

Cove Brook Greenway Visit

A walk of discovery along the brook

Ten fortunate members took a stroll along Cove Brook with Cove Brook Greenway secretary Hilda and some of her colleagues on 27th September, following a brief talk about the work of the group in maintaining a surprising variety of eco-systems and educating the public about this remarkable amenity that lies largely hidden in our midst.



During our two hour walk, from Blunden Hall to Southwood Golf Course, we saw grassland, marsh, woodland and hedgerows as the brook meandered lazily along its valley. In the brook, we saw two of the large American crayfish that have invaded Britain's waterways, not only eating indigenous crayfish but also seriously damaging river and stream banks by burrowing into them.

Hilda and her team shared their vast store of knowledge, identifying many of the plants and telling us about their conservation work. One interesting facet of their clearing of brambles, for instance, is that the bushes are cut back in undulating waves to provide still bays where butterflies love to bask.

Although the brook was benign on the day of our visit, it is prone to flood, and Hilda showed us the barrier built to hold back the water. She also pointed out the flood meadows, and a boom that had been used to prevent an oil spill heading downstream.

Over refreshments on our return to Blunden Hall we reflected on our surprise and delight on discovering such a treasure so close at hand. Cove Brook Greenway are always looking for volunteers to help with litter-picking and brush clearance and several members expressed willingness to join in. Details of work parties and fund-raising events can be found on the website which can be reached via www.rushmoor.gov.uk.