

# Mendip



## From the Chair

Here we are well into the start of 2026, there has been a mixture of new and returning events since the winter edition, hopefully something to tempt our existing members to be out and about, and to open the invitation to the wider general public. I am confident that our Editor Mike Harvey can portray a far more interesting record of what's been going on rather than my ramblings.



With the help of organising from Liz and Ian, and Jo and Steve we now have a fuller diary of events to look forward to.

Liz and Ian are stepping back for a few months whilst they prepare for their next trip to Tanzania in June and July where they have been helping a community install a water course from the mountains to the Village, a very exciting and worthwhile project amongst other equally essential day to day personal improvements to their lives many of which we just take for granted, I am sure you will have the opportunity to go along and hear how their latest tip materialised on their return.

At the next AGM in April we will be able to explain how we would like to expand our work and include other organisations to work in partnership with, practically those who sit on the National Landscape Partnership.

Tina



## And from the Editor

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**Cover Photo. - by Mike Harvey.**  
Rowberrow Woods in December.  
I'm breaking my own rule by using one of my photographs, but I am rather pleased with this one.

What a pleasure it is to be able to fill 20 pages with reports on what has been going on and what is coming up. It really feels as if our society is coming back to life after a few years of quieter times. we have several people to thank for that, some on the committee, some not. Some long-standing members, some new to organising events for us - all very welcome to contribute and play a part.



This of course is the AGM issue, and so you will find that the middle pages are designed as a pull out section covering all the formalities we need to attend to on an annual basis. The AGM itself is the best opportunity of the year for you, the members meet the people who run the society - and to let them know your thoughts, fears, frustrations and aspirations. Well worth a few hours of your time therefore - plus we have a speaker after the break to make attending a thoroughly worthwhile experience, full details are in the centre pull-out section.

you will also find a common theme throughout this edition - not a new subject, but a very important one if we want the society to grow and thrive into the future. Put simply we need more members to contribute to the running of the society. Page eight is therefore a full page of positions we need to fill, some quite urgently. Others have added appeals for help in their regular columns. Sorry to sound like a broken record, but I for one really want to keep up the momentum that several years of effort from Tina and the committee have managed to produce - and to do that we really do need your help.

Cheers, Mike.

[themendipsociety.photos@gmail.com](mailto:themendipsociety.photos@gmail.com)

## Secret World - An illustrated talk



*The hall gradually fills ahead of the talk.*  
Photo: Mike Harvey

**On the 28th of November**, George Bethell came along to Bishop Sutton Village Hall to give us an insight into the work of Secret World Wildlife Rescue.

Secret World is not a visitor attraction and is not, as a rule, open to the public. Their work with wildlife is normally done behind closed doors for the animals' welfare and so George has the brief to visit groups such as ours to communicate and inform the wider world about what they are doing, to rescue and rehabilitate wild animals in need of their help.

Something over thirty members and friends turned out on a dark and wintery night and were treated to some charming slides and short videos, alongside some cautionary tales of the sort of injuries and problems that mankind can thoughtlessly impose on our wildlife.

Generally, the talk was upbeat and covered not only what Secret World does directly, but also how it cooperates with the RSPCA and other animal charities to ensure that between them all they can do their best for the widest range of wildlife.

There were also a few hard facts delivered along the way. Such as the efforts gone to when releasing badgers, not into the area they were found, but many miles away, where licenced culls are not active, thereby maximising the animals' chances of survival. And don't please ask them to look after an injured Grey Squirrel... These are regarded as an invasive species and legally have to be humanly dispatched rather than nursed back to health!

Everyone I spoke to agreed that the talk was an interesting and informative one however – and took away two snippets in particular.

- 1, Deer can go temporarily blind if stressed or shocked... Traumatic events can cause deer to lose their sight – for several days! And...
- 2, Owls cannot move their eyes. The downside of having such acute night vision is that an Owl's eyes have evolved to be tubular in shape and are effectively fixed in their skulls.

As this was also the last planned event for us before Christmas, organiser Liz Dagger took the opportunity to add in a little festive cheer by providing mince pies alongside the teas and coffees served up after George's talk, so a lively social gathering rounded off not only the evening, but also 2025 for us.



*George Bethell of Secret World.*  
Photo: Mike Harvey

## Hellenge Hill - Fungi, ponds and a view - by Ian Dagger.

**We travelled West** to near the start of the track called, West Mendip Way, where we met other members of our tribe to visit the lands of the Avon Wildlife Trust at Hellenge Hill. Here we met the leader of that land named Fern.

We came to learn about the strange fungi that did cover this land. As we found them Fern did examine them closely and did even sniff them and tell us their name in a foreign tongue called Latin before translating them into our language. Sometimes Fern did consult a learned manuscript before deciding on the type of the fungi.

Despite the postal address of "Roman Road", as far as I can establish Hellenge is not a Roman word. It could have Greek origins and there are similar words in German and Nordic languages. It is possible that the Roman road from Charterhouse to Uphill did run along the crest of Bleadon Hill. In the locality there is evidence of a Roman Villa.



Warm clothing essential!  
Photo: Tina Bath

So back in the 21st century, Hellenge Hill is a 54-acre nature reserve on the southern scarp of the Mendips. It is owned and managed by Avon Wildlife Trust (AWT), a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The AWT website says the "calcareous grassland of Hellenge Hill supports rare plants such as honewort and Somerset hairgrass which are only found on the hot southern scarp of the Mendips. Look out also for green-winged orchid, common broomrape, yellow-wort, carline thistle and autumn lady's tresses. Gorse and hawthorn provide good habitat for birds and invertebrates. You may see adders basking on the slopes".

But we were there in November with a bracing northerly wind blowing, warding off any risk of heatstroke. Our focus was twofold, looking for the fungi that this habitat supported and understanding how the reserve was being managed and improved.

Amongst the more common fungi we found were Snowy Waxcap and Cedarwood Waxcap. The latter is said to have a strong smell of cedarwood. The aptly named Fools Funnel is deadly poisonous, it contains a lethal amount of muscarine, and can be confused with fairy ring champignon which is edible. Other fungi spotted were Double Rosegill, Petticoat Mottlegill, Hairy Leg Bell. The fungi that can be found anytime of the year and is a safe bet if it is found growing on an Elder Tree is the Jelly Ear. It is a useful addition to stir fries.

A useful website for fungi identification is [www.wildfooduk.com/mushroom-guide](http://www.wildfooduk.com/mushroom-guide) (Other sites are available)

We moved into a gated off section of the reserve where a mixed herd of cattle were grazing. Avon Wildlife Trust use grazing on many of their sites, as part of the management plans for those sites. Tina's border collie Bailey and the cattle had a good-natured examination of each other and decided, dog offered no threat to cattle or cattle no threat to dog. Leaving the cattle to return to their grazing we headed down the slope through patches of gorse and scrub. Fern explained how volunteers managed this area to create a mosaic of different habitats. I can imagine that in summer this area is alive with butterflies. The margins on the south facing slopes is where the adders will be found basking. The reserve has a large adder population and is an important site for the adder which is one of the champion species of Mendip Hills National Landscape indicating a good quality grassland habitat.



