

Harlow Conservation Volunteers

Newsletter



November 2009 – April 2010

Newsletter and task programme

Harlow Conservation Volunteers (HCV) was founded in 1985 to give local people the chance to participate in nature conservation work in and around Harlow. HCV is affiliated to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and the Harlow Voluntary Sector Forum.

Our group has been funded by Grassroots Grants, which is funded by the Office of the Third Sector.

BTCV

Conservation Centre,
163 Balby Road, Doncaster,
South Yorkshire. DN4 0RH.
Tel: 01302 572200

Email : information@btcv.org.uk

Web : www.btcv.org

TASK INFORMATION

Tasks start at **10.00am**. Most end at about 4-4.30pm. Everyone is welcome and your help will be valued for whatever time you can spare. However, if you are between 16 and 18 years old your parent or guardian must sign a consent form – please contact the HCV Secretary. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult who must be responsible for them at all times. No previous experience is necessary. Instruction in techniques and safe working practice will be given.

WHAT TO BRING

You'll need a packed lunch and a mug, strong footwear (work boots, walking boots, or wellies for wet tasks), old warm clothes, and waterproofs. Sun protection is advisable (even in winter). We provide tools and protective gear, as well as tea and coffee.

HEALTH AND INSURANCE

Insurance cover is arranged for the group on task. An up-to-date anti-Tetanus injection is strongly advised for most outdoor activities. If you think you may not be covered on this or other health issues, you are advised to consult your doctor.

CONTACT US:

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GROUP ORGANISERS

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HARLOW COUNCIL

Darren Fazackerley,
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Glenn Mulleady, Parndon Wood
☎01279-430005

Many thanks to Julie Matthews of HCV for the great photos of the Netteswell Bridge Project.

Dates for the Diary

Monday 16th November 2009
AGM + Social

All members welcome to review the group's activities for the past year. This year's AGM will follow a meal at the Fish & Eels Pub, Dobbs Weir Road, Hoddesdon, EN11 0AY
Meet at 19.30

Christmas Feast
Sunday 20th December
Meet at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve at 15.00

Planning Meeting
Monday 8th February
Meet at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve at 19.30

Chairman's Chat, November 2009

A look back over the summer tasks

The group has finally completed the construction of the new footbridge over the Toddbrook at Netteswell Plantation – see article later in this newsletter. This is not the only construction-type project the group has completed over the summer: we installed a rustic bench, with an inscription routed by Danny, overlooking the large pond at Parndon Moat Marsh; we replaced a small dam that had eroded away which maintains water levels at Marshgate Spring (a bit of re-engineering is required to get it working properly); and last but definitely not least as our 600th task we built a storytelling seating area capable of accommodating a class of 30 children at Parndon Wood (made from solid oak slices and log sections cut from trees felled in the wood). The plan is for this to be completed with a large carved storyteller's chair.

The relationship with Stewards School has continued with a wild flower survey on their meadow in June, and the regular cutting and raking task in October, when the number of school students participating reached an amazing 15.

As part of the new objective of bringing the town's county wildlife sites into what is termed positive conservation management, we have some new sites to work on. As well as Netteswell Plantation we carried out our first task at Latton Woods clearing some scrubby trees to let more light into "Tom's" pond. This programme we shall be working for the first time at Brenthall and Barnsley Wood – a beautiful wood of coppice with oak standards, a bit like Parndon Wood, but unlike Parndon very little management has been carried out for many years.

It's all about people

The Netteswell Plantation footbridge has been HCV's most ambitious and challenging project to date, and for me personally a very rewarding experience. To use the language of leadership theory, in all the concentration on the task, perhaps the team and individual aspects have been neglected. The GreenTeam Wednesday group has been going from strength to strength. What's the secret? – in the end it's probably about keeping things simple and friendly, plenty of advertising, and generally communicating – things we need to do better.

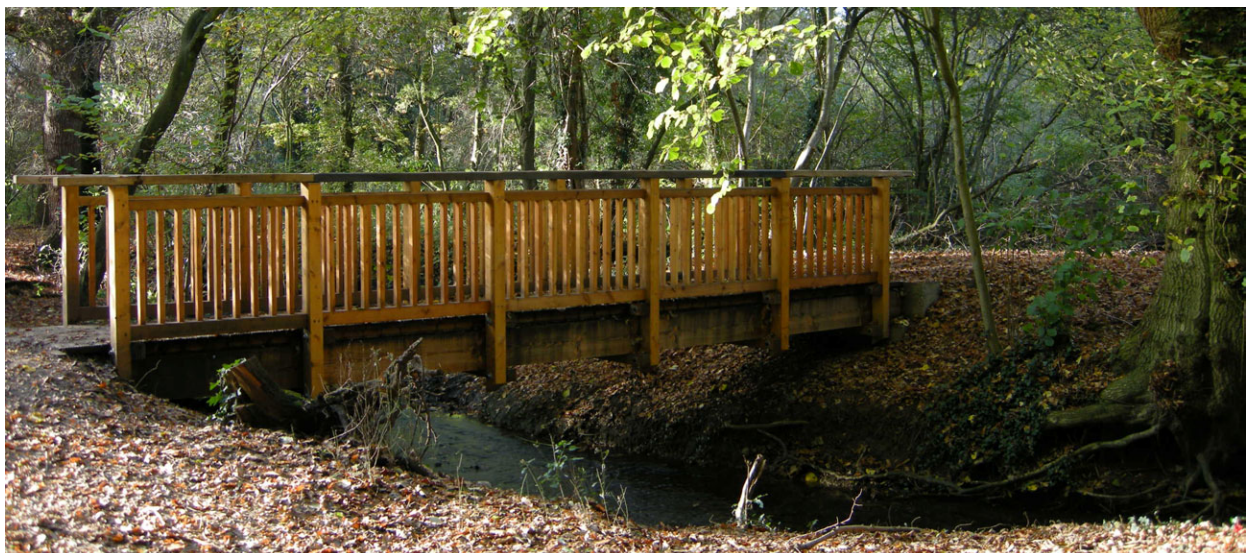
As a start we have moved our start time to a more relaxed 10:00am for a Sunday morning. Email is an easy way to announce tasks and events and let people know of any changes – please let us have an email address for you or sign up to the HCV Yahoo! group – see website.

There is some help from Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust; they have recently recruited a "Connecting People with the Stort Valley Project Officer": our tasks on the Harlow Marshes have already appeared in an events leaflet, and we are looking forward to a new leaflet about all the volunteer groups working up and down the Stort valley.

HCV's 25th Year

As I write this HCV is entering it's 25th year, with the 25th anniversary next September. It will be a big achievement – how should we celebrate?: a big party, barn dance, barbeque, a trip away, even a holiday, or all of these - what do you think?

Andrew Tomlins



Completed new footbridge over Toddbrook in Netteswell Plantation

Netteswell Plantation Footbridge



After many hours of hard work and the combined skills, experience and enthusiasm of the Harlow Conservation Volunteers along with help from other groups such as the Green Team and Harlow Council, a previously uncrossable creek within Netteswell Plantation has been transformed. The proposal to build a footbridge across the Toddbrook was entered for the 2008 Harlow Hotspots! Competition at last year's Town Show. Netteswell Plantation is one of Harlow's County Wildlife sites and is just to the south-east of the town centre. Although the proposal was narrowly pushed into third place behind Wildspace! and the Town Park sculpture, since then funding has been found by Darren Fazackerley, Harlow Council's Landscape and Biodiversity Manager, for the materials on the basis that volunteers would build it. The span is 8 metres and the construction is heavyweight timber throughout except for the concrete foundations. The design is based on a standard design by the Paths for All Partnership. The last serious bridge HCV built was the little bridge at Marshgate Spring on the route to the zig-zag bridge to the Stort Meadows back in 1995. This truly was a project suitable for a group which collectively has completed over 600 tasks over a period of nearly 25 years. May the bridge have foundations as deep and strong as the hardworking volunteers of HCV.

Greenteam Tasks

This programme of midweek tasks is organized by the Harlow Wildspace! team with help from HCV. The tasks concentrate on local nature reserves & county wildlife sites as part of the effort to bring these sites into positive conservation management. The tasks are increasing from once to twice a month on Wednesdays, 10am - 2pm.

Oct 21st – Maymeads Marsh: cutting vegetation around trees planted in 2009 by HCV

Nov 4th – Parndon Moat Marsh: coppice willows around the moat

Nov 18th – Brenthall/Barnsley Woods: ride clearance/hazel coppicing

Nov 25th – Timberland Fisheries, Flex Meadow: tree planting

Dec 2nd – Netteswell Plantation: hazel coppicing, tree pruning and ride clearance

Dec 16th – Parndon Wood Christmas task

Jan 6th – Marshgate Springs: dam building, hazel coppicing and vegetation clearance

