



wkps

Watch on the Weald

Newsletter of the Weald of Kent Protection Society

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What a Wonderful Weald
Help us keep it that way

What a Wonderful Weald and COVID-19

Not long before going to press we eased out of lockdown, shops, pubs and restaurants opened, and holidays were permitted, then the wearing of face-coverings became mandatory in certain places. These are unnerving times and we can only carry on taking the necessary precautions to protect ourselves and others.

There have been some amazing stories of surviving the virus, and extraordinarily sad stories of those that haven't.

The usual events of village life and of communities have been cancelled and we need to keep our distance from, well...almost everyone.

While we humans fight an invisible enemy, nature and wildlife gets on with doing what it does, our landscape changes with the seasons, everything continues - blissfully unaware.

WKPS strives to protect and enhance our wonderful Weald and yet, the Weald and the rural landscape seems to have protected and nurtured its inhabitants throughout the COVID crisis. How many of you, like me, have thought about how lucky we are to feel relatively safe in our environment, to be able to go outside, walk in the woods and countryside, and to feel ever so slightly removed from it all? It's a remarkable place to live at the best of times and in one of the worst of times, it is all the more remarkable and more precious than ever.

We take the opportunity here to thank all those in our villages and communities who have kept us fed and watered, the volunteers who have set up action groups to take care of people in need, all the unsung heroes, and, of course, all those fighting to save lives.

Peta Grant
Planning Committee Secretary

Producing wine in the Weald of Kent

Woodchurch Wine celebrates its 10th birthday this year. It was established when Graham and Donna Barbour decided to set out on a venture to create their own wine from vines grown in the beautiful Kent countryside. The Weald of Kent's landscape is blessed with warmer and drier weather than most of the country and grapevines thrive under these conditions. So, when Graham and Donna found a piece of land for sale on the edge of the picturesque village of Woodchurch set on hills looking south over the ancient Romney marsh down to the Channel, they knew instantly this was the site they had been looking for.

In May 2010, 10,000 Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier vines were planted and the journey was begun. The first harvest was in October 2012 bringing in a small 2 tonne crop. To put that in perspective those same vines produced 40 tonnes in 2018!

Since the first two sparkling wines were released in 2015 the range has now increased to 3 sparkling and 3 still wines. Woodchurch has won many international awards for their wine over the years including 2 gold medals and their sparkling Rosé was recently voted Kent's Best Wine in the 2020 Taste of Kent Awards. This is testament to the delicious grapes grown in the perfect location in the Weald of Kent.

Woodchurch is an eco-friendly operation. They love to encourage wildlife with nesting boxes for owls and kestrels and the vineyard makes a home for a host of other



animals including rabbits, badgers, foxes, pheasants, and partridges. No insecticides have ever been used and any other chemical use is kept to a minimum. The grasses around the vineyard are left to grow long to promote wildlife and wildflowers too.

The philosophy of low impact and natural vineyard management is carried through to the winemaking process as well. A minimum intervention approach means the wines retain as much of their natural fruit flavours as possible and the unique essence of fruit grown in Kent is preserved.

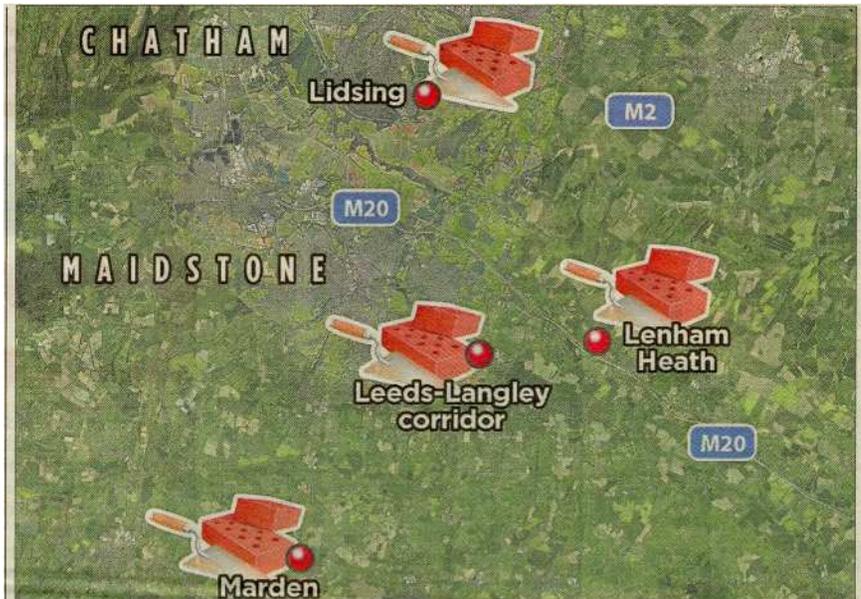
Why not come and visit Woodchurch vineyard? The cellar door shop has now re-opened after the lockdown and is currently open every weekend. Customers can purchase wine to take home, they can also walk around the vineyard at their leisure or do a self-guided tour. <https://woodchurchwine.co.uk/pages/visit-us>

Planning News

WKPS Planning Committee has continued its work throughout the lockdown period and comments have been submitted in the usual way to the LPAs, though these have been few in number.

