



Friends of the Hurtwood

Administrators to the public rights of access to some 3000 acres of land in the parishes of Albury, Cranleigh, Ewhurst and Shere.

Registered Charity 200053

Autumn
2019
No.50

Friends Newsletter



Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends

By the time you read this, Autumn will be well upon us and memories of another summer fast fading away. It's been relatively busy on the Hurtwood with a number of projects now completed or underway. Some of what follows is reported on in more detail later but I wanted to highlight the following.

What we're up to

Holmbury Hill Fort minus the undergrowth of the last decade is looking resplendent in the Autumn sun. The renovations were only possible following the acquisition of Mark's new tractor.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Holmbury Bonfire Boys, work has been progressing to unearth another less ancient monument on Holmbury Hill, the POW Camp. A new interpretation board is to be placed at the start of a new track which will lead visitors to the site. We hope to have all this in place before winter sets in.

Good progress is now being made to complete the new bike trail on Pitch Hill. In response to multiple complaints from Peaslakers this trail will divert bikers off the path from the Graveyard, instead bringing them out just south of Walking Bottom car park. To remind readers, this is part-funded by Surrey County Council and implemented by a team of volunteers under the guidance of Dave Clifford and Mark Beaumont.

We have recently commissioned the development of a new website from Taybridge Consulting. This became necessary after Ben Bray notified us that he would be taking over the management of Shere Manor Estate so he would no longer be able to provide the level of service we required. I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Ben for his support on the website and other technology issues over the last decade or so.

Art and craft from the Hurtwood

In our last newsletter we featured local artist, Amanda Cobbett, whose work is inspired by nature and the Hurtwood. I'm pleased to report that subsequently Amanda had a very successful week at RHS Chelsea, selling all the work on display and accepting many new commissions which she tells me will keep her busy until Chelsea 2020!

Another local person inspired by the Hurtwood is Kirsty Ferguson, whose work features in this issue. We would like to feature more artists and craft persons in future issues. So if you know individuals whose work is inspired by the Hurtwood, please do put them in touch.

Do we have your current email?

Finally, I would like to encourage all Friends to make sure we have their email address. This method of contacting Friends is preferred simply because the cost of posting this newsletter and the annual meeting papers is now so ridiculously expensive (and time-consuming to stuff over 100 envelopes!).

Peter Copping, Foth Chairman

Friends of the Hurtwood

Foth

The Parish Office
St Mark's Churchyard
Peaslake GU5 9RR

01306 730100 (office answerphone)
07920 705070 (Ranger mobile)

www.friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk
<https://www.facebook.com/hurtwood.ranger>

Contacts:

Mark@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk
chairman@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk
administration@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk
communications@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk



Visitor increase

It's been a busy few months despite the late change in weather during August. We still continue to increase visitor numbers, most notably at the weekends, but I feel the weekdays are the most obvious difference, as normally empty car parks are now half full during the week. On a management level this obviously has an impact; trying to do tree work on the sides of paths on what would otherwise be a quiet week day, can make life interesting. I'm afraid I'm going to have to repeat my warnings from the previous newsletter about heeding warning signs, when either I or my contractors are working.

Keeping Holmbury Hill Fort clear

We have now finished all the main clearance of small vegetation and scrub that had grown back over the hill fort area on Holmbury Hill. Ever since the main clearance work in 2005 we have been trying to keep on top of the vegetation regrowth but this proved very time-consuming and expensive as mechanical mowing was not an option. This is because after the main felling was finished the stumps could not be removed without disturbing the surface, and as it is a protected Scheduled Monument we have to take care to protect it. Fast forward 14 years, and all the large tree stumps have now rotted enough for them to be ground down quickly with a forest mulching machine. This means the surface can be frequently mown with our tractor; a massive saving in time and cost.

We knew that bracken would be the first vegetation to make an appearance, but with the new tractor I can quite quickly get the area mown and it only takes about six hours to get the area completely cut. We took delivery of the new tractor at the end of April after a slightly longer wait than expected, but now that it is here it has already proved its worth. Having the extra suspension and a little bit more horse power has made a significant difference, particularly in mowing the bracken on the hill fort.



