



NENG

EDGE

Nether Edge Neighbourhood Newsletter
February 2022

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Chelsea Park Playground Update



INSIDE
Local Traffic
Kenwood Community Growers
Sheffield Clean Air Zone
Friends of Brincliffe Edge Wood
What's On

www.netheredge.org.uk



The Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group was set up in 1973 with the following aims:

To improve the conditions of life especially of those living or working in the areas of Brincliffe, Nether Edge and Sharrow in Sheffield, without distinction of sex or race, or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating with local authorities, voluntary organisations and residents in a common effort to advance our education, to improve the environment and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure time activities.

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EDGE FEBRUARY 2022

This issue of EDGE was edited by Howard Fry and Nicole Erlen
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Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group Application for Membership/renewal

I wish to join / continue to support* the Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group (NENG) and receive the 'EDGE' magazine by hand delivery / by email* and enclose / have sent* my annual subscription of £

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- Your contact details will only be used in connection with your EDGE subscriptions or NENG membership.
- The annual subscription for EDGE is £10 per household, commencing on 1st April each year. Any additional donation to the work of NENG is welcomed.
- Subscribers living outside our distribution area will only receive electronic copies of EDGE, or you can choose to receive EDGE by email by selecting this method above.

Cheques should be made payable to **NENG**, but please bear in mind that everyone in NENG is a volunteer, so we would far prefer to receive payment by Standing Order or by bank transfer (Sort code 30-97-51 A/C 36208368 NENG), as this greatly reduces the administration burden on both your local EDGE distributor and on NENG itself. Copies of a Standing order form (you can alternatively set one up online) to send to your Bank are available from ken.lambert227@gmail.com whom you should advise when you have set up a standing order or made a bank transfer so that records can be updated.

Signature

Date

As a local resident/ supporter of NENG, I also wish to become a full Member of NENG, a company limited by guarantee, which entitles me to full voting rights at the AGM, receive regular copies of EDGE and fully participate in its activities. In the unlikely event that the Company has to be wound up, I agree to pay the sum of £1 towards its debts if asked to do so. I understand this liability will continue for one year after I cease to be a member of the company.

PLEASE NOTE: Should you prefer **not** to become a full member of NENG you still can be just an EDGE subscriber by deleting the section in italics above. This entitles you to receive copies of EDGE but no entitlement to vote. The annual subscription is the same.

EDGE EDITORIAL

Howard Fry and Nicole Erlen

As our readers will no doubt be heartily tired of the pandemic, we have tried to provide some upbeat stories to sustain you in the dark days until spring. As can be seen from our cover photograph, after a great deal of effort, patience and cooperation the Chelsea Park Playground has been transformed. The Grow Gardeners have been awarded funding to promote accessibility to the young people they support. The Abbeydale Street Trees community has obtained permission and funding to continue with its plans for making Abbeydale Road more environmentally friendly. With the support of NENG it has been possible to increase the habitat diversity of Brincliffe Edge Woods. The Sheaf and Porter Rivers Trust has been given great support by the Muslim community and by local businesses to enable them to continue to make improvements to the Broadfield area of the River Sheaf. The History Group has been able to get back to full throttle to continue with their great efforts to explore and make available local stories from the past. Unfortunately, we also have to report that

the Kenwood Community Growers, who did so much to provide fresh produce for the Food Works organisation and to encourage gardeners in this area, have had to leave their site in the grounds of the Kenwood Hall Hotel. Let us hope that they quickly find a new and permanent home where they can continue with their great work. There are of course issues of increasing concern and we focus on those relating to traffic and parking. Whilst these can appear intractable, that is not to say that solutions cannot be found. Your ideas would be most welcome. Finally, there is the issue of NENG subscriptions. We would ask you to read the piece by our NENG Chair, Ken Lambert, most carefully and take appropriate steps to ensure that you are making the correct payment.

We hope that the items in this edition will encourage you to spend time outdoors, if you are able, to explore, to relax, and to participate. And if you still feel the need to shed a few mince pies we would strongly recommend building a garden pond. The wildlife will thank you for it.

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NENG AGM

The NENG AGM will be on
Wednesday 30th March
at 7pm on Zoom

Details will be published in
the March issue of EDGE

Annual Subscriptions

This is a reminder that annual subscriptions of £10 for 2022-3 are due from the 1st April. A subscription provides you with 10 copies of the EDGE magazine over the year and also helps NENG to fund activities that benefit the community in Nether Edge, Sharrow and Brincliffe.

It would be really helpful if subscriptions could be paid as early as possible in the new operating year.

There are a number of ways to make a payment:-

By standing order – most of the standing orders for 2021-2 were made at the old rate of £8/£5. Could those who already pay by standing order, which is our preferred method, please amend the amount for 2022-3 to £10. This can be done online or if desired, a form to send to your bank can be obtained from the NENG website or by contacting me. So that we can more easily update the records, could you please use your address as the reference.

By bank transfer ('BACS') – NENG bank account information and my contact details are on page 2. Could you please use your address as the reference and it would also help update the records if you emailed/texted me with your address after making the bank transfer.

By cheque – made out to 'NENG' and posted to me (rather than our acting Treasurer) or dropped through my letter box.

