

www.friendsofecclesallwoods.org.uk

Newsletter January 2021

Chair

Marilyn Small

07801 350479

friends.ew1993@gmail.com

Subscriptions are now due

If you have not yet renewed please send a **cheque** for **£10** payable to **FEW** with name, address/email on the back to the **Membership Secretary**

John Baker

8, Thornsett Gardens

S17 3PP

0114 2369025

johnrbaker8@gmail.com

Alternatively pay by **bank transfer**

or set up a **standing order**

£10 to **FEW** ref surname & initials

Account no **30 34 66 67**

Sort Code **40-41-57**

CROSSING ABBEY LANE BETWEEN THE WOODS

A subgroup led by Claire Cruckshanks has been set up to campaign for safer crossing of Abbey Lane between the woods.

Thanks to those who have already visited

<https://cyclewalkscrmapp.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk> There are approx 100 comments so far but we would like more. It is best to register with a password (8 characters)

Find a Location: Use S7 2AW (then move the pin to a suitable point)

Comment Title: Crossing between the woods on Abbey Lane

You need to answer all sections marked with an * **Comments:** make general points or comments for specific places. Please also copy your comment to few.abbeylanecrossing@gmail.com. We will compile a dossier based on your comments (without giving your details) to present to Sheffield CC.

Further information on a petition to follow. Likely to need at least 2,500 names.



Bank vole Jack Hague


FRIENDS OF ECCLESALL WOODS, FEW

**LOVE THE WOODS...
HATE THE CROSSING?**

PLEASE HELP US CAMPAIGN FOR SAFE CROSSING
ACROSS ABBEY LANE BY:

- ADDING YOUR COMMENTS TO THE SHEFFIELD CITY REGION ACTIVE TRAVEL MAP (SCAN QR CODE)
- &
- EMAILING US YOUR COMMENTS SO WE CAN GIVE YOU UPDATES ON THE CAMPAIGN.

FEW.ABBEYLANECROSSING@GMAIL.COM



<https://cyclewalkscrmapp.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk>

Notes and News

During August Bank Holiday some one took an angle grinder to the supports of two of our information boards and one entrance board. The boards, which were left behind, have been retrieved and we now have quotes for repairs. All takes much longer to organise in Covid times.



In early September, the rangers were able to use a digger to remove about 20% of the donkey field turf saving the footpath group some hard work. Meadow cuttings from other parts of the city were spread on the bare earth. Sue Jackson, with other members of the ecology group, will monitor new growth and Geoff Chapman's bench will overlook the area.



The footpath group made the most of good weather. Among many other chores they weeded the new hedge near the willow plantation, cleared the area around Collier's pond ready for a proper enclosure, planted more wood sage in the enclosed area by the hill fort. They removed the fencing adjacent to the path where vegetation has returned and moved it along to enclose a new area.



Butterfly surveying: Cow Lane

Bill Smyllie enlisted Jane Beresford to take part in a butterfly survey. Peacock and small tortoiseshell lay their eggs on south facing nettles and the recently opened up Cow Lane was one site chosen for the survey. Although they did not see as many as they had hoped, in September Mike Arundale saw both species on a Buddleia at the entrance to Cow Lane.





A dry September and a wet October gave us a fungi harvest. There were so many photos of wonderful specimens sent to us or posted on FB, it is difficult to choose just a few.

The planned fungi walk at the end of October became a self guided fungi trail. Prior to the event, we walked with Ziggy, SCC fungi expert, around an area of wood 3 and identified 46 examples of 26 species. We flagged the best specimens and sent people off with a map. About 130 people of all ages took part.



This year saw a

bumper crop of acorns. When groups of 6 were still allowed, we collected acorns from 2 double stemmed oaks and Nathan McWhinnie, the tree officer, took a core sample of one of them to determine its age. It is perhaps not as old as we thought. A footpath group then planted out the acorns in our oak tree nursery. Another group pulled brambles in the coppice area just below Collier's pond. Others completed the additional fencing, cleared out drainage to the ponds below the Donkey Field pond and built with spare turf two hibernaculum by the smaller pond.



