

Wildlife

Issue 96 • SPRING 2013

Avon Wildlife Trust



*inspiring
people!*

Forgotten landscape
Severn heritage

Lottery project
community launch

Pollinators
a spotter's guide



includes
UK news
and stories

avonwildlifetrust.org.uk





Dr Bevis Watts
Chief Executive,
Avon Wildlife Trust

Bigger plans in a bigger picture

Since joining the Trust in January I have been inspired by a very committed team and by the support we receive from very dedicated volunteers and members. This provides a great foundation for the opportunities I see for the Trust to have even more impact on the restoration of our natural environment.

The Trust has continued to deliver to great effect in recent months but it is also an exciting time of change and we are in the process of forming a new management team. That team's challenge will be to develop a future strategy for the Trust that is entirely focused on advocating and creating a living landscape for our region and delivering a step change in the number of people connecting with that landscape in order to care for it. That means we need to develop a vision of the ecological network we want to advocate, to create and to help restore within the region and have an awareness of how that connects to landscapes beyond our region. Work to develop that vision is already underway and will engage a range of external stakeholders.

Delivering a more ambitious vision for a healthy ecological network and halting the decline in biodiversity means both building on the great work of the Trust and working in new ways. We would like to continue and scale up our work on some Living Landscape projects. This edition highlights some of our living landscapes work and the vital role of pollinators in our ecosystems. Connecting habitats and enabling wildlife to flourish and migrate across a landscape will be an even greater part of our future focus.

We also need to work more in partnership and be open to new collaborations with a wide range of organisations that are starting to realise the need to invest in our natural environment to secure the wide range of essential services it provides, including clean water, crop pollination, carbon sequestration and flood defences. One such collaboration is with Triodos Bank, which will support our wildflower meadow restoration with your help (see page 7).

We also need to engage more people in caring for the natural environment. Connecting our conservation work to social agendas will also be important. The health and wellbeing benefits from working with nature can mean both social and conservation objectives can be delivered in tandem, creating new opportunities to fund conservation work. We will also be reviewing how we can support and develop local groups, as most people's concern is for their immediate environment.

It is an exciting time for the conservation movement, and I look forward to updating you on how our vision and strategy develop.



Ox-eye daisies at Callington Road

Your magazine

Avon Wildlife Trust is your local wildlife charity working to secure a strong future for the natural environment and to inspire people. With the support of 16,500 people, the Trust cares for 35 nature reserves, it runs educational and community programmes, advises landowners, and campaigns on issues that threaten wildlife habitats.

Edited by Dagmar Smeed
Design by Kevin Lester
Print by Burleigh

Cover photos:
Forgotten Landscapes:
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Lottery project: The Post
Pollinators: Robin Williams
Trout & About: Lorna Wilcox

All uncredited photos
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*Thank you to everyone
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magazine.*

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The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Trustees of Avon Wildlife Trust.



Wildlife magazine is printed on recycled paper.

Registered Charity No. 280422
Registered Company No. 1495108

SPRING 2013

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Tweet tweet

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for the latest news and competitions. Please share your wildlife pictures and experiences! Teachers can check out the blog at wildschools.org.uk and follow @wildschools

[Twitter.com/avonwt](https://twitter.com/avonwt)
[Facebook.com/avonwt](https://facebook.com/avonwt)



*A shaded lamp and a waving blind,
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:
On this scene enter – winged, horned, and spined –
A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;
While 'mid my page there idly stands
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands...*

*Thus meet we five, in this still place,
At this point of time, at this point in space.
– My guests besmear my new-penned line,
Or bang at the lamp and fall supine.
“God’s humblest, they!” I muse. Yet why?
They know Earth-secrets that know not I.*

Thomas Hardy 1840-1928



Wild News

Updates across the Avon area

Nature Festival celebrations

The Bristol Festival of Nature, being held on the Harbourside on 15 and 16 June, is the UK's biggest free celebration of the natural world.

It brings together more than 150 organisations, including Avon Wildlife Trust, for a programme of interactive activities, live entertainment, hands-on experiences, plus a market packed with local produce.

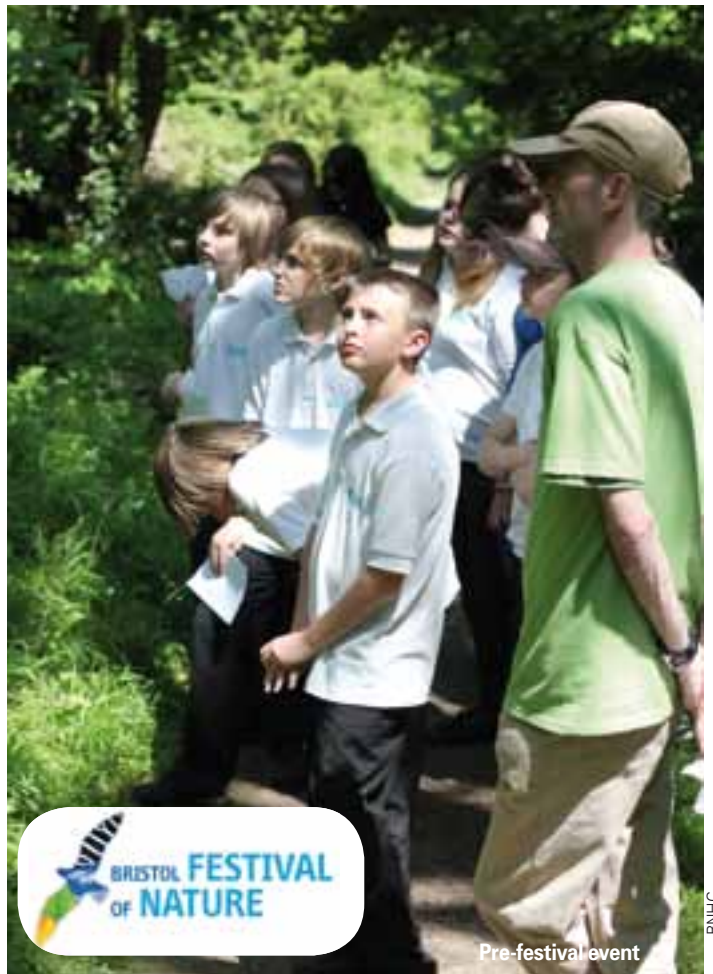
The festival, which has a schools' day on 14 June, is marking its tenth anniversary.

The Trust is celebrating 'Living Landscapes', focusing on pollinators and ways people can do their bit for wildlife by, for example, valuing the role played by reserves, allotments, parks and gardens; by volunteering for the Trust, including Feed Bristol; making a wildlife-friendly garden; or joining as a Trust member. Highlights include Living Landscape experts, live honey bees, games for children and musicians Poco Drom.

As part of this anniversary, festival organisers are also launching 'Bristol99'. Events are being organised across the city, starting with Bristol BioBlitz on 3 and 4 May and culminating in the Festival weekend.

See pages 18 and 19 for 'A River Story', which is also taking place at the Festival, and pages 22 to 23 for the feature on pollinators.

For updates visit festivalofnature.org or follow @BristolFON.



Feed Bristol wassail

Community food-growing project Feed Bristol held its first wassail to celebrate the new growing season.

Feed Bristol was officially launched last June, and has since transformed the former market garden in Stapleton, Bristol.

The free celebration included the traditional wassail with a children's music workshop, morris dancing and a ceilidh – in addition to hot stew and mulled cider. Feed Bristol has won a number of awards for its work, which includes vegetable and fruit growing workshops and celebratory events (see listings).

Community groups, schools, corporates and individuals volunteer their time and adopt patches at Feed Bristol to grow organic food in a nature-friendly way. All food is shared, with volunteers receiving 'grow it' tokens.

Project Officer Matt Cracknell said: "The wassail was a great way to show what has been achieved and to celebrate the new growing season with lots of fun, dancing and noise."

Catchment Sensitive Farming

With funding from Natural England, Living Landscape Project Officer Richie Smith has undergone training to deliver Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) advice and help to farmers in the Chew Valley area. CSF provides practical support to enable farmers and other land managers to reduce water pollution from agriculture.

Through effective nutrient management planning, good soil management and improvements to farmyard infrastructure, nutrient runoff into local water courses can be reduced. With both Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and providing drinking water to Bristol and surrounding areas, maintaining good water quality is essential.

Building on the relationships Richie has established in the region over the last four years, he is contacting local farmers to assess any possible diffuse pollution issues on their farms, carrying out soil sampling for them and recommending specialist help as required. Alongside this work, two of our experienced volunteers, Emma Davis and Helen Saunders, have been out to some of the tributaries of the River Chew to assess potential



TOM MARSHALL

sources of sediment and nutrient runoff. This is a wet weather job, as it is during and after high rainfall that we can see the problem areas. The information collected from these 'walkovers' will help direct our work in the catchment.

Dragonflies and damselflies

This spring sees the publication by the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) of the fourth in its landmark series of books.

Illustrated with stunning photographs, *Dragonflies & Damselflies of the Bristol Region* provides a description of the 32 species of Odonata found in our area. Distribution maps for the dainty damselflies, the butterfly-like demoiselles and the more aggressive chasers, darters and hawkers, are accompanied by descriptions of the status, past and present, of this ancient group of insects.

Written by local experts, the book covers species such as regional specialities the hairy dragonfly and variable damselfly, which can be seen on Avon Wildlife Trust reserves.

The distribution maps could not have been compiled without the very many amateur naturalists, including many Trust members, who have submitted their sightings over time.

As well as some declines there are new species which have colonised our region, even in the last few years. Who knows how changes to our climate and habitats may alter the wildlife we see around us? This publication sets down a marker against which future populations can be measured.

Please go to brerc.org.uk to order your copy, priced £19.95.



JOHN ALDRIDGE

In praise of groups

Volunteers are essential to the Trust's work and cover scrub bashing to workshops, admin and running local groups. These organise walks, talks and fundraising activities, and include some of our founding members.

The work they do helps protect wildlife and inspires people, bringing joy to many. Therefore it is with sadness that we announce the closure of Thornbury Group.

Chief Executive Dr Bevis Watts said: "We are grateful to everyone who has volunteered their time and energy. Many local group volunteers were amongst the first to support the Trust and we owe them a great debt of gratitude."

Wild News

Updates across the Avon area

Wild weather offers

Don't huddle cooped up inside on a wild weather day, wrap up, put on your waterproofs and explore the great outdoors!

