



Shoreham Bank, alias Mill Hill Local Nature Reserve, or ‘Coney Hanger’ (to give it its extremely old name).

and scrub. The new owners, Adur District Council, even banned grazing from the bank, though it had been grazing which created its butterfly interest. By the seventies only a few Chalkhills and Adonis survived in a tiny area of an acre or so which was kept mown. These mistakes were rectified as a result of strong action from the community of wildlifers, and a combination of vigorous scrub bashing, the recovery of the Rabbit population, and the return of sheep and cattle grazing.

Not all species were able to survive this bottleneck, though. The special mosses and lichens went, and in the 1990s you often found empty shells of the extinct Heath and Carthusian Snails. Most, if not all, of the other special chalk grassland molluscs were eliminated, too.

In August the hillside is colourful with pink Centaury, *Centaureum erythraea*, the tiny white pinpoints of Eyebright, and the white umbels of Wild Carrot, *Daucus carota*, Wild Parsnip, *Pastinaca sativa*, St John’s Wort, *Hypericum perforatum*, and Basil, *Clinopodium vulgare*.

Alongside and next to the hill top road you can see the long grassy grooves made by the braided paths of the old highway by which all traffic passed from Shoreham to Beeding before the building of the valley road in modern times.

Shoreham Bank is a Local Nature Reserve, but that status doesn’t automatically bring management resources to it. The northern and the southern end of the bank are both scrubbed up and the scrub at the base of slope is encroaching, too. Even formally protected sites are not necessarily that safe in practice, and Shoreham Bank’s two centuries of fame didn’t stop the bypass smashing it in two.

Old Erringham Farmstead. TQ 205 076.

THIS farmstead is one of the nicest on the whole of the Brighton Downs. It has a lovely old flint farmhouse with great chimneys and part-Horsham slab roofing, and ramshackle old flint barns. It has one of only two remaining medieval manorial chapels on the Brighton Downs (the other

is at Swanborough Manor), which now functions as a front garden shed for one of the modern farm workers cottages just to the south of the old farmhouse. It has a tiny ecclesiastical window on its south face. The farm has a tenth century 'ring work', presumably built as a defence against the Vikings, though it's difficult to pick it out amongst the grassy plats now. It's a mixed farm with corn crops, beef cattle, a bit of livery stabling, and hay meadows — one for Boot Fairs — and management of the gorgeous sites of Old Erringham Combe and Anchor Bottom to its credit.

Around the farmstead I counted bits of Red Star Thistle, *Centaurea calcitrapa*, (the Brighton Downs speciality), Musk Thistle, *Carduus nutans*, Spear Thistle, *Cirsium vulgare*, Welled Thistle, *C. acanthoides*, Creeping Thistle, *C. arvense*, Teasel, *Dipsacus fullonum*, and Viper's Bugloss all adding summer colour, as well as prickles, though none in the sort of numbers that would lead anyone to curse them.

Old Erringham Combe and Shaw. TQ 205 081.

As you walk down into this secret valley the road noise stops as though you've pressed a switch. Only the Yellowhammers lazy song can be heard. What blessed peace!

The Combe's old-fashioned mosaic of habitats and aspects make it a great refuge for Downland wildlife. The south-facing bank is the hottest place, but below it there are willows and a tiny tongue of wet grassland where I noted Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, some years ago. Autumn Ladies Tresses orchis occurs on the banksides with Bastard Toadflax, Rockrose, Betony, Thyme and so many other herbs. Wall Brown, *Lasiommata megera*, and Clouded Yellow, *Colias crocea*, butterflies, and day flying moths like Yellow Belle, Dusky Sallow, *Eremobia ochroleuca*, Common Carpet, *Epirrhoe alternata alternata*, and Grass Moths enjoy the drying grassland.

This site used to be part of a 'cow down', and it is maybe because of those centuries of cattle grazing that the rare Carthusian Snail, *Monacha cartusiana*, clings on in this combe.

The upper valley has clay pigeon shooting apparatus hidden in a thicket and the pasture is crunchy underfoot with shattered clays. Clearly those shooting folk don't believe in picking up their own mess.

Old Erringham Shaw is a tangled wood of Sycamore, Ash, Elm and thorn. It's more open at the northern end facing the combe, where the remains of four big old



Lancing College chapel

Old Erringham Combe and Shaw. Remote and delightful.