

COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP

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Wooden Bridge at
Southwood



Part of the Blackwater Valley
Path

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER - *Hilda Anscombe*

Such weather! First there were the storms blowing down trees all over the place, then there was so much rain that the ground is soggy everywhere. Fortunately, Paul still managed to come up with a job for us to do at the January work party, when we were blessed by having the only dry sunny day in weeks.

We are still waiting for work to be carried out on the foundations of the bridge by Houseman Road. It was to have been done in November, then was scheduled for the February half term, but has had to be postponed until the Brook level is lower. When that has been completed, the path from the bridge to Birchett Road can be improved to try to eliminate the quagmire, which passes for a path over the winter.

Despite all the rain that has fallen this winter, Cove Brook has behaved itself; although the water level did rise to the underside of the bridge at Blunden Hall and was quite near the top of the bank in other places. Having seen the pictures on TV of places that have experienced terrible flooding, I think we can all be grateful that the Bund round Southwood Meadow, together with other flood prevention measures, worked yet again and has held back the flood-waters from upstream. There was so much water that only the hand-rails of the wooden footbridges at Southwood Meadow were above water. There was one incident of flooding in Cheyne Way, but that was caused by a burst water main!!

Your committee is always trying to find ways to maintain and improve the Greenway. At present we are investigating using cattle to manage the scrub which is threatening to take over Southwood Meadows and choke out many of the other diverse plant species there. We have also found that not everyone is aware that the Greenway Path links the Blackwater Valley Path with Southwood Woodland and beyond; so we are currently applying for a grant to sign-post the Greenway path.

BVCP WALK THE PATH

At the end of April the Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust (BVCT) is offering outdoor fans a special opportunity - to walk a stretch of one of this area's most delightful natural features, the Blackwater Valley Path, including a few special sections not normally open to the public.

The River Blackwater is a hidden gem right on our doorstep. On **Sunday 27th April** participants in Walk the Path 2014 will be able to enjoy the last 17 kilometres (10 miles) of its Path, from Sandhurst to Swallowfield - a riverside walk through beautiful rural countryside in all its spring glory.

This highly successful event - now in its ninth year - is organised by the **Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust** - and pre-booking is essential. It's not too early to book, but places are limited and last year's event sold out. Taking part costs just £6 for BVCT members and £10 per person for non-members.

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WORK PARTY UPDATE - *Paul Sanders*

December 14th 2013

An impressive 24 people turned up for the third stage of our winter cleanup. We covered the brook between Kingsley Road and 5 arches bridge, plus Birchbrook Reserve and the old allotments site. As a reward mince pies and mulled wine were supplied to thank the volunteers for their dedicated work over the year.

January 11th 2014

Our planned bramble bash and scrub clearance had to be changed due to the severe flooding on Southwood Meadows so once again the team set to and litter picked an area we don't usually get to. Eleven of us met in the old section of Hazel Avenue, we cleaned up the road and the flood prevention bund and path. We also continued on to the copse along Arrow Road and even cleared the accumulated litter from the scrub on Elles Road opposite the airfield. These last two areas had not been done by us before or indeed anyone, so it was not surprising that along with an old settee and mattress rescued from the grassy mound we filled the Rushmoor Borough truck that came to take everything away.

February 8th 2014

Again all the recent rain forced a change of plans. This time we met at Blunden Hall and as the grass area between there and Houseman Road was completely flooded, we widened, and made more usable, a path through the trees bordering the grassland. This path had been in use previously but meant climbing over and under various obstacles so we cleared these and figured out a way around the deepest water. Along the way we identified an area of bramble that could be cleared on a later work party to create a wild flower area or butterfly glade.

A lot of rubbish was cleared from under the trees and the path from Blunden Hall to St John's Road was also cleared of litter. Brambles growing through the metal railings onto the pavement at Grove Road were also cut back.

As we are not a group that singles out impressive work by individual volunteers, just like last month when Hilda, Jim and Philip went, both literally and figuratively, the extra mile, but didn't get a mention; this month there will be no mention of Joy who not only collected most of the rubbish, but also with Dave took it all away as well. Sorry folks but we don't single people out like that.. Many thanks to the 10 people who braved the rain and extremely wet conditions to make this a very worthwhile task.

EELMORE MARSH PINE PULLING - *Paul Howe*



Przewalski's horses

Members of the Cove Brook Greenway and Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Groups teamed up with Marwell Zoo's conservation biologist Dr Martin Wilkie to provide a helping hand with the conservation work on Eelmoor Marsh near Farnborough Airfield.

Eelmoor Marsh is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is managed by Marwell Zoo in association with the site owners QinetiQ. The site supports a vast array of important habitats and species including, heathland, bogs and mires, woodlarks, Dartford warbler, nightjar and a high diversity of insects including butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies.

