

EAST GRINSTEAD MEMORIAL ESTATE – December 2024 Newsletter

One of the joys of having this digital technology is that I can include items of interest (well hopefully they are!) which doesn't create a waste paper cost to the planet. In this edition I have included an article written by fellow Director, Steve Metcalfe on the subject of the Meridian Line, as well as updates on what has been happening since I last wrote at the beginning of August.

As I've mentioned previously, the Charity has now been in existence for 75 years and to commemorate this landmark we introduced a new Unsung Hero award. Nominations were sought from local councillors, the EG Sports Council and ourselves to identify someone operating in the sporting or recreational sector (reflecting the wishes of Alfred Wagg when bequeathing the estate in the 1940's for the benefit of the people of East Grinstead). A number of extremely worthy nominations were received and considered by a jury drawn from the Town Council, the Sports Council and ourselves with the winner announced by the Mayor at the annual civic reception held at the Mansion on 23 September..... and the inaugural winner is Richard Tramontin who has been tirelessly running East Grinstead Town Football Club for nearly three decades.



Richard (pictured to the right of the Mayor) was presented with a cheque for £750 for the benefit of EG Town Football Club as well as £100 of John Lewis vouchers for his personal use.

As reported on our Facebook page, a further commemoration of our 75th anniversary was also marked by the presentation of two cups at the Annual Primary Schools Cross-Country championships held in East Court on Sunday 13th October. There were 197 starters across the 4 races (yr 4 races and then combined years 5 & 6 races). Thanks also go to Matt Rew, Vice Chair of EGMEL who presented the medals for the winning athletes (Yr 4) and medals, trophies and winning team shields (Yr 5/6).

Updates on other areas are as follows.

East Court Football Pitches

Three pitches have been re-commissioned as of the beginning of September, as promised, but undoubtedly will be in need of further significant work in the years ahead, especially to improve drainage. Thanks go to MSDC and Glendale who have taken a significant step forward to return this much needed facility to action.

Ash Die Back

If you have walked the woods of late you will have seen plenty of evidence of tree felling over recent months. Looking at the cross sections left on site they provide clear examples of the internal rot caused by the disease. As I write there are still issues of waste disposal to be remedied which have been taken up with MSDC, but this initial phase of felling has been completed without decimating the landscape. Clearly there is more to be done in subsequent phases (about which I'll let you know when I know)

Chyll Steps

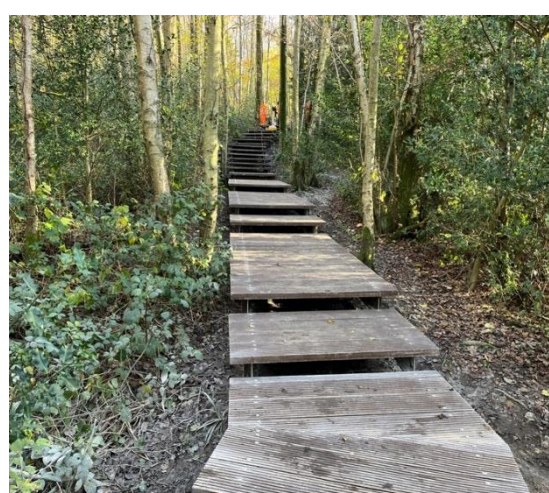
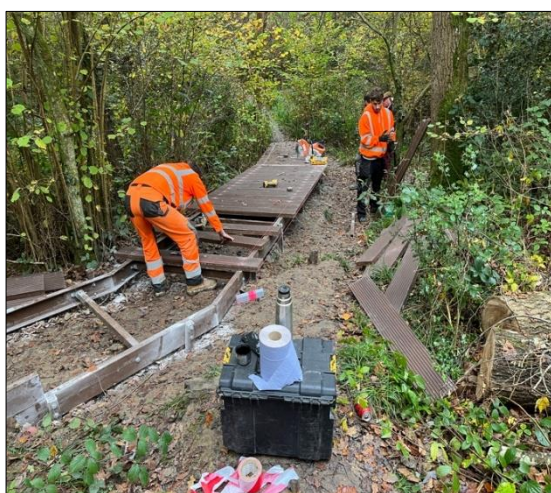
Installation of the new poly deck boardwalk/steps started at the end of October and has been completed in the last week.

This is the first major project that we have seen from the developer contributions made under the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) provisions and is a welcome enhancement to the walking experience in what has been a fairly treacherous part of the path network.

The material used is recycled plastic, so its green credentials are strong, and it looks every bit as though it was made from traditional wood sources. The benefit of it is durability with a 60-100year life expectancy, far exceeding the usual mainstream alternatives.

Not only is the decking itself made out of recycled plastic, but the supporting posts and rails are also made from the same material. The posts, which are buried a metre into the ground, are locked in position under tension through the framework itself meaning that the prospect of them becoming rickety over time is minimised.

Hopefully we can all agree this is a welcome and sympathetic improvement - some photos of the installation progressing over the page.



Parkrun

This weekly event around East Court and the playing fields continues to gain popularity (Saturday mornings) and celebrated its **300th** anniversary run on 19 October with a turnout of over 100 runners. Regular review meetings have now been established with MSDC and Glendale where all concerned are looking at options to relieve wear and tear particularly around the lower car park area and towards the bottom of the playing fields.

MSDC

In course of progress is a new year steering meeting which has been set for 20 January, as well as preliminary work to draw up a replacement 10 year plan which needs to be far more pragmatic than the initial overly complicated 2015 version!

