

Wildlife

Issue 109 • AUTUMN 2017



Avon

Learning with nature

Working with schools to encourage a love of nature

Working with businesses to create green spaces

Enabling people to build on their wildlife knowledge

Includes UK News & Stories



Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

Welcome



JON CRAIG

Ian Barrett
Chief Executive

Dear member



Welcome to the Autumn edition of your *Wildlife* magazine which celebrates **learning**. I am very proud of the ways our learning programme is developing, enabling us to reach many thousands of people every year, to inspire their curiosity in nature. Each year, Avon Wildlife

Trust works with thousands of children to get them hooked on wildlife (page 6). We teach wildlife identification, conservation and plant growing skills to people of all ages (pages 10-11). Our volunteers get hands-on experience of conservation practice (pages 24-28). And our members enjoy insights and information about local wildlife all year round (page 14).

I hope there will be features in this issue of *Wildlife* that you find inspiring, along with some useful hints and tips to help you take action for wildlife where you are (page 23).

Our membership community is integral to the Trust and enables us to protect and restore local wildlife. Central to our success is our focus on working with people. People are at the heart of everything we do, whether it's working with farmers to create wildlife-friendly landscapes, or urban communities to create nature-rich streets; whether it's the hours our volunteers put into maintaining nature reserves, or the actions we all take to encourage wildlife in our gardens. Our work with people enables us to develop wildlife-rich places and wildlife-rich lives.

The decisions people make have a big impact on the health of our natural world. At Avon Wildlife Trust we continue to champion the value of wildlife both locally and nationally. This includes making the case for wildlife friendly development (pages 30-33), for continued investment in parks and green spaces as Council budgets are cut, for nature to be a priority in the new regional strategy for the West of England, and for increased protection for wildlife as we leave the EU. Together we can help our MPs to learn more about how much we value and need nature. Everyone can help to make the case for nature by responding to consultations and getting in touch with their local MP or Councillor.

Thank you once again for your support and involvement - our members are the lifeblood of our organisation and make everything we do possible.



DON SUTHERLAND



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!



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



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



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The Schoolboy

I love to rise in a summer morn
 When the birds sing on every tree;
 The distant huntsman winds his horn,
 And the skylark sings with me.
 Oh, what sweet company!
 But to go to school in a summer morn,

Oh! it drives all joy away;
 Under a cruel eye outworn
 The little ones spend the day
 In sighing and dismay.
 Ah! then at times I drooping sit,
 And spend many an anxious hour;
 Nor in my book can I take delight,
 Nor sit in learning's bower,

Worn through with the dreary shower.
 How can the bird that is born for joy
 Sit in a cage and sing?
 How can a child, when fears annoy,
 But droop his tender wing,
 And forget his youthful spring?

William Blake
 1757-1827

Supporting Local Wildlife

NICOLE DAW

by Julie Doherty, Partnerships & Volunteering Manager

This year's #30DaysWild challenge saw more businesses taking part in our region than ever before. Staff took lunchtime walks, held meetings outdoors, ran photography competitions and some even camped out overnight

at work! Others committed to raising awareness and funds for Avon Wildlife Trust. Three companies in particular stand out - Bath Brew House, who raised £500 selling our Hedgehog's Snout beer, Bristol Ferry Boats, who donated nearly £400 from boat trip

tickets sold throughout June, and The Big Screen, who programmed a month of nature-themed films, bringing wildlife literally into the heart of the city for hundreds of people to enjoy. Thank you to everyone who supported us and took up the challenge this year.

50,000 people took part across the UK



250 people went wild with us at our events



Over **£1,000** raised will help support local wildlife



1,500 people took the #30DaysWild challenge in our region



My #30DaysWild challenge

My #30DaysWild kicked off in style on 1 June, with the Jungle Book outdoor cinema in Millennium Square, Bristol. It was a beautiful summer's day and people were enjoying soaking up the rays everywhere. The action didn't stop there though, as later that evening I started my series of after-work walks from Bath Spa train station. These were a real highlight of my month, as every Thursday evening I went on an adventure around Bath with a brilliant range of people, all with one thing in common - wanting to find out more about the wildlife in their local city. On our walks we spotted herons, rare mosses & lichens and leaf-cutter bees. We also saw an abundance of pollinators along wildflower strips in

Alexandra Park and inspected oak trees, finding galls, tiny spiders and much more in Smallcombe Cemetery.

I have to extend a huge thank you to those who supported me with their local knowledge and expertise. It meant that I could enjoy the walks too, chatting to people, learning new things about Bath's history, future and wildlife and even having time to pick up my camera and take some photos of the beautiful places we visited. I loved seeing the familiar faces of those who chose to come on multiple walks, wearing their #30DaysWild badges with pride, as well as introducing new walkers to the delights of Wild Bath.

by Nicole Daw, People & Wildlife Officer



Wild picnic



After work wildlife walk

NICOLE DAW



Fewer than 10%
of children in the
UK play in
natural areas*

ADRIAN CLARKE

**Every Child Wild, 2015*

Sparking a nature connection for children

Our My Wild Child project, now in its second year, helps pre-school children explore nature in a fun way, through weekly drop-in sessions run at three different parks and green spaces across Bristol.

Feedback from parents and carers shows how under-fives are already building a strong connection with nature through the free play and guided activities offered at the sessions.

Steph Lockyer is the mum of two boys, and has noticed that after coming regularly to My Wild Child sessions, her eldest son is showing signs of respecting and understanding nature more.

“Logan is nearly three and he knows

already there are certain plants he can pick, like dandelions, and others he can't. That for me is very important. He has a certain respect, he knows he can't trample on certain things because they're special. I think that's come from spending time outdoors.”

Find out more about when our My Wild Child sessions happen across Bristol on our website www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/mywildchild

A thriving partnership with Ecosurety

Bristol-based company Ecosurety has supported Avon Wildlife Trust to create a new wildlife pond at our Feed Bristol project in Stapleton, north Bristol. Staff from Ecosurety – a leading resource efficiency specialist – chose Avon Wildlife Trust as their charity partner, donating funds and staff volunteering time over several months this year. The team worked alongside Feed Bristol staff to clear the ground, plant hundreds of wildflower plants on the banks, and build a wooden dipping platform to enable groups of children and adults using the site to observe the teeming pond life. They also built an impressive bug hotel next to the pond to attract insects and provide shelter. Wildlife and natural history TV presenter Miranda Krestovnikoff officially opened the pond at a launch event, snipping open a willow arch with a pair of sturdy loppers! Huge thanks to Ecosurety for their commitment and energy, which has resulted in a thriving new habitat for wildlife at Feed Bristol, and a fascinating natural space for people of all ages to explore.

Have your say...

The new West of England Combined Authority is consulting on a regional strategy for the West of England, with a focus on businesses, skills and infrastructure. We are calling for the strategy to reflect more strongly the importance of a healthy natural environment to underpin a sustainable economy. Have your say here: www.westofengland-ca.org.uk/weststrategy/

Paddles aloft!

Ecosurety and Avon Wildlife Trust staff take to the water in Dragon Boat race

Staff from Ecosurety and Avon Wildlife Trust joined together to compete in Bristol's annual fundraising dragon boat race in the harbour on Sunday 18 June. Their team called itself The Dashing Dragonflies, which gave the perfect opportunity for wildlife-themed costumes! A hedgehog, ladybird, bee, kingfisher, bat and, of course, an iridescent dragonfly were among the crew, and all species paddled valiantly together in the blazing sunshine, competing against other teams in heats throughout the day. The Dashing Dragonflies finished a very respectable 18th out of 30 in the event, and huge thanks go to the Ecosurety staff who took part in such good spirits. The team raised £1,285 for Avon Wildlife Trust, which will go towards our nature conservation work across the region.



“ We thoroughly enjoyed exploring our school grounds for pollinators and making paper flowerpots... I have certainly learnt lots about bumble bees ”

Dr Rachel Emmett

School projects

PAUL HARRIS

Why do bees matter?

What is a B-Line?

Imagine trying to go about your daily business without the use of a footpath, road or railway. Bees, other pollinators, and a whole wealth of other animals struggle with this every day, as their habitats become more fragmented due to urbanisation, intensive agriculture and industrialisation. To help combat this, B (which stands for biodiversity)-Lines have been identified across the UK as corridors which we should concentrate our conservation efforts on, to join up the habitats within them and make them better for wildlife.

What is our B-Line Project?

Thanks to funding from Western Power Distribution, we have been able to visit three schools on the B-Line around Bath. Children from Swainswick Primary, Bathampton Primary and Bathford Primary all enjoyed an assembly on ‘Why do bees matter?’

A Key Stage 2 class (ages 7-11) at each school had the opportunity to learn more about the important work our bees do. The focus was on bumble bees and their fascinating life cycle, as well as how our fridges would not be as fully stocked as we are used to without our pollinators. Children

went on a pollinator hunt and were encouraged to really pay attention to different insects visiting flowers to sip nectar and inadvertently transfer pollen between flowers. We all noticed that the more flowers there were, the more pollinators could be found. So, at the end of the session, we all planted oxeye daisy seeds and took them home, to bring summer nectar to our gardens once they germinate and flower. We also planted mature oxeye daisy plants at each school, to give local pollinators an instant nectar boost.

by Nicole Daw, People & Wildlife Officer

Spawn to be Wild

During June and July, five schools across Avon hosted some unusual visitors. Tanks of critically endangered European eels were installed in Backwell Junior, Court de Wyck, Churchill Academy, Winscombe Primary and St Keyna Primary schools as part of our award-winning Spawn to be Wild project.

Students cared for the elvers (young eels) in their classrooms for approximately five weeks, feeding them, changing their water and checking their health. They also learnt all about their fascinating life cycle and the incredible 5000km journey they take to reach our shores.

They then explored the factors that

contribute to the species’ critically endangered status and identified ways to help to protect local habitats and the wildlife they support by creating their own campaigns to help save the European Eel from extinction.

A teacher from St Keyna said: ‘The project got everyone in school buzzing about it – staff, teachers, all ages of children, school meal assistants at lunch times and visitors – so many children chose to do this at playtimes.’

At the end of term, students released their elvers into Blagdon Lake to continue their journey, transporting them around man-made obstacles, which can block their path upriver. One student from Court de Wyck



school said, ‘The day out releasing the elvers was amazing because it was great to see what the elvers did when we released them in to the lake.’

