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## THE FUTURE OF EDWARD KEMP-DESIGNED PARKS AND CEMETERIES AND THE ROLE OF FRIENDS GROUPS

*Today, according to the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, there are over five thousand individual friends of parks groups in England and Wales. The government's continued implementation of severe austerity measures and their disastrous impact on the funding base of many, if not all, local authorities have serious implications for the maintenance and development of our parks, including those already included in Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in England. In this context, the existence of active friends groups may well be vital for the future conservation and survival of the country's parks, including those designed by Edward Kemp. This paper analyzes the role of friends groups at fifteen parks and cemeteries designed or laid out by Kemp. The discussion will focus on a number of interrelated issues. These include the aims of the friends groups; the role of volunteers and their contribution to the maintenance of their parks and cemeteries; their success (working in partnership with the relevant local authority) in securing external funding for conservation and restoration purposes; and the extent to which they have been able to respond so far to austerity measures and budgetary cuts.*

### THE ORIGINS OF FRIENDS GROUPS

Surprisingly, little information is available on the history of friends groups which were established from the 1970s onward in order to support the maintenance and management of parks and cemeteries, while there has been no real analysis of why they were founded at a particular point in time. In some cases, the mobilization of local communities was a result of the gradual decline in the maintenance standards of public parks which became apparent from the late 1960s onward, a trend that was accelerated by central government policy in the following two decades. At a national level, local authority reorganization after 1974 often meant that parks departments were 'swallowed up' into larger administrative units dominated by leisure services. But worse was to follow. From 1979, successive Conservative governments had an 'unsympathetic attitude' towards local government in general and, regretfully, a reduction in spending on parks and green spaces was often regarded as a 'soft option' in balancing council budgets, particularly because of changing attitudes to Victorian parks. The introduction of competitive tendering as a result of the Local Government Act 1988 created a great deal of organizational upheaval and contributed to an overall decline in horticultural standards.<sup>1</sup> By the start of the 1990s, urban parks were increasingly seen as a liability rather than an asset and their condition had deteriorated considerably to the extent that some of them were regarded as no-go areas.

What is surprising is that so few friends groups were established in response to the damage inflicted on public parks by government policies in the late twentieth century (Table 1). The first group to be founded was at Birkenhead Park in 1976 by Percy Fry, a local

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Table 1. Friends groups established at parks and cemeteries designed or laid out by Edward Kemp, 1843–88

Cemetery/park	Year(s)	Historic England listing	Area (ha)	Year friends group established	Members total/active, 2018	Volunteers total/active, 2018
Birkenhead Park	1843–47	I	90	1976	100/15	70/40
Victoria Park, St Helens	1849–50	×	14	2005	8/3	8+/3
Castle Park, Frodsham	1855	II	9.8	2001	×	×
St Helens Cemetery	1856–58	II	8	2006	11/9	11/9
Liverpool (Anfield) Cemetery	1856–63	II*	57	c.2010	12/12	12/12
Flaybrick Cemetery, Birkenhead	1861–62	II*	10.5	1993	77/20	20/20
Grosvenor Park, Chester	1864–67	II*	8.1	c.2004	×	×
Newsham Park, Liverpool	1864–68	II*	49	2001	×	×
Southport Cemetery	1865–66	×	28	×	×	×
Hesketh Park, Southport	1865–68	II*	12	c.1998	30/10	6/5
Stanley Park, Liverpool	1866–70	II*	45	1990s	×	×
Congleton Park	1868–71	II	10.5	2005	c.35/12	12/12
Saltwell Park, Gateshead	1875–76	II	22	2005	250/50	50/50
Mersey Park, Tranmere	1881–85	×	8.4	c.2016	20/10	20/10
Queen's Park, Crewe	1887–88	II*	18.2	2006	47/31	47/31

Note: Fifteen parks and cemeteries designed or laid out by Kemp are included, although two, Castle Park and Victoria Park, were originally private commissions where the park was subsequently acquired by the local authority. Also included is Birkenhead Park. Although designed by Joseph Paxton, Kemp had overall responsibility for laying it out and remained as its Superintendent (or Consulting Superintendent) for the rest of his life. The initial idea for a ‘recreation ground’ on what became Mersey Park was developed by the Tranmere Local Board. After its incorporation in the newly constituted Borough of Birkenhead, Kemp was asked to undertake ‘the planning of the plantation and the superintending of the planting of trees’. He drew up an overall plan and was consulted specifically on the proposed entrance. But because there was a dispute as to whether Kemp should be paid separately for this work, the Corporation claimed that his plans had been abandoned because of the acquisition of additional land and that its new surveyor, Thomas C. Thorburn (appointed in 1881), had laid out the park. However, Thorburn did not have a professional background as a landscape designer and the final plans incorporated many of Kemp’s designs. For further details on the design of Mersey Park, see ‘Opening of Mersey Park, Birkenhead’, *Liverpool Mercury* (27 July 1885); and Robert Lee, *Managing the First Public Park: The Superintendents and Team Leaders of Birkenhead Park*. Birkenhead Park History and Heritage, Vol. III (Bootle: Oriol Studios Design, 2019).

resident, together with other members of the local community. This initiative was primarily a response to the increasing neglect of the park and the extent of damage caused by vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Its motto – ‘That Which Is Good Should Be Preserved’ – reflected the urgency for implementing conservation measures and for combating wilful damage to the park’s infrastructure. Its first president, the Liberal councillor Griff Evans (later Lord Evans of Cloughton), provided an invaluable political cutting edge to campaigns to halt any further deterioration in the park’s infrastructure. But problems continued to plague the park. The iron bridge was partly demolished by vandals (Figure 1); cars were abandoned in the park and set alight; and the spacious wooden pavilion erected by The Field Lawn Tennis Club before the First World War (then used as changing rooms by schoolchildren involved in sports events) was destroyed by arson. There was a pervasive air of despair about the future of Sir Joseph Paxton’s masterpiece, which had been laid out by Edward Kemp.<sup>2</sup>

Concern over the future of other historic parks was also articulated through the establishment of other forms of community organization. For example, at Sefton Park, Liverpool (designed by Edouard André and Lewis Hornblower and now Grade I registered), a park civic society was established in 1981 in response to its declining state, when ‘dried up waterways, avenues of dead trees, swirling drifts of litter, vandalized buildings, in short, a



Figure 1. The iron bridge in Birkenhead Park ‘smashed by vandals’, October 1972.  
Photo: Bob Bird, courtesy of *Wirral News*

general spirit of hopelessness’ had become the main characteristics of ‘this once great Park’.<sup>3</sup> A civic society was also pressing for improvements to Newsham Park at this time, but it was not representative of the local community.

