

JULY – DECEMBER 2021 • ISSUE 45

COTSWOLD LION

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

FREE
ONLINE ISSUE

**Celebrating the
great outdoors!**

**Cotswold Gateways
Kingfisher colours for summer
Freedom to roam
We're going on a safari
Good as gold on the Cotswold Way
Introducing Farming in Protected Landscapes
50 Years of Standing Ovarions!
The Flower Hunter**



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Welcome to the July – December 2021 issue of Cotswold Lion. As we write this, the UK is still being cautious in its approach to lifting covid-19 restrictions. So, this issue is centred around an idea at the heart of the Cotswolds National Landscape – being outside. As we roll into summer, we've included plenty of ideas to keep us outside enjoying the fresh air, and hopefully, good health. Plenty of walking opportunities, the Kingfisher Trail, the Cotswold Way,

and much more. And, we have recently launched Farming in Protected Landscapes in the Cotswolds – this is a major new funding programme, so make sure you read up to see if your project could be supported. When you're out and about, remember: hands–face–space when it feels appropriate, and try to respect that everyone is experiencing the 'return to normal' differently. Be kind to one another! Wishing everyone a healthy summer, autumn, and winter.

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Image by Lydia Booth



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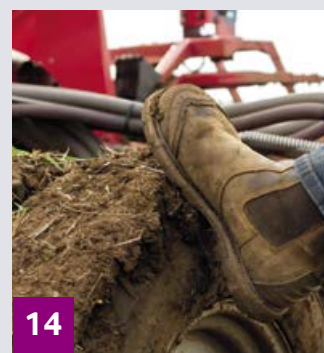
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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds Conservation Board. The two key purposes of the Board are to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB
- increase understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB

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Front cover image:
Kingfisher by Ed Swarez.
Image by Russell Sach

NEWS BULLETIN

Top stories from the Cotswolds National Landscape

The Kingfisher Trail is live!

22 kingfishers are dotted around the Cotswolds, showing off their dazzling colours and enchanting all who find them! Download the app at www.kingfishertrail.org and see how many you can find! And don't forget – you can enter the special prize draw to win the Golden Kingfisher, Sulis, by Guy Warner.



Image by Russell Sach

Golden Valley win

A new project has been launched to create a nationally recognised, wildlife-rich landscape in the Golden Valley – already famous for species-rich grasslands and butterflies. With £20k of funding from Cotswolds National Landscape, and in partnership with the Royal Entomological Society and a community of local landowners, this landscape-scale work led by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, will enhance, expand and connect wildlife-rich places between Stroud and Sapperton. Through species-specific management work such as coppicing, creating scalloped edges along woodland rides and removing scrub, threatened insect species can once again thrive and the area will become more resilient against future environmental and climate changes.

Guided walks are back!

Our Voluntary Wardens are delighted to be back and leading guided walks again! See page 8 for more info on this. And, there are more self guided routes than ever with the launch of the Cotswold Gatesways project. Check the walking and exploring section of our website at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Happy 60th to GWT!

2021 is Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's 60th anniversary! From a few wildlife enthusiasts around a table, to over 450 active volunteers and 27,000 members, GWT have come a long way, and the charity's passion for the county's wildlife and wild spaces is stronger than ever. This year, the Trust will be celebrating their many achievements over the decades, and making plans for the future. Why not travel back in time and discover the history of the organisation and how it all began by visiting this digital timeline? www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/60-years

New team member!

Nicole Daw joined our team in June, as our new Trails and Access Officer. Nicole will initially be working on the Bathscape project to create a 20 mile circular walk around the city of Bath ahead of the Bath Walking Festival in September. She will also be creating a collection of walks in and around the city, and working with volunteers who will look after the trails and lead guided walks.



Image by Anna Field

New partnership!

We're delighted to announce that Severn Trent Water have partnered with us as part of their Great Big Nature Boost to restore wildflower grasslands in the Severn Trent Area. Our Glorious Cotswold Grasslands project team is looking forward to continuing to create this fantastic habitat through its new partnership. We would love to hear from landowners and managers in the Severn Trent Area who are interested in restoring species-rich grassland. Email: anna.field@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk for more information.



For more news from the Cotswolds National Landscape visit cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Kingfisher

colours for summer

The new Kingfisher Trail of 22 giant painted birds is splashing colour across the Cotswolds in celebration of our waterways. Siân Ellis spoke to several of the artists behind the diverse designs decorating the sculptures.

Cheltenham-based abstract artist **Emma Howell** (www.emmahowell.co) had never worked on a 3-D surface before but embraced the challenge. “It’s been scary, but I thrive being out of my comfort zone. I lived with the kingfisher in my house and let my ideas flow freely, staying

true to the way I work, which is very intuitive: one mark moves into the next, one colour moves into the next, so it evolved. I wanted the kingfisher to look really beautiful and to be recognisable as a kingfisher so I’ve used ultra-marine blue, cobalt blue and burnt orange colours.”

Emma’s late father

used to love birds and jazz, and she has nicknamed her kingfisher ‘Jaco’ after Jaco Pastorius, his favourite jazz bassist. The loss of her father in 2016 taught her how to embrace the adventure of life and her artist’s career, and Jaco is a creative tribute.

Painting the kingfisher has also “given me creative fuel, opening up the idea of working on sculpture or a 3-D canvas, and getting involved in more community projects,” Emma says. “The Cotswolds is such an amazing part of the country and I’m so happy that the Kingfisher Trail will help to get people out exploring.”

At **Art Shape** (www.artshape.co.uk) it was decided to take a collaborative approach to painting a kingfisher sculpture. A dozen artists from its Art Bridge Emergents – a professional development programme for talented artists who face barriers to their practice – pooled their ideas, identified running themes and chose the overarching motif of a map to bring them all together.

