

Renovating the Rose Garden Cafe

The Friends of Graves Park are now part of the "Partnership", set up by SCC's Charity Sub-committee, which meets regularly to try and push through the renovation of the Rose Garden Café. While the Friends are quietly hopeful that this structure might work, we are also very nervous, as we have the experience of 25 years to warn us that working with the council can be difficult. We also know that nothing ever seems to happen quickly, or efficiently.

We still have our architect and our surveyor working with us to push the renovation forward and save the café building. We will be applying for funding from various potential providers and will keep our members posted.



Clearing the Himalayan Balsam

As we didn't get the chance to clear the Balsam stragglers in 2023, it's really important that we have another go at it this year. As you probably know, this is an



invasive species, which easily takes over and crowds out the native perennial plants which help to retain the soil on the river banks. Once the balsam takes over, because it is an annual with shallow roots, when it dies off in the autumn, the soil is exposed to erosion. Fortunately, its shallow roots make it easy to pull up and scrunch up, after which it quickly composts down in situ.

We intend to run regular "Balsam Clearing Workshops" through the summer, starting in June. If you are interested in spending an afternoon scrunching up Himalayan Balsam, please get in touch.



To support us, please donate here.

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Friends of Graves Park

Charity no: 1080407

Winter 2023-24

Introduction from the Chairman

Welcome to the Friends of Graves Park's latest winter newsletter. As usual, a lot has happened over the past 6 months. We have been spending a lot of time on our project, "Finding Lost Norton Park: Digging Deeper for All", the Rose Garden Café restoration plans and our Arboretum Extension proposals. For details, please read on. We are also continuing our pleas to the Charity Commission, to inform them of what is happening with Graves Park and its trustees (SCC). We are still continuing to pursue Freedom of Information requests, to try to get to the bottom of what has been happening with Graves Park Trust's accounts and the management of the park.



Demise of Iconic Tree

Loss of Iconic Trees

Strong winds during December resulted in the loss of several much-loved old trees in the park, including the sycamore on the north side (above). SCC and stakeholders are looking into the possibilities of making some sort of remembrance artwork from the remains. We will keep you updated.

Finding Lost Norton Park: Digging Deeper for All

Our exciting project is going very well, with a wide variety of events, which so far have been well attended. Our latest programme of events is currently available at all good local hubs and online. In July we will have a closing celebration, which



Archaeological Surveying

will share all our discoveries with everyone. There is still time to join in, so do check out the latest if you would like to attend a guided walk or an indoor talk! Topics currently being explored are: ecology, including birds, bats, butterflies, moths, invertebrates, fungi and lichens, woodland plants and trees; woodland heritage, including tree stories, charcoal hearths, photogrammetry creating 3D models and exploring working woodland landscapes.



Woodland Tree Walk

Chantreyland Meadow and Arboretum

Chantreyland Meadow

One might call it a water meadow; the whole area is over-field capacity, ie effectively means further rain falling on site forms pondings and runs off the surface to wherever it finds an outlet.



Looking at Fungi

All frog ponds are full to capacity. It's doubtful whether SCC will be able to mow the meadow to make way for the cowslips to grow and flower!

An elm tree suddenly died from disease and SCC tree surgeons cut it down. FOGP had been growing-on an evergreen oak (Quercus Ilex) brought as an acorn from East Anglia; this, as a small tree, has been planted in place of the Elm.

The noticeboard has been vandalised and a replacement has been made ready for installation in the Spring. The newly constructed Dell is currently a pond, however, the lily of the valley area is clear of the water build up.

The daffodil area on the right of the approach from Norton Park View now surrounded with a Dry Hedge, has been cleared of the annual herbage and with all the water now flowing into a frog pond, should afford a wealth of daffodils in spring.

Chantreyland Arboretum

Growth in the herbaceous beds has been considerable. Flowers have been damaged

by the combination of wind and rain. However, the berry bearing trees and shrubs have yielded an abundance of fruit, (now all taken by the birds).

A Berberis Darwinii plantation has been developed, replacing the aging brooms. Overgrowth of a tree canopy has been thinned to increase sunlight to the embankment area.

Flowering currently are Viburnum Tinus, Mahonia Bealeii, Hamamelis Mollis and ground ivy. A Whitebeam tree blew down in the recent gales and has been replanted and staked; 2 forest trees alongside the Serpentine Walk have blown down and will need to be sorted by SCC tree surgeons!



Cascade in Full Flow

Tennis Courts Update

Despite the fact that the "Tennis Hub" deal being pursued by SCC's parks department is totally contrary to the



Mahonia Bealeii

covenants which are meant to protect the land given by J G Graves, SCC's Charity Sub-committee has voted to accept the deal by 4 votes to one. Our experience tells us that this is such a bad idea and will privatise this part of the park for 25 years. As we probably will not be here after then to protect it, who knows what will happen. We failed to protect it this time, however, despite right being on our side and all the letters of opposition sent and the petition of 2000+ signatures by Friends of Hillsborough Park. Sadly, the Friends of Hillsborough Park have now disbanded, as the council was not prepared to listen to them. While we understand why the FOHP have given up, the FOGP are determined to keep pushing for the covenants for the park to be upheld and to publicise how appalling this wanton disposal of public assets is.