By cash – some of the EDGE distributors have continued to collect cash, though please note that not all wish to do so, so the other means above are preferred. Cash in an envelope can also be dropped through my letter box, but do remember to include your name and address

Ken Lambert

*NENG Chair and Membership Secretary
20 Chelsea Road S11 8BR*



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Chelsea Park Playground 2022

Helen Ryall on behalf of the Friends of Chelsea Park (January 2022)



On a day in March 1925, Annie Frances Styring was addressing a meeting in the Victoria Hall in Sheffield. She said, "Excuse me one moment". She sat down, then suddenly collapsed, and died.

Annie Frances was the wife of the former Lord Mayor, Alderman Dr. Robert Styring and they lived in Brincliffe Tower (now called Brincliffe Towers) with their four children – Constance, Allan, Cyril and Lillian. Robert was so distressed at the sudden loss of his wife that he made a decision to gift his house and grounds to the City of Sheffield. He set up the Annie Frances Memorial Foundation in order to maintain the grounds of Brincliffe Tower, which were opened as a public park in 1935. The park became known as Chelsea Park.

The present Children's Playground was opened on June 11th 2005 by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Sheffield (Roger and Catherine Davison) but by 2019, it was in urgent need of attention. With the help of funds from the Annie Frances Memorial Foundation, some extra funds from NENG and local fundraising, the Parks and Countryside Sector at Sheffield City Council have been able to work with the Friends of Chelsea Park to make improvements to the playground. The playground now has two sets of new swings, a refurbished camel, and a more colourful roundabout. Some improvements have been made to the climbing apparatus and, most importantly, both areas of the playground have been resurfaced. A definite improvement on Muddy Puddles.

We can imagine that Annie Frances would



Above: The playground now with new swings and surfaces.

Left: How the playground looked in November 2019

have welcomed a playground in her grounds, and be pleased to see it well-used and enjoyed by the children of Nether Edge and beyond.

Many thanks must go to Amie Rowland for leading the project and working with the Friends of Chelsea Park, and to Bob Parkin and his team at the Parks and Countryside Sector for carrying out the work. Also to everyone in NENG, the local Brownies, and others who have donated and fundraised for the Chelsea Park Playground Project.

NENG are presently holding £4,420 for Friends of Chelsea Park (FoCP), raised through generous donations, especially the Brownie's litter pick, which raised £617.

FoCP have already paid for the new spring and seat for the camel, and contributed towards refurbishment of the Roundabout Spinner. Everything else has been done by the Parks and Countryside team, using investment income from the Annie Frances Memorial Foundation.

We are awaiting final accounts, from the Council but may need to contribute a further £2.4k towards the cost of the 'Tiger Mulch' surface, beneath the adventure frame. We hope this will leave around £2,000 in the playground fund, to be spent of further enhancements for the children. The Brownies will be helping to advise what this should be.

New Walls from Old



The wall before and after

Sheaf and Porter Rivers Trust

After heavy rains, high water levels and the effects of nearby building works in April this year the 120 year old riverside wall at Leyburn Road, off Abbeydale Road, finally gave way and collapsed into the River Sheaf. Fortunately this hidden riverside site, which is just a stone's throw away from the Broadfield Pub, is currently being redeveloped as the new Jamia Masjid & Usmania Education Centre.

The Mosque project is being funded by our local Muslim Community, who generously decided to pay for rebuilding the riverside wall in the original stone and brick, rather than opting for a cheaper prefabricated solution.

The stone and brick for the new wall was recycled from the river bed and looks just like the original, but is now backed up by solid concrete and will in future form part of the

planned flood defences for the Sheaf Valley. You can find a plan of these proposals at <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/public-health/flood-protection-schemes>.

The Sheaf and Porter Rivers Trust are working with the local community to improve the river, and recently organized their third Broadfield Riverside clean-up, removing large quantities of rubbish from the river, including a 5 metre length of steel railings.

At a site meeting in August, Alison Teal, Councillor for Nether Edge & Sharrow, and Douglas Johnson, Executive Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport welcomed the Trust's exciting ideas for improving the Broadfield riverside in partnership with local businesses such as Firma-Chrome and Wolf Safety Lamps and the Jamia Masjid Mosque. Wider consultation will take place this Winter so please start sending us your ideas for improving the riverside environment to broadfieldconsultation@sheafportertrust.org.



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The History Group Looks to the Future

Nether Edge History Group

After 2 years of disrupted activity the Nether Edge History Group is looking forward to a year when restrictions ease and we can get back to something like normality.

We have not been completely Covid idle, as those of you who have been following us in Edge or on our website know. Over the last two years our activities have included the publication of 'Nether Edge in the Second World War', a 2022 Calendar of 'Green Nether Edge', development of our website, including the posting of on-line walks, the installation on Meadow Bank Avenue of the first of a series of planned History Boards. A decent list given the situation especially as, in the process, we have generated several hundred pounds for NENG coffers and other charities .