Our new tractor



The tractor, a New Holland T5-110 Electro Command (if anyone's interested) has the latest emission system and is as low polluting as anything else currently available. It has a few other small features which actually make a huge difference, particularly the "Push Back" hitch which allows me to see the hitch when connecting the trailer; this used to be time-consuming, not to mention frustrating.

For horse riders!

All the main rides have now been cut back, and as I did last year, I've managed to cut further into the banks with the flail mower, thus making a wider grassy surface, which I know is particularly appreciated by the horse riders. Some may need a further cut before the winter if this wet and warm weather continues.

Fly Tip

Fly tip continues to be an issue though there has been a slight decrease over the summer months, despite one incidence in the Roman Temple Car Park on Farley Heath costing over £1000 to clear. There is still plenty of tree surgeons' waste, and a definite increase in small quantities of garden waste dumped either in or from bin bags. This is probably a result of the reduced opening hours of the local tip.

Whilst many people may think dumping garden waste in the woodland is harmless, they couldn't be further from the truth, since weeds, cuttings and potting compost produce a number of harmful effects. Discarded plants and compost, and tree cuttings, may contain diseases and harmful bacteria; or they can lead to imbalanced soil enrichment which can encourage some plant species (e.g. nettle, hogweed).

Dumping can also result in the introduction of alien and harmful species into the delicately balanced ecology of our woods. And many gardeners use pesticides and herbicides which can be unintentionally introduced into the woodland, harming plants and wildlife.



Risk of wild fires

Back at the beginning of May we had a fire on Winterfold (pictured left) that had almost certainly been started by a discarded cigarette. The source of the fire was right next to the main footpath leading away from No.13 car park. The damage, though significant, was mostly to the bracken and shrubby under-storey. Fortunately, as it was easily visible from the popular car park, the Fire Brigade were quickly alerted. I'd like to pass my thanks to Cranleigh Fire Brigade for attending so promptly, and also for coming back later that day to check that it had been completely extinguished.

New bike trail on Pitch Hill

Work continues on the new bike trail to take riders safely down and away from other users as they come into Walking Bottom car park from Pitch Hill. I appreciate that this has caused some concern but we took this course of action after initial approach from the Peaslake villagers who were concerned about cyclists coming down the tarmac drive past the church.

Whilst the new trail won't stop this completely, I'm sure it will help considerably, especially as early feedback on the completed part is proving very positive with the riders.

Mark Beaumont

Mob: 07920 705070

Office: 01306 730100

Mark@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk



DIARY DATES FOR 2019-2020



SATURDAY
2nd NOVEMBER
6.30 - 8.30pm

*** HOLMBURY BONFIRE & FIREWORKS**
Felday Glade, Holmbury St Mary



THURSDAY
17th NOVEMBER

MABAC running event on Farley Heath



APRIL 2020
DATE TBC

FoTH ANNUAL MEETING
Duke of Kent School



SATURDAY
18th JULY

*** ALBURY PRODUCE SHOW**
Albury Heath Sports Ground



SUNDAY
19th JULY
9.30am-1pm

ALBURY MUSIC FESTIVAL
Albury Heath Sports Ground



MONDAY
31st AUGUST

*** PEASLAKE FAIR**
Peaslake Village. Road Closures

* The organisers of these events give generous donations to FoTH.
Please support them.

Fireworks with the Holmbury Bonfire Boys!

Holmbury's quirky, magical bonfire and fireworks display takes place on Saturday 2nd November with proceeds to local charities and community groups including Friends of the Hurtwood.

Plans for the building of the bonfire and the fire-work display themes have been refined by the Holmbury Bonfire Boys and their friends, ready for another great family event by the Village Hall in Felday Glade. It includes a children's fancy dress competition, hog roast, mulled cider and more. Tickets £5, under 10s free.

