

FRIENDS OF DUNORLAN PARK

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2023



WHAT A YEAR FOR DUNORLAN PARK AND THE ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN BLOOM TEAM!

From Kasia - our Park's Team's Technical Officer

Dunorlan Park has retained the Green Flag Award status and the Green Heritage Site for another year. Hooray! On September 29th, the Bloom Team attended the RHS South & South East in Bloom Award ceremony at RHS Wisley. We were pleased to collect the Gold award for Dunorlan Park, and the winner's trophy for Large Park (above 25 acres) category (*photo on front page*) Other parks and open spaces in Tunbridge Wells, as well as the town, achieved great results overall in the regional Bloom competition.



- Tunbridge Wells in Bloom - Gold in the small city category - Category Winner
- Tunbridge Wells in Bloom - Best Community Engagement award - Gold - Category Winner
- Dunorlan Park - Gold in the large park over 25 acres category - Category Winner
- Calverley Grounds - Gold in the large park category
- Grosvenor & Hilbert - Gold in the large park over 25 acres category
- Woodbury Park Cemetery - Gold in the churchyard category
- Tunbridge Wells Cemetery/Crematorium - Gold in the large cemetery category
- Tunbridge Wells Common - Gold in the commons/open spaces category
- Barnett's Wood Nature Reserve - Silver Gilt

On October 16th, Monday Volunteers, KHWP and representatives of Friends of Dunorlan Park gathered in the summer house for a small celebration of our awards. Of course, there was cake, and many cups of tea were poured! (*photos on front page*)

On October 23rd, Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom team received an amazing Gold award at the Britain in Bloom UK Finals 2023, which was held at the Royal Horticultural Halls, Lindley Hall, London. As well as the Gold, the group was also given an RHS Discretionary Award, a Certificate of Achievement for Children and Young People's Participation.

As always, our thanks go to all the volunteers, contractors and Friends who worked hard throughout the year to help the Parks Team with the maintenance of Dunorlan Park.

To find out more about volunteering in our park, email parcs@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or give Kasia a call on 01892 554031.



Peter & Jenny's
Open Gardens award



Cheque for Hospice
in the Weald

Peter and Jenny opened their 'Wildings' garden for Open Gardens Day and, through kind donations from attendees raised £450. The grand total from that and the other nine Open Gardens, was £1,309.74 and handed over to Hospice in the Weald.

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN PETER

Car parking charges have now been introduced for visitors to Dunorlan Park. The Friends' committee and its members did not generally support this and we feel that the way the scheme was introduced did not take account of many well-argued points which we had made. We will wait now to see how the scheme works in practice and the effect it has on the businesses in the park, and on potentially dangerous overflow parking on Halls Hole Road, for example.

We hope overall usage of the park is not affected as this is a very special place, loved by many for its amenities and open spaces.

As some of you know, I will be standing down as Chairman at the AGM next April, after six years in the post and a total of 10 on the committee. I have enjoyed the time spent very much and I am conscious that I followed an illustrious list of previous Chairs. I hope I will have left the park in as good a state as I found it with some valuable changes and developments having taken place. I would like to thank our excellent committee members for their support during this time and you, the 400+ members, who help to fund everything we do.

The new committee to be elected in April 2024 will have the responsibility of electing its own officers, including the new chairperson. Please get in touch if you would like to stand for election to the committee.



IAN'S MOTH MORNING

Ian had his Moth Identification event on Saturday, September 2nd and it was, as always, a success. Ian says: "We had a dry warm night to run the moth trap overnight in an adjacent garden, which gave us a good sample of what was out and about in the park for the morning's showing. As often happens, there were multiple examples of some common species like the Large

Yellow Underwing, Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing and Brimstone. The Brimstone moth confusingly shares its name with a butterfly and is

Feathered Gothic



very distinctive with its sulphur-yellow wings. It tends to be very lively, not settling down in the trap as most moths do and often escaping before morning.

