

WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019

EDITORIAL ROUNDUP

A few weeks ago, when thinking about what am I to write about in the September/October edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette, I must confess I was really having to scratch my head and wonder what to write about. This is mainly because the summer months are a quieter period of time as families during the months of July and August are on their annual holidays. However, from the middle of August onwards, so much has happened I am now thinking where do I start.

Probably the one big announcement made is Woodthorpe Park is to share in a grant of nearly £80,000 to improve certain areas of the park.

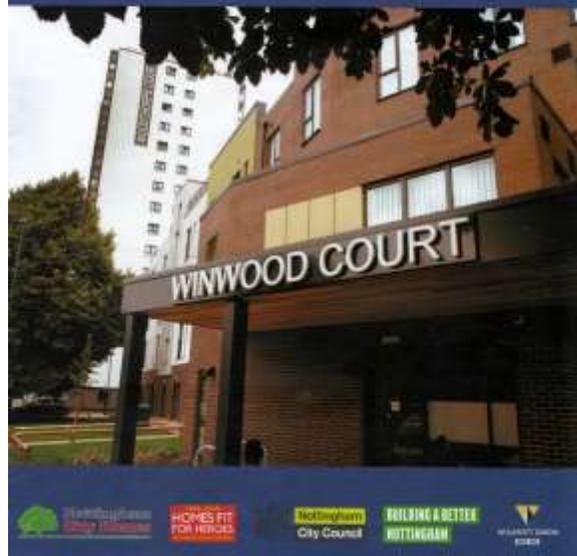
Where those improvements are to be made is still in the consultation process and will be announced in a later edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette.

However the one significant event over these past few weeks is the completion of the refurbishment of Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats and the formal opening that took place on Monday 2nd September, 2019 of Winwood Court.



When looking at the above photograph of Winchester and Woodthorpe Court flats taken before the renovation work began and still very much in their original 1960s design, it is amazing that in just two years how much of the site has been transformed after the refurbishment of the two blocks of flats and the construction of Winwood Court.

To give you some idea of the work involved, to make way for the building of Winwood Court, the garages between the two blocks of flats had to be demolished along with the original, and much loved Winwood Community Centre, a centre that was built in 1979 after the residents of the two blocks of flats applied for an Urban Aid Grant of £10,000.



2017: Demolition of the residents' garages



WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019



2017: The demolition of Winwood Community Centre

2019 also marks the centenary for local council housing and also the culmination of many years of planning which has resulted in the construction of Winwood Court along with the refurbishment of Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats, all of which has gone on to create Winwood Heights, Nottingham's newest retirement village.

In all Winwood Heights has 224 one-and two-bedroom apartments, many of which have balconies offering unparalleled views over Nottinghamshire and Woodthorpe Park.



Woodthorpe Park from Woodthorpe Court



Nottinghamshire from Woodthorpe Court

The whole of the Winwood Heights complex in particular Winwood Court comes with a rooftop garden, a sky lounge, activity and television spaces for the use of all residents from the two blocks of flats, and 24 hours 7 days a week support for residents via Nottingham on Call, the city's premier 24 hours a day, 365 days a year monitoring and response service.

The service provided by Nottingham On Call is also available for residents by the complex's on-site staff in Winwood Court's 44 one bedded Extra Care Centre. A centre that provides a 24-hour care service allowing more vulnerable tenants to remain living independently for longer.

A LOOK INSIDE WINWOOD COURT



4th Floor Sky Lounge



Roof Top Garden



WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019



Solar Energy Panels adjacent to the Roof Garden



1st Floor Residents Activity Room



3rd Floor Television Lounge



Corridor leading L/R residents Extra Care Rooms



2nd Floor Games Room



Ground Floor Reception Lounge



WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019



Ground Floor Hairdressing Salon

The idea of providing a resident's hairdressing salon goes back to the 1980s when Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats were converted into what was then referred to as sheltered housing. A single storey was added to each block, each providing a laundry and hairdressing salon. When opened in 1987, each block was regarded as the best sheltered housing in the country. Also, from the time of opening it was not an uncommon sight to see busloads of dignitaries turning up to look around the site.

