

COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP



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Displays using Recycled items from Cove Brook



ASH DIEBACK DISEASE

The hot topic in the natural world at the moment is Ash Dieback Disease. OK, so we lose a few trees you may say, but it has many more repercussions than are immediately obvious.

Dutch Elm disease, which caused the decimation of these lovely native trees in the late 1960s, was caused by a beetle and through robust management was contained.

However, Ash dieback is spread on the wind and is impossible to protect against. So until scientists make a breakthrough and can propagate ash dieback-resistant trees, the situation for ash, a popular street tree, is likely to get worse before it gets better.

The Ash is one of around only 30 native tree species in Britain. The population of 80 million ash trees provides shelter and food for a wide range of wildlife, mostly birds and insects. The species' loosely-branched structure means plenty of light reaches the woodland floor, allowing a variety of plants to grow beneath them.

To find out more about the importance of ash trees and the spread of Ash dieback, log on to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-20261020>.



BLOOMING LOVELY - by Mary Yeldham

Residents of Nos. 181 to 203 Cheyne Way entered both Rushmoor in Bloom and South/Southeast in Bloom this year and won the "Thriving" section in the South/South East Category 4 for Residential Areas. Only 5 points off "Outstanding" - not bad for a first time entry!

The South/South East judge was very interested in the Brook and the fact that residents on the green helped look after it, carrying out litter picking, grass cutting and other activities along the whole length of the Brook, not just at the end of their green.

Funnily enough some of the things of interest we found on our litter picking forays along the Brook, contributed to our gardening success. Some of these were turned into unusual planters in the gardens, which is always a talking point with the judges.

Recently the Brook is looking better. Reeds have been cut back and the channel widened to 1.5 meters, thanks to the work of the Environment Agency contractors, (the boys from Yorkshire) who carried out the work. They left about 18 inches of scrub, at the top of the bank, which apparently is to stop children going down the bank; but at least the ducks and moorhens are now back with us.

Happenings along the Brook over the years have brought the residents together as a community and, entering such events as Rushmoor in Bloom over the past 4 years, winning gold in the first 2 years and Best in the Residential/Street exhibit for next two years, helps keep that spirit alive.

WORK PARTY UPDATE - *Paul Sanders*

Sat 11th August

We originally intended to cut grass in Birchbrook, but the equipment was not available so nine of us attended to other jobs in the reserve. The entrance hedge was cut to allow easier access. All ragwort was cleared from the reserve as each plant will produce hundreds of seeds and become an overwhelming problem. One local resident had asked if we could cut back the bramble growing in the reserve and invading her garden. This we did even though it meant cutting a path through 10 foot tall bramble to get to her fence. The area was cleared of all litter.

Sat 8th September

On a very hot morning 6 of us strimmed and cleared grass in Birchbrook. It was heavy work and despite such a small group the results were very impressive. It was also good to have a couple of younger volunteers - I wish we had more.

Sat 13th October

Despite clashing with other events, a good turnout of 10 of us litter picked the brook, woodland and paths between Curly Bridge and Hawley Lane. Over 20 sacks of rubbish were collected plus several larger objects. Our timing was good as we finished just in time before a heavy hailstorm descended.

Sat 10th November

A large group of 18, including several new faces turned up for our rubbish clearing event. Within 2 hours an astonishing amount of litter and larger items had been collected from the banks and the channel, between Houseman Road footbridge and almost down to the motorway bridge. Items included several bicycles and a gas cooker, plus two fire doors and over 35 black sacks full of rubbish. We also removed a dam of bottles, reeds and large bits of wood - maybe the brook will be a little lower today.



FROM A NEW VOLUNTEER

Hello Dave and I have just returned from the litter pick and have both thoroughly enjoyed the morning!

What a nice group of people you all are, you made us feel very welcome. Following my stint as a Games Maker I have offered my time as a volunteer on a totally different type of event and ended up wondering why I had bothered, but not so today!!

It was very rewarding to stand back and see the huge pile of assorted items we had collectively dragged from the Brook, probably the tip of the iceberg (no, we didn't spot any of those!) but satisfying none the less.

As a second generation "Covie" I have a variety of memories of the brook from childhood. I clearly recall walking hand and hand with my Dad across fields in what must have been the early 1960's, the West Heath Road had just been made and the estate was still being built. Local "folk-law" told of the drowning of a child in the brook a few winters before, when the area was so flooded the bridge at West Heath could not be seen. Having been born and grown up along Fleet Road the foot path at the back of houses in West Heath and over "five arches" was a regular route for my sisters and I. Being the youngest, I was deemed too young to attempt the "walk of death" - making your way over five arches on the wrong side of the bridge!! It seemed so high and so wide at the time! I also recall seeing the huge pipes being delivered in preparation for the building of what was then to be the GLC over spill estate - now Prospect Estate.

Geography at Junior school started with plotting the route of the brook through the village. It led on to learning about meandering rivers and ox bow lakes together with a never lost skill of map reading - do the local schools today take such full advantage of this great local resource I wonder?

Anyway enough rambling from me!. Thank you for a very enjoyable morning, workout and memory jog!

See you in December!!, Kind regards **Joy**

WOODLAND DRUMMERS—Part 3

Lesser Spotted or Barred Woodpecker— *Franc Hall*

At 5.5 inches (14-15cm) - sparrow sized. The smallest European Woodpecker. The size alone is a way of distinguishing it from its larger cousin.

