



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2012

Dear Friends,

After the tremendous success of our first book, *Portrait of a Park – A year with the wildlife of Christchurch Park*, which is now into its third printing, has raised over £2,000 for projects in the Park and which is still available from the Reg Driver Centre and all good retail outlets, we are delighted to announce the publication of our second venture, *Portrait of an Owl*. This book, which is inspired by Mabel, the tawny owl that has given so much pleasure to so many, is entertaining, informative and beautifully illustrated by local artist and author Reg Snook. We are pleased again 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 Thursday, 22 November at the Reg Driver Centre (see overleaf for more details). Reg will talk about Mabel and the book, and there will be artwork from it for sale. We will be selling *Portrait of an Owl* 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!



I am writing this piece just a few days before the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 'Great Storm' of the 15/16 October 1987. In that one night, fifteen million trees were felled nationwide, including 235 in the Park. The former sand extraction pit in the north western corner became a tree cemetery and parts of the Park remained closed for many weeks. We are now facing new threats to our trees and these are discussed later in the newsletter. But we also have positive stories to recount, including the tale of an old apple tree that is making its way back to the Park after some 200 years.

Reg Snook's first book included a comprehensive bird list by another FoCP stalwart, Philip Murphy, and we do hope you can join us for Philip's guided bird walk on 27 October. The next two pages of the newsletter have full listings of events in the Park and Mansion this autumn and winter, so don't let the darkening skies and cooler weather dissuade you from visiting the Park in the coming weeks and months.

Richard Wilson

Events this autumn and winter in the Park and at the Mansion

FoCP Bird Walks – Saturdays, 27 October and 23 March 2013 at 9.30am

Isn't it so much easier when someone can tell you what that bird is over there? Even better, if they can tell you how to recognise its distinguishing features so that next time you will know it for yourself? Join our avian expert Philip Murphy for these walks through the Park. Philip will identify all the birds that you will both see and hear, and these FREE events (open to all) promise to be both interesting and informative. Meet at the Reg Driver Centre at 9.30am and bring binoculars if you have them.

Launch of the FoCP book *Portrait of an Owl* – Thursday 22 November at 7.30pm

On the last page of this newsletter you can find out about how to order your free copy of *Portrait of an Owl* by Reg Snook and we would be delighted to see you at the Reg Driver Visitor Centre for the book's official launch. Reg will introduce the publication and there will be illustrations from the book and other 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.

Margaret Catchpole and the Cobbold Family – Daily at the RDVC, 10am to 4pm

Just a reminder that this fascinating display, which includes hundreds of illustrations about Suffolk legend Margaret Catchpole (2012 is the 250th anniversary of her birth) and the Cobbold Family (who gave the Mansion to the Town and who supplied us with beer and football) is open until April. See the FoCP website or call 01473 252435 for details of when the display may be unavailable.

Mildenhall Dish – Tuesday to Sunday until 4 November, 10am to 5pm at the Mansion

Your last chance to see this extraordinary late Roman silver dish unearthed in 1942 in a field near Mildenhall and on loan to us from the British Museum. The large, highly decorated circular platter is finely decorated with images relating to Bacchus and is well worth a visit. Free admission.

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

An opportunity to see snakes, lizards and tarantulas. Free admission. For details, call 01473 252435.

Past Lives – Friday 2 November, 7pm at the Mansion

"The Library is the room I love the most, and when I die it will be here that I haunt" so said a lady of the Fonnereau family in a poem she wrote about her home in the 19th century. Experience the special atmosphere of the Mansion at night after the crowds have gone home, as your guide introduces you to some of the past occupants of the house through portraits and items in the collection. Friends of Ipswich Museums, £8 (£6.50 FoIM members), to include a glass of wine and light refreshments. Meet at the Bolton Lane entrance at 6.45pm. Booking is essential: telephone 01473 433681 or email ericab@btinternet.com.

