



# Newsletter

## New Year 2010

### Editorial

I wish all the members and friends of BCG a happy and prosperous 2010. 2009 was a vintage year for us. We gained two awards for our work in the Middle Bourne Lane garden, have been granted funding for our future efforts in the Old Churchyard, maintained our 'routine' projects on footpaths, at the crossroads, on balsam-pulling, and received some excellent publicity. Well done everyone! However, things are likely to get much tougher in 2010 as the impact of the recession begins to bite on public spending. It does not require a high-flown economist to recognise that savage cuts in public spending are inevitable no matter which party wins the next election. These cut-backs will reduce the maintenance we have come to expect will be undertaken by local and central Government. Hence our voluntary work will become increasingly more important in keeping The Bourne an attractive place both for us and for our wildlife to live. Grant money will be even harder to come by and we will need to achieve even more through our own



**'If Winter's here can Spring be far behind?'**

efforts. So the Group needs to increase its nucleus of active members, and we will need to re-double our own personal contributions. Judging by our achievements in 2009, we can be confident that BCG will rise to the tough challenges ahead.

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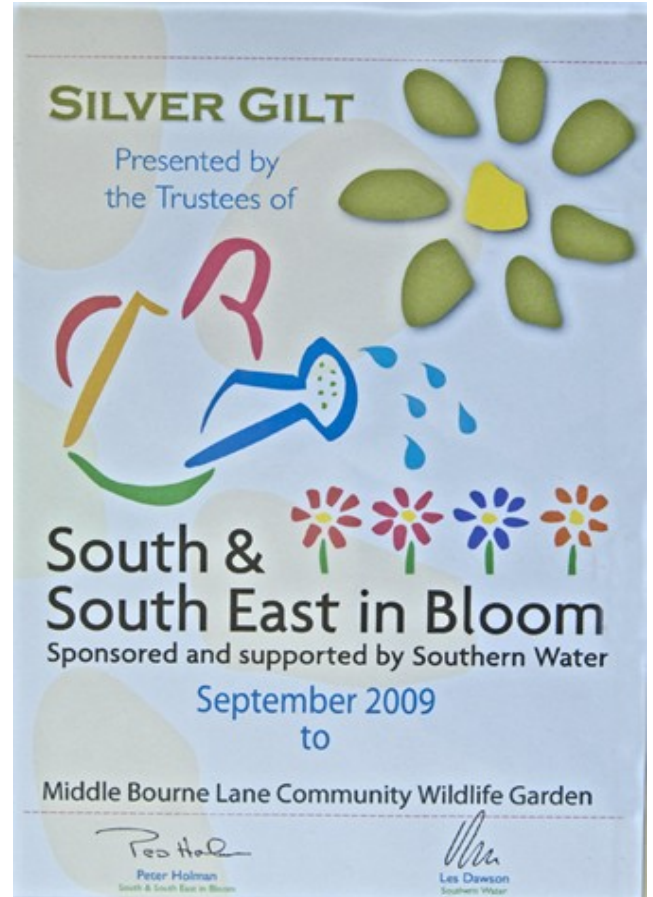
### Future Programme

<b>January</b>	
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Old Churchyard
<b>February</b>	
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Woodland
Management	
<b>March</b>	
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Footpath Maintenance
<b>April</b>	
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Middle Bourne Lane
<b>May</b>	
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Old Churchyard
<b>June</b>	
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Balsam pulling
<b>July</b>	
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Balsam pulling
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup>	The Bourne Show
	<b>Mid-week sessions will be as needed</b>

## Awards for the Middle Bourne Lane Community Garden

Members will be all too aware of the effort we have put into the Middle Bourne Community Wildlife garden (MBL) since we started the project there in May 2007. In our last newsletter we reported our decision to enter two competitions, which necessitated intense preparatory work. Most of you will already be aware from reports in the Farnham Herald that our hard work has been rewarded with considerable success. It is a good story so we make no excuses for repeating it here.

