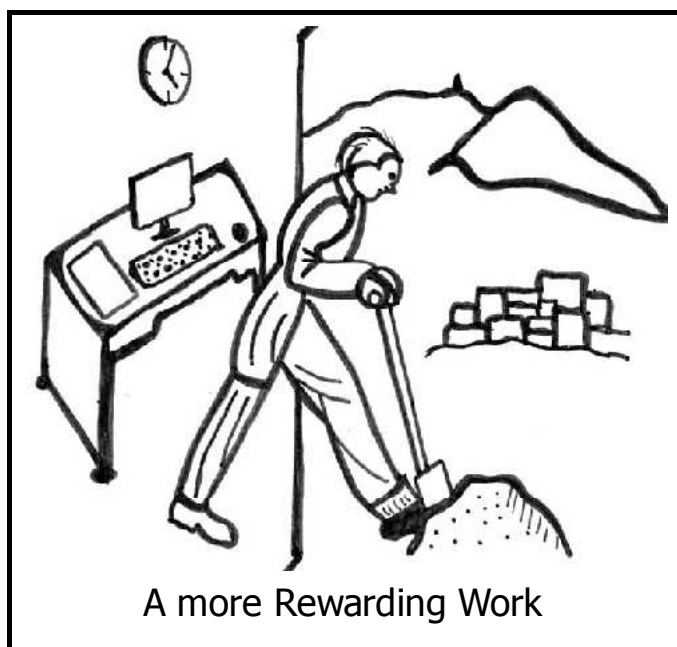


Dorset Countryside Volunteers

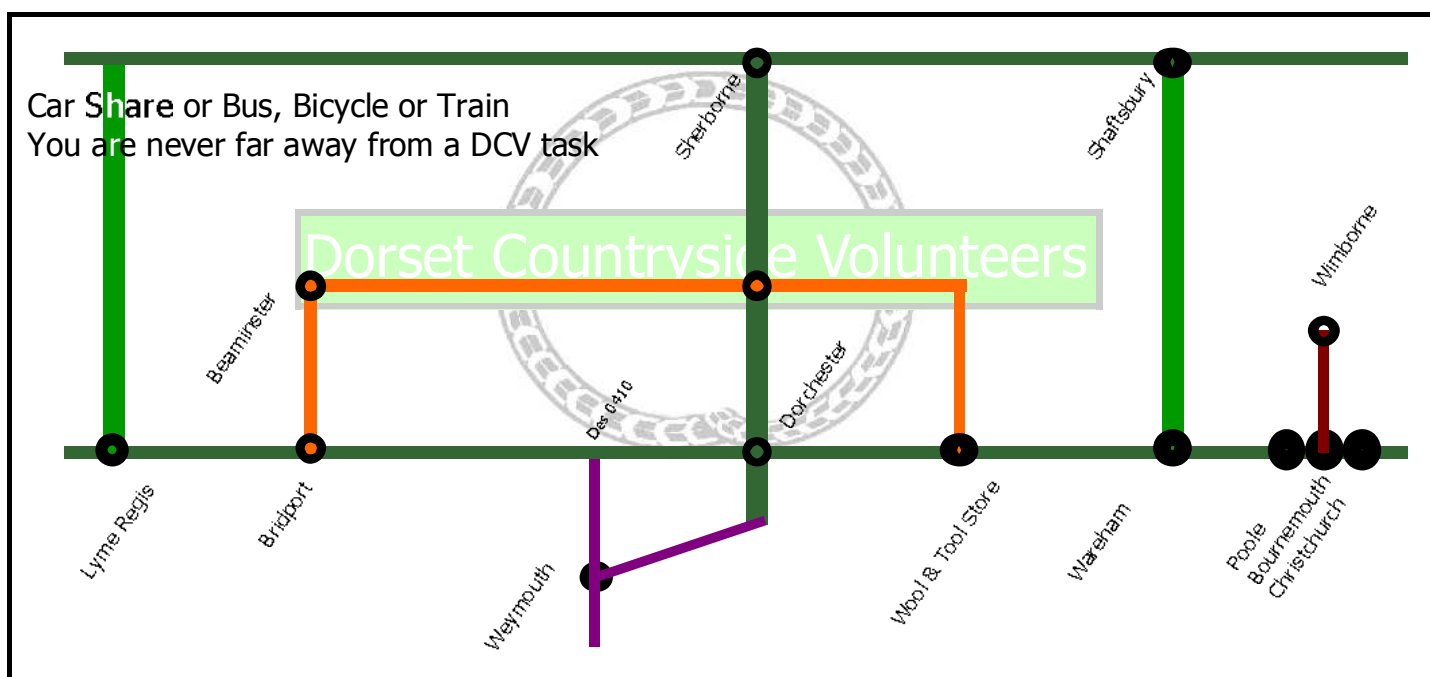
No 152
May - July 2010
Reg Charity No 1071723
www.dcv.org.uk



A more Rewarding Work



Visit the beautiful Dorset Countryside



Who we are, what we do, where, why and how . . .

DCV is . . .

- ⟨ A practical conservation group run by volunteers since 1972 doing practical work in the countryside that would not otherwise be done
- ⟨ Volunteers are male and female, from all walks of life, all ages and from all over the county
- ⟨ Work is seasonal - in winter , woodland work, hedgelaying, coppicing; in summer dry stone walling, clearing ponds, footpath work
- ⟨ Organisations we work for include: Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT), Heritage Coast Project, Natural England, National Trust, Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Trust (ARC)
- ⟨ We work at weekends throughout Dorset
- ⟨ No super-human strength or special skills needed, or attendance on every task or even for the whole weekend - any time is a bonus

DCV offers . . .

- ⟨ Practical care for the environment
- ⟨ Opportunity to learn new skills - training given
- ⟨ Use of all necessary tools
- ⟨ Beautiful countryside, social events, fun & companionship
- ⟨ Link with a French conservation group

YOU should bring . . .

- ⟨ Stout footwear (steel toecaps if you have them)
- ⟨ Old clothes (wear layers)
- ⟨ Tough gloves (we have some to sell/lend)
- ⟨ Waterproofs, sun block, sun hat, insect repellent
- ⟨ If staying overnight – a change of clothes, sleeping bag (air bed/camp bed if you wish)
- ⟨ Up to date tetanus jab
- ⟨ Goggles, if you wish, to protect your eyes

Reaching a task . . .

- ⟨ If you need / can offer a lift, phone one of the contacts 3 days before a task
- ⟨ Lifts from Wool station (toolstore is nearby)

A DCV day lasts . . .

- ⟨ 10.00a.m. – 5.00p.m. approximately
- ⟨ Breaks for lunch and drinks

FINDING DCV . . .

