

Nightingales in Bridge Wood
– see page 12



Local Wildlife news

January - April 2020

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



Woodland Products and Services from Greenways



Beanpoles, peasticks, 'firewood logs – bagged or different size loads available and other woodland produce, wildlife homes including hedgehog houses, bird boxes and insect homes. Mobile sawmilling of felled timber to your specification. Woodland, meadow and other habitat management – advice and quotations available.



Products available by appointment from the Greenways Project office on Stoke Park Drive.

Contact james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk or 01473 433995 / 07736 826076
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** *Editor*

As people who are generally out and about more than the average, us wildlife loving folk are increasingly aware of the very rapid changes in wildlife species' fortunes. Sadly, almost all of the changes are bringing ill-fortune to our wildlife. There are exceptions – new species being seen due to climatic zones moving northwards, for example, but our traditional species are not so fortunate. The lack of skylarks in Christchurch Park (page 19) and the very few remaining within Ipswich, (at Ravenswood, page 8) would seem almost impossible just 25 years ago.

We'll report on the state of the dormouse population in Belstead Brook Park in the next edition of Local Wildlife News – but nationally, the population has more than halved since the year 2000 – a staggering figure – and that despite huge efforts from the People's Trust for Endangered Species and numerous other conservation bodies around the country. At this rate, we could see the extinction in Britain in our lifetimes! The State Of Nature report for 2019 (<https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/reports/>) does not make happy reading, but as a society we must not continue to ignore it's findings. It's easy to be despondent, but the only way forward is to act, each and every one of us, in every way possible to increase wildlife's chances of surviving – campaign against inappropriate and non-sustainable development; buy organically produced food; or get out and volunteer with the organisations who are doing their best to stem the tide – plenty of opportunities locally in the events listing at the back of this edition. Thank you to everyone who does their bit – it keeps hope alive.

Mailing lists – Please note

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 you don't receive LWN regularly please consider joining one of the groups that distributes LWN to its members. LWN is available online at www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/greenways/



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Committee Report

Wendy Brown *Secretary of the SWT Ipswich Group*

We are being told to have more exercise and fresh air for our health and well-being and one of the easiest ways is to go and do something in the garden.

We are being encouraged to 'wild' part of the garden by letting the grass grow and scattering some wild flower seeds in it. This is the time of year to be planning this and, if that is in part of the lawn then it's less to mow this

summer! I am letting a strip go wild and I have a 'wilding' ally that visited the garden regularly who tried to turn the lawn into a hazel copse. The squirrel made little holes and popped a hazel nut into each one and covered it over. These nuts are winter food for the squirrel but many will not be found and will germinate and hey presto a new wood will appear. There could be a walnut tree in the middle because I watched little paws struggling to get the nut to come out of the sheath and then burying it. Maybe the large quantity of nuts was the squirrel hedging its bets!

Where have all the chaffinches gone? There were no sightings in my garden in 2019 and very few in the two previous years. It could be the disease trichomonosis that made the greenfinches very scarce but happily they are now back on the feeder in small numbers. I live in urban Ipswich so visits from a male great spotted woodpecker are a special treat; green woodpeckers I hear regularly and see occasionally.

Thinking about gardens, the Ipswich Group of SWT was delighted to have an offer from members who wished to open their garden for the

Trust. Leigh Williamson who arranged the visit has written a report as follows:

"There were two opportunities to see Sylvia and Steve's lovely Ipswich garden during the 2019 summer. There was so much of interest for those who walked round it and for those who sat in the sunshine enjoying their tea and cake."

We are being encouraged to 'wild' part of the garden...

Some people accompanied Steve down a mysterious path to the back corner of the garden that led directly into The Dales Reserve. They remarked how delighted and surprised they were to find this varied little reserve hidden behind the houses in Dales Road. Other people sat in the conservatory where, as well as having a view of the garden they could see a slide show of Steve's photos of the wildlife visiting their garden. The bonus was that £250 was raised for the SWT through donations and a plant sale. The group thanks Sylvia and Steve for all their hard work and for allowing us into their garden.

The Ipswich Group autumn talks were well attended in the Methodist Church in Black Horse Lane, Ipswich and we have booked speakers talking on varied and informative subjects throughout the winter season (see the diary for the talks still to come). The meetings make an enjoyable evening out and the venue is excellent and there are empty seats and a welcome for more people. Any profit made on a meeting helps SWT to do more 'Wilding' in Suffolk.

THE IPSWICH GROUP COMMITTEE NEEDS HELP!

Maybe you are recently retired and looking for a charity to help or you have never had the time until now to be involved in helping wildlife.

We have few committee meetings and the work is spread between the committee members and no-one is tied to a computer for very long.

PLEASE offer to come to a committee meeting, see what we do and help this great cause.

Contact Wendy Brown on 01473 259674 or introduce yourself at a meeting.



Ipswich Group Newsletter

Chairman: (Vacant)

Secretary: Wendy Brown 01473 259674
browncandw@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Tony Clarke 01473 741083
tonyclarke@2309hotmail.co.uk
jfrani.36@gmail.com

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.

Have you seen our Facebook page yet?

The SWT Ipswich group is now sharing the 'Suffolk Wildlife Trust in Ipswich' Facebook page. If you are on Facebook why not come and follow us, you will find our page if you search for:-

@swtipswich

If you're not on Facebook you can always look at the page by typing the following into your preferred browser:-

<https://www.facebook.com/swtipswich/>



© Colin Hullis

Helping to make the garden wild

24th Annual Coach Trip London Wetland Centre 16th May 2020

This year's coach trip will be to the London Wetland Centre, Barnes, South West London. It is owned by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) which was founded in 1946 by Sir Peter Scott.

The London Wetland Centre was formed in the year 2000 by combining four disused Victorian reservoirs which were tucked into a loop of the Thames. The centre occupies just over 100 acres, the land has been converted into a range of wetland features and habitats, reedbeds, grazing marsh, lagoons and wildflower meadows. It was actually the first urban project of its kind in the UK. 74 acres have been designated a SSSI. 300,000 plants and 27,000 trees have been planted, making it a real oasis for wildlife in central London.

In 2019 there were many species of wader and wildfowl breeding here including lapwing, redshank, little-ringed plover, ringed plover, pochard, tufted duck, gadwall, great crested grebe and little grebe. There were also breeding common tern, hobby and kingfisher. Other birds present all summer included snipe, black-tailed godwit (up to 41), green sandpiper, common sandpiper and greenshank.

There are six hides around the reserve, including a three-storey hide which gives a panoramic view across the reserve, this hide also has a lift.

We visited in July and were surprised to see such a variety of birds in London, we saw reed warblers, common whitethroat,



Courting Great Crested Grebes

chiffchaff, great spotted woodpecker, many ring-necked parakeet, hundreds of sand martin (there is a sand martin wall), swifts, and of course all the birds we see in our gardens. There are also many butterflies and dragonflies.

In addition the reserve is home to many captive and rare swans, ducks and geese and a pair of Asian small-clawed otter, complete with a wild heron who has taken up permanent residence in their enclosure!

Throughout the day there are a series of talks available to learn more about the history of the centre, WWT's conservation work around the world and the animals that live at the London Wetland Centre.

There is an excellent café selling a range of hot and cold food, drinks and snacks. You could of course bring a picnic.



**Suffolk
Wildlife
Trust**

Ipswich Group Newsletter



Ringed Plover

BOOKING FORM

Coach trip to London Wetland Centre

May 16th 2020 8.30am

Please reserve places at £35

Total enclosed £.....

Name

AddressPostcode

Email address

Join coach at Crown Street or Ipswich Village Car Park (delete as appropriate).

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 07720 604842. If you give an email address you do not need to enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Summer Walk at Lackford Lakes

A member of our group who was desperate to see a kingfisher was not disappointed during our morning at Lackford Lakes in July. And that was before leaving the visitors centre. The huge windows of the main area look out onto a pond with strategically placed perches, perfectly positioned for kingfishers to watch the pond and for us to watch the kingfishers which were nesting nearby.

