

Wildlife

Issue 104 • WINTER 2015



Avon

The future
in your hands

Kevin McCloud
our new Vice President



Making a difference
the living landscape



With your help...
realising *Our Vision*



Includes
UK news &
stories

BRISTOL
2015 EUROPEAN
GREEN CAPITAL

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

Welcome



Dr Bevis Watts
Chief Executive,
Avon Wildlife Trust

Bevis Watts

Dear member

We are thrilled to welcome our new honorary Vice President, Kevin McCloud, who adds his support to the Trust's work. Kevin's team at HAB Housing is based in Bristol, and earlier this year, his staff gave their time to the Trust for free to build our volunteer cabin at Bennett's Patch & White's Paddock. It is a rare partnership between a Wildlife Trust and a housing developer, but as you will read, Kevin and his team have a genuine passion for development that makes space for wildlife, and forming such partnerships is an important part of influencing the future.

We welcome Kevin at a critical time, when the four Unitary Authorities in the West of England are formulating a Joint Spatial Plan - one which the Trust would like to see take into account the ecosystems needed to support a growing population with clean water, clean air and the other services we take for granted, as well as simply for our wellbeing through that connection to nature. We need to be thinking 40 years ahead, protecting, restoring and planting the ecological networks we will need in the future, not simply mitigating individual developments. If mitigation is ad hoc, the continued decline of our ecosystems is inevitable. Through the West of England Nature Partnership, we are working towards a more strategic approach. You will see Kevin adding his voice to that cause in his article.

This is an important issue of our magazine, where we profile how much practical work we deliver as an organisation and how that is only possible with your support.

This year we have undertaken two major land-management projects at Prior's Wood and Walton Common, and what follows will give you a flavour of the great work our team and volunteers have done. These projects are also great examples of how the Trust works in decades with visions of achieving real benefits for wildlife for the longer-term.

In our 2014-15 *Annual Review*, recently published on our website, we reported that the number of people volunteering with the Trust last year nearly doubled to 1,538, delivering approximately 9,500 volunteer days. This is an incredible statistic and really demonstrates how the Trust is at the centre of a movement, serving as an enabler and advisor to those wanting to care for and take action for the natural world. And as you will read, we have the potential to do even more, and with additional funding from your membership donations, we can do just that. Read more on pages 14 and 15.

Please help if you can, and enjoy the colours and sights of autumn!



Autumn beech leaves
at Brown's Folly

Your magazine

Avon Wildlife Trust is your local wildlife charity working to secure a strong future for the natural environment and to inspire people. With the support of 17,000 members, the Trust cares for 37 nature reserves, it runs educational and community programmes, advises landowners, and campaigns on issues that threaten wildlife habitats.

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Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for the latest news and events. Please share your wildlife pictures and experiences!

Teachers can check out the blog at wildschools.org.uk and follow @wildschools. Go to the website to sign up for eshots and event alerts!



/avonwt



/avonwt

*The hedgehog
Shares its secret with no one.
We say, Hedgehog, come out
Of yourself and we will
love you.*

*We mean no harm. We want
Only to listen to what
You have to say.*

Paul Muldoon

Hedgehog from Poems 1968-1998



DICK ELLINGHAM



Introducing our new Vice President – Kevin McCloud

BARBARA EVRIDIPOU

“It is an honour to be associated with the Avon Wildlife Trust and the brilliant work it does. For that matter, it’s a privilege for any one of us to care for our wildlife and make a contribution to the preservation, enhancement and even the creation of new habitats. It’s something I particularly enjoy doing on my farmland – if you haven’t yet tried it, build a small pond in your garden and watch as the frogs, toads, newts, dragonflies and water boatmen take ownership of it. Or sow a stretch of wildflower seeds on a patch of poor ground and wait for the goldfinches and linnets to arrive. Miraculously, these species, and the flowers and seeds of the plants they live on, serve as food for a wide range of birds and bats that will visit you. And so a great chain of wildlife come to enjoy what you have provided in a rich complexity that no man could ever construct.

Green connective tissue

But major ecological improvement will not happen if we dot havens just here and there. For wildlife to flourish in our cities and suburbs we need to join up habitats and provide wildlife corridors, stepping stones for insects, mammals and birds in an effort to

garden collectively, plant trees and consider how the spaces between buildings, whether private or public can act as a conduit for wildlife movement. This idea lies at the heart of My Wild City, a wonderful initiative from the Trust. Think of a city like an organism

when neighbour meets neighbour which is why so many of the resources we incorporate into projects, such as car clubs, allotments, incidental food growing, water storage and play space, are shared. This reduces residents’ collective environmental

“Think of a city like an organism that needs feeding. Its vitality comes from the green connective tissue, the gardens, plants and trees that we nourish.”

that needs feeding. Its vitality comes from the green connective tissue, the gardens, plants and trees that we nourish. Collectively, with enough critical mass, the living environment can become as powerful as the built one in Bristol. Sustained like this, it has the power to nourish us back.

footprints, provides for greater resilience, interdependence and social sustainability, and frankly is more fun. We aim always to build and improve biodiversity at the same time. Buildings can accommodate birds, bats and bees as well as humans, and gabion walls

The spaces inbetween

I know this to be a fact because my business, HAB, which is based in Bristol, builds housing schemes where the quality of the public realm – the spaces in between buildings – is sacrosanct. HAB builds not only houses (which are always low energy) but also communities; we know that the most valuable human interactions happen



Goldfinch

GILLIAN DAY



SE1 WEBSITE

Elephant and Castle Urban Forest

and hedges are much more animal-friendly than a brick wall. We also make sure that wherever possible the planted components of our schemes work symbiotically with the architecture to provide local micro-climate, water-attenuation, summer shading and humidity control. In other words, the hard-built stuff we construct works with, rather than against, the natural world. In my view, only this approach fully defines the term 'green architecture.'

Unlocking the land

The responsibility to green Bristol, to build its wildlife havens, pockets and corridors, does not, however, just lie with its human residents and our house builders. It lies with our institutions. The Trust has been working with the Council, landowners and the Merchant Venturers to unlock land all around the city which has poor ecological value and enhance it to provide much greater natural worth. This has to happen – the idea of grim, unavailable and near-sterile land not being used to boost the city's biodiversity is not acceptable. A great first has been the conversion of Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock, next to Portway, by the Trust. I'm pleased to say HAB helped deliver the volunteer building and it sits at an important gateway

point to the City. Personally, I'd like a network of green gateways, some of them single site projects, others perhaps community projects where residents 'join up' their front gardens to create linear landscapes. It's then just a short step to the establishing of rich wildlife corridors throughout the cities.

Bristol is poised to do this. It is a remarkably progressive place, thanks partly to its very diverse communities and partly to the energies of its Mayor, George Ferguson and organisations like the Avon Wildlife Trust. It currently enjoys the status of European Green Capital 2015 and thanks to the rather wonderful One Tree per Child campaign, by next March 36,000 new trees will have been planted in the city, a national campaign with Bristol as the pioneering pilot scheme.

Let's not miss our chance!

It is, however, hugely important that the emerging Joint Spatial Plan of the four unitary authorities, recognises the value of the environment. We must think of our ecological networks that support people with free services in the same way we think about transport and other infrastructure. The people here have implicitly demanded a



RICHARD BURKMAR

Frog in creeping jenny

better and more diverse ecological environment by setting up hundreds of their own neighbourhood schemes. Retrofitting projects like Bristol Green Doors are successfully adapting our housing stock to low energy standards, so why can't we retrofit every available verge, every roundabout, riverbank and redundant scrap of land with wildflower seed and a pair of willows? Bristol is on the brink of an extraordinary opportunity to become one of the world's most biodiverse and species-rich cities. And yet this idea has to be fully grasped. Let's not miss this chance!"

Kevin is also Chairman of HAB Housing, an ambassador for Bristol 2015 and a Fellow of WWF.





Portbury Wharf a future in doubt

In recent months the Trust has raised concerns about the future quality of the Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve due to threats to its future funding, and concerns about the lack of any process of consultation with Avon Wildlife Trust on this issue by North Somerset Council (NSC).

We met with council officers in July to share concerns from both organisations and waited to hear how NSC would take forward a process for considering options for the future funding and management of the reserve and how the Trust would be involved in that process.

At the time of writing we understand that reports are being produced that will be the subject of two decision notices for a decision by NSC Executive Member Cllr David Pasley, and expect to be alerted when they are posted online so that we, along with residents and other interested parties, will be able to comment.

However, we were disappointed to learn that the Trust would not be invited to contribute our ideas on the future funding or management of the reserve to the reports or have any other input to them. We also understand that we will not receive any responses to various letters to NSC and that our concerns will be addressed in the reports to the decision notices. Therefore, we hope that councillors will call in the matter for a full council debate, and at that time the Trust and

others will be able to comment on the decision notices. However, in line with NSC processes, any recommendations from the debate may or may not be adopted by the Executive Member at his discretion.

A letter from Cllr Nigel Ashton to Village Quarter Residents in March 2015 has generated a number of problems and costs for the Trust. Given the clear political will and processes, we have to work under the assumption that the Trust will not have any involvement in, or funding from, the management of the nature reserve post-December 2015. As a result we have already had to reforecast our budgets and agreed reallocation of roles for staff whose posts are funded to support Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve. We will continue to care for the nature reserve until the end of 2015 and remain open to future involvement.

The Trust's concerns are that the future quality of an important wildlife habitat is maintained, and that commitments to offset the development of 2,600 houses by funding a nature reserve in perpetuity are upheld.



Spoonbill

AMY LEWIS

Update from Portbury Wharf nature reserve

A great deal of habitat management work has been carried out by volunteers and contractors to enhance the reserve for the birdlife. An existing large nesting island was levelled and covered in stone in the Autumn of 2010 and to our delight has provided an over-wintering home for up to 120 lapwing each year. Other birds regularly using the pools include snipe, curlew, redshank and breeding oystercatcher and we've also been visited by a spoonbill, a bittern, a grey phalarope and little ringed plovers.



GREGOIRE BOUGEREAU

The Making of *The Hunt*

20 January 2016, 7pm

Filming revelations from the landmark BBC1 David Attenborough series

An evening at St George's Bristol with executive producer Alastair Fothergill and series producer Huw Cordey

The Hunt, which begins in November, is a series with real-life, edge-of-the-seat drama. But it's not about killing. It's a landmark production about the sophisticated relationships between predators and prey. And *The Hunt's* state-of-the-art technology has revealed more about some of these relationships than even the scientists knew. You will hear about filming

breakthroughs, personal dramas, scientific discoveries and aerial revelations, and be shown special clips from behind the scenes. Characters appearing on screen include Arctic wolves, aerobatic caracals and giant blue whales. We can guarantee this will be an eye-opening presentation.

Proceeds from this event go to The Avon Wildlife Trust.

£15 adults, £5 children
Book online from December:
stgeorgesbristol.co.uk

Drainage debris for Dismaland!

Every year the Trust removes large quantities of reeds and rushes from the wetland reserves to manage waterway drainage. We were only too pleased to be asked to provide them to the Banksy-inspired Dismaland installation at Weston-super-Mare in August. The reeds and rushes were used in the creation of the pools in the alternative theme park installation. It's not often we get to provide materials for world-renowned artists!



Thank you to...

Trust member Jan Barkworth has supported the Trust by opening her wonderful wildlife garden to support the Trust for over 25 years. In this time she has raised over £30,000. This year's Open Day resulted in a donation of a record £2,500! This will go towards My Wild City projects and Folly Farm's Wellbeing garden.



Climate countdown to Paris

Marching for the climate 2014

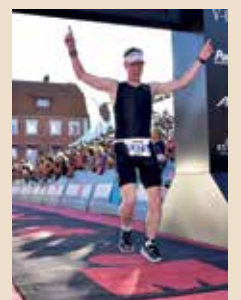
In December 2015, world leaders will meet in Paris to agree on how the world will respond to climate change.

