

# Summer Newsletter

## Schools Connect with Nature at Gadespring

**In April, pupils from Chaulden Infants' and Junior Schools spent a very special day out of their classrooms. In collaboration with another local charity, Waterways Experience, The Box Moor Trust hosted a day of pond dipping, bird watching and a boat trip down the canal.**

Over a period of six days, a total of 275 pupils took part in outdoor activities designed to help them connect with nature at the former cress beds site in Old Fishery Lane. They caught tadpoles and other pond life, bird watched from the hide, went on a nature walk and enjoyed a boat trip. As well as having lots of fun they learnt about wildlife and nature, which ties in with their science curriculum.

Box Moor Trust Chairman David Kirk said that connecting children with nature is becoming recognised as a priority within the UK and it has been a prime objective of the Trust for over 20 years. "We want to encourage young people to be the future guardians of our precious local greenspace," he explained.

This is a new initiative for the Trust's outdoor education service which already runs lessons and events for 5,000 young people every year and the small team is already working at capacity in other areas of the estate.

"This was a six day trial to set an example for local schools to run their own outdoor education days at the Cressbeds and other Trust waterways in the valley. The volunteers from the Waterways Experience were wonderful with the children and even let them help with locks and steering the boat," said David.



*Photo courtesy of Chaulden Infants' School*

The event was a huge success with many pupils reporting back on how much it inspired them. One pupil enthused, "It was the best day of my life!"

Gadespring is a special wildlife site and requires careful protection, but similar visits can be arranged for other school groups as long as the area is respected. This is available for all schools in Hemel Hempstead and Bovingdon. School boat and wildlife bookings for October 2018 and

March/April 2019 are being taken now. Please contact the Box Moor Trust at [education@boxmoortrust.org.uk](mailto:education@boxmoortrust.org.uk) to enquire about half day or full day school visits.



## Gordon Beningfield exhibition:

### Cancellation notice

In our spring newsletter, we notified you about a planned exhibition of the work of critically acclaimed local wildlife artist and conservationist the late Gordon Beningfield, to be held at the Box Moor Trust Centre over the weekend of 15th and 16th September. It was to be the last in a series of events to mark the twentieth anniversary of Gordon's death. However, due to security and insurance concerns as well as other practicalities it was regretfully decided that the Trust Centre is not a suitable venue for such an exhibition and therefore it will not, after all, be taking place. Apologies for any disappointment caused.

## Want to know more about the history of the Trust?

On Tuesday 14th August at 2pm we are holding an illustrated talk entitled 'The History of the Box Moor Trust' at The Box Moor Trust Centre in London Road. If you have ever wondered how such a unique organisation came into existence, come and join us to find out! Refreshments provided. There is no formal charge for this event, but you are welcome to make a donation. Bookable through: [education@boxmoortrust.org.uk](mailto:education@boxmoortrust.org.uk).

# Summer Holiday Activities

We have a full programme of activity days planned during August to keep your kids entertained:

## Gadespring Open Days

📍 Gadespring, Old Fishery Lane

🕒 Sunday 29th July, 26th August and 30th September 1pm to 4pm

Why not bring your family for a pond dipping session and learn about the history of this sanctuary?

## Powerful Plants family session

📍 The Old Barn, Westbrook Hay

🕒 Thursday 2nd August: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Plant trail, outdoor activities and crafts. Suitable for ages 2 and over. Drop in – no need to book. Suggested donation £2.50 per child.

## Animals and Tracking family session

📍 The Old Barn, Westbrook Hay

🕒 Thursday 9th August: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Outdoor activities and crafts. Suitable for ages 7 and over. Drop in – no need to book. Suggested donation £2.50 per child.

## Butterflies, Bugs and Bees family session

📍 The Old Barn, Westbrook Hay

🕒 Thursday 16th August: 10am to 12.30pm

Butterfly sweep, outdoor activities and crafts. Suitable for ages 2 and over. Drop in – no need to book. Suggested donation £2.50 per child.

## Year of Physical Activity – The Healthy Outdoors

🕒 Wednesday 22nd August: 10am to 12.30pm

Family drop-in session with outdoor yoga, orienteering and crafts. Suggested donation £2.50 per child.

## Family Pond Dip and Bird Watch

📍 Gadespring, Old Fishery Lane

🕒 Thursday 23rd August: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Bookable through: [education@boxmoortrust.org.uk](mailto:education@boxmoortrust.org.uk). Suggested donation £2.50 per child.



Photo: Caroline Evans

## Photography Competition closing soon!

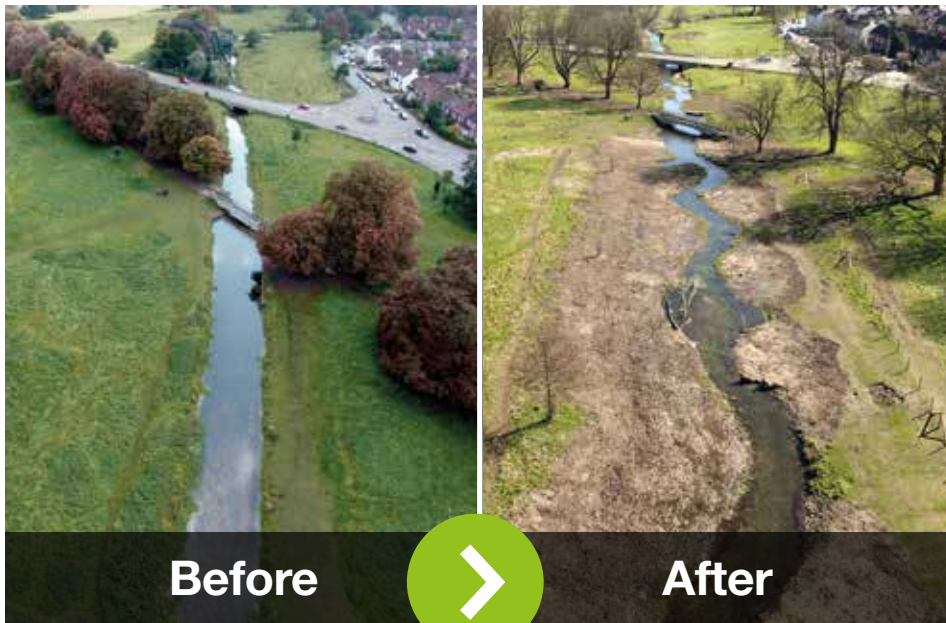
The Box Moor Trust calendar is always full of stunning images, thanks to those of you who compete annually in our photo competition. The closing date is fast approaching (August 11th) so if you are planning to enter don't delay! Entry is free, up to 10 images per entrant. The theme is "The Box Moor Trust: Colours of all Seasons", which can be interpreted however you choose. All photos must be of Box Moor Trust land and we are looking for a variety of subjects, seasons and parts of the estate depicted. First prize is £100, with smaller amounts for all winning images. Full details and entry forms at: [www.boxmoortrust.org.uk](http://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk)



Photo: Ian Phipps

# Further Accolade for 'Bringing back the Bulbourne'

The restoration of the Bulbourne chalk stream continues to be recognised in environmental circles, with another important award having been won. The Chartered Institute for Ecology & Environmental Management held their awards ceremony in June, and we are delighted to report that 'Bringing Back the Bulbourne' won the 'Best Practice Award for Small Scale Practical Nature Conservation'



Photos: Cloud Visual Ltd

The purpose of the project was to restore a 1,000m stretch of the Bulbourne between Fishery Road and Two Waters Road. The river in this location had been heavily modified in the past and was over-wide and lacking in features characteristic of a chalk stream.

The changes made to the river are now beginning to bed in. The banks have managed to regenerate, despite the

unseasonably dry weather, which has improved the look of the river. Our river fly monitoring volunteer group has been extremely positive since the works have been carried out. A marked increase in the number and range of river fly has been observed on the sites at which the works have been undertaken, together with significant increases in fish and general invertebrate populations (much appreciated by the local birdlife!)

## Bat Walks

**Our 'Moths, Bats & Glow Worms' walk in July was a great success. Noctule and Pipistrelle bats were identified using detectors and visitors were amazed at the sight of glow worms in the grass, giving off their eerie luminous green light. The evening finished with a look at the samples caught earlier in the moth trap.**

Did you know that we run bat walk evenings for community groups (both for children and adults) during September and October? If your group is interested contact us for further details at: [education@boxmoortrust.org.uk](mailto:education@boxmoortrust.org.uk). Charges applicable.



Photo: Catherine Pennington

## Phil Pennington

**Our long time Estate Manager, Phil Pennington, a true local personality, who retired in 2015, sadly passed away recently after a short illness.**

Phil's expertise with sheep and cattle helped us introduce a breeding and grazing policy which has led to the gradual development of a wonderful range of local wildlife habitats. He was a key mover in a national project to bring back the Norfolk Horn sheep from virtual extinction and, in addition to the Trust's own large flock, the breed is now surviving across the country.

Phil was really popular with young and old and brought his teaching experience as a former Head of Rural Studies to the Trust when he started here in 1993. He helped us to start what is now a flourishing Environmental Education Service. Many teenagers benefitted from his enthusiasm as a leader of our Junior Wildlife Explorers, where he was able to involve them in many aspects of protecting local habitats and livestock management. He also did so much to help the annual Conker Festival become a regular success and was a key part of the Trust's progress for over 20 years. Local environmentalists and Borough Councillors will remember Phil for his many years as Chair of the local Environmental Forum.

Despite retiring to start his own local smallholding, Phil was often back to attend our functions. It is extremely sad that he did not have longer to enjoy the benefits of that smallholding. All at the Trust and many local people will miss Phil and we send our best wishes to his family at this difficult time.

**David Kirk, Chair: Box Moor Trust**

# Swift Help from Local Students

**Lockers Park Preparatory School's pupils have been putting their design and technology skills to good use in a special project launched by the Box Moor Trust.**

With swift numbers rapidly decreasing within the UK, the Box Moor Trust initiated a scheme to encourage them to return to the area to nest. Last year, a small colony of swifts was spotted in **Lockers Park Lane**, one in **Baylie Lane** and another in **Great Elms Road**. Returning young swifts like to nest near their parents.

Lockers Park Year 6 pupils got involved by cutting templates and building some of the 50 nest boxes needed as part of their Technology course, Box Moor Trust Junior Rangers will complete the rest. Residents living around Lockers Park School in Boxmoor with two-storey houses are being asked if they will house a nest box to help encourage swifts to thrive once more. Special thanks go to **Selco Builders Warehouse, Maylands Avenue**, who donated the wood for the boxes.



Photo courtesy of Lockers Park School



Swifts struggle to find a suitable roof for nesting in the area. I have watched youngsters repeatedly searching under eaves for holes and flying away unsuccessful. The answer is to erect wooden swift nest boxes as close as possible to an existing nest site.

**David Kirk, Chair of The Box Moor Trust**



Our Year 6 pupils relished the opportunity to get involved in this worthwhile local scheme while honing their DT skills in the process. We hope to see an increase in swift numbers over the coming years as a direct result of the programme. The Box Moor Trust is a fantastic local resource and we frequently utilise its facilities to enhance our pupils' learning.

**Christopher Wilson, Headmaster at Lockers Park**



Photo: Elaine Rushton

## Autumn Festival Dates

**The Box Moor Trust Autumn Festival weekend takes place this year on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th October.**

Focusing on local crafts and produce, family activities and featuring our ever-popular conker tournament on the Sunday, this fun-filled community event is not to be missed. Attractions will include children's crafts, pottery workshop, archery have-a-go, pet animal farm and circus workshop. We are currently taking bookings for both trade and community stalls in keeping with the ethos of the event – for further details email: [elainerushton@boxmoortrust.org.uk](mailto:elainerushton@boxmoortrust.org.uk)

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