

Dorset Countryside Volunteers



No 196
May - July 2022
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, all ages, from all walks of life and from all over the county
- Work is seasonal, e.g. heathlands and woodlands in winter, in summer dry stone walling, clearing ponds, footpath work, fencing
- Organisations we work for include: Dorset Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Natural England, Amphibian Reptile Conservation Trust
- 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 for us and for you!

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

YOU should bring . . .

- Food, snacks for breaks and lunch, a mug for drinks, a bottle of drinking water.
- A basic First Aid kit, suitable for treating minor cuts, scratches, splinters, etc
- Hand sanitiser and/or sanitising wipes
- Face mask in case you need First Aid
- Stout footwear (steel toecaps if possible)
- Old clothes (wear layers) Long trousers and sleeves are best
- Tough gloves (we have some to sell/lend)
- Waterproofs, sun block, sun hat, insect repellent
- Don't forget an up to date tetanus jab

Reaching a task . . .

- Travel links: <http://www.morebus.co.uk/>
<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/travel-dorset/rail>

A DCV day lasts . . .

- 10.00a.m. – 5.00p.m. approximately including

breaks for drinks (which are supplied) and lunch (please bring your own lunch)

FINDING DCV . . .

- Maps with the task programme (at the back of this newsletter) show the locations of task sites
- DCV website **dcv.org.uk**
- Look for DCV's yellow arrows near the worksite or the DCV information board may show an explanatory note
- If unsure of the worksite try to arrive before 10.00 to meet other volunteers. The worksite may be some way off. Lost? give us a call on 07929 961532 (after 10.00 a.m.) ring longer than normal
- If the phone goes to answer phone there is no signal on the work site

FOOD & DRINK

- Please bring your own lunch
- DCV provides free hot/cold drinks during the day - bring your own mug
- Occasionally DCV may hold a shared lunch or supper (aka bring a dish) when it is usual for people to bring some food to share around
- 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. "In case of emergency details" can be inserted into a small key fob which can be attached to your rucksack. Key fobs are available from Richard Meatyard.
- All youngsters are welcome, but should be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Should you come? - If you or a member of your household has any Covid symptoms or has Covid as confirmed by a positive test then you must NOT come.

EDITORIAL



Welcome to this issue of the newsletter and another glorious spring - translucent green leaves, flowers, butterflies and birds - and where better to make the most of it than on a DCV task.

Has anyone had any ideas for DCV 50th anniversary events? No reason why we can't have a few events to mark this occasion. We have suggested planting 50 trees and have contacted one of our clients to ask if they have a hedge or wood extension that needs planting. If you have an idea don't hesitate to speak up.

A celebratory T-shirt is also planned - if you can think up a design that might be good for this, send it to Gareth - he has had a couple of suggestions already.

National Trust has a new acquisition on the South Purbeck coast - Weston Farm which hosts a variety of habitats and wildlife. They have exciting plans and you can read all about it in the article we've included.

We've also included a copy of the Dorset Wildlife Trust leaflet for Powerstock, the reserve where we will be working for a couple of weekends. DCV has worked here during many long years with a variety of tasks though more often during winter months. Do come along to do some work and have a walk around the reserve, it should be at its best at this time of year.

Not quite a complete full programme of tasks as we go to press, so remember to check the website www.dcv.org.uk or contact Richard.

As we finish the newsletter it would seem that a number of volunteers have not re-joined. Please do re-join and don't forget to tick one of the boxes for your preference of printed or e-copy newsletter.

Don't forget every task is a social and we look forward to seeing you out on task soon.

Val & Don newseds

Chris has a new play he wants everyone to know about after his recent stage success.

Just thought I would slip you details of my next play before you bring out the next newsletter. It's at Broadstone War Memorial Hall from 17 to 21 May, "Out of Order", a comedy by Ray Cooney. Details of how to book are on Broadstone Players website, but I can reserve seats for anyone who wants to contact me. Chris

Dorset Countryside Volunteers/ Association Orchis twinning event Do contact Jane if you are interested in this event

Dear friends,

Your last coming in Saint-Vaast was in May 2019 and then, unfortunately, the Covid appeared and stopped us in our respective countries.

We hope this sad period is now behind us and, maybe, in a few month, it'll be possible to meet together in France to celebrate our twinning 25th anniversary (it was "born in October 1997). This event could be the opportunity to share a task in our area and spend a friendly weekend as usual.

We can understand if you think it's too early this year to come and visit us. It can be reported in 2023. It's only a suggestion. But we miss you! Vous nous manquez !

In case you are interested in coming in September, I reserved us the village hall in Saint-Vaast from Friday the 16th till Sunday the 18th. If it's OK with you, I keep it, otherwise, no problem to cancel.

Actually, Orchis continues its activities: cleaning beaches, cleaning our local heritage (la Hougue, Tatihou), ...

We hope it's the same for you. You can visit the AGENDA on our website www.orchis-nature.com

Best wishes to all our friends in Dorset

Anne-Marie

Hi Anne-Marie,

Thank you for the invitation for September. We also miss our visits with each other very much! I will have to ask our members who usually join in the exchange visits what they feel about travelling in September. I hope it will be possible! It is a double celebration this year as it is also the 50th anniversary of DCV starting. It started as a group in 1972!

We are also continuing our activities, although it is a bit slow to get some things going again. We are doing the Abbotsbury beach clean the weekend after Easter. We will also have to see what the ferry situation is this September, but I am hoping it will be a lot better by then.

Best wishes to our good friends in Normandy

Jane

Co-ordinator's Report

Richard Meatyard

Despite the steadily rising infection rates we have finally returned to something resembling normality, outdoors at least as the year progresses. Indoors it still seems prudent to be taking precautions.

The quarter started with a run of weekends scheduled but in the event the weather and Covid had other plans.

February started with a visit to a new site, Babers Farm and an opportunity for some hedgelaying, something that has been a bit of rarity in the last few years. Even better it was virtually all suitable for hand tools. Although the forecast wasn't great, turnout was good both days and we got through the weekend with little more than a few passing showers. We made better progress than expected because we didn't need to clear the arisings. By the end of the weekend there was only about a quarter of the hedge left to lay.

After something constructive it was a return to cutting, pulling and burning. A planned weekend cutting and pulling pine on Lions Hill for ARC, became a Saturday only, after we cancelled Sunday, having checked the forecast. As a number of people had come Saturday, having done the same, we had a large turnout and completed most of the weekend's work in the day.

Then it was to Loscombe to deal with the backlog of gorse cut on our previous visit when it was

too dry and windy to have a fire. This time the weather worked in our favour as minimal fire risk meant being able to have a real DCV bonfire. The backlog was cleared after Saturday lunchtime and cutting resumed so we more than doubled the cleared area by the end of the weekend.

For the last weekend in February it was a return to Lions Hill and more pesky pine. This time the weather was with us apart from the wind that was taking the smoke to a neighbour who complained, so much so on Sunday we let the fire go out and stacked instead. Good numbers and speedy progress meant an early finish on Sunday when we ran out of work.

The first weekend in March was a return to Babers Farm to finish the hedge which we did on Saturday. Unfortunately we had to cancel the Sunday there as additional work which had been discussed with the client relied on them being present and they were having to isolate due to Covid.

After a winter that seems to have been mostly full weekends it felt a little strange throttling back to a run of Sunday only tasks.

First a couple of Sundays clearing baby scrub at the Littledown end of DWT's Fontmell reserve. No fire, just bundle it up and roll it down the hill. The weather cooperated and both days were bright and sunny if a little chilly on occasions.

Then we were back to Loscombe for a couple of Sundays of fence repairs, continuing the work we started there last year. This time we were working along the top fenceline of the reserve. Starting with the fence adjacent to the lower gate on the lane. Then the fences by the gate at the mid point and finally the fence adjacent to the upper gate on the lane. Unusually for Loscombe we had a rather poor attendance both days. At one point it looked like we might have to schedule an additional day but in the end we completed it all with a late finish on the second Sunday.

As you will be aware from the slightly extended break in activity during Easter, this is the time of year where we struggle to put together a full programme. As a result things can change at short notice so please make sure to keep an eye on the website and make sure we have your email address.

A thank you note from Ben, the DWT ranger for North Dorset and Fontmell where we have had tasks cutting young scrub.

