



Spring and Summer Newsletter | August 2020



125TH
Anniversary
1895 – 2020

In this issue

06 The Cobbold
Gift to the Park

08 The Story of
the Park in
Old Maps

16 Reg's Nature
Notes – from
125 years ago

IN THIS ISSUE

- 02 Welcome
- 06 The Cobbold Gift to the People of Ipswich
- 08 The Story of the Park in Old Maps
- 10 Ipswich School & the Park in 1895
- 12 125th Anniversary Scherenschnitte
- 14 The Sale & Development of the Christchurch Park Estate 1894
- 16 Reg's Nature Notes – from 125 years ago
- 19 Events
- 20 Friends' Contributions to the Park
- 22 Membership Matters
- 24 The Spring Storms
- 26 The Battle of Britain Tree
- 28 Ten Questions ...

Our thanks to all those who have contributed to this issue.

Editor: Peter Gray

Design: Clare Thornhill
www.flidesignltd.com

Photography: Members of the Committee, Suffolk Archives

Print: Tuddenham Press



Welcome

This was not the introduction I had planned. Originally, back in early February the Spring edition of the Friends of Christchurch Park newsletter was going to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Park and announce our upcoming AGM with Anthony Cobbold as our guest speaker. It was, after all, Anthony's relative Felix Cobbold who gifted the park to the town all those years ago and we were delighted that Anthony had agreed to speak.

That now seems like an age ago. Life, for all of us, has changed beyond what most of us could possibly have imagined.

I am pleased to say that despite the Covid-19 epidemic, this newsletter does mark the 125th anniversary of the Park and contains the original articles we had lined up. So we are indebted to Rowell Bell, Anthony Cobbold, Reg Snook and Erika Bülow-Osborne for their contributions. But, of course, this newsletter has to address the epidemic and the impact it has had not only on the Park, but also on life in general.

Green spaces such as Christchurch Park have surely never been more important to the local community. Never before has the Park been so important to so many people. Since lockdown it has become very much a focal point. For many it has been a place of refuge. When exercise was limited, this was where people flocked to get a breath of fresh air and to connect with nature. More recently it has been a place where people have met up again and started to replace

Right: A postcard showing Christchurch Mansion at the end of the nineteenth century.
Below: The 125th anniversary carpet bedding.



on-line conversations with friends to face to face meetings, albeit at a distance.

The pressure this has put on the Park has been intense. Park rangers have had the incredibly difficult task of encouraging people to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Most park users have been really good at keeping two metres apart, but not all and there are some who have caused significant problems. I would have to include a minority of joggers here, who all too often get far too close when approaching slower path users from behind.

Over the last few weeks there has been a problem of large groups meeting up and totally ignoring the rules by sitting together and mixing freely. I know that this has annoyed many Friends and it is just a sad reflection of society that some are simply not prepared to do the right thing.

This lack of community spirit is even more evident in the littering problem. This has caused the Park Team immense difficulties and they have responded magnificently – clearing up other people's rubbish and

providing many more bins. It is utterly beyond me why some people think it is all right to leave their mess behind them for others to clear up. Challenging litter droppers is fraught with problems and there have been some unfortunate and distressing incidents in the past when Friends have done just this. In most cases the best course of action is to contact Park Patrol on 01473 432132. At least the majority of park users are using the bins provided and the Park Management team empty an additional fifteen large wheelie bins full of rubbish each weekend.

With so much focus on the Park and so much activity within it – both positive and negative – I doubt if the Park has ever needed its friends so much.

There is more positive news to report. Mabel (or is it Matilda?) has brought much joy with her two owlets who appeared and pulled in the crowds. Work has started on the new play area and the Park team has planted out some spectacular carpet bedding by the Henley Road gate to mark the 125th anniversary.



Sadly, due to the epidemic, we have had to cancel all the Friends' events up to the end of August. This included the spring bird walk and all the Brass on the Grass concerts for the summer. We have done this in close consultation with the Borough Council and with the bands, none of which have been able to get together since lockdown. However, we are very much hoping to rebook the same line up for 2021 in the hope that outdoor concerts will be permitted then. I would also like to thank our past sponsors for their support and hope that we can count on their support in the future.

We still have three events for the autumn – two bat walks and one bird walk. At this stage they are still in our events calendar and we hope that they can run as planned. Clearly, this will be dependent on the social distancing and other health guidelines that are operating at the time.

