

Waxwing winter?
– see page 21



Local Wildlife news

January to April 2024

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



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Produced by the



GREENWAYS
countryside project



Tell your friends

Local Wildlife News is available online at
www.wildipswich.org



If your friends and colleagues don't have a copy let them know that the latest issue along with all back issues are always free to view at the Wild Ipswich website. The site is the gateway to all the wildlife and conservation organisations in the local area where you will be directed to their website, Twitter (X), or Facebook pages.

Copies of LWN are available at all Ipswich libraries, at the Reg Driver Centre in Christchurch Park and from leaflet dispensers at the Stable Block in Holywells Park, from the Greenways office at the Scout Hall, 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).



Come and 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 just lend us your support or get involved in our activities

Your membership will help provide valuable influence when we are standing up for local environmental issues

We don't do meetings or annual subscriptions but we will keep you informed of what's going on by email each month. Just send your contact details to our secretary Leila at iwg@wildipswich.org

Welcome

by **James Baker** *Editor*

Welcome to the winter and spring (hopefully!) edition of Local Wildlife News. As ever, this issue is full of informative, interesting and exciting articles about local conservation work and those groups involved in it. There are also a large number of both indoor and outdoor events organised by local groups, covering a very wide range of subject matter – so surely, something for everyone!

It does seem to be a factor of the post-Covid world, that people are generally less inclined to be involved in local community activity of all types – something which I feel could have a massive adverse impact on the future of wildlife conservation. Without the direct involvement of people out and about in nature reserves, it becomes less likely that they will support environmental charities or campaigns, which in turn could lead to even lower levels of participation. Sadly this is happening at the worst time for our biodiversity – with all of the current challenges facing species, from climate change and weather extremes to pollution and

human expansion – it is hard to see how we can substantially improve the biodiversity of our local area!

For that reason if no other (and there are plenty of other good reasons – mostly for your own health and wellbeing!), please do make a special effort to take part in at least one of the fabulous events in the back of this issue – all have been lovingly planned and put together by volunteers for your enjoyment!

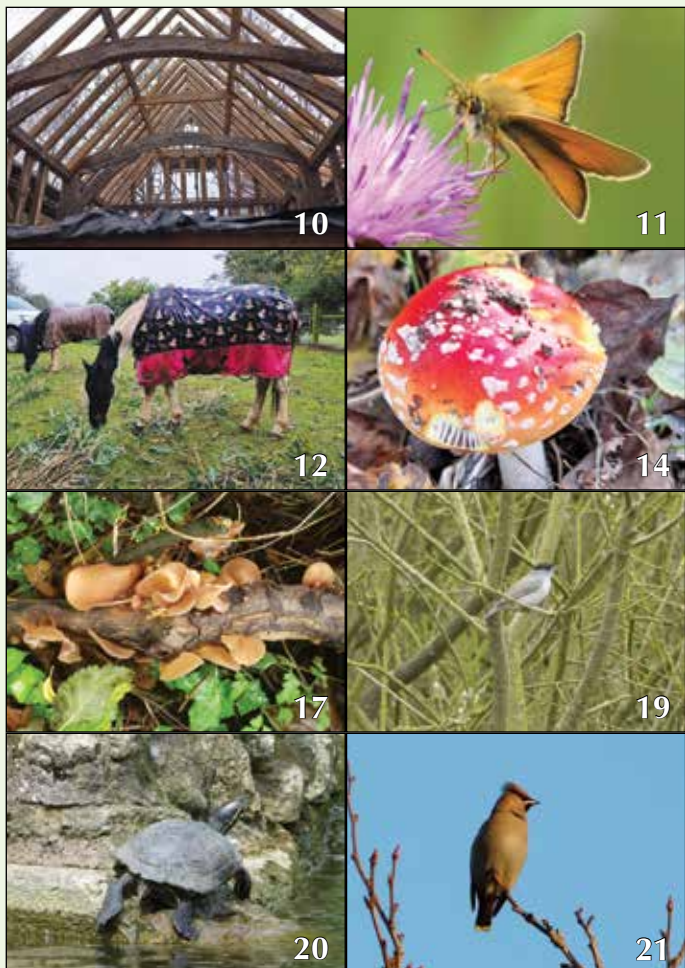
Whatever this winter throws at us, there will be groups of dedicated and committed volunteers out on our heaths and meadows, and in our woodlands and wetlands, striving to make a difference for local wildlife. I've spent all of my adult life working with these 'mad' but wonderful folk, and I feel it necessary here to say a big encouraging Thank You to them all.

All the best wishes for a wonderful wildlife year in 2024.

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Favourite trees in Ipswich

Sheila Roberts *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

Just recently, a group of us were chatting about how lucky we are that Ipswich has some truly lovely trees. Inevitably, the conversation turned to which ones were our favourites.

One group of trees I have long admired is the rows of mature trees in the little patch of land at the top of Tuddenham Avenue – near Borrowdale Road. As a result of that conversation, I learnt that they are actually the remnants of a vast country estate known as Red House Park.

The big house dating back

to the 17th century was somewhere in Bromeswell Road but the park extended from The Spinney at the bottom of the hill in Tuddenham Road north as far as Westerfield. The configuration of the current group of trees is thought to follow a formal avenue – a common feature of landscaped parks.

Another member of our group loves the little group of trees which run between the car park of the Ipswich and Suffolk Club and what was the Robert Ransome pub. These cheery specimens provide a splash of autumn colour as well as a much needed boost of green in the spring. Take a look next time you walk past Tower Ramparts and you'll see what I mean.

I love trees and find it hard to choose a favourite. Sometimes, I think it's the beautiful silver birch that, against the odds, grows along Sheldrake Drive. It's been planted too close to the path, it has a slight list and its delicate twigs annoy the heads of passers-by. As well as loving its resilience when others planted at the same time failed to thrive, I love how it has that perfect silver birch outline – almost as if an artist is painting a cliché tree. In the autumn, its leaves turn the colour of butter and in spring,



The unusual seeds/nuts on the trees in the town

they are the most vibrant green. However, if I had to only choose one, it would be the lilac tree in my back garden. It was there when I moved in and must be over 50 years old. I know it's not native, it is many years past its peak and apparently they aren't that great for wildlife but after a decade of watching it through the seasons I beg to differ.

I guess its wildlife value is enhanced because it is so

old and I'm sure most keen gardeners would have taken a chainsaw to it years ago. But, quite apart from the annual display of dark purple blooms which I love, this tree brings other treasures.

I guess its wildlife value is enhanced because it is so old ...

The trunk is partly hollow and I suspect some of the roots have long died. As a result, most years, I find stag beetles clambering up the trunk. I presume the grubs have been feeding on the dead wood of its roots. In May, the 'billiwitches' (cockchafer) use it to swarm around and more recently, great tits have reared families in the holes where branches have been pruned back from the patch. Throughout the year, bluetits and sparrows endlessly comb the buds and leaves. I have no idea what they are finding to eat but whatever it is, seems to be plentiful.

So next time you are strolling round Ipswich, take a look at our wealth of trees – we'd love to hear your stories of which ones are your favourites and why.



