



Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Newsletter 45 Winter 2022



The defibrillator unit on the Hub

Defibrillator & Water Bottle Filler for the Park

At the FoGH AGM in May this year, it was agreed to fund the purchase of a defibrillator and water bottle filling station. We had to get agreement from TWBC Parks Department for them to be installed, then work out who would do what and when. FoGH bought the defibrillator and the Parks team would pay for and organise the installation on the wall of the Hub.

The defibrillator storage unit needs an electrical supply, as it has a light and a heater to keep the frost away. It had to be wired into the existing Hub electrics, a job dealt with by the TWBC Facilities Team through its electrical contractor. At the time of writing, the defibrillator is not quite fully up and running, but we are hopeful that it will be soon. This has taken a lot longer than we expected!

The water bottle filling unit turned out to be quite complicated as well. After choosing the unit, the Parks Team had to order it: they received it a few weeks ago. As the unit has to be connected to a mains water supply, the Borough surveyor and their contractor are involved in sorting this out. It will go near the Auckland Road entrance and hopefully it will be installed by early spring.

Chris Hughes



News from the FoGH Committee

It is good to use autumn to reflect on the positive benefits gained during the year. Our Apple Day, partly thanks to Downingbury Farm's windfall apples, was like a harvest festival celebration for the Park. As the colourful leaves fall, the Park is full of seeds – including an abundance of acorns – nature's way of looking to the future.



The walkers gather by the Hub

I've enjoyed going on some Wellbeing walks, meeting and chatting to the other participants. Quite small sparks light up unexpected conversations, including the history of the apple, cockney rhyming slang and local theatre productions.

As a Friends group, we continue to work as a part of the Tunbridge Wells community. We accepted a donation of 'Purple for Polio' crocus bulbs from the Rotary Club of Tunbridge Wells. We shared these with the U3A group and they were planted at Upper Grosvenor Road and in the Bee Beds. Many thanks to TW RC chairman Alan Bernstein.

We have helped Kasia Olszewska-Martin from TWBC Parks Team plant daffodils near the Hub, as part of RTW In Bloom. Our weekly weeding group have worked on the bowls green beds and the baskets on the railings. We can look forward to the bulb flowers at the start of spring next year.

The FoGH committee have had a busy autumn, and I would like to thank them, as well as all our volunteers, for their time this year to help keep our Park looking lovely and help us secure In Bloom and Green Flag Awards. Also our sincere thanks to park-keeper Tony Cheeseman, who recently has had issues with a broken buggy and lawnmower, but has continued to work hard.

I'd also like to thank TWBC Parks Team for keeping in touch over various park issues. As I write, they are liaising with Southern Water about a water leak from an adjoining property. Work is scheduled for late December to repair the path between Folly Shaw wood and the lower playing field, which will include some drainage work. Repairs are also due to start at some point at the Redleaf Close entrance. We will share updates on these issues on social media. Should you have any concerns please email me at chair@fogh.org.uk about this, or any other issues.



Bulb planting

I would like to send you Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year.

Carolyn Gray, FoGH Chair

Wellbeing Walks

Autumn has seen the start of Wellbeing Walks in the Park, in association with the TWBC Health Improvement Team. This is a drop in event, meeting on Mondays at 10.30am, with a walk around the Park for an hour, followed by a drink at Table 8 cafe. For me it's also been good to watch the season, and weather, changing. You can read all about the walks on The Ramblers website <https://beta.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/wellbeing-walks-groups>



Heading towards Folly Shaw bridge



Going past the orchard towards the football pitch

Every week different people attend, and the whole point is to chat while walking. Many of the walkers aren't local but have found out about the walk from TWBC. I've shared park history during the walks I've attended. The Oast House and Dripping Wells continue to impress first time visitors. A weekly walk around the Park highlights maintenance issues, and I have remained in contact with TWBC Parks Department about various items, including broken paths and damaged trees.

Carolyn Gray

Images Through the Year

Local resident Sarah Wood has taken a photo every month from the same place, so here is a selection.



March



May



July

Come Apple Howling with us

With help from the local Iron Spring Morris Dancers, the Friends are reviving the ancient tradition of 'Apple Howling' or 'Wassailing' in the Park's community orchard. Locals would gather in an orchard, normally around Twelfth Night, and sing traditional wassailing songs. The word 'wassail' comes from the ancient Anglo-Saxon term 'Waes hael', meaning to wish well.



