

FRIENDS OF DUNORLAN PARK

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021



**THE FRIENDS OF DUNORLAN PARK COMMITTEE
WISH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU A HAPPY
CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL AND SAFE NEW YEAR.
WE HOPE THAT THE COMING YEAR WILL KEEP YOU IN GOOD
HEALTH AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN THE PARK**



**OUR DRINKS AND NIBBLES EVENING
FRIDAY JANUARY 14TH 2022
BARNARDO'S MEADOWS SCHOOL, WILLICOMBE PARK,
TUNBRIDGE WELLS TN2 3ND
6PM TO 8PM**

**First left off Sandhurst Road from the Pembury Road end
EVERYONE IS WELCOME - DO BRING FAMILY AND FRIENDS
Limited parking is available at the school**

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN PETER



The wrong lamp-post!



Let's start with a joke, which unfortunately is true. The brown Dunorlan Park sign on Pembury Road was erected in the wrong place by KCC and actually pointed down the driveway to my house and several others. Motorists were coming down our drive looking for Dunorlan Park and some became surprisingly grumpy when told they had taken a wrong turn. The Friends, in conjunction with our neighbour David

who was most affected, asked KCC to move the sign from one lamppost to the next so that it definitely pointed into the park. KCC refused on the grounds that their policy about brown signs had changed and helping us would create a dangerous precedent. In my response, I did note that, if KCC could not move a sign from one lamppost to the next, there was not much chance of their ever making the traffic flow properly on Pembury Road again. KCC now advise that although it is not the response we wanted, they have followed their procedures to the letter. Well done KCC! You may have seen the resulting article and picture in the Courier.

Meanwhile, activities continue in the park with our volunteers working recently to reinforce some of the banks of the lake. We also have a new band of young people from Tonbridge who are volunteering to work on one of the shrub beds at the Halls Hole Road end. The indomitable David Molloy having taken wildfowl feeding comprehensibly under his wing (Ho! Ho!), has now turned his attention to the trees in the park. There are over 850 trees numbered on a chart which TWBC has given us along with a listing of all the Latin names.

We have a band of volunteers currently pinning the right numbered discs to the right trees (we hope) so that people can find a numbered tree in the park and identify it on the chart and listing which will be in the café. We are also adding all the common names of the trees to the list and learning a lot about trees as we go along. If anyone would like to help with this project, please let me know.

Example of a numbered tree



Finally, membership subs for 2022 will be due on 1st January. If you do not already pay by standing order, please send your remittance (£7 for individuals or £12 for couples or families) to Jenny or pay by BACS to our Barclays account no 10371033m sort code 20-88-13. The small number of people who have not yet paid in 2021 (you know who you are) please pay twice! You will have had at least two reminders and this could be the last newsletter you receive - and you wouldn't want that to happen, would you? Seriously, we value our members and the revenue they generate and we hope we continue to put our income to very good use by funding important projects in Dunorlan Park.

OUR HARDWORKING MONDAY VOLUNTEERS AND KHWP



Our Monday Volunteers, along with Kent High Weald Partnership and Kasia from TWBC, have been working hard in the past few months. Important work has been ongoing around the lake with revetment, which is strengthening the banks of the lake. The volunteers have also been coppicing to clear and fence around the dipping pond (as the photos show) and have been cutting back the reeds and willows by the bridge and coppicing on the dipping pond island. Friends of Dunorlan Park and TWBC have funded this work.



Mid October saw the start of Monday Volunteers planting some of 3,500 bluebells alongside the path in Victoria Cross Grove. They will be all around the area in the Spring so a sight to which everyone can look forward. They are Common English Bluebells (*Hyacinthoids non-scripta*), not to be confused with the Spanish Bluebell (*Hyacinthoids hispanica*)! This project was funded by the Friends of Dunorlan Park.



DUNORLAN MEMORIES

WINTER FUN AT DUNORLAN

Thank you to Sue Beckwith

January 1977 I believe it was or perhaps the following winter 1978. Our family had just moved to Oakwood Rise near the industrial estate so it was not impossible to walk up to Dunorlan. I remember clearly that we woke up one morning to complete quiet, You know, not a sound and everything was bright through the curtains. It could only be one thing. I immediately jumped up and looked out the window - snow!! I shouted it again and woke up my friend Tracey who was staying the night, and my brother Martin. "It's snowed Martin, let's go out and build a snowman or go sledging!" My brother, being slightly more sensible, decided that we would do both, but sledging first, so after begging mum continually for an hour and raiding the garage for the old wooden cobweb-covered sledge, it was decided that all three of us could walk up to Dunorlan dragging the sledge behind us - (all the pavements were covered with snow, apart from where people had already begun to clear their entrances).

So, after finding long-abandoned wellies, thick socks and warm clothing (remember those navy blue quilted anoraks we all wore then?) we set off on the uphill walk to Dunorlan. Once we got there we could see that others had the same idea, we could hear the shouts from the entrance gate, we almost fell over ourselves as we hurried down the path to the hill just up from the boat hut and set down the sledge. Tracey and I sent Martin down to stand by the lake in a foolish attempt to act as a failsafe if we could not stop before we got to the water's edge, then off we went - Wow! A few seconds of exhilaration passed as we sped down the hill,



trying hard to not hit anyone else (more and more people were arriving by the minute). What fun it was. Two or three people did not manage to stop in time and did enter the lake, but there it was shallow so no harm was done.



After a while and for some unknown reason, lost in the mist of time, we decided to lug the sledge around the lake. This is where Tracey and I were kind of cruel to Martin, him being the youngest at eight years old. We told him he could ice skate on the lake and made him stand at the edge of the ice. Well, as expected, it cracked and he sunk in. it was not deep but deep enough for him to fill his wellies with water and rotten sulphur-smelling leaves. Well that was it, he had a fit and cried and refused to budge until we agreed to drag him home on the sledge so he didn't have to walk in squelchy wellies. What a palaver! We had to do it, that was our

'punishment' not made easy by the fact that by then more people, particularly in Sandhurst Road, had now cleared great swathes of pavement, so dragging him along on the areas without a snow covering was less than easy. He refused to get off the sledge as he said it was all squidgy and cold between his toes and he could not feel his feet. Sadly, we never did make a snowman.....

A FEW MORE MEMORIAL BENCHES



Donated by Carole, Lucie and Emma in memory of **David John Holmes** in February 2006.
'In memory of a wonderful man and one of life's true gentlemen'



Yvonne Georgina Hughes
1945 - 2007



Shirley Hinks 9-4-1938 to 24.4.2010
Joined by loving husband **Tom** 25-4-1933 to 9-7-2012
'Together forever in their summer place'



In memory of **Farhan**, a gentle soul
06-03-07



In loving memory of **Betty Kormanik**
1922 - 2017

Donated by John Silverman in memory of **Edith Silverman**
'In memory of Edith Silverman 1929 - 2006'



Donated by Mrs Thelma Walker on the 27th July 2012 in memory of **John Walker**
'A good man much loved and missed by his family & friends 1937 - 2012'



Donated by Betty Whibley in memory of her husband **Ken** in May 2007
'In loving memory of Ken 1926 - 2006'
Betty included and reunited 2018



Donated by Peter and Richard Blackwell in memory of **Margery and Bill Blackwell** 2007
'Remembering two special Tunbridge Wells citizens'



Donated by Barbara Woods on 28 April 2004 in memory of **Reg Woods** and **Terry Holden**
'From Barbara and Dudley with love'



A YEAR OF OUR WILDFOWL - Thank you Judy



Muscovy duck

We sadly started the year with the passing away of our last beautiful Muscovy duck. He was a great character.

With snow falling the Egyptian Geese surprised us with their six goslings. The parents were very protective and we were pleased to see five of the goslings grow up into adulthood.



Canadian goslings

April saw the first Canadian gosling. We had concerns about his survival but, a few weeks later and help with feeding from volunteers, the gosling had been adopted by another family. He grew up into a beautiful goose with a real character, nicknamed Bryan.



Bryan



Moorhen chicks

In May and June we were also fortunate to have two sets of Moorhen chicks who nested in the reeds by the dipping pond.



Greylag geese

There was an abundance of Greylag Geese this summer, who joined our regular residents. With so many geese, we had various injuries and at times needed to call in the help of Folly Wildlife Rescue.