**Suffolk
Wildlife Trust**

Ipswich Group Newsletter

Chairman: (Vacant)

Secretary: Wendy Brown 01473 259674

browncandw@gmail.com

Treasurer: Tony Clarke 01473 741083

tonyclarke@2309hotmail.co.uk

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.



Autumn colour along Valley Road

Fancy a lovely wildlife-themed day out?

Sheila Roberts *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

Every summer, your local group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust runs a series of outdoor events.

You may have read about trips to see butterflies in ancient woodland or exploring the other-worldly landscape of Orfordness.

At the time of going to print, we're still finalising the programme so watch out on the SWT website events pages for details. One of the things we'd love to do is visit somewhere slightly further afield.

As we're big fans of the BBC Springwatch series, we'd love to take a group to Wild Ken Hill in Norfolk. It's been the home of most of the 'watches' for a couple of years and is only open to pre-booked visits so it would be a real treat to see behind the scenes.

The cost of a minibus is very high so we're exploring whether any of you would like to join us by making your own way there and/or car sharing. Entry tickets are around £35 per person plus travel.

To find out more/register your interest please email us at ipswichgroupswt@gmail.com

Everyone is welcome to come along to almost any of our events. However, if you'd like to support the Wildlife Trust, you can find out details of how to join here: www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/supportus



**Suffolk
Wildlife Trust**

Ipswich Group Newsletter





Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Ipswich Group Newsletter

Events Diary

Evening talks programme

From September to April, the Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust brings a range of fascinating and informative speakers to the town for everyone to enjoy. You don't have to be a member of SWT to come along, just bring your modest £3 entry fee and perhaps a few coins for the raffle.

You'll be guaranteed a warm welcome, entry includes a free hot drink in the interval and you'll go home having learnt something about our natural world.

We look forward to seeing you.

All meetings are held at 7.30 pm in Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF

Entrance £3, which includes tea/coffee

Wed. 24th January 2024 Anne and Dennis Kell **Bats in Suffolk**

Anne and Dennis, both members of our Ipswich group, have been members of the Suffolk Bat Group since the 1980s and have been licenced bat workers with Natural England. They will talk about the ecology and lifestyle of bats in the UK, especially in Suffolk. Are the numbers of bats declining, or is it that as we get older we can't hear them anymore?

Wed. 28th February 2024 Kate Osborne **Suffolk Shingle. Tales of Treasure and Trash**

Kate runs "Beach Bonkers" and some of you may have seen her on TV with Kate Humble. She will show us some of the treasures which can be found amongst the stones on our Suffolk shingle beaches, including the shells of voracious carnivores, egg cases of cannibal sea snails, and fossil teeth from woolly mammoths and sharks....every single find tells a story. She states ...The best comment I can hear at the end of my talk is "I will never look at a beach the same way again".

Wed. 27th March 2024 **BTO Prof. James Pearce-Higgins (BTO) Birds and Climate Change**

Birds are dependent on a suitable climate for breeding, migration and survival, especially feeding their chicks, so it is perhaps inevitable that Climate Change will affect them, But how? James and his team have been researching this fascinating topic for the BTO. Which birds are particularly affected, which species might we lose here in the UK, and will we gain others, which today appear only as rare visitors, if at all?

Wed. 24th April 2024 **Colin Hawes The Ecology of Stag Beetles**

The stag beetle is the UK's largest beetle, the males reaching about 5 or 6 cms in length. The adult beetle lives only for a few weeks, although the larvae, fat white grubs with orange heads, are even larger than the adult and live for 5 or more years underground. We are lucky to have stag beetles in our area, and Colin who is lead partner in the "Conservation of the stag beetle in Suffolk" will tell us all about this amazing insect.



© Bill Baston



© Alan Baldry

Ipswich is Wild

Lucy Shepherd *Wilder Communities Manager, Suffolk Wildlife Trust*

Ipswich is alive with wildlife. Our town has well-known and much-loved species such as tawny owls in Christchurch Park, and we are recognised nationally for our population of hedgehogs that trundle about town, and our stag beetles that fly and crawl unsteadily in the summer months.

Ipswich is also teeming with wonderfully weird wildlife that often goes unnoticed. Out of this world-like slime moulds cover and crawl over deadwood, plant galls pop out of leaves and seeds on trees in our parklands, and native water scorpions and stick insects, often associated with far flung countries, swim in our town's ponds.

As Wilder Communities Manager for Suffolk Wildlife Trust, I have the great pleasure working in Ipswich helping people to connect to wildlife in our town through a series of events and workshops, and working with communities to help nature thrive where they live and work.

Ipswich is one of the greenest towns in the UK due to the amount of green spaces we have. However, this isn't evenly spread across the town, and access to green space is extremely limited for a huge proportion of residents, with big swathes of highly

urbanised areas. Our project, Nextdoor Nature, is working to change this.

Working in the areas in Ipswich that have the least amount of access to green space* we have been kick starting projects by listening to communities to understand what they would like to see in their local patch. Then after the listening, comes the doing, and we currently have five communities working hard with our help and guidance, to transform their local area.

One of our projects is Rock Paper Scissors (RPS), on Dove Street, who have been working hard to transform the concreted corner of their art studio into a wildlife haven, providing the passing public with a pop of colour as they go by.

Having run several listening exercises with individuals who attend RPS clubs and events, and the wider public from the surrounding streets, we learnt that colour was really important to everyone and was a common theme that emerged. The transformation has been huge. The area has changed from tones of grey to a whole palette of colour that has been created by the living wall they have installed, and then planted with the help of the surrounding community.

Their balcony space has also received a breath of life, evolving from a metal balcony to a pollinator friendly patch with colour to cheer anyone that passes. Our hope is that in transforming a completely concreted courtyard, and a balcony space, this will inspire residents in town without gardens, what they too could achieve in similar spaces.

RPS is just one of a handful of groups that we are working with in the town with South Street Kids, Odd Fellows, Lucy's Unwrapped and Refills, The Hold, UOS, and The Hive all in various stages of their projects.

It is amazing to be working with so many dedicated groups who are working hard to



A colourful wildlife haven



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

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A green transformation

transform their local spaces to help nature thrive. If you would like to find out more about our work, head to our website and to get in touch - suffolkwildlifetrust.org/nextdoor-nature-projects or follow us on our Instagram page @swtipswich

*Access to green space rating determined by the Friends of The Earth access to green space rating.



The nature-friendly balcony at RPS

Major projects underway

James Baker *Manager, Greenways Countryside Project*

Sproughton River Path

Our wonderful volunteers have been working tirelessly over the past few years to rebuild the Gipping river path through the new nature reserve at Sproughton – the single biggest task ever taken on by the Greenways Project.



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.

After hundreds of days, the path was largely completed by the middle of October, just days before the ravages of Storm Babet, which frustratingly, did quite a lot of damage to the newly re-laid path surface! We will return to the site in the



Suffolk County Council staff volunteers

spring (hopefully after the risk of more flood damage for a while) to repair the damage and refinish the surface.

Around two and a half kilometres of edging plank were installed with over 1800 chestnut and oak stakes being driven in to hold them. 200 tonnes of surfacing material were brought in to create the newly surfaced sections, and many more tonnes of existing material were moved in the widening and levelling operations.