From here we headed out with our guides Mike and Rob to another pond. It was newly built and partially above ground so did not look part of the landscape as yet, but it already contained visible signs of insect life. It will eventually be a great place for young people to go pond dipping as there is little chance of falling in.

En route to the lakes themselves we were almost mown down by large dragon flies patrolling the path between hedgerows. This was a sign of things to come because dragonflies and damsel flies were in abundance that day. But much less showy, on a wooden platform overhanging one of the



© Joseph Hullis

Kingfisher viewed from the visitor centre

lakes, we were intrigued to watch mayflies which had just emerged. They were completely still and then gradually fluttered their wings as the sun warmed them. We began to notice more and more of the delicate transparent discarded cases along the edge of the platform and then dozens more on an upright wooden post emerging from the water. A fascinating sight.

We spent some time in one of the bird-hides. Not to watch the bird life as there was very little of that about but to

watch the dragonflies, their varieties and their fascinating behaviours. From the same location my favourite sighting was of a comma butterfly, I love their ragged wing edges. But this one was such a bright orange. It must surely have recently emerged.

Although many of the people in our group had been to Lackford before, it is one of those places where there is always something interesting to see. Many thanks to our guides who helped us see things which would be easy to miss.



Ipswich Group Newsletter

© Colin Hullis



A recently emerged Comma

© Colin Hullis



Emperor dragonfly with Common Blue damselflies

Dates for your Diary

All Meetings will be held at 7.30pm at Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF. £2.50 includes tea and coffee. There is disabled access.

Wed. 22rd Jan. 2020

Matt Gooch (warden) Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve

With the help of a £4 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and many donations, the SWT has been able to purchase land adjoining Carlton Marshes, to establish a huge 1000 hectare reserve, where already more than 100 species of birds have been identified. A brand new eco-build visitors' centre with a café, walkways, hides, and a car park should make this a magnet for bird watchers too. Matt is overseeing this development, and can share his enthusiasm for this major development with us.

For more information Google "Carlton Marshes 2019- All you need to know"

Wed. 26th Feb. 2020

Duncan Sweeting Bats of East Anglia

Duncan works for Abrehart Ecology, a consultancy offering a wide range of ecological services. It advises those who find they have protected species such as natterjack toads, greater crested newts, bats, water voles etc. living on their land, or in their buildings. In his role he is very familiar with the various bats, our only true flying mammals, which are found in East Anglia today.

Wed. 25th March 2020

Anne and Dennis Kell In the Footsteps of Shackleton

This talk is the second part of the journey that Anne and Den took after their visit to the Falkland Islands. It weaves together the story of Shackleton's adventure in his failed attempt to cross Antarctica, with their successful trip to South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula. In addition they will look at the wildlife they encountered en route.

Wed, 22nd April 2020

Brian Calver The Work of a Wildlife Crime Officer

Wildlife Crime Officers (WCO) deal with a variety of issues, including destruction of habitats, poaching, shooting and snaring of animals and birds, collecting eggs, and uprooting wild plants. Every police force has at least one specially trained officer, who does this work alongside his normal police duties. Brian as a WCO, has had a wide experience in this field and will share his experiences with us. This meeting will be preceded by a short AGM



Sat. 16th May 2020

Annual Coach Trip to The London Wetland Centre at Barnes

Details of the visit to this amazing reserve, voted the county's best by readers of Countryfile Magazine. See accompanying article for further details and booking form.



Bats of East Anglia Wednesday 26th February

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

Two old airfields and a Tump!

James Baker

Ravenswood and the Tump
Our regular volunteers have been hard at work in the last few months, constructing new paths and a substantial set of steps up the 'Tump' at Ravenswood.

Following a decision by Ipswich Borough Council's South-East Area Committee to utilise funds earmarked for improvements in the Ravenswood area - we set about surfacing an existing well-used path between the housing and Orwell Country

Park. The new surface is made from crushed stone, rolled firmly into a cambered shape - helping to shed water.



A much improved pathway



Pig shelter under construction on Martlesham Common



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, Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council and the local community.

The set of steps - 53 in total - has been made predominantly from oak planks produced by the Greenways sawmill, from trees in parks and open spaces that had to be felled for safety or silvicultural reasons. Much of the timber here came from an oak that had to be felled from the Belstead Road tree belt.

The steps follow a strong 'desire line' up the 'Tump', where repeated use had created a deep ravine, further eroding every time it rained hard. Volunteers worked extremely hard on the steep slope, carrying up soil and aggregate to fill in the ravine and create the steps.

The 'Tump' is an artificially created mound, utilising the excess subsoil from building the Ravenswood housing development. It is about

eight metres high and offers surprisingly dramatic views across the Ipswich area. It is aligned with the main runway from the airfield that occupied the site from the Second World War up to the early 1990s.

The new paths and steps up the Tump also help to reduce disturbance to nesting skylarks by people and dogs. The skylarks here are some of the last left in the Ipswich Borough area, so the IBC Wildlife Team and Ravenswood Wildlife Group have been working hard to prevent a local extinction of this species.

Martlesham Common Local Nature Reserve - footpath improvements and gorse pig shelter!

In the now long-forgotten, hot, dry days of summer, the Greenways volunteers

were busy carrying out the first of considerable path improvements planned for the Common - a stretch of about 150 metres from the new development at Mill Heath through to the Tesco supermarket and other community facilities. A group of staff from AXA in Ipswich were a great help getting around 15 tonnes of aggregate spread along the path in one day.



The group also helped us to build a reconstruction of a temporary pig shelter,



It took volunteers five weekly work sessions to complete these impressive steps which were officially opened by local Ipswich councillors at the end of October



All the volunteers stand proudly by their pig shelter

believed to have been used regularly by commoners when keeping their pigs on the common before it became an airfield in WW2.

A long-time local resident Ian O'Brien Baker had told us about the structures and we wanted to represent them on a new information board that is currently in production - so making a reconstruction

seemed the best way to help our artist paint a picture of it! It's fair to say that the one we made was a bit basic and not as well finished as they probably used to be! Also worth pointing out that the AXA staff that 'tried out' the shelter did find the gorse to be rather prickly!!

The path improvement work was carried out on behalf of Martlesham Parish Council who look after the Common, which extends to about seven hectares and supports important lowland heathland, acid grassland and wooded areas. Further path surfacing is taking place around the Common to facilitate a new 'Trim trail' which extends right round the Parish, including Martlesham Heath.



Trying the pig shelter for size

Green Living Centre and Wild Ipswich websites

The Green Living Centre website (www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk) was set up two decades ago when a group of local environmental organisations was working together to try to establish an actual environment centre in the town. After several attempts the group decided to go for a 'virtual' centre instead, on the rapidly growing internet!

All these years later this site, which hosts web pages for the Greenways Project, Ipswich Wildlife Group and the Friends of Belstead Brook Park, is now looking very tired!

We have decided to move all the relevant groups, content and links across to the Wild Ipswich website (www.wildipswich.org)

Wild Ipswich is the name given to the recent grouping of conservation organisations working in and around Ipswich - all striving to make Ipswich even better for wildlife. Gradually the layout and content of this website will change and improve to include an interactive map where people can report actions they have taken to help wildlife in their garden or locality.

For another couple of years the greenlivingcentre website will continue to exist but will simply redirect to the new site. Both sites are owned and run by the Greenways Project, so closing greenlivingcentre will result in a small cost saving and reduce the time spent by the wonderful volunteers who understand such things and keep it all running!



Greenways takes to social media

As if writing about our activities three times a year for this magazine is not enough - we have now started to try to keep our supporters much more informed about what we and our wonderful volunteers are getting up to. You can now closely follow our progress across our 50 or so nature reserves and green spaces by following us on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook.

Twitter: @GreenwaysProj and then follow us!

