



Hello Vols

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Western Volunteers newsletter. It contains the last few tasks of 2021 along with those carried out in January 2022. It is a bit longer than normal to get them all in. Once again it covers the task through the camera without much description especially where the task has been performed so many times. You will also notice that we have been spending some time in and around Nightjar Meadow. It's a bit late to say it now but anyway:

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

In this edition:

Oak Wood edges; Buzzard Meadow; Marquee & Christmas Tree Corral; Oak Wood Azalea bash, Frog Poem & unwrapping Christmas Trees; Fence repair at Rushmere; Kings Wood ride edge cut back; Heron Lake edge birch & rhododendron clearance; Nightjar Meadow & Christmas bash; Lunch Break during Eucalyptus Tree thinning; Nightjar Meadow enclosures; Rushmere odd jobs; Oak Wood pulling, sowing, planting; Nightjar Meadow gate repair; Rammamere Heath birch removal; Nightjar Meadow Enclosures; Kings Wood ride edges 2.

Tuesday 9th November – Oak Wood Edges

The task was to tidy up the top crossroads in Oak Wood where we had previously cut back vegetation to widen the tracks for access by the logging lorries.



Whatever we are doing - there it is always time for tea!

Photograph taken by Volunteer Trisha Meers



Wednesday 10th November 2021 – Buzzard Meadow

Another typical “Heathland Restoration” task taken on by the Wednesday group is a small open area (hidden away to the left of the main lower meadow at Rushmere) on the footpath up the lefthand side of Lords Hill. This area is known as Buzzard Meadow, and it gets a “trim” at least once or twice a year. The photographs show birch and bramble regrowth.

**Tuesday 23rd November 2021 – Rushmere Visitor Centre**

On a very clear and sunny day the Tuesday boys carried out their annual task of erecting the marquee and Christmas Tree Corral.



The photograph above shows that it was sunny and clear and the calm before the storm – not really; but a marquee is not erected smoothly when led by a committee!



But erected it was eventually!



Now to build the corral. Remind Alan to duck when whoever should have hold of the end of the wood rail hasn't got hold of it (we won't mention who – he knows)!



A dedicated volunteer – on parade even though it's his birthday!

Wednesday 24th November 2021 – Oak Wood

The Wednesday task this week was in Oak Wood and just for something different it was the annual removal of Azaleas plus the usual bramble pulling. Oh! If you see some birch or pine, you can pull that too!



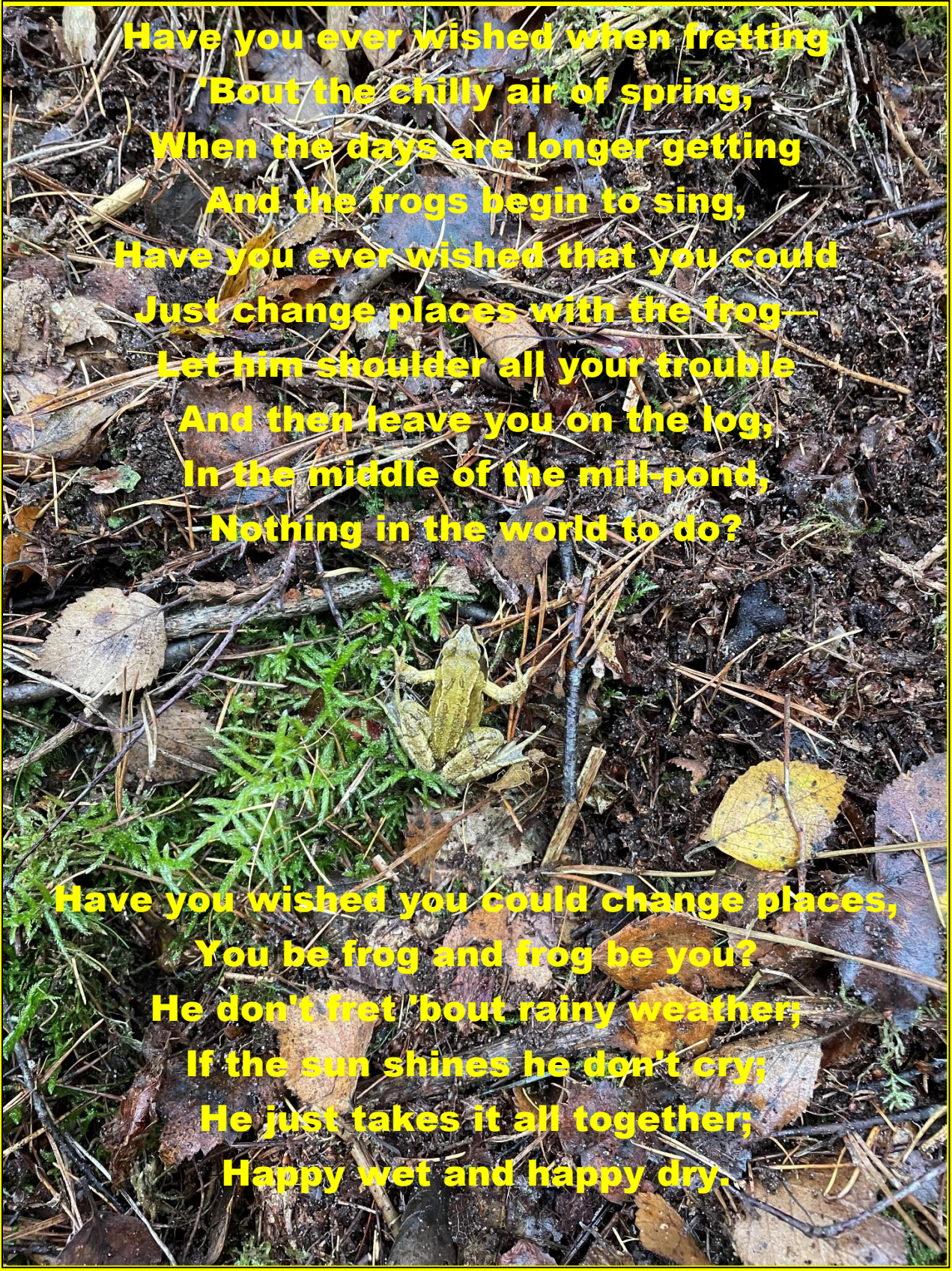
Fly Tipping!



