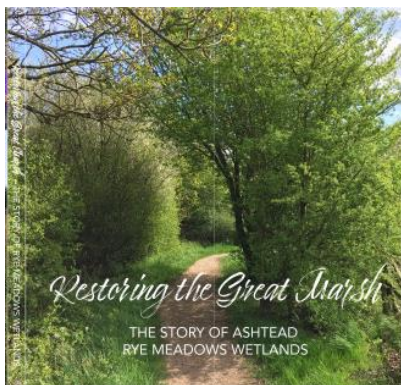


Rye Meadows Newsletter – No. 12

Welcome to the latest Newsletter from Rye Meadows. Now the summer is here and we have had an extended period of heat, the fields are very dry. We would ask visitors to be very careful when walking in the meadows and to refrain from dropping cigarette ends. In fact, let's get the nasty bits out of the way first. Dog walkers are often wrongly maligned and we do welcome well behaved dogs (and owners!) to Rye Meadows. We paid for a dog waste bin in Preston Grove and there is a waste bin in Bushey Shaw. Ashtead Common has bins on the Wood Field. There is no excuse for not picking up after your dog.

Recently one of the volunteers was strimming arounds the seats in Centenary Field to keep the area welcoming for visitors and he strimmed into a pile of unseen dog mess which then sprayed everywhere, but mostly over him. This was extremely unpleasant for him. Also, the pond is not a dog swimming pool but is a haven for birds, reptiles and other aquatic creatures. Dogs swimming stir up the mud and do harm. Please keep dogs on the lead and under control. Lecture over!

" Restoring the Great Marsh"

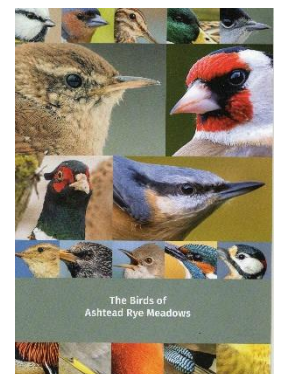


Sales of the book have gone well and it was particularly popular at Village Day in 2022. This year we shared the Ashtead Common stand with Daphne Burnett, James Irvine and Jenny Rehling selling the books. We have also made many sales via the web site. All the proceeds of the book are donated to Ashtead Rotary for the Charities they support. For a short time, it is now available at a reduced price of £10. It is a really excellent book and tells the story of Daphne's vision for a wildlife corridor. As one local author, Andy Smith, recounted in his magazine article for Surrey Life, Rye Meadows is "an oasis of rural tranquillity just a short distance from the M25. In Centenary Field there is a boardwalk so that the site is easily accessible to visitors, even when at its wettest!"

If you don't have your copy yet we still have copies available at £10. We will deliver free of charge to any KT21 address, but if outside there we will have to charge P&P. To order your copy go to <https://www.ryemeadows.org.uk/shop/>.

The Birds of Ashtead Rye Meadows

Daphne Burnett also commissioned and paid for the publication of this other short book detailing the many species of birds identified on Rye Meadows. Local ornithologist, Peter Firth, agreed to write this book which contains colour photographs of the birds together with details of their habitat, breeding season, diet and nest configuration. The narrative was typed up by Lizzie Hide one of the Rye Meadows volunteers. The book has proved to be very popular and numbers



remaining are limited so if you want a copy order one now from the web site. Proceeds of this book go to Rye Meadows funds.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

Richard Wassell, one of the hard working and dedicated volunteers, regularly supervises young students undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Award projects. This year he has seen his charges progress through



their Bronze Awards and continue to their Silver Awards. Richard's guidance and supervision has proven to be popular and 'word of mouth' keeps a succession of young people coming forward to ask to be included in Rye Meadows.

The students have worked hard in their time with us. It is certainly not a holiday break for them. Planting trees, mending hedges, repairing fences and repainting a barn (Freddie, Toren and Lucy) are just some of the many tasks they have undertaken. Their accomplishments are publicised each week on our Facebook page.

Here we must also pay tribute to Richard, and Derek Webb who has recently joined him, who give up an hour or more each weekend to guide these young people towards their goal of Bronze or Silver awards. This would not be possible without their sacrifice and commitment.

