



SPRING NEWSLETTER – February 2015

Dear Friends,

One of the wonderful things about having access to a glorious park such as ours is the appreciation of the seasons, of time passing, and the knowledge that with the spring comes renewal. And so it is with a group such as the Friends. You will notice that we now have a bright new logo, and in this newsletter you will find out much more about how the Park is changing, subtly and incrementally perhaps, but changing nonetheless. After eight hugely enjoyable years (and, according to my computer, over 8,000 emails...) it is time for change at the Friends and I will be standing down from the committee at our AGM on 24 March. I am hugely proud of everything we have achieved over that time: the four tremendous books; the website; the lobbying on important matters such as 24-hour opening and saving the Park lodges from being sold off. Now, with membership standing at over 400 for the first time including our 18 corporate members, the Friends are very well positioned for the future.

Recent weeks have seen some long-standing projects reach fruition. No pun is intended with regard to the splendid new interpretation sign for the Orchard, a creative partnership between the Friends (notably our resident artist and wildlife expert Reg Snook), Ipswich School's 'Green Team' and Ipswich Borough Council. The Orchard is named after David Mapus-Smith who worked in IBC's Property Services until his early death in 2009, and the sign has been very generously supported by our corporate member Landex Living who recently developed the water tower site on Park Road.



Another long-term project nearing completion is the renewal of the Mayors' Walk – you can read about this later in the newsletter.

I would like to put on record my thanks to Alan Gilbert and Sam Pollard for working so closely with us, and to all the members of the Friends' committee (particularly our tireless secretary Ann Snook) for all they do to ensure that the Park flourishes. Of course the most important partners are you, the members, and I very much hope that you will use the information on the back page to renew your membership now, and continue to help support "the jewel in Ipswich's crown".

Richard Wilson

Friends' events this spring

Saturday 21 March 9.30am – Spring Bird Walk

After the dark and gloom of winter we hope this walk will see a gorgeous spring day on which to enjoy the Park's varied birdlife before the trees come fully into leaf. Meet at the Reg Driver Centre at 9.30am and bring binoculars if you have them. Free and open to all.

Tuesday 24 March 7.30pm – The AGM of the Friends of Christchurch Park

We hope that you will join us at the Reg Driver Centre for a glass of wine and a discussion of what the Friends have been working on over the past year. Wildlife and Education Ranger Joe Underwood will be there to talk about his projects in the Park and across the town. Limited car parking is available at the RDVC via the Bolton Lane entrance.

Saturday 2 May 4.30am to 6.30am – Dawn Chorus Walk

Enjoy the wonderfully varied wildlife of the Park as the sun rises, and learn more about these creatures with wildlife expert Joe Underwood. Assemble at the north end of the Bridle Way, where it meets with Henley Road. Binoculars and warm clothing are recommended. Free and open to all. Breakfast follows at the Woolpack, for which a modest charge will be payable on the day.

What's on at the Mansion?

7 February 2015 to 31 January 2016 – Aspire: The Year of Constable

Throughout 2015 the Mansion is hosting Constable's masterpiece *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*. This display, with associated activities listed below, is part of Aspire, a partnership programme enabling audiences of all ages to enjoy and learn more about the work of John Constable by touring the stunning 6ft tall picture to five UK institutions. Aspire is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Art Fund.

Thursday 19 and Friday 20 February – Printing workshops

Learn more about John Constable's work by designing and creating your own printed landscape to take home. All materials provided. Sessions at 10.30, 11.30, 12.30, 2 and 3. £3 per child. Booking is required by visiting www.ipswich.gov.uk/museums or by calling 01473 433691.

Friday 20 February – Meet John Constable

Meet the young artist John Constable – find out about his life, how hard he has worked to become an artist, and about his hopes for his future career. Drop-in sessions at 10.30, 11.30, 12.30, 2, 3. Free.

Saturday 7 March – Days with Dad: Mother's Day gifts

Make Mum a special Mother's Day present – choose smaller individual items like bracelets or candles to decorate, or create a whole family gift like a willow lantern or ceramic plate. Sessions at 10.30–12.30 or 1.30–3.30. £5 per family (up to four children). Booking advisable, details as above.

Wednesday 1 and Thursday 2 April – Clay flora paperweights

Using clay and a range of flowers to imprint patterns, create your own fabulous paperweight or fridge magnet to take home and paint once dry. Drop-in at 10.30–12.30pm and 1.30–3.30pm. £3 per child.

