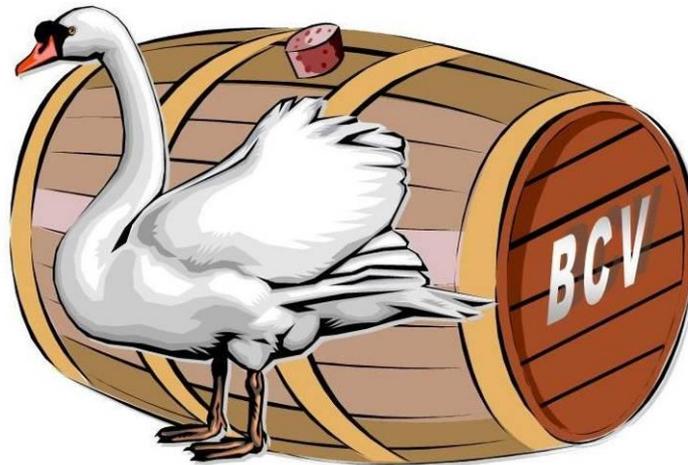


**CONSERVATION**

**BURTON**



**VOLUNTEERS**

**[www.bcv.org.uk](http://www.bcv.org.uk)**



[Working with local people to plant an evergreen hedge at Horninglow](#)

**Burton Conservation Volunteers Annual**  
**Report 2014**

Another busy and successful year, despite cut backs and less work from ESBC, we again encouraged young people to join in, inc. 4 spending 14 working days, taking their Duke of Edinburgh Award. We carried out a total of 645 volunteer days on 47 different task days, comprising of; 480 work days by BCV plus 165 days by others, including local Lichfield, South Derbyshire and Burton residents, Parish Councils, Corporate Volunteers and staff at Beaumont College in Lancaster.

Of these, 577 task days were within the National Forest, 350 in Staffordshire inc. 24 in the Lichfield area, 276 days in S. Derbyshire plus 2 in Leicestershire. We kept the traditional working weekend at Broome Farm in Herefordshire (20 volunteer days, laying a section of Hazel and Field Maple hedge and of course, sampling the cider) plus 27 days on a new venture in Lancashire at Beaumont College, run by Scope. There we installed wheelchair access paths and upgraded their wonderful nature area, so another diverse and interesting year of community and environmental work.

As in previous years I have not counted in time for committee meetings, admin work, site surveys, and general organisation like tool collection or sorting out car share. The many hours of work on the allotment have not been included, not because it is not highly valued, but because we do not have a proper record of volunteer numbers. Nor have I included team-building socials/walks, manning displays, educational talks etc. so the basic figures do not reflect the total amount of commitment given to the group by volunteers. I did include the Educational walks, as education and raising awareness of our local environmental issues is an important part of what we do. Also included were the National Forest Walking Festival walks, as they were organised for others, but not the risk assessment walks as these were largely social events. We have worked with adult learners with social problems, Schools, South Derbyshire District Council, East Staffs. BC, Lichfield District Council, Parish Councils, a Scope run college and of course Broome Cider Farm.

BCV have also worked with and provided support for local and national orgs. like Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Trent Rivers Trust, Burton and District Wildlife Group, Tatenhill Guides, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and The Kingfisher Project.

The orchard project at Paget school in Burton is continuing to flourish and we visited the orchard as part of our 12 mile National Forest Walking Festival walk, to show a successful local environmental project, involving many young people.

We have also assisted with events organised by East Staffs Fairtrade Group and One World Week (Burton) as they are in keeping with our overall ethos and also linked up with Burton Inclusive Performing Arts, on a couple of projects, including a One World Week event at the Burton Caribbean Associations Black History Month.

Thanks also go to the volunteers who help to organise walks, camping trips, theatre visits, quizzes, meals website etc. these help to make working with BCV an enjoyable and social experience, helping us to retain regular volunteers and the skills that they have built up.

Although we are not a 'carers' type group we do care and over the years a number of volunteers with learning disabilities, social or drink/drug related problems have been able to gain a lot from working with BCV. The confidence, acquired skills and improved CV they have gained, has helped a number to find jobs and careers.

