



The Friends of

Putnoe Wood & Mowsbury Hillfort

Newsletter

Spring 2014

Do We have a Healthy Wood?



You may have read in the Beds on Sunday newspaper, that concerns had been raised over seasonal bare patches and areas of the wood that appeared to be subject to excessive clearance. Coppicing has been carried out in the wood since medieval times, presently on a rotational 7 year plot cycle, the old 10 regime having been completed. Minimal clearance for changes to the path network is being carried out to allow a greater area of the wood to be recreationally accessible and to facilitate maintenance activities. Existing paths will also have their edges pushed back (route widened, but the hard surface will remain at 1.6 meters) to allow vehicle access on the current outer path structure, for essential management.

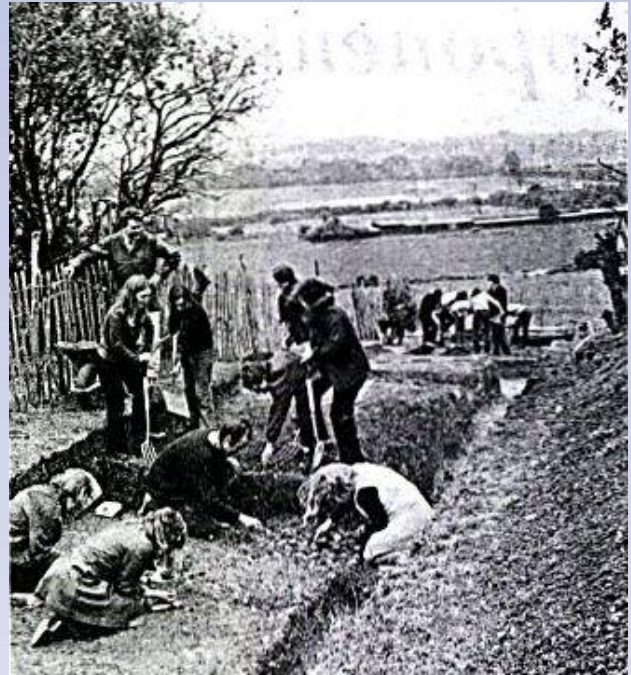
Mature trees are being lost to disease. A significant proportion of the oak trees have diseases such as Chronic Oak Decline and Acute Oak Decline. Many trees have issues such King Alfred's cakes (Fungus) Honey Fungus Ganoderma (Bracket Fungus) Inonotus (Bracket Fungus) and are being felled because they have become unsafe. Small balsam and bramble are invasive plants that also need to be managed and reduced to prevent their spread and damage to other ground flora.

There will be an ongoing need to manage the wood, probably more intensively in the future, to deal with fallen and dangerous trees.

A programme of planting trees of different varieties is ongoing, given the known diseases that are affecting the areas, to try and provide better security for the wood in the long term and improve on the age and height structure within the wood. We ask the questions for you. *Continued on Page 6.*



"HELP! We Need Somebody."



"Not just anybody."

If you were involved in the 1971 dig at Mowsbury Hillfort we would love to hear from you. We are trying to compile as much information and details about Mowsbury Hillfort as we can.

The text relating to the above photograph from the Bedfordshire Times, October 15th 1971 is reproduced below. For a chat with one of our volunteer researchers please get in touch at:

contact@putnoemowsburyfriends.org.uk.

The spot where a fort once stood.

It doesn't look much now, but once there was an Iron Age fort on this spot at Mowsbury Camp, Bedford.

Mr. Gerald Dring, a micro-biologist at Unilever, Sharnbrook, who is in charge of the dig, has unearthed a cobble circle which is the possible base of an Iron Age hut circle.

With him in the centre of the picture are a party of first year history students from Bedford College of Education, and one of their lecturers Mr Phillip Liddle who is by the fence.

In the background another group are standing where a 12 foot high rampart defended the site. Beyond that was a ditch. In the distance can be seen Mowsbury Park.

Last Task of 2013 in Putnoe Wood



Copping of the hazel and other woodland species has been carried out in the wood since medieval times, presently on a rotational 7 year plot cycle instead of the 10 year regime under the new management plan. What at the moment appears to be a bare expanse now, will soon be filled with new growth.