Sadly we have had to postpone the AGM until a later date and at this stage I can't say when that might be. But I can state that the accounts have been produced and we are in very good financial shape. Thanks are especially due to our Treasurer, Jessica Webster, for all her work in pulling the accounts together.

This unprecedented spring has seen a renewed focus on environmental issues, both locally and nationally. A survey by the RSPB found that 84% of people support the suggestion that the government should increase the number of accessible nature-rich areas. Suffolk County Council has put forward proposals for new cycle routes in town. This is an important step forward and it would be great if Ipswich's parks could have improved access and connection for cyclists. Many local organisations and individuals are campaigning for more to be done to put pedestrians and cyclists at the centre of transport plans for the town and county.



Christchurch Park is in many ways a green lung in the town centre. However, there is a significant pollution problem around the park. Four out of the top 20 most polluted sites of GP practices in the country are in Ipswich, some are within a short walk of the Park. The recent radical reduction in transport in the town has led to a welcome and very noticeable drop in pollution levels in and around the Park. Let's hope that these new plans can keep pollution at lower levels and encourage those who can to take to their bikes and to walk.

During lockdown I have used my daily exercise as an opportunity to walk round most of Ipswich's parks. They are magnificent and a huge asset to the town. How many other towns could boast kingfishers (Holywells Park), and otters and cuckoos (Bourne Park)? The wildlife areas are just fantastic (the ponds in Chantry Park are a particular favourite) and reflect the fact that in Ipswich we are lucky enough for nature to be an integrated part of the town's infrastructure. However, we can't stand still. If we want to keep the kingfishers, otters and cuckoos, and to attract more of them and other species we need to connect the town's parks and open spaces with green corridors and link these to the neighbouring countryside. The Borough Council does have a plan for this, and now surely is the time to develop it further.

Given the bleak times we have all been through, and I suspect that for many Friends and their families these are likely to have been the darkest and most difficult of times, I sincerely hope that we can look forward to a brighter future in which Christchurch Park and the rest of the town's great parks have a central role to play.

We are incredibly fortunate that we have such a wonderful Park and I sense that our role as Friends in supporting and championing the Park in the months and years ahead is going to be increasingly important. We are very keen for more people to join the Committee and help us allocate our funds and run events. Please get in touch if you can help.

Wishing you all, quite literally, well.

Peter Gray

Chair – Friends of Christchurch Park

Please let us know what you think of our newsletter and if you have anything you would like included in the next issue call the Reg Driver Centre: **01473 433980** or visit us online at: **twitter @christchurchpk** or **facebook@christchurchParkIpswich**



The portrait of Felix
Cobbold that hangs in
Christchurch Mansion.

125TH
Anniversary
1895 – 2020

The Cobbold Gift to the People of Ipswich

by Anthony Cobbold

Felix died in 1909 and in his will he left £20,000 to be used for buying art for Christchurch. In 2009 the Museum Service organised a trail around the Mansion rooms which identified 100 works of art which had been acquired either in whole or in part from the Felix Cobbold legacy.

The Cobbold's association with Christchurch probably started in 1832 when John Wilkinson Cobbold's daughter, Kate, married the Reverend Charles William Fonnereau.

In accordance with tradition they were married at the Cobbold's church, St. Clement's. Kate was an accomplished artist whose work was exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Her portrait of her husband hangs in the Mansion to this day. It was Kate's grandson, William Neale Fonnereau who inherited the Mansion in 1890 and had to put the whole estate up for sale in 1892 and it was bought by a property syndicate in 1894 for housing.

Some peripheral land (Bolton Lane and Park Road) was sold off immediately but there was great concern in Ipswich at the potential loss of this wonderful open space, so the property syndicate offered the whole estate to the Borough for £50,000.

This was a lot of money and the Borough decided to seek the opinion of the people, but they voted against the deal. This was the moment, in 1895, when Felix Thornley Cobbold, who was probably a member of the syndicate, stepped in and offered to buy the Mansion and donate it, if the Borough would buy the Park, for which the asking price was £15,000. The Borough agreed and

Christchurch Park and Mansion became the property of Ipswich with only the condition that the main structure of the house be preserved and that it be used as an Art Gallery or Museum.

