

Parkwood Springs

into Action

our country park in the city

Newsletter of the
Friends of Parkwood Springs
No. 4 Autumn 2010

Parkwood Springs needs friends

The secrets of Parkwood Springs are known to only a few of the people of Sheffield. Most see only the ribbons of the ski slope and the landfill site visible far across the city.

They don't know that this vast area of over 120 hectares, or 300 acres includes an overgrown cemetery, heathland, a forest garden (see back page), a stretch of the River Don, sites of special scientific interest and ancient woods, or that it once included its own village (see page 3).

Perhaps because few people know its secrets, it gets few visitors and so it can seem neglected. The City seems to pay little attention to this great asset close to its centre.

This is why Parkwood Springs needs you as a friend. The Friends of Parkwood Springs is already a well established group with 65 members, but the more members it has, the more support we can get for improving access to all areas, while preserving all the secret natural places and historic sites.

Please watch out for information about our meetings and other events, using the details on the back page to find our website, address and email address.

We look forward to seeing you enjoying the magnificent panoramic views from its summit or the peace of Wardsend Cemetery.

Saturday 23 October 5pm - 7pm

Fourth Annual Beacons Festival

features the

Return of Jenny Greenteeth

Storytelling and pyrotechnics amongst the entertainments

Last year the night sky was lit up at Parkwood Springs to tell the story of Lord Fox.



This year the Beacons Festival returns to the original story of Jenny Greenteeth, from the first Beacons of 2007. Storyteller Shonaleigh will be working with local school children in the weeks before the show as they learn to take their part in telling this story.



Now in its fourth year, the Beacons Festival continues to celebrate Parkwood Springs, lightening up the night sky and engaging the community.

At this major Autumn event will be timber sculptors Handsprings Design, the Friends of Parkwood Springs, Sheffield Council's Parks and Countryside, Shonaleigh herself and

(most important of all) children from Watercliffe Meadow and St Catherines Schools.

'Every child across the city had nightmares on the night the rains came... By morning the river had burst its banks. Its green grey sludge flowed over roads and pavements, over playing fields and parks. It flowed into basements and schools and houses and pubs... The cats were exhausted, the rats were hungry, the children were scared and the adults were grumpy the day the great flood came, on the day Jenny Greenteeth took over the city...' Read more at www.shonaleigh.com/

The Beacons Festival starts at Parkwood Springs Cookswood Road / Heliport entrance at 5pm. It is free and refreshments will be available.

This event is outdoors and will include fire and pyrotechnics so please do not bring any animals, and please dress appropriately for the weather.

For more info contact 0114 273 6199

On the Way to the Beacons - walk with the Sheffield Walking Group

All welcome.

A 4 mile walk via the Iron Age Hill Fort on Wincobank Hill, Crabtree Ponds and Little Roe Woods to end up at the Beacons Event.

Involves several uphill climbs.

Meet at 3pm at Meadowhall Interchange Park and Ride Car Park.



At last year's event

NB. This is a linear walk ending at Parkwood Springs. Please let the leader know if you are planning to attend by texting or calling Ruth on 07804208123.

Geocaching at Parkwood Springs

Among all the treasures of nature one can now even find a real little treasure at Parkwood Springs. Actually it is not called a treasure but a 'geocache' when using the language of a fairly new high-tech treasure hunting game called 'Geocaching'.

Geocaching has now become a worldwide game of hiding and seeking treasure. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers called 'geocaches' outdoors and then share your experience online. It can be played by anyone, the only thing you need is Internet access and a GPS device to enter the coordinates and the adventure can begin. More and more adventure seekers all over the world are falling in love with this addictive game.

The platform for many Geocachers is its official webpage www.geocaching.com and all the information of this article was taken from there. You can open a basic account for free and look for caches in your area or anywhere you want. Many caches will show you some special places and you will find out exciting stories or learn more about historical events. After 10 years of its existence Geocaching has a massive fanbase. More than 4 million Geocachers have hidden more than 1 million caches since the year 2000. Therefore it is not surprising that in Sheffield too you are never far away from the next Cache.

