

Here comes the **SUN** Oh! and the rain.



THOMAS ON ONE OF OUR BUTTERFLY WALKS. WE SAW 14 SPECIES OF BUTTERFLY AND MOTH DURING A CIRCULAR WALK OF THE HILL.

ANNUAL BIG BUTTERFLY SURVEY

Most of us have really enjoyed the warm sunny days and the butterflies and moths have loved it.

After last years bad weather the population of butterflies and moths fell to critical levels for many species. We did several surveys last year and the top survey counted 9 species, in total 30 butterflies.

The first survey we did this year we spotted 12 species and over 140 butterflies in total.

After following the same linear walk around the hill as last year, we need to do surveys in individual areas on the hill and it is these results that will be placed on www.bigbutterflycount.org

It is important to monitor the work that we are doing on the hill and what impact it is having on the wildlife. So far the results seem to prove that even a little T.L.C. can help improve the environment for the wildlife. The experts seem to agree that managed woodland, coppicing and maintaining woodland glades is much better than doing nothing.



COMMA



RINGLET



SMALL TORTOISESHELL



THE FLOWER MEADOW

REPORT BY CHRIS TOOMBS WILDFLOWER MEADOW PROJECT MANAGER.

In April we visited the site with Nick Gray from Dorset Wildlife Trust and there was a great sigh of relief when he pointed out to us the yellow rattle plants just starting to grow. They were only about half an inch high but at least now we knew what we were looking for! We had thought that the seed had either drowned or been washed away due to the heavy rain at the end of last year /beginning of this year but by the end of May they had grown to about 2 ins.

With the warm weather the plants flourished and once the flowers finished the seed heads started to form. We soon found out why it is called yellow rattle - when the wind blows the seeds rattle in the seed heads. We had wrongly assumed that the plants would grow quite tall which would have made collecting the seed much easier. However they only grow to about 2 ft. so there were a few aching backs once we started collecting the seed.

It was a lovely surprise to see not only the yellow rattle growing, but 5 orchids, as well as clover, cats ears, buttercups and various grasses and to see a variety of butterflies and moths enjoying the habitat. A lot of the yellow rattle seed will reseed itself in the area and come up next year. However, we started collecting some of the seed in July and have collected well over half a kilo. We are storing this in the fridge, ready to sow in the autumn in the new wildflower meadow area, which we are going to create in Coopers Field.

We have also been raising wildflower plants from seed, which people have donated, to help get the original area established with flowers. We will also sow wildflower seeds there in the autumn. Nick Gray will advise us on the type of flowers that would grow naturally in this habitat. However, before all this happens the grass will need to be cut with a scythe and then raked over to disperse any seeds left in the grass.



STARTING ON THE SECOND PHASE OF THE
WILDFLOWER MEADOW

A GLIMPSE OF WHAT'S TO COME



YELLOW RATTLE,
BUTTERCUP AND ORCHID



NEXT YEAR OXEYE
DAISIES?



EVEN MORE ORCHIDS



SUPPRESSED GROWTH OF
GRASS

Autumn Festival

We will be going ahead with our Autumn festival this year. Due to the delay in the lease being signed over to Allington Parish Council, we have had to revise the date. It will now be held on

**Saturday 12th
October
4pm onwards**

SUMMER FESTIVAL

THE COMMITTEE REALLY APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT FROM EVERYONE THAT HELPED OUT AT THE FESTIVAL. AS ALWAYS WE RECEIVED SOME GENEROUS DONATIONS AND OUR BRING AND BUY TABLE NEARLY COLLAPSED UNDER THE WEIGHT.

THE WEATHER CERTAINLY DID NOT DAMPEN PEOPLES SPIRITS AND THANKS TO A WEATHER PROOF BOUNCY CASTLE, RAFFLE AND OTHER FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES WE RAISED £130 POUNDS.

FOR SAFETY REASONS A LOT OF THE CHILDREN ACTIVITIES HAD TO BE CANCELLED, BUT THEY STILL HAD A LOT OF FUN.

FACEBOOK CHATTER...

THE FACEBOOK PAGE HAS TAKEN A LONG TIME TO GET OFF THE GROUND, BUT IS BECOMING A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR USERS OF THE HILL TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER AND SHARE NEWS. EVERYTHING FROM ANGRY WASPS, BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLIES, LITTER PROBLEMS, PHOTOS SHARED AND DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE NATURE ON THE HILL.

