



# The Reedbed



Newsletter of the  
Friends of Warnham Local Nature Reserve

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Photo: Jacob Everitt

Lawn mower! - Hebridean sheep

## Sheep and dipping

This issue of The Reedbed introduces our new ovine friends who even now are busy mowing the meadow having made themselves very quickly at home. We also report on rather a lot of pond dipping by both adults and children. These events are perhaps the most popular at the

Reserve with young and old alike and it is good to report such a high level of interest and activity.

My apologies for a dearth of bird related news, however, do come along to the RSPB Feed the Birds Day on 31st October, where the Friends will be assisting. We also

have a number of events to look forward to - The Fungus Foray in November will be led by Prof. Maurice Moss. Our AGM is on Nov. 23rd - we need your support! That leads us onto Xmas Wreath Making...

...Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year Walk!!  
-GM

## Meet the Committee

### With their interests

#### OFFICERS

**Chairman: Terry Slattery**

Natural history and wildlife in general. Photography.

**Treasurer: Lyn Whale**

Photography, wildlife, bird watching, working with children.

**Secretary: John Wilks**

All wildlife, especially birds

#### ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Stuart Card**

Well known around the Reserve as a Warden assisting in all aspects of the Reserve's life, with an interest in moths, birds and bird-ringing.

**Neil Henry**

Photography, wildlife and traveling .

**Graham Matthews**

Microscopy/ photomicrography (- anything small!).

**Linda Slattery**

Biology and wildlife - especially things I can get close to!

**Aston Trelford**

Photography and wildlife especially birds. Has experience of game keeping learnt from childhood

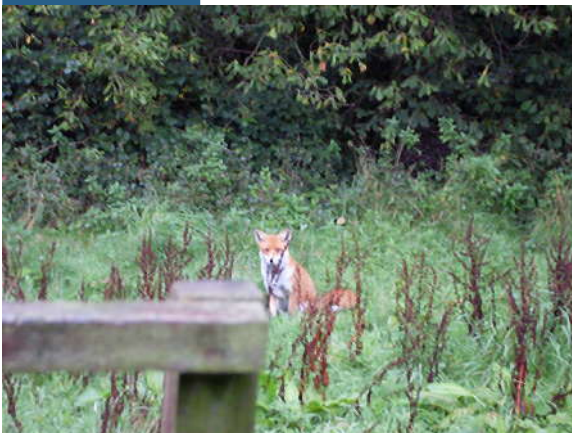
**Tony Utting**

Sport, photography, gardening and cooking. I am a senior manager with Royal Mail and was born and brought up in South London.

The foxes live  
in the  
Reserve by  
our garden

## Foxes in the Garden!

**Estella Shaw**



**Fox!**

Photo: Estella Shaw

The foxes live in the Reserve by our garden and there are three of them. We don't know exactly how old they are but one is a baby and two are fully grown parents. We've called baby Sandy, Mum Missy and Dad Cyril. They come and watch as we feed our famously cute rabbit Stanley (put his name in the paper please!) and they turn and go to their den as soon as we leave.

[by e-mail from Estella to my daughter Janejira....we hope Stanley has a secure hutch! - Ed.]

# Hops

Terry Slattery



## Hop flowers

Walking round the Reserve the other day Linda and I stopped to admire some 'chicken of the wood' fungus growing on one of the trees off the far boardwalk, when we were met with the unmistakable sight of hops in the trees. I don't believe that hops have been noted at Warnham before so presumably some seed was introduced by a visiting bird or mammal.

The common hop (*Humulus lupulus*), while often referred

to as a vine, is actually a bine. Unlike vines, which use tendrils or suckers to climb, bines have stiff downward pointing hairs on the stem which enable them to climb while twining around other stems, sticks, or strings. Hop shoots grow vigorously, up to several centimetres a day at their peak, producing flowers in July/August, and fruits in September/October, before dying down to the ground in late autumn, leaving the hardy rhizome to shoot again the following spring.

Hops have been used in the manufacture of beer for centuries, both as a natural preservative, and to give beer its characteristic bitter taste. I don't think there are any plans to start a micro-brewery at the Reserve, but if I notice a corner of the meadow is given over to barley I might need to think again!