We have teamed up with publishers Frances Lincoln Ltd and Cotswold Outdoor to agree special offers for members: £2 off *The Wild Weather Book*, plus a chance to win a copy through Facebook, and 15% off shop purchases at Cotswold Outdoor.

The Wild Weather Book is packed with lots of ideas for families to go outside and enjoy the rain, wind and snow. Learn how to make rain drums or wind wishes, take bath toys on an adventure, go on a water droplet scavenger hunt, or build mud castles! Take your camera or smartphone and post your favourite pictures on Facebook!

To claim your discount at Cotswold Outdoor, please show your membership card (this offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotion). There are more than 60 stores nationwide, with one in Union Street in Bristol. Please contact angeladavies@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk if you need a new membership card.



Order *The Wild Weather Book* at the special offer price of £7.99 inc p&p (retail price £9.99), by calling Bookpoint on 01235 400 400 and quote the code 46WWB.



Call for volunteer speakers Triodos furnishing support

If you are a confident public speaker, enjoy making presentations, and are interested in wildlife and the Trust's work, you could join our team of speakers.

We welcome people of all ages and backgrounds, but Trust members and the recently retired are especially welcome. Speakers are invited to special interest groups, clubs and community associations, to give talks on 'The Work of Avon Wildlife Trust'.

Volunteer Judy Copeland, who organises the speaker programme, said: "Talks are an important way for us to reach new audiences and to talk about the Trust's important conservation and education work. We currently have more requests for speakers than we can meet. We are especially keen to hear from people who are experienced and engaging public speakers and have a strong interest in the Trust."

For further information please ring Judy Copeland on a Wednesday morning on 0117 917 7270 or email judycopeland@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.


Ethical bank Triodos has donated more than £3,000 worth of office furniture to the Trust.

The good quality second-hand office furniture includes 34 chairs, nine tables, six coat stands, three sofas, three picture frames and a flip chart. Triodos no longer needed the furniture following the bank's move to new headquarters in Bristol.

This means that the Trust is able to present a more professional image to visitors, including funders, partners and volunteers, and that funds are not diverted from our conservation and education work.

Chief Executive Dr Bevis Watts commented: "Trustees, staff and volunteers are grateful for the support Triodos is giving the Trust, and we are looking to develop this further with a new affinity relationship which will help us generate more money for wildlife."

The Trust's offices are on Jacobs Wells Road, in Bristol, and within one of the first police stations to have been built in 1836 in response to the Bristol riots. The building features old cells, which are now used for storing conservation and educational materials.



Save money to save wildflower meadows... *with Triodos*

MARK SMITH/FWAG

Trust supporters are being urged to take out a savings account with Triodos Bank, to help raise money for wildflower meadows.

Each time a member, volunteer or supporter opens a savings account, Triodos will donate £40 to the Trust's work to restore this important habitat.

Since the Second World War, the UK has lost more than 97% of these wildflower-rich grasslands. Wildlife which will benefit includes skylarks, brown hare, greater horseshoe bats, rare orchids, and butterflies such as the brown argus and common blue.

The Triodos Bank and Avon Wildlife Trust affinity scheme covers:

- Saving ethically online;
- Placing funds into a bond;
- Moving to an ethical ISA.

For the payment to be made, supporters must visit triodos.co.uk/avonwildlife which explains the simple steps to take out an account as well as terms and conditions.

If a total of 100 supporters were to take out an account with Triodos, the Trust would receive £4,000. This means we could do more restoration work for wildflower meadows by for example:

- Purchasing 30 kg of wildflower seed and 50 hand tools for volunteers;
- Making ten farm visits to advise landowners;
- Running workshops to inspire 120 schoolchildren.

What makes the scheme even more attractive is that Triodos is an ethical and sustainable bank and only lends money to organisations that can demonstrate a positive environmental or social benefit. It is also totally transparent, so investors can see how Triodos uses money. Its clients include Cafédirect, the Fairtrade coffee and tea producer; Jamie's Farm, which provides children with therapeutic care and access to nature; and Ecotricity, which provides green energy to households and businesses across the UK.

Founded in the Netherlands in 1980, the bank has operated in Britain since 1995. Since then, Triodos has attracted a community of savers who want their money to build a more sustainable society.

Triodos Bank's Business Development Manager Tom Owen commented: "Triodos Bank is a different kind of bank. It believes that profit doesn't need to be at the expense of the world's most pressing social problems – and it only lends its savers' money to people and organisations that work to make the world a better place."

Tom added: "We are delighted to be working with Avon Wildlife Trust, helping to raise money for wildflower meadows."

Please go to triodos.co.uk/avonwildlife to find out more about saving money ethically and helping Avon Wildlife Trust's work for wildflower meadows. Thank you for your support.

Wild News

Updates and issues across the Avon area

Planning matters

Over the last few months, we've been dealing with a variety of issues across the west of England.

Public queries come in regularly, with people flagging up concerns about developments in their patch, such as potential impacts on woodland adjacent to a housing development in South Gloucestershire, and a gypsy and travellers' site application on a site of conservation interest near Bath. We always give advice and, if necessary, pass on concerns to the local authority ecologists, who have a specific responsibility to deal with these issues.

We have also responded to two planning documents relating to major housing and mixed use developments in Cribbs Causeway and east of Harry Stoke in South Gloucestershire, to ensure that biodiversity is taken into account within the proposed green infrastructure. The Trust has also objected to a contentious 'fracking' application for a test bore hole near Keynsham. At the time of writing a new application for full production, which was due to be resubmitted, has been put on hold.

A consultation on the mitigation site for Highridge Common Local Wildlife Site (LWS) in south west Bristol (on part of the proposed route for the South Bristol Link Road) was commented on, and we also submitted comments on the Marksbury Road College site planning application, which appeared to have an impact on the Northern Slopes LWS.

Make a date for the AGM

The Trust's AGM will be held on 26 September. The guest speaker and venue is yet to be confirmed. Further details, including the annual review, will be available at avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Pat retires after 30 years

Pat Ellingham retired in December after 30 years' service, working her way up from admin support to Acting Chief Executive.

She has played a key role in the Trust's development and its role to secure wildlife and inspire people. Pat said: "When I started working, the concept of urban wildlife was very new, as was the idea of wildlife gardening or that wildflowers were more than 'just weeds'."

Her work has also been recognised by Bristol Zoo in its 'Walk of Fame' initiative to celebrate 'unsung heroes' in conservation.

Dr Bevis Watts joined as the Trust's Chief Executive in January, following the retirement of Steve Grainger in September.

Please see the next issue of 'Wildlife' for further details about our most recent appointment, Director of Community Programmes Michael Connors. Michael starts work with the Trust on 28 May, and comes from Penny Brohn Cancer Care Charity.

AWT ecological consultancy Working for wildlife



The Trust's Consultancy offers a comprehensive range of ecological services to benefit both wildlife and the interests of clients, and any profits go to support the charitable work of the Trust.

- Ecological impact assessments and mitigation
- Protected species and habitat surveys
- Biodiversity Action Plans and site management plans
- Phase 1 habitat survey
- Habitat creation and restoration
- BREEAM and code for Sustainable Homes ecology assessments

To find out more

email: enquiries@awtecologicalconsultancy.org.uk
avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/consultancy

Contact Sarah Dale, Principal Ecologist 0117 917 7273



THE POST



Max Bog

National Grid published its preferred Hinkley Point C Connection draft route corridor last December (please see box below) and consulted on it for six weeks.

The Trust had serious concerns about the potential impacts of National Grid’s proposed route and responded accordingly. These concerns relate in particular to the impact on Trust reserves at Max Bog and Portbury Wharf and other priority habitats, and the impact on habitats and wildlife of undergrounding cables both within the Mendips Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and from Nailsea to Portbury Wharf.

The proposals for the route currently include:

- Undergrounding of new high-powered cables (400kv) through the Mendips AONB, which may affect the Living Landscapes area where we are working with landowners, especially those near the Lox Yeo River corridor and our Max Bog nature reserve (access by permit only). Soil structures and ecology may also be affected by the cables heating the soil surrounding them. We have requested baseline evidence from National Grid about any research done elsewhere in assessing the impacts this will have.
- Undergrounding of existing low-powered cables (132kv) from the south west edge of Nailsea to Portishead. This may impact on peat soils and watercourses near Nailsea and could damage our nature reserve at Portbury Wharf very badly. The land take through the reserve could be between 20 and 25 metres wide alongside access to the site and installation/infrastructure works.
- A new route for the overhead 400kv pylons through Kenn, Tickenham and Nailsea Moors near Nailsea which are nationally designated for their rhynes and ditches. Further north, the pylons will be located adjacent to the M5 motorway and will go directly through designated local wildlife sites.

At time of writing, the Trust is seeking urgent discussions with National Grid about the direct impacts on its reserves and other issues (raised above) so that we can influence the final route. This



Water vole

ADAM FLOOK

should be published for formal consultation in early September for six weeks.

Hinkley Point C Connection

This project proposes replacing the existing pylons, overhead lines and associated infrastructure with 46.5 metre high pylons and some undergrounding of cables between the proposed Hinkley Point Nuclear Power Station in Somerset and Seabank Power Station at Avonmouth, Bristol. It is also proposed that one of Western Power Distribution’s smaller 132kv lines along the route will be removed and the other undergrounded as outlined.

For further details please go to hinkleyconnection.co.uk (a National Grid website).

A Forgotten Landscape

Restoring the Heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels



By Miriam Woolnough, Project Officer, South Gloucestershire Council

Take a large expanse of sky, the smell of mud, the call of an oystercatcher, a view of a large bridge and you could probably hazard a guess that you'd find yourself beside the River Severn in South Gloucestershire. However, would you then be able to name the saint associated with Oldbury-on-Severn, the pop star that crossed the water on the car ferry at Aust, and the protected species that lives alongside the industrial buildings at Avonmouth?

If you can't, don't worry, you are unlikely to be alone. The River Severn floodplain between Avonmouth and the parish of Hill is a tucked-away piece of landscape – cut off in the south by industrial estates, in the east by motorways and to the west by the river itself.

This predominantly flat landscape contains remnants of the once extensive wetlands that would have connected to Avon and the Somerset Levels. It is rich in wildlife, geology, archaeology and has many cultural tales to tell, but yet is far less known than its sister landscape.