Now, in the hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel, we are considering our ambitions for 2022. These include :

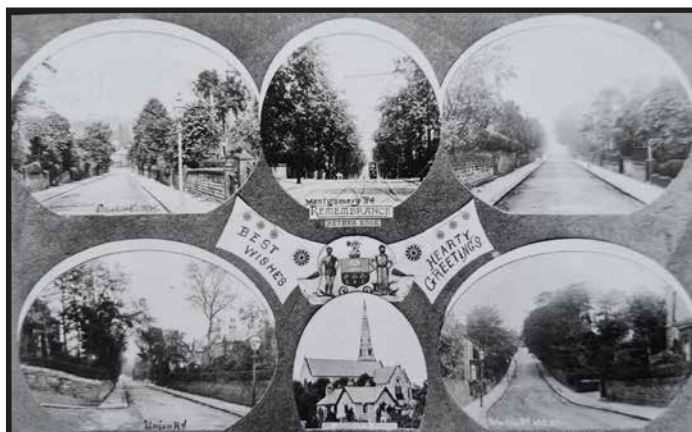
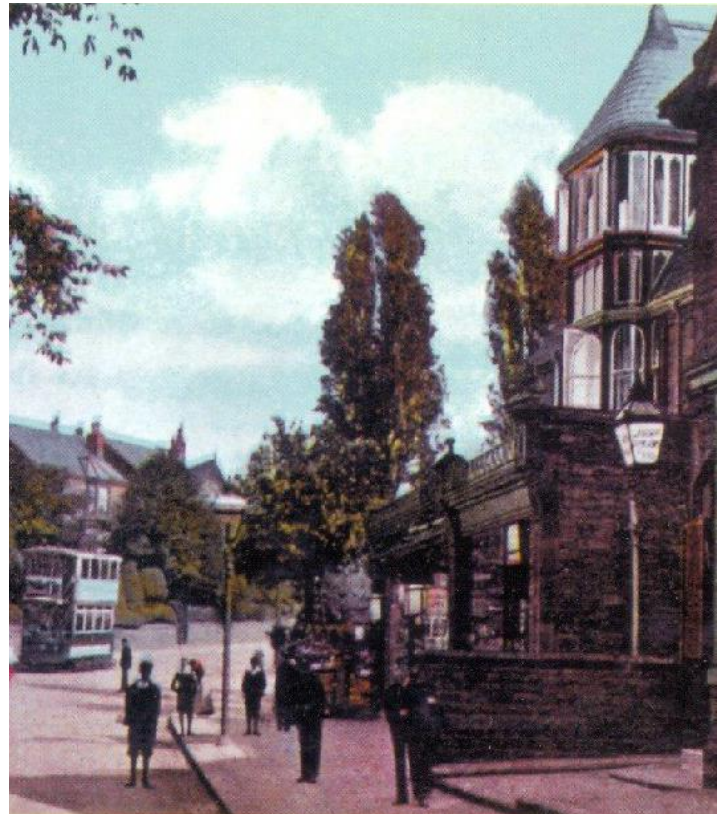
- Resuming activities temporarily suspended because of Covid including the bi-monthly Open Meetings in The Union
- Further developing our walks programme, both on-line and actual
- Organising talks
- Presenting ourselves at the Farmers Market and Local History Fairs.

We are also inviting ideas on how we might maintain our record of publishing something of significance each year in time for Christmas. This may seem a long way away but is a process that takes many months through generation of ideas, research, writing, publication and marketing.

We are also looking to establish a 'History Corner ' feature in each edition of Edge so we can keep you posted on our activities. This in addition to our annual takeover of one edition of Edge usually in the Autumn.

All very exciting stuff. And the more people involved the better. So...any budding local historians out there interested in getting involved at whatever level you feel comfortable with from active engagement to simple general interest in our activities ? Past experience of no consequence.

Membership is free and at the most basic level simply means joining our circulation list. Let us know if it appeals at contact@netheredgehistory.org.uk



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James, Happy Patient, 2021



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Ponds

Chris Fry

A pond is nothing more and nothing less than a hole full of water; but nonetheless can be mesmerising and beautiful, like flames in a crackling log fire or a bright, starry night.

Nature has been making them since time immemorial in every imaginable place, size and shape, across every continent. People have been making them too, the Alhambra and Versailles have rather good ones.

Biologically diverse, aesthetically spell-binding; puddles, pools, ponds and lakes all show us a glimpse of another world. So close but so far away. Within reach but utterly alien. If ever there was a garden feature which can connect us back to nature it is surely a pool, shimmering in the sunlight with flowers, dragonflies and lily pads with frogs on.

Nature loves water – it needs it, it is drawn to it. Putting a pond in your garden opens it up to a range of flora and fauna, sights and sounds, views and vistas which we might not otherwise experience.

If you are going to put a pond in your garden, go big! As wide and as deep as you dare! Once you have carefully dug your hole, line it with old carpet or some other protective layer, then your rubber or pvc liner can be carefully wrapped to the inside of your pit. Make sure your edge is level all around, then consider where storm overspill might occur. You don't want an ephemeral stream running across a path or onto someone else's land. Rocks and gravel can smooth, shape, form and dictate the final inner topography

Then it's time to add plants....

I like structure, so floating leaves, (like water lily), emerging stems, (dwarf reed mace and yellow flag iris do well), marginal flowers, (water forget-me-not, water mint and water avens work well together), bog plants like marsh marigold,

Solomon's seal, marsh valerian, meadowsweet, purple loosestrife will happily give a pond a jewelled frame from March to September. And in time moss will grow – welcome it and let it creep like a velvet carpet.

