



Friends of Anderton and Marbury (FoAM)

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2014

The Woodlands are now showing the Seasonal Changes

From the Chair

The committee was pleased to welcome Lorraine Brannan as secretary at the last meeting.

It was a great shame that on the occasion of the Picnic in the Park a decision had to be made to cancel the event due to the forecast of severe thunder and lightning. After the very heavy rain it brightened up and the threatened storm didn't arrive, but conditions would still have been too wet to go ahead.

Conditions were more favourable for the Teddy Bears' Picnic, although sitting on the grass was not to be recommended and Marbury Lodge provided a dry seating area. Brenda guided everyone through the afternoon, leading the singing and reading stories with support from Steve and Elna. The Bear Trail led through the arboretum, then Ranger Dave supervised the building of woodland sculptures. Mr. Bear and his assistant, Joyce, joined in all of the activities with much enthusiasm.

September followed as the driest on record; exactly what Fungalpunk Dave didn't want for the Fungal Hunt! He led two groups of walkers around Marbury Park and, after much keen-eyed searching in damper areas, they found more than 60 species of fungi.



Willow clearing at Haydn's pool

We have been working on enlarging one of the islands in Haydn's Pool. TATA has made a generous donation of more than 30 tons of limestone, with

labour being provided by regular and TATA volunteers. The cost of additional materials and hiring the contractor will be met by FoAM.

The latest talk on Marbury's history was for the Northwich Branch of Cheshire Family History Society. Next month the Friends of Weaver Hall Museum have booked a session. Each talk varies as new information is uncovered; most recent has been in connection with the Arboretum Project, some of which will be displayed on the new interpretation panel, but most will appear on the website.

You may have noticed a poster by the remains of the Ice House giving information about the original construction. It has created considerable interest and a more permanent aluminium version is being purchased.

At the end of September, Mark and Lorraine sold their last panini, pancakes, coffee and ice cream at Marbury. FoAM marked the occasion with a presentation - a framed photograph and a wooden collage showing their view of the Lime Avenue.



Bidding farewell to Mark and Lorraine

After more than five years Mark and Lorraine will be missed as much as their cakes. 'All The Goodness' is moving to the Kyle of Lochalsh and we wish them success in their new venture.

Mary Jeeves

Extracts from Mary's Journal

Jul 24th. Chris called "Fire!" when I arrived. We climbed over the ragwort to start a bonfire. The nettles had encroached since our last fire and the horseflies were biting. I felt targeted as Jim wasn't affected. With temperatures reaching 27C the last thing needed was a fire. More heat was required to incinerate the ragwort, so Chris delivered the remains of a picnic table.

30th. Four 'ragworters' joined Jim, Antony and me for another bonfire once they'd cleared the meadow. A breeze fanned the flames, but ragwort turned them to smoke. Later, 10 volunteers went litter-picking around Marbury. Hordes of visitors during the good weather have spread rubbish generously.

Aug 21st. A massive effort has begun at Haydn's Pool clearing the invading willow. Staying by the bonfire I avoided the worst of the uneven ground and the heavy work. Jim and I managed to dispose of all the willow that had been dragged to the bonfire position, but there still seems to be a forest of willow.

Sep 3rd. At Carey Park a chain gang formed to transfer a pile of lengthy logs onto the trailer. We left a few of the larger logs as 'habitat' after disturbing sheltering red admirals and toads. Back in the yard at Marbury, we prepared the charcoal burner. Chris sawed, John and Dave P. used the log splitter and I passed the logs to Antony in the kiln to start filling it.

4th. The willow clearance at Haydn's Pool goes on! Six of us trudged across meadow and reedbed,

which is mercifully dry. There were piles of felled willow from previous days. The smoke from our bonfire seemed to follow us around and occasionally a spark would spit out and burn our clothing.

24th. I spent the morning in the shed, where there were 25 bags to sort out and staple, while Mark brought more bags from the latest charcoal burn.



