

graze newly grassed and planted areas, including daffodil flowers.

Friends of Graves Park made valiant attempts to herd the heifers back into their paddocks only to find them back in the arboretum again, after gaining access under a heavy duty chain link fence where posts had rotted.

After 2 hours of chasing the cattle and much devastation we finally secured them in their paddock and then set to work clearing up the mess, including repairing the fence. All ten heifers made friends with the Friends of Graves Park and come to see us when we pass close to their secured paddock!



Very tasty!

Our hard-working team will be able to fully repair the damage in time; however we won't be able to open the arboretum to the public until spring 2016, when we anticipate a "grand opening and celebration"!

Highland Fling 2015



The sun shone on the Highland Fling again this year, again very well organized. Visitors were treated to many attractions, including the annual judging of the highland cattle, sheep shearing, ferret racing (?!), indoor farmers' market (with delicious local fare) and a fairground.

A good time was had by all. Yet those visitors to the park expecting a more peaceful afternoon had only to walk into the woodland to find the tranquillity created by our historical tracks through the trees. Well done to the organisers once again!

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Friends of Graves Park

Summer 2015

Introduction from the Chairman

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. As we continue our campaign to retain Cobnar Cottage within the park, we are currently awaiting feedback from the Charity Commission, who have stated that there must be a public consultation and a scheme submitted by the trustees (the Council). The Charity Commission are also looking into the Norton Nurseries situation. In the meantime the Environment Agency has contacted the Council, asking them to submit requests for permission and to work within the limits of permission given.

Our latest campaign has increased our membership considerably, which supports us in our endeavours to protect and enhance the park. Welcome and thank you to all our supporters, new and established! We hope that members will join us at our AGM on 24th June 2015 in the Rose Garden Café, at 7 for 7.15 p.m.

We will pass on the latest news at the meeting.

Norton in the Heart of Chantreyland



When some of us attended the "Norton in the Heart of Chantreyland" events, we already knew about the old London Road route running across the park from Derbyshire Lane to just beyond Charles Ashmore Road. What came as a surprise to us was the importance of Bole Hill Farm and the cottages adjacent, of which Cobnar Cottage is the last survivor. This

group of buildings is on the site of the staging post for the coaches using the road, where they would have stopped to refresh the horses and rest. As the road was no longer used towards the end of the 18th century, this dates the buildings to well before this.



Possible bridge on the Old London Road?

Other historical evidence identified includes charcoal burning in the woods at the northern side of Graves Park, something of which we were totally unaware. Surveys uncovered evidence of charcoal burning pits within the woodland areas, dating back to before the Civil War.

Isolated trees in Graves Park were also identified as boundary markers from times gone by, those veteran trees which date back 250 years or more. There is also a barrow clearly evident in the park (if you know where to look), suggesting settlement of this area dates from before Roman times.



Distant boundary marker tree with the trace evidence of where a wall used to be in the foreground

Chantreyland Meadow and Arboretum



Wall before clearing embankment

For 2 years FOGP have been clearing the barn embankment area of 40 years' worth of accumulated debris and brambles, beneath which we located 7 heavy duty concrete rings which were cracked and damaged.



Concrete rings we found

While salvaging some of the rings and reforming the embankment, including rebuilding the brick retention wall, a terrace has been created with the rings enhancing what is left of the ancient pathway from Norton Park to the gates of the 17th century walled garden.

Two new trees have been planted, a number of self-set sycamores removed and a dry hedge has been constructed. Daffodils and a mixture of cotoneaster horizontalis and thyme have been planted along the top of the repaired dwarf brick wall.

The area will be left to fallow, having been cultivated, until the autumn when shrubs and bulbs including bluebells will be planted.

Most of the hard graft has been achieved by the Baxter family with some more recent assistance from Terry, a new and very welcome member to our team.



Concrete rings within new landscaping

The Great Escape!

The young highland cattle heifers managed to break down their paddock fence on 3 occasions and escape into the adjacent Chantreyland Meadow Arboretum. Having escaped once and sampled the young wild flower plants just coming into flower, they continued to



Cattle up on the embankment being renovated by the FOGP team