Annual Fireworks Display – Saturday 3 November

This exciting evening will celebrate 50 years of 007 and the release of the latest Bond film *Skyfall* with over £25,000 of stunning fireworks set to all those favourite James Bond movie themes. For up-to-date ticket and timing information, please see www.ipswichfireworks.co.uk.

Curious Christchurch – Saturday 10 November, 11am at the Mansion

Ever wondered about ISSO? What about Frvgalatem sic ...or that thing on the dining table? A tour around the Mansion to find answers to frequently asked questions. Friends of Ipswich Museums, £4 per head (£3 FoIM members). Booking required: email ericab@btinternet.com or tel 01473 433681.

Remembrance Service – Sunday 11 November at the Cenotaph

The Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor Mary Blake will be attending this service organised by the Royal British Legion and Ipswich Borough Council at the War Memorial. There will be military parades and a civic procession to the Cenotaph before the service commences at 10.50am. After the service the Mayor will take the salute at a March Past near to the Mansion.

Fusion Craft Fair – Saturday 24 November, 10am to 4pm at the RDVC

Craft Fair offering many stalls to browse through. Find a treat for yourself or a Christmas gift for someone else. The proceeds of the raffle will be going to Women V Cancer. Entry free.

Wedding gifts – Saturday 24 November, 11am at the Mansion

Happy Ever After? A quirky look at some of the items in the collection relating to marriage. Friends of Ipswich Museums, details as for 10 November.

Tudor Christmas – Sunday 2 December, 10am to 4pm at the Mansion

Step back in time and experience the festivities of a Tudor Christmas. See craft demonstrations and buy unique Christmas gifts. Meet historical characters and enjoy the dulcet tones of Tudor music in the Great Hall. Make Tudor-inspired Christmas decorations or browse the shop for some unique Christmas presents. Father Christmas will also be in the house (£3 per child – includes gift) for one day only. Craft activities £1.50 per person, otherwise free entry with no need to book.

The Magic Fishbone – 4 December to 13 January, matinee and evening at the Mansion

The ever inventive Red Rose Chain present their enchanting mix of puppetry, music, laughter and mystery in a magical fairy tale suitable for all the family. For details of performances and prices, visit www.redrosechain.com/page/the-magic-fishbone-home or telephone 01473 603388.

The Power of Flowers – Saturday 16 February, 11am at the Mansion

Find out how artists across the ages have used flowers to reflect the lives and fashions of their day on this tour of the Mansion. Friends of Ipswich Museums, details as for 10 November.

PlantTracker

Sam Pollard and his team have been tackling a small area of Japanese knotweed in the Park for a number of years. As well as being a considerable nuisance, invasive non-native plant species such as these are a threat to our wildlife by displacing native species and detrimentally affecting the ecology of many vulnerable habitats. The financial cost to the UK economy is thought to total a staggering £2 billion. The first step in tackling the problem is accurately determining where these plants are and so the Environment Agency, Bristol University and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology have joined forces to help combat the spread of the UK's most problematic invasive plant species. But they need your assistance.

They have launched the PlantTracker app, which shows you how to identify each species and enables you to easily submit geo-located photos whenever you find one. The app features 14 invasive plant species and also includes a "Confusion Species" gallery for each one, to help you separate some of the similar looking plants that you might encounter. They would like you to use the app to build a comprehensive picture of the UK's invasive, non-native plant species, and it is available free from the iTunes App Store and the Android Market, or for more information go to <http://plantracker.naturelocator.org>.