Thursday 9 and Friday 10 April – Cloud pictures

Work with an artist to create amazing mixed media artwork inspired by clouds and the sky. All materials provided, just bring your imagination. Sessions at 10.30, 1 and 3 (approx. 90mins). £2 per child. Booking required, details as above.

The Park's Tree Donations

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Trees (1913) by Joyce Kilmer, American writer and poet, born 6 December 1886,
killed in action on 30 July 1918 at Seringes-et-Nesles, France

In the last newsletter I wrote about my experiences of the 'Great Storm' that hit Ipswich in the early hours of 16 October 1987. There were thankfully no fatalities or serious injuries that night as most of Ipswich was still in bed. The few chimneys that fell and roof tiles that went flying could easily be repaired, but an uprooted tree takes longer to replace. It was not until 2003 that I donated funds to replace the monkey puzzle tree (shown uprooted on page 112 of David Miller's excellent *Ipswich Arboretum*) with a hardy youngster. This was in memory of my late mother who had passed away some years before. And it was not until a couple of months ago that I had my late father's tree added to keep my mother's company. At last the six monkey puzzles that were lost that night 27 years ago have been replaced.

There are two beautifully written Tree Donation Registers on view at the Reg. Driver Centre for anyone who is interested to see who has given what and on which occasion. Trees have in fact been donated to 27 public places in Ipswich, not just Christchurch Park, including a tulip tree in the town centre. In fact there is one whole volume devoted to the other streets, parks and recreation grounds of the town. However, here I am going to draw just from the second book which is devoted to Christchurch Park and the Arboretum.

Entry number 1: the first of many for autumn 1988, small leafed lime by the *Evening Star*.

Entry 111: April 1992, magnolia and roses "In memory of my beloved dog 'Super'." And I used to think that the dog walker was calling out "Super, Super" at the beautiful surroundings...

Entry 125: March 1993, common beech from Bretts of Ipswich and furniture makers Ercol of High Wycombe, to mark the visit to Ipswich by the Ercoleni Family.

Entry 129: November 1993, horse chestnut "For Bill, I think I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree".

Entry 241: June 1998, red oak. "The Rotary Club of Ipswich Massachusetts presents this American Oak to Ipswich East Rotary Club and to all the citizens of Ipswich, England as a symbol of fellowship and friendship which exists between the two communities and its people."

Entry 321: February 2006, flowering cherry "In memory of Vera Kent, 13.08.1908–21.06.2004. Vera loved the Arboretum especially the early spring blossoms, the bird life and the occasional red squirrel."

A tree donation can be for many reasons: a life shared, a life well spent or a life cut short; lives sacrificed for others; happy memories or a milestone reached; or just the joy of giving. The tree is a living link to the past and the future and without these donations Ipswich would be a poorer place. Young trees given a fighting chance to survive to maturity are not inexpensive; a young native tree will usually cost up to £200, a more exotic tree, perhaps originally sourced far from here, may be closer to £500. Nor are there gift-aided tax advantages to the donor. But once planted, the tree will be recorded with its unique number on a map in the Ipswich Tree Donations book, so your or your kin or friends' children and children's children can revisit the tree in the years to come. There is a good chance that a one-time investment will yield steady growth and enjoyment for the rest of the 21st century and beyond.

The Friends have contributed £1,000 towards the Park's new trees this past year, thanks to the generosity of our members and donations including the owl box; well done children!

Rowell Bell

Redwood Appeal for Ipswich Arboretum

Ipswich Arboretum is a very special place. Since the publication of my book late last year (over 500 copies have already gone in two months, so thank you very much if you have bought one), it appears to have become even more popular and there have been a good number of tree donations to the Arboretum and the Park this winter, which is wonderful news.

Last autumn my family and I spent a delightful day at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew. One of the highlights was walking through their Redwood Grove – an area of mixed Wellingtonia (also known as giant redwood, number 99 on the book's Tree Trail) and coast redwood (number 82) which was planted in the 1860s. The Wellingtonias (my favourite species of tree) are the largest trees on earth, and the coast redwoods are the tallest. These are very special and very long-lived trees.

