

Wildflowers Galore!

Fairchild's Meadow – 'Summer 2014' Sunday 14th September 10.00am to 2.00pm.

Botanical expert says: "I don't know what you are doing but it is working!" July 2014

In 2002, when the people of Haddenham endorsed a plan to take over the three fields that make up Fairchild's Meadow for conservation and public access, the reintroduction of a wildflower meadow was high on the agenda. It took another two years before the money was raised for the purchase and conservation work, through public subscription and an HLF grant. Preparation for the wildflower meadow in the westmost field began in earnest in 2004 with hedge creation and improvements to public access.

By 2005 the small subcommittee of the parish council, the Fairchild's Meadow Committee, agreed that the best way to encourage wildflower growth on this land was to scrape back the grass and seed strips within the field to start off the wildflowers. Wildflowers thrive best in nutrient-low environments which is why the hay is cut after the seeds have set followed by light grazing. We were lucky enough to have a bull called "Pint Pot" and his lady friend to visit in previous years, although poor old Pint Pot is not well enough to come this year. This approach showed slow progress and in 2007 it was decided to reseed the meadow. By 2011 the wildflowers were taking hold, although you could clearly see where the original scraped strips had been as this was where the wildflowers were densest. Ragged Robin and Yellow rattle were beginning to spread and by last year, when we did the first community wildflower count in 2013 Black Knapweed was thriving in the field.

This July we have done another community wildflower count and been able to record increased numbers of wildflowers and grasses. The management regime has included late summer cutting followed by light grazing and intermittent thistle spraying.



Figure 1
Identifying
wildflowers

There is a full list of wildflowers and grasses on the Haddenham Conservation Society website. This year we identified 23 different species as opposed to 17 the previous year. We also did a 1 kilometre transect of gridsquare TL4675 in which we identified 74 different species as opposed to 52. (Maybe we are just getting better at identifying them!) It is a success story, and one that has taken time, dedication and effort. The Fairchild's Meadow committee has lost three of its leading lights over the period, Owen Bethel, Ken Bowcock and David Fairchild, but

continues with new people joining from time to time. If you are interested in helping with this parish conservation project get in touch for a chat, (jez@jrworks.co.uk). **Or come and help us do some hands-on environmental work on Sunday 14th September 10:00a.m. – 14:00p.m. – Just turn up!**



Figure 2
Pint Pot
and friend

DURING AUGUST 2014 JEZ REEVES ORGANISED THE SECOND COMMUNITY WILDFLOWER COUNT.

The results have been submitted to CEH at the Biological Record Centre (BRC), following on from the initial survey in 2013 for Plantlife. [Click here](#) to view the article written for the Village Voice, the list of plants that were identified in the 5mx5m plot in Fairchilds' Meadow, as well as the 1km transect across the survey square TL4675.