Instagram: [greenwaysproject](https://www.instagram.com/greenwaysproject)

Facebook: [Greenways Countryside Project](https://www.facebook.com/Greenways-Countryside-Project).



As well as just keeping people informed, we hope that by promoting what we do and how much we do, our funders will be more likely to maintain and possibly increase their funding.

Perhaps a better social media profile would have prevented Suffolk County Council from pulling out of the Project two years ago!

The wonderful Holywells orchard

Andy Smuk and Yvonne Westley *Friends of Holywells Park*

The Friends have been working in the orchard in Holywells Park for 15 years. It was originally part of Cliff Lane allotments but over the years it became overrun with horsetail and was very wet due to the naturally occurring springs, so became untenable for allotments.

In the 1990's the area was taken back into the park and was planted up as an orchard, with a mix of apples, pears, plums and quince. Some of the planting consisted of local varieties. When the Friends

other organisations such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust who run a regular program of events throughout the year for all ages.

... the orchard had been neglected and was completely overgrown.

Holywells orchard is also home to our thriving apiary. What nicer place could there be for our bees to forage, especially in Spring with the abundance of blossom?

The trees need pruning every February. This task is carried out by the Wednesday work party volunteers and ensures the health and productivity of the trees. Without this maintenance, the trees could become diseased and less productive. Around the same time, the volunteers coppice the hazel in the woodland walk area.

One of the attractions for the children attending our events is the willow tunnel. This was constructed a number of years ago by the Friends and also needs regular maintenance. Earlier this year, we were ably assisted by the Young Wardens group run by Lucy Shepherd of Suffolk Wildlife Trust.



Essential February pruning

One of the highlights of the Friends' and volunteers' year is harvest time, when we can see the fruits of our labour! This year we had another bumper crop. The fruit is put to good use on Apple Day for either juicing, making fritters, apple bobbing and selling to

people attending the event.

If you would like to volunteer to help maintain this magical space within the park, then do come along to one of our regular work parties. We'd love to see you at one of our events, too.



Coppicing along the woodland walk



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.holywellsark.org.uk facebook.com/holywellsarkipswich

became involved, the orchard had been neglected and was completely overgrown. With a great deal of hard work it is now a well-used space. We use the orchard for the majority of our events such as Welcome Spring, Scarecrow Day and the ever popular Apple Day. It is also used by



The fruits of our labour

The significance of Kiln Meadow and Spring Wood

Colin Hullis *Committee Member, Ipswich Wildlife Group*

In February the Group plan to plant a tree in memory of our late Chairman Ray Sidaway who died on 10 January 2019.

The tree, a Bramley apple, will be planted on Kiln Meadow, the land that was saved from development by the massive efforts of Ray, his wife Jen and other members of Ipswich Wildlife Group back in 2012. Ray also spent hundreds of hours carrying out conservation work on the meadow as a volunteer with the Greenways Countryside Project. Details of the tree-planting will be sent to all IWG members.

Meanwhile a memorial bench has been made in Ray's honour and installed in the Millennium Meadow in Grundisburgh. This is another site that Ray was particularly fond of and worked in over many years. The bench was instigated by Ray's fellow volunteer John Dunnett and made by John's son Allen who is also an IWG member. The inscription reads: *'In treasured memory of environmental champion Ray Sidaway. He, with Greenways contributed much to this meadow'.*



Ray's bench

Work in the Wood

Work in Spring Wood, alongside Kiln Meadow, is in full flow during these winter months. Our regular monthly work parties led by Gerry Donlon, turn their attention to coppicing the dense hazel from autumn through to spring.

Spring Wood is a rare and valuable ancient woodland and we try to manage it in the way it has been by man for hundreds of years. In the past the coppiced hazel would have been used for building shelters for people and livestock, for fencing and for fuel. Today we make use of the cut poles to supply to gardeners and allotment holders as beanpoles and the trimmings are utilised for peasticks. These are available from Greenways or see details of the IWG Beanpole Day in April in the 'Events' pages.

Spring Wood and Kiln Meadow were also the venue for the two Belstead Megabashes held in November and December. Over 40 volunteers from IWG, Greenways and Friends of Belstead Brook Park did a grand job improving the habitats by clearing brash, mowing the long grass and keeping pathways clear, then of course enjoying baked potatoes from the bonfire.

A seasonal twist

Over the months leading up to Christmas the IWG Wildlife Homes project takes a seasonal twist and instead of making kits for habitat boxes we turn our hands to making reindeers and snowmen!

All the inspiration of Martin Cant, these festive creations are very popular with groups such as the over-50s at



Gainsborough Community Library and the youngsters at Avenues East disabled group who finish them by assembling and painting.



Secretary Leila Matata
leilamatata@msn.com
www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/iwg

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.



Coppicing hazel goes on throughout the winter in Spring Wood

Bridge Wood Ancient Woodland Restoration Project

Joe Underwood Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Team

In 2018 two members of the IBC Rangers Wildlife Team together with other wildlife organisations met with construction company Volker Fitzpatrick to bid for funding for projects. The funding was being provided by the company as mitigation for the Trimley Rail Expansion – a rail development between Ipswich and the Port of Felixstowe.



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.

Our successful bid proposed a large scale project at Bridge Wood to restore the conifer plantation back to deciduous woodland. This area is currently dominated by Corsican pine but was once a high-quality ancient woodland. Corsican pine was planted as a fast-growing tree following WW2 to meet the demand for timber as our woodlands were under various pressures. With lower wildlife value than native deciduous trees such as oak, birch, hazel and willow, this habitat is not meeting its potential wildlife value and could be greatly improved.

To restore the ancient woodland, the wildlife team will remove Corsican pine trees systematically over the next five years. Natural regeneration will be monitored to see if we



A great habitat for nightingales

need to intervene to help things along. In some areas of the woodland there are still indicators of ancient woodland such as early purple orchid and dog's mercury present. We are hoping these rare and sensitive species of flower will regenerate naturally as well as native trees in these new clearings. In future years we will be monitoring and if natural regeneration is unsuccessful a complete leaf litter translocation will take place to restore the ancient woodland plant communities that once flourished.

... there is a misconception that cutting down trees is bad for wildlife...

Woodlands have always been actively managed and there is a misconception that cutting down trees is bad for wildlife. In fact, there are many species that have evolved and benefit from sunny glades, coppicing regimes and larger clearings. Sun hitting the woodland floor encourages a variety of new plants in once dark areas that are used

by insects. Nightingales will move in over time to nest and forage where the structure of the vegetation is suitable and species such as tree pipit are known to like clearings in pine forest. The project will also provide carbon sequestration benefits and

provide us with much needed wood for fencing and bug boxes amongst other things. Keep an eye on Bridge Wood, it's going to be a busy few years with lots of positive changes planned to improve the woodland.



Previous glade in Bridge Wood – now a hotspot for Nightingales

What a colourful, fungi-ful Autumn

Joan Powell *Secretary, Friends of the Dales*

What a wonderful Autumn it was - as John Keats wrote "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" and he isn't wrong - we have had our mists - and the mellow (being low key) showed off with such splendid vibrant colours.



Autumn colours showed throughout The Dales

Work does not end at The Dales - the majority of the Wild Flower Meadow has been cut, brambles have been trimmed by the main pond, yet more steps have been put in by the Wood Sorrel Path which now allows for a route from one end right to the other end. The steep muddy paths are now easier for all who visit, and over the bridge a new path has been cleared.

spring next year it will be a delightful sight for all those who visit and hopefully they will multiply and gently spread themselves out and about.



Sam planting bulbs

The Glade clearing

Snow berries have been chopped down and Sycamore trees and brambles have been removed which, now with the canopy being opened up and bringing in a large splash of light, was the perfect opportunity for a party of volunteers to come in November to plant about 700 bulbs and rhizomes of English Bluebells, Lesser Celandine and Wood Anemone in and around the above area as well as alongside parts of the paths.

