



Montgomeryshire  
Maldwyn

ISSUE

23

Montgomeryshire

Wildlife

News

Spring 2021





## 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.

## Contact Details

### **Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust**

Park Lane House, High Street,  
Welshpool, Powys SY21 7JP

**Tel:** 01938 555654

**Email:** [info@montwt.co.uk](mailto:info@montwt.co.uk)



Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust



@MontWildlife



montwt

## On The Cover

### **Cygnets by Gary Williams**

Gary has found capturing the wildlife he sees on his walks a great way to hone his photography skills, learn about Montgomeryshire's wildlife and lift his spirits during lockdown.

## Chair's Overview

by Tim McVey

Birds are singing, buds are appearing on the trees and it's a great year for snowdrops. Spring is here. We might look forward to seeing the Orange-tip butterfly or be lucky enough to spot or hear a Curlew. We aren't able to travel but so much is available within a short walk anywhere in the county and we can bring wildlife into our gardens where we can sit back and watch it.

There is a spring-like feeling with the improving news about Covid 19. Cases are dropping, the vaccine campaign is racing ahead and there are plans to return to activities that feel more normal. MWT has kept working throughout the last 12 months. After initial anxieties about our future due to the loss of income from cancelled projects, there is now a promise of new ones and new staff. There are funds to improve the facilities at some of the nature reserves, as well as the resources and links to work with young people and people with mental health problems.

As spring turns to summer, with wild flowers blooming in the hedgerows and birds rearing their young, MWT will start to open up. Volunteers will be able to help and enjoy their various roles, our offices and shop will reopen, projects will welcome new participants, events will fill the calendar, ospreys will return and we will be able to show off the Dyfi Wildlife Centre. We can't put dates on this and it depends on forces beyond MWT's control, but I'm optimistic that there will be a gradual return to something like normality. Meanwhile, keep watching your local corner and try and make some space for wildlife around you.

Have you been inspired by the work of the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust? Would you like to take an active role in guiding the Trust's delivery in the future? We are looking for new Trustees to support the staff team and ensure the Trust is appropriately governed and able to deliver its mission "to rebuild biodiversity and engage people with their environment by being an active and influential wildlife champion" If you are interested in finding out more please visit

<https://www.montwt.co.uk/volunteering-trustee>

**Tim McVey**

*MWT Chair*



*Tim volunteering at Dolforwyn Woods*

If you no longer wish to receive this magazine mailing please contact [info@montwt.co.uk](mailto:info@montwt.co.uk) or call 01938 555654 to unsubscribe.

## Welcome Aboard!

**Fay Morris –**  
Trainee Project Officer

I'm delighted to have joined MWT as Trainee Project Officer where I'll be working to implement climate solutions with young people. I grew up in this area and have lived on the Montgomeryshire/Shropshire border for many years, where I've got to know and love the local habitats and wildlife. After completing my degree in Anthropology, I moved into the environmental sector; working in practical conservation and youth work. I'm looking forward to engaging with a new group of young environmentalists and working to enhance our local wildlife. I look forward to meeting some of you out and about when restrictions allow!



**Alex Chadwick –**  
Community Events Officer

After a crazy year of lockdown, I've finally joined the team at the Cors Dyfi reserve as Community Events Officer. I've spent the years since finishing my Environmental Biology degree working in site management for conservation in north and mid Wales, before more recently shuffling sideways into public engagement and education roles. Until we're all allowed out to play again I've been keeping busy helping out with work on the new Dyfi Wildlife Centre, building the new osprey project website and doing maintenance on the reserve. I can't wait to get stuck into engaging with people through all sorts of tours, talks, workshops, children's activities, exhibitions and more!



## Volunteer Update

After 7 years of dedicated service, we are saying a fond farewell to Jane Phillips who is retiring as

Volunteer Co-ordinator. Jane has helped recruit new volunteers and has co-ordinated the various volunteering opportunities the Trust has to offer. She has also overhauled the volunteer database and ensured the volunteers have felt supported and appreciated, organising several thank you days including a boating trip on Lake Vyrnwy. Fortunately, we aren't losing Jane as a volunteer and she is looking forward to getting back out with the work party volunteers as soon as the Covid restrictions allow. Thank you Jane!

Volunteer Co-ordination will now be managed by Sandy Scott, the Trust's Membership Officer. If you have a query regarding volunteering please visit our website [www.montwt.co.uk](http://www.montwt.co.uk) or email Sandy directly at [vol@montwt.co.uk](mailto:vol@montwt.co.uk).