In 2012 the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) granted first-round funding through its Landscape Partnership Scheme for 'A Forgotten Landscape – Restoring the Heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels'. This project is led by South Gloucestershire Council in partnership with Bristol City Council, Natural England, English Heritage, Environment Agency, Avon Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) and Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) Southwest. It aims to conserve and celebrate the heritage of the area, improve its accessibility, and provide learning opportunities for all.

The Landscape Partnership Scheme is the most significant funding stream for landscape-scale projects and brings local, regional and national organisations together to make a real difference to landscapes and communities. Each scheme is made up of a series of projects that together improve the heritage of the



Miriam

area. Heritage is interpreted in its widest sense, encompassing wildlife, geology, archaeology, social and cultural history.

Funders have welcomed the project, and have ear-marked funds for delivery, subject to satisfactory completion of this development phase.

I was appointed as project officer in November to take it forward. I will be spending my time working with project partners, talking to local communities and organisations, commissioning studies where we have gaps in our knowledge and pulling together a Landscape Conservation Action Plan.

Within 'A Forgotten Landscape' there are approximately 25 different projects which contribute to the overall scheme.

The projects, which are still being developed, are all interlinking but can be loosely classified into four different groups.

Creating and restoring wildlife habitat:

- Creating new habitat such as wetland scrapes for birds and ponds for great crested newts;
- Restoring habitat by managing hedgerows, and the ditch and rhyme system to benefit water voles, and by pollarding willow;
- Working with farmers to achieve benefits for wildlife through agri-environment schemes.

Access and interpretation:

- Improving access along the footpath and bridleway network, developing new routes and remote access such as web-cams;
- Creating new interpretation;
- A public art project.

Community participation:

- Creating opportunities for people to volunteer in community monitoring programmes, practical conservation tasks and archaeological digs;
- Local food events;
- Historical research to produce a booklet and exhibition;
- Oral history projects.

Learning, skills and training:

- Establishing a schools' learning programme;
- Working with local colleges and universities;
- Delivering training in practical conservation skills, archaeological techniques and traditional crafts such as cider and cheese making.



The fully developed application will be submitted to HLF at the start of 2014 and we will know whether we have been successful by June. This would release £1 million funding for the three-and-a-half-year project. Contributions towards project funding would be made by South Gloucestershire Council as well as a huge amount of in-kind support and volunteer time.

‘A Forgotten Landscape – Restoring the Heritage of the Lower Severn Vale Levels’, is already discovering fascinating information, facts and tales of this important wildlife-rich area. For the Trust it also forms part of a Living Landscape, connecting the estuary, wetlands and nature reserves, such as the Trust’s Lawrence Weston Moor and wildlife corridors.



Oh, and the all-important answers to the questions at the start of this article are in no particular order: water voles, St Arilda and Bob Dylan. I’ll leave you to attribute them to the right question!

Please email Miriam.Woolnough@southglos.gov.uk or phone 01454 863886 if you have local knowledge to share, want to be involved or can suggest other contributors to ‘A Forgotten Landscape’.



Trout & About

Children have been caring for fish eggs and fry in their own classrooms as part of an innovative joint project with Bristol Water. Tanks went into classrooms across Bristol in February in the first stage of 'Trout & About', which culminated in the release of young fish into Chew Valley Lake.

This latest 'Wild Schools' project helped to inspire schoolchildren to learn about their natural environment. The schools involved were Parson Street Primary, Compass Point South Street Primary, Ashton Gate Primary and St Barnabus Primary.

Other highlights included a visit to a local pond or stream, a field trip to Chew Valley and Blagdon Visitor Centre, and a nature trail designed by Bishop Sutton schoolchildren.

Through Trout & About children also found out how to help the sustainability of a healthy environment, and discussed water use, freshwater and marine habitats, and their own personal environmental impact. The project fed into Bristol Water's catchment management work to improve water courses.

Learning Development Officer Julie Doherty commented: "This project gave children the chance to learn in and outside the classroom about river ecology, its role as part of a living landscape and local wildlife. This was a fantastic opportunity to provide real and memorable learning experiences."

Children documented their Trout & About experiences using blogs at wildschools.org.uk (see below).

Steph: "We have really, really good news. 5B came to visit the trout eggs and were very excited when they realised that two had hatched."

Barni: "When we went pond dipping we found back swimmer, fresh water shrimps and even more! It was cool and we had fun."



Children examine pond water

LORNA WILCOX



Julie

Hedgehogs in schools

A total of 12 schools in low-income areas across Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare welcomed a very prickly visitor at the start of the year.

Children had the chance to hold a living, if somewhat sleepy, hedgehog in a project funded by Western Power Distribution.

The School Hedgehog Project gave children the chance to find out about one of the nation's favourite wildlife species through interactive and fun talks, as well as stories and games.

Learning Development Officer Julie Doherty said: "Hedgehogs are fascinating creatures and children love to find out more about them. It was thanks to the support of Western Power Distribution that we were able to offer this project for free to schools in low income areas."



Hedgehog art

LORNA WILCOX



Pond dipping

THE POST

Students 'go wild' in film challenge

This spring, Avon Wildlife Trust's Learning Team launched their exciting new project 'Wild Schools Film Challenge' which encourages young people to get outdoors and engage with nature by making their own wildlife films.

Created with the support of Rolls-Royce, Wild Schools Film Challenge is designed to be a fun and inspiring way to learn in the natural environment and support students' classroom learning.

Learning Development Manager Jo Morris said: "Filming is a fantastic way to engage young people with the natural world and a fun and different way to teach outside of the classroom."

"Wild Schools Film Challenge provides many cross-curricular learning opportunities as well as giving students the chance to explore the wildlife that lives in their school grounds. Regardless of whether schools have just a few flower pots or a designated wildlife area, they'll be teeming with wildlife."

Four kit boxes containing all the necessary technology required to complete the wildlife films are available, free of charge, to all schools for a three-week period.

Each kit box contains a class set of cameras, tripods and voice recorders as well as a mini-beast hunting kit and identification guides for the wildlife that children may come across in their school grounds.

The kit box also contains teaching resources, lesson plans and ideas, student-friendly user guides for all the equipment, and ideas for follow-on class projects including how to improve school grounds for wildlife.



Ready, camera, action!

All resources are available online, with introductory videos, equipment 'how to' guides filmed by students, and planning support for teachers. The website also hosts the completed school films to give students ideas for their own films and so that they can compare their school grounds with other schools in the area. Charlotte Thomas, year 4 teacher from Ashton Gate Primary School, commented: "Students have really loved the filming project and are still very enthusiastic about all the follow-on activities. We have showcased our films to visitors coming in to school and a number of students have also made films at home using the skills they learnt from the Wild Schools Film Challenge."

"A number of parents have commented on how much the children have enjoyed the activity and the whole class is generally more wildlife-conscious in their activities."

Years 5 and 6 from Little Stoke Primary enjoyed the opportunity to challenge themselves to make a film and agreed that "it was a great way to get fresh air" and that they had found wildlife that children never knew existed. Aidan shared his class experience: "It was a good learning experience for all of us, and if I had the chance I would do it all over again."

To reserve your Wild School Film Challenge kit box please visit wildschools.org.uk, email schools@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk or call 0117 917 7270.



Kitting out schools



Exploring habitats

The Trust's Wild Schools and community teams offer:

- Exciting learning opportunities in and outside of the classroom;
- Residential and non-residential sessions at Folly Farm Centre;
- Educational activities at Feed Bristol and Portbury Wharf;
- Opportunities for corporates to support targeted learning projects.

For more details please contact schools@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Communities And Nature

The Trust's Communities And Nature project is supported by the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities programme and focuses on giving people living in six key areas opportunities to engage with nature. These areas are Twerton and Whiteway in Bath; Hartcliffe and Withywood, Southmead, Barton Hill and Easton and Bedminster in Bristol; and South Ward in Weston-super-Mare.



The Communities And Nature team comprises Senior Project Officer Kelly Bray and Project Officer Matt Harcourt, working with community groups and volunteers.

Objectives include improving health and wellbeing and community cohesion, reducing isolation, and improving people's self-confidence and social skills. The project provides opportunities for young people aged between 16 and 25, elders, adults with learning disabilities, people recovering from mental health issues, refugees and low income families.

In February we launched the project in Jubilee Park in South Ward, Weston-super-Mare, with activities including snowdrop planting, bird box building and badge making. The weather was cold but we had an excellent turn out from Weston mums, Brandon Trust and residents, and representatives from North Somerset Council and Alliance Homes, as well as the local media.

Communities will be at the heart of this exciting project and will steer its development, helping us to deliver relevant projects, support and training. This will ensure community ownership and the delivery of sustainable projects. For example residents in South Ward have already identified the need for local involvement on their community allotment. Working with Alliance Homes we are offering regular volunteering opportunities for Sure Trust members and residents on Monday afternoons.

The vision is to have a vibrant community allotment with trained local volunteer leaders to continue to support regular groups. Work with parents and toddlers includes activities



Official launch

such as food growing and nature exploration. We provide support and resources so they can feel confident to use the site independently. A few suggestions have included a 'Mud Kitchen', a willow structure to grow runner beans and making a small area of the rhyne accessible for stream dipping.

The first exciting task is to build a recycled plastic bottle greenhouse. Other practical activities include constructing raised beds, and a compost toilet. These types of activities are a great way to engage young people as they encourage team work, problem solving and practical skills and at the same time improving self-confidence and social skills.

If you live in Twerton, Whiteway, Hartcliffe, Withywood, Southmead, Barton Hill, Easton, Bedminster or South Ward and would like to get involved please contact the Communities And Nature team on 0117 980 0393 or people@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.



Planting snowdrops



Building bird boxes

PHOTOS: CHRIS DAVIES

Spring wonders

Marsh marigold

If you're passing a pond and stop to look for frogs and newts, why not take time to admire the plants that flower around the pond edges? Among them and tucked close into the pond edges might be a large buttercup-like flower with luscious green foliage. This is the marsh marigold, or kingcup, and a joy to behold as its golden reflection glows back from wildlife ponds.



Look out for marsh marigold at [Netcott's Meadow](#) or [Willsbridge Mill](#).

St George's mushroom

Tucked away in hedgerows, on the edges of grassland and even under trees, St George's mushrooms live up to their name by appearing around St George's Day. The big solid off-white mushrooms are unmistakable at this time of year. They tend to grow in fairy rings so if you find one see if you can trace the circle.



