

THANET COUNTRYSIDE TRUST

Registered charity No: 285972

1971 – Founded

1982 – Charitable status



Marbled White

A Very Happy Christmas to all
our members and hard
working volunteers



NEWSLETTER WINTER 2011/2012



Hello my name is Patrick; I am a volunteer at the Observatory. I studied at the Open University and earned a BSc in Physics and Mathematics. I was introduced to Astronomy by my Grandfather as a child and have loved it ever since. As an amateur Astronomer my interests focus around Planetary Science and NEO's (Near Earth Objects), but I also enjoy taking pictures of the Planets and Moon. I have given advice to Astronomy groups before in the field of Radio Astronomy.

While Volunteering at the Observatory I hope to be able to help people make good use of the telescope and other facilities. We have already held one evening which was a success. We were able to use the telescope to view the planet Jupiter and three of its moons. A discussion and presentation also brought together the group in their love and fascination of Astronomy. I would like to thank all those who attended and made it such an enjoyable evening. The Trust hopes to offer many more events and short courses in the future. If there are any volunteers who would like to be involved please contact the Trust for opportunities.

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WORKING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Monkton's Conservation Manager Dave Edgar is looking for volunteers to help on his Saturday work parties over the coming months.

This year, the main focus will be on scrub clearance and removal of some non native species such as Cotoneaster, but also some other outdoor tasks.

Dave said "These days can be great for keeping fit and healthy and getting to know other volunteers, as well as helping Monkton remain a great place to visit and enjoy nature. Even just a couple of hours can make a difference"

"It is important for valuable wildlife sites like Monkton, to carry out conservation work like this, so that our flora and fauna can survive and thrive".

We will meet at Monkton Visitor Centre at 10am on the following Saturdays.

Just bring yourself, a packed lunch and decent footwear, as everything else will be provided, including tea and coffee.

Saturday 26th November
Saturday 17th December

Saturday 10th December
Saturday 7th January

IN THE SPOTLIGHT - A monthly look at some of those who work, volunteer, or just enjoy Monkton Nature Reserve.

Our first question and answer session is with regular volunteer Peter Wigley.

What persuaded you to volunteer at Monkton?

The reserve needed help from volunteers, no experience necessary, so I offered. I liked the flexibility. The way I can come on days and times to suit myself. So it fits in with my other commitments, also, the variety of jobs and the fact that no experience is necessary for most of them.

Do you have a favourite part of the reserve?

All of it! I do like the peace and quiet of the outdoors. Quiet walks etc. Also, there are some fantastic colours in the trees at this time of year. I like the exhibits covering fossils to present day wildlife in the field study centre; also I see the reserve as an Oasis, with beautiful landscapes and so much small wildlife around you from birds, butterflies and dragonflies, to lizards and rabbits.

What jobs are you working on at present?

Well currently, I am helping to remove some of the non native and invasive species that are beginning to take over parts of the reserve. Plants such as Cotoneaster, also the Hawthorn has become a problem, as there is far too much of it. It is good exercise and can be worthwhile and enjoyable, especially on a nice sunny day.

Do you work outside of Monkton Nature Reserve?

Yes, I work for the Waste and Recycling Department at Thanet District Council.

Finally, any chance of coming in Christmas Day?

No

FOOTNOTE: Anyone contemplating joining in the Monkton autumn scrub bash, or helping with other jobs, indoors or out can call Dave Edgar at the reserve on 01843 822666 for more information.

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Wildlife Recording at the Reserve 2011

A survey of Lepidoptera and Hymenoptera was carried out at the Reserve during the early part of this year.

The species lists will be available to view on the Monkton website very soon <http://www.monkton-reserve.org/>

The data from both sheets was collected over a 24 hour period.

It's time once again for renewal of Trust Memberships

A membership form is included with the newsletter. Please consider paying by standing order. A standing order form is also enclosed (or attached if you receive your newsletter by email). Do let us have your email address wherever possible as this helps us to save on postage costs. Membership fees remain the same and represent very good value.

Allan Willett's visit to the Reserve in the summer - update



Allan Willett, in his role of Lord Lieutenant of Kent, along with his wife Anne visited the reserve on Wednesday 6th June, as part of their farewell visit to Thanet. One of our trustees, John McPherson, joined Mr and Mrs Willett afterwards at the Royal Yacht Club in Ramsgate where John presented them with a photo of the reserve taken by one of our members, Robert Pickett.

Allan has now retired from his role as the Lord Lieutenant of Kent and is busy with his own Charitable Trust from which he has generously given our Trust financial help for this and the next two years towards salary costs.

**** NEWS ****

We are pleased to let you know that one of our members has donated a very nice digital camera to the Trust.

This will be available for you to use while at the reserve and we are hoping to allow members to be able to borrow it - perhaps for a week to use on holiday, in return for a donation to our funds.

The camera has been donated by Don Wilkes and is a Canon D60 SLR Digital type. If any readers happen to have a lens for the Canon EF series that they can spare please bring them along to us.

More details from the staff at the reserve:

A meeting to discuss future educational course and programmes to be run at the reserve will be held at the Field Study Centre on Sunday the 27th November from 11am until about 2pm with a lunch provided. Any interested members wishing to contribute to this meeting are welcome to join us, but you must let us know please, so we can organise the lunch.