This ancient folk custom dates back centuries and was used to honour fruit bearing trees and encourage them to produce good crops of apples. In times when people survived on what they grew, this ceremony was an important part of their calendar.



Spiced and cider-drenched apple cake was placed in the branches of the largest apple tree – the 'Apple Man' – and cider sprinkled around the roots to promote growth. The leader of ceremonies would offer the tree words of encouragement, then invite those assembled to make as much noise as possible, to chase out evil and wake the trees up. Revellers would then move onto the next orchard.

A traditional 'Howling' song:

"Stand fast root, bear well top.
Pray God send us a good howling crop;
Every twig, apples big:
Every bough, apples enou';
Hats full, caps full,
Full quarters sacks full."



Apples in the orchard

Join us on Saturday 28th January 2023 in the Community Orchard between 2pm and 3pm, to rejoice in this old tradition. We will dance and sing, and make as much noise as possible to ward off any evil spirits lurking amongst our trees! There will be spiced apple cake, mulled cider and apple juice too.

Stuck with what to bring along to make a hullabaloo? Saucepans, whistles, football rattles, tambourines.....the only limitation is your imagination! We look forward to seeing you there.

Clare Kelly

Events & Activities in the Park



Making the boxes

Bird & Bat House Building

As part of the Great Big Green Week, we held our Bird and Bat Box building event on Saturday 24th September. Helped by Kent High Weald Partnership, we set up by the Auckland Road gates and soon had a steady stream of kids wanting to make a box.

The boxes come in a kit form, ready to be assembled. Soon we heard the noise: drilling, banging, then "I've made a box!"

Once assembled, the boxes were decorated with images and messages for their future inhabitants. It was interesting

to note that the Bat Boxes proved the most popular, with people saying they saw bats in their gardens. We hope everyone enjoyed the event and found a good spot for their box. As always, a big thank you to KHWP and all the volunteers.

Chris Hughes



Finished bat boxes



Cans & bottles for recycling

Litter Pick

Our second event in the Great Big Green Week was a litter pick on 25th September. This is an event we have held several times before and was well timed, as park-keeper Tony Cheeseman had been on holiday the week before. About 17 volunteers collected six full bags of rubbish. To be green, volunteers Chris Hughes and John Telling sorted through all the bags at the end. They took bottles home for recycling and I passed on the cans to RTW Soroptimists for their toilet twinning project. As the weather was good, we had our stall selling second-hand books, and our Park History book. This gave us a visible presence, and the chance to chat to passers by.

Carolyn Gray

Another Successful Apple Day

This year's Apple Day was once again a huge success. Over 400 people joined FoGH at the Oast House to wash, chop, scrat, press and, of course, drink the freshest apple juice possible.

The idea of Apple Day is to use the harvest from our Community Orchard to make juice. Unfortunately, once again all the apples were stolen from the orchard. The thief or thieves stripped the apples off the trees in late August, leaving nothing for us to use. Possibly the most annoying part of this crime is that most of the apples are not ripe then, so would not even be good to eat.



Around the apple press



Once again, we are incredibly grateful to Downingbury Farm, in Pembury, for free

access to their windfall apples. We collected these a few days earlier, ready to use on the day. These apples means that we can put on a successful event, with plenty of juice to go around. Without them, this event would not be possible.

This year we were joined by the Woodland Trust, who even helped out with our crafting stall. The Soroptimists also set up a table selling bunting and other items. And FoGH provided a fruit-themed trail in the orchard and the usual selection of mostly apple-themed home-baked goods.

Thanks to all the volunteers who stayed for the duration and to all the people who worked tirelessly chopping apples and keeping the flow of juice. We couldn't do it without you!

Emma Melville



Volunteers chopping apples



Using the scrapper



Cakes & biscuits



Woodland Trust volunteer helping with crafts

Events & Activities in the Park *contd.*

Moth Identification Event

We held our final moth event on Saturday 15th October, with around 30 attendees. We found 23 moths of nine different species, including three Lesser Yellow Underwings. They flash their bright hindwings if disturbed, to scare off predators. See more about the 2022 moth events in Ian Beavis's article on page 6.

We were joined by Pebbles, the friendly cat often seen in the Park, who found a cosy space under the table in the Hub.

Mary Hughes



Lesser Yellow Underwing



Pebbles



Raising the Green Flag

Green Flag Raising & In Bloom Awards

We celebrated the Park retaining both the Green Flag and Heritage Park awards when we raised the new flag on Thursday 20th October. Along with FoGH members, other groups took part. These included Grosvenor Bowls Club, the U3A gardening group (who look after the 'Bee Beds') and RTW Soroptomists (who manage the can recycling project).