The Fonnereau Nursery and the Ribston Pippin

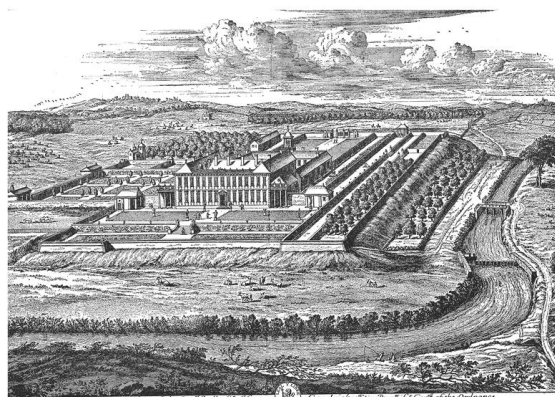
Long before Christchurch Park was acquired for the town at the end of the 19th century, the Fonnereau family, who purchased the Park and Mansion in 1735, had established a large fruit tree nursery on their estate lying to the north of what is now Park Road. When this land was eventually developed in the 1920s, many of the old stock fruit trees were left standing in the gardens of the newly-built houses and in Victoria Nursery on Westerfield Road. In the 18th century, numerous local and new varieties of trees were being created in England, and among these was a type of apple known as the Ribston Pippin. This was first grown in 1709 from one of three apple pips sent from Rouen to Sir Henry Goodricke of Great Ribston Hall at Knaresborough, Yorkshire. The original trunk did not die until 1835. It then sent up a new shoot which lived on the same root until 1928.



Ribston Hall in Knaresborough was erected by Sir John Goodricke in 1647, and stands on the site of a preceptory of the Knights Templar. The chapel to the left of the house has some thirteenth-century fragments dating back to these times. The building, which remains practically unaltered, is an imposing structure with a

long Renaissance facade. The estate was sold in 1836 to Mr Joseph Dent, whose successor family still occupies the house today as a private residence.

The Ribston Pippin (this word comes from 'pépin', the French for 'pip' or 'seed') is thought to be the parent of the Cox's Orange Pippin and thrives in a relatively dry east coast maritime climate. In the 1730's it would have been a new variety that the Fonnereau family would have been keen to establish in Ipswich, and one of these old trees was left standing in the centre of our garden when the house was built in the late 1920s.



And it's still there today though sadly it is now dying back. The picture on the left was taken in the spring some ten years ago when the tree was in blossom. It sits alongside a number of other fruit varieties including a Burrell Red cherry plum, a local Suffolk variety which was developed by the Bury St. Edmunds family later renowned for their steam traction engines. The fruit of the Ribston Pippin are yellow flushed with orange and red and they are sweet, with a flavour of pear.

The apple features in a short poem, *The False Heart*, by Hilaire Belloc:

I said to Heart, "How goes it?" Heart replied:
"Right as a Ribston Pippin!" But it lied.

In the spring of 2011, thanks to the expertise of Paul Read from the Suffolk Traditional Orchard Group, some grafts were taken from this rare old apple with a view to re-establishing the same tree in our garden and in the Orchard established by Sam Pollard in the Park. The grafts are coming along well and although planting in the Orchard won't take place until the apple is a little more robust and mature, we very much hope that this story of continuity will enable the old apple variety to bloom and fruit once again in the Park, some two hundred years after it was first introduced.

Stuart and Pat Grimwade

Trees

After some good news about a new tree for the Park, here is something rather less positive. Recent visitors will be aware of the amount of arboricultural work currently taking place, and most of this is the removal of dead or dying trees. The Park faces two serious issues with its veteran trees. The first is that, although we benefit from having so many mature trees (some hundreds of years old), we must face the fact that such a mature stock inevitably means that some of our most striking trees will soon be reaching the end of their natural lives.

The second problem is the homogeneity of the stock. In a previous newsletter we reported on 'Acute Oak Decline' and now we hear about a deadly fungus affecting ash trees. The Woodland Trust has described this as the next Dutch elm disease and it has wiped out ninety per cent of Denmark's ash trees in just seven years. In the Park, many of our most impressive trees are types of horse chestnut, and this species has been struck both by a leaf miner and, more seriously, by bleeding canker which has spread quickly and is now thought to be affecting more than half of the country's horse chestnuts. Although some appear to be surviving the blight, others are succumbing in just a few seasons. One such is the dramatic specimen in the Wolsey Garden which has died in the past few weeks and which will be removed in the coming days.