Your directors have been actively engaged in preparing our own thoughts to contribute to this process and an initial meeting has been set by MSDC for early this month to get the ball rolling. We'll no doubt hear more of this in 2025

Bonfire

A hugely successful event was held on the playing fields on 19 October with a well-attended procession through the town followed by the bonfire and fireworks display on the playing field. The organisation of the event was second to none with a band of volunteers turning up on the morning after to make good the site, which was greatly appreciated. We were delighted to have made a financial grant this year to the East Grinstead Community Bonfire group to support this activity.



Remembrance Day

As is customary, wreaths were laid on behalf of Directors and Members at services held at East Court and in the High Street on Sunday 10 November. A donation of £200 to cover the cost of the wreaths was made to RBLI.

And now for something completely different.....

.....I promised you Steve's article on the Meridian Line (sounds like a BBC shipping series of old) which follows on the next page. It's an interesting read

As we now start tucking into our advent calendars, may we wish you and yours a very enjoyable festive season and look forward to a happy 2025

Lloyd Richards
Chair, East Grinstead Memorial Estate Ltd

1 December 2024

EAST GRINSTEAD & THE GREENWICH MERIDIAN

*Figure 1 This Stone Commemorates The Silver Jubilee of
H.M. Queen Elizabeth II June 1977*



East Grinstead Memorial Estate is bisected by the Greenwich Meridian line so East Court is in the Western hemisphere and most of Ashplats wood is in the East.

As you stand over the plaque commemorating the meridian line on the Rolley Terrace at East Court and look at your phone's GPS display you may wonder why it is not showing exactly 0°E/W. The location of a point on the earth's surface is defined as a measure of Longitude & Latitude.

Latitude is an angular measure of the point on the earth's surface between the equator at 0° and the North or South pole at 90°. Historically this has been measured by determining the angle of the sun to the horizon at noon, or when the sun is at its highest point in the sky, an alternative method is to determine the angle of the North Star to the horizon when it is visible at night.

The concept of Longitude is arbitrary and is the angular offset from an arbitrary line drawn from one pole to the other. This line is known as a meridian line and many such meridians have been used for astronomical purposes and navigation.

The angle can be simply calculated if you know the time difference between your position and the meridian that you are measuring from. 1 hour is 15° of longitude. The big problem with navigation at sea was maintaining an accurate time piece, John Harrison is probably best known for developing a timepiece that was able to keep accurate time while at sea. It was not until the mid 1760s that ships were able to determine the time difference accurately enough to know their longitudinal position relative to the chosen meridian.

From the earliest time, astronomers needed to get an accurate measurement of the difference in longitude between their observations, particularly between London and Paris. Between 1690 and 1920 at least 18 different determinations were made, most were astronomical and involved the measurement of the time difference. The first attempt to fix the relative longitude between Greenwich and an American University at Harvard, Massachusetts took place in the 1840 when nearly 400 chronometers were transported back and forth across the Atlantic, this was followed in 1866 by telegraphic means following the laying of the trans-Atlantic telegraph cable.

A common misconception has been that the earth is a uniform sphere, this was challenged by Newton in 1687 when he hypothesized that the earth is an oblate sphere this theory has been refined many times since and the irregularity of the earth's surface and distribution of mass within the earth have all been taken into account in order to more accurately determine the earth's rotation.

From the early 1700's until the 1980's time and therefore longitude was determined with the aid of specialist telescopes. In Greenwich transit telescopes were initially used. The Greenwich Meridian was first defined by the second Astronomer Royal, Edmond Halley in 1721 using a transit circle (telescope) at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. This was superseded by James Bradley, the third Astronomer Royal from 1742 and his instrument came into use in 1750 and a new meridian was defined. This was in use until 1816 when the sixth Astronomer Royal, John Pond, replaced it. Astronomer Royal George Biddell Airy designed a new instrument and the first observation was taken on 4 January 1851 this was in use until 1954.

The big question of course was which meridian to use! Each country historically used its own version.

The Greenwich Meridian was established in 1884 as the Prime Meridian for navigation as more sailors were using it than any other meridian and it was agreed at the 'International Meridian Conference' with 22 countries agreeing, 1 opposing and 2 abstaining. So, from then on, the Greenwich Meridian has been used for navigation and time keeping across the world.

However as already discussed measuring systems and instruments have evolved and so when GPS technology became available a new Meridian was needed and the WGS84 standard was adopted for modern instruments. The meridian used by The Ordnance Survey and the WGS 84 are approximately 100m apart. Here WG84 0°E/W is about 100m down the slope from the terrace.



Figure 3 Looking South along the WGS84 meridian.



Figure 2 Redwood at Goat Cross roads

Over time there have been several commemorations of the adoption of the Greenwich meridian as the prime meridian. In 1977 to mark Queen Elizabeth's II silver Jubilee a plaque was placed on the Rolley Terrace in East Court. In 1984 a number of trees were planted along the line of the meridian. There are 3 Redwood trees very close to Goat carpark in Ashdown Forest. One is at the crossroads and the others are about 500m North and South.

In 2000 for the millennium markers were placed on the side of several roads and in East Court. Also in East Court two Silver Lime trees were planted in the memorial garden on the line of the Greenwich meridian



Figure 4 South side of Escots Drive



Figure 5 Southern Boundary of East Court



Figure 6 Looking North towards the second tree



Figure 7 Plaque on Northern tree

The most fun marker must be the large stone just to the North of the house



Figure 8 Millenium Stone



Figure 9 Millenium Stone



Figure 10 Millenium Stone Plaque

Sources:

- <http://www.thegreenwichmeridian.org>
- <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/documents/resources/guide-coordinate-systems-great-britain.pdf>