I have had an exciting idea for a very special project which I would like to share with you and ask if you might like to join me. My idea is to recreate our very own 'mini' Redwood Grove. To do this we will probably need to have six trees (although more would of course be better). £200 buys a tree and my wife Sarah and I will start the ball rolling with one Wellingtonia to commemorate the book's publication. Rowell and JoAnne Bell have also very generously agreed to donate one.

When you consider that these trees can live for thousands of years, I believe it would be a wonderful legacy which could be enjoyed by countless future generations of Ipswichians. I have discussed this with Steve Leech, IBC's Tree Inspector, based at the Reg Driver Centre, and he is thrilled with the idea. He and his team will order the trees and arrange for them to be planted.



The 'General Sherman' (far left), a Wellingtonia in the Sequoia National Park, California, is the largest tree on earth. It has a height of 275 feet (83.8 metres) and is estimated to be over 2,000 years old.



By comparison, to the right (and shown approximately to scale) is Ipswich Arboretum's tallest tree (photograph courtesy Rebecca Miller). This Wellingtonia, with a height of 92 feet (28.1 metres), is a 'baby' by comparison at just 152 years old!

If you would like to join us by donating a redwood I would be delighted to hear from you. The tree planting season ends in March, so if you would like to take part in this exciting opportunity, please let me know as soon as possible, and no later than 28 February. I can be contacted by email at windy200.miller@btinternet.com or by mobile on 07528 713047.

David Miller

The Mayors' Walk

At last... Some eight years after the state of the Mayors' plaques was first raised with us, they have finally been repositioned, in chronological order, along the Mayors' Walk in the Lower Arboretum (historically they been randomly positioned). This major project, aided by a very generous grant from the Ipswich Society, saw us take numerous plaques to Kirton Forge for repair and the addition of long "anchor legs" to deter theft. Following repainting, they have now been put in place thanks to the hard work of Trevor Cocker and Dan Wardley (pictured below).



The next stage will be to create some interpretation for the plaques, perhaps including short histories of each of the over 80 Mayors represented. It would be splendid to also replace the six missing plaques, although at a cost of around £300 each, this may not happen soon.

Our special thanks to the Ipswich Society for their support, and to Trevor, Dan and all of Alan's team who have brought this project to fruition.



Where have all the birds gone?

“European birds are declining at an alarming rate, and much of this decline has been attributed to decreases in the number of farmland birds caused by agricultural intensification.” So say researchers at Exeter University working with the RSPB who report that there were 421 million fewer birds in Europe in 2009 than there were 30 years earlier. The estimated decline is said to be from 2,063,173,982 to 1,641,329,711 individuals (though these do seem to be peculiarly exact figures...). Around 90% of these losses were from the most common 36 species, with big losses noted in the numbers of skylarks, house sparrows and starlings.

The scientists analysed data on 144 species of European birds collected from numerous surveys in 25 different countries and much of the information was provided by thousands of volunteer fieldworkers who identified and counted birds in the areas where they lived. The report (which you can find at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ele.12387/full>) hints at what this decline means for humans and our environment: “Potential declines in common birds are also important as a growing body of evidence suggests that birds play vital roles in the structuring and functioning of ecosystems and that declines in their numbers will likely reduce key ecosystem processes and services including decomposition, pest control, pollination and seed dispersal.”

On the plus side, not all common bird numbers are declining: populations of great tits, blue tits, robins and blackbirds are all going up. The study also reports that less abundant species such as marsh harriers, ravens, buzzards, storks and stone curlews are actually doing much better, probably due to the impacts of direct conservation action. According to the researchers, this suggests that conservation directed at wider-scale environmental improvement including urban green space projects and effective environmental schemes aimed particularly at farmland could make a huge difference.

These fluctuations in numbers can be seen in our own Christchurch Park of course, as Reg Snook and Philip Murphy reveal in their splendid recent study of our local avian populations, *Portrait of the Birds*. Reg, with his usual style and beautiful illustrations, talks about our changing avian landscape – and makes some suggestions about what we might do to maintain the biodiversity of species that we all cherish. This book, the third in the FoCP's *Portrait* trilogy about wildlife in Christchurch Park, is available from Smiths, Waterstones, the Tourist Information Centre and the RDVC for just £7.50, with all proceeds going directly to the Friends.

Richard Wilson

Have this newsletter delivered straight to your inbox

Last year we began offering this newsletter electronically to those who would like to receive it this way. We are delighted that so far 30 members have chosen this method of delivery, saving us a great deal of money on printing costs and postage that can be better put into projects in the Park. Our updated website (www.focp.org.uk) now also provides opportunities for new members to join using PayPal if they wish.

