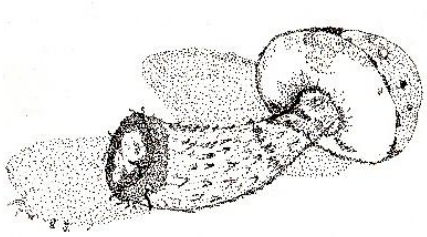
Worcestershire Wildlife Trust



Stourbridge & Hagley Local Group Newsletter Winter 2026

November 2026 - April 2027

Talks
At St. Saviours Church Hall, Hagley. £3 (cash please).

27th November at 7.30pm
Japan by Gerry Griffiths

22nd January at 7.30pm
Open evening & AGM

26th February at 7.30pm
Mobile phone wildlife photography by Anil Patel

19th March at 7.30pm
Meeting is 3rd Friday as our usual meeting date is Good Friday
Worcestershire's heathland nature reserves by Ion Riley, WWT Community warden officer

23rd April at 7.30pm
The Sandscapes Project by Ewan Chapman, National Trust countryside manager

Walks
Saturday 6th March at 10.30am
The Roman Road and beyond
Ian & Avril Williams will lead the first walk of the year. Meet on the Roman Road/Sandy Lane by the junction of High Park Avenue and South Road.
OS map 139 SO886839 / nearest postcode DY8 3RN

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

Fungus foray report

We met at St Kenelm's Church, Romsley, and walked around Penorchard nature reserve. About 20 people joined the walk, which took two and a half hours. The weather was pleasant for an October morning: slightly overcast with a little sunshine and a breeze, and neither cold nor wet.

We recorded 28 species or genera of fungi and one slime mould across grassland, verges and woodland. The outstanding find was porcelain fungus growing in glossy white clusters on a fallen beech log. Its slimy, translucent caps really do look like glazed china and one member of the group (Iris) remarked "that looks like porcelain" on the spot, which is how the species got its name!

The same log carried a remarkable range of wood-rotters: hoof fungus, giant polypore, southern bracket, artist's bracket, turkey tail and clusters of burgundydrop bonnets. The hoof fungus was an old, perennial bracket lying parallel to the ground, which suggests it either fruited after the tree was felled or reoriented itself, as hoof fungus does, to keep its pores facing down. This one log supporting so many species is a good reason for leaving fallen timber where it lies.

Elsewhere we found brown birch bolete and suede bolete, brittlegills, fibrecaps, a poisonpie on a grass verge, three ink caps, spectacular and common rustgill, jelly ear, sulphur tuft, tiered tooth, willow shield, beech woodwart and a *Stereum* crust. Fairy ring champignon turned up in several places.

Two finds were of particular interest. One bolete appeared to be parasitised by another fungus, with a pale, fluffy growth over the cap and stem, and we couldn't name either. Dog vomit slime mould (*Fuligo septica*) isn't a fungus at all but a slime mould, a different kind of organism. We also saw a number of small fungi and brackets we couldn't identify in the field, so the list isn't a complete record.

Safety note: several species recorded are poisonous, including false deathcap, sulphur tuft, common earthball and the fibrecaps, and others have poisonous look-alikes. Please don't pick or eat wild fungi without an expert identification and never forage without the landowner's permission.

Common name	Latin name
Artist's bracket	*Ganoderma applanatum*
Beech woodwart	*Hypoxylon fragiforme*
Bonnets	*Mycena sp.* (Genus only)
Brittlegills	*Russula* (Genus only)
Brown birch bolete	*Leccinum scabrum*
Burgundydrop bonnet	*Mycena haematopus*
Common earthball	*Scleroderma citrinum*
Common ink cap	*Coprinopsis atramentaria*
Common rustgill	*Gymnopilus penetrans*
Crust Fungi	*Stereum sp.* (Genus only)
Fairy ring champignon	*Marasmius oreades*
False deathcap	*Amanita citrina*
Fibrecap	*Inocybe sp.* (Genus only)
Giant polypore	*Meripilus giganteus*
Hare's foot ink cap	*Coprinopsis lagopus*
Hoof fungus	*Fomes fomentarius*
Jelly ear	*Auricularia auricula-judae*
Parachute	*Marasmius sp.* (Genus only)
Pleated ink cap	*Parasola plicatilis*
Poisonpie	*Hebeloma sp.* (Genus only)
Porcelain fungus	*Oudemansiella mucida*
Southern bracket	*Ganoderma australe*
Spectacular rustgill	*Gymnopilus junonius*

