

**BLACKWATER VALLEY CONSERVATION
VOLUNTEER NEWS**

THE JUBILATIONS OF FLEET POND SOCIETY

ONTO PASTURES NEW

GO WILD ANYTIME

**A round-up of all of the local volunteer groups
in the Blackwater Valley**

**EVENTS AND CONSERVATION TASKS IN THE
VALLEY OVER AUTUMN AND WINTER**



What a *wild* bunch you are!

Well done to all those who took part in 'Go Wild in September'. With a total of 247 volunteers taking part in 22 practical conservation activities over the month it was a great success!

The organisation of extra events and the publicity surrounding the volunteering month encouraged 49 new volunteers to come along and take part in tasks from hay making to willow weaving. Not only have individual groups achieved their goals in habitat improvement but they have developed new skills, made new friends and have paid a visit to the green gym!

Such a varied programme of tasks throughout the month allowed volunteers, new and old, to experience the range of habitats within the Valley whilst having fun for a worthwhile cause.

Co-ordinated by the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, 'Go Wild' has greatly exceeded our expectations and is hoped to be picked



Go Wild was launched by members of local volunteer groups

up regularly over the next few years. Volunteer groups made a real big effort to encourage new members and it really paid off.

Don't despair if you didn't make it to the volunteer taster days but would still like to give volunteering a try, or even

join a group, because going wild does not end here! Conservation work parties continue to meet regularly in the Blackwater Valley.

So put your feet up as you browse through this newsletter and see what local groups are doing in your area.

Blackwater Valley Conservation Volunteer News

This issue has been taken over by Go Wild so no Site Reports for our own Blackwater Valley Conservation Volunteers this time. Just a few of the memorable highlights, who can forget (some may still be trying!):

- hurdle making for beginners made especially challenging, not only were the blind leading but they were doing it with very dodgy materials! It says a great deal for the resourcefulness and lateral thinking of the group that not only did they manage to produce something but I think (hope!) that they enjoyed themselves as well.
- the long hot summer of cut and rake as many of our regular sites were due their annual short back and sides. The unprecedented temperatures making conditions very uncomfortable, what were we doing out there? Bring on the winter, we can get some proper work done!
- the post and wire fence at Hawley Meadows. The blind leading with the aid of a book this time, but it is still standing. When are they going to get around to putting a gate on? Then we just have to work out how to stop the cattle wandering down the river ...
- the ever changing task programme, just to keep you all on your toes.
- then there was the small matter of 27 Tuesday tasks, with 234 volunteer days and a tremendous amount of work done.

So thank you as always for all your hard work, commitment and support over these last six months.

Adrian & Sue

The Jubilations of the Fleet Pond Society



Chris Packham unveils the twinning plaque

Congratulations to the Fleet Pond Society who have been awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee award. As one of just three reserves in the Country to receive the award this is a great achievement for the society after 27 years of voluntary service.

Chairman Colin Gray received the award for "Voluntary service by groups in the community" for 2003 from the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Mary Fagan. The award highlights the valuable contribution of the volunteers in promoting and preserving the Fleet Pond Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The Local Nature Reserve has also been twinned with Ham Common, near Poole in Dorset.

Chris Packham, naturalist and broadcaster, unveiled the twinning plaque in an official ceremony at Fleet Pond LNR on 17th October.

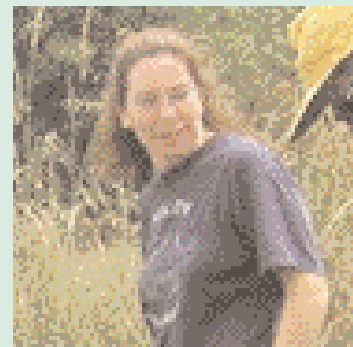
Peter Martin of the Fleet Pond Society and Ian Redjohns, a Ham Common volunteer, came up with the idea of twinning the two reserves which is thought to be the first of its kind in the U.K. Both butterfly enthusiasts, Peter and Ian recognised a number of similarities between the sites and set about the twinning process to celebrate the successes of both reserves.

Twinning the two sites is hoped to benefit both reserves through the sharing of management techniques and ideas, and the formation of new friendships.

Hopefully the idea will catch on and we'll see many more sites being twinned to enhance our knowledge of, and to share enthusiasm for the natural environment with like minded people!

