

Suffolk Barn Owls
Breeding Success
– see page 14



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Local Wildlife news

January - April 2018

A news and events
diary from wildlife and
conservation groups in
the Ipswich area



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Follow us on Facebook: **Ipswich Wildlife Group**



Where have our Toads Gone?

Last year we only had 1/8 of the toads we had in 2010, What's happened?

Would you like to help us with our toad patrol or just learn about frogs and toads?



Tuesday 13th February 2018

At The Scout Hall, Stoke Park Drive at 7:00pm

We will outline how and why we do the toad patrol and cover identification of species you are likely to see. Everyone welcome - Free event

Please come and say hello
 Margaret

For further information please contact the Greenways project on 01473 433995 or email: toads@greenlivingcentre.org.uk

SARG GREENWAYS

FOR SALE

Beanpoles, peasticks, bagged logs and loads and other woodland produce, and wildlife homes including hedgehog houses, bird boxes and insect homes.



Available (by appointment) from the Greenways Project office on Stoke Park Drive.

Contact james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk or 01473 433995 to discuss your requirements.

All produce from the sustainable management of nature reserves in Ipswich and proceeds to help fund management of the reserves and other wildlife projects.

Welcome

by James Baker

New year, new look! We hope you like the fresh image of Local Wildlife News. I'd like to thank Colin Hullis for his continued wonderful commitment to the magazine, which I hope you will agree is excellent.

The short winter months are the busiest in the conservation year – most wildlife is dormant, migrated away or at least not breeding – so almost all the habitat management work is crammed in to four months. This makes it a great time to get active and involved as a volunteer! Why not join in with one of the Greenways 'Megabash' events at Purdis Heath or Martlesham Heath – or any of the other regular site work parties in the events listing. All of the groups are very welcoming and are always delighted to have extra help. If you'd like to find out more about an activity before going, please contact the person in the event listing and they will be very happy to help.

Ipswich continues to be in the forefront of wildlife conservation effort – not only do we have the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Hedgehog project (a national first), and the Buglife 'Urban Buzz' project, but Ipswich Borough Council

was the first local authority to sign the Woodland Trust's new Charter for Trees. The Council's Chief Executive, Russell Williams, attended the national launch of the Charter and spoke about Ipswich's commitment to wildlife and trees. As well as continuing to manage our tree stock and seeking to increase the overall canopy cover in the town, there will be two Councillor Tree Champions. You can read more about these initiatives elsewhere in this edition, or please do contact the Greenways Project if you would like any further information.

Mailing lists – Please note

We are aware that some who are members of several conservation organisations may well receive more than one copy of the newsletter. If this is the case we would be very grateful if you could pass on the spare copy. If on the other hand you don't currently receive LWN regularly, but would like to, please consider joining one of the groups that distributes LWN to its members (i.e. Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Ipswich Wildlife Group, RSPB etc). LWN is available online at www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/greenways/



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Chairman's Farewell

Dave Munday

As I found it increasingly difficult to attend the evening meetings and committee meetings on a regular basis due to my health, I have resigned as Chairman and committee member.

This is done with much thought and sadness but feel it is only fair for my committee. I've been in post believe it or not, for 12 years so it is about time somebody else had a go out front!

I have thoroughly enjoyed my stint and you have been a lovely friendly and tolerant audience and now you may even find that my successor presents the AGM without any mistakes !

My special thanks also go to my committee who have been so supportive.

Many thanks too for all your kind wishes.

Dave Munday
(Ex Chair!)

The committee would like to place on record their deep appreciation of the service to the group Dave has given over the years, often in the face of difficult health. He has struggled manfully to overcome these problems, and we all wish him renewed vigour and pleasure in his new home for many years to come.



© Dave Fincham



Ipswich Group Newsletter

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We are the Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. We offer an interesting range of monthly meetings with guest speakers. Trust members and non-members are equally welcome. During the summer months we offer a variety of trips, some local, others by coach. Details of these and our monthly meetings can be found in our "Dates for your Diary" section or on the website, www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org.

Relocation

Eight days before our September meeting St Margaret's school informed us that they would be unable to accommodate us as their caretaker had left. So your committee spent the next week frantically looking for an alternative venue. Fortunately St Matthew's Church in Portman Road came to our rescue, and our meeting was transferred there. It later transpired that St Margaret's problem was to last into the new year, so the kindly staff at St Matthews agreed that our October, December and possibly January meetings could take place there as well. St Matthews Church is a warm and comfortable building, so we were pleased to take up the offer. We hope to return to St Margaret's in the near future, but that depends on the appointment of a new caretaker.



March 21st meeting 'Ipswich Hedgehog Update'

© Duncan Sweeting



January 17th meeting 'Garden Bird Watch'

© Colin Hullis

Dunwich Heath Nature Trail July 2017

Margaret Appleby

It was pleasing to have some young people in the group which set out from the Coast Guard Cottages at the top of the Dunwich Cliffs in July.

The trail started through a vast area of flowering heather and gorse with views of the sea off to our right. However, the minds of some of us were focused on finding the answers to questions on our worksheets. The first question was straightforward as we managed to find three types of heather in flower. But then despite knowing that Dartford Warblers live on Dunwich Heath all year round, it did not help us to spot a single one that day. We were able to hear what they sounded like though due to the wonders of modern technology. Just before we left the area of open heath land favoured by this elusive bird, we gathered in a tight group around someone's mobile phone which had a bird song app including the song of the Dartford Warbler. So we will know what to listen out for next time we are there.

Possibly the most observant member of the group was also the youngest. Being in front most of the time, he was the first to spot beautiful spider's webs, interesting fungi and colourful caterpillars. The distinctive black and yellow striped cinnabar moth caterpillars were so numerous they had stripped the leaves from large areas of ragwort.

From the open heath land we gradually descended through woodland where ten varieties of trees were identified with



Cinnebar moth caterpillars on ragwort



Heather and gorse surround Dunwich Coast Guard cottages

the aid of signs disguised as wooden logs. The final part of the walk bordered Docwa's Ditch, a six feet deep body of water dug by volunteers in 1970 and named after the first warden of the Nature Reserve. On a sunny day this area would be a haven for insect life. Although a few damsel flies were spotted, we were lucky that the drizzly rain did not dampen our spirits or our worksheets.

“ this area would be a haven for insect life ”

Docwa's Ditch was the lowest point of the walk so it was quite a climb from where it ended at Centenary Pond back to the top of the cliff and our starting



Docwa's Ditch



**Suffolk
Wildlife
Trust**

Ipswich Group Newsletter

point. We were grateful for the bench halfway up the slope from where we had excellent views of Sizewell, Minsmere and the North Sea. An enjoyable morning was had by all.

It was particularly heartening to see the enthusiasm for wildlife demonstrated by the younger members of the group.

Annual Coach Trip May 26th 2018

To Rainham Marshes and Thurrock Thameside Nature Park



Ipswich Group Newsletter

The Ipswich Group's Coach Outing this year will be to RSPB Rainham Marshes, followed by a visit to Thurrock Thameside Nature Park (Essex Wildlife Trust)

Rainham Marshes, part of the landscape of the Thames Estuary, sits on the urban fringe of London. It is the last stretch of ancient riverside marshland inside the M25. It is an international stopover for thousands of migratory birds, as they navigate along the Thames Estuary each year, from all over the world. The

RSPB acquired the site in the year 2000. It has a long history of neglect.

The Ministry of Defence used it for nearly 100 years, but the RSPB is working to restore important habitats and improve their biodiversity. There are three trails to follow round the reserve.

The circular route is the longest at 2.4 miles, there are three bird hides and several viewing platforms overlooking reedbeds, marsh and areas of water. If you are lucky you may catch sight of a water vole, for which Rainham is famous!

There is also a woodland walk of half a mile, and a riverside walk which will take you alongside the Thames. Hopefully at this time of year there should be damselflies,

butterflies, birds of prey such as hobbies and peregrines, grass snakes, marsh frogs and maybe even a wasp spider. Look out too for bearded tits, sand martins, reed buntings and maybe even a wheatear passing through. There are also many scarce wetland plants.

There is a café at Rainham, selling hot and cold food or of course you could bring a picnic.

Our next stop takes us to Thurrock Thameside Nature Park, which is also on the Thames Estuary. This 120 acre nature reserve managed by Essex Wildlife Trust is a former landfill site. Eventually it will be 845 acres.

There is a spectacular visitor centre (with rooftop viewing

deck) and café with 360° views over the Thames and mudflats. The area is an avian hotspot, there are internationally important numbers of ringed plovers and avocet, and nationally important numbers of grey plover, dunlin and redshank. Other birds include skylark and cuckoo. It is important for other species too such as shrill carder bee, adder, brown hare and water voles.

