

Backwell Environment Trust

Registered Charity No. 1109406

Bulletin 18 - Summer 2010



A very warm welcome to our latest summer bulletin

It has been an exciting few months for BET, especially with the fantastic news that our group has been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service - the MBE for voluntary groups. Also as you walk around the reserves, you may notice that we have been busy improving access, restoring lost habitats, opening up some spectacular viewpoints and refurbishing 'the garage'.

We hope they will all meet with your approval.

To help you find your way around our action packed bulletin the contents are listed below:

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the Chair**
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The View From The Chair



The big news for this issue is without doubt our MBE. Of course as individual members we cannot style ourselves MBE but as an organisation we can, and we have been given a logo to prove it. (This is reproduced on page 2). Note that it is the dedication and quantity of our volunteers which was

the big factor in the award and in recognition of this, we include in this issue a list of all those who have volunteered since day one, almost 100 in total. Unfortunately our records are not perfect so I apologise to anyone who has been missed out.

I would also like to say a special thank you to our Parish Council Clerk, Jane Stone, who nominated us for this honour.

Donations

Many members when renewing have added donations to their subscriptions. So many in fact that it's quite a task to acknowledge them all directly so I would like to take the opportunity of thanking them through this column. So to all who have supported us in this way many, many thanks.

Membership

Most of our members are longstanding and renew each year. Of course it's not compulsory to join and we understand if your interests and commitments may have gone in other directions. However, in case this is just an oversight and you would like to re-join we have delivered a form with this Bulletin. If you don't receive a form, it means you are already registered as a member.

Backwell Cave

We are still negotiating to acquire the 3 acres of woodland adjacent to Badgers Wood containing Backwell Cave which is now known from recent carbon dating to have contained Neolithic remains, i.e. the bones are over 5000 years old. We have had one meeting with the new owners and they have requested a second. So fingers crossed.

Backwell Lake

We are supporting the Backwell Access Group (BAG) in their bid to have the path around the lake made accessible to wheelchairs. The owners, Wessex Water, have now agreed to this and the project is supported by Backwell Parish Council and Nailsea Town Council. An application for planning permission has been made and a grant application will be made shortly.

BAG asked for our help because they would like a path similar to those BET has created in Jubilee Stone Wood and Badgers Wood. This is basically made up of crushed limestone. The material has been assessed by Wessex Water's own environmental department and similarly by North Somerset and will have no impact on the environment. When it is first laid it will appear dazzlingly white but this will soon fade to a dull, inconspicuous grey as can be seen in our nature reserves.



Bill Charnock

Volunteer Activity Mornings - on the **SECOND THURSDAY** and the **FOURTH SATURDAY** of every month starting at 10 am on both days and continuing for about 2 hours or as long as your energy lasts.

The tasks will change as the year progresses and can vary according to your strength and interests. Please wear stout footwear and suitable old clothes.

We **always** break at about 11am for large amounts of chat, tea and biscuits.

Meet at the lower entrance to Jubilee Stone Wood outside No17 Church Town just before 10am or telephone in advance to find out where we shall be working (01275 463315).

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

On the 2nd of June 2010, Backwell Environment Trust was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary service, the MBE for voluntary groups. This prestigious national honour is the highest award that can



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

be given to voluntary groups and recognises the outstanding contributions made to local communities by groups devoting their time for the benefit of others. It sets the national benchmark for excellence

in volunteering, with the work of those awarded being judged of the highest standard. Naturally everyone involved with BET, its trustees, members and supporters have been both thrilled and



privileged to have been selected for this honour.

BET will receive a certificate signed by Her Majesty The Queen and a domed glass crystal which will be presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Lady Gass. The presentation will be made during a special ceremony on the 11th September, 2:30pm at the Jubilee Stone, to which everyone is invited. Four trustees also attended a royal garden party at Buckingham Palace on the 20th July.

BET AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

On Tuesday 20th July, four BET Trustees, Ian, Ann, Mike and myself set off for London, all suitably



dressed for our trip to Buckingham Palace. We reached our destination after an uneventful journey to the capital arriving just after one o'clock and, as we had eaten our sandwiches on the coach, we made our way directly to the Palace to take some photographs outside the main entrance gates. We decided that the Hyde Park entrance would be less crowded so we waited there. We were let in to the grounds at 3pm,

making our way to the main lawn area past some magnificent rose beds. Two bands were playing alternately all afternoon and after a sit down in the shade, we joined the queue for our afternoon tea. Cucumber sandwiches were naturally on offer as well as many tiny fancies after which we all decided that the food was so delicious we just had to go back for seconds!

The Queen and other members of the Royal Family were heralded by the National Anthem at 4pm but because of the crowds, I only managed to catch a glimpse of the Queen's white hat and likewise with Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall. I had a better view however of the Duke of Edinburgh as the crowds were somewhat less around him. At 6 o'clock the Royal Family went back into the Palace and the Garden Party was brought to a close. We left the Palace by the front entrance, walking through some magnificent rooms on the way.

After such a long hot day, I suspect we probably all went home very tired with fragile heads and sore feet, but would we do it again if the opportunity arose – you bet we would!

Avril Marks



The Backwell Peregrines

When you're out and about in Backwell or walking on BET's nature reserves keep an eye open for what is probably the world's fastest creature flying overhead. Peregrine falcons have been seen flying in and around Coles Quarry, next to Badgers Wood, and even resting on the top of St Andrew's Church. They are large and impressive birds of prey which adopt a rather upright posture when perched but when in flight show off their powerful broad and pointed wings. The adults have dark, slate-grey upperparts with paler under-parts marked with dark bars. The sexes are similar in appearance although the females are often larger than the males. Peregrine falcons don't appear to have nested on the sheer cliffs next to Badgers Wood over the past few years but its location and abundance of prey should make it a prime site in future years.

Nests : Uses abandoned nests of other species on cliff edges

Breeding : Lays 3 - 4 eggs in May & early June

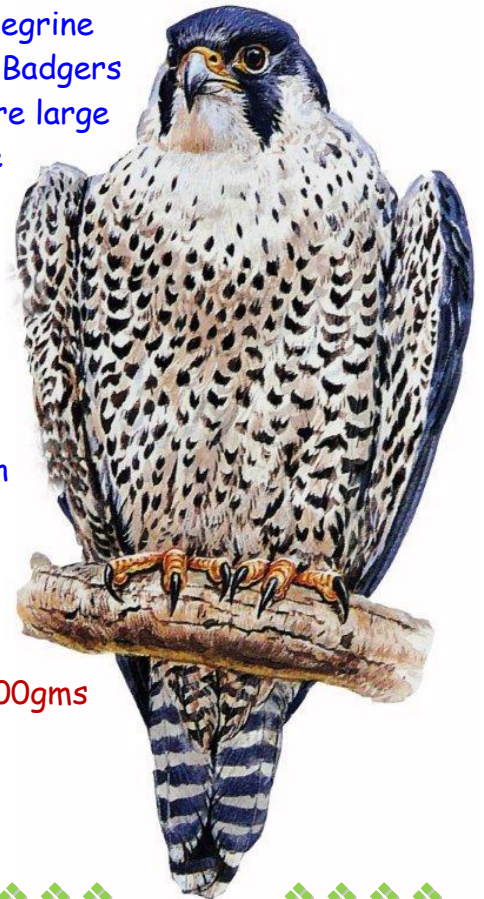
Food : Birds, especially pigeons and doves caught on the wing

Size : Length 40 - 50cms, wingspan 80 - 115cms, weight 600 - 1300gms

Habitat : Mainly coastal cliffs and rugged mountainous areas

Call : Shrieking 'kek-kek-kek' heard throughout the year

Status : Local resident in North Somerset



Woodland Report

This year could well turn out to be one of the driest since records began. Already the first six months have seen rainfall levels well over 30% down on the long term UK average making it the driest since 1929. This lack of rain has had an impact, most notably on our latest wildflower meadow restoration and our two ponds. The fledgling meadows have been very slow to develop this year as, not surprisingly, any seed which has laid dormant for many decades will want to be *very* sure it can survive in its new environment before it commits itself to germination. Luckily, the recent rain is making the meadows spring into life and we'll soon see any areas of exposed soil quickly transformed into lush green vegetation once more.



Our ponds however have not fared quite so well. Both became dangerously low and we have had to resort to periodically topping them up with tap water to keep the aquatic plants and animals alive. This is something I didn't think we would ever have to do, when you consider that the two ponds together hold over 2.2 tonnes of water!

As usual the trusty BET volunteers have been busy working on our reserves, mainly engaged in construction projects as the bird nesting season gets into full swing. Quite a few projects have been undertaken during the last four months including improvements to access, the opening up of the fantastic views from Badgers Wood, the restoration of the old 'garage' and the re-discovery of some long-lost habitats.

Step Construction in Badgers Wood (BW)

The lower entrance to Badgers Wood Nature Reserve was up a very steep slope which was just



about OK when dry, but very dangerous and slippery when wet. To improve safety on the public footpath we have now installed a total of 33 steps on the hillside. We were successful in obtaining a grant from North Somerset Council to cover the cost of 24 steps whilst BET funds paid for the remainder. Their installation was sometimes very difficult as the limestone bedrock was often to be found lurking just under the surface of the soil. So if some of them appear, how shall I say, a little rustic, I'm sure

you'll understand the long-suffering huffing & puffing that went into creating some of them!

Viewpoint Creation (BW)

At the very top of our newest reserve, the view on a clear day can easily stretch for 50 miles so we were naturally very keen to make the most of it. So at the end of our (as yet unfinished)

wheelchair friendly trail, a viewing platform has been installed to overlook the restored wildflower meadows, Coles Quarry, the Bristol Channel, Wales and Exmoor beyond. A rustic wooden seat that was very kindly donated by 'Lawnside' has also been installed there.