Onto pastures new

Those of you who have worked with the Blackwater Valley Team over the last 2 years will know Kate Jenkins. Kate is very enthusiastic about conservation and was responsible for the promotion of the Valley and its countryside activities. Kate is always keen to get out whenever she can and spends many weekends as a volunteer running pond clearing tasks across Southern England. Kate left the BVCP in June and has now secured a new job as the River Parrett Trail Officer in Somerset. I am sure you will join me in sending many thanks to Kate for all her hard work and good wishes for the future.



Kate out in the Valley

We are very pleased to welcome Jude Bagguley as the new Visitor Promotion Officer. Jude arrived in September and has already started to make her mark - including producing this newsletter, and chasing up contributions for it!

Steve Bailey





GO WILD ANYTIME

The aim of **GO WILD IN SEPTEMBER** was to give individuals in the valley a chance to experience volunteering on practical conservation days first hand. If you missed it and still want to get involved then its not too late! All of the groups taking part in Go Wild hold regular work parties and would be very pleased to welcome newcomers. Over the next five pages there's a breakdown of all of the local conservation groups, where they meet and when.

If you are already a member of a group maybe you're extra keen and would like to join another group working on a different day, or you may just like to keep this section for reference as a communication tool between yourselves and other groups!

Blackwater Valley Countryside Volunteers



Nice legs Dave!

During Go Wild a total of 21 volunteers, 4 of whom were new members, took part in three practical conservation days - together putting in an impressive 44 man (and woman) days. Working across three sites their activities included grassland management at Shepherd Meadows, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, the improvement of the Blackwater Valley Path at Frimley Hatches and scrub clearance at Moor Green Lakes.

Where? Working on a variety of sites within the Blackwater Valley, the group meet outside Courts at Farnborough Gate Retail Park

When? 10 am to 4 pm every Tuesday

Contact: Adrian on 01252 331353 or e-mail adrian.douglas@hants.gov.uk

Bracknell Conservation Volunteers



Open heathland at Wildmoor Heath Nature Reserve

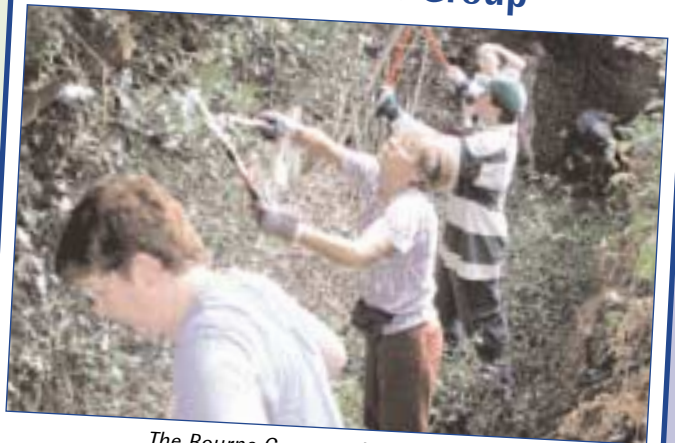
The volunteers went wild clearing pine and birch on Wildmoor Heath with great results, and 1 new volunteer.

Where? Sites in and around Bracknell, including Wildmoor Heath

When? 10 am every Tuesday

Contact: Don Petford on 01344 429952

Bourne Conservation Group



The Bourne Conservation Group get chopping away

With 4 new members, 8 volunteers took part on footpath work in the south of the valley in the Bourne area, Farnham. The maintenance of which will provide easy access for members of the public for recreational use.

Where? Work is carried out on various sites in the Bourne area

When? 10 am to 1 pm, one Sunday a month

Contact: Stan Cockett on 01252 794511 or e-mail stan@scockett.demon.co.uk





GO WILD

Cove Brook Greenway Group



What a creative lot they are!

Meadow cutting and willow weaving at Cove Brook Greenway proved to be very successful with 15 new volunteers joining the team. Many volunteers learnt a new skill in willow weaving making baskets, trays and even a giant scarecrow!

Where? Working on sites along the Brook, the group meet at Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove

When? 10 am on the 2nd Saturday or Sunday of each month and 10.30 am on the last Monday of each month

Contact: Antonia Hebbert on 01252 512634 or e-mail covebrook1@aol.com

Fleet Pond Society



Some of the residents of Fleet Pond LNR

28 volunteers and 6 new members lent a hand for two practical tasks at the Fleet Pond local nature reserve. The regulars were joined this month by 19 members of Fleet Wildlife Adventurers who were enthusiastic workers helping to clear scrub and re-open a woodland glade.

