



THE PRIORITY

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Newsletter of the Friends of Priory Park & The Green

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA



Good Friday certainly lived up to its name, with brilliant weather and a large crowd to make The Grand Easter Egg Hunt in the Park a huge success. With categories for both the under sevens and 7-11, the event was oversubscribed within an hour of opening, with just over 100 entries.

With each entrant accompanied by at least one parent, the Park became alive with people rushing about trying to find all of the clues set by Mike Hessey. Meanwhile Phil and Sharon Blatchford tried to cope with an ever lengthening queue for face painting in the Pavilion, and Celia Shakespeare in the Arts and Crafts tent soon had rows of pictures and Easter Cards. All too soon there were queues back at the Registration Desk, and the eventual winners were declared, and are pictured above. Every entrant received a goody bag. Then there was just time to have a nice cuppa and a hot cross bun in the Pavilion.

Amongst the comments received were - "It's so nice to be able to sit out in the Park and have a cup of tea and watch my children enjoying themselves". "You feel safer in the Park when there are more people about". "WHEN IS YOUR NEXT EVENT!!!".

Janet A-R



BBC Songs of Praise
Dudley Zoo 20 June
Limited tickets available
Ring 01384 237959



Editorial

Can it be two months since our last newsletter? Already “our” daffodils, planted by Priory Primary School two years ago, have faded and our first event (see elsewhere) has been successfully concluded.

Preparations continue for the work on the play area and the new multi-sports pitch under the Lottery Funding secured last year. Of course, we would like to see this proceed much quicker, but we are in regular consultation with DMBC to ensure that our original wishes are met, albeit a proportion of the funding is having to be used for fees and maintenance charges.

We cannot let it go unreported that our first chairman has relinquished his post after two years.

Arthur Weston has been an inspiration to us all, and without him we would have not become the organisation we are today. Arthur however is not leaving us, but will be concentrating on his very important role as Funding Officer, as well as his home commitments. On behalf of all FoPP's, we would like to offer Arthur and his long suffering wife Anne our grateful thanks and best wishes.

Phil Griffiths

A bigger picture

With the help, support and advice of an excellent team of professionals, led by Robert Tolley of S T Walkers & Duckham Chartered Architects, we are now at the discussion stage with Dudley Council, seeking their partnership in applying for a Heritage Project Planning Grant. If successful, the grant should enable us to prepare a project for the complete restoration and ongoing preservation of the park and its historic buildings.

Our group would be part of a Project Board, with the Project Officer being nominated by the Friends. Consultation and community involvement on the project would be under-

Letters

By email:

Many congratulations on the ‘Steps to Health’ report on your excellent website. I really enjoyed my time with you yesterday, particularly my guided tour around the Park with members of the Committee.

I shall now be a regular visitor to your website and look forward to reading all about the developments on the Park over the coming months.

I am sure that NOF and others will be interested at visiting your site as well. I have attached the NOF logo which you might like to place against any of the ‘Transforming Your Space’ work as it develops over the next year.



Very best wishes and do keep up the good work,

Lindsay Newton
Head of Development DMBC

taken by the Friends.

Without doubt our park fits all the criteria for Heritage Lottery Funds, and we have every chance of being successful, but a lot of effort is required to arrive at that point.

Any member who feels they can assist with this project, please advise me, or our Secretary, Chris Rich.

Arthur Weston
Treasurer

FoPP Annual General Meeting



Our AGM was held on the evening of 12th March. Despite the fact that it was a Friday, when there tend to be other attractions, nearly 50 people attended.

Chairman Arthur Weston gave a general report of the activities in 2003, including the successful defence of the park against the threat posed by THAT Academy, the very successful Future Skills/Green Care project for maintaining the park, the funding obtained for improving facilities in the park, and the many events organised by FoPP and other groups. Membership Secretary/Editor Phil Griffiths described the substantial growth of the group since its creation only 2 years ago, and gave details of the new junior membership scheme, plus the improvements in the newsletter, *The Priority*, which is now produced in colour and a more convenient A5 format.

Janet Alderman-Rowe, the Liaison Officer, then gave more details of the many events and collaborations with schools and other local groups that have taken place during the last year, and also presented a provisional programme for the events taking place during 2004.

Treasurer Clayton Thomas presented the accounts for the last year, which at present show a healthy bank balance, although he and the Chairman pointed out that as much of this is already fully committed, it is in no way excessive.

Christine Rich was re-elected as Honorary Secretary. In the absence of a prior nomination for Treasurer for 2004 (the existing treasurer, Clayton Thomas, having indicated that he was not able to continue in the post), Arthur Weston agreed that he would take on this role, combining it with Funding activities, at which he has excelled in the past two years. Nominations for membership of the general committee were all accepted, and include a number of new committee members.

A number of questions from the floor were taken and answered before the meeting closed. Many thanks to those who attended the meeting, and to the organisers, especially Christine Rich who provided a splendid feast before the meeting started.

Elected Committee: J Alderman-Rowe, J Banner, P Blatchford, S Blatchford, C Broom, B Chandler, H Fleetwood, P Griffiths, C Simpson.

This article first appeared on our web site www.fopp.org.uk on the 14th March.

Friends Forum

Representatives of Grange, Mary Stevens, and Priory Parks held their second meeting of the New Year at Priory Hall on Thursday 11 March.

An exchange of details of forthcoming events was made, and the delegates agreed that support would be given by all Friends where possible.

