

FRIENDS OF YEADING WALK NEWSLETTER, November 2022



The ash at the Suffolk Road entrance welcomes visitors to the park in September. Autumn produced a flush of new growth and flowering, following rain and continuing mild weather. A garden full of fallen leaves may create work sweeping them up, but provides wonderful leaf mould which is helpful for improving soil structure, especially in areas of heavy clay. Save leaves in a separate compost bin or in plastic sacks, keep the leaves moist and cover with an old sack/plastic sheet for warmth. In a year's time, you will have perfect leaf mould for improving your garden.

PARK UPDATES

New trees soak up excess rain and brighten the park



Five new Golden Alders (*Alnus incana Aurea*) have been planted close to the Rayners Lane entrance. Alders are particularly good for soaking up excess water and will help reduce saturation on the grassy bank during the wet months. The alders have buttery yellow autumn leaves and crimson catkins which will deepen in colour as winter progresses. Thanks also to Gareth Thomas, MP for Harrow West, who came to help Friends' volunteers plant two Ornamental Pears (*Pyrus calleryana Chanticleer*) near the stone bridge. These trees have beautiful spring blossom and good autumn colour. All the trees were funded by an award from the Greater London Authority.

Planting trees to support wildlife, increase diversity and for carbon mitigation is a continuing Friends' strategy for Yeading Walk.

4th Headstone Scouts turn out to 'Clean-the-Stream'



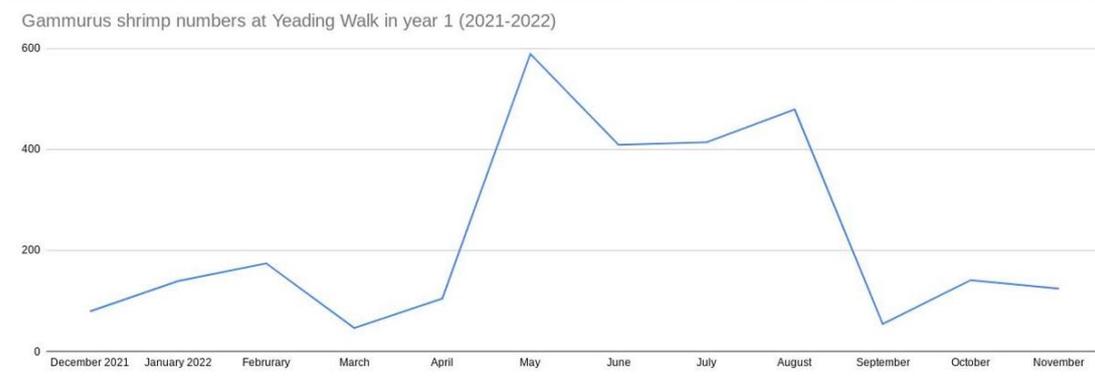
What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon than a peaceful paddle in the stream?

The second 'Clean-the-Stream' event was strongly supported by the Scouts, their leaders and parents, as well as Friends' volunteers. An assortment of junk and debris was removed from the stream resulting in a noticeably cleaner river, supporting insect life and food for birds. The white egret is now a regular visitor and some have seen the kingfisher skimming down the river. Yeading Brook is a Thames tributary and improvements upstream benefit the whole waterway. The Scouts did a magnificent job, starting at Northumberland Road bridge and working down to the stone bridge near Rayners Lane. Sixteen scouts, three leaders and 3 mums ended up muddy, wet and with boots full of water but with a job well done. 'Thank You!' to 4th Headstone Scouts.

Riverfly Monitoring produces encouraging results for Yeading Brook

Official Riverfly monitoring survey of Yeading Brook began at Yeading Walk 12 months ago. The survey involves catching and counting particular invertebrates that live in the stream. By collecting this information, we can see how healthy and biodiverse the river habitat is. In the past year we have caught 2764 Gammarus shrimp, and 4 Olive Baetidae. Fish have also been caught during Riverfly monitoring - 6 Sticklebacks and a Stone Loach. Although the amount of Gammarus shrimp is good there are not so many other invertebrates so this shows a lack biodiversity. There are many things we can do to improve biodiversity, in particular to get more plants growing in the stream. There has been a big improvement in the amount of different aquatic plants found in the stream compared to this time last year. Then there was only one type, curly leafed pond weed, but over this summer 5 other types of aquatic plants were observed including Starwort and duck weed. These plants were thought to have come downstream from Headstone Manor as a result of the wetland and river improvement work carried out last year.

