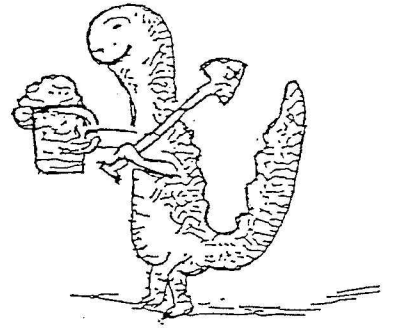


# BOLTON CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS



## NEWSLETTER No. 16

## AUG 89

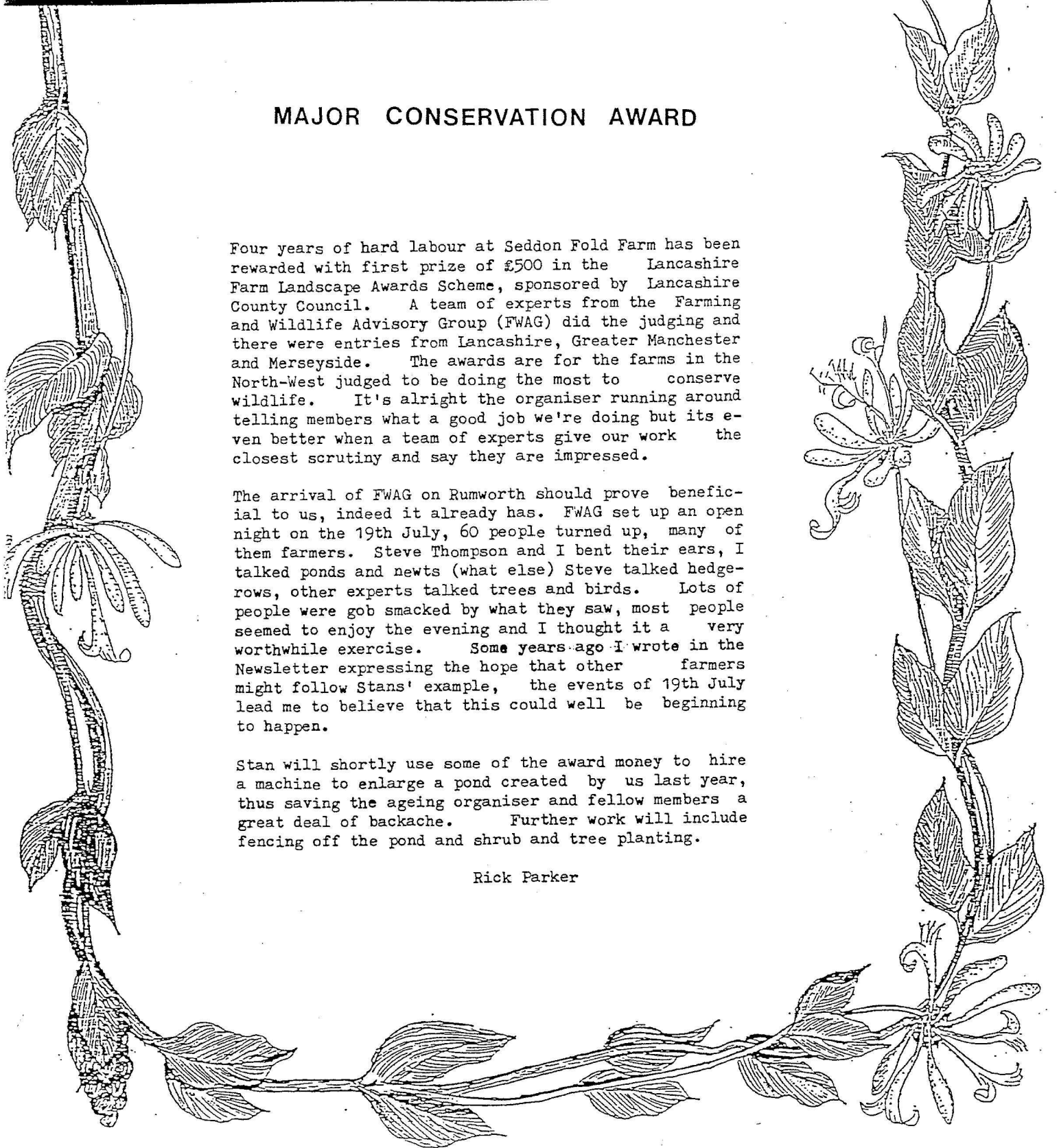
### MAJOR CONSERVATION AWARD

Four years of hard labour at Seddon Fold Farm has been rewarded with first prize of £500 in the Lancashire Farm Landscape Awards Scheme, sponsored by Lancashire County Council. A team of experts from the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) did the judging and there were entries from Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside. The awards are for the farms in the North-West judged to be doing the most to conserve wildlife. It's alright the organiser running around telling members what a good job we're doing but its even better when a team of experts give our work the closest scrutiny and say they are impressed.

The arrival of FWAG on Rumworth should prove beneficial to us, indeed it already has. FWAG set up an open night on the 19th July, 60 people turned up, many of them farmers. Steve Thompson and I bent their ears, I talked ponds and newts (what else) Steve talked hedge-rows, other experts talked trees and birds. Lots of people were gob smacked by what they saw, most people seemed to enjoy the evening and I thought it a very worthwhile exercise. Some years ago I wrote in the Newsletter expressing the hope that other farmers might follow Stans' example, the events of 19th July lead me to believe that this could well be beginning to happen.

Stan will shortly use some of the award money to hire a machine to enlarge a pond created by us last year, thus saving the ageing organiser and fellow members a great deal of backache. Further work will include fencing off the pond and shrub and tree planting.

