



# Allington Hillbillies

## Creatures great and small



I am often asked how do you manage to see so many different things on the hill. If I was anywhere else I think I would say, “just stand still and nature will come to you”.

On Allington Hill, it is more likely to be, “mind your feet as you will end up tripping over it”. I nearly stood on this lovely little bank vole pictured above. I spent ten minutes watching it weave in and out of the grass. It was adorable, approximately 10cm long and I so wanted to pick it up, but of course I didn't. Another species to add to the list of residents is the Pigmy Shrew. Sadly the one I saw was no

longer living.

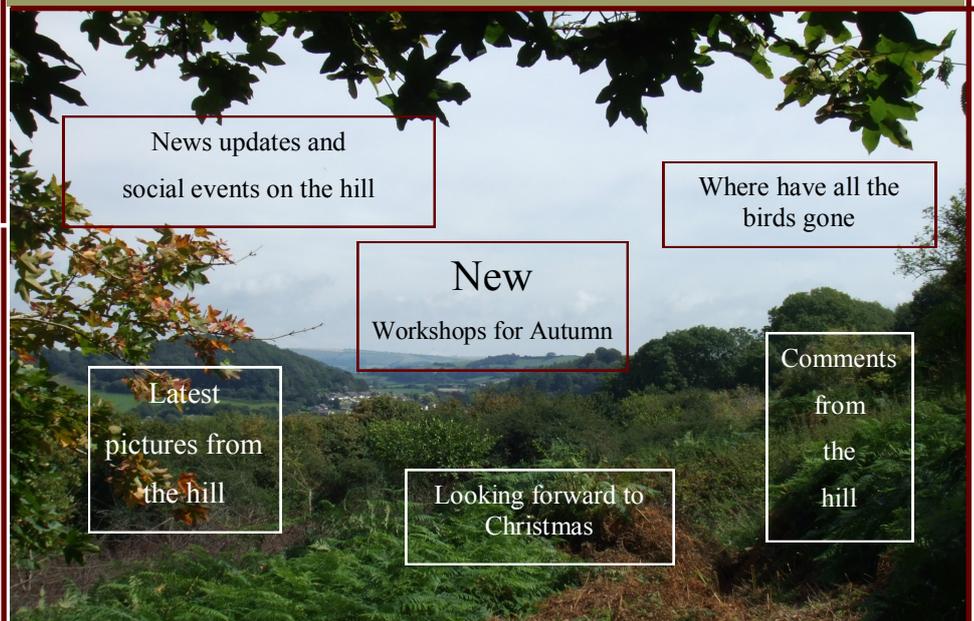
There must be an abundance of small mammals to feed the Kestrel and her young, that have a nest on the hill. The Sparrow Hawk is also still in the area. I'm sure that you have all noticed a lot of bird kills. Blackbirds are usually the main target due to being ground feeders. this could be the birds of prey, or foxes looking for food during the day to feed their young.

The biggest mammal's to be found are the Deer. There have been many sightings this year, and for the first time my husband and I saw two of them along the drive. They are often seen in Coopers Wood, hiding in the undergrowth during the day.

We also seem to have quite tame badgers. If you want to see them, you need to be on the hill well before dusk. Don't forget that it is a lot darker under the trees so they are active earlier. This applies also to the Bats.

Take a walk at dusk you will be amazed at what you will see, taking a torch with you which will also attract the Moths.

## Inside this issue



News updates and social events on the hill

Where have all the birds gone

New Workshops for Autumn

Latest pictures from the hill

Comments from the hill

Looking forward to Christmas

# Open Day report

Our first Open Day in July was a great success. The weather was kind to us and we had a lot of positive feedback from everyone that attended. Who can forget Stan's Bacon sandwiches ? They were the best. We also raised money from the tombola and had a profit at the end of the day of just over £160. The memory board, gathering peoples memories of how the hill used to be, was also a great success. The copy of an old map dating back to the 1700s' will be on display again, with lots of other information at our Autumn Festival on Saturday 1st October.



Imogen and her Mum  
hunting for Pixie George



Stan the Bacon Sarnie man



Young Volunteers of the year  
awards, Laura, Toby and Jade



The Start of the day



I Won!