- ⟨ Maps with the task programme (at the back of this newsletter) show the locations of task sites
- ⟨ Look for DCV's yellow arrows near the worksite or red and white tape or the DCV information board may show an explanatory note
- ⟨ If unsure of the worksite try to arrive by 10.00 to meet other volunteers. The worksite may be some way off. Lost? give us a call on **07929 961532**

FOOD, DRINK & ACCOMMODATION

- ⟨ Occasionally, we hire a village hall, cook supper, visit the local pub and sleep overnight - karrimats available! **N.B.** Book with Peter a week in advance
- ⟨ The charge for a weekend, including Saturday evening meal, lunch Saturday and Sunday, breakfast on Sunday and accommodation, £3.00
- ⟨ DCV provides free hot/cold drinks and biscuits during the day - bring your own mug if you wish
- ⟨ On residentials, all volunteers are welcome to come for the evening meal and pub whether working both days or just one
- ⟨ Halls offered by DCV provide separate male and female toilet/washing and changing facilities
- ⟨ **Note: If you have a medical condition or allergies of any sort, please carry a card and bring necessary medicines. If you wish, bring this to the attention of the task leader. Please complete the "in case of emergency" details at the end of the newsletter, and bring on task.**

- ⟨ **All youngsters are welcome, but should be accompanied by a responsible adult.**

EDITORIAL

What wonderful weather we have been having recently - as we speak, three weeks of glorious sunshine. Spring is well on its way with the countryside displaying its many shades of green. What better way to enjoy it all than to come out on task with DCV and see some of the remote and beautiful places in Dorset. Bluebells and ramsons are beginning to bloom,, swallows were seen at Abbotsbury. If you've been meaning to come out on task for a while now but somehow not managed it, why not give it a try even if it's for half a day. We have a task near you, for example for those living in Poole and Bournemouth your nearest task would be Upton Wood which we are visiting twice this quarter. For those in Dorchester, Weymouth, and the west, we have tasks at Lower Kingcombe. You're never too far from a DCV task!

Being out on task is a good opportunity to record first or unusual sightings of flora and fauna. When did you see your first brimstone this year? Let us know when you hear the first cuckoo and where.

Just a gentle reminder about subscriptions, the money from which goes towards producing the newsletter and annual report. Remember it's cheaper to be an active member at £3!

A big welcome to all new members and as always many thanks to all subscribers to this issue.

We would like to say "bon voyage" to one of our longest serving and greenest members . A task never missed come rain or shine. You have endured the constant pounding on your joints, been through streams and come home wet and splattered with mud. You have never complained or hindered, been late or gone early (maybe once or twice).

T Railer, it's 30 glorious years of sterling service and now you can rest up, not neglected like most of your kind but with renewed energy serving a new master. A big thank-you from all DCV members.

We would like to welcome the younger looking offspring, not so green but with plenty of muscle and strength.

Co-ordinators Report

Has spring finally sprung I ask myself as I sit writing this report. Well I hope so having spent far too many days outdoors this winter getting cold and wet although looking back over the tasks I see that in fact we escaped the worst of it.

The first task of the last programme took us to Ham Common on a sparkling sunny day, the first shirtsleeves day of the year. With stunning views over the bay a busy time was had clearing encroaching gorse to open up a path and adjacent view point. On the Sunday operations moved a short distance along the coast to the Luscombe Valley to help clear back invading birch and willow on a site that we had not visited for many years.

The following weekend saw us in the west of the county for a couple of days of hedge laying on the DWT reserve at Kingcombe. For a change someone else had cleared out and started a number of sections so it was straight into hedge laying on both days with plenty of room for all tackle their own section of hedge.

A week later and a surprising number of people found their way down the long narrow lane on a damp cold day to Coombe Heath where we picked-up where we left off last winter and continued clearing the invasive birch, warmed by the work and large fire that made several bids to escape across the heath. The rather dismal weather continued on the following weekend at Lankham Bottom where we indulged in our usual activity there of removing leggy gorse and very prickly hawthorn and reducing them to a satisfyingly large pile of ash. Damp conditions made working on the

steep slope quite an adventure and most people found themselves slip sliding away more than once.

The first weekend in March saw us at Brackets Coppice continuing with the hedge laying task started last year and as with the previous year two days of warm sunny weather. For me probably the best task of the programme in fact we had so much fun we went back for an additional day the following weekend before the scheduled task on Sunday. Although the turn-out was fairly low on all three days a good hedge and lots of enthusiasm meant that we laid some 90 metres of hedge to a good standard. On the Sunday, another bright sunny day with a good turnout from both DCV and Butterfly Conservation, we returned for one of our regular visits to Broadcroft Quarry to continue driving back the scrub and extend the areas of short turf so beloved of the butterflies there. Following complaints about the amount of smoke we had generated on our last visit we were under instructions not to overload the fires so we did our best to keep the fire burning hot and smoke free.

Unfortunately the spring like weather of the previous two weekends didn't last and the two busy days of rhody bashing at Clouds Hill were rather damp but the blazing fire helped keep the chill at bay. On Saturday we finally finished clearing rhody from outside the boundary and on Sunday we moved into the garden to clear a path through dense rhody giving Peter a last chainsaw outing for the winter.

The following weekend we returned to Tyneham, a site that has featured in most of the

recent programmes and is rapidly becoming a favourite as we get to see how our efforts benefit the centre. The stream we dug behind the barn on our original tasks has matured so well it is difficult to believe that it was only created some 18 months ago, a real reward for all the hard work that we have put in creating it. Following a busy session of tree planting all hands turned to digging and stone clearing in the bat garden in preparation for it to be planted up over Easter and erecting a rabbit-proof fence to protect this.

The break in the scheduled tasks at Easter gave us time to commission the new trailer and this had its first outing to Broadoak on the following weekend where we found ourselves planting a small copse of varied native trees and constructing an enclosure to protect them from the sheep that come in to graze the field at various times during the year.

Possibly due to prolonged cold wet weather and often over pessimistic weather forecasts, attendance at tasks has been lower this Winter particularly on Saturdays when on several occasions the day has started with only the leader and one other. Thankfully each time this has happened a few more people have turned up later in the day to reward the effort needed to get the tools on-site. With the improving weather and a busy schedule of tasks to look forward to it is time to cancel that subscription to the local gym and come and burn off those winter calories doing something productive in the glorious Dorset countryside.

Richard Meatyard

Return of the Natives

Sarah Williams of Dorset Wildlife Trust explains DCV's newest project

Return of the Natives is a new project centred on Dorset's most important rivers. After habitat loss, the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species is a major cause of loss to native biodiversity in many parts of the world. The situation is no different here. In this country freshwater and wetland habitats are particularly prone to invasion by non-native plants. This is because of our long custom of bringing plants from many parts of the world to enrich our gardens and water features, and the ability of some to escape into the wild and to spread relatively unhindered along rivers and other watercourses out competing the native flora.

