



# Friends of Darrick and Newstead Woods



## Introduction

Once again we have had a very hot summer but the woods and meadows do not appear to be suffering any ill effect.

The interpretation board at the Tubbenden meadow view point has been vandalised again and it will be replaced,

Angela Wood has returned from maternity leave and we welcome her back. Thanks to Ed for covering during this Angela's absence.

Angela has written a short message confirming her return.

In August Stella Geddes, led a walk through Kings Cross and St Pancras; Vanessa has written a report of the trip below.

We received a visit from Bromley RSPB at the beginning of September and we have written a report in the body of the Newsletter.

September was a busy month when FODNW members contributed to a successful day at the Keniston Housing Association fun day on the 13th.

Gary has published a new programme of events for the Orpington field club.

A Message from Angela Wood

Hi All,

For those of you that I didn't have the pleasure of seeing on workday today – I'm back!!!!

It was really lovely to get out and see some of you on my very first day back after my maternity leave, and I even got to have a go on the brush-cutter (albeit only for a short while). Ophelia is already not much like a baby at 9.5 months. Time absolutely flew by and nearing the end of my first day back, it really feels like I've barely been away! I've attached a couple of photos of before and after from today.

Ed has done an absolutely splendid job at Darrick and I couldn't have asked for a more efficient cover and by the sounds of it he was well liked by many of you. Darrick is looking fabulous (well done all) and I'm really excited to be getting stuck back into the winter work with you all.

As promised, I've looked up the exact location of "bench 2" which is the meeting point for next Thursday's task...it's the bench in Broadwater Meadow, near the entrance to Hale close and the bike width restrictor.

Hopefully I shall see you all then!

Best wishes,  
Angela



A Message from Lynn Russ of Keniston Housing Association

Keniston Housing Association held their fun day on 13th September 2019.

"Good morning Brian

I am very glad that the 'friends' had a good afternoon. The children were indeed very interested and the DWC group always welcomes your group along to their fun day. Attached is a photo you may want to use in your Newsletter. A thank you from us for your informative and interactive display.

Kind regards  
Lynn"



A message from Janey Marriott

Saplings

For the past 4/5 years I have been watering young trees in my road. It is a sad sight to see saplings struggling then dying because of the lack of water. We are fortunate to have a Council that so readily responds to the request for trees to be planted on our roadsides. The introduction of the green bags around newly planted trees has puzzled me; I couldn't see how it helped with the retention of water and it certainly wasn't to protect them from any passing deer. I have however, recently discovered how they work. Down one side is a double layer of the green material; in my years of watering, I had not noticed it; this double layer opens up to form a "sack" into which water can be poured; the water then seeps slowly through the bottom of the sack enabling more efficient hydration of the tree. May I encourage everyone to look out for saplings in their area; they need about 20 litres of water a week in the first three years during April to September; ideally this should be given in one go so that the water has the opportunity to seep down into the roots rather than being given in small amounts and the water remain on the surface and not reach the roots. You are then likely to be rewarded by a happy, healthy, adult tree to bring pleasure for years to come.

Janey Marriott

## A King's Cross Walk

by Vanessa Dixon

Stella Geddes once again kindly led a group on an August walk – this time around the King's Cross area. We travelled by Thameslink to St. Pancras, and began our tour outside the Crick Institute, a huge centre for scientific research, extending not only five storeys upwards, but also five floors below street level. It contains many delicate scientific instruments, which have to be protected from vibrations. On the pavement outside is a tall sculpture called 'Paradigm' symbolizing the way in which scientific research progresses in stages. The sections appeared to be balanced rather precariously, as though they could easily topple.



We walked down the side of the Institute to admire the 'Story Garden', an intriguing use of temporarily derelict land, which will eventually be the site of an extension to the British Library. Local people are growing fruit and vegetables, there is play equipment for children and also craft sessions.



