

# Parkwood Springs

## into Action

our country park in the city

Newsletter of the  
Friends of Parkwood Springs  
No. 5 Spring 2011

### Happy First Birthday to the Friends Group!

by Neill Schofield, Chair of the Friends of Parkwood Springs

It was Thursday March 25<sup>th</sup> 2010 when a group of us decided to set up the Friends of Parkwood Springs. Everyone involved was a fan of Parkwood Springs. We wanted to help to conserve the wildlife and natural environment, improve the green space, and encourage responsible use of the area.

How is it looking, one year on? The short answer, I think, is pretty good. We've built up a membership of over 80, which for a brand-new organisation is quite remarkable. We have put on a range of activities to encourage people to discover Parkwood Springs. And we have started to contribute to improving the site.

A wide range of activities has included guided walks and a walk for staff from the Meadow Children's Centre. We've also supported Council-led walks, including history walks led by the Council's Rangers, and a nature walk led by the Council's Ecologist. We know that other groups also walk regularly on Parkwood Springs, such as the Council's health walks. It's a real pleasure to see more people enjoying the site, whether in groups, families or just as individuals.

At the start of the summer holidays we organised play activities and a picnic for families. About the same time one of our members set up a 'geo-cache' for modern-day treasure-hunters, so that by using a GPS people can follow clues to explore some of the highlights of the site.

We also carried out a litter-pick, and working with the Liveability scheme and Council workers, transformed a badly-littered area at the Penrith Road end. Altogether we collected 200 sacks of rubbish! We also know that quite a few of our members pick up litter now and again as it is needed, and this certainly helps to make the site more attractive for everybody. Thank you to all concerned!

Lots of people are interested in the history of the site, and we met with local groups and



Neill at work

### Gateway sculpture to draw new users into Parkwood Springs

Local sculptor **Jason Thomson** has won the contract to install a new gateway at the main Shirecliffe Road and Cookwood Road entrance to Parkwood Springs. It should grab people's attention and draw them on to the site, and act as an easily identified meeting point for those attending events there.

Last autumn, the Friends of Parkwood Springs Group applied for funding the new gateway, needed to put Parkwood Springs on the map and show people where a short walk takes them to see spectacular views, play or picnic with the family and enjoy the countryside on our doorsteps.

Jon Dallow, of Sheffield Council's Parks and Countryside Services, guided us through the long and involved funding application process, resulting £15,000 from the Viridor Landfill Communities Fund to create the new gateway.

Against strong competition from across the country, Jason Thomson was awarded the contract. Jason has installed a good number of artworks around the area, including the 'Bird and the Boy' at the Rutland Road entrance to Parkwood Springs and a Dragon Bridge at Rawmarsh.

Jason talked with members of the group and local school children to spark inspiration for a design which will capture the essence of Parkwood Springs and make a gateway of which we can all be proud.



Jason's design for the gateway sculpture

His brief was to make a gateway which would be eye-catching from the road and which would make people want to come and explore Parkwood Springs – a work of art which would be fun and exciting as well as of high quality and very substantial.

He will work on the gateway through the summer, completing it in time for the autumn Beacons event. So look out for Jason working at Parkwood Springs, and watch out for news of the launch event to celebrate the new gateway. ■



Local residents discussing the plans

older residents at Busk Meadows to collect memories of living on or near Parkwood Springs.

One of our objectives is to improve the site. In the short-term we've pressed for improvements like more rubbish-bins and dog-waste bins, and more benches, and we are pleased that the Council has been able to install them. We've also pressed them for more action where there is abuse of the site. We have also pressed the Police for more action to stop illegal motor-cycling, which can be dangerous to others as well as damaging the paths and spoiling people's enjoyment. We've had some success, but need to keep raising these issues.

We have applied for grants and we're grateful for contributions from the Community Assembly and the Parks and Countryside Department of Sheffield City Council, which have helped us to get

started as a group, to produce and circulate 'Parkwood Springs into Action' and to fund the Beacons event and activities in local schools. In total we've raised over £4,000 for activities and improvements.

We have also been successful in applying to the Viridor Landfill Credits Fund for £15,000 to make the gateway at Cooks Wood Road / Shirecliffe Road more attractive and inviting. We are very grateful to the Fund, and to Sheffield City Council for matched funding which 'unlocks' the Landfill Credits money. We are really looking forward to seeing these improvements, which will take place over the summer.

None of this would have been possible without the work of a lot of people. People on the committee have worked hard, often out of the limelight but doing important jobs really well. I would also

like to thank our local Councillors, the Council officers and the Rangers who work with us. We have some excellent relationships, and we wouldn't have been able to get to where we are without them.

