

THE HEXPRESS

YOUR FREE HEXTHORPE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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The Crimpsall - Has it a Future?



Gordon Barlow blackberrying

The photographs of a resident blackberry-picking and the result of his work was taken in the last week of August. Where? It was here in Hexthorpe, on the Crimpsall. It was sent to the Hexpress with the caption 'Food for free!'



'It is a pity that the pathways are getting so overgrown and impassable, as it is a lovely nature reserve right on our doorstep',

so says Kath Wake, a resident on Ramsden Road, who has a particular interest in the Crimpsall. She takes her dog walking there.

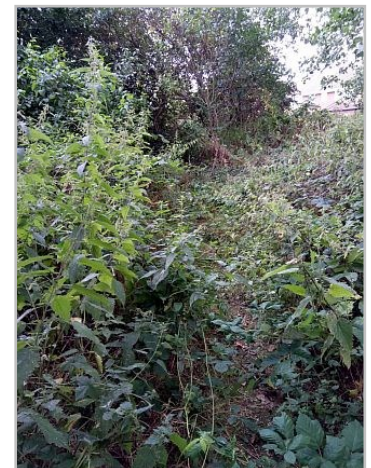
'It is becoming impossible to walk down the paths now.'

Kath wrote to Ross Jones, the Mayor of Doncaster, and within four days she was visited by a council worker. The next day Kath was taking him down to have a look for himself. Action has been promised.

This, of course, is not the first time that Kath has taken action on our behalf. The Hexpress of May 2017 reported that Kath campaigned to make the Crimpsall more accessible.

'A cause of concern was the access from Old Hexthorpe and Bramworth Road to the Crimpsall Ings, the river bank and the old Eden Grove field. The environment officer got her team to do a lot of cutting back of the growth on the paths. The path to the river was cleared and also the bank of the river. The old wood was thoroughly cleared and steps down were made..... the difference all this has made has to be seen to be believed. More and more people are using it, even a man on a bike was able to get through. Wet or dry, it is a most pleasant walk.'

It has now reverted to its former state because of neglect.



What is the story of the Crimpsall?

Hexthorpe in 1837 was described as a pleasant place with gardens. There were some very attractive walks from Doncaster alongside the river Don by the Crimpsall. The latter had 149 acres of rich meadowland, which was partly owned by the freeholders of Balby-with-Hexthorpe. After they had been mowed the freeholders could have their cattle graze there

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WHO'S WHO

Local Councillors

Sophie Liu Tel. 07981 869 276

Glyn Jones Tel. 01302 816881

Methodist Minister

Rev Jon Bellfield Tel. 07766397708

Parish Priest

Hexthorpe Community Constable

Contact Sergeant Butler Tel: 01302 385339

Stronger Community Officers

Contact: Tel. 01302 736930

PACT MEETINGS

These are held every four weeks at 2.00pm at St Jude's Parish Hall. All residents are invited to meet and ask questions of the local police officers.

The Junction

The Junction is open to all from 10.00am-4.00pm each weekday. There is a comfortable drop-in where you can spend as much or as little time as you like. You can have a tea or coffee and join in the friendly chat or just sit in peace.

Members of staff are happy to talk privately with you if you need to talk over something, or need some specific advice or help. There is a computer suite with free broadband access for all. Free computer courses are also available. For further information or help please call in or ring 01302 349341.

Any letters, articles, adverts contact:

thehexpress.co.uk or Donald 01302 852521

WEEKLY EVENTS

The King's Cross Church Hall (Methodist)

Tuesday

9.15-11.00am **S.A.R.A Group**
(Stay and Rest Awhile)
Mums and Tots Group

5.30pm **Mega Cruz School Years 3-6**

Wednesday

1.30-2.30pm **Line Dancing**

Thursday

10.00am **Refresh**
(first of each month)

Saturday

4.00-6.00pm **The Engine Room**
(third of each month)

You are invited on any Sunday to the Worship Services at The King's Cross Church
10.30am and 6.00pm

At Hexthorpe Parish Hall (St Jude's) Laughton Road, Hexthorpe

Monday

1.30-2.30pm Yoga

Wednesday

10.00-11.00am Keep Fit

11.00-11.30am Coffee Morning

Thursday

9.30-10.30am Play/Learn (Mums & Toddlers)

11.45-12.45pm Keep Fit

2.00-3.00pm PACT meeting (see opposite)

Contact: 01302 340346

The Hall is available for hire for parties and other special events.