Read more on our blog: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/wildschools/2017/07/24/spawn-to-be-wild-learning-about-eels-close

by Laura Colman, Learning Development Manager

Survey results

We recently sent an email out to members asking for their feedback on their experience as a member and their views on wildlife in Avon. We were delighted with the response as your input is so valuable to us. We hope to use the information to enhance the member experience and develop our communications with you. Here's a snap shot of some of the results.

Species fondly remembered from childhood



If you didn't receive the email but would like to have your say you can complete the survey online at:
www.avonwildlifetrust.formstack.com/forms/memberssurvey2017.

37% of UK children have never seen a hedgehog*

80% of members want to hear more wildlife success stories

Turn to page 21 to read about wildlife spotted in cities

Do you remember this bird from your childhood? page 16

Guided nature walks are the most popular type of event



Never been to an event? Check out our calendar on pages 17-20

55% of members have never been to one of our events

*Every Child Wild, 2015



MATT COLLINS

Ecology courses

Develop your wildlife knowledge by signing up to our ecology courses online at www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/courses.

Each course provides hands-on experience which helps develop identification skills that are essential to field studies. Our tutors are passionate about their subjects, and have a great range of knowledge and experience to share.

"I was really impressed! The course was well-planned with a good balance of classroom and practical activities... Explanations were clear, well-pitched

and given enthusiastically... It was great to head into Eastville Park to put the skills we had learned into practice.

Thank you for running such an interesting and rewarding course. I look forward to signing up for future field ecology events and using my new knowledge whenever I can."

Sarah Paddock, Introduction to British Mammals course attendee

Valuing Bristol's parks for people and wildlife

The future funding of Bristol's parks has been the focus of intense debate in the city over the summer, and we have called for the true value of these green spaces for wildlife and people to be recognised. Currently, Bristol City Council is proposing a budget which would dramatically reduce the funding available to maintain and enhance the city centre and neighbourhood parks across Bristol. These spaces - some tucked away and some in the heart of the city - provide a rich habitat for species, and a chance for people from across Bristol's diverse communities to personally connect with nature.

We understand the immense pressures all local authorities are

facing in maintaining public services including their parks and green spaces. But as decisions are made we want the true value of our parks for people and wildlife to be understood, and are joining with other voices from across the city to be part of the conversation about the best plan for our parks.

Bristol Parks Forum has launched a petition calling on Bristol City Council to rethink their budget proposal for the city's parks.

You can find out more and sign the petition here:
epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/epetition_core/view/ProtectParks



ZSUZSANNA BIRD

FEATURE

Lifelong learning



A recent poll commissioned by Jordans showed that one in seven Britons hasn't left the city for over *two years*. The report continued to say that one-third of those asked said they didn't have a clue about wildlife and wouldn't be able to teach their children about the outdoors.¹

This lack of knowledge won't be helped by the fact that the Oxford Junior Dictionary has been removing 'nature' words from its pages. 'Acorn', 'buttercup' and 'conker' got the chop in 2015, replaced by 'blog', 'broadband' and 'voicemail'.

As more generations grow up without nature on the school curriculum, it is not surprising that our children are now more disconnected from nature than ever before. Just 10% of our children play in wild places compared to 40% of their parents at the same age. A huge 60% of our children cannot identify a peacock butterfly, and over 50% have never found frogspawn in a pond.

This is why at Avon Wildlife Trust we engage with over 7,000 children and many more thousands of adults every year, to share the value of nature as a classroom, and as a life-long subject. Our Learning Programme welcomes all ages from toddlers to elders, and offers opportunities to learn about nature in a wide range of settings.

The following pages describe how we reach people and how you, your child, teachers and schools can get involved in Wild Learning and develop your love of nature.

¹ www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/23/public-losing-touch-nature-poll-suggests/

Exploring habitats in Hartcliffe

Students from Bridge Learning Campus (BLC) in Hartcliffe have been exploring their local habitats and helping to make their school and gardens more wildlife-friendly. Avon Wildlife Trust's learning team began the student-led project by meeting the student council and asking students what they would like to do to make their school more wildlife-friendly.

Pupils aged from seven to eleven took part in a six week after-school nature club in Term 6 (June to July), which included bug hunts, nature-themed games and den building. Sessions had a strong practical focus and students made bug hotels and seed balls to take home, improving their local environment for wildlife.

Our strong partnership with the school has been key and the staff team has been actively involved in the development and delivery of the programme. Following the success of the pilot and with support from players of the People's Postcode Lottery, we hope to develop this model, working with schools and

community partners to provide more opportunities for children to connect with and explore nature where they live.

Associate Headteacher, Neil Willey, said "When we were approached by Avon Wildlife Trust I was unsure how many pupils would sign up as we had never run a club of this sort before. Over 20 pupils took part and their attendance was excellent. This was because the activities planned were fun, varied and interesting. It was fantastic to see pupils in years 5, 6 and 7 working together in a team. The pupils really appreciated the planning and resourcing of the sessions and had the opportunity to make seed balls and planters which they could

Less than 50% of children have been to a wild place with school, to learn about wildlife*

It was a great experience for all and we are keen to continue in the future

Associate Headteacher, Neil Willey

take home and therefore extend learning. They also manned the Avon Wildlife Trust stall at our Summer Fayre! It was a great experience for all and we are keen to continue in the future."

One club member said: "I really liked exploring the school grounds, because we got to go to places we can't normally go. I loved building dens and going to the club with my friends.

Summer holiday activities are planned in nearby Millennium Green Park, providing more opportunities for BLC students and members of the wider community to explore and develop their local green spaces for people and wildlife.

**Every Child Wild, 2015*

My Wild Child

The learning team has been busy delivering weekly sessions in three parks across Bristol for families with young children, aged two to four years. The wild play sessions take place during term time and have a different wildlife activity and story each week.

Sessions have been popular and many families come every week, enjoying meeting with other young families, exploring their local parks, playing with the wild play kit and enjoying wildlife-focused activities, such as pond dipping and making bee hotels. Each session ends with a story, a song and a wildlife sticker to take home!

Feedback from families has been positive with one mother saying; 'We come (to the park) a lot now and (my son) often says, "it's like in Wild Child!" We've chosen to go to nursery at the beginning of the week so that we have

Thursdays free for this group.'

Although the regular sessions have stopped for the summer holidays, they will be returning from 6 September in a park near you.

Wednesdays pm 1.00-2.30pm

The Bommie, Knowle (meet outside 105 Wedmore Vale entrance)

Thursdays am 10.00-11.30am

St George's Park (meet on the community centre side of the park)

Thursdays pm 1.00-2.30pm

Horfield Common (meet by the children's play area)



MISTY HUTTON



ADRAN CLARKE



Encouraging learning for all

School visits

A haven for people and wildlife in the heart of the city, Feed Bristol is the perfect place to learn about nature in an urban setting. We offer a range of programmes to support lifelong learning, from early years provision to ecology and growing courses.

We were pleased to welcome some new schools to Feed Bristol this year, and students loved exploring the habitats and species that the site supports. Our 'Happy Habitats' and 'Growing Delights' programmes are ideal for Early Years and Key Stage 1, while 'Growing Detectives' and 'Hands on Habitats' encourage Key Stage 2 students to delve deeper into the plant kingdom and work scientifically to explore a range of local habitats.

Students can get stuck in to practical tasks at Feed Bristol by helping to plant seeds, look for invertebrates and even become produce testers, tasting the fresh, seasonal produce grown on the site. The six acre site, with its indoor classroom facilities, three ponds, woodland, vegetable growing areas, polytunnels, roundhouse and willow circle, enables children to safely explore and learn about a wide range of habitats, bringing the curriculum to life.

We hope that, as well as learning more about local wildlife, students and teachers leave Feed Bristol feeling inspired by what they can do to help nature in their schools and gardens.

If you know a school that might be interested in visiting Feed Bristol, please ask them to contact us on 01179 177 270.



CAROLINE FITTON

Continuing Professional Development programme



SUSIE PEARCE

From September 2017, the learning team is expanding the courses at Feed Bristol to include professional development programmes for teachers and support staff. These practical workshops aim to develop participants' knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver inspiring outdoor learning programmes. Themes include wild play, creating wildlife-friendly schools, curriculum links to outdoor learning and team building. They will be suitable for anyone working with children, including EYFS, KS1 and KS2 staff.

Please check the website soon for more details and dates for our autumn 2017 Professional Development programme.



SUSIE PEARCE



SUSIE PEARCE

Reflections on nature connection and skill development

by Bryher Bloor, Grow Leader and Volunteer

“ I have been a nature enthusiast my entire life, but this year I am suddenly seeing the natural world in a different light.

I have always been a lover of the outdoors. I spend many of my days in the wild; up mountains, camping, hiking and generally getting as muddy as I can within the bounds of social acceptability. In short, I have always considered myself to be aware of the natural world. That's why, when my perception began to change, it had such an impact on me.

Having spent a year bound to the claustrophobic brightness of a reception desk, I quit my job to apply myself to something I loved. I was accepted on a Grow Leader placement at Feed Bristol, Avon Wildlife Trust's community food growing project. This is a 12 week programme, aimed at giving people the tools and experience to become community facilitators in the environmental sector.

The course involves classroom and practical sessions, covering the basics of horticulture, the intricacies of working with volunteers and strategies for doing so. The placement allowed me to work with volunteers two days a week on site. This immersion into the project was an invaluable part of my learning experience.

I soon began to notice a change in the way I was experiencing the world around me. In place of my usual appreciation of nature, I observed a deeper understanding which both startled and delighted me.

Instead of seeing the trees and lawns I was accustomed to, I saw layers of complexity which were previously invisible to me. I imagined delicate webs of mycelium shifting under my feet, connecting to the roots of trees, interacting with millions of microorganisms. Ecosystems, which I had previously been unaware of, underpinned my world. I started to identify species; Latin names sprang into my mind, along with plant uses and ecological benefits. I felt as if I had accidentally acquired an odd, nature-related superpower.

Practically, the knowledge and skills I gained have given me the confidence to pursue work in the environmental sector. More broadly, learning in this way has opened my perspective, allowing me to see and experience new things, and increasing my connection to the natural world. Since finishing the Grow Leader course I have been working with Avon Wildlife Trust to let others know about this opportunity. My hope is for others to have the same eye-opening learning experience I did.

