



BIODIVERSITY ACTION

September 2008

Welcome

Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of Biodiversity news. It has been hastily put together as our usual technician has moved on to pastures new, so we have been saved by Becci O'Reilly who has stepped in and saved the day.

Well, this edition is packed full of information – outlining some of the conservation projects that are occurring in the County at the moment, as well as information on the Biodiversity Pledge signed by Herefordshire Council, UK BAP reporting round, events, information on national survey work, as well as a report on the Herefordshire project representation at the Orchards & Groves conference held in Sheffield.

As you are well aware, we are now in the middle of the UK BAP reporting round which is on BARS. Some of you may have reported on this before. If you haven't and you would like help with this, please don't hesitate to contact Nicky who will either come along and help or send you some guidance notes.

Most of the plans that have been revised over the past two years are now on BARS and Nicky is still working with agencies to confirm quantified target and action goals. Some have been entered onto the system already and we are awaiting information from other agencies to complete this.

One of the next projects that will be undertaken is giving the Herefordshire BAP website www.herefordbap.org a complete overhaul as it is very much out of date and so if you have any ideas or suggestions on how it can be improved, please contact Nicky via email or telephone.

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Have You Seen This Fungus On Your Old Apple Trees?

The orchard tooth fungus *Sarcodontia Crocea* is a very rare fungus that is listed as 'vulnerable' in the UK. It is a UK BAP priority species and is under threat by the removal of old apple trees.

- The fungus forms encrusted, golden-yellow patches with mini stalactites or 'teeth'. It will be found on rotting cut branch ends or inside a rot hole – usually at head height and usually on trees in the sun.



- Strong charismatic smell. When fresh, the fungus smells of pineapple, but as it ages, it begins to smell strongly of rotting fruit.
- The fruit bodies can be found between June and September.
- The fungus only feeds on the dead heartwood of the tree and is not a threat to the tree.
- It is extremely rare (currently found at only 14 sites in the UK) and is only found on apple. If a fungus looks like this but is on other trees, or at other times of the year, then it is not the orchard tooth fungus.

If you think you have seen this fungus please contact Judy Webb on 01865 377487

Biodiversity Pledge

Local Authorities pledge to act as wildlife champions

Ten Local Authorities from across the West Midlands including Herefordshire Council put pen to paper to 'pledge' their support to help protect and enhance their local wildlife on 9th July 2008.

The Authorities signed the West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge and in doing so acknowledge that wildlife has a vital role to play in enhancing our wellbeing and quality of life, but also recognises that we continue to threaten its survival.

The Pledge is a regional initiative intended to promote a new duty that Government has imposed on all local authorities and other public bodies. In signing the Pledge the Local Authorities agree to protect and enhance wildlife by ensuring they follow best practice and adhering to national guidance.

The West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership, in association with the Local Biodiversity Partnerships, are working closely with all local authorities to help ensure that wildlife is seen as top priority and a key issue in all that they do.

Joan Ruddock Minister for Wildlife supports the Pledge saying "I fully support the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership's championing of the region's valuable wildlife through the Biodiversity Pledge. It's good to see so many local authorities signing up to the Pledge and taking seriously the new duty we have placed on them. I would urge others to follow their lead."

The Biodiversity Pledge is specific to the West Midlands region and is promoted by the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership.



West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership

The West Midlands BIODIVERSITY PLEDGE

We acknowledge:

- that biodiversity and the natural environment have a vital role to play in enhancing wellbeing and quality of life
- that biodiversity is under threat from climate change and other human-induced pressures
- our duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in carrying out our functions.

We welcome the:

- Social, health, environmental and economic benefits which come from biodiversity
- Opportunity for local government to lead the drive to conserve and enhance biodiversity at a local level.

We commit our Council to:

- Ensure the conservation of biodiversity is incorporated into all relevant corporate strategies, plans and programmes.
- Champion the benefits of biodiversity within local partnerships including Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements.
- Consider the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and review policies and actions to assist wildlife to adapt.
- Participate actively in Local Biodiversity Partnerships and assist with the delivery of Local Biodiversity Action Plans.
- Protect and enhance biodiversity within the planning system and deliver the key principles for biodiversity set out in national planning guidance.
- Seek to ensure that up-to-date biodiversity data is available and used appropriately and support the maintenance and development of Local Record Centres.
- Work in partnership with others to identify, protect and enhance Local Sites of Importance for Biodiversity, taking them into account within the planning and land management systems.
- Protect and enhance biodiversity within the local authority estate.
- Promote the social benefits of biodiversity in the delivery of public services and support access to nature and understanding of the natural world within formal and informal education and community engagement.
- Raise awareness of all staff, elected members, contractors and the general public with regard to biodiversity issues.

