

# COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP



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## OPEN AT LAST – *Hilda Anscombe*



We were so lucky. The weather was warm and the sun shone and by 1pm on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October over 40 people congregated by the bridge over Cove Brook by Blunden Hall for the path opening ceremony.

Members of a Rushmoor Healthy Living walking group came walking up the path together with a friend in a mobility scooter. A couple of dog walkers joined us, and other members of the public young and old arrived on foot or by

bicycle and joined members Cove Brook Greenway Group, including "Hop Along Kathy" (our Newsletter Editor) who was temporarily wheelchair bound.



Opening Ceromony

Representatives of the organisations who funded the path improvements came from further afield: Councillor Carol Leversha from Hampshire CC, Mark O'Shea from Veolia Environmental Fund and several members of Rushmoor Borough Council. We were very impressed by Simon Pratt the representative from Sustrans, the organisation for sustainable transport which paid half the cost of the path. He arrived in suitable style, having come all the way from Oxford to Blackwater by train and then cycled to Blunden Hall along the new path. We must say a big "thank you" to all these organisations, and also to the TAG Environmental Fund, which also made a substantial contribution to the project.



Ideal for cyclists and walkers alike

After a few speeches, we all posed for the official photographs, whilst Councillor Diane Bedford, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Youth, cut the ribbon to formally open the improved path. (*Interestingly Councillor Bedford grew up in Cove and remembers when cows grazed on Blunden Green, and Blunden Bridge was the only bridge across the brook, other than the one alongside the railway*).

Following the ceremony we enjoyed a very sociable picnic in the shade of the trees, whilst Susan Jones, from RBC, joined helpers from the Greenway Group to keep the tea and coffee flowing. Our thanks to them and also to the people who carried out the tables and chairs and put them away again afterwards and, of course, to those who did the washing up.



Some of the Rushmoor Healthy Living Walking Group

As a result of the project to widen the path, the Greenway can now be enjoyed and accessed by more of our residents, many of whom include mothers with pushchairs, people in wheel chairs, and pupils who like to walk and cycle to school.

## WORK PARTY UPDATE *Paul Sanders*

### Oct/Nov/Dec 2011

The last three months of the year have become our traditional litter picking events. During the three work parties we have removed rubbish from the path, banks and channel from Hawley Lane to the 5 Arches Bridge - some areas covered more than once! Attendance has been terrific with 11 in October, 16 in November and a very impressive 20 in December. A big thank you to everyone and indeed anyone who helped out at any of our work parties throughout the year.



On the other side of the coin it is a pity we have to spend so much time cleaning up after others. For example we cleared under the Curly Bridge in all three work parties because the school children drop so much litter off the bridge on their way to and from school. We have not been able to get to the north side of the bridge due to the amounts we find, but that side needs our, or someone's attention. In the December work party we cleared the path from the Curly Bridge to the play area near Moor Road, but the amount of rubbish under the trees near the football ground is shocking. Maybe we will target this area in the RBC spring clean next April. Perhaps someone from the football club could organise some help for us?

We often find bicycles or parts of bicycles in the brook and I also find some in the Blackwater river when I work with Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership. We try to trace owners but when this fails maybe we could put them to good use. I have heard of a community project on the Prospect Estate that teaches bike maintenance but I have no more details. If anyone knows of contact details please email me at [paulsanders@talk21.com](mailto:paulsanders@talk21.com).

Back to the theme of litter. Every Saturday I try to clean up woodland near to where I live. It can be satisfying and I was wondering if people might like to 'adopt' an area of brook or grassland or a small area of woodland near to them (see Chairman's warning below). Visit it regularly and remove some rubbish, maybe limit yourself to a carrier bag full at a time. If you see debris in the channel then let us know. Obviously health and safety issues are involved so wear gloves, don't go alone or down steep or muddy banks. I wouldn't expect anyone to take on the bramble patch on the brook near West Heath Road where you can usually expect 100+ cans! But there may be areas that can be maintained more easily. I'm sure some people do this already and I'd be pleased to hear of anyone doing this.

### CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

***The committee has to point out that Cove Brook Greenway Group's insurance covers only our regular work parties. It does NOT cover independent activities. So, if you do adopt an area then it would be AT YOUR OWN RISK.***

However, if you see anything blocking the brook, i.e. fallen trees, etc., you can contact the Environment Agency, on Tel: 0800 807060. They are usually quick to clear them away.

## BUTTERFLY MONITORING UPDATE *Bob Austin*

This year's season for butterfly monitoring is now over and we have submitted our monitoring data to the Butterfly Conservation Monitoring scheme. Their data will be published in next year's report.

We managed to get out every week during the season except for two weeks in the middle of July, when it was either too cold or too wet. There are only a few situations where we cannot do our surveys:-



*Meadow Brown*

- When it's raining
- When the temperature is below 13° C regardless of whether it's sunny
- When the sun is not out and the temperature is below 17° C

There were similar quantities of Ringlets and Gatekeepers this year compared to last year, but far fewer Meadow Browns (about 1/4 of last year's count).

