



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2011

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to announce one of our most exciting ventures so far: the publication of our first book. *Portrait of a Park – A year with the wildlife of Christchurch Park* is an entertaining, informative and beautifully illustrated book by local artist and author Reg Snook. Reg has had a long association with the Park, and his fortnightly “Jottings” for the Friends’ noticeboard were the inspiration behind this publication. We are pleased to be able to offer members of the Friends **one free, signed copy** of the book, and on the last page of this newsletter you will find the form that should be returned to us to order your copy. Alternatively, you are very welcome to attend the book’s launch at 7.30pm on Wednesday, 23 November at the Reg Driver Centre. This will take the form of a talk about the book and the Park’s wildlife by Reg, together with an exhibition of his artworks (see overleaf for more details). We will be selling *Portrait of a Park* through all the usual retailers, with any profits helping to support projects in the Park, but you are encouraged to buy additional copies from us now for your family and friends at the special discount price of £5. It will make an excellent Christmas gift!

As I write, leaves are being driven from the Park’s trees by a strong autumn wind. Since the closure of the leaf yard in the centre of the Park, just what should be done with all these leaves has been a problem for the Park’s management. In the last few years, prior to transportation off site for turning into mulch or garden compost, huge piles of them have appeared in various sites around the Park. The Friends have been putting some pressure on the Council to establish a dedicated leaf storage area and we are pleased that this winter a new hedge will be planted between the bowls green and the rear of the toilet block near to Westerfield Road. When established, this hedge will screen a new storage area that will be used for leaves in the autumn, and at other times of the year for some of the clutter that inevitably has to be brought into the Park for big events such as Music Day. For the time being, some leaves may still have to be piled up at the bottom end of the Park but we hope that in the longer term these too can be relocated.

Other news items are spread through the newsletter and can be found in Sam Pollard’s Manager’s Report. For up-to-date information, don’t forget to look at the FoCP noticeboard outside the Reg Driver Centre, sign up for Sam’s electronic “Christchurch Park News”, or visit our excellent new website, www.focp.org.uk.

Reg Snook’s new book includes a wonderfully comprehensive bird list by another FoCP stalwart, Philip Murphy. We do hope you can join us either for Philip’s guided bird walk on 29 October or for the launch of the book itself on 23 November – or perhaps even both.

Richard Wilson

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FoCP Autumn Bird Walk – Saturday, 29 October at 9.30am

Here is an opportunity to enjoy bird watching in the Park with an expert. Isn't it so much easier when someone can tell you what the bird is that you have just noticed? Even better, if they can tell you how to recognise its distinguishing features so that next time you will know it for yourself? Philip Murphy, who will lead our walk, has had a life-long interest in birds and is particularly knowledgeable about the birdlife of Christchurch Park. He will identify all the birds that you will both see and hear, and this FREE event (open to all) promises to be both interesting and informative. Meet at the Reg Driver Centre at 9.30am and bring binoculars if you have them.

Launch of FoCP book *Portrait of a Park* – Wednesday, 23 November at 7.30pm

On the back page of this newsletter you can see how to order your free copy of *Portrait of a Park* by Reg Snook. Why not also come along to the Reg Driver Centre on Wednesday, 23 November at 7.30pm for the official launch? Reg will introduce the book to us, and there will be an exhibition of his artworks for sale. Wine and soft drinks will be served and limited parking will be available at the car park inside the Bolton lane entrance.

The Life and Times of Agatha Christie – Thursday, 20 October, 7pm to 8.30pm

At the Mansion, enjoy a glass of wine or a soft drink whilst listening to Peter Berridge, Museum Manager, present a lively and intriguing insight into the work of this prolific author. British Sign Language Interpreted tour at 7pm. Booking is essential by telephoning 01473 433691 or by calling in to the Mansion. Cost £6.

Creepy Crawly Creature Feature – Wednesday, 26 October, 10am to 3pm

An opportunity to see snakes, lizards and tarantulas at the Reg Driver Centre. No charge.

40th Annual Fireworks Display – Saturday, 5 November

The annual fireworks extravaganza in Christchurch Park has been organised by the 11th Ipswich Scout Group since 1972 when the total cost was £100: displays now cost up to £40,000 and draw audiences of up to 32,000 people. For forty years the event has helped finance scouting in Ipswich, providing everyday adventures for many thousands of young people. For up-to-date ticket and timing information, please check www.ipswichfireworks.co.uk.

Remembrance Service – Sunday, 13 November

The Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor John Le Grys, will be attending this service organised by the Royal British Legion and Ipswich Borough Council at the War Memorial. The service will start at 10:50am at the Cenotaph in the Park and last for approximately 30 minutes. After the service the Mayor will process to the saluting base near the Mansion where he will take the salute at a march past of uniformed services.