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter instead of a hard copy in the future, please email Corinna Hudson at corinna@focp.org.uk with your name, preferred email address and correspondence address (which will ensure that we have the right person).

A good read: *Cobbold & Kin* by Clive Hodges

The Friends of Christchurch Park published not one but two books on the Park and the Arboretum at the end of last year, and many members took advantage of obtaining free or discounted copies. If you read David Miller's splendid *Ipswich Arboretum* you will know that by the last decade of the 19th century it was in safe hands; but the same was not true of Christchurch Park and the Mansion. In fact, had it not been for Felix Thornley Cobbold buying the Mansion and the estate around it, there would be no Mansion or collection of famous paintings therein, just rows and rows of houses.

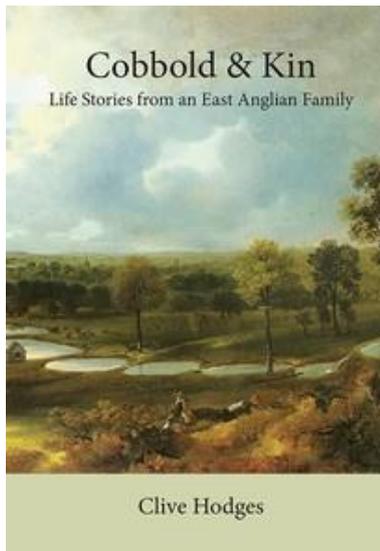
The Christchurch Park estate, which had been in the Fonnereau family for 250 years, was put up for sale. In 1894 a syndicate bought it and started to develop the land on the Park's fringes. The Council bought 51 acres, not including the Mansion and surrounding grounds, and when it transpired that the syndicate planned to demolish the Mansion and develop the remaining land, Felix intervened and bought what was left. He then wrote to the town's Mayor: "I desire to offer the property to the inhabitants of Ipswich as a free gift", but only if the Council bought the land. Further negotiations led to the house becoming the museum housing archaeological artefacts and paintings that we know today.

The town council made Felix Mayor in 1897, and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations were a resounding success, the highlights being festivities in Christchurch Park with over 10,000 excited children converging there carrying banners. Not even a violent thunderstorm dampened spirits. As Felix's year in office drew to a close, a fine portrait of him by John Collier, paid for by public subscription, was unveiled at the Mansion where he greets you still.

That is Christchurch Park's link to the Cobbold family, and we and our colleagues at the Friends of Ipswich Museums work to conserve and build upon Felix's generous gift (just one of many to the local community I should add). But Felix is just the tip of the Cobbold family iceberg as there is so much more in Clive Hodges' splendid *Cobbold & Kin*, going as far back to William Cobbold, silversmith of 16th-century Norwich.

There are the Cobbolds who grew with the British Empire leaving our shores for the colonies and dominions, overcoming great personal adversity during the early years. There is even a link with Lillie Langtry, the daughter of the Dean of Jersey who acquired the unholy nickname of 'the Dirty Dean': the book will tell you why. It is well balanced, each chapter filling a gap or two in my knowledge bank, making the next chapter a new experience. I will just give just two examples: Swing Riots and 'Blackbirding' are not playground disputes or watching out for our feathered friends. The Reverend William Rust Cobbold of Selbourne, Hampshire had been "ill qualified to bear kindly and patiently with little ignorant boys" as a schoolmaster and he was worse as a vicar to his flock, so much so that the 'Tithe' riots of 1830 arrived at his door. Many of the rioters ended up being transported to Australia in 1831. As for William, I will just say that he caught a packet ten years later. Blackbirding in Melanesia may have been the reason of Bishop John Coleridge Patterson, who was in the wrong place and the wrong time in September 1871. Blackbirding was recruiting native labourers into what amounted to slavery working on plantations in Fiji. Bishop Patterson had come to Nukapu for volunteers for his mission, unaware that Blackbirders had abducted a number of young men from the island.

This book will fill many such gaps and bring the world and the past few hundred years to your chair, even if it might also bring home the bad and the ugly deeds done by us as well as the good. Enough said, you need to read and enjoy and think, and not least be inspired



by the spirit to keep going and overcome setbacks shown repeatedly in *Cobbold & Kin*. The book cover is not of Christchurch Park of course, but if it were not for Holy Wells, we wouldn't have the Cobbolds in our part of East Anglia, or be lucky enough to have our Park as we know it.