On 29 November, people will come together again in the streets for the global People's Climate March - to break last year's record for the largest climate change mobilisation in history. You can join in the Bristol March - Trust

member Bob Langton is in the Bristol organising group, and invites all our members to march for the climate. Meet at Castle Park by 12 noon. Further details from march.bristol.dobro.uk

Iron Man challenger Nathan Treby who raised over £500 for the Trust. He writes:

"I live in Bristol, have done so for about 15 years, and work as an accountant down by the docks. I've been appreciating all the good work of the Trust while out on my Ironman training and hopefully this can give a little back."





Ecosystem services mapping

The Trust is playing a leading role in work currently being undertaken by The West of England Nature partnership (WENP), using Environment Systems GIS Consultants, to produce a range of maps for the West of England area which show the region's services provided by our natural environment (called ecosystem services).

They show the benefits that people obtain from our ecosystems, such as the provision of clean water, flood alleviation and clean air. The maps have been commissioned as part of a wider piece of work, funded by Wessex Water, to produce a State of Environment Assessment for the West of England. The maps are designed to help inform decision making to ensure the best outcome for nature and biodiversity alongside future development. This is groundbreaking work which is challenging the way

we think about planning and suggest we should be thinking decades ahead about the ecological networks we need to protect, restore or create to provide these services, as well as for our own sense of wellbeing.

The four West of England Authorities are currently working together to prepare a Joint Spatial Plan: A Prospectus for Sustainable Growth. This aims to identify the quantity of housing and jobs that need to be planned for in the next 20 years, and how they might be distributed across

the sub-region. Up to 85,000 new homes will be needed by 2036, so it is important that the JSP process has access to environmental evidence. We hope the WENP maps will inform decision-making, highlighting what ecosystem services exist and what might be lost through development, as well as those that could be further enhanced for our future benefit.

See wensp.org.uk/projects/state-of-environment-assessment/ for more details

Can cities be nature rich? – Integrating nature into urban living, design and planning

A one-day strand in the first Festival of the Future City will take place at the watershed in Bristol on 18 November 2015. The day will explore the challenge of making our urban landscapes wildlife-friendly, both to protect existing wildlife and to attract more in. The conference will showcase the journey Bristol has begun during European Green Capital 2015 and look at what it can learn from other cities nationally and internationally. The Festival runs from 17 to 20 November.

The event, introduced by Chris Baines, is open to members of the public and professionals alike. For more details see: ideasfestival.co.uk/seasons/festival-future-city



Chris

BARBARA EVRIPIDOU



A Wild Service!

Boyd on site

Avon and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trusts have joined forces to create a merged ecological consultancy. Wild Service is an equal venture between the two Trusts, and combines both Avon's and Gloucester's excellent track record of providing ecological consultancy services alongside a wider offering including land management, habitat mitigation and conservation services.

The business will operate from two offices, one in Bristol and the other in Gloucester. Boyd Henderson is the Managing Director of Wild Service, with Eric Heath as Principal Ecologist.

The consultancy is able to offer ecological survey and guidance to a range of clients, including landowners, large developers, utility companies, local authorities and private individuals. The ecology services provided include European protected species survey, phase 1 habitat surveys, environmental impact assessments, grassland surveys, woodland surveys and planning advice in relation to ecology. Complementing the ecology element of the business Wild Service also deliver land management, mitigation and conservation services. This includes habitat creation and improvement works, pond creation, access works such as path and bridge construction, vegetation management, and wildlife fencing. We can also provide a full design service and input to clients existing design regarding wildlife and landscape.



Great crested newts

DAVID KILBEY

Our full range of services and contacts can be found on our website at gloucestershire.wildlifetrust.co.uk/wildservice



Wild service tree leaf

PHILIP PRECZY



DARIN SMITH

Badger cull condemned

The Wildlife Trusts condemn the announcement by DEFRA that pilot badger culls in Somerset and Gloucestershire will continue, and that culling will be extended to a new area in Dorset.

In the two years of culling in Somerset and Gloucestershire, the badger cull has been found to be repeatedly flawed in its methodology, its measures and its objectives.

We support farmers in the battle against bovine TB and have huge sympathy for those who have been affected. But this is the wrong way of tackling bovine TB and goes against the scientific evidence and expert advice, and disregards the weight of public opinion, which is against the culling of badgers. The published reviews of the pilot culls have shown them to be 'ineffective' and 'inhumane', and more expensive than effective.

ecotricity Switch today and £100 is donated to the Trust*

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Ecotricity, a green energy supplier, will donate £100 to Avon Wildlife Trust when you switch your electricity and gas to them* Plus the money you spend with Ecotricity helps them build new sources of renewable energy.

£100 could help the Trust buy more cameras and equipment for our **Wild Schools Film Challenge** – providing an opportunity for primary school pupils to interact with wildlife in and around their school and get outdoors.

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Online: Visit ecotricity.co.uk/avon-wildlife-trust

When you sign up quote: AWT1

If you've already switched thank you – you've helped generate valuable donations to the Trust. Why not recommend a friend to switch?

*For full terms and conditions, please go to www.ecotricity.co.uk/avon-wildlife-trust.

Securing wildlife on our nature reserves

Volunteers at Dolebury Warren

Reversing the decline in biodiversity is a huge challenge, given the scale and pace of loss of nature and wild spaces – even more so for our region, which has one of the fastest-growing human populations in the UK.

At the Trust we champion the value of nature all over Avon. And no more so than on the 37 nature reserves that we manage. They feature ancient bluebell woods to Iron Age hillforts, nationally important wetlands and wildflower meadows.

We want wildlife to thrive, to disperse and recolonise our landscape so that we and future generations can encounter, experience and enjoy our natural heritage. That is why local nature conservation is so important to us. The Avon Wildlife Trust reserves form important areas of refuge for many species and act as stepping stones in the landscape. They are central to our wider conservation vision which aims to join and connect habitats through ecological corridors, enabling future growth and resilience.

37 nature reserves, covering over 1,100 hectares

Our reserves have to be actively managed to make sure they are in the best condition to benefit wildlife and ensure that visitors have a wonderful wildlife experience. This hands-on work

delivers extraordinary achievements for both wildlife and people. Here we highlight two of this year's transformative achievements.

Prior's Wood

This woodland is a fragment of the ancient semi-natural woodland that once covered the limestone ridge which stretches from Easton-in-Gordano to Clevedon. It is one of the best bluebell woodlands in the country and is enormously popular in spring. But since acquiring the site in 2001 following the sale of the Tyntesfield Estate, the Trust has been aware of the urgent need to improve management of this ancient woodland. This has meant tackling the problem of another once-prized plant within Prior's Wood – the rhododendron.

This plant was introduced to Britain from Asia in the 18th century and was used extensively by the Victorians for attractive landscaping on country estates such as Tyntesfield. Unchecked for many years, the rhododendron in Prior's Wood had spread and expanded to an area of 11 hectares by 2001, shading the ground and inhibiting growth of other species.

In 2013 the Trust was awarded funding by the Forestry Commission



Tree planting

BARBARA EVRIPIDOU

11h of rhododendron removed and 3000 trees planted last year alone at Prior's Wood

to support woodland management here and a key priority was removing invasive rhododendron. This was completed in February 2015 and has already transformed Prior's Wood, allowing light to reach the woodland floor for the first time in decades. The ground flora will be able to regenerate naturally and increase biodiversity.

Another important initiative in the restoration work was the removal of the large larch plantation, which the Tyntesfield Estate planted as a cash crop after the war. The clear-felled

areas have now been restocked with native broadleaf trees, which were donated by Eunomia Research and Consulting, whose staff worked with Trust volunteers on planting schemes throughout the winter. Further thinning work will continue in the future in order to improve the diversity and structure of Prior's Wood.

Walton Common

Walton Common lies above the small village of Walton-in-Gordano in the Gordano Valley, and is both a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, with a rich history stretching back to the middle stone age. The reserve is much loved and well used by the local community and attracts other visitors, due to the superb views over the Gordano Valley and Severn.

There is, however, a pressing need to safeguard several scarce species of the Common's invertebrates and plants, by balancing their different management requirements. Walton Common has not been grazed by livestock for many years and the grassland area has diminished due to legal issues over the fencing of commons, access difficulties and changing land use. The grassland has relied solely on rabbit grazing, together with manual grass cuts and scrub clearance by volunteers. These are difficult to sustain because of the Common's size, and the encroachment of trees and scrub has reduced the area of wildflower- rich grassland habitat.

“ Much loved and well used by the local community. ”

The Common has now been entered into Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, which will support a programme of restoration works for the next 10 years. One of the first steps involves a new piece of technology – an invisible fencing



Bluebells at Prior's Wood



larch removal at Prior's Wood

system. This is an underground electric cable that creates no visible or physical barriers within the Common, but which will stop livestock straying beyond the boundaries.

Walton Common will soon welcome a small herd of short-legged Dexter cattle who will begin the work of restoring this valuable habitat by grazing the scrub and rank grass.

Most of our nature reserves are open to the public for free, all year round. Guided walks on some are available to download from our website. For details visit: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/reserves

Please help us to do more

This vital hands-on work on these reserves and all the others we manage is benefiting wildlife and people. This would simply not be possible without your support.

Thank you

You make achievements like Prior's Wood and Walton Common possible. And of course, all of the other work the Trust does too.

Whether you are a member, supporter or volunteer your contribution to the Trust makes a huge difference, helping to secure wildlife and inspire people across the region, every single day. Thank you.

But there is still so much more we need to do. And we can't do it without your help.

Please increase your membership by £2 per month today

Your continued support for the Trust is so valuable, and together we can do so much more.

How to increase your membership donation

- Online. Visit: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/upgradeOct15
- Phone: Call us on: 0117 917 7270 to speak to one of our team



BARBARA EVRIPIDOU



For over ten years Avon Wildlife Trust, together with many other Wildlife Trusts, has been working to create a national network of high-quality wildlife habitats, a truly living landscape, for wildlife and for people.

Core areas of protected habitat, such as our nature reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) provide vital sanctuaries for wildlife. They cannot exist in isolation however, because for species to increase in numbers and wildlife become more widespread there needs to be space for expansion from these sanctuaries into the wider countryside. Valuable areas of wildflower grasslands and other habitats are scattered across farmland, adding to the rich tapestry of our countryside. Together with well-managed river courses, diverse hedgerows and buffer strips around fields, a biodiverse network is created.

Through our Living Landscape work the Trust supports landowners; across the North Somerset Levels and Moors, in the Chew Valley and around Bath to help them care for the wildlife habitats on their land. Our work with Buglife on the West of England B-Lines project also supports landowners in adding to wildlife corridors across the whole region.



North Somerset Levels and Moors

The North Somerset Levels and Moors (NSLM) are a major landscape feature of Avon - representing 3.5% of the total UK coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitat. The landscape is characterised by small, scattered settlements and cattle-grazed fields bounded by an extensive network of rhynes (drainage ditches) and rivers.

This is a conservation priority for the Trust and we have been actively involved in the area since 1995.

The grassland has largely been drained and improved for agriculture so that it is within the watercourses that the area's most important biodiversity is to be found. A number of important

180 individual volunteers
1,546 volunteer days

wildlife sites are designated as SSSIs, and some managed as nature reserves. However, the vast majority of the ditches are within farmland and are the responsibility of the individual landowners.

Through funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust we were able to carry out a three year survey project to determine the management condition and value of the wetland network outside of protected areas. Our survey results indicate a wide range of habitat conditions across the NSLM.

Some landowners are engaged in positive ditch/rhyne management providing a significant biodiversity resource in addition to the SSSIs. However, we also identified a large number of ditches where landowners are struggling to carry out regular ditch management. A significant programme of well-resourced ditch management is needed to turn this round. This will only be possible through all organisations with an interest in the area working together.

