

# *Brown's Folly Nature Reserve*

## *A unique place to explore...*



A Nature Journal brought to you by





# What makes Brown's Folly Nature Reserve so unique?

Brown's Folly NR was the first site purchased by Avon Wildlife Trust when the Trust formed in 1980. This 40 hectare site is home to a range of wildlife that depend on the unique limestone grasslands, ancient woodlands and cave systems within the reserve.

## Ancient woodlands



Located on the lower slopes of the reserve these woodlands are more than 100 years old with a diverse mix of tree species.

Unlike most of the woodland on the upper slopes, that has grown over the last 50-60 years, you can see a greater variety of trees and enjoy the colour and scent of many different woodland flowers. The woods are also home to a variety of birds.

## Grasslands

In the centre of Brown's Folly NR are 3-4 acres of open grasslands, rich in wildflowers and insects.



Wild thyme, harebell and several species of orchid cover the old spoil heaps from the mines.

## Caves and exposed limestone

The geology of the site is of national importance, with exposed limestone rock at several places throughout the reserve.



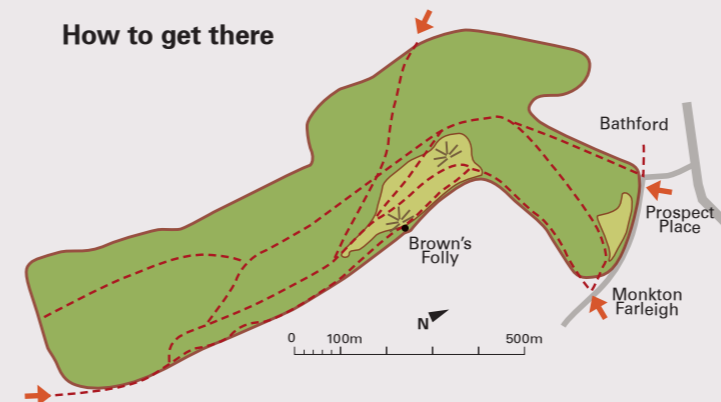
Extensive mining has resulted in vast underground cave systems, which are home to a variety of bats, including the rare greater horseshoe bat. Damp cliff faces support a variety of ferns, fungi and spiders.

# Welcome

Designated as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), Brown's Folly Nature Reserve is a unique site for wildlife and geology located on the edge of Bathford and Monkton Farleigh, near Bath.

This booklet is a guide to the reserve, helping you to explore what it has to offer all year round and is packed with outdoor activities.

## How to get there



From the A363 Bradford Road, turn onto Bathford Hill (by the Crown pub). Follow the road for roughly 1000m, passing the Bathford Cooperative Shop and The Clothes Horse. Then turn right onto Prospect Place which leads up a steep, narrow road to Monkton Farleigh. The car park is near the brow of the hill on your right. Please be aware that there is a 2.2 m height restriction barrier.

## Contents

What makes Brown's Folly NR so unique? .....	2
Welcome.....	3
History .....	4
Bats at Brown's Folly .....	6
Spring .....	8
Summer.....	12
Autumn .....	16
Winter.....	20
Treasure hunt.....	24
Scorecard.....	26
Special trees.....	27
Local stories.....	28
Community information..	30
Thank you.....	31



# History

**Named after the striking tower built by Wade Colonel Browne in 1848, set at the heart of the reserve, the site has a rich history shaped by its geological importance. The story starts 170 million years ago...**

## Jurassic period

During the Jurassic period 170 million years ago, the area was covered by a warm, tropical sea. These conditions allowed limestone to form.

The type of limestone here is called the Great Oolite Group. An ooid (named after the Greek word for egg) is a small spherical particle made up of a small piece of shell, which has layers of calcite built up around it.

It makes good building stone and was extracted locally c.70 AD by the Romans when they occupied Britain (c.40-410 AD). You can see it in the Roman Baths in the City of Bath.



Tramway at nearby Monkton Farleigh c. 1886. The tramway was used to transport stone extracted from mines in the area

## Industrial Revolution

Prior to and during the Industrial Revolution (18th and 19th centuries) limestone was extensively extracted from Brown's Folly NR.

The reserve would have been a very loud, dusty industrial place, with lots of people and horses working in the mines, very different to how it is today. Extracted stone was dragged by horses out of Brown's Folly NR and the stone was transported via railway to the River Avon, where it was ferried out to cities.

The removal of vast quantities of stone until the mines closed in 1920 has created a huge network of underground caves that extend to ~85 km, beyond Brown's Folly NR into the surrounding area.



An underground railway junction known as Clapham Junction. Before the railway, horse-drawn wagons were used to move the stone.

Stone quarried from the reserve was used for the facade at Buckingham Palace.

Did you know

## World War II

Before WWII Brown's Folly and Monkton Farleigh were known as Farleigh Down Quarry. In 1937 the caves were converted into ammunition stores with the looming threat of war.

Royal Engineers strengthened the underground pillars and walls; conveyer belts, air conditioning, lighting, power generators were installed, new floors were laid and the mines were painted white. There was also a mile long tunnel connecting Monkton Farleigh mine with the railway line at Ashley. During the war the caves offered a secure, bombproof, secret place to store military ammunition.



Conveyor belts transported ammunition within the mines.

## Present day

Some of the abandoned mines have collapsed; however, the caves now offer an important habitat for bats.

During the 1980s Avon Wildlife Trust purchased the reserve and have since been managing the site to support bat populations and preserving the wildlife at the site for the public to enjoy.

