



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
2018
No.48**

Friends Newsletter

Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends

Fire!

Who would have believed that after such a wet and windy spring we would experience one of the hottest summers on record! The hot weather brings the risk of fire on the Hurtwood and for the first time for many years there was a fire on Holmbury Hill east of Spurfold Copse (details in the ranger's report). We put fire warning notices up but it seems not generally appreciated that even if a small fire appears to have been extinguished – as was the case in May – there remains a risk that it will continue to spread underground, breaking out on the surface again much later. Mark tries to explain this to groups and walkers most likely to light fires, but we hope Friends will reinforce these warnings as they can.

Dates

It's coming up to that time of year when the Holmbury Bonfire Boys hold their Bonfire and Fireworks Display, due to take place on 3 November. Details below and on our website. On 4 December, the directors of FotH Trustee Company meet to review the past year and agree budgets and actions for the coming year. This is not an open meeting but items for discussion are always welcome. Please let me know by 1st December.

Director anyone?

The board of the FotH Trustee Company now constitutes the managing body of the Friends charity and we continue to seek committed volunteers to join as directors. We are particularly keen to recruit someone who can take responsibility for our digital communications, including the development of the FotH website. Anyone interested can contact me at chairman@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk or call me on 01306 730396.

Money

Thank you so much to all our supporters for helping us to raise £323.58 via #easyfundraising. Your support in this as elsewhere really does make a massive difference to Friends of the Hurtwood. You can continue to make a world of difference to our cause and raise donations to us from retailers with many of the things you buy online. Start shopping: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> and nominate Friends of the Hurtwood as your chosen good cause.

New directions

I'm pleased to announce that in partnership with the Land Trust, FotH has agreed to take responsibility for managing public access and woodland conservation in Bookhurst Wood near Cranleigh. Bookhurst Wood is a 15 hectare ancient semi-natural woodland which has large areas of old hazel and hornbeam coppice with mature oak standards, birch, ash, willow and aspen, plus bluebells in season.

The Land Trust – who acquired the Wood around 2015 – were pleased to have the benefit of FotH's reputation and experience to keep the land well managed for public access and conservation of the woodland, its wildlife and flora. For our part, the extra income will bring economies of scale with machinery and may enable us to employ a much needed assistant to the ranger.

I'll let you know how it goes in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, keep enjoying the Hurtwood, whatever the weather!

Peter Copping, FotH Chairman

Friends of the Hurtwood

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Ranger's report

What an amazing summer we have had, so nice to be able to go outside ready for work in the morning without wondering what other clothes to take and not knowing what the weather is going to throw at you later in the day. We have certainly seen an increase in visitor numbers this summer, as you'd expect with such glorious weather.

Fire risk

But with the dry weather we obviously had the risk of fire high on our minds, especially as we had had that small fire on Holmbury Hill earlier in May, before the dry really hot weather had even started. In all only about an acre was burnt and as this was in an area that had recently been felled, there was little damage. The fire brigade did an excellent job of preventing the fire spreading any further, and they maintained a presence on site damping down the ground for further 12 hours, finally leaving the site at 8am the following morning. You may have seen that we decided after some discussions with other landowners with public access, that it was a good idea to put up fire warning notices on the boards in all the car parks.



Clearing the verges

Over the summer months we normally cut all the grass on the side of the larger rides but due to the hot and dry weather I decided it was best to wait until we got some rain. It would have been rather embarrassing if the Ranger had managed to set fire to the place, when I'm going round making sure no one is lighting fires or having barbecues! Now the weather has turned I'm gradually catching up.

Currently we are starting to cut back the vegetation from some of the larger fire roads. This is in part

prompted by the fire risk, so we have a large enough gap between the trees should they catch fire. But also a lot of horse riders use the grassy edges as the going there is safer for their horses, so I like to keep the growth back so it's not in their way too.

Reinstating a lost footpath

Earlier this year it had been brought to my attention that a footpath that used to go up to the summit of Pitch Hill from Moon Hall Road had been long since lost. Anyone trying to locate the path using a map was led to the nearest clearing, which is the bottom section of a well-used bike trail. It was clear that this could be a conflict issue, so with the help of Surrey Rights of Way Department we mapped out the exact line of the old footpath. This turned out to be nowhere near where we thought it was and there was an existing Public Footpath sign in completely the wrong place further down the road. The R.O.W dept agreed to do the work at the bottom of the path if we did the top section up to the summit. So the Surrey footpath volunteers from the Rights of Way dept have put in a couple of steps off the road and cleared the line of the path two thirds of the way up the hill. We have continued the line and put in a new set of steps taking walkers to the back of the toposcope.



