

Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park

Chairman's Report for 2022 – 23

Following on from 2022, 2023 has been a different year altogether. For me, 2023 has been a challenging year having suffered a nervous breakdown in January 2023.

They say voluntary work is a good antidote to depression and feelings of anxiety. Therefore, all I can say is the work I have done via the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park and the support I have had from members and from those who work in the Grange you have been a great help and support for me and my wife and therefore deserves a very big thank you to you all.

It was in last year's annual report I wrote about looking to the future of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park with the launch of paid membership. A year on from what I wrote, I am happy to say that 2023 saw the launch of the long-awaited paid membership of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park. Although it began slowly because of issues surrounding membership cards, to date we have fourteen paying members. All I can say is, to those who are members, spread the word. Tell your friends and relatives about the advantages of being a paid member and that on the production of a membership card, £5.00 single membership £10.00 family membership, you get for a whole year a 10 per cent reduction at the Plant Shop and Café.

With regard to income and finance, apart from income coming from membership, from October 2022 to October 2023 the FoWGP were supported by charitable donations from the Co-Op. This has raised a substantial amount that will be revealed during this year's AGM.

The Saturday morning two-hour gardening session has again been a success, but we need more members to join in. The sort of gardening the FoWGP does can either be heavy or light. For example, what would be considered heavy is all the transplanting and propagating that members have done around the North and West Walls in the Formal Gardens.

For all the work carried out on the North and West Walls that would be considered to be heavy, the lighter less strenuous gardening comes with looking after the roses in the sunken garden that require pruning and most of all deadheading. Therefore, I will say, if the thought of heavy gardening puts you off joining in on a Saturday morning, don't worry there is probably more light gardening to do than heavy. Also, if the thought of not knowing how to prune or deadhead roses concerns you, again, don't worry, there is always someone you can ask!

Another success has been the heritage and tree walks. However, to try something new, especially on my part as a local historian, I have put together on PowerPoint a set of images that show Woodthorpe Park's history and landscape interjected with timelapse videos that follow the route I take when leading a heritage walk. Entitled, "An Armchair Heritage Walk Around Woodthorpe Grange Park" it has proved to be a success as it allows me to show more images of what the park's environment once looked like when comparing it to today.

So successful has the idea of a heritage walk been that I have been asked to put together a similar armchair heritage walk for the area covering Trent Bridge, Victoria Embankment and Memorial Gardens.

In a similar vein, concerning the tree walks around the park's gardens, it has been decided to put together a PowerPoint collection of images of the trees noted in the Woodthorpe Park Tree Trail guide <http://www.woodthorpefriends.co.uk/Woodthorpe%20Grange%20Park%20Tree%20Trail.pdf> in both their summer and autumn colours that will be posted on the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park's Facebook page.

No yearly report would be completed without mentioning the mosaic that was officially unveiled in front of the Grange on the 1st of August 2023 that commemorates Woodthorpe Park's centenary year 2022 by mosaic artist Sophie Robins in what was a true community event that involved the talents of residents from Winchester and Woodthorpe Court flats. Photographs taken at the time of the official unveiling can be seen on the FoWGP's Facebook page.

Some of the events the Friends have involved in during 2023



Tree Walk, 8th May



West Wall, 23rd May



Unveiling of Centenary Mosaic



Saturday Morning
Gardening 18th February



Centenary Mosaic



Working in the Formal Garden

As last year's annual report was the first annual report in three years due to the restrictions brought about by the coronavirus pandemic there was a lot to write about what with Woodthorpe Grange Park's centenary celebrations and HM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, you could say for the FoWGP it has been a quiet year – but not so. All I can say, therefore 2024 there are still more activities in the pipeline. Activities that, rest assured, will involve the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park.

Paul R. Swift B.A.

Chair, Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park.