



Montgomeryshire
Maldwyn

ISSUE

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Montgomeryshire

Wildlife

News

Winter 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 natures 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



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On The Cover

Parasol Mushroom *Macrolepiota procera* by Tamasine Stretton

These edible mushrooms start out almost spherical and quite dark in colour, but the cap expands and lightens over time, flattening out just like a parasol. Tammy easily spotted these specimens near her home due to their large size. Parasol mushrooms can grow up to 25cm across the cap!

Chair's Overview

by Tim McVey

The theme for this edition of Montgomeryshire Wildlife News is "The Future is Bright" and at the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust there is a lot of optimism for the future. This year has been difficult for everyone but it has given us space to reassess our aims and goals. The Wildlife Trust movement has been looking in depth at their strategy for the future. Numerous Zoom meetings and discussions have demonstrated that there is a vast amount of knowledge, skill and experience available across the movement. This is being shared and used to develop plans for every Trust. The aim is to restore 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030. Of course, we can't do this alone, as MWT only helps manage 518 hectares (1280 acres), a small portion of the whole of Montgomeryshire. But there are lots of ways that we are supporting nature elsewhere, making links right across the county and its varied habitats. Peatbog regeneration is not only great for wildlife but is captures huge amounts of carbon and soaks up rain preventing flooding. The Pumlumon Project, working on 40,000 hectares of the Cambrian Mountains, has successfully shown what can be done and we are doing similar work at Cefn Croes. Other areas of Wales are starting to follow suit. Communities are managing their green spaces for wildlife such as Open Newtown and Deri Woods at Llanfair Caereinion. Individuals are gardening for wildlife by planting flowers for pollinators, stopping using pesticides and fertilizers, changing to peat-free compost and installing ponds and nesting boxes. Dyfed Powys Police and Hafren Dyfrdwy are starting to manage their extensive estates with wildlife as a priority. If we all do our bit, we will turn the tide for nature in this beautiful county and we will see the bright future ahead.

Tim McVey

MWT Chair



Tim McVey at Llyn Mawr Nature Reserve

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Reserves Roundup



Socially Distanced at Llyn Coed y Dinas

In September 2020, MWT were thrilled to be able to get our Roaming Work Party volunteers back out on the nature reserves, doing the volunteering they love and the habitat management we simply can't achieve without them.

In light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we had to introduce some restrictions to ensure the safety of the volunteers and the Trust staff. We were only able to work on nature reserves which had adequate parking, as we couldn't offer lifts in the MWT vehicles. We had to select locations and tasks where volunteers could safely work at a

distance from each other. We also introduced a strict booking system and limited the number of volunteers attending each session. To counteract these limiting factors, Rob Haigh (MWT Reserves Officer) ran two sessions per week and to keep things simple these were, initially, confined to Llyn Coed y Dinas and Pwll Penarth.

At Llyn Coed y Dinas the volunteers have been clearing paths, including a maintenance access path around the lake. They have tidied the dipping ponds and cleared around the teaching area, as well as removing the plastic tree guards from the hedge around the

hay meadow. Hedges have been cut back and dead hedges have been created using brash and willow cut from the lake side. The team have also been tackling issues with Ash Dieback on the reserve.

Both of the hides at Pwll Penarth have been repaired, with one getting a new roof and guttering, and the surrounding willow has been cleared. The willow has also been cut back on the islands on the lake. The paths have been cleared and work is underway to tidy the dipping pond area, lay some hedges and create dead brash hedges.

Rob and the volunteers have also managed to squeeze in some urgent Ash Dieback tree work and hedge maintenance at Roundton Hill, a session at Dolydd Hafren to maintain the pathways and have begun coppicing work at Dolforwyn Woods.

These sessions have been well attended by the volunteers and the reserves have benefitted from their care and attention after being closed during lockdown. The Trust would like to extend these sessions in the future, but the health and well-being of the volunteers and staff remain our priority.



