

Newsletter and task programme

(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 a health professional.

CONTACT US:

Marilyn Hart (Secretary)
70 Rivermill, Harlow, Essex
CM20 1NT. ☎01279-865239
Email: hcvadmin@harlowwildlife.org.uk
Web : www.harlowwildlife.org.uk

GROUP ORGANISERS

Andrew Tomlins ☎01279-434322
☎07505712004
Colin Lincoln ☎01279-635574
Gary Dobrin ☎01707-375216

HARLOW COUNCIL CONTACTS

Darren Fazackerley,
☎01279-446997
Glenn Mulleady
☎01279-430005

Chairman's Chat

By Andrew Tomlins

Several tasks this autumn and winter were disrupted by bad weather: first, heavy rain prevented us doing the annual reed and sedge cutting task on Parndon Moat Marsh in November, and then the snow prevented us from re-lining the pond at Parndon Wood in January. We have rescheduled some of these tasks for this spring and summer. The silver lining in this was that, having retreated back to the warm and dry at the Parndon Wood Conservation Centre, we were able to get on with making a whole batch of rustic bird feeders from birch logs topped with a piece of oak bark - these have proved a great success contributing over £100 to group funds.

Good progress was made at Brenthall and Barnsley Wood, which is a new site for us. Together the Wednesday GreenTeam volunteers two of the three main rides were widened along their entire length, some 500-600m in total. Some people were sceptical but the lightweight Austrian scythes we purchased with the GrassRoots grant money have proved their value both at Marshgate Spring and when we finally got back onto Parndon Moat Marsh this April. With proper adjustment and sharpening together with instruction in the best scything action, they have proved as effective as a powered brush cutter without the noise, fumes, cost, and carbon footprint - we could probably do with a one or two more.

Looking forward, we decided to have a break from serious footbridge building this year, although another bridge remains a possibility for next year. We are, however, helping with a priority task to widen one of the vehicle access bridges on the Stort Valley Water Meadows. This will allow bigger more effective machinery for the important annual maintenance cut to get on to one of the meadows which, because it was not raised above its natural level, still has a colony of southern marsh orchids.

There are several tasks at Stewards School Meadow: in addition to the regular cutting task in October, we shall be enhancing the boggy area with a small pond, hopefully using the time-honoured method of clay-puddling. In the Autumn we are planning to lay a line of the hawthorns at the back of the site into a new hedge. A laid hedge, being designed to be bullock-proof, should be pretty human-proof as well!

The format of the AGM as a meal out at a pub has proved successful, and a pub evening was well attended last summer, so this year we are trying a couple of pub evenings (having a meal is optional), so that along with the formal planning meetings there's a evening get-together roughly once every couple of months. The planning meetings tend to be taken up with the next task programme, so the extra meetings will allow discussion of other matters, but the emphasis will be on a relaxed social get-together.



Shield bugs photographed at Stewards School Meadow

In September HCV will be 25 - the very first meeting was an introductory evening meeting at Parndon Wood on 24th September 1985 and the first task took place the following weekend. We are planning a fairly low key celebration in the form of a day out to the Great Fen Project between Huntingdon and Peterborough. This project involves combining the existing nature reserves of Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen and the land between to create the largest area of wetland managed for wildlife in the country. There'll be a special guided tour with the warden and an opportunity to see the Rothschild bungalow. If time permits we could include a visit to Houghton Mill, the last working watermill on the River Ouse. We'll finish up with a evening meal at TBD. Please let Colin Lincoln know if you'd like to come ASAP.

Harlow Wildlife Projects

Harlow Wildlife Projects is a newly formed organisation with the aim of securing funding to support wildlife conservation projects within Harlow. We aim to support a range of projects, large and small, within Harlow to improve biodiversity and encourage awareness of the rich variety of wildlife within our Town.

If you have any ideas for future wildlife projects we can support, are able to provide financial backing for such projects or if you are interested in becoming a member please contact us using the details below.

Telephone: Andrew Tomlins (Chairman) 01279 434322

Email: harlow_wildlife@yahoo.co.uk

**Harlow Wildlife Projects, c/o Parndon Wood Nature Reserve,
Parndon Wood Road, Harlow, Essex, CM19 4SF.**

The Keepers Eye for the Birds

*He's back, the keeper of the woods
Observing all that enters his domain
He has an eye for every kind of bird
From the very common, to the game!*

*He likes to think he rules these woods
All those entering soon catch his eye
Birds bring out the hidden wolf in him
And for their attention he will vie*

*He often likes to tease them down
For his scattered crumbs they'll swoop
Thinking they are safe upon the ground
But ending, floating in a very tasty soup*

*His midweek tasks are a mystical time
For birds around him, he gets to flock
All listening to his persuasive words
He is able to get the older chicks to rock*