Funding through Wessex Water's Partners Programme is enabling the Trust to set up a new partnership and start the restoration process. Over the next five years, we are working

2,400ha of land surveyed,
1,600ha with wildflower
interest

to integrate flood management and sustainable farming practices, with best practice management for biodiversity to achieve more with the resources available.

Chew Valley

The Chew Valley is recognised as the best area in Avon for lowland wildflower meadows with calcareous grasslands on the adjacent slopes of the Mendip Hills and in the southern Cotswolds around Bath. We are now acutely aware of the loss of wildflower-rich habitats that has occurred since the 1930's and the knock-on effect on bee and butterfly populations as well as other wildlife. It is vital that we are able to look after our remaining wildflower grasslands and start to reverse these declines.

In 2008, through our Wildflower Grasslands Project we started to make contact with landowners to carry out



Orchids at Blagdon

surveys. Whilst meadows were integral to farming in the past, they do not offer the modern farmer the same return from their land as "improved" grass swards. Lowland meadows may be fertilised to increase grass productivity at the expense of the wildflowers, which cannot compete

Engaged with over 250
landowners

with more vigorous grasses. Calcareous grasslands are often found on slopes, which are too difficult to plough and fertilise. They may be abandoned as unprofitable to farm, resulting in scrub encroachment and eventual loss of the grassland.

The Government's agri-environment schemes provide compensation to farmers for loss of earnings through adopting less intensive farming practices. However, our experience has shown that landowners may still need help with grassland restoration, and working with Natural England we have provided specialist advice along with practical assistance through our volunteer Grassland Restoration Team (GRT).

Our volunteers started in 2011 and have now contributed over 1,000 days of practical work towards the restoration of 165 hectares of wildflower grasslands. In addition to clearing scrub, removing weed species and cutting grass, the work days have allowed us to have regular contact with landowners and strengthened our relationships with them. We also know that this support has encouraged them to do additional work themselves.

As in so many areas of the Trust's



Seed gathering at
Breech Hill Common

work, the time given by volunteers was vital to this scheme. They enabled us to survey far more land than would otherwise have been possible.

Please help us to do more

Our work in creating a truly living landscape - a national network of high-quality wildlife habitats, for wildlife and for people - would simply not be possible without your support.

Thank you

You make achievements like these across the North Somerset Moors, Chew Valley and Bath possible. And of course, all of the other work the Trust does too.

Whether you are a member, supporter or volunteer your contribution to the Trust makes a huge difference, helping to secure wildlife and inspire people across the region, every single day. Thank you.

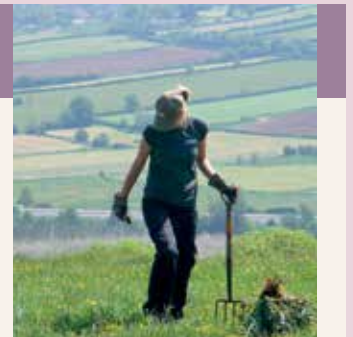
But there is still so much more we need to do. And we can't do it without your help.

Please increase your membership by £2 per month today

Your continued support for the Trust is so valuable, and together we can do so much more.

How to increase your membership donation

- Online. Visit: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/upgradeOct15
- Phone: Call us on: 0117 917 7270 to speak to one of our team



A FUTURE FOR WILDLIFE IN YOUR HANDS



JAMES BECK

Please help us to do more

You make everything the Trust achieves possible. Whether you are a member, supporter or volunteer your contribution helps to secure wildlife and inspire people across the region, every single day. Thank you.

Last year, Avon Wildlife Trust had one of its busiest years. We acquired Middle Hill Common, our 37th nature reserve, we inspired over 10,000 children with the wonder of nature through our Wild Schools programme, and we engaged 1,500 volunteers to help protect local wildlife. This vital work would simply not be possible without your support.

But there is still so much more we need to do. And we can't do it without your help.

The Future

Our Vision for our region is to enable

nature to recover on a grand scale. To do this we must continue to secure the wild spaces that our local wildlife needs to thrive. We need to inspire thousands more people with the beauty and wonder of their natural world. And we need to do this in a region with the fastest growing human population in the UK.

Please help us to do more

If you can increase your membership donation by just £2 each month, we can achieve so much more for wildlife and people in Avon. The Trust has an ambitious vision for a healthy living

world, rich in wildlife and valued by everyone. With your help we can be even more active, inspirational, and an influential local wildlife champion.

With an additional £2 per month we can achieve:

- more hands-on work on our reserves
- more wildlife friendly urban spaces
- more restoration and conservation in the wider countryside
- more well-being programmes that engage our communities



MARK SHARMAN

Walton Common

“ Supporting Avon Wildlife Trust and working in wildlife TV go hand-in-hand. I regularly visit the reserves. I am a member of the Trust and increased my membership donation as I know the Trust is doing vital work that makes me really inspired about the future for the region. ”



Mark Sharman, Bristol-based wildlife cameraman, photographer and Avon Wildlife Trust member marksharman.co.uk

Please increase your membership donation by £2 a month

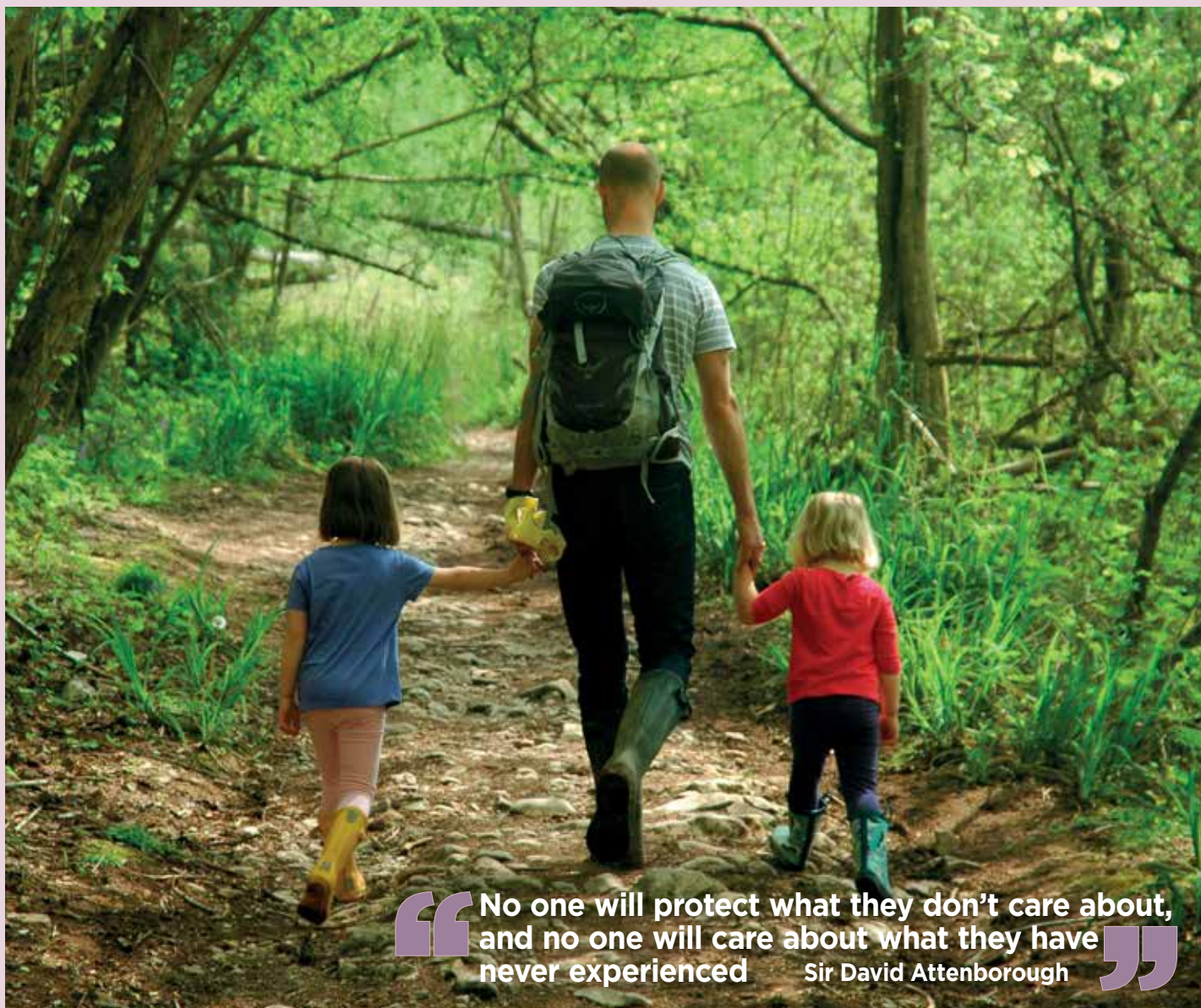
We envision a future filled with thriving wildlife and buzzing with biodiversity, all cherished and cared for by local people. This is the future we are working for each and every day. This future is in your hands.

How to increase your membership donation

- Online. Visit: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/upgradeOct15
- Phone: Call us on: 0117 917 7270 to speak to one of our team



As a member of the Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB) Avon Wildlife Trust has made a public promise to adhere to best practice, honesty, transparency, clarity and accountability in all fundraising activity, enabling you to give with confidence.



“No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they have never experienced” Sir David Attenborough

My wild city

Making space for nature!



From the Jack of the Green dancing of Gloucester Road's Mayfest to the arts and music festival of Redfest, we've left no marquee unvisited in our attempt to get across our vision of transforming Bristol into a nature reserve.

My Wild City also took centre stage in the Architect Centre exhibition which addressed the question 'How can we make space for a nature-rich landscape in the city?' The exhibition attracted over 1000 people and hosted several drop in sessions where we gave members of the public the opportunity to talk to us and learn how they can do something amazing for wildlife.

My Wild Street

Wheelie bins, bikes, piles of junk and the odd potted-up plant. This was the sight that greeted us when we first looked at the front gardens of our My Wild Street demonstration street in Easton. However, after several months of preparation, consultation and support from project partners Earth Timber Stone and leading UK law firm Burges Salmon, the conversion from uninspiring grey to a corridor of green is now complete. Over just two weeks in September, the My Wild City team transformed the front gardens

of thirty houses in a single road. We were supported by wildlife garden designer Jody Fairish and a whole host of eager volunteers from Burges Salmon. Working closely with local residents through both the design stage and construction, we've been able to introduce a series of simple wildlife habitat features spread across the whole length of Stanley Park.

There were several issues to overcome, including finding spaces for wheelie bins, provision of water, and dealing with the odd naughty cat. However, these front gardens now



demonstrate what can be done to support wildlife-friendly green space in small terraced street front gardens. These designs will be made available on our website under the My Wild Street case study, along with additional information and photos. With this street now complete, we hope our actions will inspire neighbourhoods across the city to work together and replicate what's been achieved in Easton.

See where people are getting involved with My Wild City and taking action to make the vision a reality - turning Bristol into a nature reserve. Check out the interactive map online at avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/mywildcity

Follow the action on social media too and share your posts with the tag #MyWildCity



The last hedgehog in Avon?



When was the last time you saw a hedgehog?

Sadly, the hedgehog is in rapid decline - over 95% have been lost since the 1950s.

The hedgehog remains one of our best-loved wild creatures, but only one in five people in the UK has ever seen a hedgehog in their garden.

The hedgehog has;

- About 6,000 sharp spines
- An amazing sense of smell
- Poor eyesight
- An appetite for slugs and snails
- An ability to curl into an impenetrable ball

And - they are also Apex Predators!

Why hedgehogs are so important

They're an apex predator - which means they are at the top of the food chain and are a good indicator of the general health of the environment. Hedgehogs are unfussy about their habitat requirements, so a dramatic decline in hedgehogs is a warning about the condition of the environment. They are the UK equivalent of tigers and lions, except they live in our gardens! We have the opportunity to get nose-to-nose with these charismatic creatures, an experience which can form the lifelong connection with nature we all need in our lives.

