



Friends of Anderton and Marbury (FoAM)

NEWSLETTER Winter 2012/2013

New Perspectives on the History of Marbury

From the Chair

We are looking forward to a full Programme of Events for 2013, so put the dates in your diaries. We welcomed some enthusiastic new members onto the 'Autumn Walk' and look forward to seeing them again this year. The 'Talk on Marbury Hall' in March is sure to be an attraction not to be missed.

The Interpretation Panel for Marbury Hall is nearing completion and will soon be installed along with the Panels for the Mere and Woodland Bird Hides. The History Walks around Marbury have proved very popular and will continue to take place on the first Sunday of every month.

Bringing the historical facts together, a new website www.marburyhall.com has been created. The information can also be accessed through a new category on the FoAM website. Alan Redley and Frances Findlay, in particular, have spent many hours researching, so that we now have a detailed history of Marbury illustrated with pictures and photographs. New information is still coming to light and we very much appreciate the memories that people are continuing to share with us.



After it was printed in the Northwich Guardian, Bruno Dullek's photo of the Polish Army at Marbury during World War 2 stirred the emotions of the families of other soldiers in the picture.

The Festive Coffee Afternoon in Bruno's memory raised more than £550 following huge efforts from his family, especially his granddaughter, Holly Mawdsley, and FoAM members. The following weekend there was a lovely atmosphere for the Christmas Decorations Workshop attracting a good crowd, who contributed another £150 in donations and by buying cakes, hot drinks and wooden products crafted by volunteers in the park.

Over the last few months we have also received several substantial anonymous donations, all of which will go towards future projects. Funds raised may go towards providing more shelter in Marbury Lodge, perhaps in the form of removable canvas sides for one corner. The committee is also looking at possible improvements to the Arboretum, including new identification tags for the specimen trees.

Unfortunately Katayoun Dowlatshahi failed to gain funding for her Northwich Art project, but those of us who took part in her workshop benefitted from viewing the Northwich Woodlands from a town centre perspective. We became acutely aware of the unattractive approach and entrances to the Woodlands from the town. The new Riverside Development will have considerable impact in this area and may influence future projects.

Happy New Year!

Mary Jeeves

Extracts from Mary's Journal

Oct 10th All 47 Whitley School pupils, aged 4y to 11y, staff and helpers played a game of 'foxes and rabbits'. After a walk to the Carriage Drive Chris described the Hall, then we went down to the bird hide before returning to The Lodge for a mid-morning



snack. We formed a crocodile along the Mere Path and climbed the bank. Amid much excitement Chris displayed 4 wood mice and a field vole in the small mammal traps. With lunch boxes back in the cabin we set off to the Ice Pond where baby newts delighted the youngsters. Using woodland materials they made a baby newt, an owl, a wood mouse, and a squirrel to end the day.



25th Dave had a job for me – painting the silver ladybird. I set myself up with tins of red and black paint. The paint formed large drips or it left brush

marks. It was like trying to paint with caramel. I wrote the 'Wet Paint' notices, taped them to the gates and left. Don't look too closely.

Nov 14th Dave peeped under the lid of the kiln saying there wouldn't be much charcoal. Charles and Sandra volunteered with me. We found enough charcoal to fill 13 bags. Elna, Charles and I prepared the site ready to set the kiln up again. Charles followed instructions to climb the ladder, jump inside and lay the fires as we handed him paper, cardboard and kindling. He climbed out before we loaded the browns.

21st Rotarians and regular volunteers met to plant trees, including an oak from a royal forest nursery, supplied by the Woodland Trust as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Countryfile's Matt Baker and Julia Bradshaw headed teams to plant 1000 on a prepared site and set a record. We planted 450 trees amongst nettles and thick tussocky grasses in wet sticky clay. If Dave had used machinery to prepare Carey Park we'd "have been sliding about on our backsides".

29th Now that Marbury is almost clear of rhododendron, Chris is targetting laurel, another non-native species. As bearer of the matches I was responsible for lighting the fire. We reduced a patch of laurel trees to a circle of ash and a few glowing embers. We'd been careful to keep out of the smoke because of concerns about cyanide.

Dec 5th I took pity on Daniel sorting through 5 sacks of litter for recyclable items in the yard. After a while we were both very cold, especially our extremities, in spite of stamping on countless cans. 'Fosters' seemed to be the liquid refreshment of choice. We can tell what's on offer in Tesco's.

