

Berkshire Conservation Volunteers

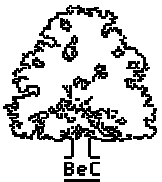
Newsletter No. 191 - September / October 2007



Wildmoor - 17 June

Neil Frankum

This was our fifth and final task replacing the section of boardwalk along the eastern edge of Wildmoor Heath. The old boardwalk had been approaching the end of its useful life, and the support beams were beginning to rot, and would soon have become unsafe. Nice sunny weather meant we made good progress dismantling the last section of the boardwalk and rebuilding a new one in its place.





This should provide a dry path across one of the damp parts of the site for all the people who use the site. It will also stop the erosion caused when everyone tries to avoid the mud and gradually widens the path into a multilane highway!



Left – Richard dismantling the old boardwalk.
 Right – Amy barrowing the new decking planks to the worksite.
 Below left – L-R Peter, Emma, Jon, Amy, Richard, Alisdair.
 Below right – the finished boardwalk.



Greenham Common – 24th June

No Task Report

Snelsmore Common – 8th July

Richard Coles

Today was billed as a path repair task. This turned out to be the destruction of an unofficial mountain bike track built near the sink hole towards the north end of the common. Some enterprising youngsters (one suspects with parental help judging by the standard of the engineering and construction!) had built some jumps and banking on the slope down into the sink hole. The ranger was worried about the damage this might cause and so we removed them.

In the afternoon we joined the local group who were clearing bracken from a clearing across the road.



Richard demolishing the well built BMX jump

A scrape will be made later and if heather and gorse are found the whole area could be restored to heathland. After the local group had left we continued clearing a smaller adjacent clearing.



Above – Peter & Andrea; Above right – Sian & David; Left – Sian; Below – Neil & the head high bracken.



Pound Copse – 29th July

Neil Frankum



The hung up tree

Today's task fell into two halves. Firstly, some of the recent bad weather had left a silver birch tree dangerously hung up over the main path. A bit of chainsaw work and use of the winch made this safe. The second task was barrowing woodchip from a large pile by the entrance to resurface the path that



Richard chainsawing

runs the length of the site. We managed to complete about half of the path.



Above left – Richard winching the trunk. Above middle - The full pond. Above right – the wood chipped path.

Pound Copse – 5th August

Neil Frankum

We had a nice sunny day finishing off woodchipping the path through Pound Copse at Arborfield that we had started the week before. All the recent rain has made quite a difference to the wood. This time last year I was digging a hole at the bottom to try and find water. Standing in the same spot this year and the water would have been above my head!

Right – Emma, Richard & Peter shovelling woodchip.



Yateley Common – 1st July

Neil Frankum



We were supposed to have been resurfacing a section of bridleway today, but due to the weather forecast, the materials had not been delivered to the site. This actually worked in our favour, as the horrible weather forecast meant that not many people turned up, so we probably wouldn't have got the path finished in time. Instead, Vicky got us to install some of the 40 or so waymarking posts that she has got



Above & Left – installed waymarking posts.

to install along the public rights of way across the site. We installed four of these posts and attached appropriate waymarking signs. We also cleared back encroaching undergrowth on three of the paths to make them passable. And best of all, the abysmal weather forecast failed to materialise until we were sitting in the van heading home!

Snelsmore Common – 12th August

Neil Frankum



Above left – Phil, Peter, Richard & Aimee installing the drainage pipe across the path.
Above right – the resurfaced section of path.



This task had been billed as a bracken clearing task. However, the recent bad weather made Keith decide to get us repairing flood damage and putting in measures to mitigate future damage. One of the main paths across the common from the car park runs up a slight slope. During the recent rains



Above left – Phil & Aimee look on as Richard mattocks out the second drainage ditch.

Above right – Phil & Richard collecting sand to bed the pipe in.

this had become a bit of a stream, and the water flowing down it had washed away a lot of the hogging surface. We spent the day resurfacing this section of path, and installing two French drains across the path to divert any future rainfall away from the path to prevent a recurrence of the



Above left – Phil digging the trench. Above middle – The drain pipe in place. Above right – Phil levelling out the gravel back fill.

A perforated pipe was then installed in the bottom of the trench, and the trench backfilled with shingle that would allow any water to percolate through into the pipe which then discharged into an adjacent seasonal pond. Funniest moment was watching a Dachshund trying to jump the trench. Quite hard when you've only got short legs! We also had to dodge the hornets that seemed to have taken a liking to the tree next to where we were working.



Above the finished French drain.

