



**Wildmoor – 15<sup>th</sup> April – David Fiddes (& additional photos by Neil Frankum)**

We spent a hot, sunny April Sunday continuing the replacement of boardwalk towards the Sandhurst end of the Wildmoor site. One of the beams had broken and was propped up with boards and one of the posts was showing signs of rot. Removal of the rotten post proved to be the most taxing task as it was standing in water and the suction combined with its weight made it problematic to lift out. After much digging and aborted attempts to crow bar it out, a board was nail across it and BeC brute force applied. The second most taxing task was demolishing some sections of the old boardwalk, which were originally constructed with BeC brute force - ensuring that some of the boards were reluctant to be separated from the beams. Despite these challenges

everything else went smoothly and with a good sized group, including the ranger Carl, we managed the target of replacing five sections. Leaving us another five for next time. The old boards were de-nailed and will be used as path edging and stair fasciae.

I forgot to add, the answer to how many conservation volunteers it takes to bang in a nail is eight. One to bang in the nail, six to oversee, and one to take the picture (as shown on the right).



Above L-R: Aimee, Fran, Sam, Amy, Peter, Neil, Richard, Carl.  
Right – Everyone watching Fran hammering in nails.



Above left – view across the site. Above right – one of the lizards seen running around where we were working.  
Below left & middle – assembling the new boardwalk. Below right – Richard doing some chainsaw carpentry.



Above left – Fran & David dismantling a section of the old boardwalk. Above right – Amy nailing on the decking.  
Below left & middle – nailing on the new decking. Below right – the finished section of boardwalk.



**Wildmoor – 25<sup>th</sup> February**

Neil Frankum

A VERY wet day for our third task replacing this section of boardwalk at the eastern side of Wildmoor. However, after two previous tasks here, we had perfected our technique. Alisdair did the chainsaw carpentry & the rest of us demolished the old, and laid out and nailed up the new.



Above left Alisdair & Richard marking up the boards needed to get round a bend in the boardwalk. Above right – Peter, Owen, Richard & Gabriel look on as Alisdair cuts a board to size.

Below left – Jon hammering in the last nail as the first punter approaches. Below right – task leader Owen on the completed boardwalk.



**Padworth Common – 4<sup>th</sup> March**

Neil Frankum

Another very wet day, this time at Padworth Common. I arrived mid afternoon to find a newly created extension to one of the heathland clearings to the west of the car park. All that remained to be done was to stack the logs, drag the remaining brash to the fire, and stand around chatting as the picture shows!



Aimee, Dan, Rhodri, Philip, Sam, Richard, and Adrian

**Snelmore Common – 8<sup>th</sup> April**

Philip Allen

Peter, Richard & myself had a sunny Easter Day to help Keith manage Snelmore Common. After tea & homemade cakes with the Friends we dug out the overgrown drainage ditches to stop the main path getting flooded in winter. The Friends of Snelmore Common had a family day out with a few kids in push chairs as they painted the fire tower.

**Snelmore Common – 11<sup>th</sup> February & 11<sup>th</sup> March**

David Fiddes



Birthday cake!

Two consecutive second Sundays of the month spent scrub clearing with the local group. Both times we had good weather, a good turn out bolstered by a local scout troop who took on dragging duties, and a bonfire with baked potatoes and parsnips kindly provided by Keith the ranger. To try and



One of the ponies

minimise regrowth we were digging up the birch trees using mattocks and forks, which made for an energetic couple of tasks.



The March task marked the fourth anniversary of the Snelmore Scrubbers and a cake with four candles was produced. My "what, handles for forks?", fell on deaf ears. I don't think they do the Two Ronnies in Newbury! Despite appearances to the contrary the cake was neither poisonous nor hallucinogenic, but very tasty.



**Pinewood – 25<sup>th</sup> March**

Philip Allen

Reading half marathon day so got to the tool store early as roads get closed at 9 am although the race does not start until 10 after waiting for Peter who did not arrive as had not remembered to put his clocks forward. Bath Road was closed town bound so had to divert via Honey End Lane, Water Road to Oxford Road & circuit via Western Elms to try to find Chloë who also said she would come. I got to the station at 9.55 (although RBC's website implied there would be no access to the station from 7am) then drove along the 329M and via the new residential development to link Southern industrial area with motorway to have a tour around the site where the contractors felled several mature oaks & ashes in addition to the pine they were supposed to take to provide fuel for Slough Power station. There is a stile that needs to be replaced with a squeeze gate, which was

not accessible today. I had started to pull up the rhododendron & laurel seedlings when Jon from Crowthorne joined me then Emma who also phoned up to book arrived about 11.20 as had forgot to put the clocks forward. Alisdair arrived at this site near his place of work however, we did not have any matches so after failing to get a fire going using the van's cigarette lighter Alisdair went off and got a lighter before creating a fire that consumed all poisonous plants we could find and enable us to have baked potatoes. The ashes were cooled & used to improve the drainage at the end of the new "disabled accessible" bridge over the stream by the pond.

**Greenham Common – 18<sup>th</sup> March / Padworth Common – 4<sup>th</sup> February** Richard Coles



Above left – Aimee, Chloe, Peter & the locals at Greenham. Above right – Warming up by the fire at Padworth Common.

