

'Friends of Big Wood' Open Morning

FRIENDS OF BIG WOOD

Ever wondered what the volunteer group the Friends of Big Wood do? Why is it an Ancient Woodland and what plants, birds and other wildlife live in Big Wood? What happens at the Forest School Sessions? Why is it so important to look after Bigwood?

Why not come and find out the answers and much more at our Open Morning on Sunday 2nd April from 10am to 1pm – meet at the Temple Fortune Hill entrance.

We'll be doing mini walks around Bigwood; nature quizzes for children and adults; animal mask drawing; Forest School photographs and Craft displays; Membership

table (so you can join up straight away). Volunteers will on hand to explain about the sort of activities we do and how you can help us to look after Bigwood. Plus, there will be hot drinks and home-made cake!

Why not come and discover this wonderful community wood and become a Friend – so we can continue to look after and protect this unique ancient woodland.

If you would like advance information on our range of activities and the surveys recently carried out in the wood, visit friendsofbigwood.com.

We look forward to welcoming you on Sunday 2nd April – comfortable, waterproof clothes and shoes recommended!



Photo: Peter Falk

Big Wood Forest school

EMILY ASQUITH

Walking through Big Wood on a Saturday afternoon in spring, you may hear the regular tap-tap-tap of a woodpecker. Then you may hear a different kind of tapping... in a corner of the wood, under the calming green canopy, a group of children are hammering – the group are making leaf prints on pieces of calico, excited to see the imprint left by the chlorophyll of a hazel leaf on the natural material. The children peg their creations to a branch then go off to balance along the 'fallen giant' – an old fallen oak tree that straddles the glade. Three younger children have discovered a 'gold mine' in the yellow clay exposed at the base of the fallen tree and have



Photo: Emily Asquith

set up a production line, carefully digging nuggets of gold and breaking them into gold dust. Nearby some older children are making a shelter with a tarp and have asked one of the leaders for more rope. Later on, we will all gather for a snack and to learn about what the 'gold' in the mine is, why it's there and about the importance of the fallen deadwood to the biodiversity of our woods.

This is Big Wood Forest School, a monthly initiative set up and supported by the Friends of Big Wood with the aim of getting children out into nature – the idea being that if children learn to appreciate the woods now they will protect them later. The sessions also, importantly, allow children to play freely outdoors, with plenty of imagination, fresh air and not a screen in sight, all under the guidance of a trained Forest School team. Each session is thoughtfully planned to build confidence, community and awareness of the natural environment and, importantly, to be fun. The calming, immune-boosting phytoncides that the trees exude are a bonus. "I love Forest School!" says one of the children, "When's the next one?"

Newcomers welcome! The two hour sessions run monthly for children ages 6 -12. Email friendsofbigwood1@gmail.com for more information or visit friendsofbigwood.com

Moth breakfast

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Whilst we are all familiar with the butterflies in our gardens, few of us have enjoyed the amazing diversity of moths that come out at night. As daylight fades a different world stirs and the air is filled with the activities of moths, and bats hunting them, hungry for their dinner.

Come and catch a glimpse into this nocturnal world and get expert guidance on what's going on from by Dr Phil Sterling, a leading authority on moths. Phil works at Butterfly Conservation, the charity working to conserve butterflies and moths.

The night before we meet, Phil will put a bright light in a garden next to Big Wood. The light will attract flying moths into a moth trap – a box where they can settle safely until morning. We will identify and talk about them, you'll get a chance to examine and photograph them in daylight and even hold a few of them if you like. You'll learn about some of their life histories and how moths fit in to the ecology of our ancient woodland.

In Britain there are around 2,500 different species of moth. They live from the tops of mountains down to the seashore, in woodlands, grasslands, heaths, marshes and ponds, even underground and in caves. They are an incredibly diverse group of insects.

But the best place to see them is in spring and summer in woodlands like Big Wood. Did you know that Oak trees support over 200 different species of moth?

How many might we see? That will depend on the weather. Moths are cold-blooded animals so if the night is cool there won't be so many flying. But if it's mild we should see dozens of them, perhaps 30 different species!

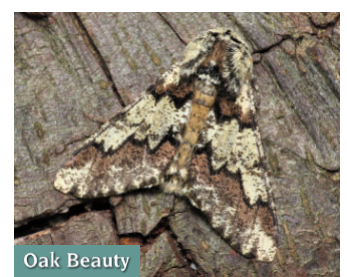
We meet at the Temple Fortune Hill entrance gate to Big Wood at 8.30 am on Sunday 30 April. Coffee and biscuits will be available. All the family will be very welcome. Children will be fascinated by the range of moths that can be found.

A wide-ranging programme of work and research in the ancient wood is organised by the Friends of Big Wood who manage the wood according to a five year plan agreed with Barnet. Detailed information on our activities, including the 5-year plan and all surveys undertaken in the last five years, can be accessed by going to www.friendsofbigwood.com.

For more information, contact friendsofbigwood1@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you there!



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