



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER – September 2009

Dear Friends,

Writing this introductory piece, I am aware of just how busy the summer has been for the Park and for the Friends: a successful run of “Brass on the Grass” concerts; a hectic schedule of Ip-art events; the bat walk; the ParkMobile being busier than ever. I can highlight some notable achievements: our second successive Green Flag Award and the adoption by the Council’s Executive of the Park’s Management and Maintenance Plan (on which members of the Friends’ committee have worked for well over a year). Of course there are still some ongoing problems – the drought which is taking its toll on all the vegetation in the Park and the various blights to our noble tree stock (not to mention some dramatic limb losses, addressed by the Council’s Arboricultural Officer later in the newsletter). But overall what impresses me is the sense of partnership, of disparate groups working together, and here I offer thanks to Sam Pollard and his team, who work hard on limited resources to maintain this beautiful spot, to Reg Snook for his always fascinating insight into the Park’s wildlife for the Friends’ notice board, to Jessica Webster for masterminding the concerts and to David Routh for compèring them so entertainingly.

I would also thank our industrious committee and the members of the Friends who volunteer in the Park in so many different ways. I am particularly delighted that contact from a couple of members has sparked developments on two matters. One Friend asked if there could be more provision for families/grandparents who bring children to the Park. We recommended drawing up a petition which we then presented to the Park Management Board. Within days, the portable putting area was provided near the ice cream kiosk. Another Friend raised the issue of the Park’s opening hours, and you can read more about this later in the newsletter.

Part of our remit is to raise the profile of the Park and encourage visitors. To this end, the committee was involved in two documentaries for Ipswich Community Radio, one of which was devoted to Ken Lightfoot giving a tour in our ParkMobile. The Park and the Friends have featured in the two recent editions of the Ipswich *Angle*, and visitor numbers for the Reg Driver Centre (over two thousand on Music Day alone) are testament to the Park’s popularity.

But this must be balanced with the need to preserve Christchurch Park as a haven of tranquillity and peace in the middle of the town. The future of the Wildlife Reserve looks very promising as we seek to tap into sources of revenue to help bring this area to life, and there will more on this in our next newsletter. But as the nights draw in, I hope the Park can continue be a haven for people and wildlife alike.

Richard Wilson

Friends' events this autumn and winter

Saturday 31 October: Bird Watching Walk Join Philip Murphy on another of his interesting and informative walks. Meet at 9.30am at the Soane Street entrance. Children welcome.

Tuesday 24 November: Historic Christchurch Park Stuart Grimwade's fascinating display of early photographs of the Park (supplemented by Robert Fairchild's collection of historic postcards) is on show in the Reg Driver Centre throughout the autumn and we encourage you to go in and see them. To celebrate this, the Friends are hosting a social evening on Tuesday 24 November when Stuart will guide us through the collection and reveal not only some of the history they portray but also let us into some of the secrets involved in restoring early photographs. Wine and soft drinks will be served and the event is free to all members. 7.30pm at the Reg Driver Centre. Parking will be available in the Mansion car park (Bolton Lane entrance).

Other events in Christchurch Park this autumn and winter

Throughout September and October: Art Display Come and see the collection of artwork by Rodney Freeman in the Reg Driver Centre. Daily 10am – 4pm, entry free.

Every day in October: Cobbold Together To celebrate the life of Felix Thornley Cobbold who gave the Mansion to the town, children are invited to the Mansion to reproduce a miniature of Mr Cobbold's portrait, then add it to a giant mosaic artwork. 10am – 4pm, entry free, no booking required.

Saturday 17 October to Sunday 17 January: 100 Years of the Cobbold Legacy One hundred years after his death, the Mansion is celebrating the legacy left by the great Felix Thornley Cobbold. 10am – 5pm. Free admission, no booking required.

Monday 26 October to Thursday 29 October: Curious Creatures As part of a whole week marking Charles Darwin's theory of evolution why not come along and create your own curious creature? Suitable for ages 3+, the cost is £1.50 per person, booking is essential (01473 433691). Sessions are at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm.

Saturday 24 October: RSPB Feed the Birds 10am – 3pm. Meet at the Reg Driver Centre.

Tuesday 27 October: Seed gathering season Enjoy an autumnal stroll in the Park gathering seeds hidden in nuts, berries, haws, hips and sloes from native trees and shrubs. You will then plant them into pots and you can grow them on at home. A Ranger event, the cost is £2 per adult, £1 per child and booking is essential (01473 433994). 1pm – 3pm.

Wednesday 28 October: Feed the Birds Join a Ranger in the Park to make wildlife feasts to help keep birds fit and healthy through the winter. Have fun making fatballs for your garden birds and make your own birdfeeders from recyclable materials. A Ranger event, cost and booking details as for 27 October. 10am – 12am.

Saturday 31 October and Sunday 1 November: Astronomy in the Park – Sun Watching Safely Learn how to look at the sun safely. Free admission. Meet at the Reg Driver Centre. 11am – 3pm (subject to weather conditions).

Saturday 7 November: Scouts' Fireworks Night

Sunday 8 November: Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph 10.45am for 11am.

Sunday 13 December: EACH (East Anglia Children's Hospice) Santa Run For more details of this morning event, please contact the Reg Driver Centre (01473 252435).

Sunday 13 December: A Victorian Christmas Listen to Victorian carols and stories, visit Father Christmas, and enjoy some traditional Victorian family crafts. Activities are free except for meeting Father Christmas (£2 per child including gift). 10am – 4pm, no booking required.

Tuesday 15 December: RSPB Guided Bird Walk For more details of this event, please contact the Reg Driver Centre.

Christchurch Park's Current Opening Hours (please see the article overleaf)

At the moment the Park opens at 7.30am Monday to Saturday and 9am on Sundays. Closing times vary according to the season as laid out below:

Month	Date	Locking starts	Locking finishes
January		16:15	16:45
February	15th	18:15	18:30
March	1st	18:45	19:00
	15th	19:15	19:30
	29th	20:15	20:30
April	5th	20:45	21:00
	26th	21:15	21:30
May - July		21:15	21:30
August	9th	20:45	21:00
	23rd	20:15	20:30
September	6th	19:45	20:00
	20th	19:15	19:30
October	4th	18:45	19:00
	11th	18:15	18:30
	25th	16:45	17:00
November		16:15	16:30
December		16:15	16:30

Park Opening Hours

Christchurch Park's opening hours, particularly Sunday morning opening at 9am, have been a matter of concern to the Committee and many Friends for a while. At a time when we should be encouraging walking (or cycling via the cycle paths) to work, school or recreation, we have a set of opening times that appear to be historic rather than suitable for today's needs. The Council has the same opening and closing times for all its parks throughout the town regardless of individual need or circumstance, and the official opening times (shown on the previous page) quite often seem to be at variance with what actually happens. (For full details of the parks' opening hours, see the Council website page: www.ipswich.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=651.) Some gates are opened and closed at different times from others which causes considerable confusion, especially as none of this is made clear in the Park to visitors.

A letter sent to the Council from one of the Friends has encouraged them to look at this issue in detail. Sadly, it is not quite so easy to change these hours as many of us would like as there are a number of cost implications. However, the Friends' Committee would like to propose the following changes which we believe will suit the majority of users, reduce possible vandalism (people attempting to gain unauthorized out-of-hours entry), and not significantly raise costs.

The Park should open at 7am, seven days a week throughout the year. The late opening on Sunday mornings is out of step with use of the Park by the many joggers, dog-walkers, church goers and families with younger children. Although the Park currently officially closes at 9.30pm in the summer (many signs say 9.15pm), we would suggest that in order to save the Council money spent on earlier Sunday opening, it might close at 9pm and incrementally to 4.30pm in the winter. Very few people are in the Park during the last few minutes in the summer. However in the winter months between 4pm and 4.30pm it is a significant route home for many people, particularly children on their way back from school (at the moment the Arboretum gates are deliberately shut at 4.15pm).

The Council is looking at this matter itself but greatly values our input and that of members of the public in general. We are very hopeful that they will listen to the views of the Park's users and take those into consideration when setting opening hours for the future. We encourage you to contact the Council with your thoughts on this matter either by post to Eddie Peters, Greenspace Manager, Ipswich Borough Council, Gipping House, 7 Whittle Road, Hadleigh Road Industrial Estate, Ipswich, IP2 0UH or via email to parks.services@ipswich.gov.uk. We would also be happy to hear your thoughts on the subject.

Richard Wilson

Christchurch Park Junior Tennis Tournament August 2009

The Christchurch Park Junior Tennis Tournament was held on the Tennis Courts in the Arboretum on Thursday 27 August 2009. This year the format was changed so that the nine to twelve year olds played their complete tournament during the morning, whilst the thirteen to nineteen year olds played in the afternoon.