**Moor Copse – 1<sup>st</sup> April**

Philip Allen (Photos by Neil Frankum)



We were repairing the deer fence from the new extension of the site. Peter was at the tool store & Aimee had booked a lift from the station met Fran at the entrance to the surprisingly dry reserve to dig down to put chicken netting



Phil & Peter working on the fence.

Fran & Aimee attaching chicken wire to block a hole in the fence.

into the holes created by rabbits and badgers to stop muntjac & roe deer getting in to graze the coppice regrowth. Richard joined us to enjoy the sun and the calls from skylarks & buzzards. Neil

arrived at morning coffee time hot foot from his holiday in Vietnam. At lunch we went for a walk to see the main badger set and saw a pair of roe deer in the 5 acre field fleeing into park wood. By 5pm we had unblocked the gates intended for use by badgers and filled in 16 holes on the runs of rabbits & badgers although two warrens straddle the fence.



Above left – Fran took us on a short guided walk around the site. Above middle – Phil repairing a hole in the fence. Above right – Fran doing the same.

## 2007 AGM

Yes it's that time of year again when everybody runs away and hides from the current committee in case they get 'persuaded' to help out with the running of the group. If you don't actually need much persuasion, and want to volunteer to help out with the running of the group then let one of the committee know.

On a more general note, we are always on the lookout for anyone wanting / able to lead tasks and / or drive the van. Again let one of the committee know if you are interested.

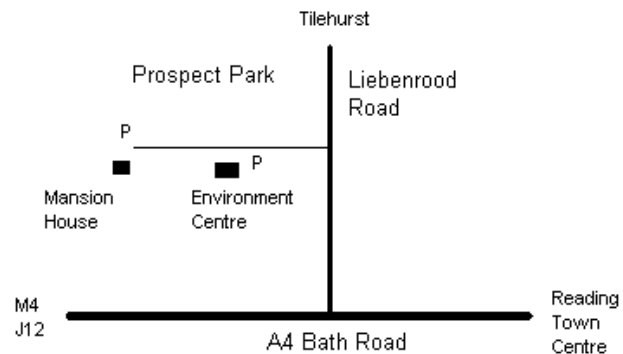
**Date: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June**

**Time: 8-00pm**

**Venue: The Environment Centre,  
Prospect Park, Off  
Liebenroad Road, Reading.**

## Agenda

1. Officers Reports
2. Election Of Committee
3. AOB
4. Adjourn to pub (Mansion House).



## 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 – Sunshine

Better than average science fiction film.

### Film - Curse of the Golden Flower

Chinese and with subtitles, but a good film nevertheless. Good storyline & visually spectacular filming, though in a more man made way than the director's previous film (House of Flying Daggers), which used spectacular natural scenery as the backdrop.

**Film – Last King Of Scotland**

As a change from the normal venue we went to the Vue cinema in town. Good film portraying the story of a British student doctor doing volunteer work in Uganda, who became Idi Amin's personal doctor after a chance meeting, and who gradually became more aware of and trapped by the dictator's extreme ways.

**Film – Hot Fuzz**

I hadn't been impressed by the trailers for this film, but let Nigel talk me in to seeing it, and I was actually pleasantly surprised. Light hearted comedy about the 'perfect' policeman who is transferred from the big city to a 'quiet' and 'peaceful' country village after making his colleagues look useless.

**Task Details: 29<sup>th</sup> April – 24<sup>th</sup> June 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 spring 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.

**CLAYFIELD COPSE, Caversham****6<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

Task: Ditch clearance.

Leader: David Fiddes 0780 191 7104

Meet at: 10:00 at the carpark off of Caversham Park Road (OS Grid Ref: SU725767).

Userbody: Friends Of Clayfield Copse / Reading Borough Council.

**SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury****13<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

Task: Probably footpath maintenance.

Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528 / 0793 225 8788.

Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). Snelsmore Common country park is located north of Newbury 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.

**BILL HILL, Bracknell****20<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

Task: Invasive species clearing (holly thinning). This is our first ever task at this Scheduled Ancient Monument in the heart of Bracknell. The site is the remains of a bronze age round barrow constructed over 3000 years ago.

Leader: TBA

Meet at: 10:15 at the site. Grid reference SU869684. Heading southeast from the Twin Bridges Roundabout up Downshire Way, as you approach the next roundabout the site is on your right. Access to the site is from Rectory Lane. You may need to park in nearby streets and walk across.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

**GREENHAM COMMON, Newbury****27<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

Task: Ragwort pulling.

Leader: David Fiddes 0780 191 7104

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.

**TBA****3<sup>rd</sup> June 2007**

Task: TBA

Leader: Richard Coles 0118 976 0580

Meet at: TBA.

Userbody: TBA

**SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury****10<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

Task: Probably bracken clearance.

Leader: Owen Lewis 07740 766517

Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). See 13<sup>th</sup> May for directions.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

**WILDMOOR, Crowthorne****17<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

Task: Boardwalk building &amp; repairs.

Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528 / 0793 225 8788.

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, &amp; goes into a dip. The entrance to the car park is signed on your left.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

**TBA****24<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

Task: TBA

Leader: TBA

Meet at: TBA.

Userbody: TBA

**Diary Dates****Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> June.** 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>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

**Address for Correspondence:**  
Berkshire Conservation  
Volunteers,  
PO Box 165,  
READING.  
RG1 4LD

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