

LOOKING FORWARD

So much has changed in a short period of time. At last the trees have come into leaf, the spring flowers have been stunning and late showing of spring butterflies gives us hope they will have a better year than last year.

Several small tortoiseshell butterflies have been recorded on the hill. They have seriously declined in numbers nationwide and monitoring where they are on the hill and protecting their habitat will give them a fighting chance.

Last year was a bad year for the honeysuckle on the hill and Jonathan suggested trying to propagate cuttings and replant areas. Small mammals such as field mice and dormice depend on honeysuckle, eating the flowers and berries.

We are sad to announce that Jonathan will be leaving us as manager and he will be sadly missed. Within the next few months Allington Parish Council will be taking on the lease of Coopers Wood/Field. All these subjects will be covered in more detail within the newsletter.



Summer Fun

We hope to get some lovely warm sunny days this summer and many of us will be spending some quality time on the hill. It has never been an issue before, but this year volunteers have already had to clean up after two B.B.Q's. One of which left raw chicken pieces behind, we presume for the foxes. The only problem being one dog owner nearly had to take their dog to the vet after eating some of it.

We do welcome people to picnic on the hill, but if you have carried all your goodies up there it is as easy to carry all the empties back. We DO NOT encourage disposable B.B.Q's, as they can easily, when left unattended after use, cause a lot of damage. Many of you have found the Facebook page the easiest way to inform the group of any such problems on the hill. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/allingtonhillbillies/>



BRACKET FUNGI



WILD GARLIC



STUNNING BLUE BELLS

Plants for concern

Honeysuckle

Last year there was a dramatic decline in the amount of honeysuckle on the hill. I only found it flowering in a few places compared with other years.. It does not just smell nice. It is one of the most important plants for wildlife. Although it is a climber and will scramble through trees, it does not smother the tree as bramble would. The flowers and berries are important, especially for small mammals that eat the flowers and berries. The leaf is also used for nesting material by such creatures as the dormouse. Although we have no proof that they live on the hill, it is important that we do not lose this type of habitat.

NOT ONLY PRETTY FLOWERS!

Teasel

We have been unable to find any teasel growing on the hill this year. It was a very hard winter and although the seed is very fine, it is an important food source for small mammals and goldfinches for example. It is possible that most of the seed was eaten. Teasel seed was included in the wild seed bombs that the children scattered on the hill, so it is a mystery why we have no plants growing.

Bluebells

Jonathan Burgess found some spanish bluebells on the hill. They are much more vigorous than the english version and will take over if not controlled. They have more than likely self-seeded on the hill from bird droppings, as many bluebells sold for gardens are of the spanish variety.

Although the bluebell is common in the west country, it has been lost due to cultivation and depletion of woodland.

It is estimated that the UK has over 50% of the world's total bluebell population.

The english bluebell is protected under the wildlife and countryside act.

HONEYSUCKLE

SEVERAL CUTTINGS OF HONEYSUCKLE WERE TAKEN FROM THE HILL AND PROPAGATED. WE HAD A 100% SUCCESS RATE AND THESE PLANTS WILL BE INTRODUCED BACK ONTO THE HILL IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

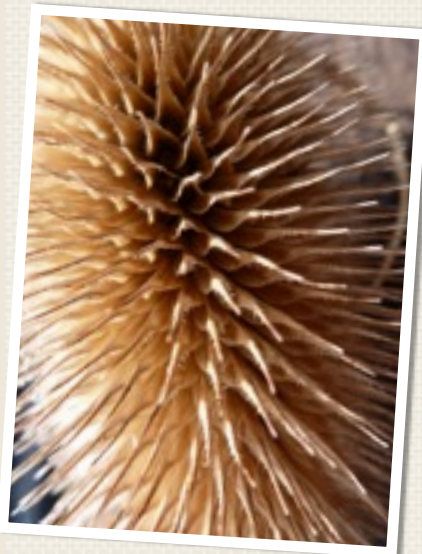
THEY WILL BE PLANTED IN AREAS WHERE WE ARE AWARE THAT SMALL MAMMALS ARE LIVING.



TEASEL

NOT ONLY A IMPORTANT FOOD SOURCE DURING THE WINTER FOR MAMMALS AND BIRDS, WHEN IN FLOWER THE BEES LOVE IT.

IF YOU HAVE ANY TEASEL GROWING IN YOUR GARDEN. PLEASE SAVE THE SEED. WE WILL BE COLLECTING WILD FLOWER SEED AGAIN THIS YEAR. IF COLLECTING FROM THE WILD, ONLY TAKE A FEW SEEDS FROM EACH PLANT AND STORE IN A DRY COOL PLACE.



BLUEBELLS

THE SPANISH BLUEBELL TENDS NOT TO HAVE SUCH AN INTENSE COLOUR AS THE ENGLISH BLUEBELL. THE FLOWER STEMS ARE MORE UPRIGHT WITH FLOWERS ALL THE WAY AROUND THE STEM.

