

Labour of love



We are so pleased that the Woodland Trust have decided once more to control the bracken on top of the hill. We were only expecting Kipp to come back to see us, but she decided to bring her half brother William with her. Their owners Kate and Will spent two days on the hill rolling the bracken. They all love this

site so much and the people that come and watch, they may even bring Kate's other horse Solo with them next time.

The Trust were so impressed with their work, they have already booked them for next year which is fantastic news. They are looking at an early date, possibly in June.

As for the grass areas they have been left until later this year before being cut. This is for the benefit of the wildlife and to ensure as many flowers go to seed as possible. This also benefits the insects, which seem to be in abundance this year. As usual it has been a busy couple of months of the Hillbillies.



Kipp



WILLIAM

The lack of children activities

One of the main aims of the volunteer group is and has always been to encourage children to get involved in the big outdoors.

We have quite a few things against us, mainly the weather. To ensure the children's safety we had to cancel the event for them organised by Butterfly Conservation. In North Allington there is no suitable indoor space that we can run too, or hold the event if wet.

We also do not have any volunteer that is really switched on to what type of things kids love to do outdoors, or that have time to organise events.

Some of our volunteering events are suitable for children, but we then can only involve a few children at a time. We also believe that children should be able to enjoy nature for free and do not make a charge for events that we put on. So what is the answer?

Firstly, we have been contacted by Washingpool Farm. They have a classroom owned by Melplash Show. We hope, for a small donation, to be able to use this as a back up venue for activities in bad weather.

We are actively looking for someone who would enjoy organising activities for children. Even if it was just once during school holidays it would offer more than we do now.

We have been able to involve more children by inviting West Bay Beavers to help us with our flower meadow project and they recently joined us one evening. We will continue to involve children in volunteer groups and wherever possible we will continue to raise money to fund children events.

If you are interested in helping us with this project please contact us via our email address. allingtonhill@gmail.com.

Calendar 2016

So many people have asked about the calendars. Yes, we will be doing another calendar for 2016. We will try and keep the price fixed at £7.50. You can reserve in advance via Facebook or email allingtonhill@gmail.com. They should be on sale from the end of October. We would be grateful to know how many you would like as the bigger the order the more discount we get. The profit goes to the volunteer group for tools etc.

Winter working parties

Joe our new Woodland Trust manager is coming to meet the regular volunteers on the 22nd of September.

We are going to walk around the hill looking at what jobs need to be done. Some will be good little projects for the group to tackle through the winter and others that contractors will be needed for.

Do you have any concerns about any area on the hill that needs work, or you would like to see an area better managed for the benefit of wildlife? This is your chance to have a say. We will pass your ideas on to Joe when we meet up with him.

We try and hold working parties either on a Sunday or once during the week, weather permitting. These are advertised on the main gates Hospital Lane and on our Facebook page.

You do not have to be experienced, nor turn up at the start time advertised, nor stay to the end. One hour helping can make such a difference. Spending time with like minded people out in the fresh air and learning new skills can be great fun. Why not come along and find out more.

Bat Walk

This was another event that almost got cancelled. The bat walk took place on Wednesday 19th of August. The previous night it had lashed it down with rain and continued to do so until about 6pm in the evening that day. I contacted Emily to cancel the event and she said " No it will be fine, lets do it"



There was about six brave souls that turned out for our 8.30pm meeting including two children Daisy and Kitty. We were all given bat detectors and before we even got into the field a bat was whizzing around our heads.

We spent the next hour being entertained by a marvellous aerial display with bats swooping down over the flower meadow picking insects out from the tall grasses. We think it may even been the parent bats teaching their youngsters how to catch prey, as they often seemed to be paired up. We now plan to purchase our own bat detector and survey the area ourselves.

Emily said it was the best sighting of bats on a bat walk for such a long time and she was amazed at the number we were seeing. We have now been given advice from Dorset Wildlife Trust on the best way to manage the grass areas in Cooper's Field for the

benefit of the bats. This will include leaving a strip of grass along the edge of the field uncut. We have already seen the benefits for wildlife in cutting the grass much later in the year, although many people complain it looks untidy.

We must emphasise once more that the field is not a park and the balance of up keep always should be for the benefit of wildlife, not how it cosmetically looks. Different areas within the field will be managed to suit a wide range of wildlife.

Access for all



The main entrance does not look much different, except we have a new main gate and the new all weather surface has been installed and blends in very well.

We have not yet completed all the improvements as we are waiting for a specially designed picnic table to be installed, allowing wheelchair access.

Money was raised by grants from Lloyds Bank Community Fund, Bridport Town Council and West Bay Car Boot Fund. The rest of the money was generously donated by the local community.

Make hay while the sun shines



Last year we found raking the grass off the extended flower meadow extremely hard work. So much so, Ryan took pity on us land girls and offered to bale it. This was fantastic and helped clear the meadow in no time at all, but we still had the problem of what to do with the bales. These were eventually just dumped in the corner of the field.

The yellow rattle sown last Autumn helped reduce the growth of grass, which was just as well. With all our regular rakers, (with the exception of Chris and Laura) being ill or on holiday we had our work cut out.



Chris and Laura have raked about 90% of the area by themselves. I hope these few photo's put it in perspective on how much they cleared. Laura by the way is only 13. By the time they have finished they will have raked the whole area that looks pale green in the photo to the left. You can just make out a line of hay piles.

Now that is dedication for you. We will have to do it all again in October as the grass has not stopped growing. Lets hope that we can get a few more people fit and less on holiday to help out.

Chris and myself said right from the start of us writing the book about Allington Hill that as soon as we sent it to the printers that magical photo or story would crawl out of the wood work. Last week a local person gave Keith Alner this photo (right). It was taken in Cooper's Field (as we know it now). You can make out the top corner of the field and the hill behind.

This would have been a fantastic photo for the book. They are obviously all local farm labourers. Can anyone put a name to any of the faces, or have a good guess who they are?

The book should be on sale some time in October.



Mad Hatters Festival



Months of preparation went into the festival, including the delivery of wood for the bonfire. Local people gathered on the Friday evening to build it, including carrying wood down from the top of the field from a recently fallen tree. I personally wish to thank Defoe Smith and Tim Smith (no relation) for taking over and organising the music and P.A. You did such a good job.

Local people again turned up 7.30am to start putting up the marquees. By 9.30am all three marquees, two Gazebos and the lorry from Washingpool Farm were in place. Even the portal loo had arrived.



Simon from Washingpool Farm was a great help with setting up the festival, collecting and returning scaffold boards we borrowed from Weller Scaffold and lights from Evans Plant Hire, who we also had hired a generator and gas bottle from.

We were so pleased to attract a few stalls to the festival who paid for pitches, which helped cover some of the costs of the festival. Sadly the Charcoal man's wagon broke down on the way and never made it. We were very pleased to be supported by Dorset Wildlife Trust, who have been of great help in our work to create a flower meadow.



Mad Hatters Festival



We still have not reached a final figure of how much money we have raised as we are still waiting for several invoices. Profits from the event will go towards the two charities supported by The Hat Festival - Brain Tumour Research and The Brain Rehabilitation Trust, as well as the volunteer group.

It is not all about money, it is also about understanding how this community space provides so much to individuals from all walks of life. Please read the story on the next page, it somehow puts everything into perspective.

