



Friends of Hollingbury & Burstead Woods

NEWSLETTER, Autumn 2017

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Programme

*Monthly work sessions, starting 10 am at the barn next to Upper Roedale Cottages
(In bold type, special event: details later in the Newsletter)*

Saturday 2 December

Clear North and South Tennis and Sheep Lane Glades. Weed Bee Bank and cut back overshadowing branches.

Sunday 7 January 2018

Plant 'Ademuz' elms. 'Top' the elm hedge bordering Ditchling Rd. Clear Hollingbury.Park bays.

Thursday 18 January

Annual evening meal

Saturday 3 February

Burstead Woods path maintenance and litter clearance. Pioneer House perimeter trees aftercare.

Sunday 4 March

Burstead Woods: Butterfly Glade clearance. Gorse patch planting and weeding.

Saturday 7 April

To be announced.

*Extra sessions may be arranged for planting snowdrops and pot-grown trees.

*Path and step maintenance on the Southern slopes will be arranged by our Ranger and the Rights of Way officer.

*Ivy control , like litter picking, will take place at all sessions where appropriate.

ANNUAL EVENING MEAL, THURSDAY 18 JANUARY

Our annual evening meal will this year be at the Cleveland Arms (on the corner of Lucerne Rd and Cleveland Rd) on Thursday 18 January. Details of the menu and cost, and of booking arrangements, will be sent by email shortly. If you do not have email, but would like to receive these details, please let Adrian Peasgood know – 01273 508620, or 14 Harrington Villas, Brighton BN1 6RG.

LATEST NEWS

Elms

The flattening and clearing of the rat-infested bund south of the Woodbourne recycling centre has created a planting opportunity for us, and prompted by our colleague Jamie Burston, we plan to purchase and plant two disease-resistant elms in this new space. Jamie is a Butterfly Conservation Species Champion for the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly, whose caterpillars feed on elm. Thanks to prompt and effective action in the 1970s against Dutch elm disease (DED), Brighton & Hove holds the National Elm Collection, and is therefore a vital habitat for this declining butterfly species. The trees chosen are of the same species as field elm *Ulmus minor*, but the Spanish variety *Ademuz*, which displays both an attractive form and high DED resistance; in fact in trials it performed better than the clone *Sapporo Autumn Gold*, regarded as the benchmark of resistance. The purchase has been approved by the Council's Arboricultural team.

The name 'Ademuz' derives from the citadel of Valencia and apparently means 'impregnable'. Let us hope the elms prove so!

'Progress' on the barn replacement

Some 15 months ago we were told by the Council that it planned to sell the barn we use a part of for free) as a store and base of operations, and a series of discussions and meetings was arranged to address the consequences of this intention, including how best to respond to the Council's offer to provide us with alternative storage facilities. The preferred outcome, a small container to be sited just inside the southern entrance to the allotments, appeared to be acceptable to all parties, but there followed nine months or so without further action by the Council. However, in mid-September the scheme was raised again, and we were asked to evaluate a particular size and style of container. Our evaluation was strongly negative, and we now await a response to it.

RECENT WORK

Starting from the north of Hollingbury Wood ...

Re-rerouted path in National Park Wood

Maintenance of the north hedge (i.e. beside the road to the Golf Clubhouse)

Clearance of Forget-me-not and New (coppice) glades

Removal of intrusive growth on the wiggly bee/butterfly banks

Clearance of Snowdrop Glade

Tidying the bays forming the boundary between the wood and the open park

Clearance of Tennis Glade

Sheep Lane Glade, and the lane itself were tidied

Maintenance of the woodland edge by Hollingbury Rise West ...

And in Burstead Wood ...

Main paths were cleared of litter, and excessive tipping of apparent allotment waste was reported to the Council

'Active' volunteers currently number about 25, with 18-20 usually attending on any one day.

SUMMER EVENTS

20 May – AGM and talk by Chris Sandom

Chris Sandom, from the University of Sussex, spoke on re-wilding and its many manifestations, prompting much engagement with the audience. The formal business of the AGM was dealt with as expeditiously as usual.

28 May – Wildflower identification walk

There were about 15 people on the Wildflower ID walk in June. We had a lovely sunny morning for it, everyone was armed with ID books, and I think everyone left feeling more knowledgeable. We found one unusual plant that the Ranger ID'd for us later, which was Gromwell.

2 July – Picnic. The day's work session was shorter than usual and was followed by a bring-to-share picnic by the edge of Hollingbury wood. About 20 people enjoyed a variety of good food and good chat.

12 July - Walk with herbalist Julia Behrens

Before setting out on the walk Julia gave us an introduction to herbal medicine and explained how to make a simple tincture using some familiar garden plants. We then set off down the road towards the woods stopping frequently as she pointed out useful medicinal plants growing in front gardens, as well as street trees, such as the common silver birch, that apparently is good for relieving arthritis and clearing toxins.

We skirted the edge of Burstead woods where Julia picked some marjoram and put it into flasks of hot water before heading up towards the Iron Age hill fort. As we walked Julia pointed out so many plants and trees with medicinal properties that it took us quite a while to reach the hill fort, but we were rewarded with magnificent views across the city and out to the sea beyond just as the sun was beginning to set. We followed the cinder track round the perimeter of the hill fort before veering off towards the dew pond where Julia picked some of the yellow flowers from the large patch of wild St. John's wort growing nearby; this is reputed to be a good antidepressant.

We lingered here for a while and sampled the marjoram "tea" that had been infusing in the flasks and then headed back towards the top end of Burstead woods. We found a patch of the diminutive eye bright, its white flowers, as the name suggests, being used to enhance the eyes. By the time we reached Burstead woods the sun had all but disappeared and we were plunged into darkness as we entered the woods, finding it quite disorientating as we walked down paths, which in daylight are familiar to us. We emerged from the bottom end of the woods into Brentwood Road and thanked Julia for her very informative and enjoyable walk.

Gill Taylor

23 July - Awayday to Knepp

A group of 15 made a revisit to Knepp Wildland, led by Geoff Mead, concentrating on the history and geology of the area, with the hydrology of particular interest.

Unfortunately as we were confined to footpaths we did not see as much of the rare breeds as before, although we did see some Longhorn cattle with their calves, and a viewing platform in an oak tree afforded useful vistas. Art at the visitor centre attracted interest, particularly an arch constructed from deer antlers. Despite the damp conditions everyone enjoyed the trip, which ended with a convivial visit to a local hostelry.

Lesley Brown

BRIGHTON & HOVE GREEN SPACES FORUM

This new organisation was formally launched on 30 October. Over 70 'green' groups are members, including FHBW.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Council is offering another 'Leadership' course on 3 March 2018, and hopes also to offer a course next year on Emergency First Aid. Volunteer groups such as FHBW must have at least one trained Leader and a First Aider at a work session; we would be happy to add to the number of members who have received either kind of training, so if you would like to be nominated, please contact any member of the Committee.

Another Council initiative which may be of interest is one which deals with what we simply call 'litter-picking'. Occasional 'tidy-up' courses (a 5 hour session), covering many aspects of that task, are now being offered; for details, please visit cityparks.volunteers@brighton-hove.gov.uk

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

This autumn Newsletter is mostly distributed by email; hardcopy is sent to FHBW members without email. The spring edition will be sent as hardcopy to all members, and will include AGM papers and subscription forms.

FHBW Committee

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