

WARWICK DISTRICT

GREEN SPACES

Welcome to our
new Green Spaces
newsletter

In this edition

- A new feature for the Pump Room Gardens
- Czechoslovak Memorial Fountain restoration
- Christmas in our parks
- A Day in the life of Head Gardener Dave Partridge



St Marys Lands in Springtime

Postcode: CV34 6HN **Parking:** main entrance at Hampton Street / Bread and Meat Close.

Public Transport: St Mary's Lands is just a 5 minute walk from Warwick bus station, which is served by all major bus routes including the X17, X18, 68 and G1, and only a 20 minute walk from Warwick Railway Station.

Green Space of the Month

St Mary's Lands

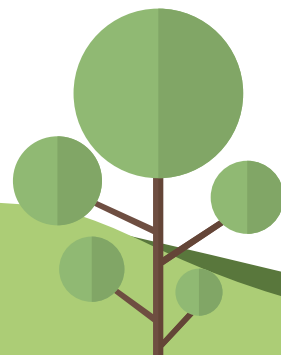
St Mary's Lands comprises 60 Hectares of open space in west Warwick. The site is located within the Warwick Conservation Area and includes the historic Warwick Common and Lammas Lands. Although St. Mary's Lands is owned by Warwick District Council, parts of the site are leased to other organisations, including one of the world's oldest racecourses, a golf centre and caravan park.

Over the past three years a St Mary's Lands Working Party has come together with a masterplan of improvements that involve making the site better for wildlife whilst maintaining a diverse range of leisure and recreational activities. The site is important for ground nesting and migratory birds, especially Skylarks, and provides a variety of habitats ranging from open meadow to woodland edge.

Footpath and signage improvements have now been made and the main entrance to St Mary's Lands has been re-landscaped with new paving and planting. Over the summer, the canter-down, in front of the Grandstand was re-laid with a multi-use surface, which means that that on non-race days the entire 2.5km track is available for walking, cycling, running and is accessible to those using wheelchairs or with pushchairs.

A new cycle link has completed a key Sustrans route and a future cycleway connection to Warwick Parkway Station is being planned. The proposals also include new play facilities and park furniture. The vision is for a future where the natural and cultural heritage is protected and enhanced – in a place where a vibrant range of community activities, economic regeneration and environmental enhancements can thrive together in this inspiring natural setting.

December 2018



Pump Room Gardens Programme Update



In 1881 an exciting new rockery and waterfall feature was added to the west of the Pump Room Gardens. The water was powered by the steam pump at the Pump Rooms and would have consumed a lot of power. It was short-lived and was later removed. As part of the restoration works, a new water feature – the “Rain Garden” is being created at the western end of the gardens, channelling surface water from the site and discharging it into the river. This area features a rockery, winding paths and natural style planting.

Work is starting on the last main path across the Pump Room Gardens but you will also see a lot of the fencing coming down, opening up the gardens once again.

After much discussion, the colour scheme for the restored bandstand has now been agreed and painting can now begin ready for the return. The colours will be revealed as the

bandstand is re-assembled in all its glory. More information on when it will be returning is to follow soon.

We are also pleased to announce that we have a fantastic new video created by Leamington's own, MadebySonder. The short film captures a flavour of the skills and craftsmanship that have gone into restoring the original Victorian bandstand. Watch this space for details of when it is to be released.



Original Rain Garden in Pump Room Gardens



December Events and Activities

Every Saturday 9am
Leamington Park Run, Newbold Comyn
www.parkrun.org.uk/leamington

Every Wednesday 11.45am
Walking for Health Walk
98 Brunswick Street CV31 3BD
www.warwickdc.gov.uk/healthwalks

Saturday 1 December 11am-12.15pm:
Morris Dancing at Jephson Gardens
www.hereburghmorris.org.uk

Saturday 1 December 12-12.45pm
Follow the Star
Christchurch Gardens: Join in with an outdoor Christmas community event. Free.
www.leamington-baptist.org.uk

Sunday 2 December from 2pm
Lantern Parade
Clock Tower, Jephson Gardens
www.leamingtonlanternparade.co.uk

Sunday 9 December
Santa Dash
Victoria Park. Get into the Christmas spirit, keep up the exercise and do something fun for charity! Participants will take on a 5k run, jog or walk starting and finishing in Victoria Park.
www.mytonhospice.org/our-events/event/santa-dash-2018

Saturday 22 December, 6pm
Carols at the Abbey
Abbey Fields
kenilworthlionsclub.co.uk/community-events/carols-at-the-abbey/

26 December 11am-2pm
Duck Race, Abbey Fields
Every year, hundreds of numbered floating ducks are launched into the stream at the Ford, where they race towards the swimming pools! Tickets £1. Prizes awarded for the first 4 ducks.
www.kenilworthlionsclub.co.uk

What to look out for in December



- Look out for Mistletoe in the branches of various trees and the red berries on holly etc. Please do not be tempted to take winter foliage for decoration as they make important habitat for birds, insects and other creatures, and berries provide essential winter food.
- While you are out exploring over the winter months, take care of icy paths and snow in our parks and green spaces, and do not walk on icy ponds!
- Need to blow away the cobwebs? There are lots of green spaces to discover and work off all the food and drink you may have consumed over the festive period – try St Mary's Lands (Warwick), Crackley Wood (Kenilworth) or Newbold Comyn (Leamington Spa) for some fresh air!

