

DUN RLAN

PARK NEWS



WINTER IN THE PARK

The boats have been cleaned and stored away and all is quiet and serene on the lake (except for the ducks, geese and seagulls !!)

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR BY RUTH BAKER

At the turn of the year, we, like the Roman god Janus (who gave his name to the month of January) turn our face in two directions, forwards and back.



Looking back it has been a difficult and distracting year. Our Committee put much effort into helping to win a temporary reprieve for the park, when the Council's refusal of planning permission to Sunrise Senior Living was upheld at Appeal. However, alas ! the genie is out of the bottle : I believe the spectre of piecemeal development around and even within the park will continue to haunt us until the council settles upon some overarching guidelines in order to create harmonious development of all the sensitive sites. Already a new development proposal for the Dunorlan House site, above the terrace in the park, is in the pipeline. Your Committee has had an initial meeting with the developers, Octagon, who presented and explained the context and thinking behind their proposal for a 'Landmark' building in this prominent location.

Looking forward, we can find some cause for optimism. The Council's plans for restoration of the temple seem practical and sensible. It is good that there is money in the budge to restore (improve) some of the damaged paths. A limited play area for the children will, we hope, be a good innovation.

We have decided to take on a new Friends Project for 2009 : we shall turn our attention to the islands within the lake. Their banks have become eroded, just as the edges of the lake itself had been eroded before the restoration. We feel enthusiastic and re-energised by the thought that we are getting back to the work for which "the Friends" was founded, namely the preservation and enhancement of the Park. Over the course of next year we shall liaise with the Council to facilitate the work required and we shall keep you informed, by notice board and newsletter, as the plans unfold.

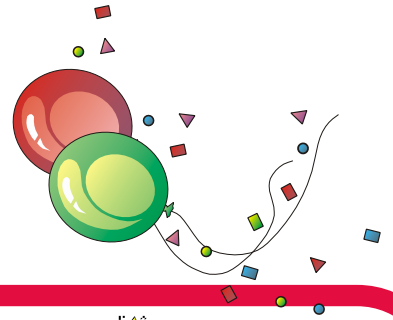
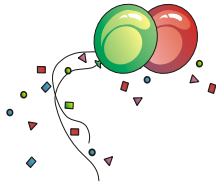
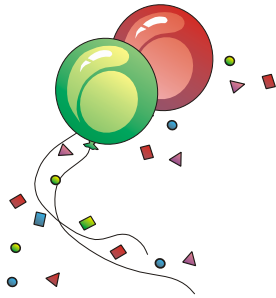


One of our islands



Erosion to the banks clearly visible.

We are indebted to Marion and Robin (Christie) for once again offering us hospitality for our traditional New Year "Drinks and Nibbles" Despite bad weather, loyal friends turned out in their usual numbers last year to celebrate our unique fellowship of Friends. We look forward to seeing you again on January 9th. Meanwhile Happy Christmas to all.



With best wishes

for a



HAPPY CHRISTMAS & 2009

from the Chairman and Committee

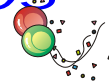


who request the pleasure of the company of all

Friends of Dunorlan Park

to our traditional

New Year "Drinks & Nibbles"

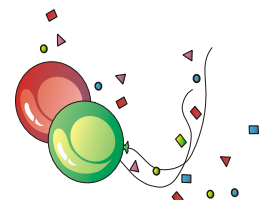
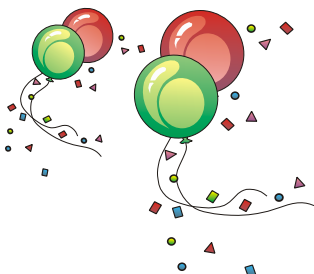


to be held once again at 12 Camden Hill

from 6 to 8.30 p.m. on Friday 9th January 2009

*RSVP to Robin Christie
12 Camden Hill, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 4TJ
RobinDChristie@aol.com*

01892 527662



POETRY IN THE PARK

Dunorlan Park

Dunorlan Park

Feel free to wander as you walk through our park,
There's so much to see, let your journey embark.
Stroll down to the lake, row a boat if you dare,
Or stand by the side and watch ducks everywhere.
Sit on a bench and paint a picture of views,
Or down in our restaurant with friends sharing news.
Relax in our summerhouse, let you mind wander free,
Gaze at the fountain in all its glory.
Our staff work so hard, so as you pass them by,
Greet them good morning, and say me oh my.
The good that you do here for all folks to see.
Be proud of yourselves and all this beauty.

A poem by Nick Carter, a frequent visitor to Dunorlan Park, currently displayed in the notice board at Pembury Road Car Park.

