

Wildlife

Issue 108 • SUMMER 2017



Avon

Take action for nature

Nature in danger

Why wildlife needs us.
Why Avon needs you

#30DaysWild

Have fun this June and
connect to nature

Wonderful wildflowers

Learn about our
favourite wildflowers

Includes
UK News &
Stories



Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

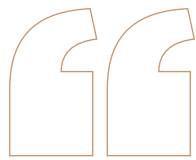
Welcome



JON CRAIG

Ian Barrett
Chief Executive

Dear member



I'm delighted to welcome you to this edition of Wildlife magazine, which celebrates the work that all of us at the Trust – members, staff and volunteers – are doing to help local wildlife. From growing wildflowers in your garden (page 12) to rescuing bluebell woods from invasive species (page 24) there are lots of actions we can all take to make space for nature. Even drinking beer this June could help to protect our local wildlife (page 16).

Summer is the perfect time to get out and enjoy wildlife and we'll be encouraging everyone to get outdoors and take time to appreciate everyday nature during our 30 Days Wild challenge in June (page 10). Our nature reserves provide the perfect places to relax, unwind and get close to nature (page 14).

As a Trust, we're working hard to give nature a helping hand, on our reserves, in our cities and across the wider countryside (pages 8-9). We know that nature conservation is facing real threats, as well as opportunities, from changes in the wider world. These changes include the impact of Brexit; local housing and transport schemes; alongside cuts to local government spending on parks and green spaces (page 6).

Fortunately, eight out of ten adults think we need the same or more environmental protection when we leave the EU, which shows the deep well of support for our wildlife and green spaces (page 28).

You, our members, are vital in showing how important wildlife is to people locally. Thank you for your support and for all the actions you're taking to help wildlife thrive in the West of England.



PAUL HOBSON

Your 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.

Avon Wildlife Trust is your local wildlife charity working to secure a strong future for the natural environment and to inspire people to care for it. With the support of over 17,600 members and 535 volunteers, the Trust cares for over 30 nature reserves, runs educational and community programmes, advises landowners, and campaigns on issues that threaten wildlife habitats.

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Keep in touch!

Follow us on social media for the latest news and events. Please share your wildlife pictures and experiences!



@avonwt



/avonwt



/avonwt

Teachers can follow @wildschools as well as @avonwt on twitter.



When you have finished reading this magazine why not pass it onto a friend or take it to a local doctors' waiting room? When the magazine is finished with, please recycle it.



Wildlife magazine is printed on 100% recycled paper using vegetable oil based inks.

Wild flowers

Blue-bells and cuckoo's in the wood

And pasture cuckoo's too

Red yellow white and blue

Growing where herd cows

meet the showers

And lick the morning dew

I love wild flowers

by John Clare

1793-1864



DAVID KILBEY

Trustee Announcements



Roz

MARK CARWARDINE



Jane

We are deeply sad to say farewell to our dedicated and long-standing Chair, Roz Kidman-Cox after 12 years on the Avon Wildlife Trust Board. Roz has steered Avon Wildlife Trust through a significant period of growth and change.

Under her guidance Avon Wildlife Trust has established Folly Farm and Feed Bristol; created two new nature reserves; embedded the landscape-scale approach to conservation; supported significant engagement with people including 15,000 marginalised people through the Communities in Nature project; and doubled the number of school children engaging with Avon Wildlife Trust each year to 10,000.

Roz has supported work to protect water voles, white crayfish and pollinators. The establishment of the West of England Nature Partnership arose on her watch, giving the sector an integrated, powerful local voice that champions our powerful local voice that champions the value and long term protection of our local

ecosystems services. Award-winning partnerships with businesses including Wessex Water, Burges Salmon and Bristol Water have introduced new audiences to Avon Wildlife Trust and helped to develop the My Wild City project which elevated the Trust's profile as part of the European Green Capital year. Her contributions are far-reaching and we are so grateful for her commitment, energy and quiet excellence as Chair of Trustees for the past eight years.

Roz has left a huge mark on Avon Wildlife Trust and is stepping down from an organisation which has grown and expanded to inhabit a vital and dynamic space as a champion for local nature conservation. We extend our deepest gratitude and wish her all the very best for the future.

However, we are delighted to welcome our new chair, Jane Memmott,

Professor of Ecology in The School of Biological Sciences, University of Bristol. She started her research career as a tropical entomologist commuting between the UK and the rainforests of Costa Rica. She then discovered the delights of a life of constant summer and spent the winters working with the weed biological control team in New Zealand. The arrival of two children led to field sites somewhat closer to home and she started working on biodiversity on farmland and on pollination. She currently runs a research group at the University of

Bristol that uses ecological networks as a tool for asking about the impact of environmental change in the UK.

Being Chair of Trustees at the Avon Wildlife Trust is a natural extension of her existing interests and one she really enjoys: "Avon Wildlife Trust is a really exciting organisation and one I'm delighted to be formally involved with. Between us the Board of Trustees have a real depth and breadth of experience and are very well placed to help Avon Wildlife Trust meet its objectives. One of the first things I did when I arrived in Bristol 20 years ago was to join Avon Wildlife Trust and it's a decision that I have never regretted."

Pond Life

Ecosurety and Avon Wildlife Trust are working together to create a new wildlife pond at Feed Bristol. Ecosurety staff have dug and filled the pond and their next step is to build a living fence and wooden dipping platform, using sustainably-sourced wood. The platform will enable visitors to get closer to the water as well as catch rainwater to replenish the pond. Water-loving plants will provide a rich habitat for birds, insects and animals. The pond will open in June and enable community and volunteer groups to learn about the kinds of creatures that make their home in the city's green spaces. James Piper, managing director at Ecosurety says, "As a company passionate about the environment... we chose Feed Bristol to be our annual volunteering project, because we believe organisations have a responsibility to initiate change for good inside their local communities, for the benefit of all."



Tranby House

For nearly 30 years, Jan Barkworth has generously opened her beautiful wildlife garden to the public, with tea, cake and plants for sale, and has raised over £30,000 for Avon Wildlife Trust in the process! Her garden spans more than an acre of land, divided into smaller areas, each with its own characteristics, including a mini woodland, meadow and pond. An abundance of wildlife is supported, from beetles, dragonflies and frogs to birds, butterflies and numerous slugs and snails! As well as the resident cats, guinea pigs and hens, there are visiting foxes, badgers and the occasional deer.

Visit from 1 May until 1 September, each Saturday Jan will be selling her famous annuals, perennials and shrubs, in aid of The Avon Wildlife Trust.

Tranby House, Whitchurch, Bristol, BS14 0BT

Cultivating the next generation of mycologists

The Justin Smith Foundation* is holding their second Fungi Workshop at Feed Bristol in Stapleton on Sunday 7 May, when attendees will get the chance to learn microscopy skills used for more accurate identification of many species.

The workshop follows on from the Foundation's first Fungi Day held in October 2016 when Avon Wildlife Trust fungi experts Rich Wright and Joe McSorley led twenty young adults, mostly university students, on a fascinating journey learning all about fungi.

The wet weather didn't dampen any spirits as the budding enthusiasts were split into two groups and explored the beautiful surroundings of Folly Farm in the Chew Valley, identifying an



SUZANNE ZILKA

impressive 60 different species of fungi between them.

The Justin Smith Foundation was created in memory of Justin Smith who died suddenly in March 2014. He was Bristol City Council's Woodland and Wildlife officer and worked in many guises for Avon Wildlife Trust. He was a skilled naturalist and expert mycologist, highly regarded for his training programmes and fungi forays.

Lucy Wallis Smith, Justin's widow and founder of the Foundation, said:

"This was our first Fungi Day, and was a real success. Kindly funded by Bristol Naturalists' Society and in partnership with Avon Wildlife Trust at Folly Farm, we were able to offer a unique opportunity to learn about what fungi are, and how to start identifying them. There is a marked "knowledge gap" regarding the numbers of fungi specialists, and our Foundation's aim is to narrow that gap."

Contact the Foundation to express interest in future workshops by emailing info@justinsmithfoundation.org, or visit their website to donate to the charity: justinsmithfoundation.org.

*Justin Smith Foundation (unregistered) has been set up in partnership with Avon Wildlife Trust with the aims to inspire, inform and educate about fungi, lichens and lower plants.



STEVEN NICHOLLS

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Avon Wildlife Trust's Annual General Meeting (AGM) is on Saturday 23 September at 2pm at MShed, Bristol, BS1 4RN

Members are invited to the formal business meeting from 5pm. As in previous years we will be hosting an event beforehand, from 2pm, details of this to follow on our website.

The formal AGM meeting is for the following purposes:

1. To receive the Annual Report of the Board of Trustees and Audited Annual Accounts, together with the Auditors' report for the year ended 31 March 2017.
2. To elect Trustees (for further details please see the website or contact the office).
3. To re-appoint Mr Simon King as President of the Trust (recommended by the Board of Trustees).

By order of the Trustees

Note: under the Companies Act 2006 the serving Auditors, Messrs Hollingdale Pooley, are deemed re-appointed and continue in office.