New barriers

Also on Pitch Hill we have erected new barriers at each end of a small narrow section of the Greensand Way. This path is simply too narrow to accommodate different user groups at once so it is restricted to walkers only; the same thing happens on a similar section on Holmbury Hill. This is not new but the old barriers had become rotten and needed replacing.



Logging damage

In my report for the spring newsletter I spoke about the mud and damage that had been done to the fire roads on Holmbury Hill during winter logging operations. The surfaces have now all been made good and hopefully we won't see a return of the mud this winter.

Fly-tipping

If you ever walk past the rubbish compound near the reservoir on Holmbury Hill, you will have seen that it's been emptied. It took two lorry loads to remove it all at a cost of over £2,000! As usual fly tip is still an issue, so please keep vigilant and let me know if you come across it. And, of course, if you are having any work

done on your house or gardens, please make sure you are using bona fide contractors who carry all the correct licences, especially if the job will create any waste that needs to be disposed of.

Mark Beaumont

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The 2018 Hurtleberry: Sunday 16 September



This was Tri-Adventure's 4th running of the Annual Hurtleberry and, once again, we were rewarded with a beautiful day, ideal racing conditions, and some fantastic competition.

This off-road event comprises Sprint and Full Duathlons (combining running and biking) as well as a 10k Trail Run, a 10k Canicross (runners + dogs) and a mountain bike challenge. Set in the beautiful Hurtwood, the network of trails is a great attraction.

With very little rain, the course was in excellent shape. The sun came out as forecast, and it was still and mild. This plus the dry weather made for excellent, fast conditions for running and biking, and Ross Smith, Men's Full Duathlon, broke the race record in 1:59:52 – the first sub 2 hour time.

Sunday's race turned out to be one of the best events we've run, with participants travelling from mainland Europe to take part, as they prepared for the October European Triathlon Union World Championships in Ibiza. Time and again, participants commented how great the course was: challenging yet not impossible, well marked and offering something for everyone. The online feedback has also been very positive, and we're pleased that so many really enjoyed themselves. We run this event on behalf of the Friends of the Hurtwood, to raise money for the upkeep and general maintenance of the area, and we were really pleased to be back again in this beautiful part of Surrey.

The event grows in popularity every year, and the Full Duathlon proved particularly popular, with 39 starters. Joining them at the staged start beside the Holmbury St Mary Cricket Club were 21 Sprint Duathletes, 14 Trail Runners and 6 dogs in the Canicross. The two Duathlon events and the 10k Trail Run were first off at 9.00am, followed a few minutes later by the 10k Canicross runners, pulled along by their enthusiastic dogs. All of a sudden, what had been a bustling village area was now eerily quiet, with just the organisers and race officials left to get on with the business.

The events provided a high class of competition in all categories, with clear winners in the Full Duathlon and in the Trail Run. The Male Sprint Duathlon produced the tightest finish, with just 30 seconds separating the winner, Nick Smith, from second placed Jim Morris. It was good to see so many people back from previous years, trying (some successfully) to better their times.



The Full Duathlon had the largest field and didn't disappoint. This year, Ross Smith led from the start and was clearly the strongest by the end of the race, winning by an 8 minute margin, and breaking the Hurtleberry race record and the 2 hour barrier on 1:59:52. Gerald Tudor was second, closely followed by Jon Heasman. The two laps of the bike loop are particularly punishing, but they offer some of the best trails and single tracks Surrey has to offer.

The Ladies' Full Duathlon was impressively won by Naomi Brewer, who finished almost 25 minutes ahead of second placed Laura Dawkin, with Julie Da Silva in third place.

Nick Smith just managed to hold off Jim Morris in the Men's Sprint Duathlon, coming in 30 seconds in front, with Graham Pentney finishing just under a minute behind. Jim had the better run times in the first and third legs, but it was Nick's speed on the bike and faster transition times which made the difference.

Rachel Roberts put in an amazing effort to win the Ladies' Sprint Duathlon comfortably, finishing over 6 minutes ahead of Ilze Skabarniecere, with Jenny Deacon in third place.

There were fewer runners this year in the 10k Trail Run, and the Men's Event was won comfortably by Alexander Holland in just under 52 minutes. Geoff Wilson held off a determined challenge from third placed Jason Dawson, coming in second with 5 seconds to spare.

