

# Newsletter

Autumn 2013

The Bourne  
Conservation Group



## Photofeature

A female oak bush cricket (*Meconema thalassinum*) on an ivy bud at night in the Old Churchyard 12<sup>th</sup> September.

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## Editorial

As the Group's portfolio of activities has expanded, so the organisational load has increased. Organising a work session is a bit like an iceberg, most of it is invisible. Tools need to be prepared, lists of participants and contact numbers prepared, tasks recced and identified, coffee and biscuits readied. At present this heavy load is predominantly being carried by the Chairman. So, we are introducing new working practices not only to ease his load but also to make our participation more effective and efficient. Surprisingly, about 60% of our practical work has been getting carried out during midweek sessions, which have been rather haphazardly arranged. Much of this effort has involved routine maintenance tasks; cutting grass, clearing leaves, weeding, hedge cutting, and watering during dry spells. So it is planned to set up maintenance teams of volunteers to look after each of our main sites. The effort of each team will be independently co-ordinated by a team leader.

The monthly weekend working sessions will then be devoted to tackling major projects that are either new, like Battings Garden, or demand a larger team effort. There will be a continuing need for midweek work sessions, but consideration is being given to time-tabling them more routinely, although inevitably unexpected events that require immediate action will occur and weather conditions may lead to short-term changes.

## The Annual General Meeting 2013

The AGM was hosted at Noel's house on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September. Unlike most AGMs the 18 members and friends who attended found this was not a dry-as-dust affair typical of most AGMs, in that it successfully mixed business and pleasure. In addition to the routine business of adopting the financial statement and electing the new committee, there was much of interest to discuss. Noel's 'State of the Union' report can be downloaded and read via the home page of our web-site. It is an impressive document that will give you a good flavour of the rich diversity of our activities. The chairman paid a warm tribute to all members of the Group for their efforts during the year that had made this possible. The key items discussed were: -

1. Our new Constitution, which needed to be extensively revised because of our ever expanding activities and interests, was adopted.

### Future Programme 2013-2014

**Weekend Work sessions please note these dates in your diaries**

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October      Middle Bourne Lane**

New work and start of winter clear-up

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November      The Bourne Crossroads**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December      The Old Churchyard**

Winter clear-up

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January      Woodland Management**

Probably Burnt Hill Wood

#### Main Mid-week Tasks

- Footpath maintenance
- Complete collection of old barbed wire fencing from Compton Field
- Autumn bulb planting and wild flower planting/seeding
- Winter planting for tubs at the Crossroads



2. Our new Health and Safety Manual was also formally adopted. This gives greater guidance to team leaders. It will need some further iterations, particularly in reference to our plan to increase the involvement of young people in our conservation work, through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
3. Modifications to our working practices (see the Editorial); these generated the most animated discussions. Our finances are healthy particular because we have covered out running costs with income generated at The Bourne Show. Our membership is growing albeit slowly. New challenges lie ahead notably the renovation of Batting's Garden and further work on The Bourne Stream. Planning and the Neighbourhood Plan continue to give some of us headaches. We have gained some good publicity during the year. We would like the



Martin Angel

membership to participate more actively in recording wildlife in The Bourne via our Facebook site.

The pleasurable part then followed when we retired to Noel's sunny garden for an excellent buffet lunch, to which many of the participants had contributed. With so much to talk about it was well into the afternoon before we all dispersed. We were all most grateful to Noel and Edelgard for hosting this informative and delightfully enjoyable event.

## The Bourne Show 2013

With the sun blazing over the browning grass of The Bourne Green, members of the BCG set up for the Bourne Show 2013, with plant, bric-a-brac and information stalls this year. There were plenty for BCG members to



organise while setting up an abundance of things for the local residents to explore and enjoy. Our members were all kitted out for the first time in our smart new group polo shirts. Thanks to the generosity of members, friends and local residents, the plant and the Bric-a-Brac stalls were packed with irresistible items to entice buyers. The glorious weather brought a record crowd and business was brisk. The Information stand was also a huge draw, with interest centring on a competition identifying infant animals with their adult counterparts, which attracted both young and old. The panels depicting the value of gardens gave rise to much discussion. The large crowds at the show boosted business and a brilliant amount of £654 was raised, which should cover the Group's running costs throughout the coming year.

