

# FRIENDS OF DUNORLAN PARK AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2021







## OUR CHAIRMAN PETER'S WORDS FROM THE CHAIR

It was so good to see our members returning to Friends' events on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July. The moth and tree

events and the summer picnic all went very well although attendances were about half of what we would have expected in spite of a rare hot and sunny weekend. I am sure this will be the effect of Covid as people remain more wary of attending public events.

By the time you read this, two very successful bat-watching events will have taken place and we will be looking forward to Keith Palmer's 'Fungal Foray' on 30<sup>th</sup> October. I hope we

really will gather again in numbers for the Drinks & Nibbles party, now

planned for Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at the Barnardo's Meadows School.

Also, you will have had a chance to comment on the TWBC website on the idea of dogs being required to be on leads in the more cultivated parts of the park. The Friends' Committee would like to see this rule introduced at least for the lakeside perimeter path and all grassland between the path and the lake. However, the proposal for Public Space Protection Orders

is being made by TWBC and the outcome will depend on how people have voted.

Our volunteers are once again emerging blinking into the sunlight and there is much for

them to do. The Friends are sharing the cost with TWBC of strengthening some of the banks of the lake and this work will be carried out in collaboration with our friends from Kent High Weald Partnership.

Last winter, there was serious flooding on the lake-side path near the bridge, caused at least in part by spring water

flowing down to the lake by various random and changing routes.

The Council has carried out various drainage works designed to improve the situation next winter. We will continue to monitor this and would be willing to part-fund further works, if required.



## HISTORY CORNER - Thank you to Sue Beckwith

**Carnival time!** Summer at Dunorlan when we were young was one of the best times for us growing up the 70s and 80s, and the highlight of that Summer was the Carnival and the fete which followed in Dunorlan Park. Weeks prior were spent by many, working out themes, costumes and preparing uniforms for that special Saturday afternoon walk from Showfields to Dunorlan through the town.

My brother Martin was in the Pathfinders cub scouts. I was in the St John Ambulance and very proud of that I was too! I spent every Friday night in the hall in Silverdale Road learning first aid, and because of this I felt I was up to any medical challenge which came my way (although none ever did!)

As the big day fast approached, my Granddad Ted Manklow - one of the park-keepers at Dunorlan - would fuel the excitement by telling us of all the attractions which were going to be at the fete. The night before Carnival Day we hardly slept, the excitement and anticipation was unsurpassed.

At last the day dawned and we were up with the lark, eating our Weetabix and Bovril toast, polishing shoes, pressing our uniforms and badgering dad with the classic, is it time yet? All this while being grateful that the sun was out.

We assembled near the Lord Cornwallis pub and then when the Police said OK, we began to march, the bands started, the wonderful sound of glockenspiels, drums and trumpets filled the air as we marched in unison along London Road, up 'the wells hill' along Calverley or Monson Road towards Dunorlan - we were so proud. I remember, I think it was the Rotary Club, dressed as Indians with big head-dresses on - always the float with guys dressed up as ladies with mad make-up, the carnival queen, the colours and the sounds of the crowds clapping and multiple helium balloon sellers. All the kids used to beg for the Indian one with the feather out the top or the white ones with the glittery goldfish suspended in them.

We used to get tired once we were in Sandrock Road, the walk was long especially for a nine year old, but the promise of meeting up with Nan and Granddad and having either a candy floss or a ride on the carousel seemed to spur us on.

Once we got to the gate I remember feeling all important because as we were in the parade we didn't have to pay an entrance fee. The fete was the highlight of the day, the coconut shy and the hit the rat up a drainpipe games were two of our favourites. The park was always full to the brim with people sunbathing and enjoying the activities, you never got a seat in the café and you had to queue for ages to get a go on the row boats.

The whole experience is etched in my memory as one of the most delightful fun times. One day perhaps they will bring the Carnival and that Fete back. I know for one I would love to see it!

*A short piece of footage showing some fun times at the Carnival can be seen at <https://screenarchive.brighton.ac.uk/detail/794/>*



***Dancers in the park***



***Diver heading into the lake***





### **There are plenty of hedgerows in and around the park but, did you know they store carbon and are havens for wildlife?**

After two years of observations, ecologist Rob Wolton had found over 2,000 species of plants, animals and fungi, much more than he thought.

"We're so big that, when you walk past a hedgerow, you see very little. If you were an ant or something, you would see a huge array of life. It's only when you look closely that you see all this stuff and it's extraordinary."

The UK is one of the most hedge-dense countries in the world. These ecological hotspots are the seams of the country's 'patchwork quilt'.

There are around 500,000km of hedgerows compared with around 400,000km of roads.