Other parks, despite their heritage importance, did not benefit from the establishment of a friends group, a park civic society or, for that matter, other forms of community support. In fact, of the parks and cemeteries under review that were designed or laid out by Kemp, only Birkenhead Park, Stanley Park, Flaybrick Cemetery, Newsham Park and Hesketh Park are known to have had a friends group (or an analogous organization) before the end of the twentieth century. In every case, the setting up of a friends group was a direct response to the serious deterioration in maintenance standards and the damage resulting from vandalism. Although an exact date for the establishment of the Stanley Park Friends is not known, by the early 1990s the neglect of the park had become such a serious problem that local residents (including park staff) became involved. The friends group at Flaybrick (originally known as Birkenhead Cemetery) was founded by John Moffat, the current secretary, in 1993 to assist Wirral Borough Council in tackling ‘one of the most hostile cemetery environments in Britain’.<sup>4</sup> At that point in time, the chapels and both the front and back lodges were derelict, twenty-six railing panels were missing, and many gravestones and memorials had been vandalized. At Hesketh Park, the idea of setting up what became the Hesketh Park Heritage Group came from the local council towards the end of the 1990s and it still functions today, albeit on a much-reduced scale.<sup>5</sup>

As far as other Kemp parks and cemeteries are concerned, proper friends groups were only set up after the turn of the century, namely at Newsham Park (2001), Saltwell Park, Gateshead (2005), Congleton Park (2005), Victoria Park (2005), Queens Park (2006), St Helens Cemetery (2006) and Anfield Cemetery (*c.*2010). Again, their creation was sometimes a result of local authority initiative. In 2006, St Helens Council issued a call for local people to become involved and to ‘take an interest in heritage planning and day to

day issues concerning Cemeteries and the Crematorium', including St Helens Cemetery.<sup>6</sup> At Saltwell Park, the friends group was set up during the process of applying for a major grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to restore the park, in part as evidence of local community support. There are other examples (including Victoria Park) that confirm the galvanizing effect of preparing major bids for securing external funding to carry out much-needed restoration work. The original friends group at Castle Park was established in 2001, but it ultimately became 'a talking shop'. In July 2018, Frodsham Town Council issued an appeal for local citizens to establish a reconstituted Friends of Castle Park, with details of a meeting that was scheduled to take place on 27 September when staff from Cheshire West and Chester Council would outline their 'exciting plans for the park and the opportunities that will be available for the volunteers'.<sup>7</sup>

Not all Kemp-designed parks, however, have benefitted from a continuing contribution from a friends group, while some of them have ceased to function effectively or have been replaced by other bodies. As already indicated, there was an active friends group at Stanley Park which played a major role in opposing the construction of a new stadium for Liverpool Football Club. Planning permission was given originally for the development in 2003: each subsequent proposal, involving an alternative design, but with increased capacity, duly received the approval of Liverpool City Council and even English Heritage, despite its national heritage role, was strangely unwilling to oppose plans that would have had a seriously negative impact on Stanley Park with a significant loss of park land. The proposal for a new stadium was only abandoned in October 2012.<sup>8</sup> Four years later, in 2016, the friends actively opposed a proposed 'revamp' of the park that would have involved the loss of over one hundred trees, as well as part of the existing playing fields through the laying down of new footpaths.<sup>9</sup>

But now its role has been superseded by a non-profit social enterprise, Stanley Park Liverpool, a community interest company (CIC), that seeks to 'animate' the park 'with weekly activities and events'. It offers a wide range of community activities, including junior park runs, Mental Health Mates walks and talks, and summer yoga, as well as hosting theatre productions, including a recent performance of 'Goldilocks' by the Bookworm Players (9 September 2018). It also employs a former councillor, Rose O'Byrne, as a community manager with responsibility for organizing 'physical well-being activities'.<sup>10</sup> But the extent to which the CIC fulfils an effective conservation and campaigning role, particularly, if required, in opposition to council plans, remains extremely doubtful.

Although there was an active (civic) group in Newsham Park in the late 1990s, council officers, including the parks development officer, Nigel Sharp, also had to deal with another group from around the southern area of the park. At times there was little sign of activity from either. After the turn of the century, a Newsham Park Stakeholder Forum was established, with active support from the council. It ultimately began to contribute to the maintenance of the park: it organized litter picking; served as a focal point for community involvement in the park; and led a drive to return it to its 'prime condition'. On 8 April 2005, Peter Brook, chairman of the friends group, emphasized that that it was 'working hard to give an important Victorian park a new lease of life for the twenty-first century' and 'to reveal Newsham Park as one of the City's true gems'. A former local councillor, Louise Baldock, called on local residents in April 2006 to join the friends group. English Heritage, through John Stonard, its manager of the jointly funded Historic Environment of Liverpool Project, provided a grant for the planting of roses as part of preparations for the park's one hundred and fortieth anniversary.<sup>11</sup> For ten years or so the friends group managed to effect improvements and prevent parts of the park from being carved off for development. For example, it helped to establish, with council funding, a kiosk café, a cricket wicket, an outdoor gym, improved sign boards, as well

as the renovation of the fountains, thus helping to reverse the policy of managed decline. However, it was not always a coherent group, but consisted of a number of different contacts and users, while increasingly the Homewatch began to take over its role.

At present, the friends group is dormant, although Tree House CIC until recently has facilitated a range of activities and well-being events, including vegetable gardening, yoga and maintaining the rose garden. In September 2018, for example, it offered 'Wild Play' and 'Mindful Yoga' as well as gardening days.<sup>12</sup> But once again the CIC was not involved in developing strategic plans for the park or in lobbying the city council for additional support in order to realize the original objective adopted some years ago by the friends group. Sadly, the main coordinator, Christina Ashworth, recently stood down from the organization and the Tree House Board decided in August 2018 to mothball the organization as it had proved impossible to keep it running without a workable partnership with either mainstream services or the council. The local community certainly feels that the park is 'cleaner, safer and more beautiful than it did five years ago', but there is now a real lack of focus on how to look after it, while the hope that its further improvement 'will be sustained by others' is hardly reassuring.<sup>13</sup>

Even in the case of Grosvenor Park, which the council regards as 'one of the finest examples of Victorian parks in the United Kingdom' and part of 'a significant cultural precinct in the heart of the city', a once-active friends group has ceased to meet. The Friends of Grosvenor Park and the Groves (FOGG) was certainly active during the restoration of Kemp's masterpiece, with some members regarded as 'responsible' for its refurbishment. But Cheshire West and Chester Council have no knowledge of its existence and the group, if it is still functional, has no web presence at all.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it was reported in September 2016 that local residents were rather blasé about the park: they loved it and used it, but did not 'own' it. The surrounding population is largely transient – people walk through the park but, with the exception of one faith group, do not get involved. At that point in time, the friends group consisted of only a couple of people who liked to be consulted and invited to anything that was happening. The group's rather unrealistic expectations about the restoration of the park, largely funded by the HLF, had not been met, so they adopted a disappointed and critical stance towards what might be achieved in future. The group never undertook any volunteering and it now appears to have ceased to exist. Regretfully, the council, because of limited resources, has not sought to re-establish a friends group, although during and since Kemp's bicentenary Barbara Moth (Cheshire Gardens Trust) has led a series of walks around the park focusing on his original design.<sup>15</sup>

