Issue 25

September 2012

NEWSLETTER

www.parishgrasslandsproject.org.uk

COMMITTEE

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Gemma Bode
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Tony Eggar
Deborah Flint
Jean Green
John Josephi
Sarah Sawyer
Mike Topp

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DIARY DATE

2.00pm Saturday
13 October
Mackenzie Hall
mini-symposium

WOOD

illustrated talks on the background, need, cultivation and various uses of wood in our area. The talks will be complemented by many exhibits, craftspeople and illustrations, and the afternoon will be punctuated by refreshments.



A Decade of PGP in 8 pages!

The Parish Grasslands Project started just after the Millennium as a response to a crisis. The country's livestock was under attack from Bovine Spongyform Encephalitis and the dreaded Foot and Mouth disease, stock movement was hugely restricted and farming bureaucracy was burgeoning. Locally, many herds and flocks were destroyed and we thought all the intricate personal arrangements to cut hay and graze fields that kept our surroundings attractive would break down. We could easily envisage our patchwork of small fields becoming a claustrophobic mass of scrub, losing in the process not just our views, but also the flowers in our fields.



Against this background, a group of us met to discuss whether we should try to do something avert this prospect. We thought some kind of mutual-help arrangement might be worth exploring, just to make it easier for residents to maintain their fields as grassland. So, we called an open meeting in the Mackenzie Hall to measure the interest and support for such a project, and were taken aback to find about 65 people in the audience.

Thus was the Parish Grasslands Project born. In the years since, we have done our best to help field owners and users and to raise interest in our surroundings, and this Newsletter summarises and reviews what we have done. When we started, we were unique as a community-based grassland conservation project, but our example was quickly followed over the Wye when the Monmouthshire Meadows Group was established, and then very recently to the east with the newly-founded Dean Meadows Group. Elsewhere, grassland conservation projects have been sponsored by an outside organisation, like the National Trust, and run with the help of a paid project officer, but we, and the neighbouring groups, have done it ourselves, albeit with welcome help from our AONB Office and various finding sources.

Of course, since the Millennium, the diseases (but not the bureaucracy) abated and the sheep and some cattle returned. Whilst many flower-rich fields have been maintained, many on the fringes of the Hudnalls have been neglected and in some cases built on, so we have not been entirely successful. We have, however, found ourselves changing gradually from just-grasslands to a wider interest in the whole environment, and that's the direction we see ourselves going in the future. If we could think of a better name than Parish Grasslands, we would change.

Our philosophy has been that we exist to interest and help, not to tell anyone what to do. We don't want the land to be just a nature reserve, but to be used in ways that maintain the diversity of our surroundings. We have been blessed with a committee all of whose members have contributed to what we do, and will continue while there are sufficient people here- not necessarily on the committee - prepared to come up with ideas and help us implement them. Running the PGP has sometimes seemed like the Arabian Nights – the need to come up with new ideas to maintain interest – and we hope the following pages will show that we have succeeded so far. **George Peterken**

Terminology

In this special issue we have referred to every article in the previous 24 Issues of our Newsletter. For example we show **4. Orchards** - this means there is an article on Orchards in Issue 4. If you want to see full details of any article please go to the website and click on the Publications tab. You can then click on Newsletters and make your selection. This will either appear directly on your browser screen or you may have to open the file in Adobe Reader depending on your browser settings.

Meetings

We have always held two, sometimes three, indoor meetings each year on what we hoped would be topics of interest. They have ranged from somewhat utilitarian discussions of our role to exciting mini-symposia on orchards, sheep, trees and other subjects. The best attended have proved to be a talk on bats and our recent Sward to Sweater gathering. Perhaps the most satisfying have been those that enabled residents to talk about their experience of some aspect of land management and use. Not all of these were reported in detail in the Newsletters.

