



ORE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Saving and enhancing green space in the Upper Ore Valley

Welcome to May's Newsletter. The weather is warming and love is most definitely in the air as these ladybirds and brown shield beetles show!



There are actually 46 species of ladybird in the UK. Interestingly the number of spots rather than the colour, denote the species, the seven spot ladybird being our most common one. It is in fact the 'seven spot' which gave the 'ladybird' its common name, referring to the red cloak of the Virgin Mary (Lady), as seen in early paintings. The seven dots are meant to represent her seven joys and seven sorrows.



It's not just the insects who are busy. Here we have the same upward view: one from a week ago and one from January's newsletter. We can see how the canopy has developed, and those cheeky sycamore trees have pretty much blocked off all the light coming through. Large areas of the woodland are now in shade and will remain so until leaf fall in the autumn.

Present Activities

Well, at risk of sounding repetitive, we have been doing more rubble clearance! As we had such a major clearance on the Church St side of the valley, it really shows up what needs doing on the Old London Rd side. We have also been attending to some dead hedging which needed smartening up and assessing the steps which are in need of renewal. Hopefully we can start on those soon.

Ecology Walk

We were lucky enough to have ecologist Andrew Grace with a small group of us again in Speckled Wood and he has kindly offered us this piece and accompanying photos:

Two bee or not two bee!



Two of the Mining Bees that live in Speckled Wood are the Early Mining Bee *Andrena haemorrhoa* (left) and the Chocolate Mining Bee *Andrena scotica* (right). Both are females. The females emerge in the early spring and build their nests as a tunnel in the ground. They make cells beside the main tunnel and fill them with a mixture of pollen and nectar. One egg is laid in each cell and when the larva emerges it feeds on the provision until it is big enough to pupate. The young bee emerges as an adult the following spring.

Speckled Wood is a special place. It is full of history: the land farmed at times, small holdings and allotments. Nature has always survived in the Ore Valley. Today the wood has regenerated and restored the Wealden character of deciduous mature trees as well as areas of bushes and grassland. The reason is the bedrock of clays and sandstones and the unique Wealden geology which has created ghyll woodland streams and freshwater springs. The landscape of the Ore Valley is very ancient, going back to the Cretaceous. Now the sheltered stream sides and slopes are home to characteristic regional flora and fauna

Here are some additional photos from our walk. Note the snail creating a unique sheltered courtyard in an eggshell. The lengths some of us go to, to stand out from the crowd!



land snail



greenbottle



nursery web spider

The nursery web spider is usually found in dense vegetation. It likes to sunbathe (which may be why we found it doing just that along Church St) and typically holds its front two pairs of legs together pointing forwards. The male is the perfect gentleman as, during mating, it presents the female with a carefully wrapped insect as a present. I think I would still prefer chocolates, but it's the thought

Tales from the Wood

Jane, who joined us on the walk, told us how her Aunt, Pansy Branston, used to live in Greville Rd at the Victoria Ave end. Jane remembered as a child in the 1950's, being able to see across the Speckled Wood valley from her Aunt's house to where her Aunt kept goats on the other side. She would put them there to keep the grass down. We looked in the direction and could only imagine this. As you can see from this view from her house, things have grown up a little since then!



Ore Community Land Trust, Ore Centre, 455 Old London Road, Hastings, TN35 5BH

ore.clt@hotmail.com

Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1171507

www.orecommunitylandtrust.org.uk