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This Month's Editor: Terry Smith



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Protecting Birds during March to August Bird Nesting Season

Our nature is in crisis. Trees and hedgerows provide vital food and shelter for wildlife, particularly in urban areas where natural food and cover may be harder to find.

Yet during 2019 there were increasing reports of tree and hedge maintenance works being undertaken within the Borough during the sensitive breeding season.

The law is clear. It is an offence under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built, or to intentionally kill, injure or take chicks or adults, or intentionally take or destroy any eggs (with some exceptions).



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/wildlife-and-the-law/wildlife-and-countryside-act/>

<https://www.trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Public/When-is-the-bird-nest-season>

As this is a criminal offence the police are responsible for enforcing the legislation. Their advice is to call them using the 101 phone number to formally report any suspected illegal activity and make them aware of any evidence you have. This will help them to take swift action to halt works if needed. Please make sure you call as the police cannot act on social media reports.

If no active nests are present, works may legally take place. However RSPB's advice to anyone considering tree or hedgerow management is that any work should be avoided between March and August.

“We don’t just advise this because the law protects active nests, we are also concerned that removing trees and hedgerows during this time can leave nature vulnerable. This is the main breeding season for nesting birds, and where they need our trees and hedgerows the most as they build their home and raise a family. And, our trees and hedgerows are vital for supporting many other species including insects, hedgehogs and much more.”

Your local knowledge is important:

If you believe an individual or organisation is acting unlawfully and undertaking works that put active nests at risk, please follow the steps below.

1. Speak to them and politely mention the risk to birds’ nests and the laws protecting nests. (Contractors often claim they have carried out a “visual inspection” but this often proves to have been inadequate and chicks are harmed in their nests).
2. If they proceed, and you know there is an active nest at risk, contact the police on 101, and ask for a reference number.
3. If you have photographic/video evidence, or recent survey data showing the presence of nesting birds please make the police aware of this.

Tree Nurseries – Terry Smith

In February we made a start on a fence around the tree nursery using material coppiced by Rob.

The unused whips from the hedge planting in Purbrook were given a temporary home in the allotment ready for the next phase.



Left: Eric sharpening stakes.

Above: Banging in the stakes.



The first section of stakes in place.



Whips in the allotment awaiting hedge planting.

Tree Planting at Hampshire Farm Meadows – Brendan Gibb-Gray

Emsworth Tree Wardens have purchased three beautiful Field Maples and one English Oak from Arundel Arboretum at a total cost of £330 and are donating them to Hampshire Farm Meadows. We intend planting them on Saturday 28th March at 10.00am and we will be delighted if other TWs can join in even if it's only to watch and have a cup of tea/coffee with us! This is in a series of many other trees that we have purchased and donated whilst working closely with the Friends of Hampshire Farm Meadows. HBC/Norse have kindly agreed to supply stakes and ties which will save us about £80 and Jamie was instrumental in securing this.
(see Diary Dates)

Trees in Pots – Free to a Good Home

We have been offered a five foot walnut tree and a four foot six horse chestnut tree, both in pots. If you can find a home for either tree, please let us know.

Hayling Update - Eric Walker

Tree Planting Prospects on Hayling

A challenge from HCC to plant 40 trees on Hayling Island early last month now seems highly achievable. We had been working with Wildflower Island last year, so combining tree planting with wildflower mini-meadows this year, will be harmonious for both activities and in the execution. The schools in Mengham are showing interest in trees and wildflower meadows. Lift our eyes a bit and a 5-year programme is in prospect.

More Trees for Hampshire

Half way through February, HCC agreed a budget of £2million for tree planting and wildflower meadows and then a further £830,000 to be invested in 2020/21 to identify and replace trees across Hampshire lost through Ash dieback.

Tree Cover by Constituency

Following on from a request by Keiron Doick at the Petersfield meeting last month, some time has been devoted to data entry onto i-Tree Canopy for some of the Havant Borough wards. This is an office bound job very suitable at this time of year. A flyer describing the project is available at https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/5379/i-Tree_Canopy_Flyer_A5_-_doublesided_4.pdf

Recycling Printer Cartridges

Keeping it simple, Eric Walker is recycling inkjet and laser cartridges. Some (Brother, Canon, HP) will give HBTW a small donation, some (Epson, Kodak) give nothing but the cartridges can be recycled in Plastic Recycling boxes, the rest we cannot recycle. It is said only 15% of the 65 million printer cartridges that are sold in the UK are recycled which means the rest end up in landfill sites and then take 1,000 years to decompose.