Photos by Terry Slattery



Chicken of the wood

# Chairman's Corner

Terry Slattery

...swifts, swallows, martins, and various warblers are heading south for the winter

Summer is nearly over and the Reserve is taking on its autumn persona, with large numbers of seeds and berries ripening, leaves changing colour and falling, and summer-visiting birds such as swifts, swallows, martins, and various warblers are heading south for the winter. Traditionally this is the time of year when contractors come in to mow the flower meadow and remove the mowings. This year, however, a different approach has been taken with the introduction of eight Hebridean sheep to do the job the natural way. These hardy creatures are often used for conservation grazing to maintain natural grassland so should provide an interesting and ecologically sound alternative to power mowers at the Reserve.

The summer programme of events the Friends put together and ran on behalf of HDC Countryside Services has now come to an end, the final events being a Pond Dipping session run with the Wildlife Explorers and a second bird ringing session. All events have been well received, and we have now put together our winter programme. Details of all the events are in the winter countryside activities leaflet and include a Fungus Foray, an Xmas Wreath Making session, a tree identification walk around the Reserve, and a talk on small mammals in Sussex. Members of the Friends enjoy a concessionary rate

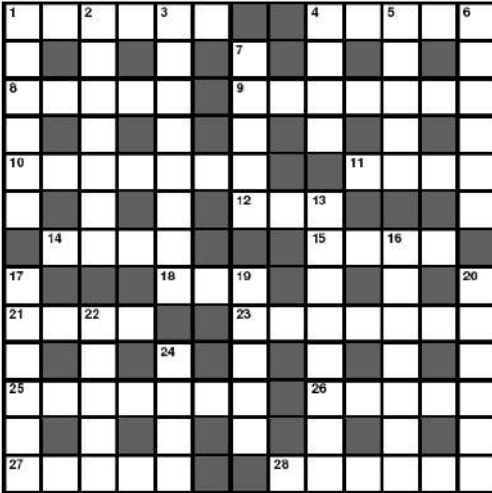
on all these joint events.

In addition to the 'joint' programme we are also planning to run a number of events specifically for the members of Friends in the new year. The provisional programme includes an informal photographic workshop, a talk by Arthur Hoare on "Alien Plants of Sussex", and a talk on Wildlife Recording. Other possibilities include talks on bees and swans, and informal walks around the Reserve. Any other suggestions would be welcome, so if you have any thoughts on events or topics for talks please contact us by e-mail ([sec001@friendsofwarnhamlnr.org.uk](mailto:sec001@friendsofwarnhamlnr.org.uk)) or by talking directly to one of the committee.

The last members' meeting of 2010 will be the Friends AGM on Tuesday November 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Reserve, and we would like to see as many of you there as possible. As well as the formal part of the meeting our warden Jake Everitt will be giving us his views on the future of the Reserve, refreshments will be provided as well as the opportunity for meeting and chatting. Finally, a reminder that we will be looking to fill the vacancies on the committee at the AGM so could I ask you to give some thought to putting yourself forward? Being a committee member is not an onerous task and you would be made to feel very welcome.

# Terry's Teaser

Crossword by Terry Slattery



**Across**

- 1 Unhealthy looking tree? (6)
- 4 Ensnarers a confused sprat (5)
- 8 Flower sounds modest to a cockney (5)
- 9 The care required for mentor (7)
- 10 Obtain foreign money to face facts (3,4)
- 11 The god of good intentions? (4)
- 12 Fifty have surgery. Amputation perhaps? (3)
- 14 Tailless reptile sounds past its best (4)
- 15 Girl takes on learner to pick a bone (4)
- 18 Footwear loses direction when weeding (3)
- 21 Instrumental in intubation procedure? (4)
- 23 Plant derivation put down to Brits (7)
- 25 Pondlife described by cereal-eating Belgian chap (7)
- 26 Literary lion extricated from a slanderous accusation (5)
- 27 Finish with a cry of pain when making a bequest (5)
- 28 Note: like journalist was made fun of (6)

**Down**

- 1 Plant species needs strong stimulant (6)
- 2 Throw broken rest in the sea (7)
- 3 Echo blew through local woodland (8)
- 4 Paddler could be late developer (4)
- 5 Pest found in mousetrap - hidden well! (5)
- 6 Good man takes foreign currency to the beach (6)
- 7 A way to everyone in the marketplace (5)
- 13 Spurn ale in favour of edible plant (8)
- 16 Many follow direction for food (7)
- 17 Sound basis to wound the French (6)
- 19 Wooden decoration taken back to American city (5)
- 20 Punished for taking drugs? (6)
- 22 Fifty in musical group is pretty uninteresting (5)
- 24 Dilapidated mews on the water (4)

## Solution to Crossword No 10

**Across:** 1 Pub; 3 Scaup; 6 Gum; 8 Error; 9 Over-act; 10 Stag Beetle; 12 Axe; 15 Nile; 17 Elan; 18 Ear; 22 Thorn Apple; 25 Rarebit; 26 Unani; 27 New; 28 Koala; 29 Tea.

