



# newsletter

Registered charity no. 1076362

## CONTACT US:

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

**please note that the  
YACWAG website is  
temporarily offline**

YACWAG Facebook group

Win Lowman

01934 833596

winlowman@hotmail.co.uk

## Come to the AGM

YACWAG's 17th AGM will be held at Claverham Cricket Club, Henley Lane, Yatton on **Thursday 26th May**.

Refreshments will be available from 7pm with the business starting at 7.30pm, followed by a walk on Cadbury Hill led by Faith Moulin.

The cricket club car park may be used for this event.

## Family Bat Walk

**Friday 29 April 8.15pm** at Henley Lane car park, Cadbury Hill. Wear warm clothes and stout shoes, bring a torch.

## Development Gone Wild

### *How Can we Protect Wildlife?*

Many local residents are concerned about the flood of development proposed for our villages. We all know that green fields, however intensively managed, provide wildlife habitat in a way that houses and roads do not.

The presence of wildlife, even protected species like bats or great crested newts, cannot prevent development (but the Government is seeking to weaken even the protection that our most vulnerable species have.) However, it is important that developers are made to mitigate for the loss of habitat, and pay so that other areas can be enhanced for wildlife.

It is increasingly obvious that we need to know more about what wildlife surrounds us. Unless we know what wildlife is on a development site there will be no mitigation. Developers do engage ecologists, but there is nothing to beat local knowledge and observations built up over many years.

YACWAG has responded to local groups and provided information about sensitive areas; comment has been made to North Somerset Council and Natural England, particularly in regard to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) required to mitigate the cumulative effect, particularly for protected species like the Greater Horseshoe Bat. YACWAG has objected to many developments and will continue to do so.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7





## Bob Young

Bob Young has been associated with YACWAG's conservation work for over 20 years. In fact he has been volunteering with us for so long that nobody can remember when or how he first got involved!

Bob lives in the cottage in which he was born, in Yatton High Street, and has 'always' been active in the community, a key volunteer with Claverham Cricket Club and a founding member of Yatton History Society. Bob has also wound the church clock since the 1970s when he undertook the task for a couple of weeks until the church could find another volunteer!

Bob enjoys being outdoors, and probably got involved with the fore-runner of YACWAG (Friends of Biddle Street SSSI) when he read something in the local paper about local volunteers being required for work on the Strawberry Line. Since then he has completed many many hours of action for YACWAG.

## YACWAGger Profile - Bob Young

I enjoy working outdoors and like the companionship of other volunteers at YACWAG's practical workparties. I remember in the early days getting involved in many different tasks. I particularly remember the first hedge laying course I attended which was held down at Biddle Street adjacent to the Strawberry Line in about 1996. I wish wildlife no harm, but for me the practical work is more interesting, and that is why I got involved.

In the early days Peter Archdale was our chief fire-raiser, but when he left for Northern Ireland I took over the mantle and ever since, whenever a bonfire is called for, I'm the main man.

One of the major projects I got very involved with was the refurbishment of Glebelands, the park in front of the village hall. We did all kinds of work there in 2004-6 knocking down walls, cutting down trees, and gave it a real make-over. Another major piece of work was the restoration of the stone-lined pond on the lower slopes of Cadbury Hill. This was carried out with John Howard over a lengthy period and gave us new skills and a lasting legacy.

Now there are fewer practical work parties with YACWAG, three or four of us like to do some useful work on a Sunday morning on Cadbury Hill, keeping the footpaths and bridleways open and other tasks as directed. It helps keep me fit and active and I hope I shall be able to continue with that for a long time to come!

I would like to see more of our local green spaces protected from development, but that seems harder to achieve now that Yatton is targeted for so much new housing and land is so expensive. If it was possible I would like to see YACWAG buy more land.

I enjoy living and working around Yatton - I have no desire to jet off anywhere, much preferring to be out and about in the village.

*Bob Young*



*Bob labouring at Glebelands in 2005*



*Bob and Tony clearing Kenn Moor reserve 2007*



*Bob Young in his element: stoking a bonfire in New Croft 2007.*

YACWAG prefers to use cut material to create piles for wildlife habitat, but sometimes the volume of material necessitates more drastic and space-saving disposal.