Sam Pollard plans to replace dead trees with more diverse species, thus reducing the risk of widespread losses in the longer term. But the felling of such impressive trees seems to affect us in ways hard to explain. Perhaps it is their very evidence of continuity, of their seeming ability to survive the passage of time, which makes their deaths so unsettling, as captured by the Scottish poet William Soutar (1898-1943) in *The Auld Aik* (*The Old Oak*):

The auld aik's doun:
The auld aik's doun:
Twa hunner year it stüde, or mair,
But noo it's doun, doun.

The auld aik's doun:
The auld aik's doun:
We were sae shair it wud aye be there,
But noo it's doun, doun.

Private Peaceful



You may remember that just over a year ago Christchurch Mansion and various parts of the Park were closed for filming. The resulting movie, *Private Peaceful*, has just been released in cinemas with the DVD being made available from the 5th November. According to its producers, "*Private Peaceful* is an independent British production of Michael Morpurgo's classic rites of passage story of two brothers and the exuberance and pain of their teenage love for the same girl, the

pressures of their feudal family life, the horrors and folly of war and the ultimate price of courage and cowardice. It is a gritty and realistic tale of love and death set in the fields of Devon and the WW1 battlefields of Flanders, giving us a heart-breaking glimpse of the way we once lived – and still die." The film stars Jack O'Connell, Alexandra Roach, George Mackay, Richard Griffiths and Frances de la Tour and stills from the movie can be seen on our website. For more information, visit www.imdb.com/title/tt1667439 .

Membership

We are delighted to welcome Thornbank Care Home as a new corporate member of the Friends. We also very warmly welcome the following new Friends: Michael & Crystal Rapley, Mary Smith, Mr & Mrs John Juby, Maureen & Alan Weekes, David Patient, Gary Grayson, The Very Revd. Keith & Mrs Viola Jones, James & Doreen Long, Mrs R Forrest, Eva Joyce, Mrs Cathy Moss, Mr & Mrs D Lewis, Revd. Charles & Mrs Susan Jenkin, Kathleen Daniel, Sue & Humphry Adair, Mary Blake.

New signs for the Park

One of the criticisms levelled by the Green Flag judges in recent years has been a lack of signs announcing the Park. In the next few weeks you will see these green signs appearing by the various entrances and, although they won't necessarily be needed by those of us familiar with Christchurch Park, they will help the many tourists and visitors from out of town.



As many of you are aware, the roads around the bottom of the Park are currently undergoing the first stage of improvement works which include the creation of a new pedestrian crossing and a wider pedestrian refuge at the bottom of Fonnereau Road. After Christmas there will be further construction which will include adding a table top road hump in Soane Street to facilitate pedestrian movements during Park events. Further details can be found at www.ipswich.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=1578&pageNumber=1 .

Opening of the Park's new Butterfly Garden



On Thursday, 6 September the Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor Mary Blake, opened the new butterfly garden in Christchurch Park. This garden is a real example of teamwork. The Friends have long promoted the idea of a butterfly garden in the Park but it only became reality through partnership with members of the 'Green Team' from Ipswich School, who designed the garden and carried out much of the building work (under the watchful eyes of the Park's gardeners), and the Papworth Trust who do so much

for the Park. The result is a stunning sensory garden that looked spectacular in the blazing sunshine at the opening.

The Park was graced not only with the presence of the Mayor, the Headmaster of Ipswich School and representatives of the Green Team, the Papworth Trust, the Friends and Park staff, but also no fewer than six species of butterfly. Pictured here is a comma, feasting on one of the newly-planted buddleias. Benches are on order from Genesis and should be installed in the next few weeks.

Do take a chance to view the garden which can be found at the north end of the Wilderness Pond, adjacent to the croquet lawn.



