

FRIENDS OF DUNORLAN PARK



WINTER

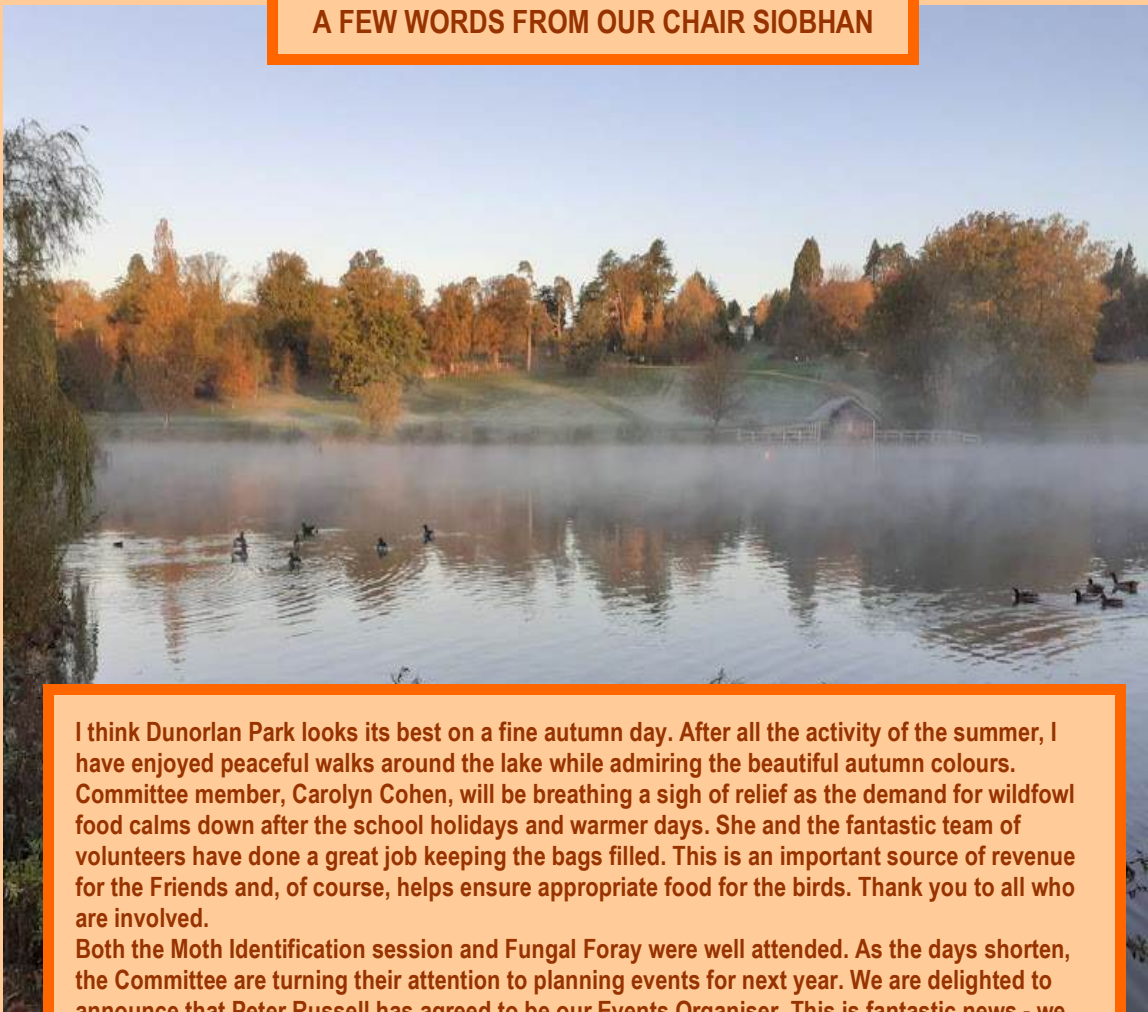
2024

NEWSLETTER



OUR DRINKS AND NIBBLES EVENING
Friday, January 10th from 6pm to 8pm
Meadows School, Willicombe Park, Sandhurst Road
Friends and families are welcome to join our
annual get-together. There will be a tombola
Some parking is available on site and usually nearby

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHAIR SIOBHAN



I think Dunorlan Park looks its best on a fine autumn day. After all the activity of the summer, I have enjoyed peaceful walks around the lake while admiring the beautiful autumn colours. Committee member, Carolyn Cohen, will be breathing a sigh of relief as the demand for wildfowl food calms down after the school holidays and warmer days. She and the fantastic team of volunteers have done a great job keeping the bags filled. This is an important source of revenue for the Friends and, of course, helps ensure appropriate food for the birds. Thank you to all who are involved.

