

FRIENDS OF THE FLITCH WAY & ASSOCIATED WOODLANDS

NEWSLETTER JUNE-JULY 2014

Sid James

I think everybody who knew Sid was sad to hear the news of his having passed away last month. A real fighter, it was sadly one fight too much for him and one he was unable to win. A real character, Sid was a valued supporter and member of the Friends almost from when we first started and will be sadly missed by everybody. Our condolences and best wishes go to Margaret and the family.

Work Party Volunteers

The Summer period is always the quietest time for work parties. This is due to a combination of factors such as the need to avoid disturbing nesting birds and, in particular, the demands on Rangers' time which reduces the time available to come out and accompany volunteers on work parties. Any work done along the Flitch Way is usually restricted, therefore, to a light cutting back of encroaching vegetation.

June saw some time spent at Great Notley replacing fences around the ponds and work parties also took place at Start Hill, High Cross Lane picnic area and in the Takeley-Hatfield Forest stretch of the path. Stane Street Halt received a lot of much needed TLC with the notice board contents replaced, paintwork smartened up and the platform area weeded. You can find more detail together with pictures of this work on the website which is regularly updated by Wendy. In the absence of a work party in June, Val Blamire and a few volunteers visited Dunmow Cutting for an orchid and butterfly survey and her report is below. July has seen a lot of activity in and around the railway carriage and a report on that work can also be found below.

P3 Work Parties

A number of work parties have taken place in and around Good Easter over this period, replacing several bridges and installing way marker posts.

P3 work parties take place each Wednesday and tend to be smaller than those along the Flitch Way. If you would like to learn new skills and travel to a variety of different sites away from the Flitch Way please contact Pete and Anne Lane who organize the Wednesday P3 group on 01376 343567.

Report on Dunmow Cutting survey.

On Tuesday 10th June, Gloria, Sue, Val and Wendy walked the length of the Dunmow

Cutting to carry out a survey of orchids and early summer butterflies. It was a sunny, warm day and conditions were good.

Comparing previous years-in June 2011 a total of 78 Common Spotted Orchids were seen, in June 2012, 96 were counted and this year a massive **144**, the largest increase being in the 2nd bay.

Common Twyblades are also increasing, especially on the north-facing bank of the 2nd bay where hard cut-back has been carried out over the last year or so. These are not as showy as some orchids but are still an orchid species.

The gem of our day, however, was the Bee Orchid found over the bridge between the Dunmow Cutting and High Cross East. Once we had got our eye in, at least 30 of these beautiful orchids were seen in full flower. Our survey was at just the right time of year. They had possibly been there for a year or so but not spotted!

Gloria recorded the butterflies seen and these included:

20 Speckled Brown	12 Meadow Brown	8 Large Skipper
2 Small Tortoiseshell	2 Red Admiral	2 Ringlet
3 Large White	1 Small White	1 Common Blue

All in all a very enjoyable visit.

We think the increase in the Common Spotted Orchid is partly due to the wet and mild winter but thanks must also be given to all the Friends of the Fitch Way who have helped with the conservation work at the Dunmow Cutting over the last few years.

Val Blamire. 11th June 2014

Carriage

The last couple of months have seen a tremendous amount of work done on the carriage and the surrounding area by volunteers who have worked like Trojans to get the job done. The recent spell of good weather allowed us to concentrate on the outside of the carriage, starting with making good areas of the bodywork which required attention. Thanks for doing that work go to Andy Horder who revealed previously hidden skills gained in a former life as a panel beater. The carriage has been re-painted from top to toe from the grey roof to the brown undercarriage and security fencing has been fixed underneath to prevent children and animals gaining access. As stated previously, the sides of the carriage have been painted in Oxford Blue and Cream, the livery of Riviera Trains from whom we bought the carriage.

Volunteers also turned out to spend a hard day making good the edges and applying

granite top-dressing to the footpath alongside the carriage The re-seeding of the edges of the path opposite the Station building was successful and a further area at the Eastern end of the carriage has been similarly treated and is showing good signs of growth.

Inside the carriage, the display units have been completed and show a variety of artefacts and photographs. The carriage was open to visitors over Tour de France weekend and many favourable comments were received about the carriage. Work continues on the working model of Rayne Station as it was but the trains ran from time to time to the interest and delight of all. The date for completion of the carriage shown in the last newsletter has been revised and the formal opening will now take place at 2pm on Friday 25th July.

We need volunteers to sit in the carriage when the museum area is open to the public. If you can spare an hour or two, please get in touch.

Annual General Meeting

Everyone who came to the AGM enjoyed the presentation by Charlie Pitcher who broke the world record for rowing across the Atlantic last year. With regard to Committee members for 2014-15, Andrew Bloomfield stepped down and has been replaced by Val Blamire. Andrew had served on the Committee from the start and we are sorry to lose him. There being no replacement, an amendment to our Constitution was made to allow the Chairman to serve for a maximum of 5 years rather than 3.

Please let us know what you would like to see or what you think should be included in the future. If you have any comments, please let Wendy or Stan know on wendymoss.wm@gmail.com or stan@keatsave.freeseve.co.uk respectively.