Sunday Services

10.00am Morning Prayer

11.00am Parish Mass

The above activities are of course subject to the restrictions imposed by the Covid regulations. Some are taking place with perhaps variations of timings. Please make enquiries to the organisers, if in any doubt.



from September to March. The Plant Works were built on some of that land later in the century.

The ordnance survey map of 1854 shows the basic layout of Hexthorpe that can still be seen today. The ferry on the Crimpsall across to Newton on the other bank is shown. There is a curved line of what are described as stones. It is believed that they were marking out the parish boundary.

(Much of this description comes from an article written by a former Hexthorpe resident Valerie Bell nee Croskell).

The Crimpsall of the mid 20th century is described by an old Hexthorpe resident.

As a small boy growing up in the forties, the area we call the Crimpsall was a magical place for us to explore. We went there down the lane off Old Hexthorpe at the top of Shadyside - in front of the present houses and bungalows. Half-way was an old pump by the side of Butterfield's field. The track led to the school playing field, which is now the allotments at the bottom of Bramworth Road. There was a path across the playing field, that led us into the Crimpsall. The path then continued towards the river and followed it round to a fence of the Plant Works. The path was on a fairly high ridge. The Crimpsall was then just marsh land without trees. There was a large pond before the works, at the back of the Eden Grove sports ground.

Behind the playing field were what seemed hundreds of allotments. There was a dyke that ran between them and the Crimpsall. That is where we took our jam jars and nets to collect frog spawn. Also, there were many newts that we caught in our nets. We took them home and they were kept on our window-sills in the back yard. It was fascinating to see the tadpoles emerge and then begin to develop into frogs. In their later stages we took them back to the dyke.



It was on the Crimpsall that I first developed an interest in bird watching. I had a very small child's telescope and tried to see the bird life through it. I remember especially the sky larks that could be seen and heard there. A cuckoo visited every spring.

Unfortunately, both are now absent.

The pond was a great attraction to us as boys. There were bullrushes around the edge of it and many great crested newts in it. Parents didn't like us going there, as it was thought it might be dangerous. Our wet shoes were always a tell-tale sign when we got home and often got us into trouble.

Just about opposite the path, as it turned by the river, was a ferry service. In a cottage under an archway lived a couple who had a small rowing boat moored by a landing stage on the other side. If you shouted "ferry" one of them would row over and we use a rickety old wooden landing stage to get in the boat. We were ferried over for a penny or so. Once there you could walk to Sprotbrough by the river bank or by a footpath close to

The latest updates and information from Doncaster Council and its partners



Each household in the local area will soon receive written confirmation via post that the local PSPO within Hexthorpe has been renewed until August 2024. This is after successful consultation with local residents and businesses. The order is designed to ensure people can use and enjoy public spaces, and support the aim to increase the feeling of safety in a community.

The order focuses on evidenced activities, which are known to have a negative impact on the quality of life for those within that community, and details prohibitions to enable authorised officers to prevent individuals or groups committing anti-social behaviour in a public space that could have a negative effect on other residents.

Taking action

There was a hive of activity within Hexthorpe on 15 July as dozens of council staff and partners were on the ground to tackle the tough issues at the heart of the community. Chief among those concerns is waste, of which we removed more than **EIGHT TONNES** from the area. This has to stop and we are prepared to penalise offenders who do not dispose of their rubbish correctly. To this end, we have issued more than 500 Fixed Penalty Notices in the area for a variety of offences from fly-tipping to littering to dog fouling. If you report it, we WILL take action. We are committed to keeping Hexthorpe clean and safe and will punish anti-social activity. Since the start of the year, we now have in place four dedicated enforcement officers who are completing nearly 90 hours per week in Hexthorpe alone. We also have recruited two new officers who attend once per week to focus solely on fly tipping investigations.

At this point, we would like to say thank you to the 14 volunteer litter pickers in the community who got involved and filled 17 bags of rubbish. If you have a litter pick of your own planned, let us know and we will provide equipment.



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Our communities' officers met with lots of local people as we focussed on supporting the home visits, identifying Wellbeing and Stronger Families cases and supporting the promotion and completion of issues linked to the recently revitalised Crimestoppers initiative.