Jan 20th – Brenthall/Barnsley Wood: sycamore clearance/hazel coppicing

Feb 3rd – Netteswell Plantation: scrub clearance and glade creation

Feb 17th – Marshgate Springs: reed cutting

Mar 3rd – Public Footpath clearance

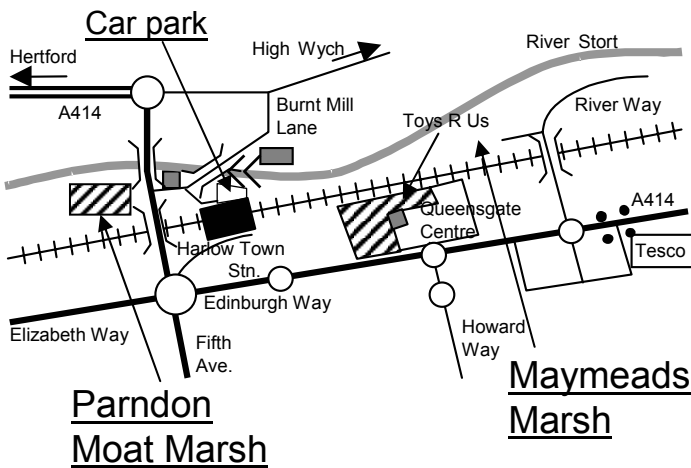
Mar 17th – Latton Woods: pollard creation and scrub clearance

Apr 7th – Parndon Moat Marsh: cut meadows and sedges

Apr 21st – Netteswell/Brenthall TBC

Task Programme November 2009 – April 2010

Please note: tasks occasionally have to be changed at short notice. You can check with the task leader or any of the group organisers listed on the front page.



Sunday 1st November Parndon Moat Marsh

Sedge cutting

Task leader: Colin L

Annual thinning of vegetation to preserve diversity of habitat. Important site for Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (Essex Biodiversity Action Plan species).

Directions: Meet at Burnt Mill Lane car park 10.00am, off A414 between Harlow Town Station roundabout and High Wych roundabout. From Harlow turn right into Burnt Mill Lane then turn right after the Outdoor Pursuits Centre but before the bridge. Site OS grid ref, TL 443 112

Sunday 15th November Netteswell Plantation

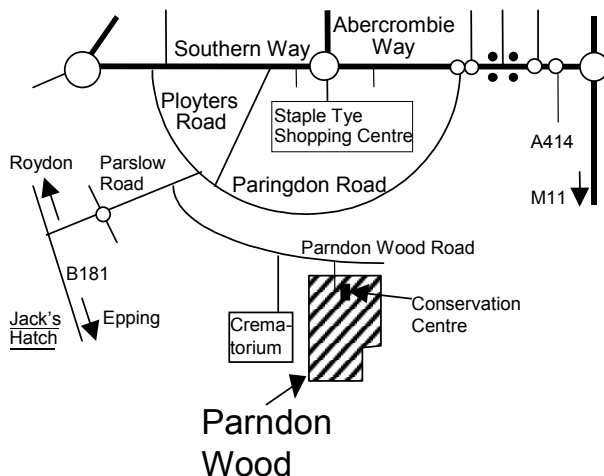
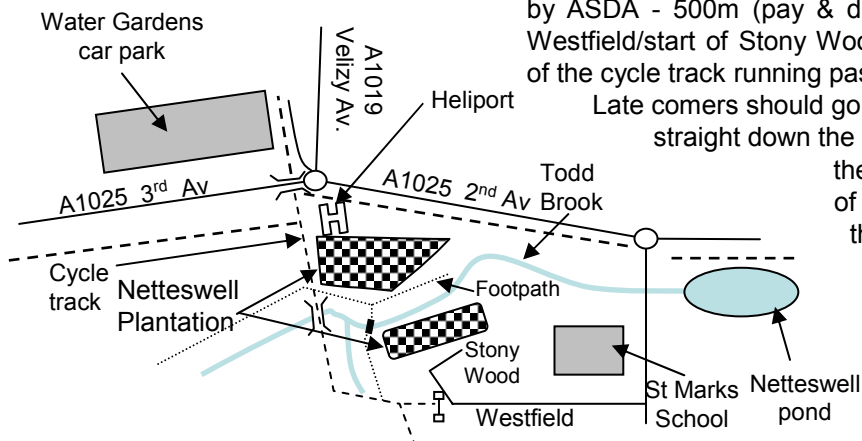
Bridge revetment & habitat management

Task leader: Andrew T.

Construction of retaining wall along the stream adjacent to the new bridge. This will be followed by the coppicing of willow and hazel along the stream.

