

Valley Conservation Society



doing nothing is not an option

Members' newsletter No 170

We are a non-political organisation

August 2020

The boys are back in town



We are delighted to report that following the Prime Minister's easing of lockdown regulations, the VCS weekly work parties have resumed in the Valley.

During the enforced three-to-four month break, individual members of the work party team have continued to visit our land to carry out essential maintenance and to ensure the safety of the public who took full advantage of the Valley for their lock-down constitutionals.

But it was not until July 7, that chairman Bryn Cornwell deemed it safe to resume the full work parties – albeit with social distancing and plenty of hand-gel.

The first major task was to cut back the undergrowth on top of the ragstone walling along Hayle Mill Road and to strim the weeds threatening to overtake the carriage way.

Anyone who has travelled up the Valley since then will have observed what a good job they did.



The wall alongside Treacle Wood

If you would like to join the work party, just turn up at the Conservation Cabin in Cave Hill on any Tuesday at 10am and stay for as long or as little as you like. Further details from Bryn Cornwell on 01622 746514.

Of course, nature did not stand still during lockdown. Our Canada Geese on Lower Crisbrook Pond hatched five goslings which are now almost as large as their parents.



A pair of coots also had six young – but we don't know the correct name for them – is it a cootlet? A cootling? A cootie? Answers on a postcard...

Butterflies too have been having a good year – with John Smith taking this picture of a Red Admiral.



Elsewhere, VCS member Phil Patton found an intriguing – if slightly less attractive - Giant Convolvulus Hawk Moth in the garden of his home in Westwood Road.

The moth is one of a number of breeds rare to England that are currently finding their way across from Europe. This particular variety can have a wingspan of as much as 10cm. They like to live near ivy.

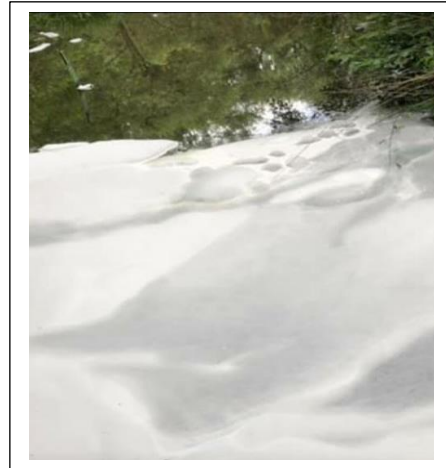


Unfortunately, the warm weather also seemed to encourage the vandals to flourish – and there was a spate of graffiti “art” in the Lower Valley.

We also saw a return of anglers to our ponds – and we are grateful to neighbours and members who challenged them – there is no fishing allowed in our waters.

One day, Reeds Pond was enveloped in a mysterious foam like something from Dr Who. The occurrence was reported to the Environment Agency, but the source was never identified.

On a happier note, we heard that we had been granted £250 from the Mayor of Maidstone’s charity fund towards an air compressor and accessories, for which we are very grateful.



The mystery foam

Cancelled

It was with great sadness that due to Covid 19 we had to cancel the Peachy Beat live music show due to be held at Boughton Monchelsea Village Hall, also the annual Spring Walk – and perhaps saddest of all – the summer barbecue.

The Hayle Park Nature Reserve Trust - for which we nominate three trustees - has also had to cancel its children’s outdoor show this year, but is going ahead with a socially distanced outdoor Annual General Meeting to which everyone is invited.

It will be held in nature reserve, near the Tractor Barn, on **Sunday, August 9**, starting at 12noon. Why not go along and find out about the Trust’s plans for its newly acquired second reserve – at the old tip site off Dean Street?

Tree-work

In the past week, contractors working for the Kent Fire and Rescue Authority have coppiced a tree on the land owned by the brigade off Cave Hill.

It’s always sad to see trees cut down, but this particular sycamore was threatening to topple onto our Conservation Cabin in the next high wind so we are grateful.

