

NO.63 DECEMBER 2012

THE FRIENDS OF

PROTECTING & ENHANCING



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BLAKERS PARK

OUR COMMUNITY GREEN SPACE 

NEWSLETTER

21st December 2012

CAROLS

IN BLAKER'S PARK

With The Brighton Mummers
Live Music & Storytelling



6 to 8pm



Come gather round the fire with your
home made lanterns for joyful
Christmas singing and fun!

more info www.brightonmummers.co.uk

supported by the Friends www.blakerspark.org.uk

lantern instructions www.is.gd/lantern

The Committee of the Friends of Blakers Park includes Caroline Bottrell, Marion Clark, Marjorie Cozens, Sally Cranfield, Tara Rogers (Secretary), Gerry Faulks (Treasurer), Max Glaskin (Chair), Sam Hart, Ian Lawes, Graham Preston (Vice Chair & Membership Secretary), and Marsali Stuart. Philip Smith is our Honorary Life President. Write to us at 77 Chester Terrace, tel 07981 490516 or email friends@blakerspark.org.uk

Just because The Dandy has gone out of print doesn't mean that there is no longer any high quality journalism left in this country. Indeed not. The Friends' committee (see above), instructed Max Glaskin to come up with a decent, serious newsletter. They should've known better but all they can do is hold up their hands and say, "OK, it's all our fault and, by the way, Merry Christmas to both of our readers."

STOP PRESS: As this was about to be signed off, we got a call from The Argus newsroom asking us how we felt about Blakers Park being nominated for Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust status. We'd been asked by CityParks if we'd support such a nomination, which we were pleased to do, but we didn't learn of the outcome until The Argus called. So we're pleased to have been nominated because, if the next stage goes smoothly, the park will gain a new level of protection, we may have access to funds to spend on the park and we'll have an excuse to hold another community celebration event.

OLD NEWS: The 30 minute video of the 1994 centenary celebrations is now available on DVD. Drop £5 and your address to 77 Chester Terrace and we'll burn you a copy that's fresher than a daisy plucked from the dog-free area. Most of the proceeds will go to charity and a small amount to the Friends.

NOT SO OLD NEWS: The AGM in October voted all the above named onto the Friends committee. We're lucky to have an excellent new secretary and a multi-tasking vice-chair/membership secretary. Dario Saracini and Keith McMurray decided to step down and we thank them for all their help in the last 12 months.

TIMELESS NEWS: Those of you with your own pocket watches may have noticed that, from time to time, the clock in Blakers Park is wrong. Or has stopped. Or is showing what the time is in Mumbai. No sooner had the Friends decided that it was time something should be done to the delicate innards of this most unreliable appendage when we heard that the problem had been diagnosed by the time lords from planet Frost Bros, a remedy would soon be applied and then nobody would have an excuse to be late home for their tea again. You know who you are.

FUTURE NEWS: The birds of Blakers Park have kindly agreed to put on a special display in the Spring so that expert ornithologist Mike Unwin can again point them out during a Dawn Chorus guided walk. We're waiting only for the wrens to agree a date and then it will go in our calendar (assuming the chaffinches don't sulk).

Thanks to all of our newsletter deliverers, Simon Bottrell at 7Creative for the masthead, Brighton Mummers for their cover artwork and for the forthcoming carols and mumming play, The Argus and Fiveways Directory for publishing our news, Stanford Avenue Methodist Church for hosting the AGM, Alister Peters for telling us about the trees, David Stephens for the historically dubious playscript and Philip Smith for the historically accurate Argus extract..

NEWS

Road safety: The Council has doubled the amount it is going to spend on improving the safety of the roads around Blakers Park. See the back page for dates and times of the public consultation of the way the £60,000 is going to be spent. Congratulations to Noelle O'Riordan for leading the community campaign. The Friends supported the campaign and gave advice in the early days but not since, so whoever's been giving the impression they've been representing the Friends committee has been misleading people. The committee has also decided not to expend its scarce resources on the issue of the controlled parking zone which, after earlier public consultation, is being implemented south of Stanford Avenue. We've got enough on our plate without venturing beyond our boundaries.

Andy Murray & Blakers Park: *The park's tennis club emulated the Olympic and US Open champion by playing rather well this year. In only its second season of running four teams it might get one in each division of the city-wide Parks League next year. The fourth team, made up of decent people and a patient captain, finished respectably mid-table while the third team won promotion to, appropriately, the third division. Blakers' second team may play in the second or third divisions next year, depending on rules so arcane they will be interpreted by Prof Brian Cox in February. To complete this outside broadcast, Blakers' first team won promotion to the first division. Now, back to the studio.*



3rd team cap'n Mike Majendie

Terrific Trees: Time was when every child could skip down the garden path, through the



open gate into buttercup meadows to tumble with lambs and sing with bluebirds. That's what Disney and Blyton told us in the middle of the 20th century. These days kids have better things to do – such as the half term trees events held in Blakers by Sam Hart and Jane Skea. Forget flighty bluebirds and skittish lambs – the scavenger hunt, bark rubbing and quiz brought the youngsters up against the biggest living things in the park. About 30 children took part and, with luck,

they'll remember to look after the trees in the second half of the 21st century.



