



## Newsletter August 2018

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

The last newsletter was written with snow on the ground and this one after the driest summer for years - quite a challenge for the flora and fauna.

After a cold spring at least the bluebells caught up for a good flowering in May when Julie Riley conducted a very successful Bluebell Walk.

Walks identifying trees, led by Fran Halsall of Sheffield Woodland Connections and bird walks, led by Paul Medforth were well supported and appreciated.

In August we had an interesting talk by Bob Croxton discussing the effects that brambles have on bluebells within woodlands.



Marilyn Small

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### **FRIENDS OF ECCLESALL WOODS AGM**

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November at 7pm - **Date changed from Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November**

at The Woodland Discovery Centre, Ecclesall Woods

Illustrated talk by **Dr Mel Jones** at 7pm - Walls, Woodbanks and Worked Trees

Mel has considerable knowledge of the history of Ecclesall Woods as well many other parts of the area. His talk will cover aspects of the archaeology and living archaeology of South Yorkshire's former coppices and wood pastures.

Followed by refreshments and AGM.

Another notice will be sent out nearer the time and if anyone would like a lift we hope we can arrange that. If enough people are interested we could think of moving the AGM to a weekday or Saturday afternoon for 2019.

## Events at Ecclesall Woods



- **Family Night Walk on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September - 6:30pm to 8pm**

A walk and some games in the woods looking for animals that come out at night. Bring a torch - £2 per person / £5 per family (free to FEW members).

Meet at the Woodland Discovery Centre. To book please email

[nell.dixon@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:nell.dixon@sheffield.gov.uk) or call 0114 2356348.



- **Feast in the Forest** is the annual free autumn event at the Woodland Discovery Centre. This year it takes place on **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October** from 10am to 4pm. Pop down for food, woodland crafts, family activities and guided walks. Sheffield Woodland Connections will be leading tree walks through the woods – see website for more information [www.sheffieldwoodlandconnections.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldwoodlandconnections.co.uk)

- For the latest **woodland craft courses** please see the website [www.ecclesallwoodscraftcourses.co.uk](http://www.ecclesallwoodscraftcourses.co.uk). Gift vouchers are available for the courses.

- **Christmas at the Woodland Discovery Centre** – the shop selling woodland craft gifts opens in Hector's House from mid-November. And the centre is open each weekend before Christmas for you to buy Christmas trees, visit the café and take part in activities for families. Ranger Nell's annual wreath making event will take place in December.



### Other events

- **Sheffield Walking Festival** - [theoutdoorcity.co.uk/walk](http://theoutdoorcity.co.uk/walk) 7-16<sup>th</sup> September 2018
- Professor Ian Rotherham would like to draw our attention to the **European Wood Pastures - Past, Present and Future** conference, 5-7th September at the Cantor building, Sheffield Hallam University. See [www.ukeconet.org/ewp](http://www.ukeconet.org/ewp) for more information.

## News from the groups and the rangers

### Ecology group

The Ecology group has been recording the presence of bluebells, holly and brambles in an area in wood 1 which showed a decline in bluebells between 1999 and 2012. Six of us tried to survey the bramble coverage recently and we all at some point got lost! Disappointingly the blackberries in this rather gloomy part of the wood had not yet ripened. We are very grateful to the younger members of the group, Fran Halsall and Julie Riley, who have been able to digitise the information to make it easier to record on a map.

The fenced areas are also being monitored. A great many plants have seeded or spread in the area between the bird sanctuary and the path in wood 3.

Sue Jackson continues to record the state of the Donkey Field. This year mowing in the grassed areas will be left until the autumn after seeds have ripened and growth has ceased.

Ash die back has been seen on some of the saplings in the Donkey Field and the pond is now well carpeted by the invasive species cressula.



Sue was pleased to find this scarlet elf cup fungus in the spring.



## **Bird ringing in the woods**

Phil May, a member of the footpath group and also the Sorby Breck ringing group, has had some sessions in the coppiced area in wood 1. Phil reports that he has caught 12 different species.

