

Sadlers Wells Community **Woodland**

Registered Charity Number 1105117



Newsletter No. 21 – Autumn 2016

Ernest Croley

It is with great sadness that we have to record the death on 28th May 2016 of our former Chairman, Ernest Croley at the age of 83. Ernest had been very much involved with Sadlers Wells Wood right from the very start when villagers were concerned about proposals to clear fell the Wood in 1996. He wrote fully on his involvement in the previous Newsletters of Autumn 2009 and Autumn 2010 and these are available on our website describing in detail all that was done culminating in the purchase of the Wood by



the Charity in January 2006.

Without Ernest's enthusiasm and efforts, the Wood would not have been acquired for the benefit of the Village and we must be very grateful to him. Not only did he lead the negotiations for the purchase, he seemed to know

precisely who from an impressive list of contacts was best placed to help the Charity with any problems that arose.

Ernest was Chairman of the Charity trustees until he retired in August 2013 to devote his time to Bunbury Mill. He had also been very much involved in other Village matters over the years including the Village Hall as well as being Chairman of the Parish Council for a time.

Chairman's Notes

Our stall on Village Day again provided an opportunity to make ourselves known and six new Friends of the Wood were enrolled. As it was ten years since the Wood was originally purchased, Ron Pulford kindly provided a bottle of Bubbly as a prize of a draw between the new members and this was won by Keith Blackwood. The subject of the usual Quiz this year was to identify creatures of the sea in view of the seaside theme for Village Day and the adult prize from the completed correct entries was won by Alison Dentith and the children's prize by Georgia Edwards.

We are also very grateful to Simon Pulford who made a donation to us of £60-00 from the entrance fees paid by the people who tried out the fighter aircraft cockpit which he brought to Village Day.

Reindeer

Reindeer are not on record as having appeared in Sadlers Wells Wood at least since the end of the last Ice Age; they are nowadays very much associated with the festive season but this makes it very easy to overlook what remarkable animals they are. Reindeer are found all over the sub-Arctic regions of the northern hemisphere and in northern Europe and Asia they are semi-domesticated.

In North America, they are known as Caribou but are the same species *Rangifer tarandus*. Caribou are truly wild and slightly larger than their Old World cousins. They undertake one of the longest migrations of any animal covering around 4500 to 5000 kms between their wintering grounds in the more sheltered afforested areas and the more open tundra in the north where they calve in areas of fewer predators and better grazing. They arrive in the early spring when their newborn calves can have a few weeks to establish themselves before the midges and other biting insects make life a misery.



Reindeer are remarkable for their hardiness being able to live and find food at temperatures down to minus 40C. The reason is their remarkable coat which consists

of a very dense under fur with about 2000 hairs per square centimetre and a longer outer fur consisting of an additional 600 or 700 longer hollow guard hairs in a similar area. The insulation is so good that they can lie down in snow and not even melt it. The effectiveness of the insulation also means that in winter they do not need to eat a vast amount of food simply to keep warm. Their noses are also covered in fur (not red!) as are the udders of the females to reduce heat loss. Their udders are small for the same reason but reindeer milk is very rich so that it makes up in quality what it lacks in quantity.

Both male and female reindeer have antlers; these are shed annually but reindeer have an unusual strategy. The males lose their antlers soon after the annual rut is over, but the females keep theirs until some time after their calves have been born. This gives them an advantage over the males without antlers when it comes to seeking and dominating grazing for themselves and their calves.

Reindeer also have a very varied diet which means that it is much easier for them to find food than it would be if their diet was more restricted. They have even been reported as eating carrion, scavenging meat from carcasses. Their impact on the landscape is comparatively small due to their varied diet and the fact that they are continually on the move.

Reindeer fossils were found in Oxfordshire which were about 500,000 years old. Reindeer were present in Yorkshire some 9750 years ago and some 8500 years ago in Scotland, and may have hung on later in other areas. The Cairngorms are the only areas in the United Kingdom with conditions similar to the Arctic tundra and a herd of reindeer have been established there for around fifty years and are now a visitor attraction near Aviemore.

They are well able to cope with the hardest Scottish winters without needing additional feeding; they also do not browse on Scots Pine and this is allowing the regeneration of Caledonian pine woodland.

Our Constitution

I wrote in the last Newsletter about the possible change of the charity's status into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It did indeed take some considerable time to sort out the various problems involved but I am pleased to say that all consents now have been obtained and at a recent meeting of the Trustees, it was decided to go ahead. The constitution of the new CIO has been approved by the Trustees and an application to register the new CIO with the Charity Commission is now being prepared. The new CIO will come into being when the registration is accepted and we can then open the new Bank Account and transfer the assets of the present Charity to the CIO. We hope that the changeover will be completed to take effect at the end of the current financial year.

We will keep you informed.

And finally

I heard recently that reindeer have been known to feed on Fly Agaric mushrooms; these are quite common and have red caps with white spots and are hallucigenic. This apparently makes the reindeer quite skittish frequently

leaping in the air as if they were jumping over non-existent obstacles. Is this the source of the stories of flying reindeer?

Merry Christmas!

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.

Contact us

Chairman and Editor

Michael Bourne; Tel 01829-260944 Long Acre, Wyche Lane,
Bunbury, Cheshire CW6 9PS

E-mail trustees@sadlerswellswood.co.uk

Vice-Chairman

Bob Harris; Tel 01829-260011 Nook Cottage, School Lane,
Bunbury CW6 9NX

E-mail bh@sadlerswellswood.co.uk

Website address www.sadlerswellswood.co.uk

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