



Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

Newsletter 31 Summer 2019



FoGH Fun Family Fete

Photo Special on pages 4 & 5

The FoGH Dog Show 2019

The Dog Show was held on the morning of Saturday 18th May. The weather was far better than the year before, when rain unfortunately meant only the very committed remained for the whole event. It was dry, mild and cloudy, so not too hot for the dogs or too cold for the humans!

A small team of volunteers turned up from 8.30 on the morning to set up the event/arena. A basic agility course was part of the show, enabling dogs and owners to test their skills before, in between and after the main events of the day.

There were cakes, cookies, hot/cold drinks, and free portable dog bowls (courtesy of Pets Pyjamas who help holiday makers find dog friendly hotels). These were available to all attendees.

Approximately 30 dogs attended with their families, to enter the variety of doggy competitions. We had the more proper (Most Obedient/Best Child Handler) tests, through endearing (Cutest Puppy/Scruffiest Dog) to the entertaining (Best Trick/Best Fancy Dress). All classes had a variety of entrants of all shapes and sizes for the judges to carefully evaluate.



The entrants line up



The judges with Best in Show Poppy Rocket



Charlie was Cutest Puppy

Judging was by the experienced eyes and unquestionable integrity of Father John from St Barnabus Church and by local artist Chris Burke. The top three dogs in each category won a rosette.

There were also treats for the First and Second prize winners from Pets Pyjamas. Father John had to keep the bag of treats well away from all the interested dogs!

Prizes for the overall Best in Show were donated by Helios, a Camden Road based homeopathy business and Battersea dogs (and cats) home.



Suki won Best Fancy Dress

Local professional photographer Jason Dilling was in attendance, with brilliant snaps of dogs/owners alike for sale as high quality prints. To anyone who missed out on the day or just want to review his shots from the event, you can access them from

<https://www.imageofyou.co.uk/hilbertdogs2019>

Thanks to our judges, the volunteers and of course to all those who came!

Chris Maslin

Obedience	Poppy Rocket
Cutest Puppy	Charlie
Best Fancy Dress	Suki
Best Child Handler	Charlie
Best Trick	Milly
Scruffiest Dog	Pi
Best in Show	Poppy Rocket



Milly had the Best Trick



Scruffiest Dog Pi

Chairman's Report

With the sounds of the swifts wheeling high above and the young blue tits, amongst other birds, fledging from their nests in my garden, it really feels like the summertime has arrived. The Park is looking splendid with fresh leaves and wild flowers. It is a haven supporting the pollinating insects and the food chain for wild birds, as well as providing a special place for all Park users.



This year we hope to retain our Green Flag Award and FoGH hope to receive the highest Level 5 'Outstanding' judgement in the Britain in Bloom 'It's Your Neighbourhood' category again this year. All this contributes to the Tunbridge Wells entry to the South & South-East in Bloom competition (the Park was awarded Gold last year).

There is a blog about the Community Orchard in an online journal at www.theenglishappleman.com/journals.asp which is worth reading. This journal also has an interesting article on Roger Worraker, the inspiration and advisor for the whole project. It shows how lucky we are to benefit from his expertise in establishing our orchard.

In June, our brilliant Community Engagement Officer, Emma Peters, will be moving on to an exciting new appointment with the Essex Wildlife Trust. Thank you Emma for all your inspirational work here. Full time jobs in this field are hard to come by so I am thrilled to know she has secured her future work and we all wish her great success there.

This summer we have a Picnic in the Park on Sunday 28th July and will be joining KHWP for the popular National Playday on Wednesday 7th August. On Saturday 14th September there will be a Park history display in the Hub and a guided walk with Ian Beavis for Heritage Open Day. The summer holiday schedule will be much quieter without CEO input but with the help of volunteers we are hoping to keep some events going in the future.

I would like to thank all of you who helped with our Family Fete in early May. As you will see in the report it was a great success again and lots of local people came along and clearly enjoyed the day. It's a great opportunity for showing what the combined support from everyone can do for the community here.

Liz Edwards

Let's Get Blooming!

RTW in Bloom brings together community groups, businesses, schools and residents to make the town look good. The town has won Gold in the South & South East in Bloom competition over the last seven years, and last year received Silver Gilt in the national Britain in Bloom finals.

Why not enter the RTW in Bloom competition? If you don't have a garden, there are categories for a front patio or balcony, basket or planter.

Brightening up your own space makes you feel good and the town look better! See www.royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk/ to enter or for more

ways to get involved.



