

Friends of Farnham Park

Newsletter Spring 2023

Registered Charity No. 285383

<http://www.friendsoffarnhampark.co.uk>

 Friends of Farnham Park



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - for details see website

15th March "Return of the Greater Horseshoe Bat"

by Martyn Phillis and Scotty Dodd.

Rowhills 19.00 for 19.30

12th April. "HoneyBees - how to keep and help them"

by Carly Hooper

Rowhills 19.00 for 19.30

24th May "Made in Farnham; Westminster Hall Roof"

by Roy Waight

Rowhills 19.00 for 19.30

7th June 'Flower Walk'

led by Isobel Girvan

Farnham Park 18.30- 20.00

All talks are held at - Rowhills Field Centre, Cranmore Lane, Aldershot, GU11 3BD

REMEMBERING ELFRIDA

Elfrida Mary Manning (1901 - 1987) was a historian, archivist, author (her published works include "Saxon Farnham" and "Farnham Parks - An Historical Review") and local councillor. Her name may already be familiar to some. Having saved the park from near complete destruction at the hands of 1960s developers (who were keen to put a road through it) Elfrida was a founder member of the Friends of Farnham Park. She was also instrumental in the Maltings project, a member of the Cobbett & Farnham Societies and a founder member of the Museum Society (her eponymous archives & library remain housed in Farnham Museum).

Just inside the Bear Lane entrance to the park sits a bench, placed there at Elfrida's behest, in memory of her husband & aviation pioneer William Oke Manning (1879 - 1958).

It is a popular place to sit but is now rather dilapidated. I am hoping to raise enough money to replace the current bench with a bench dedicated to both Elfrida & her husband. Given how much she did for the town and particularly our beautiful park, it feels fitting that Elfrida is remembered in this way. Any surplus funds will go towards disease-resistant saplings to replace those trees currently struggling.

Anyone kindly wishing to donate can do so directly to the Friends of Farnham Park bank account (Lloyds Bank). Account no: 894 55 268 Sort code: 77 49 11. Please give the reference: ELFRIDA.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to send a cheque (made payable to "Friends of Farnham Park"), please contact me at my email address below & I will arrange collection and banking.

I am in touch with one of Elfrida's relatives and we have some copies of her book "Growing Up in the Great War" to give away to anyone donating over £15. This whimsical and poignant account of being a teenager during the WWI years is a lovely, illustrated book and would make an excellent gift for any current teens (or pre-teens) studying the period at school or for anyone curious about the time.

If you would like a copy, please notify me - via my email address below - once you have made your donation, letting me know your name and postal address and I will arrange one to be forwarded to you. Thank you.

annahcarey@hotmail.com

Anna Carey



BEE KEEPING



We took up beekeeping about nine years ago, as it is something that my wife, in particular, had wanted to do for many years. I bought her a

National hive and a beginners course, with the Fleet & District Beekeeping Association as a Christmas present. Now we have three hives.

Populations of bees are in steep decline around the world, partly due to the use of pesticides (notably neonicotinoids). In January this year, the Government lifted the ban on farmer's using neonicotinoids for the third year running. As 80% of all trees, plants and crops in Europe need pollinating it is imperative that we don't kill the pollinators i.e. bees.

In summer, the worker bees collecting nectar and pollen have a life span of about 6 weeks and will only generate about quarter of a teaspoon of honey, but as there are up to 50,000 bees in each hive, they are able to build up quite a good stock of honey.

We leave a 'super' box (honey store) full of honey filled frames in the hive, for the bees to consume through the winter, when it is too cold to go foraging, but if there is an excess of honey, we take this for our own consumption. We also provide them with a bag of fondant (similar to royal icing) for them to feed on if the honey runs out. Starvation is one of the greatest threats to the bee's survival through the winter period (and occasionally in the summer, if there is a long period of cold and/or wet weather).

honeybee
(*Apis mellifera*)



It is most important to the survival of the colony, that the queen is fed well and kept warm, as she will generate the new worker (female) and

drone (male) bees throughout the summer to build up the colony for the following year. The queen, who is larger than the worker bees, is productive for about 3 years, after which the colony generate new queen cells, on the breeding or 'brood' frames.

Queen cells are a lot larger than the worker bee cells and are attached vertically to the side of the wax cells. The workers exclusively feed the potential queen larvae with royal jelly in order to generate a new queen. If a colony grows too large for the space available in the hive or the Queen is in her second or third season the worker bees will create a new Queen. The current queen will leave the hive taking about half the worker bees with her.



This is called a swarm and is natural reproduction as one colony becomes two, but if the swarm is not collected and housed by a beekeeper, it will eventually perish. Swarming bees are particularly docile having gorged on the honey reserves in the hive as it may be some time before they can establish and build up food reserves. Typically, a swarm will gather on bushes and trees, but can sometimes be seen on fences and gates. If a swarm is found, a beekeeper can collect it in a box and, as long as the queen bee goes in, the rest of the bees will follow her into the box.

Back in the original hive the remaining bees continue to generate a new queen, who then grows the colony back to a size that will survive through the next winter. A beekeeper can try to prevent swarming by adding more 'brood' and 'super' boxes to the hive to provide more space for them to grow into or by artificially swarming the colony to aid the bee's natural instinct but keep both colonies safe.

In the late summer/autumn, the queen reduces the number of new bees she produces, generating only enough bees to heat the centre of the hive to a constant 33 degrees C. They achieve this by vibrating their wings and generating body heat which, of course, needs fuel which they get from eating the honey store.

Varroa mites are a problem for bees, as they attach themselves to both bees and bee larvae, feeding from their fat cells. This makes them vulnerable to disease becoming weak, deformed and unable to fly and do their duties in the



hive. Beekeepers need to monitor the number of varroa mites present in the hive and are recommended to apply a treatment biannually to keep numbers manageable. Some

treat the mites simply by sprinkling icing sugar over the bees, making them clean themselves thoroughly and knock the varroa mites off, though it fails to remove the mites from the larvae.

Dry weather with very little wind is essential for bee welfare and honey production as it enables the bees to go out and forage.

If you are stung by a bee, remove the sting immediately by scraping over it with a credit card or similar, this will prevent excess venom entering the skin. Taking antihistamine and applying an ice pack may reduce the pain and swelling. A localised red, sore, itchy reaction is perfectly natural. Feeling faint, dizzy or short of breath is not normal and an ambulance needs to be called immediately. Thankfully, this is rare.

<http://fleetbeekeepers.com/blog/>

Andy Talbot

IN MEMORY OF RUPERT

We are all very sad to have lost a dear friend
and dedicated conservation volunteer,
Rupert Kemp,
who passed away long before his time in
November 2022.

Rupert also volunteered at the Rural Life Living Museum and was known among us all to be a very hard-working and diligent member of both teams. He is sorely missed by friends, family and the volunteering community.

A tree is to be planted in Farnham Park as a lasting living tribute
to his work and his memory.



RANGER ROUNDUP

The winter season has been very busy with a number of volunteer projects going, including but not limited to:

Hedges:

Farnham Park has a number of hedgerows – an important linear habitat providing a home for all manner of fauna and flora alongside wildlife corridors. They store twice as much carbon as woodland and support over 600 plant, 1,500 insect, 65 bird and 20 mammal species. There are around 250,000 miles of managed hedgerows in Britain, with an additional 90,000 miles of relict hedgerows in need of management. It's estimated that together they store some 9 million tonnes of carbon.

The Queen Mother's hedge has been laid over consecutive seasons and in 2021 the entire length was officially laid. This season saw the Surrey Hedgelayers complete the section around the Nutshell Lane Coppice and the Park Volunteers start a new section opposite Oast House Crescent. The aim of the hedgerow management in the park is to get all hedges into favourable condition and where possible, lay the hedges to maximise biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Ride, glade and vistas:

Several areas of the park have been subject to ongoing management, clearing areas of poorly formed, secondary woodland to develop interface between high canopy and open ground. This creates a mosaic of habitats, edge habitat and opens historic vistas which have become overgrown following the demise of cattle grazing. Follow-up surveys in these areas have found greater numbers of invertebrates, increased deer activity and 2 species of bat using the edge habitat as hunting grounds.



Nick Macfarlane BSc (Hons)

HEDGEROWS – A BUMPY HISTORY AND THEIR IMPORTANCE TO WILDLIFE

In its earliest form, a 'hedge' would simply have been the retained woodland perimeter of land cleared within a forest for the purpose of cultivation. In many cases the original aim would have been the containment of livestock but these living boundaries served to define land ownership and provide shelter for stock and crops as well as a source of fruit and coppice material.

Over time our need for land boundaries has risen and fallen under the influence of government policy, the greed



of landowners, wars, the increase/decrease in populations and developments in agriculture. There have been periods in history when many miles of hedgerow have been planted resulting in a patchwork landscape of small fields filled with crops and grazing livestock. There have also been periods when hedgerows have been ripped out either by angry commoners who have lost their means to provide food for themselves and their families or due to a higher demand for food and crops leading to increased agricultural efficiency and bigger farm machinery. These days fields are much bigger and hedgerows far fewer.

It was not until the 1960s that attention turned towards the value of hedgerows to wildlife. In some parts of the country 50% of hedgerows have disappeared whilst many of those remaining are so badly damaged or maintained that their value to wildlife is vastly reduced. Loss of hedgerows has been identified as a factor in the catastrophic decline of many plant and animal species traditionally associated with farmland. Today there is protection for countryside hedgerows based on location, length, age and 'importance' as well as grants available for planting new hedgerows.

In the 1990s a review was commissioned to determine the relationship between the way a hedgerow is managed and its value to wildlife. Less than half of UK hedgerows are in good condition (i.e. with few vertical gaps, a minimum height of 1m and width of 1.5m). This is partly due to over-frequent trimming with mechanised flails.

Traditional methods of rejuvenation such as hedge-laying and coppicing - as practised within Farnham Park e.g. the Queen Mother's Hedge (laid in the South of England style) and the Avenue boundaries - have been found to reduce gaps and stimulate growth from the base of trees and hedgerows. These effects benefit a wide range of wildlife including perennial plants, small mammals, farmland birds and a myriad of invertebrates including more than 20 butterfly species.



Most of our native small mammals are supported by hedgerows, including the dormouse which relies on them as a dispersal corridor. Even small gaps in a single hedgerow can impact on dormouse dispersal with a 64% decline in numbers recorded since the 1970s. Ditches and banks associated with hedgerows also provide havens for amphibians, reptiles and hedgehogs with leaf litter beneath a hedge forming a cosy winter retreat as well as a sheltered route through the countryside. Hedgerows are even known to aid bats in navigating between roosts and feeding sites.



Beyond these benefits to wildlife, well-maintained hedgerows help to prevent soil erosion and create a natural barrier that prevents water run-off from fields, so the ground is less likely to dry out and rivers less likely to be polluted. They also help to keep the air pure by providing screens against pollutants, thus improving our own health and wellbeing.