

Friends of Judy Woods

Newsletter Summer 2021

With the relaxing of the Covid lockdown things have started happening again out in the community. During the third week of July Mary and I were involved in three events in four days with our Friends of Judy Woods hats on - or perhaps that should be with our FoJW clothing on.

On Sunday evening 25th July we accepted an open invitation to join members of St Michael's and All Angels church from Shelf for a Forest Worship service in the woods. It was a lovely warm evening and a very relaxed event led by Rev Gordon Dey. There were about 15 of us there and it included some time to think about the beauty of the woods and share our thoughts with each other. Mary and I were also able to tell the others something about the history of the woods and about the Friends activities.

On the afternoon of Wednesday 28th July we supplemented our FoJW shirts with our PTG waterproof jackets. We fortunately had the shelter of a shared gazebo as it rained all afternoon. However, it didn't dampen the spirits of those attending the Woodside neighbourhood event on the Fenwick Drive green-space area, and we made a lot of new contacts. Thanks to PTG members Tina, Liz and Ian for giving their support also.

Our third event was the morning after when FoJW vice-chairman, Denis Waudby, now well-qualified in the subject led a small group of us on a walk as part of the Festival of Archaeology. He explained about the QR codes, put in as part of the work with the JAMES organisation, and we finished up in Judy's garden where he outlined the history there, and what he would like to see achieved in the future. A topic of conversation within the group and challenging passers-by was "Have you spotted the teddy bear tree? Well, have you?" And on that enigmatic note I'll leave you.

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Woodside Workers - Report by Sally

Our Woodside Workers have made a concerted effort over the past 12 months to try and clear the beck of as much rubbish as possible, sadly there was plenty of it. This has been a challenge to which I feel our team has risen admirably. The items most commonly found are shopping trolleys (oh what delight must be had by those who push them down the hill) but spare a thought for those not in their first flush of youth who have to heave the pesky things back up! Next on the list, car tyres of all shapes and sizes closely followed by lengths of fabric/carpeting etc. Untangling the piles of debris we have located is a skill we have learnt to master. Fridges piled on top of kitchen cupboards jammed in by traffic cones, bollards or boarding. Perhaps a child's bike or scooter or as more recently a delightful pink motorised child's ride-on car. Then we have the car seats, wheel hubs, mudguards, sun loungers, umbrellas, lilos, pillows, foam pads in amongst cans, bottles and plastic - always lots of plastic. Sometimes we need the help of our men (not often though!) to saw through branches for access and assist in carrying our finds to a pick-up point. We play 'guess what this is' as we unpick and once in a tug of war with a particularly stubborn length of cloth one individual, who shall remain nameless, ended up sat in the beck as the said item was finally liberated. No injury sustained, apart from pride but a soggy bottom for the effort. We have found that looking down from the main path to judge whether a section is clear is not a good test. Until you get in you have no idea what will be unearthed but the other week's find topped the lot - a full sized fibre glass canoe. You'd never believe it - but we would!

Bird of the Season - Goldcrest

Beech nuts, acorns and leaf buds are all often seen scattered on the woodland floor - evidence of activity in the treetops, mainly by squirrels of course but birds can also leave evidence of their activity. Whilst in the woods recently attention was drawn to small pieces of lichen drifting down from above but no squirrels were to be seen. Eventually the culprit emerged in the form of a goldcrest working its way along a branch clearing the lichen in the hunt for food. More goldcrests appeared as the small flock worked its way amongst the high branches keeping in contact with each other with quiet, high-pitched calls. Britain's smallest bird, the goldcrest is not common in the woods but if you're lucky you may come across one or two. They can be identified by their very small size and relatively long very thin beaks and of course by their gold crest.

Ongoing Work

The normal Wednesday morning routine of litter picking and bin emptying continues and with the recent improvement in the weather resulted in a heavier footfall in the woods and consequently more rubbish. Kevin and his walling team are regular attenders they build repair and refurbish our dry stone walls and if on the odd occasion they are knocked down they build them up again. It appears that the culprits are frequently quad bikers attempting to gain illegal access to the woods.

Stress Free

A recent report from the Woodland Trust stresses the psychological, mood enhancing effect of fresh air exercise in general and woodland walks in particular. Remember the colour green is mid spectrum and consequently restful on the eyes.

Subscriptions and Donations

For those members who have not paid their annual subscriptions or wish to support the group by making a donation, these can be paid directly into the FoJW bank account by bank transfer. If you use this payment method please email the Membership secretary Linda and inform her of when it was paid and the amount of the transfer. Bank details are as follows. **Friends of Judy Woods**

Virgin Money

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Please confirm to Linda at: membership@judywoods.org.uk so that she can check receipt of the payment.



