

# *The Moor Pool Duck*

Residents' Newsletter.

Issue No.38

March 2009

## *The Moor Pool website.*

A lot of content has been added in recent weeks, so please take time to have a look. The address is [www.moorpool.com](http://www.moorpool.com). Many thanks to Andrew Hackett for his hard work on the website. We are happy to give links and further information about Moor Pool's clubs and societies. If you are already listed, then please check your details are correct. There is now a photographic section which we are continually adding to, as well as archive material. If you have something which you think could be of interest then please let us know. All materials will be returned.

## *Winterbourne Botanic Gardens.*

Winterbourne House was the home of the Estate's founder, John Nettlefold. It is only a short distance away, near to Birmingham University. The gardens are well worth a visit if you have not been already. Information can be found using the link on the Moor Pool website. Winterbourne are planning an oral history project which will feature Moor Pool and we hope that a visit can be arranged to tell us more about this as soon as they are ready. They are also planning an exhibition which will include Moor Pool. Lee Hale, the Head Gardner and project manager at Winterbourne, along with Lucy McCoombes from PLB Project

Consultancy visited the Estate keen to see the results of John Nettlefold's work. We hope to have more details on the project in the next Duck. Our thanks to Grainger for opening the Hall for their visit.

## *Forthcoming Events.*

### *Residents Coffee Morning*

The next coffee morning is on Saturday 28th March in the Lower Hall starting at 10.30am. As usual, any donations of cakes will be very welcome but more importantly, please do come along and join in.

### *Moor Pool Allotment Association*

#### *Spring Meeting.*

Venue: The Lower Hall Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 7.30pm. Anyone interested in the allotments or joining is most welcome to attend.

### *Scarecrow Competition.*

Yes, the rumours are true!! Scarecrows will be appearing all over Moor Pool. (Well hopefully!) Information and entry forms can be downloaded from the website or collected from Moor Pool News and Wine (The old Post Office). Complete your form and drop it back in the post box inside the shop by the 10th April. Judging will take place on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes of £25, £10 and £5. Entry is open to all, so start accumulating your

building materials. Prize winners and entries will also feature on the website

### *Moor Pool in Bloom 2009.*

This year's event is under way with our thanks to Frances and Sandra of the Bowling Club who planted a large supply of primulas around the edge of the green. MiB committee member Liz Muir has been doing extensive research on suppliers, finally settling on Cofton Nurseries. Chris Jones and Gary McManus from Cofton have been very helpful and we are very grateful to them. We are now about to embark on the next stage. Whether this is using planters or freeplanting around the Estate very much depends on overcoming technical and liability issues.

Thanks to the many residents who have planted bulbs around trees, verges and borders on the Estate. These look really bright and cheerful. If we have funds available, we will look at planting additional bulbs for next spring.

### *Blue History Plaque*

We are in discussion with the Civic Society to have a blue plaque celebrating the Centenary of Moor Pool. Ideally this will be installed at the Circle and we will hold an unveiling event.

### *Moor Pool Hall Centenary.*

We discovered very recently that it appears the Hall is one hundred years old on November 5<sup>th</sup>. The Centenary Committee are looking at ways to celebrate this important milestone.

### *Grainger Planning Applications.*

Again nothing to report. First it was February, then March and that would seem

highly unlikely – unless the refusal is in the post! We will of course let you know as soon as there is any news.

### *MRA Subs - reminder.*

Subs (£5 per household or £3 per single person) are still coming in and all will be needed to support our activities this year. Please pay either Gill Morgan (Treasurer: 80, Moor Pool Ave.) Rob Sutton (64 Margaret Grove), or Mike Frost (1 Carless Avenue). Please enclose your name and address so a receipt can be sent to you.

### *New Conservation Officer*

Welcome to Mary Worsfold who has joined the BCC Conservation team and specifically will be working on completing the Character Appraisal for Moor Pool. Mary has been visiting the Estate to familiarise herself with its features and also went on a tour with Rob Sutton to see the other 'hidden' but important areas that make up its character. We understand Residents will have the opportunity to comment on the appraisal. Now we have waited this long, it would seem right that it is taken into account in determining the Grainger planning application.

### *The Victorian Society.*

Tim Bridges, Architectural Adviser for Birmingham & the West Midlands for The Victorian Society was another visitor to the Estate back in February. Undeterred by the cold weather Tim gave a lot of useful advice and was also able to assess the impact the Grainger plans would have on Moor Pool.