## History of Browne's Folly... what is it?!

The Nature Reserve is named after the tower 'Browne's Folly' known locally as the 'Pepperpot Tower'. The tower was built in 1848 by Colonel Wade Browne, High Sheriff of the counties of Somerset and Wiltshire. He lived in Monkton Farleigh House from 1836 until his death in 1851.

A folly is an extravagant building built for decoration rather than practical use. Colonel Browne had the folly constructed by his workers to keep them employed during an agricultural recession. It enabled him to admire the commanding local view.

The folly is now owned by the Folly Fellowship.

*«the person who owned the land got his workers to build the Pepperpot as they did not have a job to do»*  
Pupil from Churchfield's Primary School.

# Bats at Brown's Folly NR

British bats are endangered. Their populations are declining due to habitat loss and the decline in invertebrates due to loss of wildflower meadows. This is why Brown's Folly NR is so important.

«Bats are nocturnal: they come out at night. They feed on insects so where they live here (Brown's Folly) is a good habitat»

Pupil from Churchfield's Primary School.

6

## Habitat

The old mines at Brown's Folly NR make excellent homes for bats.

These caves are especially important during winter as bats use them as hibernation roosts. The caves provide the stable temperatures that bats need so that they can conserve their energy by slowing down their breathing, dropping their body temperature and blood pressure. They enter a state of 'torpor' during the winter when the supply of insects available as food are scarce.

## BAT FACT

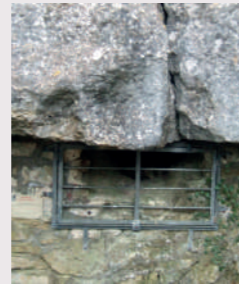
Bat maternity roosts can reach temperatures of 40°C. Hibernation roosts drop to 2-5°C.

## BAT FACT

### Old Boris

Boris, the oldest greater horseshoe bat recorded in Britain, was recorded at Brown's Folly NR. Boris was ringed in 1976 and rediscovered at the reserve in January 2000.

If bats are disturbed during the winter, when there are no insects to feed on, then they may use up valuable energy reserves, causing them to starve. Important



parts of the cave system at Brown's Folly NR are grilled to minimise disturbance.

Brown's Folly NR is a very important EU designated site because of its overwintering bat populations. In spring, bats emerge from hibernation to feed over the grasslands, and during the summer they make maternity roosts in the buildings, barns and trees of Bath.

## BAT FACT

A bat's heart rate is 1000 beats per minute in flight but only 10 beats per minute during hibernation.

## Food

The grasslands at Brown's Folly NR are rich in invertebrates and are close to the mine entrances, where bats emerge at

## BAT FACT

### Natural pest control

Pipistrelle bats eat about 3000 insects each night, making them important pest controllers.

bounce back off nearby objects. Bats use these echoes to build a mental map of their environment.

Bats are very agile in the air thanks to their incredible wings, which have evolved from their hands. They can catch their prey mid-air and sometimes even use their tail to scoop up insects.

## BAT FACT

Only horseshoe bats hang upside down in the mines, other species crawl into crevices.

night to feed. Bats need to find their food close to where they roost as they use up a lot of energy flying - this is why the grasslands are so important.

Bats use echolocation to navigate in the dark and find food. They use high pitched 'shouts' which

## Bat species

There are 17 species of bats in the UK and 13 of them live at Brown's Folly NR.

Species of bat at Brown's Folly NR include the very rare Bechstein's bat, greater and lesser horseshoe bats.



### Greater Horseshoe Bat

One of the UK's largest bats: about the size of a small pear, with a wingspan of 35-40 cm. Named after the horseshoe-shaped nose that it uses for echolocation. This bat flies low to the ground to catch large moths, beetles and craneflies.

**Brown's Folly is a crucial stronghold for greater horseshoe bats as 10% of the British population live here.**



### Lesser Horseshoe Bat

Rare in the UK and like the greater horseshoe, it is also named after its horseshoe-like nose. However, it is one of Britain's smallest bats: the size of a small plum,

with a wing span of 20-25 cm. It hunts close to the ground as well as throughout the tree canopy.



### Bechstein's Bat

This very rare species can be found in the south of the UK. It is a tree-dwelling bat, favouring tree roosts all year round and woodpecker holes

in summer. With a wing span of 25-30 cm, this elusive bat only leaves its roost after dark.

7





**Hawthorn blossom** can be found in May.

Hawthorn is traditionally associated with **weddings** as in Celtic times most marriages took place at Beltaine (the start of summer) when hawthorn is in blossom.

### Action time

**Mapsticks**  
Keep a personal, colourful record of your visit to the reserve. Choose an attractive stick that will form the base of your map. During your walk, collect various treasures that will remind you, and tell others, of a special place or a special time you've had. Tie them all to the stick with coloured wool.



Listen out for the distinctive «teacher, teacher!» song of the great tit, as it protects its territory and chicks (picture below)

### Bullfinch

Did you know

The male bullfinch has a bright red breast and cheeks, black cap and tail and a white rump. You may find them feeding on the buds of trees in spring.



Rod Holbrook

After the slumber of winter, green buds appear and then come into leaf during the spring. Trees blossom and small mammals emerge from hibernation.

