

Friends of Judy Woods Newsletter Spring 2021

Today Mary and I have been involved in two particular things relating to Judy Woods. This afternoon we took part in a Zoom meeting, hosted by Liz Parker, Ward Officer for Wibsey and Royds at Bradford Council. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the establishment of a working partnership for the Woodside area. The people present included local councillors, officers from Incommunities (the housing organisation) and representatives of local voluntary organisations. The Friends of Judy Woods were invited as the woods are used (and abused) by local residents. Various issues were discussed, and we informed the group of our achievements and disappointments. We also referred to the fact that only a few of our volunteers live at the Woodside end of the woods, and hoped that more local residents could be encouraged to join us. This was the first meeting of the group and we hope to be able to tell you more in our next newsletter.

The other get-together we attended was this morning, Wednesday 10 March, when members of the Practical Tasks Group commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mary Trossell. She was the lady who wrote a letter to her forces sweetheart in 1942, describing her walk in Judy Woods. As many of you know we were lent a copy of her letter and we produced the illustrated booklet called *Mary's Walk*. Owing to the current circumstances, Mary's daughter Wendy Faulkner couldn't join us, but we took a series of photographs of PTG members at Mary's guidepost which we have made into the montage displayed on the right.



Geoff Twentyman (Chairman)

Happy Birthday Mary

Mailing address: FoJW
c/o Wyke Library, Appleton
Academy, Woodside Rd, Bradford
BD12 8AL Telephone

Mary & Geoff on 01274 673274
or Peter on 01274 600846

email info@judywoods.org.uk. Website www.judywoods.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: Ian Downey email
ianr.downey@virginmedia.com



The Woodside Ladies

It all started last summer when Catherine, Joyce and Sue decided to begin the annual balsam bash at the Woodside end of Judy Woods. We were then joined by Sally and in weekly reports by our leader, Brian, we became known as The Woodside Ladies. Subsequent lock-downs and social distancing meant it was safer to work as a small team, splitting into twos for our weekly litter pick, this has inevitably become a feature of our outings. We have tried in amongst to remove as much debris from the beck as we can handle. Our haul has included car tyres, bumpers and seats, trolleys, scooters, children's ride-on cars, netting, numerous pieces of plastic, shower trays. In fact we have ceased to be amazed by what we turn up. A sad indictment of the lack of thought given by some to our beautiful woodland heritage. On a positive note, it has kept us fit and we get to work with a dedicated band of like-minded individuals. In these challenging times it has never been more important to get out and explore our natural world.

Bird of the season - The Woodcock

Woodcocks are present in Judy Woods but you will be lucky to see one! These pigeon-sized mainly nocturnal birds are extremely well camouflaged and sit in the leaf litter by day hoping to be undetected by any predator and just about the only time you are likely to see one is if you almost tread on one when it will fly off on a low swerving flight showing its rufous red back and long bill. Springtime does bring a chance to see these birds as they perform their 'roding' flight to attract a mate when they fly with slow wingbeats in large circles calling with a low croaking call. The small resident population swells in winter when large numbers can arrive from northern Europe and Russia creating a 'fall' of birds which has happened again this year.



The Woodcock

Balsam Bashing

Covid will not prevent the growth of Himalayan Balsam, it will start its meteoric growth soon, culminating in spreading its seed in late summer. We have been very successful in recent years, almost eradicating the pest in some areas, but we must be vigilant this balsam season and double our efforts to continue our success.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Lorna Beatie- Lorna is our contact with (YWT). She visited us on the 10th Feb, and has a 2 year contract to look after our area. She has some ideas for us regarding the woods, proposing that areas of beech be removed which will then will be made into fascines, bundles of wood secured on the banks to stop erosion washing into the beck.

Lorna has 10 months of leaky dam building experience, it is a more well researched activity than we had first thought, "great minds" have been applied to their construction so our skills need to be more finely honed. When things return to normal we'll get some extra training. Lorna also proposes to obtain and install more bird and bat boxes.

Cutting Down Trees With Spots On

In our winter 2019 issue you may recall that Chairman, Geoff, mentioned the trees with spots on, these were marked by the council for removal. The trees have an inky stain, which is indicative of a pathogen called *Phytophthora cambivora*. The removal process of these diseased trees is now underway and will continue till late March. They will concentrate on the trees close to the main paths and propose to leave all of the wood in situ which will provide habitat for the woodland occupants.