When they bloom in the

The Muddy Buddies were treated by having their play area trimmed by a member of the council with his small grass cutting tractor, which in turn gave the volunteers more time to undertake other work in the Dales - thank you for that IBC.

I have been both amazed and entranced by the huge variety of fungi seen this year - this beauty is called Wrinkled Peach (rather apt). I know that it's botanical name is *Rhodotus Palmatus* - a name I will not forget, or the sight of them by the side of the path growing on a stump.



anyone know what it is called - please do send an email if you do.



Dead Mans Fingers

This one is most interesting - in its early stages of growth it is blue with white tips, it has a hole in the top of each finger from where it releases its sexual spores - it's common name is Dead Mans Fingers - *xylaria polymorphism*




Wrinkled Peach

The others shown below I do not know - they were everywhere, practically a carpet of them sitting under brambles or low branches. I was considering having a quiz - too complicated though - nevertheless here are a few photographs.

The most intriguing one is the miniature white one on a thin branch being held by a hand to show the size of it - does



A huge variety of fungi in The Dales



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 secretary Joan Powell jayempowell@btinternet.com or find us on Facebook by searching Friends of the Dales

Winter Birding

Tim Kenny *Leader, RSPB Ipswich Group*

To borrow from a popular television series that ended last year - *Winter Is Coming*. The short winter days leave little time for those of us who work during the week to get out and birdwatch. It's no surprise to me that some people can really struggle with the lack of daylight in winter. At least I'm not in northern Russia, where I was in July. Nice enough then, when night consisted of a short twilight and it didn't actually get dark, along with pleasantly spring like temperatures. The internet tells me that, as I write, it's minus 2 degrees centigrade with snow showers, sun up just before nine, sun down just after three! I suppose it could be worse. Those hardy Russians can "enjoy" just under four hours of daylight at the winter solstice.



© Tim Kenny

Waxwing at Hollesley



Ipswich Local Group

Group Leader Tim Kenny

Tel 01394 809236

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.

The winter does have its compensations though. Bewick's and whooper swans have returned to our shores, winter thrushes are here in numbers, and the possibility of the showy waxwing turning up in the area increases. Waxwing occurrences can't really be predicted, although they do have a penchant for rowan berries, the trees of which seem to be popular with supermarkets owning large car parks. I remember being out on a bike ride with friends once, and as we passed through the village of Hollesley we happened upon a flock. I insisted we all stopped and had a good look, and couldn't resist returning the next day to get some

photos of these exotic looking birds.

It is good to be able to report the return of Ipswich's most famous tawny owl after an absence of over two years. Yes, Mabel is back! Or is she? The local press report that she was first seen in 2007 and last reported in 2017, and given that tawny owls lifespan in the wild averages around five years, it is unlikely to be her. However, they have been recorded as living up to eighteen years, and the IBC wildlife rangers remain convinced it is her as the feathering is the same. If it isn't Mabel, then there is the distinct possibility that this is her daughter or granddaughter. Unfortunately owls don't wear name badges, so unless there is some DNA analysis (which would mean that a feather or faecal sample of the original bird would require testing) we are unlikely ever to find out.

What is heartening is that there is now

a sculpture in Mabel's honour near her tree. We hope that there will be a visible tawny in the aforementioned tree for many years to come, serving as a natural ambassador and teaching the next generation that there is some great wildlife to be found even in the middle of our towns.



© Colin Hillis

Mabel ? Maybe.

Many hands could make light work...

Ann Havard *Friends of Belstead Brook Park*



Before work began...



...and after our hard work!

In August a depleted work party worked with James Baker at Ellenbrook Meadow mowing and raking to help the new wildflower meadow areas to expand.

In September just four of us were in Burnet Meadow, with James cutting the rosebay willowherb, nettles, grass and thistles with the bar mower, whilst Lydia, Chris and Ann raked up the debris. We disturbed lots of seeds which should hopefully over-winter and flower again next year. We also disturbed a tiny toad and a little lizard which were put safely out of the way. A hot day and hard work, we could have done with a few more people.

October saw four of us again, but this time raking Millennium Wood Meadow, in the rain! What a difference a month makes. James was once again driving the bar mower through the vegetation, which here appears to be responding well to regular cutting and raking by not growing too many nettles.



Safely out of harms way on a new habitat pile

This meant that raking up was a lot easier than last month. During the morning we saw several small frogs and toads, and these were rescued and put safely out of the way of our feet and the mower. We were glad James had brought along a gazebo, as it gave us somewhere dry to drink our morning cuppa and replenish our energy with biscuits.

If you have read this far, you will have noticed that we are rather short of people to help us on our practical work party

days at the moment. These are only once a month, for three hours and we always break for a cuppa and a biscuit and of course a good chat. You really don't have to be mega strong either, as there are always tasks to do for the less able. These could be a short litter pick, cleaning an information board or just snipping small bits of overhanging vegetation from a footpath.

So, what is stopping you from joining us? As the old saying goes 'Many hands make light



Friends of Belstead Brook Park

www.wildipswich.org

Email: fobbp@wildipswich.org

www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/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.

work'. We really could do with your help. Even if you can't do heavy, hard work there is always something you can do – you never know you might be stronger than you think. It's well known that getting out in a green space and putting something back into your community does you good. Please give us a go, what have you got to lose? Thanks.



James cutting the meadow



Ann, James and Lois working in Millennium Meadow, despite the rain!

It's been a funny autumn bird-wise

Gi Grieco *Suffolk Bird Group Council Member*

Autumn is the season of change for birders, when migration is in full swing. Our breeding summer birds move on making way for winter migrants moving in. We are fortunate on the east coast to see much of this action.

During autumn, birders have a keen interest in weather patterns, particularly wind direction and where it originates. However, last autumn was disappointing with little sustained migration noted. On one or two occasions there was a window when winds were favourable and some typical migrant birds were noted, to liven things up.



House Martins . . .



. . . and swallows line up at East Lane

Suffolk Bird Group



Enquiries:
info@suffolkbirdgroup.org
www.suffolkbirdgroup.org
Twitter: [suffolkbirds1](https://twitter.com/suffolkbirds1)

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

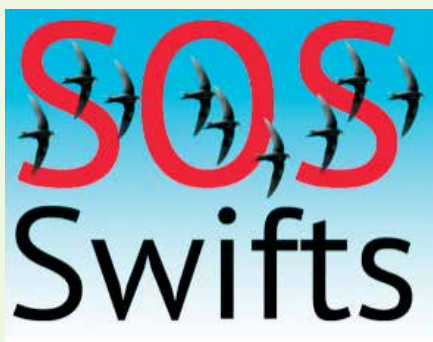
Discussions have often centred on the fact that winds have been predominately from the west and south-west as each remnant storm or hurricane from the Americas has tracked across the Atlantic. Although this will be a major part of a lack of migration noted, just how much must be considered given the decline in the numbers of birds in general, with many species suffering declines. This is not confined to the UK but also across northern Europe where many of the birds come from during passage. Wildlife in general and ecosystems are suffering and having an impact on the diversity of the natural world. There have been a couple of studies on the decline of insects in Germany, one studied the biomass at a selection of nature reserves and found a reduction of 77% in nearly three decades and a more recent article found a drastic decline, 41%, in the insect population over the last ten years. Such declines will have a major impact on bird populations.

Walks and Talks

Suffolk Bird Group had a number of walks during the autumn and although bird life has been quiet, particularly numbers of warblers, we did have a fantastic spectacle of hundreds of hirundines at East Lane, Bawdsey. The birds congregate here, roosting in the reed beds before feeding in the surrounding area, with large groups resting on the nearby Martello Tower and bushes. The trips are always enjoyable and it is a great way to enjoy the outdoors. At the time of writing, planning for 2020 events includes at least

20 walks, including a couple of more gentle, shorter walks along with half a dozen indoor talks.

