

Friends of Judy Woods

Newsletter Summer 2023

One day recently when I was working in the woods I stopped for breather and saw a movement to one side of me. It was a bee, and it was busily going from flower to flower doing what bees do. I found myself saying "Carry on lad, you've got your job to do, and I have mine". Then it made me think of all the people and all the creatures in our woods and how they have their different agendas as we call them.

Some people are there just to enjoy a walk in the lovely surroundings, some come into the woods everyday to give their dogs some much appreciated exercise. Whilst others like the PTG members or the Council team are there to carry out work. We have school classes who are part of the Forest School and similar projects, who learn about nature and the environment. Identifying flowers and trees are high on some people's agenda, and there are those who forage for food, carefully gathering edible leaves, fungi or berries. Some FOJW members are keenly interested in the history of the woods, and particularly Judy's family home.

And that is just some of the agendas of us humans. Back to the bee. It has a different agenda even to other insects, and their lifestyle and activities are not the same as the birds, or the squirrels, or the bats, or the deer. Scientists are able to tell us more and more these days about the life of trees, and we are finding it amazing how trees are known to communicate with each other. So even they have their own agendas.

What a vast spectrum of interests and life issues are to be found in woodlands. We each have our own agendas. For some they are a place for inner peace, for others an adventure. For other creatures they are home and places for survival, and the site of the start of new generations, continuing life which is centuries old.

Our woods are a pleasure and at the same time, a responsibility. We might have different agendas but hopefully we will continue to see Judy Woods flourish for future generations.

Now, just a reminder of two events coming up in the autumn.

Friday 8th September will see our annual Bat Walk led by Ian Butterfield, a member of the West Yorkshire Bat Group. We will be meeting at the Woodside Centre, 82 Fenwick Drive BD6 2RZ at 7.00pm.

Saturday 7th October is our fungi walk with FOJW members Stuart Tordoff and Sally Tetlow. Meet at Station Road Wyke BD2 8LA at 1.00pm.

Here's wishing you all the best, whatever your interests in Judy Woods are.

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Bird of the Season - The Chaffinch

One of Britain's more common birds and one of the more colourful that you might come across in the woods is the chaffinch. About sparrow size, the male (pictured) is more brightly coloured than the female and both are distinguished by having two white wing bars. Chaffinches are seed eaters and feed mainly on the ground, look out for them particularly around the bridge area. Outside of the breeding season chaffinches tend to flock together with birds of the same sex, so it is common to see flocks of either just male or female birds. The song of the chaffinch finishes with an exuberant final flourish which makes it one of the easiest birds to identify by its song.

Saturday 29th April, Walk Led by Sue & Geoff Dunn - Report by Sally Tetlow

It was a beautiful afternoon as we commenced our walk from the Meadway entrance to the woods. 15 of us were in attendance plus 3 youngsters, who took full advantage of running around in our beautiful woods. On this occasion our walk was ably led by Sue and Geoff Dunn who were keen for us to experience as much of the newly emerging spring growth as possible. Our first sight on entering the woods was a mass of few-flowered leek which looked intent on taking over an entire section bordering the housing estate. Further into the walk we noted the emergence of new foliage on the trees which seemed to shine in the sunlight. We then descended the hill to follow part of the red marker route as far as Mary's post then up the steps to continue our journey under the pylons and onto the perimeter path. The bluebells were glorious as they newly emerged and time was spent discussing the differences between our native bluebells and the 'invaders' - the Spanish. A lovely afternoon in good company and enjoyed by all. Our thanks to Sue and Geoff for planning such an interesting walk.

Committed to FoJW & the PTG

FoJW Treasurer, Stuart Tordoff, who also contributes the 'Bird of the Season' column in this newsletter regularly remarks how lucky we are to have such a committed, enthusiastic, hard working and reliable group of members unlike other groups with which he has been involved over the years which struggle to attract volunteers. As prime motivator in the establishment of the PTG in 2008, Stuart is particularly proud to have seen numbers rise from two to over thirty in the intervening years. A big thank you to all who make the PTG such an outstanding success.

Snippets

All previously planted saplings in Judy's Field were checked and any encroaching weeds were removed, also brambles were cut back to allow the survey work to continue, a wood cover was installed over the exposed culvert.

In Judy's Garden, infants from a visiting school assisted Tina in planting some herbs.

Five areas of damaged dry stone walling in Royds Hall Lane were re-built.

Three 'sleepers' were transported to the bottom of the 99 Steps in preparation for further step replacements. Many thanks to John and the use of his eco-friendly motor.