The demise of Newsham Park's Friends Group also reflected a failure to secure major grant support for the refurbishment of the park. In the late 1990s, Liverpool City Council began preliminary consultations in relation to potential bids to the HLF's Parks for People Programme, based on a series of landscape conservation master plans. But the application for Newsham Park never progressed to submission stage, which led to a decline in local support and a loss of momentum on campaigning for its restoration.<sup>16</sup> But success in achieving a major restoration programme can also lead to problems. The original friends group at Castle Park was set up in 2001 initially to fight the council of the day which had plans to sell off Castle House for flats. Having secured an alternative future for the historic property, the friends then became a park users group with membership from local organizations catering for tennis, bowls, the arts, nature and history. But following successful bids to European Union and HLF funding rounds, the friends group became inactive once the major regeneration projects had been completed and local excitement dwindled. The current initiative by the Cheshire West and Chester Council to re-establish a friends group is an attempt to move beyond a policy of managed decline by applying a



Figure 2. Mersey Park entrance, Higher Tranmere; postcard posted in 1918.  
Courtesy: private collection

‘defibrillator’ to the park that will hopefully revitalize and renew public participation in its management and promote its future development.<sup>17</sup>

In other Kemp-designed parks and cemeteries, friends groups have never played a major role. For example, the Friends of Tranmere Parks only maintains a watching brief on Mersey Park (opened in 1885 by the Mayor of Birkenhead, Alderman Robert Paterson) (Figure 2). Most members of the group are involved primarily in supporting Victoria Park which offers a far wider range of facilities for sports activities, including one full-size and two junior football pitches, Victoria Park Cricket Club, a kick-about area for young people and a fitness trail, as well as an enclosed community garden. At Mersey Park, only litter-picking by a few volunteers from the Friends of Tranmere Parks takes place roughly once a week, despite continued problems with dog-fouling (‘apparent throughout the Park’), youth disorder, vandalism and its use as a place ‘to congregate and drink alcohol’.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, in the case of Southport (Duke Street) Cemetery, there is no evidence that a friends group has ever been established. In May 1864, the Improvement Commissioners ‘determined to proceed with the erection of chapels, lodges etc’; the Lord Bishop of Chester consecrated the Church of England chapel in December 1865; and the cemetery was formally opened in the following year. Although it still accepts a small number of interments, like many Victorian cemeteries it has become relatively neglected with inevitable results.<sup>19</sup> But despite the need to establish a local friends group to focus attention on the urgency of quality improvements in the cemetery’s maintenance, this has yet to materialize.

The total membership of friends groups varies considerably, from eight (Victoria Park) and eleven (St Helens Cemetery) to as many as two hundred and fifty (Saltwell Park) (Table 1). Even when a friends group has been formed, maintaining its role is not necessarily straightforward. There is no guarantee that it will continue to flourish. Its existence over time is dependent on a number of factors, including an effective policy of succession planning, particularly in the case of elderly committee members who need to retire, the extent to which members continue to share a clear vision for the future, an inclusive attitude to local community participation, and the ability and willingness of



Figure 3. The Hesketh Park Heritage Group says farewell to Project Manager Dave Ritchie, October 2018. Courtesy: *OTSnews*, Hesketh Park Heritage Group

local authorities to offer overall support. Too often, a proactive friends group depends on a small core of committed honorary officers and members, ranging from three (Victoria Park) to fifty (Saltwell Park). At Queen's Park, the 'hard core' consists of twelve members who turn up for most events and meetings, but in other cases the number of committee members can be as low as three (Victoria Park) or five (Birkenhead Park). For those groups for which data are available, the average number of active members is only eighteen, representing between fifteen and one hundred per cent of the total number of members (at Birkenhead Park and Anfield respectively).<sup>20</sup> Moreover, their financial position is often precarious. Some groups are able to rely on membership fees to provide a solid base for planning future activities: for example, each of the thirty to forty members of the Friends of Congleton Park makes a monthly contribution of five pounds. But other friends groups whose park or cemetery is located in relatively deprived urban areas, including Birkenhead Park and Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, are only able to charge a modest annual levy (five pounds and seven pounds fifty respectively) in order to avoid excluding a significant proportion of the local community. At Victoria Park there is no membership fee: it is surrounded by residents who suffer from deprivation and the friends group refuses to deter new members.<sup>21</sup> The number of members remains relatively small, but they are still able to offer meaningful support to the park.

An ageing membership is also a problem facing some friends groups. In the case of the Hesketh Park Heritage Group, founded almost twenty-five years ago, the number of members has fallen over the last decade from seventy to approximately thirty, of whom perhaps five or six still carry out volunteering in the park (Figure 3). The original officers, among those who survive, are now in their eighties, while a small number of Hesketh Park Gardening Volunteers are only somewhat younger.<sup>22</sup> Without a clear policy to recruit younger members and to involve young people in caring for their local park and cemeteries, it is doubtful whether some of the existing friends group will be able to continue their work, which is even more important now than ever before.

#### THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FRIENDS GROUPS

Irrespective of the factors that led to the creation of friends groups to support the heritage legacy of Kemp-designed parks and cemeteries, the aims and objectives of

individual friends groups reveal a similar focus, whether prompted by local concern over the increased incidence of vandalism, the need to foster much-needed improvements, or simply as a direct response to local authority initiatives. In general, they reflect a commitment to conserve and improve Kemp's landscapes, to oppose new developments that would undermine the integrity of his designs, to combat antisocial behaviour, to raise the profile of individual sites and to make them more accessible to the general public.

The members of the Friends of Birkenhead Park are committed to five objectives: to improve awareness of its historical and heritage significance as the first publicly funded park in the world; to increase further the extent and range of volunteering; to strengthen the sense of community ownership; to deliver educational programmes and skill-training; and to encourage the community to care for the park.<sup>23</sup> At Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, the overriding objective was to rescue the site from years of neglect at a time when local residents were calling for 'urgent action to stop the desecration of Wirral's oldest public cemetery by gangs of violent yobs' which had 'terrorized' the area every weekend for over five years, and to secure its status as a Significant Cemetery in Europe which was achieved in 2004, largely because of the quality and importance of Kemp's landscape design.<sup>24</sup>

A similar emphasis is evident in the case of friends groups that were set up in the early twenty-first century. The Friends of Saltwell Park have prioritized the promotion and protection of 'the well-being and enjoyment of the Park for the benefit of the local community' and, according to Gateshead Council, it has become 'vitally important' in maintaining and improving the park and its facilities by 'promoting and protecting it'.<sup>25</sup> At Congleton, the friends group set out an overriding aim, namely 'to promote the use and awareness of the Park for the enjoyment of the public'. At Frodsham, the newly formed friends group is intended to 'increase the appreciation and respect of the park amongst its visitors and residents', but also to 'empower them to have their say on how the park is managed and developed'. The Friends of Anfield (also known as the Friends of Anfield Cemetery) have a clear vision as to how its members will ensure that one of the largest cemeteries in Europe is no longer on Historic England's 'at risk' register with a strategic plan to create an International Heritage and Visitor Centre by 2025 by taking over ownership of the chapel.<sup>26</sup> Finally, at St Helens Cemetery the members of the friends group are committed to 'preserving and maintaining the overall appearance of the cemetery grounds by focussing on issues such as dog fouling, the use of cars, and by reducing the level of damage and theft from the graves'. According to the council, it is 'a vibrant, active group', while the Twentieth Century Society has praised their members for being 'keen'.<sup>27</sup>