**Down:** 1 Pheasant; 2 Barnacle; 3 Scribe; 4 Avocet; 5 Paella; 6 Goat; 7 Mete; 11 Exe; 13 Elephant; 14 Angelica; 16 Eat; 19 Rhebok; 20 Protea; 21 Datura; 23 Wren; 24 Crow.

## Calendar

The Friends Calendar 2011 is now available at £4.99 from our Treasurer, Lyn.

E-mail: [lyn@friendsofwarnhamlnr.org.uk](mailto:lyn@friendsofwarnhamlnr.org.uk)

Tel: 01403 259592

# The Grazing Team Arrives!

Jacob Everitt

eight new  
lawn-mowers  
have arrived  
safely on the  
Reserve



## A first look around

Photos provided by Terry Slattery

The wait is finally over and the eight new lawn-mowers have arrived safely on the Reserve, after a bit of a delay due to them not being hungry enough to get on the trailer in Matfield, Kent! They finally arrived to a warm welcome from Terry, Andy and myself and they seemed to be impressed with their new abode. Within minutes they had started their new vocation and were happily munching away on the now overgrown meadow. It will be interesting to see how they react to all of our visitors walking through their meadow but first impressions are they like human attention!

All eight of them now have names although it is taking a bit of getting used to which one is which and the

farming fraternity haven't developed name badges for sheep yet (Dragon's Den idea!?) so it may take a little time. The current names have been chosen with the people responsible for the names in brackets: Hamish (Friends of WLNR), Hector (Jake - Warden), Ramnaresh (Steve - Warden), Harris (Sarah - Warden), Fernando (Andy - Warden), Rodney (Café girls), Fergus (The Wardens) and Barnabus (Already named by previous owner).

The benefits of the new grazing project are numerous. We hope that by using the sheep we will give the meadow a more natural feel allowing the numerous wild flowers to flourish in the spring and summer. The use of the hardy Hebridean Sheep

was chosen as they are renowned for browsing a mixture of foliage from grasses to bramble! We also think that the sheep are a great visitor attraction that will brighten even the quietest day on the reserve! Unfortunately the Mill Meadow has had to be fenced along the mill pond side, which has been met with mixed emotions, however the sheep were likely to find a way across to the Swan Is-



**The moment of arrival**



land! We have however successfully managed to get the swans to use the new path which runs adjacent to the meadow and we hope that the geese will still use the meadow to graze in the winter, but will simply have to fly in rather than amble!

Once the Mill Meadow gets water-logged in late October, early November, we then hope to move the sheep onto Chesworth Farm for the winter period. They will spend five months grazing some of the fields on the farm before moving onto Owlbeech Woods where they will form a vital part of the management of the heathland. We are also hoping to get a summer flock of around 20 to give our boys a hand on the heathland!



**Settling in**

# Family Pond Dipping

Graham Matthews



**Crowds!**

Photo: Graham Matthews

**Tim and I spent the whole day by the pondside**

Despite threatening weather, our joint pond-dipping event with the RSPB Wildlife Explorers, led by Tim Morgan, on Saturday September 11th was extremely well attended.

Tim and I spent the whole day by the pondside and we reckoned that we must have had in excess of one hundred keen pond-dippers visit us.

When we arrived in the morning, we were surprised to find the dipping ponds being patrolled by dragonflies, who had ventured out despite the dull day.

As the day progressed, we weathered a couple of showers, but were pleased that the rain largely held off.

The appeal of just messing about in ponds never ceases to amaze and satisfy. Although most of our visitors were children, there were also a number of fascinated adults.

The catch included dragonfly, damselfly and mayfly nymphs, baby newts, small water beetles, water boatmen, water scorpions and any number of waterfleas. I brought a microscope along and was pleased to show some of the smaller creatures in great detail, and was able to demonstrate the heart of a *Daphnia* water flea beating as well as the young in their mother's broodpouch. These tiny creatures are only 1-2 mm in size, yet you can see the heart, the moving eye, the gut and the antennae it uses for swimming quite clearly through a microscope.

