



SWT BERWICKSHIRE MEMBERS CENTRE NEWSLETTER (OCTOBER 07)

Reports from the Reserves:

Pease Dean, near Cockburnspath: Reserve convener, **Harry Edie**, reports that there have been the usual summer maintenance jobs such as bracken-bashing and footpath repair but most of the practical conservation and planting goes on in the autumn and winter. The **Lothian Conservation Volunteers** are keen to come again between Christmas and New Year and our committee voted to give them some financial support. The volunteers are mainly young professionals who enjoy a taste of the outdoor life and have been trained in the use of forestry equipment such as chainsaws and billhooks. Local volunteer Fergus has also completed his training, funded by SWT. Conservation Manager, **Julian Warman** from Cramond is often at the workdays held on the second Sunday of each month, meeting at 10.30am at Pease Dean caravan park. Further details from Harry (01289 386338).

Duns Castle Woods: Convener **Murray Henderson** reports that the wet summer spoiled a promising year for nesting birds. Blue tits and great tits used the nesting boxes but nuthatches did not, although they have been heard all summer. Green woodpeckers have been heard calling frequently and presumably nested. The coots and water hens had a good year whilst the swans reared seven cygnets. Murray is hoping to see the ospreys that stopped over at Duns Lake on their migration last autumn.

Gordon Moss: **Alec West** reports little change in this unspoilt wilderness that has been thriving in the recent wet summer. Mosses, lichens, ferns and orchids abound, including the rare coral-root. Over 200 species of moth and 16 species of butterfly have been identified. Alec has to “hack his way in” on his monthly visits to monitor the water table. He confesses that he would be lost without his G.P.S. to find the elusive WalRaGs that measure the water levels.

Summer Walks

Our programme was well supported and some of the walks were joint ones with “Go Wild Berwickshire” events organised by a team from Coldingham. They hold monthly walks and meetings, and we have taken pains to publicise these at our meetings and in the press. Some of our SWT members live in Coldingham and Eyemouth and we are delighted that they have these opportunities on their doorstep.

The weather was kind on our three events in late May and June. **Murray Henderson** led a birdsong walk around Duns Castle woods and we had permission to roam around the Duns Castle gardens, normally kept private. One of our new committee members, **Pat Tait**, took a superb photo of the swans and cygnets on Hen Poo Lake which she converted into cards.

National Wildlife Week: More than 180 events took place during the first week of June and the excellent publicity and press coverage promoted the week. Locally, **Dr David Long** held a delightful walk in Gordon Community Woodland (not to be confused with Gordon Moss) where we saw numerous wildflowers and birds, and marvelled at the hard work put in by the local residents who have built a substantial pond and an education hut large enough to accommodate youngsters from the local primary school.



Ron McBeath and members on the Houndwood walk looking for 6-spot Burnet moths.

Myra Watson led a walk amongst the newly planted Houndwood Community woodland along the banks of the Eye Water. The footpath meandered between waist-high wild flowers and shrubs and literally hundreds of young saplings that will soon become established. An otter's spraint was spotted near one of the underpasses that allows access to the river by wild creatures and avoids excessive road kill.

Sad News: The funeral service for **Alex Turner** was held on April 10th at Duns Parish Church. It was attended by a large congregation including many SWT members. Our group has been supported by Alex for many years. We hope to plant a memorial tree dedicated to Alex in St Mary's Glade at Duns Castle. His widow, Isobel, agrees that this would be a perfect memorial especially as the Glade was part of their favourite walk.

Good News: Our honorary President, **Tommy Patterson**, is making a good recovery from lung cancer and has had the "all-clear" after intensive treatment at the Western General. He has gone back to work as Estate Custodian at Paxton House but is still on light duties. We all wish him a speedy return to good health.

Fundraising Activities: By the time you read this we shall have had our stall at Horncliffe Fun Day and also our Coffee Morning on October 27th. The newsletter has to be submitted before the beginning of October so that HQ can enclose it in the November magazine, saving us postage. The amount raised by the quizzes and sales during these two events will be circulated at the winter meetings and in the press.

Secretary Rose Kay would like to thank all who have offered support during 2007.