

# Newsletter

## Christmas 2010

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### Future Programme

#### January

- Friday 7<sup>th</sup> Willow coppicing  
For materials for OCY
- Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> OCY – general tasks

#### February

- Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> Paradise wood clearing

#### March

- Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Footpath maintenance

#### April

- Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> MBL Springtime tidying
- Mid-week OCY tidying
- Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday service

#### May

- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> To be decided

#### June

- Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> To be decided
- Mid-week Check for balsam growth

#### July

- Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> Balsam pulling
- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> ► Bourne Show ◄

#### September

- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> ► Annual General Meeting ◄

Sunday sessions will be 1000-1300h – a calling notice will give details a week in advance.  
Mid-week sessions will be arranged whenever necessary at short notice.

### Chairman's Christmas Message

2010 has been another busy and productive year for our Group. I believe it has also been a satisfying and enjoyable one. This reflects the hard work and good humour of all our Members and Friends across a wide range of tasks many of which are reported on in this edition of our Newsletter. It also reflects the help and support we have received from a number of outside agencies to all of whom we are grateful. On behalf of the committee I thank you all for your good company and commitment and wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

There are many environmental challenges ahead and, in our local area, we shall endeavour to play our part in meeting them. I look forward to seeing everyone in 2011 and wish you a healthy and successful New Year.

### Editorial

Writing our response to the proposal to build a temporary bridge across the River Wey highlighted a number of issues. The ecological report provided by the developer lent very heavily on official biological records for the area, which to say the least are woefully inadequate. There are few records of even the commonest animals from badgers to foxes let alone the less common ones such as stag beetles and bats. As a Group we have kept reasonable records on our own sites but we have not done so well outside them. By rectifying this omission we would not only be able to demonstrate the rich biodiversity of our area but might also provide future evidence to counter unwelcome developments. Noel has suggested that we could provide a web page where members could report their observations, but will you use it? Before we decide to go the expense of developing the website to this end, I suggest members e-mail me with their observations.

A useful guide can be found at <http://www.nbn.org.uk/Useful-things/Publications/Darwin-Guide-to-Recording-Wildlife-pdf.aspx>

The ecological report also carried an implicit criticism of Farnham for its lack of care for its environment by citing the rampant growth of Himalayan balsam along Borelli Walk and the large patches of Japanese knotweed further down stream. As a group we are doing well in The Bourne keeping these aggressive invaders at bay, which would otherwise seriously threaten our native flora. But there is no room for complacency, we must continue to keep on top of the problem.

### **Bourne Show 17<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

This year the weather was much kinder than in 2009. Noel as usual had prepared all the main exhibits and mustered a team of stalwarts to set up. This was the first year we used our new gazebo at the show, although it had been used a couple of times before for Old Churchyard events. It provides us with much more space, and early on stood up to the gusty winds that caused others some problems. There were three main themes this year. Panels were devoted to 'Moths for all Seasons' depicting how throughout the year different moths occur in each season – 'The Living Garden' that showed how a garden could be made wildlife friendly – and a special



A general view of our exhibit with Martin Angel and Sheila Musson demonstrating aquatic animals to a family of visitors.

panel on the Old Churchyard. The Heritage Day in the Old Churchyard had been so successful and had excited so much interest in providing information on people's ancestors that Wendy and John Maddox agreed to have another consultation session at the Show.

Their advisory service proved to be very popular and they were kept busy for the duration. One visitor was 99-year old Fred Collins, who had also come to the churchyard during the heritage day event when he showed us pictures of himself as a choir boy in the early 1920's.



The oldest of our visitors Fred Collins (99) chats to the heritage team with John Maddox in front.