IT IS A GOOD TALKING SHOP AND I HAVE LEARNT QUITE A LOT FROM PEOPLE WHO KNOW A LOT MORE ABOUT NATURE THAN I DO.

IF YOU HAVE A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT THEN WHY NOT REQUEST TO BE A FRIEND. [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/ALLINGTONHILLBILLIES/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/allingtonhillbillies/)

Links with Schools

We are looking for people that use the hill and have children that go to local schools. or children's clubs. We would like to act as a liason officers to promote the children's activities on the hill.

It would be as simple as putting a poster up at the school, informing teachers or youth workers of events we are holding on the hill, or perhaps help them with nature projects. If you feel that you would be able to do this, please contact me for further information.

Wooden mushrooms

This generous donation has been given to the Allington Hill Volunteer Group as a personal gift by a local family.

After a sad loss at the beginning of the year, they wanted to provide something for the hill. It has been on the agenda for the last two years to provide some mushroom stools for children. Where better to place them but by the wishing arbor in Cooper's wood.

COOPER'S FIELD/WOOD LEASE

IT SEEMS TO BE TAKING AN AGE AND MANY LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE VERY KEEN TO SEE THE LEASE OF THIS AREA HANDED OVER TO ALLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL. THE COMMUNITY HELPED RAISE THE FUNDS TO PURCHASE THE LAND AND NOT ALL WERE HAPPY WHEN THE SAID MONEY WAS GIVEN TO THE WOODLAND TRUST TO PURCHASE THE LAND. THE LEASE WILL RUN FOR 25 YEARS AND THE HILLBILLIES HAVE BEEN ASKED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR VOLUNTEER WORK IN THIS AREA. WE HOPE TO MAINTAIN A COMMUNITY AREA THAT IS ENJOYED BY YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE WHILE PROVIDING A HAVEN FOR WILDLIFE. A BIT OF A JUGGLING ACT, BUT VERY ACHIEVABLE.

A BIG SURPRISE

IT'S NOT OFTEN THAT YOU GO FOR A WALK IN THE WOODS AND COME FACE TO FACE WITH A GORILLA. BUT THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO WALKERS ON THE HILL ON THE 15TH OF AUGUST.

IT TURNED OUT TO BE QUITE FRIENDLY AND ONE YOUNG LADY HAD A BIRTHDAY PARTY SHE WILL NEVER FORGET. SADLY AS YET, I HAVEN'T FOUND ANYONE WHO MANAGED TO GET A PHOTO OF THE GORILLA.

CHILD'S PLAY

" We are staying at the camp site at West Bay. They have nowhere for the children to just run around, or to teach them to ride their bikes. They were told off by management as they could damage the caravans! We were told about the hill and the play trail. The children have had so much fun, learning to ride and playing in the woods and on the play trail, it's been great."

WRONG SIDE OF THE FENCE

MANY SAW A MAN HARD AT WORK DIGGING ALL THE RAGWORT OUT ON TOP OF THE HILL. WHEN ONE OF THE VOLUNTEERS QUESTIONED HIS ACTIONS, HE QUICKLY REALIZED THAT HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN DIGGING ELSEWHERE, AND THE HILL DID NOT BELONG TO HIS BOSS. WE DID FEEL RATHER SORRY FOR HIM.

ANYONE FOR CRICKET

MORE AND MORE FAMILIES ARE USING THE CUT AREA OF GRASS TO PICNIC, PLAY CRICKET AND HAVE FAMILY PARTIES.

WE HAVE ALSO NOTICED THAT A LOT MORE DOG WALKERS ARE PICKING UP IN THIS AREA, MAKING IT MUCH MORE USER FRIENDLY FOR EVERYONE. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THAT. ALSO THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO DOG MESS AROUND THE PLAY EQUIPMENT HAS ALSO BEEN APPRECIATED.

