



Friends of the Hurtwood

Administrators to the public rights of access to some 3000 acres of land in the parishes of Albury, Cranleigh, Ewhurst and Shere.

Registered Charity 200053

Autumn
2012
No. 37

Friends Newsletter



Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Autumn issue of the Friends of the Hurtwood Newsletter.

As you are no doubt aware, the persistent rain through the summer caused considerable disruption to the regular maintenance work that our Ranger, Mark, undertakes. In addition, the forestry work on Pitch Hill carried out by our main landowners, Shere Manor Estate, has also taken somewhat longer than expected. With the arrival of more clement weather, Mark is catching up and hopefully all the regular grass cutting and path clearance will be completed.

Pitch Hill car park was closed for somewhat longer than originally anticipated but it is now open, and I would like to reassure everyone that restorative work on the bridleway up from Walking Bottom car park will be undertaken as soon as the forestry work is completed and ground conditions permit.

In this newsletter you will find Mark's usual report on his activities and an article on his new initiative – Forest Schools – which we launched during the school holidays for 5 to 11 year olds. The start up funding for this was provided partly from our own funds and partly from Surrey County Council's Community Budget, held by Keith Taylor, member for Tillingbourne and one of our trustees. Our future aim is to run Forest Schools each year during the summer holidays and possibly at Easter, funds permitting.

During the summer months we continued our planning activities for next year's major fund raiser – the Duathlon. We have secured agreement from Shere Parish Council (who own the ground) and Holmbury Football Committee to use the football pitch for the event HQ. The event will take place on 13th April 2013 entirely within the confines of Holmbury Hill. We have contracted a local company – All About Triathlons (AAT) – to organise the event on our behalf and if a success, the event will become a regular event in our diary. More about this later in the Newsletter.

Our drive to increase membership of the Friends continues to produce results. At the end of August our membership reached 650, up by over 200 two years ago. Of course the financial year for our charity doesn't end until 31st October, but I am hopeful that for the second year running we will not need to draw from our reserves to break even.

And lastly, we have scheduled the **Annual Meeting** at Duke of Kent School, 7 for 7:30PM on **Thursday 11 April 2013**. The guest speaker will be from the charity 'Pond Conservation' www.pondconservation.org.uk. We hope to see you there!

Peter Copping chairman@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Hurtwood Trails Group now has 180 signed up supporters with around a dozen people coming forward to help on each trail building volunteer day.

Experienced trail curators Mark Hammond and David Lees recently organised a working party to tidy up parts of the Yoghurt Pots trail at Holmbury Hill, helped enormously by the presence of volunteer Jonathan Greenwood and his digger.

"We have come to realise that trying to do things by hand takes too much time when we just meet up once a month," said Mark. "Having a digger on site and someone who can use it properly is brilliant. It can clear stuff in minutes that would take us ages by hand. We can improve drainage and maintain the trails."

Thank you, Jonathan!



Working on Yoghurt Pots
Holmbury Hill

FORESTRY UPDATE AND WELCOME BACK TO THE QUARRY CAR PARK AT PITCH HILL

Yes – the Quarry Car Park at Pitch Hill is open to all vehicles, not just brave 4x4s! Ben Nicholson brought his excavator in towards the end of September and scraped off the loose mud and re-sculpted the car park with a boundary of earth banks and tree trunks. The new wide bridge over the drainage ditch, built to take the enormous timber lorries and machinery involved in the forestry operation, has been left in place and the track down Walking Bottom is now passable. For months it has been looking like the Somme but the bridleway is now walkable, though still not a pretty sight.

Alex Wilks, the Woodlands Manager for Shere Manor Estate, said they had used the Quarry Car Park to avoid having forestry lorries going through Peaslake. "The bridle path looked hideous but it was largely a casualty of the wet weather," he said. "Most of the tracks recover very well. We have deliberately only reinstated the official rights of way and left illegal paths impassable."

"Timber extraction has not yet finished on Pitch Hill, as there is still a parcel of hardwood to fell. This is the one part of the estate where we can grow some quite good hard wood trees – beech, oak and ash. There are some really fine specimens and some weedy ones that are competing with them and need to be taken out. They will be taken out by chainsaw rather than by machine in the autumn, and it shouldn't make any mess at all."

"We are also looking at doing some work at the top of Pitch Hill where some pine trees are getting a bit old and then we will move back over to Holmbury Hill. The trees were all planted at the same time and we are trying to create a forest with a varied range of age of trees which will be more sustainable for the estate's income and will also create a sustainable landscape with better habitat and healthier forestry. We will coppice down some scrubby hardwood north of the Pinetum and do some clear felling south of the reservoir."



Top section of Walking Bottom bridleway



Pitch Hill Car Park

Friends of the Hurtwood
Fund Raiser 2013



hurtleberry

NEW
for 2013

- > 10k trail run
- > Sprint off-road duathlon
- > Full off-road duathlon

Date: 13 April 2013

Venue: The Hurtwood, Surrey Hills

Entry: www.thehurtleberry.co.uk



runnersneed
the running specialists

CycleSurgery

PowerBar

THE HURTLEBERRY DUALATHLON

The Hurtleberry will be an important Fund Raising Event for the **Friends of the Hurtwood** in 2013; and if successful, for years to come. We have partnered with **All About Triathlons** to actually run the Event with Sponsorship from Runnersneed & CycleSurgery, headquartered in Guildford, along with PowerBar to provide the prizes and nourishment for the participants. The Event will be run in its entirety on Holmbury Hill and consists of 2 off-road runs; 10K and 5K with a 10K mountain bike segment in the middle!! Obviously for the seriously fit!! There will also be a separate 10K run for those who only wish to run. The Start /Finish area will be on the Holmbury Football pitch and have the feel of a Summer Fair with local trade stands, a coffee cart, plant and cake sales and of course... cheese straws from the Peaslake Shop! The Holmbury Village Hall will also be involved with activities for the entire family to enjoy. Both the Royal Oak and Kings Head will be open for BBQ and lunch with special deals for all entrants. We hope it will be a successful and enjoyable day for everyone! To register or get more information www.thehurtleberry.co.uk