Dorset contains a concentration of nationally important rivers and wetlands designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). They cover lengths of river along the Frome, Bere Stream and much of the Moors River and River Avon, and

wetlands in the floodplains and in the headwater valleys. Many areas are affected by invasive non-native plants. Some, such as Canadian pondweed, have been with us for over a century and despite replacing native species like water-milfoils have had to be accepted as their removal is too difficult. Others are more recent. Himalayan balsam was not recorded when the Frome and Moors River were surveyed for SSSI designation in the 1980s but is now widely present and often abundantly so. Others are just starting to invade, such as monkey flower and skunk cabbage.

Return of the Natives project aims to get these 3 species under control and return native riparian plants to our banksides. With Himalayan balsam the most abundant, most of the effort will be spent on this species. However the extent of all 3 was mapped last year. Using these maps we will concentrate effort in

the upper reaches of the Frome initially and that is where the DCV will be helping with the project. There are two weekends planned with DCV hand pulling on the River Hooke, a tributary of the Frome on the 5th & 6th June and 19th & 20th June. Hand pulling is easy, but the plants are very numerous!

Himalayan balsam is an annual that seeds along the river banks and quickly grows, out shading the native flora. The roots are very shallow, so when it dies back in the autumn the banks have no cover and no roots holding them together, so erosion and siltation becomes a problem. Return of the Native project also focuses on restoring native flora that can be replaced by these invasive plants, river bank and wetland species such as meadowsweet, purple loosestrife, yellow flag iris, skullcap and figwort.

DCV tasks:

5th & 6th June

19th & 20th June

DORSET COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and ANNUAL REUNION

will be held at West Stafford Village Hall
on Saturday 3rd July 2010
at 6.30 p.m.

DCV President Kevin Cooke will preside over the AGM

a shared supper will follow
with plenty of time to socialise
Please bring a dish to share and a drink

Speaker : Sarah Williams, Dorset Wildlife Trust

N.B. Any nominations for election of officers should be sent to Richard Meatyard



ASSOCIATION ORCHIS VISIT DORSET MAY 2010



Members of the French Conservation group Orchis are visiting us again on Saturday 22nd May 2010.

In the afternoon we will take them site seeing in and around Christchurch.

On Sunday they will join us at the Tyneham Farm Project task with other DCV members. At lunchtime we will provide a picnic for our guests and a BBQ after the day's toils.

All DCV members are welcome to join in the lunch and/or BBQ which could be a great way to finish off the weekends work.

Catering is difficult without knowing precisely how many people will attend but we would like as many DCV members as possible not just to work over the weekend but to join us in eating with our French guests. If you would like to join us in the picnic at lunchtime and/or the BBQ in the evening please advise me or Helen Gorman before Wednesday 19th May.

We do need to know the numbers involved therefore please advise one of us if you would like to eat with us. We will have to make a charge for the lunchtime and/or evening food (alcoholic drinks will be

available with the evening BBQ). The charge will be £5 per person.

Since this is MOD property we need to be off site by dusk which is shortly before 9pm.

I look forward to seeing you on site at Tyneham. Please join us for the picnic and/or BBQ but we do need to know how many people we will be catering for by 19th May.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Terry Gillott
French Link

In a busy world working with DCV provides much needed respite, peace and time away from the hurly burly, a chance to recharge batteries and enjoy the benefits of a physical workout. All of this in an undeniably glorious landscape, giving us an intimate knowledge of its remote and beautiful places.

On top of this, it offers a link with Dorset's diverse history, providing a sense of continuity and permanence, a connection with the places we visit. Out on the worksite, separated from today's world, it's easy to imagine the landscape in another time. Often there are visible clues of previous occupation for example in Bronze or Iron Age burial mounds, hill forts where local tribes sheltered or fought, remnants of a Roman road. Sometimes the clues are less conspicuous.

One very visible feature running through much of east Dorset provides a physical link in a literal sense. The Castleman Trailway, also known as Castleman's Corkscrew, follows the line of the old Southampton to Dorchester railway opened in 1847, calling at East Ramsdown, Ashley Heath, Lions Hill, West Moors, Delph Woods, Upton Heath and linking not just several DCV worksites, but also many relicts of the once great Dorset heath. Despite urbanisation, in Dorset we are still well endowed with heathland habitats. Following the clearing of primeval woodland for pasture and crops, grazing prevented

tree regrowth, the soils became leached and acidic allowing heathland to establish. Heathlands have provided grazing for sheep and cattle, honey from hives, gorse for fuel or thatching, heather turves for fuel or roofing, heather as a base for roads and tracks, to bind cob walls together and for brooms. Today our heathland sites are internationally important for the diversity of flora and fauna. Although fragmented, they still form an important habitat link to other such sites. Without management their distinctive landscape would be lost, covered in scrub, self-sown pine trees from neighbouring forestry plantations and rhododendron.

Often signs of later use are evident, relating the story of past use and resulting in the landscapes we see today. Many of Dorset's heaths lie on good deposits of clay. Ham Common's chaotic slopes, mounds and water filled hollows are a reminder of the exploitation of ball clay which began during the Roman occupation, and became large scale in the 19th century when clay was extracted for Royal Doulton. The clay was also used for tiles and pottery around Poole. Commercial quarrying ceased in the late 1920s. Originally the clay was dug out with curved spades and curled into balls, hence ball clay. Fossil of fruit, seeds, wood can be found here, a link with the mangrove swamps that dominated the area 55 million years ago. Over time heathland returned and the resulting

difficult terrain helped save it from urbanisation. The flooded diggings and spoil heaps at Kilwood in Purbeck result from clay mining dating back to Roman times, extraction ending in the 1970s. Today the site is rich in flowers, birds, insects, mammals. On Creech heath, Pikes tramway carried clay to Ridge for transportation. The introduction of tobacco brought the need for clay pipe production and Wedgewood concluded that Purbeck Blue Clay was the best in the world.

At Upton heath there are visible remains of a Roman road, still used today as a bridleway. It was built soon after the invasion in AD43 in order to conquer the local tribe of Durotiges and to supply a large fortress base at Lake. Samian ware from potteries at Toulouse and Lyon, together with wine, were imported through Hamworthy.

On Ferndown Common extensive boundary banks date back to the enclosure acts of the 18th and 19th centuries, while some irregular ones in the centre are much older (pre 1600). There are also areas of ridge and furrow where cultivation was attempted during wartime. Holt Heath is recorded in the Domesday Book as the 'foresta de Winburne' a royal chase and forest. Known to have connections with the Monmouth rebellion, it is documented as the place where Judge Jefferies conducted his first interview with the Duke of Monmouth. Parley Common, in the 1600s, was

divided into long, narrow strips, a principal product being turf for fuel. With some areas being wetter and poorer than others, the strips gave everyone a fair share.

