

DONINGTON & ALBRIGHTON LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

The Reserve is burgeoning and all our careful conservation is paying off. It's wonderful to see how many new plant species have appeared and the Reserve is full of life.

In order for more of us to see and appreciate this diversity we are organising a moth and bat night for 7th September, weather permitting. Our bird hide in the Conservation Area will also be completed by then. This will provide a wonderful opportunity for anyone to observe the range of birds that live or pass through there, whether we struggle to tell one tit from another or we're a twitcher. Last month many migrant birds appeared in the Reserve including the Chiff Chaff and White Throat. A cuckoo was also heard on at least two occasions and I not only heard a Greater Spotted Woodpecker but saw one, having spent years with a crooked neck and frustration.

The butterfly survey has been continuing but the unstable weather last month meant fewer butterflies were around than there would have been had the temperature been higher. Despite that our volunteer spotted Peacocks, Brimstones, Orange tips, Speckled woods, Small whites, Holly blues and Small tortoiseshells. She also spotted a Comma, but not in the Reserve. Being the responsible naturalist she is she didn't include it in the survey. What self control.

Hidden to the side of St Cuthbert's Pool in the Meadow is St Cuthbert's Well. This feeds the Pool which in turn feeds a small stream which joins the stream running from Donington Pool. So St Cuthbert's Well should really be called St Cuthbert's Spring! The reason it isn't is a mystery, as is the origin of its connection with St Cuthbert. St Cuthbert who lived in 7th century was a great traveller but it is unlikely he ever came as far south as Albrighton as he was Bishop of Lindisfarne. He had a reputation as a healer and the water from the Well had a reputation for healing eyes but the connection between the two is unclear. One of our volunteers is preparing an information board which will help throw some light on this enigma. In the meantime we are trying to reduce the stranglehold ground ivy has on its surroundings the better to appreciate it.

Some of the more special trees in the Meadow will be labelled soon. We've discussed this at length as we don't want to make the Meadow seem like a park but we've taken our lead from the National Trust and will be using a similar method to them which doesn't interfere with the tree in any way.

The pink poo spraying has continued. It hasn't resulted in a sudden realisation by certain dog owners that leaving their dogs faeces around for others to step in is not acceptable, but it has made those pink piles easier to avoid. It has also highlighted the fact that, unpleasant and unhygienic as the faeces are, they do decompose. Bottles, cans, plastic, foil, cigarette ends, drug paraphernalia and discarded fishing equipment don't.

Please remember the Conservation Gate is open the first week end of every month. It's fascinating to explore a part of Albrighton so infrequently seen, for its own protection.

The next Volunteer Dates are Thursday July 4th, Thursday August 8th and Thursday September 5th. Paul Fallon is the person to contact for more details, and please note his new email address: paulfallon6@gmail.com