TWBC Local Plan Timetable - The public consultation to the Draft Local Plan, last autumn, yielded over 8,000 individual comments resulting in a revised timetable to give additional time to consider the contributions made. The next consultation stage will now take place in March/April 2021.

MBC Local Plan (adopted 2017) - Garden Community Developments for housing. MBC received nine proposals for garden communities, the sites are the subject of a review as part of the Local Plan process. Public consultations are due in October 2020 and February 2021. See the attached newspaper article.



The Local Plan review has seen Maidstone council look at potential sites and select four for large-scale garden community developments to progress
Image copyright: Google Earth

Garden community schemes are cut to four **Council states** where thousands of homes could go

By Katie Heslop
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@KHeslopKM

Sites for potential garden communities of thousands of homes in the borough of Maidstone have been whittled down.

In 2019, nine locations were offered by landowners to Maidstone Council as potential locations for large-scale developments.

But following evaluations by consultants, the number now stands at four and the seal of approval by councillors is a long way off.

The authority's current Local plan was agreed in 2017, with 883 homes planned to be built a year until 2031.

However, by 2022 its annual housing target will rise to 1,236 and as part of its Local Plan Review, the council is looking for suitable places to put the homes.

During a Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee meeting Philip Coyne, interim director for the Local Plan Review, gave councillors an



An impression of Heathlands
Picture: Barton Willmore

update on its progress.

He said that during a call for sites, it received nine proposals for garden communities, that were quickly reduced to seven.

These seven were: Lidsing, which is north of the M2, Binbury Park, at Detling, a group of sites north of Staplehurst, the council's own Heathlands scheme in Lenham, a site north of Marden, Pagehurst Farm and a group of sites around the Leeds-Langley corridor.

After examining whether the locations could deliver the numbers required and access

to transport and infrastructure, independent consultants were left with the following options: Lidsing, Heathlands, north of Marden and the Leeds-Langley corridor.

These are now being looked at in a second examination stage, with issues such as the costs of development, building and infrastructure at the forefront.

Doubt however was cast on the Leeds-Langley site, as discussions are on going about whether the plans can be bought forward "within the plan period".

"This work will come together at the end of July," Mr Coyne said. He stressed all of the original sites are still part of the Local Plan process and will remain so until it is determined that there are sufficient site options to recommend a sustainable strategy of house building.

This will need to be agreed by councillors, subjected to public consultation and put to a planning inspector. A second public consultation for the review is due in October, with a further round in February.

Kent Messenger
Maidstone Edition
11th June 2020

Upper Beult Farmer Cluster

The formation of Farmer Clusters is a new initiative designed to bring farming and conservation closer together. Farmer Clusters are groups of farmers with the shared interests of a defined geographical area, working collectively to benefit soil, water and wildlife at a landscape scale. They are a great forum for sharing best practice, and for trialling innovative farming techniques. The groups set their own programmes of learning events and workshops and clusters can help signpost funding opportunities, or shape future strategy.

The Upper Beult Farmer Cluster runs through the east WKPS area, taking in the seasonal and feeder streams of the River Beult which rise around Great Chart, Shadoxhurst and High Halden. These streams form two main stems to the river, the northernmost running below the Greensand Ridge and joining the southern stem at Haffenden Quarter. The Beult then leaves its upper catchment at Smarden running on through Headcorn and Staplehurst to eventually join the Medway at Yalding.



Southern Water are looking to invest in the Upper Beult Cluster to enable them to work with farmers towards the end goal of a reduced incidence of pesticides and other pollutants reaching the watercourse. Beyond that, the Government's evolving Environmental Land Management Scheme is likely to recognise farmer clusters as an important means of justifying public money for public goods in new schemes for farming subsidies.

Cluster members are working towards a better understanding of exactly what they have in terms of habitat structure and vegetation dynamics and they will work on a landscape scale, which is vital in making more space for nature. The overall objective will be for farmers to find ways of putting back more than is being lost and in the new world they can only be expected to be paid for goods and services that are wanted – space for nature, soil conservation, carbon storage, watercourse improvement, Natural Flood Management and enhance public access.

In the wildlife context, farmers will be encouraged to think about the wildlife they want to see on their own farms, arriving at priority species lists and developing habitat accordingly. The cluster area will be surveyed and mapped to identify objectives and optimise conservation impact, so that we then learn to love our own backyard.

