



HEATHLANDS REUNITED

Dave Elliott writes

As part of this National Lottery funded project, hosted by the South Downs National Park, the landowners along the sandstone ridge from Marley Common to Lynchmere are looking at ways they might be able to work together to create a sustainable, grazed, heathland corridor that links together and joins up the other heathlands along the ridge. Over 80% of the heaths in West Sussex disappeared during the course of the twentieth century, leading to a dramatic loss in wildlife. The heaths that remain are havens for some increasingly rare and very special wildlife. Birds such as the Dartford Warbler and Woodlark along with the charismatic Nightjar rely on the heaths for a home, as do a number of species of reptile and invertebrates such as the Grayling and Silver Studded Blue butterflies. By linking together and joining up habitats we have the opportunity to create more places for these species to live but also to allow them to move within the landscape and colonise new sites. Lynchmere Ridge is an important missing link in the wider landscape, and would increase the heathland habitat in the area as well as making the existing heaths more viable and vibrant places for wildlife.



View of the Serpent Trail crossing our land on Marley Common

The landowners, including the National Trust and the Lynchmere Society, will be having talks with the National Park in the coming months to see how they might be able to work together, as well as speaking to local people to explain more about the project and consult over some of its details.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Friday 11 May, Hardman Hoyle Memorial Hall at 7.30 for 8.00 pm, followed by a talk by Peter Searight – *“A Remarkable Year inspired by Lynchmere”*

Fernhurst Revels: Sunday 20 May.

Shulbrede Priory Open Days: Sunday and Monday 27 and 28 May and 26 and 27 August from 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm.

Heathlands Reunited “Bioblitz” on Lynchmere Common: Thursday 31 July.

TLS Barbecue at Shulbrede Priory: Saturday 1 September, 5.30 pm.

Fernhurst Furnace Open Weekend: 15th and 16th September, 10.30am to 5.00pm.

We already have a membership of twenty, which is a fantastic and encouraging start to the year, and are in talks with the South Downs National Park to secure funding from their Heathlands Reunited project sponsored by the “Big Lottery”.



It was agreed that we should begin a programme to build the herd, and we were able to borrow a handsome and gentle Belted Galloway bull named *Maverick* from National Trust Woolbeding. The result of his efforts is very satisfactory as we now have four very happy and healthy cows in calf.

The cows have been doing a great job controlling the scrub on the Commons, although the lateness of the spring has meant they have been getting quite hungry and have needed feeding at times. As the spring unfolds they will be feasting on young gorse, birch, pine, holly and tufty grasses.

There was a nice article in *Haslemere Life* about the Company, with photos very kindly taken by Peter Searight - The Remarkable Studio.



We are still urgently seeking more members and support, and have just sent out our first newsletter with more details and information about the herd. Members will not only have access to any beef we produce, but also be invited to our AGM and kept regularly up to speed with all things cow-related.

Scything

e-mail received last July from Alice Bower

Have any of you seen Mark recently with his scythe?

The other day I was mesmerized by the grace and rhythm of watching Mark and his scythe removing the bracken. Such a beautiful ancient art – and it really is an art – watching him was almost a meditation. In such beautiful surroundings and on a lovely day what better way to pass a few moments. So – if you see Mark and his scything why not spend a few moments chatting to him and watching his graceful and beautiful art form of scything? It's all in the hips apparently!



Photo of Mark in action

This e-mail from one of our members came too late for last summer's newsletter and it is a lovely appreciation of Mark's skill. As a former Champion English Scythesman and a trainer of others, we are lucky to have his expert help. From the conservation point of view, it is a gentle and effective way of combatting the bracken invasion in the open spaces – no noise, no chemicals – and we have several days in the diary for the SDNP Volunteer Group to come scything this summer as they did in 2017. If there is anyone who would like to take part please do get in touch – additional help would be most welcome!

Heathlands Reunited “Bioblitz” on Lynchmere Common – Thursday 31 July

Join us for a free day of family discovery! Bring a picnic and stay all day to learn about the creatures of the heath. Or join us for your favourite species slot.....

Aimed at local families to come and learn about their local heathland, each hour will start with a talk from a ranger explaining, with pictures, the species they should be looking out for. They will then go out and search for them before coming together to discuss what they found/saw. Details from www.southdowns.gov.uk. (Provisional programme: 9.00am Birds: 10.00am Reptiles and Amphibians: 11.00am Butterflies: LUNCH: 13.00pm Mini-beasts: 14.00pm Heathland Plants/Trees.

Winter Work

The Commons has been busy over the winter. “Roy's Gang”, consisting of Lowell, Ed, Dan Cornell and sometimes Dave Elliott, did much excellent work of tree felling and scrub clearance, and our Volunteers Richard Appleby and Richard Naylor excelled themselves by replacing the posts round the perimeters where necessary. Volunteer days were well-attended, with twenty on one occasion, and only one day cancelled for torrential rain. Thanks to all our workers, winter and summer – including the Belties – large parts of the Commons can now almost look after themselves.

Annual General Meeting

- Ian Russell is due to retire on the three-year rotation, and is willing to serve another term.
- The enclosed leaflet is a result of new legislation on data protection. We would like to assure the membership that we never have and never will give or sell our members' details to any other person or organisation.
- To view the Lynchmere Society Accounts, go to www.charitycommission.gov.uk, click on FIND A CHARITY, click on CHARITY SEARCH. Charity number is 1103123.
- After the "Business affairs" **Veronica Carter** will give a brief report on her reptile surveys on the Commons, and **Edwin Brooks** will bring us up-to-date with "Cow Club" news before **Peter Searight's** talk.



Trees in a haw frost

Since 'turning professional in 2004 his photography has been inspired by Lynchmere Commons. He will explore the background leading up to the award of a Gold Medal at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, and how his unusual art imagery was recognized by his peers in the photographic world.

Management Committee

Life President: Michael Tibbs

Trustees: Richard Appleby, Chris Pooley, Judy Rous, Ian Russell, Louise Searight, Peter Searight, Chris Summers

Chairman: Judy Rous (01428 723251)

Treasurer: Peter Searight (01428 723715)

Company Secretary: Ian Russell (01428 653049)

Membership: Louise Searight (01428 723715)

Surveys: Susie Bower (01428 604569)

Winter Work Programme: Edwin Brooks (07528 696803)

Database: Rodney Sutton (01428 652731)

Birds: Chris Summers (01428 724435)

Trees: Mark Allery (01428 641708)

Cattle: Sarah Fisk (07388 050050)

Wardens:

Marley Common and Fields: Chris Pooley (01428 653034)

Lynchmere and Stanley Commons: Judy Rous and Louise Searight

Land Management Consultant: R.A. Windle from R.H & R.W. Clutton

See also Web Site: www.thelynchmeresociety.org & Volunteer Blog: <http://lynchmerecommons.wordpress.com>

