



REED ALL ABOUT IT

Newsletter for Forest Volunteers

Thoughts on Woodworks! 2013

Personally, I've been thinking about Woodworks for months. In fact, every breakfast time. Why you might ask? Yoghurt pots of course!! Ever the creative one, Joan mentioned ages ago that she wanted us to save large size yoghurt pots which she planned to use for one of the kid's craft activities. Her plan was for the kids to decorate them and transform them into money boxes.

On the Tuesday before the event, things began to hot up. Marquees and swingy boats were being erected in the field and the staff were very busy too. Joan busied herself gathering all the craft items into a huge box and assembled the items for sale – bird boxes, ladybird houses, bird food, jewellery, etc. etc. When I arrived on Friday morning, the field was bustling with people, all rushing around getting things ready. We loaded up the van with all the things for the Volunteers' Tent and it was then a case of decorating the marquee, putting up flags, etc. It's amazing what a bit of bunting can do! By the end of the afternoon, things were looking good. The sales table was groaning with "stuff" and there were plenty of craft things to amuse the kids.

Saturday morning dawned bright (thank goodness!) and I reported for duty. Being assigned to the main gate, I had a bit of time to walk around the site before we opened. The diversity of stalls was amazing. I particularly liked the wooden toys and the alpacas. Sweet faces! Once "on duty", I was soon busy handing out programmes to Joe Public. There were five of us "manning" the gate, ably assisted by Nick's daughter, Megan. There was a steady stream of people throughout the morning. Nigel was kept busy too, signing up new Friends.

All too soon, it was time to hand over to the next shift and I went off to get a well earned venison burger for lunch – which was delicious. I sat in the music tent while I ate and was entertained

Landermason, a duo from the north-east. They were followed by the Half Moon Drum Circle which was very exciting. The Djembe drummers, led by Chris Puleston, were great fun to watch. I then ventured outside and had a close encounter with the Vikings. Scary! Hemlock Morris put on a good show and the ferret racing was exciting too. All in all, a good show. My nieces, Cara and Zoe, came along with their young sons. Cara's Facebook comment was: "dream catcher making, gun dog display, sword fights = one tired little boy and one tired dog. Perfect!"

Jean Sargeant

Could you talk the talk?

I've been slowly working on plans to expand our ability to give talks about the Forest to groups – WI, U3A, Rotary and so on - and would like to hear from Forest Volunteers who have experience of public speaking or who feel they might have a talent for it. Robin Morgan has already heard me talk to a couple of groups (lucky man!) and will shortly have developed a 'Forest Talk' that has official approval. I aim to run some training sessions for volunteers during the autumn as well as inviting volunteers to attend real talks.

Staff currently do a few talks each year but we've never advertised and nobody has a lot of time to spare for them. Talking to groups can be an extremely effective way to get the Forest message out to

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people – it's personal and immediate.

You'll need to be:

- A confident public speaker or have reason to suspect as much
- Willing to learn
 - to use the hardware
 - the basics of the Forest Talk
- Willing and able to attend training sessions at the Forest Centre
- Able to travel to venues in and around Bedfordshire to deliver talks, for which travel expenses will be paid

If you are interested, please contact me on 01234 762608 (Tuesdays and Wednesdays) or guy.lambourne@marstonvale.org

Guy Lambourne

Reed All About It is produced for Volunteers by Volunteers

Forest Volunteers work to further the aims of Marston Vale Trust (Registered charity No. 1069229), by freely offering their skills, time and enthusiasm
For more information contact 01234 762608 Or email volunteers@marstonvale.org

A Summer's Day in the Vale

"Is there any chance you could set up a stall at Wootton Fun Day on Saturday 6 July?" said Guy. "Only I really want to publicise the guided walk in Bedford's Green Gateway but I'm tied up elsewhere."

When Guy puts things like that it's difficult, if not impossible, to say no. Besides, we've got a new gazebo to try out. So my answer is "I'll be glad to, if I can get some help." Unfortunately, Bernard, the first one I approached, said yes, so there was no going back. He managed to rope Donna in, too, so there were no more excuses.