If you are a lover of the natural world looking for a way to learn and apply yourself, why not consider the next Grow Leader Course (January 2018)? For those of you who can spare two days a week, the placement is an amazing way to solidify your knowledge. We are also running a series of Field Ecology Courses which aim to educate people about the ecosystems which surround them, furthering their knowledge of natural history and biological recording. These weekend courses can be found on our website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/courses.



SUSIE PEARCE



Seasonal stroll

Goblin Combe

by Joe McSorley, Conservation Advisor

Goblin Combe Nature Reserve is a steep-sided, dry valley with extensive areas of limestone scree, some of which has become covered with thick hazel groves and yew woodland over time. There are also areas of flower-rich calcareous grassland, unusual limestone heathland and views across the valley. On a clear day, there are views out across the Severn Estuary to Cardiff, with Flat Holm and Steep Holm as marker points.



Rock rose and
bird's foot trefoil



Common blue
butterfly

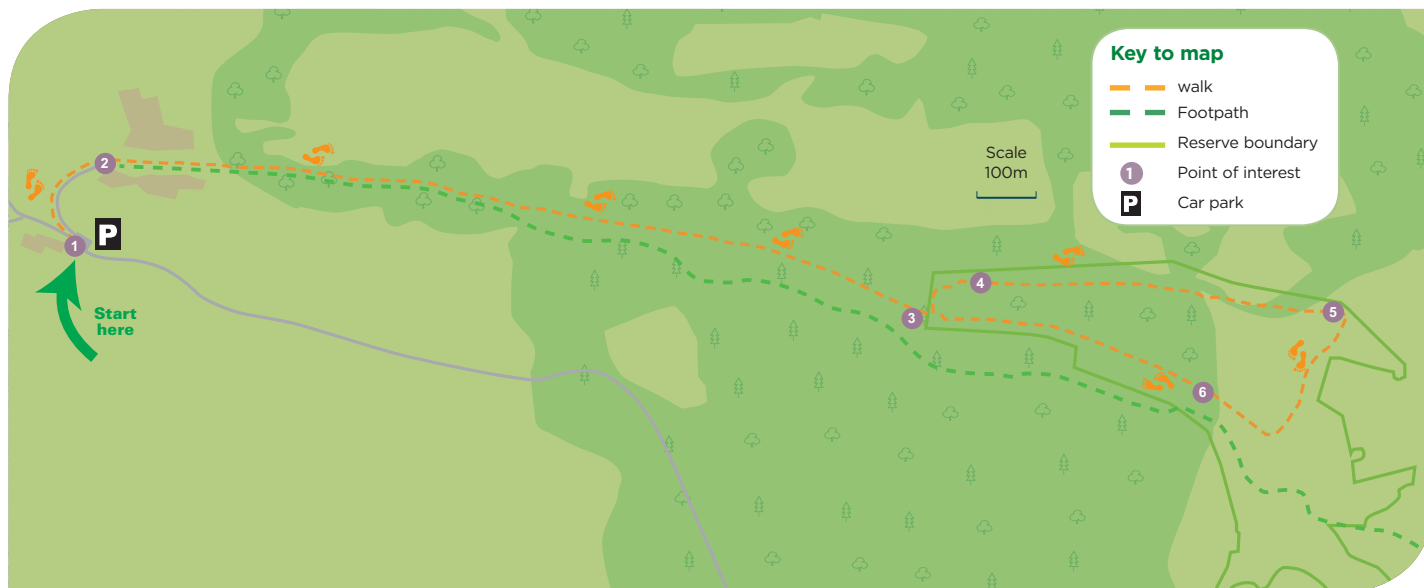


Goats



Large emerald moth

For shady woodland valley and estuary views



The walk route

1. Park in the quarry on Cleeve Hill Road near the Goblin Combe Environmental Centre. From here there are a number of waymarked routes around Goblin Combe Nature Reserve and the neighbouring Cleeve Wood. To fully appreciate Goblin Combe, we recommend following the Warren Walk (5km and marked with blue marker posts), which includes some steep climbs and descents.
2. Out of the car park, turn right down Cleeve Hill Road, then right again along Plunder Street. Follow this round past Walnut Tree Farm and a gate which is labelled The Congresbury Estate. Follow the wide track along the valley bottom through semi-ancient woodland, with some stunning mature beech trees and scree hillsides dotted with yew trees and hazel understorey. The damp conditions provide a great habitat for ferns and their lush greenness gives the valley a northern rainforest feel.
3. After around 1km you reach the Avon Wildlife Trust nature reserve, which is marked by an interpretation board and the remnants of a dry stone wall on either side of the valley. On the left hand side, steps lead sharply uphill and you should follow these to the top. Before you do, however, walk a further 25 metres up the track to admire a wonderful hollow oak that sits majestically among other trees on the left hand side of the valley.
4. The steps uphill are long and arduous, but the views from the top will be worth the exercise. When the ground flattens out there is a narrow track off to the left that leads up to the viewing point. If you prefer firmer ground then the track goes straight on and loops through a demolished dry stone wall and up on to the ridge. Once you are on the ridge, take some time to recover your breath whilst soaking in the wonderful views and the cool breezes.
5. Follow the ridge through the undergrowth with steep drops on your right hand side and steep sided woodland on your left, until you reach a kissing gate which takes you into Avon Wildlife Trust's limestone grassland. Once inside, if you continue straight on you'll reach another interpretation post by the exit route. We graze the grassland with goats and they're sure to be inquisitive when humans are around, so hang on to your lunch and please keep your dog under control until you are off the grassland. If you see any goats that appear injured or sick then please let us know - they are checked on regularly but it's good to have extra pairs of eyes.
6. To exit the grassland, take the route directly downhill from the interpretation board, go through a kissing gate and follow the track back to the valley floor. A right hand turn at the bottom of the valley and you'll have around a 1.5km walk back to the car park, passing the steep steps on your right hand side in the knowledge that you won't have to climb them again.



Look out for:

Brown argus butterfly

Slow worm

Boletus luridus fungi

How to get there: Park in quarry car park on the left near the Goblin Combe Environment Centre (signposted from the A370)

Access: Footpaths along the floor of Combe can be very muddy and slippery. Take care, and do not approach cliffs and scree slopes

Species spotter

by Joe McSorley,
Conservation Advisor

Hedgerows are one of the dominant features of our landscape, and the history of hedgerows in the UK is wide and varied. Hedges have been used to demarcate land, control and shelter stock, protect crops from the aforementioned stock, prevent soil erosion and as a source of timber and food. If you look carefully at a hedgerow you can see signs of its past management. Has it been laid? Has it been flayed? Or perhaps nothing has happened to it for years and it's slowly turning into a long, thin wood.

The importance of hedgerows in providing ecological corridors has become increasingly significant in recent years. Bats use hedgerows to navigate their commutes from roosting to feeding sites, and research has shown that some bat species will not cross gaps of as little as ten metres between hedgerows. The wide variety of food sources in hedgerows mean they provide a fantastic resource for one of our most distinctive small mammals, the dormouse, and provide vital movement corridors for this species. In autumn, the fruits and berries of a typical hedgerow add a nice late burst of colour to the year. In this article I've highlighted some of the most abundant fruits and berries which you may find in a hedgerow near you.

Foraging for blackberries

Blackberries are easy to spot, easy to find and you can eat them as you're going along. Make sure you leave some of these tangy treats for the wildlife too - birds, dormice and badgers love them!

Top Tips: pick the firmer, black berries as these are ripe, and will last longer, pick berries higher up (less likely to have been marked as dogs territory!) but not too high as the top ones are easier for birds, watch out for thorns and brambles. The best picking month is September.



MARTIN WATERS

Visit wildlifewatch.org.uk/activity-sheets for a blackberry crumble recipe



Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)

In September and October, the bright red berries, or haws, of the hawthorn bush light hedges up and down the country. These berries are pollinated by insects and are found in little clusters. They are around a centimetre long and oval-shaped. Underneath the red skin is a creamy yellow flesh and a single seed. This is where the Latin name, mono (one) gyna (seed), comes from.



IAN CHAMBERS

Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)

Perhaps the most exotically-coloured of our native fruits, they are formed of a fairly psychedelic combination of bright, coral pink fruit which split to reveal the luminous orange seeds within. I've seen them described as resembling popcorn or a Catholic priest's biretta! Please note that these fruits are highly poisonous.



PHILIP PRECEY

Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)

These berries, called rose hips, are similar in shape to hawthorn haws, although they are much larger and generally more orange in their colouration. They contain numerous hairy seeds which can be carefully scraped away to leave the flesh, which is rich in vitamins and can be eaten, although it is perhaps an acquired taste. Makes nice jelly or jam too!



Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)

Sloes, the fruit of the blackthorn bush, are some of the most distinctive fruits around. Blue-black, cherry-sized fruit, which can be covered with a grey bloom, will weigh down the branches of blackthorn bushes from September to November. They're extremely tart to taste, but can be used to make delicious sloe gin.



MATTHEW ROBERTS

Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)

Elderberries mature earlier than most of the others mentioned here, and will be seen in hedgerows and scrub from late July to September. The berries are small, black and shiny, and are found in large drooping clusters. They can be used to make juice, jelly or wine, but must be cooked as the raw berries can cause nausea and vomiting.



KAREN LLOYD

Guelder (*Rose viburnum opulus*)

The shiny red berries of the guelder rose can remain hanging on the bush for the entire winter, offering a useful source of food to birds like the bullfinch, although they are poisonous to people. They ripen in September and October and are very shiny when fresh, bright scarlet, spherical and just less than a centimetre wide.

Goldfinches

A star bird in any garden, the goldfinch is undeniably a loveable, colourful bird. A triangular white beak protrudes from a crimson red face whilst flashes of gold and white dazzle against black wings and a sandy brown body. They really are an absolute visual delight and increasingly common once again - increasing 117% between 2003 and 2014.

With recent mild winters and more farmers championing wildlife-sympathetic practices like leaving wider and wilder field margins, the countryside has begun to become a place of banquet for these little dazzlers once more. But probably the biggest contributor to their successful return is us; and specifically those of us who put seeds out in our gardens! Goldfinch love niger and sunflower seeds so if you want to attract them to your garden why not try putting out some feeders yourself this winter!

