

Newsletter

July 2019



The Friends of Linslade Woods

BEST IN CATEGORY

2018 was a good year for us; once again we received the Green Flag Award, and we were also chosen by the Anglia In Bloom judges as the best wood in the region, earning the "best in category" award of a handsome wooden bowl Thanks to everyone who made it possible.



In 2019 we received a grant from Tesco Stores through their blue token scheme so the committee are now discussing joint funding with Central Beds Council for the improvement of some of the very wet and muddy areas in the woods.

FoLW has led walks for the local community which have been well supported, and we took part in the annual Christmas Tree Festival. At our AGM in April we had Bob Hook as guest speaker, giving an enthusiastic account of the life and habits of Swifts, and suggesting how we can help them.

The FoLW committee thanks all those volunteers who turn out into the woods on the monthly Action Days.



Hedge laying

One of our recent big projects was the laying of the hedge alongside the Stoke Road; we are grateful to the Friends of Tiddenfoot who joined us in this skilled task. We are always pleased to have extra helping hands on our Action Days; we meet at 10 a.m. and usually finish by lunchtime. Tasks include clearing overgrown bramble, coppicing the Hazel and keeping areas and tracks open to let in the light to improve the habitat for wildlife. We also enjoy a coffee break under the watchful eye of GST ranger John. You do not need to be a member of the Friends to help on the Action Days; the dates are on the boards near the entrances to the woods, and are on the website.

For further information see <http://linsladewood.info>



Wildflowers in Linslade Wood by Judith Knight

Most of us, if asked about places where wild flowers abound, will think of meadows rather than woods. But woods have their own special flora, often early flowering plants which bloom before the woodland canopy closes over and reduces the light that they need to photosynthesize - take in carbon dioxide and build it into sugars and store energy. Among these early flowering plants to be found in Linslade Woods are Wood Anemones, Snowdrops, Dog's Mercury and, of course, Bluebells. Some of these persist for several weeks but none will still be flowering as summer approaches.

The more recently planted areas of the Woods are closer to meadows, and a huge range of plants can be found there belonging to many flower families and attracting many insects. Look out for members of the Pea family, such as Hairy Tare, Common Vetch, Bush vetch and - my particular favourite - Grass Vetchling. For only two or three weeks this magenta-flowered vetch displays its tiny blooms; the rest of the year it looks (to all except proper botanists) like a piece of tall grass.

Then there are many plants that used to be called Umbellifers, now known as the Carrot family. Cow parsley, "Queen Anne's lace", is probably the best known, followed perhaps by Hogweed - which is not the same as Giant Hogweed, a plant that can grow up to 12 feet, favours wet habitats and definitely does not appear in Linslade Woods! Look out for the hairy Wild Carrot whose white flower heads often have one small central dark red flower. Their seed heads form little concave "bird nest" shapes.



The Daisy family - all those yellow flowers, ranging from the tiny to the three feet high species - are a difficult group to sort out. But it's easy to distinguish Goat's-beard which has large florets with long narrow bracts and which usually closes at mid-day, and when the sun is hidden. Its seed "clock" is instantly recognizable and over 2 inches across. Look out for Creeping Thistle (also, like other thistles, in the Daisy family); is almost spineless and extremely fragrant, attracting a large number of insects.



There are so many interesting and valuable plants in our Woods - but perhaps we should not finish without mentioning the orchids; Bee and Pyramidal orchids are becoming increasingly hard to find (so do tell us if you find them!), but the Woods have a magnificent display of Common Spotted-Orchids every year.

Enjoy the wildflowers!

Why not join us?

Annual membership runs from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 and costs: £5 per pp - Another person in same household £3pp - Unwaged £2pp, so why not pick up a membership form.

Look us up on the website:

www.linsladedwood.info