The graph shows the Gammarus numbers caught each month. There us some natural seasonal variation but the dips could indicate pollution events which killed off the Gammarus and the high points show when the conditions were favourable for the Gammarus e.g. warm and plentiful food.



If you are interested in Riverfly monitoring keep an eye on our social media for updates.

Maintenance Projects – Brown, Black, Green and Muddy

Volunteers removed graffiti, cleaned and sanded down the park benches, as well as re-staining and weatherproofing the wood. A huge improvement, and thanks to those who undertook the work. A welcome replacement park bench was provided by Harrow Council in June. A litter bin was unfortunately run over by contractors and has yet to be replaced. We encourage dog walkers to kindly deposit ‘doggy bags’ in the bins near Rayners Lane or the playing field, rather than next to benches where people sit.

Graffiti created by a small group of mindless vandals is regularly removed from park notice boards, bridges and benches. In the summer, the picnic bench was set on fire by vandals and completely destroyed. If you have any information about those involved in damaging the park, please advise the committee and we shall notify the police.

The Community Orchard was pruned both in January and June. October Apple Day saw families picking apples in the orchard, helping clean up fallen fruit and some went home to produce and enjoy delicious-looking desserts. Be sure to join us next autumn for apple, pear and plum picking.



The Cherry Laurel Stump Gang get down to business, removing a substantial tree root to make room for new tree planting. The stump roots were cut loose but lay glowering in the mud in the bottom of the rain-filled hole for the next week. However, the Stump Gang turned up at the weekend for ‘One Last Heave’. The stump is now lying on the ground and the hole back filled with soil, ready for the new trees. Bravo Team!

The park lost nine trees to Storm Eunice in February. There are plans to replant this area with British native trees.



UPCOMING EVENTS

'Adopt-a-Tree' Sapling Planting underway

Yeading walk was given around 30 surplus saplings by Headstone Manor in 2021. An autumn 'Adopt a Tree' event saw families potting up saplings to nurture at home for the next year. The sapling 'parents and families' will be bringing these young trees to the park for planting out over the next couple of weekends. A group of silver birches will be sited in the area where diseased Black Poplars were recently cut back in neighbouring back gardens near the Northumberland Road entrance. Blackthorn and hawthorn bushes will create wild-life friendly hedgerows along the allotment and park boundaries. Young hazel trees are also being planted.

Preparing the Community Orchard for Winter

Come along and help volunteers mulch the fruit trees with wood chip and plant spring daffodils in late November. This helps protect the trees over the winter months and should improve fruit quality, as well as bringing welcome spring colour. Watch the notice board and social media for details.

'Harrow Wins'

This is a local lottery to benefit good causes in Harrow. Tickets cost only £1 and 60p goes to your nominated beneficiary, which we hope will be Yeading Walk. John Lewis are currently offering a £1,000 in-store voucher to the winner, with the draw on 17th December. Local lottery odds are so much more favourable than the National Lottery, so PLAY TODAY! Let's see one of the Friends of Yeading Walk scoop this prize. See details at

<https://www.harrowwins.co.uk/>

LOOKING AFTER THE PARK

We welcome volunteers to help us with projects and ongoing activities in the park. We continue to raise funds to support and improve the park, and for specific projects. Just an occasional hour of your time makes a difference.

Your contributions, suggestions and comments are welcome and greatly appreciated.

BANK: NatWest

ACCOUNT NAME: Friends of Yeading Walk

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 21131511

SORT CODE: 52-10-33

We encourage everyone who loves Yeading Walk to support the park. As a Friend of Yeading Walk, **your annual donation of £5 works out to 14p/day - a bargain in anyone's books.** Please continue to enable the Friends to care for your park by making your annual voluntary donation today.

If donating by electronic transfer of funds, please use your name or that of your organisation as a reference. Please send us an email when you donate, using email address foywgroup@gmail.com with 'TREASURER – Payment' in the subject line, so that we can thank you for becoming a Friend and keep you updated with all the latest news.

Sincerely,

Committee, Friends of Yeading Walk.

Email: FoYWGroup@gmail.com