Get Snappy with Bee Walk.



BeeWalk is a national recording scheme to monitor the abundance of bumblebees across the UK. The survey would be impossible without volunteers, who identify and count the bumblebees they see on an hour's walk each month from March to October. It can be a very pleasant way to spend an hour or two on a sunny day. Further information at:

<http://bumblebeeconservation.org/get-involved/surveys/beewalk/>

Or if you are a keen photographer you can help map the distributions of our bumblebees, particularly the rarer species.

Further information at:

Get snappy and help to track Britain's bumblebees

<http://bumblebeeconservation.org/get-involved/surveys/beewatch/>



Let Us Know Your Views and News.
Contribute to the Summer issue of the newsletter.

Wassail 2013



Thank you to everyone for venturing out on a crisp starry evening at Mowsbury Hillfort for the Wassail. A special thank you to Hemlock Morris Dancers who led the proceedings and kept us entertained. If you would like to practice for next year the Wassail information handout can be found on the Fun Stuff page of the website. We hope it was an enjoyable and memorable evening for all.

Apple tree planting



The apple saplings which had been fostered by John and Helen since last year made it up to the orchard in style by quad bike. After planting we celebrated with a private Wassail to welcome the trees to the Hillfort. Queen Helen sprinkled some amber nectar around one of the trees but sadly King John was unable to participate with the ceremony. The six new trees replace ones planted in the 1920's which had been lost to disease and we had to obtain special permission from English Heritage to replace them.

Please contact us if you have memories or information of any kind on Putnoe Wood or Mowsbury Hillfort. We are always trying to expand our knowledge and understanding of these two sites. Our volunteer researchers or the Country Park Rangers would be only too pleased to talk with you. Please get in touch:

Prioryrangers@bedford.gov.uk,
contact@putnoemowsburyfriends.org.uk.

Did You Know



Is it possible that Mowsbury Hillfort's ramparts can be seen from space? Probably not, but the south western ramparts that have been cleared of brambles can clearly be seen from Mowsbury Park. Much of what you can see in this photograph were rifle ranges used in the early 20th century and what is known as the Old Butts is just off to the right. To the left of the photograph there was a brickfield and kiln, one of three in the area, used from the late 1800's to the early 1900's. If you walk to the left of the golf club house along the ROW the old workings can be seen. This is perhaps why we find a great deal of brick and fired clay debris at the Hillfort.

We can see clearly now



We can see clearly now the scrub has gone. Tasking on the northern fringes of the Hillfort the group were protected from the worst of February high winds and rain and opened up a view from the pond towards Ravensden and as yet no sign of a wind turbine. During the summer months we will have to keep on top of the nettles and dogs mercury which will no doubt try to invade the area. Since beginning work around the ponds last year there has been a noticeable increase in bird activity with a pair of mallards, moorhen and flying displays overhead from the buzzards and red kites.

Advertisement

Check out our web site to see how you can help The Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort raise funds

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Putnoe Wood & Mowsbury Hillfort

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easyfundraising.org.uk

AS FEATURED IN

the guardian THE INDEPENDENT London Evening Standard THE SUNDAY TIMES Daily Mail

Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort

www.putnoemowsburyfriends.org.uk

So long, farewell Auf Wiedersehen, adieu

Unhappily at the end of March we had to say goodbye to Larissa Clarke, Parks Officer with the Borough. Larissa has been one of our inspirational shining lights since we emerged from our chrysalises and formed the Friends Group three years ago. Larissa is studying to complete her diploma in personal and group fitness and will use this new skill to improve the health and wellbeing of her clients, so they can become just as spritely and energetic as members of the Friends group. Hopefully when she has finished her studies we will see more of her at Mowsbury Hillfort or Putnoe Wood, perhaps at one of the tasks or activities. We wish Larissa, her family and of course the lurchers all the very best for the future. The updated Borough's contact list can be found on page eight.