Fashion Forever – Saturday, 19 November, 10.30am to 1pm at the Mansion

Find out how costumes and textiles are looked after from the Mansion's Costumes Curator and Conservator. Get practical advice about looking after clothes and textiles, from wedding dresses to uniforms. Bring your own textiles for extra practical advice. Book in advance by calling 01473 433691 or drop into the Mansion. Cost £10 (includes tea or coffee).

Victorian Christmas – Sunday, 4 December, 10am to 4pm at the Mansion

Step back in time and experience a Victorian Christmas. See craft demonstrations and buy unique Christmas gifts. Meet historic characters, enjoy music and carols and get a close look at some amazing coins lost down the sofa of time! Free entry with no need to book.

Update on the Iris beds in the Wolsey Garden

I am pleased with the growth that the irises have made this season and I am confident of a good display in 2012. However, a number of the varieties planted in the narrow east end of the bed have died, and those that remain are feeble. I believe this is due to the established hedge having removed all the goodness and moisture from the soil. I have to decide between adding some farmyard manure and replanting tall bearded, or replanting this area with spuria iris varieties that I believe to be more tolerant to the existing conditions.

In the central area of the bed, growth has been very strong. At the time of my most recent visit the leaves were about 24 inches high. I have begun cutting back these leaves to restrict wind damage during the winter and I will then feed the whole bed with bone meal. I have noticed that a few plants have disappeared, too many for it to be all down to rot, and the small dip in the soil where the plant would have been suggests that soil has sunk into the void created when the roots were pulled out. Yes, sadly I believe these gaps are due to theft. Some weeks ago I heard of a middle aged or older lady being challenged whilst in the act of trying to pull up an iris. I will be replanting in these spaces, but I am undecided if this will be with fresh TB varieties or with varieties from the west end of the bed, restocking the west end with varieties of Siberian iris. The spuria irises planted on the top tier have not put on the growth of the tall bearded but this is to be expected, as spurias are known to sulk for a year or two after being moved.

I have been gifted two rhizomes of iris unguicularis "Walter Butt" that has light purple flowers. This will be a useful addition to the beds as, once settled, it flowers from October through to March. I have also added 2 further varieties of iris reticulata, "Cantab" and "Lady Beatrix Stanley". These bulbous irises will again provide winter colour, blooming in late January or February. Most reticulate irises are coloured in varying shades of blue but there are now a few purples and recently a white, "Natasha". "Katherine Hodgkin" and its sibling "Sheila Ann Germany" have much larger flowers than most and are a blue that is almost grey. I hope to be able to continue to add varieties of reticulata to the bed, making it an important collection. It may well be that the Park could quite quickly claim National Collection status, and if anybody is interested in donating a variety of reticulata iris, the more uncommon ones cost from about £2 per bulb to around £3.99 per 5. I will be forming a list with prices. It will be interesting to see if the yellow danfordii iris blooms this spring. If not planted deep enough, after blooming the bulb breaks up into bulblets after blooming, and as a consequence, no flowers will appear for at least 5 years, if ever again!

Barry Emmerson

Tree work

You may have noticed the recent sad demise of the Bhutan Pine (No. 1 on the Park's Tree Trail) and one of the Horse Chestnut trees next to the Round Pond. These fellings were not unexpected as, unfortunately, both trees were riddled with disease and had been deemed unsafe by the Council's arboricultural team. We have asked the Park Manager to replant another Bhutan Pine elsewhere in the Park. The recent autumn winds also brought down a large willow tree from the Wilderness Reserve into the wet meadow area but we are pleased that wood from the tree will be used to make benches for the Park.

Tom Wright

Friends of Christchurch Park will be very saddened to hear of the death of Tom Wright in August. Ill-health had forced his retirement last year after 31 years with Ipswich Parks. He was perhaps best known for the superb carpet-bedding at the Henley Road entrance, but Tom was always happy to stop and have a chat, and this willingness to engage with passers-by, combined with a wealth of knowledge and experience, will be very much missed.

Membership

We are delighted to welcome four new corporate members to the Friends: Lattice Lodge Guest House, The Greyhound (public house), Hightop (domestic and contract window cleaners) and the Christchurch Park Boules Club. Contact details for all our corporate members can be found later in the newsletter.

We also very warmly welcome the following new Friends: Richard & Rosalind Doe, Jean Bendall, J. Hodgson, Mark & Jane Smith, Peter Allnutt, Mr C. J. Bolton, Mr & Mrs Biggins, Rachel & Edward Davey, Mrs Joanna Jones, Mrs Sue Jones, John & Frances Cook, Sarah Stokes, Jane & John Fair, Mr & Mrs P. Stanley, Mr & Mrs George Hering, Kathryn & Ben Parry and the Quinton Family.

