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Emsworth Conservation News
Compiled by Frances Jannaway

'Spring Bird Song Walk' in Hollybank Woods on 22 April
It was a fine, sunny morning, perfect weather for a leisurely stroll through the woodland, listening to bird song. The walk led by Brian Fellows was attended by 15 people (including four children). Most of the common woodland birds were heard, but summer visitors were relatively quiet, with only three Blackcaps and a single Chiffchaff right at the end of the walk. At least three Buzzards were heard and seen soaring overhead.

'Wildflower and Butterfly Walk' in Hollybank Woods on 20 May
A group of around 20 adults, two young children and one dog gathered for the morning walk led by Andy Brook. Despite the warm weather, very few butterflies were about, with only Speckled Wood, Holly Blue and an unidentified White with some well camouflaged Brimstone caterpillars on the nibbled leaves of Alder Buckthorn.

Although the Bluebells had already flowered, there were plenty of other wild flowers to be seen including a few Early-purple Orchids, Foxgloves, Yellow Pimpernel, Germander and Wood Speedwell, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Oxeye Daisy, Crosswort and Common Vetch, plus lots of Sweet Vernal-grass and Field Wood-rush.

'Meadow Healing' Herb Walk through Brook Meadow Thursday 24 May
It was a lovely sunny evening for the 19 people who came on the 'Meadow Healing' herb walk led by Steve Taylor of the Medicine Garden during Herbal Medicine Awareness week.

By means of anecdotes, research findings, personal experience and folklore told by older people he had met, Steve went on to describe the uses of several common herbs found in Brook Meadow. The plants included Common Nettle, Willow, Butterbur, Common Mallow, Blackberry, Mugwort, Burdock and Meadowsweet.

Path maintenance work in Brook Meadow and Nore Barn Woods
The path maintenance work in Brook Meadow which was started in Palmers Road copse in April has now been completed. The work included relaying the path from the Water Vole signcase round to the other entrance onto Palmers Road car park, removing a set of steps and rebuilding them in a more useful location and building a ramp to prevent the path from collapsing. The work has been carried out by young offenders on a 'Community Payback' programme supervised by the Probation Service. Materials are being supplied by Havant Borough Council.

In Nore Barn Woods, work on resurfacing a 310m section of the Wayfarers Walk path is now complete, and the path is beginning to merge in with the woods. The path stood up well to heavy rains in March. Grants for the path were received from Chichester Harbour Conservancy (Sustainable Development Fund), Veolia Environmental Trust, and Hampshire County Council (Access Forum), to whom our thanks are due.

It is hoped that the Community Payback team will recommence path maintenance work in Brook Meadow in June/July. Once work has been completed here, the team will go on to repair hollows which have developed in the new path around Nore Barn Woods.



Community Payback team hard at work in Palmers Road copse with Steve Patterson and Eddie Pervin (Probation Service) and Frances Jannaway (chair of Brook Meadow Conservation Group) looking on

Pollution in the Mill Ponds
A pollution incident in the form of black sludge entering Slipper Mill Pond from Peter Pond was reported to Nick Madina (Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association) on 23 May. Nick had a good look round both millponds as well as the southern sections of the River Ems but the water was clear and he came to the conclusion that it was a false alarm. However, there had been a 'real' pollution incident in Dolphin Creek ten days earlier. He contacted the Environment Agency who gave the following advice.

If you see any pollution in either the River Ems, Lumley Stream or the Mill Ponds you should:

- phone the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60
- give details of the incident and mention the names of the Local Rangers in the report - i.e. Paul Reynolds and Trevor Page.

Improvements to footpaths - an update
The collapsed stile at the Westbourne access point to the West Sussex Border Path, reported by James Colbourne in the last issue of The EMS, has recently been repaired by the 'sub sub tenant'. The replacement stile is rather rough and is still unsuitable for people with mobility problems, including children in push chairs and the elderly but at least it can be used by most fit and able-bodied people.



