



The Meadow Down Grange - Grass cutting



You may have noticed that the grassland areas in the Meadow have been cut and the grass removed this year. This is a different strategy from previous years when the grassland was cut in rotation. Following advice we will be cutting and clearing virtually every year, two experiments of direct seeding will be evaluated - areas of fine grass will be sown directly with wild flowers after cutting, and areas with coarse weeds will be sprayed before cutting and then sown initially with Yellow Rattle and thereafter with wildflower seed.



Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) is a hemi-parasitic annual that attaches itself to the roots of adjoining grass and extracts water and minerals from their host, thereby weakening the surrounding coarse grass and allowing other species to flourish.

Three main areas in the Meadow - the Triangle, Ribbon and the Embayment - were not cut by BDBC this year as the main cut would have been too early in the year to allow the wild flowers to set seed. These areas have now been cut by the KCG group and also re-seeded with locally sourced wild flower seed.

Steve cutting the Embayment prior to re-seeding

A mini 'Murmuration' of Starlings *Sternus vulgaris*



Starlings are generally regarded as resident birds, many are; but quite a few arrive from northern Europe to spend the winter in our milder climate. Many begin to appear in September but the majority will arrive in October. Most of these birds will have originated from Scandinavia.

The birds will roost together for warmth and security against Peregrine and Sparrowhawk attacks. A pre-roost spectacle of these birds swirling around and then suddenly descending into the undergrowth is a wonderful winter sight! The birds will return to their breeding grounds the following spring.

Work Parties for November & December 2014

Date	Meeting Point
Sunday 2 nd November	The Old Hedgerow. Footpath between Coniston Road & Down Grange, behind 77-155 Coniston Road.
Thursday 13 th November	Down Grange Meadow Homestead Road interpretation board
Sunday 23 rd November	Old Orchard. Kendal Gardens.
Thursday 4 th December	The Old Hedgerow – as above
Sunday 14 th December	Down Grange Meadow - as above

Times: - Sunday's 10:00 - 13:00. Thursday's 14:00 – 16:00.

If you would like to join us for the first time please ring Marion on 470171.

Please bring work gloves, tools are provided.

Contact us:- By e-mail on kempshott- conserve@tiscali.co.uk or via the website www.kempshotconservationgroup.org.uk. For anything that requires urgent action, such as fallen trees on any of our sites please contact Marion Wolstencroft on 470171