



FRIENDS OF
ALEXANDRA PARK

Parkside Newsletter

No.20

Summer and Autumn 2017



Supported by



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News and Views from around the Park.

Welcome to the twentieth edition of 'The Friends of Alexandra Park' newsletter, keeping you informed of events that have taken place, and of others to be held in the future.

Our Park is hotting up this summer, and has definitely now become the Park that all the communities surrounding it can be proud of, and want to be seen in.

The four forums working within the Park as well as the 'Friends' are regularly holding events in the park. They are the Heritage Group, Arts Forum, Wildlife Group and Sports Alliance. More on their events held will be on the pages below. These groups rely on volunteers to assist in their running, as do the Friends, so if you are interested in helping out, the contact details are set out later in this newsletter.

We have yet another addition to Chorlton Lodge, donated to us by the very kind folks at Wythenshawe Park, a larger and much more impressive specimen and descendant from the 'Charles Darrah Cactus Collection'.



Its common name is 'Old Man Cactus' and looks very furry, but observer beware, it has thousands of tiny spiky hairs all over it and must not be touched!!!

We are now gearing up towards our annual Celebration Day event, which this year is to be held on Sunday 10th September. The theme this time is multicultural food all under the banner of 'We Stand Together', and there will be various kinds of music, sports events

provided by Youth On Solid Ground and much more. In Chorlton Lodge, as part of National Heritage Open Day, the Heritage Group will be showing their brand new documentary, selling the book on the history of the park and previewing the new story boards.

ALEXANDRA PARK
Annual Celebration 2017
Sunday 10th September -12 noon to 4 pm

#WeStandTogether

Come along and join in the family fun activities
including
Multi Cultural Food Stalls
Music
Sports Activities
Dog Show provided by Manchester Dogs Home

Heritage Open Day in Chorlton Lodge
Age Friendly Information Stall
plus many more...

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Somali Golden
FRIENDS OF ALEXANDRA PARK
ALEXANDRA PARK ARTS FORUM
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
GREATER MANCHESTER HIGH SHERIFF'S POLICE TRUST
Women's Forum

If you like what you read and see in this news letter, then please come along and become an active member of the **F.A.P.** or of one of the forums. If you have anything that you would like to be included in future issues, including pictures from around our Park, then please contact me for inclusion in the next newsletter. As usual, I thank everyone who has provided articles and photos for use in this newsletter (you know who you are).

Anyway, on with the news and gossip.

Read on and enjoy.

Phil Benson-Hannam (Newsletter Editor & Information Point Coordinator)

Whalley Range Celebrate Day

On the first Bank Holiday in May, the Information Point went mobile and we set up shop at the Celebrate Festival, held in Manley Park.



Taking along all the relevant information on events to be held in the park over the coming months and also the picture boards from Alexandra Park Manchester Heritage Group showing the park in the past.

These picture boards always go down well and attract a lot of folks who are amazed at the images we have collected. In the future we will also have the old storyboards from Chorlton Lodge, that tell the history of the park from its inception to and beyond the restoration.



The day started off cool but by early afternoon the sun came out and the temperature soared.



Thanks to everyone who came along and took turns looking after the tent. We had a great time and caught up with loads of old friends.



ALEXANDRA PARK ARTS FORUM

Manchester Day 2017

This year's Manchester Day took place on Sunday 18th June. Manchester Parks came together to create an entry for the Parade and as there are 143 Parks across the City, they wanted to represent them all in some way, so our Arts Forum got their heads together and came up with their latest creation to be transported through the city in the parade.

This year's theme was Abracadabra and the Arts Forum built a huge papier mache dragon.



The float and costumes were designed by professional carnival artists and makers, and the volunteers were supported by these artists to make their creation and costumes.



Everyone who took part had an amazing time as part of the event, either before hand during its creation or actually on the day with taking part in the parade, especially Alexandra Parks Development officer extraordinaire Debbie and also our very good friend Debra from MCC.



A Midsummer's Nights Mayhem

On Sunday 2nd July, Tangled Dance Company came to the park with a 'Twisted Fairytale'.

This outdoor performing arts group was introduced to us by Alexandra Arts Forum and they told a mixed up story of favourite children's fairytales around the lake and throughout the park.



They had a fantastic response to their performance which attracted so many folks both young and old. Tangled Dance, you are welcome back anytime, the kids love you!





Thank you to Ben Turner and the Arts Forum for organising the above events.

The end of one era, the beginning of the next!

