



Newsletter

Bracknell Conservation Volunteers

Newsletter No. 61

27 February 2018

What we've been doing

27 February 2018

Popes Meadow

Leader: Richard Elsbury

Ranger: Luke Dawson

One group continued the hedge laying task from last visit. Other volunteers cleared dogwood and brambles from the site we had started work on previously. Some volunteers helped to remove brambles and holly from around oak trees. Material left from last visit and cut today was burnt on a bonfire.

The weather was very cold but mostly sunny, with a few quite heavy snow showers, including one shower exactly at lunch time! We all sat around the bonfire to keep warm. Despite the cold, 13 volunteers attended. We were very pleased to welcome two new volunteers.

Blubell (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*) leaves are beginning to show through. A sloe bush (*Prunus spinosa*) was in full flower in a sheltered spot. Nuthatches were calling and a great spotted woodpecker was drumming. Jackdaws were very noisy. As usual, robins came to investigate what we were doing.

Previous visits

We last visited Popes Meadow on 30 January 2018. We continued work on laying a hedge and cleared dogwood and brambles.

Popes Meadow

This area of 13.7 acres of parkland in Binfield parish was at one time part of the grounds of Pope's Manor, which was the home of the poet Alexander Pope. The park has been given a Green Flag award. It has been designated a Local Wildlife Site.

See: <https://files.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/bracknell/documents/pop-es-meadow-leaflet.pdf?GzFIpVwqGVLVMkHHMO6kQw0kDIOqNhHM>

Coming up next

6 March 2018

Bill Hill

Holly clearance.

Water voles: good and bad news

Populations of water voles (*Arvicola amphibius*) have declined markedly in the UK. However, according to the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), there has been a steady increase in water vole activity in the 3 counties over the past 10 years. BBOWT has been running a Water Vole Recovery Project with the aim of halting the decline in populations.

<http://www.bbowt.org.uk/news/2018/02/26/water-voles-thriving-oxfordshire-and-berkshire-and-given-helping-hand-buckinghamshir>

Unfortunately, there has been a 30% decline in water vole numbers overall:

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/mapping-water-voles>

Friendship Way stag beetle loggery

Bracknell Forest Council have placed an information board on a stag beetle loggery in Friendship Way. We worked here on 3 October 2017, I think this is the loggery which we constructed.

Himalayan balsam: a solution in sight?

We spend a great deal of time removing the highly invasive Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). A research group has been investigating biological controls for this plant. They have identified a rust fungus which is highly specific for *I. glandulifera* and could be an effective control:

<https://www.cabi.org/projects/project/32944>

What's on

Bracknell Forest Council Parks and Countryside

Community litter pick

Lily Hill Park

Friday 2 March 2018 10:00-11:00, meet at north car park, off Lily Hill Road

Nightingale Triangle project

Conservation task for residents and volunteers (all invited)

Saturday 17 March 2018 10:00 – 15:00

Park in Firlands.

Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

Evening talk on "**Conservation in Conversation**" with the Hawk Conservancy

South Hill Park Recital Room

Monday 19 March 2018 19:30 (£3 fee for visitors/£1 for BFNHS members)

Contact Bracknell Conservation Volunteers

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