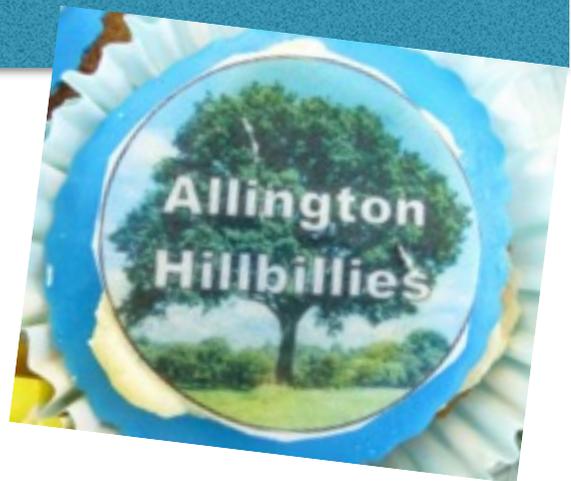
That's my Boys

This article has been copied and pasted from the Facebook page. I asked Finley's mum if I could print it in the newsletter, so we could all appreciate how much Cooper's Field and the hill means to Finley and his family.

"My little anecdote from yesterday was a little autistic lad and his brother made my year! On the bouncy castle I thought Finlay wasn't having a good time sat in the corner, so I started stirring them up. His Mum explained why the little chap was sat there. I began playing Hat Tennis with Riley which involved throwing his hat over the top bar and a point earned for catching it. Riley beat me 11 - 4 but the best of it was Finlay - every time I missed the hat and yelled "D'oh!" Finlay curled up with laughter! His mirth, as I said, made my year! Xx" Kassi

Ahh bless you..Riley and Finley are my boys!..Finley sometimes looks like he's not having a great time but he likes to just sit and watch the world go by..he often sits in corners of bouncy castles because he likes to feel the movement of others jumping. It was such a lovely evening..Finley thrives on that hill whether there is something going on or not.

Everyone made such lovely cakes, but I think Finley's Mum needs extra praise for these cup cakes.



Business Support. Washingpool Farm: Lorry, bales, jacket potatoes and transport. Mrs Barnes: Tombola donation box and prizes. Evans Plant Hire: generator and gas. Weller scaffolding: scaffold boards. The Hand Bag market stall: marquee. Mr and Mrs Copp: B.B.Q

Music: Tinkers Cuss, West Bay, Jazz 4, The Boarding Crew, Pinky Pernel, Richard Percy, Dave McKenzie. **P.A system:** David James. **Organisers:** Defoe Smith, Tim Smith.

Items borrowed: Taz Moores and Teresa Grinter, Gazebo's. St Swithin's Church Hall and Chideock Society, tea urns.

Cakes: Jo George and family. Sharon Leader, Taz Moors, Teresa Grinter, Karine Le Briquer, Laura Trott, Sarah Worner and anonymous cake bakers.

Tombola: Irvin Beer and Jade Farrington and all those that donated prizes.

Children's activities: Karine Le Briquer, Dee Trott, Anne-Marie Beer.

Thanks also must go to Kevin and Laura Trott, Adam Sherring, Kassi Anderson-Rees, Sarah Worner and friend, Sal Robinson, Chris and Stan Toombs, Pat North, Paul Bowditch, Keith Alner and Roly Boughton and many more, for all their hard work.

We are very grateful for Allington Parish Council for allowing us to hold the festival in Cooper's Field and everyone who came along and showed their support.

Fruits of the wood

There is a bountiful supply of crab apples this year and many have asked me about making crab apple jelly. This is really easy and I would say if you have never made jam or jelly before, this is a good one to try. I can always remember watching my Mum make autumn jams and jellies which saw us through the winter months. Crab apple being my favourite. You will have to excuse me using imperial measurements, but I have never got the hang of kilos and grams, let alone centimetres and meters. My mother was not a great one for weighing things either! So this is more the farmers wife's way of doing it, than Mary Berry. No jam thermometers or singing jerusalem required.

Similar recipes can be found in old fashioned cook books and on the internet. Some will add such things as lemon juice, knobs of butter and advice on cooking times and setting temperatures etc. But remember in the good old days the farmers wife had an open fire and a cooking pot and possibly couldn't read and it was just a way of preserving the harvest to see them through the winter.

Start with a bucket full of crab apples.
A few Blackberries (for colour)
Sugar.
Jam jars

Wash and halve the crab apples. This can be time consuming but it does ensure the odd maggot doesn't get into the mix! (my mother always said they added protein!).

