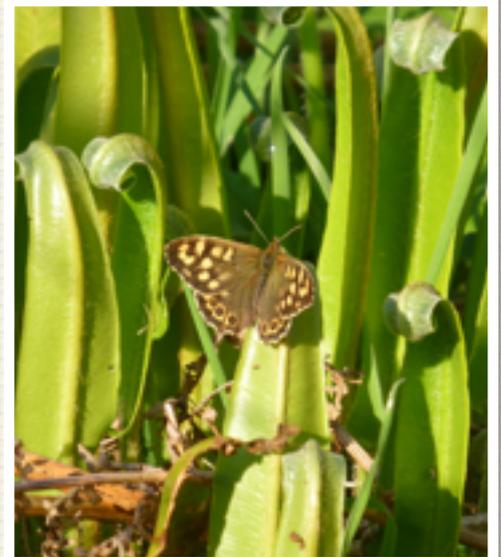


# SUN SHINES AT LAST



## Everything springs into life

This time last year the newsletter was all about the volunteers because it was so cold nothing was happening on the hill. The first trees to break bud were at the end of April and then only just. A full four weeks later than this year. The tables have certainly turned as I am now in the position where so much has

happened I really do not know where to start.

The community has certainly been inspired by the fact that Allington Parish Council now hold the lease on Cooper's Wood and Field and local people realise that we will listen to their ideas and encourage them to get involved too.

So it is not only the wildlife that is moving on a pace, but projects that have been instigated by local people and regular visitors to the hill. I hope in this newsletter to cover everything if only briefly.

The hill is flourishing this spring, so please get and and enjoy it. The blue bells will soon be at their best.



GARLIC MUSTARD



COMMON COMFREY



WHITE DEAD NETTLE

# Restoration project



Most of the work was completed after the storms. During one weekend a total of over 50 volunteering hours was completed. The path is now open along the full length of the field.



People really took an interest in this project to restore the original path along the length of Cooper's Field. We had new people get involved as well a few people we have not seen for a while.

The idea for the dead hedge to use up a lot of the waste material came from a regular reader of this newsletter, John and one of our regular volunteers. John was able to inspire one of his friends Julian to help and with guidance we were all able to create a wonderful habitat for wildlife, running through Coopers Wood.

Throughout the summer we need people to regularly walk the restored path to ensure it doesn't quickly get over grown. Please help, every foot step will make a difference.

We.....



REMOVED MANY FALLEN TREES.....



ALLOWING US TO START TO RELAY THE OLD HEDGE LINE.....



MATERIAL NOT SUITABLE FOR THE DEAD HEDGE WAS CHIPPED.....



BRAMBLE AND SMALLER BRUSH WAS BURNT.

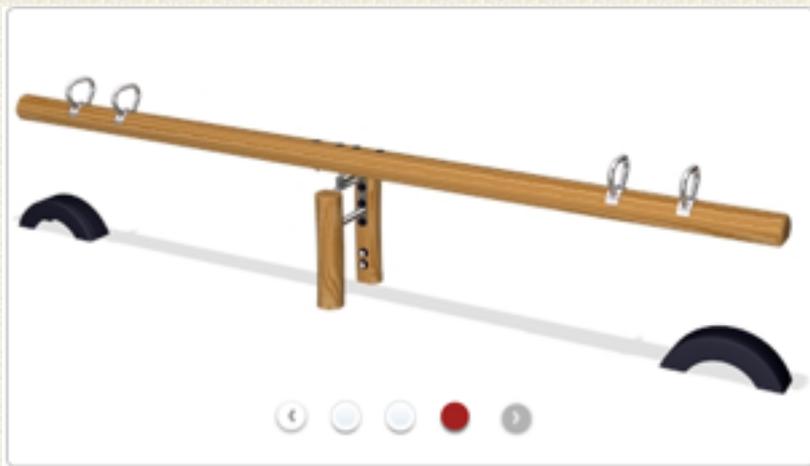
## play trail

### The see saw

At last we have been able to purchase the latest piece of equipment for the play trail.

We are hoping to install it at the beginning of May.

This will be sited on the edge of Cooper's Wood, in keeping with the rest of the play trail, which has been such a success.



## Rubbish Bins

There are two schools of thought on rubbish bins. They attract rubbish and actually make the problem worse, or they encourage people to dispose of the rubbish rather than throwing it on the ground.

The worse area is the football pitch. This actually is not the children, but staff that work at the hospital and come and eat their lunch and smoke on the bench inside the pitch. We have asks Allington Parish Council to write to the hospital to liaise with them on providing an area for staff to sit away from the children's football pitch, which is a non smoking zone, as is the hospital and grounds.

## THE LITTER PICKERS

MANY SUBJECTS ARE RAISED ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE AND THESE COME DIRECTLY FROM PEOPLE WITHIN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. THE AMOUNT OF LITTER WAS ONE OF THEM. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT PEOPLE FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO START A LITTER PICKING ROTA.

