

**Kings Worthy, Path 502
Worthy Down Halt – Platform Clearance
Sunday 20th April 2008**



Aim of the task was to:

- further clear the platform of trees, dogwood and bramble, extending the wildflower habitat.

Task report:

A small group of 4 adults arrived for the day's task. As noted in our previous report for this area, the station platform has for many years been neglected and suffered from the elements; as a consequence it is now almost unrecognisable as a station platform. Growing trees of willow, birch and hawthorn are doing the most damage, significantly to the top of the platform; unless these trees and other scrub are removed the platform will become unsafe and eventually turn to rubble. Therefore, in order to preserve the platform and promote the area for wildlife, it is our intention to promote the platform as a raised bed for wildflowers, and enhance the surrounding embankment too.



Today we chose to clear the area to the south of the hut, extending the patch previously cleared on the north end. Dogwood, hawthorn and bramble were cleared and roots lifted. A manhole was discovered to what looked like a toilet drain! – this was covered with a log-pile to prevent any hazard to walkers on the platform. Taking a break for tea, some extra hands arrived to help clear some of the cuttings. The removal of a large willow tree was attempted, but abandoned as being a job more suitable for a chainsaw. Finally, wildflower seed was sown on the newly cleared area, and also around the sleeper-bench. During the afternoon we encountered a motor-cross biker illegally riding on the footpath (as we have done on so many occasions whilst we have been working on this footpath).

The group, working with Hampshire Paths Partnership and HCC Country side Service, is hoping to develop a more strategic plan for practical conservation for the disused railway line. A meeting has been set up with the parties concerned – as well as conservation work, we will also discuss ways of preventing illegal use of the footpath.

The afternoon saw a very satisfying transformation of the platform. Weather: grey and mild, 14°C.

Bruce Graham, Task Leader

Upcoming task and event dates

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| 18 May | Nest box making and Anniversary celebration |
| 15 June | Disused railway line footpath (FP501/502) – task to be decided |
| 20 July | Butterfly survey, Top Field |
| 17 August | Litter pick with St Mary's Church group |

Donations to the group are gratefully received and will help ensure conservation work continues.