Congratulations to the author Clive Hodges, and to Anthony Cobbold and the Cobbold Family History Trust.

Cobbold & Kin by Clive Hodges, with a Foreword by John Blatchly, is published by Boydell & Brewer and is available for £25 from all good bookshops and also from www.cobboldfht.com.

Rowell Bell

A baby hedgehog in the Park

Last September a lady came into the Reg Driver Centre holding a shoe box containing a baby hedgehog. She had found it on Bolton Lane and said it was about to wander out onto the road. After much discussion and deliberation she finally decided it was best to leave Spike, as we'd now named him, with us (he was rather cute and adorable...). I promptly marched over to Bolton Lane Stores to buy some meat based dog food and hot dog sausages which are what we use for our hedgehog survey tunnels – do speak to me if you would like a hedgehog kit for your garden.

I phoned Suffolk Wildlife Trust for contact details of somebody to take him off our hands but was promptly told that all the local sanctuaries were full. I took this as good news, for hedgehogs have become quite rare and the fact that they were full indicates that they'd had a good breeding season. Because of his small size of c.400g we fed him up on slugs and meal worms to increase his survival chances, but we kept him outside so as not to denaturalize him. He is currently enjoying a long winter sleep in our apprentice's garden!



Here are a few points to summarise what you should and shouldn't do if you have hedgehogs in your garden or find yourself with a Spike:

To help make your garden hedgehog friendly:

- leave a compost heap in your garden. Hedgehogs like vegetation heaps and these can be augmented with the insertion of an open tube or a box such as a hedgehog house.
- leave an entrance gap under a fence or other boundary to let hedgehogs move around different gardens. These animals have a large home range and connectivity between habitats is important. A male hedgehog can travel 3km in an evening and your garden is safer than the local road!
- put a ramp in your pond if you have one. Although hedgehogs can swim they are unable to climb steep pond walls. Alternatively, a good cover of marginal vegetation will allow the animal access to and from the water.
- allow more wild areas in your garden. Although hedgehogs will feed on short lawns at night, cover such as hedges and trees are important places for hedgehogs to seek refuge and allow them to travel unseen by potential predators.
- hedgehogs hide in heaps of garden waste so always check before starting bonfires.
- try not to use slug pellets.

If you do find a hedgehog, it may need your help only if:

- it appears to be injured in any way.
- it is out in the open during the day (hedgehogs should be tucked away under cover when it is light otherwise they are vulnerable to predators).
- it is under 600grams in the autumn or winter. Adult hedgehogs may have a second brood later in the year, but these are considerably smaller with a substantially higher mortality rate.

If any of the above apply it may be best to contact a wildlife sanctuary, but if you are able to look after it yourself:

- give your hedgehog water.
- feed it meat-based dog food or hot dog sausages (high protein for fast growth).
- unless it is still really small in around November time, try to keep your hedgehog outside so as not to denaturalize it.
- do not give your hedgehog bread or milk.
- do not release a hedgehog too close to any main roads or badger setts.
- do not remove a hedgehog from a nest.

Much more information about how to care for sick or injured hedgehogs can be found at www.sttiggywinkles.org.uk or you can email me for help at joe.underwood@ipswich.gov.uk

Joe Underwood, Wildlife and Education Ranger

Notes from Alan Gilbert, Park Manager

The "Park Run" has returned to Christchurch Park, with free, 5K timed runs held at 9am every Saturday morning until 28 March. You are asked to register before your first run, and to do this, or to find out more information, go to www.parkrun.org.uk/ipswich. The runs are organised entirely by volunteers, so please email ipswichhelpers@parkrun.com if you can offer your assistance.

Unfortunately the Star Gazing event on the 31 January had to be postponed due to inclement weather. It has now been rescheduled to Saturday 28 February.

We now have a quote to replace the water supply to the Westerfield Road toilets that have been closed since the summer. The works will go ahead as soon as the funding has been agreed. This has turned out to be a major problem requiring excavation and we apologise for the inconvenience the closure has caused. The waterfall pipe from the Wilderness Pond has had extensive works recently to gain a full flow and maintain the water level within the pond. Repairs to the pipes leading from the Peace Garden across the Park have also been carried out, including jetting and lining. We are working on the rat problem.