Harbour porpoise and common seals are often seen from the visitor centre. There are two miles of footpaths and a bird hide.



BOOKING FORM

Coach Outing to Rainham Marshes and Thurrock Thameside Nature Park

26th May 2018 8.30am

Please reserve

..... adult places at £25/£30 (if not RSPB member)

Total £.....

..... places for 16 years and under at £15

Total £.....

Total sum enclosed

Total £.....

Please note if you are not an RSPB member then the price is £30, as the cost to enter Rainham Marshes is £5. Join coach at Crown Street or Ipswich Village Car Park (delete as appropriate).

Name

Address

Postcode Telephone Mobile

Email address

Please return this form together with a stamped addressed envelope and cheque made payable to Suffolk Wildlife Trust to: Susanne Renshaw, 51 Brookhill Way, Ipswich, IP4 5UL. Tel 07720604842. If you give an email address you do not need to enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Dates for your Diary

The January meeting will be held in St Matthew's Church, Portman Road IP1 2EX. Parking is available in the School car park, at the Fletcher Centre opposite the church, and there is also plenty of street parking nearby.

We hope to return to St Margaret's School, Bolton Lane IP4 3BT as soon as possible.
Please look at the SWT web site What's On section for latest information.

Wednesday January 17th Claire Boothby 'The Garden Bird Watch'

Claire's main interest is in garden wildlife, she is currently the Garden Bird Watch Development Officer for the BTO, having previously worked for the National Trust. Her talk will focus on Garden Bird Watch, who takes part, and what they do. She will also explain how the data provided is used by the BTO. She will talk too about ways to attract birds into your garden, and tackle a few identification challenges.

Wednesday February 21st Chris Gibson 'Menorca. Its Wildlife and Wild Places'

Chris, a freelance author, photographer and tour guide leader, who formally worked for English Nature, has led many excursions to this small, quiet Mediterranean Island. With its rugged coast, lagoons and fresh water lakes, it has an abundance of bird life. Its variety of habitats provide a home for 900 species of plants, some of which are endemic to the Balearic Islands. Google 'Chris Gibson Menorca' to learn more about this island he loves.



Wednesday March 21st Ali North 'Ipswich Hedgehog Update'

Ali is the Ipswich Hedgehog Officer for the SWT and is continuing the work to make Ipswich the most hedgehog friendly town in the UK. Her talk will outline how to attract hedgehogs to your garden and how to protect them once they arrive.

Wednesday April 18th Peter Maddison 'Butterflies in Suffolk. A Feast for the Eyes'

Peter is chairman of Butterfly Conservation in Suffolk and editor of the Suffolk Argos, its county newsletter. We will learn about Emperors and Admirals, Peacocks and Painted Ladies and many others which we may be lucky enough to see in Suffolk. He will also help us to identify other Suffolk species, and tell us when and where we are likely to see them. This meeting will be preceded by a short AGM.

Saturday May 26th 8.30am to 6.00pm

Coach Trip to Rainham Marshes, and Thurrock Thameside Booking Essential. Details and booking form on page 6.



April 18th meeting Peter Maddison 'Butterflies in Suffolk. A Feast for the Eyes'

A full listing of all Groups' events can be found from page 22

Ipswich Wildlife Group News

Colin Hullis

John Welsh retires

John Welsh has retired from the committee after serving for over 25 years, John is an inaugural member of the Group, and a past Chairman. John was instrumental in setting up the Group in the late 1980's when along with some other Ipswich-based members of Suffolk Wildlife Trust they wanted to concentrate their practical conservation work on wildlife sites exclusively in the Ipswich area. John remains as a Group Trustee.



Chair: Ray Sidaway 01473 259104
www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/iwg
facebook.com/ipswichwildlifegroup

Ipswich Wildlife Group is a registered charity, relying entirely on volunteers, that promotes interest in, and conservation of, wildlife and habitats in and around Ipswich. We seek to inform and educate the local communities of Ipswich about the wildlife and habitats that can be found in the area, and the issues affecting them, as well as involve local people in practical wildlife conservation. We carry out practical conservation tasks, bid for grants to improve wildlife and green areas around Ipswich and work closely with the Greenways Project, Friends of Belstead Brook Park and other local groups with similar aims.

The committee would like to express their sincere thanks to John for all his conscientious work for the Group over the years.



IWG Chairman Ray Sidaway thanks John Welsh on his retirement from the committee.

Ipswich Local Plan submission

As part of the public consultation, IWG submitted comments on Potential Development Sites within the Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan. Our comments were in relation to the environmental elements of the proposed plan that concerned conservation areas within the Borough, green corridors and the Ipswich Ecological Network. Our comments on the various points ranged from pointing out the importance of natural environment sites and the existence of wildlife habitats to the suitability or not of development sites and the desirability of green spaces, play areas and parks. Our comments will be taken into consideration as the updated Plan goes through its various stages of adoption.

Wildlife Homes activity

Led, as ever by Martin Cant, we have had another busy period making nest box kits and taking them to events around the town and beyond for people to construct hedgehog, bird and bug boxes for their gardens. We have again been guests of the Avenues Group who support handicapped people through illness, injury or disability, joining one of their therapy sessions in St Peter's Church. We have also had a super session making bug boxes with the 32nd Ipswich Scout Group at their Stoke Park Drive headquarters, with a group of youngsters at the Whitton Fellowship and the pupils of Chantry Primary School.

The largest order we have had to date was completed in October when we supplied a total of 48 boxes including Swift, Sparrow and Owl boxes to Ufford Park Golf Club who will erect them around the course as part of their efforts to gain an environmental award for the Club. We thank them for their generous donation. Martin Cant has compiled



A super session of bug box making with the 32nd Ipswich Scouts

a programme of Wildlife Homes events that ensures we shall have another busy year in 2018.

More activities with our partners

We have also been involved with many other activities with our partners, the Greenways Project and Friends of Belstead Brook Park including Belstead Megabashes in November and December and Martlesham Common Open Day. We also attended the launch event for Ipswich Urban Buzz at the Maidenhall allotments and Community Garden. The IWG wildlife allotment continues to be developed. We now have a pond and a wild flower area. Hopefully the Spring will see more activity with the planting of nectar-rich plants and fruit bushes.

Events to look out for include the East Anglian Potato Day at Stonham Barns on Saturday 10th February where we will be promoting IWG to the hundreds of people buying their seed potatoes. Ipswich Beanpole Day will be held on Sunday April 29th at Millennium Wood, 11am – 3pm, but we will have Beanpoles and pea sticks for sale from February 2018. For more details phone Gerry Donlon on 01394 547263. See the Events Diary pages for all our events.

Smart way to support IWG

We have signed up to 'giveasyoulive' an online service that raises funds for us every time you shop online. Please go to www.giveasyoulive.com/join/ipswich-wildlife-group where all is explained.



The newly-installed wildlife pond on our allotment

Wildlife Rangers winter work update

Sam Chamberlin

The wildlife team are currently a fraction of the way through the annual winter work programme which focuses on habitat management in our parks, open spaces and nature reserves (though by the time you read this we will hopefully be almost done!) and this is just a little summary to date. The annual cycle of jobs is going full circle and we have already been able to tick off some of the more expansive jobs such as cutting and removal of reed mace and common sedge in the greater tussock-sedge bed at Bixley Heath (SSSI).

In addition, the recent recruitment of part-time rangers has created a pool of skills and experience which has been harnessed for the implementation of habitat

management, patrolling, ecological surveying and environmental education.

During the months of September and October the team have combined to monitor translocated reptiles in Chantry Park and have completed the required amount of survey visits in order to report on the condition of the population. Specific habitat improvements are scheduled in the County Wildlife Site and other areas of the park over the winter months to renovate hibernacula, top up compost piles and reduce lower canopy spread from certain trees which are beginning to shade out log piles – important basking sites for viviparous lizard and slow-worm.

This winter progress has been



Volunteers lend a welcome hand at Pipers Vale Local Nature Reserve

made on some sites that are managed in conjunction with Higher Level Stewardship funding and with the hard work and dedication of volunteers. Recent effort has been spent at Pipers Vale LNR in the northern section of mature oak woodland, making good use of our 'Tree-Popper' tool to remove increasingly dominant sycamore saplings from the shrub layer. Some areas we hope to keep open for wildlife education activities, while in others we hope to encourage development of a denser understorey to benefit wildlife such as nesting birds and hedgehogs.

If you are interested in volunteering with the IBC Wildlife Team please call 01473 433998. Our regular work party day is Thursday,

but other opportunities are periodically available.