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN BLOOM

Mary Hughes



FoGH volunteers plant baskets by the Hub

Update from the Parks Department

March saw the official end of Heritage Lottery Funded Parks for People project with a small celebration in the Hub attended by senior officers from HLF. I'm afraid this means HLF will no longer visit the Park or support us financially. During their final visit the Senior Grants Officer and HLF Monitor complemented all on a well-run project and felt this was a model for how a project should be run. I would like to add my thanks to all the volunteers and the Friends committee for their support and hard work over the last five years and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with you in the Park.

This does mean we will see changes in the number of activities staged in the Park, although our colleagues from Kent High Weald Partnership will be working with us to programme activities over the summer. We will also be saying goodbye to our wonderful Community Engagement Officer Emma Peters, who will be leaving us in the middle of June. Emma is moving on to Essex Wildlife trust to carry out a similar role. Of course I'm sure you will all join me in wishing her luck in her new role.

Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom will continue this year with a visit from our judge, Jean Griffin, on 11th July. She is a very experienced judge and does have a keen eye for horticulture. Jean presents the gardening programme on Radio Kent so we will need to be on our toes this year.



At this time of year, I'm sure many people will be thinking about BBQs in the Park and as always we do ask you to be considerate to others and the Park. Please follow a few simple rules which can be found on the TWBC web page (see the Dunorlan Park section).

Please continue to enjoy the Park over the summer and if you have any questions about the Park please do contact me on parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Peter Every – TWBC Parks & Sports Team Leader

FoGH Events Roundup



Orchard Pruning Workshop

This year's pruning day was on Saturday 2nd March. We are fortunate that Roger Worracker from Five Oak Green offers his professional expertise and lead the pruning day. Overall the orchard is developing very well, with the first trees from November 2014 really taking shape. Roger explained how pruning develops strong healthy trees to produce plenty of fruit.

Roger took us through the basics, then we had a go at pruning our own trees. We tended to be timid: though we know it's right, it's still a shock when what seem like good stems need taking out! Then it was back to the Hub for a question and answer session, with advice on best practice and recommendations of fruit growing books. Our sincere thanks to Roger for again taking the time to support us. **Chris Hughes**



Encouragement from Roger (far left)



Quizzers study the questions

Quiz Night

Saturday 16th March saw me join quizmaster Chris Hughes for the fourth time, as another room of quizzers filled The Hub. Added competition this time as a large group of Dorking Road friends was split into two rival teams. All in good humour, the scores were tight at the half time fish'n'chip break. With a few contentious questions and answers in the second half, we awarded each team a prize.

Chris is still finding a suitable variety of rounds via some mysterious internet source, and we aim to hold more quizzes during winter 2019/20. They are a good fundraiser to help with other events, and a good way to meet others in the local community. Now: what is a

hippopotamus most closely related to?

Carolyn Gray

Great British Spring Clean

Our recent attempts to pick a suitable day for this had not met with stellar success. We had unerringly chosen particularly unpleasant days – heavy downpours in 2017, then snow and ice last year. But this year around 20 of us gathered on Saturday 22nd March in pleasant spring sunshine. The wide age range was encouraging, including teenage boys and family groups.

Within a couple of hours we had collected at least 25 bin bags of rubbish and some larger fly tipped items. It is only fair to add that Sodexo park keeper Tony does a great job keeping litter levels under control. But in the days before we had identified areas to direct our efforts. Meantime, we'd like to thank all park users who pick up and bin litter to help keep the Park attractive and welcoming.



Some of the litter heroes with their haul

Richard Woodfield



Tree textures

Photography Walk

Sunday 7th April saw our second Photography Walk around the Park. The weather was challenging, misty with little sun, but this did not deter us. The walk was led by Rosie Harris who knows the Park well. We started by Marnock Lake, then headed to the wetlands. Here we saw a single ladies shoe on one of the granite sculptures, so we all had a go at photographing it!

From the wetlands we crossed Folly Shaw bridge and up through Roundabout Wood, finishing in the orchard. Some choose views of the woods whilst others saw textures and patterns in the trees and bark. It's amazing what you can see with the help of a photographer's eye! Hopefully everyone enjoyed it and took some great photos. Our thanks to Rosie for leading the walk and giving us tips on what to look for when taking shots.

Chris Hughes

Easter Eggstravaganza Struck by Heatwave

Easter Sunday was hot, hot, hot. The heat affected our event in several ways. It meant the Easter Egg Hunt was less well attended than in previous years. Plus, we were forced to keep the chocolate in a cooler box to prevent melting!

