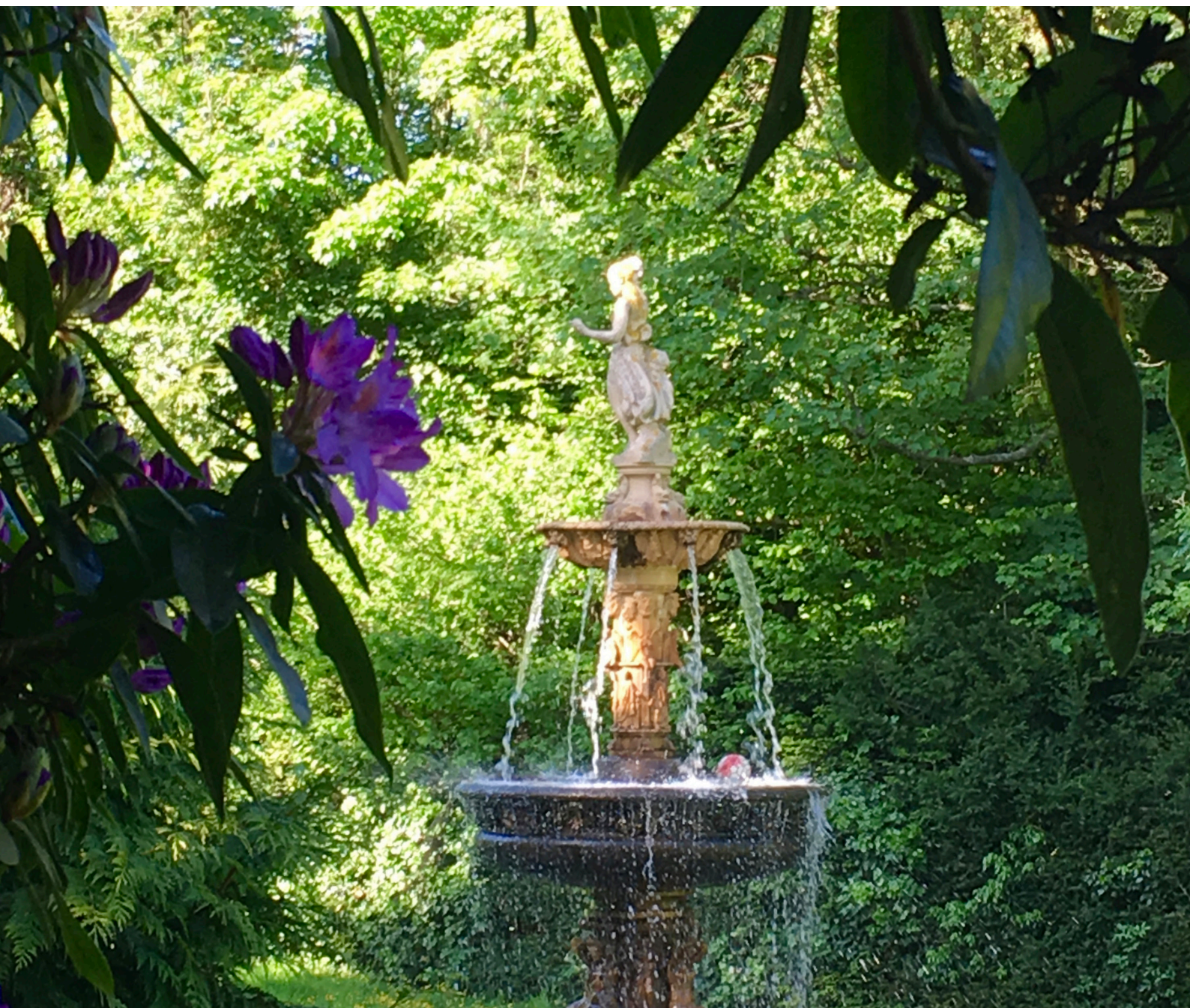




ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN BLOOM

Celebrating 10 Years of Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom

Dunorlan Park, Royal Tunbridge Wells Bloom Portfolio 2020



Introduction

Dunorlan Park, Grade II listed historic park located just a 20 minute walk from the town centre of Tunbridge Wells, is a special place with Victorian gardens, meadows and wildlife alongside the modern park amenities. The historic part of the park, designed by Robert Marnock in 1850-60s, is one of the best preserved examples of his work. There are sweeping views across the large lake to farmland beyond and wide variety of historic features e.g. Pulhamite rockery and cascade garden, Grecian temple and beautiful Hebe fountain. As well as enjoying park's heritage, visitors can hire boats, relax in the café, have family time at the natural playground, fish on the lake or have a walk in the large meadowland. The park, restored in 2003/4 thanks to HLF funding, hosts annually a number of events on smaller and larger scale. Dunorlan Park is a recipient of the Green Heritage and Green Flag Award since 2005 and a winner of Gold award in South & South East in Bloom since 2011. In 2019 we were proud to receive the Large Parks Category Winner award from S&SEiB judges.



