

## **Friends of Pelaw Wood 2014 Secretary's Report**

Although we have had many good connections with one another working on the paths, slashing brambles, picking up litter or on the dawn chorus walk – this has been our quietest year – and probably our most frustrating.



The landslide has continued to disrupt our plans – with the destruction of the paths by the Council's contractors and their reluctance to restore them. We are not aware of any progress on their proposal to develop a detailed plan and estimate to resolve things. I'm not expecting any progress toward reopening the paths until 2016 at the earliest! Due to the state of the paths we declined to lead Heritage Days walks and we did considerably less balsam pulling than in past years.

Despite having been very pleased to welcome a couple of new faces, we have not been able to field the resources to follow through on our plans for 2014. The Council's apparent lack of interest in sorting out the problems arising from the landslide has been discouraging, and we are not quite so agile as we were! I think it is time to seriously consider where we are going as a group and what we can realistically achieve in this coming year.

### **Publicity**

- The website, Facebook and Twitter kept up to date
- Handouts to people diverted through the Wood

### **Liaison with other groups**

- The Wild Woods project which finished during the year
- Durham University's Conservation Volunteers have enthusiastically supported us on a couple of occasions during the year



Some of the DUCS workers 2/11/14

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) through our affiliation and their website support
- Friends of Flass Vale and Witton Gilbert Dene

#### Liaison with the County Council

- John Bragg as the landowner's representative
- Parish Paths Partnership for funding



- Rights of Way officers about the landslide and its aftermath; and replacing the diversion signs

## Members' activities



Replacing steps down to the glade 7/9/14

Path maintenance; step building; balsam pulling; slashing & strimming in the Hockey Field; bracken crushing; barrowing planings; clearing the paths; tons of litter picking – including a burnt out quad-bike! and clearing the Silver Link Bridge

- New Year's Day stroll
- Relaxing in the Queen's Head after working in the Wood
- Dawn chorus walk
- Two moth identification evenings
- Commented on the geotechnical report and chasing the Council to sort out the chaos left behind – sadly not very successfully!
- Planting saplings
- Mapped the areas of balsam

Acknowledgements & thanks for their practical and financial support

- John Bragg for his active support & encouragement
- Milja for leading another enjoyable dawn chorus walk
- Dave Wainwright for the two moth catching evenings



Moth watch 22 Oct 14 in the upper glade

- Fran Mudd and the Wild Woods Project for maintaining the strimmer and another donation of tools and equipment
- Sarah for maintaining our Twitter account & leading the balsam survey
- Elaine Crow & the Parish
- Paths Partnership for funding
- Durham University's Conservation Society for their enthusiastic help – especially the barrowing!
- Tony & Barbara for breakfast after the dawn chorus walk, the bonfire & refreshments
- And the Queen's Head for all those plates of chips!