## Wildlife Friendly Garden Award

UK gardens make up an area 5 times the size of greater London - that's a lot of potential space for nature! If only a little bit of each one of these gardens did something for wildlife, we'd have a fantastic nature network across the country. There's a variety of ways you can support wildlife, whether it's building

a pond, putting up boxes or simply feeding the birds. If you think your garden is a haven for wildlife it may be a contender for our 'Wildlife Friendly Garden' award. Visit the Get Involved page of our website at <https://www.montwt.co.uk/MWT-wildlife-gardening-scheme> to find out how to apply to the scheme. Approved gardens will receive a plaque to display as testament to your superior habitat management skills. Be the envy of your friends and neighbours!







*Ash Dieback felling at Roundton Hill*

## Reserves Roundup

When Wales went back in to full lockdown in December, the limited volunteer work parties MWT had been able to run ground to a halt once more. This left our volunteers frustrated and our Reserves Officer, Rob Haigh, battling on alone with the urgent work required on our reserves over the winter.

Ash Dieback work remains a priority, especially on sites where Ash are near to buildings, roads, car parks and footpaths. Felling trees is something we want to avoid where possible, so we have worked with tree surgeons to do a survey of the reserves and identify the trees that need to be felled. Those trees that are

deeper into the reserves and away from any infrastructure will be left untouched. Trees that have been left as standing trunks will grow back as pollarded trees and those cut to the ground will return as coppiced trees, if they are resistant to Ash Dieback.



*Mower at Llanymynech Rocks*



*New Gate at Llyn Coed y Dinas*

boardwalk and a new gate has been installed to allow easier access for the BCS mower.

At Dolydd Hafren, some of the old bird boxes have been replaced and the interpretation on site has been repaired. Rob has also been chipping brash in the car park area.



*Scrub Clearance at Llanymynech Rocks*

Clearing up after the tree works is proving a difficult and lengthy process without the help of our volunteers so please bear with us!

Elsewhere, the more routine tasks of hedge laying, path maintenance and scrub clearance have also been happening. At Llyn Coed Y Dinas, new chicken wire has been added to the



*Chipping Brash at Roundton Hill*



# A Quest for Curlew

## by Mick Green



As our largest Wader, with a characteristic and loud call, the Curlew has always been an iconic species. This is especially true in Wales where it has at least 30 regional names and its own Saint, St Beuno. St Beuno's Saints Day is the 21st April and this has now been designated 'World Curlew Day'.

There are eight known species of curlew worldwide, two of which are assumed extinct. The Eskimo and the Slender-Billed have not been seen for decades. Out of the remaining six species, three are at risk of extinction – the Eurasian ('our' birds), the Bristle-thighed and the Far Eastern are all listed on the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species. It is no exaggeration to say that many parts of the earth will lose curlews completely over the next few decades. In Wales, Curlew have been in serious decline and current predictions are that they could become extinct as a breeding species by 2030.

In order to address this, several organisations and individuals, including Natural Resources Wales, have produced a species action plan for Curlews in Wales. One of the key actions identified is the need for detailed, up to date information about where the birds are breeding, so we can target conservation efforts.

Montgomeryshire has long been known as an important breeding area for Curlew. The birds breed in a wide variety of habitats, from moorland edge to lowland meadows and return to the same fields to breed year after year. Unfortunately, Montgomeryshire has not been immune to the Wales-wide decline. As a consequence of several windfarm applications being submitted in the late 1990's and early 2000's, extensive surveying was undertaken. These results, along with a further survey undertaken in 2012, confirmed the curlews were in sharp decline (see table)

Site	Date of previous survey	No of Pairs	No of Pairs 2012
Nant yr Eira	2005	11	3-4
Mynydd y Hendre	2005	5-6	1-2
Trannon	1995	13	1-2

Working with MWT, I will be carrying out a survey in 2021 of Curlew in previously known breeding areas. Any Curlew records, past and present, would be gratefully received. I will be surveying from public rights of way, so if you are a landowner and would like to give me access permission this would also be gratefully received. Surveys will be undertaken following the Covid regulations in place at the time.



*Curlew – Darin Smith*

Curlew will be returning to their breeding grounds in the coming weeks, when they are at their most vocal, and we are asking all MWT members to keep their eyes and ears open. Please send records to me at [mick@gn.apc.org](mailto:mick@gn.apc.org). If you can provide a grid reference and some details of the activity observed, even better. I would also welcome historical records and records from outside the county. A report of the survey and all records will be available in autumn 2021.

