



## Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

### South East Worcestershire Local Group

#### Your local news Spring 2022

##### Online talks round up

Topics covered in our online talks continue to be interesting and diverse. In November Dr Duncan Westbury, whose background encompasses ecology and habitat creation, delivered an excellent talk on sustainable food production.

In December our group hosted a lively Q & A session on rewilding with Colin Raven, Johnny Birks, Helen Woodman and Brett Westwood.

In January Mark Elliott, a wetland ecologist who was a lead in reintroducing beavers on the River Otter in Devon, gave a fascinating insight into the project with very optimistic outcomes and beautiful photographic footage of beavers at work.

##### Upcoming online talks

Don't miss the next **online** meetings; visit the Trust's website to book your place: [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk)

##### **The Lives of Dormice**

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 7.00 – 8.00pm – Andy Bucklitch**

Discover more about these tiny creatures with mammal and dormouse expert Andy Bucklitch.

##### **Sandy Badlands: Wasteground, Highwaymen and Wildlife**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 7.00 – 8.00pm – Andy Harris**

Join Trust staff Andy Harris and Beccy Somers who will tell us about our newest nature reserve.

*Janet Morris*

##### Wither TWOD

Tiddesley Wood Open Day was a fixture in many of our lives for over 30 years. A great deal of planning and arrangement led up to hard work in the run up to and on the day itself. Before the pandemic, we missed only one year – 2001 when foot & mouth disease closed the countryside. Covid forced cancellation in 2020 and 2021. The ongoing uncertainty as 2021 drew to a close made planning for anything in 2022 problematic in the extreme.

After much discussion, our committee reached the sad conclusion that we felt unable to run the Open Day in anything like its previous form. Over the last few years we lost several volunteers (moving away, finding other things

to do in lockdown) and the rest of us are not getting any younger. We are very disappointed that we cannot continue and know we are not alone. My email giving the news to our loyal exhibitors generated lovely comments and memories of how much the day was enjoyed.

The Trust has an enthusiastic team who are giving thought to what events to run in future; watch this space!

*Bob Gillmor*

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##### Firewood logs and wood-chip sales

Another successful season of log sales has ended, raising useful funds for the Trust to continue its vital wildlife conservation work. We have many regular customers and your continued support is very much appreciated.

A big thank you to our band of volunteers who help run the sales and come along between sales to do the amazing job of filling thousands of bags with logs.

##### **Home delivery of logs**

Our volunteer John Holder is able to make some local deliveries of logs (delivery charge applies) - please contact John on 07583 907636. We cannot promise to meet every request and whether or not a delivery can be made is entirely at his discretion.

##### **Volunteers**

The log sales are run entirely by volunteers. We are always very pleased to welcome new helpers. Log sales certainly give you plenty of exercise stuffing logs into bags or loading them into trailers!

If you would like to join the happy gang please contact Harry Green 01386 710377 ([zen130501@zen.co.uk](mailto:zen130501@zen.co.uk)) or Bob Gillmor 01386 556685 ([robert.gillmor@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.gillmor@btinternet.com)) for more information.

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##### Starling spectacular



Starlings gathering in tree by Pam and John Holder

Starlings gathered in Eckington prior to roosting at the John Bennett nature reserve at Birlingham. Numbers were estimated by a regular visitor to be 16,500. Our home is under the flight path, which has provided us with quite a spectacle during winter, both sight and sound.

