

BOOKER COMMON AND WOODS NOVEMBER 1985 PROTECTION SOCIETY

(Registered Charity: No 289871)

PRE-CHRISTMAS CLEAN-UP - round the Common & WoodlandPLEASE HELP!on Sunday Morning 8 December 1985Start time 10.00am

if enough people help, the job should be completed easily before lunch time.

The Organisation: There will be four separate groups working round the perimeter. Any groups finishing their sections early are asked to join any other group not yet finished. Please clear both sides of the highways.

-Full rubbish bags should be left at the sides of the highways ready for the collection vehicles. Plastic bags are obtainable from the Group Organisers and rubbish collection vehicles.

-Group 1: Group Organiser-David Wilmot. Start at Rydal Way and move south along Lane End Road; turn right at the junction with Homes Lane, and work to the end of the woodlands.

-Group 2: Group Organiser-Roy Motteram. Start by Saxon House and move north along Homes Lane to the junction with Lane End Road. (If necessary turn left into Lane End Road and help Group 1.)

-Group 3: Group Organiser-Rodney Forrest. Start by the cricket pitch clearing the rubbish round the perimeter of the grassland area and fringe of the woodland.

-Group 4: Group Organiser-Allan Duggin. Start at the green triangle below the Squirrel Pub and move along bridleway 106 to the cricket pitch. (If necessary help Group 3.)

-Materials unsuitable for plastic bags should be shovelled on to the tip-vehicle.

Collection Vehicles will be provided by Tony Hall and Brian Pearce's Tip vehicle. They will circulate the perimeter collecting rubbish bags.

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.,

-Children may join the party only if accompanied by their parents.

-Any injury must be reported to the Group Organiser (This is in order to comply with insurance requirements) and must be done immediately.

-Volunteer drivers must only use their vehicles for this job if they are fully insured.

PREVIOUS clean-ups have greatly improved the amenity for the benefit of all. So - please join any of the four groups at 10 am Sunday 8 December 1985. If you can't make 10 o'clock then come as early as you can.

FINANCE

-YOUR RECEIPT for your 1985/6 annual subscription and donation is attached - with the committee's thanks. -It has not been practicable to call on all members for their renewed subscriptions yet. But in these cases you will receive a call in the not too distant future.

-If on the other hand you have paid your 1985/6 subs but a receipt is not attached to this letter, please phone Hon Treasurer (HW 21994) or, if unavailable phone The Chairman (HW 25665).

-THE COVENANT SCHEME We are pleased to report that this is receiving strong support from members. The scheme entails a member signing a form 'Covenanting' to pay the £2.00 annual subscription for a period of 4 years (or more than £2). With this form the Society, as a registered charity, is entitled to claim back from the Tax Inspector the tax already paid on that amount by the subscriber.

For example: if a member gives £2 a year annual subscription, the total amount received by the Society at the end of 4 years is £8.00. But if the member also signs the 'Covenant form' the Society then recovers £3.43 from the tax already paid. Thus the £8.00 subscriptions becomes £11.43 revenue to the Society. An increase of 43% at no extra cost to the subscriber. -This is a painless way of increasing the Society Funds -Of course, the larger the subscription the larger the tax recovery i.e. A £5.00 annual subscription for 4 years converts a 4 year donation from £20 to £28.58.

THE COST OF INSTALLING the 1984 (Phase I) & 1985(Phase 2) works were very high.

MAINTENANCE & REPAIR COSTS will continue to be high despite the fact of volunteer labour and concessionary prices for materials and services.

-For this reason an extra thanks are due to those members who not only signed a 'Covenant' but also paid their 4-year subscription now as a lump sum.

-This extra push enabled the Society to install all essential works this year instead of dragging it out over the years ahead.

MAINTENANCE WORK

On 2 November 1985 - Damaged bollards were replaced at the junction of Homes Lane/Footpath 111.

- Additional bollards were installed at junction of Homes Lane/Lane End Road. This became necessary because a new gap was made through the woodland screen with a vehicle stolen and abandoned inside the woodland. This new gap is now sealed.

Despite our voluntary labour and concessionary cost of hire of 2 Tractors with Auger and Pile-driving accessories the cost was still £75.

-Special thanks are due to the voluntary workers and to Tony Hall, our resident engineering consultant.

-Notice Boards: In some areas there has been persistent destruction. They are now being replaced by white-enamelled steel boards and replacable stick-on notices.

-We must expect that MAINTENANCE will be a 'Forth Bridge' type job - its never ending. It can only be done with continuing financial support from members.

IAN DASHPER

Most members will already know of the tragic accident to Ian Dashper. The committee expresses its condolences to his widow, Lorraine, and to their two children, Catherine aged 13 and Richard aged 10. -The family have been members of this Society from the time it was first inaugurated.