Need some feeders and seed? Why not visit vinehousefarm.co.uk/bird-feeders who support the Wildlife Trust with a 5% donation from every purchase.



ALAN WILLIAMS

What's on?

Wellbeing self-care course

Learn new skills, be outside, meet new people and feel better! This course is for you if you...

... have a long-term health condition; experience mild to moderate depression, anxiety, and stress; are willing to be supported through a mentored course to improve your mental and physical wellbeing.

This inspiring six-week course* combines the Five Ways to Wellbeing with being outdoors in nature. Led by experienced staff, you will be supported to achieve your personal goals, leading to a healthier you.

This course runs at three sites within the Bristol & BANES area;

Tuesdays

Bath City Farm, Kelston View, Whiteway, BA2 1NW
Taster day: 17th October (10.30am-1pm)
Course start dates: 7th November (10.30am-3pm)

Wednesdays

Feed Bristol, Frenchay Park Road, Stapleton. BS16 1HD
Taster day: 18th October (10am-1pm)
Course start date: 8th November (10am-3pm)
Pick up available: Horfield Medical Centre

Fridays

Dundry Slopes, Bouchier Gardens allotment site, Crosscombe Drive, Hartcliffe. BS13 ODA
Taster Day: 20th October (10.30am-1pm)
Course Start: 10th November (10.30am-3pm)
Pick up available: Knowle West Health Park.

2018 Course dates (TBC)

*There is the potential to complete up to 3 courses

We accept agency and self-referrals. For additional information on the referral process please see our website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wellbeingthroughnature

Or contact the wellbeing team on wellbeingteam@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Annual General Meeting 9th November

See enclosed letter for more information and booking.



Professional Learning

Outdoor Learning CPD for Educators

Friday 13th October 2017, 9:45am-3:30pm

Develop your knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver inspiring, outdoor-learning sessions with your class or group. Set at Feed Bristol, the course will be a chance to explore a range of urban wildlife habitats, learn practical skills to share with your students, and gain ideas for you to take back to your school or setting.

The course will cover:

- Building confidence outdoors
- Wild play and wildlife-themed activities
- Curriculum linked outdoor learning
- How to make your outdoor space more wildlife friendly

Suitable for those working with children, in schools, early years settings and community groups.

Price £50 + VAT per attendee. For more information and to book contact learning@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Healthy city week

Bristol Green Capital Partnership, with the support of Bristol Health Partners*, will be celebrating Healthy City week from 7-14 October. These collaborative health, research, arts, science and community events are designed to bring people together from a range of disciplines, to address themes raised during community consultation. Topics include air pollution, health and nutrition, and active travel.

Avon Wildlife Trust's Wellbeing through Nature project team will be involved in some of the events over the week - check our website for more information.

*Healthy City Week is collaborating with partners at Elizabeth Blackwell Institute, Avonmouth Community Centre and Wellspring Healthy Living Centre to run Healthy City Week Fun Palaces.



EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Friday 15

BATHAMPTON MEADOW OPEN EVENING. A rare opportunity to explore Bathampton Meadow Nature Reserve on the outskirts of Bath. Join us for an evening of practical management, followed by a bat walk from dusk until 9pm. 5.30pm-9pm. Booking required, please visit the website: www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/bathampton-meadow-open-evening

Sunday 17

BENNETT'S PATCH AND WHITE'S PADDOCK COMMUNITY OPEN DAY. Part of the Portway Sunday park programme. Café, nature activities and a chance to explore the 'People's Nature Reserve', created in 2015, and visit the Bristol Whales. 2pm-5pm - just drop by!

Friday 22

PORTISHEAD CLUB NIGHT: THE FASCINATION OF DESERTS. An illustrated talk by Dave Pritchard. Entrance adults £2, children £1, including tea/coffee. Non-members welcome. 7.30pm-9pm. Booking required, please visit the website. FFI 01275 843160. **(P)**

Saturday 23

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

Wednesday 27

BAT WALK. Join us 6.30pm-8pm on a bat walk at Henrietta Park, Bath. For more details get in touch with the friends of Henrietta Park, Bath (henriettapark.org).

Thursday 28

FIVE YEAR BUTTERFLY HUNT. Illustrated talk at 7.45pm by Philip Hall at Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH. Refreshments included, entry £2.50 (or £12 for season Sept to March). Booking required, please visit the website. FFI 01275 332534. **(CV)**

Thursday 28

SAYS COURT OWL PROWL. Join us and the Hawk and Owl Trust. We will dissect owl pellet before heading out around the farm to look for native owls. Booking essential, please visit our website. £2.50 per person (shared between Avon Wildlife Trust and Hawk and Owl Trust).

OCTOBER

Sunday 1

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

Saturday 7

LAND AND FOOD FORUM AT FEED BRISTOL. 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. 12pm-5pm. FFI 01225 874259.

Saturday 7

PORTISHEAD GROUP AUTUMN FAIR. There will be plants, books, cakes and crafts for sale, tombola, white elephant stalls and much more. Somerset Hall, The Precinct, Portishead BS20 6AH. 10am-11.45am. FFI 01275 843160. **(P)**

Friday 13

HORSESHOE BATS AT THE WOODCHESTER MANSION. Talk at 7:30pm by Ray Canham and Graeme McLaren from Gloucester Bat Group, about the greater and lesser horseshoe bats of

Woodchester Mansion near Stroud. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS. Entrance £2.50, children under 16 £1. Bird food, second-hand books and other edible and decorative goodies for sale! All welcome. FFI 01225 874259. **(K)**

Saturday 21-Sunday 22

INTRODUCTION TO FUNGI. Come and explore the fascinating kingdom of fungi. From towering toadstools to microscopic filaments of mycelium, this course will explore the diversity of form and function that these important organisms display. We will cover the biology and some of the ecological roles and symbioses that fungi form, to aid as a platform for understanding their life cycles and the habitats they can be found in. 9.30am-4.30pm. Booking required, please visit the website.

Sunday 22

AN AUTUMN COLOURS WALK IN WESTON BIG WOOD. Led by Dr Bill Dixon. Meet at Valley Road entrance. Duration 2 hours, sturdy footwear advised. No need to book, donations to Avon Wildlife Trust welcome. A book about the wood will be available to purchase. 10am-12pm. FFI 01275 849200. **(P)**

Thursday 26

A SORTIE IN SPAIN. Illustrated talk by Philip Murgidge at Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH, 7.45pm. Entry £2.50 (or £12 for season Sept to March). Refreshments included. Booking required, please visit the website. FFI 01275 332534. **(CV)**

Friday 27

PORTISHEAD CLUB NIGHT: PENGUINS AND PATAGONIA. Illustrated talk by Charles Kinsey at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead BS20 6PR, 7.30pm-9:30pm. Entrance £2 adults, £1 children, includes tea or coffee. Booking required, please visit the website. FFI 01275 843160.

NOVEMBER

Saturday 4

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

Thursday 9

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Members, volunteers and friends of Avon Wildlife Trust are welcome from 5pm. 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.

Friday 10

THE NATIONAL TRUST - GUARDIANS OF OUR COUNTRYSIDE. Talk with Ian Clemmett, NT Lead Ranger, who will take us on a tour of the Somerset coast and countryside. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS. 7.30pm-9.30pm. £2.50, children under 16 £1. FFI 01275 843160. **(K)**

Thursday 23

WILDLIFE FRIENDLY FARMING in the Chew and Blagdon areas. Illustrated talk at 7:45pm by Chantal Brown at Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna. £2.50, refreshments included. FFI 01275 332534. **(CV)**

Friday 24

PORTISHEAD CLUB NIGHT: Trendlewood Community Park, Nailsea. An illustrated talk by Andrew Town about Trendlewood Community Park's creation and management and the wealth of wildlife in its varied habitats. Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead BS20 6PR. 7.30pm-9pm. Entrance adults £2, children under 16 £1, including tea/coffee, non-members welcome. FFI 01275 843160. **(P)**

DECEMBER

Saturday 2

FAMILY CHRISTMAS FUN. Come to our Christmas market at Feed Bristol where there will be stalls and Christmas themed wildlife activities. Check our website for further information.

Friday 8

A CHRISTMAS CRACKER. An evening of short talks by local members, plus festive quiz and refreshments. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS. 7.30pm-9.30pm. Adults £2.50, under 16s £1. FFI 01225 874259.

Friday 12

THE FORGOTTEN CEMETERY. Talk with Marion Rayner about the fascinating natural history of Smallcombe Garden Cemetery in Bath - Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS. 7.30pm-9.30pm. Entrance £2.50, children under 16 £1. FFI 01225 874259. (K)

Thursday 25

THE MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY: OUR OCEAN, YOUR PART IN ITS FUTURE. Talk by Alisdair Naulls at 7.45pm. Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH. FFI 01275 332534. (CV)

Friday 26

PORTISHEAD CLUB NIGHT: INSECTS AROUND THE WORLD - BUTTERFLIES, DRAGONFLIES AND OTHERS. Talk by Dr Bill Dixon at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead BS20 6PR. 7.30pm-9.30pm. Entrance adults £2, children under 16 £1, including tea/coffee, non-members welcome. FFI 01275 843160. (P)

JANUARY

Friday 12

THE FORGOTTEN CEMETERY Talk from 7:30pm - 9:30pm with Marion Rayner about the fascinating natural history of Smallcombe Garden Cemetery in Bath. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS. Entrance £2.50, children under 16 £1.

Thursday 25

THE MARINE CONSERVATION SOCIETY: Our Ocean, Your Part in its Future Talk at 7:45pm by Alisdair Naulls. Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH.