UPDATE FROM TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Several new trees have been planted this month, kindly donated through the [Tree Donation Scheme](#). The plantings include a Paulownia (Foxglove tree), three Umbrella Pines (Sciadopitys) which are native to Japan and an oak. A new [Shrub Donation Scheme](#) will be formally introduced next year, but some donations have already been made, including a Eucryphia and deciduous, scented azaleas. To find out more about both schemes contact Tony Ewins or Peter Every (at the Town Hall on 01892 526121).

Many of you will have been following the progress of the works to the **Grecian temple** and will know of the wish to restore the detailed painted interior. Regular monitoring of the temple has taken place over the past year or so and a further specialist study was conducted this summer. This study showed that the environmental conditions within the temple are not sufficiently stable to make repainting the interior feasible. The priority now is to stabilise the building and the exposed sections of the original decoration. Once this has been achieved, it is hoped that the temple can be opened up on a regular basis, with the help of the Friends

You may have noticed guided groups of walkers going around the park at lunchtime. Dunorlan is one of several destinations for the Council's programme of [Health Walks](#). The walks take place every weekday, are open to everyone and are led by qualified leaders. The Wednesday walk starts at 12.30 from the Millennium Clock at Five Ways. For more information contact Nick Atkins, Healthy Lifestyles Coordinator on 01892 554411 or e-mail health@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Ian and his team will be having a well-deserved rest over the Christmas period when the café closes on 24th, 25th, 26th and 31st December and 1st January. Ian, Jana and their colleagues would like to say 'thank you' for your custom during 2008 and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Seasons Greetings from all at the Town Hall



SOME SNIPPETS



A new roof for the café will be installed soon. It will be made from zinc forming a visual link with the boat kiosk and the boat store.

Di Drummond from Headway reports that construction of the bird boxes is underway and there should some finished and ready for installation before Christmas !

The fountain basin has been drained so that the silt from the tunnel and basin can be sucked out. The fountain will then be carefully cleaned with a jet wash.



A BAT DETECTOR

You will see from the events programme and our last newsletter that interest in bats in the Park remains high, so we have decided to buy the Friends their very own bat detector. Tony Ewins will be custodian of the detector and it can be lent out to keen bat watchers. It would be an interesting project to carry out a proper study of the bats in the park - if anyone is keen on helping out let us know.

VIEW FROM UNDER THE CHAIR BY RICHARD GOSLING

I wrote once before about the present danger to native British trees, and as a follow-up it worries me that the authorities are not taking it seriously enough. It was reported that Kent County Council were giving away Hawthorn saplings to volunteer groups to "preserve native trees". I was somewhat sceptical about this in view of the Events Field hedge which is a mongrel rather than native, and sure enough, the next week a so-called expert said on Radio Kent that we could all grow native hawthorn trees by collecting berries from the hedges.

Oh no you can't, at least near Tunbridge Wells. The reason is that the Hawthorn native to Kent is the ordinary Quickthorn, *Crataegus monogyna*, but the trees planted in the gardens and streets are nearly always Midland Hawthorn, *Crataegus laevigata*, so the chances are that if you collect haws from a hedge round here you will end up with a hybrid. Just to confuse the issue, the experts have changed the nomenclature of *C. laevigata* to *C. Oxycantha*, and also the most popular garden hawthorn, Paul's Scarlet, is regarded as a Midland Hawthorn by Alan Mitchell and as a hybrid by Hillier's. Tony Ewins has a very interesting collection of naturally sown hawthorns which he has planted in a nursery bed near the Boat House. Perhaps we could invite the 'experts' to come and have a look at it next Spring or Summer when the little shrubs are in leaf, but maybe we have to wait until they begin to flower before we can identify them definitively.

What does it matter anyway? Well, let us take as an example the Rose - Fragrant Cloud. The experts bred it on to try to win exhibitions. It looked better but they bred most of the scent out of it! Similarly, we don't know what birds and insects want from Hawthorn, and if we start tinkering with the tree we may do unknown harm.

Which brings me to late season berries. Nowadays, because of fridges and aeroplanes, we don't have much respect for the fruit which used to be eaten in late Autumn or through the Winter, such as Russet apples, medlars, quinces and such. Dunorlan Park has a Service Tree, *Sorbus torminalis*, behind a bench beside the Events Field hedge. The fruit of the Service tree are called chequers, which give the name to several local pubs. Apparently, the berries were 'bletted' or left to go brown before they were harvested and used as a complement to beer as we use nuts and raisins. Similarly, have you noticed that the birds seem to go for the brown and black haws in the Winter, while the Holly tree have pretty red berries. Perhaps haws are like raisins for Blackbirds and Thrushes. Perhaps it is worth remembering that years ago dried fruit was the only available fruit in Winter. Shakespeare says that in Winter "Roasted crabs hiss in the bowl..." and perhaps if you left crab-apples till the Winter they might taste sweeter. Enjoy your Christmas pudding!

