



Friends of Ashenground and Bolnore Woods

Autumn 2022

Conservation

-

Protection

-

Enhancement

-

Enjoyment

Update from FoABW Chair:

FoABW were finally able to get back to normal after Covid restrictions were eased. We held not one but four events this year, including our Annual General Meeting.

The Mid Sussex Marathon took place on 1 st May 2022. FoABW volunteers helped marshal the runners through the woodland section of the race.

We said goodbye to Peter and Judith McKerchar at the AGM in March. Peter and Judith were members of the FoABW team for many years. Peter stepped down as Treasurer and Membership Secretary and was, of course, a valued member of the conservation volunteers.

The committee welcomed Hannah Sharpe to the committee as the Treasurer and Membership Secretary.



The Nature Photography Afternoon took place in April and was led by Brian Watkins. The fabulous bluebell display was the star of the day. Brian gave those attending the benefit of his expertise in helping them obtain their best photos.

The other much-loved event was the Children's Bug Hunt. The weather was perfect, the children and their parents enjoyed the afternoon in Pond Meadow hunting for bugs. Debby Martell-Blake

and MSDC Ranger led the event, identifying a large number of bugs found by both children and adults.



The Evening Bat Walk, our final event for 2022, was led by Jess from the Sussex Bat Group. As soon as the sun began to set, the bats came out to hunt for food. There were a lot of excited children seeing the bats flying and hearing the



echolocation 'clicks' of the bats with the aid of our bat detection handsets. Common Soprano, Soprano Pipistrelle and Noctule bats were recorded. As we made our way back along the Bridleway at the end of the walk, we had an added treat of being joined by two foxes trotting along the path.

Thank you to all Walk Leaders for giving their time and sharing their knowledge. Thank you to those attending our events and for your support of FoABW. We look forward to inviting you to the 2023 events: Nature Photography Afternoon, Children's Bug Hunt, Evening Bat Walk and a Bird of Prey Afternoon.



Friends of Ashenground and Bolnore Woods

Autumn 2022

Conservation

-

Protection

-

Enhancement

-

Enjoyment

The annual general meeting will take place at 15:00pm on Sunday 12th March 2023 at The Ascension Community Centre, 110 Vale Road, RH16 4JS

Conservation Activities Report

FoABW conservation volunteers focussed on mowing the meadows and woodland buffer zones during the second half of 2021.

Early sessions of 2022 were devoted to chestnut coppicing, creating a new clearing in Catts Wood. This was inadvertently enlarged when a Spring storm brought down one of the adjacent Scots pines. The volunteers also carried out some targeted hazel coppicing in the ancient woodland by the bridleway. Coppicing encourages regeneration and improves biodiversity.



The power scythe mower went for servicing in February 2022 and this provided an ideal opportunity for a much-needed spring clean of the tool shed. FoABW is grateful to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for funding the mower servicing. In March 2022, the volunteers were pleased to help MSDC with tree planting in Ashenground wood as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative to mark Her Late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.

The early summer sessions of 2022 involved the volunteers shifting a couple of huge heaps of woodchip to bolster the otherwise very muddy paths in Pond Meadow.

FoABW is grateful to MSDC for supplying the woodchip. July 2022 provided a great opportunity to showcase the volunteers' hard work with a visit from the South and South East In Bloom judge arranged by Haywards Heath Town Council.

The volunteers were very sad to lose stalwart member Peter McKerchar, who has moved away, and are very grateful for his massive contribution over many years.



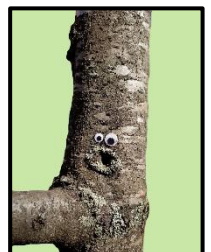
Patrick Burke

Please let us know if you would like to help with the conservation work.



What happens when a tree falls into mud? It leafs an impression.
Why can't pine trees sew? They always drop their needles.
What is green, has leaves, and a trunk? A houseplant going on vacation.
What is the best way to identify a dogwood tree? By its bark!
What's a tree's favorite beverage? Root beer!

Laura Maynard





Friends of Ashenground and Bolnore Woods

Autumn 2022

Conservation

-

Protection

-

Enhancement

-

Enjoyment

Trees, trees, glorious trees...

