

## Graves Park Heritage

As part of our work to protect Graves Park, we hope to accurately identify the ancient woodland within the park, then encourage SCC's parks department to protect it for the future. Presently little is done to protect it and serious damage continues to be done, presumably because of ignorance or lack of planning? During the COVID period and also due to the massive public use of the park surveys were suspended, although some research of plans has taken place (all in need of provenance).

A scythe making forge was located on an old plan at the junction of Chesterfield Road and where the flats are, at the entrance to Graves Park near the bottom of Cobnar Road (known locally as Cold Stream Place). On the same plan it shows a pond where the Cold Stream is at the entrance to the current children's playground.



Wood Anemone in the Ancient Woodland



Ancient Woodland – Park Wood

A further pond is indicated in the park at the entrance to Bole Hill Farm opposite Poplar Cottages, which were scythe makers' homes for the blacksmith's forge, which was next to the cottages (now built on by flats). The recent great loss to the park and history of the area was the selling off of Cobnar Cottage and the land which formed the history of the working hamlet of Bole Hill. It was a workshop and yard associated with the blacksmith's forge. Norton Parish and Park had a large history of scythe making, hence the use of charcoal produced in the nearby Cobnar Woods.

### FRIENDS OF GRAVES PARK

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# Friends of Graves Park

Newsletter

Charity no: 1080407

Summer 2021

## Introduction from the Chairman

Welcome to the Friends of Graves Park's summer newsletter. As the pandemic situation improves, we try to return to the new normal. I am therefore pleased to invite all paid up members to our AGM for this year, which will be held at Norton House Country Club on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September at 7 p.m.

Our volunteers continue to maintain and improve Chantreyland Meadow and the Arboretum. We are in regular contact with SCC's parks department. Although we keep requesting permission to start



The Arboretum 2021

our restoration of the next section of the old nurseries site back to parkland, so far we have been unable to get an answer.

The council seems unwilling to honour the long-standing agreement to let us restore this section of the park and add it to the rest of the arboretum and has now started calling the area a council depot!

The Friends, however, will not give up and will continue to pursue this permission. It is strange that the Nurseries section of Graves Park, long identified by SCC as unused and surplus to requirements, cannot be regenerated as woodland, especially when the council has declared a climate emergency in Sheffield and is supposedly committed to protecting the environment.

The Friends have now completed and submitted our application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and are currently awaiting their decision. The new project, "Finding Lost Norton Park: Digging Deeper for All", will build on the results of our previous project, which back in 2019 uncovered evidence of the possible national importance of Graves



Park in terms of its preserved historical and archaeological landscape.

## Chantreyland Meadow

**Volunteers spent a great deal of time** and effort in clearing up the herbage and cutting down unwanted self-set saplings from the frog pond and woodland area.



Nicky and Amy working on the dipping pond  
"Fallen Tree Dell"

**Due to the very wet weather** the Meadow has regenerated well after SCC mowed down the previous year's herbage through a flooded area and extremely wet conditions. The cowslips put on a magnificent display of sulphur yellow flowers. Two notices had to be installed to request people to keep off the meadow, as they were trampling down and destroying the cowslips and the following wildflower growths. This seems to have been successful and little or no further damage has occurred!

**A replacement noticeboard** has been installed to replace the previous, vandalised one, using mostly reclaimed materials. The notice displays are laminated photograph copies, with a new plan of the whole area including the Arboretum and its proposed extension! **Works have begun on clearing** 3 fallen trees, a considerable bramble overgrowth and debris in the dipping pond. We located another watercourse, connected and laid pipework towards the pond; currently we are awaiting rain for the source of the water relies upon drainage from the land.

**PLANT THEFTS! Twenty Betony wild flower** plants were taken from the meadow immediately after they were planted. NB It had taken FOGP two years to propagate and grow these plants; they are of particular value to bees.

**There is a great profusion of** meadowsweet this year and the numbers of self-setting plants has increased, also



Meadowsweet 2021



Temporary replacement Noticeboard

increased is the blue meadow cranesbill which has been given a real chance to grow since the area has not been trampled down.

**The Serpentine Project: A consistent amount of water** is now retained within the ponding construction; the dry hedge plus the sedge grasses form a good protection to the site. FOGP are in the process of growing some aquatic plants and ferns which will take time to establish. The main achievement was a consistent supply of clean water and raising the water level in each ponding.

## Chantreyland Arboretum

**There has been a wealth of flower** on the cotoneaster, pyracantha and oregano, helping a somewhat depleted bee population. We have grown some spectacular nettles, however very few butterflies are around to take up the advantage.

**The Jerusalem sage (phlomis fruticosa)** exhibited a wealth of sulphur yellow flowers, normally festooned with bees, however, only a few to enjoy the harvest. There is still some potential for bees and butterflies with the many herbaceous plants still coming into flower. The broom bank gave a spectacular display of early flowers, mainly thanks to some careful pruning by Terry last year. The shrubs are old now and need replacing, however we may get another season next year.

**There is a collection of yellow flowered** common toadflax growing naturally on site, which comes up year after year and a close up camera just proves how attractive the flower is; bees particularly enjoy the nectar it produces.



Common Toadflax 2021