

Bearsted Woodland Trust



Newsletter No. 13

2008



Former Bucks Fizz singer and television presenter Cheryl Baker hands over the Lottery cheque for £78,000 to Bernard Head live on Meridian Tonight.

‘Thank You!’

www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

Registered Charity 1103585

Your Votes Win

The Woodland Trust is the proud winner of £78,000 of lottery funding through the ITV People's Millions vote.

BWT's entry into the final eight, which went head-to-head each night of the week beginning 26th November, was only achieved after months of tireless work by Peter Willson and Sharon Bayne. Anyone who has applied for lottery money will know the stringent criteria which has to be met in order to qualify.

Despite the months of preparation involved, BWT only found out at the end of October that it would be involved in the November series. This meant that volunteers had just three weeks to launch the campaign.

The effort involved was mammoth: A team of 73 volunteers were involved in door to door and specific location leaflet distribution. A team of six also worked to make and put boards and signs up in and around Bearsted and Maidstone asking people to 'VOTE BEARSTED'.

A staggering 20,000 leaflets went into 20 local schools. Our local Tesco Express were a great help. A team of staff helped deliver the leaflets, which were also given to customers in-store. The manager displayed one of our banners on his forecourt and also kindly agreed to display our banner saying 'THANK YOU FROM BWT' after we had won.

Several other businesses in the area, including Notcutts, The Potted Garden, Rumwood Nursery and Garden Centre, Bearsted Golf Club, Hilton Maidstone

Hotel, several Bearsted pubs, and Wards and Page & Wells had a supply of leaflets to give to their customers. Peter Willson stoically looked after the media side of things – even giving radio interviews from his hospital bed!



Access for All was the theme of the BWT campaign.

With Judy Buckley keeping the website updated, a 'viral' email campaign also took off with members forwarding information onto their own contact databases, driving the total phone voting numbers up to our winning level.

On voting day Pauline Moore, accompanied by her friend Margaret Morris, drove around Bearsted and the neighbouring villages pulling her trailer which had been equipped with 'Vote Bearsted' signs and displaying the voting number. They stopped many times



en-route, ringing a bell, and handed out leaflets chivvying even more support as a call to action !We cannot begin to guess exactly how many people contributed to this effort. All we can say is a very big Thank You! Work should start on the new access-for-all paths in the spring.

Renewal Reminder

It would be appreciated if those who haven't renewed BWT membership yet could send your renewal forms and cheques to Chris Street at 43 The Landway, Bearsted, Kent, ME14 4BG as soon as possible please. As a reminder, renewal month is July each year. Perhaps you could pay by Standing Order or consider a one-off £100 payment for Life Membership.

Membership Numbers

Our members now number 841, including 147 life members, a staggering figure for such a local charity. It has meant a great sum in the coffers contributing to all the good work. If your details have changed or you would like to take a life membership, please contact Chris on 01622 739713 or chris@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org Thanks.

The Lilk Valley Bridge



After the overwhelming response to the Lilk Valley Bridge appeal, which raised over £13,500, and securing of the services of 70 Gurkhas Field Support Squadron for the construction, building commenced on September 3rd 2007. Work took the estimated three weeks. The Gurkhas worked tirelessly. Fortunately, the weather held as the men carved out the foundations and built the impressive structure. Dave Johnson, our volunteer project



leader, did a great job supervising with the army.

BWT were very happy to also be able to give a donation to the Gurkha Welfare Trust in recognition of their fantastic effort.

We would like to say a special thank you to: Andrew Street of Synergy for obtaining planning permission for the bridge; John Evans of Evans Langford for offering his company's services to survey the BWT to obtain the best path route down to and away from the bridge for pushchair and wheelchair access; KCC Countryside Access Service for their donation of £1200 towards the 'bridge appeal' and Homeleigh for supplying materials at low cost.

A note to all donors - plaques with your names should be in place by mid – March.



This photo of a bridge over the Lilk was taken around 1906 and shows Gore Cottage in the background. Reproduced by courtesy of the Kent Archaeological Society

Volunteers' Sterling Work

Cherry Tree Walk and other projects

Since our last newsletter, volunteers have continued to play a vital role. Since autumn 2007, the grass maintenance has been completed and the fruit trees in the 'orchard' were pruned. Over three days in November the flowering cherry tree avenue along the 'church path' was planted. Make a date in your diaries for spring to go and see the blossom.

The whole BWT site has had ongoing maintenance, including selected removal of tree supports, removing tree wind damage debris and preparation of the bank between Church Meadow and the Lakes for the first phase of planting of bluebells and wood anemones.

Another project for Feb '08 is the planned planting of hedgerow to delineate the area known as Dolobran and to accept the offer of the Holy Cross church male volunteer group to help with the planting. The preparation will hopefully take place on the first Thursday work-in in Feb (7th) with completion of planting on the Sat (9th).

Volunteers would be most welcome to join our volunteer group which

meets at 09.00 until about 12.30 on the first and third Thursdays of each month and/or would also like to join the tractor mowing rota group. Please ring Dave Johnson on 01622 730321 or Jeff Winn on 01622 730477. Your support would be greatly appreciated.



The avenue of newly-planted flowering cherry trees.

VIP Visits

August and September 07 saw two special visits from dignitaries to BWT. Hugh Robertson, local MP, and Mayor Richard Ash were the first to be walked around the land in August. Lord Sandy Bruce-Lockhart was then in September accompanied by Paul Carter, leader of KCC, on a visit of the Lilk Valley Bridge project as it was in progress.



Lord Sandy Bruce-Lockhart



Hugh Robertson MP

Message from Peter

Peter Willson would like to thank everyone for all the cards, emails and good wishes he received while he was in hospital for one month prior to Christmas. He says: 'I am very pleased to be back in action again after being seriously ill prior to entry. My heart problems are now behind me hopefully since being fitted with a wonderful pacemaker and taking medication for the condition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at Maidstone hospital for the excellent treatment I received.'

KIG - Say 'No' Now!

Although the official deadline for objections was in November, Maidstone Borough Council stated that it will consider ALL comments received before their decision date, which could be imminent.

It is vital that everyone sends their objection – please do not leave it to 'someone else'.

Lodge your objections with MBC as follows:

In writing to Rob Jarman, 13 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8HG

By email to KIGcomments@maidstone.gov.uk.

For information and a guide for your letter, visit www.stopkig.org

2007 Annual General Meeting

Around 60 members attended the Annual General Meeting in the Tennis Club. They were updated on all the previous year's work including the updating of the website by Judy Buckley, the failure to get planning permission for a house on BWT land and the fact that 170 large trees had already been sponsored with 45 members on the waiting list.

Plans for the future include two more noticeboards, the construction of a track to go round Barn Meadow, making distinctive the area of the Alan Demain donation, construction of a building to house the tractor and possibly a meeting room, and preparation for the junior football pitch.

Members were told all the items raised would be noted for future consideration and were thanked for their support.

Your Newsletter (Issue 13) has been brought to you by the Editorial Team of Sandy Fleming, Fiona Marriner and Sandra Knatchbull. Design is by Simon Penry. Please forward your feedback and comments to editor@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

CONTACT: Peter Willson, Grangeway, 1B Otteridge Road, Bearsted, ME14 4JP Tel: 01622 632682 or peter@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org