Why are they disappearing?

There are lots of reasons - pastures and fields that used to provide food and shelter have been ploughed up and hedgerows have been removed to create larger fields. Pesticides have killed off insects and often kill hedgehogs too. British gardens are contributing to the decline, as we're making them too tidy for the shelter-loving hedgehog.

**The future is in our hands.
There is something we can do.
Have you seen a hedgehog?**

We'd like to know as we're collecting information that will help our future conservation work and monitor population trends.

Please record any sightings of hedgehogs (dead or alive) on our website at: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/lasthedgehog

With your help there could be happy ending to the story of 'the last hedgehog in Avon?'

How you can help!

Take the hedgehog pledge!

1. Report sightings, alive or dead on our website
2. Make your garden hedgehog safe
3. Share the plight of 'the last hedgehog in Avon' with neighbours and friends

Find out more at:

avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/lasthedgehog

What to do if you find a underweight hedgehog or a hedgehog that is active in winter?

If you're concerned about underweight hedgehogs or hedgehogs active in winter, provide tinned cat or dog food and fresh water. The British Hedgehog Preservation Society can also offer advice and help you find a rescue centre near you. Contact: info@britishhedgehogs.org.uk or tel: 01584 890801





Communities and Nature

Your membership donation also supports the work we do with people across our area – even when projects are generously funded, we need to find resources from the Trust’s core income. On these pages you can catch up with recent activities.

Lifecycle Over 55s and Bike Minded groups at Dundry Slopes

Our Communities and Nature Project (CAN) works to connect vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare with the natural world. Project Officers Kelly Bray and Matt Harcourt have had a busy summer.

Lifecycles

“ We’ve been working with the cycling charity Lifecycles, who were award Bristol Green Capital 2015 funding for their Nature and Wildlife Cycle Rides project. People of differing ages and abilities from the Over 55s and Bike Minded groups rode out to explore nature reserves and green corridors across the city, including many sites the CAN team has worked on. In July they visited two of our My Wild City demonstration sites at Dundry Slopes and South Street Park in Bedminster. They discovered the conservation improvement works that have happened here, and explored Dundry Slopes. They were amazed by



Tyre planter at Easton

both the diversity of habitats and the views back over Bristol.

A silver service

One of our weekly dates is with Silvacare in Southmead, who provide outreach daycare services for adults with learning difficulties. We’ve been working on a small area in the grounds of the Greenway Centre, which has been transformed from an overgrown patch to a thriving space for people

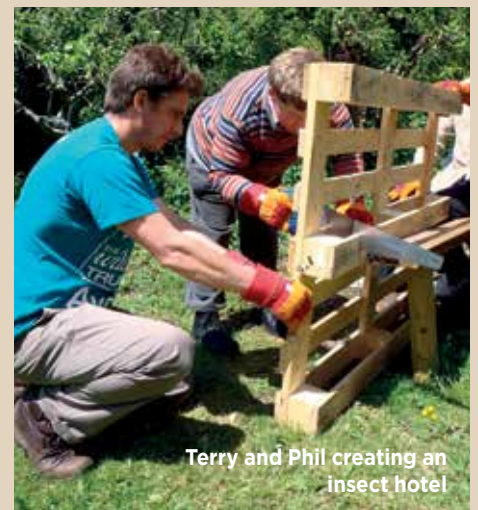
“ At nature group, we’ve learnt and done lots of things such as made benches for people to use – they are very stable. ”

Len, from Silvacare

and wildlife. We’ve cleared brambles and bindweed, planted trees, put up bird boxes, created wildflower areas and a wildlife-only hotel. To celebrate summer we made a picnic bench so that everyone can enjoy the space on sunny days, and it’s already well used as a spot to take a break and admire our hard work.

Greening together

Brandon Trust’s Greenfields horticulture group worked with us in Easton



Terry and Phil creating an insect hotel

Community Centre and nearby Owen Square Park. Together we’ve focused on practical improvements such as wildlife gardening, by maintaining the raised beds in the courtyard of the community centre and developing an overgrown area between here and the neighbouring Mosque. The Brandon Trust group grew the plants that are now thriving here at their Lawrence Weston Farm base. This once neglected area has been transformed from an unloved patch of ground to a thriving space, valued by the local community. People often stop and chat about the improvements and tell us how nice it is to see positive changes being made to the area.

Feed Bristol

Feed Bristol is the Trust's community food growing project, which works with disadvantaged groups as well as supporting outdoor education, a large volunteer programme and a business incubator initiative. Project Officer Matt Cracknell looks back at a flourishing season.

Anyone can drop in and help out!

“ We’re now developing the conservation management plan of the site, so that we can be used as an exemplar of how food growing projects can be places where people and wildlife thrive. Through collaboration with the Bristol Food Council and the Bristol Food Producers Guild we’re also able to influence the wider producers’ network across the city region to adopt a wildlife-focused approach.



Matt loads up the salad leaves

Feed Bristol hosts Sims Hill Shared Harvest veg boxes and Edible Futures salads. Other initiatives include Re-wild Tree Nursery and Pea Shoots Forest

“ The calming influence of working in nature has helped me think positively about life again after many years. ”

Volunteer, Feed Bristol

School, and over the past three years we’ve helped twelve businesses become established, and supported over 40 people into employment.

At the heart of all of this is the local community – anyone can drop in and help out with a range of different tasks, from horticulture to DIY, in exchange for a share of our harvest. The site looks inspiring with lots of examples of wildlife gardening all around the food growing areas. This year we had a fantastic display in the pollinator beds which was entered into the RHS Britain in Bloom competition – a follow-on to our winning an RHS Golden Gilt last year.

We also launched our wildflower nursery, growing over 20,000 native plants. We’ve begun collecting seed from nature reserves to build up a bank of native plants of local provenance, and they are being used across the city as part of the Trust’s My Wild City

Project. Plants are now available and can be bought on site, so if you have a project that needs planting up, please let us know.

We have also had referrals from job centres for people who are in long term unemployment due to depression and anxieties.

The benefit of working outside in the natural world is now well documented, and several of our participants have shown a marked increase in confidence on completion of their placements. One person told us that Feed Bristol gave him a lifeline, where he could work positively with others for the first time and forget his troubles. The Trust has now employed Ellie Chapman as our Nature Health and Wellbeing Officer to further develop our programme for Feed Bristol and the Wellbeing Garden at Folly Farm.

Find out about our courses, events, volunteering (including Corporate) or hire from mattcracknell@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk



Seedlings for plug plants



Every Child Wild

Taking children outside into the natural environment provides opportunities that will never be realised at home or in a classroom. In an age where children are spending more time indoors, many are becoming increasingly disconnected with the natural world. Learning Development Manager Kate Marsh wants every child to have a chance to be wild.

JAMES BECK

“**R**esearch has shown that children who spend more time outdoors are healthier, more alert and in possession of better behavioural, cognitive and social skills. There is evidence of benefits to their physical health and wellbeing, as well as improved learning abilities. Getting outdoors is also crucial for the future of our environment; if our younger generation don't have an appreciation of wildlife and nature or understand its value, they may not realise the importance of protecting and conserving it.

Holiday fun

The Trust's learning team has been providing opportunities for young people to learn in the outdoors for years, and to complement this



during the summer holidays, they ran holiday clubs within Bristol to get children outside and exploring the natural world. The clubs were based at Feed Bristol and our newest nature reserve, Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock, located just off the Portway in the Avon Gorge. Great fun was had investigating the wildlife which now calls this site its home! They discovered frogs, slowworms, dragonflies, newts, crickets and grasshoppers as well as building a minibeast mansion. After playing wildlife games and getting creative with natural materials, they toasted marshmallows over a woodland fire. At Feed Bristol children got stuck into forest school activities,

“ I just wanted to thank you for running a fantastic day at the reserve today. My kids both loved it and have talked lots about habitats and all the minibeasts and everything they saw and did today. ”

Parent of holiday club kids

getting muddy growing veg, building shelters and lighting fires!

As autumn sets in there's no better time for youngsters (or the young at heart) to get out in nature - splash in puddles, kick through leaves and play conkers! What are you waiting for? It's time for 'Every Child to be Wild'.

The Wildlife Trusts are launching the Every Child Wild campaign this autumn. See page 30 for more details.

Keep your eye out on the events pages avonwildlifetrust.org.uk for future holiday clubs and outdoor learning opportunities being run by Avon Wildlife Trust.



Grasshopper and grubby hands!



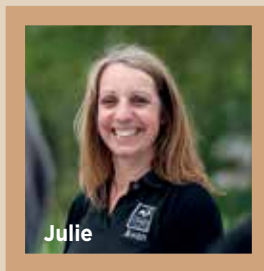
Look what we've achieved this year!

Says Julie Doherty, Trust Community Engagement and Volunteering Manager.

Minibeast palace

“By ‘we’ I mean the wider wildlife trust community, such as the 229 beavers, cubs and scouts who helped to plant 3740 trees at Bennett’s Patch and White’s Paddock nature reserve, and the volunteers who took the time to put up the new polytunnel at the Wellbeing garden at Folly Farm. The people that I have met, worked out problems with, shared stories and a cup of tea with, dug holes and planted with and shared a love of nature with, are the people who really make the difference. Whether it’s a one off volunteering day or a regular commitment, every little bit helps us to provide resources for nature and wellbeing, protect habitats for wildlife and enables nature to provide the ecosystem services that it does so well, if we let it.

Since the beginning of the year I have also worked with an estimated



Julie

159 corporate volunteers, as well as up to 100 staff from Burges Salmon on the My Wild Street project. Giving something

back and working together with colleagues in a completely different setting seems to be becoming more



Lloyds bank staff at Folly Farm

“One tree can absorb as much carbon dioxide in a year as a car produces while driving 26,000 miles, so think of the benefits brought about by planting all those trees right next to the Portway at Bennett’s Patch and White’s Paddock.”

popular and it’s easy to see why. It’s fun, it’s healthy, it’s altruistic so it makes you feel good and strengthens relationships between colleagues – and

the Trust couldn’t achieve as much as it does without their help.

Since January I’ve worked with over 774 other volunteers, which includes the Trust’s local groups who provide trips and talks for their community, look after local sites and promote our work in their area. It also includes volunteers who provide family activities, refreshments and wildlife walks at events, regular gardeners who support each other and help to maintain the Wellbeing garden at Folly Farm, and local people who have offered their time to help wildlife in their area. The generosity of people, the willingness to take action and the deep rooted caring for our planet is something that really stays with me, for without this collective support the West of England wouldn’t be the beautiful place it is today.



Minibeast palace creation

What's happening near you!



From the Trust's earliest days Local Groups have promoted our work through events and practical activities. Find out more – support a local group near you! A full list of contacts can be found below.

Meet a local group member

Kathy Farrell has been an active member of the Keynsham Local Group for several years, and became more involved when she retired in 2013.

Kathy is a keen wildlife photographer and retirement has given her more time for her hobby, as well as for the Trust. She brought social media to the Keynsham Group, which now has its own Facebook page and twitter account, and particularly loves organising their big November



This year Simon Garrett from Bristol Zoo will be talking about Zoos – Past, Present, and Future, and there'll be plenty of hands-on activities for children. The November meetings are hosted by Wellsway School, whose Head of Biology Dave Sage is Chair of the Group. Dave gets the school Green Team involved, so there's a growing involvement of younger people.

The Keynsham Group arranges seven events a year, as well as exciting field outings to Trust nature reserves. "We've been to the crane project at Slimbridge and the great bustard project on Salisbury Plain. We also organise an annual river dip and a dawn chorus." To which 25 people came at 4am, and heard or saw 34 different species. "I like to think of our motto as Educate, Encourage, Enthuse," explained Kathy. Looking at the exciting and varied programme of events the group has come up with yet again, it certainly does just that!