During the 1990's a group of Przewalski's horses from Marwell Zoo were introduced to the site to help establish a management regime which could control scrub encroachment and protect the valuable and diverse heath and mire habitats on the site. In the late 1990's highland cattle were also added to the site to further improve the management regime. Through selective browsing of the heather and encroaching scrub the horses and cattle have helped to maintain the biodiversity value of the site.



Highland Cow

Despite the efforts of the grazing animals pine seedlings and saplings are still very invasive over parts of the site. This is predominantly Scots Pine which encroaches from the surrounding plantations and needs to be pulled or cut by hand. The volunteers cleared pines from a slope in the northern part of the site which will allow the heathland to continue to flourish.

BVCP ANNUAL WALK THE PATH (CONT'D)

Other features of this event include:

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

Full details including a downloadable booking form can be found on the Trust website www.bvct.org.uk. Alternatively leave a message on 07825 469108.

COVES OWN LAKE DISTRICT *- Dr Clive Andrews*

Seventy years ago Cove would have seemed a very different place than the urban scene presented to us today in the 21st century. Back then, it would have a very rural flavour with the Cove Brook meandering through the many farms that once bordered the river, such as Eelmoor Farm, Brookside Farm, Blunden Farm and North Farm whose names now are often remembered in the names of many of our local roads. The post war years saw the complete disappearance of rural Cove and its modern evolution as a local residential area. The flood plain of the Cove Brook was perhaps the water meadows of these farms, but is now the strip we enjoy as local green space and which our volunteers help conserve.



Concrete Restriction

well as the lower areas of the municipal golf course. These open areas act as a pound and temporarily store some of the excessive volume, spreading the surge over a longer period.

Soon the view is completely transformed from an open grassed area into a sizable lake, which quickly attracts a few ducks and gulls. This change is very ephemeral and within a day or so after the heavy rain has ceased, the water soaks away, and the scene soon reverts to its former look, with just a few muddy pools to remind us of its recent aquatic appearance. The flooding occurs only after the heaviest and most prolonged of storms - perhaps just once or twice a year. It is surprising the effect it has on passing strangers, and I find many who would pass without even a nod or good morning, often stop to discuss the level comparing it with previous highs. Although the flood prevention measures are here for purely utilitarian reasons, I like a few others I have met, after a heavy storm, rush down to Hazel Avenue, stand on the metal bridge which crosses the brook there, and observe the watery scene with interest.



Cove Lake District?

I am sure some of you have noticed that the road names of the estate just north west of the playing fields has a very Lakeland theme with names such as Grasmere Road, Ambleside Close, and Ullswater Avenue. Although not in the same league as our Lakeland National Park, one or twice a year Cove does have its own attractive Lakeland scene.



Cove Brook

GREENWAY



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All talks are FREE and are held at
BLUNDEN HALL, Blunden Rd, Cove. GU14 8QP
All welcome, 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
Sun 11 th May	3.45 am	DAWN CHORUS Join our local bird expert at the Basingstoke Canal to hear and, hopefully, see the variety of birds that inhabit this area. (<i>Wrap up warm as it can be very chilly this early</i>) Hot drink will be supplied. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at: Eelmoor Bridge, signposted AAIB off the A323 Fleet/Aldershot Road
Tues 27 th May	7.30 pm	GREEN CORRIDORS —A talk by Paul Howe All about the importance of links between individual wildlife sites. Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP
Sat 19 th July	10:00 am	WALK THE BROOK WITH CLIVE A walk arranged by the Farnborough Society (Approx 3-4 miles) All welcome Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP
Sat 9 th Aug	10:00 am	RENOVATING DIPPING AREAS Working with the Environment Agency to enable access to the Brook at selected areas for educational purposes. Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP
Tues 12 th Aug	7.30 pm	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Followed by a talk—subject to be advised in next Newsletter Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP

WORK PARTIES— Held on 2nd Saturday of each month

Sat 8 th March	10:00 am	WOODLAND MANAGEMENT Cutting back brambles from the paths. Meet at: Curly Bridge, Mayfield Road, Cove, GU14 8SA
Sat 12 th Apr	10:00 am	RUSHMOOR SPRING CLEAN Our regular annual clear up along the Brook in conjunction with Rushmoor Borough Council Meet at: Curly Bridge, Mayfield Road, Cove, GU14 8SA
Sat 10 th May	10.00 am	PATH CLEARING AT SOUTHWOOD Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Cove, GU14 0LE
Sat 7 th June	10.00 am	GENERAL TIDY UP AROUND ST JOHN'S CHURCH Working in conjunction with the Scouts on their Community Week Meet at: St Johns Church, St Johns Road, Cove, GU14 9RQ NB This is the 1st Sat of the Month
Sat 12 th July	10.00 am	GENERAL WORK ALONG THE BROOK Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP

