

## PETE THE PRESIDENT!

Peter Willson has been appointed Honorary Life President of Bearsted Woodland Trust in recognition of all his outstanding work for the Trust since 2004.

Peter has been Deputy Chairman of BWT since its inception in 2004 and was appointed a Trustee in 2005.

Chairman Richard Ashness presented Peter with an engraved glass plaque to commemorate his appointment as figurehead of the Trust at the September AGM.

The biggest tree on BWT, which stands in Barn Meadow, was also named 'The President's Tree' in recognition of Peter's work. The tree plaque was unveiled by Richard and Peter on 5 October (pictured). Peter said at the AGM that he was 'humbled, honoured and very proud to be given this title'.

Richard Ashness commented; 'The BWT Management Committee is delighted to have found a way to recognise the massive contribution Peter has made to the Trust. It is no exaggeration to say that Peter has made BWT what it is today... a wonderful feature of Bearsted of which the whole village can be proud.'



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# FROM FROST TO FLOOD



Despite the heavy snows and hard frosts, there is only minor damage to a small number of trees. Following frost heave on paths in a few areas, some parts of BWT are still very wet and the volunteer maintenance team members are watching carefully to assess if additional maintenance work will be necessary in the spring. As we go to press, the snow and frost has given way to rain and flood... a great British winter!



# GRAND OPENING FOR TRACTOR BARN

Cllr Paul Carter, Leader of Kent County Council will perform the ceremony and light refreshments will be served afterwards. Special guests will also include Lt Colonel S J Hulme MBE RE of 36 Engineer Regiment.



With such a large area to look after, and in line with the long term environmental goals, it had been clear to BWT since early summer 2008 that we needed a building to store maintenance equipment and act as our HQ.

Local Architect John Stroud came up with a design to meet present and future requirements. This also allowed for kitchen facilities for volunteers, who work outside throughout the year, in all weathers.

Following planning approval in autumn 2008, BWT's project team, led by Dave Johnson, organised the materials from local suppliers, funded by the hugely successful, village-wide appeal. The Royal Engineers confirmed their

**DON'T MISS  
THIS AWAITED  
EVENT ON  
SATURDAY  
10 APRIL AT  
11AM**



intention in October 2008 to build the Barn under the Military Aid to Civil Community (MACC) scheme, which enabled the skills and capability of the RE's to be put to good use in civilian works, as well as making best use of BWT's funds.

The Royal Engineers started building the Barn in mid January 2009 in atrocious weather, which made ground works very difficult. Despite this, the first phase - the building of a secure and waterproof shell - was completed in April 2009.

Phase 2 works, managed by BWT volunteers, comprised internal finishing and decoration and external service connections, involving a lot of trench digging by hand! This took place during 2009, in parallel with the usual BWT maintenance work, and continuing through the winter of 2009/10. This has been a huge undertaking and Dave Johnson and his team have worked wonders to get the barn ready for the formal opening on 10 April.

Thanks to all the effort and support from the Royal Engineers, local professionals and trades people. With the money raised locally, BWT now has a Barn to be proud of!



# WILLOW POLLARDING

BY SHARON BAYNE

Work to restore the woodland near the entrance of the site was again under way this winter. Most of the trees in this area were felled by Ward Homes in 2003. Although the trees re-grew it meant that they would never grow into large trees. The long term plan for this area is allow it to become an area of woodland and replanting has been taking place.

This year a small group of willows behind the roller bench is being pollarded. These trees were felled at around four feet but willows, in contrast to the birch trees in the area, respond well to this cutting and have now re-grown. In fact pollarding in this way is a traditional way of managing willows and such trees are cut every few years.

The area under the willows will be planted with oak and other species as part of the long term plan to create a native woodland in this area.



## POLLARDING INVOLVES REMOVING ALL THE BRANCHES

This is a traditional method of managing willows and the branches will re-grow. The benefits of doing this are that the re-growth forms a dense and shrubby area, excellent for bird cover and prolongs the life of the trees.

**FACT:**  
POLLARDING  
IS A TRADITIONAL  
WAY OF MANAGING  
WILLOW  
TREES



Questions or comments?  
Please feel free to email  
[sharon@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org](mailto:sharon@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org)

# 2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2009 AGM, held at the Bearsted and Thurnham Tennis Club on Thursday 24 September, saw an impressive turn out of BWT members.

The Chairman, Richard Ashness, referred to the continuing progress made with projects such as the Barn and the Environmental Plan. On a sadder note, he paid tribute to the contribution of Frank Manning, a very active member of the Trust's management committee, who had died in 2008. Frank's work would now be remembered in the 'Manning Maze', completed by volunteers including Frank's family, in the summer of 2009.



Richard also reported that the Trust's finances were in a healthy position, thanks to careful use of resources.

David Ward presented the maintenance report on behalf of Dave Johnson. Whilst it had again been a good year for mowing, planting and projects completed, more volunteers were always needed.

Our Environmental Consultant, Sharon Bayne, described the longer term plans to enrich the ecological and environmental value of BWT land. This would mean more selective maintenance in a Three Year Plan, and carefully chosen planting regimes.

Finally, Richard Ashness announced to the acclaim of everyone present, that Peter Willson had been created Life President of the Trust, for his tireless and dedicated work. See front page.

## Biffa RECOGNITION

After tireless effort on the parts of Peter Willson, Sharon Bayne and other key members of BWT, BIFFA finally invited us to attend the award ceremony on Thursday 8th October in the Royal Hall at Harrogate. However, they could not disclose whether we had anything to receive! Bernard Head was asked to represent BWT at the ceremony and duly attended with his wife.