Bradford Council

Ed Brightman, Assistant Trees and Woodlands Manager, came into the woods on 3rd February for a meeting, we expressed our concerns relating to the quad bike problem. Vehicles, including quad bikes, have access to High Fernley Road and Royds Hall Lane and he explained that it is not a simple matter to change these access rights. He queried the position of the council barrier in High Fernley Road. We thought it was to stop the dumping of stolen cars or to stop large vehicles getting stuck. The main issue is to stop quad bikes using the woods. Ed will produce a notice to explain their exclusion from the woods and how the public can report violation of any such sightings. Access to the Scout Field was checked, he will try to find a suitable barrier to stop quad bike access.

Blocked Culvert

The culvert, located close to the kissing gate at the top of the 99 steps, was blocked and flowing over the path and through the wall. Ed informed us that the adjacent field is council owned and leased to the farm so is a council problem. Our voluntary work is done on behalf of the council so we took it that we could access the land and locate the entrance to the culvert. Since this meeting the entrance to the culvert has been located, it has been cleared of debris and consequently has prevented the beck overflowing, it will need to be monitored on a regular basis as the culvert entrance is quite small and potentially easily blocked.

Snotty Mountain Footbridge

Some years ago our PTG undertook the building of a retaining wall to try and stop erosion of the foundations of the footbridge which leads up Snotty Mountain. At the same time we reinforced the existing foundations but the winter rains have undermined this work. Temporary reinforcements have been put in place pending more substantial renovations later in the year.

Deer Leg & Planks

On 3rd of March Brian and Ian replaced 2 of the planks in the plank bridge up from the waterfall. On the way to do the measuring they were contacted by a couple of dog walkers who said that they had found the leg of a deer (no deer - just the leg) on the bank downstream from the waterfall. They asked if there had been a report of any poaching in the woods - there hadn't. Stuart and Ian went later to investigate, after a comprehensive search they found nothing. It is a mystery, we wondered whether "our" leg was being pulled !!



Poo Bin Stories

If you check back in your copy of the Summer 2020 newsletter you will see Paul and his full Poo Bin barrow, this is another picture of Paul & Ken with an even fuller barrow.



Covid Free

Difficulties with Covid. PTG attendances have been slightly lower than normal, some because of travel restrictions and living outside the immediate area, some have been self isolating due to their higher risk status. Nevertheless work in the woods has continued and no members of the PTG have been adversely effected.

A Longer Reach

On a recent visit from Peter Wilman from the council, we were supplied with another box of rubbish bags and two long handled litter pickers. These pickers are about 3 times the length of the normal standard ones. They will be very useful when removing rubbish from the banking adjacent to Station Road, reducing the need for rope dangling and abseiling.

The tree felling, mentioned previously, has resulted in fallen branches blocking some of the culverts under the main path, we're not sure at this stage whether the workers will be returning to to move these or whether we will be involved in shifting them ourselves.

Chris - The Lone Ranger

PTG and Heavy Gang member Chris is one who has been self isolating and not coming on Wednesday mornings. He has however been taking exercise on his own on other days in the woods and litter picking as he goes. Recently he discovered an abandoned gas bottle in the beck and resolved to remove it at his next visit.

A comment from Chris follows :-

This is Shaun the Good Samaritan from Woodside who saw me struggling with this heavy gas bottle that I had got out of the stream. It was not as easy as it sounds. He and his mum met me as I was starting to walk up the hill they had just come down. He carried it up the hill for me. Thanks again Shaun. On the way to Woodside about ten fit healthy people stopped and said what a good job I was doing. They commented how disgusting it was to leave so much litter and even a gas bottle in the woods. Needless to say they did not offer to help carry it.



It is always nice when members of the public thank us for the work that we do, it is even nicer when they give us a hand or in a few rare cases actually join the PTG as volunteers. Our usual retort to receiving a compliment for work done is to say thank you but why not come over on a Wednesday morning and join in the fun.

Important Message

Enclosed with this newsletter is the Membership Renewal Form. Please ensure that you reply promptly and enclose your annual subscription. Our normal income, derived from the walks and special events, was obviously absent this year so follow the renewal instructions and Send Us Your Money !!

Covid Recovery Programme - Grant

Bradford Council will apply for a grant from the Covid Recovery Programme for woodland and parks. The increase in footfall during the pandemic has resulted in some damage. If the grant application is successful the council propose to carry out path repairs or upgrades.

And Finally We trust that you will all keep safe, we can now look forward to life returning to a more normal pattern now that the vaccination programme is going apace, 20 million as of 01/03/21.

See you in the woods.