I trust that all members have taken advantage of the improved weather and visited the woods often. The bluebells were impressive this year - a special time not to be missed. The new growth occurring in spring /summer completely changes the character of the wood. We who are regular visitors experience the subtle changes - a joy every week.

River Water Monitoring

A refresher course recently taken by Mary, Geoff, Brian and Sally prepared them to eventually undertake monitoring of the water quality in our beck. The team are looking for seven key indicator species to ascertain whether we have a healthy water course and to do this they need to do what is called kick-sampling. This agitates the stream bed thus enabling any findings to be collected in a net for transfer to a large bucket. From here the sample is cleaned of gravel/debris and any creatures found then transferred to a segmented dish for identification, comparing what is found with a chart. This has at times proved to be challenging but confidence is building and results are now being submitted to our Monitoring Group Co-ordinator along with the grid reference of the location where the sampling took place. These results are then fed through to the Riverfly Partnership National Co-ordinator for logging onto a central database. An overview can then be had as to findings in a particular location over a period of time. Currently I am delighted to report that our beck is exhibiting signs of a healthy water quality. Long may it remain so.

Hima -Late Balsam

Himalayan Balsam, possibly due to the colder wetter spring, seems to be late this year, there certainly seems to be less of it, this may be due to our annual ongoing eradication programme. I can't believe that the dreaded balsam has forgotten to grow this year. The ladies at the Woodside end have had some sightings and success at removal.

Woodside End Steps Right

Now that we are out of severe lockdown and the weather has improved we can now recommence our programme of projects which were planned more than a year ago. We have worked on the steps at the Woodside end going down to the plank bridge. Old and damaged steps have been removed and replaced and additional new steps have been constructed to enable walkers to negotiate the steepest slope. The council delivered some hardcore for us to use to surface the steps. Work in progress.



Main Path Repairs

We are awaiting the council decision regarding the edging on the main path. We suspended remedial work as it was on the cards that the whole lot would be replaced by council contractors, this is looking unlikely now so we need to plan repairs in this area.



Left Bridge Repair

A report in the last newsletter relating to Woodside end /Snoddy Mountain foot bridge highlighted the need for further remedial work, now completed by the council contractors. They brought some heavy machinery down the hill and fortunately did little damage to the steps. The bridge piers were strengthened and some large stones were piled up next to the far side pier to protect it from flood erosion. A good solid job.

Container Move Saturday 17th July

Phil and his colleagues from Event Equipment Hire, the owners of the container site, have been very helpful regarding moving the container at no charge to us (detailed on page 4) and currently do not charge us rent. The FoJW committee thank them for their generosity. Another thank you goes to Brian and Alan who spent a significant part of their Saturday at the site during the container move.

Welcome

Welcome to the new members of the PTG who have joined within the last year, Chris and Stuart D seem happy to work with the "heavy gang". Tina, who joined late 2020 and Angela who joined recently work with the litter pickers based at the Station Road end, Mark who is doing general duties wherever required. A number of our regular members Alan, Mike, Chris H, Tony and Lynda who have been self isolating for a number of reasons, have returned. Welcome back.

Supermarket Trolley, Gas Bottle and Fibreglass Canoe - Unusual Junk



Mentioned by Sally in the page two Woodside Workers report was the unbelievable canoe. The water is just inches deep and very stoney at the point where it was discovered. The photos prove the point. The same day we recovered a large gas bottle that Chris has found previously together with supermarket trolley.



Container Relocation

After the repositioning of the container it was decided that we would sort out the contents, dispose of items that we had no use for, and organise the tools. While moving it we discovered that there was some damage to the roof near the back end. We tried bending it back up with help from a large piece of wood and a trolley jack with some limited success. Water had been collecting in the roof indentation and some rust was evident. The rusty area was wire brushed and some rust proof paint applied. It will require some further remedial work before the winter as there are some other smaller rusty areas to address. Rust Never Sleeps! Those of you who engage in pub quizzes will recall that this is the title of a 1979 Neil Young live album - not one of my favourites to be honest.

Weeds were cleared from behind the repositioned container to make room for our bags of ballast, to be moved in the near future.



The container pickup



Loading the container on to the truck



The final new position next to another similar container

There are more pictures included in this newsletter and it is published a little later than usual - reason, the canoe and the container move just couldn't be excluded. To paraphrase Henrik Ibsen: "A picture tells a thousand words"

Stay Safe