

Local Wildlife News



September - December 2015

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

Neonicotinoids and the plight of bees
- see page 20



© Colin Hullis



Local Wildlife News Snippets

Ipswich RSPB at Springwatch Unsprung

RSPB Ipswich Local Group members (l to r Tim Kenny, Chris Courtney, Rosie Forrest & Rosemary Milner) enjoying a surprisingly comfortable Unsprung sofa!



Purple Emperor surprise sighting

Lunchtime on a Greenways Tuesday work party. Suddenly a large dark butterfly flew in low, did a couple of circuits to draw attention to itself and then landed on the roof of the Greenways Land Rover. It posed for a few seconds so that we could recognise it as a Purple Emperor, but unfortunately before we could get a photo, it took off and flew rapidly away.

Ray Sidaway



© David Downing

Happiness is . . . being involved in wildlife in Ipswich

Apparently Ipswich is one of the happiest places to live in the UK according to recent research. To prove the point Anglia TV News visited a Wildlife Homes event in Christchurch Park. Several members of Ipswich Wildlife Group and Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Rangers could be seen enjoying themselves.



James Baker of Greenways was happy to be interviewed.

Rare summer visitor flies into Felixstowe



A rare sight in the UK popped up in Suffolk this summer. A Purple Heron suddenly appeared amongst the reed-fringed fresh water dykes at Kingsfleet along the sea wall from Felixstowe Ferry.

Similar in many ways to our resident Grey Herons, the Purple is more colourful, appearing darker in colour and slightly smaller with a longer and more slender bill.

Spending the winter in tropical Africa, they will fly north to spend the summer in southern Europe.

Why this individual crossed the channel to visit us is anyone's guess - perhaps it is another indicator of global warming.

The photo shows the visitor at Kingsfleet photographed by Will Brame.

Grass snake walks on water



© Mirek Kijewski

During the summer we have had a grass snake living in our garden, near our pond. He is about 75 cm long and has a bright yellow collar. He happily swims round in our pond and we have also seen him on land basking in the sun. I have seen him dive to the bottom of the pond a few times, which was a real treat.

Most of the time I have seen him, he was swimming on the surface very fast so you do have to keep an eye on him or you can lose him. Our family decided to call him Godzilla for he is the king of our pond now. He is an olive green colour and has black patterns across his back, he's also fairly thin. We have actually seen him catch tadpoles, also have spotted a huge lump in his body which we suspect was a frog!

Joseph Hullis (age 12)



Welcome

Welcome to the autumn edition of Local Wildlife News magazine, produced by the Greenways Countryside Project to help conservation groups in the Ipswich area to promote their news, activities and events.

As the nights start to draw in again and the temperatures start to drop, the conservationist starts to think about the winter and all the vital habitat management work that will need to be done in the short winter months. Everything from woodland and hedgerow coppicing, tree and hedge planting, scrub clearing from meadows, heaths and wetlands, to habitat creation, will have to be done between the start of November and the end of February (when birds start nesting again). This makes the winter by far and away the busiest time of year for us – the Greenways Project volunteers will be carrying out this work across around 50 nature reserves and green spaces in and around Ipswich – so if you'd like to get involved and lend a hand – it's a great time to do it!

Just 25 years ago, when I started in conservation, we used to consider winter to be about 6 months long – giving more time to carry out all the habitat management work – but now with the rapidly changing climate (and wildlife evolving with it), we are down to just 4 months! I wonder how much earlier birds might be nesting in another 25 years? Maybe coppicing and scrub clearing won't be possible without disturbing birds – who knows? Perhaps we'll look back in the winter edition of LWN in 2040 and reflect!

To get involved with practical conservation work in the area, please see the list of events in this edition – and perhaps start with one of our winter 'Megabash' events – the first is on Sunday November 15th in Belstead Brook Park – working in Kiln Meadow, Millennium Wood and Spring Wood – please contact Greenways for any more details.

Contributions

We are always happy to receive articles of anything up to 600 words, photographs of local wildlife or conservation work and local sightings or wildlife 'snippets' – so please do send in anything which may be of interest to: Greenways Project, Scout Headquarters, Stoke Park Drive, Ipswich, IP2 9TH. 01473 433995. greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk

Mailing lists – Please note

We are aware that some who are members of several conservation organisations may well receive more than one copy of the newsletter. If this is the case we would be very grateful if you could pass on the spare copy to someone who will appreciate it and contact the Greenways Project on 01473 433995 or greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk, stating which organisations you are a member of, so that we can ensure that you receive just one in the future.

If on the other hand you don't currently receive LWN regularly, but would like to, please consider joining one of the groups that distributes LWN to its members (i.e. Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Ipswich Wildlife Group, RSPB etc).

Remember, for those who don't receive a copy, LWN is available online at www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/greenways/

James Baker

Contents

	Page
Local Wildlife News Snippets	2
Suffolk Wildlife Trust	4
Ipswich Wildlife Group	8
Friends of the Dales	9
Greenways Countryside Project	10
Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Rangers	13
Friends of Christchurch Park	14
Butterfly Conservation	15
Landguard Partnership	16
Friends of Holywells Park	17
Friends of Belstead Brook Park	18
Suffolk Ornithologists' Group	19
RSPB Ipswich Local Group	20
Events Diary	22

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We are the Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. We offer an interesting range of monthly meetings with guest speakers which take place usually on the third Wednesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. in the hall of St Margaret's Primary School, Bolton Lane, Ipswich. 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 'Diary' section which follows, or on the SWT website, www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org.

Chairman's Letter

Swifts Now and Then

In this very newsletter 10 years ago, I wrote a piece about the swifts that fly around in the sky above my garden suggesting that, although they were impossible to count accurately, there appeared to be 50 to 100 circling above at feeding time. This summer to date (and I'm writing this on 10th July) I have only seen at most seven in a group — disastrous! I live in an area of many Victorian houses and although some of them may have had new soffits or fascias fitted, a certain loss of suitable nesting sites cannot be totally responsible for the dramatic loss in numbers of swifts. However anything you can do, such as have nest boxes fitted to help these lovely birds would be welcomed by the Save Our Suffolk Swifts campaign, and the swifts! Details from www.swift-conservation.org www.sogonline.org.uk www.actionforswifts.blogspot.co.uk and our own www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Unusual Robin

Earlier in the year I had a pair of robins that used to scratch around for spoils under the feeding station which included half coconut shell fat balls. One day to my amazement the male robin flew up to the fat ball and hovered like a humming bird while feeding. Mrs Robin had a go but she just couldn't get the hang of it!

Dave Munday
(Chairman)

Helophilus pendulus?
On Tradescantia in my garden



Wakehurst Place 30th May 2015

At 8 o'clock on a sunny morning in May a full coach left Crown Street bound for Wakehurst Place in Sussex, Kew Garden's 465 acre 'country estate'.



White-tailed bumblebee on *Erysium* – Bowles mauve wallflower

William Wakehurst first bought the land in 1205. In the 15th century it passed by marriage to brothers Richard and Nicholas Culpeper, early forbears of the famous herbalist, Nicholas and then to his descendant, Sir Edward Culpeper, who by 1590 had completely rebuilt the house into today's Elizabethan mansion. In 1678 the estate passed to William the Wastrel, who sold off almost everything in an attempt to pay off his gambling debts. By 1869, when Wakehurst was bought by the Dowager Marchioness of Downshire, the house was in an extremely dilapidated state and she set about refurbishing it. In 1903 the estate was bought by Gerald Loder, who was an avid collector of trees and shrubs. With his head Gardener, Coates, he replanted and reshaped the grounds. Wakehurst was bought in 1938 by Sir Henry Price, who had made his fortune making off-the-peg suits and was known as the 'Fifty Shilling Tailor'. He and his wife, Lady Eve, took great interest in the gardens and are remembered in horticulture by the various plants that were named after them, including *Rosa* 'Eve Price', *Viburnum tinus* 'Eve Price', *Carnassia leichtlinii* 'Eve Price' and *Pieris formosa* 'Henry Price'.



Wakehurst Place now features natural woodland and lakes, with trees from every temperate region of the world, formal gardens, a nature reserve and the Elizabethan mansion. It holds

the national collections of hypericum, birch, southern beech and skimmias. There is a rich diversity of wildlife including birds, butterflies, badgers and dormice. There is a bog garden, water garden, iris dell, bluebell woods, Himalayan glade, Westwood ravine, Asian heath garden, Southern hemisphere garden and a walled garden, among others. There are vistas and interesting sculptures. It has a wild flower trail and numerous paths to explore. Despite having suffered many losses in the Great Storm of 1987, Wakehurst is renowned for its magnificent collection of trees, including a rare Wollemi pine (a species which can be traced back to the time of the dinosaurs) and, of course, the Millennium Seed Bank.



Wollemi pine

The Seed Bank was formally opened in 2000, the world's largest ex situ plant conservation project. It is a 5,500 sq. meter low-level building with barrel-vaulted roofing with solar panels which generate enough renewable energy to power the whole Seed Bank operation. It stores seeds from almost all the UK's native plant species and aims to conserve 25% of the world's plant species by 2020.