Cycling's Tour of Britain in the Park



Mark Cavendish and Bradley Wiggins (picture courtesy of Stephen Bell)

Christchurch Park couldn't have looked more beautiful for the hundred or so cyclists who sped through the Park during the first few minutes of this year's Tour of Britain on 9th September. Leaving the Waterfront at 10am, Olympic and Tour de France stars including Bradley Wiggins and Mark Cavendish were out of the Park Road gates by 10.10am, but just had time to appreciate the glories of the Park and the Mansion. The thousands who turned out to cheer on their heroes will also have marvelled at the size of the accompanying entourage, with numerous police outriders and as many bicycles on the tops of team cars as being pedaled by the competitors themselves.

Part four of the history of the Arboretum

Our recent newsletters have looked at the early history of Ipswich's first public park, the Upper Arboretum. This opened to private subscribers in 1851, but it was only in the summer of 1852 that members of the 'public' were first admitted – and then on a very limited basis: from 2 o'clock until dusk on Wednesdays and Sundays for the months of August and September only. Many were calling for open access to the Arboretum, but not everyone was pleased with the experiment. On 14 February 1853 the Rev. H.T. Veness reported to the crowded fifteenth annual meeting of the Ipswich Association for Promoting the Better Observance of the Lord's Day that "To every observant mind it must be evident that Sabbath desecration, in a public form and on a large scale, has of late years become a growing evil... The Committee feel it their duty to protest against the opening of the Arboretum in this town on Sundays, and to express a hope that the directors will not perpetuate the scenes which transpired when it was thrown open to the public on the Lord's day."

Ten days later 'A Working Man' rebutted these comments in a letter to the *Ipswich Journal* commenting that "any one not conversant with the real facts of the case would be naturally led to suppose that the Arboretum, on Sundays, was the arena for all kinds of iniquity and vice, and that the Directors pandered to the public immorality for the sake of gain. Now, that this is the very reverse of the truth, ought to have been perfectly well known to the gentlemen who drew up the Report. The grounds are thrown open *free* to the public, but not until after morning service; and so far from any impropriety being witnessed among the hundreds who have availed themselves of this privilege, I can aver that the greatest decorum has prevailed. I must own that I have passed through the Arboretum on the Sunday afternoon, both in going to and returning from Church – nay, I have even visited it on the Sunday evening (and thought it no sin in so doing)."

The correspondent then outlines what many in the town must have felt: "Some time since, the site of the Arboretum was known as Bolton, an open plot of ground free to the public at all times, and one of the numerous delightful walks around Ipswich which have, one by one, been closed within the memory of people still living. I have never heard it objected by the most rigorous Sabbatarians that a walk in pleasant fields or on a country road on the Lord's day was sinful, and I should be glad would any gentleman of the Committee oblige me by informing me whether the mere fact of Bolton having been enclosed changes that which was before a harmless recreation into a sinful act, and violation of one of God's commandments?... Surely those who would advocate the closing of the Arboretum are the best friends to the gin-drinking and beer-swilling which the tea gardens of public houses offer as the conditions of a walk amid trees and shrubs, instead of our dusty roads and streets 'fanged with murderous stones'."

The 'Working Man' may have wanted the Arboretum to be reopened to the public but its directors needed financial reassurance before they did so. The problem was that they had spent more on creating and maintaining the space than they had received in income from subscribers. They were in a bind: they needed to keep the 'exclusivity' of the gardens to encourage subscribers, yet were coming under increasing pressure to open them up, as evinced by 'Querist' in a letter to the *Ipswich Journal* of April 1853: "Is it not high time that the Arboretum should be again opened for the benefit of the working classes?" Something had to be done and, behind the scenes (as the Borough Council Minutes of 27 April 1853 reveal) some clever manoeuvrings were taking place. In December 1852 the Arboretum Committee, who managed the gardens, proposed a swop – they would hand over the Upper Arboretum to the town if the town leased to them "by way of equivalent a similar quantity of ground at a like nominal rent for building ground". The Council's Estates Committee rejected this initial proposal in January as it would have entailed the loss of rents and also that northern part of