*Much of his time is spent in playing games
Jokes and taunts are part of his normal day
He always likes to make the feathers fly
And arouse the birds that come his way*

*So if you venture into this keepers realm
And want to spread your wings out wide
His roving eye will be watching out for you
Take care, for you'll find no place to hide*

From the Voice of the Forest

Task Programme April 2010 – October 2010

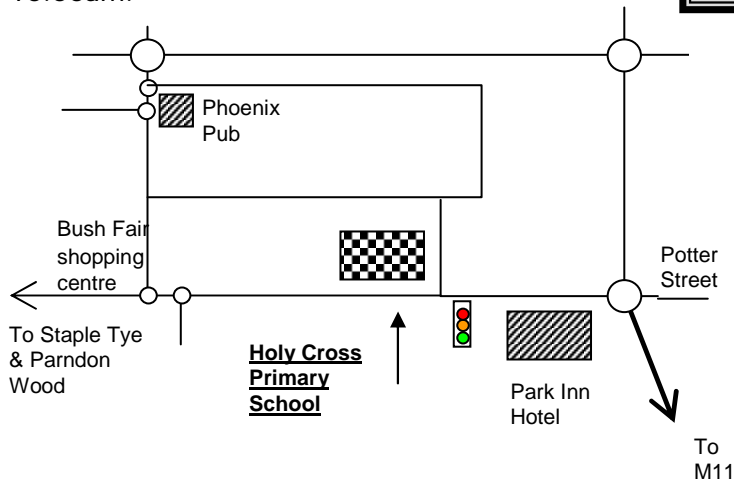
April

Sunday 25th April Holy Cross School Storytelling Seat

Task leader: Andrew T.

Today we will be installing a storytelling seat in the grounds of Holy Cross School. The seat will be positioned in the Wildlife Garden created by HCV to one side of the school field.

Meet at the Holy Cross school car park at 10.00am.



Tuesday 4th May: Queen's Head, Churchgate Street

Come along to the Queen's Head for a pint or two of the establishment's finest brew and some conservation conversation.

26 Churchgate St, Harlow, Essex,
CM17 0JT 7.30pm

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.

Please check with the task leader before this task to ensure it is happening as planned. A standby task is prepared for Parndon Moat Marsh – directions as below.

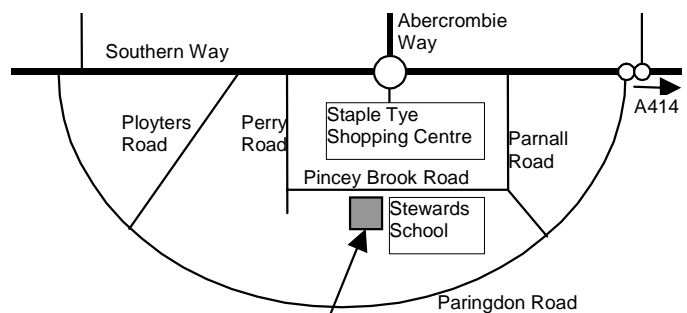
May

Sunday 9th May Stewards School Meadow and pond

Task leader: Andrew T.

The species-rich meadow at Stewards School will this year be subject to a slightly different mowing regime. This year we are trying an early summer cut followed by a late summer cut, to try to control some of the more dominant plant species within the meadow.

Students from Stewards School were awarded the Blake Shield award in 2009 by the British Naturalists' Association for their ongoing project centred around the meadow. HCV are proud to be associated with a group of such hard-working and dedicated students (and teachers...!)



Stewards School Meadow

Meet at 10.00am at the school entrance on Pincey Brook Road off Parnall Road off Southern way behind the Staple Tye Shopping Centre. Grid Ref. TL 445 079.

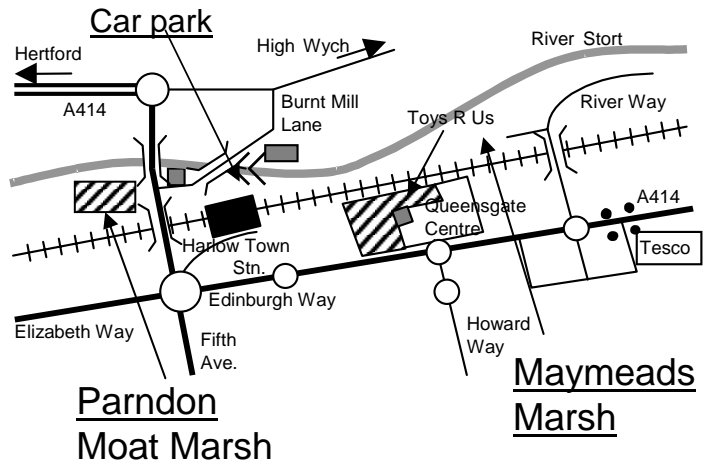
Task Programme April 2010 – October 2010

Sunday 23rd May Maymeads Marsh (morn) & Parndon Moat Marsh (aft)

Tree planting aftercare

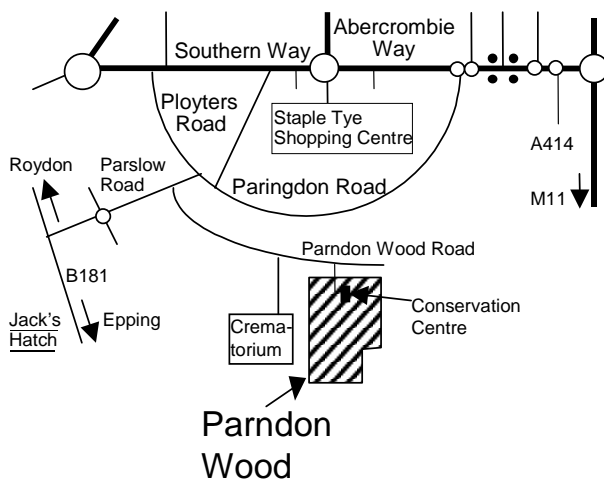
Task leader: Colin L.

Today's special offer is two nature reserves for the price of one! We will spend the morning on Maymeads Marsh tending to young saplings planted by HCV to ensure they are able to flourish. In the afternoon we will cross to Parndon Moat Marsh to continue with the tree care.



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 grid ref, TL454 118

June



Sunday 6th June Parndon Wood Forest Funtasia Fun Day

Task leader: Andrew T.

HCV will be present at this year's Forest Funtasia Fun Day making bird feeders and other crafts to raise funds for the group.

Directions: Meet at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve at 10.00am. Parking available at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve.

Sunday 20th June Parndon Moat Marsh Footpath Repair

Task leader: Colin L.

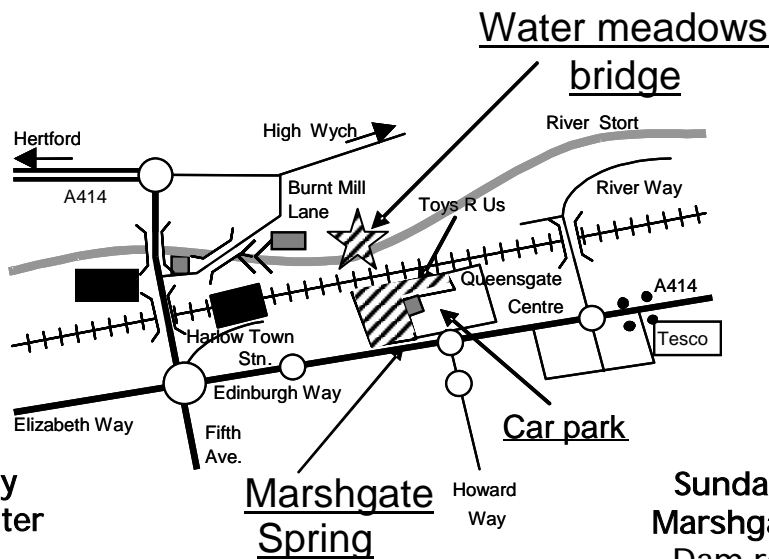
Today's task will involve the levelling of the footpath running parallel to the A414 along the bottom of the flower-rich bank

Directions and times as above.

Tuesday 29th June:
HCV social/business meeting.
Everyone is welcome for a drink and
a catch up
The Moorhen Pub, Burnt Mill Lane,
Harlow, Essex, CM20 2QS
7.30pm

Task Programme April 2010 – October 2010

July



Sunday 4th July River Stort water meadows

Bridge widening

Task leader: TBA.

A joint effort by HCV and Greenteam to widen a bridge to allow vehicle access across during the cutting season. Today we will be installing the shuttering. Project to be confirmed - please check.

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 grid ref, TL454 118

Sunday 11th July Marshgate Spring Dam restoration

Task leader: Danny K.

A variety of tasks today, including water level control and rebuilding of the dam. We will also add wire mesh to two sleeper bridges.

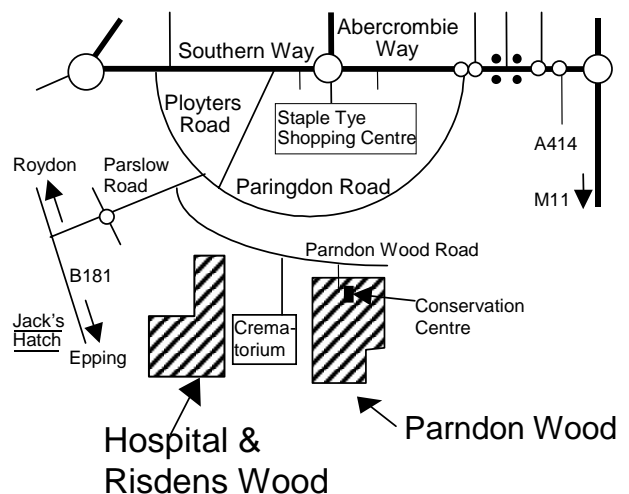
Meet in the Toys 'R' Us car park at the shop front, Edinburgh Way at 10.00am. Grid Ref. TL 454 114.

