



# Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group



## Annual Report 2015

[www.shropscwgs.org.uk](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk)

[strettonswildlife@gmail.com](mailto:strettonswildlife@gmail.com)



*Project part financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development 2007-2013:  
Europe Investing in rural areas.*





# Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

## Chairman's Report 2015

---

We had a great year – did you? I know that some of you did because you came along and joined us in our activities. We would have been very happy to have had more of you involved. Perhaps we will see you when the new “season” gets underway?

2016 promises to be a very interesting year for those interested in our local wildlife. The take-over of responsibility for Rectory Wood and Field (RF&W) by Church Stretton Council and the important 5 year Management Plan for it should offer plenty of interesting outings for us all. All that, along with the exciting Tree Planting Scheme and its related activities in All Stretton to add to our ongoing surveys makes for an interesting year ahead. And there may be more to add! But before that, we have to look back over our 2015 activities. Full details follow, but here is an overview.

As usual, our season started off with the Annual Red Grouse surveys on the Long Mynd. The weather played its part yet again, but the stalwarts turned up and the counts were made – which is what matters.

This year we were more organised concerning Butterfly counts and two “transects” were set up. These are walks, over the same route, on a regular basis, specifically to look for and note butterflies. Regular counts like this are very useful when trying to establish trends for Butterfly Conservation. We do of course welcome casual records - from members and non-members alike - and a big thank you to those who have sent them in.

The Swift surveys continued, more nest sites were noted and we are encouraged by the results and have several proposals for assisting these birds for the future.

Members again accompanied SWT staff on Wildlife Site surveys locally and improved their botanical knowledge. Surveys will continue in 2016.

Moth trapping was carried out at five local sites and several scarce species were recorded, in spite of the fact that the spring and early summer weather was not encouraging.

Hedgerow surveying revived and continued after a bit of a lapse. Shropshire Council and the National Trust have shown more interest in hedgerows and their importance as wildlife corridors.

The Community Tree Planting Scheme at All Stretton, along with its associated activities has been a huge success. It was exciting to see the number of children who were involved in the nest box construction scheme and pond dipping activities. There is a lot more to come in 2016.

You will recall that the RW&F Interest Group is involved in the creation of a site Management Plan and five public events were organised, including two by our Group. There was a large number of species recorded and the events were a huge success in that respect. The great pity was that there were so few citizens and children involved. The children who did come along enjoyed their time with us immensely. There is a good selection of photos on the website

Although we have not specifically carried out Hedgehog surveys this year, we still have the “tunnels” which are used for recording and can be loaned out as required. It is of note that the hedgehog population has increased locally.

Our aim for the future is to get more of you to join in our activities, but more importantly to get the younger generation involved. We have recorded a large number of species and are making a substantial contribution to Shropshire Ecological Data Network, including some rare or uncommon species, and we have really enjoyed doing it.

*G J Wenman, Chairman*

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	4
1.1 Community Wildlife Groups (CWGs).....	4
1.2 Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group.....	4
2. Survey Activities and Results .....	5
2.1 Butterflies .....	5
2.2 Group Wildlife Surveys.....	8
2.2.1 Rectory Wood and Field.....	8
2.2.2 Gulley Green.....	10
2.3 Hedgerow Survey .....	12
2.3.1 Help for Hedgerows.....	13
2.4 Moths in YOUR Garden.....	14
2.5 Estimating the Red Grouse Population on the Long Mynd.....	16
2.6 Strettons Tree Planting Project .....	20
2.7 Swifts in the Strettons.....	23
2.8 Wildlife Sites Botanical Surveys .....	26
3. Other News.....	28
4. SACWG Statement of Accounts .....	28
5. Acknowledgements .....	28



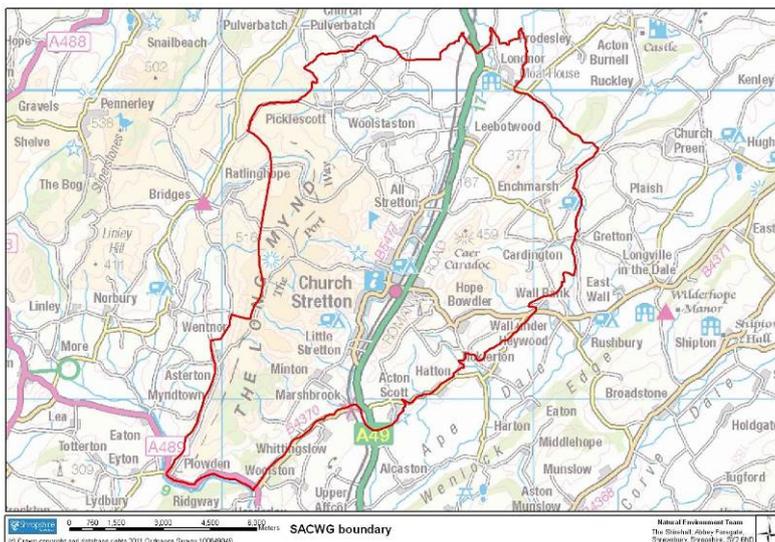
## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Community Wildlife Groups (CWGs)

Community Wildlife Groups bring people together to survey and conserve threatened local wildlife. They enable nature enthusiasts to make a real contribution to wildlife conservation in their local area and develop their own skills.

The groups are open to anyone who lives or works in each area, and who wants to actively contribute to local wildlife knowledge and conservation. They are for everyone, from experts to complete novices. Enthusiasm is far more important than detailed knowledge and initial training on identification and simple survey methods is provided. There are currently eight CWGs in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), most developed and supported through a project funded by the Shropshire Hills AONB LEADER programme. For more information on these CWGs, visit the website [www.shropscwgs.org.uk](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk)

### 1.2 Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group



The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group (SACWG) was launched in February 2012, after consulting local groups and organisations. The group covers a broad area around the Stretton Hills. This boundary is not fixed, so activities can be extended according to the location of members and study subjects.

Since 2013 the group has been co-ordinated by a committee, elected from the membership at the Annual Public Meeting. Survey activities are adopted by members at the Annual Public Meeting, on the condition that they meet the following criteria.

*Each activity requires a leader, who will be responsible for organising surveyors, ensuring that useful data is collected, distributing survey forms (if necessary), analysing data for the SACWG annual report and submitting records to Shropshire's County Recorders. The survey manager will be responsible for ensuring that any necessary training is provided.*

On the Community Wildlife Groups website you will find that the SACWG has its own section, where you will be able to keep updated with survey activities and the latest discoveries. [http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/?page\\_id=206](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/?page_id=206)

We would like to encourage all members to share their wildlife experiences and photographs. If you have seen something interesting or taken a nice wildlife photograph please let the web manager know by emailing [SACWG\\_Curator@shropscwgs.org.uk](mailto:SACWG_Curator@shropscwgs.org.uk). For those of you into social media, find us on Twitter @StrettonsWild or look for the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group page on Facebook. You can use this to keep up to date with latest news, meet other members and share wildlife news.

*Committee members (bold) and project leaders 2015: G. Wenman (chair), H. Hathaway (secretary), J. Arnfield (treasurer & website), C. Uff (annual report), S. Butler (publicity), M. Shurmer (social media), J. Bacon, L. Smith, I. Carter, P. & V. Thorpe, K. Singleton and P. Bienz.*

## 2. Survey Activities and Results

### 2.1 Butterflies

Project leader: Heather Hathaway

The aim of the current project is to try and build a better picture of the diversity and numbers of butterflies in the Strettons area and highlight vulnerable colonies that may be threatened if their habitat is lost. The data collected will serve also as a baseline against which we can measure future changes in the butterfly population.

First a general oversight taken from a report written in the Butterfly Conservation website:

*“The State of the UK’s Butterflies 2015* report found that 76% of the UK’s resident and regular migrant butterflies declined in abundance, occurrence or both over the last four decades.

The report, by Butterfly Conservation and the [Centre for Ecology & Hydrology \(CEH\)](#), found that a number of widespread species such as the [Wall](#), [Essex Skipper](#) and [Small Heath](#) now rank amongst the most severely declining butterflies in the UK. The report found that some once common and widespread species have become a cause for concern. The Wall, once a common farmland butterfly across southern Britain, has suffered a 36% fall in occurrence and 25% drop in abundance since 2005, continuing a longer trend of decline. One of our most abundant species, the [Gatekeeper](#), has experienced a 44% decline in abundance in the last decade and numbers of Small Skipper have been below average in every year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The deterioration of suitable habitats due to agricultural intensification and changing woodland management are seen as major causes of the decline of butterflies that are habitat specialists.

Richard Fox, lead report author and Butterfly Conservation’s Head of Recording, said: “Thanks to tens of thousands of people who help to count butterflies in the UK each year, we have a clear picture of the changing fortunes of these captivating insects.

“The report comes from data gathered by two long-running citizen science projects - the

[Butterflies for the New Millennium \(BNM\)](#) recording scheme and the [UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme \(UKBMS\)](#).” The full report can be read on the Butterfly Conservation Site.



**Methodology and results:** This year members of SACWG have had a three pronged effort to record butterflies in the Stretton Area. As before, occasional sightings have been recorded by 10 members and 28 species identified one down on last year.

Three transects have been carried out during 2015, two of which were new to the area. John Bacon has continued his transect on Hazler Hill, Tim Oakley has established a new transect taking in part of Ragleth and Peter Branson, John Baines and Heather Hathaway established a new transect in Batch Valley, All Stretton. A transect involves walking the same route every week between April and September recording butterflies using a proscribed method. The two latter new transects have been entered onto the UKBMS website but have not yet been submitted.

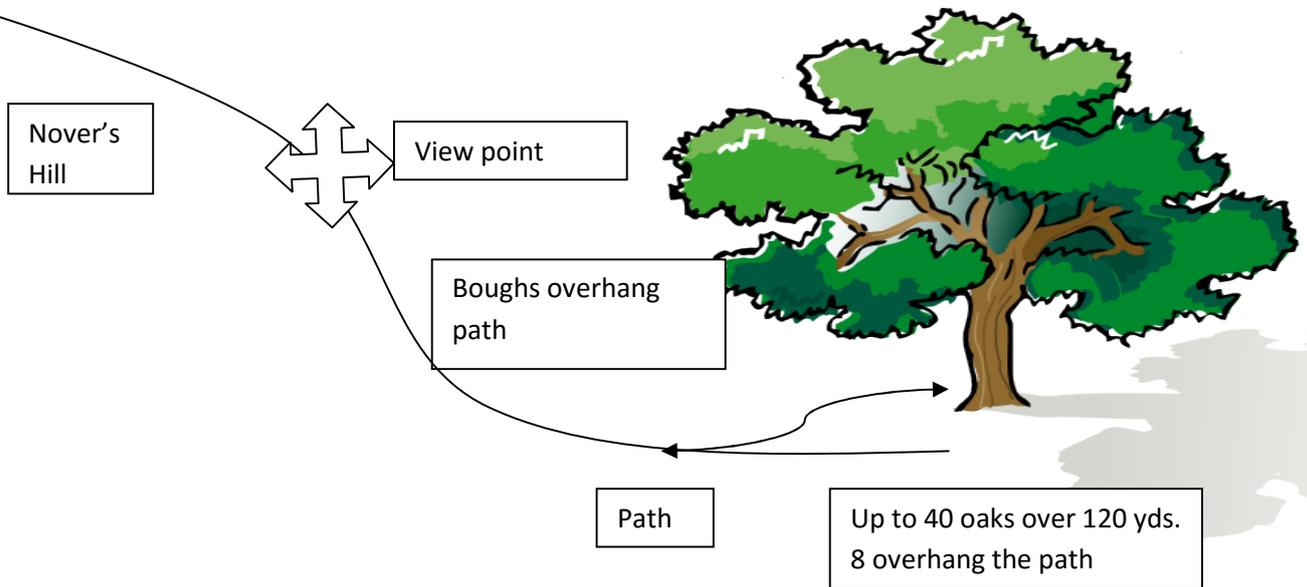
The third prong of recording was to carry out timed counts of two species, Green Hairstreak and Grayling in Cardingmill Valley during the flight seasons. These were done by Mr. and Mrs. Peter Howsam, Isabel Carter and John Arnfield, repeating work done over 10 years ago.

It has to be said that this summer has not been a good year for recording butterflies, due to a lot of weeks of below average temperatures and high winds, but there have been two high points. Peter Branson discovered a really good colony of Purple Hairstreaks in a group of Oak trees in All Stretton and a summary of his findings follows. Isabel Carter led a very successful Butterfly Identification day, supported by National Trust in late July when 14 people attended and 14 different species were identified, including a large hatch of Small Skippers in the Batch Valley. The aim was to encourage all the attendees to partake in the Big Butterfly Count in August.

Common name	Sightings	Approx. Nos seen
Brimstone	8	11
Comma	24	46
Common Blue	9	33
Dark Green Fritillary	5	12
Essex Skipper	2	2
Gatekeeper	36	383+
Grayling	17	39
Green Hairstreak	12	38
Green-veined White	58	263+
Holly Blue	5	8
Large Skipper	4	32
Large White	31	55
Meadow Brown	50	1295+
Orange-tip	32	56
Painted Lady	8	8
Peacock	62	222
Purple Hairstreak	5	63
Red Admiral	25	59+
Ringlet	25	398
Silver-washed Fritillary	3	3
Small Copper	22	103
Small Heath	35	290+
Small Skipper	12	308
Small Tortoiseshell	61	202+
Small White	19	90
Speckled Wood	24	73
Wall	13	23
White-letter Hairstreak	2	2

## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

A good population of **Purple Hairstreak** were reported from Novers Hill, GR SO4569952, by Peter Branson (2015). A diagrammatic representation of the site and summary of his observations are given below.



### Observations:

- Butterflies active warm, sunny evenings only from 17.15 towards 18.30; sun sets behind Nover's Hill from 18.30 pm onwards
- Peak flight period: last week July/first week August
- Individuals can be more closely observed and photographed on boughs of oak trees from bracken covered hillside above path
- Purple Hairstreaks appear to be located solely in this group of oaks, which stand for 120 yards from North to South, on east side of Nover's Hill. Other individual oaks in locality, show no evidence of colonization

Date	Time	No of oaks with butterflies	No of butterflies	Comments
30/07	16.30-17.15	3	6	Temp not noted
03/08	17.15-18.00	4	24 estimate	Temp not noted
06/08	17.15-18.15	8	48 estimate	Temp at end 18°C
07/08	18-15-19.00	6	30 estimate	Temp at end 18°C
08/08	17.15-18.15	4	12	Temp at end 19°C
09/08	17.15-18.45	3	4	Temp at end 19°C
10/08	17.15-18.45	5	8	Temp at end 18°C
16/08	17.30-18.30	2	3	Temp at end 20°C
Upwards of 48 probably reflects only a fraction of the actual numbers				