If Nottingham set the gold standard for sheltered housing 32 years ago what would those dignitaries who visited Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats all those years ago think if they could see the two blocks of flats along with the new complex of Winwood Court today? Like me they would be highly impressed. As Nick Murphy, chief executive at Nottingham City Homes said during the official opening of Winwood Court:

“Winwood Court are the first homes to be completed during the centenary year for local council housing and to mark this occasion residents have helped to fill a time capsule, which will be buried and hopefully dug up in another 100 years' time. The opening of Winwood Court is an important milestone for us as we celebrate 100 years of council housing.

Burying a Time Capsule

As Nick Murphy went on to say: “We are burying the time capsule here to mark this historic event, and also to make a statement that we are looking to the future as well.” In conclusion he said: We hope we have created somewhere people are proud to live in at Winwood Court, in the most beautiful setting of the

park. The rooftop garden gives one of my favourite views of the city.



L/R; Councillor Linda Woodings, portfolio holder for planning, housing and heritage and Nick Murphy, chief executive at Nottingham City Homes burying the time capsule outside Winwood Court. ©Mark Hitchings.

Finally, when the flats were first opened on the 1st December 1965 by the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Alderman William Derbyshire, they were considered desirable properties intended for professional people. One of the flats first residents, Eddie Maleck remembers the rent being 65s 9d (£3.29p) per week, which included electricity and water.



1965: Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats



WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019

WOODHEIGHTS HISTORY

1889: Nottingham Suburban Railway's Sherwood Station is opened on 2nd December, 1889.



1951: The last passenger train is pulled through the remains of Sherwood Station on Saturday 16th June.



1916: All passenger trains are withdrawn and Sherwood Station is closed.

1922: Woodthorpe Park is officially opened on 1st June.



1954: The final removal of the single line from the former Nottingham Suburban Railway.



1928: Sherwood and Thorneywood Stations on the Nottingham Suburban Railway are opened for one day to receive children as part of the welcoming party for the visitation of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary to Woodthorpe Park on Tuesday 10th July, 1928.



1964: Work begins on the construction of Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats.



WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019

1965: Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats officially opened by the Lord mayor of Nottingham, Alderman William Derbyshire, on 1st December, 1965.

1987: Woodthorpe and Winchester Court officially designated as housing for older people.

2017: Construction begins on a new highrise refurbishment of Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats together with an extra care scheme, Winwood Court – October, 2017.



2019: The brand-new facility of Winwood Court officially opens – 2nd September.



To look at more photographs of the refurbishment of Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats and the construction of Winwood Court, visit the Gallery page on the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park's website on www.woodthorpefriends.co.uk

For historical information about the Nottingham Suburban Railway's Sherwood Station, click on the Disused Stations Site Record on <http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/s/sherwood/>

Gardening – Project West Wall!



Where do we start?

Project West Wall in a part of the Formal Gardens, is as you can see by the above photograph, a strip of garden very much in need of some 'Tender Loving Care' or in this case weeding.

Project West Wall began on Saturday 7th September when six members of the Friends of Woodthorpe Park set about ridding the garden adjacent to the west wall, of couch grass, thistles and dock leaves! In fact, because of the neglected state of the strip of garden, it was difficult to know which were propagated plants and which were weeds!



Members hard at it – beginning to make sense of it all!

Looking at the whole strip of land as one piece are six members who took part in the gardening session! Just a segment of the first quarter of the land was cleared. As you can see from the photograph below, in just one session twelve bags were filled with garden waste.

WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019



Five members of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park standing in front of twelve black bags of garden waste collected in just two hours.

This is just the beginning - the genie has been let out of the bottle! The gardening session of the 7th of September will be followed up with another session in early October, along with other activities like litter picking. All dates of which will be posted on the Friends website, Facebook page and Twitter.

