

COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Work Party Update

2

New Cycling & Walking Path

2

A Year on the Brook

3

Pi's Perspective

4

Dates for your Diary

4

HI-VIS VOLUNTEERS

The work of Cove Brook Greenway Group has, over the years, contributed to the wellbeing of the Brook and its surrounds. However, togged out in our work gear, we tend to be inconspicuous and people are often unaware of the work we do. We have even been taken for a Community Service work party or Council workers on occasions.



However, all this has now changed. Now we have bright new Hi-Vis jackets, with the group's name emblazoned on the back, thanks to the generosity of Mark Staplehurst, one of the local Councillors for West Heath Ward.

It is quite amazing the difference it makes to our visibility. Now, instead of blending into the background we are all clearly visible. Not only does this make Health & Safety issues easier, as we can all see where every member of the work party is, but now people will stop and speak to us and enquire about what we do. Hopefully this will lead to more people getting involved, and the more volunteers we have, the more we can to improve our area. **Thanks Mark!**

COULD IT BE YOU?

Are you looking for a challenge? Feel you'd like to make a difference? Peter Godden, our current Chairman is standing down this year and we are looking for someone to take over from him. Could it be you?

If you feel that you would be interested, why not give Peter or Hilda a call to find out what it is all about. You won't be on your own. We have committee members with various skills and areas of experience who will be there to support you should you need any. Basically, we need someone to organize us and generally co-ordinate things.. .

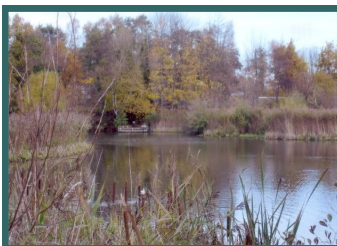
HISTORY & NATURAL HISTORY

At our next meeting Colin Grey, of the Fleet Pond Society, will be giving a brief history of when it is believed the pond was created and how it gave rise to the development of Fleet town.

The talk will introduce you to some of the diversity of wildlife supported by the variety of habitat types and explain the problems now faced by the lake and what the Society are doing to address them. It's worth coming for the beautiful photographs alone. It's all free, with tea and coffee supplied at the after the talk. Why not come and find out more about one of our local beauty spots.

LOOKING FOR A CHALLENGE

COULD YOU BE OUR NEXT CHAIRPERSON?



Fleet Pond

WORK PARTY UPDATE *Paul Sanders*

8th January 2011

Nine of us tackled the regrowth of willow in the wet grassland area between the brook and the practice range at Southwood. The area lived up to its name as we had to paddle around in a foot of water. We had to be careful not to step into deeper patches or lose tools under the surface.

12th February

We returned to the same area to complete the willow cutting. The water levels had dropped although wellingtons were still essential. As we had 13 of us we were also able to cut back all encroaching scrub from a glade amongst the larger willows and oaks nearby. As usual we filled several sacks with the litter we found in the area.

We used the cut willow to make a dead hedge between the path and the grassland. The grassland looked at its best when we left and showed what can be done with a band of highly enthusiastic volunteers over two Saturday mornings.

12th March

Thirteen of us turned our attention to the area between the scout hut and the brook near the Cheyne Way footbridge. We trimmed back the edges of the paths from all encroaching bramble. We cut back branches from the trees which had been damaged and we cut and uprooted bramble from the far end of the site to improve the area of grass we created on our visit there last year. This is just a very small percentage of the total area of bramble which extends all the way to the motorway bridge.

Some native plants were dug in along the edge of the brook. The remains of a wooden bed frame were retrieved from a particularly dense piece of bramble hopefully to be used as firewood.

NEW CYCLING AND WALKING ROUTE



Due to open shortly, this refurbished route with new additions created alongside Hazel Avenue was a project borne from a meeting in October 2009 between officers from Rushmoor Borough Council, Sustrans, Hampshire County Council and Cove Brook Greenway Group. The aim of the scheme was firstly to widen and refurbish the existing path, creating a safer shared route that could be enjoyed by walkers, dog walkers, and cyclist alike, and particularly aimed at improving access to schools. A secondary objective was to improve the brook pathway from Hazel Avenue to Cove Rd and around the rear of the houses at Westheath Rd.

With an estimated project cost of around 200k funding was actively sought and secured.

Final cost of the scheme has been in the region of 230k with partner funding coming from Sustrans, TAG environmental fund, RBC, HCC, and Veolia Environmental Trust.

It is hope that the pathway will be completed by the end of June, with an official opening planned to celebrate its completion.

Martin Sterio from RBC who was responsible for securing the relevant funding and co-ordinating the project stated that

“It has been a real pleasure working on this project as it benefits so many people in the community and enables them to get around more safely, away from traffic, whilst enjoying one of the boroughs more natural habitats”

The new pathway will be maintained on a regular basis by the Borough's maintenance team.

