

Underground drama in the insect world
– see page 5



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Local Wildlife news

January to April 2026

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



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Produced by the



GREENWAYS
countryside project



Local Wildlife News is available online at www.wildipswich.org - or scan the QR code to the right.

Copies of LWN are also available at all Ipswich libraries, at the Reg Driver Centre in Christchurch Park, and from leaflet dispensers at the Stable Block in Holywells Park, the Greenways office at the Scout Hall on Stoke Park Drive, Millennium Wood (Bobbits Lane entrance), Kiln Meadow (Marbled White Drive entrance), The Sandlings, Rushmere (Bixley Drive entrance) and Mill Stream, Rushmere (Glemham Drive entrance).



Join Us!



Become a member of Ipswich Wildlife Group and support our work at local wildlife sites and our activities spreading enthusiasm for the nature all around us.

You can get involved in our activities or just lend us your support. Your membership will help provide valuable influence when we are standing up for local environmental issues.

It's free to join us - you'll get an email once a month to keep you informed of what's going on.

Just send your contact details to our secretary Leila at ipswichwildlifegroup@gmail.com

For more information, scan the QR code.

Welcome

by **James Baker** *Editor*

Welcome to the latest issue of Local Wildlife News – covering some of the wealth of conservation activities going on in and around Ipswich. As usual there are articles, reports and updates from many of the local groups, along with a programme of events for you to get involved with. The events include a wide range of practical conservation volunteering opportunities, guided walks, indoor talks and much more. Please do take the amazing opportunities offered to support and learn about our local wildlife.

Following the retirement of the Greenways Ranger, Peter Scotcher, in September – I am delighted to welcome Carl Fordham as the new Ranger. Carl has volunteered with Greenways for many years, so this a great progression – please see more details on page 8.

Trees feature in several of the articles this issue, which has made me think about the huge additional pressures our trees are facing these days due to climate change. This year we have seen a considerable number of large mature oaks across Ipswich parks and nature reserves affected by Acute Oak Decline (AOD) and have had to be felled as a result. Sooty bark fungus has wiped out hundreds of mature sycamores, especially in south-west Ipswich and we have even seen some evidence of spruce bark beetle potentially. This is on top of ash dieback and many other pests and pathogens now attacking our trees.

In the coming years, I expect to see some devastating losses of some of these species and it is still unclear which if any species will be survivors or winners of climate change. So without sounding too negative – enjoy our magnificent trees while you can!



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Ghostly sea creatures spotted in the marina

Sheila Roberts *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

Ipswich waterfront is a great place to take a stroll at any time of the year. As well as plentiful opportunities to enjoy a drink, snack or delicious meal, it also offers the chance to spot a few unexpected wildlife highlights.



**Suffolk
Wildlife Trust**

Ipswich Group Newsletter

This is the local group of the county-wide Suffolk Wildlife Trust. A small committee works to provide events celebrating local wildlife which are open to everyone as well as raising money to support the work of the Trust.

To get in touch with the group please email ipswichgroupswt@gmail.com

In the past, I've seen a seal bobbing around in the water outside the winerack building, a peregrine falcon hunting the plentiful pigeons around the old Pauls building and lots of ducks and geese towards the lock gates end. Not to mention the occasional mini murmuration of starlings.

But 2025 brought a new sighting for me – thousand and thousands

of jellyfish. I'm no expert but pondering pictures on www.wildlifetrusts.org I concluded they might be moon jellyfish.

They are one of our most common jellyfish in UK waters, don't sting and are actually very beautiful if you look carefully. Although I imagine they aren't very comfortable living in the brackish waters of the waterfront marina.



Underground drama in the insect world

Sheila Roberts *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

I guess if you asked most people about how insects reproduce, a mental image of caterpillars devouring cabbages or, more gruesomely, maggots on something rotting comes to mind.

However, in the past few years, I've begun to learn a little more about how some of the other ways certain insects breed – and in some cases it's like something dreamt up by a sci-fi writer.

My journey to learn more started with pantaloon bees. These charming little creatures have taken up



Pantaloon bee

© Henrik L | Stockphoto.com



Ruby-tailed wasp

© Skaf-Iouarn

residence in many verges and pathways in Ipswich in areas like Chantry where the underlying soil is sandy. The females dig tunnels furiously in loose soil – usually early on summer mornings. They create chambers underground which they provision with pollen before laying their eggs.

On a long walk somewhere near Nacton a few years ago, I saw the most iridescent, wasp-like insect exploring a small hole in a slope. It was beautiful. My curiosity led me to discover that it was one of the ruby-tailed or jewel wasps which, like the cuckoo, take over the nesting arrangements of another species – in this case a solitary bee. Only this nest is an underground chamber.

At Minsmere I saw bee wolves – big solitary wasps – carrying honey bees. Turns out they stun the poor bee, stuff it down an underground



Beewolf

© Nigel Harris | Stockphoto.com

chamber they've previously dug and lay an egg on the still-live bee. And the larva from that egg feeds on the bee. See what I mean about sci-fi?

Last year, I was lucky enough to see a presentation by Steve Everett about these kinds of insects. Aided by a camera more like an endoscope, he has captured close-up images and videos of the secret life of a vast range of small creatures that use the sandy paths of Minsmere as nurseries for their offspring. It was a revelation – so much drama going on right beside our feet.

And do you know what? The Ipswich Group of SWT has



**Suffolk
Wildlife Trust**

Ipswich Group Newsletter

booked Steve to come and show everyone his photos and videos of the so called 'Digger Alley' on 25th March and everyone is invited.

There's fighting, flirtation, sex and murder – but in miniature. You'll be amused, amazed and go home with stories to enthral your friends in the pub about how insect reproduction is a lot more than just caterpillars on your cabbages. For details see page 6.



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Ipswich Group Newsletter

What can you get for £4 these days?

Maybe a takeaway coffee? Or a Sunday newspaper?

Well if I told you that your £4 could also buy you a ticket for a lovely evening out with the chance to meet new people, hear more about a local wildlife topic and enjoy a free hot drink (with optional biscuit!) would you believe me?

Because £4 is all it costs to come to one of the evening talks put on every month from September to April by the Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

And we've got some cracking topics lined up this spring:

Wednesday 28th January 2026 Film - A Walk along the River Orwell



Filmed over 14 months, Ipswich RSPB Group Leader Tim Kenny, chose his local river as the subject for his first attempt at making a film. Whilst concentrating on the abundant birdlife, Tim also looks at the history and geography of the Orwell, from the docks at Ipswich and the surprisingly industrial hamlet of Pin Mill, down to the former HMS Ganges at Shotley and the container port at Felixstowe.

Wednesday 25th February 2026 Talk - Peter Merchant on the history of peregrine falcons in Suffolk

Peter is an ornithologist with close on 50 years of experience of dealing with the rescue and rehabilitation of raptors. He has advised and assisted local businesses on how to integrate protected birds into the workplace and been responsible for peregrine nest box installations on the Orwell Bridge, BT at Martlesham, Ipswich docks and various churches which collectively have fledged 146 young in Peter's time with the project.