The Millennium Seedbank

Below the public area are vaults containing almost two billion seeds. On each side of the hall are laboratories where scientists preserve seeds, working with seed banks in other countries. Seeds are collected and dried in cloth or paper bags (plastic retains moisture); they are cleaned, x-rayed (to check for insect damage, for instance), and sent downstairs to be frozen at -2°C. Seeds are tested for viability every ten years, or earlier if necessary. Although some seeds have only a short-lived storage life of a few decades, *Sorghum* spp, the longest lived known seeds, may survive here for more than 1,000 years.

It is important to collect and bank as many seeds as possible. Commercial bananas for instance, are all produced from the

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The Mansion

same species and are very susceptible to disease and pests, so scientists are trying to find a remedy amongst wild varieties. And commercial coffee is produced from just two species, arabica and robusta, which are in trouble because of climate warming. Kew's scientists are helping farmers experimenting with other coffee species.

Meantime, you will be relieved to know our gin and tonics are safe! 70% of wild juniper plants were wiped out by the gin trade, but are now safe because they are stored in the Millennium Seed Bank.

All in all a fascinating day out. Thank you Pam, for organising everything for us.

Ann and David Prynne

Secret Ipswich on 20th June 2015

This walk, guided by Peter Scotcher, reached parts of Ipswich that some of us had never before reached! We began and ended with a little egret viewed from Bourne Bridge and in between, enjoyed a feast of nature's sights and sounds. We followed the Belstead Brook through the Park to Bobbit's Lane Meadows and the Millennium and Spring Woods, returning via Ostrich ('Oyster Reach') Meadows to the pub. All of this is just a stone's throw from the edge of Ipswich but with hardly a glimpse of house roofs behind the trees. Throughout the morning Peter explained the management of grass, scrub, trees and water levels which enable different species to flourish all the way to the Copdock roundabout.

My first delight was the quirkily-named corky-fruited water dropwort – supposedly scarce, but there is a large thriving patch near the park entrance. Peter told us some of the history of Bourne Park: a former boating lake is now part of the reed-beds, and non-native trees planted decades ago are now mature amongst native trees. We looked at horse chestnuts affected by leaf miners and so understood why many of their leaves turn brown later in the season.



Oenanthe pimpellinoides – corky-fruited water dropwort

In a dry sunny area the lucky ones saw a common lizard basking. Long-sighted folk watched a sparrow-hawk and crow having a go at each other in flight. Warblers warbled, chiff-chaffs called, a woodpecker flew, a buzzard soared. Among the

reeds some buntings perched and wobbled, and sparrows repeatedly rose and hid.



© Colin Hullis

Banded Damoiselle

At the brook, 'What's that lobstery-thing?' 'A signal crayfish,' responded Darren who was busy filming for Day 20 of his 30 Days Wild Blog. We admired the deep turquoise banded demoiselle, talked about water voles and otters (didn't see them!) and were told about the army using a helicopter to bring in beams for a wooden bridge.

We heard of phenomenal numbers of mate-seeking toads crossing Bobbitt's Lane from the woods to the reed-beds, and also how the presence of dormice helped restrict housing development. In ancient Spring Wood we saw groups of mature small-leaved lime trees (England's only native lime) growing in rings spaced several metres across. This is a result of coppicing long ago and genetically each group is one plant. The hornbeams grow dark and majestic, inviting to touch.

Our return through Ostrich Meadows was led by butterflies and ended with a bee orchid being spotted, conveniently visible from the path. Back at Bourne Bridge there were jelly fish, oystercatchers, a young family of swans and another of Canada geese. Thank you Peter, for introducing us to this hidden area which we will visit again!

Alison Mackay

Dates for your Diary - September 2015 to January 2016

All meetings, unless otherwise indicated, take place in
St Margaret's School Hall, Bolton Lane, Ipswich at 7.30 p.m.
Entrance £2.50 includes tea or coffee

Wednesday 16th September The Life of Ponds by John Biglin

After some years working in conservation John, a member of our Ipswich group, set up his own Parks and Countryside Management Consultancy, offering advice on anything from urban parks to rural woodland. Using his wide experience and knowledge he will deal, in a fun way, with all aspects of making and maintaining ponds, whatever their size, even in a washing-up bowl! He will also help you to discover what is lurking in them. For more information on John and his work go to www.anglianparksandwildlife.co.uk.

Wednesday 21st October The Work of the Owl Sanctuary by Andy Hulme.

The Suffolk Owl sanctuary is based in Stonham Aspel. It is a charity involved with the care, rehabilitation and conservation of owls, both in Suffolk and further afield. It has a hospital where owls and other raptors are treated and if possible, after a period of recuperation, are returned to the wild. Andy hopes to bring along a barn owl to his talk. For more details of the work of the Owl Sanctuary go to www.owl-help.org.

Wednesday 18th November Fen Raft Spiders on the Move by Dr Helen Smith

One of England's rarest spiders, the Fen Raft Spider, first discovered in 1956 at Redgrave and Lopham Fen, was nearing extinction. Water extraction was desiccating its habitat. Dr Helen Smith has been leading a captive breeding and reintroduction programme in Suffolk. The spiderlings, reared in captivity, have been released at Castle Marshes and other regions along the River Waveney, where they appear to be flourishing. For more details of the spider, its fascinating life style, and Helen's work, Google "Fen Raft Spider".

Wednesday 9th December Otters in Suffolk by Richard Woolnough

Otters are Richard's passion. He worked with the late Margaret Grimwade in the Suffolk Mammal Group and has done much research into many rivers in Suffolk where they appear to be doing well. Richard has a wealth of first hand experience to impart. At this meeting mince pies and mulled wine will replace the usual tea and biscuits.

Wednesday 20th January 2016 Homes for Wildlife in Ipswich by James Baker

James is manager of the Greenways Countryside Project. With the aid of a band of volunteers Greenways protects and enhances the 100 square kilometres in and around Ipswich for the benefit of wildlife and people. Amongst other things they clear our footpaths and clean out our ditches. Their latest project is to encourage wildlife into our built-up areas by getting us all to provide something in our gardens so that wildlife corridors can exist in our towns. Come along and see what you can do to improve our urban space and your own garden for wildlife.



More members photographs from Wakehurst Place

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



Ipswich Wildlife Group

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

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

Wildlife Homes - Behind the Scenes

Over the past couple of years we have been promoting our 'Wildlife Homes' project at all the events we attend and to many local schools. By the end of July this year we had provided an amazing total of 800 habitat boxes which comprised 497 bug boxes, 141 hedgehog homes and 162 bird boxes. Monies collected from donations to IWG for these is re-invested in materials to make more.

The really significant fact to come out of all this effort is that there are 800 more habitat sites in local gardens that would not have been there otherwise! Also, not quite so easy to quantify, is the new awareness and interest in nature and wildlife that we have created within the families that have left an event with a box they hadn't planned to have when they set out! It has also been a feature of the project how it is most often the children who are the instigators of making the box and persuading their parents to be involved then taking one of our leaflets home to learn more about the value of their new wildlife home.

The main reason for the success of this project is the fact that the boxes are essentially 'made' by the visitors. IWG volunteers create a kit of sawn and drilled wood which is then assembled by the visitors using hammer and nails in the case of bird and hedgehog boxes and inserting various materials such as bamboo, reeds or fennel stalks into the bug boxes.

Being involved at one of the events is very stimulating and great fun but before the pagoda is set up, the benches put in place and the box kits displayed, there is a huge amount of

work necessary in the weeks before the event as well as on the day, to make sure the day goes smoothly.

Martin Cant and Peter Locke have spent much of their free time over the past two years sourcing wood and other materials and making the kits between them. "It is a question of keeping up with demand, said Martin, "As the project has become more and more popular, trying to maintain a supply of materials, carting it from place to place and producing kits has become more and more of a problem."

With the co-operation of the Greenways Project, more recently IWG volunteers led by Martin Cant meet up on a regular basis at the Greenways barn to create the kits. "This has made a huge difference, said Martin, "Now we can turn out 50 or so bug boxes in one session. Although this sounds a big number, they can all go at just one event!"

Producing the kits is not difficult, anyone who can safely use a hand saw and electric drill is fully qualified to join in. There are also other important operations to be done such as cutting bamboo to size with secateurs, splitting small logs and making the tea and coffee!

If you could help lend a hand, the sessions are on the third Friday of every month starting at 10am. For details contact Ray Sidaway 01473 259104 rsidaway@hotmail.co.uk or Colin Hullis 07979 644134 colin@hullis.net



1. A kit-making session in full swing
2. IBC Rangers David and Joe join in
3. Martin Cant loads up for another event
4. A youngster makes the final touches
5. Another successful event



Friends of the Dales

The Dales is a small Local Nature Reserve situated off Dales Road in Ipswich.
For details of the Friends Group please contact Jessica Allen at jallen7@hotmail.co.uk or find us on Facebook at Friends

The Dales is a delightful area of 5.88 hectares designated as a Local Nature Reserve and an Open Space by the owners Ipswich Borough Council. Open Space is an unusual title for such a variety of habitats hosting so much flora and fauna as there is woodland (wet and dry), meadows, ponds, plenty of fruit trees and lots of scrub.