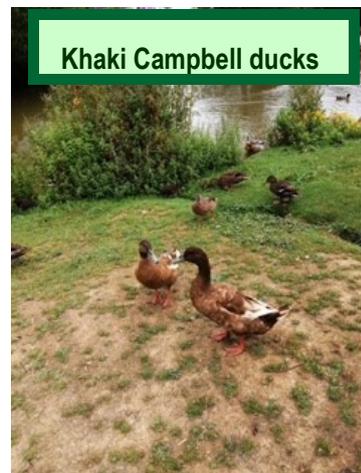


Herons

We are not very successful with ducklings and sadly only two of our nine ducklings survived.

Recently our Egyptian Geese produced a further brood but sadly it looks as if the herons took them all.

When the Greylags had flown away, we saw the arrival of many more ducks including two Khaki Campbell ducks.



Khaki Campbell ducks

SENSITIVE (AND SENSIBLE) PARKING!



Photo taken before current markings

There have been comments made in the past about the lack of parking skills in our Pembury Road car park and it seemed to be every man/woman for him/herself.

There are now guidelines for parking spaces which make it easier to accommodate more cars as people should, in an ideal world, position their cars sensibly.

However, there are some who park in the designated disabled bays (or alongside them potentially blocking a disabled vehicle in) and, if you don't have a disabled badge displayed, this

contravenes the park's rules.

There are often work and delivery vehicles entering and exiting the park for business so any car parked inconsiderately can completely block their entry or exit.

All we ask is that you please park within the parameters of the markings i.e. single square metallic blocks in the ground, so others can also make use of the car park.

PRETTY CARDS IN THE CAFÉ - Thank you Andie

After six months isolation due to Covid, I decided to start walking in Dunorlan Park with my mum. Our daily trips were our sanctuary and safe place and I decided to start taking photos just to capture the memories as a hobby.

I am by no means a professional photographer and have had no teaching. I have a point and shoot camera and I just snap



away at anything that interests me and creates a memory. I then started posting some of my pictures on social media and friends said I should make cards.....

So that's what I did.

I decided I wanted to give something back to the park



that gives us so much joy so decided to make them and sell them in the café (thanks to Ian, the café owner), and donate a % of the cost to The Friends of Dunorlan Park.

I take other photos but I only sell ones taken in Dunorlan Park for



people to buy as a memory of their visit.

I love my walks and for me Dunorlan Park has opened my eyes to see beauty and change throughout the year and I enjoy capturing memories each and every day.

Cards are available from the café at £1.50 each, with 50p from each card going to FoDP - (payable at the counter)

(Editor's note: cards suitable for every occasion. Believe me, I've got some and they're lovely)

KEITH'S FUNGAL FORAY



Some of the group in the park

Our chairman Peter joined the Foray and said, "After a very wet morning, we feared the worst for Keith Palmer's annual Fungal Foray, but the sun shone in the afternoon and we had one of the best Forays ever.

Starting at Pembury Road car park, Keith led a party of about 25 people to discover at least as many fascinating and colourful fungi.

Pictures are shown of some specimens found as well as Keith in action!

After the walk, some of the party retired to the café for a well-earned



Keith offering knowledge on one of the specimens



Blusher Fungus

cup of tea and a chance to compare notes on fungi seen and samples collected.

We hope that none were consumed later with garlic



Orange Peel

and butter as we want to see everyone back for next year's Fungal Foray.

Very many thanks to Keith for a fascinating afternoon."



Golden Spindle



Fly Agaic

POSSIBLE EXCITING NEWS!! We hope to be able to introduce you to our new Bird Surveyor in the next edition of the Friends' newsletter, and he will be offering details of our feathered friends sighted in the park. Our previous surveyor, Kieran, was wonderful but, as you know, he moved away and had to give up his surveying for us. This is still a work in progress but, once details have been finalised, we hope to have occasional surveys in these publications and also on our various noticeboards dotted around the park. Watch this space.....

PROUD COMMITTEE MEMBERS!



Some of Dunorlan Friends Committee members feeling very proud with the awards from 2021

They are South & South East in Bloom-Gold and Winner in the large park category
RHS Community Awards-Outstanding in the Gardening for Wildlife Category
Green Flag Award 2021-2022 (a retained award)
Green Heritage Site Accreditation 2021-2022 (a retained award)
Neighbourhood Award - Outstanding

A NEW DRAGONFLY - AND OTHER LATE AUTUMN INSECTS Thank you Ian

October had a good number of mild sunny days, allowing butterflies, dragonflies, bees and other insects to carry on flying. The 6th was an especially good day for recording, with a sighting of Willow Emerald Damselfly, a member of the dragonfly family new to Dunorlan. Willow Emerald is one of an increasing number of insects colonising Britain from the near Continent in response to our warming climate. It is an unusually late flying species, peaking in October, which lays its eggs in slits in the branches of willows and other trees and shrubs overhanging water. The little white patches on the leading edge of the wings distinguish it from other green damselflies on the British list.