In 2019, many stretches of the path were very narrow, sloping towards the river and some almost impassable. Now there is a continuous two metre wide route from the Norwich railway line bridge out to the A14 bridge – almost one and a half miles. As the new nature reserve develops, the river path will be the main access route allowing people to explore and enjoy this surprisingly wildlife-rich edge of the town.

We are extremely grateful to our exceptionally hard working volunteers

throughout this considerable undertaking, with a small number of individuals making massive contributions of their time to help make this happen.



Vegetation clearing before widening the path



The river path before, during and edging.

Alderman Canal – removal of bankside trees to improve biodiversity

It may seem counter-intuitive, but in many cases it is necessary to remove trees in order to allow the range of wildlife species to be maintained or increased on a site. One such example is the recent felling of several large trees along the bank of Alderman Canal in the Local Nature Reserve.

Alderman Canal (a canalised former course of the River Gipping) is currently a long, linear pond, with no substantive flow of water along it. This lack of water input and movement, combined with very high nutrient levels in the water has caused thick accumulations of duckweed and other surface weeds to grow. In turn, this surface weed blocks light into the water restricting the beneficial effects of oxygen-producing aquatic plants, and adds to the nutrient levels when it dies, sinks and rots underwater.

The resulting anaerobic breakdown of organic matter under the water, causes the unpleasant eggy smell in the vicinity (hydrogen sulphide).

In order to try to reduce the smell and nutrient enrichment issues for the benefit of local people and wildlife biodiversity, it is necessary to reduce the inputs of nutrient to the water, including leaves from bankside trees. This winter, a programme of selective tree removal along the Canal banks is taking place to help address the above issue as well as helping to allow more light to reach the Canal to help water quality and wildlife.

Some of the larger ash trees are beginning to show signs of ash-dieback disease and due to their size are at risk of failing and falling/being blown over. These trees could hit properties on the opposite bank if they fell and more worryingly, the root-plates would likely tear up the path and flood bank, releasing large volumes of water into the surrounding low-lying areas, potentially including the football stadium!

In the past, the banks of the Canal and the river through the town were kept relatively tree-free for some of these reasons – a lack of any programme of tree management has led to the need for removal now, especially as a substantial number of new residents are about to move into the new housing at Bibb Way.

The tree removal is part of planned works to try to improve the water quality issues. Subsequent de-silting of parts of the



channel will help to remove nutrient from the system, and potentially the creation of a circulatory system would help to add oxygen and reduce stagnation.

Some of the larger ash trees are beginning to show signs of ash dieback disease ...

In total, 15 trees are being coppiced or felled in the Local Nature Reserve. Whilst this work may seem drastic and appear so in the short term – there are still a good number of large, mature trees on the reserve so the impact on the landscape will be minimal. Most of

the trees will effectively be coppiced (allowed to regrow from the cut stumps), which means they will stay alive and will be managed regularly by this method in the future to minimise leaf-drop into the water.

In order to offset the potential impact, we hope to plant several more fruit trees into the informal community orchard that is being established on the site. We also intend to plant a few local native Black Poplar saplings as part of the work to try to restore this species to our treescape.

Much of the cut wood will be used to create dead wood habitat piles (such as stag beetle pyramids) in the nature reserve and elsewhere.

Sawmilling – converting local wood into local timber!

Despite being a small organisation, the Greenways Project has always used a lot of wood for various projects around the 40 or so nature reserves we manage.



The sawmill

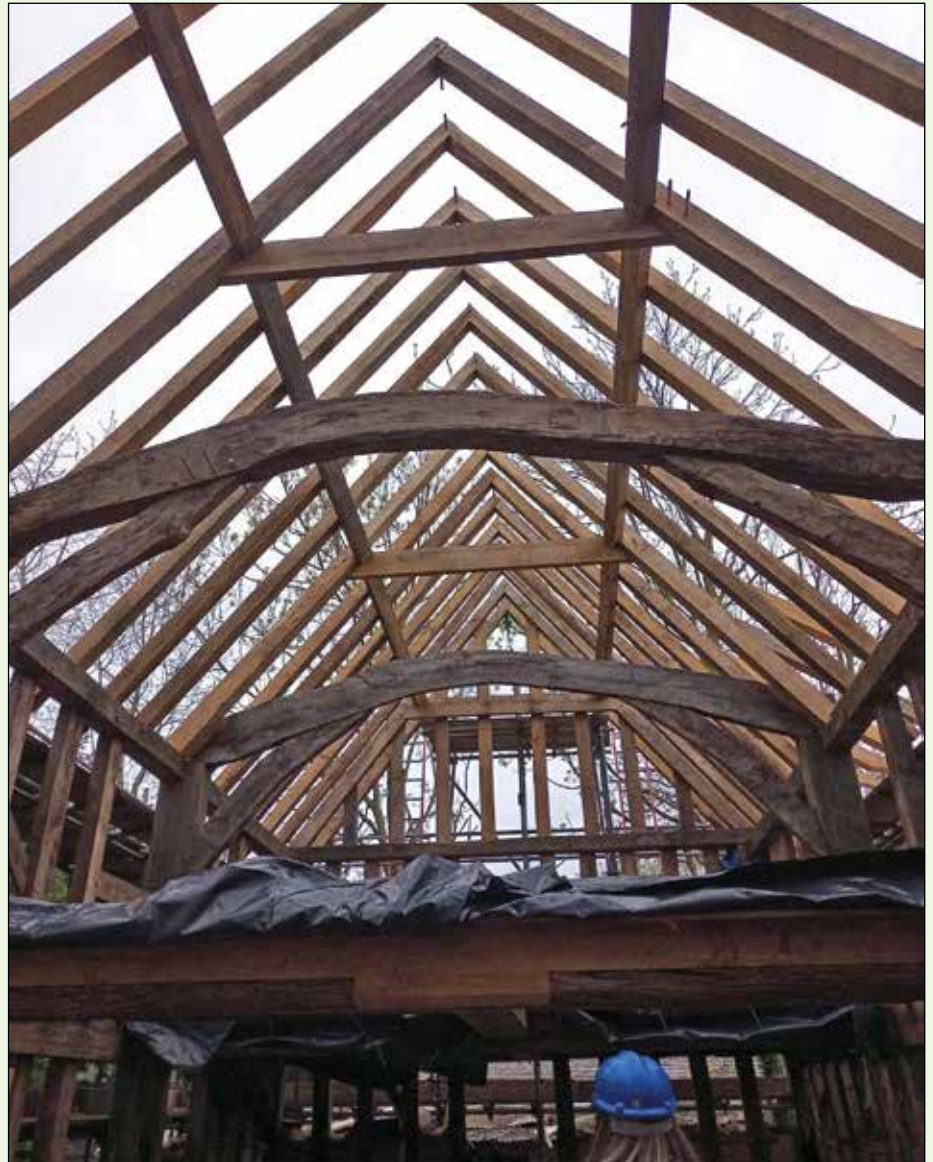
We have always tried to use local timber whenever possible and species that last without the need for chemicals to preserve the wood, (which can leach into the soil and water) – but since we have had our own mobile sawmill, we have been able to produce a huge amount of very local timber for a wide range of applications, for us and also for other customers.