THE ENGLISH BLUEBELL THE FLOWERS DROOP AND ARE ON ONE OF THE STEM.

ONLY PICK THE FLOWERS OFF IF YOU ARE SURE THEY ARE SPANISH. THIS WILL STOP THEM FROM SEEDING.



English Bluebell

JONATHAN BURGESS



Woodland Trust Manager for Allington Hill

I HAVE GOT TO KNOW JONATHAN WELL OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS AS WE ARE IN ALMOST DAILY CONTACT VIA EMAIL ABOUT THE HILL.

I DON'T THINK HE QUITE KNEW WHAT HE WAS TAKING ON WHEN HE FORMED THE VOLUNTEER GROUP FOR THE HILL AT THE END OF 2010. BUT WE HAVE MADE HIM WORK FOR HIS MONEY.

I THINK MOST PEOPLE UNDER ESTIMATE THE PASSION THAT PEOPLE HAVE FOR THE HILL, SOMETHING THAT JONATHAN QUICKLY LEARNT.

I MUST THANK HIM FOR HIS PATIENCE, UNDERSTANDING, COMMITMENT AND ENCOURAGING US VOLUNTEERS TO TAKE ON SUCH LARGE PROJECTS.

I'M NOT SURE IF THE HILLBILLIES ARE READY TO MOVE FORWARD AND TAKE ON THE HUGE RESPONSIBILITY OF VOLUNTEERING FOR THE HILL WITHOUT HIM. HE WILL CERTAINLY BE MISSED. I WISH HIM WELL AND PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH. GOOD LUCK FROM US ALL.

Founder of "The Hillbillies"

"This is the last time I will be contributing to the newsletter which I have watched grow with great pleasure from its humble beginnings, as I will be leaving the Woodland Trust at the end of June. It seems a fitting tribute that the summer festival will be held on my last week to give me a proper send-off - almost as if someone knew :-)

Since the initial idea to form a volunteer group was conceived the whole thing just snowballed due to the commitment and enthusiasm of a dedicated group, this has spurred on the involvement of many, many more local residents who have now truly taken the wood to the very heart of the community. And so hopefully the next stage in the development of the wood is about to be secured in the lease of Coopers Wood to the community under the guidance of the Parish Council, an exciting new step.

I feel that I leave behind a more colorful, vibrant, happy place than the one I took on 4 years ago and will be just one more person who takes away fond memories of the people and the time spent on the hill. If you wonder where I am going, it is to join the Forestry Commission to look after Haldon Forest at Exeter."

Jonathan Burgess

Big kids can learn too!

Simple ways to learn about plants.

Take a photo. This means that you can leave plants and flowers to continue to grow and only take the photo home.

Before you go, smell the flower, touch the leaves and make a mental note of how they feel. Are they hairy or smooth, rough or waxy to touch? Where is the plant growing?

Are there butterflies, bees or other insects on the plant?

When at home do a bit of detective work, use reference books, or the internet. Try and research only one or two plants at a time. You will find it is a lot easier to remember the names and educate others.

reference material:

Collins wild flowers (pocket guide).

Website: ispot. Upload your photo and let others help you.

Website: Plantlife.

Facebook. Upload your photo and I will do my best!

NEWLY RECORDED PLANTS ON THE HILL

Oxeye Daisy: Seeds were collected from the wild last year and scattered on the hill. Interestingly this plant is growing in a different area to the where we scattered seed.



Rosebay Willow Herb:

The seeds of this plant may have laid dormant for years. We had several bonfires last year and this seems to trigger the seed to germinate. It will have dainty fluffy pink flowers.



Dark Mullein:

These have naturally seeded on the hill. The leaf structure looks like rhubarb leaves. A tall spike of yellow flowers will appear in the next few weeks, often seen with several flowering stems and can grow several meters in height.



Yellow Rattle:

Introduced to the hill to suppress the grass in order to provide perfect conditions to create a flower meadow. Important source of food for insects and bees seem to love it. The planting of this has also helped to increase the number of orchids in the area.



It is never too late to learn. We have been encouraging youngsters to take an interest in wildlife and get involved in projects on the hill. A lot of adults are wary of becoming involved, as their schooling taught them little about the natural environment around them.

I have recently overheard two conversations between parent and child. The first was when I was walking the coastal path last year when a child asked her father what the thrift was called. "Clematis" was the reply! The next seemed even more unbelievable, as a mother talking to her child said. "Oh look at the swans on the lake." They were Canada Geese. The mini beast hunt also got me thinking. The parents were as keen as the children to go bug hunting and finding out about the bugs that they caught. Several insects I did not know myself. This seemed to spark a challenge between the children and adults, thumbing through guide books and googling to find the answers.

