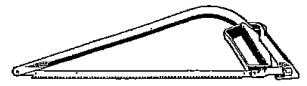




Billhook & Bowsaw

Newsletter of Wirral Countryside Volunteers



Forthcoming Events Autumn 2016

The volunteers will be working with the Friends of Willaston Meadow and will be scything a corner of meadow to maintain the wildflowers there. The friends really appreciate the volunteers' input in to the meadow and thank everybody for their impressive hedge weeding carried out one summer evening. Ten volunteers weeded the hedge in less than two hours. It gave the meadow area a cared for appearance.

There will be scything of the BBQ stand meadow at the butterfly park. This benefits the red clover in the following summer season which is nectared on by the bees and butterflies. The hazel hedgerow there will be sided up creating a chance to plant a couple more red campions into the hedge bank there. The red campion provides a colourful pink ribbon of flowers along the hedge base and a nectar source throughout most of the butterfly season. Brimstone butterflies have been spotted using the red campion here. Lunch time BBQ, bring a contribution.



Red campion

At Thornton Wood in areas of open canopy created following sycamore removal some of the competing bramble will be removed to assist young oak and alder saplings which are coming through.

At Paul's there will be a group meal, vegetable chilli and garlic bread. Let Paul know if you are coming for that by the preceding Monday. This will be followed by group meeting and some tool sharpening if there is time. There will be a hand turned sandstone wheel for billhooks and the cutting edge of the scythes can be refreshed. It does make a tremendous difference when you start a day's mowing with a keen blade.

At New Ferry Butterfly Park in October, the calcareous area will be mown with sharp blades afresh, to benefit the hosts of cowslips and marsh orchids for next summer. Hedge trimming/ laying will be started on the upper level of the park.

The National Hedge Laying Championships are to be held in Cheshire for the first time. This is at Alford, 6 miles south of Chester. For the first and only time ever there will be a Cheshire Class at the National level. Two of the members of Wirral Countryside Volunteers will be competing cutting half a chains length of hedge, 11yards! Come and enjoy the day

seeing ten different styles of layered hedge created in one hedge.



The coppicing weekend is at Quarter Bank Coppice, Thornton Wood. This will be the fifth in-cycle coppice cut of the hazel. At the last cut nearly 300 hedging stakes were extracted. The coppice flora here is the most diverse flora of the wood with good numbers of bluebell, pignut, dog violet, betony, and some barren strawberry. The hazel stakes from the coppice will be used for the hedge laying season which starts off with the eleventh WCV hedge laying training day at Poulton Hall, Bebington. The Lancelyn Greens who reside at Poulton Hall own Thornton Wood so these events have a pleasing estate symmetry about them. Tools are provided and hedge laying expertise shared. This will be followed by a meal at local hostelry as a thank you to our trainers. Contact Paul to book a place on the training day and/or the post event meal. This is the most suitable hedge for beginners that has been used for a training day.

In November, at the Butterfly Park there will be hedge trimming along the upper level. In addition there will be bramble cutting around hazel shrubs planted two years ago to extend Brick Pit Coppice. The mowing regime will continue on to the acid grassland areas.

Hedge laying skills can be developed further on a Wirral hedge near you, location to be confirmed.

There will be a hedge laying challenge St Peter's Waverton. This hedge will require use of a chainsaw in parts. The late Jack Dunning got the volunteers involved in the hedge. The memorial bench put up for Jack and his wife Betty is in the church yard. Thanks to all those volunteers who contributed to the memorial bench fund £90 was collected in total. Volunteers have been invited by the tower captain, David Andrews, to go to the belfry when the bells are ringing prior to the 10 am morning service.

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Hon. Secretary
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