

Friends of Castle Green

April 2007

www.friendsofcastlegreen.org.uk

Words from the Chair

Welcome to the latest issue of our newsletter. I hope it keeps you abreast of what the Friends are up to, encourages you to get involved and reminds you to put the date of the Summer Fayre in your diary!

I recently attended the second symposium held by the Hereford Regeneration Group at the Watershed. There were various speakers, but the real star turn was Mike Loveday from Norwich Heart, who spoke about how Norwich had created a business out of its numerous historical sites and buildings. By creating a separate trust with a very highflying board of executives, they had managed to attract levels of funding that had completely transformed the historic heart of Norwich. The dividends that are now being reaped are to be felt all over the city of Norwich.

Returning to earth, I began to think about the microcosm that is Castle Green. What they have done in Norwich is exactly what the Friends are trying to fight for on Castle Green. Heritage sites are quite capable of paying for their own upkeep, but only with the right vision, investment and management. The dividends are not restricted to money either. Real community development and cohesion can be gained from a visionary approach such as this – I can't remember the figures he quoted, but the percentage increase in volunteers was colossal.

The Hereford Regeneration Group have worked hard at creating a new approach to the city's future – let's hope that our city and county councillors are listening. Roll on Hereford Heart!

Mark Hubbard, Chair of FOCG.

The Committee:

Chair: Mark Hubbard

Vice Chair: Vacant

Treasurer: Georgina Miller

Secretary: Lisa Richardson

Membership: Lara Latcham

Events Officer: Rebecca Saunders

Press Officer: George Thomas

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Greetings Friends.

It's that time of year again, when we start talking about the Summer Fayre. The 2007 FOCG fair is on June 30th and once again we hope to have a fun packed day. Our theme this year will be "County Customs". We shall be entertained by the Leominster Morris and other local artists and schools plus activities with the theme in mind.

If anyone with a knowledge of local customs or folklore has an idea for an entertainment or activity please contact us. We shall also have a raffle with a bicycle for the star prize. The usual range of eateries will be attending plus the bar for refreshment. As ever there will be a wide range of craft and produce stalls, and for the first time this year we are including some stalls for local organisations and community groups.

Anyone who would like to book a stall should contact me Rebecca Saunders on 01432 272605.

Volunteers to help with set-up and clear-up, plus various little tasks throughout the day are always needed so please contact us if you can spare an hour or two. Come along and have a great day out on our green, bring the kids and bring the grans and enjoy yourselves.

June 30th 10am-10pm. Put it in your diary!

Rebecca Saunders FOCG Events Officer

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RIVERBANK PROJECT – THE GENTLE APPROACH

After meeting with lots of different concerned parties, we now have a project proposal to go out and seek extra funding with. Learning from the mistakes of the past, the Friends are keen to work with nature rather than against it. Many people will remember a few years ago when council contractors were sent in to clear the bank. This was all done in a very short space of time and the result made that part of the park look ravaged for a few months and then the undergrowth simply grew back again.

We are proposing to take our time clearing the bank, using a small team of people on employment training, working one day a week. On one Saturday a month, we will hold a volunteer day, when extra people can spend a few hours helping. In this way, we hope to gradually get the bank under control over a period of 3 years – a far more gentle approach. We hope the public will gradually get used to the idea of the space being cared for again and be less fearful of the pace of change. In this way, we can also tackle the more contentious parts of the project, for example the beech hedge running along the promenade. It is a magnificent beech hedge, but its height completely obliterates the river view for any children or people in wheelchairs on the promenade. The hedge also encourages people to drop their litter over it – out of sight, out of mind. We propose to gradually reduce the height of the hedge, allowing a full recovery each year and enabling its lower branches to fill out. At the end of three years we hope to have a healthy well-maintained hedge that even little people can see over!

LEARNING ON THE GREEN

Mark Hubbard, Chair of the Friends has been meeting with various stakeholders in the city – Hereford Cathedral, the Museum Service and Herefordshire Council officers. It is clear that a Project Planning Grant will have to be applied for, so detailed work can be undertaken to flesh out a learning programme for schools on Castle Green. Keep an eye on the website: www.friendsofcastlegreen.org.uk for details of how we are progressing.

IN BRIEF

Thank you to Copper Beech Garden Design for offering to replace the Dr Barnardos tree on Redcliffe Gardens, which died during the heat wave of July 2006. Hopefully the re-planting will take place soon, so the tree has time to establish itself before the summer.

The huge hole in the bank that was illegally dug last summer has finally been filled in. Thank you to Tim Hoverd from Herefordshire Council archaeology department for organising this repair so sensitively.