



matters

Issue 10 • Winter 2023

Welcome to our Winter newsletter!

We hope you enjoy this edition which has some great features on what's been happening in the park. Please get in touch if you have any suggestions for our future editions.

Thanks to all our work party, committee, and volunteers for their wonderful work, and of course to the Pollok Park team for their support and for keeping the park in peak condition.

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

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas, and all the very best for the year ahead.

Nature Walks and Talks

We have had another year of interesting walks and talks about the natural world in the park, as well as the history of buildings within the park at the Burrell and Pollok House and learning about the witches of Pollok. The final event is, as always, a practical one led by the Countryside Rangers showing us how to make Christmas decorations.

Next year's walks and talks will start with Pollok Park's contribution to the RSPB's annual Great British Bird Count, taking place over the last weekend in January. We will meet on the 27th at two locations in the park – look out for the invitation to attend, coming soon!

We hope to increase the number of events for families including a bug hunt and pond dipping – let us have any suggestions of what you want to see or do next year.

Pollok House Renovations

Pollok House closed on 20th November for two years, to facilitate the second phase of a £4million programme of investment by Glasgow City Council. The café will remain open until March 2024. The National Trust Scotland will no longer manage Pollok House, but in a recent social media post confirmed that they will remain in discussion with Glasgow City Council, and very much hope to play a part in the future of the house and country park.

Pollok House was the ancestral home of the Maxwell, later, Stirling Maxwell family. Sir John Stirling Maxwell's daughter inherited the estate on his death in 1956. Dame Anne Maxwell MacDonald gifted the estate and the House to Glasgow Council in 1966. By 1998 the NTS took over the management of the House on a 25-year lease. Sir John Stirling Maxwell was a founder member of the NTS, which was started in Pollok House in 1931.

We would like to thank all the Pollok House staff and volunteers for their wonderful service over the years and look forward to the reopening of this historic house to the public in two years time.



Fairy Village Refurbishment

The good news is that we have received a grant of £4k from Glasgow City Council to assist in the refurbishment of the Fairy Village in Pollok Country Park. The even better news is that the gardening team are helping with the work alongside members of the Friends' work party - and by summer 2024 it should be looking great with some enhancements including a story telling circle for little ones.

Unfortunately, winter weather isn't conducive to painting or concrete work but we have planted some new trees and bulbs and the path has been improved and we will do our best to smarten the village up and dress it for Christmas. Various members of the work party and the Outdoor Kindergarten are also beavering away making bunting, door wreaths and suchlike and we hope to switch on the lights just before Christmas with some story telling sessions.

The Countryside Rangers are also holding a Christmas Decorations session which will focus on twig and wooden decorations suitable for a Fairy Village. Merry Christmas everyone and we hope to welcome you and your family to the Fairy Village.

A Day in the Life of... Martin Sinclair

Martin Sinclair has worked for the Council for 33 years. He trained as a gardener and has worked in various parks within the city before coming to Pollok Park 30 years ago. Around 20 years ago he was asked to take over the clean up activity within the park.

The strangest thing Martin has found has been a dinghy - and the most expensive have been mobile phones and wallets.

The most annoying thing to deal with is the drinks cup that still has liquid in it. One paper cup with liquid would be fine, but people don't realise there could be up to one hundred such cups in a bin - which can be quite messy! However, the people Martin really can't understand are those dog walkers who leave doggie poo bags on trees - why? Put them in a bin!

Most people are friendly and the general questions Martin gets asked are 'where is the Burrell Collection?', 'where is Pollok House?' and 'where are the Highland Cows?' - sometimes when they are right next to the place of interest. It shows how vast the park is and how people can feel overwhelmed by it, so having a friendly face to ask is important.

Martin sees a lot of familiar faces in the park, usually dog walkers and volunteers from the Friends Group - and he highlights the Park Run people as typically friendly and giving him no trouble at all!

Martin loves being able to walk through this beautiful park and keeping it clean and tidy for us all. Thank you, Martin - from all of us!



GCC Update on the Stables and Sawmill...

Work has continued since our update in Summer, 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. Currently the existing South & West ranges of the building have been stabilised with a temporary supporting structure which will protect the building until the main works can commence. A temporary roof covering for this area has been instructed and work is due to commence imminently. In addition, careful down taking works have completed on the complex which included labelling, numbering and cataloguing various elements of the building in preparation for re-installation in due course. This included items such as the individual stones on chimneys, slate from roofs, decorative timber elements and internal features.

