

**Kings Worthy, Path 502
Worthy Down Halt - Scrub Clearance
Sunday 18th March 2007**



**Worthy's
Conservation
Volunteers**

For the task at Worthy Down Station we met as usual close to the vets at the bottom of Worthy Down Lane. A good group of 11 volunteers turned up more or less on time at 1.30 pm, together with a veritable pack of hounds, and we went straight to the platform site to read the risk assessment and assign tasks as the weather was a little cold with a gusty wind.

As with all work at the station the main tasks involved scrub clearance! We split into several parties and set about our various tasks after dire warnings about the safety of a number of trees near the platform in the light of the not-inconsiderable gustiness of the wind.

David was despatched to plant a packet of wild seeds at the cleared grassy area on the next bridge, and he went off happily with a rake over one shoulder, seeds in the other hand and (I think) with a happy whistle.



Lopping branches – “timber”, he bellows

Two other parties (Michael, Maureen, Ruby, Margaret, Nick, Jonathan & Sue) set about the familiar task of clearing dogwood, ash and other scrub species at a couple of sites along the western edge of the platform. In particular, an area of mainly dogwood, near the main ground-lichen patches, and also considerable scrub on the site of the old linesman's hut. The principal purpose was to improve the light with a view to increasing the numbers and variety of wild-flowers. A wealth of flowering violets were already well in evidence in the woody area and near the station buildings.



Before: part of area to be thinned

Bruce, Martin and Morgan exerted themselves removing several stout fallen trees which were blocking the eastern side of the platform, as well as a couple leaning precariously on the platform and threatening the track. It is noticeable that many of the trees alongside the eastern edge of the platform are somewhat unstable as are many which are holding on fairly desperately on the thin soil on the concrete platform top. It was suggested that all the trees on the platform should be removed with the help from the Council suitably equipped with chainsaws.



After: letting in more light

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It was very gratifying to note that the tearing-up of the asphalt area near the fence by motor-bikes had virtually ceased and that the plant cover was once again recovering. Many small seedlings of dry-habitat plants were already in evidence including Parsley piert, Storksbill and Stonecrop. The prospects are looking good for the future of this dry habitat.

A number of other tasks were carried out including the removal of overhanging dead branches and the usual, though very necessary, rubbish clearance.

The afternoon was punctuated by a short refreshment break and by the constant happy banter of the participants. We got ourselves together and departed at about 4-15pm in a sharp cold wind. Some 'hard-snow' had even fallen for a few minutes during the afternoon.

All in all another happy and useful task successfully completed.

Task leader: Michael Edwards

Weather: chilly 4C, sunny and dry apart from a sharp snow shower.



Volunteers & hounds