Over a few years, we have been working with the Orchard Barn CIC in Ringshall, helping to produce the timber they required to build a Suffolk long house, using traditional techniques – with all but a handful of the timbers having been processed by our mill. We help Ipswich Wildlife Group to produce hundreds of bird boxes, hedgehog houses and bug homes from pine harvested in Bridge Wood (in the Orwell Country Park) and Sutton Hoo (thanks to the National Trust).

We also supply local oak to local bespoke furniture maker, Tim Germaine,



Local oak planks drying



Orchard Barn long house frame with almost all components cut by our mill

whose brainchild ‘Benchprojectuk’, creates unconventionally shaped benches that encourage interaction between people – and push the principle of ‘build well – last long’! Using a galvanised steel frame and our local oak slats, these benches (in all shapes and sizes) will last almost forever with simple replacement of oak pieces if damaged. Some of Tim’s benches can be seen around Ipswich town centre.

Much of the wood we process is used for our own work, including bridges, planters, fencing, path edging, seats and signage.

The logs we process are usually the result of essential woodland management or have been felled for health and safety reasons. Not all trees can be used – most timbers are not particularly durable outside – but oak and sweet chestnut are, and these are what we generally try to use. Various lighter-weight softwoods

such as pines and larch are ideal for ‘wildlife homes’ – where the key is to use untreated wood in most cases.



Pine planks and rails at Sutton Hoo

Small v Essex

Trevor Goodfellow *Butterfly Conservation Suffolk*

This year I have been asked many times 'what is the difference between the Small and Essex Skippers?' I will attempt to clarify the main points here.

In Suffolk we have four native Skipper species: Dingy, Small, Large, and Essex, the latter three are often referred to as 'Golden Skippers'.

In the hand, the Essex Skipper is slightly smaller than the Small Skipper but not easy to tell in the field. There are three key features to look out for, all shown in the Essex Skipper photo below: 1) antennae tips, 2) male gender mark (sex brand), and 3) underside of forewing tip. '3' is not diagnostic on its own, as you can see from the photos.

You will need a close-up view of the specimen, not easy sometimes, so a good photo is useful. There are variations of each Skipper species which may present some overlapping features, but as a rule: the Essex has 'dipped in ink' black tips to the antennae which is visible from below. This feature is not always, but usually striking and appears blunter and club-like than the Small. Usually, if in doubt, it's a Small Skipper. The male gender brand (black line on upper forewing) is short and straight. The underside is usually a uniform colour.

The Small usually appears more orange coloured than the paler

Essex and has more blurred paler antennae tips that are dark, but often graduated in grey or brown ending with a curved point and pale underneath. The underside of the forewing colour fades to greyish colour near the tip, although some Essex may show this in varying degrees. The male gender brand is longer and has a dogleg appearance although care should be taken to get a good view in case the long thoracic hairs obscure the basal half.

There are three key features to look out for ...

The females of both Small and Essex do not have a gender brand so the only features are venation and wing border and colour, but with a bit of experience, you will soon get the Essex's jizz.

Purdis Heath

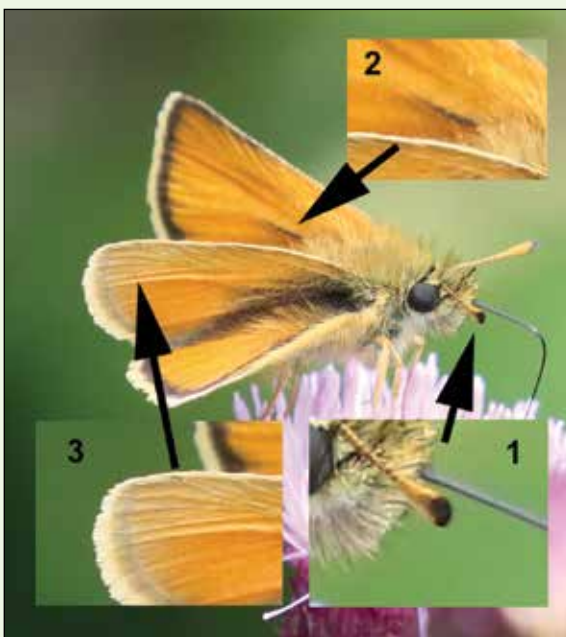
We are hoping to get consent to continue work parties at Purdis sometime in the near future. This will enable a few work parties over the course of late December to the end of February. See 3rd February entry in Events pages. *Julian Dowding*



Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Membership Secretary
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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.



See text relating to this picture



Clockwise: Essex Skipper, Small Skipper (M) showing long dogleg sex brand and pale wing tip, Essex Skipper (M) showing short straight sex brand, Small Skipper (F)

A busy time home-building

Martin Cant Ipswich Wildlife Group

Last autumn was a busy time for the IWG Wildlife Homes team fulfilling large orders for kits to build bird, bug and hedgehog homes as well as bespoke orders for swift nest boxes and butterfly hibernation boxes. In addition, our events team of myself, Mel and Gerry were invited to attend several events to display and help visitors construct nest boxes to take home and install in their own gardens.



Secretary Leila Matata
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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.

Transition Woodbridge Harvest

IWG were invited to the above event and we were blessed with a cracking day, the weather was hot and sunny and the location was top drawer, being sited on the quayside outside the Long Ship project. With a great variety of other stalls on display we were serenaded with various different musical groups throughout the day.



Hot day in Woodbridge

We had a steady stream of people making bug boxes but all of our hedgehog houses soon sold out, with orders for several more. It seems hedgehogs are doing well in Woodbridge!

Spooktacular 'park in the dark'

We joined Suffolk Wildlife Trust at their event in Holywells park to celebrate a Halloween 'Spooktacular' evening. With around 150 people booked on the event, it was always going to be a challenge in the dark, looking after so many eager youngsters (including parents). But there were lots of interesting trails, activities, storytelling, bat walks, star gazing and a moth trap going on that time soon passed. The Bishop's tea room was open for the event, supplying teas, coffees and burgers which was the highlight for many. Well done to SWT, a very successful event.

East Anglian Children's Hospice

In December we visited East Anglian Children's Hospice where we took bug boxes and reindeer to make with children and families. We also joined up with Father Xmas in Holywells Park on the 10th and 16th December where we made reindeer from coppiced hazel, with all proceeds going to EACH.

Bamboo harvest

Help was much appreciated from these fellas at Falkenham when harvesting bamboo for insect houses!



Spooktacular storyteller Gerry

Spring Wood Megabash

Thanks to the wonderful group of volunteers that joined us and FoBBP for the November Spring

Wood MegaBash. Lots of coppicing, processing, bundling, dead hedging and general wood management carried out.



Megabash harvest



Bamboo helpers

Another busy time in the park

Yvonne and Andy *Friends of Holywells Park*

It's been a busy time for the Friends over the past few months. Preparing the orchard for Apple Day, harvesting the fruit and planning the event.



Sulphur Tuft



The highly toxic Fly Agaric

All the work that goes into organising any event is mostly unseen. Without the time given by volunteers, Apple Day would not happen so we need to say a big 'Thank You' to everyone who gave their time to ensure the success of the 20th Holywells Park Apple Day, a truly brilliant community event.

