

BROOK MEADOW CONSERVATION GROUP NEWSLETTER No.88 JULY to SEPT 2017

EMSWORTH SHOW 2017

The Brook Meadow Conservation Group had their usual stall at the annual Emsworth Show on Bank Holiday Monday. It was a perfect day weather wise with non stop warm sunshine. This attracted a good attendance and the Brook Meadow stand had a good flow visitors throughout the day to look at the fine display of photos showing conservation work on the meadow and the variety of wildlife that live there. Many people also took the opportunity to renew their subscriptions while others joined for the first time.

I arrived with a basket of wild flowers picked from the meadow this morning
Thanks to Maurice for the photo

Report by Brian Fellows

BRIDGES ARE RE-SURFACED

Both bridges in the meadow have been re-surfaced by Norse, the contractors employed by Havant Borough Council.

The picture below shows the North bridge. The South bridge has only been partially re-surfaced on the eastern approach. The committee will lobby the council to make further improvements to this bridge



NEW SIGN FOR THE NORTH BRIDGE SPLASH ZONE



Dogs love to play in the water but unfortunately this activity can prevent wildlife from settling. In particular the committee hope to encourage water voles back to the river. So a special area for dogs (and children) to splash has been designated at the north bridge.

After unsuccessful attempts to make a notice a smart new sign has been installed. It is hoped that this sign will clearly indicate the splash zone for many years to come.

PRACTICAL WORK IN THE MEADOW—3rd QUARTER SUMMARY

Conservation Work Session - Sunday July 2nd 2017

10 volunteers assembled at HQ by 10 o'clock on a sunny day which rapidly became a real scorcher in the July sun. Nigel set off first to mow all the green grass paths in the north and central meadow, which was almost done by coffee time. Other volunteers trimmed along the hedge line of Seagull Lane patch. *See picture right.* A third group set to tidying the 'recreation area' in the north Meadow by the fallen willow which is putting out new foliage at a great rate. We aim to make this an attractive and safe place for children.



Conservation Work session – Thursday 20 July 2017

A small but able group of 5 volunteers made a good job of clearing the overhanging Willow and Ash branches that were obstructing the main paths. Pam's half time refreshments were, as usual, much needed and appreciated. Picture shows Pam and Suzanne cutting back nettles and brambles from the causeway path.



Conservation Work session – Sunday 6 August 2017

Warm sunny weather greeted the 9 volunteers that gathered at HQ for their 'Green Gym' work out. Nigel took control of the power scythe to mow the wildflower circles and newly developed 'play area' in the North Meadow before moving on to the paths in the South Meadow. Phil, Bob and Pam followed behind to clear away the arisings. *See picture right.*



Conservation Work session – Thursday 17 August 2017

An uncertain morning weather-wise but encouragingly forecast not to rain. Despite being in the middle of the holiday season 7 volunteers gathered at HQ for the day's briefing. The main task was to remove overhanging branches from the west side of the stock-fenced copse in readiness for the expected grass cutting. A total of seven branches were cut off. Grass cuttings from an area between the gravel path and the first oak tree in Seagull Lane Patch were raked up and collected having been cut earlier. *See picture right.*



Conservation Work session – Sunday 3 September 2017

Rain was forecast which kept numbers down to 9 volunteers. We were delighted to welcome three new members – John and Laura Brind and Terry Lay. The main task of the morning was to cut and clear the orchid area on the north meadow and Maurice, Jennifer and Phil took it in turns to use the power scythe to cut the area. They left clumps of still flowering plants as nectar sources for late flying insects. The hard work of raking, clearing and hauling to the dump was done by the rest of the team. *See picture right.*



INSECTS



Green-veined White ▲

Butterflies were relatively scarce though I was pleased to catch up with a female Green-veined White – part of the summer brood which has heavily marked upper wings and faintly veined underwings (not visible in this photo). I also got a Small White (female?) feeding on Hoary Ragwort. What a valuable plant that for late flying insects of all kinds. The female Small White has a single spot on upper wing.

Other butterflies seen included Red Admiral, Large White, Comma, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper.



Small White ▲



Meadow Grasshopper ▲

Grasshoppers There were lots of Meadow Grasshoppers jumping around in the grass and no doubt calling (which I cannot hear!), though rarely stopping for a photo. The larger Dark Bush-cricket are far more steady and photogenic. This looks like a female with its long ovipositor for egg-laying.



Dark Bush Cricket ▲



Green Shield Bug? ▲

Shield Bugs come in a variety of shapes, colours and sizes, which made identification difficult. The green ones were probably nymphs. I am inclined towards Dock Leaf Bug (*Coreus marginatus*) for the adult brown ones, but not with much confidence. Here are a couple, but there were many more.

These bugs are sap-sucking insects that can be found on a wide range of plants. The adults, when viewed from above, have a distinctive shield-like shape.



Dock Leaf Bug? ▲

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM 1st SEPT 2017 TO 31st AUGUST 2018



The subscription is still only £3 per person and children under 16 are free provided one of the parents is a member. You can renew by Standing Order. Our membership secretary can let you have a form that you submit to your bank. You can also renew in person at the AGM .