Sniff out St George's mushrooms after April showers at [Walton Common](#).

Speckled wood

Sunlit days signal the appearance of speckled wood butterflies along woodland rides and forest edges. If you manage to creep up slowly on one and examine the subtle shadings and wave patterns on the wings, then you'll appreciate why it's related to such wonders as painted ladies, tortoiseshells and fritillaries.



Watch the flickering flight of speckled woods along shrubby paths at [Weston Big Wood](#).

Cuckoo

Cuckoos are very secretive by nature, and who wouldn't be with a habit of laying eggs in other birds' nests? In late spring however, they need to attract a mate and if you're lucky enough to enjoy the rare treat of their song echoing across a woodland, then with a bit of stealth and patience you also have a chance of an even rarer sighting.



Listen out for cuckoos at [Folly Farm](#).

Badgers

Late spring is a great time to spot badgers in the early evening light. With the days lengthening there's less foraging time after dark and with young emerging from the sett there's more demand for food. Badgers love earth worms so look out for them on obvious track ways across fields and meadows.



Look for badgers at dusk anywhere across the region.

Cuckoo flower

Cuckoo flowers appear across the countryside at this time of year, with their delicate pale purple flowers opening in unison atop a single spherical stem. They're easiest to find on moist ground where the grass has been nibbled over the winter by livestock.



Surprisingly, cuckoo flower is a member of the cabbage family and tastes vaguely of watercress. The name comes from its arrival in our meadows at the same time as the cuckoo.

Spot cuckoo flowers in damp or shady areas at [Portbury Wharf](#).

Around the reserves

Sheep in snow at Brown's Folly

Months of bitterly cold and wet winter management work, from felling trees and laying hedges to cleaning out ditches and clearing back scrub, is now bearing fruit. At time of writing, plants are already flowering, and animals breed and nest throughout the warmer spring and summer months.

The nature reserves in the Gordano Valley – **Weston Moor** and **Clapton Moor** – spent most of the winter under water. Access has been limited, but what is bad for farmers and reserve managers is good for the wildfowl and waders that overwinter in the ditches and fields. Volunteers from the Gordano Valley Group have restored the reed bed and cleared willow and alder from Old Weston Moor. Final ground works on the new drainage scheme at Clapton Moor, for the tilting weir, is due to be carried out this spring... as soon as we can get a tractor on the reserve without sinking!

It's been a cold winter for the sheep at **Brown's Folly**, grazing the grassland plateau within the woodland. Our five ewes were joined by the ram this winter and all five are ready to lamb. They all seemed to be oblivious to the tree felling carried out this year, that cleared most of the slopes within the grassland to extend the rare limestone grassland habitat.

On top of the Mendip Hills at **Dolebury Warren** and **Hellenge Hill** we have had some unusual machinery crawling around the hillsides. These scrub-munching machines have removed gorse and scrub to diversify the age structure and create a mosaic of different habitats that support the birds, small mammals and butterflies that love this fringe habitat.

Purn Hill is awaiting the arrival of a herd of Dexter cattle to graze the slopes overlooking Brean Down and the Somerset Levels. Dexters are a small but hardy breed that are light on their feet and suited to grazing rough grassland and therefore ideal conservation graziers. They will hopefully also visit **Blake's Pools** and **Tickenham Hill** later in the year and help graze neighbouring land for Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group (YACWAG).

Volunteers from the Wildlife Action Group (WAG) have wrestled with bramble, hawthorn and blackthorn, clearing scrub



Tim and Joe

from **Burledge Hill**, **Walton Common** and **Charfield Meadow**. They also worked alongside contractors at **Brown's Folly**, **Hellenge** and **Dolebury**. Our contractors, who work for many different conservation organisations are always amazed at how much excellent work our army of volunteers carries out.

Hedges at **Weston Moor** and **Bathampton Meadows** have been layed by volunteers. An ancient countryside management technique, this provides a living corridor and habitat for many different species of bird, bats and other mammals.

On the edge of Bristol, alongside the M5 motorway, **Lawrence Weston Moor** is one of the last remaining fragments in the area of the North Somerset Levels and Moors. Ditch scrub clearance has been carried out alongside the rhine network that supports populations of dragonflies, frogs and newts, and elusive water voles.



Hellenge Hill

At **Tickenham Hill** our volunteer warden Keith Giles and his supporters have been expanding the wildflower grassland habitat by felling and clearing trees and scrub from the slopes overlooking Tickenham and Nailsea Moors. The work is part of the management outlined in a new Higher Level Stewardship Agreement for the site that the Trust has entered into with funding from Natural England.

Volunteers at **Portbury Wharf**, including regular weekly groups, the Gordano conservation group and the Village Quarterly group, have worked alongside the reserve manager Bernie D'Arcy to improve the habitat in the Sanctuary by clearing scrub which is encroaching on the wildflower glade. The team is looking forward to spotting the first sandmartins to use the new bank, as well as wildflowers from ox-eye daisies to bee orchids. We were delighted to spot a dozen waxwings on the reserve and lapwings using the new South Pools island.

The flooding in the Chew Valley had most of our streams and brooks at **Folly Farm** nature reserve at bursting point. The entrance to the reserve and Folly Farm Centre was flooded, and the brook that runs alongside the car park became a river, sweeping away the bank. Works were carried out by engineers and contractors to stabilise the bank and tidy up fallen trees. Volunteers have worked hard to keep the slopes open and dry, whilst navigating the muddy tracks armed with fencing materials to repair gates, posts and wire that enable grazing and public access.

Our 35 nature reserves haven't seen warm sunshine in a while after a biting cold and wet winter. Many of our reserve surveys from last year show a decline in numbers, from hibernating bats and dormice in boxes, to breeding bird surveys and butterfly transects. However, our wildlife is more robust than we sometimes give it credit for and hopefully we will see numbers recover and thrive.



Weston Moor



Reserve manager Bernie with volunteers at Portbury Wharf

Bristol Avon Catchment management through partnerships and art



Bristol's floating harbour

Paula Spiers, Avon Frome Partnership Coordinator

Did you know that the Bristol Avon is one of 100 river catchments in England and Wales?

A river catchment is the geographical area where water (rainfall and groundwater) is drained by small streams and larger tributaries. The Bristol Avon drains parts of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset – an area of approximately 2,200km² with a population of 1,050,000. The upper reaches of the catchment are rural with significant arable agricultural activity on the higher ground and livestock more common on the lowland pasture. As well as Bristol and Bath, its main urban areas include Chippenham, Frome, Trowbridge, Devizes, Melksham, Malmesbury, Calne, Keynsham, Westbury, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Yate, Chipping Sodbury, Bradford on Avon and Corsham.

In March 2011, the government called for collaborative action towards a new catchment-based approach to protect and improve England's water environment. It invited organisations to work in partnership to pilot this new, holistic way of working to improve the quality of all rivers, lakes and surrounding environments.

Partners set up a catchment pilot project for the Bristol Avon in 2012, working co-operatively to determine priorities for the catchment and how best to combine efforts to achieve environmental improvements and common goals. Partners for the Bristol Avon catchment include organisations from government, business and the charity sector, including the Avon Frome Partnership, Avon Wildlife Trust, the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency, Wessex Water and the local authorities of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, and Wiltshire.



Cormorant

The lessons learnt from all the catchment pilots across the country will help Defra to establish a framework for integrated catchment management. This in turn will support objectives for improving inland and coastal waters under the Water Framework



Directive. This directive is designed to:

- Enhance the status and prevent further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce water pollution;
- Ensure progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

Issues and priorities

The partnership has considered a range of issues from flooding and sediment loading to sewage. The main focus has been to address areas where a management plan could provide:

- The greatest positive effect on the river environment;
- An increase in collaborative or new ways of working which have the potential to initiate the greatest environmental gains;
- More efficient and effective ways of working;
- Improved knowledge of existing stakeholder activity or interest, and understanding of which organisations have the capacity for future action.

The final management plan will be completed in June and downloadable from the Bristol Avon Catchment website.

Engaging the wider community

The partnership has also been able to reach out in imaginative ways to include communities and schools in arts and festival projects.

A River Story was born from the idea of capturing 'a people's perspective' (including children and young people) by compiling a simple video story for the river from source to mouth.

Schools and local groups across the whole geographical catchment were contacted and invited to contribute and to spread the word. Video diaries, photographs, film, drawings, poetry,

original music and audio contributions were encouraged.

People were asked to explore topics such as:

- Their awareness and use of their river;
- What they like and don't like about it;
- How it affects their lives;
- How it shapes where they live and play;
- Where it goes or comes from;
- Their hopes and concerns for the river's future.

How they responded, retold and recorded *A River Story* was their choice and was turned into a double-sided, illustrated picture map and a film.

A future and a festival

From June onwards the picture map will be available to download as a PDF from the Bristol Avon Catchment website. It will also be available on loan to schools and communities as two huge vinyl banners.

A weblink to the film will also be available following its launch and first screening at noon on 15 June at the Bristol Festival of Nature. The film will be shown at other times on Millennium Square's giant screen throughout the weekend.

Other fun and family-friendly activities at the festival are being planned. These will connect with organisations working for healthier water environments, to help improve understanding of the inter-relationship between water environments and their management.

For more details please go to barcmp.webnode.com or contact Paula Spiers at the Avon Frome Partnership on 0117 922 4325 or paula.spiers@bristol.gov.uk.

Seasonal stroll Prior's Wood

Prior's Wood is the Trust's most recent nature reserve and although it's well known locally for its springtime show of bluebells, it's a delight to visit at any time of the year.



CHRIS DAVIES

for bluebells in the spring



OS grid ref: ST490 745

Walk details

duration: 1.5 hrs

grade: easy

Key to map

walk

point of interest

reserve boundary

car park

scale

400m

look out for...



bluebells



bullfinch



chiffchaff

From Portbury village turn right after passing the gatehouse on your right and continue up the track between the fields. When you enter the reserve by the interpretation sign (1) turn left off the main track and follow the waymark to the top of the hill (2), across another ride and down a flight of steps and into the heart of the wildlife-rich woodland.

At the bottom turn right onto the woodland path. As you follow this path it gently (3) rises and bends to the right, bringing you out again onto the main ride (4). Turn left here past a replanted area. Continue to the reserve entrance by the Children's Hospice South West (5). However, do not leave the reserve, but turn right and descend the path that takes you down to the stream.

