



Garstang Millennium Green Trust

Charity Number 1079032

Spring 2012 Newsletter

Issue 17, 1st April 2012

Editor: Chris Foster

EDITORIAL [By: Chris Foster]

Last year was extremely busy for the Trustees, Management Team and our band of volunteers. The workload was enormous in managing contractors, conducting major improvements using our volunteers, managing grant income, fund raising and keeping the Green operational during the improvement works. Thankfully all major works are complete and contractors have undertaken remedial works on a few areas of the new hard paths. During the winter, the paths have performed well with none of the muddy puddles of previous years.

This year, freed of contractors and their equipment, we aim to return to the basics of routine maintenance and recover the Green and its facilities to first rate condition. We hope to strengthen our volunteer teams for maintenance and fund raising by recruiting "new blood and ideas" to ensure that this wonderful facility can be enjoyed by new generations.



Spring has sprung, primroses and daffodils are in bloom, tree buds are swelling and in a few weeks time, grass cutting etc will be underway.

We hope that you enjoy visiting the Green and will contact us if you wish to help out with maintenance, fund raising events or make a donation towards operating costs.

RECENT EVENT [By Chris Gibson]

On 7th March, Friends of the Green organised a talk by Guy Topping the Chief Executive of Barton Grange Garden Centres. An appreciative audience heard the fascinating story of how Barton Grange came about. His visionary grandmother bought the house called Barton Grange in 1945 when it was still under requisition for a WAAF headquarters. The house became the family home and a hotel. Some years later Guy's father Eddy Topping started a small garden shop in the hotel grounds. This grew and grew until they began to feel there was no further room for expansion and looked around for a place to move to. Much thought and care went into the planning of the new centre which was to attract custom from a radius of one hour's drive --- estimated to be over four million people. Having received contractors quotes that were over twice their budget, they decided to project

manage everything themselves, ensuring it was to the highest standard. The result is the large scale project we see today, where the sale of plants is only a fraction of their income which includes the restaurant, cafe, farm shop, cook shop and marina. Guy held his audience as he outlined the work involved, the family history and the famous gentlemen's toilets boasting ceramic facilities in the shape of flowers from a sculptor in California. Many thanks to all who helped with setting up the room, refreshments and raffle. The event raised £134, all of which will go towards upkeep of the Green.

FUTURE EVENTS

CELEBRATING COMPLETION OF THE 2011 IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT [By Ron Freeland]

In the summer 2011 newsletter I reported that it was a condition of the grant funding bodies that a relatively small amount of the funding must be reserved to pay for an event to publicise the improved facilities and acknowledge the commitment and hard work of the people and organisations that have made the project a success. We arranged a celebratory event for September 2011 but, as you may recall, torrential rain and flooding forced us to cancel the event at short notice.

I am pleased to report that we have rescheduled the event to Saturday April 21st between 1pm and 4pm. Let's hope that the rains hold off!

Thanks to grant funding, we can offer a largely free event. It will be held at the north end of the Green, adjoining Wyre Lane and free car parking will be available on the nearby Garstang Show field. It has been arranged to be attractive to families. Entry will be free, entertainment with a Jazz quartet will be free, there will be a display of birds of prey free again and we will serve refreshments with the first element free (drink and snack). There will be a Treasure Hunt free again, there will be tours of the green yes free and there will be stalls and games. A great afternoon out so please come along. There is an official part and this will be led by Eddie Topping the founder of Barton Grange and he will be our special guest. We have invited MEP's, MP's, representatives of local organisations, lots of our supporters and we are still offering free sites for any Garstang Business or organisation to project themselves. Please come along, it will be a great free afternoon for us all.

BRIC A BRAC SALE SATURDAY 28th APRIL

[By Peter Ryder]

Friends of the Green are again running the popular sale from a stall outside the High St Market Hall from 8 am onwards. All profit from the sale will go towards upkeep of the Millennium Green.

