

Sadlers Wells Community Woodland
Registered Charity Number 1105117



Newsletter No. 15 – Autumn 2013

The Changing of the Guard

Ernest Croley, Eric Lord and Bob Price have now retired as trustees of the Charity, having reached the end of their recent terms of office on 14th August 2013. They were all involved right from the very beginning, including the setting up of the Charity, the purchase of the land, the establishment of the new plantation and the setting up of the running of the Wood. Our grateful thanks go to them for all their efforts, particularly to Ernest for his leadership as Chairman and Bob for his expertise in forestry and conservation. They will be a very hard act to follow but we hope that the new team will bring some new ideas and move things forward.

In April, Bob Harris was appointed as a Trustee in place of the late Tony Gentil and in August, Andy Fairclough and Ron Pulford were appointed after nomination by Bunbury Parish Council in place of Ernest and Eric; Peter Tonge was appointed after nomination by The Cheshire Landscape Trust to act in place of Bob Price. Andy Fairclough is currently working as a pilot out of East Midlands Airport at the moment and has family living in Sadlers Wells. He has been involved with the Bunbury Cubs, Scouts, Beavers and Brownies. Ron Pulford lives in The Highlands and is Vice Chairman of Bunbury Parish Council. Peter Tonge lives in Littleton near Chester and has considerable experience of conservation and work with The Conservation Volunteers (formerly known as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) and Cheshire Landscape Trust.

Mike Bourne has taken over as Chairman and Bob Harris has been appointed Vice-Chairman.

Recent News

1. Part of the footpath through the new plantation has been levelled and re-seeded. If conditions require, it may be necessary to close part of the path to prevent it becoming muddy and to allow the new grass to stabilise. The remainder of the path will be accessible.

2. 500 bluebells of the good old English variety have been acquired with 50 snowdrops and planted by the Bunbury Cub Scouts in the lower part of the old Wood. If the growth of the bulbs matches the enthusiasm with which they were planted, we shall have something to look forward to next spring. Some of the bulbs will no doubt be taken by badgers, squirrels and others but with luck the major proportion will remain and make a good show in years to come.

3. You may remember that the Wood was registered a few years ago as a Site of Biological Importance. This designation has been replaced by what are now known as Local Wildlife Sites. About a year ago, the Wood was inspected by The Cheshire Wildlife Trust to check whether the Wood met the criteria for the new designation and I am pleased to say that we do, although the only part now considered to be important is the lower part of the old Wood between the footpath and the River Gowy. The upper part of the old Wood was felt to be too dry and lacking in variety; new plantations can now only be considered when they have been established for thirty years. This means that it will be 2036 before our new plantation can be considered for inclusion.

4. Those who live in and around Bunbury will have seen in a recent edition of the Parish Link that the trustees have reluctantly had to take a decision to prohibit the use of the Wood by Mountain bikes. The reasons include interference and damage to wildlife and the ecology of the Wood, the impossibility of keeping bikers and walkers at a safe distance from each other and the fact that our insurance does not cover such activities.

5. We have been asked by the Scouts and Cubs if a gate could be put in at the main road end of the Wood to restrict access by children towards the main road. The School have said that they were also in favour of the idea. Bunbury Parish Council and representatives of Cheshire East have both advised that the proposal can proceed.

6. Cattle from the adjoining field have recently broken through the fence to the new plantation and have caused some damage to the footpath, including the area recently re-seeded. The damaged rail has been replaced by our neighbour.

The use of the Wood by the Bunbury Cubs, Scouts and others

It is nice to see that the Wood is being used more frequently by young people, especially some of the uniformed organisations based within the Village. Beavers, who to those who are unfamiliar, are the aspiring

Cubs, have used the wood for a hide and seek evening. They have also used the area for a series of wide games such as tag.

Not to be outdone, the Brownies arranged an evening nature hunt. They could be seen looking for creepy crawlies in the undergrowth and mud, as well as expending their energies playing some games and hiding in the holly bushes.

The Cub Scouts have used the Wood on several occasions. The meetings start in the outdoor classroom, and that is used as a focal point for their evenings. Again, lots of energy has been expended, although they managed to gain some points towards their naturalist badges. Whilst planting the bluebells, they still found time to identify fungi, trees, birds, insects and woodland plants, as well as finding animal tracks to earn their naturalist badges. They have used a map of the wood to practise some basic orienteering and map reading. Tree identification has also helped towards an activity badge.

Those groups and individuals who have used the natural resources of Sadlers Wells Wood have enjoyed it and the Leaders have discovered what a valuable asset it can be in educating and providing recreation for their Groups.

Andrew Fairclough

Meet the Trustees

No. 8 - Bob Harris

Bob Harris was born and brought up in Chester. He went to the King's School and then on to Birmingham University where he studied Geography, followed by a Teacher Training course at Crewe and Alsager College. Before teaching however, he had a number of jobs including working as an instructor at several outdoor pursuit centres in Snowdonia, where he taught a range of activities but specialised in climbing and mountaineering.

He got his first teaching job at Blacon Hall Middle School in Chester before moving to Upton Manor Junior School where he taught for about ten years until it amalgamated with a local infant School to become Upton Heath Primary School. He eventually retired as Assistant Headteacher having taught for thirty four years.