Lisa Malcolm assisted by Pat King ran another very successful competition for children, this time inviting them to design their own moths or butterflies. Set up with the help of Karen Redman's colourful children's furniture, this was one of the hits of the Show, with the youngsters still busily making moths after the Show had officially ended. Book prizes were awarded to the makers of



Some of our younger visitors enthusiastically participating in the children's competition.

the best stylistic and imaginative entries. Hopefully some of these children will develop an awareness of The Bourne's environment and become the next generation to maintain it. Finally Martin Angel organised a display of living aquatic animals that ranged from dragonfly larvae and crayfish to newts and

mosquito larvae that had been collected either from Lisa's pond or the Basingstoke Canal. The *pièce de résistance* was provided by feeding the mosquito larvae to the dragonfly larvae, an example both of nature red in tooth and claw, and the effectiveness of biological control.



We attracted young and old, with Lisa Malcolm supervising the competition, Stan Cockett in the shade, Wendy and John Maddox giving heritage advice, and Edelgard Moss relaxing.

Our exhibit was dismantled with our customary speed and it was all whisked away thanks to Bryan Snashall with his van and family helpers. Our aim of exhibiting at the show is three-fold: to advertise our activities to The Bourne community, to thank our supporters and most importantly to recruit new members. In all aspects we were successful thanks to our terrific band of willing helpers including Sheila Musson, Stan Cockett, David Dearsley, Geoff Hooker and Richard Sandars.

### Making our voice heard

The new Government has introduced the rather ill-defined concept of the 'Big Society'. It is hoping that the 'ordinary citizen' will play a large role in decision-making and in running local infra-structure. In many ways the BCG has already been doing just that by looking after footpaths, taking an active interest in planning applications, and in greening our highways and byways. In the last few months we have been expressing our opinions on some of these issues. For example, DEFRA has had a consultation on attitudes to the environment in England. How should it be organised? How can the voluntary sector play a bigger role both in local and national environmental issues, and in offering opinions

on some of the major planning issues. Some of your committee members have expressed



An example where we are already helping the local authority – Stan Cockett and Didi Hall burning laurel and holly cleared in Paradise Wood this November.

their reservations about our involvement in this consultation, especially by our expressing opinions over issues that are regional and national rather than local, and may not reflect the opinions of you the membership. Have we been stepping beyond the bounds that our members will find acceptable, by expressing opinions under the aegis of BCG that may not be shared by you. Opinions expressed by groups will potentially carry more weight than those of individuals, but are we misrepresenting you the membership in so doing?

**The DEFRA consultation** - We expressed our concern that in the current dire financial situation, there is a danger that environmental issues will be given too low a priority while overcoming the financial crisis, and still maintaining education and the health service and alleviating poverty. To renege on our environmental obligations, for example by selling off SSSIs, would not only incur substantial fines from the EU but also have serious long term implications. We argued that there must be a minister in the cabinet whose primary mandate is environmental.

**Supporting a stronger Civil Society** – This is the title of a Cabinet Office consultation on the Big Society. We were asked by Voluntary Action SW Surrey to help them with their reply especially on the subject of what local groups might need in the way of support if they are to take over more

responsibilities. We told them that a group like BCG needs three things: funding, technical support and sometimes administrative help e.g. on H&S or legal matters. Overall at the meeting there was a feeling that the Cabinet Office was in danger of under-estimating the breadth and complexity of the voluntary sector as well as perhaps tending towards too centralised an approach.

**The planning application for a temporary bridge across the Wey** – The East Street development will inevitably result in an increase in heavy lorry movements that threatens to severely disrupt everyday traffic in the town. To stop the centre of town from becoming totally congested and prevent air pollution levels soaring to dangerous levels, a planning proposal was promulgated to build a temporary bridge across the Wey and Borelli Walk. In the proposal the contractor gave reassurances that there would not be



Himalayan balsam flourishing along Borelli Walk – should the proposed temporary bridge for East Street construction traffic be built, it will cross the river where the trees are in the background.

significant increases in noise and air pollution, and the environmental impacts would be trivial. The assurances relied on outside consultants to assess the environmental impacts, who clearly had little knowledge of the area. It was claimed the felling of trees along the by-pass will have little or no effect, although currently the trees effectively insulate the town from the by-pass noise and filter out exhaust fumes. We queried the models used to predict these impacts and the

claims that the average of one heavy lorry movement per four minutes will have a minimal effect on traffic both in town and using the by-pass. We requested that an independent environmental officer should be appointed who will have control of the development and have powers to regulate construction traffic ensuring that predetermined noise and pollution levels are not exceeded.

