



Friends of Ecclesall Woods

Newsletter July 2012.

www.friendsofecclesallwoods.org.uk



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

FEW Events and Activities

We had to cancel the Beating the Bounds event on 21st June, because of the heavy rain. I am reluctant to plan another date weeks in advance, because the same thing could easily happen again. So, if we get a forecast of several days of good weather before the end of July or in August, I will send out an email announcing the event. If you aren't on email and would like to be informed, let me have your phone number, and I will ring you. On a fine night it should be a really fun event, with a joint barbecue afterwards.

31 Aug. Closing Date for Photography Competition.

Great Prizes, and a chance for your picture to be on next year's FEW calendar. Don't miss it.

Mon 17 Sept, 7.00 pm, Woodland Discovery Centre. Jon Dallow, "Woodland Learning: Not Just for Kids". Audience participation will be needed; kids welcome.

Sun 23 Sept., 2.00pm till 5 pm. "Have a Go" sessions, for existing and intending volunteers. Please ring 2356348 if you plan to come.

Sat 29 Sept., 10 am, start at Discovery Centre. Fungus walk with Ziggy.

Thurs 11 Oct, 7.00 p.m. AGM, preceded by talk by Ziggy on Fungi. Minutes of last AGM will go out with next newsletter, before the AGM

FEW/Sheffield Wildlife Trust Wildlife Watch Group.

Previously known as FEW Children's Club. The group has been successfully launched – almost too successfully, as there are more children who want to take part than qualified group leaders. We can't have more than 8 children per adult leader. Parents staying with their children are very helpful, but can't be counted for the purposes of the regulations. We NEED more leaders. Lorna Fisher has appealed for volunteers in the Sheffield Wildlife Trust magazine; I am appealing now. Would you enjoy a Saturday morning once a month with a group of 8-13 year olds, doing a wide range of nature and woodland inspired activities? If so, ring Lorna Fisher on 2356348. Next session is on 23 August.

Torch-Lit Night Walk, Saturday 15 September, 7 p.m.

4.5 km around Ecclesall Woods. Start at the Woodland Discovery Centre.

A sponsored walk for Weston Park Hospital Cancer Charity. Look on www.wphcancercharity.org.uk, or ring 0114 226 5370.

Craft Courses at the Woodland Discovery Centre

**Sunday 12th August
9:30am – 4:00pm**

Box Frame Picture Course - £40
Learn how to make Box Frame Mixed Media Pictures.

**Wednesday 15th August
9:30am – 4:00pm**

Introduction to Pole Lathe skills - £60
Learn basic turning techniques and preparation of material for a range of products in Green Wood

**Saturday 1st September
10am – 3pm**

Intro to 'Wood Carving for Kids' - £20
Learn the basics of woodcarving and simple tool use

**Saturday 22nd & Sunday
23rd September 9:30am – 4:30pm**

Advanced Pole Lathe skills - £80
Learn turning & finishing techniques for a range of products to a very high standard. Previous experience of Green woodcraft desirable as this is an intensive course

**Sunday 21st October
10am – 3:30pm**

Rustic Stool Course - £60
Make a simple stool using cleft green Ash & Hazel

Courses must be booked. Contact Sarah on 2356348 or at sarah.chapman@sheffield.gov.uk

Advance Notice.

Sunday 28 October, 11 am to 4 pm. Autumn Fun Day Event at the Woodland Discovery Centre. This will be centred around Heritage activities.

Footpath Group.

The Footpath Group continues to battle Japanese knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, clear brambles, excess cherry laurel and Norway Maple seedlings, litter picks, and much more. If you can volunteer on Tuesday mornings, even on an irregular basis, please contact Jane Beresford, on 2368867.

Ecology Group.

Bluebells were surveyed this year. The last time we looked at bluebells was 1999, so it will be interesting to see how the distribution has changed. While Monica has not yet called in, or received, all the surveys, there is no more that can be done this year.

Walks for Environment Weeks

The Bluebell Walk on 5 May had 15 visitors, including a 2 year old boy who walked for the entire 2 hours, to everyone's admiration. The bluebells were nearly at their peak. With the fine weather in March, flowering started early, but the cold weather thereafter slowed flowering down, and the bluebells continued till nearly the end of May. It was the longest flowering season for many years.

There were 3 Bird Walks on 28 April, 12 May, and 19 May, all led by Paul Medforth. The first walk intended to look at resident birds before the migrants arrived. 16 species were seen. The heron colony is in good shape, Paul is sure of 7 occupied nests, but there might be more.

The Archaeology Walk took place on Saturday 12 May, with 21 people present. This is probably as large a group as can be managed, but all present found the walk very interesting.

Talk by Ted Talbot, "The Woodland Discovery Centre, a New Gateway into Ecclesall Woods". 21 May.

This was a fascinating talk, full of many things we have wanted to know and not liked to ask, like the structure of Parks and Countryside Department, the present and likely future effects of the cuts, the plans for the building, and some possible futures for the Woods. About 25 people turned up, and Ted's talk was followed by lively questions and discussions. In a world where Sheffield Wildlife Trust has bought Greno Woods outright, we as FEW need to consider our future strategy.

19 July, Music for a Summer Evening, from the Muskoka Quintet.

This concert in the Sycamore Suite was sold out, and it was a highly enjoyable evening with much familiar music arranged rather differently. Let's hope there will be more of these; I'm looking forward to the next.

Phenology and the Changing Seasons.

First, what is phenology? It's the study of the timing of events, like Japanese cherry blossom festivals, arrival of migrant birds, flowering of various species, and how this changes over the decades. We have, for example, a record of mean March-May temperatures in Sheffield from 1883 to the present. This was plotted in the Spring 2012 issue of Kingfisher, the Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust's magazine, and shows that on average there is a steady increase from 6.8C in 1883 to 9.6C last year. This doesn't mean there aren't great swings from year to year – 1891 average temperature was 6.2C, while 1892 was 9.7C.

Along with these records of mean temperature goes first flowering dates of garlic mustard (picture) and bluebells.



The higher the average March-May temperature, the earlier garlic mustard (also hedge garlic, Jack-by-the-hedge) flowers. For every 1C increase in spring temperature, the first flowering of garlic mustard is six days earlier. This varies, of course, with the particular spring. Earliest ever flowering date was April 12, in 2011.



First observation date for the sand martin, taken from Sheffield Bird Reports, vary from 16 April in 1975 to 5 Mar in 2007. These are the extremes, and other years fall between these dates. They do show a definite trend to earlier dates with higher spring temperatures.

There are many other examples showing how spring events are getting earlier, but not all species are changing at the same rate. No use birds arriving earlier if their food isn't ready yet! We need more records. Visit www.naturescalendar.org.uk and sign up.