Suede bolete	*Xerocomus subtomentosus*
Sulphur tuft	*Hypholoma fasciculare*
Tiered tooth	*Hericium cirrhatum*
Turkey tail	*Trametes versicolor*
Willow shield	*Pluteus salicinus*

Probable

Slime mould (not a fungus)

Dog sick slime mould *Fuligo septica*

Matt Spencer

Fairies at the bottom of the garden

I once saw fairies at the bottom of the garden. Or, as a child, I thought I did. Though, perhaps, what I saw was a cluster of beautiful longhorn fairy moths dancing and glittering in the sun. Or perhaps they were mere figments of my imagination?

My childhood was spent playing on the hills or in the meadows, in woods or on heathland, close to home; when not outdoors I would have my head in a book, immersed in a different world, oblivious to what was going on around me. I was often told I had been 'away with the fairies'. My early reading was full of witches and wizards, elves and goblins; a world peopled by fairies. The Flower Fairy books by Cicely Mary Barker combined the imaginary world of fairies with the natural world of field and hedgerow with which I was so familiar.

Influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites and their philosophy of being 'true to nature', and an admirer of artists such as Kate Greenaway and Arthur Rackham, Cicely Mary Barker (1895-1973) is best known for her Flower Fairy books, in which she linked the popular interest in fairies with a sound knowledge of the wild plants of the countryside. Her books feature ethereal smiling children with butterfly wings, each one depicting the spirit of a different flower or tree and each one dressed in clothing that echoes the colour and appearance of the plant. Her models were children known to her and each held the flower, twig or blossom of a particular fairy. She paid careful attention to accurately depicting the shape, texture and form of the plant and then enlarged it to be the same size as the child.

She said, "I have drawn all the plants and flowers very carefully from real ones; and everything I have said about them is as true as I could make it."

Each illustration is accompanied by a simple rhyme in which the fairy introduces itself and says something about its special qualities or its habitat. For example the scabious fairy tells us that her flowers are "Like frilly cushions full of pins" that "curtsy in the meadow grass".

These books are an absolute delight; I'm quite sure that as a child I absorbed the basic skills of identification without being aware of it and that this has led to a deeper enjoyment of nature. There is a fairy for each of the common flowers, such as daisy and bluebell, and trees like elm and holly but also the less noticeable flowers, such as fumitory and scarlet pimpernel. I have a particular fondness for the Robin's pincushion fairy.

These books have stood the test of time, are widely available and would make a wonderful present for an adult who is young at heart with an interest in botany or an imaginative child who loves fairies and the world of nature.

As to whether there really were fairies at the bottom of my garden…. I like to think that perhaps there were.

Wendy Wilkins

Penorchard update

Work parties in the summer months usually comprise bracken control and keeping the rights of way clear of vegetation. This year has been no exception but some sessions were curtailed due to the excessive heat. At the end of July a hay cut was taken from four fields; this is good but it seems to have been done in haste and a fair amount of hay was left lying on the ground. This is not good as it forms a thatch and inhibits the growth of flowering plants. In the very dry, hot conditions of early August it was judged to be a significant fire risk particularly in Close Field. This field is crossed by the Nimmings footpath so excessive hay was raked from this field. Subsequent work parties have resumed removal of excess bramble and tree seedlings.

The unusual weather conditions have resulted in second/late flowering of some plants, for example agrimony and tormentil, and on a positive note scabious is spreading in the reservoir fields.

Ian Williams

Volunteer days at Penorchard Meadows

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

December 7th January 4th February 1st
March 1st April 5th

Volunteer days at Romsley Meadows

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

November 16th January 18th February 15th
March 15th April 19th

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

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

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