

## AGM 2012:

70 Members and Friends attended this year's AGM at the Bowls Club on 30 September. Full minutes are already on the BWT website. News and reports are summarised elsewhere in the newsletter, but the following are the main points:

## Miss Pauline Moore:

Our Chairman, Richard Ashness, paid tribute to Pauline Moore who died in August 2012. Pauline was someone who was widely loved by generations, and whose valued friendship and wise counsel on the Management Committee had been of immense value to BWT since its formation. Her legacy of 10 acres to BWT would be a lasting testament of her love for the village and its countryside. A full tribute to Pauline, prepared by Peter Willson, is enclosed.

Looking to the future, there is a separate questionnaire inviting views from Members and the wider community on how BWT should develop Pauline's land.

## Treasurer's Report and Accounts 2012:

Bernard Head reported that BWT's finances had been carefully managed during the year, with costs very close to income. This reflects the increased maintenance needed as the site matures and the work diversifies.

## Bequests:

Bernard also mentioned two major bequests and restated the value of Gift Aid tax recovery, which in the past year had brought £4,000 to BWT. As a result of prudent management, gifts and bequests the Trust has a strong balance sheet. BWT would be very grateful if others would consider a bequest as a 'thank you' for the privilege of living in such a special village. Reserves are still healthy but we will need these for the future, especially in relation to the expanded site.

## Website:

Richard mentioned the fantastic work put in by Judy Buckley through her careful and "instant" updating of our website throughout the past year; do look to catch up with news and photos.

## What's inside this issue:

BWT's Management Plan .....	page 2
A Tale of Two Tractors .....	page 2
The Hay-Cut .....	page 3
Green Flag Success 2012 .....	page 4
Pauline Moore Tribute .....	pages 5-8
Visits .....	page 9
Maintenance & Projects .....	page 10
Trees & Bench Sponsorship .....	page 11
Membership .....	page 11
Sharon Bayne interview .....	page 12

# BWT's Management Plan 2012-2014

BWT's updated 3-Year Management Plan has been prepared by Sharon Bayne, with input from the Management Committee. The Plan covers the existing 16 acres of BWT (but not the additional 10 acres bequeathed by Pauline Moore) and sets out our aims for looking after the site as it continues to mature beyond its tenth year. It is also intended to help with environmental and ecological objectives as well as balancing the aims below:

- Maintaining and increasing nature conservation value of our land
- Meeting amenity needs for our members and the community, and keeping a 'tidy' site
- Allowing the successful establishment of planted trees
- Using BWT's resources efficiently and keeping within our resource capabilities (money and volunteers)
- Managed or cyclic mowing of meadow areas, with a structured regime for hay cutting in designated areas on both the north and south sides of the Lilk Stream
- Regular hand pulling of invasive or undesirable weeds
- Creation and preservation of border strips within mown areas to encourage more wildlife, with cutting on a 3-year cycle to prevent over-dominance by brambles, nettles and other undesirable species.
- Creation of more log piles within the wooded areas (already under way in 2012)
- Gradual cessation of mowing in wooded areas
- Replacement of poor quality hedgerows with new native species to encourage birds and other wildlife (winter 2012/13)
- Managed planting of areas of trees and benches without overpopulation.

Do have a look at the detailed Plan on our Website; our volunteers use the Plan as the basis for all our weekly work, summer and winter, and we keep a diary of every day's work.

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## A Tale of Two Tractors:

If members thought they were seeing double earlier in the year they were right! Our equipment purchases during the year included a second tractor, bought second-hand in Kent and renovated lovingly and painted blue by BWT's volunteers: this has proved a valuable acquisition, allowing much more flexibility in our weekly operations, and in such a wet summer we now have the opportunity to "catch-up" after prolonged wet weather. We also have a second-hand water-bowser, also painted blue with the BWT logo!



# The Hay-Cut

This year's Hay Cut was not carried out as planned. Following pleas by Peter Willson, another local farmer stepped in to help late in the season, and part of the site was cut and collected. The remainder was completed by Dave Johnson and Peter Schmoeger using BWT equipment, but we still had the problem of lifting and removing the very wet cut grass opposite the tractor barn.