Richard Gosling 2/xii/08

BIRD WATCHING IN THE PARK



A male Crossbill

In mid- November our keen bird watcher and recorder, Les Winter, was delighted to see a flock of 7 crossbills land on an oak near our 'mini-marsh' area. Les has been joined in his bird watch and recording activities by Marion and Stan. Tony Ewins observed that "... We are very lucky to have such good people to support the Park".

As well as the cross bills, a Wood Duck has been seen and Mandarin ducks have returned.

REPORT FROM OUR HEAD GARDENER - TONY EWINS

Since the last news letter we have most months been fighting the elements here, mother nature has given us a good dose of English rain. This has been very beneficial for many of our plants, with very good growth, leaf quantity and size, though in some areas some plants have suffered from the poor drainage and very wet ground. It has been a tough few months with excessive weed growth and seeding as well as the grass growing behind as you cut it. The team here has done extremely well considering and we are now working on putting the park to bed for the winter.

I think this has been one of the best autumn for colour I have seen here, especially from many of our native trees. Our oaks and especially beech have given us a superb display of rustic browns, intermingling with yellow from the birches and stunning reds from Japanese maple and American dogwoods. We are at present raking up leaves across the ornamental areas of the park and this will continue to Christmas and possible beyond. I believe the size and quantity of leaf this year is greater than we have had for many years, this is probably due to the constant periods of rainfall each month this year. This all good news for our compost heaps and recycling programme, though for us it can be somewhat tough on our backs.

VOLUNTEERS

This year our Monday volunteer group has grown and we now have a good steady band of 6 to 8, on Fridays we have our 5 young Oakley School lads.

Our Monday group have been absolutely brilliant; they have helped us out in many and varying tasks, such as general weeding, various shrub pruning, planting, path repairs and now some leaf raking and conservation work. They have been recently involved in a super project we have going on here, which is to develop a series of small pools in our boggy area; this is to create a habitat for frogs, newts and other amphibians. Though we have a large quantity of Toads here from our survey, we seem to have very few frogs and newts. Their work has involved clearing copious amounts of rampant brambles and invasive rose bay willow herb which were quickly taking over and killing off some of our native bog plants. All the waste material has been used to create habitat piles for mammals and birds this winter. The next step of the project will be to dig out several varying sized small pools; these will be filled by the existing water course there.

Our new Friday group from Oakley School started in October and have been involved with conservation work in our top pond, again this was removing invasive foreign weeds, these were Himalayan balsam, rose bay willow herb and again brambles and scrub, they have also helped in bramble clearing in other areas and of course our everlasting leaf raking. They will be helping to continue the fine work our last year's group were involved in, which is creating a woodland border on our boundary that runs down from the VC Grove. Here we are removing selective young damaged oaks and managing the brambles, they will then be involved in increasing the woodland flora of Wood anemones, Primroses and Violets, and this will be a delight in years to come. Through the winter they will also be getting involved with learning about coppice work, pruning and mulching as well as many other good horticultural practices.



Two of the Monday group working on the Bog



A group of the Friday Oakley School lads with Lawson and another adult volunteer, Carl.

KENT HIGH WEALD PROJECT (KHWP)

We have also been involved again this year with Kent High Weald Project who have organized work parties and drummed up volunteers to help us continue in creating another part of our wild flower project. This will be of great benefit to the park, its fauna, beauty and educational prospects in the future. These projects would be hard to achieve if it was not for the help of Kent High Weald and English Landscapes hard work and support.

I would just like to say a **big thank-you** to all our volunteers who have come here this year and have given us their time, energy and certainly humour. If you have a spare few hours on a Monday and would like to become a volunteer at Dunorlan, please contact me on 07775561507.



Volunteers preparing the ground and sowing wildflower seed with the KHWP

PLANTING

We have nearly finished our planting for this year, and you will have seen several new trees have been planted as well as the new box hedge on the terrace.

The box hedging was put in due mainly to the stone balls that were being repeatedly broken off and rolled into the lake. The decision was made to remove the stone balls and have a low small box hedge along the stone edge, this associates well with the Terrace annual beds and would be in keeping with the traditional Victorian style.

Many of the trees are replacements for our old trees or others that had been damaged; we have planted several English oaks, a Purple leafed beech, a lovely Swedish birch and a Bird cherry. We will be also planting a Eucryphia and 3 Azalea lutea in the avenue border, these will bring stunning scent and colour in spring from the azalea's and late summer lovely white flowers from the Eucryphia. I would like to thank Mrs Tabor for these.

We also started a plant donation scheme this year and have been able to replace 3 Japanese Umbrella pines and a Foxglove tree, thank-you Mrs Sandford. If you would like to donate towards the planting in Dunorlan, please contact myself here or Peter Every (Parks and Leisure) at the town hall, we do have a lovely selection of plants to choose from which you could admire for years to come.

