

Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Group

Newsletter no.7 - February 2012

Annual General Meeting Saturday 11th February 2012 in the Bramall Learning Centre at RHS Harlow Carr

You are invited to join a guided walk of the Harlow Carr Gardens at 10am followed by the AGM, at 11am, where Terry Knowles, our guest speaker, will be talking about the 'Rotary' Tree Planting Scheme.

Meet at the entrance to the gardens. Please let us know when you will be arriving so we can meet you.

The business of the AGM will be:

- To receive the Chairman's report
- To approve the annual financial accounts
- To appoint members to the Committee for the forthcoming year

If you would like to stand for the committee or nominate another member (with their agreement), please let us know as soon as possible so that we can prepare for a formal election process should there be more candidates than vacancies.

Many existing committee members are prepared to stand for re-election however, sadly, our Secretary is not able to stand for re-election due to family commitments and we need to fill this position. Please consider possible options for this and any other positions.

Should you have any issues you would like raised at the meeting please submit these in writing or by email.

All members are invited to attend the AGM and vote on any of the issues. We hope to welcome as many of you as possible, and share our plans for 2012 as well as report back on the activities of the past year.



Comments and contributions welcome

Please contact Pamela Millen:

✉ biodiversityaction@gmail.com

☎ 01423 523233



Harrogate Ladies' College Wins Gold Award

HLC proved to be a worthy winner of a Gold Award, and were very proud to become the first recipient in the Senior School category, as testified by the following extracts from their press release.

The young gardening enthusiasts were presented with the coveted accolade by Sara Swift from HDBAG. The impressive commemorative plaque now takes pride of place in the award-winning wildlife garden.

The girls impressed the Biodiversity panel with their innovative ideas and designs. HLC's green creation provides different habitats for a selection of creatures,



as well as an organic fruit and vegetable patch there is an invertebrate safe haven, dubbed the 'bug hotel,' which houses an array of creepy crawlies.



the outdoor classroom



fruit & vegetable garden

Amy Chestnutt, HLC Biology Teacher says: 'We were absolutely delighted with how the presentation went. Sara praised the girls on their excellent work, and explained how they had met all the criteria necessary to create such a fantastic wildlife friendly garden.' One girl commented: "Our garden is so beautiful; everywhere you look there is something different and magical to see."

Congratulations to the young gardeners at Harrogate Ladies' College for their outstanding efforts to make their garden wildlife friendly.



2012

How lucky we were to have changed the New Year's Day walk to the 2nd January, otherwise we would have been soaked before we started instead of enjoying the pleasant, dry morning.

We all enjoyed getting out in the fresh air to do some walking and talking looking forward to the events planned for 2012.

~ ~ ~

Big Garden Bird Watch

We were lucky again on Sunday 29th January as the frost meant that setting out our stand and noting down the birds seen, was mud free. Thank you to all the members who showed up and talked to passersby, encouraging them to report back about any birds seen and letting them know what HDBAG is all about.

One young lad came back with his family and showed us the photo he had taken of a Tree Creeper. We were all very proud of his achievement.



This is what he saw:

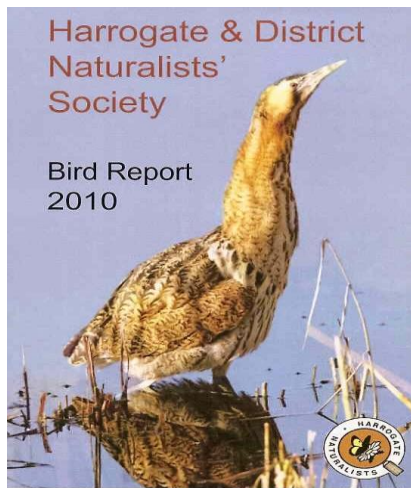
A short-toed tree creeper as illustrated on the RSPB website

www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide

The following were recorded on the day and reported to the RSPB.

