

Friends of Towerhouse Wood and of Moorend Spout

Newsletter for Autumn 2012

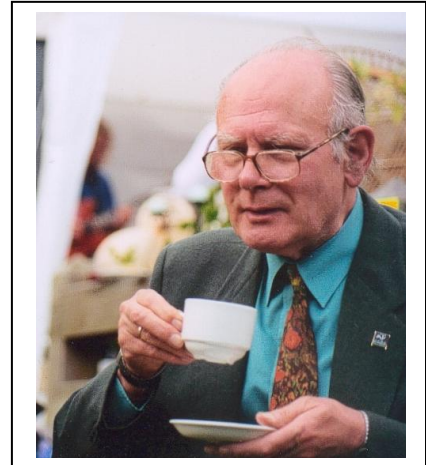
Jeffery Boswall -

[naturalist](#) and [broadcaster](#), died on 15 August 2012, aged 81. Jeffery's main interest was in birds, and he became an authority on bird calls. For many years he was a BBC producer working on programmes like Wildlife Safari, Natural World and the Private Lives, notably 'The Private Life of the Kingfisher'. He was also responsible for many other natural history documentaries, and he was head of the Film and Video Unit for the RSPB, travelling widely in the course of his work.

From 2004 he gave regular dawn chorus walks in Towerhouse Wood, joined by up to 20 bird watchers. He insisted on starting at 4 am before many birds (and many of us!) were properly awake, but enabling us to see the bats and to hear the owls. Jeffery was very supportive of our work in Towerhouse Wood, raising money for us by the small charge he made to those attending.

The world has been diminished by the loss of his eccentricities, wit and charisma, and for the encouragement which he gave for all aspiring naturalists.

Jeffery's biography appeared in the Times newspaper on 25th August and is on Wikipedia.



Water Voles

Gill Brown has evidence for Water Voles in the stretch of the Land Yeo between the Trout Farm and to the south of Towerhouse Wood. The wet year has probably been beneficial to these voles and we hope that soon we will find evidence of them at Moorend Spout.

Hazards

While inspecting the path alone to the south of the carr, Terry slipped and fell into the rhyne. Fortunately the water was relatively shallow, and he was able to drag himself out to catch the bus to go home. The worst casualty was his mobile phone, which died. However, Helen has kindly given him another phone (better than the one he lost!) so he can afford to be philosophical about the incident. Even so, the lesson is that such visits should not be undertaken alone.

Board Walk

Work at Moorend Spout has been limited this year by the incessant rain, which has prevented us taking a hay cut. Working parties have been cutting back the vegetation from the board walk, and sweeping the mud from the surface. Even so there has been an accident in which a walker slipped on the boards, and we have therefore placed notices on the path warning people about the hazards of slipping in wet weather.

The areas to the north and south of the board walk are very muddy and need a firmer base. We have continued to open up the small stream arising from the carr and which is flowing under the board walk. The vegetation here grows very quickly and requires attention at each work day to keep this waterway open.

Tree planting at Moorend Spout

To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen we planted a Black Poplar (*Populus nigra* var *betulifolia*) on 4th February (below left, with some of our volunteers)

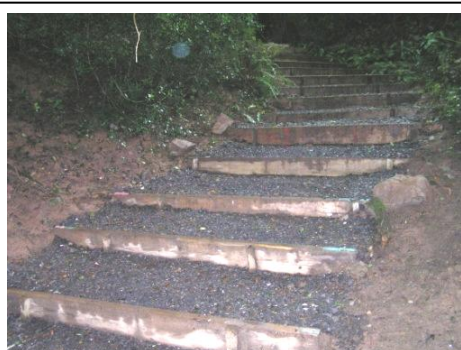
We were very grateful to the late Phyllis Stacey for a bequest of £2000, and it was thought appropriate to install a tree on site in her memory. An Aspen tree (*Populus tremula*) was planted by her nephew, Richard Stacey with his daughter, on 17th March (below right). Both of these trees are native in England.



