



BROOK MEADOW CONSERVATION GROUP NEWSLETTER No.99 APRIL TO JUNE 2020

WILDLIFE ON THE MEADOW—Spring Sights

From Brian Fellows' wildlife blog

Brook Meadow work sessions and Covid 19

The social distancing regime started just before the publication of the last newsletter. Unfortunately this meant that we were unable to distribute a paper copy although the issue was available on the Brook Meadow website. At the start of the restrictions all volunteer work on the meadow ceased.

It was fortunate that this coincided with Spring when minimum disturbance was beneficial to the meadow. We now have an abundance of growth to admire.

By the beginning of May, as the C19 restrictions were starting to ease, certain tasks needed urgent attention. So small groups of two or three volunteers started to have working sessions. Tasks included repairs to paths, clearing fallen trees from paths and ensuring that the wild flower areas were properly identified.

From the beginning of July we are restarting the regular work sessions on Thursday and Sunday mornings at the later time of 10.00 until further notice.



30th April Ragged Robin. The counts for the Lumley area came to 114. The lowest count for five years.



27th April A Whitethroat, Two Cetti's Warblers, Five Blackcaps, a Grey Wagtail (photo), a Stock Dove and two Moorhens



The Bee Orchid count was 29 this year, slightly up on last year but still less than the best total recorded in 2015.



19th June A Large Skipper butterfly on leaves on the river bank south of the north bridge.



25th May A record count for Southern Marsh Orchids from two in 2007 to 174 this year.



Above 11th May Common Blue (male) 1st of the year on the North Meadow.

Below 27th June Ringlet

Below 29th June Marbled White



Improving the Riverbank

In the spring of 2019 a short stretch of the riverbank in Palmers Road Copse was reinforced with chestnut pilings and backed with rubble. Unfortunately some of the rubble has ended up in the river. One of the tasks undertaken during this spring was to retrieve some of this rubble from the river (*top right*) which includes a number of bricks and break them up to create a smoother surface behind the pilings. (*bottom right*) This was then overlaid with scalplings which were purchased for this purpose. (*bottom left*) The scalplings were then overlaid with donated turfs and topped with wood chippings to form a flat platform from which the river can be viewed. There are still a number of objects in the river which will be removed at a later work session.



Compressed Gas Cylinders

Lesley who litter picks on the Meadow showed us one of the silver canisters of which she has been finding hundreds all over Emsworth. *The editor has noticed them as well!* It is thought they contain the gas nitrous oxide, also known as 'laughing gas', which used to be used in dentistry and is now on general sale as an agent in whipped cream dispensers. Apparently, they are freely available and are used by youngsters to get a 'high'. It is one way of getting a laugh nowadays!



Water vole Feeding Rafts

As part of our attempts to encourage water voles back onto the Meadow Dan has constructed a feeding raft and installed it in the Lumley Stream where evidence of water vole habitation has been found. He places apples on the raft and something is eating them.



Visitors to the Meadow

There has been a noticeable increase in the numbers of people visiting the meadow this Spring. Many more people both local and from further afield have enjoyed our beautiful open space.

Forthcoming Events

The AGM will be held on Friday 13th November at 19.00 (07.00 p.m.) in St James Church hall.

Photographs this issue: Brian Fellows

FORTHCOMING WORK SESSIONS 10.00-12noon:

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

Thursday 16th July, Sunday 2nd August, Thursday 20th August, Sunday 6th September, Thursday 17th September, Sunday 4th October

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