Hi Don and Richard,

Just getting in touch to say a massive thank you to you and all the other volunteers who worked on Littledown. I was up there last week and was really impressed with how much you got done, it looks fantastic and will be superb when the cowslips come out over the next few weeks. Thank you!

All the best, Ben

Powerstock Common new gate installation

Hinge & latch instructions taken from manufacturers web site

Installing the 180° hinge kit.

Offer up the 550mm top strap band to top rail of gate and mark position of the three bolt holes on each side

Drill half way through the top rail on both sides and holes should meet in the middle.

Feed the coach bolts through and tighten the nuts.

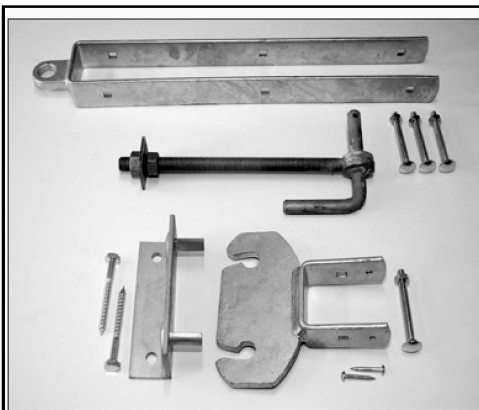
Repeat the above three steps to fit the lower Double rocker hinge plate.

Decide where the gate should hang on the post and mark the position of the top bolt. Drill the gatepost through for the top bolt and also the short hole required for the anti-turn superhook bar.

Fit the superhook to gatepost. Hang gate on the superhook to bolt, supporting the underside of the gate until the bottom hinge is fitted.

Attach the bottom hinge to the gatepost, pins facing down. Ensure a 5mm to 10mm gap between the profiled lower double strap and the plate with double pins. This allows the gate to rise on the hinges when the gate is opened.

Cut off any excess thread on the coach bolts and remove any rough edges.



DESIGNED FOR A 175 X 175MM TIMBER POST

Before installation of the hinge set please ensure that the package contains all the items shown in the photograph (Left).

- 1 x 550mm Top Strap Band
- 1 x Double rocker Hinge Plate
- 1 x Bottom Bracket c/w 2 welded half pins
- 1 x Superhook to Bolt c/w antiturn hook
- 4 x M10 x 100 Coach Bolts c/w nut
- 2 x M10 x 100 Coach screws

The manufacturer makes a variety of hinge and latch combinations for different uses and applications. The ones we will be fitting may be slightly different but these instructions show some of the features and fittings that are common across their product range.

Installation Instructions

2 Way Easy Latch Hinge Kit - Timber Gates

DCV have 2 weekend tasks at Powerstock:

30 April & 1 May

14 & 15 May

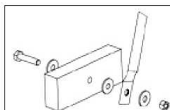
Do come along and help, there will be a variety of jobs to do and chances in between jobs to explore the reserve. See leaflet over the page.



comes with a choice of handles not shown

Before installation of the hinge set please ensure that the package contains all the items shown in the photograph (Left).

- 1 x Top Rail Guide Plate
- 1 x Spring Loaded Bolt Assembly
- 1 x M10 x 50 Nut and Bolt
- 2 x Gate Latch signs
- 1 x 2way Auto Catch for 175mmx175mm post
- 1 x 50 x 50 Plate c/w 5 holes
- 6 x M10 x 100 Coach Screw
- 4 x 45mm Pozil Woodscrew
- 4 x 45mm RND Pozil Woodscrew
- 1 x M10 x 100 Cup Square Bolt / Washer / Nut.
- 1 x M10 x 130 Cup Square Bolt / Washer / Bolt
- 8 x Pin Head Nails



For best results, attach handle to gate as shown in drawing



1. Decide where to fit the EASY LATCH®. Fitting between the 2nd and 3rd rails allows the handle to sit higher, which is preferred by horse riders.
2. Fitting between the 3rd and 4th rails the handle is easier to use by pedestrians and mobility vehicle users.
3. Offer up Latch on the selected rail and mark the position where the slide bolt will protrude through the slam stile of the gate.
4. Drill a 25mm level hole through the end stile.
5. Trail fit the spring latch and mark positions for the bolts for the end stile and horizontal rail. Drill holes and loosely fit bolts – The slam stile has the domed head on the outside of the slam stile.
6. Offer up the handle through the top rail guide and mark position of the hole for the handle.
- NB– the handle should be vertical when in resting position.**
7. Drill rail for 10mm bolt for handle, fit bolt with washers both sides of handle - tighten nut but loose enough to allow handle to be operational.
8. Screw the top rail guide plate to top rail of gate using 4 screws as shown in photo.
9. Attach 2 Way auto gate catch to slam post in appropriate position and cut off excess length of the slide bolt. Fit Latch signs to Slam post using nails provided.
10. Fit the square plate using the c/sunk screws over the slide bolt and screw to the end of the end stile.
11. Check that the kit works perfectly and tighten all bolts
12. File and smooth off any rough edges.

In the hedge look for the heavily veined leaves of the **wayfaring tree** which has clusters of creamy white flowers in June and black berries in late summer.

Large **oaks** (standards) can be seen amongst the coppiced **hazel** wood. This centuries old type of '**coppice with standards**' was once at the heart of woodland economy. The damp soil in this part encourages **pendulous sedge** and typical woodland plants like **bluebells**, **violets** and the scarce **herb-paris**.

You are now in the area of the old Common of Poorwood. For many centuries Powerstock locals held rights to graze their animals and gather firewood on the unenclosed land, until 1867 when they lost their rights. Find out what changes to the Common followed, on the reverse of this leaflet in the first paragraph.

This area is part of the Common where the Trust uses low level grazing to keep the grass at varying heights - a fine balance is required to suit woodland, grassland and wildlife. Hardy native cattle, able to cope with the difficult terrain, are left to graze through November to May.

On sunny days grassland butterflies fly here: **meadow brown**, **ringlet**, and **small heath**, and also the orange-brown **silver-washed fritillary**, a woodland butterfly which seeks nectar flowers in the hedges and fields.

Follow the edge of the field, enjoy a fine view of Eggardon Hill in front of you.

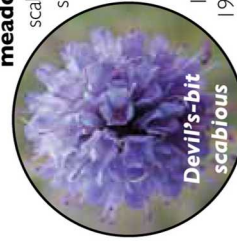


Go left through the gate and take the main forest track which eventually takes you back to the car park. Much clearing of conifers has taken place along the track and hazel has been coppiced.

- Where the track levels out you will see the results of conifer clearing which has allowed areas to re-establish into flourishing grasslands full of special plants such as **devil's-bit scabious**, **meadow sweet** and **heather**. The

scabious is vital to the caterpillars of the scarce **marsh fritillary** butterfly, now seriously declined in Britain.

At this point you can return down the track to the car park or turn left to the pond and the disused 19th century Suffolk type brickworks



Brick kiln remains

with an information panel giving lots of detail. The nearby pond has a range of waterloving plants, the most noticeable being the three leaved **bogbean**. All three native species of **newt** are found here and summer visitors will see numerous damselflies and dragonflies like **emperor dragonfly** and **four spotted and broad-bodied chasers**.



Broad-bodied chaser

VISITOR INFORMATION

LOCATION:

Map ref SY 547974

Situated about 3 miles west of Maiden Newton village, the reserve entrance/parking area lies adjacent to a disused railway bridge on a minor road parallel to and about a mile west of the A356, connecting the B3163 with the A35.

ACCESS:

Generally good with wide clear paths.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Beware of ticks, especially in long grass, bracken and scrub.
- Cattle are present on the reserve all year round - keep your dog under close control at all times.

BEST TIME TO VISIT:

Interest at any time, but best in spring and summer.

REFRESHMENTS/TOILETS/ACCOMMODATION

Approx. 2 miles away lies the Visitor Centre for DWT nature reserve, Kingcombe Meadows. Here you will find parking, a small visitors centre, toilets, accommodation & a café, **open February to end of November** - Friday to Sunday 10am - 4pm & during school holidays.

How to get there: On leaving the car park at Powerstock Common turn left, passing under the disused railway bridge. Take the first turning right into a narrow lane & after a short distance turn right again into Clift Lane. At the next T-junction turn left & follow the road for approx. half a mile into the hamlet of Lower Kingcombe, The Kingcombe Centre is signposted on your right.

DWT Powerstock information leaflet



Come for a walk on Powerstock Common Nature reserve Nature Trail



Protecting **wildlife** for the Future

11/2013 Photo © Tony Bates, Paul Comer, Ken Dolbear, MBE & Sophie Tweddle

THE IMPACT OF CHANGE

Powerstock Common nature reserve includes part of the ancient Common of Poorwood which became Poorstock Royal Forest after King John purchased the Manor and nearby Deer Park at Nettlecombe in 1208.

The impact of historical changes has helped form a fascinating mixture of natural habitats. In the mid 1800s the grazing rights (in existence for hundreds of years) of local people were removed and the loss of grazing animals led to tree regeneration across the old Common. Further changes came about during the 1914/18 war when large trees were felled and transported via the now disused railway. Charcoal burners cleared much of the higher ground in the 1950s and in the late 1960s the Forestry Commission planted the open fields to the north and replanted parts of the old common with spruce and Scots pine.

The nature reserve you see today is the result of thousands of man hours worked over several decades, by DWT staff and volunteers, to clear the dense blocks of conifer plantation. We hope you enjoy this very special part of west Dorset now buzzing with wildlife and home to ponds, ancient trees, grasslands, old coppice and many signs of man's impact on the landscape, including part of the disused Bridport to Maiden Newton railway line.

If you have time, walk to the highest point on the reserve and enjoy the panoramic view towards the coastline.

This leaflet follows the **LONG TRAIL** - the **SHORT TRAIL** follows the **RED** arrows and starts from the same point but turns left rather than passing through the gap onto the railway track. This will take you through grassland and woodland, past the remains of a disused brick kiln and close to several interesting newt ponds before leading back onto the main forest track.

• LONG TRAIL

From the car park walk up the forest track and follow the green arrows. Turn right off the forest track and pass through the gate and onto the disused railway cutting. The line closed in 1975 and since then has become a wonderful place to see displays of wildflowers and insects.

- **THE RAILWAY CUTTING** The calcareous soil of the railway cutting is home to chalk-loving plants like **catsear**, **dyer's greenweed**, **bird's-foot trefoil** and **spotted orchids** during June. In spring **cowslips** appear and during August the track is lined with **wild marjoram**.

There are 2 marked trails
SHORT TRAIL - marked with red arrows
- approx. one hour

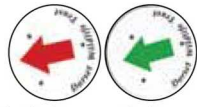
LONG TRAIL - marked with green arrows
- approx. 2 hours



Timber removal from Powerstock Common in 1916



Bird's-foot trefoil



Map based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. © Crown copyright and database right 2012 Ordnance Survey 29185.



Marbled white and **meadow brown** butterflies breed in the tall grasslands and **common blue**, **grizzled** and **large skipper** butterflies frequent the cutting. If you are lucky you may find the rare **marsh fritillary** - careful grazing maintains the unimproved grassland to encourage many species.

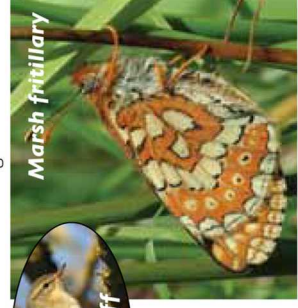


Summer time along the disused railway cutting
Crab apples

Look out for relics of the long-gone railway - old metal fence posts, gates, strainers and bridges and the one time 'gangers' hut for railway workers is still here, now a summer roost for bats.

- **ALONG THE DISUSED RAILWAY LINE** Further along the track you pass under a mixed woodland of **hazel**, **ash**, **alder**, **field maple**, **crab apple**, **hawthorn** and **oak**. In the damper parts **horsetails** line the path.

The ancient hazel coppice next to the track is full of **wood** butterflies can be seen throughout the spring and summer in the dappled sunlight **dog's mercury** and **wood avens** cover the woodland floor: **Ramsons** fill the air with garlic scent in



Marsh fritillary



Chiffchaff

the spring while **blackbirds**, **blackcaps**, **wrens** and **chiffchaffs** can be heard throughout the woodland.

- The track opens up onto an area of well drained gravel - a favourite place for waste ground-loving plants like **teasel**, **mouse ear** and **wild strawberry**.



Former railway ganger's hut

Swineham Lakes Restoration Project at Bestwall Quarry

Swineham Farm lies between Bestwall and Swineham Point

While it remains an active quarry with parts being used for gravel extraction, Bardon Aggregates Bestwall Quarry now provides important natural habitats for wildlife as a result of a major environmental and restoration



programme that began more than 15 years.

Bestwall Quarry is situated close to the historic town of Wareham with Poole Harbour to the east. The land, which has Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on three sides, is bounded to the north and south by the rivers Piddle and Frome. In addition, adjacent areas of grassland and Poole Harbour have each been designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA). The land occupied by Bestwall Quarry is covered by the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Purbeck, which is co-ordinated by the local district council. Both the environmental/ restoration programme and the gravel extraction itself were preceded by an archaeological evaluation. Initially, potential was thought to be limited, but it developed into a full-scale open-area excavation that has allowed a 10,000-year history of this area of Dorset to be accurately charted. The dig has revealed many thousands of finds including 48,348 pieces of worked flint from the early Mesolithic Age, 12,595 shards of Bronze Age pottery and an astounding two tonnes of Roman pottery.

As a result, the archaeological investigation, gravel-extraction and restoration have been interlinked, and required consultation between all parties involved, including English Nature, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, RSPB, Bardon Aggregates, the local community and local councils.

Planning permission to extract gravel from a 55ha area of the site, bought by parent company Aggregate Industries, on the Bestwall peninsula was granted in 1991 and work began in 1992. The Wetlands Advisory Service, part of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, was commissioned by Bardon Aggregates to advise on the restoration of the gravel workings.

The restoration plan creates a



wildlife lake with extensive reed beds grown from seeds collected locally. The aim is to provide a mosaic of habitats in order to increase the overall diversity of the site, in particular for waterbirds. An extensive fringe of wet woodland has also been planted along the northern shore of the lake with Alder and Willow.

Bestwall Quarry produces approximately 160,000 tonnes of sand and gravel a year, which is processed at nearby Tatchells Quarry and supplied to local concrete plants and to the wider building industry. Also around 43,000 tonnes of sharp washed pit sand is shipped from Poole to the Channel Islands each year.

Extraction at the site will be completed by the end of the year. The habitats have been designed to minimise the burden of long-term site management, though Bestwall will continue to be managed in an ecologically sensitive way by a nature conservation organisation in the future.

This satisfies the Purbeck BAP target habitats, and is thought to be one of the largest freshwater reed beds in Dorset, which it is hoped will become a haven for birds and other wildlife.

The plan has also included the construction of a number of gravel islands, approximately 0.5ha in total. The islands were designed to provide suitable habitats for nesting, loafing and roosting wildfowl, little ringed plover and breeding common tern, and are ideal because they encourage wildfowl to breed and reduce the risk of predation.

Between the individual islands, seasonally inundated areas of shallow water between 0–0.2m suitable for waders, such as the Redshank and the Curlew, are being created. Soil excavated from the waste is added to provide local nutrient-rich areas in order to establish a rich invertebrate food source. In addition, some of the wader scrapes will be surrounded by deeper water, again to reduce the risk from predators.

DCV are working here on 23rd & 24th July. We will be removing guards from trees and shrubs that are now safe from animal browsing and before they break down and enter the wider environment. The plastic guards will be disposed of safely.

Info taken from Bardon Aggregates website

Hog Cliff National Nature Reserve

Our previous visits have been in winter scrub cutting but this Ragwort pulling task is a chance to enjoy this site at its best, in summer, 10th July



Hog Cliff

National Nature Reserve



Welcome to Hog Cliff National Nature Reserve

Hog Cliff National Nature Reserve (NNR) is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and also forms part of the wider Cerne and Sydling Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Additionally, the reserve lies within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In total the reserve covers an area of 84 hectares or 210 acres.

