



Welcome to this, EuCAN's first Newsletter.

We hope that this will become a quarterly publication, and would welcome articles and photos for inclusion.

We have quite a few projects behind us and - funding permitting - some exciting opportunities ahead.

We have also grown by developing a number of semi-autonomous local sections, and this is a trend that we seek to continue.

### **EuCAN Dorset Mid-Week Volunteers**

In July we were joined by a team of ex-BTCV volunteers looking to continue their conservation work after the BTCV re-organisation resulted in the closure of its Dorset Office. The volunteers were encouraged by their various clients, including Natural England and Butterfly Conservation: an indication that the group is well-regarded.

Now operating as the EuCAN Dorset Midweek Volunteers (EuCAN.DMV), they continue their various conservation activities that include Dry-stone walling, hedge-laying, habitat management, and the removal of invasive / unwanted plant species— e.g., Rhododendron, Himalayan Balsam, Ragwort, Pine, etc.; primarily on National Nature Reserves.

The incentive for joining forces was three-fold:

- i) For those who enjoy the practical work: Opportunities to learn more about the fruits of their labours,
- ii) For those whose primary interest is to observe and record: Opportunities to learn practical skills; participate in practical projects, and help create / preserve a variety of habitats.
- iii) For EuCAN: To enhance and broaden the collective skills that we can bring to conservation projects, and so improve the prospects of obtaining funding.

EuCAN would like to encourage interaction between its various sub-sections, and EuCAN.DMV is proving to be an enthusiastic partner.

Moreover, the EuCAN.DMV members represent a broad section of the community. Many are relatively new to conservation work, but bring with them a broad range of career and life skills that can be applied to EuCAN's benefit.

EuCAN.DMV now has a page and contact details on our website.

[http://www.eucan.org.uk/page/midweek\\_group](http://www.eucan.org.uk/page/midweek_group)

### **Dorset Volunteer of the Year Awards.**

EuCAN was well represented at the Dorset Volunteer of the Year Awards, presented in October.

Will Parmiter - a member of EuCAN.DMV and (previously) the BTCV for over 12 years — was successfully nominated by EuCAN for the annual Dorset Volunteer of the Year Award.

Will also undertakes voluntary work in Dorchester Borough Gardens, and in a local garden nursery. As was pointed out in the nomination, he rarely misses a day, and is a great ambassador for our team.



Will Parmiter receives his award certificate

Nigel Spring also received a Dorset Volunteer of the Year award for his contribution to the Sherborne European twinning group (the 'Douzelage').

### **Sherborne Volunteering Project and Romania**

Nigel, Kathy and EuCAN CIC have been involved with the 'Douzelage' during the three phases of a volunteering conference project in 2011/12. Through this project young volunteers, volunteer organisers and civic leaders from partner towns in seven EU countries visited Sherborne for lectures, discussions, and volunteering activities, not to forget the eating and drinking and visiting lovely places in Dorset.

This 'Volunteaming' project was Sherborne Douzelage's contribution to 2011 The Year of the Volunteer.

Several good contacts were made and Nigel and Kathy visited Kőszeg in western Hungary, one of Sherborne's twin towns, on their way in a transit van to Siret in north eastern Romania (the Romanian twin town) where they delivered several cubic metres of clothes collected by the people of Sherborne.

While staying in Siret with the Eastern Orthodox priest and his family, they were given a tour of the beautiful painted monasteries of Bucovina, were entertained by the town mayor with glasses of bilberry vodka at 10am,



Voroneț Painted Monastery

and visited the amazing project run by the local psychotherapist and his team with the (now grown up) 'children' with severe physical deformities and learning disabilities who featured so prominently in the western media after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the demise of the Ceausescu regime.



Siret sheltered housing with vegetable gardens



A circle of Romanian scythes

There are plenty of possibilities in Siret for future EuCAN involvement particularly as ecotourism is virtually nonexistent and the local economy would benefit from initiatives in that area.



