

WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2019

The Party's Over!

That's it the party's over at least for another twelve months or, being as the preparation for Christmas gets earlier with each passing year, I should say until September. Although having said that, by June 2019 at the latest, pubs, restaurants and other licenced venues will be advertising their Christmas programmes in preparation for the annual round of office Christmas parties!

To give you some idea of how long it is to Christmas 2019, on Christmas Eve I carried out a little piece of observational research at the local Aldi Store on Woodborough Road to which I gave it the title, as the store was opened 8am to 6pm: "600 Minutes of Last-Minute Shopping.

Apart from observing peoples Christmas Eve shopping habits, in the final paragraph I calculated that there are just 365 shopping days left to Christmas 2019, which equates to 8,760 hours or 525,600 minutes. Therefore, if like me you concern yourself that Christmas gets earlier each year, think of it in minutes and Christmas will seem that little bit further away. If you want to calculate 525,600 minutes into seconds it comes to 31,536,000.00, which makes it even further away!

Before moving on to other topics, as I write it is still what the Americans call the Holiday Season, and I cannot let it pass without a few comments about the four festive weekends that were held in Woodthorpe Park's Plant Shop and Green Houses.

By all accounts all four weekends were most successful. As an example, the Christmas Trees that were brought for that four-week period, by the fourth weekend had all been sold out but left a few still to be picked by customers.



Christmas Trees selling like hot cakes!



Fourth weekend: all sold out!

What also helped in advertising the event was the huge illuminous reindeer and Christmas tree at the bottom of the park that faced on to Mansfield Road in Sherwood.



Apart from advertising Woodthorpe Park's Family Festive weekends, which were held on the weekends from 24/25 November to 15/16 December, 2018, the illuminous reindeer also received favourable comments on the Friends Facebook Page and Twitter Page as well.

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In case you are wondering where all the Christmas Trees were stored over that period, the answer lies inside the huge articulated trailer that faced on to Woodthorpe Drive that was used to advertise the four weekends of the Family Festive Fun!



Apart from all the various craft and food stalls and musical entertainment provided by two mechanical organs, that on the third weekend came with a traction steam engine and entertainment provided by the Nottingham Youth Jazz Orchestra, and also the Christmas Carol Singers from the churches of St. Martin's, St. Jude's and St. Marks, the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange were also there throughout the whole of the four weekends of the Christmas Fair.



Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park's stall

As you will see by the above photograph, the friends now have a pullup display banner, and although not visible, handbills and business cards.

With the visual aids we now have, we at last can put on an impressive display of photographs. Photographs that not only show images of Woodthorpe Park but also the activities that are carried out by the friends.

The whole marathon four weekends proved to be successful as through our display we were able to attract over forty new members.



Christmas Decorations on display in the Plant Shop



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Festive floral arrangement by the staff of the Plant Shop



Mechanical and Traction Steam Engine



Carol Singers from the Churches of St. Martin's, St. Jude's and St. Mark's

At the beginning of this article I mentioned that I carried out a little piece of observational research on Christmas Eve at the local Aldi Store on Woodborough Road to which I gave it the title "600 Minutes of Last-Minute Shopping." If you are

interested in what I have written, the article is available on the Friends website by clicking on the Woodthorpe Gazette icon on the website's homepage or alternatively you can read the article by clicking on: <http://www.woodthorpefriends.co.uk/600%20Minutes%20of%20Last.pdf>

Christmas and New Year's Hangover!

At the beginning of the first month of a new year and feeling hungover from all the Christmas and New Year's celebrations the question you ask yourself, especially as we are now entering the two darkest months of the year, is where did all the time go? All that build up to Christmas and New Year's celebrations and it's all over!

As we enter these two darkest months, it is the weather that plays the greatest part in our mood swings. For example, before Christmas and in the lead up to the big day, if it snows it's called seasonal weather. All which conjures up images of a perfect glittery Christmas of pure white freshly fallen snow set against a cloudless blue sky. In other words, as you sit by a roaring log fire, what you see outside resembles the image you see on the greetings card the neighbours from next door sent you!

After Christmas the weather takes on a more sinister meaning. As the sky is now shrouded in slate grey clouds, gone are the images of freshly fallen snow set against a perfect blue sky, especially when it's time to start out in the dark early mornings to go to work. The depressing thought of defrosting the car followed by struggling through all the slow-moving traffic is enough to make you feel suicidal, especially if it is the first day back to work after the Christmas and New Year's break!



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If, however you decide, by better judgment, walking to work would be a far safer alternative than to risk driving on slippery road surfaces in a long slow queue of slow-moving traffic, sometimes walking in wintery conditions is much quicker and less time consuming. If you live as I do in a hilly part of Nottingham, walking to work is far safer than trying to drive down a slope like Woodborough Road especially when it's been snowing. Walking, therefore is a much safer alternative.

