

Meeting of the Bolton Conservation Volunteers held at Ye Olde Man & Scythe on Wednesday 14th July 2010

Present:

Trish Calderbank (TC) Lynn Entwistle (LE) Lewis Jones (LJ) John Loder (JL)
Colin Mather (CMA) Rick Parker (RP) Claire Mulvaney (CMu) Garry Billington (GB)
Colette Peachey (CP)

Minutes: Item 5 - RP reported that Richard Marshall at Blackleach has finished the pondwork by hand with volunteers, not by machine. Apart from this, the previous minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

Mersey Basin Task – 8th August

Unfortunately the task has been cancelled as it clashes with an 'Iron Man' event, which was unforeseen when the task was booked, apparently. As there is no suitable alternative date for us or our client, that date will be a tour of our previous sites. RP will bring his scope.

Report on previous task – Blackleach, 13th June

The complex structure of cages to protect our young reeds from Canada Geese and other water fowl has worked well, and the plants have doubled in size. The experimental technique to cut mature reed and just place it in bare areas of silt has also been very successful. Although the plants appeared to die initially, a new plant has grown from the base, and they are now around 0.5 metres high. The plants appear to prefer the deeper mud, so we will focus on that in the future. The willow scrub barrier in the water also worked well as a deterrent to the larger wildfowl.

Hadrian's Wall Weekend – 2nd July

This was a classic trip. Thanks to LE, TC & Neil who did alot of preparatory work in addition to their guidance over the weekend. LE gave a new slant to the term 'Bar Gymnastics'. TC was in a rut, but came out smiling and smelling of honeysuckle.

Next Task - Anderton Residential weekend, 23rd – 25th July

13 names in the hat. Meet as usual at 7:00pm at the Man & Scythe on Friday. GB will take CMA and any others who turn up, but most people were assigned transport. Quite a few would turn up Saturday a.m. or p.m. Barbecue on Saturday, TC to cater for 13, under the balcony if it rains, funded by the Anderton Centre. The work is to destroy balsam, and on Sunday it will be burnt. No Galloways this time.

Bolton News Article

RP handed round a copy of a recent article with a hedgelaying photograph, dating from 1980, at Clifton House Farm.

Tern Ringing

Common tern – Dave Edwards has reported that the terns at Doffcocker are doing very well, as the lack of water is bringing more fish to the surface for air, making feeding easier. The Bolton Wildlife Project have provided naval assistance on a few occasions. Dave has been busy refurbishing the rafts, removing a dead gull on one trip. For those with keen eyes, this year's rings are coloured yellow for right leg, orange left leg for Doffcocker. Red for right leg,

yellow left leg for Moses Gate. The Blackleach pair that were not successful breeders have probably gone to Moses Gate.

Astley Moss Task – 27.06.10

Those who attended the after-task soiree at Lynn's were very grateful. On the hottest day of the year, the ice pops and choc ices found good homes. As John Cleese would say, don't mention the football.

Spreading the Word on Reedbeds

RP & CMA have compiled a website article giving the secret of our success in this field. This will include the latest experiments with cuttings at Blackleach. The purpose is for others to benefit from our 'trial and error' methods, and hopefully to adapt the document as we gain more experience and success. As the document will be quite a size, having a permanent link on the website could be a problem, so we could end up with a PDF. No doubt Colin will find the best way to get the message across.

Blackleach Bugle

RP handed out a copies, and commented on the recent successful partnership between the Ranger and the BCV.

Last Task – Rivington Dry Stone Walling - 11th July

Another first – we have not carried out walling under a zip wire before. A good task, once we realised that the screams were from those Going Ape, not from JL after finding that Ange had swiped his favourite 'through'. 20 of us including recruits Jason and 6 year old Lewis. Who will from now on be called '6 year old Lewis' as opposed to 'Not 6 year old Lewis'. Paul the Wall gave a short tutorial at the start, and gave expert guidance throughout, so thanks to Paul. Ian Harper from United Utilities apologised for messing up the dates.

Any Other Business:

Go Ape

LE informed us that Gill has suggested a Go Ape event as a social, after watching the participants at close quarters. Cost is approx. £30, for 2 to 3 hours of fun. 6 people showed interest depending on the date. LE to make enquiries.

Interim Accounts

CMu produced the interim accounts, which were passed round. JL kept a copy. Our balance is £264 up on the start of the year, mainly due to £600 from United Utilities.

Website Stuff

CMA asked whether we should be keeping a link to LOG on the website. After much discussion, it was agreed to keep it for the present.

Walks

LE showed us a copy of a book of local walks that may help with choosing suitable hiking opportunities.

BTCV Green Heroes 2010

JL stated that CMA & RP had handed information on how to apply for this prestigious prize. JL to look at the paperwork before the closing date of 14th August.

JL's Time Management

John will commence an OU degree course in October, and may need to scale back his voluntary work for the duration.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust Free Courses

JL circulated a download from the LWT website. The courses are normally free if you have carried out conservation tasks. As these are mainly during weekdays, they would be targeted towards those not in regular work. JL to copy and give to RP for those not at the meeting, but on task.

RP's Dragonfly Course

Rick informed us of this course, free, at Rock Hall, 10:30 am this Saturday, 17th July. 45 minutes of instruction, followed by a trip to Moses Gate Country Park to see the beasties. Hope for a sunny day. All welcome.

Next meeting: Wednesday 11th August 2010, 8:00 p.m. at the Old Man & Scythe, Bolton.