



# Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

## Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group

Newsletter Summer 2021



Ramsley Manor Farm Meadows

Welcome to your summer newsletter. I hope you are all well and looking forward to a time when we can meet up again. There is no news about restarting our meetings at St. Saviours but I am fairly certain that our two walks, planned for later this year, can go ahead. You can find details overleaf. For now, talks will continue to be online – for details and how to book visit [www.worcestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.worcestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on)

We have our usual Penorcharde Meadows update and news of a grant for the Scarlet Tiger Project. We have articles from our two Wendys. Wendy Wilkins is one of the volunteer wardens at Bunkers Hill Wood and informs us about the small conservation group working there. Wendy Larmour encourages us to walk, not in wonderful Worcestershire this time but in Staffordshire on another of her favourite walks. On Wendy's Ribbesford Woods walk in the last newsletter you may remember that she mentions the amazing window designed by Burne-Jones, it is dedicated to his mother-in-law Hannah. Hannah and her husband George Browne Macdonald are buried in the graveyard. The walk takes you past the grave, now rather overgrown, it's the last one on the right at the top of the hill, just before the exit gate. As Wendy says it's never all just about the trees.

### Larks and Woodpeckers.....

#### Bunkers Hill - a Woodland Trust gem

Bunkers Hill, which is only a stone's throw from Wollaston and Stourbridge, has everything I want in a

wood. About 102 acres in size, it is surrounded by pasture and some arable land and it contains a mixture of broad-leaved trees and conifers with a



number of veteran oaks, sweet chestnut and Scots and Corsican pine. There is a wonderful stand of specimen hybrid rhododendron, dating back to the days when the wood was managed for shooting, and these produce a magnificent display of large, brightly coloured blooms that can be seen from some distance. A diversity of paths criss-cross the site, through a variety of habitats, and this means that even at busy times it is easy to find peace and tranquillity. There is even a secret bluebell walk! On warm, sunny days the many open glades are full of butterflies and increasingly varied displays of wildflowers where work has been

done to clear the areas of invasive bracken, bramble, and balsam.

All the woodland birds I would expect are found here, including thrushes, great spotted woodpecker, treecreeper and tawny owl, and I often hear the laugh of the green woodpecker. Then there are the Scandinavian visitors in winter and, in summer, several species of warbler so that the music varies throughout the year. I often see linnet, yellowhammer, finches and even, on occasions, spotted flycatcher in the hedgerows. When I climb the fairly steep rather pebbly slope to the top ridge of the wood, I am rewarded with views of the Clent Hills and on the one slope I can see the Malvern Hills and, lower down, Kinver. It is here that I hear the larks, such welcome heralds of spring, and I see the hunting kestrel, the soaring buzzard and hear the 'cronking' and the slow beat of the wings of the raven as it passes over. Wheatear stop over briefly on the fields before journeying on.

The wood is one of a number managed by a regional manager for the Woodland Trust and contractors are brought in for maintenance work with the aim of as little intervention as possible, except where necessary for the health and safety of visitors, and to improve biodiversity. A few years ago it was decided to ask some of the regular visitors to become volunteer wardens and I was happy to take on the challenge. There is a small group of us and our role is quite informal. Whenever we visit the wood, we act as eyes and ears of the site, reporting any hazards or problems, picking up the odd piece of litter, chatting to other visitors about the wood and meeting up occasionally for a balsam-bashing session, which is highly therapeutic! It feels a privilege to be able to give something back when I am so lucky to have free access to such a beautiful place right on my doorstep.

Bunkers Hill is situated on Whittington Hall Lane. Grid ref. SO875824. It can also be accessed via a stile on Sugar Loaf Lane and from the bridleway at the junction of Westwood Avenue and the Roman Road.

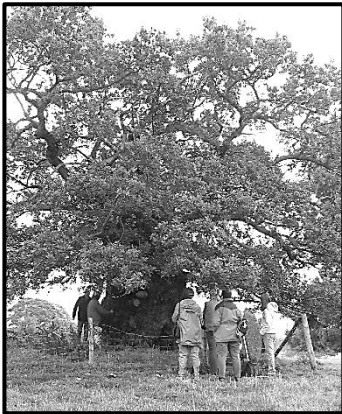
Wendy Wilkins

### Lady Jane Grey's Oak, Enville

The walk starts from the The Cat at Enville, OS 138 Grid ref. SO826867.

