

Medlock & Tame Valley Conservation Association Newsletter



Spring/Summer 2015



**Welcome to the
Spring/Summer
2015 edition of the
MTVCA Newsletter**

It has been a very busy Spring/Summer so far inside and outside of Burlinson House.

There have been repairs, painting, floor laying, plumbing, tiling and landscaping undertaken and sometimes, simultaneously! But what a difference it is all making to the MTVCA's H.Q. and surrounding grounds.

The kitchen as I write is almost complete. The committee room and hallway have also had new floor tiles and new inside doors in the reception room have been hung and stained.

The main reception room and committee room have had pictures hung and carpet tiles laid and it does feel a lot fresher now.

The box room which our recyclable energy labs will occupy in the winter months, has been re-plastered and is ready for wallpapering and carpeting.

The bathroom which is badly in need of maintenance will be have to be undertaken as a special project in the next couple of years.

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Registered Charity No. 504558

The outside work has also taken a lot of time and effort but the results are worth it.

As well as all of the changes to the side garden for the Butterfly & Bee Garden, North West Electric have visited the site and severely lopped the branches and cut down the trunks of many of the trees.

Aesthetically, it doesn't look good but as a means to getting extra light into the garden, it cannot be faulted. There is absolutely loads of work to be done now in clearing paths from felled branches and making small and more manageable logs.

The new bird boxes which were put up at the end of last summer look lovely and the good news is that one of them is now a home for a family of blue tits. A short video of the activities of the mother bird to feed her young ones has been put on the MTVCA Facebook site.

The Butterfly & Bee Garden is now well underway with the added feature of a new hand rail and newly constructed small pond. We are hoping with all of the wildflower seeds we have sown, it will be ablaze with colour and a photograph will be included in the next newsletter. So watch this space!



New pond made by Lee from York Stone and shale



INTRODUCING...
DAVID
RENSHAW – MTVCA's
new fundraiser



David Renshaw has joined MTVCA as our fundraiser and we give him a very warm welcome.

Born and bred in Manchester and a graduate of Manchester University he has lived in Stalybridge, backing on to the moors, for 32 years. After a successful career as a copywriter he sought a new challenge and decided to turn his writing from marketing Adidas, Boots, Granada TV and Heinz (amongst others) to fundraising.

In 6 years fundraising for a charity that cared for children with severe disabilities, David has raised £830,000. For a further 6 years David worked with another small mental health charity, and raised £240,000. More recent work for a homeless charity has proved to be more difficult as people seem to be less sympathetic to this group of people.

Fundraising for good causes, many of which are underfunded, David has found to be far more rewarding and satisfying than marketing consumer products.

Married with 3 children and 3 grandchildren, 2 of whom live in Australia, David's hobbies include travel, walking and football.

We welcome David to the MTVCA and look forward to his achievements! Some of the projects for which we need funding include lino for kitchen, handrails for outside steps, a new greenhouse, refurbishment of a multi-purpose room to name but a few.

Please make David feel welcome as and make yourself known to him at any of our public events.

Programme of Events 2014

JUNE

29th - Poisonous Plants

JULY

20th - Pond making and
maintenance

SEPTEMBER

20th - Fungi Walk

OCTOBER

8th More on Nuclear

NOVEMBER

Fireworks – watch this space!

All events commence at 7.15
unless otherwise stated.

Please ensure if you are coming
to the events by car that you park
at the Oldham Road End of
Oaken Clough, as parking is
strictly limited. Alternatively, a
bus from Ashton bus station runs
regularly and stops almost at the
end of Oaken Clough.

All events are open to the
public. £2 per person £5 per
family including refreshments.

**Come along - and bring a
friend, or two, or three!**

During the summer months in order
to do light housework and general
maintenance, a small number of us
will be at Burlinson House each
Sunday from 1 pm. There is also
heavier work needing done in the
house and garden by way of
general repairs/improvements.

If you would like to come to help
you are very welcome.

If you would like to telephone
beforehand to ensure the house will
be open, please ring Susan on
07989 147095.



Butterflies – an overview



FRITILLARIES

Continuing with our series on butterflies we move on to the Fritillary butterfly family, a firm favourite of many. Two are highlighted below.

Lancashire's breeding fritillaries are dependent upon various species of violets on which eggs are laid and caterpillars feed. In turn, violets require grassy, open woodland or scrub conditions to thrive and, as this resource has diminished, both plants and butterflies have undergone massive national declines. Management aimed at halting this decline largely consists of restoring habitat suitable for violets, mainly through re-establishing coppicing of deciduous woodlands and establishing forest rides. Recent research has pointed to the importance of bracken in encouraging the growth of violets in open habitats and suitable means of managing bracken-covered hillsides is being actively investigated.