Identifying fungi  
Photo: Tina Bath

In an area called the gully there were several examples of managed site improvement. The first was evidence of standing deadwood for invertebrates and bird nesting sites. Secondly, we were taken to a groove where the predominant hawthorn had been cut down. This gives opportunity for what would be the understory to flourish giving a greater diversity and hawthorn growth of different ages. It was interesting to note that there appeared to be no hazel on the reserve. Lastly, we stopped to admire a pond that had been put in during the summer. Despite the dry summer it was probably half filled and is going to be a great environment for all pond living species. Next to it was a dew pond which Tina had advised on and worked on. It was very deep and probably was only a third full. This is a project in progress, and it is planned to dig more of it out.

We then went up the gully to the start point. We had spent some two hours exploring this reserve and it was time to cast our eyes one more time over the amazing views on offer. It was one of those cold days after some rainfall when the sky clears to a cloudless expanse of blue. To the South-East was Glastonbury Tour, to the West Brean Down, Steepholm and South Wales and to the South-West, the Somerset Levels, Brent Knoll, the Quantocks and Exmoor. This is our Mendips.

## The Birds of Blagdon Lake - a lakeside walk with Nigel Milborne

**Let's be honest** – it was a VERY wet day! I had, as always, taken along a camera and long lens in the hope of getting one or two decent images, but the odds were not in my favour.

Nigel Milborne is a Blagdon Lake Warden and a very knowledgeable ornithologist. Meeting us near the entrance to the pumping station with his telescope over his shoulder he immediately started into an informative commentary about the huge variety of birds that could potentially be seen as we walked around the lakeshore on a path not normally open to casual visitors. He explained, as we walked along, that when the lake was first constructed, an attempt was made to give the landscape a highland feel, going so far as to employ ghillies to manage the wildlife and planting trees not normally found in South-West England. This has evolved over time into a very pleasant landscape and while the ghillies are long gone one could easily believe you were walking beside a Scottish loch rather than a man-made reservoir.



*Still quite dry - but not for long!*  
Photo: Mike Harvey

We first stopped near a hut used to issue fishing permits. At this point the rain was not a problem, so Nigel was able to point out several species and line up his telescope for everyone to get a better look. Right in front of us, near the shoreline a Buzzard was busy having breakfast – a gory sight, but all part of nature, red in tooth and claw as some remarked. Apologies for the dreadfully bad photo, but I just wanted to point out all the white fluff and feathers – Buzzards are messy eaters it seems!



*Breakfast for a Buzzard.*  
Photo: Mike Harvey

Walking on in increasingly heavy rain, Nigel spotted and pointed out many resident birds, some apparently quite rare – all tantalisingly beyond the range I could get a clear picture from. Then suddenly, ahead of us on the shore, we spotted a Roe Deer, who did obligingly, hang around long enough for a few pictures.



*A Roe deer, aware of us, but not too worried.*  
Photo: Mike Harvey

The rain kept falling, and eventually we admitted defeat and headed back the way we had come, at which point of course the rain abated and a few more species performed for us. Amongst them this Great Egret, a bird once rare in Britain, but rapidly becoming a regular sight.



*A Great Egret takes flight.*  
Photo: Mike Harvey

As we parted, the idea of similar walks, hopefully in dryer conditions was discussed. Nigel has agreed, and you will find details of two more events at Blagdon Lake in our "What's on" listings. Places are limited, so snap yours up, wet or dry, Nigel's informed commentary and spotting skills are well worth turning out for.

## Wassailing

**Apparently**, the word 'Wassail' comes from the Old Norse for 'Good health'. Which in the case of Somerset and other cider-producing areas, is principally applied to the apple trees relied upon to supply the raw materials (apples) that produce our traditional West Country drink of choice. And so, as we do every year, on February 1st. The Mendip Society held a traditional Wassailing ceremony to drive away all forms of evil and ensure a good harvest.

There is of course, much more to it than that. We first of all gathered in the village hall in Burrington where industrious hands produced many portions of bread, cheese, pickle, cake and mulled cider to warm the returning wassailers after their mission to banish bad spirits from the orchard.



*Master of Ceremonies Les Davies MBE attracts everyone's attention.*

Master of Ceremonies (and MS president) Les Davies MBE gave a brief welcome and introduction for those new to wassailing, before introducing the Langport Mummers, who proceeded to deliver a rowdy and humorous rendition of the traditional St. George play, shot through with topical jokes, bawdy asides and references to current affairs.



*On the way to the orchard.*



*The Langport Mummers acted out a traditional story with a twist.*



*The Devil gets up close and personal!*

We then all processed to the orchard, led in fine style by Peter Janes, playing his pipes all the way, where a huge racket was generated by the crowd in order to scare off all forms of evil, before the chosen tree was hung with cider-soaked toast and had more cider poured around its roots by one of our three Wassail Princesses.

*Words and photos - Mike Harvey*



*Les and Peter lead the way...*



*To the orchard where a chosen tree receives offerings of cider & toast.*

Spirits banished and traditions respected we then made our way back to the hall where the food had been laid out on long tables and the mulled cider flowed for the rest of the afternoon.

This year, for the first time, we sold tickets using our new, online fundraising service, Zeffy. We also held the event earlier in the day in an attempt to attract more families. Both seem to have been highly successful in that we had almost 80 people in attendance, many of them non - (hopefully future) members and including several families. Initial feedback would suggest that the whole event was well received and the increase in numbers certainly added to the atmosphere – not to mention the amount of noise generated to rid the orchard of all possible malign spirits!



*After the ceremony, plenty of bread, cheese - and cider.*



*Three princesses - so much better than one!*

## Vacancies

**I'm including this feature for a second time** - Because, to put it simply... **WE NEED YOU!**...

The Mendip Society is effectively run by a small core of active people who all do a lot to ensure the continued existence of the society. Almost without exception they are overloaded and in need of support, back up and help. We have been successful in recruiting a few, very welcome, members over the last year to increase the number of walks, talks and other activities laid on by the society - and we are very grateful for their involvement and commitment. **BUT WE DO NEED MORE!** Several long-serving stalwarts of the society have, quite understandably retired and stepped down recently. They have left gaps that we really do need to fill. Please do take a look at the list below and see if you could possibly offer your services, even occasionally, to help run the society. New members are just as welcome as long-standing ones, anyone who has appropriate knowledge, experience, or just enthusiasm and a "can do" attitude.