“A map can contain everything that the artists wanted to reflect, waterways, flora and fauna, creatures, skies and how kingfishers navigate, as well as patterning and text,” says project manager Harriet West.

The group has been inspired by medieval maps like the Mappa Mundi and at the time I speak to them, artist Jackie Drinkwater is projecting an image of an old map onto the back of the kingfisher sculpture. “I’m putting on Brockworth, which is where we are based; we’re making Art Shape the centre of the world,” she says, explaining how medieval mapmakers gave



Image by Russell Sach



Emma Howell taking a break from working on her kingfisher, Jaco

Image by Emma Howell

"Its breeches are made out of a check-like pattern of bulrushes, its jacket has mayflies and dragonflies on it; there are water snails, water voles, pussy-willow, and in the fishing creel on its back there are books including a Severn Bore timetable."

prominence to what was known and important to them.

Jackie lives on a canal boat, regularly sees kingfishers and is inspired in her work by nature and her surroundings: some clues perhaps to what you will see from her on the finished kingfisher design!

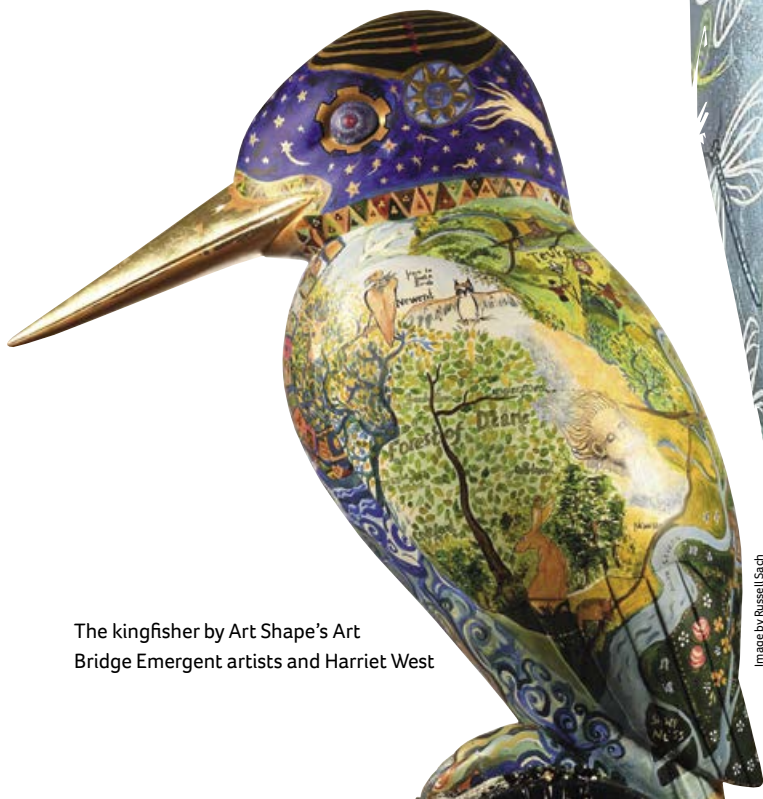
Meanwhile decorative painter and illustrator **Katie B Morgan** (www.kbmorgan.co.uk) has 'dressed' her kingfisher in waistcoat, jacket and trousers, and used a fairground technique of painting with silver underneath special coloured varnish to create a reflective glow. Step closer and you suddenly spot all sorts of fascinating details too.

"I researched about kingfishers, rivers, conservation, plants and wildlife, and I've incorporated it all into my kingfisher," Katie says. "Its breeches are made out of a check-like pattern of bulrushes, its jacket has mayflies and dragonflies on it; there are water snails, water voles, pussy-willow, and in the fishing creel on its back there are books including a Severn Bore timetable. Even in its eyes I've put reflections – of the Severn Bridge and Radcot Bridge on the River Thames."

Katie, whose workshop is at Stanway Water Mill, hopes the Kingfisher Trail will encourage people to visit new places and to become more interested in rivers.

"I hope people will love my kingfisher as a character and I also hope that once they start looking closer it will make them go away and find out about water snails or stag beetles or the Cotswolds National Landscape, whose badge I've put on the kingfisher's lapel."

The reverse of 'Halcyon Days'
by Katie B Morgan



The kingfisher by Art Shape's Art Bridge Emergent artists and Harriet West



Image by Russell Sach

Find out more about The Kingfisher Trail and the location of sculptures at <https://www.kingfishertrail.org/>



Cirencester

COTSWOLD GATEWAYS

Looking for fresh-air escapes to less-explored places? They're right at your toe-tips thanks to 37 new walking and cycling routes! Siân Ellis reports.

The recent launch of Cotswold Gateways is perfectly timed as we rediscover our sense of adventure this summer and autumn. Opening up countryside and lesser-known locations around ten towns and villages, the partnership project between Cotswolds National Landscape and local communities aims to get residents and visitors alike out and about to somewhere fresh and different.