Dead Brash Hedge at Pwll Penarth



Clearing Access at Pwll Penarth

MWT Keeps On The Move Thanks to Lottery Support

A big thank you to the players of the People's Postcode Lottery. A donation from the charity fundraising scheme has enabled MWT to replace our ageing truck with this new Mitsubishi from Humphreys and Foulkes and pay for it to be branded by VT Prints. Give us a wave if you see us out and about!



Climate Change Cymru



*Upland Peatbog
Restoration at
Cefn Croes*

The Wildlife Trusts of Wales have recently launched a new project, Climate Change Cymru, which is funded by the Climate Action Fund and aims to help tackle the challenges of climate change.

Here at Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, we're already fighting climate change and its effects. Maintaining healthy hedgerows, woodlands, salt-marshes and soils helps lock carbon away. Restoring upland peat bogs

enables them to capture both carbon and flood water. Using Beavers to restore wetlands and installing leaky dams on rivers help to slow the flow of the water and reduce flooding.

Over the next 4 years, the CCC project will seek to inspire young people to become voices for nature and climate change. We want to work together to come up with solutions to our climate problems, through practical conservation and engaging with local communities through film and social media.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shocked the world, but the response to the crisis has also served as a reminder that we can make a huge difference in a short amount of time with the right will-power. We are working to ensure that as much of the project as possible can be delivered virtually, with strict social-distancing measures in place where physical work is required. We intend to use this chance to ignite the flame of change in the young people of Wales, empowering them to help secure the future they deserve.



A Leaky Dam



*Honey Bee on
Orange Buddleia*

Calling All Gardeners!

Autumn 2019 saw MWT take the exciting step of moving to our new Park Lane House premises, offering a much improved retail and information area. The frontage has potential to have a wildlife garden display area behind the railings and we had intended to make a start on this transformation in spring 2020. Unfortunately, our plans were curtailed when Covid-19 restrictions took hold, resulting in the office and shop being closed for many months. The area now looks unloved and certainly not the showcase area that we had envisaged, but we plan to change that ready for a new start in spring 2021!

In the meantime, we are appealing to the keen gardeners among our members for any plants they could donate. We are looking for native species and particularly those which support pollinators and, ideally, some volunteers to get involved with making an area that will attract passers-by, as well as inspiring people to create wildlife friendly gardens at home. If you can help, please contact Sandy at sandy@montwt.co.uk, who will be able to give further details nearer the time.

Safeguarding a future for our most vulnerable wildlife

The coronavirus pandemic has brought many challenges, but one positive aspect has been an increased interest, and fresh appreciation of, the natural world on our doorstep. There has never been a better time to engage with a wide audience to address the current ecological and climate emergency. Building on the work delivered by the 'Where the Wild Things Are' project, MWT plans to create a Nature Recovery Network map for Montgomeryshire, working with landowners, local communities, Powys County Council and the public, to carry out meaningful action on the ground. As part of this recovery strategy, MWT will continue to work for the protection of the county's most vulnerable species:

Pathways for Pearls

For over two decades MWT has ensured the survival of the rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary (PBF); this tried and tested work will continue, but we need to do more. Even though the Welshpool population of this butterfly species is the strongest in Wales, it remains under threat, particularly from climate change and a lack of connected habitat. It is time for a landscape-scale approach, working with a diverse range of partners and stakeholders to create a well-connected, wildlife-rich landscape between Welshpool, Cyfrnydd and Guilsfield. This will benefit a great diversity of wildlife, including PBFs & pollinators and, of course, people too.

"I dream of one day luring PBFs onto the violets in my garden and I am already managing an area specifically with that in mind. We can all take simple actions like this and collectively make a huge impact. My vision for the project area is a place teeming with wildlife, where the PBF can thrive, where local people are passionate about making that happen, whilst enjoying the benefits to their health & wellbeing; a place so remarkable that people want to visit and feel inspired to follow our example." Tammy Stretton, MWT Conservation Officer

We are happy to report that we have successfully obtained some funding to start this project, in April 2021, but we need a lot more to make the necessary impact. We will be working hard to source the remaining funding, but donations are also very welcome; together we can make a lasting positive impact for PBFs. Tammy would also be delighted to hear from anyone interested in helping with this project – tammy@montwt.co.uk.