# Spring

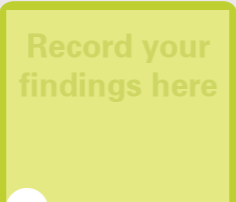
Jess Loughborough



Hawthorn blossom



Bird chick

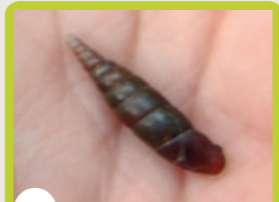


Record your findings here

Something yellow



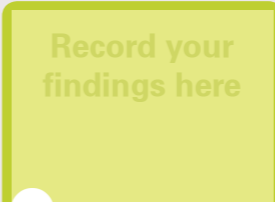
Orange tip butterfly



Tree snail



Violets



Record your findings here

Something round



Scarlet tiger moth



Wild strawberries



Snail

Can you find these sensational springtime wild things?



### Lamb tails

Male hazel catkins are clusters of flowers that start to appear in early spring. Golden in colour and ~5 -12 cm in length, they are also called 'lamb's tails'.



Did you know

### Fiction time

#### Make a woodland creature

You can make a woodland creature by gathering interesting twigs, leaves and nuts from the woodland floor, stuck in clay.



Bob, the woodland creature



### The year of the bat

In the spring, as temperatures rise and more insects become available to eat, bats wake from hibernation and move to new roosts. They emerge at dusk and feed during dusk and dawn.

### Fiction time

#### Build a bird nest

Birds are working really hard in spring to build nests. Test your nest building skills using materials that you find on the woodland floor, such as leaves, twigs and grass.

Make your nest comfortable and windproof! Then find somewhere to hide your nest - you never know, if it is good a bird may use it!



Natural or manmade nest?

The reserve is filled with lots to hear in spring: birds use their 'song' to attract a mate. So take a moment to close your eyes and listen: how many different sounds can you hear?

### Fiction time

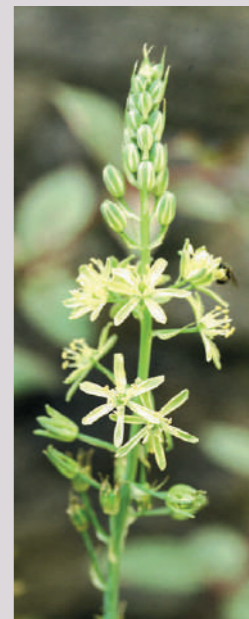
#### Wildlife dream catcher

Find a forked tree branch on the woodland floor. Tie some string around the branch to make a 'catcher'. You can then intertwine interesting leaves, nuts, twigs and feathers that you find in the reserve. A bit like a dream catcher, but made from the wonderful natural materials available in the reserve.

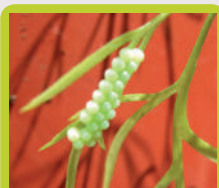


### Spiked star

Look out for the white star-shaped flowers of Bath asparagus in spring, also known as spiked star of Bethlehem. Found throughout Europe, this plant is very rare in Britain, but can be found in Bath. It is said to have been introduced to Bath by the Romans.



Did you know



Tiny eggs under/ on a leaf

Record your findings here

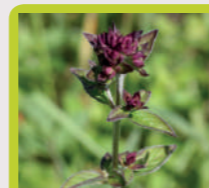
Something that jumps



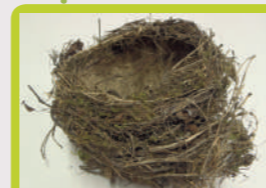
Greater butterfly orchid



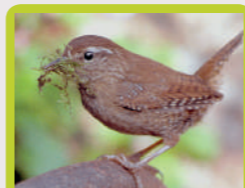
Song thrush



Wild marjoram



Birds nest



Wren



Cowslip



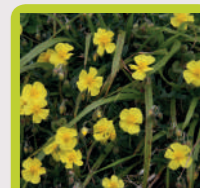
Blackbird



Brimstone butterfly

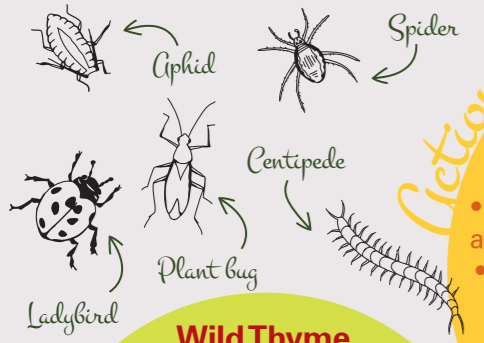
Record your findings here

Something soft



Common rock rose





*Fiction time*

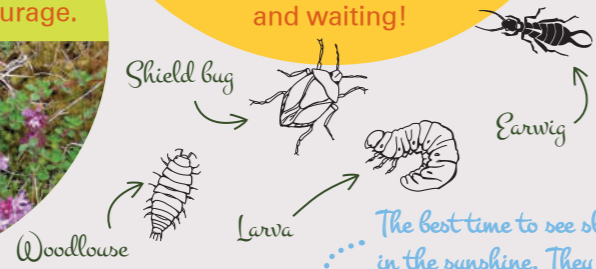
### Bug Hunt

How many different types of bugs can you find? Remember to follow these rules when being a bug hunter:

- Logs and stones are insects' homes, so always replace them as you found them.
- Be careful when you are searching, do not damage flowers or twigs.
- Be quiet and move slowly when searching. You will have a better chance of seeing some bugs.
- Remember to be patient. You can discover a lot by sitting and waiting!

### Wild Thyme

The ancient Greeks used thyme for purification in sacred fires and believed that burning thyme would give them courage.



