

Friends of Graves Park



Charity no: 1080407

Winter 2020-2021

Works of cutting down last year's overgrowth is in progress and has exposed some poor quality work when the frog ponds were constructed; some clay infill will be required to gap up the leakages.

FOGP prepared the Meadow for its annual flail in late January, expertly completed by Parks and Countryside, before which time birds had eaten all the grass and black knapweed seed heads. The overgrowth was cut down to ground level in readiness for the meadow cowslips to produce their golden carpet of blooms again this spring.

Graves Park Heritage

A recent survey by FOGP has revealed 6 charcoal burners' hearths alongside the pathway in Cobnar Woods. These have now been individually measured, photographed and plotted on a plan.

Further explorations in another part of the park's woodland revealed a further 14 possible charcoal hearths (originally we were looking for 1 or 2!). Covid-19 has

curtailed any current heritage finding by FOGP, however when we are able to continue, we will complete proper surveys of all these sites.



Surveying Charcoal Hearth Cobnar Wood

Located also at Bolehill is the site of the blacksmiths' forge which long ago a John Parker was blacksmith. He also manufactured scythes and to achieve the heat required would need charcoal for the forge, so the local supply from Cobnar Woods would be an ideal source.

Scythe making was a large industry within the parish of Norton, hence the need for charcoal; used long before coal was found!



Surveying Charcoal Hearth Cobnar Wood

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Introduction from the Chairman

Welcome to our latest newsletter.

Despite the continuing limitations of the pandemic and the restrictions of ways of working, the Friends continue to work hard to protect the park.

We are completing our bid for the Finding Lost Norton Park: Digging Deeper project, which we will submit when the NLHF allows applications. We are in regular consultation with Sheffield City Council, who have verbally agreed to support our bid. Until then, we are trying to raise at least 10% of the funding required, to show strong support from the local community. All donations gratefully received.



Fungi in Cobnar Wood

FOGP regularly discuss the Arboretum extension with SCC, explaining our plans. As soon as we have permission to go ahead, we will let you know.

For the first time wilful destruction of the noticeboard in Chantreyland Meadow has occurred. (It survived for 12 years.) The supports are still intact and FOGP will install a temporary display, with information about the proposed Arboretum extension and opportunities for visitors to contact us and make donations. (The original display cost FOGP £1,300 to have made and installed.) Eventually, once the Arboretum extension is complete, the Friends will install a permanent, up to date noticeboard.



The Arboretum Autumn 2020

As a result of the various controls brought about by the Covid-19 crisis, more of Sheffield citizens have frequented both the Meadow and the Arboretum than ever before. Most have spent a quiet time walking around the grass paths, some picnicking, jogging and practising yoga. There are increasing numbers of families with pet dogs (mainly under control) using the area and therefore, it has sustained a massive increase in foot traffic, which caused all paths to become muddied, however, the main green walk constructed with the free draining stone in its centre is surviving remarkably well.



Autumn Colour in the Arboretum

The gifted azaleas were duly planted and some additional bluebells and a sweet smelling winter flowering Sarcococca also planted and the whole area bark mulched.

A section of the dogwood area was flooded last year with contaminated water from the Nursery site, resulting in 12 dogwood plants dying and a section of the grass path being destroyed. Currently the path has been excavated, new grass seed sown and the dogwood plants removed, soil replaced and salvaged plants replanted.

It turned out to be a very colourful autumn in the Arboretum, especially the browns, oranges and golds of the oak, beech and Ginkgo Biloba leaves, combined with a wealth of crab apple, rowan, cotoneaster, hawthorn and pyracantha berries; much pleasure has been expressed by members of the public passing through.

The Garrya Elliptica is now making its presence felt with its display of olive green leaves and green, yellow floral racemes, especially in full sunlight. All the herbaceous plants have achieved good long displays of flowered colour. The Crocosmia put on a magnificent scarlet display, though sustained some damage from being trampled down. Aster Ada Ballard started flowering in June and continued on until the end of October all backed up by Helium, Lavender, Rudbeckia and Achillea. The white flowers of Japanese Anemones have just finished flowering in December. Mahonia Bealie have just started to show their sulphur golden flowers on an evergreen

background. All these plants and flowers are massively attractive to insects and birds, which increase in numbers as the site develops.

The Serpentine Project

A considerable amount of rather nasty, filthy works have been achieved by the Baxters (Father and son team) in removing huge quantities of tipped material from over the area of the serpentine stream. Subterranean, clear, flowing water (the original stream) has been exposed. A section of small "Pondings" have been created and almost immediately a moorhen, frogs and toads turned up to take advantage. Branches cleared have been formed into a dry hedge at the top of the embankment, both as a safety measure and to prevent dogs from entering the "Pondings".

Much more work is required to prepare for planting of reeds, rushes, ferns, irises and sedge grasses. FOGP would be pleased



Serpentine Water Management



Serpentine Water Management

to receive waterside plants for the "Pondings"!

Chantreyland Meadow

Chantreyland Meadow has achieved a successful year, with masses of cowslips in spring backed up by Berberis Darwinii, gorse, followed by meadowsweet, blue geraniums and black knapweed; betony for the first time also began to bloom. FOGP have propagated another 20 plants, ready for inter-planting in the spring.

Young sedge grasses growing in the meadow will be transplanted alongside the exposed Serpentine Stream, along with irises and bulrushes.