There was a tight race between the winner, Barbara Rossouw and Danielle Kleynhams in the Ladies' 10k Trail Run, with just 37 seconds separating them. Chantelle Shekyls was third.

The Canicross start was fabulous to watch, with the dogs full of beans and exuberance, waiting patiently (if a little excitedly) for the signal to start the race. I'm not sure who enjoys this event more, the runners or the dogs; at times, it seemed that it was the dogs who were being held back by their two-legged owners! The winners were Natasha Swan and Xiana in a great time of 54m10s in the Ladies' Section, and Geoff Dickens with the huge Husky in the Men's Section.

Full results can be found at <https://www.triadventure.co.uk/event-results/>

An awful lot of work goes on behind the scenes to stage an event like this. Thanks to our main sponsor, Alton Sports. And I'd like to thank Mark Beaumont, the Hurtwood Ranger, for all his help and support, and for preparing the ground for the Event Village. Thanks, also, to Tracey Blandford, Julia Edkins, Ed and Tom James, and Ben. Finally, many thanks to Gill and the Peaslake Village Shop for lunch packs and refreshments.



All in all, the event proved a great success, and there were lots of smiling yet exhausted faces. We look forward to welcoming everyone back again to next year's Hurtleberry event, provisionally booked for Sunday 15 September 2019. We want to keep putting on fantastic events which show people this lovely countryside and challenge them whilst making them feel good. So please tell your friends, and if you're not taking part come and cheer the runners, bikers and dogs on.

Adam Marcinowicz, Tri-Adventure

DIARY DATES FOR 2018



**SATURDAY
3 NOVEMBER
6.00pm for
6.30pm**

HOLMBURY ST MARY BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS

The annual celebration organised by Holmbury Bonfire Boys in aid of local good causes (FotH included). Admission by programme only, which can be bought at entry points to the site. Confirmation of arrangements and programme to follow (see the Holmbury Parish News and the FotH website for updates)



**THURSDAY
4 DECEMBER**

BOARD MEETING OF THE FotH TRUSTEE COMPANY

See chairman's letter.

Raising awareness – and money!

We really want – and need – to encourage everyone who uses the Hurtwood to share in its upkeep, which is why we produced a new leaflet explaining what the Hurtwood is about and why joining the Friends will help keep it as the lovely unspoiled place we all enjoy.

The leaflet is re-produced in this issue, and copies are available from the ranger for wider distribution (see front page for contact details). So if you walk or ride with friends who haven't yet joined us – or perhaps have no idea what the Hurtwood is all about – please get some leaflets and pass them round. If you have any ideas for particular groups we could target please let us know.

Zoe Horton and David Clifford have been busy distributing the leaflets and talking to car drivers, bikers and walkers in the Walking Bottom car park on weekend mornings, to raise awareness of how Friends look after the Hurtwood and to invite people to join up. It seems to work, with a lot of interest and a noticeable spike in new donations after each session. Contact Zoe at administration@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk or David on fothbikergroup@gmail.com, if you'd like to join in.

Happenings round the Hurtwood

Holmbury Bonfire Boys' Summer BBQ

On 30 June the Holmbury Bonfire Boys staged their first summer event – a family barbecue and games for local residents at Felday Glade, followed by evening fireworks. Foth joined a small group of community organisations with stands letting people know who we were and what we did. It was a great chance to meet supporters old and new. The event was timeless and quintessentially English village. Lovely memories of a lively bunch of children organising their cricket match up the hill. The cricket captain had started to arrange teams, but the children took over and he sensibly bowed out and left them to it!

Albury Weekend

On Saturday 21 July the Albury Produce Show on Albury Heath enjoyed another day of sunshine and crowds, with a full show tent, community stalls and games plus an increasing choice of things to eat and drink, with the emphasis on local produce – gin, wine, meat, cheese, beer and cider. Terrier racing was, as always, a prime attraction with the usual lapses in discipline among some of the canine participants.

Next morning was the Tent Service – for the first time including a baptism – followed by the Albury Music Festival. The Festival continues to enhance its reputation for good music from local musicians in lovely surroundings and a relaxed atmosphere. And it's still free (apart from a small fee if you want to put up a gazebo).

Peaslake Fair

Bank Holiday Monday 27 August saw another lively Peaslake Fair in warm sunshine. Friends' volunteers once again helped manage the car parking, and we joined an eclectic mix of community and commercial stands in the village trying to persuade, cajole, inform and sell to the many local residents, bikers, walkers and visitors who were attracted to the event. Another opportunity for us to meet Friends and urge the many people who use the Hurtwood to contribute to its upkeep.

