

### Arborfield – 22<sup>nd</sup> April

Neil Frankum

This task started out as a TBA, but Richard stepped in at the last minute with an additional task at Arborfield. We took a couple of logs from a fallen tree in Pound Copse and planted them as legs for a bench in the park up the road in Arborfield Cross to go along with the four other benches we've installed here in previous years. Alisdair gave a perfect demonstration of chainsaw carpentry cutting the legs level on the first attempt (or it could just have been my good marking out skills...). Richard will be fitting the seat onto the legs at a later date. Miglė added to the European feel of the group by becoming our first ever volunteer from Lithuania.



Above – Richard cutting up logs for the bench legs



Above Peter, Alisdair, Richard & Miglė digging the holes for the bench legs.  
Top – Alisdair's perfect chainsaw carpentry.



Above left - Peter, Sam & Miglè digging the holes for the bench legs. Above right – Richard and Miglè planting the bench legs. Below – Alisdair's perfect chainsaw carpentry.



**Yateley Common – 29<sup>th</sup> April**

Neil Frankum

Today we were resurfacing an additional length of the permissive bridleway along the southern side of the common. We had resurfaced one length of this stretch last August, and today we extended both ends of this to remove the adjacent muddy stretches of the path. We also dug two drainage ditches to help divert water runoff away from the path in order to stop the problem reoccurring.



Right – Aimee, Peter, Amy & Richard shovel hogging into a barrow whilst Nigel, Jon & Sam deposit it on the path in the background.



Above left – Peter & Nigel nailing the edging boards in place. Above middle - Jon & Nigel barrowing hogging whilst Sam spreads it out. Above right – the finished path.



Above – end of task tea break L-R Aimee, Amy, Jon, Sam, Peter, Richard, Nigel, & Vicky

**Clayfield Copse – 6<sup>th</sup> May**

David Fiddes

We worked with Friends of Clayfield Copse to clear a section of ditch alongside the main ride through the wood. This involved clearing brambles and other scrub from the ditch and then digging. The brash and mud were placed on the dead hedge that runs most of the length of the ditch. The task should improve drainage for the path, provide habitat, and dissuade people from straying from the path into the wood.



Above left – Amy. Above middle – toad. Above right – Phil digging the ditch

**Snelsmore Common – 13<sup>th</sup> May**

Neil Frankum



Rain, RAIN, RAIN, and even more **RAIN!!!**

Given the bad weather forecast, Keith had us working close to the compound and shelter. This joint task with the local group was clearing up a lot of logs and branches in the area near to the car park. This was primarily for health and safety reasons, removing as much material as possible that could be used by kids for fire lighting, or building dens. The big logs were stacked, and the brashings burnt. We came to a natural artistic conclusion mid afternoon, so had an early finish!

Left – Amy (in hi viz trousers), André, and some of the locals tending the fire.



Above left – André and a couple of the locals tending the fire at Snelsmore. Above right – Ian, Peter, Aimee, Emma & Charles on the burial mound at Bill Hill.

**Bill Hill – 20<sup>th</sup> May**

**Neil Frankum**

This was our first task at this site adjacent to Downshire Way in Bracknell. The site is a scheduled ancient monument because of the iron age burial mound at the top of the hill. The rest of the site is a beech wood, with a lot of holly and ash on the lower slopes. Our task for the day was to thin out some of the holly on the slope facing Downshire Way. For an urban site it was amazing how few people came past us as we were working. The most obvious people were the two women from the council who turned up hobbling through the undergrowth in high heels after being called out to investigate a car ‘dumped’ on the site. This turned out to be Ian’s council van parked next to where we were working!

**Greenham Common – 27<sup>th</sup> May**

**David Fiddes**



This task was originally intended to be ragwort pulling, but the ragwort wasn't established enough to make gathering worthwhile so we switched to burning small birch trees that had been felled towards the eastern end of the common. In the end it proved not to be a day for pulling ragwort.