Members of the cluster will focus on outcomes, and experience has already proved that the more neighbours work together,

the more benefits will result. Outcomes will come from processes, and processes take time. Members are encouraged to enhance anything - field corners, scrub, ponds, ditches, boundary trees, hedges and archaeology. With enhancement of habitats will come the opportunity to create new, having identified the baselines and increased awareness to improve habitat management.

The Upper Beult Cluster was initiated a little over six months ago and, despite Covid, we already have over 5,000 acres signed up. An interesting journey lies ahead.

Mike Bax

The Amelia

The former Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery is at an exciting stage in its long history, even though it currently has less of a visible presence. The display galleries closed in November 2018 in preparation for a National Lottery Heritage Funded (NLHF) project to create The Amelia. Tunbridge Wells' new and exciting Cultural and Learning space will bring together books, objects, documents, photographs, and visual art housed in a vibrant and revitalised building, named after the suffragist and Tunbridge Wells resident Amelia Scott. This integrated service will be housed in two of Tunbridge Wells' most important Grade II listed buildings which are currently undergoing major renovation, including a beautiful extension to link them. The new audience-centred building will bring alive unexpected stories about Tunbridge Wells and will challenge perceptions of the town with an ambitious and exciting programme of exhibitions and events.

The original museum was founded in 1885 by medical doctor and philanthropist George Abbott and was managed in its early days by the grandly named Tunbridge Wells Natural History and Philosophical Society that Dr Abbott also set up. As well as featuring the history, archaeology and natural history of Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding High Weald area, the rich and diverse collections also reflect the enthusiasms of the three earliest curators, who together spanned 80 years and added costume, toys, and the local craft of Tunbridge ware to the mix.

George Abbott and his supporters – who included photographic pioneer Henry Peach Robinson and maverick clergyman, Darwinian and marine biologist Thomas Stebbing – were also involved in the development of library and adult education services in the town. It is appropriate that the Amelia Scott building will bring these services back together in the integrated fashion that their founders envisaged.

During the closure period, The Amelia's active engagement team continues to share collections and knowledge around the town and adjacent High Weald area, and the NLHF Activity Plan which accompanies the physical building programme includes a varied range of exciting community projects. A selection of fascinating and iconic objects from the collections are showcased in the temporary library (closed during the current lockdown) in the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre. These include bones of the local dinosaur *Iguanodon* which roamed the Weald 135 million years ago; an original Pantile from the paving paid for by the future Queen Anne to improve access to the chalybeate spring; and a silver-plated sample of telephone cable reflecting the Victorian town's bid to be at the forefront of new technology.



Collections displayed in the restored and extended Amelia Scott building, opening in 2022, will include a gallery exploring Tunbridge Wells' unique history as a town created from scratch to cater to the needs of the country's earliest tourists; a room dedicated to the natural history and archaeology of the High Weald; and a gallery featuring costume, folk art, our local photographic pioneers, and the remarkable souvenir industry of Tunbridge ware. There will be an all new archive and local history centre, a large temporary exhibition space, and open and viewable storage.

You can learn more about our collections and local stories, and the current interim services, as well as following the progress of the overall development project, by visiting our website at <https://theamelia.co.uk>. This also provides links to our social media channels.

Gunfounding in the Weald of Kent

Rudyard Kipling celebrated the gun foundries in the Weald in his lines:

*See you the dimpled track that runs,
All hollow through the wheat?
O that was where they hauled the guns
That smote King Philip's fleet!*
(from Puck's Song)

He was not strictly correct, though, as Queen Elizabeth I's navy was reluctant to use the new cast-iron cannons that had begun to be produced in the 1540s, preferring old fashioned wrought iron and expensive bronze guns. Nevertheless, the iron furnaces in Kent and Sussex gained their reputation because, for more than 200 years, most of the guns carried on the ships that set out from these shores were made in the Weald. The first gun foundries were in Sussex but by the late 1560s Michael Weston of Leigh would be casting guns at Cowden Furnace. Soon after that Sir Alexander Culpeper began gunfounding at Bedgebury, though he did not continue for long. Cannon in those days had strange names according to the weight of the ball they fired: among them were falcons, minions and sakers, all named after sporting birds of prey; also there were culverins and the intriguingly named 'Cannon of 7' which fired a shot weighing 42 pounds. The threat from Spain brought more foundries into the gun trade. Among them was Thomas Johnson — the royal gunfounder — and he was casting at Horsmonden when a government survey of ironworks was carried out in 1588.

