

Out on the Towans:

The generation game

by Martin Rule, Towans Ranger

One of the deep pleasures in my role as Towans Ranger, especially in the last year or so, has been encouraging local schools out onto the Towans, to learn about the amazing wildlife and history on their doorstep. I tell them about everything from Bronze Age farming to palmate newts, and the incredible life story of the silver-studded blue butterfly.

My passion to make it possible for all our local schools not just to make occasional trips to the Towans, but to gradually gain the confidence and knowledge to run their own regular visits throughout the year, so they can tune into the lovely seasonal changes and deepen their connection to the place they call home. Great progress has been made with Gwinear, Connor Downs and Penpol Schools, and recently we've worked alongside the Wave Project with some schools from the Penzance area too. Over the next year, we will expand our contacts to reach other schools – so please get in touch if you can help us engage with the next generation of Towans guardians.



The enthusiasm and knowledge of the children – and the staff – and their desire to learn more, and in a hands-on way, is very rewarding indeed. In July, Gwinear School made a lovely nature trail on Gwithian Green, with wildlife posters they'd made, which they then guided their families around at the weekend.

So, with this in mind, we need your help, with a very simple request. If we want the children to take on board that the Towans is a safe, pleasant and attractive place to visit and explore, we need everyone to pick up their dogs' mess. Some people believe it's OK to leave the mess, as "it will rot down". But dog faeces carry serious diseases, and are unpleasant to step in – or touch, if you're on hands and knees looking at nature. They do not rot down over time, but actually alter the vegetation in a negative way. By enriching the soil, they encourage plants such as brambles and nettles to flourish at the expense of the dune species. So, dog mess is a bad thing! Please can we all make an extra effort to clean up after our dogs – paying particular attention to the five minutes after they leave the car parks? I won't pretend I have a big stick or fine I can whack you with on this, I'm just appealing to your community spirit to do the right thing. Thank you!

Friends of the Towans has just passed its first anniversary as a registered charity, and we will be holding our AGM at 7pm on 7th November at Connor Downs School. Everybody is welcome to attend. Our brief meeting will be followed by a fascinating presentation by ace botanist Dr Colin French (left), with the intriguing title of Hayle Towans: Cornwall's Coral Reef. Hope to see you there!

As ever, if you'd like to get involved with our work, just email me at martinrule@talktalk.net

www.friendsofthetowans.co.uk