#### THE INCREASING NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

Most of the cemeteries and parks designed or laid out by Kemp are in the North West, with the exception of Saltwell Park in Gateshead. But all the local authorities tasked with maintaining this unique heritage have been savaged since 2010 by unprecedented cuts in central government funding. Many local authorities, on the basis of their individual 'graph of doom' (calculated by the Local Government Association), will have no funds beyond what is required to meet statutory requirements to continue the maintenance of heritage assets, such as historic parks and cemeteries, after the financial year 2019–20, if not earlier. Indeed, the intractable problems created by persistent budgetary cuts have already forced local authorities to seek the support of friends groups to recruit more volunteers who can help with the general maintenance.

Of course, the use of 'volunteer' labour in public parks is nothing new. Park-related public works schemes had been initiated during the Lancashire Cotton Famine in Blackburn and Preston following the Public Works (Manufacturing Districts) Act 1864,



while Alexandra Park in Oldham (1863–65) had been created as a direct response to the hardship and suffering that had been inflicted on cotton operatives by the cessation of raw cotton imports during the American Civil War. At Birkenhead the use of ‘voluntary’ labour was a general response to downturns in the business cycle and severe economic crises. As early as 1867, the chairman of the Birkenhead Board of Guardians had proposed that men ‘seeking relief’ should be employed ‘in appropriate parts of the cemetery’; while in 1884, the Charity Organisation Society recommended the repainting of the Birkenhead Park railings ‘to give employment to unemployed painters’. Men involved in these schemes were not strictly volunteers, but they set a precedent for using non-park labour to carry out important maintenance tasks. Indeed, whenever there was ‘dire distress’ in the local economy work, creation schemes were used as a means of reducing unemployment and hardship, particularly during the early 1920s and the Great Depression (1929–33). Public works schemes were also implemented during the early 1980s as a response to the economic recession following the implementation of monetarist policies by central government. The rebuilding of the lake walls and the provision of fishing posts in 1987–88 was undertaken through a community programme for forty-six individuals run by the charity Keep Britain Tidy as part of a UK 2000 environment scheme, with additional support from Mobil Oil.<sup>28</sup> Further work was taken forward with funding from the Manpower Services Commission, while the partial restoration of the boathouse in 1989–90, by then ‘a decayed and vandalized building’, was only made possible through a grant of eighty-five thousand pounds from Mobil Oil.<sup>29</sup>

The first initiative for using volunteers in the park can be traced back to the late 1960s, following a proposal from the Birkenhead Branch of the YWCA and the Birkenhead & District Co-operative Youth Club. However, Bidston Hill became the focal point for ‘Operation Spring Clean’ and the youth club’s offer to renovate and paint a park shelter was rejected after discussions with representatives of the Amalgamated Society of Painters and Decorators.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, when the idea of allowing volunteers to assist the rangers was first suggested in 1986, it was rejected by the council because ‘the Trade Unions had objected’. Despite a persistent concern that volunteers might threaten the security of full-time jobs, by the early 1990s it was officially agreed that ‘opportunities for voluntary sector involvement in parks and open spaces should be identified’.

Today, the park is benefitting from the implementation of a volunteer programme developed by the Friends of Birkenhead Park, in collaboration with Wirral Council, which increasingly provides invaluable support for the professional staff. The volunteers operate in partnership with the rangers so that collectively they can achieve far more than would otherwise have been possible. Initially under the guidance of Ian Lea, the ‘volunteer’ volunteer coordinator, the programme recruited over eighty people willing to commit time and energy in maintaining and improving their park (Figure 4). Volunteers are offered a wide variety of roles in the park, including gardening, conservation and marshalling, many of which involve the acquisition of new, employment-related skills. Currently, over twelve separate roles are available to volunteers, including cleaning and cooking, while individuals can make a contribution as events or play assistants, education and social media assistants, site coordinators or park fitness buddies. Other roles available to volunteers include acting as site coordinators and leading health walks. They have also played a critical role in developing the Edward Kemp Community Garden and Growing Area as an important horticultural and environmental resource for local schools and community groups.<sup>31</sup> In 2011, the volunteers contributed almost five thousand hours in support of the park, equivalent to two-and-a-half members of staff, and there is a clear intention to increase the level of community involvement in maintaining the world’s first public park.<sup>32</sup> In 2016, the tenth anniversary of the formal start of the volunteer programme was celebrated, with three



Figure 4. Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the volunteer programme in Birkenhead Park, January 2016. Courtesy: Friends of Birkenhead Park

of the original volunteers still deeply committed to maintaining the park (Figure 4).

By and large, the development of volunteering in other Kemp-designed parks and cemeteries has followed a similar pattern, as friends groups have recognized that the severity of government budgetary cuts for local authorities would lead inevitably to a further reduction in the council's workforce, undermine management plans for conservation and maintenance, and necessitate a greater reliance on volunteer support. Almost in every case, volunteers organized by friends groups play a vital role in ensuring that Kemp's legacy is retained and, where possible, restored. At Castle Park, volunteers will be expected 'to support the park in a variety of ways' through landscape maintenance and litter-picking, while the Friends of Congleton Park currently offer two volunteer days each month 'to



Figure 5. Saltwell Park, 'one of the UK's 10 favourite parks', October 2018. Courtesy: Friends of Saltwell Park

generally clean the park, including various items of furniture and equipment', as well as litter pick.<sup>33</sup> The friends group at Saltwell Park plays an important role in caring for and promoting the park. In June 2016, a public consultation 'Your Park Needs You', funded by Gateshead Council's Capacity Building Fund, sought to boost its membership. Last year it was awarded the title of 'Friends Group of the Year 2017' by Friends in Trust, while Keep Britain Tidy has listed Kemp's landscape as 'one of the top ten of the nation's parks' (Figure 5). Its five-year plan covering six objectives (set out under three headings) prioritizes the need to ensure that the park is 'safe and secure', emphasizes the importance of engaging with the whole community to maximize the benefits of partnership working, but it also includes plans to increase the contribution of volunteers by improving facilities and 'protecting the Park's rich heritage and gardens'. According to Gateshead Council, the friends group is 'vitally important to the Park' and the contribution of volunteers in supporting a wide range of activities, including music concerts in the bandstand as well as carrying out landscape maintenance, is intended to promote and protect Kemp's legacy.<sup>34</sup>

But it is salutary to note that of the twelve parks that Kemp designed, laid out or superintended, four offer no, or very limited, opportunities for volunteers and the creation of new opportunities for volunteering at Castle Park will depend on the outcome of current discussions and negotiations. To this extent, the future maintenance and improvement of Grosvenor Park, Mersey Park, Newsham Park and Stanley Park will be compromised increasingly by the absence of volunteers organized by friends groups at a time of severe, if not unprecedented, budgetary cuts.