The park is home to many different types of fungi. Often overlooked, magical and mistrusted toadstools and mushrooms are a vital part of the ecosystem acting as the principal decomposers. We only notice fungi when their fruiting bodies appear above ground. They come in an amazing variety of shapes and sizes. Perhaps one of the most recognisable is the Fly Agaric which is highly toxic and the home of fairies (so some people say!)

Wonderfully named fungi, such as Chicken of the Woods, King Alfred's Cakes and Sulphur tuft



Friends of Holywells Park

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

Contact: fohpipswich@gmail.com

www.holywellspark.org.uk

facebook.com/holywellsparkpipswich

can be found in Holywells Park. So keep your eyes open and a whole new world is there to see.

Over the winter months, the Friends' volunteers will be busy pruning the orchard, maintaining the willow tunnel, rebuilding the dead hedge around the apiary, installing a cycle rack in the car park and replacing a rustic bench, to name but a few of the tasks planned. It may be winter, but that doesn't stop us enjoying our voluntary work on the best park in Ipswich!

Wild flowers, frogs, toads and fungi

Kaye Roberts *Secretary, Friends of the Dales*

Although the plants in the wild flower meadow, except for the yarrow, had finished flowering by September, a decision was made to delay the cut until October.



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 Kaye Roberts kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com or find us on Facebook by searching Friends of the Dales

This was hard work for the volunteers who were raking off the cut vegetation as everything was extremely wet, which made the job even more arduous. The unseasonably mild weather was also more of an inconvenience than a blessing and the volunteers were relieved when it was time for lunch.

On a good note, the meadow was teeming with frogs and toads, many more than last year. These were moved



Volunteers sporting their new hi-vis

away from the path of the cutter blade to the edge of the meadow for safety. Also four field voles were spotted, which is an improvement on last year's cut when none were found.

Hi-vis vests have been purchased for the volunteers with 'Friends of the Dales' printed on the back so that people walking round the Dales can identify us as carrying out work officially.

A bonus from the wet weather is the abundance of fungi in The Dales as these photos show, which were taken by Jan, one of our volunteers.



Frog being removed to safety

© Ginny Shoenith



All mushroom pictures © Jan Cawston

From left to right: Ink Cap, Fly Agaric and Parasol

Bobbitshole SSSI - a lost world unearthed

Caroline Markham *GeoSuffolk*

The Chantry sewage works on the floodplain of the Belstead Brook at the eastern end of Kiln Meadow hides a fascinating secret - evidence of a lost world was unearthed when it was built in 1953.



GeoSuffolk's information panel about the Ipswichian interglacial at Bobbitshole SSSI is in the Bobbits Lane car park.

The deposits yielded fossils from the last interglacial, about 125,000 years ago. Recorded by Harold Spencer of Ipswich Museum the ancient clays and peats were full of plants and animals – huge quantities of freshwater shells; seeds, wood and pollen; small vertebrate remains including fish and frog bones and large numbers of voles' teeth. Research into the pollen sequence by Richard West of Cambridge University established it as the most recent interglacial of several, and which was as a result, named the 'Ipswichian' and the site was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

There was a freshwater lake here in Ipswichian times, with plant and animal fossils in the deposits suggesting temperate climate with pine and oak forest, with the presence of *Acer monspessulum* (Montpellier maple), *Stratiotes* (water soldier) and freshwater tortoise indicating a slightly warmer climate than today. The lake deposits are overlain by gravel. This younger deposit may suggest a relatively fast flowing river and therefore lower sea level than at present (Bobbitshole SSSI sits only a

few metres above sea level at the present day). This indicates climatic cooling and there is some evidence of periglacial disturbance in the deposits. During the thousands of years of deep cold which followed, ice sheets reached as far south as Norfolk and the Ipswichian flora and fauna retreated southwards from the frozen Suffolk landscape.

In June 2017 the Suffolk Wildlife Trust ran a 'bioblitz' at Kiln Meadow and GeoSuffolk took the opportunity to 'geoblitz the Ipswichian flora' there. Armed with Richard West's list we searched for modern representatives of the 105 plant species he identified, and we found 39, so 37% at least of the Ipswichian flora have found their way back to Kiln Meadow in our warm post-glacial climate. Most of these were aquatic plants such as sedges and willowherb, or shrubs and trees such as alder and hazel. We found no water soldier or Montpellier maples! The wildlife area of the adjacent Kiln Meadow is a wonderful educational tool for helping interpret Bobbitshole SSSI, and the nearby evidence of this ancient flora has added the dimension of time to the Kiln Meadow flora of today, providing food for thought on future climate changes.



Sand and gravel rests on the black peaty deposits of the Ipswichian interglacial in the construction of extensions to the sewage works in 1967

Wild Ipswich

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



A sample of the Ipswichian interglacial deposit from the spoil heap in 1967. Twigs and freshwater gastropods abound

All pictures © Bob Markham

The wonders of an Ancient Wood

Ann Havard *Friends of Belstead Brook Park*

The warm weather over the summer encouraged many people out into Millenium Wood, which is a good thing in some ways but unfortunately there were several dens that had been built in a newly coppiced area. This area had been behind a dead hedge to keep dogs out and the wildlife safe, but the dead edge had been broken down.



Friends of Belstead Brook Park

www.wildipswich.org

Email: fobbp@wildipswich.org
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.

We understand that building dens is great fun and to be encouraged but only in the right place and this definitely wasn't the right place. Dens encourage fires and fires are the last thing needed in a dry, summer woodland. Thus, August saw a group of us demolishing the dens and re-instating the dead hedge.

In September we tackled the vegetation growing over the chain link fence from Stoke Park Wood Local Nature Reserve onto the footpath



Another stake driven home for the dead hedge

along Stoke Park Drive. Quite a difficult job as the ivy had twined itself in and out of the chain links! At the end of the morning we all walked around the Wood together and were very pleased to see that for a change there was very little rubbish or litter along the paths.

The autumn is always a time for mowing and raking so our October work party began this job in an area of Belstead Meadows accessed from Cottingham Road. James the mower man, had to be careful not to cut into the big ant hills hidden in the grass. We also took loppers and shears to cut some of the overhanging vegetation off the main paths. It was a pleasure to be out working in the autumn sunshine made all the better by the added excitement of using lovely new wooden rakes! 'Little things'

We were lucky in November as although rain was forecast – none came for a change. We were working in the lovely Spring Wood, coppicing and producing bean poles and stakes to hold up the dead hedges. This was the first of the winter Mega Bashes and we had 18 people out during the day which meant a good amount of work was done.

Interestingly, Spring Wood is classed as an Ancient Wood, meaning that it dates from at least 1600. Just 2.5% of woodland in the UK is classed as ancient – so we are very lucky. One of the features, apart from all those lovely bluebells in the spring, is a ditch and bank system around the edge of the woodland probably dating from the 1300s. The bank here has been eroded over the years but there was a very definite

bank around the area we were coppicing. It's great to think that people were here in Spring Wood hundreds of years ago doing the same sort of management, although they were probably coppicing for fuel rather than bean poles!

