



# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO: 38

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## CHAIRMAN'S PIECE

The High water mark's have largely been and gone, yet despite the dismal Summer we have been able to enjoy a memorable time, highlighted by both the Carnival and Olympic Torch days. The influence that Abbey Fields has contributed to the success of these events cannot be under estimated; providing a back drop for friends and families to further enjoy the occasion.

The Annual General Meeting is reported on page three of this newsletter, as well as on our website. A major talking point was the proposed cycle route through the Fields. The concensus was that it should be opposed by the Friends; however voices in favour have also been heard and their opinions must be respected. My own primary concern is that a minority usage by cyclists will impact detrimentally on the majority of users as it will be impossible to police and the paths used indiscriminately.

At the AGM I announced that I wished to stand down as Chairman at the end of the current year. What has been achieved I will leave to others, but I feel that changes should be made, which will provide new vigour and direction to ensure the future of our society.

It cannot be that as we get older the seasons seem to come and go and at ever increasing speed; it just seems so. Or is it that we are so busy in this frantic world of ours, that it is difficult to take a few moments for quiet reflection. Whenever you feel this is happening to you take a walk on the not so wild side into Abbey Fields. Sit a while and let its peace bring a little sanity back into your life and Christmas will be here in October.....

*Chairman*

## CYCLING IN ABBEY FIELDS – AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

The majority of the members of FOAF appear to be against this, although there has not been a formal vote on the subject, as a non-cyclist I would like to support the change. The actual debate is about a single cycle path through the field, to join up existing cycle/pedestrian paths, avoiding travel on public roads and competing with cars and lorries. I would certainly not support random cycling in the Fields, but correctly managed it could encourage more people to visit our excellent facilities and provide a safer environment for cyclists, including families.

My wife and I walked through Hyde Park on the last day of the Olympics and the morning of the men's marathon, it was a beautiful day and lots of people about. We walked along a path for both pedestrians and cyclists with the corridors for each clearly marked. It was certainly not universally adhered to, as I suspect most of each group could not read English, but it worked. The cyclists included a full range of abilities, with families out with young children learning to ride, lots on Boris bikes and budding Bradley Wiggins, cycling is not allowed anywhere else in the park. We have all seen this model in various cities and resorts around the world and believe it could work equally well in Kenilworth.

The path proposed in Abbey Fields would be similar to the one in Hyde Park and other locations, but I expect the traffic levels would be significantly lower. All cyclists should be "encouraged" to dismount when passing the swimming baths with strategically place bollards. It would be a logical stop for families to stop take advantage of the new super playground (2013) and have a cup of tea or an ice cream.

The council have done an excellent job in providing both pedestrian and cycle paths at either side of the Fields, that appear to be well used by both groups, it seems a great pity, that we cannot look for ways to accommodate the varying groups of cyclists to travel through the Fields in a controlled and safe manor and continue the Olympic ideal of encouraging more people to participate in exercise.

I would not suggest we follow Hyde Park model completely, and would not support using the lake in the Fields to accompany the cycling and bid for the commonwealth games Triathlon!!!

*Gordon Mitchell, Treasurer*

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## MOTH EVENING

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The annual moth evening in Abbey Fields took place on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August with the County Moth Recorder, David Brown sharing his huge amount of knowledge with Friends and visitors. He set up two moth traps, powered by a generator, which were roughly a hundred metres apart. As darkness descended the amount of moths coming to the traps increased. Among the macro moths seen were *Large Yellow*, *Underwing* and *Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing*, both these moths employ the defensive mechanism of startling any possible predators with suddenly revealing their bright hindwings, which are in contrast to their forewings. A dainty moth *Sandy Carpet*, whose caterpillar feeds on the flowers and ripening seeds of the Red Campion and *Common Carpet* whose caterpillar feeds on bedstraws were also in evidence. A *Dingy Footman* landed on someone's trouser leg, its caterpillar feeds on lichens and algae growing on trees and bushes. A moth which always rests with its wings closed *Dingy Shell* arrived in the trap, as did *Common Rustic*, *Small Rivulet*, *Small Fan-foot* and *Smoky Wainscot*. A *Flame Shoulder*, aptly named as it has a bright straw-coloured band along its forewings was one of the later moths to arrive. The evening passed quickly due to the interest generated by David Brown and we look forward to him coming next year.

**Celia Rickers**



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## OUR MAN AT WDC

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The Fields have been going through some very dramatic changes in weather, as we all have. The seeded meadow eventually got some cold and snow essential for seeds to germinate, then the driest Spring for years slowed or stopped germination. We eventually had rain, lots of it and then very unseasonably cold temperatures, however signs of germinating seedlings were seen. Please remember seeds will stay viable for many years and germinate as favourable conditions arise. Ongoing maintenance/establishment is now in place and we are cutting the meadow as normal grass cutting, this is to stop grasses from out competing the germinating flower seedlings in the first season.

The lake actually filled with water completely thankfully, and the snakes head fritillaries were a picture at the eastern end of the lake. The recent designation of the lake and surrounds as a local wild life site is wonderful news for all who are involved in the Fields. A slight typo in the last news letter, as it was designated by the County Council not the WDC, which makes it all the better as it was independently surveyed.

The Spring bulb display came out, thanks to all involved in the planting. The flowers were a bit briefer than normal due to the high temperatures, but a colourful cheery sight and a valuable nectar source for Spring insects.