Thanks to a wonderful response from BWT's membership, the resulting grass, covering 12000 square metres, was eventually removed by hand raking and cartage in wheelbarrows and our trailer (see photos). This is important for growing a healthy sward in future years. BWT's grateful thanks are due to Nick and Colin Leggett for cutting so late in the season and Ian Betts who stepped in to help with the removal, but especially to more than 30 volunteers who responded to the call for help in late October.

It was a splendid effort, and an example of how we can manage to overcome difficult problems. We are now looking at how we can manage the hay cut in future years.



# Green Flag Success 2012

Following the site inspection and audit on 20 June 2012, our Life President Peter Willson has now received confirmation that BWT has retained the prestigious Green Flag Award. We received a glowing report, attaining the highest category score of more than 80%. The only "improvement points" were essentially to carry on what we are doing now! The summary said:

"This site and its volunteer workforce are exemplary. The dedication and hard work that has gone into providing and maintaining this huge area is admirable. It is a first class example of community involvement and commitment to not only improve their local natural environment but to develop it into such a delightful and accessible green space to be in. The high marking is very well deserved."

The full report can be found on BWT's website.



# PAULINE: A TRIBUTE TO MISS PAULINE MOORE

16 NOVEMBER 1923 – 13 AUGUST 2012



Pauline proudly showing the Mayor her land

Born over Barclays Bank in Maidstone in 1923 where her father was a Bank Manager, Pauline moved with her parents to Sutton Street, Bearsted in 1925 where she remained for a further 86 years, over 50 of which were spent running her own highly successful and respected riding school.

Leaving school in 1940, the same year her father died, Pauline turned to the land for a lifelong passion of the countryside, animals and rural pursuits joining the Land Army in 1942.

Pauline learnt to ride herself at an early age. After the war, in 1946, saw the humble beginnings of Bearsted Riding School on a cinder track around an apple orchard behind Sutton House where Pauline lived. Her mother raised £100 which bought her first pony, horse box and stables, all erected by Pauline herself together with a hay store on the back of the house using ex-war material. Pauline, who was not adverse to mucking in, later learnt to shoe all her own horses to help keep the cost down.

# PAULINE: A TRIBUTE TO MISS PAULINE MOORE (1923 - 2012)



First path opening September 2005

Besides running her riding school, Pauline was Chief Instructor at the annual Tickham Hunt Pony Club Camp for over 30 years and was a founder member of Maidstone and District Riding Club holding shows and competitions on her land with everybody welcome. Pauline rented land locally at Gore Cottage, Snowfield, Barty House and many areas in Bearsted.

In the 1950s Pauline kept up to 100 poultry to supplement her small income from the riding school.

When Pauline's mother died in 1967 she could at last afford to buy a good competition horse and she bought Delphie, a chestnut mare to compete at shows and take hunting on Wednesdays with Tickham and Ashford Valley Hunts.

In 1973 Pauline sold Sutton House and used the money to build a bungalow on the land, which she moved into in 1975 and named 'Broadacre'. This had beautiful views across her land where she could stand and

enjoy her horses grazing, birds signing and dogs playing.

In 2003 aged 80, Pauline gave up her riding school licence and turned her home into a small but very friendly livery yard. Right up until last year Pauline could be seen out early every day feeding the horses, driving her famous red tractor "Thomas" around the land harrowing and topping the fields and in late afternoons walking her dogs. You could set your watch by her and the horses certainly knew when she was coming.

Pauline adored children spending time at the stables. She firmly believed that working with horses and learning how to care for them properly provided all the required skills to help anyone in life no matter what they chose to do.

After her bitter disappointment a couple of years earlier, Pauline explained to Bearsted Woodland Trust that "The Woodland Trust" were not interested in her land unless she could provide a bursary

# PAULINE: A TRIBUTE TO MISS PAULINE MOORE (1923 - 2012)



Persuading villagers to vote for BWT at the People's Millions competition

for 5 to 10 years after her death, which she turned down.

Pauline was delighted that her land had given so much pleasure to so many people and was keen to ensure that it did not fall to developers after her death. In 2005 she entered into discussions with Bearsted Woodland Trust and, after taking time to evaluate the organisation, decided to leave her land to our charity to ensure that it would remain as a green space in perpetuity. She later joined the management team of the trust, to which she made invaluable contributions at all the meetings, with her carefully prepared notes. She was a true inspiration to all the committee and she was truly our matriarch.