Rick Parker



# War of the Willows

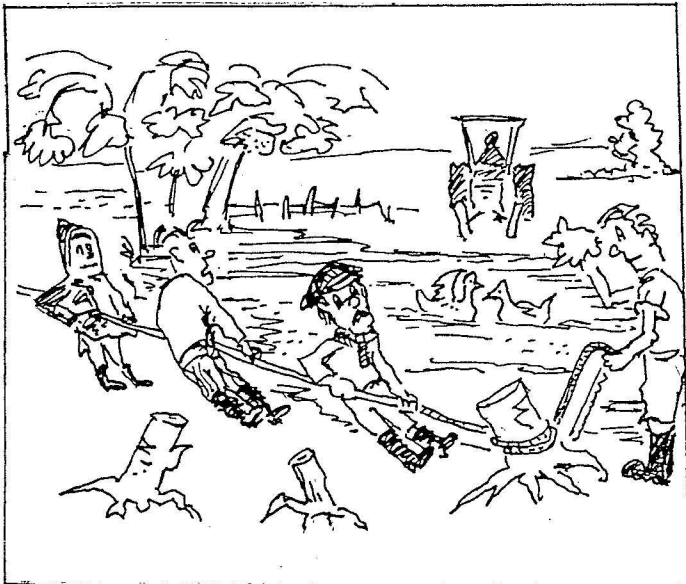
Sunday 30th July Bolton Conservation Volunteers swarmed across Rumworth on yet another Green adventure, the turnout was a magnificent 21 this years highest. One of the days objectives was to restore a pond totally engulfed in water hungry willow. Having no open water the pond is very poor in animal life.

The work looked easy enough, clear two thirds of the pond of willow and remove the stumps. One third of the pond is of very high botanical interest and this was left untouched. The operation took the form of a pincer movement, Dave and Trevor leading the assault on the deep and muddy western side, whilst my bunch moved in from the shallower and less muddy eastern bank. Our ace rhodie basher Mike got stuck in with his usual enthusiasm but a momentary loss of balance resulted in a spectacular mud bath. Further set backs awaited us, the stumps wouldn't shift, roping, winching, pushing, shaking, shouting loudly and pulling funny faces all failed. I wracked my brains for an answer but was well and truly stumped! We went in for dinner with a score of willows 1 BCV O.

The arrival of the cavalry after dinner finally overcame the willows resistance, the cavalry consisted of Stans' tractor and a wicked looking chain. Six members stayed and formed a chain gang, (as a member of the chain gang I can assure you the chain, not only looked wicked, but after a few dips in the pond and a cleverly aimed drop in a cow pat by Trev, it also smelled wicked!.....Edith). The rest of us started on phase two - hundreds of small willow branches were planted on a soil covered rubbish tip behind one of the ponds, this will grow and help to stabilise the soil.