Both the Moth Identification session and Fungal Foray were well attended. As the days shorten, the Committee are turning their attention to planning events for next year. We are delighted to announce that Peter Russell has agreed to be our Events Organiser. This is fantastic news - we are very grateful to Peter. If you have any ideas for future events, please let us know. One idea I have had is a 'Light History' walk around Dunorlan, inspired by *The Dunorlan Story* by James Akehurst. Valerie Le Moignan will continue to organise our Friends' social events, which is also excellent news.

I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and thank you for being members of the Friends. I look forward to seeing many of you at the New Year Drinks and Nibbles.

As mentioned in the Autumn Newsletter, our lovely park has again retained the Green Flag Award and the Green Heritage Site accreditation. Photos show some of our happy volunteers at a small celebration and displaying the flag. We also retained our In Bloom Gold in the Large Parks category. Well done to Grosvenor & Hilbert for winning the Large Parks category overall award.



The Monday Volunteers are a group of around 25 people who work tirelessly in Dunorlan Park to keep the 78 acres looking good for everyone.

As their title suggests, they work for several hours on Monday mornings, carrying out a range of tasks under the direction of Kasia Olszewska from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Parks Department, and contribute over 1,000 hours of volunteering each year. Just a few tasks they take on are - reinforcing the banks of the islands in the lake, replacing all the Box hedging on the Terrace, planting crocuses for the Purple polio campaign, planting 60 camellia plants to create a new garden and planting bluebells around Victoria Cross Grove. Some of these tasks are one-offs. The group has been a great source of mental wellbeing for its participants, creating an inclusive environment which bring people of different backgrounds together, and strengthening social bonds within the community.

If this is something you might be interested in and like to take part, drop Kasia a line on parcs@tunbridgewells.gov.uk, or give her a call on 01892 554031. She would love to hear from you.



Our Chair Siobhan, with committee members Carolyn and Ian, attended the awards ceremony to receive our Gold in the Large Park category



and the It's Your Neighbourhood 'Outstanding' certificate for Friends of Dunorlan Park. Being Siobhan's (and Carolyn and Ian's) first foray into the awards presentation, she said afterwards: "I had no idea how many front garden, back garden, schools, allotments,

baskets, planters, residents, commercial, community awards would be given out, all with photos taken. Very uplifting seeing how much effort people put into making Tunbridge Wells look beautiful." Of course, she included the Friends too!

IAN BEAVIS'S MOTH IDENTIFICATION MORNING

Large Yellow Underwing



Our 'Moth Man' Ian Beavis recently held his event, by the café, and it was very well attended, plus the weather stayed sunny. Lots of questions were asked, showing how much enthusiasm there is for learning about these fascinating creatures.

The moths were caught overnight in a garden on the edge of the park and this is weather-dependent as the moths prefer to fly on warm nights.

As the temperature dropped unusually low for a September evening, as many species as usual were not seen.

Among the catch were multiple examples of the Large Yellow Underwing, an example of 'flash colouration' - if disturbed by a potential predator, it opens its brown forewings to reveal the bright yellow

hindwings, giving the predator a momentary shock and the moth a chance to fly rapidly away.

There were a number of characteristic autumnal moths, including the wonderfully-named Setaceous Hebrew Character (because the wing pattern is supposed to resemble a letter of the Hebrew alphabet) and the Lunar Underwing whose white hindwings have a 'crescent moon' mark;

the caterpillars which hatch from its eggs will feed on grasses through the winter.

Another autumn species was the Dusky Thorn, one of a group of moths whose wings have an irregular outline and are coloured to resemble a dead leaf.



Dusky Thorn

Setaceous Hebrew Character



Lunar Underwing

Silver Y



The Silver Y is a moth which can be found through most of the year, flying by day as well as night. Its caterpillars feed on nettles, and the resident population is reinforced by regular migrations from the near Continent.