SMALL PEARL-BORDERED FRITILLARY *Boloria selene*

The Lancashire population of Small Pearl-bordered is centred on eight tetrads in the Silverdale area but other small colonies are present in the north of the county with records from as far east as the Gisburn Forest. The species has declined nationally since the 1970s but local colonies seem reasonably stable, despite poor weather during the flight period of May and June in both 1997 and 1998.



This species has suffered a drastic decline and extinctions at many English sites. Locally, it is confined to six areas on the Morecambe Bay limestone and is the subject of a local Biodiversity Action Plan. 1998 was a poor year locally with 40% declines on most sites. This was weather-related and it will hopefully recover although it remains vulnerable. Adults emerge in early May.

HIGH BROWN FRITILLARY *Argynnis adippe*

This butterfly can be found in suitably-managed woodland, although they soon disappear should the site become too overgrown, with no suitably-warm undergrowth remaining for egg-laying and larval development. The butterfly is also found on rough grassland, including grassland found on the edges of woods where there is sufficient light to promote growth of the violets. This species can also be found on limestone pavement, such as the colonies around Morecambe Bay, where violets grow between the cracks.

The primary larval foodplants are Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Hairy Violet (*Viola hirta*). Heath Dog-violet (*Viola canina*) and Pale Dog-violet (*Viola lactea*) are also used. Adults feed primarily on Thistles (*Cirsium* spp. and *Carduus* spp.). Betony (*Stachys officinalis*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Knapweeds (*Centaurea* spp.) and Thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*) are also used. Both sexes fly powerfully and can be difficult to observe unless nectaring on Bramble or Thistle, or when resting low down on vegetation. Males will patrol wide areas of habitat when looking for a mate, and will investigate any brown object that might be a virgin female. Pairing typically takes place in late morning. Both sexes roost high in trees at night and in dull weather.

Females are often most-easily seen when egg-laying, when they flutter low over the ground in search of the larval foodplant. Sunny and sheltered sites are preferred and the female can be seen crawling in the dappled sunlight beneath vegetation close to the larval foodplant, before laying a single egg on a dead leaf, dead bracken frond or twig. Several eggs may be laid in the same area.