New information panel for the Wilderness Pond

Reg Snook has recently replaced the sign that he made 23 years ago at the time of the creation of the Bird (now Wildlife) Reserve. The waterfowl illustrated on the former sign included ornamental but pinioned ducks which, as it turned out, were removed soon after their introduction. The new sign is really attractive and amongst the informative illustrations are the black-headed gull and the fearsome lesser black-backed gull – the one that eats our ducklings. Our newly resident cormorant is too recent a visitor to be included this time round.

Ipswich Croquet Club

After an association that goes back for over a hundred years, Ipswich Croquet Club has decided to vacate the Park and move out to the Fynn Valley Golf Club. The Park's management is in the process of deciding what should happen to the historic – and very scenic – croquet lawn in the Lower Arboretum, and suggestions are being sought from the Friends. Please contact Park Manager Sam Pollard (sam.pollard@ipswich.gov.uk or 01473 252473) if you have any proposals for this site.

Butterfly Area

Work on the butterfly area proceeds behind the scenes. The excellent plan drawn up by pupils from Ipswich School has been sent to the Borough's design team, and funding is now being put in place. We hope that you will soon see physical progress in the area (currently just a patch of grass at the northern end of the Wilderness Pond).

ParkMobile

It has been a frustrating summer for Ken Lightfoot, our ParkMobile's chief driver. An as yet unidentified but persistent mechanical fault with the vehicle has meant cancelling almost all the trips in the Park since August. We await news from Bartrams as to when the vehicle will be repaired and back in service.

Discovering hedgerow wildlife in Christchurch Park

What's living in the hedges of Christchurch Park? Butterflies and moths, ants, bees, spiders, earwigs and many other invertebrates (animals without backbones) will all be making use of the hedges in the Park. It's surprising how many animals are living all around us, including the hedgerows in our urban parks. Look carefully amongst the leaves and you can find a huge diversity of animals going about the business of their daily life whilst humans go about theirs on a much larger scale, generally oblivious to all this activity. Hedges are a haven for invertebrates, providing food such as berries and seeds, while leaves, branches and holes give shelter.



You are now invited to take part in a national Biodiversity Survey to uncover the diverse range of wildlife in our hedges. The Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) network provides a comprehensive pack with full instructions and identification guides. There are four main activities: 1. What does the hedge look like? 2. Is the hedge a good source of food for wildlife? 3. What wildlife (invertebrates) can you find? 4. What else is living in the hedge? To find out more about this particularly family-friendly survey, visit: www.opalexplornature.org/BiodiversitySurvey.

Can you identify where this hedge is?

There are 24,000 species of insects living in the British Isles, so the survey cannot possibly cover all of them. However, it is certain that a good number of invertebrates are living in Christchurch Park. You can discover which these are by studying the hedgerows closely and recording what you see. Do you know what this animal is (pictured on the right) or which group it belongs to? Check if you're correct by looking at the end of this article.



The results are sent back to OPAL to become part of a national database, so your results really will be part of a valuable research project. This survey will finish in November 2012, so you have plenty of time to take part. Different animals can be found at different times of year, so why not do the survey in the winter and then again next summer?



Look out for the posters put up around the Park or to pick up your **free** OPAL Biodiversity Survey Pack just pop into the Reg Driver Centre. Full instructions will help you to complete the survey.

For more information, contact Gen Broad on 01473 264308 or email gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk.



Gen Broad, Suffolk Biodiversity Officer

[The illustrated animal is a shieldbug, a true bug, all of which have piercing mouthparts with which to suck juices. The other photographs are of a comma butterfly on ivy and a spotted longhorn beetle, often found on hawthorn bushes in hedgerows. The hedge illustrated borders the southern end of the croquet lawn.]

A history of the Arboretum – Ipswich’s first “Public Park”

A recent discovery by John Blatchly of a “Prospectus” for the formation of an Ipswich Arboretum Society prompted a look into the history of Christchurch Park as “a place for healthful out-door recreation, accessible to all classes of the inhabitants of this rapidly increasing town” (as the Prospectus puts it). We will print the full text of this fascinating document in the next newsletter, but for now we thought it might be of interest to look at both why and how a public park for Ipswich was first proposed in the late 1840’s.

