

Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group



Newsletter

Summer 2012

Volume 5 No 2w

OPENING LINES

It is 20 years since the first global agreement on biological diversity ie bio-diversity, was reached at the Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992. This June, Conference Rio 20+ is took place to update those original agreements including that on climate change and emphasising the green economy and the skills needed to implement this.

It is just one year since the Government published its Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP), *The Natural Choice*, which was the first government statement on the environment for 20 years. Before its publication the government commissioned Sir John Lawton to examine the evidence as to the extent to which England's collection of wildlife sites represents a coherent and resilient ecological network capable of adapting to the challenge of climate change and other pressures; to assess whether a more inter-connected network would be more effective today and in the future and, if so, how that might be delivered; and, to make costed and prioritised recommendations taking into account the ecological, economic and social costs and benefits.

In summary the Lawton report recommended:

- More;
- Bigger;
- Better; and
- Joined up

And, from the government point of view, as quickly as possible given the rapid incorporation of the ideas into the NEWP.

If you put that into our context on the peninsula - Chichester District Council is currently drawing up a map of the Manhood Peninsula to illustrate its green infrastructure, that is, the areas which support wildlife from locally to internationally important.

The county of Shropshire has already done this exercise* and, once the MP map is available, that will provide an essential tool for assessing planning applications and for guiding some of our work indicating where we can make the most difference. Suggestions in the Lawton report included "stepping stones" and the importance of "connectivity". Again, the peninsula demonstrates the importance of the rife and ditches system in providing those connections so that we should be in a great position to demonstrate these recommendations on the ground by:

- Ensuring that our internationally important sites are managed better
- Identifying areas in the wider countryside which support important wildlife sites, and,
- Highlighting the linkages which can be made between sites.

The results from the CDC map should enhance those originally produced by the Wildlife Trusts as part of the *Biodiversity Opportunity Areas*** approach. Food for thought and for more conservation action!

Jill Sutcliffe

* <http://www.naturalshropshire.org.uk/ShropshireBiodiversityPartnership/Documents/tabid/39/Default.aspx>

** <http://www.biodiversitiesussex.org/publications/biodiversity-opportunity-areas>



WILD FLOWER MEADOW, HIGHLEIGH

Having been fortunate enough to have acquired some land a few years ago Robin, my husband, suggested that we use some of it to grow a wild flower meadow. Three quarters of an acre of land was subsequently planted to produce a flower meadow.

The land had lain fallow for many years so was not fertile; no fertilizer input. This was a good start as fertile soil would increase weed and vigorous grass growth and choke any flower mix. Initially, the ground was sprayed with an herbicide and systemic weed killer to kill weeds such as thistles, brambles, docks and stinging nettles, Next the ground was ploughed up and left to over winter, then harrowed. The seeds were manually scattered having been bulked up with sand to aid a more even distribution. The mixture of seed was Cotswold's Wild Flora and one of the Pro-Floras. The two different mixes of seeds were used to increase the number of grasses as well as flowers. Although late Summer or Autumn sowing would have been preferable, with conditions more favourable to seed germination, the seeds were sown in April which can be a dry month in this area. A bigger problem would have been excessive grass growth which could have been a disaster if it had overtaken the growth of the seedlings. Fortunately, instead of this in fact it sheltered the underlying developing seedlings.



Photo © 2012 Val Gatehouse

The meadow was cut and baled mid-summer, then topped by a couple of inches every few weeks with a lawn mower. Ever since it has had an annual late cut mid-September when most of the flowers are finished and seeded, and grasshoppers have finished laying their eggs. Cuttings are raked and removed within twenty-four hours or as soon as possible as this prevents rotting underneath.. Certain flowers, which at first seemed to be absent, appeared later, such as cowslips and knapweed. Some of the species which were quite prominent and seemed to dominate in the first few years such as wild carrot and yarrow have reduced and yellow rattle has come to the fore which is fortunate as it helps to suppress vigorous grass growth. There is quite a lot of seasonal variation as to which flowers grow each year.

