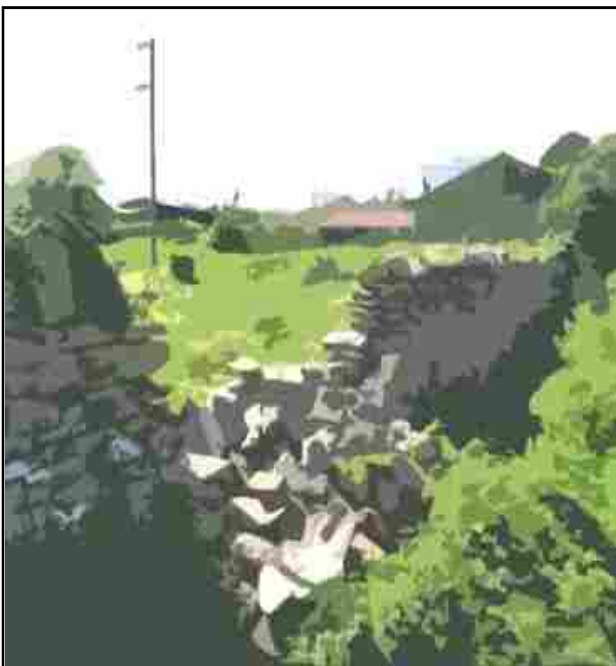


Dorset Countryside Volunteers



No 165
August - October 2013
Reg Charity No 1071723
www.dcv.org.uk



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 and from all over the county
- Work is seasonal, e.g. woodlands in winter - hedgelaying, coppicing; in summer dry stone walling, clearing ponds, footpath work
- Organisations we work for include: Dorset Wildlife Trust, Heritage Coast Project, Natural England, Amphibian & Reptile Conservation
- 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 plus training
- Accommodation on weekend tasks
- Beautiful countryside, social events, fun & companionship

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
- Lunch
- If staying overnight – a change of clothes, sleeping bag (air bed/camp bed if you wish)
- Up to date tetanus jab
- Wash, disinfect and dry all footwear to be used in or near ponds streams and watercourses

Reaching a task . . .

- If you need / can offer a lift, phone Peter Warren 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 are included

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

It's time to celebrate! Not least because the sun is shining and, for a while at least, we've been able to rely on good weather. What a difference it makes, (most) people are happier. Other reasons to be cheerful: DCV has completed another successful year - its 40th - with an amazing list of work achieved - see the annual report; as Richard says, we have a dedicated core of volunteers who turn out in most weathers, plus a dedicated team of people prepared to do that little bit more to organise the running of the group and to act as leaders. Richard has already thanked these people, but there is one omission from his list. On behalf of everyone in, or connected with DCV, a huge thank you to Richard for his tremendous efforts and hard work in co-ordinating DCV (not an easy task), leading so many tasks, running the web site, producing the annual report and so much other background work that we don't see.

You will see from the annual report that sadly attendance numbers on task are down. DCV needs your help this summer to help the wildlife of Dorset. We need our existing members to come out more often and we need new volunteers to join us - and to want to come back again, so let's encourage new people to join and also make their task experience enjoyable. We have such a lot to offer - a wide variety of work in our task programme, from the constructive to the destructive - something for everyone; the chance to see parts of Dorset we might not otherwise, training and new skills to learn. DCV is a working, active group, so please, as a member, do your bit.

Vigilance needs to be key to DCV activity. We must not spread seeds, plant material, spores and diseases from one work site to another. Please empty your pockets and turn ups on site, wash your clothes regularly and clean and disinfect your boots every task. Countryside workers are very mobile and can inadvertently spread all sorts of hard to eradicate problems.

There is one more celebration on the horizon - word has it that Roy Smith from Bridport will be celebrating his 90th birthday in September. So,

*Wishing you a Very Happy Birthday Roy
Many congratulations and our very best wishes
from everyone in DCV*

Winfrith village hall one recent warm evening in July was the venue for DCV's AGM and a very successful evening it was too. Gary Powell from Amphibian Reptile Conservation entertained us with a very interesting and informative talk on heathland. He also mentioned that ARC are keen to have some help with identification and species surveys, so if you are interested in being involved in this please get in touch. You will be given some training and pointed to a patch of heathland near your home - so hopefully would not encroach on your task time. <http://www.arc-trust.org/>

A reminder that if you have forgotten to pay your membership, Chris will still be very happy to relieve you of it. The money contributes towards the cost of producing four newsletters a year, the annual report and also the cost of the website. So you can see that it is a valuable source of income for the group, even though it is only a nominal amount.

One of our worksites this summer goes by the delightful name of Slop Bog. Your imagination will probably tell you what we should expect there, but more information can be found on the interesting leaflet reproduced within this newsletter by kind permission of Dorset Countryside. So don't forget to add bog-hopping to your list of things to do this summer.

Coordinator's Report

As my annual report to the AGM is included in this newsletter I will do my best to keep this one brief. As usual the Summer months see a change mainly to construction and invasive species tasks.

As always I need first to catch up on the two tasks that didn't make my last report. The first of these was overhauling the steps that we installed many years ago on Houns Tout. The following weekend was an unseasonably late Rhody bashing session at Clouds Hill where we made a start, despite the weather, on clearing what little remains of the Rhody on the site.

