



STB Newsletter

May 2020

🌿 VISIT THE BOARDWALK 🌿

In line with **current Welsh Government advice** (as of 1st May 20):

STAY AT HOME!

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home.)
- If you go out, stay 2m (6ft) away from other people - Whilst using the boardwalk please use the wider sections & viewing areas as 'passing places' ... 'dip into' one of those areas and let others pass at a good social distance.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.
- Do not meet others, even friends or family - the picnic area is not exempt from this.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms. Pass this message onto all of your family, lives are saved if you follow the rules.



A decision has been made on the planned July 11th Bluestone Pembrokeshire Coast Triathlon ...

... "We have reluctantly made the decision to CANCEL this event for 2020. As you can imagine it hasn't been an easy decision, but there is no short or medium term light at the end of the tunnel that is likely to see mass participation events taking place by 11th July. Moving later in July or into August would likely make little difference, and also probably not be as welcomed by the local community if things are back to 'normal' by then. We could not find a suitable date in September either and, again, still quite unlikely that restrictions will have been lifted sufficiently to allow an event such as this to take place.

We have just emailed all athletes: their entries will be rolled forward to 2021 at no extra charge - which is confirmed as SATURDAY 10TH JULY. We have little choice of dates due to tides, water temperatures, potential clashes with other events, and avoiding the school holidays. So please put the date in your diaries!!!" ... Dave Astins, Pembrokeshire Tri Club Events. [Click here](#) for their website and further updates.



We may not be able to be out and about, given that we should only leave the house for very limited purposes, but as you pass through it, the boardwalk might well be a highlight of your day. We understand inventive ways are being found to enjoy the boardwalk and surrounding area ... Recent Facebook posts pointed out rainbow painted pebbles had been hidden locally - including in the vicinity of the boardwalk! A great way to get little eyes peeled and observing the area. 😊



Remember that the Slash Pond Boardwalk is an alternative attraction to our wonderful Seaside Award beach (the national standard for the best beaches across the UK). At more than 350 metres, the boardwalk is a sheltered, non-slip, paw friendly decked walkway surrounding a serene pond in a habitat that supports a wildflower meadow, a picnic area, willow dens, bug houses and bat & bird nesting boxes.

Test yourself with our Nature Trail Quiz (download from website - address below). The area offers a circular route of approximately ½ mile which is accessible to motobility scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs.

As promised - Spring Bird Activity from David ...

"Spring has sprung, the grass is ris, I wonder where the boidies is"

If only we would all stop, look and listen then we would be able to answer this 1940 nonsense poem questionably attributed to Ogden Nash. Yes Spring has sprung and the boidies – sorry, birds – are all around us and making themselves heard as they vie for territory and a mate.

One swallow may not make a Summer but the return of the piercing song of just one Chiff Chaff is enough to convince me that Winter is over, as this small visitor from Africa returns for the season.

Another highlight is the elusive Skylark more often heard rather than seen as it hangs on fluttering wings high in the sky. Although resident throughout the year Spring seems incomplete without its high rolling notes repeatedly sung in long series. Even more iconic is the distinctive, yet now rarely heard call of the Cuckoo also having made its tortuous journey from Africa – so listen carefully before it goes quiet and departs in July. Now regarded as a rarity and on the "Red List" of endangered species as UK numbers have fallen by 65% since the 1980s.

More common and unmissable is the raucous noise from the ever growing local population of Corvids (no relation to Covid!). As any one living close to Haroldston Woods will testify – the volume of the arguing and nest building activity of Rooks is something to behold. Joined by their Jackdaw and Crow cousins in their hundreds, their flypast is one of Broad Haven's daily spectacles.

One of the victims of changing habitats is the Swift whose numbers declined by 53% between 1995 and 2016. Their screaming parties that filled our skies seem a distant memory these days but we still hope to see them return once again – maybe 2020? House-martins and swallows (unrelated to and often confused with Swifts) are always a thrill to watch as they return to last year's nesting sites, collect mud and sand for nest building and fly low over the Slashpond as they feed on emerging insects. Birds that never seem jet lagged after their long haul flight from the Southern Hemisphere.

Birds of the Warbler family always bring their individual songs to grace the Boardwalk area – too often written off as LBJs (little brown jobs) each have their own unique jizz (movement and song characteristics) so listen and look out for the Reed, Sedge and Willow Warblers and their relations – the Blackcap and Whitethroat. The aerobatics of the undistinguished Spotted Flycatcher in and out of the bushes surrounding the Slashpond is also thrilling, albeit fleeting.

The Pied Wagtails that we are so familiar with should not be overlooked as they may well be joined by their rarer cousins the Grey, White or even Yellow Wagtails.

Not all our bird life is made up of exotic overseas visitors as we have many resident species that we can too easily take for granted and so ignore the inherent beauty of their song that is far more voluble at this time of year. The Robin, Dunnock, Chaffinch, Blackbird and Song Thrush are just a few locals to listen out for; as is the cacophony of the House Sparrows in the Peasey Park brambles - in itself beautiful. Although well established, their habitat is soon to be overtaken by developers and will constitute both a loss of habitat and a loss to the village.

Whatever you see or hear in and around the village do enjoy (even if you cant always put a name to them) and treasure the experience as we are all fully aware that climatic and environmental changes, habitat loss and human indifference mean that we can take nothing that nature offers us for granted. Nor should we.

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