



Another celebration

What happens when you get a bag of soil a few seeds and add an egg box?

You inspire children who suddenly realise caring about nature can be fun. That was the focus of the Autumn Festival, ensuring that children learn to embrace the natural world around them.

It is almost a lost art, playing out in the wild with nature. Many local people can remember their childhood on the hill. They played Cowboys and Indians, war games within the quarry pits, trying to shoot rabbits with toy bows and arrows and of course the grand tree with its many ropes and swings.

We hope to recreate these fun filled days and have been raising money for a play trail for the younger children. Hopefully it will develop their imagination and their interest in nature. It is very interesting to see the den by the rope swing being built, pulled apart, readapted and becoming more complex in design. I'm tempted to join in, but the children have made this area their own space.



I was also inspired by the fact many of them could remember planting their jubilee tree and where they had planted it. Now they were throwing wild flower bombs amongst the trees, in an area that they have helped to create.

A local family dispersing their flower bombs into Jubilee Wood

This special newsletter

This newsletter is a little different in that firstly, it is sent to you a lot earlier than usual, and secondly we have articles from other volunteers.

I do get some very kind emails about the newsletter format, but it is good sometimes to do things a little differently. So I would be very interested in your views and how I can improve the newsletter in the future.

The articles submitted by others are "in the raw" and have not been edited. They have been scanned directly into place. I have asked Christine to only edit my ramblings. So please excuse any small typos and embrace the articles as they are.

Why is this all taking place? We are off to China, a once in a life time holiday and I am really looking forward to experiencing how the Chinese in rural areas live with the rhythms of nature. We will be away for three weeks. Volunteer days will still go ahead without us, so nothing else will change.

What have you done?

Volunteering isn't all about bonfires, chopping trees and clearing scrub. A small contribution in any way can make a huge difference. I hoped with the wildflower meadow we may be able to involve a few people that felt that all the above was just not their thing.

I asked people to collect wildflower seeds and egg boxes. Oh, and of course green tokens. It proved quite a few things, you do read the emails, you had been saving tokens for months and your passion for wildflowers and eggs is outstanding. Just to prove the point I have listed the different types of wildflower seeds I received and how you have inspired a new generation of nature lovers. I'm afraid I lost count of the egg boxes and we raised an amazing £365 on the Waitrose tokens.

Wildflower seeds collected by the volunteers from the local area.

Yarrow, oxeye daisy, red campion, wild garlic, foxglove, sheep sorrel, teasel, common fleabane, lesser burdock, self heal, wild chamomile, meadow sweet, corydalis, scabious, poppy, orange hawkweed, cowslips. Also one packet of seed given to me at the festival and I forgot to write the name on the packet, whoops!

Email message.

I was talking to the lovely ladies who were making the seed bombs with the children which is something we would like to do as a finale at our fundraising event this weekend coming on the 6th October the Big GREEN Apple Day in Litton Cheney at Thorners school

The children were so inspired and felt it would be a wonderful activity to offer the visiting families to our do ~ even wanting to run the activity themselves.

I must also thank Alan Ashpool, who after moving from London many years ago, took great interest in Dorset rural life and the nature within it. He is very knowledgeable on butterflies, fungi and wildflowers and has been involved in many projects within his own village on reintroducing wildflowers and protecting hedgerows from the council contractors!

He has a friend whose wild garden is full of natural primroses and cowslips and he is sure we would be welcome (when the seeds are ready to collect) to harvest them. I feel our first Hillbilly outing is in the making. Thanks Alan for all your support with our project.

Children collect grant from Bridport Town Council

We wish to include the children in every step of the way in raising money for the play trail. Although our treasurer Sal applied for grants on their behalf and did all the hard work, she felt that it was important that the children collected the cheque themselves. The Mayor has been a great supporter of our work with the children, so they were looking forward to thanking him and Jade presented him with a copy of a poem that she had written for this newsletter. At the time of writing it, she had no idea that she would be collecting a cheque of £500 from Bridport Town Council. Sal also deserves a HUGE THANK YOU.



Children inspire each other

SLOW WORM
I Found A SLOW WORM
ON THE HILL I PICKED IT
UP TO HAVE A LOOK
THEY ARE GREY BROWN
IN COLOUR IN MY BOOK IT
SAYS THEIR LATIN NAME
IS FRAGILE SNAKE BECAUSE
THEY CAN DROP THEIR
TAILS IF ATTACKED THE
TAIL KEEPS ON WRIGGLING
WHILE THE WORM
ESCAPES THEY CAN LIVE
A LONG TIME.

by - Toby age 8 yrs



It won't be long before I will be handing over the nature page to Toby. I really enjoy his company when we are on the hill, with his enthusiasm for nature. If there are any other children out there who would like to hunt for animals and insects on the hill, we quite often do nature rambles.