We always welcome new volunteers, we only meet once a month on the second Saturday of the month for three hours from 10am till 1pm but with a coffee break in the middle. There is always a variety of jobs to be done, so don't think you have to be mega strong to join us. Most places we work need a bit of light pruning along the paths and litter picking can always be made easier if you take along a wheel barrow in case the bags get too heavy to carry. Membership of the group is free, see details on how to get in touch with us.



Coppice stool



Lois starting coppicing a new hazel clump

A time of repairs and rebuilding

Stephen Corley *Chairman Portal Woodlands Conservation Group*

© S. Corley



Clearing another fallen tree

© J. Oliver



Peters Gate painted

© P. Davies



Urgent work clearing the drain

© K. Corley



Jelly ear fungus

© K. Corley



Turkey tail fungus

The weather took its toll on the woodlands over the summer and autumn. Our Volunteers had their work cut out clearing trees that had fallen in the winds and making safe several others that had died and were on the verge of falling. Other natural processes also took their toll.

A number of dead hedges had become thin and needed rebuilding. Fortunately, the branches from the fallen trees were abundant for this. The fencing at one entrance had rotted and collapsed. This was rebuilt, hopefully making the woodlands feel a little more welcoming. Peter's Gate was re-painted to give it a few more years of life. Finally, the drain on the perimeter track had to be unblocked.

As we moved into autumn, there was still some colour to be seen with displays of flowering cyclamen (*Cyclamen*). The mix of mild and moist weather brought out the fungi. Examples seen included turkey tail (*Trametes versicolor*), jelly ear (*Auricularia auricula-judae*) and the common stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus*), which was easily spotted, being distinctive not only for its appearance but also its unpleasant smell often likened to rotting meat.

Wishing a very Happy New Year to all our Volunteers, supporters and visitors.



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 – Noon.

Saturday 20th January
Sunday 18th February
Saturday 16th March
Sunday 21st 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.

Suffolk Bird Group 50th Anniversary

Chris Keeling *Suffolk Bird Group*

Last October 190 people packed Woodbridge Community Hall for a joint event with Suffolk Wildlife Trust to celebrate the 50th Birthday of the Suffolk Bird Group and a talk by Mark Cocker.

The evening's raffle prizes included binoculars kindly donated by Viking Optical Centres and a signed copy of Mark Cocker's new book 'One Midsummer's Day'. Mark was also on hand to sign copies.

the SOG council agreed a new name for the group to reflect its inclusivity and to encourage new members. Whether novice, passionate birder, dedicated twitcher, or helping with surveys and projects, all are welcome.

Members of SBG receive a copy of our quarterly magazine 'The Harrier', while members of SBG and Suffolk Naturalists' Society also receive a copy of the Suffolk Bird Report. A massive thank you here to Gi Grieco, editor of the Harrier and Nick Mason for compiling the annual bird report.

It was fitting that the theme of Mark's talk was the Common Swift as the huge success of SOS Swifts, a joint project between SWT and SBG, in raising awareness of Swifts and the threats they face in a changing world, is an excellent example of joint working and community engagement. Swift groups now operate in communities across Suffolk with groups in Aldeburgh, Ipswich, Southwold and Felixstowe amongst others.

Mark took his audience on a journey with Swifts on their migration through continents and considered our place in the web of life, with almost 600 slides from his travels over

It was fantastic to see a packed hall, with many founding members present. SBG President John Grant described how the Group began when a series of lectures by Bill Payne entitled 'The Birds of Suffolk' encouraged Ivor Murrell, Malcolm Bowling, Robin Hopper and the late Ken Carlisle to find out more about birds and birding in Suffolk. The legacy of those first meetings lives on today although in 2021



SBG 50th anniversary event

many years. In Mark's words: "It takes a whole universe to make just one small black bird". Although acutely aware of the pressure the natural world is under, (e.g. 10g of neonicotinoid theoretically can kill 2.5 billion bees), Mark described his book as a celebration, not a lament, but as a reminder that we are all utterly dependent on healthy ecosystems at every trophic level, whether in our gardens, countryside, the oceans or the sky above – where we look for returning Swifts every spring, eagerly awaiting the screaming heralds of summer.

As we celebrate 50 years of Suffolk Ornithologists' Group/Suffolk Bird Group, we continue to engage with individuals, groups and communities to support conservation projects that have secured excellent outcomes.

- Helping to return breeding Peregrines to Suffolk after 200 years.
- Reversing the county's declining Barn Owl population.
- Encouraging focused Farmland Birds work.

- Assisting in the BTO Atlas and other surveys.
- Supporting the Swift nest box programme.

Given the evenings 'Swift' theme the celebrations also provided a wonderfully serendipitous opportunity to honour a long-standing member of SBG council, Adam Gretton who was awarded an Honorary Vice-Presidency. Adam has been on SBG Council for 26 years, has been the Indoor Events Coordinator since 2005 and has also served terms as both Secretary and Chair.

A big thank you to Adam and to everyone who arrived early to help set up and to the volunteer caterers who did sterling service. I don't know who the bakers were but the Great British Bake Off should certainly come to Woodbridge! And finally, a massive thank you to all who packed the Woodbridge Community Hall for the evening, with your help SBG and SWT raised £408. Thank you everyone and a Happy 50th Anniversary to 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.



Mark Cocker and Adam Gretton

© Sarah Clyde

© Kayva Barhgate

Christchurch Park bird sightings July to October 2023

Philip Murphy *Friends of Christchurch Park*

July

Two pairs of Little Grebes were present throughout the month. One of these pairs was accompanied by two chicks on 9th but, unfortunately, neither chick survived.

A brood of four Mandarin ducklings, with an adult female, walked from the Wilderness Pond Wood down to the pond on 13th, but none of the four was present after 21st. An adult female Mandarin Duck was accompanied by one newly hatched duckling on 22nd (site's fourth brood this year) but this youngster was not seen after August 4th. A pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls bred on the roof of the Mansion rearing one juvenile. The first returning Black-headed Gulls were three adults on 16th. The sight of an irate Song Thrush chasing away a Jay offers hope that breeding was at least attempted in the park this year.

August

The autumn passage of warblers and flycatchers through Christchurch Park has been almost non-existent in recent years. It was a pleasant surprise to note an immaculate juvenile Lesser Whitethroat on 9th. What is assumed to have been the same bird was in the same area, with at least six Blackcaps, on 13th. (Lesser Whitethroats winter in East Africa).

Mandarin Ducks peaked at 28. By the month's end, three adult Little Grebes remained



Blackcap

on Wilderness Pond. The maximum count of Mallards was 45. A group of six Common Buzzards was over the Upper Arboretum, 16th. Sparrowhawks were noted on one or two occasions but there is no evidence that they bred in the park this year. Three Swallows flew east over the park, 16th, a Grey Heron was on the Wilderness Pond fallen tree trunk, 1st and pleasingly, despite my recent claim that none was left in the park, a Treecreeper was noted on the 27th.

September

The highest total of Mandarin Ducks this year was only 22. Other waterfowl included three Mute Swans and two Greylag Geese accompanying 28

Canada Geese on Wilderness Pond. Also, three Little Grebe and three Cormorants were present throughout the month. The final sightings of Swifts are usually in August, but the unusually warm weather in early September was perhaps the reason for sightings as late as 26th.

