

Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group



Newsletter

*Summer 2014
Volume 7 No 2*

PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

Across the UK, we look after more than two million acres of garden – an area five times the size of Greater London. With our countryside increasingly under threat, every garden, however big or small is a potential nature reserve.

I have been working to enthuse the younger generation on the importance of biodiversity and how we all can assist nature. We put on a 'nest box making event' in February and a 'bug home making event' in April, both at Graylingwell Park (open for residences at Roussillon Park) and Tuppenny Barn in Southbourne.

Working with small children, with hammers and nails etc. I was very grateful for the support we got with from volunteers, colleagues, parents and grandparents. Special thanks goes to Jon Logan (Community Warden) and Spencer McTear (Volunteer).

All materials and wildlife kits were designed and obtained from the Aldingbourne Trust, which supports people with learning disabilities across Sussex. All the wood is recycled and reflects the award-winning wood@aldingbourne project. It is innovative because it tackles the huge problem of wood waste in landfill. They collect commercial wood waste, sort it and sell it on to the public while trainees gain a better understanding of our environment and the commercial sector.

I have raised the importance of recreational disturbance and the positive effect we can have on our local wildlife, at events, displays and talks, including the 'Sussex Environmental Educators' Forum', Friends of Maybush Copse, Chichester Yacht Club and at FLAWED the public meeting for the Residents Association at Parklands, Chichester.

At Graylingwell & Roussillon Parks I am still hoping that in the very near future we will have access to the 'Wild Area'.

In the Bourne Area, we have been busy with managing the hedgerow at Tuppenny Barn and we launched the, 'Hedgerow Challenge', which will hopefully enable us to bridge the generation gap and provide important data for the Sussex Hedgerow Inventory Project.

At Fishbourne I have been assisting local people on the importance of ditches and how to manage them for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people and groups that have supported me.



Photo © 2014 David Holmes

Trevor and Sarah at Tuppenny Barn

WATER VOLE PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

The spring and summer can be very busy in the life of a water vole with territories to set up, mates to be found, babies to have and nurture, and general survival to worry about. For the Water Vole Patrol surveying is our priority to find out where water voles survived over winter and where they are setting up territories. This year we are focusing our attention on the area around the new Medmerry realignment site so that we can get a better picture of how water voles are moving on and off the new area.

In March we were able to access the Medmerry site as Rowenna Baker of the University of Brighton was carrying out some follow-up trapping. It gave us a chance to have a good look at the new Reserve and to examine the newly created water vole habitat and other wetland areas. The site was still quite raw while we were there and looked like a construction site but I can imagine that it is really greening up now. The water vole habitat will take some time to bed in and be suitable for water voles as the vegetation is patchy and it will be interesting to see if it holds water year round. The trapping itself was quite successful with many water voles found - but what a job it was finding them! The ditch that we had the most success on was approximately 10 – 15 metres deep with a 90° bank angle and we felt like mountain goats by the end of the week climbing up and down. This ditch runs parallel to the beach and was full of marine litter that had been washed in over the winter and looked very unappealing. The water voles seemed to like it though and lots of feeding stations were found of juicy reed tips. The new habitat surveyed near Easton Lane did not yield any water voles, which was disappointing, and I think that they may have moved offsite here to more mature habitat.

Photo © 2014 Jane Reeve



Photo © 2014 Jane Reeve



On one trapping day, Roger Finn and a camera crew from the BBC turned up to do a follow-up piece on the Medmerry site, focusing on water voles. Dr Dawn Scott from the University of Brighton was the main focus and, as Row did not want to be involved on camera, I was 'volunteered' to be involved. It was an interesting experience with the trapping session taking 3 times as long with many re-takes, strange shots of walking in wellies across the mud, my stick at one point, and the scenery – a particularly foggy and grey day! We were all relieved when it was over and left not knowing quite what was going to be shown in the final cut. I want to thank everyone who helped out during the trapping as it was very arduous with heavy traps having to be lugged long distances and over rough terrain. We all had aching knees and bulging thighs by the end! Apparently the 7 hours of filming became a 3-minute slot on South Today, which was then shown on the national BBC news, the BBC Children's Newsround, and on BBC News iPlayer!

There will be water vole surveying dates going out on a regular basis over the next month so do come along and join us. If it is something that you haven't done before then do not worry, onsite training will be given with other, experiences, volunteers around. We have lots of fun and lots of cake!

Jane Reeve

Photo © 2014 Jane Reeve



ASHE

As usual we are kept very busy. The moth traps are going out again to keep regular survey information going for ourselves and of course the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. Cold and wet weather has meant that the count so far has been very low, but negative records are as important as positive ones over the years and seasons. With the promise of things warming up we are hoping for better days ahead! We are also carrying out surveys of flora at various venues, and we are helping Trev and Francine at Bracklesham Bay when we can to maintain their brilliant work – a good water vole site too! We always have litter pickers and refuse bags with us, and Veronica sees we have a good supply of refreshments to keep us going.

At Morgan's Pond work has recently been carried out on the Italian Poplars which were overhanging the road and adjacent properties. We would have been happier if the work had been carried out before the nesting season started but this was beyond our control. The stumps of the trees have been left at varying heights and the consequent extra light entering the 'meadow' area may result in different flora appearing during the summer months. We continue to clear ivy here and build a 'dead hedge' between the site and Almodington Lane.

At Florence Pond we continued clearance of the ditches right up to the final date possible, and we have received many compliments on our efforts, which from the practical point of view should also help flooding issues. The dead branches and other rubbish were disposed of in a community bonfire, with kind permission from the Farmer.

We look forward to starting on Church Farm Pond in the autumn.

Veronica and Gina

OBITUARY: JEAN MARY KOENNECKE 8 APRIL 1945 -17 APRIL 2014

Jean (Sarah's Mum) became a part of our lives when, following the death of her husband, she returned from Germany to live in Bracklesham.

She quickly became involved with local life, being elected onto the Parish Council, and no doubt with Sarah's encouragement was a regular attendee at MWHG events and social occasions.

Jean took on the collation of our Diary of Events until she became seriously ill in 2013.

We shall miss her, and our thoughts and sympathy are with Sarah and her family.



WALKS LEAFLETS OUTLETS

Our walks leaflets can be purchased from the following places:-

Chichester District Council, Selsey Office
Hunston Post Office (Tramway Walks only)
Raycraft, High Street, Selsey
RSPB Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve
St Andrew's Lodge, Selsey
Selsey Printing and Publishing
Selsey Town Council Office

MWHG Website

www.mwhg.org.uk

At the moment, the only section which is regularly being updated is the "Current Programmes" page. New content and updates are regularly required for example on wildlife, heritage, etc.

All contributions welcome.

email: website@mwhg.org

USEFUL WEBSITES

Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group -
<http://www.mwhg.org.uk>
Recording the changing seasons -
<http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/>
Local wood recycling - http://www.aldingbournetrust.co.uk/services_recycling.htm
Local - Bags made from 100% recycled clothing - <http://www.thegreendoor.co.uk/>
Sussex Bat Group -
<http://www.sussexbatgroup.org.uk/>
UK moths - <http://ukmoths.org.uk/>
Bug life - <http://www.buglife.org.uk/>
Mammal Society - <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/mammal/>
Green shop - <http://www.greenshop.co.uk/>
Environmental calendar -
www.countmeincalendar.info
Swift Conservation -
<http://www.swift-conservation.org/>
Wildcare Shop for products relating to ecology, Park management or conservation. -
<http://www.wildcareshop.com>

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

10 August (Autumn)
10 November (Winter)
10 February 2015 (Spring)
10 May 2015 (Summer)

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**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**



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