Wednesday 25th March 2026 Talk - RSPB Minsmere Volunteer Steve Everett on the wonders of Digger Alley

Digger Alley at RSPB Minsmere looks like an unassuming footpath but, in summer, it is full of all sorts of digger wasps, mining bees and other weird insects. This talk, fully illustrated with incredible, close-up pictures and videos, looks into a world so easily overlooked, but happening under our very feet. Some of you may remember seeing some of the footage on the BBC's Spring Watch a few years ago.

Wednesday 22nd April 2026 Talk - Darren Tansley from the Essex Wildlife Trust on the Unnatural History of Rivers

From brook lamprey to beavers, source to sea, rivers are one of our most diverse habitats but they have never been more threatened. Darren Tansley asks the questions: what did rivers used to look like, what have we done to alter them and how can we make them more resilient in the face of the looming biodiversity and climate crisis?

(This meeting will be preceded by a very short AGM for the local Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich group)

All meetings start at 7.30pm in Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. What 3 Words cotton.meal.leader. Doors open 7.15pm.

Please note – despite the name, the church entrance is on Black Horse Lane. There is no access to the doors from Museum Street.

There is some free parking in the church car park – otherwise use on street parking or the car park beside the Wolsey Theatre (both charged).

We'd love to see you – why not get together with some friends and make an evening of it? And the cost? A very reasonable £4 per person.

Ipswich is Wild – The Winter lull

Daniel Payne *Wilder Communities Officer, Suffolk Wildlife Trust*

When this article reaches you the new year will be well underway, the days will be heading to their shortest, and nature will be at its quietest; we will be in the winter lull. My work, funnily enough being built around nature, is following a similar pattern.



At the time of writing Hedgehogs are frantically foraging for food at night ahead of hibernation, so building hedgehog homes, leading sessions exploring the lives of hedgehogs in schools, and advising community groups on how to help our prickly friends are ever present. Once the hedgehogs head into hibernation, one of the few UK species that does hibernate, my work further reflects that winter lull.

Trees are dormant in winter, all their energy stored in their roots, so now is the ideal time for coppicing work. Our Young Wardens will be working closely with Ipswich Wildlife Group over the winter in Spring Wood, helping coppice the ancient woodland and maintain vital habitat for dormice. I will also be working with students from the University of Suffolk on their grounds, specifically

their wildlife garden which has become overgrown and ineffective, coppicing trees and making space for nature.

Speaking of trees with their energy stored for the winter, waiting for Spring to come around, again my work reflects that. Working away in the background I am organising things for 2026. Continuing Young Wardens sessions, partner work with community groups, school visits to Ipswich green spaces... All are being set up in the background waiting



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for the Spring when it can all come to fruition; just like all the stored energy in a tree's roots. Outwardly it's a winter lull, but there's plenty going on that you won't see just yet!



A farewell...

James Baker *Manager, Greenways Countryside Project*

After about 15 years of working with the Greenways Project, the Ranger, Peter Scotcher, has decided to retire.

Peter joined the Project as our River Ranger in 2009/10 when we had some government grant aid to help us improve the management of the river corridor through the town. A year or so later, when the then Greenways Ranger left, Peter took on the permanent role with us.

Peter has helped to maintain the huge array of Greenways sites, working alongside and encouraging our amazing regular volunteers. Peter's great knowledge of local wildlife and history meant that he was always very informative when giving talks or leading guided walks through our nature reserves – I know that many people have learnt much from him, including our volunteers who have learnt practical skills alongside wildlife species information.

We all wish Peter the very best with whatever comes next for him – and would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for all the years of service.



And a welcome....

Carl Fordham is the new Greenways Ranger, joining us from December. Carl is no stranger to Greenways

and our regular volunteers, as he has been a very active volunteer for the last 7 or 8 years. Carl brings with him a very sound knowledge of our nature reserves and other sites, an exceptionally wide range of practical

countryside skills, and a strong commitment to our ambitions to maintain and enhance our reserves.

So, a big 'Welcome' to Carl from all at Greenways.



GREENWAYS
countryside project

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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.



It's Rubbish!!

Sadly, almost every time we visit any of our nature reserves and green spaces, we always find lots of litter or dumped rubbish.

It always saddens me that a fair proportion of the time given by our wonderful volunteers is wasted in removing rubbish that shouldn't be there. Apart from the cost (and annoyance), removing rubbish distracts from the conservation and other management work that we really need to be getting on with.

Most years we collect hundreds of sacks of litter along with at least one fly-tip per week – resulting in several huge skips worth of rubbish each year. In addition to this, we also separate out metal which is taken for scrap separately. It seems that despite decades of better education in schools and elsewhere, the problem of littering and dumping is just as bad as it ever was.

The solution pushed by Jason



Another load of rubbish

Alexander from Rubbish Walks UK (always busy on social media) is to take practical action as the only effective way to reduce the problem in the absence of radical changes in policy or enforcement. Jason regularly takes groups of volunteers out and

about in Ipswich and beyond, often tackling some of the grottiest 'grot spots'!

We will continue to follow Jason's example at Greenways – clearing up rubbish whenever we see it – in the hope that a cleaner local environment will encourage others to value it as much as we do!

In recent months, we have been able to clear some 'legacy' litter trapped in bramble and scrub near the River Gipping in the middle of Ipswich. This was partly brought about by a request from Ipswich Police for help with a search for evidence after a serious incident. Our volunteers have spent two days working with Police search officers, clearing scrub and uncovering huge volumes of trapped litter!

Sproughton Nature Reserve

Greenways has now been managing the new Sproughton Nature Reserve (part of the grounds of the former sugar beet factory) for five years, and the site is developing nicely. Annual habitat management work on the reserve centres around grassland, scrub and wetland maintenance. Part of the reserve is located between the original course of the River Gipping and the canalised cut built in the 1790s – creating an 'island' which is maintained free from public disturbance to maximise the value for wildlife, especially the many birds that use the mix of ponds, lakes and other habitats for breeding and feeding. The remainder of the reserve, on the 'mainland' is always open, with the Gipping river path (public



Always litter to pick

footpath) running through it from the edge of Ipswich, near Boss Hall, to the A14 overbridge.

Each autumn, our volunteers help to manage the most sensitive parts of the grassland areas by mowing and raking the arisings, to encourage lower soil fertility and a wider range of wildflowers the following year. We also use a tractor-mounted flail collector mower to manage the larger areas of grassland across the reserve, with around 10-15 acres being cut each year. Some areas are always left uncut to ensure there are 'sanctuary' areas for invertebrates, amphibians and small mammals to survive the winter.

Winter work tends to be dominated by controlling willow and other scrub, to prevent it covering too much of the open grassland and particularly to reduce shading of the ponds on the island. This year (2025) – after the driest year we can remember, it was possible to get into one of the ponds to remove encroaching willow scrub. In previous years this has not been possible and the willow has been inaccessible in the middle of standing water by the time winter arrived. Removing the scrub not only reduces the shading of the ponds but also reduces leaf-drop into the ponds (filling them in gradually) as well as lowering the water loss through the trees' evapotranspiration. It may be several more years before we get a very dry summer and autumn, or it may be like that next year again – no-one can say in these climate change affected times!

