



The Cam Valley Wildlife Group

Newsletter



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Best fishes

I often look at the fish pass (aka fish ladder) located at the weir in Keynsham Memorial Park and wonder if and how any fish actually manage to get through it? It is located next to the bandstand and the particular design is known as an 'Alaskan'. It works by buffering the water to the sides but the design has lost favour in the decades that followed installation. The one in Keynsham is a good example of a bad one - very steep and more often than not - clogged up, especially in front of the grate at the top, which is normally behind a thick and impassable mesh of branches and logs.

As a keen angler and professional fishing coach, guide, casting instructor etc., I usually hear about migratory salmonids if and when they're caught by mistake by pleasure and match anglers, but I have only been shown one confirmed picture of a salmon in the River Chew over the last decade, a 7lb baggot, seemingly trapped between Chewton Keynsham and Albert Mill. Other reports come from the main Bristol Avon, where in excess of 20 were counted in a month during temporary winter count next to Keynsham Weir a few years back. For the Chew, there are a high number of barriers over a relatively short length of river for fish to have to navigate. Some are fairly high, so it is not that surprising to hear that so few make it up. Older anglers tell me that until quite recently, salmon par would often be caught at Compton Dando...but not anymore. The Environment Agency electrofishing surveys mirror this finding. It seems ridiculous that so much money was spent on the fish pass in the park, and also the newer more effective one a few hundred yards upstream at Albert Mill, yet hidden away between the two, is the original stone weir of Albert Weir, left totally intact and untouched, sitting 2ft clear above the river when it's flowing at existing summer levels. The impassable monstrosity between Stanton Drew and Chew Magna has to be seen to be believed.

Bristol Water are currently holding a public consultation over the discharge of compensatory flows on the Chew (as they retain most in the reservoirs) - their proposal being less in summer and more in winter. The pros and cons are complicated, for me at least! As an angler, it fills me with absolute dread, because the misfit river is already so depleted of water throughout most of the spring and summer. It has become visibly lower year after year since I moved to Keynsham in 2005. Even less water in the system would spell total disaster for some of the coarse fish species that are already struggling, because they require depth for cover, protection and movement. Typically the roach, barbel and chub, but even the grayling and trout as the temperature and oxygen variants become more extreme in low flow. They need to be able to pass safely through the shallower riffles between pools or they become trapped in unsuited habitat and either die or become easy pickings for predators such as the otter.

For the text book ecologist and geohydrologist, Bristol Water's proposal is a good one - greater flow proposed for winter months, will shift considerably more silt and associated attached

pollution from the river system. Fish species on current biological index scoring systems will thrive (in abundance, but not size), so what about the other species? They don't represent clean rivers or conservation success, so are seemingly not important. More bed scour; more invertebrate life and more suitable fish spawning habitats for the species under conservation, like the salmon and the sea trout. Pats on backs all round? Not quite - such heavily managed rivers present quite a challenge when it comes to conservation efforts. For example, remove all the migratory fish barriers and you give free passage to the invasive crayfish in the lower Bristol Avon catchment, threatening any native White Claw Crayfish that might still exist in the first and second order streams.

An obvious problem for the Chew catchment as a whole is the road and agricultural run-off. The impounded sections trap it and being the misfit river that it is (it was once three times bigger), it has little in the way of connected floodplain, wetland and pond habitat. It also has little in the way of refuge to increased winter discharge and nowhere for the silt and pollutants to go, other than downstream. A cynic might say that it's a great strategy for selling more water in the summer while flushing more untreated sewage away in the winter through Compensatory Sewage Overflows (this is not my view and I have yet even to find out if the Chew has active CSOs). In early December I was fishing in Keynsham Memorial Park and fortunate to have a salmon show itself in front of my camera as I was making a vlog.

Charlie Halliday

www.fishwish.co.uk

Spidery writing

Times change and with them the style of nature writing. I think the text reproduced below makes an interesting and stimulating read, and I hope you do too. It comprises excerpts from *The Life of the Spider* by J. Henri Fabre translated by Alexander Teixeira De Mattos. *The Life of the Spider* is a collection of Essays taken from Fabre's 10-series *Souvenirs entomologiques* published between 1879 and 1909. The English translation by De Mattos appears to have been first published in 1912, by the London publishers, Hodder and Stoughton.