It was also a time to celebrate our success in the 2022 In Bloom competitions. FoGH were rated Outstanding in the It's Your Neighbourhood category,

scoring an amazing 94 out of a hundred! The Park retained its Gold award from the South & South East In Bloom competition. We would like to thank everyone that contributes to making the Park such a great place. And a special mention to Tony Cheeseman for all the hard work he puts in throughout the year.

Chris Hughes

Children's Halloween Party

Our first one since 2019 seemed to be appreciated! We welcomed over 85 children plus parents and grandparents to the Hub on the afternoon of Saturday 29th October. There was a selection of Halloween-themed craft activities, as well as a trail around the Bowling Green and playground. The selfie photo booth with a selection of costumes proved popular.

There was food on offer: making s'mores (toasted marshmallows sandwiched between biscuits) and decorating cakes led to contented munching. There was an opportunity to make ghost and pumpkin



Making s'mores



Photos in the selfie booth



Making pinecone monsters



Eating decorated cakes

lollipops, pinecone monsters and pom-poms. Many children left sporting temporary tattoos. Sincere thanks to our amazing volunteers for their hard work and to all those who attended.

Mary Hughes

Basket Planting

A small group of volunteers met on Sunday 13th November to refresh the flower baskets for the winter. The first task was to remove any plants that could be replanted in the adjacent borders or those that were already dead. Following this, new plants were put in to fill up the baskets. The plants were kindly provided by the TWBC Parks Team and included pansies, primroses and primulas and should give a good display through the winter. Many thanks to those who helped out and to the Parks Team.



Newly planted basket

Chris Hughes

1897 Ordnance Survey map



Tunbridge Wells Electricity Company

This was formed by the town's Corporation and supplied electricity to Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding area from 1895 until 1969. It was next to Grosvenor Bridge, with the Turbine Hall (formerly Trident Trailers) remaining until its recent demolition. The Electric Light Works used Jackwood spring (which supplies the Dripping Wells and Marnock Lake) as a water supply, with coal delivered by rail to the adjacent Goods Station. But in the mid-19th-century, electricity was an amusing novelty, so how did it become a power source?

Electricity has been known since antiquity. The ancient Greeks made static electricity by rubbing amber with a soft cloth or fur to attract dried grass or feathers. Their word for amber was elektron. 18th-century devices made electricity by rubbing glass against cloth, making sparks, crackles and hair stand on end.

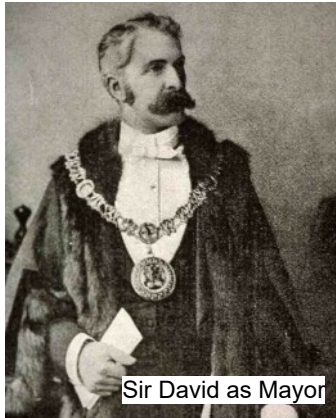
The technology advanced significantly in the 19th-century. Alessandro Volta

described his battery in 1800 and in 1831 Michael Faraday invented the electrical generator. Further discoveries led to the electric telegraph, with the first transatlantic cables laid in 1866. Adapting electric power to widespread use took time: power, light and heat were already supplied by steam engines, gas lighting and coal fires.

In 1881 the streets of Godalming were lit with water-generated electric power: the first public supply. The 1882 Electric Light Act allowed "persons, companies or local authorities to set up an electricity supply company". The first coal-fired electricity power station was Holborn Viaduct, built in 1882 to provide street lighting. More followed, run by local authorities and private companies, to fulfil a growing need to light streets, retail premises and private homes. Although gas lighting was widespread, it had its disadvantages: fumes, smoke and occasional explosions. Electric lighting was seen as clean, progressive and modern.