I hope that they will continue to bug hunt in their gardens at home and that I have made the adults feel comfortable in saying "I don't know, let's look it up." There is no shame in not knowing, it is better to try and find the answer than guess. I now do have a better understanding of why adults have a fear of the big outdoors, the lack of education when they were children. I was lucky, I grew up in the country on a farm. For many the only contact with nature was the back garden. We need to educate adults about the natural environment around them, overcome their fears of the unknown.

If you were born after the outbreak of the WWII you are very unlikely to have seen a natural flower meadow. Most of these flowers are now only seen in gardens. The nation has lost 97% of its flower meadows since the 1930's.

NEW LEASE



The lease for Cooper's Wood/Field is almost ready to be signed over to Allington Parish Council. This is more than likely to happen at the August Parish Council meeting.

The Allington Hill Volunteer Group, will be working with the Parish Council in looking after this area. This does mean that we have to change the constitution of the group, as we will no longer be solely volunteers for The Woodland Trust. A draft constitution is being worked on, changing the official title of the group will be on the lines of "Allington Hill and Coopers Wood/Field Community group", but we will still be known as the Allington Hillbillies.

The word volunteer may be removed as the community in the Parish as a whole will benefit from the work, developing and caring for this community space.

FLOWER MEADOW

Our first attempt at creating a flower meadow so far has been a huge success. There has been much interest from others on how well our project is doing. I must thank everyone who have kindly kept their dogs under control and not walked on the area.

The yellow rattle is going to provide us with enough seed to enlarge the area, or seed another area on the site. Nick Gray, from the Dorset Wildlife Trust has been advising us of the next steps to take, to ensure we are able to increase the wild flowers in the meadow next year.

Much to our relief the intense mowing and sowing of yellow rattle has actually increased the amount of Orchids growing in this area. A very positive sign that we are getting things right.



WORKING HORSE ON THE HILL



"My name is Kate and my horses are Kipp and Sol but I will only be bringing Kipp to work on the hill. They are both Ardennes and are not a British heavy breed. They come from France, Belgium and Sweden. The Ardennes have been in the UK since Roman times though and have always been used as a war horse. They are unusual in the UK but not a rare breed. We will be rolling the bracken on the hill to help stop it from taking over. This will have to be repeated for several years, but will be a huge benefit to wildlife"

KATE

SUMMER FESTIVAL SATURDAY JUNE 22ND 12 MIDDAY TO 4PM

DOG AGILITY

JUST FOR FUN
SEE HOW YOUR DOG
NEGOTIATES
THE OBSTACLES

SPORTS EVENT

EGG AND SPOON
THREE LEGGED RACE
WHEEL BARROW RACE
SACK RACE

YES, WE WILL LET THE
ADULTS PLAY TOO!

MINI BUG HUNT

GREAT FOR CHILDREN
AND ADULTS ALIKE

WHO CAN FIND THE
MOST UNUSUAL BUG

PRIZE
FOR THE WINNER

BUILD A DEN

GEAT CREATIVE
AND BUILD A MINI DEN
FOR
AN
INSECT
OR MAMMAL

PRIZE
FOR THE WINNER

REFRESHMENT TENT

"GET STUFFED"
ARE PROVIDING THE
REFRESHMENTS

ENJOY A
CUP OF TEA AND CAKE
PLUS MANY OTHER
GOODIES

WORKING HORSE

DEMONSTRATION
FROM

11AM
OAK TREE CROSS

**PRIZE DRAW, TOMBOLA
AND BRING A BUY STALL**

THIS YEARS SUMMER FESTIVAL

AUTUMN FESTIVAL

WE HAVE PENCILLED IN THE DATE
OF SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 28TH
FOR OUR AUTUMN FESTIVAL.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE LAND
WHERE WE HOLD THE FESTIVAL
WILL BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF
ALLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL BY
THEN.

THIS MEANS THAT WE NEED TO
NEGOTIATE WITH THEM TO
ALLOW THE EVENT.

I'M SURE THEY DO NOT WANT
LOADS OF ANGRY LOCALS ON
THEIR HANDS. SO WE HOPEFULLY
PRESUME THEY WILL BE ONLY
TOO HAPPY TO LET THE FESTIVAL
GO AHEAD!!!!

It does not seem a year ago that we were all enjoying our Jubilee festival. I can't promise to repeat the fine weather, but all the popular events are back, plus a few more.

This is a great way to get children interested in nature and adults alike. With **FREE** entry, it has to be one of the cheapest days out, with so many activities not charged for. Bring a picnic and soak up the atmosphere.

We do have a bring a buy table, to help us raise funds, so any small gift would be appreciated.

Jonathan Burgess the Woodland Trust manager, will be with us this year and we are going to make him work hard as it will be his last event working for the Trust.

Kipp the horse will be working from 11am ish, doing a working demonstration in the area of Oak Tree Cross.