The first task of the last programme was the Great Dorset Beach Clean with DCV dealing with their traditional section at Abbotsbury. This year we were back on the official date and turnout was good, as was the haul of rubbish.

The following weekend was, unusually, a single day at Tyneham. As always there was a varied selection of work to be done and slightly to everyone's surprise, given the limited time, all but one were completed.

The first weekend in May was a split location task. On Saturday we were busy replacing the hand rails alongside the Coast Path at Winspit and on Sunday moved to St Alban's Head to make a start on rebuilding a further section of the wall alongside the Coast Path. The following weekend we completed this section of the wall that we and other groups have been restoring in the past few years.

The next weekend saw a brief break from walling when we spent a couple of days resuming our ongoing war against the invading brambles and scrub in the mire in Upton Wood.

Then finally for May it was back to walling with a single day rebuilding a section of fallen out wall at Swyre, on a sunny summer's day. Sadly no piglets this time just turkeys strutting their stuff.

The following weekend at Osmington the summer weather continued making for two hot days building and repairing steps, path levelling and surfacing. This work having been given priority over the boardwalk construction which has been deferred to our return visit in July.

June also saw the start of our invasive species work with the first visit to Hooke to continue our attempt to eradicate Himalayan Balsam from the head waters of the River Frome. A promised couple of hours in a, midge infested, wet woodland turned into a whole day and still more to do.

Having, on our previous visit to the Quarr, spotted that the steps we installed in 2005 were in urgent need of rebuilding. We made a return to do this, with some nettle clearing and hogweed control thrown in for good measure.

The following weekend was a return visit to Upton Wood for our, now, annual stream clearing task. A surprising number of large logs were extracted from

the stream and hidden away so hopefully they won't be returned to block the stream.

The transition from June to July was the first of our Ragwort pulling tasks at a now regular venue, Greenland on Purbeck. The cold spring meant that most of it wasn't yet in flower so it wasn't until we started pulling that the magnitude of the task became apparent.

In July we continued with the theme of invasives. First with a split site task, Saturday on the Bere Stream (Milbourne St Andrew) pulling a localised outbreak of the dreaded pink peril. Then Sunday a return to the wet woodland, thankfully midge free this time, at Hooke where we finally cleared all visible Himalayan Balsam.

South Poorton was expected to be a Ragwort pulling task but by some miracle there wasn't a single live Ragwort plant in sight so the day was dedicated to pulling and cutting Creeping and Spear Thistle which are starting to become a problem in certain areas of this open grassland.

Strangely this quarter as the weather improved so the attendance on task seems to have dropped. Quite why is something of a mystery, was it Wimbledon, the chance to get out and garden or the call of the beach proving irresistible? Hopefully if the good weather continues a quiet day in the countryside with DCV will regain its popularity.

Richard Meatyard

CLEAN BOOT POLICY

Help protect our native Crayfish

Our native Crayfish - the White Clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) - are under threat. The creature is very susceptible to a virulent fungal disease - **crayfish plague** that can kill them. This disease is carried by the non native North American Signal Crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) which is present in our rivers and streams.

Don't be the one to spread water-borne disease, or invasive aquatic species!

We can inadvertently carry this disease on our wellington boots and waders.

The fungal spores can remain viable for 6-22 days without a host under wet or damp conditions.

What can we do?

We need to make every effort to ensure this disease is not carried from one stream to another.

***Please ensure your boots and waders are cleaned,
disinfected and dry before entering any river or stream***

For further information :

<http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/hres/Crayfish%20Code>

http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Leisure/crayfish_and_river_users_pdf.pdf

seasonal tips for looking after yourself on task from

DOCTOR DON

Protect your eyes:

- use sunglasses to protect against glare and sun
- use goggles 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

Tools & tips for safe working

This quarter witnesses the seasonal change in our work programme - we still have some 'summertime' tasks in pond work and dry stone walling, but from the end of September we see the beginning of our valuable winter work of scrub bashing.

So, a gentle reminder for health and safety on task and to stop us all getting too blasé.

- When lifting heavy weights - be it larger walling stones (should we have any) or wet mud, remember to keep your back straight and bend your knees - use your leg muscles, don't strain your back. Don't be tempted to lift more than you can manage on your own.
- Take care handling wet tools as they can easily slip out of your hand.
- Never let your chest waders fill with mud.
- Beware ticks . . particularly when working in vegetation. Light coloured clothing will help you to see them - wear long trousers and long-sleeved shirts, tuck trousers into socks if necessary. At the end of the day completely check over your body for ticks. Most tick bites are harmless but occasionally through carrying a small bacterium, they can cause Lyme Disease - treatable with antibiotics – the earlier the diagnosis, the better. Consult a doctor if infection occurs. An expanding reddish, round rash in the area of the bite, usually occurring within 3 to 30 days. Early symptoms may resemble flu with swollen glands near the site, mild headache, aching muscles and joints and tiredness.
- When scrub bashing or coppicing, remember to cut all stumps as low to the ground as possible, thus avoiding trip hazards and ensuring regrowth from ground level.
- If you are temporarily not using your saw or loppers, e.g. when dragging cut material back to the fire, make sure you leave them where you can find them again.
- Be aware of others working around you. Make sure no-one is in the dropping zone, before starting to fell.
- Use the bowsaw in one hand with your other hand on the branch you are cutting - well out of reach of the bowsaw blade. Saw with relaxed strokes, using the full length of the blade. If your saw is really not cutting well, change it for another - but be sure to mention it to your task leader who will 'quarantine' it, or change the blade.
- When using a slasher, don't use a gloved hand on the wooden handle as this could slip. Be aware of people around you - keep 5m distance from others and stop if anyone comes too close. Keep the blade a few inches above ground, rising slightly towards the end of the swing to avoid digging into the ground.
- Use loppers on nothing thicker than your thumb or you may have to admit to breaking a pair!
- Sledgehammers, mells and mauls - make sure you have a firm footing, bend your knees and keep your back straight as you swing the tool up over your shoulder. Keep your eyes on the target and hit it squarely.
- Picks and mattocks, same applies about having a firm footing, bending knees and keeping the back straight to avoid strain. Good idea to wear goggles when using these on stony ground.
- Bring back the tools that you take out - avoid loss.

