



# MINSTERLEY MEADOWS MUSINGS

## NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF MINSTERLEY MEADOWS

*Dear Friends, I hope you enjoy reading the second “News and Musings from Minsterley Meadows” newsletter.*

### SUMMER

The meadows have been through a tough time since Spring, which was one of the driest on record. An equally dry Summer saw the Orchids running to seed quickly and many of the plants in the meadows had a short flowering season, due to the lack of rain. However, Haysel to use the old name for hay making season, arrived in a blaze of sunshine meaning the hay crop could be cut and gathered in late July without the fear of a wet period to spoil the hay. If you would like to find out what a hay meadow is all about, next time you visit the meadows read the new sign by the bench, “A Year in the Life of a Traditional Hay Meadow”. Designed by local artist Sarah Jameson with text by local Botanist Rob Rowe. The poster is also on the meadows section of the [Marches Meadow Group website](http://marchesmeadowgroup.org.uk).



*Top photo: Local farmer who has cut the hay for the last 20 years busy cutting the last section of the second field. “Make hay whilst the sun shines”*





*A cluster of Parrot waxcap fungi*

## LOOKING FORWARD TO AUTUMN

The meadows are now a golden hue with very little plant growth. Hopefully with the arrival of Autumn many of the grassland fungi will start to show their fruiting bodies in all their lovely colours, Parrot Waxcap, Meadow Waxcap and Meadow Coral should all be making an appearance with the change of the seasons.

Take a look at the MMCLT [Minsterley meadows](https://www.middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/minsterley-meadows) website to download the [fungi list](#); on an Autumn day's walk see what you can find.



## BEE WALK

A monthly bee walk has been set up by a Minsterley resident and data from the meadows and playing field is recorded with highest numbers of bees being in July, Early Bumblebee, Red tailed and White or Buff Tailed being seen in large numbers.

<https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org>



*Meadow coral and Meadow waxcap*





*Caption: Members of Shropshire Mammal Group, Friends of Minsterley Meadows and Rea Valley Community Wildlife Group waiting expectantly to meet mammals found by Stuart Edmonds*

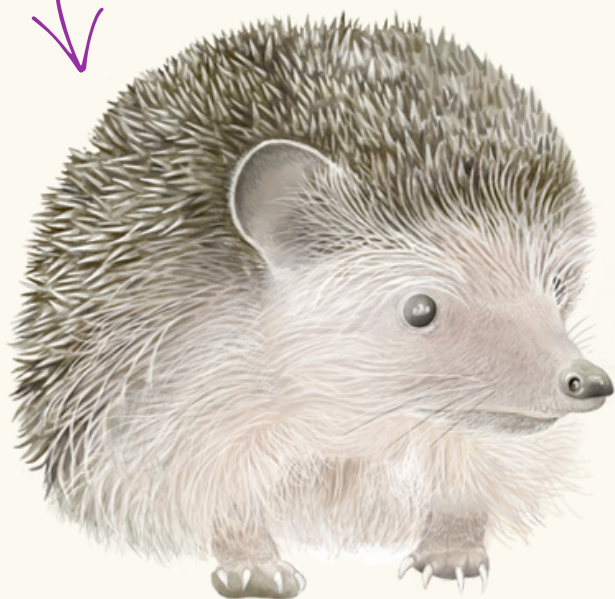
## VISITS TO THE MEADOWS

During the Summer group visits to the meadows, from surrounding villages, have continued despite the heat. A spur of the moment litter, picking, Ragwort pulling and dog waste clearing took place on one visit

## MAMMAL SURVEY

Shropshire Mammal group undertook a baseline survey on August 12th of small mammals in the meadows. The purpose of the survey was to establish which species of mammals might be present. The data will help with management, to maximise ecological diversity. The weather was warm which meant that many of the mammals being surveyed, voles, field mice and hopefully harvest mice were not active. However, presence of badgers and hedgehogs were detected and plenty of field signs of voles, from tunnels in the grass, were spotted. Further surveys will be carried out in the future and there could be opportunity for interested Friends to help with surveying.

*There are signs of hedgehog activity in the meadows*





## SOME MEADOW PLANT OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In the last newsletter some of the plants to be found in the meadows from John Gerard's 1597 "*Generall Historie of Plantes*" were featured. Here we look at a couple of plants you might have spotted flowering over the Summer, also described by Gerard.

### Ox-Eye Daisy

Gerard mentions that in some areas of Europe Ox-Eye Daisies are a powerful cure for illnesses in cattle. For humans he merely says that: "*The Flowers of Oxe eie made up in a seare-cloth do assuage wasteaway cold hard swellings, and it is reported that if they be drunk by and after bathing they make them in short time well coloured that have been troubled with yellow jaundice.*"

### Yellow-Rattle or Coxcombe

Of course we put a great store by Yellow Rattle in these days of meadow conservation. It is known as the "Meadow Maker" due to the fact that it is partly parasitic on grasses that could otherwise out-compete other meadow plants, thus reducing botanical diversity.

However, Gerard gives it short shrift saying: "*It groweth in drie meadows and pastures and it is to them great annoyance.*"







*Marian Spain, Chief Executive Officer for Natural England presenting Richard Keyner Chairman of MMCLT with the new NNR plaque*

## OTHER NEWS: NNR STATUS FOR THE STIPERSTONES

Minsterley Meadows has been included by Natural England in the new Stiperstones Landscape National Nature Reserve (NNR), a fantastic level of protection for the meadows and other MMCLT sites.

