



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group

Newsletter summer 2026

Talks

at St. Saviours Church Hall, Hagley. £3 per person.

25th September at 7.30pm.

Subtracting grass snakes and dividing adders

The issue of conserving snakes with Paul Wilkinson

23rd October at 7.30pm.

Life in the local undergrowth

With Roger Umpelby

27th November at 7.30pm.

Japan

With Gerry Griffiths

Walks

Leasowes and the walled garden

Saturday September 26th at 10am.

Join Sue and Andy Duffield on a walk around this historic area taking in a short stretch of the disused Lapal canal, the unique landscape of Leasowes park and the beautifully restored walled garden. There will be an opportunity to explore and rest so bring a drink/snack if you wish. Terrain is naturally hilly so there are slopes and some steps.

Meet at The Leasowes main car park off Mucklow Hill B62 8DH. Places are limited so please ring 01384 371064 to book. Leave your name and number and I will get back to you. £3 per person.

Penorchard fungus foray

Friday October 2nd at 10.30am.

Meet at St. Kenelms Church car park. B62 ONG
Grid ref. S0944807

Matt Spencer will lead our walk looking at the many amazing and varied fungi around the reserve. The reserve is hilly and may be muddy with uneven ground in places. There are a couple of stiles and there may be horses in some of the fields.

For details of group events visit the Trust website at
www.worcestershiREWildlifeTrust.co.uk/whats-on

Group donation

At our March meeting this year Wendy Carter (WWT Communications Lead) presented a very well received talk to the group about what to look out for in spring and the importance of recording the sightings. During the meeting Wendy accepted a cheque for £1,200 from our chairman John Homer. This donation has been raised by our group since October 2023. A big thank you to everyone who has attended walks and talks, helping to raise this amount for Trust funds.

No rooms to let

Two years ago volunteers placed an additional 40 bird boxes in hedgerows around Penorchard Meadows nature reserve. The boxes were made by another volunteer and materials were paid for from donations given in memory of my dad. Fast forward to February this year when Andy and I decided to check the boxes and give them a good clean ready for the new nesting season. Imagine our delight when we found that nearly all of the boxes had old bird nests in them, and all babies seemed to have fledged successfully.

We were surprised, however, by three nests in the same length of hedgerow – each containing lots of dried oak leaves instead of a neat nest of moss and other greenery. Even more surprising – for both parties – was when a tiny mouse jumped out of the first box that we looked in! Needless to say, guessing that the similarly-lined nests also contained sleeping creatures, we ‘let sleeping mice lie’. Hopefully, we’ll see a repeated uptake of ‘rooms to let’ this year too.

Sue and Andy Duffield

The 2026 Volunteers’ Conference

On 6th June I attended the Trust’s annual Volunteers’ Conference, this time held in Hanbury. It was my first conference but a very informative day was had by all.

Beginning with welcomes and brief introductions from Christianne Tipping (Trust Chair) and Mike Perry (Trust CEO) we were also shown updates on key reserve developments across Worcestershire. Reserves updates were given by the reserves team and it was great to see the positive work taking place.

Simone Mansi then gave a talk about the Severn Treescapes project, which is ongoing, and sees the Trusts across Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire come together to discuss the power of trees in our landscape. It was great to see a project of such size and its successes.

This was followed by a fantastic talk by Keith Alexander about decaying wood and ancient woodlands, a topic which was certainly new to me but led perfectly into our afternoon walk in the Piper’s Hill reserve where we could put our new woodland knowledge to work. It was fascinating to see how woodlands decay and regenerate. I will definitely return to the reserve again soon, as there is so much more to see!

It was a fantastic day, with opportunities to meet fellow volunteers and learn about the amazing work we all do.

Chris Thomas

Burlish and beyond

Over the past two years Andy and I have led a couple of walks on behalf of the Halesowen U3A Countryside Studies Group, an enthusiastic and friendly group of people who meet about once a month to explore the local area. Previous excursions included Penorchard Meadows and The Devil's Spittleful reserves. This time however, they wanted to climb to the heights of Burlish Top, to visit the former site of the WW2 military camp – Bewdley Camp No. 2, as it was initially called. There was also a lower camp (No. 1), which was close to Burlish Crossing and the old railway, but little can be seen of this.

The camps were constructed in 1943 in preparation for the arrival of American troops prior to D-day. After D-day they became hospitals for treating the wounded and, in fact, 12,000 battle casualties were received there. After the war, the hospital wards became home to refugees and other displaced people up until the 1960s. Most of the structures have now disappeared and nature has taken over but, using photos, maps and Lidar, we were able to point out the remaining brick and concrete features of Camp No.2 and give a flavour of what life was like in that time. The walk also gave the group the opportunity to see developments at Dropping Well Farm and The Devil's Spittleful, with magnificent views of the area from the viewpoint on Burlish Top.

As a result of the walk a cheque for £50 was donated to the Trust by the group.

Sue and Andy Duffield

Music to my ears

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, *"It is not easy to determine the nature of music and why one should have knowledge of it."*

One of humanity's greatest achievements must be the making of music. It is said that the voice was the first musical instrument and that song might have preceded speech as a form of communication. The sounds of the human body, including the heartbeat, heard by a baby in the womb, would have been the first awareness of rhythm. Then there would have been the knocking of flint on flint, the stamping of feet, the clapping of hands, which gradually became part of ritual and ceremony. Perhaps the first song was the low humming of a mother to soothe her baby and the first instrument a simple reed used as a lure by hunters, imitating bird calls? Early man would have been tuned in to the sounds of wildlife and nature around him: animal and bird calls and noises of wind, rain and water.

At some point, though, sound became something more than the practical and became something to be crafted and enjoyed. Certainly today, whatever your age, background or nationality, there is music to suit your mood and taste.

Musicians have long found inspiration in nature. Works such as 'The Pastoral Symphony', 'Fingal's Cave' and 'The Four Seasons' evoke a strong sense of place

or emotion. Others show wonderful virtuosity in imitating the sounds of nature: in pieces such as 'The Flight of the Bumblebee' or 'The Lark Ascending'. But while these are most enjoyable to hear they are still beautiful imitations and lack the ephemeral quality of the real thing.

I love to listen on YouTube to the BBC recording made in 1927 of the cellist, Beatrice Harrison, playing in her Surrey garden alongside singing nightingales, where the person becomes accompanist to the true musicians.

It is not surprising to me that increasingly we humans are turning to the natural world for emotional support and inspiration. There is a growing interest in eco-music or bio-music, which is based on the sounds of nature: whale song, bird calls, the sounds of the wind, rain, water to calm and soothe.

As for me?

- To wander outside at dawn to hear one bird after another join in a harmonious chorus; choral music at its best.
- To stroll along a deserted beach in the late afternoon and listen to the lapping of waves and the haunting calls of curlews and oystercatchers
- To saunter through an autumn woodland to hear the unexpected quiet babbling of a brook, only to realise that the sound is actually the quiet murmurings of redwings hidden in the tops of the oaks, calling to each other.
- Or, better still, to sit on the bench in my garden in warm sunshine, with a clear blue sky overhead, accompanied by the quiet hum of bees in the lavender, when swooping low overhead is the sudden joyous, wild ecstatic scream of a group of swifts.

Now that is my kind of music!

Wendy Wilkins

Volunteering

Penorchard Meadows

Volunteer days are held on the 1st Monday of the month from 10am – 3pm on

July 6th August 3rd September 7th
October 5th November 2nd December 7th

Romsley Manor Farm Meadows

Volunteer days are held on the 3rd Monday of the month from 10am – 3pm on

July 20th August 17th September 21st
October 19th November 16th

Current volunteers should look out for Sue's email for changes and cancellations.

New volunteers should contact Andy Harris on andyh@worcestershireswildlifetrust.org

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