A YEAR ON THE BROOK - *Hilda Ancombe*

John Dixon's talk in January gave us a wonderful insight into what goes on in and around the Brook over the year, and, over time, he has seen around 100 different species of bird on Cove Brook. The year starts with blue tits, wrens and coal tits feeding along the brook and in our gardens and foxes can be seen. It was interesting to hear that although the foxes in Birchbrook Reserve are shy, the foxes living near Manor School will sit at a safe distance and pose for photographs.

February is the best time to see Bank Voles when the vegetation is still sparse. The flocks of 30-60 Siskins and Redpolls can be seen feeding on the birch and alder before they leave for warmer climes in March.



Bank Vole



Serotine Bat

As the days warm up in **March** bats emerge. Serotine Bats have been spotted around the Houseman Road area. Green Woodpeckers can be seen on Blunden Green looking for ants, their favourite food, and Nuthatches start nesting.

Come **April**, the Shrews are more in evidence. They don't hibernate but, in winter, they tunnel under the leaf litter or snow looking for insects and worms. Grass snakes can be seen under Brambles, as they bask in the sun.



Grass Snake



Damselfly

In **May** Butterflies, Damselflies and Dragonflies flit along the waterway, Sparrows and Starlings are in full breeding colour and the Noctule Bats can be seen.

Stag beetles emerge in **June** along with the Poplar Hawk Moth, the Elephant Hawk Moth and the Hornet..



Elephant Hawk Moth

In **July and August** the Pipistrelle Bats can be seen diving and swooping in search of a tasty insect.



Egyptian Goose

Last **September** an Egyptian Goose was spotted on the Brook (a flock of them can be seen at Fleet Pond) and a Green Parakeet was seen. (Apparently they breed in the Yateley area,) September is also the best time to see birds of prey, as the juveniles disperse at this time. Both Buzzards and Kestrels frequent the area.

In **November** flocks of Redwings and Fieldfares arrive to feed on berries and seeds, Mallard ducks moult into their breeding colours and pair up and several Little Egrets arrive to over winter on the Brook.



Redwing



In **December** the eerie sound of foxes mating calls can be heard and before we know it, another year has gone by.



Cove Brook

GREENWAY



Hi,
I'm
Pi



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PI'S PERSPECTIVE

Have you seen the Bats? These warmer, lighter evenings are bringing them out just as I am taking my evening promenade. They are probably Pipistrelle, but whether soprano or not, we cannot tell until we catch them on the bat detector. My humans are entranced (*they're easily pleased*) and stand staring upwards, exclaiming at their speed and turning. It is the mixture of trees that makes for a good hunting ground for them. Oak, beech, willow and alder give a variety of lodging for the insects that rise on the warm evening and morning air.

"Wrenday" my dad called it; they were everywhere, and unusually, lots of them! As we passed under the trees they were trilling, as we walked by the brook they were flitting along the bank, in and out of the bushes and zipping across the path. Must be spring.

Isn't it nice to be out in the daylight? Last Sunday was a perfect April spring morning. Cool, clear, fresh, bright, light and warm. My mum loves the spring; she spends too much time in the garden, and not enough taking me out for walks. She also disturbs the mice in the garden for me to chase. They disappear behind a pot and never come out again. Where do they go?

It will soon be holiday time, my humans have bought a motorhome, so now we can travel the country and I can be with them all the time. Bliss!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All talks are **FREE**, followed by meetings, and are held at **BLUNDEN HALL, Blunden Rd, Cove**. All welcome, refreshments provided. Donations are appreciated. All volunteers welcome at Work Parties. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

TALKS & MEETINGS & EVENTS

Date	Time	Subject
Tues 31 st May	7.30 pm	FLEET POND, HISTORY AND NATURAL HISTORY - an illustrated talk by Colin Grey of Fleet Pond Society <i>The history, habitats and problems faced by the lake and what is being done to solve them..</i>

WORK PARTIES

Sat 14 th May	10.00 am	NETTLE BASHING & WILD FLOWER PLANTING Strim/cut and remove nettles from bank, weed flower areas <i>Meet at: Mayfield Road Bridge</i>
Sat 11 th Jun	10.00 am	CUTTING PATHS AT SOUTHWOOD <i>Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Southwood</i>
Sat 9 th July	10.00 am	SOUTHWOOD SURVEY WALK <i>Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Southwood</i>
Sat 13 th Aug	10.00 am	SITE MANAGEMENT AT BIRCHBROOK <i>Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove</i>
Sat 10 th Sept	10.00 am	GRASS CUTTING AT SOUTHWOOD <i>Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Southwood</i>