The meadow has not only given visual enjoyment over the years but also encouraged lots of invertebrates such as butterflies and moths.

PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

Sites across the District burst into leaf, flower and colour. I am sure that our next downpour will again enrich all. Despite the weather we have been busy trudging in the puddles, being blown by the wind and having a great time out in this fantastic green heaven.

FISHBOURNE AREA - The Recreational Disturbance leaflet has been printed. I am busy distributing it to specific sites to improve education and reduce disturbance. I am out on site weekly talking to members of the public about wildlife, dogs and how we can have a positive impact on the area. This is an interesting part of my job; face to face contact is so important to communicate the fact that our green spaces are becoming smaller, and that further development could threaten more of our wildlife. We must all be mindful of any negative impact our actions might cause.

I joined the Chichester Natural History Society for a walk and talk at Fishbourne meadows – a very interesting site for both its flora and fauna and an excellent opportunity for me to expand on the reasons for the Dog Control Order in this area.

GRAYLINGWELL AREA - I continue to work closely with the community of Graylingwell and the Chichester Community Development Trust (CCDT). April saw the “Official opening” of the Community Garden which is followed by a bigger event, Community Opening Day, in May.

Working with Chichester District Council (CDC) and CCDT we put on an event for the ‘Outdoor Play Week’, where we had a range of activities to enthuse local people to get out and explore this incredible area and to see how we can interact with our environment positively. We have pond dipped at Brandy Hole Copse (Eastern pond) where the biotic reading was up from last year with so many fascinating invertebrates - a whole ecosystem for us to view and share with the local community.

MANHOOD PENINSULA AREA – We work closely with Southend Farm, initially hedge laying at the beginning of the year, then pond dipping, (working with the ‘older people’s project’) and co-working on the Open Farm Sunday National Event (17th June 2012). I am grateful that we have such partnership working with those on the ground.

I try to support volunteers working on sites all over the peninsula. I hope we can enlist further local people to carry out important work across this area and assist those who already do so much.

Bill Martin and myself led a guided walk on ‘Land Settlement & Wildlife’ - one of a range of walks that our group is putting on for the RSPB at Pagham Harbour.

Sussex Wildlife Trust’s coffee morning was held at ‘Brecy’ in Ursula Ave, Selsey. One of the Selsey Open Gardens, it was a delight to be there, even if we were slightly damp, but an excellent day was had by all.

OVERVIEW - I have raised the profile our group, the Graylingwell Project, ‘Recreational Disturbance’ and the ‘Impacts on Wildlife’ via talks to the ‘Ladies’ Thursday Group’, ‘Solent Mitigation Workshop’ and the ‘Trefoil Guide Group’.

I continue to further my training and have attended workshops on ‘Conflict Management and Physical Intervention’ and ‘Risk Assessments’.

There are always so many meetings; CDC meetings, Trustees’ meetings, CCDT meetings, Service Level Agreement meetings, Team Leaders’ meetings, Event meetings. One of my most enjoyable meetings was on site at Chalder Farm. Jane Reeve (Water Vole Project Officer), John Dewey (Rural Contractor) and myself discussed (in the rain and walking along the bankside) the riparian habitat, water voles, recreational disturbance, predators and the connectivity of important sites. It is a pleasure to work with such knowledgeable and inspiring colleagues.

There are, as always, so many people I wish to thank for their continued support. We are all cogs of the group, working together, in many different roles which makes my job a joy. Thank you all for your never fading enthusiasm, cheer, understanding and dedication.

WATERVOLE TRAPPING

Between a Monday and Thursday in May, Rowenna Baker, PhD student at the University of Brighton, and I and a team of their committed volunteers, laid 50 traps along the Chichester Canal to trap for water voles. The MWHG have been surveying the Manhood Peninsula and the canal for water voles for years and passing this information to the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre for collating. Rowenna approached me about extending her work over to the peninsula as it has the last viable wild population of water voles in West Sussex and is therefore a key area for genetic research. Rowenna is looking at the dispersal of water voles in different habitats and how that affects the genetic diversity in the population.

The weather was wet and the towpaths got very muddy but over the four days of checking the traps in the morning and the evening, 15 individual water voles were trapped then weighed, sexed, hair samples taken and micro chipped for future reference.



The team had a huge amount of fun helping with this research and as well as seeing trapped water voles close up they also saw many individuals swimming across the canal and on the banks. It was a great opportunity for the volunteers that spend a lot of time surveying for water voles but never seeing these shy creatures, to get to study them at close quarters and to contribute to important scientific research.

Here is a summary of our trapping results:

Name given	Individual number	Sex	Trap number	Previous trap caught	Previous trap caught	No of times Captured
F1	1486395	F	8			1
F2	1485553	F	2	2		2
M1	1479574	M(j)	22			1
M2	1460265	M	2			1
F3	1485303	F	47			1
M3	1487058	M	37	34	34	3
F4	1455913	F(j)	34			1
F5	1481460	F(j)	23			1
M4	1468630	M	22	21	21	3
F6	1479357	F	31			1
M5	1484556	M	23	23		2
M6	1495161	M	22			1
M7	UNKNOWN	M?	15			1
M8	1478396	M	15			1

An analysis was carried out on the water voles that we trapped and a population estimate of 21 was established (with 95% confidence intervals of 16 to 30), with a density on site of approximately 1 water vole per 48 metres, which is healthy this time of year. The average abundance and what is classified as good is 30-40 individuals per 1km stretch of habitat during peak breeding season so given that we are at the start of the season this is a good population size. A more robust statistical analysis can take place in the autumn when we have carried out the next round of trapping and have more data. We will be able to see the growth of the population over this season, with lots of dispersal from the site so hopefully they can find suitable habitat in the surrounding farmland ditches!

Thanks again to everyone for their input.

Jane Reeve



VOTE OF THANKS

We would like to pay tribute to the dedication and expertise of our Chair, Dr. Jill Sutcliffe, and Water Vole Officer, Jane Reeve. They attended every day of the protracted Madestein Glasshouse Planning Enquiry and presented well researched and informed evidence on behalf of our local and valued wildlife. They weathered intensive cross-questioning by one of the country's top barristers, keeping their cool under fire. They even provided refreshments, including a fabulous chocolate cake, to sustain all attendees during the long days.

Whatever the outcome of the Enquiry – Jill and Jane, we are fortunate to have you, and on behalf of the flora and fauna of Sidlesham, Almodington and Earnley

THANK YOU!

Editor

BEES, THE FARMERS' FRIEND



Bees are our principal pollinating insects but not the only ones. Many people do not realise that most food crops require pollination. Not only fruit but even things like cabbage need to be pollinated at a point in their life cycle in order to produce seed. Since the Second World War for economic reasons fields have got larger and squarer. So what? you may say. The problem is that as pollinators live in hedgerows and what we call waste land and go no further than they need for food, large fields can develop a sterile centre. Therefore the yield decreases as one approaches the centre. In some parts of the country, where seed and fruit are grown, farmers are obliged to hire hives of honey bees. Honey bees are the easiest to move and manage but at this point in time they are having a difficult time for reasons that are still not fully understood. Long narrow fields are better than square. If we can provide habitat for pollinators like hedgerows with dense bottoms we are providing a home for several types of bumble bee, mason bees and others.

The other problem that has developed with changing farm practice is that now we have large areas of single clean crops resulting in hungry gaps for the bees. The best known is the June Gap which is the space between fruit and berry blossom, clover and summer flowers. Mixed planted hedgerows, patches of wild flowers and wild flower meadows have a beneficial effect which is not at first obvious but they do form a bridge between the main honey flows. What applies to bees also applies to other classes of beneficial insect, such as butterflies, moths, hoverflies, etc. Therefore the economic advantages of wild patches can be convincingly argued.

