

Newbold Quarry Annual Report

2019-2020

The volunteer group was reformed in February 2019 with the intention of meeting weekly on Tuesdays during winter months.

During February and March we cleared semi-mature hawthorn scrub from an area which lies to the west of the recreation ground at the south of the reserve and which was described as grassland in the 2007 Management Plan. The ground is now completely covered with ivy so whether it will ever return to grassland we wait to see.

After the summer break, Ray started brushcutting the existing areas of grassland to the south and west of the reserve with the rest of group raking off and/or clearing back invasive scrub from the edges of these clearings, together, of course, with litter picking (well done Jane). On one work session alone, enough floating rubbish was recovered from the water to fill five black bags.

By the end of the year we were able to move over to the area called Gun Hill on the south east of the reserve. On the top of the hill there remains two small areas of grassland which were brushcut and invasive scrub cleared. The west facing slope of the hill was covered with a dense growth of scrub and seems to have been a particularly favoured spot for throwing all sorts of rubbish from the top of the hill. Over the past three weeks clearance of both the scrub and litter has been almost completed, helped enormously by a visit from a large Nature Force team on 4th February. Our ambition is to again establish and maintain this area as grassland to mirror the existing grassland across the South Inlet.

Over the past few weeks a Council work party has also been doing excellent work, felling scrub and trees which were threatening the pathways and doing some maintenance of fencing and steps.

Apart from the butterfly surveys carried out by John Rix (see attached), I am not aware of any comprehensive wildlife surveys having been carried out over 2019.

Phil was specially pleased to see the photo of an ivy bee that Steve spotted.

Plants of some note seen during the year were common centaury, common mikwort, blue fleabane, common spotted orchid and twayblade. Bee orchid has been reported in the past but I am not aware that any have been seen in past year.

On the water a pair of mute swans managed to rear four young, and recently there has been a fairly large flock of tufted duck in residence.

Frogs, newts and toads are all present in good numbers although I suspect the toad numbers are less than the many thousands reported in bygone years.

When I took on the role of leader of the group, I have to say the challenge to get this neglected site back

to how the Management Plan written by Richard Wright back in 2007 envisaged seemed almost overwhelming, especially what on earth to do with all the scrub clearings we would generate. However, thanks mainly to the skill of Neville, Chris and Nature Force at loosing it in dead hedges, my fears have proven to be largely unfounded.

For me, a very satisfactory first year.

Richrd Beswick

05/02/2020