



FRIENDS OF CALDY NATURE PARK

NEWSLETTER No 154

Autumn 2020

www.caldyvalley.org.uk

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From Steph Hefferan CWaC Greenspace Officer Living on an island

It may be a dream to live on a beautiful island away from the world and its troubles but that dream can quickly become a nightmare if we don't have all the resources we need; food, water, shelter making it impossible to survive.

So it is with nature, all species need access to these essentials to ensure their survival, including the freedom to move about, to seek new mates and places to live – without these elements, the local populations of many species will eventually dwindle and die; these could be insects, flowers, hedgehogs – everything!

Across the country, greenspaces are increasingly becoming “islands” surrounded by extensive housing estates or built up areas and so this “island” tends to create significant threats to our wildlife.

Therefore the importance of retaining greenspaces and ensuring that they link up using green thoroughfares is crucial to the survival of our threatened wildlife. Cherish your greenspace, enjoy it and as you are out and about, consider the hedges, long grasses, verges; these are nature's motorways and key to its survival.

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

The seasons move on – Ken Walker



Bindweed ©Ken Walker

After the vibrancy of this year's spring in Caldly Valley came the more gradual but still constant changes of summer. New plants would unexpectedly come into bloom where others had been. Indeed some are still with us, like the amazing trumpets of the bindweed in the photo above - or are they fairy lanterns when they've strung themselves along host plants for support? Not welcome in the garden but great flowers nonetheless.

Once again ducklings and young moorhens have been successfully reared. It was fascinating to see the first brood of moorhens take up a role alongside the parents looking after younger siblings.



Duck family ©Ken Walker

The kingfisher darted past now and again and a grey wagtail with its striking contrasting yellow has recently put in an appearance, down from the hills at this time of year. Last year it stayed around through November. You may already have heard the geese flying over, down from the Arctic summer, now commuting from their nights on the Dee Estuary to feeding grounds courtesy of Cheshire farmers!



Loosestrife ©Ken Walker

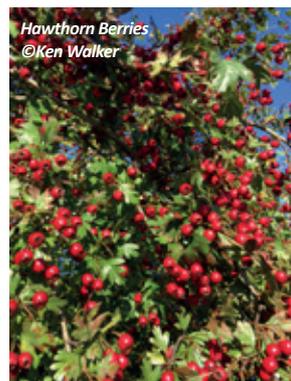
There was the beautiful purple loosestrife at the pond's edge, and there were other nectar sources to attract some of the showier butterflies like the peacock in the photo. Its appearance is of course a warning and it is indeed no shrinking violet when it comes to asserting

territorial rights over competitors. A small group of us take turns at a weekly survey of the butterflies in Caldly Valley for the Butterfly Conservation charity. We contribute to their national database which importantly draws attention to the



Peacock ©Ken Walker

decades long decline of most butterfly species and helps safeguard the very specific habitats that each requires.



Hawthorn Berries ©Ken Walker

With the clocks recently changed there's a lot of food on the trees and in the hedgerows for the jays, the wood pigeons, the blackbirds, the squirrels and all the rest. And there are some sloes I've got my eye on!

Ken Walker

Barry Lilley, hedgehog lover says...

We have had 3 hogs this year. We feed them & have a hog house for them to sleep & nest in. The youngest/smallest has been called Winnie. As the other 2 were bigger than Winnie we thought perhaps they were Winnie's parents?

My wife Dulcie likes giving them names. Winnie has been weighed (in the photo) to ensure she is a good weight before hibernation. They have all been eating well so hopefully we will see them all again in the spring! There is an app launched jointly by PTES an endangered species group & the British Hedgehog Preservation Society.



Winnie the Hedgehog ©Barry Lilley

It's called Hedgehog Street. It gives information and support about how to help and encourage hedgehogs.

You can download it free in the App Store. IOS or Google or go to www.hedgehogstreet.org

A message from Norman Sadler group Leader of Chester RSPB

I went for a walk through the valley in early Oct and saw a Grey Wagtail in the vicinity of the bridge over the brook, nearest Celandine Close entrance. Grey Wagtails are birds of moorlands and streams normally, but at this time of year are on migration. They are on the conservation red-list.



Stock image

Apart from that, I had good views of the usual suspects including treecreeper. You have oh-so-many squirrels!

and Ken Walker comments :

Good to hear about the grey wagtail. I saw one regularly last autumn in the blue bridge area throughout November. I haven't seen a treecreeper this year but plenty of nuthatch calling especially earlier on, and then a family of at least 4 young in late May. Treecreepers passed through the garden last year. Great to see the geese have been flying over again, small numbers up to 55 I've seen so far - I first noticed them pretty well on the same day as last year - 7th October.

For your information :

You will have noticed, (by the time you read this) & now the bird nesting season is over, that the willow branch that fell into the brook by the blue bridge earlier this year, has been removed & this year's Green Flag erected. Over the coming weeks some areas of the paths will be 'topped up'.

You might also meet, when walking through the Nature Park, a young lad litter picking as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. He hopes to start in November & continue for the next 12 months. He has been risk assessed & is able to work alone so hopefully he will keep the plastic & other litter down!

Two different ways of looking at nature

The early walk starts, at present, with a view of Mars out of the bedroom window. Then, as I leave the house, I have a view of Venus in the south-east sky before I turn north and view the Pole Star. A few turns later and I have a good view of Orion in the southern sky. As I near the pond I am able to appreciate Cassiopea (poor lass, sitting forever upside-down on her throne!) and The Plough (four North-American Indians chasing a bear into the sky). Amazing what a clear morning brings!

The lunch-time walk brings a different scene, this time mainly human! Ranging from eight-months old this week, to one or two who can probably give me a year or two (and I am 69!), the views are always interesting. (And I could add here that their personalities are interesting too!) Many of course also have their dogs with them, and they range in age and style too! From larger than mine (and I have a Flat-Coat Retriever) to somewhat smaller, from quiet (mostly) to rather louder (a few!), from friendly (the majority) to not-so-friendly (not many) – a wonderful variety.

I gather there are other items of nature to view in the Park as well, but I enjoy all of these!

Paul Towner

Subscriptions

We have now entered a new subs year, Sept 2020 – Sept 2021. Many thanks to those of you who have been quick off the mark and have already sent me your subs! Given the ongoing Covid 19 situation and the need to keep everyone as safe as possible the Cttee feel it best to avoid calling to collect subs when this newsletter is delivered. It would be really helpful therefore if you could either deliver your £5 sub (cash in an envelope) or pay by cheque please to me : Jacky Creswick at 3, Butterbur Close, Huntington CH3 6BJ remembering to add your name, e-mail and address in either case.

The Cttee have been working on establishing a more convenient method of paying. Due to the type of organisation we are, the only direct payment method is by bank transfer or standing order, to the Friends account. In order for us to do this we need to have a system that clearly enables us to identify where the money has come from. This means giving each member a reference that can be used when making payment so we can identify everyone who has paid. If any of you are brave enough and would like to help me test the system please email me and I will send you our bank account details and a 3 digit number, which together with your surname, should ensure that all Smiths can be identified, one from the other! Apologies in advance if I am a bit slow to respond, the good news will be that a large number of you have taken up the challenge!