Roger May

MIKE COPE - A MAN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

There are some people you meet in life whom it is a pleasure to know. Mike Cope was one of those people. But if you had asked me when I actually first met him I would have been hard put to say – he seemed to have been part of my life forever.

I learned from the family tribute at the funeral held in May at the Chichester Crematorium that Mike was born in Kent in 1947. His family moved to Windsor where his father set up a business in which Mike eventually joined him. I also learned that Mike and his future wife, Gwyn met at a rifle shooting club. They married in 1973 and had two daughters, Emma and Amanda. With a developing family he felt he needed a career and joined the Fire Brigade Service, serving twenty six years.

The family moved to Selsey in 1986, in the same year as myself, so that's when I must have met Mike. A position came up in the Fire Service Schools Liaison Service. This suited Mike down to the ground. Proof of that came at the interview where he was accompanied by a 3ft teddy dressed as a Fire Brigade officer!

After he retired in 2002, he joined both the Camera Club and, pursuing his great love for plants, the Horticultural Society, later chairing both groups and thus contributing greatly to community life in the village. He became a member of MWHG participating in and leading the work done on the Sensory Garden and Manor Green Park, helping to plant the Sussex orchard, and choosing the tree for the Lord Lieutenant of the County, Mrs Susan Pyper to plant when MWHG was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Voluntary Service on 20 September 2010. It was the day after the award that his brain tumour was diagnosed. Mike remained cheerful, never lost his lovely sense of humour and displayed much courage in fighting the illness until it won in May 2012.

He was wonderful company, a modest man who could always be relied on for information and advice. We are all the better for knowing Mike, as is the environment of Selsey. He made a real difference and is much missed. If proof were needed, besides the 75 people who filled the Crematorium Chapel, a further sixty took part in the service from outside. The Garden group are drawing up plans for an appropriate tribute to him. Our thoughts are with Gwyn and the family.

Jill Sutcliffe



Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group



Volunteers' News

ASHE GROUP

At Morgan's Pond we have erected six bird boxes – two with open fronts and four with small entrance holes for tit species.

Three of the latter type were investigated. One bluetit family fledged; a second was predated, we believed by a squirrel, and the remains of the nest were on the ground below. In the third some pieces of nesting material were left, but it was then abandoned. Next year we will re-site the open boxes to a more suitable position.

We also erected two bat boxes, as pipistrelles are known to hunt along the hedgerow. We must not touch these, so – who knows?

During the summer months we are running bat and moth events in our area. Anyone is welcome to join us – see the Diary of Events or check Pam's emails.



Photo © 2012 Veronica Wilkes

Veronica Wilkes and Gina Scott

SHEDS AT SOUTHEND FARM, DONNINGTON



Photo © 2012 Sarah Hughes

MWHG are very fortunate to have excellent relationships with landowners across the Manhood Peninsula. Working with local farmers has enabled us to enhance biodiversity and improve wildlife connectivity across the Manhood Peninsula. These are trying times, with financial and work load pressures, but working together we can achieve so much, which can benefit all parties.

Special thanks go to Will and Mariella Fleming (owners of Southend Farm, Donnington) who have supported our project over the years (water vole surveying, hedge laying, Open Farm Sunday etc.) and have very kindly lent us two sheds on their farm.

A team of volunteers have been working hard to repair and utilise these sheds for the group. Many thanks and appreciation go to all the team for their continued hard work and support. Working together we can achieve so much.

Sarah Hughes

DONNINGTON

Farmers, especially those who have entered into Stewardship agreements with Natural England, are keen to care for the environment as well as produce food for our tables. Laying a hedge enhances the landscape and creates effective boundaries, whilst providing cover, shelter and food for wildlife. Such hedgerows also serve as corridors; vital for wildlife as they can bridge important sites, enabling safe migration from one area to another. However, habitat management and improvement is a time-consuming task and these days farmers do not employ as many labourers as they did in the olden days. They are, therefore, happy to accept help from groups such as MWHG.

During February and March, Will & Mariella Fleming welcomed us back to Southend Farm where Sarah Hughes had organised a second year's hedge laying course to run over several days. We benefited from some one-to-one instruction from skilled hedge layer Roger May. By the end of the course, we had become familiar with the traditional techniques/materials and more adept at wielding the tools. These are not all available to buy off the shelf.

Taking a leaf out of Roger's book, our eagle-eyed Trev spotted a fallen branch that, once sawn to length, proved ideal for banging in the vertical chestnut stakes. These support the hazel binders interwoven at the top to hold the laid hedge securely in place. The end result is a strong barrier with an attractive finish.



The hedge laid last year along the main Selsey Road has filled out nicely and is already much thicker at the base. This year we laid the hedge to the south side of Green Lane but didn't have time to tackle the north side, so the 'before and after' is clear for all to see. Perhaps we'll be able to carry on next year, though our services are now also much in demand at other farms across the Manhood Peninsula!

Felicity McStea



MWHG ANNUAL BARBEQUE

will be at the usual location
on Thursday 16 August 2012
from 18.00 hrs

Please bring drink and side dish of your choice

RSVP to Bruce and Sheila

EAST BEACH POND

We know things are going well at East Beach Pond when the swans successfully hatch their cygnets, so we were very happy to hear that the proud parents were showing off their nine new offspring on the morning of 27th April.

As is usual in the Spring, many of the ducks leave the pond to breed in neighbouring gardens and countryside, but the first ducklings appeared on the Pond at the same time as the cygnets. It is still early days when this is being written, but we hope their survival rate will be better than last year, when predators often took the newly hatched ducklings within a day.



The drought earlier in the year meant that the seeds sown on the peninsula have been very slow to appear. This site consists of nutrient poor soil dredged from the inlet channel. We have also added native plants to the area and are still hoping to get a good show of wild flowers later in the summer. If successful, this will not only look good, but should increase the number of butterflies and other insects.

This year's Open Day will be on Tuesday, 24th July and we hope to have the usual Willow Weaving, Pond dipping and Craft activities for all to enjoy. Put the date in your diary and we will see you there!

It is always a pleasure to see people enjoying the pond and wildlife that live there and we really appreciate the positive comments we receive during our weekly work parties.

Sheila Wilkinson

THE EILEEN SAVILL AWARD

The Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group[MWHG] is seeking nominations for the Eileen Savill Award. This is a new annual award for young people under 25 years of age who are contributing towards the Group's efforts to conserve, celebrate and educate people about the landscape, wildlife and heritage of the Manhood Peninsula.

The award is open to individuals or groups who have shown enthusiasm and commitment towards practical conservation work or learning about the wildlife and/or heritage of the area or celebrating it through art, photography, writing etc. Those nominated do not have to live on the Manhood Peninsula but their activities must relate to it.

Examples of actions meriting nomination could include:

- Setting up a wildlife garden
- Taking part in survey work
- Regular volunteering for an environmental or heritage group
- Keeping a nature diary or records of sightings
- Helping to clean up an area
- A research project
- Helping others to understand more about their local heritage or wildlife
- Leading practical conservation tasks
- Writing, art or photography inspired by local landscapes, wildlife or heritage

We welcome nominations for individuals, family groups, children/students at school, college or university, cubs, scouts, brownies, guides, members of other youth groups as well as members of conservation or history/heritage groups.

The winner of the award will receive a commemorative trophy and a prize chosen to support the winner's activities. The presentation will take place in September, 2012.

MWHG is 15 years old this year. During this time it has received both local and national awards for its success in engaging people in action for local wildlife and heritage, as well as its educational work.