The bus stop bed stood the winter well and is now establishing and providing a colourful display, which is set to continue throughout the season.

The wet weather has hampered reinstatement of the grass edges to the access road to the swimming pool, after its refurbishment and nearly caused the cancellation of the Kenilworth Festival, which thankfully went on with a few changes. First time I've seen a large tent on the tennis courts!

As I'm writing this, the temperature has risen and what a different it makes to all of us, the Fields look lush and green and are all set for a very busy season.

You will be aware that WDC like all the other Local Authorities, have been and are going through the mill with cost saving exercises, we in the Parks team have been restructured and thankfully I have a job in the new team managing Warwick Districts open spaces and I will continue working closely with the Friends of Abbey Fields.

**Jon**

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## TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 18TH JULY '12

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The Chairman welcomed members to Jubilee House and hoped that the evening would be both lively and informative. Items of interest that arose during the proceedings included:

A suggestion for a Bird Seed Dispenser to be installed adjacent to the feeding station. Feeding bread to the ducks and geese not only encouraged vermin but, apparently also resulted in too many Drakes on the lake!

The Wild Flower Meadow had not had a good start to the year but was now improving and the programme of future plug planting would bring the meadow to life.

The activities organised by David Rickers during the year, had all been successful, whilst our efforts at the Lions Show and with the 2012 Calendar, were both profitable.

Membership continues to flourish, largely through the efforts of Joan Rockett. It is important to have a strong broad based society, to have a representative voice in the community.

Our newsletter produced by Linda Pettifor is the envy of many other local societies, and we are grateful to Emmerson Printers for their continued support. *(Ta!...from Ed & Committee)*

The finances of the society are strong with increased membership funding and associated gift aid claim, together with £1,400 profit from the Calendar sales.

We were also helped by a Council grant of £3,000 towards the Wild Flower Meadow project, of which over £4,600 has already been spent on the meadow, plus £350 on crocus bulbs and we had replaced several bat boxes. To encourage the use of Abbey Fields by children, a contribution had been donated to WDC Summer Activities Scheme.

Future events later this year all revolve around planting, the Jubilee Oak, plug planting in the meadow and crocuses along Abbey Hill would keep us busy.

The Committee were re-elected together with a new committee member Mr Clive Stone, who is most welcome and we look forward to working with him.

The Chairman informed the meeting that he wished to stand down from the office at the end of next financial year, although he would continue on the Committee if elected.

The Chairman gave a resume of the proceedings of the Cycle Way Forum and of the proposed cycle path through Abbey Fields. Following the circulated letter, he had received many comments from members, both agreeing and disagreeing with the idea. All had been forwarded to WDC for inclusion as residents comments, together with many sent directly. The meeting was firmly against the proposal.

After a necessary tea break, Jon Holmes gave an interesting up date on progress with the Wild Flower Meadow and how it would proceed over the next year. He also was delighted that the lake area had been given wildlife status, which gave increased importance to Abbey Fields as a haven for all wildlife.

The Chairman thanked Jon for all his efforts on our behalf and the members for their support.

A full copy of the minutes is available on the website or from Pat Smith, Secretary.

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## MEMORIES

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It is easy to assume that Abbey Fields has always been the well manicured park land that we know. Many of us are 'incomers', who only see what is a relatively modern layout. A recent chat has revealed, at least to me, that the Fields have changed radically within the last forty years. The Fields to the south of the brook housed not only the cattle, but also two cart horses owned by Kenilworth Town Council, called 'Punch' and 'Blackbird'. They were kept in the fields adjacent to Rosemary Hill. Punch retired into Abbey Fields in 1962, although he was still employed 'part-time', pulling a gritting cart up Rosemary Hill during icy weather. During this period he became....

**PTO...**

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

*cont'd...*

befriended by a small red cow and they became inseparable friends, until Punch who was over 20 years old, had to be put down through ill health. The local paper received a number of tributes to the horse.

The Fields were also wild flower meadows, something that we are now trying to restore, with dew ponds and kissing gates throughout. There was also an allotment which later became a rose garden and stood by the War Memorial.

No doubt many of you will have memories of the Fields from childhood days. Please write and share them with us.

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## Litter Picking:

Two final litter picking days left:

**1st September  
6th October**

Please meet at the Swimming Baths  
by the Café at 9.30 a.m as usual

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Can I just say a big THANK YOU again, to all the Ladies who helped with the washing up on the night of the A.G.M. Your help as always is invaluable.

Many thanks  
*Ed.*

## 2014 CALENDAR PHOTO'S

Having just produced one calendar, we now need to look forward to our next edition. The standard of photographs used in the calendar is of the highest order and we can do this by selecting from lots of photographs. We ask all members and friends, to use their digital camera's through the coming months and submit them to Pat Smith by the end of May 2013. We need photographs that are indicative of Abbey Fields and how they are used throughout the year. Pat no doubt will remind us all next year of the deadline date.

## F.O.A.F Committee

Chairman:

David Pettifor .....01926 748731

Vice-Chairman:

David Rickers .....01926 852238

Treasurer & Social Events:

Gordon Mitchell .....01926 513018

Secretary & Membership Enquiries:

Pat Smith .....01926 852458

Newsletter Editor:

Linda Pettifor .....01926 748731

Committee Members:

Joan Rockett.....01926 863143

Adrian Rowe-Evans

We're on the Web!  
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