



Friends of Ecclesall Woods

Newsletter October 2013.

[www.friendsofecclesallwoods.org.uk](http://www.friendsofecclesallwoods.org.uk)



Chair/Editor: Linda Evans, 2585346  
Membership: Lorna Baker, 2369025

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness and many fungi. It's been a good year for fungi, for blackberries -- even on brambles deep in the woods, some have ripened. I've never seen so many and so bright rowan berries, so many keys on field maple. And such growth on pestilential weeds, like Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam; it can't all be jam!

### **Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 14 Nov. 7.30 pm. Hector's House, Discovery Centre, Abbey Lane.**

The meeting begins with a talk:

**Ecclesall Woods**

**What Lies Beneath**

**And How Did They Get It Out?**

**By Peter Kennett.**

Peter Kennett has produced a study of the geology of the Porter Valley for The Friends of the Porter Valley, and gives outdoor walks/talks on local geology, as well as indoor talks. I've been on both outdoor and indoor occasions, and they were fascinating.

**We will also raffle the original print of the Woods given to us by Jill Ray. Details later.**

## **SUNDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 10AM - 4PM**

**A celebration of Autumn in the woods. Join us for Food, Crafts and Activities**

**Ecclesall Woods Woodland Discovery Centre,  
Abbey Lane,  
Sheffield  
S7 2QZ**

For further information ring 2736199 or email [catherine.nuttgens@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.nuttgens@sheffield.gov.uk)

### **Ecclesall Woods Craft Courses.**

A full programme through the autumn. Full day, (or two) practical, hands-on courses, with a product at the end. Find details at [ecclesallwoodscraftcourses.co.uk](http://ecclesallwoodscraftcourses.co.uk).

Just to whet your appetite:

Sat. 12 Oct. Basic Pole Lathe Turning

Sun. 13 Oct. Cider making for Christmas

Sat, Sun 19, 20 Oct. Iron Smelting, Blooming and Smithing

Sat 26 Oct. Woodland Coat Hooks

Sat, Sun 2, 3 Nov. Intermediate Green Woodwork

Sat 16 Nov. Rolling pins, Spoons and Spatulas

Sat, Sun 23, 24 Nov. Rustic Chair Making

Sat 30 Nov. Tool Sharpening

Sun 1 Dec. Frame Basket Making.

### **Green Flag Award 2013-14**

Ecclesall Woods has been awarded a Green Flag for 2013-14. There have been no comments received from the Green Flag Panel, and there have been changes in the way the system is administered over the last year. Now, a Council submits a list of all the sites looking for Green Flag status in its area, and “mystery shopper” visits are made to a selection of these. The Council doesn’t know which, or even how many, and the award is made on the basis of these random checks.

While the new system undoubtedly saves money (How much? Who knows?), it seems to degrade the system. Some Councils, not Sheffield, have already pulled out. As more do, it will seem less worthwhile to keep Green Flag status going, and it will probably collapse altogether.

## **Footpath Group**

They have had a busy and productive couple of months since the last newsletter. On average, more than 6 volunteers have turned up every week, although it has been the holiday season. The main effort has been re-surfacing path 252; this runs from the bottom of Abbey Lane along the east and south of the Bird Sanctuary, to the triangle where it meets the steep path downhill from the top of the Bird Sanctuary, and 2 paths running down to Abbeydale Road South and the concrete bridge over the Limb Brook. This path is not steep, but was in some disrepair, with muddy patches and standing water after rain. Hardcore was spread on the path, then finer hardcore, and finally it was compacted with a “pounding” machine. The Rangers Tom and John Amos were involved in this resurfacing, too. A cross drain was installed above the Limb Brook concrete bridge, and saplings planted round this. More plants for Collier’s Pond; litter picking; putting logs and branches at the edges of paths to stop incessant widening . . . all of these make the Woods much pleasanter to walk in for all our visitors.

## **Ecology Group.**

This year’s survey, of flowering plants and their dates, has now finished, and everyone should send their results to Monica Rorison. Monica has been leading the Ecology Group for more than 20 years, since the founding of FEW, and is retiring now. While some people have been interested in taking over from her, no-one has yet made a firm commitment. The group has done sterling work on monitoring the woodland ecology over the years, and it would be a great pity if the group folded. We need someone to VOLUNTEER. You don’t have to know a lot about plants and ecology – you can learn as you go.

## **Quiz on 16 Sept.**

This was a dead loss – not one person turned up, except Linda as organiser. It discourages anyone from setting up events when this happens!

## **AGENDA FOR AGM.**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of last AGM (next page)**
- 3. Chairman’s Report and Resignation**
- 4. Financial Report and Accounts**
- 5. Membership Report**
- 6. Footpath Report**
- 7. Ecology Report**
- 8. Archaeology Report**
- 9. Any Other Business**
- 10. Raffle of Jill Ray picture**
- 11. Date of next AGM. Propose Thurs 13 Nov 2014.**



Local artist Jill Ray has kindly donated one of her limited edition framed prints to FEW. This beautifully mounted and framed picture is titled "Spring in Ecclesall Woods". Overall size is 18" x 18½", and it is ready to hang. Jill said that she wanted to give this picture to FEW because of the pleasure she took in walking in the Woods, and wanted us to use it to raise funds for the group.

It will be raffled at the end of the AGM.

### **Committee Members.**

The Committee, in 2012-13, was made up of:

Linda Evans, Chairman

John Fitzpatrick, Treasurer

Lorna Baker, Membership Secretary

Monica Rorison, Minutes Secretary and Ecology Group

Jane Beresford, Footpath Group

Geoffrey Hartland, Archaeology Group.

