



Allington Hillbillies

Harvesting the land.

This is the time of year when I return to my family research. Many of you have asked me why I'm so interested in the outdoor life. I am in fact a farmer's daughter and my ancestors were farmers and wheelwrights, with the odd publican thrown in for good measure. Jon's family history, we know very little, so at this present time I am sitting in a holiday cottage in Norfolk.

We choose this place via the internet many months ago, for its central location to all the places we wished to visit. Only to find in fact we are in the middle of a wood. A well managed wood, privately owned and worked to provide timber and a natural habitat, right on the edge of town.

Before we came, we went to a talk by Terry Heard on traditional woodland crafts. We had a fascinating evening learning about the life of a coppice man, earning a living from the woods around him and that every part of the tree has a use, and none is wasted.

My ancestors who were wheelwrights had a good knowledge of harvesting wood

to supply their trade.

Shouldn't we be doing this too? Not commercially, but for the benefit of the wood itself. Many trees such as Hazel and Willow benefit from being coppiced, as does the wildlife that depends on them.

My ancestry might explain my love for all things wood. When I was told I could not do woodwork at school, I just couldn't wait to leave, (my father hated school as well). So that obviously runs in the blood too.

Also my passion not to waste things came from my family background. My father could mend most things with bailer twine, clothes were darned, veg was from the garden, preserves for winter use. We now like to label it as sustainable living. We can't make a living from the hill, nor should we. We can though, recycle and reuse.

By the way, we have found out that Jon's distant ancestors were known as beach men. Before life boats as we know them today, they risked life and limb to save lives at sea. In return they gained the salvage rights to the wrecks. Later when the RNLI was formed they became life boatmen. Interestingly Jon also had a love for the water, being a international canoeist for many years.

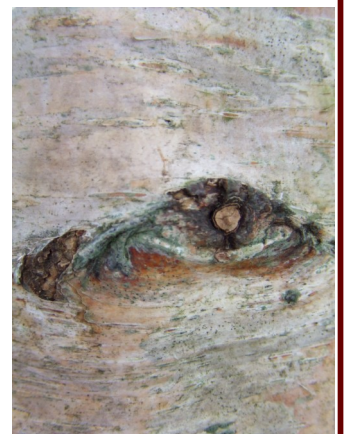
Strange things happen on

HALLOWEEN.

Tree spirits come alive.

Have you seen this eye,
watching you as you walk past.

SPOOKY.



AUTUMN FESTIVAL

What an evening. It was our first festival and we were very cautious in our planning, as we have learnt before, it can all go horribly wrong depending on the weather. We aimed to keep the budget as low as possible, at the same time as providing family entertainment. We hope you all agree that it was a great family event. Children and adults joining in the fun and talking to each other and enjoying each others company.

The whole idea is to promote outdoor life as fun and a good experience for all the family. As things become more and more expensive, fresh air, outdoors activities, become very cost effective. We need to learn how we can use our surroundings in a sustainable, positive way. I am now beginning to sound like a politician, oh dear!



Many of the volunteers today are those children that many years ago (won't tell you how many) played on the hill. Their affection for the hill has stayed with them throughout their lives. For many years it has been out of fashion for children to play outdoors in the woods, building dens, playing army games and swinging through the trees. We need to encourage the next generation to have this same connection with the hill. We may need more sophisticated ways to achieve this in the first place. If we do not, Allington Hill will become no more than a name.

Allington Hill was purchased by public donation by the towns folk of Bridport. With successful events such as the festival, it increases the awareness of this very special place. It is now time to discuss all the ideas that have come forth on making Allington Hill special, not only for us, but for nature.

(I was having so much fun, I forgot to take any photos. If anyone has photos of the event, please email them to allingtonhill@gmail.com).

What's going on here then?



A Woodland sculpture! Well it was our way of making people think and hopefully take the wood home for kindling, or for the stick and flick campaign.

A willow had split its main trunk in Coopers wood and half had fallen onto another tree. We coppiced the fallen part of the tree. The thin branches kept for wicker work. The thicker branches for sculpture (kindling) and the rest was left for insects and small mammals as a winter home. The split trunk will re-grow from the base .



These branches will soon rot down. Dead, rotting wood is as important to mammals and insects as live wood. Reuse, recycle!