## Trevor's Bird Report

---

### *Congresbury Moor and the Strawberry Line*

The wet winter provided lots of roosting places for Snipe and just 14 were present on Congresbury Moor at the end of January. A Kingfisher on New Rhyne by Ten Acres field provided a pleasant diversion though. By 19th February Snipe numbers had increased to 25 and this time a pair of Stonechats were seen. A Chiffchaff was singing on 17th March close to Footmead and another or the same Kingfisher was on the River Yeo.

Our first spring bird survey along the Strawberry Line took place on 1st April when there were no less than 13 singing Chiffchaffs recorded along with two each of Blackcap and Cetti's Warbler. Wrens, Robins and Dunnocks were plentiful and seven Bullfinches was an encouraging count. A pair of Kestrels were mating in 10 Acres so hopefully we shall have successful breeding again this year.

### *Cadbury Hill*

The Marsh Tits are back! After an apparent absence of several years I have found Marsh Tits on three separate visits and member Richard Tompkins who lives nearby has seen one or two in his garden.

### *Wemberham Lane*

The Peregrine(s) that I reported in the last newsletter were only seen as single birds until the end of January. Peregrines start displaying in February so maybe they returned to their breeding territory. Fieldfare numbers peaked at 200 with 50 Redwings and 1,000 Black Headed Gulls passed over on 30th January after heavy rain. The derelict field near to Smart Systems provided a winter home for a flock of Linnets which varied in numbers from 20 to 50. Stonechats and Reed Buntings were regular there and a Jack Snipe flew from one of the weedy areas. Three Chiffchaffs were in song by 3rd April.

One Kingfisher was seen but the best birds were two separate Short Eared Owls. The first was distant towards Kingston Seymour ( see below) and the second was being mobbed by Crows as it flew high to the South. There had been snow in South Wales and the weather may have moved this bird on.

### *Kingston Seymour.*

YACWAG member Roland Griffin has a conservation area in Kingston Seymour and as I judged that the first owl was close to his land I gave him a call. A couple of days later he reported seeing the bird on his land, and he saw it two or three times subsequently before it moved on.

Roland has several owl boxes on his fields and Alan Walker our owl box builder constructed a replacement box for Roland who saw two Barn Owls perched on one of his older boxes. Despite the wet winter the number of Barn Owl sightings by members has been quite high, so let's hope that YACWAG increases its Barn Owlet tally by a good number in 2016.

## Bird News Continued

---

### *Kenn - Nailsea Wall*

A resident gave John Croxton ( our Littlewood warden) a pellet that she had found in her garden. Neither John nor I could identify it ( it contained lots of feathers) so I showed it to local naturalist Ed Drewitt. It was a Peregrine pellet and the feathers were from a Little Grebe. If this didn't sound unlikely enough Little Grebes only fly at night. Peregrines in Bristol are known to hunt at night ( capturing a variety of 'exotic' species) using the City lights. Perhaps this Peregrine is doing the same using the Hand Stadium lights ?

## Rookery Survey at St Andrew's School, Congresbury

---

The British Trust for Ornithology in the Avon area has been running a survey of rookeries since the 1970s, latterly at five year intervals. For a couple of reasons our local 10km grid square wasn't fully covered last year so the organiser asked me to check part of the square this Spring. To this end a couple of YACWAG members have assisted me but with the help of Sue Lovesey I also involved St. Andrew's School, Congresbury again.

So on a fine overcast (ideal weather for counting) 23rd March, 35 pupils, five parent helpers, two teachers, Sue and myself began in the school grounds where we found 20 nests. There must be something about schools as there is also a rookery at Churchill school. Counting complete we made

our way to the Strawberry Line and located a new small rookery at the site of Congresbury Station (four nests). Then we went on up the line to the big rookery near to Silver Springs fishing lakes. This year there was a whopping tally of 58 nests and as other sites in Silver Street occupied in 2010 were deserted when we checked them it seems that the birds have now concentrated themselves at this big rookery.

It looks as if the number of nests in Congresbury has remained constant since 2010, which is good as numbers have generally been in decline. It was an enjoyable morning, thanks to the children, parents, staff and to Sue for making it work so well.