The Tournament was organised by Eloise Stephenson of Team Ipswich, a Borough Council initiative managed by Greg Cooper. Eloise informed me that she also played Ladies Soccer at a reasonably high level.

For our Friends of Christchurch Park "Fair Play Award" we were asked to present this to the older players at the afternoon event. Five boys took part during the afternoon playing each other once, making ten games. At the conclusion I presented the Fair Play Award (our shield) to Ben Lloyd (shown below with Eloise Stephenson). The winner of the Tournament was Matthew Patience and the runner-up Elliot Jay.

During the two and a half hours I was present, I witnessed some very closely contested games and, with some of the rallies being very prolonged, the event went well over time. I was privileged to be asked to present the Tournament's trophies to the winner and runner up as well as our Fair Play Shield.

During the morning, Jack Ardern won the junior Tournament with runner up Harry Wilson. Katie Wineares won the Junior Fair Play award.

David Routh



A Bat Walk with Park Ranger Laura Whitfield

I'd never been on a Bat Walk, and didn't know quite what to expect. "Meet at the Reg Driver Centre at 8pm, and bring a torch", were the instructions, and so Catherine and I set off down the hill in the gathering dusk with a slight thrill of anticipation. It was yet another beautiful August evening, with the sun just setting through the trees, and there was a cooling breeze after a very warm day.

Laura Whitfield, one of the Park Rangers and our volunteer guide for the evening, was there to greet about twenty of us (including several children) who'd signed-up for the event. She handed out some leaflets, splendidly illustrated with all Britain's bat species, and gave us a fascinating introductory talk – she clearly has a great love for these little nocturnal creatures, and her enthusiasm for their protection came across very strongly. Apart from a large torch, she was armed with a "bat detector", a little gizmo that tunes into the very high sound frequencies that bats emit to navigate in flight and catch their prey, and converts them into clicking sounds that humans can hear.

Our first visit was to a dead Ash tree, just on the edge of the Wildlife Reserve, which Laura hopes can be allowed to remain standing, as decaying Ash trees make particularly attractive habitats for bats. It wasn't quite dusk enough for us to see any bats there, though, and the Swallows were still flying around above the trees, taking in a late supper – which Laura said was a good sign as there would be plenty of food about for our quarry. Sure enough, once we went into the Reserve, it wasn't long before the bat detector began clicking away and we caught fleeting glimpses of bats flying high in the canopy, particularly where they were silhouetted against expanses of sky. Laura explained that these were Pipistrelles – tiny little creatures, with bodies not much bigger than the top joint of one's thumb, but with a wing-span of 150mm (6 inches in old money) – and usually the first bats to appear each evening.

Ten minutes later, and down in the middle of the Reserve, we began to see some lower-flying and noticeably larger bats, and a new range of clicks emerged from the bat detector. Laura said these were Noctules. They're about twice the size of the little Pipistrelles and were a lot easier to see through the gathering gloom. For a start, they fly much more slowly and lower down – almost at head height – and so one could actually watch them fly past, rather than simply catch a fleeting glimpse. While we were immersed in their display, Laura suddenly whispered "there's a fox behind you!". Sure enough, a skinny little fox was trotting down the path towards us and only about 20 metres away. I think it was just as surprised as we were. It stopped, trotted forward a little, and then took fright and skittered away.

It was, by now, fully dark as we headed down for the Wilderness Pond and the hoped-for finale of a flying display by Daubenton's bats, though Laura wasn't sure if there would be any about – she anticipated that they'd been displaced during the restoration works and might not have re-established themselves. Sure enough, we saw nothing over about fifteen minutes of scanning torches across the water on the south side of the pond, and began a slightly disappointed meander toward the eastern end on our way back towards the Reg Driver Centre. Suddenly, there was a new chattering from the bat detector – a sort of rising series of clicks, speeding up towards the end. Laura swung the beam of her torch across the water and there, skimming like a little spitfire across the pond, was a Daubenton's bat,

swiftly followed by another, and then a pair. Their rear ends are conveniently lighter in colour than the rest of their fur, and so showed up like little beacons in the torchlight. This was a real thrill, as these are the sports cars of the bat world. No gentle flittering about for them; they fairly zoom back and forth and it takes a good deal of skill with a torch shining down onto the water to keep them in the beam. We spent a good ten minutes feasting on this treat.