Chris Bull
Chris Bull
Chief Executive
Herefordshire Council

Keith Austin
Keith Austin
WMLGA
Lead Member for Environment

By signing the Pledge the local authority

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WMBP
Leader of the Council Roger Phillips

Orchards & Groves

Orchards and Groves: Their history, ecology, culture and archaeology. Sheffield Hallam University.

This three-day event organised by IUFRO addressed topics fundamental to the conservation of these iconic landscapes. There was international presence with speakers and delegates from across the globe, including a heavy presence from Herefordshire. Local speakers included Rebecca Roseff from Herefordshire Cider Museum who talk was entitled *"The origins of Orchards and Cider and Perry in England, with particular reference Herefordshire"*.

Dave Marshall from the Bulmer foundation provided an illustrious talk on the findings of Herefordshire Orchard Community Evaluation (HOCE), which was very well received and caused much debate, this then led neatly to Jackie Denman from the Big Apple Association who spoke about the activities of the project and how it has developed over the past 20 or so years.

On the final day, Helen Stace from Colwall Community Orchard project talked about this voluntary project based in the small parish on the edge of the Malvern Hills and the voluntary support it has gained in order to identify and survey for their quality and biodiversity value. The final talk by a fellow Herefordshire representative was given by Dr Rob Widdicombe who gave an in-depth description on the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Orchard Biodiversity project that has been surveying orchards in the 2 Counties,

thought to be at risk from development, flooding and aggregate extraction. This project will hopefully identify those most at risk and this information will then be fed into local planning authority planning systems and identify local planning policies in order to protect them.



Our very own Dr Rob Widdicombe speaking at the Orchard conference

The seminar was very interesting and displays were on show from a wide variety of orchard-related projects from across the UK and what shouted volumes to me, was that we in Herefordshire are not so good at patting ourselves on the back. We're doing an awful lot towards the conservation of orchards and that we recognise them as not only places that produce fruit and boost the local economy, but are an important element of our local biodiversity, landscape, as well as being deeply embedded in our local culture and history.



HBRC Change of Address

Please note HBRC has moved offices. Our new address and fax number is provided below. Visits to our new office are unfortunately by appointment only - please telephone or email in advance to arrange a convenient time. Thank you.

P.O. Box 230
Hereford
HR1 2ZB

Telephone (01432) 261538
Fax: (01432) 261802



Invasives

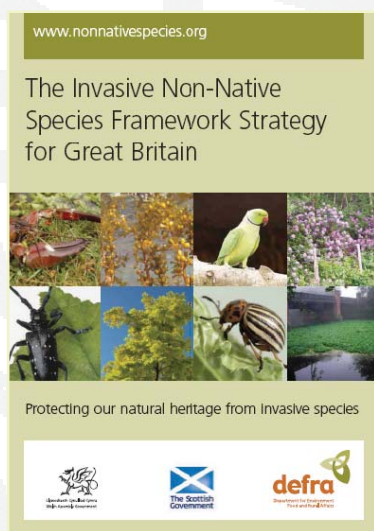
Invasive Non Natives Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain - Launched 28th May 2008

On 28th May England, Scotland and Wales launched the first co-ordinated plan to reduce the threat to Britain's native biodiversity from invasive non-native species.

Invasive non-native species such as Floating Pennywort and the North American Signal Crayfish can have a serious impact on our native wildlife and economic interests. Controlling their spread is key to conserving our native wildlife.

Key measures in the strategy include:

- developing ways to educate people on the risks from invasive non-native species, and how to help avoid introducing these species
- developing a web-based shared central directory that will show the types of invasive species in specific areas, and how they have spread
- developing expertise for early identification of potential problem species that may already be here or on their way, and the best ways to handle them
- developing a clear framework for rapid responses when invasive species are detected for the first time in Britain



To look at a copy of this strategy, go to

http://www.nonnativespecies.org/documents/Invasive_NNS_Framework_Strategy_GB_E.pdf

2008 Reporting Round

The 2008 Reporting Round is now underway and will run until the **30th November**.