Directions: Meet at 10.00am at the Heliport, close to the cycle track underpass from the water gardens. The bridge is half way along the section of the Todd Brook bordering the main older wooded area. OS Grid Ref is TL 449 094. Parking points are: Town Centre Water Gardens by ASDA - 500m (pay & display!) or at end of Westfield/start of Stony Wood by gate to a spur of the cycle track running past the wood - 500m.

Late comers should go down the cycle track straight down the hill and turn left on to the footpath by the side of the brook this side of the cycle track bridge.



Sunday 29th November Parndon Wood

Animal Gates & Bird Feeders

Task leader: Danny

Today we'll be putting some gates (akin to a cat-flap) into the boundary fence to provide access for small animals, and also making bird feeders and insect homes to raise funds for the group.

Directions: Meet at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve at 10.00am (for directions see Conservation Centre). Parking available at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve.

Task Programme November 2009 – April 2010

Sunday 13th December

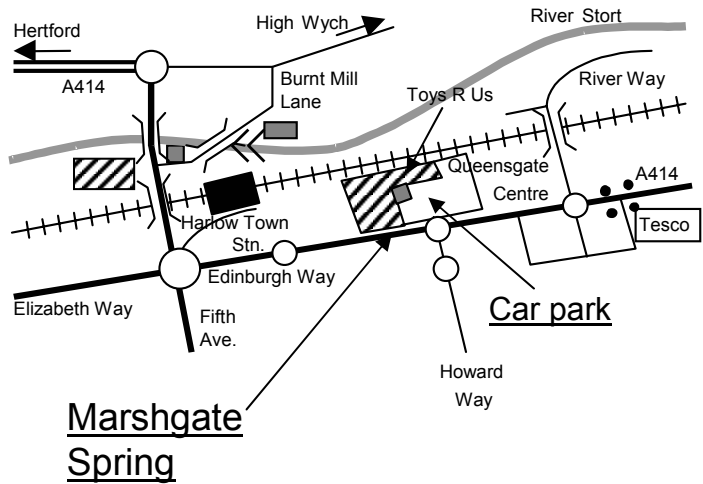
Marshgate Spring

Marsh maintenance

Task leader: Linda H

Today we plan to cut some of the tall reeds and coppice willow and hazel to maintain the aquatic habitats to maximise habitat diversity.

Meet in the Toys 'R' Us car park at the shop front, Edinburgh Way at 10.00am. Grid Ref. TL 453 114.



Monday 28th December (Bank Hol)

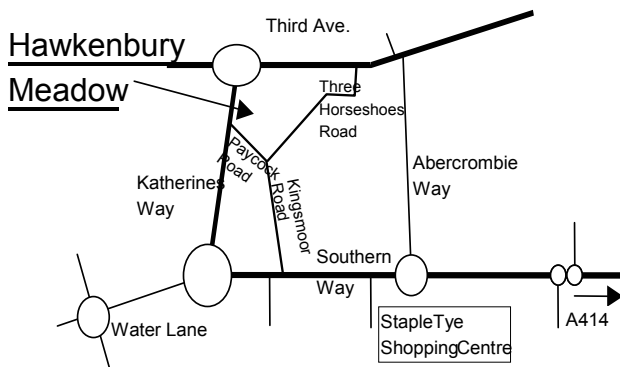
Hawkenbury Meadow

Willow coppicing/scrub cutting

Task leader: Gary D

Stodge-buster! Come and work off the Xmas excess with a bit of coppicing of willows and reduction of scrub to maintain this small local nature reserve.

Directions: Meet at 10.00am road-side on Paycock Road, just off Katherines Way. Grid Ref. TL 434 088.



Sunday 10th January

Parndon Wood

Pond maintenance

Task leader: Marilyn

Today we will be re-lining one of the ponds close to the Conservation Centre, to make sure the pond retains enough water to support the resident wildlife.

Directions and times as 29th November.

Sunday 24th January

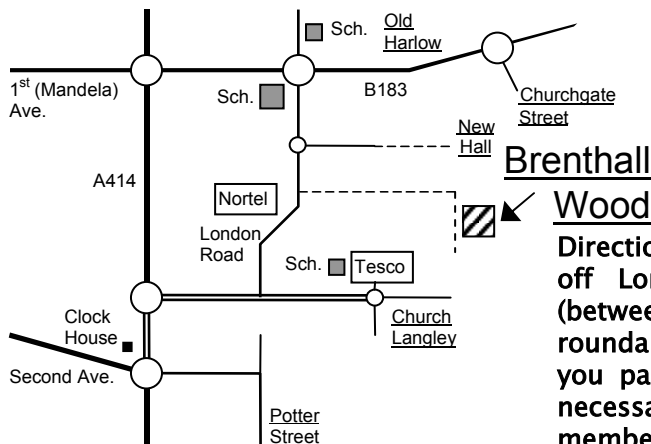
and Sunday 7th February

Brenthall/Barnsley Woods

Woodland maintenance

Task leader: Andrew T/Linda H

Over the course of two tasks we plan to coppice/pollard hazel and clear some glades within Brenthall and Barnsley Woods.