No Task – 15th July

Bill Hill – 22nd July

Neil Frankum



Today's task was predominantly trimming back trees & undergrowth to improve access & visibility along the paths across part of the site. There was a bit of added excitement as a passer by called out the fire brigade to put out our kettle!

Left Richard using the pole saw to trim back tree branches as Alisdair tidies up the cut brushings.

Goodbye #1

As I mentioned on task a few weeks ago I have got a new job and will be working in Hounslow. I've decided to move over there to save commuting. This means I won't be able to make it out on task much if at all in the future. Perhaps you could put a note in the newsletter saying thanks to everyone for making me welcome in the group and wish everyone luck in the future. – Owen

Goodbye #2

Owen is not the only one moving to west London, as Amy has also gone that way. We wish her the best in her new job trying to convince Londoners to get out of their cars and onto their bikes.

Leaders

We're temporarily down to four leaders, so we could do with a few more people to volunteer to lead task & drive the van to spread the workload out a bit more. If you fancy having a go, get in touch with one of the committee and we'll let you know what's involved.

Social - Nightjar Walk 21st June

Nigel, Aimee & Charles at Castle Bottom NNR

This evening's social started with a meal in the pub in Yateley. It was tipping down with rain outside, so there was a possibility that we were going to end up here all night. However, just as we were finishing the meal the sun came out and the rain stopped. Perfect timing for the move up the road to Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve. There were at least four Nightjars – we briefly saw three at once with another one calling behind us when we were standing on the footpath in the northeastern corner of the site just before

10pm. Two of them were then circling overhead for 10 or 15 minutes giving us a much better view than we got when we did the same last year. There was also a woodcock flying back and forth all evening. Unfortunately it wasn't the right conditions for glowworms, which we only saw one of, right next to the boardwalk. Other wildlife included: Roe Deer, Fox, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Green Woodpecker, 2 species of bat (I'm guessing Pipistrelle & Noctule from size & behaviour). It started raining again just as we were climbing into the cars at the end. Perfect timing!

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.

Task Details:**26th August – 28th October 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.

Where the leader is 'TBA' look out for the EMail updates letting you know who is going to be leading that task.

NO TASK**26th August 2007**

Due to the normal (cheap!) accommodation being closed for refurbishment this year, we've been unable to organise the usual dry stone walling trip to Dorset. Hopefully this will return next year. As a result you get a weekend off over the Bank Holiday!

POUND COPSE, Arborfield**2nd September 2007**

Task: Bramble removal and footpath work.

Leader: Richard Coles 0118 976 0580

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

Userbody: Arborfield Parish Council

HIGHWOOD, Woodley**9th September 2007**

Task: Scrub bashing.

Leader: Nigel Mason-Flucke 01252 835919

Meet at: 10-15am at the reserve on Kingfisher Drive, Woodley (Grid reference SU753725). Heading out of Reading on the Wokingham Road, turn left at the Three Tuns traffic lights. At the mini roundabout turn right into Woodlands Avenue, and then first right into Fairwater Drive. Kingfisher Drive is the first on the right.

Userbody: Wokingham District Council.

LONGHILL PARK, Bracknell**16th September 2007**

Task: Woodland work. This is our first ever task at this site to the northeast of Bracknell.

Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528 / 0793 225 8788

Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU894694) on Longhill Road, Winkfield, Bracknell.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury**23rd September 2007**

Task: Scrub bashing/or footpath repair.

Leader: Philip Allen 0118 941 0471

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.

PADWORTH COMMON**30th September 2007**

Task: Scrub bashing.

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.

ECCHINSWELL VILLAGE POND

7th October 2007

Task: Controlling the reeds invading the village pond.

Leader: TBA

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 Ecchinswell. In Ecchinswell turn right, drive north past the church, & the pond is on the right in about ½ mile.

Userbody: Ecchinswell Parish Council.

SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury

14th October 2007

Task: Scrub bashing.

Leader: Philip Allen 0118 941 0471

Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). See 23rd September for directions.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

HEATHLAKE, Crowthorne

21st October 2007

Task: Footpath construction (weather permitting).

Leader: Philip Allen 0118 941 0471

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.

PADWORTH COMMON

28th October 2007

Task: Scrub bashing.

Leader: TBA

Meet at: 10-15am at the car park (Grid Ref SU619648). See 30th September for directions.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

Diary Dates

Sun 7th Oct. 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

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Membership/Newsletter:	Neil Frankum	(0118) 975 1528 *	
Social Secretary	Aimee Dale		
Committee Member	David Fiddes	(0118) 948 2681 *	
		* 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.

www.berkshire-conservation-volunteers.org.uk