Mary Jeeves

Photographic Exhibition Saturday 9th March Comberbach Memorial Hall 10.00 am – 4.00 pm

An open invitation to come and see the Exhibition of photographs entered for FoAM's Competition in 2012

Entries came in thick and fast towards the end of the year and now number seventy and more pictures, almost up to the number submitted last time. I would like to thank all who entered. Judging will take place in February ready for the exhibition at Comberbach Memorial Hall on Saturday, 9th March. The standard, to my inexperienced eye, looks very good and photographers have obviously been skilful. I look forward to seeing the comments of the judges.

Thanks again to all those who have taken part.

Jim Jeeves

News from the Rangers

Marbury Country Park

Laurels and hedges

Regular visitors to the park will have noticed some laurel removal in Big Wood over the last few weeks. This is partly due to laurel (Lauraceae) not being a native tree or shrub (it is native to the Mediterranean) and partly due to the shading it causes to the ground flora. Big Wood is classed as semi-natural ancient woodland, which indicates that the woodland has been there for over 400 years. The laurels along Marbury Lane were planted in the 1980s as part of the restoration of the woodland after the gas pipeline went through; poor choice of plant!

The laurels close to the ice pond were around a feature either known as the cock fighting pit or the grotto. It's the sunken area of ground with ornate sandstone pillars either side of a set of steps, which this summer has become rather like a pond. I hope to restore this feature further with the help of the volunteers.

The volunteers have been busy hedge laying in two areas at Marbury, one close to the garden centre where a very overgrown holly hedge has been laid, the other behind the children's play area, a hawthorn hedge last laid 12 years ago. This traditional craft is used to manage hedges without the regular annual

cutting. Once a hedge has been laid it can be left untouched for 10-15 years by which time the regrowth will be ideal to lay again. This allows birds to nest peacefully in the hedge each Spring and berries, nuts and fruit to flourish.



If you wish to find out more about hedge laying why not try your hand on 3rd February with Dave James, call 01606 77741 to book on this event.

Chris Moseley
Marbury Country Park Ranger

Ashton's and Neumann's Flashes

The sheep are back! I have kept them on the main large compartment on Ashton's so far, due to the other areas being so severely waterlogged. I have received quite a few comments from visitors telling me that they have never seen so much water on Ashton's before! Let's hope 2013 isn't as wet and rainy as 2012.

Did you spot Northwich Woodlands on TV? Inside Out Northwest came to Northwich Woodlands on 3rd January to film for a programme that was aired on 7th January. The focus of the main article on the programme was where our road salt comes from and they filmed at the underground Salt Union mine at Winsford. The BBC chose to use the Flashes as the backdrop for that show's links to demonstrate how sites can develop from industrial areas to wildlife habitats and visitor attractions.

The bluebells and wild garlic are already starting to poke their heads through in the woodlands and the days are getting longer. Although we still have a

good chunk of winter before us, I am already really looking forward to spring and better weather.



My week is still split between Chester and Northwich, although the good news is that recruitment is now underway for new staff. Hopefully we should be back to normal sometime in the next few months.

Amanda Pritchard

Your Newsletter

Items deadline for the next issue: 5th April

We welcome comments, ideas photos and articles for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter. Email items to Joanne Redley at jarhillcliffe223@aol.com or hand them in at the Rangers' Cabin marked for the attention of Joanne. **Many Thanks**



Sowing the seed

MEADOWS have been transformed into gourmet restaurants for the birds of Marbury Country Park. Volunteers and rangers have been hard at work sowing wildflower seed for such declining bird species including corn buntings yellowhammers and tree sparrows. A field at Dairy House Meadow was also planted in last autumn which will provide a winter feast for birds this year. The seed was funded by the Friends of Anderson and Marbury.

Courtesy of the Northwich Guardian

Farmland Bird Project

A field at the corner of Marbury Lane and behind Neumann’s Flash has been turned into a rich secluded dinner table for the local finches and buntings. Amanda, with the help of funding from FoAM, has transformed what seemed to everyone as a patch of overgrown weeds, into a seed bank habitat not seen anywhere else in the local area.

Ploughed last autumn and sown with seed by the hands of volunteers, the birds are now reaping the rewards. During the spring and summer, these seeds gave a lovely display of colour, and although the summer was poor, these flowers still produced enough seed for a winter feast for our birds. All this has happened as part of the Farmland Bird Project which has also seen seed planted in other areas of the park.