The best time to see slow worms is during the summer when they bask in the sunshine. They hibernate underground during the winter.

### Wood drummer



Listen out for the 'drumming' of the great spotted woodpecker that lives in the ancient woodlands on the lower slopes. During the spring they use this drumming, instead of singing, to attract mates and claim territory. The best time to see these vibrant birds, with black and white wings and a red patch under their tail, is during the early morning or evening.

*Did you know*



# Summer

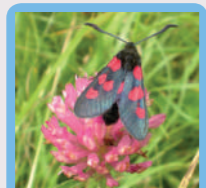
The reserve is buzzing with life during summer. Trees are in full leaf, there are plentiful insects and flowers. This is an important time for pollination and a great time to see woodland and meadow plants.

Julie Doherty

Can you find these sensational summertime wild things?



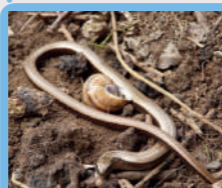
Bird's foot trefoil



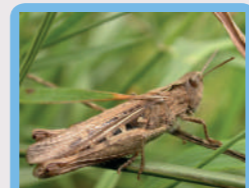
Five-spot burnet moth



Scarlet elf cap fungi



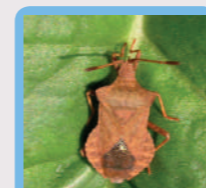
Slow worm



Grasshopper

Record your findings here

Something that smells nice



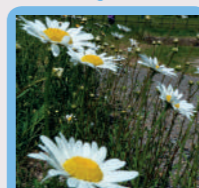
Shield bug

Record your findings here

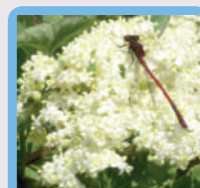
Something with six legs



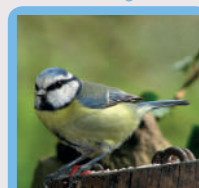
Common blue butterfly



Oxeye daisy



Elderflowers



Blue tit



Did you know

### Summer is a great time for spotting butterflies at Brown's Folly NR!



Green hairstreak Peacock Small skipper Marbled white

- Some butterflies hibernate, but many only live for 2-3 weeks
- Butterflies suck nectar with their coiled tongue
- Butterflies use their antennae as their nose
- An average butterfly has 1.5 million scales on its wings
- Butterflies' bright colours warn their predators that they are poisonous

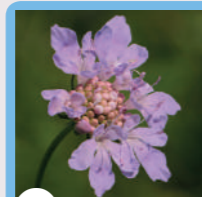
Green hairstreak, small skipper: J. Middleton - Peacock: J. Clarke

The chiffchaff arrives in the UK in March and departs in August and September. Look out for its distinctive tail-wagging!



Chiffchaff

Record your findings here



Small scabious



Marbled white



oak tree



Common spotted orchid

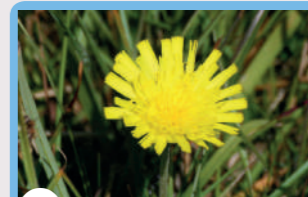


Hart's tongue fern

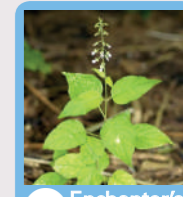
Record your findings here



Lady's bedstraw



Mouse-ear hawkweed



Enchanter's nightshade

### Detective work: footprint cast. Here is how to make plaster casts of footprints you may find around the reserve.

- 1) Find a footprint!
- 2) Bend a sheet of card around it and attach in place using a paper clip.
- 3) Mix the plaster and fill the card with it. Let it harden, then take it home.
- 4) Wash off any dirt from the cast and leave to fully dry out over a few days. Then carefully remove the cast from the card. You can then paint the footprint and varnish it if you would like.
- 5) Work out what animal the footprint belongs to. Why not build up a collection of different footprints you find at Brown's Folly NR?

Did you know

### Humble Bumble



Summer is also a great time to see the bumble bee gathering nectar from flowers. Bees are incredibly important for the pollination of plants and crops. It is easy to distinguish bumble bees from wasps, as bees have a rounder body, are black and orange and hairy.



### God tears

The bee is sacred in many ancient cultures. In Celtic mythology, the bee is a messenger between earth and the spirit world. It is said that the Egyptian sun god Ra cried tears that became bees.



### The year of the bat

In the summer, female bats gather in maternity roosts, usually in the roofs of houses, to give birth around June. Bat babies are blind. The mothers nurse the bats for about three weeks.

Action time

### Can you guess what it is yet?!

Make a colourful picture from materials you find on the woodland floor. Choose a 'creator' and see who can guess first what the creation is - a kind of outdoor Pictionary! Please remember: only use materials that are on the floor.



A woodland character



### The year of the bat

Autumn is a busy time for bats, when they feed to build up their fat reserves for the winter. They also mate during this time of year. Female bats are extremely clever, as after mating they can store the sperm of the male bat throughout the autumn and winter. They delay giving birth until spring, a time of plentiful food and suitable temperatures. Bats hibernate by late autumn.



*Autumn time*

### Bat Watching

Autumn evenings are a great time to look for bats. They are very active as they mate during this time of year. **Use a bat detector to discover different species.** A bat detector turns the echolocation shouts of a bat into a series of 'clicks'. The detector 'picks up' shouts from different species on different frequencies. A sudden 'buzz sound' from the detector may be a bat getting closer to and catching its prey.

With 13 different bat species at Brown's Folly NR, you should be able to identify quite a few!