Dear friends of Putnoe Wood
& Mowsbury Hillfort
Thank you all so much
for my card, games & vouchers.
It was a complete surprise
& so kind of you all. I
should be thanking you for
all the work you do & what
a pleasure you've been to
work with & get to know.
All are best for continuing
to enhance the 2 sites.
hope to catch up sometimes.
Larissa

The only snow in the Wood this Year



The Snowdrops in Putnoe Wood during February were well worth a visit but you needed your wellies if you managed to pop down to see them. In early spring there will also be displays of wood anemones and primroses.

Bramble Clearance



The brambles which had started to engulf the south western rampart were cutback in February. This allows the ramparts to be more visible and prevent damage by the bramble and elder root structures. There are still plenty of brambles left in other areas for foraging later in the year to go with the apples from the orchard.

Back To College



Two members of the Friends Group joined other volunteers and Country Rangers on a two session City and Guilds training and evaluation course for brush cutting and strimming. The certification and experience will allow us to offer more support to the Country Rangers.

No Peace for the Wicked



Nothing like putting new skills into practice. The first task after completing the brush cutter training saw us put to work clearing the edge of the courtyard meadow that had been allowed to remain temporarily fallow because of the growing wild liquorice.

New Paths



The route for two new sections of path have been cleared by the Friends Group. It is hoped they will improve visitor experience, allow people to walk more into the woods' rather than just tour the outside edge on the northern boundary.

Tasks to keep us fit and never dull



Because of the extremely wet weather at the beginning of the year we were a little late in pruning the fruit trees at the Hillfort but hopefully it will not be detrimental to the health of the trees.

Woodland Rescue



As we cleared the scrub for the new paths we came across pockets of wild flowers such as wood anemone's, primroses and of course bluebells that were not noticeable before.

All Fired Up



We probably did contribute to the particulates floating across the East of England recently, but do not think our small bonfire of brambles caused the poor air quality or heavy smog hanging over Bedford. This was all too obvious from the Hillfort.



We are in the process of relocating these plants away from the route of the paths but within view of recreational users. This operation is non intrusive during bird nesting season. The meandering path provides a safer route than the current northern path which is degrading into the brook on the northern boundary.



Putnoe Wood: Questions and Answers

Q1. Why are trees being cut down?

A significant proportion of the trees in the wood are diseased or are suffering from fungus. The badly affected ones are dangerous and have to be taken down. Not all trees with problems need to be felled and where they can be left in situ they can provide excellent habitat.

Q2. Why are there a lot of fallen trees in the wood?

Some of the fungus that attacks trees rots out the inside of the trunk or branches. The rotten branches often break and fall as do the trunks in heavy winds. Quite often after a rotten tree has lost a lot of branches the trunk remains standing until eventually it will fall down. It is good to have up to 5% dead standing trees for birds and other wild life to use.

Q3. Why is it necessary to create a new path in the middle of the wood?

The new path will provide an improved visitor experience and give better access for essential maintenance work and to clear dead and dangerous trees.

Q4. It feels as if the shrubbery in the wood is less dense – why?

During the winter the shrubs and trees are free of leaves and this opens up the views across the wood. In addition, winter clearance work and coppicing has opened up the interior of the wood. The leaves will soon be out again.

Q5. What is being done to ensure the wood stays healthy?

The majority of the existing trees, mainly oak and ash, are of a similar age and height. Planting of different varieties is underway to provide a gradation of age and height of trees within the wood. Active management of small balsam and bramble, both invasive plants, is necessary to protect other wild flora. These actions will help protect the long term future of the wood and encourage plants such as primroses, wood anemone and snowdrops to flourish.

Q6. Can the users of the wood help in anyway?

Enjoy the wood and wildlife, act responsibly and do not leave litter or dog poop bags in the wood. If you want to do more why not join the Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort.



If you have any concerns, questions or just want a chat relating to Putnoe Wood or Mowsbury Hillfort please do not hesitate to contact us or the Country Park Rangers. Contact details are on page 8.

What's in a Name

Throughout our early history names of people and places have evolved.