At the end of May we said goodbye to the Tea Hive from the Pavilion, and we wish them all success in whatever their new ventures will be.

The Pavilion was closed, deep cleaned and re-decorated ready for its new tenants, and for six weeks we were without a cafe.

During that time the Dementia Group kept Phil and the Information Point volunteers company in Chorlton Lodge on Wednesdays. They were a pleasure to host and with the interior of the Lodge being a reminder to older times, this made all the group recall their childhoods, bringing back memories and special times in their lives, especially for some who were brought up in the area and remember the park in its heyday.

In the main reception area (which is the old park office) the boys played dominoes, and in the parlour the girls either played cards or did knitting.



They have now been placed in the very capable hands of the new cafe providers who are Coffee Cranks Cooperative and who we welcome with great excitement and we look forward to working with them over the coming years.



They are local to this area and you may have seen them at other events with their portable bicycle coffee machine. They have been in Platt Fields Park, but this is their first permanent base in our park.

Well done guys for winning the tender and welcome to Alexandra Park Manchester.

Summer Pops In The Park

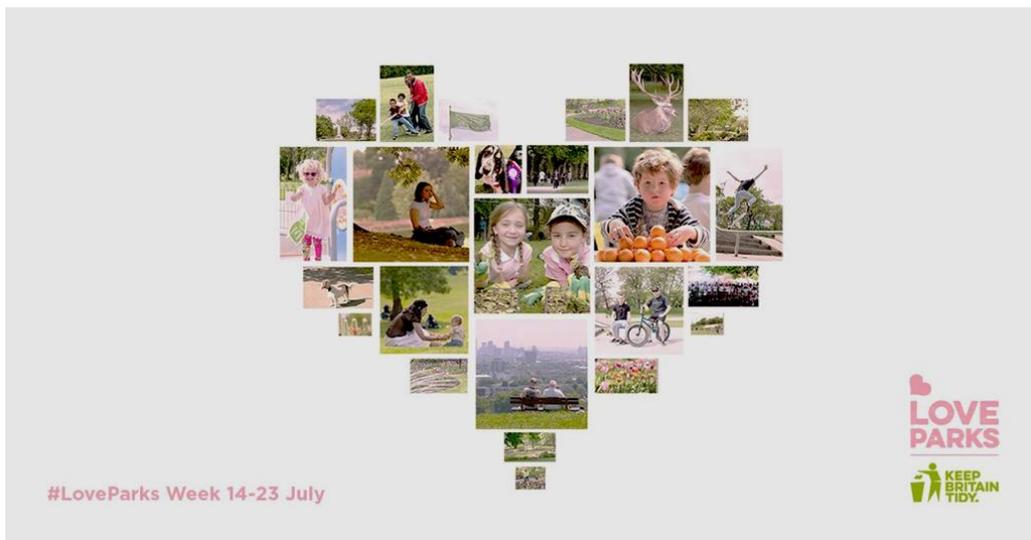
Saturday the 8th July was our very first Pops in the Park event organised by The Manchester Show Choir and sponsored by New York New York from the Village.



All monies raised from the sale of the tickets went to the Christie Hospital and Love Manchester Appeal. The weather was fantastic and the Show Choir along with the fabulous Roxy Hart and her girls were absolute darlings. The afternoon came to a close with the GMP police band joined on the stage by the Manchester Show Coir with a fabulous ‘Last night of the Proms’ finale. Here’s to next year, luvies.

Love Parks week

Love Parks week was a country wide event run in conjunction with Keep Britain Tidy, that started on Friday 14th July and ran through the week to the following Friday 21st July.



Our park’s portion of this event happened on Tuesday 18th July, and also combined the start-up of the City Councils new Sprytar app, that allows users of all ages to take a virtual historic tour of our park on their phones, as well as playing along with games and seeking out the Spryt around the park. You are also able to click on specific points on the screen and learn about structures that are either still in the park or have long since disappeared. There will be a facility to see what events are coming up that you might be interested in coming along too.



There was a portable display wagon giving away council goodies and Coffee Cranks Co-operative opened up the Pavilion for the day before their soft launch on the following Wednesday.



Even over at Chorlton Lodge we were joining in with the fun, with a lot of help from two of our favourite woofs!!!



Green Flag Award

Once again, for the third year running, Alexandra Park Manchester has been awarded its Green Flag. Well done to everyone involved in getting this for us.