I did not have to ask Toby twice to lead the Allington seed bombers into action.

He had us walking through Coopers Wood and lead us up towards Jubilee Wood. This is becoming a special place for Toby. He found the slow worm when we were clearing the area for the Jubilee trees. With the rest of the family he planted trees and now is encouraging wildflowers to grow.

He can't wait for next year to see what insects and butterflies this new planting will attract. With his sister Jade and other young children they have helped raise the money for the play trail and will collect a grant from Bridport Town Council of £500.

Path names



Can you remember last year? Coopers Wood was the group of trees that everyone walked around. “ The go cart track” as I use to call it. Then it suddenly took on its own identity. We encouraged volunteers to mark out paths and Paul , who knows no bounds, boldly went where man had not been for years. There he was on his little mower forging pathways through to create now much loved paths. The Cooper family, who proudly hold the honour of being our international hillbilly members, regularly keep in touch and are members of our Facebook page. They are very supportive of the volunteers and are so glad the hill is now once again being loved. They were very attached to this wonderful place.



If you look at the old maps of the hill, this is where an orchard use to be. Many people remember the potato fields further along this path. It is good to remind people that the face of Allington Hill is always changing. For those who donated money for the signs, I think you had very good value for money.

ALLINGTON HILL FOOTPATH SIGNS

The signs are made from Elm. This wood has high waterproof properties i.e. has been bored out for water pipes and some have been dug up in sound condition after centuries of use. The Rialto in Venice is said to stand on elm piles, so should be good for our signs!

The style for carving the letters is based upon the lettering “The finest ever designed on the column erected by the Emperor Trajan in Rome about A.D.114. The original alphabet was worked with a chisel on the stone”.

Thirteen signs were completed costing £279.59 in total equating to £21.50 for each sign including wood, varnish, preservative, posts and cement.

A total of 155 letters were carved, the equivalent to six alphabets – phew!

Jonathan says

"I have just placed an order for the new interpretation board that is to go up at the Hospital Lane entrance to the site. It will take a short while for it to be delivered but quite a valuable addition to the wood. The board will feature the way-marked trails that the volunteers have marked out initially on paper and then on the ground and will be accompanied with wording submitted by another volunteer (although the word limit available on the board means a bit of heavy editing is required), this is a real group effort for which I am yet again very grateful to all involved. The board will also feature two 'empty' A4 size gaps which can be used by the Hillbillies or the Woodland Trust to put up the latest information and notices relating to the site – hopefully eye catching enough that people get used to reading it regularly. The nice thing about the company we use is that they make the board frame from oak timber that is taken from a Trust woodland"

Jonathan Burgess Woodland Trust manager

Pat's doggy advice

With the advent of the delights of Allington Hill becoming ever popular it has brought with it a far greater number of dogs and their owners out to play. This, in itself is good in that more and more people enjoy our little jewel in the midst of a relatively built up area. But not everyone on the Hill is a dog owner or, in fact familiar with these sometimes excitable canines.

The Allington Hillbillies have been approached and asked how; if anything can be done about the unwanted, excitable and often frightening attention from a few dogs.

Now whilst it is certainly not the Hillbillies intention or responsibility to control, or to tell people how to control their dogs we can advise a suitable course of action that will help deflect said 'Unguided Missiles'.

Since man invited scavenging packs of canines closer to the campfire realising that they performed a useful duty of protection from other beasts; the dog has undergone many physiological changes in pack law to become the adored pampered and somewhat spoilt animal we know as our modern pet. This notwithstanding dogs still require calm assertive leadership within their 'family/pack' so thus behaving with good manners when out. Unfortunately most pets are not calm submissive and have little or no regard when given no such boundaries. Now, I could write a huge chapter on this, my favourite subject but space here is limited so this then is advice for you to become, if only briefly (and ALL dogs live in the moment) a leader to be respected.

When approached then by a dog determined to 'check you out'

Fold your arms, turn away and keep turning away if the dog circles you. What is most important though is NO TOUCH, NO TALK, NO EYE CONTACT. Make no vocal noise, ignore the owner (even if they should speak to you, it's only babble and breaks the unspoken communication between yourself and the dog.)

Then, still ignoring the dog, relax; walk on with arms down, shoulders upright and most importantly looking straight ahead.

