



FoPP on Tour At Birmingham Think Tank



Take two coaches, seven committee members, twelve parents, seventy two children and 300 bottles of pop – mix well and you have all the ingredients for a perfect day out.

Monday, 11th of August started dull with slight drizzle but once everyone had put on their bright yellow baseball caps (courtesy of FoPP) and settled on the two coaches, it was sunshine for the rest of the day on our trip to Millennium Point Think Tank. For most of us it was our first visit to this new Museum in Birmingham and it proved to be somewhat different to the older generation's idea of what a museum should be like, but all of our junior members took to the "hands on" approach to science with no effort. Each adult was allocated several children to look after and this proved to be the hardest part of the day (*I think so too - Ed.*)

A welcome break for lunch (more pop and crisps) and it was back to the serious work of pressing buttons and pulling levers etc.. The most popular area with the children seemed to be Medical Matters with lots of enlarged models of gruesome body parts and functions, while the seaside display gave some of us a chance for a rest (see above).

All too soon it was time to get back to the coaches with everybody clutching a souvenir brochure, hat and a last bottle of pop for the short journey to Dudley during which several younger members crashed out.

Editorial

With this being written in the middle of the school holidays, events have been coming thick and fast as can be seen elsewhere in this publication (and more to come). It would be unfair to single out any one member for their efforts, but a special thanks to the St Francis's Youth Club who have ably assisted and supported our events.

As members may have heard, both the Principal and Mr. Rowland Foote (Vice Principal) of Dudley College have moved on to pastures new. THAT Academy was Mr. Foote's concept and with his departure at the end of the last term, things have been somewhat quiet. However in the absence of anything to the contrary we can only assume that the College and D.M.B.C. will persist with the planning application. We have already arranged a meeting with the new Principal which is scheduled for the 3rd of October and look forward to her opinion on this matter.

FoPP, with the help of our M.P. and various Councillors, continue to oppose the siting of THAT in Priory Park. In the meantime our Petition attracts many more signatures. Everything suggests that it is only a matter of time before the College seeks Planning consent. Meanwhile Dudley Council seem unable to bite the bullet and concur with Community wishes to site the Academy elsewhere.

Skateboard Facility in Priory Park

There has been much discussion at Council meetings and in the Press about providing such facilities at various sites throughout the Borough, including Priory Park.

FoPP wholeheartedly support a facility which will benefit our young people but believe that the suggested location of the Bowling Green to be unacceptable for the following reasons:-

- Safety for users, audience and road traffic.
- Annoyance of nearby residents.
- Insufficient space and basic facilities.
- The exclusion of a planned leisure facility i.e. bowls.

An ideal site for this activity which does not have these problems is in the area behind the Pavilion which is enclosed, already has a hard standing, is away from roads and is of sufficient size to facilitate a substantial arena.

The only problem with this suggestion is the joint College/ DMBC proposal for THAT academy. Our Council continually indicate their vocal support for community amenities such as this, now is the chance for them to demonstrate their commitment.

A. Weston

Fun in the Sun



Painting, mosaics, stilt walking, plum and spoon races, welly wanging, football coaching, disco dancing, karaoke, a coach trip and lots more made up FoPP's first Summer activities programme. Run jointly with Friends of Grange Park approximately 275 children aged between 1 and 16 years participated and lots of fun was had by all.

Art and Crafts afternoon followed the visit to the Think Tank and children produced excellent artwork, many pictures recalling what they had seen. A display has been organised and will be exhibited in the children's library in Dudley Central Library from September onward. The Circus skills workshop was very popular with stilt walking, flame throwing, etc.

Sportsathon at Grange Park was a fast moving dynamic afternoon with a dozen or so activities for all to have a go at. Straw javelin and hook a hoop were most popular, with an eight metre throw and 1500 points being the leading scores. All participants received sweets, a certificate and a Dudley Leisure Centre swimming pass.

Picnic in the Park was the chance for r & r (rest and recreation), but not for volunteers. Sharon Blatchford was kept busy with her wonderful face painting. Chris Rich and Julie Banner looked after the refreshments. I would like to say huge thanks to all helpers who gave freely so much time and energy to make things work.

Janet Alderman-Rowe



Cavaliers and Roundheads



Saturday, 30th of August, saw this popular weekend event get underway with the coffin race in the High Street. Not to be outdone, FoPP mustered their finest athletes, trained to the peak of fitness in order to demolish the opposition. We have to report however that unfortunately we finished slowest in a field of six teams!! BUT we did win a cup for the best dressed team with our monks in their brown habits attended by a cortège of young maidens suitably attired.

