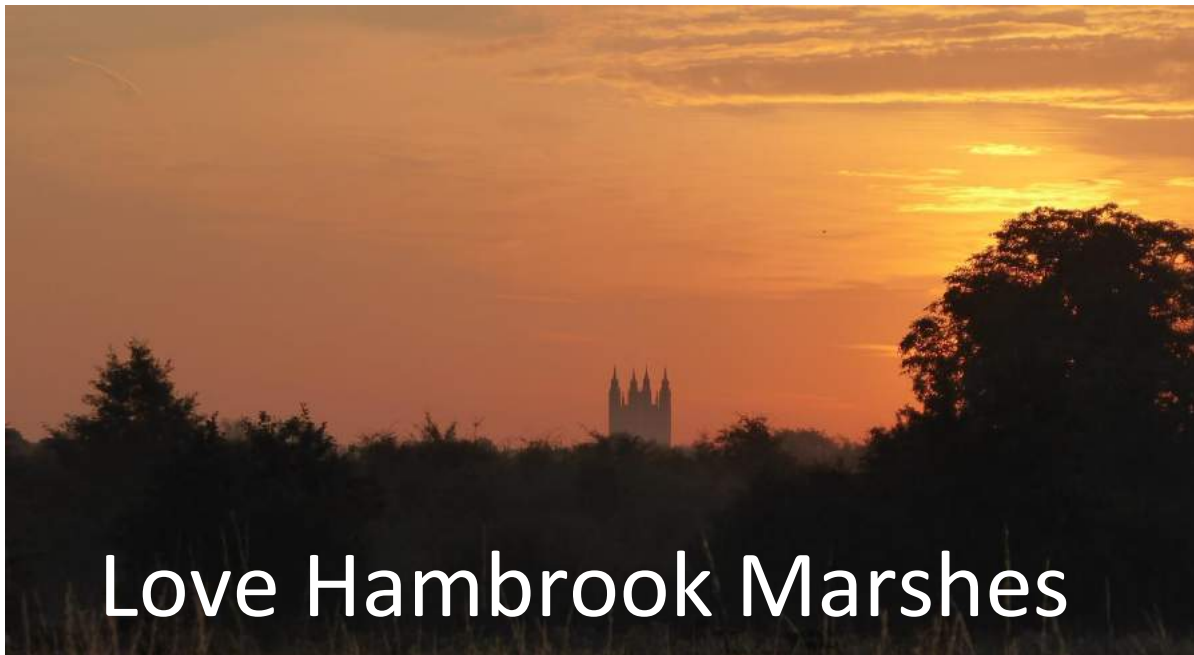




Newsletter

September 2022



Love Hambrook Marshes

Late September dawn at Hambrook Marshes with Bell Harry tower peeping above the trees

Welcome

Like many parents no longer trammelled by the strictures of school terms, we headed off for a ten-day break in September. One practical outcome of this was that I only visited the Marshes twice, which explains why the Wildlife Report is so meagre (coupled with the fact that September can be a quiet month, with little birdsong, birds departing to Africa before the Scandinavian winter visitors have arrived, and no standing water to attract in busy flocks of ducks or gulls). For us, one of the delights in heading north is seeking out waterfalls, and we weren't disappointed for, despite the dry summer (noticeably less severe in Scotland, where the land was everywhere verdant), there was plenty of water rushing and foaming over the rocky lips, then snaking its way round the rock-strewn bed of the river. Water features very prominently in the north of the UK, and it seems as though you are crossing a new river or stream every minute or two. Kent by comparison appears positively arid, and we are lucky to have the Stour on our doorstep, even if it is now menaced by occasional sewage pollution. So we do need to cherish our very own chalk stream, and on the next page you can read about CANDIFA's mini pilgrimage to celebrate the Stour on World Rivers Day.

What's happening on the Marshes?

Second willow weaving workshop

Following the success of August's session, Nicola Jane Claxton put on another workshop for Hambrook volunteers on 9th September, and the photo shows proud participants with the results of their labours. Second from left is Mike Sole, Lib Dem councillor for Canterbury South, whose generous officer's grant enabled us to install five new benches along the river last winter. Mike's grant, coupled with money from the Co-Op Local Community Fund, also stretched to funding both weaving workshops. On the far right are Rick Norman and Paul Roberts, two trustees of Love Hambrook Marshes. Encouraged by the positive response to these sessions, we would like to run some more next year that would be open to the general public.



World Rivers Day

World Rivers Day is an annual celebration of the world's waterways. It highlights the many values of our rivers, strives to increase public awareness, and encourages the improved stewardship of all rivers around the world. Rivers in virtually every country face an array of threats, and only through our active involvement can we ensure their health in the years ahead.



To mark the day, on 24th September, Canterbury & District Inter-Faith

Action (CANDIFA) organised a walk from Westgate Gardens to Hambrook Marshes. Lynne Broadbent, chair of Canterbury & District Inter-Faith Action (CANDIFA), said: "What a fabulous Saturday morning we had! There were over twenty of us, members and guests, walking along the banks of the River Stour ... a beautiful river valley, our walk interspersed with readings from different faith and belief traditions about the significance of water." At the end of the walk, all present joined in a pledge to cherish 'our rivers, lakes and seas, recognising our dependence on water ... and the kinship of all life.'

Hay meadow mowing

Our grazer has mown part of the hay meadow and removed some of the arisings. We hope to rake off the remainder in October.

Monoprinting session

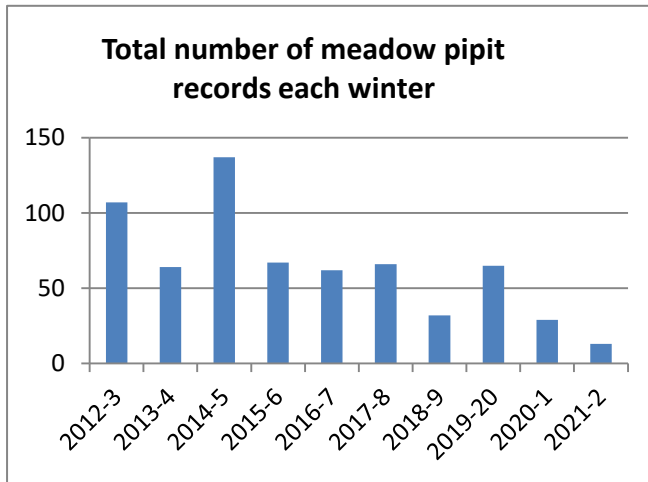
On 25th September Liz and Vicky from the *Rock Paper Scissors* shop in Canterbury held five short outdoor sessions on monoprinting for a total of twenty people. Natural material collected on the Marshes was inked in a simple printing press (below left) and then hung out on a nearby willow to dry (below right).



We're keen to develop more community-based activities, so this could well be one way in which we move forward. The demand is there, so it's just a matter of good publicity and fine weather!

Wildlife Report

As already commented, I'm afraid I don't have much to report this month. The female tufted duck was still on the river on 25th (though not seen on 3rd October), but still no sign of her offspring. It really does seem as though all of them have been predated. Such outcomes always sadden us, but Nature is remarkably prodigal, and totally uncaring of outcomes and, until humans entered the scene to upset the balance, animal populations could be relied upon to survive from year to year, and to overcome short-term losses.



A single meadow pipit flew over on 25th, a sign that winter is approaching. Unfortunately, as the graph shows, numbers have been declining in recent years, a possible example of the impact of human activity alluded to above. In this case the most likely cause is the warming climate, resulting in conditions in the birds' more northerly breeding grounds being less harsh than formerly, enabling more birds to stay put or migrate shorter distances in the autumn. Either way, the result is fewer birds turning up in the soft south.

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