Donations of Bric a Brac items such as books / toys / games / pottery / clothes / shoes etc (**excluding mains electrical items**) would be most welcome. Please contact **Peter Ryder on 01995 604688** or deliver items to the stall as early as possible on the sale day. Also, if you can spare a few hours to help run the stall, please contact Peter.

We hope you will visit the stall and pick up a bargain!

STORY TIME

MILLENNIUM GREEN BEAR HUNT

[By Glynis Jefferson]



We are repeating last years well attended, enjoyable and exciting bear hunt on the Green. Under fives (with their parents or carers) are invited to join in the hunt. We will be following the route as found in the popular children's book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury. Librarians from Garstang Library will be there to read this book with the children.

The hunt will take place in the Family Area of the Green on Wednesday 16th May from 13-30 to 14-30 and is part of the Garstang Walking Festival (11th --- 20th May 2012)

Please come and join us. This event is FREE but please book via the Visit Garstang Centre ---- either visit the Centre or call them on 01995 602125.

Full details of this and all other Walking Festival events are shown in the Walking Festival Brochure available at the Visit Garstang Centre or, you will find links to view events or download the brochure at:-

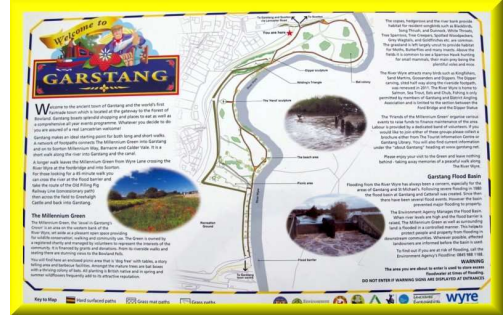
http://www.wyre.gov.uk/info/200102/walking/147/garstang_walking_festival

INTERPRETATION BOARDS

[By Ron Freeland]

Part of the 2011 Major Improvements Plan was the erection of Interpretation Boards at the North and South access points of the Green. The aim was to better inform users of the Green about its facilities and the surrounding environment. The boards were developed in partnership with the Soroptomists and the Environment Agency, and thanks are due to Greg Robinson from the Wyre Rangers and Edwina Parry from Garstang Town Council for coordinating inputs and ordering the art work.

Due to frosty weather and manufacturing timescales, the boards have only just been erected, thus completing the 2011 project. Thanks are also due to Stone UK of Green Lane West who kindly provided the stone, constructed the plinths and mounted the boards.



MAINTENANCE [By Brian Taylor]

Since my autumn 2011 report, weather conditions have governed the pace of completing the loose ends from the 2011 project plan but, thanks to the tenacity of our volunteers and the Wyre Rangers, the project has now been completed.

A mixture of perennial wildflower seeds were sown on the Triangle area and among the boulders of the landscaping to the left of the main Wyre Lane gate This proved to be quite a problem as we did it a bit late in the season and the soil conditions were poor. However, we are hoping for flowering success, which should be seen in the summer of 2013. It is known that the fertility of the soil is a big factor on how well perennials get established. Ironically, poor fertility is said to be a benefit, but it is suspected that the Green has good fertility, as a result of the periodic flooding depositing nutrients from upstream. A new member of the Management Team [Chris Gibson] has expertise in this science and hopes to have soil samples analysed so that we can optimise future planting plans. As an interim experimental measure to aid establishment of plantings, we have sown Yellow Rattle in various areas of the Triangle and the Hand fields. Yellow Rattle should have a weakening affect on nearby grasses.

Using stone provisioned from the 2011 improvement grants, the volunteer Wyre Rangers have built semi enclosed bays adjoining the north and south access points to the Green. These bays will form a new, tidier location for the waste bins. Wyre Borough Council undertake disposal of waste from bins on the Green and we are currently discussing with them the provision of a pair of smarter looking bins.

