

# Project Newsletter No1- September 1999

Welcome to the first of a (hopefully) regular newsletter that is intended to have a two-fold purpose:

- a) To keep members updated on the effectiveness of projects already undertaken, and the effects/benefits of this work.
- b) To keep the group informed of forthcoming project dates, along with the rationale behind the management.

## **Bracken Bashes**

The work done so far appears to have been highly successful - especially the areas that have been 'attacked' twice. However only time will tell, and I expect that the Bracken will counter-attack with renewed vigour next year. Therefore, it is planned to carry out more sessions next year in order to consolidate those areas already under management, as well as increasing our attacks to other areas on the site - these will take place sometime during May, July and August.

I have had several encouraging responses (and some praise) from other site users during my wanderings 'up the top', and feel it right that to pass this on to other members of the group - well done to all those involved.

## **Grassland Management**

Broxtowe Council has agreed to fund and organise the mowing of the sizeable area of grassland at the top of the site (to the rear of Burnside and Cranston). It will take place during w/c 13<sup>th</sup> September and a skip will be provided at the top of Sandy Lane over the following weekend (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>) to enable the group to remove the cuttings.

This will recreate 'traditional' hay meadow management which, over time, should create appropriate conditions for a more diverse grassland flora to re-colonise and persist. The rationale behind the implementation mowing is twofold:

- a) The removal of the cuttings will reduce the nutrients that would normally be released from the dead vegetation as it decomposes over the winter months. Fewer nutrients will enable more typical sandstone species to gain a foothold at the expense of more aggressive (and less desirable) species that need high nutrient levels.

b) The removal of the rank vegetation and some of the deep plant litter that has built up over the years will enable the seed bank, that is already present in the soil, room to grow. Coupled to this is the fact that more light will be able to reach the soil, thus increasing the chance of successful germination.

Not only will this be our biggest undertaking to date, but it will also be the first that has involved working in true partnership with other organisations, namely:

- Broxtowe Council - who are to fund the both the mowing and the provision of the skip.
- Continental Landscapes - who are to perform the mowing operation.
- The BTCV - who will loan us most of the tools required.

**Our part in this is the raking up and removal of the cuttings from the site.**

For the sake of ensuring future co-operation from these partners, I'm sure you would agree that it is imperative that we keep our end of the bargain, and demonstrate to these organisations that their respective time, commitment, faith and money invested our group has been justified.

Therefore in order to make sure of completing the task within the given time span, I propose that this should be completed over both Saturday and Sunday of that weekend - the work can progress at a more leisurely pace as opposed to a long frantic day. Also we will be on site throughout the weekend and will be able to address any questions and/or comments from other site users, as well as promoting the work of 'The Friends' - this will hopefully generate understanding, interest and support, and possibly even attract new members.

**So please try and come along for either one or both of the days (10.30am → 4.30pm), for as long as you can possibly spare. The long-term success of the group may depend on the success of this weekend.**

If you can spare the whole day it is important to bring a packed lunch and drink to sustain energy levels, and morale!!

Geoff.

**Toxocara** - this is the name given to various parasitic worms that can be picked up from dog's faeces and soil; it can cause disease and eye damage (including blindness). Hence it is vitally important that gloves are worn, and exposed skin and clothing are washed thoroughly after the work has finished.