The site also obviously enjoys



Winter work controlling willow

the presence of the River Gipping running through and around it – with regular sightings of otter and water vole to add to the terrestrial wildlife interest. Behind the old flood bank, a series of new drainage basins have been constructed as part of the redevelopment of the factory site – and these are now bedding in well with a wide range of dragonflies and damselflies, and regular flocks of house martins in the summer.

Another somewhat rarer 'habitat' is a tall mast built specially to house a Peregrine nest platform! This was required during the development process to replace an existing nest site on top of the old silos of the sugar factory. Prior to the demolition of the silos, the new nest tower had to be in place. The nest platform was used by a pair of peregrines one summer



Tractor-mounted flail at work

but has since housed nesting Kestrels instead!

It is hoped that the reserve will be formally declared as a Local Nature Reserve in the coming months, in a joint initiative by the owner Ipswich Borough Council and the local authority, Babergh District Council. This will help to protect the nature reserve into the future and clearly show the two councils' commitment to protecting important habitats and species as part of the vital process of nature recovery.

If you would like to visit the Sroughton Nature Reserve, you can access along the Gipping River path from Ipswich (Boss Hall) or from the Sroughton Millennium Green (next to the church) at any time. Access to the island part of the site is not permitted other than during organised guided visits and educational events – if you are interested in these, please contact us.



More willow scrub removal around one of the lakes

Christchurch Park Bird Sightings

Philip Murphy *Friends of Christchurch Park*

July

The five Mandarin Ducklings on Round Pond were not seen after July 7th. This is the first occasion since 2019 that Mandarin Ducks have been known to rear juveniles successfully at this site. Moulting Mallards were present on Wilderness Pond in impressive totals throughout the month increasing to 75 on 27th.

Two noisy juvenile Sparrowhawks made their presence in Wilderness Wood well known from 25th to the month's end.

The number of Swifts over the park started to decline from 25th onwards as these amazing birds commenced their long journey southwards.

August

The unexpected sight of an Oystercatcher in flight over Snow Hill on 19th was much appreciated.



Oystercatcher

Unfortunately, single dead Tawny Owls were found in the park on 3rd and 5th – whether or not these two birds had been part of the “Mabel” dynasty we shall never know.

Totals of Swifts this month included 15 on 3rd and ten on 10th but none were reported after 24th.

Twenty Mandarin Ducks were present on 31st. Up to 70 Mallards were present on Wilderness Pond, also on 31st.

A resumption of Chiffchaff song was noted from 24th. A female or immature Common Whitethroat was feeding on blackberries in the Lower Arboretum, the first site record of this summer-visiting warbler since May 2021.



Blackcap

September

Totals of Mandarin Ducks on Wilderness Pond peaked at 18 on 24th.

Four Cormorants were present in the second half of the month, and up to six Little Grebes, all of which were in non-breeding by mid-month.

September is the year's best month for seeing Swallows over the park – up to five were noted heading south on three dates.

Up to four Chiffchaffs were present up to at least 26th and three Blackcaps including a male eating Holly berries on 14th.

The most unexpected sighting this month involved a very late Swift on 24th.

October

The first Redwings and Fieldfares of the autumn were seen over the park on 7th and 21st respectively but there were no recorded large arrivals of either species. Other typical autumn sightings involved four Skylarks, a Woodcock flushed by a dog and a noisy group of 30 Jackdaws high northwards on 17th.

The last vestiges of summer involved a singing Chiffchaff on the 1st and two Swallows on the 6th.

The highlight on Wilderness Pond was 34 Mandarin Ducks on 25th; many of these ducks were in pairs, although there was much chasing, calling and posturing amongst the males. Four Cormorants and up to six Little Grebes were present on various dates.

Typically for October, Jays were much



Friends of Christchurch Park

Chair: Peter Gray 07709 634161
 Membership Secretary: Robert Fairchild 01473 254255
www.friendsofchristchurchpark.co.uk

Follow us on Facebook@ChristchurchPark
 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.



Redwing

in evidence. Birds of prey involved up to three Common Buzzards and regular sightings of a Sparrowhawk.

Magic & Wonder from Gerry Donlon

Ipswich Wildlife Group

Long-standing IWG committee member and Spring Wood warden Gerry Donlon has recently had a book published.



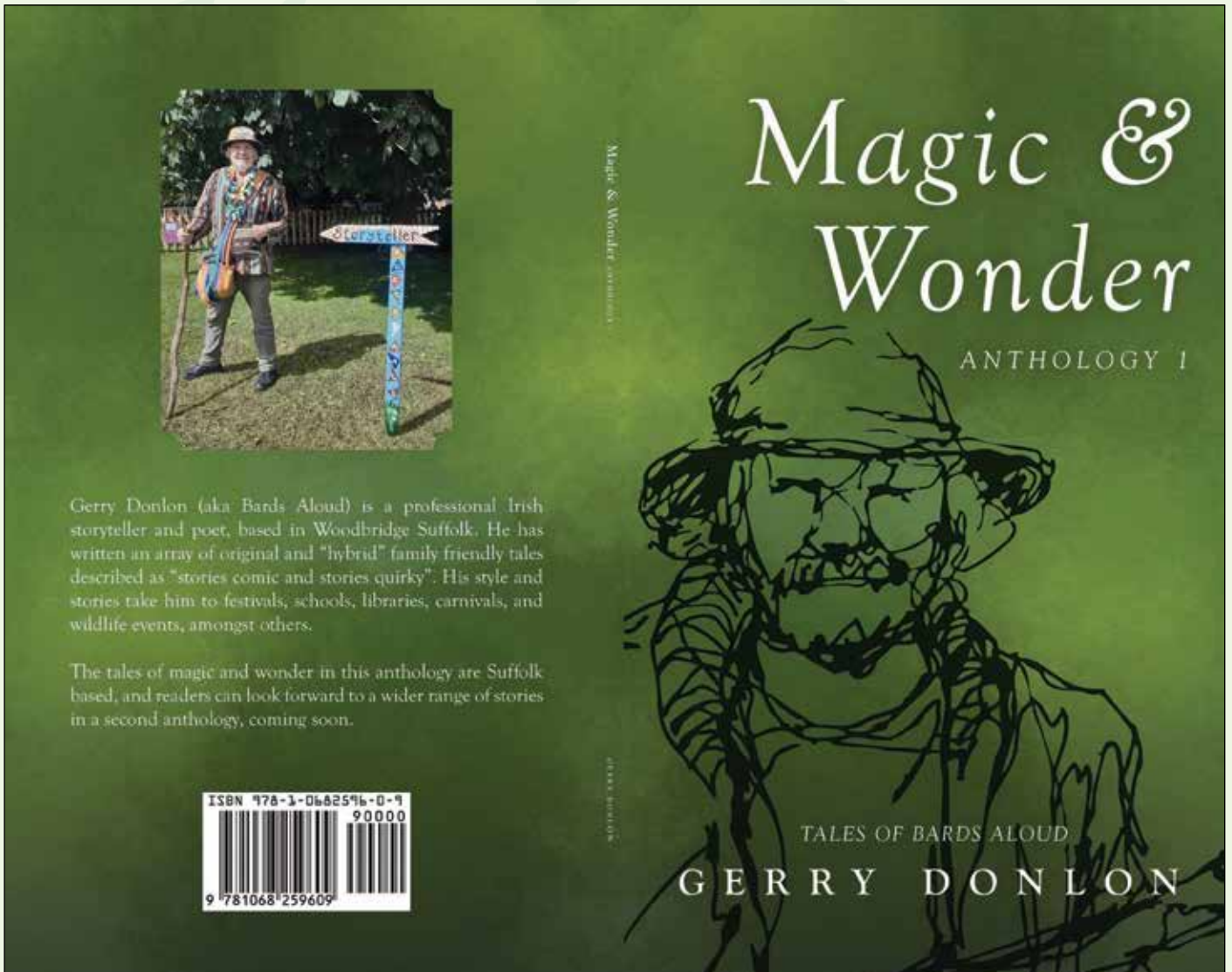
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Ipswich Wildlife Group is a registered charity, relying entirely on volunteers, that promotes interest in, and conservation of, wildlife and habitats in and around Ipswich.

