



### Decoy Heath – 3<sup>rd</sup> December – Neil Frankum

We were back at BBOWT's Decoy Heath for the first time in 3 years. We were clearing birch and willow scrub from part of the heathland area. As a result of the heavy rain earlier in the week, the site could probably have been better described as Decoy Lake as most of it was under a couple of inches of water. Paddling around in the water could have been cold, but luckily it was a reasonably warm day, and the sun was out all day, and we had a nice bonfire to dry out by too! Decoy Heath is the best site in Berkshire for dragonflies. BBOWT are also planning to get a JCB in to dig a new pond in the area we cleared to help encourage the dragonflies. The site is owned by a waste disposal company, and managed by BBOWT on a 50 year lease.

Top – starting work at Decoy Heath. L-R: Owen, Peter, James, Claire, ?, Alistair, Ed.  
Above left – today's task leader, Owen, carrying a cut pine tree to the fire.  
Above right – Ed and Alistair tending the fire.  
Right – Getting ready to start – L-R Owen, ?, Claire, Peter, Alistair, Ed, James





Above – James tending the fire whilst the rest of us wait for the kettle to boil!  
 Below left – Nigel, Rodney & Richard cutting birch as James and ? follow up treating the stumps to prevent regrowth.  
 Below middle – Alistair, Ed & Peter. Below right - ? & Claire



**Greenham Common – 19<sup>th</sup> November**

Neil Frankum

We had a lovely sunny day for today's task. We were working on Crookham Common at the eastern end of the site. It was a joint task with the Greenham & Crookham Conservation Volunteers. We were pushing back the edge of some very dense patches of new birch growth along the edges of one of the tracks through this part of the site. This should result in some nice heathland glades that the wildlife can enjoy in the spring.



Right – cutting birch in the sun.  
 Below left – Peter, Katy, & Amy in the middle of one of the areas we cleared.  
 Below right – Katy collecting the cut birch.





Above – L-R: Amy, the ranger, Richard, Katy, & Peter.  
Below – Amy dragging cut birch to the fire.



**Highwood – 12<sup>th</sup> November**

Neil Frankum



Above left – William, Alistair & Ed clearing bramble. Middle – Emma & Peter. Right – Shrew sitting on my boot!



Clearing birch from heathland seems to be a common theme at this time of year! Today we were working on the tiny remnant of heathland that can still be found at Highwood in Woodley. Some people concentrated on slashing down the invading bramble at one end of the site. Some of us cleared an area that had been burnt earlier in the summer. Everyone else cleared birch from the centre of the area. A fire was quickly started to dispose of all the cut brashings. The local wildlife was in evidence, with a shrew being spotted. Whilst I was trying to get a photo of this, it came and sat on my foot for a few seconds. Pity I didn't manage to get a better photo! We also saw a Red Kite flying over in the afternoon.



Above left – Nigel. Above middle – Chloe tending the fire whilst Phil carries cut birch to put on the fire. Above right – Peter clearing a birch tree. Below – Nigel, Roger & Emma waiting for the fire to die down at the end of the task.



**Wildmoor – 28<sup>th</sup> October**

David Fiddes

This was a return visit to the lower area of heathland. Today we were concentrating on clearing pine re-growth, although we also tackled a few thickets of rhododendron. The area has been cleared regularly for the last 4 or 5 years to the point that we were mainly clearing one, two and three year old trees, although there were a few clumps of older specimens near the edge.



Above left – Fly Agaric. Above right – lunch break L-R Neil, Richard, Peter.  
 Below left – Samantha disappearing in one of the ditches! Below right – Neil & Karl searching for the hiding birch trees.



View across Wildmoor

**Padworth Common – 26<sup>th</sup> November**

Richard Coles

We had a wet beginning to the task today. Only me Peter and Amy turned up, so Adey lent us his chainsaw and gear and I felled lots of Birch with that while the others tended the fire and did the burning. We only had a fire because Amy noticed smoke rising 100 yards away and we found the remains of a recent fire still smouldering. Graham came along in the afternoon and took a lot of logs for his fire. So look what a jolly time you missed today in the pouring rain!

**2007 Membership**

Its that time of year when I ask you to part with a fiver to guarantee another six issues of this fantastic newsletter and membership of the group through to the end of 2007. Membership forms attached.

**Congratulations**

Congratulations to Lesley Longley who has recently got engaged!

**Snelsmore Common – 10<sup>th</sup> December**

David Fiddes



Amy &amp; Phil digging up birch trees

A small contingent from BeC joined over 20 Snelsmore Scrubbers to dig and pull up re-growth from the heath around the watchtower at Snelsmore. The birch, pine and willow was put on a bonfire, along with some spuds, parsnips and a couple of bottles of mulled wine. All followed up by mince pies warmed on the back of a spade. The weather was better than expected and the large turnout made good progress before leaving when the inevitable turn for the worse came.



Lots of people

Below - View across Snelsmore Common

**Socials****Pub – Sundays after task**

If everyone feels up to it we sometimes adjourn to the pub after task. We'll usually decide where we are going on task, when we've found out what everyone wants to do.

**Cinema Trips / Other socials etc**

These get arranged on an ad hoc basis - turn up on task, contact one of us, or sign up for the Email mailing list to find out the details.

**Social Reports****Film – Borat**

Quite a funny film, unless you are easily offended!

**Film – The Prestige**

This was the best film I've seen for a while. Good story, with quite a few twists & turns. Mind you, you had to be paying attention. Nigel wasn't, and had to have the secret to the last trick explaining to him as we were walking to the pub!

