



### Events in 2013

Please note working parties may also be held during the week. If you are interested, please contact Vic Green on [vic.green@bishopsmeadowtrust.org.uk](mailto:vic.green@bishopsmeadowtrust.org.uk)

#### **February 9**

Hedge planting and path preparation

#### **March 16**

Habitat and site maintenance

#### **April (to be advised)**

Fun dog show on the meadow

#### **April 13**

Habitat and site management

#### **June (to be advised)**

Bat evening

#### **June 15**

Clearing Himalaya balsam and other watercourse weeds

#### **June/July (to be advised)**

AGM

#### **July 6**

Clearing Ragwort

#### **July 28**

Annual Fair

#### **August (to be advised)**

Bat evening

#### **August 17**

Ragwort removal and hedgerow maintenance.

#### **14 September**

Farnham Heritage Day

#### **October 12**

Scrub clearance and other maintenance

#### **November 16**

Bonfire

#### **December (to be advised)**

Members get together in the Hop Blossom

Other events will no doubt spring to mind as the year goes on

---

Dear Member

This is the first issue of a newsletter which will keep you - our friends and members - up to date on what is happening on the Meadow and about the Trust's work with other conservation groups and organizations in and about Farnham.

Local Government planning and land use regulatory systems are being comprehensively revised and it is very important that the Trust works together with other conservation groups and environmental agencies. As part of this, you need to be fully informed about what is happening and how it might affect the Meadow.

Contributions on topics of interest will always be welcome along with your thoughts and ideas for what could be included in future issues.

**Happy New Year to you all**

**The Editor**

---

**2012 – a**

---

## year to remember

Looking back is a popular pastime at this time of year and quite a lot has happened for the Trust. In February, Jo Aylwin, its Chair, was presented with the Town Council medal for services to Farnham which she received on behalf of the Trust, and in July, the Trust was awarded the Open Spaces Society's first ever Open Space Award.



Left to right: Bob Milton (who nominated The Bishop's Meadow Trust), Jean Macdonald (OSS vice-chairman), Jim Munro, Jo Alwyn, Gerri Smyth (all from The Bishop's Meadow Trust), Tim Crowther (OSS chairman).

This award from the oldest conservation organisation in the UK recognised the hard work and generosity of all those who have contributed to and worked for the acquisition of the Meadow and was won against strong competition from other conservation projects across the UK.

And then, in October 2012, the Trust took ownership of the final part of the Meadow which was available for purchase! Thanks to an interest free loan of £75,000 from the Farnham (Buildings Preservation) Trust and the generosity of Sir Ray Tindle, we are proud owners of an ancient and beautiful piece of Farnham's agricultural heritage. Set between the A31 and West St, these 34 acres of water meadowland are the last remnant of what was once a wide expanse



of hop fields and pasture. This type of land is now one of the rarest in the UK and is considered of exceptional importance both ecologically and for flood prevention.

Those of us who use the Meadow paths will have seen the new notice board by the Whitlet Close entrance to the Meadow. This was kindly donated by Farnham Lions and erected by one of the untiring volunteer working parties.



All in all, it has been a very productive year for the Trust.

## And in 2013?

In the coming year, the Trust has three priorities. The first and foremost is to raise the funds to repay the loan. This will be done through a mix of fund raising activities and seeking donations from individuals and organisations. The Trust is also setting up a new form of membership so that members

who wish to do so can pay an annual subscription rather than an outright donation.

The second is to continue to manage the Meadow as an ancient hay and flower meadow so that its character is restored and preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

The third is to work with other conservation organisations to influence local planning and conservation policies which affect the Meadow and the surrounding communities.

So 2013 promises to be an interesting year and the Trust will need our support to rise to the challenges which I am sure it will bring.