**Surrey Wildlife Trust conference on environmental groups** – Noel was asked to make a presentation about the work of BCG to this Conference organised by Frances Halstead at Dapdune Wharf in Guildford on 27<sup>th</sup> November under the aegis the Surrey Biodiversity Partnership scheme. Its aims were to create links and better



Noel presenting the work of BCG to the Conference with our panel behind.

coordination between the various environmental groups in southwest Surrey and to facilitate the formation of new groups. There was special emphasis on the care of orchards, the creation of ponds and the maintenance of churchyards and sanctuaries. We had a lot to offer and Noel's presentation and panels excited a much interest. We met our counterparts in the Bishop's Meadow Trust, the Rowhill Nature Reserve, and the

Friends of Farnham Cemeteries, and discussed possible future collaboration. We



Delegates to the SWT conference study our panel came away feeling reassured that with SWT's help and guidance we are doing reasonably well.

**The Surrey Countryside Estate –** Lisa Malcolm coordinated an excellent reply to the questions raised by Surrey County Council in their consultation on the Management of the Countryside. We have made a number of practical suggestions and a couple of more major points. The first is that, although, we are prepared to work on rights-of-way and areas of public land, we do not think that as volunteers we have the ability or inclination to take over legal and financial responsibilities of the task from the local authority. Secondly, we think that our network of paths has never been adequately managed due to lack of resources and that it would be wrong to reduce the available effort even more.

### Progress in the Old Churchyard

This year the Old Churchyard has been our main project. There have always been two strands to it: biodiversity and heritage. After concentrating throughout 2009 on the first of these, at the beginning of this year we began

to focus on heritage aspects. All the monuments were photographed and the digitised database on the inscriptions has been updated. Our heritage team of Richard Sandars, Wendy Maddox and Mike Spurrier with the magnificent help of Jenny Mukerji, has gone one stage further by compiling information on the lives of the occupants. This all culminated in June with a Heritage Day organised by Richard as part of a nationwide effort to draw attention to churchyards sponsored by the charity "Caring for God's Acre." Our event was a great success and, thanks mainly to a generous donation, raised money towards the repair of several of the monuments. This work was completed in November.

On the biodiversity side, a small wild flower meadow was created using plugs. It was only



Spring in the Old Churchyard – a queen buff-tailed bumblebee collects pollen from a crocus.

moderately successful because of the hot dry weeks of summer (difficult to remember at the time of writing when the churchyard was covered with 20cm of snow). Noel and Martin regularly watered the new plants so the majority of them do appear to have become established and so should produce better displays in 2011. Beyond the wild flower patch in the south-east corner, we toiled hard to remove the laurel stumps, which were beginning to sprout again, and to landscape the unsightly pile of rubble. A fence to protect the boundary fence was put in place and we have planted mature shrubs to create a hedge designed to give colour and provision for wildlife.

Then in October, using a digger specially hired for the purpose and operated by hired hand Rick Payne, we excavated and

landscaped a pond. A large team of barrowers toiled hard to move over ten tonnes of soil and rubble into a skip in Vicarage Hill, which was removed before the rush hour on Monday morning. Weather permitting the



The pond digging team with (l-r) Lisa Malcolm, Karen Redman, Richard Sandars, Stan Cockett, David Dearsley, Noel Moss, Martin Angel, Bryan Snashall and 'Digger' (hired for the day).

excavated pond will be lined on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December. and eventually it will be topped up, thanks to the John and Mary Egan, with water from the roof of Acorn Cottage. We expect the pond will encourage a dramatic increase in the biodiversity of the OCY in future. In the New Year we will be making a rustic fence which will screen the pond, partly as a landscaping feature and partly as an H&S measure. In November using the generous grant we were given during the Heritage Day in May, we were able to get in professional stonemasons help to repair most of the damaged monuments, This year there was another glorious display of crocuses, but a little later in February than usual because of the heavy snowfall at the beginning of the month. It was followed by good springtime displays of primroses, honesty and bluebells. We still lack similar colourful displays of summer flowers, although knapweed, cow parsley and hogweed are quite abundant. If the wildflower meadow develops as well as we hope, it should provide not only more colour in summer but also a richer variety of resources for butterflies, bumblebees and hoverflies. We have already recorded 300