As is usual for our Group, it was a great team effort. Twenty members took part on the day, undertaking on a whole range of tasks from stall holding, transportation, running the quiz and providing information to all our visitors. This team was of course backed up by many others who had contributed by donating goods for sale, growing plants or providing a delivery service to the show ground. We are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to this highly successful day.

Ben Weir

(Editor's note: Ben is one of our younger members, who started to work for us as part of his participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme).

## A Walk in the Park

In August it was a great pleasure for members to enjoy a conducted evening walk in Farnham Park at the invitation of the Friends of Farnham Park, who visited us in The Bourne last year. We were led on a comprehensive tour by David Havenhand, the Friend's chairman, and accompanied by his two border collies who with other doggie friends enjoyed the event as much as we did.

Our route took us along the impressive avenue of lime trees known as The Avenue and then across one of the grazing areas, dropping down into the valley of the Nadder Stream. This Nadder rises in Upper Hale and follows



a well-wooded course through the park and emerges at the complex of roads and buildings near the Shepherd and Flock roundabout before it joins the Wey. There have been problems of pollution here and controlling the Himalayan Balsam provides a Herculean task for the park volunteers.

We enjoyed looking at the several large ponds which also present a challenge for the volunteers to maintain. They are homes of great crested newts, although we were not fortunate to see any. We learned that their numbers have declined somewhat in the last few years. The Friends Pond is a particularly nice feature in that it is specifically reserved for dogs to enjoy a dip in hot weather.

It was delightful to see so many different wildlife habitats in the Park and to enjoy the sweeping views from the high spots down over Farnham and out across the Hogs Back. As if this was not enough, we were then most hospitably entertained in the cricket pavilion to hot drinks and a delicious array of home-made sandwiches and cakes. We are indeed very grateful to The Friends of Farnham Park for every aspect of this most enjoyable event.

Noel Moss

(Editor's note: For those of you who want to learn more about the Park copies of the *History of Farnham Park* by Pat Heather, which was published in 2009 by the Museum and Waverley Borough Council are available (£10) from the Museum, and the URL of their website is <http://www.hairycalyx.com/fofp/>)

## BCG shares in Farnham Gold Medal

We were delighted to learn in the last days that Farnham once again achieved Gold Medals in the South East in



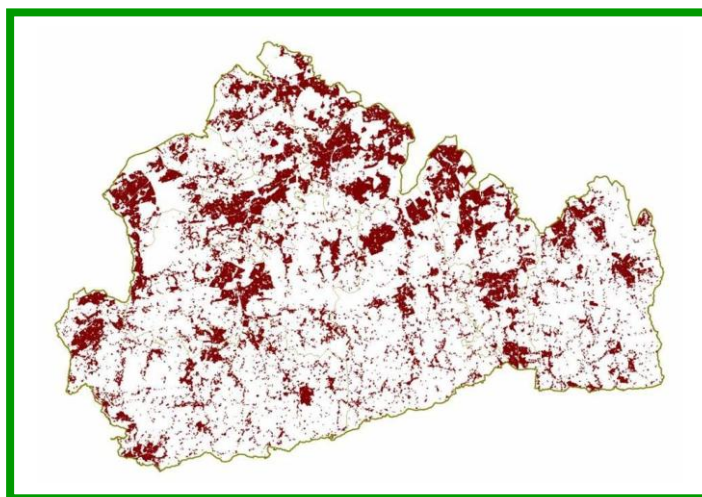
Bloom Competition in both the Town Centre and Large Town categories. This is a tremendous result with added glitter because it was also adjudged Best Large Town overall. We are particularly delighted with this result because we made a significant contribution in the Large Town category through the Community Garden in Middle Bourne Lane which we manage for the Town Council. The judges commented "The Bourne Conservation Group has made great strides in the wildlife garden with the introduction and management of various habitats. It was fascinating to see how this garden has impacted on the local environment and the recording of the flora and fauna." The picture, in which Noel shows off the

moths caught by Martin the previous night, illustrates the way in which we provided plenty to interest the judges during their short visit.

Noel Moss

## The Garden Questionnaire

Many of you have completed the garden questionnaire that was sent out during the summer, and we have invited responses from other groups such as TBRA and the Farnham Society. So far we have had 93 responses and so we are close to compiling enough information to be able to contribute useful data to the Neighbourhood Plan. Gardens contribute nearly a quarter of the area of urban Farnham. The map shows the distribution of gardens in Surrey (with thanks to Surrey Wildlife Trust). To many developers and planners, gardens are a total waste of space and



are ripe for development. However, recent scientific evidence clearly shows that gardens make important contributions to the quality of our lives and our wildlife; they help to reduce the impact of climate change and pollution, while keeping us mentally and physically fit and healthy and maintaining the town's rich biodiversity. They are an important component of the town's green infrastructure and maintain green corridors along which plants and animals can disperse. Some of the more interesting results emerging from our small survey are summarised in the text box.

<b>30%</b> use no chemicals on their lawns	<b>65%</b> mow their lawns at least fortnightly
<b>76%</b> are partially tolerant of weeds	<b>48%</b> only clear leaves at the end of autumn;
<b>28%</b> have garden ponds	<b>77%</b> feed the birds,
<b>57%</b> have log piles,	<b>56%</b> have left wildlife patches
<b>70%</b> have large trees in their gardens	<b>50%</b> have seen bats.
<b>86%</b> have seen foxes	<b>30%</b> badgers,
<b>45%</b> roe deer	<b>47%</b> slow worms,
<b>53%</b> frogs	<b>48%</b> toads.
The commonest birds are blue tits ( <b>92%</b> ), blackbirds ( <b>93%</b> ), robins ( <b>95%</b> ) and magpies (8%) (urban magpies increased 5-fold between the 1970's and the 1990's).	

Realising the full implications of our survey data will take some time and involve some high powered statistics. However, we must have more responses, if our results are going to convince the planning authorities. So if you are yet to fill in a questionnaire **please, please** do so. If you need a form, request one from me by e-mail, my e-mail address is appended to the list of committee members at the end of this newsletter. It only takes a few minutes to fill in and the effort could prevent the over-development of The Bourne.

Martin Angel

## Heritage Weekend

The arrangements we had made for our contributions on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September to the Farnham Heritage Weekend all worked very well albeit with a problem that arose either because the weather man had been left off the distribution list, or the event was run on Friday 13<sup>th</sup>! Just as we were setting out from the church of St Thomas-on-The Bourne at 17.30 on the Friday, the heavens opened. Undaunted, our team persevered, as did the very gallant group of 24 visitors who with great fortitude stuck with us for the next two hours (although a couple did find the proximity of the Fox pub on the walk too much of a temptation).



Friday night - wet, wet, wet!



Saturday morning – dry but cool!

Despite these far from ideal conditions, a great deal of interest was generated right from the start when Martin produced the Stone Age axe head he had borrowed from Farnham Museum to show how our village has a history going back perhaps 10,000 years or more. Fortunately the weather had greatly improved by Saturday morning when another group gathered to take part in a tour of the Old Churchyard and the walk down Old Church Lane, which included a visit to the garden of Vine Cottage, home of George Sturt, thanks to the kind permission of Louise and Darren Clayton. The morning culminated with welcome refreshments in the church courtesy of the Vicar, and an inspection of the materials from the Old Church that were incorporated into the new building.