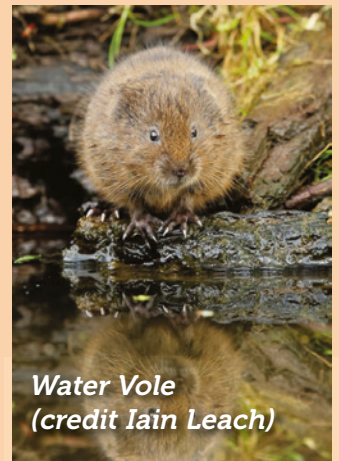
Water Voles

In September we were commissioned by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to carry out surveys for Water Voles in Montgomeryshire, following the publication of the 2020 Red List of Mammals which



Pearl-bordered Fritillary

classified the species as 'Endangered' in Wales. We looked for the species in 18 different locations, but sadly only found signs at one! Within the last 20 years, Water Vole surveys have been undertaken by MWT in 2012, 2014 and 2020. In this time, very few positive sites for Water Vole have been found and it would seem that the species is now on the verge of extinction in Montgomeryshire. NRW is now working with the Mammal Society to produce a conservation plan for the species and we have contributed local recommendations to this process. We will continue to work with various organisations to try and ensure that Water Voles have a future in Montgomeryshire, but you can help too; familiarise yourself with how to identify the species and its signs and let us know if you see any!



Water Vole
(credit Iain Leach)

White-clawed Crayfish

Another endangered species still clinging on in the area is the White-clawed Crayfish. In order to plan conservation action, we need to know more about the current distribution of this native species, as well as the non-natives which threaten it. Thankfully, we now have a useful tool to help us with this task – eDNA. In 2021, we will be working with the local community to collect water samples from waterways across Montgomeryshire. These samples will then be sent off to be analysed for the presence of crayfish species, as well as crayfish plague. Landowners on the Barwy, Tanat and Rhiw rivers interested in helping out with this project should contact Tammy and wherever you are, please report your crayfish sightings, remembering to include photographs for verification purposes.



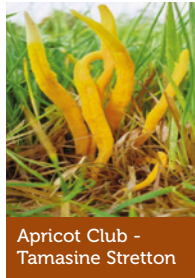
White-clawed Crayfish

The Fungus Among Us

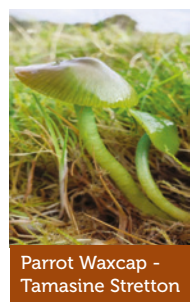
Every season has its highlights and the amazing display of fungi found in autumn is hard to beat. Fungi of every shape, size and colour can be found in woodlands, grasslands, churchyards and gardens. Here are some of our favourites from the often weird but always wonderful world of fungi:

Apricot Club - *Clavulinopsis luteoalba*

The finger like fruits of this fungus can grow to 6cm long and have pale tips. Usually found growing in short grass, they have neither gills nor pores but instead have spores covering their outsides which are distributed by the wind.



Apricot Club -
Tamasine Stretton

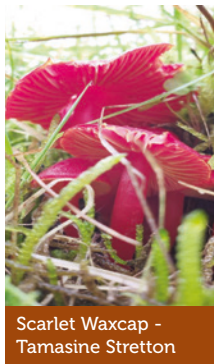


Parrot Waxcap - *Gliophorus psittacinus*

These delicate fungi come in a range of bright colours, just like the exotic bird they are named for. They are completely coated in a thick, glue-like liquid. This fungus prefers unimproved, but close cropped grasslands and is often found in churchyards and on roadside verges.

Scarlet Waxcap - *Hygrocybe coccinea*

The Scarlet Waxcap favours woodland clearings and cropped grassland, where it rarely appears alone but usually in a cluster. Sometime mistaken for the Crimson Waxcap, it is smaller (2-5cm cap) and a lighter red colour. Although reputed to be edible, it is scarce and picking them for eating would be a terrible waste.



Scarlet Waxcap -
Tamasine Stretton

Hairy Curtain Crust - *Stereum hirsutum*

Named for their wavy edge (like drawn curtains) and the hairs that cover the young fruits, the Hairy Curtain Crust can be found in a variety of colours, though shades of brown, orange and yellow are most common. The brackets are usually found growing in tiers on dead hardwood such as Oak or Beech.