To keep Pauline in the link of communications, as she was not on email, it was agreed that we should have a meeting at her house at least every 10 days to update her with important information for discussion.

One of her wishes was that a hedge be planted around her land, so she could see it grow in her lifetime. This wish came true, and in November 2011 over 200 "friends" of the trust, with Pauline leading from the front as ever, turned out to plant over 3,000 small trees around borders, along the Ashford Road and the Roundwell.

A week after the planting she wrote a personal note, and I quote: "In 1968 I had saved enough money to buy a 12-acre field from the previous owners, who had tried, and failed, to get permission to build."

"This treasured land has given me so much happiness to both young and old in the past and present. Oh! What happy, happy days we had on this loved and treasured land."

Over 200 friends packed Holy Cross Church to say farewell to Pauline. A slow moving procession began at her home at Broadacre and headed to Bearsted Green before finishing at the church for the funeral. Speeches were made by her cousin

# PAULINE: A TRIBUTE TO MISS PAULINE MOORE (1923 - 2012)

Ian Bruce-Russell who grew up with Pauline from childhood, Justin Byrd a lifelong friend, "Pauline was my mentor in life, someone I admired dearly. Pauline meant so much to us all, she inspired us through her love of life, animals and all that is true and right" and myself. The service was not a sad occasion, more a celebration of a wonderful life.

Many tributes were paid to Pauline in all the press coverage but one that I think demonstrated just how dedicated Pauline was about protecting the open spaces in our villages came from Sue Sopata a friend, "One lasting memory of Pauline will be her determination to protect Bearsted. The effort and fight she put into stopping KIG was astounding, through such bad weather when most people wouldn't venture out

Pauline at over the age of 85 attended every public meeting even after slipping on the ice and having to be taken home she still continued her fight to win." Also right up to her death she was campaigning and writing to Maidstone Borough Council trying to protect Junction 8 from development!

Pauline – Bearsted Woodland Trust will ensure that your land, that has brought so much happiness in the past, will, due to your act of generosity, bring so much future happiness and joy for EVERYONE in the villages of Bearsted, Thurnham and the surrounding area for evermore.

**Peter Willson**



Pauline's procession going past the village pond with her five horse escort



# Visits:

The annual walkabouts by Thurnham CE Infant School's Year 2 and Roseacre Junior School's Year 3 earlier in the year had been lively and entertaining for all; the young people were well-informed about BWT and more than 90% had been before, most with parents and family. Many children noted that they were born in the year that BWT had been formed (2004), and that they were the same age as some of the trees! They had sent lovely letters and signed cards of appreciation to their guides at BWT. Questions ranged from "how many trees do you have?" to "how old are you – are you as old as any of the trees", and "when can we run round the maze?"

The Junior Football Pitch is now being put to regular use, and there had been many ad-hoc picnics and visits by Nursery School groups during the summer.



We also entertained the Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Rodd Nelson-Gracie who visited BWT on the morning of 4 October. Many volunteers and friends attended, and the Mayor was amazed by the site and community spirit which it showed.



# Maintenance & Projects Report: Dave Johnson

2011/12 has been another busy year of activities by the band of 18 regular volunteers, several of whom live outside Bearsted, some as far away as the Medway Towns. As the site matures the variety and amount of work has increased.

Mowing and strimming is carried out by 4 teams on a fortnightly cycle on Tuesdays and Wednesdays; all work is related to the 3-year Maintenance Plan, so margins and wildlife areas are left untouched. Path repairs, mulching and other projects are carried out on Thursdays.

The Church Landway hedge has been cut twice in 2012 and in late summer the hedge leading to the Sutton Street entrance had been cut: this had been a major task. Pauline Moore's paddock had been mown on two occasions, to prevent the spread of invasive weeds. Other project work included preparation, planting and initial watering and mulching of the new hedgerow along Ashford Road/ Roundwell. This looks very healthy - a testament to the careful ground preparation which preceded the planting last November, but will need maintenance in the next few years before layering becomes possible. Maintenance of paths and mulching of trees has been carried out as needed.

