



Friends of Anderton and Marbury (FoAM)

NEWSLETTER Winter 2011/2012

Great Things Achieved; Grand Opening of Marbury Lodge



Councillor Parker thanking FoAM



Frances and Alan cut the ribbon

From the Chair

Wednesday 7th December saw us gather at Marbury for the opening of Marbury Lodge. We were delighted that Cheshire West and Chester Councillor Stuart Parker, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Recreation, was able to attend the opening celebration.

The three Marbury Ward Councillors (Norman Wright, Malcolm Byram and Don Hammond) were also there and representatives of many of the groups who support FoAM came along for the opening.

We were pleased that Andy White of Greenwood Oak, Nantwich (who designed and built the shelter) and Dave Plumbley of Plumbley Environmental Contractors, Winsford (who carried out the groundworks), were also able to be there.

Councillor Parker (pictured with Rangers' Team Leader Richard Snow and me), thanked FoAM and its volunteers for undertaking and completing the project to build Marbury Lodge, which he said would be a wonderful asset for all Park users.

To mark the opening, Frances Findlay (FoAM Secretary) cut the ribbon with me.

When the opening ceremony had been completed, all those present enjoyed a magnificent finger buffet and refreshments provided by our volunteers and Marbury Lodge was declared open for all Park visitors to use.

The buffet was so well received that I have since had several requests for our volunteers to enter the catering business!

You will recall our rule that no one serves in an officer role (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) for more than three years. By the time of our AGM, I will have completed my term as Chair and will be standing down. The Notice of our 13th AGM, to be held on Monday 30th April, appears later in this Newsletter.

We are always looking for fresh faces to join the Committee. If you are interested and would like to become more involved in the decision making process, why not put your name forward?

You can find out more by speaking to any member of your Committee, or just come along to a meeting to see what we do before committing yourself.

Alan Redley

Extracts from Mary's Journal

Oct 6th Because of adverse weather conditions we stayed in the yard to have a clear up and disturbed a frog and a toad whilst loading birch poles and brash onto the trailer. When we reached the tarpaulin covering a heap of logs, it was decided that we should fill the charcoal burner. We cleared the vents and Jim climbed in to set the initial fires with paper, cardboard and kindling. There were plenty of browns to start us off. Gareth tried his hand with the axe, splitting the logs to an appropriate size. We can look forward to riddling and bagging next week.



27th The plan is for the Hebridean sheep to keep the scrub in check on Carey Park lime bed by nibbling the young shoots. Meanwhile we are clearing it. The rain added to our joy as the brambles tripped us and the hawthorn scratched us. It was also mild so waterproofs weren't very comfortable. After lunch I didn't fancy putting the sodden gloves on again. Dave and Amanda rewarded me with a new pair. We left piles of hawthorn, willow and silver birch scattered across the field. We stopped off on the way back to inspect the water level at Haydn's Pool, which is no

longer Haydn's Puddle after a week of water supply from INEOS Enterprises.

Nov 3rd It was time to move the Hebridean sheep from Carey Park lime bed to Ashton's Flash. The 3 Rangers and 8 volunteers encouraged them to complete the transfer. Most of the sheep were very cooperative and came running down the lane past the entrance to the car park enjoying a quick nibble of some juicy grass on the way



9/10th Chris had 9 volunteers to help him remove rhododendron from the Carriage Drive. We cut a swathe through the brambles and nettles on the bank in order to reach the large shrubs that had to be cut up and tossed, or dropped, down the slope and on to the fire. At the end of the day we visited the Coward Reedbed to see where the Cheshire Wildlife Trust had felled trees and begun construction of a boardwalk. Chris noticed that the weight of overhanging willow trees was damaging the fence. He took 6 volunteers to make a dead hedge with the branches that he removed with his chain saw. We were working on a slope again, but this time cattle had added their contribution to make it more difficult to stay firmly on our feet.

Mary Jeeves

News from the Rangers

Ashton's and Neumann's Flashes

Back in November I did my chainsaw course and assessment, so have since been able to practise and get to grips with some felling, with the assistance and guidance of Chris and Dave.

There are some large trees on Ashton's Flash to be removed before nesting season starts again. My plan is to leave some deadwood on the site, but to store as much as possible for charcoal making. The sheep are doing a grand job on Ashton's, but there is still a lot of smaller scrub to be removed over the next few months by hand.

The bench between Neumann's and Ashton's has been moved so that it gives a better view over Ashton's Flash. Also, the broken bench at the top of Neumann's has at long last been replaced

Amanda Pritchard



Marbury Country Park

Helping Hands Reap Rewards!

Firstly I'd like to thank FoAM for their fabulous efforts in realising the dream of the Marbury Lodge; this was a truly arduous task with many pitfalls along the way. If it wasn't for Alan Redley's tenacity and drive it may never have come to fruition. It was also helped along the way by some extremely kind donations from a FoAM member, FoAM itself, the local Councillors and Cheshire West and Chester Council. The building is proving to be a great asset; already visitors are taking advantage of the dry seating during these showery days, event organisers are approaching me to book the Lodge for a variety of activities and even the rabbits appreciate the covered area!

