



FRIENDS OF CALDY NATURE PARK

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www.caldyvalley.org.uk

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From Steph Hefferan CWaC Greenspace Officer The importance of Reedbeds

Caldy Nature Park offers a diversity of habitats that appeal to a broad number of species. One such habitat on site is the wetland habitat comprising reedbeds.

Listed as a priority habitat (PH1) by Defra/Natural England, reedbeds play an important role in helping support wildlife some of which such as the water vole are a species nationally under threat.

Over winter a proportion of the reeds are cut and removed from the bed area. This prevents the organic matter from the annual die back accumulating and allowing scrub to encroach and take over this valuable habitat. These areas provide feeding sites for the water voles as well as a haven for insects, encouraging birds such as willow warblers to nest or forage for food.

Each habitat on site has its own important role to play in supporting our native species and reedbeds have a key role in helping certain species thrive.

Wishing you all the best and maybe, see you soon!

Steph

**If you have any queries or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch via the Council's number
0300 1238123
or email: enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**



Nelson @ Alistair

On 3rd Sept Alistair said: Rather surprisingly, this chap turned up in my garden this morning for 10 mins. At 8:45 he strolled in, stopped for several scratches, tried to eat some grass and then meandered on. I got several photos of him and from a number of different views it looks like he has only one functioning eye. The most obvious name for a one eyed anything is of course Nelson... He does look quite healthy and seemed quite relaxed, but that may be because his mum only threw him out recently and experience hasn't yet taught him the benefits of more caution.

Reflecting on trees...

I am having to revise! I thought that what I had gained as a child would stay with me, but I was wrong. I could, as a young teenager,

have not just identified our major tree species in this country, but also given you a little bit of background - ages, height, spread, seeds and so on. Now I'm retired I find I still have a lot to learn.

Having said that, some things are relatively easy, for example our oak trees. We look out of our bedroom to see half-a-dozen oaks (and an ash tree), and the oaks in the nature park are fairly easy to spot – nothing else quite looks like an oak leaf. They are not very large (yet) but seem well-established, but of course oaks have such a long life, and could tell us a thing or two about our history too. Our own family roots include a time in Nottingham, and trips out to Sherwood Forest showed us some ancient oaks there – 800 years old or more.



An aerial photo of trees in the Nature Park @ Dave Wilmore (Elevated Image UK).

At the other end of the scale, my walk into the Nature Park takes me past some young sumach trees, three or four of which line the path down from Caldly Valley Road. They are now, effectively,

wild, but I guess these originally came from someone's back garden, and have either been "passed on" by someone who no longer wants them, or they have "escaped" on their own. What I do know is that they establish themselves very powerfully, spreading from their roots to grow "new" trees alongside themselves.

Rowan, or mountain ash, is one of the Nature Park trees that I can at least identify, and I know that it is, in its origins, native. Its colouring is beautiful, and I also know that its fruit is sort after by the wildlife of the Park. At this time of the year the rowan should be very popular, as it was often planted alongside people's front doors to ward off witches!

But also in the Park are some less-wild trees, one of which is, I believe, a damson tree, with an amazing ability to produce a delight of fruit each summer. Back in Shropshire I could take you to a clump of tress just a mile off the new A5 ring-road round Shrewsbury, and show you some incredibly fruitful damsons, all that remains of a small hamlet that was there 100 years ago!

My last home had one tree which we could spot from an old hill-fort two miles away - a beautiful dark copper beech, which looked glorious in the autumn. Near that fort was a tree that made me go exploring. I was told that there was, just near there, a pear tree that produced, on its own, a world record of Perry in any one year! (And that tree is still there!)

What will people see and remember fifty years from now, do you think? I will be long gone, but the trees will remain!

Paul Towner



Turkey Tail Fungi @ Roy Casey

FUNGI WALK

A number of members enjoyed a great fungi walk in the Nature Park on 14th October with Fungal Punk Dave. The conditions were just right and a good variety of fungi were found.



More fungi @ Carol Lawrence



WILDLIFE MUSING - Part 1

How lucky are we to have a nature park in Great Boughton? It really came into its own during the lockdowns last year when so many people made use of it for their daily exercise. What a pleasure it was to walk there, watching the trees and plants change with the seasons. Listening to the different birds sing each day really lifted my spirits and I was also lucky enough to spot the water vole on several occasions. One evening in the last week of September, I was amazed to see what I believed to be the mother vole with 4 babies swimming and darting in and out of the plants in the small pond near the blue bridge! It was the one time I hadn't taken my phone out with me, so couldn't get any photos, unfortunately.

Due to the pandemic restrictions, my husband and I booked several trips away in Britain in our caravan this year, instead of travelling to Europe. We started in Cornwall in April and saw seals and seabirds, a kittiwake being the most special. In June we went to Brighton where, although the site was just off a busy built up area, we had rabbits galore and one evening a fox strolled casually past our caravan. A week later in the New Forest, we enjoyed seeing the ponies roaming the heathlands, pretty and unusual wildflowers and memorably- a dung beetle pushing....dung (!)

In September, we went to Scotland to see the breathtaking scenery, starting off in the Perth & Kinross area. If anyone is ever up that way, do not miss doing the Birks of Aberfeldy Walk. The beech trees are just beautiful and the walk climbs up and down with pretty waterfalls along the way. Also, the Hermitage Walk in Dunkeld is full of towering Scots pine trees (including what is thought to be Britain's tallest tree).

Moving up to the Highlands around Fort William, we were hoping to spot an eagle or a pine martin, or some other unusual creature during our many walks in forests and around lochs, but it wasn't to be. I really had my fingers crossed when we had 2 days on Skye and signs told us we might spot dolphins or even whales, but again we were disappointed. We did see seals and salmon jumping in the loch and a few buzzards. One of our walks through a forest gave us a chance to see a huge variety of the most weird and wonderful fungi, in so many shapes and colours.

Carol Lawrence

Thank you Carol, that is a lovely description of your encounters. I think photo 4 is of a group of parasol mushrooms but I am happy to be corrected and I have no idea about photo 5. If anyone can ID them please let me know and I will pass the information to Carol.

The next instalment of Carol's travels and wildlife wonders will be in the winter newsletter! **Jacky**

Subscriptions & UK GDPR

We need to ensure that we are continuing to be compliant with the UK General Data Protection Regulations. These concern the way groups like ours collect, handle and protect your personal data. It also covers your data rights. Some of you have recently confirmed that your personal details (name, address & email) can be held by me as Membership Secretary. This data is used only for administrative purposes eg sending you newsletters and from time to time, other information we think might be of interest to you. We do not share your data with any third party. You may remove your name and details from our mailing list at any time by informing me by email to tika3@btinternet.com or in writing to Jacky Creswick, Membership Secretary, 3, Butterbur Close, Huntington, CH3 6BJ. Please use the same procedure to advise us of any changes to your contact details.

As to subs, many thanks for those who have paid already, 165 at the last count & also for donations. If you know you haven't yet paid & can pay by bank transfer but haven't got the necessary code please contact me. Alternatively, please deliver or send your subs, by cash or cheque (payable to the "Friends of Caldly Nature Park") to me at the above address remembering to add your name, email & address.

If you would like to receive your newsletters by e-mail or send articles, photos, poems etc for future use please contact me at tika3@btinternet.com.

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