



## Friends of Ecclesall Woods

Newsletter January 2012.

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



Hollies in the Woods don't often berry, because of the lack of light. This has been a good year. Photo 2 Jan 2012.

Happy New Year to all.

Signs of spring and new growth are here already, in the first days of January. Celandines up; wood sorrel up. In Elton, a friend saw cow parsley in bloom! And the days are perceptibly longer already.

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### FEW Events

#### **Monday 6 February, 7 p.m. Graves Building. Talk by Rita Whitcomb. "The Sheffield Moors Partnership Project".**

Our talk at the AGM, by Professor Ian Rotherham, identified the moors to the west of Ecclesall Woods, and the intermediate zone, as being historically and ecologically connected to the Woods. Come along to find out more about plans, and the workshops being held from 22 Feb. on to work on the preservation of these areas.

**Saturday 24 March, 10 a.m. Meet Graves Building.** Mosses Day with Joan Egan, Sorby Natural History Society. Talk, walk, learn to identify.

**Photography Competition. Closing Date 31 August 2012.** See below.

#### **Advance Notice.**

28 April, 6.00 a.m. Dawn Chorus walk. Paul Medforth

5 May, 10.a.m. Bluebell walk, part of Environment Weeks. Monica Rorison

19 May, 8.00 a.m. Bird Walk, Paul Medforth.

More details in April Newsletter

**Sawmill Event.**

**Saturday 18 February, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Exhibition at Hector's House.**

Louise Lane, local botanical artist, is exhibiting her pencil drawings of native ferns of the Peak District with the RHS in London in March 2012.

We have the opportunity of a preview. Some of the ferns were growing in Ecclesall Woods.

**Time Travellers** have a very full programme for the spring, with 7 events before the end of March. For details, contact John Baker at [johnbaker@tesco.net](mailto:johnbaker@tesco.net), or Dorne Coggins at [md2.coggins@talktalk.net](mailto:md2.coggins@talktalk.net)

When this was written, there were no details available of spring events from Beauchief Environment Group, Nether Edge Wildlife Group, or Friends of the Porter Valley. Check later on their websites.

**Photographic Competition and Exhibition**

**Organised by Friends of Ecclesall Woods**

**You are invited to submit photographs of Ecclesall Woods which highlight the many beautiful aspects of the flora, wildlife and scenes during the year.**

**Photographs should be a maximum of A4, and will be judged by a committee. They should be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012, to FEW at the J.G. Graves Woodland Centre, Abbey Lane, Sheffield S7 2QZ. Please include your name and address on the back of the photograph. Entries will be accepted on the understanding that FEW will be given copyright to use the photos in any future publicity.**

**A prize of a fully automatic, digital compact camera kit will be awarded for the best picture.**

**An EXHIBITION of photographs will be held in the Graves Woodland Centre during October and November 2012. A selection of the photographs will be included in the FEW 2013 Calendar.**

**The competition is supported by Harrison Cameras and Tigoo Creative Ltd.**

**The poster, with all this information and more, can be seen in any of the Noticeboards at entrances to the Woods.**

## **Lord Mayor's Civic Reception and Workshop, 8 October 2011.**

Held at the Town Hall, and attended by Linda Evans and Jane Beresford on behalf of FEW.

There are at least 200 groups of “Friends” in the city, and the event was intended to show appreciation of their work, and also address issues of general concern – volunteering, basic standards for green spaces, practical work, and others. One common issue identified was working with SCC, and the need for simplifying procedures, ensuring consistency across the city, and open and honest communication with groups. Groups also wanted to network more between themselves. Training, insurance, risk assessments were all matters where information and support were needed, especially for new groups. Many would like to see such workshops become a regular event.

## **Grand Opening of the J. G. Graves Woodland Centre, 31 Oct 2011.**

Extracts from report by Marishka van Steenbergen. For further details and pictures see her blog, <http://www.marishkavs.blogspot.com/>

1000 people were joined by the Lord Mayor Dr Sylvia Dunkley to celebrate the official opening of the J G Graves Woodland Discovery Centre at Ecclesall Woods.

The day was a huge success. Families, dog-walkers, nature-enthusiasts, woodworkers, environment groups and artists came together to celebrate the opening of the Discovery Centre on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October.

The Lord Mayor arrived with her family to help plant a tree in celebration of the official opening. “It’s absolutely stunning”, she said. “The building’s greatest attraction is the way it makes you look out over the woods, it’s going to be very popular with schools and people who want to hold a party or a wedding.”

(On our own account). FEW now has a display table in the hall of the Graves Centre, to promote us to visitors. It was very useful at the Opening, and many new members joined then.

## **Heritage Lottery Fund Grant.**

FEW and Parks and Countryside made a joint application for a grant in July 2011, and we heard that the grant had been awarded in early November. The main purpose of the grant is improvement of information available to visitors to the Woods – walkers, children, and groups with specific interests such as birds, other wildlife, ecology, archaeology, and later history. Among other activities, we will be redoing the existing archaeological trail, and adding a second, both with new leaflets. The existing information boards at the entrances to the Woods will be updated and renewed.

Earlier in 2011, Dore Village Society agreed to grant us money for 4 new information boards, similar to the Q-pit board installed last year. The first two, on Ryecroft Mill and Whirlow Mill, are currently being designed.

## THE BROWN ARGUS AND 6-SPOT BURNET MOTH

Bill Smyllie

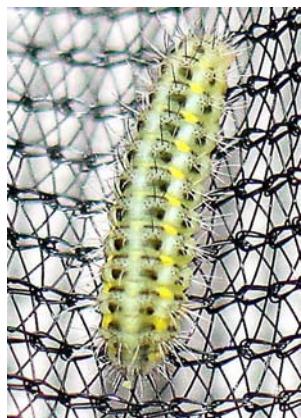
This moth was chosen for study this year because it forms a cocoon on grass-stems, so its presence at any site is easy to detect. The small colony at Coombs Dale (CMD) came out over 2 weeks before the much larger one at Longstone Edge (LE). Another large colony at Rother Valley Country Park is similar to CMD. Batches of eggs were obtained via mating couples from RVCP and LE. After 26 days the RVCP larvae were 8 to 9mm long, while after 30 days the LE larvae were only about 5mm long (see photos). It is known that some larvae mature in one year while others take 2, and I conclude from the above that these different species are similar to the Brown Argus with hybrids at LE and southern form at CMD/RVCP



RVCP mating pair



RVCP 26days 8-9mm



LE 30days 4.5-5.5mm

Some interesting wider and potentially important aspects can be looked into :-

- 1 Will the southern form (which still has enough north in it to have an 8-week flight period) fare better or worse than its hybrid neighbour in global warming.
- 2 Will parasites on various insects be different at the different sites.
- 3 Will the site differences help or hinder the health of important pollinators like bees

## **Rangers.**

I am probably like many members – I know Rangers exist, are employed by S.C.C., and are generally a Good Thing – but I didn't know anything specific. Ecclesall Woods came under a new Ranger, Henk Littlewood, in June 2011, and he came along to a committee meeting. I asked him to write something on the role of Rangers, which he did. Here it is.

Rangers are tasked to work with the community to improve Sheffield's green spaces (parks, woodlands and countryside). We support local communities and volunteers to look after the green environment in their neighbourhood, and can provide training, tools, risk assessments and environmental conservation knowledge to help them . We organise and run local events for the public based around environmental themes (e.g. guided walks, wildlife walks, bird/bat/bug box making to name a few) to encourage young and old to explore and value their green environment and help us conserve it for future generations. We work with Sheffield City Council Officers and other partners (including Sheffield Wildlife Trust, Groundwork, SHEBEEN and numerous other Sheffield voluntary groups) to improve biodiversity and implement local land management plans A. significant part of our role is in education through both formal sessions for schools and informal sessions for families and adults with an interest in the environment. Throughout our work we strive to provide an inclusive, healthy and enjoyable experience in outdoor Sheffield.

Henk is currently seconded to another task for 3 months, and Tom Collier, who has been working in the Woods, at the Sawmill, setting up SWEEP volunteers, and with FEW for some years now, is taking his place on a temporary basis.

## **Rotary Volunteers Clearing Brambles**



Ken Marshall arranged for a group of Rotary volunteers to clear brambles from the corner of Wood 1, between Abbey lane and Whirlowdale Road, early in December. I know there are many bluebells here which have been swamped by the brambles, and we hope that next year the bluebells will return.

## **Saturday Children's Club.**

A FREE monthly young people's group for the children of members will be launched at the Woodland Discovery Centre on 22 April. It will be run by Rotaract volunteers, linking into and working within the 'wildlife watch' umbrella, and collaborating with Sheffield Wildlife Trust.

## **Ecclesall Woods Craft Courses**

There is an active Craft programme at the Discovery Centre this spring. Ken Marshall, our Treasurer, has negotiated a 10% discount on nearly all these courses. Contact the Discovery Centre to book, on 2356348, or email [woodland.discovery@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:woodland.discovery@sheffield.gov.uk)

Sat 21, Sun 22 Jan. Welsh Frame Basket. £120. A rare opportunity to make a very rare basket.

Sat 11 Feb. Willow Structures, £60 Learn about willow types, planting and management

Sat 25, Sun 26 Feb. Log Baskets, £120 Make a large willow basket which can be used for logs, laundry, etc. Previous experience would be useful as this is an intensive course

Sun 11 March. Living Willow Garden Seats. £80 A gorgeous seat which can be planted with herbs.

Further Pole Lathe Skills. £60 Learn turning and finishing techniques of a range of products to a very high standard.

Sat 24 March. Willow Hurdle Making. £60 Need a rustic fence? Come along and make your own.

Sun. 15 April. Frame Basket Making in a Hedgerow Style. £60. An excellent beginner's basket.

## **Obituary of Isobel Rawson.**

Isobel Rawson died at the end of November. She and her husband, Harold, founded FEW with friends in 1993, inspired by lectures at the universities. For the last few years she suffered from Motor Neurone Disease, and was confined to a wheelchair. In spite of the frustration of losing her speech, and limited movement, she still managed to attend the 2011 AGM in the Graves Building, and visit Collier's Pond. She showed great courage in coping with the illness, and never lost interest in the people around her and her long-term concerns.

By Pam Price.