- **Small Grant's Officer.** To oversee the requests we get for financial assistance from other groups and individuals, responding, bringing applications to the committee and communicating with applicants. The process has been largely automated and put online these days, but only simple computer knowledge is required and support / training will be given. In 21 years of running the scheme we have processed 85 applications to date, that's only around five a year, but we have given almost £50,000 to good causes.
- **Rights of Way Officers.** Steve Down has stepped up for the Western side of Mendip, but we are hoping to split the role and so we are still looking for East Mendip cover. This involves checking out reports from members and others about problems with rights of way by a physical visit and communicating our concerns to the relevant authorities where appropriate.
- **Planning Officer** (North Somerset). The role would suit anyone with experience of the planning process and involves monitoring applications that could affect the northern aspect of the Mendip Hills, National Landscape, including taking onboard reports from members - then writing to the relevant authority voicing our concerns, support, or objections. We have a Planning Officer for Somerset who is happy to assist during the learning process.
- **Reserves Managers.** Our two nature reserves have been managed for many years by David and Judith Tranter, but as they step down it is important that we replace them. Mainly the role involves organising work parties to do the necessary maintenance on these special places, plus being a point of contact for members and the public to report problems to. As with other roles, support and training is available.
- **Financial Reviewer.** As mentioned by our Treasurer in her report, the previous incumbent is stepping down for personal reasons. Anyone with a little accounting or book-keeping experience could easily do this important job for us. It is not formal auditing, just simple verification of the accounts, statements and other financial information on an annual basis. Marilyn would be very happy to discuss exactly what is involved with you, but we simply must fill this role.

Plus, of course, anyone who can help out in any way whatsoever would be welcome to make themselves known - many hands make light work! If you think you can help by getting stuck in, even only occasionally, please contact Peter Janes at: [secretary@themendipsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@themendipsociety.org.uk)

- **Newsletter contributors.** OK, I added this one in at the end and it is a little different to the other "official" roles. I am very happy to compile and publish your newsletter, I hope you find it interesting and informative. Several people have been kind enough to say positive things about it since I took over, for which I am obviously very grateful.

However, you may have noticed that, in this edition particularly, a lot of the articles and pictures are mine. Now, as anyone who knows me is likely to tell you, I do quite like the sound of my own voice, and I do take a lot of pictures. But this is YOUR newsletter, not my personal journal! So please, please, please, whenever you attend a walk, talk or other Mendip Society event, or if you simply have a subject that you think might interest the other members, do consider taking a few pictures, jotting down a few words, and contributing to the next edition. Failing that, we also need pictures and video clips to put on our social media feeds and website.

In the past we have had several very good articles written by a variety of members, old and new - and of course, the front cover is a showcase for member's photographs. We also get sent the occasional image to put online - all of which is very gratefully received, but I did just want to remind you all that there is an endless need for material for both this newsletter and our online presence. If anyone with relevant experience wants to help out managing and publishing newsletter, website or social media, then I am happy to hear from you. But any and all content is also very welcome. Thanks. Mike. [photos@themendipsociety.org.uk](mailto:photos@themendipsociety.org.uk)

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. SATURDAY APRIL 11<sup>th</sup> 2026**  
**To be held at Draycott Memorial Hall, Latches Ln, Draycott. BS27 3FN.**  
**10.00 for 10.30am start**

**AGENDA – Welcome by Les Davies MBE, the Mendip Society President**

1. Minutes of the previous meeting on April 12th 2025. – Now available to read or download on the website.
2. The Chairman's Report – To be read out at the meeting.
3. Summary Report of the accounts for 2025. Copies of the income and expenditure account 2025 will be available to members at the meeting, or, on request from the Treasurer otherwise.
4. Other Relevant Reports – Membership, The website, Rights of Way, Walks & Talks, Visits, and for the two Society Reserves at Slader's Leigh and Tania's Wood. Any questions and points of information on these.
5. Election of Officers –, including any new nominations: the President takes the Chair.  
If you would like to stand for any post please contact the Secretary in writing before the meeting to: **secretary@themendipsociety.org.uk** or by post to The Cottage Harptree Hill, West Harptree, BS40 6EJ.
6. A.O.B. from the Chair or from the floor. The date of the Annual General Meeting 2027
7. TEA AND CAKE followed by our speaker. Richard Ellam "From Stockton to Crystal Palace".

**2: Chairman's Report**

**3: Financial Report for the year ending December 31<sup>st</sup> 2025**

This is a brief overview of the Income and Expenditure Account and for the year ended 31st December 2025.

A full set of the Societies Accounts will be available at the AGM.

The Society made a surplus of £1,746.99 (2024 £2,646.82 deficit) this was made up of a trading profit of £8,214.99 (2024 £2,077.18) and payments from the heritage fund totalling £6,468.00 (2024 £4,724.00).

The income of the society in 2025 included a legacy of £5,000 - there was no similar legacy in 2024.

The outgoings for 2025 were similar to those in 2024 with no significant differences and no one-off events. The Societies Accounts show the society to be in a good position financially.

I am asking if any member would be interested in becoming the society's Independent Examiner for 2026 as Allan Caldwell has expressed a wish to stand down for personal reasons.

You would only be required to check the accounts at the end of the year and verify them to the bank statements and other documents. Should anyone be interested please contact me, or speak to me at the AGM for further information.

*Marilyn Cattell - Treasurer*

**4: Membership Report for 2025 - 2026**

As at 10th February membership stands at 261 of whom 170 have paid for 2026 (you will receive a reminder by post or email if you have yet to renew). If you pay by standing order and have not yet amended the amount to reflect the new rates, please do so. These are: single < 60 £20. single 60+ £17, joint / family £27. May we say a big thank you to everyone who has added a donation to their subscription.

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
382	366	390	385	366	351	308	298	288	261

This year we started using Zeffy.com as a way for people to join, renew and pay for membership online. After some minor teething issues (mainly my age related obtuseness with digital tech) this is now working well and we would encourage everyone to use this facility.

Finally, an annual reminder that, if you pay UK income or capital gains tax, agreeing to gift aid helps us at no cost to you. But please tell the membership secretary if you have signed up and subsequently cease to be a taxpayer.

*Cont. ►*



## Secretary's Report

During the year there have been, or will be, a number of changes to the Management Committee. After the AGM Judith Tranter will relinquish managing nature reserves; we are immensely grateful for all the hard work she and David have put in. Liz Dagger has stood down from the Committee while Steve Down has joined. The Management Committee currently comprises:

- Tina Bath (trustee) – Chairman and external liaison
- Marilyn Cattell (trustee) – Treasurer
- Peter Janes (trustee) - Secretary / Membership Secretary
- Mike Harvey (trustee) - on-line publicity and newsletter
- Mike Rolfe (trustee) – planning (Sedgemoor district)
- Jo Bradshaw - events / walks
- Steve Down - rights of way.