A brand new one can be found at Parkwood Springs. It is a 'Multicache' which means that you cannot just type in the coordinates into your GPS and go there but you have to solve some little puzzles first. The clues will guide you to some nice places around the site and so

new visitors are shown some highlights while hunting for the treasure. After successfully collecting

all coordinates it is time to find the actual cache. You might search for a while but in the end you will be happy to find the small plastic box with a log book to sign, a few little gimmicks to exchange and some info material about Parkwood Springs. Back home you can log your visit online, upload and exchange photos of



your hunt and share exciting experiences with other Cachers.

So if you are interested in trying this family friendly outdoor game why not start off with this cache at Parkwood Springs. There is also another one nearby that leads you to the spooky Wardsend Cemetery in the western part of the site. Just visit www.geocaching.com to get you started.

Mountain biking legend Steve Peat to assist with new bike trails at Parkwood Springs



Remember the wobbles of freedom when you first realised you were cycling under your own steam, then the freedom of riding a bike, freewheeling down quiet uncluttered country lanes? For the last five years many people will have noticed groups of people enjoying such freedom on

Parkwood Springs.

The pleasures of cycling here are to be enhanced with the construction of new cycle trails next year, including an all weather trail and a mountain bike loop for expert riders which will get their adrenalin flowing! Sheffield's internationally renowned champion mountain biking champion Steve Pete will check the final layout and build quality.

The trails will be free and open for anyone to use. A project called Making Tracks @ Parkwood will put on 'have a go' events for all sections of the community, providing bikes, equipment and instruction. Riders will

be taught respect for other Parkwood Springs users, and the trails will be designed not to interfere with other activities.

The trails and events are being funded by Sports England, and plans for the tracks will be published online, with links from the Parkwood Springs website.

To get a flavour of the activities that will be running.

Have a Go sessions are

being run on 23

October and

28 October, 1- 4pm.

Meet at Cookwood

Road entrance. Bikes,

helmets and instruction

provided for free. Open

to everyone, booking

not essential.

Contact Woodland

Project

officer Jon Dallow

on 0114 203 7756.



'Carts came round selling milk, fish and all sorts – even pikelets and oatcakes. The milk man was a farmer who brought milk in churns with a horse and cart. Once the cart came loose and ran off down the street it was so steep' - Vera

Lots of people have brought us their memories of Parkwood Springs - playing there as children, wartime memories of army billets and anti aircraft guns, the ammunition dump, the brickworks and the power station – we would love to hear more.

Some of the most vivid recollections are those from people living in Parkwood Springs village which is still marked on maps as Douglas Road, Vale Road, Pickering Road and Wallace Road, just below the ski village.

Built in the 1860s alongside the railway line, the terraces of back to backs and houses with small back yards, five shops, two pubs, a chapel and a windswept playground formed an 'island village flanked by the Manchester railway, quarries, earthworks and a vast tipping area. On all sides the land rises so steeply that the only entry by road is through steelworks under a low, narrow railway bridge' (Sheffield Star 1970). Villagers mainly worked on the railways and in the steelworks, but people at Parkwood felt cut off from the rest of Sheffield, 'Even people in Shirecliffe didn't know where Parkwood Springs was.'

The village's isolation created a close-knit community where everyone was friendly, looked out for each other and felt a strong bond of belonging. But the isolation was to become the village's biggest problem as during the 1960s and 70s Victorian terraces in Sheffield gave way to high rise developments and 'modern' living. Houses fell into disrepair and people began to

Small bomb thrown at train

Tuesday April 19 1887: On Sunday night as the train from Sheffield to Manchester, which leaves Sheffield about 7.35, was passing Parkwood Springs, a small bomb was thrown at it and struck one of the carriages, exploding with a loud report. Mr. and Mrs. Ruff, of Stocksbridge, and a lady bound for Liverpool, were among the passengers, who were very much frightened. A deep dent was made in the carriage...

move away, leaving Parkwood Springs a 'forgotten village' with no plans for redevelopment or renewal.