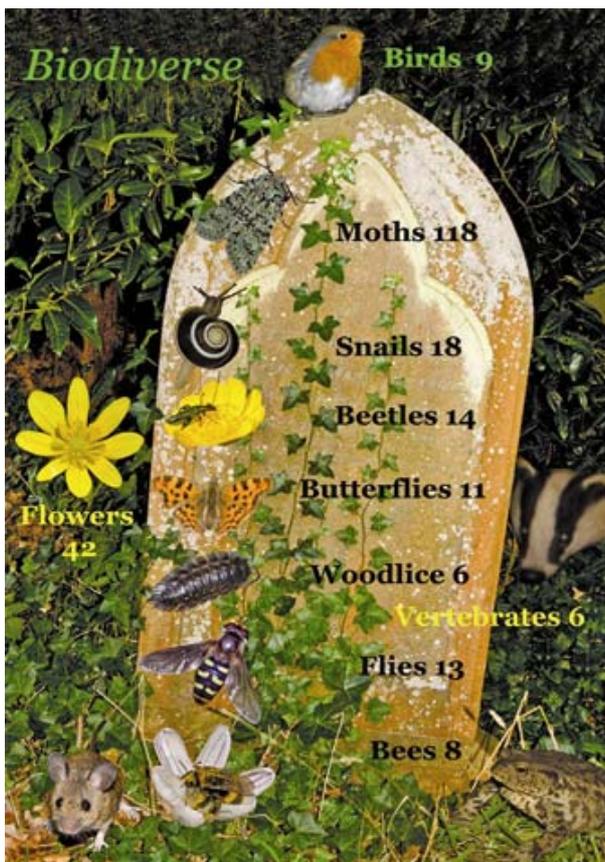


The excavated pond in November before the snow came. A bog garden is to be created in the dip on the left. The pipe will carry in rain water from the roof of Acorn Cottage. The tapes are demarcating the wildflower garden.



Masons repairing one of the previously damaged monuments, thus not only conserving the heritage of the churchyard, but also making the site safer for visitors.

different animal species in the OCY and this is without the ability to completely record the rich variety of flies, beetles, spiders and harvestmen that occur there. Frances Halstead of the Surrey Wildlife Trust with the help of Jane Still and Martin Angel ran another successful training day in June. We produced a publicity pamphlet on the Old Churchyard, which was printed in time to be distributed in July at the Bourne Show (Martin Angel has copies if any members wants one). We are greatly indebted to Mary Egan who



The inside cover of the pamphlet we produced on the Old Churchyard, which illustrates the rich diversity of the site. Many more species have been recorded since then.



The logo of our major sponsor whose grant has funded the biodiversity work in the Churchyard.

keeps the bird feeders topped up. We must also thank our vicar Jonathan Still for his constant support for our endeavours. We hear that next February he is leaving The Bourne and going to Cerne Abbas. Lucky Cerne Abbas! We wish him and Jane all success and every happiness in rural Dorset.

All our progress is a measure of the varied efforts and commitment of our teams of BCG volunteers – well done and thank you!

### Progress elsewhere

Despite the emphasis on the Old Churchyard we have continued to be active elsewhere. Sheila Musson and her team have continued to keep the crossroads looking as good as the hot, dry weather allowed. However, there is a threatening cloud on the horizon – BT is proposing to put another of their green cabinets bang in the middle of the area that we have put so much effort into. This is part of the roll out of faster broadband services that ironically comes within the remit of one of our own members, namely Jeremy Hunt MP in his role of Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport! Noel managed to get the first lot of work suspended because a most inappropriate position had been chosen, and it is now proposed to site in line with the existing cabinet. But, with the support of Cllr David Munro we continue to ask questions about this operation while recognising that an improved broadband service is needed.