The Feathered Gothic, which we had last year, appeared again. The intricate pattern on its wings reminded early collectors of the delicate tracery of Gothic church windows. We had a number of beautiful freshly-emerged examples of the Light Emerald, which provides an example of the form of camouflage called disruptive coloration. The prominent line running across both wings breaks

up the outline and makes it less obvious to predators. A more subtly attractive species was the Mother of Pearl whose wings have an iridescent sheen when viewed from the right angle.

Not everything caught in a moth trap is a moth. We had an example of one of the long-horned caddisflies which will have been breeding in the lake. Caddis larvae live in fresh water, and most species construct protective cases from plant material, tiny shells, or sand and gravel. Adult caddisflies are easily mistaken for moths, but the patterns on their wings are formed from hairs rather than scales.



Brimstone



Mother of Pearl



David Molloy & Philip Webb catching up at the event

KEITH'S FUNGAL FORAY

The walk was preceded by a deluge but the actual walk was spared for a couple of hours until the very end. With a small, but select band, Keith set off in the direction of the Fountain. On the way, some rather difficult to identify fungi were growing on imported soil and woodchips. Also Earth Balls were growing alongside the path and I was able to demonstrate the gradually maturing spore mass which, in due time, will open by a split in the top to allow the spores to be released.

Walking up the Avenue produced, on the grassy banks at the top, several colourful species of Waxcap which are regularly seen here, notably the orange so-called Blackening Waxcap which gradually turns black as it ages. Also Golden Waxcap which is a deep lemon-yellow colour. Also Golden Spindles, with an unusual shape, being just thin club-like structures.

We looked in vain for the aptly named Orange Peel Fungus, but the somewhat slimy and scaly *Pholiota gummosa* was located and brought to me for confirmation.

Pat brought a young Fly Agaric toadstool to my attention. Unfortunately, specimens which had earlier opened out under the tall trees beside Pembury Road car park had largely disappeared, washed out by heavy rainstorms. However, Honey Fungus was located here. Pat was looking forward to his 'mushroom' for tea until he was told it had hallucinogenic properties!!



Smell can be an important identification feature of some fungi, and several were identified during the afternoon. A white fungus called The Miller, smelling of flour, Oak Milk-Cap



whose smell is reputed to be that of bedbugs (!), and the self-explanatory Curry-scented Milk Cap. Then there was the False Death-Cap which smells of raw potatoes.

Other species spotted during the foray were *Russula mairei* with its bright red cap, the rather uncommon *Entoloma pleopadium*, the intriguingly named Weeping Widow, the Fawn Pluteus, Poison Pie, Blackish=purple *Russula* and Sulphur-Tuft.

The walk was much enjoyed by those present who felt they had gained much knowledge of this particular aspect of our wonderful natural world.



NEW CAMELLIA GARDEN

One of our committee members, David Molloy, is a long-time member of the international Camellia Society. Earlier this year, David noted that the Society was offering a major camellia collection to be established in a public place and a cash sum to help establish the garden. David applied for this on behalf of Dunorlan Park and was successful in his bid! As a result of this, we

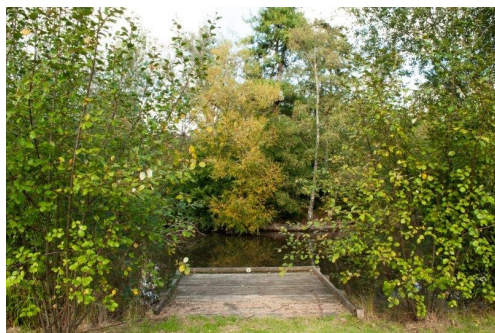


are about to receive a collection of some 60 plants, and an area of the park has been selected to establish the garden.

KENT HIGH WEALD PARTNERSHIP (KHWP) - DUNORLAN SUMMER WORKS

Thank you John Davies for the comprehensive update

Kent High Weald Partnership is a non-profit organisation which works to engage the community in order to manage the green spaces across Tunbridge Wells borough.



It is part-funded by KCC, is based at Bedgebury Pinetum and relies on local volunteers to carry out practical tasks.