Common lizards basking in the sun



Log piles are important basking sites for lizards and slow worms



Juvenile Slow-worm recorded



IPSWICH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Wildlife Rangers

Office : 01473 433998
park.rangers@ipswich.gov.uk
Stable Block, Holywells Park,
Cliff Lane, Ipswich IP3 0PG

The Wildlife & Education Rangers are responsible for the management of wildlife areas within the town's parks and other green spaces. As well as carrying out practical management, the team runs an events programme and works with many local schools to engage and inspire the public about the wildlife Ipswich has to offer.

Focus on Local Nature Reserves – Millennium Wood

James Baker

Millennium Wood, as the name suggests, is a recent addition to the wide range of valuable wildlife habitats in the Belstead Brook Park – an informal country park around the south-western edge of Ipswich.

The wood was created by a mixture of planting (all by volunteers and local community organisations during public planting days)



GREENWAYS
countryside project

Scout Headquarters (next to St Peter's Church), Stoke Park Drive, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 9TH Office:
01473 433995 greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk
www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/greenways

The Greenways Countryside Project exists to protect and enhance the countryside, landscape and open space across an area of about 100 square kilometres in and around the town of Ipswich, and home to around one quarter of the population of Suffolk, for the benefit of wildlife and local people. The project relies on volunteers to complete much of its practical conservation work. The Greenways Project is a very successful and well-established partnership between Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council, Babergh District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and the local community.

and 'natural regeneration'. Natural regeneration is the simple process of allowing local trees to drop their seed into an area to 'naturally' create a new woodland. In the case of Millennium Wood, it was the obvious technique to use as the lovely Ancient Woodland, Spring Wood, is located immediately to the south west – so the prevailing wind would blow local tree seed into the field. Once the crop of wheat was harvested from the field in 1999, and we started to prepare for planting and rabbit fencing, we discovered 10 species of tree already growing as tiny saplings in the tractor wheel ruts and between the wheat stems – proving straight away that natural regeneration would be a success.

Rabbit netting fences protected the natural regeneration in a strip 50 metres wide from the edge of Spring Wood, and within a few years a dense thicket of mixed species was flourishing. Outside of these fenced areas, we planted a nursery crop of oak trees, as we knew oaks had been planted in Spring Wood in previous centuries. We also planted hazel shrubs under the sets of power lines that cross the site, again because we were confident this species had been planted before, and it is ideally suited to regular coppicing, preventing it reaching the wires above! By limiting the

species we planted, we could be confident that any other species growing have arrived naturally and are locally native – and thus the most suited to growing in the local soil conditions.

In order to make the new area look, feel and act more like a woodland, we added piles of dead wood and piles of woodchip – helping to encourage in a wide range of invertebrates and fungi for example. The naturally seeded trees grew extremely quickly and effectively, soon outperforming the planted oaks and hazels!

In the early years, willow species tended to dominate and grow fastest and so had to be coppiced to slow them up. Under the powerlines the fast growing willows have often been treated to prevent regrowth – not something we like to do, but essential or else we would have to cut hundreds every year!

In 2010, a volunteer looking to ring chicks in bird boxes in the wood, discovered a dormouse nest and dormouse in one of the bird boxes. We hadn't previously found evidence of this species in the area, but were delighted to discover their presence in a 10 year old woodland! Dormice are a European Protected Species (effectively the highest level of species protection), due to the loss of suitable habitat (and particularly connected habitat) and arguably competition from species including grey squirrels (that tend to eat all the hazel nuts under-ripe, before dormice can use them!).

Regular surveys of the dormouse population in Millennium Wood and Spring Wood (carried out by wonderful volunteers including Margaret Regnault who has the requisite survey licence), have helped us to understand the spread



© Margaret Regnault

First Millennium Wood Dormouse discovered in 2010



A variety of well-established tree species and glades throughout the wood



© Margaret Regnault

Dormouse nest of leaves and grasses

and numbers of the species present. Dormice famously live at very low densities, so a highest survey count in 2017 of around 25 animals sounds low but is good and hopefully sustainable. The surveys cannot achieve a total population figure, but the count is comparable from one year to another as the same number of boxes are surveyed.

Management work in Millennium Wood has to take into account the needs of dormice (along with many other woodland species), so if you visit, you will notice we leave overhead branches across the paths and rides – this allows the arboreal dormice to access as much of the woodland as possible without having to travel at ground level, where they are much more susceptible to predators. We also aim to have plenty of feeding opportunities for dormice, including bramble (flowers in the spring and then blackberries in late summer) and hazel (critical for the nuts that allow them to store fat to survive the winter hibernation). Coppicing is also vital to long-term dormouse survival – a cycle of freshly cut areas, open but re-growing areas, and dense thicket provide the range of conditions for many species to thrive.

Most of the management work

in the wood is carried out by our wonderful volunteers, and includes: coppicing, building dead hedges, mowing meadow areas and glades, path clearing and surfacing, litter picking and other general maintenance.

The Belstead Brook Park ‘megabash’ event in November attracted around 30 volunteers, and saw some coppicing under the powerlines, a lovely bonfire for cooking baked potatoes and re-construction of dead hedges. The dead hedges we build in most of our reserves are multi-functional



– they provide a ‘use’ for the cuttings from the work, they provide a strong linear micro-habitat ideal as a corridor for invertebrates, small mammals and birds, and they can help to steer or limit access by people and/or dogs to minimise disturbance to vulnerable species.

A great day to visit Millennium Wood is our annual ‘Spring Wood Day’, this year on bank holiday Monday 7th May 2018 – please see the notice on page 24.



James gives instruction on the safe use of tools before the Megabash



The Megabash fire well underway, ready for the baked potatoes



Wayne gets stuck in



Peter Scotcher demonstrates the finer points of coppicing



Coppicing the hazel is an annual job for volunteers during the winter

Notes from The Dales Local Nature Reserve

Jessica Allen

The wildflower meadow is currently looking rather bare and sorry for itself. Five strips of the existing meadow have been stripped off in order to plant wildflower seeds as part of the Urban Buzz project. This bare look is only temporary though as we are expecting a magnificent display of wildflowers in the spring. Other wildflower plugs were planted in the grass after it had its annual cut to remove the nutrients that inhibit the more sensitive flowers from growing.

Volunteers continue to work caring for and maintaining the area for the benefit of wildlife and people. The pond was cleared of logs and litter by volunteers with a tool called a chrome as we do not have access to a boat and the pond is too deep to wade in. Unfortunately there are still some people who throw litter or just dump it anywhere they feel like it and often in pretty areas. Both our volunteers and the IBC Park Patrol work hard to keep the site as safe and clean as possible. Some of the litter comes from children and picnickers but some appears to come from gardens that back onto the Dales. We are especially worried about vegetation coming over fences as it could



Bare strips ready for wild flower seed

contain non-natives that will spread at the expense of our native plants.

We have two scrapes that were dug out to help amphibians, although there is no water in them at present because the weather has been so dry. We are now hoping for some rain in the following months to make sure there is enough water in the scrapes for amphibians to breed when things get warmer in spring.

The new football pitch near the children's area is being installed by Ipswich Borough Council's Landscape Team this autumn. This will be a great improvement for the local children as the old goalmouths could be described as ropey at best! We hope that the children's area will be renovated in the spring. This project is also delivering a new footpath in from the Baronsdale Close entrance to the site.

The nature reserve is a pleasure and delight as always. At the last meeting of the Friends in October, members reported

seeing fox, sparrowhawk, grass snake and slow worm. Muntjac deer have also been heard calling in the night.



Friends of the Dales

The Dales is a small Local Nature Reserve situated off Dales Road in Ipswich.

For details of the Friends Group please contact Jessica Allen at jallen7@hotmail.co.uk or find us on Facebook by searching Friends of the Dales



Wild flower plugs ready for planting



Its a Nature Reserve not a dumping ground for dead zebras!

Urban Buzz Project Update

David Dowding

Urban Buzz is an ambitious project aiming to create over 100 'buzzing hotspots' in and around Ipswich for our much loved bees and other pollinators, providing additional feeding and shelter opportunities.

Urban Buzz Ipswich is now well underway. July through to September was very much a communication phase for the project. October and November has been a groundwork phase preparing and seeding sites ready for pollinators. We have been working closely with Ipswich Borough Council's Grounds maintenance team, who are well geared up for site preparation. This has consisted of a mixture of turf stripping over-seeding and rotavation. Smaller areas have usually been dug over by hand.

On the 8th of November we had an organised work party with the Friends of the Dales LNR. The area had recently been cut and a few areas were stripped down to the subsoil. This enabled us to sow and plant a good portion of the meadow. We also planted some primroses in some of the damp woodland areas. Some members have also come out to plant wildflowers on nearby areas such as Broom Hill and Valley road.