Sunday 25th July Hospital & Risdens Wood Pond refurbishment

Task leader: Linda H

A task at Hospital & Risdens Wood to refurbish the dam in order to better regulate the water levels within the pond, plus removal of logs from the water/ditch to allow water to flow into the pond.

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



Task Programme April 2010 – October 2010

August

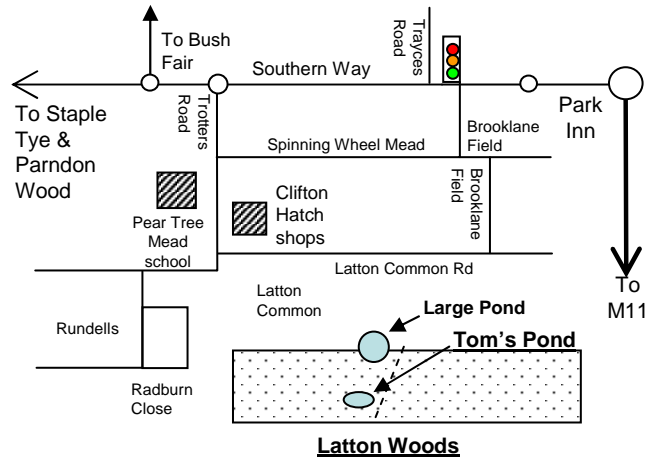
Sunday 8th August

Latton Woods

Bridge building & scrub clearance

Task leader: Colin L

Today we will be installing a small bridge over a ditch close to Tom's Pond followed by scrub clearance along the path leading to the pond.



Meet at 10.00am at the large pond on the edge of the wood at the top of the Common. Grid Ref. TL467078. From Southern way take Trotters Road to Clifton Hatch where the road bends and becomes Commonsides Road. From here proceed on foot up the Common.

**Tuesday 17th August:
HCV Planning Meeting.**

Come along and give us some ideas for the future task programme.

Parndon Wood Nature Reserve

19.30pm

**28/29/30th August:
Late summer bank
holiday weekend –
no task**

Fri 20th August - Stort Valley Partnership Family Day on Harlow Marshes
- please help: contact Andrew T.

September

Sunday 5th September

Parndon Wood

Relining pond

Task leader: Marilyn H.

Relining of the pond next to the Conservation Centre to help retain water during the dry months.

Directions: Meet at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve at 10.00am. Parking available at Parndon Wood Nature Reserve.

Sunday 19th September

Maymeads Marsh Nature Reserve

Reedmace pulling

Task leader: Colin L

Management of reedmace marshland to maintain the wetland habitat. Bring shorts or waders – be prepared to get wet!

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 grid ref, TL454 118

Task Programme April 2010 – October 2010

Saturday 25th September

HCV 25th Anniversary

To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the formation of Harlow Conservation Volunteers, we have organised a group trip to the Great Fen Project including guided tour.

The cost of the guided tour is £2.50, please book with Colin Lincoln on 01279 635574, preferably by 25th June.

The Great Fen Project aims to connect two existing National Nature Reserves, Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen, situated between Huntingdon and Peterborough.

The project is a partnership of the Environment Agency, Huntingdonshire District Council, Middle Level Commissioners, Natural England and the Wildlife Trust.

For more information on the Great Fen Project, please visit the website:

<http://www.greatfen.org.uk>

October

Sunday 3rd October Parndon Moat Marsh Sedge cutting

Task leader: Andrew T.

Annual thinning of vegetation to preserve diversity of habitat. Parndon Moat Marsh is an important site for Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (Essex Biodiversity Action Plan species).

Directions and times as above.

Sunday 17th October Stewards School Meadow cut

Task leader: Gary D.

After the first meadow early summer cut of the Stewards School meadow, today we will be undertaking the second meadow cut of the year. We will also be removing scrub from around the apple trees.

Directions and times as above.

Tuesday 19th October 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

PROVISIONAL HCV TASK DATES

Autumn/Winter 2010

- 31ST OCTOBER 2010
- 14TH NOVEMBER 2010
- 28TH NOVEMBER 2010
- 12TH DECEMBER 2010
- 27TH DECEMBER 2010

(Monday – Christmas Stodge-buster)