

2018: The best hay cut yet!



BWT are grateful to Ian Betts from Otham, who has cut our hay for a number of years, and this year the weather was on our side. 200 bales were collected by Teresa New for her three horses in Lenham. Teresa is a life member of BWT. She paid the cost of the cutting and baling, and collected the hay from site as soon as it had been baled.

Teresa says that her horses know what is good for them and love our hay which is especially sweet. Storm, her 21 year-old thrives on it, and, in spite of his age, delighted her by beating 224 other entries to become Chilham Champion this year!

2018 School Visit

In September, 90 children from Year 2 at Thurnham Infant School were led by David Ward, John Gregory and John Wale on a walk planned around the curriculum for science and nature. After a short explanation of BWT's history, they toured both sides of the stream, listened carefully, and were very thoughtful in their questions. Here are some excerpts from their letters.

- Dear Mr John thank you for taking us around. I learnt that the Miner Bees do not sting.
- We saw bracket fungi, you must never touch bracket fungi it is poisonous.
- I saw a slime slug it is orange.
- I was interested that the tree was 300 years old, but it is still green.
- I loved seeing fairies at the woodland trust, seeing the Thurnham tree, and seeing the green man.
- I liked the birds tweeting.
- I learnt that animals do not like loud noises. Why do animals not like loud noises?

- What do the ducks eat?
- The bug hotel was pretty and good.
- My favourite bit was seeing the farm machinery
- I was excited to see the goats, they looked funny.

Fungi and Lichens



In addition to interesting fungi on rotting wood, in autumn there are always some growing in the ground, if you look for them in damp shady corners. Our website (address on page 8) has a useful Nature Notes page where you can see what other visitors have spotted on their walks here, and where to look for the fungi and lichens in the photos in this photograph.



Lichens are another thing to look for, and again, look at the Nature Notes to see where to find it. Lichens are supposed to be an aid to navigation - growing only on the cooler side of tree trunks, thus showing the direction of North - but your Editor has to confess that she navigates more successfully by the noise of traffic on the Ashford Road!

Award Winning Maintenance!



Once again we have been awarded a high score with our Green Flag. Visiting assessors were very complimentary about our good maintenance. Under the heading "innovation and creativity" they praised our use of fallen and dead wood, re-purposed as sculpture, which they found was a wonderful discovery. They also liked the links to previous landowners neatly acknowledged with sculpture and the displaying of mechanical farm tools.

We have installed a drain to take rain water that has been causing puddles in the gentler path from Church Meadow to the bridge. And, for safety reasons, a higher and more solid fence has been built around a Southern Water inspection manhole nearby. Both the jobs were done by our own volunteers, who have also renovated notice boards and repaired benches, gates and fencing.





BWT were grateful to Kent County Council, who sent contractors very promptly to repair the board walk on the public footpath near the bridge. It was completely dislodged and floating after that short spell of heavy rain in June!

Overall, however, June and July were very dry, which, although great for our hay, meant that we needed our water bowser every week to water as many of the new trees as we could.

We were delighted when Jeff Winn was presented with a very well deserved Mynyn Award by the Mayor of Maidstone in June. Jeff is the longest-serving member of the maintenance team, having joined early in 2005. In 2013 he took over the organisation from the late Dave Johnson. Masterminding three working mornings every week means that Jeff spends at least 12 hours a week on the site, and many more at home doing background planning and ordering! Crucial work; which has been especially applauded by Green Flag judges.



Photo courtesy of Downsmail

Major's Lakes History

Major's Lakes are named after the very popular Major Charles Wayth JP (1769-1852) Captain of the 17th Light Dragoons, for many years second-in-command at the Army's main cavalry depot in Maidstone. The 1842 Bearsted Apportionment lists him paying tithes for his home, Bearsted House on the Green, with its garden and adjoining paddock, plus "Fish Pond Wood, Fish Pond Meadow, Fish Pond and Lodge Meadow".