On one occasion last year following a heavy overnight fall of snow I decided to walk to work. When I eventually reached the halfway point of the Old Market Square in Nottingham, along with others I eventually found myself crammed into one of Nottingham's Trams that happened to be travelling in the Toton direction, which was the last leg of my journey to Lenton where I work. However, due to the volume of people travelling on the tram it resembled something often experienced regularly by commuters on London's underground system, especially during the rush-hour period.

Huddled in with other passengers with barely enough room turn around the tram came to one of its usual stops which was Meadows Way West. However, as we were all waiting for the tram to pull off a voice came over the tram's public address system informing passengers they would have to get off as it could go no further.

Why the tram could go no further I was never to discover. Perhaps it could have been because of the wrong kind of snow on the track. As a consequence, for the rest of my journey to work I had to continue on foot, only to arrive late looking like an arctic explorer, much to the amusement of my colleagues.



Crammed in like sardines on the one and only tram that's operating. Wouldn't it be far easier just to phone in sick?

That is how the weather affects us in the months of January and February. In other words, the hiatus

between before the arrival of March and the much hoped for better weather.

On the leadup to Christmas a fall of snow is seen as seasonal with all the promise of a joyful Christmas. Whereas after Christmas snow is seen as a major inconvenience to traffic and travel, especially if it snows in London! However, it is worth bearing in mind that amidst all the travel problems bad weather can cause, it is worth remembering that the days are pulling out, the nights are getting shorter. In other words, Spring is on its way!

Weather Predictions for 2019

Like last year will this year's summer be just as hot and sunny as last year's? You will recall last year, during the midst of a very wet winter when Woodthorpe Park was submerged in water and for a time had its own ornamental lake, I candidly made the prediction: I bet we'll have a drought this summer, and we did!



As a new year has dawned will we again have another hot summer? If we do, I wonder if we will have to go through the same arctic weather conditions, we experienced last year when, if you remember, meteorologically it should have been Spring!



A little Reminder of Summer!

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When I took the above photograph, it was minus 5 degrees Celsius. It was so cold I couldn't feel my finger pressing the shutter on my camera.



The weather may have been a nightmare for some, especially those trying to get to work, yet for some it was a chance to get out and enjoy the sudden, rather belated blast of winter, dubbed the 'Beast from the East.' As someone posted onto Trip Advisor:

'This is a lovely park and great in the snow as there are lots of slopes for sledding. Lovely community feeling and the coffee bar in the middle is great. You can also play pitch and putt or visit the garden centre.'

'Sledding in the Winter'

As someone who has grown up all their life facing Woodthorpe Park my earliest memory is of the winter of 1962/63, when the average temperature recorded was minus 2.1 degrees and where January 1963 still remains the coldest month in Central England since January 1814, and I as a little boy went sledding on the park with my father. However, it will always be the

winter of 1968/69 that most sticks out most in my mind as it was during that winter, I broke my leg sledding.



Winter of 1963: Icicles hanging down from Woodthorpe Park's Ashwell's Tunnel



Like the photograph you see above, the park was packed with families and couples enjoying themselves sledding down the hills and slopes that is Woodthorpe Park.

As it wasn't too long after Woodthorpe and Winchester Court Flats had been opened, as part of the landscaping of the area a large quantity of sapling trees were planted.

As I was sledding in the area where the saplings were planted, which is looking down from the pathway entrance on to the park from Sherwood Vale. As the hill is steep, the speed gained going down meant that you could round the corner to the right of the hill and sledge down a further slope eventually

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coming to a halt in the area of the park that when it rains has, for a time, an ornamental lake.

Taking my place in the queue at the top of the hill I opted to sit with my feet on the tops of the runners of my sledge rather than lay in the more popular prone position of head first. Once I set off down the hill speed was rapidly gained. Realising I couldn't control my sledge as easily as I thought I could, I noticed I was sledging towards one of those saplings. Thinking if I hit it I would be alright when suddenly 'BANG' I came to a dead stop!

Whilst laying on the snow-covered ground and coming to my senses and wondering how I was going to get home, because of the searing pain in my right leg I began to bellow my head off. As a consequence, a crowd of curious onlookers soon gathered round. However, it wasn't long before some kind person picked me up off the frozen ground and carried me together with my sledge into his car and took me home, which thankfully wasn't too far away.



The area of the park where I broke my leg!

On arrival back home, I remember my mother carrying me upstairs and before taking me to hospital first plonking me in the bath.

