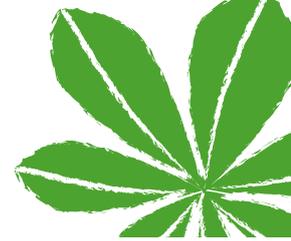


Winter Newsletter



Your land, your heritage, your future

For more news visit – www.boxmoortrust.org.uk

The
Box Moor
Trust



The Bulbourne project is hailed a success

Photo Elaine Rushton

On Wednesday 22nd November the Box Moor Trust was delighted to welcome Sir James Bevan, the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, who came to visit and inspect the recent improvement work that has been carried out on the River Bulbourne.

The 'Bringing back the Bulbourne' project has transformed a one kilometre stretch of the river from a straight, wide and silty channel into a meandering chalk stream, which is a globally-rare habitat. The project has been recognised nationally, with awards from both the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the Wild Trout Trust.

Working alongside the Trust's volunteers, Sir James took part in the monitoring of the dramatic increase in the number and diversity of fish and invertebrates resulting from the restoration work. He was able at first hand to see not only the river improvements but also the newly completed 'scrapes' alongside the river, helping to return the moors to more of the character of ancient water meadows.

Sir James had this to say about the Bulbourne: "The transformation is remarkable. Before – as a result of historic alterations – the over-wide river was slow, silty and dead straight. Now, the crystal clear water

flows over clean gravels. It's green, lush and full of life and it's a brilliant example of a chalk stream."

The project was largely funded by the Environment Agency, in conjunction with the Trust. It is one of five such schemes the EA is funding to restore and protect the world-renowned Chilterns chalk streams.

Box Moor Trustee Peter Ablett said, "This year's improvements to habitats on the moors are really impressive, representing a splendid example of inter-agency cooperation."

For further information, please contact the Box Moor Trust by email at: admin@boxmoortrust.org.uk or telephone: 01442 253300.

Did you
know?

The Box Moor Trust is now on and @BoxMoorTrust @boxmoortrust

An ongoing problem.....



Most of us are fond of dogs. One in four homes has at least one. We welcome visitors to Trust land but we do expect responsible behaviour by ALL dog walkers. This means always clearing up dog poo and not leaving the offensive black bags behind as well as keeping dogs under proper control at all times to prevent attacks on stock.

Most dog walkers ARE responsible. Only peer pressure, i.e. all of us challenging those who put the health and safety of our cattle and sheep (and other visitors) at risk, is likely to produce long term improvements. We can only move forward by creating a climate in which irresponsible behaviour is viewed as unacceptable by all. More of this in the next edition. Your support is invaluable; your views would be welcomed.

Tree work: latest news



Chalk Dell at Roughdown

Photo: Peter Samson

Management of the trees on the estate is a never-ending job, and includes monitoring the health of our existing stock, scrub clearance and felling of sick and dying trees where necessary and planting of new saplings to future-proof the landscape.

On Roughdown Common, the north-facing chalk bank above the mine had scrubbed over with regenerative ash, sycamore etc. In accordance with the SSSI management plan agreed with Natural England, the remaining third of this area has been cleared with the intention of allowing chalk grasses to re-establish on the site. For further information please see our website.

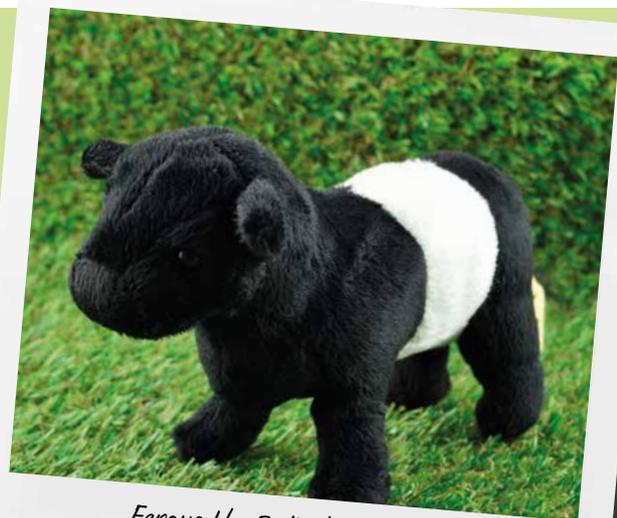
With the inevitable loss of many of the horse chestnuts to old age and disease, it is necessary to plan for a future with fewer of

them on the moors. On Herdsman's Moor, a total of seventeen new trees have been planted. Species include lime, tulip tree, cherry and wild service tree. In addition, more saplings have been replanted on Station Moor to replace some that had failed to take.

On Blackbirds Moor, a number of fruit trees have been planted, namely two Conference pears, two Victoria plums and two Lane's Prince Albert apple trees. The latter takes its name from the occasion of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert changing their coach horses near Berkhamsted at the time the first young tree was transplanted there. The developer, Mr H. Lane, was of course pleased to relate this story to his customers when selling his trees and apples!

