

## Red kites reach Redditch

Tom Wilkins



Soon after moving to Redditch in 1979 we made annual visits to the Elan Valley in the faint hope of seeing red kites. Our efforts were eventually rewarded after a few years when, parked on a hilltop, three or four kites flew directly over us and circled overhead at close quarters. An amazing and unforgettable experience.

At that time red kites had been lost from most of Britain, reduced to a tiny population hanging on in the Welsh hills following years of persecution. In July 1990 a very successful reintroduction programme began with the release of 13 kites in the Chilterns Hills (two Welsh and 11 Spanish birds).

Around this time we were making regular trips to London, driving down the M40. It was with great anticipation that we drove through the Stokenchurch cutting, hoping to see red kites as we travelled towards High Wycombe. On most occasions we were rewarded with numerous sightings of these wonderful birds.

As the years passed we noticed the kites were moving progressively northwards to Oxford, Bicester and Banbury. This pattern has continued and over the years we have seen them in Welford on Avon, Alcester and Spetchley Gardens. Then, lo and behold, about two years ago, we had one fly directly over our garden in Church Hill, Redditch. This year, so far, single birds have been seen over Riverside, Abbey Park Golf Club and, more recently, over the Redditch to Birmingham road on the way to Alvechurch.

What might arrive next; white storks, cranes, glossy ibis or a wandering white-tailed eagle?

## Redditch Local Group

### Summer 2026 newsletter

#### Talks season

Indoor Meetings 2026/2027

Our indoor meetings are held on **Wednesday evenings** at Winyates Green Community Centre, Furze Lane, Winyates Green, Redditch, B98 0SE. Talks start at 7:30pm and cost just £3 per person. Members and non-members welcome.

#### September 9<sup>th</sup> - Dinosaurs - what we know and how we know it

*Bradley Knight*

A glimpse into the surprising amount of information we can get out of fossils, and what we can uncover from the behaviour and biological function of animals that lived millions of years ago.

#### October 14<sup>th</sup> Restoration of the rivers Arrow and Alne

*Tim Burridge*

Tim is Junior Catchment Restoration Officer at Severn Rivers Trust and is currently engaged in a programme of restoration works on the rivers Arrow and Alne. In his talk he will explain the work being undertaken in the area and river restoration work in general.

#### November 11<sup>th</sup> - Rainbow dust - a celebration of local butterflies and day-flying moths

*Roger Umpleby*

Most of us think of our butterflies as being the most colourful insects in countryside and gardens but what about some of the moths that fly by day? What are their life cycles, what do their caterpillars feed on and do any of them have a darker side? The talk is extensively illustrated so come prepared to relax and admire the beauty of their rainbow dust.

#### December 9<sup>th</sup> - Fun wildlife-themed quiz

*Set by last year's winners*

Come and join us for a social evening with a fun, wildlife-themed quiz.

Come along as a team or as individuals and we will make up teams on the night.

Check [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on) closer to the dates for more details of our talks.

## Local sightings

We're always pleased to hear of any interesting local wildlife sightings. This summer we have been getting reports of lesser stag beetles *Dorcus parallelapipidus* turning up in Redditch gardens. This is not a species usually encountered in the Borough's urban gardens so we are wondering if this rather striking beetle is increasing in numbers. Their larvae develop in deadwood; another good reason for creating a log-pile in your gardens.



Another insect reported from a Redditch garden this summer is the extraordinary lacewing *Drepanepteryx phalaenoides*. Not easy to say but then it is not easy to see either! Looking more like a piece of dead leaf it is beautifully camouflaged in its habitat of trees and shrubs. It's a rare insect in the county and not much is known about its habits.



Please keep your eyes open and let us know if you spot either of these creatures.

Back in April, Wendy Carter gave us a talk about Worcestershire Wildlife Sightings and encouraged us to send in records of a list of target species.

It's easy to join in so why not get involved and help put Redditch on the wildlife map.

The Wildlife Sightings team are looking for sightings of 15 target species: Batman hoverfly, box-tree moth, broad-bodied chaser, common carder bee, common toad and spawn, house martin, house sparrow, hummingbird hawk-moth, large red damselfly, mistletoe, mole, red-tailed bumblebee, 7-spot ladybird, slow-worm, small tortoiseshell butterfly.

Submit your sightings to Worcestershire Wildlife Sightings via a short form on the Trust's website: [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/wildlife-sightings](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/wildlife-sightings)

## Ideas for walks and talks

If you have any ideas for speakers or wild themes you would like to hear about let us know and we'll see if we can arrange something for our next programme.

## Quick quiz – wildflowers

Julie Jenkins

- 1) Which insects are attracted to the fly orchid?
- 2) Folk names of this plant include bonestitch, knitbone and boneset. Can you name it?
- 3) What months are the flowers of the wood anemone in bloom?
- 4) Which plant is referred to as 'the meadow maker'?
- 5) What is the common name for *Digitalis purpurea*?

## Answers from the spring 2026 quick quiz:

- 1) Seven
- 2) Palmate
- 3) Shallow pools on sand dunes and heaths
- 4) Great crested
- 5) Pool frog

## Committee

Don't forget that we're looking for more committee members to keep your local group going.

If you can spare a little bit of time and want to get more involved in promoting wildlife in Redditch, get in touch.

Email: [wwtredditch@gmail.com](mailto:wwtredditch@gmail.com)