



Friends of Dartmouth Park
Patron: William, 10th Earl of Dartmouth
Newsletter
Issue 29

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Date for your 2013 diary
AGM—Wednesday 27 March

This year's AGM will take place in the afternoon. The meeting will be held from 2pm in the "Blind Dave" Heeley Events Room, Dartmouth Park Pavilion, where refreshments will be available.

Following the official business of the AGM, Alan and Brett from Tomlinson, the contractors for Phase II of the restoration, will update us on their progress so far, and further plans for Phase II.

Black Swan in Sandwell Valley



David Nash was walking in the Sandwell Valley and came upon this Black Swan near Swan Pool. It was the only Black Swan in the vicinity. Is anyone else aware of there being Black Swans in Sandwell Valley?

Many thanks to David for capturing this unusual sight and sharing it with the Friends.

Stunning photographs of snow scenes in Dartmouth Park taken by Seumas Kelly



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Committee**Heritage****LOTTERY FUNDED**

Nigel Slater Chairman	Roger Stopford Vice Chairman	Annette Welch Treasurer	Carol Hartill Secretary	Photographs By Seumas Kelly
Betty Finney	Margaret Geddes	Pauline Lawley	Sue Slater	
Anne Wilkins	Mandy Timms Membership Secretary	Mark Barrett Social Historian	Wendy Bodenham Minute Secretary	

Dartmouth Park and Sandwell Valley join forces



The management of the Park has for many years been separate to the management of the Valley, but the Park and the Valley are now being managed as one under Chris Moore, Visitor Centre and Countryside Manager for Sandwell, based at Sandwell Park Farm. Chris, pictured left, will be working closely with John Satchwell, the Project Manager for the restoration of Dartmouth Park, who is based in the Dartmouth Park Pavilion.

Chris says one of his priorities for 2013 is the layout of the flower beds in the Main Avenue which, with the help of the newly appointed Head Gardener, Paul Cotterill, will return to being a stunning feature in Dartmouth Park.

The new management structure should mean that on-site staff can provide an integrated service liaising with visitors and working closely with the Friends of Dartmouth Park. Grounds Maintenance is also included in the new management structure and this should ensure that the Park is well kept at all times.

Dartmouth Park is playing a very important role in the regeneration of West Bromwich Town Centre and it provides the gateway to the countryside of the Sandwell Valley. The Park and the Town Centre will become close neighbours when the Park's Reform Street Car Park is landscaped and incorporated into the Park. The Farley Fountain is being moved from Dartmouth Square to take pride of place on a knoll next to the Reform Street Bridge which borders the park. From its elevated position the Fountain will be visible from the car parks surrounding the new retail development and together with imaginative signage will be an encouragement to visitors to West Bromwich to enjoy fresh air and recreation as well as shopping.

West Bromwich Regeneration Update

In addition to the retail development in New Square, part of which is due to open in June, Queen's Square is to be transformed and Phase I will start in 2013. The work includes a new main High Street entrance, improved malls, refurbished toilets and new rest room facilities. Work has already started to link Queen's Square and New Square.

Work on revamping Duchess/Queen's Parade has already started. There will be new paving, seating, bins, lighting and trees. The market stalls are to be repositioned to run along the centre of the Parade.

Work on the much wanted Leisure Pool will commence shortly. DC Leisure has been appointed to design, build, run and maintain the £11m town centre complex, due to open in summer 2014. It will be located on the corner of Moor Street and Barton Street and will have a 25m pool with a learner pool, a sauna and steam room, a four-court sports hall, a 100-station fitness suite, two dance studios/activity rooms, an indoor children's adventure play centre and a café.

The 17th century Oak House Barns, situated next to the Oak House Museum, are to benefit from a £1.7m restoration programme to provide new facilities for visitors, schools and the local community. The timber framed stable block will create a shop, café, classroom and a community meeting room to be available all year round. Work is due to start in February 2013 and will hopefully be completed by spring 2014.