The first of these competitions was 'South East in Bloom', in which MBL was entered in the Parks and Recreation Grounds category! Our Secretary, Stan Cockett attended the awards ceremony in the Grand Hotel in Brighton on 2nd September. It was a big event with a degree of congestion because so many participants had come from places as far a field as Chichester and Swanley. MBL scored 349 points out of a potential maximum of 500, which gained us a Silver Gilt certificate. The judges remarked that "This little garden is a gem, a little bit of everything and something for everyone seeking a quiet garden in which to relax." We considered this was a very fair result with which we are delighted. The winner in our category was a recreation ground in Rustington, which was also the overall winner for the south east.



The certificate for the award.

The second competition we entered was sponsored by Biffaward who had granted us funding for the work in MBL. We were surprised and delighted to be one of the six projects to be short-listed from the nationwide entry of 42 small projects, and so thought it would be worthwhile making the journey to Harrogate for the awards ceremony in October. Good job we did!

The event took place in the Royal Hall which has recently been restored to its full grandeur. We learned a lot about the wide range of projects funded up and down the land, some of which had received



Our Secretary Stan Cockett receiving the awards from Chris Collins, the Blue Peter Gardener.



The Garden a winter wonderland on 6<sup>th</sup> January – 'a place to get close to wildlife', or may be just chill out!



**Noel with Mark Fishpool at the awards ceremony in Harrogate (Copyright picture SIRA Studio)**

grants of around £50,000. Ours was actually the smallest project overall and so it was perhaps fitting that we emerged as winners in our category receiving a prize of an additional £2000. In his summing up the judge, Mark Fishpool, echoed those of SE in Bloom saying that "The Middle Bourne Lane Community Wildlife Garden is a quiet place for people living in an urban area to have the opportunity to get close to wildlife." He was obviously impressed by the moths and slow worms that we managed to show him when he visited the site in July.

The significance of the MBL project is not that it has won these prizes, but it sets an example to everyone in The Bourne of the things they can do in their own gardens to help and support wildlife. Nevertheless, we are delighted that our work has been recognised. Everyone who has participated can be justly proud of what has been achieved.

In 2010 work on MBL needs to continue especially to improve the profusion of flowers throughout spring and summer to benefit a rich diversity of insects, particularly bees, moths and butterflies. To ease the pressure of work, we have decided not to enter any competitions in 2010 but are considering applying for a Green Pennant award in 2011.

## **Progress in the Old Churchyard (OCY)**

A year ago we had just started work in the Old Bourne Churchyard and successive editions of this Newsletter have given a detailed diary of events as well as commenting on specific heritage topics such as the story of Flt Lt Waghorn RAF who is buried there, and reporting on the successful wildlife survey and training day held there at the end of May 2009 in conjunction with the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

During the summer of 2009 we did not achieve as much as we would have liked in OCY, partly through



**Fiona and Jenny tidying up around the monuments during the October work session.**

fear of disturbing the birds and other wildlife, but also because the precedence given to fulfilling the demands of preparing for the competitions in Middle Bourne Lane. Even so, there was a lot of useful activity. Throughout the spring, summer and autumn Martin has regularly been recording the wildlife; the total inventory of plants and animals now stands at well over 200 species, confirming that OCY is indeed an important wildlife haven. At one stage we became excited when it was thought that werewolves, vampires and perhaps goblins could be added to the list, but the reports of lights and strange goings-on after dark turned out to be Martin both running his moth trap, and wandering around the monuments recording the rich variety of animals exploiting them.



**Martin learns about slugs and snails from June Chatfield during her visit in May.**

In late June his preliminary results encouraged a visit by the Surrey Moth Recorder, Graham Collins, to examine the magnificent lime trees while in full bloom. He was able to confirm that caterpillars of the pauper pug, a nationally rare species of moth, were feeding on the flowers of the limes. We were also pleased to play host to Dr June Chatfield of the North Wey Trust, who is a national expert in molluscs. She was able to find and identify 17 species of slugs and snails. June has promised to visit again in the Spring to identify the lichens and mosses. These very productive activities have confirmed the strength and

value of our relations with other environmental groups.

Other significant activities have included the updating of the Project Plan in preparation for submitting bids for funding. Our initial bid to the Surrey Community Foundation was unsuccessful, but we were pleased to host a visit by the director of the Foundation and two potential donors from the Orchid Trust Fund. Their favourable responses encouraged us to submit a revised application based on the updated Project Plan. We were rewarded by being granted nearly £5000 to be spent in financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11. We are extremely grateful for this award, which will fund just the biodiversity aspects of the project. We are now seeking alternative sources of funding for the heritage work on conserving the monuments.