“Last year was amazing – Ed Drewett talked about the magic of bird migration, and the Hawk & Owl Trust came along and flew a kestrel for us in the school hall!”

event, which is aimed at bringing the Trust's message to younger people. "We design it with the whole family in mind," she explained "and for the past two years we've attracted over 100 people each time. Last year was amazing – Ed Drewett talked about the magic of bird migration, and the Hawk & Owl Trust came along and flew a kestrel for us in the school hall!"



Local group and volunteering contacts

Volunteering opportunities at the Trust include:
 Wildlife Action Group (WAG), on Trust reserves – meet at Trust HQ (9.45am Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays)
 Grassland Restoration team (GRT) – meet at Trust HQ (Tuesdays and Thursdays)
 Reserve-based groups at Brown's Folly, Folly Farm, Willsbridge Valley.
 Find out more at avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer

(C)	Cabot	Jill Kempshall	0117 940 0706
(CV)	Chew Valley	Anne-Marie Morris	01275 332534
(GCG)	Gordano Valley	Keith Giles	01275 852627
(K)	Keynsham	Cynthia Wilson	01225 874259
(LA)	Long Ashton	Harry Williams	01275 392690
(P)	Portishead	Cynthia Dorn	01275 843160
(S)	Southwold	Gloria Stephen	01454 310328
(WsM)	Weston-super-Mare	Frank Bowen	01934 632285

What's on – walks, talks and workdays

November

Wednesday 4 - THE LATEST PROJECT, talk by Simon Bell of BBC Natural History Unit Centurion Hotel, Charlton Lane, Midsomer Norton BA3 4BD, 7.30pm (Tea/Coffee available) for 8pm. (CVWG)

Saturday 7 - JUMBLE SALE at Avon Way Hall, Portishead, 2.30 to 4pm. Jumble collection 01275 843160 or 843865. (P)

Sunday 8 - FAMILY OWL PROWL - MEET THE OWLS! Folly Farm, 3pm-5pm talk and walk with Chris Sperring. Adult £10, Adult and child £14, Family £20 (up to two adults and two children). Pre-book: events@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Friday 13 - ZOOS - PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE talk by Simon Garrett, Head of Learning, Bristol Zoo Gardens, with extra activities for all the family. Wellsway School, Keynsham, 7pm-9pm, doors open 6.30pm. FFI Kathy Farrell 0117 986 9722. (K)



Cabot Group at Redland Fair

Friday 18 - Monday 20 FESTIVAL OF THE FUTURE CITY see p 8 ffideasfestival.co.uk/seasons/festival-future-city.

Thursday 19 - FLORA OF THE BRISTOL DOWNS, talk by Mandy Leivers, Avon Gorge & Downs Project, Jubilee Pavilion, Keedwell Hill, Long Ashton, 7.30pm. (LA)

Thursday 26 - BIG CATS SAFARI - KENYA'S MAASAI MARA, talk by Jill Toman. Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna 7.45pm. £2.50 (CV)

Friday 27 - BIRDS & BEASTS OF NAMIBIA & BOTSWANA, talk by Professor Bob Thompson. Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, 7.30pm. £2 (P)

December

Thursday 17 - EELS IN CRISIS, talk by Andrew Kerr, chairman of Sustainable Eel Group. Jubilee Pavilion, Keedwell Hill, Long Ashton, 7.30pm. (LA)

Friday 18 - WINTER SOLSTICE AT FEED BRISTOL, 6pm [ffideasfestival.co.uk](mailto:events@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk)

2016

January

Friday 8 - TALES FROM THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR talk by Peter Brownlee. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham, 7.30pm Adults £2.50, Children £1. (K)

Wednesday 20 - THE MAKING OF THE HUNT special presentation at St George's Bristol see p 7 ffi

Thursday 21 - BORN TO BIRD talk by Mya-Rose Craig, Jubilee Pavilion, Keedwell Hill, Long Ashton, 7.30pm. (LA)

Friday 22 - INSECT LIFE IN THE GORDANO VALLEY talk by Dr Bill Dixon. Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, 7.30pm. £2. (P)

Thursday 28 - NATURAL NORWAY - LIVES OF PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE talk by Andrew Town. Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna 7.45pm. £2.50 i (CV)

February

Friday 12 - FILNORE COMMUNITY WOODLAND, THORNBURY, talk by Jerry Dicker. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham, 7.30pm Adults £2.50, Children £1. (K)

Thursday 18 - NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE talk by Helen Mugridge. Jubilee Pavilion, Keedwell Hill, Long Ashton, 7.30pm (LA)

Sunday 21 - SIGNS OF SPRING AND PEREGRINES WALK led by Liz Wintle. Meet at Water Tower, Stoke Road, Bristol Downs BS9 1FG at 11am. Ffi Liz 0117 909 9667. (K)

Thursday 25 - URBAN PEREGRINES - THE INVENTIVENESS OF WILDLIFE talk by Ed Drewitt. Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna, 7.45pm. £2.50 (CV)

Friday 26 - OTTERS ON MY DOORSTEP talk by Gill Brown. Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, 7.30pm. £2 (P)



Lichens walk

March

Friday 11 - BENNETT'S PATCH & WHITE'S PADDOCK, the Trust's new nature reserve, by Julie Doherty. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham, 7.30pm Adults £2.50, Children £1 (K)

Thursday 17 - BUTTERFLIES OF THE COTSWOLDS, talk by Sue Smith & Sue Dodd. Jubilee Pavilion, Keedwell Hill, Long Ashton, 7.30pm (LA)

Friday 18 - A WALK AROUND HUNGARY AND BULGARIA, talk by Terry Wall. Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, 7.30pm. Entrance £2 (P)

Saturday 19 - BENNETT'S PATCH AND WHITE'S PADDOCK WALK led by warden Tim Clarke. Meet at the Reserve at 11am Minibus from Keynsham. Ffi Liz 0117 909 9667. (K)

April

Friday 1 - QUIZ NIGHT LIVE! Pick a team of four players and come to our general knowledge quiz in aid of the Trust., £2.50 per individual team member. Contact Malcolm on 01454 310328 to book your team's place. The Old Grammar School, High Street, Chipping Sodbury, 7.30pm. (S)

Sunday 24 April - DAWN CHORUS WALK led by Dave Sage, 4.30 am to approx 8am. Meet at The Shallows car park, Saltford, Bristol BS31 3EX. Contact Dave 0117 940 7968. (K)



Birdwatch event

Volunteer workdays

HELLEN HILL RESERVE, BLEADON PURN HILL RESERVE, W-s-M. Work parties and/or wildlife surveying/monitoring. Phone warden Frank Bowen on 01934 632285 for times and meeting point

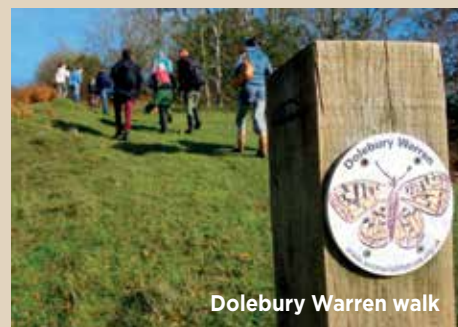
WAPLEY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE General maintenance work. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate, BS37 8US, 10am. (S) Saturday 14 November Sunday 21 February; Sunday 14 February; Wednesday 24 February

TICKENHAM RIDGE. Reserve management. Meet at the reserve (ST 442724) at 10am. (GCG) Sunday 29 November

PRIOR'S WOOD General management work. Meet 10am in car parking area opposite entrance to Children's Hospice. (GCG) Sunday 3 January

See contact box on p 22 for information about joining in with Trust workdays.

Please wear walking or wellington boots and bring gloves.



Dolebury Warren walk

Around the reserves

Burnet moth on thistle at Netcott's Meadow

The old proverb says “make hay while the sun shines” and we’ve been doing exactly that this summer. Haycuts were carried out on our grassland reserves, including Weston Moor, Walton Common, Portbury Wharf, Lawrence Weston Moor and Bennett’s Patch and White’s Paddock

Habitat monitoring is another key summer activity. Condition surveys were carried out on the ditches at **Clapton Moor** and we’ve been undertaking weekly botanical surveys, adder surveys and butterfly transects across our reserves with our volunteer survey teams. The highlight for the surveyors was a fleeting view of a white admiral butterfly at **Dolebury Warren**, which we believe is a first

record for this site. Our Weston-super-Mare volunteer group have been busy clearing ragwort at both **Hellenge Hill** and **Purn Hill** to try to eradicate this plant which can be toxic to livestock. They’ve also been carrying out fencing repairs to keep the livestock contained on site. Our Wildlife Action Group (WAG) and Gordano volunteer groups have completed sections of traditional dry stone wall at both **Dolebury Warren**



White admiral butterfly

MIKE DIMERY



Moor End Spout - a Coronation Meadow

and **Tickenham Hill**, which were started five summers ago. Volunteers have also been repairing steps and bridges at both **Weston Big Wood** and **Prior’s Wood**, where the block of beech that is adjacent to the clear-felled larch will be thinned this autumn.

Coronation Meadows

In the last 75 years wildflower-rich meadows in Britain have decreased by a staggering 97%. This has impacted on the abundance of wildflowers, butterflies, bees and birds.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the Queen’s Coronation a project was established across the UK to increase the number of wildflower meadows. The idea was to use existing meadows to act as donation sites where seeds could be harvested to regenerate



Adder at Hellenge Hill

meadows where the rich biodiversity had been lost.

The Trust's first project was to use **Netcott's Meadow** to donate seed to a receptor site managed by Nailsea Environmental Wildlife Trust at Moor End Spout. We're now in the second year of working on this site where we've prepared the ground harrowing



Grown at Feed Bristol site!

one third of the site, then cutting and transporting green hay from **Netcott's Meadow**.

This spring we supplemented the seed laid last year with one thousand plug plants individually planted by our WAG volunteers. The plug plants were propagated at our Feed Bristol site from seed collected at **Netcott's Meadow** last year.



Volunteer warden Gill Brown

This year we've started our second Coronation Meadow at **Folly Farm** where we've transferred green hay from one of our top fields, Great Wall Close to one of the lower meadows, Great Folly Mead.



French student Idalie Sallerin spent her summer volunteering with the Trust's reserves team, and looks back happily on her time as a green volunteer

“ What a great feeling it is to be waking up in the morning knowing you will spend a good day! That's exactly how I felt during the few months I spent volunteering in Bristol.

For a French student in agronomy and environmental sciences, Avon Wildlife Trust was the perfect organization to both practice English and learn about wildlife, nature conservation, organic horticulture and so much more. From seed sowing and harvesting at Feed Bristol to drystone walling and scything with the Wildlife Action Group, through seed scattering and pulling out thistles and ragworts with the Grassland Restoration Team, I participated in a lot of different tasks. In addition to physical activity and fresh air, I had the chance to learn and develop my ID skills on butterflies, wildflowers, trees, birds, orchids and edible or medicinal plants, and to take part in different surveys and walks. It allowed me to have several marvellous experiences such as: catching multicolour butterflies and letting them go, waiting in front of a badger's sett while a deer appears behind you, walking through an enchanting display of bluebells, observing the flight of barn owls and looking for newts in the light of an electric torch.

Indeed, volunteering with the Trust was also an excellent way to visit the region and discover the charming English countryside. I only had to jump in the minibus and there I was, a cup of tea in one hand, a tool in the other, listening to the schedule of the day. Whether it was sunny or rainy, each day took place in a good atmosphere surrounded by beautiful landscapes and nice people. And I must confess it was sunny most of the times!

It was a different country, a different language, a different culture but despite that I always felt comfortable, whether I was in the community garden or in a nature reserve, with officers, managers, growers, team leaders or other volunteers like me. That means a lot for me.