The partnership has been involved with Dunorlan for many years and has worked on various projects around the park.

This year, they organised the revetment work on the lake by the cascade, the renewal of several sections of the post and rail fencing around the dipping pond and the desilting and relining of the

ornamental pond below the cascade.

Dunorlan lake is classified as a reservoir and is subject to regular monitoring of the water level and an annual inspection of the integrity of the banks. The last inspection revealed significant erosion under the banks by the cascade which, if left, would have resulted in the banks and trees collapsing into the lake.

The revetment work organised by KHWP involved manoeuvring 80kg sacks of rocks as close to the bank as possible. Coconut matting coir rolls which have plants embedded are then placed in front of the rock sacks. The plants gradually establish themselves and the coir rolls rot down, leaving a natural barrier between the water and the bank. Temporary fencing is placed around the coir rolls to prevent the wildfowl eating the plants. The fencing along the section of lake



between the boathouse and north end was removed last year. The sections at the south end, both sides, are likely to be removed in 2024.

The post and rail fencing renewal around the upper dipping pond has been ongoing over the last three years, and is likely to be completed in 2024. The only complication this year was due to the fact that the new posts were 30cm longer than the old ones, which required digging much deeper holes on some of the hottest days of the year.

The work on the ornamental pond, below the cascade, were conducted by outside contractors due to the need for heavy machinery. The pond was initially drained before being desilted using a mechanical digger. The pond is now full of water and, hopefully, the plants will re-establish themselves quickly. The friends contributed 50% towards the cost of the works with the balance paid by TWBC. The revetment cost the Friends £2,322, the fencing £1,052 and pond work £3,100.

A big thank you to Steph from KHWP for organising, and to all the volunteers who attended the tasks.

Details of volunteering opportunities can be found on the Kent High Weald Partnership website www.khwp.org.uk. Pictures can be found on the Friends Instagram page and Facebook page.

Fortunately the foul smell of the mud in the lake is not something which can be replicated!

ANDY'S LATEST BIRD SURVEY IN OUR PARK - thank you Andy, lots of wonderful sightings
RED is of serious concern, **AMBER** of some concern

twHerring Gull	Blackbird	Jackdaw	Chiffchaff	Moorhen
Egyptian Goose	Blackcap	Buzzard	Coal Tit	Stock Dove
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Bullfinch	Magpie	Canadian Goose	Dunnock
Grey Heron	Chaffinch	Carrion Crow	Firecrest	Wren
Greylag Goose	Goldcrest	Cormorant	Little Egret	Great Tit
Lesser Blackheaded Gull	Goldfinch	Starling	Linnet	Whitethroat
Blackheaded Gull	Greenfinch	Jay	Long-tailed Tit	Swift
Sparrowhawk	Grey Wagtail	Mallard	Wood Pigeon	Skylark
Robin	House Sparrow	Kestrel	Sedge Warbler	
Spotted Flycatcher	Mistle Thrush	Tawny Owl	Swallow	
Green Woodpecker	Nuthatch	Peregrine	Treecreeper	
Willow Warbler	Pied Wagtail	Hobby	Collared Dove	
Song Thrush	Redstart	Bluetit	Kingfisher	



FEATURED BIRD FOR THIS QUARTER'S EDITION
THE SEDGE WARBLER

The sedge warbler is a small, quite plump warbler, with a striking with a broad creamy stripe above its eyes and greyish-brown legs. It's brown on top with blackish streaks, and creamy white underneath. It's a summer visitor and spends winters in Africa, south of the Sahara Desert.

DUNORLAN DOGGIES!

Paddington and Honey are Dunorlan regulars and just love the open spaces of the three fields. They used to run around the lake until new regulations stopped this, unless they were on a lead. Although they never chased the waterfowl, Paddington was very partial to a dip in the lake! Now forbidden, but he's pretty easy going so got over it! Mostly, he is excessively friendly with all humans, leaning against anyone who will pay him attention! Honey, on the other hand, seeks out rabbits in the bushes, but to no avail!! They both love dog friends, and that's what so special about Dunorlan. It's a dog-walking paradise so there are many friends to meet, both canine and human. If you walk your pooch in the park, why don't you send us a photo of your canine friend (and yourself if you want!) with a short story which we can include in our future newsletters. You can send them to vslemoignan@icloud.com. We would love to hear from you.