Citizen Science

Eric and Polly visited the Treezilla office at the Open University, Milton Keynes in February and were delighted that Treezilla are working on an upgrade to take full advantage of the power of smart phones to input data. Another part of the OU online citizen science work, iSpot is for sharing wildlife observations see www.ispotnature.org/about_us

We were shown the efforts being made to improve tree survey data-sharing across the industry as part of the COMMUNITREE project, Forest Research, TreeWork Environmental Practice, Natural Aptitude and the Open University have produced a draft standard, which has just finished its consultation phase. The proposed standard includes guidelines for all basic surveys as well as assessments of crown dimensions, tree age and health, and site characteristics and should be available later this year. That should be interesting especially if it brings together the British Standards, i-Trees, CAVAT and Treezilla for the urban arboriculture community.

Hedge Work in Nore Barn Wood – Terry Smith

The Friends of Nore Barn Wood held an additional work party in February, filling in gaps with two sections of blackthorn hedge to protect the woodland from salt winds. A barrier was built next to the path to save the young plants from disturbance while they establish and will need some additional work. The hedge will be added to in the next planting season.

Right: This before photo shows the extent of the gaps in the hedge.



Left: The barrier under construction.

Above: The barrier in place.

Photos: Roy Ewing (Friends of Nore Barn Wood)

This is not a Forest - Tesni Clare

Have we forgotten the inherently tangled, interdependent nature of ecosystems, the ecological value of old-growth, the microcosm of habitats provided by diversity?

It struck me recently, walking through the fiercely managed forests of Bellever, Dartmoor, that my childhood experience of forests as rich, tangled, ancient woodlands would not be the experience of many future children.

The word 'forest' in my mind summons the feel and smell of diverse old-growth, towering moss-clad beeches and twisting oaks, dense undergrowth overwhelmed with insects and fungi. Clambering over rocks carpeted in lichen and interspersed with feathery fingers of fern. Landscapes that embody hundreds of years of accumulation and regeneration.



It seems now that a 'forest' can be orderly rows of skinny, non-native conifers, planted too close together for any sunlight to penetrate the forest floor. Eerily empty places hosting a singular species, efficiently grown for human need.

Image: Pine plantation USA. [Soil-Science.info/Flickr](https://www.soil-science.info/flickr/).

Monocrops

The monocrops in Dartmoor are managed for timber but they reminded me of the similarly uninspiring tracts of 'forest' popping up around the world under a recent wave of panicked tree-planting for climate targets.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, the WEF announced its support in planting and restoring *one trillion* trees globally. As forests are sinks that sequester and store atmospheric carbon, increasing forested area is essential to save us from climate dystopia. But growing political momentum on climate change has erupted into a frenzy of over-simplified, blanket solutions: plant an unfathomable number of trees. Every environmental target now seems to be written in this way, as arbitrary targets that become meaningless in their implausibility and simplicity.

Frantically planting trees to 'offset' carbon emissions is part of a wider movement within conservation, known by some critics as 'selling the right to harm'. Poor and damaging behaviour, such as emitting greenhouse gases or destroying biodiversity, is supposedly 'cancelled out' by paying to plant trees or improve biodiversity elsewhere.

A new scheme announced by Defra and the Forestry Commission in November last year aims to increase tree planting by landowners across England. Under the £50m Woodland Carbon Guarantee, newly planted trees will represent 'Woodland Carbon Units' that landowners can sell to the government at a guaranteed price, helping the UK to offset carbon emissions and reach Net Zero by 2050. These long-term payments to landowners should incentivise more tree planting. It sounds so logical, so simple.

Biodiversity

The Forestry Commission is responsible for the management of all publicly-owned forests and the regulation of private forests across the UK.

However, set up to expand Britain's forests after over-extraction during World War I, the organisation is best characterised as a machine for timber production and embodies a vision of productivity and efficiency.

The Commission have been criticised over the years for relying heavily on planting non-native conifers in freakishly uniform rows, severely lacking in biodiversity. Have we forgotten the inherently tangled, interdependent nature of ecosystems, the ecological value of old-growth, the microcosm of habitats provided by diversity?

The reality is, it's not as simple as 'plant trees, save the world'. It matters what kind of trees are planted, where, and how. The urgency and artificiality of planting trees primarily to sequester carbon means selecting faster-growing species such as pine and eucalyptus.