Trevona Field



We agreed to assist with future improvement of Trevona field last year. It is not part of the land designated under Fields in Trust, but is now managed by the volunteers with the remainder of Rye Meadows. Access to the field was originally by a bridge from Footpath 596. To say this bridge had seen better days would be an understatement. Rot and insect infestation had eaten away at the railway sleepers leaving it unsuitable, and dangerous, to use.

So, the engineering skill of the volunteers (Frank, David and Richard 3rd) was yet again called upon and a new sleeper bridge was constructed one volunteering day. Recently too, in the very hot weather, two volunteers dug out a post hole for a gate post to be fixed in place and a recycled oak farm gate donated to Rye Meadows will be hung in place and new fencing erected. The gate was well weathered and three Duke of Edinburgh students (Lucy, Freddie and William) sanded and treated the gate to make it as good as new.



We have also planted a new stand of trees at the top of Trevona Field. These small saplings seem to have survived the rigours of a hard winter and now a hot summer but now need protecting from hungry deer who love to feed on the new shoots emerging from the protective tubes. We will be erecting a deer fence around these saplings to protect them until they are able to survive.

(Why Richard 3rd you ask? We have three Richards who volunteer. Richard Inge is Richard 1st, Richard Wassell is Richard 2nd (also called “Digger” for his JCB skills), and Richard Varian who is Richard 3rd – and no, we didn’t find him in a Leicester car park)

Materials for Rye Meadows

We have to buy in much of the materials we use on Rye Meadows and rely upon funds coming in via the Mole Valley Lottery and Easyfundraising. This is our “bread and butter” income source. However, many visitors either lose sight of or are unaware of, the huge financial commitment to Rye Meadows made by the land owners, George and Daphne Burnett. Without their overriding financial support none of this would be possible.

We do receive generous financial donations from local residents. Contributions to the wildflower meadow cost for example. We also receive donations of tools, trees and materials for use in the meadows. We recently received two loads of chippings which we use to mulch around the base of trees and hedges. These will be moved to their eventual site by volunteers or the Duke of Edinburgh students. Unfortunately, one visitor seems to have considered these two piles to be fly tipping and not materials to be used on the trees and reported them to Mole Valley Council Environmental Services. We were able to reassure the Officer that the position of these piles was temporary only and they would be used soon.

Surrey Wildlife Trust

Rye Meadows has commissioned a Report on the meadows, the brook, pond and scrapes by specialists at Surrey Wildlife Trust. The volunteers are all keen enthusiasts with varying degrees of expertise, but none of us have the knowledge on how to best manage the 14 acres of varying habitat. We give it our best endeavours, but sometimes inadvertently, stray from a best practice.

The Reports will, we hope, give us a “Bible” on how best to manage the Meadows, the Brook, pond and scrapes. Using this as a base document we will construct a maintenance and management schedule for future volunteering sessions. This will accompany the necessary one-off tasks such as fence and bridge repair.

The latter was necessary when in April the torrential rain we had in Ashted flooded the fields and tore apart three sleeper bridges in the meadows. One session was devoted to repairing these bridges and the combined skills of the volunteers reinstated them, saving a considerable sum had outside contractors been used. The pictures show the repaired bridges into Centenary Field (left) and Fraudings (right).



We at Rye Meadows have been recently nominated for the Surrey Wildlife Trust Community Champions Award. This comes in three denominations and we have been put forward for the “Rising Star” category. Shortlisted communities will receive a visit from the Community Engagement team and Nature Based Solutions team to assess the nomination. Site visits will take place between 10th - 21st July 2023.

During the visit, the team will create a short video of your community group which will be played at the Community Celebratory Event. The successful awardees will be announced at the Community Celebratory Evening, held on Thursday 3rd August at West Horsley Place.

Whether we win or not, it is a feather in our cap to be recognised for all the hard work and commitment made by the volunteers and land owners over the years to create this wonderful area.