David Rogers, Chairman of Mary Stevens Park, invited all groups to have a marquee at their Festival and asked for volunteers to act as marshals.

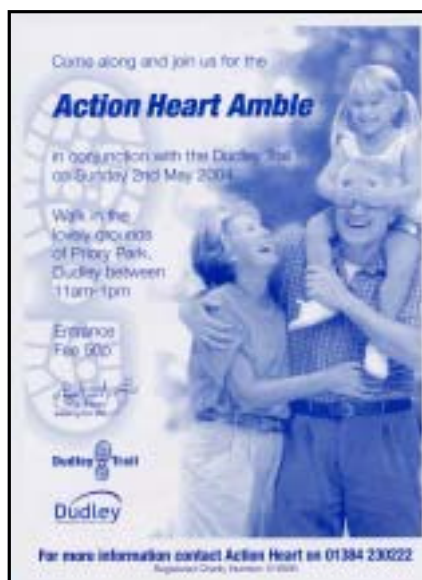
Arthur Weston gave a valuable insight into the sourcing of funding, a subject of vital importance to all Groups if they were to continue.

The Forum welcomed the announcement by the Government of the **Liveability Fund**. £3.4 million has been allocated to the Dudley area, but the fear was that the monies would be spent on "Master Plans" and administration, and very little on actual regeneration of the Parks.

The costs of Public Liability and Entertainment Licences continue to be a real problem, and it was agreed that an approach would be made to DMBC for help with blanket coverage for all Parks.



Amble in the Park



Seniors Outing

On Friday 7th May FoPP have organised a trip for seniors to the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham.

Coaches will leave the park from Priory Road, adjacent to the Pavilion, at 11:00am. The first stop will be The Dormy Hotel on the Hagley Road for a carvery lunch, and then on to the Gardens for the rest of the afternoon, and back by 6:00pm.

A limited number of seats are still available - contact Janet Alderman-Rowe (01384-258962) or Christine Rich (01384 237959) for more details.

The cost of £5 includes transport, admission to the gardens and lunch. Special arrangements can be made for all those with limited mobility.

Special thanks to Dudley Association of Community Networks for its funding support.

Priory Primary kick-start *Steps To Health*



Steps to Health, a joint initiative between the Dudley Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust and DMBC, was launched on the 1st April, after snow caused a cancellation earlier in the year.

Priory Primary School pupils, in the presence of the Deputy Mayor of Dudley, Officers of DMBC and the Department of Health made good use of the facilities in the Park to open the first of several physical activities, more of which promised for later in the year, and which will include adults as well as children.

An excellent video of the event has been produced by FoPP, and is available for FoPP Members to view (contact the editor).

Events will also be taking place in Buffery, Grange, Wollescote and Netherton parks, and the intention is that the scheme will link the parks to local Doctors' Practices. and that suitable patients will be invited to take part in walks, a Green Gym club and family activities.



Easter Egg Hunt



Registration



I haven't a clue



Luke Hadley correctly guessed the name of the rabbit (Lilly)



Up a gum tree



Arts and Crafts



Face Painting was popular, as the queue shows

Times Past



A somewhat stylised picture of the ruins, acquired recently via ebay on the web. The reverse gives some idea of its age, as the postage required inland is 1/2d (about 0.25p), whilst the cost to send it abroad would be 1d (0.5p).

We would welcome any other old pictures which members may have of any parts of the park.

Litter in the park

The Deputy Mayor attended the launch of the 'Steps to Health' event held in the park on Thursday 1st April [Report on page 3]. He thoroughly enjoyed the event, as did the 150 children from Priory Primary School who took part.

The comments made by the Deputy Mayor regarding our litter free park were a pleasant accolade. I quickly made him aware of the dedication of our members who litter pick on a daily basis, although I do not wish to detract from the efforts of Future Skills, who are also doing a fine job.

I must mention and thank Thelma, a member from Lavender Road, whose efforts to keep the park litter-free each and every day should be an inspiration, and make the litter bugs feel ashamed of their absence of care for their environment.

Arthur Weston
Treasurer

Junior FoPP Club

Feed the birds



February half term week happened to coincide with National Bird Box Week. Therefore a bunch of JFoPP's were kept busy making bird cakes and fat balls for our feathered friends.



Different Strokes funds provided 10 bird boxes, so off we all trooped to the Park to give them all a good hanging. Let's hope our efforts will be rewarded later in the summer with lots of little chirpings.

Competition Corner

Congratulations to Emily and Bethany Griffiths (*no relation, Ed*), the winners of last month's competition. The answer to "what was the garment worn by Roger de Somery?" was a "**cote hardie**".



New Competition

The Plaque on the North East corner of Priory Hall lists the initials of the employees of the Earl of Dudley who lived there.

What is the earliest date shown on the plaque?

Email answers to editor@fopp.org.uk or phone 01384 252832 or 01384 258962, or post entries in FoPP's post box at Priory Primary School.



Happy Birthdays

April
Katie Scorey

May
Ebbyleigh Cooper, Charlotte Randle

New Members

Welcome to Bethany and Emily Louise Griffiths, Jasmine De'Wolfe and Lee Clarke.

Easter Egg Winners

UNDER SEVENS -Emma Knowles, Megan Wakefield.

SEVEN TO ELEVEN -Loretta Slater, Kelly Gillard.

NAME THE RABBIT - Luke Hadley.