



# Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



## Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group

## Newsletter Spring 2023

Welcome to the spring newsletter. I am writing this in mid-February, the snowdrops in Chance Wood are at their best and spring is on its way.

Our first meeting this year was our Open Evening on 27<sup>th</sup> January, there was a very short AGM, a couple of quizzes and talks by group members about gardening for wildlife, wildlife seen on local walks and the scenery of Iceland. Hayley Guest came along to talk about the Growing up Green activities in Stourbridge last autumn. A very enjoyable start to our events this year.

### Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group programme March – August 2023

#### Talks

**At St. Saviours Church Hall, Hagley.**

24<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm.

Amphibians and reptiles of the UK, a talk by Paul Wilkinson.

28<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm.

Local wildflowers, a talk by Roger Umpelby.

#### Walks

##### Highgate Common

Friday May 5<sup>th</sup> at 10am

Rangers Gary and Hayley will lead our walk on this lowland heath that's buzzing with rare insects and other wildlife. Our last visit to Highgate was in 2011.

Meet on the car park at the visitor centre OS Explorer 219 or OS map 138 Grid ref. 835895. Numbers are limited so please phone 01384 371064 to book your place.

##### Monkwood & Green Farm

Wednesday June 14<sup>th</sup> at 2pm

The walk will be led by Dominique Cragg, WWT Western Reserves Officer. Monkwood is jointly owned and managed by WWT and Butterfly Conservation. Many butterflies and moths are found here including the successfully reintroduced wood white. Part of Green Farm, on the western side of Monkwood, has been recently purchased by WWT and Dominique will tell our group about the management plan for this new reserve.

Meet at Monkwood car park, Sinton Green. OS map 150 Grid ref. SO804607. It is a small car park and we have a limit of about ten cars so please car share if you can. Please phone 01384 371064 to book your place.

##### Penorchard Meadows

Monday July 10<sup>th</sup> at 10am

Join the Penorchard volunteers for a walk round this reserve on the northeast slopes of the Clent Hills. It is one of the largest areas of semi-natural grassland in Worcestershire with an abundance of wildlife. As we walk we will look at the flora and fauna and discuss how the management methods used maintain and improve diversity.

The parking is on the reserve off Hagley Wood Lane (the entrance just above the reservoir). OS Explorer map 219 or OS map 139 Grid ref.939811.

#### A walk through time along the Smestow

Wednesday August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10.30 am

Join John Homer on a walk by the Smestow Brook and along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal, a rural area with a history dating back to Roman times. Meet at Ashwood Nurseries, Kingswinford (car park at the Café and gift shop entrance). On our return there will, of course, be the opportunity to look round the award winning garden centre and visit the tea room.

The nurseries are off the A449 along Ashwood Lower Lane OS Explorer Map 219 Grid Ref SO865878 Post Code DY6 OAE.

For details of group events please visit the WWT website at [www.worcestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.worcestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on)

#### Growing Up Green

In autumn of last year, several members of our Local Group helped to

organise activities in Stourbridge for an event called 'Growing Up Green'. This is an annual Children and Family Arts Festival that celebrates action on climate change. In the Birmingham and Black Country region it took place from 24<sup>th</sup> Sept – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 as part of 'The Great Big Green Week'.



Meetings in local venues, with opportunities for networking with many other local environmental organisations, culminated in a week-long event filled with numerous activities including campaigning, crafting, planting and litter-picking. Our group, working alongside Butterfly Conservation and local horticultural and gardening company Hortulani, formed a valuable link with Stourbridge Library, delivering nature-themed educational craft activities during the event. We also had lots of opportunities to talk to visitors about local wildlife and the work of the Wildlife Trust. These sessions proved to be really popular – so more were planned!

Since Christmas, there have been two sessions for



adults, which have included the chance to learn different artistic techniques and meet new friends. The first of these involved printing and stamping, with participants making greetings cards,

bookmarks and pieces of art to take home. For the second session, stencilling was used to create individual images of local flora and fauna, and a large piece of artwork was brought together as a group effort. This was inspired by a walk along the Roman Road in Stourbridge – a haven for the scarlet tiger moth (with help from members of Butterfly Conservation).

In the Children's Library, visitors could learn about the different species of owl that live in the UK and make owl-



themed bookmarks and greeting cards. Many families already came along with much enthusiasm about owls and went home with extra

knowledge and keenness to hear one of the local tawny owls calling. A session in February half-term encouraged wildflower seed planting for butterflies and bees.

The 'Growing Up Green' event is due to take place in June of this year so watch this space...

*Sue Duffield*

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## *A GOOD READ*

### *The Accidental Countryside*

#### *Hidden Havens for Britain's Wildlife*

*Stephen Moss*

A book written by Stephen Moss is usually "A Good Read" and The Accidental Countryside is no exception.

From Shetland's Mousa broch, constructed over 2000 years ago, to the highest buildings in our towns and cities we learn how human intervention and construction has created places for wildlife to thrive. The Mousa broch, a round stone structure almost 50 feet high, provides a nesting site for about 7,000 pairs of storm petrels, a large proportion of the UK population. Peregrines nest on the GPO tower in Birmingham and many other high-rise buildings in our towns and cities.

Between the construction of the Mousa broch and the GPO tower constant change in our islands has led to new opportunities for wildlife. From churchyards to abbey ruins, from linear habitat along railway lines to wildflower strips along our road verges and from reservoirs built to provide water for the human population that also attract many bird species.

Stephen Moss tells of many positive outcomes but there are also important sites for wildlife lost due to human intervention. Overall it's a well written, interesting and thought provoking book.

There are two copies available in Stourbridge library.

*Avril Williams*

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## *Penorcharde Meadows update*

Improved ground conditions in December made it possible to return to Bogs Field to complete the scrub encroachment work that we started in the autumn. The fire to burn the brash conveniently allowed us to have the traditional pre-Christmas jacket potatoes etc. at lunchtime. Also in December we had unwanted visitors who plundered the holly trees on an industrial scale for making wreaths on site and left scenes of devastation. This was not confined to the reserve but also affected neighbouring land.

In January the 18 strong work party tidied up and made safe part of the mess left by our unwanted visitors adjacent to the Nimmings right of way and the boundary of one of the other fields.

We had a record turnout of 21 in February and whilst continuing to clear up after the wreath makers we pushed back the scrub encroachment on the right of way at the

bottom of the larger reservoir field. There is still more work to do along this path towards Hagley Wood Lane.



The right of way before work began in February



The right of way after scrub clearance in February

Thank you to all the Penorcharde volunteers for your hard work and enthusiasm and a special thank you to Wendy Wilkins who has retired from "active service" after many years as a volunteer at Chance Wood and Penorcharde Meadows.

*Ian Williams*

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## *Volunteer days at Penorcharde Meadows*

Work parties are held on Mondays 10am – 3pm on  
April 3<sup>rd</sup> April 24<sup>th</sup> June 5<sup>th</sup> July 3<sup>rd</sup> August 7<sup>th</sup>

There are two bank holidays at the beginning of May so we will have two work parties in April and none in May.

Current volunteers will get an email giving details of our meeting place for each work party, new volunteers should contact Andy Harris on [andyh@worcestershireswildlifetrust.org](mailto:andyh@worcestershireswildlifetrust.org)  
Bring lunch and a drink for mid-morning and for lunchtime if you are staying all day.

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*Don't forget*  
*30 Days Wild 2023*  
*1<sup>st</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June*