Conservation and Recording



Another major aspect of the group's activities is species conservation and recording. The Save our Suffolk Swift project has again been a success during the year but data shows that Swift is

still declining and is heading to a Red List species. Therefore in Suffolk it is a priority species, so we're requesting records of nesting birds be submitted to monitor the population. Details can be found on the SBG web site – www.suffolkbirdgroup.org – and in addition there is now a mobile phone app, Swift Mapper.

We've also had a great response in the first year of the Suffolk Rookery survey, the project to record the rookeries within the county. The survey continues in 2020 so we ask everyone to submit records when Rooks start to congregate at their rookeries. Records can be submitted on the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service website – www.suffolkbis.org.uk – that has a specific section for recording rookeries. On the same web site there is also a section for recording Swifts as an alternative to using the mobile app.

Twenty Years of Portal Woodlands Conservation Group

Stephen Corley (Chairman)

with contributions from Sam Cork and George Pennick (Nature Explorers and Young Volunteers)

The end of 2019 marked 20 years since the Portal Woodlands Conservation Group was created, following the hard-fought battle to save the woodlands from being concreted over to become the Martlesham Park & Ride. All the hard work from volunteers and supporters since then has certainly paid off for the benefit of the local human and wildlife communities, and for the Bronze Age and wartime archaeology of the local area.

Over the summer and into autumn there have been some great wildlife sightings in the woods. As well as the grey squirrel being a common occurrence, butterflies and birds were always to be seen, and for the lucky few, the occasional muntjac deer. During one of our volunteer events, a very healthy-looking common shrew was spotted, luckily pausing long enough for

a few photos, before heading back to his/her home in the logs.



A healthy shrew

After driving past the woodlands so many times, a local birder inspired by our wildlife reports finally decided to visit to see what he could spot. In a little over an hour he identified 18 different species, including blue, great and coal tits, goldcrests, great spotted and green woodpeckers, several goldfinches, greenfinch, chaffinch, chiffchaffs, robins, wrens, and a highlight of a tree creeper. Many thanks to this

enthusiastic person for sending us this incredible list.

The autumn was an exceptional season for fungi, with many species to be found all around the woodlands – of note was the bright orange-coloured wrinkled peach, not seen until a few years ago but now quite common in the woodlands.

During our ongoing clearance of the Bronze Age burial mounds, as the slowly rotting tree stumps of the old trees that once stood there were exposed from under the bracken, we were amazed to find a fascinating and unusual range of fungus species. In addition to a lovely display of common sulphur tuft, there was also vibrant purple-coloured jelly fungus, a rather horrific looking cluster of dead man's fingers and impressive birch polypore.

We would love to hear of any interesting flora and fauna species you spot when visiting.

If you fancy getting involved with the next 20-year chapter of the Portal Woodlands story, with local wildlife projects

and continuing to ensure the survival of these woodlands for all to share, then please do not hesitate to contact us. 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.



Portal Woodlands Conservation Group

Enquiries: Martlesham Parish Council
01473 612632 pwcg.onesuffolk.net or
email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com
The PORTAL WOODLANDS
CONSERVATION GROUP is dedicated
to conserving the woodlands west of
the Suffolk Police HQ and alongside
the A1214 encouraging the local
wildlife to thrive while preserving
historical sites of interest and inspiring
people to enjoy the nature surrounding
them. Volunteers meet each month
to work on a variety of projects and
everybody is welcome to join this
friendly group. All required training
and necessary tools are provided.



Jelly fungus



Birch polypore



Sulphur tuft

Volunteer Work Mornings (all ages welcome - no need to book) Meet at the Education Area from 10.00am – Noon.

Saturday 18th January, Sunday 16th February,

Saturday 21st March, Sunday 19th 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 18th January, Saturday 21st March.

One Man Went to Mow...

Julian Dowding *Secretary, Suffolk Butterfly Conservation*

Over the last few years, I'd seen 'old-fashioned scythes' being used and became convinced of their effectiveness. Colourful wildflower meadows managed this way to cut hay for livestock, still attracted innumerable butterflies, moths and other wildlife.



Butterfly Conservation

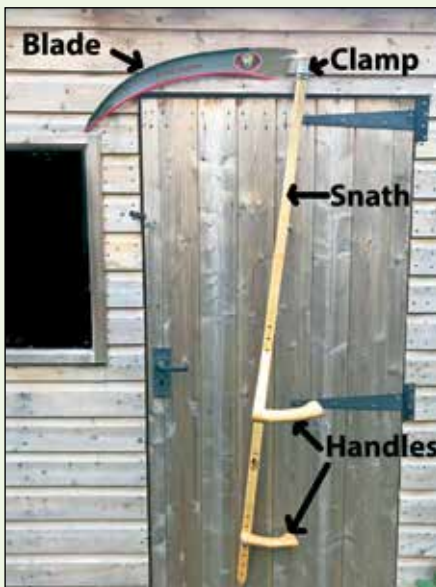
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

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.

I also became aware of a new wave of interest growing rapidly across the UK for this method of maintaining wildflower meadows. There are even scything competitions held in the UK and Europe where people can learn more about this ancient technique and see its effectiveness, particularly alongside bar mowers and brushcutters. People in the UK are beginning to think that this method has incredible potential, and in the light of climate change they offer a viable alternative to the use of fossil fuels.



Beautifully crafted Austrian scythe



Getting into the swing of it

Eventually, I got some beautifully crafted Austrian scythes (from a UK supplier) which are lightweight and easily assembled with ash snaths and handles, and steel blades, which can be peened, tempered and honed to produce a fine cutting edge. They are also adjustable, to suit any individual. I coated the wooden parts with raw linseed oil to protect from moisture, taught myself the basics and set about mowing. Even so, I was keen to have instruction from somebody well acquainted with scythes and so my son and I booked training and bought a few more scythe kits from Richard Brown, an instructor based in Norfolk who has been using scythes for many years. A group of 12 of us were soon mowing areas of grassland in Ipswich parks. We already knew the basics but were shown small ways to improve things.

There's little that can go wrong with scythes and they are much simpler than petrol driven machines. For me, one of the mysteries was knowing whether the blade was sharp enough, because sharpening has to be done every 5-10 minutes in the field. I needn't have worried because in no time at all, Richard had all of us sharpening proficiently with the little whetstones which we'd bought. It takes barely a minute to sharpen and get mowing again. After basic tuition and lunch, we moved to a meadow and within an hour, we'd cut 2/3 of an acre. Many trainees said that they really disliked using bar mowers and brushcutters and that these hand scythes were far more flexible. Some even went on to buy their own scythes. After a full day's work, you really don't feel the strain either. The quiet swish of the blade moving through vegetation and leaving a neat windrow is very relaxing, and the work gives a gentle 'all body' work out. You're also not cut off from the rest of the world with personal protective equipment

as you would be when using heavy machinery.

For a couple of years now we've been mowing meadows this way and are thrilled with the results, not just at seeing more wildflowers but also experiencing more of the invertebrate life than would have been the case if using noisy petrol machines. One notable insect which appeared was the melanic form of the rare Large Garden Bumblebee. It's a BAP species which is new to Ipswich and in serious decline nationally. At a recent Greenways Megabash, we successfully cut two smallish meadows near Spring Wood and also demonstrated some of the basics of scythe mowing.

If you would be interested in attending a day's scything demonstration in spring and summer 2020, please contact me. Places will be limited to 12 people. We'll have a selection of scythes you can try, so you'll just need to bring your own lunch. We'll provide refreshments. Contact details julian.dowding@ntlworld.com



Large Garden Bumble Bee

Heavens Above...

Reg Snook *Friends of Christchurch Park*

As five to seven year-olds we would, in summer, lie on our backs and watch the skylarks singing overhead, we would cheer as a squadron of Spitfires or Hurricanes dashed across the clear blue sky ready to engage the enemy.

