



# Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Group

## Newsletter no.26 – July 2017

### What have we been doing?

Our **Annual General Meeting** on 1st April went well with all committee members being returned. The official proceedings were preceded by a very interesting guided tour, of the wonderful [RHS Gardens Harlow Carr](#), from Andrew Willocks. It was noted there were plenty of [voles](#), whilst being food for raptors was also a good sign of lack of rats.

Item 7 on the agenda was 'What next'. Amongst the suggestions was that greater communication with the public was necessary. We worked with Catherine Baxter on her [Community Sharing Day](#) on 8th July. Secondly we are aiming to raise awareness for the plight of hedgehogs this year. We have produced a leaflet for distribution at events, as well as giving to suppliers and users of fencing, to encourage access holes be cut into the bottom of fences allowing hedgehogs entry to many gardens without crossing roads.

### HDBAG Moth Morning

Tuesday 13th June was another successful annual moth morning thanks to Charles Fletcher and Jill Warwick who set up the traps and recorded the moths. Not a huge count but not too disappointing for early June. Thanks too, to Sandra Mason for hosting the event and providing coffee and biscuits.

Of the many recorded species were two [elephant hawk moths](#) which always impress.



Figure 1: Elephant Hawk Moth

### Upcoming Events

#### **Saturday 12 Aug - Bug Hunt, [Studfold, Lofthouse, HG3 5SG](#)**

We will be part of their [Bug Hunt day](#). This is an outdoor event so - weather permitting!

For further information, and prices, telephone 01423 755084 or [emailinfo@studfold.com](mailto:emailinfo@studfold.com).

**Sunday 20 Aug - [Allotment Day, Valley Gardens, Hgte Harrogate and District Allotment Federation](#) annual show in [Valley Gardens](#) from 11.00am – 4.00pm. We will have a stall and hope to see you there.**

- Show exhibits on display from 12 noon
- Presentation of Trophies at 3.45pm
- Sun Pavilion, Valley Gardens
- Raising funds for
- Open Country
- Gardeners' Question Hour 1.30pm – 2.30pm with Ray Orme

#### **Saturday 9 Sept - [Pinewoods Conservation Group Family Fun Day](#)**

Free admission from 12 noon, entrance at the Council Nurseries, Nursery Lane East, off Harlow Moor Road, Harrogate HG2 0FH.

**Contact:** [events@pinewoodsconservationgroup.org.uk](mailto:events@pinewoodsconservationgroup.org.uk) for more details.

Already confirmed attractions are: Mini digger driving, All Together Now Community Choir, Harrogate Police and ice-creams.

#### **Monday 6 November – [Tree Charter launch](#)**

[The Tree Charter](#) will be launched at Lincoln Castle on 6 November 2017, the [800th anniversary](#) of the historic [1217 Charter of the Forest](#) which established rights of access and use for the Royal Forests in England. [Lincoln Castle](#) is home to one of the last two remaining copies of this historic document, which will be joined by the new Charter for Trees, Woods and People

To find out more about the charter and add your name to this historic document go to [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

Please follow the links throughout the newsletter to various web pages, documents and items of interest



## Musings of a wildlife gardener (a personal view) Reasons to be cheerful



Unless you are determined to keep your head firmly in the sand, you have to be aware that we are living in increasingly worrying times. The threats to our biodiversity are by no means the least of these worries. But I have to keep telling myself that it is no good to me, or to the natural world around me, if I feel too anxious to get out of bed in the morning. I need something to inspire me and to give me hope.

So here, with a nod to Ian Dury, are my 'reasons to be cheerful' on this wet day in July:

1. There seem to be, finally, signs of a change of attitude in the annual attack on the wildlife habitat of our verges. One lane near me out here in Nidderdale has been left untouched this spring with the result that grasses, orchids and agrimony have been allowed to flourish, to the benefit of local insects. It looks lovely. Another lane unfortunately fell victim to the big cutting machine,

but interestingly the orchids in that verge were given a reprieve as they were carefully cut around! If orchids can be valued this year, there is hope that other plants may be appreciated and allowed to thrive in the future - who knows, even grasses...? Attitudes can change.

2. The message about the problems connected to [neonicotinoids](#) seems to be having some impact. I recently read that B&Q has announced that it will stop selling plants grown using neonicotinoid pesticides which have proven harmful to bees and other insects. This will take effect from February 2018. Let's hope other plant retailers follow suit.

Perhaps we should all ask local garden centres and nurseries if they are going to do so? Apparently, [B&Q supported a report 'The Nature of Gardens'](#) which looks at how gardens can be good for nature. For the report, a YouGov survey of over 2,000 people found that 64% said they were concerned about wildlife in Britain.

3. I recently attended a Zero Carbon Harrogate low carbon supper, lovingly cooked by talented group members. Dr James McKay of Leeds University came as an after-dinner speaker to talk about his graphic novel, ['A Dream of a Low Carbon Future'](#). This was published last year and is the result of a project involving hundreds of school children, artists, writers, members of the public, PhD students and academics who were asked to contribute pictures and stories of their visions of the future. The resulting depiction of life in 2150 centres on the Yorkshire area, in particular Leeds and Harrogate and Knaresborough (King James and St John's C of E Schools were very involved in the project). Following devastating climate impacts of the 21st century it is a very changed world, with illustrations of flamingos flying over the Bay of York, for example. Although you will be relieved to



know that the Knaresborough Bed Race still survives.

From the point of view of those of us concerned about declining biodiversity, and the lack of proper attention given to this in world of 2017, I am pleased to see that in the world of 2150, this has all changed.