Viktor Bacsi making rakes

## Local Conservation Projects

### **Alners Gorse logs project :**

Nigel and Kathy have been working hard to convert the timber stacked at Alners Gorse Butterfly Conservation Reserve into logs for sale as firewood, using transport provided by a local farmer and working with a range of volunteers and contractors. EuCAN CIC makes a contribution to Butterfly Conservation for the timber and then sells it on as firewood, with participants paid a small wage for their efforts and a small profit going to EuCAN CIC. Sustainable conservation at its local best.

### **Cerne Valley Community Landscape Project – update.**

Our aim is to open up the scrub-covered chalk downland in the Cerne river valley north of Dorchester for the benefit of the rich flora and fauna that belong there, involving as many local people and groups as possible in this.

This ambitious landscape project began with a 'taster' day on October 4th when we had a fantastic BBQ, a tour of Barton Meadows Organic Farm and a walk on Black Hill, one of the areas where we were planning to work this autumn.

The work began on October 18<sup>th</sup>. The initial response from potential volunteers was disappointing (though with two chainsaws and one brushcutter operator we were able to achieve a huge amount even with a small group). However, we now have participants from Weymouth,



Dorchester, Blandford and Yeovil and lay on minibus transport from Weymouth so that the group now regularly numbers over 15. This includes six people from the Southill Centre in Weymouth who are really enjoying taking part in this work.



*Tea Break at Cerne*

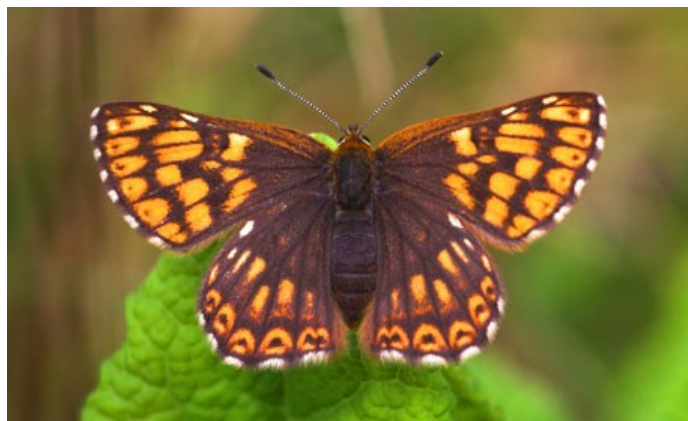


*Cooked lunch depends upon Kathy and Ben's fire-raising abilities*

On one session we were joined by an additional 8 members of the Dorset ADCAP group – their fuel costs were paid for out of the project budget and they enjoyed the Barton Meadows sausage baps we cooked for lunch; we are extremely grateful for their support and hard work. Black Hill is a very rich butterfly site and one of the target species for the management there is the rare Duke of Burgundy.

This species lays its eggs on Cowslips and Primroses but only in the semi-shade of thorn scrub. So we have concentrated our efforts on breaking up the solid barrier of bramble, hawthorn and hazel at the foot of the slope into islands separated by grassland (as it once used to be) thus providing far more edge for the 'Dukes' to find the leaves to lay their eggs on in the right conditions.

The work on Black Hill fits into the management programme drawn up with the help of Natural England for the Higher Level Environmental Stewardship (HLS) scheme.



*The Duke of Burgundy Butterfly*

For two sessions we have worked on the Minterne Estate land on the slopes north of the Cerne Giant – the task is to clear a small field that over the years has become enclosed and choked by blackthorn scrub – our work will give the grazing cattle much easier access and will lead to an improvement in the quality of the grassland there.

After that is done (!) there is an enormous block of gorse and thorn scrub to be cleared that is separating two important areas of chalk downland north of the Giant.

#### **Training in the Cerne Abbas Project:**

One member of the Cerne group has signed up for brushcutter training provided through this project, and several of the group will be taking part in a Red Cross Basic First Aid Training course in early 2013.

In the spring and summer there will be identification and ecology training sessions to enable our volunteers to understand what makes chalk downland tick.

#### **Future plans:**

We shall be continuing with this work in 2013 and holding educational sessions for local people and for the nearby schools in the spring and summer.

We are extremely grateful to the Patsy Wood Trust for their generous support for this project.