Natural ponds are dynamic. A hole filled with water eventually becomes a shallow, muddy pool, albeit after some years, as it fills with leaves and dead plant matter. Likewise, a flowery grassland or herb rich meadow will succumb to what ecologists call succession and become scrub then woodland unless something stops it from doing so. A gardener has to understand this and press pause or rewind every now and again.

A "hay cut" of the vegetation around the pond, done in late winter or early spring will allow sunlight to germinate new seeds from last year's flowers, while old plants grow again from their base. This also stops woody stems from growing and casting too much shade.

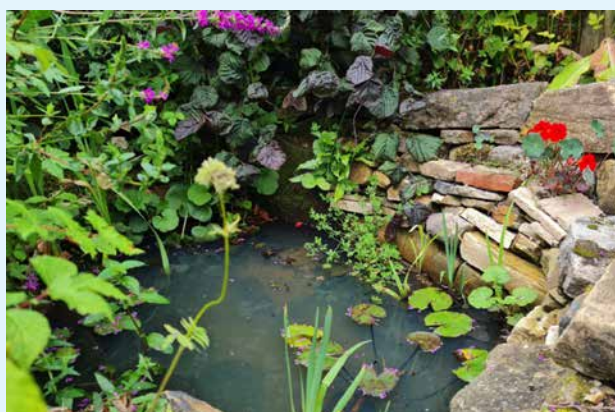
Cutting late in winter or early spring leaves shelter for over-wintering wildlife and looks stunning with fresh frost on fragile seed heads. You don't have to cut it all though, if you have enough space, leave a third each year to stay long and provide extra structure and diversity.

In time sludgy mud will build up in your pond. If it gets too thick, remove a third or so, to your compost heap, and do it in late summer, (when the breeding cycle is mostly over but you won't disturb protected winter hideaways). But let the mud sit by the side of the pond for some hours or a day so aquatic invertebrates can return to their wet and squelchy home.

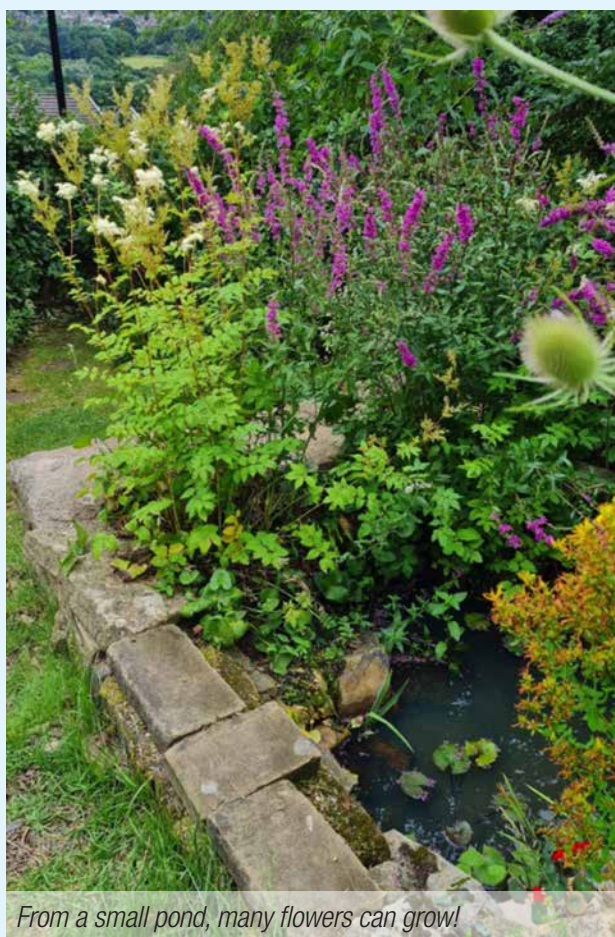
In short, ponds are amazing. Can a garden really be complete without one? A sink, a bowl, or even a depression can be a pond some of the time. Why not see what a pond can do for your garden?



*A contemplative moment while the water rises...
"Did I get the levels right?"*



Variety is the key: of places, spaces and species.



From a small pond, many flowers can grow!

Au Revoir to the Kenwood Community Growers?



Sharon Watson for the Kenwood Community Growers

Readers of Edge Magazine have been among the many local supporters who have followed the Kenwood Community Growers in the grounds of Kenwood Hall. After nearly two years of growing and donating all kinds of veg for turning into tasty dishes in the Food Works kitchen, our volunteering activities have very sadly come to a close for now.

Among our successes was the magical transformation of a garden overgrown with weeds and brambles to orderly beds and paths. We were delighted when our first seeds sprouted, rows of veg emerged in the freshly weeded soil and the greenhouse turned into a jungle of tomatoes and squashes. Of course, we had lots to learn in our first year, especially about overwatering tomatoes. . . . Being selected as a cause supported by the Co-op Community Fund was really exciting, and the funding helped us to run both practical and online workshops to support new growers and those with emerging green fingers. Co-op funding also helped us to purchase some large propagators and seed modules and establish a second net growing 'cage' so that we could rotate our crops and keep the pigeons off the brassicas.