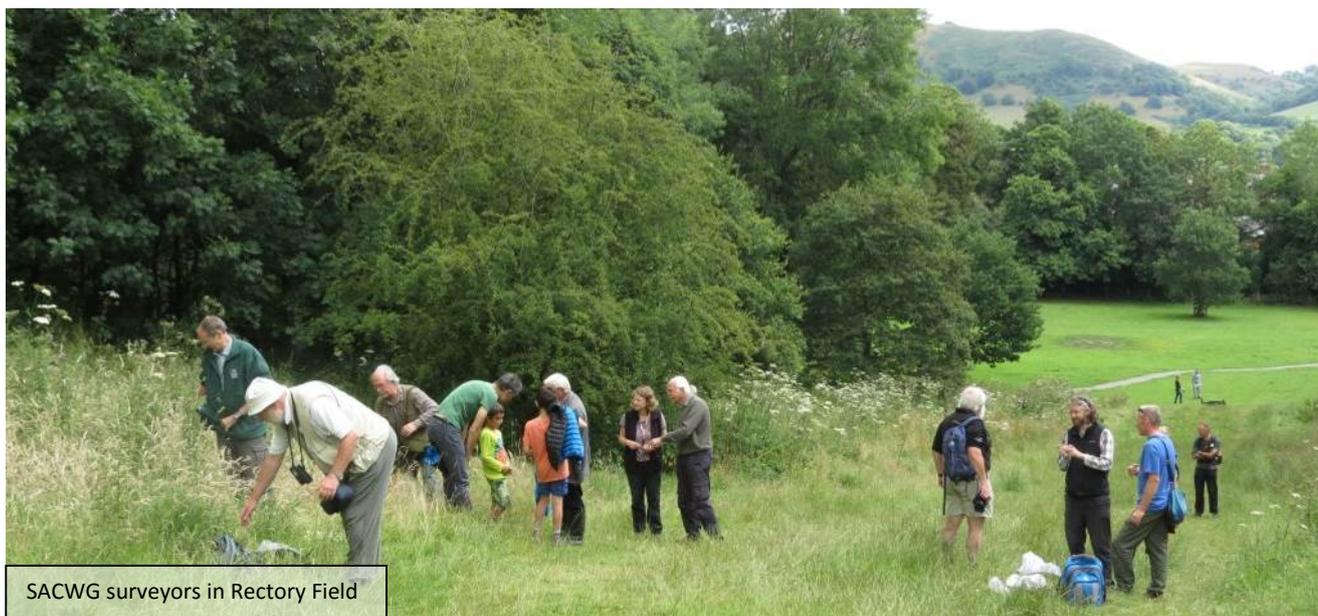
## 2.2 Group Wildlife Surveys

### 2.2.1 Rectory Wood and Field

Project leader: Graham Wenman

#### Introduction

Wildlife surveys were carried out by members of SACWG accompanied by several County Recorders as well as members of the general public who were invited to join in with the search for invertebrates and any other wildlife forms. The surveys were carried out at the request of the RW&F Interest Group and took place on the 25 August & 5 September 2015



SACWG surveyors in Rectory Field

#### Purpose

Ownership of Rectory Wood & Field has recently been transferred to Church Stretton Town Council. The current Management Plan for the Field and Wood is about to expire. The Town Council wishes to compare the current wildlife situation with data from previous surveys to help in structuring a new Management Plan. Survey results may indicate the success or otherwise of the existing plan and its recommendations and lead to further recommendation for future wildlife management.

It should be noted that in addition to the SACWG surveys, 3 guided walks were organised by the RW&F Interest Group. One of these also concerned invertebrates. The others concerned plants and fungi. The results from the 3 guided walks are not included in the SACWG results and have not been taken into account in any of our recommendations.



Identifying minibeasts

## Method

All present spent the day looking at every aspect of wildlife present at the site. This included looking at the wildlife in the recently restored pond on the first day. Also on this day, the mammal tunnels and traps set out the previous evening were examined.



Beating around the bush



Pond dipping

The trees of Rectory Field were mapped for comparison with those from earlier maps and surveys. These results were given to Dr I. Dormor for incorporation into other work he was performing for the site.

Flying insects were netted and identified by the specialists present. Larval stages were found either by “beating” trees and bushes or by close inspection.

## Survey results and comments

The full table of results can be seen on the SACWG website. Data was shared with Shropshire Council and Shropshire Ecological Data Network. Following the surveys SACWG were given the opportunity to feed into the Rectory Wood and Field Management plan and Graham Wenman provided the Council with SACWG’s recommendations. The results are summarised below.

Group	Number of species recorded and comments
<b>Butterflies &amp; Moths</b>	26 species including the nationally declining Dark Green Fritillary, and the Essex Skipper, which although declining nationally, is expanding its range
<b>Bees Wasps &amp; Sawflies</b>	26 species including <i>Melitta haemorrhoidalis</i> , a nationally scarce species associated with the harebells on the site
<b>Beetles</b>	24 species of beetle including the impressive Golden-bloomed Grey Longhorn beetle (image) which is associated with the Hogweed on the site
<b>Flies</b>	21 species including the crane fly <i>Limonia dilutior</i> which is rare in Shropshire.
<b>Spiders and related</b>	7 spiders, 4 harvestmen and 1 mite were recorded
<b>True bugs</b>	56 species including two which are rare in Shropshire: <i>Eurhadina loewii</i> and <i>Fagocyba carri</i>
<b>Mammals</b>	A single Wood/Yellow-necked Mouse was caught but escaped before fully identified.
<b>Pond Life &amp; other Inverts</b>	10 species including a Frog and a newt were recorded from the pond. In addition 14 other species of invertebrate were recorded from the site



Golden-bloomed Grey Longhorn. Image: J.Cresswell

### 2.2.2 Gulley Green

Project leader: Caroline Uff

#### Introduction

This site is a county wildlife site, set in a shallow valley under Caer Caradoc (Grid ref. SO486960). The hillside is a mosaic of permanent grassland, scrub and mature trees, there is also a small stream in the valley bottom and pond with marshy margins. Part of grassland is managed by grazing. A diverse garden and orchard provides further habitat for birds and mammals, and essential nectar and pollen sources for invertebrates throughout the season. There is already a well-established plant species list for the site. Dormice, a protected species, are known to be present and are monitored annually.

#### Aims and Methods

The aim of our visit was to record as many other animal species here as possible, in order to help inform the management of the site. We focused on invertebrates, birds and hedgehogs. Hedgehog tunnels and a moth trap were set up to run overnight and the footprints /moth catch examined the following morning (3<sup>rd</sup> June). After examining the moth trap and Hedgehog tunnels, SACWG members roamed across the site for several hours recording any animal species that could be identified. Nine members of SACWG participated in the main survey (including the owner of the site). A second visit was made on the 10<sup>th</sup> July by two members of the group. For the invertebrates a mixture of sweeping, beating and field observation were used.



Members of SACWG going through the night's moth catch, and Buff Tip moth (insert)

### Results and management recommendations

Following a cold showery night, the weather was sunny and warm and the results are summarised in the table. Full species lists are available on the SACWG website and were shared with Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Shropshire Ecological Data Network.

Group	Number of species recorded and comments
<b>Mammals</b>	5 species including field signs of Dormouse.
<b>Birds</b>	33 species including nesting Blackbird, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Pied Flycatcher, Pied Wagtail, Swallow and Wren.
<b>Butterflies &amp; Moths</b>	23 species of moth and 12 species of butterfly, including the declining Small Heath.
<b>Bees Wasps &amp; Ants</b>	26 species including 2 particularly nice finds (see below)
<b>Beetles</b>	35 species including one nationally scarce species (see below)
<b>Dragonflies</b>	5 species including the striking Golden-ringed Dragonfly associated with upland streams
<b>Other Invertebrates</b>	15 other species including hover flies, shieldbugs and grasshoppers.

Of particular note were three species that were significant in a national context.

***Nomada obtusifrons***. A rare cleptoparasitic bee, the host of which is *Andrena coitana*. The larvae of the *Nomada* destroy the host egg/young larvae and feed on the stored provisions. This is only the second record for the county.

***Omalus aeneus***. This is only the third record of this scarce ruby-tailed wasp in Shropshire. It is a brood parasite of dead wood and stem nesting solitary wasps including *Pemphredon* and *Passaloecus*.

***Malthodes guttifer***. A small soldier beetle which is very sparsely distributed in the UK (nationally notable B). It is known to be associated with clumps of grey or goat willow in damp pastures, which is where this specimen was found. There is only one other county record which is also from the Shropshire Hills.

The management of this site has produced a high quality mosaic of upland fringe habitat. This is becoming increasingly hard to find in the UK. The owners are aware of the appropriate management of the site and are actively managing it. However, the scrub control is becoming increasingly difficult and unless it continues the site will deteriorate. The owners would appreciate any sympathetic practical help with the management.