The Trust's Annual Review is on the website 28 days before the event and on request along with full Audited Accounts and Trustees' Annual Report.

Any member, not disqualified from acting as a charity Trustee or company director, and interested in becoming a Trustee should contact Jane Davis, Director of Finance and Resources, on 0117 917 7270 to arrange a meeting. Formal written proposal of any candidate must be delivered to the Trust office at 32 Jacobs Wells Road, Bristol BS8 1DR no later than 8 September. Candidates are required to provide verification of identity and a declaration of suitability and personal interests.

Come to the AGM

Members, volunteers and friends of Avon Wildlife Trust are welcome. To book your place at the AGM please visit www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/AGM2017. Please contact mail@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk to request a copy of the Annual Review or the full Audited Accounts and Trustees' Annual Report, or a proxy form, for a person to attend, speak and vote on a member's behalf, or to register your interest in becoming a Trustee.

Metro Mayor Hustings

A newly elected Metro Mayor is now beginning their role with control over the West of England combined authority area made up of Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset, and South Gloucestershire – an area covering more than one thousand square kilometres with a population of nearly one million. Avon Wildlife Trust joined with Bristol Green Capital and other partner organisations in the run-up to the election to run a hustings event putting nature and sustainability at the heart of the debate. The hustings, held at University of Bristol, gave all candidates a chance to clearly state their approach to protecting and enhancing our region's natural environment and set out how they would integrate that with their agenda for housing, transport, skills and economic growth.

We also filmed a series of vox pop films asking members of the public in different parts of Bristol how much they knew about the Metro Mayor election and the powers the elected mayor has. Awareness was low but many people said they wanted robust protections for the natural environment and feel a strong personal connection with nature in their city and surrounding landscape.

You can see the vox pop films on our website www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/blog and you can listen to an audio recording of the hustings event on the Bristol Green Capital website: bristolgreencapital.org.

FEATURE

Nature in danger

For generations most of us have taken for granted the sights, sounds and seasonal changes of nature around us, with a sense of security that these things would continue steadfastly into the future. Deep autumn colours, spring birdsong, and the abundant colour of summer wildflower meadows are just some of

the richness of nature we can enjoy through the year.

All of us, children and adults, can form a connection with some of the varied landscapes and wildlife across the country and notice the benefits of spending time in these open spaces. Alongside these visible aspects, nature is providing all of us with a

host of invisible services such as pollinating the food crops that end up on our plates, giving us clean air and water and preventing flooding by catching and absorbing water. But nature is under threat in an unprecedented way. Unless we act now there's a real danger it will suffer irreversible damage.

STEVE NICHOLLS

Wildlife

The impact of Brexit

With negotiations now underway for the UK to leave the European Union, the natural environment is at stake. Around 6,000 laws and regulations covering important environmental issues like clean water regulation, protection for birds, wildlife and habitats, and countryside stewardship payments to farmers, all have their roots in EU legislation. There is uncertainty about what will happen to these many protections for nature and wildlife. The Wildlife Trusts, together with 12 other environment and nature organisations, are part of the Greener UK coalition which is campaigning hard to ensure the Brexit process safeguards these current protections. Greener UK recently launched a manifesto calling on the government to use the opportunity of Brexit to restore and strengthen the environment. At a constituency level, MPs across the UK are being urged to sign a pledge for the environment to demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding nature in the future. Several of our local MPs have signed, and Avon Wildlife Trust is inviting them all to meet in a natural space in their constituency to talk about what's at stake and how they can play their part in protecting nature's needs.

Visit www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/news



Read more
on page 8



Go Wild:
page 10

The state of nature – what's the picture?

Even without the concerns over the environmental impact of Brexit, there were already worrying signs about nature in the UK. A major report was published in 2016 (supported and endorsed by Sir David Attenborough himself!) combining research and data from more than 50 nature conservation organisations to give a clear overview of the state of nature in the UK. The findings showed that the UK is among the most nature-depleted countries in the world with less biodiversity than the global average. 60% of UK species are in decline, with more than one in ten now at risk of disappearing from our shores unless there is dramatic intervention. The picture is gloomy, but it doesn't need to be, go to page 10 to read about how we are encouraging people to 'Go Wild' this June.

Visit www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/30DaysWild

Housing development – balancing homes and habitats

As our population continues to grow, nature faces new pressure. A serious housing shortage means local authorities have ambitious plans to build more homes, with some estimates predicting that 250,000 new homes each year are needed across the UK to keep pace with demand for the growing population. Across Avon, councils plan to build 100,000 new homes over the next 20 years. As housing development moves onto new areas across our region, we need to ensure wildlife and habitats are designed in and given space rather than destroyed under diggers, foundations and new roads.

Visit www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/MyWildCity

The challenge
is to show how
housing for people
and habitats for
wildlife can
co-exist



STEVEN WILLIAMS

Through small, individual actions and work at a bigger scale, we can support nature's recovery. Read on to learn more about what we are doing to meet these challenges, and how you can play a part too.

What we are doing for nature

At Avon Wildlife Trust, we are working hard to ensure the value of our wild spaces is understood by the people who live here. We are working at a variety of levels to promote the fact that a secure and healthy future for nature underpins a healthy society, including working with local MPs, councillors, local authorities, planners and developers, the NHS and universities. The threats to wildlife are significant, but we are focused on keeping the value of nature centre stage.

“ We are standing up for nature in Avon ”



MATTHEW ROBERTS

We are protecting and connecting the countryside

The future for our landscapes is uncertain but at Avon Wildlife Trust we have over 1,100 hectares of local land under our care. Along with hundreds of volunteers we work hard to protect and restore healthy habitats to provide homes for wildlife. Tens of thousands of hours are given by our volunteers each year to care for our reserves: clearing, coppicing, scything, planting, pruning, repairing fences, paths and steps, and monitoring the quality and presence of wildlife. We also work with around 50 farmers across our region each year to help them manage their land to create healthy habitats for wildlife including barn owls, bats, pollinators and birds. Slowly but surely we are connecting up huge swathes of the landscape to create green corridors that help wildlife. These landscapes help people too, improving air quality and preventing flooding. The future funding for this work is increasingly uncertain, however The Wildlife Trusts are working with government, local authorities, business and our members to ensure this land remains under our care. Visit: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/about-us/we-manage-land-wildlife



RACHEL SCOPES

We are connecting people to nature to improve their health

It is well recognised that regular, good quality access to nature offers deep benefits for both physical and mental health. As people realise their own health depends on a healthy natural world, more people become motivated and able to actively protect it. Our work with communities across the region supports people, whatever their age or ability, to develop confidence and skills to connect with nature and help it thrive. Our Wellbeing Through Nature project works in partnership with local doctors' surgeries. GPs refer patients suffering with poor mental health to our 12 week course which provides people with good quality, targeted and supported experiences in nature. The regular interactions with nature help to address feelings of anxiety and stress. Physical work and skills training as part of a supportive group builds new confidence to nurture nature and leads to a sense of purpose and achievement. Find out more on page 22 or visit our website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wellbeingthroughnature



Wellbeing through nature: page 22

We are building support, knowledge and skills in urban locations

Nature can feel far away from the city, and the need to protect it can get lost amongst the clamour of city-living. But urban landscapes also offer havens for wildlife and with cities across Avon set to keep growing, Avon Wildlife Trust is working hard to help city-dwellers notice the everyday nature around them and take action to protect and enhance it. Every year we connect thousands of children and young people to the nature on their doorstep, we engage corporate employees in nature-based team building activities, we help neighbourhoods to 'grow wild', and welcome thousands of people to Feed Bristol for training in wildlife-friendly food growing. Working with local authorities, schools, businesses and neighbourhood communities, we are building a strong support network of people who value urban nature, and we are giving them the know-how to protect it. Visit www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/learning



WAYS INTO WILDLIFE

Getting into nature

#30DaysWild

STEVE NICHOLLS

The Wildlife Trust's 30 Days Wild challenge in June is the perfect antidote to our increasingly fast paced life – challenging participants to take part in 'random acts of wildness' every day throughout the month. It could be as simple as taking a few minutes to stop and look at a bee drinking nectar from a nearby flower or going on an adventure to explore the wildlife and wild places on your doorstep.

Julie's story

Listening to the cheerful song of a robin in the tree tops, or the fluty trill of a wren hiding in the bushes, retunes my senses to the natural world. In the parks and gardens of the city, the woodlands and the hedgerows of the countryside, bird song fills the air with its chatter and tunes and, when I stop and listen, I feel my shoulders relaxing and my head clearing as this tuneful tonic recharges my soul. The reality is that so often we rush about, focus on traffic, the sounds of people around us and the thoughts in our head that we forget to take notice of the nature surrounding us.

