



NEWSLETTER 2014

Welcome to update from The FoLC & Nature Reserve.

It was a busy time due to the mild winter; everything came to life very early. We as a group progressed the wild flower area wall along the side of the Information Centre. Derek our Chairman built two large planter boxes which were positioned, filled and planted with sensory plants as we intend to eventually have this as a sensory garden, with seating for quiet time and personal refectation. Three spaces were dug out to be used as flower gardens these are outside the Information Centre. Trees were planted along the walled area with Birch and Rowan. Bug houses were made and fitted to the wall and a hide/midden for ground insects and provision for wildlife to hibernate in.

A further extension to the Wildflower meadow along the side paths in Nursery Lane area is on-going. Malcolm is looking at the area with this in mind and we have been able to get more trees and shrubs etc. We have obtained permission from the Cemetery Management Team to create our own tree nursery whereby it is planned to grow on these specimens and provide our own requirements. We have regular meetings with all involved working within our five year management plan to further our aims of upgrading and maintaining the fabric of the cemetery/nature reserve.

Our annual breeding bird survey was carried out by The Friends, noted and sent to RSPB. This is an ongoing commitment.

This year we hosted the Green Space Forum which was very well received. The invited members of the other five groups joined us on two walks (one short the other longer); it was well-attended with people expressing their surprise/enjoyment at the diversity of the flora and fauna within the cemetery and nature reserve and the links with the historical connections of the area. We were extremely fortunate to be able to offer our guests a buffet lunch which was kindly provided by Middlesbrough Bereavement Services.

We are delighted to be able to report that the cemetery/nature reserve was awarded our 8th successive Green Flag Award Status so we must be doing something right! This is a prestigious award which is normally only awarded to parks and gardens.

In June Catherine Howell, Project Officer with Middlesbrough Environment City gave a Bees and Wildflower talk. Catherine displayed her flair for connecting with her audience and held the floor extremely successfully for 45 minutes, carrying on with questions and answers. It was a lovely interesting evening where we all enjoyed learning the intricacies of a bee hive design, building and life within. The only negative to this event was the poor response from the general public.

Children's Activity Day was held on the Summer Solstice in the Central Space with very good results, collecting people passing through who stopped and joined with us for, some five minutes and others an hour or more. The sunny day produced the bugs and insects in profusion, these were netted and studied under microscopes and magnifying glasses; some startling examples were seen!

We have able to purchase a range of butterfly equipment, nets, microscopes, magnifying glasses, specimen jars and children-friendly identifying resources with an Awards for All grant.

A month later, July, Mark Fishpool, Director of MEC, led two extremely successful Butterfly walks to groups consisting of people from 3 year-olds to 73 year-olds. The profusion of butterflies went against the national count as we have this fantastic wild space which is quiet as far as population is concerned (they're all sleeping partners!) –

Lovely weather, impressive happy day, people enjoying themselves as they listened and learned from a nationally-known expert who has the ability to put his art over in a pleasing everyday manner.

Two extremely successful Bat nights were held in late August and repeated in late September. These are complimentary to the national Bat Survey which we conduct on behalf of The Bat Conservation Society. These were led by Malcolm with support from the remainder of the Friends, lots of people turned up, plenty of bats heard and seen, and in fact it seemed a special display had been orchestrated for us alone; with bats as close as one metre away entralling us with a brilliant display!

As part of the WW1 Commemorations, plans were put in place to have a parade in October, this was expanded to include an exhibition, refreshments and a conversation forum to include and welcome all the people who had attended.

The main focus of the event was to connect the younger members of the population with their peers and older generations; so that the memories, connections, experiences and knowledge could be transported down through the years.

The Cross of Sacrifice was the centre piece of the parade; a service was conducted by the Rev. Ray Morris from St. Barnabas Church with the laying of wreaths at 11am and a moment for private reflection. One of the most poignant moments of this Commemoration was the reading out of each of the names by the representatives of the cadet force groups and scouts of the 161 service personnel who are buried within the grounds of the cemetery. The Parade continued to the flagpole where the Union Flag was hoisted to full. Later at The Hebrew Prayer House a buffet was served by the ladies of Linthorpe Women's Institute, supported by The Teesside branches, they delighted us with an array of WW1-style cakes which was equally matched with the sandwiches provided by Relph's Funeral Service.

Memorabilia was on display from the 1914 era. Feedback reports back from many sources expressed their surprise and delight on how a small group such as ours were able to achieve such a dignified, expressive and memorable day. Estimates of attendance ranged between 100-140 people; a well-attended good day. Thank you to all who helped us to achieve this success, their support was invaluable, without them we could never have had such a memorable day.

November saw an unusual occurrence to the normal Remembrance Day Walk led by Jenny Braddy with the able support of Geoff, but on this occasion we had 22 youngsters from Archibald Junior School along with their teachers for an information walk and act of Remembrance, which was led by Derek, ably complimented by Ian Stubbs. Jenny's walk was joined at the Cross of Sacrifice by a lady and her daughter, the lady being 101 year old Joan Lithgow (the auctioneers) and her daughter Sue was on a 3 month visit from Canada her home now since marriage in 1967.

We always look forward to the Carol Service in December with The South Bank Brass Band. This is a non-denominational event where we start our Christmas festivities off with a happy carol singing session. As usual there was a Raffle and also the renowned hot punch which has gained quite a reputation; thank you Dorothy.

We are indebted to so many people without whom we would struggle; some assist with financial help, others with time and knowledge. On this occasion we must especially thank the generosity of the Coop Funeralcare in providing a commemorative information board for the 161 war dead. The commemorative badges were provided by Rose Memorials and Funerals, the aforementioned refreshments by Relph's Funeral Service, we cannot move on here without a mention and thank you to Liz Chambers whose wealth of knowledge kept us right. The support that we receive from the Bereavement Services personnel not withstanding "our Gardener" Paul is without equal. Thank you One and All.

Our next year dairy is out and we hope that you will join with us on many occasions; we start off with Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January. This will be a short talk and a chance to see a special film on loan to us from the University and College Union; this is at the Hebrew Prayer House at 4pm and again at 7pm.

FoLC & NR Committee.