“CHAPTER VIII: THE CRAB SPIDER

*The Spider that showed me the exodus in all its magnificence is known officially as *Thomisus onustus*, WALCK. Though the name suggest nothing to the reader's mind, it has the advantage, at any rate, of hurting neither the throat nor the ear, as is too often the case with scientific nomenclature, which sounds more like sneezing than articulate speech [...]*

*[...] the popular name, which sounds well, is picturesque and conveys some sort of information. Such is the term *Crab Spider*, applied by the ancients to the group to which the *Thomisus* belongs, a pretty accurate term, for, in this case, there is an evident analogy between the Spider and the Crustacean.*

*Like the Crab, the *Thomisus* walks sideways; she also has fore-legs stronger than her hind-legs. The only thing wanting to complete the resemblance is the front pair of stone gauntlets, raised in the attitude of self-defence.*

The Spider with the Crab-like figure does not know how to manufacture nets for catching game.

Without springs or snares, she lies in ambush, among the flowers, and awaits the arrival of the quarry, which she kills by administering a scientific stab in the neck [...]

The Bee appears, seeking no quarrel, intent upon plunder. She tests the flowers with her tongue; she selects a spot that will yield a good return. Soon she is wrapped up in her harvesting. While she is filling her baskets and distending her crop, the Thomisus, that bandit lurking under cover of the flowers, issues from her hiding-place, creeps round behind the bustling insect, steals up close and, with a sudden rush, nabs her in the nape of the neck. In vain, the Bee protests and darts her sting at random; the assailant does not let go.



Crab spider

Besides, the bite in the neck is paralysing, because the cervical nerve-centres are affected. The poor thing's legs stiffen; and all is over in a second. The murderess now sucks the victim's blood at her ease and, when she has done, scornfully flings the drained corpse aside. She hides herself once more, ready to bleed a second gleaner should the occasion offer.

This slaughter of the Bee engaged in the hallowed delights of labour has always revolted me. Why should there be workers to feed idlers, why sweated to keep sweaters in luxury? Why should so many admirable lives be sacrificed to the greater prosperity of brigandage? These hateful discords amid the general harmony perplex the thinker, all the more as we shall see the cruel vampire become a model of devotion where her family is concerned.

The ogre loved his children; he ate the children of others. Under the tyranny of the stomach, we are all of us, beasts and men alike, ogres. The dignity of labour, the joy of life, maternal affection, the terrors of death: all these do not count, in others; the main point is that the morsel be tender and savoury.

[...]

*As the technical name tells the reader nothing, how shall he be informed? I see but one means, which is to invite him to the May festivals, in the waste-lands of the South. The murderess of the Bees is of a chilly constitution; in our parts, she hardly ever moves away from the olive-districts. Her favourite shrub is the white-leaved rock-rose (*Cistus albidus*), with the large, pink, crumpled, ephemeral blooms that last but a morning and are replaced, next day, by fresh flowers, which have blossomed in the cool dawn. This glorious efflorescence goes on for five or six weeks.*

Here, the Bees plunder enthusiastically, fussing and bustling in the spacious whorl of the stamens, which beflour them with yellow. Their persecutrix knows of this affluence. She posts herself in her watch-house, under the rosy screen of a petal. Cast your eyes over the flower, more or less everywhere. If you see a Bee lying lifeless, with legs and tongue out-stretched, draw nearer: the Thomisus will be there, nine times out of ten. The thug has struck her blow; she is draining the blood of the departed.

After all, this cutter of Bees' throats is a pretty, a very pretty creature, despite her unwieldy paunch fashioned like a squat pyramid and embossed on the base, on either side, with a pimple shaped like a camel's hump. The skin, more pleasing to the eye than any satin, is milk-white in some, in others lemon-yellow. There are fine ladies among them who adorn their legs with a number of pink bracelets and their back with carmine arabesques. A narrow pale-green ribbon sometimes edges the right and left of the breast. It is not so rich as the costume of the Banded Epeira, but much more elegant because of its soberness, its daintiness and the artful blending of its hues. Novice fingers, which shrink from touching any other Spider, allow themselves to be enticed by these attractions; they do not fear to handle the beautiful Thomisus, so gentle in appearance.

