

COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP

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CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER - *Hilda Anscombe*

I'm writing this on 23rd December 2014; the shortest day of the year has passed and the days are getting longer. The last few days have been unseasonably mild and sunny, so I took a break from the rush and tear of Christmas. Lawrence and I went a walk along the brook and did some repair work on the two dipping areas between Blunden Bridge and Houseman Road Bridge. They are well used all year round by dogs, and owing to the wet weather they have become very muddy and some of the gravel has been washed into the brook. We spent some time raking the gravel back to where it should be and trampling it into the mud so, hopefully, it will stay there. Next spring I think we will probably need to add more gravel.

We have been busy again this autumn. On 10th October we hosted an activity at the brook for Cherrywood School. In addition to arranging an "animal hunt" and a camouflage trail, we set up a dipping activity, where the pupils used plastic spoons to catch small fish fry and other small creatures, which Mary Harris had caught in the brook, the picture is of Mary with her handy work.

On 28th October we had our Annual Quiz, which was great fun and well attended. Our thanks go to Mary Harris and Mark, for running the quiz, and to the rest of our committee for organising the refreshments and the raffle

The 6th of November saw Kathy and me, presenting an illustrated talk to the Ramblers' Association, about the Brook and the work our group carries out. It was well received and we hope they will include the brook in one of their future rambles. If you would like to know more about the Ramblers Association you can contact them at www.ramblers.org.uk.

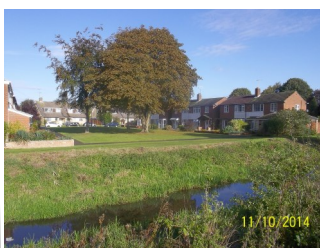
We are currently trying to secure funding to enable us to put on another Fun Day on Sunday 14th June. In the current financial situation it is not an easy task, but we are working hard and with luck we will secure it. So, put the date in your diaries and "watch this space"

In the last Newsletter, I mentioned that a group of people on Cheyne Way had cleared the nettles from the top of the bank, which runs alongside their houses. We now have a photograph of the result, doesn't it look good. It would be nice if other local resident would take responsibility for the area in the vicinity their homes.

N.B. Please be aware that **it is only the ground along top of the bank that we can clear**, as the Environment Agency is responsible for the banks themselves and it is forbidden for anyone else to work on the sloping banks without their permission.



Trays prepared for brook dipping



Top of bank cleared of nettles

WORK PARTY UPDATE – *Paul Sanders*

October, November & December 2014

As usual, we had three end-of-year litter picks along the brook, when we managed to do the following work

- ◆ Cleared rubbish all the way from Hawley Lane to Holly Road.
- ◆ Cleared the paths and banks and as much of the channel as we could reach without getting wet or stuck in the mud.
- ◆ Filled over one hundred black sacks with the unwanted and unnecessary mess and made a big difference to the area.

This shows what small groups can achieve but, unfortunately, we may well have to do the same again this year.

Many thanks to everyone who helped at any of our tasks in 2014 and we hope you can spare some time to help us again.

THE HEDGEHOG—A *GARDENER'S BEST FRIEND*



Hedgehogs can be a gardener's best friend as they eat a prodigious amount of slugs and snails. However, they need to be able to travel quite a distance to find enough food to keep them going.

Our native hedgehog is one of only three mammals in the UK that hibernate. The others being bats and dormice. They need vast quantities of insects and other small creatures to enable them to survive the winter as they are bigger than most other insectivorous creatures and need food to keep their body warm and mobile. Unfortunately, during the winter, many insects die or hide so the hedgehog's food source is very limited.

Hibernation, often referred to as "winter sleep", is unlike natural sleep, where many of the body's functions remain normal. In hibernation the metabolism is almost stationary and the hedgehog appears dead, but unconscious reflexes still make its spines stand up and it will curl into a ball if touched. Its heartbeat drops from 190 beats per minute to a mere 20 beats/min and although its core temperature, around their heart and lungs, remains normal at around 35°, the temperature of their extremities, i.e. feet, nose, skin, etc., drops to around 10°C or the temperature of their nest. This reduction in body temperature allows the hedgehog's fat reserves to last longer.

If we want to ensure that these helpful creatures continue to thrive, here are a few tips,

- ◆ Walls and fences which surround your garden can prevent access to hedgehogs. Leave small gaps at the base of these barriers to ensure that they have a large enough area to forage for the food they need to survive,
- ◆ If you have a garden pond or swimming pool, make sure that they have an escape route, i.e. a pile of stones or a piece of wood to allow them to climb out. (*Although hedgehogs can swim, they can drown in ponds if the sides are steep and slippery.*)
- ◆ Before lighting a bonfire, check that a hedgehog hasn't made a nest in it.
- ◆ Leave a small part of your garden to grow wild, i.e. log piles, long grass and undergrowth
- ◆ Feed your hedgehog on dog/cat food NOT bread and milk. (*Hedgehogs, it seems, are lactose intolerant and can suffer from diarrhea if they drink milk,*)
- ◆ For instructions on how to make a hedgehog home, try britishhedgehogs.org.uk

WALK THE PATH—*Christine Reeves, BVCT*

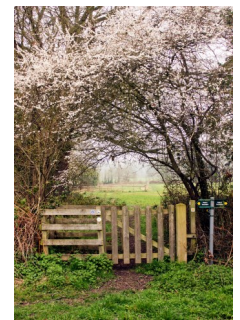
Get your walking shoes on and explore this area's most delightful natural feature, right under your nose: the Blackwater Valley. At the end of April the **Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust (BVCT)** is offering outdoor fans the opportunity to join an organised walk along the Blackwater Valley Path, which includes a few special sections not normally open to the public.



