



A gorgeous view over the top of Killarney Park, in Bestwood, Nottingham

**RUNNER-UP
KILLARNEY
PARK**

Britain's best parks: the runner's up

Our annual Park of the Year competition, sponsored by Towergate Insurance, attracts plenty of entries each year. This month, we turn the spotlight on a trio of parks who shared our runner-up award

As usual, we received a sack full of nominations for our Park of the Year competition. Our prestigious trophy, which is sponsored by Towergate Insurance, has had a whole host of worthy winners over the past two decades.

For readers who aren't familiar with the way the competition works, we ask residents from parks all over the UK to nominate their park for the award, if they feel that it is a top park which deserves some recognition. All the entries are then considered by our panel of judges, including Editor Alex Melvin and Paul Baker, from Towergate, which sponsors these awards. Once the winning entry is decided, the resident who wrote this entry receives £500 as a prize, to spend however they wish. In addition, the park owner receives £500, which should be spent on the park or its residents.

In 2013, Pant Mawr Park, in Harlech, scooped our top award. The relatively new Welsh park is loved by residents and extremely

well run by owner Neil Collis, as the feature on page 26 of our January issue illustrates.

However, we didn't introduce a runner-up award until 2012. But as the quality of UK parks has steadily gone up over the years, and the volume of entries has shot up, the judges at PH&HC felt it would be unfair to only recognise one great park a year.

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“Everybody knows everybody else so we enjoy a great community feel”
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After going through the abundance of entries, our panel of judges decided that three parks deserved some recognition!

Killarney Park, in Nottingham, Schooner Park, in Ceredigion, and Mount Park, in West Sussex, all share the spoils as equal runners-up in our 2013 competition.

Killarney Park

If you're heading to Nottinghamshire on the hunt for a park home, Killarney Park, in Nottingham, is one that must not be overlooked if the site's current crop of residents is anything to go by. Owned by Killarney Homes, which also runs two other parks in the county, this special site received countless nominations from happy residents.

Take this entry from park resident Sandra Stanford-Barclay. Sandra enthused, 'Killarney is a wonderful, peaceful place to live, set in lovely surroundings with well-tended gardens.

'Everybody knows everybody else so we enjoy a great community feel. Those who are more able, always help and assist those who aren't – to me, that's a good sign!'

The park's welcoming and inclusive ethos is plain for all to see. Sandra continues, 'At Killarney, we have a clubhouse and functions are organised on a regular basis. We also have a park minibus to take residents on trips.

'There is a park darts team, as well as a

Petanque team – both compete in local leagues and seem to do quite well.

‘We also have a regular coffee morning on Wednesdays and trips and lunches regularly take place.’

Family affair

Brother and sister team Alex Kellam and Sophie Brown now run Killarney with father Gary overseeing things as managing director while they take on everyday management of the parks.

Alex is focused on the park maintenance and operations whilst Sophie tends to lead on sales and marketing along with running the office on a day to day basis, supported by park manager Shirley Coy.

That family feeling is hard to beat and clearly helps residents feel at ease. Killarney Park is well established and was the family’s first park, previously named Surprise View. The reason is obvious once you are there as it has soaring views of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and is set over 35 acres tucked

like a mini-metropolis into the hillside.

The park is only 10 minutes from Sherwood Forest and the main visitor centre there so it really is right in the heart of Nottinghamshire. The Lakeside Restaurant and Spa is at the end of the lane and within a three-mile radius from the park there are several golf courses, country walks, pubs and restaurants.

Sue and Brian Merriman moved into a park home just over two years ago. Like Sandra, Sue loves life at Killarney. Sue said, ‘We love it here, we’ve got everything we need and it was a really good move for us.’ That says it all really!

Schooner Park

Set in an enviable seaside town location, Schooner Park occupies a prime position in, arguably, Wales’s most sought after retirement county – Ceredigion.

The park is private and peaceful but there is definitely a sociable atmosphere on the park. It’s the sort of place where people regular get together for leisure activities, as well as helping each other out in difficult times.

The park is a credit to owners Tim and Helen Chadwick, who work really hard to provide a well-maintained, private and tranquil environment for their residents. A great deal of care and investment went into designing the park. Every road and border has been sensitively positioned to enhance the estate. For example, the roads and paths wind



Park homes enjoy spectacular views at Schooner Park

**RUNNER-UP
SCHOONER
PARK**

A spacious plot with parking alongside at Schooner Park





Mount Park is close to Sussex South Downs

through spacious countryside and there is careful street-lighting too so the park always feels secure.

The local area is full of appeal too. Nearby towns and villages offer a selection of shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants. A true taste of Wales can be found locally with most restaurants offering tasty local produce.

This fabulous coastline is the first to be protected as a special area of conservation or Heritage Coastline. New Quay, in particular, has regular sightings of the bay's resident bottlenose dolphins, which are regularly spotted off the Quay. On the way to the Post Office, residents often glimpse the dolphins leaping clear of the sea! Regular boat launches take the park's residents out into the bay and the dolphins like to follow the boats.

The coastal path snakes its way along dramatic cliff tops. National Trust beaches at Mwnnt and Penbryn are easy to visit by car – both are spectacular.

The coastline towards Cwmtudu offers an excellent view of the local seal population basking on the rocks in sunshine or slithering off on a feeding trip.

All this understandably gives Schooner the edge over most parks. It's no wonder that there's such a great atmosphere on the park.

Extremely friendly

Park resident Annie Brough said, 'We live by the sea – you can hear it in the evenings. The park is kept in a fantastic condition and everybody is so friendly.'

'My husband has had two long spells in hospital since we came to live here and all of the residents were concerned about how he was and they made sure I was OK when I got back from the hospital too (they also looked after our King Charles spaniel too!).'

'All the gardens are so well looked after it is a joy to live on this park.'

'Due to my husband's disabilities, we are not able to join in on the social side of things but, if we were, there is a bowls club that a lot of residents are members of in New Quay.'

Summing up, Annie concluded, 'Everybody has time to have a chat and pass the time of day. Just living by the sea in Wales is brilliant and Tim and Helen are so helpful. It's the perfect combination.'

Mount Park

Our final runner-up park is located in the South Sussex Downs, in Steyning. Mount Park is a small park home estate, comprised of just 30 homes. It might be a small site but the big-hearted nature of the park's residents more than compensates for this.

Resident John Hubbard, who wrote into the magazine to nominate his park for our competition, said, 'Our park is very quiet and peaceful. Our neighbours are very friendly and the park is extremely well kept with pleasant surroundings.'

'I love the social life here because everybody's just so friendly. You'll never be short of company and people can pick and choose any friend they wish to make.'

'The park is well served with public transport and, on top of this, we all benefit from on-plot car parking.'

'We are near two major towns and many small rural villages with lovely pubs – idyllic!'

Summing up

Competition sponsor Paul Baker, Park Home Accounts Director at Towergate Insurance, was delighted with the quality of entries in our latest Park of the Year competition. Paul was equally thrilled with the standard on all four

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of this year's winning sites, including our three runners-up.

Paul said, 'This year it was even harder than ever to judge the UK's best park. The competition gets stiffer each year as we find out about more and more quality parks where residents are welcoming, helpful and really imaginative about how they club together to spend their leisure hours. By the same token, I've been so impressed by the efforts made by the country's leading park operators who really do go the extra mile for their residents.'

'Along with our winner Pant Mawr, all three of our runners-up, Killarney, Schooner and Mount Park, are well worth of recognition. Well done to you all!'

Info point

Find out more about our fantastic three Park of the Year runners up...

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MOUNT PARK

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Thanks to...

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