



Raising awareness of the historical, natural and amenity value of Markeaton Brook and its tributaries from Hlland Ward, Langley, Mackworth and Quarndon into Derby.

Markeaton Brook Matters

Issue 4 Spring 2008

Welcome to the fourth newsletter from the Friends of Markeaton Brook (FoMB). Much of nature has been hibernating through the winter but not FoMB as we have held our Annual General Meeting, submitted an application for lottery funding application for Sturgess Fields and even appearing on the television.

All change at the top

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at Whitecross House on February 5th 2008. Those who were there witnessed the usual end-of-year reports from the committee members, the formation of a new committee, a talk by Professor Rogers, videos of a couple of our events and the regional Nature of Britain TV programme in which we appeared.

As is usual at the AGM the existing members of the committee resigned and a new committee membership was formed. Those that are serving another term in the same roles are Anne Morgan and Joe Kucharzewski as Events Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Ken Clarke takes over as Chair from Lynne Wood as she becomes the Membership Secretary. Juliet Trotter stepped down as Secretary and we thank her for all her contributions over the last year. New faces to the committee, which are always welcome, are Judith Overton and Tracey Smith, the latter becoming Secretary. Gifts of appreciation were given to Anne and Lynne, for Anne's huge amount of work on the Sturgess Fields planning application and for Lynne being the Chair for longer than anyone can remember.

Professor Rogers of the University of Derby attended the AGM and gave a talk on his work to re-establish the endangered white-clawed crayfish and how he would like to involve FoMB.

As a change to the usual presentation of the events we've held over the past year, Anne played video recordings of the walk at Crystal Springs Farm and the History Talk by Don Farnsworth at Markeaton Park. Unfortunately, for those at the back of the room the audio couldn't quite be heard, so we're promising to beef up our recording techniques and speakers for next year.

Who's that on the telly?

In addition to the video recorded events shown at the AGM, Anne played the regional Nature of Britain TV programme FoMB took part in. You may know that this series was hosted by Alan Titchmarsh and broadcast by the BBC in Autumn 2007. The programme consisted of two sections; the first, presented by Alan was national in outlook and the second section focused on the local region. FoMB appeared in the East Midlands Urban

programme that concentrated on the wildlife in Derby city centre. We were shown clearing up Markeaton Brook and in the case of Maggie, one of the helpers on the day of recording, actually falling in the Brook! Lynne Wood, our Chair at the time, who was being interviewed by the presenter, said in reference to the nature in the brook, "If we don't look after it we'll lose it and once it's gone, it's gone forever." This remark was judged to be so perceptive the producers decided to include it in the final programme that was broadcast across the whole nation.

Following the FoMB, Professor Rogers was shown checking up on the population of white-clawed crayfish in the brook and pupils from Markeaton Primary School were on hand to take part in survey.

Spring tidy

Saturday 23rd February 2008 saw the first of our Action Days for Wildlife. Two areas of the brook were tackled, the first being along the banks of the brook at Brook Walk and the second around the Mill Pond on Markeaton St by Queensway. Litter was picked up at both places and in total 14 bags were collected. Around the pond 48 trees and shrubs donated by Wild Derby were planted and with the specialised help of the Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group 20 bat and 10 bird boxes were put up. Within one hour of the boxes going up, a great tit decided it had found a new home. Many thanks go out to all the members, volunteers and organisations that made the day such a success.

Sturgess Fields Developments

After a suggestion from Vice Chancellor Coyne of the University of Derby we have submitted an application for a Breathing Places Grant from the Big Lottery Fund for various proposals for Sturgess Fields. If the grant of £10,000 is awarded then the University will provide another £10,000. We will not hear until June 2008 whether we are going to get the money or not.

The outcomes that our proposals must produce are:

- The natural environment of the breathing place [i.e. site] is developed to encourage plant life and animals,
- People in the local community make more and better use of the breathing place,
- People in the local community are more engaged in developing and maintaining the breathing place.

We believe if we do get the grant it will be a win-win-win situation with nature, the local community and the University all benefitting.

However, all is not positive news regarding Sturgess Fields. It has come to our notice the University early in March have lodged an appeal with Derby City Council against the refusal to grant their road across Sturgess Fields. We don't know much about the content of the appeal yet but we to know more soon.

And finally...

We are pleased to announce after a long gestation period FoMB now have a post office box the address of which is:

Friends Of Markeaton Brook, PO Box 7564, DERBY, DE1 0NS

If you prefer e-mail then visit us at our website <http://markeatonbrook.net/> and select the 'Contact Us' page.

Friends of Markeaton Brook are a community group in the WildDerby partnership because wildlife benefits people.