Friday 26

PORTISHEAD CLUB NIGHT: Insects around the World - Butterflies, Dragonflies and Others Talk by Dr Bill Dixon at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead BS20 6PR. 7:30pm - 9:30pm. Entrance adults £2, children under 16 £1, including tea/coffee, non-members welcome. (P)

FEBRUARY

Friday 9

SHARKS - AN UNFAIR REPUTATION? An overview of sharks with Olivia Orchart, head of the zoological team at Bristol Aquarium. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS. 7.30pm-9.30pm. Entrance £2.50, children under 16 £1. FFI 01225 874259. (K)

Thursday 22

BIRDWATCHING AND BIRD CONSERVATION IN FRANCE. Club night* with an illustrated talk at 7.45pm by Ken Hall at Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH. £2.50, refreshments included. FFI 01275 332534. (CV)

Friday 23

BIRDS AND WILDLIFE OF BLAGDON LAKE. Club night* with an illustrated talk at 7.30pm by Nigel Milbourne at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead BS20 6PR. (P)

**Non-members are also welcome at Avon Wildlife Trust Club Nights. Entrance £2 for all adults and £1 for children and students, which includes tea or coffee during the evening. FFI 01275 843160.*

Saturday 24

WINTER BIRDS OF CHEW VALLEY LAKE. We will see and identify numerous winter visitors, including viewing them from the hides (permits available on the day, cost not included). Meet at Wellsway School at 10am BS31 1PH for minibus, cost £2. Please wear sturdy shoes and warm, waterproof clothes. We suggest taking binoculars! Booking for minibus required. FFI 0117 909 9667. (K)

MARCH

Saturday 3

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

Friday 9

THE SWIFT - A LIFE ON THE WING. A talk by Peter Bright, who has been watching swifts nest in his Mendip home since 2006. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS. 7.30pm-9.30pm. Entrance £2.50, children under 16 £1. FFI 01225 874259. (K)

Sunday 11

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SMALLCOMBE CEMETERY.

Marion Rayner shows us the abundance of flora and fauna in this wildlife haven. The walk follows on from her evening talk on Friday 12 January. Meet at Wellsway School, BS31 1PH for minibus, cost £2. 10am-1pm. Please wear warm clothes and sturdy shoes. Back in Keynsham by 1pm for your Mothers Day lunch! Booking required. FFI 0117 909 9667. (K)

Thursday 22

INSIGHTS INTO THE WILDLIFE OF COSTA RICA. Illustrated talk at 7.45pm by Derek Trendall at Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna BS40 8SH. Entry £2.50, refreshments include. FFI 01275 332534. (CV)

Friday 23

BIG CATS AND OTHER ANIMALS OF TANZANIA. Club night* with an illustrated talk at 7.30pm by Grete Howard at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead BS20 6PR. (P)

APRIL

Friday 13

A WILDLIFE ODYSSEY THROUGH SPAIN. Len Clark will take us on a birding and natural history journey through Spain. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham BS31 1DS. 7.30pm-9.30pm. Entrance £2.50, children under 16 £1. Bird food, second-hand books, will be available to buy. FFI 01225 874259. (K)

Saturday 22

DAVE'S DAWN CHORUS. Our Chairman, Dave Sage, will lead this ever-popular field trip to identify the different songbirds that make up the dawn chorus in the Saltford Shallows area. 4.30am-8am. Please wear warm clothes and sturdy shoes; you are advised to bring binoculars and a warm drink too. Meet at The Shallows car park BS31 3EX. FFI 0117 9407968. (K)

Friday 27

WILD ORCHIDS OF THE UK. Club night* with an illustrated talk by Sue Smith and Sue Dodd at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead BS20 6PR. FFI 0117 940 7968. (P)

MAY

Saturday 19

DOLEBURY WARREN IN THE SPRING. Rupert Higgins, an ecology expert, leads us around this haven for wildflowers and butterflies, one of Avon Wildlife Trust's "Top Ten" reserves. Meet at 1pm at Wellsway School for minibus, cost £4, must be booked in advance. Please wear clothes suitable for the weather, and sturdy footwear. Booking required. FFI 0117 909 9667. (K)

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:

Pollinator Corridors

Meet at Trust HQ (Tuesdays and Thursdays).

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

Reserve-based groups at Browne's Folly, Folly Farm, Willsbridge Valley, Purn, Hellenge Hill (W-s-M), Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock, Walton Common 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:

Sunday 10 September WAPLEY BUSHES Meet at 10am. We will be undertaking the annual stream clearance and other reserve maintenance work on this autumn workday. Please wear stout footwear. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate BS37 8US. **(S)**

Saturday 23 September KENNEDY WAY POND Meet at 10am. Carrying out general tasks on the reserve, including vegetation clearance at this local wildlife haven. Meet at the Kennedy Way Pond, Link Road, Yate Shopping Centre, 10.00am (parking is available at the Yate overflow car park, also on the eastern side of Link Road, BS37 4AY). **(S)**

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

Saturday 7 October KINGSGATE PARK NATURE RESERVE PONDS Meet at 10am. We will be undertaking maintenance of this important amphibian site, including the cutting back of vegetation. Please wear gloves and wellington boots. Meet at the Scott Way entrance to Kingsgate Park, Scott Way, Yate BS37 4NW (parking is available at the entrance of Shackleton Avenue). **(S)**

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

Saturday 18 November WAPLEY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE Meet at 10am. A morning of general maintenance work and tidying up the reserve prior to the winter season. Please wear walking or wellington boots and bring some gloves. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate BS37 8US. **(S)**

Sunday 26 November TICKENHAM HILL 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)**

Sunday 7 January PRIOR'S WOOD Meet at 10am. Clearing and burning previously cut material. Meet in parking area opposite the entrance to the Children's Hospice, ST 493738. Turn off B3128 at the Downs School entrance. Follow drive for about 1 mile, then turn left at sign for Hospice (Charlton Farm). **(GCG)**

Sunday 28 January PRIOR'S WOOD Meet at 10am. Clearing and burning previously cut material. Meet in parking area opposite the entrance to the Children's Hospice, ST 493738. Turn off B3128 at the Downs School entrance. Follow drive for about 1 mile, then turn left at sign for Hospice (Charlton Farm). **(GCG)**

Sunday 18 February WAPLEY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE Meet at 10am. General management tasks at the reserve, including the pruning of the local variety fruit trees. Please wear stout footwear, bring gloves and a pair of secateurs if you have them. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, south Yate BS37 8US. **(S)**

Saturday 17 March WAPLEY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE Meet at 10am. General management, including a spring clean to enhance the biodiversity of this precious nature reserve. Please wear stout footwear. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate BS37 8US.

Saturday 14 April GOOSE GREEN Meet at 10am. Reserve maintenance on this local grassland and wetland nature reserve, including path and litter clearance. Please wear walking or wellington boots and bring gloves. Meet at the bridge on the reserve, west of Oak Close, North Yate BS37 5TN. **(S)**

Sunday 15 July WAPLEY BUSHES Summer Fruit Tree Pruning. Meet at 10am. As well as pruning stoned fruit trees such as plums and gages, we will be attending to odd jobs on the reserve. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate BS37 8US. **(S)**

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

Filnore Conservation group 01454 416945 friends@gmail.com.

Gordano Conservation Group 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

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)



Local group and volunteering contacts

(CV)	Chew Valley	Anne-Marie Morris	01275 332534
(GCG)	Gordano Valley	Sarah Kennedy	01275 817565
(K)	Keynsham	Cynthia Wilson	01225 874259
(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.

Wild city diaries

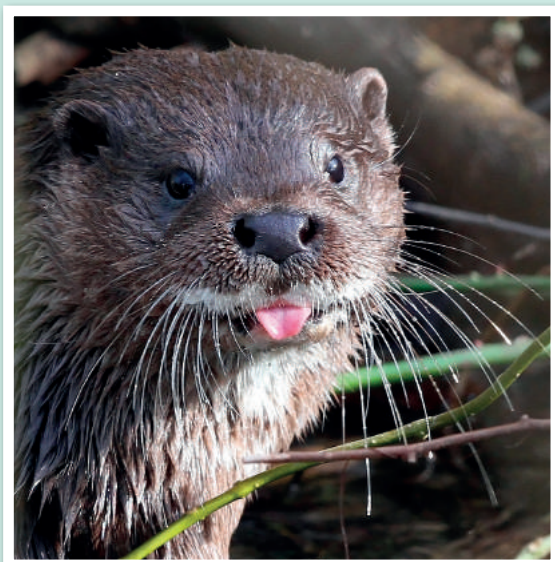
White-letter hairstreak

A small colony of white-letter hairstreak has been recorded in Eastville Park, a scarce record for Bristol, with small populations restricted to just a few woodlands within the city. As with many of our butterflies, its survival and lifecycle are intrinsically linked with that of a plant, in this case, our native elms: English elm (*Ulmus procera*), smooth-leaved elm (*Ulmus carpinifolia* or *Ulmus minor*) and wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*).

In the late 1960s, a destructive outbreak of Dutch elm disease hit the UK, causing the mass deaths of over 80% of mature elms. Lowland central and southern Britain were the worst affected, with the disease leading to the deaths of most mature English elms by the early 1980s. While not many large elms remain in Britain, there are many millions of young elms growing around the countryside. As time passes and these trees mature, it's allowing the white-letter hairstreak to re-colonise from remaining strongholds.



RICHARD SCANTLEBURY



MARGARET HOLLAND

Otters spotted

Otters are becoming an increasingly common sight in cities across Avon, with regular records coming in from both Bristol and Bath over the last few years. While Bristol's otters remain slightly more elusive, the otters in Bath have grown in confidence and are more brazen than ever. We've received no fewer than eight confirmed sightings this summer, with the hot spot appearing to be around Bath Spa railway station. Most are individuals spotted in the morning or just before dusk, with one record of an otter swimming around Pulteney Weir at lunchtime!

If you're out and about in Bath, it may very well be worth keeping one eye on the river. Otters swim low in the water, with their head just above the surface, and will often dive down before reappearing in a completely different location. Watch out for trails of bubbles as they swim underwater and you might just catch them as they pop up. There are plenty of other signs to look out for, such as half-eaten fish or their oily, fishbone-filled poo, otherwise known as otter spraint. Be sure to send us any sightings.

Swifts in Bath and Bristol

Swift enthusiasts in Bath have joined together to form a new Bath Swift Group, mirroring the work being undertaken by Bristol Swift Conservation Group. Sharing the same key goals of identifying, protecting and enhancing populations, residents have spent the summer walking the streets of Bath, identifying swift nesting sites within buildings around the city. By identifying nesting sites and submitting records to the local biological records centre, it is hoped these nests can be protected from incidental destruction by re-roofing and insulation work, which is often undertaken without the knowledge of swifts being present, and the long-term damage this can do for such an iconic urban species.

