

Parkwood Springs

into Action

our country park in the city

Newsletter of the
Friends of Parkwood Springs
No. 3 Spring 2010

Parkwood Springs has many friends

More than 40 people registered as friends of Parkwood Springs at a meeting to found the group on 25 March 2010

The Friends, all local residents and people interested in Parkwood Springs, have three aims:

- (1) to protect and conserve wildlife and the natural environment,
- (2) to improve the green space as a resource for local residents and the City, and
- (3) to encourage responsible use of the natural environment that Parkwood Springs offers.

The Friends plan to raise money to fund better facilities and practical conservation work, and to raise the profile of Parkwood Springs.

Involving more local people in improving the area is a major objective. This means **you** and your friends and families: please join the Friends group –

- * membership is completely free
- * you can do as much or as little as you like to help
- * the Friends will keep you informed of everything that's happening.

And above all, please explore and enjoy Parkwood Springs. The Friends are encouraging organisations to stage events – see the list on the back page, and go to as many as you can.

The Friends will hold at least two public meetings each year. These will provide good opportunities to find out all about Parkwood Springs and for people to see if they would like to join the group. Meetings will be publicised with notices and leaflets, so please look out for these.

Contact details are at the end of the back page.

I can see for miles and miles and miles... by Ziggy Senkans

High above the meandering river Don sits a real enigma of a place. In late summer from certain parts of the city, if you look towards the scars that are the slopes of the 'ski village', you may notice a mosaic of purple, green and ochre. This ridge, topped by a mast, is Parkwood Springs, an important part of Sheffield's natural heritage.

Beyond the pool table green flatness of the sports fields, lies an enticing band of woodland. This is not the Park Wood that gave the site its name. No, that disappeared long ago (though there are tiny scraps of it hidden away in hard to get to corners). Most of the woodland surrounding the sports pitches is the result of various planting schemes over the last decades, hence the mixture of exotic and native species.

Beyond the trees Parkwood Springs comes in to its own. Once in the open you notice that the dominant ground cover is a mosaic of grasses or heather. Scattered amongst it are areas of broom and gorse which give Parkwood its heathland character. Other important components of the heath are areas dominated by blankets of lichen and moss (during dry periods the ground actually 'crunches' below your feet, these are the Cladonia lichens which can be used to measure air quality).

Insects

Open and bare ground provides a valuable habitat for insects such as grasshoppers. Lift up any piece of discarded debris and chances are you disturb an ant colony (Wardsend Cemetery contains areas littered with old but thriving ant-hills, species associated with old grassland).

During summer look at the stems of the grasses and you may notice yellow papery cocoons attached. These are pupating burnet moths and in some years they appear to be on every grass stem.

The grand view

When you've stopped looking at the abundance of biodiversity on the ground, you might actually notice the view over the city! And what a stunning vista it is! Taking in the city west of the Don, the far distance is rimmed by heather clad moorland as you move your eyes closer to the city centre, areas of woodland and green patchwork fields become interspersed with housing.

Around the banks of the Don the buildings may be bigger but when your eyes finally rest on the city centre, green fingers find their way in. Then there are the distant parks and open spaces, Sky Edge (cloaked in golden coconut scented gorse and broom), Norfolk Park, Black Bank Open Space and Meersbrook Park...

Ziggy leads a walk on 22 July – for this and many other events, see back page listings



Burnet moths



The River Don washes the base of Parkwood Springs before it flows through Sheffield and beyond, past Meadowhall. It could be one of the greatest amenities of Parkwood. Now that there's less heavy industry near its banks, and pollution of rivers is more strictly controlled, the Don is becoming cleaner and a home to wildlife. **SPRITE** is an organization making a major contribution to cleaning up the river and making its banks accessible to responsible users.

Clean Flows the Don

The city of Sheffield wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the river Don. It's an integral part of our community. A group of people, some from Hillsborough and others from as far away as Derby and Lincolnshire, have set up a not-for-profit voluntary group called **SPRITE** (Sheffield Partnership: Rivers In the Town Environment) to look after the Don between Beeley Wood and Hillfoot bridge (where Neepsend Lane joins Penistone Road). They want to encourage people to see the river as a recreational asset and to educate younger people to become custodians of the river and everything that lives in it (for full aims and objectives see website, below).

How will **SPRITE** achieve this and who will benefit from it?

- We have regular working parties on the river where



A clean-up working party

everyone is welcome. Just bring a pair of wellies or waders as the other cleaning equipment is supplied to us free of charge by Streetforce, Corus and Veolia.

