

# Friends of Judy Woods

## Newsletter Spring 2022

I am short of breath! Don't worry I am not ill; I have just read the draft of the other three pages of this newsletter. What a lot is going on! Many thanks from all of us to Ian, Stuart and Sally, and the rest of the contributors and production team for providing all the information that is here for us to read.

Thanks also to all the workers on the Practical Tasks Group who give their time and physical effort so generously on a Wednesday morning. As is intimated on another page, none of us are getting any younger and new volunteers in a fitter condition are always welcome. But if you only can do light work, don't be put off. We will be glad to see you too.

The recent wild weather saw yet more large trees and large boughs fall to earth. Some will be left in place and others have had to be removed as they caused obstructions. One morning four were cutting off many branches of a beech tree which was blocking the paths and the side stream in Low Wood. For a while we had a "supervisor". It was a robin which perched above us which sang out its lovely trill. Sometimes, we can be too busy with what we have to do, or what is on our minds, to notice what is going on around us. It might just take one bird song for us take in more of our surroundings and look up and around us.

Denis Waudby, our vice-chairman, retired from work some time ago and subsequently gained qualifications in archaeology. He has put his knowledge to good use in various places, and his latest venture is to apply for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to do work in "Judy's Garden", as mentioned elsewhere in our newsletter. Denis has put a lot of work into the project, and has had several setbacks, not least with what some of think of as "red tape" requirements from the HFL.

Finally from me, just a reminder that we will be pleased to see you at the AGM at Wyke Methodist Church at 7.00pm on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April. Don't worry, you won't be pressed into doing anything if you are not already nominated in a role. You will have the opportunity to learn more about our water courses and the insect life of them, from Mary Twentyman of FOJW, and Melvyn Wood of the Riverfly project.

Hope to see you then.

Geoff Twentyman (Chairman)

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### **Bird of the Season - Common Buzzard**

#### **Red Marker Route Posts Replaced**

Stuart & Alan have done a survey on the Red Marker Route posts. Stuart made some new posts and the "heavy gang" located and recovered existing posts that had been vandalised. All were installed successfully. The route is now completely reinstated ready for the Easter influx of visitors.

#### **Turning Circle Seating**

It was our intention to replace the seating at the turning circle, as the council has supplied us with the replacement kit. However the recent appalling weather has put that on the "back burner", it will be implemented in near future.

#### **Welcome to New PTG Members, Guy & John**

We have 2 new members of the PTG, Guy & John, both are keen to engage with us on the more physical tasks. Good news as none of us are getting any younger. Spreading the load helps enormously. John was / still is part of the team led by Kevin who has been repairing the dry stone walls. When not involved with that he helps with more general tasks. As an aside, long term PTG member Chris comments when contemplating a new task probably proposed 2 or 3 years ago, before COVID, we are all 2 years older. Can we physically still do it?

#### **Lorna of YWT**

Lorna, our contact at the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is coming to the end of her contract. Lorna has been very helpful with advice and providing us with specialist tools. Although, due to COVID, we have not had much contact, nevertheless we have had a positive outcome. We thank her for her help and enthusiasm and wish her well in her further career.

#### **New Growth in Spring**

Always as early spring approaches it is great to see the new growth starting. Spring is the time when the woods start to rapidly change their character. A wonderful time of the year when the drabness of winter starts to become spring green again. Always a joy to experience for us who are regular visitors. After the stormy wet weather we now look forward to a more benign Spring period and the display of bluebells in April & May.

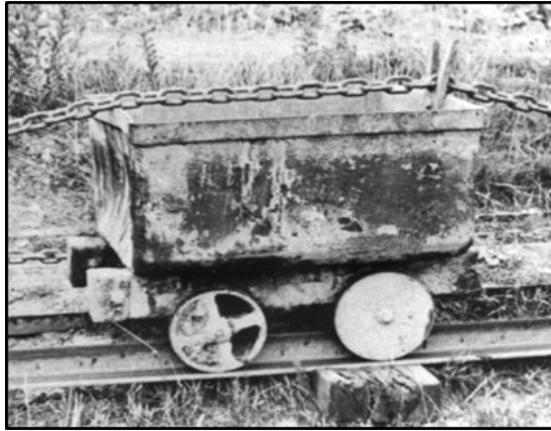
#### **Reinstate Leaky Dams**

The severe weather has damaged our leaky dams which need some effort to replace. This will be undertaken when the water level has dropped. Regarding the main beck, more fallen trees have created some natural leaky dams in areas that we wouldn't normally have considered.

The Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) is a bird often heard before it's seen. A loud peeo overhead betrays the presence of this medium-large bird of prey. Despite its name, it was for many years rarely seen in this area but recently it has become an increasingly common sound and sight in Judy Woods and we know that birds have bred not far away in the last few years. A resident species in the UK, buzzards prey mainly on small mammals but will also take birds and insects. A bird of prey seen circling high in the sky these days is most likely to be a buzzard, although it could be confused with a red kite (rarer and larger) or a kestrel or sparrowhawk (smaller). Buzzards are very often mobbed by crows, who cannot resist having a go at any large bird flying over their patch; they can also sometimes be seen perched at the woodland edge in a tree or on a fence post.