Hairy Curtain Crust - Tamasine Stretton



Olive Earthtongue -
Ceri Jones

Olive Earthtongue - *Microglossum olivaceum*

This tiny (up to 2cm) fungus is a Biodiversity Action Plan species in Britain due to its rarity. It has a narrow stem and a wider head and can range in colour from reddish brown through to olive green.

It favours unimproved grasslands and mossy woodlands where it is well camouflaged.

Green Elf Cup - *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*

It is rare to spot the fruiting body of this small (up to 1cm) fungus as it bears fruit infrequently. More commonly a blue/green stain can be spotted on bark free dead wood such as Oak, Hazel and Beech. The tiny goblet shaped cups are supported on a short stem and the cup will flatten out as the fruit matures.



Green Elf Cup -
Ceri Jones



Turkey Tail - Tamasine
Stretton

Turkeytail – *Trametes versicolor*

Once referred to as the Many-Zoned Polypore, this fungus is now commonly known by its American name. This fungus can be found all year round on dead

hardwood where it forms overlapping layers. Each bracket is made up of bands of different colours and the colour combinations vary from specimen to specimen. Although too tough to eat, the Turkeytail is often used for decorative purposes, such as table centre pieces.

Collared Earthstar - *Geastrum triplex*

These fascinating fungi can be found under hardwood and coniferous trees, often favouring sloping ground. The interior of the young fruit body is white, turning to a dark brown powdery mass as the spores mature.

Spores escape from the hole in the top of the spore-sac, called the peristome, when the wind blows across the opening. Larger puffs of spores can be spotted during rainfall when the raindrops hit the domed top, compressing the spore-sac.



Earth Star -
Jane Hudson



Ballerina Waxcap - Jane Hudson

Ballerina Waxcap - *Porpolomopsis calyptriformis*

These beautiful pink waxcaps are uncommon and localised in Britain, usually found as single specimens or small groups on cropped, unfertilised grassland. They first appear with a narrow, conical cap which splits as it matures, producing the "tutu" effect that earned it its common name.

Beef Steak Fungus - *Fistulina hepatica*

This common bracket fungus, sometimes called the Ox Tongue fungus, can be found on the lower portions of Oak and Sweet Chestnut tree trunks. Its red, moist surface looks very much like the steak it is named for and it will even "bleed" if cut. Although edible, it does require a long cooking process and does not taste at all like beef!



Beefsteak - Eley Hart



Honey Fungus - Eley Hart

Honey Fungus - *Armillaria mellea*

Named for their colour, there are many species of fungus within the Honey Fungus group and they are all potentially lethal to surrounding trees and plants. The fungus attacks coniferous and broadleaf trees and once the fruiting bodies appear it can be assumed that the internal damage already done to the tree will be terminal. Black, bootlace like mycelial threads, like roots, spread under the bark and can also travel tree to tree – up to 9 metres!

Beech Jellydisc - *Neobulgaria pura*

This fungus can be found on the fallen trunks and branches of broadleaf, hardwood trees, particularly the Beech, hence its common name. Pinkish in colour and variable in size, the gelatinous fruit bodies start out quite flat and become more cup shaped as they press against each other.



Beech Jellydisc - Ceri Jones



Variable Oysterling - Ceri Jones

Variable Oysterling - *Crepidotus variabilis*

This tiny, kidney shaped fungus can be found on the dead twigs of broadleaf trees. As the Latin name suggests, its shape is variable ranging from semi-circular to almost fully circular fans. The gills, like the cap, start out white and

turn a buff or cinnamon colour when covered with mature spores.



Porcelain Fungus - Ceri Jones

Porcelain Fungus - *Oudemansiella mucida*

These white, semi-transparent fungi are specific to Beech trees and can be found on dead trunks or fallen branches. The cap has a layer of translucent mucus giving the fungus its smooth, shiny, porcelain appearance. Porcelain fungus, once established, rarely shares its location with other fungus, a feat it achieves by releasing a powerful fungicide to deter competitors.

