

## **L**ottery funding for 'Hardy's Egdon Heath'

September 2000

We have received the excellent news that our bid for heathland restoration management in Dorset under the Heritage Lottery Fund's umbrella programme, 'Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage', has been successful. The project, running under the title 'Hardy's Egdon Heath', is the largest project under Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage. English Nature and its 12 partners have been awarded £2.4 million from HLF which with match-funding by all the partners, means at least £3.7 million will be available for heathland management over the next five years. We will shortly be appointing two project staff to manage this complex programme which will involve major scrub removal and the re-introduction of low intensity cattle and pony grazing to appropriate heaths, as well as providing enhanced information to local communities.

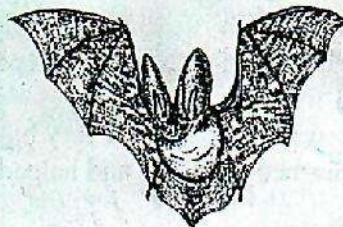
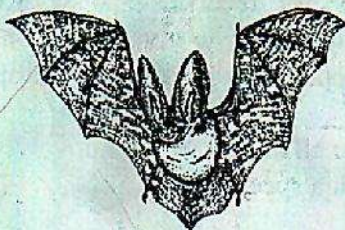


Tomorrow's  
heathland heritage

The largest scheme in the programme is for the reestablishment of grazing on Holt Heath NNR, the third largest heathland in

Dorset. Our aim is to graze the entire heath allowing a mix of cattle and ponies to roam across the two roads which cross the heath - much the same as at Hartland and Stoborough NNRs. There are difficulties though. Firstly, the site is registered common so an application to the Secretary of State for the Environment is required for cattle grids and fencing. Secondly, the roads will require measures to reduce the speed of traffic and we are working with the County Highways Department and the police to find acceptable solutions. If all goes smoothly, we hope to see grazing animals return to the heath in May 2002.

All our other heathland NNRs - Hartland Moor, Stoborough Heath, Morden Bog and Holton Heath - have received funding for scrub and bracken control and many of these projects will be starting this winter. You might think the Green Team can now put their feet up for the next few years but there will still be plenty to do as most of the lottery funded work focuses on restoration of areas of dense scrub to heathland.





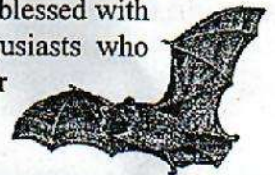
## Bat warden training

Over the last few years, the bat casework with which the Dorset Team deals, has established a recognisable pattern in that the geographical spread of cases does not necessarily match the geographical spread of our hard working Bat Wardens! This has led, during peak times, to us struggling to find licensed wardens who are able to conduct bat roost visits in certain parts of the county, enabling us to provide much needed advice on building work and timber treatments. So, last autumn we sent out a plea for potential licence trainees, expecting just a few people to express interest. We were bowled over by the response from 25 interested batty people - we had no idea they were all out there!

Training for this intrepid group began in earnest at the end of last year since when courses have been run on bat biology, species identification, bat casework, bat detectors, and bat echolocation. Joint training visits

have been made to a Greater horseshoe maternity roost and roosts around Kingcombe in West Dorset. Bat surveys and walks have been carried out at Holt NNR, Hod Hill (National Trust) and on Brownsea Island thanks to the National Trust and Dorset Wildlife Trust. Two trainees also helped out on a bat talk to 30 fidgety nine and ten year olds, all of whom expressed their devotion to bats by the end of the evening.

Existing licensed bat workers have helped hugely by taking trainees on many accompanied roost visits and I am very grateful to all who have done this in such good spirit. I am hopeful that with this sound grounding, a good proportion of the trainees will be licensed by the end of the year. If this becomes the case, Dorset will be well blessed with a committed group of enthusiasts who tend to only be seen after sunset!



Victoria Copley

## Hambledon Hill 'Wild Day Out'

On a gloriously sunny May Sunday, we hosted a wildly successful Open Day at Hambledon Hill. The aim was to celebrate our National Nature Reserves and this was achieved in style with over 17000 people attending 20 similar events across England on the day.



Over 1500 people got involved in a dawn to dusk program of activities that included guided wildlife walks on everything from bugs to bats. English Heritage archaeologists gave people a chance to learn more of the Hill's complex neolithic and iron age earthworks. But a highlight for many was the impressive hilltop procession and drama performed by

children from three local schools. Other entertainments included music by folk band 'Beltaine', story telling and traditional craft displays including the making of flint tools by expert "knapper" William Lord, while renowned sculptor Keith Rand started a major new work in wood, some 20 feet high, on the hilltop.

The wide range of activities certainly appeared to have captured people's imagination judging by the enthusiastic comments we received and it was particularly rewarding to be able to give elderly and disabled people a rare opportunity to get to the hilltop.

A very big thank you to all of you who got involved and helped make it such a special day.



# Holton Heath NNR update

By the time this issue hits your doormats, we will have had a chance to consider the implications resulting from a survey of the asbestos and heavy metals which has been in progress this summer.

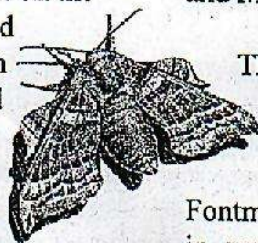
The bad news is that more asbestos has been found and we are in the process of finding extra funds to employ specialised contractors to remove it. The good news is that it is concentrated in specific areas and this means we expect to be able to do some management work on the site this winter. This will include the spraying of rhododendron regrowth from stumps cut two years ago and possibly the clearance of an area of dense pine and rhododendron on the north near the railway line. All the work will be done

by contractors and work will have to follow strict procedures to ensure workers are not put at risk. During the scrub clearance, the air will be sampled to check for airborne asbestos fibres and ground searches will be made. This is to some extent experimental but we hope that the lessons we learn will mean that we are able to undertake further scrub clearance in future years which is cost-effective.

It is too soon to say for sure when we will be able to resume volunteer work parties. However there is every likelihood that work such as cutting of seedling pine with loppers could still be done by volunteers in areas of low risk and so we have included in the programme the possibility of a Green Team visit in February.

# Volunteer's evening at Slepe Farm

Our annual gathering at Slepe Farm took place in July and although a shower did its best to spoil the fun just as we were about to set off on the bat walk, it did the honourable thing and stopped just as we were thinking of calling it an early night. The stroll down to Slepe Wood resulted in good displays from Pipistrelle and Long-eared bats, both visually, and audibly through the bat detectors. Earlier, Steve Barratt had talked us through an impressive moth catch from the previous night which included



magnificent specimens of three different hawk moths. And a superb spread was laid on as usual by Annie and Mike and was appreciated by all.

This is now the third year we have held the event at Slepe Farm so it's time for a change. Green Team member, Julia Percy has offered to host next year's do at the Springhead Trust at Fontmell Magna. This magnificent mill house is set in superb grounds with a lake and both Fontmell Down and Hambleton Hill are nearby. This is sure to be a splendid venue so watch this space

## Contacts in the Team...

Ian Nicol - Holt Heath and Forest NNR, Holton Heath NNR, Hambleton Hill NNR.

Tim Brodie James - Hartland Moor and Stoborough Heath NNRs, Hog Cliff NNR, Morden Bog NNR, Valley of Stones NNR.

Sue Moore and Victoria Copley - Bat case work, Sue is first point of contact.

John Stobart and Sally Proud - Badger case work, Sally is first point of contact.

## We are at ...

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