



RIDGE WOOD MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF RIDGE WOOD

www.ridge-wood.org.uk

WINTER 2015-16

Welcome to the newsletter of the Friends of Ridge Wood. We are volunteers who look after the Wood and help to improve it for all who visit. Working with South Gloucestershire Council and the site owners Hanson Aggregates, the Friends undertake practical conservation work. This local nature reserve is a great place for everyone to explore the beauty of nature. The Wood has a fascinating history and some mysterious old features, and best of all – it is on your doorstep!

REVIEW OF 2015

We held several successful events in Ridge Wood in 2015. In May, local naturalist Ed Drewitt (whom you may recognise from the BBC's Springwatch) led a fascinating Evening Chorus walk through the woodland and attendees were rewarded with sightings (and soundings) of a fantastic variety of bird species both familiar (robins, blue-tits, dunnocks and wrens) and less common (bullfinches, a goldcrest and a mistle thrush). You can read a full review of this event on our website.



'Forest Fun Time', our fantastic family event in August, encouraged many younger visitors to explore the woods, following a quiz trail through the trees and then getting the chance to try out some woodland crafts, making twig pencils and willow crowns to take home. We are grateful to Hanson's for the generous financial support they provided. Due to its popularity, Forest Fun Time will return this Summer!



Finally, we held a Moth Discovery evening in October as part of the South Gloucestershire Council's Discover festival. Unfortunately a cold night resulted in fewer moth sightings than we hoped for but local moth expert Ray Barnett gave a fascinating talk and we plan to invite him back in the future.

While these events are both enjoyable and important in encouraging people to explore the reserve, an equally vital part of our work involves running our regular woodland work mornings throughout the year. Tasks undertaken in 2015 included snowdrop planting, clearance of brambles and blackthorn to allow wildflowers and other smaller plants to flourish, coppicing, native British bluebell conservation work, as well as general tidying and litter picking to keep the woodland looking at its best.



? DID YOU KNOW ?

Ridge Wood has a long and interesting history, and many clues to their past can be found if you look. Did you know...

- Camps are believed to have been located along The Ridge as far back as the Iron Age.
- A mansion house known as Ridge House once occupied the site of the existing Hanson offices. However, this was finally abandoned in the 1960's when the quarrying got a bit too close for comfort – it was reported that following blasting operations, rocks would fall through the roof!
- The wood is home several giant sequoias, also known as Wellingtonias, which originate from the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California. This species of tree are the largest in the world with some famously having a trunk wide enough to drive a car through! These formed part of Ridge House's pleasure gardens but the first plantations in Britain were established on the Duke of Wellington's estate in Hampshire – hence their popular name!





PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION – NEW FOR 2016!

Show off your photography skills and send us your photographs of the woodland! Pictures can be of anything –plants, birds, animals, landscape - as long as they were taken in Ridge Wood. The competition is open to all budding photographers (amateurs only) and prizes will be awarded for the best photograph in the following categories:

- Under 10's
- 10-16
- Adult

Email your entries to info.forw@gmail.com with your name, age and contact details. The closing date for entries is 31 August 2016.

WHAT'S ON IN 2016



We have lots of great activities planned for 2016 for all the family!

Work days are planned for the year ahead – see below for dates. If you want to get involved in your local community, learn more about woodland management, get fit, and have fun then please do come along! No experience is necessary and tools and gloves are provided.



Sunday 21st February – Woodland Work Morning

10:00am – 12.00, meet at the Melrose Close entrance.

Wednesday 23rd March – Informal Meeting

19:30, Community Meeting Room, First Floor, Tesco Extra, Yate.

All welcome.



Sunday 24th April – Woodland Work Morning

10:00am – 12.00, meet at the Melrose Close entrance.

Learn how to identify native British bluebells and help conserve this vulnerable flower in Ridge Wood.

Wednesday 4th May – Evening Chorus Walk

Time tbc. Meet at the Quarry Road entrance.

Join us again for an interesting walk through the woodland led by Ed Drewitt and learn how to identify the songs and calls of the common birdlife inhabiting Ridge Wood and the local area.

Suggested donation: £2 adults, £1 children.

Thursday 18th August – Forest Fun Time

Once again, we are planning a family trail and woodland crafts to encourage kids to get out and about during the school holidays.

Free.

We are also hoping to hold a **Bat Walk** in September and a **Fungus Foray** in October. Watch this space for more details!

For updates on all our work days and events, as well as other information about Ridge Wood, please check the website (www.ridge-wood.org.uk) and woodland notice boards!

GET INVOLVED!

Please join us! Woodlands are diminishing, and as a consequence, a wide variety of plant and animal species also. It is therefore vitally important to protect this Wood, so that it continues to thrive. Become a Friend of Ridge Wood and help manage Ridge Wood! It's free and it's fun! There is no regular commitment, just give us your support or an hour or two of your time, when you can!

Name:

Tel.No:.....

Address:.....

Email:.....

How would you like us to contact you in the future?

Email / Post (please circle)

How did you hear about us?.....

Please email the above details to info.forw@gmail.com, or alternatively complete the form and post to:
Friends of Ridge Wood, c/o Yate Town Council, Poole Court, Poole Court Drive, Yate BS37 5PP