I hope I can speak for everyone who participated with such enthusiasm by saying that we all loved every minute of time we spent in our 'secret' garden tucked away in a corner of the grounds of the hotel. Learning how to grow food well, without chemicals, and working with the seasons and the weather gives you such a strong connection to the earth. You learn patience, and acceptance of the things you can't control (pandemics, snow, wind, rain, drought and, to a certain extent, badgers and slugs!) You also learn that it takes effort and energy to produce veg even on a small scale like we did, and so you are deeply dismayed by the insane amount of waste that goes hand in hand with large scale food production.

Everyone who shared in our activities has not only given something to benefit the wider community, but has also received something back for themselves; whether that's peace of mind, the confidence to grow more veg or do other stuff, and a stronger sense of what you can achieve through collaboration. Thanks to everyone who

donated resources, gave their time, took part in our workshops and encouraged us. We are hopeful that other opportunities will come our way and we'll soon be squeezing our feet into wellies again. If you know of any local green spaces that might be suitable for us to use as our new home, please get in touch via our facebook page.

Meanwhile if you are inspired by our story, you can take part in the Food Works 'Grow-a-Row' initiative or volunteer at the Food Works farm or kitchen— see website for details <https://thefoodworks.org/>



Grow Gardeners

Edge is very happy to report on the success of the local enterprise, Grow Gardeners, as set out in their press release

Sheffield gardening charity partners with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)



Grow, a Sheffield based youth development charity, has recently received funding through the RHS Flourish Fund to promote access to horticulture.

Grow Gardeners is a paid work experience and training programme aimed at unemployed young people who are at risk of long-term unemployment due to mental ill-health and other barriers to employment.

Steven Cotton, founder of Grow, says: *“ This programme not only coaches employability skills but also gives the trainees a context to put these skills into action. Many of the young people we work with struggled to access employment and had given up hope of securing work. The Grow Gardeners Team Leaders are trained in both gardening and coaching skills so are able to support young people in developing gardening skills whilst also developing essential employability skills that will equip them for their future”.*

One of the current trainees is an adult in foster care. His foster carer said:

“This scheme is effectively a paid work experience programme based on a social enterprise model. We really needed this kind of experience to support him before he enters the world of employment. They are sympathetic employers and take each student's needs into account whilst encouraging them to work hard and develop professional behaviours.

He is really enjoying himself! He is earning money, is busy every day with regular hours, is developing his knowledge and understanding of horticulture, making new friendships, becoming more independent, taking risks, asking for help, thinking carefully about when and what to eat, going to bed earlier and sleeping better!”

Dale, one of the programme graduates said:

“I learned a lot about flowers, weeds, perennials, and how to take care of them, like deadheading and pruning. It's actual employment, so it's helped me out through lockdown... it was good to learn new things. It's been getting me out more than I would have so that's been good.”




Talking about how the trainee programme has benefitted him, Dale said: “It's got me into a set routine with going to work, so it's helped me prepare for my future... I'd recommend Grow Gardeners to others. It's a good start for someone who hasn't worked before, you could definitely do Grow Gardeners and progress to whatever you want to be as it doesn't limit you to just gardening.”

The Grow Gardeners programme has capacity for new clients in 2022 and will soon be able to offer a wider range of services including building patios, decking and planting design. To make an enquiry about the services visit www.growuk.org/grow_gardeners



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final farewells in familiar places



Sheffield Clean Air Zone

Hunter's Bar Living Streets, Pavements for People, Safer Streets for All

Sheffield City Council (SCC) recently approved the Category C Clean Air Zone, which will be introduced towards the end of this year. Once introduced, buses, taxis, vans and lorries that do not meet specific emissions standards will have to pay to drive in the zone. This is happening because Sheffield frequently records illegal levels of harmful nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and harmful levels of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). SCC is therefore under a legal obligation to take steps to reduce car exhaust emissions. An estimated 500 Sheffield residents die prematurely every year due to pollution-related ill health and many others lead lives that are negatively impacted by it. This places a burden on the health service and has an economic impact through lost working days. The health and economic burden on our children and grandchildren will be even greater if we do not tackle air pollution now.

Clean Air Zones can be controversial but evidence from the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in London shows that the number of state schools in areas exceeding legal limits for NO₂ was reduced by 97%. There was also a 44% reduction in roadside NO₂ in the central London ULEZ. This is important because NO₂ is linked to conditions including heart and lung disease, respiratory conditions (e.g. asthma), dementia, miscarriage, and stunted lung growth in children. Many of us have a relative, friend or colleague who suffers/has suffered from one of these conditions, yet few of us pause to consider how an individual decision, such as making a short journey by car – when replicated many times across the city – directly affects the life expectancy or discomfort of that person.

At Living Streets Hunter's Bar we believe that the implementation of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is essential to improving the quality of life and health of all residents. We are however concerned that the proposed CAZ is not ambitious enough to deliver the significant improvement to air quality that is needed, as it does not include private diesel vehicles.

Some of our supporters are also concerned that the exclusion of Ecclesall Road from the CAZ will mean that some of the most polluting vehicles coming from the southwest will divert at Hunter's Bar roundabout and route, via Brocco Bank and Junction Road, through the residential areas of Sharrow Vale, Nether Edge and Endcliffe Vale to avoid paying the charge. This will be to the detriment of residents and school children in those communities. The geographical scope of the CAZ may therefore need to be modified if subsequent traffic monitoring shows that displacement is happening.

