

Friends of Princes Park annual report 2014-15

This year has seen a Hot Air Balloon rise above Princes Park and the building of our fantastic wooden Henge amongst many other activities. Our May Fair to launch the Henge and recreate the Fancy Fair of 1849 took place in glorious sunshine. Donkeys gave rides and grazed happily on the hedge! People enjoyed carriage rides and Victorian tea while watching dance and listening to local school pupils singing Victorian songs. Over 2000 people came.

On June 6th we celebrated the 150th year since the death of Joseph Paxton (creator of our park who died on June 8th 1865) with a walk round our trees new and old. We measured trees that were likely to have been planted when the park was created (at least 2 trees date from that time).

Our Henge was finished in September as part of a project with local young people funded in part by the Peoples Health Trust with support from Liverpool city council and Plus Dane. People have come from afar to see it and we have had fantastically positive feedback. We have had interest from a local Druid... watch this space... for next year. A group of people watched the sunrise from the Henge at the spring solstice. As well as designing the Henge young and old visited Chatsworth House, Ironbridge museum and Yorkshire Sculpture Park looking at design and heritage. We feel that Joseph Paxton would approve of what we have created in the park.

Our Chatsworth visit also introduced us to the Friends of Birkenhead Park. We met Fraser Robertson, a direct descendent of John Robertson who worked with Paxton on the park. Fraser has created a fantastic website for us. We hope to have more Paxton celebrations this year.

Over the year we have planted more trees and coppiced our existing plantations which are flourishing. We have also planted bulbs in the Henge and other places.

We have been approached by a local group hoping to create a space which will be a memorial to Nelson Mandela, following the adoption of the Sunburst Gates as a place of remembrance when he died and our dedication of newly planted trees in his memory. This will involve an international artist working with our local communities and is very exciting. It will be the focus of our AGM in August. Please come along to hear more.

In the autumn we will be doing some more planting and coppicing. We need you! Please see website and Twitter for more information.



Finally this month Young Everyman and Playhouse, working with local young people are performing Robin Hood on 24th 25th and 26th July.

This year is also a sad one. Liverpool City Council faces massive cuts. We have been told by a park officer that in 2 years, without a radically new approach “There will be no money for parks”. A review is under way, but we have lost several wonderful officers who have worked with us over the years and been a huge support including Derek Dottie and Nigel Sharp. However we look forward to working with the Council in imaginative ways to make our park even more wonderful in the next few years.

We would like to thank everyone who worked on the Henge including: Dave Cornick FOPP tree person extraordinaire, Lisa Cover from Plus Dane, Gil Goodwin from Council Youth service, Tom Duckworth from Council and FOPP members especially Pat Bragg.

We would also like to thank all FOPP members who have volunteered with us this year on tree planting, coppicing, litter picking, working at the Fair and many other things. Thanks to our very active Tree group for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Thanks to everyone in FOPP and all the people who have supported and helped and worked with us over the last 12 months. We are looking as always for people to get involved, whatever your skills we can use them!

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