

## Hurst Water Meadow News – September 2007

### Wild flower seeding project

The drought in April and over five inches of rain in May upset the triggers for germination of the seeded wild flowers. However, when Charles Flower, the consultant, visited in mid-June things looked a bit better, with about one-third of the new species in flower. Surprisingly, there were no signs of Yellow Rattle on the seeded areas, though it had done well on the lower field. This is a mystery and it may germinate later. The second year of the seeding project, planned for September, will be postponed until 2008 to give the late germinators a chance. This will allow grazing by polo ponies again in the autumn. The wild flowers in the scrape – planted by school children in May 2006 – are doing very well.



*Flowers in the scrape 13 June 2007*

### July monsoon

Two inches of rain fell locally in June and **nine inches** in July, with two inches on one day. The subsequent flooding has damaged much of the hay and delayed its cutting. Silt has been deposited on parts of the meadow which is not harmful. The floods in July closed the footpath to Overy for a few days and shifted the massive oak logs which form the open-air classroom.



*Floods on 23 July 2007 – just starting*

**School visits**

A total of six school visits have taken place this year, five led by Julia Sargent, the environmental education consultant, and one from Dorchester Primary School led by John Metcalfe and Peter Pritchard. All were a great success, and we hope in the future to give more children the opportunity to learn about the countryside. The planting of wild flower plants along the hedge line by Dorchester School form 3 is scheduled for the morning of **Thursday 11 October**. Help from parents and volunteers will be welcomed. A programme for secondary school geography students, on the theme of floods, has been planned, jointly with Project Timescape at Little Wittenham, the Environment Agency and others! We also hope to have joint visits to the Abbey and Museum.

**Kissing gate at the south end of footpath**

The County Council have agreed to install a kissing gate to replace the stile at the Overy end of the public footpath. We hope that it will be large enough to take wheelchairs and child carriages. It will be entirely on the Trust's property.

**Dog mess on footpaths**

The trustees are getting increasing complaints about dogs fouling the footpaths, both on the lane down to the Hurst and on the mown areas of the meadow. This is very unpleasant for other walkers and visiting school groups. We hope that dog walkers will cooperate in keeping the paths and other mown areas clear.

**Peter Pritchard, Hon. Secretary 340008**