Regular visitors to the Park will see the holly hedge restoration project alongside the Arboretum coming to a close. This involves felling the mature leaning holly trees at waste height to prevent the rabbits eating the re-growth and clearing the trees from in front of this historic hedge line. In the future the holly will be kept as a low hedge as it was intended, with any gaps filled with new holly plants.

DEFRA and I have worked together to secure funding from the Forestry Commission through their Woodland Grant Scheme to eradicate the last of the rhododendron ponticum at Marbury Country Park. A

contractor will spend the summer months spraying all the re-growth from the cut stumps of rhododendron.

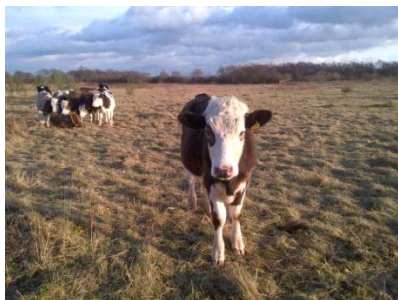


This re-growth is particularly susceptible to the plant disease *phytophthora ramorum* (sudden Oak death) which has been identified in four different locations at Marbury Country Park over the last five years. This rhododendron eradication is the culmination of ten years' work; the majority has been cleared by volunteers ranging from Scouts, BTCV, adult learner centres, and even hen parties! I would like to thank all the volunteers who have helped over the years. It's been a great achievement and lots of fun!

Chris Moseley

Anderton, Carey Park and Furey Wood

February and March can be very busy times of the year as we need to finish off any woodland thinning before the nesting season starts. I hope to continue a little more work at Anderton, pushing back the woodland edge throughout Marshall's Wood to give more light to the glades, very similar to the work the volunteers and I have been involved in at Carey Park.



Volunteers were out in force clearing scrub from the meadow behind Haydn's Pool when the cows started to take an interest in our work. We're not sure they will appreciate the aesthetics of the corral we made them from the brash pile!

Anderton will hopefully also benefit from a grant from the Forestry Commission to upgrade the footpath leading from the car park. The path cuts across the upper meadow and will create a loop, returning to the car park via the woodland by the edge of the fishing

pits. The grant is specifically aimed at creating an all ability access, which will enable visitors to reach the flowering meadow, plus a few stopping places with the extra addition of benches and perhaps a small interpretive panel. The panel will hopefully enlighten visitors about the industrial history and its impact on the wildlife of the area.

Furey Wood is also on the agenda, mainly work associated with health and safety. One or two large crack willows by the river have unfortunately reached a size where tops are beginning to snap or break. The trees then either lean towards the footpath or lie immediately adjacent. These trees will now be pollarded, i.e. reduced in size. Other work includes cutting back the trees which overhang the steps to give a little more light. This will be appreciated by visitors as the steps can be slippery due to the lack of sunlight.

Whilst all this is going on, the team, including the volunteers, will be helping to cut back the reedbed. The section this year is on the Carey Park side of Witton Brook. A little work is needed to ensure safe access for the mower and then we can hopefully have access to the whole of the reedbed.

Cheers Dave and Blue

Pilot Scheme Takes Off!

With a new log-burner to feed, it wasn't a difficult decision - to accept Ranger Dave James's offer of a tree allotment on Carey Park. This was the deal proposed to members of FoAM in a recent newsletter; we pay £10, do a short training session on felling small trees and undertake to remove said trees by the end of March before the birds start nesting. Dave marks out the trees he wants removed, accepts the £10 and puts his feet up. Or something like that, anyway.

Joking apart, it's really been very simple. The Rangers have kindly lent us hard hats, saws and billhooks, giving us time to acquire our own equipment; the only 'must-have' in the first instance was the rather vital safety boots. Dave took us to a tree plantation in need of thinning, high up on Carey Park; he let us loose to pick three consecutive rows, the idea being to open up a section of woodland where the public will eventually be able to walk. The training was straightforward - deciding which way the tree was to fall, cutting a perfect (?) wedge with a hand saw (no chain saws allowed!), sawing through, remembering on which side of the tree to stand...hmmm.... And that's about it. Plus the small matter of removing the brash - the twigs and small branches - and stacking it as wildlife habitat, before sawing the tree into manageable chunks to put in the car.

We teamed up with another allotmentee, Bob (now affectionately listed in my mobile phonebook as 'Bob the Tree') for company and safety, an arrangement which has worked very well and motivated us to get up there and get on with it. We have to check in and out of the site at the Rangers' cabin, and the Rangers have been very obliging about the times of our comings and goings.



What we perhaps hadn't considered properly before we started was the regular arrival of chunks of tree in the back garden. These need to be sawn into logs and then stacked for a year or more before they are ready for use - but where? The pile grows ever higher and we have not yet decided on a location for a log store or three, never mind actually building one.