The Borough's gratitude to Felix was shown by his being made Mayor for Queen Victoria's Jubilee year in 1896/7 despite his failing to meet the prior requirement that the Mayor be chosen from the body of Aldermen. The people's appreciation was shown by their subscription to the Hon. John Collier portrait which hangs in the Great Hall.

Felix died in 1909 and in his will he left £20,000 to be used for buying art for Christchurch. In 2009 the Museum Service organised a trail around the Mansion rooms which identified 100 works of art which had been acquired either in whole or in part from the Felix Cobbold legacy. The Cobbold family invited guests and 100 glasses were raised to toast Felix's generosity. More recently the family has donated to the Arboretum a Coast Redwood (2014/15) and a Cut-Leaf Beech (2015/16).

Felix's money was made mainly from the people of Suffolk in brewing and banking. It seems wholly appropriate that it should be returned whence it came, in effect with interest, as the Park and Mansion are an appreciating asset.

The Story of the Park in Old Maps

Few things tell a story of the past as well as maps and those of the Park are no exception. With thanks to Suffolk Archives for these three gems from the Park's past.

Map 1:

A map dated 1867 (ref MC4/57).

Map 2:

Detail from a map from 1878 (ref MC4/59), with apologies for the fold in the middle.

Map 3:

A section of the southern end of the Park from a map dated 1904. Note the properties on the eastern boundary of the Park, not present in the earlier maps, and a result of the sale of Park land – see page 14 for more details.



125TH
Anniversary
1895 – 2020

Follow us on:



@ChristchurchParkIpswich



@ChristchurchPk

125TH
Anniversary
1895 – 2020



Above: the School Cadet Corps 1901.
Below: pupils in assorted headgear.

Ipswich School & the Park in 1895

Back in 1895 when Christchurch Park opened to the public, Ipswich School – or Queen Elizabeth Grammar School for Boys as it was then called – had been in its current location on Henley Road for about forty years, having moved there from the town centre.



Left: the junior school in 1896.
Below: Past and Present cricket match 1895.

The Headmaster at the time was 37 year old Philip Raynor, who had only been in post for a year. He had previously been a head at schools in Tasmania and Adelaide.

The school site looked very different in those days, basically consisting of the main buildings which front Henley Road and the adjoining chapel. The cricket pitch – referred to on maps at the time as the Play Ground – was in existence with a pavilion at the far end.

Lessons were held in what was called Great School – a large hall featuring formal rows of desks, with boys sitting in year groups. Among subjects studied were Greek, German, book-keeping, commercial arithmetic, French, Maths and even shorthand.

Science laboratories were to be added a few years later, but at the time of the Park's opening, boys (it was a single sex school then) visited a physics laboratory at Christchurch Mansion.

The uniform was very strict, as the 1897 Prospectus stated: 'Light coats are not allowed. The School colours are dark blue and light blue. All boys must wear either the school cloth cap or a straw hat with school ribbon on weekdays; high hats are allowed as an alternative on Sundays. The privilege of wearing the college cap and gown is confined



to members of the Sixth Form and foundation scholars; this dress must not be worn in the playing fields. The college cap alone as a head-dress is not admissible."

There was no School cadet corps at this time, which is somewhat surprising as the Royal Cavalry Barracks were just a short walk away down Ivy Street. However, the Boer War was to see its revival just a few years later. It is quite possible that the Corps drilled in Christchurch Park in the pre-WWI era as militarism took a firm grip on the town and country, as it did on others throughout Europe with disastrous consequences.

Acknowledgements:

Ipswich School: a History in Photographs by John Blatchly and Stuart Grimwade;
A Famous Antient Seed – Plot of Learning by John Blatchly.

125TH
Anniversary
1895 – 2020



The Victoria I.R. Memorial (see also the photograph on page 3).



Christchurch Park
125th Anniversary
Scherenschnitte.



Above: The Reg Driver Centre.
Below: *Quercus robur pedunculata*, English Oak.
Englische Eiche, The Prince's Oak.



125th Anniversary Scherenschnitte

by Erika Bülow-Osborne

Special thanks to Erika Bülow-Osborne who has marked the 125th anniversary of Christchurch Park with a spectacular cut out – or Scherenschnitte – featuring much of the park's flora and fauna framed by an outline of the Park.

Follow us on:



@ChristchurchParkIpswich



@ChristchurchPk



The Sale & Development of the Christchurch Park Estate 1894

Lots 1 to 4 are suitable for the erection of houses of from £20 to £30 rental, which would find immediate
tenants and purchasers.

