

Wyre Forest Local Group

Winter 2020



Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust



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Mervyn Needham - Great News

We are delighted that Mervyn has been awarded, in the Queen's Birthday Honours list, the British Empire Medal for services to Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and his local community of Chaddesley Corbett.

It is a thoroughly well-deserved recognition of his unstinting work since 1977 as warden and later as volunteer reserve manager of Chaddesley Woods National Nature Reserve.

Mervyn has also been a valuable and longstanding Trustee of the Trust and a dedicated committee member of Wyre Forest Local Group for many years.

Brown Hares

I was inspired to write this article during one of my early morning "lockdown walks".

Walking up a farm track I saw movement ahead, stopped and 20 yards in front of me were two hares who had just ambled off into an adjoining field in which there were four more!

It's been a few years ago since I last saw one on a track in Chaddesley Woods. Many years before that I saw two "boxing" in the fields behind the church in Chaddesley.



© Gill Smith

We have two species in the UK, the brown and, in Scotland and upland areas, the mountain hare. The brown hare of the lowlands is much larger than the rabbit. Their preferred habitat is open farmland and marshy ground. They live on the surface and do not burrow like rabbits. Instead they breed in a small indentation in the grass called a form. This is where the female gives birth to three to five young three to four times a year.

The young are born well developed and amazingly can run around after just a few hours. They are suckled for a month and then begin on their main diet of vegetation, grass and herbs etc.

How to tell the difference between rabbits and hares:

Firstly the hare is much larger in size and the fur is yellow/brown and they have long ears that are always tipped with black. Hind legs are long and when disturbed a hare can reach speeds of up to 40 mph, running in a zig zag pattern and taking very large strides, using their long back legs to full advantage. However, they often sit tight close to the ground, hoping to avoid detection.

On the other hand, rabbit ears are shorter and have no tip markings. When disturbed, rabbits tend to bob along seeking quick cover underground. They are more easily disturbed.

The hare tends to be more active at dawn and dusk, spending the day lying low using their keen sense of smell and acute hearing and sight to spot predators.

In spring "*Mad as a March Hare*" antics may occasionally be seen and it is sometimes the females fighting off the amorous advances of males. They rise up on their hind legs and jostle each other each other using front feet, as if boxing.

As you wander around our many public footpaths, keep an eye open for these delightful creatures and spend a few minutes observing their antics.

Mervyn Needham

IMPORTANT

Communicating with our members in the Wyre Forest area

It would be of great help to have a register of our local members' contact details, either a telephone number or an email address if you're happy for us to have these. This would enable us to contact you with the details of events that we planned, ones that will obviously rely on Government regulations and restrictions.

In addition we can let you know if we need to cancel a meeting (in normal times) due to snow etc.

Please be assured that your contact details will be held securely and only used by us for the purpose of communicating local wildlife group information. This will act as a back up to information on the website.

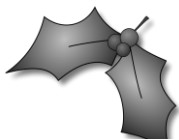
If you feel that you would like to be part of this and to receive any relevant information please let us have your details either by phoning or emailing.

Phone 01562 741891

email djhowell70@gmail.com

Thank you

David Howell, Chairman



2020 Christmas cards

2021 Calendar

Please support the Trust by purchasing Christmas cards and calendars from the online shop www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/shop

Normally we would sell these items at meetings prior to Christmas but this has obviously not been possible this year and, consequently, the Trust may lose valuable funds.

Your support is much appreciated.

Thank you

A New Way of Meeting!

We have worked with other Local Groups to successfully arrange a series of excellent talks via Zoom. They are very good and to be recommended. These started in September and are being hosted, in turn, by local groups around the county. There is a suggested donation of £2.50 at the time of booking.

The following talks have been arranged:

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| Thursday Dec.3rd | Urban Peregrines with Ed Drewitt |
| Thursday Dec.17th | The Natural History of Christmas with Dr Michael Leach |

All meetings begin at 7.00p.m.

www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on
for details and booking



Planned Programme 2021

At the time of going to press we are working with other Local Groups to plan a further series of online talks for January to March. Information about these should be on the Trust's website by the time you read this.

Whilst it seems unlikely at the moment that any meetings will be able to resume, we have pencilled in a series of walks for the new year – if you'd like to join us, please get in touch and we'll keep you updated as to whether or not they can go ahead depending on Government regulations at the time. We travel in hope!

January 10th Three Counties walk from Shatterford
March 14th Nature of Longmore Farm.

February 14th Walton and Clent Hills
April 11th A walk round Astley

Please contact us with any queries that you may have.

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We hope that you all stay well and safe and will be able to have an enjoyable Christmas.

David and Ruth Howell, Editors