Another instalment in our occasional series, about the roads near Blakers Park, a play what David Stephens wrote

Beaconsfield Villas: A Play in Three Acts

Act 1:

February 1876. A small withdrawing room, Windsor Castle. Queen Victoria is holding her weekly audience with her Prime Minister. She is dressed in black, still in mourning for the death of Albert:

QV: *Ah Mister Disraeli please be seated.*

BJ: *Thank you Ma'am. Before we begin may I thank you for the gracious gift you have bestowed upon me?*

QV: *You are happy with Earl of Beaconsfield and Viscount Hughenden? Though I'm afraid they'll always know you as Dizzy.*

BJ: *It pleases me greatly. As you know I have represented the fine town of Beaconsfield since 1847 and Mary Anne and I have been very happy at Hughenden Manor. And if I may be indiscreet we do prefer to reside in nearby High Wycombe.*

QV: *The Queen laughs. Well before you know it they'll be naming a street after you – some dreadful row of villas, or worse, some railway station in the metropolis. But what can one do?*

BJ: *Quite. Pray Ma'am may I now talk a little of Russia and the League of the Three Emperors...*

Act 2:

22nd August 1896. A small committee room in Brighton Town Corporation. Alderman John George Blaker is smoking a large Havana cigar and

addressing the committee for street naming and numbering. The committee is chaired by a local dignitary Sir Maxwell Glaskin.

JB: *Havelock and Waldegrave I can live with but Disraeli Drove I'm not having! Preston Drove, Disraeli Drove, we'll all get into a mither!*

MG: *And your suggestion Alderman?*

JB: *Well it's right to honour the man – I remember when he graced us with his presence at the Royal York Hotel - but we must take care in all this, once named, forever shamed...*

MG: *Hughenden Road?*

JB: *It's a mouthful, and anyway none of us have ever heard of the place. No, I think Beaconsfield it will be, though for the life of me we'll run into the same problem, you mark my words!*

MG: *Education Alderman Education! The greatest gift we can bestow upon this growing town. Let every child in every school know more about our streets, our great town, our Empire!*

JB: *And let them play in what's left of our open spaces Sir Maxwell instead of having their heads filled with bookish nonsense!*

Act 3:

January 5th 1914. Trolley-vehicle running along the Ditchling Road, Preston Drove and Beaconsfield Villas tramway. Maud Wilkins, a lady's companion of advancing age is sitting next to her friend Philippa Smith, a retired school mistress.

MW: *It means 'clearing in the beeches' Or a place surrounded by beech trees...*

PS: *What does?*

MW: *Beaconsfield. Where you live...*

PS: *I don't live in Beaconsfield, I live in Brighton!*

PS: *No, the Villas. Where you live...*

MW: *Well that makes sense I must say. Beach trees did you say? Well it makes sense, Brighton n'all, though I'm not so sure about clearing. It looks like we might be getting some of that rain they promised.*

The trolley stops half way down Beaconsfield Villas. Maud is pointing to one of the newly planted trees opposite her small villa. Philippa has decided to humour her friend. Advancing age. Makes you dizzy?

Curtain

From the Archives

Philip Smith retrieved the following from the archives of The Argus, date unknown.

"The building of houses on the triangle of land next to Preston Park formed by Preston Drove and Stanford Avenue was delayed for nearly two decades because of a clause in a will. In the end it took an Act of Parliament before development of Beaconsfield Villas and the roads parallel to it - Havelock, Waldegrave, Cleveland and Southdown roads and Chester Terrace - could begin.

The land formed part of the Stanford Estate and it was only after his death in 1853 that it was discovered that William Stanford had inserted into his will a clause which allowed leasehold building only on the land, with leases of not longer than 99 years. Leasehold was unpopular in Brighton and little interest was shown in the land for development.

According to Sue Farrant in her well researched book, *The Growth of Brighton and Hove*, the Stanford family ten years later enjoyed an opulent life style, with a house in Madeira, a yacht and a London residence, and were probably beginning to look for new sources of finance.

In 1870, the family decided the land should be sold for building. The following year a private Act of Parliament was passed altering the terms of William Stanford's will to allow land to be sold freehold. The road pattern was marked out and developers invited to take an interest. But it was 25 more years before building in the triangle of roads reached its peak - all the development under the control of the Stanford family.

