

Hurst Water Meadow News September 2009

Old bridge meadow

There has been much delay over the legal details of the Trust having vehicle access to the meadow across the car park, but that has now been sorted out and the purchase can proceed. This has delayed our getting the expert reports on which the plans for managing the meadow, pond and wild flowers will be based. The nettles have been cut by Stephen Cook's contractor and the meadow is looking more attractive.

Sir Hugo Brunner has kindly agreed to conduct the opening event which will be on **Tuesday 27 October** at 11.00 am. All donors will receive an invitation and residents and friends will be welcome to come as well. He will unveil an interpretation board of timber construction, rather like the one near the Long Bridge on the Hurst, but smaller. Nigel Joyner, an archaeologist at Oxford University, has surveyed the meadow and had a magnetometry survey done to see if there are any hidden features. Karen Selway Richards and Mary Tame are looking into the history of the site and we hope there will be something to report by then.

Hurst meadow

The wild flowers are now nearly over and many have set seed. The hay cut has been delayed because of the wet weather. The contractor plans to spread the hay twice before baling. This will help to shake out the wild flower seed. The yellow rattle will inhibit the growth of coarse grasses and give the wild flowers a better chance of flourishing. The final part of the plan to increase the range of wild flowers will be to chain harrow all the fields and hand sow wild flower seed. Grazing animals, or a second chain harrow will help them to germinate next spring.

Peter Pritchard, hon secretary 340008

Butterflies in the Hurst – a note from John Metcalfe

Large numbers of butterflies have been reported this year from many parts of the UK, and the Hurst is no exception. In the last month we have seen 12 species, and over the last 2 to 3 years 21 species have been recorded. That's not a bad score considering that there are only 68 butterfly species in the whole of the UK, some of which are very rare and/or occur in a very restricted area. Many of our species are the well known ones like the Peacock, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell and Comma, which are often seen at this time of year on garden plants such as Buddleia. In the Hurst they can be seen feeding on thistles, knapweed, burdock and blackberry – if you look closely you will see their long probosces probing the flower heads for the nectar. But there are some smaller species as well which, if you look carefully on a sunny morning, you will see if you walk through the long grass – they fly very fast but often come to rest on knapweed, bird's foot trefoil and thistles. These are the Common Blue, Small Copper and Brown Argus. They may be harder to find once the hay has been cut.



Brown Argus



Comma



Painted Lady



Small Copper