



Hello Vols

Here is the second newsletter under new authorship – hope you liked my first attempt. The success of our newsletter depends on input from you volunteers, especially photographs suitably annotated and commented! Here are some highlights from the last few months contributed by Sarah.



On a bright sunny day in April our Practical and Conservation volunteers at Rushmere Country Park were treated to shoulder and neck massages to relieve their aching muscles. These were carried out by a Greensand Trust volunteer qualified in the practice of Shiatsu during a lunchtime break and we look forward to her return.

Our Heron Watch volunteers are still manning the telescope due to a late clutch

of eggs. Two chicks hatched on 31st May prolonging the season by seven to eight weeks. Thirty nesting herons and twenty four heron chicks have entertained us since February but now nearly all of the herons have flown their



nests. Volunteers have to date engaged with over 6000 visitors and volunteered over 350 hours

A trip to College Lake Nature Reserve in June was enjoyed by our volunteers. Bob Hook, Greensand Trust ranger, led the visit and pointed out a variety of birds, wildflowers and insects. One of the highlights was the discovery of green hairstreak butterfly by a volunteer. This small fairly shy butterfly began a good-humoured contest to top the find but no one could manage to come close.



Image from: <http://butterfly-conservation.org/50-1012/green-hairstreak.html>

The annual volunteers summer BBQ was held on Wednesday 12 July 2017 in the Visitors Centre and Tree Tops café at Rushmere Country Park. The catering team will be supplying the food and drink and attendees were able to bring something for themselves or to share.

The summer BBQ is an opportunity for the Trust to show its appreciation and for us to get together and enjoy each other's company.





Sarah Says:

We need volunteers to join our Visitor Service team at Rushmere Country Park this summer.

The happy faces and warm greetings provided by our Visitor Centre volunteers as they give advice, hand out leaflets and talk to people about the Greensand Trust and Rushmere Country Park can make the difference between a grey day and a great visit. This is a fantastic opportunity for people who like meeting and helping others.

Hours to suit you between 11am and 3pm with training and support from Greensand Trust staff.

For more information please contact Sarah Preston.

Tel:01525 234260

Email: sarah.preston@greensandtrust.org or visit our website www.greensandtrust.org

For those who are fairly new to the western volunteers (or even those who have been with us for some time) I thought the following rogues gallery might help you put names to faces:

			
Bob Holland Senior Ranger	John Creasey Countryside Ranger	Gary Peach River Ranger	Bob Hook Countryside Ranger
			
Jo Baker Rushmere Ranger	Matt Nash Rushmere Ranger & Education	Phil Irving Senior Ecologist	Erika Pratt Education Coordinator
			
Ian Richardson Centre Manager	Daphne Turney Administrator	Sarah Preston Volunteer Coordinator	Hayleigh Smith Catering Manager
			
Dan Front of House (Catering)	David Chef (Catering)	Dee Deputy Catering Manager	
			
	Phil Dillingham Cleaner	Alfie Cleaner	

In April, some of the volunteers installed the new Rushmere Country Park entrance sign. The original was away being refurbished but is now installed on the other side of the entrance.



Part of the fence required some repair and/or replacement.



You will also notice that the post on both sides of the road from the entrance have been replaced. Many of the old posts were rotten at ground level and were removed by the Tuesday volunteers. The task took several sessions including the placement of the new posts

Some of the volunteers have become rather expert (?) at fencing, whether it is chain link or wood bar and post – so it would seem – because they have done a lot lately!



Here is a before and after

First, the metal fence bordering the meadow was removed by digging up the supports, untangling the tress wwhere they had grown through the fence and cutting other bits. Then the old wooden fence was repaired (posts) before the new fence was erected.





Here the chain link fence was loose and overgrown due to rotten posts and vegetation The volunteers removed and replaced several posts in a location that is probably as far away as possible from the visitor's centre as you can get in Rushmere.

The Ouzel Enhancement Project

(extract from GST Press Release by Jon Balaam)

Volunteers from the Greensand Trust, working alongside and under the expert guidance of staff from the Environment Agency, have started the latest phase of work on the River Ouzel in Leighton-Linslade. The Ouzel Enhancement Project will result in a river that is better for wildlife, is more attractive to people, and has a reduced risk of flooding.

The volunteers installed a series of “flow deflectors”, constructed from woody materials, along the river at the Riverside Walk greenspace, owned by Central Bedfordshire Council. “These deflectors force what is currently a slow and sluggish river around them, speeding up the flow and cleaning gravels vital for spawning fish and invertebrates” said the Environment Agency’s Fisheries Officer Paul Wilkanowski.



The project also aims to make the stretch of river, often neglected, more attractive for the people, encouraging them to use it for exercise and relaxation. “By felling trees already growing within the river channel, and using a small percentage of this material for restoration, the works will reduce the risk of flooding, while letting in more light to make what was a rather gloomy stretch much more attractive” continued Paul.



The project has been funded by a grant from Central Bedfordshire Council’s Planning Obligations Fund and the Defra Catchment Partnership Action Fund. “Since the project started in 2014 there has been an increase in interest in the river and its wildlife, with people often stopping to talk to us and ask what we’re up to – and when we explain people are genuinely interested and supportive” said Jon Balaam, Greensand Trust Director of Development.

Leighton-Linslade Town Council also support the Trust’s volunteers, and Town Councillor Tony Morris joined the most recent task, donning a pair of chest waders and a buoyancy aid and helping to install one of the flow deflectors: “Working alongside the regular volunteers with the Greensand Trust was great fun, and to benefit the river, its invertebrate and fishy inhabitants and those many people who enjoy Riverside Walk is a real bonus” said Councillor Morris afterwards.

Editor Notes:

More recently the volunteers have been working on protecting the riverbank. Over 130m of bankside have been protected so far, using bundles of hazel staked and wired against the bank to stop erosion.



Unloading faggots; staking and wiring;



A faggot; floating into position; stamping down;



Cutting a point 1; putting on waders; cutting a point 2



Oh dear! Another drowned Volunteer

Jon also adds:

Volunteers have not only helped with the improvements to the river channel, they are also monitoring the success of the project through carrying out surveys – these include surveying the invertebrates that live in the channel using a technique known as “kick sampling” (not as violent as it sounds!). It is hoped that the habitat improvements will lead to a greater diversity of aquatic life, supporting populations of fish and birds as well.

ODD HAPPENINGS AT RUSHMERE & STOCKGROVE



Bob's stand-in
(he's off twitching!)



Stuart walking on water



Bob is actually cleaning the vehicle



Finally, here is a log seat cut from a fallen tree by the lake at Stockgrove. It was carefully cut by John Creasey and rolled using ancient techniques and the winch up out of the swamp and into place. The following week Derek and Mike cut and dug in stakes to secure the log in place.

Please, if you have any material, articles, pieces of information, photographs etc that I can use **please please** pass them on to me on Tuesday or Wednesday or email them to:- mikesumpter@btinternet.com

Happy Volunteering
Mike Sumpter