It is important that the more open, sparsely vegetated banks are maintained as such, as these were particularly important for the solitary bees including the rare *Nomada*. The flower rich meadows and glades provide an important forage area. The hedgerows were very thick and diverse, providing important shelter, forage and nesting sites for a range of species. The stream, pond and surrounding wetland with willow scrub are another very rich habitat adding to the diversity of the site, as is the dead wood, which should be retained whenever possible. The adjacent garden and orchard adds significant value to the site as it provides nectar and pollen for most of the year as well as further nesting habitat and shelter.

This is a fabulous site. The wide range of food plants and habitat types are reflected in the diversity of species recorded and further surveys would undoubtedly reveal many more species.

## 2.3 Hedgerow Survey

Project leaders: Peter and Vivian Thorpe

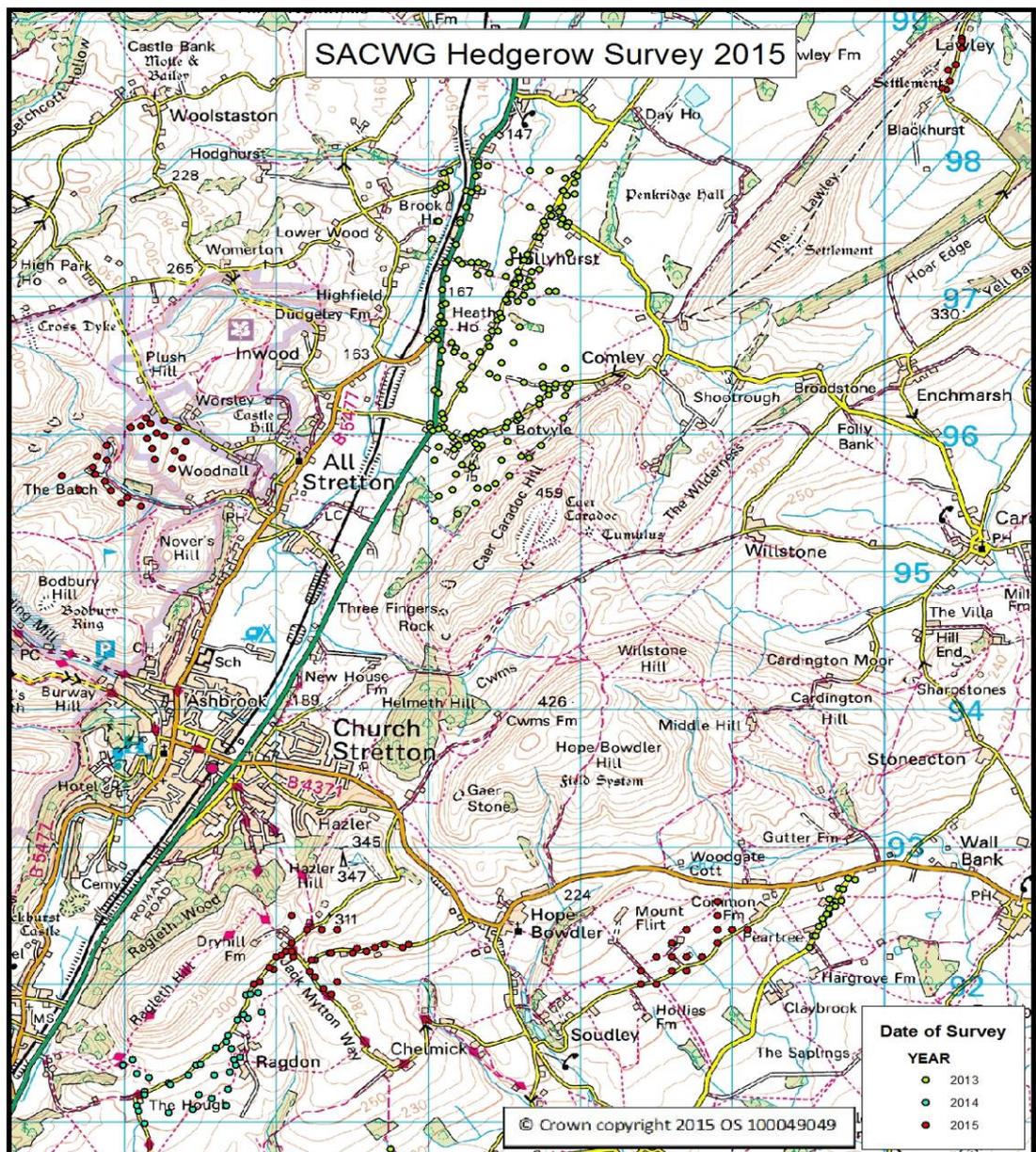
The Hedgerow Surveying group has been in the doldrums over the past couple of years due to lack of members, but now we have had a renewal of interest and added several new members to the team. Most of these have come from the wildlife sites botanical survey team.

During 2015 we started by concentrating on the area below Ragleth, north of Chelmick. We were then asked by the National Trust to help them with some hedge surveying on the lower slopes of Ragleth and near Jinlye above All Stretton (see following article). This has given our surveying an additional boost and of course, the data we collect for the Trust will also be added to the SACWG database – killing two birds with one stone, as you might say, but being conservationists we don't generally throw stones at birds!

The map illustrates the hedges that have been surveyed to date by SACWG.

Many other areas are available and surveying is quite easy and very flexible – that is, you can do it when you want and for as long as you want.

Further information and training can be provided by Vivienne and Peter Thorpe ([vjandp@btinternet.com](mailto:vjandp@btinternet.com) 01694 771443).



### 2.3.1 Help for Hedgerows.

Andrew Perry, Ecologist, National Trust

Members of the Stretton Area Community Wildlife Group (SACWG) have undertaken a number of hedgerow surveys for the National Trust in 2015. The surveys focussed on recording the value of the hedgerows of wildlife, and will help build a National Trust inventory of these important habitats. As illustrated on the previous page, SACWG members have already surveyed numerous hedgerows in Shropshire for the Council using a similar method, and so they were in a good position to trial out our survey method and provide valuable feedback.

The hedgerows surveyed for the National Trust were located around Batch Valley, Jinlye Meadows and Ragleth. A number of attributes are recorded to assess their value, including the diversity of tree or shrub species that make up the hedge. One hedgerow at Jinlye Meadows was recorded to have 12 native woody species present! The surveyors also record the management of the hedgerows, and their continuity or 'gappiness' – two factors which have an effect on their value to wildlife.



Hedgerow surveyors in action. Image: M. Carter

One of the biggest problems faced by wildlife in the UK is the degree of separation between areas of suitable habitat, with small populations of many species struggling to survive in isolation. Hedgerows can provide important links between different habitats, giving animals and plants a 'green corridor' in which to move around the countryside. Hedgerows are also important habitats in their own right providing food and shelter to birds, mammals and insects. Amphibians and reptiles may also find refuge at the base of a hedge, whilst bats use them for navigation and to forage for insects.

If you manage hedgerows and would like to ensure their value to wildlife, the following management can help: avoid cutting all aspects of the hedge (i.e. top and both sides) every year; cutting in late winter is generally considered least disruptive to wildlife; plant up any gaps in the hedgerow with native shrubs; in long hedgerows allow 'standards' or mature trees to develop every so often; and, allow an uncultivated margin of ground flora to develop alongside the hedgerow. Hedgerows which are tall, wide and dense, and containing a mixture of native trees and shrubs, are generally considered the most beneficial for wildlife.

The National Trust would like to thank the member of SACWG for surveying the hedgerows on Trust Land.

### 2.4 Moths in YOUR Garden

Project leaders: Graham Wenman and Mike Shurmer

We have continued our studies of the moths of the SACWG area with moderate success.

As was pointed out in our original introduction to 'mothing' it is useful to have regular records from the same sites to allow for looking at trends in moth populations. We have thus mainly concentrated on the moths of our own gardens and have been delighted with some of our finds.

An example of what used to be a very common moth (which most people could name) - or at least would know its hairy caterpillar (the woolly bear) was caught in Ludlow Road. Yes, a Garden Tiger - normally seen as a chocolate-brown moth covered with a network of white patterned lines and bright orange hind-wings (sometimes yellow) with blue-black spots, which it flashes when disturbed. The photograph shows this very rare aberration – which may yet be voted the “Best Moth of 2015 in the West Midlands”.



