

Interview with Margaret Robshaw

Contributed by Administrator
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'So how did you get involved in the Friends of Royal Albert Park?'

I went to the open meeting and volunteered. It combines my interest in the area with my work .. I work for the council in the regeneration office as their finance officer and I wanted to get more involved in regeneration finance.

In my childhood, this was my playground, my mum used to bring me down here, and for years I've walked my dogs here and I watched it just seem to start slipping into the sea.

Last year I think we all became a little disillusioned about it, we'd done all this work and nothing much had happened.

I've become more and more enthusiastic recently and now I'm very positive about it.

The skatepark is big news. My son is a skater and helped with the design.

I've helped secure funding streams, for instance from area committee grants and Awards For All to fund things like the picnic area, signage and the fitness trail.

We've held 2 family fun days to raise awareness, highlight the importance of the area, show the plans and build membership. We've had park guides, brought birds of prey for people to draw, employed entertainers and had bug hunts.

This year's going to be very exciting. It's the centenary of the opening of marine drive on the 3rd August. Due to diary clashes we'll actually celebrate it on the 10th August.

It's a beautiful place. There's so much been done on the south side, but nothing on the north (which is far more beautiful). It was becoming delapidated, but now it's starting to look something. Perhaps it's become more important now the Sands development is under way.

'What does Royal Albert Park mean to you?'

I used to holiday in Scarborough as a kid, rock pooling in North Bay.

Nowadays I mostly walk the dogs, and I'm amazed at the varied uses people put the area to. The other day I saw a chap bouncing along on those trainers with springs underneath. There are older people enjoying the view alongside runners. With the new developments: the playground, skatepark, dirt jumps we're targeting all the family. That's a little different to the park in South Bay which is more formal, we're focussing on activities.

The Castle Holmes area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) primarily because of its geology.

Actually, my Auntie (Nan Sykes) compiled a book on the flora of the east coast, available from the English Heritage shops (Amazon site).
She documents an orchid that grows here.

Now the path under the castle arch has been re-opened, people don't have to walk all around the headland to reach the park, they can just walk up past the castle and they can enjoy stunning views from there.

People are becoming more aware of green issues and of the importance of green spaces. The park is a natural space, and more of us are using areas like that for activities .