

## Help Us Recruit New Friends!

BWT is nearly 15 years old now, and full of visitors, but it's not unusual to discover they don't know anything about becoming Friends. In fact our Friends only number about one third of all local households, and because of this, Committee members have an ongoing programme of dropping membership leaflets around the village.

We also hope that existing Friends will encourage neighbours and work colleagues who enjoy the land as we do, to join us. The subscription is good value, and we think that being a "friend" family, getting our newsletters, and having the opportunity to attend annual meetings, gives a sense of ownership to all ages.



The Tuesday Health Walkers waving BWT application forms

# Parkland in Moore Meadow

In 2013 Moore Meadow was full of parkland trees, and BWT hoped to keep that look unchanged. However, although peripheral planting has flourished, we have lost one big oak and several ashes to old age and disease. The view in 2019 (below) is different.



Sadly, three ash trees already pollarded which started last year to sprout again, do not look so good now. They will probably have to be removed completely.

However BWT plans to plant new oaks, hornbeams, limes or elms, to ensure a “parkland” environment for the future, although some of us will not be around to see it!

Ragwort is poisonous to some livestock, and horses may be grazing nearby. It is not an offence to grow it for the cinnabar moth, but it is illegal to allow it to spread. So we pull it out before it flowers, to stop seeds blowing, as we don't want to use herbicide unless absolutely necessary. Nettles are also controlled in the central grassland because they affect the quality of the hay cut, but elsewhere are left to benefit wildlife.

# Old Avenue before and after

BWT's Winter project 2018/19 was the removal of dead growth on Old Avenue.



This photo taken in September 2018 shows how overgrown it had become.



This one taken in May 2019 shows how it has opened up so that we can see how it develops and plan its future.

# The History of Old Avenue

Old Avenue (highlighted on map) was never a public right of way. It wasn't marked at all on the 1840 tithe map shown here, but did appear on ordnance survey maps in 1870 and 1894. But it was clearly a water supply route from a well beside the lake to Church Farm.

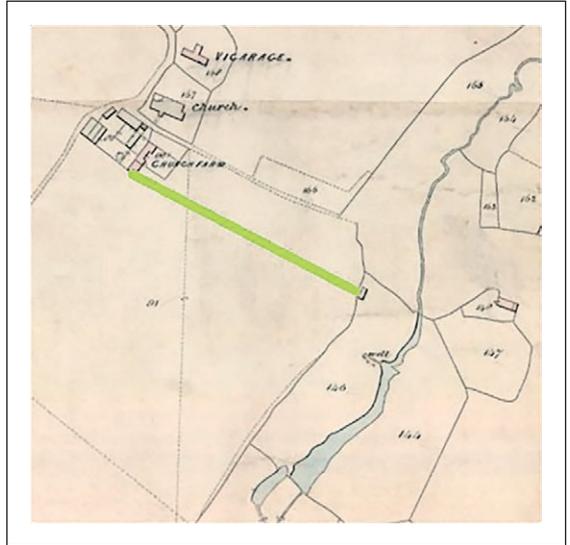
In the 1890s Mid Kent Water had been given Parliamentary consent and was beginning to install pipes and storage to supply the villages along the North Downs with fresh water from the chalk streams above.

In 1900 Maidstone brewer Walter Fremlin of Milgate Park (an expert on clean water supplies) devised an alternative scheme to supply the Milgate estate and Bearsted village. He built two storage towers, above Roseacre and at Crismill, to supply Bearsted. He installed a pumping station by the lake and Old Avenue was probably the route for pipes to the Roseacre (now Tower Lane) tank.

But complications made his scheme for the village short-lived. In 1906 he sold all the structure and apparatus (pumps, connections, etc.) to Mid Kent,

retaining only the right to supply Milgate House and the buildings within Milgate Park, Crismill House, and Tollgate

But not everyone paid for the piped water supply. Many families went on using their own wells, even into the 1960s. Meanwhile in the 1930s, when the Jessel family lived at Mote Hall, they used to take Summer picnics down Old Avenue to their boathouse on the lake.



Map courtesy of the National Archives and Kent Archaeological Society

## MR. FREMLIN'S WATER SCHEME.

The Council were notified that Mr. W. T. Fremlin, of Milgate Park, proposed to apply for a provisional order authorising him to supply water to the parishes of Bearsted, Hollingbourne, Lenham, and Leeds.

A letter was also received from Mr. A. J. Ellis, stating that the Mid Kent Company intended some time ago to include the same parishes in their Bill, but withdrew the proposal on hearing that the Hollingbourne Council contemplated carrying out a water scheme themselves. The company were, however, quite prepared to carry the matter through without any expense or risk to the Council.

The Clerk said it was for the Council to say which of these three courses they would adopt: Assent to Mr. Fremlin supplying the parishes; ask the Mid Kent Company to do so; or carry out a scheme themselves.

Cutting from Maidstone Gazette 1900

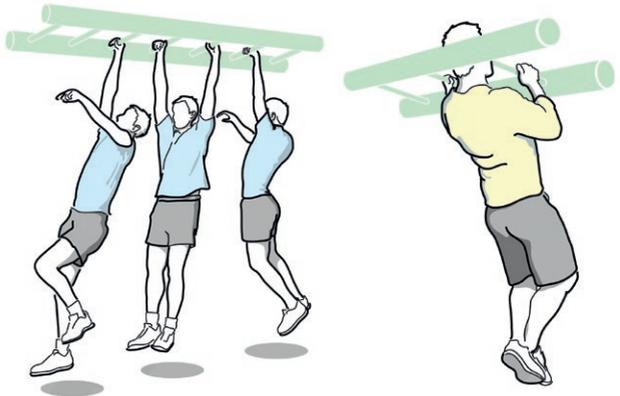
# Fitness Trail will be installed in July

BWT's initiative to provide a fitness trail has been welcomed by Bearsted Parish Council as it supports their strategic aim of improving health and well-being, and they have made a grant toward the cost.



This photo (taken on Forestry Commission land) shows a Bench-Sit-Up.

The trail will have six stations on the edges of the main field for full body exercise. We have chosen a bench-sit-up, parallel bars, pull-ups, step-ups, horizontal ladder and balance beams. Clear instructions will be displayed, with two suggested exercises for each station.



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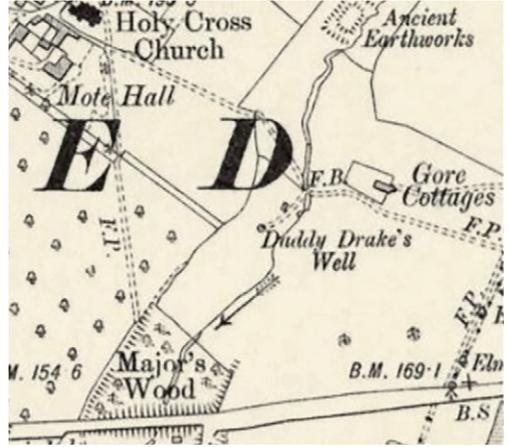
## Roller Bench Wood

Meanwhile in Roller Bench Wood, thinning of untidy trees in Winter 2017/18 has opened up the canopy, and the increased light levels have encouraged wild flowers on the woodland floor.

# Who was Daddy Drake?

Hops were washed to control aphids. In 1891 the Sussex Courier, in an article about hop washers, said that Drake & Muirhead's machine "certainly does wet 'em most effectively - thoroughly drenches 'em in fact," provided that plenty of water is easily obtainable!

The "Daddy Drake" of Bearsted's well might have been J A Drake (1843-1911) Maidstone Engineer, founder of Drake & Muirhead in 1882, whose son Arthur was also an engineer?



## Tree Sponsorship

Suspension of tree sponsorship continues. At the moment we are planting very few new trees, but we will let all Friends know if this changes. In the meantime, please will Friends who already have trees remember that BWT aims to create natural woodland, not a memorial garden? Please don't add extra memorabilia to your tree.

## Diary Dates:

Come to the BWT stand at the Bearsted and Thurnham Fayre. **Saturday 29th June 2019** on the Green from 1pm. Photo display, Souvenirs and Friends membership sign-ups.

BWT Annual General Meeting on **Sunday 29th September 2019**. Friends welcome at 2:30pm at Bearsted Bowls Club, opposite our main entrance in Church Landway. The bar will open at 2pm.

Editor: Judy Buckley Design: Paul J Street Printed by Reed Printers, Rochester

Judy thanks Kate Kersey, Michael Buckley and Pauline Mannering for help with this issue.

Up to date news and further information about Bearsted Woodland Trust can be found at [www.bearstedwoodlandtrust.org](http://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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