Landseer is one of the Project's flagship sites. It is already a great wildlife site with lots of meadow but the project will focus on improving the less diverse areas for pollinators. On Landseer we have now planted and seeded around two acres of meadow with the help of some keen volunteers. One large section (0.75 acres) of coarse grass has been entirely stripped off and covered from corner to corner with wildflower seed. By the summer this should look a real spectacle

and form a valuable oasis for the local pollinators

Sidegate School has been a real pioneer in wildlife education here in Ipswich. With a wildlife pond, and a series of log piles already in place, the school was keen to expand out into the playing fields by planting some young trees and sowing a wildflower meadow. We teamed up with the Ipswich hedgehog project on in November to do a joint activity with the school's Wildlife Ambassadors. The pupils took turns sowing seeds and building hedgehog hotels tucked away along the woodland edge. With help from the teachers we discussed the topics of pollination as well as lifecycles, habitats, and food chains. This enabled the pupils to understand how a wildflower meadow would benefit hedgehogs as well as the pollinators.



Sidegate School's Wildlife Ambassadors sowing seeds

The Activlives organisation has always been involved with wildlife conservation in Ipswich. They were keen to help with the project and hosted our Launch at their Community Garden but this has since progressed. They have agreed to cultivate wildflower plants for the Urban Buzz project through their ActivGardens

project which has a large plant nursery with extensive glass houses.



Wild flowers growing in the ActiveLives glasshouses

Targets

The target for Buzzing hotspots was 100, spanning across 25 hectares. So far 96 sites have been identified but the more the merrier. So far we have successfully completed the preparation of 16 sites totalling 4.4 hectares with a further eight scheduled in before the end of the year. On top of this 53 volunteers have

Wild Ipswich

All the conservation organisations working together to inspire local people to help wildlife throughout the town and beyond.
www.wildipswich.org

attributed 154 hours to the project. The feedback thus far has been incredibly positive. Meadow creation causes initial change and the results are not immediate so this response from the public in particular was very pleasing.



Signage has been put in place to aid consultation

If you have any suggestions for Urban Buzz sites within the Ipswich area or would like to get involved with the project, please get in touch
David Dowding,
Ipswich Urban Buzz Conservation Officer
07464 828624
david.dowding@buglife.org.uk



Volunteers at work on Landseer Park

Christchurch Park then and now...

Reg Snook



Colchester and Ipswich Museums, Ipswich Borough Council Collection, IPSM.C.: R. 1939-98

The Suffolk Show in Christchurch Park by John Duval from Colchester and Ipswich Museums: Ipswich Borough Council Collection



Friends of Christchurch Park

Secretary: Sylvia Patsalides 07971 467042
Membership Secretary: Robert Fairchild
01473 254255

www.focp.org.uk Follow us on Facebook@
Christchurch Park and Twitter@ChristchurchPk

The sole purpose of the Friends Group is to help look after the Park for the public good, and to promote its welfare. Anyone who shares this aim is welcome to join. For a small annual fee of £5 you can join in Friends activities all year round, including Illustrated talks and discussions, Guided Park walks and Practical conservation work. You will also receive an informal seasonal newsletter.

I suppose that as we grow older it is inevitable that we reminisce and compare now with 'as it was then'. I am not that ancient (that's my view) but luckily, since a very early age, I have kept records of my findings in the countryside. Those early notes were written in cheap exercise books and it is interesting to browse through these early scribbles. I was reminded of this when I visited the Mansion in Christchurch Park and stood in front of a painting by John Duval (1815-1892) entitled "The Suffolk Show in Christchurch Park". This magnificent painting dated 1869 depicts people and horses in a landscape of mature trees and grassland a most visual reminder of

how our Park looked then. Many viewers will surely be surprised that the setting was Christchurch Park; it could easily be interpreted as a rural idyll in deepest Suffolk. Surprisingly, this prestigious county show used to be held in our Park, very close to the centre of Ipswich. At that time Christchurch Park was owned by Thomas Neale Fonnereau who lived in the Mansion. John Duval really knew his horses and was commissioned to illustrate The Suffolk Stud Book in 1880. He was also a very fine portrait painter commissioned by royalty and the aristocracy.

Change in those days came slowly. A friend of mine was a local farmer whose father had bought his first tractor in 1934, a Fordson from America which speeded up the ploughing somewhat from when Suffolk Punches were used to pull the plough. These heavy horses ceased to be used in 1958. Although my friend never kept records he recalls great numbers of finches, thrushes and especially house sparrows. In fact the farm employed local boys to trap the sparrows as there are so many of them, because these birds were considered to be a nuisance. Of course other 'winged vermin' was also destroyed. With the advancement of modern machinery, use of herbicides and pesticides there has been a steady decline of bird life on the farm with house sparrows completely disappearing.

Similarly, today there are no house sparrows in Christchurch Park and a massive decline has been recorded in

many other species. From my notes I see that our Dawn Chorus walks now contain much less variety of bird song. We are fully aware of habitat loss in our countryside but Christchurch Park appears to be very similar to how it was in John Duval's day. So what has changed? Certainly the wear and tear on the Park has changed as have the numbers of staff who are employed to look after it. Horses and carts have been replaced by heavy vehicles carrying generators and fairground equipment compacting the grassy areas of the Park often leaving deep ruts and occasional tree damage. Our Park receives much less respite than it once did.

With the increase in the population of Ipswich since those times we must, however, take into account the fact that thousands of people get much enjoyment from the events held within it. After all, the Park was a gift to the people of Ipswich from Thomas Fonnereau for their use and enjoyment. I realise too, when I walk through the Park on a sunny autumn day, when the colours are at their best, that its wonderful contours remain. Its gorgeous trees silhouetted against the skyline are a joy to behold and unchanged at that. To this end, the Friends of Christchurch Park have, over the past few years, been quietly adding to the tree content throughout the Park and particularly in the Arboretum. You see, although our Park will always benefit from some 'TLC' some would say that it can take whatever is thrown at it since Nature doesn't take long to cover up any scars.

Always lots of activity in Holywells

Robin Gape *Chair of FoHP*

By the time that you read this, winter will be well under way. It's time to look back and to look forward. FoHP were delighted to receive a report from Carol, one of the garden volunteers, of seeing Elephant Hawk Moth caterpillars, as photographed in the previous Local Wildlife News, munching away on rose bay willow herb near the Holywells Park Conservatory. Adding to the report was a video of a Privet Hawk Moth, also having a good munch, all of which shows the power of, and the fun to be had with, just keeping one's eyes open.

Every so often, one tempts, knowingly or unknowingly, fate. There must have been a great deal of temptation in relation to October's Apple Day, which featured on the cover of the previous issue. To start with, the forecast wind on the appointed day resulted in IBC calling all park events off. And so FoHP postponed the event by a fortnight, in to November. Again, we did the preparation and looked at the weather forecast. The God of Wind was in our favour, but Rain took over



Apple pressing is hard work

where Wind had left off! In the event, we had what might be termed a hard core of around 100 visitors to the event, and a great deal of mud in The Orchard! Thankfully, a good time seemed to be had by all. There was no shortage of folk for food and drink, and in spite of the rain the storytelling in the woods held the audience, select though it was, spellbound.



A Pumpkin Bee!



Privet Hawk Moth caterpillar munching away

In winter, there is much less daylight, and rather less temperature. But this does not mean that Holywells Park closes down. A lot of the wildlife is dormant, but on a warm day insects are to be spotted flying, or otherwise moving, around local suntraps. Even in January, I have been surprised to see hoverflies around sheltered bushes. There are dog walkers, and their canine companions, to be seen on pretty much any day of the year. The café is open year round, though the opening hours are rather more restricted in winter. But warm food and beverages are especially welcome when the weather's brisk! And what better way of justifying a quick visit than a bracing stroll, with or without the kids, a dog, or some other companion?

The lack of leaves during winter is a harbinger of the coming of spring, and new life appearing in Holywells Park. Many years ago, when out walking the dog in Essex, I fell to chatting with a local naturalist. He explained that the yellow spotted butterflies to be seen in the glade were freshly hatched Speckled Wood butterflies, which species is pretty much the first to appear in Spring, around March,

and the last to hatch in Autumn. When fresh, the colours are sharp, but after a couple of days the colours fade, and become better matched to the Speckled Wood's woodland surroundings. So even a usually dingy, easy-to-miss, quite common insect has a fascinating story to tell!



Friends of Holywells Park

The Group aims to work in partnership with Ipswich Borough Council to improve and promote the Park.