As far as the three cemeteries are concerned, the picture is mixed. Both Anfield and St Helens are working cemeteries and inevitably it is the respective council's responsibility to maintain them, as required. As a result, the opportunities open to volunteers from the two friends groups to undertake landscape work is far more restricted than at Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, which is effectively closed to new interments. St Helens Cemetery is well



Figure 6. Encouraging people of all ages to appreciate Anfield Cemetery, October 2018. Courtesy: Friends of Anfield

managed and maintained, while the friends group is involved in meetings of the council's committee with oversight of the cemetery, which is normally convened on a twelve-week basis with an explicit focus on preserving and maintaining the overall appearance of the cemetery grounds. Members organize and assist with a range of events, including Christmas wreath-making and the Father's Day Memorial Service (June 2018), but all maintenance work is carried out by Sefton Council staff. Equally at Anfield Cemetery, members of the friends group are not involved in maintaining Kemp's landscape, but they contribute enormously to the development of what for many years was a neglected heritage site. They host regular tours by Liverpool's Heritage Board and young people, arrange remembrance services (such as that to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Royal Air Force), and compile and disseminate heritage articles that reveal aspects of the cemetery's history that have been neglected for many decades (Figure 6). For example, in April 2018, they posted on the group's website an article about five members of the Chinese Labour Corps who were buried in the cemetery during the First World War. At least ninety-three thousand Chinese volunteered to help the British war effort as non-combatants by digging trenches, burying the dead, working in munitions factories and serving in the Merchant Navy in order to release British troops for active service at the front. Some of them married local women, but the authorities deliberately failed to notify their families when they were forcibly deported in 1919 without compensation.<sup>35</sup>

By contrast, the Friends of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens have undertaken a great deal of hard work in clearing ninety-two per cent of an overgrown landscape that would have been an impossible challenge for other friends groups. 'Lax winter works programmes' from the 1980s until the first decade of this century meant that most paths had become almost impassable; in both the Catholic and Non-conformist sections paths had disappeared; and the views from one section down to another – a key feature of Kemp's landscape design – were lost. There was also widespread memorial vandalism, the impact of which the friends tried to soften by selective planting. The scale of the task was enormous and initially, because of the small number of volunteers, progress in clearing vegetative overgrowth was limited. The solution to this problem was to foster partnerships working with local organizations and firms. Young people from the TNG Youth and Community Centre were brought in as part of their training programme and apprentices from Cammell Laird agreed to manufacture and install the missing rail sections. Today, the volunteer programme has been transformed. Under the leadership of Brian Sinton (who is also a member of the Friends of Birkenhead Park), corporate volunteers from Vodaphone, Deutsche Bank and the Department for Work and Pensions have worked on site, while young people have become involved in improving the landscape through a partnership with the St James Community Centre.<sup>36</sup> The outstanding work undertaken by volunteers at Flaybrick Memorial Gardens in restoring a significant historic landscape that had been neglected for many years was a major achievement and it has provided a basis for the development of strategic plans to ensure its ultimate restoration.

#### THE ROLE OF FRIENDS GROUPS IN FORMULATING STRATEGIC PLANS AND SECURING EXTERNAL GRANTS

From the available evidence, it is clear that friends groups require a clear vision as to how their parks and cemeteries can be restored and improved in a way that will encourage greater community involvement and a sense of ownership. At Anfield Cemetery, the friends group has played an important role in raising the profile of the heritage site and in convincing Liverpool City Council to take forward a number of bids for external funding in order to move towards its complete restoration. In the last three years, the council and Historic

England have contributed two hundred and ninety thousand pounds in order to stabilize the two large catacombs; thirty thousand pounds for the production of a conservation management plan (now half completed); ten thousand pounds to prevent rain damage to the South Chapel; and fifteen thousand pounds for a whole cemetery structures report. More recently, the award of fifty thousand three hundred pounds from HLF's Resilient Heritage Programme ('Exploring Anfield's South Chapel', 16 April 2018) included provision for the employment of a professional consultant to provide advice on how the friends group could raise funds to take over the ownership of the chapel and transform it into an International Heritage and Visitor Centre, as well as an architect to design a two-storey extension, which, if approved by the local planning committee, will allow people to see why Kemp's geometric design of 1863 is still so highly prized.

The chapel will serve the community in various ways: as a centre for events, including photography and art exhibitions and genealogical research, and also as a venue where visitors will be able to record stories about their loved ones. The cemetery is a unique 'Heritage in the Making Resource' with the potential of serving as an education centre to explore Liverpool's global past. According to Tom Bradburn, secretary of the Friends of Anfield: 'Once again, the HLF has demonstrated its faith in our work. This grant will make a big difference to our charity.'<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the friends group itself has also been successful in obtaining grant support, including a Start Up Grant from the HLF and three thousand pounds from the Architectural Heritage Fund, but by raising the profile of the cemetery and seeking partnership links (for example, with the University of Liverpool), it has created a vision for the future and prompted active support from the city council.

A similar approach has been adopted successfully by the Friends of Flaybrick Cemetery. From the date of its foundation in 1993, it has sought to tackle the problems created by continued neglect by the local authority, but its campaigning was informed by a strategic vision to restore the dilapidated cemetery and the need to seek national and international recognition. Because of its importance as a Kemp-designed landscape, it was awarded Significant Cemetery in Europe status; in 2008, with support from Wirral Borough Council, it hosted the European Cemeteries Conference in Birkenhead; and in 2012 its status was raised to II\* by English Heritage. Again, the members of the group were able to reinforce pressure for remedial measures to address the cemetery's desperate condition by organizing a range of community events, by securing local support for a programme of restoration, and by developing an effective volunteer programme. Although it was a slow process, this ultimately led in 2006 to the commissioning of local architects, Ainsley Gommon Ltd (with financial support from the council), to undertake a feasibility report on necessary repairs for the ruined cemetery chapels and their 're-ordering'.

