



Friends of Ecclesall Woods

Newsletter April 2010.

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Welcome Spring.

FEW has an active program in the Woods and elsewhere this spring and summer, detailed below. We have also agreed with other groups to publicise their meetings, and they will publicise ours.

I hope that members will want to join in these activities, and we will have a good summer to encourage being outdoors.



FEW Meetings In the Woods

Wed. 21 April. 2 p.m. Art Group Meet at Ryecroft Glen Road entrance to Wood 3

Sun. 25 April. 2 p.m. Art Group Meet at Dobcroft Road entrance to Wood 1

Sat. 1 May, 10.15 a.m.- 12.15 p.m. Archaeology Walk, led by Geoffrey Hartland. (Phone 236 8569) Meet at Wood 2 bridleway entrance near Endowood Road. Part of FEW's contribution to Environment Weeks.

Sat. 8 May, 10.15 a.m. – 12.15 p.m. Ecology Walk, led by Monica Rorison. (Phone 236 6979) Meet at Wood 2 bridleway entrance near Endowood Road. Part of FEW's contribution to Environment Weeks. We hope bluebells will be out, but they are late this year because of the hard winter. There will still be plenty to look at.

Wed. 19 May, 2 p.m. Art Group. Meet at Ryecroft Glen Road entrance to Wood 3

Sun. 30 May, 2 p.m. Art Group Meet at Dobcroft Road entrance to Wood 1

Wed. 9 June at 6.30 p.m. Joint meeting with **Beauchief Environment Group.** Meet at junction of Hemper Lane and Beauchief Drive

Wed. 16 June at 2 p.m. Art Group Meet at Ryecroft Glen Road entrance to Wood 3

FEW events cont.

Sat. 19 June at 10 a.m. Ecology Group meeting/ general walk to look for, and at, summer flowers. Led by Monica Rorison.

Wed. 23 June. POND OPENING. 10 A.M See p.3.

Sun 27 June at 2 p.m. Art Group Meet at Dobcroft Road entrance to Wood 1

Wed 14 July at 2 p.m. Art Group Meet at Ryecroft Glen Road entrance to Wood 3

Sat 17 July at 10 a.m. Flower walk jointly with **BEG** and **Sorby**. Meet at Limb Lane playing fields car park.

Beauchief Environment Group Events.

Sat 24 April at 10 a.m. FAMILY ACTIVITY MORNING to meet BEG. Ranger Hank Littlewood will lead a craft activity and mini-beast hunt. Members of BEG will lead a guided bluebell and spring flower walk. Refreshments at Beauchief Abbey. Meet at Beauchief Abbey Ponds.

Sat. 15 May, 10 a.m. starting at Beauchief Abbey. Flower and tree recognition morning; a guided walk to spot and identify wild flowers and trees in the area.

Thurs 20 May 6.30 p.m. Meet at Beauchief Abbey. “Bluebells and Charcoal Hearths”. A walk through Ladies’ Spring Wood led by Dr. Ian Rotherham. About 2 miles; some steps. Good footwear.

Friends of the Porter Valley Events

Sat 1 May, 5.30 a.m. Meet at Wire Mill Dam Car Park. Dawn Chorus walk, led by Prof. Tim Birkhead. No dogs please

Wed 5 May. 7.30 p.m. Bents Green Methodist Church Hall. “How Our Roads Began”, talk by Howard Smith.

Thurs. 13 May. 7 p.m. Wire Mill Dam Car Park. Birds in the Porter Valley. Evening walk led by Paul Medforth. No dogs please

Sat 15 May, 10.30 a.m. Porter Clough car park, Fulwood Lane, Ringinglow. “Coalpits and Quarries on Brown Edge”, walk led by Peter Kennett.

Nether Edge Wildlife Group Events. Contact Richard Pethen, 255 1576, or email richard.pethen@btinternet.com May be cost.

Sun. 16 May. 10 a.m. Summer Migrants in Rough Wood and Padley Gorge

Sat. 26 June. 10 a.m. Meadow flowers of Carr House Meadows.



“Ganister Quarry” Pond. Great progress has been made on the new pond. The pond filled with water from natural rainfall during the winter. The sluice is working to prevent overflows, and the pond is holding water. Grass seeded last year is growing well, and some patches will be reseeded. We have 250 plants for pond edges, supplied by Ray Jackson. Some will be in, and some out of, the water. They will be planted by the Footpath Group on Tues 20 April.

The existing path will be repaired, and a new path built along the left of the pond. It is also intended to have a “dipping platform”, so children on school visits will be able to collect frogspawn and other pond life. This will all be completed by late June, when there will be a “grand opening”. This will be on Wed 23 June, at 10 a.m., with local councillors. There is a competition, organised at the Sawmill, for the name of this pond, and the name will be announced at the opening. DO come to the opening. The Footpath group have done a terrific job, working with Parks and Countryside Department, and we should all celebrate their achievement.