Last year I took up the 30 Days Wild challenge for the first time and was surprised by just how much the

“ I wanted to familiarise myself with the diversity of these fascinating creatures ... and I wasn't disappointed ”

conscious action of looking for nature on a daily basis really did make a difference. I started to take after work walks, I looked closer at the diversity of invertebrates that visited my garden,

I volunteered to take the local cubs river dipping and, my favourite of all, I decide to learn about something new. Having been curious about our night-time visitors for a while, I set myself the challenge of putting out weekly moth traps at our Feed Bristol site throughout June. I wanted to familiarise myself with the diversity of these fascinating creatures, of which there are 2,500 species in the UK alone and I wasn't disappointed. Even with the early morning starts before work to check the trap and identify my catch, I loved every minute and now have a new passion that continues to captivate me. So sign up today and start planning your 30 Days Wild – who knows where the adventure could take you!



Top wild ways to get involved

1 Have a picnic. It could be at the weekend with friends and family or just a week day lunch break in your nearest green space. Venture outside and enjoy some fresh air and tasty nibbles. You can also join us for a Wild Picnic on Brandon Hill in Bristol on 3 June and see if you can find 'Bristol's rarest tree', the Golden Rain tree, one of only half a dozen in the country.

2 Go for a walk. You could take a riverside walk through Bath and look out for herons, kingfishers and otters. Afterwards, celebrate your venture with a refreshing Hedgehog's Snout ale* in the Bath Brewhouse beer garden.

3 Grow something. You don't have to own an allotment to bring nature to your home. It can be as simple as planting pollinator friendly plants, in your garden, window box, or even a pair of old shoes, so get creative! Our wildflower nursery at Feed Bristol sells over 200 different varieties, why not pop by and take a look and learn about what will bloom this summer?

**Over 18s only.*

4 Take photos. Whenever you see something in nature you like the look of, take a snap and share it with us on social media, be it a flower, a bug, a squirrel or just a picture of yourself, your friends or family, enjoying nature. If you're a photographer (amateur or expert) why not take some time to visit one (or more!) of over 30 nature reserves. Take your camera and explore our wildflower meadows. Make sure you share your sightings online using the #30DaysWild #StayWild on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

5 Relax! Walk barefoot in the grass, read a book, lie on your back and watch the clouds. Take it easy...outside, and enjoy!

STEVE NICHOLLS

Bristol business backing

We've teamed up with a fantastic group of students from University of Bristol to engage local businesses in 30 Days Wild, helping us to spread the word and even raise funds as part of the challenge. We are so grateful to the student team and our local businesses. See below for how you can have fun, help conservation and support local business all at the same time!

Flavalanche

Flavalanche frozen yogurt is all-natural, low-calorie and famous for its tangy, refreshing flavour. Each Tuesday in June, for anyone who makes ANY purchase and says they are supporting "Avon Wildlife Trust" or taking part in "30 Days Wild", Flavalanche will donate a whopping 20% of the proceeds to Avon Wildlife Trust. So why not head over and grab a guilt-free treat and support your local wildlife at the same time.

Ever keen to help us spread the word, Flavalanche is offering 10% off next purchase for anyone who takes a picture of their treat and uploads to Twitter with the hashtags #flavalanche and #30DaysWild

@Bristol

@Bristol are committed to making June all about nature and so through the month they will be showing nature themed films on the Big Screen in Millennium square, kicking off with A Bug's Life on 1 June, so keep a look out.

Bristol Ferry Company

Throughout June Bristol Ferry Company will donate a proportion of profits to Avon Wildlife Trust for two of their trips.

Bands at Beeses

An evening boat trip to a legendary riverside venue where you can sit back with a beer or a cheeky G&T and be transported to the tranquil, leafy, waterways to Beeses. Then you can hop off enjoy a delicious meal, refreshing beverages and relish the brilliant atmosphere of a live band. You might spot otters on the river too!

Classic Avon Gorge trip

Travel down the harbour, past Brunel's SS Great Britain, through the historic gates and into the huge lock. Pass The Rocks Railway and the old steamship dock, sail underneath the famous Clifton Suspension Bridge and the Old Powder House. You may be lucky enough to see a heron!

For information on bookings please contact info@bristolferry.com or call their office on 0117 927 3416.

Gym in Fishponds

Body Focus gym will be hosting an outdoor boot camp each Saturday in June and will be donating a percentage of the profits to Avon Wildlife Trust.



Wonderful wildflowers



JANE SHEPPARD

Wildflowers are beautiful and bountiful in the ways they support our native wildlife. The right mix of wildflowers helps bees, butterflies and moths pollinate, and provides hunting and feeding grounds for insects, mammals and birds, keeping Avon teeming with life.

However, the desire for a ‘groomed lawn’ and ‘improved’ agricultural practices have seen many of these beautiful and necessary flowers viewed as ‘weeds’, resulting in many becoming quite rare. But all is not lost. We are working hard to protect our wildflowers and grow them in abundance in our meadows. You can help too, starting in your own home. You don’t need to have a garden to grow your own wildflower haven. You can use window boxes, hanging baskets, or even old watering cans!

Create your own wildflower haven

Summer wildflowers bloom throughout July and August, and are perfect for bringing vibrant summer colours into your home. Be it in your garden at your summer BBQ, in a window box, hanging baskets or a wonderful line of colour around your drive, wildflowers can flourish with the right care.

Good for butterflies and bees:

- Autumn hawbit
- Viper’s bugloss
- Lesser knapweed
- Yarrow
- Small scabious
- Tufted vetch
- Greater knapweed*
- Teasel*

*also good for birds

Preparing the soil on a dry day

You need to ensure that the soil is properly prepared to help your flowers grow. Most native wildflowers require a soil low in nutrients, which you can achieve by removing the top layer of soil. If the soil is poor already, remove existing vegetation by hand. Scratch the bare soil with a rake, but don’t rotate it, as this can bring unwanted weed seeds to the surface.

Wildflowers at Feed Bristol

Feed Bristol runs a unique nursery that specialises in native wildflowers. It is open to the public, trade and large pre-orders for big projects (Monday to Saturday 10am–4pm). Plants are grown by our community groups to support health and wellbeing and the income directly supports Avon Wildlife Trust and this project.

We stock over 200 different species of perennial wildflowers, collected from seed from reserves around Bristol. We also have organic vegetable starters and fruit trees. To find us or learn more about how nature helps us grow check out our events and courses on our Feed Bristol Facebook Page: facebook.com/feedbristol

Sowing the seed

Once the soil has been prepared as above, you are ready to sow your seed. If you mix the seed with a little bit of sand you can easily see where the seed has been sown, so that you can sow more evenly. This can be done in spring (March-May) or autumn (August-September).

You’ll want to sow your seed mix using 2.5-5 grams per square metre, with one part wildflower and four parts grass-seed. To make sure that the seed is secure in the soil, roll or walk over it, then water lightly. Finally, to help the seeds germinate (protecting them from cats/birds etc.) place twiggy sticks over the soil.



CLARE DAVEY

Management in lawns and gardens

You’ll need to give your wildflower haven a helping hand at first, or else any surrounding scrub may take over. To help your meadow survive, you’ll need to mow to control annual weeds. From the second year onwards, let your flowers bloom before mowing (normally late summer) and keep your soil nutrients low by removing all cuttings.



BEVIS WATTS

Cowslips An early delicate yellow spring wildflower which gets its name cowslip from the old English 'cow slop', referring to their habit of popping up on patches of grasslands where cows have deposited their pats. Traditionally used in garlands for mayday and spring weddings, cowslips give off a delicious apricot smell (which helps identify them from the similar looking Oxslip!).



ELLA BEESON

Speedwell are abundant in summer and just as likely to be found on the roadside as a woodland pathway. Their calming colours and habit of growing alongside track ways made them a good luck sign for travellers. As there are many different species, it's a good family to practice your identification skills on. It can be identified by its toothed oval leaves, hairy stem and lilac flowers.



BEVIS WATTS

Wild garlic This common flower can dominate woodland with its enchanting scent and rich green elliptical leaves and cluster of small white flowers. Garlic has been harvested for food and also for its medicinal properties for millennia. It's full of vitamins and minerals and has a number of antibacterial and antibiotic properties. Be careful not to pull the bulbs up if you harvest the leaves as this will kill the plant.



Selfheal The name is the big giveaway with this common meadow plant which will flower well into summer. Its imperial purple flowers rise on bulky flower heads supported by square stems. It's fairly common in grassy meadows and is a popular nectar source for bees and other creatures. The plant itself contains disinfecting qualities so in the past has been used to clean wounds, bites, and stings to avoid infection. So you could, as the name suggests, heal yourself.



Black knapweed With deep royal purple flowers surrounded by a crown of deep black bracts, knapweeds are reminiscent of thistles, though they aren't in the same family. With its flower heads poking above many of the other meadow plants it's a favourite of butterflies. It's often a great vantage point to get a close up view of colourful insects and add a dash of contrasting colour to photographs. There's some evidence to suggest that Neanderthals left Knapweed bouquets as grave offerings 50,000 years ago!