Studying the old map

## Special Thanks

On behalf of everyone that supports the work of the Hillbillies, special thanks must go to the following. Paul, for the marquee and tea making facilities. Stan for his expertise on the cooking range. Stan, Ervin, Kevin, Ted, Jon for all their hard work throughout the day. Chris, for a fantastic memory board display. Pat for making tea all day and keeping me calm! Anne-Marie, Jade and Toby for a fantastic tombola. Sal for the map and enthusiastic support. Everyone else that turned up and made the day special. Thank you.

# What's it all about?

I am sure that many of you remember the beginning of the year when the Hillbillies were first formed. It was a group of like-minded people, occasionally volunteering to do work on the hill.

So why has it changed? Why are we doing work every week and holding events? That was not the original idea.

This is what happens when you get like-minded people together, all with different ideas, and then there were the children!

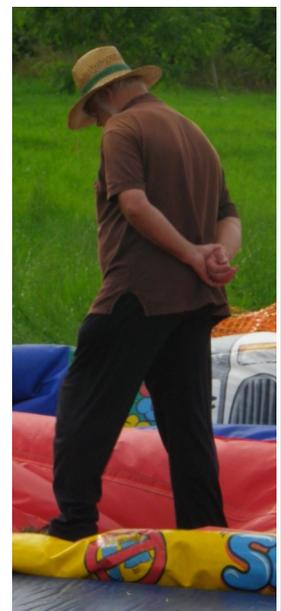
At no time did we expect a lot of children to turn up to our Open Day, which had been organised by adults for adults. Yet by the end of the day, we had children asking us if they could join the Hillbillies.

Why not? As yet we do not have a Junior Hillbilly club, although they are all very enthusiastic and want to be involved. We often have children turning up at volunteering events and perhaps we should be helping them learn more about nature, woodland skills and creating their own play activities on the hill. Please read Ellie Rodgers poem that she wrote in her woodland log book .

With the money from the Parish Council we were able to part fund an activity afternoon for the children. Thirty children and their parents turned up to the event. It was the best two hours that you could have imagined. So this is why the Hillbillies have grown from a small volunteer group, to a enthusiastic group of people who are enthused to make Allington Hill accessible to the whole community. We hope that you agree, as we have put more of our ideas into the next event on Saturday 1st October which will be suitable for the whole family.

Beautiful trees  
And leaves  
Divine skies  
Birds cries  
Amazing  
Allington Hill

Poem written by Ellie Rodgers aged 12



AGE LIMIT  
12!

## Children's Activity Afternoon



# Where have all the birds gone

Sometimes to understand nature we have to put it into human context. So I hope the following makes sense. This is how I understand it.

In spring with more daylight and warmer days ahead, the birds, like humans, start to flirt with one another. Males defend their territory and do everything possible to attract a nice young female. We are able to enjoy the Dawn Chorus and we may not see the birds but we can certainly hear them. We all know what happens next. Before the male knows what's happening, she's expecting, and needs a home for the young ones. Nest building starts. Can you imagine building your home from scratch carrying one brick at a time, exhausting work.. The ladies, then have to do the home improvements and feather the nest before settling down to brood.

Most male birds (but not all) stay around to feed his young lady, while she is hatching the young. We know what it is like to feed one or two hungry youngsters, but five or seven screaming kids can you imagine it? Most of us would drive the car to the supermarket and stock up with goodies. These parents have to fetch and carry every single mouthful, and the food is never found in the same place, as on the supermarket shelves. How stressful must that be?

Teenagers! Yes, some leave home before they should and others just hang on in the nest. They all fledge and start flying off in all directions, still screaming to be fed. When we are walking on the hill, there are birds flapping about everywhere, there seem to be so many. By this time the adults are feeling run down and once the kids have flown the nest they want to escape into the countryside for a well deserved rest.

The days are long and hot and they take cover to keep cool. As food is plentiful and they do not need to eat so much to keep warm, it is a good time to moult and replace worn out feathers. We would go to the spa or have our hair done. While they are doing this, they don't draw too much attention to themselves and fly around less, keeping a low profile. So we don't see or hear them. Sadly the predators also take their fair share of the fledglings and the worn out parents, so the numbers are far less by the end of the summer. We are almost back to the beginning. The days are getting colder and the birds need more food to keep warm and sing to protect their territory. So we begin to see them and hear them again. I hope that makes sense.