Raptor sightings were a Red Kite flying east on 6th and a female Sparrowhawk watched as it plucked and ate a bird on 11th. Visible autumn migration over the park has declined in recent years, so the sight of 12 Meadow Pipits flying west on 19th was pleasing. Mistle Thrushes have also become scarce but a gathering of nine was noted on 22nd.

October

Sightings of birds on Wilderness Pond were of particular interest this month. A female Teal on 2nd is only the second site record this century. Peak totals of regularly occurring species involved 16 Mandarin Ducks, 37 Canada Geese and 50 Mallards. Up to four Cormorants were present throughout the month as were three Little Grebes.

The first Redwing of the autumn was seen feeding on berries, 11th, and on 16th approximately 125 flew west over the park. Other arrivals



Friends of Christchurch Park

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



Redwing

heading west included three Fieldfares on 30th, ten Blackbirds on 19th and, two Bramblings on 22nd. A Blackcap on 8th was perhaps a late summer visitor. There were three sightings of Grey Wagtail, these birds could well have originated from further north in Britain, or even in Northern Europe. 15 Jays were notes on 29th. Less typical were two late Swallows heading west high over the park on 11th.

As ever, my thanks go to Brian Macdonald, Tony Powell and Mark Dowling for their contributions to this article.

Local terrapin lays eggs

David Dowding *Wildlife and Education Team Leader, Ipswich Borough Council*



© Colin Hallis

Terrapin photographed at home on the Wilderness Pond



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.

Terrapins are a reasonably common sighting at Christchurch Park, where they have become somewhat naturalised in the ornamental and wildlife ponds. There are other small populations in other parkland ponds around town, most notably at Chantry and Holywells

A non-native species, many were bought during the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle craze of the 90's. Terrapins are popular as pets as they are considered low maintenance requiring little upkeep, however they can be a long-term commitment as some species can live for up to 50 years.

When they outgrow their tanks at home people often release them into wetland areas. The adult reptiles are quite adept to the British weather, but currently the summer temperatures aren't quite hot enough for breeding, so they are less of a risk to native wildlife than other species.

However, the recurring summer heatwaves have triggered the reptiles into attempting to breed. For two years running, terrapins have been seen in Christchurch Park excavating burrows and laying eggs in the grass away from the water, though there are no reports of successful hatching. Smaller individuals have been seen, but it is thought they are more recent releases.

Terrapin eggs take around 60 days to incubate and need to be kept at a constant temperature of between 24 - 32 degrees Celsius, which although a common summer temperature, it is still far too long an incubation period for the UK's climate.



The terrapin alongside its egg-laying site in Christchurch Park

Where the young go free

Tim Kenny *Leader, RSPB Ipswich Group*



© Tim Kenny

Waxwing, Blanche Street, Ipswich, January 2023

I am delighted to say that where Ipswich RSPB local group leads, the national RSPB follows!

OK, that's slightly tongue in cheek, but the recent announcement that those of us under 24 years of age now get free entry into all RSPB reserves follows a policy that we as a group instigated a few years ago. To allow young people to have access to our activities without a financial contribution, we have not charged under 18s an entry fee or a group membership since 2018. As an organisation, we need to do all we can to encourage the next generation to take up the reins and protect our natural environment, and I very much welcome this latest RSPB initiative.

Organisations of all kinds, from charities to football clubs, are seeing their memberships decline, a trend that has been accelerating since Covid. Back when I played the beautiful game on a Sunday morning, there were two leagues totalling sixteen divisions, each consisting on average of twelve teams. That's 192 football teams! Now, twenty years later, there is a single league of three divisions totalling 34 teams. If my maths is correct, that is a contraction of 83%. The RSPB is not immune from this downturn in participation in, well, everything, so any initiative we can do to boost numbers has to be tried.

The weather, as it frequently does on our wet and windy isles, made news headlines last autumn. Storms with exotic names such as Babet and Ciaran have blown in an almost unprecedented number of American

migrants from across the pond. Sadly, for the east coast twitcher, these falls have occurred on the western side of the country. As someone who has not yet ventured to the US, it would be nice if a Black and white or Blackburnian warbler found its way to us. Not so nice for the birds though, which rarely, if ever, make it back across the pond against the prevailing winds.

... it appears we may be in for a Waxwing winter.

Wet, wet, wet

More pressing issues here in Suffolk were the floods affecting such places as Framlingham and Debenham. Those of us with volunteering commitments up at Minsmere noticed the flooding that left the South Hide several feet deep in water. The path from the sluice to the Wildlife lookout was impassable for several weeks as was the public footpath from Eastbridge. I had never seen The Scrape so full, and my visit in November saw two female Goldeneye, a species normally seen on the deeper waters of the Island Mere, happily finding enough water to dive in right in front of the East Hide.

Excitingly, it appears we may be in for a Waxwing winter. This highly irruptive winter visitor was seen in flocks of over five hundred in Inverness-shire and was noted in Lowestoft and Ipswich during autumn. These ever-popular winter visitors are always sure to draw a crowd whenever they



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.

occur, and I remember being out on a bike ride with a group going through Hollesley, and insisting everybody stopped to take a look at a flock that had taken up residence there. I ruined a few personal best times that day – sorry, not sorry!

I hope to see you on one of our walks or at an indoor meeting soon. Our outdoor meetings kick off with the now traditional walk around Mistley and Manningtree for winter waders and wildfowl on January 14th, and later next year we have some new trips. I'm particularly looking forward to an all day trip to The Brecks on March 10th, where, with a lot of luck, we hope to find Lesser spotted woodpecker and Goshawk.

Snippets

Harlequins galore *Colin Hullis*

Harlequin Ladybird larvae is a new one on me. I found dozens of them on the leaves of my runner bean plants and got David Dowding to identify them for me. Thinking back through the summer, I recall noticing a couple of Harlequins on the plants. They were presumably laying their eggs at the time. Always learning!



A new butterfly colony

Richard Stewart

The White-letter Hairstreak butterfly has declined alarmingly because of Dutch Elm disease, Elms being the larval food plant. It was therefore a pleasant surprise to find a new colony on 24th June, behind Picton Avenue in Ipswich, close to a seasonal pond. Five were seen but this land is marked for housing development. However the hedge concerned is adjacent to an existing footpath and part of the boundary for Ipswich School's playing field, so it may be saved.



The Great British Beach Clean

Tom Fairbrother, Coast and Heaths AONB

The Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team organised three surveys/cleans. In total 11 events took place within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty involving almost 200 people. The Great British Beach Clean is an annual event organised by the Marine Conservation Society. Every September thousands of people across the UK head to the coast to take part in the Great British Beach Clean, a week-long citizen science event, where hundreds of beach cleans take place up and down the UK. The AONB is now known as Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape.



Mel's pond *Mel Eke*

Back in 1982 we discovered a small pond in the garden with a few toads in residence. This we replaced with a bigger version but over the years tree roots penetrated the liner so the pond was not holding water and was getting stagnant with leaf mulch. So this is the latest grand development

which required a major overhaul of the site involving re-digging, a new liner plus new stones and plants. Hopefully spring 2024 will have plenty of spawn and dragon/damselflies will return.