Running out of staples gave me chance to straighten up and go into the office. I escaped into the sunshine for the Butterfly Transect with Elna. It's almost the end of the butterfly season, so we were lucky to see the one comma.

Mary Jeeves

Photographic Competition

This is the last newsletter of the year so may I remind you to get your entries for the photographic competition in as soon as possible, at least by 31st December. One or two people have expressed a reluctance to submit photos because they are unsure of the standard needed. Please don't be put off. In the past, winning entries have been taken using all types of camera. It is often about being in the right place at the right time and having your camera with

you. Good photos have been taken with phone cameras.

Just have a go and you may be pleasantly surprised with the standard of some of your results. Any questions please do get in touch.

Jim Jeeves 01606 77688 or jmjeeves4867@btinternet.com.

Children's Corner

Have you noticed all the changes taking place in the woodlands at this time of year? The paths will be brown with the fallen leaves and the trees have nearly all lost their leaves so the birds have fewer places to hide.

Have a look at the Woodland Trust Nature Detectives website for some great ideas for adventures, games, things to find in the woodlands right now.

The website also has loads of free charts, lists, fun things to do, quizzes and spotter sheets to download free. You can find all these things, and many more suggestions at: www.naturedetectives.org.uk. If you have a camera, why not take some photos – and enter our photographic competition.

Our Last Two Events of the Year

Saturday 1st November Autumn in Marbury Country Park

Discover the shapes and colours of autumn in the park at one of its most beautiful times of the year. Meet: 10.00 am at the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge

For information contact: Mary Jeeves 01606 77688

Sunday 14th December FoAM's Christmas Decorations Workshop

Make decorations for your home from natural materials gathered in the woodlands.

From: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm by the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge

For information contact: Joanne Redley 01606 44728

Goodbye to All the Goodness

FOAM members, the Rangers, regular and occasional visitors to Marbury Country Park were sad to say goodbye to All the Goodness on Sunday 28th September.

All The Goodness is dedicated to providing delicious food that is natural, fresh, healthy and homemade and the owners Mark and Lorraine have been keeping us all heartily 'fed and watered' since they first came to the Park at the start of 2009



Illustration by Stephanie Cowburn

We will all miss their friendly faces and conversation as well of course their delicious drinks and snacks.

The exciting news for Mark and Lorraine is that they have bought a new place in Scotland which they plan to open in Spring 2015 and I'm sure those of us who may be lucky enough to visit that beautiful area will be popping in to say hello and see how they're getting on. (All the Goodness, Aird Point, Ardelve, Kyle, IV40 8DY)

Whilst on Mark and Lorraine's website (www.allthegoodness.co.uk) I came across this message from them which I thought everyone would like to see;

"Many thanks to all our customers for your support over the last five years. We have really enjoyed being part of Marbury Park and we wish you all the very best."

We all wish them the very best too!

Celia Muir

Teddy Bears' Picnic

A real live Teddy Bear was a welcome guest at the Friends of Anderton and Marbury Teddy Bears' Picnic in August! Young families enjoyed an afternoon of activities, braving the rather chilly weather.



After some bear action songs, bear stories and bear poems in Marbury Lodge, Big Teddy led the children into the Arboretum to follow a Teddy Bear Trail.

Later he chose his favourite imaginative sculpture from those made by the children using material found on the woodland floor, and awarded a pot of his favourite woodland honey to its creators. More singing, story-telling and poetry – accompanied by Big Teddy's antics - completed the afternoon and were well received by grown-ups and little ones alike. By the end, some of the smaller guests were fast asleep, whilst others enjoyed bear cakes and bear biscuits before going home.

Big Teddy, meanwhile, had tiptoed back into the woods and has not been seen since. If you do happen to spot him, please mention it to Ranger Chris or Ranger Dave, but the chances are that he will sleep the winter away in a cosy corner where no-one can find him...

Brenda Yates

Your Newsletter

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. **Items deadline for the winter issue: Friday 2nd January 2015. Many thanks.**



If you go down to the woods today you may be lucky enough to see the white squirrel. He was photographed very recently.

