

THE HEXPRESS

YOUR FREE HEXTHORPE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

No. 123 February 2025

thehexpress.co.uk

Wetland restoration at Hexthorpe Ings - The Crimpsall - after decade of overgrowth

A latest update from the Don Catchment Rivers Trust (DCRT). Hear from Volunteering Officer Anthony Cox on how he and the All Hands on the Don volunteers are making improvements to the land at Hexthorpe Ings. Learn about the benefits of wetlands, how to get involved, and how you can stay in touch with your local rivers trust.

After a decade of overgrowth, improvements to the land are now being made by DCRT's All Hands on the Don volunteers at Hexthorpe Ings- also known as Crimpsall Ings. When speaking about the changes happening there, Anthony Cox, Volunteering Officer, says,

'We've re-cut the old footpath around the site which forms a circular walk for the public. What we're hoping to do now is to restore the Ings back to wetland.'



All Hands on the Don volunteers restoring the wetland at Hexthorpe Ings

Wetland is one of the most endangered types of habitat in the world. Anthony talks about their role in the ecosystem, saying,

'It's very important that we try to protect wetlands. These are rare and precious habitats for biodiversity, as many species live in these spaces.'

Even if it's not a very big site, compared to Potteric Carr, for example, it's really important to create small sections of wetland along the river as stopping points for birds, insects, and other animals.'

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This Hexpress has been kindly sponsored by Helen and Louise, the daughters of Cath Lawson. We are most grateful to them. It is in memory of their mother, the former head of our Hexthorpe School, who we highlighted in our last issue.

WHO'S WHO

Local Councillors

Sophie Liu Tel. 07981 869276

Glyn Jones Tel. 01302 816881

The Kings Cross Church

Minister: Andy Clark 07387 917335

Parish Priest

Fr. Richard Hume Tel. 01709 231326

Stronger Communities Officers

Rob Allen 01302 736930

Rob.allen@doncaster.gov.uk

Jenny Aimson 01302 736930

Jenny.aimson@doncaster.gov.uk

WEEKLY EVENTS

The Crossing @ The King's Cross Church

Monday

5.30-7.30pm Mega Cruz - For School Years 3-6 during term time.

Tuesday

9.15-11.00am SARA Group (in main building) - Parents/Carers with children 0-3 during term time.

Wednesday

1.30pm Line Dancing

Thursday

10.30am Refresh - First Thursday of the month. Friendship, fun and food for over 60's.

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

Building A Better Hexthorpe Positive Action Group



Date: First Thursday of the month

Time: 5:00pm

Location: Travis Gardens, Hexthorpe,
DN4 0DP

Are you interested in making your community a better place to live? Do you have positive ideas that you want to share? If this sounds like you then come along and meet with other residents and Well Doncaster to find out how we can support you and your community!

For more information contact Well Hexthorpe on Facebook or email Laura.Sawdon@doncaster.gov.uk



City of
Doncaster
Council



Any letters, articles, adverts contact:
thehexpress.co.uk or Donald 01302 852521

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

Wednesday

10.00-11.00am Keep Fit with Donna
07979 768717

11.00-11.30am Coffee Morning

Thursday

11.15-12.15pm Stretch and Relax with Donna

The Hall is available for hire for parties and other special events. Contact: Joy 07714 082643

Services

Wednesday

10.15am Morning Prayer

Sunday

11.00am Parish Mass

*Some activities are taking place with perhaps variations of timings.
Please make enquiries to the organisers, if in any doubt.*

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Wetland habitats are particularly vulnerable to overgrowth as, if the trees aren't managed, the land can dry out. Regarding restoring the site, he says,

'It can seem bad to cut down trees. We're taught that trees are good-and they are good-but they need to be in the right places. A wetland can store more carbon per square meter than a woodland.'



All Hands on the Don volunteers collecting litter to improve footpath access around the Ings

The work on Hexthorpe Ings began in November of last year. Anthony says,

'We'll keep working on the site until our last volunteer day there on the 26th of February, so we don't interfere with the bird nesting season in March.'

'We're organising weekly volunteer days throughout February, and anyone can come along; it's a lot of manual work but they're really fun days.'

'We've also got a 'young person's nature skills' day on Saturday 22nd of February, where we'll teach people about wetland management, fell trees, and make habitat piles for animals and insects using branches.'


'We're happy for anyone to join. People are welcome to get in touch if they'd like to come along.'

On how this work came about, Anthony explains,

'It was suggested in conversation between DCRT and local people from Hexthorpe who were concerned about the Ings. We reached out to Doncaster Council who gave us permission to work on the site. There hasn't been any land management done there for quite a while, for at least ten years but potentially even longer.'