The two groups now aim to work together to provide all the information needed to help residents protect existing nest sites within their homes, advice on re-roofing with swifts in mind, and how to create new nests sites using specially-designed nest boxes, which anyone can build cheaply. To find out more, share your sightings or join these groups, please visit [facebook.com/groups/BristolSwiftConservationGroup/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BristolSwiftConservationGroup/) for Bristol. If you are based in/closer to Bath, please contact the Bath Swift Group:bathswifts@gmail.com



MATT COLLIS

INSPIRING PEOPLE

My Wild Community



We have over 11,000 followers on Twitter, 1,500 on Instagram and over 4,000 followers on Facebook. We also have over 7,000 people who subscribe to our monthly eNewsletter and 17,600 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.



Beautiful blossom mosaic by Lucy Smith. (@teggster)



Bristol Grammar School Year 8 Biologists habitat sampling ponds, and woodland at Folly Farm. (@BGSBristol)



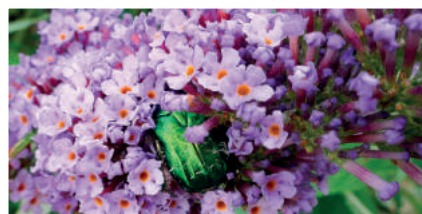
Stride Treglown's outdoor yoga session for #30DaysWild. (@StrideTreglown)



Another day at the "office" for volunteer warden Chris. Evening litter pick helping keep Weston Big Wood safe and clean. **Gordano Valley Nature** (@NaturGordano)



Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) by Simon Galloway (@Simon_Pic_Ed)



Rose chafer sunk in Buddleja by Caroline. (@HawkmothGarden)



Day 18 of #30DaysWild, quite rare, spotted a great teenager in a walnut tree keeping cool. (@victoria1w2)

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).

Stay wild

by Matt Collis,
My Wild City Project Officer

The passing of summer can feel like the end of the best months of the year, and nature starts winding down. Warm weather turns damp and crisp, and our gardens go from being places of basking, buzzing and breeding to fading flowers, falling leaves and frosts. But before you hang up your gardening gloves, now is the perfect time to add some extra resources and help wildlife with the transition. The priority for many species has changed. With the bounty of summer fading, many will be busy preparing for a more barren winter, gorging on as much food as they can find and seeking safe places to see out the winter. They'll be reliant on new resources to help them through, and below are some ideas suitable for your garden, balcony or even your window ledge, to help your local wildlife.

Fatty cones Cheap and made from all natural ingredients; chop up seeds, nuts and fruit before mixing with melted vegetable fat. Allow mix to semi-harden before pasting onto a pine cone.

Top Tip: Hang from overhanging branches on small trees or hedges using cotton twine and leave at least 1.5m off the ground.

Fruit rings Create a tasty autumnal wreath for your resident thrushes. Grab a selection of fruit and thread around a wire frame circle. Hang from a branch or bird feeder table.

Top Tip: No need to buy fresh fruit from the supermarket, pick up windfall apples and pears from parks and gardens instead – they're free!



MICHELLE WALLER

Bug hotel



TIMOTHY BEATLEY

Wildlife pond



TOM MARSHALL

Green corridor



BURGES SALMON

Hole highways Wildlife could be waiting just outside, if only it could get in! Ensure your garden is part of the garden network by adding postcard-sized holes around your boundaries, 13x13cm.

Top Tip: Have a boundary you can't add a hole to, like a stone wall? Why not add a tunnel by digging a shallow pass underneath! Be sure to speak to neighbours first.

Hibernation huts Perfect places for queen bees to spend the winter. Overturn a ceramic pot, half bury it and cover the top hole with a tile. Run a section of hose pipe from inside the pot to the soil around, ensuring to add drainage holes to the pipe to stop rain build up.

Top Tip: Adding some dried out grass or straw to the inside will provide a warm and secure environment. The perfect bee blanket!

Pool in a pot Nothing helps wildlife like water. Find a suitable container (tin bath, barrel or pot) and make water tight. Add an assortment of native pond plants in water potting basket and top with gravel.

Top Tip: Wildlife may need to climb in and out so adding a large rock or brick which can be used as a ladder both inside and out is a must.

Mini green roof Why not add some colour to a bird box, feeding table or something more ambitious like a shed! Not only wildlife-friendly but looks great too!

Top Tip: Simply edge the roof with wooden batons, lay a water-proof sheeting, followed by a water-retentive matting. You're then ready to plant with sedums.

Working in Bath

We value our members' opinions on their experiences of Avon Wildlife Trust, and you've been telling us that you'd like to see more about the work that has been going on in and around Bath.

Urban wildlife across Europe is facing tougher challenges now than ever before. Parks, gardens and brownfield sites act as important refuges for butterflies and other wildlife, but in recent years these areas have come under increasing pressure from development, habitat loss and climate change. Green spaces in cities are essential for us too, providing places to relax, socialise or simply enjoy the nature around us.

The Wild Walcot project has been developed to create a wildlife-friendly green corridor along the length of Walcot Street, improving the wildlife value of the street and creating a more attractive place for people to visit. Since the beginning, this partnership project has been community driven, with support from Avon Wildlife Trust. A consultation evening identified a huge appetite for change and questionnaires helped to focus plans and develop ideas. The energy, enthusiasm and drive of Adrian from the Walcot Street traders and Adam and Tom from the Vegmead

community project in particular, have been inspiring.

The site adjacent to the Cattlemarket car park was identified as the first priority, and in June, Bath-based firm, Amdocs worked alongside the local community and Avon Wildlife Trust to create a welcoming place for people and wildlife. Areas of bramble were left to provide a rich nectar source for bees, hoverflies and butterflies, a nesting area for birds and food for small mammals. The more formal garden area was planted with pollinator-friendly plants, including wild marjoram, wild thyme, foxgloves, nasturtiums, ivy, yarrow, self heal and lavender.

Regular drop-in volunteering sessions for the local community since then have helped to develop the garden and generate a real team effort.

Local traders have donated time, resources, professional skills, coffee, biscuits, water and even a bench! Bath and North East Somerset Council have provided advice, support and a mountain of woodchip. Residents have brought plants, pots, watering



cans, wood and lots of good wishes. Spending just a little bit of time in the garden really brings home what a fantastic community resource this is, and spending time with others to make it happen is so rewarding.

Exciting developments are continuing as the whole community is getting involved. The Vegmead food growing project have begun a Vegdrop project in an old telephone junction box at the top of Walcot Street to share surplus fruit, vegetables and plants and, over the summer, Bath library left children's books on the bench in the community garden as part of their Animal Antics reading challenge. A Wild Walcot steering group is developing more plans and the offers of help are still coming in, so watch this place, or even better, join in!

Email wildwalcot@gmail.com to sign up to the Wild Walcot mailing list, follow us on Twitter @WalcotWild or like our Facebook page, [facebook.com/wildwalcot](https://www.facebook.com/wildwalcot).

by Julie Doherty, Partnerships and Volunteering Manager

Bathscapes is a landscape partnership that seeks to ensure that the landscapes surrounding Bath are cared for in a way that fully reflects their value for people, communities and heritage. Avon Wildlife Trust is working alongside many other charities, organisations* and local communities to shape the project. If you'd like to find out more visit bathscape.co.uk or email info@bathscape.co.uk.

*Bath & North East Somerset Council, National Trust, Cotswolds Conservation Board, Bath Spa University, CURO, University of Bath, Bath Residents, Visit Bath, Wessex Water, Bath Preservation Trust, Wiltshire Council, Joint Local Access Forum

Nature reserves in Bath

Browne's Folly: We rely on volunteers to help us manage the land and keep it accessible to visitors. Over the past year, the regular Local Group volunteers have been working each Monday to create and maintain the step pathway. The Avon Wildlife Trust Wednesday volunteer group have been working on mending the fences and the Friday group have been working on the signs.

Bathampton Meadow: Man-made wet meadows and an oxbow lake; abundant in migrant birds and dragonflies, typically closed to the public and accessible via permit only. Bathampton Meadow is an amazing site

for migrant water birds, with waders such as dunlin, ringed and little ringed plover and green and common sandpiper, which are attracted to the muddy margins in spring and autumn. Sand martin and kingfisher have been seen regularly by the oxbow, and other migrant birds include yellow wagtail, whinchat and hobby.

In July we opened up the meadow for a rare opportunity to visit the site and take on some practical management work. We worked with three local schools to teach children about the importance of pollinators as part of our B-Lines project. In early September, we opened up the site again for more volunteering and conservation management.

Blooming Whiteway Front Garden Festival celebrated Whiteway's front garden spaces from May to July this year. Whiteway's gardens come in all shapes and sizes and the estate is a stone's throw from open countryside. Through green spaces the countryside is connected with the city of Bath and there's an amazing array of wildlife and birdlife; from driveway gardens to wildlife havens, from patio pots to plants for pollinators, from bird feeders to edible beds, anything goes. Avon Wildlife Trust worked in partnership with Blooming Whiteway to support learning in schools and promote wildlife-friendly growing. It is also coming to Bathscape Walking Festival (more information in *What's On* page 17).

Over the next 12 months, Avon Wildlife Trust will be working with landowners in three parishes of Batheaston, Marshfield and St Catherine to the east of Bath. We're particularly keen to speak to landowners who are interested in receiving some assistance with hedgerow/boundary improvements or orchard advice and assistance from our staff and volunteers.

Please contact the Trust's Conservation Advisor in the area, Joe McSorley, at joemcsorley@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.

INSPIRING PEOPLE

Not only has Keith led the group for 20 years, he's the volunteer warden of Tickenham Hill, known for its wildflower-rich limestone grassland and home to greater butterfly orchids. As a warden he coordinates local volunteering groups and helps us care for and maintain the land, keeping an eye out for broken fences or stiles. Our wardens are our eyes and ears, we couldn't manage our reserves without them.

As we pass by the gate and out of the fields, Keith points to the gate we just walked through; he helped build and install it. Everywhere on the reserve are testaments to his work and the work of the group. We return to a feast of food that everyone has contributed to (under a gazebo, just in case the rain returns) – another example of the camaraderie within the group. After an impressive 20 years of dedicating his time to leading the group, Keith has plenty to look back on and say about his experience:

“ I've enjoyed it – it's been very satisfying to see what we've achieved over the years in various parts of the valley and on the various reserves. We can all go back where we worked for many years and say 'do you remember what that was like before, it was woodland and now it's beautiful grassland.'