Using the preservation of a steam locomotive as an example, the area of Formal Garden that is now under the jurisdiction of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park has to be treated with the same determination and enthusiasm as preserving a mainline steam engine, as it is our wish to see that piece of garden restored to its former glory.

As an example, the photograph below is of the steam locomotive Witherslack Hall. Originally built at Swindon locomotive works in 1948, it was finally withdrawn after 18 years of service in 1966.



After having spent 27 years rotting away at Woodman's scrapyards on Barry Island in Wales it was bought by the Witherslack Hall Locomotive Society

where it arrived on the Great Central Railway, Loughborough in November 1975.



6990 Witherslack Hall steam locomotive as it is today after many years spent restoring it to its former glory.

With enthusiasm and determination restoration was completed in 1986 and the locomotive operated until 2001 when it was withdrawn for overhaul. After 14 years out of service, 6990's overhaul was completed in October 2015 and has been operating at the Great Central Railway ever since.

Whilst I agree we are not preserving a steam locomotive; all we are doing is restoring a piece of ground to its former glory. However, what I have shown is an example of what enthusiasm and determination can achieve.

All of this leads me to say folks is:

LET'S DOOO IT!



1950s: The grass bank outside the Grange – like a snooker table

WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019

ROLL UP, ROLL UP FOR THE GREAT SHOW IN TOWN

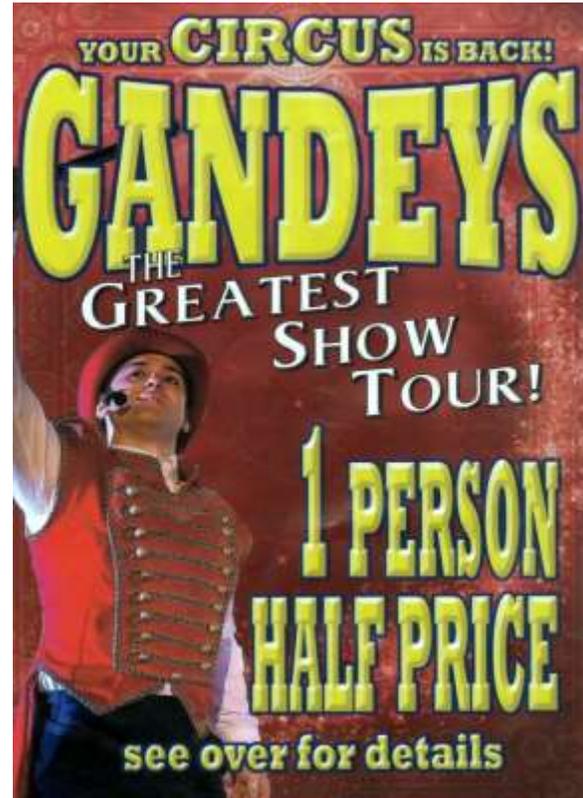


As I write you cannot help but notice the huge tent at the entrance to Woodthorpe Park from Mansfield Road that is Gandeys Big Top Circus.

A circus is something new to Woodthorpe Park, it is something that is usually associated with the Forest Recreation Ground, with its easy access to car parking and public transport.

When a notice was posted onto the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Parks Facebook page about Gandeys Circus coming to Woodthorpe Park I have to say one thought that did cross my mind when I first saw adverts for a Circus coming to Woodthorpe Park – where are people going to park their cars, especially when people posted comments concerning the parking of cars? However, from what I saw people were parking their cars with no problem alongside the pavement on Woodthorpe Drive and in the carpark on Woodthorpe Park.

Therefore, with the desire to relive our childhood, curiosity got the better of both my wife and I, as we had not been to a circus since our childhood days. Indeed, the last time I went to a circus it was Billy Smarts Circus on the Forest Recreation Ground, which was still in the days of when they had performing animals. The same also applied to my wife. So to settle our curiosity we booked tickets for one of the 4.45pm performances.



Advised to turn up early so that we could get the best seats for the money we paid, with the exception of a few families we were almost first in the queue.

Being one of the first to arrive we both began to wonder if many others would turn up, especially as it was just after the schools had finished for the day. However it wasn't long before more people began filing in along with families bringing with them excited children.

Going on favourable comments posted on the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park's Facebook page we both were wondering if the performance would live up to the circus performances of our childhood?

In answer to our trepidation we were not to be disappointed. With a cast of over 32 international artistes starring in a lavish theatrical production staged in the fully-heated 1,000-seat Italian big top, featuring the latest amazing light and sound effects we were in for a truly memorable evenings entertainment.

In all, the cast of Gandeys Circus is a host of truly international world class circus artistes, which includes aerialists Jacqui and Brandon from Mexico, the Gerlings from Colombia, racing in the iron thunder dome on motorcycles.

WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019



The Thunder Dome

Of course, no circus would be complete without the resident circus clown. Gone are the days of the white-faced clown, or indeed the sad faced clown. Gandeys Circus's clown came in the face of Chico Rico, who was billed as returning by popular demand to create mayhem and mirth!



© Gandeys Circus



Gandeys very own 'rubber man'

© Gandeys Circus



The Wheel of Death

© Gandeys Circus

In all, the two hours circus performance proved itself to be excellent value for money. In fact, I hope this is not the first and the last time we shall see a circus like Gandeys come to Woodthorpe Park.

As someone who has lived facing Woodthorpe Park all their life, it is high time more attractions like this one come to Woodthorpe Park. After all we have an annual summer fair so it is only natural we have a circus paying an annual visit as well.

Like Vernon Park in Basford, Woodthorpe Park shares the same category as a park for the local community. Whereas parks like the Arboretum, Wollaton Park, and Highfields Park, including the Victoria Embankment at Trent Bridge are very much geared to tourism. Whilst that can only be a good thing, as according to the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) report for 2017, the number of visitors to the city and county increased by 1.3 percent to 35.89 million in 2017, up from 35.42 million in 2016. This in turn saw an economic growth of 3.6 percent in 2017 to £1.814 billion compared to £1.751 billion the previous in 2016.

Whilst all of these figures show that Nottingham is a leading UK tourist attraction, what it fails to show is how popular and important for the local community parks like Woodthorpe Park and Vernon Park and other suburban areas of recreation in Nottingham are.

Whilst statistics are readily available for the numbers of people who visit Nottingham's Arboretum, which is considered to be in one of the 'Honey Pot' areas (places of mass tourist attraction), statistics are not so readily available for people visiting local parks. If statistics were available, they would probably equal those of parks that are advertised as major tourist attractions. After all, as emphasized, our local parks are just as important to the local community as those advertised as tourist attractions,

WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019

which has been proved by the visit to Woodthorpe Park of Gandeys Circus. Therefore, from a social scientific point of view, what is the difference between a person visiting one of the parks in Nottingham's suburbs, as opposed to a tourist visiting the Arboretum? just another visitor under a different title.

Finally, it is ironic that on the same weekend of the 21st and 22nd of September that Gandeys Circus is on Woodthorpe Park, the Plant Shop was holding its annual Autumn Flower Festival - this is yet another reason to visit Woodthorpe Park!



To round off this article, with the success of Gandeys Circus, all I have to say is:

'We hope to see you next year!'

As a codicil to the previous article. When watching the performance given by Gandeys very own 'rubber man' and wondering how is he able to contort his body in so many unusual shapes? I was to discover it is what is referred to as Joint Hypermobility. In other words, it means that some or all of a person's joints have an unusual large range of movement. Also, people with hypermobility are particularly supple and able to move their limbs into positions others find impossible and that Joint Hypermobility is what some people refer to as having "loose joints" or being "double-jointed"!



WOODTHORPE PARK CENTENARY: LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022



The above photograph, which has been featured in previous editions of the Woodthorpe Gazette, is of the Mayor of Nottingham, Councillor Berryman officially opening Woodthorpe Park to the public on Thursday 1st June, 1922, which, to date, is two years and nine months away. However, in February 2020 at Winwood Court the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park will be hosting an opening meeting, to which all organisations and individuals are invited to discuss ideas of how we as a local community can celebrate Woodthorpe Park's centenary.