The concept of a “public” park is a relatively recent phenomenon. It was only after the 1833 Parliamentary Select Committee on public open spaces that areas of England’s newly industrialised towns and cities were first designated “public land”. In Ipswich, access to “Christ Church” had been limited and sporadic. The first public park in England is generally agreed to have been the Arboretum presented in September 1840 to the town of Derby by their Mayor Joseph Strutt, a wealthy mill owner. On the day he handed over the deeds, Strutt said: "...as the sun has shone brightly on me through life, it would be ungrateful in me not to employ a portion of the fortune which I possess in promoting the welfare of those amongst whom I live, and by whose industry I have become aided in its acquisition". Strutt had first wanted to establish a botanic garden but was advised that this would be too costly. He then thought of calling the gardens “Pleasure grounds and public walks” but later decided that “Having thus prepared this piece of land for the intended purpose, I have given it the name of ‘The Arboretum’.”

The word "arboretum", though commonly used in the late 18th and the 19th centuries to mean "a place planted with trees", did not yet imply a specific scientific or educational purpose. This connection was made by Strutt’s designer, John Claudius Loudon in his *Arboretum et Fruticetum Britannicum*, who also said that “The Derby Arboretum would not only serve as a source of recreation and instruction to the inhabitants of Derby and its neighbourhood, but as a standard of nomenclature to that part of the country generally; the collection of trees and shrubs being one of the most extensive ever planted, and the whole having been named with a degree of correctness scarcely to be found in any other garden.”

Despite Strutt’s generous bequest, Derby’s Arboretum still charged threepence for children under 12 and sixpence for everybody else for entry on five days of the week: as we will see in the Ipswich Prospectus, “accessible to all classes” did not mean free. Nonetheless, the idea of the public being able to access urban green spaces was catching on: during the 1840’s other public parks opened in London (Crystal Palace), Birkenhead and Manchester. This was not just altruism. Edwin Chadwick’s 1842 *Report... into the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* had proved influential in encouraging better conditions for the urban poor and spurred on Lord Morpeth’s Public Health Act of February 1848 (although the cholera epidemic of the previous year may have played just as important a part). The Ipswich Corporation Committee Minutes describe this bill as being for “the construction of sewers and the removal of nuisances and to give facilities for otherwise promoting the health of the public”, and its intent was to ensure safe water and sewerage provision as well as promoting the proper burial of corpses. In Ipswich the bill would eventually lead to the creation of the municipal cemetery in 1855. (It is interesting to note that in March 1848 our Council actually petitioned the Government that bodies should be buried not less than 48 inches deep, rather than the 30 inches suggested in the bill...)

In November 1847 it had been resolved that “a Committee be appointed to inquire and report upon the practicability of providing a plot of ground for the recreation of the public” and on 20 January, while the Public Health bill was still before Parliament, the Ipswich Journal reported

that “A meeting, convened by private circular, was held... to determine on the propriety of selecting, in the vicinity of the town, an eligible spot for the formation of a park or place of healthful out-door recreation for all classes.” An “advantageous site” was suggested, “consisting of two fields in Upper Bolton [field], lying between the Henley Road and Mr Fonnereau’s park. One of these fields, consisting of upwards of three acres of meadow, has been for years past the resort of children in the summer season; the other field, containing seven and a half acres, consists of arable land, lying next the town of Ipswich; both being in a very airy situation, high and dry, and easy of access to the population.” William Charles Fonnereau owned most of the land (some 561 acres) in this part of Ipswich, and offered to lease these eleven acres at £5 per acre, per year, for 63 years “which appeared to be considered very liberal and equitable by the meeting”.

There was no mention yet of an Arboretum. Rather, initial thoughts were of “a cricket or pleasure ground” and an area “devoted to the purposes, at all times, of a rough-and-tumble play ground for children”. In the course of what the Journal describes as a “long and desultory discussion... a question was started as to the public having for many years past used the smaller field. This called forth a remark from Mr A. Ransome that the public had not the shadow of a right or claim; that the field was the private property of Mr Fonnereau; and that the use the public had made of it was by permission alone, the public having had no right to use it under any circumstances. The meeting assented to this opinion, when a wish was expressed that, if possible, the larger field, from its commanding position, should be devoted entirely to the purposes of a pleasure ground, or *aboretum* [sic]”. This is the first use of that name with regard to Ipswich’s first public park.

According to the Council Minutes for February 1848 however, a deputation “examined the spot and they were of Opinion that if the requisite portion of the land in question were set apart as a Cricket ground there would not be sufficient left for the formation of an Arboretum. It also appeared that a piece of land containing about 5 acres (part of the Sandpit farm) lying on the other side of the Henley Road and admirably adapted for a Cricket Ground might be obtained... and the Deputation recommended that if sufficient funds could be provided, the first named piece of land should be appropriated entirely for the purpose of an Arboretum and the latter piece for a Cricket Ground.” That part of Sandpit Farm did indeed become a cricket pitch but in the end it was as part of the new Ipswich School, the foundation stone of which was laid by Prince Albert on 4 July 1851. (It is interesting to read in the Minutes for September 1850 that in part this site was chosen as it had “the advantage of being opposite the proposed Arboretum”.)