4. Old Orchards. Report on talk by James Marsden
5. Horse pasture management project. Talk by Rachel Simpson Guidelines on managing fields with horses
10. Trees on the Common. Report on a mini symposium of the PGP. (Relevant to our Woods day in October)
21. Food from our Fields - Preview
22. Food from our Fields - Report & photos

Bushytail with Autumn Apples



4 Squirrels – cut into joints
2 ozs Flour
1 tbsp. Cinnamon
Olive oil
4 Crab Apples
2/3 Bay Leaves
4 cups Cider
2 tbsp Cornflour
3 tbsp Water

Mix flour and cinnamon in a bag.
Heat oil in frying pan.
Shake squirrel pieces in flour.
Place meat in hot oil & fry over medium heat until browned all over
Peel, core & slice the apples.
When meat browned, place in casserole.
Layer on apples and add bay leaves.
Pour in cider. Cover with foil or lid & bake for 2 hrs @ 3500
Remove meat from bone & cut into small pieces if for tasters only.
Otherwise place joints on serving plate , remove bay leaves & pour sauce over.

23. Sward to Sweater - Preview
24. Deer and Boar - Preview
24. Sward to Sweater - Report & photos



Open days and Barbecues

Together with Monmouthshire Meadows, we ran three Open days, when we stood by to show visitors some of our meadows, the principal organisers being Peter Chard and Sarah Sawyer. We had many interested visitors, but the weather was never good and we felt the effort justified more. Many people helped on the day, and the were rewarded by a helpers' party. In addition, John Childs and John Josephi twice organised BarBQs at Cowshill Farm. Theses, too were fun, but again the weather was unhelpful.

11. Report on the Open Day. 6 sites (3 in Wales)
13. Barbecue - 29 July
15. Open Day
17. Open Day





Farming issues and using the produce of the land

Although very few of the owners of local fields on the Hudnalls would call themselves farmers, we would not like to see ourselves as just gardeners or nature reserve managers. Ideally, we would like to be seen as responsible users who both enjoy the land and use its products. The Newsletter has included several articles by John Childs about farming issues and a few about using what we produce. Perhaps there should be more: certainly, the 'Wood' meeting in October should generate some articles.

5. How supermarkets affect wildlife. JC cynical article on the Code of Practice for Farm Assurance

Extract - The Supermarkets' Code of Practice for Pork.

....Size of pen: Pigs must not be crowded (as people are in inner cities). Drinkers: 10 pigs to a drinker, able to supply one pint per minute (how does your 'Local' shape up?) Environmental Enrichment: Meaning lots of straw and balls to play with (no gang warfare in the piggery). Transport: Lorries must also comply (we must not have pigs packed in like people on trains). Veterinary: Quarterly vet inspections for the whole herd (no NHS eighteen month waiting lists here). Records: Paper, paper and more paper (well the paperwork is more important than the stock isn't it?).....

6. Organic or Gimmick? JC cynical view of Organic
6. Marketing meat from conservation grazing on the Woolhope Dome

8 and 9. Rare Breeds and Gloucester cattle

10. Rare breeds: White Park cattle
13. Dexter Cattle - Little cows with a big future



15. Flower-rich grassland and meat
20. Drinks from wild fruits and herbs. Elderflower cordial
22. Slow Food

Extract - Slow Food.

Slow Food is a global, grassroots organization with supporters in 150 countries around the world who are linking the pleasure of good food with a commitment to their community and the environment. Slow Food's approach to agriculture, food production and gastronomy is based on a concept of food quality defined by the three interconnected principles of Good, Clean and Fair food for all:

GOOD a fresh and flavorsome seasonal diet that satisfies the senses and is part of our local culture;

CLEAN food production and consumption that does not harm the environment, animal welfare or our health;

FAIR accessible prices for consumers and fair conditions and pay for small-scale producers.

Practical help with management

We have always tried to keep members in touch with grant schemes and related issues that exist to help people with land to manage, and were directly instrumental in helping several residents to enter the Stewardship Scheme. However, take-up was a matter for individuals.