-Fellow members who wish to express their condolences in a practical manner will be able to do so by contributing to the TRUST FUND. We have learned that this is now established at Barclays Bank, 197/199, New Road, Booker (sorting code 20 10 76).

-Any who wish to donate when next at the Tumpike should enter on the paying-in slip "The Ian Dashper Fund - Deposit A/c No. 21142933 and the amount" The Bank have asked that contributors put name and address on the back of the paying-in slip; but of course any who wish to remain anonymous may do so.

'MAN'S BEST FRIEND'

-The 60 acres of Booker Common is mostly woodland and a mere 10% is open grassland, including the cricket pitch. Yet there are constant complaints that some owners appear to train their dogs to leave excreta on this small open space rather than take them into the vastly greater area of woodland.

-It's the sort of thing that 'gives a dog a bad name!'

-It is this relatively small area of open grassland that is most intensively used for recreation by both children and adults, including Childrens' Play Groups and the Cricketers.

-There is no need for this area to be persistently fouled, (but of course the odd accident is understandable), because dogs are among the most biddable of animals ever anxious to please their owners.

-So Please - will owners exercise their dogs inside the woodlands and off the grassland.

A QUESTION OF HISTORY!

From time to time the questions are asked; How old is Booker Common? and, Is it an 'Ancient Woodland'?

-The short answers are: As part of the Manor of West Wycombe it can be traced back to Saxon times - before William the Conqueror. The answer to the second question is YES.

-The questions will be answered more fully in later Newsletters as space permits.

P.S. Don't forget the HEDGEHOGS this winter (the gardener's friend). You can help them survive the winter by putting out saucers of bread and milk. But don't start unless you can continue because they'll come to depend on it for survival. (See David Wilnot's article in Newsletter No 12).

FIELD LIFE & FLORA - by THE COMMON

This contribution about the BIRDS is written by IAN STEVENS. You can help them survive the winter - which looks like being a hard one, and don't forget they need ice-free water. (If you can help with the BIRD CENSUS of those you see in your garden please phone N.Y. 25665).

The top twelve common garden feeders are: Blackbird, Blue Tit, Robin, House Sparrow, Starling, Dunnock, Great Tit, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Song Thrush, Coal Tit and Collared Dove. (The Garden Bird Book, PPO.)

All of these will be found in gardens around Booker Common, but other 'regulars' in our area are Nuthatch and Woodpecker. Regular but less obvious visitors are the Hren and Treecreeper.

This year Redwing and Goldfinch arrived in our garden during January; Fieldfare and Mistle Thrush at the beginning of February. Occasional visitors include Jay, Magpie, Bullfinch, Greater Spotted Woodpecker and Long-tailed Tit.

The number of blue and great tits coming to feed in our gardens this winter was on the low side. Although one cause may have been the high losses during last year's breeding season, the main reason for the absence of tits was the attraction of a bumper beech mast crop in the woodlands. (BBC Wildlife, October '84)

By providing food you can entice the birds to show themselves more freely in places where you can watch them. And, as the availability of food controls to some extent the bird population of your garden, you will also be increasing their numbers. But providing food is not a pleasure to be undertaken lightly. Put out some scraps in the garden and you will very soon attract new residents. They will become dependent on your generosity, and if it falls they will be competing for an inadequate supply of natural foods. Especially in cold weather birds may lose a lot of weight overnight, and they have to make it up again during the brief hours of daylight. Death comes in a matter of hours even to a healthy small bird, if it is without food. In hard weather the real killer is hunger, not cold. (The New Bird Table Book, Tony Soper)

If you do decide to feed, provide a variety of food and feeding positions. Remember that some birds, such as the dunnock, are ground feeders and will not use a bird table. Provide a regular amount each day, preferably in the early morning, and supplement it in times of real hardship.

Position the feeding stations away from thick cover, where danger may lurk (cats!), but not too far away from safety (about 5 meters).

Do not feed highly spiced, salted or dehydrated food.

Water for drinking and bathing is as necessary to birds as food. By November, regular frosts will have reduced the availability of natural supplies, so start putting out water every morning - a plastic dog bowl or upturned dustbin lid will be easy to keep ice-free and supplied with clean water. Do not add salt or antifreeze.

Giving food during the breeding season should probably be avoided as natural foods are more nutritious to young birds and household scraps, peanuts, bread etc., may even be harmful to them. Blackbirds could be feeding young during March, so avoid bread at this stage (stale cake is less harmful).

People are often advised to stop feeding the birds in May because parent blue and great tits may give their nestlings unsuitable food. But the majority of tits do not have chicks before the middle of the month, and a well stocked feeder will keep the greenfinches going until the early weeks (their natural