We have foxes, occasionally seen but more often observed from their strategically placed poo which communicates with other foxes and excites interest in many of the dogs who are walked there. Many dogs take an interest in squirrels and cats that are also about from time to time. Deer too have been seen occasionally, usually Muntjac but sometimes something bigger. We also have a good population of amphibians, particularly frogs, that help to sustain a healthy grass snake population.

© John Humble



Great spotted woodpecker

We've had an abundance of birds this year some of whom can only be identified by their song as they hide very successfully deep in the undergrowth. These have included Willow Warbler, Common Whitethroat, Bullfinch, Dunnock, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Carrion Crow, Magpie, Jay, Robin, Blackcap, Goldfinch, Moorhen, Common Buzzard, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Grey Heron, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long Tailed Tit, Coal Tit, Chiffchaff and Chaffinch. A pair of nesting Sparrowhawk is a good indication that the population of small birds is big enough to support her family and therefore the area of habitat is in good condition.



A chiffchaff calling from the undergrowth



A handsome male Bullfinch – you can't beat a bit of bully!

Many of these birds nest near the ground so dog walkers are asked to prevent their dogs running through the woodland areas during the bird nesting season (1st March to 31st July). The pockets of woodland and scrub are regularly coppiced to ensure there are sunny glades for insects and thick, bushy growth for nesting birds. How good would it be if we could get Nightingales to stay and breed instead of just passing through on migration?!



Comma on the left and small tortoiseshell on the right

Our maturing Wildflower Meadow has encouraged many more bees and butterflies this year. Flowers include Bird's Foot Trefoil, Knapweed, Yarrow, Speedwell, Plantain, Cinq Foil, and earlier in the year Buttercups and Dandelions. Butterflies include Painted Lady, Skipper, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell and many others.

This very attractive area is used by many different people and we have a well-knit friendly community of people interested in maintaining this little treasure by providing a breathing space in this part of Ipswich. A working party of volunteers led by an IBC Ranger meets on the second Wednesday of the month to do whatever is required. So far this year we have collectively logged about eighty hours of voluntary work. Please do come and join us if you have the time!

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

The Greenways Countryside Project exists to protect and enhance the countryside, landscape and open space across an area of about 100 square kilometres in and around the town of Ipswich, and home to around one quarter of the population of Suffolk, for the benefit of wildlife and local people. The project relies on volunteers to complete much of its practical conservation work.

The Greenways Project is a very successful and well-established partnership between Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council, Babergh District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and the local community.

Annual Report - April 2014 to March 2015

This brief report includes some examples of the work carried out by Greenways Project staff and volunteers over the financial year. The map below shows the approximate location of the sites managed by the Project on behalf of the local authority partners and other land owners, with Belstead Brook Park expanded to allow individual nature reserves to be identified within the informal country park area.

It is not possible to detail work on each site – please contact us if you would like specific details about any site.

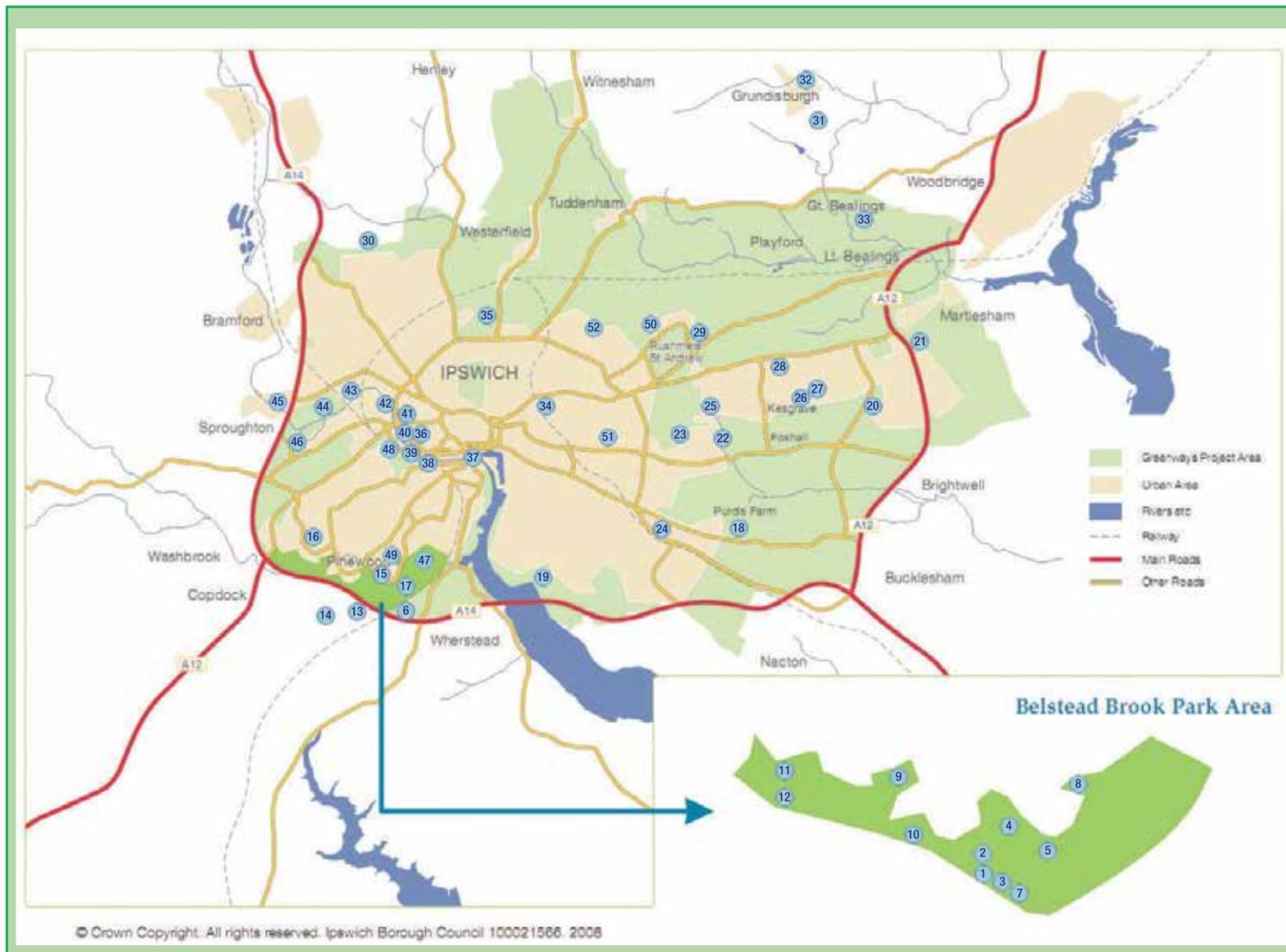
Nature reserve and green space management

Routine maintenance of our 50 or so sites includes: coppicing and woodland management; tree and hedge planting; heathland scrub clearing; meadow mowing and raking;



Volunteers building a boardwalk under supervision

Greenways Project Area Map



reed cutting; clearing and surfacing paths; building bridges, boardwalks and fences; installing signs, habitat piles and seats; picking litter and clearing dumped rubbish. Some sites receive weekly attention, whilst some others are only managed more infrequently, perhaps to carry out a specific seasonal task.

Events

The ever popular Spring Wood Day event in May, once again attracted around 900 visitors who came to enjoy the wide range of activities, demonstrations and wonderful walks



through the bluebells and other wildflowers. Our 'megabash' practical events have also continued to be a success, with volunteers from different groups coming together to make an impact on larger tasks – each year these are held in Belstead Brook Park, Purdis Heath and Martlesham Heath, and typically attract around 30-60 volunteers. Other public events have included guided walks and 'Wildlife Homes' activities (see details in case studies).



Discovering butterflies on a guided walk in Spring Wood

List of sites

Belstead Brook Park

- 1 Spring Wood (LNR)
- 2 Kiln Meadow (LNR)
- 3 Millennium Wood (LNR)
- 4 Bobbitts Lane Meadows (LNR)
- 5 Ashground Plantation and Whitland Close area
- 6 Bobbitts Lane – upper area
- 7 Butterfly Ride
- 8 Stoke Park Wood (LNR)
- 9 Ellenbrook open space and Playing Field
- 10 Burnet Meadow and Thorington Park area
- 11 Belstead Meadows
- 12 Belstead Lower Meadows (CWS)
- 13 Thorington Hall Farm area
- 14 Belstead Heath

Southern fringe

- 15 Netley Close open space
- 16 Belmont Road Wood
- 17 Braky Wood

Eastern Fringe

- 18 Purdis Heath (SSSI), Purdis Farm
- 19 Pond Hall Carr Meadow, Orwell Country Park
- 20 Martlesham Heath (SSSI)
- 21 Martlesham Common (CWS)
- 22 Mill Stream (LNR), Rushmere St Andrew
- 23 Sandlings, (LNR), Rushmere St Andrew
- 24 Warren Heath (CWS)
- 25 Farthing Wood, Kesgrave
- 26 Long Stropps Pond, Kesgrave
- 27 Cedarwood Green, Kesgrave
- 28 Legion Green, Kesgrave