We hope to develop the plant sales area next spring so we would like you to consider us when planting your seeds, bulbs and plants for later growth. Anyone with English blue bells and snowdrops that can be spared are asked to bring them along

so we can expand the spring displays. Please note that we would only use English bulbs. Any others that you can offer will be added to the plant sales.

If you do not have any plants would you consider covering the cost of a quantity of bulbs that we can purchase from a wholesale supplier? We can show you a list from which you can choose species, or leave it to us. We will be pleased to acknowledge your donation if you so wish.

Over the last 18 months we have developed a very good relationship with a charity shop at 21 High Street, Margate called Turner Gain. We have one of our contribution jars in the shop as well as our leaflets which they give out for us. In return we provide them with many of the books that for a variety of reasons we do not sell in our own book shop areas. As a thank you to us Robin Vaughan-Lyons, the Manager, has recently purchased and delivered to the reserve a new wheel barrow. These sorts of donations all help to make the work being carried out at the reserve a little smoother, and we can use another wheel barrow!

Heat and Light

We are happy to let you know that at long last a boiler and calor gas tank have been installed, and are now working to provide heating in the Field Study Centre, and hot water for the kitchen and the toilet area basins.

The solar panel system has had to be upgraded as well to hopefully ensure a continuous electric supply.

This has been a long and costly episode at the reserve, and we hope that you will continue to visit us through the winter where the plan is to offer you a warm and well lit building to enjoy.

Because of all the former disruption and cost to the Trust of having to replace the inefficient systems installed last year, our local MP Roger Gale, has written to the company who installed the original equipment to complain to them; as yet without reply!

That company is called Ample Energy; they certainly did not live up to their name. The multi fuel stove in the building has been disconnected from the heating system and we wish to sell it as soon as possible. If you are interested please come and have a look - it is available to be taken away along with the stainless steel flue. We would like a fair price for it.

Items Wanted – please

- 🌿 Another wheel barrow!
- 🌿 Sand
- 🌿 Small hard core
- 🌿 Plants (English) for the Reserve and any plants to sell
- 🌿 Metal shelving to sit outside
- 🌿 Gloss paint
- 🌿 Carpet runners or strips
- 🌿 Books, of course!

We would like someone to deliver our leaflets (and occasionally posters) to a number of local businesses, tourist info centres, pubs, shops etc, perhaps once every 6-8 weeks. These sites are around Thanet, Canterbury, Sandwich and Deal. This certainly helps the reserve to gain publicity and has helped us increase visitor numbers this year. If you are able to assist please contact us by phone, email, or call at the Reserve.

Pond dipping during the Summer



Pond dipping has proved quite popular at Monkton this year, especially with our new pond colonising so rapidly with dragonflies, damselflies, diving beetles and lots, lots more. Families and groups, have thoroughly enjoyed identifying what they have found and have commented how enjoyable it is. A real bonus for us at Monkton was to discover just how healthy and pollution free our ponds are. This bodes well for the future, and is mainly due to the work of a number of our volunteers at the reserve in diverting road run-off water and creating the pond in the first place. So a very big thank you is due to them all.

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New Trustees

The Trustees of the TCT would like to invite applications from those interested in joining the Board of Trustees.

A formal Trustees meeting is held approximately once every three months with occasional meetings when we are able to do so.

The last 18 months has seen a tremendous amount of remedial, conservation and improvement works carried out on the reserve as well as a great deal of effort expended in gaining new grants, equipment and volunteers; in the main by or under the management of the current Trustees.

There is a great deal more to do for the Trust and the time has come for additional Trustees to contribute to the future growth of the reserve.

We hope to have applicants from a broad spectrum of life experiences, of all age ranges, and who have some time to help in our future decision making processes.

Applications are welcome from present and/or former members, committee members and any others with concerns for a part of Thanet's future.

Please either write to the Trustees at Monkton or email us on the Reserve email site telling us a little about yourself.

Management Committee Members

If you can join our Management Committee to help with making a positive contribution of ideas and/or effort to the day to day and week to week running of the Reserve, including the Museum, Bookshop, Sales, Marketing and Computer based administration plus helping with any other external visits that we might make we would like to hear from you.

We try to meet once a month, usually on the last Thursday of each month, for our meeting at the reserve.

Please either write or email us or call into the reserve and discuss what is involved.

Monkton Nature Reserve – Film Set

On Tuesday and Wednesday 25th and 26th October, the nature reserve was used in a short film, loosely based on the fairytale of Hansel & Gretel, but renamed Harry & Grace. We used it as the main location for our school film project as part of our International Baccalaureate diploma. With a small cast and crew of only six people, plus one family member, we came to Monkton in the rain and wind and successfully managed to film enough footage for our 6-7 minute film. We will be coming back soon to film the trailer. We were extremely lucky as Monkton Nature Reserve lends itself hugely to film and photography, with all the wonderful footpaths lined with trees and plants. The only slight problem we had with the sun occasionally coming out which could have led to continuity errors but we believe we made up for this. We would all like to say a massive thank you to everyone on the reserve for being patient with us and allowing us to film there!



Back left; James Clark-sound, Becky Upson-cinematographer, Lily Stokes – Carter-director, Front left; Chantelle Cohen-elderly lady, Tim Norman-Harry and Katie Hatt-Grace.