



SPRING 2011 - Greetings from your committee members

Friends of Knolls Wood Work Party – Sunday 6th March 2011

The Friends of Knolls Wood and The Greensand Trust have arranged a work party on the 6th March and we invite anyone to come and give us a helping hand under the skilled supervision of John Creasey our local GST Ranger. Tasks to be done include planting 15 Scots Pine and clearance work around the wood.

Please meet outside 55 Redwood Glade at 11 am.

November work day 2010

The Friends' last work party of the year was Sunday 14 November when the main task was to plant some Scots Pines in the strip of woodland next to Plantation Road. Twenty-two saplings were planted – they had been dug up a few days before from an area in Rushmere Park that was being cleared. We also planted Blackthorn bushes at the Sandy Lane entrance to fill in the wide gap there. Holly was planted earlier in the year, but not all had survived. While most people were digging and planting, a few volunteers carried out the usual litter pick. With ten or so volunteers, the work took only an hour and a half. The Friends very much appreciated the help of everyone who turned out – more hands make light work, as the saying goes.

As at February 2011 the saplings were still looking healthy.

Notice Boards

Thanks to the generosity of Leighton Linlade Town Council, who have approved a grant of £500 towards new notice boards at their 26th November meeting, we are now planning to replace the existing signage at the entrances to Knolls Wood with up to date ones. Our thanks go to Jack Owens who met with the appropriate officials and completed the required application form to a very tight deadline. The Friends of Knolls Wood will fund the balance of the cost.

Dates for your 2011 Diary:

6 th March	Working Party	Meet 11 a.m. outside 55 Redwood Glade
29 th April	Plant a Royal Wedding Oak	TBC
15 th June	AGM	Stockgrove Park
10 th July	Working Party	Meet 11 a.m. outside 55 Redwood Glade
11 th September	Children's Event	TBC

Bees

There are over 250 species of bee, and of course, other insects that at first glance might be confused with them such as hoverflies and wasps. 2010 was a good year for bumblebees which is just as well, since of the 25 species only 6 are now commonly found in our gardens. Bees of course do a very important job in pollinating our flowers, vegetables and other crops, but they are not entirely philanthropic. Bees collect pollen for protein to feed to larvae and nectar for fuel. Only honey bees make and store honey to use as food over the winter. Bumblebee colonies die off over the winter, and the queen hibernates below ground ready to start a new colony in the spring.



Bees are truly remarkable insects; they have 2 pairs of wings, and have evolved to vibrate their wings twice as fast as their maximum muscle speed with the muscles just giving a push on every other stroke. Honey bees naturally build their hexagonal cells of wax and these are filled with pollen (the different colours of pollen giving a good indication of the plants visited), honey, or brood.



The queen lays eggs in the cells provided by worker bees and the eggs hatch into larvae which are fed by nurse bees. After a week they are sealed in their cells by the nurse bees and they then begin the pupal stage. After 1 week they emerge as an adult bee. As a female worker an adult bee will clean the hive for the first 10 days of her life, from days 10 to 16 she will build new comb, and from day 16 to 20 she will receive nectar and pollen and store it. After day 20 she leaves the hive and spends the remainder of her time as a forager. She will gather honey from as far as 3Km and travel about 1000 Km in her lifetime.

Special scout bees search out new sources of nectar, and perform the famous waggle dance on their return to let other workers know where the nectar source is. Workers and queens are fed on Royal Jelly for the first 3 days of their lives, but after this the workers get diluted honey and nectar. A queen can lay as many as 2000 eggs a day and at its peak a hive may contain as many as 50,000 bees. The male drones are not unlike their human counterparts; they have no sting, and seem to wander around the hive in an aimless manner! There are never more than a few hundred in the hive, and their only function is to mate with the queen. They are expelled from the hive in the autumn. A colony of bees is thus like one huge organism.

So how does Knolls Wood help our bees? Although not obviously full of flowers in the summer it does host Snowdrops and Bluebells when nectar bearing flowers are at a premium in early spring. There is also an abundance of Ivy flowers at the other end of the summer, although the benefits of Ivy are a subject of debate, and it can certainly make honey taste rather strange.

Have you looked at our website recently? Are you interested in what we do? We use our site to communicate with you and would like you all to be aware of recent updates. We are very interested in recruiting new members to our committee. Please visit the site to learn more about Knolls Wood