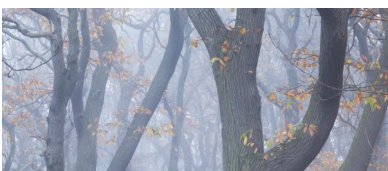
With many autumn tasks still to be done, "bubbles" of 2 meant work was again suspended in November. It did allow two ecology members to check out the newly unfenced area. Brambles had invaded a significant area. As with strawberries, brambles send out runners. Some of these measured between 14-18ft before putting down a new root. They climbed coppiced hazel and invaded known bluebell areas. We did our best to remove them!

A member of the public complained about the ever widening muddy path along side the fenced area between the concrete bridge and Rycroft Glen. It is part of the trackway and will be a difficult path to restore. It is on the list but tackling it seems a long way off.



The footpath group was unable to harvest the willow for wreath making this year, much to many peoples' disappointment. It has now been harvested under Rachel's supervision and some will be used for fencing. Jane says they learnt about the varieties of willow and hope to plant more species. The Woodland Trust sent us more hedge whips. Ideally they need to be planted by March. That seemed an easy deadline when they arrived at the beginning of November....

AGM November 17th

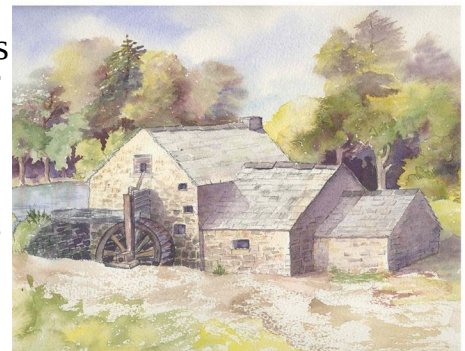


The committee decided to have a ZOOM AGM as a reasonable compromise. 27 people were able to log on including 7 committee members. A report from each group summed up the year. More had happened than we expected. Although all formal activities ended after 23rd March, it was left to individual members to report their findings. Jack Hague and Florian Graber set up cameras, Phil May recorded bird sightings and Sue Jackson among others continued to record flora and fauna in the Donkey Field and other findings on walks. Fran Halsall produced informative videos of her walks in the woods.

FEW, Sheffield Litter Pickers, staff and other walkers kept litter under control. The Discovery Centre remained closed. The Woodland staff and Rangers did and still do as much as they can in the circumstances. Some woodworking courses were held. The Woodland Coffee Stop reacted to the various changes to regulations and has managed to provide a very welcome service.

Ryecroft Mill

I was contacted by Graham Dixon about a painting he has of Ryecroft Mill. The artist was Stuart Thorpe whose father was a landlord at the Rising Sun. The actual date of the painting is not known. The mill itself was in a ruinous state by 1884 and a later drawing by H. Tatton, as seen on our web site, is possibly more fanciful. This copy of the painting by Jane Beresford was used for the Ryecroft Mill information board. Dore village Society has a print of the original painting and if we had somewhere to hang one, we could also have a print. Although Graham does not want to sell it, long term he would like to find a suitable home for the painting.



Ryecroft Mill around 1850 by Jane Beresford

Plans for 2021

- There will be meetings of the crossing group and plans to push forward with the campaign. It is likely that a petition will be set up. A minimum of 2,500 signatures will be required if it is to be discussed by the council.
- **Sheffield Environment Weeks 24th April to 6th June 2021** Online entries only to the calendar. It may be that at fairly short notice a self-guided walk to identify trees, spring flowers or the best bluebell patches could be organised.
- Let's hope that various ongoing projects will be completed. Many thanks to Jane and the footpath group for doing their best in trying circumstances.
- It is the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Discovery Centre in autumn 2021. We hope to have a small celebration!



Badger Florian Graber