- We are holding regular meetings with Councillors and MPs to eradicate the fly tipping scourge. We are making headway – it may not look like it, but things are starting to change.
- We are planning talks to residents of Hillsborough on how they can help to control alien plant species like Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam that are prevalent on the river.
- Junior fishing groups are being organised to capture the next generation of river custodians. Last year we took groups of children to fish at local fly fishing locations, and we hope to extend this to coarse venues this year.
- During the winter evenings, events will be held for fly tying, the building and maintaining of fishing equipment and the theory of river maintenance. Fishing is a wonderful way of relaxing and can be used in school curriculum based projects.
- We are working with Sheffield Council and the Environment Agency to have a fish pass and fishing platforms installed on the river.
- A teaching programme has been devised called Mayfly in the Classroom. Teacher's notes and delivery notes are on the website.

The group is committed to getting as many people involved in the river corridor as possible, so if you are a bird watcher, walker, canoeist or if you would just like to help or to find out more, please use our website at <http://www.spanglefish.com/sprite-southyorks/>

The group meets once a month at the Hillsborough Hotel but over the summer months we will be meeting at a location on the river. Location and events for June are available on the website.

HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON

Spring flowers at Parkwood Springs



Solomon's seal



apple blossom



garlic mustard



bluebell with harmless bug

The Woods and Flowers of Parkwood Springs

The landscape of Parkwood Springs has been formed by the activity of people, from prehistoric times to the present. Currently the heart of it is being reformed as the landfill site is filled to a level higher than the original hill slope.



A small part of it has remained virtually unchanged for more than four centuries: the ancient woodlands of Rawson Spring and Scaith Wood at the north end, near Herries Road. The name Scaith is an Old Norse word, meaning a boulder-strewn slope, so this place could have been named a thousand years ago.

It's the plant life of these areas that tells us how old the



Bluebells in Scaith Wood

woods are. These 'biological indicators' include the type of oak tree found in them – the sessile oak – and smaller plants like wood anemone, wood sorrel, and yellow archangel.

If you find any of these plants anywhere on Parkwood Springs, we'd love to know about it. If you let us know what plants you have found and exactly where you found them, you can help build our knowledge of the history of Parkwood Springs. You can find a list of biological indicators in *Sheffield's Ancient Woodlands* by Mel Jones*. The smaller indicator plants are those which only become

well established in woodland after many years. They include the bluebell – now spreading well through parts of Wardsend Cemetery.

Parkwood remained mostly wooded until the early twentieth century, when the then owner, the Duke of Norfolk, permitted the tipping of ash from Neepsend power station in the central area, known as Old Park Wood. Quarries there were filled with landfill, leading to the present use. Local residents can still remember when the site was permanently on fire from the hot ash dumped on it.

Now the whole of Parkwood Springs is steadily becoming once more woodland and wild open space, and we have the chance to record how wildlife recolonises a landscape which had been transformed by people.

If you want to know more about Parkwood Springs' history, please contact the Friends of Parkwood Springs, who can send you, free of charge, a leaflet by Professor Mel Jones, which is crammed with information.

For more information about woodlands in Sheffield, and in particular how they have developed and been used, we recommend Professor Jones's *Sheffield Ancient Woodlands*.

Signed copies are on offer to readers of Parkwood Springs into Action for only £7.00 (including postage), from Melvyn Jones, 4 Kirkstead Abbey Mews, Thorpe Hesley, Rotherham S61 2UZ (tel: 0114 2451235).



New leaves on a sessile oak



Dog's Mercury, with tiny female flowers – another plant found in old woods like Rawson Spring



Memories of Parkwood Springs

Friends of Parkwood Springs asked people who lived on Parkwood Springs Village (finally demolished in the 1970s) for their memories of living there. Here are two of them.

The sulphur from the Electricity Power Station used to smell unpleasant, rot the curtains and kill the privet hedges. As children we used to climb the massive spoil heaps of black ash at the Power Station, jump into the empty buckets going up the hillside and jump off at the next heap.

My uncle, who was in the Home Guard during the war used to man the anti-aircraft guns at the top of the hill. Our windows would rattle when the guns were fired.

We hope to bring you more memories and history of Parkwood Springs Village in our next issue. We would be pleased to receive more memories and historical information from readers: contact details at end of back page.



The anti aircraft gun mountings are still there beside the viewpoint at the top of the hill.

Dangerous behaviour

We want Parkwood Springs to be a welcoming, peaceful place, so please help us get rid of any activities that are, or can seem, threatening.

Off road motorcycling

Riding a motor cycle anywhere on Parkwood Springs is illegal. Sheffield City Council has **not** given permission for motorcycling anywhere on Parkwood. Any rider who does not have a driving licence, insurance, an MOT, tax, and registration, or is not wearing a helmet, is committing an offence. Penalties are severe.

