

Hope Bagot Winter 2019/20 Newsletter



Hope Bagot on a cold January morning

Walking the Pipe!



Artist Kate Green has been walking the Elan Valley Aquaduct (which supplies water from the mid-Wales reservoir to Birmingham).

On her walk she has collected stories of this astonishing Victorian engineering feat and presented her stories at Knowbury Village Hall in October. Kate's planned community walk in Hope Bagot

had to be called off due to torrential rain which had poured down non-stop from the previous evening. The afternoon at Knowbury Hall was terrific with Kate singing ballads and folk songs composed around tales and characters met on her walk of the Elan pipeline. Accompanied by Faith Brackenbury on fiddle and multi-talented John Neilson on a range of instruments we were entertained after delicious tea and cakes. In a side room was a museum exhibition with old photographs and artefacts from the building of the pipeline. Great entertainment!! Many thanks to Kate, Faith and John.



Superfast Broadband causes super slow TV!

While the new Superfast Broadband aerial mast is now operational it appears to have interrupted various TV receptions in the village. The good news is that there is now Broadband available for community events in the village hall.

Hope Bagot Big Garden Bird Watch 25-27th January

The RSPB has been running the Big Garden Bird Watch for 40 years (you don't need a big garden to participate). An hour with the birds is a wonderful opportunity to sit back, relax and spend time with nature. So, pop the kettle on, put your feet up and start counting!



1. **Watch the birds for one hour**

Choose an hour between 25th and 27th January to watch the birds in your garden.

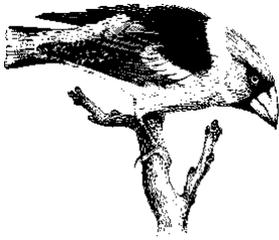
2. **Count the most birds that land at once**

Only count the birds that land in your garden - not those flying over. The same birds may land more than once, so you can avoid double counting by recording the highest number of each bird species you see at any one time – not the total number you count over the hour.

3. **Tell the RSPB what you saw**

Every count is important, so don't worry if you don't see anything. Observing which birds aren't around is as important as seeing the ones that are. You can submit your results online at [rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch) from 25 January until 16 February.

Year of the Burial Ground 2020



At this time of year burial grounds can seem barren and empty at first glance. However, if you wrap up warm enough and spend a peaceful half an hour sitting, you may see a variety of winter visitors such as fieldfares and redwings. Both are types of thrush which migrate from colder climes. In addition, look out for song thrushes, mistle thrushes and blackbirds which also descend on yew trees to eat the berries.

Churchyards have acted as sanctuaries for yew trees over thousands of years. The most significant collection of old trees in Europe is to be found in the churchyards of England and Wales, where approximately 800 yews with an age above 500 years have been recorded. Churchyards are sometimes referred to as the 'Noah's Ark' for yews. If you are wanting to find out how to look after your yew, we have an information sheet 'Yews and Other Veteran Trees' which is on our website, along with an informative short video by yew tree specialist Russel Ball.

If you do record any bird species – common or rare – we would love to hear from you. Your records could then go on our Beautiful Burial Ground map.

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Mystery of the Holloway



At the rear of St John's Church lies a mysterious hollow way leading from the church up through Gorstley and towards Clee Hill. This path is clearly marked on Victorian maps and shown as being lined with ancient yews (since sawn down but their stumps remain). While Hope Bagot Lane cuts between the existing yew trees the remains of the ancient yews can be seen alongside the path leading up towards Gorstley Rough. While the yews would have given significant shelter from the elements the question remains as to why the yews were planted when it would have taken several generations to create any worthwhile shelter. Could there be a connection with St John's Church or to the even earlier pre-Christian site? The path becomes a very deep trough through Gorstley and it seems that it may have been used as a key route during the mineral excavations that have taken place over the centuries.

Does anyone know anything more or when the yews were removed. Contact Jim at hopebagot@gmail.com.

Don't forget that jim is our investigative reporter so if you see anything of interest let him know at hopebagot@gmail.com.