Northern Fringe

- 29 Chestnut Pond, Rushmere St Andrew
- 30 Whitton Footpath Link
- 31 Grundisburgh Millennium Meadow
- 32 Lyttleton's Meadow, Grundisburgh
- 33 Kiln Farm Meadow (CWS), Gt Bealings
- 34 Former St Mary's Convent site, Woodbridge Rd.
- 35 Fonnereau Way

Western Fringe and the River

- 36 Alderman Canal (LNR)
- 37 River Path – Stoke Bridge
- 38 River Path – Princes St to West End Rd
- 39 River Path – West End Road
- 40 River Path – West End Rd to Handford Rd
- 41 River Path – Handford Rd-Yarmouth Rd
- 42 River Path – Yarmouth Rd to Riverside Road
- 43 River Path – Boss Hall
- 44 River Path – ex-Sugar Factory
- 45 River Path – A14 to Sproughton
- 46 Churchman Way

Recent new sites

- 47 Bourne Park
- 48 Gippeswyk Park
- 49 Belstead Road Tree Belt
- 50 Limes Pond Rushmere
- 51 Britannia School
- 52 Rushmere Hall School

LNR = Local Nature Reserve

Volunteers and opportunities to get involved

The Greenways Project is built around its wonderful volunteers, who not only look after the nature reserves and open spaces but also help with everything from events and event preparation; wildlife and public surveys; photography; website; and even the production of Local Wildlife News magazine. In the year, a total of 1827 volunteer days of time were contributed – the equivalent of more than 8 full-time staff working for the Project. This contribution can also be expressed as being worth over £100,000 using Lottery volunteer values. The Project can only continue to look after so many sites and run fun and interesting events and activities because of the volunteers, so we are extremely grateful to everyone who helps. There are always opportunities to become involved in different aspects of our work, so please do get in touch if you think you can help us – there is no need to commit to attending regularly and you don't need to have all the skills and knowledge already – we are delighted to receive any help and will advise, train and supervise as necessary.

Funding

The Project is a long-standing and very successful partnership between Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council and Babergh and Suffolk Coastal District Councils and the local community. These core funding partners continue to support the Project through very difficult financial times in local government. The Project has had to rely upon alternative sources of income in addition for many years to cover the full costs of running the Project, so we also gratefully receive contributions from Parish and Town Councils, grant giving bodies and land owners and businesses in the area as well as selling our services. In 2014-15 the funding partners' core contributions were:

Ipswich Borough Council	£32,110
Suffolk County Council	£14,544
Suffolk Coastal District Council	£7,200
Babergh District Council	£5,500

Some partners also contribute in addition for practical site management work.

The total expenditure for the year was approximately £130,000.

Case Studies

Heathland Management

Throughout the winter months, the volunteers were kept very busy with heathland work, primarily scrub removal on several important heathland sites to the east of Ipswich. Martlesham Heath, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), is managed by the Martlesham Heath Householders Limited, and they have received grant aid from Natural England to help manage the site more for the benefit of wildlife. MHHL then ask Greenways to deliver some of the practical work on the site, which included gorse clearing, scraping the surface back to bare sand and carting cut material to the fire site for the big bonfire at the Megabash event. Some work here was also supported by grant aid from Butterfly Conservation, as the site is good for Silver-studded blue butterflies. BC also funded Greenways time to carry out important conservation work at Martlesham Common and Purdis Heath.



Burnet Meadow and Thorington Park area



Following being handed to Babergh District Council from the developer of the Thorington Park housing development, Burnet Meadow has now established as a rather lovely wildflower meadow and woodland belt with a popular play area and exercise equipment. The site brings wildlife very close to people in a very successful way, and supports a wide range of wildflowers, insects and even dormice. Greenways volunteers have been carrying out coppicing in the wooded areas and mowing and raking of the open meadow for the last few years, with great success. The site is now more diverse than ever, and is being used by more and more people. During the winter months, the Project carried out additional work for Babergh District Council to manage the retained trees and hedgerows through the development. This work involved extensive consultation with local people before tree surgery and other work was carried out.

Wildlife Homes

The Project has worked very closely with Ipswich Wildlife Group and the Borough Council's Wildlife and Education Rangers to deliver a series of public events encouraging residents to make their gardens more wildlife friendly, to improve the connectivity of habitat in the town and encourage more wildlife generally. Residents in a particular part of the town's ecological network are invited to come to a nature reserve or park to make insect homes, bird boxes or hedgehog houses to take home. They can also take wildflower seed or logs for a wood pile, and advice on other ways to make the garden more valuable for a wider range of species.



Some of the events were supported by a grant from Sanctuary Housing, whose tenants were targeted with special local events to highlight the importance of the Belstead Brook Park area on their doorsteps.



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.

Piper's Vale Pyrotechnics

The glow-worm's phenomenal ability to emit light has long been a feature of poetry and folklore. The ancient Greeks named them 'the bright tailed spark' and Wordsworth 'the earthborn star', the Scientific name *Lampyrus noctiluca* translates as 'Shining nightlight'. These days the chemistry behind the bioluminescence is better understood but much of the species' ecology is still unknown. This species exhibits one of the strongest sexual dimorphisms of any insect with only the male resembling a beetle, the glowing female is more segmented like a millipede or a caterpillar and resembles a larva.

In the UK, glow-worms are typically associated with flower rich grassland where the open sward and high floristic diversity provide both a high density of snails for the larvae and open areas for the females to display. They are also however noted to prosper on heathland, where the larvae live amongst clumps of heather and gorse and the females tend to display along path edges. After a female has mated, she spends her final few weeks laying eggs amongst low growing vegetation, often attached to mosses and lichens. The carnivorous larvae, which feed primarily on banded snails, are able to tackle prey much larger than themselves. Using a needle like mouthpart (modified mandible), they immobilise their quarry by injecting it with a toxin which liquefies the mollusc into a 'proteinous soup'. In its lifetime a larvae may only move a few metres and because the females are flightless, glow-worms are poor colonisers and seriously under threat from habitat fragmentation.

Piper's Vale has long been known to hold a population of glow-worms but because the females display in midsummer, they are only visible after 9pm. This has made monitoring this declining species difficult. My aim was to map out the glow-worm distribution on Piper's Vale by doing some evening surveys around midsummer. I then wanted to see how the population was responding to the work we were doing. This site is currently under a transformation, whereby large areas of aged scrub and light woodland are being reverted back into heathland.

Surveys for females were conducted between the 16th and the 19th of June across Piper's Vale and the accumulative locations were plotted on a map.



Map showing the location of Glow-worm sightings (yellow spots) across the Orwell Country Park (16th-19th) June

The study showed that a good mixture of bare ground, short vegetation and scrub, i.e. well managed areas, were favoured. Sparsely vegetated bracken was noted to be a favoured display point for the females, who would climb up the strands. In areas of very short, rabbit grazed vegetation, retained dead wood and fence posts were used as display points. One discovery was to find glow-worms displaying on recently created heather areas.



Female enticing two males (Pipers Vale)

The Anglian Water Jetty, which was amenity grassland until 2003, now boasts the highest density across the country park. This is likely because it is now managed as a species rich grassland, where the high floristic diversity supports an assortment of snails, on which the larva feed. Animals were not however present in the northern (Factory) side of the grassland, and we suspect this may be due to light pollution interfering with the courtship. The biggest achievement of the study was to find glow-worms in previously unknown areas on Pond-hall meadow and Pond-hall farm. We were also hoping to find glow-worms on Braziers meadow, as it is a neighbouring area of grassland but, after several attempts, none were seen. Although still unsure, the species' poor ability to colonise areas may be to blame.

Habitat work this winter

In ecology, heterogeneous (non- uniform) habitats are known to support more species than homogenous (uniform) ones. In other words the more niches provided, the greater the biodiversity. An optimal heathland for wildlife contains a mosaic of vegetation types with a varied age structure, together with areas of bare ground. As with most habitats, many species are only able to survive when the plants they depend on are of a certain age or in a particular location. In order to maintain this heterogeneity a heathland requires a large amount of management. This winter we will be knocking back encroaching scrub and woodland, as well as increasing the amount of bare ground and heather cover. As well as glow-worms, nationally scarce wasps and butterflies, together with nationally declining reptiles and birds are also benefiting from the habitat restoration.

If you would like to get involved, or find out more about the work on Orwell Country Park, please contact the Rangers

David Dowding, IBC Wildlife Team

Secretary: Ann Snook 01473 251037 Membership Secretary: Robert Fairchild 01473 254255
www.focp.org.uk Follow us on Facebook@Christchurch Park and Twitter@ChristchurchPk

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

‘One gull of a problem!’

I have written volumes about the large gulls of Ipswich. I have watched their murderous ventures into Christchurch Park where I have seen mallard, mandarin and moorhen chicks being consumed day after day until they have gone, although the Canada Geese normally put up a ferocious fight to protect their goslings from these marauding gulls. I have monitored the spread of nesting large gulls from the rooftops of central Ipswich to industrial sites and shopping mall roofs on the outskirts of town and their range is widening. But why oh why in the current debate do national and local newspapers consider all large gulls to be herring gulls with absolutely no mention of lesser black-backed gulls? And tell me this, why do reporters travel to the seaside to witness and report on the aggressiveness of large gulls. It can only be the lack of knowledge of these reporters that they assume seagulls are only to be found at the seaside.