Noel Moss

## The Oldest Artefact

The oldest artefact we were able to show at our Heritage Day events was the Stone Age axe that was kindly



loaned to us by the Farnham Museum. It was dug up at Ward's Pit, a gravel pit that exploited the Farnham Red gravels, and part of the Firgrove Estate that was owned by Mr Ward. It was he who donated the land to the church for the building of the 'new' church, which is now known as St Thomas's in The Bourne. The gravels were probably deposited as the glaciers retreated at the end of the last Ice Age around 14,000 BC. So the axe probably dates from between 14,000 and 10,000 BC. More accurate dating is not possible because the Stone Age men being hunter-gathers were constantly on the move and left no other signs of settlements or datable artefacts. This axe, which was probably used as a scraper rather than as a weapon, is made of chert rather than flint; chert is a common rock layer in the greensand of the Surry Hills the nearest source of which is Caesar's Camp.

Martin Angel

## Planning Matters

It's been a busy period for planning activity on our patch, so I propose to highlight only a few issues.

### The Bourne Woods

After what has seemed an interminable period of "consultation", the Forestry Commission's application to formalise filming in Bourne Wood finally appeared on the agenda of Waverley's Western Area Planning Committee meeting in Godalming at the beginning of September. Noel Moss and I attended as observers, together with three members of The Bourne Residents Association. Tony Patterson spoke for the objector's side, and in the short time allowed (three minutes) put over the TBRA position very forcibly.

Waverley's planning department was there in force, with four staff members in attendance. Their recommendation, as presented to the committee, was that with conditions the application should be passed. I think we all expected that it would be rubber stamped, but rather to our surprise, the councillors present had clearly decided that this would not be the case. Councillor Stephen O'Grady read out a long list of potential loopholes that he felt had not been accurately defined in the officers proposed conditions. Councillor Carole Cockburn spoke eloquently about the disruption that she felt the scheme would still inflict on nearby residents. The planning officers appeared surprised, and in some disarray, and could not sensibly answer any of the

councillors' queries. The committee decided unanimously that the application should be deferred, until the proposals by the planning department were in a better state.

The existing recommendations do already go some way towards our suggestions, and with luck we might get some further concessions at the next attempt. Fingers crossed....

### **The Toyota Development (AKA Mulberry Place)**

This is now approaching completion, and we will soon be able to see it in all its glory (gory)! We had hoped to have some minor improvements made to the design, but in practice few of these have been realised. The (Berlin?) wall is of a height and prominence that was certainly not obvious from the perspective of the developer's artistic impression, shown on the left below. Compare and contrast the real thing on the right.



**Idealised artistic impression**

**The present reality**

You may well think that the overpowering reality of the bulk and size of the wall, and the looming houses above it, are not quite the impression given in the drawing, which has a viewpoint about 30 feet above the level of the road. Normally we do not stoop to saying "we told you so", but in our objections to the planning application we stressed the need for sympathetic landscaping with hedgerows to preserve our local environment while giving the new residents their privacy. On a lighter note - what (if anything) can we do about the wall? Suggestions to date have included tasteful graffiti, or that we should all carry pots of mixed yoghurt and seeds (native of course), to be hurled at the wall from the windows of our cars! Guerrilla landscaping anyone?

All in all, it's probably unlikely that this development will win the Stirling Prize for architecture.....

### **Kendal Cottage, Old Church Lane**

An initial application to demolish this 19th century cottage and rebuild a vast house was rightly (in my view) rejected by Waverley. The next application seeks to exploit a worrying loophole in a badly drafted piece of legislation by applying for a huge extension, increasing the footprint of the existing cottage by 140%. This has caused a veritable storm of protest locally, including a front page piece in the Herald, so the developer has withdrawn the application. However, a whisper says that another application is on its way....

### **Appeals**

And finally, a couple of welcome successes at appeals. There has been a noticeable and unwelcome recent trend for applications, rejected by our local authority, to be approved on appeal to the Government Planning Inspectorate. However, two such appeals, in Dene Lane and Pine Ridge Drive, have recently been rejected so the trend isn't one hundred percent. The next appeal to be watched is at 49 Burnt Hill Road, the open space by the little bridge over the Bourne stream. It went to appeal some time ago but no decision has yet been issued.