Les Davies gives invaluable support as President.

We still need more help for the Society to function fully effectively and are looking for people to carry out the following roles: nature reserves' managers, small grants officer, planning officers for B&NES, Mendip and North Somerset, archivist, walks leaders, auditor, volunteers to assist at events. You don't necessarily need to be on the Committee to help out and anyone interested should contact the Secretary.

During 2025/6 we provided £6740 in financial support to local groups and projects which met our eligibility criteria. These included the Gully cave excavation, St Hugh's Church at Charterhouse (door renovation), Mendip Young Rangers (kit), Cameley Church historic wall paintings, bat detectors, Nempnett Thrubwell Green Spaces (road sign renovation), Mendip Rocks Festival, Wrington and Burrington Hedging competition, Mendip Ploughing match, Shipham Allotments.

In the past we ran a walk each week. These were generally less strenuous than walks offered by other walking groups and were useful for getting people to join the Society. At present we simply do not have enough walks leaders to do this so please contact the Walks Coordinator if you would like to help.

*Peter Janes - Membership Secretary*

## Website, Social Media and Online Activity

Over the last twelve months the main website has seen only small changes in content and functionality as I try to ensure it remains easy to find, navigate and understand. The format works well on PC, tablet and phone screens thanks to a modern, if simple package. The online world never stands still however, and I am constantly looking for ways to make greater use of the internet and all it offers, without abandoning much loved, traditional forms of communication. With this in mind we now offer a flip book version of our printed newsletter, which is proving popular, but we have no plans to abandon traditional print.

We also have Facebook and Instagram channels, both of which attract a mix of members and non-members. I do try to post interesting and relevant content on a regular basis, but this demands a constant stream of images and other material, and so any content that members send in is gratefully received.

This year we also took over running our own YouTube channel. Graham Keating, who helped produce a series of short films featuring Les Davies a few years ago was keen to hand over this content and was helpful in the process of moving it to our control. Hopefully, over time we will be able to add to the number of short films it offers, anyone who cares to help with materials or expertise would be most welcome.

Visual media aside, we also put our Small Grants application process online, making it easier to keep track of all applications and ensuring that all the right questions get asked and answered first time out. Saving both effort and time. And of course, we began using Zeffy as a way of allowing members old and new to renew or join online. Zeffy also offers a way to issue tickets for a wide range of our events, either by clicking a link on the website or scanning a QR code, printed alongside each of the listings. The vast majority of events are still free to paid-up members, who need to enter the word "Member" in the discount code box. But non-members and guests get to pay when they reserve a place, one less thing for organisers to do on the day. To date (mid Feb at time of writing) we have raised over £1,600 via Zeffy and a fair bit of this has come from non-members attending their first society event, some then joining as a result.

Zeffy costs us nothing to use, but does ask for a voluntary donation from those paying for membership or tickets. It is totally up to the user to donate or not, but please do read the instructions carefully to ensure you only donate if you intend to.

*Mike Harvey - Webmaster*

*Cont. ►*

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## Annual Report for Slader's Leigh. 2025/6

The Society's 60th Anniversary has been, 'A year of two halves' - either completely too wet or really too dry. Popular with walkers, a great many with dogs and many with children of all ages, we have been the easiest way from the Winscombe Hill car park down onto the Strawberry Line. This lovely, well-maintained footpath, with its new management committee and volunteer work force is keeping our also lovely flower meadow well visited. We are very lucky that we decided to keep the synthetic grid path, laid by Bristol Water when we acted as the railway tunnel bypass some years ago – with all this wet weather the whole meadow would have become muddy, churned up and impassable, as so many others have around us. People, dogs (mostly anyway), push chairs and even the bikes do not wander from it at all.

The extremely strong storms with gusting high speed winds, have brought down another two very large, old trees from the far bank of Muddy Lane, our Eastern Boundary, they have fallen exactly on top of the ancient oak which fell two years ago. The large area of digging evidence around their roots area on the far bank shows that there is still very popular with badgers. Bringing the fence down along with some of the trees of the side copse it was mess which we have spent a lot of the year clearing up, but it did mean that the volunteers could have a supply of cut logs to dry out for their winter fires if they wanted them. It also had to be done to allow the oak tree on the bottom of the pile to continue, to break into Spring leaf cover and show it is still alive. (Its roots are still embedded in the opposite bank of the lane!) . Many other branches from individual trees along the boundary of both sides of the meadow have fallen, mostly being left to provide good wildlife habitats, but all in all the high rainfall seems to have suited good growth everywhere. And no more so than with the one ancient Small Leaved Lime still standing and all the growth from the second fallen one in their protective cage at the top entrance to the meadow. Safe from having their roots compacted by footfall (this causes the death of many ancient trees) they have put a spurt on until the weight of the top growth is now dangerously high for the hollow trunk to bear and they will have to be pollarded again. We last did this many years ago but we are not as nimble as we used to be – so the contract to pollard and shred the timber was put out to several competent tree surgeons for it to be done early in 2026.

With the dry Spring all the trees and bushes went into 'panic mode' about the future of their species and vast quantities of flowers, then fruit appeared everywhere. Earlier than usual the ground was littered with the fallen fruit. Much of it wasn't fertile but the birds and small creatures did very well out of it. The meadow flowers appeared somewhat earlier than usual also, not in quite such abundance and not as tall or vibrant as usual either, everything at sixes and sevens. Our pond at the lower end of the reserve, rapidly filled up with plants and silt, the greater part being the invasive New Zealand Stonecrop. This is usually spread on the feet of birds coming to drink at the pond and once it takes a hold it is a difficult job to eradicate. Our local amphibian group RAGS, led by John Dickson, have put us on their list for 2026 to do a thorough pond clear-out and clean. Then we wait for the rain to re-fill it – a time when we will be glad of a high rainfall! Every last scrap of clearance material must be comprehensively buried in our side gully with the material cut during the summer annual cut and rake clearance. Just one sprig could start it all over again. The cut this year was postponed one week by a huge storm forecast from the Atlantic (it duly arrived spot on time so we were glad to have listened to the forecast!) the day next chosen was not particularly good either, the raking day the following week was rained off at lunch time. However, we were very grateful to Richard Ellis for returning by himself in the following days to finish off. We were also extremely grateful to our two volunteer owners of Allen scythes, who gave their time, fuel and labour freely to us, I doubt whether it would have been so well cut without them

We didn't hold an Open Day in the Meadow this year – everything was in such a state of flux – including the difficulty of forecasting a fine sunny spell for it in advance so as to publicise it properly. We were also rather worried about the appearance of the Memorial seat there by the pond, dedicated to four of our Society members in summer 2024. The fierce sun shine appears to have bleached the colour from the wood of the seat and the back panels. However, Somerset Wood Recycling, who made the seat for us, have told us what we can do to try and revive the lovely 'warm wood colour' once the timber is really dry in the coming summer. The seat is always very well used by visitors – and of course, by our volunteers on our work days, for their lunch break.