We stared open-mouthed as we watched Flying Fortresses and Liberators lumber back from bombing missions, some with engines streaming black smoke and with wings and tail fins 'shot to pieces'. We also watched in horror as occasionally one of these wounded 'birds' would gradually lose

... there are no skylarks in Christchurch Park but there is still 'stuff' to be seen overhead ...

height. We knew, however, that a crashed plane meant more shrapnel to add to our collection. We boys all collected shrapnel (as well as birds' eggs). Skylarks still sang overhead as Heinkels and Dorniers released their screaming incendiary bombs. When we saw a flock of Nazi bombers, we hid amongst the gorse bushes and when they began to return, after getting a pasting, then we cheered but stayed hidden. The skylarks and their habitat have long gone and there are no skylarks in Christchurch Park but there is still 'stuff' to be seen overhead.

I am too old and embarrassed to lie on my back in our Park and, in any case, I would need assistance to right myself. As my garden is adjacent to the Park, I can instead relax in a chair and still gaze upwards. No Spitfires, no Heinkels, no barrage balloons; instead there is a steady stream of passenger jets coming from or descending to Luton or Stansted airports. Okay, so passenger jets are boring but other 'stuff' floats past. In autumn, the local large gulls leave their roosts on the Orwell and head for the newly ploughed fields or the piggeries. Now if one of these gulls comes across a bird of prey, then all hell is let loose. Usually it is a buzzard, sometimes a red kite. When the gulls have departed, then the resident crows

take over as sentinels. Woe betide any migratory short-eared owl, or raven, that strays into the Ipswich flightpath. Besides the now regular sightings of Apache helicopters, I see sparrowhawk, the now scarcer kestrel or hobby and twice this year I have seen a goshawk in a thermal. I once thought that I saw a black stork but that 'bird' turned out to be a large aerial piece of black plastic and I could not work out what was dangling from a parachute that was drifting past. Sometimes a throbbing chug, chug chug signifies a Chinook.

This summer I have recognised a spoonbill, white stork and peregrine, a Montagu's harrier and a weather balloon, a strange looking drone (probably taking photos of me) – oh, and a flying chicken later identified as a child's birthday balloon. I failed to identify an eagle miles up in the blue but an alpine swift amongst the local swifts was an easy 'tick'. Regular sky-walkers are C130's (Hercules) on their way to Marshalls of Cambridge for maintenance, cormorants on route to the Wilderness Pond for sustenance, and the 'eye in the sky' checking on the traffic chaos in an around Ipswich. F15's and F16's can often be heard migrating from Lakenheath and on September 11 I saw a B2 Stealth bomber fly low over the Park, almost as impressive as a large bird of prey.

Sky-watching is a lazy occupation but the number of bird species seen over Christchurch Park is increasing. Who would have thought that ring-necked parakeets would arrive and that peregrine, buzzard and red kite would

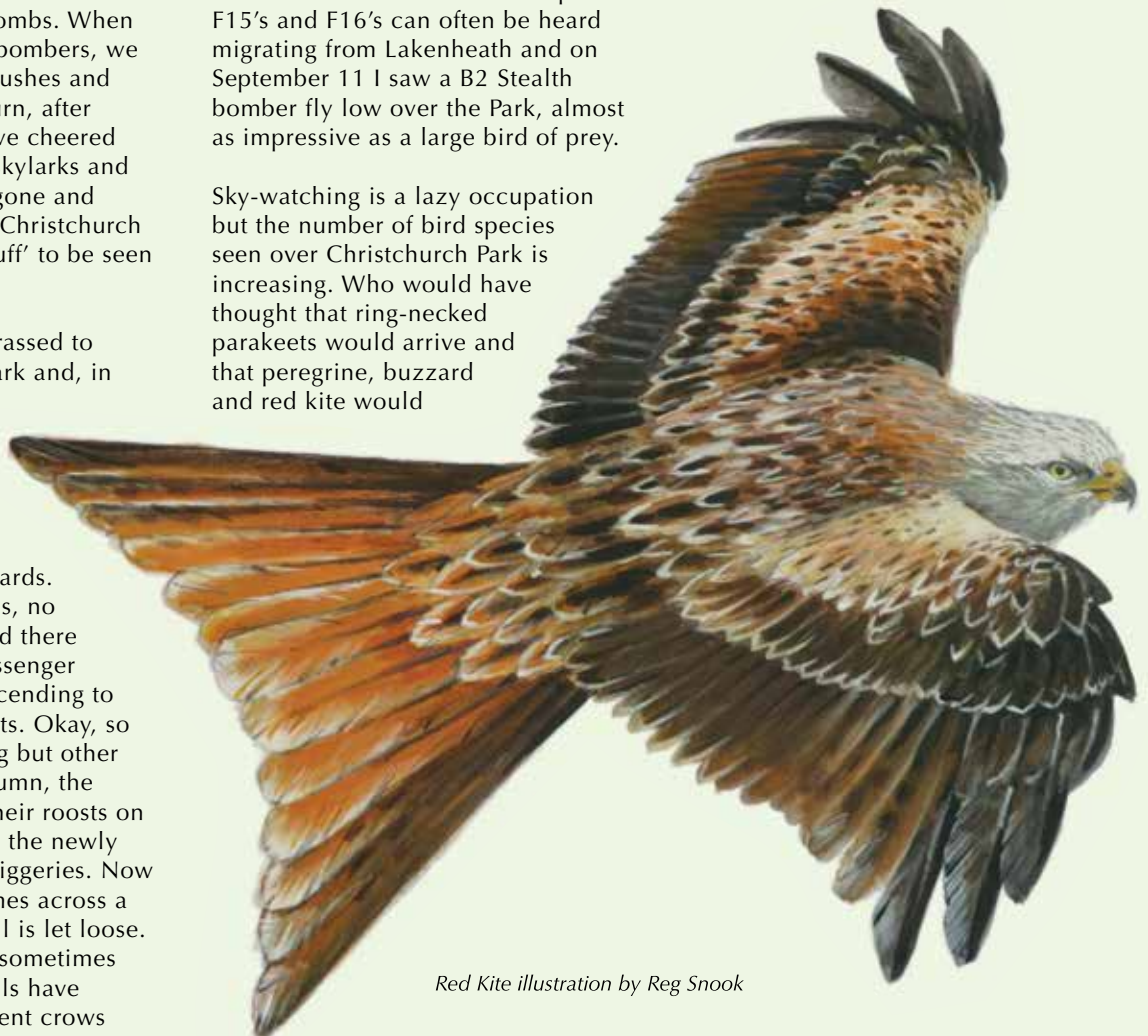
become common sightings. I realise that all of this might seem flippant but watching the heavens ornithological is important. Migration is taking place all of the time and we are situated on important routes for birds arriving or departing. Now, could that crow possibly be a black woodpecker?



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 £10 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.



Red Kite illustration by Reg Snook

Young Wardens, a group for Wild Teens.

Lucy Shepherd *Wild Learning Officer, Suffolk Wildlife Trust*

Across the year Suffolk Wildlife Trust in Ipswich hosts Young Wardens, a group for teens aged 11 – 16 years old, carrying out different practical conservation skills every month in the beautiful and historic setting of Holywells Park. From creating amphibian hibernacula and raking hay meadows to coppicing and species counts, our teens carry out a whole variety of tasks.



Wild Ipswich

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

Recently our Ipswich Young Wardens were given the project of maintaining Kissing Gate Meadow, an area of the park that has, in recent months, become very overgrown with brambles, encroaching the area and making it hard to walk through, even swamping mature trees! Armed with loppers and bundles of enthusiasm, in the few months that we have been working on this project we have cleared big patches of brambles, creating habitat piles and areas of refugia with the cuttings.

During a particularly wet session the group raked the meadow, after the Rangers had cut the area the day before for us, and the teens were particularly vigilant, removing several frogs and toads that we came across during the session. The meadow has already been completely opened up and transformed into an area that looks unrecognisable from when we first started.