Proposed Clean Air Zone



Can we / should we try to do something about local traffic?

Howard Fry

I was horrified when I learnt my 10 year old grandson had cycled up Brincliffe Edge Road in rush hour to get to my house, and thought we ought to do more to improve dangerous stretches of road. Coincidentally, the Council launched a consultation on 'Active Neighbourhoods' (see p12 EDGE Oct '21). This suggested turning the roads running down from Brincliffe Edge Road between Union Rd and Sandford Grove Rd into a low traffic neighbourhood (LTN), to promote healthier life-styles and make our streets safer. It didn't say exactly how this would be achieved, but a variety of measures to calm local traffic and deter through traffic are available and have been implemented across the country with great success.

Though a bit vague, the consultation raised issues that deserve more thought than first imagined. Traffic problems on otherwise quiet residential streets are going to be with us for a long time until public transport improves radically. At first I was a little taken a-back by what seemed a crude solution to limiting traffic by blocking whole streets, but then a friend took me aside to explain what was really being suggested. Vehicular access to selected streets is restricted at one end only (a modal filter), by short one-way sections or other measures, so residents can always drive to their house, but perhaps by a slightly longer route than in the past. The potential addition of 2 minutes to a car journey is hopefully not a problem for many residents if it means that through traffic is reduced and walking becomes more pleasant. Of course, modal filters have to be designed with care, to ensure vehicles can turn around if their exit is blocked and that emergency vehicles can still gain access. A series of filters may be needed to deter through traffic and avoid the risk of traffic simply diverting to adjoining streets. Any system would need careful

monitoring and adjustment if necessary, to ensure it works for the benefit of all residents.

A good example of a long-established modal filter is where Ulverston Road meets Archer Road. Residents confirm the filter is massively beneficial to them, otherwise they would have constant through traffic on their street. It also makes it quicker for them to walk to the Sainsburys/Aldi/retail park than to drive round so in that sense it works for promoting active travel while still allowing elderly residents and those with young kids the option of driving around the longer way if they choose.

- Should NENG be promoting active travel and encouraging walking and cycling instead of short car journeys?
- Are we prepared to put up with some inconvenience for the 'greater good' of making our residential streets safer and less polluted?
- Could we find ways to reduce flows on streets like Nether Edge Road?
- Could we make Brincliffe Edge Road safer?

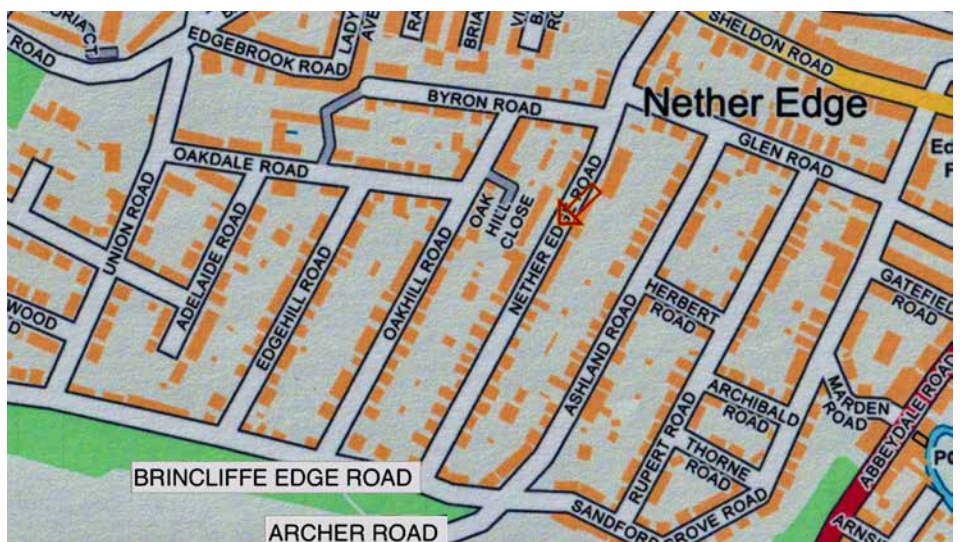
The council is working to improve public transport, which is very welcome, but that

won't happen over-night. Electric, self driving cars will eventually help, but these are still cars that will clutter the streets. Car-sharing schemes could reduce the need for a costly vehicle that sits around doing nothing outside your house for much of the time, but won't suit everyone.

Effective traffic calming needs expert professional input, but one wonders if matters would be improved if the stretch of Brincliffe Edge Road from the top of Archer Road to Union Road was made one-way, as it is very narrow and extraordinarily dangerous during rush hours. This measure would significantly reduce traffic on Nether Edge Road, as returning vehicles would be unable to turn left at the top, to reach Archer Road. It would probably be necessary to make the top section of Ashland Road one-way in the opposite direction as well, and further measures may be needed to deter through traffic from Nether Edge. Is it worth asking the council to consider implementation?

These are personal opinions and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board or NENG.

