

# Hurst Water Meadow News July 2010

## Old Bridge Meadow

The next job to be done here is to deepen part of a ditch in the centre of the meadow. This ditch is actually an old river meander which has silted up. As described in our plan, we intend that the deepened area remain wet for longer into the summer and so encourage a greater variety of species and also create a more varied and attractive meadow. We are now planning how to do this work.

## Hurst Meadow

A volunteer party worked to remove fencing from around saplings which have now grown into sizable trees. The appearance of the meadow was greatly improved and the trees allowed to grow free. Sadly, one of these trees was almost immediately damaged with an axe. This has been just one of a series of recent incidents on the Hurst, involving damage, fires, fishing out of season and camping. If you witness poor behaviour, or see damage, you can remonstrate with those concerned if you feel able to do so and it is safe, but equally please alert the police on their non-emergency line on 08458 505505. We plan to put up new, very simple notices saying what is not allowed (camping, fires, motor vehicles, fishing out of season) so that no one can say they do not know. It is a shame we have to do so.

In contrast, if you haven't been down to the Hurst lately, go and have a look now - it is a mass of colour from the wild flowers.

March and April saw the white blackthorn scrub like drifts of snow, with yellow cowslips showing up in the pasture. Then came the drifts of buttercups, two species in quick succession, followed by the white cow parsley and, less than a foot tall, large numbers of yellow rattle. With the end of May came the white ox-eye daisies and here and there the pink heads of ragged robin. June brought the yellow birds' foot trefoil (favoured food plant of the common blue butterfly), and it won't be long before you will see clumps of knapweed with its purple thistle-like flower heads. And on the left hand side of the path as you go towards the big oak tree, the sky-blue meadow crane's bill is just starting to bloom. Just keep looking and you will find more to delight the eye.

Most of those species have always been in the Hurst, but the yellow rattle, ox-eye daisies, ragged robin, bird's foot trefoil and knapweed are the result of the Trust's campaign in recent years to encourage more wild flowers. And there are signs that some of these species are on the increase, notably the yellow rattle, the germination of which must have been improved by the severe winter (the seed won't germinate unless exposed to freezing temperatures).

We have a working party planned for Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> August, again concentrating on the Hurst. The main aim will be to work on the scrapes especially: removing the fencing from around both scrapes, digging out willows from the scrapes and ditch. If you'd like to help, please contact Graham Beland at [workingparty@hurst-water-meadow.co.uk](mailto:workingparty@hurst-water-meadow.co.uk) or on 858956. All ages and abilities can join in. We will have another working party about a month later.

## Need to increase regular donations for maintaining the meadows

One of the Trust's challenges for the future has to be to increase the value of regular donations. Over the years we have received many donations for specific projects such as the purchase of the two meadows and the tractor. We have also enjoyed considerable support from government-backed grants. However at some stage these grants are likely to come to an end or be greatly reduced in value.

For the last financial year, the total received in regular donations was £330. In addition we were able to claim gift aid. We are very grateful to these regular donors. If you would like to make a regular donation to the Hurst Water Meadow Trust then please contact the hon. treasurer, Andrew Clements, on 340753.

**Mike Southon, hon. secretary 341544**



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