



## Friends of the Nickey Line Newsletter 16 - November 2013

### WHAT'S IN THIS NEWSLETTER?

- **AGM Advance notice 8<sup>th</sup> May**
- **Ambrose Lane and Park Hill Work going ahead**
- **Noticeboard news**
- **M1 Tunnel Lights still out**
- **Botanical Survey carried out**
- **Book Holidays with Ramblers Worldwide Holidays and Earn the Friends £s**
- **Usage Survey results**
- **Can You Help? We need more work party volunteers and 2 committee members**
- **Events and Work Parties Update**

### WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE NICKEY LINE

**Major Changes to Harpenden Section** – Following lengthy consultations, St Albans District Council has given a go ahead on the plans to:

- Add a cycle / buggy/ disabled access ramp to the Ambrose Lane steps – This will be in the now disused original north loop of the Nickey Line which went towards Luton
- Resurface the Line from the Hollybush Lane steps to Roundwood crossing
- Replace the Park Hill steps:



Ramp clearance work has already started. Watch out for a celebratory cycle ride down to The Hub in Redbourn, when the new ramp is completed.

**M1 Tunnel Lights** – The M1 tunnel continues to be 'in the dark'.



Agreement has been reached between St Albans District Council, Redbourn Parish Council and the Highways Agency on how to replace the lights and future responsibility for them. The old lights (shown above) have now been removed but new ones not yet installed....

### **Tree Blocked Line after the October 'Storm'**

Following a notification by a user of a large tree blocking the Line, Friends cleared an emergency path round the tree blown over in the October storm near '5 Ways' Crossing.



## Botanical Survey

Our thanks to Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) who have conducted two botanical surveys between the bottom of Redbourn Lane and the top of Knott Wood.

HMWT have given advice on how we better manage the habitat area by Knott Wood. This suggests we enlarge the grassy scallops, and cut the grass in April and late September. Anyone wanting to see the botanical survey can contact the Friends.

## FRIENDS NEWS

**Board News** - Our boards have been badly affected by vandalism this year, especially:

- **Roundwood Crossing** – This important information board was damaged by vandals earlier this year and required substantial repair work.

The Joinery Workshop, part of the Harpenden based Jarvis Group, made an entirely new one in oak and donated their work to the Friends, charging only material costs.

Harpenden Town Council helped to insert the new board.

Our thanks go to both organisations.



Carl Sturgis from The Joinery Workshop with your Chairman and the new board

## • Knott Wood Nature Interpretation Board

This £1400 board was damaged by vandals who must have had tools with them - despite the board being substantially 'vandal proof'. The side was ripped off and the whole frame bent as they attempted to damage and take off the viewing surface.

It has been repaired and re-installed with the help of Helpline Metal Services and Pan Auto Services at Southdown, in straightening bent metal parts.

Our thanks to them for their generous support.



## July 2013 Usage Survey

The Friends carried out an in depth survey of usage over a week and a half in early July between Harpenden, Hollybush Lane and Redbourn Lane.

Hot weather affected usage and pattern of usage. Sunday PM walkers were well under normal numbers. There was more morning and evening usage and less middle of day.

Many users helped by reporting the number of people they saw when using the Line.

Main results included:

- Overall use more than doubled over the last detailed survey in 2006. There were well over 4000 uses of line in a week - up from 1550 in 2006  
(Best usage estimate was 4,900+ uses including the Roundwood school sponsored walk, or 4100 'core usage' otherwise excluding the sponsored walk )
- Walkers & Dog Walkers together roughly match the numbers of Cyclists and Runners combined
- Cyclists are now the biggest 'normal' user group at 31% of uses
- There were slightly more Walkers at 25% than Dog Walkers 23% but this was heavily influenced by Roundwood School exit use - Normally Dog Walkers exceed other Walkers
- Sunday remains by far the busiest normal day with about 800 uses - up from 350 in 2006

*Our thanks go to everybody who contributed to the survey which will help us to support fund raising and projects to improve the Line.*

## Ramblers Worldwide Holidays Walking Partnership –Reminder

Book a holiday with Ramblers Worldwide Holidays ([www.ramblersholidays.co.uk](http://www.ramblersholidays.co.uk)) and you can nominate Friends of the Nickey Line to receive £10 per head for UK holidays, £20 for short haul holidays, and £30 per head for long haul holidays.

**\*\*You must nominate Friends when you book! \*\***

### Your Committee – Can You Help?

We regret that Frank Griffin has had to resign because of health problems. We want to thank him for his support and contribution on Hemel Hempstead matters.

We urgently need please:

- another committee member from Hemel Hempstead, and
- some one to support our internet communications – website, Facebook and Twitter in particular.

Can you help?

Email [friends@nickeyline.org](mailto:friends@nickeyline.org) or ring us on 01582 622771 to chat about what you could do.

**EVENTS PLANNED – Dates for Your Diary** – See [www.nickeyline.org](http://www.nickeyline.org) for details.

- **Dawn Chorus** - Look out for this ever popular walk, currently planned for Sunday 13 April.
- **AGM Advance Notice -Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May at Park Hall, Harpenden, at 7.30 pm** with talk by John Fisher on "Ver Valley Barn Owl Project 2004/14". Put in your next year's diary now!

**WORK PARTIES** – We have started our winter work programme.

We shall be opening viewpoints beyond the M1 tunnel, while the bee orchid area has already been cleared of ash saplings. Alongside Knott Wood we shall be widening the open areas to promote grasses and improve the wildlife, while also maintaining the views. Further hedge laying will be undertaken.

**We need more work party volunteers!** Even an hour or two would be welcomed. if you cannot stay all day, and you will enjoy yourselves. Contact us if you can help.

**\*\*\*DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?\*\*\***

Can we send you our newsletters by email in future? Please email us at [friends@nickeyline.org](mailto:friends@nickeyline.org) if we can!

***Happy Christmas and a Good New Year to all Friends***