Where? Working on Fleet Pond the group meet at the Countryside Workshop, Old Pump House Close, next to 65 Kenilworth Road, Fleet

When? 9.30 am on the 2nd Sunday of the month, except July and August.

Contact: Colin Gray on 01252 616183 or e-mail colin.gray5@virgin.net

Friends of Brickfields Country Park



Volunteers hard at work!

Pond clearance took place over two days at Brickfields Country Park in aid of 'Go Wild'. 4 friends pulled on the waders and got to work and since then 3 new members have come forward to join the team!

Where? Brickfields Country Park, Aldershot

When? 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month

Contact: Mike Hatch on 01252 330966 or e-mail fbcp@brickfieldspark.org

Friends of Farnham Park



We'll use all the help we can get!

A work in progress, the Friends carried on with the construction of a footpath through Farnham Park with their 'furry friends' lending a hand!

Where? Working on Farnham Park the volunteers meet at various points around the park, please ring for details

When? 10 am to 4 pm one Sunday a month

Contact: Murray Nurse on 01252 716064 or e-mail murraynurse@totaluse.co.uk



ANYTIME



Friends of Oakley Park



Fancy a dip?

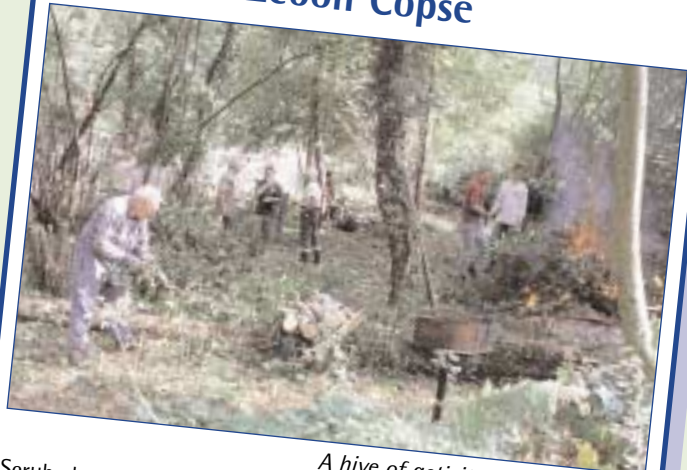
12 volunteers went along to the site in Fleet for a general spruce up and litter pick, making the area more usable for both wildlife and the public. Ferocious beasts were also found in the park when around 30 local children came to the park for a Teddy Bear's Picnic!

Where? At the kickboard beside the children's play area, Oakley Park, Fleet

When? 10 am, four tasks a year

Contact: Margaret Wales on 01252 652842

Friends of Zebon Copse



A hive of activity in Zebon Copse!

Scrub clearance to create glades within the copse and a bonfire followed by a BBQ brought along 16 members and 2 new volunteers during 'Go Wild' in September.

Where? Meet at the East end of tarmac path between Lonlandes and Silvester Way, Zebon Copse, Church Crookham

When? 10 am to 1 pm once a month

Contact: Clare Bloomer on 01252 870425 or e-mail clare.bloomer@hants.gov.uk

Frimley Fuel Allotments Conservation Team



The team rev up for 'Go Wild'

The members of the conservation team, armed with a new recruit, turned out to take part in a site walk followed the next week by some practical heathland clearance to maintain this valuable habitat.

Where? The team work on Frimley Fuel Allotments and meet at the lay-by on the Old Bisley Road, opposite the Ridgewood Centre

When? 10 am on the 2nd Sunday of each month

Contact: Christa Rohde e-mail christarohde@hotmail.com

Hart District Council Rangers



Emerging from the undergrowth . . . it's Elliot the friendly ranger!

A new team of 5 volunteers turned out for the restoration of heathland at Basingbourne Heath, Fleet.

Where? Work takes place in and around Hart, including Odiham Common, Fleet Pond, Basingbourne Heath and Elvetham Heath

When? Countryside Rangers hold regular volunteer work parties.

Contact: The Rangers on 01252 623443 or e-mail countryside@hart.gov.uk





GO WILD

Lakeside Park Conservation Group



A scenic view of Lakeside Park!

11 volunteers including 3 new recruits got to work at Lakeside local nature reserve mowing and raking the wildflower meadow. The late summer cut is the traditional way to manage such habitats and maintain the rich diversity of plants present. The volunteers didn't work too hard though and finished at lunchtime in order to join the 'Go Wild' BBQ at Yateley Common! The park has a wide variety of different habitats offering the opportunity to carry out a range of tasks involved in the management of reedbed, heathland, meadow and woodland.