2. Secretary's report. DEFRA consulted on the Stewardship Scheme
3. Countryside Stewardship – 8 members signed up
9. Rural Land Registry
13. How the PGP is helping wild flowers to re-establish
14. Stewardship
15. Insurance for small field owners
20. High Nature Value Farmland

Managing the land

The original raison d'être of the PGP was to help residents maintain and use their fields so we have used the Newsletters, as well as the meetings, to inform, spread experience and offer helpful hints on everything from grazing to bracken control.

1. Grazing with donkeys
3. How hay became silage, and what's haylage?

Extract - Haylage

....As the name suggest, this is a cross between hay and silage. Perhaps the original concept was developed in circular tower silos, where the crop could be sealed when the tower was full. Today, in this country, much of the haylage is made in round bales, plastic wrapped, the same as silage. The advantage is clear – it is more digestible than hay, because it is moist and of course it can be made in almost every conceivable condition of weather and from all types of grass. The down side is the cost and what to do with all that plastic wrap!....

4. Grazing characteristics of different animals
5. Orchards and countryside stewardship. Outlining how the scheme works
8. Improving your meadows

Extract - Improving your meadows

....Everyone would like meadows full of wildflowers, but what is the best way to achieve it?

Reducing the fertility of the soil will significantly reduce the growth of dominant grasses and give the wildflowers an opportunity to establish themselves without the competition being overwhelming. You can achieve this by cutting the grass for hay and removing it, followed by light grazing of the aftermath. Over a period of years this will result in the return of many wildflower species that are endemic to the area.....

11. Making hay – or was it haylage? Update on a good summer with 30 fields cut in 2 weeks
11. Rent a cow. Peter Chard using three of JC's cattle
11. Fields at Rosemesne, Lower Meend. T&J's experience of 2 acres with sheep and a pony

Extract - Fields at Rosemesne

....We moved into Rosemesne having had no experience of managing grassland, but plenty with ducks, hens and geese.. The land is approximately five acres in total, about half of which is grassland, divided by one metre high post and wire fencing into four paddocks for animal rotation. We inherited three Jacob ewes, one of which died of old age shortly after we took over – our first introduction to sheep management!



We also inherited a cockerel and 17 hens sharing an orchard and two of the paddocks with the sheep. Within six months, the 17 hens had been reduced to four due to raids by a still unseen fox, all during the day. The land is steep and cannot be cut by a conventional mower/tractor, so we have to either have animals to graze it or use the Project's Alpine mower.....

12. Soay Sheep- How to solve the problem of long established bracken and brambles
12. Looking after the fields at Tyersall

Extract - Jane Morgan's article on Tyersall

....The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust surveyed the fields in 2002, and we have added some species to their list, so we know that the fields contain at least 65 species of grassland plants in addition to the woodland species in the hedges and woods. Top Field is much the most diverse, and this is presumably because it still has wet areas, despite the drains, and has never been ploughed. Amongst the plants found there are ragged robin, lousewort, lesser spearwort (a small buttercup), marsh bedstraw, greater bird's-foot-trefoil, oval sedge, glaucous sedge, yellow sedge and smooth-stalked sedge. The last-mentioned has not been found anywhere else on the Hudnalls. It is common further west in Pembrokeshire.....

13. Bracken Control - to flail or not to flail
15. Managing our meadows. Weather bad so members suffered as hay not cut – also members had too much bracken making hay useless
15. Grazing animal survey. Comparison of various grazers
15. Bracken control

Extract - Roger Gaunt article on Bracken Control

....First of all let us look at the nature of the plant and how it grows. The energy of bracken is contained in the underground rhizomes (root system). These are extensive and labyrinthine. Cutting the fronds on the surface does not remove the underlying problem. Energy is stored through the winter in the rhizomes and used for the new fronds in the summer. When these fronds die back in the late summer, energy drains back into the rhizomes. During the summer energy is added to the system so that unchecked bracken will eventually dominate the ground cover until superseded by scrub and eventually woodland. How is this pernicious weed to be controlled?.....

