



Snelsmore Common – 11th November

Today's task was the usual joint task with the local group. We spent the day tackling the birch regrowth on the central heathland area of the site. 'Unfortunately' I had a sprained wrist, so couldn't actually do any of the mattocking up of the tree roots, and had to restrict myself to dragging the cut brushings to the fire on the main path. A fair bit of standing around chatting was also done (as can be seen from the photos!). After having an end of task tea break whilst letting the fire burn down, a bowser of water was poured over it to fully douse it before we left site. This was Aimee's first task as leader, and well led it was too!

Top – end of task tea break as the fire is doused.

Right – Peter & Jon tackling one of the bigger birch trees.

Below - Digging up birch trees. L-R: Richard, Sarah, Rodney, Aimee, Jon, Peter, Freya.

Neil Frankum





Above – tending the fire. Above left – L-R:Rodney, Jon, Richard, Freya, Aimee, & Peter discussing the task
Left – Jon, Aimee, & Richard doing more discussing of the task.
Below – L-R: Rodney, Peter, Richard, Jon, Aimee, Freya doing yet more discussing of the task!



Quintilis – 4th November

Neil Frankum



Above – Sarah, Peter & Richard cutting rhododendron & putting it on the fire.

This was the first time I had worked at this site in the southwest corner of Bracknell, though Richard thought we had worked here several years ago. The task was clearing a stand of fairly big rhododendron, both to reduce the amount of this non-native invader, and to stop it encroaching on the main path through the site. We soon had a towering inferno of a bonfire to consume the majority of the cut rhododendron, though some of the

bigger logs were taken away as they wouldn't burn down in time. We finished off chatting around the fire into the descending gloom of evening, before transferring a significant proportion of the neighbouring stream onto the fire to make well and truly sure that it was out before we left the site.



Above left – bonfire. Above middle – Peter & Richard. Above right – the big pile of ash after the fire was doused.

Ecchinswell Village Pond – 7th October

No task report.

Jock's Copse – 2nd December

Neil Frankum



I arrived just before lunch to find everyone hard at work copping hazel trees at the eastern end of this long narrow wood near Binfield in the north of Bracknell. I think this may have been the first time we've



Worked on this site, and its certainly the first time I've worked here. The council have a long term plan to gradually reintroduce a coppicing regime to the wood. The weather was a bit variable, from cold rain and a howling gale to sunshine and blue skies in the space of about 10 minutes. However the rain only lasted about 15 minutes and the rest of the day was nicer. We're back here in the new year for more...



Richard, Marie-Anne, and Aimee coppicing one of the larger clumps of hazel.

Padworth Common – 25th November

Neil Frankum

Rodney & I arrived at lunchtime. I decided to have my lunch before starting, but on opening my rucksack, remembered that my lunch was still in the car! As I couldn't be bothered to walk back, I decided to get stuck in, chopping down birch trees on the edge of the cleared area. We were extending the open heathland area to the south of the road. Today's area was slightly to the west of where we've been working this year. Right – Nigel, Peter, & Hannah next to the pile of cut brushings.



Snelsmore Common – 14th October

No task report.

Yateley Common – 9th December

Neil Frankum



Above and right – the muddy bridleway before we started.

For the second time in as many weeks I received an EMail from Peter containing a weather forecast. Fortunately this week's forecast wasn't as accurate as the previous one, and we actually had a relatively nice day, with only the occasional light shower.



Above – Jon, Rodney & Richard clearing mud from the path.

As Vicky was off leading a guided walk to start with, we had the fun of following a map to find the worksite. However, when we got there it was very obvious where we were working, as we were faced with a waterlogged mud bath that should have been a nice dry bridleway. We started off by digging a few drainage channels to allow the worst of the water and muddy slurry to drain away. On one channel I actually created a small stream until the 'pond' in the middle of the path had drained. Most of the rest of the morning was then spent shovelling off the layer of mud resulting from years of leaf litter falling on the path and being trampled by horses' hooves.



I cut some birch to provide the base for the new path. When the mud was cleared we staked out the new edging boards at the regulation 3m width. Over lunch there was some discussion about whether to barrow the gravel and hogging, as the



Above - Mud!

Below – lunch break. L-R: Nigel, Jon & Vicky

tractor couldn't get it any closer to the worksite, but without much persuasion we accepted Vicky's offer to go and fetch the Brava, and use it as a motorised wheelbarrow. So after lunch, Richard & Jon shovelled gravel and hogging into the Brava, whilst Nigel & I spread it all out on the path and tamped it all down, and trimmed up the tops of the stakes. Unfortunately, the short days at this time of year, and the amount of mud we had had to clear meant that darkness overtook us, and we didn't get the hogging top layer finished before we got to the point where we couldn't see what we were doing, & had to stop.





Above left - staking out the edging boards. Above right - putting down the brushings and gravel base layer.
Below - Richard & Jon shovelling gravel into the Brava.



Below left - Vicky delivering the next load of gravel. Below right - transferring hogging from the trailer to the Brava.



Heathlake – 21st October, Padworth Common – 28th October

No task report.

Decoy Heath – 18th November

Richard Coles

I was the only one to turn up today. Since the weather was so awful, we (ranger and I) walked

around the reserve to look at the ponds and then went home. He can't treat stumps with herbicide when it's raining anyway. Task was effectively cancelled by mutual agreement. On the way home the weather got worse. I was disappointed to have to cancel, but I can't blame anyone for staying in the warm. It was ****ing cold.

