

Friends of Judy Woods

Newsletter Winter 2022

December is the month when many people start looking back on the year. Now that most things are just about back to normal we might forget how restricted things were only a year or so ago. However, like many organisations we started to re-introduce our former activities and they have been well supported.

We started off our Events programme with a walk on 2nd April, led by Stuart and Sally. We also welcomed back Alice Gingell, who as usual was able to point out early spring flowers which some of us might have missed.

Five days later saw our first AGM since 2019. All officers were re-elected and we welcomed some new recruits to our committee. The theme of the two presentations was the watercourse and its insect life. Mary Twentyman of FOJW and Melvyn Wood of the Calderdale Rivers Trust each did very interesting sessions. Mary, Sally and I carry out river fly sampling in the mid-year months and submit our results to the CRT. It is good to report that sufficient numbers of larvae found in the stream bed have indicated no cause for concern during 2022.

Shortly before our next planned event Sally discovered that the destination for our May walk was closed on a Wednesday. But through the kind co-operation of Carolyn, the proprietor of Lightcliffe Tea Rooms, they opened specially for us. As well as our custom that day they had a bonus as Mary booked them to do the outside catering at Bradford Family History Society's conference later in the year. And what a wonderful spread that was!

Some of our organised walks take us through the woods and then to other places in the area. Our August walk did not include the woods at all, but took us to places that had connections with Judy North. Some people were quite amazed that we managed to include visits to four nature reserves in the Low Moor and Oakenshaw area.

Our bat walk was re-introduced in September and led as usual by Ian Butterfield. We didn't actually walk that far, but we were rewarded by the views and amplified noises of the likes of pipistrelles and Daubenton's. And we had a bonus of a tawny owl caught in our torchlight at Park Bottom.

Details of our fungi walk follow on page 2. There will be some great exercise and entertainment for you on the 27th December at our Seasons Greetings event.

All the best for Christmas.

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Bird of the Season - Kestrel



Whilst working in Judy's Garden recently we were pleased to see a kestrel working its way along the edge of the wood. Kestrels are not woodland birds but they can be seen in neighbouring fields where they hunt for small mammals. The UK population of these attractive medium-sized birds of prey has fallen significantly in recent years and you are more likely to see a buzzard these days but the kestrel is much smaller and if it's hovering then it's definitely a kestrel. As resident birds they can be seen all year round.

Incidentally, it's forecast to be a waxwing year this winter so keep a look out for these exotic-looking migrants from Scandinavia around berry trees - often in supermarket car parks.

Fungi Walk

The Fungi Walk took place on Saturday October 15th after a break of two years. The walk was led by Stuart, John & Nick. A total of 25 people attended and just short of fifty fungi species were spotted, some for the first time. The younger members were able to spot fungi that others had missed. We look forward to such an interesting and well attended event next year.

Cans Aplenty

The slope into the woods from Station Road always suffers from littering, however recently we have had a plethora of cider cans. Car owners, we presume, have been throwing their empties over the fence, we estimate that we have picked up 60 cans all of the same brand as well as other pieces of litter. "Dope on a Rope", Ian, assisted by Tony and Alan have completed this task over a couple of weeks fitting it in amongst other jobs.

Woodside Workers - Trolleys

The school holidays always pose a problem in the woods. Greater footfall, more rubbish and the inevitable collection of shopping trolleys. The WW team, plus on some occasions the heavy gang, have recovered many, some almost new, some old and rusty. The annoying part is that the supermarket in question does not accept them back so they need to be left at the bin collection point to be picked up by the council. The record is 5 trolleys in one week, at £200 a trolley that's a grand!

River Fly Sampling

The river fly sampling has continued on a regular basis although there has been a problem during the latter part of the summer with low water levels in the beck. Sampling has now been suspended over the late autumn and winter period. Geoff, Mary & Sally are the main participants.

Bat Boxes

We were donated a number of bat boxes, these needed to be installed on trees close to an open space, as bats don't like flying through wooded areas. We chose trees close to the Judy's garden area. The extending ladder was employed, Ian climbed up, cordless drill/ screwdriver in hand and a screw between his teeth, with Tony and Brian stabilising the ladder. All were fitted within a couple of hours. We are told that it may take a while for bats to discover the boxes and adopt them as a roosting place.