Shaggy Inkcap - *Coprinus comatus*

This large, edible fungus can be found in groups in meadows, woodlands and on road verges. Growing up to 15cm tall, the early fruiting body is white and egg shaped, becoming more bell shaped as it matures. Its "shaggy" appearance comes from the outer layer of the fungus splitting into scales which stand out from the main body.



Shaggy Inkcap - Ceri Jones



Magpie Inkcap - Sarah Thomas

Magpie Inkcap - *Coprinopsis picacea*

These striking fungi usually grow individually, so capturing a group photo is very impressive! The white or silver grey markings on a dark background give this fungus its common name and its beauty. Like all inkcaps, the fruiting body has a short life span and the fungus favours alkaline soil in deciduous woodlands.

Lacquered Bracket - *Ganoderma lucidum*

Fungus in the Ganoderma family can be difficult to identify due to the variability of their colour, shape and size, with some growing up to 25cm wide! Referred to as Reishi or Lingzhi fungus in oriental medicine, they are highly prized and have been used in various remedies for 2000 years. Often found on the bases or stumps of broadleaf trees.



Lacquered Bracket - Eley Hart

Visit www.montwt.co.uk/fungi-quick-guide to find out more about Montgomeryshire's amazing fungi.

Dyfi Wildlife Centre Update

After years of planning, fundraising and building, the summer of 2020 was to see the grand opening of the Dyfi Wildlife Centre (DWC), the Trust's new eco-friendly visitor hub at Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve. With a shop, café, wildlife cinema, display areas and interpretation, not to mention full access toilet facilities

and breathtaking views, the new centre would replace the old portacabins with a state of the art, carbon neutral building, complete with solar panels and a ground source heat pump.



View from the Balcony

Needless to say, the Covid-19 pandemic made that timescale impossible, but the good news is that, throughout the lockdown, contractors, suppliers and Trust staff continued to work on the DWC, bringing us ever closer to that grand opening. As we go to press, the staircase and



Work continues on the interior

flooring are being fitted and we have been able to allow limited numbers of volunteers to enter the centre and help with the painting.

If all goes well, we hope to open the Dyfi Wildlife Centre on 1st March 2021 (St. David's day). However, the threat of Covid-19 remains and the restrictions change on an almost daily basis. Follow the Dyfi Wildlife Centre Facebook page for the latest updates and news.

Open Newtown

MWT are continuing to work with Open Newtown to help deliver several projects around Newtown.

- Preparations are underway to use pond plants from an MWT Nature Reserve to help colonise a two year old pond in Vaynor. The pond will have a pond dipping platform so local schools and the community can explore the amazing pond life safely.
- The Wales Community Service Team, managed by the Wales Probation Service, have been working on Trehafren Hill, carrying out important vegetation clearance



Duke of Edinburgh Award Volunteers

on the brand new mountain bike trial and restoring the path network on this lovely piece of unimproved grassland.

- Woodland safety surveys and tree surgery tenders have been commissioned to deal with the potentially dangerous trees found on Newtown's parks and green spaces over the winter.
- Volunteers from the Bryn Walking Group are helping to keep Newtown's parks clean and safe by collecting and removing large quantities of litter. Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) have provided bags for these collections and Powys County Council are collecting the bags from waste collection points nearby. This partnership between the volunteers, KWT and the local authority is a great example of how the Open Newtown project aims to work with the community to ensure Newtown's open



Electric Cargo Bike

spaces are safe and clean for visitors and the wildlife found there. The waste bins on the parks are being regularly emptied by the collection service Bike to the Future and their electric cargo bike.

- Students from Bettws Lifehouse School are undertaking volunteering around Newtown for their silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award. So far they have visited Dolerw Park four times to clear up fallen branches blocking the paths, helping to make the site safe and at the same time making homes for wildlife. They will also be working at Trehafren Playing Fields cutting back overgrowth from the paths and digging holes for a small number of fruit trees which will be added to Cultivate's Incredible Edible Trail, which meanders in and around Newtown's parks and open spaces.