For when it released land to builders it was on a 99-year lease. Only if houses were built within seven years of the lease and to a minimum value specified by the estate, was the family prepared to sell the freehold. The freehold price was fixed at the equivalent of 25 years rent.

Sue Farrant cites some of the minimum values in 1893 as £300 for a terraces house in Chester Terrace and £550 for a substantial detached house in adjacent Rugby Road.

The area was regarded as unlikely to become fashionable and it was laid out as a middle class town suburb. Much of the building work was by local concerns, including Alfred Cox and Sons, whose offices are still located in Preston Road. Alfred Cox started building on the estate in 1870 and the firm's activities reached a peak in the 1880s, reflecting the rise in interest in Preston Park.

Much of the appeal of this part of Preston is in its proximity to the park, which was originally established when the area was being built up in order to preserve the view from Preston Manor. In 1883. the Stanford family, still looking for new finance, sold the park to the town for £50,000."

Blakers – the friendliest park in the world

Blakers Park is a gem but it would be different if the Friends hadn't protected it from unwanted changes. Now the Friends keep an eye on it all, improve it and organise free events for everyone. So please join or renew your membership now. There's no reason not to. If you feel good about Blakers Park, join the Friends. If you feel indifferent, you can still join. If you hate Blakers Park, join and we'll give you the support you clearly need.

Don't do it soon, do it now.

There are **two different** ways to show you care about Blakers. The **first** is the simple form you can fill in and give to us with cash or a cheque made out to "Friends of Blakers Park".

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Phone _____

Please write your email address below to receive news and events by email:

_____ @ _____

I enclose payment for the following (please circle):

One year's individual membership	£3.00
One year's membership students and unwaged	£1.50
Three year's membership	£9.00
Five year's membership	£15.00
One year's household membership	£5.00
One year's group membership	£30.00

The **second** way to join us is to complete this standing order mandate.

Standing Order Mandate

My bank: _____

Bank address: _____ Postcode: _____

My account no: _____

Sort code: _____

My name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Bank instruction: Please pay £_____ beginning with immediate effect and on the same date each year to Friends of Blakers Park

Account no: 21262734; Sort Code 40-05-27; *HSBC 69 Pall Mall, London SW1 5EY*

This Standing Order Mandate supersedes all previous standing orders to Friends of Blakers Park

When you've filled in your name, address, phone & email details and completed **either** the membership payment panel (with payment) **or** the standing order mandate, please drop this in at 77 Chester Terrace, BN1 6GD or 61 Havelock Road BN1 6GL

What's On?

...not a lot, to be honest, but if you would care to visit www.blakerspark.org.uk you can download posters and to keep more up to date than a Twitter fiend

Friday 21st December 2012 6pm onwards

Christmas Carols & Yuletide Mummers

Brighton Mummers and the Brighton Brass Ensemble return with songs, live music, storytelling and a mumming play. A great event to mark the solstice.

Wednesday 19th December 2012 11am – 3pm Stanford Ave Methodist Church

Public Consultation on plans for Local Road Safety Improvements

Wahay!! 20 years after we asked for this, it seems to be happening. Go along, look at it and give the Council your views.

Thursday 20th December 2012 3pm – 6.15pm Stanford Ave Methodist Church

Public Consultation on plans for Local Road Safety Improvements

Vote once, vote often! A second chance to see the plans and give your views

Wednesday 26th December 2012 12 noon to 1pm

The Wonder of Woollies – all around our park

You must know the score by now. It's your chance to wear those knitted Christmas gifts for the first and possibly last time in public without fear of prosecution, as we band together and parade about the park with our heads held high (often topped by a fetching bobble hat and/or a seasonal balaclava). Last year BBC South was keen to broadcast the event live but the committee tactfully declined. This year those with reindeers on their woollens will carry the flag.

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The Gift that Keeps on Giving – and it fits on your shoulder

Let's face it, you're desperate. The people you love have everything they could possibly want and you're expected to give them a novel, fun, interesting and quality Christmas present. What a dilemma. In the interests of community harmony, the Friends' committee can now offer you the perfect solution. It's a shopping bag. It's made of cotton. It has not just one strap but two. They can be held in the hand or rest on the shoulder, either the left or the right. It's so versatile that two people could hold one strap each. And, by fortunate coincidence, it has a logo of the most considerate Friends group in the world. Don't just buy one for yourself, buy ones for every member of your extended family, everybody in your street (big savings there for residents of Lucerne Road) and for those moments when you're a little fed up and want something comforting to cuddle. They're only £3 each so pop the money and your address into 77 Chester Terrace and relax because that's your Christmas shopping sorted.

