

# Butterflies and Brambles

## A Year in Teazle Wood



Top: Silver-washed Fritillary, courtesy of Jeremy Early

IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR WE TOLD THE STORY OF HOW A SURREY COMMUNITY SAVED ITS LOCAL WOODLAND FOR THE SAKE OF ECOLOGY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. AS THE PROJECT CELEBRATES ITS FIRST BIRTHDAY, WE REVISITED TEAZLE WOOD FOR AN UPDATE.

**A**way from the roar of the M25 and the bustle of modern life, the flora and fauna of an Ancient Woodland quietly continue the fascinating cycle of life. Teazle Wood in Leatherhead, Surrey, was purchased in summer 2012 by a group of people championing its survival as a vital green space. As soon as the wood was in safe hands, the important work of planning and protecting its future began.

The first year has been largely a year of recording and surveying. To create an effective management plan, it is essential first to fully understand a wood, and to know how it has been used and what species it is already supporting.

Teazle Wood has numerous leading experts aboard, offering their time and advice free of charge.

“The various surveys have been eye-opening and inspiring,” explains campaign leader Lucy Quinnell. “From bats and birds to butterflies and lichen, we are starting to grasp the incredible biodiversity of the Teazle Wood site. We have some of the best-known international experts in their fields helping us – we are very lucky.”

As well as nurturing Teazle Wood for its ecological importance, its potential as an educational and therapeutic resource is a key aspect of the project. Community experts have given guidance, and a start has been made on looking at the archaeology of the wood. Intriguing finds in this first year include the handle of a spoon marked with initials, three Roman ‘curses’ – little lead tablets inscribed with messages – and plenty of Elizabethan horseshoes.

The year has also seen litter picks, photographic workshops, guided walks and lectures, and the unexpected linking of this small English deciduous woodland to the vast and famous Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Lucy spoke at the Natural Connections conference at Brunel University in London, where Jon Day of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority made the incredible offer to link local Surrey children directly to Reef scientists via video conference. Unilever, whose headquarters in Leatherhead backs

directly onto Teazle Wood, is helping to set up the technical facility that will enable this wonderful offer to be accepted.

“It may seem bizarre, linking our little site with one of the giants of the natural world”, says Lucy, “but all sites relate to each other, and looking after and monitoring every piece of the picture is vital if globally we are to make any impact. 20% of North Leatherhead’s children live below the poverty line – imagine the excitement we all feel about this chance to enrich local lives with such interest and colour.”

Fund-raising activity has also brought people together. Some of the money needed to buy the woodland was borrowed, and funds are still being raised to pay back those who lent money over and above their donations. Tea parties, open gardens, sponsored runs and swims, choral performances, plant sales, fees from lectures and workshops, art exhibitions – all have helped to raise awareness and income. ■



*The ‘Save Teazle Wood’ campaign is still fundraising to finish paying for the acquisition of the wood. To get involved, contact Lucy: Telephone 01372 386453  
E-mail lucyquinnell@aol.com Facebook: Friends of Teazle Wood  
www.teazlewood.org.uk*