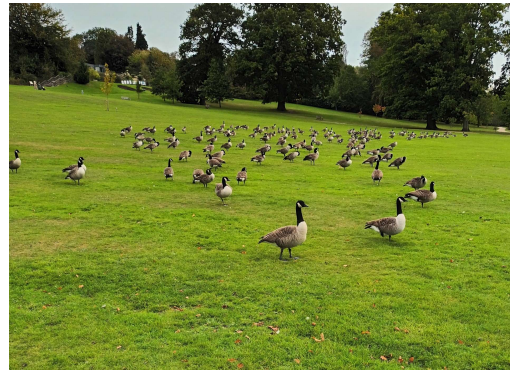


CUSTODIANS OF OUR WILDFOWL - Thank you Peter, Judy and Charlie

Many visitors to Dunorlan Park enjoy seeing the wide variety of wildfowl which are attracted to the lake and feeding them with the bags of grain which the Friends make available in the café.

The ducks and geese come and go, of course, with many migrating as the weather gets colder. One week, there seems to be very few and the next we find 100 Canadian Geese have arrived, in spite of the risk of being charged to park by TWBC!

We have seen a wide variety of ducks and geese over the years. Unfortunately, the survival rates of ducklings and goslings is very low in the park. We do not fully understand why, but there



seems to be various factors, including dog and fox attacks, and the population of large pike and discarded terrapins in the lake, and with the recent possible sighting of a mink.

One person who has a particular rapport with the wildfowl is Charlie Round. He can often be seen in the park where the ducks and resident Greylag Geese wait patiently for his arrival. They clearly trust Charlie and he has named most of the Greylag Geese along with previous duck residents. At present, the love life of the female Egyptian Goose is better than any soap opera. She is now on partner number three, having ditched her last one for a more attentive new male. He appears to be a supportive father of the three mature goslings which are pictured here.



Charlie had been watching the 'soap opera' and said "The 3rd husband of the Egyptian goose booted out the 2nd one. Though the 2nd husband was less aggressive than the 1st and the 3rd, he only got more aggressive when his goslings started dying in May 22. Sadly, the small goslings born in the spring were all killed, at least one by a dog."

A recently imposed Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) now requires dogs to be kept on leads in the cultivated part of the park and this includes the perimeter path around the lake.

The PSPO is now observed by most dog owners but a few still flout it and allow their dogs to swim in the lake and disturb the wildfowl. Charlie can often be seen delivering a severe reprimand to such people!

The Friends sometimes receive messages from members of the public that a goose or duck (or even a pigeon) is injured and needs attention. One of our members provides a vital link with Folly Wildlife Rescue, and Charlie often helps her to catch an injured bird, which is usually not an easy process.

Outside the winter months, the wild fowl are amply provided for by the natural resources of the lake, and buy supplementary feeding by the public. In harsh conditions, the Friends organise a rota so that a bucket of food is scattered on a daily basis. This work is carried out by David Molloy and Willicombe Park colleagues (who manage the seed bags available in the café), and others such as the pupils of the nearby Barnardo's Meadows School.

Our thanks go to Charlie and the many users of the park who feed and care for the wildfowl on a regular basis.



ARMISTICE DAY IN THE PARK

The Armistice Day Commemoration in Victoria Cross Grove on Saturday, November 11th, was held on a lovely sunny morning and was well attended with around 30 people, including some children.



Bagpiper
Rorie Evans

Bagpiper Rorie Evans walked slowly towards the Memorial Sculpture playing Highland Cathedral. The service was led

by Pastor Gareth Jones from the Pantiles Baptist Church and dignitaries included Mayor Hugh Paterson and author Richard Snow.

