

# Project Update



## Lower Mole Countryside Management Project

Volume 9, Issue 2

### Volunteers Hard at Work Conserving the Countryside

As the summer comes to an end and we head into another autumn, we start the most popular time of year among the Project's regular volunteers, the coppice season. This time of year tends to increase the daily number of volunteers by a third. If this is the case again this winter the Project will continue adding to a truly outstanding number of volunteer's days, as so far this year the volunteers have worked an impressive 904 days! A record number as year on year figures from 2010 to 2011 are up an amazing 41%!

April started with two weeks at workshops, building new rights of way signposts for Horton Country Park, and a lovely bench with a back, in memory of our long serving volunteer John Haworth. This was installed over looking a hazel coppice by Butchers Grove. Next the volunteers erected



200m of temporary deer fencing at Watercut Copse and moved 300m of deer fencing at Butchers Grove. This was followed by two weeks building a cattle-holding pen on Rye Meadow on Epsom Common.

In May the new timber storage container had a rear door cut out, made and fitted, the timber racks installed and filled, and the surrounding surfacing finished, plus both containers were externally painted.

A glorious sunny week in mid May was spent at River Lane Meadows on the banks of the River Mole, supposedly working whilst watching the Chub rising to the surface helping them selves to the healthy hatch of damsel and May fly's and the occasional sighting of a kingfisher "not seen by Ted, just every one else". The work was in preparation for cattle grazing, the volunteers installed a field gate, a squeeze and 200

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Management  
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#### Welcome to Project Update

This is the seven-teenth edition of Project Update, which is intended to keep you up to date with the work that the Project's volunteers have been doing in the previous six months.

The mainstay of the Lower Mole Project's work is the volunteer task programme. This enables volunteers from the local community to help with practical conservation and access work across the Project area. Each year over 10,000 volunteer hours are achieved.

During the 25 years that the Project has been running over 200,000 volunteer hours have been achieved.

### Living Woodlands

The Living Woodlands fund has received a boost with several donations including £350 from Waitrose after the Lower Mole Countryside Trust's appeal was featured as one of the green token charities, and also £1000 from Toyota. In addition the Trust's 'Mountain Out of a Molehill' appeal to members has raised over £300 so far. These donations will help to fund work at the ever expanding number of Living Woodlands sites.

The arrival of two storage containers early in the year by our office at Horton Country Park has streamlined the Trust's firewood sales and provided

storage for timber from larger oaks felled as part of coppice management.

During the summer the Project has carried out surfacing work to improve access at Watercut Copse and The Warren, and are preparing to start coppicing work at two new sites; Nonsuch Park, and Arbrook Common.

The Project has submitted a grant application to Your Heritage (part of the Big Lottery Fund) to fund a Living Woodlands Project Officer, and have a small group of volunteers set up to help with publicity / educational material.

## Lower Mole Countryside Management Project

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**We're on the web!**  
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The Project is funded by Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Royal Borough of Kingston, City of London and Natural England.



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## The Lower Mole Project

The Lower Mole Project was set up in 1983 and now covers an area of 143 square kilometres.

The aim of the Project is to carry out countryside improvements for the benefit of people and wildlife, by:

Improving public access to the countryside for informal recreation.

Conserving landscape features and enhancing the natural beauty of the countryside.

Increasing public knowledge and understanding of the countryside.

Encouraging greater community involvement in the countryside

## Volunteers Hard at Work continued

metres of stock fencing, after mastering no less than three monkey strainers at a time.

June kicked off with installing a culvert bridge and path surfacing at one of the entrances to Castle Hill from Horton Country Park, removing the many old metal bits of fence, often attached to large lumps of concrete and reinstating the ditch to help with rain runoff.

Next the volunteers revisited Epsom RDA and Leatherhead Golf Club to weed the hedges planted the previous winter. The Golf Club hedge is part of the PTES Hedgerows for Dormice Project, where a fantastic hedge is now emerging.

June also saw the start of our summer work at Stokes Field, Long Ditton. We surfaced 100m of path, with another 100m being completed in August. We also had another week on the site in July constructing a pond dipping platform.

July started with a couple of beautiful sunny days at one of the volunteer's favourite site's Headley Warren, a tough hill to work on rewarded by the views and biscuits. A new and increasingly common sight was Ashley running around chasing butterflies.

Ashley's butterfly fix was soon to be topped up with more chalk downland restoration working on a joint task with the National Trust volunteers in the orchid field at Box Hill, cutting avenues through the dense

woody scrub.

August started with a blistering heat wave at Moles Copse, whilst clearing weeds from last years coppice and erecting deer fencing allowing the hazels to grow. A similar task took place at Moor Lane Allotments.

Next the volunteers tackled path revetment by the River Mole in Molesey, which started with some brave volunteers battling the elements to cut and drag encroaching scrub that had forced the path perilously close to the river. We added 15m of revetment, guarded by some fierce wasps from no less than five ground nests, John and Tom getting to know a couple of wasps a little too well. The job was finally finished a few days later after improving some 100 metres of path.

September started working at the Warren seeing the last of this seasons surfacing and the start of the coppicing. Laying down 135m of limestone surfacing with some harsh weather for the start of a week with a morning of strong wind and rain battering the volunteers, whilst they coppiced some over stood hazels along the ride side.

The volunteers have now started a new coppice season at some of their favourites sites such as Princes Coverts and Norbury Park, where we can always rely on a toasty fire to keep us warm.