Well, what can this gem among Spiders do? In the first place, she makes a nest worthy of its architect. With twigs and horse-hair and bits of wool, the Goldfinch, the Chaffinch and other masters of the builder's art construct an aerial bower in the fork of the branches. Herself a lover of high places, the *Thomisus* selects as the site of her nest one of the upper twigs of the rock-rose, her regular hunting-ground, a twig withered by the heat and possessing a few dead leaves, which curl into a little cottage. This is where she settles with a view to her eggs.

Ascending and descending with a gentle swing in more or less every direction, the living shuttle, swollen with silk, weaves a bag whose outer casing becomes one with the dry leaves around. The work, which is partly visible and partly hidden by its supports, is a pure dead-white. Its shape, moulded in the angular interval between the bent leaves, is that of a cone and reminds us, on a smaller scale, of the nest of the Silky *Epeira*.

When the eggs are laid, the mouth of the receptacle is hermetically closed with a lid of the same white silk. Lastly, a few threads, stretched like a thin curtain, form a canopy above the nest and, with the curved tips of the leaves, frame a sort of alcove wherein the mother takes up her abode.

It is more than a place of rest after the fatigues of her confinement: it is a guard-room, an inspection-post where the mother remains sprawling until the youngsters' exodus. Greatly emaciated by the laying of her eggs and by her expenditure of silk, she lives only for the protection of her nest.

Should some vagrant pass nearby, she hurries from her watch-tower, lifts a limb and puts the intruder to flight [...]

[...] She lives exclusively upon maternal devotion, a commendable but unsubstantial fare. And so I see her pining away from day to day, becoming more and more wrinkled. What is the withered thing waiting for, before expiring? She is waiting for her children to emerge; the dying creature is still of use to them.

[...]

[...] The *Thomisus*' wallet, sheathed in leaves over the greater part of its surface, never bursts; nor does the lid rise, so carefully is it sealed down. Nevertheless, after the delivery of the brood, we see, at the edge of the lid, a small, gaping hole, an exit-window. Who contrived this window, which was not there at first?

The fabric is too thick and tough to have yielded to the twitches of the feeble little prisoners. It was the mother, therefore, who, feeling her offspring shuffle impatiently under the silken ceiling, herself made a hole in the bag. She persists in living for five or six weeks, despite her shattered health, so as to give a last helping hand and open the door for her family. After performing this duty, she gently lets herself die, hugging her nest and turning into a shrivelled relic.

When July comes, the little ones emerge. In view of their acrobatic habits, I have placed a bundle of slender twigs at the top of the cage in which they were born. All of them pass through the wire gauze and form a group on the summit of the brushwood, where they swiftly weave a spacious lounge of criss-cross threads. Here they remain, pretty quietly, for a day or two; then foot-bridges begin to be flung from one object to the next. This is the opportune moment.

I put the bunch laden with beasties on a small table, in the shade, before the open window. Soon, the exodus commences, but slowly and unsteadily. There are hesitations, retrogressions, perpendicular falls at the end of a thread, ascents that bring the hanging Spider up again. In short much ado for a poor result.

As matters continue to drag, it occurs to me, at eleven o'clock, to take the bundle of brush-wood swarming with the little Spiders, all eager to be off, and place it on the window-sill, in the glare of the sun. After a few minutes of heat and light, the scene assumes a very different aspect. The emigrants run to the top of the twigs, bustle about actively. It becomes a bewildering rope-yard, where thousands of legs are drawing the hemp from the spinnerets. I do not see the ropes manufactured and sent floating at the mercy of the air; but I guess their presence.

Three or four Spiders start at a time, each going her own way in directions independent of her neighbours'. All are moving upwards, all are climbing some support, as can be perceived by the nimble motion of their legs. Moreover, the road is visible behind the climber, it is of double

thickness, thanks to an added thread. Then, at a certain height, individual movement ceases. The tiny animal soars in space and shines, lit up by the sun. Softly it sways, then suddenly takes flight.

What has happened? There is a slight breeze outside. The floating cable has snapped and the creature has gone off, borne on its parachute. I see it drifting away, showing, like a spot of light, against the dark foliage of the near cypresses, some forty feet distant. It rises higher; it crosses over the cypress-screen, it disappears. Others follow, some higher, some lower, hither and thither.