I WAS SURPRISED BY THE RESPONSE AND ALLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL HAVE AGREED TO FUND PROPER LITTER PICKING EQUIPMENT INCLUDING GLOVES FOR THE VOLUNTEERS. THEY WILL TAKE TURNS EACH MONTH.

THERE WAS A LOT OF WORK TO DO FOR THE FIRST VOLUNTEER AFTER THE STORMS BLEW A LOT OF RUBBISH ON TO THE HILL.

SIX PEOPLE HAVE PUT THEIR NAMES FORWARD, WHICH MEANS THEY ONLY HAVE TO DO IT TWO MONTHS A YEAR. IF ANOTHER SIX PUT THEIR NAMES FORWARD IT WOULD JUST BE ONCE A YEAR THAT YOU WOULD BE HELPING TO KEEP THE HILL SPICK AND SPAN.





The one thing that local dog walkers wanted that do pick up, was dog waste bins in the actual field itself.

Two have been supplied by Allington Parish Council and are due to be in place by the beginning of May.

We choose these as they cosmetically blend in with the natural environment, are large enough that they will not constantly over flow with dog waste. Volunteers will empty the bins once a week for collection by the council on a Monday morning.

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE POO?

The main problem is that Allington Hill is about the only place left in Bridport where if you really don't want to pick up your dogs poo you can get away with it.

The Woodland Trust policy is to "Stick and Flick" which most people don't seem to get the idea either. I must admit I prefer this method, than putting it in a bag and hanging it in a tree. So what is the answer?

After consulting local dog owners and families who use the hill, the follow will be the new policy.

- Pick up on all cut grass and pathways and around play trail equipment.
- Within long grass or woodland areas, use a stick and flick, leaving it for nature to deal with ( slugs love it.)
- If you are elderly or disabled which prevents you from being able to pick up after your dog, we are providing a small area of wood chipping's to the left of pedestrian gate in hospital lane, for dogs to use. These people often cannot walk far and usually only walk along the flat area of the field. This area will be covered by fresh chipping's, or raked when needed, to prevent odours, if nature hasn't coped with the demand!



I love my dog  
I love yours too  
Lets all love this hill  
And pick up their poo

We need to thank local people for coming up with, I personally think a very positive campaign.

No one likes being told what to do. We have no dog poo marshals, or spraying poo with yellow paint.

Instead a proactive poster campaign, poo bins sited where the dog walkers want them and three different ways to deal with the poo.  
A great community effort.



oh dear, forgot you bag.  
Please dont worry, we wont nag.  
Just find a nice stick  
And give it a flick



## Piles and piles of chipping's

### THANK YOU

We are very grateful to Bridport Town Council workmen and Andrew of Elwell Farm who between them delivered and shifted tons of chippings for the pathways on the hill.

Andrew's family run a very good kennels on their farm. I know quite a few of you use them already.

[www.elwellfarm.co.uk](http://www.elwellfarm.co.uk)

Back in the autumn we put the word around that we would be grateful for any chippings if they could not be used for biomass fuel.

Of course at that time we did not know that the winter storms would fell a large number of trees in the area.

This meant that we ended up with more chippings than we bargained for. It was becoming a bit of a headache, in fact I actually woke up one night having a nightmare about chippings!

It did mean though that for the first time in many years we have been able to cover the whole of the Drive with chippings. We will also be able to place chippings on some of the other muddy areas in Coopers Field and along the old blackthorn area.

We will also have our first chippings dog poo area.

We owe a lot to volunteers Paul, John and Sarah, who have so far done most of the hard work. We still have more to shift. Some help would be great!

## The Flower Meadow Project

Last year the heavy frosts were perfect for the yellow rattle seed that we had sown. They need the bitterly cold weather to encourage the seed to germinate. I am sure you can imagine that with the mild winter and all the rain, we had little hope of germination this year.

Perhaps keeping the seed in the fridge for many weeks in the summer did the trick, as we have an abundance of yellow rattle growing again this year. This has kept the grass really short allowing such



plants as the cowslip to grow really well. It is amazing how quickly your memory fades. As Chris nor myself could actually remember where we had planted them. We just have to wait now to see what else will grow, but please.....

**DO NOT  
EXERCISE YOUR DOGS ON  
THE WILD FLOWER  
MEADOWS. YOU ARE  
DESTROYING THE SEEDLINGS**

## JUBILEE WOOD



CHRIS AND SARAH HAVE PUT IN OVER 40 HRS OF WORK CLEARING THE BRAMBLE AND GORSE FROM JUBILEE WOOD. IT'S HARD WORK ON A STEEP SLOPE. BUT WELL WORTH THE EFFORT. AMAZING TO THINK THOSE TREES WERE ONLY 9" TALL IN 2012 WHEN PLANTED.