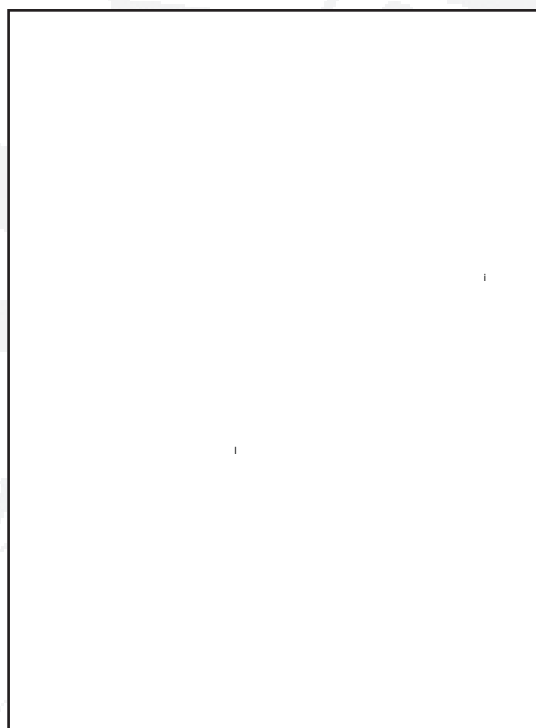
Please report on your species, habitats or local action plans through the 2008 Reporting link available after logging into BARS. The information collected will be analysed in early 2009 and will contribute to both the UK BAP 2008 report and to the UK's report on progress towards the 2010 target that will be submitted to the CBD in spring 2009.



If you would like any help or support, please do not hesitate to contact Nicky. Meetings to assist with this can be arranged (either email or telephone to arrange a time). Guidance on how to report can be obtained from Nicky as well as guidance for partners on roles and responsibilities in the LBAP process.

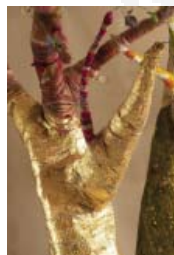
For any other 2008 reporting round queries please contact [Ant Maddock](#) (01733 866 827).

Sustainable Schools Conference



Orchard Exhibition

A new exhibition entitled 'Orchard' on national tour could not possibly by-pass Herefordshire, a county with more orchards than any other in the country. Featuring the work of renowned artist, sculptor and prop-maker, Edwina Bridgeman, it has just opened at Hereford's Cider Museum on September 9, and runs until November 22. In it she visually interprets life in an orchard in a quirky kind of way and with child-like wonder.



She explains: "An orchard is not just about apples and other fruits grown on the trees, but also the birds, bees, insects, lichens and the memories, emotions and magic created in the minds of people using them.."

Edwina's work has been described as life enhancing, sometimes humorous, even spiritual, and a lot of fun!

Orchards, says Edwina, are contemplative spaces and she uses the stories and experiences of others in her mixed material work. She talks of 'feeling the beauty of these quiet places..' In fact, visitors to the exhibition will be encouraged to sit down at a battered old writing table, under an apple bough, and write, or draw, of their own orchard memories, from which the artist will draw inspiration to add yet more work to the exhibition as it continues its national tour organised by New Brewery Arts. Educational and writing packs have been sent to schools.

The exhibition is being supported by Bulmers, Herefordshire Council, The Becket Bulmer Charitable Trust, the Friends of Herefordshire Museums and Arts, Herefordshire Orchards Community Evaluation project, and Hereford City Council.

Its visit to the Cider Museum has been arranged by the Bulmer Foundation, which managed the Herefordshire Orchards Community Evaluation Project, a two year detailed study of a sample of six orchards to evaluate the financial, social and environmental impact orchards have on a community. The findings of this project, described by Natural England as "a ground-breaking study of the multiple benefits of orchards to the environment, rural life and well-being" are being displayed alongside Edwina's magical pieces. For more information on the project, have a look at www.herefordorchards.co.uk.

The exhibition at the Cider Museum also includes local people's own depictions of this piece of Herefordshire's heritage, with a show of some of the entries to an orchard art competition organised in association with Tidnor Wood Orchards CIC.



The Cider Museum is open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5pm in September and October and 11am to 3pm in November.

Climate Change


Cutting Carbon, Cutting Cost!
How can Herefordshire cut carbon and build a more resilient county?





The Herefordshire Partnership have now signed up to a challenging **4.9%** carbon reduction target in countywide CO₂ emissions over the next **3 years**.

Every time we fill up our cars or switch on a light at home or at work we are adding to carbon emissions from the county & costing ourselves money.