There is an online events calendar at <https://dcrt.org.uk/events-calendar/> which contains the contact information for joining on a volunteer day. If you're interested in conservation volunteering and heritage events in Doncaster, please check out DCRT's website or social media.



 @don_catchment_rt

 @DonCatchmentRT

 /DonCatchment

Hexpress Comment

What we call the Crimpsall is officially named the Hexthorpe Ings. We have kept the name of Crimpsall in this Hexpress. We are delighted that there is such good news. It is more than 4 years since the Hexpress of October 2021 had the headline – ‘*The Crimpsall: has it a future?*’ A letter was written to the Mayor, Ross Jones and we had a positive response, in that the Mayor asked the Assistant Director of Development to move the matter forward.

Eventually a meeting of interested parties was held and late in 2022 a visit to the site was made by the Council ecologist. Then there was silence.

Fortunately, we met with DCT in late 2023 resulting in what is reported in this Hexpress. If you are able, the opportunity is given for volunteers to help with the Crimpsall’s development.

What about the future years? The Hexpress of May 2017 reported on the great work done by Kath Wake in persuading the Council to do some work on the Crimpsall, Kath said

‘there was 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 of undergrowth 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. Wet or dry it is a most pleasant walk.’ Then in 2021 we had to report that *‘it has now reverted back to its former state because of neglect’*.

It is now essential that in conjunction with DCT there should be a plan to manage the Crimpsall in the coming years. There is a need to form some form of partnership/friends group to secure its future development.

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No. 113 October 2021

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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.

HEXPLORERS SEASON TWO



In the heart of Hexthorpe, a remarkable initiative is flourishing, bringing joy, creativity, and new opportunities to the children of our community. The **Hexplorers project**, now in its second successful season and organised by **Arts & Culture Community Centre**, is dedicated to providing children with the chance to explore various artistic expressions, from music and poetry to crafts, puppetry, and literacy games.

This project has become a beacon of hope and creativity for the children of Hexthorpe.

Through engaging workshops and hands-on activities, children have discovered a safe and inspiring space to express themselves, make new friends, and explore their unique talents.

The impact of Hexplorers has been profound. Parents and educators alike have noted the positive changes in the children who participate. They have grown in confidence, developed new skills, and found a sense of belonging that extends far beyond the workshops.



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One of the most remarkable aspects of Hexplorers is its ability to unlock the children's potential. By offering a diverse range of artistic experiences, the project has opened doors to new passions and possibilities. Whether it is through the rhythm of a drum, the brushstrokes of a painting, the magic of a puppet show, the creativity of literacy games, or the joy of learning musical instruments, children are discovering the beauty they have to offer their community and the world.

The children themselves have expressed how much they enjoy the activities and how happy they feel when they are at the workshops. Many have shared that these spaces allow them to discover new talents and feel a sense of joy they had not experienced before. They appreciate having a place in their neighbourhood where they can nurture their talents and feel truly happy.

Looking ahead, the organisers of Hexplorers are planning to expand the initiative by incorporating music workshops where children and parents can learn to play the guitar, violin, or keyboard. To achieve this, they seek support from the local government to purchase instruments and ensure these workshops are provided free of charge to the community. By continuing to evolve and adapt to the interests of the children, the project seeks to become an even more integral part of Hexthorpe's cultural landscape, fostering creativity and self-expression in future generations.



Hexthorpe's Role in the Story of Oswin Avenue School (Ossie) Part Three World War II - Triumph & Tragedy

For the pupils of Oswin Avenue School, one early consequence of the preparations for war was an extended summer holiday in 1939, as air raid shelters were being constructed. Pupils would soon grow accustomed to carrying gas masks and engaging in air raid drills. At one stage, the school premises were utilised by the Home Guard. "*Classrooms were crowded with beds, cookers (and) practice bombs*" (Alan Berry 1999). The YMCA hostel which stood on 'The Half Acre', Oswin Avenue, which later functioned as one of the school's classrooms, was used as barracks for the women of the Land Army.

The factory workers of Balby and Hexthorpe, many of them former Ossie pupils, were at the heart of industrial war efforts. Whilst spared the levels of devastation experienced by some other towns and cities, Doncaster lives were lost as a consequence of bombing. As a centre of the rail industry, Hexthorpe was targeted. Former Ossie pupil, Betty Armstrong (nee Davies) recalls visiting the crater formed by an unexploded bomb which fell just yards from her home in Eden Grove.

Ossie's staff members and former pupils experienced combat across the globe. The service and sacrifice of Hexthorpe's and Oswin Avenue School's young people is encapsulated in the stories of two local combatants.