From hidden woodland paths and wildlife to epic hilltop views, and from curious sculptures to fascinating heritage, the 37 new walking and cycling routes are full of variety – with plenty of refreshment opportunities along the way. Each start-point – Charlbury, Cirencester, Dursley, Hawkesbury Upton, Marshfield, Painswick, Stroud, Tetbury, Winchcombe, Wotton-under-Edge –



is accessible by public transport too, so you can leave the car at home. To get you going here are a few highlights:

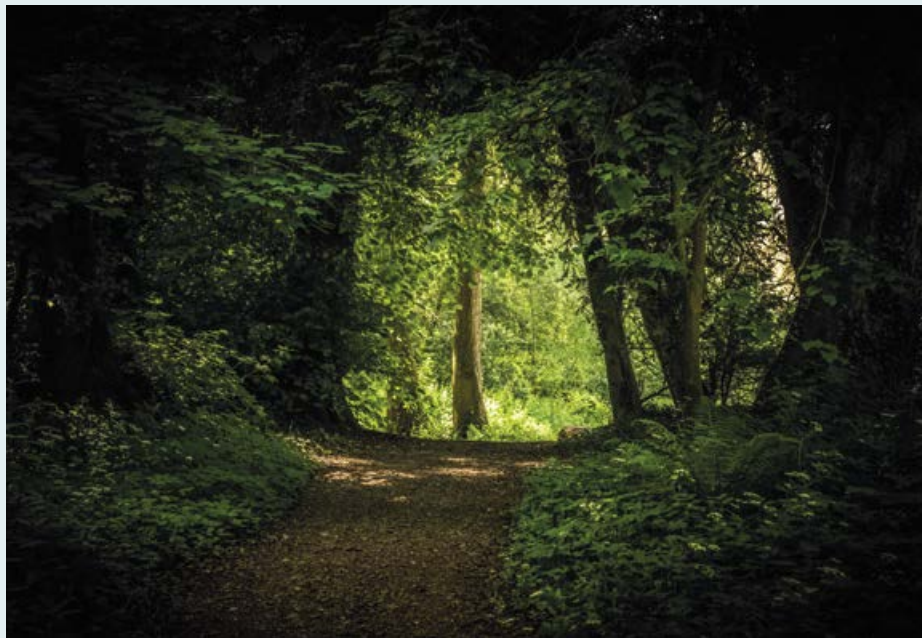
Green Cirencester – Cirencester might not immediately leap to mind as somewhere off-the-beaten track but the new Gateways 3.47 mile (5.55km) circular walk linking green spaces will open your eyes to the countryside in the town – you might even spot a kingfisher darting along the River Churn. Starting at Abbey Grounds and passing familiar landmarks like the magnificent parish church of St John, Holy Trinity ❖❖❖

The 37 new walking and cycling routes are full of variety – with plenty of refreshment opportunities along the way.

Church and the Corinium Museum you step seamlessly into green scenes at City Bank Local Nature Reserve, the Roman Amphitheatre and Querns Wood where birdsong makes you feel miles away from town streets.

Easygoing Charlbury – tucked into the Evenlode Valley on the Oxfordshire edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape, Charlbury is another base for a couple of easygoing walks (1.8 miles/2.9km and 2.2 miles/3.5km). You will find several pubs, deli, café and shops for refreshments or bring a picnic – the Mill Field is one good spot. Our two Gateways walks over fields and across stream take in St Mary’s Church with its 13th-century tower and 18th-century sundial, Wigwell Nature Reserve rich with wildflowers in summer, and lovely vistas across the Evenlode Valley to Cornbury Park and the ancient Wychwood Forest.

Dursley surprises – what links an 18th-century market house, romantic views of a Tudor manor house re-awakened like Sleeping Beauty by a leading light of the Arts & Crafts movement, and a sculpture of a gorilla recalling an unusual early 20th-century Uley resident? Answer: an 8-mile (12.9km) figure-of-eight ramble (moderate difficulty) from Dursley around the Uley Valley. Fields, woods, great viewpoints at Uley Bury and Cam Peak, plus a few good climbs and steep descents will get your pulse dancing. Relax afterwards over artisan coffee or pub grub back in market-town Dursley.



Wychwood Forest

Wonderful Winchcombe – with half a dozen easygoing-to-strenuous Gateway routes at Winchcombe, you’re spoiled for choice. Up for a challenge? The circular 4.7-mile (7.7km) hike via Sudeley Castle and St Kenelm’s Well offers a perfect mix of countryside walking and glorious views towards the Malverns, sprinkled with historical intrigue around the tale of 11th-century Kenelm and encounters with the ancient Salt Way. Renowned for making walkers welcome, the town offers ample post-exercise eats and drinks places.

On your bike – Cotswold Gateways cycling routes include on- and off-road terrains, with rides ranging from just 4 miles (6.5km) to 20.5 miles (33km).



Look out for cycling routes included in the Cotswold Gateways project

From Winchcombe, for example, you can head for Cleeve Cloud (435 metres ascent), follow the Guiting Loop (512m ascent), explore around West Wood and the ‘lost village’ of Sennington (547m ascent), or spin around a circuit taking in Hailes, Snowhill, Stanton, Stanway and Didbrook (560m ascent).

Boots on, bikes out – discover Cotswold Gateways to some new adventures!



Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe

More information

Cotswold Gateways has been part-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Look out for information boards in towns and villages, and download walking and cycling routes from www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/cotswold-gateways

Freedom to roam again!



Image by Tea Smart, SquashedRobot, Films

Coronavirus lockdowns kept many people cooped up inside – including the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens, who would normally lead over 300 guided walks a year. Now restrictions are lifting, the wardens are back, and they can't wait to share guided walks with people again. Deputy Head Warden Mike Cripps explains to Alana Hopkins.

Mike looks after the social media accounts for the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens. His enthusiasm for walking and the outdoors practically beams out from laptop and phone screens. Throughout lockdown, Mike and the other voluntary wardens have been waiting patiently for restrictions to lift so that they can resume their guided walks.

“There’s no doubt that lots of people have found the repeated lockdowns in the UK difficult, and for many reasons,” he explains. “For us as a group, lots of wardens thrive on being outside, walking, meeting new people, and helping with the maintenance of footpaths and pathways, and so being stuck inside for most of last year has been very difficult. We’re delighted to be back!”

The voluntary wardens have been planning guided walk routes throughout the lockdowns, and shifting their dates in accordance with the rolling guidance from government. They’ve also, when permitted, been out on very small work parties to help repair and maintain

footpaths. This has included repairing sections of pathway impacted by the wet winter conditions and the increased footfall through 2020, as well as checking routes and signage.