Whilst they store carbon quickly, these trees are planted in tightly-packed monocultures – single species plantations of the same age, incomparable to the variety of form and structure that should characterise a forest. These plantations are known to be ecologically damaging, reducing soil fertility and enhancing fire risk, demanding heavy use of agrichemicals to make up for the missing parts.

Productivity

The picture is complex, because nature is complex. As an example of this complexity, some trees suck up *less* carbon than the grassland they are replacing... but this does not fit our desire for box-ticking solutions.

Doing something rather than nothing is better for your corporate image (and under new schemes better for your bank account) but ironically, some existing permanent grasslands and pastures store more carbon and support greater biodiversity than would a newly planted woodland. We are socially engrained to worship productivity and material outcome. Faster growing wood = more carbon fixed = good. But by myopically focussing on carbon as the valuable 'unit' of a forest, we are blanking out the holism integral to ecology.

If these plantations are to be resilient and survive well into the future, the soil must be healthy and there must be a microcosm of habitats for complimentary species, species that support forests' survival through seed-dispersion, natural fertilisation, pollination, and so on. As Richard Powers writes in *The Overstory*, 'everything depends on everything else'.

Offsetting

And what if the planting frenzy merely justifies destruction elsewhere? The offset model purports that forest loss in one place can be mitigated by planting elsewhere – take the political promises of 'no net biodiversity loss' for HS2, the high-speed mega-construction set to slice through the countryside.

But clearing vast areas of old pasture or ancient woodland would take 500 years to replace. Trees are slow, ancient, careful creatures that cannot be easily coerced into an anthropocentric regime that values quick, blueprint solutions.

Plantations are worlds away from ancient woodlands. Worryingly, by paying for carbon offsets in the form of new plantations, consumers and businesses are given the false impression of having no negative effect on the planet. What we should be focussing most of our attention on is *protecting* the ancient forests that exist, not planting trillions more trees.

Whilst the urgency of tree-planting for climate change mitigation is very real, our conception of what a forest is matters. Visions translate into material outcomes, and if we're not careful, we'll end up with a world blanketed in rows of short-rotation monocrops, poor in biodiversity, ironically justified under the banner of environmentalism.

Forests are more than just carbon-sucking units: they are mystical, tangled, elaborate worlds that cannot be captured by statistics and targets.

This article was reproduced (with permission) from The Ecologist.

Tesni Clare is an environmental journalist based in Bristol.

Diary Dates - March

Monday 2nd March 10.00am – 4.00pm - HBTW Work Party in The Queen's Inclosure

(postponed from 24th February)

Our main task will be finishing the removal of invasive plants from the main pond. We will also dig out and reinforce the sides of a small pond to encourage frogs to spawn.

Wellington boots, waterproof jackets, trousers and gloves will be useful. Please bring a packed lunch, refreshments and a high visibility vest if you have one.

Meet at the main entrance in Park Lane, Cowplain, PO8 8AB at 10.00am.

Parking in Park Lane (please do not park on the verge) or in Winscombe Avenue.

Sunday 8th March 1.00pm – Tree Planting

Celebrate 10 years of Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens by planting 10 heritage fruit trees in Victoria Street Pocket Park. Tools will be provided but wear stout shoes & gloves.

Victoria Street, Portsmouth PO1 4NR.

Wednesday 11th March 6.00pm – 7.00pm – Talk on Microplastics

Marine Biologist Serena Cunsolo will illustrate the nature of plastic marine pollution.

Free tickets but booking essential.

The Portland Building, Portland Street, Portsmouth PO1 3AH

<https://www.port.ac.uk/news-events-and-blogs/events/how-to-solve-the-problem-of-microplastics-in-the-aquatic-ecosystem>

Thursday 12th March 7.45pm – Talk on Flora and Fauna of Farlington Marshes

Chris Lycett, Wildlife Trust warden of the Nature Reserve will be talking to the Friends of Portsdown about the wildlife on the marshes. Admission £2.

Church of the Resurrection Hall, Brecon Avenue, Drayton PO6 2AW.

Sunday 15th March 1.00pm – Tree Planting

Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens are continuing the Charles Dickens Orchard Trail.

All are welcome to help.

Meet at Treadgolds Museum, 1a Bishops Street, Portsmouth PO1 3DA.

