



## FRIENDS OF BUTTS CLOSE

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER

September 2021

### *Ephemera and Earthwatch*

#### *First the ephemera*

The Close has had its usual cycle of events. Graffiti and tagging 'decorated' not just the swimming pool wall but the benches as well this time. So sad. But why? A number of investigations into the psychology of tagging<sup>1</sup> suggest it is partly driven by adrenalin – the rush of doing something illegal and clandestine – and leaving evidence of the risk the tagger has taken, including communicating this to other taggers. It also identifies the tagger as a member of a group outside what he (almost always a he) perceives as 'normal' society. A signifier of proud, risk-taking independence. For those of us of a certain age, it's easy to identify these dynamics with the status of long hair in the 1960s<sup>2</sup>. But understanding it doesn't really help eliminating it. Suggestions (not with a spray can) welcome.

Then Thurston's Funfair came and went, and for once it didn't rain the whole time. They had reconfigured their setup to accommodate controls to minimise COVID infection, and it seemed that for us along Bedford Road the noise levels were lower than in previous years.

Then a drain pipe near the pond overflowed, leaving sewage on the grass – there are temporary guard rails round it right now. Anglian Water will be putting a camera down the pipe to investigate further<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/09/160908120959.htm>,  
<https://www.artefactmagazine.com/2019/10/30/psychology-of-london-graffiti-artists/>

<sup>2</sup> Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. 'Deja vu' track 3: 'I almost cut my hair'.

<sup>3</sup>Thanks to Anna Parr for noticing this, and also reporting the missing knee-rails by the north entrance

Three knee-rails were removed from the side of the north entrance gate. We've heard how building timber is in very short supply, but that seemed excessive. We also wondered if this was a precursor to the travellers' attempting to camp on the Close again, as they did in 2019, because the rails were removed during the period of the Appleby Horse Fair. NHDC have now replaced the rails. No caravans.

And of course the hedge saplings have needed periodical tlc, mainly weeding and cutting back to give the young trees room to grow. Thanks to everyone who did this.

The Close has also contributed to recycling. As in previous years, the long 'conservation cut' grassland was mowed, and the bales will go to Blue Berry Farm, in Watton-at-Stone. They are used for animal bedding.



Photo courtesy Simon Maddison

## ***And now Earthwatch<sup>4</sup>***

This is an initiative to plant 'Tiny Forests' to mitigate the effects of climate change. Their website says:

Environmental issues such as flooding, heat stress and loss of biodiversity are increasingly affecting urban areas.

Creating thriving and climate-resilient urban areas that support economic growth, whilst also enhancing livelihoods and wellbeing, is a considerable challenge.

Tiny Forest can play a part in facing this challenge. They bring the benefits of a forest – reconnecting people with nature and raising awareness, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change, as well as providing nature-rich habitat patches to support urban wildlife – right into the heart of our cities and urban spaces.

Help mitigate the effects of the climate crisis, one Tiny Forest at a time.

*Tiny Forests* are densely planted natural woodland plots, of about 600 trees on a space of some 24 by 12 metres. That's roughly the area of a tennis court.

It's been suggested that the Close could accommodate such an initiative. Of course, the planted area doesn't have to be a rectangle. It could be a curved sweep of trees, any shape really. However, the Close has quite a number of services buried beneath – gas, electricity, etc – that will rule out many areas for consideration. And I've already had people concerned at the idea, who want the Close left as it is. My guess is that FoBC members will want more detail before considering this proposal, so we'll find out more first.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Tony Riley  
for Friends of Butts Close

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://earthwatch.org.uk/get-involved/tiny-forest>

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