Now, the wardens are pleased to have devised new guided walks. They’ll be releasing them in batches so people can browse for walks and full details online at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk. In the meantime, here are highlight walks from each of the five districts walk leaders work across. Search online for all the information to get booked on! ❖❖❖

AVON VALLEY

Thursday 15 July • 10:00am

‘From the Iron Age to the Nuclear Age’

7.5 miles • 4 hours • Strenuous

This walk offers stunning views across the Severn valley (weather permitting) and returns via lesser walked footpaths of the Badminton Estate. Along the way we will visit an Iron Age fort, a Roman camp, a Menhir stone, a 17th century stately home, and a nuclear bunker. Quite a day! Please bring a picnic lunch.

Start point: Old Sodbury Church



Badminton Estate

SOUTH

Tuesday 3 August • 10:00am

'Five Houses, Three Valleys'

8.5 miles • 5 hours • Moderate

Join an 8 mile walk through the southern Cotswolds. Featuring scenic landscapes, secluded valleys, varied architecture, industrial archaeology, and fascinating personal histories – this is some of the best of the region condensed into 8 miles! And, there's a pub at the halfway point! Please bring a picnic lunch, pub stop is for drinks only.

Start point: Newark Park National Trust car park

CENTRAL

Friday 13 August • 10:00am

Friday Foray: Miserden Park – via Wishanger and Whiteway

5.5 miles • 3 hours • Moderate

From Miserden we head west to the pretty hamlet of Wishanger, then we skirt the edge of Whiteway, before dropping down into woodland, eventually reaching the lake on the Miserden Estate. Plenty of pretty and varied scenery. Lunch and drinks available afterwards at the Carpenters Arms.

Start point: Miserden School (car park at school)

EAST

Tuesday 17 August • 12pm

'A Roman Villa and a River Valley'

5 miles • 3.5 hours • Moderate

From Stonesfield, we walk to the North Leigh Roman Villa where we will stop to explore the villa site, listen to a brief talk about its history and visit the Mosaic Room which will be opened especially for us. Our return includes a gentle meander along the Evenlode, and across the river valley. Please bring a picnic lunch.

Start point: Stonesfield Village Hall/Library car park



Five Houses, Three Valleys

NORTH

Tuesday 28 September 10:00am

CW50: Up, up, and away

10 miles • 5 hours • Moderate

This autumn walk is along a lovely stretch of the Cotswold Way which showcases some pretty villages. The walk is part of the celebration of 50 years of the Cotswold Way, and the route climbs up the scarp to get fine views in all directions. The return route uses the Winchcombe Way. Bring a packed lunch.

Start point: Stanton village car park



Image by Tea Smart, Squashed Robot Films

“For us as a group, lots of wardens thrive on being outside, walking, meeting new people, and helping with the maintenance of footpaths and pathways, and so being stuck inside for most of last year has been very difficult. We’re delighted to be back!”

Pack a picnic!

Some guided walks suggest bringing a packed lunch to sustain you along the way. Independent bakeries are booming in the Cotswolds, so why not grab a loaf, along with some cold meats, cheeses, and fruit, and pack a traditional picnic for yourself? Check out the delicious offerings at www.markscotswoldbakery.co.uk near Chipping Norton, www.norths-bakery.co.uk in Winchcombe, www.saltbakehouse.co.uk in Stroud, www.bakeryonthewater.co.uk in Bourton-on-the-Water, among many more! Remember to stay hydrated, and always to take all your litter home with you.



WE'RE GOING ON A SAFARI!

Ever wondered what kind of wildlife you might find just beyond your back doorstep? Wildlife expert, Matt Brierley, points us in the right direction with one thing to look for every month, from now until the New Year!

JULY

Count Cabbage Pinks

Butterfly Conservation's *Big Butterfly Count* urges people to count butterflies in local parks and gardens with 111,628 participants submitting a record-breaking 145,249 counts in 2020. It's the perfect excuse to sit with sun on your face, chalking up what flutters by. That warm inner glow is the knowledge your sightings are helping to save butterflies, as Butterfly Conservation uses the data to understand trends. Even our most common species have secrets – "cabbage white" butterflies are, in fact, three species – small, large and green-veined white, and they aren't white... they're pink! It's just that we can't see their ultra-violet reflectance!



Image by Richard Tyler



Image by Richard Tyler



Image by Simon Smith



Image by Alana Hopkins

AUGUST

Snakes don't blink

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation want to hear about your slow worm sightings (search for their record pool online). To tell these legless lizards apart from snakes, remember... snakes don't blink... slow worms do! To help them out, put slates down in your garden; they'll warm up safely underneath. Since they need the sun's energy to go about their business, a morning slow worm hunt before they're turbo charged is a real treat. They'll happily hibernate in compost heaps too. Slow worms have smooth, golden-grey skin. Males are paler, sometimes sporting blue spots. Females are larger, with dark sides and a dark back stripe. From above babies resemble golden boot laces!

SEPTEMBER

Explore the mysteries of migration

Migration was a mystery to our ancestors. A Swedish bishop made a real blunder when he said swallows overwintered at the bottom of ponds. Edward Jenner may have cracked vaccination in Gloucestershire, but not before he drowned a swift to see if they could survive underwater. Charles Morton had another idea in the 17th century. He said birds migrated. To the moon. Now we know the swallows restlessly lining our telegraph lines in Autumn are preparing for a big push across the Sahara to South Africa. You can't help but wonder what they're chattering about as they flit between wires, their metallic hues resplendent in low autumnal light, like so many notes on a musical stave.