Some hardy folks did turn up and followed our trail around the Park. We estimate, from the amount of chocolate that was eaten, that a total of around 160 adults and children braved the sunshine. The heat didn't seem to affect the little ones, who ran enthusiastically around the Park, with sweaty adults in tow!

Emma Melville



A rest in the shade!

The FoGH Family Fete

This year was our seventh early May Bank Holiday Event, and we watched the weather forecasts with some trepidation beforehand. In 2018 we enjoyed record-breaking heat, but this year set records for colder-than-usual temperatures! It was a great relief to see people streaming into the Park in the same numbers as before. But shorts and T-shirts were replaced by woolly jumpers and coats!



Crowds on the lower football pitch

We stuck with the 'downsized' version that we used last year, focusing on what works best, and it certainly makes things more manageable. But planning the event starts the previous autumn and takes serious hard work!



TS Brilliant blow the fanfare



The Town Crier



The Mayor with the unicycle

A noon fanfare from TS Brilliant signalled Town Crier John Scholey to introduce The Mayor, Cllr Len Horwood, and Mayoress Judy. They declared the Fete open before visiting all the attractions. The Mayor thought about trying the unicycle, but common sense prevailed!

Bounce The Party had a variety of bouncy castles by the skateboard park and Riffhams Donkeys were busy all day. St James's Church offered crafts and biscuit decorating and TS Brilliant Sea Cadets ran a coconut shy.



The ever-popular bouncy castles



Donkey rides in the sunshine



The St James' Church stall

Cally from Kent High Weald Partnership and Ellen from the Cross Pollination Project had bee-friendly plants and seeds to sow. Following the bee theme, Margaret from Henda Honey sold locally produced honey. Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom had a stall, encouraging residents to enter the competition and get their gardens flowering. Grosvenor Bowls Club ran a popular 'Have a Go' session, increasing awareness of this gentle game.



The KHWP stand



The RTW in Bloom stall



Trying out bowls



Laura & Jimmy the Juggling Jester



Ukelear Fallout



Liquorice Lounge

Jimmy the Juggling Jester taught circus skills with the hula hooping Laura. We had entertainment all afternoon on or near the stage. Cascade Dance and Tiger Gymnastics performed while bands set up, as did TS Brilliant Reunion Band. Thanks to musicians Disciples of Lily, Liquorice Lounge, Second Helpin' and Ukelear Fallout.



The Ghana Supper Club



Southborough Butchers



The Ragged Trousers bar

There was a wide choice of refreshments, with the bar from The Ragged Trousers and the FoGH soft drinks stall. Food wise we had a BBQ from Southborough Butchers, Moby Dicks Fish & Chips, Cucina Pizza, the Ghana Supper Club, Real Thai and Nicoletta Catering. The ice cream van got held up on the A21, but had a queue as soon as it arrived and did a roaring trade all afternoon. And we can't forget the FoGH cake stall! FoGH had our popular tombola and lucky dip, ably run by Alistair and James Melville, with Ben on the children's lucky dip. St Barnabas Brownies had a popular sweet stall and helped us litter pick at the end of the event.



The FoGH tombola



St Barnabas Brownies with the sweet stall



The FoGH cake stall

Thanks to our many tombola prize donors, including Trinity Theatre, The George, The Forum, Rendez-Vous Restaurant, Locality, Leeds Castle, and Pashley Manor Gardens. The FoGH cake stall is entirely supplied with donated cakes, so thanks to all those who took the trouble to bake for us. Dan Littlechild from Acoustic Valium Project (raising money for the Jay Harmer Foundation) co-ordinated the entertainment with Liz from FoGH and put on a great show as usual.

A sincere thank you from FoGH to all our wonderful volunteers – we couldn't do it without you! This includes marking the field and setting up early in the morning, being a steward for an hour or so, baking a cake or donating a tombola prize.

If anyone does want to get involved in helping FoGH at this or other events, please go to our website and sign up to receive our volunteer newsletter www.fogh.org.uk/index.php?inc=contact

Despite our concerns about the weather, local people turned out to be a hardy lot and still came in their droves! It's great to know that our efforts in putting on the event are appreciated by the community.



A busy afternoon!

Emma's Update

Summer is nearly upon us, and the Park is buzzing with activity – from our wildflowers regrowing, to birds, bees, and butterflies in the skies once more. Our resident mallards have their first brood of ducklings, and there was a promising amount of frogspawn in the Wetlands too, so be prepared for a wild season to come at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park!



Clearing scrub in Appledore Wood

It's been a busy period for our conservation volunteers, who have been hard at work planting in the gaps and weeding around Marnock Lake. We've sown wildflower seeds in a new cleared area at the border of Appledore Wood, done wildlife surveys, and created a living willow dome.