To all the people of Avon Wildlife Trust, I thank them for giving me the opportunity of such a good and precious experience, for their warm welcome, their natural kindness, their enthusiasm and spontaneity, the share of their knowledge with passion and teaching skills and their indulgence for my first softball game ! ”

Volunteering on conservation projects is a great way to make a real difference to wildlife, to get fit and healthy and to meet some wonderful people. Volunteering opportunities at the Trust include:

- Grassland Restoration team (GRT) - meet at Trust HQ (Tuesdays and Thursdays)
- Wildlife Action Group (WAG), on Trust reserves - meet at Trust HQ (9.45am Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays)
- Reserve-based groups at Brown's Folly, Folly Farm, Willsbridge Valley, Purn and Hellenge Hill (W-s-M) and the Gordano Valley Group
- Feed Bristol in Stapleton and Feed Folly at Folly Farm Centre
- Communities and Nature, in Twerton and Whiteway, Bath

Find out more at avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer

Seasonal stroll

Brown's Folly

Looking towards Bath

Standing high above the River Avon with commanding views towards Bath, Brown's Folly has ancient woodland, woodland glades, open grassland and a network of caves originally created by the quarrying of Bath stone. Discover this special place for yourself on a walk through ancient woodlands and over delightful downland. Whatever the season, there's delight to be found at Brown's Folly.



Great spotted woodpecker

DARIN SMITH



Silver hairstreak butterfly

ANDY SANDS: NATUREPL.COM



Dead man's fingers fungi

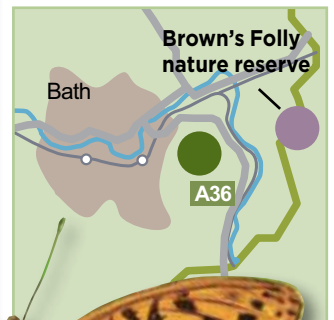
for bat caves and Bath asparagus



OS grid ref: ST797 664
 Walk details
 duration: 1.5 hrs
 grade: easy

Key to map

- walk
- point of interest
- reserve boundary
- P** car park



Silver-washed fritillary butterfly

Look out for:



Bath asparagus



Greater horseshoe bat



Wild thyme

Following the path from the car park, follow the track north (1) along a route known locally as Fluester's Road (1) which was built in the 1860s by a local quarry master to cart stone from the mines beneath Brown's Folly to the river for local distribution. To the right is an area of coppice (2) good for woodland plants in the spring. The ride has been widened (3) to encourage breeding birds and foraging bats. Further on, look to your left (4), behind the trees, for large rock exposures – the oolitic limestone known locally as Bath Stone which was quarried here since Roman times. The disused quarries in the reserve provide excellent conditions for roosting bats. The woodland in autumn is full of the colours of leaves, nuts, berries and fungi.

At the end of the ride take the left-hand path up on to the grassland (5) which is full of common spotted orchids, salad-burnet and wild thyme in summer. Take in the spectacular views of the city of Bath from this area (6). In the valley you can see the three main transport routes for the mined stone – the river, the Kennet and Avon Canal, and the Great Western Railway.

Behind you, high on the ridge, is the Folly, now owned by the Folly Fellowship. It was built in 1848 by a local landowner, Colonel Wade Brown, to give employment to his tenants during the agricultural depression of that time. Follow the path back out of the grassland through another metal kissing gate and into the woodland, passing several grilled-off caves (7) – access for bats only!

Some paths are muddy in winter. Take extreme caution when approaching rock faces. Mines must not be entered.

How to find the reserve

Location: Prospect Place, Bathford, Bath BA1 7TW

Public transport: go to traveline.org.uk

Bike: go to sustrans.org.uk

Car: from the A363 turn into Bathford Hill. Take the steep right-hand turn into Prospect Place. The car park is near the brow of the hill.

Find more walks on Avon Wildlife Trust's other nature reserves – avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves-sites/walks



Guest member

Amy Coulthard

Amy and her daughter

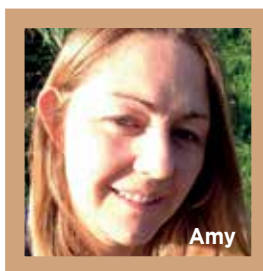
ELEANOR REAST

Amy is Team Leader of the Avon Conservation Team, Natural England, and has been working with Avon Wildlife Trust to bring our Brown's Folly nature reserve into favourable condition through active management since 2006. We asked Amy to tell us more about her work and how she became involved in conservation.

“**G**rowing up, I spent summers camping around the UK, most memorably in the South Hams, The Lake District and the Outer Hebrides. My Dad was a dedicated walker and a fantastic story teller, bringing landscapes to life with stories about the geology or local legends. I was outdoors a lot and spent time at my uncle's farm in the Chew Valley area. I don't remember a time when wildlife, landscapes and the people who shape them were not important to me.

My first job in conservation was with the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency working on Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) as a cartographer. After the Foot and Mouth crisis I moved into an adviser role supporting farmers with Countryside Stewardship in Herefordshire and Worcestershire who were recovering and restocking their farms. I joined the

Avon team in 2002 and when Natural England was formed in 2006 I had the opportunity to become more involved with protected sites in the Bath area, and this included Brown's Folly. Natural England supported the Trust by providing advice and grants through the Environmental Stewardship Scheme. At the beginning it felt like an impossible task but the combination of funding, dedicated trust staff and passionate volunteers have resulted in a significant positive change to the site. We are now working towards achieving favourable condition by 2020. In my new role I will be leading the Avon Conservation Team, managing staff who are establishing the Somerset,



Amy

Dorset and Severn stretches of the England Coast Path, delivering Agri-Environment schemes and protected sites.

My hope for the future? That everyone will value the natural environment as being fundamental to our lives. It provides the air we breathe, water we drink and food we eat as well as controlling pests and climate. It is critical to our emotional and physical health providing tranquillity, fun and exercise. Taking care of the natural environment is not something that we can do only if we have the time or resources. It is something we must do to live.

Amy's favourite local wild place

Brown's Folly for the bats, far reaching views, species rich calcareous grassland and of course the stories attached to it.

Brown's Folly is our Seasonal Stroll - see p 26.

Folly Farm's summer abundance



Here at Folly Farm we've had an action-packed summer, and as autumn gets underway, we look back at the highlights.

Folly Farm Centre is the place where the Trust's learning team delivers high quality learning experiences for schoolchildren. Before the summer holidays set in, we welcomed 3,500 pupils on both residential and day visits. They enjoyed many activities including pond dipping, watching badger families playing at dusk, and setting bait traps to capture and study the nocturnal wildlife that lives in our 250 acres of nature reserve.

3500 schoolchildren visited

It's lovely to receive the letters from the children who thank us for having such a great time.

We took part in the annual Big Butterfly Count and logged an impressive 18 different species in the gardens and nature reserve including lots of painted lady butterflies.

We enjoyed another summer of weddings, congratulating 20 couples and welcoming some 1900 guests, to join them in their celebrations.

The Wellbeing garden continues to bloom and grow, providing nearly 10kg of fresh berries, 15kg of cherry tomatoes, 10kg of courgettes, 100 pollinator-friendly plug plants for our flower borders, and dozens of salad

leaves for our kitchens. Not forgetting three enormous homegrown melons! The upkeep of the garden is down to the hard work of Emma and her willing band of volunteers, who have amassed over 100 hours of time spent nurturing food and proving that wildlife-friendly food growing is very fruitful.

Our nature reserve takes a lot of looking after, and thanks to the Folly volunteers, who visit us every week to lop, chop, prune, mend, and fix in the ancient woods and wildflower meadows, they've spent a collective total of 700 hours keeping the conditions just right for wildlife, and maintaining the access-for-all trail, so all our visitors can enjoy the woodland.

Another group of valued volunteers are the corporate clients who use our

20 couples tied the knot

conference facilities for business and then spend the rest of the day 'giving something back' by volunteering. So far this summer we have had four groups giving us a total of 150 hours, tending and planting flower beds and trimming our reed beds.

We also welcomed our very own three little piglets who are enjoying



churning up their paddock and welcoming guests! Alongside the sheep and cows they've put the farm back into Folly.

Lastly, the Centre has saved carbon throughout the summer, by utilising the buildings' eco-features including:

15kg cherry tomatoes grown

solar powered electricity; rainwater harvesting; low food mile meals and an electric car charging point for guests. A busy summer indeed!

Folly Farm Centre is available for school visits, residential and non-residential conferences, weddings and overnight stays. For more information please phone the team on 01275 331 590 or email info@follyfarm.org

Welcome



I used to love reading to my children at bedtime. The song about Mike TV's fate in Charlie and Chocolate Factory was a favourite. In it Dahl vents his wrath on the hated television: "They sit and stare and stare and sit until they're hypnotised by it". The intensity grows until he shouts "IT ROTTS THE SENSES IN THE HEAD! IT KILLS IMAGINATION DEAD!"

What would Roald Dahl think now? Not only does the average child watch 17 hours of TV a week; they spend 20 hours online.

People have probably always looked at the next generation's lifestyle with horror, so as I join the ranks of parents struggling with screen addiction I try desperately to be objective. The facts are that children only roam 300 yards from the house, not six miles as my grandparents' generation did, and 30% have never climbed a tree.

That we are not designed for this is borne out by shocking evidence of the near incurability of serious obesity, and terrifying graphs of mental health admissions for children and young people. We need love, support and companionship, but the need to be close to nature is in our DNA too.

Your Wildlife Trust is working with as many children as it can to reverse these trends: in schools, in parks, in wild places. A 'wild' childhood is good for health, wellbeing and nature. We want every child to be wild. Your support as a member is critical in helping us to reach this ambition. Thank you.

Stephanie Hilborne OBE
Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts

Together The Wildlife Trusts have more than 800,000 members. We are the largest voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving all the UK's habitats and species. Contact us on enquiry@wildlifetrusts.org or 01636 677711. To join your Wildlife Trust, visit wildlifetrusts.org/joinus. **Natural World, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1WT.** Editor Rupert Paul **Communications officer** Emma Websdale. **Layout editor** Dan Hilliard

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facebook.com/wildlifetrusts



Research shows that experience of nature has huge benefits for children. This is London Wildlife Trust's Camley Street, a few hundred yards from Kings Cross

EMMA WEBSDALE

Every child wild



How can we ensure future generations grow up with a love of wildlife?

We believe children need to connect with, love and care for nature – it's good for them, and it's good for nature, too. Our *Every Child Wild* campaign will raise awareness of the gap between children and the natural world and what we can do about this.

Together we must find the solutions: who else will look after our wildlife tomorrow?

How you can help

- Take a child you care for somewhere wild to play and explore.
- Join your local children's nature club with your Wildlife Trust – make friends, discover wildlife and get muddy!
- Tell us what you think needs to happen at #everychildwild
- Continue to support your Wildlife Trust's work with local schools and children through your membership

wildlifetrusts.org/everychildwild

“Contact with nature is critical to the personal development of our children.”