We are continuing to renew our tree stock, with more than 20 (among them foxglove and handkerchief trees) recently planted, including 10 financed by the Friends. Some species, such as a stone pine, have not been planted here before. We have done more infill shrub planting this winter to bulk up sparse shrubberies and maintain a good range of plants.

Temporary chess-pale fencing sections were erected along the eastern boundary of the Park to catch leaves that would otherwise have blown into Westerfield Road. This safeguard was not fully tested this winter as the leaves did not blow in large quantities as in previous years. The fencing has now been removed.

We have again submitted our application for a Green Flag.

Alan Gilbert, Area Supervisor, tel 01473 432473, email alan.gilbert@ipswich.gov.uk

Notes from Joe Underwood, Wildlife and Education Ranger

I thought I would give you a few examples of the work we have done in the Park over the past year or so. As you will see, it is a mixture of hosting events for people and trying to make the environment of the Park more conducive to hosting wildlife.

We have held two corporate responsibility groups, from Axa and from Catlin finance. Together we worked on the Rockery, constructed stock dove boxes and stag beetle habitat piles (which can be seen at the top end of the Park) and painted benches in front of the Mansion and in the area of the Round Pond. We were joined by members of the Wildlife Trust for a wildlife gardening event, making bird boxes and hedgehog houses. In May we saved a juvenile great spotted woodpecker that had fallen out of its nest. We rehabilitated the bird and released it back into the Park the following month. The alder tree in the Wet Meadow had to be cut down due to its dangerous condition, and the Wet Meadow itself was cut twice to remove excessive nutrients that are detrimental to the species we wish to encourage. We were helped by Ipswich School's "Green Team" who also removed small sycamore and laurel trees in the Wildlife Reserve to favour native species and ground flora. They also built bird and bat boxes and helped clear footpaths. They have helped create the new orchard sign (see below) and this coming year we will be working with them to install interpretation signs for the Wet Meadow.

Six brownie groups and twelve different school groups attended educational events in the Park last year and our "Scales and Tails" event in the RDVC was attended by over 150 people. We will soon be welcoming visits from St. Albans and St. Helens Schools and are looking forward to the Eco Network launch event on 25 May which will also involve the Ipswich Wildlife Group, Greenways Project, RSPB and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Two other wildlife-themed nature events are in the planning phase – announcements to follow.

FoCP Autumn Bird Walk – 25 October 2014

Philip, our usual leader, was unfortunately unable to be present on this walk – how we missed his articulate descriptions of the Park's avian dwellers! We also missed Philip's mimicking of his beloved stock doves. It was left to me to try and find something of interest to say to the twenty four and a half bird fanciers who assembled at the RDVC on a lovely sunny autumn morning. (The 'half' was a four-year-old boy whose knowledge of birds kept my brain racing!)

Those of us who arrived by the Westerfield Road entrance paid our respects to Mabel who was looking resplendent and almost asleep – or should that be almost awake? Autumn is usually regarded as the best time for fungi foraging and quite close to Mabel's tree was a clump of field mushrooms. Even more spectacular were the several parasol mushrooms discovered near to the Park's iron fencing. These large mushrooms are so aptly named.

The Round Pond was devoid of birds apart from two, just two, Canada geese; a rather inauspicious start to the walk. Still, it was a lovely morning. The Wilderness Pond was far more rewarding with mallard, moorhen, Canada geese and Mandarins, all affording good views. Despite the many anti-feeding notices, food is still thrown to the wildfowl and so it is therefore possible to see these birds at very close range. However, bread strewn about so liberally is not only bad for the birds but encourages rats, and we saw some very large rats! We also saw cormorants. Two of these large birds were perched on the upper branches of an oak overhanging the water. One continually yawned, very amusing, whilst the other stood motionless with its wings outstretched. The young boy in our party loved the cormorants so all was as it should be. However, the excitement quickly reached new heights as, after telling everyone that we might just get a glimpse of a kingfisher, this magnificent metallic blue and orange bird flashed across the pond and then spent several minutes perched on a wooden rail nearby. Kingfishers are always spectacular.