From the Iron Age right through to the Anglo-Saxon period surnames were not used except for an additional post script which simply told you where they were from or something that further described that person or deed done. So we have names such as Eadric the Wild of Wales, Hereward the Wake and William the Bastard. Common folk were just known as purely John, Cedric or Robert etc. Can you imagine if the Royal Mail was around in those days, no surnames, no Postcodes no definitive address, how would they ever be able to deliver all that junk mail to you?

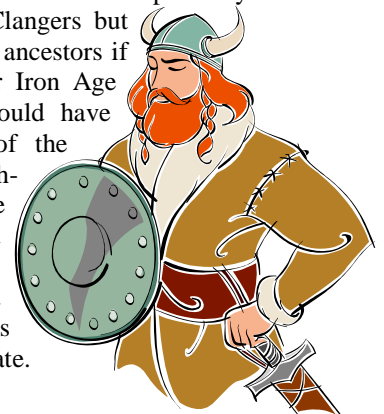
It's not until the Norman Conquest that we find surnames coming into play. This is because the Normans were all about possessions, they wanted people to know they owned land, great estates, houses and they owned you, so they tended to take on surnames that reflected the names of areas, towns or places they owned. For the peasants their surnames evolved from what they did or what profession they followed. Surnames define our family lineage but do you need a surname to book your place in history, history shows that Boudicca, Cnut, Caratacus, Harold, Hereward apparently did not find it restrictive.

Towns such as Ashford, Brentford, Watford and Bedford all have one thing in common "ford" this gives a clue to where they are situated, on a river crossing and the prefix to "ford" normally describes an additional feature in the area or a notable person to cross reference its location i.e. Brentford, a ford across the River Brent or Bedford, a Saxon chief called Beda and a ford across the River Ouse.

Closer to home we have Putnoe recorded in the Domesday Book as Puttenhoe, Putta was the first recorded Anglo-Saxon settler in the area and "hoe" which translates to a spur, hoh of land or outcrop, Mowsbury Hill being the nearest outcrop.

Mowsbury, four names have been associated with this area, Morinsbury, Moresbury, Mosbury and Mowsbury, one thing that all four names have in common is "bury" which translates in old English to castle or fortification, which probable shows that this was a site that held some importance. A place name defines where it is and its importance, so hopefully you will understand why we have decided to adopt the name Mowsbury Hill Meadow for the outer meadow at the Hillfort.

As we live in Bedfordshire we would probably be classed as Bedfordians or Clangers but this was not the case for our ancestors if they lived here. In the later Iron Age and Roman period they would have been a Catuvellauni one of the most powerful tribes in southern Britain. At the time of the Norman Conquest you would have been Mercian because this area was part of Mercia. We only became Bedfordians or Clangers at a much later date.



New Information Boards for Putnoe Wood

After a lengthy process the designs for the interpretation boards emerged from Borough Hall with full approval. The boards are being printed and will be delivered to the Council. They are to be mounted on metal lectern style legs and the order for these has been placed, the same firm will deal with the installation in the wood. The existing information board and cabinet at the entrance to the wood will be removed and replaced with a smaller one that is easier to use. This will be used for information sheets and public notices relating to the wood. The design of the new boards was a partnership project between the Borough Council and the Friends. We have offered to give continued assistance with this project and look forward to seeing the new boards in position soon. Ward funding for the new boards has been generously provided by Councillors Michael Headley and Sallyanne Smith.

Welcome to Putnoe Wood

Celebrates the seasons in Putnoe Wood and provides users with information about the Flora and Fauna that can be discovered.

Welcome to Putnoe Wood

Introduction to the history of the wood with a timeline and map

Caring for Putnoe Wood

Information on caring for the wood, management and guidelines for users.

Friends of Putnoe Wood

Background information about the Friends Group, guidelines for users and map.