For further info please see this link:

[http://www.eucan.org.uk/page/cerne\\_valley](http://www.eucan.org.uk/page/cerne_valley)

#### **Community Juicing Project**

Dorset County Council's Disabilities and Social Care Innovation Fund granted £2650 to the CIC to enhance and build on last year's Community Juicing Project, but the poor apple harvest this year has rendered this project unviable.

We are very pleased that the DSCIF will let us roll the funding to next year when the spring weather has to be better and the pollinating insects happier!

## Conservation activities abroad

Sadly our applications for Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig grants to fund European projects were not successful in 2012. However, We are hoping to find support for initiatives to take groups of trainees to our partner countries to carry out butterfly surveys and practical habitat management in 2013. Keep an eye on the website for developments.

We are also looking at the possibility of running some more commercial style trips to Europe to help raise funds - your thoughts on this slight departure from purpose would be welcome.

**La Brenne Jan/Feb 2013** We are aiming to take a group to continue with the management work we have been doing in La Brenne since our first visit in 2007. We can provide some of the funding and we hope our French partners might find some too; the participants will be asked to make a contribution based on their financial/employment situation. Let us know if you are interested.

**La Brenne May/June 2013** We are planning to take a group for a tour of the Brenne and its wildlife in the early summer (fabulous butterflies, moths, orchids, dragonflies and birdsong!). This will be even more relaxed than the usual work placements and we hope that we can raise some money for the CIC in this way. Please get in touch if you would like more information.

## Sustainable Forestry Workshop

One of our partner organisations, Forum Synergies <http://www.forum-synergies.eu/> is coordinating a series of workshops to promote sustainable forestry in Europe. At present they are planned in Sweden, Germany, France and the UK. This follows a successful series of workshops that explored sustainable development in lake areas,

Gwil attended several of the lake workshops and found them very useful. As a result EuCAN has agreed to be the UK partner for the woodland series and will be



working to organise a workshop in the Somerset and Dorset area in autumn 2013.

So far the project plan has been produced and we are awaiting the appointment on a new European coordinator before contacting partners and seeking funds.

The thrust of the UK workshop will be to

increase the capacity and ability of individuals, NGOs and public services to deliver forestry management that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Participants will be able to share experience and expertise with a variety invited speakers from the South West.

The workshop will take place over 4 days with site visits, indoor presentations and social events. Numbers are likely to be limited to 40. Although we are hoping to gain external funding and sponsorship it is likely attendees will have to cover some of their costs.

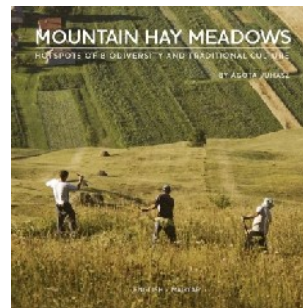
If you are interested in taking part or helping out please contact Gwil on [gwil@eucan.org.uk](mailto:gwil@eucan.org.uk)

## Fundraising

Anyone who has been on a EuCAN placement will know how life-enhancing these trips are so please send us your fundraising ideas ..... or have a go yourselves!

We are also hoping to produce a new design EuCAN sweatshirt for sale, to help raise funds for our European activities. Details will be on the website shortly... <http://www.eucan.org.uk/page/home>

We really need all the help we can get to raise money. Maybe get together with others in your areas who have taken part to pool ideas?



Transylvanian Haymeadows DVD for sale. 60 minutes. A beautiful film about an entrancing area; produced by our partners in Transylvania. See: <http://www.mountainhaymeadows.eu/> . £10 + £2.50 p/p – email orders please to [nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk) . A wonderful Christmas present!

## The next Newsletter

A newsletter has two main objectives:

It keeps you informed of what EuCAN is doing, and of the opportunities in the various projects that we organise.

It allows you to share your experiences and photos with others.

Given sufficient content, we can produce a quarterly publication; but if not we shall publish randomly when we have sufficient content

Please e-mail your contributions to Dave Searle at [EuCAN.dmv@gmail.com](mailto:EuCAN.dmv@gmail.com), with "Newsletter" as the subject.