The willow branches were transported half a mile to a previously restored pond which has improved greatly and now supports dragonflies, damselflies, toads, frogs and newts. Although the pond itself is ideal the surrounding fields tend to be very open and it was felt the provision of habitat piles adjacent to the pond would provide cover areas for the ponds' inhabitants. Support stakes were driven in and the willow branches stacked to a height of 2ft and covered with soil. Later on in the year it is planned to plant bramble on the heaps making them more attractive to wildlife and less of an eyesore. A return to base camp found the chain gang in high spirits having successfully removed the rest of the stumps. The days work finished with one pond restored and a further pond improved. The full time score being BCV's 65 willows O.

Rick Parker



# Wild Flowers

Have you thought of helping to conserve some of our wild flowers by turning part of your garden into a wild flower meadow (or even just a patch)? You would add a beautiful and everchanging new aspect to your garden as well as having the satisfaction of ensuring the survival of some of our native wild flowers in the process.

Tan Pits have seed packs available £4.95 which covers an area of 210 square feet. It contains a mixture of 31 native wild flowers and grasses which will thrive in almost all soils and locations (approved by NCC).

If this sounds too expensive or too large an area how about splitting a pack with a friend or friends and sharing the cost?

No garden? How about planting the mix in window boxes or patio tubs? It would certainly be different! For further details contact Rick on 922 817302.

Edith Elebert

# Rhodie Bashing

Rhododendrons have long been a problem. National Parks have been addressing this pest with little success as the conditions required for these bushes to thrive are poor or acid soils. As for reproducing, one flower head is capable of producing 3-7,000 seeds which equals approximately 70,000 seeds per bush. Another factor is the seeds can travel up to 700 yards from the parent plant. Its not cheap at any price, to clear one National Park alone would cost £30 million. It is estimated at £1,000 per hectare to clear, so cost is a major factor when it comes to which area is to be treated. Also taken into consideration is whether the flower adds to the beauty of or interferes with woodland management or encroaches on moorland.

Our small contribution in controlling this colourful enemy came on a fine, warm May day at Phillips Park in the Croal-Irwell Valley. Our main task was to 'trim' back the bushes which were obstructing the footpaths. As rhodie bashing tends to make conservers over enthusiastic it wasn't long before the pathways were clear and several long buried paths had been reclaimed from the enemy. A new pathway was also created for the wildlife. Apart from making the area more accessible for the public it will also assist the wildlife as this bush is poisonous to most of our native critters. Another bonus was the finding of several small but healthy tree seedlings, these should now have a chance to get established and add to the beauty of the park.

The other task was regrading the drainage, this will stop flooding and reduce the risk of paths becoming slippery and inaccessible. Finally all the branches we had 'trimmed back' were stacked ready for burning later in the year. There was a clear improvement, a very productive effort all round by the group. The tea and ice-creams were a welcome addition.

Michael Ankers

# HERB

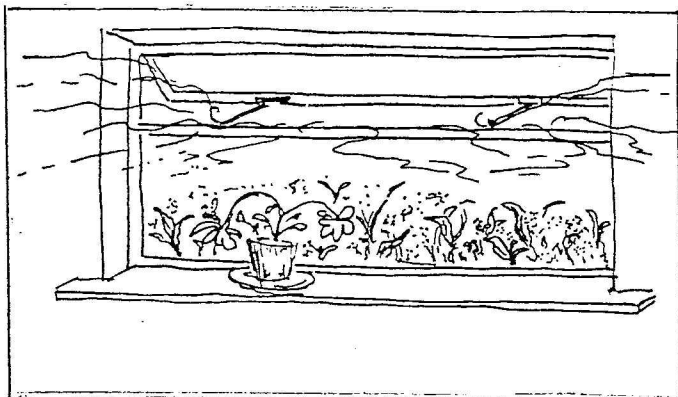
## GARLIC - The stinking rose

Since garlic hath powers to save from death bear with it tho' it makes unsavoury breath. SALERNO 12A.D.