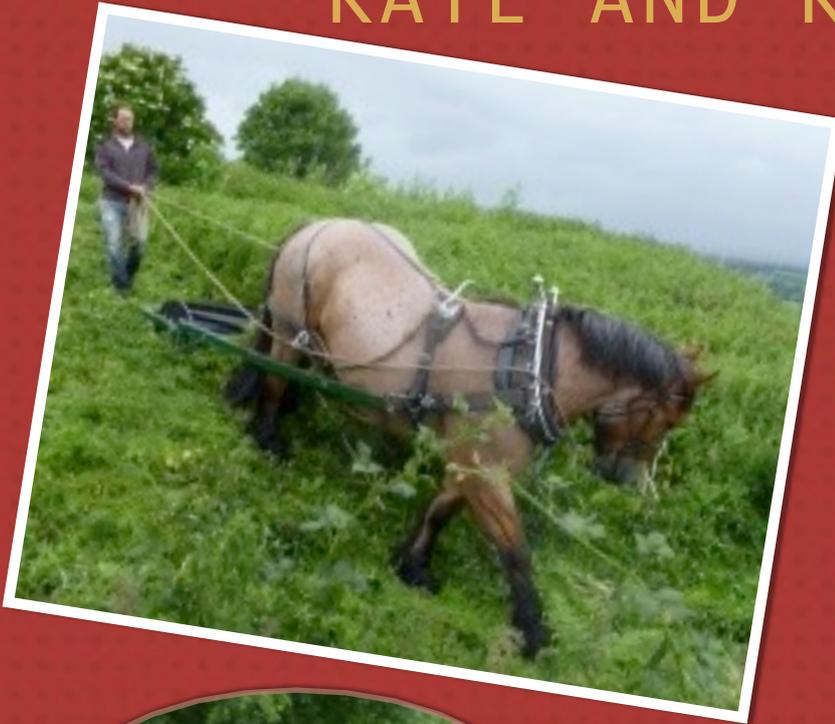
NATURE BADGES

ONE YOUNG LADY HAS DRAGGED HER MUM OVER THE HILL NEARLY EVERY DAY. SHE HAS HER NOTE BOOK AND BINOCULARS WITH HER, AS SHE IS SO KEEN TO GAIN HER BROWNIES BADGE.

ANY BUTTERFLY OR BUGS THAT THEY CAN'T IDENTIFY, MUM TAKES A PHOTO ON HER PHONE SO THEY CAN RESEARCH IT AT HOME. NOW THAT IS DEDICATION FOR YOU.

THE NEXT KATE HUMBLE PERHAPS?

KATE AND KIPP



Project to control the bracken

THANK YOU

We must thank Washingpool Farm for allowing Kipp and Kate to stay for two nights on their farm.

Also for all the dog owners that kept their dogs on a lead or chose a different route from their usual path. It is very easy to take for granted that the hill is one of the most dog friendly areas around with no restrictions, thanks to the Woodland Trust.

The Wooden Trust has had concerns about the spread of bracken on the hill. It has no natural predator to control it. There has also been a huge rise in ticks, which is about the only thing on the hill that directly benefits from the dense growth, which are not pleasant for any animal or human, with the potential of carrying lyme disease.

With so many complex habitats on the hill at threat from the spread of the bracken, an eco-friendly way of controlling it was needed. Total eradication is impossible due to the lie of the land.

Using horse power to pull a bracken basher shreds the stem of the bracken. The toxins in the sap feed back down to the roots and weakens the plant. This

process will have to be repeated for three or four years, by which time other plants will have been given the chance to get a hold.

Kate's horse Kipp is trained to do most forestry work and is a gentle giant. The Ardennes breed was the horse mostly used during WWI, for its strength and sturdiness.

Kipp worked for about 45 minutes before having a 15 minute break, working throughout the day. Kate lets Kipp tell her when he has had enough and never pushes Kipp to complete an eight hour day. I'm sure a few of us would like a boss like that!

Kate had Will to help lead Kipp around the hill. They must have walked a good few miles between them during the day.

Looking ahead

There will have to be some changes in the way that the Volunteer group is run, although very subtle and will mostly affect administration. The changes need to reflect that we will now be volunteering for not only the Woodland Trust, but also Allington Parish Council. To reflect this and hopefully not to confuse things further the official title of the Allington Hillbillies will be "Allington Hill, Cooper's Field and Wood Community group." The word volunteer has been dropped as we did not wish to convey that we were volunteers for the parish as a whole.