We passed the community centre which was built as an asset for the local area, after the construction of the Crick Institute. There were colourful flower beds outside, designed in a very natural style. After that came the Purchase Street Open space with its red and black brick walls. The whole area developed around the railways with competition between the Midland and Great Northern Railways. We saw the Camden Council buildings which, Stella told us, has two very nice swimming pools in its basement which anyone can use.

We progressed past the Camley Street Natural Park, visited on a previous walk with Stella, but currently closed for the construction of a new visitor centre. We were amused by the hanging baskets in hard hats adorning the builders' Portakabin!



We crossed the Regent's Canal and gazed across at the St. Pancras Lock and the Victorian water tower.

Trains still trundle pass, but more often the Eurostar than the freight trains of former years. This area was notable for its colourful planting by Dan Pearson, a well-known landscape gardener who has won many Chelsea Flower Show awards. Commented [SG1]:



A short walk further and we entered London's most unusual park, Gasholder Park, comprising a circular lawn surrounded by a low bank, a bit like a hint of an ancient earthwork. This in turn was enclosed by a rather mirror like metal surround. Some of the surrounding buildings nearby were deliberately



designed in rusted steel coloured materials, to remind the residents of the railway heritage. Flats in the former gas holders cost over a million pounds. We were able to peer into a ground floor room, which was a circle segment in shape.

Near here, Stella showed us the Facebook building with its numerous tall, narrow windows, and the Aga Khan's building which contains six different Islamic style gardens. We admired Coal Drops Yard, whose name describes its former function. Now it has many shops and up market restaurants. The best cup of coffee in the world is said to be available in one of these at a price of £15! Thomas Heatherwick of 'Garden Bridge' fame designed the 'Kissing Arch' here on the Coal Drops.



The steps were bright with red Pelagonia in black biodegradable tubs.

We progressed across Bagley Walk, between more colourful flower beds, stopping to observe a pedestrian bridge over the canal made of steel only a few mm thick.

At Granary Square many small children were jumping around in the 1,080 fountains.

Inside the building one can play table tennis and the Central St. Martins' School of art is found there. She showed us the site on which Google is building its new London headquarters, which will be in dimensions something like the Shard lying on its side -- vast!



In Pancras Square we admired the waterlilies and then saw the Stanley Building, comprising parts old and new, the German Gymnasium and the pin oak which had been transported from Hamburg, already 60 years old. It was a very colourful walk on a memorably glorious sunny day.



## Visit of the RSPB Bromley Local Group to Darrick and Newstead Woods by Trevor Morgan

On September 3<sup>rd</sup> Richard Pearce and I spent three hours guiding The Bromley Local Group of the RSPB around our reserve. We took them on the exact route that we use for the survey. Usually the route takes just over an hour but this time we stopped frequently not just to enjoy the birds, but the insects, flowers and mammal life too. We also had plenty of time to share experiences and general knowledge.

At the start of the walk I was concerned that we would not see any show piece species. No offence to Woodpigeons, Crows and Magpies but these are everyday fare, and as we headed around Darrick Wood these were the only species we were seeing.

Luckily, our visit to Newstead Woods was more profitable: one of our bird watchers identified the call of the Nuthatch. Then we all saw a pair flying from tree to tree. These handsome birds have bright yellowish-brown breasts and blue wings. They appeared rather iridescent in the bright sunshine. The nuthatch feeds on insects, seeds and nuts whilst foraging on tree trunks and branches, they are capable of climbing and descending trees. They often visit bird tables in gardens that border woodlands. We know that Nuthatches are resident in our reserve, but we don't often see them.

We also heard and saw a Great Spotted Woodpecker. Curiously this bird was tapping very slowly on a tree trunk something which none of us had heard before.

Finally, one of our eagle-eyed visitors spotted a Tree Bee nest. Richard and I thought that these communal bees had disappeared from the reserve. Originally, they were living in Darrick Wood. They appeared to be surviving well living much higher up in their tree in Newstead Woods - but perhaps they were a different colony.