The best place to see and 'hear' bats at Brown's Folly NR is about 20 m away from the main cave entrance.

You will need to get out to the reserve just before dusk. You may see pipestrelle bats first, as they fly in search of food whilst it is still quite light, then the range of bat species will emerge as it gets darker.



*«It is said that nine hazel trees surrounded a magical pond and the salmon who ate the hazelnuts became very wise»*

Pupil from Bathford Primary School

*Did you know that the Twit Twoo call is made by two different birds? The male and female calling to each other!*



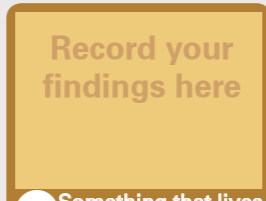
Ann Power



Angle shades moth



A nibbled nut



Record your findings here

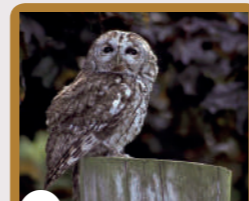
Something that lives in a dark, cool place



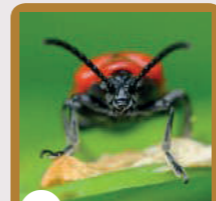
Hazelnuts



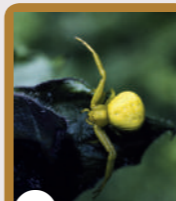
Sloes



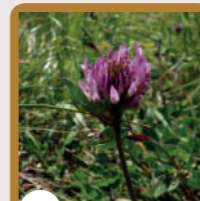
Tawny owl



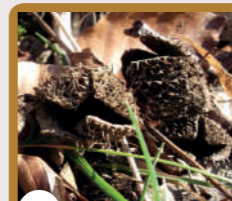
A beetle



A spider



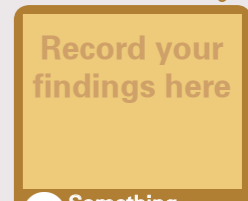
Red clover



Beech nut casings



Hawthorn berries



Record your findings here

Something wriggling

*← Can you find these sensational autumntime wild things?*



Did you know

**Oak**

The oak leaves and acorns are poisonous to cattle, sheep, horses and goats but not pigs. An oak tree can live for over 1000 years, and it can take 50 years before it has its first crop of acorns!



**Find your nut**

Can you find an acorn from an oak tree? Now see how your memory compares to a squirrel's... Hide your nut, then try to find it again after you have walked around the reserve!

Look out for grey squirrels 'caching' their nuts for the autumn. Look for moving tree branches as this is usually a sign of a squirrel jumping from tree to tree!

**Autumn time**

**Tree faces**

Autumn is a great time to find 'faces' in the bark of trees, when they have lost their leaves. How many faces can you find? Are they happy, sad or even spooky like this one?



Spooky tree face

**Fungi prints** Make some prints from fungi you may find at Brown's Folly NR.



Cut off the stalks and place the mushroom cap on some paper and leave overnight. The fungi will release its spores on the paper to reveal a print.

Always wash your hands after handling fungi- some are poisonous!

Did you know

**Autumn is a great time for foraging for fungi!**  
Can you spot some of these intriguing fungi finds at Brown's Folly NR?



**King Alfred's cakes** can be found on the bark of ash trees. King Alfred's cakes were pre-historic lighters! Embers from a fire were placed within the fungi, and could be carried about until a new fire needed to be lit.

**Birch Fungus** has a leathery top and white underside. This fungus grows on the live or dead wood of birch trees.

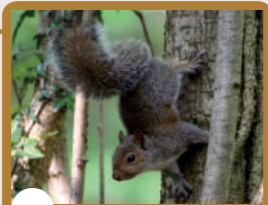
**Parmelia physodes lichen** is quite leafy and can be found growing on trees or soil. It has a distinct pale green/grey colour.

**Coriolus versicolor** (left) and **Trametes versicolor** (right) fungi, also known as **turkey tail**, arrange themselves one above another, like little roofs. They range in size from 3-8 cm wide.

All fungi photos: Ann Power



Acorns



A squirrel



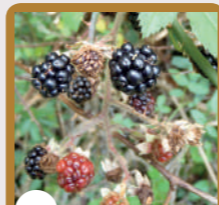
Field maple leaves



A ladybird



Knapweed



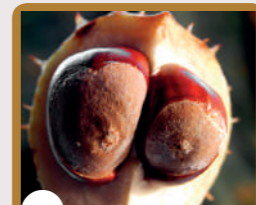
Blackberries



King Alfred's cakes

Record your findings here

Something crispy



Conkers

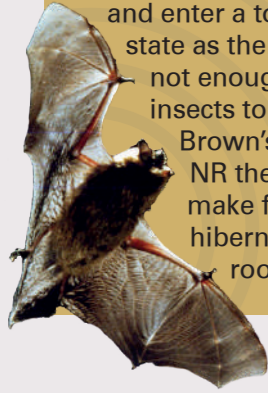


Magpie



### The year of the bat

Bats hibernate during the winter months and enter a torpid state as there are not enough insects to eat. At Brown's Folly NR the caves make for ideal hibernation roosts.



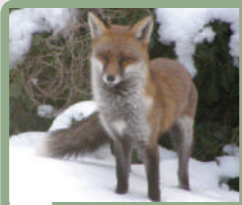
Ivy is an evergreen plant which is particularly important in winter when it provides a home for birds and hibernating butterflies.