## Did you see?



I'm not making it easy for you this month. Can you name them? If not, get your reference books out and see if you can find out what all these things are that I have photographed on the hill.

# Autumn Festival

## Saturday 1st October

### 4pm to Late

Autumn is well on its way and traditionally this time of year we celebrate the good harvests of the summer and get ready for winter.

We are trying to do the same for the Wood. For the Hillbillies so far this year we have done so much looking after the trees and pathways, now it is the turn of the wildlife.

Come along to the event and make a bug or bird box, have a go at making a wicker lantern and learn more about the work shops that we are planning for the winter months.

We hope to see some of the night time wildlife as well. Bats, Badgers and Moths.

Hot food will be available. Bring a seat and make yourself comfortable in front of the bonfire and listen to the story teller telling country tales.

Dog training display 5pm  
Bouncy Castle 4.30pm to 6.30pm  
Bug/ Bird Box workshops  
Story Teller  
Bonfire  
Hot Food and Drinks  
Wicker Lantern Workshop  
Lantern Parade after dusk  
Tombola  
FREE ENTRANCE  
Main Gate Hospital Lane,  
North Allington.  
**Think green! Please walk to the event.**

## Words from The Woodland Trust

"As a Site Manager I seldom ever get enough time to do the 'nice' things and am usually being called away to other sites to deal with fallen trees and fly-tipping, ensuring paths are cut and a thousand other basic management essentials. So when a group of people get together and ask if they can help by doing all the stuff I just don't have the time for, I have to restrain myself from literally biting their hand off to accept the offer. When a group turns out to be as enthusiastic, thoughtful, friendly, resourceful and effective as the Hillbillies, I can only stand back and admire them. That is why I decided to nominate the group for the Woodland Trust's Volunteers of the Year award. Fingers crossed for the results".

Jon Burgess, Site Manager for Allington Hill, The Woodland Trust.

*Thank you Jon for nominating us, that is an honour in itself. I'm sure there are many other groups that are more worthy of the award.*

# Face Book



The face book page is up and running. It will be improved over the coming months. Look at *Allington hillbillies*.

# Funding

The Woodland Trust are able to cover our costs when we are working on the hill. For example, although we all use our own tools, we can claim for replacement tools where they are used solely for volunteer work on the hill.

We have also a small pot of cash of our own money raised from the Open Day and a donation from Allington Parish Council. We do have two volunteer treasurers looking after this pot of money.

Now that the account is up and running, we are looking at ways to make the finances as transparent as possible, so you will know where the money is being spent. Our own funds are being used to fund expenses up front, to promote projects for the hill. For example we hope to get people to sponsor the cost of bird boxes. We need to buy some materials up front. The Autumn festival also needs some funding, hopefully providing us with a small profit at the end.

We also need some funds to hand when applying for match funding, for certain projects. A play park for the children, or set up costs for an orienteering course, could be funded this way.

We also wish to run some winter work shops so we can all get involved in different projects for the hill. To find out more contact:

**allingtonhill@gmail.com**

# Ideas for Christmas

A little guidance for you men folk. No excuse this year for leaving the shopping to Christmas Eve. I know of two Lady Hillbillies that have requested rather unusual gifts this year. A pair of loppers, ratchet secateurs and even a Butterfly net.

So I have put together a little shopping list of must haves, for our budding Hillbillies.

## Collins Nature Guides

These pocket sized nature books are little gems. Each book specialises on a different topic. These can range from insects, flowers, fungi or butterflies. They are often on offer in book shops or garden centres, for as little as £2.99. The best thing is on the back they tell your darling wife that you paid £8.99 for them. You just can't lose. Great stocking filler!

## Country File magazine

This is a good all round magazine, with many features that link in with the TV programme itself. If you pay for an annual subscription, the magazines pop through your letter box once a month. The good thing is you can pay by Direct Debit and works out a lot cheaper. Order over the internet or pick up a gift box package, available at larger newsagents.

