



The Lynchmere Society
For Lynchmere, Hammer and Camelsdale

Summer Newsletter

Life President: Michael Tibbs **Vice president:** John Hooker

Chairman: Michael Shaw (01428 643406)

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Commons Wardens: Stanley: Roy Wolfe (01730 821290)

Lynchmere; Judy Rous (01428 723251) and Louise Searight (01428 723715)

Marley: Chris Pooley (01428 653034)

Trustees; Robert Dows-Miller, Louise Searight, Christina Heath, Stuart Ibbotson, Nic Mann, Laura Ponsonby, Judy Rous, Ian Russell, Michael Shaw, Richard Appleby, Chris Pooley.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 1st September at 5:30pm

Barbecue at Shulbrede Priory

All are welcome. Drinks and barbecued sausages will be provided but please bring something sweet for pudding and bring friends who might be interested in joining the Society.

Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th September

Fernhurst Furnace Open days

Friday 19th October at 7:30pm

Autumn lecture at the Hardman Hoyle Memorial Hall
Rosemary Northway will speak on "Life at Stanley Farm"

Volunteer's dates are included on a separate sheet



Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)



Birch Polypore (*Piptoporus betulinus*)

The above photos and newsletter editing by Seb Dows-Miller

Chairman's Report

As I write the rain continues to pour down and our land looks more and more soggy. Fortunately our heaths and fields are not in areas where they are likely to be flooded and we do not do much work on them during the summer months anyway but our grazier will have problems getting in her hay crop if this weather goes on much longer. (Incidentally please do not enter the fields, there are no footpaths, they are not open access, some are for hay others have cattle including a bull in them.)

We have now completed our programme of replacing fencing round most of our fields although some occasional repairs will always be repaired as posts rot or trespassers break down gates. We have received many compliments about the rail and post chestnut fencing. It is traditional and the timber is sourced to within a mile or two. That round Valley field replaces similar fencing which Peter Burkitt put up some 40 years ago so we are hopeful...! However, the fencing round the commons which we put up in 2005 is now beginning to show its age as the posts were treated at the time with a preservative from which certain elements had been removed on health and safety grounds and which has proved less effective. This is likely to require ongoing remedial work over the next few years and if you are out walking and see any posts which have decayed please ring one of the trustees.

We have also had problems with fly tipping. If any of you know the identity of the person who this year has dumped 50 black bin liners of old newspaper and animal waste we would like to meet him. The same goes for whoever lunches off Benecol yoghurt and an orange and leaves us to clear up the detritus. I have just removed sixteen empty pots from one site having watched them accumulate on a daily basis.



Mike Edwards

Apart from some plant surveys by Lara Ponsonby (which are on our website) we have not commissioned surveys for some years now. However we have now commissioned Mike Edwards to do an entomological survey of our fields and he is most of the way through that. You will find his initial comments later in this newsletter. It is clear that the management plan for our fields about which I wrote in our last newsletter is just what was needed and it is amazing that he has found over 100 species of beetle on just two visits to our fields.

Among other developments we are looking at how we repair and maintain Mare Barn. It now has an electricity supply and improved drainage in the yard (though you may not think so just at present). Ian Russell and I are negotiating with Natural England for advice and financial help and he writes about this later in this newsletter.

We continue to maintain close links with the South Downs National Park Authority. One very welcome development is their appointment of a Heath land project officer – Jonathan Mycock who is already well known to us – and he will shortly be putting forward proposals for improving the heath land across the weald. We are at the heart of this land and look forward to playing a role in this project and receiving some of the spin off from it.

TLS began in 1999 as a village appraisal society. Since then we have turned into a major Landowner with 350 acres of fields and heath land, several miles of fencing and a historic barn. That has inevitably led to much increased work for our trustees, many of whom have been with us since the beginning. It is now time to look again at how we run and manage ourselves. Robert Dows-Miller our Secretary/Treasurer will be retiring at our next AGM, as will I too after five years as Chairman. We have some nine months to find successors and to bring new blood to the board of Trustees, for we have only had two new trustees since I became one six years ago. Many societies place strict limits on how long trustees should remain in office. That may not be appropriate for us but feel free to volunteer or just to give me your thoughts. It is time for a change and we need to manage it carefully.

Michael Shaw

Chairman



Mark Allery Scything at Mare Barn

Mare Barn Past and Future – Ian Russell and Michael Tibbs

Mare Barn is tucked away on the edge of the Lynchmere Hamlet conservation area. Walkers will know it well. Away from public roads, it is just south of the Sussex Border path where it intersects with the footpath running up from the cricket field and St Peter’s Church. The group of buildings consists of the ancient oak framed barn and the newer shelter sheds built on two sides of a yard with a small pond nearby.