Recently, two such reports appeared in the press. Even our Prime Minister entered the fray stating that large gulls are a problem and that we have to have a ‘big conversation’ about whether a cull is necessary. Our Prime Minister, at odds with Europe and ISIS, is now considering a cull of gulls. The Daily Mail reporter quoted herring gulls, common gulls and black headed gulls but with no mention of lesser black-backed gulls. The local reporter went to Aldeburgh, the Daily Mail reporter went to Margate and Mr Cameron talked about Cornwall. Oh please come to Ipswich! Catch a bus at the Old Cattle Market and wait with the lesser black-backed gulls there or listen to the young gulls crying for food on the buildings in Tacket Street or the Butter Market or, better still, wait for another hatching of ducklings in Christchurch Park. You will likely see both species of large gulls but we have far more lesser black-backed gulls. Perhaps a better viewing point would be Ransomes Industrial Park where large gulls are nesting on empty warehouses, not just a few pairs but probably hundreds.

The lesser black-backed gull is quite beautiful with black-grey upper parts and the remaining plumage being brilliant white. Its legs are yellow as is its beak. The lower mandible has a red spot. The eye, the evil-looking eye, is pale with a red ring



© Paul Sherman

A Herring gull involved in the massacre in the Park

around it. It is a splendid bird, haughty in appearance. It is also quite intelligent. Lesser black-backed gulls have spread to the northern fringe of Christchurch Park looking for anything edible. There is no doubt they are moving further afield.



© Colin Hullis

Black headed gull

The country’s leading expert on these gulls, Peter Rock, estimates that there are well over 100,000 pairs in towns and cities across Britain and they are spreading not just to Aldeburgh and Margate. Yes, it has been reported that they have killed a tortoise and two very small dogs but no mention of the massacre of ducklings in Parks like ours. No mention either of the tons of pig food that they have consumed or even what they scavenge from the rubbish tips and of course, more to the point, no mention of what we discard. Many people are calling for a cull but how and where? Certainly, not in Christchurch Park. Mind you, if those reporters were to visit Ipswich later in the year, guess what? Those lesser black-backed gulls will be gone, scavenging their way down to West Africa only to return in the spring when there will be many more of them.



© Paul Sherman

Lesser black-backed gull raiding a moorhens nest



Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Membership Secretary 01379 643665

www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk

email: butterflies@sns.org.uk

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

Summer Walks prove Fruitful

The Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation summer programme included two walks in varying local habitats led by Julian and David Dowding.

9th July: Landseer Park and Pipers Vale for acid grassland, woodland and heathland butterflies

We started at 9am, parking in Landseer Road car park and set off past the wildflower banks. With fine weather and lots of nectar flowers in evidence, we saw eight species on the Knapweeds and Thistles by the car park, including many Skippers. Red Admiral and Painted Lady were also observed.

We then walked around the meadow adjacent to Oulton Road and Dereham Avenue. Here we saw Small, Essex and Large Skippers, Gatekeepers, Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns, and Ringlets. We then moved along the wet area adjacent to Medway Road, adding Brimstone, Green-veined White, Holly Blue, and Comma.



Marbled White

Up through the woodland, we found White Letter Hairstreak (hard to find) and Speckled Wood. We returned along the top of the flower bank, and admired the cornfield annuals which the IBC rangers had sown earlier in the year. We then visited Pipers Vale, where a quick investigation of the heathland produced two Silver-studded Blues. Later, Purple Hairstreak was seen on the oaks. In total 19 species of butterfly were seen.



White Letter Hairstreak

11th July: Bonny Wood for Purple Emperors and other woodland butterflies

We set out from Barking Tye village hall at 9am blessed with 22°C and clear skies, after first giving a talk about the recent resurgence in interest in Purple Emperors in Suffolk, following research into Purple Emperors in Suffolk by Liz and Andrew from Herts and Middlesex Branch BC. They had suggested (and proved) that the butterfly did indeed exist in Suffolk in suitable woodlands and woodland complexes, often at low densities.

We set off on the footpath alongside the fields towards Bonny Wood. At a suitable point in the landscape I stopped to give guests an overview of the small complex of woods in the area and of Liz and Andrew's method of finding the butterfly by watching highpoints in the canopy which might prove

attractive to male Purple Emperors wishing to set up assembly areas. When we reached the path veering off to Barn Grove, a couple of guests said they'd seen an Emperor flying across the field from Priestly Wood. I was taken aback as it seemed improbable to see one away from the woods and so quickly. However, when we reached an area where about 40 straw bales had been dumped at the side of the spinney, a stunning male flew around us and alighted on one of the bales where it then sat probing some substance with its proboscis. Liz and Andrew's work had shown the butterfly to be quite capable of moving between woods. 5 km was a short hop and 10km a long hop. It seems that they were indeed using the entire complex. I had remarked on the phone to one of the guests when booking the event, that given the nature of the woods and the probable thin density of the butterflies, finding the Emperor would be a bit like finding a needle in a haystack. How ironic then, that we found one sitting on a straw bale!



Purple Emperor

After about an hour watching the butterfly and taking many photos, some of the group walked further along and entered Bonny Wood. Those left behind had another Emperor circling higher in the trees. A male White Admiral was seen briefly in the wood, followed by Ringlets, Silver-washed Fritillaries, Meadow Browns



White Admiral

and numerous whites. Also seen were Large Skipper, Small Skipper and Gatekeeper. Eventually we reached a ride where two males and a female Purple Emperor were seen gliding along. These brought the total up to five Purple Emperors for the day. Another butterfly of the purple persuasion was Purple Hairstreak. We watched and photographed a male which was sitting low underneath a branch. Total number of species seen: 15.



Purple Hairstreak

I wish to thank Suffolk Wildlife Trust for their successful management of Bonny Wood and for mowing the rides before our walk! Thanks also to Barking Parish council for kindly allowing us to use their car park.

Julian Dowding

Landguard Partnership

Landguard Bungalow, View Point Road, Felixstowe IP11 3TW Tel: 01394 675283

Email: ranger@landguardpartnership.org.uk www.landguardpartnership.org.uk

Ranger Blog: <http://www.discoverlandguard.org.uk/attractions/landguard-nature-reserve/rangers-blog> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/landguardranger>

The Landguard Partnership was formed in 2009 to ensure that the Landguard Peninsula in Felixstowe is managed in a sustainable manner, contributing to the nationally important environmental conservation, cultural heritage, educational resources and economic prosperity of the area and adding to the quality of life and enjoyment of the local community and visitors. The Partnership consists of all the organisations and a charitable trust who have either a vested interest in the Peninsula or are concerned about conserving and protecting this valuable resource. The Peninsula incorporates the historic Fort, the important collections of the Felixstowe Museum, the Landguard Nature Reserve and the popular View Point overlooking the Orwell Estuary.

Hutchinson's Ports UK CEO and Europe Division Manager Mr Clemmence Cheng accepted my invitation for a short tour of the Nature Reserve. He was accompanied by Mr Alan Tinline the Ports Environment and Energy Manager. I was very pleased that both men had managed to take time from busy work schedules to make the visit. The purpose of the invitation was to introduce Mr Cheng to part of the Landguard Partnership that funding from the Port has benefitted from and hopefully generate some genuine empathy for the Nature Reserve. I was very pleased that Mr Cheng managed to spot a Ringed Plover on its nest with my binoculars, it can be quite difficult to pick them out with the bird's camouflage working so well. He made



Mr Cheng spotting a Ringed Plover with Chris Ryde

a comment on the great view across to the Port and reeled off the classification of one huge ship that was at berth. Mr Tinline outlined some steps that the Port has undertaken to lessen its environmental impact, he also invited me to take a closer look at the Port, an offer I will be sure to take up.

One evening while doing my evening check around the beach enclosures, I noticed a large black object moving on the edge of the lapping waves. Perhaps a seal was my first thought but on looking through my binoculars I could see that it had a dolphin-like tail. Even looking at its movements from a distance



Harbour porpoise

it looked quite weak. My thoughts went to all the times I have seen reports of stranded cetaceans on the news, many seem to end with unfortunate deaths. As I got up to it I could see that it was in fact a Harbour Porpoise. I wonder if it beached itself while chasing fish into the shallows? As I stood over it with hands on each side I was surprised by how it felt to the touch, rather like a car inner tube but obviously alive. After pointing it out to sea and wading into deeper water, thankfully it swam away, snorting out of its blow hole as it went. Note to myself, always carry a small camera!

I have been helping Laurie Forsythe record the Reserve flora. Laurie is a great botanist and having spent many years working as a Warden for Essex Wildlife Trust has also developed a great knack of imparting his knowledge which has been a real bonus for me. Many of these coastal plants are completely new to me, coming from the woodlands and grasslands of the Chiltern Hills as I do. One plant that Laurie introduced me to and had recently become familiar with was, Suffocated Clover. Sarah Wynne a previous Landguard Ranger and keen botanist Tweeted to me that in all the time that she had spent bent over looking at Landguard's miniaturised plants (due to Rabbit grazing), she hadn't found that one at Landguard before. Laurie supplied me with a photo of one taken at Shingle Street.