News from the Rangers

Anderton Nature Park and Carey Park

Over the last six weeks, volunteers have been instrumental in removing a large area of willow which had been encroaching onto the pool at Haydn's. This is part of the higher level stewardship work that needs to be accomplished before 2015. The willow had gradually encroached around the edge of the pool, and, as the water levels receded in previous years it provided a perfect seedbed for the willow. If this was left to colonise the area we would gradually lose the pool altogether.



On average six people were involved for two days a week, the numbers swelling to 14 with the help of a team building day from Barclays Bank. This was followed by a similar team from TATA, which swelled

our numbers by an extra 17. A huge effort by all concerned - and my thanks go to the people who have been willing to cut, bash, strim, saw and burn the willow. TATA also brought with them thirty four tonnes of limestone, which was used to increase the height of the shingle island. FoAM paid for the tracked dumper and driver plus 20 tonnes of shingle to go on top. All of the stone was moved on the same day, raked and pushed around until we were all happy. The aim, of course, is to have a deeper pool, and still have a decent sized area suitable for the nesting birds, especially the waders.

It has been really nice to hear positive comments from visitors who appreciate our efforts. We are, however, probably a few years away from defeating the problem altogether, so next year we will cut any re-growth and, similar to this year, spray or wipe the stumps with a weed killer. All that remains for us to do is to turn the pump on and flood the area with water. I am hoping this will help suppress the willow and aid us in defeating its progress.

The next big project is to cut and remove more scrub willow and birch from Carey Park and Ashton's; this should be finished by late March.

Dave and Blue

Marbury Country Park

Hollywood comes to the Park

Some regular visitors may have been surprised on the morning of 1st October to find the park transformed into what looked like a scene from Hollywood. It was a film company called Sugar free TV, who used the swimming pool and surrounding area to film an advert for the NFU Mutual Insurance Company. They were initially attracted to the Park by the outdoor pool which their clients wished to be included in the advert. They then soon realised they could film more scenes here but drew the line at trying to create a cricket pitch and eventually used Winnington cricket pitch for that scene. The advert will be shown on TV soon, on the lead up to Christmas, so look carefully and see if you can recognise any parts of Marbury Country Park and pool



Bird seed areas a success

The bird seed areas we sowed in the spring have now come into their own, providing a host of seeds for the birds to enjoy over the winter months. The areas are along Marbury Lane close to Butterfinch Bridge and two areas at Dairy House Meadows. These were sown by volunteers on 7th May and have enjoyed ideal growing conditions this summer

They will be left over the winter and hopefully the process will be repeated next year, with maybe new areas added.

Enjoy the autumn colours.

Chris Moseley, Marbury Country Park and Dairy House Meadows Ranger

Willow bashing for beginners

How to remove tonnes and tonnes of willow growing in the wrong place

Most people's perception of willow is a large, majestic tree, overhanging some slow moving stream or river or canal.... something to admire on a nice warm summer's day whilst supping at a cool drink in some pub garden. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. The following tries to describe the process of removing the willow when it is not wanted.

First locate the willow to be removed; not always that obvious. It may appear as small 'clumps' of tall grass reed, happily co-habiting with its grassy 'friends'. Don't be fooled! Beneath that innocent exterior is a grim determination to take over the world. Well, most of the area it is inhabiting.

You may, at this point ask: 'why does it need to be removed'? Good question! The simple answer is that it has quite a voracious appetite for water. It will grow from practically nothing to a mature plant in a very short period of time and consume huge quantities of water in the process, thus depriving other vegetation and wildlife of a key ingredient for life. Nature isn't always fair.

Next, find a group of willing volunteers and broad minded Rangers who are not afraid of wading through tall grass, brambles, weeds, mud (mixed with bovine deposits) and squadrons of flies (which haven't eaten anything for at least 5 minutes) into the 'stuff' and showing the willow who is boss! Luckily for Marbury Country Park, there is such a bunch of people. Turning out whatever the weather to take on whatever the Rangers can throw at them... and still find time to laugh and joke. (What medication are these people on???)

