



National  
Trust

August 2016

# Purbeck Monthly



HOME FROM HOME: The students and Purbeck ecology team with the volunteers who helped create 'Camp David'

## Camp David seals special relationship

Currendon has become a temporary home for 10 students in the start of a partnership which will help set our conservation agenda for years to come. The group from Bournemouth University, led by Associate Professor Dr Anita Diaz, are pioneering a long term relationship with the Trust in which students collect data which will help form the

basis of our countryside management plans. This year their focus is heathland and woodland and groups from the university will return in future years to look at other habitats. The students are camping at Currendon where volunteers have converted part of the barn into a temporary common room for their two-week stay.

A shower and other facilities have been installed and the set-up has been dubbed Camp David after LON Project Manager David Brown—despite his protestations! “By linking students and academics with some of our own expert volunteers we get the best of both worlds: the students put their learning into practice, and we begin

long-term monitoring of how LON will influence the wildlife we are trying to protect,” said David. Dr Diaz added: “Everybody wins on this—students learn skills and get to see that their contribution matters, the National Trust get data that are useful and I get to be an educator and a researcher at the same time.”



# Middle Beach latest

Our plans to address the issue of coastal change at Middle Beach continue to be in the news and it's important to remind ourselves of the facts.

Firstly, and most importantly, we are relocating the existing facilities to new buildings close to their existing sites – we are not taking anything away.

Recent coverage has focussed on plans to demol-

ish the café, toilet block and sea school but has skipped over the fact that they will be replaced and relocated to Middle Beach car park, where they will still be close to the sea.

The café will be unaffected until the current lease comes to an end in October 2017 and the replacement will open in spring 2018.

The café has limited

opening hours during winter anyway so there will be little or no gap in service for customers. The toilets and the building let to the sea school will also be relocated to sites at Middle Beach and we will use temporary units to make sure there is no loss of amenity while this takes place.

All the above is subject to planning permission and we have already begun

talking to the planners. Secondly, the new café at Middle Beach will be leased out as an independent business.

Speculation that we plan to take it in hand and to relocate the facilities at Knoll Beach to Middle Beach are quite simply untrue.

We are committed to a long term future for all our facilities at Knoll Beach.



## Hunger games in Purbeck

Although we're not expecting human society to collapse in Purbeck, forcing teenagers to compete in life and death struggles as portrayed by the blockbuster Hunger Games movie franchise, we thought it would be a good idea to prepare the young ranger, just in case. Ken Cosgrave, an outdoor activity instructor who specialises in weapons training, was asked to teach them skills including shooting longbows and crossbows.

The Young Ranger Team normally spend their time helping carry out conservation tasks, but once a year we organise a fun event.

We are looking for more adult volunteers to help us with the group. You don't need to have any practical skills, just a belief that young people should be fully engaged in the great outdoors. If you can spare us four hours a month on an occasional basis please contact [rachel.rodman@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:rachel.rodman@nationaltrust.org.uk).



**T**his month I'd like to take some time to thank those whose contribution goes above and beyond.

Two recent examples which caught my eye are the Purbeck Gardening Group and the Currenden administration team who have been stripping bedding in holiday cottages to cover staff holidays—

## Laurie's Month

not because they had to, but because they wanted to make a difference.

It's something I see happening time and again in Purbeck and we should be congratulating people for thinking and acting that way.

These are the things that just happen and don't always get noticed—but what a differ-

ence they make to Purbeck. People do these things with no expectation of reward, but they do deserve to be celebrated.

That's why we started the Purbeck People Awards, and I'd encourage everyone to nominate some of our special people for some of the special things they do.

We'll be announcing the first winners in September and you'll find more details on P5.



## Clock this

It's not a wind-up, there really is a grandfather clock in reception at Currendon.

A lady from Sussex donated the antique to the Trust in her will, along with other items of furniture.

It has found a temporary home in reception while a long-term place for it is found—possibly in a holiday cottage.

Kurt Sparkes has meanwhile been given the task of keeping it wound up. The rest of the bequest, including a writing desk, is in storage at Currendon.



FACE TO FACE: Kurt and the grandfather clock

## Facebook roundup

A Studland Facebook post highlighting littering at Shell Bay reached more than 86,000 people this month.

"We had a busy day at Studland yesterday and this was Shell Bay beach this morning," posted Sarah Dean, along with a picture by Paul Bradley (below). "The ranger team stayed until late last night clearing up but the beach was still covered in litter this morn-

ing. If you are visiting Studland please take your litter home and keep this nature reserve beautiful for everyone to enjoy."

The post attracted plenty of comments including this one: "I've never understood why people leave rubbish outdoors! I mean the odd bit of food that rolled away I can understand as the wildlife will eat it, but animals could get really hurt around rubbish like this!"

Meanwhile, and in a



pleasanter vein, a picture of ponies on Godlingston Heath posted to Purbeck Rangers by David Jones was also popular.

"Don't forget to keep up your water intake in this hot weather," he wrote.

More than 1,000 people saw the picture and it was widely shared with other users.

If you'd like to see what's happening on Facebook in Purbeck and join the conversation, why not check out the pages below?