Finally I would like to thank members of the Friends for their support. The fact that we can show that people treasure the area and want to see it achieve its full potential is really important. We are looking ahead to when the landfill site is closed, and the whole area can become a wonderful 'Country Park in the City'. In this first year we've made good progress – now onwards and upwards!

Next meeting of the Friends of Parkwood Springs will be at 7.00 pm on Weds 21 September at St Catherine's School, Firshill Crescent, S4 7BX. For contact information, see back page. ■

## Shirecliffe – The Bright Cliff of the Deerpark

Imagine the scene – a steeply wooded valley, curls of smoke drifting through the trees from the iron smeltings, the high ridge of sparkling sandstone shining bright and golden in the warm evening sun. This was Shirecliffe through the centuries. The crumbling old hall built as a hunting lodge with its own chapel, knocked down and rebuilt as a 'modern' early 19th century house - the tenant struggling to drive his carriage and horses up the steep hill from Pitsmoor and eventually asking to build a new drive towards Sheffield that wasn't so steep.

When Jon Sharrocks from the Ranger Service leads a short history walk round Parkwood Springs these are the pictures he brings to mind.



Seeing coppiced trees in the woodland and pictures of the charcoal burners' huts at Shirecliffe left us picturing the life of generations of men working and struggling to make a living on the steep hillside. Looking from the top of the hill at the layout of the streets of Parkwood Springs village gave a view into the world of the railway age - the steep terraced streets (long gone), the lives of the families working in the steelworks below, at the brickworks or on the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire line.

Standing at the viewpoint close to the gun mountings, we could imagine the wartime gunners watching for planes through the Upper Don Valley that might have targeted the American army bomb-making factory on the hilltop at Grenoside. We were there with the kids playing on the high, windy playground or climbing on the buckets taking slag from the cooling towers to the top of the heaps. We watched the bowling teams stepping out onto the closely mown greens above Parkwood Village - and we pondered what memories we could leave at Parkwood Springs for our children and grandchildren to discover.



*Remains of the gun emplacement*

It was more than a walk – it was a journey through time. Join Jon on his walks and experience time travel for yourselves.

## Kayaks on the Don

A long stretch of the River Don flows through Parkwood Springs. Sheffield City Kayak Club works to open up this private stretch to the public and keep the river clear of rubbish. It is holding an event at Kelham Island on 24 September to explain its work and give you a chance to try kayaking. See **Go Paddling** event info on the back page.



# Parkwood Springs Forest Garden – producing fruit with little effort

A forest garden is garden designed to mimic the structure of a natural forest - the most stable and sustainable type of ecosystem in this climate. It uses trees, shrubs and perennial plants mixed in such a way that they support each others growth and promote production of fruits, nuts, edible leaves, spices and potentially medicinal plant products, poles, fibres for tying and basketry materials. Ideally, every plant in a forest garden will have more than one use.

I'm **Edward Thatcher**, a Community Forester working for the Council. I have recently taken over responsibility for developing the Parkwood Springs forest garden with local people and groups.



On Monday 28 March I met with Niels Corf, the garden designer, a group of lads from the Probation Service's payback team, and a couple of members of the Friends Group to do a day's work on the garden. We had a number of new trees and shrubs to put in including: apple trees, raspberry canes, kiwis and some Eleagnus multiflora (see below).

Our first job was to clear weeds around the planting areas. This was pretty heavy work but we got a good deal done. Then we

A second workday on Sunday 19 June saw further clearing of weeds, planting, and harvesting of blackcurrants.

Once established, the structure of a forest garden means that most weeds are outcompeted by desirable plants and the garden should need little maintenance other than a small amount of pruning, a tiny amount of weeding and a lot of harvesting. Admittedly at this stage of the garden a little extra weeding is required but this will decrease as we move towards completion.

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planted around twenty five plants, mulched them and watered them in. Finally, Neill Schofield and I met at the garden a couple of days after this event to put guards up around the trees to protect them from rabbits and other pests.