Garden Tiger (aberration) Photo: M. Shurmer.

A moth which was New To Shropshire was caught by Mike in All Stretton. This was a Silky Wainscot, its' caterpillar feeds inside the stems of dead Common Reed stems, but little is known of its biology.

As for most insects in Britain, there are lists showing their relative scarcity, and these range from “Red Data Book, 1, 2, 3” through “Nationally Scarce, A, B” to local and common. Although we have not yet had a Red Data Book species, we have recorded several Nationally Scarce ones.

Away from home we have re-visited 2 sites where we previously trapped, on both occasions on a different date from the previous years' visits. An early April visit to Strettons Farm Road, a house that backs onto the World's End wetland site, yielded 32 moths (7 species) but a Pine Beauty was a first record for both of us. This result shows how variable moth trapping is, as our previous visit on 30 May 2014 produced 135 moths of 77 species.

Towards the end of May, we took 3 traps to Bagbatch where there are several acres of wild flower meadow. The result was a catch of just over 100 moths (43 species) and the 'best' moth, which was new to us both, was a small, shiny green micro-moth called *Coleophora trifoli*.

Our next 2 garden visits, both in June were to the east of the A49 and both these locations had good sized gardens with a wide range of plants and shrubs. At the first of these, it poured with rain all night and the next morning but nevertheless, the trap had 50 moths (22 species) including a pristine Lime Hawk-moth,



Lime Hawk-moth

which was in perfect condition as well as a pretty micro-moth called a Cork Moth, which in spite of its name has a larva which feeds on bracket fungi.



Cork Moth

Only 9 days later and only a few hundred metres away, we ran 3 traps and caught 110 moths (44 species). Included in this catch was a Spotted Shoot Moth and this was only the 3<sup>rd</sup> Shropshire record.



Spotted Shoot Moth

However, as part of a much wider survey, the trap was run at Gulley Green and several members of the Group attended in the morning for the 'opening ceremony', which was followed by a full day of surveying for all kinds of wildlife. The trap produced 35 moths (17 species), one of which was new to me. During the daytime surveying, a further 11 day flying moths were identified. When the trap was run there on 2.5.14 there were 23 moths (7 species).

Although we did not run a light trap there, the 2 SACWG Wildlife Discovery Days at RW&F led to us finding a total of 12 species, of which, some were larval stages. Nevertheless, one of these, the Parsnip Moth in its larval stage, on Hogweed, was new to the Strettons.

Our thanks go to Wally and Meriel, Mags and Joe, Gill and Richard, David, Tim and all those who participated at Rectory Field

### 2.5 Estimating the Red Grouse Population on the Long Mynd

#### Introduction and aims

Red Grouse is on the amber list of UK birds of Conservation Concern (Eaton et al. 2009, 2014). The Long Mynd contains the larger of the two breeding populations of this species in Shropshire.

The National Trust implemented a monitoring programme of Red Grouse on the Long Mynd in 1994, based on dawn counts of calling territorial males in winter. The number of territorial males present has grown steadily since then, and in 2010-11 it was estimated to be 40-59 (Caroline Uff *pers. comm.*).

It was felt this method did not produce a sufficiently accurate population estimate for such a scarce species, or to assess the effectiveness of the Trust's heather management. A new survey method was piloted in 2011, which aimed to map the



territories of males displaying at dusk at the start of the breeding season. This approach produced an estimate of 60-63 territorial males, representing an improvement on the dawn count methodology. The dusk survey technique was repeated in 2012, when it was adopted by the new Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group, producing an estimate of 63 – 66 territorial males. The method produced excellent results, and it was decided to repeat it annually. The 2013 survey was affected by bad weather, and produced an estimate of 53-54 territorial males. It is not known whether the reduced estimate was due to fewer observations as a result of lower activity because of the weather, or a real reduction in the population. However the estimate of 56-58 territorial males in 2014, still lower than in 2011 and 2012, suggests the latter.

#### Methodology

The 2015 survey was undertaken by 64 volunteers. Those participating for the first time attended an indoor briefing session in March, and several of them attended an “on the job” training session during an evening fieldwork survey. Sixty-seven watch points, selected to give a good field of view of a large part of the survey area, were identified, and marked on 1-10,000 Ordnance Survey maps. Each participant was allocated a watch point, and sent the relevant survey map and recording sheet. Participants used the map to record the location of all Grouse seen or heard, together with a number for each observation. This number corresponded to data entered on the recording sheet, which included time, the activity seen or heard, and number of individuals.

The project was disrupted by bad weather less than usual, and Surveys were undertaken on seven evenings between 3 April and 14 May 2015, with 78% (52/67) of the watch points covered on at least three occasions. Twelve (18%) watch points were covered twice, and only three were covered once. This was a better level of coverage than in 2014.

A full description of the analysis is provided in a detailed project report. It follows the territorial mapping method (Bibby et al, 2006), which uses concurrent observations of different birds exhibiting territorial behaviour (display flight or aggression) to estimate the number of territories.

#### Results

A total of 184 result sheets (146 maps with observations, plus 38 nil counts) were returned for analysis. These maps included 839 different observations of Red Grouse (some of which were concurrent

## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

observations of two or more birds). The coverage is summarised in Table 1, and compared with that of previous years. Coverage was better than in 2014, and broadly comparable with 2011 and 2012. 2013 had less good coverage because of disruption by the weather.

**Table 1. Summary of Survey Coverage and Results 2011 - 15**

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Number of Watchpoints	38	60	67	67	67
Number of Surveyors	48	67	40	52	62
Number of Counts	147	204	122	181	184
Number of Counts / Watchpoint					
Average Number of Counts / Watchpoint	3.9	3.4	1.8	2.7	2.7
Number of Records	818	816	460	865	839
Average Records / Count	5.6	4.0	3.8	4.8	4.6
Counts with no Grouse recorded	12	51	26	44	38

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the results on each of the seven Survey dates

**Table 2. Summary of Observations of Red Grouse during the 2015 Long Mynd survey.**

Counts of Zero and Records	Survey Dates							Totals		
	April				May			Counts	Records	Average
	9	16	23	30	7	12	14			
Total Counts	23	29	30	34	38	15	15	184		
Counts of Zero	6	10	6	4	7	1	4	38		
Total Grouse Records	86	65	176	208	175	95	34		839	
Average Records / Count	3.7	2.2	5.9	6.1	4.6	6.3	2.3			4.6

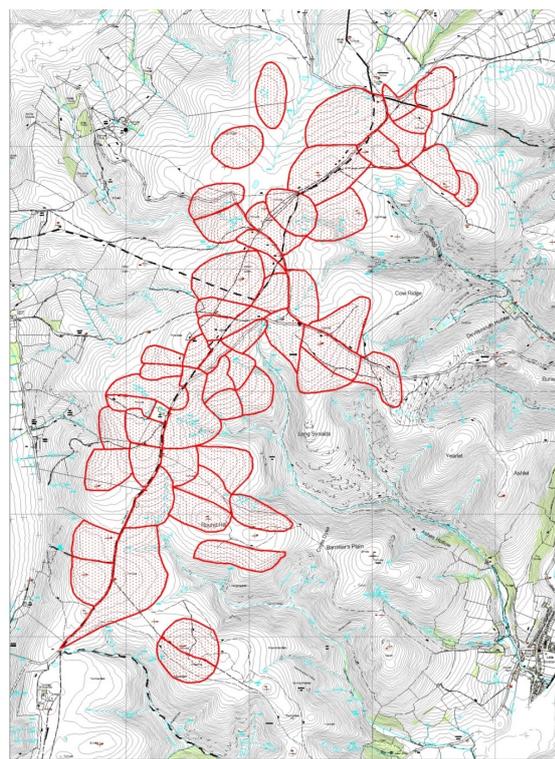
The mapped observations are summarised in Figure 1. The map shows notional territories, based on those observations which approximately locate a boundary between territories. There is not necessarily any correlation between the size and shape of territories shown on the maps and the area that each Grouse actually occupies. Many of the Grouse recorded could not be assigned to a territory with any degree of certainty.