Tidying Middle Bourne Lane garden with (l-r) Lisa Macolm, Hazel Tucker (local resident), Karen Redman, Martin Angel (? in state of collapse), Sheila Musson and Richard Sandars.

We have kept the Middle Bourne Lane garden tidy, but there is still work that badly needs doing including modifications to the bottom path, part of which is currently closed. We

have some new plants on order for that part of the site but these have been delayed and have now rather been overtaken by weather conditions. We have cleaned out all the nest boxes not only in MBL but at one or two other places where we put them up some years ago. (*Have you cleaned out the ones in your garden?*) In due course we shall also need to tackle those in OCY.

We had a splendid session in Paradise Wood in November when we made extensive inroads into the invasive encroachment of laurel and holly that was shading the ground flora. This was one of several work sessions at which James Luff, a young volunteer introduced to us by Sarah Brooks, the Volunteer Advisor, at the Farnham Volunteer Centre, who has given us invaluable assistance during several work sessions.



James Luff taking a breather in Paradise Wood.

Thank you James for all your hard work and thanks to Sarah for the introduction. We hope we will have similar help from other volunteers in future.

### The Children's Hymnal

Two years after the first phase of construction of the original church was completed in 1861, the avenue of lime trees leading to the North Porch and the two yew trees were planted in the northeast and northwest corners of the churchyard in March 1863 by James Knight of Vernon House, Farnham, to celebrate the wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales - as recorded on two plaques at the base of the yew trees. Twenty-five years later, in 1889 Mary Ann(e) Sidebotham (1833-1913), the sister of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Thomas Sidebotham the first vicar of The Bourne, donated the funds for the construction of the lychgate at the

entrance to the churchyard from Vicarage Hill (then known as St Thomas' Hill).



The construction of the lychgate was funded by proceeds from the hymn book. This romantic pen and ink drawing of it covered with ferns as it was before it was renovated, was drawn by Mrs Helen Sale who we thank for giving us permission to reproduce it.

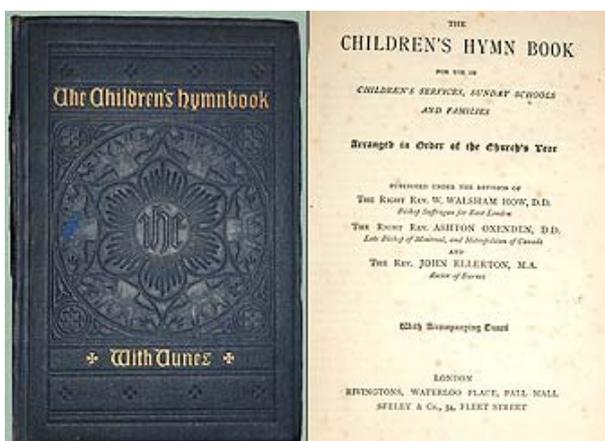
So how was the sister of a Victorian vicar able to raise that sort of money? Miss 'Annie', as she was affectionately known throughout the parish, was an accomplished musician and she played the harmonium (and later the organ) at Sunday morning services at the new



Mary Ann Sidebotham known as Auntie Annie

church. However, she found it a struggle to cope with the singing of the congregation that was enthusiastic but somewhat limited in its musicality. The donation came from the

proceeds of sales of the very popular and successful Children's Hymn book, which she co-edited with Frances Carey Brock. This hymn book was first published in 1881, and by 1898 over one million copies had been sold and it stayed in print until 1911; so even by today's standards it was a best seller. Mary Ann was not only the Musical Editor, but also composed several of the hymn tunes, which she only permitted to be attributed under her initials MAS. Amongst the other composers who specially contributed tunes for the hymnal were Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir John Stainer, and some family members. Her co-editor Frances Brock (1827-1905) was the wife of the Dean of Guernsey (The Dean is often attributed as being the editor!). Mary Ann had met Frances when her brother, at his doctor's suggestion, went to Guernsey, to



The cover and title page of the copy of the Children's Hymn Book in the choir vestry of St Thomas's. It is interesting that the title page makes no mention of either Frances Brock or Mary Ann Sidebotham, but pays tribute to three senior clerics.

convalesce from an illness that was threatening his eye-sight, before he was appointed to The Bourne. Frances Brock had for some time wanted to produce a hymnal expressly for children that would give them "an experience of singing in childhood such hymns as they would love and value all their lives". The production of the Children's Hymn book was undertaken against a background of considerable social change, which included the setting up of children's charities and the passing of legislation on education, child employment and welfare, and this is reflected in many of the words of the hymns.

The whole story of the hymnal is recounted in an excellent booklet by John Barnett and it is also mentioned in the history of the choir at <http://www.stthomaschoir.co.uk/history.asp>

### Ivy - love it or hate it?

While first helping to clear the Old Churchyard I developed something of a love-hate relationship with this plant. It has ancient pagan associations and so its traditional use in Christmas decoration was once banned by the church. However, the carol 'The holly and the ivy' continued to be sung, although ivy does not get much of a look in. It was depicted together with vine leaves in the wreaths worn by poets and Bacchus - may be because a wreath of ivy leaves worn on the head was thought to counter drunkenness -



Monument to Grave 304 Kate Sheldrake. The growth of ivy looks beautiful, but in the longer term it will accelerate the erosion of the inscription and will shade the covering of lichens.

some thing to try this Christmas? Perhaps not if you are driving! Ivy is a plant sacred to witches, who used it to treat plague victims

and syphilitic sores. Traditional medicinal uses included infusions of young leaves to



A chestnut moth feeding on ivy flowers at night in the Old Churchyard.

treat sun-burn and to remove of cellulite, but beware - ivy can cause dermatitis!

It was considered to be a symbol of fidelity – because it clings so tightly? This evergreen plant can live for up to 400 years. It is a plant of woodland and hedgerows, throughout Britain and much of Western Europe. Our survey days in the Old Churchyard showed that a thick ground cover of ivy provides a rich habitat for a rich diversity of invertebrates, but unfortunately also swamps the other ground flora. Ivy stems produce rootlets at the leaf nodes, which enable it to cling to walls and the trunks of trees. So ivy can grow high up into the tree canopy. On the ground the 'immature' leaves are the familiar 5-lobed shape, but once the stems reach high enough to become exposed to full sunlight, they produce leaves that are simple and only then begin to produce flowers. The yellow-green flowers, which are produced in clumps (or umbels) in late summer and autumn, are very rich in nectar. On sunny days they attract a variety of insects often in great abundance. At night they are just as attractive to moths. Ivy is the food plant of the caterpillars of the summer brood of the holly blue butterfly. A butterfly that has two broods a year and it is the spring brood lays its eggs on holly. Ivy berries are purplish-black and are an important food resource for birds and small mammals in winter, but they are mildly poisonous to us (note: in the Balkans there is a subspecies that has yellow berries, which is

a rarity in Britain, so if you see yellow-berried ivy in The Bourne please let me know).



The large hoverfly *Volucella inanis* feeding on ivy flowers in the Middle Bourne Lane Garden. It mimics the coloration of a hornet, which gives it protection against predators.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Noel Moss and Richard Sandars for contributing some of the contents. Noel also took several of the pictures of working parties - all members of the committee who read through early drafts of the texts and spotted my deliberate errors - the Vicar for giving me access to the Children's hymnal - Mrs Helen Sale for permission to reproduce her drawing of the lychgate.

### BCG Committee

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Noel Moss</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Stan Cockett</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Karen Redman</b>
<b>Footpath co-ord</b>	<b>Lisa Malcolm</b>
<b>Heritage</b>	<b>Richard Sandars</b>
<b>Publicity</b>	<b>David Todd</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Martin Angel</b> <a href="mailto:mvangel37@googlemail.com">mvangel37@googlemail.com</a>
<b>Contact us at</b>	<a href="mailto:info@bourneconservation.org.uk">info@bourneconservation.org.uk</a>