Back at the Reg Driver Centre we all thanked Laura for a fascinating adventure, and an introduction to an unfamiliar world. She told us there are several other bat walks available in Ipswich's parks each year – particularly in Chantry Park – so these might be well worth looking out for next year.

For lots more information on our bats, do take a look at this fascinating website: www.bio.bris.ac.uk/research/bats/britishbats/index.htm

Peter Howard-Dobson

Breeding Sparrowhawks in Christchurch Park – August 2009

I have known for some time that Sparrowhawks frequent the Park and have probably bred here. This year I have had positive confirmation of the fact. My primary interest in wildlife is fulfilled in a forty-year hobby of collecting nature's sounds on tape, and this is my main expectation when I visit the Park. However, during the first week in August this year, I wanted to try to photograph Damselflies around the Wilderness Pond but I slipped a small recorder in my camera bag – just in case. As soon as I approached the pond, I could hear the high-pitched cries of young Hawks, so I abandoned my Damselfly project for an hour and entered what I call the bird sanctuary area (Wildlife Reserve). High in the Scots Pines I could hear the young birds calling to each other, obviously now off the nest.

Wishing to make as close an approach as possible, I climbed the hillside to the south of the valley path though the sanctuary. Within a few minutes, I was standing beneath a tree from which one of the birds was periodically calling. A second bird was away to my left and a third to the right, their calls correspondingly fainter. As I stood with recorder running and microphone held aloft the Hawk above me took wing and circled twice, calling loudly, before moving off to join one of its siblings. Ample proof, I think, of Sparrowhawks breeding successfully in Christchurch Park.

As I descended the hill to resume my original intention to spend time by the pond, I flushed a female Hawk which made off in the direction I was going myself. Despite a blustery breeze, which created a loud hissing in the tree canopy and is the background sound to my recording of the calls of my accidental quarry, I am delighted to have had this opportunity to collect the voices of the young Hawks for my library.

No luck with the Damselflies though!

Malcolm Clark

Protect the trees we have, Care for them and Plant more trees

Christchurch Park has been a status symbol in Ipswich from mediaeval times. The immense heritage value of our Mansion and other fine park buildings, and the treasures they contain as well as the Park and its gardens, is widely recognised. Remarkable and rare veteran and old trees have survived within the Park and deserve equally high recognition. (English Nature defines a veteran tree as *“a tree which, because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value culturally, in the landscape or for wildlife”*.) Some trees are clearly old and would instantly be recognizable as veteran or ancient. Others may not grow to a great size or reach a great age but they may be veterans for their species. They contribute to *“the air of respectable antiquity”* of this magnificent historic park and make the distinctive quality to its landscape that helps to distinguish the Park as a regional treasure. Because of Dutch Elm Disease, changes in tree management practices and general urban pressures, many veteran or old trees will have been lost over time. As a result, the Park has become a refuge for some of our oldest and most culturally important trees and the specialist wildlife associated with them. As survivors in a historical landscape these trees are an extremely valuable genetic resource that should be propagated and locally conserved for future generations.

The Council works in a climate of increased environmental awareness, in which trees are both greatly valued and potentially hazardous. Balancing different management objectives is always needed, especially where old and perhaps structurally unstable trees are present. As trees age, they develop features that might compromise their mechanical integrity whilst providing increasingly diverse wildlife habitats and visual interest. These include cavities and decaying wood, which together with other niches in the tree provide habitats for many rare plants, animals, insects and fungi. For veteran and old trees in the Park (and their younger successors) to be managed responsibly with regard both to safety and their value, the Council has adopted reliable methods for the assessment of hazards and valuable features alike. As far as hazards are concerned, the need is to be able to quantify them and any associated risk so that this risk can be kept within acceptable or reasonable limits. Public safety is of paramount importance and the Council takes its duties of safety very seriously. But, tree safety management goes beyond simply reducing the risks from trees, and requires consideration and optimisation of the benefits conferred by them. In addition to the immediately apparent economic value of timber and their aesthetic beauty, trees confer many benefits such as moderating global and local climate, supporting the economy of Ipswich (e.g. producing attractive environments for business, tourism and a healthy workforce), providing shade and shelter, and intercepting storm water to name but a few.