## *English Heritage.*

Michael Taylor, Historic Areas Adviser for English Heritage visited Moor Pool and toured the Estate. As with Mary Worsfold, the visit gave a broader picture of the Estate's ethos than just the picturesque pool and bowling green. There may be opportunities for featuring Moor Pool in an English Heritage publication.

## *The Moor Pool Viability Study.*

Moor Pool has experienced rather turbulent times in the last few years. Since Harborne Tenants were taken over, a different style of management has become clear. The fact of the matter is that Grainger are a large commercial company owned by shareholders expecting to see a profit. That's the reality and not really compatible with managing community halls, bowling greens and tennis clubs, etc. As Chair, it is my belief that sooner or later whether by choice or circumstances outside their control this remaining interest will be severely tested. To wait until this happens would be very unwise. To see what alternative ways forward might exist, I approached the local BCC offices. Jagwant Johal the Edgbaston Constituency Director was very supportive and a number of suggestions were put forward. At the same time in discussions with Phil Nelson of Grainger, agreement was reached to look into a financial viability study for the Estate. Whether it is a local trust or some other organisation which runs the community facilities, they will need to know the extent of the requirement and funding necessary. At previous meetings residents

were clear that they would not be involved in any sort of Trust unless it could be shown to be sound and financially viable. That has not changed.

As things stand, (BVT) Bournville Village Trust would manage the exercise with a financial contribution towards its cost by BCC and hopefully Grainger. This would be a thorough exercise looking into all aspects of community facilities. Very important would be the information supplied by Clubs and Societies on problems they might be experiencing and needs for the future.

## *Verge Damage.*

Severe damage occurred recently at the Circle by large vehicles trying to navigate past parked vehicles. Please if you can, leave space to allow vehicles to turn into and out of the nearby roads without cutting corners. Discussions are ongoing with BCC to catch offenders who damage the verge. We have also had a request from residents asking us to remind other residents to park leaving sufficient space for passing in the traditional locations and also to try and make the most of parking space.

## *Tree Replacement*

Following anger by residents at the recent removal of trees on the Estate, an additional grant application fund has been made towards a planting programme. We have now been notified that 14 new trees will be planted around the Estate. Thanks are due to our local Councillors for responding so quickly to our concerns and ensuring this funding was made available. Trees do become unsafe at times

and do reach the end of their natural life, but replacement is very important and with the right trees too. We have offered to work with BCC on the locations for the new trees and await further information.

### *Vehicle Security*

The local Police have asked us to warn residents about leaving sat nav holders on view in their cars. This is a tempter to break into the vehicle to find the 'hidden' sat nav even if is not really there.

### *Moor Pools History*

Well it's a 'nice' place to live and rather unusual compared to the rest of Harborne – but is that all there is to Moor Pool? Eugene Hayden, one of our Committee 'historians' has written a piece for the Duck to tell you a little more.

*In the Autumn of 1906, when a proposal to construct a tramway from Birmingham to Harborne threatened to encourage speculative builders to choose the undeveloped parts of the district as a field for their activity, some enthusiasts for housing reform and planning made a careful study of the area with a view to ascertaining the extent of the danger and the best course of action to take in an effort to avoid it. It became clear to these pioneers that a certain plot of land in an area known as the "Moorpool", some thirty-six acres in size, was, owing to its position the key to the problem from a Garden Suburb, planning standpoint. Garden cities and suburbs were a dominant theme in community planning throughout the early part of the twentieth century. Ebenezer*

*Howard's garden city at Letchworth and Henrietta Barnett's garden suburb at Hampstead, London, attracted international renown and emulation. These design standards proved adaptable to private development and public housing.*

*Harborne Tenants Estate was inspired by the development of these experimental new communities. Built between 1907-1912 it was the first Co-partnership garden suburb in Birmingham and a model for future Co-partnership Tenant Societies.*

*Established by John Nettlefold, first chairman of Birmingham Housing Committee and an advocate of housing reform and town planning, it formed part of the Garden City concept to provide low density housing centred on a community hall and with many interspersed green spaces. This was at a time when the majority of inner city housing was of a crowded back-to-back design.*

Eugene Hayden.

If time allows this year, we will organise a history night for residents with an illustrated talk on Moor Pool. Please have a look through your old papers and pictures. Anything could be of interest.

### *Moor Pool News and Wine.*

Our thanks to Raj and Dip for their help with providing the MRA post box inside the shop. The shop is very important to the Estate so please do use it whenever you can.

That's all for this Duck. Mike Frost will be back in the Editors chair for the next issue after his trip away.