
Task Reports 2002 October (Part 1)

6 October – Inkpen Common – Neil Frankum (Photos by Maurice Budden)

This was the group's first task at this site for quite a few years. The task was to install a post and wire fence around a small area of woodland on the edge of the heathland. The purpose of the fence is to keep the horses that graze the heathland out of the area whilst it is coppiced later in the year, so that the regrowth has a chance to grow without being eaten. Unfortunately the ground was rather stony, so the holes for the main straining posts took quite a while to dig, especially as they had to be three feet deep to ensure the posts were sturdy enough to take the strain of the wire. After much hacking away with spades and crowbars, and with a certain amount of grovelling around on the floor with your arm down the hole trying to fish out soil, the holes were dug. Straining posts were then put in place and soil tamped into place around them. After lunch our carpentry skills came to the fore as we carved holes for the struts that help to take the strain. The intermediate posts were knocked in, and as the end was in sight and it was still nice and sunny we worked on a lot later than normal to finish the job. Nigel and I then did a pub crawl to find a pub that was actually open, which we eventually did, and the Halfway House (not surprisingly halfway between Hungerford and Newbury) did us a nice meal to finish off the day.



It takes a lot of hard work and grovelling around on the floor to get the loose earth out from the bottom of a three foot deep hole. Unfortunately my arms were the only ones long enough to mange!

Fixing a strut to the straining post so that it can take the strain of the wire.



Installing the intermediate posts through the woodland.



Using monkey strainers to tension up the three stands of wire that form the fence.

13 October – Ecchinswell Village Pond – Neil Frankum

Our annual pond clearance task saw the arrival of autumn with a vengeance. However, after a few hours of standing knee deep in a pond with your feet stuck in the mud, the pouring rain doesn't seem quite so bad. At least it wasn't cold as well! Seven of us were crazy enough to come out despite the rain, and were joined by six locals for part of the day. Ian, the councillor was pleased with the finished result as were the pair of ducks who seemed to enjoy all the 'food' we had stirred up from the bottom. The day finished with a quick half in the pub.