In 2016, a jointly funded project involving Historic England and the council (worth three hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds) was initiated in order to stabilize the chapel walls by preventing the risk of any further collapse and by eliminating any further damage to the existing stonework and carvings, some of which had been hidden for over thirty years. The chapels have finally been opened again to the general public as part of Wirral's Heritage Open Days programme 2018. The friends group remain committed to continuing their campaign to secure further improvements: the conservation management plan, completed by Purcell Architects, has provided a basis for formulating new proposals for reinstating paths and other features of the site, while the Wirral Environment Group (with funding from Life Long Learning) have put in six hundred hours surveying all the trees and producing a much-needed leaflet. The immediate objective is to draw up an application for major HLF funding, in collaboration with Eileen Willshaw, the local authority's heritage officer.<sup>38</sup>

The case of Birkenhead Park demonstrates the extent to which friends groups can really help to transform the debate about the future of a landscape laid out by Kemp (although nominally under Paxton's supervision) and one for which he retained a great deal of responsibility until the year of his death in 1891. In 2004, after considerable pressure from the friends, work was finally initiated on the restoration of the park on the basis of significant grant support (£11.3 million) from the HLF, the European Union, English Heritage and Wirral Borough Council, which also made a commitment to increase its revenue support for at least ten years. But the physical restoration of the park was seen by the friends as the first step in its rehabilitation. In April 2007, a five-year community involvement and heritage education project was launched with funding support from the HLF (£451,300), Wirral Borough Council (£7500), the University of Liverpool and the friends. The project delivered a range of activities designed to achieve two objectives: to promote a better understanding of its international importance as the first publicly funded municipal park in the world; and to strengthen community involvement in its management and future development.

In addition, a decision was made to seek funding to convert what had been a derelict area on the periphery of the park into a resource for community allotments and a centre for learning and practising horticultural and gardening skills. Under the leadership of Sheila Blair and with significant external funding from a range of sources, including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Local Food and the Burbo Bank Extension Community Fund, Park Roots CIC (the trading arm of the friends) have created the Edward Kemp Community Garden and Growing Area. It has been a great success, with allotments taken up by local schools and community groups, while volunteers can acquire new skills (Figure 7). In total, since 2007, the friends have secured external funding in support of Birkenhead Park in excess of one million pounds. More recently, the friends have led the way in formulating plans for the inscription of the park on the UK's tentative list of World Heritage Sites. The planning committee is chaired by a member of the friends and its work, which is already well advanced, is regarded by the council as having strategic importance.<sup>39</sup>

Equally, at Congleton Park the friends group played a proactive role in securing HLF support (£9,993,000 on 11 September 2001) for a full restoration of the park, which



Figure 7. Volunteers at the Edward Kemp Community Garden and Growing Area at Birkenhead Park, October 2018. Courtesy: Friends of Birkenhead Park

was completed in 2004–05, with additional support from a wide range of organizations, including Cheshire East Council (formerly Congleton Borough Council), Congleton Town Council, the Millennium Committee and local trusts. Indeed, members of the friends, in particular John Lilley and the late Margaret Williamson, were responsible for writing up over seventy per cent of the bid document, with support from the council's quantity surveyors and planners. Following the completion of the restoration project, the friends group has expanded its activities in the park, hosting and organizing both sixties and jazz concerts and, above all, frequent performances by brass bands, all except one of which was supported financially in 2018 by local trusts (Figure 8). Indeed, the friends group has developed an enviable expertise in raising money for activities and events in the park, for which it has almost sole responsibility. Members have secured the erection of a store for all their equipment; they carry out risk assessments; and used their influence to secure the transfer of park maintenance from ANSA Environmental Services (originally commissioned by Cheshire East Council) back to Congleton Town Council as a means of improving quality standards and strengthening local democracy.<sup>40</sup>

At Queen's Park, evidence assembled by council staff at the beginning of this century, reinforced by pressure from the friends group and complaints from the local community, revealed the extent of the park's gradual decay and the need for significant improvements. This led to the implementation of a large-scale restoration scheme in 2006 at an overall cost of six-and-a-half million pounds, of which two-and-three-quarter million was provided by the HLF, with additional support from Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN), a not-for-profit business that provides grant support for community, biodiversity and heritage projects. Before 2010, however, the friends did not have a proper constitution, but following the park's restoration the group's role in supporting and sustaining the park was formalized officially. Indeed, it is seen by the council as 'the cornerstone' in ensuring its sustainability by helping to increase the level of community and public support. In 2013, there was a considerable extension of its role through the establishment of ANT (Action Not Talk) which was subsequently incorporated into the management structure of the friends. This offers the wider community the opportunity of airing its views on issues relating to the park. It was created in response to a challenge from the leader of the council for more active public engagement with the park and has now evolved into a 'hands-on service' that meets monthly to undertake a range of tasks. In addition to the core committee of the friends, a number of subgroups have been set up for wildlife, angling, events, bowls and the management of the Lakeside Pavilion. The Creative Crewe volunteers represent the events group, while the secretary of the friends acts as a direct link with the core committee. It organizes two main events in the park each year and supports many others, including the park run (every Saturday morning until 29 December 2018), the frequent summer band concerts, and the Crewe Military Festival (1 July 2018). It also plays an active role in fundraising.

The extent of volunteering at Queen's Park is impressive, with approximately four thousand person-hours registered in the first six months of this year and the rate of growth 'has been nothing less than staggering'. Such progress, however, has been a result of an effective partnership between the council and the friends group. In 2018, Elaine Webster, parks and recreation manager at Cheshire East Council, became the recipient of the Green Flag Award Scheme's 'Employee of the Year', having been nominated by the secretary of the friends, Sheila Blackburn, who emphasized the importance of a collective approach in ensuring the sustainability of the park. Following its restoration to its former Victorian splendour, it had become 'a modern, accessible and free green space that serves its community and the wider area in an incomparable way. It is, without doubt, the very best that Crewe has to offer – and that is thanks to the work

and commitment of its manager, Elaine Webster' and, it might be added, to the immense contribution of the friends.<sup>41</sup>

In other cases, the balance of responsibility between a local council and a friends group in sustaining Kemp-designed parks and cemeteries continues to vary. Friends groups often focus on applying for limited funds to undertake specific activities. Almost in every case, their members organize events and activities (often in conjunction with the local authority), some of which can only be delivered through successful applications for external funding or partnership working with other local organizations. For example, the Friends of St Helens Cemetery, with support from the Rotary Club, has arranged bulb-planting opportunities for school children and bat walks with the rangers.<sup>42</sup>

#### WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL COUNCIL AND OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

What emerges from this analysis of the role of friends groups representing parks and cemeteries designed or laid out by Kemp is the importance of working in collaboration with the local authority and other bodies. Indeed, it is often the responsibility of the friends group to raise the profile of its park, secure community support for a forward-looking strategy, and persuade local councillors of the undoubted benefits that would accrue through an official commitment to secure external funding for major restoration work, where necessary, or specific projects that would enhance the park's appearance. A number of friends groups have developed a close and positive working relationship with their local councils. Funding applications to rectify decades of neglect at Flaybrick Memorial Gardens could not have been submitted without council support; the Friends of Anfield Cemetery has excellent relations with Liverpool City Council; and the Saltwell Park Users Group, which brings together all the park's stakeholders, including the friends group, is coordinated by Gateshead Council. Almost certainly, progress in securing the HLF grant (two-and-a-half million pounds) to restore Hesketh Park was achieved through the political influence of the founding chairman of the Hesketh Park Heritage Group, Tom Glover OBE, who was a longstanding local councillor (1973–2012). Indeed, a later rejection of an application to the National Lottery to support the building of special classrooms in the park did not dishearten its members 'who vowed to keep on raising money', and they have kept their promise. They now have enough funds to equip an education and visitor centre, but Sefton Council is unable to finance its construction because of severe budgetary cuts.<sup>43</sup>