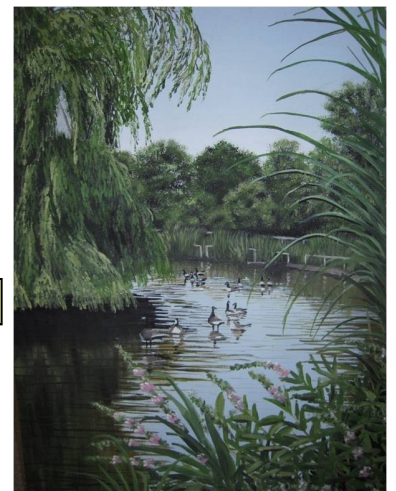
£20m is being spent on the Eastern Gateway located between Bull Street, High Street and Overend Street to provide high quality affordable homes, office space and retail units. Phase I is already underway. The Lyng and Greets Green are also areas of West Bromwich where homes are being built which will provide a wide range of property choice for residents.

The news that West Bromwich Building Society HQ has decided to relocate from their High Street premises to a new building in Providence Place was excellent news. A planning application is expected within the next few months.

Keen gardener Annette, our Treasurer, who is also heavily involved in the Sensory Garden in the Park, would like to share some of her gardening tips with other gardeners in this and future newsletters.

Annette's Gardening Tip

Don't throw away banana peel or over-ripe fruit. Skin and fruit are a natural source of potassium. Bury them next to the roses to help them to flower and thrive.



Would you like to own the original oil painting of Dartmouth Park featured right?

We are auctioning an original oil painting of Dartmouth Park by local artist Chris Holloway at our AGM on the 27 March. Some of you may remember the two paintings commissioned by the Friends—one has pride of place in the Events Room, but we haven't the space to display the second painting. Sealed bids are invited either before the 27 March, if you are unable to attend the AGM, or on the day. The envelopes will be opened and the winner announced at the AGM.

Green fingered members needed to contribute to a Plant Stall

We are aiming to have a Spring Fair Event in May, similar to last year's Autumn Fair. Although our Autumn Fair was a success it was unfortunate that we didn't have a plant stall and many of the people who attended were disappointed. May is the perfect time for planting out the garden for summer and our committee members and volunteer gardeners are already raising plants for a stall, but it would be very helpful if our green fingered members could donate a plant from their garden or a plant grown from seed. For more information contact: Annette on 0121 525 5524

Volunteer gardeners taking a rest and sunning themselves on the new benches in the Sensory Garden



Giving the Park a 'WOW' factor

Now that the Sensory Garden is almost completed, the Friends are looking for another project to help give the Park a 'WOW' factor. We are sure that our members will have lots of ideas to share with us, and Annette, our Treasurer, will endeavour to raise funds for the chosen project. Contact us by e-mail or letter with your suggestions—contact details on Page 1.

We would like to pass on the condolences of the committee and members of the Friends' Group to Mandy, our Membership Secretary, whose mother passed away in January. The late Maureen Timms was a very active member of the group and helped out at many of our events. She will be sadly missed by us all.

Advertisement from 1890 for the Refreshment Rooms

NOTICE.
VISITORS TO DARTMOUTH PARK will find Excellent Accommodation at the New and Commodious
REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

These Rooms are situated in the centre of the Park, commanding splendid views of the surrounding country. The Dartmouth Park Band plays in the Park on Sundays 3-30 to 5 p.m., on Mondays and Saturdays 6-30 to closing time; and the Golds Hill Saxhorn Band on Thursday evenings from 6-30 to closing time.

Special arrangements made with Schools and Pic-nic Parties upon Moderate Terms. Good Quality Guaranteed. Estimates given for School Treats.

Observatory—Charge 1d. Field Glasses on hire. Postal Address: The Park Rooms, West Bromwich.

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MISS E. BROWNE, Proprietress.

The advertisement on the left was placed in the local newspaper in September 1890.

Miss Browne, the proprietress of the Refreshment Rooms was charging 1d to visit the Observatory and hiring out field glasses. We can't provide Bands playing in the Park four days a week, but our new pavilion can offer a visit to the Bill Finney Viewing Tower and field glasses for free. The Tower also has a telescope, which, however, does require a coin to operate. The terrace on the second floor contains some interesting play equipment for young children.

We also have the splendid "Blind Dave" Heeley Events Room which can be hired for meetings and parties. The bright airy room has splendid views down to the pools and beyond. Ring 0121 553 0220 for more information.