The NNR is a partnership of six landowning organisations: Natural England, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Linley Estate, Forestry England, Shropshire Council and Middle Marches Community Land Trust.

The NNR will be declared as one of the new King's Series of National Nature Reserves to honour the coronation of King Charles.

Visit the [MMCLT website](https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/minsterley-meadows) to see the full press release.

*The new NNR logo for the Stiperstones NNR*



*A fantastic Stiperstones-themed cake was made for the launch event, featuring the Quartzite Tors and an Emperor Moth!*



## MINSTERLEY MEADOWS AT THE MINSTERLEY SHOW

The work of MMCLT and Minsterley Meadows were brought to the Minsterley Show on August 16th.



*MMCLT & Minsterley Meadows stall at Minsterley Show.*

*Children enjoyed colouring in pictures of meadow flowers and animals*



*Hot work demonstrating scything at Acton Scott Historic farm*

## SCYTHING AT ACTON SCOTT

Minsterley Meadows along with The Marches Meadows Group attended the hay making festival weekend at Acton Scott, historic working farm in July.

Members of both groups demonstrated scything on the meadows at the farm and talked to visitors about traditional hay meadows and their management.





*Minsterley Meadows mural before completion and concept design*

## OTHER ACTIVITIES: THE NATIONAL LOTTERY GRANT IS ENABLING US TO:

**Install new perimeter fences where required, install new gates and improve access, and more information boards:**

This work is due to start in the Autumn in partnership with Shropshire Council.

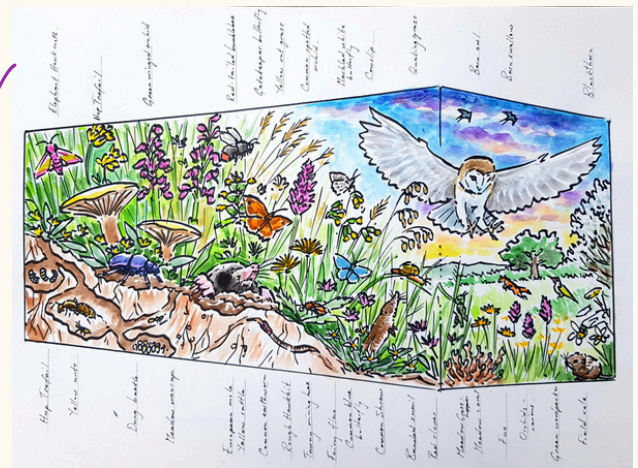
Work on new interpretive boards will start over the Winter.

### **Engage with the local community:**

Volunteer conservation work parties will begin in October. Dates of the first session will be sent out to friends and other local groups in September, do join us if you would like some fresh air and learn some new skills whilst taking an active part in the care of the meadows. Watch out for dates on the Friend's emails.

A kids club, to be led by a children's wildlife activities leader:

A wildlife activity leader has been selected to work with local schools starting in the new term.



### **Production of a mural at Minsterley Primary School:**

We are excited to be working with local artist Rory McCann. The pupils at the school are all involved with designing a mural to feature the meadows. We are grateful to the school for engaging so enthusiastically.

## FRIENDS' EVENTS

Keep an eye open for upcoming Friends events via emails from the Friend's email [minsterley@mmclt.co.uk](mailto:minsterley@mmclt.co.uk) and the **Middle Marches Community Land Trust website**.

We will be holding an autumn meeting for the Friends; date to be confirmed soon.





*A good rest after a morning's work in the meadows*



## CAN YOU HELP US?

Friends can help look after the meadows by:

- 1 Keeping a watch on the meadows for any unwelcome activities**  
These can be reported to us via [info@middlesmarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@middlesmarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk) or Meadows Project Coordinator, Sarah Wallace-Johnson via the friend's email address [minsterley@mmclt.co.uk](mailto:minsterley@mmclt.co.uk)
- 2 Keeping records of any interesting plants or animals you might spot**
- 3 Recording orchid numbers and distribution and species**  
We hope to run some wildlife ID training days in the future for Friends who might be interested in using iRecord.

## FRIENDS BENCH

The bench kindly donated by the Friends of Pontesford and Earls Hill has been modified by a group of volunteers from the hill, to provide a higher seating position. On the same "volunteer away day" the top of the fallen Ash log in Alderley Leasows meadow (the second meadow from Callow lane) was flattened using a chainsaw and "Alaskan Mill". This has made the Ash branch into a comfortable, level seat, a great spot to watch the sunsets over Long Mountain and listen to the sounds of the meadows.



*Skilled work by the Friends of Pontesford and Earls Hill*





Making a bench?  
First find your log!



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to:

- Lucy Gaze for photographs and filming
- Robin Fellows-Weir for continuing to film the meadows over the seasons
- Minsterley Primary School teachers and pupils for engaging so enthusiastically with the art mural project
- Marches Meadows Group for continued support and advice
- Natural England
- Sarah Jameson for artwork and designs
- Thank you to all the Friends who are helping to care for the meadows and keeping a watch on them
- All the volunteers who have helped with events
- Massive thanks to the Friends of Pontesford Hill volunteers for donating a bench to the meadows and modifying the Ash branch into a seat



<https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/minsterley-meadows>



Thanks to The National Lottery Players for making the Minsterley Meadows project a reality.