Directions: Meet at 10.00am. Take the turning off London Road opposite the Nortel site (between Church Langley Way and the roundabout for New Hall). The track will take you past playing fields towards the woods. If necessary park along the track & contact a member of the group to find out the task location if you are late. Grid Ref. TL 478 098.

Task Programme November 2009 – April 2010

Sunday 21st February Marshgate Spring Coppicing

Task leader: Gary D
Today the group will be coppicing hazel and willow to maintain the vegetation structure at Marshgate Spring.

Directions and times as 13th December.

Sunday 21st March Netteswell Plantation Habitat management

Task Leader: TBD
Continuing with the coppicing of willow and hazel in the stream corridor.

Directions and times as 15th November.

Sunday 11th April Parndon Moat Marsh Path Levelling

Task leader: Colin L
Today HCV will be working to level the paths that network across Parndon Moat Marsh to ensure visitors are able to fully enjoy this small but diverse nature reserve.

Directions and times as 1st November.

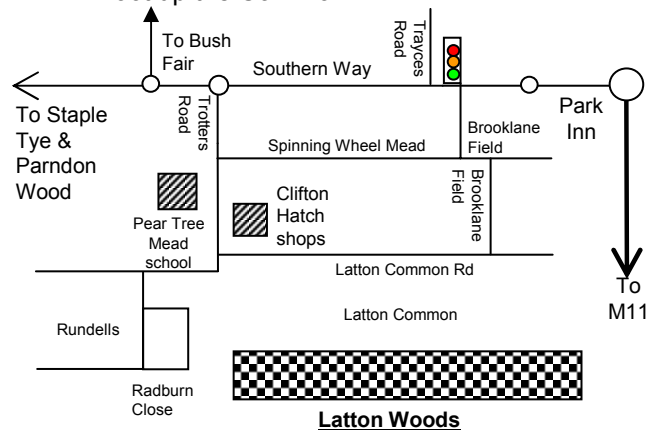


Danny, Andrew, Linda, and John at Marshgate Spring

**PROVISIONAL HCV
TASK DATES
Spring/Summer 2010**
• 9TH MAY 2010
• 23RD MAY 2010

Sunday 7th March Latton Woods Pollarding

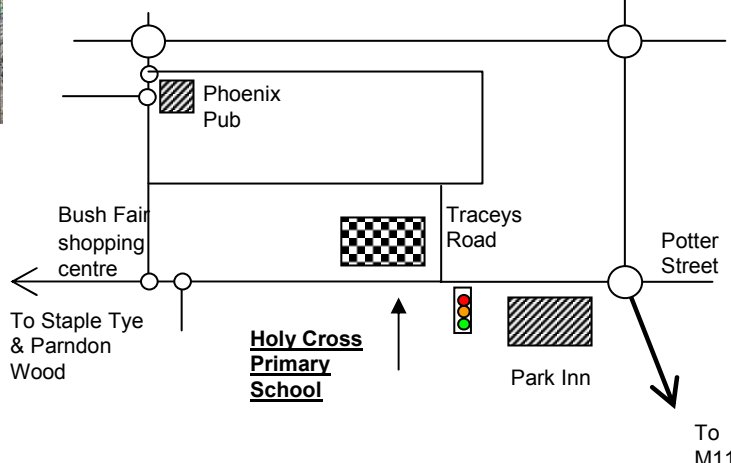
Task leader: Colin L
Come along to Latton Woods Wildlife Site to help pollard some Oak/Ash trees.
Meet at 10.00am at the large pond on the edge of the wood at the top of the Common. Grid Ref. TL 467 078. From Southern way take Trotters Road to Clifton Hatch where the road bends and becomes Commonside Road. From here proceed on foot up the Common.



Sunday 25th April Holy Cross School Storytelling Seating

Task leader: Colin L
During our previous visit to Holy Cross school in November 2006, we helped to create a wildlife area within the school grounds. Today we will be installing a storytelling seating area for teachers and children to use.

Directions: From M11 roundabout head to Harlow taking first exit at Moat House roundabout. Take the first right and you will see Holy Cross on the left. The car park is on the left as you pass the school. Grid Ref. TL 465 086. CM18 6JJ. Meet at 10.00am.



To
M11