

Wildlife

Issue 105 • SPRING 2016



Avon

Nature and wellbeing

Communities and nature

Five ways to wellbeing

Spring songsters

Tune into urban bird song

Vital volunteers

Green is good for you



Includes
UK news &
stories

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

Welcome



Dr Bevis Watts
Chief Executive,
Avon Wildlife Trust

Bevis Watts

“ Dear member

The Trust is focused on continuing the momentum we've achieved in engaging thousands more people with our work, whilst also putting our full efforts into delivering our Vision 2020 plans. An important part of this is to show more people the value of nature to people and support people in experiencing and reconnecting to nature for their own wellbeing. The more people we can engage in the Trust's projects the more people will value their own time spent in nature and positive effects it has on us all. As Sir David Attenborough once said "no one will care about what they have never experienced". That is why inspiring people to take even small actions for wildlife and spend some time in nature is an important part of our work.

It is also the reason we are so pleased to unveil in this issue Natural Estates, a new £1m project over five years to work with Housing Association communities across the former county of Avon and Gloucestershire, in partnership with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. The Trust led the bid to secure the project with a vision of creating more urban refuges for wildlife in the areas of land owned by Housing Associations. This will also deliver benefits for those communities in supporting young people becoming more active and learning new skills, as well as providing natural areas they can spend time in.

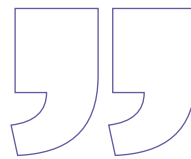
The Trust is a leader in doing such innovative work, and we celebrate the success of our Communities and Nature project over the last three years. We also look forward with our 30 Days Wild campaign, which aims to get everyone spending more time in nature and learning about wildlife.

Mobilising hundreds of people to get active in nature and help create Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock nature reserve was a huge success and that is something we are trying to do more of, whether through working with local communities to improve their own green spaces for wildlife, or major landscape scale work like that we've just started to restore ditches and rhines across the North Somerset Levels.

Sadly, this is my last magazine as the Trust's Chief Executive which has been a real privilege. I give some reflections and future thoughts later (pages 8 & 9). I will continue to support the Trust wherever I can and thank you to everyone who has supported the Trust and me personally over the past three and half years. The Trust team deliver amazing work with limited resources and they deserve great support.

Have a Songful Spring!

Best wishes and thanks



TOM MARSHALL

Bluebells

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 17,500 members and 1,500 volunteers, the Trust cares for 36 nature reserves, it runs educational and community programmes, advises landowners, and campaigns on issues that threaten wildlife habitats.

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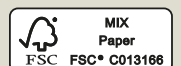
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Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for the latest news and events. Please share your wildlife pictures and experiences!



/avonwt



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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!



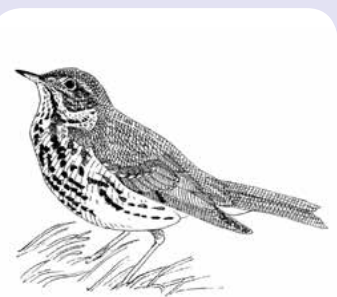
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Proud Songsters

*The thrushes sing as the sun is going,
And the finches whistle in ones and pairs,
And as it gets dark loud nightingales
In bushes
Pipe, as they can when April wears,
As if all Time were theirs.*

*These are brand new birds of twelve
months' growing,
Which a year ago, or less than twain,
No finches were, nor nightingales,
Nor thrushes,
But only particles of grain,
And earth, and air, and rain.*

Thomas Hardy 1840-1928



WOLF



Severn Estuary tidal lagoons

Consideration for estuary ecosystem essential

The company behind the world's first tidal lagoon at Swansea Bay in South Wales, Tidal Lagoon Power (TLP), have plans for three more lagoons in the Severn Estuary at Cardiff, Newport and Bridgwater Bay. Although the building of the tidal lagoon in Swansea has been delayed by a year, TLP are pressing ahead with their future projects.

The Wildlife Trusts were engaged with TLP throughout their process to develop the Swansea lagoon and are already in discussions regarding their other sites. TLP's further projects are in the early stages of development, with much work to be done before we fully understand the impacts.

As the impacts of the Severn schemes are irreversible once built, it is vital that lessons are learnt from the Swansea experience in advance of design and construction of further lagoons. We believe that renewable developments should be using the

right technology in the right place.

The Severn Estuary is of outstanding significance in a UK and global context. It is a unique environment, supporting hundreds of species, including internationally important migratory water birds and fish. Both individually and cumulatively, the scale of TLP's proposed lagoons are likely to cause significant impacts on the estuary ecosystem and the designated nature conservation sites in the estuary.

The Wildlife Trusts do not currently believe that compensatory measures

will be feasible or achievable on the scale needed to compensate for the likely adverse impacts of multiple lagoons on the estuary and the features for which it was designated.

We are willing to work with TLP to address our concerns and to make these projects better. We want to ensure that the benefits from renewable energy developments, for example the reduction in carbon emissions, are not outweighed by the negative impacts on the environment which they are ultimately trying to protect.

Welcome to our new Chief Executive

Ian Barrett joins Avon Wildlife Trust

In April, our new Chief Executive will be joining the Trust and both Bevis Watts and our Trustees are delighted about his appointment. Ian Barrett comes from Sustrans, where was England Director (South). He has a strong strategic, policy and communications

background, having worked for more than 12 years for DEFRA, where among other roles, he was Head of Ecosystems Policy. Ian is familiar with the Wildlife Trusts and is an existing member of Avon Wildlife Trust. He is also the current vice-chair of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership. Ian is looking forward to introducing himself to members in the next magazine.

Turn to page 8 to hear from Bevis, who is leaving the Trust in April after three and a half years at the helm.





Portbury Wharf
nature reserve

BARBARA EVRIPIDOU

Portbury Wharf: the end of an era

Throughout 2015 the Trust was deeply concerned about the future funding and management of Portbury Wharf nature reserve, and it was with great regret that we were forced to withdraw from management of the site at the end of December 2015.

The Trust has repeatedly stressed its willingness to continue to be involved in the management of Portbury Wharf, given the significant investment it has made in its creation and success to date. We met with Cllr Pasley in October to discuss possible ways forward, and subsequently followed up in writing to express our willingness to find a solution for continued Trust involvement but have had no response since.

We have become resigned to the strong political will to see North Somerset Council manage the reserve without understanding the rationale for forcing the Trust out. But we cannot stand by and let Council Members mislead the public about the intentions of the Trust and have made public statements (see avonwildlifetrust.org.uk) to set the record straight where necessary.

Gold for Folly Farm's green achievements

We are delighted to announce that Folly Farm Centre (our education, conference, wedding and group accommodation venue in the Chew Valley) has been awarded a Gold Green Tourism award for commitment to sustainability

Green Tourism measured 10 different aspects for the award including: energy saving; waste minimisation and nature and culture. Recent improvements have included increasing recycling; offering free car-charging for electric vehicles and buying Fairtrade products.



Folly Farm

All profits from Folly Farm Centre are gift-aided to the Trust, so you can choose to have a positive impact on wildlife the next time you need a beautiful venue for your event.

Visit follyfarm.org for more information.

Thanks a million

We want to say a huge thank you to our corporate partners Vine House Farm. Since 2007, their donations have raised an amazing £1,000,000 for Wildlife Trusts across the UK.

Passionate conservationists, Vine House Farm are leading the way in wildlife-friendly farming – growing, packaging and dispatching of bird seed. Plus the actual bird seed sold during our partnership would feed 4 million robins for their entire lives!



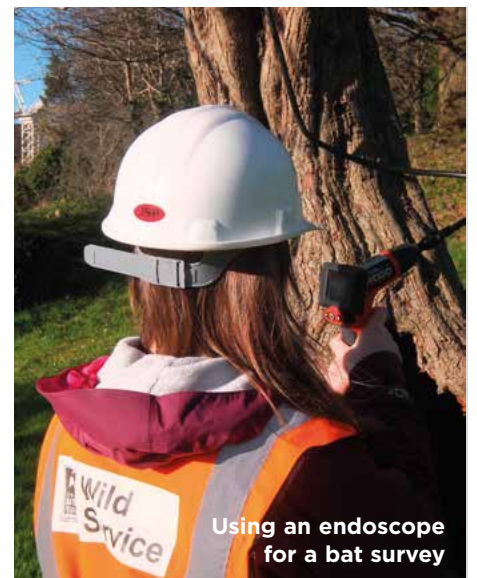
CARLA PRIETO

Wild Service

- Ecology
- Conservation
- Land Management

Wild Service is the specialist Ecological Consultancy and Land Management Company of the Avon and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trusts. Wild Service has an extremely capable team working across a wide range of disciplines, who are ready to help with all ecology or land management aspects of your project.

Our full range of services can be found on our website: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/consultancy



Using an endoscope
for a bat survey

Bristol Cathedral welcomes peregrines



Matt Collis installing the nest box

My Wild City project installs new nesting box on Cathedral roof

Bristol is lucky to have two resident pairs of peregrines, one in the Avon Gorge and another in the city centre. However, the city centre nesting spot isn't the safest site for young fledgelings.

We have now partnered with Bristol Cathedral to install a new nesting box, offering a safe long term nesting site for Bristol's peregrines and we

hope to see eggs in our box as early as mid-March, and young peregrines flying around the cathedral spires by July.

A webcam to monitor for visiting peregrines has been installed. This will give us a remarkable insight into the lives of the increasingly urban peregrine falcon, the fastest animal on the planet.

Welcome to our new placements!

Five new placements have recently joined our Feed Bristol project - JK, Lexi, April, Cliffy and Emily, and Tom and Alice joined the My Wild City team.

All placements are for six months and give volunteers the opportunity to develop and practice new skills within a supported environment.



New placements at Feed Bristol

Joint Spatial Plan consultation complete

In the West of England the four Unitary Authorities have committed to working together to produce a 'Joint Spatial Plan', which will determine the amount of homes and jobs required from the period 2016 - 2036.

The Trust has been working with the West of England Nature Partnership to create a range of maps which show the region's ecosystem services and benefits, and its ecological networks. These have been included as key environmental evidence to help inform the plan.

We have also submitted a response to the consultation on the Joint Spatial Plan, outlining our vision for development that works with nature, not against it.

What's in a name?

