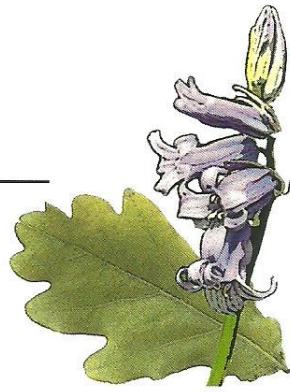


# Newsletter

July 2015



## The Friends of Linslade Woods

### Recent Activities

Recent months have been a busy time in the Woods with regular monthly Action Days involving coppicing, path edging, cutting back overhanging branches and constructing bench seats.

A successful Summer Walk was also held on 11 June led by wildlife experts Steve Halton and Trevor Smith. The earlier Spring Walk unfortunately had to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

Earlier in the year the Friends' Group were delighted to hear that the Woods had been judged as outstanding under the Anglia in Bloom - It's Your Neighbourhood Scheme. It was an indication that all the hard work carried out by the volunteers throughout the year had paid off. This is in addition to the Green Flag awards which have been received for the last 5 years.



### The Year's Events by Sue Phillips

#### Canal Festival and Rushmere Christmas Fayre

Both events went well. The Canal festival was manned by Friends throughout the day. The weather was good and lots of interest was shown. We are back again this year. Rushmere Christmas Fayre was set up and manned until midday on a stall shared with the Friends of Tiddenfoot Waterside Park. Rory Morrissey provided excellent photos of woodland wildlife for the display boards.

#### Fun Day for Dogs

A rather wet start in October but an agility course was organised by Trevor Smith to test out skills of jumping and running through a tunnel (for dogs). There was also a treasure hunt to sniff out sausages.

#### Bug Lab

The Greensand Trust organised this popular event in August which once again attracted large numbers of children who enjoyed hunting for bugs and other tiny creatures, and used their craft skills to construct their own bugs.



### New benches appear in the Woods by Malcolm Chaney

On the 30 August 2014 the first of 6 bench seats was installed by volunteers Steve Bigland and Malcolm Chaney ably assisted by John Creasey of the Greensand Trust. The other 5 bench seats were installed over the next 12 months and the project should be finished in July. The bench tops were purchased with generous grants from Central Beds Council and Waitrose and support timber was provided by the Greensand Trust. Visitors to the Woods have taken full advantage of the new benches and many have been seen relaxing on the benches and enjoying the scenery and wildlife.

### Bedfordshire Walking Festival by Ken Barry

A successful walk was organised for the Walking Festival in September and attracted people from all over Bedfordshire. Participants enjoyed a guided walk along the towpath of the Grand Union Canal from Tiddenfoot Waterside Park to Linslade Woods and back and seeing many places of interest on route. On arrival at the Woods, Dave Booth and other Friends led them on a guided tour round the Woods and explained some of the history.

### New Volunteers Welcome

The Friends of Linslade Woods, working in partnership with the Greensand Trust and Central Bedfordshire Council, have a regular programme of action days, wildlife walks and other events throughout the year. New volunteers are very welcome to take part in their activities. This autumn we will be improving the grassland along the ride by cutting and raking the long grass. This will encourage the wildflowers and grasses which will also benefit the insects. We will also be continuing the hazel coppicing and we are now on year 6 of our 7 year rotation. If you'd like to join us to make the Woods an even more beautiful place the programme is displayed on our website and notice boards. Further information can also be obtained from John Creasey, Greensand Trust on 01525 237760 or [john.creasey@greensandtrust.org](mailto:john.creasey@greensandtrust.org).



## Wildlife in Linslade Woods by Judith Knight

Are you interested in birds? Plants? Trees? Butterflies? Other insects? Fungi? There is a wealth of wildlife in Linslade Woods, changing with the seasons.

Everyone knows about the Bluebells in the old wood, but how many of us stop to admire the Wood Anemones or the Primroses or the humble Dog's Mercury (once thought to cure deafness, blindness and earache - but don't try it!). Three species of orchid grow in the newer parts of the wood, and we need to maintain an open structure so they are not shaded out by scrub.