Although the Borough Council had apparently already agreed the price with Fonnereau, it transpired that, according to the Ipswich Journal, they “had no power to interfere by making any grant of money, their province being confined merely to the necessary police regulations”. And apparently, ‘bobbies on the beat’ were needed for “The desirableness of having police stationed at the outskirts as well as in the centre of the town was generally admitted.” The first modern police had appeared on the streets of Ipswich in 1836 and developed following the County Police Act of 1839, with the East Suffolk County Police forming in 1841.

It was decided that £400 was required to establish this “Public Park or Play-Ground”, and although “Nothing definitive, however, was agreed upon with reference to these several questions”, a committee was formed to “consider the eligibility of the site selected, and to devise means for carrying the plan into effect”. But as we shall see in our next newsletter, it would be another five years before a properly “public” park would open in Ipswich.

Richard Wilson

FoCP Dawn Chorus Walk on Saturday, 14 May

As 20 observers met in the Bridle Way at 4.30am there was already light in the eastern sky. Even as we assembled, we could hear blackbird, chaffinch and wren singing, and we saw a fox running across the Park's open area. The walk down to the ponds produced several singing wrens (undoubtedly the commonest singing species we encountered during the walk). A treecreeper was heard on several occasions but only glimpsed briefly in the gloom. At least four lesser black-backed gulls were already searching for food on Snow Hill, and we heard several stock doves calling.

Down at the Wilderness Pond, a chiffchaff (a small summer-visiting warbler from southern Europe or northern Africa) was giving its monotonous "chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff" song but somehow it managed to remain unseen. Three swifts flew high overhead.

The only sign of new life on the ponds was a brood of three Canada goose goslings on the Wilderness Pond; based on the experience of recent years, there is a distinct possibility that all of the ducklings and moorhen chicks will have been taken by herring gulls and lesser black-backed gulls. A female and five male Mandarin ducks were on the Round Pond near to where two pied wagtails were noted. Despite much effort, we failed to see a singing blackcap (another summer-visiting warbler from southern Europe or northern/western Africa) in the Wildlife Reserve but blue tits were seen entering two of the FoCP's nesting boxes. Both adult parent great spotted woodpeckers were seen attending a nest site in the alder trees on the northern side of the Reserve.

A nuthatch was heard over towards the Mansion and nearby, an immature herring gull was watched chasing some of the grey squirrels that were taking advantage of the peace and quiet to forage on the open grassy areas. Several mistle thrushes were also foraging on the Park's rock-hard grass. We obtained excellent views of a stock dove, which enabled us to highlight the principle differences between this species and the wood pigeon. Finally, the sharp alarm note of a starling brought to our notice a sparrowhawk that circled around high above us.

Many thanks to all who attended this walk, and particularly Richard Wilson and David Routh who highlighted several areas in the Park where the FoCP is currently active.

Philip Murphy

The Dawn Chorus Walk

I had to get up while it was still dark. On the way to the Park with my dad I saw two bats. We met some other people and said hello and then we started the dawn chorus walk. Me and my dad saw a blackbird heading towards us and we thought it was coming on the walk with us. We were listening and looking for birds. A person from the dawn chorus walk saw a blue tit go into a nesting box and when we were there we saw a fox five times in the Park. I saw a chaffinch up close. I saw some swifts. I saw some goslings with their mummy. I loved the dawn chorus the people there were very very nice. At the end when we were going home I had breakfast in a shop with my dad.

Rosalind Payne, aged 6 and a half

Ivy

I'm loath to mention it, but it won't be long before many of us will be singing about "The holly and the ivy". We cherish the red holly berries in the gloom of winter, but what about ivy? Why do so many of us see this as a troublesome plant that must be removed at all costs from walls or trees when in fact it is a wonderful natural resource for wildlife and does such little damage? The Suffolk Wildlife Trust has produced a factsheet on the plant that may help to educate us and dispel some of the myths, and we thought it might be useful to summarize it here.

Common ivy (*Hedera helix*) is native to and widely distributed across Suffolk. It is an adaptable and resilient plant, able to grow in most soils and climates. Whether trailing over walls, forming parts of a hedgerow or scaling a tree, ivy's foliage, flowers and berries provide excellent habitats and nutrition for wildlife throughout the year.