Chalk downland, too, evolved from human activity with the clearing of large areas of ancient woodland followed by sheep farming, creating the open chalk grassland landscape. Sheep grazed and trampled plants, preventing scrub and young trees from growing. Thinner chalk soils drain more easily, providing good grazing. Iron Age forts were built here, familiar to us from our scrub bashing tasks on Hod and Hambledon. Wars brought the need for more food production and many farmers stopped sheep farming. In some areas only rabbits kept the grass short although this was much reduced in the 1950s with the deliberate introduction of myxomatosis. As a result, rough grasses, scrub and trees spread onto the chalk grassland, shading out the grassland plants - hence the need for our scrub cutting to maintain the diversity of flora and fauna.

Many tasks have linked us to another railway, the Maiden Newton - Bridport line in operation from 1857 until 1975 with The West Bay extension opened in 1884. Around Maiden Newton we've cut scrub, repaired a fence and helped maintain a road bridge over the line. We've restored nearby water meadows and repaired the riverbank. Down the line, near Toller, we have hedgelayed at Kingcombe, whilst at Powerstock we have cut scrub from the track and worked in woodland and meadow, not forgetting of course

renovation work on the brick kiln. The Bridport line was heavily used during the First World War transporting millions of hemp lanyards used by the services, 50,000 hay nets for Army horses were sent off weekly, in addition to rifle "pull-throughs", tent, balloon and airship ropes, camouflage nets and twine for stitching canvas, steel cord for anti-submarine nets and vast quantities of timber required for the war effort. Goods traffic too was heavy on the Bridport line, much of it agricultural. At Toller a sawmill provided truck loads of pitprops, railway sleepers and boxes for the Kentish fruit trade. Powerstock handled coal traffic and during the last war became a coal dump. In 1936 a railway camping coach was installed at Powerstock. These six berth coaches, kitted out with crockery, cutlery and bedding were used for family holidays until the start of World War II.

Scrub cutting on Portland has taken us to the limestone quarries worked by the Romans and through the middle ages, becoming economically viable in 17th century. Quarrying has created a unique landscape of drystone walls, tracks and quarry faces from which we have cut various invasive species. The burning of chalk or limestone in a kiln to convert it into quicklime goes back to at least Roman times in this country. Quicklime when crushed to a powder and drenched in water is called slaked lime and can be used as a fertiliser especially in acid areas, as a whitewash on buildings and to make hardened floors in cottages. DCV has enjoyed restoring two limekilns in Dorset, one at Church Knowle and the other at Swyre.

Other DCV links with the 'industrial' past, besides the Powerstock brick kiln and the two limekilns, include the Symondsburys sheepwash, which offers many hours of pleasurable renovation. Here the sheep were washed prior to shearing as a clean fleece was worth more money. Passers by who have stopped to watch our work have shared memories of its use within their lifetime.

For more links with the recent past, we've rhody bashed around Clouds Hill, the cottage where T E Lawrence - of Arabia lived until his death in 1935 whilst tasks around Chesil Beach and The Fleet have taken us to the 1943 test site for the bouncing bomb. At Tyneham, compulsorily evacuated just before the Second World War, we are helping to restore the farm as part of the ongoing Tyneham Farm Project giving an insight into a way of life now lost in another era.

So many diverse habitats, each with their own story, supporting so much diversity of flora and fauna. For now it's our turn to help manage these habitats, which without our helping hand could be lost forever. All of this and so much more on our doorstep, waiting to be discovered when we are out in the glorious Dorset countryside.

Val Simcock

Tools tips for the safer approach to working

Using the right tool for the job

Spades have a strong narrow blade with a sharpened edge and little lift angle between the blade and the handle. They should have a blunt tread so they can be used even with Wellington boots. When using keep your weight over the tool and push it down with maximum force. Do not try to lift too much or use the spade as a lever. Bend your knees, not back.

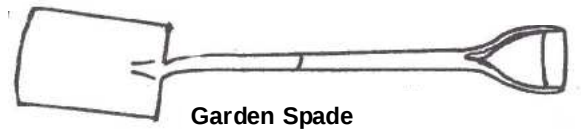
Shovels are made for shifting and lifting and have a broad thinner blade that can buckle if used as a spade. Work from as low a position as possible and lift with your knees keeping a straight back.

Pick axes have a hardened steel head and an Ash or Hickory handle. They are used to break up hard stony ground but do not use them as a lever. A good method is for one person to use the pick on hard stony ground to break it open and a second person use a spade or shovel to move the spoil, thus allowing the first person to rest.

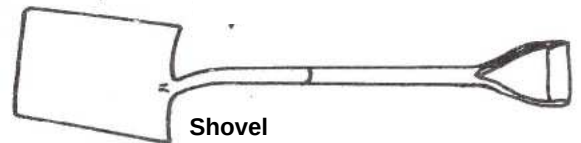
Mattocks have a wooden handle but a softer steel head. The broad blade is used to break up hard ground and the sharp axe end for cutting roots. If digging a trench stand in it, this is much easier than leaning over and straining your back.

Bars are called crow or wrecking bars and are used as levers to move heavy objects. They can also be used to make post holes and break stone in the ground. Wrecking bars are often used for pulling out nails.

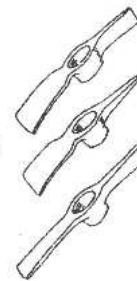
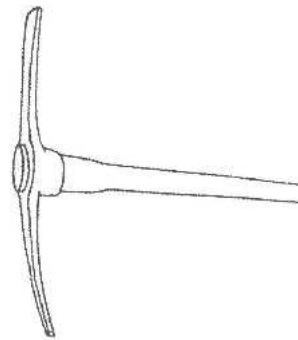
is it a spade . . or is it a shovel . . ?



Garden Spade



Shovel



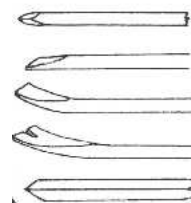
Grubbing mattock

Pick ended mattock

English clay mattock



Wrecking bar



3 to 10ft
long
Different

A simple key to surviving tasks this spring

Protect your eyes:

- < use sunglasses to protect against glare and the sun
- < use goggles or close your eyes (blink) more often when using a mattock or pick on stony ground
- < when cutting back scrub or brambles, keep your head as far back as possible

Protect your skin against the sun:

- < sun cream or block is a must in spring through to autumn - it's all too easy not to notice getting burnt when working
- < wear a hat to protect your face and neck
- < wear a shirt with long sleeves and collar

Dehydration:

- < drink more water - little and often is best
- < keep a bottle of water near to where you are working
- < work steadily and don't over exert yourself

Attacks:

- < wear insect repellent when necessary
- < carry your own antihistamine (either as a cream or pills) if allergic to bites
- < wash skin if you come into contact with any plant sap to prevent blotching

Remember safety is also your responsibility

LOGS TO BURN

Thank you Maurice for sending in this poem

Logs to burn, logs to burn
Logs to save the coal a turn
Here's a word to make you wise
When you hear the woodman's cries

Beechwood fires burn bright and clear
Hornbeam blazes too
If the logs are kept a year
To season through

Oak logs will warm you well
If they're old and dry
Larch logs of pine wood smell
But the sparks will fly

Pine is good and so is Yew
For warmth through winters days
But Poplar and Willow too
Take long to dry and blaze

Birch logs will burn too fast
Alder scarce at all
Chestnut logs are good to last
If cut in the fall

Holly logs will burn like wax
You should burn them green
Elm logs like smouldering flax
No flame to be seen

Pear logs and Apple logs
they will scent your room
Cherry logs across the dogs
Smell like flowers in bloom

But Ash logs, all smooth and grey
burn them green or old
Buy up all that come your way
They're worth their weight in gold

← Springwatch in Dorset

This spring's BBC television programme Springwatch will feature locations within Dorset. Various filming opportunities are being discussed with Simon King's team for the forthcoming show, for which Simon will be in Dorset . . . so keep an eye out for familiar places.