One vital task had to be done in the Spring. The five-bar metal gate across the entrance at the top of the meadow was found lying flat on the ground one day. The bottom support hinge had fallen out, the gate fell breaking its post out of the ground. The post was found to be rotten. An emergency gang of four, with a new post donated by Julian, one of the four, had a hard day digging the very rocky ground with pickaxes and shovels, then to post-crete the new one in. One passer-by gentleman stopped, said 'that looks hard work' and promptly took up the pickaxe and set to work. – and our faith in human nature was duly restored.

We must also include, in this year's report, two other volunteers of a different society - that of the Somerset Bat Group, who put up five new bat boxes in the large boundary trees of the meadow, and later on took a group of our members on a bat walk along the Strawberry Line and into Slader's Leigh one evening, and have been monitoring activity for us. We are well known for being a strong foraging route for bats which frequent the railway tunnel nearby.

There is always something going on in the meadow – or which has to be cut, salvaged. restored or repaired in a living, changing environment like Slader's Leigh, Local Nature Reserve.

Judith Tranter

Cont. ▶

◀...

## Annual Report for Tania's Wood. 2025/6

This year we celebrated the tenth anniversary of this gifted piece of land which we call 'Tania's Wood Nature Reserve, received from Glynn England, our Society Chairman in the Nineties. This tenth year has been one of growth - more growth - and yet more growth - of virtually everything within its 900-year-old boundary hedges. The high volumes of rain and often extraordinary temperatures have stimulated everything into constant new growth spurts making it very difficult keeping access and pathways through, clear to walk, and hedges and bushes from being smothered.

We held two very well attended hedge laying training days, in January and February. The Beginners had a rather difficult hedge which hadn't been laid for some time, was made of a great deal of Blackthorn (very fierce stuff) and which straddled a ditch, but the end result was magnificent. The 'Improvers' meantime, had an original Deer Park hedge on top of the Deer Bank slope to contend with. Our volunteers who had trained with brush cutters had done battle with the extensive growth of grass and shrubs on the bank just to make it possible to get at the hedge so as to do the work to lay it. Then it was constant clearing of the vast amount of brash away from the hedging area - thank goodness for volunteers! And a great job done rewarded by, not too long afterwards, a great display of primrose, bluebells, snowdrops and even one or two cowslips. However, the whole bank had to be cleared a couple more times through the year, to keep small tree saplings from taking root; trees destroy banks quicker than anything.

The car park field was cut by Peter Janes with his domestic mower after the spring growth but then had grown fiercely again during the summer and become so coarse because of the heat the mower couldn't cope the next time it was attempted. So we had to call upon those volunteers who could scythe to do the job – but it was still a hard all day task, during which it was discovered that the metal gate into our field from the farm field next to us was collapsing. Tania's Wood is on a Public Footpath (PRoW) crossing the Reserve for a very short distance via a wooden bridge, at the southern tip, where it then, after another couple of fields, joins up with the long-distance footpath 'The Monarch's Way'. With the very dry, rock-hard ground it was another difficult task to get the boundary gate operational again by replacing rotting posts as is our responsibility on this access path.

Here, as in Slader's Leigh we had to contend with occasions of very stormy weather, with high winds and torrential rain. One such night blew away the Forest Schools' composting Loo shelter and ripped the roof cover of the shelter built by the dads of some of the Forest School pupils. The pupils of Blagdon School have missed two terms of their Forest School visits because of changes in the staffing and funding difficulties at the school. But they are due to resume after Easter 2026. The Schools' fire circle seating logs have deteriorated in the rain and will need replacing by Easter too, as will any ropes and swings used by them previously, but we are very glad to welcome them back again. Their fire/meeting clearing is filled with very tall pine trees, and several are clearly leaning rather dangerously over the shelter and may well have to be topped or taken right down in the future, as the strong winds we have been experiencing are sure to continue.

Judith Tranter

## Rights of Way Officers Report 2025

Sadly, due to the death of Dave Parker, one half of our long-standing Rights of Way team, we have no report to include this year. His wife and partner Margaret, quite reasonably does not want to continue alone and so has stepped down. We are lucky however that Steve Down has stepped into the role for the Western side of Mendip, we are still hoping to get a volunteer to cover the East.

### 5: ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

*The President takes the Chair for the election of the officers of the Society.*

1. Re-election of the Chairman and the Treasurer as prime members of the committee, both are willing to stand next year.
2. Re-election of the Management Committee. These serving members of the Management Committee: - Peter Janes, Mike Rolfe, and Mike Harvey are willing to stand again. Proposed 'election en bloc.
3. Election of members to the Committee from any received nominations.

### 6: A.O.B. from the Committee or the floor

### 7: Tea / Coffee Break, followed by our guest speaker

**Richard Ellam, historian, singer, (and unapologetic railway enthusiast) "From Stockton to Crystal Palace"**

The first public steam railway, the Stockton and Darlington, opened on September 27 1825. The guests at the opening did not know that they were witnessing the very beginnings of a transport revolution that would transform large parts of Britain within a generation, and lay the foundations for our modern hyper-connected age. Twenty-six years later, in May 1851, Queen Victoria opened the Great Exhibition in London. Only made possible because of the explosive growth of the railway network and its success highlights the huge transformation that the burgeoning railway network had already wrought quarter-century since the first trains ran from Stockton to Darlington.

Ends. ◆

## Protecting Our National Landscape - Mike Rolfe

**It is important** for us to protect The Mendip Hills National Landscape. The Mendip Hills are protected by strict planning policies such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which grants them the highest status of protection, and Local and Neighbourhood Plans.

However, any plan is open to interpretation and rest assured landowners and developers are adept at finding loopholes. Moreover, successive governments are committed to constructing 300,000 dwellings per annum. Accordingly, County Councils are under intense pressure to approve developments under threat of financial penalties if they fail to meet government targets.

The public and bodies such as The Mendip Society need to remain vigilant and watchful. They should not be afraid to consider planning applications against the NPPF, Local and Neighbourhood Plans and constructively object in writing to any that threaten the beauty of our National Landscape including its flora and fauna.

Our Society is in need of someone to analyse planning applications for North Somerset and to submit objections when the National Landscape is threatened. If you are keen to help, please get in touch with Mike Rolfe at: [rmrolfe@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:rmrolfe@tiscali.co.uk)



### Mendip Society Lapel Pins...

Metal and enamel lapel pins featuring the Mendip Society logo are now available at a cost of £4.00 each.