Suffocated Clover

Five pairs of Ringed Plovers, two more pairs than last year, managed four successfully fledged chicks. Six chicks were predated by a very active Kestrel, one infertile egg and four nest failures with sixteen eggs which were most likely due to egg predation by Gulls and Crows. I have noticed that where anglers are or have been, attracts Gulls. Lunch and bait scraps being responsible and some have the habit of burying their unused bait. This coupled with anglers sometimes unwittingly placing themselves just a few feet from a nest when tucked up close to the enclosure boundaries has led me to believe that prohibiting fishing on the north eastern shore of the Reserve from April to the end of July would be a positive step.

Chris Ryde



Friends of Holywells Park

The Group aims to work in partnership with Ipswich Borough Council to improve and promote the Park.
Contact: fohpipswich@gmail.com www.holywellspark.org.uk facebook.com/holywellsparkipswich

Holywells Park was officially re-opened on the 18th July. The Grand Re-opening represented the completion of the capital works of the restoration project. The project itself runs for another three years or so, to encourage increased use of the park.



The Stable Block as seen from the terrace

And what have we achieved so far? To start, the Friends have always been clear that as far as possible, the restoration should be sensitive to environmental issues and increase the environmental value of Holywells Park. The Stable Block now possesses a café, complete with a screen showing views from wildlife cameras in the park. An adjacent reception area allows visitors to learn more about Holywells Park, its facilities,



The new bench in the Stable Block, using recycled Holywells Park oak, funded by SCC and private donation.

heritage and wildlife. The Green Bike project has returned to a new location. There is now a 'Changing Places' toilet, suitable for severely disabled visitors, the customary facilities are also somewhat improved. Three heritage display rooms are being set up, including an original stable. There are new educational and meeting facilities. Meanwhile, two new bat boxes have been added to the outside walls.

Further along, the new performance area sits between the Stable Block and Orangery. The Orangery has been restored and is being slowly transformed. Already there is a palm tree planted inside the terracotta feature. The Orangery has already hosted various events, including launch meetings for Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Lottery-funded 'Closer to nature in Ipswich' project. A great deal more has been done, including a new low-height sensory maze, complete with bench in the centre.



The Orangery, from the centre of the new maze

Various improvements have been made to the footpaths, including a new path from Myrtle meadow to the big pond. Perhaps the stand-out item is the resurfacing of the path from the Cliff Lane kissing gate entrance along the canal, past the big pond, and continuing most of the way to the Myrtle Road entrance. The path is now rather less of an assault course and we hope that more people will be able to enjoy that part of the park. But other areas of the park remain untouched, and delightfully natural. Where spoil has been dumped from the desilting part of the project, in a year or two's time it will be hard to see that dumping took place as nature takes back her own.

Eighty per cent of the cost has been met by the National Lottery through its 'Parks for People' programme. Another 10% comes from Ipswich Borough Council. The final 10% comes directly from the populous in the form of volunteers. For this project of around £3.5M, that's volunteer labour notionally valued at some £350,000 over the lifetime of the project, which will finish in 2018. Some of this effort has come from the Friends but the vast majority has come from other people, and long may these activities continue into the future.

Many thanks to all parties who have contributed to funding, whether as cash or as labour. Many thanks are also due to all of those who have, one way or another, contributed to the project to date.

And Holywells Park is very much open for visitors all year round. Come and explore, and if you organise meetings and events perhaps the new facilities will get your imagination going!

Robin Gape
Chairman



Friends of Belstead Brook Park

Website: www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/fobbp

E-mail: fobbp@greenlivingcentre.org.uk Facebook: www.facebook.com/fobbp

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



The Friends at work - and play!

In April the Friends picked litter in Ellenbrook Meadow for about an hour until the heavens opened and torrential rain saw us scurrying to Costa for a coffee and a chat! However, in the short time we were working we picked up several bags of cans, bottles and other rubbish.

In May, the Friends were helping at the very successful Spring Wood Day organised by Greenways and attended by hundreds of local people. The wood echoed to the sounds of pole lathes and other woodland crafts, music, dancing and happy children. The bluebells were looking lovely and we were able to encourage quite a few people to join our Friends group.



The somewhat overgrown pathway. . . now cleared and easily accessible

We became drainage contractors at our June work party in Stoke Park Wood. Runoff from the path at the top of the Wood was eroding the path away, so we dug a trench and installed a drain complete with grid and a pipe to divert the flow away from the path. Hopefully, we'll have a good summer and this won't get tested till the winter!

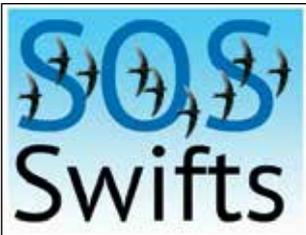
Seven Friends worked hard at our July work party clearing vegetation from along the path round the A14 tree belt. We pruned back shrubs and trees, slashed the grass and nettles and raked up the trimmings to leave the path passable again. Pop over to our Facebook page to have a look at the photos. We were very careful not to cut back too much and kept a good look out for birds and dormice nests.

If you'd like to join in the fun and can spare three hours on the second Saturday of each month, we'd love to see you. You wear old clothes and stout boots, we bring hot drinks and biscuits – good exercise, great company and the pleasure of knowing you've helped the environment – what's not to love?

Finally, although we'd love to see you at one of our work party events, if practical conservation work is not for you, you can still help us by letting us know if you see or hear of any problems in the Park. We also would like to extend the activities of the Friends so we would love to hear from you if you have any ideas and think you could help out in any other way. You can now follow us and what is happening in our Park on our Friends of Belstead Brook Park Facebook page www.facebook.com/fobbp

Ann Havard

Membership Secretary Matthew Deans, 49c, Hollesley, IP12 3JY
 info@sogonline.org.uk www.sogonline.org.uk Twitter: suffolkbirds1
 SOG is the Group for people interested in the birds of Suffolk, and provides a network and a voice for birdwatchers in the county.



It's been another successful summer for the Save our Suffolk Swifts (SoSS) joint partnership project between SOG and SWT. Following its inception last year with an inaugural talk about Swifts and the project at St. Peters Church Hall, Stowmarket

last year, this year the project has continued to expand and develop with a further two events at Lower Layham and Blaxhall.



Save Our Suffolk Swifts group in Blaxhall

Both events included a talk by SOG secretary Edward Jackson followed by a visit outdoors to see some local Swifts including nesting birds on a church and specially fitted swift nest boxes on a house. What was pleasing with both events was the turn out, average 35 people, who showed an active interest in the project as well as the local Swifts inhabiting their local areas.

Another development for SoSS this year has been the liaison with Suffolk Biological Records Centre who have set up and are hosting a Suffolk Swift Survey on their website. Nesting records of Swifts as well as swift screaming parties can be recorded, the web link is www.suffolkbrc.org.uk/swift and we'd welcome any sightings to be recorded please. Further information about swifts and the project can be found here www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/swifts and www.sogonline.org.uk so please have a look.



Common sandpiper

Although SOG is the county bird group, often on field trips, of which there are over 20 in a year, other wildlife apart from birds is enjoyed and appreciated. This was the case on a recent field trip to Minsmere.

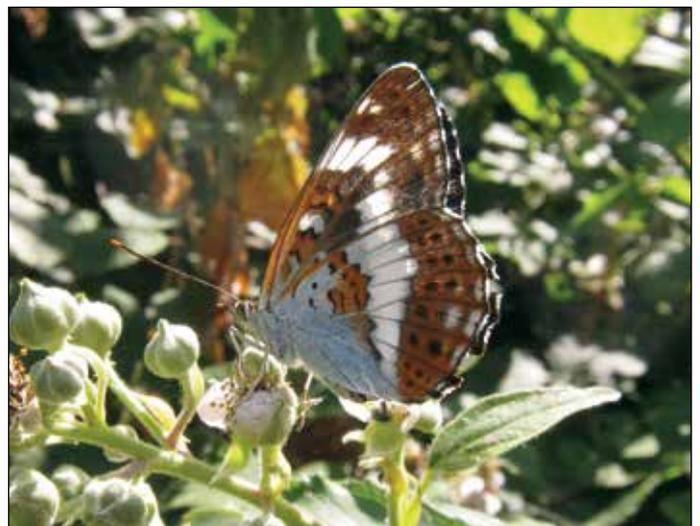
An early morning start and visiting the hides to look across the scrapes, a number of returning waders were present. Some highlights included Little Stint, Wood, Green and Common Sandpipers, several Ruff and Spotted Redshank seen, good numbers of Avocets and Common Terns amongst which a Black Tern landed and excellent views of two Red Kites proved popular.



Volucella Zonaria

A number of butterflies were seen on the way round such as Small Skipper and Grayling while back at the visitor centre around the Buddleia bushes Painted Lady, Red Admiral were found along with a striking hoverfly, Hornet Mimic Hoverfly Volucella zonaria. After lunch more insect forays, first around the Minsmere woodland trail where we encountered four Purple Hairstreaks, Large Skipper and two White Admirals and then on to nearby Dunwich Forest with at least a further five White Admirals and two White-letter Hairstreaks.