### **Conservation work on the Meadows**

During the year, work has continued with the removal of a large part of the Himalaya Balsam which had begun to find a foothold on the meadows and especially along the riverbank. In early 2012, the Trust received a grant from Farnham Town Council which has allowed it to buy bat boxers and bat detectors. These will be used to support and encourage the resident bat population and for the “bat walks” which it plans to hold this coming spring and summer with members of the local Beaver and Scout troops. The Trust has also received a grant of £2,000 from the Farnham Institute Charity specifically for the purchase of equipment to help it to maintain the meadow now and in the future.

### **Moths, wildflowers and trout**

During the year two surveys of plant species have been carried out by Surrey Wild Life Trust. There has also been a survey of the moths and butterfly population by Martin

Angel of the Bourne Conservation Group. In spite of the poor conditions this summer, Martin identified over 16 species of butterfly and 40 species of moths including one rarity – the Kentish Arch.



The results can be seen on the Trust website. We also had a sighting of a pair of peregrine falcons hunting over the Meadow – alas no photographs are available.

In August the Wild Trout Trust carried out a survey of the river and their report can be found on the website. The Trust also received a series of proposals for future work from the Environment Agency following a series of site visits which they had made earlier in the year. The Meadow plays an important part in the management of the water flow and quality of the River Wey and the Agency regards the Trust as a major partner in its work in these areas. The Board of the Trust will be considering the recommendations made in both reports and will keep members informed of any developments.

### **The Wey Landscape Project**

Since the spring of 2012 the Trust, the Bourne Conservation Group and other local conservation organisations have been involved in discussions held jointly by Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency

as part of their Wey Landscape Project. The result was the setting up of a Wey Landscape Partnership involving all the organisations with an interest in the Wey and the land around it. Trust representatives are also founder members of the associated Farnham Rivers Group chaired by Councillor Jessica Parry. This sub group represents local conservation organisations within the Partnership (see next item).

The Landscape project has two closely connected themes; the first of which is to preserve and enhance the biodiversity of the whole of the Wey catchment, and the second is to improve the quality of the water in the river system as required by the UK Water Framework Directive. The Environment Agency is responsible for implementing the Water Framework legislation and is well advanced in conducting a detailed analysis of the state of the Wey, and how its water quality and ecology can be improved. In our area the Wey's main water quality problem is pollution by phosphates which get into the river from agricultural run-off and discharges from sewage treatment works.

The Partnership has identified several well defined projects including wetland habitat restoration on a landscape-scale. This will provide a multiple set of benefits for both people and wildlife and the Meadow has been identified as one of the suitable sites. The Partnership is also considering asking local voluntary groups to act as River Wardens.

## The Farnham Rivers group



The Farnham Rivers Group first met in the Council Offices in August and is chaired by Cllr Jessica Parry, who has already played an important role in bringing river and flood management issues to the notice of the Town Council. The group includes our representatives (Vic Green and Jim Munro) and representatives of the Bourne Conservation Group, the Wey Valley Fisheries Consultative Association and Surrey Wildlife Trust. The Farnham Park Ranger has also been invited to join. Since then several meetings have been held and a number of tasks identified to improve the ecology of the River Wey and its various feeder streams around Farnham. The stretches of river involved are the Northern Branch of the Wey, the Nadder Stream, which flows through Farnham Park, The Bourne Stream and Frensham Vale Stream. Problems to be tackled include barriers to fish migration, the spread of Himalaya Balsam, leaks from Farnham's overburdened sewage works and illegal discharges into drains. The Bishop's Meadow Trust is particularly concerned with the obstacles to fish migration which exist in its stretch of river and the Board will be considering what action might be taken to bypass them – and how to find the funds to do this.

## Publicity and Future events

The Trust has continued to receive coverage in the Farnham Herald and the Surrey and Hants although the regular "Meadow watch" article in the Herald had to be discontinued. It also had a successful stall at the Charity Fair at Farnham Maltings, organised by Pippa Hoyland and manned by Trust members.