The upper parts of the adult are predominantly black with heavy white barring across the back and wings, a black tail with white outer feathers. It has a short red crown as opposed to the red nape patch on its black and white cousin. The facial markings are buff to white, with a black moustache curving upwards around the ear coverts, but not adjoining the crown as in the Greater Spotted Woodpecker. The under parts are buffish-white, streaked with black near the flanks with black spots on the underside of the tail **not** red around the under tail as in the Greater Spotted. The juveniles are similar, but browner, with more streaked or spotted under parts.



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

They are thinly scattered throughout England and Wales, more scarce in Northern England and unknown in Scotland. In a quirk of fate they seem to have benefitted from the insect life found beneath the bark of the victims of Dutch Elm disease. It is very secretive and rarely seen, foraging along small branches and twigs in the canopy.

In flight it is similar to a small songbird with a typical bouncing, finch-like flight. It tends to avoid open agricultural and urban surroundings. It has no song, but can be heard drumming with a much lighter, more high pitched sound, usually followed by a soft whistling “pee, pee, pee”, similar to the Wryneck, but less ringing. During flight a soft “tchick” can be heard, similar to, but softer than the Greater Spotted Woodpecker. The appearance in flight, from above, is mainly black with extensive, continuous white barring along the wings and back and it lacks the white shoulder patches of its larger cousin. From beneath it appears smaller and lacks the red under tail rump patch of the Greater Spotted, but they are otherwise similar.

Food: Chiefly larva of wood boring beetles, as well as moths, spiders, flies and caterpillars. It also eats some fruit, mostly raspberries and currants.

Nest and Eggs: A hole bored in decayed wood—often on the **underside** of a branch at any height up to 7 feet. It bores a shaft about 7.5 to 10 inches deep, occasionally lined with wood chippings. The usual clutch of 4-6 glossy white eggs are laid in May to June (one clutch only)

HART WILDLIFE CENTRE—*Hilda Anscombe*

Julie Palmer, a volunteer at HART Wildlife Rescue, gave us a very interesting talk at our meeting on 14th August.

Set up in 1996 the charity’s mission, reflected in its title, is to:

- Help wildlife
- Alleviating sickness and suffering
- Return the animals to the wild
- Teach others about wildlife care

The rescue centre’s animal hospital, located in Medstead, near Alton, last year alone admitted nearly 1,600 casualties. Their patients come from vets, individuals, and the RSPCA, and the running costs for the Centre last year added up to £110,000. To try to help raise funds they run a charity shop so, if you are in the area, do pop in and support them by buying something.



Obviously Julie could not bring along sick animals, however she entertained us with amusing anecdotes. She did manage to bring a lovely albino hedgehog, which is kept at the Centre as, sadly, it would not survive in the wild.

For more information visit www.hartwildlife.org.uk and, should you find a wild animal in distress, you can call them on 01420 562335.



Cove Brook

GREENWAY



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CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

We all know that it's been a difficult year weather wise, so I was pleased to see that the wild flowers that we planted in the long grass between West Heath Road and Blunden Hall have survived and flowered. It was lovely to see the pink Campion, white ox-eye daisies, blue cornflowers and yellow buttercups, even though there were only a few patches of them. I hope they managed to produce plenty of seed so that there will be more flowers in the coming years: and of course we plan to grow more starter plants from seed and then plant them out to try to accelerate development of flowering areas.


On 29th September we had a stand at the Mayfield Community Partnership activity day at Samuel Cody School. We were almost inundated by people wanting to make dream catchers and dragonflies, and we were pleased to chat to them about Cove Brook

On October 9th we hosted a class of pupils from Cherrywood Primary School at the brook. Then on 30th October we had our annual quiz night. We almost ran out of tables as about 50 people came, and we were really pleased to have such great support. Our fantastic volunteer cake makers did us proud, and we were able to serve everybody at table with tea, coffee and a selection of home-made cakes.

Then today, November 10th, we had our monthly work party and we welcomed with open arms some first time helpers. It is really heartening to have such support and we hope that more of you will come and join us; we'll be able to do so much more with more helpers.

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. Volunteers welcome at all Work Parties. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

TALKS, MEETINGS & EVENTS		
Date	Time	Subject
Thurs 17 th Jan	10.00 am	BLACKWATER VALLEY TRUST WALK A walk taking in Cove Brook and Hawley Lake, led by our Work Party Leader Paul Sanders <i>Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP</i>
Tues 19 th Feb	7:30 pm	WINGED WONDERS A talk by Penny Jeffries of the Butterfly Conservation Trust Find out more about these lovely insects. <i>Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP</i>
WORK PARTIES		
Sat 8 th Dec	10.00 am	CHRISTMAS SPARKLE LITTER PICK The last push of the year to get the Brook looking really good.  Don't miss the hot drinks and mince pies. <i>Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP</i>
Sat 12 th Jan	10.00 am	SCRUB CUTTING <i>Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Cove, GU14 0LE</i>
Sat 9 th Feb	10.00 am	SCRUB CUTTING <i>Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Cove, GU14 0LE</i>
Sat 9 th Mar	10.00 am	BRAMBLE CUTTING AND POND RENOVATION <i>Meet at: Cheyne Way, near Curly Bridge, Cove, GU14 8SA</i>