



NEWSLETTER

Number 3

FRIENDS OF WOLSTONBURY

Summer 2007

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COMMITTEE

Chairman
Ian Pack

Call Ian if you intend participating on particular days or with membership or other queries, which will be passed on.

Secretary
Rod Scott

Treasurer (Funding)
Ray Howland

Treasurer (Membership)
David Creaton

Field Task Organiser
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Graham Welfare

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Welcome

to newsletter number three. So far it's been a great summer for Friends of Wolstonbury, despite the vagaries of the English weather!

On Saturday 21st July the wet weather in Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint no doubt deterred many from going out on the field task, but those who did experienced Wolstonbury's wonderful micro-climate without the local rain!

Now Friends of Wolstonbury is firmly established we have set annual membership fees at a very reasonable £7.50 per family or £5.00 per family if you choose to receive your newsletters by email. You'll find enclosed with this newsletter a membership application form and standing order mandate for 2008. We urge you to pay your 2008 membership by standing order as this will save us administration costs and trips to the bank.

Please send your membership application to the address shown at left together with your payment. Annual membership of Friends of Wolstonbury runs from April to April.

Together with this newsletter, keep a monthly lookout for Infomag through your door. Publishers Jo & Becky have generously agreed that Friends of Wolstonbury can have a regular column.

Sheep Day

Open grass downland is a purely man-made landscape created through man's need for agricultural land. The steepness of the Downs and the shallow soils on the slopes meant that the best use of the land was for grazing animals in particular sheep.

The land would have been cleared of trees, being replaced with low growing herbs and grasses. Animals would have browsed on this and any woody seedlings thus preventing scrub and woodland re-establishing.

The most effective way to maintain grass downland is to graze animals on it. Unfortunately the National Trust as owners do not have the resources to keep their own animals on Wolstonbury, however, they have entered into grazing agreements with local land owners to achieve the same ends.

One such owner is Richard Burrows on the Danny House estate. Wolstonbury Hill would have traditionally formed part of this estate. Richard keeps a



Richard Burrows & Mike Botterill dose a ewe with wormer

Supported by:



DATES for Your Diary

2007

Tue. 14th August
Committee Meeting

Fri. 24th August
Tracks, Skulls and Rubbings
10AM to 1 PM

Meet by the rope swings at grid ref TQ 285 142, left at the bridal way close to the Mud Wrestling Pit. This is an opportunity for the kids (and their parents) to do some tracking and relax with other members of the group.

Sun. 23rd September
Field Task

Tue. 25th September
Committee Meeting.

Wed. 3rd October
Field Task

Sat. 13th October
The BIG scrub bash

Tue. 6th November
Committee Meeting.

Thu. 28th November
Field Task

Sat. 8th December
Field Task & anniversary of the groups' first task

Unless advised to the contrary we will meet for tasks and events at 10 AM by the Plough Inn, Pyecombe.

The committee meets at the Guide Hall, Semley Road, Hassocks at 7:30 Pm unless notified to the contrary.

flock of three hundred sheep primarily to maintain the Danny estate but they can also be seen on the hill helping to keep the grass down. The lambs have Southdown father with Suffolk X half scotch mothers. This combination is to maintain the traditional breed of the area but adding commercial value to the offspring.

To learn more about sheep husbandry and to say hello to the Wolstonbury four legged locals, a group of five Wolstonbury friends visited Danny House to lend a hand on 16th May 2007.

We had to get stuck in straight away rounding up the sheep with their new lambs. More bodies made the task of rounding up much easier.



Members of the group were shown how to hold a lamb correctly

Once penned, Richard explained what he wanted us to do. The ewes were checked to ensure they did not have fly strike, were dosed with wormer and then treated to a footbath. The lambs were sorted to ensure that their tails had been docked. Tails are docked for hygiene reasons to prevent dung accumulating which encourages flies. We were shown how to hold the lambs to stop them struggling. The tail docking consists of a band being put on to prevent blood flow. The boy lambs were treated with a second band to stop unwanted procreation.

At lunchtime we sat in the courtyard garden of the main house, admiring the views. Richard then gave us a brief tour of the House. Danny House is run as a retirement home split into apartments. It was once lived in by Lloyd George and where the terms of the armistice were drawn up after the First World War.

After lunch when all the sheep had been treated we moved half the flock up the lane. This proved the trickiest part of the day, with some of the lambs trying to make a break for freedom.

This was a very enjoyable day for everybody involved and we are planning to help out again next year.

If you are interested in purchasing any local Wolstonbury lamb, Richard sells whole (£80) or half (£45) carcasses that are butchered locally in Woodmancote.

Tel: 01273 833000

Mike Botterill
Field Task Organiser

Butterfly Recorders Day

The butterfly identification and recorders day was led by Dr Dan Hoare from Butterfly Conservation. Dan demonstrated how to identify butterflies captured with a net - not as straight forward as you think when we have 3 of the



Um! It's blue, but which blue?

blue species on Wolstonbury - but Dan gave us all a few pointers to make identification easier.

Although the recent weather hasn't favoured butterfly recording, we are still looking for volunteers to assist with regular butterfly surveys between now and October, providing Butterfly Conservation with valuable data on species and colony distribution.

Orchid Safari

Sunday 10th June was blazing sunshine throughout the day and provided ideal conditions for this annual event. Forty five members and guests turned out for a walk guided by



An excellent turnout for The Orchid Safari

National Trust Ranger Graham Welfare.

Eight species of orchids are found on Wolstonbury Hill, including the rare Man orchid which is found in only three sites in Sussex. Many species were identified on the day including many on the orchid bank which we started clearing in December 2006.

Pond Day

A very interesting day was had by members on 10th July studying and learning about the ecology of the dew pond at Welcome Bottom.

Local National Trust Ranger Graham Welfare introduced



© Ray Howland 2007

James Worsley prior to discovering that it's worth checking for leaks before entering the water!

the day with a brief talk about the history of the dew pond, which up until a few years ago was completely filled with grass. In all probability the dew pond is of medieval origin. With the aid of a grant the pond has been restored by the National Trust aided entirely by local volunteers.

The post and rail fence has been installed in order to allow sheep through but keep cattle out of the water; cattle have a tendency to leave undesirable deposits in the water.

Our local dragon and damselfly expert, James Worsley gave a very interesting talk and Ian Hartle from the South Downs Joint Committee conducted a survey of the pond. Numerous species were identified, including the rare Great Crested Newt and Emperor dragon fly, Britain's biggest species.

James Worsley also discovered that even on a sunny day there's no guarantee that you'll stay dry on Wolstonbury Hill - his waders had sprung a leak!

Thank You

Our condolences and thank you to Julie Rhianon & Morgan Phillips. Julie's husband Bob died after a recent tragic accident. Bob was a regular on The Hill and Julie has sent a donation to Friends of Wolstonbury in memory of Bob in order that we can continue our work.