



Photo: Anthea Lovatt

Box Moor Trust Hosts Riverfly Day

A meeting of the Chilterns Herts & Middlesex Riverfly Partnership was hosted by the Box Moor Trust on Saturday 14th March. The Trust was represented on the day by Anthea Lovatt and Tim Edwin, who are part of a small team of volunteers who undertake riverfly monitoring along the river Bulbourne.

Riverfly monitoring is an initiative which ensures that monitoring groups can take action to conserve the river environment by monitoring water quality. In a healthy river most of the pollution-sensitive riverfly invertebrates (animals with no backbone) should be present. Declines in water quality are reflected in declines in the abundance and number of different invertebrates present.

Over thirty volunteers from different monitoring teams representing the Chiltern, Herts and Middlesex regions attended the event. The day was hosted by Allen Beechey (Chilterns Chalk Streams Project Officer). Led by the Chilterns Conservation Board, the Chilterns Chalk Stream Project is a partnership of statutory agencies, local authorities and voluntary bodies committed to conserving the chalk stream environments across the region.

Dr Margaret Elizabeth Fricker

20.12.1930 - 12.12.2019

Everyone at the Trust was sad to hear that Margaret Fricker, a Trustee from 2010 to 2019, passed away just before Christmas.

Margaret had had a long and interesting life, living in various parts of England and the world before settling in Boxmoor in 2007. After spending part of her youth in Hong Kong, Margaret was educated in Plymstock, Devon and later spent her sixth form at the Naval School in Malta (where her father had been posted by the RN), before eventually graduating from Hull University where she studied Physics and Mathematics. She went on to study for an Education Diploma at Kings College London. Either side of marrying and bringing up a family, Margaret taught for 18 years. Her thirst for knowledge led to her achieving a Diploma in Neutron Activation Analysis in 1973. We are fairly certain that Margaret was the only Trustee with that qualification! As if that was not enough, she went on to gain a Doctorate in 'Changes in Higher Education' at the age of 72. In between all her studying Margaret loved writing, amateur dramatics and socialising.

From the moment she arrived in Boxmoor, Margaret threw herself into community work. She did not consider age to be a barrier and in 2010, at the age of 79, she fought an election campaign and was successful in becoming a Box Moor Trustee. Here she used her vast experience to foster improvements in environmental education and the arts. She was chair of the Trust



Education & Community Committee for some years and was always keen to reach people of all ages in the community. Just recently, Margaret gave the first Trust talk to a care home and was instrumental in an initiative by the Trust to bring music and dance to those in sheltered accommodation.

Board meetings can involve difficult subjects and different opinions but Margaret was always calm, enthusiastic and positive. She was also really supportive of all the staff who worked with her. Unfortunately, ill health forced her to resign from the Board late in 2019 and she is sadly missed. Margaret's vacant position, along with others required to ensure a regular turnover on the Board by the Charity Commission, should be filled in the autumn when Trust elections will hopefully take place.

New Born Lambs

Our hard-working estate team has been kept busy with lambing during March and April. The new lambs are now out on the pastures of Westbrook Hay.



Photo: Elaine Rushton

The Box Moor Trust

Your land, your heritage, your future

Spring Newsletter

Sheep for Sunnyside



Photos: Elaine Rushton



Site Co-ordinator Matt Felix (4th from right) and Sunnyside trainees welcome their new arrivals. Box Moor Trust Stockman Bob Mansbridge is far right.

In December, four of the Trust's Norfolk Horn ewes were transported to Sunnyside Rural Trust's site in Northchurch to start a new life as part of an exciting new facility opening there, which has seen the introduction farm animals. The addition of the livestock will enable Sunnyside to provide therapeutic and practical skills for their client group as well as allowing the charity to sustainably manage the land in line with its environmental principles.

Site Co-ordinator Matt Felix said, "I have always believed in the therapeutic benefits of working with animals. By introducing sheep to the Sunnyside Northchurch site we are able to offer training to young people and adults with learning disabilities to look after and care for them, subsequently improving their own mental and physical health. The sheep represent the first steps towards creating a care farm; we have now also introduced pigs and goats. We foresee that the introduction of animals will encourage

the public to our site and visit the new farm shop. This will offer and promote retail experience for young people and adults with learning disabilities."