The police can seize motorcycles which are causing alarm, distress or annoyance to the public. Illegal motorcycling is dangerous. Off-road motorcycling has recently killed several people in South Yorkshire alone. The police regularly patrol the site using their own vehicles.

To report motor-cycling or any other nuisance call **101** (the number for non-emergency reporting). All information is treated in confidence and you will not have to give your details.

Firearms

We have received recent reports of lamping (using lamps to dazzle rabbits in order to shoot them at night) and other occasions when firearms have been on open view at Parkwood. It is against the law to have a firearm in a public place like Parkwood. Air guns count as firearms. Call



rabbit shot at
Parkwood

999 to report any such incidents to the police, who promise to take them very seriously. Do not approach directly anyone carrying a firearm.

Shirecliffe Allotments

You can help reduce crime on allotments by reporting all incidents, no matter how small to the police on 101. Also contact Allotment Watch 2734528.

Fly tipping

To report fly tipping phone Streetforce 0114 273 4567

Landfill

To report problems with the landfill site call 0800 80 70 60. Your call will be logged, and if appropriate acted upon. The number of calls complaining about a nuisance, such as unpleasant smells, can become

evidence leading to action to remove the nuisance.

Parkwood Landfill Action Group works to secure the closure of the landfill and the return of the site to public use as soon as possible. Contact c/o Green City Action, Abbeyfield Park, Abbeyfield Road, Burngreave, Sheffield, S4 7AT, tel. 244 0353.

Events

26 June, 10am–1pm: **Litter pick:** equipment and support provided by the Rangers. Meet at the entrance to the Recycling Site, Shirecliffe.

6 July, 7pm: **Friends of Parkwood Springs meeting** at St Catherine's School, Firhill Crescent, Sheffield S4
20 - 21 July Mountain biking. Equipment and training provided. Contact Woodland Project Officer Jon Dallow for more info: 2500 500

22 July, 7 - 9 pm **Twilight on the Heath:** a walk of about 2 hours, led by Ziggy Senkans. Look at the flora and fauna of this habitat with an expert, and catch the sun setting over the city! Meet at Little Pear Tree Field, off Shirecliffe Road / Cooks Wood Road. Contact: Ecology & Biodiversity Monitoring Team 205 3618

25 July, 2 - 5 pm **Family Fun Day and Picnic**, organised by the Friends of Parkwood Springs. Bring your own picnic and join in the games. Cookswood Road / Shirecliffe Road entrance. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Come and have a great time!

26 July, 10am–4pm **Playday.** Cooks Wood Road / Shirecliffe Road entrance: climbing wall, grass sledging, woodland crafts, den building and lots more to be announced nearer the time. Free and open to all.

27 July to 30 July, Tuesday to Friday 10.30am–3pm: **Playscheme.** Cooks wood Road / Shirecliffe Road entrance. Free and open to 8 - 12 year olds, although younger children can attend if accompanied by an adult. Activities include treasure hunts, art and crafts, woodland exploration and fire. *Places need to be booked.* Email catherine.nuttgens@sheffield.gov.uk or ring 2736199 to receive a booking form.

23 October Beacons Project

With entertainments and storytelling by Shonaleigh, finishing with a



Last year's Beacons event, with Lord Fox and his foxy friends

firework spectacular! Watch for details in our next issue, on our website and in the Burngreave Messenger.

Rambling

Sheffield Group of the Ramblers - Neill Schofield 0114 272 4499 neill.schofield@googlemail.com

Football

There are 2 full size football pitches with changing facilities and parking.

Currently 7 teams are allocated for the 2 pitches. South Yorkshire amateur football league division 2: leaders Burngreave United, St Thomas Wanderers, Masons Arms, Dev FC, Ecclesfield Albion, The Pheasant 2007 and Sured United.

For football pitch bookings contact: Parks & Countryside: sports bookings: 273 4234.

Forest Garden

Anyone interested in helping with the forest garden should contact Leonie Kapadia. Community Forester, on 07976 988 627, email Leonie.Kapadia@sheffield.gov.uk .

Contacts

Friends of Parkwood Springs

The Friends have elected a committee and officers to run the group.

Chair: Neill Schofield 0114 272 4499, email

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Publicity Officer (and editor of this newsletter): Andrew Green 0114 244 6122, email sia@fitting-up.org.uk .

Parkwood Springs into Action is published by the Friends of Parkwood Springs, with financial support from Sheffield City Council.

www.parkwood-springs.org.uk

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Do you want to be sent copies of future editions? If so, let us know.

Please email or phone the editor with any info, events, or news we should know about.