

# COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Work Party Update</i>	2
<i>Butterfly Survey</i>	2
<i>A Nightingale Sang</i>	3
<i>Why Hay Cutting?</i>	3
<i>Pi's Perspective</i>	4
<i>Dates for your Diary</i>	4

## DISCOVERING THE BROOK

by *Peter Lovejoy*

For two thankfully warm and sunny afternoons in May, Cove Brook was invaded by 150 children from Cove Junior School, accompanied by an army of teachers and parent helpers. There was much splashing, swooshing of nets and bothering of wildlife, all in the name of education.

The afternoons were split into two parts. One half of the children went on a long walk from school, past Blunden Hall, all the way down to a gravel area towards the end of the brook. Here, armed with the nets, trays and identification charts borrowed from The Greenway Group (*all the children say 'thanks'*), they explored the brook, caught a surprising amount of invertebrates and small fish and generally had a super time getting wet.



*Hunting for Mini Beasts*

The other half rampaged through Birchbrook Reserve, trying to catch anything that moved in their nets, ending up with a fine collection of grasshoppers, ladybirds, weevils and many other unidentified creepy-crawlies. Despite some initial squealing from one or two rather 'sensitive' types, their fears were quickly replaced with curiosity, with many being astounded by how many different types of bugs and insects can be found so close to home.

The trip was a great success, inspiring many who have since visited the brook with their parents. It is a valuable educational resource that the children of Cove Junior will be using again in the future.

## GET OUT AND ABOUT WITH RHL

Are you new to the area or sitting at home bored? Do you tell yourself you should be getting out and meeting new people? Feel you'd like to get fitter, but don't like the thought of going to a gym? Why not give the Rushmoor Healthy Living walks a try?

Don't panic! These are gentle walks in the local area, lasting around an hour, often taking in the paths along the Brook. At least three of our committee go on these walks and we have discovered more about an area which we thought we knew. Not only that, but we have made new friends and learnt all sorts of interesting things from the variety of people from all walks of life and of all ages, who come along. The walks are free and there is a chance to have a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit afterwards. What are you waiting for?

The walks take place every Friday from Prospect Community Centre on Mayfield Road and the meeting time is 10.45 am for an 11 am start. For more information contact Christine Pieters on 01252 362660 or go to

[www.rushmoorhealthyliving.org.uk/getwalking](http://www.rushmoorhealthyliving.org.uk/getwalking)



Just a few of the wonderful volunteers, of all ages, who took part in The 2011 Rushmoor Spring Clean



## WORK PARTY UPDATE *Paul Sanders*

### 9<sup>th</sup> April

Over 60 people helped with the RBC spring clean. It's always good to see so many people willing to come and help us keep the brook looking good. Refreshments once again provided by the 6<sup>th</sup> Farnborough Scout Group were very welcome. With another clean up also taking place in Mayfield road the RBC truck was full to capacity with rubbish.

### 14<sup>th</sup> May

Ten of us did a sterling job of nettle bashing near Cheyne Way, concentrating on the curved area where we had previously planted some wild flowers. Kathy took one of our young helpers on a litter pick to alleviate boredom.

### 11<sup>th</sup> June

Seven of us spent the morning in Southwood meadows cutting back overhanging bramble and branches from the paths. We also collected a great deal of rubbish from those paths and the "mound" which had been the site of several BBQ's and was strewn with rubbish. We don't mind the youngsters using the mound and they obviously enjoy going there, so why do they then proceed to make it into a rubbish dump?

### 11<sup>th</sup> July

This time we split into two groups. **Paul's group** did a sterling job collecting the rubbish, which had been exposed by the recent Environment Agency grass cutting along the bank between Houseman Rd and Kingsley Rd, as well as a large amount of litter they found under the trees and brambles between Blunden Hall and Birchbrook Reserve. Our thanks to Mike for helping to get rid of the accumulated rubbish sacks and debris.

**The other group**, armed with field guides headed to Southwood Meadows with the intention of identifying wild plants. They identified several sub species of common plants and some of the more specialised wet meadow plants, such as marsh bedstraw and great burnet. On the south side of the driving range were several broad-leaved helleborines, a type of orchid with purplish brown flowers, well worth a close look. As for the dozens of grasses, sedges and rushes ... we left those for another day, another field guide and possibly cold compresses.