Buglers from TS Brilliant played The Last Post and Reveille whilst the Royal British Legion's Standard Bearer, Duncan Sage, lowered the Standard.

Two-minutes silence was observed.

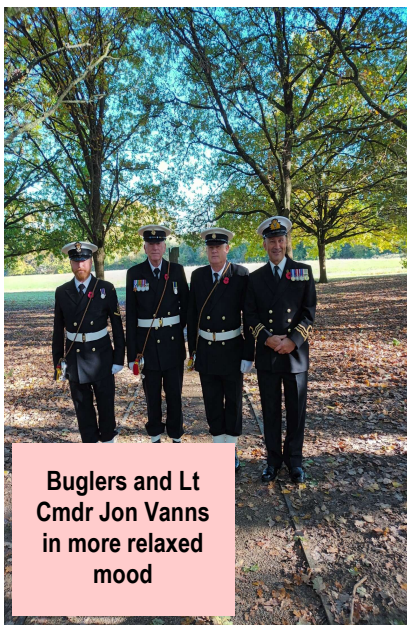
Richard Snow also read out the names of the Ten Brave Men And True who were all from Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding area, and feature on the plaque in VCG.



Buglers from TS Brilliant



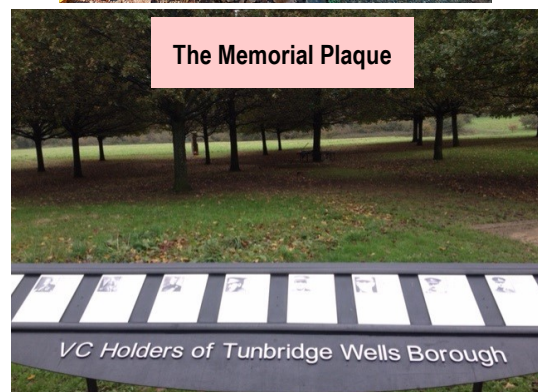
Wreath-laying



Buglers and Lt
Cmdr Jon Vanns
in more relaxed
mood

Two wreaths were laid at the Memorial - one by the Mayor on behalf of the RBL and one by Peter Russell, Chairman of the Friends of Dunorlan Park.

A poignant occasion and lovely to see many people attending.



The Memorial Plaque

MEADOWS SCHOOL PUPILS LOOKING AFTER OUR PARK



Up to five pupils, aged between seven to 11, from Meadows School, Willicombe Park, help out in the park on Thursday afternoons. They enjoy bagging up the birdseed to feed the wildfowl, which can then be bought in the café by visitors, and have helped out with litter-picking and pond-dipping.

Oscar, one of the pupils said: "I try to respect the ducks. I feed them seed. It makes me feel happy".

Teacher Mrs Newman says: "The pupils have learned about different breeds of ducks, about their safety and how their eggs are kept safe. At the park, pupils collaborate and compromise with each other, and communicate with members of the public".

The photo is of Isaac standing in front of his artwork for which he won an award and was

displayed in the park. It was inspired by the duck feed experience!

MONDAY VOLUNTEERS

Some of our Monday Volunteers recently planted 5,000 purple crocus bulbs, at the Pembury Road end of the park, as part of the Rotary Club's Purple4Polio campaign, to eradicate polio. The bulbs were donated by Rotary.



We have all enjoyed previous poems, in our newsletters, by our long-standing Friends' member Alex Masson. However, Alex has said that his poetry days are now over, but has allowed us one last gem to enjoy.....

FRIENDS TO DINNER

Our friends are coming to dinner tonight.
We're dining with silver candlelight.
The table is laid with a cloth serene,
The glasses are washed and polished clean.
They sparkle and flash in the firelight's gleam:
We'd better be sure that we've got it right,
Our friends are coming to dinner tonight.

Our friends are coming to dinner tonight,
We've turned on the hall and the entrance light.
We've set out the plates and we've chilled the wine.
I know we'll be in for a lovely time.
The smell in the kitchen is quite divine.
The cooking's been timed just exactly right.
Our friends are coming to dinner tonight.

