

Grazing Trial Given the Go-Ahead!

The Countryside Service is happy to announce that the erection of temporary electric fencing on Hazeley Heath Common has been given the go-ahead by the Planning Inspectorate! The temporary fencing is needed to run a five year grazing trial on Hazeley Heath that will hopefully start this summer.

Hazeley Heath is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA), and as so it is very important that we conserve and protect it as a heathland landscape. Heathland is semi- natural, it has been shaped by people's traditional use of the land, including grazing livestock, collecting firewood and digging for peat. This means that over thousands of years an open landscape on nutrient poor soils has developed, and with it specialist species that are adapted to live in this environment. As our culture has developed these traditional uses have all but disappeared, and with it the majority of our heaths have been lost, and so to protect them we



Hazeley Heath ~ 1924 - Note how open it is with few trees

need to mimic these traditional practices. Grazing is a very important part of this system and by running a five year grazing trial we hope to improve the condition of Hazeley Heath for the important wildlife that lives there.



Male Silver Studded Blue- just one of the rare species grazing will benefit

Heathlands are made up of a mosaic of vegetation types and ages, and it is this structural diversity that maintains the species richness. Grazing is considered by the majority authorities to be the most effective way to achieve the mosaic of micro-habitats needed, as well as controlling the growth of scrub.

The primary aims of the grazing trial is to determine whether grazing is an appropriate management tool to use at Hazeley Heath, whether it has a positive effect on the vegetation and therefore species richness, and whether grazing is acceptable to local people who use the heath.

The Countryside Service already graze at two of our other heathland sites, where the cattle are having a very positive effect on the vegetation structure, making great improvements to help conserve this rare habitat. One of the reasons grazing is so successful at these sites are a dedicated team of volunteer 'Lookers', people who check up on the livestock to make sure they have enough water and look in good health. These people may be regular dog walkers, horse riders, or just people who want to help us in our conservation work. I will be searching for volunteer Lookers to help us at Hazeley Heath, you don't need any experience, and you only need to give up a small amount of your time whenever you can, whether it's every day or once every few weeks, it all helps.



Grazing cattle at Fleet Pond SSSI

For any more information on our grazing trial you can see the Grazing Trial Draft Proposal on the Hazeley Heath webpage and a variety of Natural England publications about conservation grazing on

the Conservation webpage. If you are interested in becoming a 'Looker' you can email the Countryside Service on countryside@hart.gov.uk or call 01252 623443 for more information.