COOPER'S WOOD AND FIELD WILL BECOME A COMMUNITY AREA FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY AND EXPERIENCE NATURE. INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY WITH THE ONGOING PROJECTS OF THE PLAY TRAIL AND WILD FLOWER MEADOW. THE REST OF THE HILL WILL BE A HAVEN FOR WILDLIFE, ENSURING THE HABITATS ALREADY THERE ARE PROTECTED AND ENHANCED TO PROVIDE THE BEST HABITATS FOR THE EXISTING WILDLIFE.

The working parties will restart early Autumn. This will include Coppice work, within the area of Coopers Wood. Clearance work along Bluebell Walk and general maintenance work on Jubilee Wood and the Blackthorn Area.

The new Children's club which is held one Sunday a month in the afternoon from 2pm. Each month there will be a different theme. October will be trees. November will be making items for the Christmas tree that we hope to have at the Christmas tree festival at the United reform Church. Posters of dates and other information will be posted on the main gates.



JONATHAN BURGESS

SADLY WE SAID GOODBYE TO JONATHAN THE WOODLAND TRUST MANAGER WHO FOUNDED THE HILLBILLIES. WE PRESENTED HIM WITH A PLAQUE AT OUR SUMMER FESTIVAL, NOT THAT HE WILL SURELY BE ABLE TO FORGET US! WE HAVE VOWED TO KEEP IN TOUCH AND WISH HIM WELL WORKING WITH THE FORESTRY COMMISSION AT HALDON FOREST.

THE OLD OAK TREE

THE CONTRACTORS HAVE DONE A GOOD JOB OF REMOVING THE TOP OF THE CANOPY TO HELP STABILIZE THE TREE. THE FALLEN BOUGH WILL BE LEFT IN SITU AND LEFT TO NATURE. IT NOW HAS A BETTER CHANCE OF SURVIVAL ALTHOUGH A SLIM ONE.



FUNDRAISING

THIS HAS NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN, BUT PUT TO ONE SIDE. IMPORTANT MATTERS SUCH AS JONATHAN LEAVING, THE ISSUE WITH LEASING THE LAND TO THE PARISH, HAS ALL HAD TO TAKE PRECEDENCE. WE WILL KICK START THE STEPS CAMPAIGN NEXT YEAR WHEN A NEW TRUST MANAGER IS IN PLACE.

COLLECTING WILD FLOWER SEED



WE HAD A FANTASTIC RESPONSE LAST YEAR TO OUR REQUEST TO COLLECT WILD FLOWER SEED. WE HAVE ALREADY STARTED TO RECEIVE SEED NOT ONLY FOR THE WILDFLOWER MEADOW BUT ALSO FOR THE OLD BLACKTHORN AREA. AS MANY WILL REMEMBER OUR EFFORTS TO GROW IMPORTANT SEED BEARING PLANTS SUCH AS TEASLE AND FOXGLOVE, WERE DESTROYED BY AN OVER ZEALOUS CONTRACTOR WITH A BRUSH CUTTER. THE IDEA IS TO SEED BOMB THIS AREA AGAIN, A PROJECT THAT THE CHILDREN CAN GET INVOLVED IN AND IF THEY ARE AS SUCCESSFUL AS WITH JUBILEE WOOD, THE PROJECT WILL BE IN GOOD HANDS. WHEN COLLECTING SEED FROM THE WILD ONLY TAKE A THIRD FROM EACH PLANT, LEAVE THE REST FOR NATURE. STORE IN A PAPER BAG IN A COOL PLACE OR IN AN AIR TIGHT CONTAINER IN THE FRIDGE. PLEASE BRING ALONG TO THE AUTUMN FESTIVAL OR POP THROUGH MY LETTER BOX 196, NORTH ALLINGTON.

STALLS

IF YOU BELONG TO A LOCAL VOLUNTARY GROUP OR CHARITY WITH INTERESTS DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH NATURE, WE HAVE A FEW PITCHES F.O.C. AVAILABLE AT OUR NEXT FESTIVAL. IF YOU ARE SELF EMPLOYED AND LIVE IN THE LOCAL AREA, WE WILL HAVE A LIMITED NUMBER OF PITCHES AVAILABLE FOR £10. TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. CONTACT

allingtonhill@gmail.com



An apology

We have received an apology from the Co-housing group, after one of their enthused members set up an information table at our recent summer festival. This has caused some confusion, that in some way we are linked with the group. I believe we do have several volunteers that are linked privately with the scheme. We have been consulted by the group about their plans and asked of our concerns in the way it may effect the area. We are not involved in the scheme and have no direct interests as a group.