Charles Fearnley

## Plants for beneficial insects - daisies

The daisy family of plants (Asteraceae) is one of the most important for bees and butterflies. Bees need nectar for fuel and both pollen and nectar to feed their larvae; adult butterflies don't need pollen but nectar is an essential fuel for flight. Many daisies suit bees and butterflies because they produce prodigious amounts of pollen and nectar in an accessible form. Daisies all have flower heads which are actually a composite of lots of individual flowers all tightly packed together. These small tubular florets are well-suited to bees and butterflies



as they use a thin tube-like proboscis to suck up the nectar.

Flowers in the daisy family all have a similar basic structure, but vary a lot in appearance. The individual florets can either be regular with all the petals the same size, such as the cornflower, or they can be irregular with some petals bigger than others, such as sunflowers.

If you're thinking of adding some new plants to your garden now and would like to choose ones which will provide good forage for insects, here are a couple of suggestions which look lovely when planted together. One is from the daisy family and

one from the stonecrop family; both do an excellent job of extending the flowering season into autumn.

**Asters** (Michaelmas daisies), have massed pink and purple flowers with yellow centres. They attract autumn butterflies, honeybees and hoverflies providing both pollen and nectar. The variety *Aster x frickartii* 'Mönch' is particularly attractive to butterflies and it can flower from late July until October. It's a trouble free perennial which grows in most soils and will spread over time.

**Ice plants** or sedums, being succulent, are great for drought tolerance. Not all cultivated varieties of Sedum are popular with bees but Sedum 'Munstead Red' certainly is (see picture). It's a clump-forming herbaceous perennial about 60cm tall, which was found by Gertrude Jekyll in 1915. It has red stems and dark green leaves tinged with purple; it produces domed clusters of purplish-pink flowers from August to October.

Hilary Dickson



## Asian hornet – a potentially dangerous invader



Have you seen this hornet? When a container of pottery arrived in Bordeaux sometime around 2004, it contained unwelcome stowaways - queens of the asian hornet *Vespa velutina*. Since then the hornet has spread rapidly in France, and it likely that it will cross the Channel and invade Britain sometime in the future. This hornet is a voracious predator

of honey bees, hunting them down at the entrance of the hive. While it is not aggressive to humans, its sting is very painful and potentially dangerous to anyone who is allergic. It is larger than a wasp, but smaller than our native hornet. It is active during the day, rather than at night like our native species (which is not uncommon in our area). Should you see one of these invaders, then you are asked to report your sighting to the National Bee unit ([nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk)) preferably together with a photograph and/or a specimen. If it does get across the channel we need to take all possible measures to prevent it from becoming established here in Britain.

Martin Angel

## Ivy is now in flower



Ivy is now in full flower. If the sun comes out during the day then it will be attracting a wide range of insects. So far this year wasps are the most abundant insects on the flowers, but keep an eye out for the ivy bee. Butterflies also find it a great source of nectar, which is vital for species like red admirals, commas and peacocks for their hibernation over winter. In previous years hornets have been frequent visitors to the ivy in Middle Bourne Lane – incidentally they do not deserve their fearsome reputation that originated from Desperate Dan in the Beano comic. They tend to be nocturnal but in autumn queens are often to be seen foraging on fallen fruit. They visit the ivy flower both for the

nectar and to prey on the other insects visiting the flowers. If you go out at night you have a good chance of seeing a number of moth species foraging on the flowers. Here is a photograph taken last week of a large yellow underwing feeding on the ivy flowers along the footpath skirting Compton Field.

Martin Angel

## Your Committee

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Noel Moss</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Richard Sandars</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Fiona Warburton</b>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Karen Redman</b>
<b>Footpath co-ord<sup>n</sup></b>	<b>Martin Wisdom</b>
<b>Publicity</b>	<b>David Todd</b>
<b>Planning</b>	<b>Charles Fearnley</b>
<b>Horticulture</b>	<b>Hilary Dickson</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Martin Angel</b>
<b>Member</b>	<b>Lisa Malcolm</b>

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