



Friends
of Williamson Park

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2022



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR : *Keith Dawson*

Dear Friends,

After the storms and falling trees etc we are having some really good spring-like days even though spring is still a few weeks away. I was walking with my dog Max the other day from Quernmore Road up the main drive to the memorial, it was so beautiful to see the snowdrops on the wooded banks to the right and then on the left this wonderful display of daffodils covering a really large area as we walked up the hill. The sun was already shining on the early daffodils and had a warm yellow/orange tinge to them, they were just below the mosaic where the Friends had recently removed brambles that constantly encroach on the grass and planted areas in this part of the park. Further on the hydrangeas were coming into bud, what a beautiful morning.

Even though February saw lots of rain the Friends managed to put in 112 volunteer hours, this is quite a feat for the small amount of workers who regularly attend each Monday and Thursday morning. A big thankyou to all. The bird feeding enclosure has now had the fencing repaired and wood chippings from a nearby fallen tree have been put down , its looking good and we'll soon be repainting the green fencing round the viewing area. Soon there will be chicks to feed and the weather should be getting warmer and the fat balls will be withdrawn from the feeders.

The TV programme "Peaky Blinders" returned to our screens a few weeks ago. The first of the new series was filmed in Williamson Park it was amazing to see how the memorial had been transformed in to a swish mansion in America and the local scenes looked amazing. It is great publicity for the park as many people like to see where TV programmes are made.



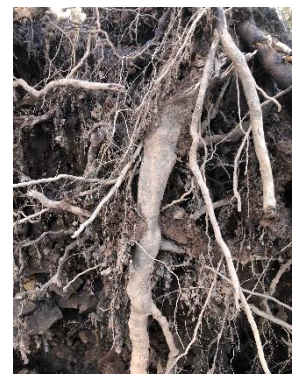
Tai Chi: Friday morning Tai Chi sessions have started again with David

Redmore from 9.30 – 10.30 in front of the Memorial. Total beginners are welcomed. Please dress very warmly as the practise is outside unless very, very bad weather! Donations to Friends of Williamson Park.

Park Trees

Three rare trees have been gifted to the Park. These are known as Willoumii and were only discovered in Australia in 1994. Before that they were only known by their fossilised seeds from many millenia ago. Other unusual trees will be added to the Butterfly House garden.

Sadly many trees have come down or been damaged in the recent storms. Many were very old.



Friends' and Queen's Gardens

Working in the Queen's and Friend's Gardens, even on a windy day is a calming experience. They have been developed in old quarries to the north west of the Café, and were once begonia gardens. They have been planted with more perennial plants and shrubs, providing colour and structure through the year. The Queen's Garden comes into its own in late winter with a wonderful display of hellebores and snowdrops. Come and visit on Monday and Thursday mornings, we would welcome more volunteers to help us.

BUTTERFLY HOUSE GARDENS

A quiet time in the garden with winter tidying, making hazel plant supports, and some snowdrop planting. The new pond is looking good and will slowly develop as plants are established. Strange animals and other creatures have appeared, and a five star thatched bug hotel has been built. Come and see!

BIRDS NESTING MONITORING

If anyone spots birds using the 100+ nest boxes around the Park, please do let the Friends know, or add your sightings to the notebook in the shop.

NEWS FROM THE PARK MANAGER: *Beth Nortley*

Plan to refurbish the Wyresdale Road Toilet Block

Summer opening: 1st April Open 10 am close 5 pm

Special Activities to look out for are:

- May 12 to 15th Highest Point Festival
- June Twelfth Night 3 Left Feet in the Dell
- July 17th Lancaster Grand Prix cycle races
- July 22nd to August 28th Dukes Walkabout Show Jungle Book
- Mothers Day Flower arranging
- Eat the Table
- Spring Wreaths
- Family Activities in School Holidays

Full programme and details of events can be found on the Calendar on the Williamson Park website.

COME ALONG AND MEET THE FRIENDS IN THE PARK ON MONDAY AND THURSDAY MORNINGS AT 10 AM BY THE CAFÉ. WE DO A VARIETY OF PRACTICAL WORK AND GARDENING FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS, AND HAVE A CHAT OVER A CUPPA AFTERWARDS.

For more information contact: info@parkfriends.com

THE BUTTERFLY HOUSE AND MINI ZOO



The butterfly house at Williamson Park was once an Edwardian palm house but now houses brilliantly coloured butterfly's and a collection of exotic plants creating a rainforest near the heart of the city. Exploring the building you will come across koi carp, colourful frogs and tortoises. Together with the Mini Zoo and gardens behind and Café, this area is a fascinating place to visit, for all ages. Where Exotic animals can be enjoyed alongside native butterfly's birds and frogs, which are currently spawning in our nature pond behind the meerkats.



The butterfly house itself is a grade II listed building leading to interesting challenges when adapting it to accommodate for multiple species without making structural changes. Kept between 23 and 28 degrees it is the ideal breeding ground for tropical butterflies. Large, camouflaged Owl butterfly's lay eggs on the banana plants and the caterpillars quickly reduce them to stems! Meanwhile a closer look at the citrus plants around the hall will reveal swallowtail pupae and caterpillars. The house holds a variety of species year-round and during the summer months there are a variety of caterpillars to be found.



The minibeast cave is a dark and comfortable home to a variety of invertebrates, reptiles, amphibia and snakes. Highlights include Bruce the royal python the Madagascan Hissing Cockroaches and the newest arrival Tim, a European Eyed Lizard. The adjacent aviary is currently closed for refurbishment and as a safeguard against the risks of avian flu. A group of Java sparrows calls the aviary home and are currently laying eggs just in time for easter!



As you enter the mammal area you will be greeted by Colin and Leo, two Common Marmosets, with a history in the pet trade, living in less than ideal conditions. Whilst viewing the marmosets you may be being carefully watched by one of the seven meerkats, a bachelor group of brothers who are always entertaining to watch as they play, explore and sunbathe. Wilf the rabbit and Jam the Guinea Pig are also lively and will soon be getting a brand new enclosure, with possibly some new friends. The latest addition to the zoo is Nacho, the Prevost Squirrel, a native species of Sumatra, who is rather shy at the moment. Nacho is an exciting addition to the zoo as he will be part of a breeding programme allowing the Park to contribute to global conservation goals, a hard job for small zoos!



The animals in the collection are well looked after by Emma and Milo the zookeepers alongside student volunteers from local colleges and Lancaster university. The zookeeper job is varied and includes a lot of cleaning and feeding alongside projects such as planning and developing new exhibits. The zoo is held to high standards by zoo inspections which are performed annually and is accredited by BIAZA a national association with stringent entry requirements. The zoo takes pride in its education output with school groups and jungle party's resuming after an unfortunate break during Covid-19 as well as a range of exciting educational holiday activities.