J. G. Graves Woodland Discovery Centre. Work has started on the new centre at the sawmill site. The modern timber building will include visitor, education and training facilities to cater for school groups, local businesses and community organisations as well as families and individuals. The construction and initial landscaping is being carried out by Baggaley and Jenkins Ltd and is funded by The J.G. Graves Trust, The Veolia Environmental Trust, Viridor Credits Environmental Company and Sheffield City Council.

Building work started on the 5th March. Bill Smyllie, our retired Chairman, was present with local councillors and representatives from the funders. You may have seen the picture in the Star. Completion is expected in September 2010. The new building will be used for education, meetings of local groups, social occasions . . . I believe there will also be a coffee bar, and very-much-needed public loos.

FEW Art Group. This new group had its first meeting on Wed. 25 March. It was a damp and cold day, so the 7 people decided to walk round wood 3, prospecting for sites for future work. Everyone enjoyed this. Future meetings of the Art Group are listed in Forthcoming Events. I hope that there will be a seasonal image from the Art Group in subsequent newsletters.

Walks. On Sat. 20 Feb. some FEW members joined a Sorby group at Limb Lane picnic area to look at lichens. Apparently there was very little walking involved, as

the immediate area was so rich in varied lichens. The FEW members stayed only till lunchtime on this cold day, but Sorby enthusiasts stayed till dusk.

John Baker led a walk in Wood 3 on Sat. 6 March, called "From the Victorians to the Bronze Age". I found this walk absolutely fascinating and learnt a lot of new things about the recent history of the woods, and its links to Dore as a coal-mining area. I hope John can be persuaded to repeat this walk next autumn or winter. It has to happen when the outlines of features can be seen on the ground.

Paul Medforth led a bird walk in Wood 2 on Easter Saturday, 3rd April. It was a pity this was poorly attended, as there were many birds to be heard and identified.

Website. We have commissioned a website from MediaTalk, and are currently busy writing the content. If any members have items they would like to see on the website, please let me, Linda Evans, know.

Editor. Bill Smyllie said in the January newsletter that Pete Severs had volunteered to be the next editor, and would produce the next newsletter. Very unfortunately, Pete found in January that he was very seriously ill, so he couldn't do it. I have taken over for this newsletter, and I hope that in future members of the committee will edit it in turn. Meanwhile, we all send Pete our very best wishes.

Newsletters need contributions. If any members have anything they would like to say about the woods, anything they have seen or heard, or old stories, then please send them in to Linda Evans. Email francis.evans@btinternet.com, phone 258 5346, address 14 Edgehill Road. More authors can only improve the newsletter and make it truer to members' views and interests.

Member's Forum. This is a new feature, and I hope that members will comment, ask questions, answer other questions, . . . in short, join in. To start with, what do you think about the planting of garden bulbs in the woods? I disapprove in theory, because I think that the woods should stay fairly natural. But the daffodils along Ecclesall Road, on the edge of Wood 3, cheer me up every time I drive past. Snowdrops used to grow naturally in the woods; why shouldn't we introduce them? What about the crocuses planted beside some bridle paths?

Green Woodwork Shelter, Freeman College. Quite a lot of us have missed the presence of this working centre in Wood 3, and the associated compost toilet. The toilet was vandalised first, and then the shelter itself was set alight and burnt in autumn 2009. Freeman College has now withdrawn from the woods.

I feel angry, scandalised, ashamed at this vandalism. Yet it's hard to know what to do about it; the Woods can't be watched all the time, (and we'd hate it if they were), and expostulation with vandals is usually unproductive and often feels likely to be dangerous. The least one can expect is abuse. What can be done?

Lorna's Membership Appeal.

I would like to thank all those who have renewed their membership for 2010. Renewals seem to have come in more quickly this year. Currently we have 39 singles paid up and 48 family memberships. Another 28, both single and family ones have still to renew. I am hopeful that I will not have to make too many reminder calls later in the year! I must apologise for not acknowledging the renewals but I have tried to pay the cheques in promptly so that people know they have not gone astray.

IF YOU ARE AMONG THE 28 WHO HAVEN'T RENEWED, PLEASE DO IT NOW. IT'S EASY TO LET IT SLIP YOUR MIND.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL.

Name

Phone No.

Email Address

(If you would rather receive the Newsletter by post, please tick here)

Rates: £5 single Membership, £8 Family membership

Please send a cheque made out to FEW or Friends of Ecclesall Woods to:

Lorna Baker, 8 Thornsett Gardens, Sheffield S17 3PP.