← Pond Project

Three great crested newt ponds near Langton Matravers have been restored in partnership with Dorset Wildlife Trust and National Trust. Around 15 further ponds have been examined prior to survey or restoration work in the area.

← Dorset Wildlife Trust Studland Project

Seahorses at Studland in Dorset have been in the news lately although local residents report finding them decades ago. The first confirmed evidence of seahorses breeding at Studland (a pregnant male spiny seahorse) came in 2004 - there have been many sightings since, including a pregnant short-snouted seahorse.

Of the two species found in the UK, the spiny seahorse is the one most associated with seagrass and most likely to be found at Studland. Like their relatives, the pipefish, they have jaws fused into a narrow tube and use bellow-like cheeks to suck in small prey. It is thought that seahorses first evolved their

upright posture as an adaptation to living in seagrass meadows, taking advantage of the vertical stems for shelter and camouflage.

Two dead but very fresh seahorses recently washed up at Studland show that the creatures have survived (at least until March) in very cold sea temperatures, whereas it was previously thought that they moved to deeper water in winter.

Of particular concern is the damage caused to the seagrass by boats moored in the bay, whose anchors effectively plough the seagrass meadows.

Dorset Wildlife Trust's final report for the Studland project has been produced – check out www.ssssg.org.uk

Outward looking school has won UN status World views put students on map

By James Tourgout. Deputy Head of News, Dorset Echo

This report appeared in Dorset Echo on 31st March 2010 and is reproduced here with their kind permission

THE global outlook of students at the Thomas Hardy School in Dorchester has helped it gain UN status.

They have taken part in special projects to secure the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Associated Schools Project Network membership.

The Queens Avenue school has become one of just 54 nationwide to boast the UNESCO connection.

Deputy headteacher Richard Wheal said: "The Thomas Hardy School has already been declared a World School by the International Baccalaureate Organisation in Geneva.

"Being invited to become a UNESCO Associated School confirms that we are outward looking.

"It also confirms that we are keen to prepare our students for life in a complex world and a multi-cultural Britain, and that we are committed to a fully-rounded education in which outstanding achievement is but a part."

UNESCO aims to promote quality education as well as international perspectives in schools and such values as human rights, mutual respect and cultural diversity.

Schools are encouraged to undertake projects and activities related to one or more of four study themes.



Thomas Hardy student and D C V member Tom Hearing

They are the UN system and UN priorities, Education for Sustainable Development, Peace and Human Rights and Intercultural Learning.

Thomas Hardy School was chosen for its work in all four areas.

Its projects include a model UN running in the sixth form and its strong links with the Jurassic Coast project.

Newly-crowned UK Young Scientist of the Year Tom Hearing's project to measure the erosion of an ammonite-rich ledge near Lyme Regis has played a key part.

The school also has a Student Voice group which has set up projects to reduce the carbon footprint of all students in Dorchester by 10 per cent – including links with other schools.

The school sells healthy, local produce, such as ham and bacon from Pampered Pigs, and is a Fairtrade School.

Scientist Tom set to jet off

UK YOUNG Scientist of the Year Thomas Hearing is off to San Jose in California to represent the country at the International Science Fair.

Thomas Hardy student Tom, aged 18, will attend the festival in May and is also due to attend British Geological Survey 75th anniversary celebrations in September.

He won the prestigious UK Young Scientist of the Year title in the National Science and Engineering Competition at the Big Bang science fair in Manchester.

He is the first winner of the title from Dorset and finished above the 200 best young scientists in the country.

Tom won the award after receiving a Nuffield Foundation Science Bursary for a summer project on coastal erosion near Lyme Regis.

Sharmila Metcalf, who is national co-ordinator for the Nuffield Science Bursary scheme, said: "I had an opportunity to chat to Tom and he thoroughly deserves the award."

DCV Social Diary

As always Doug's pancake evening was well attended and a thoroughly enjoyable evening of delicious food and entertaining chat was experienced by all. In March despite the difficulty in booking a table six DCV members enjoyed a pub meal at The Silent Woman Wareham - not The Sailor's Return. We couldn't find a telephone number that was obtainable for that pub despite checking the internet and Yellow Pages. If anyone does have a current number it would be appreciated.

This quarter's newsletter includes the Orchis Social on May 23rd and the AGM. As both of these are socials no additional venues have been arranged. Please note there will be a barbeque to follow the Tyneham task on Sunday 23rd May. Please inform Terry or Helen if you would like to attend as catering will be more difficult. Please come to take part in the evening when we entertain our French guests. A charge of £5 will be made to cover the cost of the meal.

The AGM will be held on Saturday 3rd July. Please join us and bring a dish of your own as a contribution to the meal. Once the business of the evening has been concluded, Sarah Williams of Dorset Wildlife Trust will speak to us about Himalayan balsam.

Publicity report - Brian Thompson

Brian's been busy attending meetings on behalf of DCV. The first, organised by Dorset Volunteer Centre was for all organisations using volunteers in countryside conservation. The aim was to help the Volunteer Centre send the right person to the right organisation as well as identifying needs of those present. There was a lot of discussion about recruitment and retention of volunteers. Many said that today's youngsters were willing to work weekdays, but getting them to come out on a weekend was difficult - a handicap for DCV. One suggestion was that DCV needs a site on Facebook as most groups and organisations are using it, especially to communicate with young people. Brian is in contact with the County Youth Team who would be willing to discuss Facebook with DCV and maybe help with ideas on setting up the site. It needs someone who is in to IT and mobile phones to run it.

The second meeting was the Countryside and Environmental Industrial Liaison Group at Kingston Maurward College for the purpose of helping the college in the planning of their Countryside Skills and Management courses. We may see students from these courses out on task for them to improve and obtain skills in working in the countryside. Having a younger presence in the group even for a short time might help in the recruitment of younger volunteers to DCV.

At the moment Brian has three events booked for DCV publicity and hopes to make it four.

