

Commentree AUTUMN 2009 ISSUE 51

12 & 13 September 2009

Woodworks – Better Than Ever

Every year Woodworks! gets bigger, better and more important. There will be more stalls, more experts, more chances to 'have a go' more great products to buy and just as much fantastic music as ever from old favourites and some new names. Woodworks! brings together experts, practitioners, scientists, craftsmen and woman, all in the area of growing and harvesting trees and turning wood into beautiful products; and they're all keen to inspire, inform and entertain you. Entry costs just £6 for adults and £4 for children and concessions. Children under 10 are free.

Take the Train

Once again, trains will run all weekend from Bedford and Bletchley, get off at Millbrook for a 20 minute walk or free bus to the Forest Centre.

In this issue...

News

All about Woodworks!

Changes to Commentree

A full what's on guide for the autumn

Wind power in the Vale?

..and more

The Forest of Marston Vale — it's about using trees to repair a damaged landscape and you can help

News

Improved Access to Park's Wetland Trail

Funding from WREN is now in place to create a new 2km surfaced path around the Wetland Trail at the Millennium Country Park. This exciting development will enable people of all abilities to get into the wildlife haven that is the Park's wetlands. Work will start later this year.

Turbine or not turbine?

Since 2005, the Marston Vale Trust has been looking at the possibility of harnessing wind power to generate electricity. Wind speed studies indicate that a turbine would be feasible in the Millennium Country Park, and at information days held at the Forest Centre, more than 87% of respondents considered a turbine an 'excellent' or 'good' idea. Over the last year experts have been investigating the possible impact of a turbine on local residents and the Park's wildlife. If these studies indicate that a turbine would be a sustainable and acceptable way forward, the Marston Vale Trust will consider applying for planning permission towards the end of the year. If a turbine goes ahead, the Trust will investigate how local people can invest in the project and share the profit. If you are interested in being involved in community ownership of a turbine, please register your interest at the Forest Centre or by e-mail: info@marstonvale.org.

Thanks to Bonfire

The Forest Team has enjoyed a productive relationship with Bonfire Creative Intelligence over the last year. Bonfire chose the Marston Vale Trust as their charity partner for 2008/2009. Staff and their families planted trees on a very rainy day at Rectory Wood last December and made a cash donation of £500. Since then they have made a very generous donation of 40 hours of design and consultation time. The results of this work will begin to be noticed over the coming months. We are very grateful to Bonfire for their generous contribution. www.bonfireci.com tel: 01525 841079

Rotary Club's trees

The generous support we receive from individuals and community groups is vital in our work to revitalise the environment and communities of the Marston Vale. Here's a great example – £500 donated to the Marston Vale Trust by the Bedford Park Rotary Club to compensate for the carbon produced by a trip to Venice. This contribution was used to plant trees in the fourth phase of Rectory Wood, Cranfield.

For more information about adopting trees in the Forest, visit www.marstonvale.org/adoptatree or contact Paul Catton on 01234 762615 or paul.catton@marstonvale.org

Pony Club thumbs up

In June a group of young riders took part in their first Endurance Ride at the Millennium Country Park. "A huge thank you to the Forest Team from the Pony

Club” said Vicki Barrett, one of the event organisers. “The bridleway around your lake has proved to be a great hit with our young riders. Parking for horse transport is good, the horse trail is safe and beautifully maintained and there’s no traffic.” To learn about The Pony Club visit www.pcuk.org

Grange sports days

The new cycle trail that links two points on Route 51 north of Willington has become increasingly popular since it opened last year. As well as walkers and cyclists out to enjoy this fantastic surfaced path (and Route 51 itself), it is now a favourite venue for sporting events. Willington Youth Forum, Bedford and County Athletic Club and Sustrans all organised events last spring. Both routes are definitely worth a visit; park at Priory Country Park and follow Route 51 east, towards Willington. There’s more information at www.letsgo.org.uk

Green Flag for Park

The Millennium Country Park was once again awarded coveted Green Flag status a ceremony in Bournemouth on 23 July. The Park joined over 900 other green spaces to receive the prestigious award, proving there has never been a better time to visit the Millennium Country Park.

www.greenflagaward.org.uk

Wood Heat for Centre

Plans to install a wood chip burner to heat the Forest Centre are fast reaching completion. Works will start in the autumn and by the time temperatures drop outside, the Centre will be cosy and warm thanks to heat from woodchip burnt in a state-of-the-art furnace. These improvements, made possible by grant aid from E.on, will reduce the Centre’s costs and carbon footprint.