Bracken Control (JSW & BW)

Bracken control has now started in some of the Badgers Wood wildflower meadows and has also continued in Jubilee Stone Wood. We have pulled & bashed the bracken in Jubilee Stone Wood a total of 13 times now and it appears to be finally getting the message as re-growth this year has only been a fraction of that seen in previous years. With the bracken canopy now removed, the wildflowers have been finally freed to expand their range and thrive once more.



'Pond' Restoration Project (BW)

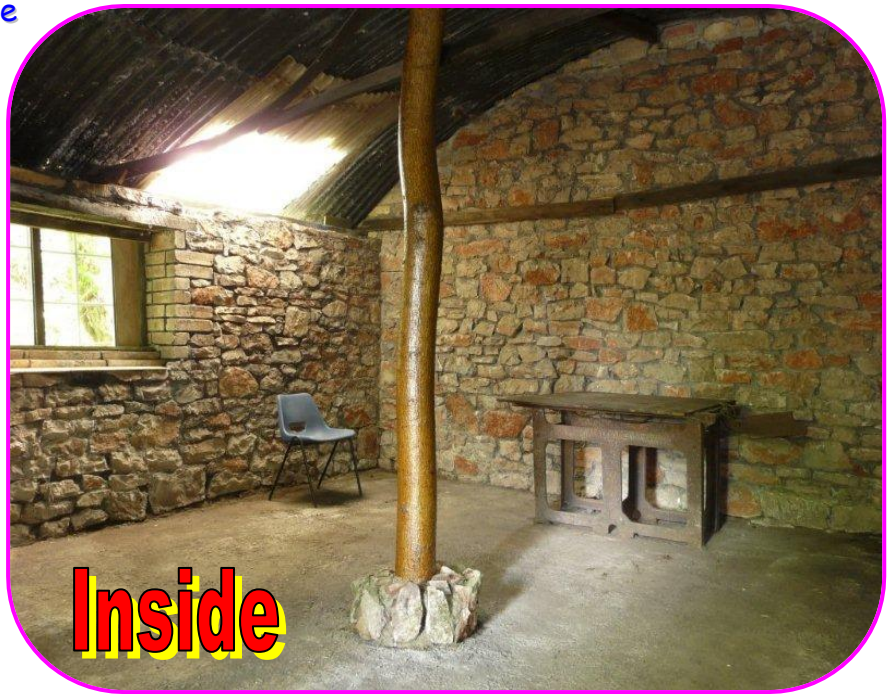
Hidden away in the depths of the northern slopes of Badgers Wood is what appears to be an old livestock drinking pond which was later used as a water feature in a cross country horse riding event (see Bulletin 17). It certainly appears to have been very well constructed with shaped limestone blocks used around its edges and a (presumed) thick clay lining to stop the water draining away. (In fact the lining, although probably well over a 100 years old, is in such good condition that it is still holding water today, and continued to do so even during the recent drought). It would make a fantastic pond in the depths of the woodland, however many tonnes of soil and debris has been washed into it over the years which would need to be removed before it could support life once again. The BET volunteers have already made a start on this project but it is very hard, slow work which has required copious amounts of tea & biscuits to keep them happy.



Garage Restoration Project (BW)



When we purchased Badgers Wood, included in the deal was an old garage situated close to the lower entrance of the reserve that was once used to park a Rolls Royce. Cemex, the previous owners, had managed to secure the building quite successfully but in a somewhat unsympathetic way. I have always thought it quite an eyesore, especially as it is one of the first things you would see on entering the reserve. So after a close inspection of its structural condition, our assessment was that it had been built remarkably well and would only need minor restoration to make it safe, secure and watertight. (We have purposely not blocked up all the holes in the structure to enable over-wintering wildlife to seek shelter). This work has just been completed and we now have another valuable resource within BET, hopefully with a multitude of future uses from storage of low value items to an educational facility.



Dry Stone Wall Restoration (JSW)

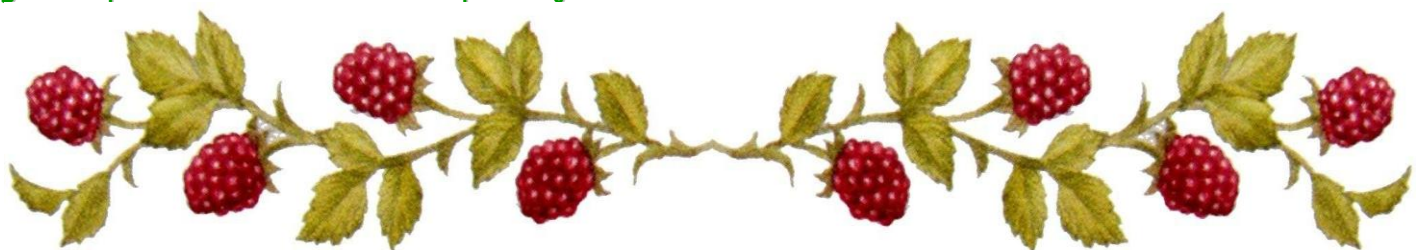
At the lower entrance to Jubilee Stone Wood there are the remains of an old mortared wall that had fallen into disrepair many years ago, which was partially re-built by BET volunteers as a dry stone wall some time ago. This summer the project was finally completed and the wall now extends all the way down to the lower gate of the reserve. As well as making the entrance more visually appealing, dry stone walls can be great places for wildlife to hide in as we found out when we had to relocate a seriously big toad who then showed me his thanks by constantly weeing over my hand.



