

*Trevor Russell*

I now know what I want for Xmas; a Tuareg Power Brush Cutter. It was unable to join us on the arranged Bramble Bash Day and I had wondered what would be left for it to do after a large work party armed with petrol hedge-trimmers, scythes, and other alarming weaponry had spent a very productive November morning cutting access paths to nestbox-bearing trees and opening up public footpaths.

Nestbox-bearing

trees had become inaccessible behind head-high bramble and we need access to allow the boxes to be cleaned and serviced in time for the next breeding season, but the first trick was to find them! Many boxes had been lost on fallen trees and despite a 'box map' many others were hidden behind ivy and bramble. Nevertheless huge inroads were made despite it being a rather nasty job. We (including future Pied Flycatchers and Nuthatches, that is) owe a huge debt of gratitude to the 'mechanical duo' Keith Bradley and Steve Roberts, and to the small-arms bearers Verity

Picken

, Alan Williams, Chris Field, John Coleman, Ceri

Jones, Jerry Lewis and Trevor Russell. I think we all gained what is laughingly called in business parlance 'Job Satisfaction'.

Then David Hathaway arrived a couple of days later with his Tuareg

Brush Cutter. Resembling a beefed-up sit-on lawnmower it was wonderful to watch it scythe through the bramble, sycamore saplings and most anything else that got in its way, so that in a few hours it was Mission Accomplished, despite the brush cutter being bogged down in a quagmire requiring it to be winched

out. Nevertheless, paths have been widened, others newly cut to give access to unfamiliar parts of the wood,

nestbox-bearing

trees were made accessible and tracks cut to more trees to await new boxes. It was a wonder to behold.

It'll be interesting to watch the degree of new growth but David has generously offered to have

another 'swing through' next year to discourage it a little more – I think he rather enjoyed it really!

Thanks again to everyone who took part, especially David Hathaway and his awesome machine. It was fun. Honestly.