KEITH PALMER'S FUNGAL FORAY

This year was an excellent turnout, including a number of children who, with eyes closer to the ground than adults, quickly began to find early specimens. The unsettled weather during September and October was beneficial, and soon mushrooms and toadstools were found in quantity. Milo was equipped with a collecting basket and was



quickly off the mark, while welcome helpful and informative adult contributions towards identification were provided by Bryn, who later took a few specimens home for further study.



An early mystery was a collection of whitish fungi beneath the vegetation on route from the car park towards the fountain. This turned out to be *Clitocybe phylloporia*, the highly poisonous **Frosty Funnel**. This led to a general discussion



Oilslick Brittlegill

about deadly poisonous fungi but soon **Earth Balls** and **Wood Puff-Balls** were found as often beside tracks which are well walked; the method of



Herald-of-the-Winter

distribution of the spore mass of these ripened fungi was demonstrated with the passion of young children to tread violently upon these structures in order to release the clouds of brown spores being almost essential in helping to spread the species! However, the spore mass at an early stage is white rather than brown, and has the texture of marshmallows, changing completely when ripe, the fungus opening by pores or splits to allow the spores to be released.

Another *Clitocybe* was found in quantity especially round the back of the Temple. This was the **Clouded Agaric** which can be seen commonly as Autumn progresses towards Winter. As we walked from the Fountain along the wide grassy track towards the Temple, a strange fungus was found, the **Common White Helvella** which has a contorted cap atop a uniquely furrowed white stem, hardly looking like a typical fungus at all. We also found a small colony of **Shaggy Ink-cap** which, as it matures, simply dissolves in an inky mass containing the spores; at an early stage it is an edible fungus but, as it dissolves, it hardly looks appetising! We found the lilac-coloured **Wood Blewit** and the related **Field Blewit**. Under Birch the distinctively-scented **Coconut Milk-cap** was located, plain looking but having a strong smell of, guess what, coconut!

Perhaps the most exciting part of the foray however was the discovery of several species of colourful waxcaps which inhabit the damp grass near to the Temple and can normally be found prolifically here each year late in the season. This year saw an exciting collection including the one known as **Herald-of-the-Winter**, a fairly large species, the **Slimy Waxcap** which certainly lives up to its name, the **Ivory Waxcap**, the **Parrot Waxcap** green at the top of the stem (or stripe as it is called) and a tendency to go green elsewhere and the bright **Golden Waxcap**.

Also in the grass were simple unbranched fungi known as **White** and **Golden Brittlegills**. Other species seen were **The Deceiver**, **Tawny Funnel** and several Russulas or **Brittle-Gills**, a very large and complex family of fungi which can sometimes be identified by the application of certain chemicals which Bryn demonstrated, coming up with *Russula ionochlora* or the intriguingly named **Oilslick Brittlegill!**

FOLLY WILDLIFE RESCUE - GREAT NEWS!

Folly Wildlife Rescue, Fairview Lane, Broadwater Forest, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9LU has been, on many occasions, a saviour for wildfowl and so many other animals both big and small in the West Kent and East Sussex area, particularly in our park, and sometimes further afield. So it was extremely sad news to hear that they were appealing for donations as it was facing closure in the very near future. BUT, at the time of writing this, thanks to the generosity of so many of their supporters, **they have now smashed their total and have raised over £307,016!!**

Thousands of animals are admitted to the Centre each year, be they injured, distressed, sick or orphaned, where they receive expert care and veterinary treatment. Some fall from nests in high winds, or are the survivors of attack or predation but, by far, most are victims of human activity. Road traffic accidents, entanglement in nets or fishing lines, poisoning, burning, immersion in, or ingestion of, chemicals, attacks by cats and dogs, are just a few of the incidents dealt with by the caring staff and volunteers at Folly.

A large part of the work at Folly involves caring for young animals and birds which have been orphaned or separated from their parents, usually as a result of human interference.

This wonderful place needs to continue and we can continue to help. If you could make a donation, no matter how big or small, please visit their website www.follywildliferescue.org.uk. Alternatively, you can write to them at the address shown above.

The animals, large and small, will always need Folly's help, and we can be there to help them.



Another wonderful list of Andy's sightings in and around our park. Thank you so much.