Ian Chambers

PS : Please don't forget that BET has its own small car park for members at the top of Jubilee Stone Wood. So if you're maybe not quite as nimble as you used to be, you can still visit & enjoy large parts of our nature reserves on level, secure paths.

Directions : 200 metres back from the 'T' junction where Cheston Combe Road intersects with Backwell Hill Road is a wide gravel track with a large 5-bar gate across it. Open this unlocked gate & park in one of the two spaces just inside.





Backwell School

Enrichment Week



On a sunny Wednesday afternoon in June, four intrepid BET trustees greeted a group of teenage boys from Backwell Secondary School, accompanied by three teachers, outside 17 Church Town. The boys had chosen an outdoor activities option as part of their annual enrichment week that included an afternoon with BET.

After a brief introduction and safety briefing by the trustees - Ian and Ann Chambers, Caroline Hoult and Amanda Swannell - the party made their way up through Jubilee Stone Wood towards the limekiln. Ian described the excavations carried out by BET volunteers and how the kiln would have been used in the past.

The group then crossed over to Badgers Wood, walking along the partially completed new access path towards the viewpoint over the quarry. On such a beautiful afternoon the visitors were very impressed by the views and took a moment both to appreciate what could be seen and to take some photographs.



There was only a short time available for the main activity of den building so having ensured that the boys knew where they could build, the materials available and had been shown how to use any tools safely, they split up into groups and made a start. It was wonderful to see boys of that age enjoying themselves and working so well together. They required very little input from the adults which provided the teachers with the opportunity to ask questions about BET and its

activities. It was also interesting to see the variety of dens made using the materials available in the woodland. Most of the groups made use of the shape of the surrounding trees and their pliability (or otherwise) to produce some original designs. One den even had a small extension!

After a bit of hurried hand cleaning the boys ate some delicious lollies that Caroline had managed to keep cool. Whilst they were doing this the adults had a look at the dens and provided some positive feedback. Ian had brought his amazing 'volcano' kettle and kindly heated some water to provide a very welcome cup of tea!

The party then made their way back the way they had come and everyone agreed that it had been a very successful afternoon.

Amanda Swannell





Butterflies and Moths



At this time of year the wildflower meadows and scrubby areas on BET's nature reserves are alive with fluttering butterflies and moths feeding on the abundant nectar. Due to our last two cool, wet summers a few species have declined in number, but fortunately so far, 2010 is looking like it will be a much better year for them. Our nature reserves have, and are being managed, to contain the widest range of habitats possible and now include sun-baked wildflower meadows, sheltered scrubby clearings as well as dense woodland. This variety of different environments should ensure that many species of butterfly and moth will be able to find their own special niche somewhere on our reserves. Summer is by far the best time get out and look for butterflies and moths, so to start you off, here are just a few of my personnel favourites.

Peacock Butterfly

A fast flying butterfly and very fond of the buddleias to be found growing in many of our hedgerows. It is a strong flying migrant and often perches with its wings open to flash its 'eye-spots' to scare off predators. Winter is passed as an adult, often in dark, frost-free buildings where its almost black undersides provide the perfect camouflage.

Size : 30mm

Fight : June to September

Caterpillar food-plant : Stinging Nettles



Common Blue Butterfly

The male's upperside wings are a striking, unmistakable violet-blue colour with narrow black margins on their edges. Its underside is a mixture of azure-blue and a brown-grey colour interspersed with black and orange spots. The female's uppersides are brown but heavily dusted with black, blue and orange markings on the wing margins. This butterfly can be spotted feeding on the wildflowers in our meadows. Winter is passed as a small caterpillar.

Size : 17mm

Fight : April to October (in up to 3 broods)

Caterpillar food-plant : Bird's-foot Trefoil



Marbled White Butterfly

The eye spots on the wing undersides of this slow-flying butterfly distinguish it from all the other members of the White Family. There is little differences between the sexes with both the male and female wings displaying a chequered black and white pattern. This butterfly can be found in our wildflower meadows. The female unusually lays her eggs in flight rather than selecting a suitable plant. The winter is passed as a small caterpillar.

Size : 22 - 28mm

Fight : June to August

Caterpillar food-plant : Various Grasses



Six-Spot Burnet Moth

This moth is one of the few moths that flies during the day, although it can be reluctant to take to the air. A moth of the open sunny meadows. It usually has six clear red spots on its forewing, although the two outer spots may sometimes blend into one. The hindwing is also red with a narrow black border. It can often be seen feeding in our meadows on ragwort and scabious flowers. The winter is passed as a caterpillar.