Equip this group of people with modern tools – like sharp loppers, newly purchased bow saws, even a strimmer or chain saw should the task demand it. Don't forget to include at least two sizes of loppers – big and not so big. You would be amazed at the diameter of a piece of willow which can be felled when the larger size loppers are in the hands of an eager volunteer or Ranger.

Transport this group by whatever means is practical. This transport does not have to be a 5 star luxury coach (desirable, but not essential) but it should have wheels, seats and be fully air-conditioned – nature's way!

Having arrived at their destination, point the volunteers in the direction of the offending plants. They will soon be skilfully removing the offending vegetation and carefully stacking them ready for the final stage in the process. Take note: should you happen to miss one of the small willow shoots, probably masquerading as a small slither of grass or reed, as soon as you turn your back and focus your

attention on the more mature specimens, this innocuous shoot will put on a prenominal growth spurt and cause you to step back and ask: 'How on earth did I miss that one?' It is easily done.

As the day progresses, the more observant volunteers might note that not all of them are hacking away at the slowly diminishing forest of willow – some will have started the final process – the ritual burning of the previous sessions' cutting and stacking. It may look like the easy option, but believe me, it is not. Not only do you have to persuade the (slightly) damp willow stalks to accept their fate, but you have to shift the cuttings from one area, by whatever means the individual deems fit, and launch them onto, what hopefully is, a roaring fire. The combination of dragging the cuttings, the launching onto the raging inferno and the almost unbearable heat being produced, can be very taxing.



As the day comes to an end, it is always good to congregate around the glowing embers and discuss the day's work, secure in the knowledge that once you believe that you have cleared the area, it will be back as big and ugly in a couple of years' time.. so be prepared to return again .. and again.

You never know, you may even get some unexpected help along the way.



Enjoy!

Graham Walker

Autumn Bird Walks 12th October

This was a new event that centred on the water at Neumann's and Ashton's Flashes and Haydn's Pool.

The morning started off in mist, but 17 people and our leader, John Gilbody, were determined to go ahead as the forecast indicated that it was due to clear. Limited visibility prevented good views of the birds, but John did a sterling job in keeping us up to speed on bird migration habits and what to look out for. As we made our way round Neumann's to the first hide, we heard the bird song of wrens and robins and saw the abundance of fruit on the bushes. A great spotted woodpecker flew overhead as we walked

FoAM members had volunteered to man the hides and set up telescopes for us to use. Mist prevented all but views of the closest birds, but, by the time we reached the third stop, it had cleared somewhat and birds could be seen and identified around the island.

At the fourth stop we could see much more; a ruff and various more common birds were clearly visible. The main part of the walk finished at Haydn's Pool. The mist had gone, allowing good views of the birds, including a buzzard perched on the owl box as stock doves flew past. We were also able to see the great improvement made by the rangers and volunteers to

the area round the pool and we could appreciate the work done over the last few weeks.



photo by Dave Whitehead

The afternoon walk followed the same route, but by this time the views of birds and the surroundings were superb for the second group to enjoy.

The success of the event was due entirely to John and the helpers and I am extremely grateful to them. It seems to indicate that this will become a popular event to add to FoAM's programme.

Jim Jeeves

Fungal Hunt

The driest September on record meant that Fungal Punk Dave had a hard task ahead of him in early October, when groups joined him at Marbury for a Fungal Hunt. Participants ranged from beginners to experienced mycologists and contributed to the day with great enthusiasm and high levels of curiosity.

The morning started in the arboretum, moved to the grass under the beeches near the mereside bird hide, both good locations for Orange Peel Fungus in recent years, and then - in desperation! – down onto the Cheshire Wildlife Trust boardwalk behind the reedbed. The moist conditions there yielded some specimens, such as Burnt Knight (*Tricholoma fulvum*), Coconut Scented Milkcap (*Lactarius glyciosmus*), Deer Shield (*Pluteus cervinus*) and Common Yellow Brittlegill (*Russula ochroleuca*), although not the quantity and variety we might have expected. In the afternoon the group explored Hopyards and the damper area by the stream.