Grey Heron	Collared Dove	Long-tailed Tit	Starling
Cormorant	Kingfisher	Nuthatch	House Sparrow
Mute Swan	Green Woodpecker	Treecreeper	Bullfinch
Greylag Goose	Skylark	Goldcrest	Goldfinch
Canada Goose	Grey Wagtail	Firecrest	Greenfinch
Egyptian Goose	Pied Wagtail	Wren	Chaffinch
Mallard	Raven	Blackcap	Great Spotted Woodpecker
Moorhen	Carrion Crow	Chiffchaff	Lesser black-backed Gull
Black-headed Gull	Jackdaw	Blackbird	
Herring Gull	Magpie	Redwing	
Buzzard	Jay	Song Thrush	Seen from, not in, the park
Kestrel	Blue Tit	Mistle Thrush	Pheasant
Woodpigeon	Coal Tit	Robin	Red-legged Partridge
Stock Dove	Great Tit	Duncock	Red Kite

YELLOW - is of conservational concern **RED** - is of serious conservational concern



FEATURED BIRD - GREY WAGTAIL
The grey wagtail is more colourful than its name suggests! Its upper parts are slate-grey and it has a distinctive yellow under-tail. Its tail is noticeably longer than the Pied or Yellow wagtails. Its diet consists of insects, it is around 18-19 cm in length and has a wingspan of 25-27cm.

BIRD SIGHTINGS - thank you to Judy Guest

We are fortunate to have regular sightings of a variety of birds.

Highlights this year were the two Goosanders in January and a Gadwall.

If you looked up, you may have seen a Nightingale, a Whimbrel and a Mute Swan. Our Kingfisher is always a joy to see.

Sadly, this year we lost a few of our friendly residents who had been with us for many years and, surprisingly, there was a shortage of ducklings.

For the first time, our Heron found a partner and produced four babies who could be seen, perched in their nest, on top of the island tree.

Our Egyptian Geese were very busy with three broods. The arrival of the Canada Geese resulted in seven goslings shared between two families. There was a continual arrival of Moorhen chicks throughout the summer.

It was also an excellent year for Common Spotted Orchids, with over 150 seen in June. Also seen were two Pyramidal Orchids.



Goosander



Heron Chicks



Kingfisher

ARMISTICE DAY IN VICTORIA CROSS GROVE NOVEMBER 11th 2024

The day dawned bright with sunshine, but chilly, for our Armistice Day Commemoration in Victoria Cross Grove.

The event followed a short commemoration at 11am by the War Memorial in town, when dignitaries and participants travelled up from there for 11.30am.

Bagpiper Rorie Evans started the event as he walked towards the Memorial Sculpture playing Highland Cathedral.

John Cohen, Chairman of the Tunbridge Wells Branch of the Royal British Legion, said a few words about specific battles and Richard Snow then read out the names of the Ten Brave Men And True named on the plaque in the Grove, all who are connected in various ways to Tunbridge Wells.

Buglers from TS Brilliant Sea Cadets played the Last Post and a two-minute silence was observed. The buglers then played Reveille.

Wreaths were laid at the Memorial Sculpture by the attending dignitaries, including a cadet from 129 Squadron Tunbridge Wells Air Training Corps.

Around 50+ people attended, including children who behaved beautifully during the commemoration and also wore their own, hand-made poppies.

It's heart-warming to see the numbers attending grow each year as, several years ago, I was the only person there and that was so sad.

This day in our history needs to be remembered for the next generation and generations to come. If it wasn't for those who made the ultimate sacrifice, who knows what could have happened.....



FOR OUR YOUNGER SUPPORTERS - CAN YOU NAME THESE CREATURES OFTEN FOUND IN OUR PARK?

Answers on the last page

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



THE PLANNED SENSORY GARDEN

As this issue goes to print, the Friends of Dunorlan Park and TWBC's Parks Team are exploring the cost and design options for a special garden.

It is important to get the whole area right so anyone with a disability, be that mobility, sight, touch or hearing, can access and enjoy this special place to the very best of their ability.

Dunorlan Park prides itself on being accessible for everyone, although one or two areas may be tricky but, on the whole it is a park in which anyone can walk, run, sit and generally be at peace with nature, despite being so close to a large town or, as In Bloom now regards us, a small city!

Watch this space for updates on the sensory garden in the New Year.....



