

COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP



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Following last year's successful Springwatch Dirty Weekend at Southwood Meadows, we are pleased to announce that a similar event will take place at the green area next to Blunden Hall.

Our Wild Day Out event will include a **"Bioblitz"** a **24-hour intensive survey** of all the wildlife in a given area, covering Birchbrook Reserve and a short stretch of the Brook. Commencing on the **evening of Saturday 12th June**, there will be moth and bat surveys going on through the night, followed by small mammal and bird surveys at dawn, then plants, reptiles and amphibians, butterflies and other invertebrates during the day. We will have wildlife experts carrying these out, but **everyone** is invited to come along and lend a hand, either looking for them or coming along to find out what is being found.



SUNDAY 13TH JUNE

10.30 pm to 3.30 pm

BLUNDEN HALL, COVE

Come and see

Millar's Ark Petting Farm

Working Heavy Horses

Falcon High

with wonderful falconry displays

Refreshments

Local Wildlife and Environmental Groups

FREE ENTRY

It's open to everyone, so come along and join in the fun.

Parking limited—please walk or cycle if possible

WORK PARTY UPDATE - by Paul Sanders

9th Jan

With so much snow around and bad road conditions, we reluctantly decided to cancel this one.

13th Feb

A dense screen of willow regrowth looked very daunting on a bitterly cold day when eight of us turned up at Southwood. But, armed with various sized loppers and saws, we managed to cut nearly all the growth that was threatening to take over this patch of wet grassland.

We also cut up and cleared a tree which had fallen across one of the paths and cleared the grassland and path to Grassmere Road car park of litter.

13th March

Ten of us tackled the paths through the grassland and around the pond near the Scout Hut close to the Curly Bridge. This entailed cutting overhanging branches, bramble and gorse. Some bramble was dug out to provide a viewing point above the brook.

We also carried out some litter picking, but there was so much there we decided to target the area as part of next month's Rushmoor Spring clean.



GUIDED TOURS

This year we have again been offered the opportunity to visit two of our close neighbours, where access is usually restricted for security reasons.

GUIDED TOURS OF



TAG
AIRPORT

AND EELMOOR MARSH



Farnborough Airport operator TAG has kindly offered to host two guided tours around their airfield facilities. These give an insight into the commercial activities at the airport and usually include a full drive of the airfield, a look inside the hangars and a trip up the control tower which offers spectacular panoramic views of the surrounding area. The tours take place on the mornings of 1st June and 17th August.

We are also invited by Qinetiq to tour Eelmoor Marsh, the Site of Special Scientific Interest which lies within their secure site. Eelmoor Marsh covers 79 hectares and includes a diverse array of vegetation communities. It is a remaining fragment of the formerly extensive heathlands of Cove, Hawley and Aldershot commons. The site provides a valuable refuge for many rare species and is a hotspot for local biodiversity, including around 370 species of flowering plants, half of all the butterfly species known in the UK and over 70% of Britain's dragonfly species.

The Eelmoor Marsh tours will take place on the morning of 16th June and the evening of 7th July. On the evening tour we will hope to hear and see the visiting nightjars.

Places are limited and will be on a first come first served basis. **A valid, current photo ID will be required for access to the sites.** If you would like to join any of the tours please apply at our e-mail address covebrookgg@yahoo.co.uk, or call 01252 679972 leaving your name and address.

BIODIVERSITY AND WILD FLOWERS - by Hilda Anscombe

Promoting biodiversity along the brook in the built up areas requires very careful planning. We want the brook to look attractive for the people who live alongside it and to encourage people to enjoy walking along its banks. However, we also want to encourage **natural** wild plants (*not garden plants*), which are beneficial for insects and birds, etc. But, there are several limitations put on us by the authorities; The Environment Agency won't let us dig on the river bank or river bed, and Rushmoor Borough Council cut the grass in the area alongside the river. So, last year we planted carefully chosen wild, annually flowering plants on the very top of the bank in the Cheyne Way area.

Some were killed off by such things as dogs urinating or scratching, or "strangulation" by invasive plants, but some survived and flowered (albeit with small flowers). We hope that, in time, the seeds produced will germinate and grow so that in a few years we have mists of colour from established flowering plants and are planning to extend our planting this year or next as we gain experience.



Vervain

BIODIVERSITY AND WILD FLOWERS - by Hilda Anscombe (Cont'd)

Nettles are another problem. These plants are excellent for insects, especially the caterpillar stage of the peacock (and other) butterflies, and we need to keep some for this purpose. However, in some areas along the brook they are taking over, and in the autumn they look really unsightly. So this year on 8th May our working party will be cutting back the nettles and pulling up their roots from the top of the river bank.



Birds foot Trefoil

Did you know that country folk used to gather young nettles and cook them, they're supposed to taste a bit like spinach. So, if you want to help us control the nettles, and get your greens for free, you know what to do – come and help us on Saturday 8th May.

(For further info, see *Dates for your Diary* on back page.)