Image by Richard Tyler



Image by Richard Comont

OCTOBER

New bee on the block

Clingy, luscious, misunderstood. Ivy has long been accused of strangling trees but doesn't harm them! In full flower it's a beautiful thing. Yellowish green flowers that appear in small, dome-shaped umbels aren't visually stunning, but offer insect food as Autumn bites. And there's a new bee on the block enjoying their bounty. It's twenty years since ivy bees naturally colonised Southern shores. They look like small honeybees wearing orange-striped football jerseys and have furry ginger thoraxes. Sometimes you'll spot lots if there's a colony in a sandy bank nearby. Why not tell BWARS (Bees, Wasps & Ants Recording Society) about them? As they push North, Cotswold sightings are particularly noteworthy.

NOVEMBER

Spot tiny Vikings

Listen for needle-points of sound to find one of the UK's smallest birds, the goldcrest. They're only 9cm long and weigh 5g, the same as a 20p! These tiny olive-green birds fuss through branches, and in November our population's bolstered by Scandinavians who've braved the epic crossing of the North Sea. If two birds meet, they'll flash bold crown feathers at each other. All goldcrests have two black stripes on their heads bordering a brilliant patch of colour, orange on males and yellow on females.



Image by Richard Tyler



Image by Anna Field

DECEMBER

Super furry shrews

There's another tiny 5g critter eking out an existence amongst December's frosts. The pygmy shrew's search for food is critical. They're so small they're unable to lay down enough fat reserves to hibernate and are forced to remain active throughout winter. These miniature mammals live life on the edge; starvation for just two hours could mean death. To survive, a pygmy shrew needs to eat more than its own body weight each day, meaning a constant search for prey. So, wrap up, sit still, and try your luck shrew-spotting as they sprint at breakneck speed to snaffle snacks.

GOOD AS GOLD

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE COTSWOLD WAY

The Cotswold Way celebrated 50 years as a named walking route in 2020. Katie Jarvis talks to people about what it means to them.

Robert and Sheila Talbot are out on the Cotswold Way, high above their home-town of Winchcombe. 'The views are wonderful,' Robert says. 'You can see Sudeley Castle, St Peter's Church; and right ahead of you is the Vale of Evesham.'

The two of them have a deep love for this long-distance footpath, stretching 102 miles from Chipping Campden in the north, right down to Georgian Bath. Sheila enjoys the wild flowers – rare orchids especially; both delight in wildlife: 'Deer, hare, foxes; even young calves you see growing throughout the year.'

Today, their rucksack is packed with tools, not sandwiches: 'Pruning saw, secateurs, gloves, hammer, nails, spanner.' The Talbots are two of the volunteer parish patrol wardens tasked with helping keep five-mile stretches in apple-pie order. 'Sometimes you'll find a gate needing a hinge adjusting. In May and June, you can lose an hour snipping

away at brambles and branches.'

'People often think we get paid by the council,' Sheila smiles. Actually, the payment is in thanks they get from walkers. Businesses are appreciative, too; the tens of thousands of annual visitors vastly contribute to the local economy. John Lewis Cheltenham and Robert Welch, in Chipping Campden, are two such businesses supporting the golden Cotswold Way celebrations in 2021 – as a way of acknowledging the importance of the trail, and its upkeep.

It was back in 1970 that Gloucestershire Ramblers and Cotswold Voluntary Wardens (volunteers who look after the landscape) had the brainwave of connecting a series of existing bridleways and footpaths into a magnificent long-distance walk. In May of that year, the Cotswold Way was

officially inaugurated.

'The idea was to emphasise views by largely following the Cotswold Escarpment,' explains John Bartram. 'It strays a little by dropping into some of the villages which are part of the attraction of the Cotswolds – Chipping Campden, Broadway, Winchcombe, for example.'

A geologist by profession, John is chair of the Cotswold Way Association, the charity ensuring it stays in good repair. 'By following the footpath, you get an idea of the history of the geology fundamental to the Cotswolds. The top of the Escarpment exists because of oolitic limestone: relatively hard rock, compared to the clays and sands at the bottom.'

It's also a way of seeing swathes of farmland that define so much of

'The idea was to emphasise views by largely following the Cotswold Escarpment,' explains John Bartram. 'It strays a little by dropping into some of the villages which are part of the attraction of the Cotswolds...'



Image by Tea Smart, Squashed Robot Films



Image by Tea Smart, Squashed Robot Films





Image by Tea Smart, Squashed Robot Films

the region – most of the footpath is through privately-owned land. As John Bartram points out, determining how many people use it each year is almost impossible. ‘In terms of those who walk parts of it, I’m sure you’d be going into 100,000, if not more.’ What’s more, they come – in normal times – from all over the world.

In 2007, the Cotswold Way was launched as an official National Trail, one of 16 long-distance footpaths administered by Natural England, taking walkers through some of the most beautiful parts of England and Wales. With increasing numbers now enjoying it – and with climate change bringing challenging weather (causing landslips, mud, and fallen trees, amongst other issues) – maintenance is key. Government funding has more than halved over the past decade; the work

of the volunteers has never been more vital.

But loved and appreciated it is – all the more so during lockdown. Lisa Parsons spent last autumn walking it in 10-mile chunks with three fellow maths teachers from Chipping Campden School.

‘The only place we could meet up was outside, and walking the Cotswold Way seemed a natural thing for us to do. It gave us a goal,’ she says.

They laughed; they celebrated (‘Fish and chips and a glass of Prosecco in Broadway’); and they bonded. ‘It was so quiet and still – you can’t answer emails when you’re walking,’ Lisa says. ‘The views were breathtaking. You get to see places you normally just drive past. ‘We had snow, rain and sunshine, but – whatever the weather – we walked. It just reminded you there was a whole world still out there.’

Increasing accessibility

Nic West is a trustee of the Cotswold Way Association, tasked with advising on the footpath in terms of disability and inclusivity.

Sometimes a relatively minor tweak is all that’s required: ‘When replacing stiles or broken gates, the accessibility of that section should be considered. If it’s inaccessible because of the ‘wrong’ sort of gate, that’s a quick fix.’

Some sections will always be problematic because of topography – steep slopes, for example – or even a lack of nearby parking for unloading vehicles.

As Nic points out, she won’t explore areas if she can’t find out beforehand how suitable they are. ‘This has been one of the most difficult issues; and it’s why routes need to be assessed by someone on wheels so that information can hopefully become more easily available in future.’



More information

Events to celebrate 50 years of the Cotswold Way were postponed from last year, but are being re-planned for this autumn, with support from John Lewis and Robert Welch. Look out for activities and public walks running from 11 - 19 September. For more information, visit cotswoldsaonb.org.uk and cotswoldwayassociation.org.uk

To donate to the vital maintenance of the Cotswold Way, visit www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/cotswayassoc50

Image by Richard Bell/Unsplash

INTRODUCING...

FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

Image by Tea Smart, Squashed Robot Films

The Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme will be open for applications from July 2021. Mark Connelly, Land Management Lead at Cotswolds National Landscape, explains what the programme can support and how it will work.

The background

“Defra is introducing the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, which will run from July 2021 to March 2024. Their hope is that by supporting the farmers, land managers and people who live and work in protected landscapes like National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty like the Cotswolds, they can help protect these exceptional places and support local communities.

Through the programme, farmers and land managers can be supported to carry out projects that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and cultural heritage, or support nature-friendly,

sustainable farm businesses. This is a programme of funding for one-off projects covering these areas of work, not an agri-environment scheme.

The programme is part of Defra’s Agricultural Transition Plan.

It has been developed by Defra with the support of a group of AONB and National Park staff from across the country. ❖❖❖



Image by Tea Smart, Squashed Robot Films

In the Cotswolds, most grants are expected to be smaller than the maximum award, there will be grants of up to £250k available.

Eligibility

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is open to all farmers and land managers

(including from the private, public and charity sector) in a National Park, AONB, or the Norfolk Broads – or where activity on the ground can bring benefit to one or more of those areas.

You must manage all the land

included in the application, and have control of all the activities you'd like to undertake, or you must have written consent from all parties who have this management and control.

Other organisations and individuals can apply

as long as they do this in collaboration with a farmer or land manager, or in support of a farmer or group of farmers.

Common land is eligible for support through the Programme. You can apply as a landowner with sole rights, or as a group of commoners acting together.

The programme supports activity on any land within the Cotswolds. It can also support activity on other land where projects can demonstrate benefit to the Cotswolds or the Cotswolds' objectives or partnership initiatives. Most of the funding will probably be provided to projects within the Cotswolds National Landscape boundary.



Image by Tea Smart, Squashed Robot Films



Image by Tea Smart, Squashed Robot Films

“This is such an incredible opportunity for the Cotswolds collectively: for land managers, farmers, conservation organisations, and communities to make really good use of funding and work together towards a sustainable future. I encourage people to think broadly and creatively about what they could do with grant funding.”

You can see the boundary by visiting the [MAGIC mapping website](#).

Click on ‘designations’, ‘land-based designations’, ‘statutory’, and then ‘Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty England.’

What the Programme will pay for

The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme will pay for projects that, in the opinion of the selected Local Assessment Panel, provide value for money and meet at least one of the outcomes from the four themes below:

- **Climate outcomes**
- **Nature outcomes**
- **People outcomes**
- **Place outcomes**

Your project must also demonstrate how it supports the current Management Plan for the Cotswolds National Landscape. Details of the Management Plan can be found at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

How to apply

Applications for the first year of Programme funding should be made between 1st July 2021 and 31st January 2022. Funding will be awarded to successful applicants throughout the application window, rather than after the window closes, so you should submit your application as soon as it is ready.

Before applying, we would encourage you to contact us to discuss your application. Ideally, the Farming in Protected Landscapes project officers might visit your potential project location or meet you to discuss your ideas.

And finally: think broadly and creatively! This is an incredible opportunity for land managers, farmers and communities to make really good use of funding and work together towards a sustainable future across the Cotswolds”.

More information

Visit the Farming pages at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk for more information. If you have a question about the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, please contact Mark Connelly or Scott Brown at farming@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

50 Years of Standing Ovarions!

With heavy hearts, this summer's Guiting Music Festival has had to be cancelled; it would have been celebrating its 50th anniversary. But be of good cheer: this unique village festival is determined to resume as soon as it possibly can. Katie Jarvis spoke with festival chair, Katherine Judge, about happy times past.

The organisers of this year's Guiting Music Festival couldn't be more disappointed. 'We've got to keep people safe, so we've had to cancel, despite all the hard work people have put in,' festival chair, Katherine Judge explains, pragmatically.

They're not alone, of course. But it's all the more galling considering this highly acclaimed celebration of classical, jazz and blues was planning to celebrate its 50th anniversary this summer.

...Now, let's just examine that a little more closely. A half century is an impressive run for any Cotswold event. But even more so considering the village of Guiting Power – according to the most recent census – is populated by fewer than 300 inhabitants.

This year's cancelled programme (not to tease; just to demonstrate the sheer range and quality) gives some idea of how it has achieved its longevity. The brilliant Joanna



Image by Evan Dawson

Joanna MacGregor



MacGregor was set to play two concerts. There was Xuefei Yang, the first guitarist to enter music school in China; the AKA trio bringing music from three continents; a debut Guiting appearance from singer/songwriter Izo Fitzroy; cello music, saxophone, stomp box, ragtime, blues, Delius, Chopin.

So how exactly has Guiting achieved all this, enticing – in normal years – visitors not only from all over the country, but the world, too?

