



BROOK MEADOW CONSERVATION GROUP NEWSLETTER No.98 JAN TO MAR 2020

Winter on Brook Meadow

Brook Meadow is public access land managed as a conservation meadow by volunteers. The Brook Meadow Conservation Group exists to promote the conservation and protection of wildlife and the natural environment within the Emsworth area. New members and volunteers are always welcome. For more information please visit <http://www.brookmeadow.org.uk> or contact Colin Brotherston on 07779 759696

It has been a wet winter and this has resulted in high water levels in the River Ems and Lumley Brook. The South Meadow has been impassable on some days due to flooding. The volume of water in the river was such that the water level overflowed the sluice gates and a stream flowed down the path in the South Meadow.



The high water level has flooded the water vole burrows. If water voles are present we hope that they have been able to survive. However it was flooding in the winter of 2013 which may have caused the disappearance of these mammals. The Brook Meadow Conservation Group have been working hard to create the right conditions for water voles to re-establish. This has involved planting reeds, and maintaining the river bank. By the end of last summer surveys had found evidence of burrows and latrines which suggested that the voles had returned. As yet no one has had a reliable sighting in the Ems although they have been seen in the Lumley stream.

As the weather improves and the paths become less muddy it is worth having a look at the river which is still full flowing strongly. These chalk streams have very variable flow and frequently dry up in the summer. Chalk streams are comparatively rare with only a little over 200 worldwide. The vast majority of these are located in southern England. They are an important habitat for wildlife since the water emerging from the springs is very pure. The continued building of new housing with the resultant increase in demand for water will sadly result in many of these streams becoming even more variable in flow.

The current Covid 19 emergency has restricted the movement of us all. During this period all voluntary work on the meadow will cease. However

Brook meadow remains open and available for local residents to enjoy during this time. We hope that more people will have the opportunity to visit and watch as the warmer weather brings the meadow to life.

If you have an interest in wildlife we hope that you may like to become a member of Brook Meadow and help to maintain an important local amenity.



Elisabeth Kinloch

Elisabeth Kinloch had died over the Christmas period aged 97 years! She had been ill with dementia for many years and had been cared for at her home in Westbourne. Elisabeth was the owner of Peter Pond and we trust David Gattrell will be able to carry on with his excellent management of the pond. Elisabeth was also an active member of the committee of the Brook Meadow Conservation Group in the early days of the group.

Pictured below Elisabeth with David in 2008



PRACTICAL WORK IN THE MEADOW—1st QUARTER SUMMARY

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

Conservation Work Session—Sunday 5th January

13 volunteers. Leader Colin. Weather: Overcast, mild with light breeze.

Tasks: Clear fallen wood from the CM to a future bonfire site at the arising dump, Start bonfire in the SLP and feed with wood and debris, mow area around Mike's hedge and remove decorations from the cheery trees. ▶



Conservation Work Session—Thursday 16th January

12 volunteers. Leader Reg. Weather: Calm becoming overcast at wet by end of session, after week of severe gales.

Tasks: Single task to remove all under growth from the trees along the North path and create a bonfire pile on SLP. ▶



Conservation Work Session—Sunday 2nd February

13 volunteers. Leader Maurice. Weather: dry and mild°C—12°C

Tasks: Start a bonfire in SLP to burn previous arisings. Remove brambles from young trees along the North path in the NM. Two hazel saplings planted by the N bridge. ▶.



Conservation Work Session—Thursday 20th February

9 volunteers. Leader Colin. Weather: Damp becoming wet 8°C. Tasks: Move wood chippings to re-enforce muddy paths in the NM and CM. Ground is sodden. Also improve gravel path in SLP by adding a further layer of gravel Also start to dig out brambles from the flower rich area. ▶



Conservation Work Session—Sunday 1st March

10 volunteers. Leader Maurice. Weather: clear still 9°C

Tasks: Overlay the gravel path in SLP with yet more gravel. Barrow wood chipping to the path in the CM. Ground still sodden with SM flooded. ▶ Litter pick and sign case clean.