Ivy

Record your findings here

Something hard



Fox



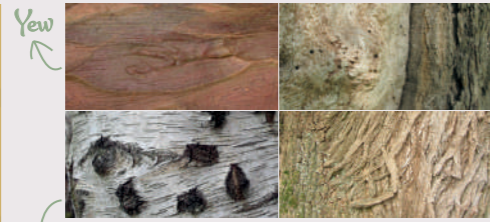
Beech tree buds



Footprint



Yew



Yew  
Oak  
Birch  
Elm

**fiction time**  
**A work of bark!**  
Why not take a closer look at the wonderful patterns in nature by taking some tree bark rubbings? All you need to do is tape some paper to a tree trunk and rub over the paper with a crayon and watch the pattern of the surface of the trunk appear! Alternatively, use a candle instead of a crayon and when at home paint over the paper. The bark rubbing will stay white.

The **yew tree**, sacred to Pagans and Druids, is known as the **'Tree of life'**. It is a symbol of regeneration as drooping branches can form new trunks where they touch the floor. The tree is also a symbol of death as the leaves, bark and berry pips of the yew are poisonous. Yew branches were used in burial ceremonies to protect the deceased on their journey to the 'underworld'. Britain's oldest inhabitants are yew trees... they can live for thousands of years.



Rabbit footprints

Hedgehog footprints

Whilst most woodland, grassland and meadow plants become dormant and mammals hibernate to conserve their energy during the harsh winter months, there are still many delights to see at the reserve.



# Winter

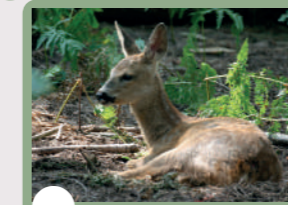
Can you find these sensational wintertime wild things?



Silver birch



Old man's beard



Roe deer



Record your findings here  
Something star shaped



Drey (squirrels nest)



# Fiction time

## Microhabitats

Can you find the limestone wall that marks the eastern boundary of the nature reserve? The wall provides a microhabitat that is dry and snug in winter for lots of creatures... Can you find any? What other microhabitats can you find?



This tree provides a cosy home for these snails



The limestone wall

## Pellets

Birds of prey eat small mammals such as voles, mice and shrews. They swallow them whole but can't digest them all. The feathers, fur and bones get compressed in their gullet and regurgitated as a pellet.

Photo: P. Doherty



Barn owl pellets

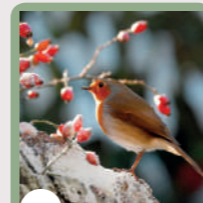
Did you know

**Winter wonderland** Wrap up warm and search for frosty cobwebs on a crisp, cold morning. They make wonderful photos! How many different shapes can you find?



Photos: D. Kilbey (top 3) - GatehouseStudio (bottom left) - S. Nicholls (bottom right)

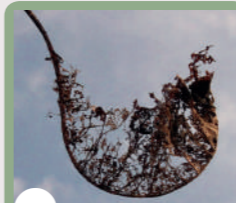
The female robin builds the nest, usually amongst bushes or in ivy on trees, or in holes in walls, making a domed structure from leaves and grass, and lining it with roots, feathers and hair. However, robins often nest in unusual places such as old teapots, kettles, pans and inside sheds and garages.



Robin



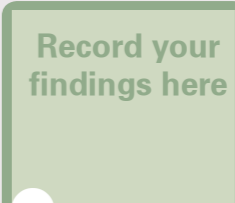
Icicles



Leaf skeleton



Moss



Something rough



Holly berries

## Holly

Vibrant evergreen plants were commonly used to decorate people's home during Pagan times at Yuletide, especially holly and pine.

In Pagan folklore holly is personified as the Holly King, depicted as an old man with a staff made from a holly branch. **At the winter solstice** (the shortest day) **there is said to be a great battle between the 'Oak King' and the 'Holly King'**. The Holly King is a symbol of death and darkness. He reigns from the summer solstice as the days become shorter. But he is defeated by the Oak King, and the days become longer again.

Holly is also seen as an important plant after the solstice, as its prickly leaves symbolise the tenacity of life and was a reassuring reminder in the winter that life would indeed return in the spring.

The Romans believed that holly was sacred to Saturn and was used in ancient Saturnalia celebrations held in December.

**Holly has protective qualities against fairies and lightening!** Holly was placed on people's front doors for protection. The holly tree can actually protect itself from lightning as the spines of the holly leaf act as electrical conductors, channelling lightning strikes to the ground.

Wildstock



# Treasure hunt

Avast Ye! There be some great things to spy at Brown's Folly NR all year round! Put on your treasure-seeker hat and uncover the secrets of the past... Use the co-ordinates to find your way to the treasures.



24

**Can you find the oldest tree within the ancient woodlands?**  
Try and find a tree that is at least 100 years old. How can you tell? If you can put your arms around a tree's trunk then it is younger than 100 years.  
*Grid ref. G1*



**Exposed limestone**  
This oolitic limestone at Brown's Folly NR was formed during the Jurassic period, when the area was covered by a shallow tropical sea. The ooids would have collected on the sea floor, along with shell material from organisms living in the sea, and would have eventually become cemented together to form a rock. *Grid ref. F3*



**Fossils in rocks**  
Fossils can be found in the limestone rocks. You can see shell and coral fossils that lived in the calm tropical sea 170 million years ago! Fossils are only found in sedimentary rocks such as limestone. You can find bits of rock like this on the grasslands.  
*Grid ref. F3*



**Browne's Folly**  
Check out the yellow lichen patterns growing on the tower and snails and bugs living between the stone blocks. What letters are carved into the stone?  
*Grid ref. F4*

25



**This old 'tomb' stone**  
*Grid ref. C6*



# Score card

Use this scorecard to add up points for each species you see around Brown's Folly Nature Reserve. How many points did you score at the end of a year?

