

Bringing Back the Small Blue

Report from 4th – 31st March 2009

1. Habitat Restoration

Habitat restoration has started on five of the 18 sites and is on schedule with revised work plan followed the delayed project start. Work on three sites has been pushed forward to the next winter season.

Southam Quarry

Approximately 3 hectares of scrub have been cleared at Southam Quarry and a series of bunds have been created. Some scrapes have also been created to expose the sub-soil to enable a comparison of how habitat establishment differs to un-scraped areas. A number of these lens scrapes have been seeded with Kidney Vetch and these will be compared with those that have not been seeded.

A baseline study of the area has been undertaken and the new area mapped to aid future monitoring of the site.



One of the sections after scrub clearance

Gaydon Landfill

An embankment of local subsoil with a high percentage of blue lias clay has been used to create a south-facing embankment. On 23rd April 5 community service volunteers lead by the Probation service planted two sections of the bank with a total of 500 Kidney Vetch plants. One section has been seeded. The bund has been mapped to enable monitoring of the different sections.

Nelsons Quarry

Approximately one hectare of scrub was successfully cleared by hand and then a machine was used to create a bund. A series of trial plots are being set up for monitoring.



Before scrub clearance work



After scrub clearance work

Stockton Cutting

Two areas of dense scrub have been cleared in total an area of 200 x 20m. Top-soil has been scraped off in places. Baseline surveys have been undertaken and the areas have been mapped for future monitoring.



Harbury Spoilbank

A different technique of scrub removal – by pulling up the roots and then tillering over the site has been used on very dense scrub. An area of 0.1 hectares has been cleared.



Project Officer and volunteers plant Kidney Vetch on newly cleared area

2. Publicity

- All landowners and project partners have been informed of the project start by phone.
- Articles have appeared in 2 Parish Council Newsletters announcing the project start and calling for volunteers.
- Discussions have been held with Cemex regarding the launch event at their Southam Quarry site. A press release was prepared and circulated in March and subsequently sent out on April 21st.
- The project is being featured and regularly reported on, on the Warwickshire BC Branch web-site at <http://www.warwickshire-butterflies.org.uk/>
- An article has been prepared for the next edition of BC's national magazine "Butterfly".
- The Project Officer has arranged to give a presentation at the Warwickshire LBAP Steering Group meeting on 28th April.

3. Community Involvement and Partnership

So far 14 individual volunteers have either helped directly with the project or have offered to help with future activities.

Links have also been made with the Warwickshire V Team and the Probation Service to work with their volunteers to help with planting and scrub management activities.

There has been regular contact with landowners and managers about the progress of works on the sites.