Richard and myself left a very damp Reading and were wondering how successful we would be at lighting a fire, but when we arrived at Greenham the rain had stopped and a fire was quickly lit.

This part of the common is managed to provide birch for the steeplechase at Newbury racecourse. There are a succession of compartments that are harvested after three years. The densely packed young birch makes good nesting grounds for nightingales and the older harvested sections provide habitat for nightjars to go hunting for insects. We were clearing the site of the remains of the felled birch. The large trunks were stacked and everything else was burnt on a bonfire.



Right – David tending the fire. Above – Andy adding brushings to the fire



Neil joined us and brought the rain with him. Fortunately the fire was well established and we were able to clear a good area and keep warm, and - if you stood close enough to the fire - dry.

Left – David, Richard & Andy around the large pile of ash that was the result of our efforts to tidy up the cut brushings

**Clayfield Copse – 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

Richard Coles

Everything about this task was "TBA" except me leading. We went to Clayfield Copse in the end, to continue our clearance of a ditch. Many thanks to the Friends of Clayfield Copse for providing this task at short notice - they were there, clearing an invasive weed which came with somebody's dumped garden rubbish, and the two Amy's joined them. Our two D of E's, Joe and Tom, attacked a large tree which had fallen across the path, and after much hard work cut through the trunk so that it could be moved. And in the afternoon, we got to the end of the ditch.

**Snelmore Common – 10<sup>th</sup> June**

Owen Lewis



Amy

Eight of us headed to Snelmore common on a warm, humid and sunny day. We were extending a footpath through a boggy section. This required some levelling of a cross-slope, drainage ditch digging and barrowing and spreading a large amount of gravel. It was hard work in the heat - as I found out when I actually did some work instead of just supervising! Working with the friends of Snelmore group, however, we were able to make rapid progress. By three o'clock we had laid a large section



Phil

of path and were able to head for the local pub feeling well satisfied with our days work. Strangely the Blackbird closed at three, but we did find another very friendly hostelry just outside of Newbury.



Above left – Charles, Richard, Aimee & Amy surfacing the path. Above right – Keith, Sam, & Peter.

**2007 AGM**

The AGM on 4<sup>th</sup> June saw a few changes to the committee. David stood down from the task coordinator role, though he remains on the committee as an ordinary member. Nigel has moved from Social Secretary to take over the Task Coordinator post. We welcome Aimee Dale to the committee as our new Social Secretary.

**2006/7 Annual Report**

# BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS



## Annual Report 2006-7

**Introduction**

Berkshire Conservation Volunteers (BeC) is a voluntary organisation founded in 1975 to carry out practical nature conservation work in and around Berkshire. We are a "Roving" Group - we do not have a site of our own, but work on a wide variety of sites throughout Berkshire and S. Oxfordshire and N. Hampshire, such as nature reserves, common lands, public open spaces, woodlands, heathlands, grasslands, ponds & wetlands.

We go out every Sunday and work a whole day, from about 10 to 4.30 (depending on daylight). We have a van to carry tools and volunteers. The work involves in many different skills including coppicing, hedgelaying, fencing, dead hedging, path work, pond clearance, heathland restoration etc. Anyone can join, no prior knowledge or skills are required, and people of all ages are welcome.

We are affiliated to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, BTCV. We follow BTCV practice for task organisation and methods, and for safety.

This report summarises the group's activities over the period 1st April 2006 – 31st March 2007.

**Socials**

Post task trips to the pub were a regular feature during the year, as were trips to the cinema. We also had a couple of country walks.

**Membership**

By the end of 2006 the group's paid up membership was 36 (an increase on the previous year).

