



Three Brooks Nature Conservation Group

Community Wildlife Walk – 13 June 2009

The Three Brooks Nature Conservation Group offered residents the chance to learn more about the plants and animals on their local nature reserve on a guided walk with a professional ecologist. Rupert Higgins from Wessex Ecology led a group of 25 residents through the varied habitats in the heart of Bradley Stoke.

We first visited Savage's Wood and were introduced to plants with mysterious names such as enchanter's nightshade and dog's mercury. Rupert explained that medieval herbalists attached the name "dog" to any plant that wasn't any use for anything! Wrens and woodpeckers were heard and children were fascinated by the tiny leaf-mining grubs.

Out in the grassland Rupert pointed out the spiky heads of teasels – still used today to "tease" the felt on billiard tables – and purple-spotted, poisonous hemlock. Having scaled the heights of the Tump we were rewarded with the liquid song of skylarks and clouds of striking, red-spotted burnet moths – Rupert had never seen so many.

Having watched the ducks, swans and little grebes on the lake we passed through Bradley Stoke's most ancient woodland, Webb's Wood. The ground was a riot of colour with red campion and yellow archangel emerging through the fading bluebells.

As we walked up Braydon Avenue to join the community festivities we were still seeing wildlife as sparrows and finches darted through the trees. Everyone enjoyed the walk and some residents commented that they would always look at the world around them in a different light!

The Three Brooks Nature Conservation Group was formed by local residents, with the aim of conserving and enhancing the Three Brooks Local Nature Reserve for the benefit of both residents and wildlife in Bradley Stoke. This friendly voluntary group meets on the first Saturday of every month to work on the reserve and we always welcome new members. If you would like to help to look after your local wild spaces, why not join us at one of our events? See posters around the reserve or visit our website, www.three-brooks.info for full details.