NEWSLETTER No. 7

Friends of Meadow Park

AUTUMN 2004

Remember, remember
the 5th of November?

Not literally, perhaps, but November was certainly a busy and important month for the Friends of Meadow Park.

SUNDAY, 7TH

Nearly 30 people came along to the first of what we hope will be monthly "workshops".

Armed with loppers and saws, ropes and ladders, they made a formidable task force as, organised by John Adcock, they embarked on a major programme to clear the heavily overgrown southern bank of the Kingston Brook. This will be carried out over many years, and Phase 1 saw two stretches, each about 10 metres long, opened up between Kestrel and Heron bridges. The work included pollarding a large willow tree and coppicing a hawthorn. More light now reaches the surface of the water, and access for birds and animals is improved. The cut branches were stacked to provide a rich habitat for insects and small animals, an important element at the bottom of the food chain and an encouragement to larger creatures to settle in the park.

Conrad Oatey and Neil Hunter pollard one of the big willow trees alongside Kingston Brook

SATURDAY, 13TH

The management of the Co-op supermarket kindly gave us permission to mount a display showing some of our activities over the past three years. We have accumulated quite an extensive photographic record by now, and the public were duly impressed!

It was amazing how many people said they knew nothing about Meadow Park – a real wake-up call for our publicity sub-committee, or did they just have shopping on their minds? Fifteen new members signed up, however, which was very pleasing, especially as it took our numbers over the 100 mark for the first time.

WEDNESDAY 17TH

It was Annual General Meeting time again, so of course it was raining. Report overleaf.

ALSO IN NOVEMBER

Can trees grow from empty cans? Yes! Because East Leake residents are top of the Rushcliffe re-cycling league, ALUPRO (Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation – remember you read it here first) gave us 3 ash trees and 4 rowans, now planted near Bateman Road.

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THESE WORKSHOP DATES

(Sunday mornings, 10am till about noon)

16th JANUARY	13th MARCH	8th MAY
13th FEBRUARY	10th APRIL	12th JUNE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, NOVEMBER 2004

We have a genius for choosing bad weather for our meetings, so congratulations to the very respectable gathering who made it on the night.

After receiving the officers' reports and agreeing a few modifications to our constitution, to regularise what has proved workable in practice, the remaining business, before we attacked the compensatory wine and nibbles, was to elect our committee for 2005.

Ian Weekley, having steered FMP through its crucial feet–finding and identity-forming first three years, stepped down as Chairman – his contribution has been greatly appreciated, and we all wish him well. As an ardent supporter of FMP since it first emerged as the delicate brainchild of just a few folk, Kevin Shaw was his obvious successor, while Conrad Oatey, who can add up as well as climb trees (see page 1), has taken over from Kevin as Treasurer. Debbie Slade continues as Secretary, her intimations that she would like a break having been roundly ignored, so she and Darcy will continue to quarter the village making sure we are kept well informed; more members' e-mail addresses would be a great help to her (see opposite page).

The open discussion session became quite philosophical, with divergent views on how strict a planting policy there should be. Some felt that limiting the park to "native species only" (especially if that was interpreted as being pre-Roman) might be boring, others that too casual an approach might endanger desirable habitats. The solution seems to be to establish an area (near the Bateman Road entrance) as a representative "arboretum" including interesting non-native shrubs and trees – a sort of living reference book – but to maintain a native only policy in the rest of the park, with absolutely no rhododendron!

Extract from Ian Weekley's Report:

Since this is my final year as your Chairman I thought it might be better to review the period since we began in 2001 rather than just the last year. For by any measure the change in the Park has been quite remarkable. We began, you'll remember, with the Kirk family bequest of the water meadows alongside Kingston Brook and with funding for its maintenance, although ownership was vested in Rushcliffe Borough Council. Fortunately at that time the officer responsible, Keith Wood, was an enthusiast and the network of paths and bridges and the patches of future woodland were laid out. Now haven't they come on! This summer you could walk through those embryonic copses of oak and ash, hawthorn and guelder rose and maple, and feel already the same sort of country calm that you get in older woods. Hall Field, which early on we decided to leave, has proved a fascinating experiment and the wildlife love it: whitethroats, willow warblers, pippets, linnets, wagtails, and in winter redwings and fieldfares in numbers we'd never dreamed of. The variety of bird life has increased dramatically, the same with butterflies (at least a dozen species) and other insects, demonstrating that it doesn't take long for nature to fill a gap. At least 50 wild flowers have been recorded, and this year, thanks to John Adcock's initiative, members have tried to speed up the flower meadow - with some success. Many of you will now be helping to grow plugs for next year. Helped by a proper mowing regime, thanks to Neil, the flower meadows don't seem such a distant dream after all. This has been the first year when we haven't had to complain too much about the mowing, thanks in part I'm sure to the arrival of Paul Phillips as environment officer. We've had two complete haymakings and regular cutting of the path edges and the green paths (desire lines, in the jargon).

You can walk round the Park now and find half a dozen comfortable seats, much less vandalised than they were at first, with the Guide seat especially well sited. Now the Committee are hoping to put a picnic table in the Playfield as well as more rustic seating in the remoter western part of the Park. The log seat incidentally, perfectly placed for us by Roy Vincent, has been very well received. Joan and her Activities committee organised Spring walks and we'll hope for more of them next year. They also produced that very useful introductory leaflet of which there are still copies to spare. So thanks for those and thanks also to the Parish Council for their continuing support and to the Committee who've been a pleasure to work with, especially Debby and Kevin as Secretary and Treasurer for their commonsense and hard work.

And, of course, thanks to you the Members for financial and physical support.

Thankyou.

FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK

ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD 01/11/2003 TO 31/10/2004

2003 – £s	RECEIPTS	NOTES	2004 – £
213.00	Members' donations	1	283.50
163.00	Grants	2	84.38
	Sale of notelets		15.00
0.23	Bank interest		0.21
394.23	**TOTAL RECEIPTS**		**383.09**
	PAYMENTS		
35.41	Subscription – BTCV	3	25.00
166.35	Insurance		168.75
16.50	Publicity		9.00
	Refreshments	4	27.16
50.00	Projects	5	334.48
268.16	**TOTAL PAYMENTS**		**564.39**
- 126.07	**EXCESS PAYMENTS OVER RECEIPTS**		**181.30**
	BANK RECONCILIATION		
117.40	Opening balance		243.47
394.23	Add Total Receipts		383.09
511.63			626.56
268.16	Less Total Payments		564.39
243.47	**BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD**		**62.17**

NOTES

1 Membership Donations - whilst the minimum subscription is £2.00, many members have contributed well above this figure

2 Grants - payment from East Leake Parish Council :50% of annual insurance premium

3 BTCV Subscription in 2003 covered 17 months

4 Refreshments = catering at 2003 AGM. This year (2004) this has been covered by donations from the management committee

5 Projects:

Information Leaflet	£ 312.00
Wildflower seeds	£ 13.00
Log bench - gift for farmer	£ 9.48
	£ 334.48

While Tim Slade and Andrew Sandford were wrestling a large hawthorn into submission (technically coppicing it), Paul Morrissey went fishing……

E-MAIL ADDRESSES, PLEASE!

Just e-mail parishclerk@east-leake.gov.uk, marked for the attention of Debbie Slade, and your address will be forwarded to her

WILD FLOWER PROJECT

The seed patches sown late last Spring flourished reasonably well, so it was decided to have a communal "sow-in" for 2005. John Adcock tracked down an approved local source of seed, and a dozen or more volunteers got

busy with seed trays and compost. As a result, 2000 or so "plug plants" are now adorning various window-ledges, ready for planting out later in the Spring. We are grateful for the enthusiasm people have shown for what is yet another way of demonstrating that Meadow Park belongs to us all.

BIRD WATCHING WALKS

© Max Watson, 2004

Back by popular demand!

Max Watson has kindly agreed to lead more of his interesting walks through Meadow Park. We can most of us recognise blackbirds such as the shiny fellow above, but there are now increasing numbers of many different bird species both resident and visiting the park, and to have a stroll there with someone who knows what to look for can be very rewarding.

We'll let you know when detailed arrangements have been made – watch noticeboards, the village website and the press.

And finally……..

We bet you can come up with better captions than the ones on these pages.

Just hand in to the Parish Office your name & address, number of the picture and your spot of inspiration. Closing date 11th February

Debbie's decision is final!

FRIENDS' GALLERY

There is a display in the Parish Office of photographs taken in Meadow Park by our members.

Do pop in and have a look

any weekday morning. Copies can be ordered (with or without a caption) and cost £2 per A4 size print.

Notelets are also on sale – 10 pictures of the park, all different.

They cost £1.50 per pack, complete with envelopes.

PLEASE DO YOUR BIT FOR FMP'S FUNDS!

More pictures from our "workshop "

Preparing for the off

Let's get chopping ..

Desirable residence for bugs.