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## When you wish upon a star

Brook Meadow's Open Day in mid July was a great success. Over 300 adults and children came to share the lovely warm sunshine for the official opening of Emsworth's first Local Nature Reserve of which the Conservation Group are very proud. The Mayor of Havant, Councillor John Smith, opened the festivities by cutting the ribbon and making a short speech. Then the fun began.

As usual there was much interest in the various activities - Nature Trail, Nature Hunt, Grasses Exploration, Herb Walk, Butterfly Spotting and excellent photographic displays of the Meadow.

Making Bat and Bird boxes was hugely popular too, with people of all ages producing the most wonderful sturdy 'houses' for our winged friends. Many thanks to Pete Hodges, chair of the Friends of Park Woods, Waterlooville, for organising this.

Volunteers manning the refreshment tent were also kept busy, overflowing as it was with delicious homemade cakes and cookies. Thanks to Dave Wagg of Emsworth Home Hardware for generously supplying plastic beakers, paper plates and serviettes.

Last but not least was the 'Wishing Stars' corner. This activity is always well attended by boys and girls of all ages - even some middle aged! One may well think that this delightfully messy activity is just a bit of fun - which of course it is. But it is much more as all ages can take part at a deeper level. So how does this work?

Each child chooses a cut-out star or butterfly on coloured card. On one side they write their name and a Wish - something good for the Meadow or indeed the World - this is after much thought, for this is a serious business. The other side is for decorating with a choice of materials -coloured pens, pencils, stars, stickers, glue and glitter - definitely glitter!! Parents are often drawn into the game, encouraging the process and when complete there are smiles all round! The children and their families then hang their artwork with a ribbon on the 'Wishing Tree' for all to see and admire.

So what is the value of all this? It is creative and fun to do. It is a way of becoming aware of, and caring for, the natural environment and being considerate of other life forms. It is a way of developing the beginnings of personal responsibility for the environment. It is about pride in an object of one's own making being displayed in a public place. It also encourages parents to enjoy a shared interest and maybe join the Brook Meadow volunteers.

How marvellous then for families to be able to enjoy 'quality time' out in the open air in such a captivating little wonderland.

Barbara Wrigley



## Autumnal Horse Chestnut Trees

Horse Chestnuts are widely used in prominent amenity plantings and the incidence of pests and diseases associated with this tree have previously been very low. However, you may have noticed that autumn has come rather early this year to all the magnificent Horse Chestnut trees along Havant Road and also Horndean Road. This is not just confined to Emsworth, as Horse Chestnuts all over Havant Borough are also affected in the same way. This premature aging of the leaves is caused by a leaf-mining moth, *Cameraria ohridella*, and possibly also a leaf blotch fungus, *Guignardia aesculi*.

The *Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner* was first observed in northern Greece in the late 1970's. It appeared unexpectedly in Austria in 1989 and has since spread rapidly throughout eastern, central and southern Europe. A series of years with above average summer temperatures and below average rainfall across Europe may well have contributed to the leaf-mining moth becoming a significant pest.

The moth was first found established in the UK in Wimbledon in 2002, spreading rapidly at a rate of 40-60 km/year, it is now present across most of southern England, the Midlands, East Anglia and South Wales. It has been suggested that the rapid expansion of the moth is linked to human transportation, particularly of infested leaves accidentally carried on vehicles. Damage to the leaves is caused by the larvae of the moth burrowing between the upper and lower surfaces of the leaves, resulting in serpentine mines which are at first translucent. Up to 700 leaf mines have been recorded on a single leaf often merging together. Severely damaged leaves shrivel and turn brown by late summer and fall early, well before the normal leaf fall in the autumn.

The *Leaf Blotch Fungus* is one of the most common diseases of Horse Chestnut trees and is not as significant as the insect pest. The fungus is recognised by reddish or dull brown irregular blotches concentrated at the tips and margins of the leaflets often outlined by a conspicuous yellow band. Later, the fungal infections produce tiny black pimples on the browned parts mostly on the upper surface. Leaflets attacked by the fungus roll upwards longitudinally and may fall prematurely. Although unsightly, the damage occurs after most of the growth has taken place and is widespread in the south of England.

## Reducing carbon footprint is everybody's business

The Climate Bill reaches the decisive Report stage in November. This Bill puts into statute the UK's targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through domestic and international action by at least 60%t by 2050. Green groups say it should be nearer 80% and include aviation and shipping. Local councils will now include measurements of CO2 emissions within their areas and set strategies for reducing those generated from delivering their own services.

Figures from DEFRA indicate 755,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2005 within Havant Borough split more or less evenly across industry, transport and domestic users. At 6.5 tonnes per head, Havant is well below the average for the southeast region (8.4 tonnes). Hampshire's highest emitter is the New Forest district (1,776,000 tonnes) and Basingstoke and Deane (1,613,000 tonnes). The presence of Fawley refinery and power station explain why the New Forest tops the league. Portsmouth weighs in with over 1,300,000 tonnes or about 6.8 tonnes per resident.

Many local authorities are now getting serious about emission reduction. Portsmouth's ambition is to reduce tonnage by 13% per resident by 2010-11 while across Hampshire, the figure is 10%. The city council launched a city-wide survey with almost 1,000 replies so far and is holding community workshops. 72% of their industry is at risk from flooding. With predictions of 15-30% more rainfall during the winter so it's hardly a fringe issue.

Councils are well placed to set the pace by making energy savings in public buildings, housing and fleet, promoting green energy and adapting to changing weather patterns.

But they account for typically 2% of the local carbon footprint. To make any real difference in carbon reduction, participation will need widening to include hospitals, business, energy and transport companies and the public. Only when everybody is working towards the same end, will any real progress be made. Calculate your carbon footprint: [www.footprint.wwf.org.uk/](http://www.footprint.wwf.org.uk/)

Ray Cobbett

## Maritime Recycling in Chichester Harbour

Under a new scheme launched by Chichester Harbour Conservancy, boat owners are provided with durable, re-usable bags to collect their waste on-board and bring it ashore to the new recycling facilities. Harbour users will be able to recycle glass, paper & cardboard, plastics and cans. Information and signage has been provided to tell people what can be recycled and where.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Chichester Marina, Emsworth Yacht Harbour, Northshore Yachts and Thornham Marina have piloted the new scheme. It is hoped to roll out the scheme to all marine businesses and sailing clubs within Chichester Harbour AONB in the near future.

The Conservancy is supporting the scheme through the Chichester Harbour AONB Sustainable Development Fund.

Edited from press release

Damage by both moth and fungus greatly impairs the *visual appearance* of the trees but there is no evidence that on their own either causes dieback or a decline in tree health or tree death. Consequently, there is no reason to fell or remove trees just because they are attacked by the leaf-mining moth or the leaf blotch fungus. Even severely infested or infected trees will grow new leaves as normal the following spring.

The most practical *means of control* is good hygiene by removing fallen leaves during the autumn and winter. The moth over-winters as a pupa in the fallen leaves, appearing to be extremely frost tolerant, surviving temperatures of below -29°C. Commercial composting of leaves or burning (if local regulations permit) destroys the pupae and reduces the moth population at the start of the growing season the following spring. This is when trees are growing most strongly and when any reduction in damage is of greatest benefit. It has been estimated that 1 kg of over-wintering leaves could result in the emergence of 4,500 moths the following spring with 80,000 eggs being laid. Trees will become re-infested later in the summer as moths fly in from the surrounding areas but damage at this time is much less important.



Horse Chestnut leaf infested with leaf miner

Frances Jannaway



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