Blackcurrants ripening



A bee pollinates the flowers of a cultivated blackberry

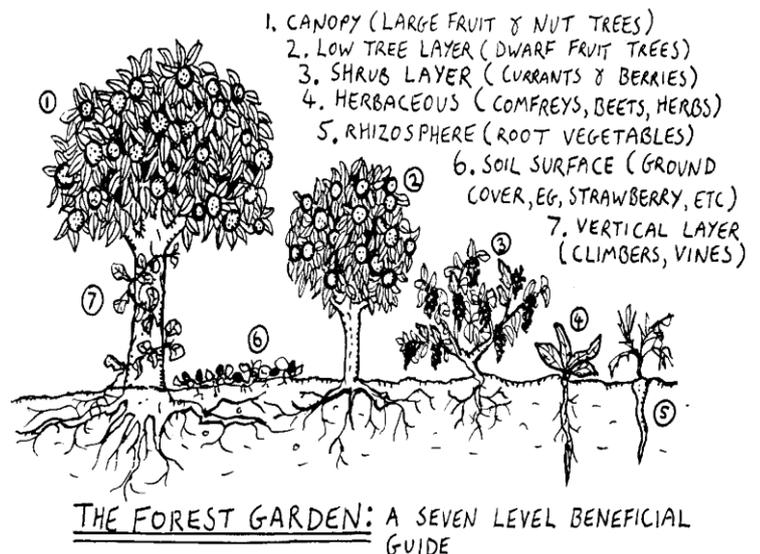
The Eleagnus multiflora, right, is a typical forest garden plant as the following quote from Wikipedia demonstrates:

*"The fruit is round to oval drupe 1 cm long, silvery-scaled orange, ripe in mid to late summer, and is juicy and edible, with an acidic taste.*

*As with other species in the genus, E. multiflora is an actinorrhizal plant, growing in symbiosis with the actinobacteria Frankia in the soil. These bacteria fix atmospheric nitrogen, making it available in usable form for the host plant, and indirectly for other nearby plants. This feature allows the plant to grow in poorer soils than would be possible otherwise."*



End of a satisfying day's work at the Forest Garden





Remember that you can access Parkwood Springs on foot at any time. You may want to print out our map which indicates the location of the various entrances and main footpaths, as there is limited signage on site for the time being. Link at [www.parkwood-springs.org.uk/FindingParkwoodSprings](http://www.parkwood-springs.org.uk/FindingParkwoodSprings)

### Events

#### Teddy Bears Picnic and Games

*Tuesday 26th July*

Fun lunch time activities for younger children, with the Rangers. 12 noon to 1.30pm. Bring a picnic and a favourite teddy or soft toy. Meet at the entrance to the playing fields (Cooks Wood Road/Shirecliffe Road). For more info, contact the North Area Rangers on 0114 240 3578

#### Go Paddling

*Saturday 24 September 10.00 till 4.00*

At Kelham Island Museum: free entry to the museum all day. Free Entertainment. Come and try the Olympic sport of Kayaking

Adult (over 16) sessions on the river £1.50 for 30 mins

Under 16 sessions on the Goyt £1.00 for 15mins on the water. All under 16s must be accompanied by an adult. All staff approved and licensed to work with children and adults. All coaches are approved and licensed by Sport England.

Adult trips: 1 hour trip on the river Don. 8 places per trip. £7 per person including insurance. You can pre book adult trips. Ring Tony 01142348338 after 6.00pm

#### Funghi walk

*8 October*

Find out about the funghi on Parkwood Springs, with Council ecologist Ziggy Senkans. Meet at Little Pear Tree Field, by the Cooks Wood Road/Shirecliffe Road entrance at 10.30am, for 1½ - 2 hours walk. Dogs allowed on leads. Please check details nearer the time.



### Beacons

*22 October*

Our regular Autumn spectacle with story telling by Shonaleigh, fireworks and other entertainment. Watch for details nearer the time – put it in your diary now!



### Dangerous behaviour

Help us to make Parkwood Springs a welcoming, peaceful place, by reporting any activities that are, or seem, threatening.

#### Off road motorcycling

Riding a motor cycle anywhere on Parkwood Springs is illegal. 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.

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

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.

**Shirecliffe Allotments:** 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 the Environment Agency 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.

### Activities

#### Rambling

Sheffield Group of the Ramblers - Neill Schofield 0114 272 4499  
[neill.schofield@googlemail.com](mailto:neill.schofield@googlemail.com)

The Upper Don Walk Trust aims to create an accessible trail along the Don, including the Parkwood Springs section. [www.upperdonwalk.org](http://www.upperdonwalk.org)

### 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.

### Contacts

#### Friends of Parkwood Springs

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[www.parkwood-springs.org.uk](http://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.** Photos are also welcome, but please make sure that everyone in the photos is happy to have their picture published in the newsletter.

### Correction

As a child I lived at Parkwood Springs so am fascinated by the information in the newsletter however I must advise you of some incorrect information in the section titled "Memories of Parkwood Springs village". It states that "demolition was complete by 1974" and I know for a fact this was incorrect. My family lived at 59 Pickering Road. We were the last people living at Parkwood Springs and did not leave until September 1977 so the demolition was not completed until soon after this time. A whole 3 years after was stated!

Sorry to correct you but I personally felt this was a very important point.

Thank you

Karen Rawson

