

STROUD VALLEYS PROJECT

Working with people for the environment



Welcome to the SVP Summer 2013
Newsletter and Events Guide.

We hope you like it and find items to interest you.

Wild Flower Festival Launch

Professor Chris Baines, one of the UK's leading independent environmentalists and the person who kick-started the modern wildlife gardening movement launched our latest campaign at Stroud's Bisley Road Cemetery in May. As it is SVP's 25th



anniversary in 2013 we decided to celebrate by searching for 25 wildflower meadow sites to make, monitor or maintain to leave a practical legacy throughout the Stroud District.

Wildflowers and plants are being lost from our environment at an accelerating rate and in Gloucestershire an estimated one plant species is becoming extinct every two years.

"Wildflowers and plants are essential to our lives in a way that our society is just beginning to fully realise," said Chris Baines whose 1980s BBC TV series 'Blue Tits and Bumblebees' and books 'A guide to Habitat Creation' and 'How to make a Wildlife Garden' inspired millions to change the way they garden.

"The good news is that we can reverse this loss and we can all do something to help right now," explained Chris. "Meadows are natural habitats that can be made on any suitable bit of land – even in a small back garden. When created and managed properly meadows are home to a vast number of plants which in turn support all kinds of wildlife including bees and birds. This is why Stroud Valleys Project wildflower festival is important to in making everyone realise what they can do.

How to Get Wildflowers in your Garden -

An Illustrated talk by Donald McIntyre, Emorsgate Seeds

If you would like to know how to get wildflowers in your garden, even if you only have a small patch of ground, please come to our talk on at 11am on Saturday 7th September at the Lansdown Hall. This is part of the Stroud Festival of Nature.

See our Events Programme for more details.

We Won the Octavia Hill Award!



Thank you for voting for us! We are thrilled to have won our category of the National Trust's Octavia Hill awards. Our contribution as green space guardians has been nationally recognised and we are now featured in the Countryfile Magazine.

Local District councillor Philip Booth, who nominated SVP, said, "I had no hesitation in recommending Stroud Valleys Project for this prestigious national award - they have a fantastic reputation for working with all parts of our community."

Helen Timbrell, Volunteering and Community Involvement Director at the National Trust and one of the judges, said, "The standard of nominations for the Octavia Hill Awards this year was really high. Being a volunteer is in our national DNA and it's great that these awards recognise and celebrate the commitment, passion and determination of the people that care for the green spaces that matter so much to them."

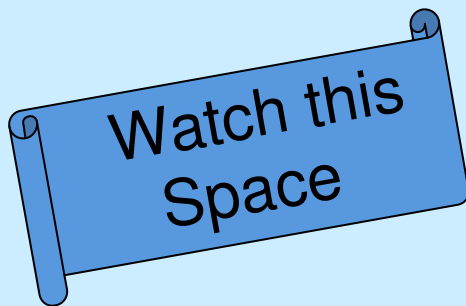
Continued overleaf /.....

SVP wins Octavia Hill Award

(Continued from front page)

Clare Mahdiyone said "Octavia Hill was a truly inspiring social reformer who had a vision for a socially inclusive society. Social inclusion goes to the heart of Stroud Valleys Project. We work with people from all walks of life to protect the spaces that can't protect themselves."

You can find more information at www.stroudvalleysproject.org.



Wildflower Work Growing on our Website

Coming soon to the Stroud Valleys Project website is a page dedicated to the wildflower work that is going on in this area. There are lots of groups and charities carrying out work in our area and this web page aims to bring all the information together into one place. The page has been sponsored by Gloucestershire Naturalists Society and encourages local people like you to notify Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records about the species you note in the area.

Appeal Update

Thank you again to everyone who has supported our Appeal to raise £25,000 between December 2012 and March 2013 – WE MADE OUR TARGET!!! This means we are able to stay in our premises in the town centre and keep the eco shop going.

We have been overwhelmed by the response shown to SVP from our local community. It has been brilliant to realise how much support there is for our organisation and the work we do in our local area. We have also realised that lots of people don't know about all the different types of work we do, so I hope the information in this Newsletter on our current projects will keep you updated.

Although our main focus is on environmental projects working with local people we will be keeping up our fundraising activities throughout the year. Lots of this work is new to us, if you have any time or experience you can offer us we would appreciate your help and support.

Museum in the Park – Walled Garden Project

Stroud's Museum in the Park has been awarded a grant of just over £50,000 by Arts Council England for a community project to clear the ground in its derelict walled garden in advance of its forthcoming regeneration.



