

**Title** Local community initiatives

How members of Signet's UK field management team volunteered at two nature reserves.

On 1st September 2010, two willing Regional teams volunteered from the South & West to transform two projects in Erdington and South Yardley, both near Birmingham.

The South Regional Team supported the Plantsbrook Nature Reserve. This comprises of a number of pools, surrounded by fringes of woodland, wetland and a wildflower meadow, making it an oasis for its wildlife.



The Reserve is surrounded by a mix of residential and industrial estates and was developed for people to experience and enjoy wildlife in an urban setting. The team included; Glenn Weston, Tony Tagg, Sharon Stevens, Ernest Rigg, Sam Thorowgood, Mark Coutts, Phil Payne, Jeanette Jones, Peter Bassett, and Paul Sanders.

Team Leader Tony Tagg said, "There was a big need for upkeep and maintenance to preserve the site. The whole day was a wonderful experience for numerous reasons. Firstly as a team we achieved a great deal which even surpassed the ranger's expectations but the looks on their faces was reward enough. We did this for a day and they do it daily and you could see how much it meant to them. Secondly the impact we made was very powerful. Short term we cleared away trees and bushes to allow the Wetlands to flourish and long term cuttings we had created were going to be used for repair works to the river banks and also to create Willow off shoots to sell for basket making which would help aid the Nature Reserve. The sun definitely shone on everyone at Plantsbrook that day".

The West Regional Team supported the Old Yardley Park. The park is comprised of a mix of open parkland. The archeologically important site of an old 12th century manor and a relatively new nature reserve surrounded by a mix of the historical village of Yardley and more deprived residential areas. The team included; David Colley, Robin Greenwood, Paul Evans, Karen Buchanan, Gary Rowson, Greg Bradshaw, Adam Pritchard and Bryan Meredith.

Team leader Greg Bradshaw said, “The Park was looking to be developed into a nature reserve that could be used by the local community and schools for educational visits. From my point of view it was a great day with a fantastic team effort from everybody, resulting in more being completed than had originally been planned. The great team spirit, despite the heat combined with the competitive nature of the team meant we also had lots of fun and laughs throughout the day. After completing our task we left behind a very happy and thankful Ranger. Altogether a really rewarding day, not only did we help the community, we also had a great team building day for the West”.



The projects was facilitated by CARES, a national business led employee volunteering programme managed by Business in the Community.

CARES aims to match team skills and talents with the needs of the local community

With lots of giggles and laughs along the way, the Signet teams contributed a lot but also gained a great deal.

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