

BCV News

Newsletter of the Bolton Conservation Volunteers Issue 46, Autumn-Winter 2007

www.boltonconservation.org.uk

Conservation Work at Seddon Fold Farm

Rick Parker

Many people will be unaware of the outstanding contribution to nature conservation around Rumworth Lodge made by farmer Stan Terry.

I have known Stan for over 30 years and we first met because of our shared interest in bird watching. When Stan moved into Seddon Fold Farm twenty or so years ago, he immediately approached me for help in kick starting conservation work on his land. The BCV was soon involved and the first job was hedge laying at the Lostock end of the farm.

The hedge was a monster as it hadn't been touched for 30 years and it was basically a line of trees. This wasn't the easiest hedge the group has laid, but the end product was excellent. Project after project followed in quick succession. Over a five year period we planted over 400 metres of new hedge. Ponds were created, planted up and fenced. Hundreds of trees were also planted and in 1989 I was proud to accompany Stan to the Lancashire Show where he was presented with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) award for the farmer doing the best conservation work in the north-west. The money helped to fund further conservation projects including the planting of wildflowers and the clearing of ditches.

Stan has always farmed in a wildlife friendly manner, cutting his hedges to encourage birds to nest and timing his farming activities so as to cause least disturbance to wildlife. Over the years he has been approached by various gun clubs for permission to shoot. He has always refused and consequently roe deer and the occasional hare flourish on his farm.

This spring Stan put his farm into the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and now receives grant funding for farming in a less intensive manner. The major changes have been to stop silage production and to stop the application of artificial fertilisers - Stan reckons he's turned back the clock 50 years and we can only hope that other farmers follow his lead.

Stan has recently joined an R.S.P.B. scheme to encourage lapwings. The BCV has helped by funding a digger to create some new scrapes for the birds and these ponds are filling up rapidly. 30 years ago I don't think that either Stan or I envisaged that so much could be achieved but the future looks bright for the borough's greenest farm.

BCV takes up management challenge at George's Wood

David Orchard

Sunday October 21st saw the BCV start work on a new site in Bolton: George's Wood in Ainsworth.



George's Wood and one of the many windthrown trees; photo by David Orchard

An introduction to the site

George's Wood is one of two sites owned by the Woodland Trust in Bolton (the other being in Dunsar Wood near Egerton). George's Wood was planted in 1974 and donated to the Trust in 1995 by a private landowner. The Wood forms part of Red Rose Community Forest.

Being small (just over 6 acres) and of limited ecological value, George's Wood is low on the Woodland Trusts list of priorities for regular management. (The Trust instead gives its attention to larger ancient woodland sites that are well used by the public.) Small sites such as George's Wood are relatively expensive to manage, so work is done only when resources allow.

Management challenges facing the wood

The Woodland Trust welcomed the interest from BCV volunteers when they offered to help manage George's Wood as it faces a number of problems:

The wood was planted in just over 30 years ago with Japanese larch, Scots pine and also sycamore, ash and beech. The Japanese larch and Scots pine were planted for timber production but these are of limited value to wildlife as they cast dense shade. This suppresses the shrub layer and ground flora, and consequently, there is little diversity of vegetation



Paul and Fred do the technical bit with the winch; photo by David Orchard

within the wood. Since 1974 when the trees were planted, the value of timber has fallen dramatically so the larch and pine are now almost worthless in financial terms. Increasing the wildlife value of Georges Wood is an important priority for the Trust and so this means gradually thinning out the densely planted trees.

Many trees in George's Wood have been blown over or uprooted by strong winds and gales and clearing these was the priority for this BCV task.

The site is well used by the public, mainly by dog walkers. Unfortunately the lack of well defined paths means that wildlife such as ground nesting birds are constantly disturbed as people make their own way through the wood. Formalising the network of paths through the wood will be a priority for future tasks.

Management objectives for George's Wood

The priority management task is the removal of the Japanese larch. These will be replaced with oak and birch, which are characteristic of woodlands around Bolton that have developed naturally. Management also aims to increase the structural diversity of the site, i.e. to ensure that trees and shrubs are of different size and age and this will help to increase the ecological value of the site. With assistance from the BCV, the Woodland Trust now aims to clear 20% of conifers from the George's Wood this winter and this will allow the process of natural regeneration to begin.

The BCV sets to work.

Eighteen volunteers took part in the task on October 31st which was a great success. The main challenge of the day was met by Paul and Fred the winch operators, who undertook the task of carefully bringing a number of partially fallen trees to the ground. Most of the trees within George's Wood are very close to each other, so as they were felled they sometimes became hung up in adjacent trees rather than falling to the ground. This task day achieved approximately 25% of the work that the Woodland Trust hopes to complete at George's Wood this year.

Colin Riley, (Woodland Trust Woodland Officer {Greater Manchester & Lancashire}), who helped organise the task said, "The BCV has done a great job in removing conifers from George's Wood and this work would not have been done

without the volunteers. It would be great to work with the BCV again and I hope we can arrange another task in the near future."

Day of the Dragonfly

Colin Mather

The BCV dragonfly I.D. day this summer has highlighted just how much global warming is affecting our local environment, and how dragonflies in particular are benefiting from warmer global temperatures.

In recent years dragonflies have been carefully studied as they provide valuable information on how global warming is affecting different species. Thirty years ago the northwest had only twelve species of dragonfly and damselfly and today there are twenty-three, nineteen of which have been identified at Darcy Lever Gravel Pits. The largest new arrival is the Emperor Dragonfly. This species was previously only found in southern England. It is the largest of the UK species and spends five to seven years submerged in its larval stage before emerging in its winged adult form to breed. With a wingspan of 120mm it can fly at 38 kilometres per hour and it is a descendant of the Earth's first insect predators.



Ruddy Darter teneral; photo by Colin Mather

The first Dragonflies appeared 300 million years ago in the Carboniferous period and at that time they had wingspans of 70cm. It was a time when insects were the dominant terrestrial life form. The Carboniferous was also the time of the first forests. Fuelled by high levels of atmospheric carbon, vast forests of 30 metre tall *Lepidodendron* trees covered tropical deltas. These forests would later become coal seams, in turn powering humans to economic success and fuelling anthropogenic climate change. After the Great Permian extinction event 250 million years ago, when 96% of all life was on Earth was wiped out by climatic change, dragonflies took on their more modern forms.

Today there are 5500 species of dragonfly worldwide, and although there are 120 in Europe, most species are found in warm tropical regions.

As global temperatures have increased, southern species such as the Emperor have moved northwards. Recently an Emperor has been recorded as far north as Scotland. In the

south of England continental species are crossing the channel and becoming increasingly prevalent as our climate becomes more favourable for them. Research by the University of Liverpool and the British Dragonfly Society has found that the early springs we are now experiencing are also affecting the Dragonfly life cycle with some species emerging sooner than normal. The report suggests dragonflies are unlikely to be too adversely affected by climate change.

As we burn the fossilised remains of the forests that supported the Emperor's ancestors we are also returning the climate back towards the conditions that supported the first insects. This year there have been increases in the numbers of midges, mosquitoes and dragonflies. Many scientists consider the Earth is on the brink of the planet's sixth mass extinction event, 10% of the world's species are already on the verge of being lost thanks to humanity's insatiable demand for resources and energy. The dragonfly is one of the planet's evolutionary successes, surviving four out of the last five mass extinctions and it seems likely they will survive the next one, even if the lifestyle of westernised humans does not.

Out and About Wednesdays

Anthony Prescott

Most of you will know that I left Newton College July 2007. On Wednesdays I took part in offsite activities and educational trips. These are some of the highlights, I hope you find them interesting.