The map shows 57 territories, but observations in two of them were difficult to interpret, and there may have been more.

**Based on analysis of the survey results, the total population in 2015 is estimated at 57 – 59 territorial males.**

Several participants had good views of other moorland species.

**Figure 1. Territories identified by the 2015 Long Mynd Red Grouse survey.**



## Comparison with Previous Years

Table 3 provides a comparison of the population estimate for each of the five years of the survey

**Table 3. Estimated Number of Red Grouse (Territorial Males) on the Long Mynd 2011-15**

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population Estimate	60 - 63	63 - 66	53 - 54	56 - 58	57 - 59

## Heather Management

Approximately 700 hectares of heather dominated heathland is owned and managed by the National Trust on Long Mynd. Roughly 60% is actively managed by burning or cutting on a long rotation cycle of 16 years. Over the 14 years to 2014, around 185 ha of heather has been cut / burnt in scattered patches. A further 10ha was burnt in the spring of 2015. This aims to add structural diversity to the heathland, whilst maintaining heather as the dominant species.

This practice benefits a range of species, in particular the Red Grouse. The remaining 40% of heathland is left as 'non-intervention' to support less mobile species, which are negatively affected by burning or cutting. The detailed report includes a direct comparison between the territories and the heather management map. In general, most territories have some area of short heather in them. It therefore appears that the heather management has benefited Red Grouse.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The level of Red Grouse activity, and the likelihood of them being observed and recorded, depends on good weather conditions, but also on good coverage of all Watch Points.

The number of participants, the number of counts, and the weather conditions, all affect the total number and distribution of records, and, more importantly, the observations of two male Grouse seen or heard concurrently which are needed to define territory boundaries. Therefore it is not possible to make detailed comparisons between the maps produced each year, because they reflect the variations in coverage. More importantly, the methodology does not produce a map of the actual occupied territories, and there is some natural annual rearrangement of territories, as the burning, and further growth of the mature heather, both lead to areas becoming unsuitable habitat.

It appears that the population did actually decline in 2013, and it has partially recovered since. The Survey will be repeated in 2016, and will hopefully show a continued recovery and upward trend.

## Participants

Thanks to the participants who carried out the surveys: John Arnfield, Judy Axelbank, Charlie Bell, Robin Bennett, John Bent, Sam Bishop, Peter Boardman, Lesley Brown, Simon Brown, John Burns, Dr Norman Burton, Sandy Burton, Chris Cooke, Mags Cousins, Sylvia Davidson, Malcolm Dixon, Mike Flavell, Bernard & Jane Ford, Mark Foxall, Jeremy Freeland, Julian French, Annie Frost, Helen Griffiths, Jonathan Groom, Richard Halahan, John & Anne Hanley, Heather & John Hathaway, Frank Hinde, Pat Holbourn-Williams, David Holmes, Ruth Holmes, Alison Hopewell, Keith & Val Hotchkiss, Jane & Tony Howsam, Peter Howsam, Peter Jackson, John Knowles, Liz Knowles, Edward Marvin, Anna McCann, Nigel McDonald, Judith Metcher, Stephen & Margaret Mitchell, Jennie Morris, Ann Parry, Kate Price, Barrie Raynor, Mike & Jo Shurmer, Leo Smith, Jo & Tony Stanley, Geoff Taylor, Lorna Taylor, Caroline Uff, Tom Wall, Heather Williams and David Woodhouse.

## Detailed Report

A more detailed report, with a full description of the methodology and analysis has been prepared *Red Grouse on The Long Mynd: Survey and Population Estimate 2015* (Smith 2016). All participants have been supplied with a copy. It can also be viewed and downloaded from the Community Wildlife Groups website, [www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk](http://www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk) Reports from previous years can also be found there.

Leo Smith  
February 2016

## References

Eaton MA, Brown AF, Noble DG, Musgrove AJ, Hearn R, Aebischer NJ, Gibbons DW, Evans A and Gregory RD (2009) Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *British Birds* 102, pp296-341.

Eaton MA, Aebischer NJ, Brown AF, Hearn R, Lock L, Musgrove AJ, Noble DG, Stroud D, Gregory RD (2015) Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. *British Birds* 108, pp708-746.

Bibby CJ, Burgess ND, Hill DA and Mustoe SH (2006). Bird Census Techniques, 2nd Edition. Academic Press, London

## 2.6 Strettons Tree Planting Project

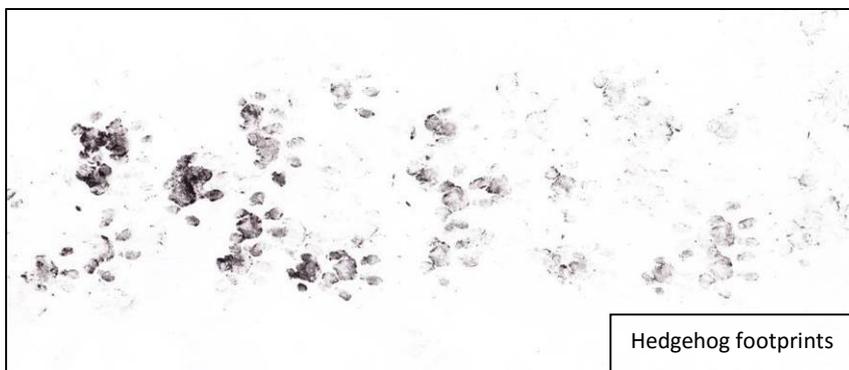
Project leaders: Penny Bienz and Steve Butler

Strettons Tree planting project aims to sensitively restore native woodland to parts of Park Coppice and Open Coppice (Batch Valley, Long Mynd) which, as their name belies, were historically wooded.

A planting plan was designed by Penny Bienz in conjunction with the National Trust (land owner) and Natural England who administer the Higher Level Stewardship on the site. The first planting is about to take place. To further support the project and increase our understanding of the wildlife in the area, a range of community activities and surveys took place. Some of these were incorporated within existing SACWG projects such as the butterfly and hedgerow surveys, but others including the stream life, hedgehogs, bats, birds, other small mammals, and are summarised below.

### Hedgehogs and other small

**mammals:** Following reports of a small colony of Hedgehogs in All Stretton, five Print Tunnels and materials were placed in village gardens during late summer 2015. They were maintained and monitored by families, prints of Hedgehogs, Grey Squirrels and small mammals were obtained and one family used a wildlife camera to record Hedgehog behaviour.



Hedgehog footprints

Thirteen gardens recorded Hedgehog activity during the survey, in one garden six individuals were seen at one time and male/female interaction was noted. Several road sightings were made and one individual was found run over. No Hedgehogs were recorded west of the main road in the village.

In addition to Hedgehog tunnels, small mammal traps were placed in 6 sites in Park Coppice particularly around the pond and the barn area. Some were also placed in a range of gardens around the village in July/ August 2015 and were monitored by the families themselves using ID charts.



What have we got?



Letting go...

## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

The traps are designed to harmlessly catch the mammals which are identified and quickly released. Peanuts, seed and dried mealworm were used as bait

The recorded results are shown below.

	Yellow-necked Mouse	Bank Vole	House Mouse	Wood Mouse
Park Coppice	5	2	0	2
All Stretton (Becky)	3	0	0	0
Nicky	0	0	0	0
Lee	1	0	0	0
Steve	2	1	2	0
Womerton	1	1	0	0
<b>total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

**Birds and Bats.** A very successful family day was held on August 1<sup>st</sup> at Womerton Farm, when boxes for both birds and bats were produced. About 80 boxes were built on the day and others supplied later. These have been placed mainly in the All Stretton Village, but also taken as far as Germany and far flung parts of



Box building at Womerton Farm

England. Some have also been placed on NT land in both Open and Park Coppices, where they will be monitored. Boxes have been numbered and records kept.