If you would like to have a trade stand, volunteer as a marshal or get involved in the **Hurtleberry** in anyway, please contact Sheri at communications@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk

AUTUMN EVENT

SUSTAINABLE WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

By **Richard Edwards of LC Energy Limited**

Friday 2nd November 7:30 for 8:00pm PEASLAKE MEMORIAL HALL

Light refreshments included in the ticket price

Tickets: Gold & Silver Friends Free, Bronze Friends £5.00, Non-Friends £7.00

Available from Trasn Palmer—22 The Glebe, Ewhurst, GU6 7PZ

01483 277589 or email: friendsevents@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk

Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of the Hurtwood' and enclose a SAE

AUTUMN EVENT

BLOSSOMING IN THE WOODS

A group of lucky children aged 4-11 had a fantastic encounter with nature in the Hurtwood in August.

The event was such a success that more Woodland Experiences are already in the pipeline. Keep checking the Friends of the Hurtwood website for the next events later this autumn and in spring 2013.

Cat Beaumont piloted five Woodland Days in a magical tract of forest near the Holmbury Youth Hostel. The children can be seen blossoming in the freedom of their outdoor playground in the super picture gallery in the ranger's blog that is well worth a look. A few of his pictures are reproduced here.

They show just what Forest School – the movement behind the Woodland Days - is all about: safety awareness and personal risk assessment, acquisition of basic skills, free rein for creativity and confidence building and connection with the natural world.

These were the first Woodland Days that Cat, wife of ranger Mark Beaumont, has held in the Hurtwood, but she already has experience of running Forest School activities at Winkworth Arboretum earlier in the year and the August days at the Hurtwood went brilliantly. She had expert support from four helpers - three Forest School trained, and one Early Years trained, to look after the 16 children and they are all keen to help with the next programme.

The children could print pictures on calico using leaves and berries, make nettle string, cook bread on a spit, make dream catchers, whittle sticks with potato peelers and learn to make fire safely. One of the most popular activities was building dens.

So check the website for the next sessions.



Children enjoying Woodland Days!



Ranger's News

This year the weather, though a little odd, has only delayed but not really played too much of a part in how things have been going on in the Hurtwood. Some of the rides had to be cut twice due to a sudden spurt of young vegetation growth when the rain arrived after a dry start. For those of you that visit Pitch Hill, you'll no doubt be aware of the forestry work and the damage to the main ride caused by the machinery and the rather unfortunate timing of the wettest summer for many years! However, the main ride from Pitch Hill car park to Walking Bottom has had some remedial work done, which certainly improved the situation considerably. As there is more timber to be extracted, the car park will not be properly repaired until all operations in that area have finished. The forestry contractors will be returning soon, but will be starting back on Holmbury Hill. Please keep an eye out for further information on the Ranger's Blog on our website.



Cutting back Rides on Farley Heath

Elsewhere in the newsletter you'll read about the children's Woodland Activity Days we held in August. Though a steep learning curve, we'll definitely be returning with some Woodland Days next year, and judging by reactions so far, possibly for adults too! It's been one of my long term plans to offer more educational facilities for children in the Hurtwood. Hopefully, this is just the start!

As well as the usual cutting back of rides, you may have noticed I've also had to spend a bit of extra time cutting back low hanging, heavily laden tree branches that otherwise would prevent the tractor passing through, possibly more this year due to the abundance of extra leaf growth. I continue to repair and replace old and vandalised signs in our car parks. The most amazing was someone took the sign posts but left the sign!! Only on the Hurtwood!!

Later this year I'll be doing more work on some of the viewpoints, particularly on Holmbury Hill around the summit and on the Greensand Way path. The Birch re-growth has been considerable and is starting to obscure the view. I will also be doing clearance work on Winterfold, particularly around the Justice James Seat. I'm aware of the erosion there being caused by the mountain bikers riding off the edge of the viewpoint. We're currently waiting on funding that'll hopefully allow us to repair this damage, and prevent it from happening in future.

Some of the Larches in the Pinetum appear to be suffering from disease and these will have to be removed to prevent it spreading further. We'll also be finishing the thinning in the Pinetum to try and create clear pathways to allow everybody to wander through the trees and appreciate them a little more.

Fly tip continues, though on a smaller and more persistent level. This week, over on Farley Heath, we had our first burnt out car for some time. I'm only hoping this isn't the start of a spate.

As always please keep an eye out for anything untoward, and do call me even if you think it may have been reported already. With such a large area to cover and so many paths it's very helpful to have other eyes and ears about the place.

See you on the Hurtwood,

Mark

HURTWOOD GREEN & CLEAN DAY

Plus a Children's Art Exhibition

SUNDAY 14th October 2:00 pm

Enjoy a walk in the woods

and a **Nature Hunt** for the Children

Prizes for the Nature Hunt

and refreshments for all

For a starting point and treasure map contact

Sally Godfrey on 01483 203452 or
events@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk

Friends of the Hurtwood

Contact details:

Friends of the Hurtwood
St Mark's Church Yard
Peaslake GU5 9RR

Office: 01306 730100 (Answer phone)
Ranger Mobile: 07920 705070