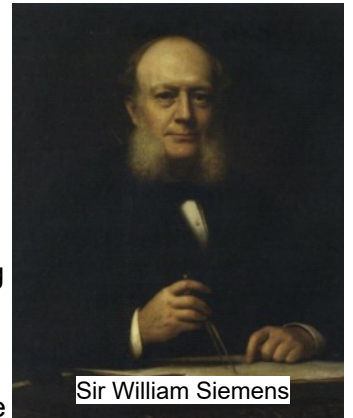
Reconstruction of Volta's battery



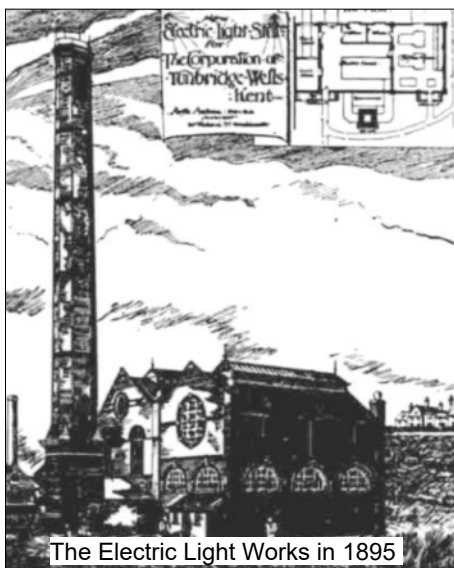
Sir David as Mayor

Tunbridge Wells was fortunate in having two eminent electrical pioneers as residents. Sir David Lionel Salomons (1851-1925) lived at Broomhill (now known as Salomons) and in 1874 was one of the first in England to adopt electric light. This was generated on site, and, as the accessories were unobtainable at the time, he made them himself.

Sir William Siemens (1823-1883) founded the company that still bears his name with his brother. He moved into Sherwood House in 1875, installing a complete electrical system, powered by a steam engine and dynamo, to light the house and pump water. Both these gentlemen shared their enthusiasm, showing town councillors their domestic electric systems and supplying equipment to local events.



Sir William Siemens



The Electric Light Works in 1895

Tunbridge Wells Town Council began investigating electric light in 1889. An 1891 Act of Parliament enabled them to start their own electricity supply company. Their consultant W H Preece recommended the purchase of the lease of a piece of land by Grosvenor Bridge. Government Board loans totalling £25,000 allowed the electricity works to be built and the cables laid.

On Wednesday 9th October 1895 the Mayoress Lady Salomons officially opened the Electric Light Works (it was already operating). Although Sir David was not a member of the council, he was offered the Mayoralty for 1894-5 in recognition of his role as an electrical pioneer.

After the opening ceremony, there was a procession up Camden Road and around the town, along streets lined with flags and bunting. This finished at the Town Hall in an exhibition on electricity in the modern home.

Applications for electric light exceeded capacity by the end of 1895, so equipment was replaced and the works extended the following year.

Future articles on the electricity works will follow its development and progress.

Mary Hughes

Sources: various online resources, Kent & Sussex Courier 1873-1950 (©Local World Ltd courtesy of The British Library Board) via the British Newspaper Archive & National Library of Scotland historic maps collection.

Moth Identification Mornings 2022

We held four well-attended moth events over the course of the year, using a moth trap overnight in a garden by the Park. Our first event in mid-March produced a small selection of characteristic early-flying moths. The range is always less at either end of the season, but early spring and late autumn reveal species not seen at other times of the year.

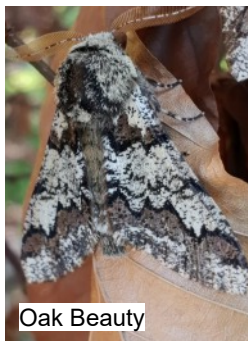
We saw the March moth, often one of the earliest to appear, which rests with overlapping wings.



March moth



Common Quaker



Oak Beauty

Another find was the Common Quaker, one of a group of closely related spring moths named for their understated appearance. The Oak Beauty is a woodland species related to the summer-flying Peppered moth.

June produced the most varied catch of the year, with spectacular and unusual species. Most striking was the Privet Hawk, one of Britain's largest moths. It's now much less common because of the widespread loss of large old native privet hedges. With it was the related Eyed Hawk, with dead-leaf camouflage on its forewings and vivid eye-spots on its hindwings to startle predators that disturb it.



Privet Hawk



Eyed Hawk



Buttoned Snout



Light Brocade

A new record for the Park was the Buttoned Snout, one of a distinctive group of moths that seem to have a long 'nose'. It is nationally scarce and its caterpillars feed on hop leaves. Also new was the intricately patterned and uncommon Light Brocade. Other finds included the unusually patterned Bird's Wing and the brilliant scarlet and black Cinnabar. This is usually a day-flying species, and its well-known orange and black striped caterpillars feed on ragwort.