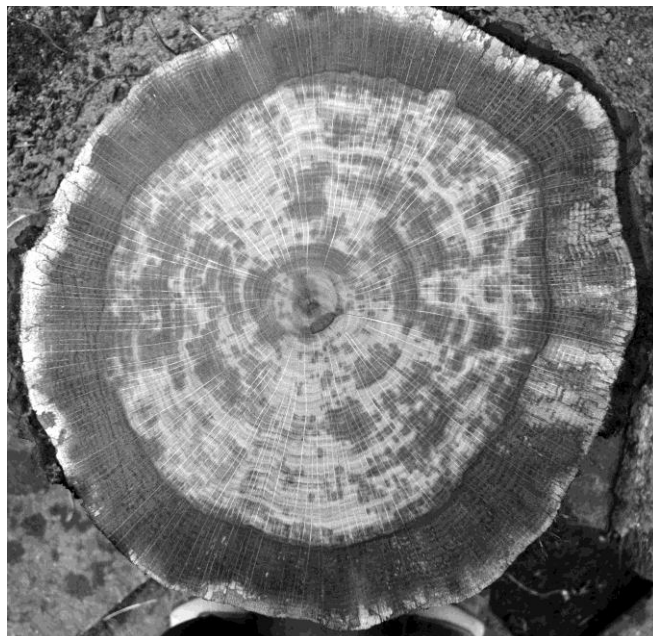
*Pam and John Holder*

## Spotlight on the mighty oak

"For centuries, the oak touched, literally, every part of a Britons life, from cradle to coffin. The oak spanned the house in which he or she lived, provided the acorns to feed the pigs. It was oak that made the 'wooden walls' of Nelson's navy, and it was the navy that allowed Britain to rule the world. Oak was charcoal for smelting in the first foundries of the Industrial Revolution, the axle for the haywain, tannin for leather, shelter for livestock, shade for the courting couple. Ink from oak galls recorded life in the parish registry, the course of events in the court annals. An oblong of oak was the raw material for a boys first woodwork lesson (A Simple Coat Peg, With Mortice and Tenon Joint), while the roots of the tree were the imagined home of gnomes in the children's classic The Little Grey Men by BB. Or were for this boy in the 1970s at least."

from *The Glorious Life of the Oak*  
by John Lewis-Stempel  
Published by Doubleday

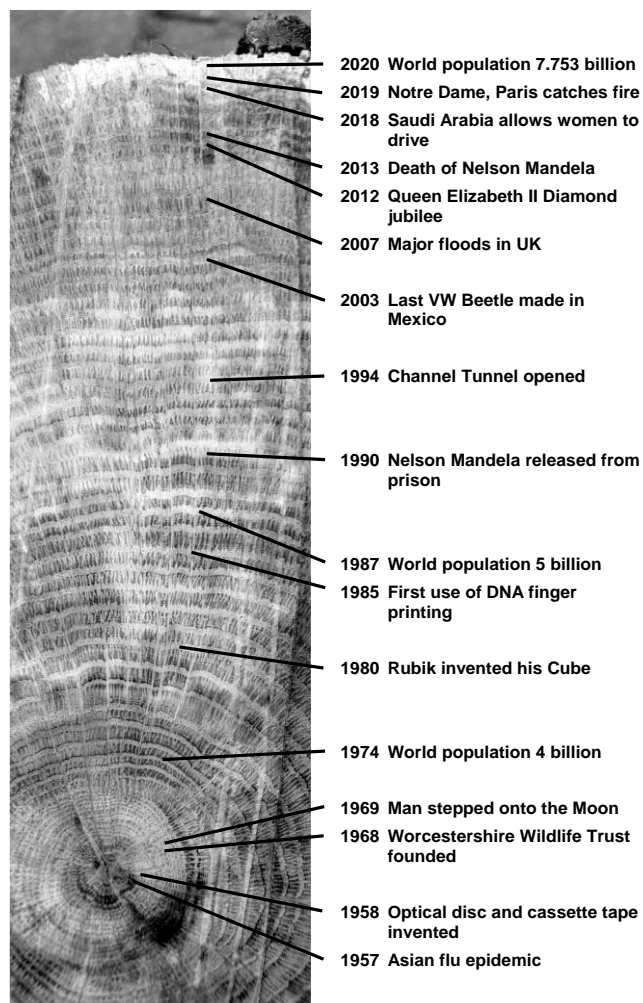
RRP: £9.99



Cross section through the oak trunk pictured opposite  
Photos by Harry Green

Around about the time that Princess Elizabeth was crowned Queen of England a little acorn began to grow in a Worcestershire woodland and below are some of the events which occurred during its lifetime. The tree had been felled on a Trust reserve as part of conservation thinning and sent for the Trust log sales, the estimated age of this oak tree is around 63 years.

*Sue Chandler*



## Book review – Lord of the Forest by BB

Seeing the rings of the tree coupled to events taking place over its maturing years reminded me of a book I read some time ago that similarly juxtaposed a tree with both the natural and historical life going on around it. The book is 'Lord of the Forest' by BB, pseudonym of Denys Watkins-Pitchford, naturalist, author and illustrator. This is a very interesting and unusual book covering the natural history of an oak tree from when the acorn was first planted in the 13th century right through to life around the self-same mighty oak in the 20th century. Alongside a description of the development and flourishing of the tree BB recounts the events that take place under and around the tree within the wider context of the political history of the time. A great read for anyone interested in natural and social history by a writer with an innate feeling for the natural world.

*Janet Morris*

## Websites

Our Local Group website is [www.tiddesley.org.uk](http://www.tiddesley.org.uk) Events and log sale information can also be found on the Trust's website [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk)

We are looking for a volunteer to help maintain our local website. If you would like to help out with this please contact our webmaster Bob Gillmor tel 01386 556685 or email [robert.gillmor@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.gillmor@btinternet.com).

## Your Local Group Committee

Harry Green 01386 710377 (Chairman, Tiddesley Wood, logs and chips, work parties, general information etc). Bob Gillmor 01386 556685 (Treasurer and log sales organiser). Liz Stone, Jayne Bache, John Holder & Pam Holder (log deliveries), Sue Chandler (bird food and Christmas card sales), Janet Morris (organiser local indoor events). Newsletter edited by Jayne Bache.