The Barn had been part of Church Farm for over 100 years before Mr Pratt Barlow bought the Lynchmere Estate in 1901. In the 18th century it had been part of Shulbrede Farm. On Mrs Pratt Barlow’s death in 1928 the estate was sold. The details of the sale stated that “the Lynchmere herd of Guernseys and Large Black Pigs are well known throughout the country”. Although some of the pigs were kept in the farm yard, most of them were housed in Mare Barn and its shelter sheds.



Mare Barn on the 30th of June 2012 – The day of the Volunteers’ Barbecue

The farm was later bought by Admiral Grant of Lynchmere End, though Mare Barn and Barn field went with Lynchmere house to Major Leschallais but rented back to the farm. It was used to store farm equipment, but gradually deteriorated until it was bought by Peter Burkitt.

The shiny corrugated iron roof of the main barn does not please everybody but because it is protecting the oak frame we are very fortunate to have it. The buildings were repaired and partly rebuilt by Peter Burkitt ten years ago. He owned them and the adjoining field and farmed here for many years. When Peter died the buildings and fields were generously donated to The Lynchmere Society and so we have the responsibility of maintaining them for future generations, which is what Peter wanted. We have made a start by bringing water and electricity to the site. It is a store for the Society’s equipment which is used by our volunteers to maintain the commons. We hold a volunteers’ barbecue here every summer. A community apple orchard containing traditional local varieties of trees has been planted just to the north of the barn and is now flourishing.

Peter Burkitt was instrumental in putting on the metal roof (which once upon a time had a “wood chip thatch”) to preserve this ancient (200 year old) barn against further deterioration, but it does now urgently need attention. Strengthening and repairs are needed to the oak frame and subsidence to the old stone walls needs to be tackled.

The Society approached Natural England because they can give grants for preserving farm buildings such as these. We made an initial submission and following a site visit we were delighted to hear they will provide a grant towards the next stage – which is to appoint conservation experts to give a detailed report on exactly what needs to be done. Following this we can obtain quotations for the repairs with a view to getting them carried out in the not too distant future. But Natural England will only fund part of the costs (which will be considerable) and we will have to find the rest one way or another – so watch this space!

Surveys

Butterflies on the Commons

Louise Searight and Judy Rous signed up earlier in the year with the Haslemere Naturalists Society to do a Butterfly survey. This entails walking the same route once in every seven day period between 11am and 4pm, on sunny days when the temperature is around 17°C. Sad to say some weeks have not produced a single suitable day! Temperatures have been low and butterflies very few and far between. Of the rarer varieties they have seen one Green Hairstreak, one Grizzled Skipper and a few moths.

They will go on trying and there is always next year!



A Grizzled Skipper

Entomological Survey of The Lynchmere Society Meadows

Following Laura Ponsonby’s plant survey and a visit last summer from the eponymous Charles Flower, an expert on flower meadows we are now in the middle of an insect survey by Mike Edwards. Some members will remember his extremely good talk a few years ago on the Field Cricket and he has previously surveyed our commons. He and a colleague have made two out of three planned visits so far and are delighted with their finds despite the unfriendly weather.

Last year Charles Flower was very interested and enthusiastic. He wrote “these fields are not just any old meadows. Given the acidic nature of the soil type the fields may well rank as being of considerable importance. They are rich in species and deserve the best possible management because the nectar from the flowers will be providing for countless grasshoppers and other insects which were evident on our visit to the fields which had not then been cut”.

Mike Edwards now writes:

“The survey of the Lynchmere fields for insect interest is, after a slow start due to the weather, now well underway. Despite low numbers of bees, wasps and flies - for the conditions are not good for creatures with exposed wings - the number of beetles, especially weevils is very exciting. Over 100 different species of beetle have been recorded on two visits, with 60 in Roundabouts field alone.

Many of these are flightless and can only walk between patches of their food plants, so have relied on the rotational use of the fields for hay-cutting and grazing to survive overall in the fields. It follows that ensuring that not all their food resources are removed at any one time (by cutting or grazing) is an important part of the management plan for the fields.

Another important function of the flowers in the meadows is to feed adults of the many species which have larvae living in the surrounding woodland. Again here it is important to ensure that flowers are always available, although as many of these species do fly, they will find it easier to move between fields as required.

Although a disappointing number of bee species have been recorded so far due to the weather pattern of 2012, we have found several species of solitary bee including the mining bees *Lassioglossum lativentre* and *Andrena wilkella*. The latter species specialises in collecting pollen from the flowers of legumes. We also found *Nomada striata*. This is a cuckoo bee, which lays its eggs in the nest cells of *Andrena wilkella*.”

Mike Edwards’ full report will be available later this year and you will be able to read it on our website.

The Lynchmere Society’s website is www.thelynchmeresociety.org and our website designer is Seb Dows-Miller

The logo of Bell Heather (Erica cinerea) indicates the Society’s ownership of the Lynchmere Commons



Attactagenus plumbeus



Barynotus obscurus