Fill in your email address to receive fortnightly email notes from Brian Fellows instead of this quarterly newsletter.

The following would like to renew their membership of BMCG:

Name(s)..... Address:.....

..... Phone (optional):.....

Email (optional): Names of any children under 16

I enclose my/our subscription (£3 per person) amounting to a total of £.....

I am also making a donation to Brook Meadow Conservation Group of £.....

I enclose cash for £..... OR a cheque for £..... Made payable to Brook Meadow Conservation Group.

Please take or send this form (or copy thereof) and your payment to our membership secretary. (see contacts page 4)

Visit from Bay House School, Gosport – 3 July 2017

A group of 6th Form students from from Bay House School in Gosport came to Brook Meadow with their teachers to carry out some conservation work as directed by Jennifer Rye. They completed two main jobs. One was to extend the path area immediately outside the HQ tool store to allow for easier access for the power scythe. The other one was to construct steps in the north-east corner of the meadow from the path down to the river to make it easier for people to exercise their dogs in this dedicated splash zone. *Picture right shows Pam and her dog using the new splash zone.*

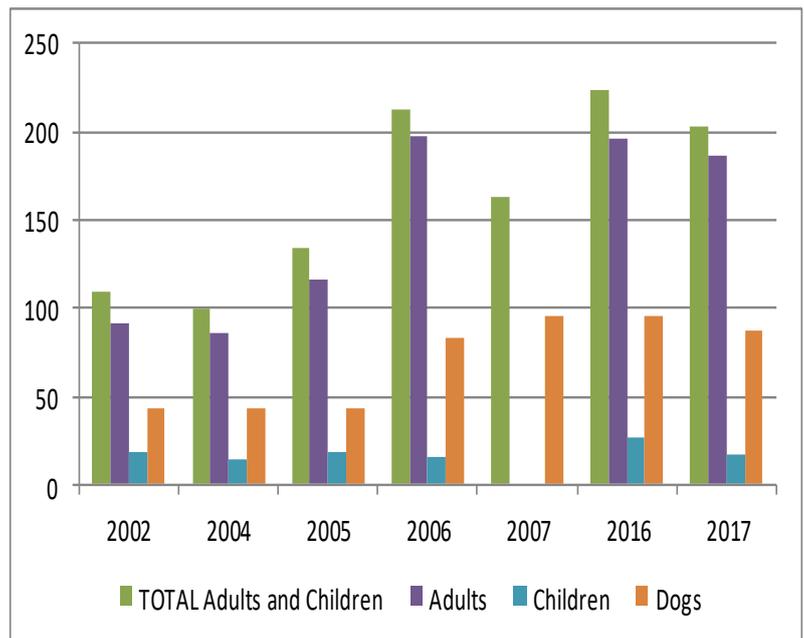


VISITORS SURVEY 2017

Every year a count of visitors on the meadow is made between the times of 8.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. on a Saturday. This year the count was conducted on Saturday 15th July.

The table to the right shows the main results from the surveys since 2002 – the Brook Meadow Conservation Group first took over the meadow in Year 2000. (Note, many years were not done.) Total indicates the number of adults and children. Dogs were counted separately, but were always with a person. The results show a fairly large increase in visitors since 2002-05, but relatively little change over the past 10 years. In fact, this year's numbers were slightly down on last year's.

These figures clearly confirm what a great local asset Brook Meadow is to the local community. It is well used and well respected by all users. Litter is not dropped or quickly cleared and dog mess relatively infrequent, despite the number of dogs visiting. What would we do without it?



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 17th November 7.30 p.m. Brook Meadow Conservation Group AGM to be held at St James Church Hall. There will be a brief business session followed by refreshments and then a talk entitled **Ancient Forests** by Hugh Milner, Chairman of the National Limewood Working Group.

FORTHCOMING WORK SESSIONS 10-12noon:

Meet at the Tool Store Seagull Lane. Tools and gloves provided.

Sunday 1st Oct : Thursday 19th Oct : Sunday 5th Nov: Thursday 16th Nov : Sunday 3rd Dec : Thursday 21st Dec (with mince pies): Sunday 7th Jan 2018

RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Each year's membership year runs from 1 September to 31 August, so your annual subscription for membership of the Brook Meadow Conservation Group is due for renewal on 1st September. The subscription is £3 per person (children under 16 are free provided one of the parents is a member). If you renew your membership by Standing Order please ignore this notice. Use the form overleaf and return with your membership fee and/or donation to Pam Phillips, Membership Secretary, at the address given below.

BROOK MEADOW CONSERVATION GROUP—CONTACTS

Jennifer Rye (Chairman): 6 Frobisher Gardens, Emsworth, PO10 7AS. tel. 01243 376926. e-mail jenniferrye01@gmail.com

Debbie Robinson (Minute Secretary): 16 Victoria Road, Emsworth, PO10 7NH.

tel.01243 389005. e-mail debsrobuk@yahoo.com

Pam Phillips (Membership Secretary and Treasurer): 2 The Rookery, Emsworth, PO10 8AH.

tel.01243 377791. e-mail p.phillips367@btinternet.com

Website for photos of wildlife and Brook Meadow news: www.brookmeadow.org.uk