

# FRIENDS OF THE CARRS NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2010

## Chairman's Message

At the time of writing the last of the preparations are being made for the Celebration Day on 21<sup>st</sup> August. By the time you read this it will all be over and we will be assessing whether or not the event was a success. The Celebration Day was to mark 85 years since Henry Boddington first gave a small piece of land to the people of Wilmslow for use as an open space and also 75 years since that initial area expanded to the length of The Carrs we know today. The Celebration Day began at 11 am with play activities for youngsters led by the Cheshire East Play Team and then from about midday there was an exhibition of organizations and activities with an outdoors flavour put on by local individuals and groups.

When you have been visiting The Carrs over the last few weeks you will hopefully have noticed that the Himalayan Balsam is far less in evidence this year, although still plentiful particularly in the Northern end of The Carrs. After several years of attacking this invasive plant on our Balsam Bash days it seems we are getting the weed under control. This year we adopted a new multi-focussed attack detailed in the report later in this newsletter on the Balsam Bash and it seems to be working. My personal thanks to all those who helped with the weed spraying and the Balsam Bash.

Elsewhere the wheels grind slowly on. We still await a decision on the refurbishment/replacement of the wooden bridge and although there have been meetings on The Carrs with regard to the river bank erosion and a multi-use path there is not, as yet, anything to show for all the discussions that have taken place. The proposals for a "natural" playground for younger children near the picnic area are being moved forward but an installation date is still awaited. But let's not be pessimistic. We are undoubtedly making progress across a wide range of issues and some of those I have mentioned above are, by their very nature, long-term projects.

With this newsletter will be information about our AGM in October. Please come and join us for the afternoon. The meeting is, I assure you, brief but is a chance for the committee to hear your views on what we are doing. Better still why not join us on the committee. It is not onerous but more willing hands are always welcome. Please give the idea some thought.

Colin Shepherd, Chairman

## Dates for your diary 2011

The final event of 2010 will be a Nature Walk led by one of the Rangers from Cheshire East Council starting at 2pm followed by the Annual General Meeting at 3pm.

Nature Walk and AGM 17<sup>th</sup> October 2010

The provisional dates for the events planned for 2011 are:

Litter pick and "Fun Day"	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2011
Balsam Bash	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2011
Bat walk	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2011
AGM	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2011

We do hope you will come and join us.

## 2010 Events

### Litter Pick 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010



Sunny Spring weather attracted crowds of visitors to enjoy The Carrs this year. This resulted in plenty of litter to clear on our annual Spring clean as well as the usual detritus left by Winter. Luckily many people including two prospective Parliamentary candidates came to help us. The day was memorable for an epic struggle to dislodge a shopping trolley from its resting place in the river. It had been there for several years and had defied all previous efforts to remove it. However it met its match in Emma Houghton from Bollin Valley Trust. Armed with a large spade and helped by two volunteers, several children and a dog, Emma finally freed the trolley from the mud and carried it triumphantly to the skip. Advice offered by the large group of onlookers on the bridge was not always well-received! For the full story in pictures see our web-site [www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk](http://www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk).

## Balsam Bash 27<sup>th</sup> June 2010

The annual Balsam Bash was only part of our efforts to contain this invasive weed. On the Balsam Bash day itself a willing group of volunteers cleared right down the river bank to about half way between the wooden bridge and Pownall Bridge. This was followed up a few days later by a working party from the Environment Agency who cleared a vast amount of Balsam from around the Red Rock area (near the wooden Bridge). Our thanks to them and also to a working party from the Probation Service who cleared a significant area near the children's playground. In addition we experimented with some weed-killer this year on the Balsam growing on the Styal Road side of the river between Red Rock and Pownall Bridge. The result has been patchy but where it has worked it has worked very well indeed. We are aware that there is still severe infestation all the way from Red Rock down to Twinnies Bridge and we have a considerable task ahead of us clearing this area. However it looks as though the use of weedkiller could be a good way of keeping the plants in this area under control whilst we try to eradicate the weed upstream.

Next year we are considering following up the Balsam Bash with a second day a couple of weeks later to tackle any new growth.

## Batty about Bats 31<sup>st</sup> July 2010



A magnificent 62 people, including several new visitors to The Carrs met Ranger Martin James at dusk on The Carrs. They even included a family from Victoria, British Columbia. This must set a record for the greatest distance travelled to an event on The Carrs! They all joined Martin for a walk along the riverside hoping to spot bats. Unfortunately we had picked a particularly bright evening and Martin feared the bats would still be sound asleep. However, he had come armed with fascinating facts about bats and several videos on a laptop to amuse us while we waited. We all learned a great deal more about these misunderstood creatures who share The Carrs with us. Bat detectors were handed out to the most responsible-looking children and tested in the absence of bats by using the high frequencies generated by a bunch of rattling keys. At least one 11-year-old learnt enough to spend the next week passing on nuggets of information about bats to

anyone patient enough to listen. A good time was had by all and, yes, Pipistrelle bats did finally make their appearance right on cue at the end of the evening. A great success all round.

## Celebration Day 21<sup>st</sup> August 2010

After many grey and gloomy days it was a considerable relief when the 21<sup>st</sup> August dawned bright and sunny. A full report on the Celebration Day will be included in the Spring newsletter, but a police car complete with a chance to sound the siren and try out the radio was a great hit with the children.



## Trees

Six of the hawthorn trees planted as part of the BBC's Tree o' Clock initiative are thriving and will eventually form a small copse providing nest sites and berries for the birds. More saplings, this time grown by members of the Committee will be planted on The Carrs when the weather is suitable. It is also planned to purchase and plant some wild flower plugs with some of the money donated by the Waitrose Community Matters scheme. These will beautify The Carrs, increase the variety of flora and improve the habitat for wildlife.

## Committee Members

Colin Shepherd (Chairman)  
Ann Brown (Secretary)  
Graham Beech (Treasurer)  
Julie Armstrong  
Ian Baillie  
Emma Houghton  
Alison Gallen  
Paul Jabore  
Peter Mainwaring  
Chris Tonge

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