It's down to music-loving, loyal, supportive residents, of course, who take fierce pride in a Cotswold village that has – against the odds – retained two pubs and a tea room/shop. And holds an annual fete, pantomime, quiz nights, music nights: 'And lots of people go to them!' Katherine Judge says.

A retired publisher, she and her husband moved here from London seven years ago. They instantly felt welcome – friendliness Katherine returns in full. Her professional skills are a huge asset: 'My role also lies in picking musicians up from local stations; making sure they're fed and watered; getting them to rehearsal slots on time, and generally looking after them.'

Musicians past have not only been knocked out by Guiting's charm; they're impressed by its amenities, too.

'We have dressing room; nothing fancy, but private, with its own loo and basin, which delights and surprises many. One lady told me, 'I once had to put on my long dress on a staircase with somebody holding a sheet for privacy!''

The festival started back in 1970 with a simple conversation between three locals, each with a keen interest in music. 'They thought they'd keep it small and niche and see how it went,' recounts Katherine.

It went like a dream. Those modest ambitions have morphed, over the years, into a regular mix of outdoor picnic concerts; indoor classical; jazz and blues; fantastic local sponsors; and willing volunteers (all unpaid; the festival has charitable status). In a regular year, there are 10 days of concerts, selling around 1,500 tickets.

Ask Katherine for her all-time highlights and she's spoilt for choice. But she particularly recalls the Elias String Quartet performing a Scottish lament two years ago. Violinist Donald Grant dramatically played the opening notes as he walked into the hall to join fellow musicians on stage.

'You could have heard a pin drop. It was wonderful,' Katherine says.

Even near disasters can become triumphs. When 12 weeks of glorious weather broke back in 2018, on the day of an outdoor blues concert, audience members huddled in cars, in the village hall, and in the hospitality tent. But as the downpour stopped, everyone emerged to spontaneously begin dancing – waterproofs and all.

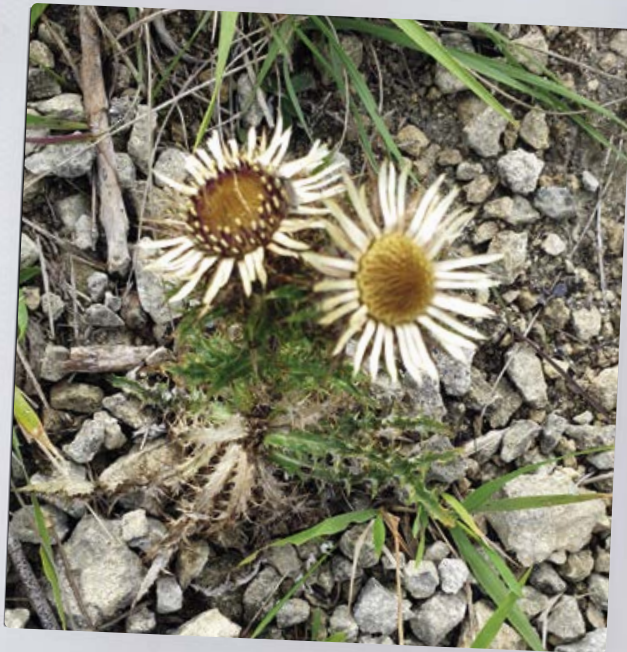
'We can't promise we'll go ahead next year – no one knows what the future holds – but we're determined to do all we can for 2022,' Katherine says.

Hurrah for Guiting! It deserves its own standing ovation.

More information

www.guitingfestival.org

'We have dressing room; nothing fancy, but private, with its own loo and basin, which delights and surprises many of them. One lady told me, 'I once had to put on my long dress on a staircase with somebody holding a sheet for privacy!''



Carline thistle, Swift's Hill, July 2020



Clustered bellflowers on Rodborough Common, July 2020

The flower hunter:

LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN

I never expected 2020 to turn me into a flower hunter. I am the worst gardener ever and, while I knew a daisy from a daffodil, was no great flower expert. But now you can expect to see me bent over the tiniest little flower with my camera at the ready – and not just in the countryside, but in the heart of my town, too. Kirsty Hartsiotis shares what lockdown taught her.

It all started in lockdown, of course, but far from the Cotswolds. I was locked down the first time in rural Suffolk, and started a practice of daily walks for exercise, and I checked what was in bloom, and made a note of it, to keep myself interested. I was hooked. I had a spreadsheet of flowers. Every new flower species felt like a gift.

I came back to Stroud in early July 2020, full of trepidation. I don't drive, my husband was hard against the deadline for his book, and we live right in the middle of town. Was I going to get my flower fix? So, armed with my camera and notebook, off I set. Flower hunting started the moment I left our garden path. I walked up towards the Horns, about a half hour walk, and found myself in a wild, overgrown meadow full of flowers. Okay, some of those flowers were invasive Himalayan Balsam, but I didn't care, I was drunk on flowers! But it was the fact that

Flower hunting started the moment I left our garden path. I walked up towards the Horns, about a half hour walk, and found myself in a wild, overgrown meadow full of flowers.

the pavements I'd trooped up to get there were just as full of flowers as the meadow that really struck me.

On that first walk I clocked 90 flowers. Some were common enough – herb Robert, codlins and cream, dandelions – but I also saw a broad-leaved helleborine, a kind of orchid, growing in a little strip of woodland. I saw pyramidal orchids outside the police station. I discovered that my local cemetery was a nature reserve. I found flowers brimming through the concrete pavements – wild and garden escapees alike. It was ...



*Codlins and cream or Great Willowherb
Locking Hill, Stroud, August 2020*



*Californian poppies, a roadside in
Stroud, August 2020*

going to be alright. Whatever the summer threw at me, the flowers would see me through.