After safety, the primary aim is to ensure that no avoidable loss of veteran or old trees takes place, therefore remediation measures will be directed to enhancing tree longevity through a range of practices. The *“veteranisation”* of *“old”* trees by mimicking natural damage over the coming decades could help provide sustainable opportunities for our aging veteran tree population. Such techniques represent a departure from conventional arboricultural practice and are informed by natural processes that have been trialled and observed through the experience of working on, and in, old trees. There are even opportunities, in certain situations in the Park, to optimise the conservation benefits from collapsing and dying trees whilst managing the associated risks at a reasonable level that is acceptable to the wider society.

Trees are a living resource and, as such, their care requires ongoing decisions regarding maintenance, renewal, removal and replacement. Whilst protecting trees is paramount to the principle of maintaining the quality of the present day landscape of Christchurch Park, it should be recognized that trees are not everlasting permanent features and young trees still need to be planted.

Andy Whalley, Assistant Manager – Arboriculture, Ipswich Borough Council

Brass on the Grass – summer 2009

Our annual “Brass on the Grass” concerts took place at the Arts and Crafts Shelter in the Arboretum this year on four consecutive Sunday afternoons. With very good weather for three of the concerts this summer (and the fourth only suffering rain during the band’s interval), with a better than average attendance at all the events, I think we can boast this summer’s offering as being the best ever.

Our concert organiser, Jessica Webster, is to be congratulated on producing four excellent sponsors and four very good bands. She was present at all the concerts, erecting the gazebo with other members of our Committee, positioning the chairs and banners, and overseeing every small detail to ensure a successful afternoon.

On the first Sunday, 19 July, the Ipswich Society sponsored the Phoenix Brass Band conducted by Keith Nice. The Society, for the second year running, provided wine and various fruit juices on their stall and Jack Chapman, their Chairman, was pleased to address the crowd on the merits of the Ipswich Society with a promise of continued support. During the interval the heavens opened, but it was only a brief shower and the band continued for the second half protected from any remaining raindrops inside the Shelter. However, we lost some of our congregation as they were not so well protected – or optimistic!

The next Sunday, 26 July, we enjoyed good weather with well over 200 present. The Lions Club of Ipswich sponsored “Stacks of Sax”, who have played at all our previous concerts going back over the last seven years (only missing out during 2004 when we were not able to raise sponsorship). Their leader and conductor Adrian Budgen has been present on all these occasions and manages to increase the number of his saxophone players each year – this year there were eight.

Our third concert, held on 2 August, produced a band that we have not had the pleasure of before, the Ipswich and Norwich Co-operative Brass Band which was sponsored by the Co-op. The crowd was swelled on this occasion by some of their own supporters. The final Sunday, 9 August, saw a return of one of our old favourites who have played for us most years, the Ipswich Hospital Band conducted as usual by Peter Gray and sponsored by Scrutton Bland. This event produced our biggest crowd of over 300.

I would like to thank all our sponsors for their support, the bands and their friends. Thanks to the Park Manager, Sam Pollard, and his staff for their back-up organising the chairs etc., the St. John Ambulance Brigade whose members turned up on all four Sundays, the ice cream suppliers who provided a regular service, Ken and Delia who gave rides in our ParkMobile for the children and some of the older ones! – plus members of our Committee who kept the whole thing ticking over whilst gaining a number of new members.

This was our seventh year, missing out only year 2004, and our best from the attendance point of view. Jessica has promised to carry on again for one more year organising the sponsors and the bands and we thank her very warmly for all her efforts.

Finally, I want to thank all our Members who attended the concerts this summer together with their families. For my part, I have always enjoyed being your “compère” at these concerts over the past years and I look forward to seeing you next summer.

David Routh

Green Flag Award 2009

We hope you've noticed the new Green Flag on the flagpole this year! Green Flag is a prestigious award which the Park has gained for a second successive year for offering safe, clean, attractive public open space.

Stuart, who is the independent member of the Park Management Board, and myself, representing the FoCP, took ourselves down to Bournemouth in July for the awards. Michaela Strachan, TV wildlife presenter, gave out the awards, and the accompanying photo is the result of our photo call with her in the Pavilion Gardens. We enjoyed some socialising with representatives from as far away as Edinburgh and Newcastle, and, chatting to the manager of Greenwich Park, discovered that he is now deeply involved in the staging of the Olympic equestrian event – be thankful it's not here, Sam!