We are, however, showing signs of addiction. The trees are a manageable size, a challenge rather than a trial. The weather has largely been kind to us, and it has been a joy to be up there in 'our' little patch of trees, with views over the town centre and the river. We don't see too many birds up there, but two male bull finches highlighted in the winter sun were a treat, a green woodpecker was a bonus and the way the rabbits mark out our tree stumps as their own brings a smile to our faces.

Steve Wilde and Brenda Yates

13th Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Anderton and Marbury

Notice of Meeting

Notice is hereby given that this meeting will take place on Monday 30th April 2012 at 7.30 pm in Comberbach Memorial Hall.

The Officers and Additional Committee Members shall be elected at the Meeting in accordance with the Constitution.

Alan Redley has completed his three year term of office as Chair and nominations for the role of Chair will be sought at the meeting.

All existing members of the Committee are standing for re-election and Brenda Yates has joined the Committee since the last AGM and will be standing for election.

Other nominations for membership of the Committee are sought from members of FoAM and should be sent to the Secretary.

Copies of the Accounts will be available at the meeting.

Frances Findlay Secretary

Well Heeled Dog Club - New for 2012



Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme (KCGCDS)

In addition to the regular training classes, The Well Heeled Dog Club has now been approved as a training provider of the highly respected Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme. Club members can now develop their dog handling skills by working towards a recognised level of training standard with their dog.

The scheme incorporates four awards: Puppy foundation, Bronze, Silver and Gold. Each level involves a gradual development of the basic exercises that are included in daily life situations and requires a slightly higher level of understanding of your dog and your training abilities.

The examination at the end of the course consists of simple tests, conducted by external examiners, which are designed to ensure that your dog has learnt the type of obedience exercises and behaviour that will ensure it is a pleasure to own. As part of the assessment, handlers will be tested on their knowledge and responsibilities of owning a dog.

Interested?

For details of course arrangements and costs please contact:
Mike Flannery, Club Trainer

mike@thedogclub.co.uk / 07768 980 918

**Kennel Club Approved
GCDS Training Provider**

**Well Heeled
Dog Club** 

mike@thedogclub.co.uk • 07768 980 918
www.thedogclub.co.uk

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 11th February Nest Box Making

Come and make a nest box to take away to put up in your garden as part of National Nest Box Week. No charge, but donations are welcome.
Meet: 10.00 am – 4.00 pm Marbury Country Park
For information contact John Gilbody 01606 882065

Monday 12th March Talk on the Dragonflies of Cheshire

Join us for a talk by David Kitching on this fascinating topic.
Meet: 7.30 pm Comberbach Memorial Hall
For information contact Alan Redley 01606 44728

Saturday 21st April Spring Flowers/Bluebell Walk in Marbury Country Park

This is a wonderful time of the year for a gentle walk in the Park to spot the spring flowers, including bluebells.
Meet: 10.00 am at the Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park
For information contact Mary Jeeves 01606 77688

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 spring issue:
Thursday 5th April. Many thanks**

Our First Event in Marbury Lodge

Our Christmas decorations workshop which was held in the Lodge on the Sunday before Christmas was once again a celebration of the wonderful natural materials gathered in the Woodlands, and some wonderful wreaths, table arrangements, swags and rings were produced in just two hours. A very happy and enjoyable occasion for all who took part.



Photographic Competition 2012

Please remember to take your camera with you when visiting our area.

Winter and early spring can give excellent conditions for good photos. Competition rules and details can be found on our website, or from the Rangers' Cabin.

Further details from Jim Jeeves
(jmjeeves4867@btinternet.com)

Saturday 28th 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 11th 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

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Talk on Dragonflies

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Monday 30th April

FoAM AGM, Quiz and Supper

Meet: 7.30pm at Comberbach Memorial Hall
To Book for the Quiz and Supper
Contact: Joanne Redley 01606 44728

Saturday 5th May

Dawn Chorus Walk

FoAM's ever popular event for everyone interested in birds.

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

Monday 21st May

Photographic Workshop

An evening workshop in Anderton Nature Park led by professional photographers Tracy and John Langley. There will be a small charge.

To Book a Place contact: Alan Redley 01606 44728

Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th May

Bring and Buy Plant Sale

A chance to find something unusual and exciting for house or garden. 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

Sunday 24th June

Family Fun Day

A family event to promote health and well-being lifestyles. Enjoy cookery demonstrations, sporting activities, grow your own competitions and lots more.

A partnership event organised by Cheshire West and Chester Link, Cheshire West and Chester Rangers, and FoAM.

Time: 11 am – 3 pm

Location: Marbury Country Park

For information contact: The Rangers 01606 77741

Saturday 30th June

Wildflower Facts and Folklore

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 7th July

Breakfast with Moths

Join the 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 21st July

FoAM Picnic in the Park

A special summer celebration evening 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 24th August

"Teddy Bears' Picnic" at Marbury Country Park

Family Treasure Hunt to find the hidden bears and enjoy fun and woodland games in the Park.

Meet: 1.00 pm at the Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park

For information contact: Joanne Redley 01606 44728

Saturday 3rd 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 16th December

Christmas Decorations

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

From: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm by the Rangers' Cabin, Marbury Country Park

For information contact: Joanne Redley 01606 44728