New facilities at Towerhouse Wood

The Forestry Commission has part funded the installation of a five-barred gate at the entrance from Towerhouse Lane, close to the intersection of footpaths W2 and W9 . This will help to prevent access by motor bikes and horses into the woodland. This grant has also provided kissing gates at the same entrance, and also at Freda Henry's stile at the south end of W2. These will allow easier access to the Wood for walkers. The path W2 is quite steep and in wet weather it was quite hazardous. I have slipped there many times. A group of corporate volunteers from Friends Life have now installed a series of steps, making this a much safer route. Friends Life is a life assurance company formed in 2011, comprising the merged UK operations of Friends Provident and the life assurance businesses acquired from Bupa and AXA UK. It is planned to add steps to other steep pathways in the Wood.

A new interpretation board also has been made and awaits installation, and it is hoped that way markers will be placed at the intersections of footpaths.



New steps on the public footpath



New gates at the entry to the Wood

Himalayan Balsam

With help from David Clay and members of the Southfield Church in Nailsea, we have had two Balsam pulling sessions this year, continuing from the previous four years in which we had several sessions each year. The outbreak is now mainly confined to two gardens to the west of Towerhouse Wood. With the agreement of the owners we have almost completely removed this aggressive alien, although undoubtedly we will need to be vigilant in the future, and it may be several years before it can be said to have been totally eliminated.

Ty's woodland trail

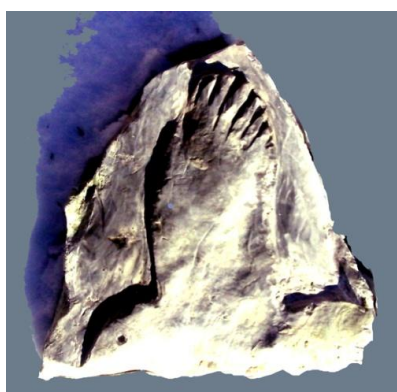
Ty loved these woods. His bedroom was practically in the woods, and all through his early years he explored the paths, climbed the trees and made dens. In his teens, following in the footsteps of generations of local lads, he would sometimes camp out over night armed with marshmallows, crisps and cans of beer. He and his friends would learn what is what like to sleep out under the stars, hear mysterious rustlings and crunching, and wake to the sounds of birds. As a result he was never afraid of the dark, and the woodland paths knew the sound of his footfall as he made his way home after a night out in Nailsea or Bristol, lighting his way with the screen of his mobile phone. Being brought up next to Towerhouse Woods shaped his identity quite significantly.

The Ty Woodland Trail will be a series of carvings of animals which are found in the wood, cut from the local limestone. The idea is to invite children (and grownups) to discover the wide diversity of species found here, but in a way that is both subtle and exciting. Unlike the glossy programmes on TV, wildlife can only be discovered if you are sensitive and patient with your environment, so some of the carvings will not be immediately obvious, and it is hoped that discovering them will be an engaging process.

At this stage ideas are still being formed, but we're thinking that there may be maps available at the entrance of the wood which will show which carvings have been completed and a rough guide to where they are. If a party of Cubs, Guides or school children comes into the wood, it will provide a creative way of learning about the Towerhouse habitat. We will add to the carvings as time, energy and funds allow. Ideas so far include a Raven, Dormouse, Fox, Badger, Deer, Squirrel, Domestic Dog, Hedgehog, Rabbit, Wood Mouse, Vole, Rook, Woodpigeon, Heron, Buzzard, Pheasant, Woodpecker (Green and Spotted), Mole, Blackbird, Thrush, Robin, Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Owl, various footprints, Bat, even a Welly perhaps !



Deer Print



Raven

Donations can be made directly to Ty's Parents (Piers and Fi 01275 858871 or email us at piers@pindropmusic.co.uk). All funds will be paid directly to a bank account in the name of 'Ty's Trail'. Accounts will be published on a 12 monthly basis. Please make cheques payable to 'Ty's Trail'.