Meadow Browns are normally one of the most abundant species of butterfly and I have no idea why there were so few this year. They live in many types of habitat and have many species of grass as their food plant. The Meadow Brown is easily recognisable as a fairly large brown butterfly with pale orange markings on the top of its wings, with a single small white eye dot in its otherwise black eye.

The Gatekeeper is a smaller brown butterfly with more obvious orange markings and has two small white eye dots in its black eye. Favourite nectar sources include Wild Marjoram, Common Fleabane, Ragworts, and Bramble. It shares a number of habitats with the Ringlet and Meadow Brown.

It was interesting to find a Small Copper at the beginning of August, a species I have not seen in the area for some time. Again, it lives in similar habitats to the Ringlet, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown. Favourite food plants include Common Sorrel and Sheep's Sorrel. Broad-leaved Dock may occasionally be used. The Small Copper is quite small and dark brown with very bright orange markings and is easily recognisable. It is normally seen in ones or twos.



*Gatekeeper*

Well – that's it for this year and we are looking forward to next year's surveys and for good conditions for the butterflies and the surveyors!

## WHAT NEXT?

Following the success of our Open Days in 2009 and 2010 many of you said how disappointed you were that we hadn't run one in 2011..

We get huge pleasure from producing such wonderful **free** community events but, despite rumours to the contrary, our band of dedicated volunteers all have work and/or family commitments, and there are times when these have to take priority. Sadly, despite our best intentions these commitments, together with the financial challenges and the loss of some of our more experienced committee members meant that, in 2011, we were unable to put one on.

But don't despair. We are already beavering away in an attempt to raise in the money to cover the site booking, health and safety surveys, insurance, etc., plus the attractions that everyone loves, in order that we can have an Open Day in 2012, hopefully at Moor Road Recreation Ground. With luck we will again be able to bring the joys of the great outdoors into the lives of people who live in the local area.

In the meantime, we are looking for help in making wooden nest box kits. This entails cutting each piece to size, sanding it smooth and drilling pilot holes. We'll also need assistance to helping youngsters assemble the nest boxes on the day.

Any offers of help are most appreciated. Most of our current volunteers started thinking that they had few, if any skills, but it's amazing what you find you can do. If you want to find out more, contact us on our e-mail address, or call Hilda or Kathy whose details on the back page.





Hi,  
I'm  
Pi



## CONTACT DETAILS

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## PI'S PERSPECTIVE



We see the Little Egret often, he/she seems to be getting used to humans (& me) as he no longer flies off in a panic to disappear round the corner of the brook. Perhaps he'll come in the garden with the sparrows and tits; we do have a fish pond.

The willows looked scalped! The Environment Agency people have been round pruning, clearing and shredding. Looks a bit stark, too neat, but Mum says it won't be long before spring when it'll look green again and I can sneak up on the foxes and rabbits! There are a couple of tame ones that wander about, but I'm not really allowed to chase them, anyway my Mum makes so much noise they run off before I can get close.

I enjoyed the Christmas Sparkle Litter Pick; lots of people who thought I was 'lovely' and gave me bits of mince pie & shortbread, yummy! There are funny things going on at our house, all sorts of parcels and lights and shiny things hanging up. Must be good though as my people are talking turkey. I love turkey!

My morning walk is now in the dark luckily, as I feel pretty silly with fairy lights round my neck but, thankfully, no-one is around to see me.

## Happy New Year

## 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

Date	Time	Subject
Tues 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb	7.30 pm	<b>MEMORIES OF COVE - Cllr Diane Bedford</b> <i>Reminiscences of a childhood in Cove.</i>  Why not bring photos or any other information you may have about Cove and the brook, and share memories over a coffee after the talk. <b>Meet at:</b> Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP

### WORK PARTIES

Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10.00 am	<b>SCRUB CLEARANCE, Southwood Meadows</b> Cutting back willow to conserve meadowland <b>Meet at:</b> Grasmere Road Car Park or on site at the overgrown side of the golf practice area GU14 0LE
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> Feb	10.00 am	<b>BANK CLEARANCE,</b> Cutting nettles and brambles from the edge of the brook <b>Meet at:</b> Mayfield Road bridge, Off Fernhill Rd, GU14 8UB
Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> Mar	10.00 am	<b>PATH &amp; BANK CLEARANCE</b> Tidying up path and bank <b>Meet at:</b> Footbridge to Cheyne Way, off Anglesey Ave & Mayfield
Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Apr	10.00 am	<b>RUSHMOOR SPRING CLEAN</b> Our combined litter pick with Rushmoor Borough Council <b>Meet at:</b> Moor Road Playing Fields entrance GU14 8HN