

FRIENDS OF THE CARRS NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2013

Chairman's Message

I hope you all enjoyed a good summer. After a wet spring and a delayed start the recent weeks have made up for what went before. It has been a similar story on The Carrs. The new tennis courts had only just been completed when the spring newsletter was being produced, but, as anticipated, they have proved very popular and have been well used. The Jubilee wood has also been expanded and although the dry weather has seen some of the latest plantings die, the area as a whole is gradually taking the woodland shape we are seeking. The fruit trees that were planted last autumn have also produced a crop in their first year. Later in the year we hope to receive some saplings to fill in the gaps in the hedge along Styal Road and also extend the hedge towards the Twinnies Bridge car park entrance – without reducing the sight lines for drivers!

On the debit side our attempts to obtain grant monies to revamp the path through the length of The Carrs have so far proved unsuccessful but a dedicated team are still working on this and there are hopes it could still happen. More positively, the further repairs to the river bank were undertaken by contractors during July and August including repairs to a stretch previously addressed by the Environment Agency. The contractors were backed up by FOTC volunteers who reseeded the ground, pruned existing willow and fenced off the ground in most need of protection to give the vegetation a chance to recover.

Looking to the future we have a considerable amount of Himalayan Balsam to clear but, without doubt, we are making progress. Unfortunately we still have Japanese Knotweed to contend with! More positively however it is beginning to look as if, after many years of debate, some form of toilet facilities will now be provided at the parish hall car park. There are still issues to resolve but I am optimistic that this time something will happen. For their part, Cheshire East Council, is looking at revamping the playground area which is beginning to look its age in some areas.

Finally, this will be my last item as Chairman as I have advised the committee that after 5 years in the "hot seat" it is time for somebody else to take over and bring in some fresh ideas, so I will be standing down as your Chairman at the AGM in October. It would be remiss of me not to thank you all for your support but in particular I must thank the committee members upon whom all the hard work falls and without whom nothing would get done. I couldn't have coped for the last 5 years without their support.

Colin Shepherd, Chairman

E-mail Addresses

This newsletter can be supplied by e-mail. Please let us know your e-mail address by contacting colin.shepherd@friendsofthecarrs.org.uk. You will then receive the newsletter regularly together with reminders of the latest events.

Dates for your diary 2014

The final event of 2013 will be the AGM. This will be in the Parish Hall starting at 2:30pm. This will start with a presentation by Simon Hiley of the National Trust on Nature and Wildlife Conservation.

AGM

13th October 2013

Dates for events in 2014 have not yet been selected. Please watch the web-site www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk or the notice boards on The Carrs for details. The list will also be in the Spring newsletter.

We do hope you will come and join us.

Nature Notes



Primroses blooming this year on The Carrs

It has been a very good year for wild flowers in the Carrs. After a nearly barren spring in 2012 we were relieved to see plenty of daffodils this year along with an increasingly rich carpet of bluebells in the woods. The ox-eye daisies which we sowed two years ago are now appearing all along the river bank and there have been colourful displays of marsh marigold, purple loosestrife, yellow loosestrife and bright blue devil's bit scabious. Primroses and cowslips were also planted three years ago. The cowslips have long since disappeared, but some primrose clumps have established themselves and bloomed this year despite the severe spring weather.

The battle has continued against Himalayan balsam and ragwort, a native plant and the main

food for the cinnabar moth, and therefore less unwelcome, has become rather invasive and may need controlling in the future. Steps taken to eradicate the thankfully small amount of Japanese knotweed seem to be having the desired effect, although it will take a year or two for the plants to be killed off completely.

The mink which had made their home just above the first bridge appear to have gone, which is good news for the rest of the wildlife in the Carrs and we hope that the mallards which have been seen in that part of the river will stay to breed next year.

The small orchard planted by Incredible Edible survived a cold spring and eventually most of the trees produced blossom. Only a few apples appeared, but it has been a promising start and we hope all the different types of fruit trees continue to flourish.

2013 Events

Litter Pick, Balsam Bashes, Bat Walk, Canine Capers



1 Judging takes place at the dog show

Saturday 14th September saw a new event in the FOTC calendar joining the expected Balsam Bashes, Litter Pick and Bat Walk. This took the form of a fun dog show on the Carrs.

Fortunately the sun eventually emerged on the day and much fun was had by the dogs and their owners - adults and children alike.

With more than eighty entries to the various fun competitions judging was not easy.

The Show raised much needed funds for the Friends and it is hoped that it can now be developed into an annual event.

Our thanks to the supporting organisations including The National Trust, Beacon, Cheshire Search and Rescue, Skinners dog supplies, The Ladies of Styal Methodist Church, Wilmslow Animal Sanctuary, and last but not least the Show's visitors and their dogs.

For further information about all these events and more pictures please see our web-site www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk.

River Bank Repairs

Tuesday 9th July saw contractors Willowbank Services from Taunton arrive on The Carrs with digger, dumper truck, lots of stakes and faggots to carry out further repairs to the river banks and also to repair an area previously restored by the Environment Agency but which had since suffered from a wash out. It must have been one of the hottest weeks of the summer and the FOTC volunteers who joined the contractors to carry out the unskilled support work certainly lost a few pounds working in that heat. Unfortunately the repairs to the area originally treated by the Environment Agency proved to be more difficult than anticipated and so the contractors had to return in early August to complete the work. All of the new work undertaken is in the area between the two footbridges and less obvious than the work done previously as much of this new work is hidden by the trees, but it does mean the worst scoured areas of the river bank have now been addressed. As many of you will have noticed, a significant stretch of the bank between the two footbridges has now been fenced off so that the ground can recover and it is encouraging to see that, despite the dry weather in July and August, the grass seed and wild flower seed that was put down has germinated. Once the ground has become more stable and the vegetation fully established the fencing will be removed. The work provoked a lot of interest from users of The Carrs and some very positive comment about FOTC and what we have been doing to improve the open space. We have also received positive comments from Cheshire East, The Town Council and the Environment Agency, each of whom played an important role in ensuring the work went ahead. Our thanks are due to Willowbank Services who proved to be very flexible and helpful partners.

The contractors have left us with a large number of stakes and a small supply of faggots which we are investigating using to provide some low level protection for the more vulnerable river bank towards Twinnies Bridge. More news on this another time, once we have got our plans prepared.

Thanks also to the FOTC volunteers who discovered skills they didn't know they possessed, well done to all of you!

Stop Press

We have just been advised that, subject to a few issues yet to be agreed, our application for a grant for a multi-use path through The Carrs has been successful and £125,000 has been awarded by Natural England. Many congratulations to Graham Beech and Emma Houghton for their persistence and determination in securing this.

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