



BROOK MEADOW CONSERVATION GROUP NEWSLETTER No.97 OCT TO DEC 2019

Christmas Tree Decorating Event on Brook Meadow Wednesday 18 December 2019

Recently a few volunteers led by Dan Mortimer arranged an event for children from Emsworth Primary School. Sixty pupils

from Year Two visited the meadow for an “end of term tree decorating event”. The event was staged over two days. On Monday 16th December the children made tree decorations from materials gathered from the meadow and other natural sources. They were assisted by Brook Meadow volunteers who provided materials and design ideas for decorations. On Wednesday 18th December the children accompanied by teachers and assistants walked to the meadow and placed the decorations on five cherry trees.

The weather was fine and the children enjoyed this open-air event. Divided into groups of six they decorated the five trees. After the trees were adorned the children performed a few songs from their nativity play. Thirty pupils came in the morning and a further thirty in the afternoon.



The afternoon session was further dignified by a visit from the Mayor of Havant Cllr Diana Patrick and her consort. She was able to witness the children enjoying their outing and further experience what the meadow can do for the local community. The Brook Meadow committee is most grateful to Dan Mortimer and his assistants who put a considerable amount of time and effort into making this such a successful event for all our visitors.

It is hoped that similar events might be held on the meadow in the future.



Christmas Event on Brook Meadow – Dan’s report

Report by Dan Mortimer and photos (above) by Brian Fellows

I arrived on site at 08.30 and Reg, Kathy, Pam and myself put up the gazebo. Having done that I rushed home to get my car, already packed with everything else needed for the day. The first party of 30 kids, a few parents and 6 school assistants arrived very promptly at 09.30 and we all set to putting up the first lot of decorations .

The trees were really starting to look Christmassy and festive. The Brook Meadow volunteers were climbing up the ladders and putting the decorations up onto the branches under the children’s guidance. At about 11.00 we all had a Christmas sing song and the children went back to school for lunch.

For the next hour and a half Kathy, Reg ,Terry and myself had to stick around in the cold to wait for the afternoon team of another 30 pupils, teaching staff and parents to arrive to hang up the remaining decorations.

The Mayor of Havant and her consort arrived at 02.45 to join in the fun. She was given a few decorations to hang on the trees herself and generally joined in. More sing songs were enjoyed. A special huge thanks to Diane Lay and Brenda’s friend for the delicious brownies and squash which were much enjoyed by all. And a special thanks to Kathy without whom I would never managed to make this event possible and so successful.

Editor’s note: Thank you to Dan for masterminding this event and putting a considerable amount of time into ensuring that it was successful.

PRACTICAL WORK IN THE MEADOW—4th QUARTER SUMMARY

PRC=Palmer's Road Copse, SLP=Seagull Lane Patch, SM=South Meadow, CM=Central Meadow, NM=North Meadow, HQ=Tool Store.

Conservation Work Session—Sunday 6th October

9 volunteers. Leader Maurice. Weather: sporadic sunshine, 18°C

Tasks: Mowing the wild flower meadow and raking up the arisings. Also gathering sundry tree debris to infill the reinforcing on the repaired NM path. Pendulous sedge seedling were planted along the foot of the river bank. ►



Conservation Work Session—Thursday 17th October

9 volunteers. Leader Colin. Weather: Overcast, frequent heavy rain showers 11°C.

Tasks: Litter pick, clear vegetation around the rowans ► and plant rhizomes in the Lumley stream and Ems..
A productive but uncomfortable session.



Conservation Work Session—Sunday 3rd November

9 volunteers. Leader Colin. Weather: calm, sunny with no wind 8°C—14°C

Tasks: Rake and clear growth under cherry trees for Xmas decorations, tidy SL hedge, ► re-cut and rake flower rich area and move fallen branches from CM. A busy and productive work session.



Conservation Work Session—Thursday 21st November

11 volunteers. Leader Reg. Weather: Calm, overcast and dry.

Tasks: Tidy CM of small branches which had fallen and also a larger branch cut by a contractor, and move to a bonfire site. ► Rake arisings in CM from an earlier cut. Power scythe to cut around cherry trees and also in CM.



Conservation Work Session—Sunday 1st December

13 volunteers. Leader Colin. Weather: calm sunny winter morning.

Tasks: Continue to build bonfire site in CM. Mow and clear area around the rowans with power scythe. Thin the purple leaved plum and remove sucker growth. ► Litter pick and sign case clean.



Conservation Work Session—Thursday 19th December

10 volunteers. Leader Maurice. Weather: Overcast, calm and warm for season.

Tasks: Tidy up plum tree arisings and build twig barrier, light bonfire in CM and burn arisings. Final refreshments including mulled wine, mince pies and stollen at HQ. (Thank you Maurice and Dan). ►



WILDLIFE ON THE MEADOW—Autumn sights

From Brian Fellows' wildlife blog



6th October A Common Toad was disturbed while volunteers clearing the orchid area. They managed to avoid damaging the creature and it scrambled into safety of the remaining undergrowth.



3rd November Berries (poisonous) on Bittersweet, a perennial vine. Common in woods and waste ground.



21st November Mole hills. This is a active season for moles when tunnel systems are being enlarged in preparation for the breeding season. The tunnel system, which is the permanent habitation of the mole, also acts as a food trap, constantly collecting invertebrate prey such as earthworms and insect larvae. As they move through the soil, invertebrates fall into the mole run and often do not escape before being detected by the patrolling resident. If you watch carefully, you can sometimes detect the hill being built as the mole pushes soil to the surface. Moles are rarely seen on the surface of the ground where they would be easily caught by predators.



1st December the nest of a Harvest Mouse which the volunteers had uncovered during the clearance work on the centre meadow. We do occasionally see these tiny neatly woven nests on Brook Meadow but this is the first one in my records since 2015.

19th December The first flower spikes of Winter Heliotrope are now out along the main river path. ►



AGM 2019—Report by Brian Fellows

The Brook Meadow Annual General Meeting was held on Friday November 8th 2019 at 7pm in the St James Church Hall in Church Path, Emsworth. There was a good attendance of 34 (including the 5 committee members at the front table and Brian the photographer). Jennifer Rye delivered her Chair's report and Pam Phillips presented the Treasurer's report.

In her report Jennifer confirmed that she would be standing down as Chair Person after 6 years in the job. She received a warm round of applause. Maurice Lillie presented Jennifer with a small carved log taken from an Ash tree that came down over the river on Brook Meadow. The log is engraved with the Brook Meadow logo along with Jennifer's name and term of office. (see picture right and below)

We are all very appreciative of Jennifer's work and inspiration during her term in office which has seen Brook Meadow make steady progress both as a wildlife nature reserve and as a prized local community asset.

Jennifer announced the good news that Colin Brotherston had agreed to take over as Chairman of the group and this post was duly confirmed by a unanimous show of hands.

The rest of committee will be staying on (except for Jennifer): Debbie Robinson as Minutes Secretary and Pam Phillips as Treasurer and Membership Secretary, plus Maurice Lillie, Dan Mortimer, David Search, Roger Mills and Reg Newnham as ordinary members. To complete the committee two new members were elected, Kathy Edwards and Terry Lay both of whom are regular workday volunteers making a total complement of 10 members.



After the main business meeting there was a 15 minute refreshments break when tea and coffee and biscuits were served by Tricia Brotherston and David Search.

Sarah Hughes was to have been the guest speaker to talk about her recent Water Vole surveys on Brook Meadow, but her daughter went into labour with her first grandchild and naturally enough Sarah wished to be with her.

Brian Fellows stepped into the breach to present a wildlife review of the past year on Brook Meadow with slides. The talk included reference to Sarah Hughes's report of the Water Vole surveys which Sarah had kindly sent in advance.



Forthcoming Events

Photographs this issue: Brian Fellows

FORTHCOMING WORK SESSIONS 9.30-12noon:

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

**Sunday 5th Jan: Thursday 16th Jan : Sunday 2nd Feb: Thursday 20th Feb : Sunday 1st Mar:
Thursday 19th Mar: Sunday 5th April**

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