Timetable:

6.30pm Barbecue
6.45pm Lighting the bonfire and fancy dress competition
7.30-8.15pm Fireworks display

- Don't forget to bring warm clothes
- Parking is very limited so share a car if you can
- Please do not bring your own alcohol or fireworks

Dog Walkers Alert

Police are investigating claims that men seen behaving suspiciously in different parts of the Hurtwood recently may be attempting to steal dogs.

It is understood the men may have been laying food trails to entice the dogs away from their owners.

Dog owners and dog walkers are urged to be vigilant and keep their dogs within sight. Anyone noticing suspicious behaviour should call the police.

Stationery essentials

Hurtwood postcards and prints are available to purchase at Peaslake Stores. Perfect for thank you notes and helping to raise the profile of this beautiful area.

2019 Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Hurtwood, 18 April

Friends of the Hurtwood held their Annual Meeting at the Duke of Kent School on Thursday 18th April. The Meeting is booked on an annual basis and unfortunately this year the date was the day before the Easter bank holiday weekend. Nonetheless, the event was attended by over 50 Friends as well as newcomers to the local villages.

Friends enjoyed a short social get-together over drinks kindly provided by Handa Bray before hearing from the Ranger, Mark Beaumont, about the various tasks that had been undertaken in the previous year. These included updates on the continual problems of fly tipping in the car parks and pressures from increasing visitor numbers.

Then followed a report of the annual accounts. David Clifford was re-elected as a Director. Sue Darling and Alex MacKinnon were elected as new Directors, David Counsell was reappointed as Treasurer and Bernard Brace as Independent Examiner.

After the formal proceedings Tim Metson gave an update on the progress of B4SH, Broadband for the Surrey Hills.

As always, Friends of the Hurtwood would like to thank the Duke of Kent School for the kind use of their hall for the evening.

Albury Produce Show, 20 July

It was another great day, with around 1000 entries in the show tent, plus a band, Morris men, ferret racing, Pimms, cider, gin and craft beers to taste and a variety of games and stalls to sample. Plus the ever popular fire engine and Punch and Judy.

Friends again produced volunteers (almost entirely drawn from the Management Committee) to help the Produce Association run this long established event. This included manning a gate, helping with parking and checking tickets for the show tent. We get a generous donation from the Association, and understandably they look to us to keep the show on the road. Volunteers from members next year would be welcome!

Peaslake Fair, 26 August

For once, the sun shone on Bank Holiday Monday - a swelteringly hot day! Thankfully the Friends of the Hurtwood gazebo/stand was in the shade for another busy and well-attended Peaslake Fair and we were able to tell many visitors about FoTH.

As always, we met a lot of people who've walked and ridden round the area for years but have no idea what the Hurtwood is, who the Friends are and what we do. So there was a lot of interest, which we hope will be converted into more people joining us. And it was noticeable how many people, especially bike riders, had come from outside the area.

Friends provided a succession of volunteers to help the fair run smoothly, mainly with parking.



Congratulations

Congratulations from all Friends to the Shere Manor Estate on receiving the Royal Forestry Society's Award for Excellence in Silviculture (woodland management) in July. It's particularly significant to us because the Society's inspectors praised areas of clear felling in the Hurtwood which had encouraged exceptionally successful natural regeneration.



Creativity in the Hurtwood Kirsty Ferguson – versatile crafts worker

In the second of our series on artists and craftspeople round the Hurtwood, Sue Darling talks to Kirsty Ferguson about her work and connections with the Hurtwood.

Kirsty Ferguson is an artistic polymath in the best English rural tradition. Like Amanda Cobbett (featured in the Spring newsletter), Kirsty gains inspiration from her forays into the Hurtwood, and much of her work draws on natural materials, shapes and textures.

Originally from North Yorkshire, Kirsty moved via Bristol to Surrey 13 years ago and now lives in Shalford. Drawing on her degree in photography from Nottingham Trent University, she first took up a teaching position at George Abbot School, and now heads their Photography Department.