Eileen Savill lived in Selsey for almost 50 years and devoted her life to encouraging young people by teaching for 23 years at Manhood School [now The Academy, Selsey]. She always saw the potential in young people and nurtured it, even when others had written certain young people off. She was a founder member of the MWHG and contributed artwork and photographs to many of the group's publications. Eileen loved the area and was passionate about preserving and celebrating its heritage. She was also an active volunteer in many of Selsey's groups, including the RNLI and Camera Club. She spent her life giving.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the MWHG website – www.mwhg.org.uk or are available from
Joe Savill – 01243 607104.

Completed forms should be returned to Joe Savill, 28 Vincent Road, Selsey, West Sussex PO20 9DQ
Joesavill@fsmail.net

Deadline for entries is Monday 16th July, 2012

SELSEY COMMON

Selsey Common like many other sites across the Manhood Peninsula is once again in the grip of the Brown-tail moth caterpillars. This defoliating caterpillar can cause varying degrees of skin irritation when in contact with exposed parts of the body. For the foreseeable future only work of a non-intrusive nature, for example litter clearance, will be carried out on this site.

Dave Haldane

BROWN TAIL MOTH Euproctis chrysorrhoea

**Please be aware that caterpillars of the Brown-tail moth are active in our area.
These are defoliating caterpillars that may pose a risk to human health.**



The caterpillars are dark brown in colour with a white stripe down both sides of the body. They have two raised orange/red tufts to the rear of their body and are covered in hairs. They create visible web tents (also covered in hairs) on the branches of their host plant. These serve as a retreat during winter hibernation and a shelter in the spring and summer. The caterpillars are considered a risk to human health when the hairs, which are spiked and barbed, are shed and come into contact with exposed parts of the body. This may result in an irritating rash or if the hairs are inhaled can cause respiratory problems.

Anyone suffering an allergic reaction as a result of coming into contact with these caterpillars should seek medical advice.

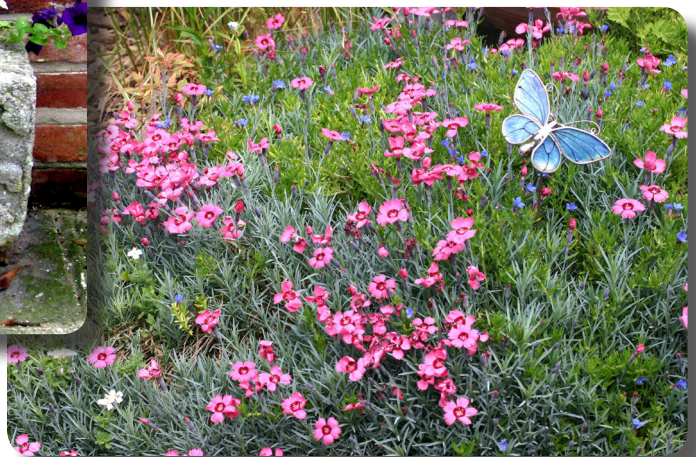
Where advice on the control of the caterpillars and nest is required contact your local Environmental Health Officer on 01243 785166

SELSEY OPEN GARDENS event took place on Sunday 17 June 2012.

Here are some photos to whet your appetite - full article in our Autumn edition.



Photos © 2012 Jill Sutcliffe



STOP PRESS

**We are pleased to report that the
Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group
is now a Registered Charity Number 1147335
and
a Company limited by guarantee Number 07629112**

WALKS LEAFLETS OUTLETS

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

Chichester District Council, Selsey Office
Hunston Post Office (Tramway Walks only)
RSPB Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve
St. Andrews Lodge, Selsey
Selsey Printing and Publishing
Selsey Town Council Office
Tourist Information Centre, South Street Chichester
Tourist Information Centre, Midhurst



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
Wildcare Shop for products relating to ecology, Park management or conservation. - <http://www.wildcareshop.com>

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: newsletter@mwhg.org

2012/13 DEADLINES

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

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The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service



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