The Marriott Hotel, Tudor Park, had sent a group of 10 employees for a team-building exercise in repairing bark paths; they liked it so much they had been back a second time!

Thanks to team leaders David Ward, Jeff Winn and Peter Schmoeger and all regular volunteers for their commitment and hard work.



## **STOP PRESS: All Tree Lovers** Look out for and report Ash Die Back Disease

So far Kent has no reported cases, but we are not far from the disease's stronghold in East Anglia and it could spread quickly. Swift action is needed and BWT is aware of the situation.

Signs: wilted leaves, die back at the tops of trees and side shoots and lesions on the bark.

For more information on the disease, symptoms and how to report it visit [www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara). For those with smart phones, download the free app ASHTAG from your store.



## Trees and Bench Sponsorship: David Ward

In his annual update, David reports that in the year from September 2011 to August 2012 we have arranged sponsorship of 29 trees and a small copse, providing a total income of £8,000. Included in these sponsorships are 17 new life members.

Between November 2011 and February 2012, 31 trees were planted; these included Himalayan Birches on the bank adjacent to Gore Cottage, Oaks along Pauline Moore's boundary with BWT and various species in the new hedgerow planted along the A20 boundary towards Roundwell.

Currently we have approximately 66 existing trees of varying size and type for sponsorship, and we also have 1 bench available in the Parish Council's playground area.

Using our own water bowser, this year, we have been able to ensure that all our trees have been kept watered and thus we have not lost any to drought during the summer, although for various other reasons we do have to replace several that have died. The trees and inscriptions database has been kept up-to-date. There are also 3 fingerpost signs now in the area to direct visitors to the BWT site.

## Membership: Chris Street

At the end of September there were 1170 families/individuals registered, an increase of 34 during the year. The figure included 380 Life Memberships, an increase of 41. There were 75 Memberships still to be renewed. Chris thanks all those volunteers whose help is invaluable in distributing newsletters and other BWT information, and we are delighted to give a warm welcome to Felicity and David Vowles, Gillian Malkin, and Deborah Griffith who have recently become volunteer members of the delivery team.



## Sharon Bayne, Conservation Adviser to BWT 2003-2012 Interviewed by Judy Buckley

Sharon Bayne was born and went to school in Hampshire. She always loved nature study, and in her teens she volunteered with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

After leaving school she joined a large company manufacturing fork-lift trucks then, having gained experience in office work of all sorts over three years, she decided to go to college. A year's Science Access course in Canterbury qualified her for a degree course in Environmental Science. At Plymouth University Sharon met her future husband, Richard, who was taking the same course. After graduating they luckily found their first jobs in neighbouring areas; Sharon in Brentwood and Richard in Epping. For Brentwood Borough Council Sharon looked after the local authority parks, commons and woodland, made sure the rights of way were in good condition and advised local landowners about managing their land to support wildlife. Sharon also studied for an MSc, Research in Ecological Restoration, with a three-year project of experiments to establish the most effective way of restoring heathland. Beginning with an area overrun with bracken and invasive aspen, the top soil was removed, stirring up the seed bank. After two years, seeds which had lain dormant in the ground for over 50 years, burst into life. Heather, dwarf gorse and common lousewort re-appeared all over the heath.

In 2002 Richard and Sharon moved to Kent, where Sharon spent the next three years

working for the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership. In 2003, when Richard Ashness had just bought the land from Wards for Bearsted village, Sharon was asked by Maidstone Borough Council to help him draw up a plan for managing and rejuvenating the land. She also helped organise some of the early volunteer work parties using MVCP tools and vans. Greatly impressed by the enthusiasm she found in Bearsted, Sharon became more involved with the Trust as a volunteer, and her expertise has been absolutely invaluable. It was Sharon who masterminded the complicated applications needed to win those very important awards from People's Millions and BIFFA, and the Bearsted Woodland Trust Committee say that they could never have managed without her.

After her daughter was born, Sharon began her own consultancy business, Blackwood Bayne, working on ecological projects from home, and she is also studying for a distance learning degree in Environmental Law at Aberystwyth University. Sharon's husband Richard works for the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and their shared love of conservation is not just their work but their hobby. They have a wild flower area in their own garden, love going out for walks, and their daughter is becoming a keen birdwatcher.

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