This spectacular and varied National Nature Reserve is principally important for areas of unimproved chalk downland with species rich grassland communities typical of the chalk of west-central Dorset. There are good populations of the Marsh Fritillary butterfly, a scarce species throughout Europe, as well as other butterflies including the Adonis Blue. Areas of woodland and scrub provide additional habitat diversity. The combination of chalk grassland, scrub and

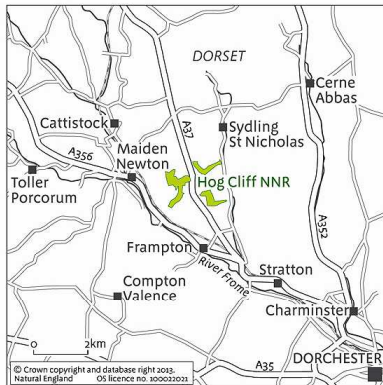
Marsh Fritillary



Flower-rich grassland with Devil's Bit Scabious

woodland on steep slopes facing all parts of the compass at every aspect creates an intimate and enclosed landscape and an exceptionally diverse range of habitats and wildlife for the visitor to enjoy.

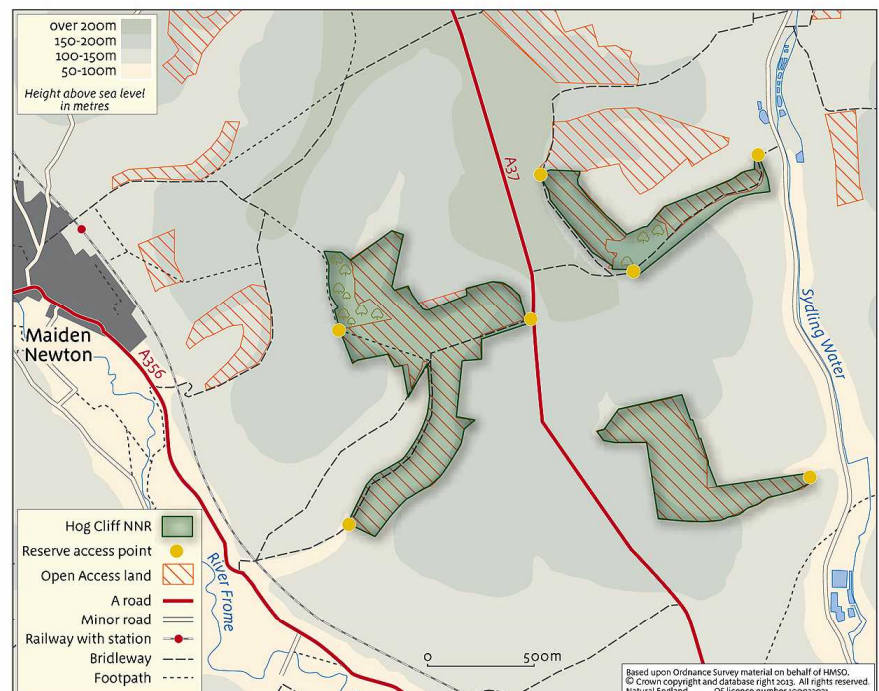
The best species rich chalk grassland within the National Nature Reserve is found on the steeper slopes that have avoided modern intensive agricultural practices such as ploughing and addition of artificial fertiliser. Traditional grazing and farming methods have shaped the landscape and habitats of the NNR and allowed the rich chalk downland and associated wildlife to evolve over centuries. This traditional management has also preserved local archaeology. Medieval field patterns, strip lynchets and old field boundaries are all found within the reserve and are visible across the landscape in this beautiful part of Dorset.



Visiting the reserve

Hog Cliff National Nature Reserve is made up of three separate areas of land located 5 miles north-west of Dorchester, due south of the small village of Sydling St Nicholas and close to Maiden Newton. All parts of the reserve are open to the public for access on foot, with some additional brideway access.

Please be aware that because the site is grazed all year round with cattle and sheep you should keep all dogs under close control and on a lead if livestock are present. If you feel threatened by cattle or if they behave aggressively stay calm, move slowly away and let your dog off the lead.



By car - parking is limited but possible on a lay-by on the nearby A37 which separates the 3 areas of the reserve.

By cycle - Maiden Newton is on the route of the Wessex Ridgeway trail. It is also on Route 26 of Sustrans National Cycle Network.

By train - the reserve can be accessed on foot via

public rights of way that link to Maiden Newton train station

By bus - bus services run from Dorchester along both the A356 and A37 to local towns. See the Traveline SW website for details.

The nearest toilet and refreshment facilities are in Maiden Newton.

Hog Cliff National Nature Reserve

Reserve leaflet



Adonis Blue

© Natural England / Peter Wakeley

Management

The main objective of management is to maintain the chalk grassland habitat which has evolved over centuries of traditional grazing management. Cattle and sheep roam over large extensive areas within the reserve throughout the year and this helps control scrub and vigorous grasses and keeps the grassland sward open to benefit wildflowers and insects.

The aim is to create a mixed sward with a patchy mosaic of long and short grassy areas across the reserve. This maximises habitat diversity within the grassland and is essential in order to provide suitable conditions for all the wildlife found on the reserve.

Managed scrub provides an important habitat for a range of wildlife including breeding birds, small mammals and invertebrates. Scrub is often found along the top of steeper slopes and this

provides a buffer against the more intensively managed agricultural land that typically surrounds the NNR. Scrub also has a function within the landscape of the NNR and enhances the intimate sense of enclosure for the visitor. Scrub can also invade the open grassland and consequently in the winter some scrub is often cut back. Occasionally more mature established scrub is cut and allowed to re-grow to create structural diversity within the scrub which also benefits wildlife.

Traditionally managed hedgerows can be seen within the reserve and often follow old field boundaries. Over time and without appropriate management hedgerows can become 'gappy' and lose structure. Some hedgerows are being re-planted within the NNR and existing hedgerows are also laid in a traditional manner.



Yellow Hammer

© Natural England / P N Watts

Hog Cliff Bottom



© Natural England / Simon McVittie

Wildlife

The grassland supports a wide range of grasses, herbs and flowering plants including Sheep's Fescue, Horseshoe Vetch, Autumn Gentian, Clustered Bellflower, Rockrose, Small Scabious, Devil's Bit Scabious, Chalk Milkwort and Betony. Over 100 species of fungi have been recorded including eight species of Waxcap.

Butterflies found on the reserve during the summer include the rare Adonis Blue and Marsh Fritillary as well as more common species such as the Green Hairstreak, Common Blue, Gatekeeper, Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper.

The small areas of ancient woodland are mostly Oak and Ash standards with a Hazel and Field Maple understorey. The woodland has been shown to be particularly important for a range of rare lichens. Historically some of the woodland has been managed as coppice. There is a rich spring ground flora which includes some uncommon plants including Herb Paris and Toothwort.

Sleepy Dormouse



© Henry Slater@wildlife.org



Clustered Bellflower

© Natural England / Chris Comersall

Further information

If you would like to get involved in helping us to look after the reserve, or to find out more, contact site staff on **07810 297886**.

Front cover image: Hog Cliff NNR

© Natural England / Tom Sunderland



Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

ISBN 978-1-78367-055-0 Catalogue Code: NE495

Natural England publications are available as accessible pdfs from: www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information: 0845 600 3078 or email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Printed on stock comprising 75% recycled fibre.

www.naturalengland.org.uk

This note/report/publication is published by Natural England under the Open Government Licence - OGLv2.0 for public sector information. You are encouraged to use, and reuse, information subject to certain conditions.

For details of the licence visit www.naturalengland.org.uk/copyright

Natural England photographs are only available for non-commercial purposes. If any other information, such as maps or data, cannot be used commercially this will be made clear within the note/report/publication.

© Natural England 2013

National Trust buys Weston Farm in Purbeck

Article taken from an N.T. press release

The National Trust has acquired Weston Farm on the South Purbeck coast in Dorset to protect this spectacular stretch of coastline for both nature and future generations.

Over the coming years this 350-acre (142 hectares) farm will be transformed through a careful combination of nature recovery, conservation management and regenerative agriculture. A mosaic of species-rich grasslands, wildflower meadows, scrub and woodlands will emerge, creating a much wider coastal corridor for nature that can be enjoyed by everyone.

Just over a quarter of the land is already a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and sits within Dorset AONB (Area of Outstanding Beauty). The land forms the eastern half of St Aldhem's Head, and will extend the existing Trust-owned 'Purbeck Wares' that lie to the east, famous for being some of Britain's best grasslands for orchids and other rare wildflowers. The coastal strip of Weston Farm includes ancient 'strip lynchet' terraced field systems and Winspit quarry caves.