Where? Meet in the site car park off Lakeside Road, Lakeside Park, Ash Vale

When? 10.30 am to 4 pm on the 4th Sunday of each month

Contact: Claire Leech on 07779 641638 or e-mail claire@leechhq.freereserve.co.uk

Rowhill Conservation Volunteers



The volunteers take a well earned tea break

Haymaking at Rowhill using HUGE machinery made for a fun day for the 8 established conservation volunteers and their new recruit taking part.

Where? Rowhill Local Nature Reserve, meet at the Rowhill Field Centre, Cranmore Lane, Aldershot

When? 10 am to 4 pm on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sunday of each month

Contact: Roy Champion on 01252 548837

Surrey Heath Borough Council Rangers



Heathland at Lightwater Country Park

'Help the Heathland' with Surrey Heath Borough Council Rangers encouraged 4 new volunteers to come along and get involved in some heathland maintenance in the Park. Participants range from retired people to those on Duke of Edinburgh award schemes and anything in between. Tasks are normally practical conservation or estate maintenance working alongside the Rangers.

Where? Work takes place on Lightwater Country Park, meet outside Heathland Visitor Centre in Park

When? 10 am to 4 pm weekdays in autumn and winter

Contact: Gordon Voller or Peter Maynard on 01276 479582 or e-mail lightwater.country@surreyheath.co.uk

Moor Green Lakes Group



Robert beating back the bramble

As 'Go Wild' fell at the end of the summer months, many volunteers were involved in mowing and raking meadows. The Moor Green Lakes Group were no exception with 15 volunteers, including 3 new recruits, taking part in the maintenance of their grassland.

Where? Moor Green Lakes, meet at the site car park on Lower Sandhurst Road between Sandhurst and Finchampstead

When? 10.30 am to 4 pm on the 2nd Sunday of the month, September to April

Contact: Steve Farmer on 01252 409868 or e-mail stephen.farmer3@ntlworld.com



ANYTIME



Tongham Community Woodland



A bit of team work goes a long way!

This new group are working hard to bring a neglected woodland back into shape. Go Wild Volunteers, both new and old, were given the opportunity to master the art of coppicing in a bid to re-introduce this technique to the woodland.

Where? At the entrance to Tongham Community Wood off Garbett's Way
When? 10.30 am to 4 pm on the 3rd Sunday of each month
Contact: Tony Anderson on 01252 331353 or e-mail w.tony.anderson@hants.gov.uk

Waverley Conservation Volunteers

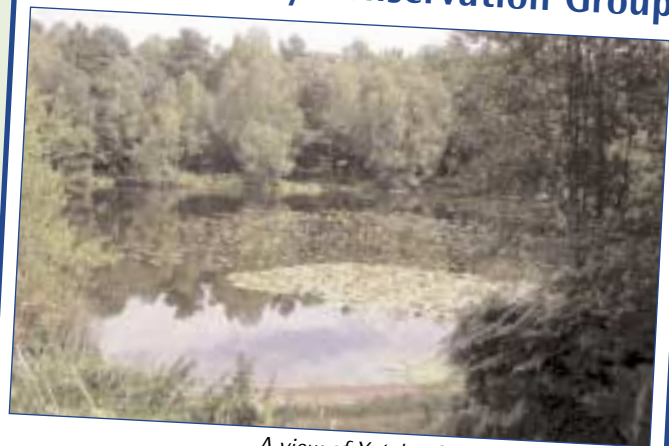


A view across Farnham Park

2 volunteers got handy in hedge maintenance at Farnham Park. Are there any more budding bramble beaters out there to join them?

Where? Meet at the main car park at Farnham Park, Folly Hill, by the cricket ground
When? 10 am to 4 pm every Wednesday
Contact: Ron Hills on 01252 725872 or e-mail rhills@waverley.gov.uk

Yateley Society Conservation Group



A view of Yateley Common Country Park

13 volunteers took part in heathland management on Yateley Common for their 'Go Wild' activity. This friendly little group is comprised of people with a fascination and passion for nature. They insist that people do not feel obligated to attend, but go along when they are able and because they enjoy it. This philosophy has ensured that many volunteers, young and old, have been with the group for a number of years.