**Nest boxes we put up in December, on the left is the owl box, the top right box is for robins, and lower left for wrens.**

Thus funded, we have approached our work during the autumn with renewed confidence and enthusiasm. We have continued to clear away the unwanted laurel (including some very tenacious stumps). We have carefully put up 11 nest boxes of three different designs, each designed and sited to meet the specific requirements of different species. As in Middle Bourne Lane, we have invested in woodcrete boxes, which are robust, long-lasting and easily cleaned. A large item of expenditure was employing a tree surgeon to cut out the dead branches from the seven lime trees, which had

remained unmanaged for at least 10 years. This task is needed to ensure that the trees stay healthy and visitors are not at risk from falling branches. We have begun tidying up and landscaping the neglected southwest corner by the old Sexton's hut.



**The tree work being carried out in December, showing why we got the experts in.**

With so much good work behind us the question arises as to "what next?" The answer is a mixture of on-going maintenance and new tasks. We need to achieve a delicate balance between preserving the existing wildlife habitats, and creating the right conditions for further improving biodiversity. In the coming months we want to replace the laurel with new plants that will provide more colour, nectar and pollen throughout the summer months. These will be planted in relation to our landscaping of the four corners where there are no graves, where we can create new habitat features. We are continuing to seek funding to repair the 15 or so broken monuments, which require the specialist services of a stonemason. We are also planning to produce a brochure to inform visitors about the site's history and ecology. In parallel, we are embarking upon a historical research project on the people interred in the Churchyard, which we hope can be used for heritage projects by local schools. One of our Friends, Janina Terry, has very kindly re-typed the existing record of the 750 graves making it available in electronic format, which will be an excellent



**Grave 20 – one of the more interesting monuments of the Chrystie family. One of the plaques commemorates Major George Chrystie 25<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Field Force killed in action near Bannu, near the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1913.**

resource for our future heritage work. Thank you very much Janina! In summary, there is no shortage of things to do in OCY in 2010!

### **‘Breaking’ new ground**

In response to Abigail’s excellent suggestion, in October we had a bulb planting session on the triangle of grass at the junction between Shortheath road and School Hill. If we had been aware of just how hard and stony the ground was, we might have



**The bulb planting team**

had second thoughts about taking it on. But in the coming Spring our efforts should result in local residents and passers-by being treated to a splash of bright colour. Planting for the future is one of the important contributions we are making to the environment in The Bourne. We always welcome further suggestions from members for projects large and small that the Group can consider tackling. Our human resources are, however, already stretched with our present schedule of tasks, so ideas for small projects are more likely to get an immediate response than those for large ones that will require project management and funding.

### **Publicity**

Noel was asked at short notice by BBC Radio Surrey to give them a 20 second burst on our Biffaward Award on 15<sup>th</sup> October. This had been triggered by the press release sent out by David Todd earlier in the week announcing our winning the national competition for small projects. Noel managed to include a message that we hope MBL will serve as an example to residents and visitors of the sorts of things they can do in their own gardens to encourage wildlife without necessarily spending much money. Such publicity may be ephemeral, but it helps with the Group’s ‘outreach’ and gives us a good feeling. More importantly, since success breeds success, it plays a role in encouraging more people to volunteer and funding agencies to continue to support our efforts.

Our participation in other local events has brought its rewards. Noel sat on the panel for the TBRA brains trust in the autumn and as a result we recruited some new members.

Press releases issued by David on the MBL awards resulted in extensive press coverage in the Farnham Herald. Recently David’s press release announcing our award from the Orchid Trust Fund resulted in a long article in the Farnham Herald on 4<sup>th</sup> December about our efforts in the Old Churchyard. We are pleased and grateful to the Herald for this coverage.