I started exploring. I found a scrubby meadow very close to where I live. I made my way through fields full of tiny meadow flowers like fairy flax and hop trefoil – names to conjure with! Down to the canal I went and saw a different habitat again. I hiked up to Rodborough Common, and out to Swift's Hill, these more protected places truly abundant with flowers, clustered bellflower, carline thistle, wood sage. I explored every nook and cranny of the town and as far as my feet could take me. Graveyards are wonderful flower hunting places – and Stroud Cemetery is a nature reserve. I lost weight, too – bonus!

Please don't think I had all these names at my fingertips! It was a combination of books, plant apps and consultation with my Mum, who used to be a National Trust gardener. Then repeating the names of new things every time I saw them

again, like a mantra. This year as they come out once more, I'm often foxed, knowing I knew it last year but defeated until I look in the book again. Yes, I'm still doing it. Not as religiously, there's no spreadsheet anymore, just photos.

I kept it up all winter, charting seeds, fungi, interesting bark and lichen. I'm back working again now, but it's become a necessity to get out as much as I can. My body craves the movement, my soul craves the balm of nature and the joy the flowers have brought me. It's a pleasure knowing so much more, and there's a feeling of the local landscape coming into sharp focus after years of having been a green blur. That's a Welsh poppy, I say to myself, that's a hedgerow cranesbill. Knowing that there's an abundance of nature right here in the town makes even a shopping trip a flower-filled adventure.



*Gatekeeper butterfly on hemp
agrimoney, Stroud, August 2020*

Kirsty Hartsiotis is a writer, storyteller and speaker on folklore and art history. She's the author of five books of local folk tales, including *Gloucestershire Ghost Tales* and *Gloucestershire Folk Tales for Children* (with partner Anthony Nanson, whose book *Storytelling and Ecology* is out in July with Bloomsbury). She's also the curator of the decorative and fine art collections at The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham. Find out about her at www.kirstyhartsiotis.com



All images by Kirsty Hartsiotis

In conversation with...

Rosemary Wilson

Rosemary Wilson has been a Cotswold Voluntary Warden for 12 years, and describes herself as a walk leader first and foremost – and as she explained to Alana Hopkins, there's much more to her life as a warden...

Being outdoors in the countryside is my natural habitat

I love the sense of freedom, the connection with the landscape and very often the unexpected surprises encountered, such as deer dashing across a field or countless butterflies on a sunny day. Growing up on a farm meant that I could walk from an early age without boundaries or restrictions, so unsurprisingly walking has become a big part of my life.

Becoming a Cotswold Voluntary Warden some 12 years ago was the obvious thing to do

when I retired from being a primary school teacher. It gave me an opportunity to get out into the fabulous Cotswold countryside doing what I loved most, walking the myriad of footpaths. As a guided walk leader I have the pleasure and privilege of sharing our landscape with members of the public. I am also a parish warden, and Chair of the East District group of wardens.

Joining a guided walk with the wardens is not just about following a track.

When people go on a guided walk, their walk leader will have researched the route and points of specific interest along the way. These points might feature history, geology, landscape or wildlife along the routes. Some wardens are very knowledgeable, and I do admire them. For me, I just hope my enthusiasm for being outside and close to nature, whatever the weather, is passed on. One of my favourite walks involves meadows of orchids – and the joy of introducing walkers to these always gives me great satisfaction.



Image by Russell Sach

Some people are quite hesitant about walking in the countryside,

unsure of where to go, what to wear, or if they are fit enough. So long as the footwear is reliable and they are reasonably fit, joining a guided walk is perfect. You don't need to worry about navigating or getting lost, and once you get going, the rhythmic nature of walking takes over and you can enjoy it. Being out in the countryside makes you very aware of the changing seasons, and how each time of year offers something different. This is something you never tire of, there is always something new to see and experience. You may venture to places you didn't know existed, right on your doorstep. I love walking in the area around Brailes, there are woodland stretches to walk through and suddenly the path opens out into open countryside with fantastic views across the Stour Valley.

Walking in a group means you meet other people all sharing the same activity on the day. Conversation is part of group walking, all adding to and enriching the experience, an aspect of walk leading that I really appreciate. The health benefits of walking are well documented, but to me it would be dull to walk *just* for that reason. I know I always feel invigorated after a good walk and that's good enough for me. ❖

Image by Russell Sach

As for my favourite Cotswold walk?

There are so many to choose from, but I do love the Cross Cotswold Pathway between Banbury and Bath. It goes through some lesser known parts of the area, and has everything people associate with the Cotswolds: woodland, unspoilt villages, attractive towns, streams, grazing sheep, and an entry into Bath along the canal.

More information

Inspired by Rosemary to get out and explore the Cotswolds on a walk? Browse guided walks and self-guided routes online at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk



When I retired from being a primary school teacher. It gave me an opportunity to get out into the fabulous Cotswold countryside doing what I loved most, walking the myriad of footpaths.

RURAL SKILLS

courses are back!



Book a place online at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

We took a little break from running courses during the pandemic, in line with government advice. Now we're back – courses have been made covid-safe, and trainers are raring to go and can't wait to welcome people!

Dry stone walling



Image by Russell Sach

Green wood working



Image by Russell Sach

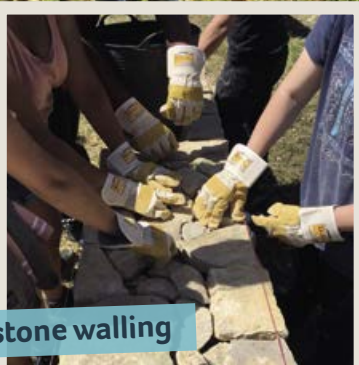


Image by Alana Hopkins

Dry stone walling



Image by Russell Sach

Scything



Image by James Webb

Woodland experience



Hedgelaying

Images depict a selection of rural skills courses which have run previously. Please note courses are seasonal, and not all courses are available all year round.