the site which they wanted to keep as “an open pleasure ground” for the inhabitants of the town. The Arboretum Committee came up with an alternative plan “to grant the Corporation a Lease of the land lying between the Henley Road and the Bridleway forming the Western side of the Arboretum, on which a very large outlay has been made, and the piece of land at the north end of the Arboretum intended for a public playground containing together about ten acres, for the term of 75 years at a nominal rent – the Corporation undertaking the management of it and keeping it up for the purpose for which it was intended – in exchange for which it is proposed that the Corporation should grant to the Arboretum Committee a Lease of the piece of land, part of the Handford Hall farm called the ‘Clay Pits’ lying on the East side of the Eastern Union Railway and estimated to contain 7 acres and as much as the field called the 11 acres part of the Handford Hall Farm lying at the junction of the London and Hadleigh Roads as with the Clay Pits will make up 12 acres, for the purpose of building, on a lease for 75 years”.

The Committee considered this amended proposal but, ever conscious of costs, “deemed it prudent to enquire whether there was any means by which the ground could be kept up without entailing an expence [sic] upon the Corporation” and they decided that “an arrangement could easily be made with a respectable nurseryman to take the ground upon lease and keep it up at his own expence in good condition as an Arboretum with some slight modifications and so that the public might at all times have free access thereto subject only to such rules as the Corporation might think fit to impose for the due order of the parties visiting it and for the protection of the property”. There was only one stumbling block. As the “open ground at the North end of the Arboretum” would need to be included for the purposes of a house and land for the nurseryman who would be assuming care of the Arboretum “some provision ought to be made by the Corporation for a public play ground elsewhere” and they suggested “that some portion of the Marsh land now proposed to be let might be advantageously retained for that purpose”. They would lose the annual rent of about £10 but they considered this “a small price to pay for the objects which would be attained namely the securing the Western side of the Arboretum (with an enlargement of it) as a garden for public recreation and securing a play ground for the class of persons requiring it.”

After some deliberations the deal was agreed, and at a stroke the Arboretum’s directors’ problems were solved. They had land to build on to help defray their costs whilst retaining the Lower Arboretum as an exclusive area for the moneyed classes, and they could satisfy the increasing demands of those who wanted access to land that, although historically part of the Fonnereau estate, had long been regarded as ‘public’. As we will see in the next newsletter, a nursery business would soon be established in the northern section of the Arboretum, park lodges built and before the end of the year the gates thrown open to all. In the longer term perhaps the members of the Arboretum Committee did not get such a good deal. The land they gained from the agreement was that part of London Road leading up to the railway line. This now includes the DHL building at the junction of the London and Hadleigh Roads (where the ‘clay pit’ is still evident) and the houses they put up appear to have been destroyed by bombing in the Second World War, perhaps on the night of 10 November 1940 when 39 incendiary bombs fell on Ipswich (including one in the Arboretum itself) or on 6 May 1941 when a high explosive bomb landed in London Road.

In a final twist, the “Marsh land” that the Borough decided should be kept as “a play ground for the class of persons requiring it”, is in fact that area lying north of Russell Road where Suffolk County Council’s headquarters and the practice pitches for Ipswich Town now sit. It seems that Portman Road only developed as the home of Ipswich Town Football Club thanks to these machinations over the Arboretum’s development some 150 years ago.

Richard Wilson

Brass on the Grass concerts 2012

This year four sponsored concerts were organised by our Chairman who continued the good work of our previous concerts' organiser Jessica Webster. They were scheduled to take place somewhat earlier than usual in July so as to avoid clashing with the Olympic Games. Unfortunately, the first concert by the Ipswich and Norwich Co-operative Band sponsored by the Ipswich Society had to be cancelled on the day due to heavy rain – a very rare occurrence in the ten years that we have been promoting these concerts. The refreshments normally provided by the Society were sorely missed; however we very much hope that they will continue their generous support next year.