In the words of my mother: 'We can't have you going to hospital looking like that!'

So, it was in the back of my mother's car I was transported to hospital to discover after an x-ray, I had broken the fibula and tibia bones in my right leg, and where for six weeks or more I had to wear a plaster cast while the bones healed themselves

Wearing a plaster cast or not, it didn't stop me from sledging. Wrapped in numerous plastic bags to prevent the Plaster of Paris cast from dissolving from the dampness of the cold I was out on Woodthorpe Park sledging again. Suffice as to say,

when it comes to slowing down a plaster cast makes a wonderful brake.... Ha, ha, brake!

Fast forward fifty years to the winter of 2018/2019, apart from that fact that I am that much older, the onetime sapling is now a fully-grown tree.

This is one story I have told on numerous of occasions, especially when leading guided walks around Woodthorpe Park. Plus, when you look at how the area surrounding the flats looked like when they were first opened, it makes you realise just how much the area has changed.



2018/19: The fully-grown tree that once was a sapling that I broke my leg on whilst sledging 50 years ago!



1960s: The area surrounding Woodthorpe and Winchester Court Flats.

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More Weather Predictions for 2019

Will the weather this year be a mild winter followed by a short spring! Because of a sudden blast of winter in 2018 this was given the title 'The Beast from the East' only to be followed by 'The Pest from the West' due to the rise in temperature followed by the inevitable floods!

The weather predictions for 2019 I shall leave up to you the reader. Suffice as to say, as I look out from my study window onto Woodthorpe Park, apart from the remains of aircraft vapour trails, the sky is a cloudless blue. Along with the mild weather, it's enough to make you think spring is finally in the air!



I know it's only January but it's enough to make you think spring is in the air!

Seasonal Reminders of 2018

Winter



Photograph taken on the 18th March, 2018 when meteorologically it should have been spring!

Spring



The tiny specks of yellow appearing out of the ground in the formal garden are the fruits of the labours of the Friends of just 4 months ago to when this photograph was taken on 24th March, 2018.

Summer



15th July 2018, brown parched grass, Woodthorpe Park is beginning to resemble the long hot summer of 1976.

Autumn



A season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.

Municipality of Woodthorpe Park *Pokémon Go Craze*

Whatever the time of day or season it is you will always find individuals and groups of people on Woodthorpe Park. Be it dog walkers, cyclists, couples enjoying a walk, or the jogger out for a run, even groups of families celebrating a birthday, Woodthorpe Park has an attraction for all and many more besides. Also, and in more recent times, Woodthorpe Park has become the mecca for the Pokémon Go craze. These are whole groups and individuals, mostly adults, who walk through the paths and gardens of the park gazing into their mobile phones in search of little cartoon characters or what is referred to by enthusiasts as pocket monsters.

According to the Guardian online the Pokémon Go App began as an April Fools joke. The idea of Pokémon Go is to take groups and individuals out of their living rooms and on to the streets as they compete to capture, train and battle Pokémon characters using their mobile phones.



For example, when the Pokémon app is opened it shows a map of the area around where the player is standing with various points of interest marked such as statues, clock towers and so on. The player then has to physically walk up to one of the points of interest, referred to in the game as a Pokéstop, then tap an on-screen icon to which the player is rewarded with items and experience points.

Some locations have become hubs of Pokémon activity. For example, apart from Woodthorpe Park, New York's Central Park, for instance, has been bustling not just with the usual crowds of sightseers but with players checking their phones for nearby Pokémon Go characters.

As a further example, unlike Woodthorpe Park where you see groups of people wandering, in what appears to be in an aimless direction, the craze has led to a darker side whereby Police in Missouri

reported that a group of men were waiting near a Pokéstop in a secluded location to target players, and a woman from Wyoming stumbled upon a dead body while trying to reach a water-type Pokémon apparently living in a river by her trailer.



A Pokémon enthusiast on the continuing quest for the next Pokéstop!

Some may see the Pokémon craze as rather eccentric, or something rather odd especially on a fine summer's day where Woodthorpe Park is full of people enjoying the weather when some are more content with checking their mobile phones in the fond hope of catching one of these cartoon characters.

As editor I once saw a whole group of Pokémon enthusiasts walking through Woodthorpe Park's garden's making their way towards the Plant Shop. As a naturally curious person I asked one of the

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group members why there were a large number of people all walking in the same direction? In reply, apart from stating what I thought was the obvious that you don't have to be mad to be a Pokémon enthusiast, but it helps, she went on to say we are a group of enthusiasts who meet up occasionally on Woodthorpe Park, and that Woodthorpe Park is a rich hunting ground for the Pokémon characters!