Horsmonden (which was also known as Brenchley, or Serenden, Furnace) was to play a crucial role in the history and development of cannon making. Johnson's successor, Thomas Browne established a dynasty of gunfounders that lasted there for nearly a century. To begin with business was hard to come by as his son, John, only had the patent to cast guns for the navy, not for merchant vessels, and the long peace that held before the outbreak of the Civil War meant that he had little work to keep his furnace in blast. He diversified by casting bronze guns and experimenting with lighter guns called 'drakes'.

Kent declared for parliament in the Civil War and John Browne cast cannon for them but was accused, as royal gunfounder, of supplying the king as well.

However, with no other founder available Browne kept his business, which flourished when orders for naval guns increased as war broke out with the Dutch. George Browne, John's son, had succeeded him in 1651 and managed the family's furnaces for the next 24 years, demand making it necessary to lease other ironworks, including those at Bedgebury and Hawkhurst.

Two more generations of Brownes continued the business, but the final years were marred by misjudgement in the casting of an expensive new type of cannon, the 'nealed and turned' guns, that had been promoted by Prince Rupert, King Charles II's uncle. They were supposed to be superior to the normal ones, but their performance did not justify their price and the government eventually cancelled its warrants. Unfortunately, the Brownes had paid to have guns cast in anticipation of orders that never came, and they ran out of money. In 1692 John Browne's great-grandson, also John, relinquished the title of King's Gunfounder.

The furnaces at Cowden and at Barden, near Tonbridge, which had been casting guns since the 1570s, were the last ones in Kent to continue to do so in the 18th century, both closing down in 1771 when their ironmaster, William Bowen, whose home was in Southborough, died.

Jeremy Hodgkinson
www.wealdeniron.org.uk



42-Pounder 'nealed and turned' gun cast by John Browne in 1673, at Chatham Historic Dockyard

Countryside Code



Respect - Protect - Enjoy

The Countryside Code sets out the responsibilities of visitors to the countryside and those who manage the land.

The Code was last updated in 2016. It has roots in the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 and before that in the historic Country Code. The Countryside Code sets out the principles of behaviour in the countryside. It is supported by numerous related instructions and some laws covering everything from the rules around camping in Open Access areas, to the public's Right to Roam and to the farmer's right to shoot out-of-control dogs. All of this can be found on the internet. Of course, a visitor is not necessarily a townie; it could be someone from the next village or from your own village.

The Countryside Code discusses visitors' behaviours under three headings:

Respect - Protect - Enjoy

Respect other people

remember that your actions may affect people's lives and livelihoods

Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors

don't block gateways, slow/stop for horses, follow farmer's directions moving animals etc.

Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

report distressed animals to a farmer; don't climb over walls, hedges, fences and ruins

Protect the natural environment

this is a responsibility for all of us, both now and for future generations

Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home

do not damage rocks, plants and trees; littering is a criminal offence, report unattended fires

Keep dogs under effective control

keep your dog on a lead or in sight and obedient; go only where you have permission (see below)

Enjoy the outdoors

even when going out locally, get the latest access information first

Plan ahead and be prepared

look up current websites etc, understand changes in weather, tell someone when you will return

Follow advice and local signs

get to know the signs that show paths and open countryside (read the Countryside Code Leaflet)

Advice for land managers

Know your rights, responsibilities and liabilities

people generally want to do the right thing but need your help

By law rights of way must be kept clear; misleading signs are a criminal offence

most visitors prefer to follow a visible route using proper access points – gates etc.

If in doubt contact your local council

Make it easy for visitors to act responsibly

problems are normally due to a lack of understanding

Keep paths clear and signs in good order

create gaps in hedges and fences where there is a public right of way

Set an example by getting rid of farm rubbish

Identify possible threats to visitors' safety

ensure that your activities do not knowingly put visitors at risk

Draw attention to any man-made or natural hazards on your land

try to avoid electric fencing or barbed wire alongside narrow paths and bridleways

Ensure warning signs are visible

this applies to electric fencing and to stored chemicals and poisonous substances

Animals likely to attack visitors should not be allowed to roam freely where the public has access - you may be liable for any resulting harm.

The Right to Roam

Following from The Countryside Code are the rules associated with Rights of Way, accessing land and the Right to Roam.

You can access some land across England without having to use paths. This land is known as 'open access land' or 'access land'. It includes mountains, moors, heaths and downs that are privately owned. It also includes common land registered with the local council and some land around the England Coastal Path. Your right to access this land is called the 'right to roam' or 'freedom to roam'. We do not have such open areas in the Weald, but we have about 20 forests and woods with public access. You can see their locations on the Woodland Trust website. They are linked by our huge network of footpaths, bridleways and byways.



Seven of these wooded Weald sites are designated open access sites. They are shown in yellow with a buff-coloured border on the OS Explorer series maps - Bedgebury, Hemsted and Orlestone Forests (Forestry Commission), Dering Wood and Comforts Wood (Woodland Trust), Sissinghurst Woods (National Trust) and Hothfield Common (joint Ashford BC and Kent Wildlife Trust). The remainder are also in private ownership (for example Angley Woods) but have paths, bridleways and/or byways passing through them. Each has its own notices at the access points.

