

Growing Connections

The West Weald Landscape Project Newsletter

Editorial by Tony Whitbread

Chief Executive of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

Welcome to the first issue of the brand new newsletter of the West Weald Landscape Project, the dynamic partnership project which the Sussex Wildlife Trust is proud to host. Through this newsletter we plan to keep you up to date with what is happening to improve the natural environment of this internationally important area for wildlife, as well as encourage you to be involved! We hope to reach out to and work with more people for the benefit of the environment and the people that live, work and visit the West Weald, so do please stay in touch.



As the end of 2009 approaches, and we cast our thoughts back to the year just gone, we can reflect on an active season with some exciting new discoveries as part of the first year of the project's new funding award. Read on!

Major Funding Boost for the West Weald

Earlier this year the West Weald Landscape Project (WWLP) was awarded major support of nearly a quarter of a million pounds over a five-year period by The Tubney Charitable Trust for its work to conserve and enhance this special area. This funding will enable us to move far beyond traditional conservation efforts to look after individual special sites, such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust reserve of Ebernoe Common, and expand to support the efforts of a much broader range of landowners and farmers to enrich the countryside. We can now offer a programme of free advice, support and nature surveys to land managers, in addition to funding dedicated improvements such as hedge-planting. Volunteers are especially welcome to get involved, with practical works as well as wildlife studies that support our conservation measures. Lastly, keep an eye out for our new information materials now available, as well as for the nature events that we are running in the area to support our vision of a healthy managed landscape for all.



Hedge planting with a school

This project is based at the Sussex Wildlife Trust and is supported by The Tubney Charitable Trust, as well as by the BBC Wildlife Fund, Chichester District Council and West Sussex County Council. A broad partnership of organisations helps to steer and deliver the project.

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Contents:

Editorial

Major funding secured for the West Weald

News in Brief

Parish focus – Ebernoe

Information

Funding for practical conservation works by landowners now available from WWLP - especially involving targeted tree and hedge planting.

BBC Wildlife Fund & Bats - short video on the ground-breaking work they are funding by the WWLP at www.westweald.org.uk/news.htm

Records of Dormice wanted! - join in with the "Golden Great Nut Hunt" at www.ptes.org/moremammals/gnh/

Events

Climate change adaptation workshop - for West Weald stakeholders, to be held 25th February 2010 in Chichester.

Landowner workshop on land management for nature - to be held near Petworth in March 2010, contact WWLP for details.

News in Brief

New species uncovered

A biological recording day was held on 23rd May with the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, to bring together volunteer naturalists who pooled their expertise and enthusiasm at sites near Balls Cross and Kirdford. Some notable new records of invertebrate species came to light both on this day and through other surveys this summer. Highlights include a 'nationally notable' black and red click beetle *Ampedus elongantulus*; a huge striking "daddy long legs" *Tanyptera atrata* (a first record for Sussex); a first appearance of the threatened Wood White butterfly at the Butcherland reserve by Ebernoe; and lastly the discovery of a rare spider by Plaistow, only known from two other places in the UK!



Tanyptera atrata (Graeme Lyons)

Agri-environment monies secured

A large farm holding near Petworth has entered into a ten-year Higher Level Stewardship agreement with the support of the WWLP, especially designed to benefit the rare barbastelle bat. This scheme means that extensive new tree belts will be planted along mapped bat flightlines this winter, and small wetlands created as feeding areas.



Dormouse (John Davis)

Technology aids conservation research

A study of bat activity on farmland has been running this summer using new automatic 'Anabat' bat detectors. These high-tech devices were left out to record the ultrasound signal every time a bat passes, resulting in thousands of digital 'sonograms' from which the different bat species can be identified and used as indicators of the natural health of the countryside.

West Weald in Art

An attractive new leaflet on our project is now out, which includes a fold-out artist's impression of the landscape together with beautiful illustrations of iconic species by the renowned wildlife artist John Davis. Another artist, Alexi Francis, has meanwhile drawn an impressionistic vista of the area as the focus of a new display panel to be fronted at fairs and events.

The project website has also been revamped, and now features ways to get involved as well as a news page which includes a video by the BBC's Wildlife Fund on their support to us through substantial funding of our conservation programme for rare bats. Our bat project featured in the summer edition of BBC Wildlife magazine, alongside African elephants and other better-known charismatic species!

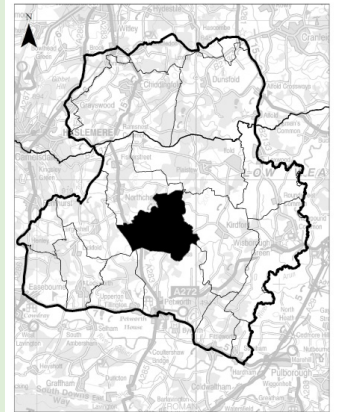
Parish focus – Ebernoe

"A place not quite a place" by Frances Abraham

Ebernoe owes its rich wildlife partly due to its complex geology and partly to its history. The parish of Ebernoe was formed in 1988 from outlying parts of Kirdford, Northchapel and Petworth parishes, and it still has the atmosphere of a place which is not quite a place.

It consists of the hamlets of Colhook, Ebernoe, and Balls Cross, which contain the wooded commons of Colhook Common, Ebernoe Common and Langhurst Common respectively.

Read the rest of this article at www.westweald.org.uk/ebernoe.htm



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