An aerial shot of Museum, the walled garden is the square area on left hand side

The walled garden project aims to bring back to life 2,000 square metres of derelict land which was formerly the garden belonging to the mansion house, now the Museum in the Park.

We are very excited about our new project working in partnership with the Museum in the Park to develop the Walled Garden over the next nine months. We have appointed a new Project Officer, Katherine Hallowell to lead on the project.

We have lots of interesting environmental and cultural events being organised as part of this project and plan to build up a team of volunteers to maintain the garden. More details in next newsletter, but do get in touch if you are interested in volunteering.

Saving the Dragons!

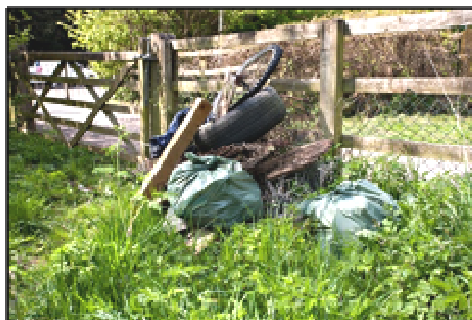
Thanks to Biffaward funding SVP and its band of ever enthusiastic volunteers have been able to start work on a new project at Stonehouse Newt Ponds. The 18 month project aims to restore, enhance and manage the three ponds and green spaces to provide better habitat for Great Crested, Smooth and Palmate Newts.



The site has been neglected for well over a decade and so in that time conditions for all wildlife and especially the newt population, whose numbers are in decline nationally has been effected. Due to the nature of the newt lifecycle and strict legislation (the Great Crested Newt being the most protected amphibian in the UK) work managing the site will be focussed on when the newts are less active, grass cutting taking place June to July and pond clearing work October to February.

In April SVP project officer, Ivi Szaboova, ran a newt survey at the site setting bottle traps on an early evening that were then checked the following morning with numbers and types of newt recorded. SVP volunteers from both the Wednesday 'The Green Team' and a regular Thursday group have already set about clearing out rubbish that has been dumped on-site over the years (see below

photograph). It is hoped that over the next few months a number of compost bins will be constructed so that arising grass cuttings cutting can be composted whilst also providing habitat for wildlife to dwell in. SVP hopes that this project will kick-start the long-term management of this beautiful green space and provide in the future a mixed and diverse habitat for Britain's largest newt to flourish!



It should be noted by the reader that a surveying and handling licence is needed to handle, survey, and trap Great Crested Newts.

Event Dates

31 July

Children's Nature Morning and Picnic

Earth Education nature activities for children.



8 August

Badger Watch

See local badgers in the daylight with expert Tony Dean during this enchanting event.



13 August

Bug Hunt

Find all kinds of insects and pond creatures at this pretty site using nets and pots.



15 August

Bug Hunt and Picnic in Cam

Find insects in an orchard meadow and learn all about them.



Event Dates

20 August

Bird Walk in Frampton

Spot the latest arrivals at Frampton Pools



29 August

Bat Evening in Cam

Listen for bats using bat detectors



7 September

Wild flowers in Your Garden

A talk from a national expert.



FOR MORE EVENTS LATER IN THE YEAR, SEE ENCLOSED EVENTS CALENDAR

SVP PROJECT NEWS

SVP Bike Ride 2013 a success

More than 60 cyclists took part in the Stroud Valleys Project sponsored bike ride on Sunday including councillors Sarah Lunnon, David Drew, Simon Pickering, Ben Spencer and their families. Peter Eden was dressed as Frank'n'Furter from the Rocky Horror Picture Show.



The bike ride started from the Museum in the Park at 9.30am where participants were offered bike security stamping by the Police.

SVP also teamed up with the Gloucestershire Bike Project and eight old bikes were dropped off to be collected,

restored and resold by the Gloucester-based charity. We would like to thank Transition Stroud for supplying the music and the Museum in the Park for their hospitality.



Julie Wickham, SVP Fundraising and Marketing Manager, said, "It was a great day with a real mix of people from families to dedicated sport cyclists taking part.

"We are so pleased with the support and fundraising from local people as it all makes a great difference to our charity."

National Healthy Eating week

On 3rd June the national Healthy Eating week campaign was launched at Brimscombe Primary School, the first school in the country to become a Healthy Eating School.

The Get Growing Project contributed to its bid for healthy eating school status by building four raised beds at the school last year with the help of Ecclesiastical Insurance, and Clare and Tamsin were invited along to the launch.



While visiting the school, HRH Princess Anne, went down to the garden and admired the raised beds.