Entitled 'Magic & Wonder' the book is an anthology of Suffolk-based tales and poems written by Gerry, that are described as 'stories comic and quirky'. Among this rich collection are stories entitled 'The Deben River Sprite', 'The Flight of the Stag Beetles' (inspired by the Spring Wood area) and 'The Tump'.

As well as his involvement with IWG Gerry is a professional storyteller, poet and writer and is co-founder of the East Anglian Storytelling Festival and founder of 'Storytelling with Bards Aloud' and of 'Poetree Walks with Bards in the Woods'. Gerry has performed his stories at festivals, schools and carnivals throughout England and Ireland.

Gerry is thrilled to have this, his first book published, and promises a further anthology to follow. 'Magic & Wonder' by Gerry Donlon is available from Amazon and Waterstones bookshop.



Farewells and a record breaker

Julian Dowding *Branch Secretary, Butterfly Conservation Suffolk*

Our Chair, Peter Maddison, who's been on SBBC committee since 2008 (firstly as Argus newsletter editor, and then as Chairman) has retired. We say a fond farewell to him and must now find a replacement. If you know of anyone please get in touch.

We also say goodbye to Trevor Goodfellow (current Argus Editor) who's been in post with the excellent newsletter for 8 -9 years, whilst also supplying a lot of his own excellent photos for the publication. Trevor has also encouraged woodland owners in the Bury St Edmunds area to manage for butterflies and create transects, and together with Mark Brewster, who's been on committee for 4-5 years, jointly given butterfly Lepidoptera presentations to local groups.

Sadly, Mark is also stepping down. He has been brilliant getting support for wildflower meadows in the Harleston and Chedborough areas. He's liaised with local councillors too in pushing for 'proper' green spaces. By this I mean areas for breeding species, not just amenity grassland.

Our County Recorder James Corton also is stepping down. Farewell James, and thank you for all your hard work collating records and writing the Suffolk butterfly reports. All four will be sorely missed but our abiding hope is that

they will still be able to get out and about to enjoy the county's butterflies and moths.

Suffolk Branch has supported several wildflower projects over the years. Recently we provided advice and seed for a group at Shingle Street (dry soils) Gt Waldingfield (chalk bank creation) and Fornham St Genevieve, to mention but a few. It's really encouraging that people are getting involved at the grass roots level (literally). With a sound respect for, and a growing understanding of the soils and plants that our native species require, together with a wish to preserve and enhance them, our butterflies and moths now have a chance to increase and reverse the downward trend we are still witnessing. Sadly, we still have a way to go to but we are now armed with a lot more expertise and impetus.

James Corton writes, "With only a few more butterfly sightings to go, this year (2025) has been a record breaker for numbers recorded. Although the recorder effort is greater than ever, the number of butterflies in our county is declining, per long-term studies on nature reserves (transects). Lots to mull over in my last report but thank you for your inputs and support these last five years..." I too would encourage you to get involved with your local wildlife groups and to also



© Julian Dowding

Close up bugloss poppy meadow

sow your own wild flower patch, even if it's just a meter or two in your own garden. Please see photo above. This can help raise awareness and drive conservation. It's also a thing of beauty. My own front garden is barely 12m square but each year attracts some lovely breeding species like Common Blue, Brown Argus, 6-spot Burnet, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and Marbled White.

Suffolk Branch has a generous legacy that we would be happy to use to help any community projects such as those mentioned above, up to around £300-£500. For any grander ideas, please get in touch by email via our website and we can discuss at committee.



Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

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www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk
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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.



© David Dowding

Common blue larvae and ant



© Julian Dowding

Marbled White

Nature Notes from The Dales

Friends of 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 find us on Facebook by searching Friends of the Dales.

The volunteers were busy in the autumn with the usual cutting and raking of the wildflower meadow.

This job is a major annual task and keeps everyone occupied for the morning, or longer if a few people are absent. A few frogs were hiding deep in the grass but no field voles were found.

The possibility was explored of digging out the very small pond at the back of the meadow and work was started clearing a path from the meadow towards it. Some small trees were removed and other fallen logs relocated together with two stag beetle larvae discovered within the rotting wood.

Work parties take place on the second Thursday of the month.

If you are interested in taking part, please meet the group at 10am

Fungi in The Dales

Sam Chamberlin IBC Wildlife Ranger

During the November work party with Friends of The Dales, I stumbled across two interesting species of fungi in two different habitats.

The first being the Field Blewit (*Lepista saeva*), which was noted in the main meadow. This is a species that favours calcareous grassland and

is often found growing in tightly packed groups or fairy rings.

This is a good species of fungi to become familiar with, the cap is buff to light brown and can grow up to 15cm in diameter. The purple, fibrous stem is particularly eye catching when determining identification. Like a lot



Field Blewit (*Lepista saeva*),



Stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus*)

of fungi, Field Blewits are saprobic, living in environments rich in organic matter and have an important role in recycling nutrients.

The second species of fungi found is a little more ambiguous. Tucked away on the woodland floor under an entanglement of brambles, a Stinkhorn

egg. The egg stage of the Stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus*) is quite easy to find as they are usually partially buried and found in groups. Typically, the 'egg' is roughly 4 to 8cm until it ruptures, and the stipe emerges. Spore dispersal is reliant on flies which are attracted to its unpleasant odour.

The Christchurch Park Sarsen Rockery

Caroline Markham *GeoSuffolk*



Much of central Ipswich is underlain by Eocene London Clay, including our Minster and the lower areas of Christchurch Park, which are rendered 'plashy' by the sticky clay during wet weather.

The London Clay is about 54 million years old and beneath it are older Tertiary age deposits, mostly sands, but with some very hard quartzite blocks known as sarsens. These are too deeply buried to outcrop in the landscape but are dug up from time to time. Their durability has led them to be included in ancient church towers, such as St Nicholas, and 'propping up' medieval walls, such as in Salthouse Street.

Large numbers of sarsens were dredged up when the Ipswich dock basin was created in the early 1840s and it is thought this is the origin of those in Christchurch Park. Sarsens are quite distinctive to Ipswich and, though they also occur in Essex and across the Thames in

north Kent, the rockery must be one of the largest collections of sarsens in the country. GeoSuffolk has designated it a County Geodiversity Site.