Songbirds, apart from robins and wrens, were at a premium so I owe a debt of gratitude to naturalist Richard Stewart who described the new butterfly garden and then talked about the different species of butterflies to be seen in our Park. We even saw a couple of them. Numbers of birds seen were not outstanding but at least we were able to discuss the birds that could or might be seen, the various Park habitats and also appreciate the beauty of the many species of trees. A slight damper on proceedings was the fact that three of us trod in dog poo but, remarkably, we did actually see a dog on a lead in the Wildlife Reserve.

We did miss Philip and, hopefully on our Spring Bird Walk which will be held at 9.30am on Saturday 21 March, normality will be resumed.

Reg Snook

New membership leaflet

We would very much like to thank Clare Thornhill of fli design who gave considerable time and attention to the design of our new membership leaflet. Despite having now topped 400 members for the first time, we would like more people to know about the Friends, so do please pick up some of these leaflets from the Reg Driver Centre and pass them on to anyone who might be interested.

Time to reward park volunteers – with hard cash?

According to a report from Policy Exchange, “the UK’s leading think tank” and an organisation close to Downing Street, Council Tax rebates worth up to £1,500 a year could be given to volunteers who help to clean up parks and green spaces. Their report released last August suggests that “green guardians” who offer their time to maintain parks, allotments and cemeteries (like members of the Friends who work in Christchurch Park) should be properly rewarded.

Local authorities could set the discount rate themselves, basing it on hours spent volunteering or setting a minimum number of hours necessary for volunteers to qualify for the rebate. They say that this would not only provide a solution to the declining number of park rangers, but would encourage people of all ages, backgrounds and income groups to become actively engaged in their local communities.

The report highlights the benefits of parks and urban green spaces, and says that providing free outdoor space helps both physical and mental health. However it points out that local authority spending on open spaces was cut by 10.5% between 2010/11 and 2012/13 and there was no ring-fencing to protect green land. “Combined with the increasing demand for housing and other urban development there is a risk that the UK’s parks will deteriorate or become spaces that are the preserve of the wealthy,” the report says. Another (perhaps less welcome) suggestion is for a tax to be levied on residents who live near a park, with the cash being used to help maintain it. Those who could not afford to pay would be exempt.

Katherine Drayson, the author of the report, said: “The time has come for radical new thinking to safeguard our parks and make them more accessible.”

New members

We are delighted to welcome as new corporate member of the Friends Nicholas Jacob Architects and AXA Liabilities Managers (AXA LM), an AXA Group company specialising in non-life (re-)insurance legacy business acquisition and management.

We also give a warm welcome the following new household members who bring our total membership to over 400 for the first time:

Gillian Reid, Mrs R Reynolds, Carl Ross, Mrs Susan Chaffey-Slade, Corinna Hudson, Malcolm Fewkes, Mr C P L Wood, Paul Bourner, Sarah Jenkins, Maggie Lawler, Anne Leonard, David Beckett, Deborah Godward, Karen & Richard Bainbridge, Hugo Linnett, Simon Sparrow, Nick Wilcox, Richard Allen, Val Becker, Barney Butler, Rodney Cook, Tony Cox, Dr B J Godbold, Mr Herbert Golding, Louis Gooch, Mrs Margaret Goulding, Marvin Grimwood, Neil Jerrett, Robert Judd, Mrs R Martin, Martin Minta, Mary Alice Nunn, Mrs L Perrins, Lauren Roberts, David Shiplee, Sandi Sims, Christine Walsh, Sheila Westall, Dorothea Bonney, Lesley Southgate, Lynn & James Hayward, Brian Eric Robinson, Sally Stranix, Erica and Terry Burrows

The Ipswich & Suffolk Club, one of our corporate members, has kindly offered to show a limited number of FoCP members around their impressive premises. We hope this will take place one mid-morning in the spring. If you might be interested in such a tour, please contact Robert Fairchild on 254255 or email robert.fairchild@ntlworld.com.