If you wish to respond, please email nengeditorialboard@gmail.com



Friends of Brincliffe Edge Wood

Ken Phillip

The Group's interest was sparked when Paul Selby of NESST (Nether Edge and Sharrow Sustainable Transformation) gave one of his inspiring talks about conservation and biodiversity in our area.

Paul is an expert on butterflies and pollinators and is keen, as we are, to combat the decline that we are seeing in all plant and animal species.

Paul launched an initiative aimed at planting buckthorn which is attractive to the brimstone butterfly. This insect is not particularly rare but we thought that the addition of a large yellow butterfly to Brincliffe Edge Wood would support our ideas about improving biodiversity in the area. The Common Buckthorn has clusters of pale green flowers in the spring and then red berries turning to purple. The caterpillars of the brimstone feed on the leaves of the buckthorn until early autumn.

Working with Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust Paul arranged for buckthorn whips to be delivered to Sheffield and the Friends asked if NENG would be prepared to fund the purchase of 50 plants to go into carefully selected areas of the Wood. "Yes" was the immediate answer so we set about collecting the whips from Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust and the organisation of a planting day.

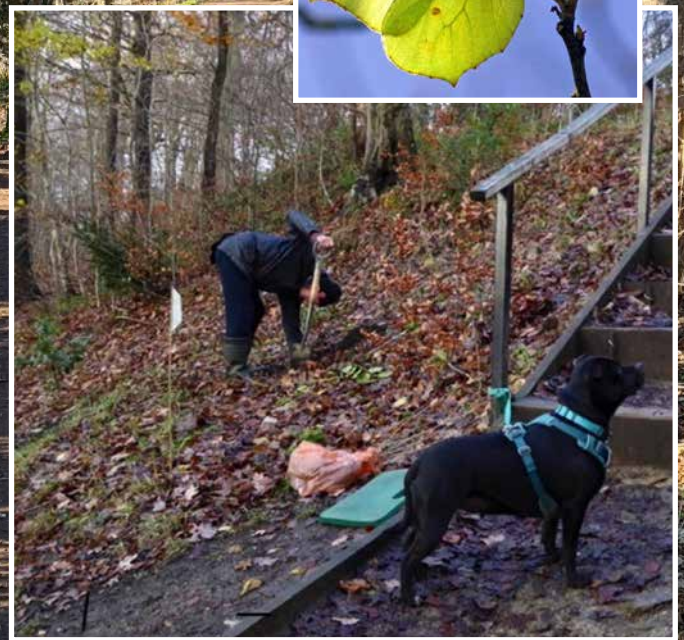
How do you organise the planting of 50 buckthorn in just the right areas of the Wood? Well, the Wood has been divided and mapped into 160 sections and, using these plans and coloured flags, Group members Jo Millett and Claire Bygate identified the planting spots – no mean feat. These plans will also help us locate the plants to monitor their growth and, eventually, to prune the buckthorn.

The day in December chosen for planting was not a part of the FoBEW Volunteer programme but we had a good turnout, including kind volunteers from NESST, and, armed with plans, spades, plants and bottles of water the planters had the job done in under two hours.

With the brightly coloured flags and people wielding spades we attracted a lot of questions and many kind comments.

Don't start looking for lemon yellow butterflies just yet as the buckthorn will take a while to become established and the butterfly to find its source of food.

We are very grateful to NENG, to NESST and to Paul Selby for supporting this initiative and for helping to provide an attractive addition to our valued local Wood.



Top: Pat & Howard settle a buckthorn whip
Above: Groot stands guard as Ken from NESST plants more buckthorn

LETTERS

Abbeydale Street Trees Update



Dear All,

Some exciting news to kick the new year off...our funding application for a parklet just off Abbeydale Road has been accepted! The bid for £12,800, which has been awarded through the Covid Economic Recovery Fund and distributed by the council, will provide the money to build and maintain a parklet for 3 years on Avenue Road between The Greek Village and Apna Lahore restaurants, and behind the current bus stop.

We are also really happy that construction and installation of the parklet will be in partnership with Strip the Willow, another local business on Abbeydale Road, with initial designs showing an evolving 6x6m space with greenery, seating, artwork and bike stands (see image above) to help continue make Abbeydale Road an even more wonderful place to work, live and visit! We aim to have the parklet open during the Spring.

In the meantime, keep looking out for the new trees on Abbeydale Road which are due to be planted this month or next. We hope everyone is in good health and spirits...

Again, with peace, love and solidari-tree....