The post on the main path carrying one of the QR codes which we call the Bear Post has been vandalised again, a replacement was prepared and the new post was installed.

Brambles were cut back under the pylons for easier access to the balsam.

Two of our Woodside Workers were assisted by four from Station Road in clearing branches and litter picking along the beck.

Clearing of balsam on the steep slope above the Scout Field was completed in mid July, by a small team using harness and rope.

The Great Bradford Spring Clean

The whole group were involved with The Great Bradford Spring Clean on 12th April. In the blitz around Royds Hall Dam, 27 bags of litter were collected plus some additional tyres. As you can see from the accompanying photos the collection was quite comprehensive.



Judy's Garden Rustic Bench

The council supplied the material for a rustic bench seat planned for Judy's garden. This was assembled by the team in mid May and strengthened by some steel brackets the following week. It was tested and was deemed to be robust and comfortable, ideal for a picnic in the shade or a short respite from the labours of a hard pressed PTG worker.



PTG Deer Sighting

We have had reports by members of the public of deer activity, we occasionally see evidence of their presence. However on July 19th a group of us spotted a young deer close to the junction of High Fernley Road & the main path. The first sighting for a while.

Balsam Bash 2023

We have been so successful with the removal of Himalayan Balsam at the Station Road end of the woods that we had been struggling to find large enough patches to bash on our annual Balsam Bash Saturday. Although there are more clumps of balsam available at the Woodside end, under the electricity pylons, the transit time there and back to our post-activity meet-up at the Pear Tree pub would possibly preclude our group going that far. However, the dreaded balsam has recently put on a spurt of growth which has produced areas close to Station Road where bashing could be possible. The chosen date for the Bash is 29th July which coincides with the publication of this newsletter so you could be reading this after the event.

Plank Bridge Repair

The plank bridge on the cliff top path has been sorely in need of repair for a while. We need sufficient members on site to be able to transport the kit and materials from the container site to the location. We need to remove the staples holding down the mesh which covers the rotten plank, crowbar the nails and wood out from the joists at either side, then slide in the new plank. The final operation is to replace the fixing nails and staples. Once we have the materials at the site and have got into the swing of the process, it all happens quite quickly. Each member of the team has a job and keeps out of the way of the other team members. We joke that we are not quite as quick as the tyre change in an F1 pit lane - but getting there!

Woodside Workers

Our team of Woodside Workers have now turned their attention to locating and eradicating any evidence of Himalayan Balsam that is lurking in their territory. Sadly this is a never-ending fight but progress is being made and there is now evidence of other plant life, in particular bluebells, reappearing in areas that have been previously cleared. This is good news and further galvanises our efforts against this plant's advances in our beautiful woods.

River-fly Monitoring

River-fly monitoring also continues at our appointed location near Judy's Bridge. This is undertaken on a monthly basis by our team of three from April through to October. The results are subsequently forwarded to the Calder Rivers Trust, they keep a record of our results and are able to detect any anomalies that may arise. This season so far we have noticed that we are finding the species that we need to identify for good water quality, but not in the numbers previously found. Time will tell as the season progresses whether this changes but to date we are hitting the target figure required for our beck. Long may this continue.

Campsite

We had report of a two tent campsite downstream from Judy's bridge. We first encountered it when 2 campers were still in residence, we just cleaned up the litter and beer cans and left. Once the camp was abandoned we cleared the site and dismantled the stone base of the camp fire. This produced a wheelbarrow plus load of rubbish. Thanks to a member of the public who assisted in pulling the wheelbarrow up the last third of the slope. The rubbish was left by the kissing gate and Denis, the Area Warden, was informed to arrange pickup.

Archaeologists visit Judy Woods

A joint site visit for FoJW and the Council of British Archaeologists (Yorkshire) to review the archaeological prospects of the site was undertaken in early June. We were particularly pleased that CBA (York), who had previously awarded funding to upgrade the FoJW QR-coded Heritage Trail, had accepted our invitation to review the completed work. The CBA group complimented FoJW for our role in the preservation of the archaeological and social history of Judy Woods. Additionally, the archaeologists provided a professional appraisal of the geophysical/magnetic site surveys and our current progress in the excavation of Judy's cottage.

The pictures show:-

Geo/Phys magnetic survey of Judy's garden with cottage outlines indicated.

Judy North (after whom the woods are named) pictured outside the cottage which can be seen in the background



Judy's Garden Pear Tree

The pear tree that was planted in Judy's garden has already started to fruit. This must be the planting technique of Denis and his team, and the devoted ongoing watering required - or is it just fertile soil?