Size : 11 - 18mm

Fight : June to August

Caterpillar food-plant : Common Ragwort



Silver-Washed Fritillary Butterfly

A fast flying butterfly is best seen in the many sunny glades of Jubilee Stone Wood (especially in the pond coppiced area). It is one of the UK's largest butterflies and its size and vivid orange colour make it fairly unmistakable. The upper wings are orange with black markings whilst the undersides have the silver streaks which give it its name. Winter is passed as a tiny caterpillar.

Size : 60 - 70mm

Fight : June to September

Caterpillar food-plant : Violets



Butterflies and moths are a group of insects known as *Lepidoptera* meaning 'scale-wings' and a very successful one with over 160,000 known species worldwide and over 5,000 to be found in Europe.



Butterfly or Moth ??

The division of the two groups is not always that clear to be honest and there is no single difference that can be used to decide which is which. That said, the **antennae** or feelers are a pretty good guide; all butterflies have little knobs or clubs at the end of their antennae whereas very few moths have this feature (one notable European exception however being the Burnet moths). Also, almost all butterflies rest with their wings closed vertically over their bodies so that only the undersides are visible, whereas most of our moths rest with their wings either spread flat or folded over the body with only their upper-sides visible.

Ian Chambers



A BIG BET 'Thank You' to all the volunteers that have very kindly helped out with some of the many projects we have undertaken over the past five years.

BET VOLUNTEERS : 2005 - 2010

Alex Arthur, Dot Baker, Annie Ball, Martin Bell, David Bossanyi, Ervin Bossanyi, Sarah Bossanyi, Tim Bossanyi, Di Bramall, Martin Brasher, Liz Brasher, Debbie Brittan, Jeremy Brittan, Gill Brown, Brian Campbell, Ann Chambers, Ian Chambers, Phil Chapman, Barbara Charnock, Bill Charnock, Charlotte Compton-Williams, Jackie Condran, Jennie Crocker, Pete Davies, Liz Davy, Mark Davy, Celia Dooley, Cheryl Flynn, Olwyn Gillespie, Maureen Gillet, Rob Gillet, Emily Gladstone, Rachel Gladstone, Jean Glasson, Jenny Greenslade, James Griffiths, Marion Griffiths, Caroline Hatcher, Charles Hatcher, Anne-Francoise Hayman, Chloe Hayman, Elio Hayman, Ian Hayman, Luc Hayman, Josiah Hockett, Phil Hockett, Erica Hogg, Caroline Houlton, Chris Houlton, Henry Houlton, Monty Houlton, Andy Hull, Sandy Hydes, Richard Ivens, Norma Knight, Kean Lamb, Robin Lambert, Dennis Lewis, Pat Lloyd, Avril Marks, Michael Marks, Lindsay Moore, Phil Noad, James Norman, Richard Penny, James Preston, Anne Richards, Chris Richards, Carrie Riches, Trevor Riddle, Chris Rodgers, Angie Seddon, Derek Seddon, Alex Shearer, Anne-Marie Smith, Terry Smith, Tony Smith, Johanna Suomela, Verner Suomela, Lauri Suomela, Amanda Swannell, Paul Tainton, John Tarkanyi, Andrew Town, Alan Vivian, May Vivian, Mary Webb, Steve Webb, Alan Webb, Chris Webb, Lucy-Jane Whitehead, Gerald Wilcox, Tessa Wilkinson, Brian Wilson, Gordon Wilson, Diane Zimmer.



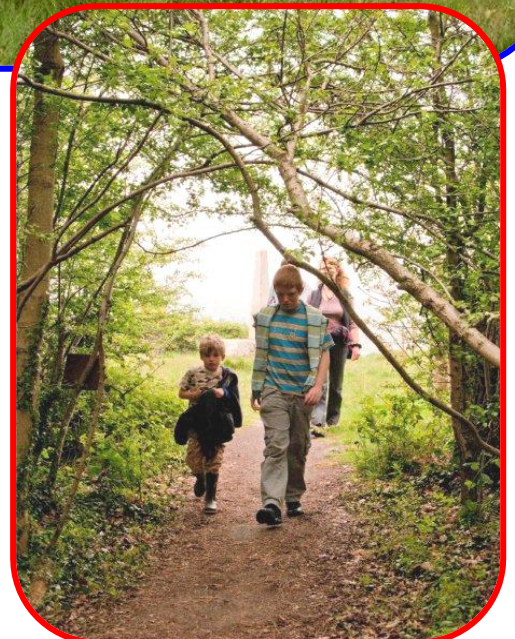
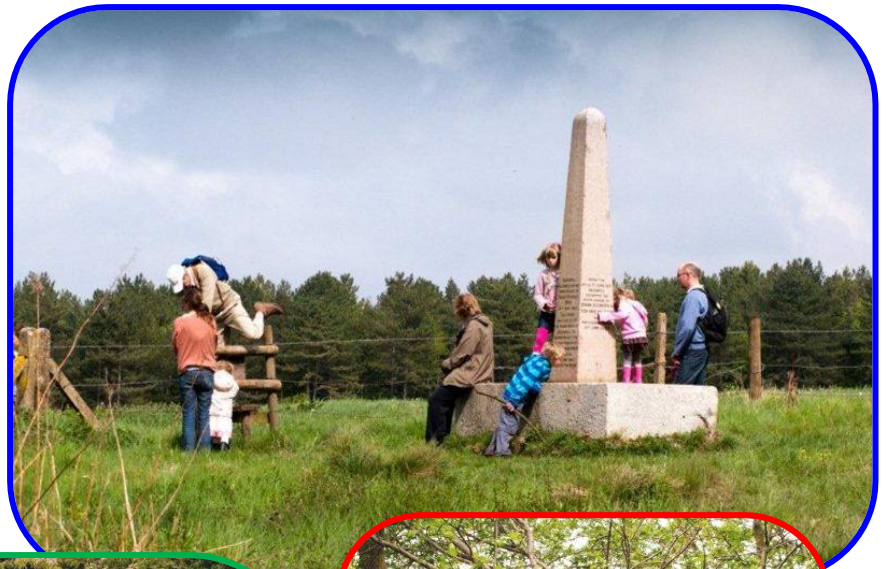
Badgers Wood Celebration Day



On May 16th 2010, BET celebrated the acquisition of its second nature reserve, Badgers Wood, with an afternoon of fun, frolics, walks and music.

Our event on a warm Sunday afternoon went very well with about 150 to 200 people attending. Luckily the weather was bright and warm throughout the afternoon with only one quick shower to dampen us down. There were many events going on, guided walks through both nature reserves, pond dipping, bug hunts, face painting, mask making, a six foot badger selling raffle tickets, a plant & seedling stall and of course, lashings of tea and cakes. There were

displays on the work of BET, Fairtrade and Sustainable Backwell as well as live music throughout the afternoon from the Congresbury Brass Band and a folk group. **Ann Chambers**



Photos : Ethnel Ellis



Quarries & Fossils



Stone quarries have been an essential part of the landscape since Man shaped his first axe and cut out huge blocks which were hauled many miles to build barrows or ritual monuments. Most well-known of these is the 5,000 years old Neolithic Stonehenge, where over 80 bluestones were brought from the Preselli Hills in Wales and 5 massive Sarsen sandstones from northern Wiltshire.

Before the Romans arrived in AD43, most buildings were of organic materials like wood, straw and earth, mud and clay, so needing constant repairing. Gradually, however, people began to build with locally-quarried stone, or used timber frames on stone foundations, but for some high status buildings, material was often brought long distances. The Roman Palace at Fishbourne, west Sussex not only used marble from Purbeck in Dorset but also from the Pyrenees and Italy. Even today many important buildings are made from Dorset's Portland stone rather than local varieties, such as St Paul's Cathedral; the United Nations building in New York and Government buildings in Delhi, India.



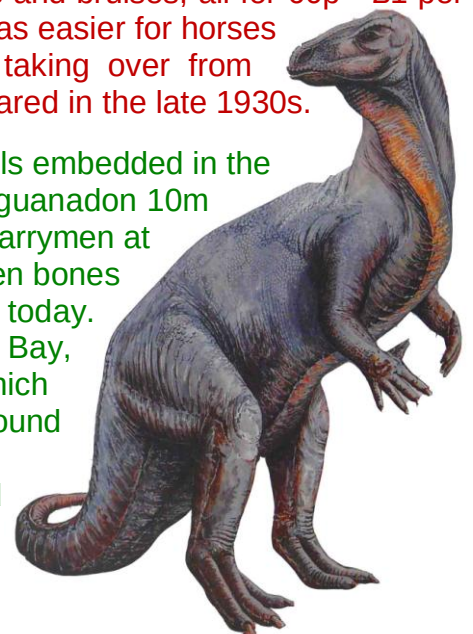
Carboniferous limestone from Backwell Quarry (which operated from 1867-1999) is the basic form of raw material for the Aggregates Industry, its uses include construction projects, road materials and ready-mixed concrete. Today some stone-cutting is done without explosives, the equipment having minute diamond chips incorporated into its blades so the machines can cope. A wire-saw or abrasive wire loop also has diamond fragments and works like a cheese cutter. Portland Stone now has environmentally-friendly underground mines, 20 metres below the surface, which causes little disturbance which is a massive improvement on open-cast quarrying.

With all this modern technology, it is difficult to imagine the life of a quarry boy in Portland in the 1920s, where to be accepted into a gang, meant proving their courage by racing across the road, but trying to be last in front of wheels of a 12-ton traction engine hauling stone! At 14 years old they began work, complete with long trousers, hob-nailed quarry boots and a lunch of bread and cheese wrapped in a red polka dot hanky. Work was in gangs of 6-7, usually members of one family and all with the same initials and surnames – Old Jack, Young Jack and Jack's Nipper.



