



Future events:

Walk and Talk – Exe Estuary

Our next walk-and-talk is planned for the summer solstice on 21 June, when we plan to meet at 6pm by the 'Duck pond' and walk along the estuary, taking in the Tiny Forest in Carter Avenue along the way.

Further information will be sent out nearer the time.

Stantyway Farm Tour, 3 May

On a warm sunny day that could have been midsummer, sixteen of us were treated to a tour of Stantyway Farm with the farmer Sam Walker and naturalist and photographer David White, who has extensive knowledge of the wildlife on the farm.

We all climbed into the transporter and Sam (walker) the farmer drove us all the farm explaining how he runs the farm for the benefit of wildlife.



The photograph show Sam in the tractor driving us around his farm. Stantyway is a 300 acre organic mixed farm which produces wheat, oats, beans, grass, lucerne and clover to sell to specialist organic markets or to feed to our suckler cows and their calves.

They are currently in Organic Countryside Stewardship with a particular emphasis on protecting endangered Cirl Buntings. They have helped to create suitable habitats and the organic farming system they operate benefits a wide range of species. They leave hedges uncut, the fields have grass margins, and over 6 acres of unharvested wheat and small seed crops help to feed the birds. They are also experimenting with wild bird seed strips, sunflowers and cutting grassy rides in areas of scrub.

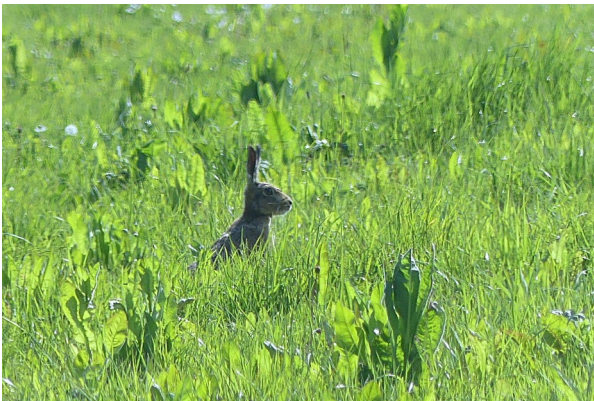
We learned that chicory (which we saw growing here during our walk-and-talk last year) is a natural wormer. We also learned how the government subsidies they currently receive for organic farming will end later this year, and future funding sources are unclear. As tenant farmers Sam and Nell will have to find a way to follow their

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passion and still make enough profit to pay the rent.

As Sam promised, we saw hares, in fact two of the fields had a number of hares in them and we had a very good view of them, and stopped for some time to watch them. .



Hare. Photo by Diane Gee.

David White (a local naturalist who has been following wildlife on the farm for a number of years), told us the females were probably giving the males the runaround in order to select the strongest to mate with. He also told us that rabbits, when disturbed, run away with their tails up as a warning to others from their warren (white tails showing), whereas hares run away with their tails down – they just have a scrape in the field so don't need to warn others.. Another distinguishing feature is the black tips on the ears of the hare.



'Countryfile corner'

Sam drove us up to 'Countryfile corner' with fantastic views across Ladram Bay and entertained us with a description of his experience of filming for the programme.

The hedgerows and wide field margins were full of wild flowers and butterflies, and a skylark rose and sang for us at Countryfile Corner.

At the wooden gate Sam stopped for those who wanted to walk back through the fields with David - everyone chose to do this.





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We were rewarded with the sight and sound of a number of skylarks, and we heard curl buntings, but sadly did not manage to see any. Cirl bunting.



Wild radish

We saw wild radish sprinkled through the grass, and vetches among the field margins. We also identified this ground ivy and found quite a lot of scarlet pimpernel. In the meadow field.



Ground Ivy



Scarlet pimpernel.

On the corner of a field Simon picked up two pellets, which David thought might be from a buzzard.



Bird of Prey Pellets

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Even though we were quite a crowd we were constantly aware of the birdsong, and the sense of peace and calm in this stunning location. No wonder Sam says farming here is his hobby here, because he loves his work so much.

It was a fabulous day, and quite a few of us took advantage of the Honesty Cafe after the walk, and stopped for a drink and a chat. Sam's wife Nell had made sure it was well stocked for us!

Back at the farm we could hear the swift calls which are generated by an MP3 player and a couple of small speakers. Sam told us about how important swifts had been to his father, and so he is very keen to attract them to the farm.

With cirl bunting, skylark, linnet, chaffinch, and goldfinch calling Stantyway home, they would make a great addition – but Sam needs to generate louder swift calls to attract them, and is looking for an MP3 player, some better speakers and the know-ho to get it working. If you can help please get in touch with Sam!

Lympstone's Environmental Action Day, 17th May

On a sunny Saturday in May, Wild About Lympstone (WAL) held a successful day of events and activities for the whole family.

The very popular 1000 plant giveaway was so successful that all 1400 plants we snapped up before the end of the event! We hope that our local pollinators will be very happy with all the new wild flowers gracing the village's gardens and providing them with lots of nourishment.



1000 plant giveaway.

In addition to the plant giveaway, there were stands from local groups including Lympstone's Water Quality Group, and our local Water Guardians who provided the

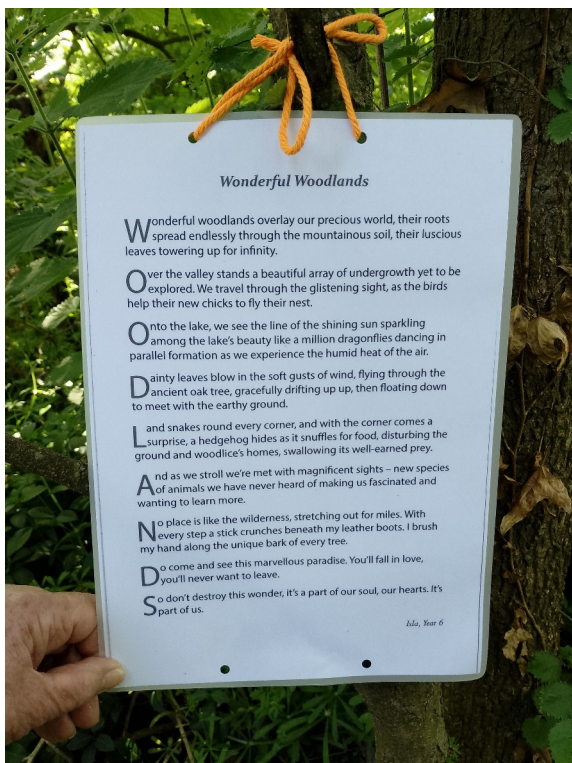
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opportunity to have a go at some hands-on water quality testing. The local school and cub scout group also had displays about the water quality testing they had done in Wotton Brook, which runs through the village to the estuary.

RSPB had a stand with fun activities to learn more about wildlife, and Devon Swift Project was a big draw, with about 40 people taking the tour up the church to learn about the new swift boxes that have been installed.

There was a wellbeing nature walk following a trail of poems from our Nature, Health and Wellbeing book, which provided pause points along the way...



Katie Wilkinson of the 'Wilder Communities' project brought a DWT stand with a focus on the wildlife garden awards, and the actions people can take to support and encourage wildlife in their own garden.

The Eco-church group had a stand with a thought-provoking Eco-game, and children were crafting with recycled materials.

This was a free community event, and the only fundraising activity was the silent auction of Louise Banks' beautiful framed original 'Lympstone Wildlife Map', which generated important funds to help to enhance the local natural environment.

Encouraging people to get involved is an important part of what WAL try to do, and people were encouraged to 'get involved, by making small individual changes, or by connecting with people and groups who already look after our natural environment - everything from litter-picking to helping with the garden at the village train station.

WAL is grateful for the support of the many groups and individuals who came together to make the day a success.

Mary Turner

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Wildlife Garden Award

Could you qualify for a Wildlife Garden Award?

To attract wildlife to your garden you need to provide opportunities for wildlife to get food, water and shelter. You may also need to manage your garden a little differently. To enter the scheme you must have at least 10 of the features below, with at least two from each area (food, water, shelter, management and connectivity).

In return you will receive an award plaque to proudly display on your gate, wall or door, and a wildlife garden themed booklet packed with hints and tips for inspiration (Devon residents only).



Water for wildlife

You can apply via DWT's website at <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/wildlife-garden-award>

Follow DWT Bystock Reserve Volunteers on X (formerly Twitter):



@DWT_ExmouthLG

The Bystock newsletter, issued quarterly, is full of updates and information about species to look out for at the reserve.

What's happening in and around Exmouth

The Exmouth area has many local groups which are doing their bit for nature, and many individuals are doing their bit too.

We would love to hear from you about what you or your group have been doing, or about events that may interest our members.
