



BERKSHIRE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS



Newsletter no. 172

June / July 2004

Task Reports

2nd April – Yateley Common – Neil Frankum (Photos – Neil Frankum & Maurice Budden)



Today's task was installing replacement wooden bollards along the side of the common, to prevent vehicles driving across the delicate heathland areas. The job involved removing the remains of some existing bollards which had virtually rotted away. Then digging holes deep enough to bury at least two foot of the posts into the ground. Several 6" nails were partially hammered into the bottom of the posts to make them harder to pull out of the ground. The soil was then tamped back in place to produce a suitably car proof barrier. Vicky was going to come back later in the week to trim all the posts to the same length with her chainsaw, to put the finishing touches to the job. I can't remember the final tally, but it was somewhere around 20 posts. Lots of positive comments from the neighbours, which was nice.





18th April – Snelsmore Common – Neil Frankum

It started raining as I left home, and got heavier and heavier as I drove west along the M4. I arrived on site to find everyone except Richard and Maurice huddling in the van having a very early lunch. After food, we decided that the rain wasn't going to stop, so went out and flattened the selected area of bramble. Attempts to light a bonfire sort of succeeded as we managed to get smoke and flames, but it seemed totally incapable of actually burning very much of the cut bramble.

25th April – Clayfield Copse – Neil Frankum

After last week's torrential rain, this Sunday was gorgeously sunny. We were doing path work in the dip at the north east corner of Clayfield Copse. The job involved putting in steps along the path, to prevent erosion, moving some of the logs to edge the path and try and steer people away from trampling on the nice display of bluebells, and surfacing the path with woodchip. A Red Kite, green Woodpecker, and several butterflies flew past whilst we worked. Another task where we received lots of positive comments from the locals out for a Sunday walk.





2nd May - Dinton Pastures - Revetment Building – Richard Coles

Bank Holiday Sunday saw us building more revetments by the banks of the lake, to halt wave erosion, by driving stakes into the lake bed and nailing on telegraph poles. The fun bit is manhandling one telegraph pole on top of another before staking them, but at least the water had warmed up and we had waders. In the afternoon, Philip built his own revetment with willow stakes and branches along a difficult bit of bank, giving the appearance of a strange aquatic creature building its nest. We were working next to a busy path this time - a passing Labrador darted in without warning and scooped my sandwiches. After lunch, we started backfilling with soil brought in a tractor's bucket, but had to stop because so many people were out enjoying the warm sunshine that Dave couldn't get the tractor through. So we adjourned to the pub.

9th May Pound Copse Arborfield – Richard Coles

We don't usually go to Pound Copse at this time of year, and the bluebells were out and putting on a fine display. A local tree surgeon had delivered an impressive pile of woodchip, but his chipper must be on its last legs because much of it was undigested branches, big fronds of *Leylandii* and small logs. There wasn't enough to finish the path, but we reached the pond, so it won't be much trouble to finish the job from the other end of the wood in the summer.

16th May Snelsmore Common – Richard Coles

It wasn't raining at Snelsmore! And we didn't need waders! And we didn't need a bonfire to keep warm, because anyway we were scraping mud off a path on a hot sunny day, ready for 18 office workers from Vodafone to lay down 40 tons of gravel later in the week. Not any old gravel, either, because it's a SSSI and the gravel has to be geologically correct, so it has to be brought from Greenham Common which is similar. The Warden timed it right because the mud was damp enough to dig up easily, but not too wet so it was sloppy and stuck to your shovel. Sorry to go on about mud, but we did shift quite a lot of it.

New Leader

Thanks go to Owen Lewis who has volunteered to join the band of people willing to lead tasks. Come along to support him on his first task as leader at Yateley Common on 13th June. If anyone else wants to have a go at leading have a chat to one of the committee.

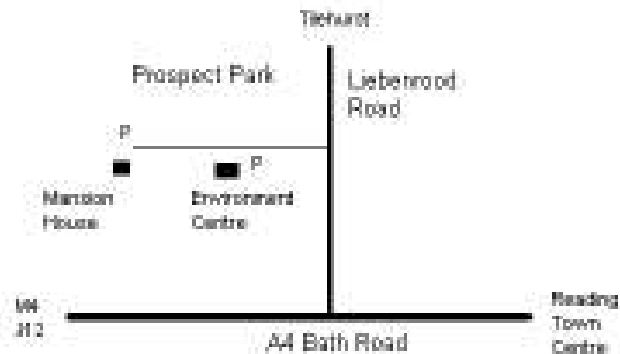
AGM

Yes it's that time of year again when everybody runs away and hides from the current committee in case they get 'persuaded' to help out with the running of the group. If you don't actually need much persuasion, and want to volunteer to help out with the running of the group then let one of the committee know. On a more general note, we are always on the lookout for anyone wanting / able to lead tasks and / or drive the van. Again let one of the committee know if you are interested.

Date: Monday 7th June
Time: 7-45pm
Venue: The Environment Centre,
 Prospect Park, Off
 Liebenrood Road, Reading.