Bedford Borough Council

Priory Diary

Spring 2014

30 th	9am Guided Bird Walk	Mar
5 th	2pm-4pm WT Wildlife Watch	April
6 th	9am-3pm Volunteer Task	
9 th	7.30pm WT AGM and Talk: Wildlife and Organic Gardening	
13 th	2pm-4pm WT Plant Sale	May
19 th	11am-3pm Dogs Trust Microchipping Event	
27 th	9am Guided Bird Walk	
3 rd	2pm-4pm WT Wildlife Watch	June
4 th	9am-3pm Volunteer Task	
11 th	4am-7am approx Dawn Chorus Walk	
25 th	9am Guided Bird Walk	
1 st	9am-3pm Volunteer Task	June
6 th	9.30pm Bat Walk (Booking essential)	
7 th	2pm-4pm WT Wildlife Watch	
29 th	8am Guided Bird Walk	

Information

For further information on Volunteer Tasks, Guided Bird Walks or general park information please ring Priory Rangers on 01234 211182 or email prioryrangers@bedford.gov.uk

Guided Bird Walks start from the Visitor Centre. Please bring along your binoculars.

Bat Walks start from the Visitor Centre; **booking essential**. To book please ring Danny on 07780 954272 or email bats@priorycountrypark.co.uk

Wildlife Trust talks and Wildlife Watch are held at the Visitor Centre. For talks and Wildlife Watch a donation of £2 is suggested. Wildlife Watch is aimed at 8-12 year olds interested in nature and the outdoors. Younger children are welcome if accompanied by an adult.; **booking essential**. For more information please ring 01234 364213 or email Bedfordshire@wildlifebcn.org

Priory Country Park
Barkers Lane
Bedford
MK41 9DU

Free car parking
Car park open 5am-9pm

Visitor Centre open:
9am to 4.30 pm
weekdays
11am to 4.30 pm
weekends

Updated Bedford Borough Contacts

General Park enquiries
Ed Burnett
ed.burnett@bedford.gov.uk
01234 228759

Grounds Maintenance enquiries
Clive Betts
clive.betts@bedford.gov.uk
01234 276682

Play Area enquiries
James Wallbank,
james.wallbank@bedford.gov.uk
01234 718457

Volunteering enquiries
Deborah Shrimpton,
deborah.shrimpton@bedford.gov.uk
01234 718276

Park Events
Bjorn Hove
bjorn.hove@bedford.gov.uk
01234 718456

Useful Telephone Numbers

Priory Park Rangers	01234 211182
Bedford Borough Council	01234 267422
Bedford Police (non emergency)	101
Environmental Services	800 121 8888
Highways Help Line	01234 718003
Bedford Citizens Advice	0844 245 1290
NHS Direct	111
Anglian Water	0845 714 5145
British Gas	0800 111 999
Brickhill Parish Council	01234 271708



Tasks, Activities and Friends Meetings

Please checkout the Diary on our websites what's on page for times and dates:

www.putnoemowsburyfriends.org.uk
contact@putnoemowsburyfriends.org.uk

The English School of Falconry Bird of Prey & Conservation Centre

WORD SEARCH

P	E	R	E	G	R	I	N	E	R
B	W	R	E	D	K	I	T	E	H
A	D	F	Y	R	B	K	Y	O	O
R	D	H	T	V	C	F	E	L	B
N	R	A	Z	Q	E	H	R	P	B
O	A	Q	F	J	D	C	P	H	Y
W	Z	R	C	M	N	V	S	M	T
L	Z	T	A	W	N	Y	O	W	L
R	U	Y	K	E	S	T	R	E	L
P	B	R	G	J	D	S	W	O	E

Find the following British birds in the word search:

Red Kite	Peregrine	Barn Owl	Tawny Owl
Buzzard	Hobby	Kestrel	Osprey

You can help to protect healthy Oak, Ash and Chestnut trees and prevent spreading Diseases and Pests By:

Avoiding contact with trees showing symptoms of Acute Oak Decline, Ash Decline (*Chalara fraxinea*), Horse Chestnut Bleeding Canker, Do not touch the bleeding areas on tree stems.

If you have been walking or cycling in an area where there are diseased trees, clean soles of walking shoes and bicycle tyres before entering areas where trees are not yet affected.

Do not remove dead wood, branches or infected bark from the wooded area. For the latest information please go to the Forestry Commission web site at: www.forestry.gov.uk/