Woodland Trust work

As many of you are aware, the Woodland Trust pay contractors, to cut the paths and grass on the hill. This swallows up almost the total budget for the hill. When the volunteer group was first formed, two areas that needed immediate attention was the Blackthorn area, which we have now cleared, and an area facing Chideock and Comers Hill near the top of the drive. You may look at it and think it looks the picture of health. I usually do photos of before and after. This time it is outside and inside. The picture on the left is from the lower path. If you walk on the upper path, with the steeper climb to the top, you see a different picture. As a true reporter, I risked life and limb and scrambled down an old trail, just to prove a point. On the inside the bramble has choked the Elder, which is mostly dead. The green you can see is bramble on the outside. The picture on the right is in fact all dead bramble. I agree, some wildlife may prefer it this way. It also could be made a haven for all wildlife. The Trust have managed their budget well and have funds available to clear this land. If the work has not all ready started, it will soon. We will then have a blank canvas to work with. This is one area of discussion for our meeting on November 11th. For a full lists of possible projects for the hill and ones in progress. Full information given later.



A True Volunteer



When things are kept nice and ship shape, we tend to take things for granted. I'm sure that you all recognise Paul. Ok, this is a photo of him cutting the verge. But while he is at it, he also takes his ride on mower up to the seats at the top of the field. Such a pleasant area to sit. He has also cut an area just inside the main gate, so we could hold our festival. I doubt if many people actually stop and thank him. He does not get paid for doing this and it is all done in his own time. So on behalf of everyone

THANK YOU

With permission from Allington Parish Council, some kind residents on the estate have planted more bulbs (paid for by themselves) along the bank. Again this is really showing true community spirit. It was not organised by the hillbillies. It seems as if good will and a sense of community is shining through. It will look great in the spring. Thank you.

Hillbilly Social Event

November Friday 11th 6.30pm

1st West Bay Scout Hut, St Swithins rd, Bridport.

This is your opportunity to have a say on the projects that you feel are right for Allington Hill. Find out how they can be achieved and put across your point of view. Below is a list of the ideas that have come forth from Volunteers, The Woodland Trust and local people.

- Recording the history of Allington Hill
- Tree planting (including Queens Jubilee Trees)
- Management and path through Coopers Wood.
- Recording the nature on the hill.
- Annual photographic competition.
- Bird boxes.
- Children's play area.
- Outdoor classroom for schools.
- Work shops.
- Sculpture trail.
- Notice board and leaflets.
- Green Flag award.
- Orienteering routes.
- Seating.
- Woodland crafts.
- School holiday activities.
- Junior Hillbillies.
- Open days and festivals.

If your idea is not included in the list and you would like it discussed, please contact me at; allingtonhill@gmail.com

This will be an informal evening. No talks, no lectures or pressure to volunteer. We would just like your thoughts on the different topics and the best way to achieve them. Again we would like this to be a family event. Please bring the children along, as they must be involved in what happens on the hill.

Children under 12 do need to be with an adult please.

FREE ENTRY

TEAS AND LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

PRIZE DRAW



Did you see these fungi on your last visit to Allington hill. I did!



HILLBILLIES CONTACT DETAILS

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

Facebook
Allington Hillbillies

Dates for your Diary

Working parties on the hill.

November

Sunday 20th at 10am

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

**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

Why are the Hillbillies supporting the Woodland Trust "Stick and Flick" campaign? Who are you to tell us what to do.

We are supporting it because none of us, including dog walkers, like stepping in dog poo. We are not telling you to pick it up, or bag it. It is just a polite request to flick the dog mess off the path into the long grass. That way it bio-degrades quickly and apparently insects love it. Paths should be safe for adults and children alike, not just for dog poo!

Have you got permission to do that?

This person had good reason to ask, when we were cutting willow. Many of our volunteers are unable to come on working parties, so do small jobs in their own time. We do need some form of identification, to inform people that we are Woodland Trust Volunteers, "Hillbillies".

Isn't it about time something was done with Coopers Wood?

We will be looking at Coopers Wood this Autumn/Winter. In fact you can come along to our social event on Friday November 11th, to discuss it. We will look at putting a path through and raising some of the canopy. Also perhaps thin a few of the trees out where it is overcrowded. We will keep the work to a minimum, as nature tends to know best.

I don't know enough about wildlife or woodland, so I feel I can't volunteer.

You will always be working with other volunteers and it is the best way to learn. Many people would like to learn more, even if to just be able to identify the trees. It has been a steep learning curve for me. I take photos and then use guide books to identify things. Some of the best books are designed with children in mind. I have several books I have bought recently, to give as prizes for children. I will now not let go of them. Sorry kids!

Mmmm. I don't think we need worry about me being whisked off to front the next BBC Spring Watch. Although I was impressed that I managed to catch a grasshopper and a large collection of carpet moths. But, oh did we have fun, we laughed until we cried. The bonus was we also saw a fantastic sun set.