Bath nature reserve gains an 'e'

As part of our ongoing work at our Brown's Folly nature reserve on the outskirts of Bath we've recently installed two new interpretation boards.

The Trust has owned the site since the mid 1980's and we've always referred to it as 'Brown's Folly.' This is the name that has long been in common use, but during the design phase we consulted with the local community and discovered an interesting fact

Bathford Local History Society informed us that "The Folly was built in 1848 by Wade Browne Esquire, owner of Monkton Farleigh Manor, local

benefactor and 'lord of the manor'. We know from our research that he spelt his name with an 'e' and it is recorded as such on his memorial plaque in St Peter's church in Monkton Farleigh".

As we're replacing two of the existing signs and hoping to renew the other four in the near future it seemed a good time to take the plunge and restore the 'e'. So from now on the site will be known as Browne's Folly.

Pages 28-33 for UK news Focus on flooding: how nature reserves protect our homes



Folly Tower 1930s

STEPHEN LORD



Congratulations to our Wild Schools Film Challenge winners

Miranda with the overall winners

In October 2015 a glittering awards ceremony was hosted by Wildlife TV presenter Miranda Krestovnikoff for the pupils who made the final of our Wild Schools Film Challenge (WSFC).

More than 1000 pupils from 30 schools got involved in the project and we received 32 film entries for the competition. May Park Primary School, St Peter's Church of England Primary School in Portishead, Burrington C of E Primary School and Elmlea Junior School all produced exceptional films that made the final shortlist.

The overall winning film was made by pupils from St Peter's C of E School, entitled 'Nature is Everywhere'. It won the judges' votes due to its

strong message about the importance of spending time in the natural world, great wildlife facts and captivating narration. The team who made the film have won a fully expenses-paid residential trip to the Folly Farm Centre and nature reserve for their class.

Kit boxes are available for all schools in the Avon area to borrow for free for 2016.

For more information or to see the finalist films visit avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildschoolsfilmchallenge.



Remembering Justin Smith

A generous cheque of £10,000 has been presented to Avon Wildlife Trust from the Justin Smith Foundation.

The Foundation was created in memory of Justin Smith who died suddenly in March 2014. Justin, an expert mycologist, began working with the Trust in 1995 and went on to become Bristol City Council's woodland and wildlife officer. The Trust is grateful for this generous donation, which will make a real difference to educating people about fungi and lower plants, including running a school workshop linked with UK National Fungus Day planned for this year.



The Hunt was on

Sold out event receives roaring applause

On 20 January, we were joined by over 500 people at St George's in Bristol for a sold out talk from the producers of *The Hunt* – the landmark BBC One David Attenborough series. Producers Alastair Fothergill and Huw Cordey shared fascinating insights into the world of wildlife filmmaking with scientific discoveries, aerial revelations and previously unseen footage.

This event was a great fundraising opportunity for the Trust and we are delighted to have raised over £3,500 to support our work. A big thank you to those that came along!

My Wild City Showcase

The theme for the Trust's 35th AGM, held on 22nd October 2015 at the Redgrave Theatre, Bristol was My Wild City, and profiled some of the key My Wild City projects of 2015.

This included scouts volunteering at our new nature reserve in the Gorge, the transformation of the BBC Bristol front garden into a wildlife haven, and the making of My Wild Street in Easton. Members also enjoyed a presentation of wildlife photographer Sam Hobson's extraordinary images.



At the AGM two new trustees were elected. – Justin Dillon (Head of the University of Bristol's Graduate School of Education and Professor of Science and Environmental Education) and Lorna Fox (National Learning Adviser for the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust).

Looking forward...

Bevis at Feed Bristol

Chief Executive Bevis Watts is leaving the Trust in April after three and a half years of dynamic leadership. As he prepares to say goodbye to the Trust team and our membership, Bevis reflects on the progress that has been made during his time here, and looks at the future challenges.

“**O**ne of the first things I did when I moved to this area in 2008 was become a member of Avon Wildlife Trust. Looking for volunteering opportunities with the Trust, I spotted it was about to open Folly Farm Centre, and I subsequently became the first customer to hire Folly Farm for an away-day with my old team. I remember meeting Pat Ellingham, former Director of Communications, on that April day, both of us discovering how the Centre worked. Folly Farm has prospered and developed in a wonderful way since then and is now a fantastic asset, also generating a regular income for the Trust.

Extending our impact

Over the past three and half years, I have had the privilege of being Chief Executive, and in that time, I hope the staff and I, together with the Trustees, have put the Trust on a much stronger footing and professionalised many aspects of its work. Importantly, we have done so while also extending our impact for wildlife. For example, we have acquired two new nature reserves and undertaken major capital projects

to improve the habitat on others. Work with landowners to influence the wider landscape has continued, and we have produced the visionary B-Lines maps, which provide the opportunity for everyone within a B-Line - whether farmers, private landowners, gardeners or those in charge of school grounds or community green spaces - to see how their actions can contribute to supporting pollinators recover across the region. We've also made dramatic progress in urban conservation, with My Wild City as the flagship, and working to make urban spaces wildlife-rich and connect people to nature.

An inspiring team

We should be proud of the Trust's team, which does truly inspiring and important work with limited resources. The job of a wildlife trust chief executive is to run an organisation and team, but it is also to be at the centre of a web of partners, volunteers, supporters and organisations who all care about the natural environment and want to see it recover. More than ever before, the Trust is working in a collaborative way and in partnership - key to its future success. Continuing to inspire the dramatic growth we have

seen in volunteering and getting the support of high-profile ambassadors such as Kevin McCloud will be important to support the delivery of our 2020 Vision.

Multiple constraints and finite resources make running a wildlife trust challenging. But I have continually been inspired by meeting so many people who share a passion for the Trust's work and make amazing contributions to that web we try to weave for the benefit of wildlife. In equal measure I've also learnt to continually expect the unexpected - challenges and opportunities - whether that be in the form of travellers or protestors occupying one of our



sites, governments changing policy or Banksy's team approaching us to help with his Dismaland installation. Navigating that array of challenges and opportunities is the main role of the Chief Executive and I hope the Trust's five year plan, 'Vision 2020' provides a clear focus on why some things are prioritised.

Engagement for all

One challenge has stood out during my time at the Trust - the need to engage more and more people to understand their impact on wildlife and inspire them to care for it. The Trust faces fast population growth in this region and waves of impacts from people who enjoy nature but do not necessarily appreciate their impact on it, whether that means camping on reserves, lighting fires or breaking into barred caves that are refuges for bats. Dealing with such issues and the costs are a constant distraction, and it underlines that part of conservation is engaging people to learn about wildlife and care for it.

I'm delighted, therefore, that we're announcing in this magazine a new £1-million project that will take our people engagement work into some of the hardest-to-reach communities, and will seek to help wildlife move into their communities with them (see p12).

Influencing decisions

Such efforts will, however, only be fruitful if we continue to influence policy-makers to value nature and its importance to human health and wellbeing through creating more green and blue infrastructure alongside development, and investing more in the ecological networks that provide us with clean air, clean water, flood defences and much more. I believe that we have made huge progress in that discussion with key decision-makers. Indeed, the Trust's leadership in the development of the West of England Nature Partnership is now bearing fruit in the designation of a Nature Improvement Area and the production of ecosystem-services maps to help inform future planning. You can find our more at wenp.org.uk.

Working together for wildlife

We cannot only look to policy makers. We also have to look at the conservation movement and ensure it is making the greatest impact for wildlife. We are now working more



Wild City - dramatic progress in urban conservation



The Gordano Valley: priority area in Vision 2020, the Trust's 5 Year Plan

“ I've learnt to continually expect the unexpected ”

closely with other Wildlife Trusts. Nationally, we've adopted common website infrastructure, in the South-west we now have a joint-procurement agreement, and locally we have created an ecological consultancy business. Wild Service, with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Avon Wildlife Trust always seeks to work in partnership with other conservation bodies and any organisation involved in the issues.

So my successor has a great job - a privilege to have - but faces many challenges. Please give him all the help you have given me in the role by continuing to support the Trust. I will continue to be a proud member, supporter and volunteer when and wherever I can.



Nest box making at Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock open day

Five ways to wellbeing



Folly Farm

Three years ago we launched our Communities and Nature (CAN) Programme and it's amazing to look back at how much has been accomplished. This includes improving green spaces, forging partnerships and the impact the programme has had on people's health and wellbeing. The CAN team Kelly Bray and Matt Harcourt celebrate what has been achieved.

Working with groups outside wasn't just about getting the practical work carried out - planting trees, clearing brambles or creating meadows, it also supported individuals to use fundamental (and often overlooked) life skills - by giving groups new experiences, connecting them to their green spaces and improving their wellbeing through nature.

Encouragingly there is growing momentum and recognition of the value of reconnecting people with

nature, backed up by plenty of evidence. For example, five minutes a day in nature triggers important neurochemicals which relax our brains, boost our mental health and helps us let go of societal pressures.

Five Ways to Wellbeing, a report by the New Economics Foundation, incorporates this evidence into five simple actions we can do to aid our own wellbeing. These are **Connect**, **Keep Learning**, **Be active**, **Take notice** and **Give**. We adopted the Five Ways as an approach to delivery of our activities

and a way to measure outcomes.

The Five Ways are not hard and fast rules to live by, but rather designed to help everyone remember the benefits of using the 'natural health service' on our doorsteps.



The feedback

Connect

"Just being with such a great bunch of people was so good"

Be active

"I like it that we're exercising but without really noticing, were just outside talking to each other in the fresh air enjoying ourselves"

Take notice

"It was so lovely to get out of the city and see butterflies and hear birdsong"

Keep learning

"I didn't think I would be any good at the woodcarving, but I gave it a go and enjoyed it"

Give

"I got a real buzz out of knowing that people would want to come in and use our benches"

What we achieved – the numbers

The CAN project celebrated its achievements with an end-of-project event at Folly Farm. Groups were asked to share their experiences through talks and storyboards, and this really illustrated the positive effect the project has had on individuals.

Overall we engaged with **15,282** individuals and of those that were interviewed an average of **85%** indicated they had improved health and wellbeing. We worked with **66** groups, some were a one-off event while other groups were engaged in nature for up to a year.