You get extra points for spotting rare species. What is your maximum score for one day? Is it easier to spot certain species at different times of the year?

## MAMMALS

	Date spotted	
Badger	25	
Bat	20	
Squirrel	5	

## BUTTERFLIES

	Date spotted	
Green hairstreak butterfly	15	
Small skipper butterfly	15	
Marbled white butterfly	15	
Peacock butterfly	15	

## BIRDS

	Date spotted	
Robin	10	
Sparrowhawk	25	
Great tit	15	
Great spotted woodpecker	25	
Blue tit	15	
Bullfinch	15	
Chiffchaff	15	

**TOTALS**

## PLANTS

	Date spotted	
Oak	5	
Beech	5	
Yew	10	
Hazel	5	
Holly	10	
Ivy	5	
Bath asparagus	25	
Wild thyme	15	
Common spotted orchid	15	
Hawthorn	5	
Sycamore	5	
Horse chestnut	5	

## OTHERS

	Date spotted	
A nibbled nut	25	
Fossils in rocks	25	
Leaf skeleton	15	

**TOTALS**

## FUNGI / LICHEN

	Date spotted	
King Alfred's cakes	15	
Turkey tail	20	
Leafy lichen	10	
Birch fungus	10	
Yellow lichen on the tower	10	

## REPTILES

	Date spotted	
Slow worm	25	

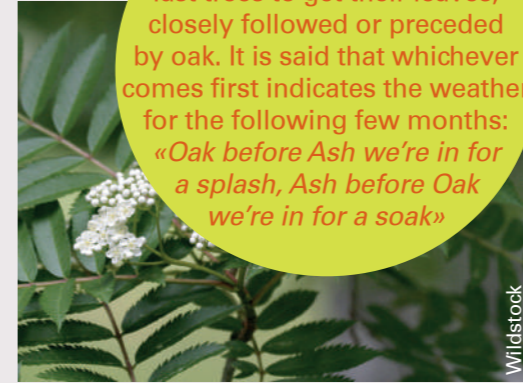
## MINIBEASTS

	Date spotted	
Tree snail	15	
Woodlouse	5	
Pillbug	5	
Ladybird	5	
Worms	5	
Spider	10	
Harvestman	15	
Snail	5	

**TOTALS**

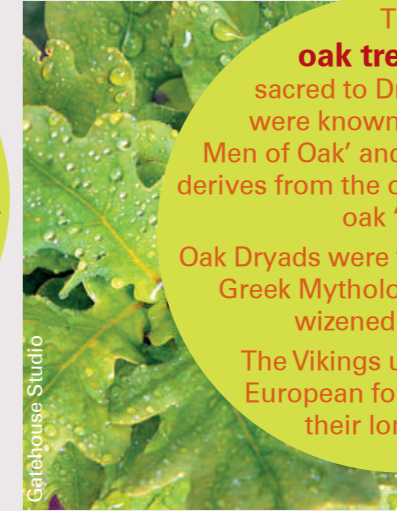
# Special trees

These six trees are native British trees found at Brown's Folly NR. This means that these species were growing in Britain about 20,000 years ago, before the end of the last ice age when rising sea-levels cut off Britain from the rest of Europe.



Wildstock

In spring, **Ash trees** are one of the last trees to get their leaves, closely followed or preceded by oak. It is said that whichever comes first indicates the weather for the following few months: *«Oak before Ash we're in for a splash, Ash before Oak we're in for a soak»*



Getehouse Studio

The **oak tree** is very sacred to Druids. Druids were known as 'the Wise Men of Oak' and the name Druid derives from the old Gaelic name for oak 'Duir'.  
Oak Dryads were tree spirits in early Greek Mythology, depicted as wizened old men.  
The Vikings used oak from European forests to make their longboats.

## Hazel

was regarded as the Tree of Knowledge in Celtic times and its nuts were the ultimate vessel of wisdom.

Shakespeare associates hazel with faerie lore. Queen Mab is a fairy mentioned in Romeo and Juliet: *«Her chariot is an empty hazelnut, Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub, Time out of mind the fairies coach-makers»*

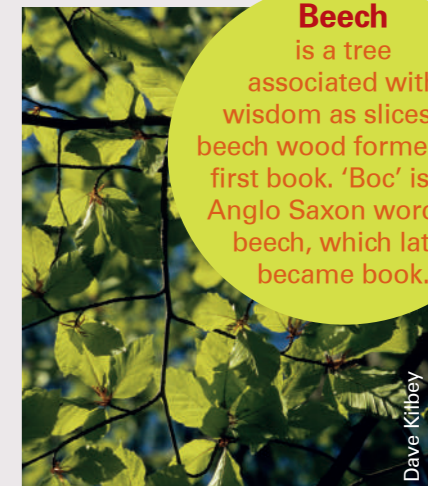


White-beam

Mirok E. Talbot



Yew



Dave Kibbey

## Beech

is a tree associated with wisdom as slices of beech wood formed the first book. 'Boc' is the Anglo Saxon word for beech, which later became book.