The AST team

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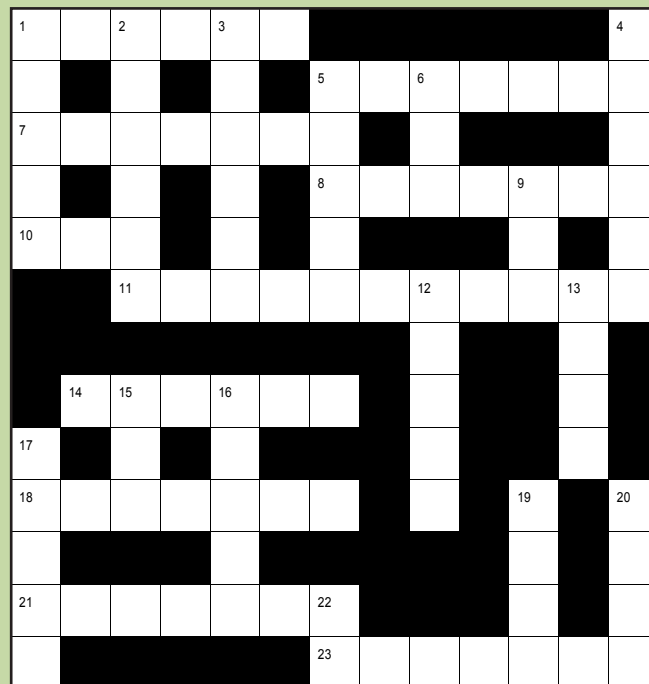
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SPRAT'S ONE AND HUNDRED AND TWENTY SIXTH CROSSWORD

A bit different this month. It's based on American State Capitals. The clues marked * are the State Capitals, and the answers are the States they belong to. It would be very easy to cheat and look them up, but give it a go first without.



Across

1. Juneau* (6)
5. Helena* (7)
7. Montgomery* (7)
8. Indianapolis* (7)
10. Kind of carp (3)
11. Hartford* (11)
14. Carson City* (6)
18. Atlanta* (7)
21. Albany* (4,4)
23. Phoenix* (7)

Down

1. Oh dear! (5)
2. Red spotted toadstool – Fly _____ (6)
3. Warning hooter (6)
4. Opposite of 'Engaged' (6)
5. Augusta* (5).
6. Incline one's head (9)
9. Part of a curve (3)
12. Austin* (5)
13. Salt Lake City* (9)
15. Sense of self-esteem (3)
16. Aggressive, violent behaviour (5)
17. Extreme pain (5)
19. Columbus* (5)
20. Des Moines* (4)
22. Egyptian attendant spirit deity (2)

Answers on page 16

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Old Moor: Away from the Hustle and Bustle



Nicole Erlen

When I stopped working, I had three aims. One was to do something completely different, the second was to learn new skills and the other was to spend as much time outside as possible. A volunteering fair was held in Sheffield City Hall and I went along to see if anything matched my criteria. There were many worthy causes that needed support but I was repeatedly drawn to the RSPB stall. I had been an RSPB member for years and an intermittent bird watcher and so it was not surprising that following my visit to the fair I found myself visiting Old Moor RSPB reserve. The reserve is on the site of degraded farmland and the shunting area at the side of what was Manvers Colliery. Much hard work has gone into creating watery habitats that are attractive to ducks, waders, raptors and rare species like the bittern and bearded tit. The reserve is bounded by the Trans Pennine Trail, the main Barnsley/Doncaster Road and industrial units. So, it is indeed incredible that this oasis of calm exists.

In my role there as a wildlife guide, I quickly discovered that my own skills were very much at entry level. The many experienced birders were daunting but so generous in passing on their knowledge so that I could quickly learn what certain birds looked like in their trickiest stages as juveniles or when in eclipse. To me the most astonishing thing about Old Moor is its complete transformation with the change of the seasons. In the spring and summer there is almost a sensory overload as all the wildlife concentrates its efforts on reproduction and rearing its young. In the winter, on the other hand, there is absolute calm. Apart from the melancholic song of the robin, the

whistling of the wigeon and the occasional honk of overflying geese there is very little sound. This is a calming landscape where, after a few minutes, you feel tension ease and heartbeat slow. It is good to be still and simply look. There is the wonder that many of the overwintering birds that you will see have travelled miles to get here from the harsh environments of Greenland, Iceland and Scandinavia. I will never forget having the privilege of bog shoeing in Estonia, a very bleak environment where wolf tracks can be seen in the snow and frozen cranberries are there to be picked, and seeing an information board showing that in this very place in the summer one would find the goldeneye that spend some of their winter at Old Moor. But it isn't just the winter visitors. There are resident birds to look out for too such as the illusive bittern, the blue flash of a kingfisher, a barn owl peeking out of its nest box, a marsh harrier quartering the reedbeds, snipe standing stock still in a hole in the mud or bearded tits precariously hanging onto a swaying stem whilst feeding from the reed heads. Or you might come across a rare visitor such as a glossy ibis or grey-necked phalarope. Or none of these. You can always depend on nature to come up with the unexpected.

With an eye to the future Old Moor has used a proportion of a lottery grant to develop new facilities for children. As a wildlife guide there is nothing more satisfying than engaging with a young person and helping them expand their knowledge. Some of the money is being used to develop new field pools which will be rotated to ensure that there is always a plentiful supply of invertebrates for waders. In addition, a new path is being built to create a circular walk round part of the



Golden Plover

reserve. It has become a great place for a family day out.

So, I would very much recommend that you wrap up warm, pick up your binoculars if you have any (before Covid it was possible to hire them) and make your way to Old Moor. There is a café for hot refreshments and a chance to warm your toes. I hope that, like me, you are able to appreciate the tranquillity of this precious space in the heart of an urban environment.

During the winter months Old Moor is open from 9.30am until 4.00pm. It is on Old Moor Lane S73 0YF and is clearly signposted from the M1. RSPB members free. Non-members, £5 for adults and £2.50 for children over 5.

