



Friends of Darrick and Newstead Woods



Introduction

It has been another very wet winter but warm with few frosts. The ponds are full and the dry streams are now running again.

Idverde, with the help of the FoDNW workday volunteers have built some “leaky” dams in the marsh, to help manage the water flow and retain a larger quantity of water in the area.

We have a guest article, below, about the Brown Hairstreak butterfly, and how its habitat can be preserved in nature reserves:

“This butterfly has suffered badly from flailing of hedgerows throughout the UK since it lays its eggs on 1-2 year old blackthorn growth. It has recently been found at 2 sites in LBB by a local naturalist.

This butterfly’s survival depends on the retention of some young blackthorn since the eggs are laid on underside of blackthorn twigs where new growth meets the previous year’s growth. Butterfly Conservation recommend rotational cutting back of just 1/3rd hedgerow each year. It is important that young blackthorn is checked for eggs before it is cut back.” **Judy John.**

Brown Hairstreak Butterfly by Martin Jordan who is the Butterfly & Moth expert of the Bromley Biodiversity Partnership sub-group

Adult Brown Hairstreak butterflies are on the wing from late July to the end of September. They spend most of their lives high in the tree canopy but after mating, the female can sometimes be seen laying eggs on the bark of fresh Blackthorn twigs often at a fork and where new growth has developed. These eggs hatch the following year towards the end of April and the larvae eat Blackthorn leaves until ready to pupate at the end of June. The position of these eggs makes them vulnerable to any winter pruning or hedge flailing and it is good practice to check for eggs whenever Blackthorn is to be cut back. There has been recent success in harvesting these eggs by careful cutting of twigs with eggs prior to hedge management and then the re-wiring these twigs back on the food plant after work is finished.



Adult Male



Adult Female



Female underside



Egg

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Artificial Light at Night (ALAN) by Trevor Morgan – January 2020

There is increasing concern in the scientific community about the strength of artificial light at night. Naturalists are concerned that artificial light is affecting the behaviour of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish and insects. There are two main sources of light pollution; direct artificial light and skyglow.

Darrick Wood is affected by both. Direct lighting is sourced from bright streetlights, lights from commercial properties and domestic lighting. The woods are surrounded by bright lights which also reflect from surfaces. Skyglow, is artificial light that has been scattered and reflected back to Earth from within the atmosphere. It is a growing phenomenon. Even though it is quite dim it can appear quite bright when compared to natural celestial light sources, such as stars or even moonlight. It can also alter the appearance of the sky which is located far from urban areas.

Artificial Light at Night is the bane of astronomers and even under the suburban skies of Orpington it is now only possible to see the brightest stars of the constellations. In the UK there are few locations that have truly dark skies. Most British children never see the full glory of the heavens.

ALAN can affect the behaviour of animals at night and during the day.

At night many species of insects, birds and reptiles use natural light to navigate, by using the moon and stars to find direction. Artificial light can interfere with an animal's sense of direction, leaving the bird or insect in the wrong place at the wrong time when they are migrating, or trying to find mates.

At night artificial light can also interfere with an animal's hunting and foraging techniques.

Owls rely upon their hearing rather than sight to find their prey; darkness gives them an advantage if a prey species cannot see them coming. Some animals are reluctant to come out and search for food whilst bright lights are shining and their time for foraging can be severely restricted.

Bright artificial lights at night can affect the survival prospects of a species by changing the times they are active. More than 60% of invertebrates are nocturnal so interrupting their diurnal rhythms could interfere with their ability to find food and mates and avoid predators.

It is not just nocturnal animals that are affected by the use of artificial light at night; Blackbirds have been shown to extend their foraging activity to times when they would normally be roosting, and this could reduce the prevalence of prey species

Research has been conducted into mammal behaviour when their sleep patterns are disrupted by ALAN. Some rodent species have been demonstrated to have impaired cognitive behaviour, when exposed to strong artificial light. There is also some evidence that the cognitive abilities of human beings are also impaired when they are continuously exposed to blue light before sleeping.

Human beings have already put so much pressure on animal life through climate change and air and soil pollution. Light pollution could be the final straw for many vulnerable insects that protect the fertility of the soil. And, if we are not careful it could be the final straw for us. Darrick wood could be a useful reserve to help the sustainability of our species. Perhaps, we should cherish it more and only allow natural celestial light to illuminate it at night.

Peter Woodward's Talk About Chislehurst Common

A message from Brian Street

Peter Woodward from the Trustees of Chislehurst Common will be giving a short presentation into how the common functions independently from Bromley Council and the funding they have to raise to support two full-time keepers looking after the 135 acre site.

He will also talk about the plant life and habitat found on the Common and many aspects including the history and when the Trustees were first involved.

Peter is a very interesting and engaging speaker having been chairman of the Friends Forum before Larry Herbert.

We look forward to a very good meeting.

Bird Survey for the last quarter of 2019 by Trevor Morgan - January 2020

We have been doing a weekly bird survey for over a year now and have probably recorded nearly all the species in the reserve. We have now changed the survey to a monthly schedule.

Apart from the common species of birds we have established that we have resident populations of goldcrests, nuthatches and treecreepers. These species are rather shy and may not always be apparent to a casual observer.

We also have tawny owls in the reserve and as they are mostly nocturnal, they are not visually observed very often. However, you can hear the males and females calling to one another if you venture into the woods after dark.

Black headed gulls are regular visitors to the reserve and are seen on nearly every bird survey feeding on the ground. We are also visited by common gulls but less regularly.

We have observed green finches, chaffinches and gold finches in the reserve, and these are probably resident populations. Green finches are well camouflaged, and it is difficult to pick them out in the spring and summer. We have not seen bullfinches or linnets on the surveys, but of course it does not mean that these common birds are not there. We welcome reports of their presence. The author saw a siskin for the first time since visiting the woods for about 19 years. This has not been recorded on the official records.

This winter we have not seen migrant fieldfares or redwings yet as a result of the very mild weather.

We have about forty species of birds which either reside in the reserve or visit us. It seems that the reserve is a rather healthy environment for birds, and long may this continue.

Wet and mild December by Trevor Morgan January 2020

December 2019 was the wettest and mildest that I can remember for a long time. The ponds were full and most of the streams that usually run dry were running strongly. The reserve was waterlogged and being churned up by runners, cyclists and dog walkers. I have stopped running through the muddiest areas of the reserve.

It is not possible to attribute a single extreme weather event to climate change, but it does make me ask, what are we doing to the environment? 2019 was the second warmest year on record according to NASA and the NOAA. 2016 was the warmest year on record and the last decade was the warmest on record. Modern and reliable weather record keeping began in 1880.

Who knows what the future will hold for Darrick and Newstead Woods, regarding the climate and weather? I can only hope that the reserve will be able to preserve its current diversity of flora and fauna.

Below are some pictures of our ponds:



Orpington Field Club - Autumn/Winter Talks – 2020

2020

March 14th

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.

Winter Edition 2019/2020**Future Events****Wednesday 25th March at 1930**

Friends of Darrick & Newstead Woods AGM at St Paul's Church.

Wednesday 8th July 2020 at 1930

Friends of Darrick and Newstead Woods Open meeting at the BEECHE, High Elms.

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/

Friends of Jubilee Country Park: www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk/

Friends of Keston Common: www.friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk/

Friends Forum: www.bromleyfriendsforum.org/

Friends of Darrick & Newstead Woods Website

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

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

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.

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.