



# Project Update

Lower Mole Partnership

Volume 17, Issue 1

## Volunteers Hard at Work Conserving the Countryside

So we've had a brief taste of spring, mixed in with March winds and the odd dusting of snow. Despite this the hardy Mole volunteers have been out working hard through the winter season, racking up over 900 days! It's time to look back again at just what we have managed to get done over the last six months.

We started the scrub clearance season when the weather was still very warm and dry. Firstly we headed up to Juniper Hill on Epsom Downs to extend the area of chalk downland we had previously cleared. This was followed by a return visit to Young Street continuing previous efforts to maintain the verge as grassland. A team of 17 from RHS Wisley joined us for half a day at our next

task on Esher Common. We were clearing scrub around Black Pond and building a dead hedge. Bankside scrub clearance took us back to Watercut Copse in Oxshott, and we completed the month with another successful River Mole Discovery Day.

October saw a return visit to Ether Hill in Runnymede to clear more rhody from the woodland, and our first visit of the season to Ashtead Common. Here we were working close to the flow structure in the wetland area, clearing scrub to prevent it from taking over. A sub team was also taken from the main task here to complete some repairs to the boardwalk at Ashtead Rye Meadows. Our tree poppers were put to good use on a birch and pine pulling task on

Continued on back page.....



Welcome to  
Project Update

Project Update is intended to keep you up to date with the work that the volunteers have been doing in the previous six months.

The mainstay of the Lower Mole Partnership'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 about 9,000 volunteer hours are achieved.

During the 35 years that the Project has been running over 300,000 volunteer hours have been achieved.

## Jeremy's Countryside Experience...

After spending two years studying Arboriculture at Merrist Wood, I was curious to experience all parts of the industry. I had worked with tree surgeons, tree officers and towards the end of my studying I volunteered with the National Trust. During my time with the National Trust I had been applying for many jobs in the countryside, but couldn't get anything due to my lack of experience. I found an advert for the Surrey Partnerships on Countryside Jobs Service, and decided to apply.

I have been with the Surrey Partnerships (the Moles and the Downlands) for eight months now, which has in-

involved everything from scrub clearing to path laying, tree felling to sheep shearing, leading and planning tasks as well as helping to lead training courses

and most importantly remembering to put the tea kit in the land rover.

I have also been on a 4x4 course, a sheep care course, a tree inspection

course and a brushcutter course. I hope to also do my medium tree felling, pesticides, shearing and trailer driving as well.

I would highly recommend doing this internship to anyone who wants to get into the industry. It has been fantastic for my experience and I have thoroughly enjoyed it.



## Lower Mole Partnership

2 West Park Farmhouse  
Horton Country Park  
Horton Lane  
Epsom KT19 8PL  
Phone: 01372 743783  
Fax: 01372 742291  
Email: mole.project@surreycc.gov.uk

**We're on the web!**  
**www.lowermoleproje**  
**ct.org.uk**

The Partnership is funded by Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Royal Borough of Kingston, and City of London.



*Countryside  
Management  
in Action!*

## The Lower Mole Partnership

The Lower Mole Partnership (formerly Project) was set up in 1983 and now covers an area of 264 square kilometres.

The aim of the Partnership 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

Chatley Heath, and an extra task was arranged for a Friday, when staff and volunteers joined colleagues from the Small Blue Project to clear scrub from Denbies Hillside. The Partnership ran a one day coppicing course for members of the Moor Lane Allotments Group, to help them make use of all the pea and bean sticks growing on their doorstep, and some hedgelaying was completed at Fetcham Splash. Next, to Black Pond on Esher Common, where we were joined for a day by volunteers from SCC Adult Social Care Team for some heathland restoration, and to Castle Heath on Epsom Common, felling some larger trees, and clocking up two visits from Surrey Fire and Rescue in one day!

We started November with a clearance task along the route of the TDL & LONDON LOOP walks beside the Hogsmill in Old Malden. This work was funded by Sustrans and is part of a larger partnership project to improve the local area. The team then returned to the Rye Brook on Ashted Common for more scrub clearance on the wetland, and some successful winching to remove the stumps. Further downstream for the next task and another scrub clearance task on Kestrel Field with a field test for the mowing machine. A new site next, and our first of two winter visits to the Beaverbrook Estate. This first visit was rhody clearance, working alongside the estate team, in this fascinating woodland. The first task in December was coppicing on the Bonesgate Open Space, where we got

to try out the new electric brushcutter. This was followed by the annual pre Christmas task in Butchers Grove, HCP for coppicing and the Christmas BBQ.

Volunteers were back out in force after the festive break for our joint tasks with the Epsom and Ashted vols. The first week was spent on halo release of the veteran oaks on Ashted Common, and the second was continuing scrub clearance on Wells Rise, Epsom Common (with another BBQ). Then a second visit of the season to continue work on the Beaverbrook Estate. This time clearing a forest of buddleia, releasing yew trees from this neglected woodland.

The first signs of spring in February with a two week effort on Oxshott Heath. The tree poppers were well used again, and the view and heathland were once again restored on the South slope. Jeremy, our intern took charge for two days with some rideside clearance in HCP, then our annual return to Stones Road Pond to maintain the habitat for the Great Crested Newts. Next, some more scrub clearance at Stokes Field - on an old tennis court! To finish the month, our regular winter visit to clear scrub at Headley Warren, and a complete contrast to the previous year with Beast from the East - record breaking temperature and wall to wall sunshine. Brimstone, Red Admiral, and Small Tortoiseshell all spotted on site! What a way to end the winter season, and thanks to all the volunteers for their hard work....