



matters

Issue 9 • Summer 2023

Welcome to our Summer newsletter!

We hope you are having a great summer and that you enjoy hearing about our latest news. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to producing this summer update, and of course if you would like to share an interesting article or photograph, please get in touch.

Whether you're enjoying a cultural day out, or running, cycling, playing, or simply enjoying communing with nature, I'm sure you will agree that the park is in beautiful condition, so a huge thanks to all the Park staff for their efforts, along with our volunteer work party who assist the park team throughout the year.

If you would like to help the Friends of Pollok Park, or if you would like to become a member, we would love to hear from you!

Please join us, it's free, at: membermojo.co.uk/friendsofpollok

GCC Update on The Active Travel Plan...

Visitor Survey-
This survey was conducted from March through to June and included interviews with questionnaires as well as observation shifts. This survey was conducted by researchers over a selection of weekends and weekdays. The findings are currently being collated and analysed and we are expecting the final report from the survey in August.

EV chargers-
Installations have been made at the Burrell and Pollok House car park and will go live once the supply cabling is complete. There was a delay in the cabling which has now been resolved and it is expected that the EV chargers will go live in September.

Childrens play park-
Plans being finalised to improve access/exit routes.

Lochinch road-
Plans being finalised to improve passing places and repair potholes.



The BBC Antiques Roadshow

Film crews were spotted at Pollok House on US Independence Day, (Tuesday 4th July), amid filming for the hit BBC series The Antiques Roadshow.

Now in it's 45th year and 866 episodes later, huge crowds flocked to Pollok Country Park to take part in the filming, with current presenter Fiona Bruce spotted eyeing up some antique figures for the cameras.

The first Antiques Roadshow was broadcast in February 1979. Bruce Parker introduced the show from Newbury, (a market town in the county of Berkshire, England). It proved to be a great success to go on the road as in every town hundreds of people brought in their treasured possessions for approval and valuation by the experts. The star of the show then, was Arthur Negus, already famous from Going for a Song. But the antiques discovered and the reactions of the people who brought them in when told the value of their item made Antiques Roadshow compulsive Sunday afternoon and early evening viewing.

Here, on the lawn of Pollok House, along with a team of experts, Fiona Bruce appraised treasures brought in by Glaswegians who hoped to secure a life-changing valuation.

Entrants to this year's ticketed event were asked to tell producers about the "special item or items" they wanted to bring along and to submit photographs and information online ahead of the event.

It was such a fantastic occasion for us all associated with Pollok Park. Whilst we were there one brass Chinese statue was valued at £12,000, but whether or not any memorabilia or treasures could fetch a life-changing valuation - we'll need to wait and see. The air date for Glasgow's episode of the programme has not yet been announced, but we were told that August or September looks likely!



Art Fund Museum of the Year 2023—The Burrell Collection

Pollok Park's Burrell Collection reopened on the 29th of March last year to much acclaim and has already won the highest accolade in the UK, the largest museum prize in the world, the Art Fund Museum of the Year.

The criteria are excellence, innovation, creativity and imagination, judged by Jenny Waldman, Mary Beard (yes, the TV historian!), Larry Achiampong, Abadesi Osunsade and Laura Pye.

The award for £120,000 marks 120 years of the Art Fund supporting museums.



Wildlife Garden 2023 Season



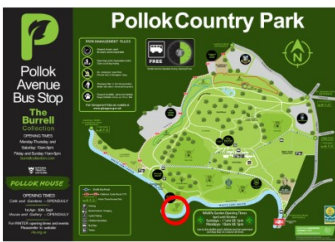
Protected on all sides by a tall beech hedge lies an oasis of biodiversity; The Wildlife Garden. Nowhere else in the park will you find such a rich tapestry of plant species concentrated in a small area which provides an excellent habitat for a wide variety of fauna to thrive and prosper. This special place is manned by volunteers from Friends of Pollok Country Park and is only open for a limited time period at the hours shown on the map at the bottom of this article. If you visit, ask about the wonders that you see or just take it all in and have a peaceful moment or two. You will smell the heady scent of flowers and listen to the buzz of bees as they work hard collecting pollen for their nests and colonies.