Cross the bridge (6) and follow the path up the hill, taking the first right onto the main track. Following this takes you into an extensive bluebell area that is truly breathtaking in the spring. At the end of this path (7) cross a new bridge that takes you up a slope and along a narrow woodland path which eventually rejoins the ride near the first sign (8). Turn left and retrace your steps.

How to get there

From Portbury take the Clapton-in-Gordano road, parking on layby just after last house in Portbury village. Walk back to the gated lane, turning onto a track that leads into the woodland. Please consider local residents when parking.

Access

Some of the paths can be muddy, slippery and steep sided.

Why don't you... come back in autumn on a fungus foray?

Pollinator power

Ray Barnett is Collections Manager at Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives and an expert on pollinators.

The sight of a colourful meadow gladdens the heart, but how often do we stop to think that actually the flower's role is to lure insects to do a plant's bidding? We are witness to the results of a 130-million year evolutionary partnership between insects and plants, which began when the dinosaurs of the late Cretaceous period still roamed the land.

Insect-borne pollination is by far the commonest mechanism to ensure successful sexual reproduction and the formation of seed. Bees, butterflies, beetles, moths and hoverflies transfer pollen as

an accident of visiting flowers to feed, to hunt other insects, to find mates, lay eggs or even to warm up.

Flowers have evolved colours and markings, including those only visible in ultra-violet light, which may be particularly attractive to some species.

Insects pollinate one third of all our food crops, and we need them. However, numbers are falling. Research into urban pollinators, such as that being carried out by Bristol University, is vital but we can all help by being more wildlife-friendly in our gardens.



Honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) – Hives can have as many as 100,000 bees and are susceptible to attacks by wax moths and the varroa mite. Popular pollinators, they have been kept by people as far back as the Ancient Egyptians.



Tree bumblebee (*Bombus hypnorum*) – Whilst many native bumblebees are in decline, this species has colonised Britain from the continent since 2001 and is widespread around Bristol and Bath. It has a ginger thorax and white tail.



Red-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*) – Protein content of pollen varies in different plants which may in turn affect a bee's growth and survival rates. This bee prefers yellow plants.



Garden bumblebee (*Bombus hortorum*) – It has three yellow bands and a long tongue, favouring flowers such as foxglove. An average nest, perhaps in an old mouse hole, can contain 100 bumblebees.



Common carder bee (*Bombus pascuorum*) – The gingery brown bee visits labiate flowers such as dead nettles. The nest is covered with moss.



Early bumblebee (*Bombus pratorum*) – Two yellow stripes and an orangey tail indicate this common species which is often seen at bramble and soft fruit bushes. The nest is short-lived, producing two or three generations per year.



Drone fly (*Eristalis tenax*) – A close mimic of the honey bee, it feeds at open flowers such as the Michaelmas daisy. Males hover to protect a territory and to impress females. Hoverflies can digest pollen grains as well as nectar.



Tapered drone fly (*Eristalis pertinax*) – Distinguished from the very similar drone fly by its the front two pairs of feet being entirely yellow. This is one of the commonest hoverflies.



Marmalade fly (*Episyrphus balteatus*) – Despite its diminutive size, this hoverfly with its marmalade colouration is a regular immigrant from the continent.



Thick-kneed flower beetle (*Oedemera nobilis*) – Beetles go to flowers to feed, hunt and seek a mate, and as a result transfer pollen between flowers. The male of this species is very distinctive with its swollen hind legs.



Thunder flies (*Thrips Thysanoptera*) – In humid summer weather plagues of these tiny flying insects can be pests of cereal fields. They can be present in huge numbers in flower heads and so act as pollinators.



Silver Y moth (*Autographa gamma*) – On a warm summer's night take a torch to your night-scented flowers and discover the night shift. One of the hundreds of nocturnal species which feed on and pollinate plants.



Painted lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*) – A great wanderer, this butterfly can fly hundreds of miles, refuelled on nectar and transferring pollen from site to site.



Mosquito (*Culex pipiens*) – We may love to hate the mosquito for its whining flight and bite but that is only the female. The males don't suck blood, preferring nectar, and so convey pollen from flower to flower.



Bee fly (*Bombylius major*) – The long-limbed and tongued bee fly hovers at flowers such as primroses, cowslips and lungwort in the spring. Look closely and note the front legs resting on the flower.

Please go to avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildgardens for tips on making gardens more pollinator-friendly.

Our guest member

Nancy Chambers

Avon Wildlife Trust member, Nancy Chambers, is a fundraising consultant, helping local charities raise funds through grants and donations.



Nancy and the girls enjoying the sunshine on a walk

“

As a family we are always out and about, hunting for bluebells in May, fungi in October or simply taking the dog for a walk at the weekend. One day we got chatting with an Avon Wildlife Trust volunteer on a stand outside Waitrose. From the moment he told us where we could find red and white spotted fungus we were hooked!

My husband David, daughters Rose, who is 11, and Georgia aged eight, and I have been members of the Trust for five years. I work with many local charities and really appreciate the important role they play in protecting wildlife and encouraging the public to enjoy nature. Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust, for instance, provides a beautiful green sanctuary and wildlife reserve in the heart of Bristol. Another client, the Mitchemp Trust provides opportunities for disadvantaged 11 to 14-year-olds to experience nature through outdoor adventure camps.

We have taken the girls to Willsbridge Mill for den building and children's parties, to Weston Big Wood for walks and Brandon Hill is a favourite reserve due to its proximity to the shops and cafés of Park Street. David's mother has recently moved to Portishead so Portbury Wharf has become a regular haunt.

I grew up in rural Hampshire. My playgrounds were fields of maize twice my height, giant haystacks through which we built tunnels and the hills we whizzed down on our go-kart. There were lots of positives to growing up in the countryside but I also felt isolated at times. I wanted my children to enjoy the social benefits of living near friends, clubs and school, where every day did not involve getting in the car.



Georgia enjoys chatting as we walk

However, it is also important to David and I that our children should learn to appreciate nature. Being members of Avon Wildlife Trust gives us ideas of where to go, things to do and places to visit. We have remained members over the years because of the benefits it provides us as a family and because we know our monthly subscriptions contribute to the conservation of these natural habitats.

”

Folly Farm Conference Centre: *a place for business*

At Folly Farm Centre you escape from the pressures and distractions of the office to a place where all your conferencing requirements are taken care of, in the heart of the Trust's 250-acre nature reserve.

From the early stages of planning through to the event itself, our friendly team will be on hand to offer professional advice and manage all your conference needs. Whether it's a strategy meeting, residential conference, away day or large corporate event, you'll get all the space you need to focus, energise and inspire.

Restored farm buildings offer sleeping accommodation for up to 45 delegates; with ten bedrooms in the period farmhouse and ten self-catering studios in the centre's beautifully converted cowsheds with glorious views over Chew Valley Lake and beyond. The bespoke glass atrium with its wood burner creates a cosy and inviting space to socialise in the evening whilst enjoying a selection of our local and organic wines, ales and beers.

Our menus reflect the change in seasons and the chef always plans meals according to what vegetables, herbs and fruit are available from the Folly Farm Centre kitchen garden and other local suppliers. We plan for each arrival, looking at the needs of your group and the focus of what is to be achieved, ensuring delicious and creative dishes whether for a networking breakfast meeting or a week-long residential course. Special diets and



Philip prepares one of the conference spaces

food requirements are planned with personal service and care. The conference facilities include state-of-the-art audio visual equipment, as well as free wireless connectivity throughout. We have four conference suites and outside, the unspoilt meadows and woodland are perfect for our unique team-building activities. Let Master Shepherd Chris Farnsworth challenge your team dynamics with our ever-popular 'Sheep-herding' activity, enjoy time in nature on a 'Bushcraft Survival' afternoon or divide into teams and race each other in our fabulous 'Mission Impossible' team challenge!

Sustainability is at the heart of everything that we do at Folly Farm Centre. Holding your next conference, meeting and training session at Folly Farm Centre will help your organisation meet its corporate, social and environmental responsibility objectives. All profits generated by the Centre are also ploughed back into Avon Wildlife Trust's conservation and education work.

The Folly Farm Centre is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Avon Wildlife Trust, and gift aids profits to the Trust.

folly farm
conference centre

a place for business

Located in the heart of a 250-acre nature reserve, our award-winning conference centre is an inspiring and unique venue for conferences.

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Huge support for real marine protection

250,000 people have shown support for a network of 127 marine reserves. But so far just 31 candidate sites have got a green light

Despite huge public support for a network of marine reserves around the UK, the Government has only approved up to 31 of the 127 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) put forward by stakeholders in England.

The Defra decision will have disappointed the quarter of a million people who 'signed a scale' in our Petition Fish campaign to support the proposed network in English and offshore Welsh waters. The Wildlife Trusts delivered those signatures to Fisheries Minister Richard Benyon in January. Nevertheless, the designation of these sites frees an area the size of Cornwall from harmful activities. It is the biggest step forward ever taken to protect and manage our seas.

The Government wants more evidence to show that the rest of the sites are worthy of protection. We are working hard to gather that evidence. Meanwhile we are urging Government to designate all 31 initially proposed sites this year, and bring in appropriate management as soon as possible.

What you can do

- Have your say: Government department Defra is running a public consultation on MCZs. Submit your views via wildlifetrusts.org/haveyoursay.
- Become a friend of some (or all!) of the sites which might be designated in the future via wildlifetrusts.org/MCZmap. More details on page 32.



These pictures show a few of the 250,000 people who have signed our 'petition fish' to support a marine reserves network

Shropshire and Cheshire Wildlife Trusts are taking practical steps to address bTB



TOM MARSHALL

More Trusts start badger vaccination

While Government plans two large-scale badger culls this summer, The Wildlife Trusts continue to demonstrate alternative ways to tackle bovine TB. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust began a badger vaccination programme in 2011. Last year it was joined by Trusts in Cheshire, Shropshire, Somerset and Warwickshire. Other Trusts are raising money for their own vaccine deployment projects.

There's still time to convince Government to abandon the cull and tackle bTB through vaccination. You can help via wtru.st/helpbadgers



COLIN VARDELL

How will ash dieback affect reserves?