Each site encourages walking, with or without a 'well-behaved' dog, and mobility scooters where appropriate. Each of them also has its rules – on horse-riding or cycling for example, or in some cases a closure time to protect ground-nesting birds. The various websites encourage prospective visitors to check for the site-specific rules. However, it is fair to say that interpretation of the rules relies heavily on common-sense.

There is no Right to Roam on farmland. Access is solely on footpaths, bridleways and byways. unless specific permission is given by the landowner. The duty of dog-walkers is put most succinctly in the National Trust notice shown. Generally, farmers and landowners are fairly sympathetic during lockdown, but they retain the right to shoot a dog if it is worrying livestock.

David Northcroft

Hemsted Forest

You probably already know the meaning of the various place names of the Weald ('wooded place'). 'Hurst' (as in Staplehurst and Hurst Green) refers to a wooded hillside, while 'Den' (as in Tenterden and Benenden) looks back to the time when, in the early post-Roman dark ages, the Weald was largely made up of oak and beech woods, and divided into dens where pigs would be put out to forage. Benenden contained around 40 of the more than 1000 dens across the Weald, and its trees were known to be particularly fruitful.

Hemsted Park lies at the junction of two major Roman roads - one north-south, the other east-west - that ran through the Weald. It is a place steeped in Roman history and there are still ruins throughout the area. After 1066, Hemsted was gifted to Odo, Earl of Kent, by his half-brother, William the Conqueror. A certain Robert of Hemsted built a moated manor on the site in the early 1200s.

It then passed to the wealthy Guldeford family, who were gifted the manor by Richard II. The Guldefords owned property and land throughout the county and were the family chiefly responsible for the "innings" that reclaimed the Camber estuary and the land around the Isle of Oxney from the sea in the 14th and 15th centuries. Elizabeth 1st visited the Guldefords at the house in the 16th century.

The current property - initially rented, then purchased, by Benenden School - was built in the mid-1800s. It was at this time that the area of woodland north of the park - Hemsted Forest - was bought by the town of Cranbrook (the 'Cran' in the name is the Old English word for heron). It is now a surprisingly variegated site of 400 acres managed by the Forestry Commission. There are more than five miles of well-maintained tracks and a rich and diverse range of trees.

While the main impression is of conifers - there are numerous Douglas fir and pine trees - these are a relatively recent addition, having been planted by a local community group after the area was devastated by the Great Storm of 1987.

More typical of the area are the sweet chestnut trees that grow throughout the forest and are coppiced in several areas. It was long thought that the Romans brought these trees to the UK (and their presence here would support the theory); scientists have recently proven that the trees only came to the country in the mid-12th century. There are alder and crack willow in the valley that runs along one side of the forest, where the Crane Brook runs and several dank and marshy pools are formed. Higher up, you'll find beech and birch thickly planted, with an ever-changing under-growth of bluebells, brambles and wood anemones.



Look out for crossbills in the pine trees here – the forest is one of the best places to see the birds outside of Scotland, and the rarer parrot crossbills have been seen several times here. There are also regular hawfinches, ravens and even the occasional goshawk.

Alex Preston, who lives in Sandhurst, is a prize-winning novelist and journalist who writes for *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*. His last book, *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*, was a best-selling reflection on birds in literature. His next novel, *Winchelsea*, is set in the Weald and tells of the smugglers of the Hawkhurst Gang. Alex appears regularly on BBC radio and television.

