

The Meadowlark - Spring 2013



Winter floods on the Meadow - taken from Crosby gate

Dear Member,

It has been a while coming but, after a few false starts, Spring is on the way and the Meadow is waking up from its long winter sleep. Hawthorn and blackthorn are coming into leaf and the new grass is just beginning to turn the winter grey brown of the Meadow into green. The winter migrants such as waxwings and redwings that visited the Meadow and the neighbouring gardens have left for Scandinavia. The next wave of visitors, swallows, swifts and willow warblers will soon be joining our permanent residents feeding and perhaps even nesting in and around the Meadow.

For the Trust it promises to be a busy and exciting year and, as you will see, it has already got off to a flying start - so keep an eye on our website at <http://bishopsmeadowtrust.org/> Have a good Spring and - dare we hope - a real summer.

The Editor

EVENTS

The Volunteer dates are being revised. A new list will be sent out next week.

May 18

Art Exhibition - Art Exhibition in aid of the Trust at the Museum of Farnham's beautiful Garden

June 14

Bat evening - 9:00 pm – 11:00 pm Crosby Gate. Ed Partridge will lead a bat walk and talk on the meadows

June 15

Volunteer Day - 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Crosby Gate

July 1

Volunteer Day - 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Crosby Gate

July 14

Volunteer Day - 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Crosby Gate

August (to be advised)

Bat evening

August 17

Volunteer Day - 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Crosby Gate

14 September

Farnham Heritage Day Meadow walks

October 12

Volunteer Day - 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Crosby Gate

November 16

Bonfire

December (to be advised)

Members get together in the Hop Blossom

The Meadow IS special - it's official !

On the 26th February 2013, Bishop's Meadow was selected as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). The Meadow was selected "*...for its species rich grassland habitat supporting 17 plant species typical of grassland of conservation interest in Surrey. The site is well used by the local community.*"



Now that the Meadow has this status, the local authority (in our case Waverley Borough Council) is required by government to make its designation and protection a part of the planning policies set out in their development plans.

It also opens the door to new sources of funding for the maintenance and restoration of the Meadow - although not unfortunately for the repayment of the £75,000 loan we took on to buy the last part.

This is wonderful news for the Bishop's Meadow Trust, the people of Farnham and of course for the Meadow and the wildlife it supports. It is very important that we continue to manage the Meadow so that we foster and add to the wide range of plants and animals which already make their homes here.

The Bishop's Meadow Trust would like to say a huge "thank you" to the Surrey Wildlife Trust and in particular to Isobel Girvan for helping us to achieve such an important step in saving and caring for this wonderful place.

See our web site <http://bishopsmeadowtrust.org/wildlife/> for more information.

We need new Directors - could one of them be you?

Last month saw the departure of Gerri Smythe, our data management expert, to work on other projects in her home town of Guildford. Gerri's hard work and sense of humour will be missed and we wish her well. This leaves us with two vacancies on the Board of Directors.

COULD YOU MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE FARNHAM ENVIRONMENT?

DO YOU HAVE EXCELLENT SKILLS IN MARKETING, PUBLIC RELATIONS OR FUNDRAISING?

The Trust is governed by a voluntary Board of local residents who meet monthly. There are 2 sub committees, one tasked with Fundraising and engagement with members and the local community, and the other with Land Management.

This is an exciting opportunity for an enthusiastic communicator to join the Trust as a Board Member. A lot has been achieved but there is much more to do.

If you are interested in making a valuable contribution and have relevant skills in land management, marketing, public relations or fundraising, the Trust would welcome your application.

To find out more or to send in a CV please contact: Jim Munro (Board Secretary) by email on jimmunro74@gmail.com or by phone on 078151 04953.

Working party News

In spite of horrible weather and the usual Spring floods, Trust members have been out on three occasions since the start of the year.

Bramble Bashing

In February the team braved sleet and an icy wind to clear over 400 square feet of bramble by Mill Brook on the south edge. This particular patch has expanded rapidly and prevented the farmer from cutting the hay in that area last year. They also began to re-stock the hedgerow by Oak Meadow, using self-seeded hawthorn bushes that were popping up in the middle of the field and making it difficult to cut the hay. As a final touch, they put up some bat boxes of which more later.

New trees for old

The sun actually shone in March when our mid week team was joined by Surrey Wildlife Trust with 250 switches of native wetland trees including alder, hazel, birch and hawthorn, kindly provided by the Woodland Trust. Spurred on by lots of SWT tea and coffee, we created a new hedge row, a birch coppice and restored more of the Oak Meadow hedgerow. We also took out most of another large patch of bramble. Pat Quigley came back in April to finish off this particular patch single handed - a heroic effort, thanks Pat.