Hurtleberry 2018

This took place on Sunday 16 September. See report above.

NOTES FOR HORSE RIDERS

The Ranger and Management Committee are aware of concerns about conflict points with bikers coming onto bridleways, particularly on Pitch Hill, and we're doing what we can, with great co-operation from the bikers' representatives, to separate horse and bike trails and minimise the scope for conflict (see notes for bikers below). Please report any dangerous or potentially dangerous happenings to Mark and he'll see if improvements can be made. But it's ultimately up to all users to take due care.

We recognise that horses and riders want a safe ride on a forgiving surface. So thank you to Mark for mowing grass verges on the sides of some of the stony tracks on both Holmbury and Pitch Hill.

On sandy soils such as on Farley Heath, however, the story is different. Here, horses tend to avoid the hard work of wading through deep sand and veer off on to the grass and bracken verges. This has caused some trails to more than double in width and risk becoming race tracks. So a request to riders to keep to the middle of sandy tracks rather than the edges. The same applies where paths are muddy.

NOTES FOR BIKERS

At the moment our biker trail maintenance is focused on resolving user conflict points and preventing erosion and trail spread. To this end the trail which descends from Lawbrook Lane to Walking Bottom car park has been redirected at the lower end in an attempt to keep riders on the trail rather than use the fire road. At the top half the trail has been rebuilt to eliminate the trail spread and to make it more of an all weather trail.

We would like to thank the volunteers who have given up their time to enable this to happen.

NOTES FOR WALKERS

Please contact the ranger or editor if you'd like to make any points about conditions for walking in the Hurtwood.





THE HURTWOOD

- A PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE
AND FOR YOU



 The Hurtwood covers nearly 2,500 acres of privately owned forest, heath and hills in South West Surrey, with public access on foot, bicycle and horse granted free by the landowners.

 Public access is managed by the charity **Friends of the Hurtwood**, which clears trails, maintains the car parks, removes fly tip, opens up views and looks after the countryside and wildlife.

 Most of our income comes from people like you who use and love the Hurtwood. Without your donations, we cannot do the work that's needed.

To help keep the Hurtwood open for your enjoyment,

PLEASE BECOME A FRIEND

and

DONATE NOW

(Details overleaf)

Charity No 200053



FotH is a registered charity made up of people who believe passionately in maintaining the Hurtwood.



Over almost a century, a succession of landowners have generously granted public access on foot, bike and horse over the Hurtwood, an area which embraces Holmbury Hill, Pitch Hill, Winterfold, Farley Heath and part of Blackheath.



The landowners have entrusted FotH with the management of the public access and we employ a single ranger and occasional contractors to maintain the paths, car parks and viewpoints.



Most of our income comes from Friends' donations and fundraising. Find out more on www.friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk

PLEASE BECOME A FRIEND and **DONATE NOW** via

www.friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk/friends/make-a-donation,
our QR code
or write to FotH, St Mark's Churchyard, Peaslake, GU5 9RR



**Thanks to Holmbury Bonfire Boys
for funding this appeal**

Lasting legacies

If the Hurtwood has meant a lot to you during your life, please consider making FotH a beneficiary of your will so that future generations can enjoy this beautiful expanse of heath and forest as well.

Making a will is normally quite straightforward – and we should really all have one, duly signed and witnessed. If you already have a will, it is even easier to add a legacy to the Friends in a codicil.

Legacies are a brilliant way of giving something back after years of pleasure in the Hurtwood, and we'll be happy to discuss any requests for how your bequest might be used. (Contacts on the front page).

FotH WEBSITE

A website is one of the most important assets for any modern organisation and we are aware that although the FotH website contains some amazing information and advice, its format is dated and it's become something of a nightmare for the uninitiated to work with. So we are looking to make some changes and here are some ways that you might help.

- The chairman's letter invites expressions of interest from technically-minded people to become a director of FotH.
- If you have skills and experience in setting up websites but would rather not be a director, we would still value your practical help.
- If you have had problems with the website or have found something in it of special use, please let us know so we can take account of it when we're making changes.

Please contact us. You will find all the contact details on the front page of the newsletter.



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 20% to the donation.

**PLEASE SUPPORT
THE FRIENDS OF
THE HURTWOOD**



THANK YOU