A little over two years, you might say, seem a long way off to start discussing a centenary celebration. However, the purpose of the meeting, as I have already pointed out is to bring groups and individuals together to discuss the park's centenary. Also, as Woodthorpe Park's centenary comes at a time when a number of events in the local community are taking place, it could be discussed how all these local events could be brought together around the time of the parks centenary date of 1st June 2022.

To give you a thought as to why it is important to celebrate Woodthorpe Parks centenary is to look at it from an historical perspective.

Woodthorpe Park has the same historical significance as that of Highfields Park and the Victoria Embankment, they were all made possible by the generosity of Sir Jesse Boot.

How Sir Jesse Boot came to be involved in the purchase of Woodthorpe Park you have to go back to 1921 and the sale by auction of the Woodthorpe estate into five plots of land with the intention of building a housing estate on the whole 52-acre site.

Woodthorpe Park
1922 – 2022

WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019

With the intention of preserving some of the Woodthorpe Estate, Nottingham City Council at the time of the auction could only raise £1,000. It was then that Sir Jesse Boot stepped in with a grant of £5,000 on the condition that the whole site becomes a public recreation area. As a consequence, a year later on the 1st June, 1922 Woodthorpe Park as we know it today was officially opened.

That is why it is important that the centenary of Woodthorpe Park is celebrated. Although February 2020 may seem a little far away to make groups and individuals aware of a meeting that is to take place, especially when no firm date has been announced, However, I would ask all individuals, organisations, schools, and sports clubs who benefit from Woodthorpe Park to please come along to the meeting. Your contribution will be most welcome.

Finally, the actual date in February will be announced in the November/December issue of the Woodthorpe Gazette and also on the Friends website's in the Latest News and Dates for your Diary page on www.woodthorpefriends.co.uk and the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Facebook Page and Twitter Feed on [@OfWoodthorpe](https://twitter.com/OfWoodthorpe)



Circa 1922: Woodthorpe Grange



Circa 1922: Elm Tree Avenue, Woodthorpe Park

Finally, if it wasn't for the generosity of Sir Jesse Boot, what we know today as Woodthorpe Grange Park would have become a housing estate...Try and imagine Woodthorpe Park as a housing estate?... You can't!

The Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness

Here we are again, to quote the title of John Keat's celebrated poem of autumn, in 'The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.'

As we now reflect on what was the summer of 2019, as you will see from the photograph below, June began with what meteorologists referred to as a mini monsoon when Woodthorpe Park looked more like something only seen in the depths of winter when large parts of the park became a quagmire of glutinous sticky mud!



As if by contrast, just a few weeks later we were sweltering in temperatures rarely experienced in this country when temperatures were recorded as high as 44 degrees Celsius, as the photograph below proves.



WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2019

The temperature of 44°C was recorded at Sutton Bonington in Leicestershire, which on Thursday 25th July, 2019 was reputed to be the hottest place in the UK.

In spite of this summer being a contrast of all four seasons in one season, for children visiting the Nottingham's parks there were the children's Story Parks, which ran throughout the summer holidays from July to the end of August, where there was arts on Woodthorpe Park, music on Highfields Park, storytelling at Vernon Park, Ranger activities at Wollaton Park and library activities on the Forest Recreation Ground.



As you can see from the photograph attached, in true British style when it rained, at Woodthorpe Park, all outdoor activities were transferred to one of the poly-tunnels adjacent to the park's Plant Shop.



As the summer of 2019 becomes a distant memory, and we gear ourselves up to the next big event, which is only three months away or to be more precise 13 weeks away (no guesses needed) here is a photograph taken on Woodthorpe Park on 20th July, 2019.



Finally, the next November/December edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette will include a report on changes in membership and the future running of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park....Ed!