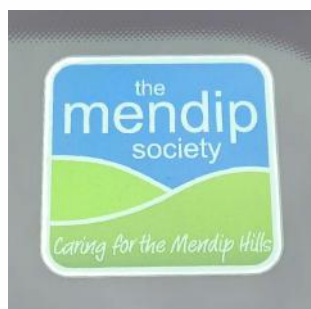


Measuring 30mm square. (1.2") these high quality badges are the ideal way to show your membership of the Mendip Society off to the world.

They will be available at the AGM and at most upcoming events where committee members are in attendance.

### ...And Vinyl Stickers

Ideal for placement in your car window, these low-tack vinyls can be peeled and repositioned leaving no residue and should not fade over time.



Better still - these are free to all members, just ask for one at the AGM.

### Will your photograph feature on the front cover of our next edition?

We are always keen to have members send in their photos for us to consider for our front cover.



You don't need to own an expensive camera or have lots of experience, just a high resolution picture of something connected to Mendip or a Mendip Society event.

You can send or upload your files to:

[themendipsociety.photos@gmail.com](mailto:themendipsociety.photos@gmail.com)

More detailed instructions can be found by typing this address *exactly as shown* into a search engine.

<https://tinyurl.com/MS-Cover>

Or, if you have a smart phone or tablet, scan this QR code to be taken there automatically.



## Winter Tasks in Slader's Leigh...

**When the Society** was given a lovely donation in the will of Susan Bates recently, to be used in one of our Nature Reserves, it was agreed by the Committee that we could use it to do some seriously needed tree works in Slader's Leigh. This would be on the two Small Leaved Limes (*Tilia cordata*), safe inside their fenced in area at the very top of the meadow. These had put a spurt on with rain and sunshine mixture of our weather lately, had grown very top heavy and were also spreading themselves through the fencing. The one still standing, having a completely hollow trunk, and being over 900 years old, was thought to be in danger of being blown over in the strong gales we have been experiencing.



*Left to Right: Going, going, gone! The tree surgeons reduce the crown of our standing Small Leaved Lime.*  
Photos: David Tranter

The method used to keep them safe and prolong their life span is to pollard the entire head of the tree above the trunk. So several trusted tree surgeons were invited to tender a bid to do the work, leaving everything clear and tidy afterwards. The selected team were booked to do the work on Thursday 29th January 2026 and accordingly notices shutting the permissive footpath through the meadow were displayed all around, for reasons of public safety. In the event the date on all of them had to be changed quickly as the work was brought forward to Monday 26th.

Luckily the day was reasonably fine and an early start plus good team work ensured that that the standing tree had a perfect haircut, and its fallen companion, with its self-rooted off shoots, were trimmed thoroughly and all was re-opened by the afternoon. A big chipping machine was carefully brought by a small lorry down Muddy Lane from Winscombe Hill (a tight fit!), and amazingly thick, large branches were made into a pile of wood chippings, left for anyone who fancied a bit of garden composting material, to take away. Any left-over will feed our own planting in the meadow.

So, we now wait, a little anxiously for the spring and the bursting into life of the beautiful lime-green *Tilia cordata* leaves; they are, after all, over 900 years old.

And we cannot leave Sladder's Leigh without a mention for three hardy volunteers who have rebuilt the steps at the upper entrance. David Tranter, Richard Ellis and Beth Yates defied the mud to make access easier for all. Our sincere thanks and admiration to them all.



*Repairing the top entrance steps. Hard, muddy work!*  
Photos: Beth Yates

...and Tania's Wood - Judith Tranter

During the winter months, when the vegetation, especially the trees and hedges, are not making any growth, is the time for essential maintenance. For example, cutting back excessive growth of branches and for the laying of hedges to create new growth in the spring.

In Tania's wood especially, because of the rare historical nature of our boundaries, the Society's aim is to ensure there are enough people who can carry on the tradition of hedge laying.

Beginners' day on January 31st was fully booked and the day proved dry, fine and productive. The Improvers Day is planned for February, too late to be included here, those who have completed the beginners course will have been contacted directly and invited to attend.



A first taster of hedge laying  
Photo: Beth Yates



The school shelter, directly under the crown of the leaning tree.  
Photo: Judith Tranter

The area where the Forest School children hold their activities and where their shelter also is built contains a number of very well grown fir and pine trees, one of which has been slowly heaving itself out of the ground this past year. It would, if left untended, probably have eventually collapsed right onto the roof of the shelter.

Being too high for a ladder to be used to cut the top branches off, a 'cherry picker' seemed the only option. Very luckily our neighbour at Slader's Leigh Reserve, A&D Garages has just such a vehicle in his work yard. Director of A&D, Andy Goodall, has always been interested in the ancient trees we have in the Reserve and indeed has quite a few very large ones around his yard as well, which in fact stretches across the Strawberry Line Railway tunnel itself. He offered to take his 'cherry Picker to Tania's Wood and see what he could do.

It was amazing watching a skilled master of such a vehicle at work and the mission was accomplished in very quick time. Luckily we had a small group of our volunteers to clear everything up, also in double quick time, piled high in the fire circle ready for the opportunity to arise to have a warming fire sometime.

And the greatest thing of all – Andy – our kind neighbour – said he had enjoyed himself and had no intention of letting us pay anything for his services, not even for the fuel to travel there and back. What a day, what an end result – the Forest School shelter safe from falling trees, ready for the new term after Easter.



Left: Removing the top of the tree.



Right: The resulting piles of branches.

Photos: Judith Tranter

## Mendip Connections

**Mendip Connections** was billed as “a relaxed and friendly showcase” with a tagline of “Community, Collaboration, Conservation” - which encapsulated the areas it was intended to focus on, but in practice it was so much more. It was a chance for anyone and everyone with an interest in Mendip to come together, see what others are doing, network, learn and discover opportunities - and it delivered in style!



*There was a real “buzz” throughout the morning in Shipham Village Hall.  
Photo: Mike Harvey*

First A Patch Wilder, which is just on the edge of Shipham and is a thriving privately owned nature reserve set up and run by Charlie and Rachel Fayers. You may have seen a news story in our last edition – and on national media, about the sighting of a Pine Marten on one of their camera traps – a Mendip First! We hope to organise a trip to this fascinating place later this year – keep checking the website for an announcement.

The other talk was a complete contrast, but still with a very local theme. Amal Khreisheh, who is curator of archaeology for the South West Heritage Trust, told the story behind the remarkable Chew Valley Hoard, the largest hoard ever found in the UK, comprising 2,584 silver pennies dating 1066 –1068 and valued at £4.3 M.

Additionally, there were a couple of short films from the Strawberry Line and Lottie Scott to somehow fit in.



*The Chew Valley Hoard presentation was also popular.  
Photo: Andy Chamberlain / MHNL*

Shipham Village Hall was buzzing on the morning of November 29th, as various groups set out their stands, from the National Trust to the local allotment society, a wide and diverse range of organisations with an interest in Mendip – and obviously, the Mendip Society, as one of the longest standing and best respected organisations in the area was amongst them.