POSSESSION OF ALL THE LOTS MAY BE HAD ON COMPLETION OF PURCHASE
(Except as to small portions of Lots 1 and 2).

The Land Tax on the whole Estate amounts to £6 1s. 1d., which equals about 3½d. in the £ on the assessment.
The Tax is redeemed by the Vendors each Purchaser shall pay his proportion of the redemption money.

The population of about 60,000 having steadily increased to this number from 42,000 in 1871

125TH
Anniversary
1895 – 2020

Anthony Cobbold's article on pages 6–7 refers to the sale of land around the perimeter of the Park in the 1890s, and the sales documentation produced at the time includes some interesting descriptions and photographs of both Ipswich and the Park.

The building sites were described as having 'unrivalled charm', and the Park's 'magnificent specimen and other trees' were highlighted. The sites at the top of the Park, on Park Road, had clear views not only of the spire of St Mary-le-Tower and St Lawrence, but also "glimpses of the River Orwell and a panoramic view of the rising, thickly-wooded land beyond."

Ipswich was described as having a population of 60,000, which had steadily increased from 42,000 in 1871. The public buildings were "superior to those of the majority of towns of its size." London was 95 minutes away by train and steamer ships "ply at frequent intervals between Ipswich and Harwich, and Felixstowe and in the summer between Ipswich and the watering places of the Essex Coast and on to London."

Other local features which made it on to the sales document were the town's 'good and cheap supply of gas and water', and a service of tramways. Hunting, golfing and yachting nearby were added attractions.

Acknowledgements: with thanks to Ipswich School's archives.



Above: The cover of the sales document.



Right: A photograph from the sales document.



125TH
Anniversary
1895 – 2020

REG'S NATURE NOTES from 25 years ago ...

It is 1895. I am 10 years old and I live with my family in Albion Street, close to Ipswich Docks. My town has a population of about 34,000. I go to Trinity School and in two years time I am looking forward to going to work ...

My favourite subject is art, although I tend to be very messy and my Mum curses me because I come home covered in chalk. Dad says 'forget about art, as it is a waste of time'. He says that I will have to earn my keep by getting a job on the docks, or on the barrows or something like that (but I do like horses). Of course, I do have alternative – I could join the army. Dad was in the Royal Horse Artillery; he says it is a good life as I would be taught discipline, my clothes would be found for me and I would be fed and watered and when that time comes he will take me to visit the

barracks in Ipswich. He reckons it will be a cushy number as wars will be a thing of the past as we now more or less rule the world.

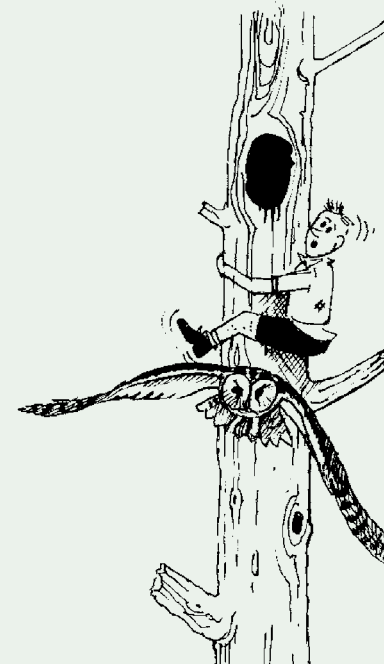
I do have another interest as I am very keen on nature, especially birds. I get paid a farthing for every dozen sparrows that I catch in our back yard. These little birds are everywhere and, for some reason, they are thought to be a pest, so I trap them. In the nearby cornfields in summer, there are huge flocks of sparrows and finches but I like spring best of all because that is when most birds are nesting. The hedgerows are full of

nests and last year my friend and me found over 500 nests mainly those of blackbirds and song thrushes. We call the song thrush Mavis and it is the most common nest that we find. Like many of my friends, I have started an egg collection which I keep in an old cigar box. I often look at these eggs especially in winter when I long for the time when I can get out into the fields and start bird-nesting again. Dad likes me to look for eggs, particularly moorhen eggs, as he likes to eat 7 or 8 of these for his breakfast.