The distinctive hummocky or 'mammillated' surfaces of the sarsens form an attractive feature in the

rockery. Most have been laid horizontally, roughly in layers, mimicking the original stratification of the deposit. The rockery is well-maintained – cleaned of graffiti and cleared of excess vegetation from time to time.

Wild Ipswich

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

www.wildipswich.org



Mending, maintenance and a megabash

Ann Havard *Friends of Belstead Brook Park*

The Friends have had another good few months working in various places around Belstead Brook Park.



Friends of Belstead Brook Park

www.wildipswich.org

Email: fobbp@btinternet.com

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 June it was once again time to clear the growth around the viewing mound in Bobbits Lane Meadow. This is an annual task to ensure that people can observe any bird life on the wet areas in the meadow without them seeing us. The steps up to the mound also need keeping clear

and someone who is fit enough to scale the wooden palisade climbs over to clear the mainly nettles on the other side. Tough gloves also needed!

Only two of us were out in July checking trees in the new stag beetle wood in Bourne Park. We were amazed at the number of trees that had survived the hot, dry summer with so little rain. We put this down to the method of planting - digging a good hole, adding a tree guard which helped shade the new sapling and adding a good layer of wood chip mulch. Hopefully now, with autumn and winter rain they will put down longer roots and establish really well.

General path maintenance in August in Spring Wood clearing paths, followed by the usual September work of mowing and raking in Belstead Meadows. This has been made considerably quicker and easier with the lovely red tractor doing a lot of the work! This enabled us



The bench in Burnet Meadow being put to good use

to just clear the path edges and cut back overhanging vegetation.

More of the same in October but this time in Burnet Meadow. We were joined by a couple of new guys who were most welcome and worked very hard. Along with raking the meadow we also installed a very fine looking rustic bench which a robin came to investigate – hopefully he approved!

the dead hedge into which all the brash went.

A dead hedge is a linear feature and is vital to the ecology of a wood, with many different species including insects and fungi all helping to decompose the wood into available nutrients for plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms. Did you know there are approximately 2000 species of wood-eating invertebrates



A friendly robin joins the action



Spring Wood fungi

We had our first Mega bash of the winter in Spring Wood in November. Twelve hardy people turned out including one lad from Suffolk Wildlife Trust Young Wardens who worked really hard and is now experienced at coppicing. We made a good clearance and produced many good hazel bean poles, garden stakes, pea sticks and stakes to secure

(eg beetles, slugs, snails) munching away and digesting dead wood?

Gardening tip – if you can have even a small dead wood feature in your garden, the residents will help keep other garden 'pests' away. Chunky logs are best but even smaller branches and twigs piled up will provide a home for wildlife.

Clearing up and fungi finds

Stephen Corley *Chairman Portal Woodlands Conservation Group*



All pictures © S. Corley

As we moved out of summer, our volunteers were busy clearing up trees and branches brought down by stormy weather. They also tackled the brambles and bracken on the southern Bronze Age burial mound (*tumulus*), progressing our project to return the mound to a grassy knoll.

In November we surveyed our bird boxes and were pleased to find that over 70 % had been used for nesting, mainly by tits. Some boxes had up to three unhatched eggs, but thankfully no dead chicks were found,

indicating a very successful fledging season.

It was a good autumn for fungi, as it typically is, with some of the best examples on show. Of note were the colourful false turkey tail (*Stereum ostrea*) and, on dead branches of silver birch (*Betula pendula*), the striking birch polypore (*Fomitopsis betulina*), serving as a snack for local wildlife, evident from tell-tale nibble marks.

We wish all our Volunteers, supporters and visitors a happy, healthy and nature-filled 2026!



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.



Volunteer Work Mornings

(all ages welcome - no need to book)
Meet at the Education Area
from 10.00am to noon.

Saturday 17th January
Sunday 15th February
Saturday 21st March
Sunday 19th April

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



False turkey-tail fungus



Birch polypore fungus

A remarkable birding year

John Kornjaca *Suffolk Bird Group*

A remarkable Suffolk birding year is slowly ending. The year has seen not one, but five new species recorded in the county and, the first ever breeding record on the mainland of the UK for one of the five.



© John Richardson

Turkestan Shrike

quite recently, an immature Isabelline Shrike/Turkestan Shrike (virtually impossible to differentiate between the two). The adult Turkestan Shrike seen at Dunwich was a beautiful bird with a pristine, clean plumage.

... we have several species that are seen to 'pass through' on their way further south ...

In autumn we welcome many winter visitors. In addition to those birds that overwinter in the UK, we have several species that are seen to 'pass through' on their way further south. Immature Ospreys have now moved through – they target our coastal estuaries to feed up prior to making their way to West Africa. In contrast, we

have also seen large numbers of rarer, tiny Warblers with Pallas's Leaf Warbler and Yellow-browed Warbler quite prominent. They are a joy to see with both showing bright greens and yellows in their plumage. The photographs show birds caught and ringed at Landguard Bird Observatory.

All the accepted records of bird sightings for the county are detailed in 'Suffolk Birds' which is the annual report for the county produced by the Suffolk Bird Group and Suffolk Naturalists Society. The 2024 report is now available.

The final 2025 indoor presentation took place on 27 November with Andrew Raine our guest speaker. He entertained a group of about 45 attendees with his photographs and talk

following a recent visit to Columbia – the world's most diverse bird country.

The final outdoor event of what has been a packed calendar in 2025 saw members and friends stretch their legs with a birding walk around Felixstowe Ferry on the morning of Sunday 14 December. Traditionally, it's the festive lunch that follows, that I hear is the main attraction.

The SBG quiz team were victorious in the recently held Suffolk Wildlife Trust (Woodbridge Group) quiz night. As well as contributing to over £650 raised on the evening, the knowledgeable team (Julie Llewellyn, with Mssrs Grieco, Gretton, Bathgate, Keeling and Kornjaca in support) were delighted with their first-place finish!



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.

The five new species are Bridled Tern, Booted Eagle, Zitting Cisticola, Turkestan Shrike and Brown Shrike. And the Zitting Cisticola pair was reported to have raised four youngsters on the outskirts of Walberswick – the first breeding record of the once called Fan-tailed Warbler on the mainland of the UK.

A 'SHRIKE' autumn was fantastic! Shrikes are collectively known as 'butcher birds' since they have a habit of catching their prey (usually insects, including wasps and bees, occasionally small birds) and impaling their victims on thorns or the barbs on wire fences thus creating a 'larder', or stockpile of food. In the space of a few weeks along the Suffolk coast, birders have enjoyed the pleasure of seeing Red-backed Shrike, Turkestan Shrike, Brown Shrike and

Both pictures © Angus Barnett



Yellow-browed Warbler



Pallas's Leaf Warbler



Indoor meetings at the Community Centre, Hintlesham.

© John Kornjaca

Holywells Park- Trees in Winter

Andy and Yvonne *Friends of Holywells Park*

Winter is the cruellest season. Wildlife 'battens down the hatches' to survive food shortages and the harsh weather...it's survival of the fittest.