Tim and I both felt that this had been a day well spent and hope we can run a similar event next year.



**Daphnia with young in the brood pouch**

Photo: Graham Matthews

# The Quekett Microscopical Club Visit

Graham Matthews



And now the grown-ups(?) turn

Photo: Tony Dutton (Quekett)



Great Diving Beetle (female)

Photo: Tony Dutton (Quekett)



In the marquee

Photo: Graham Matthews



Pediatrum, colonial algae

Photo: Graham Matthews

Another event that involved quite a bit of pond dipping was the visit by the Quekett Microscopical Club. Founded in 1865, this Club has members with wide ranging interests from natural history to forensics and material sciences. Like the children at our family pond-dipping, the members like nothing better than a chance to dabble in ponds, and the Friends were pleased to invite Quekett members to indulge.

A magnificent marquee was provided by the Scouts to accommodate our guests, who were also impressed by the food on offer from Tanhouse Café.

Once again, the ponds provided some great specimens, from giant amoeba and the beautiful geometrical colonies of the algae *Pediatrum* to a splendid Great Diving Beetle (*Dytiscus marginalis*), which is over an inch long and definitely not microscopic!

Thanks to all involved: the Wardens, Scouts, Tanhouse Café, Friends and all our visitors and guests. Hope to see you all next year!

# Beavers and Brigaders

Linda Slattery



Are there  
any  
giraffes  
here?

## A contemplative moment

Photo: Linda Slattery

No, you're not likely to find Boldings Brook has been dammed by the logging activities of some large semi-aquatic rodents. The Beavers in question were Beaver Scout groups, mostly boys but a few girls, who made requests to visit the Reserve over the summer period. The Wardens previously supervised such activities but pressure on their time meant this was not possible, so requests were passed over to the Friends' committee.

Lyn and I bravely volunteered to organise the first visit, on a trial basis, then requests started arriving from other groups, including a local Girls' Brigade group (plus a few

boys) and some child minders with their young charges. In all we hosted five visits, appreciating Terry's help for those involving pond dipping. The weather was fine, no-one fell in and we were pleased to be able to introduce the youngsters to the Reserve and its wildlife.

During the pond dipping sessions the children were predictably intrigued by the transparent Phantom Midge larvae and the Caddis larvae that looked like lengths of green stem but suddenly moved off at speed, having sprouted legs and a small head. Greater Water Boatmen jumping out of the nets caused much amusement.

Trips to Woodpecker Hide produced comments of “I’ve never seen them so quiet” from several accompanying adults. On each occasion we were rewarded with the sight, not only of a number of species of birds, but also of a young Roe deer who seemed to make a habit of visiting in the early evening in the hope of finding seed left on the tree stumps. Further round the Reserve excitement was generated by a large number of tiny frogs in the mud beside the boardwalk, noticed as we looked for deer hoof prints.

Each group seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed their visit, as we did, despite feeling the need for eyes in the back of the head and having been kept on our toes with questions about “Midgets” and “Bull Sausages” and “Are there any giraffes here?” The Friends’ funds also benefitted from some generous contributions which will be put to good use.

We look forward to next year .....



**Hungry roe deer**

Photo: Linda Slattery



**A good catch**

Photo: Linda Slattery

# Friends of Warnham Local Nature Reserve

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

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## OBJECTIVES

To foster and promote an appreciation of the reserve at all levels, for the benefit of the wildlife and the natural history of the site and for the enjoyment of members and the public.

To support the wardens in their work on the reserve by raising funds, and to provide lectures, learning opportunities and social activities for the members.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

The membership year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The committee may use their discretion over the cost of joining within the last three

months of the membership year. Currently subscriptions stand at £10 and cover the period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.



## News & Forthcoming Events

### WLNR EVENTS

Visitors' Centre, except as noted. See our Website or HDC leaflets available from the Visitors' Centre for full details.

Sunday, 31 October  
10:00

**RSPB Feed the Birds Day**

Sunday, 21 November  
10:15

**Fungus Foray\***

Members £1.50, others £3.00

### DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

All articles, news, photos etc.  
to the Editor by Friday, 10  
December 2010

Tuesday, 23 November  
19:30

**AGM: All members welcome**

Tuesday, 14 December  
10:00

**XMAS Wreath Making\***

Members £5.00, others £8.00

Saturday, 1 January 2011  
10:00 **New Year's Day Walk**  
Members £1.50, others £3.00

**\*Booking Essential**  
Tel: 01403 259592

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