Blackbird	1	Blue Tit	4	Robin	3
Song Thrush	1	Coal Tit	1	Nuthatch	2
Magpie	6	Great Tit	2	Tree Creeper	2
Crow	5	Long-Tail Tit	3	Dunnock	1

~ ~ ~



To obtain a copy contact Harrogate & District Naturalists' Society or buy one via HDBAG

£5 at meetings or £6 if mailed

www.knaresborough.co.uk/hdns

For a detailed account of what birds have been sighted in the Harrogate District you can't beat the latest bird report from the Harrogate 'Nats'. As well as accurate local information, there are some fantastic pictures and line drawings.

Trees

Terry Knowles, coordinator of the Harrogate Rotary Carbon Emission Offset Scheme, will be our guest speaker at the HDBAG Annual General Meeting on 11th February 2012.

Donations made to offset carbon emissions are used to fund the purchase of young trees or 'whips' and the supporting stakes and tubes. Planting is done by volunteers. Amongst the volunteers at the larger sites have been platoons of the young recruits from the Army Foundation College.

During 2011, members of HDBAG volunteered to help plant these 'whips' and became part of this grand plan. The numbers of trees planted are already adding up; 1,850 in 2009, 2,000 in 2010 and 3,000 in 2011.

February and March are ideal months for planting trees whilst they are still dormant and can be lifted from the nurseries and bare root planted before the sap begins to rise.

Volunteers are need for the following dates:

February 26th at Lake Farm, Eavestone

March 4th at Bark Cabin Wood near Guise Cliff

March 11th at Oak Bank Farm, Pannal

March 18th at Hollins Hill, near Eagle Hall, Beverley

Contact Terry on 01423 525014 or email at teruna2@aol.com to offer your services.

~ ~ ~

On 6th March the Tree Wardens are completing the second phase of planting following a Tree Council Award. They will be at Willie's Wood, Birchfield. To help here contact Ann Stark at annstark@btinternet.com

~ ~ ~

Why the need to plant trees when it appears that there are plenty of them? Here are a few statistics. Forest or woodland cover of EU land runs at 37% whilst here in the UK it is only 10-12%. For Yorkshire and Humberside it is 5.8% and in Nidderdale 7.2%. So to increase our percentages and provide more and hopefully connected areas of woodland to support our native wildlife, and to increase our woefully low level of self sustainability in wood and wood products, we must plant now.



If older trees are more to your liking, log on to the Woodland Trust website at www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk to see how you can help record and save the beautiful veteran and ancient trees in our countryside

Musings of a Wildlife Gardener (a personal view)

The joys of moss and lichen

"There is another kind of garden, an open-ended garden, which nature flows in and through and control is exercised only intermittently."
Germaine Greer

Four years ago when our garden was largely in its infancy, looking out of the window in February was a rather bleak, brown prospect. We were in the midst of the late winter tidy, but as we cut back for the spring all we had to look at was bare branches and bare earth. We would ponder what to plant that would give us winter interest and colour.

Now we seem to have cracked it. We have ferns such as hart's tongue, ground hugging cotoneaster and euonymus and delightful perennials such as phlomis russeliana that keep basal leaves throughout the winter.

We also have lichens and moss making our stone walls into an abstract work of art and creeping across stone and bare earth around our pond.

I've been intrigued by interviews with David Hockney about his new Royal Academy exhibition. He seems to be exhorting us to look at the fine details of what is around us in nature, to observe and appreciate the colours and seasonal change of even the smallest plant. Is it by paying attention to these small details that we start to understand the bigger picture?

I expect most gardeners overlook mosses and lichens - or even spend hours trying to eradicate them. My plea to them is to pause and question why. Why do we approve of the miniature world of alpines and carefully plant up sinks and troughs so that we can get a really close look, better to admire them? Mosses and lichens are even more miniature beauties that change through the seasons, and deserve that we pause in our busy lives to admire their different forms and colours and seasonal progression.

😊 Send us your thoughts and ideas 😊

✉ biodiversityaction@gmail.com

We all admire "a grand view", but maybe it's time to turn our attention away from that and tune in to the fine detail of which it's composed. So take a break from the more obvious delights of your garden and before the leaves come on the trees and perennials spring up, try going out to search for any mosses and lichens in your patch and learn to appreciate them for the beauty they have.

Janice Scott



Fascinated by the lichen on my fruit trees, which I have photographed, I recently purchased some information sheets and as Janice notes, now is the time to go out and study them.