Wild Woodbridge

Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Ipswich Wildlife Group were on display promoting conservation and involving visitors in wildlife homes making at a summertime event alongside the iconic Woodbridge Tide Mill.

© Mel Eke



Events Diary

JANUARY

Thursday 11th January 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
'Providing for Pollinators', David Dowding, Wildlife Education Team Leader, Ipswich Borough Council. Sponsored by Bypass Nurseries Capel St Mary. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH

Sunday 14th January 9am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
Manningtree and Mistley for waders and wildfowl. Meet at The Walls, Manningtree CO11 1HQ. TM109319. 2 - 3hrs. 2 - 3miles. **Leader Tim Kenny.**

Saturday 20th January 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH
Martlesham Common. Join Greenways and others for a day of scrub clearing and heathland management at the nature reserve, hopefully including 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**

Saturday 20th January 10am to noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING
All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **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.**

Sunday 21st January 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY
Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Tuesday 23rd January 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK
Christchurch Park. Meet at Soane Street entrance IP4 2BE. TM165448

Wednesday 24th January 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
Anne and Dennis Kell, 'Bats in Suffolk'. Anne and Dennis, both members of our Ipswich group, have been members of the Suffolk Bat Group since the 1980s and have been licenced bat workers with Natural England. They will talk about the ecology and lifestyle of bats in the UK, especially in Suffolk. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF

Thursday 25th January 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK
'Birding memories and reflections on the early days of SOG/SBG', Reg Snook, with Peter Merchant. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission £3, non-members most welcome; full-time students free. **Additional information/queries: Adam Gretton, Tel. 07799 657459 Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

FEBRUARY

Saturday 3rd February 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH
Purdis Heath. Join Greenways, Butterfly Conservation and other volunteers to carry out essential heathland management on this beautiful SSSI heath. Event is subject to necessary permissions from Natural England, so please **contact Greenways for more info and confirmation before event 07736 826076 or email: james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Thursday 8th February 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
'The Secret Life of Swifts' Simon Hooton, retired Conservation Manager for Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Sponsored by Collins Waste Solutions. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH

Saturday 10th February 10am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
River Deben for waders and wildfowl. Meet at Melton Riverside car park IP12 1LR. TM288503. 2 - 3hrs. 2 - 3miles. **Leader Stephen Marginson.**

Saturday 17th February 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH
Martlesham Heath. Join us and Martlesham Conservation Group for the annual heathland management day on this glorious heathland, hopefully including a bonfire! Meet on site, following signs from the windsock on Eagle Way (park considerately on local streets). **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Sunday 18th February 10am to noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING
All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **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.**

Sunday 18th February 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY
Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Thursday 22nd February 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Followed by trophy presentations, SBG 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. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Non-members most welcome. **Additional information/queries: Adam Gretton, Tel. 07799 657459 Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

Tuesday 27th February 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK
Bourne Park. Meet at Stoke Park Drive car park IP2 8LT. TM152419

Wednesday 28th February 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
Kate Osborne, Suffolk Shingle 'Tales of Treasure and Trash'. Kate runs 'Beach Bonkers' some of you may have seen her on TV with Kate Humble. She will show us some of the treasures that can be found amongst the stones on our Suffolk shingle beaches. She states ...The best comment I can hear at the end of my talk is 'I will never look at a beach the same way again'. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF

MARCH

Sunday 10th March 7am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING
Santon Downham and Breckland. Meet at Santon Downham car park IP27 0TQ. TL938919. All day event with 3 - 4miles on foot. **Leader Tim Kenny.**

Thursday 14th March 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING
'The History of the Peregrine in Suffolk' Peter Merchant, Licensed Raptor Specialist. Sponsored by The Oddfellows. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH

Saturday 16th March 10am to noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING
All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **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.**

Sunday 17th March 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY
Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Thursday 21st March 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK
'Dream birding destinations: Antarctica and Papua New Guinea', Andrew Raine. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission £3, non-members most welcome; full-time students free. **Additional information/queries: Adam Gretton, Tel. 07799 657459 Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

Tuesday 26th March 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK
Chantry Park. Meet at Hadleigh Road car park by toilet block IP2 0BP. TM138443.

Wednesday 27th March 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK
Professor James Pearce-Higgins (BTO) 'Birds and Climate Change'. Birds are dependent on a suitable climate for breeding, migration and survival, so it is perhaps inevitable that Climate Change will affect them, But how? Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF

APRIL

Saturday 6th April 10am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING

Levington Creek for waders, wildfowl and spring birds. Meet at Levington Creek car park IP10 0LH. TM238389. 2 - 3hrs. 2 - 3miles. **Leader Stephen Marginson.**

Thursday 11th April 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich Group INDOOR MEETING

AGM followed by 'An Introduction to Bats and the work of the Suffolk Bat Group' Ann and Dennis Kell, wildlife and natural history enthusiasts. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH

Thursday 18th April 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK

'Saving Suffolk's House martins', Martin Tickler. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission £3, non-members most welcome; full-time students free. **Additional information/queries: Adam Gretton, Tel. 07799 657459 Adam.gretton@naturallengland.org.uk**

Sunday 21st April 10am to noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING

All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. **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.**

Sunday 21st April 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

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

Tuesday 23rd April 10.30am RSPB Ipswich Group MIDWEEK WALK

Bramford Open Space and Water Meadows. Meet at Open Spaces car park IP8 4AN. TM126465.

Wednesday 24th April 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

Colin Hawes 'The Ecology of Stag Beetles'. We are lucky to have stag beetles in our area, and Colin who is lead partner in the 'Conservation of the stag beetle in Suffolk' will tell us all about this amazing insect. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF

Saturday 27th April 7.30am RSPB Ipswich Group FIELD MEETING

Upper Hollesley Common for dawn chorus. Meet at upper car park IP12 3HU. TM335471. 2 - 3hrs. 2 - 3miles. **Leader Stephen Marginson.**

MAY

Monday 6th May 10.30am to 4.30pm SPRING WOOD DAY

Event at Spring Wood and Kiln Meadow, Pinewood. Join Greenways, Ipswich Wildlife Group, the Friends of Belstead Brook Park and many others for a day of wildlife walks, activities, live folk music, storytelling, woodcraft and much more, to celebrate spring, wood, and Spring Wood! **More info from Greenways 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

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**

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 01473 728907**

SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH Friends of The Dales WORK PARTY

Contact Kaye Roberts kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 7.30pm - 9pm Ipswich Friends of the Earth MEETING

- for venue please see Facebook page **www.facebook.com/ipswichFOE/**

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

EVERY FRIDAY 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. Thorington Hall Barn, Bobbits Lane, Ipswich. **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-12pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust NATURE AND NATTER

Location varies. A monthly group for those aged 60+ who enjoy the outdoors. Meet new people whilst doing a different wild activity each month. **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@wildipswich.org**

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 1pm-3pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust 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 2024

A reminder that Spring Wood Day now takes place every other year - next date will be Monday 6th May 2024.