



THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST NEWS

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THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST

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CHARD JUNCTION QUARRY – (July 2010)

This summer a pair of ringed plovers bred in the far west of Dorset for the first time. The wading birds raised four chicks at Chard Junction Quarry. Ringed plovers have increasingly chosen to nest inland on sand and gravel pits, sometimes on old industrial sites, as well as on coastal beaches. The species' future has been concerning conservationists, as ringed plovers have amber status. According to the British Trust for Ornithology, there are 126 bird species classified as amber, with 52 species on the red list - species most at risk of extinction and 68 on the green list - species least at risk. If a bird is "amber", it means they are a "rare breeder", with only one to 300 breeding pairs in the UK and that they breed in only 10 or fewer locations.

The site owners Bardon Aggregates and Dorset Wildlife Trust turned a disused part of the quarry into a community nature reserve about a year ago. Chard Junction Quarry nature reserve is near Chard Junction, at grid reference ST 345045. Open daily, free of charge, it includes a path, bird hides, woods, ponds and establishing grasslands. There are no other nature reserves in the area.

TVT fully recommends a visit to the Reserve and has supported various work parties, the open day and has donated funds towards a new Bird Hide. Reserve leaflets are also available from Chard Tourist Information Centre.

WHY DEAD WOOD IS IMPORTANT?

Dead or decaying wood is an important but often overlooked element of wildlife gardening. Whether its small twigs or huge tree trunks, they are home and food to invertebrates, fungi, mosses and lichens. Birds feed on the invertebrates that make their home in old wood, and dead branches make excellent song and display perches. A decaying tree with a snagged bough or a small cavity might also provide a nest site for a bird or bat. The RSPB recommends providing a variety of sizes of dead wood, some lying down and some standing, to give secret but needy wildlife a chance of finding exactly what it wants.

You can do this by retaining and increasing the amount of dead woody material in your garden and lying or stacking it near to where it has been cut. Don't remove logs from the countryside, but if you have logs or chopped wood lying around that you're unsure what to do with, the best thing for wildlife would be nothing at all. Stacking, laying or planting upright in the ground provides shelter for all kinds of invertebrates. If you have a log fire or wood burner, donate a few logs for wildlife.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The TVT committee meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in Thorncombe Village Hall or Community Room. Trust members are always welcome to attend, to find out what we discuss and learn more about the Trust.

THE LAST 6 MONTHS

We have had a wide variety of speakers and "days out" over the last 6 months.

Talks have ranged from "The Otter Population of the Axe" to the history of "Old Dorset Farmhouses". We had an afternoon visit to Guy Mallinson's Greenwood Workshop and a field trip exploring rock pools at the beach below Golden Cap. In November we are due a speaker from the Barn Owl Trust on the 11th (7.30pm start) and our annual Christmas Sale and Coffee Morning on Saturday 20th from 10.00am to noon..

We try and make our events as diverse and interesting as possible, and if members have any ideas for future talks and events please do not hesitate to contact a Committee Member. We are always open to suggestions.

Please also visit our new website at www.thorncombe-village-trust.co.uk which will have details of all our forthcoming events, plus interesting facts, news and pictures.

HOW TO PREDICT IF RAIN IS COMING

Our weather seems to be becoming more and more unpredictable, although I know some of you will be saying "the weather has always been like this", so here are some tips to predict if rain is on the way.

Red or Pink Morning Sun or Sky ~ Rain is highly likely. High sky humidity causes the atmosphere to appear red.

Red or Pink Evening Sun or Sky ~ Rain is not likely for the following 24-36 hours.

Breakfast Rainbows ~ Rain is likely approaching. These are rainbows that appear in the morning, but do not follow a storm.

Grey Morning Sky ~ Rain is unlikely. Greying is caused by shift of ground moisture into the lower sky.

Grey Night Sky ~ Rain may be likely. Evening grey happens when the humidity in the high sky is sufficient to trap coloured debris particles and form a haze.

Low Sitting Clouds ~ Rain is highly likely in near future. Clouds fall as their water content increases.

High Sitting Clouds ~ Rain is unlikely. Water content of the clouds is low.

Silence ~ Significant storms should be expected. When animal noises, particularly bird songs, are not present, it indicates the onset of bad weather conditions.

Environmental Odours Increase ~ Rain or storms are likely. Plant life reacts to the natural indicators of weather. When storms approach, you'll often hear people say, "It smells like rain." They aren't far off. What they are smelling is the subtle blend of botanical excitement.

Wandering or Grazing Cows ~ Weather will be fair.

Huddled Cows ~ Rain is likely. Cows huddle on the ground to protect each other in a storm.

Hazy Moon ~ Rain is unlikely. Haze indicates dust and moisture trapped in the high atmosphere.

Clear Moon ~ Rain is likely. An area of low pressure has sucked the moisture and dust downward, creating a clearer view of the moon.

BEATING THE BOUNDS

We all know that the parish of Thorncombe is situated in West Dorset on the borders of Somerset and Devon, and this can be confirmed on maps, but how were parish boundaries originally recorded and monitored?

A group of old and young members of the community would walk the boundaries of the parish, usually led by the parish priest and church officials, to share the knowledge of where they lay, and to pray for protection and blessings for the lands. These officials would head a crowd of boys who armed with green boughs, usually birch or willow, beat the parish boundary markers (usually a gatepost, wall, tree or boundary stone) with them. Sometimes the boys might also be 'switched' (i.e. hit with the willow wands), thrown over hedges, into brambles or ponds or required to climb up chimneys or over roofs. The object of taking boys was to ensure that witnesses to the boundaries should survive as long as possible, and the beatings - to ensure the imprinting of exact locations in their minds.

No beating of the bounds would be complete without the refreshment wagon that would be stationed at a convenient point. This would be loaded with food that after a morning's long tramp was gratefully devoured and in many Parishes the completion of the beating of the bounds was marked with a barn dance and plenty of strong drink.

The tradition of Beating the Bounds still continues in many Parishes around Britain, with a view to increasing community spirit, but minus the "beating of boys"