

Newsletter

November 2019

Support **Essex Wildlife Trust** by joining your Local Group of volunteers and getting involved in fundraising, events, and activities. Meet fellow enthusiasts to **protect wildlife** and inspire others.

Contacts

Local Group Chair: For Trust and Local Group issues.

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Conservation Work on our nature reserves.

Tuesday and
Thursday mornings
from 9:30 to Noon.
New volunteers are
always welcome, contact
Michael Rowley on the
phone number above.
See details of the locations
and dates on our local
website at
uttlesford-wildlife.org.uk
and navigate to the Essex
Wildlife Trust Work Party
page with the quick link
button at the right side of
the page.

Autumn in the Nature Reserves

Our Autumn season began in September, with a long list of things to do on all of the nine nature reserves which are in the care of our Local Group. It makes for a dauntingly long list at first sight, but for our skilled team of volunteers, who have mostly been through this seasonal routine in previous years, we know it as the best way to really get to see the nature reserves, and learn about the wildlife for which they are home.

So, while many people have to face up to cutting their lawn, our work party volunteers have mown and raked up the grass and herbs from the rides at West Wood, the meadows at Rushy Mead, the chalk grassland at the Harrison Sayer reserve, the three large meadows at the Aubrey Buxton reserve, and widened the paths at Turners Spring.

We still have to move on to the woodland work, with the coppicing season due to begin after we have finished all of the grass cutting, and after the leaves have fallen from the trees.

And why do we do all of this work? Well of course to benefit the plants and animals that make our nature reserves their home, and to keep conditions right for them. So, the small chalk grassland at Harrison Sayer reserve has three species of orchid flowering in the summer, and a range of thirty to forty wildflower species to see in total. Our coppiced woodlands at West Wood and Shadwell Wood have both gained a "Favourable Condition" grade from Natural England, and we think they are the best woods in Essex; but you would expect us to say that!

If you have time on Tuesday or Thursday mornings please come and join us, contact details are in the side panel.

Local Group AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Uttlesford Local Group of Essex Wildlife Trust will be held on Wednesday March 25th 2020, at 20:00 in the Saffron Walden Town Hall Committee Room.

The formal business will hear reports from the Chair and Treasurer, and there will be opportunity for you to raise any questions that you may have about the work of the Local Group. This will be followed by a cheese and wine evening.

We hope that winter will be a distant memory by then, and that you will be able to join us.

Clifden nonpareil

The rare Clifden Nonpareil moth, (it's name means Beyond Compare) was seen at the Aubrey Buxton reserve on 30th August 2019 by John Patterson and his 12 year old son Ashton. The moth was spotted inside a fallen tree trunk, and Jon's photo is reproduced below.

The Eastern Daily Press reported another sighting in Norfolk in their report dated 26 September, where they said that it had not been seen in Britain for 50 years and was believed extinct. Numerous sightings this year in southern England show it has recolonised and is breeding again.

Perhaps the hot and dry weather of the summer was a benefit to this moth.



Clifden nonpareil. Picture; Jon Patterson



New Boardwalk under construction.
Picture; Tony Morton

New boardwalk

The paths within the Aubrey Buxton reserve have been wearing away over recent years, making a walk there more of a challenge, and to redress this Essex Wildlife Trust has hired contractor Steven Barnes to provide new surfaces to the most worn paths, and to provide a new boardwalk beside the third pond.

The new paths open up a route between the ponds that was not previously passable, with a picturesque view along the whole length of the top pond.

The new paths and boardwalk will be completed in time for the anticipated wetter weather this winter (much needed locally).

Turners Spring

The Turner's Spring nature reserve at Stansted is large enough to generate a lot of work for the volunteers in the woodland and the meadow.

This Autumn the Warden, John Roberts, and the work party organiser Michael Rowley decided that it would be better to leave the meadow cut until the spring, and to just widen out the paths around the edges where people walk.

We were fortunate to be loaned a new type of mower by Will Cockerell and the Thaxted Footpaths Group to try out, which has a strimmer head with four cords. It made short work of the encroaching brambles, shredding them into fragments. Our usual reciprocating cutter bar mower can cope with the brambles but tends to get a tangle of brambles around itself. The photo, taken by the Newsletter Editor Tony Morton, shows Will in action.

The strimmer is much lighter and easier to use, as well as being easier to transport to site, and we were so impressed that we will be trying to gather funds to buy one for our own group to use on all of the nature reserves which we have to manage.



Will with the Strimmer Photo Tony Morton