COMMENTREE CHANGES

Commentree has been produced in one form or another for fifteen years or more and has proved successful in getting news to people in and around the Vale. Now that most of us can reach the web and have access to an email address, we have decided it's time to launch an electronic version. We will soon develop a Commentree page to make news more up to date and easy to access. If you prefer to read things on paper don't despair. Commentree will still be printed three times a year, however the number distributed will be reduced. By providing your contact details, you agree to us sending to you, paper or electronic versions of Commentree along with other information about the Forest of Marston Vale. We will not pass your details to any third party. This will save resources – both natural and financial.

CONTACT US NOW!

If you usually receive a paper copy of Commentree through the post, you will continue to do so. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please let us know. However, every electronic copy sent out saves us money, so if you would prefer Commentree to appear on your screen, just tell us your email address. Email: guy.lambourne@marstonvale.org or tel: 01234 762608 or by letter to Guy Lambourne, at the Forest Centre (address on the back of this edition).

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know.

Writ large

If you, a friend or a member of your family has a visual impairment and would like to see Commentree in large print, let us know. All editions are downloadable from www.marstonvale.org/commentree as pdf files.

YOUR FOREST ~ YOU CAN HELP!

ADOPT A TREE

Whatever your reasons for adopting trees – the birth of a baby, an anniversary, in memory of a loved one (or anything else), you are doing something very worthwhile for yourself and the environment.

1-3 trees £15 a tree

4 trees £50

10 trees £100

100 trees £500

500 trees £1,000

All tree adopters receive a certificate and have their adoption recorded in our 'book of adoption' at the Forest Centre. Remembering us in your Will is a good way for you to support our future work. Money left to us goes into a designated fund for the long term creation and management of the Forest of Marston Vale. Any donation, regardless of size will help make the Forest a great place for present and future generations.

JOIN OUR FRIENDS GROUP

For just £24 a year you and your family can enjoy free access to our wetland reserve, gain free entry to our Woodworks festival and have the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale.

Find out more by visiting
www.marstonvale.org or contact
Paul Catton on 01234 762615 or email
paul.catton@marstonvale.org

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What's on?

ARE YOU WELL?

The Forest Centre is hosting Bedfordshire's second Well Being Festival on Saturday 10 October 2009, 1pm to 3pm. This free event, to be opened by a local sporting celebrity, offers you a chance to find out about all sorts of physical activities that could improve your physical and mental well-being. Stalls promoting local organisations will add to the wide range of activities already confirmed, including Tai Chi demonstrations and taster sessions, healthy walks, conservation tasks, line and belly dancing, pram pushers, circuit training and Horses Helping People. More information www.wellbeingfestival.org.uk

TREE PLANTING

It may seem a long way off now, but December will be here before we know it! If you fancy planting a tree in the Forest, your opportunity this side of Christmas will be on Sunday 6 December, during National Tree Week. As yet, the location remains uncertain, but if you want all the details, please keep an eye on our web site www.marstonvale.org call Guy Lambourne on 01234 762608 or email guy.lambourne@marstonvale.org

HEDGE LAYING AT RECTORY WOOD

BTCV have arranged one of their famous 'UK Natural Breaks', bringing people from far and wide to Rectory Wood to learn the ancient country craft of hedge laying. Forest volunteers are welcome to join in on both days, Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 November. Call Andy Lingard on 01234 762617.

AMAZING AMAZONS

There are loads of opportunities to do something valuable for the environment really close to home. The Forest's Conservation Volunteers get together once a month, usually at the Forest Centre, to do a wide range of work, from hedge laying to bird surveys. There's no need to have any experience or knowledge of what's on offer; it's all provided along with tools, tea and biscuits. It's your enthusiasm and muscles that are needed. On September 27th, we are back on the wetland islands, clearing areas for ground nesting birds to enjoy next spring. Islands, boats and bonfires – very Swallows and Amazons! Why not give it a try? It's relaxed and sociable and you really will be doing something amazing for the environment. Meet at 10.15am at the Forest Centre garage (ask at reception if you need directions). The day ends at around 4.00pm, so bring a packed lunch if you can stay all day. For more information contact Alexis Pym 01234 762614, alexis.pym@marstonvale.org

CONSERVATION TASKS

Saturday 17 October

Bird Box construction and refurbishment

Monitoring, fixing and building bird boxes for different birds around the site.

Sunday 22 November

Hedgelaying

Round the children's play area and Sensory Wildlife Garden. Small sections of hedge to be laid, all training, tools and materials provided.