This year's ceremony took place in Hull, and Debbie and Paul were invited to go along and collect our flag, along with our friends from Heaton Park and Southern Cemetery who collected theirs too. A great time was had by all.

Wake up and smell the Coffee!

As has already been said, a very warm welcome to the Coffee Cranks at the Pavilion.

Their 'soft' launch date was on Wednesday 26th July and their main launch date was the following Saturday 29th. They had a buffet on offer as well as their new menu range and fantastic tasting coffees.



The best bit of news, for all us dog walkers, is that as long as ours woofs are well behaved, then they are welcome in the pavilion too, so no more sitting out in the rain if we want something to eat and drink!

It's time to sell your rubbish!!!

As the saying goes 'One man's rubbish is another man's gold' well that point was well and truly made at the first of our annual Car Boot Sales on the 5th August.



The weather was perfect and we totalled 110 vehicles selling, with the park full of buyers. Coffee Cranks were run off their feet, definitely a baptism of fire!!!!

The 19th August was a different matter, the weather was foul but we still opened and had car booters queuing up to sell even in the rain (51 in total). The buyers came out in force too, as I said to someone on the day 'us Mancs don't get suntans, we just rust nicely'.

Our last one of the season was 26th August, and what a day that was. 154 vehicles turned up, the weather was fantastic and the park was full of punters.

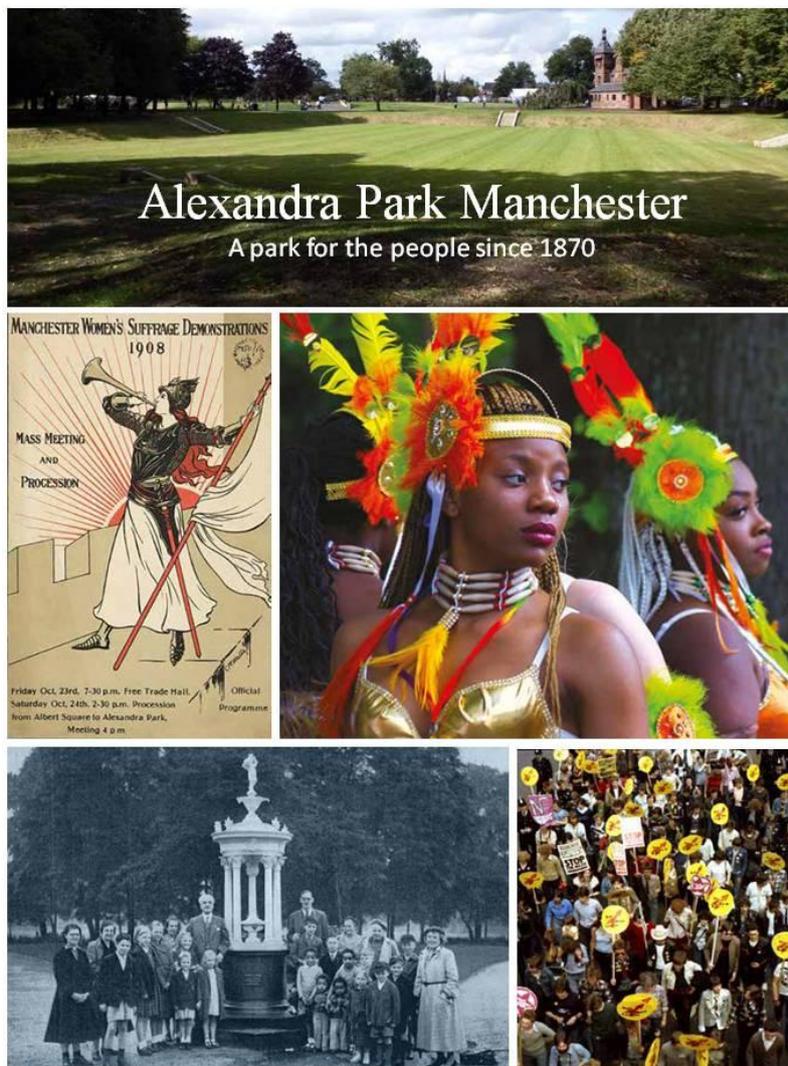


Thanks once more to Dave Saunders for his fabulous organising of these events, and to all our volunteers who came to help run them, come rain or shine, on the days.



ALEXANDRA PARK HERITAGE GROUP

The Heritage Group has been having a very busy year so far. The book that they commissioned called 'Alexandra Park Manchester – A park for the people since 1870' is here and now selling like hot cakes!!!