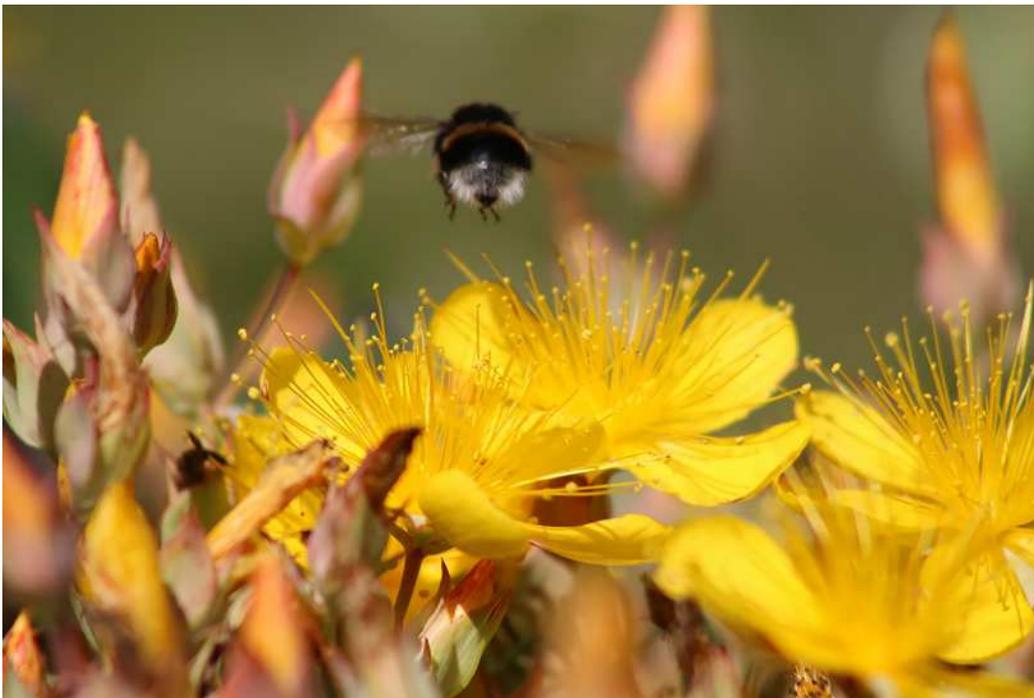
Lucky Lockdown - time to be still and look

I don't know about you, but over the last few years I have been concerned that I have seen less and less wildlife in my garden. What happened to the dormice, turtle doves, spotted flycatchers, stoats, adders, grass snakes and lizards I used to see? Where are the butterflies? Well, I cannot say they have all been there all the time and I missed them, but over the last few months when we have been asked to stay home there has been time to sit still and look, it's surprising what you see.

I am lucky to have a large garden in a house we have lived in for nearly 20 years. From day one we tried to make the garden a combination of nice space to be in, supplier of vegetables, a wildlife friendly habitat and a place to let some chickens do their thing. This year, being forced to spend much more time in my home environment I have learned to appreciate just how successful we have been. I cannot say all the wildlife we have ever seen has been rediscovered, but I am happy to say we have a growing list of species that we are proud to host.

The pond we made contains palmate newts and great diving beetles, and in lockdown I had the unexpected pleasure to see both an adult grass snake and some babies swimming across the water, that means they are breeding which is great news. Over the last month we have been treated to the small firework displays that are glow worms in a few of our flower borders, and whilst looking out one evening as twilight approached a tawny owl actually perched on our bird feeder - no doubt using it as handy perch to look for the wood mice which live in the compost heap, and come out at night to clean up any seeds dropped by the birds during the day.

We have a growing list of birds using the trees, hedges, bird boxes and the roof space to make nests. This year as well as blue tits, great tits, blackbirds and wrens, in our roof we have had at least 4 starling nests and more sparrow nests than I can count. Whitethroats and blackcaps nested in the hedge and we were lucky to have both song thrushes and nuthatches nesting too. We have a long established maternity colony of brown long eared bats in the roof, and I spent a couple of early mornings watching them fly home to their roost site as dawn approaches just to make sure they are still there and doing well.



All this as well as more butterflies than I can remember seeing for some time, orange tips, holly blues, commas, red admirals, peacocks, skippers and of course cabbage whites to name but a few. Add to this many bees, like common carder and buff tailed, as well as beetles like the violet ground beetle and other bees, beetles and insects I struggle to name, and it makes me feel that being asked to sit still in one place has made me look much more closely at what is actually right on my doorstep. I have made a pact with myself to spend more time sitting, looking and listening and less time rushing around. It's not only good for the wildlife - I believe it's good for me too.

Caroline Brent

Reconnecting with Nature

I have come to learn to love nature. When I was growing up, I was fortunate enough to be surrounded by lots of nature and wildlife. My parents had moved about, but we had always been in the vicinity of a wonderful environment for a child to experience nature in. And I was an outdoorsy child, when you could get me off the PlayStation. I say that because, whilst I did enjoy being outside, seeing animals and generally running amok through the Kentish countryside nevertheless I wasn't captivated by it. And I had little to no interest in plants, other than the ones you eat.

Given a choice between learning about how to plant a tomato or slaying a dragon, the dragon won every time. This didn't stop my mother from pointing out every flower and going "what's this", "rub this" and "smell this" dragging me out of Pokémon and back into the world. As a family we used to go on these hugely long drives at the weekend. The parents would lure us into the car with "let's go to town" or "let's take the dog for a walk" and every time my brother and I would unwittingly seal ourselves away from PlayStations and dragons for hours. It was a trap of course. We would go to town, but then after we would take a left "to see where it goes". 3 hours later we would find out where it goes. It always went further from home now that I think back on it... reflecting on this it did force my brother and I to soak up a lot of the Kentish countryside and even get a passing knowledge of our local wildlife. A buzzard swooping on a hare in a field is a captivating sight, dragon or not.

