

FOREST WYRE - THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WYRE FOREST SOCIETY

August 2025

Chairman's Report

As I type this, the weather has been pretty decent this year and as far as I can tell, the forest wildlife seems to be in pretty good shape (which is more than can be said for my lawn...mind you, 'Mr Mole' hasn't helped there either...) and I have seen a lot of deer, slow worms, more butterflies (see below) and a lot more insects in general, which must be a good thing after the predictions of 'insectageddon' a few years ago: my garden has regularly been host to the curious bee fly and also the Elephant Hawk moth, the latter I gather is dependent upon Rosebay Willow Herb. I'm seeing red kites on a regular basis circling above the fields of the Yew Tree caravan park and – perhaps not so great – I seem to have most of the UK's woodpigeons in my back garden.

The flip side is that the watercourses and ponds are low, which is probably not great for the aquatic life, and there's no sign of any persistent rainfall. I've been putting out water for the garden birds and they've been having a whale of a time.

As to the Society, we are in a bit of a transition period. I've detailed the results of the survey below and it's clear that people still want in-person meetings, as well as 'hybrid', but no-one is keen to join the committee, which is a bit of an issue, as we've lost a couple of committee members in recent months: in particular, we really need someone who would be willing to take on the 'X' and Facebook WFS accounts: we have a fair few followers, but we are currently not posting anything, so ultimately people will drift away – so, if you would be willing to take that on, please let me know: you don't have to join the committee necessarily! We will certainly give the online Teams/Zoom meeting idea a go.

Meetings we will run on an *ad hoc* basis based on the survey results and we are hoping to have someone come and talk to us about the beavers in the forest. Which leads me to the next topic: venue. It would be good if we had a venue with a bar, so post-talk we could have a bit of a social element. I've looked at Far Forest Village Hall, bar available but parking is not so great; I couldn't ascertain whether Heightington Village Hall has a bar or not and I hadn't got too much further – if anyone has a suggestions, please email me at wyreforestsociety1@gmail.com

I think everyone knows that email now – we had to change it as the previous email was irretrievably attached to the personal account of the former webmaster!

Membership is pretty stable and hopefully our campaign(s) (see below) will boost that a bit.

The next 'Forest Wyre' will be produced in the autumn: please do send material in: it doesn't have to be 'War and Peace', a snippet is fine, sightings of anything, pictures, comment, 'letters to the editor' – anything at all! I'll send out a reminder about a month beforehand.

Simon Oakley FRSB

Chairman WFS



Images from the Wyre Forest

Very big thank you to new member Mark Ward for the following images taken in the area.



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An Elephant Hawk Moth on my bathroom wall:



A picture from the Oxbind Coppice area on Saturday 2nd August 2025



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Robin at Hawkbatch



'Punk' Blue Tit

The 'Cleobury Clarion'

I met with Jim Reynolds, Editor of the Cleobury Clarion (which now incorporates elements of the no-longer-published 'Rock and District News'). I provided Jim with some material over a cup of tea and he is going to write a short article on the Society, with a view to generating some [membership]

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interest. The WFS is also placing an advertisement in the Clarion and I am also talking to the 'Bewdley Bridge'. Jim also joined the WFS as a member, so welcome Jim!

The Big Butterfly Count

The Big Butterfly Count is running until the 10th of August – details and an identification aid may be found at the following website:

<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>

I've actually seen significantly more butterflies in 2025 than I did in 2024.

Planning

If you weren't aware, there is an excellent resource under the planning section of the Wyre Forest District Council website, which allows one to search for planning applications/decisions by Parish or by map: the latter I think is better as one can filter by timeline and zoom in and out, which makes it easy to visualise applications that may impact the forest. One can sign up for regular alerts also.

<https://planningpa.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=weeklyList>

Of current relevance is 24/0707/FUL, Lynalls Lane.

Please note that for some areas of the Wyre Forest, you may need to visit the Shropshire County Council website, which has a similar system.

Footpaths and Public Rights of Way

For definitive maps and current status, one can visit Worcestershire County Council's website (and only it has the power to close/suspend rights of way, so don't let anyone else tell you otherwise!) at the following link:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/environment/countryside-and-leisure/public-rights-way>

and here's the one for the Shropshire bits of the forest:

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/outdoor-partnerships/countryside-access-and-public-rights-of-way/the-definitive-map/>

Reports of any issues can be reported via the relevant website. It's also worth consulting local groups such as Rock Pathfinders:

<https://rockpathfinders.uk/>

Website statistics

For the last 365 days:

Site sessions: 340 (+15%) – mobile 55%, desktop 41%, tablet 4%

Unique visitors: 261 (+14%)



Access locations: Kidderminster (84), Birmingham (30), Stoke-on-Trent (27), Wolverhampton (10), Stourport (9), London (9) and a whole host of lower numbers ranging from Kirkcaldy to Pontypridd!

Thursday seems to be the busiest day and the main referrer – no surprise – is Google

Survey results

Q1 The Society needs to evolve. Should it become online only, hybrid or stay as it is (i.e. only physical meetings) - 91% want hybrid

Q2 Should the Society have a defined meetings programme or ad hoc meetings? - 45% defined, 55% ad hoc

Q3 We urgently need new committee members. Would you be interested in becoming a committee member? - 36% yes, 64% no 😞

Q4 Committee meetings are held about 4 times per year, on a Friday afternoon. We recognise this is not ideal for working people. Would you become a committee member/attend if the meetings were moved to an evening or weekend? - 30% yes, 70% no 😞

Q5 If some of the Society talks were online (e.g. using Microsoft Teams or Zoom) would you join online? - 55% yes, 45% no

Q6 Would the Society benefit from merchandising (i.e. selling t-shirts/key rings/other material)? - 45% yes, 55% no

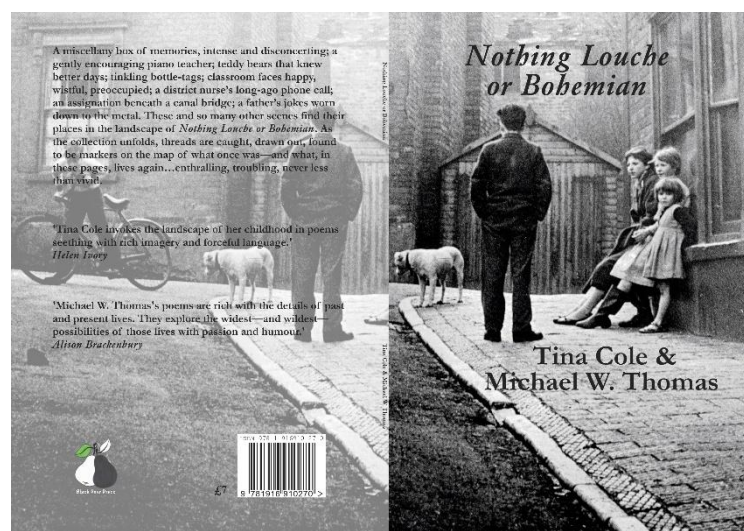
Q7 Have you visited the Society website? - 80% yes, 20% no

Q8 Did you know that the Society has an 'X' and Facebook presence? - 90% yes, 10% no

Q9 Would you like to make any other suggestions? If yes, please use the contact form on the website. - 9% yes, 91% no

And now for something completely different:

One of our members, Michael Thomas, has written a book of poetry, which may be a good thing to consult in these troubled world times:



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