Ash dieback disease has now been found in more than 160 mature woodland sites, including some Wildlife Trust reserves. The main affected areas are East Anglia, Kent and the south west. The Government's national control strategy is to promote genetic resistance so that ash woodlands can naturally regenerate over time. All our woodlands remain open to visitors. Find out more about ash dieback on wildlifetrusts.org/ashdieback

AROUND THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS

LONDON WT

A large, rare spider, *Meta bourneti*, has been recorded for the first time in London by Trust staff – deep in tombs at Highgate Cemetery. It's an orb-weaving cave spider, adapted to living in darkness. wtru.st/tombspider

NORFOLK WT

Nature Iraq, the leading wildlife conservation NGO in Iraq, has given \$1,000 to the Trust's Cley Marshes appeal as an act of global support for the protection of marshes. wtru.st/cleyiraq

SUSSEX WT

A new project is encouraging neighbours to help wildlife thrive in their gardens. 'Nature Street' aims to help local communities to interlink garden habitats and create Living Landscapes. wtru.st/natstreet

YORKS WT

Thanks to SITA the Trust is recreating water vole habitat at Westwinds, near Ackworth. It aims to reconnect isolated populations, so the voles can disperse and recolonise more easily. wtru.st/wentvoles

SCOTTISH WT

The Trust and RSPB Scotland have presented a plan for a National Ecological Network to the Scottish Government. They argue it should be part of Scotland's new National Planning Framework. wtru.st/scotnetwork

BBOWT

Woodlands, hedgerows and wildflower meadows on five reserves in Bernwood Forest are being restored thanks to a WREN Biodiversity Action Fund grant of £222,000. wtru.st/bernwood

Help us save places like this

New website section features appeals to safeguard crucial wildlife sites



This fabulous saltmarsh could link two existing Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserves. More at wtru.st/cleyappeal

The Wildlife Trusts' website has a new section showing local appeals to buy land for wildlife. We hope that global publicity will bring in extra donations and help push forward our mission to create Living Landscapes.

Trusts are appealing to save marshes, hills, islands – even Charles Darwin's garden and Laurie Lee's wood. Some of these places and the funds needed are:

- Eycott Hill, a wildlife-rich upland site in Cumbria, £968,000;
- Part of Skokholm Island, a crucial site for seabirds off South Wales, £250,000;

- Axemouth Undercliff, a stretch of jungly Jurassic Coast in Devon, £50,000;
- Trantershill Wood, Gloucestershire, owned by author Laurie Lee, £35,000;
- Charles Darwin's childhood garden in Shrewsbury, £75,000.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust needs to raise £1m to buy 143 acres (main picture) adjoining Cley Marshes. This would expand Cley – the first reserve owned by a local Trust – by a third and create a five-mile strip of coastal wildlife sites. So far it's raised £300,000. If you can donate to help us save this and other special places, visit wildlifetrusts.org/appeals. Thank you.

CHESHIRE WT

Over the winter schools, scout groups, volunteers and students have helped the Trust to plant bluebell bulbs in young local woodland plantations as part of work to increase the species' range.

wtru.st/cheshirebells

DEVON WT

The Trust has achieved the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard, recognising the work it does with more than 300 volunteers who regularly take part in conservation tasks.

wtru.st/VQSdevon

DORSET WT

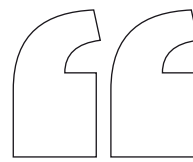
127 square miles of reef habitat from Portland to Studland is now a European Special Area of Conservation. Hundreds of volunteer divers have recorded the species and habitats there.

wtru.st/DorsetSAC

GLOS WT

The Trust has joined a local cheese maker to launch a wildlife-friendly single Gloucester cheese. It's made from the milk of cattle used for conservation grazing at Greystones Farm nature reserve.

wtru.st/GWTcheese



Your support is vital



We have never needed the support of our members more than we do now. So thank you very much for joining and for staying with us, in what are difficult times for the natural world as well as for society.

We continue to look after some of the most precious and beautiful places near you, to introduce millions of children to nature, and to work with local authorities and businesses to promote wildlife. There is so much more we could and need to do, given funding cuts to both central and local government. We are fortunate to have the contribution of our many volunteers but your legacies and support for appeals, such as those featured left, are vital.

Although a recession traditionally means less pressure from development, this one seems to break all the normal rules. The Government's obsession with reviving damaging road building schemes ignores lessons from the 1990s, when the need for a more environmentally responsible approach to transport planning was established. We must dispel the myth that nature is a barrier to the economy – a myth underpinning the Government's recent efforts to repatriate powers for environmental regulation to the UK from Europe. To quote Tony Juniper's new book *What has nature ever done for us?*

How can nature be holding back the economy when without a healthy natural environment, society (and so its trading system the economy) would not exist? Watching the Government behaving like this is like watching someone disappearing further into sinking sands as they flail about. "Stop!" you shout. "Stay still! Or you will sink further."

Stephanie Hilborne OBE
Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts

There are 47 Wildlife Trusts. With more than 800,000 members, we are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving all the UK's habitats and species. Contact us on enquiry@wildlifetrusts.org or 01636 677711. To join your Wildlife Trust, visit wildlifetrusts.org/joinus
Natural World, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1WT. Editor Rupert Paul **Communications manager** Adam Cormack. **Layout editor** Phil Long
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Everyone loves wild rivers

And the good news is, restoring rivers' natural features and rebuilding their biodiversity can also reduce flooding and erosion, and cut the cost of water treatment. Helen Perkins reports

Bringing a river back into good health after many decades of pollution and modification is never easy. But it's worth doing, not just to restore scarce plants and animals, but for the knock-on effects it has for the rest of us. A clean, varied, wildlife-rich river with natural bankside features is a more beautiful place to be. It can also protect people and wildlife from the impacts of pollution, flooding and drought.

Across the country Wildlife Trusts are working to restore rivers and bring them back up to the standards required by the European Water Framework Directive – standards that mean rivers will once again support an abundance of native wildlife, such as brown trout, water vole and white-clawed crayfish.

This is a massive undertaking. Industrial activity, housing, roads and abstraction for drinking water have all altered water quality and the shape of our rivers. In England and Wales, only one in four rivers is in 'Good Ecological Status'. So over the last year, the Environment

Agency (EA) has worked with The Wildlife Trusts and others to begin restoring entire river catchments in England. For example, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust is co-ordinating work in the Beame-Mimram and Stort river catchments and in Birmingham the Trust is leading work on the River Tame. For 2013, the Agency plans to extend this approach to every river catchment in England.

On the ground, Trusts are working to deliver the actions needed to bring our rivers back into good health – for example by re-naturalising modified rivers, reconnecting rivers with floodplains, removing invasive non-native species and putting natural features back into the river channel.

Defra has funded The Wildlife Trusts to deliver a series of such projects, all designed to benefit wildlife and people.

This is just the start of the hard work needed to restore our river catchments. We hope Government will use the law to halt future damage and promote the value of natural rivers and wetlands.



Helen Perkins is Living Landscape Development Manager for The Wildlife Trusts



Love your river!

Every drop of water we use means less for the natural environment. The Love Your River Campaign, supported by The Wildlife Trusts, aims to help people understand and value their local rivers, and thus look after them better. Olympic rower James Cracknell (below, with environment minister Richard Benyon) is a big supporter: defra.gov.uk/loveyourriver



An inquisitive chub checks out the camera in Fairham Brook, a Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust reserve



Stafford Brook Staffordshire Wildlife Trust



NICK MOTT, STAFFORDSHIRE WWT

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?
Returning the stream's habitat complexity to historical levels. Woody debris enhances fish and invertebrate habitat, and traps sediments that otherwise flow downstream.

A tributary of the Trent at Cannock Chase, the brook suffered from phosphate pollution and low populations of fish. Deepening and straightening had produced a uniform habitat, though some

brook lamprey, native brown trout and bullhead remained.

The Trust used large woody debris to form new pools, split channels, debris dams, backwaters, gravel riffles, chutes, silt benches and areas of submerged and exposed sediment. Thirty three root balls weighing 35 tonnes were added to a 500 metre stretch. More habitat complexity came from selectively felled

multi-stemmed birch and alder trees. Land drainage pipes in an adjacent field were excavated and removed, enabling fertiliser runoff to filter through a buffer strip adjacent to the Stafford Brook SSSI.

Research shows that woody debris can slow flood water, reduce temperature and improve water quality. The next stage is to monitor any changes to the fish and invertebrate populations.

River dwellers



LAURIE CAMPBELL

OTTER A top predator in river systems, the otter declined dramatically due to dioxin poisoning in the 1950s and '60s. Today it's recovering strongly



PAUL HOBSON

WATER SHREW Using a home range of just 60-80m², water shrews feed entirely on invertebrates. They need clean, well-vegetated waterways



DAVID CHAPMAN

KINGFISHER Britain's most colourful bird hunts for small fish over clear water. It also needs high, natural riverbanks in which to excavate its nest tunnels



LAURIE CAMPBELL

SALMON This iconic fish needs an open route upstream to reach spawning grounds and clean, well-oxygenated water to aid the development of its eggs and fry



SHROPSHIRE WT

River Perry Shropshire Wildlife Trust

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Improving the river's poor ecological health and reducing over-modification of the channel while meeting the needs of farmers

Tree planting helps cool the water



Flowing south to meet the River Severn above Shrewsbury, the Perry falls within the 'River Severn Source to Sea' Living Landscape and 'Meres and Mosses' Nature Improvement Area. Intensive farming had reduced it to little more than a drain, but improvements had to address local concerns about drainage and flooding. The Trust gathered several partners and consulted widely before agreeing a plan. Buffer strips reduced farmland runoff, and troughs kept cattle out of the river. More sensitive channel management lessened silt build-up and improved fish habitat. Bankside planting of 600 trees will lessen erosion, and create shade for spawning salmon. "It's about understanding what help landowners need to develop affordable solutions," says Pete Lambert, Project Manager. "We want to extend this work across the Severn catchment."

Shawford Shallows is in the Itchen Navigation, itself part of a chalk river needing restoration along much of its length. Heavy tree growth had badly silted the channel, and a downstream lock prevented it from being scoured clean. When Lottery and EA funding enabled the lock to be bypassed the Trust reduced tree cover and added woody debris, brushwood faggots, and planting of locally grown rush, reed sweet-grass, bur-reed, yellow flag iris and purple loosestrife.

