

Bearsted Woodland Trust



Newsletter No. 14

2008



Transformation of access path to the new Lilk Valley Bridge at completion.

‘Access for All’

www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

Registered Charity | 103585

Grand Opening of New Path All Welcome

The official opening of the new path will be held on Saturday 12 July at 2pm. We are very fortunate to have Lord Sandy Bruce-Lockhart to perform this event for us. Please show your support by attending this very important day in our history. Drinks and light refreshments will be provided after the ceremony and a walk of the new paths. Parking will be in the Elizabeth Harvie Field (same parking area as used by Bearsted Fayre). Signs will be provided through Cross Keys, off The Street. See the centre pages for the story of the new paths.

New Sutton Street Entrance

The new metal kissing gate has been installed at the Sutton Street entrance for the disabled with their mobility scooters and mums with their push chairs.

The key is a standard RADAR universal key for disabled entrances of this design. If anyone would like to purchase one, contact Peter Willson 632682. Price is £5.00. BWT has also been fortunate enough to receive two mobility scooters by kind donations. Please look out for further information regarding their use and availability on the web site or in the next newsletter.



Children's Areas

The new football area will be ready for the under 12 football teams for the 2009 playing season. Public funding is now available for the proposed adventure play area. The Parish Council is proposing to circulate a consultation document. BWT has leased this area of land to the parish council for a nominal fee of £1 per annum.

Bearsted & Thurnham Fayre

This year's fayre will be on Saturday 28th June. We are saying our prayers for a sun soaked day. Please do come into the BWT tent to see the latest updates and say 'Hello'. It will also be the perfect opportunity to renew memberships and purchase some of the lovely BWT notelets (now £2).



Blooming Marvellous Volunteers

The sight this spring as the new cherry trees came into blossom was truly spectacular. So much of the hard work, tirelessly done by our volunteers, goes unnoticed, but this gives us something to shout about. Thanks to All! 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.

Mynn Award

Congratulations to Peter Willson for being awarded the Mynn Award in recognition of his good work in the community and especially for his role in securing £78,000 from the Peoples' Millions.

Our New Paths



The dedication plaque for all the contributors for the Lilk Valley bridge is now in place and looks perfect alongside the bridge.

Mid April saw the arrival of the engineers from Pearl who spent 8 weeks on the land to transform it and make our dream of "Access for All" come true.

No one watching the transformation of muddy banks to gravel paths could quite believe it.

All money received for this project has now been spent. £78,000 from the People's Millions, £48,000 from BIFFA and £700 from Pat Marshall's Devolved Budget allowance. None of this work



would have been possible without these grants. Please visit the site, if you have not already, to see what an amazing job has been done.

We owe great thanks to volunteers Dave Johnson, Dave Ward and Jeff Winn, who project led the task, and their team, who were on site every day for eight weeks during the construction.

Thanks also go to John Monk for his work on installing the kissing gates and renewing fencing at the top of the lake. This was sterling work from all involved – without them, none of it would have been possible.



*Above: Steps now lead down from the old carriage avenue.
Left: Diggers excavate soil to create new paths that are then rolled level.
Right: A new path leads from Cherry Tree Avenue alongside the Elizabeth Harvie field.*



Cutting the Grass

by Sharon Bayne

Very soon after taking over the land BWT realised that there was going to be a never-ending task of cutting the grass. The aim of this regular cutting has not just been to keep the site looking 'neat and tidy'. It has, right from the outset, been carried out with the intention of improving the grassland for wildlife. The grass hadn't been cut for years and was full of weeds, such as ragwort and thistles. The predominance of tall, vigorously growing grasses meant that the delicate wildflowers had little chance of surviving and had all but given up growing. Due to the ragwort in the grass, which is harmful to animals, no farmer would take the grass for hay. This meant that BWT relied on grants to pay for the grass to be cut and removed. After five years all the hard work is starting to pay off. It is unlikely that a wide variety of wildflowers will come back by themselves, but the grass is now in a condition which is more favourable for them to grow.

Wildflower Trial Area

A trial area of the grassland, next to the access path at the Church Landway entrance, was sown with a wildflower mix in the autumn of 2007. The mix contained a range of wildflowers, including red clover for the bees, vetches and knapweed. A special plant called yellow rattle was also included. This pretty little yellow flower is actually a parasite and helps to suppress the growth of the grass, which allows more space for the wildflowers to grow. It might take until next season to really see if it has worked and can be tried elsewhere on the site.



black knapweed

Cutting in 2008

As the grass has improved over the years, the intensive regime of grass-cutting of the last few years can now be relaxed. More areas will have the grass left longer, having just one haycut in the summer. The areas under the trees will be cut regularly to let them continue to establish and the paths will also be cut.

Easter Egg Hunt



This year saw our first group event for all five local churches - a grand Easter Egg hunt around the BWT site. The day was very successful with over 170 children taking part. The skies remained clear, helping the little 'searchers' and their families successfully find clues throughout the wide expanse of land.

Conservation Lessons

Children from Year 2 at Thurnham Infants School enjoyed a morning with the Bearsted Woodland Trust, taking their morning lessons out of the classroom and into the big outdoors. Nearly 90 children were guided by Peter Willson, Dave Johnson, Dave Ward and Jeff Winn. We look forward to welcoming further visits in the near future.



People's Millions Update

Not only did BWT win our area last November but we have since been informed that ours was the best vote performance in the country. Sharon and Peter have also become the voice of the PM flagship project for ITV! You may well have already seen them this year encouraging other charity organisations in the South East to apply for PM 2008. They make it all sound so easy!

New Barn Requires Funding

We now have planning permission to build a new tractor barn and base for our maintenance volunteers. We would like to say a big Thank You to John Stroud who designed the barn and steered it through the planning stage. The next stage is to seek funding for the cost of construction, which is likely to be circa £40,000. Any proposals or ideas would be gratefully received.

‘Recruit a Friend’

We are always trying to improve our membership numbers and wondered if you might like to ‘recruit a friend’. Please encourage your friends, family and neighbours to become BWT members. A membership form can be printed from our website. They could pay by standing order or consider a one-off £100 payment for life membership. Minimum donation of £5.00 per family a year. Please contact Chris on 01622 739713 or chris@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

The BWT would like to thank Lesley Colman for joining our dedicated team who deliver your Newsletter.

2008 Annual General Meeting

Please note in your diaries that this year’s AGM will be held on Thursday 25th September at 7pm in Bearsted Tennis Club. Bar open and committee members available for informal discussion from 6.30pm.

Your Newsletter (Issue 14) has been brought to you by the Editorial Team of Sandy Fleming, Fiona Marriner and Sandra Knatchbull. Design is by Simon Penry. Printing by easyprint www.easyprintuk.com 01622 608248. Please forward your feedback and comments to editor@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

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