Where? Work takes place on Yateley Common a Site of Special Scientific Interest & Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve. Meet at Wyndham's Pool car park off Cricket Hill Lane, Yateley
When? 10 am to 1pm on the last Sunday of each month
Contact: Mike Mann on 01252 877741 or e-mail mike.mann1@ntlworld.com

Hampshire Wildlife Trust

Where? Managing nature reserves throughout Hampshire
When? Regular tasks
Contact: Annette Forrest on 02380 688912 or e-mail annettef@hwt.org.uk

Surrey Wildlife Trust

Where? Nature reserves throughout Surrey
When? Weekends and weekdays
Contact: Carol Yesson on 01483 488055 or e-mail cyesson@surwild.cix.co.uk

Berkshire Midweek Team

Where? Working on nature reserves throughout Berkshire
When? Every Thursday
Contact: Richard Elston on 01628 829574 or e-mail bbowtberks@cix.co.uk

Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

Where? Queen Elizabeth Park, Farnborough
When? 3rd Sunday of each month
Contact: Geoff Bullen on 01252 545513 or e-mail geoff.bullen@care4free.net

What You Need to Know

If you would like to go along to one of the groups listed here for a spot of practical conservation then here are some of the most frequently asked questions:

What do I need to take with me?

Volunteer groups provide all tools and equipment that will be needed for the task on the day but you may like to take your own gloves. Most groups supply tea/coffee and biscuits but you will need your own packed lunch if you are staying all day.

What should I wear?

Wear 'gardening' clothes, boots or wellies and take a waterproof - you never know!

What will we be doing?

Tasks range from pond clearance and coppicing to building bonfires and constructing fences. No matter what the task, you can work at your own pace, no experience is necessary.

How long will we work for?

You only need to stay as long as you wish, you are not obliged to stay all day. If you arrive late then most groups will be found working out on site, however on bigger sites it may be worth contacting the group in advance to learn of their whereabouts.





Events Autumn 2003

November 2003

Saturday 15th **Event: An exhibition of fishing, waterways and wildlife conservation** Presentations and hands-on activities for the whole family with local wildlife and conservation groups. Doors open 1pm. Admission: adults £2, children under 16 £1.
Talk: An evening with Ian 'Chilly' Chillcott and ECHO One of the UK's best know carp fishermen, writer and speaker, Ian Chillcott talks of fish and fishing at Calthorpe Park School. Admission by ticket only after 6.30pm, visit www.calthorpepark.hants.sch.uk/cpsa/ for further details or call Deb on 01252 620693 between 6-8pm only.

Talk and activity: Managing woodlands to increase wildlife diversity An introduction to the theories and practice of woodland management. Ideas on how to increase woodland biodiversity and practical work in a local woodland. Meet at the Loddon Room, Dinton Pastures Country Park. Booking is essential. Please book or call for further details on 01189 342016 or e-mail countryside@wokingham.gov.uk

Sunday 16th **Activity: Tongham Community Woodland** Continuing to coppice in this valuable community woodland. PLUS a BBQ! For more information please contact Tony on 01252 331353.

Monday 17th **Meeting: Local Groups Forum** Come and share ideas, experiences and opinions with other local groups from the valley. If you have anything that you would like to discuss at the meeting let the Blackwater Valley Countryside team know by calling 01252 331353 or e-mail blackwater.valley@hants.gov.uk Meet at 7.30pm at the Basingstoke Canal Centre.

Tuesday 18th **Walk: Wildmoor and Broadmoor** Not for the faint hearted, this circular walk is approximately 5 1/2 miles long and will take about 2 1/4 hours. Meet at Wildmoor Heath car park off the Crowthorne Road. For more information call 01344 354120.

Saturday 29th **Event: The Mayoress of Rushmoor's Annual Charity Bazaar** Go along and support Rowhill and other charities taking part in the event at the Princes Hall, Aldershot from 2pm - 4.30pm.

December 2003

Tuesday 2nd **Walk: Lakes and Ridges** Meet the Bracknell Forest Team at Horseshoe Lake car park 10.30am. Contact the Ranger on 01344 354120 for further details.

Thursday 11th **Event: Social Evening** A new venture for Rowhill Field Centre. Refreshments and entertainment from 7.30pm.

Saturday 13th **Event: Christmas Tree Sales** Go along and get a real Christmas tree. Sales are from 12.00am - 3.00pm at the no through road off Rackstraw Road, Owlsmoor, nr Sandhurst. Contact C. Winder for further details on 01753 854393.