Born at 5 Laughton Road, Hexthorpe on the 11th January 1925, Kenneth Roy Cage was the youngest of Walter James Cage, and his wife Jessie's 7 children. Roy as he was known attended Hexthorpe Infant and Junior School. From an early age he was a keen and able sportsman. Roy transferred to Ossie in 1937, where in his school report dated April 1939, he was described as having produced "*Very good work indeed*". It was also noted that Roy was a member of the school football team.

Upon leaving school Roy worked as a Grocer's assistant, a position he held at the time of his enlistment as a Private in the Royal Artillery in March 1943. Roy's participation in sports appears to have prepared him well, as his Army papers record his Medical Grade as 'A1'. As a member of the Anti-Tank Regiment, on the 3rd September 1944 Roy participated in the liberation of Brussels. During his time in the city he befriended a local man, Ory Peremans. On the 5th September 1944, Ory took a photograph

which amongst others featured his daughter Jacqueline and Roy. He sent a copy of the photograph and an accompanying letter to Roy's family, in which he wrote, "*Good luck to our liberators*".

After being discharged from the army Roy worked as a delivery driver for the Co-op. He married Sheila Harvey in 1951 and their daughter June (herself to become an Ossie pupil) was born 4 years later. After more than 20 years with the Co-op, Roy took up his final job, as an assistant Caretaker at Woodfield High School. Roy died on the 14th February 1988, having lived out his days at 5 Laughton Road.

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Born at 11 Gladstone Road, Hexthorpe on the 24th February 1921, Cyril Holmes was the eldest of Harriet and Wilfred Holmes' two children. He was baptised at St Jude's Parish Church, Hexthorpe. He too attended Hexthorpe's Infant and Junior Schools before transferring to Oswin Avenue Senior School aged 11. A capable scholar at Ossie he was placed in Class 1A. From his surviving exercise books we learn that one of the subjects that he was being taught was the History of the British Empire. Cyril joined the 44th Albions, Hexthorpe Scout Group, attaining the rank of Rover Scout in 1939. An accomplished musician he played the piano and saxophone, developing a taste for jazz. Upon graduating from senior school, Cyril continued his education, taking night classes at Ossie. He also secured a position as a trimmer at the Plant works.

In the normal course of events we might have followed Cyril's journey as this bright young man's career progressed at the Plant works. These however were not normal times, and Cyril's story continues in the field of war. Records inform us that Gunner Holmes of the Royal Artillery, experienced service in the Netherlands East Indies. On the 30th December 1940, as he made the voyage East, Cyril wrote a letter home. The contents give the impression that he was in a positive mood. He had enjoyed recent shore leave and had celebrated the festive season, washing down his Christmas dinner with a bottle of beer.

In stark contrast to the optimistic tone of Cyril's letter, in 1943, Harriet received devastating news from the Records Office informing her that her son "*must be posted as missing*". The family clung to the hope that Cyril may have been taken as a prisoner of war in Java. Whilst Cyril had been captured by the Japanese forces, hope that he would eventually return home was dashed several months later. In October 1943, the war office recorded how Cyril had died of Pleurisy on the 3rd March, "*whilst a prisoner of war in Japanese hands*". Cyril's remains are buried in the Yokohama War Cemetery. In his home village, a memorial service was held for Cyril at St Jude's Church where he was considered to be "*a prominent member*".



Less than half a mile separated Roy's and Cyril's places of birth in Hexthorpe. As boys they attended the same schools, and played in the same streets and alleyways. As young men each answered the call to defend their nation.

After the conclusion of the war, Roy Cage returned home, started a family and through his work served his local community over the decades that followed. A series of letters written by his liberated friend, and proudly preserved by Roy's family members, are reminders of his courageous role in the fight for liberty.

When in 2021 the home of Cyril Holmes' deceased younger brother Clifford was cleared, a collection of documents pertaining to Cyril were discovered. Amongst them was a letter signed by King George VI which concluded with the words:

"We pray that your country's gratitude for a life so nobly given in its service may bring you some measure of consolation".

For Cyril's family over the years the letter served as a proud but tragic reminder of the toll that the fight for liberty can exert.

Written by Tony Armstrong. (Ossie Through the Ages Project.)