16. Improving our meadows. Spreading flower seeds using Green Hay
17. Grazing Animals Group

Extract - paragraph by Peter Chard

....The principal aim of the PGP is to see the number of flower meadows increase and the number of meadows clogged with bracken bramble and scrub reduce. This will result in an increase in the variety of insects which provide food for both birds and bats, so enriching the wildlife of the Wye Valley.....

17. Scything bracken. George and Tony's experience

George..... I was saved by Joyce McKay, who had a spare metal-handled scythe rusting quietly at the bottom of her garden..... the scythe has proved to be helpful and easy to use on small patches of bracken spreading from the hedges. Even though my strength and skill only allows me to use it in 30-45 minute bursts, I've been able to cut all the many patches three times this year, the herbage has already recovered and I have high hopes that the new fronds will be weaker next spring.....



Tony.....I walk around the paddocks swinging my long handled scythe and topping anything that I don't want. This usually takes about two hours, probably the same as with the strimmer. It is much less tiring, totally quiet and uses no petrol. The bonus is that I am unencumbered by leggings, harness, goggles and ear muffs allowing me to savour the buzz of insects, the birdsong and the scenery over the Wye Valley plus becoming far more familiar with every part of the paddocks....



18. Keeping Hebridean sheep

Extract - Louise Frankel's article



....Though they were at first extremely wary, it was only a matter of days before they ran towards us at the sound of a few sheep nuts rattling in a bucket. 'Bucket training' is really the only way to successfully manage a small flock. Our local farmer gave us the hint of only giving them the nuts within a corral of hurdles; that way, any time we do need to handle them they are confined in a small space.....

18. Looking after flower-rich grassland
24. Sheep and Holly

Extract - Sheep and Holly by George Peterken

.....sheep are obviously tougher than they look. In fact they liked it enough to run across the field and jostle me out of the way when I threw down the branches I'd cut from the hedges, and within fifteen minutes the branches were almost leafless. In fact, they climbed on top of one of the bales to get at holly higher up in the hedge. .....



Machinery

At the outset, the PGP Committee debated whether to try to help directly with land management. Eventually, through the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Forest of Dean DC and the AONB Office we obtained enough funds not only to buy a tractor and other machinery, but also to fund display boards, leaflets and Flowers in the Fields. Naturally, the management service we offered via the efforts of John Childs, Robert Childs and Peter Chard figured often in the Newsletters. Mike Topp has latterly taken Peter's place, but for various reasons – and not just the run of wet summers – we have found it too difficult to sustain (and so has Monmouthshire Meadows), so we are likely to stop soon. This is likely to be a subject of debate shortly.

7. Machinery bid successful. Grants approved in conjunction with Monmouthshire Meadows Group. (2004)

Extract. ....Together with Monmouthshire Meadows Group, our counterpart over the Wye, we will actually receive three grants, one from the HLF, another from a Welsh Sustainability Fund administered through the AONB office, and a third from the Forest of Dean District Council. Furthermore, we in the project have undertaken to give time on a voluntary basis. With these resources we will be able to buy machinery for grassland management; design and construct display boards; write and publish a booklet; and prepare 'how to' guides for grassland owners.....

8. Grant news and progress. Purchase of the first part of the machinery - Vithar 700 AR tractor. Machinery Hire Sheet enclosed with Newsletter

9. Machinery report. First season of the Vithar tractor and accessories



10. Using our machinery. Update on progress of the machinery and how members should use it. (2005)

Extract - from update

Four options evolved following the first full year of service:

1. Advice on whether the grass is suitable for hay
2. Flail the edges of the field to get rid of the bracken and bramble
3. Where the field is shaded make haylage by wrapping the bales
4. If you want hay, to bale the centre of the field after it has dried

12. Machinery Operations update

13. Machinery update

14. The PGP Management Service

14. Machinery News. The alpine tractor is now equipped with extra wheels which makes it possible to tackle really steep slopes