I came across Kirsty's work at a small exhibition of local arts and crafts in the lovely Barn Church in Farley Green in September, where she displayed delicately carved wood spoons, a lino cut, pyrography pictures (made by burning into wood) and etchings. The wide range of her work, in addition to photography, extends to stained glass, stone carving, print making and silversmithing.

"I love art and learning," said Kirsty, and the variety of her work and the processes involved reflect her enjoyment of the 'process of making' as much as the finished piece and its commercial prospects. "I have a job, I'm a teacher," she said, "I don't feel I have to be commercial as an artist."

But Kirsty's work has attracted a number of commissions, including stained glass and print making, and she finds that silver jewellery finds a ready market.

Kirsty has a particular affinity with wood, possibly inherited from her father, who was a boat



builder and joiner specialising in 'cobbles', the traditional boat of the north east coast. For her spoons she sources wood through her partner, a tree surgeon. A block is roughly shaped with a small hatchet, then refined with a whittling knife followed by a hook knife to create the bowl. After sanding she uses walnut oil, on the basis that a nut oil is better for the wood and, unlike olive oil, won't go rancid.

A keen runner and hiker, Kirsty knows the Hurtwood well from running and walking with her children. A qualified Hill and Moorland Leader, she also supervises navigation and orienteering training for Gold Duke of Edinburgh award candidates across the Hurtwood's hills and heaths.

Kirsty can be contacted at kirstyferguson@outlook.com



Fresh air and exercise

Reggie Bray's century-old ideals of fresh air and exercise for all underpinned the commitment to public access to Bray land, which started off the Hurtwood as we know it today. Now a new Girl Guiding badge has been launched in Surrey to encourage Rainbows, Brownies and Guides to get outdoors and explore the fantastic countryside on their doorstep and understand more about the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



The new badge and accompanying worksheet challenge girls between 5 and 15yrs to learn about their natural environment by visiting places within the Surrey Hills AONB with either parents/guardians or their guiding units. An online resource is available suggesting over 60 places to visit in the Surrey Hills <https://www.surreyhills.org/surrey-hills-60/>, which include some of the Hurtwood's iconic places.

The Guiding initiative links in with the Review of England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, published on Saturday 21 September. One of the Review's themes is reaching out to wider society, regardless of age or cultural background, including a proposal that every school-child should get the opportunity to 'spend a night under the stars', offering them a chance to engage with nature and become a landscape ambassador.

Membership and fundraising

Membership of FoTH

Currently almost 400 people, the Friends of the Hurtwood, make up the membership of our charity. Members are entitled to attend and vote at the Annual Meeting. They can also propose individuals to join the governing body. Our members make donations totalling around £38,000 each year, which is a significant part of our income. But the more we raise, the more we can do. So we are working harder to increase our group of Friends and supporters.

We used our stand at the Peaslake Fair in August to raise the profile of FoTH, sell promotional items and recruit new members. Over the summer, a number of supporters undertook car park blitzes to take our message to the visitors actively using the Hurtwood, chatting to them as they came or went. This strategy is proving successful as membership numbers increase after the blitzes, so we will continue to target the walkers and cyclists who are using the car parks to enjoy the Hurtwood.

What else you can do

If you know anyone who enjoys the Hurtwood – walking, cycling, horse-riding, dog-walking, etc. – please encourage them to join us through a regular financial donation and help maintain the countryside they love and use. More details available at www.friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk.

Donating through Gift Aid means charities like ours can claim an extra 25p for every £1 given, and this extra money is very welcome. But HM Revenue and Customs regulations for gifts and claims are now more rigorous, so if your gift aid status has changed – for example if you are now or have ceased to be a taxpayer, please let us know by emailing administration@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk.

There are a further two ways you can raise additional money for FoTH:

- Use 'Easyfundraising' when you buy pretty much anything direct from online shops. Join via this link: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/friendsofthehurtwood/>
- Use 'Amazon Smile'. This is easy, just start your shopping at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> and nominate Friends of the Hurtwood as your chosen charity. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price of eligible purchases to FoTH (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees).