S O C I A L S

The pub meal held at The Silent Woman in May was well attended with the usual combination of good food and company. The AGM was also well attended, following the business of the evening and a wonderful meal everyone listened to a fascinating talk from Gary Powell (Amphibian Reptile Conservation). He described the work of the body with particular reference to a British native frog that has gone extinct and current efforts to reintroduce a close relative from Scandinavia.

The first social of this newsletter will be the evening meal held when our French guests join us for the Orchis exchange. The meal will be held at Church Knowle village hall on Saturday 28th September. All are welcome to join us from 7.00pm onwards, the cost will be £5. Please inform Terry or Helen if you would like to attend.

There will be a bring a dish evening on 24th October probably at Helen's from 7.30.

DCV SWEATSHIRTS

*with DCV logo available to
purchase:*

Cost - £16.50

*if collected on task
or plus £2.50 for p & p.
Sizes and colours - various*

*Send cheque payable to
Dorset countryside Volunteers
to
Brian Thompson, 32 Cowleaze
Martinstown, Dorchester,
Dorset, DT2 9TD*

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

FREE key fobs available
to hold an "in case of emergency"
name and phone number.

Attach the fob to your rucksack
so it's to hand should an incident
occur.

Available from Richard



ASSOCIATION ORCHIS LINK



DCV exchange trip to Orchis
Friday 10th May 2013 - Sunday 12th May 2013

Eight of us left Poole this year on the good ship Barfleur at 8.40am on a cool, overcast day. The crossing was good and the heavy sea swell caused no problems. We were duly met by our hosts in Cherbourg and were given coffee & cake in the arrivals lounge while sorting out who was staying with whom.

We were taken to Cap Levi for a short walk along the coast before splitting off to go to our host homes. I stayed with Irene Puig in St Vaast la Hogue. Irene has a typical old French terrace house close to the beach. The house, which she is renovating, has very thick walls small rooms & a very large garden.

I was asked if I would like to go for a bike ride around town. Well I haven't ridden a bike for years but agreed in order to maintain a good Franco British relationship.

The bike was the cycling equivalent of an old 2CV. So using my feet as brakes we set off around town. I was even on the correct side of the road at times. We went to the harbour and visited the small fisherman's church and then walked with our bikes along the breakwater. We enjoyed a ride around the rest of the town

and harbour and Irene pointed out the numerous oyster beds for which St Vaast is well known.

On returning to the house I was offered an aperitif followed by a hearty meal of lamb shank.

On Saturday we walked the short distance to Anne-Marie's house, where Terry was staying and, as we were early, had a quick look around the market. I was surprised at the many stalls selling fresh fruit and vegetables, a few of which were selling just one product, asparagus in particular.

Irene and I were given a lift to our work site for the day at Gatteville. The work was to involve restoring the roadside dry stone wall together with the stone walls of a customs officers shelter.

All eight DCV members arrived together with Val and Don, who travelled to France separately. We were joined on site by Terry Sweeney who had also travelled independently. All together with our hosts and other members of Orchis we numbered 31 in total.

The wind blew and we nearly froze to death but after organised chaos started our tasks.

Much of the wall and all of the shelter had to be demolished before being rebuilt and by lunchtime it looked doubtful whether we would finish the task.

At 12.30 we scrambled into cars for the short journey to the village hall where we were thankful to get out of the cold wind. Here a cold buffet was laid on for us consisting of meats, cheeses, pates and salad. This was followed by cakes and fruit flans.

We returned to site in the afternoon and given the extra energy afforded by the excellent lunch, carried on with the task. The wall and shelter grew by the minute, photos were taken and congratulations were handed out all around. Yes we had finished the task despite the freezing conditions. I don't think that the customs shelter had ever had so many people in it at one time.

We dispersed to our various houses at 16.30 and prepared for the evening entertainment. Being wise after the event I decided to wear nearly every stitch of clothing I had with me.

We all met in St Vaast at the village shed where Orchis keep their trailer and tools. Here we enjoyed aperitifs of Sangria,

Ricard and nibbles. Helen and Anne-Marie gave thanks to both organisations for their hospitality and completion of the day's tasks.

Moving on for the evening entertainment we arrived at the fort in la Hogue to the strains of singing by the Wareham Whalers. Dinner of chicken paella cheese and choux pastries was held in a large tent with our hosts, other members of Orchis and members of the public, who were also there to enjoy sea shanties sung by French and English folk singers. We retired to our various homes at 10.15.