People live in [LILACS](#) (Low Impact Living Affordable Community) which are managed 'to promote maximum biodiversity'. 'Houses are designed to support hundreds of species of animals and plants within and around the building fabric', while 'whole armies of people are working to stabilise bee populations and re-introduce them to areas where they went extinct'. The book starts with a quote from Aldo Leopold: 'The oldest task in human history - to live on a piece of land without spoiling it'. It is a work of bold imagination and it is a work of hope. I have thoroughly enjoyed dipping into it to be challenged, inspired and sometimes amused by the ideas.

You can read more about the project on [James McKay's blog](#).

The graphic novel itself can be downloaded as a [pdf](#).

Alternatively, James left some copies with [Zero Carbon Harrogate](#), when he came to speak, to give to those who join the group.

**Janice Scott**

### Helping Hedgehogs

We have started to distribute our leaflet to raise awareness of the problems facing hedgehogs and how we can help. On one side is the amusing but informative advice from the [British Hedgehog Preservation Society](#).

If you would like to help distribute these leaflets please contact Pamela on [biodiversityaction@gmail.com](mailto:biodiversityaction@gmail.com)



And on the other is HDBAG's message.

As well as providing access to roam here are some other things to do to help hedgehogs.

- Before using a strimmer make sure the area to cut is clear.
- For a couple of days after applying wood preservative at ground level protect your work from hedgehogs who like to lick it!
- Stop or reduce the amount of pesticides and poisons used.
- Move piles of rubbish to a new site before burning them.
- Ensure netting is kept at a safe height.
- Check compost heaps before digging the fork in.
- Cover drains or deep holes.
- Ensure there is an easy route out of ponds and pools.

A hedgehog lying in the sun, or wobbling as it walks, or with flies round it needs help. Use gardening glove to collect it up, bring it indoors and put in a high sided cardboard box with an old towel or fleece for it to hide under.

Call 01584 890801 for further advice and numbers of local contacts.

## Yorwaste and Recycling

A very interesting talk was recently given by [Yorwaste](#) Manager Mathew Wilkinson to the [Harrogate Zero Carbon Group](#).

They are owned by North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council and manage over half a million tonnes of waste a year, carry out over 450,000 collections and employ 300 staff.

Mathew assured us that they are committed to environmental sustainability and providing safe waste management.

About 70% is burnt at Allerton, without hazardous fumes, and this provides enough electricity to power 40,000 homes. The residue ash going for use on roads and paths.

Over 60% of waste is recycled, the bulk going to China. Over 80% of [Yorwaste's](#) recycled paper heads their way, however the Chinese will now only accept good quality recycled goods with a contamination rate of just 1%.

This means that goods going into the recycling boxes need to be clean to be of any use, for example a pizza box that has any food in it even just tomato sauce will be rejected so it may as well just go into the black bin!

It is not possible to recycle black plastic at all or Pringle tubes so they also should be destined for the black bin. It appears that requests to manufactures to reduce their use of black plastic packaging falls on deaf ears as apparently consumers think black plastic means better quality! As most of the waste is incinerated it makes little sense to use expensive biodegradable bags

[Yorwaste](#) are the biggest composters in the UK, Yorganic compost is 100% recycled, locally sourced and completely peat free. It can be bought at either the [Stonefall or Penny Pot Lane Recycling Centres](#). They will supply larger loads at cost price for schools etc.

[Yorventure](#) have a grant scheme for local community environmental projects which can be accessed via their website.

**Bernadette Reid**

## A message from a local professional dog walker...

Being a professional dog walker in Harrogate for around 9 years it can be the best career in the world from getting to spend your days with my favourite species, dogs, to walking in the fresh air, watching nature change through every season.

Experiencing woodpeckers, kingfishers, red kites and even otters on a daily basis. It is sheer bliss (even when it's raining and blowing a gale). This is far from an easy career like some seem to think it is but I wouldn't change it for the world. But it can also come with its pit falls.

Being hated by some members of the public and being tarred with the brush that "you can't possibly pick up all that poo from 6 dogs" " you can't possibly control that number of dogs"

Which I assure we can, and do. I don't vouch for all "professional walkers" in that comment, and a lot of the new walking companies starting up don't share the same ethic but I know from running [Bark in the Park](#) we do.

Well in these 9 years I, and some other walkers, have noticed that the dog mess problem is on the rise so we decided as a group of 6 long standing walkers we would try tackle this problem head on.

So, we started our pick an area and pick that poo campaign.

So far, we've done Hookstone Woods collecting over 800 dog poos. And we've just done Nidd Gorge collecting over 250.

We hope that by doing this we will make these spaces better for all to enjoy, not just owners of dogs, but also try make the public realise that we, as professional dog walkers, do care about the spaces that we are using to have fun with our groups of dogs.

And it is a way to give back to the community for allowing us to use these spaces to run our businesses. We are so grateful and never take this privilege for granted.

Comments and contributions welcome

Please contact Pamela Millen:-

✉ [biodiversityaction@gmail.com](mailto:biodiversityaction@gmail.com)

☎ 01423 523233



We are also hoping to educate certain members of the public about the need to pick up that poo. From the spread of diseases to other dogs and even children to that horrible moment you happen to step in a stray poo.

And after contacting a few local schools we will hopefully have some lovely posters to put up on the walks drawn by the children to highlight the need to bag it and bin it.

Currently **there's no such thing as the dog poo fairy!** Even though some dog owners seem to think there is.



Figure 2: Rowen and a clan...



Figure 3: Great community effort - thanks to all involved!

Rowen Hardcastle

#### Membership

If you would like to support the Group and haven't yet paid your 2017 membership fee, please contact Bernadette:-

✉ [biodiversityaction@gmail.com](mailto:biodiversityaction@gmail.com)

or visit our website for payment details:

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

Fees remain at £10 single or £15 for a family