My Uncle Albert often takes me bird-nesting with him and teaches me so much about the countryside. I don't have any bird books at home and none at school that I know of and so

all that I know he has taught me. I think there could be another reason for him coming out with me as he keeps song birds, mainly finches, in cages so he keeps an eye out for any nesting finches. He also takes eggs from the nests of chaffinches, King Harrys (goldfinches), greenies (greenfinches), linnets and sometimes bullies (bullfinches). He carefully places these eggs in a box, takes them home and then puts them under his nesting canaries in their cage. As canaries are really finches they make a good job of rearing up these wild birds. I do enjoy going out with my Uncle Albie. We also searched the area to the north end of the Christchurch Estate (just beyond where Park Road is now) where he showed me a nightingale's nest. How I marvelled at those olive brown eggs. My uncle also showed me a hedge sparrow's nest which had four blue eggs in it one of which, he said, was a cuckoo's egg. How he knew that I do not know. He told me that cuckoos lay their eggs which match the true colour of their host's eggs. I wonder about this as I find that hard to understand. Still, Uncle knows everything.

Another time, Albert helped me over the Estate's wall to go and search for nests near the large pond. We found a reed warbler's nest in the rushes. I could not believe how it just hung in the reeds – it was beautiful. I had already got an egg from the three sorts of woodpecker that lived in this





parkland but I was overjoyed when Uncle pointed out a wryneck which was entering a hole in an elm tree. My uncle called this strange bird 'the cuckoo's mate'. I don't know why. We had to leave the park in a hurry because the bailiff spotted us and we nipped over the wall at speed. I suppose the wryneck's egg will have to wait. However, I did manage to take my dad home half a dozen moorhen's eggs.

The hedgerows are full of nests and last year my friend and me found over 500 nests mainly those of blackbirds and song thrushes.

I often go looking for nests along the foreshore of the River Orwell near Nacton. It is quite a walk but it means that I can look for 'shellies' (shelducks) nests. They nest in holes in the riverbanks. Sometimes a nest will have over a dozen eggs.

Uncle says it is because more than one female will use a nest. I did not know that! I know the gamekeeper on the Nacton estate – he is Mr Baker. I think he likes me because of my interest in birds although two or three times I have felt his boot on my backside. I find his gibbets so interesting. He hangs all of the vermin that he has shot or trapped on his wire lines. The only fox I have ever seen was on one of these gibbets. Mr Baker says that tawny owls are a menace to his young pheasants and, as well as the fox, there was a sparrow, two kestrels, twelve tawnies and lots of rooks and crows. He says there are no magpies, stoats or weasels left for him to trap! Mr Baker does however like red squirrels and was pleased when I said that I had seen them near Christchurch Mansion before the bailiff chased me away.

(PS To our younger readers – egg collecting was a hobby 125 years ago, but today it is illegal!)

Friends' events in the Park 2020

Every year the Friends put on a series of free events in Christchurch Park and sadly our plans for this year have been hit by the epidemic. At this stage we are hopeful that the bat walks and autumn bird walk may take place as planned.

Saturday 28th March @ 08.30

Bird Walk with Philip Murphy

Meet at the Reg Driver Visitor Centre. No need to book.

Monday 30th March @ 19.00

Friends of Christchurch Park Annual Meeting

Reg Driver Centre. All Friends welcome.

Saturday 9th May @ 10.00

Bird Walk with Philip Murphy

Sunday 19 July @ 14.00

Brass on the Grass concert
Arboretum.

Sunday 26th July @ 14.00

Brass on the Grass concert
Arboretum. (Taking place on the same day as BBC television's Antiques Road Show).

Sunday 2nd August @ 14.00

Brass on the Grass concert
Arboretum.

Sunday 9th August @ 14.00

Brass on the Grass concert
Arboretum.

Saturday 5th September @ 19.30

Bat Walk
Places are limited and we will be opening bookings later in the year.

Saturday 19th September @ 19.15

Bat Walk
Places are limited and we will be opening bookings later in the year.

Saturday 31 October @ 08.30

Bird Walk with Philip Murphy



Friends' Contributions to the Park

The Friends have agreed to contribute to several projects within the park this year. These include wildflower seeds which were to be sown this spring, fitness equipment and bat boxes. Sadly, because of restrictions, the outdoor gym has been closed until recently and the seed sowing postponed until spring 2021 as staff were involved in other essential services.



THE PARK OUTDOOR GYM



Above: Exercise equipment bought by the Friends.

The Friends have a long association with Suffolk Bat Group which leads fascinating walks in the park every autumn – do see our events page for more details.