Contact: fohpipswich@gmail.com www.holywellspark.org.uk [facebook.com/holywellsparkipswich](https://www.facebook.com/holywellsparkipswich)

Work parties

FoHP work parties continue, do come and make your positive contribution to Holywells Park. Wednesday mornings, 10am, meet near the Stable Block. Further details from Martin Cant 07858 436003.



Sending the orchard's trees to sleep

Venomous snakes, data protection and waxwings

Tim Kenny

Readers of my September article will remember that I was a contestant on BBC TV's Mastermind that was recorded back in July. Well finally it aired on November 10th and I can talk freely about the result. I came second with 23 points and no passes, to the winner, a quizzing juggernaut named Alfred Williams who scored 31 points! I sincerely hope he goes on to win the series. Still, pretty pleased to get

13 points on 'The venomous snakes of the world', although some slight brain fades on the General Knowledge round let me down a little. Nobody mention 'marzipan' please!

Like many organisations the RSPB will be subject to new data protection regulations being introduced Europe-wide and we will be asking members to opt in and advise us of their preferences.

These new regulations come into force in May 2018 and unfortunately if any existing supporters have not opted in by this date, the RSPB will only be allowed to contact them in regard to their membership. The pertinent forms are in your latest RSPB

magazine so please take a moment to look at these and send them back.

This migration season hasn't been a vintage one rarity

wise in our part of the world, but it's always nice to listen to the



© Tim Kenny

Waxwing, Hollesley

calls of the migrating redwings at night overhead (a thin "tseep" as they keep in contact with one another). Should we experience hard weather this winter (remember 2009-2010? I ended up with a ten foot icicle on my house) then these birds, along with their relatives the fieldfares, will come into urban areas to find food. Even more excitingly, the prospect of waxwings rears its head, although whether we will come close to matching last year's "waxwing winter" is another question. There was a decent flock at Hollesley in March this year of around 30 birds, which commuted to and from a holly bush to gorge on the fruit at regular intervals, giving wonderful views.



Ipswich Local Group

Group Leader Tim Kenny
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ipswichrspliblocalgroup@yahoo.com
www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ipswich

Ipswich RSPB Local Group is for everyone interested in birds and other wildlife in the Ipswich area and beyond. Come along to our indoor talks, held monthly between September to April at Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, or (throughout the year), get out and experience nature first hand on one of our regular field meetings, visiting some of the best spots for wildlife in the area. Three times a year the 'Orwell Observer', keeps readers abreast of the latest developments at nearby RSPB Reserves as well as news of Group activities, along with members' photographs and accounts of birding exploits from home and abroad. Membership costs £3 per year (£1 for Juniors). For more information see the Events Diary in this magazine, visit our website or write as per details above.

Suffolk barn owls breeding success

Chris Courtney

For the past five or six years I have volunteered as a barn owl monitor under the Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project, (SCBOP), looking after a number of boxes around Ipswich and on the Felixstowe peninsula.

From 1945 Barn owls declined nationally by almost 70% and in Suffolk by the millennium there were only around 100 pairs left mostly in the north-east of the county. By 2005 it appeared that the decline in barn owls had begun to even

out. However, their recovery was being hampered by a lack of nesting sites.

This gave rise to the inception of the SCBOP in 2006 which since that time has helped facilitate and advise on the fixing of over 1800 barn owl boxes across the county.

In 2016 SCBOP succeeded in monitoring 83% of its 1,800 boxes logging the presence of barn owls in 476 of them. A further 13 boxes not monitored last year, on the Shotley

peninsula brings this total to 485, a new Suffolk record. However, despite these record numbers, productivity was not high last year, largely due to the inclement weather, with many eggs failing to hatch and frequent failed broods. A cold snap in late April, early May was then followed by a very wet June. This hampered male birds from provisioning their brooding females, or newly hatched chicks with voles. (Barn owls have no waterproofing in their feathers so therefore are unable to hunt in wet weather as their feathers become water-logged in the rain).

Despite this, a total of 483 chicks were produced from 206 boxes occupied at the chick stage during July to October.

One of the chicks from one of the boxes I monitored in Levington in 2016 was found this year breeding in a box in Alderton. However, another chick ringed from the same brood last year, displayed even greater wanderlust when it was recorded this summer with its own brood in a box more than 400kms away in Cornwall!



Outside and inside a successful owl box

Butterflies boom on Belstead's Nature Reserves

Kev Ling

It is always nice to have a nature reserve on one's doorstep. So, I am blessed to have a large area to explore in the Belstead area of Ipswich.

Belstead Meadows, Kiln Meadow, Spring Wood and Bobbits Lane nature reserves are nestled side by side, providing acres of fantastic wildlife habitat that includes Insects, Birds, Mammals, Amphibians and flora. It is the Butterflies that I will focus on in this article.

My year kicked off along Bobbits Lane, examining hedgerows for Brown Hairstreak eggs. The larval foodplant is Blackthorn and the eggs are laid singly on the bark. Look early in the year before new growth makes it more challenging. A number were found, but later in the year, the adults proved elusive to me.

The Orange Tip is one of the first species to appear. It provides welcome colour after a long winter and helps kick start spring. Given the mild temperatures my first sighting this year was at Belstead Meadows on 2nd April, my earliest on record. I would return there regularly to observe the early stages of the next generation of Orange Tips. Later, I also observed my earliest recorded Holly Blue, along with a further six species (Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Speckled Wood, Comma, Brimstone, Small White). A good omen for the year to come.



First Green Hairstreak of the year

Kiln Meadow is owned by Ipswich Borough Council and officially opened in 2013. It comprises a mixture of grassland, hedgerows and woodland and supports a range of butterflies. On the 30th April I recorded my first Green Hairstreak of the year, on Hawthorn. The following day was the annual Spring Wood Celebration event where the Suffolk Branch of BC attend and provide guided walks. The weather was not kind to us this year, but we hope to see you there in 2018.

The next event at Kiln Meadow was the BioBiltz on 11th June. Good weather provided a variety of species including the emergence of Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Skippers. Other sightings included Brown Hairstreak and Comma larvae as well as adult Brimstone, Small Copper, Red Admiral, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Whites.

“ sightings of both Silver Washed Fritillary and White Admiral ”

By mid-June there were single sightings of both Silver Washed Fritillary and White Admiral. The White Admiral was not such a surprise as these are present a short flight away at Wherstead and Cutlers Wood. As for the SWF, is this another example of how this species has spread across the county recently?



Comma on Kiln Meadow

On June 29th, an afternoon walk saw butterflies reaching their peak at Kiln Meadow, with over 500 seen in one third of the reserve, including 234 skippers and 215 Ringlet. The summer highlight for me was the Comma. On this walk 26 were counted. I also found larvae and pupa of this species.

Into July and an explosion of Gatekeeper. After a disappointing 2016, this species bounced back with a vengeance and sightings would remain constant for weeks to come.

As the summer progressed, so did the number of visits made to this beautiful area of Ipswich. I could not remember seeing so many Butterflies for some time. Small Copper numbers increased along Bobbits Lane and on a good day I would find 15+ species along this stretch. At Kiln Meadow a plum tree started to shed its fruit, inviting Comma and Red Admiral to a feast, whilst good numbers of Large White began to be seen.

As winter beckons, mild days, still produce small numbers of Butterflies, with the hibernating species feeding themselves in preparation for a long winter ahead. That is just about it for 2017. I look forward to that moment when the Orange Tip heralds the start of Spring and we can look forward to doing it all again.



Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Membership Secretary
01379 643665

www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk
email: butterflies@sns.org.uk

Butterfly Conservation is dedicated to saving wild butterflies, moths and their habitats throughout the UK. All Butterfly Conservation members who live in Suffolk are automatically members of the branch and receive our newsletter, the Suffolk Argus, three times a year. The Suffolk branch is run by volunteers and we would be very pleased to hear from you if you would like to get involved.



Suffolk Branch are offering Buckthorns for Brimstones again!
For more details see page two or visit our website

Driven Grouse Shooting campaign in focus

Gi Grieco

In the last issue we made mention of the inaugural Derek Moore Memorial Lecture, a joint event between Suffolk Ornithologists' Group and Suffolk Wildlife Trust that took place in November. The evening was a great success with around 130 people present in the Great Hall at Ipswich School, to hear an impassioned, and sometimes humorous talk by leading conservationist, wildlife campaigner and author Dr Mark Avery.

The evening was opened by SOG President John Grant who recounted some tales about Derek Moore, including Derek's great passion for wildlife and conservation, that he believed should be enjoyed by all and, being a great raconteur, his love of a good story. John then introduced Dr Avery, whose lecture was entitled 'Conserving our wildlife: are we winning?'. Initially he talked about some of the species gains that



Dr. Mark Avery at the inaugural Derek Moore Memorial Lecture

hold more pairs. Birds regularly go missing with some found either poisoned or shot.