Nature notes by Alan Ashpool

I would just like to thank Alan for allowing me to freely cut and paste this article to fit into the newsletter.

Before I moved from London to Dorset I had little knowledge of wild flowers. Some vague childhood memories about daisy chains and reflecting buttercups to determine whether I liked butter, but apart from that, wild flowers were a complete mystery to me.

When I came to the Bridport area in my late fifties all this changed. The local hedgerow verges were full of all kinds of flowering plants in every season of the year and I was mesmerized by this and wanted to know what each flower was called. One way of identifying them I thought might be to take photographs of the individual flowers in close-up and then look them up in a suitable handbook. This was easier said than done. There are possibly scores of different wild flowers to be seen in the area throughout the year and it was not possible to photograph all of these so I decided that I would concentrate on the more numerous varieties. This approach has worked well and I am now familiar with most of the common wild flowers to be seen locally.

This time of year the blues of knapweed, tufted vetch and various thistles predominate inter-dispersed with the white fluffy beards of meadowsweet. Come late summer the yellows return in the form of fleabane and ragwort. Hedgerow verges are usually trimmed in early July and it may be mid August before they have a new flush of wild flowers. Some verges are set aside and not cut however because of their special wild flower interest. They are usually marked in Dorset by blue painted posts at the beginning and end of each protected verge. On these sites there are lots of different species to be seen throughout the summer.

Before the introduction of specific herbicides most meadows would also have had a marvelous display of wild flowers before they were cut for hay. These included poppies, corn cockles, snakeshead fritillaries, ragged robin, meadow buttercup, bugle and various thistles. The list is endless. There are still a few meadows in the area that have a good display of these plants but the majority just have a single type of grass growing. Things might be changing however as more land is being set aside to support wildlife.

ANNUAL BUTTERFLY COUNT

ALAN IS ALSO AN EXPERT ON BUTTERFLIES AND HAS STARTED TO SURVEY THE BUTTERFLIES ON THE PARK HILL SIDE OF THE HILL. I HAVE BEEN DOING THE SAME ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE HILL. WE HAVE BOTH SPOTTED DIFFERENT BUTTERFLIES IN EACH AREA.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION GROUP

ANNUAL BUTTERFLY COUNT

20TH JULY - 11TH AUGUST

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART IN THE NATIONAL BUTTERFLY COUNT ON THE HILL, YOU CAN DOWN LOAD A SURVEY FORM FROM
bigbutterflycount.org

or

join us on one of our organized counts (details to follow)

NEW TO THE HILL



MEADOW SWEET



CORN COCKLE



RED CAMPION



NAPWEED

PIN BOARD

butterfly count
July 20th- 11th Aug
bigbutterflycount.org
or
allingtonhill@gmail.com

CONTACT DETAILS
EMAIL
allingtonhill@gmail.com
FACEBOOK
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/allingtonhillbillies/>
PHONE
01308 423202

JUNE SAT 22ND
TAKE THE FAMILY
TO
ALLINGTON HILL
FESTIVAL
AND WORKING HORSE DEMO
FROM 11AM ONWARDS

visit
Jubilee Wood to see all the
foxgloves

Chat from the hill

Should you be introducing so many wild flowers to the hill.

It is more of a case of re-introducing flowers to the hill. Many years ago the hill was covered in foxgloves for example. Three years ago there were only three remaining flowering plants. We also broadcasted hundreds of oxeye daisy seed. So far I have only seen one plant in flower. Nature will do it's own thing and only seed suitable for the hill will germinate.

What changes will be made to Cooper's Wood and the field?

This will be up to Allington Parish Council, local people and the volunteers. If you feel strongly about the future of the area, then get involved, no good moaning afterwards!

It said in the View From, that you were moving the play equipment?

We are not sure where this misinformation came from. The play equipment is staying where it is.

Why have you stopped the working parties?

They will be relaunched in the Autumn. With the late spring we were unable to carry out work because of the nesting birds and breeding mammals on the hill. A few of the regular volunteers have continued to do minor work when weather permits.

What will happen with the volunteer group now the Parish Council will be leasing some of the land.

We are looking into changing the constitution of the group to cover the changes and are working closely with the Parish Council and Woodland Trust. Except for the wording of the constitution, you should not see any physical change to the group, although some people have expressed they wish no longer to volunteer for the Trust. We must try and put such problems behind us and work together to look after "our!" hill.

THE WEATHER

I would like to say at last it is warm, but I am sat at my computer with layers of clothes on and a very cold nose! We have had some warm days, but no continual warm weather, with biting strong winds at times.

*Last month we had 60mm of rain, which is about average, with one day reaching 21.2c
We still had some very cold night time temperatures.*

The wildlife on the hill have benefited from the extra day light gaining 1 hour and 15 minutes over the month of May.