Over time lower level, naturalistic grazing and active habitat restoration through re-seeding and meadow management will create nature-rich habitats. Conservation grazing of the grasslands sloping down to the coast will bring back plants such as the green-winged and early spider orchids.

Restored meadows on the former arable fields will bloom with cowslips and knapweeds, and these flower-rich grasslands will become home to rare butterflies such as the Lulworth skipper and Adonis blue. This will also open up nesting sites for endangered skylarks. Hedgerows, scrub and small

woodland patches will once more give refuge to voles and other mammals, along with breeding sites for yellowhammers, linnets and other birds. This stretch of coastline is also the summer pit-stop for visiting birds such as whitethroats, which will immediately benefit from flower- and insect-rich habitats, with scrub and trees to shelter in.

Within the coastal strip there are also abandoned stone quarries that are home to 15 of Britain's native bat species. This is Dorset's most important swarming site for bats and a site of national significance. In the autumn swarming season, thousands of bats flock to the Winspit caves from up to 60km away for a night of 'speed dating' and mating on the wing. For rare species such as the serotine and barbastelle bats this is critical to the health of their populations. The caves are also used for winter hibernation for some of the UK's rarest bats such as the greater horseshoe.

Back from the coast, new accessible paths will also cross the farmland through the recovering nature-rich landscape, and link up with existing footpaths to encourage easy day walks. Meadow seed mix including yellow rattle will be sown, and a late summer hay-cut taken followed by livestock grazing. Some areas will remain uncut to allow patches of scrub to develop and encourage yet more wildlife. And in these fields seasonal camping will continue to take place.

The National Trust was able to draw upon its Neptune Fund for this acquisition, supported by four significant donations. For more information on Neptune visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/neptune

Tracey Churcher, National Trust General Manager for Purbeck, said: "Nature recovery is at the heart of what we do, but so is connecting people with nature and the outdoors. The South West coastal path runs along the edge of the farm and we'll be able to move the current field fences much further back, giving walkers room to spread out, savour the remarkable coastal views and take in the nature-rich landscape."

David Brown, National Trust Ecologist for Purbeck, said: "In the future people will enjoy fantastic uninterrupted access along a seven-kilometre stretch of some of the UK's best coastline, and be free to explore some its most diverse and ecologically rich grasslands. We aim to create a landscape that is richer in nature, so there'll be no chemical inputs or regular ploughing on any of the land and life will be restored to the soil using natural regenerative farming methods. As the land is given time to rest and recover, the ground will store more carbon and streams flowing off the land will be cleaner and healthier."

HEALTH & SAFETY, THIS QUARTER'S WORK

Ticks on task

To reduce the risk of being bitten cover your skin while outdoors and tuck your trousers into your socks. Use insect repellent on your clothes and skin – products containing DEET are best.

Wear light-coloured clothing so ticks are easier to spot and brush off.

Tick bites are not always painful and you may not notice a tick unless you see it on your skin.

Always check your skin and hair after being outdoors.

Use fine-tipped tweezers or a tick removal tool. Grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible. Slowly pull upwards, taking care not to squeeze or crush the tick.

Clean the bite with antiseptic or soap and water.

The risk of getting ill is low. You do not need to do anything else unless you become unwell.



protection is now seen as a priority in most jobs these days and DCV have safety specs you can borrow. If you want your own pair then they come in a wide variety: wrap around goggles, over spectacles, goggles and partial wrap around. They also come tinted for bright days. Starting at around a couple of pounds they are worth having. From garden centres, builders merchants and online.



Fencing tasks means coming into contact with preservatives and wood treatments. We should all be wearing gloves, leather, cotton or pvc offer good protection. If you have sensitive skin bring wet wipes to wash your hands and arms.

Spring will be showing itself with new plant growth and insects on the wing. There are a number of plants with sap that can irritate eyes and skin. Treat with water.

Dorset Countryside Volunteers Clothing New season's prices

Clothing has the DCV logo and "Dorset Countryside Volunteers" embroidered on. The hats have "DORSET COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS" in gold but not the logo.

Typical examples of colours are: Black, Navy Blue, Bottle Green, Burgundy, Royal Blue, Light Grey, Purple, and Red. Some items are available in other colours so ask if you have a specific requirement.

Adult sizes:

Sweatshirt (crew neck, unisex S to XXL) £17.00,
Sweatshirt (crew neck, ladies, slightly lighter weight material, sizes 8 to 18) £16.50,
Hooded Sweatshirt (unisex S to XXL with kangaroo pocket) £17.95,
Zip sweatshirt - lightweight without hood (unisex S to XXL) £19.80
Zip Hooded Sweatshirt (unisex S to XXL with side pockets) £21.00,
Polo Shirt - our traditional poly-cotton type (men S to XXL, ladies size 8 to 24) £13.50,
Polo Shirt - a lighter all cotton shirt with an additional colour - sand (unisex S to XXL) £11.60,
T-shirt (unisex S to XXL) £8.50,
Soft-shell jacket (unisex S to XXL) £45,
Sleeveless soft-shell jacket (unisex S to XXL) £36.

Child sizes:

Sweatshirt (crew neck) £10.50, Hooded Sweatshirts £13.50, Zip Hooded Sweatshirt £15.50,
Polo Shirt £10.50, T-shirt £6.50. Child sizes are by age: 2yrs, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9,10, 11/12, 13.

Hats and caps: Baseball caps £6.50.

Bucket Hat (double layer cotton) suitable as a small sun hat or for you to apply a waterproofing £8.50.
Fleece ski hat (with turn-up band) £6.95. Note that these are polyester so should be kept away from fire.
Outback Hat (wide brim sun hat, cotton, chin strap) £12.50. Available in pebble (light fawn), navy, or olive.
All hats except the bucket ones are single size. Bucket hats are in two sizes (try samples held by Gareth)

N.B. there may be slight variations in details dependant on the stock that our supplier can obtain at the time. Orders take up to 30 days to complete. Payment in advance is by cheque payable to Dorset Countryside Volunteers. Either collect the clothing on task, or contact Gareth for alternative arrangements.

Gareth Morgan

DCVpublicity@gmail.com

07923 498760 (text or voicemail)



The control of Ragwort

Scientific name: *Senecio jacobaea*

Habitat: Grasslands, waste ground, roadside verges

This medium height attractive plant much loved by the cinnabar moth caterpillar and hated by farmers is a well established invasive, now classed as native. A biennial plant with a rosette in the first year and flowers in the second. Planted in the 17th century Oxford botanical gardens where it escaped and established itself around Oxford, it became known as Oxford ragwort. Ragwort contains alkaloids making it poisonous to animals, who won't eat the bitter tasting plant but will when the plant wilts and dies and the taste is masked by plant sugars. The "Weeds act" 1959 requires landowners to control the spread of ragwort from their land and so organisations such as the

National Trust, Dorset Wildlife Trust and Natural England will either use volunteers or mechanical methods to cut and remove the plant.

Volunteers are used on grassland with a scientific designation, such as Fontmell down and Hambledon hill where spraying would be harmful to other flora or on slopes inaccessible to vehicles. The ragwort is collected in bags and trailed away to be burnt or composted.

Ragwort can be difficult to pick especially when the ground is dry and hard. DCV use a tool called a "lazy dog" which is a 2 or 3 pronged fork that can be pushed under the root and pulled



back to ease the plant out. They are effective and very easy to use. Ragwort is a useful nectar plant to many insects and is therefore left where there is no threat to farm animals. There is a perception that ragwort is on the increase but evidence suggests that it is not spreading or becoming more widespread but local land use changes such as not mowing verges give the appearance that it is on the increase.



The control of Thistles

Thistles provide a succession of micro-environments and food for a range of birds and insects feeding on leaves, flower heads, and stems. However, in some grassland situations creeping thistle and spear thistle in particular can become a problem crowding out other native plants. Other thistles may be rare, valuable to wildlife and unlikely to cause problems.

Thistles for wildlife

The goldfinch is the bird most commonly associated with thistles, the seeds of which make up one third of its diet. Other birds include greenfinch, siskin and linnet, which eat thistle seeds and use thistledown in the nest.

Butterflies including painted lady larvae feed on the leaves. Other butterflies such as the peacock and meadow brown use thistles as a nectar source.