The forecast for 6 July was for hot and dry weather and the Met Office were spot on. The gazebo went up easily and Donna took charge of setting up our sales table so it looked a bit more professional than if I had done it! We debated whether or not to peg out the guy lines. Several minutes later we found that we had made the right decision in deploying them, as a sudden gust lifted a neighbour's tent and dropped it in a mangled heap several yards away!

The Green Gateway walk attracted quite a lot of interest and a number of people turned up on the evening walk (a description of the evening by Sue Livens appears elsewhere), so the effort was worthwhile. We are hoping to increase the number of Volunteers available for this sort of event so we can put ourselves about a bit more. Training is expected to be arranged in the autumn, in time for the following spring and summer.

Andy Brocklebank

The Forest of Marston Vale – The Background

I've done a couple of evening sessions for volunteers and staff that aimed to fill in gaps about the Forest – why we are creating it, who has and does fund it, what we are trying to achieve... These have also been chances to ask the questions that you've been thinking about since you started volunteering. I would be pleased to repeat this evening – let me or Joan know if you'd like to take part.

Guy Lambourne

WALK 4 HEALTH 10TH ANNIVERSARY

I cannot believe that 10 years have gone by since I did my first official walk at the Forest Centre. It was October 15th 2003, and we had a grand total of 5 walkers. This number continued to fluctuate from 3 to 9 bodies until our late mayor, Frank Branston, and some members of the council chamber came to the Forest Centre for an inaugurate walk on a bitterly cold spring day in 2004. A picture of the mayor, complete with his chain of office, and staff striding out along the forest paths appeared in the local papers. The publicity helped and our numbers gradually grew to our current average of 30 people.

A few years ago it became apparent that many of our members were seeking to look further afield for walking experiences and, by now, I had 3 walk leaders so between us we tested other walks nearby and noted their suitability for our members.

Numbers were still growing, so more walk leaders were recruited. By now we had 7, and this has meant that we can have 2 walks on Wednesdays. One starts at the Forest Centre and the others start from suitable car parks near the walks. Some people prefer the forest paths and some want more of a challenge. Forest Centre walks start at 10.30am every Wednesday and the other walks start at 10.15 pm which allows time for travel so we can all meet at the Lakeside café for refreshments at approximately 11.30 am. A walk programme is available at reception or on line at mw4h.tk. Please note that as the winter approaches many of the alternative walks become unsuitable and hazardous but the walks in the Forest Centre continue throughout the year. Hope to see you soon.

Maggie Milne, Walk Leader.



Wootton Guided Walk

Well, this was only my third foray into Wootton in 44 years but I managed to find Guy and Diane at the junction point in Wootton and suddenly folk just kept turning up from all directions! Some knew each other, some were other volunteers, but mostly they were Wootton residents who'd seen the notices and it was so good to know they were interested in this walk. It was great to find that Bob and Celia Wallace were also joining us, Bob being a Trustee and quite knowledgeable about so much of the FOMV.

There was a little wait whilst two couples were due to join in as they had a different joining point - derr? Who told 'em the pub???

There was a beautiful young Labradoodle (about 7 months old) who wanted so much to play with our Jill's guide dog Fran - but Jill was wise enough in guide doggy-off-the-lead techniques to keep our adorable Fran in close check! A wise lady is our Jill as a gorgeous slobbery bull dog also joined and he was raring for a bit of fun! You can probably tell, I love dogs!!

So, as Guy led us off on a truly wonderfully beautiful summer evening, I was full of anticipation to see a part of the Forest that - for various reasons - I'd never been to before.

There were about 25 of us (per Bob's count) and groups were quickly formed, and slower walkers were happily accommodated. Guy is such a careful leader that we were all informed of the names of old fields and Bob had his input too! Mostly the path was good but some parts were really hard underfoot, so hopefully funds will come to make it more comfortable to silly twits like me who had soft soled trainers! Mea culpa!! innit?

There were some beautiful views as we stopped for Guy's talks, and even tho' the road noise often intervened, I'm sure that in the next 15-20 years, the new growth will deaden that awful road noise.

Whoops!! On the return walk the following happened! Suddenly we were due to walk across a field which was now full of cows 'n calves! Jill found this so very difficult as Fran was not actually 'working' so she could have been worried by the frisky young beef cakes!! So Andy stood guard as the youngsters and I tried to walk between her, Fran and the herd mothers, and we finally got to the road way. PHEW! I really love cows 'n calves and had a learning curve from Jill re dogs 'n cows!!

We had a delightful young gent with us called Lucas who had eyes set for all sorts of moths and other interesting wildlife - Guy was so

pleased to enjoy his interest. I do so hope that Lucas will keep up his questions and love of wildlife and join us at the Forest centre as a keen and enthusiastic member, as he is just the kind of younger person that the Forest Centre was set up for!!

It is truly for Lucas and his contemporaries that we have worked for the last 12+ years and we would so love to hand over to such a delightful young man when the time is right for him.

Despite having a very sore back by the end of the walk, it had been a beautiful evening with a huge variety of people and I really do believe everyone really enjoyed this walk .

MORE PLEASE GUY!!

Sue Livens



Diary Dates

For more information call:

Stephen 07745 786307, Joan 01234 360178, Anna Charles 01234 762614,

Darren Woodward 01234 762603, Andy Lingard 01234 762617

Sun. 6 th Oct.	Sunday Stroll in Millennium Country Park	Meet in Reception at 10.15 for 10.30 start. 1½-2 hours. £1.00 per person payable on the day.
Sun. 27 th Oct.	Guided Walks at the Grange	11am and 2 pm Meet at the Stables, Church End, Willington, MK44 3PX. Part of the National Trust walking festival
Sun. 27 th Oct.	Conservation Task — Island Clearance	10am-4pm. Book a place on 01234 762614. Meet outside the garage at the Forest Centre
Mon. 28 th Oct.	Kids Event – Apple Day	Need to book on 01234 767037
Fri. 1 st Nov.	Kids Event – Snakes & Adders	Need to book on 01234 767037
Sun. 3 rd Nov.	Sunday Stroll in Millennium Country Park	Meet in Reception at 10.15 for 10.30 start. 1½-2 hours. £1.00 per person payable on the day.
Mon. 4 th Nov.	Learning Lunchtime	11am to midday - Derek Hardy from Shelterbox Disaster Relief - how their boxes help 50,000 families a year, across the world, when disaster strikes. Free – no need to book.
Fri. 8 th Nov.	Learning Lunchtime	11am to midday - Martin Deacon from Bedfordshire Archives talks about a local WW1 battalion. Free – no need to book.
Sat. 9 th Nov.	Bird Walk	8am to 11am - Led by knowledgeable Volunteers. Wear warm, waterproof clothes and shoes. Some unmade paths and slopes. £3 per person. £1 reduction for concessions, Volunteers and Friends. Book in advance but pay the leader, call 01234 767037.
Mon. 11 th Nov.	Learning Lunchtime	11am to midday - Dawn Black from the Happy Brewer Learn about doing your own home brewing, with demonstrations and a chance to ask the experts. Free – no need to book.
Sat. 16 th Nov.	Conservation Task—Hedge Laying	10am-4pm. Book a place on 01234 762614. Meet outside the garage at the Forest Centre
Mon. 18 th Nov.	Learning Lunchtime	11am to midday - Moira Townsend - Dispelling the Myths of Cruising. Ever longed to travel the world? Learn why cruising might be the way for you, with tips from an expert travel agent. Free – no need to book.
Mon. 25 th Nov.	Learning Lunchtime	11am to midday - Stephen Sleight (Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership Officer) on the Enigma Line. A fascinating insight into the Bedford to Bletchley railway line and its history. Free – no need to book.
Wed. 27 th Nov.	Pink Ladies Night	7pm - 11pm A charity night out for the ladies. Licensed bar. Proceeds to Cancer Research UK and the Sue Ryder Home, Moggerhanger. Entry £2.
Fri. 29 th Nov.	Learning Lunchtime	11am to midday - Sarah Jane Phillips - The author of Worms on Parachutes talks about her incredible survival story and her work for Breast Cancer Care. Free – no need to book.
Sun. 1 st Dec.	Sunday Stroll in Millennium Country Park	Meet in Reception at 10.15 for 10.30 start. 1½-2 hours. £1.00 per person payable on the day.

RAAI Copy Deadline

Please note that the copy deadline for the next issue of Reed All About It is Monday 3rd December 2013.

Any notes, thoughts, articles, pictures welcome—to Joan Ferguson at the Forest Centre.