DCV currently has a vacant post, that of publicity officer in the east of the county. If you are interested, please contact Brian Thompson

DCV Sweatshirts with logo

Cost - still only £16.50 Also available - Polo Shirts at £13.00 T-Shirts at £9.50

Ladies sizes available - 8 to 24 Children's sizes available - (Prices on request)

Most Colours Available (No orders for pink in last 10 years)

Orders to Brian Thompson with cheque made payable to Dorset Countryside Volunteers

D C V DIARY May - July 2010

DATE	TASK SITE	CLIENT	WORK
May 2 Sunday	Toolstore, Wool	DCV	Tools maintenance
May 8 & 9	Kingdombe Meadows, West Dorset	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Boardwalk construction
May 15 & 16	Kingdombe Meadows, West Dorset	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Boardwalk construction
May 22 & 23	Tyneham	MoD Tyneham Farm Project	Dry stone walling & cobble pitching
May 23 Sunday	BBQ at Tyneham with Association Orchis	Booking essential	Contact Terry or Helen
May 30 Sunday	Upton Wood	Purbeck District Council	Pool digging and bramble cutting
June 5 & 6	River Hooke, Kingcombe Meadows	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Balsam pulling
June 12 & 13	Swyre, West Dorset	Private	Drystone walling
June 19 & 20	River Hooke, Kingcombe Meadows	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Balsam pulling
June 27 Sunday	Upton Wood	Purbeck District Council	Ditch clearing
July 1 Thursday	Planning Meeting	@ Don & Val's 7.45	
July 3 Saturday	A G M & annual reunion	West Stafford village hall 6.30 p.m.	Bring a dish to share and a drink
July 4 Sunday	Ryewater Farm	Plantlife	Fencing
July 10 & 11	Loscombe	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Thistle cutting
July 17 & 18	Swyre, West Dorset	Private	Drystone walling
July 25 Sunday	Tadnoll	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Ragwort pulling

DCV mobile: 07929 961532 (task hours)

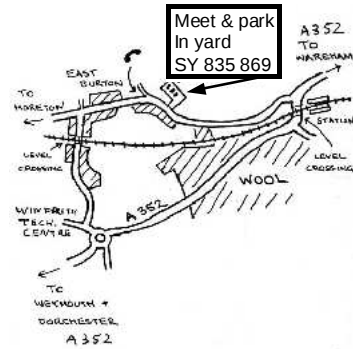
web site: www.dcv.org.uk

Remember to keep a note of the DCV mobile phone number - there could be occasions when a task may have to be cancelled at the last minute, or may have to finish early, e.g. in adverse weather conditions. If you are coming out later in the day, it may be wise to phone to check the task is still running.

DCV TASK PROGRAMME : May - July 2010

DCV Tool Store

OS 194



Sunday 2 May: Wool Toolstore, Purbeck

We have no task booked for this weekend and so we shall use the opportunity to catch up on some tools maintenance at our toolstore.

If you have ever wondered where all the tools and our trailer live during weekdays, well now's your chance to find out. Having spent the year bashing and blunting everything from bowsaws to wheelbarrows, the time has come for giving some serious TLC. There are blades to sharpen, handles to linseed and squeaks to oil, mud to scrape off the yard area and lots more. And there is also our brand new trailer to inspect and admire!

NB: There will be a leisurely lunch at a country pub just a short walk down the road.

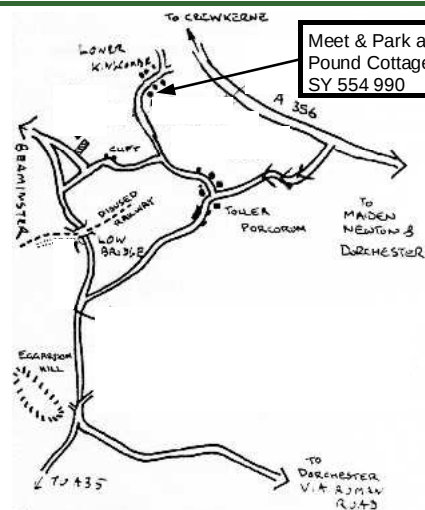
8 & 9 May: Kingcombe Meadows, West Dorset

In this programme we have a series of tasks in and around this fascinating nature reserve. Usually we visit in winter when nature is slumbering and our hedgelaying skills can be put to good use. The landscape is etched with skeleton shaped trees and hedges and coloured by the dull greens of winter grassland. These summer visits will allow you to see the trees and hedges in their full leafy glory, and the meadows pasted with rich shades of green and the yellows and reds of millions of flowers. We start with a project to construct a boardwalk on a path leading to a bridge over the River Hook. The valley path becomes a slippery mass of deep mud churned up by cattle and walkers. A boardwalk should solve the problem. It will need a hand rail and gates to keep the cattle off. We have done several boardwalks in the past so there will be experienced volunteers to provide help and direction. Construction involves lots of different jobs so there is something for everyone.

NB: Meet at Pond cottage. Bring walking boots or wellies to cope with the mud.

Kingcombe Meadows

OS 194

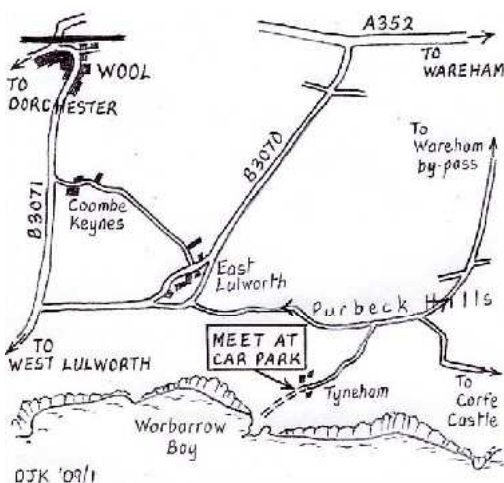


15 & 16 May: Kingcombe Meadows, West Dorset

This weekend we continue on the boardwalk construction project, picking up from where we left off at the end of our last task. By now we should be able to do the handrail and we will need to finish off on the gates. If we really do well and finish by Sunday there is some fencing work to keep us occupied. See 8 & 9 May for more details.

Tyneham

OS 194 & 195



22 & 23 May: Tyneham, Purbeck

We return to help with restoration work around the Tyneham farmstead. The buildings, along with the neighbouring village and surrounding land were requisitioned by the armed forces during World War II for essential training. The area has remained in military use ever since. Over the years the cottages and other buildings slowly decayed and started to collapse. But fortunately the slow loss was recognised. The village buildings have been progressively restored and now provide a glimpse of Dorset frozen in time from over half a century ago. The farmstead restoration is one of the largest projects. On this occasion we have been asked to do some drystone walling and, something new for DCV, some cobble pitching in the old ford crossing. There is also vegetation management. So there is plenty of choice. Experienced volunteers will be on hand to help if you wish to try your hand at the walling or have a go at cobble pitching.

NB: On Sunday we are joined by our twinning friends from Orchis so it would be good to see lots of you to mingle and exchange chat.

DCV TASK PROGRAMME : May - July 2010

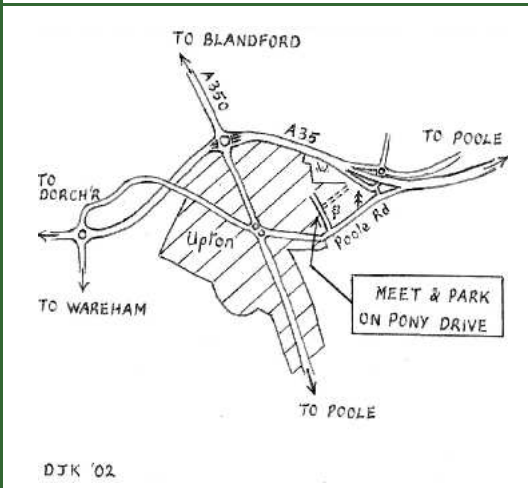
Sunday 30 May: Upton Wood, Poole-Purbeck border

This area, squeezed between Upton and its by-pass, is more than just a woodland. There is also some scrub and grassland and in one part a heathland mire, once part of the mire system that descends through Upton Heath on the other side of the by-pass. It's here in the mire that we have our task this week. We have been asked to dig out some pools among the moor-grass (*Molinia*) tussocks. The pools should attract dragonflies and other aquatic beasts, possibly even the raft spider, a Dorset heaths speciality that hunts prey on the water surface. The mire, despite its name, is drier than it should be and bramble is mounting an invasion by scrambling from one *Molinia* tussock to the next. So we have another job - these bramble need to be cut out.

NB: Bring wellies if you have them and come in old clothes - if pool digging is to your liking be prepared to get wet and muddy!

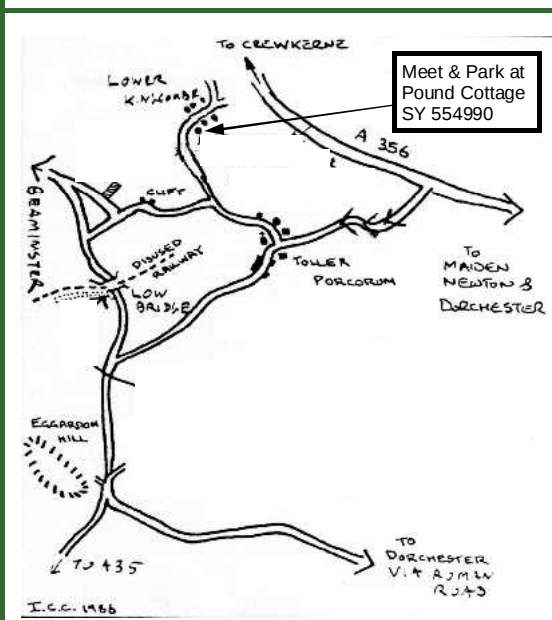
Upton Wood

OS 195



Kingcombe

OS 194



5 & 6 June: River Hooke, Kingcombe Meadows, West Dorset

Usually our pulling skills are applied to ragwort. This summer we have something new to pull: Himalayan balsam. As the name implies this plant comes from the Himalaya. Introduced to Britain it escaped into the wild and has spread along river banks, into fens and just about any uncultivated ground with wet soil, even on hill tops. It's the fastest growing annual in the countryside, and can grow to a height of nearly 3m during the summer months. Our native plants can't compete. The problem is national and the government is funding research into its control and also local initiatives to stop and reverse its spread. In recent years balsam has spread along miles of the River Frome, ousting native river bank plants. So DCV will be helping a new initiative to push back the plant, starting on the River Hooke tributary at the top end of its spread along the river banks. The plant has little root and is easy to pull, but the pulling must be done before it flowers and spreads seed. We shall be working our way along the riverside, from Pound Cottage up to Hook village and down to Toller. Every balsam must go.

NB: Bring wellies or boots for wet ground. And as balsam often grows among nettles it's best to bring some clothes to protect your legs and arms. Gloves can be provided on the day if you don't have any.

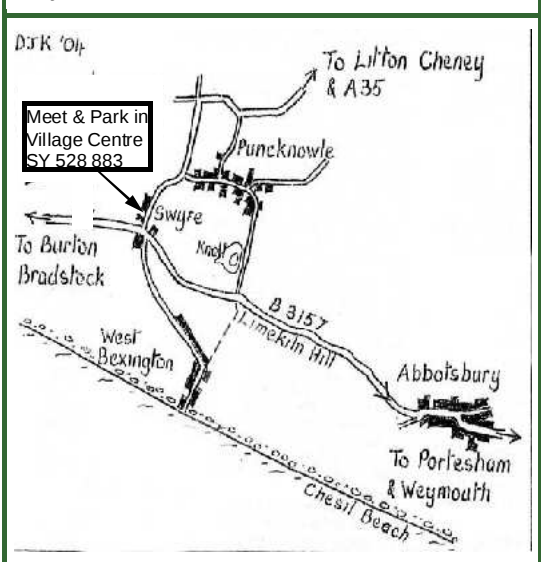
12 & 13 June: Swyre, West Dorset

We return to this tranquil farmland valley that lies behind the village in the west of the county. Centuries ago the fields were enclosed with limestone rocks and stones cleared from the land or dug from small quarries, producing strong stockproof walls able to stand up to the harshest of weather. But as farm labour declined, wire fences became easier to erect and maintain. Most drystone walls fell into disuse, slowly breaking down and disappearing under scrub through lack of care and maintenance. Now there is revived interest in drystone walls as part of our landscape heritage and many are being restored. We shall be tackling a long wall with several collapsed sections that runs along the top of the valley slope beside a farm track. We have some scrub to cut back and lots of fallen stone to rescue and sort. Then we can start on gap repairs. As usual there will be some experienced wallers on hand to provide guidance. The task is really worthwhile as our repaired wall will be seen and hopefully admired from the village houses across the valley for generations to come. The task continues later in July.

NB: Park in Swyre village centre (SY 528 883) near the telephone box just off the main road and look out for the distinctive DCV signs.

Swyre W Dorset

OS 194



D C V TASK PROGRAMME : May - July 2010

Kingcombe

OS 194



19 & 20 June: River Hooke, Kingcombe Meadows, West Dorset

We return to the River Hook to mop up any balsams that escaped our attention on the last visit and move onward into a new stretch of the river. By now the plants should be bigger, making them easier to see and grab among the vegetation. Once again this will be a bit of an adventure along the river bank, especially getting among the vegetation to all the places where the balsam takes hold. For more details, map and what to bring see task on 5 & 6 June.