*Trevor Riddle*



**Monday 2nd May 7am**

Meet at Millennium Arch Yatton station  
Warbler walk along the Strawberry Line; breakfast in the Strawberry Line cafe if required. To book please ring Trevor on 01934 835208 or email [trid@btinternet.com](mailto:trid@btinternet.com)

## The History of YACWAG Part 7

When Littlewood was bought in 2003, English Nature had just published a report based on a radio tracking survey of Greater Horseshoe bats from the Brockley Hall Stables SSSI (a maternity roost). The report showed the flight line passing close to Littlewood. This tantalising line on a map led

YACWAG into wanting to find out what our local bats were and to map where they were going, how it related to our own reserves, and to find out more about how bats could be helped.



In 2004 YACWAG started its bat monitoring project and in conjunction with the Goblin Combe Environmental Centre YACWAG offered bat training courses and a keen group of bat enthusiasts was formed. A grant of £2500 for bat detectors and moth trapping equipment was awarded by YANSEC through the landfill tax rebate scheme.

In 2006 YACWAG's bat group was gaining in experience and knowledge and worked with St Andrew's school in Congresbury to teach children about the mysterious world of bats. An evening event was put on for children and their parents, and bats were discovered in the school grounds.

YACWAG's charitable objects are: 1. to create and maintain nature reserves and 2. to raise awareness of nature conservation, so when a local resident offered YACWAG a chance to buy two more wildlife-rich fields off Stowey Road a further grant was sought and awarded by YANSEC. Because of the closeness of Yatton primary schools, and YACWAG's intention to use the land for educational purposes, funding was also given by Yeo Valley Lions, Yatton Parish Council and a members' appeal raised the all-important match funding.

Stowey Reserve had been managed for the previous 17 years as a private nature reserve and contained meadow and marsh plants that once were common in local pastures. Although outside the SSSI, the fields were designated part of a Local Wildlife Site and are of SSSI quality. These two new fields, purchased in March 2006, brought YACWAG's total to six, four in the parish of Congresbury and two in Yatton.

In 2005/6 YACWAG was heavily involved in the refurbishment of Glebelands, working with Yatton Horticultural Society and other community organisations and individuals to create a beautiful area in the centre of Yatton. It is impossible to overestimate the value of YACWAG's contribution of voluntary labour to this make-over.



*Frances Osborne, Maureen Clissold and Irene Astle bag up excavated rubble and rubbish and help to create a garden at Glebelands*

## YACWAG Bat Group Looks Forward to the New Season

---

This year the group will be focusing on gathering as much data about the local activity of the Greater Horseshoe Bat as possible.

We kick off with our Family Bat Walk on Cadbury Hill on **29th April** (see front page). This is open to the public, so members can bring their friends. We hope to hear both Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats. During the year there will be further opportunities to come on walks - if you are interested in receiving communication about bat group activities, please register your interest with Win and get on the list.

Bat boxes at our Littlewood reserve will be checked on Sunday **8th May**, weather permitting. Booking for this event is essential. Please ring Tony Moulin on 01934 834282 or email [tonymoulin@icloud.com](mailto:tonymoulin@icloud.com). You stand the chance of seeing bats in the hand, and subject to favourable weather the night before, also a chance to look at the moth catch from the wood.

The bat group will be displaying its Greater Horseshoe Batmap at the AGM on **26th May**. There will be an opportunity between 7pm and 7.30pm for members to get information and sign up to our survey project for the year.

## Development Gone Wild (continued from page 1)

---

YACWAG is working with three Neighbourhood Plans - Claverham, Yatton and Congresbury - to provide knowledge about the environment and make suggestions for future policies.



*New Croft on Biddle Street SSSI looking towards Yatton*

What is important for our villages are the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that provide green buffer zones, giving amenity for wildlife and people. In Yatton many residents have been clamouring for a bypass without considering where the route would go, or the interests of neighbouring parishes. A route through the Biddle Street SSSI would be unacceptable to YACWAG. It would be much more damaging than the construction of new pylons. Such a road could be funded only through thousands more houses.

It would be helpful if YACWAG members could bear this in mind when people are discussing development issues and put in a word about the importance of these areas.

Please let me know if you have any comments.

*Tony Moulin, Chair.*