The proceeds from the evening go to the SWT Suffolk Broads appeal to fund land acquisitions that will greatly extend and enhance the Trust's landholding at Carlton Marshes. This reserve was created during Derek Moore's time at Suffolk Wildlife Trust and was one of his proudest achievements.

The Garrod Award

SOG has an award in memory of Ken Garrod. The idea has been expanded to have it as an annual celebration of the huge contributions made to SOG and Suffolk birding by both Ken and his wife Jean. Jean wanted the award to be presented to the next generation

of bird and wildlife enthusiasts and be awarded for their contribution to birds and wildlife. This is open to all Suffolk-based young nature enthusiasts, up to 25 years old, who are involved in birding, conservation and the environment. The closing date for nominations is January 15th 2018.

SOG would like the form filled in on their website - www.sogonline.org.uk/the-garrod-award/ or by email, and a team will assess the nominees and select a winner each year. Winners will receive a certificate, a year's membership of SOG, a SOG Tee -shirt and space within the Harrier to write articles about their wildlife experiences. The Garrod Award will be presented at each SOG Annual General Meeting, normally held in February.



Membership Secretary Kevin Verlander,
9 Heron Close, Stowmarket, IP14 1UR
info@sogonline.org.uk
www.sogonline.org.uk
Twitter: [suffolkbirds1](https://twitter.com/suffolkbirds1)

SOG is the Group for people interested in the birds of Suffolk, and provides a network and a voice for birdwatchers in the county.

have occurred in the UK in recent years and the concentrated conservation effort to bring species like Bittern back from extremely low number of pairs to the 164 booming males reported in 2017. The contrast was from these successes, to the plight of other species, particularly farm birds such as Turtle Dove and Skylarks.

The remainder of the talk centred around Mark's campaign for a ban on driven grouse shooting, with the ecological and environmental damage this system brings, not only to wildlife but also to creating flood risks from peat degradation and the inability of the peatlands to retain water. In areas such as Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire where peat burning has only begun in recent years, the number of floods in the area has increased. The other unsavoury aspect of intensive grouse shooting moors is the association with wildlife crime, particularly against birds of prey, predominately Hen Harrier. These birds are protected by law, but have declined greatly where, in reality, the areas could



Ken and Jean Garrod

© Gi Grieco

Many hands make light work - but more wanted

Ann Havard

Our August work party saw four of us doing two hours work and picking up 10 bags of rubbish from behind Whitland Close and another two from Stoke Park Wood. Ipswich Borough Council Park Patrol kindly took away the rubbish.

On a very hot September day the Friends met at Stoke Park Wood where we raked the meadow area which had previously been cut by volunteers from the Greenways Countryside Project. The cut vegetation was heaped in several places to provide nice warm, winter hiding places for insects, reptiles and amphibians.



The gang still smiling

Unfortunately our October work party was cancelled due to several stalwart members being on holiday.

In November we joined in with Greenways and Ipswich Wildlife Group volunteers in a Megabash in Millennium and Spring Woods. With many hands making light work, we cleared scrub and used the cut material to add to the dead hedges. These help protect dormice and ground nesting birds and other creatures from disturbance from dogs and help to keep humans to the paths. Some folk did some coppicing in one of the rotational plots. This was all fairly hard work but baked potatoes from the bonfire at lunchtime gave us all added strength to carry on. Thanks to James and Peter from Greenways for organising and to all the volunteers who worked hard.



Old man's beard



Danny at work



Cleared and dead hedged



Interesting fungi



Beautiful birch bark

Our next few work parties for 2018 all meeting at 10am till 1pm are as follows:

13 January – Coppicing / scrub clearance Millennium Wood. Meet Bobbit's Lane car park.

10 February - Coppicing / scrub clearance. Meet Bobbit's Lane car park.

10 March – Spring clean / litter pick to tie in with Tidy Great Britain. Venue to be confirmed.

14 April - Spring Wood Day preparation (including viewing mound and tower) Meet Bobbit's Lane car park.

7 May – Spring Wood Day in place of our normal second Saturday.

We would love a few more people to come out to our work parties as the more the merrier. We do not undertake very difficult tasks and everyone can work at

“ *the more the merrier* ”

their own pace. We always stop for tea and biscuits and a good old chat, so why not give us a try, we'd love to welcome you. Follow us on Facebook too.



Friends of Belstead Brook Park

Website: www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/fobbp

E-mail: fobbp@greenlivingcentre.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/fobbp

Friends of Belstead Brook Park (FoBBP) was set up in 2002 to help look after the 250 acres of informal country park on the south-western fringe of Ipswich. The group runs practical work parties, helps raise funds for improvements and acts as 'eyes and ears', passing information back to the Greenways Project.

In April we will be holding a Drop-in for people to come and talk with us and see what we do – everyone is welcome to attend – there will be cakes! Venue to be confirmed but please check our Facebook page nearer to that month.

If you feel you could help us with our work that would be wonderful. We are only a few, very busy people and many hands makes light work. In particular, if you have good Facebook skills and able to help keep our page up to date, that would be great. We also help deliver Local Wildlife News and again a few more people to help would be appreciated. The organising group meets quarterly in January (10th January – AGM in the Scout HQ, Stoke Park Drive at 7pm, everyone welcome), April, July (often a walk about in the park to see what needs doing) and October. We would be delighted to have new input into our group, get in touch with us using the E-mail address in the panel.

Improving the Woods for visitors and wildlife

Sam Cork Deputy Publicity Officer, Nature Explorer and Young Volunteer

The Group's last volunteer working party before the summer break focussed on the maintenance of the hazel area intended to eventually provide a habitat for dormice. The whole area was completely overgrown with bracken, thorns and stinging nettles after the recent wet weather which all needed to be cleared to allow the saplings space to grow.

Over the summer the working party volunteers took a break but completed a very special task. Planting a tree in memory of Katie Webb, a much-missed young member of the Group, by what she called the 'Fire Engine' log which amazingly

Katie's favourite colour. The tree is a British native rowan and the berries should provide a delicious treat for hungry birds and other local wildlife.

Returning after the summer break, the Nature Explorers group completed the final installation of waymarker posts before joining the Working Party who were clearing an area of debris, thereby enlarging a certain section of the main path. We hope that many people will enjoy a stroll through the woods and along one of the three themed walks (historic, nature and pond) marked by the new waymarkers (an aeroplane, an acorn and a dragonfly).

The woods flourished in the summer months and the working party has found much to do since returning to work. At the pond the vegetation had taken over so much that the entrance gate couldn't be opened! We have cut back branches overhanging the pond, limited the surrounding hedging height to approximately six feet and cleared access round the edge of the pond to allow sunlight to reach the surface of the pond and the many pond plant species. The removed vegetation was put to good use, piled up as a new wildlife habitat. Our pond supports frogs, toads and newts, including the protected great crested newt, as well as numerous species of water mini-beasts, all waiting to be caught by young pond dippers.



Wild cyclamen

Members of the Group were happy to lead a group of eighteen Guides and their leaders on a bat walk through the woods in October. Unfortunately, due to the fireworks and the cool temperature, no bats were detected. Hopefully they will have better luck on a return visit during warmer weather next year!

We'd like to say a big thank you to the BT team building group that cleared the northern tumulus from vegetation meaning we are getting ever closer to being granted English Heritage approval for the two tumuli that are in the woods. Conservation is a perfect team building exercise because not only does it enhance communication and problem solving skills, it also gives everyone a sense of achievement to know that they have made a difference to the community at the same time as keeping fit in the fresh

air. Please get in touch if you would like to find out about the possibility of holding a team building conservation event in the woods.

We continue to look for new volunteers - all ages and abilities are welcome to join us in improving the woods for visitors and wildlife as well as preserving local history. Local community groups and teams that have a few hours to spare to work on projects in the woods, or young people looking to work towards their achievement badges or DoE awards are accommodated where possible. Please email us at pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com if you would like more information.

For more details of the Group's events, and to check for date changes, please go to: www.pwcg.onesuffolk.net or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.

