



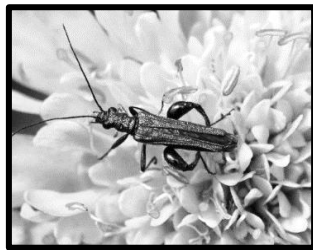
# Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group  
Winter 2019



## SUMMER WALKS

As I write this at the end of October, when we have just had the first frosts, it seems a long time since our walk at Ashwood Wildlife Meadow in June. It was a warm day and the meadow was buzzing with life. Tom Woodhall led the walk and explained to the group about the reduction of species-rich grassland in Britain due to farming practices employed to increase production. The meadow is not large but there was so much to see that we spent a couple of hours there and could have stayed much longer.



Thick-legged flower beetle on scabious

The weather on our next walk at Comer Wood with John Homer in July was not ideal for the white admiral butterfly we had hoped to see, it being an overcast and damp day. We quickly found plenty of other wildlife to see and try to identify. The botanists in the group pointed out the interesting plants along our route. As we walked, a muntjac crossed the track in front of us and when we reached the pool we



*Volvariella bombycina*

watched a kingfisher and a family of goosander. The highlight of the walk was a fungi on a tree stump that nobody could identify. Wendy Larmour sent a photo of it to an expert who identified it as *Volvariella bombycina*, which is uncommon and grows on broadleaved trees.

We had a pleasant day for our Springfield Stroll in September with Wendy Larmour. We started in Springfield Park, which Wendy informed us had been the rubbish tip for Kidderminster; it has now been transformed into a lovely park. The park is bordered on the west by the Staffs and Worcester Canal, which we crossed by Wolverley Court Lock. Wendy pointed out orange balsam

*Impatiens capensis*, it's a native balsam, unlike the Himalayan balsam several of us spend hours as volunteers removing from our nature reserves. The walk along the towpath gave us a view over Puxton Marsh, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) since 1985. We crossed the canal again after a brief walk through a small housing estate and returned to Springfield Park where we paused by the pool and watched a cormorant on the preserved chimney next to the pool. At the end of the walk several of us visited the café in the park for refreshments.



Group on Wolverley Court Bridge

Our thanks must go to Tom, John and Wendy for leading such enjoyable walks.

Avril Williams

## MAGPIES Part 3

### *A Gathering of Magpies*

Magpies often gather together so I wondered what is their collective name? Collective nouns usually refer either to behaviour or are onomatopoeic (mimic sound). Groups of magpies can be called variously: A Parliament, A Conventicle, A Congregation, A Murder, A Tiding, A Mischief, A Gulp, A Charm or A Tittering.

I have found children enjoy making up their own collective nouns and illustrating them. I like the idea of A Stutter of Magpies, A Strut or even A Swagger. A Rattle of Magpies could be shown as a group of birds wearing the black and white Newcastle United colours, brandishing football rattles, and A Fusillade or Salvo of magpies could have them wearing black and white camouflage and wielding machine guns.

Any other suggestions?

Wendy Wilkins

## **A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY** **STOURBRIDGE & HAGLEY OPEN EVENING**

Our open evening on 24<sup>th</sup> January will be the usual mix of quizzes, displays and presentations of members' photographs. If you would like to show your wildlife photographs from 2019 please contact John Homer on 01384 277800 so that he can plan the evening.

## **STOKE PRIOR STEAM RALLY** *14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September*

A couple of years ago at the Kinver Country Fayre we were approached and asked if we would like to have a stand at Stoke Prior Steam Rally. This year the committee decided to take up the offer even though it is well out of our area. The space was booked and gazebos, tables, leaflets and sales goods were collected from Lower Smite Farm. Once we had worked out how to put up the Trust's new gazebos all went well. The weather was fine so there was a good crowd on both days. We sold Trust goods, handed out a lot of leaflets and talked to a lot of people, even one from Stourbridge. We had activities for children, they made bee puppets and dragonflies, and made a small donation to our group funds. A recruiter joined us for each day and signed up several new members for the Trust. We were all tired at the end of day two but decided that it had all been worthwhile. We may do it again next year.

*Avril Williams*

## **MAGPIES Part 4** *Magpie Musings*

Once on a windy but hot summer's day, when the air was abuzz with insects, I was walking along a local bridle path, with horse paddocks on either side, when I saw an astonishing sight. A number of magpies were actually running across the field, all in one direction, facing the oncoming wind, with wings outstretched and beaks agape. It took me a little while to realise that the wind was carrying the insects directly into the open gullets of the birds. How intelligent is that!

Today gathering armfuls of wildflowers or collecting birds' eggs is rightly frowned upon but in the past it was often in this way that youngsters learned about nature. When my daughters were at primary school, a slightly older lad hand-reared a young magpie. It must have taken a lot of time and patience and he would have learned so much from the experience. However, there was a downside to this as after being released into the

wild on maturity, the canny bird returned frequently to the school playground and perched on the shoulders of children, begging for titbits.

*Wendy Wilkins*

## **PENORCHARD UPDATE**

What have the Penorchard volunteers been up to recently? During the early summer the group concentrated on tasks such as keeping footpaths clear, fence repairs, plant surveys and also recording the extent of encroaching bramble and scrub in some fields. It was encouraging to note the regeneration of betony and dyers greenweed in areas previously cleared of blackthorn scrub. Similarly, an increase in the amount of fleabane was noted in areas of Bogs Field that had been opened up in the past.

The July session was transferred to Chance Wood to remove Himalayan balsam, check fences and clear footpaths.

Back at Penorchard in August a patch of blackthorn was removed from the Top Church Field. Bogs Field was the venue for September and October, clearing a tangled thicket of blackthorn and fallen hawthorn trees.

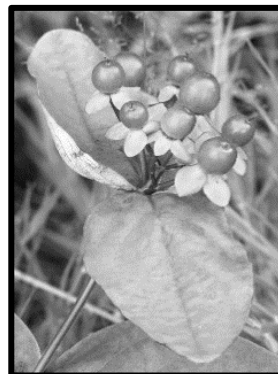


It's not all hard work! Lunch break at Penorchard Meadows

*Ian Williams*

## **Volunteer days at Penorchard Meadows**

Work parties are held on Mondays 10am – 3pm  
Meet at St. Kenelm's Church car park on



Tutsan at  
Penorchard Meadows

December 2<sup>nd</sup>  
January 6<sup>th</sup>  
February 3<sup>rd</sup>  
March 2<sup>nd</sup>  
April 6<sup>th</sup>

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