

BOOKER COMMON AND WOODS PROTECTION SOCIETY

(Registered Charity: No. 289871)

YOUR RECEIPT is attached for your 1984/5 annual subscription, and for any extra donation towards the cost of the Conservation Installations: - - - If you have not yet renewed your membership for 1984/5 and wish to do so please send £2.00 to Treasurer, David Crowther, at 1A, Barbers Wood Close, Booker (phone H.W. 21994) by 15 March to enable him to close the annual accounts for the Auditor. --If you have any query please phone him (If not available leave a message at H.W. 25665).
THANKS ARE DUE TO ALL WHO SUPPORT THIS CONSERVATION WORK.

2. Please Help SPRING-CLEAN the Common and its Woodlands on Sunday morning 17 March 1985. Meet at 9.30a.m. at the central assembly point on the Green below the Squirrel Pub, Squirrel Lane. From here Volunteers present will be split into separate working parties, issued with rubbish bags and move to different areas on the common and woodland.

Safety Precautions: Volunteers are advised to wear suitable clothing (i.e. protective footwear; gardening gloves; also, in this uncertain climate, waterproofs!). As we are dealing with rubbish it is advisable to have a tetanus jab in event of cuts etc. It is inadvisable for young children to pick up rubbish. Volunteer drivers must only use their vehicles for rubbish collection if they are fully insured.

Clean-ups in previous years have greatly improved the appearance of the area for the following Spring and Summer months. So - PLEASE JOIN THE PARTY at 9.30am Sunday 17 March

3. CONSERVATION & AMENITY WORKS (Additions & Modifications)

These new proposals were described, with sketch maps, in the September 1984 Newsletter (No. 11); and 3 months/^{notice} was given for everybody to have time to consider any constructive comment or raise objection to any aspect.

The September 1984 Newsletter was delivered to 660 households adjacent to, and near, the Common. In addition public notices were displayed in the 3 local shopping areas and Booker Memorial Hall. As a further reminder, the proposals were also advertised in the 'Public Notice' columns of the Bucks Free Press with an editorial article in the same issue.

The work-programme at present scheduled is as follows:-

i) First Stage begins week-end 23 & 24 March 1985 including:

-Digging pits and planting 8 broadleaf trees: -Installing 8 tree-guards: -Removing the remaining 22 Bollards from alongside the cricket pitch for transfer to the western woodlands (Horns Lane): -Repositioning the Notice Board, at present at junction of Bridleway 106 and Willow Avenue: -Cutting back scrub & small growth on the edge of the north/east corner of cricket pitch by Bridleway 106. (The purpose is to give air and light and bring-on the naturally regenerating broadleaf trees which are at present being stifled).

Safety Precautions: (a) Only hand tools may be used; (b) Parents are asked not to allow their children to work on these jobs; (c) In event of cuts etc it is advisable to have a tetanus jab; (d) Those with a medical condition are asked not to volunteer (in these cases why not 'adopt a bollard' instead? - Now £3.00)

ii) Second Stage (Start date will be advised later)

-Removal of old tree stumps on the north/east edge of the cricket pitch.
 -Installation of 134 Bollards: 1 or 2 Locked removable Rails: 4 Notice Boards at Eight vulnerable points round the perimeter of the woodlands on the western side of Horns Lane and southern side of Lane End Road. This is as described in September 1984 Newsletter. The purpose is to stop unlawful entry of vehicles deep into the woodlands for rubbish dumping.

NOTE -The Bollards installed last year on the northern and eastern perimeter of the woodland have effectively stopped the abandonment of vehicles and truck loads of rubbish being dumped deep inside the woodlands. This has not only improved the environment, but also saves rate costs now and in future. This is because it is far more costly for the Council to recover rubbish from inside the woodlands than on the perimeter.
 -Safety Precautions: Volunteers for Second Stage operations are asked to ensure that they have a copy of the job specification and safety precautions before starting work.

- iii) VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOBS! If you want to 'do your bit' in the interests of Conservation of the Countryside, please phone H.W. 25665. Your offer of services will be on the understanding that it is subject to your availability on the workdays. Please offer ½-day work-units (i.e. 1 or more ½ days on Sats. and/or Sundays)

WYCOMBE AIRPARK - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Some Members have expressed concern about dangers from low-flying aircraft, and excessive noise nuisance on some occasions. Understandably, concern greatly increased following the crashed aircraft on the roof of a house in Booker Hill Road.

Your Committee made joint investigation with a number of other local Amenity Societies whose members had also complained. As a result it was agreed to introduce a more formalised procedure for members of all local Societies, and indeed any others who wished to make use of it.

PROCEDURE: i) Individual complainants should continue to phone their complaint to the Airpark Control Tower (H.W. 29261) giving full details of the alleged offence and their name and address. - Memy already do this, but it must be done immediately.

NEXT: ii) Phone Tony Hall (H.W. 39030) - the Society Representative with the same full details. He lives at the end of the runway at 'Greenwood Cottage', Horns Lane, Booker. Common. (If he is not available leave a message at H.W. 25665).

iii) Tony Hall will collate everybody's complaints and confirm in one letter to the Wycombe Airpark Joint Consultative Committee. (This committee comprises the Management of the Airpark on the one side, and Councillors and Parliament Officers of Wycombe Council on the other.) This letter of composite complaints should be expected to ensure that serious complaints are seriously considered at the right level, and properly dealt with.

But the system can only work if complainants give specific information, otherwise we cannot reasonably expect the Airpark Management to identify the offenders.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION REQUIRED IS:-

- i) Precise time of the incident.
- ii) Aircraft Number (if visible) & other description.
- iii) Direction of Aircraft; (from approx direction to...to...)
- iv) Position of Aircraft; (for example 'above Squelch')
- v) Estimated Height; (Height is difficult to judge, but try and relate it to something you do know - like the length of a cricket pitch etc.,)
- vi) Detail the alleged offence; (for example; unnecessary noise caused by continuous circling etc.,)
- vii) Dangerous flying over houses; (for example Aircraft too low; Two-ropes too low etc., etc.,)

IS GARDEN RUBBISH - RUBBISH

Everybody deplores Rubbish Dumping in the Woodlands - except those who dump it. But not everybody believes that garden refuse is harmful to the natural woodland growth. Below is reprinted an authoritative opinion from 'The Woodland Trust' Newsletter.

-(The Woodland Trust was formed in 1972 for: safeguarding trees - woodland conservation - acquisition of woodlands at immediate risk. To date the Woodland Trust has taken over management of some 120 woodlands throughout the Country for the benefit of the public. It is supported by the Countryside Commission and by individuals such as TV Naturalist 'David Bellamy'. It is reasonable to suppose they know what they are talking about). Now please read on:

EXTRACT FROM WOODLAND TRUST NEWSLETTER:-

".....Those that think that dumping garden waste into woods and other places causes no damage, -since the material is degradable and soon disappears,- are mistaken. Garden rubbish is a visual intrusion just as much as paper or building rubble. If dumped in quantity and over a long period it can swamp the indigenous flora and alter the character of the soil, which in turn affects the flora.

"Most importantly garden waste may contain the seeds of plants which may establish themselves and become a problem. This is because they can dominate the native plants and hybridise with them and so reduce the quality of native populations of flora.

"-So those of you with gardening neighbours and friends, please ensure that they burn their rubbish at home, or take it to the local authority tip." (NB In our case Booker Tip)

FLORA CENSUS

Booker Common is an 'Ancient Woodland' with a long history, so not surprisingly it is rich in variety of ground plant life - some of very rare species. To our knowledge they have not been fully identified and methodically recorded.

This information is valuable for two purposes: i) To inform members of the facts, and so enhance their enjoyment and appreciation of the woodlands. ii) To inform Bucks County Biology Unit which collates this information from 'Local' Conservation Societies throughout the County. Their job is to take a 'Global' view of changes in the wild plant life in the County as a whole. So, our job is to think 'Global' but 'Local'.

VOLUNTEERS are required from among those with knowledge of the flora. Please ring H.W. 25665.

THE WILD LIFE & FLORA ON THE COMMON

It has been suggested that the woodlands could be better enjoyed if more information was available about the wildlife and natural flora. We gladly invite anybody to contribute short articles for publication in these Newsletters. For example, about local birds and their habits, the food they like etc, and the dozens of wild plants indigenous to the area.

We print the first of these below about Hedgehogs and written by 'David Wilmot'.

"At this time of the year our friend the 'Hedgehog' is a friend indeed, who likes to eat slugs, beetles and other garden pests. They are just beginning to awaken from hibernation but sadly towards the end of February the first casualties will be seen squashed on the roads, which allows more garden pests to enjoy the fruits of your gardens.

Although they trundle around like clockwork toys, they can move quite quickly (about 2 miles per hour), or if desperate can make short sprints (up to 6 m.p.h have been known). They can climb walls and fences and even the occasional drainpipe.

Although Hedgehogs have fleas they only like hedgehogs and do not stay on other animals and humans. They sometimes acquire ticks which left alone simply drop off. Their life expectancy can be upwards of 5 years, but most babies leaving the nest don't survive for more than 2 years.

This essential link in the environmental chain is not only killed off on the roads, but also by slugs poisoned by slug-killing-chemicals. Also by falling into drains or holes. However the major cause of death is insufficient fat reserves in hibernation.

When air temperature drops below 8/10°C it is time to hibernate. Hedgehogs don't just disappear completely. They need to come out during the winter from time to time and it can take them up to 4 hours to wake up sufficiently to move around. Their need is particularly great if they are low on body fat reserves.

It is this fat reserve which feeds them during hibernation. This thin white fat is stored under their skin and makes up 1/3rd of their body weight at the beginning of hibernation. It is vital that Hedgehogs get enough to eat in the weeks before hibernation; not only for everyday living but also to store up fat to last them throughout the winter months. For survival they must weigh at least 450 grams (1 lb) before hibernating in their nests in the woodlands (or if you are lucky in your compost or garden refuse heap).

You can help the Hedgehogs survive by putting out saucers of bread and milk (wholesome for preference). If you have a 'slug' problem then add an egg to their diet and be even more sure of their survival. When your 'personal' hedgehog becomes accustomed to an easy food source it will come to rely on it. So once you start you must keep up the supplies even if the food is not taken each day.

Sometimes in the Autumn you may find an isolated baby Hedgehog, an 'Autumn Orphan' and the result of a late brood. By itself it has no chance of survival. Before you consider fostering it for the winter be absolutely sure its mother is not lurking nearby. If you are satisfied the baby really is an orphan and take it home it will need constant attention throughout the winter. It will need a large nesting box (1 metre long x 500mm wide with newspaper/straw). Dust it lightly with flea powder. Release it into the wild in the Spring when it is heavy enough (450 gm minimum to 600gms). Its diet should be bread/milk/eggs/dog-food/worms - but not all at once!

When Hedgehogs in the wild come out from hibernation their fat resources will be almost gone and they need to restore their body weight very quickly if they are to survive the early spring (and sort out your garden slugs). This is the time to add an egg to the bread and milk saucers.

(Message from David Wilmot); If you want to know more, join the British Hedgehog Preservation Society; Knowbury House; Knowbury; Shropshire, or buy a copy of 'Hedgehogs' by Pat Morris (Whittet Books) ordered from any bookshop; which provided the information on which this article was based.

HOLIDAYS 1965 - (But with a difference!)

DO YOU LIKE:- The open-air life? - staying in areas of outstanding natural beauty? - plenty of exercise? - Opportunity to learn countryside crafts? (like: Drystone walling; hedgecraft; forestry; Anti-erosion sea defence; etc.,)

IF SO:- Why not start thinking about a working holiday with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers? If interested phone H W 25665 for further information on which this article was based.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: is at Booker Memorial Hall on Wednesday 15 May - at 8 p.m.