The most impressive species at our August event was

another hawk moth seen in previous years – the Poplar Hawk, which masquerades as a bundle of dead leaves when at rest. A new record was the Dusky Thorn, one of a group of autumnal moths which mimic dead leaves, with rich brown shades and indented margins. We found two common but attractive species. The brightly coloured Brimstone moth confusingly shares its name with a



Poplar Hawk

butterfly, because of their sulphur-yellow colour. The Mother of Pearl is associated with nettles and has a delicate iridescent sheen.

Finally, on 15th October we showcased various late autumn species. These included the velvety Black Rustic and the Satellite, which hibernates as an adult and may pop out on mild winter days. It is named for the pale marking on its wing, with two tiny bright white 'satellite' points. The L-album Wainscot is our second record of a rather scarce migratory species. The Pine Carpet has colour and pattern to match the trunks of the conifers on which its larvae feed.



L-album Wainscot

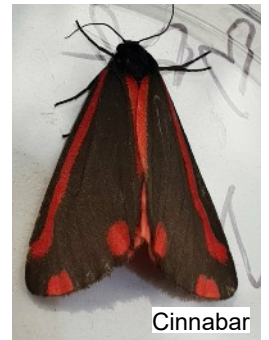


Pine Carpet

These identification sessions showed the diversity of moths found in and around the Park at different times of the year. Moths are very mobile during the hours of darkness, looking for nectar sources to feed, searching for mates, and seeking out appropriate plants to lay their eggs. All moths were safely liberated after the events.



Bird's Wing



Cinnabar



Dusky Thorn



Brimstone



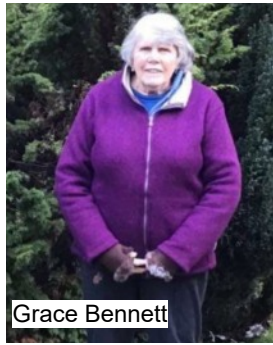
Satellite



Black Rustic

Ian Beavis

Meet the Park Volunteer



Grace Bennett

I first went to Grosvenor & Hilbert Park when I was very young, in about 1946. My aunt taught me to swim in the pool in the Park. It was my playground with my friends (all boys – I was the only girl), until I was 10, when we moved away.

During lockdown, my friend and I used to walk down to the Park, have a picnic and spend a lot of time there. I was amazed to see how much it had changed over the years. Before the wetlands, there was a playground with swings, roundabouts, a slide and a seesaw.

I'm friends with Lynda from the FoGH committee, so I joined the Friends group. I help with the weeding, plant bulbs, go on litter picks and meet new people. Now I go out on the Wellbeing Walks on Mondays (in fine weather!) I get to see different parts of the Park, which I didn't know existed, then we finish off with a nice cup of coffee at Table 8 café. **Grace Bennett**

Dogs in the Park

Hi! We're Margot and Bonnie. Believe it, or not, we're not whippet puppies, but fully grown Italian Greyhounds. Margot may be more familiar to the regular park goers, as she has been terrorising the local squirrel population and demanding treats for over two years, since she was a puppy.



Margot & Bonnie

Older sister Bonnie is a recent addition to the pack, as she was adopted in June. She's still getting her bearings a little bit but is growing more confident by the day. We're both incredibly friendly and love nothing more than getting the fuss and adulation (and treats!) from our adoring public we feel we deserve!

When we're not down the Park, we can be found under a blanket, on our owner's laps or sunbathing wherever there is a slither of sun. We're certainly not fans of the cold, so expect to see us clothed during the cooler months of the year. **Kris Boyes**

Tunbridge Wells Foresters Football Club

You may have noticed a number of young football teams playing in the Park at weekends on a regular basis. Tunbridge Wells Foresters junior teams have been using the upper and lower football pitches for their matches. The Club Chairman Stuart Newman explains:



The U11 girls team

"Since we were established in 1984, the Club has grown to be the largest England FA community affiliated club in Tunbridge Wells. We have over 770 registered players, along with 70+ qualified FA coaches. The coaches are all DBS checked with safeguarding and first aid qualified. They are all volunteers and dedicate so much time to developing local football talent.

So far this season we have been using both the Junior 9-a-side and Adult pitches at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park, with our

three U12 teams using the lower pitch. Our two U14 teams play on the top pitch, along with our U16 and U17 girls.

For the season 2022/23 we will run 49 teams from U7 through to Adult, in addition to our Development Squad which covers children in reception and school year 1. We are the only club in West Kent who have two male and female adult teams this season, offering true progression from junior into adult football. Already for these teams a



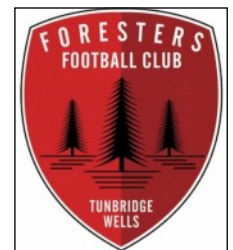
The U14 boys playing on the top football pitch

few 16 and 17 year olds – both male and female – have made their debut for the senior teams.