Martin Mere

Martin Mere is owned by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Over the year we carried out a large programme of work here, sometimes twice a month. We studied the history of The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, Martin Mere and its habitats and ecosystems. We planted soft rush near to the entrance, near the Viking round houses, felled trees, put thatch on the houses and put up bird boxes. We also learned about the Fen and the Carr, Bogs and Wet Woodlands as well as learning about the management and estate skills of Vinson's Marsh. This included the installation of land drains, maintenance of pipe-work and sluices for winter flooding techniques, topping of wetland areas during summer months, maintaining embankments by use of suitable species and barrier protection to minimise soil erosion, seed sowing regimes to provide food sources during autumn and winter periods. We reseeded some areas in spring and did some pruning of woody plants to maintain good public viewing areas while restricting public access to the marsh itself. I was also involved in bird monitoring surveys, breeding surveys, vegetation monitoring and control and studied conflicts of habitat conservation in fishing e.g. use of lead used and dropping of litter.

On our first visit Bill Oddie and Kate Humble were there filming Autumnwatch for BBC1. Bill took us to Harriers Hide and gave us some very interesting facts about the geese and other birds that we could see and to look out for the Pink-footed Geese, Whooper and Beswick's Swans. We were lucky enough to see a Hen Harrier.

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) is a UK registered charity. Martin Mere is one of its nine wetland centres specialising in wetland conservation and covers 400 acres. It is one of Britain's

most important wildlife sites, being designated a Ramsar Site and SSSI for its winter wildfowl and rare wetland plants. It has an excellent adventure playground, lots of hide. It is home to 2,000 tame birds from all over the world.

Address: WWT Martin Mere wildfowl and Wetland centre The Wildfowl & Wetland Trust, Fish Lane, Burscough, Lancashire, L40 0TA.



Anthony meets Bill Oddie at Martin Mere; photo by Anthony's friend

Beacon Fell Country Park

During a visit to this site we studied both deciduous and conifer woodland and its management. The summit of Beacon Fell is 266m above sea level - walk to top of Ashurst's Beacon for spectacular views of Blackpool Tower, Lakeland hills, Welsh mountains and Lancashire Penines. It opened in 1970 and has a café, picnic areas and 6 car parks. I am not going on any more about it because it's such a family favorite for a day out.

Address: Goosnargh, Preston, Lancs PR3 2NL.

We're all Green Heroes!

Rick Parker.

We have just reached a major milestone - our first environmental award in thirty years.

We've won the group section of the Green Heroes Award competition run by The Bolton News in conjunction with Middlebrook Retail Park.

I attended the presentation event at The Reebok on the 6th July. Jane and Fred came along to give moral support when I accepted a plaque and cheque for £200 on behalf of the BCV.

I firmly believe the award was justified as our environmental track record speaks for itself: just short of a thousand conservation tasks undertaken, involving over ten thousand man workdays. Members past and present give yourselves a pat on the back! I remember my first task, tree planting at Phillips Park; we planted hundreds of whips in a small field and, unused to physical work, I finished the day in a horizontal position. Being within the newly planted trees it felt like I occupied a clearing in a miniature forest. This revelation proved to be pivotal - I was hooked on practical Conservation.

I remember thinking this group deserves a medal and nearly

thirty years later we've got one. I had been associated with several Environmental groups, all of which drew attention to green issues, but none of them could match the commitment displayed by the B.C.V.

Losing forests? - plant new ones; Ponds disappearing? - dig some more; Habitats need managing? - we can help manage them. Few habitats in the Borough have escaped our attention - mosslands, heathlands, woodlands and wetlands, we have worked on them all. However, we now have an opportunity to manage a new habitat - wet grassland. The R.S.P.B. have drawn up a scheme to manage the farmland around Rumworth Lodge.

Wet grassland is the favoured breeding habitat for Lapwing. Once very common, this beautiful bird is in sharp decline because the current obsession with land drainage and silage production is destroying good Lapwing meadows. Careful research by the R.S.P.B. has shown that scrape production and careful regulation of stock numbers can dramatically improve the breeding success of these birds. The BCV has got permission to hire a digger to produce these scrapes and I am negotiating for extra ponds and hundreds of metres of new hedge planting.