We have achieved a lot – it's been satisfying for me and I think people have enjoyed it, like this morning, a good social event and we made a lot of progress in terms of pulling up ragwort.

If you look over areas of the the Moor, you can't see any ragwort – you could have

five or six years ago. It's reassuring and satisfying that we've achieved something and seen the results. We couldn't have achieved any of this without you – it's [the group] been slowly evolving with members but I've got to the stage where I shall be 80 later on

this year – keeping fairly well, not quite as flexible as I used to be – but I'm looking forward to returning and being an ordinary worker. Thank you all for coming and for your support over these many years – it's been great. I hope you've all enjoyed it as much as I have.



The work that Keith has done, volunteering and leading groups, has been phenomenal; the group is full of friendly, hardworking people who have bonded over the years, and I find myself wondering why I didn't come out here sooner.



Keith will continue to volunteer with the Gordano Valley group, as well as with his own 'Friday Group', retired friends that worked together at a chemical company and meet each week to work across the Gordano Valley. If you'd like to volunteer, have a look at our volunteer working days on page 20.

Volunteers are critical to our work and people like Keith, who give so much in so many capacities, are the life blood of the Trust. Thank you.

Ian Barrett, Chief Executive Officer

Around the reserves

Browne's Folly

MAIN PHOTO: NICOLE DAVY STEPHEN DAWSON



Green hairstreak butterfly



ELLIOTT NEEP



Grayling butterfly

MARGARET HOLLAND

Volunteering

The Walton Common Volunteers and the local Gordano groups have been working hard over the summer to maintain and improve access for our visitors. This work has involved installing new kissing gates and steps at **Prior's Wood**, repairing steps at **Weston Big Wood** and keeping the tracks clear across all of the **Gordano Valley reserves**. Our tenant farmers have been carrying out the haycuts and supporting work carried out by the volunteers. We were very pleased to re-introduce sheep grazing to the orchards at **Weston Moor** and the small group of Dexters at **Walton Common** welcomed a few new members. The ditching work will start across our wetland reserves in the autumn.

The volunteer group at **Hellenge Hill** and **Purn Hill** have been busy maintaining fencing to enable the grazing to continue on the stunning calcareous grasslands. The steps and



Giant Hogweed removal at Bathampton Meadow

JOEMCSORLEY

tracks along the Mendip Way have been kept clear and repaired when needed. Wildlife surveys have also been carried out to inform our management plans and the group were **'delighted to record lots of badger and butterfly activity'**.

Goblin Combe

Nestling within the extensive woodland around **Goblin Combe** is an important area of calcareous limestone grassland rich in wildflowers, supporting a wide range of butterflies including green hairstreak and grayling, and providing a home for adders, grass snakes and common lizards. Following extensive scrub clearance work over the winter we've recently partnered up with Street Goat to bring goat grazing to the reserve. Goats are renowned for their keenness to eat the less palatable shrubs such as bramble and cotoneaster and they're starting to work their way around the reserve.

NATURE RESERVES

If you visit **Goblin Combe** regularly you're likely to come across the goats and we'd love to hear from you via email joe.mcsorley@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk or we can sign you up to our Whatsapp group, where you can tell us if you've seen the goats, how many there are and if they all seem healthy.

Browne's Folly

Visitors to **Browne's Folly** over the last few weeks will have benefited from the major infrastructure works we're undertaking. **We've replaced over 100 steps over the summer** thanks to our ever-active Browne's Folly Volunteer group that meets every Monday. We're also gradually replacing the roadside fence near the car park and we hope to be able to resurface some of the entranceways. Improving the infrastructure around the reserve makes the visitor experience that little bit more enjoyable and we're hoping to continue our work over the coming months.

Bathampton Meadow

The shelving of the potential park and ride scheme on land adjacent to **Bathampton Meadow** was very welcome news. We've been busy improving the site for wildlife over the last few months by removing problem species, including a dozen 10 feet high giant hogweed plants. We've also been actively removing some of the remaining tree protection fences which have been in place since the 1990s when the site was planted up. This **gives the reserve a much more natural and wild feel**. Although access is restricted to the site under our lease terms, we've also been arranging some open days to allow locals to visit the site and help us with some of our work there. Watch our website, social media and email newsletter for dates and timings.

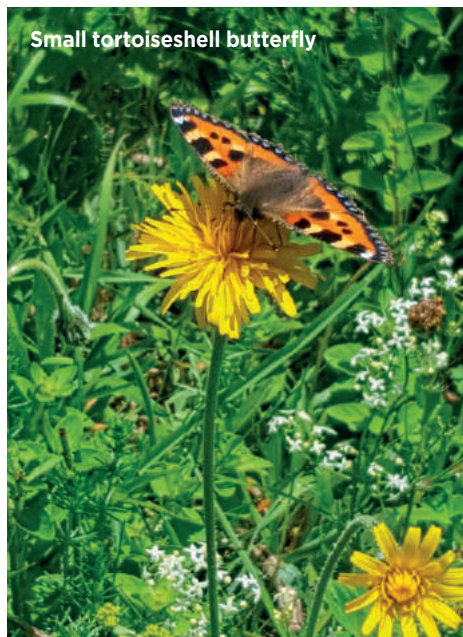
Willsbridge Valley

We've been improving the paths, revetments and steps around **Willsbridge Valley** for a couple of years now and the positive feedback we've received has been very welcome. Some of **the path-side wildflowers have been giving wonderful displays again this year** and providing a rich nectar source for a range of insects. There's still lots more to do to keep our wonderful **Willsbridge Valley** volunteer group busy over the next few months and years.



Red-tailed bumblebee

NICOLE DAW



Small tortoiseshell butterfly



Pyramidal orchid

ROSE MAPLE



Willsbridge Valley volunteers

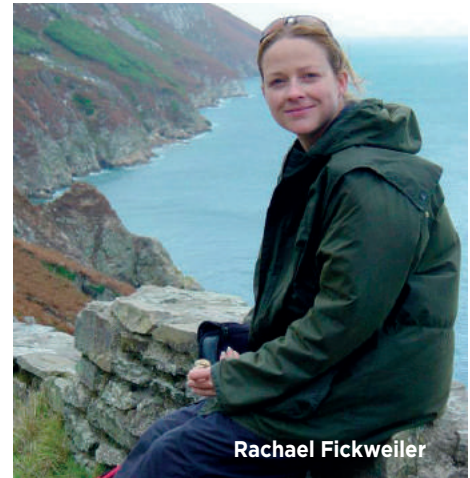
JOE MCSORLEY

Meet our Conservation Projects Officer

“ I don't remember a time when I wasn't interested in the natural world and the flora and fauna around me. I remember horrifying a teacher when it was discovered that I had millipedes in little boxes and a collection of lichen, picked from walls along my walk to school, on damp paper towels in my school drawer. I was regularly frisked by my mother upon returning home from my ramblings, as I used to bring collections of snails I had found back to our garden, which were, apparently, not welcome! The local 'newting pond' received a lot of my attention in the spring evenings and weekends when I was at last released from school.

I went into veterinary nursing as my first job which satisfied my general interest in biology and science, and I also did some volunteering with the Wildlife Trust on a local reserve. Being aware that people spend a large part of their lives at work I wanted my work to involve what

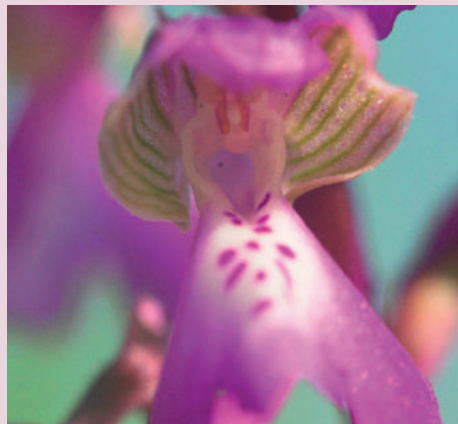
I was interested in, so I enrolled at Greenwich University to study for a degree in Environmental Biology. During the course I found the ecology elements particularly interesting. When I left university I found that the competition for conservation jobs was fierce, and so I decided to study further and took an MSc in Ecology at Aberdeen University. Since then I have had a variety of biodiversity-related jobs with a range of organisations, including English Nature (now Natural England), the National Trust and the North York Moors National Park Authority, working on priority species and habitat conservation. More recently I worked as a Fund Manager for an organisation providing grants for biodiversity conservation projects. This was a great opportunity to visit many wonderful reserves and wildlife-rich areas across the whole of southern England and Wales and be involved in their management and restoration. When the source of project funding came to an end it was



Rachael Fickweiler

time to move on and I applied for my current job as Conservation Projects Officer with Avon Wildlife Trust. This involves a variety of tasks, including reserves management, writing funding applications, working on our Living Landscapes projects and taking out groups of Avon Wildlife Trust's fantastic and enthusiastic volunteers for conservation task days.

I try to resist the urge to keep live insects in my desk drawers these days...”



Green-winged orchid (*Anacamptis morio*)

grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), with extensive areas of red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and tall herbs such as hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and hoary mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*). Little about its history would suggest that a plant generally found in ancient hay meadows and unimproved pastures would turn up here.

The green-winged orchid is scarce across the Avon region and is known to be declining due to agricultural intensification. It does occur in other sites within the Avon Gorge and is locally abundant in sites like Justin's Meadow in Ashton Court. Orchids have long fascinated people; they are mentioned by Shakespeare in Hamlet and intrigued Charles Darwin sufficiently for him to write his famous work *The Various Contrivances by which Orchids are Fertilised by Insects* (not his most punchy title). They are monocots, meaning they emerge from the seed with a single juvenile leaf, known as a cotyledon. Other monocots include wild garlic, bluebell, the Bristol onion and all our grasses, sedges and rushes.

The orchid family is defined as being perennial, with fleshy roots or tubers and unstalked, undivided leaves, although there are a couple of UK species with no roots at all. The flowers consist of six perianth segments, divided into two whorls of three. These segments can be wildly different and

are sometimes lobed, which makes it look like there are more than six. All the flowers of an orchid carry both the male and female reproductive organs. The reproductive strategies of orchids are so varied and interesting that Darwin was far from the last person to publish a book about them, and little wonder. Many orchids are reliant on insects for pollination and attract them through the scent that they produce. The relationship between the orchid and the insect can be very close indeed; orchids like the fly orchid secrete pheromones to attract male insects, which then attempt to mate with the flower and pick up some pollen for their efforts.