The first bus service was provided only in 1971 to help older residents in and out of the village.

The Star reported in 1970: 'As I walked up Pickering Road to the playground, I could understand why relatives rarely visit – it is simply too steep and inaccessible.'

Christine said: 'You had to push cars up the hill in the snow – we got 6d when we got them to the top.'

Memories of Parkwood Springs village

Ray said: 'At the bottom of the hill to get to school you had to go down 100 steps, a cobbled gennal and through a dark tunnel.'

Julie said: 'It wasn't nice to go out on dark nights because of coming back. My dad used to wait for me at the 53 bus stop to walk back up the hill. You aren't be late home. We didn't have mobile phones then.'

Ray said: 'In winter we used to sledge down the streets and the clay heap by the brickyard. We collected clay and made hollow boxes that we baked in the kitchen range. The steel workers at the Hallamshire steelworks gave us 'oily wop' (fabric soaked in oil) to burn in our 'winter warmers' to keep our hands warm.'

Residents attempted to revitalise the village and there were no plans for redevelopment, nevertheless demolition was complete by 1974. There are still no plans for that small, steep area below the ski village, although it is designated a business development site. However, it may be possible for the City Council to generate income

from development there which could be used to maintain and improve the rest of Parkwood Springs for the future.

We have many more memories of Parkwood Springs – the village and the country park - please bring us yours. Words, photos and drawings welcome. Contact details are on our back page.

Vegetable monsters from the past

Enormous rhubarb

The Sheffield Times of July 12 1849 reported that James Yates, brewer to Mr Paul Ashley, has lately cut a rhubarb plant of the enormous weight of 7st.5lbs. grown in his garden at Harvest Lane Neepsend. The produce of the same root last year weighed 5st.7lbs. The plant is three years old.

Marvel of the Turnip Race

The Sheffield Iris of October 6 1847 reported: On Monday last, there was exhibited to us a turnip, of the following weight and dimensions, viz.--weight 23 and half pounds; circumference, 34 inches; depth from the insertion of the top to the insertion of the root, 13 inches. This marvel of the turnip race, which is supposed to be the largest ever produced in Yorkshire, is of the "Norfolk white", and was grown in the garden of Mr. John Turner, at Neepsend.



Information and contacts

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 insurance or is not wearing a



Mulberry trees planted on the Forest Garden are producing their first fruits, but the Garden still needs plenty of work. Anyone interested in helping with the forest garden should contact Leonie Kapadia. Community Forester, on 07976 988 627, email Leonie.Kapadia@sheffield.gov.uk

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. The police regularly patrol the site using their own vehicles. They have erected signs telling people what they have to expect if they ride motorcycles on the site. They hope to scare them off, but they still rely on reports being made by local residents in order to take action on offenders.

Please report illegal motorcycling every time you see it on Parkwood Springs! Simply call the police on non-emergency 24 hour number 101.

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.

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.

Friends of Parkwood Springs

Chair: Neill Schofield 0114 272 4499, email

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newsletter): Andrew Green 0114 244 6122, email sia@fitting-up.org.uk.

Would you like us to send you 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. Photos are also welcome, but please make sure that everyone in the photos is happy to have their picture published in the newsletter.

The Friends of 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 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.

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

www.parkwood-springs.org.uk

c/o 175 Shirecliffe Road, S5 8XA

Friends of Parkwood Springs family picnic

The first event organised directly by the Friends of Parkwood Springs took place on 25 July 2010.



The parachute was a great success.

With much help from the Rangers, we put up two marquees, serving refreshments and supplying information in one and games for children in the other. We had feely boxes, dragonfly and butterfly making.

It was a good start. The Friends spent the next two days cleaning up litter from the worst areas of Parkwood

Springs, again with the help of the Rangers.

We hope to see you somewhere on Parkwood Springs soon!

