

# Newsletter

Issue 26 February 2013

Berengrave LNR, where history & nature come together



FRIENDS OF  
BERENGRAVE



## Report On Committee Meeting Thursday, 24th January 2013

Present were: Terry Clare (Chairman), Jack Hughes (Vice Chairman), Eddy Newport (Treasurer), Pat Clare (Secretary), Liz Arnold (Rep for Berengrave Lane) and Di Weedon (Rep for Lower Rainham Rd and Motney Hill Rd.) Apologies for absence were received from Brian Baker (Web Manager and Newsletter) and Fraser Miller (Historian)

Matters discussed and action agreed were: previous Minutes, accounts, insurance for the recruiting and information stand in Rainham Shopping Centre, Members' meeting on 15th February and production of form for "Observers" in the Reserve.

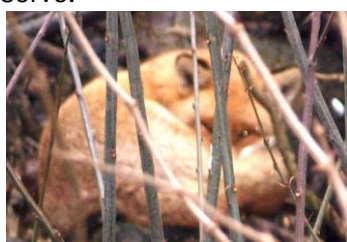
The meeting commenced at 2.30pm and finished at 4.30pm

All members are invited to view a full copy of the minutes by contacting the Secretary on 233748.

## Reserve Monitoring

The monitoring team have reported the following:

- Louise Owen – Heron sighted on lake
- Terry Williams – Tree fallen across path. Cleared by Rangers
- Kevin Mahoney – Gunshots in Reserve. Reported to police
- Di Weedon – Signs of pony tracks in Rainham Dock East
- Fraser Miller – Picture of fox asleep in Reserve.



## Armistice Day

The committee wishes to thank all those involved in the arrangements for the Armistice Day event and who made it a success despite the poor weather and lack of public support.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### Members Meetings

All Commence at 7:00pm in the Methodist Church Hall, Station Road, Rainham

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2013**

**(Talk on BATS by the Kent Bat Group)**

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2013

**(Includes Annual General Meeting)**

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2013

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2013

Members are invited to bring a friend, or friends, with them, but there will be a small charge of £1.50 for non-members.

The meetings will consist of a short period for business, followed by a guest speaker, after which there will be refreshments (tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits) and an opportunity to meet fellow members.

## What to look out for in the Reserve – Cow Parsley & Hemlock

Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) also known as wild chervil, keck, wild beaked parsley and Queen Anne's Lace, is generally classed as a biennial or short lived perennial. It can be found in the Reserve flowering from April to June. The flowers are insect pollinated. The fruits mature in late-June to July and gradually fall off from July to September. The hollow stem which is covered in soft hair grows to a height of 60–170 cm (24–

67 in), branching to umbrels of small white flowers, the leaves are dissected. It is a very common plant in hedges, roadside verges, damp areas and neglected land.



Cow Parsley

It must not be confused with:-



Hemlock

Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) – this plant is poisonous. It flowers from June to September but looks very similar to Cow Parsley. The leaves are virtually identical. The stalks are speckled and thicker but the speckles do not appear on young plants. The fact that it has a very unpleasant “mousy” smell should be a deterrent to eating it. It causes numbness to the extremities and eventually respiratory failure.

We know that Cow Parsley is growing in the Reserve but are not sure about Hemlock. We hope to find and identify it when spring growth starts.

Don't touch unless you are sure!

Pat Clare

## Rainham in the first part of the twentieth century. Part 2

The Ordinance Survey map of 1908 showed the excavations in the chalk pit had reached the final level of the pit but did not show any buildings of the process plant which was necessary to supply chalk slurry to a cement works. The material excavated was being sold to other cement works and the flints to the building trade.

Reports in the local paper in August 1912 indicated that the foundations of the new cement works were being got out. This being ten years since the project was first announced. At the same time Short Bros. the aeroplane manufacturers in Eastchurch were showing an interest in a site near Motney Hill. The local trading community were hoping this would come to fruition. This was abandoned a year later when no suitable housing could be found, however by August 1913 Chatham and Rochester Water Company were showing interest in the site for a sewage disposal works.

The construction of the new cement works was not without incident. During May 1913 there were two reports of injuries to men employed in the construction works, one when Mr. Osborne Black of Ivy St. suffered a fall during the lifting of a large casting. This resulted in Mr. Black suffering a fractured skull. The second was to local well known runner Mr. William Day who fell over 20ft and was described as having been shaken up and will have to lay up for a few days.

It should be noted there is no mention of a local hospital or an ambulance being used. The only record we can find is accident victims being taken to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, in horse drawn works vans. In the case of Mr. Black, Goldsmiths paid him £200 in full discharge of all liabilities.

The old cement works owned by the Barron family and traded as Falcon Cement Works announced in July 1913 their intentions to close. The works were taken over by Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers who realised their production method could not compete in output and production costs closed the works. The Goldsmiths were installing the latest rotary kiln invented in America by Thomas Edison, and it was hoped some of the men would find work there.

A rise in demand for cement allowed the old works to continue until Feb. 1914 when it finally closed.

References: *East Kent Gazette*, 1901 Census, *Grays Museum*, *Kelly's Directory*.

Fraser Miller, Historian, FoB - Oct 12, 2012