### **Policies and project planning**

Greater onus is being placed on groups like ours to formalise policies which minimise risks associated with our activities and ensure that if things do go wrong we have the mechanisms in place to deal with them. Health and Safety regulations require us to have emergency contacts for everyone participating in our work sessions. To avoid having to keep medical records on every one, we expect each one of us to take responsibility for our own health and not to take on tasks that are too physically demanding, or use tools that we are not comfortable with. We have a sufficient nucleus of trained first-aiders to ensure at least one is in attendance at each working group with a first aid kit. In addition, each working party leader has a list of contacts for the emergency services. It is

Noel who undertakes the onerous task of preparing the documentation undertaking most of the risk assessments for our projects, and ensuring we are prepared for any emergencies. So far these precautions have not been needed, but in the future are we going to continue to be so lucky?

Other policies divide opinion in your committee. For example, should we be encouraging participation by young people? This is deemed desirable by some, but too risky by others. Developing a policy for involving young people is fraught with administrative problems and 'semantic' difficulties. What is a young person? Well it has a variety of legal definitions. What tasks can they be given safely? Clearly the use of tools potentially puts them at physical risk, so should we be training them in the use of tools? Now anyone working with children may need to be vetted, but it remains very uncertain as to exactly who requires to be vetted.

Behind the scenes, Noel has been beavering away at developing our policies and sorting out the conflicting advice which comes from the broad spectrum of advisory bodies. He and Stan Cockett have attended a couple of workshops aimed at getting these policies in place within the voluntary sector.



**A life-saving coffee break from tree felling in the Old Churchyard**

Equally important has been the project planning that underpins each of our major projects. Before even starting our work in the Old Churchyard, Noel drew up a project plan that outlined our aims and objectives, produced a costed work programme and defined a timetable of objectives. These plans have evolved as the work progresses and new challenges emerged. One of the prior requirements for winning the award from the Orchid Trust was a thorough updating of the project plan for the Old Churchyard. Another feature of the preparatory work for each working session is making sure that all the tools is a vital service for most of us! Clearing up afterwards can also be a considerable chore, removing a dozen or more plastic sacks of needed are on site and in good condition. The provision of

coffee and biscuits to sustain the workeraccumulated debris of leaves, cuttings and rubbish can require a large effort. Once again it is Noel who undertakes the lion share of these burdens.

## National Moth Night

Annually the Butterfly Conservation Society organise a National Moth night. In 2009 it was run over two nights on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September. Martin decided that as part of his on-going survey of moths of the Old Churchyard that he would run a session for the Group. It was attended by Noel and four visitors: Jane Still, her friend Sarah Ralling and two of their



**Jane Still and Sarah Ralling in discussion with Noel**

children. The night was cool and there was a bright moon, so it started disappointingly quietly with very few moths around. A white sheet was placed near the trap so we could see some of the moths without having to look at the light. All, but Martin retired by 2330h, but then more moths began to arrive, and he was able to photograph some of the moths on the monuments. After midnight, just when Martin was considering leaving the light on all night, he was visited by four young men who had probably been imbibing in the pub for much of the evening. An amicable half hour discussion then took place, which ranged from moths to keeping tarantulas as pets. So at 0100h when the lads departed, Martin decided it



**An angle shades moth on one of the monuments during our National Moth Night session in OCY.**

would be better to turn the light off and leave going through the catch until the morning. Noel returned at 0800h to help with recording the 26 species. The following night conditions were more conducive for moths, so when Martin ran his trap again, this time in his garden he recorded 32 species. Our results were submitted to the national survey, but an analysis of the data is yet to be published. In 2010 National Moth Night is to be on the 15<sup>th</sup> May.

## A register of Ancient Trees for The Bourne?

Those of you who watched Autumn Watch on 10<sup>th</sup> November will be aware that the Woodland Trust compiling a register of ancient tree in order to raise Government awareness of the need to protect them. Britain has a substantial proportion of Europe's older trees and they provide habitats for many of our rarer species of animals and plants. Thus their protection is very important for maintaining biodiversity both nationally and within Europe. Venerable trees are survivors from our past, some originated in ancient woodland, others have been boundary markers, and others have historical significance – like, for example, the limes and yews in the Old Churchyard (although they are probably rather young being only 150 years old). A tree's shape is indicative of its past and how it may have been used. Some of the big oaks that line the south side of Greenhill Road look to have grown