## Outdoor clothing

You really do not have to buy designer label outdoor clothing to get good protection from the elements. But to us ladies the label can mean as much as the clothes themselves. The Trading Post in South St has a good selection of designer outdoor clothes, fit for the hill, at reasonable prices, so go and check out their latest offers. We may have our own designer range soon!

## Tools of the trade

Please, no more kitchen gadgets, what we really want is a pruning saw, or a pair of loppers, or even ratchet secateurs. We will get the hill looking ship shape in no time. Groves Garden Centre have a great selection of tools and wild seeds. Please make sure they are native wild seeds and would be suitable for the hill. They do a points card now, even better join the Bridport Garden Club (only £5, contact allingtonhill@gmail.com for more details) and you will receive a 10% card giving you money off many items sold at Groves. You get your money back in no time at all.

## Woodland Trust

Great membership deals available from the Trust's web site.

## Last but not least

A good soak in the bath and some pampering is in order after all our hard work. (Pamper packs available at all good chemists). So while we are doing that, you can cram in some creative cooking. (Cheat, Washingpool Farm have some fantastic ready meals, she will never know). Is your cooking really that good? Well, you might get away with it. You have just won yourself another gold star. Oh by the way, what do you want for Christmas?



### HILLBILLIES CONTACT DETAILS

To receive a newsletter  
Send an email to  
allingtonhill@gmail.com

Mobile  
07789705345

*Facebook*  
*Allington Hillbillies*

## Dates for your Diary

Working parties on the hill.

**October Sunday 16th at 10am**

**November Sunday 20th at 10am**

*The following events will take place,  
with kind permission, at 1st West Bay  
Scout hut, St Swithens rd.*

**Autumn work shop.**

**October Friday 28th 6.30pm-9pm**

Making bird boxes and Halloween  
pumpkins, tools provided.

**Hillbilly social event.**

Discuss what you want to see done  
on Allington hill and projects in the  
pipeline. Relaxed social event with  
refreshments. All welcome.

**November Friday 11th**

**6.30pm-9pm**

**NO EVENTS IN DECEMBER.**

# Your News and Views

## COMMENTS FROM THE HILL

I have lived in Bridport for over twenty years. This is the first year that I have ever visited the hill.

*It's brought back so many memories, My first job when I left school was working in a saw mill. These are the very same overalls I had back then. I have had so much pleasure from my first volunteering day.*

Wow, wicked, It's a great rope swing.

*I've had such fun, can we do it again? ( Trying to catch moths with a butterfly net in the dark ).*

Children's fun afternoon: This is a great idea, why was it not advertised?.

We were unable to spend a lot of money on advertising, but our twenty posters around the parish encouraged thirty children to turn up. Hopefully word of mouth ( the best advertising of all) will mean even more children benefit next time.

*There's not many birds on the hill.*

*I hope the article within the magazine helps explain this illusion a little,*

Why isn't anything being done about the amount of dog poo on the paths.

The Woodland Trust are promoting their "stick and Flick campaign"

## The Weather

I am so glad I made the most of that sunny weather early in the year. For some trees such as Apple trees it has been a fantastic year, even though the rain fall has been a little sporadic.

July we saw 34.5 mm of rain. No surprise for August 118mm of rain. This month we have had the odd shower most days but not a measurable amount. It looks as if it is going to be another dry month, even though we have had more days when it has rained. All three months have been on the cool side. I wonder what the autumn will bring.

## Pixie George

Thanks, for the rope swing. Us pixies have had a great time swinging through the trees. So have some of you adults too!

The children have had great fun building a few dens on the hill over the summer, just like they did in the old days.

We will look after the plants the children put in, Foxgloves and Teasels. They will look great next year.

Really looking forward to the Autumn Festival.



If you cannot take your dog's poo away with you,  
please pick up a 'stick and flick' it off the path and into the wood  
where it can rot away naturally. Discarded plastic bags can cause  
a nuisance and a litter problem.

 The Woodland Trust Autumn Park Grantham Lincolnshire NG21 6LL  
01476 581111 www.woodland-trust.org.uk Registered charity number 294344

Help keep Allington Hill enjoyable and safe