



Friends of Dartmouth Park
Patron: William, 10th Earl of Dartmouth
Newsletter
Issue No. 20

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Our beautiful replica Victorian Drinks Fountain attacked by senseless vandals

The fountain, a stone replica of the one given to the park by the 5th Earl of Dartmouth soon after the park opened, was unveiled in March with a celebratory event attended by a crowd of local residents. We are devastated by this act of vandalism which is a tragedy for all who use the Park.

The urn at the centre of the feature has been kicked off, smashing the drinking bowl, the brass fittings, and the step beneath.

Cabinet member for neighbourhood services, Cllr Derek Rowley, said: “This is a senseless act of vandalism, which serves no purpose other than to spoil the park for everyone who uses it.

“We hope someone will come forward so the police can catch whoever is responsible.”

A new bowl will have to be carved, but the contractors have said they will get it repaired quickly. The cost of repair is in the region of £5K. Proposed future security for the fountain will be addressed with railings and CCTV.

How distressing when the children are on their summer break from school; the park is full of people enjoying themselves, but they can't use this very popular facility because of the thoughtless behaviour of mindless individuals.



Steps from the Park into the Sandwell Valley open for business

On a happier note the steps connecting the Park to the Sandwell Valley have opened and look very impressive. What an improvement it has made to this area.

Lots of exciting new additions in the Valley with the High Ropes, new children's play facility and soon to arrive bicycle hire, as well as the newly restored crazy golf and tennis courts.

No need for a visit to a theme park if you live in Sandwell.

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Committee

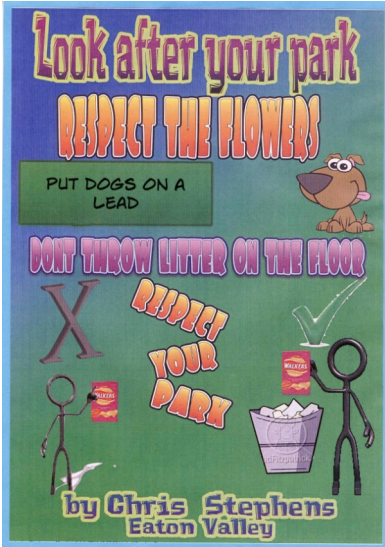
Nigel Slater, Chairman	Roger Stopford, Vice Chairman	Annette Welch, Treasurer	Carol Hartill, Secretary
Betty Finney	Margaret Geddes	Pauline Lawley	Sue Slater
Anne Wilkins	Mandy Timms Membership Secretary	Mark Barrett Social Historian	

Big Spring Clean in Dartmouth Park

Members of the Friends were joined by Cllr Dhallu, on Tuesday 12 July to help tidy some of the flower/rose beds in the park, including the new Sensory Garden. Litter in the park isn't the problem it used to be and the Friends would like to thank Serco for taking on board their concerns and providing a daily litter collection, including weekends. The photograph shows Richard, the Dartmouth Park Ranger, with Cllr Dhallu making some headway on the old rose beds.



Visits to the Park by schools and SVI are a great success



In June and July the park was visited by pupils from Eaton Valley Primary School, King George V Primary School, Phoenix Collegiate, Sandwell College, and Sandwell Visually Impaired. Richard the Park Ranger, John Satchwell, Restoration Project Manager, and members of the Friends Committee, brought the visitors attention to flora and fauna, the history of the park and the restoration. It's important for the children to learn about respecting the park whilst enjoying its facilities. The visually impaired spent some time on the outdoor gym and also enjoying the Sensory Garden they helped finance and plant.

The Primary School children were asked to produce poems, posters, or stories relating to respecting the park for display in the Park's notice board. Do take a look at the wonderful work produced by the children, which will change regularly. On the left is an example of one of the posters.

The Friends have another link with the SVI in that committee member, Anne Wilkins, has become the voice of their Talking Newspaper following a request for a volunteer to take on this role.

Algae problem on the park pool

The Model Boat Club have had to find a temporary new home on Swan Pool because of the algae in the park pool. In an attempt to resolve the problem Park Warden, Richard, was asked to anchor bales of straw around the pool, as it is hoped the chemicals given off by the decomposing straw will inhibit growth. The dry weather and also feeding bread to the ducks, swans and geese has exacerbated the problem, because the algae is natural food for water fowl, but is not being eaten. The Friends when taking school groups into the park try to encourage the children to use the correct duck food (available from the farm) and ask them to pass the message on about not feeding the ducks bread. Park users were amused to see Richard, helped by Stan, in the first rowing boat to use the pool for many years, struggling to place these bales into position. The water fowl seem to approve and have already started to use the



Sensory Garden for the Visually Impaired

Following the successful planting of the raised bed reported in our June newsletter the Friends group are now in the process of applying for a Community Spaces grant to landscape the surrounding area into a Sensory Garden. The initial plan is for a winding path to go behind the raised bed towards the new pavilion. One side of the path will have a small retaining wall to enable the upper part of the garden to be on one level. The lower part of the garden will slope away towards the children's play area. The plan includes seating and a pergola. The plans will be on display at our Family Fun Day event in the park on the 25th September.

We will be updating you as the plans takes shape and will consult with you regarding the details of the planting at a later date.

If you are interested in joining the project team then please contact Annette (0121 525 5524). The project will be over the next 12 months and will probably involve a monthly meeting.

