

## Friends of Princes Park annual report 2013-14

This has been another good year for Princes Park. This spring will see over 50 new exotic trees coming into bud, and we can imagine what they will be like in 100 years from now just as Joseph Paxton would have done in 1842 when the park was first opened.

FOPP has been very active this year with lots of varied projects.

In early summer we had a delicious picnic while making our new labyrinth in the long grass of the bowling green near the tennis courts. This labyrinth, though slightly wonky, inspired Glendales to say they will make a really distinct one for us this year. Meanwhile the old labyrinth in the big field above the lake will now be a labyrinth of spring bulbs.

We planted nearly 1000 bulbs in the old labyrinth in November and because it was very wet some FOPP members spent an exciting day laying drainage at the site in December..... The sun shone and parakeets flew overhead. We hope to see results later in spring.

We are making progress on our wooden Henge project for the big field near the Devonshire/Belvedere gates, working with local young people. We have the full backing of our local youth services who have been very supportive and gone above and beyond the call of duty to make this happen. One way or another it will happen later this summer. \*

In the Autumn we launched, with support from the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Trust, Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group and RunEngland, way markers for the 5k run through Princes Park, a route taken by about 200 runners at 9am every Saturday morning at Parkrun ([www.parkrun.org.uk](http://www.parkrun.org.uk))

We held a public meeting about the state of the lake in early November. Although the lake is lovely, with a regular heron visiting as well as occasional swans and cormorants and holding water well at present, it continues to be at risk, and the banks and the island, in places, are unsightly. A lake group has reformed and will be taking this forward as improvements to the lake are an ongoing top priority for Friends of Princes Park.

On the weekend of the 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> December we planted over 50 exotic trees in Princes Park with a grant from Mersey Forrest and support of the Council parks department. As Nelson Mandela had very sadly just died we dedicated the trees to him and we had lots of support from local people who joined in. As well as hard work we enjoyed delicious cake made by Lis, soup made by Ingrid, tea and coffee from Pat and Martin and fun rides on the back of Dave's trailer. The Sunburst Gates became a colourful and moving memorial to Nelson Mandela and a march in his honour started from there the following week.

The new trees are exotic species similar to those originally planted by Paxton. Many of them are very long lived like the giant Sequoia which can live for 1000 years. We are compiling an

information booklet on the trees and will be walking round them in May to introduce them to local people.

Sadly this January saw the departure for 2 years to Tasmania of Dave Cornick our main tree expert. However he has left us ideas and strategies for further planting later this year and he has inspired us to publicise our wonderful trees, new and old and our lovely park.

This summer we hope to erect a wildlife notice board near our native tree planting near the Belvidere Devonshire Gates. Our planting has attracted many birds to the park. On a wild winter's day I counted 27 goldfinches by this planting, while on the nearby field over 30 redwings were feeding. We are having a wildlife walk led by Paul Slater in March following an interesting and informative one last year.

We are keen to promote and support events in the park. As well as Brouhaha which is very colourful every summer, this spring on May 10<sup>th</sup> LIPA are performing in the park with local community groups. This performance features singing, a picnic and a boat (!)

People continue to tell us how the park continues to improve and I would like once again to thank everyone who has helped us to make it this way, especially the city council and Glendales, who despite hard times and sometimes not completely agreeing with our ideas, have worked tirelessly to make the park a better and better place.

Finally this spring sees the "roundabout" near the Sunburst Gates being made safer for pedestrians and cyclists. FOPP was fully involved in the new design and we are confident it will be safer to access the park from now on.

Thanks to everyone in FOPP and all the people who have supported and helped and worked with us over the last 12 months.

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- PS Just heard (April) we have got grant for our Henge project to go ahead with local youth service this summer. It will go on site in the autumn. Come to AGM to find out more!