How can we best work together to achieve savings and reduce the risk of dangerous climate change?

This stakeholder workshop at Town Hall Hereford on **Wednesday 24th September** will start to plan this process, using our shared expertise to draw up an action plan for the next three years.

Cutting Carbon, Cutting Cost!
How can Herefordshire cut carbon and build a more resilient county?

Workshop: Wednesday 24th September 2008, Town Hall

- 13:45 **Registration and refreshments**
- 14:00 **Welcome, introductions, agenda and process**
Michael Haings, Director of Environment & Culture
- 14:10 **Overview of Local Area Agreement and target**
Herefordshire Partnership Officer
- 14:25 **Carbon Reduction in a National Context**
Philip Stamp, DEFRA (invited)
- 14:45 **Developing our Delivery Plans**
Delegates divide into groups to explore one of the three outcome areas of the target in detail and start work on the delivery plan:



Transport	Domestic Housing	Businesses
Where are we ?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the LAA target - Current strengths and weaknesses? - Programmes in place and planned - Who is currently doing what 		
Where do we want to be?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What new/amended interventions should be introduced? - What resources can be deployed/redeployed? - Any special for when funding becomes available? - Who is responsible for making it happen? 		
15:45 Refreshments Break		
16:00 Review of outcomes Delegates move to hear outcomes from other groups		
16:30 Pulling it together What is this telling us and where do we go from here? How can we best organise this? What involvement do delegates want? How can we involve others		
17:00 Workshop close		



Your involvement and contribution will be greatly appreciated: by taking small steps together can we help to protect the beautiful county we live in.

Please call or email Ben Boswell to confirm your attendance at this free workshop. Tel: 01432 260784 Email: bboswell@herefordshire.gov.uk



Biodiversity Projects In Herefordshire

Herefordshire Council

- Lower Lugg Breeding Otter Project 2007/2008: An assessment of potential otter breeding sites in the middle and lower reaches of the River Lugg between Hereford and Leominster with a particular focus on Bodenham Lake nature reserve. Preliminary findings appear to be positive and any outcomes will influence future management of the site.
- Local Area Agreement Indicator 197 Local Sites 2008/2011: Achieving positive conservation management on local sites. For example through provision of management plans to local site owners and managers. A local sites partnership is being set up to oversee this work.
- Herefordshire Council's Conservation section is currently working with Worcestershire County Council on a strategic cross-border orchard project to identify & survey selected orchards & associated grasslands within/adjacent to settlements by interrelating planning data with ecological data.

Malvern Hills Conservators

- Grayling Butterfly survey on the Malvern Hills – Training and support for local volunteers to do the survey for habitat and counts. Partner with Butterfly Conservation (BC).
 - High Brown Fritillary project – HLF funded project to restore habitat and monitor species on the southern Hills. Partner with BC.
 - On going HLS funded grazing project on the Malvern Hills and Commons covering over 1500 acres.
 - Coppice crafts woodland management project in Park Wood, West Malvern.
- Dormice survey project on the Malvern Hills - MHC funded purchase of 30 dormouse boxes.



River Wye Preservation Trust

- Native Woodland Restoration in Herefordshire is currently underway and is nearing completion. It is being funded by the Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund, the SITA Trust, the Duchy of Cornwall and the Woodland Trust. The project will help deliver policies for the enhancement and the restoration of native woodland, wood-pasture and parkland and their interface with surrounding countryside. The project will also contribute to the public appreciation, enjoyment and understanding of woods and trees and also the importance of their management.

Wye & Usk Foundation

- Giving up the Weed – aims to eradicate invasive weeds in Wye and Usk catchment. Currently focusing on Giant Hogweed in Herefordshire Wye:

37km double bank sprayed 2008. Autumn – start of Japanese knotweed spraying. Budget c£145K.

- Fish Pass construction R Arrow (2) £18K).
- Pipeline Enhancement Fund. Habitat restoration. R Escley £69K + in kind.

Recently completed (i.e. within last 12 months):

- Leader + Lugg and Arrow project (Herefordshire) Habitat restoration Lugg and Arrow, Fish pass construction (6).
- Rural Enhancement Scheme: Habitat Restoration Lugg, Arrow and Garren.

Projects under consideration (i.e. bids made but not secured):

- Countdown £1million to NE. Invasive weeds.
- Sita - River Lugg and Arrow habitat diffuse pollution and fish passage (culverts etc).