There were some really good outcomes from this, including:

- 235 residents engaged with specifically provided advice and guidance on how to report issues proactively in the future via Crimestoppers
- 320 properties visited (with Waste & Recycling colleagues) and checks made focused around waste and recycling issues in the area
- 36 residents spoken to and given advice about how to present waste properly

As mentioned previously, residents were really receptive with many commenting that they were happy to see activity and follow ups.

Hexthorpe Crimestoppers Community Awareness day

Recently, our partners at Crimestoppers were located near the Post Office and on hand to promote their work in the area. Their representatives spoke to all of the businesses (which were open) in close proximity. Feedback from these businesses was that an event like this was much needed but it is hard to pinpoint exact issues which are being faced on a daily basis.

However, several businesses are happy to promote the work that Crimestoppers do – including displaying leaflets and posters.

In return, Crimestoppers were happy to have provided some engagement and the community. It is hoped that the messages are well received and follow up work can be carried out. In addition, Crimestoppers representatives are open to speaking at workshops or attending community events in the future.



**To contact Crimestoppers anonymously,
visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org or
call 0800 555 111**

Hexpress Profile

by our reporter Chris Branton

It seems a long time since I last wrote an article spotlighting a Hexthorpe resident who I felt deserved a bit of the limelight! Thanks to the Pandemic, everything has been on hold for far too long and only now are things starting to get back to a new kind of normal life, so I was delighted when I was asked to do another interview.

This Spotlight Article will be different in two respects. Firstly, I have interviewed two people instead of one, and secondly, they are not resident in Hexthorpe, but are very much involved with life here. In fact, one of the two has been involved with Hexthorpe for so long that he has been greeted by the name of Mr. Hexthorpe on at least one occasion, due to his frequent presence around the village! To give you another clue - their motto they stick to is: I won't promise to get something done but I will promise to try.

So, the spotlight this issue goes to someone we all know well, and a lovely lady who has been working with Glynn Jones in Hexthorpe since May, 2021, when the long-standing counsellor Sue Wilkinson stood down. Sue and Glynn made a superb team working in the community for many years until she decided it was time to step down and let some young blood take over.

Glynn Jones and Sophie Liu - Our local councillors

I felt very privileged that they were able to fit time in their busy schedules to talk to me and we had a lovely chat together at the Dell café.



Sophie was born and brought up in China and came to the UK in 2003 to marry her English husband. Their first home was in Mutual Street, so she is well aware of the problems of the community she has chosen to serve. Sophie quickly highlighted the most persistent problems of fly tipping and social misconduct and the steps they are taking to improve the problems, although it is an ongoing battle. They actually came across a person dumping stuff in an alleyway, as they were doing their weekly walk round the village and were able to ensure the culprit was visited by the local police.

Sophie has two sons, eight- and five-year-olds who keep her very busy, when she is not working in Hexthorpe. She is already very much aware of local issues and is very passionate about working with Glynn and community leaders to make Hexthorpe a place we can all be proud of. They have pushed to get a Public Protection Order passed for Hexthorpe, which we hope will help alleviate the social misconduct problems, forbidding large groups to meet up, and cause distress to other residents.

They are also involved in pushing through a law to improve rented accommodation, enforcing landlords to adhere to rules regarding overcrowding, and strict safety measures. Incidentally he joked that documentary such as Homes under the Hammer are partly to blame for the increase in this kind of problem. More people are buying properties and renovating them and making them into flats but there are a few unscrupulous landlords/ladies that put profit before safety and comfort.

This law makes sure that those accommodations must comply with strict rules and checked regularly. This will ensure the tenants have better housing that they can take a pride in and take care of; this in turn should help improve the fly tipping which is not only very unsightly, but a significant health risk.

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As we all have seen, progress on the brand-new housing estate on the old Plant Works site area is moving fast and soon all the new residents will be moving in. Glynn feels that this will be a very positive step for Hexthorpe, as well as providing much needed accommodation in the area. It will also push value of property up in Hexthorpe, and so assist the economy.



I knew **Glynn** and Sue from their regular visits to the Junction Pre-Covid, but it was the first time I had chance to actually chat to the man behind the job. He was born and brought up around the Hyde Park and Balby area and still lives in Balby, has a wonderful wife called Diane, and three daughters, and six grandsons. Glynn says he is enjoying being able to do boyish stuff with his grandsons, which he missed out on having only daughters, although I know he loved sharing his life with four women as his daughters were growing up!!

