
Task Reports 2003 January

5 January – Warburg – Laurence Herniman

A frosty cold (-9°C at the reserve) day on the first task of the new year meant that the van had to be scraped and jump started, but Peter to his credit waited at the station until a rather late lift arrived. At least we were unaffected by the floods. Nine of us in all turned up to meet the Bix warden Giles, who led us up the hill to a sycamore coppice. Alisdair finally had the bonfire established just before lunch. This was fed with the thin stuff, with the rest being stacked. We were forced to leave before the light failed as this is one of the quiet sites far from traffic. We will be happy to return here on March 2nd.

12 January – Clayfield Copse – David Fiddes

Eighteen BEC and GO Reading volunteers turned out at Clayfield copse to clear sycamore and do some coppicing.

Richard used the chainsaw to fell four large sycamores around the pit. He had a small group of helpers on lookout and clearing up the logs so that they can be dragged out of the wood later in the year.

The rest of the group coppiced along the main drive, repairing and extending the dead hedge. The good turn out meant that the task was successfully completed and the group was able to retire to the Gardeners Arms in good time!



Peter and Richard clearing up one of the large felled sycamores. The dead hedge during construction.



Neil and Hannah constructing an extension to the dead hedge.

19 January – Moor Copse – Neil Frankum (Photos by Maurice Budden)

Last Sunday saw us back at Moor Copse for the first time in many years. This was probably the most physical task we have done for a while, but amazingly 12 tonnes of hogging and sand had been moved by 2pm to resurface part of the main access track that was getting rather rutted.



Neil with one of the first barrowloads of hogging.



Richard & Peter with a much smaller pile a few hours later.



Barrowing along the track, whilst Richard used the compactor to flatten the hogging into all the holes.



The two Richards putting in the finishing touches, whilst the others admire our handywork.

26 January – Hook Common – Neil Frankum (with additional photos by David Fiddes)



Above - Enjoying our baked spuds and toasted marshmallows at the end of the day. Below - John using the axe to fell one of the birch trees.



This turned out to be a bit of a mega-task, as there were actually three groups (BeC, BCV, and HWT's local group) working on the site today, with a total of over thirty people. The locals started on the north side of the open area where we had worked last month, and Basingstoke and ourselves got stuck into the southern edge of the area. Birch trees were soon being chopped, dragged, and devoured on the large bonfire we had going. The Hampshire Wildlife Trust owns or leases a total of 400 acres of heathland here and at the adjacent Bartley Heath. On Hook Common the aim is to clear approximately 25 acres of birch trees this year to allow the original heathland vegetation to recover to its former state. Most of the work is going to be done by Contractors with chainsaws. When the main clearance has been done, some of the trees along the roadsides will be removed to open up views across the site. The fire enabled us to finish the day off with baked spuds and toasted marshmallows.



Above left – Neil dragging a tree to the fire. Above right – June helping Laurence to fell a birch tree.
Below - Alisdair and Amanda putting the brushings on the fire. Bottom - The view across Hook Common.