SWT has also some willow switches available, and we are discussing with the Environment Agency where these can best be put so they reinforce the river banks without interfering with the flow.

We're getting mechanised

Using a generous grant from the Farnham Institute, we have bought a mechanical brush cutter. This will make short work of the rest of the large patches of bramble and other scrub which have invaded the Meadows over the years and open up more grassland for wild flowers and wildlife. It will also help us to keep the edges of the meadows under control.

Come and join us

Working parties are a very important part of our maintenance programme and take place on weekends and during the week. If you can spare some time we'd love to see you. Tools are provided; just bring your own gloves, wellies and refreshments. If you are interested and would like to know more, contact Jim Munro on jimmunro74@gmail.com or Vic Green on millsidevg@aol.com

Homes for happy bats

Thanks to Farnham Town Council, we have three state of the art bat boxes hanging in trees within the Meadow. We also have two bat detectors which can pick up the ultrasonic sounds used by bats to locate their insect prey. With these, we'll be holding bat walks on the Meadow this summer to see if we can find and hear some bats.

Wildlife on the meadows

Did you know that we have 11 species of mammals, 3 species of bats, 4 species of reptile, 40 separate species of moths and 16 species of butterflies that live on or visit the Meadow? And we haven't even begun to count the insects. See <http://bishopsmeadowtrust.org/wildlife/> for more details.

Special visitors to look out for this Spring



On the left is a [Red Kite](#), in the centre a [Cock Pheasant](#) and on the right a [Little Egret](#). All these have visited us recently. Have you seen them?

Come and visit the Meadow, tell us what you've seen. Even better, send us a photograph and we'll put it on the website. It's your Meadow, enjoy it!

Fund raising

Big thanks to all the generous people out there who responded to our plea for funds - you are magnificent! But the Trust needs more of you to help us to pay off the £75,000 loan so we can say that the Meadows are really yours forever.

Please, please reach for the cheque book, unearth the bullion from under the flowerbed, spring-clean your wallet or handbag and get rid of those old crumpled fivers. Why not become an annual subscriber? The minimum subscription is only £10 a year (more is always welcome) and we have all the arrangements in place on our website to make it easy. Click [here](#) to donate.

If you prefer direct action, why not organize an event? In February, Dr Ian Bysh gave a delightful concert of song and piano solos in the welcoming and beautiful church of St Thomas-on-the-Bourne.

The programme of works by Purcell, Suk, Dvorak, Mussorgsky, Liszt and Finzi was entitled "Love Life and Loss" and expertly performed by Ian (counter-tenor) and international concert pianist Maureen Galea. It was a generous programme of wonderful music full of drama, romanticism and beauty and greatly appreciated by the audience. The concert was in fact Ian's debut recital and the result of a promise he made at a Trust fundraising meeting last December to sing for the Trust. It was a great event and the Trust is extremely grateful to Ian for donating half the proceeds - £260 - to the Bishop's Meadow. The other half went to St Thomas' Choir Tour Fund.

We'd also like to thank St Thomas' for allowing us to use their beautiful church and give special thanks to Sue Green and Tessa Trench for providing delicious home baking with teas and coffees, to Bill Dolan who acted as door steward and to all those who turned up to set up and clear away.

For all you bikers, the Trust has been added to the list of nominated charities for the Farnham Charity Bike Ride. Why not join in on the 7th of July and see how much you can raise? Let us know if you are interested.

Next time you are in Farnham, why not pop into Waitrose and nominate the Trust for their green token scheme.

Here's another idea - **Sponsorship**. Millside Technical Ltd offered us a percentage of each sale they make. They have just sent us a cheque for £200! Do you know a company or local firm who might sponsor the Trust? Let us know.

Visit our web - it's yours too

The website <http://bishopsmeadowtrust.org/> is now up to date and revised and we are on Facebook and Twitter.

Membership

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 078151 04953 or e-mail jimmunro74@gmail.com

And finally....



We know where this was taken - the upper end of the Tudor Ditch aka New River, but does anyone know when?

Acknowledgement

The Editor would like to thank all those who have suggested, prodded, encouraged, proof read, spell-checked and generally supported him in producing this newsletter. Special thanks to Michael Manzi who produced the excellent template for this edition and all those to come.