

Annual Report 2013

Nailsea Environment and Wildlife Trust (NEWT) manages Moorend 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 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.



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

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)

The Glanville Fritillary

Tickenham Court, built in about 1400, lies 1 km to the west of Moored Spout (ST347715). This grade II listed building, which is now owned by Stewart Plant, is celebrated as the ancestral home of Eleanor Glanville (b. 1654), a pioneer entomologist. Eleanor was



Glanville Fritillary on Ox Eye Daisy photographed at Sand Point © Karen Woolley 2012 reproduced with permission. <http://karenwoolley.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/glanville-fritillary.html>

the daughter of a Roundhead major, William Goodricke, who left her a considerable fortune on his death. Within this legacy she inherited 1300 acres of land, together with Tickenham Court, and it became her home. Her first husband, Edmund Ashfield, died young and Eleanor married Richard Glanville, a Lincolnshire landowner, ten years younger than her, but this marriage broke down in 1698 when Glanville found a new partner. It is said that he was a violent man who once 'presenting a pistol loaded with bullets and cock't to her breast' threatening to shoot her dead.



Glanville Fritillary on Red Valerian, photographed at Sand Point on the Somerset coast. © James Packer, reproduced with permission www.somersetbirder.co.uk/may09.htm

Eleanor found solace in the study of wild life, and she was especially interested in butterflies. At that time, those who were engaged in the study of insects were considered to be mentally ill, and society found this particularly unacceptable as an occupation for females. She may have been the first to describe Geometrid larvae as 'loopers' and she reared moths and butterflies (esp. High Brown Fritillary and Green Veined White).

Eleanor was corresponding with the newly formed Royal Society (founded 1662) and, following her interests, she apprenticed her son by her second marriage to an apothecary in London, James Petiver (1663-1718), who is recognised as the father of entomology. Eleanor gave Petiver many specimens which he received gladly. He gave many butterflies the names we now know them by, such as Brimstone, Admiral and Tortoiseshell. Glanville and his mistress did not approve of this apprenticeship and a bitter custody battle followed. Consequently her son was forced to give up his association with Petiver. Apparently no portrait of Eleanor exists, and it is not clear where she was buried (though this may be somewhere in London). Unfortunately she also left very few written records.

When Eleanor died in about 1709 she left much of her estate beyond her immediate family. Her son from her first marriage, Forest Ashfield successfully contested her will at Wells assizes in 1712 on the basis that she was deranged,. The literature relates several incidents which seem to imply that she suffered from mental instability, promoting the view that she could be irrational. At that time, her study of insects was also considered to be additional proof, and indeed this occupation became so obsessive that she neglected the management of her estate.

Her life has recently been narrated in a (semi-fictional) biography written by Fiona Mountain entitled 'Lady of the Butterflies'. Eleanor collected many entomological specimens and although these have been greatly depleted by mite predation, a part of her collection is now preserved in the Natural History Museum in London.



Ribwort Plantain - Photo taken in December 2013. It should be possible to find a better photograph later

In Lincolnshire she was the first to describe the butterfly now known as the Glanville Fritillary in 1702 (named in her honour in 1748). The larvae of most of the Fritillaries feed on species of wild violets (i.e. High Brown; Pearl Bordered; Small Pearl Bordered; Silver washed; Dark Green; Queen of Spain). Exceptions to this are the Heath Fritillary (Ribwort Plantain, Germander Speedwell); Marsh Fritillary (Devilsbit Scabious) and the Glanville Fritillary (Ribwort Plantain). The latter is distinguished from other Fritillaries by the presence of an arc of light coloured spots on the upper surface of the lower wing, each of which has an inserted black spot (see photograph above, taken in 2009).

The Glanville Fritillary is widespread in continental Europe, but its distribution has become restricted in England. It is primarily confined to the Isle of Wight and its environs. The butterfly was probably the subject of various introductions to Sand Point (ST320660) in North Somerset, not far from Woodspring Priory, where it now appears to be established. There are several other sporadic records of its occurrence in this area.

Although this article has been produced in good faith, some of the information here is derived from various websites. I apologize if I have made mistakes, I trust that I can be told and hopefully I can make corrections. In particular I am grateful to Tony Smith and Ray Barnett for their invaluable help in writing this article. Biographies of Eleanor Glanville may be found in 'The Aurelian Legacy' by Michael Salmon Harley Books (2000) pp106-108 (books.google.co.uk/books?isbn=0520229630), www.goodrick.info/eleanor_glanville.htm, www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_history.php and 'The Making of a Manor' - The story of Tickenham Court by Denis Forrest (1975) (Nailsea Library).

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For further information on local wildlife see www.nailseanature.org.uk