Meadowsweet One of our wet meadow loving plants that carries a sweet perfume of honey and almonds that a gentle breeze can carry along river courses and hedgerows. The perfume comes from its densely packed cream flower heads that rise tall on red stalks decorated with glossy six-pointed leaves. Look for it along wet river edges and damp meadows. Although edible in moderation, it's not widely used as a food but a bouquet can add a rich and sweet summer smell to your home.

Seasonal stroll

Dolebury Warren

In spring, the woodland surrounding the grassland fields come to life, with the beauty of the bluebells brightening the dark forest floor and the subtle scent of wild garlic drifting in the breeze. During the colder winter months, Avon Wildlife Trust and our volunteers were busy clearing scrub from the grassland fields, preparing more space so that the flowers can rise and blossom this summer.

SMARTIMAGES.CO.UK



For spectacular views, wildflowers and butterflies



By Chantal Brown, Nature Reserve Manager

My favourite walking route at Dolebury takes in all my favourite spots;

- 1.** Get the heart pumping with a steep climb up over 200 steps (from the carpark), meticulously crafted over many hours by dedicated volunteers. Keep your eyes and mind busy as you march up the hill.
- 2.** Walk around the embankments of the Iron Age hill fort, taking in the breathtaking scenery. Pick a fine day to really enjoy the far reaching views.
- 3.** At the far end of the hill fort, the footpath is signed off to the left, take this track down and explore the lower woodlands.
- 4.** As you come up and out of the woodlands, the signs take you around the grassland fields - head back to the conifer plantation, keeping it on your right as you head in the direction of the carpark.
- 5.** Staying on the track you will cross over a stile gate and be in the heather plot. Although the heather won't be in flower yet, it is a very rare habitat so worth looking out for this rare plant.
- 6.** As you enter the hill fort again, just off to your left, take a minute to look at the steep slopes where all the flowers cling in the summer. We are lucky to have a brilliant farmer who puts his sheep and cattle on the nature reserve for us. These brave animals take on the slopes in the quest of finding tasty grass and flowers and as a result we get more flowers and more rare butterflies and bees.

Do you know?
Which animal we associate with the word 'warren'? Can you spot any on your walk today?

If walking with friends or family, find out who knows how many years ago the Iron Age era was?



Buzzard

Heather

Small blue

TOM MARSHALL

How to get there: Follow the A38 southwards from Churchill village. Take the first left turn after the traffic lights into Dolebury Bottom. Please drive slowly along the lane and park in the small car park. Follow footpaths to summit.

Access: Please keep dogs on leads. Not suitable access for wheelchairs or pushchairs.



Fancy a pint of Hedgehog's Snout?

By Julie Doherty



PHOTOS: NICOLE DAW

We've partnered with Bath Brewhouse to create a beer, so throughout June you'll be able to enjoy a pint of our specially made Hedgehog's Snout. It not only tastes great but actively contributes to local nature conservation at the same time.

At the heart of Bath's city centre lies Bath Brewhouse which has its very own micro brewery. After meeting Lucas, the Brewhouse Manager to discuss a potential collaboration, Avon Wildlife Trust launched a competition earlier in the year to 'Name That Beer'. We invited people to come up with an imaginative name for a local, nature-inspired brew that would be created by the Bath Brewhouse team and sold in their pub throughout June to celebrate our 30 Days Wild challenge.

Nearly 100 names were entered into the competition, which was absolutely brilliant, from 'Stark Avon Mad' to 'One for the Toad', 'Bladdered Bladderwort' and 'English Brewbell'.



knowledgeable beer drinker. Sam and his partner Emma met with the brewers at Bath Brewhouse, along with myself and AWT's People and

**THE
BATH
BREW
HOUSE**

snuffling in the hedgerows of wildflower meadows.

We are delighted to be working in partnership with Bath Brewhouse

who have been fantastic hosts to our competition winners and great supporters of our nature conservation work. Therefore, on a summers evening, after taking in the delights of the beautiful city of Bath, or joining us on one of the after work wildlife walks*, why not follow up with a well deserved pint of Hedgehog's Snout in their lovely beer garden?

Bath Brewhouse will be making a donation to Avon Wildlife Trust every pint of Hedgehog's Snout sold. So you can take a rest and enjoy a brew, knowing that you are helping to conserve the wildlife and wild places in the West of England at the same time. How good will that taste?

Cheers!

“ We're thrilled to be working with the Avon Wildlife Trust team to brew an interesting, locally produced, real ale. 50p from every pint will be donated to them to help with their invaluable work and we're really happy to support such an important local charity ”

A small team of volunteers narrowed the names down to the top four which were put to the public vote: Bladdered Bladderwort, Bumble Bee-r, Hoppy Heron and Hedgehog's Snout. After a week of online voting, the outright winner, as chosen by the public was, of course, Hedgehog's Snout.

The name was suggested by Sam Twedde, fortunately, a keen and

Wildlife Officer, Nicole Daw, one evening in March to discuss potential recipes. After much tasting and deliberation (we had to get it right!) the final decision was to use natural ingredients foraged in fields across the West of England to create a truly local beer. We wanted a flavour that was befitting of the name and to conjure images of hedgehogs

***Join us on a wildlife walk after work. We will meet every Thursday in June outside Bath Spa station at 5.30pm. Check www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/events for more details.**

Pull me out
and stick
me on the
fridge!

What's on?

30 Days Wild

Make room for nature this June - no matter where you are or how busy your life! Make this the month when you do something wild every day - and let us motivate you! When you sign up to our challenge, you'll be sent a pack full of encouragement, ideas and 'Random Acts of Wildness'. Sign up at mywildlife.org.uk/30dayswild

My Wild Child

Come and play outdoors! #MyWildChild sessions are running in Horfield Common, St George's Park and Northern Slopes on Wednesdays and Thursdays. We've had some fantastic turnout so far this year so for enquires/more information visit our website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/events.



Festival of Nature

The Festival of Nature has been running since 2003 and is the UK's biggest free celebration of the natural world. This year creativity, imagination and innovation will bring the wild to life at Bristol's Harbourside (Millennium Square) on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 June.

Nature-lovers of all ages will find something to satisfy their curiosity, as we unearth wildlife secrets in the heart of the city. There will be interactive activities and live entertainment throughout the weekend.

Bristol 10-11 June*
Bath 24-25 June
Keynsham 18 June

*Avon Wildlife Trust will be selling wonderful wildflowers from Feed Bristol. We hope to see you there!



Field Ecology Courses

We are hugely excited to announce the launch of our Field Ecology Courses being delivered at Feed Bristol. These courses provide hands on experience, helping people to further their knowledge in natural history and biological recording!

All our tutors are passionate about their subjects and have a great range of knowledge and experience to share. The courses will provide a thorough introduction to each group's biology, ecology and diversity within the Bristol area (many of our courses will include field trips to local sites of interest!)

Prices
range from
£60 - £150
depending on
course and
income

Sign up
today!

Course Title	Course Date	Tutor
Wildflower identification	20-21 May (2 days)	Alex Morss
Wildflower identification	22-23 July (2 days)	Alex Morss
Introduction to...		
Amphibians and Reptiles	22-23 April (2 days)	Peter Hill
Aquatic Invertebrates	8-10 September (3 days)	Tony Smith
British Mammals	15-16 July (2 days)	
Bryophytes	27-28 May (2 days)	Richard Lansdown
Entomology	12-14 May (3 days)	Phil Ward
Fungi	21-22 October (2 days)	Rich Wright
Grasses	24-25 June (2 days)	Alex Morss
Hoverflies	10-11 March 2018 (2 days)	Roger Morris
Lichens	10-11 June (2 days)	David Hill
Aquatic and Wetland Plants	25-27 August (3 days)	Richard Lansdown
Bristol's Bats	29-30 July (2 days)	Sarah Dale
British Birds	29-30 April (2 days)	Ed Drewitt
British Butterflies	8-9 July (2 days)	Niell Talbot
British Moths	12-13 August (2 days)	Neale Mellersh

Features include

Ecology

ID skills

Biology

Field trip

Surveying techniques

Terminology

Tracking/monitoring

Moth trapping

Bird song identification

Microscope work

Find out more and book on to Avon Wildlife Trust's inspiring courses on our website (www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/courses).

EVENTS

MAY

Monday 1 May

REDLAND GREEN MAY FAIR. Cabot Group fundraising stall – cakes, jam, plants and bric-a-brac. Offers of help on the day very welcome. Set up 11am onwards. FFI 0117 908 0521 (C)

Saturday 13 May

FOLLY FARM WALK, a two-hour exploration of the Reserve led by volunteer guide Richard Campbell. Meet at Wellsway School, Keynsham BS31 1PH at 1pm for the minibus, cost £2 (must be booked in advance). Donations to Avon Wildlife Trust on the day. Please wear appropriate clothing and bring a Drink. Toilets available at start and end. FFI Liz Wintle 0117 909 9667. (K)

Sunday 14 May

WILD FLOWER AND TREE WALK IN WESTON BIG WOOD, PORTISHEAD, led by Dr Bill Dixon. Meet at Valley Road entrance for 10am start. Duration 2 hours, sturdy footwear advised. No need to book, donations to Avon Wildlife Trust welcome. Book about the wood available to purchase. FFI 01275 849200. (P)

Saturday 20 May

COFFEE MORNING AND PLANT SALE, 36 St Peter's Road. Portishead BS20 6QT, 10am to 1pm. Homemade cakes, jams, handicrafts, books and puzzles for sale. FFI 01275 843160. (P)

Saturday 27 May

FREE WALTON COMMON GUIDED WALK. Come and meet the warden, learn about the amazing wildlife that can be found, the history of the reserve and its future management. Meet at the reserve entrance off Walton Street at 11:00am (by the kissing gate). Access details can be found on the Avon Wildlife Trust website.