SVP PROJECT NEWS

Get Growing



'Get Growing' is our school gardening project co-ordinated by Tamsin Bent, and is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, which supports primary schools in Stroud District to grow, cook and sell their own food.

We have had a busy spring planting wheat with eight of our schools as part of a seed to loaf project. All the wheat has now been planted and despite the snow during one of our planting sessions and marauding hungry birds, it seems to be coming on well! It is now up to the children to look after it until it is ready to be harvested in September when the hard work of processing the grain will begin. We have also produced a lovely seasonal gardening and cooking calendar which is available to buy from our eco shop for £2.50.

We have a number of events taking place this autumn, the first of which will be a stall at the Stroud Festival of Nature on 7th September, so please come along and have a go at some of our family activities. We are also running two harvest celebrations. On 14 September we will be holding a stall at the Shambles Market, Stroud, where school gardening clubs will hopefully contribute some of their produce and the children come along to try their hands at being a market trader for the day. Then we will be holding a Pumpkin & Apples event at the Museum in the Park on 27 October where we will have a day of apple pressing finishing off with a carved pumpkin lantern trail, hopefully including some home grown pumpkins. So if you are currently growing pumpkins make sure you save one to carve for the Trail. There will be prizes for the best carved pumpkins in four categories; home grown, primary aged entrants, secondary aged entrants & family entrants.



Children with a carved pumpkin grown at their school gardening club in 2012

We look forward to seeing you there!

Do you Live in Cam or Dursley?

Work is continuing at Holywell Orchard. We will be surveying the wildflowers and grasses, bats, birds and herpetology (reptiles and amphibians). We will be carrying out wildflower meadow management tasks such as removing the arisings following mowing. It is vital to do this as wildflowers prefer a site with poor nutrients and if the arisings are left, these increase the fertility of the land and make it ideal for dock, nettle and bramble. If you live in Cam or Dursley we would love to meet you. Work days are each week until the end of September.

Hedge laying at Larkshill, funded by Adult Education in Gloucestershire.



In March, SVP embarked on another one of its successful Adult Education in Gloucestershire courses running a five day 'Hedge laying for Beginners' course along a 40 metre section of hedgerow at Larkshill, Whiteshill near Stroud.

The course structure was based around employability and the students were taught the basic skills and theory in laying a hedge in the Midland/Bullock style, a style appropriate to the area where the course was being held. By running the course over five sessions it gave students the practical opportunity to gain confidence in learning the art of hedge laying, allowing the students to see their own progress and also gave the learning group as a whole a sense of achievement and ownership in the week long project.

The standard achieved by those who attended was of a high quality and would not have looked out of place in a 'Novice Standard' class at any hedge laying competition in the Cotswold AONB.

SVP PROJECT NEWS

Keep shopping with Stroud Valleys Project eco shop

First of all a big THANK YOU to all our customers who come in regularly to buy from SVP eco shop - the money that the shop makes really helps towards running costs for the charity.

Our decision to do refills for Ecover, Ecoleaf and BioD seems to have provided a service that not many other shops offer as there is a growing demand from local people to use refills rather than buy new containers every time. As a charity that has sustainability written through it like a stick of rock, we are very pleased that local people are doing this and reusing/recycling containers rather than throwing them away.



The Biodynamic seeds from Demeter sold well again this Spring and we will be ordering more for the Autumn and we are now taking in any excess seedlings that people have grown and want to donate for us to sell. It is interesting that the Biodynamic Association is also based in Stroud see www.biodynamic.org.uk/ and we stock some of their books.

We also have in stock some recycled plastic stools - very useful for extra seating in the garden if you have a BBQ - plus some unique trugs made of recycled old tyres.

If you come across any products you think we might sell please email, tweet or just come into the shop and tell us. We are always looking out for locally made products - especially if they are recycled out of something else!

Hedge layers at your service

Sadly we say goodbye to our hedgelaying work at the moment. Of course this is because the season has ended but also because that particular funding stream has finished. It was a great project. We worked with unemployed people and gave them vital skills in working outdoors. We really got to know our volunteers well and have been able to help some of them with further study and very specific references because we know their skills and strengths.

Hedgelaying is the ancient craft of cutting a hedgerow tree to within an inch of its life, in order that it will regenerate significantly the following spring. Volunteers learnt how to lay a hedge using the Midland Bullock style. This involves cutting stakes and heatherings. The stakes are hammered into the hedge at regular intervals and the heatherings are woven along the top of the laid hedge, giving a stock proof barrier. This course was aimed particularly at unemployed people.

One volunteer said:- "The experience was outstanding. Learning a new craft was wonderful to be able to achieve. I haven't had that sort of support before. It gave me a new confidence in my life. I have received many knockbacks in places like factories before but this was different and much better."

We now have a great team of hedgelayers. **If you would like to support our work in this area further, you could pay us to lay your hedge for you.** This will help us, and the environment. Hedgerows are a niche ecosystem. Without vital work on restoring and rejuvenating hedgerows, all our local hedgerows will become lines of trees, which isn't bad in itself but it's a very different habitat. Once you have seen how a laid hedge rejuvenates, there is no going back; you will be smitten with laid hedgerows, just like we are.

SVP PROJECT NEWS

Wildlife oasis gets help from SVP and Cam Parish Council.

Since the end of funding from Biffa Award that 'kick started' the restoration of the Rackleaze nature reserve, SVP has been managing the site thanks to a new partnership with Cam Parish Council who have agreed to fund some of the work to maintain the wetland area as a wildlife haven. Although there is no longer a weekly group of SVP volunteers working at the site the organisation still meets on a Tuesday, once a month in the winter (Oct – Apr) and twice a month in the summer (May – Sept). This time is spent keeping the footpaths cut so that the public have the opportunity to walk around the site, as well as general habitat management work to maximise opportunities for wildlife.



Over the next few months SVP's very knowledgeable survey team of Denise Gibbons and Barbara Wood will be spending time at the reserve collecting further information through sightings (birds) and netting (insects). The information gathered by them will not only provide us with further records of what wildlife lives in and around the site but will also be put together in a display that will be shown at Rackleaze during our annual open day, 'Netting for Insects' planned for August during the summer holidays (see above photo of last year's event). For more information about dates when SVP is working at the reserve and to find out more about the netting event contact us at the office.



SVP PEOPLE NEWS



Project officer Ivi Svaboova left SVP in mid-May after 10 years involvement with the charity both as volunteer and member of staff. Ivi's contribution to Stroud Valleys Project can probably best be summed up by the following event.

A volunteer walked into our shop. He had worked with Ivi on the allotment and at the time he was out of work, but now he had found work and he wanted to give Stroud Valleys Project a donation. He said Ivi had been an important part of his life at the time, her frequent texts and reminders about the work were really valuable and there should be more people like Ivi in the world.

Your support has enabled us to employ staff like Ivi to be there for local people who find themselves with free time in the week for whatever reason and who want to do something brilliant with their free time. We all wish Ivi well in her new job in an ecological consultancy.

We are pleased to welcome the following to our **Company Friends Scheme** which is a really great way that companies can support us. **Moreton F Cullimore** are a well established local company. Cullimores strongly believe that they only borrow the land and have an obligation to hand it back to nature in an even better state than when work began.

<http://www.cullimoregroup.co.uk/environment/>

Butterfly Ball are based in Union Street near the farmers market.

They provide unique handmade gifts, from local craftspeople: www.butterflyballstroud.co.uk

Eastington Parish Council – It is really valuable to have the support of Parish Councils.

STROUD VALLEYS PROJECT

Contact details and other information

SVP Office and Eco Shop are located at 8 Threadneedle Street, Stroud, GL5 1AF

T: 01453 753358

W: www.stroudvalleysproject.org

E: info@stroudvalleysproject.org

SVP FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Thank you for your support – it makes a difference!

Please tick one of the following boxes to indicate the amount you would like to give, and complete the short form below :

£15 (individual)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£25 (family)	<input type="checkbox"/>
£30	<input type="checkbox"/>	£50	<input type="checkbox"/>
£100	<input type="checkbox"/>	£250	<input type="checkbox"/>
£500 (company)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name.....Date.....

Address.....

.....Post Code

Email

I enclose a payment of made payable to 'Stroud Valleys Project'
OR

I have set up a Standing Order form with my bank for the amount of annually/monthly*

(*please delete as necessary)

Please return this completed form to Stroud Valleys Project, 8 Threadneedle Street, Stroud GL5 1AF.

GIFT AID at no extra cost to you

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Tick here to increase the value of all donations I have made for the six years prior to this year, and all future donations until I notify you otherwise.

We would like to acknowledge your support on our web-site and in our annual report – but please tick this box if you would prefer us **NOT** to.



Working with people for the environment.

THIS NEWSLETTER is a team effort by John Ockham, Dominic Griffin, Clare Mahdiyone, Tamsin Bent, Richard Lewis, Carolyn Buckley, Deb Coleman, Sue Flook, Stella Parkes, Julie Wickham and lots of volunteers who proof-read, prepare, and stuff envelopes - thanks to you all!