But the throng has finished its preparations; the hour has come to disperse in swarms. We now see, from the crest of the brushwood, a continuous spray of starters, who shoot up like microscopic projectiles and mount in a spreading cluster. In the end, it is like the bouquet at the finish of a pyrotechnic display, the sheaf of rockets fired simultaneously. The comparison is correct down to the dazzling light itself. Flaming in the sun like so many gleaming points, the little Spiders are the sparks of that living firework. What a glorious send-off! What an entrance into the world! Clutching its aeronautic thread, the minute creature mounts in an apotheosis.

Sooner or later, nearer or farther, the fall comes. To live, we have to descend, often very low, alas! The Crested Lark crumbles the mule-droppings in the road and thus picks up his food, the oaten grain which he would never find by soaring in the sky, his throat swollen with song. We have to descend; the stomach's inexorable claims demand it. The Spiderling, therefore, touches land. Gravity, tempered by the parachute, is kind to her.

The rest of her story escapes me. What infinitely tiny Midges does she capture before possessing the strength to stab her Bee? What are the methods, what the wiles of atom contending with atom? I know not. We shall find her again in spring, grown quite large and crouching among the flowers whence the Bee takes toll."

If you are interested in the full text, it is sold in book and audiobook form and can also be found online.

Deborah Porter

Members' photos

Phil Gait has sent in a photo of oak galls on a fallen oak leaf with no other similar leaves nearby. Galls occur on many plants in Britain on leaves, stems, twigs, trunks and roots. Galls can be caused by insects, fungi or bacteria. Fortunately, these particular 3-4mm galls, found on the underside of leaves of both the Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) are common and easily identified, with their 'yellow' colour, central bump and red hairs. They are caused by a Cynipid wasp, the Common Spangle Gall Wasp (*Neuroterus quercusbaccarum*). The gall itself is a growth of plant cells on the leaf that forms as a reaction to egg hatching in the plants tissue; it provides food for the causer of the gall and for inquilines, opportunistic insects that lay their eggs in gall tissue and can sometimes starve out gall wasp larvae. The gall is also home to parasitoids, often brilliantly coloured wasps that prey on the gall wasp, the inquilines, or even other parasitoids, killing them in the process!

Other insects, termed 'followers', also use the galls as shelter or to lay their eggs on. There can be many different insects directly involved in the gall and its food-store.

Oak-gall causers have an interesting life cycle. Most of these wasps exist in two separate states of very different looks and behaviour. One generation consists of both males and females, and the other of asexual (agamic) females which produce fertile eggs without the aid of a male.

The (asexual) female Common Spangle Gall Wasps, small black-bodied wasps, pupate during winter in the galls Phil has spotted, and which their hatching caused to form, emerging from January to May. They lay their eggs in the catkins, leaf edges and twigs of both Pedunculate and Sessile oaks, causing green to red spherical fleshy galls like red-currants 5-6mm in diameter, known as currant galls. The next (sexual) generation of wasps emerges from these currants from May to July.

The study of gall wasps, their inquilines and parasitoids can be fascinating, but is not for those who are easily frustrated or without the time and equipment needed! If you would like to study them, a good place to start is the British Plant Gall Society: <https://www.british-galls.org.uk/index.htm> and the websites of the Natural History Museum and Robin Williams are worth visiting (<https://www.insectsandflight.com>).

David and Jacky Chalk were two of several members to have the pleasure of seeing Scarlet Tiger moths this year and have sent in a nice photo of one in their garden in June this year along with a “nosy pheasant” on their windowsill in March.

Maggie Edwards has sent in a clutch of photographs including a very attractive Harebell, some stunning Acer leaves, a profusion of flowering Ivy, some gloriously shiny Sweet Briar rose hips and the flower that precedes the hips.

Her photo of the Common Plume, *Emmelina monodactyla*, is at rest. It is one of the 44 species of plume moth found throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

All stand up on their (usually) long slender legs, holding their wings perpendicular to their (usually) slender bodies, and horizontally above whichever surface they are on. In some species the forewing covers the hind wing, as in Maggie’s photo, but in others both are visible. With the exception of one genus, the wings are divided into lobes, two in the case of the forewing and three in the case of the hindwing. At rest, the Common Plume moth (forewing length 9 – 13 mm) has tightly rolled wings which give the moth a small cross-like appearance. You can see the tell-tale spots on the forewings, one at about a third the length from the base, and a larger one before the wings divide.