Our latest project will be our most ambitious yet and the Green Heroes Award money can be used to start the project, but we will need more. At our last meeting members agreed that money bequeathed by Jim and Hovis could be used to help fund this innovative project and Bolton Rotary Club have also volunteered financial support. The much needed habitat for Bolton's beleaguered Lapwings should be in place for next spring.

New pond fund for Lancashire

Rebecca Cleaver, Pond Conservation

Lancashire County Council and Pond Conservation are together making funds available to protect late-succession ponds by creating new ones.

Ponds naturally age, a process called natural succession. At each stage of its life, a pond supports a different range of wildlife. For example, broad-bodied chasers like new ponds with little vegetation, great crested newts love middle-aged ponds, and some hoverflies need the bare mud of old shaded ponds for breeding. When ponds reach old age, they are often 'managed' or 'improved' in the name of conservation, but ultimately a whole range of plants and animals are lost.

Creating new ponds is a great alternative, especially if they are located close to older more established ponds. It increases the number of ponds in the area, creates a new type of habitat for wildlife and avoids disturbing existing ponds.

Funding could help with some of the cost of creating ponds, e.g. hiring a digger, and the fund administrators will help ease the process by checking for planning requirements, archaeological interest and other aspects that are part of responsible pond creation.

If you are operating in Lancashire, keep the fund in mind when you are visiting ponds or talking to pond owners.

Part of the idea is to give people the confidence to speak to landowners knowing that financial support may be available. A simple application process and information pack are being developed.

Contact Pond Conservation on 01942 614013 or rebecca.cleaver@naturalengland.org.uk to talk about pond sites and funding. There is lots of advice and support available to help you plan and carry out a pond project.

Bolton Records Centre Mothballed

David Orchard

Bolton Biological Records Centre is being quietly mothballed as part of council plans to transfer resources to other services. This has been a gradual process, so if you haven't been aware of the changes it means that the council plans have run smoothly.

Bolton still has a records centre that stores 642,000 records. This information provides one of the best sources of information about our native wildlife in the north west, covering Greater Manchester, Blackburn and Bury. If Bolton is to manage and conserve its native wildlife, it's important that we record where the different species are found. If new developments are planned, the Records Centre must be consulted to assess the impact on wildlife. Until recently, Bolton Records Centre could provide this information and welcomed any records collected locally. In addition to managing these records, staff were also on hand to give advice to the public about species identification, wildlife issues and who to contact for further information. However, the Record Centre always relied heavily on both the museum natural history staff and its budget for its successful running.

Thanks to the "enlightened" policy of Bolton Council there have been gradual cut-backs and most recently in 2006, a staff restructure of the museum, diverting resources away from the Records Centre. The natural history staff in the museum are now just one and a half posts, down from four posts in 1991. The budget of the records centre has been reduced to zero and this makes the task of operating the centre almost impossible. Records submitted are no longer being added to the database, which means it's becoming more and more out of date. A fantastic resource has been lost, undermining those working to protect wildlife in Bolton and the surrounding area.

Now that Bolton Council has decided that the records centre is a low priority and can quietly be mothballed, the question is what to do with the records themselves. If staffing levels are cut any further, these records will be completely inaccessible, meaning that the hard work of many people over the years will have been wasted.

Bolton Biological Records Centre is not a luxury item; it is an essential part of managing the environment in and around Bolton. The story of what has happened to the Records Centre is a clear demonstration of Bolton Councils lack of commitment to biodiversity and it also shows what happens when people with no appreciation of conservation issues are allowed to take important decisions.

If a manager from the council would like to argue otherwise, we'd be very happy to include their response in the next edition of BCV News.

Cane Toads Dying From Unknown Disease

by Daniel Bateman, Townsville Bulletin, (North Queensland, Australia)
12.2.07

A mystery disease is killing the northern Australia's cane toads before scientists have a chance to unleash their man-made virus upon them. Toad numbers are believed to have dropped throughout North Queensland, which has led one expert to believe a microbe may be responsible.

Last week, scientists told the Townsville Bulletin they had found the 'holy grail' of cane toad control - an engineered amphibian virus, created from a disease found in Townsville, Bohle iridovirus (BIV). Before the water-borne disease is released, the scientists will test the virus to be 100 per cent certain it does not kill native species results are expected by the end of the year.

The engineered BIV targets cane toads' genes, halting tadpoles from metamorphosing into toads and therefore preventing the toads from laying eggs.

However Jensen resident John 'Nipper' Ryan believed he had already seen a toad virus in action in his backyard. "We used to have heaps of the bastards here," Mr. Ryan said. "There'd be 20-30 when you turned on the porch light at the front of the house. "In the wet season, you look out and just think 'holy hell'. All of a sudden they started disappearing about 18 months ago."

The remaining toads Mr. Ryan found had a dark grey to black discoloration along their backs and were also extremely lethargic. "They just sit there, doing nothing," Mr Ryan said. "Usually you lift something up and the toad hops away."

James Cook University toad expert Professor Ross Alford believed a disease was responsible for the blackened toads, although he said there was no chance of the toads becoming extinct in North Queensland. "We still don't have much trouble collecting fair numbers of them when we need to," he said.

Mr. Ryan hoped authorities could soon fix the cane toad problem. "They've stuffed up the environment," he said. "The only thing that knows how to kill them are crows. They will flip them over and eat their insides out."

The north west slow-worm hunt

David Orchard

In September 2007, the Amphibian and reptile Group of South Lancashire was awarded £8,150 by the Heritage Lottery Fund for a north west slow-worm project. The aims of the project are to:

1. Raise awareness and understanding about these elusive animals.
2. Produce information about these animals and their ecology.
3. Find new slow-worm records for the north west.

Slow-worms are found in three areas of north west England, but records are few and far between. (Two records centres in the area have less than 10 records between them.) This is undoubtedly due to a scarcity of slow-worms in the north west but is also due to under-recording. People who know where slow-worms are found have a tendency not to pass on records. This project aims to gather together all the existing records as well as finding new ones.

Because of the scarcity of slow-worms in the north west, it is unlikely that surveyors will be successful at finding slow-worms if they go out specifically to look for them. The approach of this project is therefore to target gardeners, allotment holders and landscaper contractors. These are the most likely people to come across slow-worms as an incidental result of their activities. A number of training sessions will be held for those interested in finding out more about slow-worms and these will be held in areas where slow-worms are known to exist.

For further details contact David Orchard at argsl@btinternet.com.

A fond farewell to Margaret

December 2008 saw Margaret Keighley leave the Lancashire Wildlife Trust in Bolton to take up a new post in Blackburn.

There's no doubt that Margaret will be missed, not only by her colleagues but by everyone she's worked with during her time with the Trust. Margaret has a well deserved reputation for enthusiasm, dedication and for getting things done, inspiring others to follow her lead. All this hard work will leave Margaret's replacement with a hard act to follow! The good news is that Blackburn isn't far away and it's likely that the BCV will be working with Margaret on projects in the future.

Well done Margaret and best wishes for the future, the BCV has enjoyed working with you.

The Spike Thorn Comment

Spike Thorn

We've been hearing quite a lot recently about the need for millions of new homes. We're told that most of Britain hasn't yet been built on, so losing a small amount of our green space to give someone a roof over their head sounds eminently reasonable.

Unsurprisingly, one of the most ardent supporters of the need for a massive house building programme is the The House Builders Federation. This is a trade body for private sector housebuilders, which bills itself as the "voice of the house building industry in England and Wales". Their argument goes something like this: Build more houses and the cost of property will fall, making it easier for people to buy their own home - everyone's a winner. Simple - or so we're told. Maybe there is a need for some new homes, but this is only part of the equation. There's lots of other factors to consider as well and I'd argue that the answer to our "housing crisis" is a lot more complex than simply building houses on our remaining green spaces as quickly as we can.