Hopefully, all the birds and animals have built up their resources to get through. Looking at the animals in the park, they have the advantage of being mobile and can search out food, whereas the trees cannot do this. They remain in their static position, enduring all that Winter throws at them.

Holywells Park has many varied species of trees. Most of the non-native species having been planted during the Cobbold era (1812-1930).

A couple of examples of these are the Swamp Cypress which can be found on the triangle near the Stable Block and the Coastal Redwood near the Alan Road entrance to the park. Both of these trees originate from America.

Native trees to be found include many English Oaks, the avenue of Limes leading up to the Bishops' Hill entrance and a magnificent Copper Beech.

Wintertime is an excellent time to take a walk around the park and look at the trees



Common Lime

when they are not 'in leaf' as this gives an appreciation of how different each tree is in shape, structure and form.

If you have a spare couple of hours this Winter, why not wrap up warm and do the Holywells Park Tree Trail? Just search for Holywells Park Tree Trail on the internet. Enjoy!

Anniversary

This year, the Friends of Holywells Park will be 25 years old. This coincides with Holywells Parks' 90th year.

In 1935, the Park was presented to the citizens of Ipswich by Lord Woodbridge, then officially opened to the public in May 1936.

We're planning to celebrate this double birthday so keep a look out for further information in the coming months on the Park noticeboards, the Friends' website, Facebook and Instagram.



Friends of Holywells Park

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

Contact: fohpswich@gmail.com

www.holywellspark.org.uk

facebook.com/holywellsparkipswich



Copper Beech



Horse Chestnut

All pictures © Andy Smuk

Woodland management- Orwell Country Park

David Dowding *Wildlife Ranger, Ipswich Borough Council*

As we come into the Christmas period, we make a shift from managing grasslands and wetlands to woodlands and scrub.



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.

Braziers Wood and Bridge Wood are ancient woodland sites within Orwell Country Park. The latter is known as a PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site) due to the sadly common practice after the Second World War of clearing native broadleaved woodland and planting coniferous species in their place. This was done as the conifers grow faster and produce relatively straight and lightweight timber. Corsican Pine was the main conifer planted in Bridge



Stag beetle grubs under a logpile in Bridgewood

Wood alongside some larch. Sycamore was also planted as it was thought this was going to be in great demand by a domestic furniture industry that now no longer really exists! Since the wood has been owned by Ipswich Borough Council as part of the Orwell Country Park, the plantation conifers have been thinned and are being progressively removed in favour of a return to native broadleaved species. More open rides and glades have also been created to maximise biodiversity.

Woodland management may look a bit drastic, when areas are cleared of trees, but these practices have been going on for centuries- hence the term ancient woodland, and when done on rotation this type of management creates the best mix of habitats for biodiversity.

If left unmanaged for more than 20 years, the canopy starts to shade out the understory and the diversity of habitats rapidly starts to degrade. Doing it on a 15-year rotation seems to be the best timescale for both biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Coppicing promotes rapid growth both through the physical stimulation of cutting, and the increased light levels created, so provided most of the tree is retained as deadwood habitat or timber and not burned, this "human intervention" increases the site's value as a carbon sink.

In areas of ex-plantation, it is amazing how much natural regeneration occurs from the seedbank after decades of heavy shading.

Coppicing in sandy areas of Orwell Country Park has given rise to Bramble, Gorse, Broom and then over time, a canopy of Birch, Elm and Oak. It also creates a spectacular display of English Bluebells which is the main



Bluebells growing in the drier areas of the woodland

woodland flower on the drier sandy soils. In the lower lying areas with a more clay substrate the regeneration has given rise to Field Maple, Hazel, Ash and Small Leaved Lime.

There is also a better range of wildflowers on the wetter soils including Primroses, Wood Anemones, Violets, Dogs' Mercury, Early Purple Orchids, Wild Garlic, Bugle and Moschatel.

Elm is a fantastic species for wildlife but also has a great deal of heritage in Britain. Before Dutch Elm Disease devastated the UK's population, Elm trees were iconic features of our countryside, used for their durability in ship building. For example, the hull and keel of HMS Victory in Nelson's Day and seen in the paintings of John Constable and Thomas Gainsborough.

Sadly, mature Elms are now scarce, so we have been planting disease resistant varieties (hybrids) to try and restore them in the landscape.

Coppicing of the younger Elm seems to prolong the life of the tree as the disease seems to be more detrimental to older specimens, so we are trying to actively manage more of these areas.

Some areas of natural regeneration have been supplemented with ad hoc planting of species such as Goat Willow, Hornbeam and disease resistant Elm.

It has been amazing to see the target species respond, particularly red listed birds such as Nightingales and biodiversity action plan butterflies such as White Admiral and White Letter Hairstreak making use of the scrubby glades and wildflowers.

90% of the wood is left in site as habitat, but some of the straight lengths of Pine are set aside for the milling of timber for wildlife homes. Chestnut, Larch and Oak is often used "raw" for bench legs and path edging as they naturally have good durability outdoors.

Elusive encounter

Tim Kenny *Leader, RSPB Ipswich Group*



© Tim Kenny

Redwing on Landguard Common

As well as leading the RSPB local group here in Ipswich, I volunteer at Minsmere once or twice a month on Sundays - a full-time job precludes me from doing more. And in October I had one of those encounters that proves bird species can turn up anytime, anywhere.

The day before, I had been talking to my predecessor whilst trying to spot an elusive Pallas's warbler at the Landguard observatory, and mentioned that my British list is light on seabirds, particularly shearwaters, petrels and skuas. Partly my fault probably, I don't have the patience to stare out to sea for hours in the hope of identifying a small dot a mile offshore! The following day, I was walking up the ramp to the Island Mere hide when a bird caught my eye. A juvenile gull?

No, it was far too slim and falcon-like. It was a skua species, slightly inland from the coast where one would expect to see it. It briefly landed on the mere but was soon seen off by the local gulls, heading towards the sea. Fortunately, someone in the hide had taken a photo, and by the distinctive white wing flashes we were able to identify the bird as a juvenile Arctic skua - an unexpected life tick for me! So much of birdwatching is a case of right place, right time, and had I been two minutes later, or two minutes earlier, the Arctic skua would remain a gap in my UK list.

Eyes out for winter migrants

As I write in late November, the annual changing of the guard that is migration season is just about over. The summer visitors are long gone and enjoying the sunshine somewhere in Africa, whilst the winter visitors have now arrived. The thin *tseep* calls of the Redwing are no longer an accompaniment to the clear autumn night, and recently I saw an impressive flock of Fieldfare near Westleton. Eyes out for Waxwings, although whether this winter will see an irruption remains to be seen.