With your help, we hope to build up an accurate picture of the Curlew's status and from that create a conservation action plan that will secure the future of Curlews in Montgomeryshire for generations to come. Diolch yn fawr.

# Operation Orange-tip

by Douglas Boyes,  
Montgomeryshire County  
Butterfly Recorder



Orange-tip  
– Ian Lindsey

The Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines* is a familiar butterfly to most of us, and one that heralds the beginning of spring. The first males are often seen in late March, as they set about establishing and patrolling their new territories, eagerly awaiting the emergence of the rather less colourful females.

The gaudy coloration of the males (from which the species gets its English

name) is not without good reason: this warns birds that it would not make a good snack, as it is highly distasteful. To achieve this feat, it is thought the caterpillar accumulates mustard oils from its food plant. The females preferred plants for laying eggs are cuckooflower and garlic mustard. At night, the adults can often be seen at rest on these plants. They hold their wings shut, displaying a beautiful green mottled underside that serves as excellent camouflage.

The Orange-tip is a fairly common species over much of the UK, including Montgomeryshire. Thanks to the males' roaming habits, it regularly turns up in gardens but it is possible to see Orange-tips anywhere in the county where its food plants are found. My new digital atlas of the county's butterflies reveals a rather patchy distribution, which almost certainly does not reflect the species' true range. As a result, I'm launching 'Operation Orange-tip', an initiative to encourage recording of this species to better understand its distribution in the county.

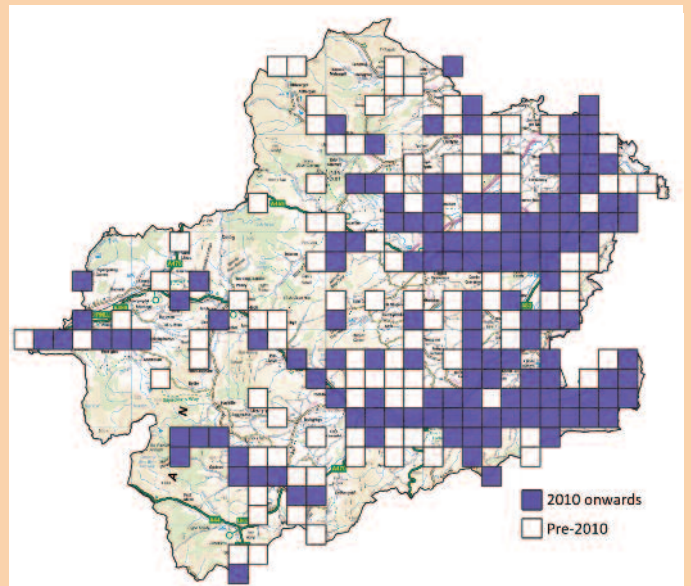
To do this I need your help! Please can you send me any sightings of this charismatic butterfly? It doesn't matter where these are from: gardens, nature reserves, road verges, even supermarket car parks! With your help, we can build up a better picture of where this species occurs in Montgomeryshire. The species is usually on the wing from late March/early April and can be seen flying right through until June. If you happen to spot any other spring-flying



Orange-tip  
– Ian Lindsey

butterflies whilst out and about, please do send in these sightings too. I just need the basic information that forms a biological record (the four 'W's): Who (the recorder's name), What (the species seen), Where (a site name plus an OS grid reference), and When (a date).

The atlas map shows the blue 2km x 2km squares (tetrads) where the species has been recorded recently, as well as white squares in which the species has not been seen for over a decade. Let's see how many squares we can find Orange-tips in this spring! Whilst all sightings are important, it would be particularly exciting if you were able to find Orange-tips in completely new squares or those tetrads with only old records. If exploring new areas, remember to stick to public footpaths or gain the landowner's permission.



For more details about Operation Orange-tip and how to get involved check out:

[www.douglasboyes.co.uk/orangetip](http://www.douglasboyes.co.uk/orangetip)

My digital atlas detailing all 43 butterfly species that have been seen in the county can be accessed here:

[www.douglasboyes.co.uk/atlas](http://www.douglasboyes.co.uk/atlas)



20 years of putting  
wildlife on the map  
20 mlynedd o roi  
bywyd gwyllt ar y map



**BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION SERVICE**  
FOR POWYS AND BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK  
**GWASANAETH GWYBODAETH FIOAMRYWIAETH**  
POWYS A PHARC CENEDLAETHOL BANNAU BRYCHEINIOG

## Record a Bird Challenge

As part of their 20th anniversary celebrations the Biodiversity Information Service (BIS) are challenging people in Powys to spot 20 different species of bird this spring.

