



Newsletter

Bracknell Conservation Volunteers

Newsletter No. **128**

17 June 2021

What we've been doing

8 June 2021

Peacock Meadow

We worked in Peacock Meadow South, somewhat to the north of West Garden Copse. The task was ragwort pulling. The plants were relatively small, and were not yet in flower. It was fairly easy to pull plants with a small fork.

12 volunteers attended. The weather was fine and quite hot in the sun. Fortunately there was some cloud later, which made it cooler.

The group car failed to start, but fortunately our Chairman was on hand to transport tools.



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15 June 2021

Peacock Meadow

Back at Peacock Meadow again for some more ragwort pulling. We adopted a systematic approach, and fanned out across the area to be cleared. As far as we could tell we removed all visible ragwort plants from the area concerned, but the smaller plants can be quite hard to see. The special ragwort pulling forks proved very effective.

10 volunteers attended. The weather was fine and sunny.



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Coming up next

22 June 2021

Peacock Meadow

Task: ragwort pulling

29 June 2021

Cabbage Hill

Task: bracken clearance and path edge removal

Wykery Copse

Some time ago, some of our volunteers built mud/stick dams in the stream at Wykery Copse, with the aim of improving the wetland habitat. While doing this, they noted that there were no worms in the mud they were digging into, in fact there appeared to be no invertebrates at all. A volunteer subsequently carried out sampling of the mud together with the BFC biodiversity officer. Quantities of mud were washed with mustard water (a solution of powdered mustard in water) which encourages invertebrates to come to the surface. Almost no invertebrates were found apart from some very small worms, very small woodlice, a nematode, and what appeared to be shrimps. The latter may in fact be amphipods, possibly *Gammarus pulex*, which is fairly common in freshwater habitats in the UK.

http://www.uksafari.com/freshwater_shrimps.htm

During building work around Wykery Copse there is known to have been a cement spillage, which can suppress biodiversity for 10 years or so. However, the effects of this should have receded by now. Perhaps some of our volunteers might like to investigate this further. Has anybody got a microscope which we could use to examine samples? Please get in touch if you are interested.

<https://www.biology-fieldwork.org/a-level/fieldwork-techniques/sampling-mobile-organisms/catching-invertebrates-in-leaf-litter-and-soil/>

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