Sunnyside Rural Trust was founded in 1990 as a small, horticultural project for young people and adults with learning disabilities. It is now a thriving charity and social enterprise, offering training and work experience for over 130 vulnerable people in the local community. The Box Moor Trust

has worked with Sunnyside for a number of years now, providing monthly outdoor educational sessions across the estate for their trainees and supporting their public events.



Trust Events and Covid-19

With the continuing uncertainty over the Covid-19 outbreak and following government restrictions regarding public gatherings, we have cancelled or postponed all Trust events for the foreseeable future.

We have pencilled in dates for a Butterfly Walk at Westbrook Hay on 13th June (if weather bad, postponed to 20th June) and Moths, Bats & Glow Worms guided walk on 3rd July. As we go to press, it looks unlikely that these will go ahead but please keep an eye on our website for up-to-date information.

Some items to cheer:

Our barn owls have overwintered for a 4th year running, a pair of kingfishers are courting near Camelot Rugby Club and it is a great relief to say that a rare water vole has survived the winter (and the greedy herons) and has been spotted near Gadespring Cressbeds. It is frustrating that so many of us are confined to the home for so long. We will try and bring you updates on 'Nature at the Trust' on our website and in Facebook over the next few weeks. If you spot anything inspiring then please let us know.



Photo: Steve Rogers

Farewell to Jean



Photo: Liz Linker

March 2020 marked the end of an era when longstanding staff member Jean Sniders retired.

Jean has worked for the Trust for 32 years, during which time she has seen many changes as the charitable trust has evolved and adapted to match the times. She joined in 1988, having previously worked for the London boroughs of Brent and Harrow. When she started, she worked as the Secretary in what is now the box office of the Playhouse in St John's Hall. In 1993, the office moved to 69 High Street (over the old hire shop) and shortly afterwards Jean became Administration Manager. Finally, the HQ moved again to its current location on the A4251 at Westbrook Hay, where her most recent role was Finance Manager. Over the years, Jean has provided admin

support for no less than 32 Trustees and has managed 5 Trustee elections. She was instrumental in starting up the annual conker festivals (now the Autumn Festival) and her knowledge of the (often idiosyncratic) historical processes involved with the fine detail of running the Trust is second to none.

Jean has a fondness for walking, travel and singing in a choir, and she plans to spend more time on those hobbies when she retires. She also enjoys spending time with her three grandchildren and gardening. She is an active member of her local U3A group. We wish her a long and happy retirement – she will be greatly missed!

Roe Deer in Hay Wood



This stunning photograph of a Roe buck was taken by Trust volunteer and wildlife photographer Liam Edwards in the woodland around Westbrook Hay recently.

The Roe deer is one of the two truly native deer of the British Isles, the other being the Red deer. They vary in coat colour throughout the year, ranging from bright rusty red in summer to a dull, slate grey in winter. They have large black eyes, noses and mouths and large ears, prominent white rumps and no tail. The bucks have small antlers, which have three points when fully grown. Roe deer are particularly associated with the edges of woodlands and forests. They are also found in areas with copses, scrub and hedgerows and use agricultural fields in these areas too.

They are increasingly entering areas closer to our towns and cities as they take advantage of more urban habitats.

The other species of deer known to frequent Trust land is the Muntjac, which was brought from China to Woburn Park in Bedfordshire in the early 20th century. They are now widespread and increasing in number and range. Deliberate releases and escapes from Woburn, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire led to the establishment of feral populations.



Photo: Chris Lindsay

Calendar Photo Competition

There's still time to enter this year's competition – closing date is not until 8th August. The theme, "People Enjoying the Moors", can be interpreted however you choose. With the current restrictions on movement in place, we realise that it is not the time to be out and about taking photos (unless of course it's a quick snap taken responsibly while on your daily exercise), so we are happy for you to submit images from your 'back catalogue' that were taken in previous years. All photos must be taken of, or from, Box Moor Trust land and twelve will be chosen to feature in the Trust's 2021 calendar. There will be cash prizes for all the winners, including £100 for first place, £75 for second and £50 for third. See our website for full details and entry form.