In the spring, ivy gives excellent cover for nesting birds. Its berries, if not eaten immediately, stay on the bush from November until April and provide birds with a good source of food through the winter and early spring. They are a particular favourite of blackbirds, but are also enjoyed by mistle and song thrushes, blackcaps, redwings, pigeons and robins. Ivy is an early source of nectar for butterflies and provides a valuable overnight refuge for them at other times of the year. In September and October ivy feeds many pollinating insects, wasps, green bottles and honeybees. In later autumn, moths and butterflies (such as the holly blue and red admiral) are attracted to the flowers, and the succession of flowering through November and December is important to the survival of queen wasps. As an evergreen and often quite dense plant, ivy is particularly important to birds and small mammals in the winter, when it is also home to hibernating butterflies. It also makes a great ground cover, allowing the Park authorities to cut down on weeding.

Although it is commonly thought that ivy growing on a tree is damaging, it can actually help to protect the trunk by dissipating potentially damaging wind energy, and many trees can survive with large amounts of ivy on them. Regular trimming between September and January will effectively control the plant but result in a loss of its nutrient-rich berries. Always avoid pruning during the nesting months of March to July. Whenever possible, ivy should be left on walls to provide nesting sites for birds and a late nectar source for insects, but it may need to be restrained when growing on buildings, especially on loose brickwork.

Ivy is unusual in that it has two growth forms – juvenile and adult. It may stay in a juvenile form indefinitely, during which time no flowers or fruit are produced. This is the climbing or creeping form when the plant sends out many aerial shoots and suckers. As it matures it takes its adult or arborescent form with no aerial roots, unlobed or slightly lobed leaves arranged spirally around the stem, and the production of flowering stems and then fruits. You can encourage ivy to develop into this more productive and wildlife-friendly form by pulling the top shoots away from their support so that they hang free.

So next time you see ivy wending its way up a tree in the Park, don't worry, but rather think of the tremendous benefit this particular plant will be giving to our wildlife. "Of all the trees that are in the wood, the ivy bears the crown."

Richard Wilson

Brass on the Grass concerts 2011

Four concerts were held this summer on consecutive Sunday afternoons at the Arts and Crafts Shelter in the Upper Arboretum. All were well attended, with an audience of around 300 people at most of the concerts. We were fortunate in that it was only the first concert that suffered any adverse weather, with occasional downpours forcing thirty plus members of the Suffolk Phoenix Band to squeeze into the Shelter (except for the drummer who remained bravely outside with umbrellas sheltering his kit). As I introduced the band (ably conducted by Keith Nice) I was confronted by only half a dozen intrepid individuals, and the band appropriately struck up with *Singing in the Rain*. But the weather improved and a further hundred others joined the audience before more rain brought a slightly early close.

The second week's concert on 24 July was blessed with glorious sunshine. We were entertained by the Ipswich and Norwich Co-operative Band sponsored by the Ipswich Society, who, as in previous years, provided free wine and fruit juice. Their chairman, Jack Chapman, introduced the Society and spoke about their pleasure in annually supporting Brass on the Grass. The band, directed by conductor Rowland Morris, played a very good programme and over 300 people attended. Even the ice cream lady (who had suffered poor sales the previous week and a puncture in her vehicle's tyre) did a 'bomb'.

On 31 July we again enjoyed good weather with attendance matching that of the previous weekend. The Lions Club of Ipswich again sponsored one of our regulars, Stax of Sax led by Adrian Budgen. Laddie Doggett of the Lions Club produced many colourful banners and spoke about their charity work in the town. Speaking of which, we introduced our new FoCP banner this year which proudly displayed our presence to the Park's visitors.

The final concert on 7 August saw another regular band, the Ipswich Hospital Band, conducted by Bernard Westren and sponsored by Scrutton and Bland. Again the audience topped 300 despite the threat of rain. All in all the weather was very kind to us this year and audience numbers probably exceeded those of previous seasons.

I wish to thank first of all Jessica Webster for all her work in arranging the sponsors and bands again this year. Unfortunately, this is the last time that she will be doing this job and we hope that a volunteer from our members will come forward to take over her role (please contact any members of the committee). Her efforts have been much appreciated and her excellent guidance notes she will help to the next person who might take over from her. We must thank too Sam Pollard, Parks Manager, for his assistance and Trevor and James from the Parks staff who covered all four weeks, placing and removing the chairs and generally providing the muscle when needed. Not least we must thank the sponsors of all four concerts and the excellent bands. Thanks also to the members of St John Ambulance Brigade who attended all four concerts, the ice-cream lady, and Ken and Delia who drove our ParkMobile providing much pleasure to the children present. Finally, thanks to those members of the committee who provided back up and hopefully signed up some new members. As for myself, I have thoroughly enjoyed compering these concerts over the past nine years and I look forward to Brass on the Grass 2012.