## ANOTHER WILDLIFE HABITAT



STAN WAS GIVEN THE TASK OF CUTTING POSTS TO CREATE A MINI DEAD HEDGE ALONG JUBILEE WOOD. THIS WAS FILLED WITH ALL THE BRAMBLE AND GORSE CUTTINGS. NOTHING GOES TO WASTE.

## THE WALL



A LOT OF DAMAGE WAS DONE TO THE WALL LAST YEAR BY GEOCACHE HUNTERS. THE ITEM HAS BEEN REMOVED AND THE WAY POINT REMOVED FROM THE WEB SITE. BUT WHO PAYS TO RESTORE THE DAMAGE. THE TRUST? THE GEOCACHE OPERATOR'S? NO DOUBT IN THE END IT WILL BE UP TO US. ANYONE KNOW A MAN WHO CAN?

## COMMUNITY WOOD

There is a lot of interest from far afield in the way our volunteer group works. The success we have had with our projects with little funding and how the community have been inspired to get involved.

Many of you may have seen the article in the Bridport News a few weeks ago offering a grant to set up the first community woodland in Dorset, which I replied we already have one!

It does raise the question, " why are we so successful?" Is it because of the hill itself, or that we try and work with nature and do things the old fashioned way. Or that anyone at any time can come along and help, no experience needed, tools supplied and it's "ok" to have a rusty old wheelbarrow with a hole in it and children to use plastic toy rakes, so they can make a difference too. I think it is a bit of all the above. It would be nice to have a large grant and shiny new tools, but would we then lose something special?



Quick fix! Mending the gate with a piece of rope.

## ROPEWALK FAIR

WE WILL BE HAVING A STALL AT THE ROPEWALK FAIR ON SUNDAY 11TH OF MAY.

WE WILL HAVE A LOT OF INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PROJECTS. PLEASE COME ALONG AND SAY HELLO.

WE WILL ALSO BE GIVING OUT INFORMATION ABOUT OUR FESTIVAL EVENT IN AUGUST.



## WEB LINKS

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/allingtonhillbillies/>

our very own Facebook page

[www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)

Tracking the migration of Cuckoos, they are on their way back.

[www.brc.ac.uk/irecord](http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord)

What butterflies can you see on the hill. I upload any sightings directly to this site.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life>

Refresh your memory on your bird song and the birds you may see on the hill.

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF COOPER'S WOOD

We will be holding an event to celebrate the planting of Cooper's Wood on Sunday 3rd August.

We have had to scale down the celebrations from our usual festival events. This is due to the lack of volunteers who wish to be involved in staging such events. It becomes very hard work for the few organisers. If you would like to get involved, please let us know. It would be a shame to see the end of our very popular events.

## Play equipment inspection

The play equipment inspection will happen in May. We are very grateful to D.C. woodwork, for providing the right type of chippings free of charge ( yes we need yet more ) to go around the play equipment. These are in fact wood fillings and saw dust. Just right for what we need.



The bluebells will be at their best from next weekend ( 26th April ) photo Mark Cope 2013

## Chat from the hill

**“Why is there no notice to say the main gate is open”**

With due respect, a six foot gap in the hedge line is surely a good indicator and a lot bigger than an A4 poster. It is the dog owners responsibility to have their dog under control at all times, on or off the lead.

**“Why are you pruning the new trees”**

It may have looked as if we were pruning the trees in Jubilee Wood as they are still quite small. We are in fact trying to keep the bramble in check and allowing the other wild plants some breathing space.

**“When are you building a mud hut”**

I laughed at first, but listening to the chap with interest as he had already put a lot of thought into it. I have suggested he try's building a den with his son first.

**“You are destroying Gods nature” ( 5yr old girl )**

I managed to explain I was helping god to create a habitat for small mammals and birds. I didn't know how else to describe the dead hedge and what we were doing, but for once was almost speechless!

**“We really like what you are doing here”**

Well, thank you. We have had a lot of people recently giving praise to the volunteers and saying thank you. Those few words, mean so much.

## The weather

*I have made some comparisons with last year.*

*March 2013 we had 10 nights of hard frost with the lowest being -3.9c. Highest day time temp 15.1c*

*March 2014 we had 2 nights of frost with the lowest being -1.7c. Highest day time temp 20.1c*

*April 2013 we had 5 nights below 0c*

*April 2014 we have had none.*

*So far this month (up to 19th April ) we have had 23mm of rain. But the next week looks like typical April showers, so this could easily double by the end of the month.*

*The mild weather has seen many butterflies, insects and flowers appearing earlier than they have for many years.*

*There is a Foxglove in flower on the hill already. Such flowers as the primrose and wild garlic really enjoyed the damp conditions of the winter and have been at their best this spring.*

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<http://www.facebook.com/groups/allingtonhillbillies/>

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