Ashenground is an ancient semi-natural wood. Previously hazel or hornbeam coppices were harvested as a crop, then oaks were interplanted, allowed to grow to a useful size, before being felled before they got too big for hand tools. There are patches of ancient woodland in other parts of the Reserve, with bits of secondary woodland and sweet chestnut plantation. All this adds up to an extraordinarily diverse woodland. Most of the trees in our Reserve are either native or long-established imports - a total of at least 25 tree species. Where there is most light, on the wood edges, or where an old tree has fallen, are the trees and shrubs that don't grow tall enough to survive under the high canopy - blackthorn and hawthorn, bird cherry and guelder rose. The wood edge supports many creatures who live part of their lives in the deep wood. Some trees are pioneer species, which germinate beyond the wood edge - birch for example. Only holly and yew will germinate inside the wood.



Silver Birch

Tree Identification: Tree identification can be quite difficult, there are lots of beautiful charts. However, they often show trees growing in the open; in a wood, trees grow closely packed, all reaching for the light. So, you must look for several features to make your identification. Autumn is a good time for this; look for fruit, nuts and winged seeds, dead and green leaves on the ground and bark on the tree. Sometimes one of these is distinctive enough on its own- the bark of silver birch (pictured) for example, and most of us would recognise an acorn. There are good charts of all these features, but you would need more than one!

Tree Bark: This is made up of layers. Inner 'heartwood' is the strength of the tree and keeps it standing; although it is dead, it has huge strength. The outer bark protects the tree from rain, heat and cold; it must accommodate the increasing growth of the tree, by splitting, or shedding, or simply blowing away. It is renewed from inside by the phloem, a layer which carries the food up to the leave and becomes the inner layer of the bark when it dies. In the middle is the cambium, the growing part of the trunk, which produces the phloem, and the sapwood.

The latter carries the sap up and adds to the heart wood when it dies.



English Oak

Tree List: Some may have succumbed to the increasing darkness under the canopy, others lost to disease. What remains is none the less a wonderful diversity:

Oak, hornbeam, hazel, birch, ash, beech, sycamore, Scot's pine, rowan, elder, hawthorn, sweet chestnut, horse chestnut, yew, holly, western red cedar, alder, wild cherry, bird cherry, alder buckthorn, field maple, blackthorn, goat willow, grey sallow, crab apple, hornbeam, hazel, birch, ash, beech, sycamore, Scot's pine, rowan, elder, hawthorn, sweet chestnut, horse chestnut, yew, holly, western red cedar, alder, wild cherry, bird cherry, alder buckthorn, field maple, blackthorn, goat willow, grey sallow, crab apple.

Gill Rogers

What sort of room can you eat?a mushroom.

(but not all mushrooms are edible)

This autumn has been an outstanding one for fungi sightings. We have had some wonderful photographs taken in and around the woods. White Saddle and Grey Coral Fungus were among the more unusual sightings, Parasol Fungus and Common Bonnets being among the more familiar. This might be a good time to remind everyone that some fungi are edible, but **many are toxic and can be fatal**. Unless you are an expert in fungi identification - and even the experts can get it wrong sometimes - we are sharing some very good advice from an expert mycologist:

NEVER MUNCH ON A HUNCH!!

Thank you to Debby Martell-Blake, Sonya Parker, Emma Makosz-Lawrence, Roxie Grant, Holly Brown, Felicity Pawsey and Anthony Goodwin for sharing their photographs. A big thank you to Michael Blencowe-Sussex Wildlife Trust for his help in identifying some of the fungi shown in the photographs.

Lorraine Maynard



White Saddle



Grey Coral



Blusher



Chicken in the Wood



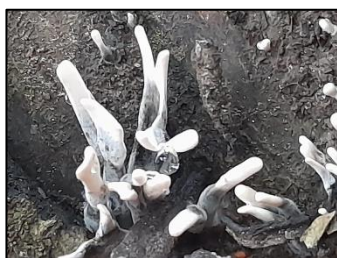
Small Staghorn



Boletes



Parasol



Candlesnuff



Beefsteak



Fly Agaric

FoABW Finance Update

The current state of our finances remains healthy. However, we would kindly request any members who have not paid their subs by the end of the calendar year to please do so as soon as possible.

To join or renew your subscription (£5 per year) you can do the following:

- Set up a standing order: for a form please contact the Treasurer at hannah8a@gmail.com;
- Send a cheque made payable to 'Friends of Ashenground & Bolnore Woods' to 13 Wealden Way, Haywards Heath, RH16 4AF;
- Transfer BACS payment to Friends of Ashenground & Bolnore Woods at Natwest Bank (branch sort code 60-10-26 and account number 10021310).