© S. Corley



Portal Woods Conservation Group

Enquiries: Martlesham Parish Council 01473 612632 www.pwcg.onesuffolk.net or email pwcg@martlesham.org.uk
The group was formed to conserve the woodlands west of the Suffolk Police HQ and alongside the A1214. Volunteers meet each month to work on a variety of projects. Anybody is welcome to join this friendly group. Training and tools are provided.

survived for more than two decades. The ceremony and unveiling was well-attended by some of Katie's friends and family. The tree chosen was an 'Apricot Queen', which is a variety of rowan that will develop orange berries –



Katie's tree planting ceremony

Volunteer Work Mornings (all ages welcome - no need to book) Meet at the Education Area from 10.00am – Noon.
Saturday 20th January, Sunday 18th February,
Saturday 17th March, Sunday 15th April

Nature Explorers (11 to 18 year olds)
Meet at the Education Area from 9.00am - 11.00am.
Booking essential, please email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com
Saturday 20th January, Saturday 17th March

Nature Watch Club (5 to 11 year olds)
2017 dates to be announced. Please email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com for more information.

© K. Corley

Snippets

Surprise Dormouse encounter

Margaret Regnault

Margaret Regnault happened upon this delightful (aren't they all?) dormouse when removing tree guards along Bobbits Lane. This is adjacent to Kiln Meadow and Spring Wood where there is a known dormouse colony that Margaret, a licensed dormouse surveyor, has been involved with since its discovery seven years ago.

"This is a daytime nest, explained Margaret, the dormouse was still active, not torpid and I was surprised to catch it. Although we have never found them in tree guards before, I have always suspected we would get dormice in the tree guards because they create a



similar habitat to the 'dormice tubes' which we use to survey for presence or absence of dormice."

"Dormice hibernate on the ground in a small nest under the leaves, the temperature in a tree guard would be too variable for hibernation."

"One of the reasons we have been putting dead hedges along the paths in Millennium woods is because dead hedges restrict dog access to the woodland floor and hence reduce disturbance to hibernating dormice."

Did you know?

10 amazing facts

A rat can survive longer without water as compared to camel.

The leg bones of a bat are so thin that no bat can walk and it is the only mammal that can fly.

The average fox weighs 14 pounds.

There is an average of 50,000 spiders per acre in green areas.

Some male songbirds sing more than 2000 times each day.

A group of owls is called a parliament.

Apple and pear seeds contain arsenic, which may be deadly to dogs.

There is a butterfly in Africa with enough poison in its body to kill six cats!

A woodpecker can peck 20 times per second.

We share 70% of our DNA with a slug.

Surprise Eagle encounter

Colin Hullis

Always looking for an excuse to go birding, one fine Sunday morning last November I decided to go in search of Crossbills in an area of Tangham forest where I had been lucky enough to see a flock a couple of years earlier.

Not a Crossbill in sight but hold on a minute, what's going on over there. Through my bins I spotted in the far



distance a dozen birders with mighty zoom cameras, 'scopes and tripods akimbo. I tracked to a small clump of heather where they seemed to be focussed but could spot nothing. So I moved closer to the action and raised the bins again. I couldn't believe it - it can't be - yes, it's definitely a Golden Eagle!!



I scrambled frantically through my bag to get my camera before it flew off. I was still a couple of hundred yards away so had to use plenty of zoom to get this shot. What a fantastic sight,

what a magnificent bird, and right here in Suffolk. I took a couple of dozen shots then went back to the bins wait a minute . . . what's that a few yards away from the Eagle - a couple of people, wearing long leather gloves!

Oh no! Falconers!



Presumably taking their pet out for a Sunday morning stroll - and birders like me for a ride!

Events Diary

For events covering a broader range of environmental issues go to www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/diary/diary.php

JANUARY

Thursday 11th January 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
'Trinidad & Tobago, Swamps, Oil and Goats' by Andrew Goodall, Wildlife photographer. Sponsored by ByPass Nurseries, Capel St Mary. St Andrews Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere St Andrew IP5 1DH. **Details from Tim Kenny 01394 809236.**

Sunday 14th January 10am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
Manningtree and Mistley for waders and wildfowl on River Stour. Meet at Manningtree Maltings TM109319. **Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791.**

Saturday 13th January 1.30pm – 3.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger HOLYWELLS YOUNG WARDENS
Holywells Park for 11 – 16 year olds. £3 Please book. **Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

Tuesday 16th January 10am RSPB Ipswich Group MID-WEEK WALK Holywells Park meet at the Stable Block TM176432. **Leader Kathy Reynolds 01473 714839.**

Wednesday 17th January 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
'The Garden Bird Watch', Claire Boothby, Garden Bird Watch Development Officer for the BTO. St Matthew's Church, Portman Road IP1 2EX.

Saturday 20th January 9am - 11am Portal Woodlands Conservation Group NATURE EXPLORERS
(11 to 18 year olds) Meet at the Education Area. Booking essential, **please email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com**

Saturday 20th January 10am - Noon Portal Woodland Conservation Group WORK MORNING All ages welcome - no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **For details contact pwcg.onesuffolk.net**

Saturday 20th January 10am to 3.30pm Greenways PURDIS HEATH MEGABASH
Joint event with Butterfly Conservation and Ipswich Wildlife Group and others. Please come and help with the essential winter management of this wonderful, nationally important heathland. A great way to have a go at practical conservation work and suitable for all ages. All tools and instruction provided, along with tea, coffee, biscuits and baked potatoes from the bonfire! Park in the informal lay-by on Bucklesham Road. **More information from the Greenways Project james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk or call 07736 826076 on the day for directions etc.**

Thursday 25th January 7.30pm Suffolk Ornithologists Group TALK
Steve Piotrowski - 'Birding Deserts & Mountains in SE Kazakhstan'
University of Suffolk (Waterfront building) £3 admission, other than students who are free. **More detail from Gi Grieco 07951 482547**

Monday 29th January 7pm Ipswich Wildlife Group AGM and SOCIAL EVENING
All members and prospective members are welcome to this social evening and short AGM at the Thomas Wolsey pub, St Peters Street. **Further info from Ray Sidaway 01473 259104.**

FEBRUARY

Thursday 8th February 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
Stone Curlews by Tim Cowan, RSPB Brecks Project Manager. Sponsored by Collins Waste Solutions. St Andrews Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere St Andrew IP5 1DH. **Details from Tim Kenny 01394 809236.**

Saturday 10th February 10am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
Abberton Reservoir for wildfowl and winter birds. Meet at the Visitor Centre TL962177. Admission charge applies. **Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791.**

Saturday 10th February 1.30pm – 3.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger YOUNG WARDENS
Holywells park for 11-16 year olds £3. Please Book. **Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

Sunday 11th February 10.30am -12.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger CREATE A WILD FLOWER MEADOW
A morning for families in Holywells Park. In partnership with The Urban Buzz Project. £4 child/£2 adult please book. **Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

Tuesday 12th February 10.30am – 12.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger BUILD A NEST BOX
A morning for families in Chantry Park £6 per box. Please Book **Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

Tuesday 13th February 10am RSPB Ipswich Group MID-WEEK WALK
Chantry Park, meet at the toilet block, Hadleigh Road entrance TM138443. **Leader Kathy Reynolds 01473 714839.**

Tuesday 13th February 7pm Greenways TOAD PATROL BRIEFING
If you would like to help with this year's toad patrol in Bobbits Lane, do come along to get expert advice. The Scout Hall, Stoke Park Drive IP2 9TH. **For more information see notice on page 2.**

Wednesday 14th February 10.30am-12.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger WILDLIFE HOMES & GARDENS
A free family drop-in event in Holywells Park Orchard. In Partnership with Greenways and Friends of Holywells Park. **Details from Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

Saturday 17th February 10am to 3.30pm Greenways MARTLESHAM HEATH MEGABASH Joint event with Martlesham Conservation Group and others. Practical conservation work suitable for all the family, with a bonfire and refreshments. All tools and instruction provided. Access to site via gate opposite the windsock on Eagle Way, with parking near the Douglas Bader pub. **For more information contact james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk or call 07736 826076 on the day for details, directions etc.**

Sunday 18th February 10am - Noon Portal Woodland Conservation Group WORK MORNING All ages welcome - no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **For details contact pwcg.onesuffolk.net**

Sunday 18th February 10am – 12.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY MASTERCLASS

Christchurch Park for 11-16 year olds £10. Please Book. **Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

Wednesday 21st February 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
'Menorca. Its Wildlife and Wild Places', Chris Gibson, a freelance author, photographer and tour guide leader. **Please see www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org What's On section for venue information.**

Thursday 22nd February 7.30pm Suffolk Ornithologists Group TALK
AGM including raffle, quiz and bird review of the year. University of Suffolk (Waterfront building) **More detail from Gi Grieco 07951 482547**

MARCH

Saturday 3rd March 10.30am – 2.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger BRIDGE WOOD DISCOVERY DAY
A free drop-in event for families in Bridge Wood. In Partnership with IWG, IBC Rangers and Greenways. **Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

Thursday 8th March 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
'A Love Affair with House Martins' by Martin Tickler. Sponsored by Fenn Wright Estate Agents. St Andrews Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere St Andrew IP5 1DH. **Details from Tim Kenny 01394 809236.**