Our Corporate Members

Orwell Veterinary Group - (contact Charles Bagnall) - 01473 2575570

Berners House Surgery, 56 Berners Street, Ipswich, IP1 3LU www.orwellvets.co.uk

Woodcock & Son - *Estate Agents* - (contact John Woodcock) - 01473 233355

16 Arcade Street, Ipswich, IP1 1EP, www.woodcockandson.co.uk

Coes of Ipswich - *Distinctive fashion for men and women* - (contact William Coe) - 01473 256061

20-28 Norwich Road, Ipswich, IP1 2NG - www.coes.co.uk

The Will Shop - (contact Adam Muldoon) - 01473 233110

21 High Street, Ipswich, IP1 3QH - www.thewillshop.com

Ipswich School - (contact Peter Gray) - 01473 408300

Henley Road, Ipswich, IP1 3SG - www.ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk

Gilmour Piper and Associates - *Osteopathy & Integrated Healthcare* - 01473 217592

10 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich, IP1 3JP - www.gilmourpiper.co.uk

Scrutton Bland - *Accountants* - (contact John Pickering) 01473 233355

Sanderson House, Museum Street, Ipswich, IP1 1HE - www.scruttonbland.co.uk

Kerseys Solicitors - (contact Anthony Wooding) - 01473 213311

32 Lloyds Avenue, Ipswich, IP1 3HD - www.kerseys-law.co.uk

Christchurch Dental - (contact Derek van Staden) - 01473 250977

69 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich, IP1 3JN - www.christchurchdental.co.uk

Hightop - *Domestic & Commercial Window Cleaning* - (contact Neil Ayers) - 01473 231232

PO Box 612, Ipswich, IP2 8WZ - www.hightop.co.uk

The Greyhound Public House - (contact Dan Lightfoot) - 01473 252862

9 Henley Road, Ipswich, IP1 3SE - www.thegreyhoundipswich.co.uk

Lattice Lodge Guest House - (contacts Mosaic Williams and Martin Pike) - 01473 712474

499 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, IP4 4EP - www.latticelodge.co.uk

Thornbank Residential Home - (contact Cathy Greef) - 01473 253346

6 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, IP4 2UJ - www.greensleeves.org.uk/carehomes/thornbank

Woodbridge Antiques Centre - (contact Natalie Smith) - 01394 387210

7 Quay Street, Woodbridge, IP12 1BX - www.woodbridgeantiquescentre.co.uk

Landex Limited - (contact Jane Jones) - 01473 599004

19 Holywells Road, Ipswich, IP3 0DL - www.landex.co.uk

Ipswich & Suffolk Club - (contact Stan Gaskin) - 01473 292095

Northgate Street, Ipswich, IP1 3BX - www.ipswichandsuffolkclub.co.uk

Nicholas Jacob Architects - (contact Nicholas Jacob) - 01473 221150

89 Berners Street, Ipswich, IP1 3LN - www.njarchitects.co.uk

AXA Liabilities Managers - (contact Debbie Eggleton) - 01473 337130

80 Civic Drive, Ipswich, IP1 3AN - www.axa.co.uk

Membership Subscriptions – IMPORTANT

All subscriptions to the Friends of Christchurch Park (£5 per household) are due annually on 1 March. To help reduce our costs, we prefer all members to pay by continuous Standing Order. **IF YOU ALREADY PAY BY STANDING ORDER, NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED.** If you do not, and you would like now to pay by Standing Order, please send the completed Standing Order Authority **AND** the Membership Form (below) to Robert Fairchild. Please call Robert on 01473 254255 or email robert.fairchild@ntlworld.com if you are in any doubt as to whether you already pay by Standing Order.

We appreciate that Standing Orders are not always suitable and we still welcome payment by cash or cheque. In this case, please include the completed Membership Form **ONLY** with your payment and send to Robert Fairchild at the address below before 1 MARCH.

We now also have the option of lifetime membership for a one off payment of £100. If you would like to take out this form of membership, please tick the appropriate box and amend the Membership Form accordingly.

STANDING ORDER AUTHORITY

Account to be credited: Friends of Christchurch Park
Bank: Lloyds Bank, Cornhill N Ipswich
Account Number: 02952840 Sort Code: 30-94-55

Account name to be debited:
Bank and Branch:
Account Number: Sort Code:

Amount: £5.00 (five pounds)

Please pay to the Friends of Christchurch Park immediately and then annually on the 1 March until further notice. (Mandates will not be submitted to the bank until after 1 March 2015.)

Signed: Date:

(detach here)***** (detach here)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I have enclosed a new Standing Order Authority

Please find enclosed a cheque for £5 made payable to Friends of Christchurch Park

Please find enclosed a cash payment of £5

I would like to become a lifetime member for a one-off payment of £100

(Please tick as appropriate)

Name(s):

Address and Postcode:

**Please send this form to Robert Fairchild, 10 June Avenue, Ipswich, IP1 4LT
or email to robert.fairchild@ntlworld.com**