

## Friends of Sharphill Wood Work Party 28<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Today was damp but the rain mostly held off whilst we were working. Seven of us focused on clearing the sycamore and Norway Maple saplings that compete aggressively for space light and food, to the detriment of other species (see Autumn newsletter on the website). That is very satisfying work as it is not too heavy and you can see instant results. And as Notts Wildlife point out regeneration of the understorey is very quick to follow. We put in a total of 32 hours doing that, coppicing rangy shrubs, removing litter and replacing a leaflet holder that had been burnt.

There has been a delivery of new good quality woodchip (courtesy of the Notts County Councillors – thank you gentlemen) near the south end of the Wood, which we shall use to improve the walking surface of the paths over the next few months, however we need to organise the logistics of moving it in bulk preferably to a high point from where it can be distributed manageably. We encountered a hitch, however, when we found that the lock on the Wheatcroft end gate does not work. We suspect sabotage, which has happened in the past, so this will need to be repaired urgently. We do wonder what people gain from sabotaging the locks put on by Rushcliffe Borough Council to protect the Nature Reserve, and also what they gain by destroying Friends' leaflets and leaflet holders.

Nature wise, the Wood was very quiet, few birds in evidence, but quite beautiful with the colours of the autumn leaves. Farmer Wells' field at the north end has been recently ploughed and the expanse of reddish brown earth with the autumn colours looks quite beautiful. We did see a range of autumn fungi, e.g. clouded agaric mushroom and some red champions. We have been alerted to discovery of *Chalara fraxinea* fungus (which affects ash trees) in East Anglia. More information is available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-20079657>.

There are many ash trees in Sharphill and the Friends Group is alert to any possible spread of the disease and evidence at Sharphill. The Forestry Commission have produced a helpful guide to identifying the disease <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>

One of our party unfortunately injured his ankle whilst walking on the path. We hope it recovers quickly and that he is back with us soon.



The field up to Sharphill at Peveril – rarely seen like this!