**Task Leaders**

This year's tasks were led by 6 people:  
Richard Coles  
Philip Allen  
Neil Frankum  
Mark Clay  
David Fiddes  
Owen Lewis

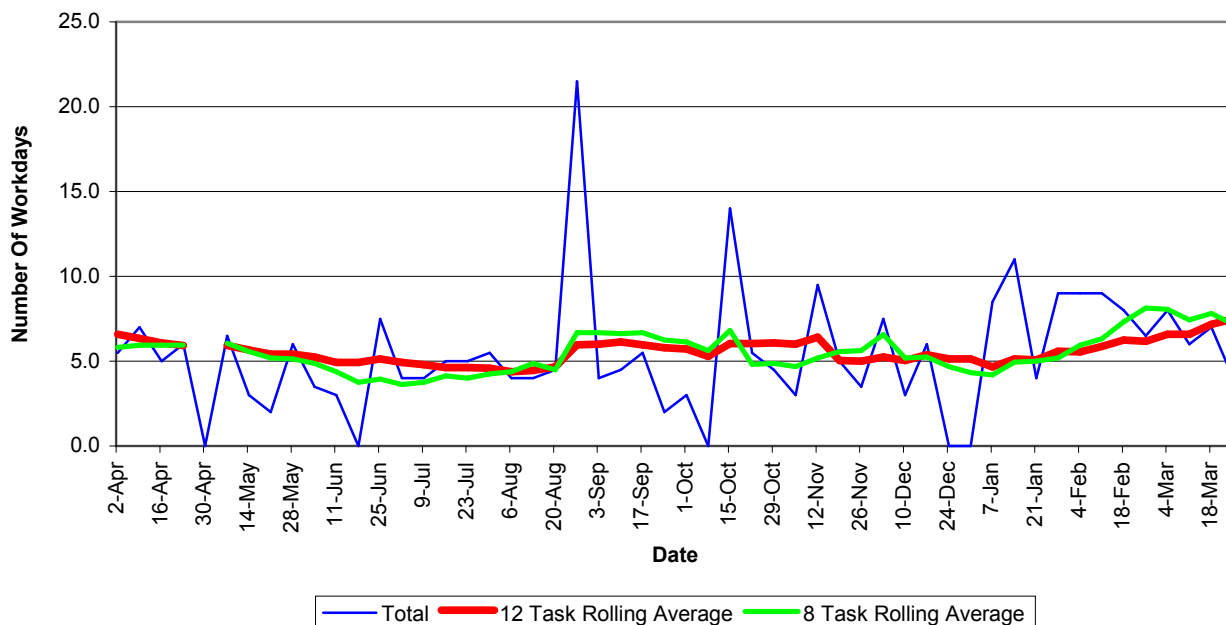
**Committee**

The committee for the year 2006-7 was:  
Richard Coles      Chair & Tools  
Peter Harrison      Treasurer  
Rodney Chapple      Van Admin  
David Fiddes      Task Co-Coordinator  
Neil Frankum      Membership, Newsletter & Website  
Nigel Mason-Flucke      Social Secretary

## Task Attendance

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 we had a total of 62 volunteers out on task. This was significantly up on last year. Top volunteer again was Richard Coles with a total of 44 workdays. The year has shown a similar pattern to last year, with peaks and dips in numbers at similar times to last year, though the rolling average was flatter overall. There were five weekends with no task due to holidays or cancellations.

BeC Task Attendance 2006-07



## Tasks

During the year we carried out a total of 47 tasks at 18 different sites. The total number of workdays was slightly down on last year, though there were two less tasks.