The presentation afternoon at the Pavilion Theatre was informative. Some councils such as Edinburgh, Leeds, Sheffield and even Chelmsford, submit several parks of a high standard; awards are also given for country parks, pocket parks, cemeteries and allotments. Green Flag aims to promote the value of good quality open space, essential to well-being. Their researches show that people who live close to green space are far more likely to enjoy doing some physical activity, whether walking (alone or with the dog), playing or jogging. People value calm, relaxation and the chance to "escape" for a short time and, interestingly, 25% of young people (no age stated!) enjoy going to green spaces for these same things. It has been calculated that if every household in England had easy access to quality green space it could save £2.1 billion p.a. in healthcare costs.

We thought it worth highlighting some of these points, as we were persuaded of the value of what Green Flag is doing and of the need for the award to be promoted. It's a great achievement that Christchurch Park is the first green space in Ipswich (and only the second in Suffolk) to receive the award, but we hope that others will soon be able to apply. That Christchurch Park meets the quality criteria is a huge tribute to all involved in running the Park, and especially to Sam and his team.

Patricia and Stuart Grimwade



A brief history of the Tawny Owl (*Strix Aluco*) and Mabel

The Tawny Owl is the most common of our owls frequenting parks, gardens, copses and deciduous forests (hence its other name of Wood Owl). Strangely, it is not found in Ireland. Perhaps the two most iconic bird songs heard in England are those of the Cuckoo and of course the Tawny Owl. It is about 15" in length, the female is usually larger and both sexes are similar in colour. The male is the one that hoots – that familiar drawn out “hooo” to which the female answers by a sharp “kee-wkk” (although in my experience the female Tawny Owl has a very large vocabulary).

The nesting season varies. I have found quite well grown young in January but usually egg laying is from March to May. The female incubates two to four eggs, which hatch after 28-30 days. Another month sees the young able to fly. The female will stay with the young to start with and the male will bring food to the nest, which is usually a hole in a tree or a building. This brings us to ‘Mabel’ who is nationally famous after being featured in the Daily Mail. She is also a local treasure. I do not know of another Tawny Owl that has been as obliging as Mabel. She has been photographed by many and was, ironically, named by schoolchildren before her sex was known. We still do not know for sure, but to me it seems logical that our Owl is female. Mabel is a large Owl and in early spring I heard her calling which suggested she was female. Also, Mabel was not seen for some weeks in late spring. I thought she could be incubating eggs and then caring for her young in the hollow tree below her roost.

Sam Pollard uncovered an interesting episode of her fascinating story. A member of the public informed Sam that a baby owl was on the ground under Mabel’s tree. Because Magpies were harassing the youngster, Sam took the Owl to Stonham Barns Owl Centre for a check-up. They declared that Mabel Minor was fit and well and advised that Sam should return it to the Park, but placed in the branches as it was too young to fly. On returning the Owl to the branches, Sam was surprised to see it immediately fly to another tree! The first feathers that grow on a young fluffy Tawny Owl are the primaries and secondaries (flight feathers). So we may assume (and only assume) that Mabel is a female and that she successfully reared at least one young. Shortly after, Mabel was seen again at her favourite roost. Enjoy Mabel while you can.

Sam asked me how long Tawny Owls live for. Well, they can live between ten to twenty years but, and this is a big BUT, Christchurch Park is surrounded by busy roads and Owls get run over. Tawnies feed on mice, rats and beetles and they will also take dead matter. Rats are poisoned because they are vermin and birds of prey, including Owls, can suffer because of this.

I listened to some children discussing Mabel in the Park at the beginning of September and they remarked at “how cuddly” she was and wasn’t “she sweet”. That may be so, but Mabel is a killer. By day she quietly sleeps and by night she hunts with keen sight, silent flight and strong, powerful talons. As a note of interest, although Tawny Owls are more common than Barn Owls, in captivity they rarely breed. Wild disabled Barn Owls that I have kept have readily laid eggs and reared young. Not so with Tawny Owls in my care – only one pair have bred.

Reg Snook

Sam's Notes

Back in the spring the Met Office was warning us of a barbecue summer. Unfortunately, it never materialised. However, it has been a very dry one! During 2007 and 2008 we never really had to water the plants in the Park as it rained frequently. This year we have had to make several visits to new areas of planting to ensure they coped. The dry weather did help out at the FoCP concerts though, enabling all to have a wonderful time (so long as you don't mention that one rogue shower).

This summer has been a great one for the Park. We have been very busy in terms of visitor numbers and there hasn't been a day when the Park was empty (is there ever?). We have had more events this year than ever before – the majority of them being on a small scale – and we still have a few more to come. Throughout September and October we are displaying artwork by Rodney Freeman in the Reg Driver Centre. Rodney works with a palette knife and has produced six lovely pieces here in the Park. Some of his work is for sale. In October we have another weekend of astronomy (weather permitting). Please keep watching the notice boards for further event information.

Reg Snook has been keeping everyone updated on wildlife issues in the Friends' notice board. This has become very popular and has encouraged many people to stop and read. He has been keeping tabs on Mabel, who is back in her tree (I won't tell you what he says here – you'll have to read his article for yourselves).

This summer has also been good for volunteering in the Park. Nine different faces, each one able to provide information on what's on and where, currently grace our reception desk. We have 10-15 different volunteers working on the various shrub beds around the Park and another 15-20 who turn up to clear litter in the Park. All in all, that's a lot of interested people giving something back to the Park and we all benefit.

Once again we are winners of a Green Flag Award – with obvious thanks to the Friends of Christchurch Park and the volunteers mentioned above. We are very proud of the award but see it as a step in the right direction rather than recognition that we have achieved everything.

I hope you all enjoy the autumn colours as much as I do, and when the leaves have all gone, keep an eye out for Mabel.

P.S. If you have any questions or queries, issues or problems, please do drop in to see us at the Reg Driver Centre or call 01473 252435.

Sam Pollard, Park Manager

Membership

We warmly welcome the following new Friends
who bring the number of member households to over 300

Zara, Andy, Hazel & William Carless, Ms Assis Carreiro, Diana Allsopp, Mrs C Armstrong,
R A D Glover, S Hilderbrand, Marilyn Martin, Glenda Sugars, Jack Biggins,
Elizabeth Mortlock, Mr & Mrs J Pallant, Mr & Mrs P. J. Phillips, Russell W Reeve,
Mr & Mrs E Rosier & Family, Mr B P and Mrs J R Thomas, Mr & Mrs Westren,
Gary & Jan-Marie Wilson, Mr Paul & Mrs Janet Firman, J S Hall, Mrs Eileen Damant

Corporate Members

Woodcock & Son (Estate Agents)

16 Arcade Street
Ipswich IP1 1EP
01473 233355
www.woodcockandson.co.uk
(FoCP contact David Wright)

Ipswich School

Henley Road
Ipswich IP1 3SG
01473 408300
www.ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk
(FoCP contact Peter Gray)

The Will Shop

84 Berners Street
Ipswich IP1 3LU
01473 233110
www.thewillshop.com
(FoCP contact Adam Muldoon)

W. D. Coe Ltd

20-28 Norwich Road
Ipswich IP1 2NG
01473 256061
www.coes.co.uk
(FoCP contact William Coe)

Orwell Veterinary Group

Berners House Surgery
56 Berners Street
Ipswich IP1 3LU
01473 257557
www.orwellvets.co.uk
(FoCP contact Charles Bagnall)

Scrutton Bland (Accountants)

Sanderson House
Museum Street
Ipswich IP1 1HE
01473 259201
www.scruttonbland.co.uk
(FoCP contact John Pickering)

Gilmour Piper and Associates

(Osteopathy & Integrated Healthcare)
10 Fonnereau Road
Ipswich IP1 3JP
01473 217592
www.gilmourpiper.co.uk
(FoCP contact Andrew Gilmour)

Articles for our next newsletter

The next newsletter will be sent to all members in the spring. We are delighted to receive articles and letters from members, and anyone wishing to contribute should write to Richard Wilson either by post or email (please see the back page for contact details). We reserve the right to edit all submitted material for publication. The deadline for contributions is 1 March 2010.

FoCP COMMITTEE MEMBERS – 2009/10

(To year ending AGM – March 2010)

Chairman and
Vice-Chair the Park
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Committee Member and
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Events/Meetings: David Routh, 62 High Street, Ipswich IP1 3QS
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Committee Member: Peter Howard-Dobson, 52 Westerfield Road, IP4 2UT
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ParkMobile Bookings

For all ParkMobile bookings please call Ken Lightfoot on 01473 251749

To contact the Park Manager or for any other enquiries about the Park or Park events, please telephone the Reg Driver Centre on 01473 252435