Their 'soft' launch was on Sunday 6th August in Chorlton Lodge and we were run off our feet with folks piling in to get their own copy. The book is very well presented, factual and really good quality, making it a complete bargain at the sale price of £6:00 here in the park. It is also available to buy at other times from Chorlton Lodge Information Point on Wednesdays and Fridays from 11am 'til 2pm, and also in the pavilion with Coffee Cranks. Plan ahead and buy as a gift for Christmas while stocks last.



The official launch for invited guests is to be held in Archives+ in Central Library on 28th September. This event will also premiere the documentary 'Alexandra Park – a short history of a people's park' produced by Armadillo Productions, which tells its own story about the history of the park and perfectly complements the book.

Alexandra Park Manchester Multimedia Launch

The rich history of Manchester's Alexandra Park has now been recorded in a new documentary film, an illustrated book, and a series of educational 'story boards' for permanent display in the Park's Chorlton Lodge.

Come and Celebrate
the social history of Manchester
at the official launch and reception
(Spaces are limited, so book early!)

The Performance Space, Central Library
St. Peter's Square, Manchester M2 5PD
Thursday 28 September
6.00 – 7.45 pm

Free tickets are available on Eventbrite
Search: "Eventbrite Alexandra Park Manchester Multimedia Launch"

Official launch of the book:
"Alexandra Park Manchester
A Park for the People since 1870"
(copies will be on sale for £6)

Premiere of the video:
"Alexandra Park – A Short History of a People's Park"
A 20 minute documentary situating the Park's role in
Manchester people's history from
the 1860s to the present day

The documentary will also be shown in Chorlton Lodge at our 'Celebration Day' event on Sunday 10th September, which is also National Heritage Open Day. Screenings will be at 12:30pm, 1:30pm, 2:30pm and 3:30pm and afterwards will then be shown at regular time slots, by Phil and his volunteers, on the days that the Information Point is open, so if you have 20 mins to spare pop in and learn about the history of your local park.



Anne Beswick (Green Badge Guide) will also be giving one of her free history walks around the park on the day, this will set off from Chorlton Lodge at 2 pm.

The Heritage Group meets monthly to plan activities, and are in Chorlton Lodge on the first Sunday of every month from 12 pm to 2 pm, to coincide with the Litter Picks by the 'Friends' group.

The Heritage Group still has two immediate objectives, memory collecting and working out how to share this history. They also continue to search for photos, videos and memories of the Carnival and have been fortunate in getting some amazing photos and stories.

The creation of the online archive of Alexandra Park continues, where anyone can post or search for information and photos regarding the history of the Park. There will be topics to choose from at the bottom of the page on separate tabs, which you will click on to post information specific to that subject. The park does not have an archive and part of the difficulty experienced in finding out the history of the park, has been the lack of coherent and

organised archive material. Information relating to the heritage exists in a variety of places and also in the “heads and memories” of many people, some of whom are no longer contactable. It has taken a great deal of work to accumulate the start of this archive. The aim is to have a ‘one stop shop’ of information that anyone can access, for further research on the Park.



ALEXANDRA PARK WILDLIFE GROUP

A somewhat select group of wildlife enthusiasts, led by Julie Boyd and Stuart Fraser have been very busy this year drumming up support. The group organised a fascinating bug hunt during the summer and are about to hold a bat walk in the next couple of months. There are lots of opportunities to expand the wildlife activities in the park, which are particularly popular with children, so please contact Julie with any ideas if you would like to get involved.

Carnival Time

This year’s Caribbean Carnival took place on the weekend of the 12th and 13th August. On the Saturday, for the parade, the weather was not very good at the start, but as the afternoon progressed, got significantly better.





On the Sunday the weather was much better and the park was filled to capacity with everyone having a fun time.





The smell of food from all the stalls was very tempting, and a good groove kept most folks bopping away till the end of the day.

A Word from the Chair

As you have already seen and read in this newsletter, the Park has been very busy so far this year with loads of interesting and unique activities being organised. All sections of the local community are starting to use the park as a focus for their activities, which is something for we had always hoped. This newsletter really just records the major events. This year saw the local Somali community celebrating Somalia National Day in the park. The local Gambian community football team uses the park for regular matches. The Moss Side Food Festival held its inaugural event here. Eid was celebrated in the park again this year, and cricket teams from lots of different communities hold matches several times a week throughout the summer.

