



Newsletter

Bracknell Conservation Volunteers

Newsletter No. **102**

5 September 2019

What we've been doing

27 August 2019

Cabbage Hill

On our previous visit to this site on 16 April 2019 we found that, although there is a designated car park at Cabbage Hill, it is very small and poorly surfaced, with large ruts. It was therefore decided to park at the Jock's Lane car park on this occasion. The distance to the site is about the same from either car park.

The task was clearing bracken and brambles from the edge of the path through Long Copse. In some areas, bracken stems were pulled up whole, and brambles were cut with loppers. In other areas, slashers were used to cut down bracken and bramble stems, and the cleared material was then raked out. Cleared material was piled in appropriate places.

There were 16 volunteers present. The weather was sunny and very warm, but we managed to avoid the worst of the heat by working in the shade of the trees.



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3 September 2019

Lily Hill Park

We worked in Starch Copse, at a site where we had done clearance on 14 August 2018. We re-used the bonfire site from the previous visit.

The task was clearing bramble, bracken, holly and *Rhododendron ponticum* from around the trees. Larger rhododendrons were left, as these were likely to be specimen *Rhododendron* varieties. There were some red oak saplings on site (*Quercus rubra*); these and rowan saplings were left.

We discovered 2 well-grown wild service trees (*Sorbus torminalis*) on site, as well as a large number of seedlings. This was very good news, since this is an iconic tree for Bracknell, and is specifically mentioned in the Biodiversity Action Plan. The wild service tree, sometimes known as "chequers" is at the edge of its range in this country, and is known to be very difficult to propagate from seed. Assuming the small trees we saw are seedlings rather than suckers or runners, these 2 trees seem to have no difficulty setting viable seed.



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18 volunteers attended. The weather was warm with sunny periods.

We also found a circle of stinkhorns (*Phallus impudicus*). The fruiting bodies of this fungus produce a mucilaginous coating which smells of carrion, and attracts flesh flies. We were not able to smell these specimens, although it was noticeable how many flies were being attracted.



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Coming up next

10 September 2019

Wildmoor Heath

Heathland clearance

Park in the designated Wildmoor car park. There is usually sufficient parking here:

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=483846&y=163059&z=110>

17 September 2019

Wildmoor Heath

Task and parking as above

Asian longhorn beetle

The Asian longhorn beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) has been eradicated from the UK.

In 2012 a breeding population of this beetle was found in woodland at Paddock Wood, near Maidstone in Kent. The beetle is a native of China and has been introduced into many different countries, presumably with imported wood. It has caused serious damage to trees in North America and some European countries. The main tree affected at Paddock Wood was sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/asian-longhorn-beetle/>

Native bluebell not a pushover

There has been concern about the effects of the Spanish bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*) on populations of the native bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). The Spanish bluebell is more robust than the native bluebell, and seems to be encroaching on areas formerly occupied by native bluebells. The Spanish bluebell is commonly grown in gardens, from where it escapes and becomes naturalised. The Spanish bluebell hybridises with the native bluebell, and it was thought that hybridisation would irreparably damage the genetic constitution of our bluebells. However, recent research at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh suggests that the native bluebell is more fertile than the Spanish species, and may be more resistant to the effects of hybridisation than was previously thought.

<https://www.rbge.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/current/battle-of-the-bluebells-hots-up-in-fight-for-genetic-supremacy/>

What's on

Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

Evening talk on **Bracknell Biodiversity/Help a Hog**
with Marlies Boydell, Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Officer

Monday September 16 2019

start 19:30

South Hill Park

For details see:

<http://www.bfnathistsoc.org.uk/>

Wildlife in Ascot

Tree recording walk along a green corridor in Ascot

Thursday 19 September 2019

14:00 – 16:00

e-mail: ascot.wildlife@gmail.com to join

Bracknell Forest Parks and Countryside

Heritage Open Day walk at Lily Hill Park: guided walk to learn about the exotic trees and plants in this historic park (free event)

Friday 20 September 2019

10:30 – 11:30

Meet at North car park off Lily Hill Road:

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=488766&Y=169407&Z=110>

Extinction Rebellion event

Climate Change: Heading for Extinction (and what to do about it)

Easthampstead Baptist Church, South Hill Road, Bracknell RG12 7NS

Thursday 26 September 2019

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19:00 – 21:30

<https://www.facebook.com/events/863928557318851/>

"A science-based examination of climate and ecological breakdown and the power of peaceful rebellion."

Entry free, donations welcomed; for queries contact: xr-bracknell@protonmail.com

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