



## FRIENDS OF CALDY NATURE PARK

### NEWSLETTER No 157

Summer 2021

[www.caldyvalley.org.uk](http://www.caldyvalley.org.uk)

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#### From Steph Hefferan CWaC Greenspace Officer Its good to be back!

Not that we ever actually went away, but its great to have regular work parties getting out and about and enjoying being together as a group again. At this time of year most of the jobs are routine and focused on general cutting back of vegetation, brambles and overhanging trees; it's a big job so if you feel you would like to come along and help out, the volunteers meet in the car park on the first Weds of the month at 9.30... it's a great way to get fit, meet people and help look after this incredible community asset at the same time.

Got other skills? Volunteering can come in many forms, so if Wednesday work is not for you, don't worry. Volunteers can work on a range of projects such as repairing noticeboards or replacing the loose tiles on the sculpture in the car park meadow (thanks Nick and Roy), organising events... and so on. Just contact the Friends groups or myself at CW&C if you want to get involved!

Wishing you all the best and maybe, see you soon!

**Steph**

**If you have any queries or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch via the Council's number  
0300 1238123  
or email: [enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)**



*An aerial photo of the pond June 2021 @ Dave Wilmore (Elevated Image UK).*

### The Sounds and Silence of the Birds in the Park

The soundscape of the Nature Park has given delight again this year even though, against the background of that first lockdown, spring 2020 still stands out in the memory for the richness of the birdsong on those beautiful warm sunny mornings. The contrast with this, or indeed any, late August could scarcely be more stark – the occasional chirp and squeak, a few calls from the larger birds, a magpie or crow or a wood pigeon; if you hear so much as a snatch of song, it's almost certain to be a robin, but mostly there's silence.



*Ducklings in a row @ Martine Pickering taken on 16th June*

What then has happened to the 6 or more male chiffchaffs proclaiming territory as early as 18th March to the later arriving females? Or the many blackcaps gloriously singing throughout the Park, earning them the title of "northern nightingale"; the song thrush that was singing in January, the blackbird and robin that were singing at 3.20am in March?

The wrens were everywhere with their astonishingly loud song for such a small bird. The blue, great and coal tits joined the chorus and long-tailed tits could be heard as they foraged in their flocks. The subdued note of the bullfinch softly announced the presence of this striking bird, contrasting with the twittering of the more visible goldfinches and greenfinches that have given pleasure in many neighbouring gardens. The great spotted woodpecker was drumming and the nuthatch calling in the tall trees. Not to mention dunnocks, starlings, jackdaws, chaffinches, house sparrows and the often overlooked but numerous tiny goldcrests. Calls from high in the sky at times alert you to a circling buzzard, a raven or perhaps the peregrines from the Shot Tower, while the disappearance of a few of the young small birds is the work of the sparrow hawk that may have been nesting near the car park.

To complete my record for the year there were again the wonderful pink-footed geese flying over through the winter months, the black-headed gulls that occasionally tried to take over the pond from the mallards and moorhens, the heron that I have at last seen stir itself to catch some fish, a grey wagtail down from the hills adopting the stream as its home for a time towards the end of winter, a wintering redwing from Scandinavia that almost crossed paths with summer arrivals from the Mediterranean and beyond. I didn't (but others did) see the kingfisher this year, though I did see the rarely noticed tree creeper. I only fleetingly heard a willow warbler, and wasn't as aware as other years of the reeds being home to reed warblers. The jay will undoubtedly put in an autumn appearance as it tracks oak trees

down for the acorns, and a recent surprise has been the cormorant that has discovered the pond, on occasion treating passers-by to its iconic pose with wings stretched out to dry. Swifts have already gone to head for warmer climes, but house martins and swallows still occasionally pass overhead.

So where are all the songsters? I'm pretty sure many of them are still here. Young chiffchaffs and blackcaps have been taught how to feed by the parent birds who no longer have territory to defend and just utter occasional call notes to keep in touch – they certainly haven't all migrated yet, and maybe some never will. A coal tit has just called as I'm getting my thoughts down, reminding me that generally the various tits have been coming round silently in mixed flocks presumably finding confidence in numbers. Birds may move around more than we think. There are probably blackbirds from across the North Sea joining our resident birds in winter which may account for some of the annoyance they demonstrate with each other! There seemed to be more chaffinches around in the late winter than I've been aware of through the spring and summer. So maybe now, some of the birds are off on their holidays in the nearby countryside. Or it could be just that the older birds are keeping their heads down, moulting and recovering from the demanding tasks of rearing the next generation. If you have any questions about the birds and their songs in the Nature Park you're welcome to get in touch.

**Ken Walker**  
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Editors note : The kingfisher was spotted on 24/8 by Dave Coathup near Malcolm's scrape.



Ringlet @ Charles Neame

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## Butterflies in Caldý

A disappointing year for butterflies but not really surprising given the cold, late spring followed by a rather wet period. Amazing really that any caterpillars or pupae survive at all when such odds are stacked against them! Charles caught this lovely ringlet in early July. There were a good number of small tortoiseshells and peacocks out in the sunshine in mid-August so the 3rd brood of the year might be the best!

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## EVENT FOR 2021

Thursday 14th October 10.30 – 13.30  
Fungi Walk with Fungal Punk Dave.

The event was very popular last time and numbers are limited so please book early via  
[admin@caldyvalley.org.uk](mailto:admin@caldyvalley.org.uk)

It is subject to there being no new covid restrictions by then.



Fairies in the Valley @David Ferguson

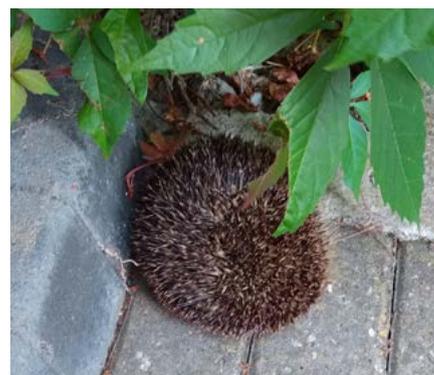


Nursery Web Spider with babies in crèche web @ Jonathon Barritt

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## More on Hedgehogs

Further to my comments in the spring newsletter no 156 one small hedgehog has continued to be a regular visitor in my back garden. I believe it is a female as evidenced by the fact that on 3rd August two males, larger animals, were courting her outside our back door. She seemed to be rebuffing them both but I will be keeping a watchful eye out for any sign of hoglets. It is rather late in the year for hedgehog litters but not unknown and, fortunately, there are a number of local hedgehog rescue centres that will take hedgehogs of any age that are not heavy enough and so unlikely to survive hibernation to over winter & then release them back into their original home come spring. The photo shows a hedgehog sleeping on my front doorstep during the late afternoon. Unusual, but it was during a very dry spell when they were out early and it appears to be quite healthy.



One of my recent prickly visitors

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## Subscriptions

It is that time again (Sept) a new subs year! For those of you who paid your £5.00 by bank transfer last year it would be really helpful administratively, if you could pay the same way again this year. If you haven't got the code I emailed to you please contact me & I will send it again. We are using the same codes each year (a unique number followed by surname) to ensure everyone can be correctly identified. Alternatively, please deliver or send your subs, by cash or cheque (payable to the "Friends of Caldý Nature Park") to me : Jacky Creswick at 3, Butterbur Close, Huntington CH3 6BJ remembering to add your name, email & address. If you would like to receive your newsletters by e-mail or send articles, photos, poems etc for future use please contact me at [tika3@btinternet.com](mailto:tika3@btinternet.com).

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