The next day we were taken to the American war cemetery at Coleville overlooking Omaha

beach, site of the D Day landings. The cemetery is kept in a magnificent condition with the rows of over 9000 brilliantly white crosses and stars standing to attention in rows as neat as a military parade. Quite a moving site.

We then moved on a little way down the road to La Pointe du Hoc. It was here on D Day that 250 American Rangers stormed the cliffs to capture the gun emplacements thus reducing heavy bombardment of the beaches. The successful mission resulted in the death of 170 Rangers.

Lunch was enjoyed outside the petanque club at Omaha beach before making our way back towards Cherbourg. Here we

had an hour or so to spare so were taken to see the chateaux and gardens of Ravalet. A Renaissance style chateaux surrounded by 17 hectares of lawns, ponds and specimen trees.

At 17.15 we jumped back into our cars for the short journey back to the port. Our last cup of coffee and cake was enjoyed with our hosts in the departure lounge and fond farewells were bid to all.

A busy and extremely enjoyable weekend with our Orchis partners had come to an end and we look forward to them visiting DCV in September.

Geoff Beavis

Association Orchis exchange visit to Dorset

27th - 29th September 2013

It's almost time again for the annual visit of our French friends from Association Orchis. They will be visiting us on Friday 27th September. On Saturday 28th we will be working at Townsend, Swanage (full details of the site and task are provided in this Newsletter). Please come along this weekend and enjoy the occasion and experience.

On Saturday evening we will be adjourning to Church Knowle village hall for a meal and some fun playing a few games.

We would like to see as many people as possible working on site for this our first cut and burn task of the Autumn. Similarly in the evening, the more the merrier so do come and join us.

However since we are catering we do need some idea of the numbers involved, please therefore let me know if you intend to join us in the evening. A charge of £5 (very good value) is made for the evening food and please bring a bottle.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Terry Gillott

01202 765611

terrygillott3000@yahoo.co.uk

DCV DIARY August - October 2013

DATE	TASK SITE	CLIENT	WORK
3/4 August	River Hook, West Dorset	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Himalayan Balsam pulling
10/11 August	Tyneham, Purbeck	Ministry of Defence	Pond restoration
17/18 August	Slop Bog, East Dorset	Dorset Countryside	Fencing
25 August, Sunday	Swyre, West Dorset	Private	Dry stone walling
31 August / 1 September	Tool Store, Wool, Purbeck	DCV	Maintenance
7/8 September	Symondsburry, West Dorset	Private	Sheepwash restoration
15 September Sunday	Swyre, West Dorset	Private	Dry stone walling
21/22 September	Tool Store, Wool, Purbeck	DCV	Maintenance
26 September, Thursday	<i>Planning meeting</i>	<i>At Doug's - 7.45pm</i>	
28/29 September	Townsend, Swanage	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Scrub cutting
28 September, Saturday	<i>Church Knowle Village Hall</i>	<i>Dinner with Association Orchis (£5)</i>	<i>Please advise Helen if you wish to attend</i>
5/6 October	Fontmell Down, North Dorset	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Scrub cutting
13 October Sunday	Upton Wood, Poole Purbeck	Purbeck District Council	Bramble cutting and tree 're-locating'
19/20 October	Lankham Bottom, West Dorset	Butterfly Conservation	Scrub cutting
24 October Thursday	<i>Bring a dish, & a drink - 7.30 p.m.</i>	<i>Probably at Helen's</i>	
26/27 October	Townsend, Swanage	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Scrub cutting

DCV mobile: 07929 961532 (task hours)

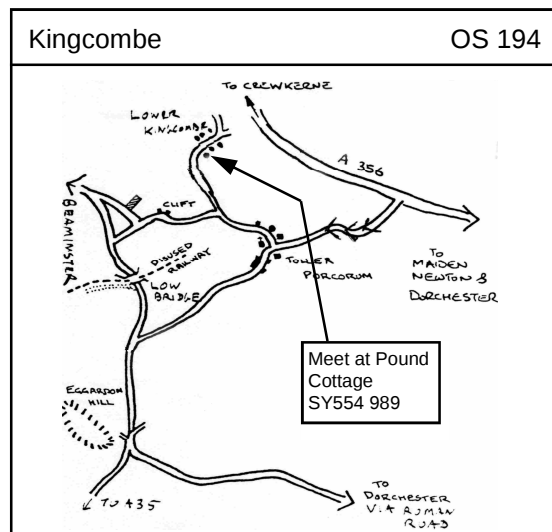
Remember to keep a note of the DCV mobile phone number, or check out the website - www.dcv.org.uk There could be occasions when tasks may have to be cancelled at the last minute, or may have to finish early, e.g. in adverse weather conditions. If you are coming out later in the day, it may be wise to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

3 & 4 August: River Hooke, Kingcombe Meadows, West Dorset

This weekend we return to the wooded fens along the River Hooke to again do battle with Himalayan balsam. This introduced plant has colonised wetlands across the country, becoming a nuisance in the conservation of our natural habitats. It's only an annual but incredible numbers of seedlings can appear each spring. And they grow fast, by mid-summer easily overtopping the native plants and suppressing them with dense shade. Fortunately they are easily pulled up – though the really big ones can put up stiff resistance - and once removed that's a whole lot less seeds to start another generation of plants next year. We shall be doing a clean-up sweep down the riverside removing those that escaped attention in earlier tasks.