Suffolk also does well for winter geese, with a few White-fronted goose flocks occurring on the coast at sites such as Hollesley Marsh and North Warren. The latter is also good for Barnacle geese from the well-established local feral flock, and amongst these I was once fortunate to find a rare vagrant Red-breasted goose. The odd Tundra bean goose can also turn up, and not forgetting that denizen of the estuaries the Brent goose, which occurs in internationally important numbers along the Stour, Orwell and Deben estuaries. I haven't even mentioned the Canada and Egyptian geese, feral species that are becoming increasingly common in the wild in our part of the world. Even the Bar-headed goose, more at home in the Himalayas, has been breeding in Suffolk recently, almost certainly from escaped



Ipswich Local Group
Group Leader Tim Kenny
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<https://group.rspb.org.uk/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, get out and experience nature first hand on one of our regular field meetings. Three times a year you will receive the 'Orwell Observer' magazine. Membership costs £5 per year (£1 for Juniors). For more information see the Events Diary in this magazine, visit our website or email as per details above.

birds that have "flown the wire" of a wildfowl collection somewhere.

As 2026 approaches, I hope you all have a good Christmas and Happy New Year. If you haven't come along to one of our walks, why not come along next year? All are free of charge, and you don't have to be a member of the group, they are open to everyone. I can't promise you an Arctic skua, but you never know what you're going to see.

Snippets

Fighting Pheasants *Colin Hullis*

On a recent birding excursion to Shingle Street in search of Short eared owls, I stopped off at Hollesley Upper Common and was fortunate enough to watch a couple of Stonechats and a Dartford warbler. Attractive birds and always a welcome sight.

On the road from Hollesley approaching Shingle Street I was stopped in my tracks by this couple of Pheasants in the middle of the road. Facing each other, there was clearly bad blood between them. After much posturing and a couple of coming-togethers, all hell broke loose as they literally flew at each other with one reaching an altitude of at least three feet. Eventually they made off into the undergrowth swearing at each other and I continued my owl search, (unsuccessfully).



Brief encounter *John Ellis*

A cool dusk settled over Foxhall Stadium as I began my walk. As I rounded a corner near the tree line, a flash of russet fur caught my eye - a fox, slender and alert, watching me before slipping back into the shadows. Moments later, a rustle came from deeper in the undergrowth. Out stepped a muntjac, its delicate hooves barely making a sound. For a brief moment we watched each other. Then it vanished between the trees, leaving me alone with the stadium and the fading light.



Visiting Sparrowhawks

Melvin Eke

This is one of the stunning Sparrowhawks that regularly visit my garden in the Belstead area of town. Both male and female often take time out from terrorising the locals to drink from my large, ornate stone birdbaths - on several occasions simultaneously!

Good news is that they have not caught all of my tit population but have overseen the demise of several wood pigeons.



New seat in the Orangery

There's an old, disused pond in the Holywells Park Orangery which is a heritage feature. This is surrounded by Pulhamite, a patented anthropic rock material invented by James Pulham, and used widely in parks, grottoes and waterfalls from the 1830's to the 1940's. The Pulhamite has deteriorated and has jagged edges so this seat will not only protect the rock but also be an attractive addition to the space.

Grateful thanks to Friends of Holywells Park, Ipswich Wildlife Group and Ipswich Borough Council. Special thanks to Martin Cant who came up with the idea and determinedly followed it through to fruition.



Even tractors get stuck . . .

Greenways tractor stuck in a hidden, old air raid shelter at Martlesham Common, whilst cutting bracken!



....and rescued



Events Diary

JANUARY

Saturday 3rd January 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING

Manningtree and Mistley Walls for winter waders and wildfowl. Meet at The Walls, Manningtree CO11 1HQ, TM109319. 2-3 miles, 2-3 hours. **Leader Tim Kenny.**

Sunday 4th January 8.30am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Levington. Meet at Levington Marina, park along the approach road. Map Ref: TM246382. Post Code: IP10 0LN What3Words: formation. submerged.zipped **Leader: Dave Pearsons. Tel. 07913 620665.**

Thursday 8th January 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING

'Raptor Translocation Projects of White-tailed Eagle and Osprey', Peter Merchant, Licensed Raptor Specialist. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Ample free parking and refreshments included. Group Members - adults £3, age 60 and over £2.80. Non-members - Adults £5. Under 18s free.

Saturday 17th January 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH

Martlesham Common. Join Greenways and others for a day of heathland scrub clearing on this lovely Local Nature Reserve. May include a bonfire, wind direction permitting. Meet in the Community Centre car park off Felixstowe Road, Martlesham. **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Sunday 18th January 10am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Abberton and beyond. Meet at the EWT Visitor Centre car park. Map Ref: TL963178. Post Code: CO2 0EU (nearest) What3Words: cornfield.albatross.glare **Leader: Ashley Gooding. Tel. 07808 044611.**

Sunday 18th January 10am – 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Meet at the field gate at the top of the bridleway on Kiln Meadow. Park in Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlan 07733 968481.**

Sunday 25th January 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Thorpeness. Meet on the grassy area by Thorpeness Meare. Map Ref: TM471595. Post Code: IP16 4NW What3Words: hobby.shrug. monday **Leader: David Walsh. Tel. 07947 051223.**

Tuesday 27th January 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK

Bourne Park for winter birds. Meet at Stoke Park Drive car park IP2 8LT. TM152419.

Wednesday 28th January 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group FILM

Ipswich RSPB Group Leader Tim Kenny will present his film 'A Walk along the River Orwell'. Whilst concentrating on the abundant birdlife, the film also looks at the history and geography of the Orwell. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. Please note There is no access from Museum Street. £4 includes tea or coffee.

Thursday 29th January 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK

Hobbies and Stonies with Ed Keeble. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission charge £3. Non-members most welcome, full-time students free. **Additional information: Adam Gretton, adam.gretton12@gmail.com Tel 07394 923010.**

FEBRUARY

Saturday 7th February 9.30am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING

Melton and the River Deben for waders, wildfowl and scrubland birds. Meet at Melton Riverside car park, TM287504. **Leader Simon Marginson.**

Thursday 12th February 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING

'The Future of Barn Owls in Suffolk' Sally Nelson and Dave Pearson, Barn Owls Support Suffolk. Sponsored by Collins Waste Solutions. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Ample free parking and refreshments included. Group Members - adults £3, age 60 and over £2.80. Non-members - Adults £5. Under 18s free.

Sunday 15th February 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Carlton Marshes. Meet at reserve car park, Burnt Hill Lane, Carlton Colville. Map Ref: TM508919. Post Code: NR33 8HU What3Words: sake.focal.obviously **Leader: Richard Smith. Tel. 01502 586801.**

Sunday 15th February 10am – 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Meet at the field gate at the top of the bridleway on Kiln Meadow. Park in Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlan 07733 968481.**

Saturday 21st February 9.30am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Staverton Lakes. Meet at Daisy's Walk car park, Rendlesham. Map Ref: TM348502. Post Code: IP12 3PJ What3Words: hunt.bulky.pampered **Leader: Steve Fryett. Tel. 07593 382082.**

Saturday 21st February 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH

Martlesham Heath SSSI, Join Greenways and Martlesham Conservation Group for a day of heathland management work with a bonfire and baked potatoes. Meet on the site by the bonfire, opposite the pedestrian entrance from the windsock on Eagle Way. **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Tuesday 24th February 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK

Holywells Park for winter birds. Meet at the Stable Block off Cliff Lane IP3 0PG TM176432.