Fortunately there is a Public Footpath that leads you across the private estate from Enville and up onto the Sheepwalks. Choose a good day for the amazing 360° views from the top. As you leave the Hall, the estate buildings, farm and pool behind, the path leads you through an old gateway and stile, onwards and upwards with mixed woodland to your right revealing everything from holly and field maples to enormous limes. If you keep your eyes to the left you will hopefully

spy an ancient oak. It's easily missed, not being huge, but you'll spot it if you glance over your left shoulder every now and then, standing alone on a steepish rise just off the path. The trunk is now a 'C' shape, typically hollowed with age, but it is the nature of the pollarded top that tells the tale. It was reputedly pollarded at the time that Lady Jane Grey was beheaded, she being a relative of the then estate owners.



That was back in 1554 I believe so I'll let you do the maths! It is well worth, whilst pondering on this story, to walk on up to admire the views from the top. Spot planes doing circuits from Halfpenny Green in one direction and Dudley's skyline and Clent Hills in the other. I have another favourite tree up here, an ancient sweet chestnut, now falling apart but clinging on. Will it have survived this winter's storms? There's a bench nearby, just right for some refreshment. You'll want to stay a while, believe me!

*Wendy Larmour*

### Group walks in 2021

*Friday September 10<sup>th</sup> at 10am*

*Stop, Look, Listen! Beyond the tracks in Hagley*

Wendy Larmour will lead a circular walk starting from the centre of Hagley. Meet on the car park by Hagley Library for a walk across the famous 'Hornby Bridge' and into the countryside beyond the railway lines. OS Map 139. Grid Ref. SO903804.

*Saturday November 6<sup>th</sup> at 10am*

*Waxcaps at The Leasowes*

We will join Nick Williams for a talk and walk. The Leasowes has gained national recognition for its waxcaps. Meet at the car park on Leasowes Lane, off Mucklow Hill.

There is a fixed charge of £4pp for this walk and booking is essential as numbers are limited so please phone 01384 371064 to book your place. OS Map 139. Grid Ref. SO976840. Postcode B62 8DH.

### A grant for the Scarlet Tiger Project

In our first look at a local conservation group in your winter 2020 newsletter, Joy Stevens informed us about the Scarlet Tiger Project on the Roman Road. Joy has recently obtained funding of nearly £4,000 from Ibstock Enover Trust, an environmental body funded through the Landfill Communities Fund. The grant will be used to purchase wildflower seeds, tools and equipment and provide two new information boards along the Roman Road.

Joy says "This project will provide a real boost to the fortunes of the scarlet tiger moth along Roman Road and create awareness of the beauty and

importance of this and other insects. It's fantastic that Ibstock Enover has awarded us a grant towards this important project and we're really looking forward to seeing the biodiversity of our area improving over the next few years."

Joy is hoping to recruit more volunteers. You can contact Joy at [joystevens@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:joystevens@blueyonder.co.uk) if you would like to join the group.

### Penorchar Meadows update

Socially distanced work parties resumed in April with small groups engaged in bramble clearance and making repairs to the boundary fence of the newly acquired fields. The remainder of the group continued removing bricks and rubble from the site of the old barn and sorted scrap metal in preparation for its disposal.

In May one group brushcut and raked a previously flailed patch of bramble while others removed some of the small oak saplings that have begun to invade the meadow. Several corrugated iron sheets were removed from the undergrowth and a much needed litter pick was undertaken.

In between normal work parties a small group



*Pam, Wendy & Judith*

installed a new field gate between two of the fields.

As a reward for all the hard work at Penorchar, in June the group was given the opportunity to visit the nearby Romsley Manor

Farm Meadows, which the Trust has taken on temporary management of ahead of fundraising for its purchase. This is a botanically-varied site with great potential but much restoration work is required, as will be a large group of volunteers.

*Ian Williams*

### Volunteer days at Penorchar Meadows



*Volunteering at Penorchar Meadows in 2010*

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

August 2<sup>nd</sup> September 6<sup>th</sup> October 4<sup>th</sup>  
November 1<sup>st</sup> December 6<sup>th</sup>

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.