All this should take no more than a few seconds and when you meet the same dog again he will remember your scent amongst the many thousand stored in his brain and ignore you too.

Happy Wandering

Pat (the dog) caninecalm@fsmail.net

Pat.

Pat welcomes any enquiries on canine calm. Take the stress out of walking your dog and you and your dog will benefit as much as the people you meet on the way.



Natures Diary



Wow, that must have been some fancy dress party!

Both photographed on Allington Hill.

Way markers

Very many thanks for seeing us and showing us around Allington Hill last Tuesday. Will you also please pass on our thanks to the volunteers we met. It was very good of them to take the time so to do, and much appreciated.

We all really enjoyed our walks with the accompanying commentaries and information, which we found most interesting. It was very pleasing to hear that the money donated at my late father's funeral last year has been put to such good use for the benefit of the Woodland Trust and the local community. In his time he did a lot of walking, and thus we felt that a contribution to way markers was appropriate. It must be very satisfying that you are supported by such a very enthusiastic and energetic volunteer group. Their great efforts to enhance the wood for both present and future generations is plain to see, and they are to be congratulated. I hope their event on Saturday was a success. The weather appeared to be 'kind' for them.

Again, many thanks to you and the Allington Hill volunteers for giving us a very enjoyable morning last Tuesday, and we wish you and them every success with future projects at Allington Hill.

Best wishes

Peter Phillips

Sarah, Irvin and Jonathan spent a lovely two hours with the family. They understand that this is an on going project and we will get the three routes in place.

I would like to thank Sarah for spending two hours the day before ensuring that the trail was still in place.

I hope the route markers will be left in place and enjoyed by many, as it obviously means a lot to the family.



Wildflower meadow project

We started to look into the feasibility of a flower meadow. Having read up on the subject, it was not just a matter of scattering some seeds and waiting for a beautiful meadow to emerge! Jon Burgess at the Woodland Trust agreed that we could proceed with the project. We contacted Nick Gray from the Dorset Wildlife Trust and he was a mind of information, which we couldn't have done without. He advised us that yellow rattle seed would help suppress the grass in the meadow so wildflowers would have space to grow.

On 02.08.12 Nick very kindly collected half a kilo of yellow rattle seed from a field near Whitchurch Canonicorum. We met with Nick on 24.08.12 to decide on a suitable site, an area to the left of the seats at the top of Cooper's field. The grass growing in this area was deemed suitable. To expose the soil to sow yellow rattle seeds we needed to cut the grass. Paul carried out the first cut on 26.08.12 on the 28.08.12 volunteers raked up the grass. Paul did a shorter cut on the same day, and we raked it up again! After a cut on 30.08.12 a couple of us measured the area, so that we knew how much seed we would need. We raked again on 31.08.12. Cathy had the foresight to order two large old fashioned rakes as we would have been there forever raking with our garden rakes!

We needed to purchase more seed, another half kilo. We also e-mailed Jon Burgess with a map of the area, so that the contractors would not mow that area next year. On 01.09.12 Nick visited the site to see if we had cleared enough of the area ready for sowing. It was fine except for a few patches of really thick grass roots and we agreed a sowing date of 09.09.12. Paul mowed the area yet again on 06.09.12 and because the grass was so dry managed to set his mower on fire, but managed to put it out without damage to the mower! There was a further raking session and aerating of the grass roots on 07.09.12.

On 09.09.12 we finally arrived to sow the yellow rattle seed. The weather held and fun was had by all. Four children were in the group of volunteers and Nick explained all about yellow rattle seed and why we were sowing it. The seed was measured out and mixed sand that Adam had kindly provided. Each child and adult was given a carton of seed/sand and was shown how and where to sow it. Within an hour the seed was sown and then we treaded it in. The children came up with an ingenious idea of rolling down the hill to bed it in. Cathy took photos of the having fun. The area will now be left for the seed to germinate, thankfully it rained overnight.

As the seeds start growing, the area will need to be cut again. In the summer when the yellow rattle has grown and has set new seed, we will be able to collect this and use elsewhere. In the Autumn, we will then be able to sow the wildflower seeds that have been collected. With a bit of luck the following spring/summer we will have the start of a wonderful wild flower meadow and it will have been worth all the hard work everyone had put in.

Special thanks to Nick Gray, his advice and help was invaluable. Also a huge big thanks to Paul Bowditch as the project would not have got off the ground



with-
out the
use of
his



Jade

Allington Hill

The sun is out its a lovely day
We've walked the dog and now have time to play

We planted seeds late last year
and hope in spring they will appear

We had such fun on the Jubilee
The mayor and mayoress came to tea
They helped with the sports
and the prize giving
and later on with lighting
the beacon

one day while walking on the hill
We saw something that made us stand very still
We looked down through the mist and rain
We saw three deers and were glad we came.

We also have an autumn show
where we make things that will give a glow
as the night begins to fall
The bonfire burns to warm us all
When the ice and snow is about

We still have fun because the toboggans come out

We also have a rope swing there
and a football pitch for all to share

I hope I've made the hill sound fun
and next time your there you'd think "hm"

I could help out another day
So give me a shout and I'll be on my way

by Jade Farrington
age 10



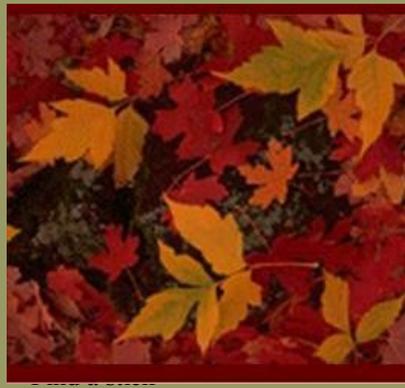
At little meetings for those volunteers that like to get involved in the festivals that we arrange we often have four or five youngsters under the age of 18 voluntarily come along.

They are an inspiration with their enthusiasm and their energy is contagious. Jade is one young lady that will take on any challenge and with note book in hand and amazing memory keeps us all on the straight and narrow.

I asked her to lead the lantern parade as she had spent several weeks before hand making loops from willow she had cut from the hill. Then assembling them into lantern shapes. She spent the evening helping other children decorate their lanterns. As Jade was leading the parade a dog fox walked out from Coopers wood in front of them. It just made her evening.

We hope over the coming months that the children will be given the opportunity to collect grant/donation cheques we have been donated. We are making special requests for these to take place after school hours or allowing them out of school a little early.

Bridport Town Council	£500
Waitrose	£365
Lions Club Bridport	£250
West Dorset Leisure development	£1,327



HILLBILLIES CONTACT DETAILS

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

Mobile
07789705345

Facebook
Allington Hillbillies
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/allingtonhillbillies/>

My news and views!

Slight headline change, but you lot seem to have taken over the newsletter. A lot of you have pestered me for a Facebook page that worked! So with the help of our I.T hillbillies Jill and Mark we are up and running. I am not really a Facebook fan, but it does seem a good way to keep up to date and share photos etc, which is limited with just the newsletter.

Chris is also doing a diary of the flower meadow. I had to edit her entry for the newsletter and I will load up the full version onto Facebook for those who would like to read it in full. All the newsletters are there, as some of you still seem to have problems opening them even as a pdf.

We are planning to have a working groups during the winter around my dining room table. Anything from crafts, planning events and firstly making natural decorations for a Christmas tree., with materials from the hill. These will possibly be on a Wednesday or Thursday evening for a couple of hours. If you would like to join this little social group then you are very welcome. More details to follow, just email me to say you are interested.

The weather

We were all hoping for that lovely Autumn that we had last year. I choose the date for the Autumn festival with this fact in mind. Yet again I managed to find a weather window and we had lovely sunshine. I announced early on that I had invited Jonathan Burgess to come along and I received looks of horror . “It always rains when he turns up” was the reply. Well it didn’t, so he seems to have broken his jinks. It would be lovely to see some Autumn colour this year , which we will need some sunny, crisp weather to achieve. The weather was so mild last year, we were well into December before the last leaves fell from the trees. This year the storms have already stripped the Beech of their leaves. Shall I arrange some snow for the sledge run?

Dates for your Diary

WORKING PARTIES
WILL ALL BE NOTIFIED BY
EMAIL AND TEXT.
DUE TO
RECENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

SUNDAY
OCTOBER 21ST
10AM

SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 18TH
10AM

allingtonhill@gmail.com

Did you know

Our volunteer group has been nominated in the Annual Woodland Trust Volunteer Awards. It is an honour just to think that we are good enough to be added to the list of the best groups in the country. There are many groups that help the trust look after the woodlands, with years more experience than us.

Look at.....

This great book on seed bombing
Seed Bombs Going wild with flowers

BY Josie Jeffery

ISBN 978-1-907332-55-5

Our 2013 calendar is now for sale. £7.50 each or two for £6.00. Visit the face book page to see the pictures.

Orders taken by email