



THE CHALK FACE AT THE RESERVE

Monkton Nature Reserve Newsletter



September 2020

From Small Beginnings

After almost exactly 6 months, visitors finally returned to Monkton Nature Reserve on Saturday 19th September.

Nearly 60 members, in small family groups, took the opportunity to come to the reserve under our new 'Covid-secure' measures.

Following a huge effort from a dedicated band of volunteers, trustees and staff, the lower part of the reserve was open for 2 sessions to allow a 'socially-distanced' visit by members. This provided the chance to experience the wonderful flora and fauna that has continued to thrive – unaware of the current pandemic! We hope that this will give us the experience to pave the way for a more general reopening to the public in the future, as well as organising further events in a safe way.

Access to some of the nature trails was possible along a one-way system, the ever-popular Birds of Prey were present, limited refreshments were available at the Cabin café, and an outdoor book stall was open for business.

The trustees thank all visitors for their continued support and the staff and volunteers for all the hard work that made the day possible.

BOOKABLE MEMBER-ONLY DAYS AT MONKTON NATURE RESERVE

We still have some places available for members to visit the reserve on Saturday 3rd October and Saturday 10th October. For details email:

contact@monkton-reserve.org

NEWS FLASH: BOOK DONATIONS – we are still accepting donations of books for the bookshop. Please contact us to arrange delivery or we can organise collection

**contact@monkton-reserve.org
01843 822666**

Michael Maloney of Countrywide Productions has produced a short film of conservation work taking place at the reserve during lockdown – link below

<https://vimeo.com/454799416>

Tales from the Museum by Lester Hovenden

The Largest Land Mammal Ever Known The late Oligocene, approximately 25 million years ago, saw the greatest flourishing of grasslands on our planet, enabling the rhinoceros and similar species to evolve and fully exploit this vast new food resource that spread over the northern hemisphere and into the South American land mass too.

The largest land mammal was named **Indricotherium** (named for a mythical beast). Original restorations show a very stocky, rather a slow, albeit a huge lumbering beast probably not capable of fast movement. Modern reconstructions suggest a slimmer more athletic creature probably able to gallop. Not bad for an animal weighing in at some 15 tons, or four times the weight of an African elephant! It also stood at 25 feet; around the height of a house - a truly magnificent sight. The females were smaller overall. The skull and neck bones were very heavily built, especially in males as mating rituals were quite savage and the forces involved in contact can only be imagined.



THE MUSEUM AT MONKTON

The museum at Monkton Nature Reserve harbours a wonderful range of exhibits – from Thanet and beyond

Save our Ladybirds! by Clive Nuttman

In recent years, one of our favourite ‘bugs’ – the ladybird – has been suffering at the hands of a foreign invader! The Harlequin ladybird arrived from continental Europe just 15 years ago, where it had been brought in from North America to control aphids – a serious pest of food crops.

Unfortunately, these aliens have a taste for our native ladybirds – we have nearly 50 species of ladybird and some, including the 2-spot and 7-spot varieties have suffered, either through having their eggs and larvae eaten or not being able to compete for food against these voracious incomers.

Harlequin ladybirds are very variable in their coloration and can be difficult to separate from some of our favourite insects.



Harlequin ladybird

7-spot ladybird

HELP WITH CONSERVATION BY VOLUNTEERING AT MONKTON

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT: volunteering@monkton-reserve.org

Thanet Countryside Trust – registered charity no. 285972

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