Saturday 12 December

Cutting and burning hawthorn scrub to open up areas for wildflowers and butterflies. For more information (see left) contact Alexis Pym

01234 762614, alexis.pym@marstonvale.org

Sunday 27 September

Wetland Islands working

Boating out to the islands to cut back trees and shrubs and gravel some areas for ground nesting birds

GUIDED WALKS**Sunday Strolls**

1st Sunday of every month

A gentle walk in the company of Forest Volunteers. Meet at Forest Centre reception; 10.15 for 10.30am. Join us in the Country Park to hear how the Park was set up and a little about the surrounding area. On hard, surfaced paths which are mostly level. Walks last around two hours. Call 01234 767037 for more details. Cost £1, payable on the day – no need to book.

Bedfordshire Walking Festival

5-13 September

The county's first walking festival; sure to be a winner. www.bedswalkfest.co.uk

Walk 4 Health

For more information call Mike Fayers on 01767 626453

Forest Centre – every Wednesday at 10am. Meet at the Centre reception

Wootton 16 September, 1.00pm at the far end of the car park at Wootton Health Centre

Fratelli Cross Keys, Wood End, Kempston

Rural, 30 September 10.00am,

Bird Walks

Join expert, friendly Forest Volunteers to discover the birds and other wildlife in the Country Park. Distance varies. Wear warm clothes and waterproof footwear. Some rough paths and short lengths of gradient over 1:6. Walks start from the Forest Centre at 8am and last three hours. £3/adult, £2/child, £1 reduction for Forest Volunteers and Friends. Booking is required in advance, but pay the leader on the day. Call 01234 767037.

Migration Mayhem

Saturday 12 September

A perfect opportunity to meet birds on their way to other parts for winter.

Autumn ducks and thrushes

Saturday 7 November

A really good time of year to see birds that overwinter in the Park.

Holiday highlights

Monday 28 December

A breath of fresh air in the holiday season – a good time to catch up with winter residents and visitors.

Life in the freezer

Saturday 30 January 2010

At this time of year there's always a chance that winter weather will bring out rarities; and if not it's a good time to check up on everyone else.

Sunday 8 November

Help introduce woodland wildflowers into areas of Rectory Wood, Cranfield. Thinning and pruning young trees, sowing seed of a range of woodland wildflowers, collected earlier in the summer from ancient woodlands in the Marston Vale. Call Andy Lingard on 01234 762617 for more information.

TRIBUTE NIGHT

Saturday 29 August – from 7.15pm

QUEEN, ROBBIE WILLIAMS AND ELTON JOHN

Tickets from £19.50 (adults in advance).

For bookings call 01234 767037 or 01223 894566 (more details page 5).

CHILDREN'S PARTIES

Thursday 29 October 6-8pm

HALLOWEEN FANCY DRESS PARTY

for 5-8year olds Children's buffet, prizes for best fancy dress Admission by ticket only £10. Saturday 5 December 3-5pm.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Present from Father Christmas, buffet, prizes for best dancers. Admission by ticket only £10.

WEDDING FAYRE

Sunday 20 October 11am – 4pm Free entry. Free bucks fizz for all brides to be.

Saturday 17 October

BLUES BROTHERS TRIBUTE NIGHT

Hog roast, fully licensed bar Ticket only.

WELL BEING FESTIVAL

Saturday 10 October 2009 11am- 3pm ALL are welcome to a FREE event which is about looking after your physical and mental well being through physical activity.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHESES

1 – 18 December CHRISTMAS LUNCHESES 2 course meal including coffee.

For details and booking for the events below, please call 01234 762613

AGM

Wednesday 11 November

MARSTON VALE TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5.30pm. The AGM is open to the public, numbers are limited so if you would like to attend please book at the Forest Centre Reception or call 01234 767037

HOLIDAY STUFF FOR KIDS

At the Forest Centre. All materials provided. £1 per child. Ring 01234 767037 or email Alexis.pym@marstonvale.org for more details or to book your place.

Three sessions: 10am, 11am and

Noon – 30 children per session

HALLOWEEN CRAFTS Friday 30 October.

Spooky times ahead! Make your own Halloween themed craft

CHRISTMAS CRAFTS Tuesday 22 December.

Bring the magic of winter into your own home with a natural Christmas decoration.

WOODLAND WILDFLOWERS

Sunday 8 November

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Thinning and pruning young trees, sowing seed of a range of woodland wildflowers, collected earlier in the summer from ancient woodlands in the Marston Vale. Call Andy Lingard on 01234 762617 for more information.

