



# Newsletter

Bracknell Conservation Volunteers

Newsletter No. 14

1 March 2017

## What we've been doing

**28 February 2017**

**Horseshoe Lake**

**Leader: Jon Munday**

**BFC ranger: Richard Westwood**

This was a continuation of work from the previous visit. We cleared small trees and scrub (oak, willow, hawthorn and blackthorn) from the meadow area and burned cleared material on a fire. The weather started off surprisingly sunny and warm for February, but became overcast later, with a cold wind.

Early arrivals in the car park had a wonderful view of at least 2 buzzards (possibly 3) circling above us, "mewing" loudly and lit up by the sun.

Nine volunteers were present.

### *Previous visits*

BCV last worked at Horseshoe Lake on 27 September 2016. The group cleared small oak, silver birch, willow, blackthorn, alder and hawthorn scrub from the meadow.

### *Horseshoe Lake*

The Horseshoe Lake site covers about 22 acres. The lake is named after the horseshoe-shaped island. It was once a working gravel pit, which has since been flooded. The site is in the Blackwater Valley, an ecologically important area of wetlands.

A range of species of birds are seen on the site. Barn owls are known to live here. The barn owl is a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is listed on the local [Biodiversity Action Plan](#). The site is also important for dragonflies, butterflies and other insects. There is a wide range of habitats, including open water, marginal shallows, shingle, bare ground, rough grassland and patches of developing scrub. Cattle are grazed on the site at some times of the year.

See: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/horseshoe-lake.pdf>

## Coming up next

**7 March 2017**

**Lily Hill Park**

Scrub clearance in Starch Copse

**NB:** park at Running Horse car park

## Christmas outing/bushcraft activities

BCV Christmas Outing will be on 14 March 2017. Activities will include wood whittling, fire lighting, baking bread over a campfire (including lunch) and setting up tarpaulins and hammocks. The day will be spent at Hayley Green woods, which has the advantage of toilets being available at Westmorland Park.

## Spring flowers

The first flowers are out. Hazel and alder catkins are fully open, releasing clouds of pollen. These are wind-pollinated flowers, so do not need insect pollinators.

The lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*) opens its small yellow flowers on sunny days. It is in fact a small buttercup, with about 8-12 petals on each flower. The Latin name references the fig (*Ficus*) because lesser celandine was reputed to be effective in treating piles (haemorrhoids), which was also known as "the fig". Don't try it, it's almost certainly poisonous.

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/species/lesser-celandine>

Winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) is another buttercup relative. Intense yellow flowers look as if they are surrounded by a "ruff" of leaves. This is not a native plant, but is common in gardens and often naturalised.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eranthis\\_hyemalis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eranthis_hyemalis)

## Conservation trivia

"Coalminer's coppice" is a form of tree cropping which you will only see in woodland in former mining areas, chiefly Yorkshire and Derbyshire. It dates from miners's strikes in the 1980s and earlier, when miners collected wood from local woodland. Miners hew coal on their knees, so they coppiced trees at the same height, leaving an unusual form of "stubs" of trunks.

<http://www.heritagewoodsonline.co.uk/map/002/002.html>

### Reference

Rotherham ID *Ancient Woodland, History, Industry and Crafts* Shire Publications 2013

## What's on

### ***Warfield Environment Group***

Big Spring Clean at Larks Hill (litter picking)

Saturday 4 March 2017                      10:30 – 12:00

Meet at Larks Hill car park

### ***Bracknell Forest Society***

"The Bracknell Town Regeneration", talk by Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker, executive member for economic development and regeneration.

Bracknell Rugby Club                      Lily Hill Drive, RG12 2UG

Friday 10 March 2017                      20:00

All welcome, bar and raffle.

### ***Berkshire Conservation Volunteers***

Path clearance at Wildmoor    Wildmoor car park (off Sandhurst Road)

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=484149&Y=163022&A=Y&Z=110&ax=483847&ay=163037>

Sunday 12 March 2017                      meet at 10.15

Leader:                      Neil Frankum 0793 225 8788

### ***South Hill Park***

Community Litter Pick

Thursday 23 March 2017                      10:00-11:00

Meet at courtyard in front of SHP reception, Ringmead, Bracknell RG12 7PA

### ***Contact Bracknell Conservation Volunteers***

On-site mobile phone: **07986 707 448**

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