



# COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP

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Signal Crayfish



Lesser Celandines



Dog Violets

## LEARNING ABOUT THE BROOK

As a group we are always keen to introduce the young generation to the delights of the brook. We recently had a group children from Cherrywood Infants School, and we set out to teach them, among other things, about camouflage, by asking them to find both bright coloured and muted coloured strands of wool, spread around the hedgerows. This way they learn how creatures use colour and pattern to blend into their background. We also helped them to discover what creatures live in and around the brook.



Looking for water creatures

After their visit we received this lovely letter from **Alexia Mourao**, one of their Year 2 pupils.

*“Yesterday I went to Cove Brook because we were learning about rivers. First we had to put our high visibility jackets on so the cars could see us.*

*The first activity we did at the brook was a scavenger hunt to find things with interesting colours. We then went on an animal picture hunt. We collected wool to find out about camouflage and the green pieces of wool were hard to find.*

*Our last activity was playing Pooh Sticks so we could find out about the flow of the river. Finally, we looked at the brook animals, and were very surprised that a crayfish had been found! My favourite activity was the string hunting and looking at the different animal*

*Thank you a lot for showing us the brook animals and I had a great time”*

It is so nice to receive feedback from the schools. It enables us to find out what works and what doesn't so that we arrange their visits to ensure that they get as much enjoyment and knowledge from their visit as possible. How satisfying to know that, even in today's electronic age, children still enjoy getting out in the fresh air and learning about their local environment.

## SPRING IS ON THE WAY

The dark green heart-shaped leaves of the Lesser Celandine can be found in the hedgerows and woodland edges on Blunden Green and other areas along the brook and soon their brash shiny yellow-petalled flowers will appear, heralding the arrival of spring.

This is the time of the year when things suddenly seem to come back to life. The Hazel catkins, commonly known as Lambs Tails, are blowing in the breeze and the beautiful purple Dog Violets have appeared under the trees near the part of the path running North from West Heath Road.

**Did you know:** The word “dog” means that it has no scent, unlike the sweet violets.

## WORK PARTY UPDATE - *Paul Sanders*

### Sat 8<sup>th</sup> December

Once again it was pleasing to see 19 people gathered at Blunden Hall for our Christmas litter pick. With such a fine crowd we were able to cover the area back to Mayfield Road and include a new section for us, the path along the railway from the West Heath Roundabout back to Highfield Path. This entailed collecting a large amount of rubbish beside the railway arch including 25 or so DVDs. How did they get there?

Whilst it was pleasing to see the paths free from rubbish, the railway embankment alongside it is still an eyesore. It would be great if, now we have such enthusiastic litter pickers, we could get access to these areas - well away from the tracks of course.

### Sat 12<sup>th</sup> January

11 of us spent a very cold morning in Southwood meadows. We cut bramble and holly back from encroaching onto the paths at the northern end. We also cut low branches off the willows and oaks that had been vandalised and removed a huge amount of litter and rubbish from the area. So much in fact that with this event, and the previous three, **we have gathered over 100 black sacks full of litter!**



Removing overhanging branches

## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER - *Hilda Anscombe*

In winter I cycle from my home in Marrowbrook Lane to my Allotment behind Farnborough Football Club. I visit the allotment about once a week. I love the seasonal changes along the brook. At this time of year you can see the brook clearly, especially in places where the Environment Agency cut back the vegetation this Autumn.

A Little Egret is visiting the brook again this winter; there are lots of Mallards and several pairs of Moorhens. If you see any nests or youngsters later in the year, do let us know. You might have noticed one odd duck, bigger than a Mallard, with a lot of white on it; it's probably a Mallard cross, but I have no idea what it was crossed with. There are lots of small birds, such as the Long Tailed Tits, etc., and, several times this January, a pair of mature swans have been spotted on the bank near Blunden Hall. I wonder if they will stay for the summer.

At our December work party one volunteer was lucky enough to glimpse a Kingfisher as it flashed down the river; it's been spotted several times in the last few years. Hopefully, I'll see this shy bird myself one day.

In January, a photographer came along to take our picture and I'm delighted to say there was an article about us in the Farnborough News and Mail. With our many layers of clothing and our very fetching Hi-Vis tabards, we were not exactly glamorous, but we had a very productive morning, finished off with a really welcome hot cuppa.

Recently I noticed an advert in a local shop asking for unwanted and damaged bikes to renovate or use for spares. The business is in Ash and will collect unwanted and damaged bikes to repair or to use for spares, his telephone number is 07711 756896. We often retrieve bicycles from the brook. So now we have a way to recycle them locally.



### Southwood Work Party

Photograph, by courtesy of  
Surrey Advertiser

## WOODLAND DRUMMERS—Part 4

### Green Woodpecker *-Text and drawing by Franc Hall*

At 12-13" (30-32 cm) they are our largest woodpecker in the UK. It frequents broad leaved wooded areas with open clearings, e.g. parks, gardens and heathland habitats. As with all woodpeckers it is more often heard than seen.