I asked Glynn how his political career began, and he told me he first was elected in 1999, but had been an active member of the local labour party long before then. His first real involvement began when was with the Single Regeneration Budget Phrase two, which was when the Government invited communities to apply for a grant to regenerate their village or town. He became involved as a governor at the local school and tenant's and residents' association meetings listening to the residents to find out the problems they faced in the community. Since then, his time has been involved with listening to people, getting involved in community projects, working alongside church ministers, school staff and many other community leaders in and out of the area and signposting people who need assistance, making sure the funds got to the places where there were most needed, and applying for more funds.

They also run regular surgeries to encourage residents to come and talk to them about issues they are facing. This funding has been used in many areas, not just in erecting signs reminding folk of the rules and regulations and help and information for people who need help and support. Much money has also been spent on the park, providing a skateboard park, and renewing the park benches and play area. It is sad that the wonderful friends of the Hexthorpe Park who try to keep it tidy and looking nice are thwarted by a small minority of people who take pleasure in destroying the hard work and money spent to make it a park we can be proud of again.

He is quick to point out that there are many positives in Hexthorpe, for example the two churches, the local school and such organizations as the Boxing club which are all an excellent positive force in the community and attracts many young people, and of course the Dell café which is often used by and for the community. Of course one of its many positives is the Park, which is slowly been transformed back to the beauty spot so many remember of us remember visiting as kids.

If we play our part and all take responsibility for the upkeep of our lovely village, we can stamp down on the few that persist in causing trouble. I know there are already a few groups of people who litter pick their area every week, and others that keep their eye on the Dell, and park area. Glynn and Sophie are doing a wonderful job and are true friends of Hexthorpe and they need our support wherever we can. Glynn has asked me to point out that on the Hexthorpe and Balby North Labour Party Facebook page all the changes are detailed, and recommends we keep reading it to see what changes are underfoot, or planned in the future, and roadworks.

As for future plans, Glynn hinted there were lots in the pipeline, including a very significant grant to be used in the park but to keep updated, keep checking in the above-mentioned Facebook page!

Local News

Friends Of Hexthorpe Flatts Park Update

Much has been happening in the Park this year including Yoga sessions in the Dell, two Doncaster Mumbler treasure trails, the relocation of the Doncaster Forest School to the Park and the Community Payback Team who have been busy in the park over the summer helping to restore the BMX track, fences and undertake much needed gardening. We have also paid for ten new benches to be installed in the Dell and they make a big difference.

The annual fireworks event will resume this year and will be on **Thursday 4th November**. It was a massive success last time with around 2,500 people attending and we hope it will be as good this year. More details to be announced in due course.

If you have any questions or ideas then please let us know either on social media @hexthorpepark or by email to hexthorpepark@mail.com or pop into the Dell Café anytime.



Trent Milner and his sons beginning the painting of the crazy golf course. Well done!

HEXTHORPE FLATTS PARK

FIREWORK DISPLAY & Children's Fun Fair

Thursday 4th November

Fun Fair Opens at 5pm
Firework Display Approx. 7.30pm
Entry £1

(includes a donation towards fireworks and the Friends of Hexthorpe Flatts Park)



Calling all seniors

Over 60? Then why not try 'Refresh'.

This is a new group that will meet every first Thursday of the month at 10.00am at the King's Cross Church.

It will include:
activities, games, sports, crafts and food - a light lunch.

See you there!

New Drop in for the Youngsters

Hexthorpe Youth Drop In

Where? St Jude's Hall

When? Mondays @ 4.30 - 5.30pm

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An encouraging letter

This a lovely letter we have received in response to the various mentions made of the 'community feel' there is in our community; it has proved itself over the over the difficult past 18 months.

Dear Hexpress Readers

I come from down south originally and have lived in Hexthorpe for 33 years. I found the people of Hexthorpe here refreshingly friendly and altogether helpful. People here look out for one another. I experienced this in the early days when I was on the Hexthorpe bus. I would hear a voice call out, 'You want to be off at the next stop, love.'. Then sometimes, someone would ring the bell for me. All this was new to me! I had hoped we might live here in retirement and so it came to be. I have not been disappointed.

Yours, Margaret Reasbeck

The latest news from the Junction

What a delight it has been this last week to be able to open The Junction doors without being concerned about having to restrict access. We are now fully open for three days a week (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) with a short lunch break each day.