You may notice that, in the south end enclosure, the Wyre Rangers have incorporated a stone upon which they have carved the inscription "STAN". This is in memory of the late Stan Atkinson, a fellow Wyre Ranger Volunteer, who did much work in the early days of the Green and throughout Wyre Borough.

Towards the end of the year we cut the main meadow grass, a task we failed to achieve the year before. Ideally, the cut grass should be collected, bailed and removed to reduce soil fertility but farmers will not accept the grass due to contamination from dogs etc.

Most of the hedges were cut by a local contractor, including those bounding the Rugby Field, which was not done last year. In future, we propose to cut the latter only every other year for environmental reasons. The Wyre Lane section was cut by volunteers in the autumn.

Our efforts to stabilize the grass paths on the western boundary, with plastic mesh, together with the creation of a stone causeway adjacent to the Children's Area will, we hope, help all to navigate this area when the ground is wet. Further improvements are being considered in way of the causeway.

A new fence has been installed south of the footbridge extending approximately 40 yards, alongside the river path. The fence is to exclude owners and dogs from the steep bank for safety reasons and to help protect the bank from further erosion.

Further hedge planting has been made adjacent to the Wyre Lane gate and between the new walled bay and the rugby field gate, at the south end of the site. We have also planted a "wedge" of hedging on the approach to the Dipper gate to encourage us all to use the hard and mesh reinforced grass paths in that area and hence avoid the trampling and mud bath alongside the old hedge.

Our existing mowers have had their annual service overseen by Chris Foster and Gwyn Williams and the storage cabin has been spring cleaned leaving us ready to go for another season.

RECRUITING NEW HELPERS

[By Ron Freeland]

On March 9th we held a recruitment meeting at The Royal Oak and were delighted at the response. The outcome is likely to be about twelve new volunteers for work on the Green and helping with organisation of events. When the new recruits are trained and familiar with the tasks and equipment we aim to operate a second workday each month, additional to the long standing third Tuesday schedule. The inaugural extra workday for the new recruits will be on Wednesday April 11th commencing at 10 a.m. Call in and join in if you feel like it ---- we will be on the Family picnic area. Contact Ron Freeland or Brian Taylor [details below] if you need further information.

We always welcome extra help and support and need to keep reminding ourselves, and the citizens of our town, that Garstang Millennium Green belongs to the people of Garstang and area; it is not owned or run by any local authority, even though they provide occasional welcome support.

SUSTAINABILITY GRANT UPDATE

[By Chris Foster]

In the last newsletter I reported that, unexpectedly, the Community Spaces Programme had provided additional grant funding to cover the procurement of new and additional tools and equipment for use by our maintenance volunteers. That equipment has been

purchased and delivered. The grant also covered the provision of training regarding safe use of mowers, strimmers etc and, on 4th April, eight of our volunteers will attend a training course at Myerscough College.

In addition to the grant funded equipment, Kath Knipe, the wife of our late Treasurer Ken, has very kindly donated a most useful selection of Ken's extensive tool kit to the Green.

POETRY CORNER!!

The recruitment drive for new volunteers has inspired the following ode by a member of the Management Team:-

Down on the Green by the Wyre

We need volunteers
So we're bending your ears
This Green won't look after itself
So if you're 'round and about
Just give us a shout
Down on the Green by the Wyre.

There's weeding and seeding
Mowing and hoeing
Chatting, snacking and hacking
We need you, whatever you can do
Down on the Green by the Wyre.

[By Lara Hurley]

POINTS OF CONTACT FOR MILLENNIUM GREEN TEAM

CHAIRMAN OF MANAGEMENT TEAM:

Ron Freeland 01995 606384

ORGANISER – MAINTENANCE WORK TEAMS:

Brian Taylor 01995 604515

FRIENDS OF THE GREEN

Membership / Donations Secretary

Joan Williams 01995 605202

"The Nook"

Church St.

Garstang

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Fund Raising Events Organiser

Peter Ryder 01995 604688
