



A wild rose bed has been planted with three species of native roses. And recently a number of specimen trees have been added including one of our rarer species, the black poplar. A log-pile has been provided in the hope of attracting amphibians and ground invertebrates. Work is now well advanced on the hard standing area and when it is complete a 'human sundial' will be installed as well as a seat which has been very kindly donated by Mrs Etta Pullinger.

The main work for the rest of this year will then be the growing and planting of meadow flowers for which we hope to get the help of our members. It is planned to sow some seeds directly onto the meadow and others to be grown and planted out as plugs – this should enable an assessment to be made as to which is the most effective method. Also, a suitable gate will be installed to allow access for prams and wheelchairs.

And finally, a history of Little Meadow has now been written and published and is available on our web site. In researching and writing this history we would like to thank Richard Oram, David Denning and members of Overton Historical Society for their help and advice.

## HERITAGE AND NATURE TRAILS

In line with the requirements of the LHI Grant we are in the process of creating three trails namely, 'Historic Overton', 'Little Meadow and Flashetts' and 'Field and River'. The first two are now ready to go to press and the third one is almost ready. Each trail has its own guide and an accompanying leaflet called, 'What to look for'. These are designed to give additional seasonal information on the flora and fauna of the given trail.

It is hoped to provide an information board for each trail but so far only one site has been found which is both suitable and accessible. This board will relate to the 'Little Meadow and Flashetts Nature Trail' for which the board will be placed in the meadow itself. Overton Parish Council have kindly given permission for the use of art work from the 'Overton Footpaths' book to be used on the information boards.

The 'Little Meadow and Flashetts Nature Trail' was the first to be completed was trialled almost two years ago at the 2004 Sheep Fair. Since then leaflets for it have been available at various outlets and it has been in regular use for bird walks.

The 'Historic Overton Trail', the second to be completed, was presented to The Overton Society last April - they have now arranged for a guided walk to take place in June of this year. We would like to thank members of The Overton Society for their advice and support in planning this trail.

The third trail, 'Fields and River Nature Trail' is not yet complete but it is hoped that it soon will be so that the guides for all three can go to the printers at the same time.

## SURVEYS

A survey of the hedgerows of Overton was begun in 2003, the LHI required that this be completed and the report written up, this was done in April 2005. The full report given to Overton Parish Council and the local farmers and landowners. A copy has been deposited in the local library and one sent to HWT (Hampshire Wildlife Trust). The full report is also available on our web-site. A second 'popular' report has now been written and is being launched tonight, price £2. It contains more general information about hedgerows, receipts and suggestions for what to plant in local hedgerows as well as details from the main report.

However, more hedgerows have been surveyed since the publication the 'Final Hedgerow Survey Report'. OBS, for the last two years, has taken part in a pilot hedgerow survey scheme organised by HWT and CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England). The object of which is to assess the viability of carrying out a national survey. For this we surveyed a number of hedgerows in the north of the parish which has both helped to fill in gaps in our original survey and contributed to the HWT study. A further three 'at risk' hedgerows were surveyed. An 'At risk' register is being kept by the society so that information on these can be made available as necessary.

A survey of all the mature trees within a half mile radius of the village centre has just been completed. 445 trees in all. The position, height, girth and condition of each has been recorded and photographs taken of the more interesting or important ones. This unique and valuable record of local trees has been the work of three of our members. John Smith and Jim Stickland who have carried out all the survey work and Mrs Marie McNair who collated and recorded the data. We would like to express our gratitude to Mrs Marie McNair for all the time, skill and patience she has given to this project.

A presentation of their findings will be made to society members on March 10<sup>th</sup> 2006. The data has now been sent to HBIC (Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre) and the Biodiversity Development Officer at B&DBC (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council) and is also available on OBS web site.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

An essential requirement for the award of an LHI Grant was the appointment of a Project manager and the drafting of A Project Management Plan. Alan Stevens took on this task and I believe that great credit is due to Alan whose plans and systems have enabled the project to run smoothly, to be on time and to be effectively monitored. Credit must also be given to the all the members of the committee who have worked so hard and enthusiastically over the past year to enable this project to be well on its way to completion. And on behalf of the committee I would like to thank all our members who have helped the LHI Project in so many different ways.

## **ACTIVITIES FOR MEMBERS**

Throughout the year a number of activities have been provided for members and often for non-members also. (Where payment is required to cover costs members usually pay half price. Membership fee is £1 – excellent value!)

Activities include talks, walks, visits and opportunities to help with trail planning, surveys and work on Little Meadow. We hold an Annual Photographic Competition and members can visit our ‘stall’ at different local events.

(A full list is attached.)

We are grateful to all members who have helped with Little Meadow, the planting, digging, weeding and spreading mulch – we are now looking for volunteers to help grow some of the wildflower seeds.

A number of surveys have been undertaken the results of which are sent to the appropriate organisations – they include, birds, moths, bats, woodlark, owl and rook.

A number of members keep ‘Wildlife Diaries’. We would like to thank those who do this and encourage others to think about doing the same. Such information is not only useful now but will prove invaluable when we come to devise a local Biodiversity Action Plan.

## **APPRECIATION**

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all the people and organizations who over the year have given us advice, support and practical help. The names of these can be found on our web site under our various publications.

However tonight I would like to give a special thanks to Marie McNair for her valuable work in recording the results of the tree survey.

On behalf of all the committee I thank our husbands, wives, partners and children for their fantastic support – it is much appreciated.

Also on behalf of the committee I would like to thank our members for their enthusiasm, help and support – it is really great to know that we are doing something which pleases so many people.

And, as this is my last opportunity to do so, I would like to express my personal thanks and good wishes to all the members of the committee who are so hardworking and supportive of one another - for me it has been a delight and privilege to chair OBS through its formative years.

Kathleen Doyle, *25 March 2006*

## ACTIVITIES FOR MEMBERS AND OTHERS

### TALKS

Dormouse Evening by Ian White from the Hampshire Mammal Group  
Report on Hedgerow Survey by Veronique Kerguelen  
Water Vole Evening by Dr. Jon Bengel, Sparsholt College  
Moth Evening

### WALKS

Dawn Chorus Walks – 5 led by Peter Hutchins  
Tree Walk led by John Smith and Jim Stickland  
Tree Walks (2), led by Mr. R. Gibbins  
RSPB Walk led by John Smith

### VISITS

Forest Edge Wildlife Garden  
Northdown Orchard –Organic

### COURSES AND TRAINING

Two members attended Hedgerow Survey Training Day  
Two members attended North Wessex Downs Forum  
Members attended two HBIC forums, at second members gave presentation about OBS.

### PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION

News and Views, Parish Newsletter – regular information and updates  
The Test – articles – local parish magazine  
Andover Advertiser – occasional news items  
‘Stall’ at St. Mary’s Church Fete,  
‘Stall’ at Overton Primary School Fete  
‘Feed the Birds Day’ stall at Community Centre  
Training in planting of shrubs given at the time.

Launched new web site [www.overton-biodiversity.org](http://www.overton-biodiversity.org)