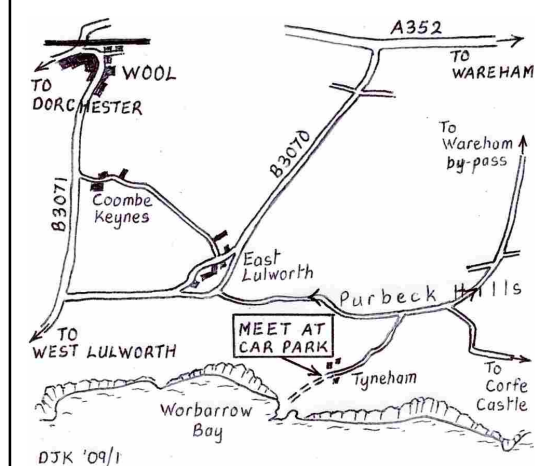
NB: Meet at Pound Cottage for onward travel up valley. If late look for DCV board with instructions on where to go or phone DCV mobile phone. Bring wellies for splashing about in the water, or boots for wet ground. And as balsam often grows among nettles or sharp leaved sedges it's best to bring some clothes to protect your legs and arms. Gloves can be provided on the day if you don't have any.

Clean Boots please



Tyneham

OS 194 & 195



10 & 11 August: Tyneham, Purbeck

Tyneham village and surrounding land was requisitioned by the wartime government in 1943 for training use by British forces. Peace came but the army stayed. The area is now part of the Lulworth firing ranges. Inadvertently this has given us a glimpse into the past - of village buildings, the everyday rural occupation of their occupants and school life before the changes brought by the second half of the 20th century. This weekend our task is in the village pond. It has almost completed filled with silt brought in by a small stream. The army have repaired some silt traps further up the stream which will hopefully cut out the input of more silt. Removing the silt already in the pond is down to us. We dug out part last year but there is still much more to do. So we shall be digging out another section into buckets and wheelbarrows for those with the muscles to cart it off for disposal in nearby scrub.

NB: Park in the visitors car park (SY 882 802) at the end of the lane – you will pass the pond on the way in. This will be a wet and muddy task but great fun, and entertainment for the tourists too! Bring wellies and wear suitable old clothes. And if it's sunny, don't forget the sun cream.

Clean Boots please

17 & 18 August: Slop Bog, East Dorset

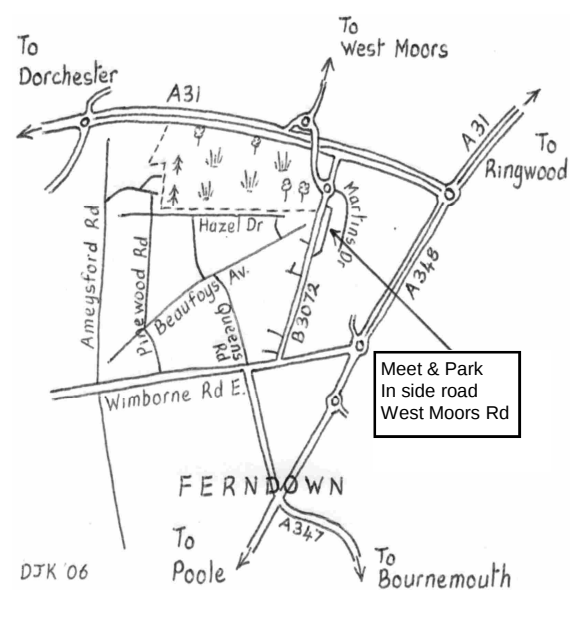
This site really is just as its name suggests. Groundwater seeps out across the low-lying ground creating a very wet and nearly impenetrable heathland bog. But the wetness has been its saviour. The land escaped incorporation into the expansion of Ferndown, being too difficult to drain and develop. Now the site is protected for its heathland wildlife and managed as a statutory Local Nature Reserve. We last visited the site some years ago and since then much has changed with the introduction of grazing cattle, more boardwalk and scrub clearance on areas of drier ground. On this occasion we shall be helping to improve the fences. We have been asked to install some new lengths: driving in the fence posts, putting in struts and hanging either wire netting or strand barbed wire. Fencing involves lots of jobs and not just those needing muscles. We work together helping out on the jobs, with experienced 'fencers' on hand to show how it's done.

NB: Bring wellies for the boggy bits, although at this time of year working boots will be fine on the drier ground. The site is on the Ferndown side of the A31 Ferndown by-pass – see map in main article in this newsletter. Park opposite the reserve entrance in the residential side road alongside West Moors Road, just before the roundabout to the by-pass. Then look out for our distinctive yellow arrows showing the way to the task site.