Green spaces improved

43

Bird/bat/bug homes created

642

Bird feeders built

173

Bulbs planted

1,550

Wildflower plugs planted

2,345

Hedgerow trees planted

1,745

Meadow creation

298m²

Meadow management

1,290m²



Total nature sessions
715

Food growing and wildlife gardening
191

Walks and exploration
129

Bushcraft and outdoor cooking
28

ID training
54

Arts and crafts
33

Community events
39

Practical improvements days
241

MATTHEW ROBERTS

Our favourite moments

- The creation of the Recycled Bottled Green House and Growing Together Project, at Weston-super-Mare.
- The work of the Horizons Group at Hebron Burial Ground in Bedminster being valued by the local community who often stopped to thank them.
- The amazed and relaxed expression on the faces of all those who visit Folly Farm for the first time.
- 85 young people obtaining their John Muir Award, an environmental award scheme focused on wild places.
- Making a fire and cooking healthy fresh food grown in the wellbeing garden with Tomorrow's People.
- Creating an insect hotel with Silvacare in Southmead
- Cycle ride to Prior's Wood to see the magnificent show of bluebells, as part of LifeCycle's Bristol 2015 nature rides.
- Transforming the courtyard space at Easton Community Centre, with a range of hard-working groups.

A big thank you

The project was funded by the Big Lottery Fund, and partnership working has been key to all our activities and approach. We'd like to thank all the organisations who helped contribute to the Communities and Nature project, which are too numerous to mention.

What's next?

Although the CAN project has finished, the work of the Nature and Wellbeing Team continues to grow and the five actions are central to our nature and wellbeing work. The CAN project has triggered the momentum of the Trust's activities in this growing sector of nature and wellbeing and highlights that people need nature and nature needs people to care for it. Turn over to read all about our latest project - Natural Estates.



Natural Estates

Empowering young people to improve the environment



Janice Gardiner, Nature and Wellbeing Programme manager describes how a new initiative will empower young people to improve the environment.

Young people across the UK will be put in the driving seat of transforming their local green spaces, as 31 projects begin under Big Lottery Fund's new Bright Green Future Programme.

We are delighted to announce that Avon Wildlife Trust, working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, will be delivering one of these projects, named 'Natural Estates' over the next five years.

Our focus will be to involve young people in improving green spaces and gardens on housing estates across Avon and Gloucestershire. We will work with six social housing providers and young people aged 11-24 to create wildlife spaces for the residents to care for and enjoy.

Young leaders

The Natural Estates project will offer fantastic opportunities for 18-24 year olds, to join a training programme, which will develop the skills needed to design and lead a project that will transform a local green space.

In consultation with the local community they will survey their local area to discover what wildlife is already there, and how people use the open spaces. By exploring further afield, they



aim to gain inspiration from wildlife gardens and successful green projects.

These project leaders will develop a wide range of skills for future employment, including leading groups of 14-18 year olds in the physical work to create a wildlife garden. On completion of the project they will receive a reference from the Trust and will have valuable practical experience to call on in job interviews.

Green communities

As well as transforming green space and adding to our work to make Bristol and Avon nature-rich, Natural Estates will connect a large number of young people to nature. Other residents

will also be able to benefit from the positive work carried out by young people in their community.

This project will build on the experience gained through our Community and Nature programme (see pages 10-11) and provides the Trust with a valuable opportunity to work with the age groups that tend to have the least involvement with nature.

The first steps for 2016 will be working with young people to create promotional materials and begin to trial delivery within communities. Look out for us at events, to discover the opportunities for getting involved with this exciting project.

“ This five year project will offer many young people the chance to do something different within their communities and will give them the opportunity to become the active citizens of tomorrow ”

Jayne Whittlestone,
United Communities,
partner Housing Association

30 Days Wild

Are you up to the challenge?

When the buds begin to show, the new leaves to unfurl and the flurry of activity explodes across the natural world, we can become impatient to shed the layers of winter clothing and feel the sun on our skin. Many of us will know from experience that getting outside into nature makes us feel healthier and happier.



WENDY CARTER

However, sat in front of a screen most days, and for our children in classrooms for hours, it can be a challenge to get a daily 'nature fix'. So this June, Avon Wildlife Trust will join the 30 Days Wild campaign, and we'd love you to join too. Every day for the month of June we challenge you to undertake a random act of wildness - and share your stories with us.

In June 2015 thousands of people joined in with the Wildlife Trusts' 30 Days

Wild and together they undertook more than 375,000 acts of wildness. Adults danced in the rain and made cocktails out of elderflowers. Children and families made wild works of art; went stargazing and created homes for wildlife in their gardens. Even people at work found time for wildlife, taking meetings outside in the sun and growing herbs on the windowsill.

Last year, the Wildlife Trusts worked with the University of Derby to create a

Wildness Quiz. The results completely surpassed all expectations. After the 30 Days Wild challenge people reported feeling significantly healthier and happier not just for a short amount of time, but months afterwards. Taking part led to a sustained increase in connection to nature. This isn't just great news for us, but for businesses, schools and most importantly for wildlife.

People told wonderful stories about how 30 Days Wild made them feel.



EMMA BRADSHAW

“There are loads of barriers for teenagers to experience nature - they don't think it's cool - but 30 Days Wild is a great way to inspire them and unlock their love of wildlife”

Dawood Qureshi, 16, Buckinghamshire

“I made elderflower champagne, which tasted amazing!”

Tiffany Francis of Hampshire

Please help us to spread the word about 30 Days Wild

Why not sign up yourself? Could your school or business get involved? Will you write a daily blog? Can you share your wild acts on Instagram, Facebook or twitter? To sign up to 30 Days Wild and receive your campaign pack visit: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/30DaysWild

Go Wild this June! We can't wait to hear all about it.

Volunteering

Where else do you all have a picnic together every week?

Julie Doherty, Community Engagement and Volunteering Manager, decided to find out

Volunteers at Goblin Combe

Volunteering is vital work and the Trust cannot begin to deliver its conservation goals without the support of our many volunteers. The Trust's overall volunteering numbers nearly doubled last year to over 1500, but what motivates people to volunteer? I decided to find out, so I joined the Wednesday Wildlife Action Group, or WAG, as it is affectionately known, which takes weekly volunteers out to work on the Trust's nature reserves.

Naturally, everyone was inspired by playing an active part in improving the environment but frequently people told me how much more they valued the volunteering experience. Jenny has been volunteering with the Trust since 2009. She has an impressive



Jenny

“It's good for stress and you forget all your worries”

Jenny

range of skills, from hedge laying to felling trees and told me how she enjoyed the social aspect. “We go to beautiful places and all have a picnic together. It's good for stress and you forget all your worries,” she observed. “There's clearly a real

fondness between volunteers, developed from the kind of camaraderie that comes about when working as a team in all weathers and terrains.” Tim, another volunteer pointed out that “Once you leave work you lose that social aspect.”

In contrast, Bryony and Kaz are some of our younger volunteers, looking to gain the skills needed for a career in conservation. Bryony is a keen birder, having just finished a season volunteering on Skokholm Island, and Kaz has recently been coppicing at Westonbirt. They volunteer on veteran tree surveys and support the WAG group. “It makes me feel so much better outside,” Kaz said.

For Robin, who has been volunteering with the Trust for five years, it's also about learning. He told me, “it's a great educational process helped by meeting people with a wealth of knowledge and the opportunity to sit round with a group of zoologists in the pub afterwards. I have become very knowledgeable about wildlife. I get advice on books to read and how to identify birdsong.”



Robin

“I have become very knowledgeable about wildlife”

Robin

Volunteering seems to offer so much more than the opportunity to help manage the landscape. It's good for your physical and mental health, you make friends, gain knowledge and if you're lucky you might get a picnic and a trip to the pub on the same day.



WAG volunteers

We are currently reviewing our volunteer programme and reluctantly took the decision to end the Sunday WAG from January 2016. This was a difficult decision and we would like to thank our volunteers for all their hard work over the years.

We aim to continue to provide a variety of volunteering opportunities, for more information visit avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer or email volunteer@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Hedgehog heroes



TOM MARSHALL

School children will be taking action for hedgehogs, safeguarding eels and learning about the power of solar energy. Kate Marsh, Learning Development Manager, tells us all about the up-and-coming education projects.

Helping hedgehogs

In early 2016 the Trust received funding from Western Power Distribution to run 'My Wild City' activities within eight Bristol primary schools, focusing on hedgehogs. Sadly the hedgehog has faced a rapid population decline, with 95% of them being lost since the 1950s. However, there are simple steps we can take to help them thrive again. Through the project children will be learning about the importance of wildlife and what they can do to help, before taking action for hedgehogs in their school grounds.



Through this project the Trust will be working with Westerleigh Parish Council, SunEdison and the Bennett family who own the farm.

In March the learning team will be taking pupils from local schools on fieldtrips to the site, to learn about the need for renewable energy, the impact of the installation on the local environment and the measures being put in place to help the wildlife that inhabits the area.



Spawn to be Wild

We are also gearing up to run our award-winning Spawn to be Wild project again in April. Working in partnership with Bristol Water and supported by Bridgwater College and the Sustainable Eel Group, tanks of critically endangered eels will be put into schools. Our tutors will teach the children about these charismatic creatures, before taking the children on a fieldtrip to release their eels.

Says Court Solar Farm

Avon Wildlife Trust are monitoring the impact of this large scale solar installation on the site's species diversity, where measures are being implemented to plant trees, create barn owl corridors and wildflower meadows.



“The 2015 Spawn to be Wild project was awarded a Green Apple Award for environmental best practice and we look forward to building on this success in 2016”

Day visits and residential stays

We run day visits and residential stays for all ages at:

- Folly Farm: A stunning 250-acre nature reserve, set in the heart of the Chew Valley. It is the perfect place to get children outdoors, engage them in the natural world and let them learn new skills and discover new experiences. We have a fully equipped learning centre and for residential visits you can stay in our beautifully restored 18th Century farmhouse.
- Feed Bristol: An inspirational community food growing project in Stapleton where children can delve into our wonderful wildlife-friendly gardens and food growing spaces.

Activities range from teddy bear's picnics for reception children to biological investigations for A level pupils, with curriculum-linked programmes for all ages.

Folly Farm

How our garden is growing



Wellbeing Garden

Nature Health and Wellbeing Officer Ellie Chapman walks us through the new developments at the Folly Farm Wellbeing Garden.

