



Montgomeryshire
Maldwyn

ISSUE

21

Montgomeryshire

Wildlife

News

Summer 2020



Who are we?

Since 1982 **Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (MWT)** has been the leading voluntary organisation promoting wildlife conservation in **Montgomeryshire**.

Our VISION:

An Environment rich in wildlife for everyone

Our MISSION:

To rebuild biodiversity and engage people with their environment by being an active and influential wildlife champion.

Wildlife Trust Wales:

The five Trusts in Wales, supported by Wildlife Trusts Wales, have 25,000 members and manage 230 Nature Reserves covering more than 6,000 hectares of prime wildlife habitat.

The Wildlife Trusts:

There are 46 local Wildlife Trusts across the whole of the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney. With 850,000 members and 2,300 nature reserves covering over 80,000 hectares. The Wildlife Trusts are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to the conservation of all UK wildlife.

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Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust



@MontWildlife



Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

On The Cover

Hawfinch by Emyr Evans

Being at home during lockdown has given many of us the opportunity to watch our bird tables and feeders more often and brush up on our bird identification. This beautiful female Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) was spotted by Emyr in his garden in Machynlleth. Hawfinch populations are thought to be in decline with less than 1000 breeding pairs in the UK. This Red List species is particularly rare in Wales.

Chair's Overview

by **Tim McVey**

There has been lots of sadness over the past weeks and there is more to come. The pandemic is not over and the economic consequences will last a long time. Many have struggled with their physical and mental health. I thank all those working to keep us and our loved ones safe.

But there are things to celebrate.

Firstly, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust has come through it intact! In March we had big plans and new projects lined up. These rapidly disappeared with little prospect of them coming back. Clive and his small team held on, searching and applying for grants and other funds. There has been a constant stream of donations, particularly to the Dyfi Osprey Project. Furlough gave us breathing space and our tremendous staff understood that it was necessary for our survival. They kept in close contact and now they are gradually returning. There are practical difficulties keeping everyone safe and we are all learning.

Personally, I have found many benefits. Our local walks in the extraordinary weather allowed us to notice the progress of spring as the birds sang and the flowers blossomed. Air and noise pollution were greatly diminished allowing an appreciation of the roadside verges. Webcams have become immensely popular. We anxiously waited for Monty's return and were then entranced by Telyn's new partner Idris, an excellent father to Tywi and Teifi and all of this in vivid detail via the live streaming. It's been a chance to thumb through bird books and wildflower books, phone apps and online courses and come out of lockdown a little more knowledgeable.

Let's make the New Normal a better future for nature and all of us.

Tim McVey

MWT Chair

AGM Notice

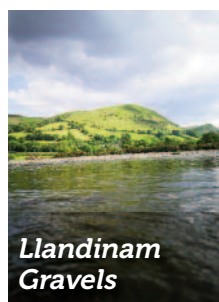
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent social distancing regulations, the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust will be holding its AGM online later in the year. Further details, and the AGM papers, will be posted on our website in due course. www.montwt.co.uk.



Bugle by Tamasine Stretton

If you no longer wish to receive this magazine mailing please contact info@montwt.co.uk or call 01938 555654 to unsubscribe.

Reserves Roundup



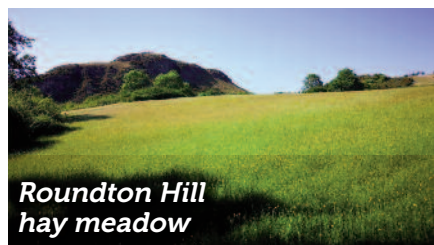
Llandinam Gravels

With the lockdown starting in March and the majority of the Trust's staff on furlough, MWT made the decision to close all of its nature reserves. With

no staff or volunteers able to visit them we were no longer able to ensure they were safe for visitors. In June, Rob Haigh was brought back from furlough and was ready to deal with any issues that had occurred on the reserves during those two months of isolation. The good news is that, on the whole, the reserves were in good condition and had continued to thrive. They were a little overgrown and there were a few instances of damage and vandalism to deal with, but MWT was able to re-open most of its nature reserves to visitors on the 6th July. Some reserves will remain closed for now (Cwm y Wydden, Coed Pendugwm, Cors Dyfi and Morfa Dyfi) and there are restrictions in place on some of the sites but Rob has been working hard visiting all the reserves and reporting back on his findings:

Ty Brith – The site is in good condition and the hay cut is due to be taken in July.

Llanymynech Rocks – The paths are clear and the site is looking good. A gate on the bridle way has been smashed and will be fixed.



Roundton Hill hay meadow

Roundton Hill – The car park and paths are clear. The stile into the top hay meadow needs repairing.