Grecian Temple at Dunorlan Park



Summer House in Cascade garden, Autumn view



Dunorlan Park, Spring



Dunorlan Avenue and the Hebe Fountain

Section A: Horticulture, Gardening and Conservation

The grounds are currently maintained under a ten year contract with Sodexo Horticultural Services which started in 2011. They work to a contract specification and a planned programme of works agreed with the TWBC Parks team. Monday Volunteers group, which meets weekly, takes active part in maintenance of the park.

At Dunorlan Park seasonal displays are planted in box-edged circular beds near the historic terrace. In October we planted mixed *Bellis perennis* Habanera with Kaufmanniana Tulip 'Ice Stick'. Summer 2020 display consists of *Osteospermum* Blue Eyed Beauty and Bronze with dividing line of *Salvia* Victoria Blue.

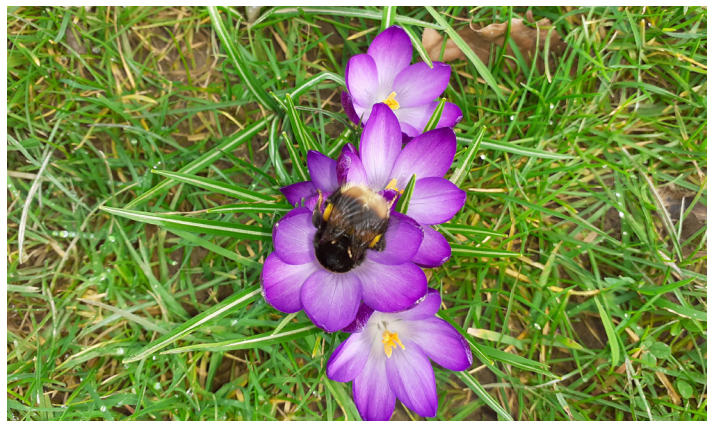


Entrance bed, Spring 2020



Planting crocus bulbs with Rotary TW for the End Polio Now, November 2019

In November volunteers and local Rotary Club planted additional 2000 of purple crocus bulbs for End the Polio campaign in the lawns by the main entrance. They provide bright display every February.



The End Polio crocus in bloom, Spring 2020

Through the winter 21 new trees were planted via the popular memorial tree donation scheme, including *Quercus*, *Styrax*, *Davidia*, *Magnolia*, *Catalpa*, *Cedrus*. Sadly in the storm Dennis we lost four of Avenue Cedar trees and one 100 year old Oak in the cascade garden.



Oak fallen across the Cascade during storm Dennis, February 2020

Over winter, with help from our partners Kent High Weald Partnership, most of the invasive *Prunus laurocerasus* have been removed by volunteers from shrub borders and replaced with flowering shrubs (*Philadelphus*, *Cornus kousa*, *Hammamelis*, *Daphne*, *Abelia*).

Some projects planned for this spring couldn't go ahead due to the Covid-19 outbreak, e.g. topping up of pollinator friendly beds, finishing of installation of protective fence around the 'café Oak' and planting of new tree copse. We hope to complete this autumn.