It's been nearly two years since the launch of the Folly Farm Wellbeing Garden and what a productive garden it has become. We have now begun the next phase - to help people achieve their Five Ways to Wellbeing in the garden. The Five Ways to Wellbeing are actions proven to enhance our wellbeing; Take notice, Be active, Give, Keep learning and Connect.

Sensational herbs

We are creating a Sensory Garden with the help of our regular volunteers and community groups. Here people can 'take notice' by enjoying the smell of aromatic herbs such as mint, rosemary and thyme and the touch of fennel. These herbs also make a refreshing tea that can be enjoyed at break time in the circular pergola, now complete with a willow woven shade, thanks to the help of our Community and Nature Project working with Tomorrow's People and the Brandon Trust.

Food for thought

The poly tunnel will become a learning hub with interesting information about organic gardening and the likely species you can spot in and from the garden such as kestrels, butterflies and wild flowers.

The poly tunnel will also be an indoor

wheel chair access workshop space for wild crafts and growing micro-greens and salads. We visited the Chew Valley Monday Club, a local group for elderly and disabled people, to gather feedback from their previous visit last summer and their thoughts on the new changes ahead. The club were positive and volunteers offered user advice on the design of the poly tunnel layout.

Cooking on an open fire is a firm favourite for many of the groups that use the garden, so we are building a cob oven where we can demonstrate cooking highly nutritious and tasty garden produce and people can experience the enjoyment of connecting with new friends through communal cooking.

Natural exercise

Gardening in a team to prepare the ground for the next crop of Swiss



Gardening



Chew Valley Monday Club

chard, purple sprouting broccoli and leeks is a great way to be **active** outdoors. Research shows that outdoor exercise is even more beneficial for our wellbeing than indoor exercise and at the end of the day you can take home some amazing organic produce to try in a new recipe!

Would you like to **give** your time to volunteer in the wellbeing garden? Drop in sessions 10am-4pm every Tuesday. For further information please contact Emma.Benton@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

The 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

You're invited!

Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock 1st birthday party

Sunday 24 April 2-5pm - FREE

Join us to celebrate one year since we opened Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock, our urban nature reserve located on the Bristol Portway. We welcome you to come and enjoy music, nature walks and family fun and games. You'll be able to admire the magnificent 'Bristol Whales' art installation and enjoy homemade cakes in our pop up café too.

Stretched across 12 acres, the reserve was once a brownfield site filled with rubble, two unexploded World War Two bombs and chemical waste! Thankfully, with the help of over 1,000 volunteers, the site has been transformed into a wildlife haven with over 4,000 trees, ponds and a wildflower meadow all linked by a wheelchair-accessible path.



FESTIVAL OF NATURE WEEKEND Put the dates in your diary!

**BRISTOL HARBOURSIDE
Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 June**



If you've ever wondered why the sky is blue or why moss only grows on certain trees you are likely to find your

answers at the Bristol Festival of Nature. Organised by the Bristol Natural History Consortium, this is a two-day free event welcomes thousands of guests to celebrate the natural environment. Expect an exciting programme of hands-on activities, fascinating talks, live entertainment, tasty local produce and much more.

Plans are underway for our 2016 marquee, which will inspire you with 'wild' activities you can take part in for 30 Days Wild; a challenge to do something wild every day for a month.

Our festival marquee is always busy so we need help to welcome people and carry out fun family activities. Are you outgoing with a love for nature? Are you free to volunteer on the weekend of 11 and 12 June? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Please email: mail@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk to register your interest.

KEYNSHAM – Sunday 19th June

From 1pm, join Toad, Ratty, Mole and Badger for an immersive live performance of Wind in the Willows at Keynsham Bandstand, then join your favourite character in a hands-on nature workshop.

BATH – Saturday 25 June

11am-6pm within the beautiful setting of Victoria Park, Bath. Plenty of crafty family activities, guided nature walks and tasty food. Find the festival by the bandstand.

Visit festivalofnature.org.uk for more information.



What's on – walks, talks and workdays

MARCH

Thursday 17 March

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

Saturday 19 March

WALK – BENNETT'S PATCH AND WHITE'S PADDOCK led by warden Tim Clarke. Meet at the Reserve ST 551751 at 11am. The reserve, formerly the Bristol and West sports ground, is located on the Portway between Sea Mills and the Avon Gorge. Access is from the north only, turn left into the main gates shortly after passing Roman Way. Minibus from Keynsham. FFI Liz 0117 909 9667. (K)

Thursday 24 March

WOLVES ACROSS EUROPE – RE-WILDING THE LAND, illustrated talk by Richard Brock. Millennium Hall, Old School Room, Chew Magna, 7.45pm. Entrance £2.50 including refreshments. (CV)

APRIL

Friday 1 April

QUIZ NIGHT LIVE! Pick a team of Eggheads, make up a name and bring them along to our general knowledge quiz in aid of the Trust, plus your own snacks and beverages. Tea and coffee in the break. You need four players, £2.50 per individual team member. Please contact Malcolm on 01454 310328 to book your team's place. The Old Grammar School, High Street, Chipping Sodbury, 7.30pm. (S)

Friday 8 April

THE PYRENEES IN JUNE, talk by Sue 'n Sue of Gloucester who have been interested in butterflies and wildflowers for over 20 years and undertaken many travels. Baptist Church Hall, High Street, Keynsham, 7.30pm Cost: Adults £2.50, Children £1. (K)

Saturday 9 April

WILLSBRIDGE VALLEY NATURE RESERVE, leader Rita Andrews. Meet at Willsbridge Mill Cafe BS30 6EX at 11am. Free, share cars and petrol cost. FFI Liz 0117 909 9667 (K)

Sunday 17 April

SPRING FLOWER WALK in Prior's Wood. Paths can be muddy, slippery and steep sided. Meet outside The Priory pub Portbury. 2pm. FFI 0117 9400706 (C) See page 24 for Prior's Wood – our seasonal stroll.

Thursday 21 April

OUT IN THE DARK, talk by David Brown, whose lifelong fascination with bats has provided him with intriguing nightlife stories which he will share with us. Jubilee Pavilion, Keedwell Hill, Long Ashton, 7.30pm. (LA)

Friday 22 April

THE WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE OF INDIA, illustrated talk by Grete Howard at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead, 7.30pm. Entrance £2 for adults, £1 for children, includes tea/coffee. Non-members welcome. (P)

Saturday 23 April

FLAG DAY street collection in and around the High Street, Portishead. (P)

Sunday 24 April

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

WILD FLOWER AND TREE WALK in Weston Bigwood, Portishead, led by Dr Bill Dixon. Meet at the Valley Road entrance for 10am start. No need to book. Duration 2 hours, sturdy footwear advised. Free, but donations to AWT welcome. A book about the wood is available to purchase. FFI 01275 849200. (P)

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE SPRING WALK, a guided walk in Westridge Woods between Wotton under Edge and North Nibley with Pauline and Richard Wilson. Please wear walking boots or other stout footwear and note that ample free car parking is available at the Wickwar Road car park. Meet for car share at the Clock Tower, High Street, Chipping Sodbury, 1.30pm. (S)

MAY

Sunday 1 May

DAWN CHORUS WALK 5-7am Prior's Wood. Join us on International Dawn Chorus Day for a walk around this beautiful bluebell woodland to hear the glorious sounds of song thrushes, blackbirds and robins. Exclusively for Avon Wildlife Trust members. FREE but pre-registration is required. Register online: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/dawnchoruswalk See page 24 for Prior's Wood – our seasonal stroll.



Bluebell walk

AMY LEWIS

Monday 2 May

REDLAND GREEN MAY FAIR Cabot Group fundraising stall – cakes, jam, plants and bric-a-brac. Offers of help – phone 0117 940 0706. Set up 11am onwards (C)

Sunday 8 May

MY WILD CITY: HOTWELLS URBAN WILDLIFE WALK. As part of the Bristol Walking Festival, join My Wild City Project Officer Matt Collis for a walk along the river in Hotwells to spot the wildlife that lives in the heart of the city. You'll look out for: kingfishers; house martins; swifts; grey wagtails and of course gulls! If you are extremely lucky, you might spot an otter too. 9-10.30am FREE but pre-registration is required. Register online: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/hotwellswildlifewalk



Hotwells

Saturday 14 May

COFFEE MORNING AND PLANT SALE. 10am-1pm at 36 St Peters Road, Portishead. We will also have homemade cakes, jams, crafts, books and puzzles for sale. FFI 01275 843160. (P)

Sunday 15 May

BENNETT'S PATCH AND WHITE'S PADDOCK FUN DAY.

Come and enjoy our 12-acre nature reserve during 'Portway Sunday Park' 2-5pm, FREE. The Portway will be closed to traffic, providing a rare opportunity to appreciate the Avon Gorge in tranquillity. Guided walks, refreshments in our pop-up cafe and children's activities will be available.

Friday 20 May

A WALL AROUND HUNGARY AND BULGARIA, illustrated talk by Terry Wall ARPS about the abundant wildlife in that region. 7.30 pm at the Folk Hall, 95 High Street, Portishead. Entrance £2 for adults, £1 for children, includes tea/coffee. Non-members welcome. (P)

Saturday 21 May

FILNORE WOODS, THORNBURY, led by Jerry Dicker. Minibus from Wellsway School, leaves school at 1pm. Meeting starts in Thornbury at 2pm. Cost £4 for minibus (to be paid in advance). FFI Liz Wintle 0117 909 9667 (K)

Sunday 22 May

GUIDED WALK by Ray Barnett looking at insect life on Brandon Hill. Meet by pond on lower path leading from Trust headquarters on Jacobs Wells Road at 2pm. FFI 0117 940 0706 (C)

JUNE

Sunday 5 June

PORWAY SUNDAY PARK AT BENNETT'S PATCH AND WHITE'S PADDOCK. Come and enjoy our 12-acre nature reserve during 'Portway Sunday Park' 2-5pm. The Portway will be closed to traffic, providing a rare opportunity to appreciate the Avon Gorge in tranquillity. Guided walks, refreshments in our pop-up cafe and children's activities will be available. FREE.



Portway Sunday

Sunday 5 June

OPEN GARDEN at Tranby House, Norton Lane, Whitchurch, BS14 0BT, 2-5pm. Trust member Jan Barkworth has been sharing her beautiful wildlife garden with the public for over 25 years. Admission £3.50, children free. Tea and cake available and plants for sale. Also open Sunday 17 July.