BWT was in the third section "Outdoor Recreation" and after hearing about our competitors, the judge announced that we were the winners, mainly due to the hundreds of volunteers that had been involved in the

project to increase Access for All on the site. The prize was a cheque for £2,000.

**“the judge announced that we were the winners”**

After the final category had been awarded, the Chairman announced the overall winner for 2009. All of the judges had agreed that one entry stood out. An exceptional project carried out by the commitment and determination of their volunteers and which involved the local community - Bearsted Woodland Trust. **This award prize was a further £5,000.**

# OUR FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT

The fragile nature of the environment around the Woodland Trust was brought into sharp focus by a pollution scare in January which involved the Lilk Stream where it flows south from the M20, under the “Gurkha’s Bridge” near BWT land in Bearsted, and into Major’s Lake Fishery near the Ashford Road.



The drama began when a diesel spillage occurred on the M20 following a crash involving several vehicles in the heavy snow and ice. Environment Agency staff were quickly on the scene to deal with 600 litres of diesel fuel which found its way through the M20 drainage system into the nearby streams. Oil booms were successfully deployed by them to contain the spill, reduce the harmful effects of the oil, and minimise the damage done both within the water and the surrounding land.



After the incident, an Environment Agency Spokesperson said “ We responded quickly to eliminate the threat posed by this serious pollution. Due to our prompt efforts the impact of the pollution of the environmentally sensitive waterways has

been greatly reduced, and was prevented from spreading across the fishing lakes. Surveys of the affected stretch of river will take place to assess the impact of any ecological impact over coming weeks.”



At the time of writing, BWT volunteers have noted traces of a thin film of oil still on the water surface near the bridge. It is too early to say what the long-term effects may be, but the incident serves to illustrate how an ecological balance, built up over many years, can be damaged by a single incident occurring some distance away from the site.

**Members of the public are encouraged to report any instances of pollution to the Environment Agency’s incident hotline on 0800 807060**

# BEARSTED AND THURNHAM FAYRE

Despite the grips of a very long winter, warmer days are on the way. While hoping for the sun to shine, we are also planning for our stall at this year's Bearsted and Thurnham Fayre.

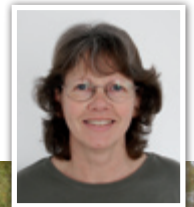
This year, come along with your family and friends to look at the displays on BWT's achievements and successes. Be amazed at how the landscape has changed and developed. Look at the Three

Year Environmental Plans and perhaps consider how you can make a contribution, by giving BWT just a few hours each week. It all makes a difference. Come and talk to our volunteers to find out more about the many jobs they do.

If you also want to renew your subscription (due on 1 July) or ask about sponsorship for trees or benches, we can help!

**DON'T  
FORGET!  
SATURDAY  
26 JUNE**

## THANKS TO OUR DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS BY CHRIS STREET



I would like to say a great big 'thank you' to everyone in the delivery team. Many of you have been helping out for several years now and I know we can rely on you to get the job done whenever there is a newsletter etc. to be delivered. I'm also very pleased that we have many new volunteers who have joined the delivery team, which makes the job much easier especially when I have to call on about 40 of you, from a group of 65, whenever we need to do a leaflet drop covering the whole of Bearsted.

The team regularly hand deliver to about 850 homes in Bearsted, Downswood and Bearsted Park – just think how much money BWT saves

on stamps and envelopes etc every time a newsletter is delivered!

I have personally made many new friends through BWT and helping to organise the delivery team. It's great knowing that you never moan or grumble when I phone you up asking if you'd be able to help out again! You all play a very big part in helping BWT succeed – thank you very much.

**Editorial note: This is only one part of Chris' involvement in BWT, which also includes Membership Secretary. She is one of the many tireless background volunteers. Thank you Chris.**

# TREE PLANTING AND SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorship of trees and benches has continued to be very popular during the last year. Eighteen new trees were planted in November/ December, twelve of which had been on the 2009 waiting list, the remainder being replacements for those that had died during the year.

Additionally, five benches around the Trust and in the playground have been sponsored.



What will become a beautiful row of twenty five trees, to screen the houses along the A20 has also been planted. This includes Rowan, Birch, Field Maple and Wild Cherry.

**Members are welcome to sponsor these trees but please note there are only twenty five available! Please contact Dave Ward on 01622 737133**



## MEMBERSHIPS

Membership renewals are due on the 1st July. Family membership is a minimum of £5 a year, which can be paid by standing order. Alternatively, why not take out a life membership for a one-off payment of £100.

For more details please contact Chris on 01622 739713 or [chris@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org](mailto:chris@bearstedwoodlandtrust.org)

TO DATE\* WE  
CURRENTLY HAVE  
**1050 FAMILIES**  
WHICH INCLUDE  
**279 LIFE MEMBERS**  
\*as of March 2010

## THANK YOU

We would like to say thanks to Sandy Fleming and Simon Penry for their help with the previous newsletter issues.

## MAINTENANCE

The regular maintenance of BWT will continue in 2010. Mowing will begin on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at the end of March till the end of October. First and third Thursdays are our general maintenance days each month throughout the year. Each morning session is from 09.00 to 12.30, but it is flexible subject to individual availability.

New volunteers (male and female) are always very welcome, so please come along to the tractor barn if you can.

Alternatively, please contact Dave Johnson on 01622 730321, David Ward 01622 737133 or Jeff Winn 01622 730477 for more information.

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