Our club philosophy is to offer 'football for all', which encompasses teams playing in the lowest division of our local leagues up to our Ladies 1st XI, who play in the South East Women's Counties Premier League.

This season they played two qualifying rounds in the women's FA Cup, before finally going out to Dulwich Hamlet

We are always looking for new players and anyone interested should contact us via our website at www.forestersfc.com (Also see our Facebook and Twitter pages.)"



The U17 girls team



An U17 girls match

Stuart Newman, Club Chair

Winter/Spring Events 2023

Apple Howling.....Saturday 28th January 2 – 3pm

Join FoGH & the Iron Springs Morris Dancers in the Community Orchard to celebrate this old tradition. Bring something to make a noise with, a saucepan & wooden spoon will do!
Wrap up warm & wear suitable footwear. Refreshments available. Donations welcomed.

Winter Lantern Parade.....Saturday 4th February from 5.30pm

This starts from Calverley Precinct & ends at the Auckland Road entrance into the Park.
There will be lantern making workshops each Saturday in January: see www.winterlanterns.org/news/
Reserve date in case of bad weather: Saturday 18th February.

Orchard Pruning.....Sunday 19th February 11am – 1pm

The apple & pear trees in the Community Orchard need pruning in winter while they are dormant. We aim to encourage fruit production & maintain well-shaped trees. Information sheets will be available. Please wear appropriate clothing & footwear. If you have secateurs &/or loppers, please bring them.

Kent High Weald Partnership Volunteer Day.....Thursday 23rd February 10.30am – 3pm

Wood pasture management in Appledore Wood & memorial bench installation.
Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear.

The Fun FoGH Quiz.....Saturday 25th February 7pm for 7.30 start

At the Hub. The popular brain-testing quiz returns! Tables of 6 if possible: £10 per person. Fish & chips included, as well as condiments! Please bring your own drinks.
Booking essential by phone/ text on 07972 592799 & please advise of any dietary requirements.

The Swimming Pool in the Park.....Wednesday 15th March 7pm for 7.30 start

There was a swimming pool in the park for over 80 years, but there's no trace of it now. Learn about the development, history & how it was used by local people.
History talk in the Hub. Light refreshments available.

Moth Identification.....Saturday 1st April 10.30am – 12.30pm

Join Ian Beavis to identify the moths caught overnight near the Park.
Moths seen close up are amazing: learn more about these fascinating night-time creatures!
Free drop-in event at the Hub. This event is suitable for all ages.

Please note: children must be accompanied by an adult at all events.

For more information about any of these events, see social media & look out for posters in the Park.

FoGH website: www.fogh.org.uk Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert

Twitter <https://twitter.com/FofGH> or Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/ghparkfriends/>

To learn more about conservation volunteering days with KHWP, see www.khwp.org.uk/



Join the Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park!

I am addressing this in particular to anyone who has picked up this newsletter at a FoGH event. If you have enjoyed it, please consider becoming a member. FoGH is a voluntary group set up in 2011 to preserve, enhance and promote this much loved Park. We receive no outside funding, so membership fees help to fund our work. The cost is £5 for an individual and £10 for a family.

There are also opportunities for volunteers to help in the Park. This could be helping set up before or clear up after an event. How about a spot of weeding, bulb planting or baking for an event? To subscribe to our volunteer newsletter or to join FoGH, please see our website at www.fogh.org.uk/

Mary Hughes

FoGH Contact Details

Carolyn Gray (FoGH Chair)

chair@fogh.org.uk

Jane Melville (Membership Secretary)

Friendsghrp@aol.com

Website

www.FoGH.org.uk

Facebook

www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/FofGH>

To join, contact the Membership Secretary at 15, Dorking Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN or on Friendsghrp@aol.com

Comments or contributions to

Newsletter editors at

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or 15 Dorking Road,

Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN

Our sincere thanks to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for their support printing and collating hard copies of this Newsletter



Other Contacts & Useful Information

TWBC Parks Service

01892 554031

Out of Hours Service

07920 534369

Toilets: Opening Hours

7am - 6pm

Photos courtesy of Dave Barnett, Kris Boyes, Ian Beavis, Carolyn Gray, Chris Hughes, Clare Kelly, Stuart Newman, Lynda Steers & Sarah Wood.