## Kings Worthy, Footpath 501 Worthy Down Halt – Platform Clearance Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2009



On a bright and sunny Saturday afternoon, 11 volunteers met up at Worthy Down Halt – this was our first task to be held on a Saturday, the idea being that it would hopefully encourage new volunteers who otherwise would not be able to attend on Sunday ... indeed we had four new faces! – three from the Ramblers Association.

The station platform – built in 1924 to serve the army camp, and dismantled in 1964 as part of the Beeching Axe – has for many years been neglected and suffered from the elements; as a consequence it has become almost unrecognisable. Willow, birch and hawthorn trees have done the most damage, significantly to the top of the platform; unless these trees are removed the platform will become unsafe and eventually turn to rubble. Also, bramble, privet and clematis have done their utmost in almost completely obscuring the platform from view.

It is our job then to restore 'the lost platform of Worthy Down Halt' (anyone seen the documentary film crew!?!!), creating a raised wildflower bed and enhance the surrounding embankment too.

Today we chose to clear the area to the south of the hut, extending the patch cleared last April. The debutantes settled in well, and everyone equipped with a bow-saw or lopper set about to clear as much scrub as possible and to lift roots; we spread out along the platform to avoid stepping on toes! The cut material was dragged 100 metres down the line to block motorcycles from churning up the special wildflower habitat beyond the south end of the platform. Only the larger trees remained - these will have to be tackled another day with some heavy muscle. Finally, wildflower seed was sown on the newly cleared area.

There is still more to do to clear the platform completely, but it is at last beginning to show a character of its own, reminding us of a bygone age - you can just imagine passengers waiting to catch the 12:32, the GWR steam train chuffing and puffing as it approaches ...

Weather: sunny and bright, 10°C.

Bruce Graham, Task Leader

## **Upcoming task and event dates**

Sunday 15 March Platform clearance continued, Worthy Down Halt

Sunday 19 April Footpath improvement, Nuns Walk



