

FRIENDS OF KETT'S HEIGHTS

Annual Review 2017

Highlights of the year

- Further improvements to the site
- 1,300 people welcomed to Kett's Heights on tours and two theatre productions
- Regular clearing of litter and sweeping of paths to keep the site attractive and welcoming
- Regular practical work to improve the diversity of the vegetation and renovate the fruit trees
- Start made on preparation of a management plan

January to March

The most significant event of the quarter was the visit of Storm Doris in February, leaving in its wake numerous trees blown down or over. The City Council responded promptly, and all the paths were cleared within a few days. Processing all the timber from this and other tree work kept the practical work group busy for the remainder of the year. We were again aided by a visit from Mousehold Heath warden Will Stewart with his chainsaw to clear further trees, and staged several bonfires to deal with much of what had been cleared. We were pleased to see our work on the pond rewarded by breeding of frogs, even if we had to rescue tiny frogs from the overflow pipe.

Our AGM in February was well supported, although we had to drag members away from the book sale so that we could start the business, and we were pleased to welcome new members to the Executive Committee.

We were very pleased to be given a donation of £1,000 plus tools and gloves by the members of the former Norwich Green Gym group, some of whom joined us for practical work sessions. During the year we added to this equipment with the purchase of a wheelbarrow and other items, all of which have seen good use.

Our volunteers Vanessa and John Trevelyan were given an award of Thorpe Hamlet Community Champions by Clive Lewis, MP for Norwich South, who came to Kett's Heights to present the award.



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April to June

Our Publicity and Events sub-committee held its first events in April, a 'Nest-building' exercise as part of the BBC's Get Creative day and the first of our regular public tours on the first Sunday of each month. A dawn chorus tour led by Chris and Mary Ash heard or saw about 20 species.



Further activities included a walk led by Brian Ayers along the river from Bishop Bridge to Fye Bridge - "What did Kett see from Kett's Heights in 1549?", a plant sale to raise funds, and helping Bignold Primary School to visit as part of their study of Kett's Rebellion.



The end of April marked the Flintspiration event organised by the Norwich Historic Churches Trust. One of the Friends of the Trust organised a 'Flintspiration, Perspiration' run which brought participants to Kett's Heights. To mark the event we produced a plan and guide (available on our website) to the 18 (of 31) historic churches that can be seen from the viewpoint. We also produced for the website a self-guided version of our tour around the site.



Practical work undertaken by the Friends included further painting of railings as well as regular clearance and sweeping of paths. We were pleased to welcome a volunteer, and his mentor, on a placement organised by Volunteering Matters.

During the quarter we started discussions with Matt Davies, who has succeeded Paul Holley as Norwich City Council's manager for Natural Areas including Kett's Heights, on a management plan for the site.



July to September

The Common Lot's performance of their play 'Come Yew In' took place in July, with around 500 people attending two performances. This was followed by Crude Apache's similarly-attended performance of the folk opera 'The Transports' in August, both of which demonstrated how well the Lower Green works as a natural auditorium. Following advice from Common Lot after their 2016 production, some practical work was undertaken to level the space under the walnut tree for their sets.



Other events included a continuation of the monthly tours and tours on each of the four days of Heritage Open Days (HODS) in early September, with St Matthew's Church again acting as the base for people to assemble, and be refreshed.

We produced a Family Trail (available on our website) as part of HODS.

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October to December

October saw our final public tour. Kett's Heights also featured in BBC Radio Norfolk's 'Treasure Quest' programme, and we assisted with tours by Plumstead Road library and the gardeners who maintain some of the city's flower beds, such as those outside City Hall. Cavan Stewart arranged for this year "Paint Out" activity to include Kett's Heights, and we were pleased to see the results in the exhibition.



We started our programme of winter clearance and bonfires, but also embarked on a programme of planting spring bulbs. The response from members to an invitation to plant 1,500 snowdrops by the entrance was so encouraging that the Executive Committee agreed to double the number. We also planted 150 crocus around the apple tree on the lower green. At the time of writing this Review in early January 2018 the snowdrop leaves are beginning to make an appearance. If the Committee judges the planting to have been a success further planting of these and other species will be undertaken in future years.



The "Norfolk Rocks" craze for painting stones and leaving them in public places with a request for them to be found a new home saw several being left on Kett's Heights.



Finance

Annual accounts will be available at the AGM : our principal income sources have been donations (£1,499), subscriptions (£350) and plant sales (£110). Expenditure has been on insurance (£115), bulbs for planting (£277), tools and other materials for practical work (£137) and printing the Annual Review and other materials (£101).



We have wood available for people to take away from the piggeries. Much goes for members' open fires and wood-burning stoves, but some was also taken by The Men's Shed for use in their practical activities. They kindly agreed to include in their activities making for us a gavel, which will be in use at the AGM.

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Membership

At the end of 2017 we had 110 members, whose support is much appreciated. We were pleased that the initial enthusiasm of people to support the Friends has been maintained for a second year.

Volunteers

We have achieved a great deal in our second year, thanks to the efforts of our volunteers, who have between them recorded 1,010 volunteer hours on activities related to the Friends. Members of committees and other principal volunteers have been : Alan Brownlee, Bridgid Everitt, Cavan Stewart, Chris Pink, David Howarth, David Van Edwards, Gaye de Leiros, Helen King, Jan Carter, Jane Chapman, Jane Chittenden, John Trevelyan, John Williams, Lesley Brownlee, Linda Campbell, Mary Ash, Mike Button, Norman Lister, Peter Jennings, Steve Davis, Sue Lister, Susan Wright, Vanessa Trevelyan.

We encourage visitors through our website and Facebook page, both of which Mike Button has continued to manage for us.

We are also grateful to St. Matthew's Church for their continued assistance with provision of spaces for meetings and other events such as Heritage Open Days. We reciprocated by helping raise funds for their Friendship Club and roof repair appeal. For that appeal the Church produced a Thorpe Hamlet Trail booklet, which included three locations on Kett's Heights.

Kett's Heights has become an increasingly popular place from which to view the firework displays for the Lord Mayor's weekend in July, the New Year, and, seen here, the Big Boom in November, watched in 2017 by around 100 people.



The Friends of Kett's Heights want to restore Kett's Heights to its former glory so that it is:

- A welcoming space for the local community and visitors to Norwich
- An attractive space with a wide diversity of plants and wildlife
- An event space with activities to suit a wide audience
- An educational space where its long and diverse history can be investigated and interpreted