A large bulky bird, the adult male has a predominant red crown, which extends to the nape, and a black patch with a red "moustache" stripe. The upper parts are bright green with bright yellow rump and black/brown primary feathers, barred with cream. The tail is a dark greenish-grey with faint cream spotting. The rear of the face, sides of the neck and under parts are pale yellow, except for darker barring on the flanks. The adult female is similar, but has smaller black face patches and lacks the red moustache. The youngsters are similar but dulled by white spotting and barred underparts.



**Male Green Woodpecker**

*Female similar but without red moustache*

In flight it can be recognised by its short, low, undulating flight—often accompanied by its loud "yaffle" call. In good light, its bright yellow rump and red crown cap shows up well, and its short, double pointed, wedged shaped tail is very distinctive.

It can frequently be seen in short, open grassland, probing the earth with its beak in search of ants and other small insects. It has the longest tongue of all woodpeckers.

**FOOD:** Almost exclusively ants, both adult and pupa. Occasionally eats seeds and fruit. It can be a pest to bee keepers who have reported raids on their hives to feed on the bee larva.

**NEST AND EGGS** Five to seven white eggs laid in a hole, 10 to 12 inches deep in a decaying tree, between April and June.

**CALL:** The typical "yaffelling call", (*almost as if they are laughing*) often uttered in flight, with a short "Kyack" call when alarmed,

**Note:** They can sometimes be seen feeding on Blunden Green

## WALK THE PATH WITH BVCP

Get out your walking boots and come along to walk the lower reaches of the Blackwater Valley Path on **Sunday 28th April 2013**. After a year's absence the ever popular 'Walk the Path' event returns, as a one day walk covering the last 17 km (10 miles) of the Blackwater Valley Path from Sandhurst to Swallowfield. This beautiful part of the Blackwater Valley passes through some peaceful rural areas and, if you've never explored the countryside here before, this is a perfect opportunity to do so as part of an organised walk.



As in previous years participants can walk at their own pace or be part of a group, as there will be designated walk guides. There will be transport at the start/finish to take you back to your starting point, refreshments stops and toilets en-route and a collection service if you are unable to finish the walk for whatever reason.

Organised by the Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust, full details including a booking form can be found on their website [www.bvct.org.uk](http://www.bvct.org.uk); pre-booking essential. Costs £8 per person; £6 for BVC Trust members, with a special offer of £11 which includes the walk fee and membership to BVC Trust.





# Cove Brook

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## GREENWAY



### CONTACT DETAILS

#### Web site

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#### Newsletter

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## FOOD FOR FREE?

Did you know that Nettles are used to wrap Cornish Yarg cheese, and you can buy nettle tea. In days gone by nettles were used for medicinal purposes, e.g. for gout and other problems. Now scientists are researching their use in modern medicine. Nettle fibres were used in the fabric for the German uniforms in WWI and there is now new research into an economical way to produce nettle fibres for fabric or for compost.

Fruit and veg prices are rocketing, so why not try a healthy nettle soup made from some of those pesky nettles that grow along the banks of the Brook?



#### Ingredients:

1 lb potatoes  
½ lb young nettles  
2 oz butter

#### LADY RIDLEY'S NETTLE SOUP

1½ pts chicken or vegetable stock  
sea salt & black pepper  
4 tablespoons sour cream

#### Method

1. Cook the peeled, chopped potatoes for 10 mins in salted water. Drain.
2. Wash & chop coarsely the nettles (*Only pick the new, young tops, using gloves!*)
3. Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the nettles and stew gently for a few minutes.
4. Add potatoes and heated stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 mins or until tender.

When all is soft, cool slightly & purée in a blender, adding seasoning and the sour cream. *Bon Appetite!*

## 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
Tues 28 <sup>th</sup> May	7:30 pm	THE WORK OF THE BLACKWATER VALLEY TRUST <i>A talk by Colin Wilson</i> Find out how the Trust works, and the projects and events they are involved in. <i>Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP</i>
Sun 28 <sup>rd</sup> Apr		WALK THE PATH WITH BVCP ( <i>see article on p.3</i> ) For more info log on to: <a href="http://www.bvct.org.uk">www.bvct.org.uk</a> ; or Tel: 07825 469108

### WORK PARTIES

Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> Mar	10.00 am	BRAMBLE CUTTING AND POND RENOVATION <i>Meet at: Cheyne Way, near Curly Bridge, Cove, GU14 8SA</i>
Sat 13 Apr	10.00 am	ANNUAL RUSHMOOR SPRING CLEAN Our combined litter pick with Rushmoor Borough Council <i>Meet at: Curly Bridge, off Cheyne Way, Cove, GU14 8SA</i>
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> May	10.00 am	GRASS CUTTING AND WILD FLOWER PLANTING Grass cutting and raking to encourage wild flower growth <i>Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP</i>
Sat 8 <sup>th</sup> June	10.00 am	A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE Our Annual Summer walk of around 6 miles taking in the Brook and other areas of local interest..