For me the discovery of a new Tree Bee nest was the ecological highlight of the visit. It often pays to have many more attentive eyes. The visit was a real success.



## Autumn Edition 2019

### The Knopper Gall by Trevor Morgan

This summer I have noticed the knopper gall growing on the acorns of many of our pedunculate oak trees (*Quercus robur*) in the reserve. These galls are caused by a cynipid wasp - *Andricus quercuscalcis*.

The wasp lays its eggs within the tissues of the budding acorn, the larva then produces a chemical which induces the oak to produce the gall from which an adult wasp escapes in spring.

The galls are sticky and turn red in colour. In the autumn the galls turn brown.

*A. quercuscalcis* is an invasive species of wasp which found its way to the UK in the 1960s and they have spread across the country.

It has an interesting life cycle. The knopper galls are produced by an asexual form of the wasp which reproduces by parthenogenesis, which is a form of “virgin birth” in the animal kingdom. In the spring of the following year the female wasps emerge to find a turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*). The female wasp then inserts its eggs into the male buds of the catkins of the turkey oak, to produce a different and smaller gall. Male and female wasps then emerge from the catkin galls to mate. The females then produce next year’s knopper galls in the pedunculate oak.

The wasps therefore need both types of oak to complete their life cycle. I have been unable to identify the turkey oak in the reserve - perhaps a tree expert could help me.

The galls on the oak trees do not seem to seriously affect the health of the tree and of course not every acorn or catkin is invaded. Turkey oaks arrived in the UK in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



The larvae of *A. quercuscalcis* are parasitized by chalcid wasps especially of the genus *Mesopolobus* but these seem to have very little controlling influence in the UK.

The life cycle of these invasive wasps is fascinating, why not look out for their galls on the oak trees the next time you take a walk in our reserve.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/07/knopper-galls-wenlock-edge-oaks-wasps>



**Orpington Field Club - Autumn/Winter Talks – 2019/20**

Five talks have been arranged for the second Saturday afternoons from October to February at BEECHE, High Elms Country Park, Shire Lane, Farnborough, BR6 7JH. These will be between **1.30pm and 3.30pm** giving members and visitors a chance to network! **All visitors are welcome, especially those from Bromley's Friends Groups, Kent Wildlife Trust and Local RSPB members and anyone with an interest in natural history. Entrance is by a £3.00 donation which includes refreshments.**

**October 12<sup>th</sup>                      Natural Quarries                      David Boag**

When David was asked to photograph, write and design a book about the wildlife and natural beauty of a working quarry in Somerset he was reluctant to say the least! He knew/thought quarries were places that destroyed the environment and were rubbish for wildlife, but he had never been so wrong. It turned out to be an amazing project but also quite a significant challenge because working in that environment is difficult. He was quick to discover a wealth of indigenous wild plants, which lead to a profusion of insects. In turn they encouraged birds and predators to follow. He has never seen the web of life so well illustrated as in that quarry.

**November 9<sup>th</sup>                      Otters and Beavers                      Jonathan Bramley**

Jon has studied otters and beavers in the UK and abroad for over 30 years. He completed degrees in Freshwater/ Marine Biology and Ecology and has been lucky enough to work in Europe, South Africa and other parts of Africa since then.

He worked for various Universities and Wildlife Trusts, and was one of the founder members of the Kent Mammal Group (plus the Kent Reptile Group) and was on the KMG team for over 15 years, where it grew under the excellent guidance of Ken West.

Jon loves otters, water voles, water shrews, beavers and all cetacean mammals (as well as many other animals, plants and algae) - so come and see him do an interesting talk on otters and beavers, which he is very happy to engage folks in and have a great natter about them.

**December 14<sup>th</sup>                      Hedgehogs                      Nigel Reeve**

It is common knowledge that there are less Hedgehog sightings these days. Nigel's talk will start by reviewing the status and biology of hedgehogs in the UK nationwide and then move on to talk about the findings of the continuing study of hedgehogs in Regent's Park that began in 2014. This provides some insights into the problems that hedgehogs face in other urban sites nationally .....