Many of the Covid measures have now been removed, meaning you can now sit where you choose and we are no longer resorting to disposable cups. However, we still invite you to wear your mask whenever possible, and hand sanitiser and the QR code for scanning are still available.

Migrant Action are still holding their session on alternate Thursday mornings drop-in, and we are hoping that some of our **Knit and Natter group** will begin to return on Tuesday mornings. **Appointments for help** with different issues continue to be available, and, thanks to funding from the Doncaster Council Ward Members' Budget (not to mention the two helpers who erected it for us) we now have a **fully** operational greenhouse. Thanks too to the green-fingered member of the community who has supplied us with tomato plants, onions, beans etc. We look forward to cooking with them in due course.

On Wednesday lunchtimes (11.00am - 1.00pm) **the Stronger Community Officers** are holding a drop-in session at The Junction, so if you have any issues you want to discuss with them, then call and see them there. Hopefully other facilities will be available as time goes on.

If you would like to come in for a cuppa and a chat, or wonder if we can be of assistance to you in any way, please do get in touch. You can do this by ringing 01302 349341 (if no one answers, leave a message as these are checked regularly, or by sending an email to thejunction20@yahoo.com or a message through Facebook: The Junction - TKCC. We really do look forward to meeting you or hearing from you.

Lynn Petersen

Jean Tait

We are sad to report the death of Jean Tait. Jean was a wonderful Hexthorpe lady who was part of our community for 89 years.

Jean's son Ian posted this on a Hexthorpe Facebook site -

Robert, Joanne and myself would like to thank you all for your very kind words and beautiful tributes to our Mum, Jean. We are absolutely overwhelmed by the response. Mum would have loved them all and if she could, would have replied to each and everyone of you! Thank you.

In our next issue we shall have a tribute to Jean. She contributed so much to our community life.



The Wildlife of Hexthorpe!

That was the headline of the February Hexpress of 2013. The article began –

There is an amazing variety of wildlife in the Hexthorpe region. Apologies to those who thought that the Hexpress had a front page sensational scoop! The wildlife we are talking about is the real wildlife produced by nature. It is surprising how much can be seen around the neighbourhood.

We want to remind us all, as we highlight the Crimpsall, that it is still available for us to appreciate. All the following have been spotted in our streets, gardens, back yards, the Flatts, the Crimpsall and the river. Some have been added since 2013.

House sparrow, starling, blue tit, blackbird, chaffinch, woodpigeon, feral pigeon, goldfinch, blue tit, great tit, robin, collared dove, dunnock, magpie, greenfinch, coal tit, long tailed tit, thrush, kestrel, sparrowhawk, mallard, swan, great spotted woodpecker, swallow, house martin, the grey heron and kingfisher can be seen by the banks of the river, the treecreeper in the Flatts, wren, common gull.

What an amazing variety - how many have you seen? Are there others to add to the list?

Fishermen regularly can be seen making their way to the river. This is a sight that would have been extremely rare some twenty-five years ago. Salmon swim up the river.

There are of course a number of animals, including unwelcome one such as mice and rats. Others provoke mixed feelings - rabbits and grey squirrels that are not welcome by gardeners. Foxes have been seen running down Old Hexthorpe and Bramworth Road. A deer was seen in a garden off Dell Crescent. Hedgehogs visit some gardens regularly. Frogs, toads, bats and newts, especially the great crested newt, can be spotted on the Crimpsall.

Kingfisher



Treecreeper



Dunnock



Kestrel



Source: RSPB website

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/>

a quarry, that led you into Sprotbrough park - the grounds of the old hall. You could also go and have a look at Newton's farm.

Unfortunately, the river was one of the most polluted in the country. Therefore, there was no life in it. Kingfishers, herons, fish, including salmon, that are there today were nowhere to be seen.

On the right just as we entered the Crimpsall was a small coppice where we could climb trees. There were willow and catkin trees by the dyke.

Looking back, we were very fortunate children to have such an area to explore. We lived in an urban setting, with the rows of terraced houses and the Plant Works dominating the scene. Yet, on our doorstep was such an amazing area. We lived near to the town centre, but had an opportunity to be close to nature. Who would have lived anywhere else?

