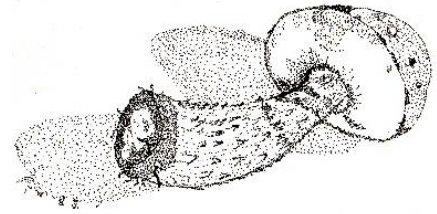




Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group

Newsletter Spring 2022

Welcome to the spring newsletter. After two successful and well attended walks at the end of 2021 I am happy to report that the group has had its first talk at St. Saviour's since February 2020. Paul Wilkinson's talk "Flying mice" (i.e. bats) was given in his usual enthusiastic way and was well received by the group. It was not a normal meeting, with some Covid restrictions still in place, but I hope that by the time you receive this newsletter we will be back to "normal".

Please check the Trust's website and our regular newsletters for more information about forthcoming events

www.worcestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on

Stourbridge & Hagley local group programme

April - September 2022

Talks

22nd April at 7.30pm.

30 Days Wild with Roger Pannell

A talk by Roger Pannell at St. Saviours Church Hall, Hagley.

Walks

Saturday 23rd April at 11am.

Bluebells in Buckpool Dingle

Join John Homer on this walk through Buckpool Nature Reserve, where nature has reclaimed this former industrial landscape, to Foot's Hole Pool. Return via the Stourbridge Canal to the starting point where refreshments are available. Meet at the historic Red House Cone in Wordsley, 1½ miles north of Stourbridge on the A491. OS Map 139. Grid Ref. S0894865.

Thursday 16th June at 2pm.

The Knapp & Papermill Reserve

The walk will be led by Dom Cragg, WWT Western Reserves Officer. Our visit should be at a time when Big Meadow is at its best and full of orchids. OS map 150. Grid ref. S0751522. WR6 5HR.

Wednesday 20th July at 11am.

Uncllys Farm visit and Wyre Forest walk

We visit Uncllys Farm in the heart of the Wyre Forest for a tour led by John Iles. There is a fixed charge of £5 for the farm tour. Booking is essential as places are limited so please phone 01384 371064 to reserve a place. Bring a snack and drink for lunchtime. After lunch Sue & Andy Duffield will lead a walk in the forest visiting Simon's Orchard, which has a collection of heritage apple trees planted as a gene pool for the future. Park at Uncllys Farm. OS map 138. Grid ref. S0762754. DY12 2LR.

Friday 9th September at 10.30am.

Wendy's walk in Hurcott Wood

Wendy Larmour will lead the walk for our first group visit to Hurcott Wood since 2010. Meet at the car park in Hurcott Lane. OS map 139. Grid ref. S0851779.

Waxcaps at the Leasowes

On 6th November a group of 19 joined local expert Nick Williams at The Leasowes, a site that has gained

national recognition for its waxcaps. Nine species of waxcap were found and many other grassland and woodland fungi were seen on the walk, which was both interesting and enjoyable. Thank you to Nick for leading our walk and also sending a full list of what was found.



Sulphur tuft
Turkeytail
Honey fungus
Glistening ink cap
Nitrous bonnet
Ivory bonnet
Yellow club
Apricot club
Moor club
Butter waxcap
Golden waxcap
Meadow waxcap
Parrot waxcap
Honey waxcap
Cedar waxcap
Scarlet waxcap
Ballerina waxcap
Crimson waxcap
Meadow coral
Yellow spindles
Deceiver
Earthy Powdercap
Jelly ear

Tawny funnel
Trooping funnel
Ivory funnel
Lumpy bracket
Purple brain fungus
Wolf's milk

Hypholoma fasciculare
Trametes versicolor
Armillaria mellea
Coprinus micaceus
Mycena leptocephala
Mycena flavo-alba
Clavulinopsis helvola
C. luteoalba
C. argillacea
Hygrocybe ceracea
H. chlorophana
H. pratensis
Gliophorus psittacinus
Hygrocybe reidii
H. russocoriacea
H. coccinea
Porpolomopsis calyptiformis
Hygrocybe punicea
Clavulinopsis corniculata
Clavulinopsis fusiformis
Laccaria laccata
Cystoderma amianthinum
Auricularia auricular-judae
Mycena acicula
Lepista flaccida
Clitocybe geotropa
Clitocybe dealbata
Trametes gibbosa
Ascocoryne sarcoides
Lycogala epidendrum

Larking with Maisie

(with apologies to Stephen Moss 'Skylarks with Rosie')

There is nothing I enjoy more than 'larking' about with my five-year-old cockerpoo, Maisie. You don't have to own a dog to enjoy nature but dogs have to be exercised daily, whatever the weather or time of year. Lucky to be within walking distance of lovely countryside; woods, bridleways, hills, canal and river, our daily strolls allow Maisie to do what dogs do, while giving me the chance to know my local patch really well.