Saturday 10th March 1.30pm- 3.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger YOUNG WARDENS
Holywells Park for 11-16 year olds £3. Please Book. **Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

Sunday 11th March 9.30am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
Holbrook Bay for waders, wildfowl and winter birds. Meet at Stutton Church TM162344. **Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791.**

Tuesday 13th March 10am RSPB Ipswich Group MID-WEEK WALK
Bourne Bridge area and Park. Meet at Bourne Park car park TM161419. **Leader Kathy Reynolds 01473 714839.**

Thursday 15th March 7.30pm Suffolk Ornithologists Group TALK
A trio of talks – Ed Keeble, Eddie Bathgate and Edward Jackson 'Red-breasted Geese/ Crete/A Compact View of Aussie Birds'. University of Suffolk (Waterfront building) £3 admission, other than students who are free. **More detail from Gi Grieco 07951 482547**

Saturday 17th March 9am - 11am Portal Woodlands Conservation Group NATURE EXPLORERS (11 to 18 year olds) Meet at the Education Area. Booking essential, **please email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com**
Saturday 17th March 10am - Noon Portal Woodland Conservation Group WORK MORNING All ages welcome - no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **For details contact pwcg.onesuffolk.net**

Wednesday 21st March 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK 'Ipswich Hedgehog Update'. Ali North is the Ipswich Hedgehog Officer for the SWT. Please see www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org What's On section for venue information.

Saturday 24th March 12noon - 3pm Friends of Holywells Park SPRING AROUND EASTERTIME. For more information email fobpipswich@gmail.com

APRIL

Sunday 8th April 10.30am – 12.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger CREATE A WILDFLOWER MEADOW
A family event in Chantry Park child £4/ adult £2. In Partnership with The Urban Buzz Project. Please Book. Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Wednesday 11th April 11am – 3pm WILDLIFE HOMES AND HEDGEHOGS
Join Greenways, SWT, Ipswich Wildlife Group and IBC Rangers to learn about wildlife in Christchurch Park. More information at www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Thursday 12th April 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
AGM plus 'Norwich Peregrines' by Zoe Smith, Hawk & Owl Trust. Sponsored by Mid-Suffolk Fencing. St Andrews Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere St Andrew IP5 1DH. Call Tim Kenny 01394 809236.

Saturday 14th April 9.30am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
Hazlewood Marshes SWT Reserve for wildfowl, waders and heathland birds. Meet at reserve car park TM448577. Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791.

Saturday 14th April 1.30pm – 3.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger YOUNG WARDENS
Holywells Park for 11-16 year olds £3. Please book. Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Sunday 15th April 10am - Noon Portal Woodland Conservation Group WORK MORNING All ages welcome - no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. For details contact pwcg.onesuffolk.net

Sunday 15th April 10.30am – 12.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger BEES AND BEEKEEPING
Holywells Park for 11-16 year olds £10. In Partnership with Friends of Holywells Park. Please Book. Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Tuesday 17th April 10am RSPB Ipswich Group MID-WEEK WALK
Bridge Wood meet at Orwell Country Park car park TM188408. Leader Kathy Reynolds 01473 714839.

Wednesday 18th April 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK 'Butterflies in Suffolk. A Feast for the Eyes', Peter Maddison. This meeting will be preceded by a short AGM. Please see www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org What's On section for venue information.

Thursday 26th April 7.30pm Suffolk Ornithologists Group TALK
Joe Harkness - 'Bird Therapy - exploring the therapeutic benefits of bird-watching for mental health and well-being'. The Cedars Hotel, Stowmarket £3 admission. More detail from Gi Grieco 07951 482547

Friday 27th April 4pm - 8pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park DROP-IN SESSION
Scout Hall, Stoke Park Drive IP2 9TH. Come and meet the group and see how you can get involved. Refreshments supplied. For more information email fobpp@greenlivingcentre.org.uk

Sunday 29th April 10am - 12.30pm SWT Ipswich Education Ranger WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY MASTERCLASS
Chantry Park event for 11-16 year olds £10. Please Book. Contact Lucy Shepherd 01473 890089 suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Sunday 29th April 11am - 3pm Ipswich Wildlife Group BEANPOLE DAY
Come along and buy all your beanpoles and peasticks produced from coppicing in Spring Wood. Park at Bobbits Lane car park IP92BE.

For further details call Gerry Donlon 01394 547263 Ipswich Wildlife Group on Facebook or see www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/iwg

MAY

Monday 7th May Bank Holiday 11am - 4pm SPRING WOOD DAY - FAMILY EVENT
Join the Greenways Project, Ipswich Wildlife Group, Friends of Belstead Brook Park and many others for a celebration of this wonderful area of Local Nature Reserve. Guided walks, woodland crafts, family activities, demonstrations, music, food and much more. Parking at Bourne Park off Stoke Park Drive with free minibus to the event on Kiln Meadow. More information from 01473 433995 or 07736 826076 on the day and at Ipswich Wildlife Group on Facebook.

Regular Events

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 10.30am - 1pm SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY
Join Ipswich Wildlife Group and Friends of Belstead Brook Park for a morning of work in the wood. Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481

TUESDAYS 10am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY
The Project's largest weekly work party – carrying out a wide range of practical tasks across the 50 or so sites that we manage. For all Greenways work parties, volunteers need to be registered via a short informal induction prior to joining us – please contact us for further details. Work party runs from 10am to about 4pm. Contact greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk or call 01473 433995.

WEDNESDAYS 10am Friends of Holywells Park HOLYWELLS PARK WORK PARTY
Besides doing positive work as part of a small team of volunteers your time will be matched by cash from the Lottery enabling further work in the Park. Meet at the Stable Block located down the driveway from Cliff Lane. Contact Martin Cant for details 07858 436003

SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH Friends of The Dales WORK PARTY
Contact Jessica Allen for the details jallen7@hotmail.co.uk.

THURSDAYS 10am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY
A smaller group than on Tuesday, but operates in the same way – please see details above for Tuesdays Work Party.

SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 8pm 'Green Drinks' Dove Inn, Ipswich DRINKS AND CHAT
Join us at the Dove Inn for a drink, a chat and a bit of networking with other environmentally-minded people. Look out for the 'Green Drinks' sign on the table. All welcome. Details from Gerry Donlon on 07733 968481

FRIDAYS 10am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY
Another opportunity to work on the 50 or so sites managed by the Project – please see the details above for Tuesdays Work Party.

THIRD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Ipswich Wildlife Group/Greenways BOX KIT MAKING
Come and join in making the kits for bird, hedgehog and insect habitat boxes for our Wildlife Homes project. Only the most rudimentary of woodworking skills needed. Thorington Hall Barn, Bobbits Lane, Ipswich. More information from Martin Cant 07858 436003 martin.cant@ntlworld.com

FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group RIVER WORK PARTY
A joint work party with the River Action Group along Alderman Canal and the River Gipping, maintaining footpaths and making these splendid waterways areas to be proud of. Meet at Bibb Way alongside Alderman Road recreation ground. More information from Ray Sidaway 01473 259104.

FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Butterfly Conservation WORK PARTY (October to March)
Meet at Purdis Heath to help restore the heath for the benefit of butterflies and other wildlife. Use the lay-by in Bucklesham Road. More information from Helen Saunders helens919@gmail.com

SECOND SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH 10am - 1pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park CONSERVATION WORK PARTY
Come and join us for a morning working in the fresh air. For further details visit our website: www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/fobpp or email fobpp@greenlivingcentre.org.uk

MOST SATURDAYS 10.30am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group Northgate Allotments WOODCRAFT & WILDLIFE
Get involved in coppicing and woodland skills at the Wildlife area. Call Geoff Sinclair to confirm dates 07860 595376

FOURTH SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH 10am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group WILDLIFE ALLOTMENT
Come and lend a hand to help create our wildlife friendly plot. More information from Ray Sidaway 01473 259104.

Spring Wood Celebration Day



**A free event for all the family to enjoy
the wildlife and nature of Spring Wood and Kiln Meadow**



Fun activities and storytelling for kids

Folk music and dancing

Have a go at ancient woodcraft

Guided walks in the woods

Make your own bird box

Refreshments or bring a picnic



**Bank Holiday Monday 7th May
11am to 4pm**

Parking at Bourne Park off Stoke Park Drive with free minibus to the event.

Please come on foot, by bike or bus if you can.

Pedestrian entrance to Kiln Meadow off Marbled White Drive, Pinewood.

For further details call 01473 433995 (on the day 07736 826076).

Email greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk or www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/greenways

