

Stop Press!

We have just been informed that we have been awarded £1,000,000 from HLF for the Meres and Mosses. More news on this to follow.

SHROPSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

193 Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6AH
01743 284296
dianem@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

Protecting wildlife where you live

Dates for your diary

Saturday 5th June—free bee ID course at Shropshire Wildlife Trust HQ 10am to 3pm. Bookings please contact us on 01743 284280

Wednesday 14th July Volunteer summer barbecue 6pm to 9pm, music and food! Bring a friend

Saturday 17th July Shropshire Wildlife Trust open day—our chance to show people what we do and promote the work done by our volunteers. Helpers required. Please contact Diane or Kate if you can help out for an hour or two on the day.

Sunday 19th September Seven Wonders of the Oswestry Hills challenge walk. Contact David Harwick for details thehardwicks@btinternet.com

Ham sandwiches and perfect guided walks Jerry Hughes

On arrival at the stable block of the Llanymynech Heritage Area on a cold April morning, we huddled around a wood burning stove clutching hot mugs of coffee wondering just how we were going to cope with a Master class on Golden Guided Walks. Diane Monether introduced us to our course leader, Nigel McDonald of No nonsense Interpretation. His warm up activity involved us describing a random object for a blind folded partner to identify. Mine was a bit of a give away when I pressed the speech button on Buzz Lightyear!

Nigel moved on to the main business of the day which was to establish the priorities needed in preparing a successful guided walk. We learned that the key is to have a **theme** that clearly states the main message, a message that the audience will take away with them and remember. To achieve this,

good **organisation** (a Ham sandwich) is required to make the event relevant, purposeful and entertaining. 'Stops' need to be carefully planned with the ideas presented feeding into the themed message. To avoid overloading the group with information there should be a maximum of eight stops.

Finally, the occasion should be **entertaining** with the leader using a friendly and fun approach encouraging

interaction and enjoyment.

The second half of the day involved a guided walk exemplifying the morning theory session. Our route took us through the carefully restored buildings of the Victorian lime manufacturing industry and up the remains of the incline tramway to the quarry. A fascinating site further enhanced by much of it lying within the SWT Llanymynech Rocks reserve.

We went home enthused and fired up, ready to inspire others on the delights of our nature reserves and the hidden secrets to be found within.

We are in the early stages of developing a group of volunteers willing to lead or help out on guided walks for our members. If you want to find out about Ham sandwiches and how to keep people engaged, or you're just interested in finding out more, please contact me at the Trust.

Diane



All ears! Nigel demonstrates one way of keeping your audience engaged.

Summer 2010



SHROPSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Grapevine



Volunteer update

As I write this there is a steady downpour of much needed rain. After the dry spring the garden has finally flourished and this rain will really bring a flush of new growth including weeds! One of the highlights of the spring has been a blackbird nesting in the garden at the Trust within sight of our office window. It was lovely to secretly watch the female feeding and to see the 2 nestlings fledge successfully.

Seven wonders of the Oswestry hills

There is lots of planning going on for future events including corporate volunteering days over the summer and the Seven Wonders

Oswestry Hill walk which is our first major fund raising event of this kind. We're working in partnership with Hope House children's hospice on this fourteen mile challenge taking in all seven of the Trust's Oswestry reserves (There will be a shorter 7 mile option). We're looking for helpers on the day and of course walkers to take on the challenge; let me know if you would like to be involved. The event is on Sunday 19th September and we hope

to have in the region of 300 walkers.

Summer barbecue

Don't forget the volunteer summer barbecue with food and music is on Wednesday 14th July 6-9pm; hopefully the fire brigade won't put in a n appearance this year! There is also a Trust open day on Saturday 17th July to which you are all welcome.

Diane Monether



Nigel explaining the finer points of leading a good guided walk. See Jerry's article on the back page

A ray of sunshine!

Stacey came as a volunteer helping with admin in January this year after being unemployed for some time. It so happened that the Trust had just become involved in a scheme called Future Jobs which aims to get youngsters into work. Stacey fitted the bill

and started as Visitor Centre assistant in March helping out on front of house, in reception and in the garden. She has settled in extremely well and

enjoys the variety of work that the job brings including meeting people, dealing with customers and helping in the garden. Stacey is with us for six months.

"My confidence has increased and it's great to be contributing to something so worthwhile"
Stacey

Inside this issue:

Planning volunteers	2
More from the flower faeries	2
The hazards of fox—watching	3
Help with our website—volunteers needed	3
Compost envy	3
Dates for your diary	4
Ham sandwiches and perfect guided walks	4



Planning volunteers

In March we held an event aimed at volunteers interested in finding out more about the planning system. Twenty five people attended and presentations were given by John Box (Trustee and ecologist with Atkins) and Robin Mager (Planning and data systems Officer with the Trust) explaining how the planning system works, how the Wildlife Trust gets involved and what the developers should and can do. As well as changes to the planning system there have been changes with the local situation as we now have just two planning authorities in Shropshire.