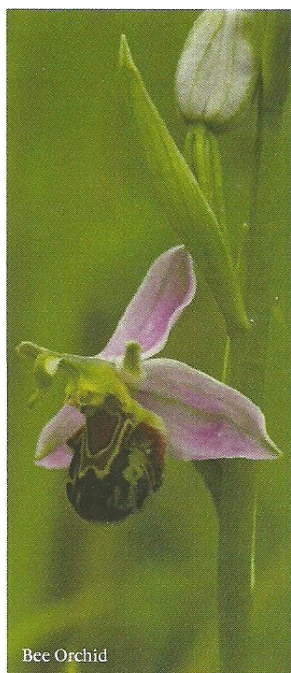
There are over 60 species of birds recorded in the woods, and many of these breed, including Tawny Owl and Mistle Thrush, and summer visitors like the warblers Chiffchaff and Blackcap. We have several bird boxes along the main ride, and last year all of them were used, almost certainly by Blue and Great Tits; there is also a Little Owl box on a large tree on the west of the wood. Keep checking!

Marbled Whites are some of the most exquisite butterflies to be seen along the open rides in high summer; in the shadier areas Speckled Woods may be seen spiralling in pairs or holding their own small territory. More than 20 species of butterfly visit throughout the year, and the moth experts can count even more, ranging from the colourful Cinnabars to tiny micro-moths.

Fungi come in all shapes and sizes, often with intriguing names; have you ever seen Porcelain Fungus or Rosy Bonnet? (Look on the website - [www.linsladedwood.info](http://www.linsladedwood.info) - to check them out).

We really need to know what wildlife we have in the woods and one way that everyone can help is by sending in records of what they have seen. Look on the website for details of what has been recorded, and where to send records; or join the Linslade Woods Yahoo group and tell everyone as soon as you have spotted something interesting. ([linsladedwoods@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:linsladedwoods@yahoo.co.uk))

This wealth of wildlife is encouraged by the necessary woodland and scrub maintenance that the Friends do on their work parties - extra help is always appreciated.



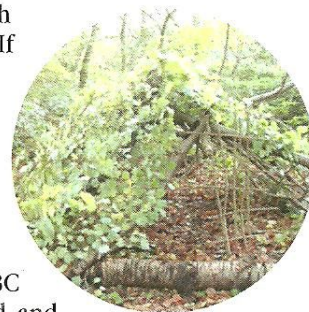
Bee Orchid

## Linslade Wood Site Wardens' Report by Dave Booth

There are currently nine Site Wardens, who work as volunteers with the Greensand Trust, and their Ranger. The Greensand Trust manages the woodland on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), the owners. The Wardens each have allocated areas to patrol which they know well, but they also keep a watch over much of the other woodland. Their work is varied and undertaken at their convenience as often as they wish. They check the woodland for safety hazards such as dangerous trees or broken branches caught in the tree tops, particularly after high winds. They keep the footpaths safe and free of hazards removing debris where possible or calling for Ranger assistance when required.

During 2014 they removed six large bags of litter after visitors had enjoyed themselves. In one incident the Ranger had to attend with a Land Rover and trailer to remove cans, bottles, sleeping bags, and clothing scattered into the trees after one such event. After a Halloween party one Warden had to remove balloons, lights, cans, and Angel Wings. Several bonfire sites were found, all the ashes were checked for broken glass and metal with sharp edges, to avoid injuries to animal paws.

Tree dens are a particular problem, whilst organisations like the National Trust encourage children to build them, they do not stress that the owner's permission is required, and to pull down such structures before they leave site. If these structures are left, an unsuspecting young child or animal could easily go inside, dislodge something and bring the whole structure down on them. There is often a lot of wood in these structures and a serious accident would result. CBC requires all dens to be dismantled, and this often takes some time and effort for the Wardens to do.



Most years we get some graffiti which can usually be removed. The railway tunnel air shaft is generally covered in graffiti, but being hidden amongst the trees the Wardens only take action when the content is offensive.

Some years we get overnight campers, which are not allowed by CBC. The Wardens ask them to leave, but if any trouble is encountered the Rangers are called to deal. Last year one camper chose the wrong location, and in a short space of time several Wardens visited him to request he left. With so much hassle he must have wondered how many Wardens there were.

Motorbikes visit the woodland occasionally, generally they are heard, but sometimes they are seen and then reported to the police. Their visits are usually short, but some years ago one biker was caught by the police and his bike was crushed. Anyone visiting the woodland should report such incidents to the police, as the more reports they get the greater the response they give.

Overall the volunteer Wardens encounter many varied scenarios throughout the year in their efforts to keep the woodland safe for the public and the wildlife.