LIVE MUSIC

LAST YEAR AT THE AUTUMN FESTIVAL WE ENJOYED LIVE JAZZ MUSIC FROM IMPROMTU. WHO GAVE THEIR TIME FOR FREE TO HELP RAISE MONEY FOR PROJECTS ON THE HILL.

THIS WAS VERY POPULAR AND WE ARE LOOKING FOR LOCAL GROUPS WHO WOULD PLAY FOR BETWEEN 30 MINUTES TO 1 HOUR TO HELP US RAISE FUNDS FOR THE HILL.

PLEASE LET US KNOW OF ANY TALENTED PEOPLE THAT WOULD LIKE TO PLAY AT THE FESTIVAL THIS YEAR.

WITCHES AND WIZARDS

WE THOUGHT THE CHILDREN WOULD LOVE TO GET IN PRACTICE FOR HALLOWEN AND DRESS UP AS WIZARDS AND WITCHES.

THEY WILL HAVE CHANCE TO MAKE THEIR ON WIZARD'S WANDS AND WITCHES BROOM STICKS FROM THE WOODS. THE PARADE OF LANTERNS WILL BE EVEN SPOOKIER THIS YEAR!

WE HAVE A HIGHLY RECOMMENDED STORY TELLER, AS WELL AS FACE PAINTING TO AMUSE THE CHILDREN.

BEE AMAZED

Does anyone remember the bees nest in the old Oak Tree. The nest did not appear to survive the winter. It was in the bough that fell from the tree.

I took my camera and kept taking photos inside all the holes. I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would ever see inside that bees nest. I wonder if they sensed the bough was unsafe and decided to move on? I wish to think so.

IF YOU HAVE ANY INTERESTING PHOTOS FROM THE HILL AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM IN THE NEWSLETTER, PLEASE FORWARD THEM VIA THE EMAIL ADDRESS.



The Weather

The long cold winter seems a distant memory and it almost seems worth having to live through it when we have had such a lovely summer, with the exception of the odd wet day.

We will benefit with rich pickings of crap apple, blackberries, sloes and elderberry from the hill.

Rainfall for June and July was 27mm and 37mm respectfully.

The maximum temperature was 29.8c in July. A little cooler this month so far, with the maximum of 21.8c.

Chat from the hill

“ Why do you let people camp on the hill?”

We do not and it is discouraged. We have had to clear up behind two lots of campers this year, who seem to think it acceptable to leave their rubbish behind, including a double quilt. please let us know if you see people camping.

“You replaced the rope on the rope swing, why paint the seat red, it looks out of keeping?”

We did not paint the seat red. The campers above and a tin of spray paint seem to be the culprits. It obviously enhanced their camping experience!

“Why don't you get chipping's delivered when someone is available to unlock the gate and dump it inside?”

We have several suppliers who deliver chipping's F.O.C., and are asked to phone in advance to arrange for the gate to be opened. The last large deliveries were from an unknown source. This caused us huge problems as we only have one wheelbarrow and man power. It cost the volunteer group £50 and a lot of good will to shift the pile. If anyone sees a delivery being left by the roadside, please take note of the name or number plate and pass the information on to us.

“ Thank you so much for putting the information on the main gate about the butterflies”

We have had a lot of feed back about the butterfly project this year, it seems to have caught everyones interest. The good thing is that it is a good indication that we are improving the habitats on the hill, including the bees, that also need a rich source of nectar to survive.

“Is it necessary to cut all the grass?”

last year, large sections of the grass were left uncut, due to the wet weather and many plants still in flower. This year everything had already set seed. It is a way of stopping the land turning into scrub and becoming totally unmanageable. It is important to get the balance right.

“ We have seen so many dragonflies on the hill this year”

There have been many sightings of dragonflies. A chap from the butterfly conservation who visited the hill was totally perplexed. He has a good knowledge of dragonflies, and we saw several different types, one of which is very rarely seen away from water. I will do some research and see what I can come up with.

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

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