Visit to West Bromwich by Tom Farley, great grandson of Alderman Reuben Farley



Tom Farley paying his respect at Reuben Farley's grave in West Bromwich Cemetery



Tom with Anne Wilkins in front of one of the wonderful displays relating to Reuben Farley



Tom wearing the mayoral chain donated by the Earl of Dartmouth

The great grandson of Alderman Reuben Farley has visited West Bromwich at the invitation of the Friends. Our June Quarterly Meeting was a celebration of Reuben and his importance to West Bromwich, and we were delighted that Tom Farley could be part of our event. Tom is a businessman and lives in Kidlington, Oxfordshire.

First port of call was Heath Lane Cemetery where Tom placed a tribute on Reuben and Harriet Farley's grave. A small group of us then took him to lunch at The Public, before setting off for a Reuben Farley based walk in West Bromwich, led by Robin Pearson, starting at the Farley Clock Tower, Carter's Green. We visited the HQ of West Bromwich Building Society to view the mural in reception which depicts a selection of West Bromwich's achievements, many of which are associated with Reuben. The group then moved on to the site of his home Summerfield Court, of which only the Lodge now stands. Then on to Lombard Street and Edward Street where many of the municipal buildings stand, stopping off in Lodge Road to view the foundation stone of the West Bromwich Institute laid by Alderman Farley.

The group joined other members of the Friends who were already in the Council Chamber in the Town Hall where Anne Wilkins had assembled a wonderful exhibition of regalia and memorabilia associated with the great man.

Tom Farley spoke to the audience about his family and he said his father bore a strong resemblance to Reuben. We then had a presentation by Robin Pearson on the great man, followed by a short update on the progress of the restoration by John Satchwell, Restoration Project Manager. Finally there was a very interesting presentation on the Mayoral robes and regalia by George Murray, Civic Affairs Chauffeur.

Our members were delighted to meet Tom and said how much they enjoyed the event.

Rowing Boat almost ready for display in the new pavilion



When its restoration is complete the boat, given to the Friends by Derek Hickinbottom, will be displayed in the new pavilion.

The Friends have been given a donation of £100 by Mrs Jean Knott, towards restoring the Dartmouth Park rowing boat in memory of her husband Eric, as he loved boating on the pool. The boat has been treated and painted in its original colours by a local contractor, who has kindly donated his services free of charge.

A big thank you to Jean for her help with this project.

A tour of Patshull Hall and Church, near Albrighton, with afternoon tea, has been arranged by the Friends. Patshull was the home of the Dartmouth family for a 100 years following their move from Sandwell Hall, and they took many features from Sandwell Hall to their new home. We will be walking from the Hall to the Church through the grounds, which should be looking stunning with the trees in their autumn colours.

The date of the trip is Tuesday 11 October and the coach will pick up at the Reform Street Entrance to Dartmouth Park at 12.45. The cost of the trip including coach travel, tour and afternoon tea is £17.50. Please e-mail or ring Carol (contact details on the front of this newsletter) if you would like a booking form.

Summit Foundry - Owned by Taylor & Farley



In 1861, Reuben Farley in partnership with his sister's husband, George Taylor, purchased Summit Foundry. Twenty years later Farley bought his late brother-in-law's shares and became sole proprietor. During the late nineteenth century, as iron founding expanded in the wake of the decline of the basic iron industry, the company grew rapidly and became one of the largest of its kind in South Staffordshire. Taylor & Farley's rolls and other mill and forge machines were well known throughout the major iron and steel districts, and the firm won a medal at the 1897 Brussels Exhibition. Reuben Farley remained the active head of Taylor & Farley, which occupied much of his time. The foundry's address was Spon Lane, which must have been the closest main road at the time, but the offices, which are all that remain of Summit Foundry, lie back from the road on what is now Kenrick Way.

It is thanks to Tom Farley's research that we have found this building, which is part of the history of West Bromwich. The drawing above dating from the 1870s shows the office almost exactly as it is today, and the initials TF are still above the entrance. Tom Farley has followed his great grandfather into the metal industry as he is Managing Director of an aluminium rolling technology business.

Family Fun Day in Dartmouth Park—Sunday 25 September -Starting at 12.30



We have a fabulous day organised for the enjoyment of the whole family with lots of entertainment and activities. Plus the new pavilion should be available for inspection. For the 'grown-ups' we have by special request the return of The Naked Beatles and they're being joined by Lusty Springfield to add to the fun. We also have the Martinique Jazz Band who will be playing some old standards. There will be lots of entertainment for the children, including Major Mustard and his fabulous puppet show, pony rides and funfair rides. Many stalls will be situated in the Avenue selling their goods or advertising their organisations.

There will be displays relating to the history of the park and Paul Swift will be on hand with his display of old photos of West Bromwich. Paul's wonderful website is keeping the memory of West Bromwich's past alive.

Refreshments will be available, including a traditional pig roast, which, I am sure, will bring back memories to many of us who queued for hot pork sandwiches at the old Horticultural Shows many years ago.

Entrance to the event is free so do come along and bring your family for what will be a great afternoon of entertainment.

The Friends will also have a presence at Sandwell Park Farm on Heritage Open Day, Sunday 11 September. Entrance to the Farm is free on Heritage Open Day.