

Summer Newsletter

Wildlife pond brought back to life

Over recent weeks we have been working hard with our contractor Stillwater Management to refurbish the old Preston Hill pond and at long last we have been able to fill it with water. We thought it would be a good time to share some information about it:

- The pond has been created for wildlife
- Please do not enter or allow your dog into the area
- Water supplied is ground sourced and pumped from our new borehole
- Planting of the marginal areas will start once the site has settled down
- Once the ecosystem is ready to support larger species, it is hoped that newts/frogs and the rare Albino toad will return. The pond has already attracted back dragonflies and damselflies, as evidenced by this photo of a female Emperor dragonfly laying her eggs, with a common blue damselfly cheekily perched in front of her!

Special thanks to Will Atkins of London, Essex and Hertfordshire Amphibian and Reptile Trust (LEHART) and Dave Willis of Herts ARG for the ongoing support & advice for this fantastic project. We would also like to thank our volunteer John Sparrow for the time-lapse photography footage, which can be viewed on You Tube - search for: *2023 06 05 Preston Hill Short*.

The all-weather path between the Old Barn and Preston Hill is also now complete and ready to use and will take you through the wood and right up to the pond.

Photos: John Sparrow



Photo: Will Atkins





Photo: Tawny James

Orchids

One of the most beautiful sights on the chalk soils of the Trust meadows and woodland margins at Westbrook Hay, Sheethanger and Roughdown Commons are the wild orchids of summer. You are most likely to see Common-spotted and Pyramidal orchids (sometimes hybrids of the two) but other species that have been found on Trust land include Southern Marsh Orchid, Twayblade and Autumn Gentian, and last year saw the return of White Helleborine at Roughdown for the first time in 30 years. Particularly lovely is the delicate Bee orchid, which mimics a female bee to attract male bees to pollinate the plant. This example was found in our Memorial Orchard on the edge of Bourne End, but they can also be found growing in other parts of the estate.



Calendar Photo Competition: Entries closing soon

Photo: Andrew Fox

A reminder that the closing date for this year's competition is fast approaching on Sunday 6th August.

This year's theme is "Box Moor Trust: for Community and Conservation" which can be interpreted any way you wish: landscapes, sport, wildlife and nature - there is plenty of scope across the estate. All photographs must have been taken on, or of, Box Moor Trust land and should be in landscape format (long edges top and bottom) to fit in with the design of the calendar. The twelve

selected finalists will be put to the public vote on the Box Moor Trust Facebook page to determine 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. The competition is free to enter, and prizes are £100 for first place, £75 for second and £50 for third, with £10 awarded to all other photographers whose images are selected for the calendar. A link to the entry form can be downloaded from our website.



Photo: Elaine Rushton

Autumn Festival 2023

Dates of this year's festival are 23rd and 24th September on our usual site at Blackbirds Moor. We are slightly extending our Sunday opening times to bring both days in line: 11am to 3pm. We now have enough food vendors but can still accommodate a few more local crafters, artisans and small businesses as well as community groups and charities. Applications for stall space, either inside a marquee or an outside pitch, can be made quickly and easily by completing an online form. Contact us at admin@boxmoortrust.org.uk if you are interested in having a stall.

Box Moor Trust Gin Returns!

In 2019, Kate and Ben from Puddingstone Distillery, creators of the multi award winning Campfire Gin range, produced 1594 The Spirit of Box Moor. This very special gin, distilled using juniper from our very own estate, was released to celebrate 425 years of the Box Moor Trust. Today, we are excited to announce that the Box Moor Gin will be returning this September with a new look and bigger bottle. Alongside our very own juniper, harvested last year, the team have used British angelica, coriander seed, Moroccan orris and fresh lime, a historical nod to the fact that Box Moor Wharf was the home of Roses Lime Cordial from 1946 to 1983.

“For the last few years we have received many requests to create a new bottling of this classic London Dry style gin using the Box Moor juniper. For us, working with a local conservation trust and sourcing our key botanical just a few miles from the distillery aligns perfectly with our ethos of working mindful of community and environment. We feel privileged to work with such an established organisation and in a region where customers have embraced our product” commented Kate.

This latest release will be limited to circa 400 bottles presented in two different bottle

designs. For every bottle sold, the distillery will donate £2 to the Box Moor Trust.

To get the latest news on release dates and pre-ordering sign up to the newsletter at www.puddingstonedistillery.com

Puddingstone will be launching the Box Moor Gin in September and it will be available on Saturday 23rd at the Autumn festival.



Commercial/ Professional Dog Walkers at Westbrook Hay

Photo: Jessica Box

With effect from 1st June 2023, all express or implied permission to Commercial/Professional Dog Walkers using any part of the land known as Westbrook Hay Estate has been withdrawn.

This exclusion has been imposed because of continuing complaints received from the Trust's beneficiaries, many of whom no longer felt comfortable walking on the land due to frequently encountering large numbers of boisterous dogs off-lead and high levels of dog mess left lying on the ground, among other issues.

Any transgression of the exemption, which includes the car parks contained within the boundary of the estate, may be dealt with by recourse to legal action and is also likely to invalidate the business owner's public liability insurance.

If you are a member of the public and walk your dog at Westbrook Hay or are thinking of employing a Commercial/Professional Dog Walker, please visit the 'Bringing Your Dog' section on our website for advice and information.

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Photo: Steve Dutch

Fleeces available

Now that our wonderful Norfolk Horn sheep have been shorn, we have a limited number of these beautiful fleeces available.

Not to be missed as there are so many uses for them: needle felting, use in the garden, insulation....the list goes on.

We are selling these at £5 a fleece by collection only at The Box Moor Trust office in London Road. To reserve your fleeces, contact us via phone on 01442 253300 or email Ann at admin@boxmoortrust.org.uk

You'd be Baaa-my to miss out!



Access for all

The Trust has purchased a small number of specially designed self-propelled all-terrain wheelchairs, which are available at the Old Barn for use by visitors to Westbrook Hay. They are specially designed for safety and stability on uneven ground and can be hired (free of charge) by members of the public. If you would be interested in using one of these, please contact the Trust office for further info.

Summer Events and Activities

For further details and to book places please visit the [Upcoming Events](#) page on our website.

Colour in the Meadows, Westbrook Hay

Wednesday 26th July, 11am-12.30pm & 1.30pm-3pm. Suitable for families.

Rivers Day, Harding's Moor

Friday 4th August, 11am-3pm. Suitable for families.

Photography Sessions, Gadespring Cressbeds

Wednesday 9th August, 1pm-3pm & 6pm-8pm. Suitable for all.

Open Day, Gadespring Cressbeds

Thursday 17th August, 11am-3pm. Suitable for all.

Mindfulness in Nature, Westbrook Hay

Sunday 20th August, 10am-12 noon. Adults only.

Natural Art, Hay Wood (Westbrook Hay)

Wednesday 23rd August, 11am-12.30pm, 1.30pm-3pm. Suitable for families.

Open Evening, Gadespring Cressbeds

Tuesday 29th August, 6pm-9pm. Suitable for all.

Moth Trap Morning

Location and date to be confirmed. Suitable for families.

Self-led Trails

River exploration

Activities along the Bulbourne with temporary signs to interact with.

Wiggly Worm Walk

Activities around Sheethanger Common with temporary signs to interact with and the chance to win a book.

Mindfulness at Bovington Brickworks

Mindfulness activities around these old brickworks turned nature reserve.



Contact Us

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