Website shop

The Box Moor Trust is excited to announce the launch of our brand new online shop. You can now buy a range of Box Moor Trust merchandise from the comfort of your own home, just by visiting our website at www.boxmoortrust.org.uk. Items for sale include the 2018 Box Moor Trust calendar, a waterproof pocket map of the Trust estate, our newest set of Christmas cards (why not buy early for next year?) and 'Royalty to Commoners' a book by Joan & Roger Hands detailing 400 years of Box Moor Trust history. Also proving popular is our newest introduction, Fergus the cuddly Belted Galloway! All profits go directly back to the Box Moor Trust, helping us protect and manage the land we all hold so dear.



Fergus the Belted Galloway

We are the Conquerors!



The Box Moor Trust Autumn Festival, featuring our annual conker tournament on the Sunday, took place on Blackbirds Moor over the weekend of 14th and 15th October. Several hundred visitors flocked to the event, enjoying unseasonably warm weather and glorious sunshine, particularly on the Sunday. In the conker tournament, both the senior and junior classes were keenly contested. The winners, being crowned Conker Champions of 2017, were John Dixon in the adult category and Megan Cumner in the juniors.

Attractions at the event included a mix of trade stalls, not for profit organisations and activities such as wood carving and turning demonstrations, have-a-go archery, pottery and circus skills workshops, a mobile petting farm, children's crafts, storytelling and face painting. Stalls selling local produce and crafts included tasty rare-breed meat from Hazeldene Farm, preserves, cheeses and honey from Beechwood Fine Foods, wooden craft items from The Repair Shed, delicious Italian gelato and sorbet from Scoops, hand-made jewellery and crafts by Bernadine's Creations and

fruit and vegetables from Sunnyside Rural Trust. Providing delicious hot food over the weekend were Khana Cookery and Hazeldene Farm, whilst Boxmoor and South Hill Primary School PTA groups ran popular refreshment stalls to raise funds for their respective schools. Musical entertainment came from Berkhamsted Ukulele Random Players on Saturday and the Jolly Jazzers on Sunday.

With thanks to all who contributed to the success of the event, including our brilliant volunteers, stall holders and visitors.

Orange Walk update



In line with our ongoing update of all the walk routes, the Orange Walk leaflet has now been updated, and new way markers put up at strategic points to help guide walkers around the route. Located at Westbrook Hay, orange walk is the shortest and easiest of our colour coded walks and is aimed specifically at those with impaired or limited mobility. It encompasses the length of the boardwalk, which stretches from the car park in front of the Old Barn, continues through Hay Wood and emerges onto Preston Hill. From there, the path wends its way across to the next field gate and through the wildflower meadow of Bovington Reach in a circular route, ending up back at the car park. Total length of the walk is approx. 1¼km.

Fascinating Fungi



Eagle-eyed estate ranger Karen spotted this fascinating Bird's Nest fungi near Dellfield at Westbrook Hay recently. So named because its fruiting bodies resemble tiny egg-filled bird's nests, it feeds on decomposing organic matter and is often seen growing on decaying wood.

Shy Visitor

We are delighted that a Water Rail has been reported several times at our Gadespring Cressbed hide.



Photo: Mike Dunks



This winter visitor has been seen occasionally at Trust reed beds elsewhere locally in the past but, because it is so shy, few people get to see one in the open. In winter, they also visit sites such as Tring Reservoirs and Rye Meads RSPB reserve and may well be present

in the Gade Valley but good pictures like these by Mike Dunks and Rob Simons are hard to achieve without the shelter of a bird hide. Breeding records in Herts are rare but with the Trust's suitable wetland habitats in the Boxmoor area we can always hope!

Volunteers Making a Difference

Our hard-working conservation volunteers have been tackling all sorts of tasks on the estate over the past few months. This is just some of what they have been getting up to:

- Work has started in Bury Wood to clear holly and small trees such as sycamore to reduce competition and let in more light for ground flora.
- Work at the cress beds has continued with the creation of new wet areas that will encourage the growth of wetland species such as Phragmites, reed mace and flag iris.
- Hedgelaying has started along the top of Overbourne. The hedge was last laid about 8 years ago, and we are now laying the new growth in order to revive it again.
- We have also cleared self-set trees around the pond on Preston Hill to reduce the damage to the pond liner and increase the light to the pond area. Blackthorn, hawthorn and bramble around the edges of the pond have been left as good coverage for birds using it as a feeding area.

In addition, a group of Duke of Edinburgh Award students are regularly litter picking and filling bird feeders around the estate.

If you are interested in finding out more about volunteering with the Trust, please contact carolineevans@boxmoortrust.org.uk

Contact Us

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