Conservation Work Session—Thursday 19th March

9 volunteers. Leader Colin. Weather: Overcast, damp and mild, 11°C

Tasks: Complete the removal of the wood chippings pile further adding to the path in the CM. Start to move newly grown grass from the dump in the NM to the newly cleared river bank in the SLP. ▶



WILDLIFE ON THE MEADOW—Winter sights

From Brian Fellows' wildlife blog



05/01/2020 This Great Tit was singing a somewhat truncated song high in a tree



02/02/2020 Four Song Thrushes seen today augers well for the breeding season.



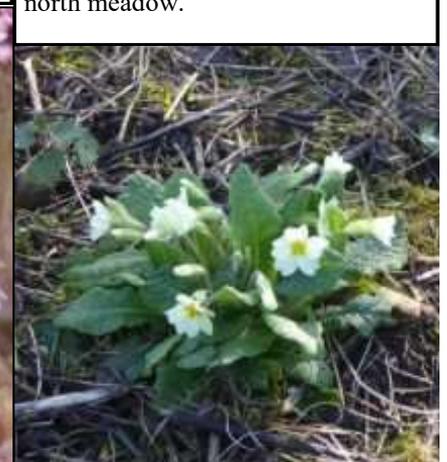
01/03/2020 The bright star-like yellow flowers of Lesser Celandine are now prominent particularly in the north meadow.



05/01/2020 This attractive bright yellow small jelly-like fungus growing on a dead twig. Known as Yellow Brain Fungus (*Tremella mesenterica*) though more imaginatively it is also known as Witches Butter. It is fairly common on dead twigs in winter, though in dry weather it shrinks and darkens. It is not poisonous, but is not worth eating!



01/03/2020 flower spikes of Butterbur are now prominent in the main area below the seat and will be ready for counting in a couple of weeks. Here is a close-up of the attractive pink flowers.



01/03/2020 A clump of primroses which along with snowflakes and violets make some of the most attractive early spring sights.

Membership renewal reminder. If you have not renewed your membership this year we would be grateful if you could do so using the form below.

[BROOK MEADOW CONSERVATION GROUP MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM](#)

Membership for the year ending 31st August 2020

The subscription is £3 per person (children under 16 are free provided a parent is a member).

Please fill in your details below and return this form with your payment to The Membership Secretary, Pam Phillips, 2 The Rookery, Emsworth PO10 8AH email: p.phillips367@btinternet.com

The following would like to renew their membership of BMCG:

Name(s)..... Email(optional):.....

Address:..... Phone (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 £.....

Please enclose cash or a cheque made payable to Brook Meadow Conservation Group.

Payment may be made annually by standing order. Please tick if you would like to use this method.



Fallen or Leaning Trees

Winter weather can cause damage to trees. Occasionally a promising specimen can be blown over. A blackthorn growing in the new hedge on the edge of the Sea Gull Lane patch is a case in point. This tree is attractive in early spring with its bright blossom and was considered to be a feature along the new hedge.

However vigorous growth last year made the tree too large for the root system to support and it has been blown over as shown in the picture on the right.

Some attempts have been made to right the tree but these have so far failed. The root system is badly damaged and it will be necessary to either remove the tree completely or cut it back so it can form part of the hedge.

If the tree is removed it maybe replaced with one or two similar but younger specimens. To avoid the problem in the future single hedgerow trees must be pruned to keep their height under control.



Pruning the Cherry Plum Trees

The cherry plum trees provide one of the very attractive features in early Spring with a fine show of blossom. This is particularly true of the specimens alongside the causeway path near the Lumley Lane gate. However these small trees, originally a single tree, are rapidly becoming a copse. They produce runners with their root system which then become new trees. These new growths threaten other nearby shrubs and trees.

As the trees had spread both along and across the path it was decided to thin the larger trees and remove most of the small new growth. A considerable amount of arisings resulting from this cut back were used to create a temporary barrier along the edge of the trees. This will be removed next autumn. The cutting back of these trees is a task which will need to be repeated every four or five years. It should result in sturdier trees with vigorous growth.



Forthcoming Events

Photographs this issue: Brian Fellows

FORTHCOMING WORK SESSIONS 9.30-12noon:

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

No work sessions will take place during the present public emergency. Please refer to the notice boards or website for further information.

BROOK MEADOW CONSERVATION GROUP—CONTACTS

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