Simmer the apples and a handful of blackberries in a small amount of water, stirring occasionally until they are reduced to a pulp. while you are waiting, find somewhere where you can hang a muslin cloth (an old pillow case is just as good) over a bowl. My Mum always turned a high stool upside down and placed a broom handle across the bottom rungs.

Now for the tricky bit. Place the bag in the large bowl and carefully pour in the pulp. As quickly as possible tie up the bag very tight and then suspend it from the broom handle or other hanging device with the bowl underneath. The apple juice will flow out. Leave to drip overnight.

The next day sterilise your jam jars. Wash them thoroughly and then place them in the oven and leave the oven on a low heat, while you are setting your jelly. You can buy new jam jar lids or paper covers (Frost usually have them all year round, other stores have them too). I find leaving the jam jars in very hot water works just as well and a lot easier than trying to get boiling hot jars out of the oven. I have never had mouldy jam yet. Measure out the apple juice a pint at a time and place in a large saucepan or preserving pan. Heat the juice until it reaches boiling point. Measure out the sugar, you will need 1lb of sugar to 1 pint of juice. Add this slowly to the boiling mixture stirring all the time until the sugar has dissolved.

Stir every five or ten minutes., skimming off any "scum" that is produced. The juice will start to turn a golden colour. To check if it is ready, spoon a small amount on a plate and let it cool for five minutes. If it is still like a liquid give it another good ten to fifteen minutes before testing again. As it gets nearer the setting point it will crimp up as you run your finger through it and be the same consistency as jam. Do remember to let it cool before you do this and keep repeating this test until you have the right consistency. The cooking time will depend on how much natural pectin there is in the apples. At this stage you can add mint or rosemary to make a wonderful accompaniment for lamb. Turn off the heat and ladle or using a glass jug pour the liquid into the jam jars, securing the lids as soon as possible. If using metal tops, check they are on very tight. After about an hour I always check they are air tight. If the middle of the lid "bounces" air is getting in. Tighten and the vacuum should make the top "pop" seal when pressed.



This huge caterpillar was actually rescued from being attacked by a dog. It will turn into this lovely Elephant Hawk moth, now that it is quickly eating it's way through my hubby's fuchsia bushes!



After many years of saying we would join in Bridport Carnival, we actually made it!

We all had great fun, not sure if we will do it again, but it was nice hearing so many people shout out " It's the Hillbillies " as we walked along. Thank you for all cheering us on.

Chat on the hill

We would like to hold an event on the hill next year, who do we contact?

We and the Woodland Trust will look at any application to hold an event. You do need to remember, it is an open access site at all times and you personally must not profit from the event. You can contact Allington Parish Council, the Woodland Trust or allingtonhill@gmail.com for more information.

Why has so much bare earth been put around the new seat in Cooper's Field?

The area needed to be levelled as in the winter months this area is quite slippery and it was on a slope. The earth has been seeded and will soon blend in with the rest of the field.

The grass on the top of the hill still has not been cut, it looks a mess.

It may look a mess but it is a haven for wildlife. It is usually cut before the main harvest time for the farmers. This work is contracted out to a local farmer, so his main priority is his farm. It is a very awkward site to access and cut due to the many pits. We are lucky they have found some one willing to do it at all.

I have not seen any working parties advertised, is the group still going?

We have been kept very busy during the summer on organising events. Working parties are restricted as we do not wish to disturb nesting birds, which have nested throughout the summer this year. We always start our working parties in October, so you will see us out in force again.

The music from your festival kept us awake to 3am, what were you thinking?

Yes we did initially get the blame for the private party! held at Shipton Gorge. As we explained, our music licence was only to 9pm and we have a much better taste in music! Why anyone would think that we would keep most of Bridport awake, or that our volunteers would want to rave on into the small hours, I can't quite understand. I must admit we were very upset as such accusations.

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

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