Phase 1 has now been extended to include works on additional repairs/ asset protection and is taking place while the detail design is ongoing. These works have now started on site and are expected to be completed in April 2024. The works focus on the East wing and include general roof repairs, renewal of gutters and downpipes and re-building of chimney heads. Finally, numerous detailed surveys have been completed to record the existing historical features and condition of the building elements. These have included stonework and slate surveys; timber rot surveys; structural and condition surveys; asbestos surveys and various ecological surveys.



Phase 2 (rebuild and fit out for end use) - Design work for main refurbishment and fit out works is progressing well, and the detailed design stage is expected to complete in December with the planning application to be submitted in the new year. We are expected to be on site September 2024 with completion of works estimated in December 2025.

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 have now been delivered and are being stored until installation. The electrical output will provide power to the Stables buildings, while the existing turbines will be conserved and showcased for the public.



Creature Feature

Treecreepers (*Certhia familiaris*) are very active, small, brown woodland birds with a long, down-curved bill. They have stiff tail feathers for support while climbing. They always work their way up trees before a quick darting flight to the next one; preferring mature trees with gnarly bark, perfect for them to eat a variety of insects including beetles and caterpillars, and spiders. They use their long bills to probe into bark crevices to extract their prey; seeds and nuts are also consumed.

Nests are in tree holes with clutches of 5-7 eggs incubated for up to two weeks with the young fledging after another fortnight.

Treecreepers are fascinating to watch and are active all day, but more so at dawn and dusk, they will move quite close by if you are still and quiet. Their mouse-like movements up trees will catch your eye, though camouflaged backs make them tricky to spot. They use all their senses and will stop and listen for sounds of wood-boring insect grubs. Treecreepers call year-round with a high-pitched “tsi-tsi-tsi...”.

Winter in the Wildlife Garden

There are still little gems to be found in the wildlife garden; the odd red campion still managing to flower and even larger ones like the sprawling and spindly, bristly oxtongue. Winter is almost here and the place is definitely winding down but here and there you can still see a few hardy plants thinking about next year already. We are still keeping it open for now on Sundays from 11am till 1pm, provided we have volunteer cover. The garden is remaining busy and visitors have been delighted with the path resurfacing that the park's gardening team did a great job of installing ; it's now a lot easier to move around; even in light footwear, this great improvement allows a more leisurely stroll, just seeing what there is to see even in a garden getting ready for some winter sleep. Conditions for wheelchairs and prams are considerably improved.



The garden has produced a bounty of seeds which we have plundered to add to seed purchased for wildflower locations in the greater park area. The buzz of the bee though has disappeared by now, the last of the queens have had their last search for food before hibernation. Lets hope for a bumper wildflower year in and around the park to greet them when they return. We are now feeding wild birds too so there's always a flying circus of things going on and some squirrels trying to workaroud squirrel proof feeders! Recent visitors to the garden have been delighted with this change. Sometimes it's hard to walk away from the scene. Huge thanks to anyone who has donated towards our efforts in The Wildlife Garden and for all the good wishes from those who have visited us there in the past year.

Upcoming Events

Please note all FoPCP events should be pre-booked unless otherwise advised. A full programme will be available in the new year.

- 2nd Dec—Making Christmas decorations (FoPCP)
- 4th Dec—Coffee & Culture: Dementia café (Burrell)
- 9th Dec—Sculpture & Sketch (Burrell)
- 12th Dec— Cold and Grey: Five Wintery Tales (Burrell)
- 17th Dec—South by Five Race 4 Pollok Park
- 19th/23rd Dec— LGBTQ+ Histories (Burrell)
- 27th Jan—Great British Bird Count (FoPCP)
- Every Wednesday—Burrell Bites (Burrell)

Additionally the Burrell Collection runs frequent tours.

Contact us at: contact
@friendsofpollokpark.com

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Management Committee 2023

Chair: Des Gallagher
Vice Chair: Catherine Todd
Secretary: Rachel Clark
Treasurer: Brian Willett
IT/Social Media: Gavin Winterbotham
Members: Jane Black, Bob Marshall, Patricia McCarthy and Charlie Turner

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