### **Species caught:**

Chiffchaff (pictured), magpie, blackbird, blackcap, long tailed tit, blue tit\*, nuthatch, redstart, robin, jay, great tit, dunnock.

\*The blue tit was already ringed as a young bird in 2015 on Bradfield Moor.



He also reports:

“I have permission to ring in the bird sanctuary. I have not done any mist netting yet, but I have 9 nest boxes there, of which 7 were used, 3 by great tits and 4 by blue tits. Each species raised a total of 20 chicks, with 19 of the great tits fledging and 15 of the blue tits. The chicks are ringed while still in the nest and the data is collected and put on to nest record cards and sent to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

I had hoped to ring the heron chicks this year but due to tree climber availability it was not possible, but next year I will start planning this earlier. I counted 10 heron nests this year but due to leaf cover I couldn't tell if they were all occupied.

I also found a buzzard nest in the bird sanctuary but it didn't seem to progress to producing young, having started off looking promising with both birds flying over the nest on several occasions.”

## **Footpath group**

In April the group planted 250 hazel whips in the coppiced area which had been cleared recently. Let's hope that some will have survived the dry weather! The group continues its battle with litter and have been discouraging the use of “desire line paths” by blocking them with brash and fallen timber. Himalayan balsam is still being pulled up in certain areas to keep it under control. Some activities have slowed down while the ground is so dry. The group even had time for a photo - apologies to the stalwarts who just happened to be away that day.





The rangers were happy to act on a suggestion by one of our members and Ranger Lucy made a sign and it was put up at Collier's pond by the footpath group.

You may have noticed ongoing footpath improvements which have been carried out by the footpath group, rangers, volunteers and Sheffield Hallam University staff on a team building day in July.

The footpath group meet every Tuesday morning at 9.30am at the Woodland Discovery Centre. Gloves and tools are provided but bring your own refreshments. Further information from Jane Beresford, tel : 0114 2368867.

Regular members of the group are provided with a polo shirt and a fleece top embroidered with the FEW logo.

Jane will be ordering more tops shortly. If anyone else would like to buy one please let Jane know.

Last year's prices were:

Polo top £11.34

Pullover Fleece £18.78

### **Cray fish and river dipping in the Limb valley**

The Sheffield City Council Ecology Team is currently not allowing any river dipping in the streams in Ecclesall Woods. This is in an attempt to protect the native white clawed crayfish (*astacus astacus*) which is found in the Limb Brook and other Pennine streams and rivers.

White clawed crayfish (pictured) need protection from a fungus carried by the non-native and larger North American signal crayfish. This non-native crayfish was introduced into the country in the 1960s and is not infected by the fungus.



The Sheffield City Council Ecology Team and the Environment Agency hope to carry out a survey in the Limb Brook but it is thought that the plague has already hit the valley.

## **We have updated our PRIVACY POLICY**

The details we hold on you as a member or contact, and the purposes to which they are put, are set out below. If you no longer wish to receive any future communication from us please contact the membership secretary (details below) who will withdraw your name from the contact list. You can withdraw from our contact list at any time.

The only data we have on contacts (if provided) is:

Full name and title;

Address (email and postal – so that we can keep in touch);

Phone number (in case we need to cancel or rearrange events);

and whether you have paid membership subscriptions.

We keep no bank details on members at all.

The only people who hold this data are the Membership Secretary and Treasurer and we do not share any details with any third party.

We undertake:

- to always hold your details securely.
- to only ever get in touch in the ways that you have provided, and we will make sure that everything we send to you is relevant to our constitution, including newsletters, current activities, details of related events and ways you can support us, such as fundraising activities.
- to make sure you are in control of your information, and that you can ask to see it, or for us to stop using it whenever you like.

If you have any questions on this please call 0114 2369025 or email: [johnrbaker8@gmail.com](mailto:johnrbaker8@gmail.com)