Thanks to a generous donation from Stretton Focus a Bat Detector was purchased and several walks were organised in All Stretton. A few families also had the

detector for a short period of time and much interest was generated. Tentative identification included Pipistrelle species, Long-eared, Noctule, and possibly species of Myotis bats. A (Pipistrelle) nursery was also confirmed in Batch Valley.

**Stream dipping.** Two sessions were held in Park Coppice on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> April and were well supported by 21 village children and 20 adults- parents and other helpers. The invertebrates collected were identified and Chris Stratton (National Trust) explained how they could be used to determine the health of the stream. No further survey was done as other projects were under way and more significantly the stream and pond were almost dry in midsummer. Trial sampling (SB) produced virtually no higher scoring invertebrates present. It

## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

will be interesting to see if such groups as Caddis, Stoneflies and Mayflies are as abundant next year and if so whether they are “spring” species with survival strategies. This will need more accurate identification to species. The table below shows the range of invertebrates in the stream in April.

Name	Total of each animal caught	Score for each	Total score	<p>The <b>Biotic index</b> tells us if a stream is healthy or not.</p> <p>We divide our total by different types which gives us a total of about <b>5 ½</b>. (<b>0</b> tells it's a polluted stream, <b>10</b> is the top score).</p> <p>We shouldn't really have looked in the pond part- so our score is a bit lower cos we had a few low scorers in - that's why Tadpoles &amp; Newts don't count. But who cares?</p> <p>There were more creatures about perhaps because the weather had been good last week.</p> <p>Well done everybody.</p>
Freshwater Shrimp	x28	6	168	
Caseless Caddisfly larva	x1	5	5	
Cased Caddisfly larva	x12	7	84	
Tadpole	x252	0	0	
Water Beetle larva (1)	x1	5	5	
Water Beetle larva (2)	x3	5	15	
Water Beetle (Whirligig)	x1	5	5	
Dragonfly nymph	x1	8	8	
Damselfly nymph	x1	6	6	
Stonefly nymph	x9	10	90	
Worms	x105	1	105	
Swimming Mayfly nymph	x6	6	36	
Snail	x5	3	15	
Blackfly larva	x10	5	50	
Pondskater	x2	5	10	
Greater Water Boatman	x1	5	5	
Freshwater Limpet	x1	8	8	
Cranefly larva	x1	5	5	
Palmate Newt	x1	0	0	
Non Biting Midge larva	x4	2	8	
<b>Different animals = 20</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>628</b>	

Overall, two super days were enjoyed by all and some great finds and records were made- which produced some lovely artwork and writing for the Village Exhibition in May

Our thanks go to all those who supported the Strettons Tree planting project and related activities, in particular Tony and Ruth Lawrence for the use of the farm and equipment. To Stretton Focus for the supply of materials for mammal boxes and funding for a bat detector. Thanks also to the National Trust for stream dipping and mammal trapping equipment, and to the Mammal Society for additional hedgehog tunnels.



First catch of the day.

## 2.7 Swifts in the Strettons

Project leader: John Arnfield

### Purpose & Objectives of the Project

The Swift (*Apus apus*) is an amber-listed bird of conservation concern (due to falling population numbers) and it is thought that the loss of nest sites due to modern building methods and materials has played a key role in their decline. By recording known nest locations, it is possible to monitor whether these sites continue to be used in subsequent years or whether new sites are selected and, importantly, to liaise with residents, builders and planners, when works to improve properties is carried out, to ensure the preservation of nesting opportunities. Surveying also indicates where it might be worthwhile installing artificial nest boxes to increase colony size – the birds are sociable and tend to nest within close range of each other.

Swifts are commonly observed in and around the Strettons but there was no formal recording of the locations of nest sites or the number of birds until 2014, when the first “Swifts in the Strettons” was inaugurated by the Stretton Area Community Wildlife Group, under the leadership of Peta Sams. The survey of 2015 sought to build on and extend the results of this study. It used the same methodology, involving weekly surveys on foot of appropriate areas and of those for which reports had been received by members of the general public.

The location of the nest sites will be passed to Shropshire Council, Church Stretton Civic Society, RSPB swift survey and the county bird recorder for use when proposals for maintenance or modification to buildings occupied by Swifts are filed with planning authorities and to establish the presence of Swift populations in the county.

### Results: General Observations of Swifts in the Strettons

The first arrival of the 2015 breeding season was observed on 4<sup>th</sup> May, with many other arrivals during the following week. By the end of the month, groups of 10 birds were not uncommon. Group sizes reported range from singletons to 30, with those in excess of 10 often indicated to be flying high. The size distribution of group size, based on 120 records, is shown in Table 1.

Records of screaming parties occurred between the last week of May and the first week of August and involved between 4 and 20 birds, mostly in the vicinity of the Market Square and Church Street.

A total of 22 nest sites was confirmed (i.e. birds were observed entering a consistent location on a building two or more times), which is three more than in 2014. These were observed on 14 buildings. In addition, around 10 more were unconfirmed (i.e. only one visit was observed). A combination of the following evidence of young present in the nest was obtained for seven sites:

- Young birds heard by house occupants in roof space.
- Vocal young heard by observer, especially when an adult bird arrived with food.
- Young bird found on ground beneath nest.
- Droppings noted on ground beneath nest site.

Size Range	Percentage of Groups
≤ 4	55%
> 4 ≤ 8	28%
> 8 ≤ 12	8%
> 12 ≤ 16	3%
> 16 ≤ 20	5%
> 20	2%
Mean group size: 5.2 birds	
<b>Table 1: Size ranges of Swift groups</b>	

The chick found on the ground was taken to Cuan Wildlife Rescue, Much Wenlock, on 6<sup>th</sup> August but later died. It was found to be about one week from fledging but was diagnosed with a tumour in its throat and Cuan speculate that it may have been ejected from the nest by a parent.

The last observed visit to a nest occurred on 24<sup>th</sup> August. This was also the latest date any Swift was recorded in the Strettons during 2015.

Miscellaneous facts about the 2015 (and prior years) results include the following.

- Swifts in Little Stretton were observed to fly in mixed flocks with hirundines (Swallow and House Martin) until about 21:15, when they separated prior to roosting.
- The occupant of one building in the centre of Church Stretton confirmed a 29-year occupancy by Swifts.
- One market square site may have been an entrance location for more than one nest. At several times during the nesting season, more than two adult birds were observed to enter, including at roosting time (when they did not emerge). Also, the calls of young birds were extremely loud at street level, suggesting large numbers of chicks.
- Swift flight activity (even at low levels) was unaffected by the presence of the Church Stretton market on Thursdays.

### Results: Swift Nest Site Locations

The following is a summary of the numbers of confirmed Swift nesting sites in the two years of the survey.

- 12 (37%) sites had nests in 2015 but not 2014
- 10 (32%) sites had nests in both years
- 10 (32%) sites had nests in 2014 but not 2015

In addition, 10 sites had unconfirmed nests in 2015

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the confirmed sites information.

(a) Stretton's Swifts exhibit nest site fidelity.

There was only one building used in 2014 for which there were no records for 2015. On re-used buildings, exact locations varied slightly between years, suggesting that Swifts may accept some variation in exact nest sites as long as the general characteristics of the site's environs remain a constant. Of course, there is no evidence that close nest sites are necessarily used by the same pair between years.



- (b) Of the six buildings that were used in 2015 but not in 2014, five were in areas of newer (twentieth century) housing rather than in the town core. In all probability, this is due in part to the fact that this area was inadequately surveyed in 2014, especially given that many of the sites apparently have a long history of Swift nesting (according to residents' observations). No sites were found in post-World War II buildings.

There is extensive unconfirmed evidence of multiple nesting sites in Little Stretton. However, access to the property to confirm roosting was not possible. It seems likely that there may be 5-10 additional nesting locations here, based on the numbers of birds observed flying low over the location that apparently landed at nest sites at dusk.

Nest aspect shows a bias towards the easterly direction: some 41% of the 22 confirmed nests exhibit this tendency (see Table 2).