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 June

FESTIVAL OF NATURE WEEKEND, two-day free event on Bristol Harbourside. The UK's biggest free natural history event returns with hands-on activities, fascinating talks, live entertainment, tasty local produce and much more.

Sunday 12 June

BEEES and STRAWBERRIES at Yatton & Congresbury, led by Sal Pearson from Yatton Area Bee Project, and Faith and Tony. Meet at Wellsway School, Keynsham, 10am for minibus from school. Must book places in advance, £3 per person. FFI Liz 0117 909 9667. (K)

Sunday 19 June

SWINEFORD SUMMER WALK. Our guides, Pauline and Richard Wilson, will be taking us on a walk from the Swineford picnic site on the A431 and taking in Upton Cheyney, North Stoke and the edge of Lansdown at Prospect Stile. Please wear walking boots or other stout footwear and note that ample free car parking is available at the Wickwar Road car park. Meet for a car share at the Clock Tower, High Street, Chipping Sodbury, 1.30pm. (S)

Saturday 25 June

BATH FESTIVAL OF NATURE 11am-6pm within the beautiful setting of Victoria Park, Bath. Plenty of crafty family activities, guided nature walks and tasty food. Find the festival by the bandstand. Free.

Sunday 26 June

WALK AT EASTON-IN-GORDANO, including St. George's Flower Bank, guided by Bob Buck. Meet lay-by at junction of High Street, Portbury BS20 0TW and the A369 Bristol to Portishead Road. Donation £3. Booking essential. FFI 0117 940 0706 (C)

JULY

Saturday 2 July

TREES & FLOWERS OF BRISTOL DOWNS, led by Richard Bland. Minibus from Wellsway School, leaves school at 10am. Meeting starts at Water Tower at 11am. Cost £2 for minibus (to be paid in advance). FFI Liz Wintle 0117 909 9667 (K)

Sunday 17 July

OPEN GARDEN at Tranby House, Norton Lane, Whitchurch, BS14 0BT, 2-5pm. Trust member Jan Barkworth has been sharing her beautiful wildlife garden with the public for over 25 years. Admission £3.50, children free. Tea and cake available and plants for sale. Also open Sunday 5 June.



Tranby House Garden

Sunday 24 July

PORTBURY WHARF. Wildlife walk looking for flowers and birds. Bring your binoculars. Paths can be steep and muddy with some steps. Meet Wharf Lane off Sheepway at 2pm. FFI 0117 940 0706 (C)

Volunteer Work Days

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. There are plenty of volunteering opportunities at the Trust including:

- Grassland Restoration team (GRT) – meet at Trust HQ Tuesdays (fortnightly) and Thursdays
- Wildlife Action Group (WAG), on Trust reserves – meet at Trust HQ 9.45am Wednesdays, Fridays
- Wild City Action Team – meet at Trust HQ 9.30am Tuesday (fortnightly) and one Saturday a month
- Feed Bristol in Stapleton – Monday, Tuesday, Friday 9.30am
- Feed Folly at Folly Farm Centre – Tuesdays 10am
- Reserve-based groups at Browne's Folly, Folly Farm, Willsbridge Valley, Purn and Hellenge Hill (W-s-M), Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock and the Gordano Valley Group

Please go to avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer for dates and work programmes.

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

WAPLEY LNR General management including pruning fruit trees. Please bring secateurs if possible. Meet at the Shire Way entrance to the woodland, South Yate, BS37 8US, 10am. Sunday 19 March, Sunday 10 July. (S)

WESTON MOOR Meet just inside the reserve (ST 446736). Access via Cadbury Lane and Weston Drove. Cadbury Lane is a narrow lane on eastern side of the B3124 in Weston-in-Gordano, 200m from the White Hart. Drive down Weston Drove then take rough track on RH side and on through the metal gateway. Sunday 20 March. (GCG)

GOOSE GREEN General maintenance on this grassland and wetland nature reserve. Meet at the bridge on the reserve, west of Oak Close, north Yate, 10 am. Saturday 9 April. (S)

RIVER FROME & KENNEDY POND General spring clean. Meet at Kennedy Way Pond, Link Road, Yate Shopping Centre, 10 am. Parking available at the two car parks on either side of Link Road, BS37 4AY. Saturday 14 May. (S)

PRIOR'S WOOD Fencing removal. Meet 10am in car parking area opposite Children's Hospice. DO NOT USE HOSPICE CP. Turn off B3128 Clevedon road at Downs School, then turn left at sign for Hospice. Sunday 24 April, Sunday 22 May. (GCG)

CLAPTON MOOR Clearing footpaths. Meet 10am in the car park at the entrance to the reserve (ST 461733) on Clevedon Lane, about one mile from Clapton-in-Gordano village. Sunday 26 June. (GCG)

WESTON MOOR. Ragwort-pulling in the meadows and other management. Meet 10 am down the small drive beside the church in Weston-in-Gordano (ST 444743). Sunday 31 July. (GCG)

Local group and volunteering contacts

(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

For further information please go to avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer or email Julie: volunteer@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Folly Farm family residential

This summer why don't you and your family join us for a nature-filled family residential stay at Folly Farm? Located on a 250 acre nature reserve in the heart of the Chew Valley, our 3 day/2 night residential programme, led by an expert tutor, will get you outdoors and having fun!

On the residential course you will:

- Stay in our comfortable, sustainable and beautifully restored 18th century farmhouse
- Explore the wildlife that inhabits Folly Woods and ponds
- Practice your survival skills as you build dens
- Challenge yourselves to make fires without the use of modern day gadgets
- Try to spot the family of badgers that live in the woodland!
- Meet other like-minded families.



**the
folly farm
centre**

**Dates: Sunday 7th to Tuesday 9th
August 2016** Cost per person: **£153
(inc. VAT)**

The residential is suitable for any families and who enjoy getting outdoors. Activities are recommended for families with children ages 5 years +; younger children are welcome but they may not be able to participate in all activities.

The cost includes all meals, accommodation and tutor-led activities. For more information or to book visit the events pages at avonwildlifetrust.org.uk or contact Kate Marsh, on courses@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk or 0117 917 7270.



Guest member
Ros Kennedy

CAMERON KENNEDY

Ros was appointed as High Sheriff of the City of Bristol in 2015, after a long career as a GP. We invited her to tell us more about her new role, and her longstanding interest in the natural world.

“**T**he High Sheriff is the Queen’s representative for law and order in the County, in my case Bristol, and is an independent, non-political Royal appointment for a single year. Alongside my official duties I try to support the voluntary sector as much as possible by visiting and encouraging some of our excellent local charities, including Avon Wildlife Trust.

I have always been interested in the natural world. I grew up living in the country and being able to enjoy the pleasure and relaxation of walking has always been important to me. As a GP, I used to see a lot of people with stress-related illness, both mental and physical. When I was trying to help them to get better and recover their sense of wellbeing, I would explore with them what they enjoyed doing in their free time, and would encourage them to try some gentle exercise in places with beautiful nature. Some people definitely felt better for trying this.



Visiting My Wild Street in Easton

In my year as High Sheriff, I have supported local initiatives which are trying to improve mental health services, especially for young people. I am very aware of the high rates of mental illness in our community. Many people in our wonderful city live hard lives, often with major economic and social problems. Our year as Green Capital has highlighted the importance for all of us for natural spaces and places to walk.

There is a growing body of scientific evidence that for our health and well-being, we need not just social

relationships but contact with nature. I hope as part of our Green Capital legacy, we can continue to encourage everyone to enjoy the natural world.”

Ros’s favourite local wild places

When I retired as a GP, I bought a Labrador so that I had the perfect excuse to go out on regular dog walks. I call her my gym membership as I so much prefer walking in the local woods and countryside to exercising in an indoor gym. Bristol is full of beautiful places to walk, I love the Downs on a crisp winter morning with the sun rising, Leigh Woods in the spring and autumn as the colours change, Ashton Court for the sweeping views and Brandon Hill for the contrast between the nature reserve there and the views of the city and docks.

Around the reserves

While the birds are away

Hellenge Hill

IAN GAWINOWSKI

Winter is a time of increased activity across our nature reserves. Major projects can be carried out during the lull between the end of the wildflower season and the early spring bird nesting season, with woodland work, hedge laying and scrub clearance keeping staff and volunteers busy.

Important grasslands

In the Gordano Valley, a huge effort has been made this winter towards grassland restoration at **Walton Common** and **Tickenham Hill**. The biodiversity value of both grasslands has been declining due to excessive scrub encroachment. Selective scrub management work has been carried out through the combined efforts of contractors and volunteers. Some scrub will be retained for the bird and insect populations and its management

will always be informed by species monitoring. Our Weston-super-Mare volunteer group have also been working hard to control the scrub on the steep slopes of **Hellenge Hill** and **Purn Hill**.

Nurturing new growth

At **Prior's Wood** we've been providing aftercare to our 3,000 new trees to ensure they continue to thrive. The Gordano local group and our Wildlife Action Group have also been

thinning the former nurseries that were established by the Tyntesfield Estate in the 1980s. In the same vein the next phase of the ride-widening project at **Weston Big Wood** has continued this year. A number of bays have been created in the main ride to provide favourable open space within the woodland for a wealth of woodland residents such as bats and butterflies. This winter we have been coppicing the fringes of the bays so that there will be greater structural diversity and a smoother transition from scrub to tree line, thus providing homes for a wider variety of animals and plants.

Opening pools and glades

The determination and hard work of all of the volunteers over many years has been the main reason why we have retained open water within **Blake's Pools** despite constant reed invasion. This year was no exception, however they also had mechanical assistance, which greatly aided in the restoration of this beautiful isolated wetland by the Severn Estuary. The volunteers carried out reed control around the island and a contractor cleared less accessible sections. Some reeds were retained for the birdlife. There has already been a kingfisher record in the hide logbook and we hope many more birds will



New trees at Prior's Wood

PETEYVANS



Kingfisher

HALCOULMBROWN

enjoy the improved habitat over the coming months. Winter is our tree felling season so we've had contractors and volunteers out over the winter at several of our woodland sites. The main work has been at **Browne's Folly**, where we're opening up glades, widening rides and removing invasive turkey oaks as part



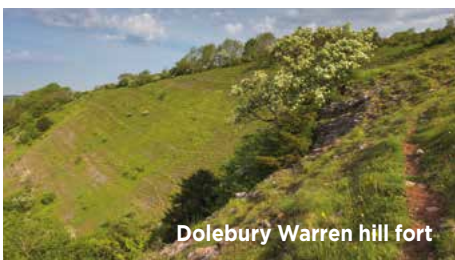
Look out for speckled wood butterflies in the dappled shade of woodlands

TOM MARSHALL

of a long-term woodland improvement programme. At **Folly Farm** we've been working for a couple of winters to gradually open glades in both Dowlings and Folly Wood with the aim of improving the woodland quality and to encourage dappled shade for plants.

Protecting history

As well as being a wonderful wildlife site, **Dolebury Warren** is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument because of the spectacular Iron Age hill fort that dominates its western end. We've been clearing scrub and woodland that's been encroaching on the hill fort on the precious areas of limestone heathland that exist on the site, in order to maintain this rare and remarkable habitat.



Dolebury Warren hill fort

SMARTHAGES.CO.UK



Maddy

Adventuring through the countryside

Maddy Bartlett looks back on her first day of volunteering and where it has taken her

“ Sheltering from an icy February shower under a makeshift canopy in the middle of the woods, listening to the rhythmic hum of brush-cutters, interspersed with the twittering of an unidentified bird in the bushes – that was my first experience of volunteering for the Avon Wildlife Trust. It might have been the knowledge that the work we were doing would have a direct impact on the wildlife around us, or perhaps it was the lovely people and banter thrown about over tea and hobnob biscuits, but anyway I was hooked, and the next day I signed up to a year as a voluntary Conservation Assistant – which led to eighteen months, which led to two years, and still I pop in every now and then to join the most recent volunteers on days out.

Being around so many enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers and staff I've picked up countless new skills, from wildlife identification, to hedge-laying, to dry-stone walling (although I'm pretty sure my section of the wall would barely survive a summer breeze). I've been really lucky to have been able to use these skills to support the work I do in my job as a project coordinator, and that as a result of volunteering I've been paid to conduct wildflower walks and lead a tree seed collection project for Avon Wildlife Trust with Kew Garden's Millennium Seed Bank, roaming the countryside in search of the elusive Midland hawthorn.

Through volunteering I've had a unique close up look at the environment around Bristol, and been to so many places that I never even knew existed. Looking for dormice in Goblin Combe, sitting silently at Folly Farm watching badgers at twilight, waving a net at an emerald blur before delighting in catching my first green hairstreak on Dolebury Warren, or going on a race to see how many orchids we could find in one day (18 including a shrivelled-up fly orchid), every day is an adventure with the Trust.

Come rain or shine, I am always happy to be exploring the countryside discovering our native wildlife or working to conserve our habitats – and especially when it's pouring down with rain, I always remember that first icy February day when I was introduced to the wild world of volunteering with Avon Wildlife Trust.

For conservation, events and office volunteering opportunities please go to avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer or email julie.doherty@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk



Seasonal stroll

Prior's Wood

Prior's Wood is well known for its astonishing drifts of bluebells in spring, and it is a delight to visit all year round, whatever the weather. A walk there is guaranteed to lift your spirits!

Bluebells



Black cap

CLIVE NICHOLLS



Ransoms

STEVE NICHOLLS



Toothwort

Why don't you... come along to an event at Prior's Wood?

Sunday 17 April

SPRING FLOWER WALK in Prior's Wood. Paths can be muddy, slippery and steep sided. Meet outside The Priory pub Portbury. 2pm. FFI 0117 9400706 (C)

Sunday 1 May

DAWN CHORUS WALK - a members' exclusive!

5-7am Prior's Wood. Join us on International Dawn Chorus Day. FREE but pre-registration is required. Register online: avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/dawnchoruswalk

for bluebells in the spring



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OS grid ref: ST490 745

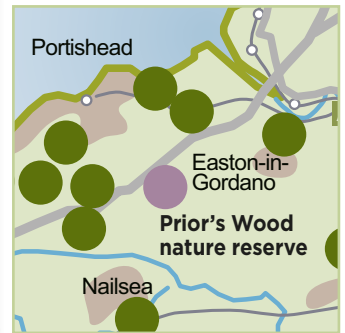
Walk details

duration: 1.5 hrs

grade: easy

Key to map

- walk
 - 1 point of interest
 - reserve boundary
 - P car park
- scale
400m



From Portbury village turn right after passing the gatehouse on your right and continue up the track between the fields. When you enter the reserve by the interpretation sign (1), turn left off the main track and follow the waymark to the top of the hill (2) across another ride, and down a flight of steps into the heart of the wildlife-rich woodland. Turn right onto the woodland path. In spring the slopes are covered with bluebells, as well as wild garlic and patches of wood anemone, a flower that in ancient times was said to be a gift heralding the coming of spring. The path gently rises (3) and bends to the right, passing some ancient beech trees and bringing you out onto the main ride (4). Turn left here past a replanted area. Woodland management by the Trust ensures the woodland remains healthy, for a wide range of wildlife and for future generations of people to know and enjoy.

Continue on to the reserve entrance by the Children's Hospice South West (5). Don't leave the reserve, but turn right and take the path down to the stream. Cross the bridge (6) and follow the path up the hill, taking the first right onto the main track. Following this takes you into another extensive bluebell area. At the end of this path cross a bridge (7) that takes you up a slope and along a narrow woodland path through an area of ancient woodland. Herb paris can be found in some of the shadier areas, below the oak and ash trees, and the ghostly toothwort grows at the base of old hazel coppice.

Eventually this path comes back out on to the ride (8). Turn left and you will leave the reserve the way you came in.

How to find the reserve

From Portbury take the Clapton-in-Gordano road, parking on layby just after the last house in Portbury village. Walk through the gated lane, turning onto a track that leads into the woodland.

Access

Some of the paths can be muddy, slippery and steep-sided. The walk takes approximately 1.5 hours.

Listen out for the fluting song of the blackcap – known as the 'northern nightingale' – and the melodious chattering of the garden warbler.

Did you know? Prior's Wood was once part of the great Tyntesfield Estate near Wraxall. Timber from the woodland was processed in the saw mills of the estate.

Look out for:



Wood anemone



Spotted flycatcher



Herb paris

STEVE NICHOLLS

AMY LEWIS

Spring songsters

Identifying urban bird song

Matt Collis, My Wild City Officer tunes in to the sounds of spring.



Now is the perfect time to improve your bird ID skills, as birds are just starting to get the 'spring' back in their step and exercising their vocal chords. Our urban parks and gardens provide an ideal starting point for those wishing to start learning, or improve their knowledge.

It's definitely worth the time getting your ear in tune to the songs and calls as it is a great way to identify birds; particularly those hidden by dense foliage, in a distant tree, or those that look identical to each other. You can even learn to pick them out at night! The great majority of species are heard rather than seen, so here are a few tips to help your ears become your new eyes.

Easy listening



AMY LEWIS



ELLA BEESON



STEVE WTAERHOUSE

Wren A voice much larger than its body. An explosive rattle, reminiscent of a **machine gun**, lasting about five seconds and usually ending in a trill. Almost always sung close to ground level and notoriously hard to spot despite the noise.

Blackbird Song is rich, **varied and flute-like** usually finishing with a squeaky phrase. Found singing from the tops of trees, houses and walls. You'll often hearing its warning call, a sharp 'chook', given in response to intruder males.

Song thrush Sung from a prominent perch high in trees, even tops of TV aerials, listen for the same phrase **repeated three or four times** before it moves to the next. Phrases will be random but is always loud, clear and often flute-like.

Middle melodies



HARRY HOGG

Robin Using familiar perches on walls or the outside of shrubs, a **melodious warbling** song sounding like ‘twiddle-oo, twiddle-ee-dee, twiddle-oo’. Alarm call is a loud ticking call resembling hitting a metallic ring. The only bird song heard all year round.



RICHARD BOWLER

Blue tit Often sung on the move flicking between branches, a **high pitched ‘see-see-see’** almost always starts the song. Endings can vary, including no ending at all, but frequently a trilling ‘dudududu’. The alarm call is a chur-like sound.



RICHARD BOWLER

Goldfinch A pleasant rambling of **jingling, twittering and tinkling** (like gold) is the most common call with numerous birds simultaneously calling in a flock. Song is a composition of this call and additional rattling notes and nasal sounds. Sung in flight or perched with wings drooped over its sides.

Expert harmony



ADAM JONES

Greenfinch Two different songs. Most recognisable is a **wheezy nasal ‘dzweee’** but a twittering trill is also common, easily confused with the goldfinch’s song. If in doubt wait for it to switch songs to the more recognisable wheezing or look for its display flight circling around the tops of a tree.



RICHARD BURKARR

Goldcrest Their song is a quiet, **high pitched twittering** that cascades down at its end, roughly translated to ‘tweedly tweedly tweedly twiddleedidee’. Often heard from conifers or other evergreens and can be easily missed due to pitch.



AMY LEWIS

Blackcap Rich and varied warble song, much fuller in tone than robin. Starting with a chattering notes before more **flute-like warbling** lasting up to five seconds. Alarm call is a harsh ‘tacc’ like two pebbles hitting one another. Commonly found in dense hedgerows.

Tricky tweets Even when you become familiar with our most common birds songs and calls, you will still hear sounds that can cause confusion. Some species are incredible mimics and can have a huge diversity of songs to trick you, however, from my experience 95% of the time it will be a **great tit!**

Further listening Download the **Chirp!** app, which uses games to test your skills Visit xeno-canto.org for an extensive library of sound recordings Visit bto.org for brilliant ID videos including bird song



23 new Marine Conservation Zones

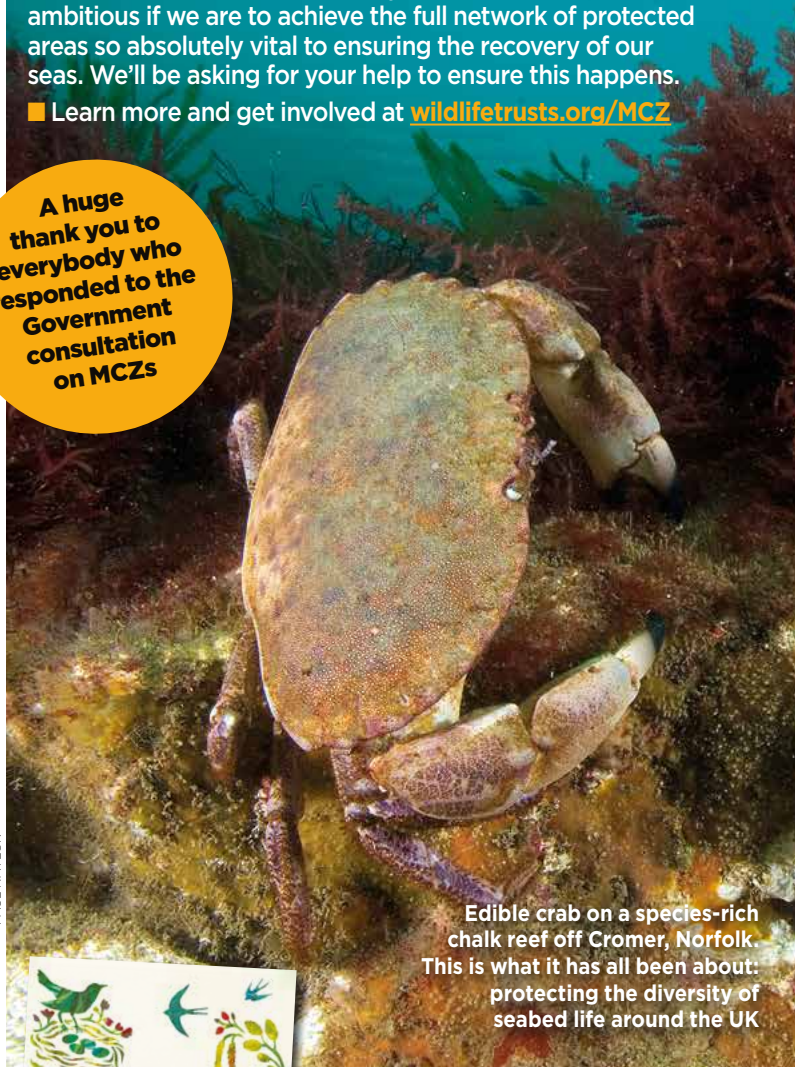
2016 gets off to a good start with new protected areas at sea

Following years of campaigning to protect marine wildlife we are delighted to report that 23 new Marine Conservation Zones have been created – mostly in English waters.

These latest zones add to the 27 that were created in 2013. Westminster has also committed to setting up a third round of Marine Conservation Zones by 2018. This must be ambitious if we are to achieve the full network of protected areas so absolutely vital to ensuring the recovery of our seas. We'll be asking for your help to ensure this happens.

■ Learn more and get involved at wildlifetrusts.org/MCZ

A huge thank you to everybody who responded to the Government consultation on MCZs



Edible crab on a species-rich chalk reef off Cromer, Norfolk. This is what it has all been about: protecting the diversity of seabed life around the UK

PAUL NAYLOR



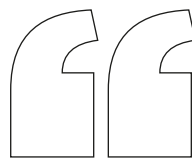
Spring is here

The newly-published *Spring is a must for fans of nature writing*

A new four-part anthology, published in conjunction with The Wildlife Trusts, celebrates the changing seasons. The editor is Melissa Harrison, an award-winning journalist, novelist and nature writer.

In the four books she brings together the classic works of great naturalists and pieces by

new writers. They describe moments of transition, from changes in urban settings to the shifting patterns of country life. All are threaded together to mirror the unfolding of the season. The full set of four will be published during 2016. You can buy the first, *Spring*, at wtru.st/seasons-spring



Latest UK-wide news and issues: wildlifetrusts.org/news

Our shared earth



The strandings of sperm whales on the beaches of Germany, Holland and England in January, although tragic, remind us just how phenomenal our sea life is. These ocean giants weigh up to 60 tonnes and have the largest brains on earth.

One theory is that a pod of young males strayed off course in pursuit of squid and hit the bottleneck of this shallow, narrow part of the North Sea. Disorientated, panicking and hungry, the whales could well have swum on to the beaches.

This time we could do nothing to save these wonderful creatures. But it reminded me that we are not as much of an island as we might think. We are joined to the rest of Europe by shallow seas which are no barrier to our fish, to our porpoises, dolphins and smaller whales or indeed to our migratory birds. And we are joined emotionally to our European neighbours as well, sharing the heartbreak and helplessness of watching these beautiful animals die.

For wildlife, the European Union is therefore very important. And it is no accident that the EU has the most substantial body of environmental legislation in the world. Without this, it is likely that our children would be swimming in raw sewage off our shores as we did, and that the Thames would still be devoid of salmon. It is true that EU policies on agriculture and fisheries have a less honourable track record in wildlife terms, but it is far from clear that nature would have fared any better if the UK had been left to its own devices: consider the agricultural deserts of the US and the collapse of Canada's cod stocks.

The EU builds up policy slowly and carefully and rarely loses that which it has built. This offers a solid insurance policy for wildlife against short-term thinking, and our unquenchable thirst for economic growth.

Whilst we've lost those wonderful whales we do have something to celebrate: a recent massive expansion in the area of our seas afforded real protection. That progress was kicked off by the EU and taken forward by our Governments.

Stephanie Hilborne OBE
Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts

Together there are 47 Wildlife Trusts covering the UK, all working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone, on land and at sea. 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 Oldham. **Layout editor** Dan Hilliard
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Tony Juniper is our new President

The well-known campaigner, writer and environmentalist has been appointed President of The Wildlife Trusts. Tony has been involved with the movement for over 30 years, and was the first recipient of The Wildlife Trusts' prestigious Charles Rothschild and Miriam Rothschild Medal in 2009.

In his new role he will help drive our mission to support nature's recovery on land and at sea, and to put nature at the heart of society. "It is a huge honour," he said. "This organisation is the very backbone of conservation in the UK and the work it does is vital in bringing huge benefits for people, nature and our economy. I am very much looking forward to adding what I can to the already huge impact of this amazing network."

"This organisation is the very backbone of conservation in the UK"



Tony at Cherry Hinton, an urban nature reserve owned by the Beds, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust

ELEANOR CHURCH



A forest school with a difference: Nick Baker and friend

LYNDESE YOUNG

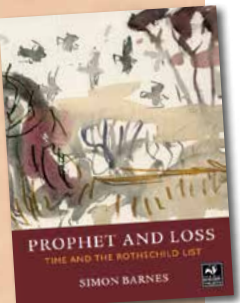
Forest schools grow – yet again

As a learning experience you can't beat it: seeing, smelling, hearing and touching the plants, animals and habitats that make up our world. So we're delighted that our Forest Schools will grow again in 2016 to include Nottinghamshire,

London and the Bristol area. It's all thanks to funding from many sources, but most of all from players of People's Postcode Lottery. Our schools boost children's confidence and increase their knowledge and love of wildlife.

Prophet and Loss

A new ebook Prophet and Loss by award-winning author Simon Barnes explores the legacy of The Wildlife Trusts' founder, Charles Rothschild. 100 years ago Rothschild recommended protection of 284 wild places in Britain and Ireland: areas of mountain, woods, bog and coastline 'worthy of preservation'. Prophet and Loss revisits some of those places and uncovers their stories. Available digitally for £1 from wildlifetrusts.org/prophet



Bass Rock - one of the places revisited in Prophet and Loss



THE BASS ROCK, NORTH BERWICK

Wilfred Toadflax: trouble on a string



Be inspired by Brambly Hedge

Brambly Hedge and The Wildlife Trusts have joined forces to help families explore and feel inspired by the animals that live close to them. Go to wtru.st/Brambly-Hedge for a wild recipe, colouring sheets, puzzles and much more. Plus a detailed look at the characters which are celebrating their 35th anniversary this year.





Hebden Bridge, York, Leeds, Tadcaster, Cockermouth, Pooley Bridge, Bradford, Glenridding, Aberdeen. Just some of the villages, towns and cities affected by the December floods. More than 16,000 houses flooded, and many businesses too. Tens of thousands of people have suffered the trauma and disruption of having their lives turned upside down. Recovery takes months or years.

Prime Minister David Cameron recently called for an 'attitudinal change' on flood protection. Whilst we agree on that point, he wants to shift the focus away from protecting nature and towards protecting property. In fact, we must do both. We need to take a new, collective approach to finding long-term, effective solutions to these predictable and recurring floods. They are the result of a combination of factors:

“ **More than 16,000 houses have been flooded, and many businesses** ”

■ Our natural defences (habitats, water catchments and river ecosystems) have been dismantled and damaged by intensive land management - often driven by Government subsidies intended to increase food production.

■ We lack an integrated approach to flood and drought alleviation, water quality issues and wildlife decline. The solutions to these challenges need to be woven together, not sat in separate silos.

■ We have spent decades ignoring Environment Agency advice by building in the wrong places. Floodplains are not suitable for housing and other developments.

■ Urban areas lack the vegetated wild spaces needed to absorb water safely and release it slowly. Poor planning, too much hard landscaping and paved-over front gardens don't help.

The most fundamental factor in any catchment is how the land is managed. For example, research by Devon Wildlife Trust and Plymouth University shows that wilder 'culm' grassland absorbs 4.5 times more water than sown and fertilised pasture. Trees are better still. So well-wooded catchments and those with



Stephen Trotter
The Wildlife Trusts' Director, England is passionate about wildlife and wild places, and what they can do for people.

to change

drain. Stephen Trotter sets out The Wildlife Trusts' alternative

MONTGOMERYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

wetlands and wildflower-rich grasslands are much better at coping with extreme rainfall events.

Ploughing-up of densely-vegetated wild habitats, over-grazing, digging drains and straightening rivers have all had disastrous consequences for our landscapes, which now have a severely reduced capacity to absorb and store water. Once a catchment is saturated, the speed of run off determines whether a flood becomes an extreme incident.

Often the land manager's objective is to get the water away as quickly as possible. But this simply passes it on downstream – where it can become someone else's bigger problem.

Then it hits the floodplains which we have developed and constrained – the spaces into which they could naturally

“ Carefully designing more absorbent habitats can protect towns and cities ”

expand during intense flood events. Far too often, society has failed to respect or value the functioning of this natural process.

There has to be a better way and there is: to work with natural processes rather than against them. By carefully locating and designing more absorbent habitats like woodlands, wetlands and floodplains,

we can increase the water-holding capacity of landscapes near towns and cities. This can be good for people and good for wildlife – and often far cheaper than the hard concrete solutions we hear so much about.

Natural approaches help avoid the extreme peaks that can be so damaging.



Before

Welsh peatland dried out by 'improvements'

After



The same peatland after ditch blocking was completed

How nature reserves protect homes

Penrith, Cumbria

Thacka Beck has been rerouted through a purpose-built reserve, allowing wet grassland to act as a floodplain when water levels rise – protecting the nearby town.



Penrith's flood reduction system

Lunt, North Merseyside

Lunt Meadows nature reserve sits next to the River Alt and acts as an overflow when water levels rise. In heavy rain, water enters the wetland area, protecting communities downstream.



Overflow slip at Lunt Meadows

Rotherham, Yorkshire

The Centenary Riverside urban nature reserve is also a flood storage area. Last winter it kept floodwaters from the River Don away from surrounding streets and buildings.



Centenary Riverside fills up



Short-eared owl – often seen in wetlands that can help to fight floods

Designing more places like these three into local plans can help us deal with future flooding – and provide much-needed space for wildlife. A real win-win.

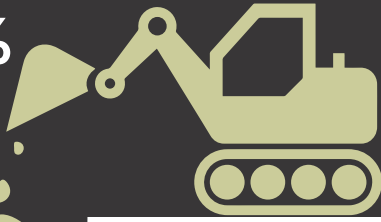
PAUL HOBSON

AMY LEWIS

SOME EVIDENCE FOR A RETHINK

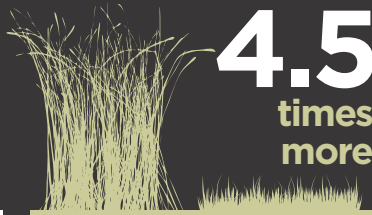
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, PUTTOCK & BRAZIER

68%
less
flow



Blocking drainage ditches on the Exmoor Mires reduced storm flows to 32% of the pre-restoration level.

4.5
times
more

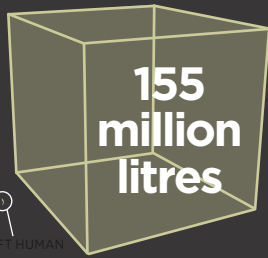
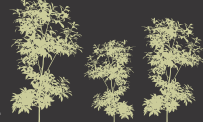


Culm v cropped

Devon's culm grasslands hold 4.5 times more water than intensively-managed grasslands.

The magic of trees

Water soaked into tree plantations in Wales at the rate of 100cm/h. On grazed pasture the rate was negligible.



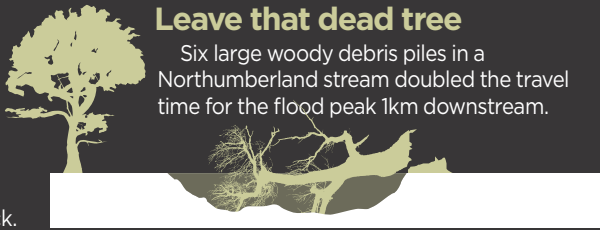
155
million
litres

GET HUMAN

Ditch-blocking 250 ha of peatland in Pumlumon, Wales raised the water table by 5cm. That's an extra 155 MI held back.

Leave that dead tree

Six large woody debris piles in a Northumberland stream doubled the travel time for the flood peak 1km downstream.



If all of the tributaries in a catchment spill their water into main rivers at slightly different times, it has been shown the most severe flooding can be avoided – making a huge difference to the number of homes and businesses affected.

There is a role for hard defences and dredging in some places but they won't work everywhere. We need an approach that looks at underlying causes – from the headwaters to the coast. Everyone needs to work together to find local solutions that work for people and wildlife across whole catchments.

Wildlife Trusts are doing this across the UK, for example in the 'Slow the Flow' projects we're implementing. We just need more of them in more places. This is why we are calling on the Government to invest in smarter natural solutions for flood control (see right). Evidence shows that in most places working with the grain of nature is more effective, and more affordable.

■ **Read more at wildlifetrusts.org/flooding.**



SHEFFIELD WILDLIFE TRUST

10 ways to help nature help people

1 Plan land use at a catchment scale
Use ecological network maps to create large, new multi-functional areas at strategic locations around vulnerable villages, towns and cities.

2 Stop building on floodplains
Planning policy must rigorously prevail against urban floodplain development. Too often, concerns are dismissed with disastrous effect.

3 Renaturalise rivers
Introduce more meanders, dead wood and rocks to slow the water. Recognise that the floodplain is part of the system, even if it is dry most of the time.



4 Protect soils
Encourage farming practices that restore soil and its ability to intercept run-off – especially near streams and rivers.

5 Rebuild absorbent uplands
Keep more water in the hills for longer by restoring wet peatlands, and letting broadleaf trees regenerate naturally in critical places.

6 Rip up city paving
Permeable surfaces, green roofs and wild areas in communal outdoor spaces should be part of all new development.

7 Create buffer strips
Strips of grasses and flowers along watercourses in towns or countryside slow the flow of water and reduce levels of pollutants.

8 Design and protect buildings better
Help vulnerable householders to adapt their houses so that a flood is less of an issue and life can return to normal more quickly.

9 Ensure farm payments reward helpful practices
Public payments should be for public benefits such as flood alleviation and the restoration of wild habitats.

10 Commit fully to tackling climate change
Properly commit to the Paris Climate Change agreement. Set up a National Natural Infrastructure Commission to lead and coordinate activity.

JACK PERKS

One branch at a time might not look like much. But over time beavers are nature's wetland engineers



LAURIE CAMPBELL

PEOPLE & WILDLIFE



Go wild this June

The Wildlife Trusts would love you to commit 30 Random Acts of Wildness from 1-30 June. Are you up for it?

Sign up at
wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWild





EARTH TIMBER STONE are passionate about wildlife and have the knowledge and expertise to make small alterations or complete re-designs to bring nature to you.

After a great year collaborating with the Avon Wildlife Trust on My Wild City they are excited to be designing and building the show garden for the Festival of Nature for the 3rd year running. Join them at Bristol's Harbourside on 11th/12th June to discuss your garden or call now to book a FREE consultation (offer for gardens in Bristol and North Somerset and subject to availability).

Call 01179 641715 or contact Jody directly on 07973 680973

www.earthtimberstone.co.uk
Find us on Facebook or Twitter @ETS_Gardening

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Vice President
Vice President
Vice President
Vice President

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Chair
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Secretary

Staff

Chief Executive

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Director of Delivery Programmes
Head of Land Management and Advice
Conservation Advisor
Conservation Advisor
Conservation Advisor
Conservation Project Officer
Contractor Conservation Advisor*
Contractor Conservation Assistant*
Monitoring Officer*
Community Engagement and Volunteering Manager
Nature & Wellbeing Programme Manager

Simon King
Mark Carwardine
Mike Dilger
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Roz Kidman Cox
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Natural Estates Project Officers
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Feed Bristol Project Officer*
Communities and Nature Senior Project Officer
Communities and Nature Project Officer
My Wild City Officer
Nature, Health and Wellbeing Officer*
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Director of Finance & Resources
Finance and Resources Manager
Finance and Resources Officer*
Grant Development Officer*
Membership & Administration Officer
Membership & Administration Officer*
Membership & Administration Officer*
Executive PA and HR Administrator*
Accountant*
Major Grants Fundraiser*
Site Assistant - Trust office*

Fundraising, Membership and Communications

Director of Fundraising, Membership and Communications*
Marketing Officer
Communications Officer

Folly Farm Centre

Director of Folly Farm Centre

Front of House Manager
Event Administrator*
General Assistants

*part-time

Vacant
Matt Cracknell
Rich Wright
Kelly Bray
Matt Harcourt
Matt Collis
Ellie Chapman
Emma Benton
Kate Marsh
Shelly Dewhurst

Jane Davis
Freiny Miles
Pat Sandy
Sam Pullinger
Jenny Holmes
Angela Davies
Claire Davey
Katharine Slocombe
Sarah Brander
Richard Cottrell
Roy Catford

Sarah Moore
Jade Preddy
Ella Beeson

Andrew Lund-Yates
Stella Page
Hannah Read
Arthur Newton
Elen Mannion

Postscript



We need to notice what's there and when it's not

Says Trust Chair, Roz Kidman Cox

Swallow

“One of the hardest things is to do is convince people who've had little contact with nature to care about it. Wildlife is 'lions and tigers on TV' and not relevant to their world, and they are too preoccupied to notice what's around them – and when it's gone. There lies the challenge, to find a way to open the eyes of at least one person you know by showing them simple marvels of nature.

When I was a child, a pair of spotted flycatchers nested every year in wisteria under my bedroom window – until one year they didn't. Only then did I realise that I loved them just being there. Today, they and other once-familiar migrants that fly to us from Africa, such as cuckoos and nightingales, are rarities. Somehow, we've become accustomed to and accepting of such dwindling populations. There is a name for that: shifting baselines. We forget that things were not always this way and are excited by the survivors we do see. We all need to relish what we have and to notice when once-familiar species are becoming rarities.

It's hard to love what you don't know you're missing, and if you regard it as just the way things are, you're not going to do anything to prevent the continuing decline. So we need everyone to



Roz

marvel at the arrival of spring, whether the first queen bumblebee foraging for life-giving pollen or the first swallows overhead. We need to notice what's there and when it's not and to look for ways to help. Pussy willow, humble dandelions and early flowering shrubs are vital for queen bumblebees, as are nest sites – and for swallows, too. Friends transformed an old outdoor privy into a swallow home, just by a few repairs, leaving an entrance and erecting a couple of shelves. It was occupied the first season.

We need to cherish the valuable grass-meadow verges – primroses are out already, and cowslips and other spring beauties will be soon. Make sure others notice these jewels, and lobby for the right mowing regime. We need to preserve space for wildlife and to make space for it.

So open someone's eyes this spring. Take them to a headland to watch for the migrants flying in and marvel, or point to the golden blooms of dandelions and imagine how we'd value them if they were rare.

R Kidman Cox