15. Haymaking



16. Our Management Service. Louise Frankel's praise of the PGP and how it helped her

Extract. .....We got in touch with the Parish Grasslands Project and subsequently received a visit from Peter Chard who gave us some invaluable advice on not only clearing the overgrown paddock but also the work required to maintain the other paddocks, all the while pointing out to us the wild flowers and grasses we were surrounded by. When John Childs arrived in the Parish Grassland's Alpine tractor it was frankly very difficult to believe that one chap on his own using a smallish machine and flailer could achieve anything and yet within a couple of hours the entire field was cleared. The results have been nothing short of astonishing; all the vegetation has been pulverised and the paddock has revealed itself to be in a lovely light situation on a south facing slope, with stunning views down the Wye Valley.....

18. Management service

19. Grassland Management

20. Grassland Management. Machinery now split between PGP and MM. Revised list of equipment now available.

22. New machinery for hire. Photos & description

Gondoli two-wheeled tractor with flail.



Petrol driven log-splitter with 10 ton rating.



Field visits

In the early years, we arranged several field visits each spring and summer, with the aim of exchanging experience, ideas and interest on anything related to local land management and what we do it for. These have always been instructive and enjoyable, and John Josephi's doughnuts became a legend. However, we felt after a few years, that interest was declining, so we gave them a rest. Recently, however, we revived and diversified them to take the form of a guided walk.

1. Five sites visited in September 2001

3. Reports on field visits to Bryn House, Brook Farm, Sylvan House, Tyersall

6. Spring visit reports: Harthill Cottage, Firtree Cottage

Extract - Firtree Cottage field visit

....there was also ragwort, but apparently that is not a problem unless cut and dried (as in hay). The up-side is that Roger had a flypast from a Cinnabar moth, the caterpillars of which use ragwort. The second field had a fascinating collection of stone gate posts, probably quarried on site as a stone mason had once lived at the cottage. The third field (ungrazed) had more common Twayblade than the other two and also Adders Tongue Fern. Bracken was a problem throughout and a 7HP rotary grass cutter had been acquired which would be used to keep cutting the bracken.....



8. Field visits: Rodmore and Abbey Passage Farm

Extract - Abbey Passage field visit

....they took on - with no house and in a neglected condition - ten years ago. Some 30 acres is in the Stewardship Scheme, and grants have helped to rebuild the derelict barn, coppice and replant hedgerows, maintain fences and control acres of bracken and scrub. The river meadows, which flood twice a year, are now cut for hay in July, and other fields are grazed by sheep, donkeys and horses. Weeds are controlled by spot weeding with chemicals - wayward tourists from Tintern are not so easy to deal with!....



11. Report on visit to Yewtree Farm. Keith Orchard's cider kit and his orchards

21. John Josephi field visit

Extract - John Josephi field visit

....to where a 90-year-old felled oak lay in sections on the ground, John then proceeded, despite the tropical temperature, to split and trim a length of lower trunk, to illustrate how he made gate posts, stakes etc. In a novel arrangement of lengths of the thinner timber corralled in a tall stack between stakes, he showed us, using a chainsaw, how to slice down the stack in one stroke, producing the maximum heap of logs for the minimum of effort.....



23. Hudnalls Woodland Walk

Surveys

It's always important to know something about the subject of your efforts and interests, so the PGP has been involved with surveys of the grasslands and their biodiversity. The Countryside Agency paid us to map the state of the grasslands at the outset (see Flowers in the Field), so we have a complete record from which we can see that, sadly, the amount of flower-rich grassland continues to decline. We also helped the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to survey flora in several properties. Other surveyors have visited, but the only survey we have done ourselves was our attempt to map the local deer.

