



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

South East Worcestershire Local Group

Local News & Local Events December 2019

INDOOR MEETINGS

Winter Programme 2019-2020

All meetings are held at Wulstan Hall, Priest Lane, Pershore, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Entrance fee £2.50. Meetings are usually on Thursday evenings.

Thursday 19th December 2019. The Return of the Pine Marten. An illustrated talk by Johnny Birks. Johnny is of course well-known for his informative and amusing presentations. He has been studying pine martens for many years and is involved with national re-introduction programmes.

Thursday 20th February 2020. A sideways look through birds' eyes. An illustrated talk by Graham Martin. You may have heard Graham's talk on bird vision before but there will be new things in this version!

Thursday 19th March 2020. Underground, Overground – Discovering, Exploring & Investigating Hardwick Green Meadows. An illustrated talk by Chris Greensmith. These wonderful floodplain meadows at Hardwick Green are a new Trust reserve in the SW of Worcestershire near Eldersfield and Staunton, and part of the old Eldersfield and Longdon Marsh, a wetland wonderland in Victorian times and earlier. Chris Greensmith is volunteer reserve manager and has been researching the water supplies and drainage and how they affect the flower-rich meadows. The talk will give a fascinating insight into the way in which a floodplain meadow works for its characteristic wildlife.

WEBSITES

Information on Local Group events and log sales can be found on the Trust's main website www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk and on the local website www.tiddesley.org.uk/

If you can, please check the Tiddesley website before meetings in case of last minute changes.

LOCAL GROUP CONTACTS

Useful phone numbers and your local committee:

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



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Tiddesley Wood near Pershore

Log & wood chip sales

Sat & Sun 28th & 29th September 2019
Sat & Sun 26th & 27th October 2019
Sat & Sun 30th Nov & 1st December 2019
Sat & Sun 4th & 5th January 2020
Sat & Sun 1st & 2nd February 2020
Sat & Sun 29th Feb & 1st March 2020
Sales 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day

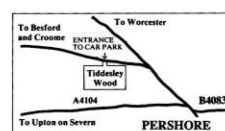
Sold in aid of wildlife conservation

Logs £6 a bag
Loose without bags £120 per cu metre (250-350 logs)
Loaded loose into trailers, car boots etc,
Any amount big or small.



Follow main road (B4084) out of Pershore towards Worcester. Turn left at top of Allesborough Hill following signposts to Besford & Croome. After c500 yds look for signs. WR10 2AD will get you near for Sat Navs.

www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk
www.tiddesley.org.uk



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Lower Smite Farm, Smite Hill, Hindlip, Worcester, WR3 8SZ tel. 01905 754919
Charity no. 256618 company no. 929644

FIREWOOD LOGS AND WOOD-CHIP SALES

Sales were very good last winter, bringing a useful income for the Trust. Please buy from us and encourage others to do so!

Wood chips suitable for garden mulch, paths or chicken runs are usually available but please check first. £3 a bag or negotiable loose!

Home delivery of logs.

Our volunteer John Holder is able to make some local deliveries of logs. There will be a delivery charge. If you are interested 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 and Tiddesley Wood Open Day 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 or email zen130501@zen.co.uk for more information

FLOODS AND FLOODPLAIN MEADOWS



Aerial photograph taken by Andy Young on Sunday 27th October 2019 shows the River Avon in flood near Eckington, looking upstream. The river channel can be seen in places on the right of the flood. Eckington Bridge is in the foreground to the right of the flood near the caravan site. The road crossing the floodplain is flooded. Birlingham village is to the left about two-thirds of the way up the picture.

In the past the floodplains of the Worcestershire Rivers Avon, Severn and Teme had a complex unique flora with special flowering plants able to survive both winter flooding and also near drought conditions in hot summer weather. Much also depended on the height of the water table in the soil and this in part is controlled by the water level of the nearby river maintained by locks and weirs: higher water tables just above the lock, lower ones below, where the top of the river bank tends to be high above the water.

This all changed during a time of great floodplain drainage in the 1970s, the repair of locks along the Avon and river dredging. The Avon floodplains once had a string of marshes and pools at the edge of the floodplain just before the rise of the adjacent land. Many of these were drained. The drained drier old meadow land encouraged cultivation as flooding risk was lower and many long-standing permanent pastures were ploughed and cropped. Others were re-seeded with vigorous grasses harvested for silage.

All these activities largely destroyed the typical floodplain flora along all of Worcestershire's main rivers and throughout England so that very few remain. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust acquired a small fragment on the old Longdon Marsh some years ago and more recently a larger tract near Hardwick Green on the old Eldersfield Marsh and this is the subject for the indoor meeting in Pershore on 19th March 2020. The Vale Landscape Heritage Trust has also acquired several floodplain meadows along the Avon where fragments of the typical flora remain. Parts of the new Pershore floodplain wetland are developing meadows and wetlands.

Plant communities on floodplain meadows vary according to drainage and fertility of the soil. In drier conditions common knapweed, field scabious and bulbous buttercup are frequent. The classic floodplain mix, the burnet meadows, is found on fairly well-drained alluvial soils and plants include great burnet (which is often abundant), meadowsweet, ladies bedstraw and cuckooflower. Where there is constantly moist soil common flowers are ragged robin, marsh marigold, meadow rue and marsh stitchwort. If there is prolonged water-logging there is reed sweet grass, tubular water-dropwort and amphibious bistort. All the groups also contain other flowers as well as specific grasses and sedges.

The full picture in any one meadow is, of course, complex and different groups of plants grow in different parts of the old long-standing meadows according to very local soil conditions.

Alongside the plants there are many other species. In the 1950s there were corncrakes and curlews. The marshy parts had redshank and snipe. Curlew populations are now very low, driven out by agriculture and nest predation by carrion crows and foxes. Curlews are

long-lived birds and often returned to the same field year after year but lost eggs or young so very few young birds were produced. There is a big conservation effort at the moment headed by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust working with many others, including our Trust, to reverse the downward trend.

Many insects also live in long-standing grasslands. Beetles are often abundant and, although rarely seen, if you enter the shallows of a new and rising flood scores can be seen climbing plant stems, trees, fence posts, anything to escape the water.

The abundant flowers are visited by many flies, bees and many other insects.

Floodplain meadows are rich and biodiverse and both the conservation of the few remaining ones and creation of new ones (which takes many years) is a conservation priority.



Great burnet flowers



Young curlew in a floodplain meadow (by Mike Smart)