Sunday 14th **Event: Christmas Tree Sales** As above. Note: sales are from 10.30am - 2.00pm.
Activity: Collect a Christmas Tree Cut your own Christmas tree free of charge from Frensham Common in return for a little

help. Contact Steve for further details on 01252 792416.
Wednesday 31st **Walk: Hogmanay Walk at the Lookout** Join a seasonal walk around the woods at the lookout to see the year off in style. Guided by a ranger the walk is approximately 2 miles long and will take about 1 1/2 hours and will be followed by mulled wine, coffee and an odd mince pie or two! Cost: £3 adults, £1.50 children. Please pre-book by calling 01344 354441.

January 2004

Saturday 3rd **Walk: 'Aren't Birds Brilliant'** The RSPB will be taking a guided walk around Dinton Pastures Country Park from 9am. Meet in the main car park. Admission £1 adults, children free. For more information contact 01189 342016.

Thursday 8th **Talk: Flying in Farnborough** Dr Kevin Briggs talks about flying in Farnborough (and this doesn't mean aeroplanes!). Meet at Rowhill Field Centre for 7.30pm.

Friday 9th **Talk: Reptiles and Amphibians** The Crowthorne Natural History group are to host a talk by Rod d'Ayala at the Parish Hall, Heathhill Road, Crowthorne at 8pm. Admission £2.

Sunday 18th **Walk: Bird Walk** Join the Wokingham Countryside team for a walk around the lakes for a closer look at Dinton's winter birdlife. Meet in the main car park at Dinton Pastures Country Park at 10am. Please book in advance by calling 01189 342016 or e-mail: countryside@wokingham.gov.uk

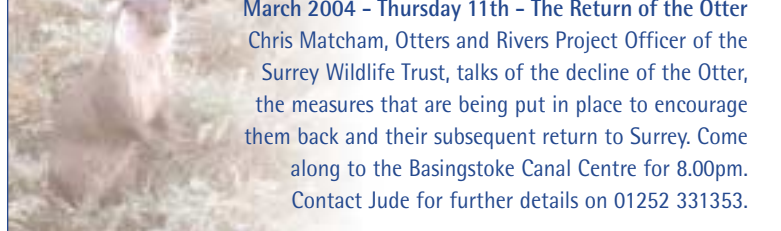
February 2004

Sunday 1st **Activity: Winter Wizards Workshops** Gordon MacLellen will be running a magical workshop for children, filled with wonder about the natural world. Children will have the chance to make a wizard hat filled with treasures or create a magical spell book. To be held at the Loddon Room, Dinton Pastures Country Park. Please book places in advance at the contact above.

Friday 13th **Talk: A Wood of Our Own** The Crowthorne Natural History group are to host a talk by Prof Julian Evans at the Parish Hall, Heathhill Road, Crowthorne at 8pm. Admission £2.

Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th **Activity: Rural Crafts** Learn the art of willow weaving, the traditional management of willow for basketry and wildlife and create your own basket. Suitable for beginners or those wishing to improve their technique. Meet at the Loddon Room, Dinton Pastures Country Park, 10am - 4pm. Cost £50 (includes all materials). Please book in advance on 01189 662250.

Dave Williams



March 2004 - Thursday 11th - The Return of the Otter Chris Matcham, Otters and Rivers Project Officer of the Surrey Wildlife Trust, talks of the decline of the Otter, the measures that are being put in place to encourage them back and their subsequent return to Surrey. Come along to the Basingstoke Canal Centre for 8.00pm. Contact Jude for further details on 01252 331353.



Caption Competition

Have you got a witty streak? If so have a go at our caption competition and win a pair of new gardening gloves! Captions to Judith.Bagguley@hants.gov.uk by 20th December. The winning caption will be published in the Spring edition.

Have you got News for us?

The next issue of the Volunteers newsletter will be Spring 2004 and we are keen to receive contributions from our readers. If you have any news items, events to publicise or would just like to make a comment on the layout, design and content of the newsletter then we would like to hear from you. Please ensure that you have provided Judith Bagguley with the relevant information by the end of January.

Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership

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The Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership gratefully acknowledges sponsorship by: Hampshire County Council, Surrey County Council, the District, Borough and Town Councils of Blackwater & Hawley, Bracknell Forest, Farnham, Guildford, Hart, Rushmoor, Sandhurst, Surrey Heath, Waverley, Wokingham and Yateley.



Blackwater Valley
Countryside Partnership

Further enquiries telephone: 01252 331353