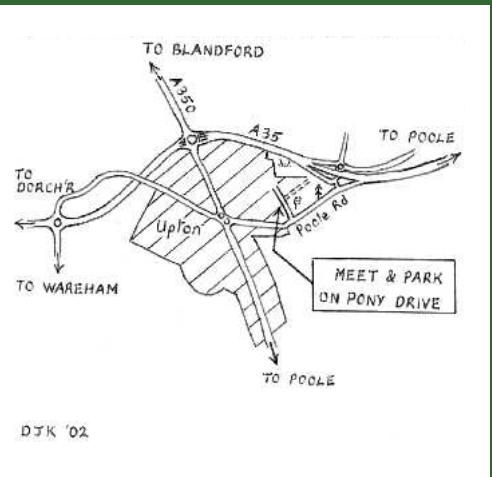
Sunday 27 June: Upton Wood, Poole-Purbeck border

For this Sunday task we move back east with a return visit to an area of conservation interest on the edge of Upton. On this occasion we have been asked to clear the ditches of debris. We last did this a few years back, hocking out lots of wood and leaves. We also collected an amazing assortment of urban detritus, from old tyres to cans and bottles, and even an almost complete bike.

NB: Bring wellies if you have them and gloves, and come in old clothes for splashing about in the ditches.

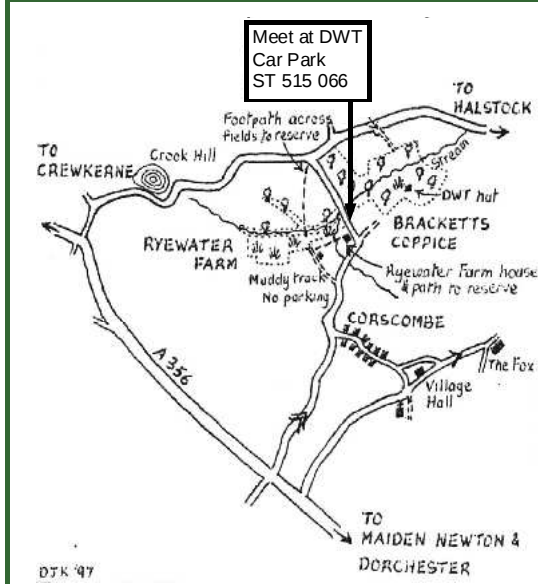
Upton Wood

OS 195



Ryewater Farm

OS 194



Sunday 4 July: Ryewater Farm, West Dorset

Our task programme resumes in remote corners of the far west. It's a fair journey from the populous towns but do make the effort (car share perhaps) and come and see another side to our wonderful county. We first visited this site soon after the pastures were acquired as a new nature reserve. Since then we have cleared scrub that was marching out into the plant rich grassland from surrounding hedges, removed miles of old barbed wire wrapped through a woodland strip bordering a valley bottom stream, and helped repair and renew the field fences. There are still some fences in a poor state. We shall be carrying out more repairs. Fencing is a varied task, some needing muscles but also lots of fiddly work with staples, hammer, wire and 'monkey-strainer' - if you have never strained a monkey come and find out how!

NB: There is now a second parking area in the DWT Bracket's Coppice reserve. Go a bit further north along the lane from the track entrance to the Ryewater reserve - just past a house where the lane does a sharp bend. Park here but beware the ground can be very soft if you stray into the grassland beyond the parking area.

DCV TASK PROGRAMME : May - July 2010

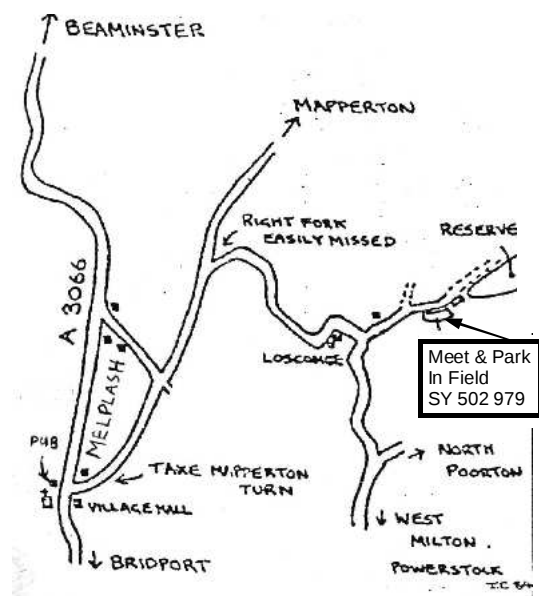
10 & 11 July: Loscombe, West Dorset

It's been a fair few years since we last visited this reserve, but we have had tasks here for decades. So this visit is long overdue. The reserve is aptly named, being tucked away in a deep valley. Even getting there is an adventure through winding, hedge-lined lanes and then down a steep sunken lane designed for the horse and cart to the streamside hamlet in the valley bottom. At the reserve there are precipitously sloping pastures full of anthills, a hay meadow and marshy grassland, all edged by hedgerows. A wooded stream along the bottom completes a scene of beauty and tranquillity. Our task on this occasion is to tackle thistles. In a few meadows they keep coming back in some abundance. This reduces the grazing needed to conserve the grassland plants. Cutting before the flowers set seed prevents yet more new thistles. This job would normally be done by tractor and machine but on steep slopes, among anthills or on wet ground there's nothing that beats DCV man (or woman) with scythe.

NB: Do bring your good gripping footwear for the steep slopes. Parking at the reserve is tricky. Do not park in residents lay-bys – they get annoyed! Look out for DCV signboard in valley bottom lane for directions.

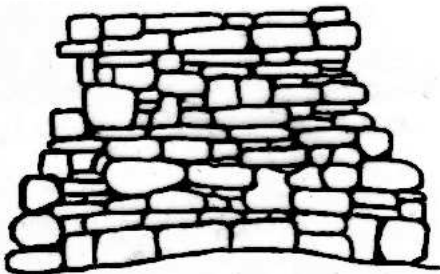
Loscombe

OS 194



Swyre W Dorset

OS 194



17 & 18 July: Swyre, West Dorset

This weekend we continue our repairs to a drystone wall in a tranquil farmland valley behind the village. Hopefully much of the preparatory work like fallen stone clearance and wall foundations will have been done in the last task. So we should be able to crack on building up the layers of stone forming the wall and closing the gaps. For more details and map see task on 12 & 13 June.

Sunday 25 July: Tadnoll, Purbeck

Once again it's that time of year when a countryside volunteer's mind turns to thoughts of yellow flowers. It's ragwort pulling time once again. This year we have a change of view – to a large heathland reserve. On the edge of the heath there is grassland and it is here that the ragwort needs to be kept under control. Ragwort can be deadly poisonous to livestock and the whole area is grazed by cattle and ponies. We shall be working our way across the land collecting ragwort in our trusty old fertiliser bags. We don't often visit heaths in the summer so this task also gives us a chance to see this fantastic habitat nearing its peak in heathery flowers buzzing with insects.

Tadnoll

OS 194