### **Highlights**

The highlights are always difficult to single out, as so much of what we do is important, fun and successful! This was shown when a 21 years of BCV slideshow was produced, looking not just at examples of the huge number of jobs carried out by BCV over its lifetime, but juxtaposing 'then and now' pictures, showing much of the work still in working order, including our very first paid job, installing a fence at Branston Water Park. Parties are always good highlights and the 195<sup>th</sup> (3 of us had a 65<sup>th</sup> birthday) showed how much the group has

brought people together and how much it means to so many. Revisiting old work sites and seeing laid hedges regenerated, trees growing and seeing the many obvious and subtle signs of a thriving and healthy habitat, is what our work is all about, but these are gradual rather than dramatic ‘highlight’ changes. The main thing that I would see as a highlight, was not one thing, but the many little gestures like; the homemade treats given by the residents of Appletree Meadows, the pleasure on the faces of the staff at Beaumont College and gestures like the free tickets to the Rosliston ‘Proms’ from Zoe, showing a growing appreciation of the group and the importance of our work.

### **Sustainability**

We continue sourcing materials locally, and recycling arisings as stakes, binders etc. for different uses like fence posts and rails, hurdles, pea/bean sticks for the allotment and even for tools, hopefully setting an example for others.

Use of the PHAB minibus has been mutually beneficial we hope, giving the bus a decent run, to keep the engine from clogging up, whilst reducing the number of vehicles travelling to sites and thus our carbon footprint.

### **Awards**

We did not apply for any awards this year, but as stated in the highlights, simple gestures can be as important as prestigious awards.

### **Socials**

We have continued the very enjoyable trips to the Globe Theatre in London, and trips to the London markets, for fun or serious Christmas shopping, plus seeing live music and other theatre companies at local venues. On a similar track, we have also helped with Burton Inclusive Performing Arts, by supporting and performing.

The camping/walking holiday in the Forest of Dean, was a more relaxed affair than previous walks, although on the plus side it gave more chance to study the wildlife and different ecosystems and also watch an excellent performance of Romeo and Juliet at Raglan Castle.

The working weekend at Broome Farm, was great fun and a partially laid, old Hazel and Field Maple hedge, plus the comments from local people, on past and present work, shows how these weekend promote BCV and Burton, far and wide.

## **Training**

It has been a busy year for training, with 6 volunteers passing their first aid course, 6 passing their Brushcutter training, 2 attending a



Woodland Management course, and 8 passing their Defibrillator training. We have always been keen to pass on the skills vital for the emerging woods of the National Forest, like ‘new wood’ management, fruit tree pruning, formative pruning etc.

[Lynn and Richard at Defibrillator training](#)

and the group also provided hands on training to many other volunteers by encouraging members of the public to join us on projects involving work like, hedgelaying, willow weaving, coppice and woodland work. Lynn and I gave talks and guided walks to a number of groups and public events, whilst giving advice on the management required for sites. Along with training young people doing their Duke of Edinburg Awards, we also had a number of students gaining units for course work, as well as post grad students looking for practical experience and CV enhancement.

## **Summary**

The recession has sadly led some orgs. to cut back on vital environmental work, however a shift in focus to working with Parishes and SDDC has ensured another busy and successful year. We

have continued to work/visit some old favourite sites and observed the positive ongoing effects of our work at places like, like Branston Water Park, Kingfisher Trail, Monks Walk etc. whilst adding new sites like Swadlincote Woodlands and Coton Park LNR.

BCV have continued to invest in training, despite the recession and the purchase of the defibrillator and volunteer training in its use, show the groups commitment to volunteer welfare, as well as forward thinking (the trainers first org. to buy one before an incident).

We need to continue to promote the value and genuine cost effectiveness of employing a forward looking, committed, skilled and experienced group like BCV and also the high quality of the groups work. The adaptability shown by the group last year should, ensure, that we are well placed to ride out the recession.

So thank you to everyone who has taken part in the group, making Burton Conservation Volunteers such a happy team and a successful organisation.

Lawrence Oates Chair and Project Officer 27-3-2015.

## Looking forward to a successful 2015