The Suffolk Bat Group is a specialist group within Suffolk Wildlife Trust and is the county's main point of contact for all bat conservation related issues.

Joining is only £5 per household each year and will help us do even more for Suffolk's wildlife and countryside. More information about how you can get involved with batty activities on www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/suffolkbatgroup or email suffolkbatgroup@suffolkwildlifetrust.org.



New Play Area

If you have been to the Park recently you have probably noticed a lot of activity around the play area.

Work had been scheduled to take place this spring, long before the epidemic struck, and the funding secured from the Borough Council.

Some Friends might have seen some images in the local press featuring a visualization of the new play area. To many of us the images suggested that the play area was going to be very brightly coloured and there were fears that this was a little out of keeping with the rest of the Park. However, the colours have been toned down and Park managers have since discussed the design with local councillors.

A plan of the new play area gives an idea of what fun awaits younger visitors to the Park.

Depending on Covid-19 restrictions at the time, the play area is due to open towards the end of the summer.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

New members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

Colin & Doreen Hawes
Ronan & Honor Kavanagh
John & Caroline Woolnough
Steven and Anne Abbott

Ipswich School
Ipswich and Suffolk Club
Ipswich Jaffa
Kerseys Solicitors
Landex Ltd
Lattice Lodge Guest House
Nicholas Jacob Architects
Orwell Vets
Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd
Scrutton Bland
Thornbank
The Will Shop
Woodbridge Antique Centre
Woodcock and Son

Corporate members

We are grateful for the support of our Corporate Members:

Christchurch Dental
Christchurch Solicitors LLP
W. D. Coe Ltd
The Fitness Unit
Gilmour Piper & Associates
The Greyhound
Hightop

We are always after new members, so do please pass on your copy of the newsletter once you have finished it to anyone interesting in joining.

Call out for new committee members

There are just a handful of us in the Friends' Committee and we could really do with some more help.

We have spaces for new committee members including a Secretary. The committee meets about four or five times

a year at the Reg Driver Centre at 5pm. We try to keep meetings to an hour and would greatly welcome new members. Nominations can be sent to Jessica Webster, 33, Constable Road IP4 2UW or emailed to her at Jessica.webster1@btinternet.com

Nomination Form

Nominee (who has agreed) _____


First proposer _____

Second proposer _____

Date _____

Membership Form

Membership costs £10 per household per year, or £100 for lifetime membership. Subscriptions by cheque, cash or Standing Order are due each year on 1st March.

- If you already pay by continuous Standing Order, no further action is required.
- If you would like to pay by Standing Order, please send the completed Standing Order Authority (below) to Robert Fairchild. For questions about Standing Orders please call Robert on 01473 254255, or email robert.fairchild@ntlworld.com
- You can also pay online via PayPal at www.focp.org.uk 
- We also accept payment by cash or cheque. In this case, please send the completed form and payment to **Robert Fairchild 17 Henley Avenue, Ipswich IP1 6RN**
- We now also have the option of Lifetime Membership for a one off payment of £100.

How to Pay

Please tick method of payment and complete the details below:

☐ Standing Order ☐ Cheque ☐ Cash ☐ Direct Bank Transfer
(please use your name as the reference)

Personal Details

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Standing Order Mandate

Account to be credited: Friends of Christchurch Park Amount: £10.00

Bank: Lloyds Bank, Cornhill, Ipswich Account No: 02952840 Sort Code: 30-94-55

Account name to be debited _____

Bank and Branch _____

Account number _____ Sort code _____

Please pay Friends of Christchurch Park immediately and then on 1st March each year.

Signed _____ Date _____



THE SPRING STORMS



One of the casualties of Storm Ciara, next to Westerfield Road.

This winter has seen successive storms batter the country. While we have been spared the worst of the weather, the Park has sustained some damage, but probably not as great as it could have been due to forward thinking by the Council which has been cutting dead wood from trees and reducing the crowns where appropriate.



Above: One of the more interesting fallen branches – note the holes presumably made by woodpeckers.