With upcoming projects this year that include helping Friends of Holywells Park with pruning and planting their willow tunnel, removing invasive Himalayan balsam along the river path, and one of the group's favourite activities of litter picking, we have lots planned for 2020.

Whether teens join us to earn their Duke of Edinburgh awards, to help wildlife in their local community, or to just come along and make new friends and spend time in the great outdoors, whatever the reason I am heartened by the teens' enthusiasm and eagerness to spend a

Saturday each month in their local green space working hard each session - rain, snow or shine! Well done Ipswich Young Wardens!

If your 11 – 16 year old would like to join Ipswich Young Wardens, book your place online through our website www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org and search Ipswich green spaces. Join us every second Saturday of the month, 1.30pm – 3.30pm. We hope you can join us! Follow us on socials to keep up to date with our wild finds in the town on @swtipswich on Facebook and Instagram.

map data ©Google 2019



Toadlet moved to safety

Snippets

It's behind you!



Marvellous! *Colin Hullis*

Taking a slow, leisurely drive along one of Suffolk's charming 'Quiet Lanes' in Butley I came across this whole family of stoats crossing the road in front of me. I stopped, they carried on. For a few precious moments there was just me (my car) and them . . . and they didn't seem to notice me as they cautiously crossed the lane and I took the photos. Marvellous.



There be leopards in the orchard!

Andy Smuk

The natural world is always full of surprises. Working in the orchard in Holywells Park on our regular Wednesday work party, we noticed that one of the recently planted apple trees had appeared to have died. Looking for a reason as to why this had happened we cut it down. Inside the main stem was a neatly bored hole. Suddenly, out crawled a strange looking creature. It was identified as the larva of a Leopard moth which spends part of its life cycle inside the stems of woody plants. Much of the natural world is hidden from view it's by chance encounters like this that we can wonder at its rich diversity. By the way, the apple tree which we thought had died has now recovered!



Events Diary

For events covering a broader range of environmental issues go to www.wildipswich.org

JANUARY

Sunday 5th January 10am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING

Manningtree and Mistletoe for waders and wildfowl. Meet at Manningtree maltings TM109319. 3 hours 2 miles. View from cars if weather adverse. Walking easy. **Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791**

Thursday 9th January 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING

"Rural and Wildlife Crime", Lee Andrews-Pearce, Suffolk Police Rural & Wildlife Crime Officer. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. *Sponsored by Bypass Nurseries Chapel St: Mary* **Details from Tim Kenny 01394 809236**

Saturday 11th January 10am – 1pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park CONSERVATION WORK PARTY

Come and join us for a morning working in Belstead Brook Park. **Details of meeting place and more information from fobbp@wildipswich.org**

Tuesday 14th January 10am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK

Holywells Park, including conservation area. Meet at Stable Block off Cliff Lane. TM178432 **More information from ipswichrspblocalgroup@yahoo.com**

Saturday 18th January 9am – 11am Portal Woodlands Conservation Group NATURE EXPLORERS

11 to 18 year-olds. Meet at the education area. Booking essential. **More information from pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com or pwcg.onesuffolk.net**



Saturday 18th January 10am – noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group WORK MORNING

All ages welcome. Meet at the education area. **More information from pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com or pwcg.onesuffolk.net**

Wednesday 22nd January 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK Matt Gooch 'Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve'

With the help of a £4 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and many donations, the SWT has been able to purchase land adjoining Carlton Marshes, to establish a huge 1000-hectare reserve, where already more than 100 species of birds have been identified. A brand-new eco-build visitors' centre with a café, walkways, hides, and a car park should make this a magnet for bird watchers too. Matt Gooch is overseeing this development and can share his enthusiasm for this major development with us. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, IP1 2EF.

Saturday 25th January 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH

at Martlesham Common LNR. Join Greenways and local groups to clear scrub, coppice woodland and improve paths - with baked potatoes from the bonfire! Meet at Martlesham Community Centre car park off Felixstowe Rd - plenty of parking available. **More info from Greenways 01473 433995/07736 826076 james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**



Thursday 30th January 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK

'Life recovery projects – doing a good tern (for both little & roseate terns)' Chantal Macleod-Nolan, RSPB. Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Copdock IP8 3JD **Additional information from Adam Gretton Tel. 01473 829156. Adam.gretton@naturalland.org.uk**

FEBRUARY

Sunday 2nd February 1.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING

Shotley for waders and wildfowl. Meet at Bristol Arms TM245336 2 miles 2 hours. Walking easy. **Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791**

Thursday 6th February 7pm to 8.30pm Toad Patrol INTRODUCTION EVENING

Join local expert Margaret Regnault and the Greenways Project for an informal introduction to this season's Bobbits Lane Toad Patrol - learn why and how we help toads to cross the road, and enjoy some light refreshments. Meet at the Scout HQ on Stoke Park Drive, IP2 9TH. Parking available. **More info from toads@wildipswich.org**

Saturday 8th February 10am – 1pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park CONSERVATION WORK PARTY

Come and join us for a morning working in Belstead Brook Park. Details of meeting place and **more information from fobbp@wildipswich.org**

Want to join in?
Take a look at Regular Events on page 24

Thursday 13th February 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING "Suffolk Diary" Liz Huxley, wildlife photographer. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. *Sponsored by Collins Waste Solution.* **Details from Tim Kenny 01394 809236**

Saturday 15th February 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH

at Martlesham Heath SSSI. Join Greenways and Martlesham Conservation Group and others to make a difference on this nationally important heathland reserve. Scrub clearing and a big bonfire with baked potatoes! Meet on site, follow signs from entrance opposite windsock on Eagle Way. (Please park considerately in nearby roads). **More info from Greenways 01473 433995/07736 826076 james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Sunday 16th February 10am – noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group WORK MORNING

All ages welcome. Meet at the education area. **More information from pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com or pwcg.onesuffolk.net**

Tuesday 18th February 10am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK

Chantry Park, meet at car park near toilet block (Hadleigh Road entrance). TM138443 **More information from ipswichrspblocalgroup@yahoo.com**

Wednesday 19th February 10am to 1pm BIRD BOX MAKING

with Ipswich Wildlife Group, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Ipswich Borough Council Rangers and Greenways - in Holywells Park. Meet by the Orangery (near the Stable Block). **More info from Ipswich Wildlife Group - iw@wildipswich.org**



Wednesday 26th February 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

Duncan Sweeting 'Bats of East Anglia'. Duncan works for Abreheart Ecology, a consultancy offering a wide range of ecological services. It advises those who find they have protected species such as natterjack toads, great-crested newts, bats, water voles etc. living on their land, or in their buildings. In his role he is very familiar with the various bats, our only true flying mammals, which are found in East Anglia today. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF.

Thursday 27th February 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group AGM

Followed by trophy presentations, SBG and BINS Review of the Year, a raffle and Mystery Bird Quiz! Please bring any unwanted bird books/magazines to exchange or donate for Save Our Suffolk Swifts. Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Copdock, IP8 3JD. **Additional information from Adam Gretton. Tel. 01473 829156. Adam.gretton@naturalland.org.uk**

MARCH

Sunday 1st March 10am to 3.30pm
Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH
at Sproughton nature reserve. Join Greenways for the last big winter work party of the season, carrying out a variety of tasks around this new reserve in the old sugar factory grounds. Meet on site by the Bailey Bridge (park at either Boss Hall Road car park or near Sproughton Church and walk in along river path) or contact Greenways to arrange a lift in. **More info from Greenways 01473 433995/07736 826076 james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Saturday 7th March 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
Holbrook Bay for waders & wildfowl on the River Stour. Meet at Stutton Church TM162344. 3 hours 3 miles. Walking easy but can be muddy. **Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791**

Thursday 12th March 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
"Birds Without Borders", Peter Holden MBE, writer and lecturer, ex RSPB. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH *Sponsored by The Oddfellows* **Details from Tim Kenny 01394 809236**

Saturday 14th March 10am – 1pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park CONSERVATION WORK PARTY
Come and join us for a morning working in Belstead Brook Park. **Details of meeting place and more information from fobbp@wildipswich.org**

Tuesday 17th March 10am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK
Bourne Bridge area and park. Meet at Bourne Park car park (Bourne Bridge entrance) TM161419 **More information from ipswichrspblocalgroup@yahoo.com**



Saturday 21st March 11am - 2pm Friends of Holywells Park 'WELCOME SPRING'
Come and join the Friends in the orchard to Welcome Spring. Hunt for the Golden Hare, explore the woodland area and willow tunnel. Children's craft activities and refreshments available. Location, Holywells Park Orchard.