Thrushes, dunnocks and bullfinches nest in hedges, all birds found in the park. Dormice bring up their young in brambles. Common toads, lizards, long-eared bats, grass snakes, pipistrelle and hedgehogs can also be considered inhabitants of hedgerows.



As the climate crisis escalates, hedgerows are expected to become even more important for wildlife as they move in response to environmental change.

Hedges are an important feature of UK heritage. There is a cultural and potentially aesthetic benefit to hedges too. Natural England has recommended that the hedgerow network should be increased by 60%.

So, next time you're in the park or even walking the perimeter, have a look at the hedgerows and see what you can find. You might be surprised!



## RON AND NORMAN'S MEMORIAL BENCH

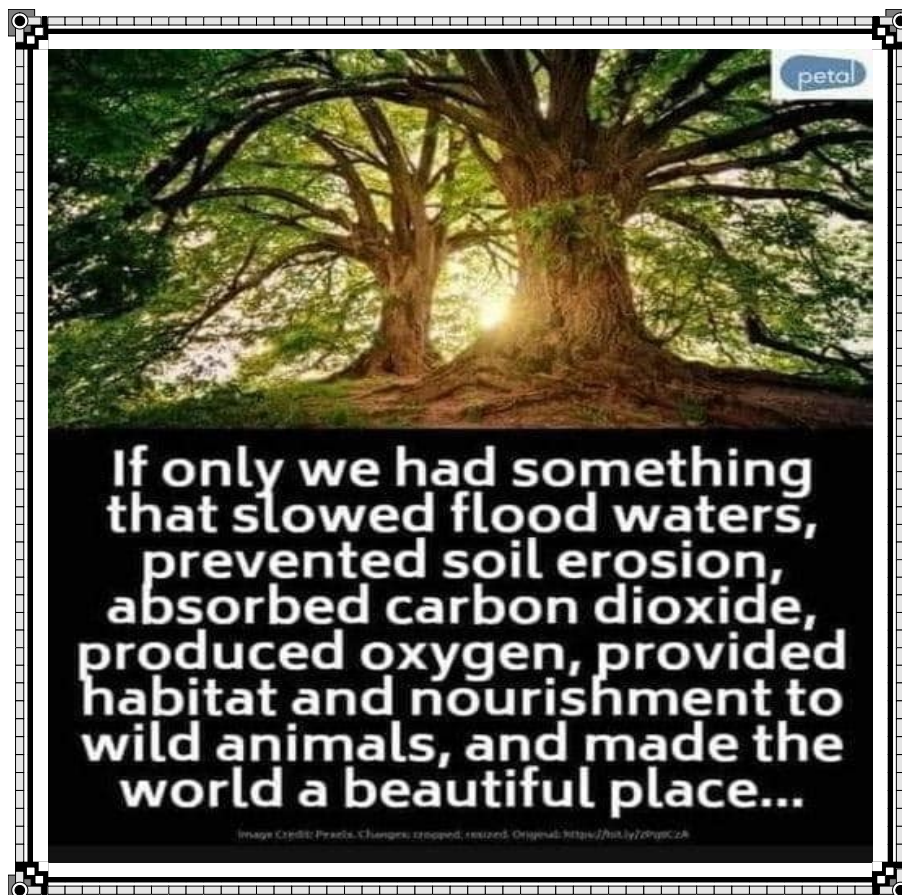


On Saturday July 17<sup>th</sup>, a Memorial bench was unveiled by the Matchett family, in memory of Ron and Norman who ran the boats on Dunorlan lake for 70 years. Sadly Ron died in August 2006 aged 86, and Norman died in July 2020 aged 98, having been handing out tickets in the kiosk and keeping an eye on things until the age of 97!

They both started the boat hiring business in 1954 and now Norman's son Peter has taken over the reins (or should that be oars?! ) with his wife Julie doing the admin.

The bench is very near the kiosk, under trees and looking out over the lake - a beautiful spot for anyone to sit and reflect.

The charity event was well attended with a glass being raised and some lovely refreshments. £1,200 was donated and this will be shared between the RNLI and Hospice in the Weald.



*Pinched this from Facebook as I thought the sentiments were appropriate.....*





**This is what blue-green algae looks like from a height.** The photo was taken from a satellite over the Baltic Sea and has been drawn into an enormous vortex measuring about twenty kilometres in diameter. The vortex was created by eddies and currents and is drawing nutrients up from the depths to supply the sudden explosion of new algae. Imagine this on a much smaller scale and how dangerous it can be for anything or anyone caught up in it. Blue-green algae can be fatal to humans and some animals if

ingested and, unfortunately, is present in Dunorlan lake. It is not always obvious, but it is there, so the point of asking people not to let their dogs into the water is not just bureaucracy gone mad, it is for a very valid reason.