The second Sunday saw much better weather and, together with our newly-purchased gazebo, we welcomed the Suffolk Phoenix Brass Band to the Arts and Crafts Shelter in the Arboretum. A generous Friend of Christchurch Park, Mr Russell Reeve who together with his wife attended all of our concerts, sponsored the band. Conductor Mr Keith Nice gave, to a sizeable audience, a very informative introduction to each piece played. Ken and Delia provided rides round the Park in the ParkMobile with Ken providing instruction to our new relief driver, Richard Worman. The ice-cream lady sold out, which hopefully made up for the disappointment of the previous week's cancelled concert.

The following Sunday of 22 July was a fine and very warm day when the Ipswich Hospital Band entertained us, generously sponsored by Scrutton Bland. Paddy Gray, their usual conductor, decided to set up the band under an adjacent tree as the Shelter was too small for them all. Paddy then took over the percussion so Bernard Westren could conduct the band, as he did last year. As Ken had to leave early, Delia shared ParkMobile duties with Richard our new driver, giving rides to the children. A good crowd appeared and despite the initial problem of a lack of chairs, finally all went well.

Sadly, dark clouds and rain again threatened the final concert on 29 July. Laddie Doggett (representing our sponsors, the Lions Club of Ipswich) arrived early to set up his tables and memorabilia and agreed that the Stacks of Sax band of eight would all be accommodated inside the Shelter. It was decided that despite the rain and relatively small public turnout Stacks of Sax, conducted by Adrian Budgen, should commence their programme. It was the right decision for, as the rain ceased, the crowds started to appear. Ken Rivers, my photographic friend who often covers these concerts, was delighted with the colourful umbrellas displayed by the gallants who sat through the early showers, and his results below confirm this.



I would like to thank all our generous sponsors for their continued support together with that of the bands, their families and friends. We should also like to thank the St John Ambulance Brigade who turned up (often with several members) to our concerts. Thanks also go to Ken, Delia and Richard Worman for providing the ParkMobile rides for the children and others (somewhat older!), together with our other committee members who kept things ticking over and worked to gain new members. We hope our ice-cream lady made a profit despite the poor weather. Special thanks go to all the Friends and others who came to support our concerts this year despite the many other attractions on offer this summer.

For myself, I have thoroughly enjoyed compering these concerts over the past ten years and I look forward to Brass on the Grass 2013.

David Routh

Christmas lunch – courtesy of the Round Pond

Born in March 1891, Grace Rodwell (née Hubert) was a child in Ipswich during the latter years of the nineteenth century. In handwritten notes she made towards the end of her life that were kindly copied to us by Chris Rapley, she describes coming to the Mansion for cookery lessons: “One day we thought we would explore... We came to a door at the back of the Mansion and one of us opened it and saw a long passage or tunnel. So we walked along ever so far and we were thrilled and excited when seeming to come from nowhere was a man. He was furious! He shouted ‘how dare you, come here, get out! I’ll tell your teacher when she comes back and you will be punished.’ How disappointed we were – we would have liked to have known where that passage led to.”

She also tells of how her family was supplied with Christmas lunch courtesy of Mr Damant who was the first Attendant when the main Park was opened to the public in April 1895. Although Mr Damant had a budget of £500 he clearly used his position to supplement his income: “My father had a friend named Mr Damant who was caretaker and supervisor of Christchurch Mansion and Park and every Christmas he would sell my father a sygnet [sic] from the round pond. I remember this hung on a hook of the kitchen door until Mother and Father plucked it. It hung from almost the top of the door to the bottom. While it was being plucked we were told to keep out of the kitchen. I remember I opened the door once and it looked like a snow storm. Mother and Father each sat on a chair with the sygnet lying across their laps plucking away for all they were worth. The sygnet had to be taken to a bakers shop at the corner of Tomline Road to be roasted in their big oven.”

The mute swan had been declared a ‘Royal bird’ in the Middle Ages which meant that the monarch owned all the swans in England unless he or she chose to give them to someone else. When she first came to the throne, our current Queen would have been entitled to eat her swans, but changes in legislation since then have protected mute swans as an endangered species. She maintains the right to own all the swans in the land but only enforces this right on the Thames. The Master of the Queen’s Music, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, got into a good deal of trouble in 2005 when he found a dead whooper swan near his home on the island of Sanday in the Orkneys and made a terrine from it.