Green-winged orchids are mainly pollinated by the red-tailed bumblebee and shrill carder bee. Although they don't produce nectar, they do produce the smell associated with it, so attract these insects with the promise of a meal, but don't even give them that in payment for their pollination services. Despite going to these lengths, most colonies of green-winged orchid don't set seed very well, so this new arrival in Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock is very exciting. I for one will be heading back next spring to see if it has returned, and indeed if there might be more than one next year.

By Eric Heath, Head of Land Management

The green-winged orchid is generally a quite compact plant with a flowering spike around five to fifteen centimetres tall, although they do get taller sometimes. There are between five and twelve flowers on a spike, varying in colour from almost white to blackish purple. The crucial identifying feature is the broad lateral sepals (top left and top right parts of the flower) which are marked with six or seven green parallel veins.

In the middle of April, a green-winged orchid popped up in Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock. As you are no doubt aware, this is our newest nature reserve, bought by the Trust in 2014 with the aim of creating a new reserve in the heart of Bristol. When we took this site on, it was a derelict sports ground, dominated by coarse grasses such as false oat-

ACROSS THE UK

Wildlife areas on school grounds

Wild play areas for young people

Existing trees, water and meadows integrated

Wildlife permeable barriers between gardens and public green spaces

A new way to build

New developments don't have to squeeze out wildlife. In fact, they can enhance it – and benefit people at the same time

The Wildlife Trusts are calling on developers, local authorities and Government to embrace a new, more holistic way of building: one that avoids damage to protected sites, and works with the natural surroundings to create gains for nature, and better health and well-being for residents.

ILLUSTRATION: NIK POLLARD



Rachel Hackett is Living Landscape Development Manager at The Wildlife Trusts @RachelTassell



Green spaces joined up in large connected blocks

Sustainable Urban Drainage for biodiversity and flood relief

Integrated bat and swift boxes



Wildlife-friendly planting and landscape design

Green roofs and walls to provide habitat, and regulate pollution and rainfall

ACROSS THE UK

The next decade is likely to see hundreds of thousands of new homes built. In the past, housing developments have mostly destroyed habitats rather than created them. But done in the right way, on the right site, they can lead to a net gain for wildlife – and offer their incoming residents a healthier, happier place to live. And that's because good housing and a healthy natural world are intrinsically linked.

The Wildlife Trusts have pioneered the integration of wildlife into new developments for many decades (see box below). Using our expertise

“The Wildlife Trusts have pioneered this idea for the past decade”

and relationships with developers we have ensured that existing meadows, wetlands, hedgerows, trees and woods are retained. We also aim for wildlife-rich gardens, verges, amenity green space, cycle paths and

walkways. The result is natural corridors weaving through the development and reaching out beyond. These features add what is known as natural resilience: they reduce surface water flooding and improve air quality, for example. We also work with social landlords and residents to create natural places that encourage wildlife and benefit people.

The best new houses are energy and water efficient; have built-in roosting and nesting features; and provide easy access to safe, attractive green space for exercise,

Some we did earlier...

Trumpington Meadows: Beds, Cambs, Northants WT

CHALLENGE: 1,200 new homes. **RESPONSE:** Habitats created and managed with the local Wildlife Trust. The developer consulted widely about creating a new country park. They chose the local Wildlife Trust to advise on green infrastructure and to manage the land in future. Play areas, open ditches and tree avenues weave

through the development and the 58ha park is both a space for people and a 'nature reserve'. Creation of 40ha of species-rich meadows, hedgerows, woodlands and floodplain meadows began before the first houses were built. Wetland features keep runoff to the River Cam at pre-development levels.

New development



The developer at Trumpington Meadows understood the value of high quality green space

Existing development



Natural Estates: appreciated by 7,000 inner city residents

Natural Estates: London WT

CHALLENGE: Little wildlife in many estates. **RESPONSE:** Encourage residents to improve their area. This was a partnership between London Wildlife Trust, Groundwork London and social landlords. More than 7,000 people from nine different London housing estates took part.

“It helped create havens for wildlife and attractive outside areas for people to enjoy, and built a sense of pride and wellbeing in the local environment,” said the Trust’s Gareth Morgan. More at neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk/case-studies/natural-estates

“It created attractive outside areas for people to enjoy”

play and social interaction. And they deliver the priceless treasure of wildlife on your doorstep.

The Wildlife Trusts believe that all new housing developments could and should be places where people and wildlife flourish with:

- Access to wildlife whether in a town or country
- High quality natural green space
- A genuine, measurable net overall gain for wildlife
- Connectivity to the wider ecological network.

With the urgent need to build so many new homes, the Government

now has a perfect opportunity to reset the approach to housing. We believe it should refocus to help wildlife, and to create healthy, cohesive and thriving communities, where residents can connect with nature and each other.

All the necessary knowledge, evidence and expertise to do this already exists, and so our vision is simple: it should become normal for all housing developments – whether new or established – to contribute to nature’s recovery.

■ More at wildlifetrusts.org/housing

“We like living here”

“We have attractive, varied open spaces with no need to get in the car. The area feels safe and the kids can play within walking distance of our home.”

Rachel Mortimer, wild development resident at Cambourne, Cambs

Priest Hill: Surrey WT

THEN: abandoned playing fields and some developed land. NOW: 15 new homes alongside a new nature reserve. Surrey Wildlife Trust worked with the developer and Borough Council to restore the 34ha reserve site, which helps reconnect a green corridor into London. The Trust is recreating species-rich chalk grassland, wetlands and hedgerows, and many existing paths have been retained. Small blue, white-letter and brown hairstreak butterflies are increasing, as are common lizard, skylark and linnet.

“15 new homes alongside a new nature reserve”

New development



The new housing estate seen from the fast-developing nature reserve

ALAN OAKLEY, SURREY WT

Gaydon: Warwickshire WT

CHALLENGE: A planned 3,000 home development. RESPONSE: To make it a net gain for wildlife.

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust has worked to shape this complex development since it was proposed as part of the local plan in 2013. Final planning permission is pending but as part of the development a Local Wildlife Site will become a nature reserve with long term management. There will also be semi-natural buffers to protect nearby ancient woodlands; semi-natural habitat links to the nature reserve; and green infrastructure throughout the development.

New development



Wildlife on this site should increase after the houses are built

WARWICKSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST



“ The garden will be an invaluable space for patients, visitors and staff to find a peaceful space to connect with nature outside of the clinical environment ”

My Wild City

Our My Wild City project aims to bring nature into the everyday lives of the people of Bristol – on their way to work, when relaxing at home, going to the shops or walking to the bus stop. It’s true that wherever you are in the city there’s often wildlife to be seen – a blackbird singing in the park, a bee sipping nectar from an oxeye daisy, or a fox strutting around the street at night – but in reality urban wildlife species are in trouble. Urban areas make up just 7% of the UK’s land, but are home to 80% of the human population. Increased development and the loss of city green spaces and brownfield sites all have an impact on both the abundance and diversity of the wildlife. Once-familiar species such as starlings, swifts, hedgehogs and many of our pollinators are in decline, with 7% of urban species threatened with extinction from Great Britain completely.

We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to experience the joy of wildlife in their daily lives, so we are working with businesses, communities and individuals to take action for nature across Bristol.

Creating new habitats, restoring neglected sites and managing existing ones for wildlife across the city is an ambitious task, so we need to work in partnership to provide a better quality of life for all.

One example of how we’ve been

doing this is by working with University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust to create green spaces across their sites for staff, patients and visitors to enjoy. Even a small wildlife-friendly garden can help people to feel relaxed and more positive and provide valuable food sources for wildlife. In 2016, we created a new rooftop garden at the Bristol Heart Institute with volunteers from Skanska and garden designer Jody Fairish of Earth, Timber, Stone.

This year, we were able to transform a derelict courtyard in the gynaecology outpatients’ department into a colourful garden, in partnership with Skanska, Riverside Garden Centre, Roots Community Gardening group and Elmtree Garden Contractors. We used medicinal plants, such as St John’s wort, yarrow, echinacea and selfheal from our Feed Bristol wildflower nursery, and pollinator-friendly plants such as lavender, salvias and oxeye daisies. We also added a pyracantha shrub and ivy to provide berries for birds, put in a small pond for drinking water, a bug hotel and lots of herbs that could be used in the nearby hospital café.



PHOTOS: JULIE DOHERTY



JOE MCSORLEY

Keynsham thank you

Our Local Groups help us do amazing work and without them we wouldn't be able to reach the people we do and introduce them to and excite them about wildlife.

We'd like to say a special thank you to the Keynsham Local Group, run by Dave Sage. Throughout #30DaysWild the group organised

and ran many events, including a film screening of A Plastic Ocean and running a bioblitz at the Festival of Nature - Keynsham. By doing this they raised an incredible **£700** for Avon Wildlife Trust.

Thank you Keynsham!



Bevis Watts, our former Chief Executive, cycled 600km from Brussels to Essen and back, raising **£942** for Avon Wildlife Trust.

Ecosurety and some of the staff here at Avon Wildlife Trust entered the Bristol Dragon Boat Race and raised **£1,285**.

Thank you for standing up for nature here in Avon.

New systems

We are very excited to have a new member and supporter relationship management system, called ThankQ, which will help us to support our members, manage events and provide more efficient communications. We'd like to ask that you bear with us as we implement ThankQ, as we may need to check the information that we hold about you later in the year.

We'd like to say a very big **thank you** to Geoff Stevens, who provided our previous membership management system. Geoff designed and built the system for us and has developed and supported it for many years. His system has been an integral part of helping us run the Trust, recording our members, subscriptions and donations and helping to manage our magazine distribution for over 20 years.

If you'd like information and ideas about how you can raise money for Avon Wildlife Trust, contact us on hello@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

You can leave **curiosity**
and **wonder** behind

To leave a legacy in your will to help connect children with the wonder of wildlife, and inspire a curiosity in their natural world, please contact sarah.moore@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk



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