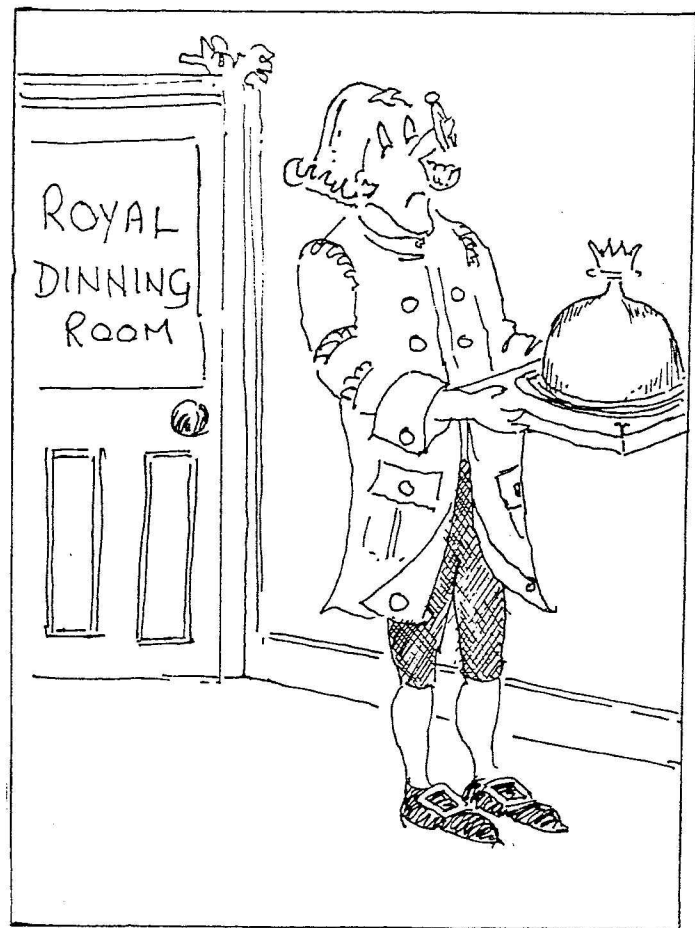
It is always interesting to hear of people's faith in particular panaceas to cure anything from a sore throat to frostbite. In Thailand Paul and I met a foxy old Welshman travelling the world alone, who ferociously believed in the properties of garlic to put the body to right. He looked the picture of health too, with his pixie-ish, youthful face and twinkling eyes found only in folks who live very close to nature. Indeed, before he left Wales in 1985, he grew his own garlic, herbs and veg, picked wild fruit and nuts, mushrooms and flowers in the early morning misty woods near Cwmbran in Gwent. The rigours of travelling through hard countries like East Turkey, Pakistan and China for 18 months hadn't shown their ravagements in Mat. His body was spritely and cheerful and moved easily, he puts it all down to garlic.

GARLIC (*allium sativum*) is an anglo-saxon name: 'gar' meaning spear and 'leac' meaning leek. Thus it is a plant with spear like leaves resembling a leek. It is hard to say who first introduced it into the garden but it is over 5,000 years old. A member of the amaryllis family (the other being onion) it is repellant to many insects and animals who would otherwise eat and destroy it. So wild garlic is able to 'scent' out the witchwoods in peace. I do remember a task or two at Croal-Irwell where we worked in woods with garlic growing. It was damp and the smell was pungent and medieval and conjured up all sorts of woody folklore and mystery.

When Paul and I were in Bali we rented a room where garlic grew just under the window and in the dew early dawns the smell would rise and invade the rooms so that it was almost unbearable! No wonder it's called the 'stinking rose'.



Garlic has well known medicinal values and powerful antibiotic properties which, because it is natural is entirely harmless to the body. However, it has been known to irritate the gastro-intestinal tract in some people. It has been used by ancient high civilisations including China, India, Egypt and Greece. It was given to gladiators in training in ancient Rome to give them strength. In medieval Britain it was known as 'poor mans treacle' and given to lepers and used by the monks to treat the sick during the Black Plague and also as a disinfectant. It was discovered to open obstructed fatty arteries, kept colds and infections away, heated the body and killed worms in the belly.