I have moved about a fair bit in recent years. These days however I am still lucky enough to be surrounded by nature, however I have a totally different perspective. Those lessons in the car have not only made me premium nature fact purveyor at any gathering but also given me a real insight into local wildlife and even a desire to know more about the beating heart of the Garden of England. Whilst I don't have a huge garden it is full of ambition. Dreams of crisp salads, insect hotels, coloured lights and bird houses when I was in the city have become a reality.

Finding understanding can often be the key to discovering passion and an interest. I am the sort of person that needs to know details about a subject before I can truly derive enjoyment from it. I think that's true of many people, once you get a little taste of the knowledge it become sort of addictive. I have always liked and had an interest in the 'exotic' animals you see David Attenborough present, but it took me until I was 20 to really love British nature. We have so

many amazing creatures and plants right on our doorstep, and you can bring them even closer with care to your local environment. Being an ambassador for your local 'patch' is so important. You can care for the environment you love; help educate your friends and family and be a champion for local wildlife. Who knows, maybe some of that information will help another young person like myself reconnect with their local nature.

I am no expert gardener, but I have definitely been bitten by the gardening and nature bug. Most days you can find me pottering about with my cucumbers, taking pictures on long walks or waging war with the local aphids. Something 10-year old me would have abhorred; not when that Dragon still really did need slaying. I wouldn't say I have hung my Dragon slaying Cloak up yet, but there is definitely more dust on it than there used to be.



Max Brent lives in East Sussex, is aged 28 and is a Social Media Manager. Describing himself as an aspiring green-thumb, but relatively new to the gardening game, he discovered a passion for bringing nature into his garden and growing food for the table. As a food-lover, he says that nothing compares to serving friends and family with home-grown veg. When he's not gardening he loves to explore the local area with his dog and a camera enjoying the countryside and all that nature has to offer.

Poems for Covid-19

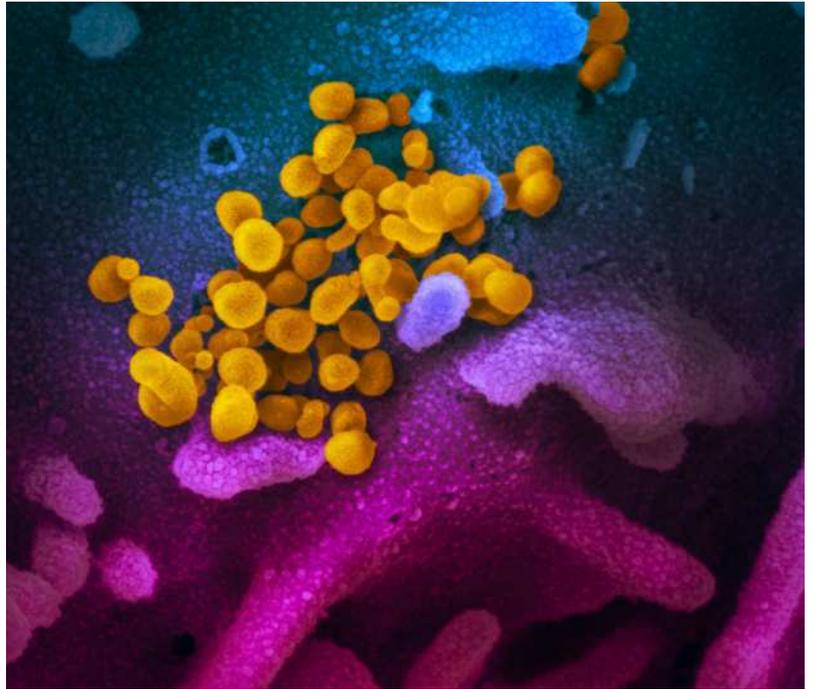
And people stayed at home
And read books and listened
And they rested and did exercises
And made art and played
And learned new ways of being
And stopped and listened more
deeply
Someone meditated, someone
prayed
Someone met their shadow
And people began to think
differently
And people healed
And in the absence of people who
lived in ignorant ways
Dangerous, meaningless and
heartless, the earth also began to
heal
And when the danger ended and
people found themselves
 they grieved for the dead
And made new choices
And dreamed of new visions
And created new ways of living
And completely healed the earth
Just as they were healed.

*Written by Kathleen O'Mara in
1869 (Cholera pandemic)*

The lockdown from corona virus
Is certainly going to tire us
We've nothing to do
But to see the thing through

The lockdown from covid one
nine
Has caused some bad people
to whine
However the rest
Are surely the best
And pretty soon all will be fine

Bert Renwick, 93



I am a little virus too tiny to be seen
Although I am quite very small
I'm also very mean.

You really must admire us, we make you cough
and sneeze,
Bring cities to a grinding halt
And countries to their knees.