This algae is not algae at all, but the organisms got this name as they give the appearance of algae when they clump together in the water - mostly non-flowing fresh water such as lakes and ponds - during hot weather when there is less rainfall, but it can appear at other times of the year.

Blue-green algae can produce harmful toxins which stop a dog's liver from functioning properly. Exposure to this algae can be fatal and can also cause long-term health problems to dogs which survive after swimming in or drinking algae-infested water. Some algae can kill a dog just 15 minutes after ingesting any contaminated water.

The Friends have warned people against letting their dogs in the lake and signage has been erected, but still it goes on and signage torn down.

Would you take a chance on your family pet dying before you've even left the park? Would you want it to suffer long-term health problems? Would you want its liver to cease functioning? Questions to ponder on before letting your dog loose.....



## FOLLY WILDLIFE RESCUE

Folly is situated in Broadwater Forest and is a charity dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of injured, orphaned and distressed wild animals throughout West Kent, East Sussex and the surrounding area.

Folly receives no funding from local authorities or lottery grants and relies entirely on voluntary



donations from the public, legacies, grants and fundraising activities.

They have been instrumental in helping the wildlife in our park and we are so very grateful to them for the time and effort put in by their volunteers to ensure our wildlife residents are looked after in the best possible way.

Folly specialise in the hand-rearing of mammals including hedgehogs, badgers, mice, foxes, rabbits and deer as well as over 2,000 nesting and fledgling birds of all species.

Would you help Folly in their quest to help injured animals? If yes, visit their website for ways to donate - [www.follywildliferescue.org.uk](http://www.follywildliferescue.org.uk) - or give them a call on 01892 543213. You can also become a Friend of Folly for as little as £3 a month. Details on their website.

Please help them to help the animals in their care.

**IAN'S MOTH IDENTIFICATION** Ian Beavis was kept busy with a steady flow of visitors to see the 20+ moths, butterflies and other small creatures he'd caught the evening before and displayed outside the café. The Elephant Hawk Moth was, of course, the star attraction! All creatures were released, unharmed, after their adventure.



**DAVID'S TREE WALK** was enjoyed by a valiant group of people, given the heat of the day. Fortunately the trees in the park offered plenty of shade and David's knowledge of our large leafy plants was most enlightening.

**THE SUMMER PICNIC** was a jovial affair, being able to meet in person with Friends' Members we hadn't seen for quite some time. Andrea's stall featured her lovely photographic home-made cards showing many aspects of the park and its wildlife, plus Joan's bric-a-brac stall, made only nominal funds for charity but every little helps (*apologies to a well-known*



*supermarket!*). Fewer people than usual attended the event which, unsurprisingly, was the first gathering of the Friends since the start of the lockdowns. Also the heat may have been one reason why some didn't want to venture outdoors. Still most enjoyable though.





### THE BAT WALKS

Thanks to Judy's organisational skills, the Bat Walks went well and the weather stayed dry. As the light faded, bats were out in force to engage the interest of the socially distanced groups with their torches and bat detectors, and the ethereal look with the torchlight on the lake only added to the eeriness!

Thanks to David Scully from Kent Bat Group and Ian Johnstone from Kent High Weald Partnership, everyone gathered was in awe of their knowledge about these flying mammals.



### THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE PARK'S WATER FEATURE



The new water feature, by the Friends' noticeboard, now has an official plaque in place. ***This facility was funded by a Friend of Dunorlan Park with a contribution from parkrun. May 2021.***

It is understood that the facility was well used during the spell of hot weather in July and many canine visitors made good use of the bowl by the side of the feature! Parkrunners have also found it a boost to refill their water bottles both before and/or after completing the 5k run around the park.



### WE COULD LEARN TO LOVE WEEDS!

Most people I know cringe at the sight of weeds whether they're in our park or their own garden and I'm no exception. However, despite having a great team to look after the park and volunteers who do their utmost, not every weed can be removed and maybe that's no bad thing???

Lots of weeds are really wild flowers and, as I've said myself on numerous occasions, just a pretty flower in the wrong place.

The prevailing idea that a park is solely for flowers, trees etc and is best for wildlife is not true.

Nettles and ragwort have a much higher relationship with lots of different wildlife than any other plant you come across.

Weeding is a cultural thing and has almost become a neat and tidy obsession. If you're growing veg in your garden, it's much easier to weed out everything else.

It's about giving over a small amount of space.

Look at the bigger picture and maybe just a small area, like part of our Events Field, can be given over to daisies, buttercups and even dandelions. That's our wild area which allows tidying tendencies to be pulled back and a different mindset can be adapted.



### WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



As you probably know, the Tunbridge Wells Royal British Legion has a short but very poignant ceremony at the Victoria Cross Grove on November 11<sup>th</sup> every year. This is arranged by our committee member John Cohen from the RBL's Tunbridge Wells Branch, and is usually attended by the Mayor, two buglers from TS Brilliant and the RBL's Standard Bearer.

This will take place on Thursday November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am and it would be lovely to see many of you joining in with this ceremony.

For anyone new to the park, Victoria Cross Grove is accessed from the Bayhall Road entrance and the plaque with Ten Brave Men And True is on your right, with the Memorial Sculpture, at which the ceremony takes place, at the end of the path behind the plaque.



**UPCOMING EVENT - KEITH'S FUNGAL FORAY- SATURDAY OCTOBER 30<sup>th</sup>**

Meet in Pembury Road car park at 2pm. Keith will impart his expert knowledge on the numerous fungi found around the park and the edibility (or not!) of each  
To book your place email [dunorlanfriends@gmail.com](mailto:dunorlanfriends@gmail.com) or call 01892 531830

Many of us will possibly use the services of Amazon to buy Christmas presents and other supplies. The Friends have joined Amazon Smile and we invite you to do your shopping via Amazon Smile, and the Friends will receive 0.5% of everything you spend. There is no cost to you and the range of products available to you on Amazon remains exactly the same. All you have to do is:

- Always log on to [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) instead of your usual log on
- The first time you log on in this way, please choose the Friends as your favourite charity. The easiest way to do this is to simply type in our Charity Commission number which is 1063715. You need only do this once as the system will recognise you and your favourite charity next and every time you log in via Amazon Smile
- If you are currently using Amazon via a web link, saved in a favourites file, please delete that and replace it with the Amazon Smile web link as above



**You can help the Friends of Dunorlan Park  
by leaving a gift in your Will.**

**This will allow the Friends to continue their vital work in the park.**

**For further details call 01892 531830 or email  
[dunorlanfriends@gmail.com](mailto:dunorlanfriends@gmail.com)**

**THE FRIENDS' DRINKS & NIBBLES EVENING  
OUR GET-TOGETHER IS BACK ON  
FRIDAY JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> 2022**

THANK YOU TO BARNARDO'S FOR AGAIN ALLOWING US TO  
HOLD OUR EVENT AT THEIR PREMISES

**Starting at 6pm** at Meadows School - Ravensdale Campus  
Willicombe Park TN2 3ND

First left off Sandhurst Road from the Pembury Road end

Everyone is welcome. Please bring family and friends

Limited parking is available at the school

Do put the date in your diary and we look forward to seeing you there!



## REMEMBRANCE DAY AND POPPIES

Would be nice if you could join us on Armistice Day at Victoria Cross Grove - see article above

Poppies have a massed effect of colour but are also delicate. They can be prolific too. Each poppy flower will produce about 17,000 seeds of which some 3,000 will remain viable and dormant in untilled ground for at least a century before bursting into flower when the ground is disturbed and the seeds exposed to light.

This tendency to wait until ground is tilled explains why poppies will grow seemingly from nowhere when a park or garden is cleared for the first time in years.

Maybe the most significant deliberate domestication of field poppies came in 1880 when the Reverend Wilks, a vicar of Shirley in Surrey, noticed a single one in the vicarage glebelands with a white base. He liked what he saw so collected the seed from it and eventually bred



the strain that we know as Shirley poppies, which have white, rather than black, bases to the petals.

The opium poppy has superb flowers as well as wonderful foliage. It grows in almost any conditions and reappears year after year with reliability. Black peony poppies are an intense plum colour and White



Cloud is perfect in white borders.

### A few poppy facts:

Poppies are the symbol for Remembrance Day as they grew on the battlefields after World War One ended.

The Queen wears five poppies to pay her respects to the Armed Forces and one theory is that each poppy represents a family member who fought and died in the war.

There is no right or wrong way to wear a poppy. It is a personal choice reflecting individual and personal memories.

A poppy is red because that is the natural colour of the poppy flower.

The red poppy directly supports the Armed Forces community.

Poppies weren't always sold with leaves. Like the natural flower, the original version of the poppy didn't feature a leaf. Poppies are sold in every community across the UK.



**ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN BLOOM's results will be announced on  
September 17<sup>th</sup>. Let's keep everything crossed for our park!**

### KEEPING IN TOUCH

**It's always lovely to hear from you so if you have any stories to tell or  
comments on the newsletters, do please get in touch.  
My contact details are shown below**

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**All details correct at the time of going to print!**

**THANKS TO TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR THEIR SUPPORT  
IN PRINTING AND COLLATING 'HARD COPIES' OF THIS NEWSLETTER**