Herefordshire Ornithological Club

- HOC are involved in the 4 year National County Bird Atlas involving 20+ members doing winter and summer field work. The club is also involved in setting up bird slide show and talk suitable for talks to schools, WI's and local OAP clubs.

Butterfly Conservation

- Senior Regional Officer for Butterfly Conservation covering the West Midlands region and focussing on our most threatened Lepidoptera species (basically the UK BAP ones). At present (until March 2008) funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.
- The Herefordshire Group of the West Midlands Branch of Butterfly Conservation is currently trying to establish a moth recording group by holding regular meetings and now have a new Butterfly Conservation reserve to help to manage (on the edge of Ewyas Harold common).
- SITA funded Herefordshire's Wood White Butterflies. A project involving Forestry Commission and Butterfly Conservation to survey and manage for Wood Whites in 8 FC woods in Herefordshire. The project involves FC woods in 2 FC districts - West Midlands District (North Herefordshire) and Forest of Dean District (South Herefordshire).

Herefordshire Action for Mammals

- HAM is involved in a variety of survey projects including monitoring of bat box schemes in woodlands, dormouse boxes as part of a national scheme, bat surveys, otter surveys, recording mammals particularly moles and hedgehogs this year, and surveys of new areas for dormice.
- We have 2 dormouse nestbox schemes - one in Queenswood (Dymock Forest, but the Herefordshire side), 40 boxes put up May 07, well used every check. Will be making the boxes up to 50 this winter.
- Haugh Wood boxes 50 put up 2001/2(ish) used occasionally, but the yellow necks love them. Tubes

put up in different areas of the wood periodically and one Oct we had 15 in 40 tubes!

- Walks, talks and training.

Caring for God's Acre

- The Churchyard Task Team is a Heritage Lottery funded project that aims to involve more people in churchyard conservation. We take a group of volunteers out every week to join local churchyard volunteers to manage their churchyards for wildlife. The type of work includes repairing drystone walls, grassland management, hedge planting and making compost bins. Training courses and other activities are also organised.
- Transport, tools and training provided. Activities for all in churchyards including childrens events, surveying trees, woodland crafts, medieval reenactments and wildlife surveys.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust

- Earth Science Champions Project - 10 sites in county to be chosen. Local community involved in helping to look after them and learning about the geodiversity, biodiversity and archaeological features. A local "Champion" will be trained to take guided walks and give talks about the site.
- A Geodiversity Action Plan for Herefordshire is being developed. An audit of sites was done in 2007-8 and now an application is being submitted for funding to finalise the aims, objectives and targets of the Action Plan, to write up the audit of sites and do some of the targeted actions of the GAP.
- Geopark Way – A long distance footpath is being developed from Bridgnorth to Gloucester through the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark with help from communities and local groups. The guide for this footpath will be published in the autumn and will describe geology, landscape, biodiversity, archaeology and related features.
- Monitoring of the condition of Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) is being carried out within the Malvern Hills AONB.
- Building Stones of Herefordshire – Finding the Quarries which were the source for the building stones used in Herefordshire.
- Guided walks and Talks are being given to describe the geology of the county. E.g. Walk in the Staunton on Arrow area and a talk in Kington, both in September.

Forestry Commission/ Ledbury Naturalists field Club Queenswood (Dymock Forest) Conservation Group

- A long running project to survey and record flora and fauna, and undertake associated management in the Herefordshire part of Queenswood.

Herefordshire Nature Trust

- Woolhope Dome - Malvern Hill linkage project

where we have identified the most ecologically feasible route along which habitats, landscape type and areas of potential between Woolhope Dome and Malvern Hills BEA can be linked for biodiversity enhancement within a sector of the landscape of Herefordshire.

Colwall Orchards Project

- Assessment of the trees and developing management plans for their maintenance along with some biodiversity assessment as well.

Herefordshire Amphibian and Reptile Team

- 'What's that Snake? Herefordshire Community Reptile Project' - The overall aim of Project is to develop a community awareness, involvement and surveying programme to provide a substantial increase in knowledge about the county's reptile population and status. Project Officer from 30th September will be Nigel Hand and will be based at Herefordshire Nature Trust Offices at Lower House Farm.

Credenhill Park Wood Community Group (Woodland Trust)

- Practical conservation volunteer group meet on the second Saturday of the month to assist in the management of the wood. Typical tasks include path repair, bramble clearance, coppicing and woodland crafts.