TREE SEED COLLECTIONS

All 10am – 3pm

Sunday 4 October: Kempston Wood

Sunday 18 October: King's Wood Houghton Conquest

Sunday 25 October: Marston Thrift SSSI

Sunday 1 November: Flitwick Wood

Contact Colin Carpenter on 01525 716371 or 07751 356094 or

www.communitytreetrust.co.uk

TREE PLANTING

Sunday 6 December

For more information www.marstonvale.org

WE WILL ROCK YOU SATURDAY 29 AUGUST

Following last summer's hugely popular night of tribute bands, the Forest Centre is hosting another even more exciting set of top tribute acts. Queen, Robbie Williams and Elton John will share the bill on Saturday 29 August, from 7.15pm. Here's a chance to picnic in style and join the crowds for a wonderful evening of fun and dancing with a dramatic fireworks finale. The grounds open at 5.30pm so there will be plenty of time to buy merchandise and refreshments before the show. There's a licensed bar and hog roast, and if you are bringing a large group, why not hire a gazebo space and hold your own party? Pre-booked adult tickets cost £19.50, and children's tickets (5-14years) cost £5 each. Tickets on the day cost £25 and £10 for children. To book your tickets, call the Forest Centre on 01234 767037 (9 – 5pm) or 01223 894566 (6 – 10pm).

Woodworks! 12 & 13 SEPTEMBER 2009

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS

Battlefield LIVE

A revolutionary outdoor combat game. It doesn't hurt when you die, and there is absolutely no mess. Grab the gun, slip on the hat and you're ready for action! Players must be aged 8 or over.

Pyrography

This year Bob Neill will be offering the chance for everyone to have a go at this intriguing craft in which an image is burnt onto the surface of wood or leather. When you've tried it (and realized how tricky it is), take a look at the array of beautifully decorated items offered for sale.

Bush craft

Jason Ingermells of Woodland Ways will demonstrate some of his wide array of bush craft skills, from fire lighting to shelter building, and offer you the chance to see if you are up to the challenge.

ARENA EVENTS

New Forest and South East Axemen

Once again we have pleasure in welcoming these axe-wielding gentlemen, to demonstrate their rather alarming skills. They have thrilled Woodworks crowds for the last two years and are sure to induce some gasps as they avoid losing limbs with razor-sharp saws and axes.

English School of Falconry

A rare chance to see birds of prey from around the world flying free just feet above your head. Guaranteed to draw the crowds with a great combination of fluffy feather and cruel claw.

Chainsaw carving spectacular

All our chainsaw carvers in one place carve against the clock to produce finished pieces of art.

11am – 5pm

FOLK/ROOTS LINE-UP

It's looking great! An intriguing mix of instruments and influences adding up to a fantastic weekend's entertainment. Here it is so far, visit www.marstonvale.org/woodworks for up dates.

PROGRAMME SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION

SATURDAY

12.45pm Landermason

Multi instrumentalist Fiona Lander and Paul Mason have developed a unique sound which displays a combination of both traditional and contemporary folk with jazz and other styles.

1.45pm Barron Brady

Superbly crafted self-written songs and fine interpretations of English folk song, beautifully sung with impeccable musical accompaniment. Their beguiling lyrics often draw upon the stories, legends and folklore of the South-West.

SUNDAY

11.45am Zoox

A superb trio serving up a cocktail of new melodies and traditional tunes with a delicate balance of strings, wind, percussion and voices. A fabulous array of instruments from contrabassoon to congas. Their rich and varied influences include Celtic, Appalachian, Klezmer, African, Cuban, rock, and classical.

12.45pm Soma & the Half Moon Drum Circle

Soma's mix of influences has been described as Indo-Afro-didgeribluess. An extraordinary mix of percussion beats at its heart amongst guitar, bass and vocal harmony. Soma will be joined by Bedford-based singer, Pooja Gupta, to add a distinctly Indian flavour to their set. The Drum Circle will pick up from Soma, providing some disciplined drumming on instruments mostly from West Africa

1.45pm Ben & Jo Broughton

A very welcome return to Woodworks for the original irreverent brothers of the folk and blues scene. Combining instrumental virtuosity, powerful songs and pure entertainment.

