



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group Newsletter Summer 2022

Welcome to your summer newsletter. At last we can return to near 'normal' for our talks at St Saviours but, unfortunately, without refreshments during the break. Paul Wilkinson's talk "Flying Mice" in January was followed by three more excellent talks. Gary Farmer's talk "Weevils in the Haystack" in February gave us an amazing insight into a miniature world few of us had ever encountered. This was followed in March by a wonderfully illustrated talk on the birds and mammals of central Brazil by John Medlock. In a change to the April programme Roger Pannell told the group about "30 Days Wild".

The first walk of the year, on 23rd April, was led by John Homer on one of his favourite local walks. We walked public footpath between Brierley Hill Road and Bromley Lane to Foot's Hole Pool, a former clay extraction site, with lovely wooded areas and hundreds of bluebells along the way. The return to Wordsley was via the Stourbridge Canal towpath, now resurfaced, and a very easy walk. Thanks to John who led this lovely walk so near to home and unknown to us all.

The walk on 16th June at The Knapp and Papermill nature reserve was led by Dom Cragg, the Trust's Western Reserves Officer. We were joined on the walk by Garth Lowe who was warden there about



The Knapp & Papermill walk

40 years ago. It was a very warm afternoon and we walked the yellow route at a leisurely pace with plenty of stops along the way as Dom and Garth explained

past and present management of the reserve. A cuckoo was spotted over the woodland, marbled white and meadow brown butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies were seen in large numbers. The highlight of the walk was a noble chafer beetle seen in the orchard, a first sighting for most of us. Thanks to Dom and Garth for a very enjoyable walk.

*Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group programme
September - November 2022*

Walks

Friday 9th September at 10.30am
Wendy's walk in Hurcott Wood

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

Talks

23rd September at 7.30pm.
Wild boar with John Dutton

28th October at 7.30pm.
Searching for British Orchids with John Tilt

25th November at 7.30pm.
A Birding Odyssey with Roger Pannell

For details of group events please visit
www.worcestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on

Wild Service Awards 2020

The awards are given annually in recognition of outstanding voluntary service to the Trust and usually presented at October's AGM. The AGM has been disrupted by Covid for the past couple of years so the awards for 2020 were presented at Lower Smite Farm on Saturday 26th March this year. Seven members of our group were presented with the award and also Nigel Davies who volunteers with us at Penorchar Meadows:
Nigel Davies - *Penorchar Meadows, Piper's Hill.*
Sue & Andy Duffield - *Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group, Chance Wood, Penorchar Meadows.*
Bernie & Mary McLean - *Penorchar Meadows, South Birmingham reserves.*
Carl & Iris Sweeting - *Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group, Chance Wood, Penorchar Meadows.*
Wendy Wilkins - *Chance Wood, Penorchar Meadows.*



Nigel, Andy & Sue



Iris, Wendy & Carl

WWT Volunteer Conference 11th June 2022

The conference this year was held at Hallow Village Hall, just north of Worcester. After the welcome tea and biscuits, the format followed the usual pattern of short talks in the morning and a site

visit after lunch. Professor Graham Martin, Vice Chairman of WWT council, welcomed c60 volunteers and introduced the speakers. Several members of Trust staff, including Liz Yorke, Wilder Communities Officer for the Wilder Worcestershire project, gave updates on work and events since the last time we met in 2019. During lockdown much work has been carried out and many new projects undertaken.

The visit after lunch was to Monkwood nature reserve and Green Farm, 3.5 km from the conference



In Green Farm meadows

venue. There was much to see on the walk through the wood including the successfully re-introduced wood white butterflies. The main reason for the visit, however, was to see the fields at Green Farm, managed by the Trust since 2020 with a view to purchasing. They run almost the full length of the western boundary of Monkwood and are full of wildflowers and surrounded by ancient hedgerows. There is much work to be done but plans are already in place for reintroduction of the former orchard and creation of wood pasture. There was much enthusiasm for the project on the return to the conference venue and I think everyone departed for home hoping that the purchase would be successful and the proposed work begun in the near future.

Penorcharde Meadows update

In March, with the advent of spring imminent, a final push on scrub removal was made, aided by contractors who cut an area of scrub and flailed areas of encroaching bramble. The debris was removed by the volunteers to clear the ground and allow the meadow to regenerate. The woody material was used to form dead hedges and the remainder raked into compost/habitat piles.



Bernie, Richard & Nigel fixing the fence

The two dilapidated stiles in the new South Staffs fields have been replaced with metal kissing gates and refurbishment/stabilisation of the fence dividing the two large fields is ongoing. Also continuing are efforts to reverse the encroachment of bracken and bramble into the meadow and keep the public rights of way passable.

A big thank you to all the Penorcharde volunteers for their hard work and enthusiasm.

Ian Williams

A GOOD READ

Rainbow Dust

Three Centuries of Delight in British Butterflies

Rainbow Dust was written by Peter Marren and takes the reader on a journey from ancient Greeks and Romans through the early days of obsessive collecting to the, hopefully, more enlightened times of protection and conservation. Along the way we discover the collectors, breeders, researchers and conservationists who have played a part in the butterfly story through the ages. Peter Marren tells his own story from collector to conservationist from his first butterfly book, *The Observer's Book of Butterflies*, bought with his pocket money, to being the author of many books including *Bugs Britannica*, written with Richard Mabey. Anyone who loves butterflies will find this an enthralling read.

Avril Williams

Volunteer days at Penorcharde Meadows



One of the new metal kissing gates in the South Staffs fields

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

August 1st September 5th October 3rd

November 7th December 5th

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

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

A thick-legged flower beetle on a common spotted orchid at Penorcharde Meadows, 13th June 2022. This is why we volunteer!

Why not join us and help to keep our nature reserve at its best for wildlife.