Agenda

1. Officers Reports
2. Election Of Committee
3. AOB
4. Adjourn to pub (Mansion House).



Congratulations

Congratulations go to Alisdair, who has passed his chainsaw exam for logging and stumping trees. We've now got two people qualified to come along and do the hard work of tidying up all those tree stumps and big logs following our winter coppicing tasks!

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.

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: 30th May – 25th July 2004

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 Caversham Court 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, and 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 usually 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.

GREENHAM COMMON, Newbury**30th May 2004**

Task: TBA. Great chance to see how a cold war cruise missile base is being returned to nature.
 Leader: Mark Clay 07810 838916
 Meet at: 10:15 at the site. This is a LARGE site, so contact Mark for details if you are coming.
 Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury**6th June 2004**

Task: Bracken bashing / path maintenance. Wellies a good idea if it's been raining!
 Leader: Laurence Herniman 0118 954 9620
 Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). Snelsmore Common country park can be found north of Newbury and is located 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.

YATELEY COMMON, Yateley**13th June 2004**

Task: Footpath work. This is Owen's first outing as task leader, so plenty of support wanted!
 Leader: Owen Lewis 0118 926 4007
 Meet at: 10:15 at Wyndhams car park off Cricket Hill lane in Yateley (Grid ref: SU821596). If you're coming from Reading, then you need to come down the A327 and take the B3272 left towards Eversley and Yateley. Once in Yateley, turn right at the second roundabout (just after the Royal Oak pub and signposted to Fleet) into Cricket Hill Lane. You will go past the Cricketers pub on the right and a right hand turning into Handford Lane. Shortly after this on the left is the entrance to the car park, just before a phone box. It is not well signposted and very easy to miss so keep your eyes open!
 Userbody: Hampshire County Council.

GREENHAM COMMON, Newbury**20th June 2004**

Task: TBA. Great chance to see how a cold war cruise missile base is being returned to nature. Joint task with Friends Of Greenham Common.
 Leader: Philip Allen 0118 941 0471
 Meet at: 10:15 at the site. This is a LARGE site, so contact Philip for details if you are coming.
 Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

SNELSMORE COMMON, Newbury**27th June 2004**

Task: Bracken bashing / path maintenance. Wellies a good idea if it's been raining!
 Leader: Laurence Herniman 0118 954 9620
 Meet at: 10:15 at the site (Grid Ref SU463710). Snelsmore Common country park can be found north of Newbury and is located 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**4th July 2004**

Task: Bracken clearance.
 Leader: Neil Frankum 0118 975 1528
 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.

BEALE WILDLIFE PARK, Lower Basildon**11th July 2004**

Task: Thistle pulling.
 Leader: David Fiddes 0118 950 0735
 Meet at: 10-15am at the main car park. Take A329 west from Pangbourne. Leave the village passing under the railway bridge towards Lower Basildon. Look for signs to the park entrance, which is on your right about a mile and a half after leaving Pangbourne. Look out for the arrows from the car park if you can't see the van, as we could be working further along near Church Farm, or down by the river.
 Userbody: Child Beale Trust

GREENHAM COMMON, Newbury**18th July 2004**

Task: TBA. Great chance to see how a cold war cruise missile base is being returned to nature.
 Leader: Nigel Mason-Fluke 0118 984 4177
 Meet at: 10:15 at the site. This is a LARGE site, so contact Nigel for details if you are coming.
 Userbody: West Berkshire District Council.

KINGWOOD COMMON,**25th July 2004**

Task: Heathland management. This is possibly a new site for BeC. We certainly haven't been here in my time in the group.
 Leader: Mark Clay 07810 838916
 Meet at: 10:15 at the site. Meet immediately south of Great Davids at ref. SU 696829 From Reading take B481 north. Just after Sonning Common (at the top of the 1st hill) fork L towards Stoke Row. At second junction turn R but go to left of Unicorn pub down Colemore Lane. Follow lane for 1km and park on left.
 Userbody: BBOWT.

Diary Dates

TBA Committee Mtg 7-45pm. The Land's End, Hurst. All welcome.
Mon 5th July. Newsletter copy date. Any (printable!) contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. Any items for inclusion in the next newsletter should be sent to the P.O. Box on or preferably before this date.
TBA Please contact Richard Coles for dates of tools evenings.

BeC Contacts

Chair & Tools:	Richard Coles	(0118) 976 0580
Treasurer:	Philip Allen	(0118) 941 0471 *
Van Admin:	Rodney Chapple	(0118) 986 4438
Task Co-Coordinator:	Laurence Herniman	(0118) 954 9620 *
Membership & Newsletter:	Neil Frankum	(0118) 975 1528 *
Social Secretary	David Fiddes	(0118) 950 0735
Committee Member	Peter Harrison	

* Answerphone available

Address for Correspondence: Berkshire Conservation Volunteers, PO Box 165,
 Reading, Berkshire, RG6 4LD

Email: membership@berkshire-conservation-volunteers.org.uk

MOBILE: We now have a mobile phone for use on task – 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 **0780 3360654**. **NB:** this phone will only be switched on during tasks.

www.berkshire-conservation-volunteers.org.uk