Drills & Bits

We now have an electricity feed into the container so we were in the position to purchase a battery operated electric drill. Stuart T did some research and obtained a quality cordless drill with charger and two batteries, included in the package were some drills and screwdriver bits. We have bought a timer so the drill battery can be charged, ensuring that it is ready for use when required.

More Double Yellow Lines

The council have now applied extra double yellow lines on Station Road, stretching from the main entrance round the corner and over the railway bridge. Some motorists were not parking sensibly. This has clearly restricted the amount of parking on Station Road but fortunately does not restrict the parking near our container site. This new road management intervention will make access to the woods much safer. The logistics company up the road were often having problems getting their trucks around the corner because of badly parked cars. Assuming that motorists adhere to these parking restrictions this problem is solved.

Fence Repair

The fence alongside the path leading from Judy's bridge to the 99 steps had become damaged due to the posts becoming rotten at ground level. New posts were sunk into the ground and bracing was attached to the original fence. This simple intervention means that the fence will not need further remedial work for some time. A similar procedure was used on the fence just up from the style entrance on Station Road.



Containers

Mentioned in the July newsletter, the number of containers available for rent on the container site continues to increase. The attached photo shows the extent of the development.



Judy's Cottage

Denis and his team continue to improve the area surrounding Judy's cottage. The path and wall have been improved and extended, with the help of the walling team Kevin & John. A survey of the area is in progress, with Chris and Guy assisting. Work has been done on the fencing with vertical stakes being interwoven with beech whips. John has a scythe and the skill to use it safely, so areas have been cut back to encourage spring growth next year. A hole has been dug in preparation for the planting of a pear tree and an area was cleared for a possible herb garden. A special mention to Denis who shared his graduation video with us, he looked resplendent in his cap and gown when he received his PHD. An achievement to be proud of and the result of a lot of hard work. Well done Denis.

High Fernley Road
The wall that was partially demolished by a fallen tree up High Fernley Road is still under repair. The walling team did some preliminary work removing bracken and brambles to allow access to the base of the wall so work can now commence on the rebuild.

Balsam Bash

A final effort of balsam bashing took place on Judy's field, small clumps were spotted surrounded by dense brambles. It was decided to note the area and try to attack them next season rather than being ripped to shreds this year.



More Vandalism

During the summer we have had a continual problem with damage to fences, with people wanting to gain access into the woods with quad bikes or motorcycles. The fence, adjacent to the kissing gate close to the top of the 99 steps, was removed. We installed a new post and some new rails, the rails were broken out again and subsequently reinstated. Similarly the fence adjacent to the style entrance was cut out, this again was reinstated and has currently not been vandalised again.

Future Events - Seasons Greetings

The event will take place on Tuesday 27th December at the Harold Club. Timings are approximate

This event is the most popular of the year, come along and enjoy the festive atmosphere.

12:00 The club will open for drinks and food.

13:00 The walk in the woods will commence.

14:30 Ryburn Longsword, dance group, will perform in the car park.

15:00 A mummings play, written by Mary will be performed inside.

15:15 Entertainment continues with floor singers and possibly special guests.

A Message From the Editor - Newsletter

Although I am the newsletter editor and am responsible for the finished product, a number of others are significant contributors. Stuart Tordoff provides the copy for the Bird of the Season and his eagle eye as a proof reader is invaluable. Sally Tetlow frequently provides copy describing one or other of the walks. Page 1, The letter from the chairman, is provided by Geoff Twentyman, which just leaves me to finalise the layout and provide the final copy. Stuart's daughter, Jenny, acts as our printer and the excellent quality of the printed letter is due to her. Stuart takes the printed copies to Linda Paul who prints the envelopes and includes any further information (Membership Renewal Forms for instance), I then pick up the envelopes from Linda and take them to the Council Peel Park dept where they are posted on our behalf. So my sincere thanks goes out to all my co-contributors, it is by our combined efforts that the quality of the newsletter is maintained.

Festive News

The PTG Christmas meal will take place at the Guide Post Hotel on Wednesday 14th December. Thanks go to Julie for organising the meal, circulating the menu and collecting the payments, with help from Brian.

Seasonal Salutations

May I take this opportunity to extend my best wishes for the festive season to all Friends of Judy Woods and trust that we will all have a prosperous and above all a healthy New Year.