The Plume moth larvae, with the exception of the Rose Plume, feed on herbaceous plants, some feeding within the shelter of stems or flower heads. A few, unusually, bite the stem of their food plant and feed on the wilted leaves above by preference and most are well camouflaged. The Common Plume moth flies from September to May and again from June to early August; it uses a wide variety of habitats and the larva feeds on the small leaves, flowers and developing seeds of bindweeds.

The stunning autumn colour of the Acer leaves photographed by Maggie is the result of the breakdown of chlorophylls, of which there are many types, into colourless compounds. This breakdown reveals previously obscured pigments in the leaves such as orange beta-carotene and yellow xanthophylls. Leaves also contain other pigments, such as anthocyanins. Anthocyanins are water-soluble pigments that can differ in colour according to acidity or alkalinity; they can be red, purple, blue and black. Young oak tree leaves can be quite red at first due to the presence of anthocyanins. This is thought to help protect them from plant-eaters. Anthocyanins are also thought to help protect tomato plants against cold by lowering the rate of cell death.

Deborah Porter



Oak leaf - Phil Gait



Sweetbriar wild rose - Maggie Edwards



Sweetbriar wild rose hips – Maggie Edwards



Flowering wild ivy – Maggie Edwards



Harebell – Maggie Edwards



Red Acer leaves – Maggie Edwards



Plume moth – Maggie Edwards



*Colchicum autumnale – Meadow Saffron or Naked Ladies
– ‘Tiny’ French*



Pheasant – Dave & Jacky Chalk



Scarlet Tiger Moth – Dave & Jacky Chalk

‘Tiny’ French’s *Colchicum* is a corm that contains an alkaloid (colchicine) used to treat gout. The Chalks also saw a Sparrowhawk and Dippers are still being seen in the centre of Radstock along with the occasional Small Egret. Bullfinches have been spotted in their bird feeders and on the Greenway by Five Arches.

Please send photos for the next members’ photos article to Phil Gait at p.gait@tiscali.co.uk or to camvalleywildlife@gmail.com, making sure to give permission to use any personal details you are happy with being printed (e.g. name).

Save the bees – but which ones?

For almost fifteen years now the message from the media has been save the bees, with headlines and articles usually accompanied by pictures of honeybees and hives. Fortunately the colony collapse disorder which originally prompted this concern was confined to the USA and did not affect honeybee colonies in the UK. However, ask around and you will find that many still believe

that our honeybees are suffering and in decline. In reality official figures show fairly steady hive numbers across these years. There is now evidence of too many in some areas.

Positive outcomes of this bee publicity are the 2018 EU ban of Neonicotinoid insecticides, the prime suspect in the US disaster, and national schemes to increase wild areas and provide more food plants for pollinators. Less useful is a proliferation of sponsorship schemes such as Swindon Honeybee Conservation Group, who are 'Working hard to help sustain the honeybee population' and seek your £350 to start a new hive. Similarly, it is not clear how tote bags and tea towels decorated with bees and hives or the Glastonbury 'sacred bee Goddess' really help either.

A third outcome of the raised awareness of bees has been a surge in the number of new beekeepers with local branches of the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) reporting full or unusually busy beginners courses in recent years.

There are approximately 270 species of wild bees in the UK. There are Bumbles, and about 250 species of solitary bees, which are very efficient pollinators. Some pollinate a wide variety of plant species while others have co-evolved with plants to be specialist pollinators for a particular genus or species. Hoverflies, wasps and other insects are also useful pollinators. In fact DEFRA's National Pollinator Strategy estimates 1500 UK pollinator species.



Red tailed wasp

One of the planet's most studied insects, honeybees, are effectively farm animals. *Apis mellifera* has been selectively bred, sometimes via artificial insemination, to be good and well-behaved honey producers. Colonies are usually managed and controlled to inhibit or encourage increase, and thus bred as required and traded as livestock. They are housed in boxes designed for human convenient, often polystyrene these days. They are routinely treated with medicines, as treatment or precaution against *Varroa* mite and *Nosema* infection etc.

The surge in urban beekeeping in London means that there are now some areas where there are just too many hives and not enough forage to support them. Other areas are reporting similar problems. Imagine the pressure on the wild pollinators in these areas. This year in my town with many other beekeepers, I took no honey from my bees; unusual in over 30 years of my keeping. I would give up, but I tried once and missed the little buzzers!