The River Blackwater is a hidden gem right on your doorstep. On **Sunday 26th April** participants in 'Walk the Path 2015' will be able to enjoy the last 17 kilometres (10 miles) of its Path, from Sandhurst to Swallowfield – a riverside walk passing through beautiful rural countryside and a delightful variety of habitats.

This highly successful event – now in its 10th year – is organised by the Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust and is extremely popular, with over 250 booked last year. In previous years the walk has proved to be a highly enjoyable day for participants as it features:

- transport at either the walk start or finish (because it's a linear walk);
- refreshment points en route;
- a collection service for participants if they are unable to finish the walk for whatever reason;
- variable start times from 9.15 - 11am to avoid congestion;
- a walk leader, back marker and designated walk guides; route maps so you can walk at your own pace.



Bring your friends and family, invite your neighbours, make up a group or come alone and walk this most beautiful part of the Blackwater Valley. If you've never explored this area of the Berkshire/Hampshire borders, this is the perfect opportunity to do so. Pre-booking is essential and places are limited - last year's event sold out. Taking part costs just £6 for BVCT members and £10 per person for non-members.

Full details including online booking can be found on the Trust website www.bvct.org.uk.

Alternatively leave a message on **07825 469108**.

GREY WAGTAILS

A pair of grey wagtails can often be seen on Cove Brook near 5-arches railway bridge. Throughout the year they can be seen bobbing about from stone to stone looking for insects. They can also be seen by the pond in Queen Elizabeth Park, but there is no way of knowing whether or not they are the same birds, or a separate pair.



Grey Wagtail

The grey wagtail looks similar to the yellow wagtail at first glance, and can be mistaken for a yellow wagtail: However, although the grey wagtail has a yellow under tail, the yellow wagtail has more yellow on its under-side and a greenish back.

The name wagtail denotes the bobbing movements it makes. The grey wagtail is a resident of the British Isles and can be seen throughout England, around fast flowing rivers, although in winter it can be seen around farmyards and occasionally visit garden ponds and water features.

The yellow wagtail is a much rarer summer visitor from Africa. Both these birds have long tails that bobs up and down as they move. Hence the name Wagtail..



Cove Brook

GREENWAY



CONTACT DETAILS

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ABANDONED TROLLEYS

Currently around 400,000 trolleys are dumped every year. Not only are they an eyesore but they are also a hazard for motorists, pedestrians and wildlife. With some supermarkets having removed the need to put a £1 coin or equivalent in a slot before you can get a trolley, the likelihood is that things are going to get worse.



So what can we do about these abandoned trolleys? The answer is to contact Rushmoor Borough Council on either Tel: 01252 398399, e-mail customerservices@rushmoor.gov.uk or use the "Report a grot spot" link on the Rushmoor Borough Council's website. The council will then collect, store and recycle the offending trolleys within 48 hours and contact the relevant shop responsible to recover the costs.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TALKS ARE FREE AND ARE HELD AT
BLUNDEN HALL, BLUNDEN RD, COVE. GU14 8QP

Refreshments provided. Donations are appreciated.

Volunteers welcome at all Work Parties.

(Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.)

NB: ALL INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CHANGE
PLEASE CHECK WEB SITE FOR CONFIRMATION

TALKS, MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Date	Time	Subject
Tues 17 th Feb	7.30 pm	WOODLAND FEATURES A talk by Roy Champion of Rowhill Copse, Aldershot Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP
Sun 26 th Apr	Start Times Between 9.15 and 11 am	WALK THE PATH A 10 mile walk along part of the Blackwater Valley Cost £6 for BVCT members or £10 for non-members Booking essential Via www.bvct.org.uk . Or call 07825 469108.
Sun 10 th May	3.45 am	DAWN CHORUS WALK The ideal chance for bird lovers to join our local expert at the Basingstoke Canal to hear and, hopefully, see the variety of birds that inhabit this area. (Wrap up warm as it can be very chilly at this time of the morning.) A hot drink and pastry will be supplied. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at: Eelmoor Bridge, signposted AAIB off the A323 Fleet/Aldershot Road
Tues 26 th May	7.30 pm	OPEN EVENING Details TBA

WORK PARTIES— Held on 2nd Saturday of each month

Sat 14 th Feb	10.00 am	WOODLAND MANAGEMENT Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Southwood, GU14 1LE
Sat 14 th March	10.00 am	WOODLAND MANAGEMEN Meet near the Curly Bridge, Cheyne Way, Cove, GU14 8RZ
Sat 11 th Apr	10.00 am	RUSHMOOR SPRING CLEAN Meet at: Cheyne Way, near the Curly Bridge, Cove, GU14 8RZ