David Routh

Mabel...

...is back. Do look out for her in her favourite spot near to the Westerfield Road entrance.

Dog mess – a global matter...

Uncollected dog mess in the Park can be both upsetting and hugely annoying. Whilst this is not an easy problem to solve, the Park is now being patrolled, and offenders can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £50 or could face prosecution. But we are not the only ones to have a problem on our hands – or rather, on our feet – and we thought we'd have a look at how other towns around the world been addressing the matter.

Last October we read that officials in Toulouse, France had begun using satellite navigation devices to log the co-ordinates of dog mess on their streets. Police and council staff are using hand-held computers to position and photograph the offending pile and then email the location to street cleaners. The experiment, which Toulouse council said was a world first, came after a flood of complaints about the increasingly dog-fouled streets and followed Paris's former environment head, Yves Contassot claiming that dog mess on the capital's streets was to blame for France not winning the 2012 Olympics. "Paris was the dog poo capital of the world. It was such a problem that the Japanese used it as an argument for opposing our candidacy for the Olympic Games. There were complaints from people all the time. What was worse was that we were mocked around the world for not being able to keep our own pavements clean."

In April, *The Times* reported that the town council of Hernani near San Sebastian in northern Spain had set up a canine DNA database to track down culprits who didn't clear up after their dogs. A byelaw forces owners to register their pet's DNA and then any deposits found in parks or on the streets are collected by a special team and sent off to laboratories at a local university for analysis. Owners of dogs whose DNA match the samples are then tracked down through the database and fined up to €300 euros (£265). Those who refuse to provide DNA analysis of their dogs face similar fines. The separatist Basque party mayor who introduced the initiative said "People should not to have to suffer this filth", but local dog owners are furious at the proposal, arguing that it is unfair, ineffective and very expensive. (The cost of DNA analysis using a saliva or blood sample is around €45 euros (£40) and must be borne by the pet owner.) A local opposition socialist party councillor has said "The whole thing is absurd and will not solve the problem" and argues that the problem had worsened following the council's decision to remove rubbish bins from the streets, leaving nowhere for owners to dispose of the messes. "This council knows only how to make threats and punish people rather than tackle the problems of daily life."

In reporting the same story, *The Daily Telegraph* said "Maybe we can import this idea – but then again, who would want to be a poop sleuth? In Victorian London, there were people known as 'pure finders' who collected dog dung and sold it to the tanning factories. The financial incentive helped to keep the streets clean. Perhaps this trade can be revived, as part of a hi-tech war on the dog-fouling menace. It could, indeed, be a job for Pooperman, Lincoln's anonymous dog-poo crusader, who leaves notes in offending piles to embarrass owners into clearing them up. No doubt it would require a regulatory body – Ofscop, perhaps?"

Dog owners, please remember the law: it is an offence for a dog owner not to clear up after their pet has fouled on a highway, footpath or any open land to which the public has access, subject to a potential maximum fine of £1,000. Additionally, if a dog is dangerously out of control in a public space such as the Park, either the Police or the Council may take legal action that can result in an unlimited fine, or a prison sentence of up to two years, or both.

Sam's Notes

Wow – it has been a bit hectic in the Park recently! What with cycle races, half marathons, filming movies – and all this alongside our normal programme of events.

The filming was both a great experience and a huge challenge. Being the Park Manager, I was allowed on set, ate with the stars (well, from the same food truck) and assisted when asked. I did manage to meet Frances De La Tour, who was wonderful – every bit the fun person I remember from *Rising Damp*. However, it was not all excitement. From the moment the first trucks arrived in the Park, things deviated from the original, carefully drawn-up plan of action. For health and safety reasons Bolton Lane gate had to be closed which caused disruption to an awful lot of people – including myself. Increasingly, more of the Park was cordoned off as it became clear that those parts would be 'in shot' (it wouldn't have been correct to have a WWII memorial in a WWI film...). Obviously, we tried to resolve the various issues and keep the public informed as well, but it was not all good news and we thank you for putting up with the disturbance. It has given us an insight into what is required when the movies come to town and will set us in good stead for any future requests. And there may well be some, as the locations team that visited us were very impressed with the Park and Mansion. Anyway, for now (or rather, sometime in the next 12–24 months) we all need to look out for the release of *Private Peaceful* and head along to see it. Enjoy watching the Park and the Mansion or maybe even keep your eyes out for bloopers (perhaps you can see the modern scaffolding on St Margaret's?). You might well notice some other Suffolk landmarks as much of the filming took place in and around Ipswich. Whatever you look out for, make sure you see the film.