Within minutes of leaving home, I hear the constant chatter of house sparrows in a privet hedge, the whistles and clicks of the starlings in the local poplar, the tinkling calls of goldfinch and the wheeze of the greenfinch in a silver birch. How I would miss these sounds if the birds were no longer there. A little further on, a mistle thrush has

been guarding the last remaining rowan berries with its menacing rattle and throughout last summer, a chiffchaff called constantly from a small patch of 'wild' surrounded by houses. I wonder if it will be there again this year.

In his recent article in the RSPB magazine Simon Barnes advocates that we 'tune in' and 'be ready', which is what I try to do, making sure to always carry my lightweight binoculars. After years of visiting the same places, I can now tell you where you can expect to see stonechats on the paddocks or exotic parakeets along the canal. I know which hedges are most likely to host yellowhammer and linnets and, in the summer, the various warblers. I know where you are most likely to spot visiting wheatear or the hovering kestrel and which fields are visited by flocks of wintering redwing and fieldfare. Sometimes it will be a 'jay day', with good numbers flitting through the woods, or on another day the woods will be filled with the drumming of woodpeckers.

I love the sound of rain falling through leaves and it is often on damp days when I see most. I might be sheltering under a tree, with Maisie tucked between me and the trunk, when I suddenly see a small bird dart across the path to the base of the tree opposite and start its unobtrusive ascent...one of my favourite birds, the tree creeper. If I am lucky, it might meet the more colourful and noisier nuthatch that is on its way down!

I have learned to look and listen for the expected but I am constantly surprised by the unexpected. Ever since she was a puppy Maisie has learned that it is obligatory to stand for five minutes on the metal bridge over the River Stour at Bells Mill, Wordsley. I frequently catch a fleeting glimpse of the kingfishers. On one occasion I saw kingfisher, grey wagtail and dipper, all within five minutes of each other! Once I came eyeball to eyeball with a buzzard that was perched on a low branch on the opposite side of the path. We seemed to stare at each other for a lifetime before it silently raised its wings and soared off through the trees.

On one of our short jaunts by car, on a drizzly day on Highgate Common, I stood watching a cuckoo calling on a branch above my head while another circled behind the tree and then I heard a third 'bubbling' cry of a female cuckoo. Amazing! Last year I had my binoculars raised to look for the local stonechat when I saw a very large bird coming at speed towards me. At first I thought it was the commonly seen buzzard or possibly one of the usual ravens but as it passed at pylon height over my head I realised it was a red kite, a bird that is beginning to be spotted quite often. More recently I was walking along Prestwood Drive when a little egret flew over and a couple walking in the opposite direction said they had seen two land amongst some herons on the field near Prestwood Nursing Home, our walk took us there the next day. We saw the herons but no egret. Instead, five goosander were on the water heading towards us.

I have only mentioned the birds but there are the butterflies, dragonflies, small mammals, fungus...oh and the flowers...but they are another story. I have heard my first lambs this year and collected lamb's-tail catkins so now while Maisie is busy sniffing the ground, I will be listening out for larks. I have not heard them yet this year but I am told they are tuning up. Perhaps tomorrow

Wendy Wilkins

A GOOD READ

ORCHARD a year in England's Eden

The book was written by Benedict Macdonald and Nicholas Gates who met when working on BBC's Springwatch in 2014.

Ben had discovered an ancient orchard in Herefordshire, full of huge standard trees and littered with dead wood. It is totally organic and the effect of nature's self-regulation is magical. There is no need for pesticides, the balance of the orchard is controlled by its wildlife, and it produces a commercial crop of fruit for cider making. The authors have adopted this as their "patch" and have monitored the wildlife for several years.

The first chapter, "Apples & Bears", is a history of the spread of the apple from its native home in the Tian Shan Mountains of Kazakhstan across Europe and, eventually, to England. There follows a month-by-month account of the orchard and its wildlife, with facts on every page to remind us of the need to protect such habitats for the future.

This is a very well written book and should be essential reading for anyone interested in conservation. There is a copy of the book in Stourbridge Library.

Avril Williams

Penorchard Meadows update

November, December and January work parties continued the removal of the oak, hawthorn and bramble thicket in Big Fox Field. The result of all this hard work is a level of tree cover that is much closer to that shown in the satellite pictures from around the millennium. Currently there is a fair amount of bare ground but the increased light



levels will allow the ground flora to regenerate and the footpaths should dry out more readily. Extra volunteer help was drafted in during January in the form of some ponies that have reduced the height of the grass in three of the new fields.

February saw 15 volunteers tackle a new challenge: "trimming" one side of a rather overgrown hedge that had been cut mechanically on one side and the top but was too wide for the machine to cope with cutting the other side. We completed the cutting of the ~125 metre length but did not have time to remove all the waste. That's for next time!

Ian Williams

Volunteer days at Penorchard Meadows



Working on a hedge in February

Work parties are held on Mondays 10am – 3pm on

April 4th May 9th June 13th July 4th August 1st

Current volunteers will receive an email giving details of our meeting place for each work party, new volunteers should contact Andy Harris on andyh@worcestershireswildlifetrust.org

Bring lunch and a drink for mid-morning and for lunchtime if you are staying all day.