The top layers of stone – overburden or rubble – had no monetary value, so this had to be blasted away before reaching the lower levels. Then 3 men had to drill 3.7m (12') deep holes by hand or with an 18lb sledge hammer, sometimes needing 12 holes before explosive could then be used. It was dangerous work, with men maimed, bones broken, bruised ribs, cuts and bruises, all for 60p - £1 per day depending on value of the stone. At least in the 1920s life was easier for horses as traction engines (steam-powered) were introduced in 1890, taking over from horse-drawn wagons and later trucks called 'Mammoth Majors' appeared in the late 1930s.

Quarries were not only sources of stone, but some also had fossils embedded in the rock. Local doctor Gideon Mantell in 1825 in Sussex uncovered an Iguanodon 10m (33') long in one, having found teeth at the side of the road. Quarrymen at Kirkdale, Yorkshire found a hyenas' den, with hundreds of half-eaten bones and the remains of 75 tropical hyenas, larger than those living today. However the most prolific discoverer of fossils, mostly at Lyme Bay, Dorset was Mary Anning, one of 6 children who collected fossils which she sold to tourists to help feed her family. In 1811, aged 12, she found a dolphin-shaped Ichthyosaurus or 'Sea-Dragon' buried under the shoreline, complete with its entire backbone of 60 vertebrae and sold it for £23, enough to feed her family for 6 months. It is thought that the tongue-twister '*She sells sea-shells by the sea-shore*' was dedicated to her.



Lyme Bay and Charmouth, Dorset are excellent places to visit, admire the spectacular cliff geology and maybe hunt for fossils. However for those with less time to spare, I recommend walks around BET's Jubilee Stone Wood Nature Reserve, or perhaps Badgers Wood, where part of the path runs close to the old quarry. There the once harsh lines of limestone extraction are softened with plants, animals and birds living there once again – certainly a unique, safe wildlife habitat. The view across from there towards the Estuary and Wales is always magnificent and uplifting, whatever the weather.

Jenny Greenslade



BET at Tyntesfield



On 24th June, BET teamed up with The North Somerset Wildlife Wardens and NEWT (Nailsea

Environment and Wildlife Trust) at an outdoor event organised by the National Trust. This was advertised as a free Community Garden Party at Tyntesfield for local organisations and the general public. We shared a stand with the above groups in a beautiful spot near to the house and gardens with great views across the valley to the BET reserves in Backwell. The public picnicked, listened to music and wandered past the various stands stopping



to chat and look at our display boards. The atmosphere was relaxed and even the weather was kind, adding to the feel of a summery event, although the gusty wind proved a little challenging at times! (We did however get the chance to take a peak under the enormous white canopy Tyntesfield is currently covered with to check on their ongoing progress with the roof - see picture opposite). This event was good publicity for BET and, as we were sited near the Hawk and Owl Trust stand, interesting for us too. Chris Sperring, MBE from that organisation has led an owl walk in the past for us and we availed ourselves of some of their leaflets.



Caroline Hoult

BTCV Green Heroes 2010



Backwell Environment Trust has been nominated for another award, the 'British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) Green Heroes 2010'. This award recognises the vital work environmental volunteer groups play in protecting and preserving the beautiful landscapes this country has to offer. It is a national award with BTCV vouchers presented to the winners and runners up. We'll let you know how we get on.