2. Three flowers to look for among the grasslands

2. How much flower-rich grassland do we have on and near the Hudnalls Common? 655 acres

3. Countryside Agency - record of flora within the project area – map from AONB next year?

3. Stone walls. FOD field Officer appointed to survey Hewelsfield Common

6. Plant surveys

Extract - Plant Surveys

....The botanical find of 2003 was Dyers' Greenweed (alias Genista tinctoria), which looks like a miniature broom, with dense clusters of yellow pea-like flowers on short, shrubby growth in somewhat overgrown turf. When the Chepstow botanist, W.A.Shoolbred, wrote his local Flora in 1920, it was "not uncommon in rough meadows" and was specifically recorded at Hewelsfield, but it is now rare. It turned up in Peter and Ann Chard's field, a nice reward for all the hard work they have put into the project. I think he has collected some seed, so others may have a chance to establish it.....

7. Where is the best grassland on the Common?

17. Brown-Banded Carder Bees

21. Biodiversity Survey

21. Deer Survey. Map & Summary

Extract - Deer Survey

....but in the garden they are a serious menace. We have watched a fallow buck lazily eating the flowers off an ornamental cherry just outside the kitchen window, and any strawberries are grazed leafless just as the flowers start to show. Flower beds are stripped of columbines, pasque flowers and much else, leaving only the daffodils, spurges and other plants that have unpleasant or poisonous sap. This spring they even entered a half-glazed greenhouse and ate everything within.....



Biology and ecology

Much of what we knew about the history of our landscape and how it was managed was covered in some detail in Flowers in the Fields, together with the results of various surveys. However, we are always learning, so we frequently insert items in the Newsletters that we hope will be of general interest. Strangely, little has been included about the local fauna, so anyone with interesting observations should get in touch.

3. Late flowers
8. New plants on the Common

Extract - New plants on the Common



....One was the herb paris, which grows in some profusion in parts of the alder woods below Bailey Lane..... The other plant was the even stranger bird's nest orchid, which is also usually found in dry woods on limestone.....

9. Yellow-rattle: an aid to flower-rich grassland
10. Fungi of the Hudnalls Grassland. Report on the Dean Fungus Group meeting
13. Orchids

Extract - Orchids



....Orchids are flowering plants that behave like fungi. They produce millions of dust-like seeds that are spread far and wide on the wind, then if they fall on suitable ground, spend years building up a subterranean rootstock before they produce above-ground leaves and eventually flowers.....

13. Nightjar watch
19. Primroses.
20. Fungi of meadows and hedgerows

Extract - Fungi



....Fungi used to be considered to be plants but are now classified in a kingdom of their own. Many of the microscopic ascomycete fungi are vital to our every day living, rotting down waste materials and providing our daily bread, wine, beer and cheese!....

22. Buttercups in the Hudnalls

Extract - Buttercups in the Hudnalls by George Peterken

.....We have three main species of buttercup in our fields. Two, the meadow buttercup and the bulbous buttercup, are very similar, but the latter flowers first and can be distinguished by its reflexed (bent back) sepals. The third is the creeping buttercup, which puts out long runners and has a furrowed flower stalk. They all have the bright, shiny, yellow flowers that children once held under their chins to see if they liked butter..... We also have three buttercup-relatives - the abundant lesser celandine, the lesser spearwort and the dainty goldilocks buttercup.....



Local environment

4. Stone walls on the Common

Extract - Stone walls on the common

....the clearing of land comprised the removal of very large stones and to the wonderment of how this was performed it is interesting to know that the very large rocks that formed the boundary fence were rolled down the hill to the lower level, so that as it is well known on the Common that the boundary fence is that of the land on the higher ground.....

16. Apples, Pears and the like. Members experiences.

Extract - Apples, Pears and the like



....John Josephi has revitalised his derelict orchard by planting new trees of local varieties amongst the old apples and pears. The original orchard was certainly in existence in 1921 being shown on the OS map. He stressed the importance of giving his new trees sufficient space being mindful of their eventual size, and he was able to give the details of costs of fencing them for protection from the browsing horses who will share the orchard.....

16. Apple orchards and cider
16. Traditional Haymaking

Publications

Apart from the Newsletters themselves, the PGP has published leaflets and the well-received Flowers in the Fields book about our local environment, and all of these have been on sale in the village shop. The three walks leaflets leaflets have been particularly popular, and sales of the book have helped our finances.

