



Finding Lost Norton Park

Our successful National Lottery Heritage Fund project "Finding Lost Norton Park" concluded in October. (Please see our report review leaflet for further details.) We have now submitted our end of grant report, which has been accepted. The next step is to look into applying for a further grant to expand and look into the various themes in our project in greater detail.

We are immensely grateful to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the people who support this, because they provided the grant to make all of this possible.

The Friends are still collating everything. We are periodically putting photos and articles on our Facebook page: [Friends of Graves Park: Finding Lost Norton Park](#), so please keep checking our progress.

Foreign Invaders: Himalayan Balsam

During our "Finding Lost Norton Park" project, environmental expert Professor Ian Rotherham noted the problem with Himalayan Balsam in Graves Park. This is an annual, which crowds out the indigenous species of woodland indicators. We will have to deal with this in June,

when the plants will be visible but before they have set seed. We will ask for volunteers to help in our next newsletter.



Packhorse Bridge in Ancient Woodland

Fundraising

The FOGP has a donations account with [JustGiving](#).

Please spread the word!

<https://www.justgiving.com/fo-gravespark>

Don't forget help raise funds for Friends of Graves Park whenever you shop online!

Help support us:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/fograpespark/>

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Friends of Graves Park

Newsletter

Charity no: 1080407

Winter 2019-20

Introduction from the Chairman

Welcome to our latest newsletter. As always we have been working hard to protect the park.

Legal Action Update

We have now agreed a final amount with SCC to conclude the settlement of costs, which were awarded against us by the court. This has now been paid off. **Thanks to all of you** who donated towards our legal action over the past four years, we have been able to settle our debts in full. **The Friends are keen to get on** with raising funds for various improvements in Graves Park. Some of the areas on which we need



Highland Calf in Stone Trough

to focus are the long awaited Arboretum part 2, the Animal Farm, tree thinning, grassland surface drainage and further improvements to the playgrounds.

Land for Sale Update

The FoGP were contacted by a supporter when a piece of land near Woodseats Playground and bordering Graves Park went up for sale by auction in December. We contacted SCC, who assured us that it did not belong to the park or SCC and they had no knowledge of the sale until we contacted them. The Friends have informed SCC that the land in question is part of the ancient water meadow, from which Meadowhead gets its name. This land holds a great deal of water in what is



Ancient Window in Norton Churchyard

already an area prone to flooding and any development on this land would exacerbate the drainage problems in the area.

The Arboretum Autumn 2019



Cotoneaster Cornubia in the Arboretum

The perennial beds excelled themselves with good quality flowers and until the autumn torrential rain destroyed the more delicate blossoms, continued to be very colourful throughout the summer and autumn; rudbeckia was still flowering in November.

The beds of dogwood gave a good display of autumn leaves and the red and yellow stems continue until they are pruned in late spring.

A bed recently constructed and planted with Lenten roses (hellebores) red astilbes, white flowering Japanese anemones and

flame of the forest (pieris forestii) has developed successfully and should give a good display next year.

The row of hazels planted 2 years ago has been coppiced and the stems used to reinforce the existing dry fence. (This gives rise to spiders and insect larvae, especially suited for wrens, dunnocks and robins.)

The white flowering brooms have been pruned and some new flowering growth has developed for this spring's flowering period. The specimen thuja and the garrya elliptica have survived replanting and are growing successfully now.

Base branches of the Monterey Cyprus were removed to reduce the width of their canopy and bark mulch was spread around their bases. The autumn leaves of oak beech and hawthorn plus its orange berries, were spectacular this autumn.

There have been some very complimentary remarks from members of the public walking round the area about how beautiful it is.

Chantreyland Meadow

The continued wet and carbon enriched climate has seen massive growth of all the grasses, wild flower plants, trees and shrubs, with quality of the actual flower crop reduced. The area base comprises a mixture of yellow/blue clay with concrete reinforcement bars, brick and little or no



Nursery Wall - Stone to Brick

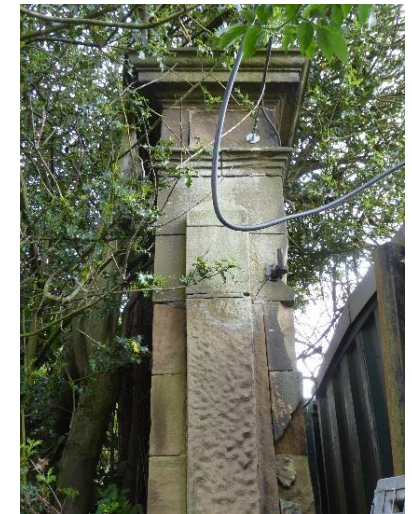
top soil. The whole site is currently waterlogged, but not flooded!

All the frog ponds are overflowing and drainage throughout the site is working, albeit slowly. Drainage from the area is through, for the most part, a 100mm piped outlet, but where it enters the open park, pipes are restricted and water is flowing over ground, through the park entrance at Norton Park View. Once the water flow is reduced, FOGP will try to locate and release the blockages (mainly tree root growth in the pipework.) Meanwhile FOGP are continuing to cut back the massive overgrowth on the fringes of the bird thickets and surrounding paths.

The annual mowing of the meadow in February may have to be delayed, due to the wet conditions; at worst FOGP may have to hand trim! Meadowsweet has grown to a height of 1.2metres in places and shown a poor flower crop which was then destroyed by heavy rainfall. Some

additional planting of purple loosestrife has been carried out in the meadow approach; that and other areas have been bark mulched.

Whilst a considerable effort has been put into locating ancient woodland plants and historical features in the general park, FOGP have also been exploring the historical walled garden and what remains of it after years of neglect and destruction of its features. However, there is still a considerable amount left intact to build up a substantial picture of how it was constructed, starting off with what remains of its double skimmed wall, i.e. stone outer and hand-made brick inner construction with stone capping. Currently we are exploring water courses, ponds and also what remains of the 17th century workman's "bothay" (living accommodation).



Stone Gate Post in Nursery