David Garnham.

### **MINUTES OF 2012 AGM, 11 Oct. 2012**

**APOLOGIES:** Pam Price, John and Lorna Baker, Keith Hill, Steve Terry, Jon Clennel, Brian Green, Graham and Rachel White, Malcolm and Margaret Lewis, Pat Marshall.

**Minutes of last Meeting:** There were no questions. Acceptance proposed by Sue Jackson and seconded by David Garnham.

**Finance:** Linda, speaking on behalf of Ken Marshall, the resigned Treasurer, said that this was the first year for some time when there had been an excess of income over expenditure. While some expenses had been trimmed, for example by changing printers, the main reason was the increased membership. Subscription income went up by over £1000.

While the first instalment of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant had been received, this money was already entirely committed to the activities specified on the grant application.

Dore Village Society has donated money for information boards.

Members present at the AGM received a copy of the financial report.

**Chairman's report:**

a) 7 new information boards are planned for the entrances to the Woods, because the old ones are deteriorating badly. 8 further boards will give information at places of interest in the Woods.

b) New leaflets for Archaeology and Ecology Walks will be designed and printed.

A member suggested from the floor, what about "I spy ....." type of leaflets for children. Linda welcomed this idea.

c) We will ask for 2 GPS Units for surveying, particularly in winter, when the conditions are favourable for archaeological surveys and find out about training for volunteers to use them. Queries about their usefulness in woodland conditions will be looked into.

d) Our Treasurer, Ken Marshall, has resigned for various reasons. We are grateful for his work and dedication to FEW.

We have a new Treasurer, John Fitzgerald and we are very grateful to him for taking over this role. Members present expressed their gratitude and welcomed him.

e) The photography competition Ken organised this year was a great success and the resulting calendars will be for sale on the Autumn Fun Day (Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> October).

f) The children's Wildlife Watch Club, also initiated by Ken, will meet on some Saturday mornings in association with the Wildlife Watch Clubs of the City.

g) Volunteers are needed in many different capacities, from the children's club to help on the Committee, or representing FEW at the Sawmill Centre at a Fun Day. In short whatever you might like to help with - you are very welcome.

**Membership:** In the absence of our membership secretary, Lorna Baker, Linda reported that there are now 176 member households, 16 of those are Honorary members. This is a huge increase and we are grateful for the tireless efforts of David and Chris Garnham and Ken Marshall on behalf of FEW.

**Footpaths and Pond:**

Our Tuesday Path Group has had the welcome addition of 4 new members. A big Thank You to David, Judith, John and Steve and a special thank you to Steve for writing and circulating the group's monthly report.

This Spring we cleared brambles from areas of known Bluebell concentration.

However they re-grow at an alarming rate. Advice from the meeting (Bill Smyllie speaking), was to limit the spread by uprooting bramble at the edge of areas.

Streams and culverts were cleared to drain freely all through the summer, especially by Abbeydale Road South. Widening paths and cutting overhead branches was done on all paths in Woods 1 and 2. Over 100 mixed saplings were planted on Cow Lane to form a hedge replacing Cherry Laurel. Cross beams have been installed in Wood 3, on paths: 252, 254 (the main bridleway from Abbey Lane through to Beauchief Gardens). Existing crossbeams have been widened and new drains dug to channel water off path 245 to halt serious erosion. Resurfacing this path is planned for the near future.

In May, our local cub and scout group cleared and widened the footpath along Whirlowdale Road. They worked very hard from 5pm to 9pm one Thursday evening. I (Jane Beresford), would like to thank them and Pam Price for organising and liaising this project.

Our group would like to thank Rangers Tom and Clare for coming out with us throughout the year and readily supplying us with extra tools and machinery to help

with the heavier projects. We are looking forward to their continued support this coming year.

My thanks again to all my volunteers on Tuesday mornings.

**Ecology:** We had a well attended Bluebell walk under the Sheffield Environmental Weeks scheme and the bluebells were in spite of the odd spring temperatures (hot in March, cold in April), very beautiful indeed.

There were 3 Bird Walks on offer in the spring, one of them under the Environmental Weeks scheme and 2 under our own banner. All were led very ably by Paul Medforth. We had a chance to watch birds feeding at their nest sites and we could learn to identify species by their song or call.

In March we enjoyed a moss workshop expertly led by Joan Egan, making use of the facilities in the Graves Woodland Discovery Centre to put up microscopes and specimen to view.

Over the season we surveyed the vegetation of the donkey field and the annual report went to our Woodland manager, John Gilpin.

Finally we had a fungus foray with Ziggy, which was a great success in September.

Our general survey looked at the distribution of Bluebell and the results will be analysed and can be shown at our AGM 2013.

The group is looking for a coordinator, because I (Monica Rorison) am going to retire. Recording the ecology of the Woods is a worthwhile ongoing project and should continue with the love and interest of our members it deserves.

**Archaeology:** No report, as no activity through the year

**AOB:** Volunteers are needed in many areas of our activities. Maps of our Woods are not very satisfactory for surveys.

**Date of next AGM:** Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2013. 7.30 pm at The Woodland Discovery Centre.

### **What Does the Chairman Do?**

Obligatory; arrange AGM and chair it; convene committee meetings and chair them

Activities which fall to Chairman by default, but could be done by others:

Quarterly Newsletter

Website maintenance

Answering queries from the website

Liaise with Footpath group, Ecology group

Liaise with SCC and Parks and Countryside and Ecology and Woodlands

Liaise with other groups of SCC, other Friends groups, other volunteering groups.

Apply for grants

Take part in carrying out grant-related work

Arrange talks and events.