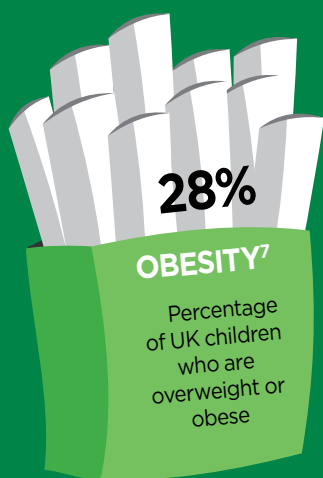
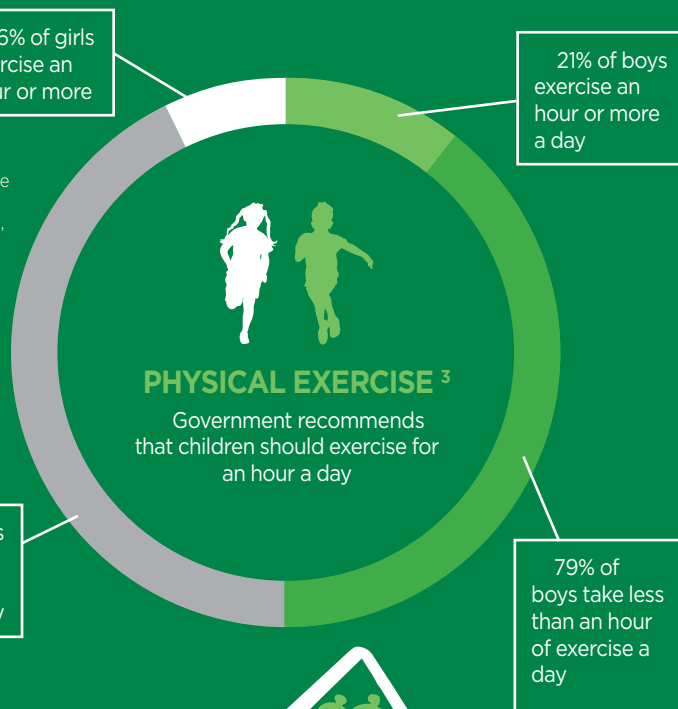
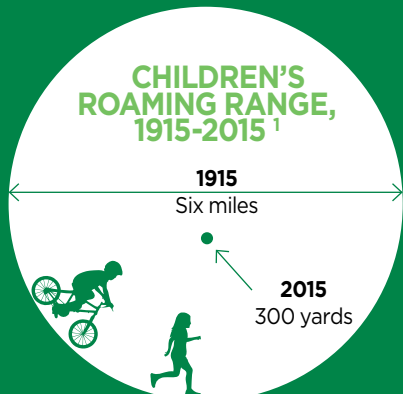
The Wildlife Trusts will have reached more than 400,000 children this year, but there are 800,000 children in every school year. If nature makes children happier and healthier, then shouldn't we be doing more of it? An overwhelming body of evidence (see opposite page) suggests we should.

“Contact with nature should not be the preserve of the privileged,” says Sir David Attenborough. “It is critical to the personal development of our children. We will be physically, mentally and spiritually impoverished if they are deprived of contact with the natural world.”

Let's create a future generation which loves wildlife – and which, when it grows up, will cherish and conserve it.

Nature versus modern childhood

REFERENCES: 1 Derbyshire, 2007. 3 Department of Health, 2011. 3, 7 Health and social care information centre, 2013. In Bragg, et al., 2014. 4, 5 Moss, 2012. 6 National Trust, 2008. 8 Wells, 2000; Wells and Evans, 2003, in Bragg, et al., 2014. MacKerron et al., mappiness.org, 2013.

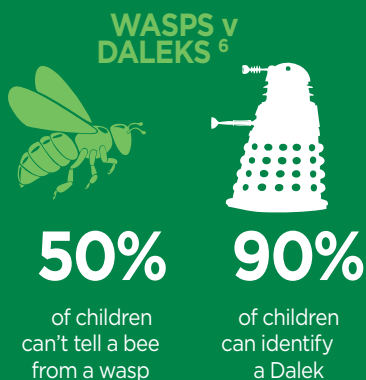


Fewer than 10% of children play in natural areas. When today's adults were children the figure was 40%



WALKING TO SCHOOL⁵

7 and 8 year-olds



SCREEN TIME⁴



What The Wildlife Trusts are doing to help

248 Wildlife Watch groups nationwide, giving 10,669 children experiences of nature each year

150,000 junior members of The Wildlife Trusts

193,922

people a year (mostly children) attend Wildlife Trust forest schools, workshops and activities

271,331 people visit a Wildlife Trust nature reserve as part of a school, college or society. There are over 15,000 of these visits every year, the vast majority by young people

300,000 pupils and students spent time with The Wildlife Trusts in 2014

11,000 events a year are run by The Wildlife Trusts - the vast majority family focused

OUR OUTDOOR LEADERS

456 environmental educators
1,487 volunteers devoted to Wildlife Watch and other children's work

What next for Nature Act?

Pre-election campaign won't result in legislation yet, but it has borne fruit

You may remember our pre-election campaign for a Nature and Wellbeing Act. More than 10,000 people and a range of organisations supported a joint Wildlife Trust and RSPB e-action, creating a combined and passionate voice for nature's recovery. Thank you.

Every MP in England was asked to support the Act. We believe that this helped ensure there was reference to nature, and the need for its recovery,

in the current government's manifesto as well as those of the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green parties.

The Conservatives have promised to produce a 25-year plan for nature's recovery. This falls short of an Act, but it gives the government the opportunity to produce a far-reaching plan. The Wildlife Trusts will be watching all the way, and will contribute to its development. We

will keep you informed of any opportunities for input.

We continue to talk to MPs from all parties, pointing out that nature's recovery is vital not only for its own sake, but because of what it contributes to our lives, our society and our economy. More than 25 organisations think the same, and continue to support our campaign.

■ Learn more: wildlifetrusts.org/naturewellbeingact



Did you know?

In 2011 the scientifically robust National Ecosystem Assessment said society will be wealthier if we rebuild ecosystems degraded during the 20th century

Abundant wildlife is the best indicator of a healthy local environment

100th chick for Rutland's ospreys

This summer the Rutland Osprey project – a partnership between Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and Anglian Water – saw its hundredth chick fledge. Four generations of Rutland birds were at the reserve for the first time, and 15 young birds fledged from eight nests.



The chick prepares for its first flight

Worcestershire rivers to

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust has secured £80,000 for catchment-scale plans to improve water quality and wildlife habitats in Bromsgrove, Redditch and the Teme Valley. The Trust, which has years of experience in river restoration, will work with local authorities and communities to install sustainable drainage, protect river banks, create fish refuges, monitor wildlife and establish wetlands. The funds come thanks to the Catchment Based Approach project.



LYNDESE YOUNG



Customers and Wildlife Trust staff appreciate VHF

Vine House Farm donates £1m

A huge thanks to award-winning bird food producer Vine House Farm, whose donations to The Wildlife Trusts have just passed the £1,000,000 mark. This incredible sum is the result of a partnership which began in 2007. Since then, the award-winning family business in Lincolnshire has donated five per cent of each bird food sale to each customer's local Wildlife Trust.

VHF founder Nicholas Watts has been a pioneer of wildlife-friendly farming since the 1980s. Thanks to his generosity we have been able to protect and restore more areas for nature, and to inspire more people to experience wildlife first-hand.

■ More on wildlifetrusts.org/blog/vinehousefarm



VINE HOUSE FARM

Not every Lincolnshire farm has marsh harriers

improve



Fish such as grayling will benefit from cleaner, more varied water flows

Back on the Meon

It's the UK's biggest water vole reintroduction – and it's working. This summer 190 animals were released on the River Meon in Hampshire. They join 450 released at Titchfield Haven in 2013 and 600 further upstream in 2014. Volunteer monitoring shows the voles are breeding at all three sites, sometimes more than a mile upstream.

The project is led by the South Downs National Park

Authority, the EA, Natural England and Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. It has turned around the factors which wiped the voles out in the Meon Valley: habitat loss, pollution and predation by non-native American mink. The improvements will benefit the whole river ecosystem.

"The voles haven't been able to return naturally to the Meon, so they need a little extra help," said the Trust's Ali Morse.



Have river. Will breed

JAMIE HALL

Ted Smith 1920-2015

Ted Smith CBE, founder of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and a leading light in the Wildlife Trusts movement, has died. He saw the need to conserve our country's coast, heaths, meadows and woodland as early as the 1940s, and was widely recognised for his services to conservation. In 2012 he was presented with The Wildlife Trusts' Centenary Award by Sir David Attenborough.



Ted was an inspiration to generations of conservationists

SARAH PITT

Scottish beavers produce two kits



SCOTTISH WT

See mum and her three month-old kits on the video

Video from the Scottish Beaver Trial at Knapdale shows two young kits playing by their mother – a first for the project, which aims to bring back beavers after 400 years. Led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, the Trial finished this year. The Scottish Environment Minister will now decide whether the beavers can stay.

■ Video: [youtube/gli8pWaOIBI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gli8pWaOIBI)

More MCZs please

England's network of Marine Conservation Zones is taking shape. But, as Maya Plass points out, it can't properly protect all the wildlife in our seas until it's ecologically complete

I was recently asked, "Why do you particularly love the British coastline?" Where to begin? Common dolphins leaping towards a boat of Lundy day-trippers. Frolicking with seals off the Farne Islands. Staring in awe at tiny nudibranchs while diving in Devon. Finding Montagu crabs with impressed school children. I could go on.

We have an incredible variety of coastline and creatures in our waters. But we're not just lucky to have all of this. We actually *need* healthy, diverse seas for our commercial fisheries, our tourism, our economy, our sense of identity, even our health and happiness.

We need to ensure our children continue to enjoy all of these benefits. And that means setting aside enough parts of the sea to safeguard all our marine life.

The UK's marine plants and animals are not just a vast collection of weird or wonderful species. They are all joined

together by invisible threads through the food they eat, the nutrients they rely on and the habitats they live in or visit. If these threads became visible we would see what a wonderfully complex and connected ecosystem they share.

So to conserve the highly mobile white-beaked dolphins, for example, takes more than just protecting the open water they swim in. We need to protect the fish, crustaceans and molluscs that they feed on – and the habitats which are essential for their survival too.

Moreover, we need more than one patch of a particular habitat. Should an oil spill occur, we have then still got a similar, healthy, protected habitat not too far away which could, in time, re-seed

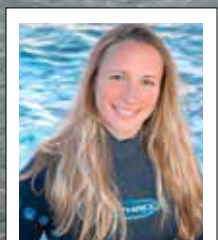
the damaged area.

This vitally important patchwork of habitats around the British Isles, protecting a huge array of species, is what we call an 'ecologically coherent network of Marine Conservation Zones'. At the moment there are 27 designated areas, and that is simply not enough. We need to follow the recommendations of scientists and fill in the gaps.

And the protection must be more than a shaded area on a map. It must mean protection from activities which would damage the quality of the sites. We need to monitor the sites so that we can measure how well we are protecting them. And we need to explain to others why our seas are so very important.

“ We only have 27 designated Marine Conservation Zones, and that is simply not enough ”

The little-known white-beaked dolphin ranges widely, but has only two special areas where it breeds and feeds. They should be protected



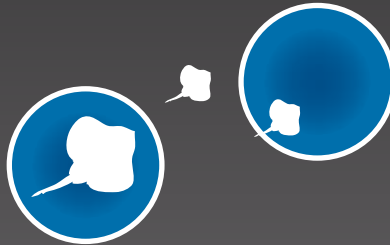
Maya Plass
A marine ecologist and guest presenter on BBC Springwatch, Maya runs *Learn to Sea* in South Devon.

JOHN CARNELL, NORTUMBRIA MAMMAL GROUP

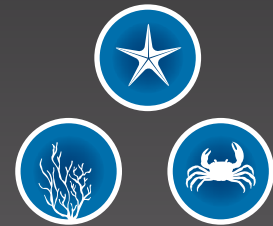
Marine Protected Areas can only work if they are:



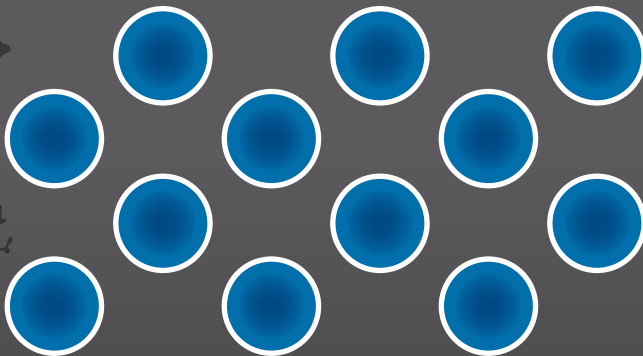
1. Big enough



2. Close enough



3. Representative



4. Numerous enough



5. Actively protected

England's missing MCZs

So far the Government has approved 27 Marine Conservation Zones in English waters. A second tranche is expected late in 2015.

This map shows some of the biggest gaps that still remain:

1. Irish Sea mud habitats
2. Offshore Wales
3. White-beaked dolphin areas
4. English Channel seagrass



IT'S A DEVOLVED PROCESS
This map shows potential Marine Conservation Zones in English and Secretary of State waters, where the process of designating protected areas is partially complete. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own processes. Full update on wildlifetrusts.org/MPA.

■ Add your voice:

Help us complete the network of Marine Conservation Zones: sign up to our mailing list. You can also get up-to-date information on progress towards a complete network: <http://wtru.st/ACTION4OURSEAS>

10 places to see

Salt marshes and estuaries

1 Farlington Marshes Hants & IOW WT

A coastal grazing marsh and lagoon which attracts thousands of brent geese in winter, and large numbers of shoveler, wigeon, pintail and teal. You can also see short-eared owls and peregrines.

Where is it? Between Cosham and Havant S of A27. Grid SU 685 045.

2 West Williamston WT of S&W Wales

Tidal creeks and saltmarsh, limestone outcrops and woodland. Expect curlew, little grebe, grey heron,

shelduck, mute swan, comorant and oystercatcher. The woodland has tawny owls, wrens and polecats.

Where is it? W of West Williamston, S Pembrokeshire. Grid SN033 058

3 South Walney Cumbria WT

A shingle island with pools and intertidal areas, and lots of waders and wildfowl. Many of the 250 species recorded are stopping to rest and refuel: Wheatear, redstart, willow warbler and goldcrest.

Where is it? S of Barrow in Furness. Grid SD 225 620

4 Fingringhoe Wick Essex Wildlife Trust

One of the finest saltmarsh panoramas in the region, and just extended with a sea wall breach. It's a haven for knot, dunlin, grey/golden plover, avocet and godwits. Raptors, wildfowl and divers too.

Where is it? Visitor centre is on S Green Rd, Fingringhoe, CO5 7DN. Grid TM 048 193.

5 Welwick Saltmarsh Yorkshire WT

Marsh with extensive tidal creeks. Look for short-eared owl, merlin and marsh harrier, and hundreds of curlew, grey

plover, knot and dunlin feeding on the mudflats.

You're restricted to a path so binoculars are essential. The saltmarsh itself is dangerous.

Where is it? N bank of the Humber: Side Lane, Welwick, Patrington, Hull HU12 0UX.

6 Montrose Basin Scottish Wildlife Trust

The vast mudflats attract thousands of waders feeding on lugworm, ragworm, snails and shrimp. If the tide is out, watch from the visitor centre (binoculars provided). Arrive at dawn or dusk to see up to 80,000 pink-footed geese.

IAN CAMERON-REID

STEPHEN PROFFER

Saltmarshes are special!

- 250-300 species of invertebrates occur on saltmarshes - 150 of them uniquely
- A cubic metre of mud or sand flat can hold over 1000 worms, plus huge numbers of molluscs

■ This is why these areas are so attractive to more than 1.5m overwintering and roosting birds in the UK

- Marshes easily absorb wave and storm energy, making them natural coastal defences
- They also may be an important carbon store, and have a role in reducing climate change

Good times to visit: winter for geese and waders, spring for thrift, summer for sea lavender



Where is it? On A92 30 miles N of Dundee. Main car park is at the Old Mill, grid NO669 591.

7 Dawlish Inner Warren Devon Wildlife Trust

A long spit of sand curving across the mouth of the river Exe. Thousands of dunlins, curlews, ringed plovers, black-tailed godwits and shelduck gather to feed in the mud, moving gradually closer to the bird hide before the rising waters drive them off.

Where is it? 1 mile E of Dawlish, post code EX7 ONF. Grid SX 981 787.

8 Ribble Estuary Lancs Wildlife Trust

A hotspot for wintering wildfowl: more than 250,000 overwintering ducks, geese, swans and waders are an astonishing sight. The Wildlife Trusts are working to get the estuary designated as a Marine Conservation Zone.

Where is it? NE of Southport, off the A565.

9 Rye Harbour Sussex Wildlife Trust

An internationally important wetland of shingle, saltmarsh, saline lagoons, grazing marsh, freshwater gravel pits and reedbeds. 280+ bird species recorded; most famous are the breeding colonies of little, common and Sandwich terns.

Where is it? 20 miles SW of Ashford on A259. Post code TN31 7TX, grid TQ 942 189.

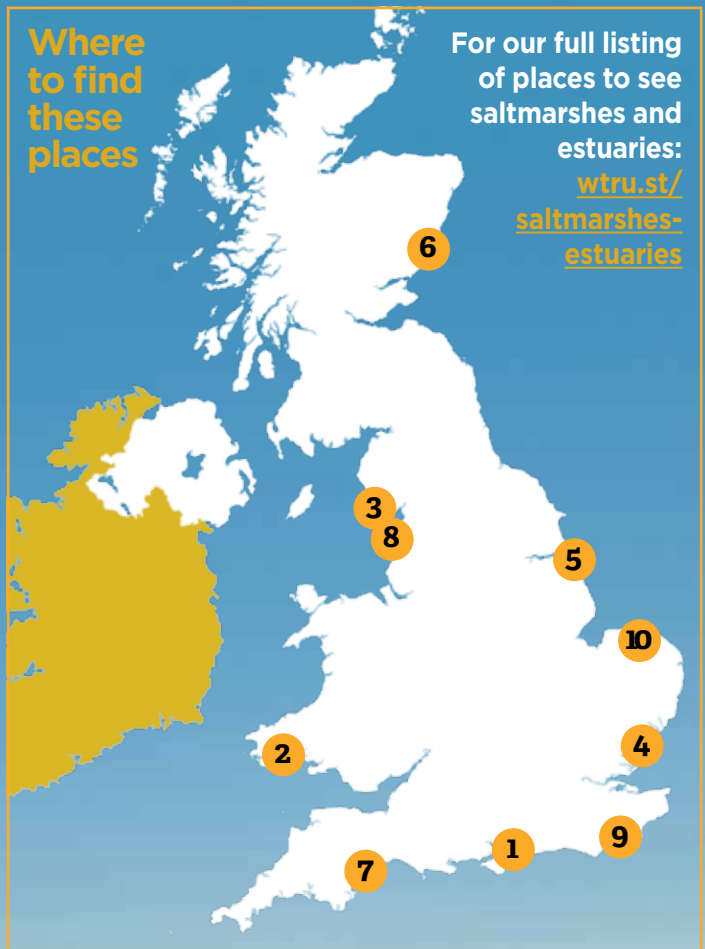
10 Salthouse Marshes Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Shingle ridge (on the Norfolk coast path), reed-fringed dykes, marshland and shallow pools. There's a huge variety of birds on the sea, shingle and inland marshes, plus common and grey seals.

Where is it? Between Weybourne and Cley. Use Salthouse Beach car park. Grid TG 083 443.

■ Access/transport details for each site: wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/reserves

Where to find these places



For our full listing of places to see saltmarshes and estuaries: wtru.st/saltmarshes-estuaries

Winter at Farlington Marshes, a reserve for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust



A ONE-MINUTE GUIDE TO

Saltmarshes

Saltmarshes develop over mud flats, where pioneer salt-tolerant plants gradually establish when flows are slow. Regular tides deposit more mud and the marsh gradually accumulates around roots and stems. Many UK saltmarshes are eroding due to rising seas and increasing storms.



Salt marsh creeks flow from the sea upwards to the land

MATTHEW ROBERTS

Identify Autumn fungi

Autumn brings woodland walks and fungi forays – below we highlight six species of spectacular fungi to look out for.



Ear fungus – a reddish brown fungus shaped like an ear, jelly-like in texture when fresh and hard and crusty when dry – it can revive on re-moistening. Commonly found on dead elder.



Stump puffball – these suggest unopened ‘mushrooms’ but release their spores via an opening in the cap and not from their gills. It grows in clusters on tree stumps.



Honey fungus – a very common parasite of trees and the bane of both the forester and gardener, it typically forms huge tufts of honey-coloured ‘mushrooms’ at the base of the host tree.



Sulphur tuft – also forms large tufts at the base of trees, but this species feeds on dead wood only. The caps are much smaller than the honey fungus and are bright sulphur yellow in colour.



Scarlet hood – a bright red species, one of a group of ‘wax caps’ typically found in grazed meadows. They can be clearly spotted as they occur in swarms of scarlet caps in autumn.



Earth star – this is one of our most distinctive looking fungi with a central puffball like sphere, collared with pointed wings giving it the star name. Look for it in deciduous woodlands.

Useful fungi guides We recommend books with good illustrations and descriptions such as:

Mushrooms and other Fungi – Roger Phillips (Pan 1981)
Mushrooms and Toadstools of Britain and Europe
 – R Courtecuisse and B Duhem (Collins Field Guide 1996)

What’s in a name? In the past the word mushroom denoted fungi that was edible, and a toadstool was most definitely not! Nowadays, however, use of these words is archaic and mushrooms and toadstools are known as gill fungi.

Note: although the above fungi are not poisonous, never eat fungi without consulting an expert.

PHOTOS: SCARLET HOOD AND EARTH STAR: IAN CHAMBERS; HONEY FUNGUS AND SULPHUR TUFT: GATEHOUSE STUDIO; EAR FUNGUS AND STUMP PUFFBALL: JUSTIN SMITH

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MARK SHARMAN

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Postscript



“ I recently saw the most exquisite bit of tapestry. Three square metres of front-garden lawn on a housing estate transformed into a thing of beauty: a mixed sward of biodiversity almost without grass, a weave of texture and shades of green. ”

Says Trust Chair, Roz Kidman Cox

Green woodpecker

“ **B**y comparison, the shaved grass frontages next door were barren eyesores. Yet one small innovation can beget another. So come spring, when the sward is dotted with daisy, cinquefoil, speedwell, buttercup and bugle flowers, the neighbours may reconsider their notions of lawn respectability and make their own tapestry features - ‘lawns’ that will need relatively little mowing. Then a patchwork of insect feeding-stations will run down the street.

Creating such showcases of inspiration is a way to contribute to the rewilding of the urban landscape - it’s volunteering at home, if you like. And Bristol-based Trust members can inspire others by logging contributions on the interactive My Wild City website map. Ones to do now could be insect hibernation hotels of hollow stems and old bamboo or artistic mini log piles.

The potential of gardens to provide nature-rich stepping-stones through the built environment is huge. Lawns especially have potential. Probably 60 per cent of gardens in Bristol and Bath comprise lawn, and a huge amount of effort is invested in keeping it relatively sterile. Yet there are simple ways to cut down on this time and money by



Roz

creating grassland features of beauty.

Mow only paths and glades, leaving creatively shaped islands of grasses that will be a summer feature and support communities of insects. Introduce plugs of a few key nectar-rich wildflowers into the grass and create mini-meadows for the spring. Embrace anthills - tilled mounds of soil that can sprout marjoram and thyme - and consider ants as ecosystem engineers increasing the soil porosity, as plant protectors removing herbivores and as seed dispersers (the violets in a glade in my ‘lawn’ have all been spread by ants).

Many birds will benefit from the seeds and insects in your rewilded space, even in winter. A green woodpecker has been a regular mid-winter visitor to my ant-grass area. And letting teasel grow into the long grass guarantees goldfinches on the seedheads.

My goal for spring is to lay down a flower-sward quilt. Just a couple of square metres will be enough to create what I’m going to call my Wild City bee lawn. ”

R Kidman Cox