'Replacement stile' at Westbourne access to West Sussex Border Path

Tree Warden Scheme
Frances Jannaway

Thanks to an article in 'Serving You' and other publicity, there are now a total of 24 Tree Wardens across the Borough. As the revival started in Emsworth in 2006, it is not surprising that 11 are in Emsworth. Havant (including Bedhampton and Denvilles) has four and Waterlooville/Cowplain six with one in each in Hayling Island, Langstone and Leigh Park. The aim is to have a small group of Tree Wardens in each area of the Borough with their own coordinator who meet on a regular basis and decide what projects they want to carry out in their particular area.

The Emsworth Tree Warden group meet on a regular basis and have been involved in supporting the establishment of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on several trees under threat from development as well as objecting to TPO trees (and trees in the Conservation Area) from being felled. The Tree Warden Scheme is supported by HBC's Tree Officer, Jamie Gargett. If you see or hear of a significant tree which you think may be threatened, please contact Jamie Gargett immediately on 02392 446525, email jamie.gargett@havant.gov.uk

One of our Tree Wardens, Jonathan Huet, has given a talk on Trees at the Horticultural Society's AGM. He also gave a Tree Identification Walk in the spring and a Guided Tree Walk in Hollybank Woods at the end of June. In the autumn, we are hoping to work with Emsworth Primary School on a Seed Collecting and Tree Planting project. Finally, we are planning to compile and publish an Emsworth Tree Trail booklet at the end of the year funded by the Havant Conservation Action Project.

Many of you may have seen that three large Lombardy Poplars have been felled along the Havant Road recently. Trees in verges along roads are the responsibility of Hampshire County Council Highways Department. One of our Tree Wardens checked this out and was told that the trees were diseased and had to be felled for safety reasons. She was also informed that the trees would be replaced in the autumn. It is vital that these trees are replaced with new ones, especially since Havant Road is designated in the Local Plan as a Road with Special Character due to its mature trees. The Emsworth Tree Wardens will make sure this tree planting is actually carried out.



The stump of one of the three Lombardy Poplars

Havant Conservation Action Project

Peter Hodges

- Chair of Friends of Park Wood

Brook Meadow Conservation Group, Friends of Nore Barn Woods, Friends of Hollybank Woods and Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association are four voluntary conservation groups in Emsworth that are working in partnership with other similar voluntary groups across Havant Borough who together have formed the Havant Conservation Action Project.

This new joint project has been set up with funding from the National Lottery (Awards for All) to encourage more people to get involved in practical conservation in the local area. By either giving their time and helping to care for the natural places in the Borough or by taking part in guided walks and other activities to learn more about the wildlife and heritage on their doorstep. The project is supporting local voluntary groups with funding to run events and workdays, purchased a set of display panels, display material and leaflets and set up a website to publicise these activities as well as provide local training courses to improve the skills of volunteers in the groups.

There is a programme of guided walks and other local conservation-themed events taking place over the year. The walks are led by experts and events happening in Emsworth in July include, a Moth and Bat Summer Party in Hollybank Woods, two Ems valley walks and a Herb Walk in Brook Meadow. In September, there is a Woodland Fair at Park Wood, Cowplain on 30 September while in October there will be a fungi walk in Hollybank Woods and an English Bluebell planting day in Nore Barn Woods. A full programme of activities across the Havant area can be found on our website: www.havantconservationaction.org.uk or you can pick up a leaflet from your local library or community centre.



**New Forum for
Chichester Harbour Users**

John Davis

A brand new forum has been added to the Conservancy website to allow discussion between anyone who has an interest in Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Harbour website www.conservancy.co.uk is used by up to 10,000 unique visitors each month. Up to now there has not been an area for the site users to meet and discuss issues that are important to them. The new Forum, which can be accessed from the homepage, will facilitate discussions and can be used to pass on useful information.

Already set up are areas where discussions can be held about current issues, life on the water and harbour wildlife. In addition, a Market Place area can be used for items for sale or wanted. John Davis, Chichester Harbour Master said, "We know people talk about Chichester Harbour so our website seemed the obvious place to host the discussions. We hope that the new forum will be well and responsibly used."

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