Wednesday 25th February 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

Peter Merchant is an ornithologist with almost 50 years of experience dealing with the rescue and rehabilitation of raptors. He will talk about the history of wild peregrine falcons in Suffolk. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. Please note There is no access from Museum Street. £4 includes tea or coffee.

Thursday 26th February 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Followed by trophy presentations, SBG Review of the Year, a raffle and Mystery Bird Quiz! Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. No admission charge. Non-members most welcome. **Additional information: Adam Gretton, adam.gretton12@gmail.com Tel 07394 923010.**

MARCH

Sunday 1st March 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING

Trimley Marshes SWT Reserve for winter waders and wildfowl. Meet at Searsons Farm car park, Trimley St Mary IP11 0UD. TM262355, 4-5 miles, 4-5 hours. **Leader Tim Kenny.**

Thursday 12th March 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING

'Extremadura and Coto Donana' Anne Wright, Ipswich Group member. Sponsored by The Oddfellows. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Ample free parking and refreshments included. Group Members - adults £3, age 60 and over £2.80. Non-members - Adults £5. Under 18s free.

Sunday 15th March 10am – 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Meet at the field gate at the top of the bridleway on Kiln Meadow. Park in Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlan 07733 968481.**

Sunday 15th March 10am to 2pm IBC Wildlife Team/Greenways TREE PLANTING Pond Hall Farm

Join the Wildlife Rangers and Greenways for a tree planting session down by the Orwell Estuary in the Orwell Country Park – planting a screen of trees and shrubs to reduce disturbance to feeding birds on the estuary. Meet in Bridge Wood car park at 10am. There is a walk of about two thirds of a mile down to the planting site. **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Sunday 18th March 8am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Breckland. Meet at Santon Downham car park. Map Ref: TL815878. Post Code: IP27 0TJ What3Words: caused.wiped.secretly **Leader: Gi Grieco. Tel. 07951 482547.**

Tuesday 24th March 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK

Christchurch Park for winter and spring birds. Meet at Soane Street entrance IP4 2BE TM 165448.

Wednesday 25th March 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

RSPB Minsmere Volunteer Steve Everett on the wonders of Digger Alley. As featured on BBC's Springwatch, this talk is illustrated with incredible, close-up photos and videos of creatures like digger wasps, mining bees and other weird insects. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. Please note There is no access from Museum Street. £4 includes tea or coffee.

Thursday 26th March 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK

Lowestoft Kittiwakes – accommodating a red list species, with Dick Houghton. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission charge £3. Non-members most welcome, full-time students free.

Additional information: Adam Gretton, adam.gretton12@gmail.com Tel 07394 923010

APRIL

Thursday 9th April 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING

AGM followed by 'Butterflies, Moths and other invertebrates' Liz Cutting, Naturalist and Photographer based on the Suffolk/Essex border. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Ample free parking and refreshments included. Group Members - adults £3, age 60 and over £2.80. Non-members - Adults £5. Under 18s free.

Saturday 11th April 9.30am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING

RSPB Boyton Marshes for spring birds. Meet at Banters Barn Farm, Boyton IP12 3LW TM387475. **Leader Simon Marginson.**

Sunday 12th April 8am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

SWT Lackford Lakes. Meet at reserve car park, N.B. £3 SWT charge payable on the day. Map Ref: TL801706. Post Code: IP28 6HX What3Words: pencils.reckons.complies **Leader: Adam Faiers. Tel. 07708 521852.**

Sunday 19th April 10am – 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Meet at the field gate at the top of the bridleway on Kiln Meadow. Park in Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlan 07733 968481.**

Tuesday 21st April 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK

Kiln Meadow and Spring Wood for spring birds and flowers. Meet at Marbled White Drive IP8 3TL TM143417.

Wednesday 22nd April 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

Darren Tansley from the Essex Wildlife Trust on the Un-natural History of Rivers. From lamprey to beavers rivers are one of our most diverse habitats but they have never been more threatened. (This meeting will be preceded by a very short AGM) Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. Please note There is no access from Museum Street. £4 includes tea or coffee.

Thursday 23rd April 7.30pm Suffolk Bird group TALK

'Connecting Constable & Gainsborough Country, A Landscape Recovery Project' (including both the Stour Valley and Suffolk Wool Towns farmer clusters) with John Pawsey and Lizzie Thurston. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission charge £3. Non-members most welcome, full-time students free. **Additional information: Adam Gretton, adam.gretton12@gmail.com Tel 07394 923010.**

Saturday 25th April 9.15am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Fingringhoe Wick. Meet at visitor centre car park, South Green Road. Map Ref: TM048192. Post Code: CO5 7DN What3Words: novelist.modem.kilts **Leader: Ashley Gooding. Tel. 07808 044611.**

Regular Events

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 1pm SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Join Ipswich Wildlife Group for a morning of work in the wood. Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Parking in Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH (except December & January) Ipswich Wildlife Group BOTANICAL SURVEYING OF SPRING WOOD AND SURROUNDING AREA
Meet at 10am by the stag beetle sculpture near Spring Wood. **Details from Leila ipswichwildlifegroup@gmail.com**

TUESDAYS 9.30am 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 07736 826076**

WEDNESDAYS 10am Friends of Holywells Park HOLYWELLS PARK WORK PARTY

Join our small team of volunteers doing valuable work around the Park. **Contact Andy Smuk for details 07722 749440**

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 7.30pm - 9pm Ipswich Friends of the Earth MEETING - for venue **please phone 07931 585672 or see Facebook page www.facebook.com/IpswichFOE/**

SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Friends of The Dales WORK PARTY

Meet by the notice board at the lower entrance on Dales Road.

THURSDAYS 9.30am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY

A smaller group than on Tuesday, but operates in the same way – please see details above for Tuesdays Work Party

THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 7 – 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

FRIDAYS 9.30am 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

FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH 9.30am 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. *Volunteers need to be registered via an informal induction prior to joining us.* **More information from Martin Cant 07858 436003 martin.cant@ntlworld.com**

FRIDAYS 10am-11.30am Suffolk Wildlife Trust WILD TOTS

Wild play activities for ages 18 months – 5 years old in Holywells Park. **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

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. Usually meeting at Bibb Way alongside Alderman Road recreation ground, but please get in touch to confirm location **More information from James Baker 07736 826076**

FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Butterfly Conservation WORK PARTY (October to March). **More information from Helen Saunders helens919@gmail.com**

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am-12pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust WEEKEND WILDLIFE CLUB

For 6 – 11 years olds. Meet new friends, get outdoors and earn awards. Join us in the beautiful, historic Holywells Park. Each month has a different wild theme. **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

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: wildipswich.org/fobbp or email fobbp@btinternet.com**

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 12:30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust NATURE CHAMPIONS: YOUNG WARDENS

For 11-16 year olds in Holywells Park. Looking for practical experience, whilst making friends? If so, Young Wardens is the group for you! **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 11am-1pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust ECO ACTIONISTS

Location varies. A meet-up and creative session for 18-25 year-old eco actionists. **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org**

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**

Spring Wood Day 2026

A reminder that Spring Wood Day now takes place every other year - next date will be Monday 4th May 2026.