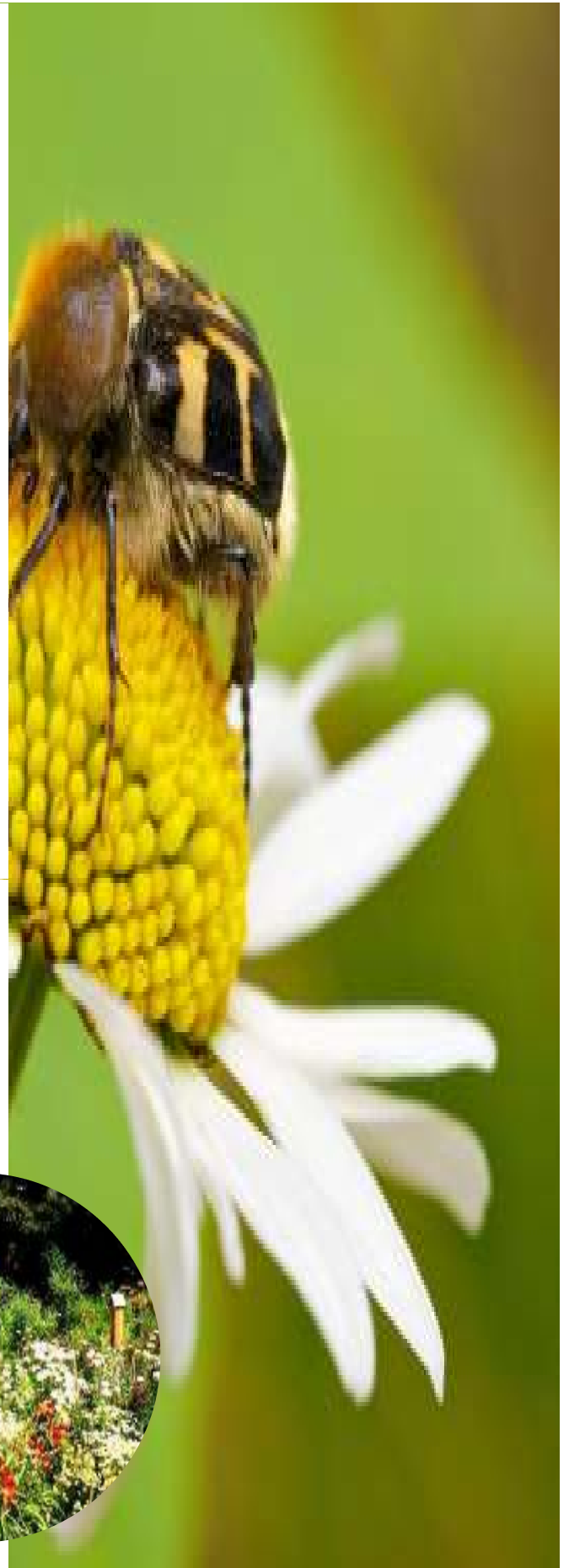
BUMBLE BEES

Bumblebees are endearing and familiar insects. Their behaviour and deep buzz as they fly from flower to flower makes them a joy to watch and reminder us of hot summer days.

Sadly, our bumblebees have been declining because of changes in agricultural practises that have largely removed flowers from the landscape, leaving the bumblebees with little to feed upon. Most UK species have declined greatly in recent years, and two have become extinct in the UK since 1940.

There are around 250 species of bumblebee in the world, and most of these are found in the northern hemisphere, although South America has a few native species, and New Zealand has some which were introduced from Britain.

MTVCA's special project of a Butterfly & Bee and wildflower Garden has been taking shape since last October and we are "doing our bit" to help both butterflies and bees to survive.



In the UK there are 24 species of bumblebee but only eight are commonly found in most places. They are found in a variety of habitats and our gardens can provide plenty of flowering plants to attract them.

Some species are less common and are only found in a few locations. For example, the Great yellow bumblebee is now only found on the north coast and some islands of Scotland. This species previously had a wide distribution throughout the UK, but again, habitat degradation has seen its numbers decline dramatically in most places.

There has been a great deal of publicity encouraging people recently by conservation groups and Government advertising to make an extra effort when they are planting in their garden to consider planting bee friendly or pollinating insects plants and wildflowers are ideal for attraction.

Over the next few seasons we will be considering lots of topics about bumble bees such as:

- Species of bumblebee
- Bumblebee mites
- Bumblebee predators
- Finding dead bees
- Honeybees and bumblebees
- Moving bumblebee nests
- Finding bees in winter or bad weather
- Finding hibernating bumblebees
- Swarming bumblebees



“Few people realise just how important bumblebees are. They are charming little things and a pleasure to see, but they also do an essential job which many people take for granted. If bumblebees continue to decline then we face ecological turmoil. Join BBCT today and support their important work.”

Chris Packham

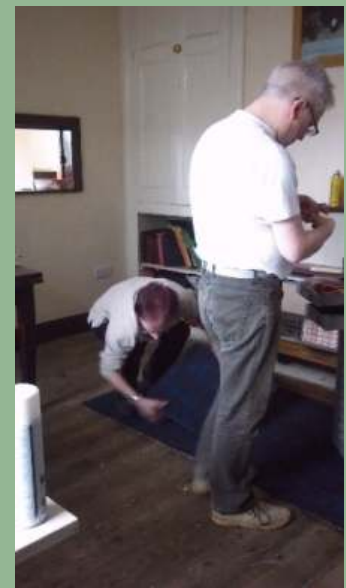
All donations, whether financial or 'gifts in kind', which you would like to make to MTVCA are very welcome. Please contact any member on the back page of the newsletter to arrange collection, if required, or to answer any queries you may have.

Items of interest to us are bird seed (always!) garden benches; bird baths; bird feeders; garden shears; good nature books; ornate flower pots; hanging baskets; gardening gloves; general tools. If in doubt, just ask!

Handrails on steps to butterfly & bee garden



Lee & Carl fitting carpet tiles in the committee room



Bird feeder on summer house

New carpet tiles in hallway





Committee members

Chairman: Bryan Stringer

Vice Chairman: Paul Lythgoe

Secretary: Susan Stewart
Tel: 07989147095

Treasurer: Jean Lythgoe

Newsletter: Susan Stewart
thepliedes@yahoo.co.uk

Webmaster: Lee Borrell

Other committee members: Katie Caine

Membership Fees

- Individual Adult: £10.00 per annum
- Family: £15 per annum
- Concessionary: £7.50 per annum

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