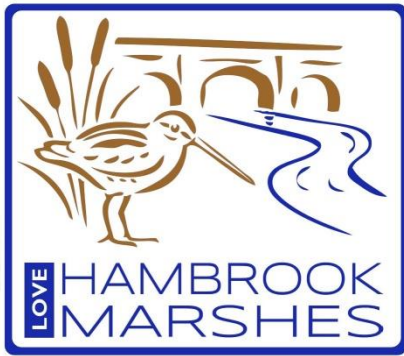




Newsletter

April 2024



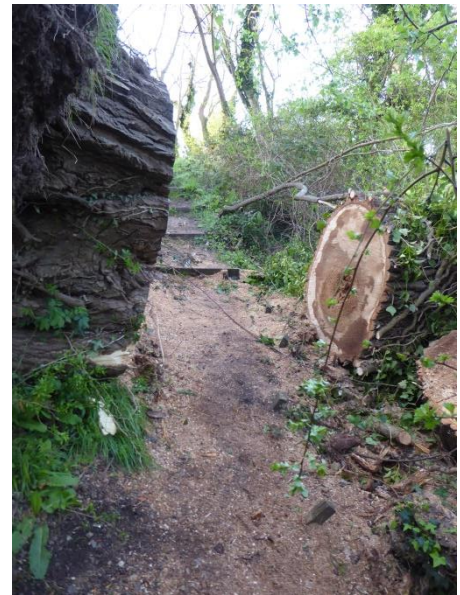
Snake's head fritillaries in hay field

Welcome

A small group of trustees have been managing the Marshes since the creation of Love Hambrook Marshes in 2014. However, they are all busy people with other commitments, and it was becoming evident that they didn't have sufficient time between them to look after this beautiful site in a way that it truly deserved. We have therefore been holding meetings with the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP), who have now formally agreed to take on the day-to-day work of looking after the area. You won't necessarily notice any great changes in what goes on at Hambrook, certainly not in the first year, though in the longer term KSCP may be able to take on bigger projects that the trustees didn't feel equipped to deal with. The trustees will remain in charge of the overall direction of management but will liaise with KSCP on the best way forward, making full use of the organisation's extensive experience in managing land within the catchment area of the river Stour. A KSCP manager, Andy Crasswell, will be in charge of these operations, working with a team of volunteers and, when necessary, engaging contractors for larger tasks, such as fencing. Andy's first job has been to seek a replacement grazer. Several have now visited the site, and we anticipate that a new herd of cattle will fairly shortly be seen grazing the marshland, as for hundreds of years past.

What's happening on the Marshes?

The large poplar tree that was blown across the path leading up to the old railway embankment last month has been dealt with by a contractor (right). A series of slabs were cut out to create a gap in the trunk the same width as the path, so access to the embankment and its fine viewpoints is now fully restored. While working in that area, the contractor also brought down a large poplar branch that had broken off and become lodged at a somewhat precarious angle.



Wildlife Report



Signs of the receding winter are disappearing fast, with just three tufted duck still on Tonford Lake towards the end of the month, and no snipe found since 2nd. So, bring on the summer migrants: well, to be honest, there wasn't a great deal to report, as chiffchaff and blackcap had already been recorded in March, but the first whitethroat was heard singing cheerily on 10th, and short-distance migrants in the form of reed bunting and linnet both turned up, with every appearance of settling in to nest.

Also of note were four coot and one Canada goose on Tonford Lake, a buzzard on 22nd, and a red kite (left) flying downstream towards Canterbury on 4th.

Red kite photo courtesy of Dave Smith

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