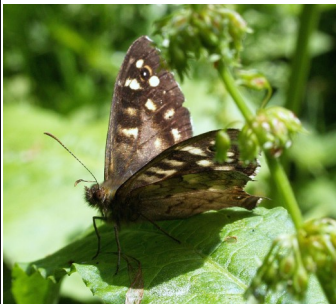
## BUTTERFLY SURVEY *—Bob Austin*

Every year, from April to October, we conduct weekly butterflies surveys around parts of the Cove Brook area recording all the species we spot. Using 'Transect Walker', a software package provided by Butterfly Conservation, the data is submitted to their Monitoring Scheme for analysis. The data is collated, together with reports from all over the county, and is included in the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Butterfly & Moth Report 2010. Our own surveys identified around 20 different species of butterfly over the season.

Half way through this season's monitoring the results, so far, looks similar to last year, the most prolific species early in the season being the Speckled Wood and the Orange Tip. The Speckled Wood is easy to recognise by its chocolate brown wings with yellowish/white speckles. They thrive mainly in shady areas of dappled sunlight, often feeding on aphid honeydew in treetops. They also have various grasses as food plants such as False Brome, Cocksfoot, Yorkshire-Fog and Common Couch. The male Orange Tip is easily recognised, having white wings with bright orange tips. The female however, has black wing tips and is more difficult to spot. Its food plants include Cuckoo Flower, Garlic Mustard and various Cresses.

We are coming into the busy summer season now and already there are large numbers of Ringlets (dark brown wings with 5 yellow ringlets on the underside) and large and small skippers (small darting moth-like butterflies with orange wings). There can easily be 100 or more skippers spotted on a single walk at the height of the season.

If anyone wants to see they copy of the 'Hampshire and Isle of Wight Butterfly & Moth Report, just contact Kathy Pitcher, anyone is welcome to borrow it. If you are interested in learning more about the various butterflies we have in the UK, have a look at [www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org) and follow the link to Butterflies and A-Z of Butterflies



*Speckled Wood*



*Orange Tip*

## BUTTERFLY SURVEYS *(Cont'd)*

For those of you who think that most butterflies are Cabbage Whites, Red Admirals and Small Tortoiseshells these are some of the butterflies you might easily spot in our area:

Meadow Brown, Ringlet; Green Vein White; Small White; Large White; Brimstone; Peacock; Red Admiral; Painted Lady; Small Skipper; Large Skipper; Common Blue; Holly Blue; Speckled Wood; Comma; Small Tortoiseshell and others.

*Good hunting*



*Small Skipper*

## A NIGHTINGALE SANG-

A hardy four early risers, plus our dawn bird expert Chris Jones, met just before 4am on Sunday 8th May at Eelmoor Bridge on the Basingstoke Canal, overlooking Farnborough airport. This has become our favourite dawn chorus spot, because it's a meeting point of grassland (the airfield), heathland and woods, with birds from each kind of habitat. In the last few years we have come to expect the rather amazing sound of skylarks singing as they soar overhead in the dark, but this year they were joined by something even more special - a nightingale, whose song came loud, clear and long from the woods by the canal. Nightingales are increasingly rare - this is the first time Chris has heard one locally for 15 years - so we hope that this Mr Nightingale's fabulous song was heard by a passing Miss Nightingale, and that she stopped to investigate. While we listened, a nightjar began its strange churring sound, and came very close to us.

Other notables of the morning were a woodlark and a meadow pipit. A total of 36 different birds were heard during our time on Eelmoor Flash

*Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Pheasant, Moorhen, Cuckoo, Nightjar, Skylark, Wren, Nightingale, Blackbird, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Blue Tit, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Greenfinch, Linnet, Graylag Goose, Mallard, Grey Heron, Woodpigeon, Tawny Owl, Woodlark, Meadow Pipit, Robin, Stonechat, Song Thrush, Garden Warbler, Chiffchaff, Long-tailed Tit, Jay, Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Reed Bunting - Amazing!*



*Nightingale*

Nightingales  
are  
increasingly  
rare

## WHY HAY CUTTING?- *Stuart Croft*

Why bother to continue the traditional management of hay-cutting...?

Well, if the meadow is not grazed or cut by the Autumn, the tall grass falls over forming a layer of dead thatch on top of the ground. This covering reduces the number of wildflower seedlings germinating by restricting the light getting to the soil and blocking new shoots. Also over a few years, the thatch rots down enriching the soil with nutrients. Whilst this nutrient-rich soil is loved by vigorous plants such as grass, nettles, thistles and brambles, it is less suited for wildflowers which can't compete. So, by hay-cutting and raking the meadow we are reducing the soil nutrients, to provide a suitable habitat for wildflowers to bloom. Hay-cutting also helps to improve biodiversity by opening up areas for new growth.