During the ensuing discussion, it became clear that there was a strong interest in developing volunteer groups in key areas around the county. While most

of the interest focused on planning applications and the impact of development, there was still significant interest in planning policy and the Local Development Frameworks. The attendees had a broad range of skills and experience and included some ex-planners.

Outcomes

- Develop Telford as a pilot area for a planning group
- Key contacts established in a number of areas (Newport, Ludlow, Clun, etc)
- Key volunteers with particular interests or experience to help on specific planning issues (e.g. Minerals and Waste Plans)
- Establish a planning page on the Wildlife Trust website

(to give notice of key planning applications and consultations; access to planning documents and guidance; summary of the Trust's comments and position on major developments / consultations)

Volunteers will be kept informed of major planning issues and be able to feed in their concerns, comments and local information. If you were unable to attend this event but are interested in getting involved please contact Robin.

Robin Mager is the Planning and Data Systems Officer for the Wildlife Trust. If you have any planning related queries or concerns please feel free to contact him on 01743 284289 robinm@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

Moving on – in the right direction!

Tues May 4th, Earl's Hill, and the first foray out into the field in 2010 for the plant monitoring volunteers. The moment of truth - would our efforts in the office during the cold winter months actually help our efforts in the woodland and grassland reserves and produce better working documents?

Woodland communities

For 2009 the grassland assessment sheets had been transferred from 'Word Documents' to 'Excel Spreadsheets' and now the woodland sheets are also in this format; 'Rodwell' has been consulted and positive indicator species for the various woodland sub-communities noted (2 years ago I didn't even know that woodlands

had communities, let alone sub-communities!); site specific axiophytes have been checked; last year's GPS readings are in place and the maps have **gridlines!**

Scrambling up and down vertical slopes

This final addition has been applied using GIS – a marvellous programme that, after a quick lesson from Fiona, enabled Gill and I (technical dinosaurs) to produce maps that will inform us whereabouts on the site we actually are, rather than relying on Fiona, the sun or guesswork!

Where on earth are we?

Did it all help? A definite 'Yes' – 'Where on earth are we?' is no longer up for debate. So

hopefully, this year we won't find ourselves scrambling up and down vertical slopes or monitoring woodland that doesn't even belong to the Trust – but don't count on it!

Helen Critchley and the flower faeries



Rhona showing one of the recording sheets

The hazards of fox watching

Early May here is a great time for checking up on local fox numbers and watching cubs at play. Also a time for embarrassing moments! Whether you're flat out in a ditch, huddled inside a bush, or perched in a tree, there's always a risk of being 'discovered' – often by a couple of hill walkers heading home at sunset.

White faces peering up into your tree, startled voices and yelps at the foot you've left dangling, can all mean a ruined fox watch.

Petrified ramblers

If you find you are spotted by petrified ramblers while in a broad oak (as I have been!) you won't have many options for maintaining secrecy, but may have to try:

a. hissing, while flapping your arms violently to indicate 'Go away' (you'll fall out of the tree)

b. whispering a soft 'Hi' (marks you as simple as you're obviously not 'low')

c. murmuring quietly through the leaves 'lovely evening' (even if you leave off 'for it', this will

sound as if you as trying to be down-to-earth and normal when it's clear you're neither)

Self respecting fox

Any mention of 'foxes' –hissed, whispered or mouthed - is a no - no (this will only confirm suspicions about you)

To be honest, whichever method you choose, you'll have had it. By now, any self-respecting fox will have sussed that Something's Up – you, in a tree, in this case – so you might as well swing down the trunk and go home!

Stee Hancock Volunteer warden at Comley Quarry

Volunteers needed

As you may know, the Trust recently relaunched its website (www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk) and we are now hoping to evaluate what we have done and how best to improve it. To do this we need to find out what you think – because, after all, the website was designed with you in mind.

As such, I was hoping some of you would volunteer to form a focus group to find out what

you think of the website. I know this may not be as enticing a prospect as a day out on one of our reserves, but the website is an increasingly vital aspect of our operation and we will not be able to get it right without you. As a 'thank you' we'll have a trip out onto one of the reserves at the end of the year.

This focus group would meet only every few months over the course of this year. We would,

of course, provide refreshments. I would be very grateful if any of you could give up the time to help us on this.

Please contact me if you would like to take part.

danb@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

Telephone: 07972 595 528

Dan Box

Life Stories project officer

Compost envy

When I joined the Master Composters last September I didn't think that I would ever enthuse as much about the subject as the tutor did at the time. The ideal compost: crumbly and sweet-smelling - I hadn't ever had that result at home; due mainly to an excess of grass clippings!

In the Trust's garden, it was time to take stock of our compost and make use of it. Our garden volunteers have been

much more diligent than I have been at home and have been constantly turning our 3 heaps. The results: every bit the text book description - fantastic! Through sheer hard work, John religiously went through each heap with the help of Robert, Graham and Richard and filled bags full of wonderful stuff, even going as far as to sieve a portion specifi-



John proudly showing off his compost!

Caroline Pond