How thistles spread

Thistles spread by seed but creeping thistle rarely propagates itself by seed, the fluffy fruit heads often have no fertile fruits. Instead, its root propagation is very efficient – fragments of rhizome can remain dormant in the soil for years and then appear when there is a gap in the grass sward.

Thistle control options

Timing of thistle control is crucial, before seeding, and the method used will vary according to the site:

Prevention is better than cure – aim to maintain a well managed perennial sward. Avoid overgrazing especially in the winter.

Control Strategy

Herbicides are sometimes used but not on nature reserves. On flat ground cutting with strimmer or by tractor can be used but on steep slopes volunteers are best used cutting the stem at the base.

Summer tools

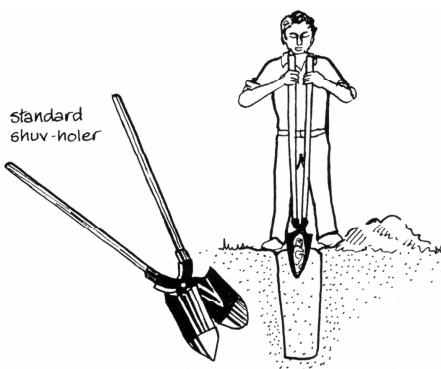
Some tools we may use this quarter



Quick release clamps are an ideal way of clamping in any situation. Here a rail is clamped to a fence post prior to drilling and bolting. Very useful to hold items that need accurate sawing, a makeshift work bench if you like. Can be used one handed for quick tightening and then release. You really can't have enough of these on some jobs.



The old fashioned Chisel is still the best way to fashion joins and joints for a seamless looking finish between post and rail on corners. Just take off a little at a time before trying to fit.

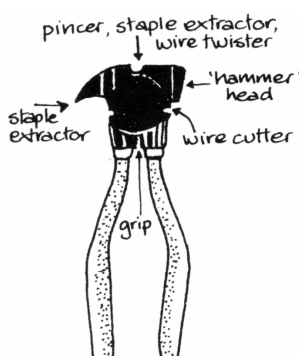


Shuv-holer or post hole digger

DCV have 2 of the lightweight shuvholer and are used for digging deep holes for straining posts. They have a pointed blade to dig into the soil but the ground is often best broken up using an iron bar. They won't collect masses of soil but a little and often is the technique. If the soil is wet or clay they might need tapping to release the soil or a hand trowel is also useful to scrape the soil off the inside.

Wood drill bit

These are different to the normal everyday bit we have at home. On a boardwalk or new gates they are used to drill out a hole for the coach bolt. They have a point that centres the drill and a blade that cuts the wood. Don't drill too fast and draw the drill out from time to time to clear the cut wood and so it doesn't jam. Do have spare, they are easier to break than normal drills.



Fencing Pliers The multi-tool of fencing

The hooked part is used for extracting staples. Used with a hammer to beat the hook under the staple and lever out enough to get the pincer under and lever out the staple. Other useful features include a wire cutter on the side, new pliers will cut through like butter. Old DCV pliers need a bit of brute force or use the DCV wire cutting pliers. The wire grip can be used to stretch out the wire. The hammer can be used to start off the staple.

Hand saw

Old saws are good for most wood cutting but if you are cutting oak then it is best to buy new. They aren't expensive, just an expense, part of the job.

Try to keep level if you can especially on parts that the public are going to see. Use in smooth strokes and don't force it too much especially when it is a long way into the wood as sometimes accidents happen and a bent saw can occur.



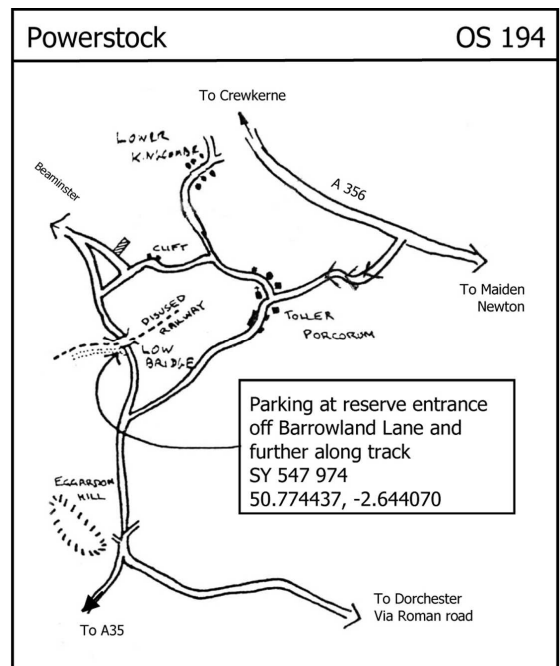
Spirit Level should be used to check that surfaces meant to be level are level.

DCV TASK PROGRAMME : May - July 2022

30 April & 1 May: Powerstock Common, West Dorset AND 14 & 15 May: AND Sunday 29 May (to be confirmed)

Our visits to this large nature reserve are usually in the winter, cutting and burning scrub encroaching on the grassland and tracks. This spring visit will be something of a treat, hopefully with a warm sun, trees freshly in leaf, carpets of woodland bluebells and other flowers to admire across the grasslands. In recent years the management of the reserve has been transformed with increased funding. Dark plantations of spruce and pine have been removed, dense scrub has been cut back and livestock now graze extensively across rough, tree dotted pastures and small woods and thickets. Elsewhere there are woods enclosed from the grazing animals. The fences run for miles around the grazing areas. But with fences comes a need for gates to allow people to explore and enjoy the reserve. We have been asked to replace 3 gates with new gates that provide easier access. There will be holes to dig and refill with new posts, wire fences to adjust and, of course, the new gates to hang. So there are lots of jobs to share around. And the day will be punctuated by chat, breaks and stove brewed teas and coffees, accompanied by the task leader's choice of biscuits.

NB: Look out for DCVs sign board for directions to the task site then follow our distinctive yellow arrows.

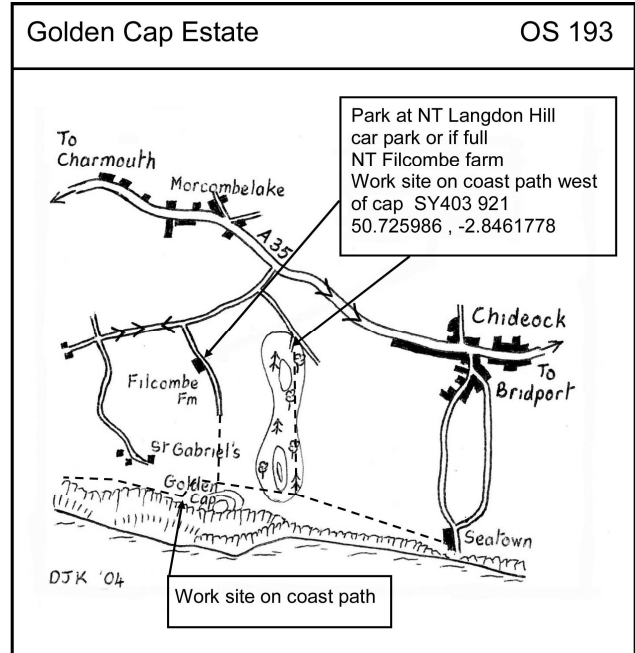


7 & 8 May: Golden Cap Estate, West Dorset AND 21 & 22 May:

This area has been described by the National Trust as a jewel in the crown. And justifiably so. Here the coast path climbs steeply to the summit of Golden Cap – at 191m the highest point on the south coast. On a clear day there are sweeping views along miles of dramatic coastline. Turn inland and there are small, secluded valleys, each with a patchwork of fields and hedges. Here small streams tumble down between the fields, some ending with a leap over the cliff to the beach below. So it's a great privilege to have tasks in the area. What's more, this task takes us onto the upper slopes of Golden Cap itself. Here we have been asked to construct a post and rope handhold for the many people that walk the coast path and come to experience the dramatic views. The ground is hard so we may well need to dig a good number of deep holes to anchor in the posts. And in-between digging and filling, enjoy the views. There will be our trusty kettles to provide hot drinks and plenty of time to chat and work together on those holes!

NB: Park at either: Filcombe Farm (steeper but shorter walk) or the Langdon Hill wood car park, if this is full then head for Filcombe Farm. The route to the worksite will be signed from Filcombe. From Langdon, follow signs for Golden Cap for 1Km, then follow the DCV arrows round the back of the Cap to the kissing gate on the western side.