**Orpington Field Club - Autumn/Winter Talks – 2019/20 continued**

**2020**

**January 11th**

**Wild Flowers of Kent**

**Lynne Flower**

Lynne's wildflower talk will encompass her journeys across all her favourite wildflower hotspots, including many Kent Wildlife Trust reserves, across all the variety of Kentish habitats with the best of the plants - and of course an up-date on the status and success of barn owls of Bough Beech.

**February 8th**

**Slugs and Snails**

**June Chatfield**

June is a zoologist specialising in molluscs, and is currently retired after a working life in education and museums but still running courses for the Field Studies Council, volunteering at Haslemere Educational Museum and writing. She is also Vice-president of the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

Slugs and Snails can be found almost anywhere in terrestrial habitats and there are not too many species so identification is achievable. Individual species have their own life styles and their presence can indicate much about the ecology of the habitat and therefore snails from excavations can inform archaeologists of past environmental conditions. A reference collection of empty shells can be made with no harm to the snail.

Attendees are encouraged to bring along specimens that they might like to have named and to look at some shells brought in, together with preferably a x 10 hand lens.

**March 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Orpington Field Club (Facebook Group) Social**

An opportunity to assess the past year in particular and the past two years of the club's new arrangement.

**Autumn Edition 2019****Future Events****Wednesday 23 October 2019 at 1930 Broadwater Gardens Community Centre**

Friends of Darrick and Newstead Woods Open meeting

**Wednesdays 14.00-1600 hrs**

Darrick Wood Walk for Health. This walk takes place weekly, from the cricket pavilion at Tugmutton Common, Starts Hill.

**Thursdays 10.00-1200 hrs**

Darrick Wood work day. This takes place weekly and is led by Angela Wood of Idverde UK. See Notice board or Website for assembly location.

**Links & Contacts****Useful Numbers**

Ward Security	0845 847 6180
Willow Wild Life	0795 647 2284
Fox Project	01892 731 565
RSPCA	0300 1234 999
High Elms Rangers	01689 862 815
Safer Neighbourhood Team	07920 233 856

**Websites**Friends of High Elms: [www.highelmscountrypark.btck.co.uk/](http://www.highelmscountrypark.btck.co.uk/)Friends of Jubilee Country Park: [www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk/](http://www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk/)Friends of Keston Common: [www.friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk/](http://www.friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk/)Friends Forum: [www.bromleyfriendsforum.org/](http://www.bromleyfriendsforum.org/)**Friends of Darrick & Newstead Woods Website**

The Friends of Darrick and Newstead Woods now have a Website:

[www.friendsofdarrickandnewsteadwoods.co.uk](http://www.friendsofdarrickandnewsteadwoods.co.uk)

This is quite a long address so it is recommended you put it in your favourites list.

In addition we have an email address, where you can contact members of the committee:

[fodnw@outlook.com](mailto:fodnw@outlook.com)

Membership Form

Membership of the Friends of Darrick & Newstead Woods includes the whole household. If you would like to join, please complete the slip below and send it to: Friends of Darrick & Newstead Woods, 6 Bucks Cross Cottages, Bucks Cross Road, Chelsfield Village, BR6 7RN, Kent.

There is no subscription, but donations will be most welcome. All money will be used to support the work of the Friends: sending information, publicity for Friends events, and other activities. Please make sure that all members of the family who wish to be included are listed.

Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of Darrick and Newstead Woods' and write your address on the back.

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I/We would like to join the Friends of Darrick & Newstead Woods

Names \*

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\*Under 16? Parent or Guardian's permission required..

Signed Parent or Guardian :

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Address

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Postcode..... Telephone.....

Mobile..... E-mail.....

Donation..... Date.....

Under GDPR rules you have the right to see , amend or have deleted any information that FODNW holds about you.