### Concluding Remarks

There is little reason to believe that the Strettons area Swift population or nest total has changed significantly since 2014. While more confirmed nests (3 more) were found, this increase may be attributed to newly discovered sites in areas of Church Stretton with twentieth century housing (on the east side of town). These areas were not surveyed as intensively in 2014. In addition, residents suggest these are long-standing nesting sites. Accordingly, it is concluded that the breeding status of Swifts has remained unchanged in the Strettons in the one-year period since the last “Swifts in the Strettons” survey.

Despite the new nests alluded to above, the core breeding area remains in the older building stock in the area of the Market Square, Church Street and Cunnery Road. Evidence for all of these areas suggests that, while Swifts are faithful to particular *buildings*, they do not always re-use the precise *sites* employed in previous breeding seasons. Whether this represents flexibility on the part of an individual returning adult or whether location shifts denote the returning offspring of birds raised in those buildings must remain a source of speculation.

### Acknowledgements

This survey would not have been possible without the efforts of those SACWG members who participated in evening survey walks and contributed casual observations (John Bacon, Peter Branson, Isabel Carter, Julie Cowley, Margaret Foster, Nicky Halliburton, Heather Hathaway, Tony Jones, Malcolm Loft, Janet Longstaff, Andrew Morton, Peta Sams, Gill Silk) and the residents of the Strettons who talked to us about the Swifts that shared their houses with them.

Aspect of nest	Confirmed Sites	Unconfirmed Sites
N	2	1
NNE	1	0
NE	1	0
ENE	1	0
E	9	3
SE	0	1
S	3	0
SW	3	0
WNW	2	2
NW	0	1
<i>Table 2: Distribution of nest aspect for all nest sites</i>		

### 2.8 Wildlife Sites Botanical Surveys

Project leader: Kate Singleton

In conjunction with Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT)

Wildlife Sites are places which have been shown to have special local nature conservation value. They are the most important places for wildlife outside the legally protected areas, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Many of them are in private ownership but this year we have mostly surveyed sites that have either open access or a public footpath running across them.

The format for botanical surveying is the same each year with woodlands being the first to be surveyed because the ground flora comes into full splendour before the leaves unfurl. At Helmeth Woods we were richly rewarded with a fantastic display of the famous bluebells. The site is well managed by the Woodlands Trust and the ground flora is very rich as a result. The group recorded 94 species of plants, including 14 Shropshire axiophytes (good habitat indicators) as well as 10 birds. Of particular interest were the Scaly Male-fern, Moschatel, Wood Melick, Sanicle and Early Dog-violet, all of which had not previously been recorded by the Wildlife Trust. If visiting the site in May and June look out for a patch of Crosswort just by the styled entrance near the water tanks (approx. grid reference SO469936). Crosswort is classified as “decreasing” in the latest Flora of Shropshire and Ian Trueman (emeritus Professor at University of Wolverhampton) is currently keen to know if anyone spots Crosswort in the County.

Wondrell Coppice is part of the larger Cardington Hill Wildlife Site. This is interesting woodland because it has a ground flora rich in Wood Melick. It also has clusters of the impressive Early Purple Orchid.



Bluebells, Helmeth Wood



Early Purple Orchid, Wondrell Coppice

Cardington Hill Wildlife Site also contains large areas of acid grassland with wet flushes. More than 250 species were recorded on this site over several days of surveying. On one particular soggy day the group was very pleased to see Sneezewort on a rather boggy wet flush. Members of the group also found an interesting sedge which was later confirmed by Chris Walker as Pale Sedge. Cardington Hill Wildlife Site is owned by traditional farmers who cattle graze much of the grassland. This is an ideal type of management for keeping the habitat in good condition. The spread of bracken is kept in check by cattle trampling on the fronds and the grazing helps keep down the growth of scrub and the more aggressive grass and rush species that would otherwise become dominant.

The group had a self-led day at a hay meadow at Leamore Common, carrying out two NVC quadrats which Catherine Wellings has also analysed with the computer program 'Mavis'. For those familiar with NVC, the meadow came out with 58% match for both MG6b/ MG5c showing that at the moment the hay meadow is not being managed ideally to retain its diversity and is progressing towards a less species-rich type of grassland.

The group was asked to stray outside the Strettons Area for an emergency survey of a couple of beautiful grasslands in the Clee Hills area. The land at Cold Weston Farm was up for auction in summer and SWT had



Meadow Saffron

permission from the landowners to undertake quadrats across the two grasslands to ensure that data was gathered prior to a change of ownership. One of the grasslands is a hay meadow which supports Meadow Saffron. This is a most impressive plant which has glossy-green leaves like a garden hyacinth (photograph left). The flowers are like crocuses but have 6 stamens rather than 3. They appear before the leaves in autumn. A letter and management plan has been sent to the new owners to highlight the quality of the grassland. Kate hopes to make contact with the owners in the coming weeks.

Lastly, a most interesting time was spent in the wet flushes of Hope Bowdler and Cwms Common. Jumping frogs added to the excitement of practising

our sedges of wet flushes. These included Common Yellow-sedge, Star Sedge, Flea Sedge, Common Sedge, Glaucous Sedge and Carnation Sedge. Higher up one flush we discovered Round-leaved Sundew (photograph right).

Cwms Common was a wonderfully rich site with 98 plant species recorded on the day. Since the survey Kate has visited the farmer who said that he has noticed that since starting a hard grazing regime the flowers have returned. He began about 5 years ago more or less by accident when he used the Common as a temporary grazing area before shearing. He now puts sheep on the Common at the end of July until approximately the end of August and this also seems to keep the bracken under control. The farmer has also agreed to the site becoming a Local Wildlife Site which is fantastic news.



Round-leaved Sundew

Shropshire Wildlife Trust would like to thank the SACWG members involved in the 2015 surveys and looks forward to surveying more sites in 2016, SWT's last year of funding for the Wildlife Sites Project.

## 3. Other News

### Development of biodiversity at Stretton's Wetlands

A SACWG committee member, Isabel Carter, is working with a small group to explore the potential of developing the land commonly known as Stretton wetlands for the benefit of both landowners and wildlife. We are working with the various landowners of a little used marshy area on the edge of Church Stretton (SO451933) with the aim of improving both footpath access and wildlife biodiversity. During the spring and summer of 2016 it is hoped to obtain funding to install water meters to monitor ground water levels and to carry out several Phase 2 habitat surveys. The surveys will assess the presence or otherwise of reptiles, amphibians, small mammals (notably water voles), bats, birds and flora. A further meeting with the landowners will then explore future possibilities

## 4. SACWG Statement of Accounts

### Income:

Grants*	£367.00
<i>Total Income</i>	<i>367.00</i>

### Expenses:

Survey Expenses*	£346.82
Web Hosting Fee	15.00
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<i>361.82</i>

### Balance Calculation:

Previous Balance (04/02/2015)	£639.62 +
Total Income	367.00 –
Total Expenses	361.82
Balance (10/02/2016)	<b>£644.80</b>

### Note:

Items marked \* are dedicated funds associated with Batch Valley Project. This subaccount has a balance of £367.00 - £346.82 = £20.18.

Hence, SACWG undedicated funds show a balance of £644.80 – £20.18 = £624.62

## 5. Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those members of SACWG and the public who supported the full range surveys and activities. Also to specialist recorders who helped with identification of invertebrates during the Rectory Wood and Field survey. Images from the Rectory Wood and Field day were supplied by John Arnfield and Emma Mason, and those from the Tree Planting Project were supplied by Penny Bienz and Steve Butler. Printing and copying was provided by the National Trust. In regard to the Red Grouse surveys, Leo send thanks particularly to Kate Price, National Trust Assistant Ranger, for helping organise the survey, especially for allocating the observers to Watchpoints for each count. Thanks also to Caroline Uff, former National Trust Ecologist at Long Mynd, for providing the results of previous monitoring of Red Grouse on The Long Mynd, information about the Heather Management policy, and



## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

---

the maps up to 2014 from the Trust's GIS system, and Andrew Perry, the current ecologist, for the 2015 maps and data. The Red Grouse photograph is © Jenny Steel. Thanks to her for permission to use it.