Following a visit by Northwich Guardian Photographer Nick Jones, the paper carried an article about the project on 12 September.

Now lesser redpolls, greenfinches, goldfinches, chaffinches and reed buntings are regular visitors to this free feast and this is proving a great hit with local birdwatchers. At times it can look as if there are no birds there, then an explosion of wing beats occurs as the birds fly to the trees, proving that the area is not as quiet as it first seems. Once the all clear is given, they all dive down back to the feeding grounds as one, and it looks deserted once again.

Patience is a virtue when watching these birds and close scrutiny this winter may reward you with a view of a brambling, a rare winter visitor to these shores. Plans are in place to create more of these meadows, so keep reading your FoAM newsletters for future updates.



Courtesy of the Northwich Guardian

John Gilbody

We have also received the following comment from FoAM members Greg and Barbara Baker:
 “Just wanted to congratulate everyone on the success of the Farmland Bird Project in the field between Marbury Lane and Neumann’s Flash. It’s been great to see so many finches and reed buntings there this winter in the absence of much similar habitat elsewhere locally.”

Future Events

**Saturday 9th February
 Nest Box Making**

Come and make and take away a nest box to put up in your garden, as part of National Nest Box Week. An event for all ages. No charge but donations welcome. Full instructions given.
 Meet: 10.00 am – 4.00 pm at the Rangers’ Cabin Marbury Country Park.
 For information contact: John Gilbody 01606 882065

**Monday 11th March
 Talk on Marbury Hall**

An illustrated talk on the History of Marbury Hall
 7.30 pm Comberbach Memorial Hall
 Information from: Frances Findlay 01606 44727

Christmas Decorations

Once again we saw some stunning creations at the decorations event just before Christmas. Many people said how much they had enjoyed the event.



‘Lord of the Ring’



All our own work

The Well Heeled Dog Club:

Q&A's about dog training

The club meets for classes every Saturday at Marbury Park; in each edition of the FoAM Newsletter I'll be covering a Q&A.

Hi Mike,

The week before Christmas my dad passed away. He's been living with us for the past 3 years, just after we got Benji, our Golden Retriever. We all miss dad terribly but we're bothered about Benji. He's become very withdrawn and although we're trying to show him lots of love and affection he seems to be getting worse. I don't know if it's relevant but he's started drooling quite a lot too? Hope you can help, Yvonne.

A: Dogs are very sensitive animals and if someone close to a dog dies – a person or a fellow dog – this not only disrupts the normal routine but will more than

If you've got a question you'd like me to cover, email: mike@thedogclub.co.uk

Tales from an Aberystwyth Student

Where to start? I guess I should introduce myself. I'm Charles Cooper, 25 year old student who joined the team at Northwich Woodlands in August 2012 as part of a 9 month work placement from Aberystwyth University, where I am studying Countryside Management and Conservation. Having no previous experience of managing a green space or conservation work, this was my opportunity to gain valuable experience of the profession I would like to join after university.

Working with the rangers from Northwich Woodlands, and also from the Weaver Parkway and Castle Park, has given me an insight as to how varied the role of a ranger is. The vast amount of practical and physical work gets done on the volunteer days of Wednesday and Thursday at Northwich Woodlands. This has given me the opportunity to work alongside members of the community that I would not usually get to interact with - from volunteers who are retired or unemployed and other students who are in a similar position to me.

Fruit Tree Pruning at Marbury

Following a workshop on pruning fruit trees initiated by Committee member Brenda Yates in winter 2011, volunteers have spent some time in January putting into practice the skills learned in order to catch up on this winter's pruning of the apple trees in the Marbury orchard. After a very disappointing yield in 2012 because of the poor weather, we are hoping that with a better spring and summer our efforts will be rewarded with an abundance of fruit this year.

likely mean that the atmosphere in the house is more subdued too. Dogs will pick up on this and, although difficult at times, owners must keep the dog's routine going.

I know it may sound harsh but Benji will feel much better if you stop giving him as much fuss and attention. Dogs don't understand that in our minds we're being affectionate. Quite the contrary, they think they're being rewarded for feeling the way they do. Your distress about his unhappiness will undoubtedly have an effect on him and will stress him even more.