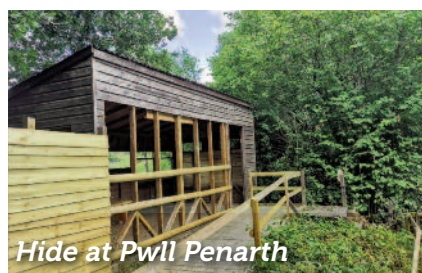
Llanmerewig Glebe – Grass around the seating area is a little overgrown and needs strimming.

A new stile will be fitted shortly to deter dog fouling on the site.

Llandinam Gravels – Hay bales being stored on the car park mean space for parking is limited. Car park needs strimming but paths are clear. Hay cut will be taken after 15th July.

Dolydd Hafren – The first hide is open and the paths to it are clear. However, access beyond the first hide is blocked by a fallen tree and the second hide is full of wasp nests!

Dolforwyn Woods – A major landslip has occurred and the affected area has been fenced off. The rest of the reserve is accessible but overgrown. Car park is clear but has a hole that needs fixing.



Hide at Pwll Penarth

Pwll Penarth – Paths are clear but the reserve is very overgrown. There have been instances of vandalism in both hides with one having an entire wall kicked in. A subsequent repair has also been vandalised and the wall in question has now been removed.

Glaslyn – Some small repairs needed. Powys County Council have changed the gate access code so please contact info@montwt.co.uk and quote your membership number to get the new code.



Glaslyn

Llyn Coed y Dinas – The pathways, car park, teaching area and picnic area are fine. Bird hide will remain locked.

Severn Farm Pond – The Friends of Severn Farm Pond local group were halfway through removing a section of boardwalk prior to lockdown but this area is fenced off. There is an ongoing issue with pollution on site that is being addressed.

Red House – Paths are clear but one section of boardwalk needs a minor repair.



Red House

Dyfnant Meadows – The new hedges are looking great. The stiles in the fence need to be repaired or replaced.

Cors Dyfi – The Dyfi Wildlife Centre build has been on hold but will hopefully start again soon. The reserve and the new centre will aim to open on 1st March 2021.

As you can see, Rob will be kept very busy over the next few months! The next phase will be enabling the volunteers to get back to the nature reserves and continue with the land management work they love. The safety of our volunteers is, of course, our first priority but we are looking forward to finding safe ways to welcome them back. Lastly, Rob has asked if anyone visiting the nature reserves can be our eyes and ears and let us know of anything we should be aware of, whether that's repairs that need doing or exciting wildlife records!



Hay cut at Pwll Penarth

30 Days Wild

A new survey from The Wildlife Trusts shows that the feel-good factor from simple daily contact with nature can last for months and that people who have engaged with the 30 Days Wild campaign have reported being healthier, happier and more connected to nature. 30 Days Wild challenges people to engage with nature every day for the whole of June and share their experiences with others. Over a million people have taken part over the last 5 years and this year promised to be even more of a challenge with the whole campaign going digital due to the Covid-19 lockdown. MWT, with the help of our social media followers, rose to the challenge and were able to post useful, informative and often hilarious ideas on Facebook every day for people to enjoy and try for themselves. Here are some of our favourites;

FEED THE BIRDS



WATCH A WEB CAM



WILD ART



LEARN ABOUT A NEW SPECIES



READ A BOOK OUTDOORS



EXERCISE OUTDOORS



MINI BEAST HUNT



HUG A TREE



CREATE HOMES FOR WILDLIFE



Lockdown Challenge

by Tim Ward

Over the last few months, as a retired person, I feel that I have been somewhat fortunate compared to many other people. I have not had to worry about losing my job or how I am going to keep the children occupied and contained in the house week after week. However, as for everyone else, my life has been subject to significant and necessary change due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Of course there have been many more negative aspects but on the positive side it has allowed me to spend more time looking at local wildlife.

Essex Skipper – An increasingly common butterfly in southeast England but only recorded from a few sites in eastern Montgomeryshire including my wildflower meadow



The travel restrictions that have been a big part of the recent lockdown have prevented me from travelling far and wide to look for interesting creatures and instead provided me with a great opportunity to look in more detail at places closer to home. Over the past few months, looking more closely at the wildlife in my garden has been a revelation. I have been trying to make my garden a better place for wildlife for some time now and it has not always been easy to see if my efforts are being rewarded. By taking more time to study the less obvious creatures and with the help of a few new books, a lot of helpful websites and a cheap USB microscope to aid identification, I have found that there are some fascinating creatures living all around me. No need to step more than a few yards from the front door as some of them just seem to fly into the house!

