Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Wyre Forest Local Group

Newsletter winter 2026

Nature and folklore

St. Melangell became the patron saint of hares in the 7th century. Her tale says that she was once an Irish princess who fled an arranged marriage and became a hermit in Powys, Wales. One day Brochwel, Prince of Powys, was out hunting and the hare he was chasing took refuge under her cloak. The prince gave her the valley as sanctuary and she became abbess of a small religious community; she remains the patron saint of hares.

White hares were believed to have connections to the Otherworld. They were treated with respect and never eaten. Tales also tell of witches turning into hares to roam the countryside unseen.

Foxgloves. The outside markings are said to be the footprints of fairies. Also, if there is no wind and the foxglove is swaying, there will be a fairy inside.

Bluebells. According to floriography (a system where meanings are given to specific plants), bluebells symbolise humility, constancy and gratitude as they reliably pop up annually from damp, leaf-mulched soil.

Frogs were thought to have magical properties. Carrying a dead frog was thought to ward off illness. Some people believed if a frog entered a home, it would bring good luck (not for the frog!).

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Badgers. Across the UK they symbolise perseverance, confidence and strong will. Some even believed they could grant protection from witchcraft.

Butterflies symbolise rebirth, transformation and hope. They were also used for weather prediction - if the first butterfly seen in spring was white, then cloudless days were seen ahead; if it was dark in colour then stormy days were ahead.

Magpies. After the spread of Christianity, magpies were seen as a bad omen. Saluting a magpie may reverse bad luck if one crosses your path. Before this, they were seen as symbols of good fortune and intelligence.

Crows. If a crow lands on a house, good luck will follow but if a crow lands on a grave, it means the soul is not at rest.

Barn owls heard screeching on a chimney at midnight signifies there will be a death in the family.

Beech trees to Druids symbolised ancient wisdom and were the sacred wood of the summer solstice.

Hazel is believed to have magical properties and protect against evil spirits. It was also a symbol of fertility in medieval times.

Roma Bubb and Caris Hawkley

Talks

Everyone is welcome to join us at Holy Innocents Community Hall, Kidderminster. DY11 6LA
Meet at 7.30 pm. Admission £3.00

Thursday 3rd December Christmas social.

Thursday 7th January *'Raptors'* Nicola Benhamada – Nicola set up the North Worcestershire Raptor Monitoring Group in October 2023.

Thursday 4th February *'Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy'* Natalie Jaworska – Natalie will be talking about Worcestershire's LNRS. This sets out local biodiversity priorities and mapped habitat opportunities for nature recovery across the county.

Thursday 4th March *'The Nature of Finland and Norway'* Gerald Griffiths – Gerald will talk about the diverse landscapes of Finland and Norway.

Thursday 1st April *'Update on Our Rivers'* Kate Ashley – Kate is a river engagement officer at Severn Rivers Trust.

Walks

Walk start at 10am. Donations welcome. Dogs on leads unless stated.

Sunday 10th January *Beavering to the beavers* - led by Richard Jeynes & Joan Kearton-Jones
Meet: Earnwood car park, Button Oak, Bewdley SO744784 / DY12 3AL
Mainly easy walking along well maintained forest tracks, a short distance on reasonably smooth forest paths, with a very short uneven section. The path section might be muddy. Some long descents and ascents. We lose 126m to get to the beaver enclosure and then have to return; it's not steep but it is a long pull up. There are a number of interpretative boards along the route and a couple of benches. Approx. three and a half miles with no stiles.

Sunday 14th February *Does Stourport's wildlife sleep in winter?* - led by Richard Cory
Meet: Severn Meadows car park 2, Stourport SO807713 / DY13 3SA
Parking charges at time of printing are £4.80 for three hours or £7 for 24 hours.
A flat walk incorporating river, common, canal and basins. Approx. three miles with no stiles.

Sunday 14th March *Trains, towpath and turrets* - led by Jean Maffei
Meet: Bratch Lane, Wombourne SO871938 / WV5 9AB
A mainly flat walk starting with a short section along an old railway track onto a country lane and then the canal towpath. There will be time to view Bratch locks and the old pumping station as well as the opportunity to continue over to Wombourne Brook accompanied by walk leaders. Approx. three miles with no stiles.

Sunday 11 th April *Droitwich canal, fields and lanes* - led by Viv Farrell
Meet: slip road to Westacre Middle School, Ombersley Way (off Briar Hill), Droitwich SO887631 / WR9 0AA
This walk has a few steps, two short ascents and a descent and some uneven ground in one of the fields if the Shetland ponies are there. Other livestock is also nearby. NO DOGS. Approx. four miles with three stiles.

For more information about our walks, please contact either:
Roma Bubb: bubb.roma@outlook.com or Chris Morris: chrismorris222@btinternet.com

For further information about the group, please contact Joan Kearton-Jones: joan.kj@sky.com

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