NBB: If you arrive late at Filcombe and the gate is closed there is parking for a couple of cars above the yard. The task site is very exposed to whatever the weather brings from the open sea. It can be calm and hot or driving rain, all in a day. So bring clothing for all conditions and suitable footwear for the steep slopes.



14 & 15 May: Powerstock Common, West Dorset

Continuation of work fitting new gates. For description see task 30 April & 1 May

NB: Look out for DCVs sign board for directions to the task site then follow our distinctive yellow arrows.

For map see task for 30 April & 1 May.

21 & 22 May: Golden Cap Estate, West Dorset

Continuation of work installing a new rope handrail. For details see task for 7th & 8th May.

For map see task for 7th & 8th May

DCV TASK PROGRAMME : May - July 2022

Sunday 29 May Powerstock Common, West Dorset (to be confirmed)

Continued task on Sunday 29 May subject to confirmation on what remains to do after task on 15 May. Check DCV web-site or phone Richard, Peter or Doug near the time.

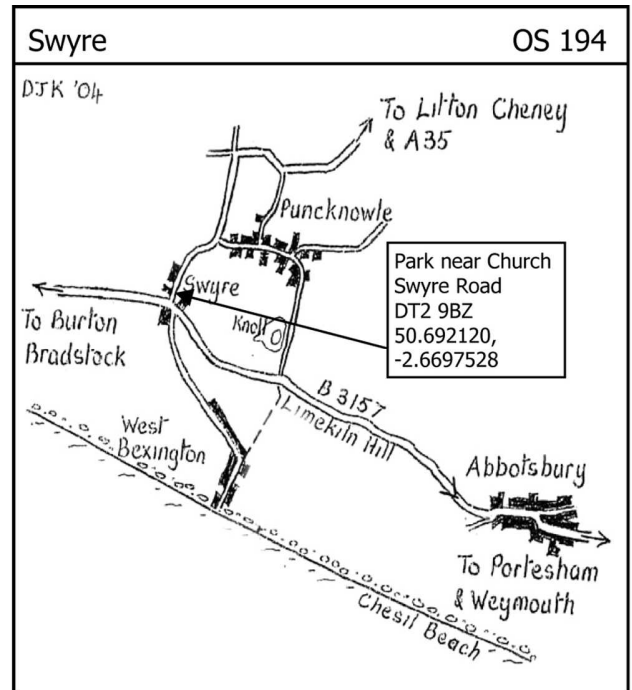
Or task below

Sunday 29 May: Swyre, West Dorset (to be confirmed)

AND 4 & 5 June: Swyre, West Dorset

Over the extra-long Bank Holiday period (Queen's Platinum Jubilee) we return to a tranquil valley setting away from the crowds. Sheep and perhaps swallows hunting over the fields are the only sounds likely to disturb the quiet. This is limestone country. The landscape is distinctive, characterised by drystone walls, and the villages by limestone buildings. This village and the surrounding land are typical, the fields divided by a grid of old stone walls. The walls are strong and can last for centuries. But over time parts crumble and collapse as the weather and livestock rubbing up against the stone take their toll. The past winter was no exception, a section of wall collapsed. We have been visiting this site for well over a decade, rebuilding collapsed and collapsing sections of wall. The art of drystone walling is easily picked up. It's rather like a 3-D jigsaw but without a picture, just a few simple rules on what sort of stone goes where. We shall have some experienced wallers to help and provide guidance. Our trusty stove will give us hot drinks for leisurely breaks through the day, and we can look forward to an assortment of biscuits and plenty of chat.

NB: Park in village centre near the church (SY 528 883) just off the main road and look out for our distinctive DCV signs taking you through the farmyard to the task site.



11 & 12 June: Task tba. See website or phone Peter, Richard or Doug.

18 & 19 June: Task tba. See website or phone Peter, Richard or Doug.

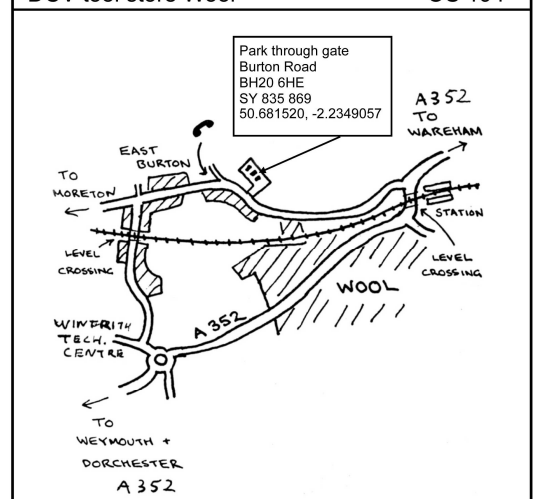
25 & 26 June: Task tba. See website or phone Peter, Richard or Doug.

There is a possibility of a DCV tool store task on one of the TBA weekends.



DCV tool store Wool

OS 194

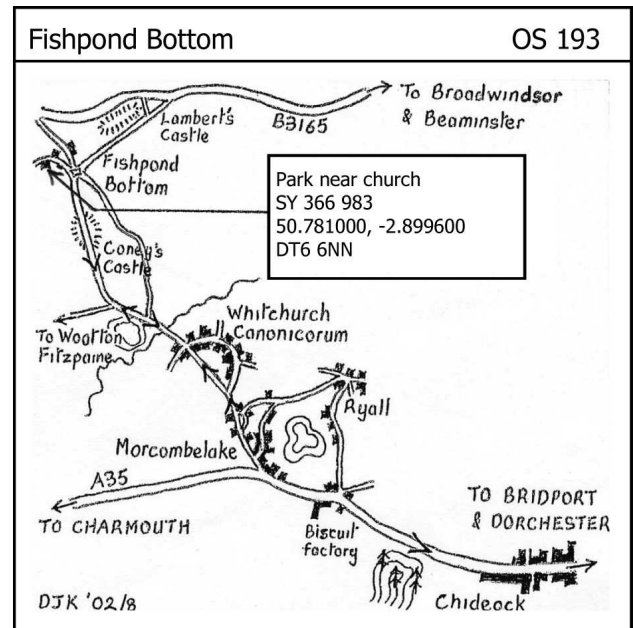


DCV TASK PROGRAMME : May - July 2022

2 & 3 July: Fishpond Bottom, West Dorset

This task takes us to the far west of the county, to the slopes below Lambert's Castle. Here there are wonderful views across a patchwork of small grassland fields to the sea at Charmouth. Despite the lofty elevation many of the fields contain wetland areas. This is caused by groundwater seeping out of the ground and draining downhill. These seepages support a vegetation rich in wetland plants among the more familiar grasses. The wet ground is also ideal for Himalayan balsam. 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. We shall be helping the year on year work to eliminate balsams from this site. The plant has little root and is easy to pull. Every balsam must go. And over our breaks, enjoying teas and coffees, we can take in views down the valley and to Coney's Castle (where we have occasional tasks in the winter).

NB: There is parking near the little church (SY366983) on the lower road heading west from the Fishpond Bottom junction. Look out for DCV arrows to the task site. This could be a wet task getting to balsams in the more squidgy ground and among willow scrub. Bring your wellies or good waterproof boots, wear old clothes and be prepared to get wet.

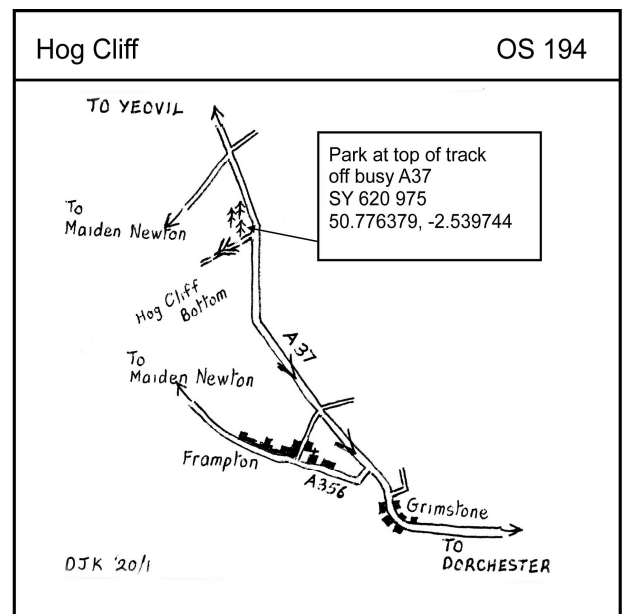


Sunday 10 July: Hog Cliff, nr Dorchester

Task subject to being confirmed. Check DCV web-site or phone Richard, Peter or Doug near the time.

This task takes us to part of a wider National Nature Reserve centred on dry chalkland valleys high in the Dorset Downs. The steep slopes escaped agricultural improvement during the 20th century and continue to support chalk grassland with a rich variety of wild flowers. Many insects thrive here, including scarce butterflies like Adonis blue and marsh fritillary. Previously we have visited this reserve in the winter to cut scrub. On this occasion we shall be able to admire the flowers, including possibly lots of ragwort. The plant is poisonous to livestock when cut and needs to be controlled in abundance to reduce its spread to surrounding agricultural land that may be cut for grass or to control weeds such as docks and thistles. So we shall be hunting out the unwanted ragwort and stuffing them into sacks for safe disposal. There will be lots of time for breaks: to admire the views, to catch up on the chat and to enjoy freshly made cups of tea and coffee from our trusty stove and whistling kettle.

NB: The entrance to this reserve off the A37 is easily missed. From Dorchester, after going up the steep inclines beyond Grimstone look out for a lay-by on the left. Slow down, a wide farm track entrance to the reserve is a few hundred yards further, just before a pine tree thicket - look out for DCV's yellow arrows. Park at top of the track, tight on fences, and not blocking farm access. Bring good gripping boots for scouring out ragwort over the steep terrain. Ticks can be a problem, particularly at this time of year. Wear long trousers that tuck into your boot socks, ideally light coloured so you can see and flick off any of the offending critters. And it can get really hot on a calm sunny day, so bring a hat and suitable protection.



DCV TASK PROGRAMME : May - July 2022

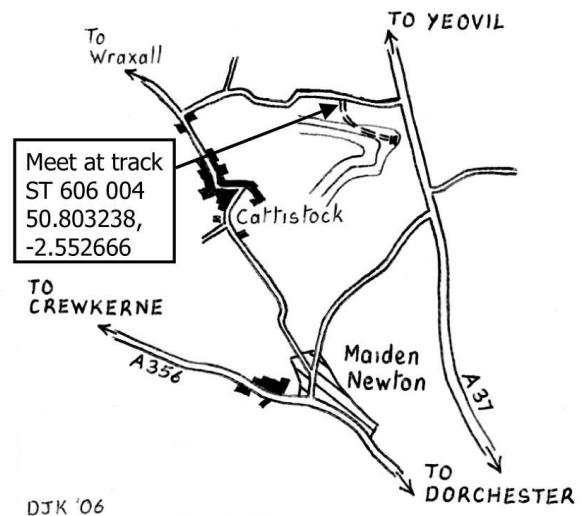
16 & 17 July: Lankham Bottom, nr Dorchester

This weekend we travel to another chalkland site in the west of the county, a short distance from our task last Sunday. The site is managed as a nature reserve, primarily for its butterflies. It has become a regular fixture on DCVs task programme, in the early days cutting scrub in the winter and latterly pulling ragwort in the summer. The reserve covers a deep bowl at the head of a dry valley. There is a lovely view down towards Cattistock. Beyond, high chalk ridges extend to a distant horizon. The grassland on the steep chalk slopes escaped agricultural improvement and contains an abundance of wild flowers. These in turn support a rich variety of butterflies that thrive in the warmth and shelter of the valley. One plant occurs in rather more abundance than is wanted - ragwort. It's poisonous to livestock, especially when cut, and so must be removed from grassland that is cut for hay or 'topped' to encourage fresh grass. Here at the top of the valley its seeds could be carried far and wide by the wind to colonise surrounding grass fields. So its abundance needs to be controlled. That's where we come in. We shall be pulling out unwanted plants and stuffing them in sacks for deposit in a safe place. There will be plenty of breaks for drinks and chat, and to take in the local scene.

NB: It's likely our focus will be on ragwort growing high up on the valley slopes near the reserve boundary with other agricultural land. The slopes are steep and can be slippery, so please bring suitable footwear. And on a calm sunny day it can get really hot, so do bring a hat and suitable protection.

Lankham Bottom

OS 194



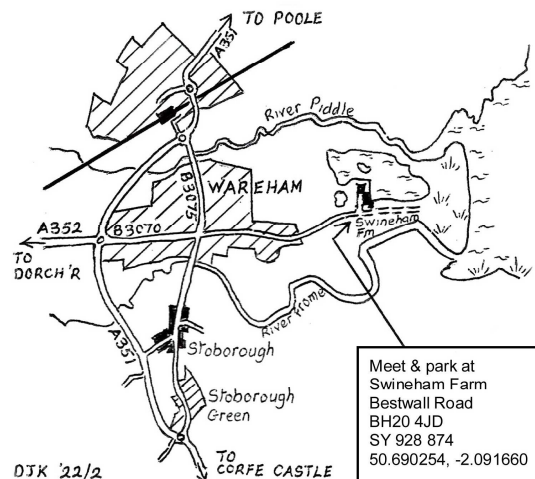
23 & 24 July: Swineham Lake, Wareham

On the east side of Wareham, jutting toward Poole Harbour, lies a narrow peninsula of high land sandwiched between flood meadows formed by the Piddle and Frome rivers as they lazily wind into the harbour. At the far end lies saltmarsh, the remains of a long-abandoned sea wall, then mudflat and reed beds of the harbour itself. Beyond, the Arne peninsula, now part of the large Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve. This is still a wild coast, a world away from the nearby bustle of Wareham on a summer's day. Much of the peninsula has been dug for sand, leaving behind a large freshwater lake and smaller areas of water. These are managed for quiet recreational activities, including wild swimming and bird watching. Part of the main lake is formed into a mosaic of small islands and secluded water as a sanctuary area for breeding water birds. New native woodland is being established alongside parts of the lake shore, planted as part of the restoration following completion of the sand extraction. The trees and shrubs have now reached a stage where they are safe from rabbit and deer browsing, and their plastic tree guards can be removed. We have been asked by the mineral company to help with this work, removing the plastic for safe disposal before it breaks up and finds its way into the lake and harbour.

NB: Meet and park at or near Swineham Farm, look out for DCV's distinctive yellow arrows. The new woodland has formed a dense cover and the ground can be wet on the lake edge. Bring suitable footwear and outer clothes for pushing through the undergrowth.

Swineham, Wareham

OS 195



D C V DIARY May - July 2022

Date	Task Site	Client	Work
30 April & 1 May	Powerstock Common West Dorset	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Gate replacement
7 & 8 May	Golden Cap Estate West Dorset	National Trust	New post & rope handrail
14 & 15 May	Powerstock Common West Dorset	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Gate replacement
21 & 22 May	Golden Cap Estate West Dorset	National Trust	New post & rope handrail
29 May Sunday	Powerstock Common West Dorset	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Gate replacement
Or	Alternative Task	If work at Powerstock has finished	
29 May Sunday	Swyre West Dorset	Private	Dry stone walling
4 & 5 June	Swyre West Dorset	Private	Dry stone walling
11 & 12 June	TBA	<i>Check website www.dcv.org.uk</i>	<i>or contact Richard</i>
18 & 19 June	TBA	<i>Check www.dcv.org.uk</i>	<i>or contact Richard</i>
25 & 26 June	TBA	<i>Check www.dcv.org.uk</i>	<i>or contact Richard</i>
2 & 3 July	Fishpond Bottom, West Dorset	National Trust	Himalayan balsam pulling
10 July Sunday	Hog Cliff Nr Dorchester	Natural England	Ragwort pulling
16 & 17 July	Lankham Bottom Nr Dorchester	Butterfly Conservation	Ragwort pulling
23 & 24 July	Swineham Lake Wareham	Aggregate Industries	Removing plastic tree guards

DCV mobile: 07929 961532 (task hours) or try other mobiles on contact sheet.

*Please check DCV web site - www.dcv.org.uk
Keep a note of the DCV mobile phone number - a task may have to be cancelled last minute or finish early.*

*If coming out later in the day,
phone to check task still running*