At Birkenhead Park, bimonthly partnership meetings are held between park management and the friends committee; volunteers provide marshalling at major public events, including the annual Race for Life; and honorary officers of the friends attend quarterly meetings of the Birkenhead Park Management Advisory Committee and chair meetings of the World Heritage Site Planning Committee. Indeed, Wirral Council is in many ways exemplary in the way that it has encouraged friends groups to participate in policy formulation and the monitoring of standards. In formulating the Wirral Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2014–2024, following consultation with friends groups and other stakeholders, the local council adopted measures that strengthened cooperation, but also reinforced their contribution in formulating strategic objectives and monitoring performance as a 'critical friend', a role that had already been taken forward by the Partnership and Performance Board, chaired by the chair of the Wirral Parks Forum. Particularly at a time of severe reductions in the budgets of parks departments, which will get considerably worse by 2020, active collaboration between friends groups and local councils will be critical if the future of the public landscapes designed or laid out by Kemp is to be guaranteed.<sup>44</sup>



Table 2. Green Flag Awards as an indicator of the contribution of friends groups

Cemetery/park	Friends group	Year of Green Flag Award; and Green Heritage Award
Birkenhead Park	Yes	2007; 2007
Victoria Park	Yes	2015
Castle Park	No	2012
Anfield Cemetery	Yes	×
St Helens Cemetery	Yes	×
Flaybrick Cemetery	Yes	2016
Newsham Park	No	×
Grosvenor Park	No	2008
Southport Cemetery	No	×
Hesketh Park	Yes	2006
Stanley Park	No	2010
Congleton Park	Yes	2008
Saltwell Park	Yes	2006
Mersey Park	Yes?	×
Queen's Park	Yes	2016; 2017

Often, in collaboration with the local council, friends groups have played a critical role in securing Green Flag status for their parks, thereby raising their local, regional and national profile and encouraging greater community involvement (Table 2). Whether at Congleton Park, Queen's Park, Hesketh Park, Flaybrick Cemetery or Birkenhead Park, the friends groups have been fully supportive of council attempts to secure what has been termed the 'Oscars of the Park World', with outstanding success (Figures 8 and 9). In 2008, Councillor Glover, as chairman of the Hesketh Park Heritage Group and a 'champion' of the park, was instrumental in taking forward the Green Flag application. A year earlier, Birkenhead Park achieved its first award (as well as a Green Heritage Award): it had been actively supported by the friends group and the announcement of the award was described by Councillor Bob Moon as 'a big occasion for the area'. In other cases, however, the evidence suggests that the absence of a friends groups makes the likelihood of an application to Keep Britain Tidy unlikely, if not impossible, while ongoing austerity measures, as in the case of Liverpool, have led to a radical reduction



Figure 8. The Friends of Congleton Park celebrate the Green Flag Award 2016/17. Courtesy: The Friends of Congleton Park



Figure 9. Celebrating the Green Flag Award 2018/19 at Queens' Park, Crewe, October 2018. Shown are the Mayor of Crewe, Councillor Brian Roberts, Paul Todd, Manager of the Green Flag Award Scheme, Keep Britain Tidy, Eileen Webster, ANSA Parks Manager, Derek Morgan, Chair of the Friends, and Sheila Blackburn, Secretary of the Friends and representative of Creative Crewe, Crewe Rotary and the Friends. Courtesy: Friends of Queen's Park

in the number of parks and cemeteries submitted, even if they meet the required quality standards. For some years the council has only submitted applications for two of its parks – Sefton Park and Stanley Park – only because they have both been the recipients of significant external funding to secure their restoration. A similar trend is evident in St Helens: before 2017 most of the council's parks succeeded in gaining a Green Flag Award, but because of austerity measures and cost considerations (particularly the loss of staff time involved), only Victoria Park has been allowed to retain its Green Flag status. A few years ago when the Friends of St Helens Cemetery tried to persuade the council to submit an application for its own Kemp-designed landscape: the request was denied.<sup>45</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

According to the North West Friends of Parks Forum, of which some of the friends groups discussed in this paper are members, there is a pressing need to support the way in which they can play a more proactive and empowering role in safeguarding the future of their individual parks. In the current climate, when further cuts to local authority budgets by the Conservative government will have a disastrous impact on all public parks in the next two years, friends groups will have an even greater responsibility for ensuring that they remain vital community assets. The widespread benefits delivered by parks and green spaces were well understood by the Victorians, particularly by those who advocated their creation by using public money. They were intended to deliver economic improvements, promote health and well-being, and to serve as a means of promoting social cohesion in what was then a rapidly changing world. Today, the contributions that public green space can make are equally relevant when we are faced by a widening differential in class-specific morbidity and mortality, severe health problems resulting from isolation (particularly for many elderly people) and obesity, as well as the negative consequences of zero-hour contracts and the gig economy.

Within such a context, the responsibilities that friends groups face in supporting parks and cemeteries designed or laid out by Kemp are legion. It is not surprising, therefore, that their remit usually includes promoting further improvements to the

historic landscape, raising local awareness of the regional or national importance of their heritage assets, increasing the extent of community involvement and ownership, and, perhaps most importantly, campaigning for a reinstatement of local authority funding so that adequate maintenance can be guaranteed in the future.

But the review of the current role of friends groups at Kemp sites is not uniformly encouraging. In two cases – at Newsham Park and Stanley Park – existing friends groups ceased to operate some time ago, and if any attempts to revive them have been undertaken, they have not succeeded. The cumulative loss of key staff from Liverpool's Parks Department, specifically park development officers who played a vital role in fostering the formation of new friends groups and sustaining those that already existed, has had inevitable consequences, despite the success of the Liverpool Parks Forum in galvanizing widespread support in opposition to the sale of park land and the downgrading of essential maintenance. In both cases, however, community interest companies have sought to take over activities and events that the friends groups previously helped to deliver. But they do not have a campaigning function and often have difficulties in raising regular income, as the recent and regrettable demise of The Tree House CIC at Newsham Park illustrates.<sup>46</sup> At Chester, the Grosvenor Park Friends Group has ceased to operate; an earlier attempt to set up a group at Southport (Duke Street) Cemetery did not progress; and it is only now that Castle Park is once again trying to recruit volunteers.

