

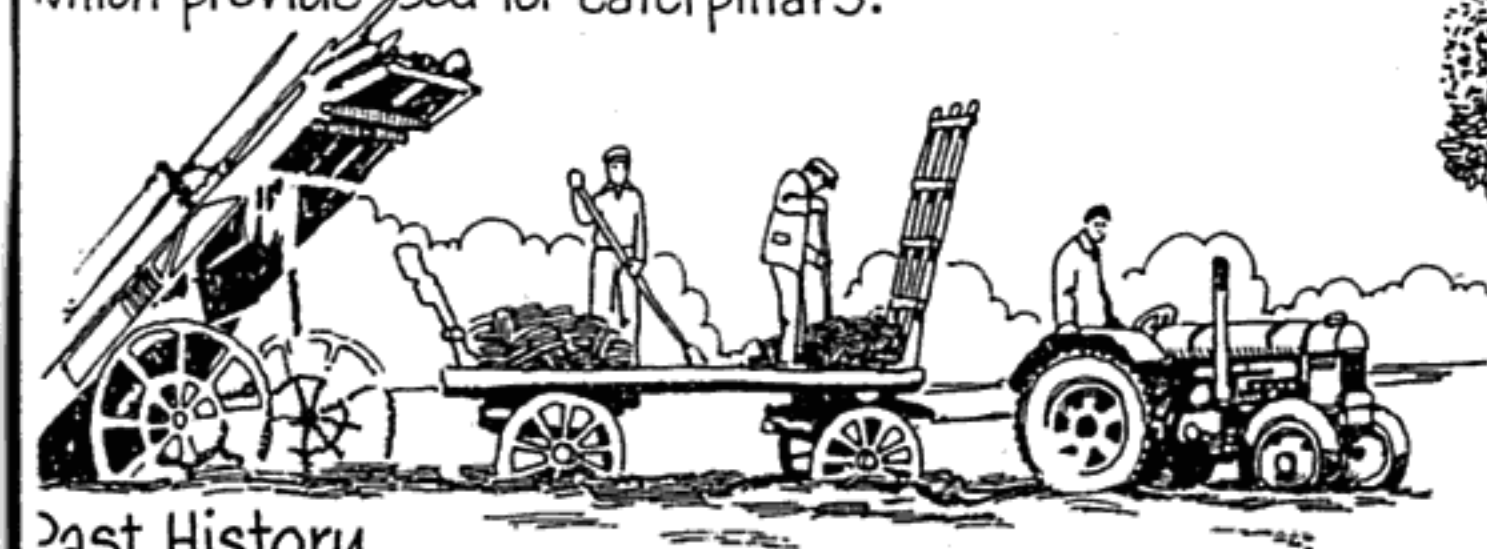
## The Importance of Wildflower Meadows

This meadow, full of butterflies and wildflowers in summer, is part of an elite 3% of meadowland in the UK to survive destruction over the past 60 years. Most grassy fields have been fertilised and resown with a few vigorous grass species. They grow grass very efficiently and are cut several times a year starting in April, but this means that



Dyer's Greenweed

there is no room for wildflowers or the food plants for the caterpillars of grassland butterflies, and no time for life cycles to be completed before the field is cut. So most of our fields have bright green grass, but no wildflowers or butterflies. In contrast this meadow contains many species of wildflower like Black Knapweed which provide nectar for adult butterflies, and native grasses such as Cocksfoot and Yorkshire Fog which provide food for caterpillars.



