



ORE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Saving and enhancing green space in the Upper Ore Valley

Welcome to April's Newsletter, the first month of the zodiac and the first month of our existence as a charity. Many, many thanks to the members and others who have worked hard behind the scenes to take us to this stage. We hope you are enjoying our updated icon and heading.

Ecology in the Wood

And, talking of new: new is going on throughout the woods. Lots of preparation for the new generation of flora and fauna. So, it was great timing that an ecologist friend of ours, Andrew Grace, popped down to the wood with us to take a look at life in Speckled Wood. Here is a report from one of our members, Chris:

“We met at the village green, and proceeded towards the wood. Before we had even entered the wood, we stopped at the laurel tree at the entrance. WOW! It was teeming with life, the sun was shining hard on the leaves, and the insects were taking full advantage of this.

After half hour, we finally entered the wood. We spent some time studying the trees and plants, and the relationship they have with insects. I pointed out the damage to the trees, carried out by male (testosterone high) squirrels, which is not only exploited by insects, but also fungi.

Dropping deeper into the wood, you could see the ecology change, from sun loving insects, to shade lovers and on reaching the valley floor, due to the shade and the presence of the stream. Again, we could see how the plants, trees, and also the geographical position affect the ecology of the wood. By now, we began see how it is all connected, and started to take an interest in the ornithology, which is very dependent on insects. All your usual birds were singing and dancing amongst the trees: wren, robin, blackbird, etc. Flying high above us was a sparrow hawk, and higher still were buzzards, a truly beautiful sight.

So the next time you go down the wood, do not just look forward, look up, look down, and look around.”

Some of the species we observed or heard:

Birds – blackbird, blackcap, blue tit, chiff chaff, collar dove, common buzzard, great tit, hedge sparrow, jay, robin, song thrush, sparrow hawk, woodpecker, wood pigeon and wren.

Insects – mining, mason, hairy-footed flower and redbellied bees; queen wasp, hoverfly, bee fly, crane fly, red dragonfly, damselfly, red and yellow ladybirds, comma and speckled wood butterfly



Speckled Wood butterfly



Bumblebee



Hoverfly



Ladybird



Comma butterfly



Damselfly



Hoverfly



Hoverfly

The Speckled Wood butterfly is common in woodlands and tall vegetation throughout southern England. The adults feed on aphid honeydew, and their caterpillars on grasses. The Speckled Wood is unique among British butterflies in that they are able to hibernate either as a caterpillar or as a chrysalis.

Hoverfly is the general name applied to the large and very diverse (see above photos!) Syrphidae family. Not only do they appear diverse, they have a wide range of ecological lifestyles. The adults feed mainly on nectar and pollen whilst the larvae (maggots) eat a wide range of foods from decaying plant and animal matter to preying on plant sucking insects

Present Activities

Aside from more rubble tidying, we have widened the bench on the Church St side of the valley and helped out with Ore in Bloom when they came to weed the planted areas on the green. We have also tidied and repaired some of the fencing along Victoria Ave which should give better protection to the badger setts there.

Walk in the Wood



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Greenway walk - 22nd April 2017

The Ore Valley Greenway Group organised another lovely walk, showing the desired portion of the Greenway route from Ore Station up to Victoria Avenue via Speckled Wood. It was well attended again, including 4 Hastings Guides (who informed us that they make use of the wood for some of their activities) and some rather interesting woodland folk along the way, thanks to the Lantern Tree theatre group.



Geometry in the Wood



We have our first contribution to our 'geometry in the wood' photo challenge. The cherry laurel at the entrance to Speckled Wood from the green has been a main feature of this month's newsletter. A favoured sunbathing place for a huge variety of insects, and it has come up trumps here too, with a very definite circle.

Many thanks to Jevon for the photo.

Finally, please enjoy this wonderful spring poem from one of our trustees, Lil Megs:



That is all for this month. If you would like to make a contribution to the newsletter, please send your offering, by the 20th of the month, to the email address below with subject heading 'newsletter' and how you would like to be named.

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