Our friends are coming to dinner tonight
And ready to greet them a splendid sight
The table's been set and is decked with flowers.
We've busied and beavered for simply hours.
We've just had a moment to take our showers,
Though not really dressed to perfection quite.
Our friends are coming to dinner tonight.

Our friends are coming to dinner tonight
And time's running out, what a dreadful plight!
The race in the kitchen is warming up!
' Quick, pass the ingredients in that cup!'
Then add some more wine - and give me a sup!"
I know that the Hollandaise should be light.
Our friends are coming to dinner tonight.

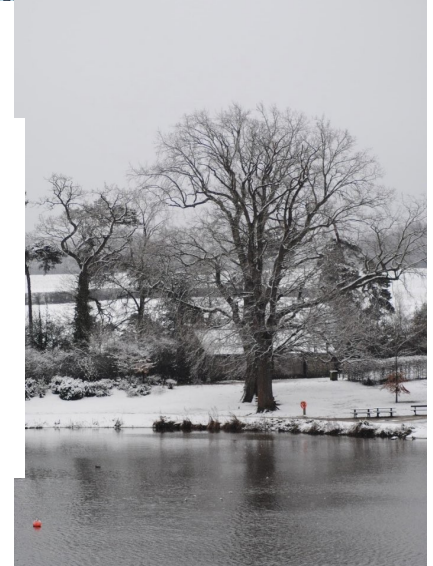
Our friends are coming to dinner tonight.
As time rushes by we are taking fright;
There's so many things that we've still to do
We're only half dressed in the kitchen, phew!
The temperature's rising, the sauce is too!
The door bell. "Your apron!" "Quick, out of sight"
"Your jacket!" "My shoes!" "There, you look alright!"
Our friends are coming to dinner tonight".

THE FRIENDS' DRINKS & NIBBLES EVENING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 12th 2024 - 6pm to 8pm
MEADOWS SCHOOL, WILLICOMBE PARK, SANDHURST ROAD
DO BRING FAMILY AND FRIENDS FOR OUR ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER
Some parking available

If you have anything park-related which you might like to see in our quarterly newsletter, or have any comments, do get in touch with details. You can contact Chairman Peter on 01892 531830, email dunorlanfriends@gmail.com or write to him at Wildings, Pembury Road, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QN.

Or you can contact Newsletter Editor Joan on 01892 539551, email cjay13@hotmail.co.uk or write to 3 St Peter's Street, Tunbridge Wells TN2 4UX.

**A FEW WINTERY PHOTOS OF OUR PARK FROM THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS,
THANKS TO OUR LOVELY SUPPORTERS. YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE.....**



AN A - Z CHALLENGE FOR YOUNG AND OLD!
NAME ONE TREE AND ONE FLOWER FOR EVERY LETTER OF THE ALPHABET

A..... / B..... / C..... /
 D..... / E..... /
 F..... / G..... / H..... /
 I..... / J..... /
 K..... / L..... / M..... /
 N..... / O..... /
 P..... / Q..... / R..... /
 S..... / T..... /
 U..... / V..... / W..... /
 X..... / Y..... /
 Z..... /

If you're struggling, a quick peek at <https://wildfloweryard.com/a-to-z-list-plants-flowers-trees/> could help!

**THE FRIENDS OF DUNORLAN PARK COMMITTEE WISH YOU ALL A VERY
 HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OVER THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS
 AND IN YEARS PAST. IT REALLY IS APPRECIATED.
 IF YOU KNOW OF ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A FRIEND,
 DO GET IN TOUCH AS THEY WOULD BE MADE MOST WELCOME**

If you are a UK Income Tax payer, the Friends can claim 25%
 from HMRC on any membership fee or donation you make.
 This means for every £10 you give, the tax man will pay the Friends another £2.50.
 If you haven't already completed a Gift Aid form, please contact Jenny, the
 Friends' Membership Secretary at dunorlanfriends@gmail.com or call 01892 531830