Wild flower planting

WALK THE PATH

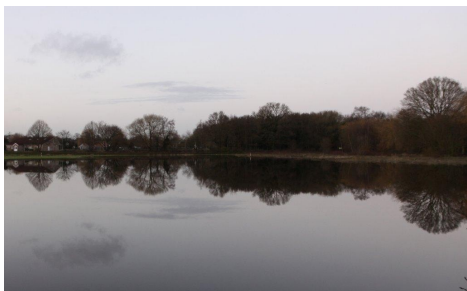


If you enjoy walking but have always thought four or five miles is the most you could do in one go, why not give yourself a challenge and join a longer, but organised, walk. There is a suitable route that straddles the borders of Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire. Although it's 23 miles long, it follows the route of the River Blackwater and offers excellent walking, as it is fairly flat and passes through a variety of different landscapes.

Anyone interested in taking up the challenge is invited to Walk the Path, a special weekend walking event held on 8th & 9th May, 13 miles on Saturday and 10 miles on Sunday. Organised by the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership (BVCP) the event is aimed at people who enjoy walking and would like to discover more about the Blackwater Valley.

Full details of the walk can be obtained by writing to 'Walk the Path 2010' (PM), Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Ash Lock Cottage, Government Road, Aldershot GU11 2PS; by ringing 01252 331353 or by visiting www.blackwater-valley.org.uk

THE MEADOWS IN FLOOD



In January this year some heavy rains and a thaw saw Cove Brook in flood at Southwood Meadows. The area around the Meadows has been managed to provide flood protection for communities further downstream with water being held up and released at a rate which greatly reduces the risk of properties near the brook being flooded.

These photographs show the brook, which normally flows through the Meadows at the bottom of a channel,

which is 4 or 5 feet deep, flooding over the plain, with the adjacent golf practice range becoming a temporary lake. However, within two or three days the brook was again flowing in its normal channel and the practice range was boggy, but green again. Notwithstanding these conditions, there are still enough dry spots on the meadows to shelter wildlife, such as the common lizards which many people saw during the haymaking on the Meadows during our Springwatch Dirty Weekend Event last year.



OIL SPILL UPDATE - by Hilda Anscombe

Since the oil spill in the Cove Brook was reported, TAG has been working alongside the Environment Agency to mitigate the impact on the environment. A network of absorbent booms have been placed along the Cove Brook, by Environment Agency and TAG staff, to reduce the effects of the spill further downstream. TAG commenced an investigation of the site drainage system which confirmed that the source was not connected to Airport operations. The pollution (which has now ceased) was traced to beyond the boundary of the Airport, where the Environment Agency is continuing investigations.



Cove Brook

GREENWAY

Springwatch



DAY OUT

Sun 13th June



CONTACT DETAILS

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS
covebrookgg@yahoo.co.uk

BOOKINGS
e-mail or call 01252 679972
and leave a message

Work Parties

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OIL SPILL UPDATE *Cont'd*

TAG will be reviewing the levels of protection against polluted third party drainage on to the Airport site, in order to prevent such an occurrence in the future.

Pollution is not helped by individuals who find it amusing to dump a motor scooter in the brook, leaking, petrol, oil and possibly battery acid into the channel. Despite being pulled out twice by volunteers, each time it was pushed back into the stream overnight, until RBC was able to collect it.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All Talks and Meetings are **FREE**, and are held at **BLUNDEN HALL, Blunden Rd, Cove.** Open to all, refreshments provided. Donations are appreciated. All volunteers welcome at Work Parties. Persons under 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

EVENTS

Date	Time	Subject
FOR INFORMATION PLEASE E-MAIL covebrookgg@yahoo.co.uk, AND LEAVE A MESSAGE. SOMEONE WILL GET BACK TO YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. FOR BOOKINGS SEE CONTACT DETAILS		
Sun 9 th May	4 am	DAWN CHORUS WALK Meet at: Eelmoor Bridge, signed AAIB, off the A323 Fleet to Aldershot Rd.
Tues 1 st Jun	Morning	TAG AIRPORT TOUR — BOOKING ESSENTIAL (See contact details)
Tues 1 st Jun	7.30 pm	A NEW PATH ALONG THE BROOK—by Martin Sterio, RBC Come and find out about the Sustrans proposal for a multi user path along the Brook ALSO ALL ABOUT MOLES Take the opportunity to find out all about these creatures from Paul Murray, a local mole catcher.
Sun 13 th Jun	10 am to 4 pm	SPRINGWATCH WILD DAY OUT This year at Blunden Hall open space. Blunden Road
Wed 16 th Jun	Morning	EELMOOR MARSH TOUR — BOOKING ESSENTIAL
Wed 7 th July	Evening	EELMOOR MARSH TOUR — BOOKING ESSENTIAL
Tues 17 th Aug	Morning	TAG AIRPORT TOUR — BOOKING ESSENTIAL

WORK PARTIES

Sat 8 th May	10.00 am	WEEDING WILD FLOWER AREAS & NETTLE BASHING Strim/cut and remove nettles from bank, weed flower areas Meet at: Mayfield Road Bridge
Sat 10 th July	10.00 am	GRASS CUTTING AT SOUTHWOOD Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Southwood
Sat 14 th Aug	10.00 am	GRASS CUTTING AT BIRCHBROOK Meet at: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road
Sat 11 th Sept	10.00 am	GRASS CUTTING AT SOUTHWOOD Meet at: Grasmere Road Car Park, Southwood