



Friends of
Whitworth
PARK

Summer Newsletter 2014

Deja Vue!

On April 1, 1905 the Guardian reported that the work of transplanting a full-grown ash tree at the Whitworth Park was

completed on the previous day. Although it had taken several workmen three days, to do “full-grown trees are worth taking care of in Manchester, and most of the timber on Whitworth Park is especially young”. This ash tree had stood immediately behind the original Art Gallery and had to be removed in order to build its extension. “Gardeners marked out a large square around the base of the trunk, then dug down and wedged boards beneath the roots, these were chained together, and when the upper part of the tree had been steadied with “anchor ropes” the whole of it was lifted bodily by means of “jacks” and rested on a low lurry (sic). Thanks to the firm casing of the square of roots, and earth, the tree rode steadily on its way to a new site twenty yards away. Then the jacks were got to work again, the lurry was removed, and the weighty square slowly worked down the sides of a new-dug hole, in which the tree was finally replanted”.

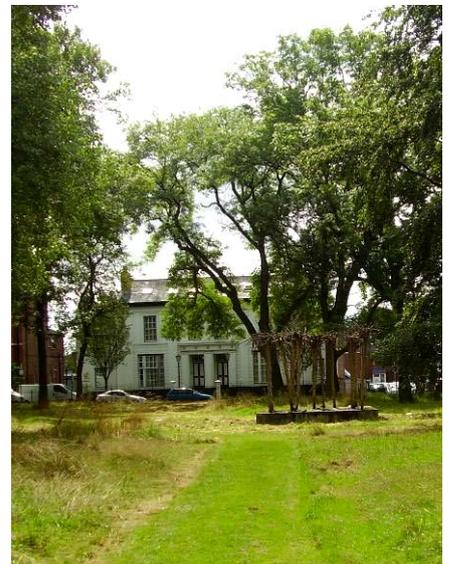


On July 31, 2014 the sculpture “Flailing Trees” by Gustav Metzger, originally commissioned for the 2009 Manchester International Festival and located in the Peace Garden, but later moved to the front of the Gallery, was moved to allow the redesign of the forecourt as a landscaped Sculpture Court. The new site is in an area of long grass, away from the larger trees and the playing area and provides the focus of long views across the Park from the Centre Circle and the entrances off Moss Lane East. A base of hardcore was laid in a shallow excavation and then the sculpture lifted by a huge crane onto a flatbed truck and moved by road to Moss Lane East. Fence panels were removed and tracking laid to allow the 75ton load to pass over the grass to the new site where the crane lifted it into its new position. The work was carried out by John Sutch Cranes who had also carried out the



earlier move.

Bryony Bond, Exhibitions Curator, said the work “is a critique of man’s barbarity towards nature. The work’s themes will fit with the inspiration behind creating a more permeable boundary between the park and the gallery, considering man’s impact on the natural world, and creating a space for reflection and appreciation of nature in an urban situation”. The upside down willow trees are designed to decompose and be replaced. The sculpture will be checked weekly by Gallery staff and annually by the Manchester Museum’s Sculpture Conservator and any costs or maintenance will be met by the Gallery.



There is still time to visit this exhibition, which runs to 5 October. As well as showing the “finds” from the two archaeological digs with stories to illustrate the background, you can pick up a free booklet that indicates the positions of the lost features— bandstand, boating lake, statues, and formal planting schemes and tells how these features were lost as other demands on the public purse have increased. *Its open from 10 til 5 daily and its free! And on Wednesday 20 August, 1-2pm, Dr Melanie Giles will be talking about “Whitworth Park at War, also free.*

See <http://whitworthparklife.wordpress.com> for more background and stories from this splendid project.





Green Flag Award 2014-15 Across the country more than 1470 parks and green spaces will be flying a Green Flag this year, including ours! The *Keep Britain Tidy Green Flag Awards* are judged by volunteer experts who assess parks against

eight strict criteria, including horticultural standards, cleanliness, sustainability and community involvement. Following the inspection reported in the last newsletter, the Park application was successful along with 11 others in the city. The award came during Love Parks week, July 25 to August 3, when thousands of people celebrated our country's fantastic parks and green spaces. The scheme manager Paul Todd said

"This is something well worth celebrating and testament to the efforts of thousands of men and women, supported by some amazing volunteers, who work tirelessly to maintain the high standards demanded by the Green Flag Award. The parks sector is facing some tough challenges so it is heartening to see that they are committed to maintaining and improving standards." Paul then refers to the HLF report *"State of UK Public Parks 2014"* which notes that since 1996 the HLF and Big Lottery have invested £800million in parks in response to the loss and damage resulting from the 1980's cuts, and this huge figure was matched in time and money by councils and community groups. The HLF research shows that this investment, as well as many parks and green spaces, may now be at risk. In response, the *National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces* (NatFed), which represents the view of many of the country's 5000 Friends groups that the dramatic cuts to budgets for staff and maintenance resulting from current national and local budget restraint could cause long term damage to parks and green spaces, just at the time when their benefit to the health and wellbeing of increasingly busy people, many stressed by the effects of the same policies, is starting to be understood. Their petition, *"Save our Parks!* is about protecting and maintaining our green inheritance and calls on the next government to hold a national inquiry into the funding and management of green spaces, to bring in a statutory duty to monitor and manage these spaces to a national standard, and to ensure adequate resources for all green spaces. Parks are vital community assets -we need everyone to work together to ensure they are maintained for future generations.



The reduced mowing strategy in the Park, introduced as part of the city's biodiversity strategy (but also meant to save money), is starting to show results – this hogweed (far left), sitting amongst an impressive range of flowering grasses, has grown spontaneously and suggests that given better management and careful addition of a wider range of species (near left), we could make some interesting walks. And on July 26, to link in with the Whitworth Park : Pleasure Play and Politics exhibition, as well as Love Parks Week, Manchester Museum's monthly nature workshop for

adults *Urban Naturalist* was themed around insect identification in the Park. Anna Bunney reports that after a behind the scenes tour of the entomology collections, including specimens that had been collected in the Whitworth Park bioblitzes organised by the Greater Manchester Ecological Unit, *Phil Rispin, Curatorial Assistant Entomology*, led a walk to see what insects could be found in the Park. These were identified:- Cinnabar caterpillar moths on ragwort (photo right), Common carder bee, Bumblebee, White butterfly, Honeybee, Grass moth, Meadow Brown butterfly, Juvenile garden spider, fly, Capsid bug, Soldier beetle, harvestman, parasitic wasp, harlequin ladybird and three butterflies new to park records, small skipper, speckled wood and green veined. Thanks Anna for this report.



Please contact **Ken Shone**, with any suggestions or comments at shones@altrincham.freecerve.co.uk or 0161 928 5744.
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