"The work complements other projects along the Itchen Navigation," says Project Manager Ali Morse. "We hope the cumulative effect will take the Itchen Navigation from 'Poor' to 'Good' status. We'll have a river richer in wildlife for local people to enjoy. And that will achieve a greater sense of ownership of this beautiful place by local communities."

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Improving the wildlife of a chalk stream in a way that local people will enjoy and value more and more as the years pass

Faggots help plants establish, and vary water speed



HANTS & IOW WT

Shawford Shallows Hants & IOW Wildlife Trust

No, the fallen trees aren't coming out – they're going in! Adding tree trunks and rootballs to the Stafford Brook quickly created several new habitats for fish and insects



JACK PERKS

GRAYLING Very sensitive to water-borne pollutants, grayling are less common in the south-east. They need fine gravel beds and free-flowing water to spawn



DOUG MERRICK

SCARCE CHASER A big, powerful dragonfly that patrols well-vegetated, slow-flowing waters such as lowland floodplains, lakes and large ponds



DAVID CHAPMAN

MAYFLY An important food source for a huge number of river species, the mayfly spends much of its life as an aquatic nymph. The adult only lives a few days



DAVID CHAPMAN

WATER CROWFOOT A fine-leaved submerged plant of shallow rivers. It thrives in buffer zones where cattle are prevented from trampling the river bed

We need more MCZs

After a 15-year campaign and evidence provided by more than a million people, the Government has agreed to set up 31 marine reserves. That's good – but it's not enough

As reported, Defra has proposed that just 31 Marine Conservation Zones should be designated around England and offshore waters of Wales in 2013. That's not the full 127 MCZs we hoped for but, as the map here shows, it's a start.

A recent poll has found that 89% of people believe protecting our marine life is more important than commercial activities such as dredging or industrial fishing. We intend to keep up the pressure on Government to ensure they take into account all available evidence for the remaining sites. We want them to commit to an ambitious timetable for their designation too.

Meanwhile, here are four of the soon-to-be designated sites, and four whose designation is still on hold. Learn more about the proposed network of MCZs, and let the Government know your views, on wildlifetrusts.org/haveyoursay.



Joan Edwards is Head of Living Seas for The Wildlife Trusts



ON HOLD

4 Sefton Coast

This is a shoreline area extending from Formby Point to Crosby Beach. Its exposed peat and clay beds provide homes for burrowing clams, crabs, mussels (above), winkles and worms. These in turn are important food for other species. This site is also archaeologically important: the peat and clay contain preserved human and animal footprints which date back to the Stone Age!



NIKI CLEAR

POSSIBLE DESIGNATION

1 The Canyons

200 miles south-west of Land's End, this site ranges widely in depth from 130m to over 2000m. As the name suggests, there are two deep-water canyons making the seabed more complex here than at many other sites. Its shape creates an up-welling of nutrient-rich water, leading to higher than average sightings of seabirds and cetaceans, including the Risso's dolphin (above). It also contains the only known living coldwater coral reefs in English waters.



PAUL NAYLOR

ON HOLD

2 Bideford to Foreland Point

Stretching from Lynton to Bideford is a coastline of cliffs, rocky shores, small sandy inlets, and sandy Bideford Bay. European eel, native oyster, peacock's tail seaweed and the aptly named hedgehog sponge (above) can be found here. Reef-building ross and honeycomb worms provide additional habitat. In the shallows are the fragile pink sea fan, as well as scarlet and gold star coral, Devonshire cup coral and short-snouted seahorse. The area is also important for foraging seabirds and cetaceans. This site was originally recommended as an MCZ by the local community.



ROB SPRAY

POSSIBLE DESIGNATION

3 North of Celtic Deep

Bordering the territorial waters of Wales and the Republic of Ireland, this is the most southerly site in the Irish Sea. Deep water sediments support abundant populations of marine invertebrates such as worms, clams and lobsters (above). The highly productive waters make it important for seabirds such as gannet, Manx shearwater and puffin, and create excellent feeding grounds for whales and dolphins.



Key to MCZ areas

■ Possible designation 2013 (31 sites)

Govt consultation pending

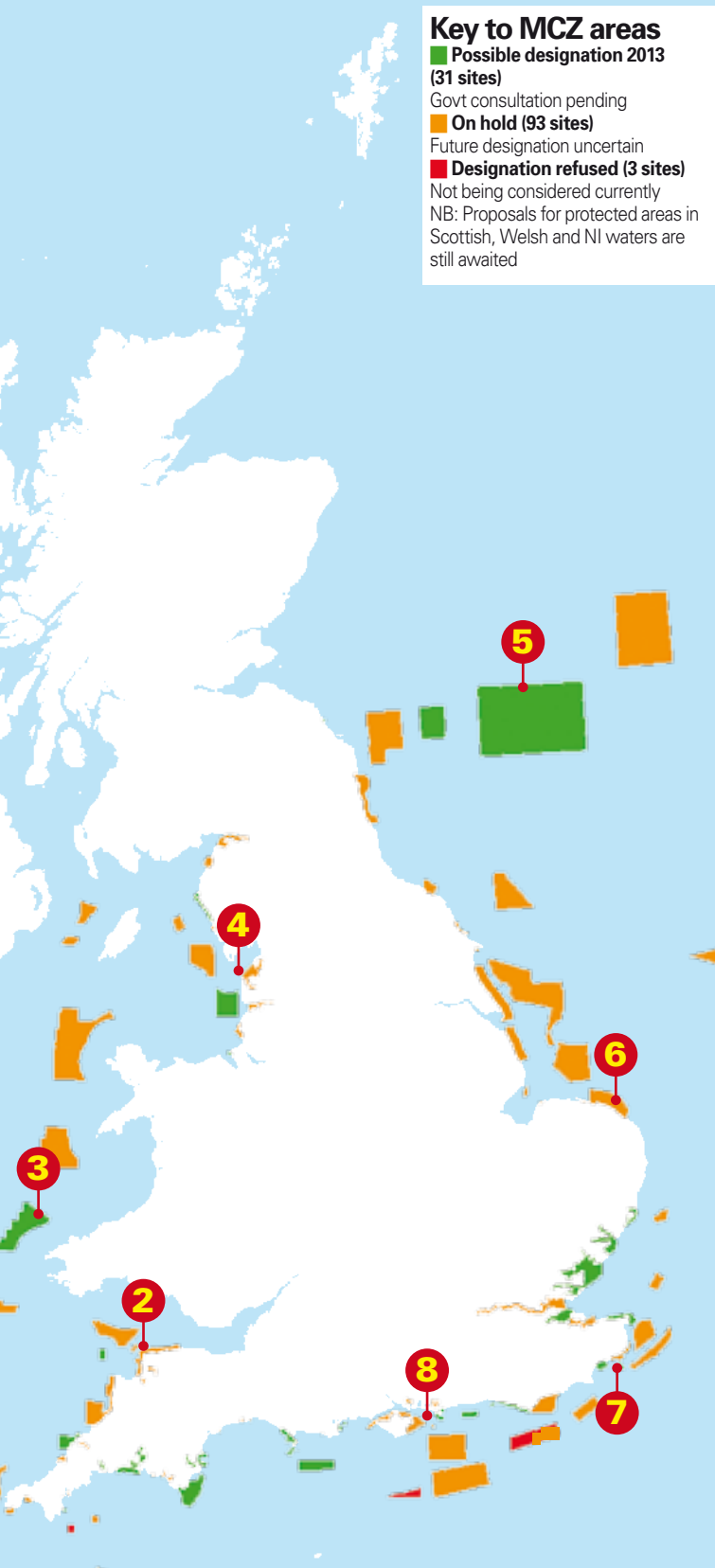
■ On hold (93 sites)

Future designation uncertain

■ Designation refused (3 sites)

Not being considered currently

NB: Proposals for protected areas in Scottish, Welsh and NI waters are still awaited



PETER TINSLEY



POSSIBLE DESIGNATION

5 Swallow Sand

Sixty miles off the Berwickshire coast, Swallow Sand's 50-150m depth range makes it one of the deepest sites in the North Sea. It is also one of the largest MCZs put forward, covering more than 1,800 square miles. Its gravel, sand and mud seabed is home to burrowing peacock worms (above) and bivalve mussels. The western side contains Swallow Hole, a glacial tunnel valley supporting high numbers of commercial fish including sprat and mackerel.

ROB SPRAY



ON HOLD

6 Cromer Chalk Shoal

Just 200 metres off the Norfolk coast is a 20-mile reef of chalk, thought to be Europe's largest. Three-metre chalk arches tower above the seabed, providing a home for attached sponges and red seaweeds, whilst shoaling horse mackerel fly through the water like silvery darts. Marine wildlife is abundant: from blue mussel beds and 30+ species of sea slug to harbour porpoise, grey and common seals. There are large communities of crustaceans, burrowing piddocks, sponges (including a new species found in 2011), sea squirts and anemones.

PAUL NAYLOR



POSSIBLE DESIGNATION

7 Folkestone Pomerania

Five miles off the coast between Folkestone and Dover the seabed drops into an area of huge, boulder-strewn bowls, with exposed greensand forming craggy ridges around the sides. Lobsters and crabs (above) shelter under deep ridges whilst ballan and goldsinny wrasse swim amongst the branching sponges, soft corals and colonies of seaboard and hornwrack. Further out is soft muddy seabed, consolidated by sandy tubes constructed by honeycomb and ross worms. This mix of both types of tubeworms living together is rare.

PAUL NAYLOR



ON HOLD

8 Utopia

Just off the east coast of the Isle of Wight, this site is named after the tope shark which uses it as an important pupping ground. Rocky reef and boulder outcrops create a habitat for sponges, corals and anemones which otherwise would not be found here.

Utopia was not initially proposed as an MCZ due to a lack of evidence. However, Hampshire & IOW WT then submitted detailed data proving this feature exists, including photographs, video footage, seabed imagery and species lists.

“ 89% of people believe protecting marine life matters more than destructive activities ”

ICM poll, 2012

Ten great places to see Ancient trees

Few things give you a better sense of perspective than a tree that's shrugged off several centuries. Here's a selection

1 Folly Farm
Avon Wildlife Trust

Wildflower meadows and woodland surround the Folly Farm Centre at the heart of Folly Farm, a 250-acre nature reserve between Bristol and Bath which offers spectacular views over Chew Valley Lake and the Mendips. There are ancient oaks to be found here that are over 400 years old, the Folly Oak being one.

Where is it? Off the A368 towards Bishop Sutton. Grid ref: ST 600 604.

2 Moseley Bog
WT for Birmingham & Black Country

Moseley Bog was the childhood playground of The Lord of the Rings author JRR Tolkien, who lived nearby. The atmospheric site is said to have inspired the wild forests he described in his books. There are many gnarled old trees here, including a 300-year-old oak.

Where is it? 3 miles S of Birmingham centre, between Sparkhill and Billesley. Entrances along Yardley Wood Rd. Grid ref: SP 094 821.

3 Marsland Valley
Devon Wildlife Trust

A reserve on the northern border of Devon and Cornwall extending inland from a dramatic coastline. In spring the woods are alive with birds and flowers, and the gnarled oaks are smothered in mosses, lichens and ferns.

Where is it? 7 miles N of Bude off the A39 at Crimp. Past the farm at West Gooseham, R at the T junction, park in 0.5 mile on track by sharp L bend. Grid ref: SS 217 169.

4 The Mens
Sussex Wildlife Trust

Ancient wood where towering cathedrals of beech form a high canopy over hawthorn, oak, mosses, ferns and flowers. The centuries-old Idehurst Oak (girth six metres), lost a limb in 2011. Now it's habitat for beetles and fungi.

Where is it? 3 miles E of Petworth on A272. Park on Crimbourne La. Grid ref: TQ 033 249.

5 Roydon Woods
Hants & IOW Wildlife Trust

See the magnificent beech at this reserve in the New Forest National Park. It's more than 100ft tall and over 100ft across, and dominates the skyline for miles around. Many woodmen have sat in its shade over the centuries.

Where is it? 1.25 miles SE of Brockenhurst. Leave the A337 next to the Filly Inn at Setley, walk E along the bridleway to the main entrance. Grid ref: SU 306 004.

6 Cwm Byddog
Radnorshire Wildlife Trust

Ranked as one of the top 20 ancient tree sites in Wales, Cwm Byddog is a hotspot with former oak pollards – one 6.3m in girth – and also a 5m alder. There are rare veteran tree lichens, and in springtime bluebells, early purple orchid and yellow archangel.

Where is it? Near Hay on Wye. Take unclassified road N from Clyro village. Entrance is 0.5 miles on R near Court Evan Gwynne track. Keep track clear. Grid ref: SO 216 448.

7 The Hollies
Shropshire Wildlife Trust

200 windswept, broken, ancient holly trees scattered on the north-east edge of the Stiperstones. Branches used to be harvested as winter animal fodder; this occasional pruning reinvigorated the trees, keeping them young.

Where is it? A488 from Shrewsbury through Minsterley. L to Snailbeach, park at brow of hill. Walk to Lord's Hill chapel, through gate, take R fork. Reserve on your L. Grid ref: SJ 383 016.

8 Brankley Pastures
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Once an ancient wood pasture, then largely cleared, but now under long-term restoration. The gnarled trunks of the surviving veteran trees provide habitats for many types of insects, birds, mammals, plants and fungi.

Where is it? A515 N 1.5 miles from Yoxall, R to Scot Hill, L at crossroads after 1.5 miles. Park on R after 0.25 miles. Grid ref: SK 166 213.

9 Glenarm Nature Reserve
Ulster Wildlife Trust

One of the best wood pasture/parklands in the British Isles, with old sweet chestnut and lime trees, as well as veteran and phoenix oaks. Other species include red squirrel, silver-washed fritillary, Real's wood white, intermediate wintergreen and toothwort.

Where is it? In the Glenarm Estate, off the B97 Ballymena Road. Grid ref: D 304 111.

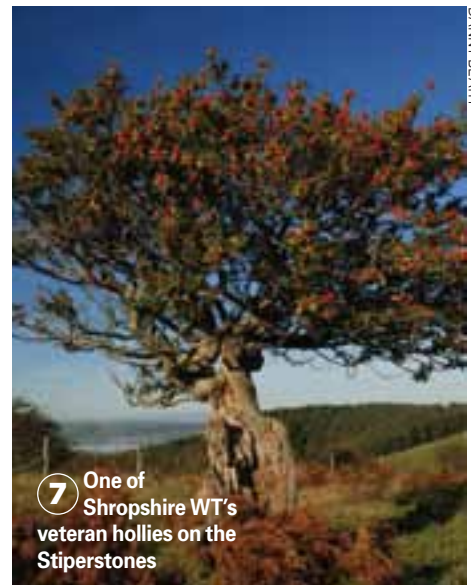
10 Moorlands
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

Originally a Victorian woodland garden, which is why ancient beech and native rowan trees mix with non-native snake bark maple, dawn redwood, rhododendrons and azaleas.

Where is it? 5.5 miles N of York. A19 Thirsk for 3.5 miles to Skelton. Turn R, continue through the village, Reserve is 2 miles on L. Access for less able visitors. Grid ref: SE 580 587.



1 The oak tree at Folly Farm



7 One of Shropshire WT's veteran hollies on the Stiperstones



10 Yorkshire's Moorlands, where you can sit in the shade of a giant beech



6 Some of the trees at Radnorshire's Cwm Byddog look like they've walked in

DANNY BEATH

KRISTEN SMITH

RADNORSHIRE WT

FIND MORE SITES LIKE THESE AT WILDLIFETRUSTS.ORG/ANCIENTTREES

Who's who at the Trust

Simon King
Mark Carwardine
Mike Dilger
Philippa Forrester

President
Vice-president
Vice-president
Vice-president

Trustees

Roz Kidman Cox
Dr Steve Nicholls
Tony Elgood
Cecile Gillard
Anthony Brown
Andy Bord
Martin Brasher

Chair
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary

Keith Taylor
Alan Dorn
Lesley Freed
Jane Memmott

Staff

Dr Bevis Watts

Chief Executive

Conservation team

Lucy Rogers
Janice Gardiner
Richie Smith
Eleanor Higginson
Kate Pressland
Lydia Robbins
Chris Giles
Tim Curley
Joe Middleton
Bernie D'Arcy
Joe McSorley
Anne Halpin
Siân Parry

Director of Conservation Programmes
Living Landscape Programme Manager*
Living Landscape Project Officer*
Living Landscape Project Officer
Living Landscape Senior Project Officer
Living Landscape Species Officer
Head of Land Management
Senior Reserves Manager*
Reserves Manager
Portbury Wharf Reserve Manager
Reserves Officer
Monitoring Officer*
Planning and Policy Officer*

Consultancy team

Sarah Dale
Mary Wood

Principal Ecologist
Senior Ecologist

Community team

Michael Connors

Director of Community Programmes
(from 28 May)

Jo Morris
Julie Doherty
Kelly Bray

Learning Development Manager
Learning Development Officer
Communities And Nature Senior
Project Officer

Matt Harcourt
Neil Hutton
Matt Cracknell
Susan Rogers

Communities And Nature Project Officer
Portbury Wharf Community Officer*
Feed Bristol Project Officer
Feed Bristol Seasonal Grower*

Finance team

Rachel Watkins
Pat Sandy
Sam Pullinger

Director of Finance*
Finance Officer
Grant Development Officer*

Communications and Development teams

Dagmar Smeed

Director of Communications
and Membership

Gill Hambleton
Angela Davies
Rachel Mepsted
Roy Catford

Office Manager
Membership Officer*
Office Administrator*
Site Assistant – Trust Office*

Folly Farm Centre

Philip Niemand
Hannah Read
Daniel Dacer
Gabriela Stepkowska

Centre Director (FF)
Senior Administrator and Duty Manager (FF)
General Assistant (FF)
Housekeeper (FF)

(FF) based at Folly Farm *part-time position



Gifts in wills and in memoriam

CHRIS DAVIES

Throughout time we have remembered those we love with flowers. But cut flowers never last long – unlike wildflowers and the meadows in which they grow.

A donation to Avon Wildlife Trust in memory of a loved one will help to safeguard the wildflower meadows and woodlands in our care and increase the work we do to inspire people to love and value nature.

It is terrible to think that since the Second World War, we have lost more than 97% of our meadows. Wildlife Trusts across the UK are working hard to restore important habitats, to advise landowners, and to create living landscapes.

Locally we have made progress, thanks in the main to support from our members, through subscriptions, appeals, gifts in memoriam and in Wills.

We remember those who have generously given gifts in memoriam and in their Will by adding their names in our Book of Remembrance, which is held on display at the Trust's Folly Farm Centre.

Relatives have also shared cherished memories of what a particular reserve meant to their loved one, or fond recollections of them helping to make teas at Trust fundraising events.

The Wildlife Trusts' Vice President Sir David Attenborough said:

"This generous act is one of the most important things you can do to make sure the species and habitats we love will be there for future generations to enjoy."

Please contact Dagmar Smeed on 0117 917 7278 or email dagmarsmeed@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk. Thank you.

Postscript



The importance of pollinators

explains Trustee **Professor Jane Memmott**

Pollination by an animal is essential for 75% of crop species and an estimated 15-30% of global food production.

Pollinators come in all shapes and sizes – in Britain these range from bumble bees, to hoverflies, to solitary bees and to what I affectionately call the GLDs (Grotty Little Dipterans) – the hundreds of species of difficult-to-identify flies that you find feeding on flowers. Some of these flies are gorgeous – bee flies (pictured) look like a cross between a pussy willow catkin and a Harrier Jump Jet plane and hover like hummingbirds when feeding from a flower.

Moreover Bristol is the best place in the world I have lived for seeing these and if you wait by a patch of cowslips or lungwort on a sunny day in April or May you may well see one.

Pollinators are very much in the public eye at the moment. What with honey bee diseases and habitat loss affecting bumble bees and other insects, plus the adverse effects



Jane

of the wettest summer for 100 years these are trying times to be a pollinator.

But help is at hand in the shape of a new collaboration between University academics and Wildlife Trust practitioners, who together can link scientific discovery directly to the implementation of solutions in the wild.

Many conservation organisations have initiatives for protecting plants and animals which operate at the landscape scale. The Wildlife Trusts are creating, restoring, expanding and reconnecting wildlife habitats in order to protect the plants and animals they host.

A £657,000 project recently funded by the National Environmental Research Council will see the Avon Wildlife Trust and Bristol University join forces to look at how pollinators forage in these living landscapes and how this affects pollination.

Their data will provide the information needed to plan pollinator-friendly landscapes where bees, hoverflies, solitary bees and the gorgeous GLDs can set up home.