The dome is already producing many green shoots and leaves, and should look fantastic come summer – very inviting for anybody wishing to have a

wander through its tunnels. You can find the dome at the edge of Appledore Wood, near the entrance to the boardwalk.

If you would like to volunteer in the Park, please take a look at the FoGH website or Kent High Weald Partnership's website for opportunities.

Volunteering covers many areas and interests such as nature surveys, one-off event assistance, and conservation work to keep the Park looking at its best.



Building the living willow dome



The Astronomy evening

We have had a wide variety of events run over the past few months, from an Astronomy evening with the Mid Kent Astronomical Society, skateboarding sessions with Team Rubicon, World Water Day, a screen printing taster workshop and many other activities.

On the first bat walk of the year we only spotted Common Pipistrelle bats. We hoped to see Noctules and Soprano Pippistrelles. There are more exciting upcoming events in the Park to get involved in if you missed any of the above. Try pond dipping, moth trapping with Ian Beavis, or other arts and crafts events.

March saw the end of the HLF funding in Grosvenor and Hilbert Park, which was celebrated with a key stakeholders event, and a new photo display showcasing the progress over the past five years. As I only came into the Community Engagement Officer role in the past year, it was truly incredible to look back through the photos. The improvements made over the course of the project will hopefully be enjoyed for many years to come. We also launched the Grosvenor and Hilbert Park video, which can be found on the Facebook and Twitter pages.



The end of HLF project event

Now that the project has ended in the Park, the HLF funded Community Engagement Officer role is ending too. It has come around quicker than expected – this will be my last newsletter update as Community Engagement Officer for the Park! I have secured a new role with Essex Wildlife Trust in their outdoor education team. I have a few smaller events planned before I leave in June, so keep an eye on our Facebook page, Twitter feed, and in-park posters to get more information.

I will be sad to leave the Park, but I am very grateful for all the experiences and opportunities it has provided, as well as all the lovely people I have had the chance to work with and meet in this role.



Emma Peters, Community Engagement Officer

Future Events & Volunteer Activities in the Park

Park users have enjoyed 5 years of events and volunteer activities led by the Community Engagement Officer. The cost of this was paid for by the Heritage Lottery Fund, as part of the £2.3 million refurbishment grant awarded in 2014.

Now that the CEO role has ended, it will be up to the Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park to fund and organise events in the Park. As a volunteer group, FoGH receives no external funding, relying on subscriptions, donations, fundraising events and occasional grants. It's therefore unlikely that we will be able to maintain the level of activities previously run by the CEO, but we will do our best!



Chris Hughes

An Appreciation

Three different people have held the Community Engagement Officer post, first Cally Fiddimore from spring 2014, then Steff D'Agorne from summer 2015 and finally Emma Peters from August 2018.

All of them have delivered a wide programme of events, suiting many interests and age ranges. Participants have tried out different arts and crafts, and learnt about the plants and wildlife found in the Park. A regular volunteer group have worked hard to enhance the Park and carried out wildlife surveys.

All three have been great assets to the Park – sincere thanks for their hard work and dedication! **Mary Hughes**



Cally Fiddimore



Steff D'Agorne



Emma Peters

Meet the Committee



Chris Maslin

Chris Maslin has been on the FoGH committee for three years now. He's one of the younger members, still being (just!) in his thirties. As a dog owner, he's keen to support canine rights in the park.

He runs the FoGH dog show and helps with other events during the year. This includes baking his famous cookies for cake stall sales!

Chris runs a financial firm employing about 10 people, based in Tunbridge Wells. This means his brain is often picked for FoGH accounting/finance queries. He's married to Jenny Maslin a musician and teacher, and they live with Hamish their labradoodle on Ravenswood Avenue.

Having lived in the St James area of the town for most of his life, Hilbert Park has always been a favourite of his. Chris hopes to be able to help others enjoy this green space we have for many years to come.

Dogs in the Park

This is Dolly. We rescued her from the RSPCA in Hereford aged about 6 months. She is around 3 now but still acts like a puppy sometimes!

Dolly is a large dog and people in the Park all like to try and guess her mixed breed! We don't know, so it's always fun to hear suggestions. She has a gorgeous brindle coat and people say she looks like a tiger!

Her favourite thing to do in the Park is jump into the pond or the wetland. She loves chasing the squirrels and meeting up with her doggy pals on the football pitch for a run around most mornings. After all the running around she likes to sleep a lot and sometimes falls asleep sitting up. Her naughty habit is sneaking onto the sofa in the night when she isn't allowed.

As well as cuddles and chicken, Dolly loves people and all dogs. She loves to meet dogs in the Park so be sure to stop and say hi!

Charlotte Kent



Dolly

Sport Report

Football (see <http://www.wksl.org.uk/>)

A mixed end to the season for Park team St John's Yard. They did well in Division 2 as a promoted team, but will regret some missed chances.

In the Intermediate Cup, they lost the semi-final 12 – 5 to Dormansland Rockets (on aggregate over two legs). They were unable to raise a team for the Senior Cup quarter-final, despite getting through the group stages.

In the League they were second for much of the season, but two crucial losses left them in third. Their promotion chances ended with a 0 – 0 draw and 1 – 2 loss in a double-header against their jinx Dormansland Rockets. But they consolidated their place in Division 2 and enjoyed some high-scoring wins. **Mary Hughes**



Challenging for a goal



Our Bowls Open Day

Bowls (see www.grosvenorbowls.co.uk)

The outdoor bowls season began for Grosvenor Bowls Club in late April with an away match before we were allowed on our green from May 1st. We have now played 4 matches and encountered little rain!

Our Open Day was part of the FoGH fete, and it was a great pleasure to welcome so many people to have a go at bowls! Several have returned to join our Wednesday evening practice nights (from 6pm: do come along and have a try. Simply wear flat-soled shoes).

The Thursday Tunbridge Wells League will be a challenge for Grosvenor, as we are now competing in the top division. Spectators are always appreciated – pick up a fixture card from Table 8 or see our website to learn more. **Jo Cartwright**

Summer Event Highlights

Moth Blitz.....Saturday 8th June 11.15am – 1pm

Join Ian Beavis to identify moths caught in a moth trap overnight in a local garden.
At the Hub. Free drop-in event suitable for all ages.

Brilliant Butterflies.....Thursday 11th June 3.30 – 5.30pm

Learn more about Britain's butterflies with crafts & a trail.
Free drop-in event at the Hub. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Pollination Pals.....Thursday 13th June 10am – 3pm

Planting the Cross Pollination Project beds & monthly bird survey.
Meet at the Hub & wear suitable clothing & footwear. HLF/TWBC volunteer day

Great British Bee Count.....Thursday 27th June 10am – 12pm

Join the conservation volunteers to see which species of bee live in the Park.
Meet at the Hub. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Please wear suitable shoes.

Let's Go Trimming!.....Thursday 27th June 12 – 3pm

After the bee count, the HLF/TWBC volunteers will be strimming the orchard pathways.
Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear.

National Meadows Day Bug Hunt.....Saturday 6th July 10.30am – 3pm

In the meadow next to the Skate Park – discover the mix of insects living in this habitat.
Drop-in event. All ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Please wear suitable shoes.

FoGH Picnic in the Park.....Sunday 21st July 12 – 4pm

Celebrate Love Parks Week by joining FoGH for fun & games!
On the lower football pitch. Bring a rug & your picnic. Games & activities provided.

National Play Day.....Wednesday 7th August 11am – 3pm

Join FoGH & Kent High Weald Partnership to celebrate the right to play outdoors.
We'll be by the skate park & in the woods. They'll be fun for all the family.

Moth Blitz.....Saturday 24th August 11am – 1pm

Join Ian Beavis to identify the moths caught overnight in the Park.
Free drop-in event at the Hub, suitable for all ages.

Can we cut it?.....Wednesday 28th August 10am – 3pm

KHWP volunteer day – meadow management in Appledore Wood pasture.
Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear.

Sunny-D.....Wednesday 5th September 10am – 3pm

KHWP volunteer day – looking after the wetland area & clearing burreed – wellies required!
Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear.

Heritage Open Day.....Saturday 14th September 10am – 4pm

Join FoGH at the Hub to learn more about the history of our Park.

Heritage Open Day Walk.....Saturday 14th September 10.30am – 12.30pm

Ian Beavis leads a walk through the Park with insights into the history & wildlife.
Meet at the Hub. Places can be booked through editors@FoGH.org.uk

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

FoGH events: www.fogh.org.uk Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert
or Twitter <https://twitter.com/FofGH>

FoGH Contact Details

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To join, contact the Secretary at 41, Dorking Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN or on Friendsghrp@aol.com

Our sincere thanks to Tunbridge Wells
Borough Council for all their support
in 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 Liz Ager, Dave Barnett, Carolyn Gray, Chris Hughes, Charlotte Kent,
Emma Melville, Emma Peters & Richard Woodfield.*