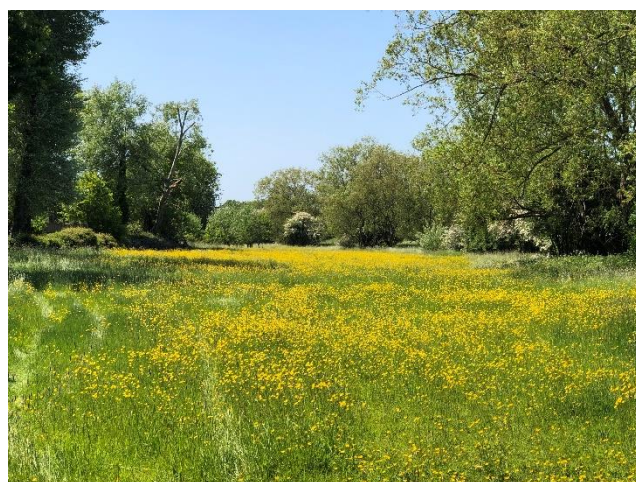
Wildflower Meadow

Mrs Burnett had always been keen to establish a wildflower meadow within Rye Meadows and in 2021



through to 2022 she commissioned Chris Edge Tree Care to prepare and sow wildflowers in Fraudings field. The field was closed to the public as a consequence and signs erected to explain why. Sadly, these signs were destroyed on at least three occasions by visitors who took exception to this **private** land being closed off. Trespassers were politely asked to not climb the gates and enter the field, though sadly some continued to do so.

This year the fruits of these endeavours can be seen with yellow rattle establishing itself in the field. Yellow rattle becomes the dominant flora keeping grasses at bay and will now, we hope, self-seed and become a feature of the field allowing other wildflowers to flourish.



Winter Meadow on the other hand has had a magnificent display of self-seeded wild flowers presenting the splendid sight of a yellow carpet from the Ashtead Woods Road viewpoint.

An increasingly popular idea is to change your lawn into a Wildflower Meadow. Did you know... our meadows increase biodiversity and are a natural habitat for over 3,500 of our animal species. They provide bees, butterflies and other pollinators with food throughout the year. And, perennial meadows protect the environment... their complex root systems help to stabilise the soil and fight the effects of flooding.

Creating a wildflower garden, even in the smallest patch, helps our nation's pollinators and other wildlife. So, let's celebrate our wildflower meadows, our gardens, our small wild spaces, and the diverse world of wildlife they are home to.

If you have been interested in creating a wildflower area in your garden, www.meadowmania.co.uk contains a huge amount of advice and is a source for seeds and plug plants. To receive their newsletter just visit their site and register your interest.

Once the wildflower area is established the wildflower Meadow can fill your garden with Bees and Butterflies as well as creating a lot less work and maintenance.

Donations and Income

No newsletter would be complete without the usual plea for funds. The tractor, brush cutters, chain saw and other equipment all need diesel, petrol, oil and annual servicing. The tractor alone costs £630 a year for its annual service. We have to insure our tools and ourselves for Public Liability and this costs £240 p.a.

You can help by using Easyfundraising when you buy items on the internet. Several thousand retailers subscribe to the scheme and it costs you NOTHING. Just visit <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause/step-1/?char=100092&invite=26KLH6&referral-campaign=c2s> and sign up. Once registered, just visit Easyfundraising **before** choosing Amazon, Argos or any of 3,000 online retailers and **they** will donate to us a percentage of the value of your purchase. To date we have raised £1,600 from these purchases. It might be pence or pounds, but it all adds up.



Another way to support us is to buy a regular weekly lottery ticket from Mole Valley Community Lottery, choosing us as your supported scheme. Visit <https://www.molevalleylottery.co.uk/support/find-a-good-cause> and in "Search for a Cause" type Rye Meadows, then follow the on-screen instructions to sign up. Tickets cost £1 each and from that we receive

50p. To date we have raised £1,742 from supporters.

Heritage Open Days



Once again, Rye Meadows will be taking part in National Heritage Open Days.

This year it starts on Friday 8th September and runs until Sunday 17th September. For the duration of this festival **all** the fields will be open to the public from 10am until 4pm and on Sunday 10th September the Rye Meadows volunteers will be on hand to greet visitors. We will be having our stand at the entrance to Centenary Field just off the Footpath 596

from Fairholme Crescent. We hope to be selling our two books so be prepared to bring your "plastic" with you to buy the books, mugs and tea towels. Come and see the terrific displays of pictures of bird species seen on Rye Meadows that has been commissioned by Daphne Burnett.

There will be mown paths through the fields and we ask visitors to stay to these where possible. Dog walkers are welcome, but please, please keep the dog under control and pick up after your dog and dispose of the bag in the bins in Preston Grove and Bushey Shaw.

We hope to see many of you there on Sunday 10th. If driving, please park responsibly either in Preston Grove, Fairholme Crescent or Links Road. We want to keep on the good side of our neighbours.

We hope all our supporters have a good Summer.

David