The team from Mendip Hills National Landscape MHNL had organised the event and were there in numbers, explaining their role in the area and also running the event, including providing hot drinks and a range of delicious home made snacks.

There were also a couple of speakers giving presentations in a side room providing insight into their particular interest in Mendip.



*Rachel from A Patch Wilder, gave a talk on their project and vision.  
Photo: Andy Chamberlain / MHNL*

One display in particular took the eye – and total attention of our president, Les Davies, as Lauren Holt from the National Trust transported him, in the virtual world, on a flight over Mendip. Taking in Brean Down, Cheddar Gorge and Rowberrow. Les immediately saw the possibilities and pulled me off of our stand to try the VR goggles out for myself. Moments later I was hovering over an Iron Age encampment on Rowberrow, which I could transform at the click of a virtual button into a WW2 Home Guard camp on the same site, followed by flying over Brean Down at dizzying speed. We have since started talking to National Trust about the possibilities of giving other parts of Mendip a similar treatment, possibly even recreating the Starfish decoy on Blackdown – I hope to be able to reveal more soon.

November 29th 2025

With so much going on the morning flew by, but Les did manage to get his picture taken with Tessa Munt MP, who represents Wells and Mendip Hills and was obviously very interested in all that was going on.

Hopefully Mendip Connections was not just a one-off event, but rather the start of something much bigger for all those people and organisations involved - and for everyone who lives in, works in, visits, or simply loves Mendip. Members of our management committee have already had a meeting with Jim Hardcastle and David Turner, Manager and Chair of MHNL respectively, to discuss how we can help to ensure everyone's voice and opinion gets heard. We are determined to use the good name and reputation of the Mendip Society to ensure a bright and positive future for our area and all its flora, fauna, history, geology and abundant nature. Watch this space!



Les Davies, Tessa Munt MP, Gareth Withers (Strawberry Line) and Jim Hardcastle (MHNL)  
Photo: Andy Chamberlain / MHNL

And finally, I just want to express thanks to, not only the staff and volunteers of Mendip Hills National Landscape for their vision and sheer hard work bringing this event together, but also to Andy Chamberlain of MHNL for generously sharing his photos of the day. I had intended to take more myself, but was just too immersed in all that was going on around me!



Les Davies gets immersed in VR Mendip.  
Photo: Andy Chamberlain / MHNL



Our stand saw a constant stream of visitors.  
Photo: Mike Harvey

## What is the Mendip Society for? - An opinion piece by Mike Harvey

**You may think it an odd question**, but as we enter our seventh decade of existence, I believe it is something we need to give some thought to – and possibly plan ahead for the future rather than just ambling along resting on our laurels. In 1965, a group of individuals joined forces to create the Mendip Preservation Society. Under a year later, membership had grown to over 200 and in 1967 it was 466. By then amalgamating with the West Mendip Rural Preservation Society total membership reached 586.

One of the main objectives of the Mendip Society (this name being adopted in 1970) was to have Mendip become an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which of course was realised in 1972. While it is still a long-term ambition to have all of Mendip covered by the same designation and protections, we have largely long-since achieved this aim – so what next?

Conserving and enhancing the Mendip Hills is obviously an ongoing mission, and we aim to educate, inform and generally support any and all efforts to keep Mendip special. But we do occupy a unique position amongst all those who live or work in, spend leisure time on, or simply care about Mendip. We are THE Mendip Society, and if we choose to do so, we can make a real and positive difference to the area we take our name from.

I don't want to steal anybody's thunder, and I know it is a subject that has been discussed within the committee and beyond for a while now. Tina has hinted about telling you all more at the AGM, so I will leave it to her to expand on the subject, but please do consider just what a difference we can make if we all pull together.



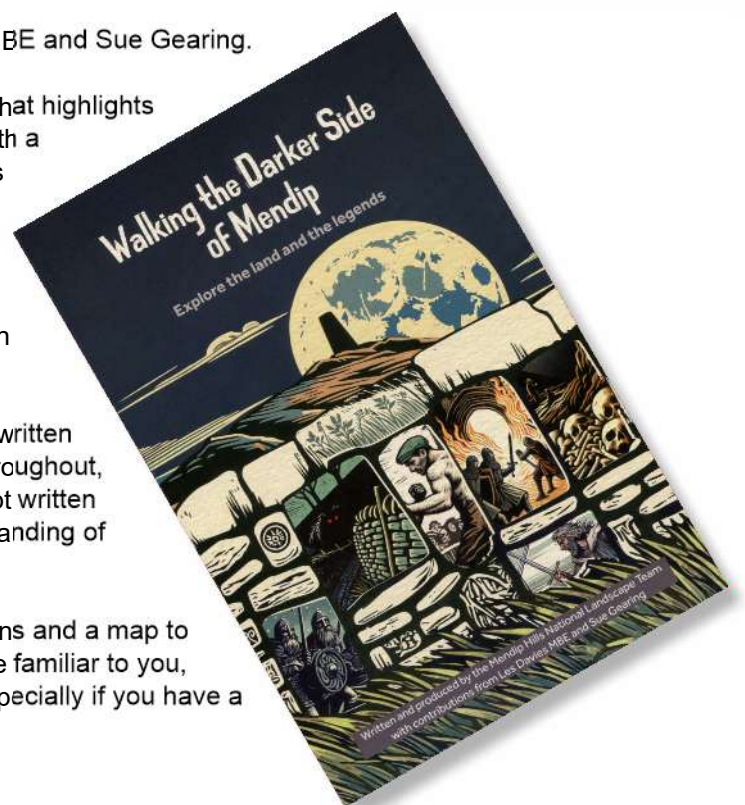
## Book Corner - Walking the Darker Side of Mendip.

By the MHNL team. With contributions from Les Davies MBE and Sue Gearing.

A pocket size walking guide with some great illustrations that highlights ten routes, each taking in a story of local folklore, each with a mysterious and “dark” side. Produced by the Mendip Hills National Landscape team with profits going in to the Mendip Hills Fund. The one thing I couldn't specifically spot was a credit for the many illustrations that are included. Whoever is responsible for them, please take a bow, they complete the book and add greatly to the written descriptions, maps and photographs included.

Many of you will no doubt be aware of the walking books written by Les Davies and Sue Gearing. Their style is evident throughout, and the stories that accompany each route, while no doubt written with a twinkle in the author's eye, do add to one's understanding of Mendip history and legends.

Stories and pictures aside, each route has written directions and a map to guide you, and although many of the paths taken might be familiar to you, this is a different way of seeing the Mendip landscape, especially if you have a liking for myth and mystery.



## Walks, talks and events, organised by The Mendip Society

### Sunday March 29th. 10:30am - 12:30pm. Discover the Nature in Dry Stone Walls.

A short, but informative walk with Nathan Orr, recovery ranger for MHNL. Members free, non-members £5.00. Limited to 20 places. Use the QR code, or visit our website to book. Generally easy, but there will be stiles to be negotiated, and you should expect to be standing still while Nathan "shows and tells". Therefore warm layers and wet weather gear advisable.

**Meeting at:** Deer Leap Car Park: Deer Leap, Priddy, Somerset, England, BA5 1EL  
**NGR: ST 519 492. What three words ref: ///variances.larger.bookings**



### Saturday April 11th. 10:00am - 1:00pm. The Mendip Society AGM.

Followed by guest speaker, Richard Ellam.

**ALL** members welcome - no need to book. This is **YOUR** chance to have a say in the running of your society. Guests are welcome after the official business is concluded for the talk. "Stockton to Crystal Palace".

**Venue:** Draycott Memorial Hall, Latches Ln, Draycott. BS27 3FN.

**NGR: ST 473 512. What three words ref: ///pram.burglars.lightens**

**NO  
BOOKING  
REQUIRED**

### Wednesday April 22nd. 9:30am - 1:30pm. A visit to Yeo Valley with Lunch.

Learn all about one of our most successful local dairy businesses, take a guided walk around the farm and follow it up with a fabulous two-course lunch at their renowned HQ "canteen" (NB. it's a really nice restaurant!) The price of a place on this special event is just **£12.50**, which includes hot drinks and your lunch. **ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Limited to just 20 places. Use the QR code, or visit our website to book.

**Meeting at:** Holt Farm. Blagdon, Bristol BS40 7SQ.  
**NGR: ST 515 584. What three words ref: ///venturing.textiles.entire** (Entrance from road)



### Saturday May 9th. 10:00am - 12:00pm. A return visit to Batch Farm.

Roger and Christine have developed an educational resource on their smallholding near Churchill. With support from several local funds, including our Small Grants Fund, they are now able to run short courses in conjunction with the local college, MHNL and others, introducing students to land and livestock management plus restoration and renovation works - this was where the "Arty Adders" were created last year amongst other things. Roger has also uncovered a lot of local history and installed information boards to tell the story of his land. Free for members, £5 for others. Use the QR code, or visit our website to book a place.

**NGR: ST 441 589. What three words ref: ///trimmer.slice.headstone** (Full access details with tickets)



### Friday May 22nd. 11:00am. A walk to Wilkins Cider Farm. (Over 18's only please)

Meeting in the free car park in Wedmore. This is an easy, mainly flat walk of around 7Km (4.4 miles) with one small hill of around 70 meters ascent. Roger Wilkins is a legend in the world of traditional Somerset cider. His product is award winning - and strong! Be prepared to carry back a sample or two of the product, and make sure you have a "designated driver" for the trip home!

Free for members, £5 for others, **EXCLUDING** any purchases you may wish to make!  
Use the QR code, or visit our website to book a place.

**NGR: ST 437 481. What three words ref: ///support.collusion.encoded** (meeting point)



### Tuesday May 12th. OR Friday May 15th. 10:30am - 1:30pm. Wildlife and Flowers at Blagdon Lake.

Two short walks on level ground looking at wildlife and flowers at Blagdon Lake, guided by Nigel Milborne. We will be going to the North side of the lake which isn't open to the public or permit holders as a rule. The meadows are a delight in May. Some bird watching included.

**ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Limited to 10 places per visit - please chose your date when booking. Free for members, £5 for others. Use the QR code, or visit our website to book.

**Meeting at:** Blagdon Lake, North Shore (Ubley end). Off road parking will be made available  
**NGR: ST 524 595. What three words ref: ///processor.storming.already**



### Thursday June 11th. 2:30pm. A walk at Ubley Warren Reserve with Chris Billinghamurst & Graham Allen.

A short walk on uneven ground, looking at the flora and fauna found on this reserve which is owned by Somerset Wildlife Trust. Free car parking can be found at The Blackmoor Reserve Car park or along the roadside beside the reserve.

Use the QR code, or visit our website to book. Members free, non-members £5.00 Limited to 15 places.

**ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL.**

**Meeting at:** The Ubley Warren Reserve Sign Post, by the kissing gate.  
**NGR: ST 506 554 What three words ref: ///accompany.cubed.pupils**



Please note that The Mendip Society often organises other walks and events between newsletters that cannot, for obvious reasons, be included here. For the latest information and to be made aware of any late changes please visit [www.themendipsociety.org.uk/walks-and-events](http://www.themendipsociety.org.uk/walks-and-events)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Would members please ensure they bring a valid membership card to all events. Organisers have been asked to check membership before starting events in order to be fair to all. Those who fail to show a valid membership card will be treated as non-members.

## A Presidents' View.



**To say** the world and everything that goes on within it, seems to be moving faster every year is a statement echoed by many. So here we are again preparing for the Society's Annual General Meeting, (AGM) where like the two headed Roman God Janus, we shall both look forward and back as we review last year and look forward to the next.

I feel it has been a year of progress with a lot of good things happening. Good things happen because good people get behind them and organise things. Whether it's a walk, talk or specialised interest visit, someone has to organise things. To this end there will always be a need for extra help if anyone has time to spare. There will be a 'Situations Vacant' post in the Newsletter, so please if you can help, make contact.

I have always said that the Mendip Society is more than just a group of friend who go on walks , attend talks or take part in training courses. This Society was one of the prime movers in getting the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ,(AONB) established back in 1972. Time has moved on since then and the newly designated National Landscapes Team are doing far more than was ever done in my days as a Mendip Hills Warden.

I was very impressed with the networking day held at the end of November last year in Shipham Village Hall. People started talking to one another and learnt what was going on over someone else's wall. Long may this continue and there will be ways in which this Society help bring forward the views and hopes of other smaller organisation to the table of the Protected Landscapes forum in the future.

You will as always, find your copy of this year's AGM papers in the newsletter and I would encourage you to encourage others to attend. Such events as the recent Wassail at Burrington have all added to raise the society profile and encourage new people to join. Groucho Marks from the comedy team 'The Marks Brothers' once commented..." I would never join an organisation that would have me as one of it's members". I don't tend to agree with that statement these days!

So finally, you will find pictures of recent activities within the pages of this Newsletter, but I was sent this by the Langport Mummers who provided the entertainment on the evening... Just love St Georges Mother's outfit!

As always my kindest regards and thanks for all your support. Les



Mendip Connections in Shipham Village Hall.  
Photo: Andy Chamberlain / MHNL



**THE MENDIP SOCIETY Registered Charity Number 262867 [www.themendipsociety.org.uk](http://www.themendipsociety.org.uk)**

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**For newsletter content and pictures, e-mail: [themendipsociety.photos@gmail.com](mailto:themendipsociety.photos@gmail.com)**