Gi Grieco



White Admiral

Membership Secretary: c/o 19, Marlborough Road, Ipswich, IP4 5AT Email: chrisc.courtney@yahoo.co.uk
www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ipswich

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

Defend our Nature

Its always nice to read about the fabulous diversity of nature, especially on such occasions when the exotic, spectacular and colourful turns up right on our doorstep! As this summer when a bevy of bee-eater records including the now famous flock of 10 around Theberton in early July, the purple heron at Kingsfleet (both enjoyed by the many) or the all too brief visit of Suffolk's first black-browed albatross at Minsmere on 12th July (enjoyed by a very lucky few!). For further details see our September edition of our magazine the 'Orwell Observer'.

Indeed some of these birds (the albatross excepted), may even be the forerunners of new breeding populations becoming established especially in the context of our rapidly changing climate and indeed bee-eaters bred last year on the Isle of White and this year in Cumbria, next year it may well be in Suffolk!

However, while we all enjoy (myself included), an element of the exotic and unexpected, as Mark Cocker has commented we should never forget to "celebrate the ordinary" the routine but nonetheless fascinating species that we all regularly encounter throughout the year, especially since so many of them are no longer nearly so routine or ubiquitous! How many of us managed to see or hear the delightful gentle purring of a turtle dove this summer? I was fortunate to find a pair along the entrance track to RSPB Boyton earlier this year, but had to content myself to listening to them purr while on hold, telephoning the BTO!



Turtle dove - no longer a routine sight

Issued quite without ceremony or media attention came the latest DEFRA publication on 23rd July. 'England Natural Environment Indicators' made for sober reading for those of us with an interest in nature. It confirmed for example that the official projected trend for our breeding farmland butterflies and birds continues to deteriorate in both short and long term. Under DEFRA's own definition 'Deteriorating' meaning an anticipated decline in excess of 50% over the next 25 years,



Exotic Suffolk visitors - Bee-eaters (Merops apiaster)

coming, as in the case of farmland birds, on top of already catastrophic declines with species such as turtle dove, corn bunting, grey partridge and tree sparrow already having declined by more than 80% since 1970. If born out these forecasts will inevitably translate into local extinctions before long in the case of many of these species, as well as a failure by DEFRA to meet most of its Natural Environment Indicators.

In the woods the DEFRA prediction is similarly depressing, with both butterfly and bird populations, also set to deteriorate and ditto for the overall long-term 'relative abundance' for priority (BAP) species and the 'frequency of occurrence', of priority insect species.

Fortunately, there are a few welcome bright spots to prevent the naturalist's complete descent into suicidal depression! The prospects for widespread species of bats are given a long-term status of 'improving' – Hooray! As perhaps more surprisingly, given more recent trends, breeding seabirds are also deemed to be 'improving' although I think that one will need unpicking and further analysis by species to be properly appreciated and understood.

Bees and pollinating insects do not feature specifically in this report but I doubt many of you missed the news that their plight has not been helped by the recent decision by Secretary of State, Liz Truss, for the UK to end early, the two year EU moratorium on the use of Neonicotinoids. (Neonics), although initially only a partial relaxation, applying principally to the 5% of UK oilseed rape production worst affected by the ravages of flea beetles. Unfortunately, this primarily constitutes the Eastern region! Consequently, some 30,000 hectares of Neonic dressed rape seeds, will be drilled this autumn in the arable fields of Suffolk and Norfolk, following only a single year of growing a conventional crop. Meanwhile, the scientific evidence has increased as to the damage inflicted to bees and other pollinators through to earthworms and grey partridge by this insidious systemic pesticide.

The NFU had lobbied hard for an emergency application and while Liz Truss by all accounts had otherwise consulted only with representatives from Syngenta and Bayer; the manufacturers of these pesticides. The RSPB has expressed its profound disappointment at the lack of transparency apparent in this process. Moreover, there is much to concern conservationists under the current administration despite recently repeated claims that they are indeed the greenest government ever.

Having already attempted to sell off our National Nature Reserves and large parts of the Forestry Commission Estate, and having massively cut both the funding and the independent remit of Natural England, the government's Sustainable Development Agency, that was set up to oversee the 'greenest government ever' policy, was itself abolished in 2011 along with its role of balancing economic needs with long term environmental protection and conservation.

In fact as I write this (31st July 2015), the heads of 10 organisations including the RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts, WWF, The National Trust and Greenpeace have collectively written to David Cameron to register their major concern at the cancellation or weakening of 10 Green Policies since his election, as these organisations consider the governments deeds to be strongly at odds with its words as for example its manifesto commitment of "being the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than that in which we found it".



© Dave Ratcliffe

Bittern - protected under the Nature Directives

heaths have received special funding and achieved successful outcomes as witnessed here in Suffolk.

Research just published by the RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, Birdlife International and Durham University has number crunched and analysed massive data sets collected from across Europe, to prove in isolation from other factors, such as climate change, migration strategy and habitat preference, the measurable effectiveness of these Nature Directives in delivering significant beneficial outcomes for the fortunate (to date), Annex 1 species. The results have been quite unequivocal, proving these milestone international conservation agreements to be among the most successful in the world.

Unfortunately, many conservationists fear the review now being conducted under President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker to be a prelude to weakening the Directives which some politicians would seem intent upon achieving including UK Chancellor George Osborne, who has said "We will make sure that gold plating of EU rules on things like habitats aren't placing ridiculous costs on British businesses", while Defra has been conducting its own review into particular concerns surrounding restrictions on "the authorization process for proposed development"



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Reed beds - a designated priority habitat

Meanwhile in Europe, we now await the outcome of the consultation of the Nature Directives, which 520,325 people told the EU leaders not to weaken! (You may well have been one of them!) These have been created since the 1979 (EU Birds Directive) and 1992 (EU Habitats Directive), a set of common standards and objectives for uniting and strengthening conservation policy across the 4 million square kilometers and 500 million people of the EU. These Directives have delivered protection to the most threatened species and important wildlife sites across the continent. Under these schemes, designated priority (Annex 1) species and habitats, such as our bitterns, marsh harriers, reedbeds and dry acid

In contrast the RSPB's Tim Webb asserted "It actually makes a great deal of economic sense because it improves development and makes them nicer places to work, live and play in. It is hugely important for protecting all sorts of different wildlife."

Watch this space... a dedicated conference on the Fitness Check is to be held in Brussels this autumn when draft results will be shared and discussed with Member States and key stakeholder groups such as us. The outcome may well affect some wildlife near you!

Chris Courtney

Events Diary

Thursday 10th September 7.30pm RSPB INDOOR MEETING

'Decline and Recovery of Thetford Forest Nightjars' by BTO Research Ecologist Greg Conway. Sponsored by A W Hart Builders. Sidegate Primary School, Ipswich. Members £2 non-members £3. **Details from Chris Courtney 01473 423213.**

Saturday 12th September 10am RSPB FIELD MEETING

Havergate Island. Depart Orford Quay 10am return 3pm. £12 per person, limited to 12 people. **Details from Chris Courtney 01473 423213.**

Tuesday 15th September 10am RSPB MIDWEEK WALK

Holywells Park including Conservation Area. Meet at Stable Block off Cliff Lane TM176432. **Leader Kathy Reynolds 01473 714839**

Wednesday 16th September 7.30pm SWT TALK The Life of Ponds by John Biglin

After some years working in conservation, Ipswich group member John Biglin set up his own Parks and Countryside Management Consultancy. John will talk, in a fun way, on aspects of making and maintaining ponds, whatever their size. St Margaret's School Hall, Bolton Lane, Ipswich. Entrance £2.50. **Details from Dave Munday 01473 217310.**

Friday 18th September 10am Ipswich Wildlife Group WILDLIFE HOMES KIT-MAKING

Come and join in making kits for the bug, bird and hedgehog boxes that are finished off by visitors at wildlife events. All materials provided, hardly any skill required. Meet at the Greenways Barn, Thorington Hall Farm off Bobbits Lane. **More detail from Ray Sidaway 01473 259104.**

Saturday 19th September 9am - 11am Portal Woodlands Conservation Group NATURE EXPLORERS

(11 - 18 year olds). Meet at the Education Area, booking essential, **please email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com**

Saturday 19th September 10am - 12 noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group WORK MORNING

Meet at the Education Area. All welcome. **For details contact 01473 612632 email pwcg@martlesham.org.uk**

Sunday 20th September 9am - 11am Portal Woodlands Conservation Group NATURE WATCH CLUB

(5 - 11 year olds). Meet at the Martlesham Heath Control Tower, booking essential, **please email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com**

Wednesday 23rd September 7.30pm Suffolk Ornithologists Group TALK

'The Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project - the first ten years', a talk by Steve Piotrowski. Please note venue: Stowupland Village Hall, Church Road, Stowupland IP14 4BQ (joint talk with Stowmarket SWT group: £2.50)

Saturday 26nd September 6.30pm Butterfly Conservation A.G.M & MEMBERS EVENING

Ixworth Village Hall (off High Street) Map Ref TL93217036. Further details on the branch website and in the summer edition of 'Suffolk Argus'.