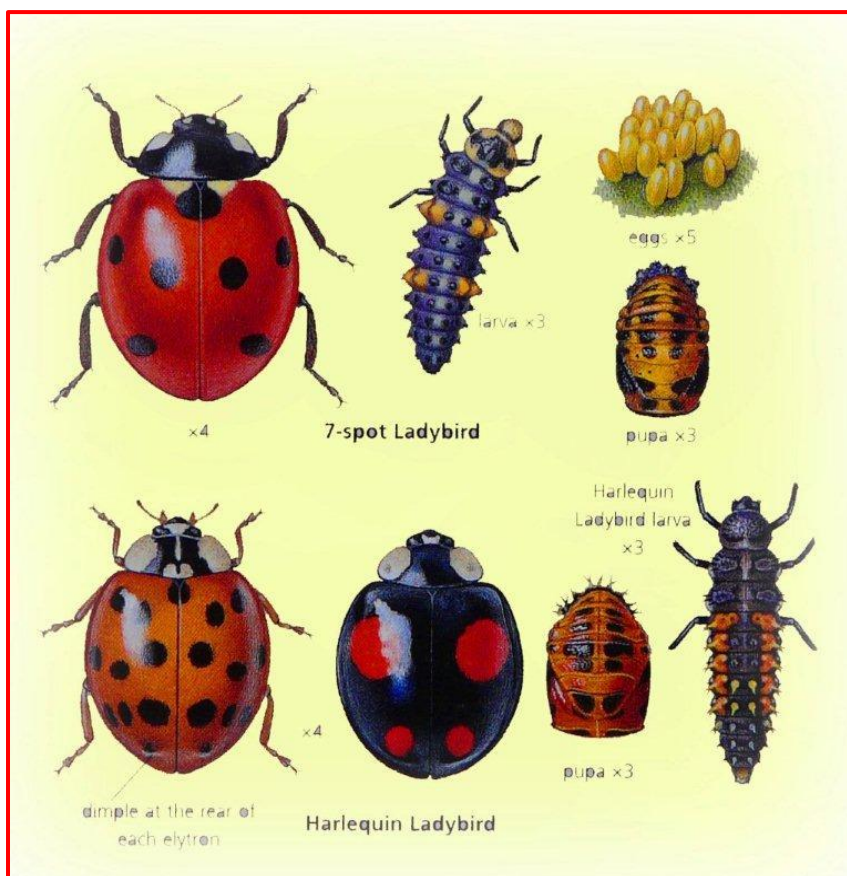
Harlequin Ladybirds



The Harlequin Ladybird is native to Asia but was introduced to both America and continental Europe as a biological control because it had the advantage of devouring even more 'pest' insects than our humble British variety. Unfortunately, as it turned out, the harlequins also ate non-pest and beneficial insects, including the larvae of other

ladybirds and the eggs and larvae of butterflies and moths. Britain's 45 species of native ladybird and many species of butterflies and moths play a key role in our fragile ecosystem but now the harlequin has the real potential to jeopardise up to a thousand species of British insects.

Harlequin ladybirds arrived in the UK in 2004 but by 2008 had spread as far as the Orkney Islands making it one of the fastest spreading non-native species in Europe, as well as the most invasive ladybird on earth. Harlequins in the UK usually have either 15 to 21 black spots on an orange body or 2 to 4 red spots on a black body. They also have rather more white or cream colouration on their 'heads' (or *pronotum*), a dimple



at the base of their wing-cases and their legs are brown. To date, I have only seen our native species on BET's nature reserves so we may be OK for now. In the meantime however, scientists are exploring the various methods that could be used to control the invasion including introducing fungal diseases, mites or parasitic flies and wasps - but let's hope that yet more introductions will not turn out as damaging as that of the harlequin ladybird.

Ian Chambers





Fairtrade Cafe & Shop

Second Saturday of the Month

10:15am - 12:15pm Backwell Parish Hall

Why don't you pop in for a great tasting cup of tea or coffee & stock up on Fairtrade goods?



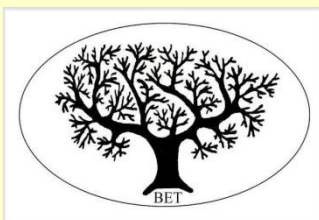
Come and see what's going on at this lively meeting place. As well as supporting Fairtrade, the cafe encourages local groups to run stalls to promote their activities and develops initiatives to encourage sustainable living. You can get Ecover refills, join a bulk buy club and borrow a 'Smart Meter' to check your electricity consumption. One of the cafe's offshoots is a new organisation called *Sustainable Backwell* which is working to mitigate the effects of climate change and peak oil by reducing our dependence on fossil fuels. They are currently developing projects on the topics of energy, local food and transport. And did you know that you can now get your home insulated to today's higher standards either completely free or at a discount of up to 50%? *Sustainable Backwell* can refer you to an assessor who will perform a free, no obligation survey on your property, suggest ways of increasing your home's insulation & tell you what level of discount you will be entitled to.

Just call Terry Black on 01275 542951 who will arrange everything for you.



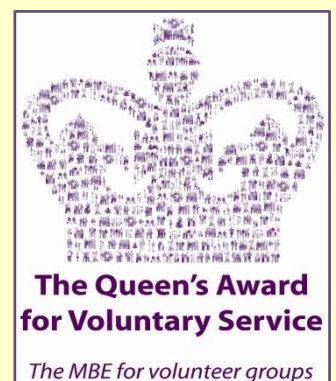
The Backwell Cave Bones

Further to an article about the Backwell Cave bones in Bulletin 16, radiocarbon dating has now been carried out on two of the vertebrae, revealing that they are from the Neolithic period and are over 5,000 years old which is much earlier than previously thought. This was a time when people used stone tools, kept cattle, pigs, a few sheep and their diet included corn, raspberries, blackberries, crab apples and hazelnuts. Their settlements are rarely visible today, but monuments like Stonehenge and countless long barrows where they buried their dead are the more obvious signs of their existence which can still be seen. Scientific studies can reveal much information about the people themselves, and hopefully more bones will be dated in the near future to help us learn more about the people who lived in Backwell all those years ago.



Invitation

BACKWELL ENVIRONMENT TRUST
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO
ATTEND THE LOCAL CEREMONY OF THE
QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE BY
THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF SOMERSET, LADY GASS.



THE PRESENTATION WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER
AT 2:30PM AT THE JUBILEE STONE OR IN THE PARISH HALL IN CASE
OF RAIN.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL
IAN OR ANN CHAMBERS ON 01275 463315