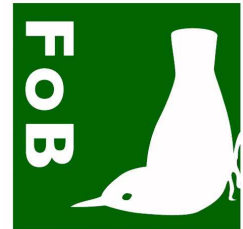


# Newsletter

Issue 21 February 2011

Berengrave LNR, where history & nature come together



FRIENDS OF  
BERENGRAVE



## A rather belated Happy New Year to all (74) of our members

**Lang mey yer lum reek.**  
(Live long and happily)

**Mey the best ye hae iver seen be  
the warst ye'll iver see**  
(May the best you have ever seen be  
the worst you will ever see)

**Mey the moose ne'er lea' yer giral  
wi the tear drap in its ee.**  
(May the mouse never leave your  
grain store with a tear drop in its eye)

**Mey ye aye keep hail an herty till  
ye're auld eneuch tae dee.**  
(May you always stay whole and  
hearty until you are old enough to  
die)

**Mey ye aye juist be sae happy as A  
wiss ye aye tae be.**  
(May you still be as happy as I  
always wish you to be)

*(Traditional Scottish New Year greeting)*

## Sarcoptic Mange

Sarcoptic Mange is a terrible condition which can affect domestic as well as wild animals. It causes hair loss, conjunctivitis and open wounds due to the animal constantly biting and scratching at the affected part. If left untreated it ultimately causes a prolonged, painful death. Research by the National Fox Welfare Society (NFWS) suggests that cross contamination between animals is not as common as one might think. Their studies also suggest that infection is most likely when the animal has a poor skin condition to start with, due mainly to poor diet and resultant vitamin deficiencies.

The NFWS believe that the best way of curing the mange is to treat the underlying cause of the problem – the skin. This they do with a homeopathic remedy, which they will provide free of charge to householders who are prepared to feed affected foxes.

The fox population local to Berengrave LNR seems to be suffering from an outbreak of Sarcoptic Mange. Are you prepared to feed the foxes and give them the necessary medication? If you are, please go to <http://www.nfws.org.uk/> or ring 01933 411996 for further information and to receive the free medication.

The National Fox Welfare Society website also gives much general information on foxes as well as more detailed information on the Sarcoptic Mange and the research they have been doing into the disease. The website can be accessed either directly from the above URL (website address) or from the LINKS page on the FoB website

## Bird strikes

Do you suffer from birds flying into your windows? These bird strikes are normally due to one of two reasons:

- The bird sees a reflection of trees and sky and thinks it is flying into an open space
- The bird sees a reflection of itself and flies to attack the perceived territorial intruder



Although the RSPB website says that broken wings and necks are rare, in my experience broken necks are quite common, especially amongst male greenfinches.

How can one prevent bird strikes? The RSPB has some advice on their website at [http://www.rspb.org.uk/advice/watchingbirds/behaviour/birds\\_and\\_windows/index.aspx](http://www.rspb.org.uk/advice/watchingbirds/behaviour/birds_and_windows/index.aspx) They also sell stickers to go on the outside of your window(s) which, they say, may help prevent these strikes.

## Strimmer course

FoB would like to be able to help the council maintain Berengrave reserve by strimming overhanging vegetation from the edges of paths and boardwalks. However, the council's Health & Safety protocols mean that this can only be done by persons who have successfully completed a strimmer operator's course.

Would any FoB member like to go on a brushcutter/strimmer course with a view to helping with maintenance of the reserve?

The course would probably be of ½ or 1 day, somewhere in Kent (possibly at either Riverside or Capstone Country Parks) and would cover the safe maintenance, transportation and operation of petrol strimmers. FoB would pay for the course and any out-of-pocket expenses.

I cannot give further details at the moment as these will depend upon take up of the offer. Any volunteers please give your details to the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

## Armistice Day (11<sup>th</sup> November, 2010)

The event was attended by Mrs Bird, a descendant of one of the deceased men who are commemorated on our memorial plaque. There was not much support from FoB members, but the consensus of opinion was that this wreath-laying event should be continued.

## Christmas buffet (14<sup>th</sup> December, 2010)

I believe that everyone who attended enjoyed both the food and the socialising, but it was a disappointing turn-out. If attendance does not improve next year it may be necessary to question whether it is worth the effort of those ladies who spent their time shopping and cooking to provide the food.

## Rangers team will soon be up to strength

Towards the end of last year the depleted Riverside Country Park ranger team of Darren Sweeting and Becky Simmonds was augmented by the appointment of Colin Stubbs as the third ranger. I am informed that a fourth Riverside ranger is to be recruited within the next few weeks. This will bring the team to full strength. Additionally, Paul Hadaway has been appointed as the new Countryside Officer and will be responsible for all the Countryside Rangers at both Riverside and Capstone Country Parks

Note: Countryside Rangers look after the Countryside Parks, areas of woodland and 'rough land' such as the Darland Banks. Urban Rangers look after all the cultivated areas, such as Gillingham Park, Rochester Castle grounds, The Vines, sports grounds, etc.

## Next Members Meeting

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2011, 7:00pm, at the visitor centre, Riverside Country Park

*Brian Baker  
Chairman  
Friends of Berengrave*