Thursday 8th October 7.30pm RSPB INDOOR MEETING

'From Peru to New Zealand - a World Tour' by Roy Laverick. Sponsored by Birketts Solicitors. Sidegate Primary School, Ipswich. Members £2 non-members £3. **Details from Chris Courtney 01473 423213.**

Tuesday 13th October 10am RSPB MIDWEEK WALK

Pipers Vale. Meet at car park at Vale entrance TM178419 **Leader Kathy Reynolds 01473 714839**

Friday 16th October 10am Ipswich Wildlife Group WILDLIFE HOMES KIT-MAKING

Come and join in making kits for the bug, bird and hedgehog boxes that are finished off by visitors at wildlife events. All materials provided, hardly any skill required. Meet at the Greenways Barn, Thorington Hall Farm off Bobbits Lane. **More detail from Ray Sidaway 01473 259104.**

Saturday 17th October 9am RSPB FIELD MEETING

Freston, Wherstead and River Orwell for waders and wildfowl. Meet at Freston Hill lay-by. Then on to The Strand and Ipswich Waterfront, 4 miles, 4 hours. **Leader Stephen Marginson 01473 258791**

Saturday 17th October 10am - 11:30am Landguard Nature Reserve WHAT'S ABOUT WITH THE RANGER

Ranger led walk for all the family providing a seasonal look at the Landguard Nature Reserve. A great opportunity to learn more about the reserve's wildlife and enjoy a healthy walk. Children 15 years and under must be accompanied by an adult. Bring stout footwear and waterproofs. Dogs welcome if kept on a short lead. Admission free but donations welcome towards the Landguard Bungalow bird feeding station. Meet outside the Landguard Visitor Centre and View Point Café. **For more information email ranger@landguardpartnership.org.uk**

Saturday 17th October 11am - 2.30pm Friends of Holywells Park APPLE DAY

Come and enjoy the Orchard, apples galore, food and drinks - fun for all the family. Free event, all welcome. **For more information contact fohpipswich@gmail.com**

Sunday 18th October 10am - 12 noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group WORK MORNING

Meet at the Education Area. All welcome. **For details contact 01473 612632 email pwcg@martlesham.org.uk**

Wednesday 21st October 7.30pm SWT TALK The Work of the Owl Sanctuary by Andy Hulme

Andy hopes to bring along a barn owl from the Suffolk Owl sanctuary based in Stonham Aspel. St Margaret's School Hall, Bolton Lane, Ipswich. Entrance £2.50. **Details from Dave Munday 01473 217310.**

Sunday 25th October 9am - 11am Portal Woodlands Conservation Group NATURE WATCH CLUB

(5 - 11 year olds). Meet at the Martlesham Heath Control Tower, booking essential, **please email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com**

Sunday 1st November 9am RSPB FIELD MEETING

River Stour for waders and wildfowl. Meet at Stutton Church TM162344. 3 hours, 4 miles. **Leader Tim Kenny 01394 809236**

Thursday 5th November 7.30pm Suffolk Ornithologists Group TALK

'Swifts: problems and opportunities' a talk by Dick Newell (Action for Swifts). The Wolsey Room, Holiday Inn, London Road, Ipswich, IP2 0UA. Admission £2 for all, non-members most welcome.

Thursday 12th November 7.30pm RSPB INDOOR MEETING

'Corncrakes, Short-eared Owls, Bitterns and much more' by Bill Coster, photographer and magazine contributor. Sponsored by Alder Carr Farm, Needham Market. Sidegate Primary School, Ipswich. Members £2 non-members £3. **Details from Chris Courtney 01473 423213.**

Sunday 15th November 10am to 3pm BELSTEAD BROOK PARK MEGABASH

Join Greenways, Friends of Belstead Brook Park and Ipswich Wildlife Group for a day of woodland management - coppicing, scrub clearing and dead hedging. Bonfire and baked potatoes. Meeting at Bobbits Lane car park. **Details from Greenways 01473 433995, (07736 826076 on the day).**

Tuesday 17th November 10am RSPB MIDWEEK WALK

Bourne Bridge area and park. Meet at Bourne Park car park (Bourne Bridge entrance) TM161419 **Leader Kathy Reynolds 01473 714839**

Wednesday 18th November 7.30pm SWT TALK Fen Raft Spiders on the Move by Dr Helen Smith

Dr Helen Smith has been leading a captive breeding and reintroduction programme in Suffolk. St Margaret's School Hall, Bolton Lane, Ipswich. Entrance £2.50. **Details from Dave Munday 01473 217310.**

Friday 20th November 10am Ipswich Wildlife Group WILDLIFE HOMES KIT-MAKING

Come and join in making kits for the bug, bird and hedgehog boxes that are finished off by visitors at wildlife events. All materials provided, hardly any skill required. Meet at the Greenways Barn, Thorington Hall Farm off Bobbits Lane. **More details from Ray Sidaway 01473 259104.**

Saturday 21st November 9am – 11am Portal Woodlands Conservation Group NATURE EXPLORERS

(11 - 18 year olds). Meet at the Education Area, booking essential, **please email pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com**

Saturday 21st November 10am - 12 noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group WORK MORNING

Meet at the Education Area. All welcome. **For details contact 01473 612632 email pwcg@martlesham.org.uk**

Thursday 26th November 7.30pm Suffolk Ornithologists Group TALK

'RSPB Conservation Updates: wet grassland breeding waders and stone curlews' a talk by Jen Smart, Tim Cowan and Rob Hawkes (RSPB). The Wolsey Room, Holiday Inn, London Road, Ipswich, IP2 0UA. Admission £2 for all, non-members most welcome.

Saturday 5th December 10am RSPB FIELD MEETING

Orford, River Alde and Sudbourne Marshes for winter birds. Meet at Orford Quay TM425496 4 hours, 6 miles. **Leader Stephen Marginson. 01473 258791**

Wednesday 9th December 7.30pm SWT TALK Otters in Suffolk by Richard Woolnough

Otters are Richard's passion and he has a wealth of first-hand experience to impart. At this meeting mince pies and mulled wine will replace the usual tea and biscuits. St Margaret's School Hall, Bolton Lane, Ipswich. Entrance £2.50. **Details from Dave Munday 01473 217310.**

Thursday 10th December 7.30pm RSPB INDOOR MEETING

Christmas Social Evening, bring and share finger buffet plus 'Hungary for Birds' by Tim Kenny. Sponsored by Ipswich Microwave Centre. Sidegate Primary School, Ipswich. Members £2 non-members £3. **Details from Chris Courtney 01473 423213.**

Tuesday 15th December 10am RSPB MIDWEEK WALK

Christchurch Park, meet at Soane Street entrance. **Leader Kathy Reynolds 01473 714839**

Sunday 20th December 10am - 12 noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group WORK MORNING

Meet at the Education Area. All welcome. **For details contact 01473 612632 email pwcg@martlesham.org.uk**

Wednesday 20th January 2016 7.30pm SWT TALK Homes for Wildlife in Ipswich by James Baker

James is manager of the Greenways Countryside Project. Their latest project is to encourage wildlife into our built-up areas by getting us all to provide something in our gardens so that wildlife corridors can exist in our towns. Come along and see what you can do to improve our urban space and your own garden for wildlife. St Margaret's School Hall, Bolton Lane, Ipswich. Entrance £2.50. **Details from Dave Munday 01473 217310.**



RSPB midweek walk Christchurch Park - 15th December



Suffolk community barn owl project - SOG meeting 23rd September

Regular Events

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 10.30am - 1pm SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Join Ipswich Wildlife Group and Friends of Belstead Brook Park for a morning of work in the wood. Meet at the stepped entrance to the wood in Bobbits Lane. **Details from Gerry Donlon 01473 726082**

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 10.00am to about 4.00pm. **Contact greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk or call 01473 433995.**

WEDNESDAYS 10am Friends of Holywells Park HOLYWELLS PARK WORK PARTY

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

SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH Friends of The Dales WORK PARTY

Contact Jessica Allen for the details jallen7@hotmail.co.uk.

THURSDAYS 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.

SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 8pm 'Green Drinks' Dove Inn, Ipswich DRINKS AND CHAT

Join us at the Dove Inn for a drink, a chat and a bit of networking with other environmentally-minded people. Look out for the 'Green Drinks' sign on the table. All welcome. **Details from Gerry Donlon on 01473 726082.**

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 SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group RIVER WORK PARTY

A joint work party with the River Action Group along Alderman Canal and the River Gipping, maintaining footpaths and making these splendid waterways areas to be proud of. Meet at Bibb Way alongside Alderman Road recreation ground. **More information from Ray Sidaway 01473 259104.**

FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH Butterfly Conservation WORK PARTY

Meet at Purdis Heath to help restore the heath for the benefit of butterflies. Use the lay-by in Bucklesham Road.

More information from Helen Saunders helens919@gmail.com

SECOND SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH 10am - 1pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park CONSERVATION WORK PARTY

Come and join us for a morning working in the fresh air. **For further details visit our website: www.greenlivingcentre.org.uk/fobbp or email fobbp@greenlivingcentre.org.uk**

MOST SATURDAYS 10.30am - 1pm IWG Northgate Allotments WOODCRAFT & WILDLIFE

Get involved in coppicing and woodland skills at the Wildlife area. **Call Geoff Sinclair to confirm dates 01473 327720**



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BUTTERFLIES OF MEXICO 10-24 MAR 2016
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