Wiggly Wigglers

CITIZENS OF THE WORLD!

Wiggly Wigglers present, for your edification & enjoyment

For one night only, the star of BBC Radio 2's Jeremy Vine Show

MR TERRY WALTON
(The R raconteur of the Rhonda)

'FRUGAL' RICHARD FISHBOURNE
(Master of Ceremonies and Wiggly Wigglers' Neurotic Naturalist)

in an evening of diverse entertainments on a gardening theme entitled

"DEFINITELY NOT GARDENERS' QUESTION TIME"
featuring Vegetables Large and Small

Friday October 10th, from 7.30 'til 10pm at the Village Hall, Preston-on-Wye
(Nine miles West of Hereford)

Tickets £10 (to include a light supper and a glass of mulled cider)
Available from Wiggly Wigglers, call 01981 500891 or visit wigglywiggles.co.uk

Bar Available **Great Prize Draw** **Book Signing**

IN AID OF ST MICHAEL'S HOSPICE & THE BODATH CENTRE
for Children with Cerebral Palsy

Herefordshire Council Fruit Tree Initiative 2008

(Fruit varieties to plant in your Herefordshire orchard or garden).

If you live in Herefordshire and want to restore old standard orchards or are trying to trace traditional local varieties of apples, then the Herefordshire Council Parks, Countryside and Leisure Development Service's latest Fruit Tree Initiative could be just what you were looking for.

The aim of the scheme is to encourage people to plant old apple varieties, either to restore an old orchard or in gardens to keep the budstock alive for propagation in the future.

Fruit trees are now available budded on to two different types of rootstock:

- M25 vigorous rootstock which results in a standard orchard tree that could reach a height of approximately 30ft.
- Semi-dwarf rootstock results in a smaller tree (approximately 7-10ft tall) suitable for planting in an urban garden - ensuring that this bud-stock will be available for future generations to use for propagation.

The closing date for the scheme/tree collection is the 17th November.

All advance ordered trees must be collected from Queenswood Country Park, Dinmore Hill between 10am and 3pm on Saturday 29th or 10am to 3pm on Sunday 30th November 2008.

Any unreserved trees will be sold first come, first served on a Cash & Carry basis on the collection weekend at Queenswood.

Trees cannot be delivered.

Further information: jbisset@herefordshire.gov.uk
http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/Fruit_Tree_Initiative_2008_v5-08.pdf

The Biodiversity Partnership Management Group

The group consists the following representatives:

Chair - Charlotte Morgan – Land management & conservation advisor (Herefordshire), Natural England
Juliet Wheatley - Team Leader – Landscape & Biodiversity – Herefordshire Council

Joanne Hackman – County Ecologist – Herefordshire Council

Nick Smith – Forestry Commission

Francesca Griffith – Herefordshire Nature Trust

Steve Roe – Herefordshire Biological Records Centre

The Big Apple - Autumn Event October 11th & 12th

Friday 10th and Saturday 11th October at 8pm

Much Marcle Memorial Hall - The Wye Theatre Company presents *The Real Inspector Hound*. £5 on the door. Call (01531) 670389 to reserve tickets. (Saturday tickets will be on sale at Hellens)

Saturday 11th October

- Enthusiasts Day – hands on opportunity to learn to make cider. Lunch provided; 10am to 4pm, £65.00. Details and booking (essential) (01531) 670713.
- Ciderland. James Crowden will be signing his latest book 'Ciderland'. Gregg's Pit. 11am to 4pm.
- Leominster Morris at Westons (11.30am), Gregg's Pit (12.30pm), Hellens (3pm).
- Living with Mistletoe. One hour pruning demonstration in young and old orchards at Pixley House (GR663383) 11.30am and again at 2pm. No charge.

Sunday 12th October

- Climate Change – What's in store for apples and cider? A talk by Liz Copas. Putley Village Hall (GR653381) 11.30am, £2.50.
- Big Apple Bike Ride. Market House, Ledbury at 10am, leave 10.30. Follow quiet country lanes, visiting cider producers and orchards. BYO picnic and explore Big Apple, returning pm Information (01531) 635432.
- Marcle Ridge Walk. 7 mile guided walk along the Marcle Ridge and through the orchards of Putley. Steep in places. No dogs please. Donations welcome. Meet Ridge Car Park (Grid ref: SO631346), 9.30am.

Nicky would like to thank all partners that contributed to the production of this newsletter.



The Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator post is joint-funded by Natural England and Herefordshire Council.