Nevertheless, the remaining ten parks and cemeteries included in this survey do have active friends groups, some of which contribute enormously to the safeguarding and development of their historic landscapes. At Anfield Cemetery, Birkenhead Park, Congleton Park, Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, St Helens Cemetery, Saltwell Park, Victoria Park and Queen's Park, and, to a lesser extent, at Hesketh Park in Southport and Mersey Park, the friends groups (or their equivalent) play a major role in the management and development of their Kemp landscapes. Partnership working with the local council and other local community groups is already embedded in working practices and in some cases, for example, at Congleton Park, the friends group has taken over a great deal of the council's responsibilities. Collectively, they offer a template for other friends groups and provide a clear indication of how local groups can respond effectively to the current government-induced crisis that has undermined the ability of many local authorities to maintain public green space to an appropriate standard and has already led to the sale of park land for residential housing development.

In the current financial and political climate, with an unwavering commitment to austerity with its widespread, class-specific impact, all friends groups have a major responsibility for developing in collaboration with their local councils a strategy that will ensure the future safeguarding of their parks and cemeteries. But one-third of Kemp's public landscapes do not have an active friends group, and other historic landscapes depend on the commitment and hard work of a relatively small number of members and volunteers. In general, there is a real need for capacity-building in the case of friends groups at a regional level, which the North West Parks Friends Forum is seeking to address with support from Big Lottery (Awards for All), but the task is a daunting one.

There is clearly a strong case for closer collaboration between the different friends groups, particularly on a practical basis distinguishing between those involved with parks and cemeteries, simply in order to share best practice and to develop new ideas for future projects. But unless there is a radical change in the government's policy to funding local authorities, by 2020 it will have had a devastating impact on all parks and green spaces, including the historic landscapes designed and laid out by Kemp. Forward-looking councils have seen the benefits of placing Kemp's parks at the centre of their local communities and have recognized the ability of friends groups to ensure their parks



Figure 10. The Friends of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, October 2018, including John Moffat (centre) and Brian Sinton (second from right). Courtesy: Friends of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens

can support the health needs of local residents. They have fostered the implementation of effective partnership working and have welcomed the contributions that volunteers can make in improving public green space, as in the case of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens (Figure 10). But if councils have no budgetary flexibility at all by 2020 and cannot even maintain statutory services, then the tasks facing friends groups may well become insuperable as the downward cycle of underfunding and dereliction that characterized the latter decades of the twentieth century returns to inflict far greater damage on the fabric of our parks and Victorian cemeteries, including the outstanding landscapes designed or laid out by Edward Kemp which represent some of England's most important heritage assets.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>32</sup> Metropolitan Borough of Wirral Department of Leisure Services, *Birkenhead Park Management Plan* (Birkenhead, 1991), p. 74; 'Birkenhead Park Manager's Report', Wirral Council, Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee (4 April 2012).

<sup>33</sup> See [www.friendsofcongletonpark.co.uk/](https://www.friendsofcongletonpark.co.uk/).

<sup>34</sup> See <https://www.friendsofsaltwellpark.co.uk/>; and <https://www.gateshead.co.uk/article/6625/Friends-of-Saltwell-Park/>.

<sup>35</sup> Mark O'Neill, *The Chinese Labour Corps: The Forgotten Chinese Labourers of the First World War* (London: Penguin Random House, 2016); John Starling and Ivor Lee, *No Labour, No Battles: Military Labour During the First World War* (Stroud: History Press, 2009); Vicki Caren, 'Chinese labour in Liverpool', in *World War I Merseyside at War 1914–1918* (available at: [www.merseyside-at-war.org/story/chinese-labourers-in-Liverpool/](http://www.merseyside-at-war.org/story/chinese-labourers-in-Liverpool/)); 'Liverpool remembers the Chinese Labour Corps, 10 August 2018', *Centenary News First World War 1914–1918* (available at: [www.centenarynews.com/article/liverpool-remembers-the-chinese-labour-corps/](http://www.centenarynews.com/article/liverpool-remembers-the-chinese-labour-corps/)).

<sup>36</sup> Moffat, 'Past and present impact', pp. 3–5.

<sup>37</sup> Tom Bradburn, presentation on Anfield Cemetery at the Edward Kemp Symposium and personal communication, 25 September 2018; 'Radio Merseyside interviews Friends of Anfield, 16 April 2018'; <https://friendsofanfieldcemetery.com> (16 April 2018).

<sup>38</sup> Moffat, 'Past and present impact', pp. 5–6; Lorna Hughes, 'Can £325K repairs help Wirral's Flaybrick Cemetery recover from years of neglect?', *Liverpool Echo* (13 February 2017); [agarchitects.co.uk/projects/2007-08-26-flaybrick-hill-cemetery-memorial-chapels-creativeuse](http://agarchitects.co.uk/projects/2007-08-26-flaybrick-hill-cemetery-memorial-chapels-creativeuse).

<sup>39</sup> Graham Arnold, 'Volunteer presentation', paper given at the Edward Kemp Symposium; The Edward Kemp Community Garden and Growing Area, *Beyond Inspiration Into Reality* (Hoylake: Edward Kemp Community Garden and Growing Area, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> John Lill, Friends of Congleton Park, personal communication, 28 September 2018; Reece Morgan, ANSA Environmental Services (Cheshire East Council), personal communication, 28 September 2018.

<sup>41</sup> George Broughton, 'The task of maintaining Kemp's unique landscape heritage: Queen's Park, Crewe', paper presented at the Edward Kemp Symposium; [www.wren.org.uk](http://www.wren.org.uk); Elaine Webster, 'Queen's Park Crewe Friends of Queen's Park Crewe' (September 2018), pp. 1–2, 5–7; 'Inspirational manager receives Employee of the Year Award' (available at: [www.greenflagaward.org.uk/news/inspirational-parks-manager-received-top-award/](http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/news/inspirational-parks-manager-received-top-award/)).

<sup>42</sup> Marlene Downey, paper presented at the Edward Kemp Symposium.

<sup>43</sup> Bradburn, personal communication, 25 September 2018; Ward, personal communication, 28 September 2018; 'What makes Southport such a special place?', *Lancashire Life* (14 June 2011); 'Historic Park's £2.5m new look', *Liverpool Echo* (12 December 2003); 'Hesketh Park in Southport denied National Lottery Cash', 13 March 2015 (available at: <https://www.southportvisitor.co.uk/News/SouthportNews/HeskethPark/>); Glover, personal communication, 1 October 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Arnold, paper presented at the Edward Kemp Symposium; Wirral Borough Council, *Wirral Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2014–2024*, stakeholder workshop (April 2013); <https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s500221346/rep3646.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup> Natasha Young, 'Two popular Liverpool sites honoured with Oscars of the Park World', *YMLiverpool* (18 July 2017); Councillor Bob Moon, 'Special award for historic park', BBC News Channel (29 February 2008); 'Oldest public park gets Green Flag' (2008); [www.parksandgardens.org/news-and-events/.../332-oldest-public-park-gets-green-flag/](http://www.parksandgardens.org/news-and-events/.../332-oldest-public-park-gets-green-flag/); Downey, personal communication, 30 September 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Liverpool Parks Friends Forum (available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Liverpool-park-friends-forum-244506995917482/>).