



Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust

Malvern Local Group

Summer newsletter 2025

Annual General Meeting

We will hold our group's AGM after the indoor meeting on September 4th. The meeting will take place 9.35pm-10.00pm.

Agenda: Treasurer's report. Committee members' reports. Discussion.

Indoor Meetings

These are held in the Lyttelton Rooms adjacent to Malvern Priory starting at 7.30pm. £3 per person, cash only.

Thursday September 4th

Life in the rainforest by Paul Carpenter

For the past 20 years Paul has travelled to tropical forests of South and Central America, Africa and Asia to study and photograph insects, spiders and other fauna. Followed by the AGM.

Thursday October 2nd

Worcestershire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) by Natalie Jaworska

Discover more about the LNRS, which aims to protect and improve Worcestershire's wildlife.

Thursday November 6th

The work of Herefordshire Meadows by Rory Johnson

Rory is the director and meadows adviser of the Herefordshire Meadows charity

Thursday December 4th

The biodiversity of Castlemorton Common by Richard Newton

Discover more from this keen local naturalist and wildlife photographer.

A casual observer's view of The Knapp and Papermill nature reserve

Visiting a reserve on a regular basis gives several benefits. You get to see it changing through the seasons. In spring at the Knapp you can enjoy the snowdrops and primroses along the path beside the brook. They will be followed by cowslips, then meadow flowers and orchids in Big Meadow. Summer sees

meadow flowers too. I used to enjoy bluebells in the wood above Big Meadow but sadly that path is closed now.

Walking the paths in the dark gives a very different experience. The bark of a muntjac deer sounds louder and even threatening. In summer bats can fly very close and in winter you may hear tawny owls. There is hardly any artificial light visible and the bright array of stars above Big Meadow shows just what town's folk are missing.

Birds give great pleasure. In spring, you can usually see blue, coal, great and long-tailed tits on the bird feeders at the entrance, sometimes marsh tits too. These feeders are usually filled on a Thursday when the working party visits. All these tits are seen elsewhere on the reserve. Grey wagtails are regularly seen along the brook and, occasionally, dippers and kingfishers. There are many other regular sightings like great spotted woodpeckers, treecreepers and nuthatches. Spring brings chiffchaffs and willow warblers. We get some rarities too; a redshank, a lesser spotted woodpecker, a pair of red-breasted mergansers and mandarin ducks have all been seen over the years

Nigel Dunn



Grey wagtail by Matt Adam Williams

Summer guided walks

Guided walks are being arranged by Tim Lawrence - 07462 327844 or email malverngroup@live.co.uk with 'mlgambles' in the subject or go to malverngroupwwt.org.uk for further information.

Please note:

To be sent emails about our activities, please email the address above. Our list is different to the one held by the Trust. You can unsubscribe at any time by sending us an email to let us know.

Knepp Rewilding, 27th – 30th April 2025

“Wall-to-wall birdsong” is how someone described much of our visit to Knepp; song thrushes, blackbirds, whitethroats, assorted warblers and too-often-disregarded wrens.

It is probable that the distant purr of a turtle dove or, perhaps, even the call of a cuckoo would have taken the prize as most welcome to our ears. But virtuoso performances of an unexpected scale that were to be heard - here, there, everywhere around the estate and throughout the day, were nightingales.

The storks were a delight and the tree-top platforms afford perfect sightings of anything on the move. A couple of fallow buck were seen from one and a party of red deer from another.

Butterfly hunters saw 12 species, including a green hairstreak and numerous brimstones, with a female observed laying an egg.

Bird species for the four days of our little expedition numbered 75. Had it not been for the nightingales and turtle doves, a firecrest on the South Downs Way would have been the highlight.

We ended with a couple of visits within the South Downs National Nature Reserve where views of the unspoilt beauty of the English countryside provided a wonderful memory.

Kevin Larkin

College Lake nature reserve, Tring, and Natural History Museum, 22 March

On a lovely, dry spring day trip to Tring we visited College Lake nature reserve, which is managed by Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). This was once a working chalk quarry and, after a lot of hard work by the Trust, it is satisfying to see nature reclaim it.

A small group of us were lucky enough to be given a guided tour by a friendly and knowledgeable volunteer. After viewing ducks and a redshank from the closest and largest hide we proceeded downhill alongside a delightful little stream where a small pike was basking in the centre. Apparently the volunteer can set his watch by it as it always appears at 11am! Further along and the highlight were a few toads of varying sizes,

which put on a good show with their swimming techniques.

The hide at the bottom end of the lake had good views, not only of birds but of planes, as the reserve is on the flight path to Luton airport. The red kites didn't seem too perturbed. We had good views of three reed buntings from the window as well as oystercatchers and lapwings, both breeding birds there. It was good to hear the repetitive song of the recently arrived chiffchaffs.

After refreshments in the cafe we travelled a few miles to the Natural History Museum Tring to see the eclectic collection of Lionel Walter, 2nd Baron Rothschild (1868 -1937). His private collection in his family home became the basis of the present day 4,900+ specimens. He kept 64 cassowaries and 144 giant tortoises in his lifetime, as well as zebras that he trained behind ponies to pull a carriage to Buckingham Palace.

Entry to the museum is free and the collections spill out over six galleries. It's easy to spend an hour in each gallery but with some of the largest collections of taxidermy to be found in the UK, three hours was not long enough to view the entire collection.

Particularly disturbing were collections of entire families - male, female and chicks - of wading birds as well as an enormous albatross chick. The beetle and butterfly collections were in wooden cases protected by glass and every species from molluscs to sharks were mounted on walls. Alligators, elephants, bears (even a giant panda), big cats, monkeys; you name it, it was there!

Although it seems cruel, and there is no doubt most of the thousands of specimens were hunted and killed in the name of science, Walter Rothschild was a conservationist at heart. He began collecting specimens from his garden as a small child (declaring at the age of eight that he would run a zoo) and progressed to leasing an island in the Indian Ocean in an attempt to protect the Aldabra tortoise.

Rothschild's collection is the largest ever held by a private individual and one of the largest natural history collections in the world. It is well worth a visit.

Bridget Hodgkinson