Tree Management

The recent hot, dry summer may have presented some challenges, but it has also helped to produce a magnificent display of autumn colour on our trees.

In urban areas, trees are important not only making towns look attractive, they also inspire people to get out and about more, have a positive impact on mental and physical health, improve air quality, and reduce wind speed and noise. Trees also provide essential habitat for a range of wildlife – a mature oak tree will support over 280 different species of insects alone.

Tree management is undertaken throughout the year by the Green Spaces Team but the most productive time is during the winter to minimise disturbance to wildlife. Tree works can include pruning, dead wood removal and the felling of dead, dying or dangerous trees.

Tree management has been completed in Victoria Park, Jephson Gardens and Abbey Fields, and further work will take place over the winter in our local nature reserves including Whitnash Brook and Oakley Wood.



Restoration of the Czechoslovak Memorial Fountain

The Czechoslovak Memorial Fountain in Jephson Gardens commemorates the bravery of seven parachutists who were originally based in Leamington Spa. They died together on 18 June 1942 in Prague, resisting hundreds of SS soldiers. The memorial also commemorates the heroic Czechoslovak citizens and local resistance fighters who lost their lives.

The memorial fountain was unveiled in 1968 and has recently undergone restoration works thanks to the combined efforts of the Friends of the Czechoslovak Memorial Fountain and Warwick District Council.

An opening ceremony was held on Saturday 27 October in celebration of the restoration, and to mark 50 years since its original unveiling. The ceremony was attended by representatives from the Czech Republic and Slovak Embassy.

The Friends of the Czechoslovak Freedom Fountain said: "We have watched with great interest over the spring and summer as the fountain has been renovated. It was a pleasure to collaborate with the Council to revitalise the planting and arrangement of new roses from the Czech Republic town of Lidice, as a special memorial for all those killed during Operation Anthropoid."



A day in the life of

Dave Partridge, Head Gardener

What does your job involve?

I work in Jephson Gardens as a full time gardener for Idverde, who are the Councils' grounds maintenance contractor. I'm responsible for the maintenance of shrub and flower beds, which involves planting, pruning, weeding and watering. I also top up the bird feeders over the lakes, and help with other jobs in the park. I've been based here for 10 years. It's very seasonal work, all the shrubs have to be pruned at specific times of year.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

It's great when people come up and say 'Thank you – you're doing a lovely job and it's appreciated' – it makes it all worthwhile. I get to know a lot of local people, and also meet visitors from other parts of the UK and abroad. People from different countries often stop and ask what we are planting, or ask about the trees. Sometimes seeing us working reminds people what jobs they need to do in their own gardens! Last winter lots of people were asking about a shrub with a wonderful scent – the Christmas Box.

How did you become a gardener?

I have always been interested in it, and when I was young I used to help my Dad out when he was growing veg in the back garden and in the greenhouse. I decided to go into horticulture, and studied it at Askham Bryan College in York. I've worked in gardening ever since.

What are you working on at the moment?

Over the last few weeks we've finished off the spring bedding schemes. We've removed

all the summer bedding, and we have been double digging all the soil, adding manure, and planting spring plants such as polyanthus, myosotis (Forget-Me-Nots) and Bellis (cultivated daisies) and planting Tulip and Hyacinth bulbs.

Do you ever get involved in unusual tasks?

A couple of times a year we have to change the barley straw bales in the lakes – this helps to prevent blanket weed taking over in the summer. We were out on a boat one year, and I leaned in to get the bales, which made the boat list and gave my colleague a fright – he thought we were going to capsizel!

Which is your favourite green space in the district?

It has to be Jephson Gardens – I love the variety of plants and trees, and since working here I've noticed the diversity of birds and wildlife in the park – birds I had never seen before like Tree Creepers and Nuthatches, quite surprising so close to the town centre.

What do you do when you're not at work?

I enjoy walking and spending time with my grandson, who's just turning three. I've also been learning

to play the guitar – I have an acoustic and electric ones. I play all sorts, especially blues.

At the moment I'm learning a simplified version of Fleetwood Mac's 'Albatross'.

How are you planning to celebrate the festive season?

I'll be at home with my wife and my daughter and son-in-law on Christmas Day, with more family arriving on Boxing Day. My wife Gail will be cooking – she is an excellent baker, known for her cakes!



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For more information about green spaces in Warwick District please visit:

 greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk

 www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks

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