In Victorian England it became very anti-social with socialites and dropped out of use. Mrs Beeton denounced the plant in her famous cook books and called it too 'rank' to be used in recipes fit for 'gentry'. Now it is slowly making a comeback as Brits become exposed to Mediterranean cuisine.

Garlic is extremely beneficial in lowering cholesterol and blood pressure and thus is a good toner for the heart muscles. It's good to use in sickness and diarrhoea, cleaning out the intestinal tract and good for cleansing the blood. It warms the body and encourages it, indeed, there's very little it can't do. Some light-headedness can occur and also some diarrhoea if starting to take it regularly, but this is the cleansing work being carried out and blood pressure coming down.

Of course it is best assimilated in its pure form ie. raw! Cooking will undoubtedly burn and kill off the active ingredients of garlic. It is best to chop and sprinkle the pieces over your prepared meal. If you really can't stand it raw, rather than go without it is best to cook it in the later stages so that it is not overdone. As for garlic breath - well, we don't notice it anymore and is something you get used to. Though chewing mint and parsley leaves help, as will eating fruit or drinking herbal teas. Really, nothing works efficiently, and you will have to get used to it. We have been taking it every day for 10 months since that day we met Mat, and we've seen neither flu or fever, diarrhoea or drowsiness.

Garlic has other uses too. If your lovely lawn is being churned up by beautiful velvety moles (who only want to be friendly) the planting of garlic bulbs in the lawn will deter them. Growing garlic between your rows of home produce will help to keep off predators and bugs from your spuds and carrots. And everyone knows it keeps vampires away! And considering natural healing, always remember that food is the best medicine of all.

Julia Spencer

## Greenmount

Sunday July 9th we were in action once more at Greenmount Bird Hospital. Nine guides and four guide leaders from Bolton Sacred Heart Girl Guides helped to swell the turnout to an impressive 27. The guides got stuck in and by all accounts had a enjoyable if somewhat tiring day. I suggested to the guide leaders that the guides do a write up on the days activities and promised that the best one would be published in the Newsletter. I understand prizes will be awarded for the best three.

Rick Parker

I was asked to judge the entries and print the winning article. But, seeing as the Editor always has the last word, I couldn't resist publishing all 3 winning articles as I feel each one has character. Below in order of merit are the winning entries.

Edith Elebert

On Sunday 9th July Sacred Heart Guides went to Greenmount Bird Hospital to dig a duck pond. The man showed us a duck pond that somebody else had built. Then they showed us how to use the spade. A man hacked it for us and then we started to dig. It was very hard work. By dinner time we had half-finished. While all the men had their tea, a woman who looked after the hospital gave us a tour. We saw an owl who was blind and a crow with a broken wing. Then we started the work again. When we had finished the duck pond, we went into the souvenir shop. I bought a postcard. Then it was time to go home so we said goodbye and overall I had a very good time and I hope the duck pond we built helps a lot of sick birds to get well.

Dominique Walsh

We went to Greenmount Bird Sanctuary to dig a duck pond. We saw some ill ducks and they were feeding the big birds on chopped up chicks. We dug a very big hole in the ground to make a pond. After dinner we had a guided tour of all the birds and ducks. A small group of us went to clear away the sludge from the stream which made the ponds fill up. There were thousands of worms - it was horrible - but we enjoyed the day.

Caroline Madej

It was ten o'clock and we were off to the Greenmount Bird Sanctuary. As we were going we listened to Cliff Richard. When we got there we ran over a frog - (poor thing). Soon we were digging. I didn't think it was fair because when we were digging and working hard - the guide leaders were standing around watching us (cheeky things).

Atlast it was lunch time and I was dying for the loo. When it was nearly the end of the day I ended up the only guide digging. All the others were carrying wood about.

At the end of the day the results were - a broken back and a duck pond. - (All I wanted to do was to have a nice hot soothing bath.)

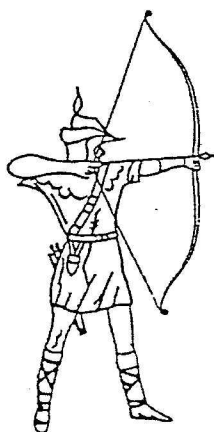
Lauren Greenhalgh



ILLUSTRATED BY: Brian Mason

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