8. Footpath Leaflet, and "How to" Guides
12. Flowers in the Fields: a review of the booklet on the natural history of grassland in the Hudnalls
16. Publications. Flowers in the Fields, Walks Leaflets and George's Wye Valley book
19. Flowers Leaflet



Younger generations

We have always tried to be an organisation that interested more than the 'active retireds', so, when Patricia Pinkerton was on the committee, we negotiated opportunities to introduce our surroundings into the lives of the youngest members of the community. Apart from one December talk about flowers to the school's environment club, we have organised 'flower hunts' in Jean Green's fields for both the Play Group and the entry class of the school. Whenever the weather has allowed, these have been just about the most rewarding events in the calendar.

17. Flower Hunt for St Briavels School

21. Wild Flower Hunt

Extract - Wild Flower Hunt

....They ran around the field very enthusiastically, having their insect catches identified by the "Bird Lady" and showing the adults flowers they had picked; the flower checks were by colours rather than by name and the collection was very good. The sweep nets were a great success and the children particularly enjoyed the grass-hoppers which were easily caught and observed before being returned, unharmed, to the meadow with the other bugs and beetles.....



23. Younger Generations

23. Flower Hunt

23. Bat talk and walk

Extract - Bat talk and walk

.....members of Brockweir Youth Club and the Parish Grasslands Project were treated to an informative talk and guided walk about the bats in our area. Youth Club members commented afterwards:

"As well as the talk Mr. Rabjohns showed us some dead bats that he has preserved. I learnt a lot about how bats interact with each other and how long their life span is"

"The bat night was excellent because you could hear the bats sending their echo waves over the special radios. The bat people were experts and answered all of our questions"



The bat detectors picked up two species of bat, the Common Pipistrelle and the Soprano Pipistrelle, the most common and smallest species in the British Isles.....

People

The PGP owes its existence to individuals who are prepared to give some time and experience to our aims and activities. Through the years, we have been particularly fortunate to attract residents to our committee who have not only been full of ideas but willing to help implement them. One the whole we have said little about them in the Newsletters, but we have included tributes to two committee members who died.

16. Jane Morgan



Extract .....Jane certainly achieved at Tyersall the sort of management results that the PGP wishes to facilitate—and, in that it affirmed her own success, she fully identified with and supported the PGP. Indeed, she was a founder member of the Committee. A real country lover and practician she would be the first to admit that she struggled with the identification of those grasses—thank goodness for Yorkshire Fog—but the Bents and Fescues were not so easy!....

19. Peter Chard



Extract .....When, at the height of the crisis over the BSE and Foot-and-Mouth diseases, a group of us met to consider whether this might mean dereliction for the parish environment and landscape, it was Peter Chard who was most certain that we, the parish community, could do something worthwhile to help ourselves, and it was out of this that the Parish Grasslands Project developed. Peter was actively involved from the start in all our activities, contributing ideas and always volunteering to do the hard work. In particular, when five of the original committee wanted us to acquire machinery and offer a management service, it was Peter who undertook the considerable task of developing the proposal, filling grant application forms, negotiating with grantors, and eventually reporting annually on our progress.

Conservation elsewhere

The PGP was the first community-based grassland conservation project, as far as we know. All others had been based round a professional project officer paid for by a grant or an organisation. We have had several visitors to see how we operate and have given a few talks over the years. More to the point, our lead was followed by the Monmouthshire Meadows Group across the Wye and, lately, the Dean Meadows Group. Elsewhere in the Wye Valley, the Woolhope Project prospered for a while, but lapsed when the project officer post could no longer be funded.

7. What's different in the Woolhope Dome?

24. Dean Meadows Group. New group

More Information

To access and read in full any of the Newsletters, go to our website and select the relevant issue number that is shown alongside each subject. They are in PDF format so can be printed as well.