Building new houses is easy... which is where the profits are for the housebuilders. The difficult part is getting the infrastructure right and this is much more difficult, requiring long term planning and investment. Some difficult questions will arise, such as, "will new roads and rail links be needed?", "how will the demand for additional water supplies be met?" and "will new schools or other services be needed?" These questions need careful answers before new building can be given the go-ahead. Throwing up houses wherever a space allows will store up problems for the future. (Needless to say this is of no concern to the housebuilder or the average politician.)

If Britain really does require 3 million new homes, maybe we need to do something really visionary. Why don't we create a new town that could be an international example of good modern planning and sustainable building? Such a new settlement could include all the features needed to reduce our carbon emissions to near zero by 2050 - a target that is rapidly being accepted as essential for the wellbeing of our planet. To focus simply on a number for new homes needed is misleading as it implies that simply building this number would solve all our housing problems.

Although some of us are still young and care-free enough not to be worrying about a pension, it's fair to say that many people are concerned about this issue. People have no faith in the established pension system and so where possible, people have taken matters into their own hands and invested in property. This is a guarantee of having a pension in 20-30 years' time and while this situation continues, more new homes will mean simply more "buy to let" properties are available for the shrewd investor. Unless our pension system is sorted out, most new homes will never be available for first time buyers.

There's a widespread view that building on our countryside is undesirable. In response, building on brown field sites is seen as a better alternative but this may well not be the case

if biodiversity issues are considered (though often they're not). Many of our urban "wastelands" are of immense value for wildlife but often have no statutory protection. In contrast, many agricultural areas have been so intensively managed that they're almost sterile. It could be argued that building on green field sites could increase their habitat value, though this would be an unpopular view. Nevertheless, if people were serious about preserving our wildlife they would be ready to accept that sometimes it could be better to build on a green field site than a brown field site full of wildlife.

Unfortunately I don't believe there's a magic answer to this issue - but it can only be solved by reasoned argument and open debate. It's clear that whether we like it or not, millions of new homes will be built in the very near future, (with or without careful consideration), and some of them may be coming to a green or brown field near you.

Spike's final thought: We all need to think carefully about the way we want Bolton and its environs to look in 20-30 years time and we need to let the policy makers know our views. Do we want to lose all of our interesting wild urban spaces? Must biodiversity always be the least important factor when considering where to build? If we accept that new house building will take place in Bolton, we must ensure that due consideration is given to all the issues - and this includes biodiversity.

New website for Lancaster and District Conservation Volunteers

The BCV's webmaster, Colin Mather, has helped a fellow group of conservation volunteers to set up their own website.

A member of Lancaster and District Conservation Volunteers was so impressed by the new BCV website that she got in touch asking for advice. Colin was happy to help out and the group now has a fully functioning website of their own. Among the group's many good photos is this very impressive one of their own vehicle, which certainly looks the part!

Why not find out about their group for yourself by taking a look at www.ldcv.org



The Lancaster and District Conservation Volunteers group vehicle

Yellow Rattle

Taken from Wikipedia by Gary Wright

The BCV has planted quite a bit of yellow rattle during the past year as it suppresses rye grass and so encourages biodiversity in flower meadows. If you've always wanted to know more about this useful wildflower, now is your chance to find out.

Yellow Rattle or Cockscomb (*Rhinanthus minor*) is a flowering plant native to Europe and western Asia.

It is a partially parasitic herbaceous annual plant that gains some of its nutrients from the roots of neighbouring plants. It grows to 25-50 cm tall, with opposite leaves which have a serrated margin. The flowers are yellow and the fruit is a dry capsule which contains loose, rattling seeds when ripe - the plant's name refers to these. The preferred habitat of yellow rattle is dry fields or meadows, where its flowering period is between June and September.

Research at the UK's Centre for Ecology and Hydrology has shown that encouraging Yellow Rattle to grow in hay meadows greatly increases biodiversity by restricting grass growth and thereby allowing other species to thrive. The seeds are spread very effectively by traditional hay-making practices.

It can be cultivated by scarifying the surface of the ground with a fork or similar, then sowing onto short grass at a density of 0.5 to 1 gram of seed per square metre. Yellow rattle seed is short-lived and should always be sown in the autumn, using seed harvested that year. Keep the grass short during March as the seedlings establish, thereafter the grass should not be cut until the end of July to allow yellow rattle to flower and go to seed. Following this, the grass can again be cut short.



Yellow rattle; photo from Wikipedia

Britons throw away a third of the food they buy

Bearing in mind the amount of hunger in the world, this scandalous fact is something of a moral outrage. It's also something of an environmental disaster in its own right and so a campaign is being launched to make people aware of how much food they are wasting

The Government-backed Waste & Resources Action Programme (Wrap) said bins across the UK were being filled with food - at great cost to consumers and the environment.

It found 33% of all the food bought in the UK is thrown away untouched - the same as ditching every third bag of groceries. This equates to £8bn of squandered produce, and as a result 6.7 million tonnes of food waste is dumped into landfill sites every year. This rots away - producing 15 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Preventing the build-up of this level of CO2 would be the same as taking one in five cars off the road. Wrap chief executive Dr Liz Goodwin said: "It is sad that so much food is being wasted needlessly. At a cost of £8bn a year, it's a serious issue that not only impacts the environment but our pockets too.

"Our research showed that 90% of consumers are completely unaware of the amount of food they throw away. "Once attention is drawn to it, however, we know that people are surprised and keen to take action."

Wrap believes that action on food waste would deliver huge financial and environmental benefits.

BCV Task Programme, October 2007 - March 2008

October

Sunday 7th October: Rumworth Lodge, Bolton. Work on tern islands for United Utilities.

Wednesday 10th October: Indoor meeting at 8.00 pm in the Howcroft, Bolton.

Sunday 21st October: Georges Wood, Ainsworth. Woodland management.

November

Sunday 4th November: Orrell Waterpark, Wigan. Hedge laying.

Wednesday 14th November: Indoor meeting at 8.00 pm in the Howcroft, Bolton.

Sunday 18th November: Rumworth Lodge, Bolton. Hedge planting.

December

Friday 30th November - Sunday 2nd December: Residential Weekend in North Wales. Sand dune management for sand lizards and natterjack toads.

Wednesday 12th December: Indoor meeting at 8.00 pm in the Howcroft, Bolton.

Sunday 16th December: Darcy Lever Gravel Pits, Bolton. Pond work.

Sunday 30th December: Leg of mutton wood, Bolton. Tree planting.

January

Wednesday 9th January: Indoor meeting at 8.00 pm in the Howcroft, Bolton.

Sunday 13th January: Darwen: tree planting.

Saturday 19th January post xmas meal Howcroft, Bolton 6.30 pm meet 7.00 pm eat.

Tuesday 22nd January: Extra task at George's Wood. Contact David Orchard for further details on 01204 529312.

Friday 25th January to Sunday 27th January. Residential weekend: Anderton centre, Horwich. establish tree nursery and rhodie bashing with Galloway Society For The Blind.

February

Sunday 10th February: Darcy lever gravel pits, Bolton. Pond work.

Wednesday 13th February: Indoor meeting at 8.00 pm in the Howcroft, Bolton.

Friday 15th February - Sunday 17th February: Residential Weekend in North Wales. Sand dune management for sand lizards and natterjack toads.

Sunday 24th February: Blackleach, Walkden. Dr John Leather memorial. hedge laying competition.

March

Sunday 9th March: Cannon Slade School, Bolton. Pond work.

Wednesday 12th March: Indoor meeting at 8.00 pm in the Howcroft, Bolton.

Sunday 23rd March: Wigan flashes, Wigan. Habitat management.

Meet for all tasks at 10am at the Man and Sythe. Please wear old clothes, gloves and strong footwear, and bring sandwiches and a flask for lunch.