Rogues Gallery – Volunteers at Work



**There were others on the day, but they were scattered over the valley side
– sorry I didn't get you all!**



**Have you ever wished when fretting
'Bout the chilly air of spring,
When the days are longer getting
And the frogs begin to sing,
Have you ever wished that you could
Just change places with the frog—
Let him shoulder all your trouble
And then leave you on the log,
In the middle of the mill-pond,
Nothing in the world to do?**

**Have you wished you could change places,
You be frog and frog be you?
He don't fret 'bout rainy weather;
If the sun shines he don't cry;
He just takes it all together;
Happy wet and happy dry.**

Poem by William Henry Dawson

**And just for something different to do – some of us went back to the Visitor
Centre to unpack Christmas Trees!**



Tuesday 30th November 2021 – Rushmere Fence Repair



The Tuesday boys split into two groups, and I can't (don't know) remember what the other half did but we had to repair the fence along the pedestrian/bike entrance path to the park. Why? Well, some tall pine trees along the edge had been declared dangerous and the Rangers decided that they needed felling (any excuse) – but even with careful lining up where they were likely to fall, sections of the fence were taken out! The above photographs show the post and rail fence repairs.

Wednesday 1st December 2021 – Kings Wood

The “Long Trek” task! King's Wood tasks nearly always require a long and sometimes muddy trek to get to the area to be worked, and this was no exception. The task was to trim back shrub regrowth from the edges of ditch along the ride. Trimmings were to be laid down across the stumps as we do when hazel coppicing.



The photographs below are of a sign (“Clarke’s Hornbeam”) along the main ride and refer to a particular tree – if anyone knows anything about it let me know and I will publish the information later.



Tuesday 7th December 2021 – Heron Lake

Today's task was to clear rhododendron and birch growth from the edge of the Heron Lake at the bottom of the slope below the Visitor Centre.



Whilst some focused on removing the rhododendron regrowth the rest tackled the birch trees along part of the edge of the lake. The reason for the removal of these trees was to improve the view of the lake from the Visitor Centre's decking.



Before and After



Tuesday 20th December – Nightjar Meadow & Christmas Bash

This Tuesday task was to continue clearing selected birch and pine from the corner of Nightjar Meadow near the entrance. A fire allowed the burning of trees (already felled on a previous task) and any new felled trees. While the boys were working hard, Ranger John performed his culinary tasks of baked spuds with sausages (don't tell the Wednesday group). And as you can see when there's food available some employed staff (ex-vol) can't keep away. My apologies to the Wednesday Group - I didn't catch the main Christmas Bash (15th) on camera.



Wednesday 22nd December 2021 – Nightjar Meadow Eucalyptus





Lunch break

Tuesday 4th January 2022 – Rushmere odd jobs

First task of the day – take down the Christmas Tree Corral and return timber to the shed.



There were left over Christmas trees to burn while the corral was disassembled, and the second task to clear birch, bramble and dead gorse from the corner of the Dog Training Area.



This photograph proves that you can have a fire in the bracken without setting light to it!

Wednesday 5th January 2022 – Oak Wood Pulling, Sowing, Planting



Oak Wood in the sunshine – while pulling birch, bramble & pine



Sowing heather seeds



Planting pulled birch (in a different location)
Tuesday 11th January 2022 – Nightjar Valley Gate Repair



Wednesday 12th Rammamere Heath Birch Removal



Tuesday 18th January 2022 – Nightjar Meadow Enclosures



The task was to create small enclosures around the 3 planted apple trees and the hole in the lower meadow.

Wednesday 26th January 2022 – Kings Wood Ride Edges 2



End Piece



Nuthatch feeding at the stump table at Stockgrove