Do you have a pet Hurtwood project?

Finally, we are considering the possibility of funding projects either originated by FoTH or proposed by our members. In advance of this and to test the feasibility of the idea, it would be great to receive your suggestions for the type of projects we might consider. They would need to meet certain criteria; e.g. does the proposal increase a visitor's enjoyment and/or understanding of the Hurtwood?

An example would be an interpretation board for places of scenic or historic interest. Please let the Chairman know your thoughts, at chairman@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk.

New Directions for the Friends

Our Website

As noted in the spring newsletter and Chairman's letter above, work is well under way to re-vamp our website (www.friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk) and it should be live by the New Year. We'll keep you posted.

Social media

Thanks to the sterling work of Alex MacKinnon, Friends of the Hurtwood now boast an active presence on Facebook and Instagram. There's a steady increase in the numbers of people visiting and liking our media, and subscribing so that they see future posts. As at October 18th, we have 272 followers on Instagram and much more regular interactions on Facebook.

The Hurtwood is a highly photogenic place and Alex is drawing on past and current pictures that he and the rest of the team are taking of work being done and the seasons changing. If you have current or historic Hurtwood pictures you'd like to share on Facebook or Instagram, please send them in by email to Mark (mark@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk) or message them to us on Facebook or Instagram. (You must of course have the copyright to these pictures and be willing to share them in this way.)

Logo



The Management Committee has decided to change the FotH logo, though we'll miss the lone Scots pine which has represented Friends

for so long. It wasn't a case of being trendy (we don't tend to do trendy...) but we're planning to expand the information on our notice boards and at car parks and we needed a cleaner-lined logo which will convert more easily into a metal stencil for printing and copying. It represents the hills, heaths and woods of the Hurtwood. We hope you like it and recognise some of your favourite places.

PLEASE SUPPORT
THE FRIENDS OF
THE HURTWOOD



THANK YOU

Leaflet

A year ago we produced a leaflet designed to tell people what the Hurtwood is, who Friends are and what we do – with the corollary, of course, that we hoped they would contribute too! (See the Autumn 2018 newsletter for details.) We're working on a new edition, with a view to increasing membership and helping us do more work to maintain the Hurtwood.

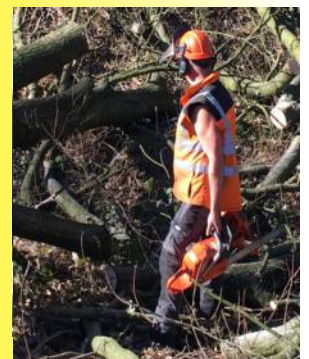
Booklet

Members of longer standing may recall successive editions of ***Around the Hurtwood, A Visitor's Guide with Maps***, which has become rather outdated. We're also starting work on bringing this up to date and would welcome any input from Friends and/or users of the Hurtwood. We would especially welcome any advice from naturalists and birdwatchers, and also high quality photographs, particularly of wildlife on the Hurtwood.

Please send to communications@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk or phone Sue on 07579 811122.

FRIENDS OF THE HURTWOOD

- Provide a full time Ranger, **Mark Beaumont**
- Manage 30 miles of registered footpaths and bridleways, 30 miles of unofficial tracks, a network of firebreaks and 14 car parks, to provide unrivalled public access across the Hurtwood.
- Protect and conserve the natural environment.
- Create and preserve wildlife habitats.
- Maintain the panoramic views from the tops of the Hurtwood hills.
- Clear and prevent litter and fly tipping.
- Protect three scheduled monuments including Holmbury Hill Iron Age Hill Fort.
- Promote educational activities to encourage children to treasure the countryside.



WHY NOT MAKE A FRIEND A FRIEND!

Visit our website:

<https://friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk/friends>

And become a Friend through a regular annual or monthly donation by direct debit. A direct debit ensures that our administration costs are minimised and if the donor qualifies for Gift Aid, this adds an extra 25% to the donation.