Neil – I turned up about 10 minutes after the task had been abandoned and Richard and the ranger had gone home. I walked round the site, got very wet & very cold, and went home (secretly glad that I didn't have to spend the whole day out in the cold wet rain!). It was worth noting that Peter sent me an EMail on the Saturday, including a weather forecast and a comment, that after reading the forecast I would be "wishing for a long lie-in tomorrow morning"!!!

50th Newsletter

Whilst sorting out some old newsletters, I found a copy of the first newsletter I edited, and realised that this issue is now the fiftieth issue that I have edited. A lot more issues than I thought I'd do when I volunteered to do the job! The newsletter has changed from a text task programme to an electronic full colour version with pictures over this time. One thing that hasn't changed is the challenge of getting copy. So get typing, as it would be nice to have a few more task reports etc from other people again! Or I'll have to resort to my previous tactic of sitting you down in the pub after task, with a notepad & pen in front of you, & not letting you go until a report has been written...

Congratulations



David Fraser Fiddes, with parents Milada and David

Congratulations to David and Milada Fiddes on the birth of their son, David Fraser Fiddes. Born at 7:20am on 28th August (a mere 15 days overdue), and weighing in at a healthy 10 lbs 1 oz.

Congratulations also go to former member Ben Virgo who got engaged a few weeks ago to girlfriend Jingle Li. Ben is now living and working in Guangzhou, China.

And slightly belated congratulations to former member (and committee member / task leader) Richard Wilson who got engaged to girlfriend Naomi Cordiner earlier this year.

Membership

It's that time of year again where I ask you all to part with a nice crisp fiver for your membership subscription for 2008. Membership form attached.

Moving On

Andy Phillips is moving on from his role of ranger at Greenham Common. A big thankyou to him for all the nice tasks he's given us on the site over the last few years. However, he's not going far as he's moving on to become Berkshire Reserves Officer for BBOWT, so hopefully we'll still see him on task occasionally in the new year, just on a different site! We wish him well in his new job!

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

Cinema – Beowulf

This was an animated fantasy film based on mythology. The CGI graphics were good, and the film was well put together. The only thing that made it fail for me was the lead character's accent, which didn't really fit with the rest of the film.

Cinema – Eastern Promises

The story of a doctor trying to trace the relatives of a baby born on her shift, after the mother died in childbirth. This leads her into a web of Russian gangsters, with interesting results.

Cinema – The Kingdom

Terrorism in Saudi Arabia is quite a hot topic. This film tells the story of an FBI investigation into the suicide bombing of an American contractor's living compound in the country. Well filmed, though the presence of a female FBI agent in Saudi Arabia did stretch the believability of the story.

Task Details: 30th December 2007 – 24th February 2008

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.

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

SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury**30th December 2007**

Task: Scrub bashing.

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.

HAPPY NEW YEAR**WILDMOOR, Crowthorne****6th January 2008**

Task: Scrub clearance.

Leader: Nigel Mason-Flucke 01252 835919

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.

SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury**13th January 2008**

Task: Scrub clearance.

Leader: Richard Coles 0118 976 0580 (daytime)

Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). See 30th December for directions.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

LONGHILL PARK, BRACKNELL**20th January 2008**

Task: Hedge clearance.

Leader: Peter Harrison 0118 950 9276

Meet at: 10:15 in the car park on Longhill Road, Winkfield, Bracknell (Grid Ref: SU894694). Heading east from Bracknell along the A329 you come to a roundabout with the B3430. Turn left here into Longhill Road. The car park is on the left in about 500m.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

JOCK'S COPSE, BRACKNELL**27th January 2008**

Task: Coppicing.

Leader: Richard Coles 0118 976 0580 (daytime)

Meet at: 10:15 in the Jock's Lane Recreation Ground car park on Jocks Lane, Bracknell (Grid Ref: SU857704). Heading north out of Bracknell on the B3018, Jock's Lane is on the left.

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

PADWORTH COMMON

3rd February 2008

Task: Scrub clearance.

Leader: Nigel Mason-Flucke 01252 835919

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

10th February 2008

Task: Scrub bashing.

Leader: Richard Coles 0118 976 0580 (daytime)

Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). See 30th December for directions.

Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

YATELEY COMMON, Yateley

17th February 2008

Task: Footpath work.

Leader: Aimee Dale 0796 878 7080

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

Userbody: Hampshire County Council.

TEMPLE COPSE, BRACKNELL

24th February 2008

Task: Coppicing.

Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528 / 0793 225 8788

Meet at: 10:15am at Temple Copse (Grid ref: SU854703). From the Coppid Beech roundabout on the A329(M), head east on the B3408. Go straight across the roundabout and traffic lights. At next roundabout take 2nd exit signed "Golf Centre". Take the 2nd right into Boltons Lane. Take 1st right into Dunford Place, and follow this all the way to the top where you will come to a t-junction. The site is straight ahead. Park considerately!

Userbody: Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

Diary Dates

Sun 10th 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.

BeC Contacts

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|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Chair & Tools: | Richard Coles | (0118) 976 0580 | Address for Correspondence: Berkshire Conservation Volunteers, PO Box 165, READING. RG1 4LD |
| Treasurer: | Peter Harrison | (0118) 950 9276 | |
| Van Admin: | Rodney Chapple | (0118) 986 4438 | |
| Task Co-Coordinator: | Nigel Mason-Flucke | (01252) 835919 | |
| Membership/Newsletter: | Neil Frankum | (0118) 975 1528 * | |
| Social Secretary | Aimee Dale | 0118 975 8253 | |
| Committee Member | David Fiddes | (0118) 948 2681 * | |
| | | * Answerphone | |

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