Honeybees may not be the best pollinators for some varieties of plants, and are not a substitute for wild bees. Research has found that high numbers of honeybees in an area can cause harm to wild bee populations, because they compete directly for nectar and pollen. There is no problem if flowers are plentiful, but in environments where resources are limited wild bees and other pollinators can be outcompeted. If wild pollinators are squeezed out it can be harder for some wild plants to reproduce, reducing biodiversity. Clearly, we must protect the entire pollinator community to ensure proper pollination.

Consequently the rise in amateur beekeepers, however well meaning, is likely to cause more harm than good. In short, adding more hives of honeybees to help pollinators makes as much sense as

raising more pheasants to help with wild bird conservation.

Back with the wild bees, a 2019 survey by WWF looked at data for 228 species in the South East. Of these 17 species are extinct from the area, 25 species are threatened, and another 31 are of conservation concern. Clearly, these are the bees that need to be saved.

So what can be done to help? I'm sure you already know now most of this!



Ashy Mining bee

- The National Pollinator strategy mentioned above is a powerful step in the right direction. Well worth reading. It has actions for farmers, planners and the public and runs until 2024.
- We know that 'weeds' such as dandelions, buttercups, brambles, vetch, clover and daisies are all vital food plants for wild bees. Plants like these need to be allowed to grow and allowed space to do so.
- Plant older varieties of flowers and not showy hybrids which may have sacrificed pollen and nectar. Don't use insecticides or herbicides.
- Check whether local public spaces, parks and road verges are bee friendly and let local councils know how they can be improved. Also ask councils, football and sports clubs and particularly golf clubs about their use of 'amenity' chemicals.
- Try to provide nest sites for wild bees. Not just tube 'hotels', be creative. Look at the needs of ground-dwelling species and maybe poke a few holes in lawn and border in spring for them to explore. Also maintain an area of damp sandy mud in spring to encourage mason bees.



Red Mason bee

Terry Goodall

At home with wildlife

Apart from wood beetles in the roof, ants on the table, we now have weevils in the big cupboard which have been chewing up the macaroni and spaghetti. One potful had turned into a brown squelch so preventing the bugs leaping back out from the slippery wet plastic sides, but plenty were still marching about. They are quite capable of chewing through a cardboard box and from their appearance could well be cousins to the aforementioned wood beetles. The explanation for their debut that comes to my mind is that we imported them from Malta. So this being a more temperate climate, their progress has been fairly lethargic.

Fergus Callender

Hedgehogs in our garden

We have a fair few hedgehogs that visit our garden and this year I hope there is one hibernating in the hedgehog house.

We, of course, haven't looked but in September/ October there were a lot of leaves being taken inside. I also left small bundles of hay outside and each night they got taken away, fingers crossed by the hedgehog.

We feed the hedgehogs each day and if you are lucky enough to have these prickly visitors then it's important to keep a supply of food and fresh water available throughout the winter months as well.

Hibernation isn't a continuous state and hedgehogs do wake up during periods of milder weather and will need a drink and a quick snack.



We feed our hedgehogs on Tesco Kitten biscuits

As a 'treat' I bought some Spikes Hedgehog food but we must have fussy ones as they preferred the Tesco biscuits and left the speciality food! Any meaty cat or dog food or chicken biscuits are good to feed. I remember that it used to be bread soaked in milk for hedgehogs but this has proven to be very bad for their digestion so shouldn't be fed. Also meal worms are not good to

give hedgehogs, although they apparently do love them, as they do not provide good nutrition and can lead to calcium deficiency.

Hopefully, come the spring we will get to see our visiting hogs again when they emerge

To be continued.

Zoe Niccolls



...And more members' photos

It took blackbirds, thrushes and redwings less than a week to strip the holly bush below.



Autumn Holly berries – Phil Gait



No Holly for Christmas! – Phil Gait

Happy New Year to all Cam Valley Wildlife Group members

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Next Newsletter: The copy date for the next Newsletter is **15th March 2021**

This Newsletter is published four times a year by Cam Valley Wildlife Group, an independent, volunteer-run wildlife group, covering Midsomer Norton, Radstock and surrounding villages.

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