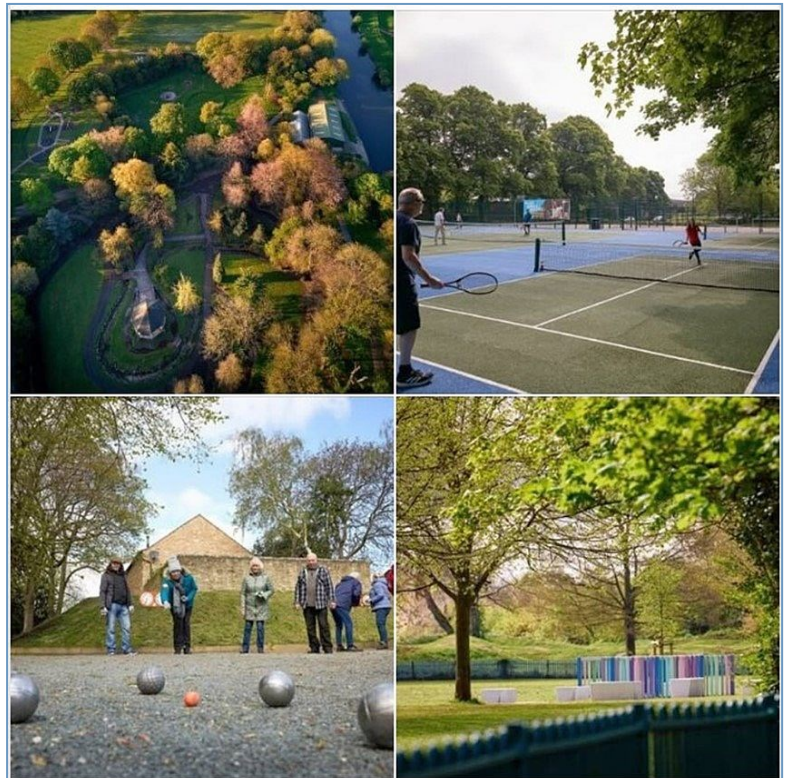
National recognition for Hexthorpe Flatts Park

Hexthorpe Flatts Park has been honoured to at the Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards, winning the ‘Green Space Innovation’ category.



The award recognises our approach to engage with residents, encourage new park visitors and increase the opportunities available to residents to enjoy spending time there.

Our application shared the story of Hexthorpe Park’s recent regeneration which has seen not only physical improvements to the park, but increased what’s on offer there - including interactive trails with Enigma Rooms, a new social seating area designed with young people in mind by youngsters from Doncaster College, installing Doncaster’s first Petanque pitch and supporting the formation of Doncaster Petanque Club, as well as improved tennis courts with the Local Tennis Association and the installation of Pickleball courts.



All these improvements - and more - have been led by the local community and have been driven by local needs. Special mention must go to the Friends of Hexthorpe Park whose work to care for the park and create events for the local community to enjoy is hugely appreciated by all and makes an important contribution to the park’s vibrancy.

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Hexpress Comment

This is more great news. The Friends of Hexthorpe Flatts Park are to be congratulated. Well done! Please see the latest news about the park in News in Brief and Letters .We have two great assets in Hexthorpe - The Crimpsall and The Flatts Park.

Some late news - the pathways in the Dell have been tarmacked at last. The Friends Group have been pushing for this for some years. It is looking great - pay the Dell a visit and see for yourself!

News in Brief and Letters

Friends of the Hexthorpe Flatts Park



Volunteers Jenny, Gordon and Elizabeth

We will not be meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at Travis Gardens Community centre during the winter months, as we are taking a break from gardening in the Dell though dog walking, litter picking and Petanque in the park will continue! We shall reconvene on Tuesday March 4th at 6.00pm when we will make the final arrangements for the next volunteer morning which is on Tuesday April 1st.

Please put these dates in your diary. Many thanks everyone for your help and support this last year. Best wishes

Jenny Barlow and Elizabeth Iball

Great British Spring Clean Event

Can I remind you all that it is the Great British Spring Clean Event on Friday March 21st 2025 at Hexthorpe Flatts Park. It is a national event to promote keeping our communities clean and tidy and a great place to live.

We will be holding our local event in Hexthorpe Park and welcome as many people as we can to come and tidy up and litter pick. The event will be 1.00pm till 4.00pm. We will supply as much equipment as we can and will have involvement from the primary school too.

Please put a note in your diaries and come along if you can, it will be great to see you.

Rob Allen, Stronger Communities Officer for Hexthorpe

A welcome comment

“The Hexpress is a much loved and appreciated community news magazine. Some people, particularly the elderly, have commented that it makes them feel included and part of their community. I think all of us think that way really. Long may it continue....”

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The Maltings reopens

Paul Dhaliwal is pleased to announce that the newly refurbished Maltings Bar is now open every day. Here are some pictures of the splendid new interior. There are special events and offers each day.

Our senior readers will be pleased to note that on Wednesday mornings from 9.00am to 11.00am Tea, Coffee, Biscuits and Cake are available for only £2.

Find them on Facebook - The Maltings Bar



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Hexthorpe@crestpharmacy.com
Send us your: Name and Address,
Telephone number, Date Of Birth
Pošlite nám vaše: Meno a adresu,
Telefónne číslo, Dátum narodenia
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