Whether Mr Damant would have been found guilty of theft or treason is a moot point...

Richard Wilson

Sam's Notes

What a great time we have all had over this summer! The Jubilee, the Olympics and Paralympics, other sporting successes and of course the sun even came out few times. Christchurch played its part in celebrating some of these great events and, at the very least, it was somewhere where everyone could compete in their own sporting fun.

Earlier in the year we added the Park Run, a 2.5km way marked trail around the Park. Now, thanks to Councillors Cann and Lockington, we have a few pieces of trim trail on which to 'work out'. Please feel free to go and try out the equipment – it is there for all ages. Oh, and just in case the codes catch you out, each site suggests what a B = Beginner, I = Intermediate or E = Expert should be able to do. Just make sure that you do some warm up exercises first!

We have just started working on a substantial landscaping project in the Mayors' Walk area of the Lower Arboretum. This is connected to the project to restore the Mayors' plaques which has been carried out by the Friends and funded by a generous grant from the Ipswich Society, but it involves working on all the surrounding shrubberies. Many of these are overgrown and infested with weeds and bracken which bring about all sorts of difficulties from a management and maintenance point of view as well as looking quite messy and uncared for. Our aim is to reduce the size of the overgrown or straggly shrubs, in particular where growth is stunted by overhanging trees. We are looking to reconfigure a few of the shrubberies, lay some areas of grass amongst the shrubs and replace some of the Mayors' dead trees. Once all of the areas have been landscaped we will then be putting back the plaques which have already been lovingly restored (at the Kirton forge) and repainted. This work, combined with the mulching of the rockery, should make a great improvement to this whole area.

In the last few weeks we have also been doing a bit of plumbing – on a grand scale. Two of our drainage pipes had burst and were causing holes to appear every time it rained. We have now replaced the broken pipes and so should not be suffering from these problems any more.

For those of you who regularly use the 'Purple Shop' entrance you will be pleased to hear that work should be commencing on the replacement fence in the very near future. The existing dilapidated and inappropriate fence is to be replaced with the same style as that of the rest of Fonnereau Road. Although this has taken some time to get done it should be completed soon and will be well worth waiting for.

I wasn't going to mention the roadworks, but I will. Just to say that when fully complete we will have a complementary road surface outside of the Soane Street entrance. This is great and is something that is being funded by the town-wide improvements. Hopefully this will really help to improve the appearance of the southern approach to the Park.

Finally, I want to remind/reiterate the news about *Private Peaceful*. The film is now out and can be seen at the Ipswich Film Theatre from 26 October until 1 November. The Mayor tells me that it is a little tearful but well worth it. Why not go and see your own Park on the big screen?

Sam Pollard
Area Supervisor Christchurch Park & Central

Corporate Members

Woodcock & Son

Estate Agents

16 Arcade Street
Ipswich IP1 1EP
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

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)

Thornbank Residential Home

6 Westerfield Road
Ipswich IP4 2UJ
01473 253346
www.greensleeves.org.uk/carehomes/thornbank
(contact Cathy Greef)

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
01473 252862
www.thegreyhoundipswich.co.uk
(contact Dan Lightfoot)

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 an Owl – My tales of Mabel and other owls

We are delighted to announce the publication of our second book, *Portrait of an Owl* by resident author, artist and wildlife expert Reg Snook. Inspired by Mabel, the tawny owl of national fame who for some years has graced the Park with her presence, Reg takes us into the magical and intriguing world of owls. Educational yet very personal, *Portrait of an Owl* is beautifully illustrated throughout with drawings, cartoons and exquisite paintings.

We are launching the book at a Friends' event to be held at the Reg Driver Centre at 7.30pm on Thursday, 22 November. Reg will talk about Mabel and introduce the book, and there will be illustrations from the book 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 22 November (it would help us 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 22 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:

FoCP Book Offer, 5 Manor Road, Ipswich, IP4 2UX