

### **3 Brooks Nature Conservation Group Report on activity April 2009 to March 2010**

This reports on the Three Brooks Nature Conservation Group's fifth year of activity since its official constitution on 13 April 2005.

#### **Workdays and events**

(A full list of the year's activity is attached as an appendix.)

The group now has an established cycle of regular tasks. Now that the older woods are in much better shape, we have moved on to the newer plantations. With a number of experienced group members and a store full of tools, we are now able to run our workdays by ourselves.

We continued our programme of guided walks, which tend to attract different people. We had very good weather for our walk on the day of the Community Fair and introduced quite a large crowd of people to the reserve, and our bat walks, run by Paul, attracted 49 people although these were not evenly spread out! We have also received some media publicity this year; a plug from our local weatherman Ian Fergusson on BBC Points West brought a healthy turnout to our Dawn Chorus, and thanks to the BBC's Springwatch, hordes of people turned up for a (rather wet) day of balsam-bashing and stream clearing, while Dave D, Steve and I got a millisecond each of fame on national television. (Nobody mention soggy biscuits, OK?)

The Green Gym, led by Dave B, is now fully independent but is officially linked to the main group which means we have joint insurance and can work together on grants, etc. It has a strong regular membership including a number of "cross-over" members from both groups.

#### **Grants and awards**

We were delighted that Bradley Stoke Town Council awarded us an annual SLA in December 2008. This will give us a regular annual income of £1500 which we can use to plan regular events, keep tools maintained, ensure first aiders are fully trained etc. We are also very pleased to be "recognised" as an important group in Bradley Stoke!

In March we were awarded £391.40 from the South Gloucestershire Revenue Grant to purchase 6 bat detectors and 10 bat miniguides, which we can use to run walks ourselves if we want.

At last year's AGM we had a talk from Martin Davies, whose father Howard farmed the land that used to be Bradley Stoke. Martin has written a book about the area's past, *The Farmer and the Goose with the Golden Eyes*, and has very generously decided to donate the profits to four local charities, including our group. This month Dave picked up a cheque from Martin for £600. We need to think carefully about how to spend this very generous donation; it seems appropriate to choose something that would be fitting to the memory of Howard Davies and his concern for the wildlife of the area.

## Meetings

As we had a very light agenda for our “mid year” meeting in November, we turned it into a social in the Three Brooks pub, which made a nice change.

The Committee met in May, September and November. Issues discussed included co-ordination with the Green Gym, insurance, liaison with other groups and general work planning. As we were not managing a big grant this year we had a relatively quiet time. However we are always happy to hear from members on what you would like considered.

## Our website

Robin and Steve continue to maintain our website and Robin has provided the following viewing stats:

Period	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages
May 2008 to April 2009	2270	3551	21654
May 2009 to April 2010	3598	7377	42178
% increase	58.5%	107.74%	94.78%

The following helpful organisations have redirected people to our site from theirs:

<http://www.bradleystoke.gov.uk/>  
<http://www.bradleystokejournal.co.uk/>  
<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/>  
<http://www.sadlybroke.com/>  
<http://www2.btcv.org.uk/>  
<http://www.bradleystokematters.co.uk/>  
<http://www.bristolvolunteers.org.uk/>

## Membership

As of 25 April 2010 we have 17 full members, 2 less than last year (though I am still expecting some responses). A further 4 non-members are on the mailing list.

We have had a trickle of new members but seem to have trouble getting them to stay and turn into regulars. Was it something we said? Keep plugging us to all your friends!

## **Concluding remarks**

As ever I would like to thank my fellow committee members for all their hard work in keeping the group running, and to all volunteers who turn up whatever the weather for our tasks.

We now have a solid group of regulars and a familiar cycle of tasks. Is there anything else you would like this group to do? It's your group so please let us know!

*Emma Creasey, Secretary*  
*April 2010*

### Appendix - Record of workdays/events 2009-10

Date	No. of volunteers	Event
<b>2009</b>		
4 April	11	Planting wildflower seeds/plugs in meadow area by Sherbourne's Brake
3 May	12	Guided walk with Rupert Higgins
10 May	14	Dawn Chorus with Rupert Higgins 6-8.30 am
5 June	9	Bat walk
6 June	22	Stream clearing. Huge turnout thanks to Springwatch/Dirty Weekend publicity. Families put to pulling balsam. Large log jam cleared. This year's haul included a bicycle wheel, a car wheel, a hubcap, a large section of plastic road barrier, a perfectly serviceable push-scooter and of course (no stream clearing would be complete without them) a shopping trolley and a traffic cone.
13 June	25	Community nature walk with Rupert, linked to the Fair. Lovely weather and a group of very interested people.
26 June	4	Bat walk
27 June	12	Tools training day in the woods with Paul
4 July	7	Haycut. In very hot weather we cut approximately half of the grassland next to Webb's Wood – starting from the lake end. Next year we need to start from the school end and do the other half. We also removed some saplings and Robin managed a bit of "soil disturbance" in the flooded areas but we were too hot to do any more!
1 August	10	Haycut in the orchard; despite constant drizzle we cut the whole area, rescuing the fruit trees that were disappearing in the tall grass.
19 August	15	Bat walk
5 September	7	Irrigating the marsh, continuing Green Gym's work. We dug a long channel and a deep sump and attempted to flood a bramble patch!
18 September	21	Bat walk
3 October	13	Drainage work on the path by the plantation.
7 November	10	Coppicing in Sherbourne's Brake
5 December	11	Clearing out excess plant growth in the top newt pond and replanting some of it in the meadow pond.
<b>2010</b>		
2 January	12	Hedgelaying around Dewfalls pond – lovely job much appreciated by the residents.
3 January	8	
6 February	13	Tree thinning in plantation just past orchard.
6 March	16	Tree thinning in plantation near Sherbourne's Brake, plus getting a dead tree out of the brook.