**Guy Fawkes Night – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November**

Seven of us met up for the usual visit to the fireworks display being put on at Laurel Park in Lower Earley. Good display as usual. We adjourned to the George afterwards for a pint.

**Film – Casino Royale**

The latest Bond film has a slightly harder edge to it than its predecessors. Good film.

**Congratulations**

BBOWT have successfully raised the £235000 needed to buy a 72 acre extension to their Moor Copse nature reserve near Pangbourne. This is a very nice reserve that we have worked at several times over the years, and the extension will approximately double the size of the reserve.

**Task Details: 7<sup>th</sup> January – 25<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

To book for task, please contact the task-leader listed below (If possible, by the Thursday before the task). Transport is available from the Tool Store at Edenham Crescent at 9:10am, and from the front of Reading Station (near the taxi rank) at 9:30am. Other pick-up points can sometimes be arranged – please contact the task-leader.

You are advised to wear old clothing, and stout boots or wellies (preferably with steel toecaps). Also bring waterproofs and a packed lunch, BeC will provide Tea/Coffee/Squash and Biscuits. As it is winter we could experience any type of weather, so wrap up warm / bring the sun cream??!!.

Whenever possible, please do let the task leader know you are planning to come on task. Occasionally task details change at short notice, and we can only let you know of changes if we know you are planning to attend the task. However we do always take enough tools and biscuits for a few extras, so if you get the urge on Sunday morning, but haven't booked, you will still be made welcome.

We often go to the pub after task, so remember to bring some money (and a change of clothes if it's likely to be a very muddy task) if you want to join us.

**ECCHINSWELL VILLAGE****7<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

Task: Scrub clearance.

Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528 / 0793 225 8788

Meet at: 10-15am at the site (Grid reference SU503606). Head south from the roundabout on the A339 at Kingsclere. Where the road bends round to the left turn right (straight on) towards Echinswell. Contact the leader for exact details of where to meet in the village.

Userbody: Echinswell Parish Council.

**WILDMOOR, Crowthorne****14<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

Task: Scrub clearance.

Leader: Richard Coles 0118 976 0580

Meet at: 10:15 in the car park on the road heading south towards Sandhurst from Crowthorne. Grid reference SU838630. Heading south, as you leave the built up area, the road bends left, and goes into a dip. The entrance to the car park is signed on your left.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

**HEATHLAKE, Crowthorne****21<sup>st</sup> January 2007**

Task: Rhody bashing.

Leader: TBA

Meet at: 10:15 at the entrance to the site off Nine Mile Ride. Grid reference SU828655. Head south from Wokingham on the A321 the Sandhurst Road. At a double roundabout turn left onto Nine Mile Ride (B3430) and the site is on the right after half a mile.

Userbody: Wokingham District Council Countryside Service.

**YATELEY COMMON, Yateley****28<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

Task: Path work.

Leader: Richard Coles 0118 976 0580

Meet at: Meet at: 10:15 at the site. There are several car parks along the A30 & Cricket Hill Lane, so contact the leader if you are making your own way to site to find out where we are meeting.

Userbody: Hampshire County Council.

**PADWORTH COMMON****4<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

Task: Scrub clearance

Leader: TBA

Meet at: 10-15am at the car park (Grid reference SU619648). Head west along the A4 from Junction 12 of the M4 for approximately 3 miles. Just before you get to the roundabout at the junction of the A4 and A340 turn left into a minor road signposted towards Padworth. Follow this road for approximately 2 miles. The car park is on the right just before you reach the T junction with the Burghfield Common to Tadley Road.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

**SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury****11<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

Task: TBA.

Leader: David Fiddes 0780 191 7104.

Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). Snelsmore Common country park can be found north of Newbury and is located along the B4494 road from Donnington to Wantage. The entrance is sign posted from the road opposite the entrance to Mary Hare Grammar School.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

**GREENHAM COMMON, Newbury****18<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

Task: TBA.

Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 775 1528 / 0793 225 8788

Meet at: 10:15 at the site. This is a LARGE site, so contact the leader for details if you are planning on making your own way to site.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

**WILDMOOR, Crowthorne****25<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

Task: Boardwalk building &amp; repairs.

Leader: Owen Lewis 07740 766517

Meet at: 10:15 in the car park on the road heading south towards Sandhurst from Crowthorne. Grid reference SU838630. Heading south, as you leave the built up area, the road bends to the left, & goes into a dip. The entrance to the car park is signed on your left.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

**Diary Dates**

**Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Feb.** Newsletter copy date. Any items (task reports etc) for inclusion in the next newsletter should be Email to me on or preferably before this date.

**TBA** Please contact Richard Coles for dates of tools evenings.

**BeC Contacts**

<b>Chair &amp; Tools:</b>	Richard Coles	(0118) 976 0580	<b>Address for Correspondence:</b> Berkshire Conservation Volunteers, PO Box 165, READING. RG1 4LD
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Peter Harrison	(0118) 950 9276	
<b>Van Admin:</b>	Rodney Chapple	(0118) 986 4438	
<b>Task Co-Coordinator:</b>	David Fiddes	(0118) 948 2681	
<b>Membership/Newsletter:</b>	Neil Frankum	(0118) 975 1528 *	
<b>Social Secretary</b>	Nigel Mason-Flucke	(01252) 835919 * Answerphone available	

**Email:** membership@berkshire-conservation-volunteers.org.uk

**MOBILE:** We have a mobile phone for task use – although primarily for use in emergencies, volunteers can also use it to contact us if they are having difficulties locating the worksite. The number is **07875 262129**. **NB:** this will only be switched on during tasks.

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**[www.berkshire-conservation-volunteers.org.uk](http://www.berkshire-conservation-volunteers.org.uk)**

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