Saturday 21st March 9am – 11am Portal Woodlands Conservation Group NATURE EXPLORERS
11 to 18 year-olds. Meet at the education area. Booking essential. **More information from pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com or pwcg.onesuffolk.net**

Saturday 21st March 10am – noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group WORK MORNING
All ages welcome. Meet at the education area. **More information from pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com or pwcg.onesuffolk.net**

Wednesday 25th March 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
Anne and Dennis Kell 'In the Footsteps of Shackleton'.
This talk is the second part of the journey that Anne and Den took after their visit to the Falkland Islands. It weaves together the story of Shackleton's adventure in his failed attempt to cross Antarctica, with their successful trip to South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula. In addition, they will look at the wildlife they encountered en-route. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF.

Thursday 26th March 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK
A trio of talks including 'Confessions of a Learner Birder'; 'Submitting records for the Suffolk Bird Report'; 'Birding in Madagascar' from Anne Wright / Edward Jackson / Andrew Raine. Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Copdock. IP8 3JD. **Additional information from Adam Gretton, Tel. 01473 829156. adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

APRIL

Thursday 9th April 11.am to 3.pm Ravenswood SKYLARK DAY
Join Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Ipswich Wildlife Group, Greenways and Ipswich Rangers for a day celebrating skylarks in the Ravenswood area. Meet near the Tump (car park on airfield perimeter track just before bridge over A14 to Bridge Wood). **More info from IBC Wildlife Team 01473 433998 or park.rangers@ipswich.gov.uk**

Saturday 11th April 10am – 1pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park CONSERVATION WORK PARTY
Come and join us for a morning working in Belstead Brook Park. **Details of meeting place and more information from fobbp@wildipswich.org**

Tuesday 14th April 10am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK
Bridge Wood. Meet at Orwell Country Park car park. TM188408. **More information from ipswichrspblocalgroup@yahoo.com**

Wednesday 15th April 11am – 2.30pm IBC Rangers WILDLIFE DAY
Join local conservation groups for a day of wildlife exploring, craft and wildlife homes making at Christchurch Park. Meet near the main play area, drop in at any time. **More info from IBC Wildlife Team 01473 433998 or park.rangers@ipswich.gov.uk**

Thursday 16th April 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
AGM plus "Practical Sustainability" Melissa Abbott Sustainability & CSR co-ordinator at Munton's Malt, Stowmarket. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. *Want to sponsor this meeting? Contact Treasurer Teresa Marrable on 01473 211940*

Want to join in?
Take a look at Regular Events on page 24

Saturday 18th April 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
Bourne Park, Spring Wood and Kiln Meadow for woodland birds and early summer visitors. Meet at Bourne Park car park, Stoke Park Drive TM152419. 3 hours 3 miles. Walking can be wet and muddy. **Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791**

Sunday 19th April 10am – noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group WORK MORNING
All ages welcome. Meet at the education area. **More information from pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com or pwcg.onesuffolk.net**

Sunday 26th April 11am - 3pm Ipswich Wildlife Group BEANPOLE DAY
Come along to buy your beanpoles, peasticks and other woodland products - or just have a cuppa and biscuit with the volunteers! Millennium Wood, Pinewood - parking in Bobbits Lane car park (grid ref: TM147414) opposite Bobbits Lane/Belstead allotments. **More info from IWG - iwg@wildipswich.org or Ipswich Wildlife Group on Facebook**

Wednesday 22nd April 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
Brian Calver 'The Work of a Wildlife Crime Officer'.
Wildlife Crime Officers (WCO) deal with a variety of issues, including destruction of habitats, poaching, shooting and snaring of animals and birds, collecting eggs, and uprooting wild plants. Every police force has at least one specially trained officer, who does this work alongside his normal police duties. Brian as a WCO, has had a wide experience in this field and will share his experiences with us. This meeting will be preceded by a short AGM. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF.

Thursday, 30th April 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK
'The Seafarers – on seabirds and nature writing' Stephen Rutt. Please note venue: The Cedars Hotel, Needham Road, Stowmarket, IP14 2AJ. **Additional information from Adam Gretton, Tel. 01473 829156. adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

MAY

Sunday 3rd May 10.30am to 4pm SPRING WOOD DAY
Join Greenways, Ipswich Wildlife Group, the Friends of Belstead Brook Park and many others for this day of celebration of wood, spring and Spring Wood! Guided walks, woodcraft, family activities, live music, storytelling and much more...
Parking at Bourne Park, off Stoke Park Drive, with free minibus shuttle to the event at Kiln Meadow. More info from Greenways 01473 433995/07736 826076 james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk and at Ipswich Wildlife Group on Facebook. **NB please note change to Sunday this year due to the moving of the usual bank holiday.**

Saturday 16th May 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group COACH TRIP
Annual Coach Trip to The London Wetland Centre at Barnes.
Details of the visit to this amazing reserve, voted the county's best by readers of Countryfile Magazine. See further details and booking form on page 5

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**

SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH 10am – 2pm SWT Wild Learning WILD IN THE WEEK

Location – across Ipswich. Join us for our Wild in the Week activity day for children aged 6 - 10 years. Each month has a different theme all taking part in the great outdoors. See website for details. Price £7. Booking essential. **To book: www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org / 01473 890089**

SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH 10am – 2pm SWT Wild Learning WILD IN THE WEEK

Location – across Ipswich. Join us for our Wild in the Week activity day for children aged 11 – 16 years. Each month has a different theme all taking part in the great outdoors. See website for details. Price £7. Booking essential. **To book: www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org / 01473 890089**

WEDNESDAYS 10am Friends of Holywells Park HOLYWELLS PARK WORK PARTY

Join our small team of volunteers doing valuable work around 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 Joan Powell for the details
jampowell@btinternet.com

EVERY THURSDAY/FRIDAY 10am – 11.30am

SWT Wild Learning WILD TOTS

Outdoor adventure and play for tots age 18 months – 5 years and their carers.

Christchurch Park Thursdays, Holywells Park Fridays. Cost £4. **Please book at suffolkwildlifetrust.org or 01473 890089**

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 9 – 10pm '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

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

FRIDAYS FORTNIGHTLY 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 Colin Hullis 07979 644134**

FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Butterfly Conservation WORK PARTY (October to March)

More information from Helen Saunders helens919@gmail.com

EVERY SECOND SATURDAY 10am – 12pm SWT Wild Learning WEEKEND WILDLIFE CLUB

Holywells Park. Join our wildlife themed club to explore the park, learn about wildlife, meet new friends and earn awards as you go. Age 6 – 11 years. Cost £3. **Please book at suffolkwildlifetrust.org or 01473 890089**

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/fobbp or email fobbp@greenlivingcentre.org.uk**

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 1.30pm – 3pm SWT Wild Learning YOUNG WARDENS

Holywells Park. Price £3. Booking Essential. **To book: www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org or 01473 890089**

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**

LAST 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 Colin Hullis 07979 644134**



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 dancings • Have a go at ancient woodcraft
Guided walks in the woods • Make your own bird box • Refreshments or bring a picnic

Sunday 3rd May - 10.30am 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.

More info from Greenways 01473 433995 / 07736 826076

james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk and at Ipswich Wildlife Group on Facebook