But there's a little secret for every son and
daughter,
The thing that scares a virus
Is lots of soapy water.

So, wash your hands my lovelies, keep them
squeaky clean,
And soon there'll be no virus
Not anywhere to be seen.

But do not get complacent. We live in every crack.
So if you don't keep washing hands
The virus will be back.

Bert Renwick, 93

WKPS's First Life Member

We recently received a generous donation from WKPS's first Life member and this letter:

Dear Chairman

After serving as a navigator in the RAFVR from 1943-1947, followed by three years at North British Rubber Company as a tyre division superintendent, I took over the management of Park Farm, Fosten Green, Biddenden. I was invited to become the first WKPS life member in July 1962. This occasion was documented by a photograph of Biddenden Village, taken by George Rodger of Magnum Pro.

I greatly admired the pioneer work carried out by WKPS, including keeping an open mind on green field applications, wherever the necessary infrastructure services were available, such as drinking water, sewage, drainage, school places and doctors services.

I have pleasure in donating the original framed picture to the Society and look forward to reading about your continued good work.

With my best wishes, sincerely yours

Alan Pickett



*Biddenden Village
July 1962*

Nature Notes

It is always exciting when a 'new' species turns up on the farm or in the garden. It is often the case that once you know what you are looking for, you realise the species is quite numerous.

This happened to us at Moat Farm this summer. We knew that Long-horned Bees had been seen in the area but we had never seen any here. Then — on one of those hot June afternoons we noticed a lot of insect activity on a patch of bramble in the Harp Meadows. The bees were busy. Then, we noticed one with long antennae,



and then another and another! Long-horned Bees get their name from these unusually long antennae. They are a species in decline and now absent from many of the areas in which they used to be found. As a result it is now a UK priority species.

They appear in May, foraging on Bugle, moving onto Bramble and then Bird's Foot Trefoil, all three of which species are widespread in the Harp Meadows.

The amusing part of this story is that, having made this discovery, we returned to the house where we have everlasting Wallflowers on each side of the back door. Guess what — Long-horned bees foraging all over them!

Events for 2020

Sadly, due to COVID-19 all of our exciting events for this year have had to be cancelled. The forthcoming Bridge Tea will also be cancelled.

We are hoping to go ahead with the Mushroom foraging in November, and will keep you posted. Numbers for the lunch will be limited, so if you want to book please do so asap. If this event does have to be cancelled we will issue full refunds.

Mushroom foraging at Beckley Woods Wednesday 4th November, 10am - £35 per person

Come and enjoy the freedom and fresh air of many public footpaths and woodlands and learn how to forage for edible wild mushrooms! Paul Webbe will pass on his infinite knowledge of the mycelium world growing beneath your feet. You may only gather just a few mushrooms (if you find any!) and always leave some to preserve nature. Followed at 1pm by a welcome drink and 3 course lunch at the Fish Café, Rye.



WKPS have been unable to hold any fund raising events this year. Donations can help us bridge the gap and would be gratefully received. Please send any donations to Secretary@wkps.org.uk 5 Castle Hurst, Bodiam, East Sussex, TN32 5UW. Payment by cheque or BACS to A/c 01754514 sort code 30-90-28

Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join WKPS to enable us to continue our work in protecting the Weald.

**WEALD OF KENT PROTECTION SOCIETY
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP – CHARITY NO 261992
Membership runs from 1st April – 31st March**

Personal details: (Please use block capitals)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

I/we enclose a cheque in favour of Weald of Kent Protection Society for £15 Single/£20 joint subscription or I/we have paid by bank transfer to A/c 01754514, sort code 30-90-28 (please clearly state your full name as reference)

Please send to WKPS Secretary, 5 Castle Hurst, Bodiam, East Sussex TN32 5UW
Email: Secretary@wkps.org.uk

GIFT AID

I would like the Weald of Kent Protection Society to recover the tax on my annual subscription or any donation that I have made since the date below, or may make in the future. I confirm that the income tax/capital gains tax I pay in the appropriate tax year will be at least equal to the tax reclaimed on my subscription/donation(s).

Signature _____ Date _____

STANDING ORDER INSTRUCTION TO _____ Bank Plc

Address _____

I authorise you to pay Lloyds Bank, Tenterden 30-90-28 now and on 1st April each year The Weald of Kent Protection Society Charity 261992 (A/c No 01754514) the sum of £ _____
Until further notice my A/c No _____ Sort code _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Bags of Help

We are thrilled to announce that WKPS has been awarded a £2,000 charity donation through an application to Tesco's amazing Bags of Help Scheme. Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised by the carrier bag charge in Tesco's stores is used to fund thousands of community projects. The projects must meet the criteria of bringing benefits to the community.



Disclaimer

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