### Strange Artefact Found In Judy Woods

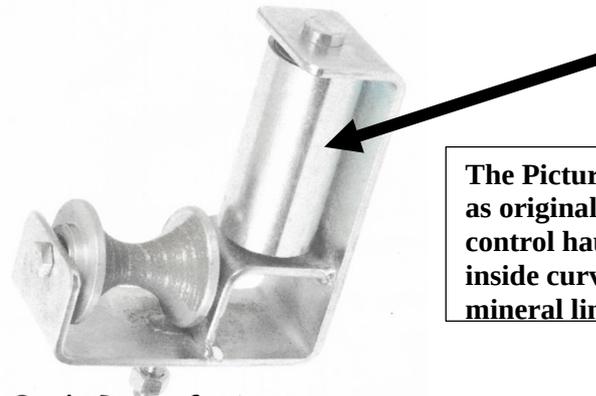
One of our PTG members, Mike McGrath, found this strange 9-inch by 4-inch diameter metal cylinder in the stream. Close examination revealed a series of grooves on the surface suggesting that the cylinder served as a machinery part. The grooves were compatible with those evident on rocks adjacent to the mineral lines, where steel haulage lines were used to haul the coal trucks from Flathers Pit to Low Moor Ironworks.



A web search showed that this method is still practised today. The picture below shows such haulage line roller assembly as used in Australia. Such rollers were used at right angles to the central base roller to hold the haulage line in place where the pulling line passed along a curved area of track and probably dated from the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century. **Well Spotted Mike !**

### Station Road Fence Replaced

20 metres of fence was demolished on Station Road in late 2021, result of a nasty car accident. The Police tape, for safety reasons, remained in place for a while. The fence has now been replaced and is safe again.



The Picture shows the roller as originally mounted to control haulage line travel inside curved section of the mineral line.

### Main Path Resurfacing

As mentioned in my last newsletter the council were well on the way to complete the replacement of the path edging. This was completed in early 2022. In February council contractors arrived and resurfaced the main path. Some of the fencing adjacent to the kissing gate was temporarily removed for machinery access, once complete this has been replaced. The contractors left a pile of surfacing ballast for us and this was used on the new path at the stile entrance. The council have since delivered more ballast for us to use in other areas.

### Heritage Lottery Fund

Denis Waudby, Vice-Chairman, had proposed an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to fund archaeological work round Judy's cottage and to replant a wildflower garden. The application has been submitted and we await the result.

### Survey of the 99 Steps Starting to Replace/Turn the Damaged Sleepers

Following a survey of the 99 steps and in consultation with the council the repair of the steps has started. It is a big job, we think that there are 20 or so steps to tackle. The idea is that although the front edge of the step could be damaged and rotted away if we remove the side edging board holding it in place we can remove the step and turn it over. Hopefully this creates a better front edge. Once we get into the swing of doing this perhaps it will not be as arduous as we first thought. The preliminary work seems to indicate this. Again the stormy winter weather and other more pressing priorities has temporarily stopped this project.

### **Tree ID Plaques**

The tree plaque project which was mentioned in our last newsletter has now been extended with additional plaques having been bought and some placed in position.

### **Steps at the Stile Entrance**

The stile entrance near to the container site has been a problem for a while. The area between the stile and the 4 steps down to the mineral line was uneven due to surface tree roots. The recent wet weather has made the area treacherous with the build up of mud. Tree roots were removed from a tree adjacent to the path that was cut down by the council last year, so no damage to the tree. Steps and path edging were installed and we spent some time bringing over firstly large ballast from our store and then the finer surface ballast to complete the job. The surface on the existing 4 steps was loosened up and more fine ballast was added and tamped down. It is a massive improvement and a job that has been needed to be done for a while - the path is no longer a skating rink when wet.

### **Container Site**

Our recently refurbished container has been joined by 30 or so others. Our container is positioned along with another, close to the entrance gate. Hitherto there were a few containers at the bottom end of the lot but every week there seem to be more. Now there is an unbroken row right down to the Network Rail compound at the far end. The owners are proposing to rent them out for storage. Some weeks ago a rail was constructed inside the security fence for a sliding gate along with a mains electricity box to power the gate. In the last fortnight a truck arrived with a gate along with an installation engineer. Once completely installed it should make the site even more secure. It appears we will be sharing the site with more people. We trust that the current appropriate security measures are maintained. I will keep members well informed on developments in following newsletters.

### **Events Programme in the Woods**

The events for 2022 are as follows:-

Saturday 2nd April 1.30 pm Spring Walk - Stuart and Sally

Thursday 7th April 7.00pm AGM - Wyke Methodist Church - Speakers Melvin Wood and Mary

Wednesday 4th May 1.30pm Lightcliffe Tearooms - Sally

Sunday July 17th 2.15 pm Calderdale Heritage Walk - Mary

The events later in the year will be detailed in the next newsletter.

Please look at the website for amendments or additional information.

### **New Committee Members - John & Tina**

As mentioned in the last chairman's introduction Peter Todd has stood down from the committee, Tina & John expressed an interest to join the committee, they have attended recent committee meetings as observers and will be formally proposed as members at the up and coming AGM in April.

**Please note the AGM is on Thursday 7th April 7.00pm AGM - Wyke Methodist Church**

### **Stop Press**

The council are proposing additional parking restriction on Station Road, details are on the appropriate council web site, contact them if you have any objections.