Before all of that we had the Tour of Britain racing through. Another thrilling 10 minutes of my life – dare I say heart stopping, especially as we don't normally allow cycling on that path and they (and the cavalcade of vehicles and police outriders) were travelling at great speed. We have had a display of 15 vintage Rolls Royce cars and of course on Music Day (how long ago that seems already!) we had over 45,000 visitors to the Park.

I have to say that all this just goes to show how popular Christchurch Park is. To many people, the Park **is** Ipswich. We (that is you as the Friends and us as the Borough Council) have to ensure that we maintain this beauty in the heart of our town and protect it from those who may damage it. But we must all keep in the back of our minds that everyone loves Christchurch and when they plan something in Ipswich, this is the place they think of first.

Moving on from all of that, let me take you back to early this summer when we won another Green Flag (many thanks to all the Friends who were involved in meeting the judges). We are pleased to have brought our scores back up again this year but we know that there is still room for improvement and there will always be some work in progress in the Park. Over the coming months we will be looking to restore worn out or damaged patches of grass and improve the landscaping in other areas. Look out for more details on the notice boards or sign up to our electronic "Christchurch Park News" by emailing me at sam.pollard@ipswich.gov.uk.

I hope that you have all enjoyed our late summer sun. Now let's look forward to getting some proper rain over the autumn and winter so that we can green the Park up before another new year is upon us.

Sam Pollard

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16 Arcade Street
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01473 233355
www.woodcockandson.co.uk
(contact John Woodcock)

Ipswich School

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

Gilmour Piper and Associates

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

Scrutton Bland

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

Orwell Veterinary Group

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

Hightop

Domestic & Commercial Window Cleaning
PO Box 612
Ipswich IP2 8WZ
01473 231232
www.hightop.co.uk
(contact Neil Ayers)

W.D. Coe Limited

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

The Will Shop

21 High Street
Ipswich IP1 3QH
01473 233110
www.thewillshop.com
(contact Adam Muldoon)

Kerseys Solicitors

32 Lloyds Avenue
Ipswich IP1 3HD
01473 213311
www.kerseys-law.co.uk
(contact Anthony Wooding)

Christchurch Dental

69 Fonnereau Road
Ipswich IP1 3JN
01473 250977
www.christchurchdental.co.uk
(contact Derek van Staden)

The Greyhound Public House

9 Henley Road
Ipswich IP1 3SE
www.greyhound-ipswich.com
(contact Dan Lightfoot) amend for Jan 2012

Christchurch Park Boules Club

c/o Suffolk Coastal Petanque Alliance
18 Melville Road
Ipswich IP4 1PN
www.suffolkcoastalpetanque.blogspot.com
(contact Simon Fletcher)

Lattice Lodge Guest House

499 Woodbridge Road
Ipswich IP4 4EP
01473 712474
www.latticelodge.co.uk
(contacts [Mosaic Williams and Martin Pike](#))

Portrait of a Park – A year with the wildlife of Christchurch Park

The Friends are delighted to announce the publication of their first book, *Portrait of a Park* by local artist and wildlife expert Reg Snook. Highly informative, hugely entertaining and beautifully illustrated throughout, this 78 page paperback book takes the reader on a journey through the wildlife year and vividly brings to life the sights and sounds of our very special Park.

The book is going to be launched at a Friends event to be held at the Reg Driver Centre at 7.30pm on Wednesday, 23 November. Reg will introduce the book to us and there will be an exhibition of his artworks for sale. Wine and soft drinks will be served.

The retail price of the book is £7.50, but we are very pleased to be able to offer the Friends one free signed copy per household.

There are two ways to claim your book: you can **either** attend the launch on 23 November (it would help if you brought the form below with you) **or** post the form to us. Additional copies can also be purchased at the special launch price of £5 – it will make a fabulous Christmas gift. Proceeds from the sale of the book will be going to help wildlife projects in the Park, and more information on the book can be found on our website: www.focp.org.uk.



There is only one free copy per membership address (corporate members are included) and this is a time-limited offer: we must receive your form by 23 November.

No free or reduced price copies will be available after that date. If you wish to claim your free copy, and to purchase additional copies, please detach and return the form below. There is no charge for postage and packing on these deliveries.

.....
Please send me my one free copy of *Portrait of a Park*

Please also send me additional copies priced at £5 per copy Total £.....

(cheques should be made payable to The Friends of Christchurch Park)

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Please print your name and address clearly and return this form to:

Ann Snook, 5 Manor Road, Ipswich, IP4 2UX