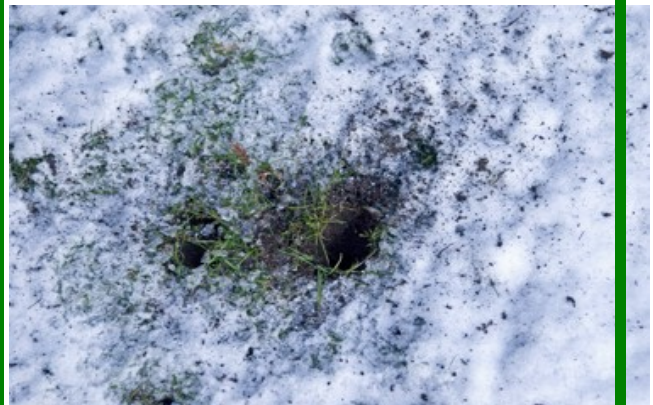


**This oak at SU 858 461 near the old line of the B3001 near Compton Rec has a girth of 4.15m. Its shape suggests it has grown in the open and so was either a boundary marker or was a hedgerow tree.**

in the open, so may have originally grown in a hedge that bordered a track leading to the original Greenhill

farm. I suggest that this spring BCG inventories the old trees of The Bourne. I am willing to develop the inventory and enter the data (location, species girth at a height of 1.5m, and its characteristics) in the Woodland Trust's register. Mapping the trees may not only give us clues as to why they have survived, but also increase our ability to ensure their continued survival. So, how do you know if a tree is worthy of being recorded? If you hug it and the tips of your fingers reach less than half way around its trunk, its girth is over 3m and it is worth recording. For example, at the bottom of our garden is a beech tree, whose girth is 3.71m, indicating its age is over 250 years. This beech, together with some of the oaks that line Old Church Lane, must have been growing when George Sturt lived at Vine House and wrote his classic accounts of the early days of The Bourne. The shape of our beech shows it was once pollarded. So did it mark the boundary of Sturt's property, and was he responsible for it being pollarded? This spring when you are out and about, let me know if you see a large tree (or trees), and I will come and record it for our register. We will not only enter our trees into the National Register, but also Andy Clout, Waverley's tree officer is eager to have our data.

## Puzzle Picture



**How should this picture be captioned?**

During the snow just before Christmas I saw an animal making this hole in our lawn. The question is what animal did I see and why was it digging the hole?

## Miscellanea

### Footpaths

Lisa thanks all the Footpath wardens who continue to walk The Bourne's paths and provide invaluable feedback. As a result of your work 75 reports have been submitted in the last year, and about half have been resolved (by a mixture of actions by BCG, Surrey County Council, Waverley Borough Council or property owners). Lisa is looking forward to receiving regular reports from our wardens throughout 2010, so keep up the good work – it really is making a difference.

### Tawny Owls

The Autumn Watch programme over Christmas also noted that they are still looking for people to report sightings and hearings of tawny owls. Lisa has already reported one on their web site <http://www.bto.org/survey/tawnyowls.htm> If you are unsure of what a tawny owl call sounds like then it can be played from the RSPB web site: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/t/tawnyowl/index.aspx>

### Membership

We continue to need more members, so if you are reading this newsletter and do not belong to the BCG, please think about joining. There is one main 3-hour working party on one Sunday a month. These are both good exercise and good social events. Even if you are unable to be an active member and participate in our working groups, we would be pleased to welcome your support if you sign up as a 'Friend'. The larger our membership, the more influence we can have over issues such as planning applications. Do visit our website, and if you are interested in supporting us then contact David Todd (see the box below). If you have any local issues you think we can help with then please contact Noel Moss.

## BCG Committee

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Noel Moss</b>
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	<b>David Todd</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Stan Cockett</b>
<b>Acting Treasurer</b>	<b>David Todd</b> david_todd69@hotmail.com 01252 715807
<b>Footpath co-ord</b>	<b>Lisa Malcolm</b>
<b>Member</b>	<b>Richard Sandars</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Martin Angel</b> <a href="mailto:mvangel37@googlemail.com">mvangel37@googlemail.com</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://bourneconservation.org.uk">http://bourneconservation.org.uk</a>
<b>e-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:info@bourneconservation.org.uk">info@bourneconservation.org.uk</a>