Fifty years on in 1993, the Hexpress reported the following:

Lawn mowers, sinks, TV aerials, oil drums, a cow's jaw bone, beds, a toilet were just some of the items fished out of the dyke on the Crimpsall. On Saturday May 22nd, 25 people from the Hexthorpe Environmental Group spent the day cleaning out the dyke. Rubbish had been dumped there over a number of years.

The dyke was described as

'once being of botanical interest - it supported a colony of the rare African violet.' It was thought then that the whole of the Crimpsall (otherwise known as the Hexthorpe Ings) would possibly soon be developed. 'The whole area could be a real asset to the community. Already it is used by gardeners, dog owners, walkers, anglers, rowers, nature lovers and the sports people of Eden Grove.'

June 1999 (From the Hexpress)

The Crimpsall or Hexthorpe Ings SSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) has had a chequered history. In the 1970's there were proposals to landfill the site but because of its high wildlife and amenity value, the scheme was abandoned. However, in the 1980's, a worse fate was to befall it. British Waterways needed to widen the River Don and soil was removed from the corner of the allotments and dumped on to the Ings, because of a lack of communication between the Board and Doncaster Council. Fortunately, before it was too late, the majority of the soil and dredging were put on the Plant site to cap the blue asbestos dumped there.

The area is now drying out and the wetland and animal communities are being replaced by wasteland species. This means that the largest known breeding site of the great crested newt in Doncaster is under threat. This cannot be allowed to happen. A recent Council report, 1996, suggests that the site has no opportunity for enhancement. This is totally incorrect, as the site is a relict Carr woodland with a moderate ecological interest and importance and the marshland zone is worth preserving. What is needed is for several ponds to be created as a visual amenity for wildlife and for educational purposes.

The area needs to have easy access for schools as an educational resource to allow for observation (hides), pond dipping or monitoring (surveys). This would be an asset for our children.

This is from an article by Martin Towers, who worked tirelessly with the powers that be to turn the dreams for the Crimpsall's future into reality.

October 1999 - a new dawn?

This report by Martin Towers was given in the Hexpress. It described exciting new plans for

the Crimpsall's future.

The site is drying out, through lack of management to arrest the natural succession and because of a fall in the water table due to climatic change. This chain of events is not good news for the great crested newt, for which the Ings is the largest breeding colony in DMBC.

The newts are migrating to the Plant Works, where there is now a thriving colony in several concrete water tanks. The present occupiers, Adtranz, would like to develop the Plant Works site and in particular where the newts are to be found. The newts are a protected species, which means that their habitat must not be disturbed. This puts Adtranz in a bit of dilemma. Quite rightly the company contacted English Nature, who contacted the DMBC and its countryside unit.

Members of HEAF (Hexthorpe's environmental group) met with Dennis Roe, the head countryside ranger, to discuss the possibilities of what could be done to arrest the natural succession of the Ings to carr woodland. The good news is that Adtranz are to finance the excavation of three ponds on the Ings, to allow the newts in the Plant Works to be moved back. Hopefully, they will breed and re-establish.



A management plan to last for 15 years has been agreed. Adtranz will transfer the newts, under licence from English Nature. The ongoing day to day management and monitoring of the site will be undertaken by HEAF, in partnership with DMBC. Funds will be made available by Adtranz for any ongoing beneficial management of the newt ponds. A watch will be kept on the use of the site and what waterfowl will be seen. Fish will be introduced and invasive undesirable weeds controlled. This an exciting project and it deserves to succeed.

Ponds were created, but unfortunately events overtook this plan. The Hexpress of January 2004 reported that the Plant Works site and Eden Grove was for sale.

Hexpress Comment

We have given much space to the Crimpsall because we want to show the importance of the site we have on our doorstep. Also, we want to highlight the false dawns, when it seemed possible that the Ings might be developed into an exciting reserve.

Unfortunately, that has not happened. Is it too late? Can another attempt be made? Can all interested parties, those who have a stake in its development, get together?

One new important newcomer to the scene is the new housing estate on the old Plant Works site, known as Pullman Green. In the plans for this new development, the old Eden Grove site is described as reserved for a Community Area. It is now overgrown and almost unrecognisable as a sports field. Can the developers be included in the interested stakeholders and a plan drawn up for the whole area - the Ings and Eden Grove?

This would be great for the present Hexthorpe residents and would be a positive attraction for potential new ones in the Pullman Green.