



NORTH SOMERSET AND BRISTOL GROUP NEWSLETTER – July 2018

Dear Member and Friends

Our walk last month took in three reserves – Uphill, Walborough and Bleadon Levels Reserves. Bird-wise it was very quiet but it was a pleasant stroll with lovely all-round views from the Beacon at Uphill. The new cycle path to Brean makes the reserves very accessible, both on foot and on a bike. Just away from the cycle route are the tidal salt marshes which are a good area in which to see short-eared owls during the winter months.

View from the church on the hill behind Uphill, looking over the salt marshes



The next walk is a morning one at the Somerset Earth Sciences Centre, Moon's Hill Quarry at Radstock on 30th July. As the location has to be accessed by minibus, our group size is limited to 10. Please contact me for further details if you are interested. If we have to disappoint too many members we will try to organise another visit for next year!

The Midsummer Charity Day at Acton Court was very successful. This was a joint venture for Acton Court and the South Glos H&OT Group who help with conservation work in the traditional meadows and monitor the resident barn owls. The proceeds are being shared between the charity 'Streetlife', (supporting the homeless in Bristol), and the Trust's Shapwick Reserve. Acton Court is a fascinating, very original Tudor house that has been overlooked for many years but recently conserved by English Heritage. It opens to the public for guided tours on only 30 days a year (booking advised). <http://www.actoncourt.com/>



Swifts need help as their numbers are falling every year. One of the reasons is a shortage of nest sites as old barns are converted and roofs re-felted. However, like barn owls, swifts seem to take quite readily to appropriate nest boxes and at Swift House in Bristol there are no less than twenty-five on one semi-detached house from which to choose! Having selected one, swifts are nest faithful. Over the years, swift visitors have increased from one pair to seventeen, with lots of breeding success. At their open garden event in June, it was fascinating to hear how one couple's passion for swifts has had such amazing results.

<http://www.bristolswifts.co.uk/bristol-swifts-blog-2018/>

Swift boxes under the eaves on the back and side of the house.

Kestrel Highways Project

If you would like to be involved or have sightings please contact baz.gray@btinternet.com

Urban Peregrine Project

From Hamish Smith - "Very happy to report that Bath Peregrines' 2016 female KR (sibling of the somewhat manic KP) has bred successfully in the London area this year. Many thanks to Stuart of London Peregrine Partnership ([@LdnPeregrines](#)) for advising that that she overwintered with a male and has raised her first brood of three on a building roof."

News from Shapwick:

Volunteers have been regularly checking and reviewing our two webcams located on the reserve and are gathering some interesting footage of swallows nesting around the Workbase, kestrels and a barn owl. Their technology skills are being developed to edit and transfer the images into a video format!

For information on volunteering please contact simon.beard@hawkandowl.org Tel 01308 861008

Other dates and items which may be of interest:

This year's Big Butterfly Count is **20th July-12th August**. <https://www.bigbutterflycount.org>

Sunday, 19th August - Advance notice of the date for member's BBQ on the reserve. We will provide the BBQ – please bring food to cook and share.

A reminder that, following changes to the law regarding data protection, this will be your last newsletter if you have not given me your consent to contact you in this way. Thanks to the many who have already responded, and for the supportive comments.



Last month I forgot to include this photo of one of the restored Mendip ponds!

Best wishes

Carrie Riches

Chair **Hawk and Owl Trust North Somerset and Bristol Group**

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