Clean Boots please

Slop Bog

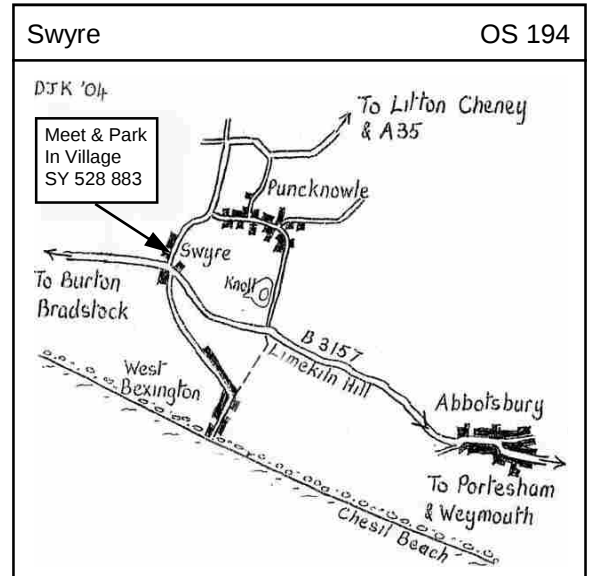
OS 195



Sunday 25 August: Swyre, West Dorset

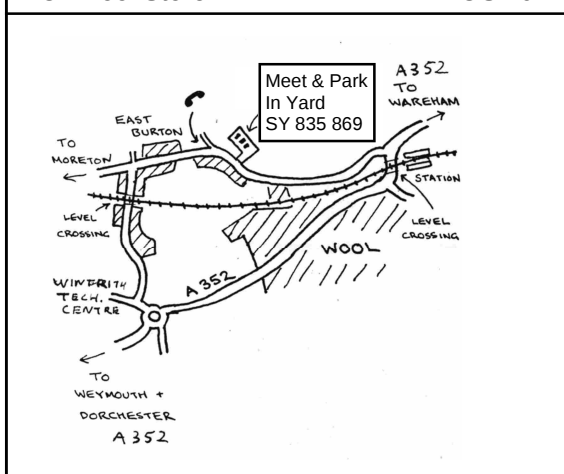
It's August bank holiday weekend and the coast roads and car parks will be packed. But not here. The village lies just off the coast road overlooking a valley bounded and divided by drystone walls. It's a tranquil setting even at the busiest of times; just a few sheep, some pigs and piglets rooting about, and swallows flying overhead. We shall be restoring a further section of drystone wall, possibly a section that runs alongside a small stream. The wall has started to lean at a crazy angle and may collapse at any time. Only a mass of ivy holds the stone together. The ivy will need to be cleared, the collapsed and leaning stone removed and sorted, and then the rebuilding can begin. The 'art' of drystone walling is easily picked up and can become quite addictive fitting rough stones into neat layers, one atop the other. We all work together, with more experienced DCV wallers on hand to provide guidance.

NB: Park in Swyre village centre near the telephone box (SY 528 883) just off the main road and look out for the distinctive DCV signs to the task site. Some of us will need to tackle the stream side of the wall, so bring wellies for splashing around in water and mud.



DCV Tool Store

OS 194



31 August & 1 September: Wool Tool Store, Purbeck

Our seasonal tasks of saw, lop, slash and burn are not far away. So it's timely to ensure our tools are up to the job. And the summer tools need checking over, cleaned and repaired if necessary, and put in storage for another year. Another vital job will be to give our trailer a good overhaul. It works tirelessly for us every weekend and now needs some intensive TLC: on the paintwork, electrics, tyres and so on. But our biggest job is to sort out the yard area fronting the tool store. Over most of this year it has been used as a work site by contractors doing something on the railway. They have now gone but our brick-cobbled hardstanding is in quite a mess, covered in spoil and is probably nothing like level. We shall need to do quite a bit of restoration and a further task is programmed later in September to continue the job. So there is much to do on all sorts of things to keep us occupied over the weekend. As usual this is a leisurely task, with lots of chat and hopefully the sun for company.

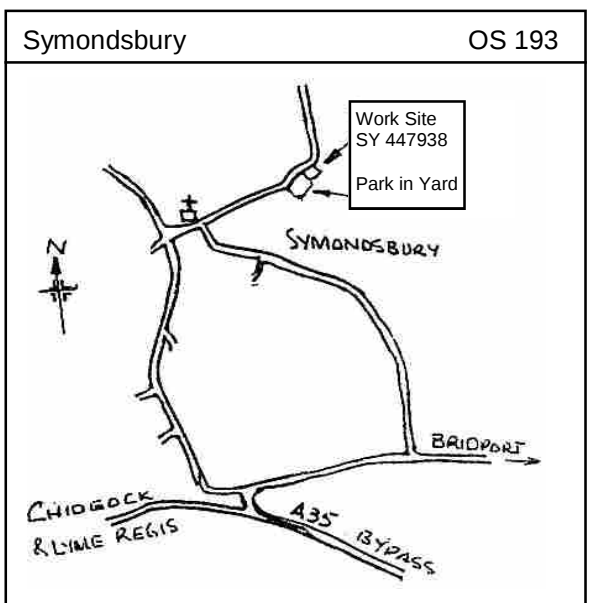
NB: There will be the classic DCV tea breaks with biscuits. We lunch at a near-by country pub or bring a packed lunch if you prefer.

7 & 8 September: Symondsburry Sheepwash, West Dorset

The sheepwash was built years ago as a way of cleaning the sheep before shearing. The cut fleeces could then fetch a better price. Now there are more modern methods of cleaning fleeces. Sheepwashes are no longer required. Those that survive lie abandoned and falling into disrepair as a relic of a bygone age in farming. The wash at Symondsburry comprises a walled hollow with an entrance ramp built into a small stream and was used to hold up the flow allowing the sheep to be thoroughly dunked in water. Over recent years we have made much progress in restoring the wash from a dilapidated state. The heavy rains last year did nothing to help and the flooded stream has lifted and eroded under some of the stone slabs. We shall be re-fixing and cementing in the loose slabs and re-pointing more of the surrounding stonework walls. Also there is likely to be yet more silt to clear from the stream in the sheepwash bottom.