On a sunny day in June CBBG stalwarts were joined by local residents and Blackwater Valley Countryside Volunteers, forming an impressive group of 20 people. The riverside meadows from Blunden Hall to West Heath Road were cut using a powered motor scythe and the cut hay was raked off to create habitat piles in the bushes.

Stuart Croft, Ranger for Blackwater Valley Countryside, said "We are delighted with the turn out, and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Since the traditional method of hay-cutting is so labour intensive we managed to get a lot of work done, which will greatly benefit the wildflower meadow."



an impressive  
group of 20  
people



# Cove Brook

## GREENWAY



Hi,  
I'm  
Pi

## CONTACT DETAILS

### Chairman

Peter Godden

### Secretary

Hilda Anscombe

(For enquiries)

Tel: 01252 512109

e-mail: l.anscombe@sky.com

### Work Parties

Paul Sanders

(When, where & what we are doing)

Tel: 01276 32173

e-mail:

paulsanders@talk21.com

### Newsletter

Kathy Pitcher

(Editor)

Tel: 01252 651147

e-mail: kathy@verati.co.uk

(Note new e-mail address)

Sybil Godden

(Distribution)

Tel: 01252 682850

e-mail: sybil.g@tiscali.co.uk

## PI'S PERSPECTIVE

My Mum's been a bit slow recently, she's been leaning on a couple of sticks and keeps stopping, but she still takes me out early in the sunshine. It was while she was resting we saw a young sparrow chasing a moth; it was soooo funny! The moth dodged and weaved, flew vertical and sideways and the sparrow was right behind it, as good as a humming bird. Didn't catch it though; lucky escape. If it had been a tit or a robin it would've been his breakfast.

The new crop of foxes are very inquisitive. A couple of them were sunning themselves on the water-line and just watched us pass. I didn't know what to do! They usually make it possible for me to have a chase, but these just sniffed and watched. What's a dog to do? Luckily my Dad called me away, so I could retreat with honour. However, I did get to chase some croaking crows. I almost got one before it rose into the air. How I wish I could fly (or climb a tree after a squirrel)!


Isn't the new path nice? Lots of bikers are using it, but they go so fast and whizz by so suddenly. I wish they'd ring a bell or something so I don't jump when they pass.

I see the grass has been cut (by Glebe Road), apparently to give a varied habitat. I like it, more room to run.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All talks are **FREE**, followed by meetings, and are held at **BLUNDEN HALL, Blunden Rd, Cove, GU14 8QP** 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 9th Aug	7.30 pm	<b>WATERAID</b> — a talk by Alan Taylor Did you know that one person in eight has no clean water to drink; and two people in five have no toilet facilities? Come and learn more, and hear what WaterAid is doing to help. <b>Followed by AGM Nominations for committee to Peter Godden or Hilda Anscombe by 8th August please</b>
Tues 25th Oct	7.30 pm	<b>HALLOWEEN QUIZ NIGHT</b> Have some fun and test your knowledge. Free coffee, tea and homemade cakes plus a Raffle.  <b>Come alone, or with friends to make up teams of 4. If pos please call Kathy or Hilda (see contact details) to book or just take a chance and turn up</b> Entry £3.00 per person All Welcome

### WORK PARTIES (Held every 2nd Saturday of each month)

Sat 13th Aug	10.00 am	<b>MEADOW MANAGEMENT AT SOUTHWOOD</b> Grass cutting and raking, to keep the area open and encourage wildlife. <b>Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Cove, GU14 0LE (near football pitch)</b>
Sat 10th Sept	10.00 am	<b>GRASS CUTTING AT BIRCHBROOK</b> <b>Meet at: Blunden Hall,</b>
Sat 8th Oct	10.00 am	<b>LITTER PICKING</b> <b>Meet at: Cheyne Waye, nr Curly Bridge</b> 
Sat 12th Nov	10.00 am	<b>LITTER PICKING</b> <b>Meet at: Mayfield Road Footbridge</b>
Sat 10th Dec	10.00 am	<b>CHRISTMAS SPARKLE LITTER PICK</b> The last push of the year to get the Brook looking really good. Don't miss the hot drinks and mince pies.