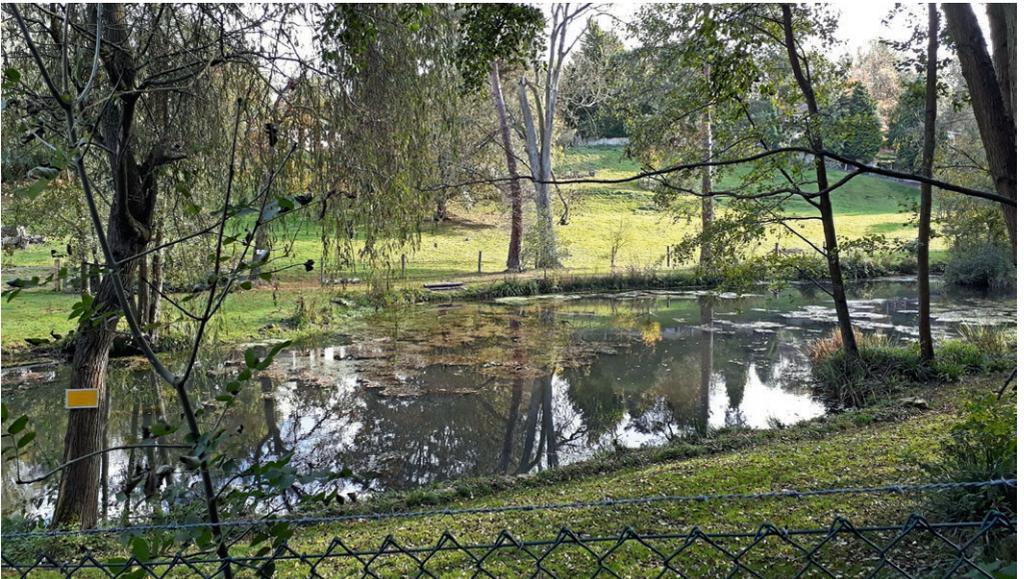
The Major was involved in many local organisations and especially keen on allotments. He left many charitable bequests including £100 for the Maidstone Infirmary and money to buy books of 'a useful and scientific nature' as prizes for the children at Bearsted School.

In 1894 Walter Fremlin created a duck shoot by damming the Lilk stream and channelling the water into a conduit under the main road, and in 1925 the sale brochure for Milgate estate described the lakeside as an "excellent site for Tea Gardens".

Kentish Gazette 29 October 1844

BEARSTED.—Cottage Allotments.—Wednesday se'night being the rent-day of the allotment holders of the parish of Bearsted, the whole number, amounting to thirty-nine, were provided with a substantial hot supper and a plentiful supply of good ale, at the Royal Oak, on Bearsted-green. This supper is provided annually by the subscriptions of the landed proprietors, clergy, and gentry of the vicinity, whose health, accompanied by hearty English cheers, is always drunk on these occasions. The allotment system in this parish has now been in active operation ten years, it having been introduced by Major Wayth in 1834 ;

In the mid 1990s Ron and Shirley King dredged over a thousand tons of silt and debris, creating two lakes which were carefully stocked with fish and leased to the Boxley Angling Club. In 2000, the Major's Lakes Angling Syndicate was formed, and since 2008 the lakes have been managed by Country Sports.



Pollarded ashes sprout again



In Woodlander 32 (a year ago) we reported the pollarding of the first of our large ash trees infected with ash die-back disease. Since then we have pollarded four more large ash trees in Moore Meadow, primarily for safety. Infected leaves and twigs need to be burnt and dead branches may fall. But removing bad wood may give the tree extended life and new leaves can already be seen on all our pollarded ashes. All of them will henceforth be regularly inspected and monitored.

Tree Sponsorship suspended

BWT has 523 Life Members. The tree sponsorship programme began in 2004 and now, 14 years later, Life Members have sponsored about 450 trees and 64 benches. Which means that our 26 acres are pretty full of both.

Therefore, at the 2018 AGM it was announced that sponsorship is being suspended for two years.

We are, however, continuing to move plaques from ground posts to established trees, and replace damaged ones. If you would like a new oval plaque, we can provide one at a cost of £10.



Your Consent for Data Storage

New General Data Protection Regulations came into force in May. We must ask all our members for their consent to our holding their personal information. Many thanks to 800 of you who have completed the form and given consent. However, over 370 members have still to reply. If you have received a consent form or renewal letter with this newsletter it means we still need your consent.

If you have access to the Internet, the easiest way is to complete the form online on our homepage: **www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org** - otherwise please complete your form and return it to us as soon as possible.



45 Friends at the 2018 Annual Meeting

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Judy thanks Kate Kersey, Michael Buckley and committee members for help with this issue.

Up to date news and further information about Bearsted Woodland Trust can be found at www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org

The website contact page is the easiest way to send us messages or to request this newsletter by email. We also welcome nature notes from BWT Friends.

BWT Telephone 07807 917533 Please leave your name, number and message, and we'll return your call.

Postal address: Bearsted Woodland Trust, 8 Fauchons Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 4AH

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