Userbody	Site	No. Of Tasks	No. Of Workdays
West Berkshire District Council	Greenham Common	7	50
West Berkshire District Council	Snelsmore Common	10	45.5
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	Wildmoor	5	34
West Berkshire District Council	Padworth Common	5	29
Hampshire County Council	Yateley Common	4	23
Dorset County Council	Langton Herring	1	21.5
Wokingham District Council	Highwood	1	9.5
Ecchinswell Parish Council	Ecchinswell Village (Digweeds)	1	8.5
Arborfield Parish Council	Pound Copse	2	7.5
Friends Of Clayfield Copse / Reading Borough Council	Clayfield Copse	2	7.5
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	Hayley Green Wood	1	6
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	South Hill Park	1	5.5
Wokingham District Council	Heathlake	2	9
Ecchinswell Parish Council	Ecchinswell Village Pond	1	5.5
Wokingham Without Parish Council	Pinewood	1	4

BBOWT	Aldermaston Gravel Pits	1	2
BBOWT	Decoy Heath	1	7.5
Wokingham District Council	Lavell's Lake	1	7.5
<b>TOTAL:</b>		47	283

## Userbodies

During the year we worked for 10 different userbodies across Berkshire and north Hampshire. There was also a weekend away in Dorset.

Userbody	No. Of Workdays
West Berkshire District Council	124.5
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	54.5
Hampshire County Council	23
Dorset County Council	21.5
Wokingham District Council	17
Ecchinswell Parish Council	14
BBOWT	9.5
Arborfield Parish Council	7.5
FOCC / Reading Borough Council	7.5
Wokingham Without Parish Council	4
	<b>283</b>

## 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 – Fracture

Film about a young public prosecutor doing one final case before selling out and going for the money as a lawyer in private practice. Anthony Hopkins does his usual role of the baddie playing with the mind of the cop.

### Film – 28 Weeks Later

This film portrays England in the aftermath of a plague that has wiped out virtually the entire population. Good film, though I wasn't totally convinced by the zombie like plague victims. It did however sum up the typical US military stereotype of if in doubt drop a bomb on it.

### Film – Zodiac

Contrasting stories of how police and journalists try to track down the 'Zodiac' serial killer.

## Task Details:

**24<sup>th</sup> June – 26<sup>th</sup> August 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 summer 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.

### **YATELEY COMMON, Yateley**

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2007**

Task: Path work.

Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528 / 0793 225 8788

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.

### **SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury**

**8<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

Task: TBA.

Leader: David Fiddes 0780 191 7104

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.

### **TBA**

**15<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

Task: TBA

Leader: TBA

Meet at: TBA.

Userbody: TBA

### **Bill Hill, Bracknell**

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2007**

Task: Holly clearance 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: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528 / 0793 225 8788

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. Best access to the site is to go right at the roundabout into Rectory Lane, then take the second turning on the right into Saffron Road, then right again into Dundas Close.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

### **POUND COPSE, Arborfield**

**29<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

Task: TBA.

Leader: Richard Coles 0118 976 0580

Meet at: 10:00 at Grid Reference 751673. Follow the Shinfield Road (A327) south out of Reading. Cross the M4, pass through Shinfield village, and bear left at the mini-roundabout past the ESSO petrol station. Half a mile after crossing the River Loddon turn right into Greensward lane opposite the signpost to Swallowfield. Pound Copse is 100m on the right.

Userbody: Arborfield Parish Council

### **TBA**

**5<sup>th</sup> August 2007**

Task: TBA

Leader: TBA

Meet at: TBA.

Userbody: TBA

**SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury****12<sup>th</sup> August 2007**

Task: Bracken Bashing.

Leader: Philip Allen 0118 941 0471

Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). See 8<sup>th</sup> July for directions.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

**TBA, Bracknell****19<sup>th</sup> August 2007**

Task: TBA

Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528 / 0793 225 8788

Meet at: TBA.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

**TBA****26<sup>th</sup> August 2007**

Task: TBA

Leader: TBA

Meet at: TBA.

Userbody: TBA

**Diary Dates****Sun 5<sup>th</sup> Aug.** 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>	Nigel Mason-Flucke	(01252) 835919
<b>Membership/Newsletter:</b>	Neil Frankum	(0118) 975 1528 *
<b>Social Secretary</b>	Aimee Dale	
<b>Committee Member</b>	David Fiddes	(0118) 948 2681 *
		* Answerphone available

**Address for Correspondence:**  
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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)**