National Trust Corfe Castle  
National Trust Purbeck Rangers  
National Trust Studland Bay



**HUNTING TIGERS:** The heath tiger beetle is one of our rarest insects that builds its nests in burrows: but unlike the mason wasp (right) it needs drier, slightly compacted sandy ground to do so. The older dune soils at Studland are one of the best places in the country to see it, but this year nearly 20 volunteers have been seeking it out across the Purbeck heaths. We have found good numbers at Slepe Heath on the trackways left behind after forestry clearances.

**TRUE LOCAL:** The Purbeck mason wasp is so named because in the UK it only occurs here; Godlingston Heath and the area of Slepe Heath and Hartland Moor are traditional strongholds. It burrows into exposed clay banks to make its nests, and it needs water to help build nests as well as plenty of bell heather as a nectar source. To make life more complicated, it also needs to find the micro moth *Acleris hyemana* nearby, as it parasitizes the larvae as part of its lifecycle.

# Small wonders

Our heaths are more than beautiful, open spaces to walk through. They are home to some of our most specialist and iconic wildlife; strongholds of birds such as the internationally protected nightjar and Dartford warbler, and the only landscapes in which you can find all six of our native reptiles. For many ecologists and naturalists, however, the heathlands really come into their own when you get down on your knees, and take a look at the insects and other invertebrates.

Interestingly, many of our most endangered species are the insects that live not in the heather itself but in the bare ground that lies between the vegetation. The grazing, cutting and burning

that have shaped our heathlands since Neolithic times ensured there was always plenty of suitable habitat, but when heaths are abandoned and the heather and gorse grow unchecked the bare ground disappears; and many of our in-

Nature project we are joining forces with RSPB, Natural England and other neighbours to take part in Back from the Brink; a project to monitor and look after more than 20 of our most endangered heathland wildlife species, including the

heath tiger beetle and the Purbeck mason wasp.

Our work this year has shown that both species still survive on all our heathlands, along with other rare heathland insects, but there is work to do to keep them there.

So, next year we will be

out disturbing the heaths just like our ancestors did, creating more bare ground—but in just the right places and in just the right way for some of the heaths' rarest and most overlooked inhabitants.



Conservation Monthly

By David Brown



**CHAIN GANG:** Off road cycling on the Rempstone Ride was on the agenda as part of a twice-yearly Purbeck ranger day. The ride was a chance to experience the most popular local route for traffic-free cycling and see the extent of good-quality heathland being managed by our neighbours the Forestry Commission—a key partner in delivering landscape scale conservation. It followed a morning session in the Discovery Centre at Knoll Beach with presentations by David Brown, Mike Madgwick, Mimi Rousell and Michelle Brown as well as Simon Ford and Paul Hawkins from the consultancy.

## Nominate now

**Time is running out to nominate individuals or teams for the first Purbeck People Award, due to be announced in September.**

**The awards celebrate staff or volunteers who have gone the extra mile.**

**Contact [sharon.davis@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:sharon.davis@nationaltrust.org.uk) with your suggestions by August 31 to be sure of being considered—good luck!**



## Joe's dream job is a real education

Beach ranger Joe Ahvee is off to pastures new after two years with the Trust at Studland.

Joe has landed a job managing habitats at an outdoor education centre run by the London Borough of Waltham Forest.



**Purbeck  
People**



The centre provides valuable lessons on nature to schoolchildren in the north London borough.

"I've enjoyed my time here but this is a great chance to move on and develop the skill I have learned during my time in Purbeck," said Joe.



## Tri tri and tri again

Two teams from the Trust in Dorset took part in the tenth annual Property Triathlon at Eton Dorney, the 2012 Olympic rowing venue. James Godsmark, Martin Roscoe, Lucinda Finlay, Mike Madgwick, Stewart Jeenes and Amy Jeenes were raising money for our work in Purbeck.

The national event for property professionals comprised a 750m open water swim, 22km bike leg and 5km run.

"It was a really well run event and we are all keen to do it again next year," said James.

## Star of the heath

It is always a great pleasure to hear, and hopefully see, a Dartford warbler on the heath.

Most often skulking in a thicket of gorse, it's easy to understand why an alternative name for them is furze-wren.

My subjective impression this summer is that they have had a successful breeding season.

Certainly they seem to be quite conspicuous just now along the Ferry Road and around the dune heath at Knoll Beach.

This is good news, strengthening the role of

the Purbeck heaths as an important area for Dartford warblers.

Furthermore, although they are mainly restricted to southern England, good breeding success and better winter survival has allowed them to expand their range northwards in recent years, reaching up to the Midlands.

And perhaps they are losing their renowned shyness and secrecy a little—one of the most reliable places to



Picture: North East Wildlife

### THRIVING: The Dartford warbler

see them now is near the barbecue area at Knoll Beach car park.



**Nature News**  
By Kevin Rideout



Editor: Jon Bish

☎ 01929 452316

[jon.bish@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:jon.bish@nationaltrust.org.uk)



Volunteering: Rachel Rodman

☎ 01929 452306

[rachel.rodman@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:rachel.rodman@nationaltrust.org.uk)

Contact us: