



THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST NEWS

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THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST

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BATS IN DORSET

In the UK there are 16 different species of bat and in Dorset all 16 species are found. The Pipistrelle bats are the most common and can be seen during evening in the summer. This is the smallest bat in the UK, but also the most numerous with an estimated population of 2 million. It is also one of the most frequently recorded bats in houses. Some spectacular roosts of many hundreds have been recorded, but these are the exceptional and a typical roost contains only a few tens of bats. Recent research had revealed there are two species of pipistrelle, distinguished by the frequency of their calls. (Pipistrellus pipistrellus and Pipistrellus pygmaeus). The two species overlap, although Pipistrellus pygmaeus may favour foraging over rivers, streams and open water.

The TVT has a Bat Detector that we are happy to lend out to members. This enables you to track and identify the bats in your area by converting their ultrasonic calls into audio that we can hear. Please contact a committee member if you are interested in borrowing the Detector. (Please note a returnable deposit will be required)

12 Months in a Bat's Life

January – Hibernation - using stored fat as fuel.

February – Hibernating – little fat left.

March – Signs of limited activity – small numbers feeding at night.

April – Active and hungry. Become torpid again when cold.

May – Fully active. Females search for suitable nursery sites.

June – Young are born.

July – Mothers suckle their young. Some young almost full size.

August – Females desert nursery sites and seek males. Juveniles begin catching insects.

September – Mating takes place. Fat begins to build up ready for winter.

October – More mating. Seeking suitable hibernation sites. Periods of torpor.

November - Bats begin hibernation.

December – Hibernation.

Welcome to New members in 2010/11

in Chard St: Sophie, Michael and Sid
Susan & Graham Evans
Clare & Tim Clifford

in Fore St: The Arnold Family

In Saddle Street: John & Carol Lewis

At Southcombe: Victoria & Gervaise Macgregor

At Fordwater Marie Parker

Annual fees for members for 2011/12 are £3.00 for an individual, or £5.00 per household.

PLANT & CRAFT SALE 21st MAY 2011

Our annual spring Plant & Crafts Sale and Coffee Morning is to be held on Saturday 21st May from 10am – 12pm in the Village Hall. As well as the normal stalls there will be an exhibition of photographs from year 5 and 6 pupils of St Mary's Primary School, Thorncombe.

Please come along to this annual event, purchase a plant, craft item or cake or just have a coffee and chat. Donations of plants are most welcome.

RECYCLING AND HOME COMPOSTING

Users of Dorset's household recycling centres can now find out what happens to their waste after it has been deposited at their local depot. Dorset County Council has published a comprehensive list of where each material is sent at www.dorsetforyou.com/enddestinations for residents to find out what happens to these materials. Dorset's recycling centres are some of the highest performing in the country, achieving an average re-use, recycling and composting rate of 78% during April to July 2009.

Home composting has many benefits. It adds nutrition to your soil improving its structure and water-holding ability, makes an excellent mulch, improves soil fertility, keeps soil healthy and balanced, and can save you a fortune on commercial fertilizers. Best of all, compost is free, and enormously reduces the amount of waste that ends up in landfill.

Making compost is very easy, but requires a little thought. It is a by-product of the work of fungi, worms, insects, and bacteria and replicates the way that material decays on the ground in a wood or forest.

Heat is very important in the creation of compost. In the centre of a pile of organic matter heat is generated by the decomposition. The bigger the pile, the hotter the centre will get and the faster it will decompose. Anything up to 1 cubic metre is optimal. Air is also very important as oxygen is an essential part of the process. Air is added to the mix by turning the compost over or using a compost aerator. Moisture is also essential. A dry compost heap will decay very slowly, however a soggy wet mass is also something to avoid. And finally, the balance of organic materials in the compost heap is very important. If there is an excess of any one type of material (for example grass cuttings), the compost will form slowly and be poor. A good mixture of green and brown material is essential.

Brown material is carbon rich - e.g. wood, newspaper, leaves (dried), and straw. Green material is nitrogen rich - e.g. fresh kitchen scraps, grass clippings from the lawn. Most compost heaps are composed primarily of dried leaves, grass clippings, and kitchen waste. Manure, and seaweed can also be added and both are excellent materials full of nutrients and helpful microbes. Hay and straw are excellent in place of leaves. Crushed egg shells are also excellent, as are all of your fruit and vegetable peelings, and even tea bags and used coffee filters.

If you do not turn your compost heap the decomposition process can take years. However regular turning can result in excellent compost within a matter of a couple of months, ready for use in your garden.

LAMBERTS CASTLE

Lamberts Castle is the site of an Iron Age hill fort. It dates back some 2,500 years and is similar to Pilsdon Pen in that it is surrounded by a single ditch and bank. An annual fair was held here from 1709 to 1947, on the Wednesday before the feast of St John the Baptist on June 24th. It is possible to make out the imprint of the fair house and the low banks marking the livestock pens or market stalls, and during the later part of the 18th century a horse racing track was added as part of the fair. In 1806, because of the threat of a Napoleonic invasion from France, an admiralty telegraph station was erected. It formed part of a chain of signal posts from the main fleet stationed in Plymouth to the Admiralty in London. Messages were sent using a system of six shutters mounted on the roof of a signal building, and in good weather conditions a message could be relayed from Plymouth to the Admiralty in 20 minutes. The Napoleonic wars ended in 1816, the system was proved to be unreliable in strong winds and so was replaced by the two-arm semaphore system and later, the electric telegraph. It would probably be sent as a tweet now!

Lamberts Castle is a wonderful place to walk, either by taking the 9 mile circular route or just walking across the top which is fairly flat. You can follow part of the old race track, which is to the southwest of the hill fort, straddling the Wessex Ridgeway. There are spectacular views across to Pilsdon Pen, Lewesdon Hill, (the highest point in Dorset) and the Marshwood Vale to the east, and south towards the coast Langdon Hill and Golden Cap. On a clear day it is possible to see Portland Bill, and maybe, with the help of binoculars, it will be possible to watch the Olympic sailing at Weymouth next year! The National Trust owns Lamberts Castle and lets the grazing to a local farmer who keeps Welsh Black cattle on the hill, a traditional hardy breed, distinctive by their stocky appearance and black shaggy coats. Without the cattle grazing the hill the land would quickly be lost to scrub and woodland, and the diverse variety of habitat would be lost. This includes heath land, grassland, woodland and wet mires. Among the many species of birds you are likely to see are Meadow Pipit, Stonechat, Yellowhammer, Green Woodpeckers and Buzzards. Spring is an especially good time to walk through the woodland as the bluebells and beech trees are just coming out.