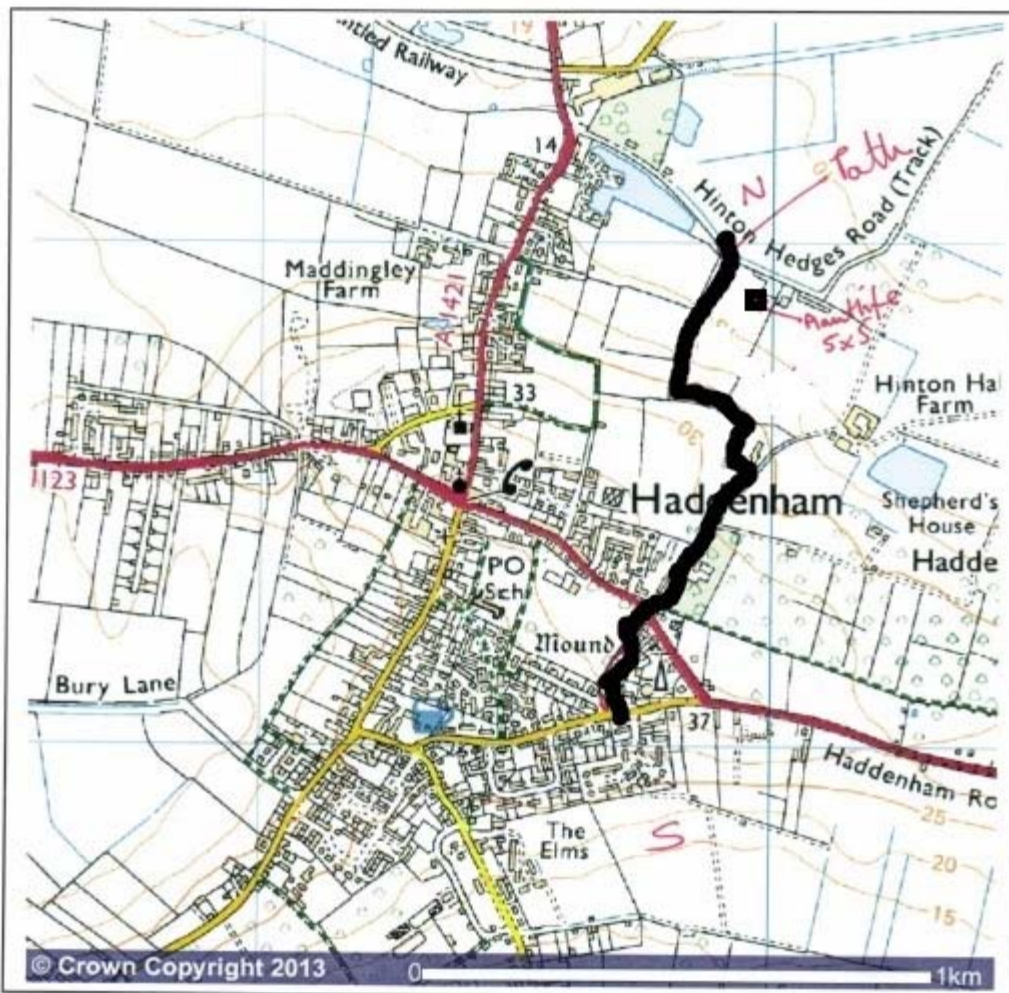
Inventory plot 5m x 5m plot survey in Fairchilds' Meadow

Date: 28 June 2014 10:00 – 11:30am

Conditions: Bright day, damp under foot

Square: TL 4695/7685

Surveyors: Jez, Carol, Sarah, Clare, Kate, Jane



Species	Domin
Common Knapweed	4
Yellow rattle	4
Meadow buttercup	5
White Clover	2
Red Clover	3
Ragged Robin	2
Oxeye daisy	1
Greater Birdsfoot trefoil	3
Selheal	2
Common mouse-ear	1
Creeping thistle	1

Lesser trefoil	1
Yorkshire fog	7
Barley	3
Sorrel	1
Rye Grass – perennial	3
Creeping Bent Grass	6
Meadow Foxtail	5
Sweet Vernal	3
Red Fescue	6
Rough Meadow Grass	4
Crested Dogs' tail	1
Timothy	1
	69

Wildflower path survey in TL4676

Date: 7 July 2014 11:00 – 14:00 : Started at: TL 4690/7600

Conditions: Bright day

Surveyors: Jez, Carol Collins Complete Guide to British Wild flowers: Paul Sterry Collins 2006

Species:

Ash	Elder	Nettles red flowers
Bay willowherb	Elm	Nettles white
Bent grass	False fox sedge	Nipplewort
Black knapweed	False oats	Oxeye daisy
Black medic/lesser trefoil	Field bindweed	Prickly sow thistle
Bramble	Goatsbeard	Ragged robin
Birdsfoot trefoil	Gosse grass	Rapeseed
Broadleaf willowherb	Greater burdock	Red clover
Bush vetch	Greater Plantain	Red poppy
Cocks foot grass	Green alkanet	Redshank
Comfrey	Groundsel	Ribwort plantain
Common mouse ear	Hawkweed	Self heal
Corn chamomile	Hedera	Sharp rush
Corn marigold	Hedge bindweed	Shepherd's purse
Cornflowers	Hedge mustard	Spear thistle
Cow parsley	Hedge woundwort	Speedwell
Cowslips	Hemlock	Timothy grass
Creeping buttercup	Hogweed	Wetted thistle
Creeping thistle	Ladies bedstraw	White bryony
Crested dogs tail	Lesser burdock	White clover
Cut leaved cranesbill geranium	Lords and ladies	Woodland ivy
Dandelion	Mallow	Yarrow
Dead nettle	Meadow barley	Yellow rattle
Dock	Meadow vetchling	Yorkshire fog
Doves foot cranesbill	Nettle	

Notes

Started on Hinton Hedges Lane (woodland) traversed Fairchild's (wildflower meadow), through hedge alongside of field (hedgerow), across back of Hinton Hall (orchard) and then lane to recreation field with wildflower sown mound and down to grass verge on Duck Lane. Same route as last year.