Undaunted, Dave focused more on smaller and micro-fungi and eventually listed over 50 different species in the field (later to become 66 species after microscopy). Some, like the Common Earthball (*Scleroderma citrinum*) and Shaggy Pholiota (*Pholiota squarrosa*) are easily spotted, others require a keen eye and a magnifying glass. Of particular interest were Upright Coral (*Ramaria stricta*), Champion Rust (*Puccinia behenisis*), Big Smoky Bracket (*Bjerkandera fumosa*) and that old favourite, the very cute Eyelash Fungus (*Scutellinia scutellata*). My own favourites were Elder Whitewash (*Hyphodontia sambuci*), which gives the impression that someone has brushed white emulsion paint onto dead Elder stems, and the minute Nut Disco (*Hymenoscyphus fructigenus*), seen under a magnifying glass on beechmast, and resembling perfectly formed white button mushrooms.

As usual, Dave took away a box full of samples to identify at home under the microscope, making the list something akin to respectable – a full list of fungi can be found in the Fungal Friends section at www.fungalpunknature.co.uk.

Next year's Fungal Hunts are already booked, and will take place on 26th September 2015.

Brenda Yates

DIARY DATES FOR 2015

Saturday 24th 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 at the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge
For information contact: David Bullock 01606 781981

Saturday 21st February

Homes for Wildlife

Make and take away a nestbox to put up in your garden, as part of National Nest Box Week, or perhaps a bughome. No charge but donations welcome.

10.00 am – 4.00 pm, Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge
For information contact: Anna Cooper 01606 891683

Saturday 21st February

Astronomical Event

Join the Astronomers from Liverpool Astronomical Society for an evening of star gazing and exploration of the night sky.

Meet: 6.30 pm at Anderton Memorial Hall
For information contact: Brenda Yates 01565 733197

Saturday 7th March

Photographic Exhibition

Come and see the Exhibition of photographs submitted for FoAM's Competition in 2014

Comberbach Memorial Hall 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
For information contact: Jim Jeeves 01606 77688

Monday 16th March

Talk on Marbury

An illustrated talk by Clive Brookes of Friends of Anderton and Marbury on the War Time History of Marbury.

Meet: 7.30 pm Comberbach Memorial Hall
For information contact: www.merseyforest.org.uk/foam

Saturday 18th April

Spring Time in Marbury Country Park

A guided walk at this wonderful time in the park to see the early woodland flowers.

Meet: 10.00 am at the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge
For information contact: Mary Jeeves 01606 77688

Saturday 2nd May

Dawn Chorus Walk, Marbury Country Park

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

Meet: 5.00 am at the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge
For information contact: David Bullock 01606 781981

Saturday 2nd May

Spring Bird Walk, Marbury Country Park

A mid morning walk for those who would like to see the birds of Spring.

Meet 10.30 am at the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge
For information contact: David Bullock 01606 781981

Monday 18th May

FoAM AGM, Quiz and Supper

Meet: 7.30 pm Comberbach Memorial Hall. There will be a charge for supper.

To book for the Quiz and Supper contact : Anna Cooper 01606 891683

Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th May

Bring and Buy Plant Sale, Marbury Country Park

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

10.00 am – 4.00 pm Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge,
For information contact: Jim Jeeves 01606 77688

Saturday 20th June

Breakfast with Moths, Marbury Country Park

Join FoAM's regular moth trappers to see beautiful moths attracted to the traps on the previous night. Croissants and orange juice available for breakfast. Donations welcome.

Meet: 9.30 am at the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge
For information contact: Brenda Yates 01565 733197

Wednesday 24th June

Photographic Workshop 1

The first of two evening workshops, led by Simon Davies in Marbury Country Park. This workshop is suitable for those with a basic experience with a camera who want to learn to get a better exposure and pick out the best shots. There will be a charge of £10.00. Booking essential.

Meet: 7.00 pm Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge
To book a place contact: Jim Jeeves 01606 77688

Saturday 27th June

Wildflower Walk in Anderton Nature Park

A guided walk to view the many summer wildflowers.

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

Wednesday 1st July

Photographic Workshop 2

The second of two evening workshops led by Simon Davies in Marbury Country Park. This slightly more advanced workshop is suitable for those with the ability to use semi-automatic or manual settings on their camera. There will be a charge of £10.00. Booking essential.

Meet: At the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge at 7.00 pm
To book a place contact: Jim Jeeves 01606 77688

Saturday 18th July

FoAM Picnic in the Park

FoAM's celebration of Summer in the Park. Bring your own picnic or food to barbecue.

From: 5.00 pm Marbury Country Park
For information contact: Alan or Joanne Redley 01606 44728

DIARY DATES FOR 2015 continued

Saturday 26th September

Fungal Hunt, Marbury Country Park

A repeat of this very popular event run by Fungalpunk Dave of Fungal Friends. No charge but booking essential.

Sessions from 10 am – 12.00 (Suitable for families, children 8 years and over) and 1 pm – 3 pm (Adults)

Meet: At the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge

For information contact: Brenda Yates 01565 733197

Sunday 11th October

Autumn Bird Walks, Northwich Woodlands

See Migrating and Wintering Birds at Haydn's Pool, Ashton's and Neumann's Flashes.

From 10.00 am – 12.00 and 2.00 – 4.00 pm

Meet: Cumberland Car Park, Northwich

For information contact: David Bullock 01606 781981

Saturday 31st October

Parkland Trees

A guided walk looking at the wide variety of trees in Marbury Country Park, including the Arboretum.

Meet: 10.00 am at the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge

For information contact: Mary Jeeves 01606 77688

Sunday 13th December

FoAM's Christmas Decorations Workshop

Come to our annual workshop to create some stunning decorations for your home from natural materials gathered in the woodlands. Families with children welcome.

From: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm by the Rangers' Cabin/Marbury Lodge

For information contact: Joanne Redley 01606 44728

The Well Heeled
Dog Club



The Well Heeled Dog Club: Q&A's about dog training

The club meets for classes on Saturdays at Marbury Park. We also run puppy courses, KC dog classes and offer 1:1 advice for behaviour problems.



Hi Mike,

We're planning to bring our puppy home soon and I've been thinking of using a crate for him to sleep in. Some puppy training books say to keep him in the bedroom for the first few nights but others say to leave them downstairs and let them get used to being alone, even if they cry. My friends have made the decision harder because they say it's cruel either way and that it's like putting a dog in prison. What's your advice?
Kath

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A: There's nothing at all wrong with crate training unless a puppy is being shut in there for 24 hours a day without water and no space to turn around. Dogs are denning animals by nature, so they see a crate as being a safe & secure place where they can rest and relax (away from the kids if necessary). I always start a puppy off in a crate, in my bedroom for the first few nights. When he wakes and whimpers I get up and take him out to toilet, then straight back to bed, without making a fuss - if he doesn't wake I don't get up. He'll also settle far more easily if he can hear you sleeping. I then move his crate to the door for a few nights, then out onto the landing for a couple of

nights, then downstairs to wherever his crate is to be long-term. For the next few weeks I would set my alarm to wake and go down to him if I knew he was likely to need to 'go' at a particular time.

This helps in several ways. Firstly, you get used to when he's likely to wake up and when he needs to go. Secondly, he doesn't get stressed when he needs to perform a natural action.

Of course accidents can happen, so I make sure that the crate is divided into two. A piece of vetbed in a cardboard box at one end and a puppy pad at the other. Dogs don't like soiling their sleeping area so if he wakes he'll go as far away as he can from his bed, i.e. onto the pad. As he grows (even a little) he won't be able to move as far away from his bed as he was able to previously, so he'll hold on until the crate is opened. Therefore, when you're positioning his crate downstairs try to make sure that the crate door is facing your back door and the garden.

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