



Preston Environmental Group  
*caring for our surroundings*

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018 - UPDATE

No 4

## SO FAR THIS YEAR ...

### January

Sally, Brock and Margaret went to a water vole talk at Brandon Marsh. Water voles are the largest of the voles, around eight times bigger than their brothers, field and bank, which is probably why they are often referred to as water rats. We learned a lot about recognition and habits and have a very good leaflet with details, so if you would like one please ask.

Water voles have become an endangered species mainly due to the presence of mink, loss of habitat and modern farming. We think we may have some in the Stour and nearby in Quinton. Tim Precious-Li, the WWT expert, is going to be visiting in the spring and we are to be involved in a survey of the river.



Water Vole

### 3 March

Ron and Margaret braved the snow for our first Recorders Group Meeting in Warwick. It was heartening to hear and meet so many amateur and professional experts who are all working to conserve and record Warwickshire's plant and animal life.

We learned encouraging news of successful water vole and dormouse projects. The conservation of the grizzled skipper butterfly habitat near Knowle has led to a local team of amateurs researching the history

of the site. It had been a quarry and after closing down became a general dumping ground.



Grizzled Skipper

The discovery of dune helleborines, a type of orchid, was unusual, a first in Warwickshire, and possibly arrived in some dumped sand. The fungi expert showed some wonderful photos to help us know our shooters from droppers!



Porcelain fungus (Droppers)

Warwickshire is the first area to have a digital record of its fungi with over 2,500 entries. In a few weeks there will be a rare plant register online at [www.bsbi.org/warwickshire](http://www.bsbi.org/warwickshire). There were also talks on canal life and management, churchyard schemes, hedgehogs, amphibians, reptiles and moths. We couldn't resist another addition to the PEG library, 'Britain's Plant Galls'. Haven't you ever wondered who lives in those strange lumps on trees, leaves and twigs?

The overriding message to us all is to keep looking at the plants and animal life that we have and make written records with photographs whenever possible.

If you don't know what it is there are plenty of people who will be able to help.

### Survey plans for 2018

This year we plan to continue with the butterfly survey plus and Sally and Di are undertaking a survey of the orchards of Preston in conjunction with the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species.



### Desirable residences for Preston

PEG is very actively trying to encourage more birds to stay and raise their families in Preston and surroundings. Last year we distributed nest boxes to many of our members and look forward to hearing news of residencies being taken up – so far two boxes have had regular visits so hopefully there will be more.



Our very own nestbox master craftsman.

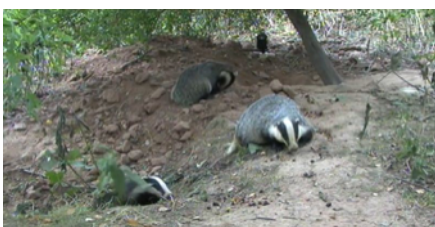
Brock has made two swift boxes and we have bought house martin

nests. We really want to see more of these birds in the village and help them to settle here. If you know you have had nests or have a suitable site please let Sally or Ron know.



**Wildlife Camera for Hire**

We are in the process of buying a wildlife camera for PEG. It will mean that as a member, you will be able to borrow the camera, setting it up in your garden to see what creatures visit you at night, and during the day. It is activated by a motion sensor and records in colour during the day and black and white at night. We haven't worked out the fine details of this exciting new project, but will keep you informed so you can book a slot to borrow it.



**2018 WALKS**

**JANUARY**



**FEBRUARY**



**MARCH**



**STILL TO COME**

**SATURDAY 14 APRIL**

*Longorough*

**SATURDAY 12 MAY**

*Bluebells*

**SATURDAY 9 JUNE**

*Special Event - Grand day out on the Oxford Canal*

**SATURDAY 21 JULY**

*Oxford*

**SATURDAY 11 AUGUST**

*Jill & Sue to organise*

**SATURDAY 8 SEPTEMBER**

*Brocks to Organise*

**SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER**

*Autumn Colours*

**SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER**

*Organisers required.*

**SATURDAY 8 DECEMBER**

*Organiser Required*



**PS -** Has anyone seen a hedgehog in the vicinity of the village in the last two years. Can everyone email her with a yes or no and if yes please supply an approx date.

