

Forest Journal

£1

The newspaper for RINGWOOD, FORDINGBRIDGE & VERWOOD



Clever craft work

The Dorset Do does a turn in Ringwood, P6

Plans to

New upper scho

'Dreadful damage' sparks rallying cry

By Karen Bate

ANYONE who cares about Latchmore Brook in Fordingbridge is being urged to attend a public exhibition on Tuesday.

Concerns have been raised that many restoration projects carried out by the Forestry Commission have been ill-prepared and destructive to wildlife, particularly during the bird-nesting season.

At the Verderers' Court, resident Elizabeth Potter said of the work at Broomy: "What on earth has been the point of it all?"

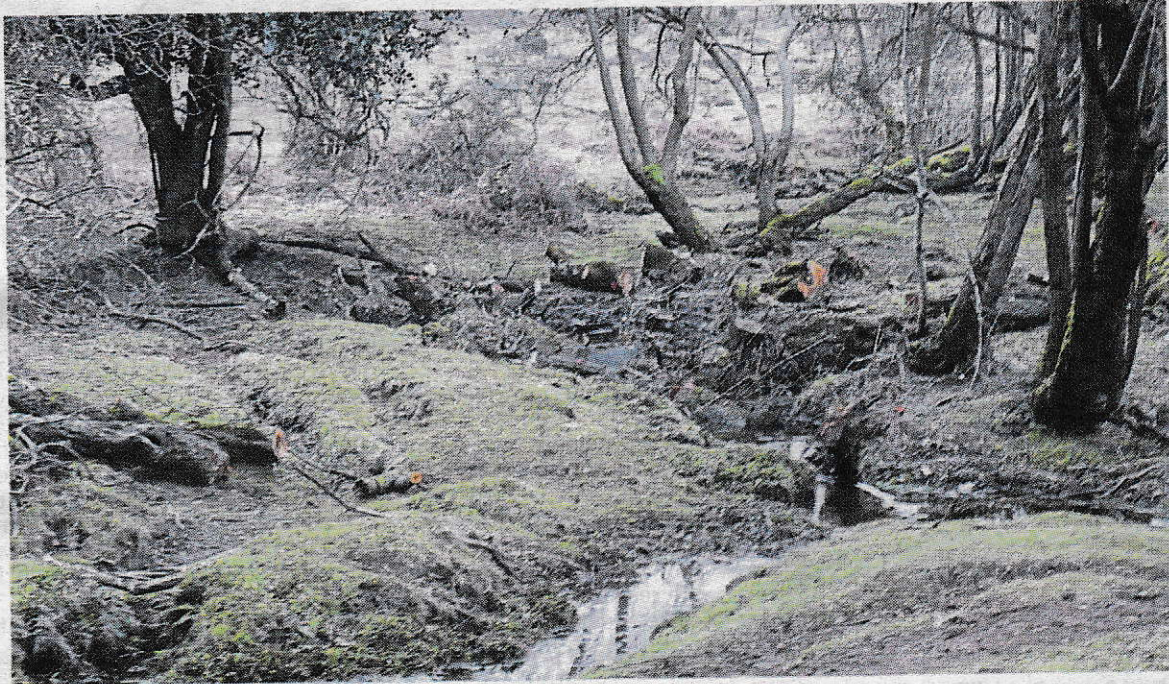
"Gone is the stream and its banks and its natural winding beauty and instead there is a dead infilled stone path which can't be ridden. Where can the fish swim?"

"Dreadful damage has been done and much habitat seriously compromised."

Outrage at "the destruction" of Ogdens sparked a campaign, friendsoflatchmore.org, which fought for an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The assessment of Latchmore wetland restoration is currently being finalised by independent environmental planning consultants LUC and will be submitted to the New Forest National Park Authority later this year.

Latchmore Brook was artificially deepened and widened in the



Stream restoration work carried out by the Forestry Commission at Latchmore Brook, Ogdens, near Fordingbridge

mid-19th and early 20th centuries, to improve grazing and extend the area where trees could grow inside the inclosures.

But Natural England claimed it affected the wetland ecology and identified the area as being in an "unfavourable condition".

The Forestry Commission

claims the works will protect the Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest for future generations.

Bruce Rothnie, deputy surveyor at the Forestry Commission, said: "Natural England has identified Latchmore Brook in particular is under threat as a result of past

drainage work. It's our moral and legal responsibility to maintain and restore habitats such as this by reinstating the natural processes wherever possible."

The Forestry Commission and LUC will be hosting the exhibition at Hyde Church Community Centre between 4pm and 8.30pm.