Volunteers working on Café Bee Beds, November 2019



Maintenance of café beds by KHWP, May 2020



Volunteers removing invasive laurel, January 2020



Volunteers planting in shrub bed, March 2020



Daffodils by the café, Spring 2020



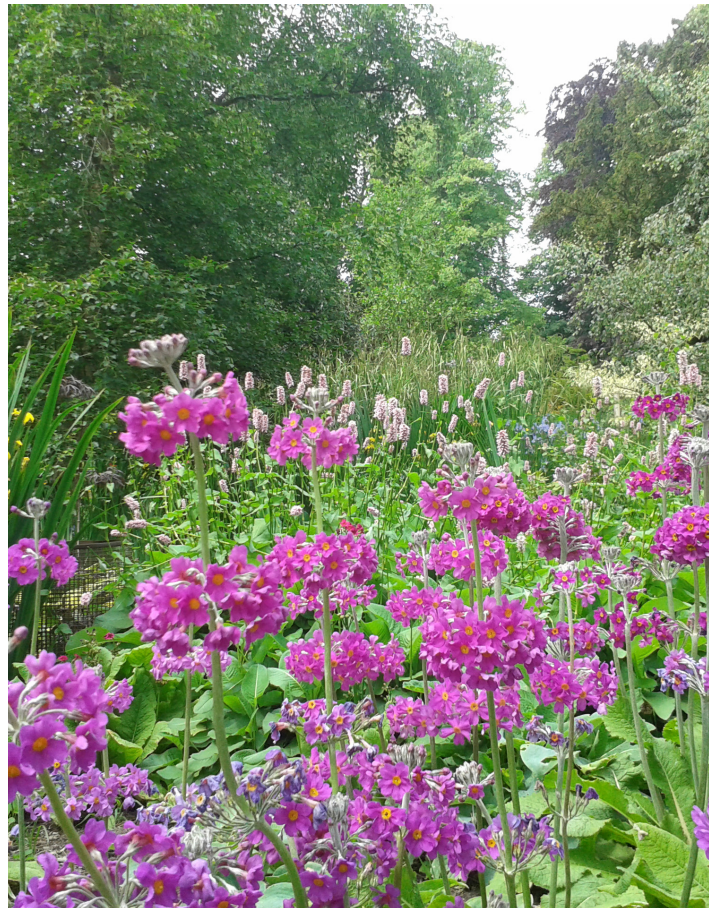
Rockery in bloom



Terrace bedding, Spring 2020



Wisteria at the Terrace, May 2020



Avenue border, June 2020

Section B: Environment

Sustainability:

Non-chemical weed control is carried out. Invasive vegetation (Himalayan Balsam, brambles) are removed manually with help of volunteers.

Park's green waste is taken to on-site composting bays. Produced mulch is applied on the borders and bases of young trees to reduce water loss.

Watering of newly-planted trees only takes place during prolonged dry spells. Irrigation is carried out using water from a bore hole in TWBC depot.

Cleanliness:

All surfaces are kept predominantly free of litter. Litter bins are emptied daily. Any graffiti is removed as soon as possible. Dog waste bag dispensers are located at entrances.



Autumn 2019 was great for fungi

Conservation:

Park contains a diversity of habitats that support a good range of native flora and fauna. Notable amongst these are semi-natural and marshy grasslands located south and south-west to the park. Network of hedges, scrub and mature trees also provide oases for wildlife.



Our winter scheme of waterfowl feeding is growing strong! November 2019



Phil at the Folly Wildlife Centre rescuing stranded swan in top pond, June 2020

Following recommendations of KHWP included in ecological surveys, management of selected areas have been adjusted to develop a mosaic of habitats for wildlife, e.g. relaxed grass mowing regime in places, increased deposit of dead and fallen wood in scrub and around specimen trees, selective clearance on vegetation near the stream and ponds. Clearance of the cascade stream, planned for this spring, had to be postponed.



Wetland habitat at Dunorlan, Spring 2020



Mulching of young trees, November 2019

Improvements:

In September, a new chip-and-tar path has been laid at the Victoria Cross Grove.

In December, a specialist contractor completed repairs to the most eroded sections of the lake banks. Further works on lake edges planned with KHWP for this summer had to be postponed.



Repairs to lake banks and path, December 2019



Elephant Hawk Moth identified at the FoDP Moth Morning



New path at the Victoria Cross Grove, 2020

Section C: Community Participation

Monday Volunteering sessions take place once a week. Tasks include bramble clearance, weeding, planting, coppicing, planting and help with specific KHWP projects. From August 2019 until March 2020 Monday Volunteers contributed 376 hours. We hope to resume in autumn.

Friends of Dunorlan Park organised several events:

- Summer Picnic was a great success, not only with our lovely supporters but also passers-by.



FoDP Summer Picnic 2019

- Moth Identification morning was held in the cafe and people were shown various moths caught overnight beforehand and, at the end of the morning, released unharmed. The star of the show was an elephant hawk moth.
- The two Bat Walks were crowd-pleasers for both children and adults, listening for the bat sounds on the hand-held devices.



FoDP Bat Walk 2019

- Fungal Foray was an eye-opener for many especially children, learning what they could and could not eat! Autumn 2019 was a superb time for fungi.

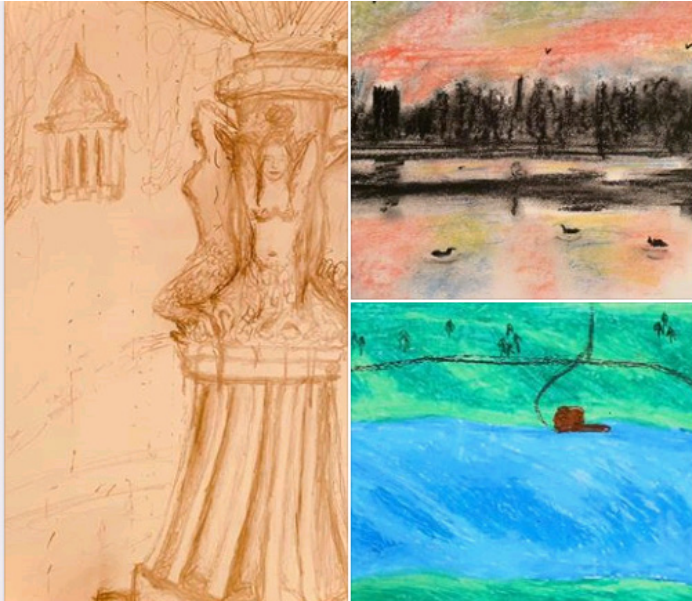


FoDP Fungal Foray 2019



FoDP Tree Walk 2019

- Lockdown Art competition, promoted via Facebook, was enjoyed by many children who sent in scenic drawings of Dunorlan Park.



Winners of the lockdown art competition for children organised by FoDP, May 2020

For 2020, all the above events were seriously considered but, due Covid-19, have been cancelled. FoDP are hoping to hold the bat walks and the fungal foray in the autumn.

Residents of Willicombe Park (retirement village) together with FoDP organised winter duck feeding programme. Willicombe Park volunteers pack the duck food to smaller paper bags which are then available at the café at a donation.

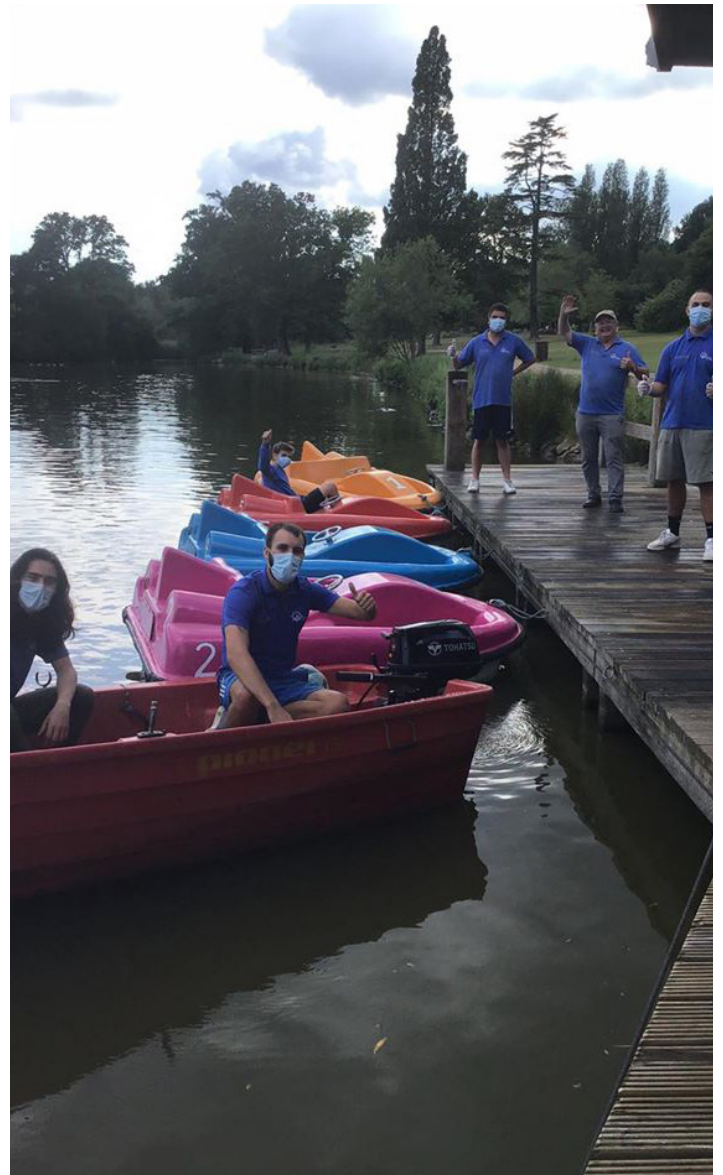
Two local schools, Oakley and Meadows Junior (Barnardo's) developed series of activities in the park e.g. litter picking, gardening and feeding waterfowl during winter.



Monday Volunteers installing protective fence around Cafe Oak, March 2020



KHWP and Monday Volunteers - removal of invasive laurel




Dunorlan Park Boats getting ready for socially distanced service, June 2020

Our ambitions for the next season:

- To resume all regular volunteering activities and carry forward the events planned for 2020 which had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.
- Further repairs to eroded lake banks, with KHWP and volunteers.
- Further removal of invasive laurels and replenishing of shrub borders.
- Planting of a new tree copse.
- Improvements to the existing natural playground.
- Replanting of children's grass maze.
- Repairs to worn path surfacing on the South side of the park.
- Refurbishment of the historic timber boundary fence on the border with Dunorlan Lodge.




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www.khwp.org.uk

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www.cross-pollination.uk

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Many thanks to Rachel Luckhurst and Friends of Dunorlan Park, Dr Ian Beavis, KHWP team and Dunorlan Park Boats for their help to gather photos for this year's portfolio.