Finally, who would have thought that Woodthorpe Grange Park is on a par with New York's Central Park, in as much as like Woodthorpe Park, Central Park is also a mecca for Pokémon enthusiasts!

I wonder if Central Park has, like us, a Friends Group. If so, we should perhaps consider twinning with them, and maybe all of us could one day travel to New York for a twinning ceremony...**ED!**

Municipality of Woodthorpe Park Football

Apart from youngsters who use their jumpers as goal posts there has always been football played on the park's two pitches for as long as I can remember. However, in more recent times it has been, because of the rise of the popularity of the women's football there are now a number of girl's football teams that regularly play against each other on the park, especially on a Sunday morning.

Not being a footballer myself or knowing much about the game my knowledge therefore is very limited. However, being a regular on the park and especially at weekends when it is my turn to walk the dog, it is not so much the footballers I notice but more the parents.

Parents or should I say fathers can get really carried away sometimes, so much so that the organisers, before the match begins, erect a rope barrier by the touchline for sole purpose of maybe preventing a parental pitch invasion!

The other thing I notice concerning parental support is what they shout at their sons/daughters whilst the game is being played. If it's a girls' team it's usually the words of encouragement from mothers I hear most. However, if it's a boy's match then the gloves are off. The beautiful game, as it is commonly known as, becomes almost gladiatorial as fathers from the opposing teams compete with each other in a sort of macabre shouting match by broadcasting across the park the art of dribbling (the ball I am referring to) and/or tackling.

As a consequence, the game their sons are playing becomes a multi-task effort. By that I mean not only are they having to concentrate on playing against their opponents whilst at the same time listening to their father's instructions, couched as words of encouragement.

It would be fair to say that all parents want their sons and daughters to succeed and do well in their lives. But from what I hear from the touchline I do often wonder if the parents are not living out their dreams through their sons/daughters.

For example, mothers to a lesser extent and fathers to a greater extent, especially in the boys' game, as they stand shouting encouragements and or instructions from the touchline, are they living out their own dreams through their sons. In other words, are they dreaming that one day they will be playing for a top-flight premier league football club; become a multi-millionaire, and have a beautiful WAG (Wife and/or Girl Friend) who will be an adoring and obedient wife to a successful husband, or are they just being pushy parents?

Amongst all the noise and cacophony of Sunday morning touchline parental support, whether it's a boys' or girls' team, in the final analogy it would be fair to say in all probability Woodthorpe Park is where those youngsters success begins and where dreams, in this case sporting dreams, are made of, and like all dreams, with a little bit of effort can come true - as the song reminds us:

*When you wish upon a star,
Makes no difference who you are,
Anything your heart desires,
Will come to you.*

*If your heart is in your dream,
No request is too extreme,
When you wish upon a star,
As dreamers do.*

*Fate is kind,
She brings to those who love,
The sweet fulfilment of,
Their secret longing.*

*Like a bolt from the blue
Fate steps in and sees you through
When you wish upon a star
Your dreams come true*

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Woodthorpe Park's Sunday Morning Footballers

As Woodthorpe Park has two football pitches. One nearest to the Grange and the bottom pitch that faces the entrance on Mansfield Road. However, it is quite noticeable on the bottom pitch that one side of the width of the pitch is higher than the other. So, in effect, if the ball is kicked out of the pitch on the higher side the player that throws the ball back in is, in effect, throwing it down hills, where from the other side, if the ball goes out of play, the player is in effect throwing the ball back in up hills, as the photograph below shows!



Finally, combining the craze of the Pokémon Go and the Sunday football matches, together with the runners and the summer picnickers, people are all enjoying being outdoors, whatever the weather and whatever season. As someone recently pointed out when watching the footballers, at least they are all outside enjoying themselves and not stuck indoors playing computer games or watching the television!

Finally!

As almost by tradition I round off this latest edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette with a poem. As January is the first month of a new year, I sign off this edition with a poem written by Richard Wibur entitled:

Orchard Trees, January

It's not the case, though some might wish it so
Who from a window watch the blizzard blow?

White riot through their branches vague and stark,
That they keep snug beneath their pelted bark.

They take affliction in until it jells
To crystal ice between their frozen cells,

And each of them is inwardly a vault
Of jewels rigorous and free of fault,

Unglimpsed until in May it gently bears
A sudden crop of green-pronged solitaires.

PS. After little investigation I have found out that New York's Central Park, like us, has a Friends Group. Like us they too have their own website, Facebook page and Twitter Feed. Their website address is: <http://www.centralparknyc.org/support/>

Maybe we should send them fraternal greetings and let them know all about what we get up to, which is not too dissimilar to what they do.... Watch this Space!



Central Park twinned with Woodthorpe Park?