Brown's Folly c. 1930

## Local stories

### A tall story?

There are myths and legends surrounding the tower and why it was built. Folklore suggests that the Pepperpot tower was built for an errant daughter to be locked up in!

### Sally in the Woods

Legends says that Sally in the Woods, near to Brown's Folly NR is so called because a lady called Sally was imprisoned in Brown's Folly and was murdered in these nearby woods... or that a lady was knocked over here when she ran from the woods in front of a car. Sally is also an old word for skirmish (a battle) which may have taken place here.

*«Although there is no real historical evidence, there is a myth that a landowner's daughter was locked in the tower as it had been predicted that she would die on a certain day. Food was winched up to her in a basket and on this certain day a poisonous snake had got into the basket. She was bitten and died.»*

Pat Ellingham, Avon Wildlife Trust



This historic photo shows men who worked quarrying Bath stone in the area, and the tools they used. The men in the front row are holding 'Frig Bobs', large saws used to cut blocks of stone, which you can see in the background.

Brown's Folly NR, 1946



## Sheepwatch!

Joe Middleton (AWT Reserves Manager)

The grasslands are a precious habitat at Brown's Folly NR as they allow invertebrates to thrive which, in turn, helps feed the bat populations. This historic photograph shows that in 1900 there was a greater coverage of open grasslands at the reserve. This open grassland existed as sheep and rabbits used to graze the land. The introduction of myxomatosis to Britain during the 1950s reduced the population of British rabbits, meaning that scrub colonised and eventually the grasslands turned into woodlands.



*The tower on the limestone ridge, grassland and exposed limestone slopes and ancient woodlands below.*

Over the last ten years Avon Wildlife Trust has tried to maintain these grasslands through volunteers manually clearing the land on a regular basis. To help maintain the grasslands, Brown's Folly NR is now home to a rare breed of sheep. A small number of Wiltshire Horn sheep are now grazing the grassland area, with a team of local Sheepwatchers making sure they are safe.

*"The grassland area has been known by local children as 'The Humpy Tumps' "* Richard Pooley, Conservation Volunteer for AWT



# Community information

## Batty about Bats?

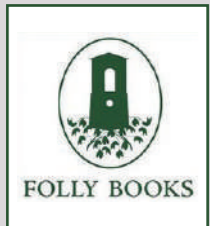
Visit [www.avonbatgroup.org.uk](http://www.avonbatgroup.org.uk) to find out more about bats in the south west or attend a bat walk.



## Sheepwatch at Brown's Folly

If you would like to find out more about the sheep grazing on Brown's

Folly NR or would like to be a Sheepwatcher, visit: <http://www.brownsfollysheepwatch.blogspot.com>



## Folly Books

has published two fantastic illustrated books about the underground workings at Brown's Folly: Derek Hawkins' 'Bath Stone Quarries' and Nick McCamley's 'Second World War Secret Bunkers'.

[www.bradford-on-avon.org.uk](http://www.bradford-on-avon.org.uk)



## The Folly Fellowship

A charity that protects and preserves British Follies. It has owned Brown's folly since 1998. [www.follies.org.uk](http://www.follies.org.uk)

## The Bathford Society

A registered charity dealing with matters of interest to the Parish of Bathford, the society organises talks and exhibitions relating to research into local history. [www.bathfordsociety.org.uk](http://www.bathfordsociety.org.uk)



## Wiki page

Visit [brownsfolly.wikispaces.com](http://brownsfolly.wikispaces.com), an online database set up by Avon Wildlife Trust's Wild Schools for local people to view and update photos and information about Brown's Folly.

Avon Wildlife Trust  
**Brown's Folly NR page**  
[www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/browns\\_folly.htm](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/browns_folly.htm)

# Thank you

'Brown's Folly Nature Reserve, a unique place to explore' provides opportunities for local people to engage with nature in their neighbourhood and has been produced by Avon Wildlife Trust with the kind support of the Medlock Charitable Trust. The journal will be used as a resource for schools and the wider community, to enable people of all ages to discover the wonderful wildlife that lives within this beautiful nature reserve.

I would like to thank Ann Power, Learning Team placement at Avon Wildlife Trust, for her dedicated research, fantastic photos and invaluable help in compiling this book. Huge appreciation must also go to Peter Staples and the Bathford Society, Derek Hawkins and Nick McCamley of Folly Books for their time, advice and generosity for allowing us to publish their photos which have added so much value to the content of the book. Big thanks also to Richard Pooley for showing me around the reserve and sharing all his knowledge when I first started this project and Joe Middleton, Avon Wildlife Trust's Reserve Manager, for his enthusiasm and general support.


Finally, I would like to mention how much I have enjoyed working with the staff and pupils from Bathford Primary school and Churchfield's village school. I hope they take time to enjoy Brown's Folly NR, visit it regularly and help to ensure its future by respecting the landscape and wildlife.

*Julie Doherty*

Learning Development Officer at Avon Wildlife Trust

If you would like a copy of this booklet or would like to find out more about learning opportunities with Avon Wildlife Trust please contact Julie Doherty, Learning Development Officer on 0117 917 72 70 ext. 316 or email [schools@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:schools@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk)





*"Brown's Folly is a beautiful site. The view is incredible, the history is incredible, the woodland, the interest of all the invertebrates, the wildflowers, the trees - it has got so many appeals to so many people"*

Joe Middleton (Avon Wildlife Trust)

This booklet is printed on 100% recycled paper using vegetable based inks. Compiled by Ann Power and Julie Doherty, designed by Caroline Dalcq