Sometimes throughout the year, members of FoPCP can attend events like Wildlife I.D. Fact & Folklore, a talk we had earlier this year given by Allison Greig Senior Countryside Ranger; which was held in the garden. One of our members, Vicki, can be seen enjoying a tranquil moment in the sun not far from the bee and butterfly area. Those who visit regularly, including our volunteers, know these moments well. This time of the year is particularly intoxicating; meadowsweet is in flower and its scent fills the air. We've recently added extra seating with two benches for visitors to rest a while and take it easy. We advise keeping dogs on a lead and children must be guided as there is a deep pond filled with various flora and fauna.



A pond is essential in any wildlife garden as amphibians in particular are under threat in our modern world with many ponds filled in or silted up. Aquatic insects will also make a home there and you will see damselflies, pond skaters, whirlygig beetles, backswimmers, and water boatmen. The garden's pond is also visited by grey herons and mallards when there are no people around.

No pesticides or herbicides are used in the garden; we rely on natural predators like the ladybird you see here to control pests like aphids. As for the weeds, yes we have them too. They are tackled by our volunteers! You can join us by visiting our website at www.friendsofpollokpark.com and it's free! Its a great feeling, helping wildlife to flourish.



The red circle indicates the location of the garden on the park map. Opening times are 11am till 1pm on a Sunday, 10am till 1pm on a Monday when staffed by volunteers but only during spring and summer till end of October. Its micro habitats allow you to closely witness nature in action. This is all packed into this wonderful place of natural beauty and wonder. If you enjoyed your visit to the garden and have anything special you would like to share, including photographs, you can get in touch and let us know via our social media platforms.

GCC Update on the Stables and Sawmill...

Work has continued since our update in Spring, with ongoing discussions with all potential partners and operators. The following provides a progress update on the project:

Phase 1- The stabilisation works have now completed. Phase 1 has now been extended to include works on additional repairs/asset protection and is taking place while the detail design is ongoing.

Phase 2- (rebuild and fit out for end use). We are expected to be on site Summer 2024 with completion of works estimated in December 2025.

Two public information events were held in April, one at Pollokshaws Library and one at Pollok Civic Realm, to inform the public of project progress and to show visuals of the concept design. The project team also had a stand at the Royal Highland Show at the end of June, to showcase the project and to meet the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Hydro scheme-

This initiative will be incorporated within the 'Stables and Sawmill' refurbishment project and there is ongoing engagement with SEPA around revisions to the scheme. Two replica turbines will be introduced and are expected to be delivered to site in September / October 2023. The electrical output will provide power to the Stables buildings, while the existing turbines will be conserved and showcased for the public.

A Day in the Life of... the Pollok Country Park Livestock Team

The livestock team, at the moment, is comprised of Matt and Mel. Matt has worked in the park for nearly 20 years and Mel joined as a fresh-faced youth 13 years ago. The dream team, as they refer to themselves, look after an average of 80 cattle every year. No two days are the same and the workload can be quite different depending on the season.

For example, in calving season starting late February, the pair spend their days checking on the 28 cows ready to give birth. On the odd occasion assistance is needed they have to be on alert to give a big calf a helping hand into this world – and also checking the newborns have had a drink and that both cow and baby are doing well.

People sometimes phone to say there is a calf in trouble, and every report has to be investigated, but 9 times out of 10 they are just sound asleep enjoying the late evening sun.

People might remember last year when a young, but very boisterous, calf was found waiting on the platform for a train - and a few days later went for a swim! Most of the youngsters are very well behaved – but there is always one!

This young bull is called Brogach Dubh of Pollok. While this is his official name, can you think of something easier for us all to pronounce? Please let us have your suggestions by email to contact@friendsofpollokpark.com





Blackstone CLYDESDALES

Some members of our committee had a most enjoyable visit to this wonderful farm on Tuesday 23rd May. Paul Brannan (Pollok Estate Manager) and Michael McNellis (Pollok Estate Supervisor) accompanied us. The farm is run by John and Magi, and they have 30 Clydesdales, including our four retired Pollok Clydesdales, who they refer affectionately to as 'The Pollok boys' 😊. We learned so much about the management, care, and costs of looking after the horses, and it's John and Magi's intention to set up a trust to ensure that the long-term future of the farm/horses are secure.

Historically, Clydesdale Horses originated from Lanarkshire (formerly known as Clydesdale) when the 6th Duke of Hamilton imported Flemish stallions in the 18th century to breed heavier horses for farming and industrial purposes. Their connection with Pollok Park stems from Sir William Stirling Maxwell who bred prize winning Clydesdales in the 19th century and was a founding member of the Clydesdale Society (1877) which still exists today.

If you would like to find out more about having a wonderful family day out visiting the Blackstone Clydesdales, full details are available on their website: <https://www.blackstoneclydesdales.co.uk/>



GCC Update on the Clydesdale Horses...

The four horses currently owned by GCC are being retired from work and will continue to stay in their accommodation at the farm where they are well looked after. The refurbishment project will still reintroduce Clydesdale horses to Pollok Country Park, it is just that these specific four horses will not be returning to the work. Discussions around potential operators are ongoing at present.

Nature Walks and Talks

Members of the Friends of Pollok Country Park continue to receive regular emails inviting them to register for the walks and talks being organised in the park. Places are on a first-come, first-served basis, with details of the walks and talks, as well as other events, shown below. We have still to decide on a topic for the talk in November – we did the witches of Pollok last year – what do people think we should cover this year? Let us have your ideas!

Our fabulous Countryside Rangers will be leading many of the walks and talks for the rest of the year, apart from the Kings Park Brass event and Pollok House tour.

Since the last newsletter we have had a tour of the award-winning Burrell Collection, a talk in the wildlife garden on wildflower identification, facts, and folklore and a walk to meet the Highland Cattle.

On 7th June our Assistant (Livestock) Supervisor, Mel and Countryside Ranger, Denise took a group of members to meet with the Highland Cattle that are so beloved and associated with Pollok Country Park.

We had a walk to meet the cattle last year but this year we were at a different location -and the walk was a few months earlier - so the calves, while smaller, were big enough that their mums wouldn't be overly protective of them – although obviously we didn't get too close!

It was a privilege to be there and see them go about their daily business, interacting with each other, basking in the sun or sleeping in the shade, and occasionally calling out for each other. They were obviously relaxed because Mel was there and no one should go into any of the cattle fields unsupervised.

We will be sending out invitations nearer the time of each event so keep checking your email if you are interested in any of them – and let us know if you have any suggestions to put forward for next year. Please note that the Butterfly Transect walk (31st July) is full, but if you are interested in helping out with an officially registered Transect next year (April to October) please do get in touch.

Thank you!



Creature Feature : Summer Visitors

Common Swift

Swifts are dynamic birds with their scythe-shaped wings; they can slice through the air with speeds of up to 111kph; earning them the worlds record for fastest bird in level flight. They hunt high in the sky; usually around 50m in altitude but will drop lower if insects are closer to ground level; this is usually near sources of fresh water. The only time they touchdown is to raise their young; usually in places of human habitation; they love nooks and crannies in tall buildings. A shortage of such sites, the insect apocalypse, and poor summer weather have led to a sharp decline in their numbers; as a result, they are now a red list species, with their conservation considered a priority issue. Their migrations are some of the longest of any animal on Earth around 22,000km per year. They hunt, mate, and even sleep on the wing. Swifts start visiting our shores in April and stay till July, a short visit solely for the purpose of breeding. We can help them by providing “swift bricks” in our structures or putting nest boxes under eaves.

Swallow

Swallows are much smaller than swifts and are very striking with their long tail streamers. They also hunt agilely in the air for insects. Often you can see them exhibiting low level flight over fields and meadows. They can achieve a top level flight speed of 56kph and during migration can travel by as much as 322km in one day; mostly during daylight. They also winter in Africa as swifts do and habitually nest in human structures. In the U.S. they are known as “barn swallows” for that reason. They love outbuildings; nesting on beams and ledges. You can assist this by allowing access and providing platforms for them to build their nests. Although still sadly in decline for the same reason as swifts they are still a green status species with no immediate concerns regarding population size.

House Martin

As their name suggests they love nesting in buildings; mostly under the eaves with a nice clear flight path to approach from. Again in decline for same reasons as previously mentioned they are sadly a red status species. You can help by also providing accommodation for them under the eaves, a simple platform or nest box would help tremendously. Some plastic sheeting to catch their droppings that you can swap out avoids this becoming an issue. They build their nests out of mud, in the past on cliffs and crags but moved to human buildings around the 19th century. They hunt on the wing like swifts and swallows and are quite agile as they swoop and swirl in our skies. They also commute between Africa and the UK, an amazing feat for such a small bird.

Sand Martin

These are the smallest in the family of Hirundines to visit our shores; they prefer to nest in more natural surroundings like riverbanks or cliffs, but also sand quarries and I’ve even seen one of their colonies in a crumbling old brick factory. They remain gregarious even in their winter habitats in Africa, large groups make it possible to keep vigilant regarding predators. Also agile on the wing they hunt airborne insects and you can see them frequently in Pollok Park as The White Cart River provides them with a suitable nesting habitat. They have also been directly affected by a decline in insects; but also severely by drought in Africa. At the moment they are a green listed species. Let’s hope it stays that way and their numbers, along with those of their close relatives improve; that way we can continue to witness the fantastic annual spectacle as they arrive here to reproduce and grace our skies with their aerodynamic prowess.



The White Cart River...did you know?

The river cutting through Pollok Country Park (between the Pollokshaws Road and Corkerhill Road entrances) is the White Cart. The river’s source is on Eaglesham Moor, and it runs from there through Busby, Cathcart, Pollokshaws, and Paisley before joining the Black Cart River near Glasgow Airport. As well as supporting wildlife and agriculture, the White Cart in the past was used to power the manufacturing work of several mills in the area, and in Victorian times powered the sawmill and drove the turbines that supplied electricity to Pollok House. Later this year the river will once again help generate electricity for the Stables via a hydro- electric turbine.

Upcoming Events

Please note all FoPCP events should be pre-booked unless otherwise advised.

- 30th July—Burrell Folk Club (Burrell)
- 31st July – Butterfly Transect (FoPCP)
- 1st Sun each month —Market at Pollok House, in the courtyard (JSG)
- 12th Aug – Pond Dipping – family event (FoPCP)
- 19th Aug— Allotment Open Day (SJSMA)
- 20th Aug– Kings Park Brass, lawns at Pollok House 2-3pm – no booking, open to all (FoPCP)
- 3rd Sept—Glasgow Walk to Beat Blood Cancer (Blood Cancer UK)
- 16th Sept—Pollok House tour, 10.30am (FoPCP)
- 2nd Oct - Wetland Bird Survey Count/water bird ID (FoPCP)
- 6th Nov – Talk by Countryside Rangers – TBC (FoPCP)
- 2nd Dec—Making Christmas decorations (FoPCP)

Additionally both Pollok House and the Burrell Collection run frequent tours.

Contact us at:

contact@friendsofpollokipark.com

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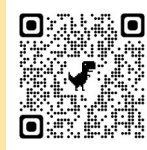


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