Tomlinson make good progress on Phase II of the restoration

Work started in the autumn to provide a new performance area, children's water play area, new park furniture, and improvements to the lakes and wetland areas. The photograph far right shows some of the new paths that have been created and work is continuing on improvements to the old paths.

Following our AGM Alan, pictured right, will be giving us a full update on progress and those wishing to take advantage will be able to walk with Alan to view the work being undertaken.



Alan, Site Manager, and John, Clerk of Works, from Tomlinson



Diane Walker's childhood Memories of Dartmouth Park

Being born and bred in West Bromwich, attending Beeches Road School until the age of 11, Dartmouth Park became part of my everyday life. I recall being met by my granddad from school and going into the park to feed the ducks followed by a walk to see the cuckoo clock, by the cenotaph. The clock was always beautifully planted with alpine plants and the highlight was to be there to hear the sound of the cuckoo on the hour.

Sunday was always a special day when, with the family, we would take a stroll around the boating lake and I would count the boats as they were rowed around the island. The old blue bricks which form the landing stage and steps down to the lake, to me, form part of the lovely area we had. The boats during the winter would be stored in the, long since gone, boat house which stood by the lake and in front of the bowling green where granddad enjoyed many a game of bowls. If it happened to be a particularly warm day we would make our way to the Pavilion, or as we called it, 'the coffee house' for a welcomed drink.

One harsh winter in the early 1960's the lake froze over and the ice became thick enough to skate on, and so the council erected floodlights and luckily owning our own skates, my friend and I were able to skate and do our Jayne Torvill impersonations. It was a real treat and one I will always remember. Sledging in the snow down the Elsmere was always another treat – we always seemed to have snow every winter then.

Dartmouth Park always hosted annual horticultural shows, the best fireworks display in the borough, and many other functions. It was always a pleasure to be able to say 'we're going up the park' to enjoy ourselves at one of these functions.

I look forward to spending more time in our park now I am one of the retired generation, and to be able to say 'this is how I remembered it'

Friends' Member, Ivor Wright, makes an unusual find

Ivor Wright, a long serving member of the now, sadly disbanded, K&J Male Voice Choir, was having a sort out at home when he found a well used copy of sheet music for 'Our Borough Song', dedicated to the Mayor, Aldermen & Burgesses of the Borough of West Bromwich. Ivor thought the Friends of Dartmouth Park might be interested and our Social Historian, Mark, was asked if he could research when it was written and any other relevant information. Unfortunately we cannot identify the exact date it was written, but the research has given us information on an important family in West Bromwich who had a road named after them—Hartland Road, Charlemont.

Lizzie Hartland who wrote the music for 'Our Borough Song' came from a family of musicians who lived in Charlemont House on the corner of Hollyhedge Road and Newton Street. It was an impressive house which was demolished to make way for the bungalows just inside Newton Street. Lizzie's father, Timothy, was an organist, choirmaster, played the flute, wrote church music, and had a fine tenor voice. He did much to promote music in West Bromwich.

Timothy's son, William and daughter, Lizzie, followed in his footsteps. William was the Town Hall organist and in 1875 founded the West Bromwich Choral Society. He was Professor of Singing at the West

Bromwich Institute. William was one of the West Bromwich Improvement Commissioners featured in an Album presented to Reuben Farley, Chairman of the Improvement Commissioners, to celebrate the opening of Dartmouth Park.

Lizzie Hartland was for some time accompanist to the Choral Society, but moved on to teaching and composition. She composed many songs which were performed in West Bromwich.

West Bromwich was made a Borough in 1882 and it seemed that the song may have been written to celebrate the occasion, but the first line of the first verse starts with 'Hurrah for our busy old Borough' which indicates West Bromwich had been a Borough for some time. Below are some of the lines from the song:

Our town of which all can most honestly boast
In the past she fought sturdily, nobly her way
With a zeal opposition could never repress
And we proudly regard, and right joyously too,
The record of deeds which ensured her success.

Hurrah for our famous old Borough's Success
Whatever the changes around us may be,
Success to her Business, her Industries, Mines
With Time's strange developments none can foresee.

Hurrah for our splendid old Borough's Success
To her Science and Art, and the Football Team too.
Let West Bromwich indeed be ever A1
In all that her townsmen endeavour to do'