To submit your sightings, and be in with a chance of winning a Bird ID guide in their prize draw, visit [www.bis.org.uk/diaryevent](http://www.bis.org.uk/diaryevent) to register on Eventbrite. Sightings can then be logged using BIS Wired, the LERC Wales app or iRecord up to the 30th April 2021.

For more details please visit the BIS website or contact [ben@bis.org.uk](mailto:ben@bis.org.uk)



*Great Spotted Woodpecker*  
– Dave Kilbey



*Nuthatch*  
by jLasWilson

For over 20 years MWT has worked with local bird recorders to run the 'MWT Garden Bird Survey', which asks participants to record the birds they see in their garden, throughout the year. Many members may have taken part at the same location since the survey started, leading to an exceedingly valuable continuity of data. 100 different bird species have been recorded during that time, with approximately 45 surveys undertaken annually. The survey is a vital tool to help us record bird species in the area, monitor population figures and diversity changes over time and inspire people to value their gardens as havens for the birds that visit them.

Since its inception, the survey methodology has remained unchanged; this is important to be able to compare data over the years, but the time has come to review the survey and ensure it is fit for purpose, whilst being user-friendly. Having discussed this with the County Bird Recorder, Simon Boyes, who also

## MWT Garden Bird Survey

consulted existing participants, we have changed the system slightly. The changes include an updated bird species list, a simpler scoring system and room for non-bird sightings. We hope this will make it easier to take part in the survey, without losing the long-term continuity.

The form can be found on our website at <https://www.montwt.co.uk/mwt-Garden-Bird-Survey> where you can download and print them out, or, for those who prefer, they can be filled out in Microsoft Excel. Alternatively, you can contact [info@montwt.co.uk](mailto:info@montwt.co.uk) or phone 01938 555654 to request the form be emailed or posted out to you.

The new survey starts on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March, but don't worry if you missed the start, just record the weeks that you can. Whether you are new to the survey, or have been taking part since it started, we need YOU! Records from the west of the County are especially welcome. Montgomeryshire is a very under-recorded area, so you can make a real difference to our understanding by taking part.



# Fighting Climate Change – We Need You!



Pond Dipping

An All Wales, youth-led climate project is gathering momentum and we are looking for the next generation of environmentalists to get involved! The project is funded by the National Lottery Climate Action Fund and seeks 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 community action, education and training, and virtual engagement.

In the last few months, we have recruited a new Trainee Project Officer, Fay, who will be working on project delivery alongside our Climate Solutions Officer, Dan. During the winter lockdown we have been busy reaching out to potential partners in the area who we hope to collaborate with. These include local schools, extra-



There's no planet B  
– Penny Dixie

curricular providers, the farming community and more! If you are involved with an organisation who might like to collaborate with us, please get in touch.

More than anything, we are keen to hear from young people who want to stand up for nature. If you or someone you know is enthusiastic, interested in the environment, and between the ages of 9 and 24, we'd love to hear from you! This project offers the opportunity to make a difference for nature, while building your confidence and skills. Please contact [dan@montwt.co.uk](mailto:dan@montwt.co.uk) to find out more.

## Cors Dyfi Beaver Update

Last spring, with the help of a local fencing contractor, we built an enclosure for beavers at Cors Dyfi. The enclosure has a perimeter of around 700m and an area of seven acres. It encloses a series of three interconnected pools and a mass of dense willow and birch scrub – essentially beaver heaven!

We have now been granted a license from NRW to introduce a small family group of beavers in the next few months. Our beavers will be translocated from one of the Scottish beaver projects to our enclosure. The animals will undergo full health screening before their move and will be given time to settle in to their new home when they arrive.

The beavers at Cors Dyfi will be an important management tool to further the recovery of the peat bog by reducing the scrub growth and enhancing open water areas. This means that the reserve will have a greater capacity for carbon sequestration and we should see an increase in the overall biodiversity of the area. Base line monitoring has already begun using invertebrates, bats and bryophytes as indicators of biodiversity. We are also monitoring any changes in the hydrology with dip well monitoring. We are excited to be bringing these ecosystem engineers to the reserve and can't wait for them to get started on managing the scrub vegetation that is drying up the bog.

View from the Beaver Lodge



**STOP PRESS!**

Two of the Beavers, father and son, have now been released into the enclosure and are settling in well. The female will follow shortly.