In spite of truly horrendous weather on 23 September, we managed to hold a small, damp but happy Autumn Fair and dog show to celebrate the opening of the Scholars Greenway footpath by Councillor Pat Frost and the acquisition of the first part of the Meadow. Huge thanks go to Peg Banfield for suggesting, publicising and supporting it. The Trust would also like to thank **Cathcart and Winn veterinary clinic and hospital** for their generous sponsorship of the dog show including prizes, rosettes and equipment. **CP Backhurst & Co Animal Feeds** for their sponsorship and **Burgess Supa Dog, Arden Grange Dog food** and **Rosewood Pet Products** for generously donating so many prizes for the dog show and the raffle, **Springfield Stables, Tongham** for providing pony rides, **3rd Farnham Scouts** for Burgers and very welcome mugs of tea, **Hampshire Pet Beds** for donating their well known pet beds and rugs as prizes for best in show, **Nick Green Lighting Services** for the loan of equipment, advice, moral support and lots of help, **British Car Auctions Ltd** for the loan of their car park, **Surrey Wildlife Trust** for the loan of their gazebo and their help, **G Hone and Sons** for a superb basket of fruit and last but no means least to all those who donated raffle and Treasure hunt prizes, put up tents or just turned up.

the Board plans to hold another dog show and a Country fair on the Meadow in 2013 – hopefully the weather will be kinder - so watch this space. Unfortunately they can't promise elephants – yes there were once three elephants roaming the meadows and here's a photograph to prove it.



But there is a limit to what the Trustees alone can do. We need more fund raising to pay off the loan. It doesn't have to be difficult. For a start, when we next go shopping why not pop into Waitrose and nominate the Trust for their green token scheme?

If you have an idea for a fund raising event which you would like to organise, please let the Board know. Don't worry if you can't think of anything, they have lots of ideas – just need people to turn them into reality. It doesn't matter how small the event, every little helps.

In December, the Trust held a get together at the Hop Blossom in Farnham which was well attended in spite of the short notice. So much so, that there will be another this year hopefully at the same time in December. This is our chance to meet the Trustees and other members, perhaps sample some of the Hop Blossom's excellent beer and enjoy ourselves so please make a space in your diary.

Our website is being brought up to date and revised and we are on Facebook and Twitter. Please visit these for news of further fund raising events.

## Concert

The concert in aid of the Bishop's Meadow Trust is on Saturday 16th Feb in St Thomas-on-the-Bourne Church. The children from St Thomas' will be singing a new composition, specially written for them and we are very lucky to have the international concert pianist Maureen Galea to play for us, see our website for ticket sales and other details.

## Membership

Since the beginning of the year the Trust has recruited 31 new members and donors. On behalf of the Trust I would like personally to welcome you all and hope that you will be able to take an active part in the work of raising funds and managing the Meadow.

I should also like to thank all those who responded to the survey. The Board will be coming back to you with the results - if you have not already received them.

We are always delighted to welcome new members and volunteers so if anyone reading this is not already a member of the Trust and would like to join, or knows someone else who might, please contact **Jim Munro** on 01252 734673 or e-mail

[jim.munro@bishopsmeadowtrust.com](mailto:jim.munro@bishopsmeadowtrust.com)

The annual individual subscription is £10.00 and donations are always welcomed

## Acknowledgement

The Editor would like to thank all those who have suggested, encouraged, spell checked and generally supported him in producing this newsletter. Thanks Team!

From this.....



to this.....



### Your Board

<b>Jo Aylwin</b>	<b>Chair</b>
<b>Graham Aston</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
<b>Ronnie Broughton</b>	
<b>Bill Dolan</b>	
<b>Vic Green</b>	
<b>Pippa Hoyland</b>	
<b>Jim Munro</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>Ed Partridge</b>	
<b>Alex Scrivens</b>	
<b>Gerri Smyth</b>	

Tessa Trench

Web : <http://www.bishopsmeadowtrust.org.uk/>