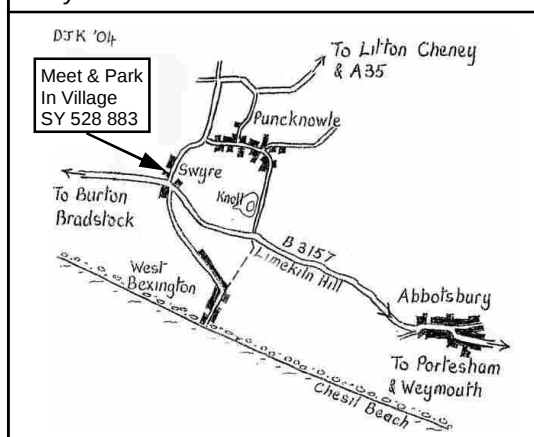
NB: For those wishing to splash around in the sheepwash it's going to be messy. So bring your wellies and suitable clothes. Or there's the stone and brickwork repairs and staying dry.

Clean Boots please



Swyre

OS 194



Sunday 15 September: Swyre, West Dorset

Our theme this September on stonework continues with a return visit to the drystone walls at Swyre. We are restoring the walls that bound and divide the pasture in a tranquil valley behind the village. Drystone walls characterise the limestone landscape in this part of Dorset. They were built centuries ago, clearing the land of stone rubble and providing strong, stockproof field boundaries. But the walls don't last forever. They need occasional repair to make good collapses caused by the action of the weather, plant roots and livestock. We need to finish off the repairs we started earlier in the autumn. You don't have to be an expert. The basics are easily learnt and some experienced DCV wallers will be on hand for guidance. The walls are easily seen from the village houses and so our restoration work will be appreciated locally for years to come.

NB: Park in Swyre village centre near the telephone box (SY 528 883) just off the main road and look out for the distinctive DCV signs to the task site. There may still be some rebuilding to do on a wall that runs immediately alongside a stream, so bring wellies for splashing around in water and mud.

21 & 22 September: Wool Tool Store, Purbeck See task 31st Aug / 1st Sept for map

This weekend we return to our tool store to continue restoration work on the yard area. Over most of this year it has been used as a work site by contractors doing something on the railway. They have now gone but our brick-cobbled hardstanding was left in quite a mess, covered in spoil. We shall be clearing and, where necessary, relaying more of the brick cobbles. We also need to finish off our annual maintenance on the tools: line-seed the handles, sharpen up the billhooks and slashers, kill the squeaks on the wheelbarrows and pump up their tyres. The tools store itself could also do with a sweep out - a chance to explore the dark, hidden depths where few venture. So we have much to do to keep us occupied. This is a leisurely task, with lots of chat.

NB: There will be the classic DCV tea breaks with biscuits. We lunch at a near-by country pub or bring a packed lunch if you prefer.

28 & 29 September: Townsend Swanage, Purbeck

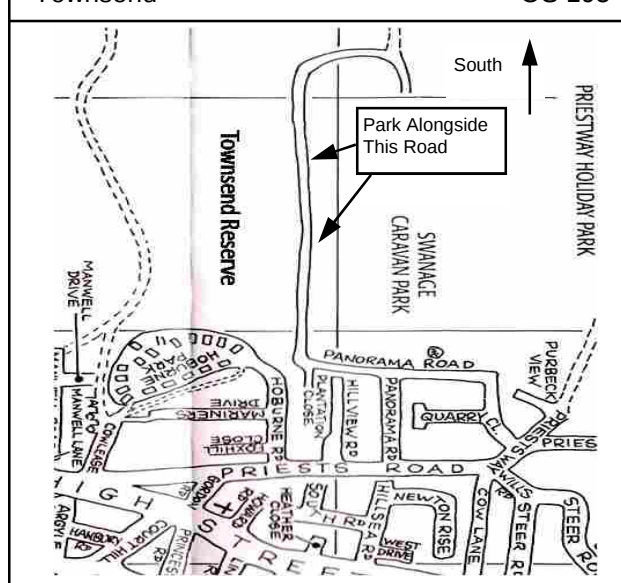
On the south side of Swanage the land rises sharply to this nature reserve on a high limestone plateau. In the past the limestone was dug and mined for building stone. Now long abandoned, the old diggings have produced a chaotic mosaic of hollows, mounds, slopes and grassy flats. The limestone grassland contains an abundance of wild flowers, including many orchids. Meanwhile the old mines have proved ideal for bats. They hibernate through the winter months in the constant darkness and cool environment. On the surface the vegetation is far from constant. A scrub of thorns and sycamore is seeking to take over the grassland. Despite the best effort of the grazing livestock there is a regular need to push back its advances to maintain the flower rich grassland. We shall be cutting out areas of unwanted scrub with bowsaws, loppers and other sharp implements. Their remains will provide a nice bonfire on which to brew our teas and coffees.

NB: We shall be joined on this task by our friends from Association Orchis. So there will be plenty of socialising and chat, in a mix of customs and languages. If you have not been on task lately then do come along for a great time at a wonderful site.

Coming into Swanage on the A351, take the first right on the bend. Take the first right after Spar shop then left, then right onto Panorama road. Carry on up the hill, the reserve is on the left hand side. Roadside parking.

