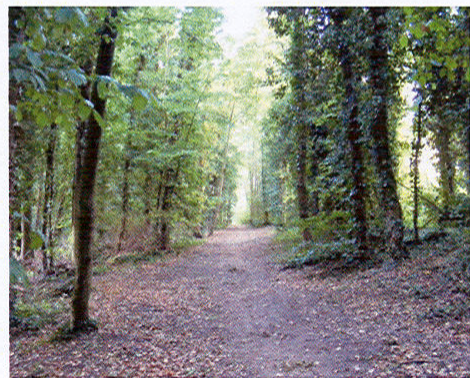


Friends of Gedling House Woods

Annual Report 2011



spring



summer



autumn



winter

FGHW Annual Report 2011

New equipment

After years of good use, we realised that our second hand tractor mower was in need of replacement, it was decided to invest in a new updated 'John Deere' mower to keep the meadow and top 'D' section paths in good order, this being necessary to keep walkers on the pathways rather than straying through the meadow's grazed areas, where we are trying to promote a variety of wild flowers that are more likely to have been indigenous to this locality, also making the total area looking more attractive.

At the same time, rakes, forks, and spades have been purchased, for use with our working parties.



Full steam ahead

Budgets and management

John has continued to carry out the secretarial duties in a most efficient manner, and kept us on budget with the financial restraints that are familiar with us all.

Necessary work in the woodland has been contracted out and overseen by John, including some clearance in the area opposite 'Spring Bank' in preparation for the planting of some English oak trees to replace the dead and dyeing trees in this area.

Hay Crop

After the years of managing the meadows in accordance with our 'plan', we were quite hopeful that the better condition of the hay crop taken last year was going to be of a commercial quality for use with local farms and the like.

The hay was cut and dried, but when it was inspected by a local farmer the hay was considered unusable as winter fodder, as contamination by dog excreta was present on the hay.

As it was not good policy to leave the hay on the meadow, it was decided to have the hay baled and deposited to a discreet place in the meadow to rot down naturally.

During the very cold winter this proved a blessing in disguise, as the flock of sheep still on the meadow at this time, found the hay to be a very valuable food source, when the ground was covered by snow for long periods, and hay was at a premium, and in short supply.



Walk, talk, & strawberry tea

Towards the latter part of July we organized a walk through the woodland areas, passing through the newly formed 'glade', then on to the highest point pausing a while near to the top bench, appreciating the view, and learning a little about how our ancestors would have used of the meadow land and woodland areas years ago.

Making our way down through the meadows, admiring the flock of Wildlife Trust hebridean sheep, and learning about the different way that sheep are managed in other parts of the world.

We finished the afternoon off at 'Spring bank' with a very nice strawberry tea and a glass of wine, and a lot of talking ! This proved to be a very sociable and successful event that was open to all members of fghw.



Working party

On the 19th of October last year it was very encouraging to have approximately sixteen volunteers, all working hard in controlling the sycamore saplings, but foremost in clearing some of the ever increasing bramble, to create a 'scallop' as another micro climate for birds and butterflies and bees, this being a very suitable areas of the top 'D' section, where shelter is provided by the canopy of overhanging trees, and having a south facing aspect.

After removal of the collected bramble and debris, this area will be left for the grass to regenerate, and eventually mown in line with recommendations from our adviser Barney Parker.



Woodland and glade

As the Nature Reserve is a place for public use, it is necessary that we have a safety survey carried out periodically. Although we don't always see problems in the wooded areas ourselves, the report carried out this year identified many dead trees, and some unsafe trees, requiring felling. These were then formed into log piles for nature to take over. The decaying timber hosting many different bugs and beetles, as a food source for birds and small mammals.

The newly formed 'glade' surprised us by showing some poppies very much like the 'opium' poppy last year. This year the area has been purposely left to see what kind of wild flowers would self generate.

It is our intention to have the sculptured oak log seat sited in a suitable place in the glade for people to appreciate the quiet, and tranquillity of the woodland.



The sculptured log seat in oak



to be positioned in the glade

Parties of school children still enjoy the 'Nature Reserve'

Part of our agreement with Gedling Borough Council, is to introduce some form of education when planning our forth coming activities.

We are very fortunate in having Dave and Ann Richards, not just as members of fghw, but managing this complete programme for us, incorporating Carol as our coordinator for this invaluable and I'm sure enjoyable visits from local schools.

Dave and Ann will assist schools with the necessary paperwork, incorporating 'risk assessment' and where required, financial assistance can be granted towards transport for children travelling to the 'Nature Reserve'.

Details for this can be seen on our web site www.fghw.org.uk



A leafy woodland walk

Education Report

Ann and I had another interesting and enjoyable year introducing so many young people to these ancient treasures here in Gedling. The meadows and woods are ever changing and there is always something new or different to see and young eyes evoke so many questions.

On so many occasions we hear the comments which confirm that both children and accompanying adults have not been aware of what they can find in this part of Gedling.

We have continued using our Nature Trail but this trail changes slightly during the different seasons.

We have also done some introduction to geology and shown the children how the landscape has been formed.

We discover evidence of the likely hood of climate change and the children have really enjoyed the shelter building. Amongst other things we are hoping to undertake are some tracking exercises.

One of the activities that the children really enjoy is the summer term teddy bears picnic. We could never miss this out.

We are grateful for the great support given to us by other members of Friends of Gedling House Woods, but we do sometimes suffer from the attention of dogs which are clearly not in the control of their irresponsible owners.

However, I must make it clear that the great majority of dog owners are very helpful. This was another very successful year which was confirmed by the excellent comments received from our visitors.

Dave Richards



start of the children's shelter building

Reserve Warden

As well as our membership and advertising officer, Carol deals with most of our enquiries that come through our web site, and a good job she does as well !

Carol writes:-

As an admirer and regular walker exercising her dogs in the woodland and meadowland areas, Carol is our natural 'warden' keeping a lookout for any untoward occurrences, litter picking and reporting anything unusual in the Nature Reserve, for which we thank her.

Carol meets with many responsible dog owners, but on occasions will notice that some people still forget to clear up after their dog.

One Sunday afternoon in April, Carol with a few regular dog walkers got together to clear the meadow areas of dog excrement. Those who volunteered are not the ones who fail to pick up after their dogs, but rather the ones who want the site to remain beautiful, and clean for all to use and enjoy.

In the space of about 45 minutes several carrier bags were filled and disposed of in the dog bin.

Our thanks go to these volunteers.



What can I eat now

Green Flag – Green Pennant Award

The committee have investigated the possibility of obtaining the above Award for the Gedling House Woods and meadow. The appropriate award would have been the Green Pennant which recognises high quality green spaces in England and Wales, that are managed by voluntary Groups. However on examination of the criteria for the award to be made, the maximum size of the area is limited to three hectares (7.5 acres). Our site is considerably in excess of this figure and so unfortunately we do not qualify. Even if the area had been within the limit, there are a number of other conditions which have to be met none of which we could realistically meet. No further action is intended on this issue.

Roy Briggs

