

Friends of Gedling House Woods

Annual Report 2013



Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter

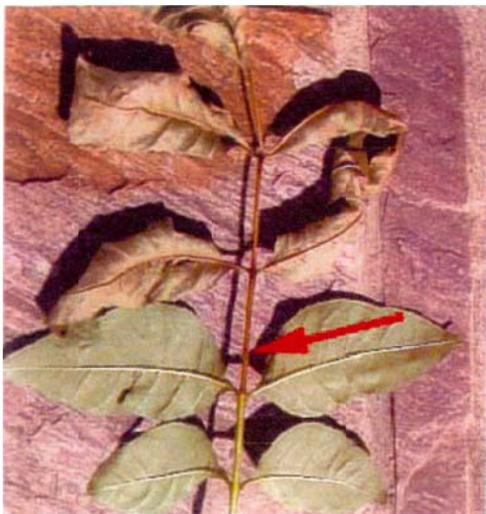


News and updates

What has been happening in the woods and meadows over the past year . . .

The wet summer has meant a quiet year in the woods but the meadow flourished in the moist conditions. When cut, very late in the season, it yielded about 40 bales of hay, which have gone to a local farm. There are always concerns about the quality of our hay, because of the use of the meadow by dogs and their walkers. As always, dog walkers need always to dispose of any deposits carefully. The new bins put in place by Gedling Borough Council this year are much more prominent, situated at the main entrances to the wood and meadow.

During the year several more dead and damaged trees have been felled. Leaving the logs in much longer lengths seems to have reduced their removal and continues to provide a good habitat for invertebrates. There has been no sign of Ash die-back disease, either wilting while the trees were in leaf or the diamond weals that show in the autumn after leaves have fallen. The pictures from Natural England below show what to look for. If you do find any evidence of ash dieback, please contact a member of the FGHW committee



Dieback of wilting stem and wilting leaves



Diamond shaped lesion centred on dead side shoot

Some small scale planting of hazel has been undertaken along the verge midway up Wood Lane to reduce access over the fence. The verge has also been trimmed to maintain a clear separation between verge and road, although we understand this has not been universally welcomed.

The stones at the lower gate have been augmented this spring to provide a safe access to the field. A similar arrangement is being put in place at the end of this month at another gate to make a steep exit from the field to the woods safer.

Visitors will have noticed the black sheep again this year. They visited the meadows for four weeks in March.

The wood anemones have been particularly prolific this spring.

Large clusters close to the glade have presented a carpet of wild flowers.



Local improvement scheme

FGHW has been successful in achieving a grant from the County Council . . .

FGHW's application to clear and reseed the glade and to clear the brambles from the sloping D-shaped area above the meadow further from the road has been successful. The glade has already been sprayed but will need further treatment over the summer before reseeding in the autumn.

We have yet to work out the detail of the work in the D-shaped area, but the general principle is to restore it to meadowland, and stop the gradual take-over by bramble and elder.



The glade, Spring 2013, before spraying, with the rustic seat at the top right of the picture

By making these changes, the woodland and meadow areas of Gedling House Woods will show an increase in biodiversity, attracting a wider range and greater quantity of butterflies, bees and other insects in both areas, encouraging more bird species and small mammals. The glade will generate a much more pleasant environment for sitting and walking.

The benefits of this project will be:

- greater biodiversity, particularly of insect life
- an increase in the insect population
- greater range of wild flower growth
- improved appearance and popularity as a leisure area
- better information to the public about the range of species resident in the meadow and woods.

More news will become available as the project gets underway – we have only heard we have been successful recently.

Ridge and furrow farming

Visible history of the meadow in Gedling House Woods . . .



The melting snow in this picture, taken in 2013, clearly shows how years of cultivation have left the land in ridges and furrows.

The ridge and furrow pattern shows the remains of the strips the farmers used to share the land, typically running up and down the slope.

The aims of Friends of Gedling House Woods

A reminder of what we are here for . . .

To protect, maintain and develop the local natural environment of Gedling House Woods Local Nature Reserve and its immediate surroundings, including wildlife, woods, adjacent meadowland, hedgerows trees and verges.