

## Winter ranger notes from Wisley Common and Ockham and Chatley Heath 2011/2012

As I write these ranger notes we are just coming out of one of the warmest Novembers we've had on record. Wisley Common and Ockham and Chatley Heath has been so unusually warm that it is only been the past week or so where leaves are finally being blown off of the trees creating a beautiful (but slippery!) carpet of colour across the heath and woodland floor. There are still plenty of insects around too including dragonflies, midges and mosquitoes which shows us just how few frosts we have had.

However, wildlife on the nature reserve also seems to be predicting harsh temperatures ahead! I can honestly say that I have never seen so many red holly berries in my life, which according to folklore, means a bitterly cold winter is to come! Keep an eye out for the winter birds coming in on Boldermere Lake. Our first Wigeon have just started to arrive from places like Iceland and Scandinavia.

Winter work is in full swing out on the heath with lots of scrub removal being done by volunteers and the Community Payback Scheme who have all worked extremely hard. You will see me out and about collecting and burning up piles of birch brash and doing lots of stump treating so do stop and say hello.

Heather cutting will also be taking place which will allow the heather to re-grow at a variety of ages which maximises our biodiversity. The cut heather will then be scattered on some of the regenerating areas so boost up the seed bed here and there.

And finally, a bit of work will be done in 2 of our car parks. Pond car park will be temporarily closed for 1 day on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December. And Boldermere car park will be partly closed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> of January next year. This is to allow a bit of scrub removal to be done around the edges of the car parks to open them up a bit and make them safer and more accessible for everyone.

### Up and coming events:

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> of December** come and make a Christmas Wreath on the Heath (free but donations welcome. Meeting at Pond Carpark)

**Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of December** come and see Santa at the Semaphore Tower (£10 per child, booking essential)

**Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of December** and **Sunday January the 8<sup>th</sup>** - come and help manage the heath at our volunteer work party- everyone welcome!

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> of January**- 'Talking Tracks' guided walk. Come and identify some of our wildlife by looking for their tell tale signs and tracks! Meeting at Wrens Nest car park

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> of Feb**- 'Historic Heaths' guided walk through the Mesolithic era right to today. Meeting at Pond Car Park.

Please do get in touch for more details.

We hope you enjoy your visit to Wisley and Ockham.

Gemma Grant  
Wisley and Ockham Ranger  
Surrey Wildlife Trust  
Tel: 07970094416  
Gemma.Grant@Surreywt.org.uk