HAPPY DUCKS' TALE! **Thank you Judy Guest**

On a wet autumnal day, two domestic ducks were left in the park. They stayed huddled together and it was obvious they had no wildlife survival skills. We are so grateful to the member of the public who kindly let them spend the night in his bath whilst a new home was found.



The following day, they found a fantastic home at Smiles Sensory and Family Farm in Eridge. Paris, the owner, has informed us they are happily settling in, and have been named Jerry and Jemima.

They will slowly be introduced to the other free-roaming residents, including goats, pigs, rhea, chickens and other ducks.

They have over three acres of woods, grass and streams to explore, and will get lots of love and attention from their visitors, staff and volunteers.

To find out more about Smiles Sensory and Family Farm, have a look at their website: <http://www.smilessensoryfarm.co.uk/>.



KEEPING IN TOUCH

If you have any comments about our newsletters, be they good, bad or indifferent, do get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

Maybe there is something specific you would like to see regarding the park?

Something you might like to comment on?

Have you had a look at our Facebook page, Instagram or X (formerly Twitter)?

All the Dunorlan Friends Committee members are either working full-time and / or involved with other things so, although we try to keep an eye on any social media comments, the three sites mentioned are only semi-regularly monitored so we can't guarantee an instant reply.

For anything relating to the park itself, your first point of contact should be Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Parks Team. You can reach them at parcs@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or call 01892 554031

For any out of hours incidents in the park, you can call the emergency facilities number on 07967 686217

If you have any park photos to share, do send them to Joan at cjay13@hotmail.co.uk, in jpeg format please, and they could be included on our FB page or in our newsletters. Maybe even in the media with articles about the park! Add your name and you will be credited (if I remember!)



**Friends of Dunorlan Park Membership
Application Form
FOR NEW MEMBERS ONLY**

Registered Charity No. 1063715/0

Please return the completed form, inserting, amending or deleting as appropriate to:

Jenny Russell, FODP Membership Secretary, Wildings, Pembury Road, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QN

2024 Subscriptions

£7 Individual

£12 Family (any number)

I / We
(Name)

Address and postcode
.....
.....
.....
.....

Telephone: Email:
.....

Wish to apply for Individual / Family Membership of the Friends of Dunorlan Park

I enclose payment (cheques to FoDP) of the appropriate subscription (£7 / £12)

I also wish to make a donation of £ and enclose payment.

OR

- **I wish to pay by bank transfer to the Friends of Dunorlan Park account no 10371033, sort code 20-88-13 ()**
- **Please send me a Gift Aid Declaration Form ()**

I agree that you can contact me via email / mail with appropriate information.

Signed: Date:

**CURRENT MEMBERS' SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE ON
JANUARY 1ST PLEASE, FOR ANYONE NOT PAYING BY STANDING ORDER**

**EVERYONE ON THE FRIENDS OF DUNORLAN PARK
COMMITTEE WISHES YOU A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN 2025!**

If you are a UK Income Tax payer, the Friends can claim 25%
from HMRC on any membership fee or donation you make.
This means for every £10 you give, the tax man will pay the Friends another £2.50.
If you haven't already completed a Gift Aid form, please contact Jenny, the
Friends' Membership Secretary at dunorlanfriends@gmail.com or call 01892 531830

Chair	Siobhan O'Connell	dunorlanchair@gmail.com 07484 890550
Secretary	Camilla Doonan	
Treasurer	John Davies	
Membership Secretary	Jenny Russell	dunorlanfriends@gmail.com 01892 531830
Publicity, Newsletter & FB	Joan Hamilton-Smith	cjay13@hotmail.co.uk 01892 539551
Events Organiser	Peter Russell	dunorlanfriends@gmail.com 01892 531830
Marketing & Social Events	Valerie le Moignan	07768 611492
Committee Member	Ian Beavis	ian.Beavis@tunbridgewells.gov.uk 01892 523007
Committee Member	Carolyn Cohen	
Committee Member	Ian Harman	i.harman984@btinternet.com 01892 356095
TWBC Parks Team	Peter Every & Kasia Olszewska	parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk 01892 554031



Animal quiz answers: 1. Fox 2. Hedgehog 3. Blue Tit 4. Mayfly 5. Vole 6. Egyptian Goose 7. Red Admiral Butterfly
8. Moorhen 9. Mouse