Aside from all of the official activities, it is thrilling to see how many people are starting to use the park for their own informal sports. Volleyball nets spring up from nowhere. Tightrope walkers appear to float between the trees. Tai Chi and yoga “happen” as if by chance. We have seen people reviving the use of the informal cricket pitch on the North Oval. Bike Hive holds regular cycling events, and cycle repair classes. There is a weekly boot camp. A chess club has started up in the pavilion on Saturday mornings. And still dozens of lone runners and small groups use the various running routes around the park.

As always, the “Friends” and the other Forum volunteers have been really busy all summer arranging activities. The park gets busier, but there is still room for plenty more. This September will see the launch of a brand new Gardening Group, which intends to meet weekly, which could herald a riot of colour arriving in the park next year. I am still hoping that anyone interested in starting a fishing group will get in touch.

Paul Benson-Hannam

(Chair) Friends of Alexandra Park

friendsofalexandraparkmanchest@gmail.com

Events Calendar 2017

Litter Pick/Tidy Up

1st Sunday of every month (second one in January) – 12 noon - 2pm

Alexandra Park Women's 5K Training Runs

Sundays 3pm by the children's playground near Princess Road.

For details contact Anna at: www.openathletics.org.uk



Alexandra Park Heritage Group - Memories Day

1st Sunday of every month (not January) in Chorlton Lodge - 12 noon - 2pm,

RSPB drop-in Events

Over the summer period – 11am till 5pm, meet at the lake.

A.R.C.C (Annual Restoration Completion Celebration) – We Stand Together.

Sunday 10th September – 12 noon – 4 pm

Multi cultural food stalls, music, dog show and sport events to celebrate 3 years since the Regeneration of the Park.

National Heritage Open Day

Sunday 10th September – 12 noon - -4pm

As part of the “We Stand Together” event, Chorlton Lodge will be open and showing the documentary ‘Alexandra Park – a short history of a people’s park’, along with showing the new storyboards and selling the book.

Alexandra Park Multimedia Resource Launch event.

Thursday 28th September 6pm – 7:45 pm at the Performance Space in Archives+, Central Library Manchester.

Official launch of the book, documentary and storyboards. Free tickets available on Eventbrite

Christmas Cheer

Saturday 9th December – Details to follow.

Friends of Alexandra Park meetings dates

Tuesday 26th September 2017

Tuesday 31st October 2017

AGM Tuesday 28th November 2017 (in the Depot)

Tuesday 30th January 2018

Tuesday 27th February 2018

Tuesday 27th March 2018

Tuesday 24th April 2018

Tuesday 29th May 2018

Tuesday 26th June 2018

All meetings start at **7.00pm** prompt in Chorlton Lodge, unless otherwise stated.

Contact Details

Park Office

Debbie Marsden (Alexandra Park Development Officer) **0161 224 2902**
John Keys (Neighbourhood Engagement & Delivery Officer - Whalley Range) **07903 267298**
Alexandra Park Security **0161 224 4237**

Friends of Alexandra Park

Paul Benson-Hannam (Chair) **0161 226 7525**
Phil Benson-Hannam (Newsletter Editor/Info Point Co-ordinator) **07375 782337**

Facebook Address: www.facebook.com/AlexParkMCR

Open Athletics

Anna Verges www.openathletics.org.uk **07709 000436**

Alexandra Park Heritage

Angela Downing www.alexparkmanchester.org or www.facebook.com/AlexandraParkMCR

Alexandra Arts

Lotte Karlsen hello@alexandra-arts.org.uk

Alexandra Arts and Culture

Ben Turner sambalanmusic@hotmail.com

Alexandra Sports Alliance

Darren Ashton www.alexparkmanchester.gov.uk

Alexandra Park Wildlife Group

Julie Boyd www.wr4wildlife@yahoo.com or website <https://wr4wildlife.wordpress.com/>

Greater Manchester Police

If you have any criminal information/activity you want to pass on to us you can contact us on the below numbers:

999 Emergency
101 Non-emergency - Use this number if you need the Police for an incident that is not an emergency.
0800 555 1111 Crimestoppers anonymously.
0161 856 4973 Didsbury Integrated Neighbourhood Police Team.
0161 872 6633 Minicom (text phone users)

www.twitter.com/gmpolice or www.facebook.com/gtrmanchesterpolice

If you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and are interested in any of the events, then please come along to the Park and find out what you are missing.

All the best and continue to enjoy your completed and restored Alexandra Park.