The next day events moved to Priory Park with members of the Sealed Knot giving another excellent re-enactment of the storming of the Priory and Castle with much gunfire and smoke.

FoPP again had our marquee with an updated photo display on show and we were pleased to be able to demonstrate to the Lady Mayor, Mrs. Tomkinson, our ongoing commitment to maintaining Priory Park for the enjoyment of all. Lots of visitors expressed their thanks for our efforts and we were able to sell plenty of raffle tickets. A list of winners is available from Committee members.



Celebration Day



At the same time as the Cavaliers and Roundheads event, all the Local Community Voluntary Groups came together on the Woodland Avenue side of the Park for a Celebration Day ably hosted by Craig Gutteridge. A veritable village of marquees sprang up early Sunday morning.

The Mayor spent considerable time visiting each voluntary group without exception and the feedback we received was how heartened she was by all the hard work of the different groups within the ward.

On behalf of all the groups we would like to thank DOSTI funding organisation for their generous financial contribution without which this day could not have been such a success. We now have various items of equipment which can be used by all groups throughout the ward in future events.

Amongst those in attendance at the event were:-

- Priory Community Association
- Priory Residents and Tenants Association.
- Neighbours News
- St. Francis' Youth Club
- St Francis' Church and Parish Centre
- Priory Boxing Club
- Priory Tots
- Duncan Edwards under 11s
- Duncan Edwards Disco
- 13th Dudley Scouts

Future Skills Dudley (FSD)

A joint venture between Future Skills Dudley, Green Care (formerly known as the Grounds Maintenance Division) and FoPP has been forged to maintain the infrastructure of Priory Park. This is different to the previous arrangement in as much as people will be dedicated solely to, and permanently based on, the Park.

Mark Lavender, head of FSD and himself a local resident said that "This unique partnership will allow local unemployed people to receive training whilst improving and maintaining the Park. Trainees will be supervised and trained by two staff, one from each organisation and attend the accredited NVQ centre on Wrens Nest to complete their level 2 NVQ training. We hope we can work closely with FoPP who can help us decide which improvements are required so that we can get going."

If you are unemployed and interested in pursuing a "Green Career", contact Judy Downing or Christine Weston on 01384 812215 for further details.



Priory Primary School Presentation



As part of our ongoing commitment to the local youth of the area, Friday the 12th of September saw us with a Hall full of children at priory Primary School. We were there to present a variety of play equipment on behalf of FoPP in recognition of their help in our bid for Fair Share lottery monies.

The opportunity was taken by our Liaison Officer to give a short talk on vandalism and other problems in the Park and a lively two way discussion with the pupils ensued. With the full approval of the Staff it was agreed that we would erect a Notice Board in the school to display details of our future events and receive any comments or suggestions from everybody.

A commemorative Certificate was presented to the Deputy Headmistress Miss Riley, who thanked us for an interesting afternoon and assured us that the equipment would be put to good use.

Bang the Drum



Extensive coverage of our New Opportunity Fund bid has been given in all the local newspapers and the next issue is to get quotations for the work involved. An excellent 3D overview of the proposals has been produced by equipment supplier Wicksteed and this was shown to all at the Celebration Day event and drew much favourable comment. With a huge climbing net,

a combat slide and numerous other activities this promises to be a terrific attraction for children of all ages.

Repairs to the Tennis Courts and new security fencing will be a priority (!) while the refurbished Bowling Green has already attracted much interest.

Several people have already signed up to register as possible new members .

Calendar of Future Events

Senior Citizens Trip

With our visit to the Think Tank being such a success it has been proposed that we link with Age Concern to take a trip for our more mature FoPPs and residents. Various venues have been suggested including a Panto, Ice show or the Ballet; let us have your thoughts and more suggestions.

Halloween Fright Night Friday 31st October

Together with St. Francis's Youth Club and Mandy Winning, in Priory Park, with lantern and candle making, ghost walk, Duncan Edwards Disco.

Carol Concert 17th December

Winter Social (Last years event of the year)

early December -Town Hall Banqueting suite.

Christmas Cards. Its never too soon and with last years effort being so popular and having to be re-printed twice, get your orders in early. This time we hope to offer different views and perhaps a variety pack. See your distributor or committee member for details and prices.

And finally ... Lost in Space?



Well Priory Park actually. Our bemused visitor was Mr R. F. Duffy from Runcorn who was touring the area by bicycle and trying to find Wolverhampton! (*I have the same problem Ed.*). Sorry we didn't get your first name but we did sign you up as a member.