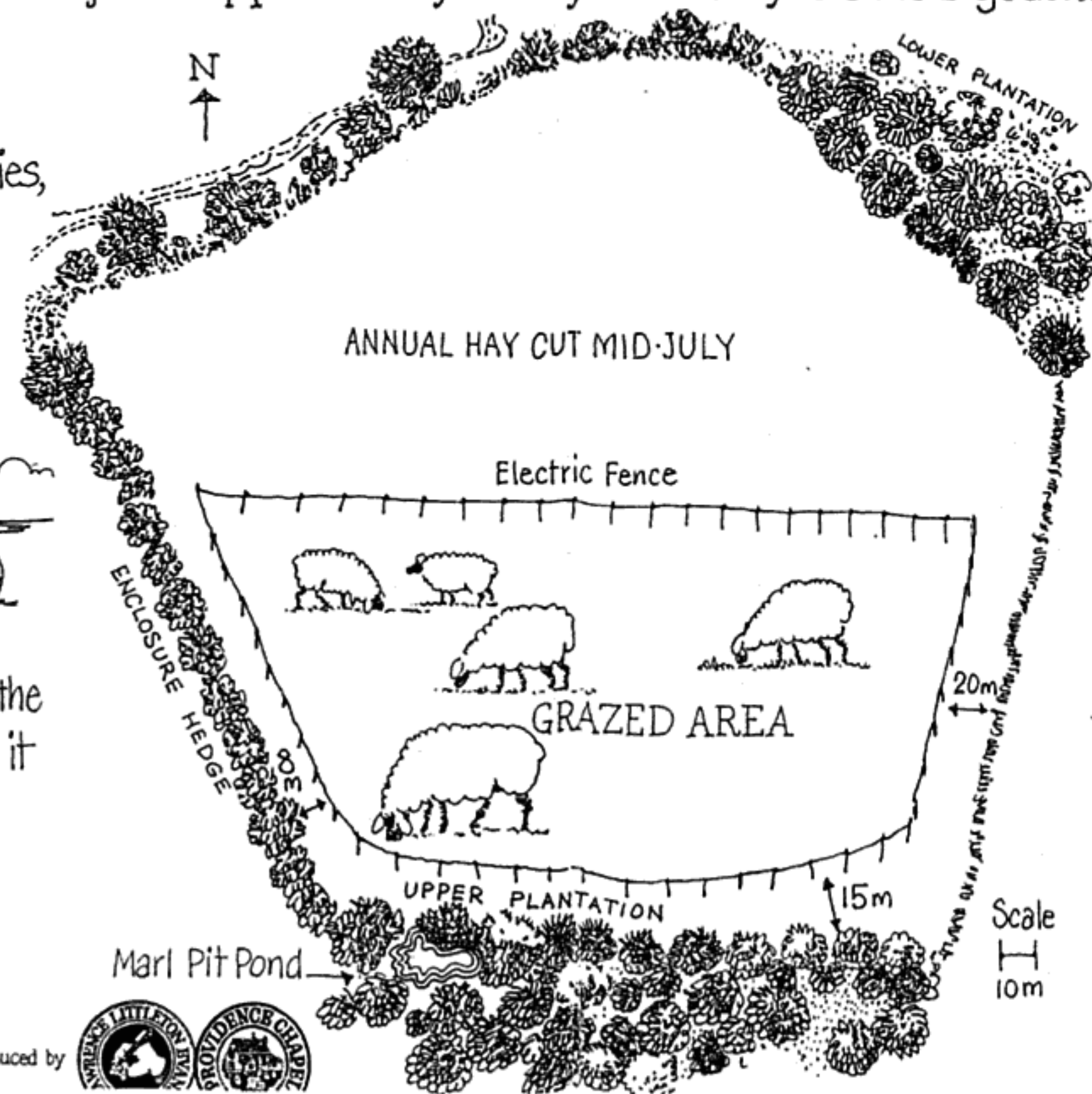
## Past History

Until it was enclosed in 1828 this meadow was part of the open grazing of Valebridge Common for centuries and it still contains a large amount of Dyer's Greenweed, an unusual plant reputed to be associated with old Commons. Traditionally, then, this would have been grazed pasture rather than hay meadow.

# BEDELANDS FARM LOCAL NATURE RESERVE MEADOW MANAGEMENT EXPERIMENT

## THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT TREATMENTS ON NEUTRAL GRASSLAND

University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education  
Meadows Research Group with Mid Sussex District Council.  
Project supported by a Royal Society COPUS grant.



## Management of Wildflower Meadows

This meadow is a product of our farming heritage and without cutting or grazing it will become invaded by scrub and tree species, and eventually become woodland. Since 1991, when Bedelands Farm became a nature reserve, an annual cut of hay has been taken. The mowing has retained the open character of the area, but considering its past history as commonland grazing may be a better management option. In order to find out whether grazing would be a better management option than mowing an experiment has been set up starting in summer 1997.

## The Meadow Management Experiment

From summer 1997, the field has been divided up into 2 parts and each year the northerly half will have a hay cut in mid-July, but no grazing. Sheep grazing will be introduced from 1997 into the southern half for two periods in each year: in October and November and again in April and May using an electric fence to enclose an area inside the main footpaths. Will this area develop a more diverse flora than the ungrazed half?

## Monitoring the Effects of the Different Treatments

The Bedelands Meadows Research Group (University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education) is monitoring the effects of the different management treatments and you can find out more through The Friends of Bedelands or Mid Sussex District Council Leisure. Tel: 01444 458166

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