



Friends of Ecclesall Woods

Newsletter January 2014.



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Have you heard woodpeckers drumming yet? The earliest I've heard, some years ago, was on Boxing Day. The first time I heard a woodpecker I thought someone was failing to start a lawnmower engine! I'm told the Sycamore Room in the Graves Discovery Centre is a good place to see woodpeckers and other birds at the nearby bird feeder.

It's been such a mild autumn and early winter here; can it possibly last?

FEW Meetings

Saturday 19 April (Easter Saturday), 6 am. Dawn Chorus Walk, guided by Paul Medforth. Meet at the entrance to the Woods opposite Beauchief Gardens. 97, 98 buses stop there.

Saturday 26 April, 10 am. Bluebell Walk, led by Linda Evans. Meet inside Sawmill site, at Graves Woodland Discovery Centre. Bus access from stop near Abbeydale Road South/Abbey Lane crossing, and walk up Abbey Lane. Part of Sheffield Environment Weeks.

Saturday 3 May, 10 am. Archaeological walk, led by Geoffrey Hartland. Meet inside Sawmill site, at Graves Woodland Discovery Centre. Lasts about 2½ hours. Bus access from stop near Abbeydale Road South/Abbey Lane crossing, and walk up Abbey Lane. Part of Sheffield Environment Weeks

Saturday 17 May, 10 am. Bird Identification Walk, led by Paul Medforth. Meet at the entrance to the Woods opposite Beauchief Gardens. 97, 98 buses stop there. Part of Sheffield Environment Weeks

Ecology Group

The Group met at Monica Rorison's house on 23 November. Monica has been leading the Ecology Group since it began 16 or more years ago, and has now retired. We thank her for her hard work over all these years, and the fascinating results that have come from the plant surveys. Monica's successor will be a triumvirate of Sue Jackson, Marilyn Small and Irene May. We decided that the 2 bluebell-distribution maps, from 1999 and 2012, should be duplicated and put up in the Woodland Discovery Centre. Monica's large maps of survey results should be scanned on a suitable scanner (maybe SCC has one?) and put on the website.

Footpath Group.

The Footpath Group has continued to meet every Tuesday morning, and usually numbers 6 or more volunteers. In November and December they cleared fallen trees, with help from John Amos; renewed the fencing round Collier's Pond, and added stepping stones across the mud at the outlet end; litter picked, and leaf-blew all the footpaths and bridleways. This last is really essential to keeping the Woods in good condition for walkers. If the paths are not blown, leaves build up, then mud, and then walkers widen the path by picking their way along the edges, or even making new diversions through the pathside trees. Results; wider paths with unwalkable muddy middles, wild flowers by the paths trampled out of existence, and an unattractive and un-cared-for environment. Well done the Footpath Group.

There are people who object to leaf-blowing the paths, and after the paths have been cleared will go and kick the leaves back on the paths. What can be in their minds? Just as one wonders about people who pick up their dog messes in little black bags, and then hang these on bushes. If you are one of these people, remember you aren't the only person using the woods, and think what you're doing.

AGM, 14 Nov 2013.

The AGM was held in Hector's House, on the Sawmill site. Peter Kennett gave a talk on the geology of Ecclesall Woods, and the history of mines in the woods. I found it fascinating, and I think everyone did as well. There were 27 people attending.

At the AGM itself, the Chairman (me, Linda Evans) resigned. I gave notice a year ago that I would resign now, but it seems no-one believed me. So we now do not have a Chairman. I will carry on doing the minimum duties until one is found, but this is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. At committee meetings, the Chair will be taken in turn by committee members. This is the last Newsletter I will produce. The Committee says they will produce a newsletter in turn.

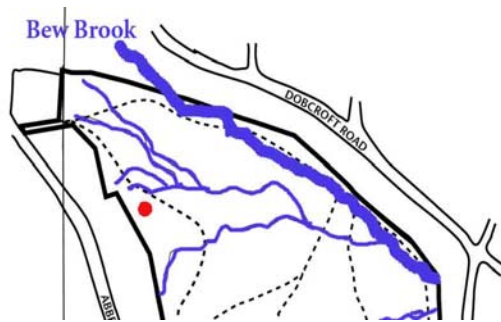
The Footpath group is carrying on as before, successful and attracting members. We have a really good Treasurer in John Fitzpatrick. But we NEED more members, first to join the committee, and then one person to become Chairman.

As mentioned elsewhere, Monica Rorison also resigned as leader of the Ecology group after 16 or more years.

Without active volunteers, groups can simply fade away.

Bew Brook.

I have long held that streams in the Woods should have names. Till recently, there was only Limb Brook. I was talking to Joan Egan, of the Sorby Natural History Society, and she mentioned Bew Brook as a historic name.



This stream issues from a pipe from the back of houses on Dobcroft Road, and runs through the woods until it vanishes and runs under houses on Whirlowdale Crescent. From there, maps show it as on the surface between Dobcroft Road and Pingle Avenue, at the

bottom of the gardens. It then goes underground again under Abbeydale Road South, and comes out by the Millhouses Café and boating lake. It's on the surface for a little here, and then goes into another pipe before running into the Sheaf. Upstream, it seems to rise in the fields behind Silverdale School, and be piped most of the way to its issue in the woods.

The other streams on the map also issue from pipes as shown, and it's not clear where they enter the pipes. They are all tributaries of the Bew Brook. I have seen it spelt as Bow Brook, but Bew is more usual. Will anyone who knows more please get in touch with me?

Woodland Discovery Centre Spring Event, Sunday 27 April 2014.

Ecclesall Woods Craft Courses

Craft courses for 2014 are now available. To book go online to:
www.ecclesallwoodscraftcourses.co.uk

Introduction to Basic Woodland Coppicing	15 th Feb 2014
Introduction to Wood Carving for Adults	22 nd Feb 2014
Bronze Making, Smelting, Casting & Magic	15 th March 2014
Introduction to Wood Carving for Kids	16 th April 2014
Walking Stick Making	26 th April 2014
Basic Spoon and Spatula Carving	18 th May 2014
Basic Pole Lathe Turning	25 th May 2014
Tools Sharpening Course	1 st June 2104
Make a Rustic 3-Legged Stool	15 th June 2014
Stake and Strand Basket Making	22 nd June 2014

These courses often get booked up quite quickly, so act soon if you're interested.