Try focussing on something positive and fun to do with him, it'll help both you and him to adjust. And keep a diary record of his drooling – this is certainly one of the signs of stress in a dog. As it reduces you'll be heartened to know he's feeling better too.



The large array of different habitats that make up the Woodlands means that there is no shortage of tasks to get stuck into from shrub clearance, planting trees to coppicing. One of the main community engagements that I have been involved with is the Wood Allotment on Carey Park where I have selected trees to be felled, given the tool talk, and made the site accessible to those allotment holders.

At the end of my 9 month work placement I will have gained valuable industry experience of practical conservation, engaging with users of the Woodland, contractors, and other organisations. This placement will form the basis of two forthcoming essays and a presentation that will need to be submitted. I have greatly enjoyed my placement so far, working with the rangers, volunteers and meeting other users of the park, and will hopefully continue to do so.

Charles Cooper



Saturday 26th January

Bird Walk in Big Wood, Marbury Country Park

How many birds can you identify in the Park? Full details and checklist on

www.merseyforest.org.uk/foam

Meet: 2.00 pm Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Vernon Lundy 01606 782627

Saturday 9th February

Nest Box Making

An annual FoAM event. Make and take away a box to put up in your garden, as part of National Nest Box Week. No charge but donations welcome.

Meet: 10.00 am – 4.00 pm, Marbury Country Park
For information contact: John Gilbody 01606 882065

Saturday 9th March

Photographic Exhibition

Come and see the Exhibition of photographs submitted for FoAM's Competition in 2012

Comberbach Memorial Hall 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Contact: Jim Jeeves 01606 77688

Monday 11th March

Talk on Marbury Hall

An illustrated talk by the Friends of Anderton and Marbury on the history of Marbury Hall

Meet: 7.30 pm Comberbach Memorial Hall
For information contact: Frances Findlay 01606 44727

Saturday 20th April

Spring Time at Marbury

A Spring stroll at this wonderful time in the park to see the spring flowers, including bluebells.

Meet: 10.00 am Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Mary Jeeves 01606 77688

Saturday 4th May

Dawn Chorus Walk

Join FoAM's birding experts for this ever popular event for everyone interested in birds.

Meet: 5.00 am, Marbury Country Park
For information contact: John Gilbody 01606 882065

Monday 20th May

FoAM AGM, Quiz and Supper

Meet: 7.30pm at Comberbach Memorial Hall
To Book for the Quiz and Supper
Contact: Anna Cooper 01606 891683

Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th May

Bring and Buy Plant Sale

Come and find something unusual and exciting for house or garden at FoAM's amazing plant sale. All surplus plants will be welcome.

From: 10.00 am – 4.00 pm at the Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Mary Jeeves 01606 77688

Saturday 29th June

A Summer Walk at Anderton

A guided walk around Anderton Nature Park to view the many summer wildflowers.

Meet: 10.00 am Anderton Nature Park car park
For information contact: Mary Jeeves 01606 77688

Saturday 6th July

Breakfast with Moths

Join FoAM's regular moth trappers and find out what was attracted to the traps on the previous night.

Croissants and orange juice available for breakfast. Donations welcome.

Meet: 9.30 am Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Alan Garner 01606 883539

Saturday 20st July

FoAM Picnic in the Park

A special musical evening to celebrate summer in the Park. Bring your own picnic or food to barbecue.

Meet: 5.00 pm Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Joanne Redley 01606 44728

Friday 23rd August

"Teddy Bears' Picnic" at Marbury Country Park

A Family day to enjoy fun and woodland games in the park and find the hidden bears.

Meet: 1.00 pm Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Joanne Redley 01606 44728

Saturday 21st September

Fungal Foray

Re-introducing this very popular event run by Fungalpunk Dave of Fungal Friends. No charge, but booking essential. Suitable for age 15 and over.

Sessions from 10 am – 12.00 and 1 pm – 3 pm
Meet: At the Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park
Contact: Brenda Yates 01565 733197

Saturday 2nd November

The Shapes and Colours of Autumn – A Walk in Marbury Country Park

Come and enjoy the Park at one of its most beautiful times of the year. A leisurely, 1 – 2 hour walk.

Meet: 10.00 am at the Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Mary Jeeves 01606 77688

Sunday 15th December

Christmas Decorations

A chance to create some stunning decorations from natural materials gathered in the Woodlands.

Donations welcome.
From: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm by the Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Joanne Redley 01606 44728