Willow Emerald Damselfly

Several butterflies were in evidence too, including the Comma whose unique 'dead leaf' camouflage is ideally suited for autumn activity before it goes into hibernation over the winter. It gets its name from a bright white mark on the dark underside which is



Hornet

said to mimic sunlight shining through a crack



Comma

in a dead leaf. Speckled Wood, which often flies very late too, was recorded in its typical habitat under trees; while up on the terrace there was a Red Admiral, a butterfly that is a very light sleeper during hibernation, often popping out on sunny days in winter. Also on the terrace, sunning themselves on the Mahonia, were some colourful Hornets which although they look big and scary are in fact very docile.

AN UPDATE FROM TWBC'S KASIA

"Autumn weather has been good so far for us (touch wood!) and **Monday Volunteers** meet now every week. The group keeps growing, new volunteers joined us at the end of summer and I am happy to say that I receive regular emails and calls from people considering joining.

The group is focusing on the typical seasonal tasks now, coppicing, cutting back vegetation etc [see *earlier article for pics*]. Lots of effort goes towards clearance of the 'dog-walkers path' at the VC Grove end of the park - it got very overgrown with brambles, nettles and self-seeded sycamores.

It's a very exciting task to prepare areas for the Bluebells planting. Bramble roots are dug out to make sure the bulbs have the best start possible. We have planted 1,500 bulbs to date and are looking forward to delivery of the next 2,000, thanks to the funding received from the Friends! [see *earlier article for pics*]. When the bulb planting is completed, we will focus on trimming back the path leading towards Hawkenbury, then on to preparing the bee-friendly beds for the winter.

In October we met with teachers and students at **The Oaks Specialist College**, a school for 18 to 25 year-olds with learning difficulties. The Oaks have offered to take over maintenance of one of the shrub beds in the park at the Halls Hole Road end. They have already started to clear some Laurel and other unsightly shrubs and keep working on the replanting plan. We are very excited about this project and



are looking forward to this partnership. **The Little Learning Tree Preschool**, based at the Salvation Army, contacted us as they were looking for a suitable site for forest school sessions. Together with **KHWP** (who will be delivering the forest school sessions for children), we have identified a lovely area beneath two old Oak trees. KHWP volunteers cleared the area of pesky brambles and we arranged for some essential tree works to make the area safe."

One of the Friends committee members, David Molloy, donated an Eternal Flame tree and he's shown in the photo with Kasia after the planting, just down from the Pembury Road car park. This tree is replacing one which died and had to be removed. In spite of being

protected by netting, this tree was destroyed in early November by someone cutting it off near the base. The Friends plan to replace the tree in the Spring.

Our chairman Peter, his wife Jenny, and a group of volunteers are currently pinning numbered discs onto 856 trees in the park but this could possibly reach around 1,000 as the newer trees are not yet on Kasia's chart.

SOROPTIMISTS' 75th ANNIVERSARY

Soroptimist Tunbridge Wells Club's bench in Dunorlan Park, adjacent to the café, had pride of place for the Soroptimists' 75th anniversary of the milestone which began on the 26th October 1946. On October 26th 2021 the bench was gifted to Dunorlan and is in pride of place with a view of the lake. Councillor Jane March, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure, TWBC cut the ribbon and everyone enjoyed Soroptimist-themed cakes. President Caroline presented Cllr March with a yellow chrysanthemum plant, chosen for its colour and symbolism of longevity and being the essence of the sun and a Soroptimist pen. Also attending was Peter Russell, Friends of Dunorlan Park Chairman and Joan Hamilton-Smith, Tunbridge Wells Area Ambassador. Cllr March expressed her delight at this donation of a bench, especially coming after the pandemic when so many people have enjoyed outdoor green spaces and relied on them for support for their general health and wellbeing. The bench carries the inscription 'Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells & District Empowering Women Since 1946'.





If you are a UK Income Tax payer, the Friends can claim 25% from HMRC on any membership fee and 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

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