3pm Drum Workshop with Chris Puleston

Your chance to join Chris with drum and didge. He will get you going and enjoying the experience.

www.fabnights.co.uk

Something for everyone

A day out in the country that really does offer something for all the family. Woodworks is about trees, wood and woodland, but there's so much in the mix that it all adds up to a fantastic fun-filled weekend – one that you can't afford to miss. For the woodworkers and tree-lovers amongst you, there are machines, craftsmen, carvers, growers and weird and wonderful tools. If that's not your thing, don't worry, there will be stalls selling all sorts of intriguing products; arty things, crafts and fantastic stuff for children. There's storytelling, and of course a full programme of live music, together with great food and beers. Here's a taste of what will be at Woodworks this year. Check www.marstonvale.org/woodworks.

Exhibitors and demonstrators

• Wheelwright • wood turner • spar making
• traditional fencing • beekeeping • coracle making • local authorities • tree growers
• woodcarving • hedge laying • bush craft
• sawmill • charcoal making • lumberjacks
• falconry • basket weaving • face painting

Have a go

• Archery • make a beeswax candle • pyrography
• make a willow fish • Musical Mud • fossil search • Victorian amusements • wood turning

Shopping

• Carvings • furniture • wood for turning

- jewellery • sculptures • 'log loc' • baskets
- crystals • firewood • fossils

THE FOREST OF MARSTON VALE

People who live and work within the 61 square mile Forest, between Bedford and Milton Keynes, have seen their countryside affected by decades of clay extraction for brick making. Later, several clay pits were filled with industrial and domestic refuse. The decline of the brick industry and national pressure for more housing has also seen these communities undergo significant change. For these reasons the Forest of Marston Vale was selected, in 1991, to be one of twelve Community Forests in England. Our challenge is to use trees and woodlands to repair this scarred landscape and revitalise its communities. We have already planted more than one million trees and by 2031 we will plant five million more; working with local communities, government and businesses, to create new woods and other wild places for everyone to enjoy.

NEW WOODLANDS

Although still young, trees planted in the Forest are beginning to change the landscape; they look beautiful and provide new homes for wildlife. Many big, new woods are open to the public all the time.

COME AND EXPLORE

Many woods have surfaced trails – great for cycling and walking; and lots of seats and picnic benches. Route 51, passes the Forest Centre on its way from Oxford to Cambridge, and a new 2km cycle trail, built by the Marston Vale Trust in 2008, follows the River Ouse, north of Willington. Why not come and explore the Forest soon? For more information, visit www.letsgo.org.uk

The Millennium Country Park

At the heart of the Forest, the 225 hectare Park is packed with wonderful walks and brilliant bike trails; the perfect place for a great day out. There's an adventure playground, sensory wildlife garden and cycle hire. For those wanting to explore further, surfaced and unsurfaced paths give easy access to lakes, woods and meadows. For a more tranquil walk and a chance to see undisturbed wildlife, particularly wetland birds, the 2km Wetland Trail gives access to reed beds, water meadows, lakes and bird hides (a small fee applies).

Forest Centre

The Centre provides a focal point for both the Millennium Country Park and Forest. Its fabulous Lakeside Café Bar overlooks water and maturing trees; a place where families feel at home and everyone enjoys choosing from the wide ranging menu and browsing in the well-stocked gift shop.

Business in the countryside...

As a venue for your business meeting or conference, the Forest Centre is hard to beat; providing state of the art facilities in bright, airy rooms overlooking beautiful parkland.

...and weddings too

If you are looking for the perfect place to tie the knot, we can arrange everything you need; from civil ceremony to breakfast, band and balloons.

Profits transformed into trees

Because the Centre and Country Park are owned and managed by the Marston Vale Trust, all profits are used for the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale.

CREATING WILD PLACES FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY

How to find us

By train – an enjoyable train ride (to Millbrook or Stewartby on the Bedford to Bletchley line) and a lovely 20 minute walk through the Park. Visit

www.londonmidland.com or call 0845 602 4277

By bus – call Traveline 0871 200 22 33 or visit

www.traveline.info

By cycle – Route 51 takes you direct to the Forest Centre.

By car – follow the brown signs from the A421

at Marston Moretaine. The entrance is off Station Road.

Opening hours

The Country Park is open all the time. However the Centre and car park are open 7 days per week from 10am – 6pm, until 24 October, then 10am – 5pm. Cycle hire open weekends and bank holidays (term time) and every day except

Thursday (school holidays) – call 07773 254627

The Forest Centre, Station Road, Marston Moretaine, Beds, MK43 0PR

T. 01234 767037 F. 01234 767606 info@marstonvale.org www.marstonvale.org

The Marston Vale Trust Charity No. 1069229