Wednesday 31 May

BLOSSOM DAY at Salt Marsh Drive. Join a Forgotten Landscape, the RSPB and Avon Wildlife Trust for an afternoon celebrating orchards and blossom. There will be a story teller & children's activities. 1pm-4pm.

JUNE

Thursday 1 June

AFTER WORK WILDLIFE WALK. Explore Small Combe cemetery and enjoy some nature therapy after work. Meeting outside Bath Spa station at 5.30pm.

Saturday 3 & Sunday 4 June

WILD PICNIC. 30 Days Wild Picnic at Brandon Hill. Join us as we celebrate the beginning of 30 Days Wild – activities for all ages. 11am-3pm.

Sunday 4 June

GUIDED WALK. Take a leisurely stroll around Weston Big Wood Nature Reserve with our warden. Meet at Valley Road Entrance to the wood. 10:30am-12pm. Please book in advance by visiting our website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on.

Tuesday 6 June

AFTER SCHOOL WALK at Prior's Wood. Take part in an outdoor activity in nature after school. Arrive from 4:45pm to start a walk from 5pm to 6pm.

Saturday 10 June

FEED BRISTOL. Join us on a visit to find out about this amazing AWT project. Meet at entrance on Frenchay Park Road, Bristol BS16 1HB, 2pm. Booking required. FFI 0117 940 0706 (C)

Thursday 8 June

AFTER WORK WILDLIFE WALK. Explore Small Combe cemetery and enjoy some nature therapy after work. Meeting outside Bath Spa station at 5.30pm.

Saturday 10 – Sunday 11 June

FESTIVAL OF NATURE. Our Feed Bristol nursery moves to the city centre, lock, stock and barrel for a weekend of connecting

with Bristol's Natural History movement. More info on the website: bnhc.org.uk/festival-of-nature.

Thursday 15 June

AFTER WORK WILDLIFE WALK. Explore Small Combe cemetery and enjoy some nature therapy after work. Meeting outside Bath Spa station at 5.30pm.

Tuesday 20 June

VISIT TO THE WRANGLE, a wonderful wild flower meadow, led by local member Edna Price, followed by an optional lunch at the nearby farm shop. Meet at 10.30am. Please indicate if you need or can give a lift. FFI Edna 01275 838503 for full details of venue. (K)

Thursday 22 June

AFTER WORK WILDLIFE WALK. Explore Small Combe cemetery and enjoy some nature therapy after work. Meeting outside Bath Spa station at 5.30pm.

Saturday 24th June

GUIDED WALK AT WALTON COMMON. Come and meet the warden, learn about the amazing wildlife that can be found, the history of the reserve and its future management. Meet at the reserve entrance off Walton Street at 11:00am (by the kissing gate). Access details can be found on the Avon Wildlife Trust website.

Sunday 25 June

BOTANICAL TREASURES OF THE MENDIPS, a walk around Ubley Warren and Blackmoor Reserve led by botanist Helena Crouch (following on from her talk in Keynsham on 10 February). Meet at Wellsway School, Keynsham BS31 1PH at 1pm for the minibus, cost £4 (must be booked in advance). Walk 2 to 2.5 hours, should return to Keynsham by 5.30pm. Please wear stout footwear and appropriate clothing and bring a drink. Biscuits provided. FFI Liz Wintle 0117 909 9667. (K)

Thursday 29 June

AFTER WORK WILDLIFE WALK. Final chance to explore Small Combe cemetery and enjoy some nature therapy after work. Meeting outside Bath Spa station at 5.30pm.

JULY

Saturday 1 July

MEET THE GROWERS. Explore the site in its full glory covered in wildflowers and production (First Saturday of the month open day). Feed Bristol. 12-5pm

Thursday 13 July

GUIDED WALK. Take a leisurely stroll around Weston Big Wood Nature Reserve with our warden. Meet at Valley Road Entrance to the wood. 7pm-8:30pm. Please book in advance by visiting our website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on.

Sunday 16 July

DRAGONFLIES OF PRIDDY, a visit to Priddy Mineries on Mendip with expert Ray Burnett. This walk will follow on from his talk in Keynsham on 7 April. Meet at Wellsway School, Keynsham BS31 1PH at 1pm for the minibus, cost £4 (must be booked in advance). Return to Keynsham approx 5pm. Please wear sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing. Binoculars recommended. FFI Liz Wintle 0117 909 9667. (K)

Saturday 22 July

GUIDED WALK AT WALTON COMMON. Come and meet the warden, learn about the amazing wildlife that can be found, the history of the reserve and its future management. Meet at the reserve entrance off Walton Street at 11:00am (by the kissing gate). Access details can be found on the Avon Wildlife Trust website.

Sunday 30 July

WALK AT LAMPLIGHTERS MARSH at mouth of Severn Estuary. Join us on our walk at this Site of Conservation Interest. Meet in car park of Lamplighters pub, Station Road, Shirehampton BS11 9XA. 2pm. FFI 0117 940 0706. (C)

AUGUST

Saturday 5 August

HARVEST FESTIVAL. Free event at Feed Bristol. Fun for all the family with kids activities, live music, café and hot food. Come and celebrate the seasons and see the project in its full glory.

Friday 11 August

BATS AT ELM FARM. Our own Philippa Paget will lead us on a bat walk, followed by bat detection as the bats leave the roost in the evening. Meet at Elm Farm, Burnett, BS31 2TF, at 6.30pm. Please let us know if you need or can offer a lift. Free event. FFI Philippa 0117 986 4276. **(K)**

Sunday 20 August

GUIDED WALK. Take a leisurely stroll around Weston Big Wood Nature Reserve with our warden. Meet at Valley Road Entrance to the wood. 10:30am – 12pm. Please book in advance by visiting our website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on.

Saturday 26 August

WALK AT WALTON COMMON. Come and meet the warden, learn about the amazing wildlife that can be found, the history of the reserve and its future management. Meet at the reserve entrance off Walton Street at 11:00am (by the kissing gate). Access details can be found on the Avon Wildlife Trust website.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 2 September

MEET THE GROWERS. Explore the site in its full glory covered in wildflowers and production (First Saturday of the month open day). Feed Bristol. 12-5pm

Saturday 9 September

SUMMER INTO AUTUMN TREES. Bristol Downs expert Richard Bland will lead a tour to learn about the notable trees around this wildlife-rich habitat. Meet at the Water Tower on Stoke Road BS9 1FG at 11am. Please wear appropriate clothing for the weather. Optional tea in Cafe Retreat after walk. Leader donation £2. Please let us know if you need or can offer a lift. FFI Liz Wintle 0117 909 9667. **(K)**

Sunday 10 September

BRISTOL DOORS OPEN DAY at Prior's Wood. Please see our events page for more details closer to the time: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on

Friday 22 September

THE FASCINATION OF DESERTS, illustrated talk by Dave Pritchard, 7.30 pm at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, BS20 6PR. Entrance adults £2 , children £1, including tea/coffee. Non-members welcome. **(P)**

Saturday 23 September

WALK AT WALTON COMMON. Come and meet the warden, learn about the amazing wildlife that can be found, the history of the reserve and its future management. Meet at the reserve entrance off Walton Street at 11:00am (by the kissing gate). Access details can be found on the Avon Wildlife Trust website.

Thursday 28 September

THE FIVE YEAR BUTTERFLY HUNT, illustrated talk by Philip Hall at Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH. 7.45pm. Entrance £2.50 (or £12 Season – September to March). **(CV)**

OCTOBER

Sunday 1 October

RIVER DIPPING IN KEYNSHAM. Join our chairman Dave Sage for some family fun dipping in the River Chew. Meet at Dapps Hill bridge, Keynsham BS31 1XE at 2pm. Wellington boots strongly advised. Free event. FFI Dave 0117 940 7968. **(K)**

Saturday 7 October

LAND AND FOOD FORUM. A full day of interactive discussions from 20 key speakers, spanning four themed topics. In collaboration with Bristol Food Producers and Land Workers Alliance. Feed Bristol. 12-5pm

Saturday 7 October

AUTUMN FAIR at Somerset Hall, The Precinct, Portishead BS20 6AH from 10am to 11.45am. Plants, books, cakes, crafts for sale, tombola, white elephant stall and much more. FFI ring 01275 843160. **(P)**

Friday 13 October

HORSESHOE BATS AT WOODCHESTER MANSION, a maternity roost for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bats. Talk by Ray Canham and Graeme McLaren at the Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS, 7.30pm. Entrance £2.50, Children under 16 £1. Sales table of bird food, second-hand books and other edible and decorative goodies! All welcome. **(K)**

Sunday 22 October

AUTUMN COLOURS WALK IN WESTON BIG WOOD, PORTISHEAD, led by Dr Bill Dixon. Meet at Valley Road entrance for 10am start. Duration 2 hours, sturdy footwear advised. No need to book, donations to Avon Wildlife Trust welcome. Book about the wood available to purchase. FFI 01275 849200. **(P)**

Thursday 26 October

A SORTIE IN SPAIN, illustrated talk by Philip Mugridge at Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH. 7.45pm. Entrance £2.50 (or £12 Season – September to March). **(CV)**

Friday 27 October

PENGUINS AND PATAGONIA, illustrated talk by Charles Kinsey, 7.30 pm at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, BS20 6PR. Entrance adults £2 , children £1, including tea/coffee. Non-members welcome. **(P)**

NOVEMBER

Saturday 4 November

JUMBLE SALE at Avon Way Hall, Avon Way, Portishead BS20 6LT 10 to 11.30am. If you have jumble that needs collecting locally before the event please ring 01275 843160 or 843865. **(P)**

Friday 10 November

A TOUR OF THE NATIONAL TRUST'S SOMERSET COAST & COUNTRYSIDE, an overview by Ian Clemmet, Lead Ranger, at the Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS, 7.30pm. Entrance £2.50, Children under 16, £1. Sales table of bird food, second-hand books and other edible and decorative goodies! All are welcome. **(K)**

Thursday 23 November

WILDLIFE FRIENDLY FARMING IN THE CHEW AND BLAGDON AREAS, talk by Trust Staff member Chantal Brown at Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH. 7.45pm. Entrance £2.50 (or £12 Season – September to March). **(CV)**

Friday 24 November

TRENDLEWOOD COMMUNITY PARK NAILSEA, illustrated talk by Andrew Town about the Park's creation, management and wealth of wildlife. , 7.30 pm at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, BS20 6PR. Entrance adults £2 , children under 16, £1, including tea/coffee, non-members welcome. **(P)**

For a full list of our up to date events and booking forms, please visit the website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on.

You can also follow us on Twitter and Instagram to keep up to date on how our events go:

Twitter (@avonwt) Instagram (@avonwt)



Volunteer Work Days

Volunteering on conservation projects is a great way to make a real difference to wildlife, to get fit and healthy and to meet some wonderful people. There are plenty of volunteering opportunities at Avon Wildlife Trust including:

Grassland Restoration Team (GRT)

Meet at Trust HQ (Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Wildlife Action Group (WAG) on Trust reserves - meet at Trust HQ (9.45am Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays).

Reserve-based groups at Brown's Folly, Folly Farm, Willsbridge Valley, Purn and Hellenge Hill (W-s-M) and the Gordano Valley Group

Feed Bristol in Stapleton and Feed Folly at Folly Farm Centre

Communities and Nature in Twerton and Whiteway, Bath

Please go to: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer for dates and work programmes.

For conservation, events and office volunteering opportunities please go to www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk or call 0117 917 7270.

Here is a selection of other conservation groups:

HELLENGE HILL RESERVE, BLEADON PURN HILL RESERVE, W-s-M. Work parties and/or wildlife surveying/monitoring. Phone warden Cynthia Sparks 01934 204028 for times and meeting point.

GOOSE GREEN Saturday 22 April As part of our commitment to this local grassland and wetland reserve, we shall be undertaking maintenance such as path clearance and a general tidy up. Please wear walking or wellington boots and bring gloves. Meet 10am at the bridge on the reserve, West of Oak Close, North Yate, BS37 5TN. **(S)**

Prior's Wood Sunday 23 April Meet 10am in car parking area opposite entrance to Children's Hospice. Turn off B3128 Clevedon road at Downs School entrance and follow drive for about 1 mile, then turn left at sign for Hospice. DO NOT USE HOSPICE CP. **(GCG)**

KENNEDY POND & RIVER FROME Saturday 6 May, to carry out a general spring clean of the area. Meet at the Pond, Link Road, Yate Shopping Centre at 10am (parking available at car parks on either side of Link Road, BS37 4AY). **(S)**

MIDDLE HILL COMMON Sunday 21 May, general reserve management. Park on the roadside in Valley Road, Portishead (ST 444751). Come up Valley Road from the B3124 and turn left at the roundabout outside the Police HQ. Continue for about 400m and past Blackberry Lane on the left side of the road and park. Meet in Blackberry Lane, 10am. **(GCG)(GCG)**

TICKENHAM HILL Sunday 25 June. General management. Limited parking on RH side of Cadbury Camp Lane West (ST 443723). Come up Hill Lane (on N side of the B3128 at western end of Tickenham). Name changes to Cadbury Camp Lane W part way up the hill and is a narrow private lane with speed bumps and restricted access. Meet 10am. **(GCG)**

WAPLEY BUSHES Sunday 25 June Plant Identification Afternoon Session at this wildlife-rich local nature reserve. Please wear stout footwear. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate, BS37 8US, 2pm. **(S)**

WESTON MOOR Sunday 30 July Reserve management - probably ragwort pulling! Meet at 10am down the small drive beside the church in Weston-in-Gordano ST 444743. **(GCG)**

WAPLEY BUSHES Sunday 10 September (Annual stream clearance and other maintenance work. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate, BS37 8US, 10am. Please wear stout footwear. **(S)**

KENNEDY WAY POND Saturday 23 September Vegetation clearance and general management work. Meet at the Pond, Link Road, Yate Shopping Centre at 10am (parking available at car parks on either side of Link Road, BS37 4AY). **(S)**

WALTON COMMON Sunday 24 September Scrub clearance from grassland, maybe a bonfire. Meet 10am on the coast road above Walton-in-Gordano on the layby beside the end of Clevedon Golf Course (ST 423735). **(GCG)**

KINGSGATE PARK NATURE RESERVE PONDS Saturday 7 October Maintenance of this important amphibian site. Meet at the Scott Way entrance, Scott Way, Yate BS37 4NW, 10am (parking available at entrance of Shackleton Avenue). Please wear gloves and wellington boots. **(S)**

CLAPTON MOOR Sunday 29 October Scrub management and footpath clearance. Meet 10am in the car park at the entrance to the reserve on Clevedon Lane (ST 461733) about one mile west of Clapton-in-Gordano. **(GCG)**

WAPLEY BUSHES Saturday 18 November Tidying up reserve prior to the winter season. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate, BS37 8US, 10am. Please wear walking or wellington boots and bring gloves. **(S)**

TICKENHAM HILL Sunday 26 November Scrub management and bonfire. Limited parking on RH side of Cadbury Camp Lane West (ST 443723). Come up Hill Lane (on N side of the B3128 at western end of Tickenham). Name changes to Cadbury Camp Lane W part way up the hill and is a narrow private lane with speed bumps and restricted access. Meet 10am. **(GCG)**

OTHER GROUPS

Avon Badger Group 0777 609 0816

Avon Bat Group Emma Stone 0117 966 4393 / David Brown 01275 810420 info@avonbatgroup.org.uk

Cam Valley Wildlife Group Barb Jones 01761 232321 www.cvwg.org.uk (CVWG)

Eastville Park Action Group Irene Blessitt 0117 965 8429

Filnora Conservation group 01454 416945 friends@gmail.com.

Gordano Conservation Group Keith Giles 01275 852627 or Sarah Kennedy 01275 817565 (GCG)

Patchway Conservation Group 0117 940 0020 / 01454 898369 / 868530 www.patchway-town.co.uk (PCG)

Wapley Bushes Conservation Group Isabel Ryan 01454 313055

Local group and volunteering contacts

(C)	Cabot	Jill Kempshall	0117 940 0706
(CV)	Chew Valley	Anne-Marie Morris	01275 332534
(GCG)	Gordano Valley	Keith Giles	01275 852627
(K)	Keynsham	Cynthia Wilson	01225 874259
(LA)	Long Ashton	Harry Williams	01275 392690
(P)	Portishead	Cynthia Dorn	01275 843160
(S)	Southwold	Gloria Stephen	01454 310328

If you would like to get involved or start a new group, please contact Julie Doherty 0117 980 0391.

My Wild Community

We have over 10,000 followers on Twitter, 1,200 on Instagram and over 3,800 followers on Facebook. We also have over 7,000 people who subscribe to our monthly eNewsletter and 17,000 members. That's a huge community! But we know that not everyone is on social media, and so we wanted to share some of the photos and stories shared by our online community with you, our members.



The breath-taking views on a clear sunny day and the beauty of Brandon Hill has been gorgeously portrayed by **Ruth Revell**.



Such a strikingly happy image of **Sian James'** first bee sighting as it collects nectar from a daffodil, in full bloom. A perfect picture of spring.



Sarah Thorpe has surrounded her shop with bright daffodils, bringing a little bit of nature into the city of Bristol.



Ben Buckle has been exploring Prior's Woods and has been lucky enough to spot this beautifully coloured Turkey Tail fungus!

We'd love to see your pictures from your wildlife adventures around Avon. Get involved with your community and follow us/share your story on Twitter (@avonwt) and Instagram (@avonwt) or email us on members@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Wellbeing through nature

Happier and healthier lives



PHOTOS: DAVID KILBEY

As I write this, I'm looking at the first of one of my favourite wild flowers, the stem reaching towards the sky with buds bursting open to reveal those candescent and multi-headed yellow flowers. Ah yes, the cowslip. It's Spring! The birds are singing, frogs are spawning and as nature grows around us, we begin to appear from our houses and breathe the fresh, crisp, spring air.

But not everybody has that positive

connection with nature like I do (and maybe you too). Living in dense, urban areas, where green fields and open spaces are rare and sometimes hard to find, overshadowed by towering buildings and tarmacked roads, many people are disconnected from nature (or don't know where to look for it). Even more people don't realise the value nature has for their wellbeing, and how that disconnection can be detrimental to their health.

It's not just an issue of awareness but also of accessibility. There are people, with health conditions, people living in the city, that do want to connect with nature but need a little support. Here at Avon Wildlife Trust we developed our Wellbeing through Nature programme to help address this need. We've developed three levels of engagement to help people to re-connect and care for nature, whilst reaping the rewards nature offers to their health and wellbeing.

Wellbeing self-care course

A supportive 12-week course that aims to help people with long term health conditions and those experiencing low mood, anxiety or stress. It has been developed around a person-centred, holistic approach, where we structure activities supporting individuals' development to gain new skills, increasing resilience. Through a referral process, the course provides people with the confidence and skills to boost their wellbeing, to care for nature and themselves in the process.

Wellbeing community projects

Our local, individual projects aim to bring people and communities together to enhance green spaces for wildlife. This gives people the chance to get to know others, whilst also experiencing the associated benefits to their physical health and mental wellbeing by working in nature.

Wellbeing days

We promote wellbeing through fun and purposeful nature activities highlighting the role nature plays on our wellbeing.

“ Nature supports our wellbeing so we need to protect the wellbeing of nature ”

Reduce stress

“ When I started the course, I was feeling very down and low on confidence after a breakdown triggered by starting a stressful new job. I spent most of my time at home a lot of the time looking for jobs on the internet. I felt lonely, depressed and sluggish...

...The course is one of the highlights of my week - knowing that I am around people who can empathise with me in a supportive environment makes me feel more relaxed, and contributing something to society has increased my sense of self-worth. ”

Participant of Wellbeing Through Nature

“ After a working life in health care as a GP, I'm tremendously impressed by the power of simple exposure to nature as a therapy. Through volunteering with the wellbeing groups at Avon Wildlife Trust, I regularly see profound changes in people. Everyone responds to the natural world in different ways, touched by ordinary sights and sensations in nature - often colours, sounds or smells that may take them back to childhood or another place. It's such a simple treatment... nature “does the work”. ”

Dr Johnny Wood

Increase self-esteem

Enhance mood

If you know someone who would benefit from a wellbeing course; know a health professional who can support more engagement with nature; or want to enrol on a course yourself, please contact us: 0117 9800393 wellbeingteam@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Prior's Wood Project

By Nicole Daw

Avon Wildlife Trust has been working with Rolls Royce since 2008. Over the years they've helped with the development of our Folly Farm centre, supported our work through learning and community projects and are planning a new project around one of our very special nature reserves, Prior's Wood.

Prior's Wood

The Prior's Wood project offers opportunities for children, communities and Rolls Royce staff to connect with the natural environment and take action for wildlife.

Once part of the Tyntesfield Estate, Prior's Wood near Portbury, is a mosaic of wildlife-rich ancient woodland, streams and plantations. It is locally famous for its spring display of bluebells and wild garlic, but at other times of the year you can find solitude and tranquillity as the reserve remains nature's stronghold.

Rolls Royce graduates have been working closely with us not only to support us, but to lead activities too.

“ In an era of being constantly connected to technology with phones, tablets and computers, ensuring young people interact with nature is helping to develop a new generation of environmentally conscious and well-rounded people.



Billy Parr
Rolls-Royce Graduate

“ We had a fantastic time and the feel good effect is immense here in the team ”

Mike Gamlin
Manager in Air Safety
Investigations

Wild winter workers

Never afraid of hard work, even over the cold winter months, Rolls Royce teams continued to work with us. They wanted to do something a little bit different from the norm for their team building activities, and we made great progress in tackling a final strand of Rhododendron.

This invasive non-native plant used to cover a lot of the wood. It suppresses the growth of other plants by shading them out and poisoning the soil. Much is now removed. Teams also coppiced some sweet chestnut and hazel stools, allowing more light to flood the woodland floor. The results are being enjoyed now as plants spring to life in the newly created clearings, adding to the patchwork of habitats found around the woodland.

Working with the community

A class from the local primary school enjoyed a day in the woods learning all about life as a Stone Age hunter gatherer which included shelter building and plant identification (it is very important not to mix up your black bryony with your bramble!).

Siblings of children staying at the local children's hospice enjoyed a day exploring Prior's Wood before rewarding themselves with campfire pancakes and other tasty treats. Throughout the project there have been family adventure days in the wood. Local families, Rolls Royce families and groups from the hospice have joined us for these and thoroughly enjoyed themselves as they learn new skills, spend time together as a family and connect with a beautiful wild space.



“ My daughter loved the woodland activities, in particular collecting bits of foliage to make our creations. As a mum I couldn't believe this fantastic event was free. Amongst the hectic times it was the highlight of my December, real quality time ”

Louise - Parent



“ It's been wonderful to see the joint efforts of Rolls Royce and Avon Wildlife Trust to bring hands on woodland experiences to children staying at the hospice. Being able to offer activities such as this to families, right on our doorstep is fantastic, and we are really grateful to both organisations for their support ”

Louise - Parent

The future

The team at Rolls Royce is constantly growing, with many staff lined up and ready to lend a hand, work on their team dynamics and enjoy a dose of nature.

As we move into summer the jobs will turn to surveying, footpath maintenance and step building. We look forward to working with them!

Without the support received from Rolls Royce and the enthusiasm of the graduate team, the work at Prior's Wood would not have been possible.

Thank you!

BIAN CARRELL



Walk with the warden *Vinah Bell*

Interview by
Naomi Fuller

Vinah Bell – aged 89 – is volunteer warden of Walborough Nature Reserve – and for 30 years has had a special connection with the site – as well as helping to oversee the adjoining Uphill nature reserve, owned by North Somerset Council.

Vinah is an early bird and until recently a walk around Walborough was the first thing she did between 6.30 and 7.30am every morning.

“It was part of my morning routine. My role was to keep an eye out for broken fences and report things like it,” she explains.

“I’d also look at the cattle when they were grazing on site and spot if any were injured or needing attention and let the reserve manager know about that. And I’d spot the flowers and wildlife out at different times of the year.”

Born in London, Vinah moved to the Mendips in 1940 after the Second World War broke out, and immediately took to her country childhood, playing with other local children amongst the hay bales in a farm opposite her home.

“I think I was always meant to work with the land. It was in me already,” says Vinah, who, after the war, spent some years in the Women’s Land Army, based on a farm on Exmoor.



Vinah

NICOLE DAW

Her long connection with Walborough means she knows the site intimately and enjoys the change of the seasons and the stunning views down to the Quantocks and across the Bristol Channel to Wales.

“One day I stopped on my walk and gazed down at the view and a kestrel swooped down and perched close by me. That sticks in my mind.”

Vinah still manages regular walks around the site when she can and has led guided walks to share her deep

“ **One day I stopped on my walk and gazed down at the view and a kestrel swooped down and perched close by me** ”

knowledge of this special site to new people, pointing out the varieties of different orchid and other plants and animals visible throughout the year.

“It has changed a tremendous amount over the years but there’s always something interesting to see whatever the time of year,” she says.

About Walborough

Walborough sits in a privileged position between two other nature reserves, North Somerset Council's Uphill reserve and Wessex Water's Bleadon Levels reserve, which together represent a large area of habitats important for wildlife at the end of the Mendip ridge. Walborough is famous for its species-rich grassland habitat as nationally rare flora are present including **somerset hair grass; honewort; sea barley; slender hare's-ear** and **sea clover**. Not forgetting the gorgeous colonies of **green-winged orchids**.

Insects and birds also flourish here, and **30 species of butterfly** having been recorded on site, five of which are UK priority species. The locally rare **chalk hill blue** is seen in good numbers during most years. The best areas of grassland are on the steeper slopes, where you will find dozens of butterfly species in summer.

Wildfowl and **waders** can be seen on the estuary during autumn and winter, including **redshank, dunlin, shelduck and black-tailed godwit**. Birds wintering on the salt marsh include **skylark, rock and meadow pipit**.



Views

Those who walk on Walborough hill are rewarded by fantastic views out across the estuary and of Brean Down to the west. To the east rise the cliffs and slopes of Uphill which are topped by the Norman Old Church of St Nicholas and a tower on the hill which is the remains of a 14th-century windmill.

Protection

Walborough is not only a local nature reserve, it is also supported by a number of national and international designations which help to protect it. Walborough itself is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is part of the Mendip Limestone Grassland Special

Area of Conservation. The adjacent estuary is a RAMSAR site (a wetland site designated as international important) and a Special Protection Area. There is a Scheduled Ancient Monument at the top of Walborough Hill.



Development

One of our key activities on the site has been the creation of an area of managed retreat in 2003 with project partners, where areas of the old sea wall were breached to enable sea water to periodically inundate an area of low-lying, poor quality grassland. This has enabled the development of saltmarsh which is a priority habitat type with its rare plant communities and associated wildlife including invertebrates and birds.



Accessibility: Walborough is very accessible with good footpaths through the three reserves of Uphill, Walborough and Bleadon Levels. Some surfaced paths allow access for buggies and wheelchairs, dogs are allowed but should be kept on leads in cattle grazing areas from April through to August when a local farmer's cattle help to keep the grassland and saltmarsh in good condition for wildlife. There is open access to the grassland areas but please keep off the salt marsh to avoid disturbance to birds. Contact Avon Wildlife Trust for disabled access information.

Location and parking: Walborough Nature Reserve is located in Uphill village in North Somerset, on the southern edge of Weston Super Mare on the Bristol Channel coast and near the mouth of the River Axe. After following signs to Uphill village from the south end of Weston-super-Mare, park near the large sluice gates on the left or by Uphill Way in the lay-by.



Facts

- Walborough was purchased by Avon Wildlife Trust in 1996.
- It is just over 20 hectares in size.
- The best time to visit for the beautiful flowers and stunning views is April to June.

Great for...

- a family day out
- fungi
- reptiles
- spring flowers
- stunning views
- wildflowers

ACROSS THE UK

Green groups unite

Following the vote to leave the EU, environmental organisations are asking Government to keep

Farming

Keep

Controls on pollution of our rivers, soils and seas



NICHOLAS WATTS

Introduce

Investment to restore our soils, rivers and countryside to full ecological health



MATTHEW ROBERTS

Environment

Keep

Protection for important wildlife sites



MATTHEW ROBERTS

Introduce

A world-leading Environment Act, and map nature's recovery



UK PARLIAMENT/JESSICA TAYLOR

Thirteen major environmental organisations including The Wildlife Trusts have formed a new coalition called Greener UK. Their aim is twofold: first, to ensure that wildlife's fortunes improve when we leave the EU; and second, to persuade the UK's Governments to seize this moment and lead the world in nature's recovery.

The 13 organisations in the coalition speak for almost eight million members - but many more people support the coalition's objectives. In a recent YouGov poll, eight out of ten British adults thought we needed the same or stronger levels of environmental protection after we leave the EU.

"This coalition is powerful because its moment has come," says Stephanie Hilborne, Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts. "If these islands are to change fundamentally, let's

make that change a good one."

Greener UK is concerned that wildlife could be forgotten in the rush to attract new investment or make new trade deals. This might reduce the protection we give our most important wildlife sites, or the vigour with which we control pollution.

The coalition is calling on the UK Government to keep as much of the EU's environmental protection as possible when we leave, and uphold it into the future. It is also asking for sustainable and effective farming and fisheries policies, underpinned by safeguards for important wildlife sites and species, pollution control, and marine protection.

The Wildlife Trusts are asking Government to:

- Bring in a world-leading Environment Act and map nature's recovery;
- Invest public money in restoring our soils, rivers and countryside to full ecological health;
- Complete the UK's network of Marine Protected Areas and ensure we fish sustainably.

"We have secured real, tangible and positive change in the past and are determined to do so again," says Stephanie Hilborne. "The people of the UK want their wildlife back. Now is the time to call for that, on behalf of this generation and the next."

“ Eight out of ten adults think we need the same or more environmental protection ”

for nature

the EU's existing protections, and build on them

Fisheries

Keep

Momentum on banning discards and moving to sustainable fishing

FISHFIGHTNET

Introduce

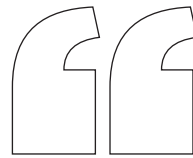
More protection for vulnerable habitats, and let fish stocks recover

PAUL NAYLOR

180 MPs and counting
 In the last issue we asked every MP to sign a pledge to help make the UK a world leader on environmental protection and climate change, and restore nature. See who signed at green-alliance.org.uk/ GreenerUK



DAVID CHAPMAN



Say what you believe



The Wildlife Trusts believe that nature matters in its own right and that everyone should have the opportunity to experience the joy of wildlife and wild places in their daily lives. Surely this is why it hurts so much to lose a favourite tree or see a kestrel killed on the road. It explains why our hearts leap at a murmuration of starlings; and why we grimace when we hear of children who have never had the chance to run along a beach.

We believe that people are part of nature and yet so much of its variety and joy has been ripped slowly and painfully from our land and from our souls. Together, we must put wildlife back into our country and into our lives. And your support for your Wildlife Trust is helping us to do just that.

But there is unprecedented pressure to release new land for house-building, uncertainty about the future direction of farming, and a risk of trade deals lowering environmental standards.

Perhaps the biggest risk of all is that, in the face of such turmoil in world politics and such urgency to ensure Britain is "open for business", the environment is overlooked. Yet it is the foundation upon which a healthy and prosperous society depends.

We know most people in this country do care about nature and future generations. But we need your help to keep reminding those in the centre of the whirlpool of change why they need to act for the environment. Think

of the impact we could have together if all 800,000 members of our movement wrote a short, heart-felt letter to our elected politicians calling for sustainable fishing and farming, and for improved protection for the environment.

Sometimes it's hard to know what to say. But those are usually the times that it matters most to say something. So why not simply say what you believe?

Stephanie Hilborne OBE

Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts
 @stephilborne

Wherever you are in the UK, your Wildlife Trust is protecting and standing up for wildlife and wild places in your area. 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 **Layout editor** Dan Hilliard **Communications officer** Catherine Boggild.

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In memory Mike Chadell

“His easy charm, infectious smile and never ending enthusiasm are sadly missed by all of us”



Volunteers are the lifeblood of Avon Wildlife Trust with many of them providing unwavering support and assistance over several years, and in many cases decades. One such volunteer was one of our Wildlife Action Group (WAG) volunteers, Mike Chadwell, who tragically passed away at the start of the year.

Mike volunteered with Avon Wildlife Trust for more than 11 years and his easy charm, infectious smile and never ending enthusiasm are sadly missed by all at Avon Wildlife Trust, but in particular the Land

Management Team and his fellow volunteers who worked with him on a weekly basis.

Volunteering in his local community and with Avon Wildlife Trust's WAG group were incredibly important to Mike, and his family wanted to reflect this by cremating him in his "WAG clothes". The family were also very generous in raising a collection at Mike's memorial service which raised over £1,000, for which we are incredibly grateful and which will help Avon Wildlife Trust to continue to deliver the conservation work that was so close to Mike's heart.



ELLA BEESON

JOE MCSORELY

Thank you

Nature Connections Matched Fund Appeal

ZSUZSANNA BIRD

We were overwhelmed by the response to our Nature Connections Appeal.

170 of our members donated to the appeal contributing over £10,000 and securing the full £5,000 in matched funding.

These gifts will help Avon Wildlife Trust continue its vital work across our region. Connecting people to the value of nature and wildlife, here on our doorstep.

Thank you so much for your generous support.



STEVENICHOLES

A strong voice for local wildlife

With over 18,000 committed members and volunteers, plus thousands more school children and business employees, we are a strong voice for local wildlife.

Thank you for standing up for nature, here in Avon.

Tailoring communications

Support from our members is vital and we want you to enjoy your experience as a member of Avon Wildlife Trust, but the law is changing the way we can contact you. To make sure we can keep you up to date please take a minute to update the ways you are happy to be contacted by us. Please do let us know here: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/updatepreferences

If in future you would like to receive the magazine via email instead of post, please let us know on: 01179 917 7270 or members@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.



Wildflower Nursery open!

Monday - Saturday 10am - 4pm

Feed Bristol runs a unique nursery that specialises in native wildflowers. Plants are grown by our community groups to support health and well-being and the income directly supports the work at Feed Bristol. We have organic vegetable starters and fruit trees - get planting!!



 facebook.com/feedbristol

Over 200 different species



Help bees, butterflies and moths pollinate

30 DAYS WILD

1st-30th June 2017



This June
can you **do something wild**
every day for **30 days?**

Join thousands of people taking part in the UK's month-long nature challenge. Make time for nature, explore wild places near you and share your love of wildlife with the world.

Sign up online
to receive your
FREE
wildlife pack



#30DaysWild
wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWild

