

Annual Report 2013

Nailsea Environment and Wildlife Trust (NEWT) manages Moored Spout as a nature reserve. This 6-acre site of woodland and meadow is a particularly valuable wildlife habitat: low lying and water logged, it is accessed from Pound Lane and is traversed by a well-used public footpath which links Nailsea and Stone-edge-batch in Tickenham. Kingfishers, Herons and Otters can be seen here, and there are many dragonflies in the summer months.



Fastening weldmesh to the surface of the boardwalk.

NEWT installed an 80 m boardwalk on this route in 2010 and has spent the last few months adding wire mesh (purchased by Nailsea and District Footpath Group), to reduce the risk of slips during wet or icy weather.

The site includes a rare wet woodland, 'alder carr', containing a number of springs and waterways which discharge into the Middle Yeo and Tickenham boundary rhyne. NEWT has extended the waterways flowing from the carr towards the boardwalk, forming a shallow pond and stream network to encourage wildlife – you can often see insects and tiny shrimps enjoying the new habitat. This is an interesting area, but please take care as the waters can be deep in places.

At the eastern end of the site, within the meadow, NEWT has recently created a new wildlife pond, roughly 8m by 12m in size and around 1m deep holding 80 cubic metres of water, and hopes to (eventually) encourage the local schoolchildren to take part in activities such as pond dipping there. It will be at least another year before the

pond is established enough for this. The pond has been filled with a siphon from the Land Yeo and water levels are being reviewed to determine whether it will need to be lined, or whether the pond will be topped up sufficiently by the siphon and by rainfall.

We have had visits from Andy Graham of The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (Slimbridge) who initiated a meeting with Brian Marsh, the founder of the Marsh Christian Trust, a philanthropic organisation which supports groups and individuals working in the environment. Brian Marsh came from London to see the work that we are doing and Terry was presented with a cheque for £1000 to help towards this. We have still not decided how to use this money, but we could consider seats or 't' shirts incorporating our logo.

The meadow takes up around two thirds of the site. Historically it was used for grazing and may have been treated with fertilizer to encourage the grass. NEWT is now trying to reduce the nutrient levels by taking regular hay cuts in the hope that other plants and flowers will become established. This year we have had two heavy hay crops which have been removed after being baled.



A conducted tour of the Nature Reserve given by Hilary and Terry for Brian Marsh (Marsh Christian Trust).
Yes – it was raining!

NEWT is being considered as a receptor site for Prince Charles' Coronation Meadows project, in partnership with Avon Wildlife Trust. This would involve spreading hay containing wild flower seed from Netcott's Meadow reserve, near Backwell Lake which is well known for its orchids and other wild flowers in the Spring. Part of our field may need to be ploughed first; we hope to hear in the New Year if we have been



Inspecting the new pond with the Environment Agency and Brian Marsh from the Marsh Christian Trust

successful in our bid for funding this project. We already have some interesting plant and insect species on our site, discovered by Lindsay Moore, Pam Millman and Tony Smith.

A monthly work party meets on site to carry out tasks such as keeping the paths and waterways clear and controlling excessive growth of reeds and brambles, clearing rubbish and planting trees. Anyone can help with this work as all that you need is sensible clothing, gloves and wellies or work boots. NEWT provides the tools needed, along with refreshments and good company! There are lots of young trees donated by the Woodland Trust which need to be planted. NEWT would welcome any offers of help. Anyone interested in working outdoors to create this nature reserve should contact Ian Chambers on 01275 463315, or just come to the entrance to the site

on Pound Lane, opposite the schools lay-by, at 10.00 am on the first Saturday of every month. Please phone first if there is any doubt about the weather.



Panoramic view of the field at Moored Spout (courtesy of Christopher Smith). To optimize the view, go to this photograph on the home page of www.newt.btck.co.uk, right click to 'view image', and left click to enlarge the picture, then use the scroll bar to pan the view.

More information, including recent news and species lists, is available on the website at www.newt.btck.co.uk/ or from newtmembership@yahoo.co.uk.

Written jointly by Helen Iorwerth and Hilary West (trustees)