Townsend

OS 195



Fontmell Down

OS 183



5 & 6 October: Fontmell Down, North Dorset

This task takes us to the high downs in the north of the county. Here a chalk scarp falls away sharply to the Blackmore Vale giving extensive views across a checkerboard of fields and hedgerows to distant hills on the horizon. The slopes escaped agricultural improvement and support a rich diversity of chalkland flowers, butterflies and other insects. They are grazed by cattle and also sheep to keep the grass sward in suitable condition for the plants and wildlife. But thorn scrub also grows and tends to be avoided by the livestock. Scattered patches of small scrub provide shelter for insects and cover for downland birds. Larger areas are less welcome as their growth shades out and replaces the grassland habitat so important for many of the chalkland species. Thus periodically the scrub needs to be cut back. We shall be cutting unwanted scrub on some of the steeper slopes. There will be the challenge of finding a level area for the bonfire, and for enjoying our mugs of tea and coffee while admiring the countryside views below.

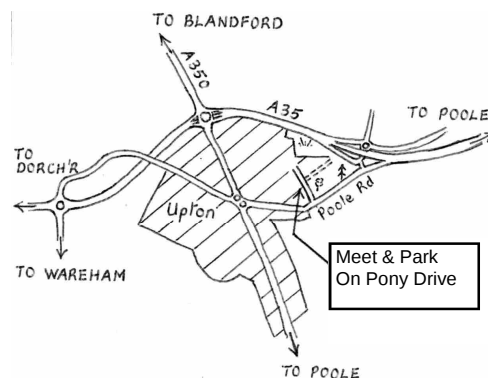
NB: Meet at the NT car park; we may move on from here to another part of the reserve, so look out for the DCV sign board with directions. Bring stout shoes for tramping over the steep ground.

Sunday 13 October: Upton Wood, Purbeck-Poole border

In recent years this site has become a regular feature in our task programme. The site is sandwiched between the Upton by-pass and a neighbouring residential area, providing an urban greenspace that is much used by local people. Often our tasks have involved some woodland management or scrub and bramble removal on the open area of heathland mire. This time we get to do both as one task. We shall be carefully digging out young tree saplings from the mire, and then carefully replanting them in the wood. The idea is to help woodland regeneration in the areas cleared of dense holly. And when we have tired of tree transplanting we can return to our more normal destructive mode - removing more bramble from the mire. No fire but plenty of time to catch up on chat and news around our stove-brewed drinks.

Upton Wood

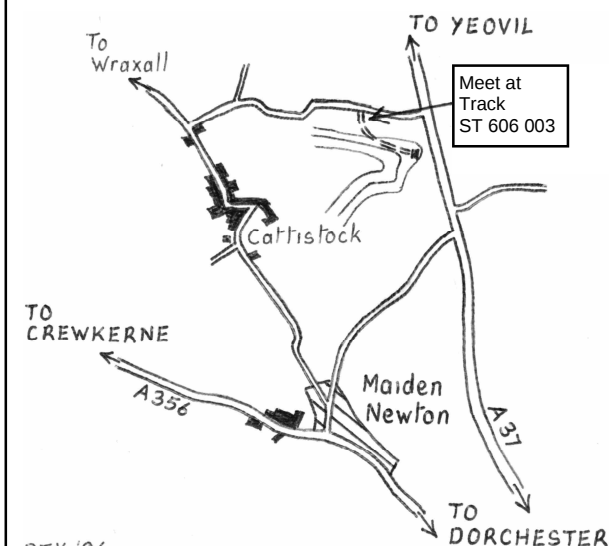
OS 195



DJK '02

Lankham Bottom

OS 194



DJK '06

19 & 20 October: Lankham Bottom, West Dorset

This chalkland reserve covers a deep bowl at the head of a dry valley. Last year the autumn sun and sheltered conditions gave us a balmy warm day. Let's hope for a repeat performance. Old photos show the valley as open chalk grassland with just a few patches of scrub. At some time the management declined allowing a scrub of gorse, thorns and young trees to spread over the slopes. The chalk grassland with its rich diversity of flowers and butterflies became increasingly confined to the steepest slopes. Since becoming a nature reserve the scrub has been steadily pushed back allowing a return of the grassland and its insect wildlife. Much scrub still remains on the upper slopes. This is being cut to form areas of grassland within a mosaic of old and re-growing scrub at different ages - habitat for birds and those insects requiring less open conditions. We shall be cutting into an area of dense scrub to help encourage this habitat mosaic. The remains we shall burn, while trying to avoid smoking out those cutting scrub further up the slopes! As always there will be a plentiful supply of teas, coffees, assorted biscuits and banter.

NB: The slopes are steep and can be slippery, so please bring suitable footwear.

26 & 27 October: Townsend Swanage, Purbeck

This weekend we return to the high limestone plateau above Swanage to continue our battle with scrub invasion. Hopefully there will still be some autumn warmth, but we will have a hot bonfire too. The site is exposed. So do remember to bring suitable clothing for sun and whatever else the weather may bring. For further details see the earlier task at this site on 28 and 29 September.

Coming into Swanage on the A351, take the first right on the bend. Take the first right after Spar shop then left, then right onto Panorama road. Carry on up the hill, the reserve is on the left hand side. Roadside parking.



*Clock change 27th October at 2am
Don't forget to reset your Alarm Clock if
you want to get to this task on time*

Townsend

OS 195

