

# Spring Newsletter

## A royal oak for the coronation...

## and an update on the Queen's Green Canopy

Further to our mention of this new planting scheme in the last newsletter, we can now report that planting is complete – the trees are all now in situ in a variety of locations around the Trust estate.

Trees 1-7 are to commemorate the 70 years of Queen Elizabeth II's reign and each of the seven species was chosen partly for its suitability for the location in which it was planted but also for a (loose) connection to the traditional anniversary gifts for each decade, as follows:



**10 years: Tin** Royal Alder (*Alnus Glutinosa* imperialis). OK, this is a tenuous link!

**20 years: Emerald** Norway Maple 'Emerald Queen' (*Acer platanoides*)

**30 years: Pearl** Kashmir Rowan (*Sorbus cashmiriana*). Autumn berries resemble bunches of pearls.

**40 years: Ruby** Honey Locust 'Ruby Lace' (*Gleditsia triacanthos*)

**50 years: Gold** Crab Apple 'Golden Hornet' (*Malus x zumi*)

**60 years: Diamond** Black Poplar (*populus nigra*) This tree has diamond shaped leaves.

**70 years: Platinum** English Oak (*Quercus robur*). Reliable and steadfast, as was our Queen.

Tree 8 is also an English Oak and has been planted to mark the coronation of King Charles III on May 6th 2023. An oak was chosen as it was the type of tree in which the future King Charles II of England hid to escape the pursuing Roundheads following the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

The planting of trees on the moor has been a historic tradition, with the iconic horse chestnut avenues around the estate all dating to the 19th and early 20th centuries. Nowadays, with the benefit of modern botanical knowledge, planting is arranged in a much more naturalistic manner and tree species are carefully matched to the prevailing environmental conditions and habitat.



# New Website



**Have you visited our website lately? If so, you will have noticed that it is looking a bit different. We launched our shiny new site at the beginning of the year and have worked hard to get the style and content just right.**

We have simplified the menus and streamlined the navigation tools so that hopefully users can find what they are looking for more easily. Maybe you want to plan your visit, enquire about booking meeting/event space, find out about volunteering opportunities or just catch up with our latest news? The main menu on the home page should steer you to the right page. Our stock map, popular with dog owners as it helps them to avoid the fields being grazed by livestock, is still a prominent feature of the site and is regularly updated to reflect the current locations of the sheep, cattle and horses. We will also be expanding the range of items for sale in our online shop, including these attractive greeting cards, some Belted Galloway pin badges and cuddly plush toys. More products relevant to the Box Moor Trust will be added over the coming months.



Photo: Jane Ahern



## A very welcome visitor

**Here we have a still from some wonderful video footage collected recently on our estate of an otter and it's offspring (known as a 'kit').**

They have been seen regularly over the course of several months and now is the time for this young otter to learn to hunt for itself. This is serious stuff, as without being able to hunt effectively the youngster will struggle to survive in the wild. That said, it is not all about work with these animals. They are a species that are also known to play together to help strengthen social bonds and learn vital skills that they will need as adults.



## Summer events for 2023

**We are planning a varied programme of events over the summer months.**

**Guided Walks:** Learn about a variety of habitats and species around the Box Moor Trust. These sessions are led by our experienced Ranger team and supported by our wonderful volunteers.

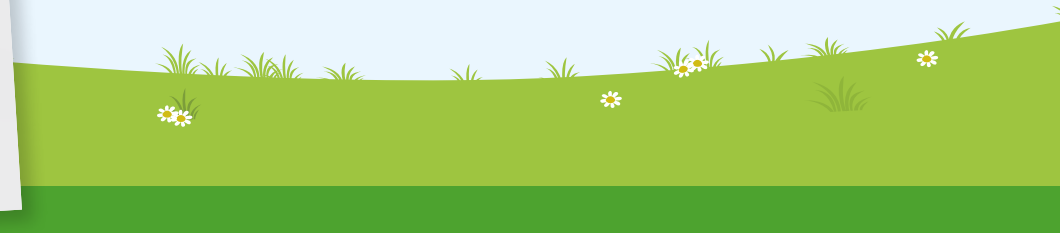
**Meadow Sweeping:** This activity involves using a net along our grasslands to help identify all manner of invertebrates, including butterflies, grasshoppers and many more!

**Pond Dipping:** Have you ever wondered about the creatures that may lurk in the depths of the water? An amazing range of invertebrates and amphibians await discovery - why not come along to one of our pond-dipping sessions and find out more?

Keep an eye on Eventbrite, our website and social media for individual events and dates.



Photo: Chris Ward



# Don't forget...

Closing date for our calendar photo competition is 6th August, so there is still plenty of time to enter. The theme is 'Box Moor Trust: for Community and Conservation' which can be interpreted in any way you wish. Free entry and cash prizes for the 12 finalists. Full details at: [www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/news-events/calendar-competition/](http://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/news-events/calendar-competition/)



Photos: Charlie Towler

## Westbrook Hay Ponds

Over the coming weeks/months we will be working hard to improve the woodland and Preston Hill ponds at Westbrook Hay. Both ponds will be revamped and the areas around them enhanced. The new all-weather path (which is being installed in place of the old boardwalk) will lead right up to the pond on the top of Preston Hill to enable our less-mobile visitors to get nice and close. A borehole has been drilled out at the foot of the hill, which will supply water to both ponds; this will also enable all the nearby drinking troughs for our cattle and sheep to be supplied by the borehole. This natural mineral water, which will have flowed through permeable chalk and rock, will provide a much better-quality environment for the pond life than using treated water from the mains supply. Look out for updates in the coming months.



Photo: Jane Ahern

## Line-Up!

Amazing to see how orderly our ewes are when it comes to feeding time...

We supplementary feed our ewes regularly at this time of year to ensure that they are in fighting fit condition for motherhood. Towards the end of the pregnancy the lambs can grow up to 60% of their mass within the last six weeks, which can put a lot of pressure on the body to cope with that demand. Want to discover more about our animals? Visit: [www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/about-us/our-animals/](http://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/about-us/our-animals/)

## Volunteering for Nature

**Do you have a passion for nature, green spaces or the local community and wish to share that with the younger generation?**

Here at The Box Moor Trust, we are so thankful to have a dedicated team of volunteers that support us across a large range of tasks from habitat management to administrative tasks. We would love to welcome more volunteers that have an interest in our Environmental Awareness and Community activities to help support the Estate team to deliver high-quality outdoor environmental awareness opportunities. We know that it is key for nature moving forward to have the younger generation inspired by what they see, and where better to do so than on their own doorstep? If you are interested in helping with this, please visit our website and sign up as a volunteer at [www.boxmoortrust.org.uk](http://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk)



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**There is nothing quite like the sight of a British bluebell wood in full bloom! At the time of writing, the woodland floors in both Hay and Bury Woods are a real spectacle, carpeted in a glorious shade of blue.**

*Photo: Elaine Rushton*

Bluebells (latin name *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) are native to western Europe, with the UK being a species stronghold. They're associated with ancient woodland and, as they flower earlier than many other plants, they're a valuable food plant for woodland butterflies, bees and hoverflies which all feed on their nectar. While the bluebell is still common throughout Britain, it is under threat from

hybridisation with the non-native Spanish bluebells (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*). The plants can take years to recover from the damage caused by trampling, and if their leaves are crushed, they can be weakened as they can no longer photosynthesise. So, when you are out enjoying this springtime spectacle, please be careful where you walk so as not to cause harm.

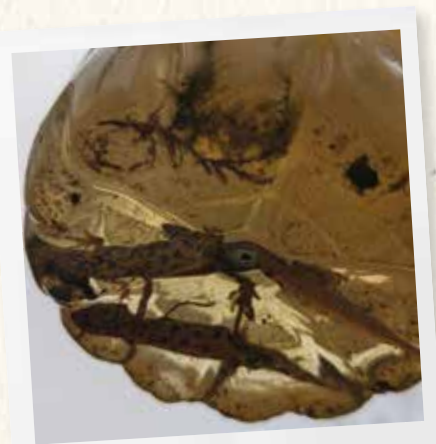
## Amphibian Monitoring

**The return of our monitoring in March saw the first newts of the season spotted at Bovingdon Brickworks.**

We use a variety of methods to determine what amphibians we have on site. Where water in the pools is clear we will use powerful torches in the evenings to see what is swimming around in the water and identify what can be seen but in murkier waters we have to use these bottle traps. These smooth newts are a common amphibian, but it is still important to monitor their presence and gain an understanding of what threats they may be facing in our area.

Please do not use bottle traps without the express permission of the landowner, as these methods can cause harm to the animals if done incorrectly.

If you wish to get involved further, please look on our website to sign up as a Survey Volunteer.



*Photo: Charlie Towler*

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