Many of you may be aware that once you cross the border into Wales, the level of recording of which species are present in any one place declines dramatically, and for the less often recorded taxa (i.e. anything other than birds, flowers, butterflies and moths), this decline is exponential. If you look on resources such as the NBN Atlas or iRecord, to see



***Eriocrania cicatricella* leaf mine – A micro moth that is widely recorded in England on birch trees but not known in Montgomeryshire until this year when 3 records have been made.**

the UK distribution of a particular species, there is often a blank area with no records in mid Wales. This means that for much of Montgomeryshire many records will be new for the locality and be contributing to the body of knowledge of what species lives where and general levels of abundance. Ultimately, when collated, recording this information will be a great help in determining whether they are increasing or decreasing in numbers. Interestingly over the last few months I have found a number of species that have been spreading from more southerly counties in the UK, some of which have only recently started to be recorded in Montgomeryshire and one or two that have, rather excitingly, not been recorded before in the county. This leads me to believe that the changes I am making in the garden by encouraging these species is making a difference and benefiting my local wildlife and hopefully making a tiny change at a global level too.

So I can truly say that spending more time at home has been a positive change for me and something that I intend to do more of for the benefit of the environment, to increase the level of understanding about the status of wildlife in the wider countryside and my own personal pleasure. I hope you will do more of it too! Anyway, time for me to get back out into the garden to see what new things I can find today.



***Melitta haemorrhoidalis* (Gold-tailed Melitta) – a solitary bee that has only been recorded once before in Wales but not in Montgomeryshire until it appeared in my garden this year**

Nature – A Lifeline in Lockdown

For some it provides a beautiful place to exercise in the fresh air. For others it offers a symbol of hope for better times to come. Maybe it's the basis of a new hobby or a way to educate our young people? Whatever our reason for engaging with wildlife during lockdown, our mental and physical health is given a boost when we allow ourselves to go a little wild. And the wildlife has been reaping the benefit too!

"I certainly have found nature and wildlife vital in surviving the lockdown without friends and family nearby. My spirits have been raised by the wonderful wildflowers and watching the birds - Coal Tit babies, Blue Tit babies and young Blackbirds on my table, as well as the ever joyful Sparrows! I'm digging borders in my garden and planting as many plants for bees as I can find. Oh and the Martins, Swallows and occasional few Swifts, Buzzards and Kites up above are constantly, mindfully occupying and relaxing.

I have sent an email to the Welsh Government for a recovery from Covid-19 plan with nature at its forefront and also signed a petition to make sure our verges are not cut unnecessarily. I have written to our MP asking him to support a World Ocean Treaty and also a strong environment bill in the UK to protect wildlife and mitigate climate change. So even though I haven't been able to do my volunteering I have been trying hard to do my bit!"
– **Sheila**



We are lucky to have a large garden, and we try to manage it for invertebrates. Our thinking is that if we get it right for the small things, then it will be good for everything else too. However, I am rather obsessed by solitary bees and wasps and wanted to do more to help them. Lockdown gave me the opportunity to think about improving nest site availability for these insects. Bees and wasps need sunny nest sites – some species are ground nesters, others nest aerially in dead wood, stems and walls.

Last year a field next to our garden was sold: we were disappointed not to buy it. It was flower-rich and excellent for ground-nesting insects but heavy grazing this year has reduced numbers considerably. We decided to clear a scrubby patch on our land, adjacent to the field, so that insects could move to a less disturbed area. We reduced tree height, and removed a tangle of scrubby thorn, dead wood and nettles. Now we have a sunny south-facing bank with lots of bare earth for insects to burrow into. This has been a good lockdown project, as it gave us a focus and a sense of offsetting the damage caused by the heavy grazing. We couldn't start the work until we were sure there were no nesting birds there, so won't really know if it has worked until next spring. But already a spider-hunting wasp and mining bees have been exploring the area. Other improvements include making standing wood piles - upright logs which are stacked in a sunny spot. They are a magnet for nesting insects. Having these interests has meant that there has always been something to look at in the garden and has kept me sane through this spring when I should have been carrying out field work for an MSc project. However, because I was at home my garden list for this group has jumped from 106 to 130! - **Clare**



"Who would have dreamt a few short months ago that 'Springwatch' would become my 'must-see' programme on TV! I've been off work and have really enjoyed watching nature at its finest. I've snapped thousands of photos and walked loads of miles. I took this photo at the reserve behind our building and spent a fascinating hour or so watching this bird hunting" – **Gary**



"We've been trying to provide habitats for different kinds of wildlife in our garden during lockdown. Something as simple as a piece of wood with holes drilled in it is a great place for solitary bees and our new pond, made from an old tyre, is already attracting pond invertebrates and bathing birds" – **Kevin**