He has lived in Bunbury since 1987 with his wife Mairi and daughters Bethan and Rowena. In his spare time, he still plays cricket and

five-a-side football and enjoys mountaineering in Snowdonia and further afield. He has also had three books published about the ancient history of Wales, the Peak District and the Lake District.

Woodland and Garden Birds in Winter

Birds do not hibernate like mammals but migrate to avoid harsh winter weather and the British Isles are at a migration crossroads. We have birds moving around nearly all through the year, and in the late spring experienced this year, some places found the first summer visitors arriving before some winter migrants had left for their breeding grounds. We are fortunate in that we can provide both good summer breeding sites with long daylight hours and a relatively mild winter climate compared to central and eastern Europe which means that many common species come here to avoid harsher weather; bird ringing is providing much more information about what is going on.



The arrival of winter visitors such as fieldfares, redwings and bramblings (illustrated left) is well known as are the massed flocks of starlings and rarer visitors such as siskins and waxwings. They are not however the only birds on the move during the winter months. Many of the birds once thought to be residents also migrate, and the ones in your garden in winter may

not be the same ones that were there during the summer.

A winter blackbird may have come from Scandinavia, Germany, Poland or even Russia, and the one in your garden in summer may have gone south for the winter. One individual ringed blackbird was found to commute for several winters from Norfolk to the same garden in Devon. Furthermore, the type of migration can vary. Bramblings tend to fly directly from Scandinavia across the North Sea but chaffinches from the same area take a longer route to take advantage of a shorter crossing of the English Channel. Male chaffinches also tend to winter nearer their breeding grounds whilst the females go further afield. In Autumn 2012, an amazing 87,500

blue tits were recorded at a bird observatory in southern Sweden in a single day, twice the previous highest day total for the species.

Most birds form flocks when they go foraging for food in winter, but some, such as robins and wrens, stake their claims to their own feeding territories which is why they are frequently heard singing during the winter months.

Birds must find as much food as they can during the short winter days so that they can survive the cold nights. It has been said that a small bird can lose ten to fifteen per cent of body weight during a cold night and must therefore put on weight feeding during the day. This is the equivalent in human terms of gaining and losing a stone. Many birds have communal roosts where they huddle together during the night to reduce the amount of energy needed to keep warm. Bird feeders in your garden can truly be the difference between life and death, even though you sometimes get the impression that the feeding the birds is an expensive hobby.

English Woodland

Some of our Friends may have read a piece in the QI column of the Daily Telegraph on Saturday, September 28th when it mentioned that Britain was one of the least wooded areas in Europe with tree cover of only 8.4 per cent of total land area compared with the EU average of 36 per cent. It also pointed out that this was nothing recent as the forest cover had been reduced to 15 per cent by the time of the Domesday Book. Any wooded areas around Bunbury were certainly cleared before the Norman Conquest as the only woodland mentioned in the Domesday Book for Bunbury was a long thin wood some three miles long and around two hundred yards wide. This almost certainly refers to the woodland along the River Gowy of which remnants can still be seen today and of which Sadlers Wells Wood forms part. The new plantation will have helped towards re-forestation in our area, particularly as according to The Woodland Trust Cheshire is the least wooded county in the UK at 6.4 per cent.

Friends of the Wood

The annual subscription is a minimum of £5-00 each and the 2012/13 subscription **became due on 1st April**. The wood produces no income itself and we therefore have to raise all the money needed to pay for insurance, maintenance, etc. Your subscriptions are therefore very valuable to us, not only in themselves but also because they show a commitment

from the local community which is a great help when we approach funding organisations for any grants available to enable the Trust to carry out its work. Thank you to those who have duly paid. Reminders have been sent to those whose subscriptions are still outstanding and early payment of any still owing would be greatly appreciated. Payment can be made either to Michael Bourne or Bob Harris whose details are given below; cheques should be made payable to Sadlers Wells Community Woodland.

Gift Aid is a valuable source of income and we would appreciate subscriptions being gift aided if you are able to do so and have not already done it. The amount of Gift Aid on a single subscription is only small but the total amount we get each year is significant.

And finally

The greatest number of African Mammals who migrate are not the wildebeest and zebra of the Serengeti but around ten million straw coloured fruit bats who flock each year from equatorial Africa into Zambia to feast on the season's figs and other fruiting trees, some travelling thousands of kilometres. The longest migration of all is that of Arctic Terns who breed in the northern Atlantic and Arctic regions and then migrate some ten thousand miles down to the Antarctic for our winter.

If anyone has any comments or queries regarding this Newsletter or the wood generally, please write or e-mail our Chairman, Michael Bourne. We would appreciate response from members to let us know whether we are heading in the right direction.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, if you see anything unusual or interesting in the wood, please let us know by telephone or e-mail as we would like to make a record.

Also, if there is anyone who does not receive Newsletters by e-mail but would like to do so, please let me know by e-mail at the address below. It would save us postage or delivery. An e-mail address would also be helpful for any other communications.

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Trustees of the Charity Michael Bourne (Chairman), Bob Harris (Vice-Chairman), Alyson Thacker, Dr Katherine Hutchinson, Andy Fairclough, Ron Pulford and Peter Tonge

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 Friends of Sadlers Wells Wood -- Subscription 2013/14

Name(s)	Amount (min. £5 per person)
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Cheques should be made payable to Sadlers Wells Community Woodland.