Tuesday 17th March 7.30pm - Talk on Global Warming

Dr Nick Pepin, a Reader in Climate Science in the School of the Environment, Geography & Geosciences at the University of Portsmouth, will give an illustrated talk for the Friends of Langstone Harbour. All are welcome.

The Drayton Centre, 238 Havant Road, Drayton, Portsmouth PO6 1PA

For further information contact John Goodspeed john@havantnature.net .

Wednesday 18th March 7.30pm – 9.30pm - Talk on St Clair's Meadow Nature Reserve

An illustrated talk about the wildlife trust's newest reserve in Soberton where water voles thrive on the River Meon, with birds and insects in abundance.

Organised by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, South Downs Group.

St Wilfrid's Church Hall, Padnell Road, Cowplain, PO8 8DZ

Free Parking. Non members welcome. Admission £3 donation including refreshments.

Contact: Rosemary Clarke e-mail: raclarke57@gmail.com

Saturday 21st March 10.00am – 1.00pm – HBTW Hedge Planting

The hedge at Stockheath Common has had some infill planting in recent years. We have 200 whips to fill more of the gaps. We will be joined by The Friends of The Hermitage Stream.

Stockheath Common, Stockheath Lane, Leigh Park

The nearest post code is PO9 4QS (Riders Lane) which is next to the common.

Parking in Riders Lane or Stockheath Lane.

Wednesday 25th March 7.30pm – 9.30pm - Talk on The Havant Thicket Reservoir Project

An illustrated talk by Trevor Codlin of Portsmouth Water on the plans to build a reservoir in Havant Thicket and its implications for wildlife.

Organised by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust - Havant, Hayling & Emsworth Group
Warblington School, Southleigh Road, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 2RR

Contact: Andrew Powling on 02392 258457 e-mail: apowling01@btinternet.com

Saturday 28th March 10.00am - Tree Planting at Hampshire Farm Meadows

Emsworth Tree Wardens have purchased three beautiful Field Maples and one English oak from Arundel Arboretum at a total cost of £330 and are donating them to Hampshire Farm Meadows. All welcome.

Hampshire Farm Meadows, Skylark Avenue, Emsworth PO10 7GE

Monday 30th March 10.00am – 4.00pm - HBTW Work Party in The Queen's Inclosure

Please bring a packed lunch, refreshments, gloves and a high visibility vest if you have one.

Meet at the main entrance in Park Lane, Cowplain, PO8 8AB at 10.00am.

Parking in Park Lane (please do not park on the verge) or in Winscombe Avenue.

Diary Dates - April

Friday 3rd April 3.00pm – 5.00 pm - Havant Conservation Forum

An opportunity for Conservation Groups within Havant Borough to meet and update each other on activities.

Talk by Chris Smith about his work at Groundwork and the catchment monitoring scheme.

The Community Room, Asda Superstore Havant, Larchwood Avenue, Havant PO9 3QW

Newsletter Contributions

Please submit newsletter contributions to hbctreewardens@gmail.com

Deadline for next issue: 24th March 2020

Photographs illustrating articles or photographs on their own (with captions) would be appreciated. If you are not the photographer, please check you have permission and say who is so that credit can be given. To keep file sizes manageable, please avoid sending high resolution images. The ideal image size is 250KB or less.

If you embed images in documents, please also send the images as attachments.

Please let us know if you have ideas for future articles or subjects you would like to see included.

Would you like your own copy of this newsletter?

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to request your own copy, please send an e-mail to hbctreewardens@gmail.com

Membership of Havant Borough Tree Wardens

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in trees. We do not currently charge a membership fee and, although we need members who want to be involved in practical tasks or the running of the network, we also welcome supporters. If you would like to become a member, please request a membership application form by e-mail to hbctreewardens@gmail.com or download it from our website. <https://groups.tcv.org.uk/havantboroughtreewardens/>

Donations

If you would like to make a donation to Havant Borough Tree Wardens, payments can be made into our bank account.

Account No: 84937017

Sort Code: 55-70-34

Please include your name as a reference.

Havant Borough Community Lottery

You can also support us through the Havant Borough Community Lottery. You have the chance to win up to £25,000, plus additional prizes in special draws, and we receive 50p from every £1 ticket. A further 10p is paid into a community fund and grants for specific projects are distributed from the fund to eligible good causes every six months.

<https://www.havantlottery.co.uk/support/havant-borough-tree-wardens>