In normal times I would have been spending four days a week volunteering for Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust and Dyfi Osprey Project. Something was needed to fill the gap and litter picking during my allotted daily exercise just wasn't cutting it. The garden was the obvious direction. Firstly, I let half of the lawn do its own thing. It soon looked great with primroses, cowslips, buttercups and many different grasses attracting busy insects. Making the most of the rest of the garden meant growing things to eat - forget toilet rolls and hand sanitiser, soil topped my shopping list! Old Lego storage boxes made great planters for cucumber and fennel and an old pallet plus an ancient wooden trellis fixed onto a wall made a great vertical garden for runner beans, peas, courgettes and beets. The vegetable patch became a haven for insects and provided us with a bountiful harvest which, frozen and pickled, will hopefully be keeping us fed long after lockdown is over. As things slowly move to a new normal I will still be experimenting with my veg. Fennel pesto, anyone? – **Jill**



Cygnets



Gary also wins the prize for the cutest lockdown photograph we have received with this picture of a young Cygnet!

Ospreys



With the new Dyfi Wildlife Centre build on hold and Cors Dyfi nature reserve closed, the Dyfi Osprey Project webcam became the only window onto the world of these endearing, fascinating birds for thousands of people around the world. With Monty failing to return, the pressure was on for new male Idris to bond with Telyn and breed successfully. All went well and the pair have raised two male chicks this season, Tywi and Teifi, who have both fledged.

The Week in Wildlife

During lockdown, MWT have been encouraging people to share photos of the wildlife they have seen that week, along with a description of what they have spotted. Here are some of our favorites – why not visit our Facebook page to see the full collection?

Roe Deer - 'dormousebirder'

"I am lucky enough to own a few acres of rough land and have built a hide overlooking a small pool where I have set up some bird feeders. Recently I looked up and saw a sight I had never seen here before: a Roe Deer. I managed to open the window to take a photo without disturbing it and it passed right below the window in front of me."



Bagworm – Clare

"This is a curious little moth. It lives on lichen on tree trunks and rocks and it constructs a beautiful case from pieces of lichen and attaches a small piece of bark to the case. The whole thing is no bigger than a grain of rice. This was a first record for Montgomeryshire last year, but I was thrilled to see that the colony is still there this spring."



Rhingia campestris - Sue



"The lockdown has given me an opportunity to attempt to take up a new hobby - hoverflies! Many of them cause confusion, as they are excellent mimics of bees and wasps, but one in particular seems particularly charismatic and recognisable. It's easy to identify as it has a bright orange-brown body and a unique 'snout' which enables it to feed on deeper flowers than many of its 'cousins'."

Muslin Moth – Becky



"We put out the moth trap on Friday night. On Saturday morning we were all prepped to

spend a few hours looking through our moths trying to ID them all (as we are a bit out of practice). It took us 5 minutes. We had 14 Muslin Moths. All male. Apparently the females are day-flyers whilst the males come readily to light at night. They were stunning – I think they had all recently emerged."

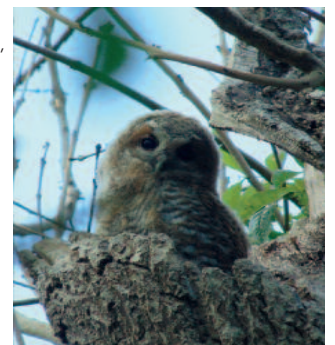
Common Lizard – Clare

"This Common Lizard found a safe spot to soak up the last of the afternoon sun by secreting itself in the crack of a dead tree in our garden. Usually they are very difficult to sneak up on, but I think it knew it was safe."

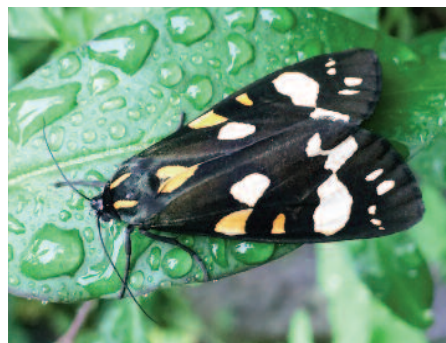


Tawny Owl chick – Dominique

"The three Tawny Owl chicks have gone. We watched them test their wings for the first time a few days ago. I am sending you the best photo I have of one of the chicks (my favourite), always the first one out and the last one into the nest."



Scarlet Tiger – Sarah



"After a day of heavy rain I didn't expect to step outside and see two Scarlet Tiger moths resting in the garden. Simply stunning!"

No Mow patch – Clare

"This is one of our no-mow patches. The geraniums have been flowering a while and have now been joined by agrimony. Soon the knapweed will be out - a delight for the bees. At the back you can see one of our dead wood stacks. These are full of nesting solitary wasps and bees."



Small Tortoiseshell – Rory Thomson



"Stunning close-up of a freshly hatched Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly"