

ENVIRONMENT

Friends of Hollybank Woods organise two popular walks in the woods

John Bond and Andrew Brook

Tree Walk

On Sunday 16th July, 25 people, including a good number of children, attended a Tree Walk in Hollybank Woods. Jonathon Huet, the founder of 'Walk with Trees' led the walk. Jonathon's extensive knowledge of the fascinating history of our beautiful



Jonathon Huet: Folklore in the woods

wild woods and the folklore surrounding these wild places was amply demonstrated as he not only identified a wide variety of trees but also explained their medicinal uses and practical application of the varied natural resources trees supply. A glorious journey through Hollybank Woods celebrating ancient mythology, storytelling, traditions, tree lore and the symbolic nature of trees.

Bat Walk

In excess of 50 people, many of whom were children, turned out at 9pm on 21st July for the annual Hollybank Woods Bat Walk, famed for its good turn out ... and ... no bats! This year, we hatched a cunning plan to bring Hollybank's bat population out for all to see. In the former Hollybank Lodge house clearing, two moth traps were set up. Not only did this give the opportunity to see some of the varied and exotic moths which inhabit the woodland, but also to draw in insects for the bats to feed on. As usual, however, we had two fleeting glimpses of Pipistrelle bats only! Despite only picking up a couple of Pipistrelle with the aid of a bat detector box on the far edge of the clearing, one of the most interesting sounds came from a Cricket with an amazing high frequency rubbing of the back legs!

The moth traps, however, provided an endless stream of moths for identification, and everyone threw themselves into the task of collecting, identification and observation. Many thanks to Mike Perry and his team from Chichester Natural History Society for their expert identification. One of the most magnificent catches was that of a Privet Hawk-moth, Britain's largest. With so many children present it was great to see the enthusiasm they added to the evening event.

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Damage to Emsworth's nature conservation areas
Frances Jannaway

Over the summer, a series of incidents occurred in all three nature conservation areas in Emsworth causing damage to both trees and wildlife. In Nore Barn Woods, the fires and vandalism came to a head on 20 July when a dozen trees were sawn down, and a den and a fire built. The photo shows the damaged trees.



Vandalised trees in Nore Barn Woods

In Hollybank Woods, the fire brigade has been called out throughout the year, including in late August to put out a large fire in the meadow area on the western side of the woods. Problems with litter, especially cans and bottles, were worse over the Food Festival weekend in September when several trees were also hacked down and a large fire lit.

Brook Meadow also came under attack when many of the lower branches of our famous Wishing Tree were hacked off on 18 August. In addition, the fence at the Seagull Lane entrance was vandalised over the Food Festival weekend.

All these incidents have been reported to the Police and our beat officer PC Lisa Jones has been active in following up the situation.

Please help the volunteers who look after these special wildlife areas in Emsworth by reporting any inappropriate activities you see happening to the Police on 0845 0454545, or by contacting a committee member of the appropriate group (see page 6 Groups and Societies under Nature Conservation).

Rebuilding the A27 junction at Harts Farm Way
Richard Jannaway

The explanation on the HBC website for the road building work on the A27 junction at Broadmarsh is that it is being provided by the Highways Agency and SEEDA to further develop the exceptionally successful Broadmarsh business area.

Is the current business park the only reason for improving the junction? For years there has been a plan to turn the land to the west of the industrial area into a huge multi-million-pound marina with luxury apartments, flats, shops and leisure facilities. In 2004, the Planning Inspector threw out these plans and the site was subsequently designated in the Local Plan for nature conservation.

Earlier this year, agreement was reached between two Havant Borough Council boards and Hampshire Wildlife Trust on a plan to manage the site until 2010.

However, more than six months later, HBC's Executive had still not given its final approval to the management plan. Why not?

It would seem from the Core Strategy Consultation Paper (the first stage of the new Local Development Framework which will replace the Local Plan in 2010) that the protagonists for a marina development have not gone away and the ideas for a marina, housing and hotels have re-emerged. Both the tourist development and the housing appear in different places in this consultation document. They are proposed as clear options in the questionnaire sent out to consultees. There are no alternative options on offer, such as continuing the nature conservation status and developing this for low impact tourism.

The Executive seems to be trying to wear down the opposition by repeating the proposals until they give up. The sheer scale of the rebuilt A27 junction can be seen as evidence for this.

Borough is a Blooming Success
Silver award for Havant
in 'Borough in Bloom 2006'

Adapted from HBC press release

The aim of the 'Borough in Bloom' competition is for communities to make lasting improvements to their neighbourhood. The competition focuses on both horticultural enthusiasm and community involvement, with special interest being paid to seasonal planting, conservation, recycling, and initiatives to reduce litter, graffiti and vandalism. Judging took place in July with an award ceremony at the Civic Offices on 19th September.

"As a first time entrant, Havant pulled out all the stops and were an enthusiastic team, interested in promoting their patch", said the judges of Britain in Bloom. They gave Havant praise for the maintenance of all bedding displays, individual garden displays, cleanliness of the town centres and other areas, the approach to sponsorship of roundabouts and their sustainable displays and a good relationship with the media in promoting the event.

After winning the Silver Award in the Large Town/Small City Category South and South East in Bloom, Freda Devonshire, the Borough Council's Open Spaces Development Manager said: "We would like to thank the public, voluntary groups and our partners for participating in Borough in Bloom because without their support we would never have been able to achieve this standard in our first year".

Five special awards were also achieved across the Borough. One of these was a 'Certificate of Excellence' awarded to the Brook Meadow Conservation Group in Emsworth for their work in involving the community to preserve and develop Brook Meadow as a local nature reserve.

Overall the judges cited the borough as a good example of work in progress and felt there was great potential to progress to Silver Gilt award and beyond. The Borough Council will certainly be entering again and hopes that even more people will want to take part next year.

Where have all the trees gone?

Richard Jannaway

The tree cover behind the eastbound platform of Emsworth station was totally decimated by contractors in August. Passengers waiting for the train used to be able to look down into a green oasis full of bird life. Now the view is more like a battlefield and there is no protection whatever from the north wind.

No doubt Network Rail will blame 'leaves on the line' and in some places reasonable clearance is undoubtedly necessary but surely such drastic action is totally over the top.

One benefit, for those who like such things, will be the uninterrupted view of the construction site when the new road to the A27 development is being built! Is there a case for passengers to demand ear-muffs from Network Rail in compensation?

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