What is lichen?

From: Guide to common urban lichens1 (on trees and wood).
F.Dobson. Field Studies Council Pubs.

Lichens are not like the plants that grow in gardens as they are a combination of two simple organisms, a fungus and one or more algae growing together as partners to their mutual advantage. The fungus forms most of the body of a lichen (called the thallus), providing a layer around the algae, protecting it from extremes of temperature and drought.

This is a good time to look at urban lichens as levels of sulphur dioxide, air pollution and acid rain have been falling rapidly during the last few years. As pollution drops the pollution tolerant lichen is being replaced by an increasing number of species. Initially crusty (crustose) species, followed by leafy (foliose) and finally bushy (fruticose) type. Pollution from nitrogen compounds from traffic, bird and animal dropping and artificial fertilizer are now becoming more detrimental to lichens than the effect of sulphur dioxide.

Pamela Millen



Dates for your Diary

February Wildlife Homes

Saturday
11 February
11.00-12.30
Annual General Meeting
at Bramall Learning Centre
RHS Harlow Carr
👉 Join a guided walk at 10am👈

Wednesday
15 February
14.00-16.00
Nest Box Building
at the Harrogate Library
Let the children make their own bird box
which you can install at home.
Further kits and instructions available on
request.

Sunday
26 February
Tree Planting
At Lake Farm, Eavestone
Contact Terry Knowles for more
information, on ☎ 01423 525014 or
✉ teruna2@aol.com.

March Gardening for Wildlife

Tuesday
27 March
19.00-20.15
Gardening for Wildlife in Springtime
Learn from a wildlife gardener at RHS
Harlow Carr how to create a beautiful
garden whilst encouraging and
supporting wildlife. All welcome.

Sunday
4 March
11 March
18 March
Tree Planting
Bark Cabin Wood near Guise Cliff
Oak Bank Farm, Pannal
Hollins Hill, near Eagle Hall, Beverley
Contact Terry Knowles for more
information, on ☎ 01423 525014 or ✉
teruna2@aol.com.

Sunday
6 March
**Tree Planting with Nidderdale Tree
Wardens**
At Willie's Wood, Birchfield
Contact Ann Stark for more information
✉ annstark@btinternet.com

April All things that *Creep...*

Tuesday
10 April
19.30-20.30
Newt Hunting by Torchlight
Join local experts to learn about these
elusive creatures
Booking required, call Pam on
☎ 01423 523 233
✉ biodiversityaction@gmail.com

Wednesday
11 April
14.00-16.00
Nature Awareness
At the Harrogate Library
Join in with various activities to learn
about the world around us

Saturday
28 April
13.00-15.00
Chestnut Click Beetle Hunt
At Birk Crag
Join the hunt for this elusive beetle
found in only two places in the UK
Contact Pam for more information
☎ 01423 523 233
✉ biodiversityaction@gmail.com

Visit our website for more information:
www.biodiversityaction.org.uk

Opportunities

We are always looking for people willing to help out for a few hours a month and support our many activities. In 2012 we are looking for support for a number of new initiatives. A variety of skills are needed but any willing hands are gratefully welcomed.

Examples:

- Preparation of business cases to present our initiatives to various organizations offering funding for community and conservation work.
- Marketing expertise to support, and guide, our busy team.
- Engagement of various groups of organizations and businesses throughout the District.
- Support for our schools officer, engaging with local schools and developing hands on activities, including the building of the marvelous insect hotels.
- Presentation material development to showcase all the wonderful things going on across the region.
- Running talks, presentations and activities at local shows and events.
- Engaging with other local groups and organizations ensuring the best efforts in co-operative working supporting all the positive work.
- Dog-walkers, bird watchers and anyone who enjoys being outdoors to provide feedback on special areas and sightings.
- Help with practical tasks.

The list of opportunities and possibilities is endless, so please chat to us about how you could be involved.

Contact us on:

✉ biodiversityaction@gmail.com

☎ 01423 523233

Visit our website for more information:

www.biodiversityaction.org.uk



Like us on Facebook



Add photos on Flickr



Follow us on Twitter



Chat on Tumblr