Just after Storm Ciara, the Park team sent through this update on the impact it had had:

- Overall Parks and Open Spaces have fared very well in the aftermath of Storm Ciara where winds well in excess of 55mph were recorded in Ipswich. The Council has proactively been inspecting its trees and carrying out necessary remedial works and this has certainly reduced the risk of tree failures during high winds.
- Tree and branch failures we are currently aware of consisted of a large mature horse chestnut in Christchurch Park, failing on its main trunk, this tree was growing on the Westerfield Road boundary just up from the Cabman's Shelter.
- Elsewhere, in Chantry Park a moderate sized evergreen oak was blown over near the bowls green and a mature pine tree was blown over in Broomhill Park.
- Apart from this, the most notable issue on Highways was a large failed plane tree on Nacton Road.



The Battle of Britain Tree

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and here Rowell Bell reflects on the Battle of Britain tree planted in the Park three years ago.

There is a tree to the South East of the Cenotaph in Christchurch Park whose plaque says:

*This English Oak is Dedicated To
The Heroes of The Battle of Britain
10th July to 31st October 1940
To the Pilots in the RAF and from
European and Commonwealth Nations
and elsewhere
Also to The Polish Air Force in
Great Britain 1940 – 1947
Most of whom lost their homeland
and settled here*

The Mayor, Cllr. Roger Fern planted the tree, donated by Friends of Christchurch Park on February 2 2017, with a number of participants attending including Consol General Krzysztof Gryzelczyk from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland and Artur Bildziuk, Chairman of the Polish Airman's Association and members from the Ipswich Polish Community.

Many of the British pilots were so young. Squadron Leader Geoffrey Wellum was 18 when flying Spitfires in the Battle of Britain. His first solo flight was September 1 1939. "After I joined the squadron they went to Dunkirk and at the end of the day we'd lost five people, four of whom I had met the night before." He died aged 96. Young Bodie "Bogle" DFC left Ipswich School in 1938 and joined the RAF in 1939 also flying Spitfires; he buzzed Ipswich according to David Routh. Bogle joined 66 Squadron in May 1940, was Wing Commander 310 squadron March 1941. "He survived shooting and landing with a burning plane on all but the last occasion". Bogle died aged 21.

The Polish pilots were older and more experienced. One such pilot is buried at the Lawns Cemetery in Ipswich aged 76. Julian Kowalski was born near Wroclaw 10th July 1910, joined the Polish Air Force in 1932 and became an instructor at a School of Aviation.



In 1939 he evacuated to Romania then went to France where he helped destroy a Do17. After the collapse of France he arrived in England June 21. F/O Kowalski joined 302 Squadron based at Duxford and on 19th September 1940 he destroyed a Junkers 88 near Ipswich, but had to make a forced landing at Ipswich Airport. He was released from the Polish Air Force in January 1947. Wing Commander Julian Kowalski DFC VM settled here and designed agricultural machinery for Ransomes Simms and Jefferies.

On September 14 1940 a Junkers 87, whose intended target was thought to be Ransomes Simms and Jefferies, dropped its bombs early, one narrowly missing Christchurch Mansion landing in St. Margaret's Green blowing out much of the Victorian glass in both aisles at St Margaret's Church.

By the end of the War there were about 19,400 Poles serving in the Polish Air Force in Great Britain and the RAF. The Free Polish forces were excluded from the victory parade on June 8 1946 because the Government at that time did not want to offend Stalin.

Ten Questions ... for Anthony Cobbold

1. What is your earliest memory of the park?

A peep through the gates in 1979 when I brought my elderly father on a nostalgic tour of Suffolk.

2. What is your favourite part of the park?

The Mayors' Walk because it commemorates 9 family members (5 Cobbolds and 4 others) who have served the Borough.

3. What park event is most memorable to you?

The unveiling of Felix Cobbold's blue plaque on the Reg Driver Centre, 8th April, 2011.

4. What is the biggest challenge you feel the park has faced in the past?

Development and neglect.

5. And what challenges do you see the park – or parks in general – facing in the future?

Lack of necessary funding due to misallocation of resources by Government.

6. What do you think Felix Cobbold would think of the park today?

He would be absolutely delighted.



7. What is your favourite film?

Tawny Pipit, 1944! Aged 9, I loved it so much I saw it three times round for 6d (as one could in those days). A beguiling wartime romance centred around a rare pair of nesting Tawny Pipits. Sheer English delight!

8. If you could meet anyone in the world – dead or alive – who would it be?

'Big John' Cobbold (1746–1835), 3rd generation brewer and Felix's great grandfather who had 22 children!

9. If you could change one thing in the park what would it be?

Parking.

10. What three words best describe yourself?

Obsessed Family Historian.