Finally, we will also be filling in the gaps of our yew hedging that runs from the zigzag path to the fountain, several of these have suffered due to various reasons and now in places need replacing.

On behalf of all the staff here, I would like to thank all those who have supported us this year and have encouraged us with their many kind and positive comments.

You will have noticed that we have been building a much closer relationship with the KHWP over the past year which is of great benefit to all of us, and I an Johnstone of the KHWP is coming to talk to us and tell us more about their work after our AGM in April.

The wildflower project which Tony and the KHWP are currently working on is intended to create a wildflower corridor between the two large meadows, from the middle entrance on Bayhall Road down to the top pond by increasing the floral diversity. It is hoped that this will in turn increase the diversity of insects, birds and small mammals.

PARK EVENTS FOR 2009

Unless specifically indicated all FoDP events are open to all, and we welcome participation by local residents or visitors and young or not-so-young alike.

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE	CONTACT
January	Fri 9	Evening	FoDP Drinks Party	Chez Robin Robin Christie (RC)
February				
March				
April	Sat 4	Morning	Historical Walk	Pembury Rd car park Museum/KB/IB
	Tues 21	Evening	FoDP AGM with a talk by Ian Johnstone (IJ) of Kent High Weald Project (KHWP)	Café Diana Lamb
	Sat 25	10.30 am	Richard Gosling's Greening of the Trees Walk	Café RG
May	Sat 9	5.00 am	Brian Gallop's Dawn Chorus	Halls Hole Road Car Park RC
	22/23?		Head Gardener's Walkabout	TE
	Sun 24	5.30 - 2.30	Cancer Research Race for Life	Park TWBC/SL
June		Afternoon	Possible FoDP Picnic in the Park	Norman Collings (NC)
July	6 - 10 / 13 - 15		Brush with Nature (for Schools / children)	Museum/KB
	Sat 18		Digging Deep	Museum/KB
	Thurs 23		Bat & Moth Evening	KHWP/IJ
	24/25/26?		Head Gardener's Walkabout	TE
	Thurs 30		Bat Evening	KHWP/IJ
August			Circus ? Scouts Raft Race ?? Motor show ????	
	Thurs 6		Mini-Beast Safari x 2	Museum/KB/IB
	Sat 15	10.00 am	IB's Bugs & Beetles walk	Café IB / RC
			Possible late summer FoDP visit to Bedgebury Pinetum	NC
			Autorama ?????	
September	Sat 5 / Sun 6		HAHA Autumn Show	Events Field SL
October	9/10/11?		Head Gardener's Walkabout	TE
November	Sat 7		Round Table Fireworks	TWBC/SL
December				

FoDP also exploring :

Possible Moth Morning, Lichen walk, Wild Flower walk and Fungus Foray

Possible Bat Talk

Visits to : Alexandra Park, Barnetts Wood and Woodbury Park Cemetery

Tony Ewins / KHWP / FoDP also considering :

Specific projects within Management Plan suitable for Volunteer involvement + sources of / assistance with any necessary funding therefor

As you can see we have been working closely with Tony Ewins, the Kent High Weald Project and TWBC to produce a coordinated programme. There are gaps and question marks and the programme is a working document which will be updated in the next Newsletter. So, as ever, keep your eyes peeled for notices in the park, check out the web site and keep an eye open for an emailed "Round Robin" in the interim !!

BIG APPEAL

I have made various "appeals" in the Newsletter over the years which have almost without exception been met with a deafening silence !! It occurred to me that this may be because they were a bit low key and small, tucked away as footnotes so to speak. So this time we agreed at our recent Committee meeting that we should try a BIG appeal - half the back page of the newsletter- so here it is:

We are currently 'on the web' but as a sub-section of TWBC's web site and whereas we much appreciate this facility we are now very keen to become independent and have our very own web site, so..... We need a volunteer, or volunteers, to help us put this together and then manage it. Are there any IT whizz-kids (or not so kids) with a bit of time on their hands and an enthusiasm for this sort of activity who could help us - please come forward and talk to me or Robin Christie if you are out there in the ether !!!

Contacts

Chairman	Ruth Baker	Friars Coach House, Matfield, TN12 7LG	722406
Vice Chair	Richard Gosling	4 Delves Avenue, TW RN2 5DR	546899
Vice Chair & Events & Activities Coordinator	Norman Collings	Peterstone, 5 Sandrock Road, TN2 3PX E-mail: sn.collings@dsl.pipex.co.uk	523451
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Treasurer/Membership	Robin Christie	12 Camden Hill, TW TN2 4TJ E-mail: RobinDChristie@aol.com	527662
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Head Gardener	Tony Ewins	email: tewins.dunorlan@hotmail.co.uk Mobile Number 0777 5561507	