

What's on?

Local group events

Blashford Lakes (nr Ringwood) Saturday 29 January, 9.30am (or 12.30pm)–4pm

Following our 'launch' day at this Hampshire Wildlife Trust reserve last February (right), we're delighted to be going back for another work-party/bird-watching combination. Practical conservation work (optional) in the morning. Picnic lunch (bring your own) at the visitor centre & hear from Andy Lester, A Rocha UK Conservation Director. Afternoon walk led by Andy, to include viewing wintering birds. **Please let David & Jean Morgan know by 20 January if you are coming** & if you'll be joining the morning work party as we need to give definite numbers to Blashford. Morgans' contact details: 01202 883504; david.morgan@arocha.org



Heading west

If you are interested in a possible A Rocha local **west Dorset/east Devon** group, put **Tuesday 1 March** in your diaries. There's an exploratory meeting at **Amherst Lodge, Cathole Lane, Uplyme DT7 3XH at 8pm**. Further information from Jeremy White, 01297 32299; jeremy.white@onetel.net

New Forest, new group

An exciting development for our area is the formation of a new A Rocha local group in the **New Forest**. The launch meeting is on **Saturday 5 March** at the **Treehouse Study Centre, Beaulieu, SO42 7YL**. Meet at **10am** for coffee, a short act of worship and news from Andy Lester (ARUK Conservation Director) about current A Rocha work. We'll then look at the different habitats in the Hartford Wood area and hear how the Countryside Education Trust uses them. Picnic lunch in the Treehouse at 1pm approx. Do feel free to invite both church and non-church friends. Further info from David & Bronwen Bridges, 01590 678732; thebridgesfamily@f2s.com



John's slot

Cold winter weather always has something to teach us. As a temporary thaw sets in, and with a few days off (as I write), it's pleasant to reflect on not having to go to work in sub-zero temperatures for a while, and to appreciate even more the comforts of home and good seasonal food! The birds have been busily making the most of an extra top-up of our feeders, and the blue tits in particular have been finding food in the hedge and in our tall conifers. What can they see moving in the greenery? It's a mystery to me!

I've just returned from part of my favourite walk. The River Stour is only a five-minute walk away; nothing spectacular, no great sightings, but it's my regular patch. I hope I know it reasonably well, and it may turn up a few interesting things, such as otter prints and spraints (droppings). Perhaps one day I'll see the otters themselves. It's a place for the atmospheric photo of a sunset with, of course, a favourite oak in the field (right): a giant of a tree which is home, or perch, to the owls. I've seen roe deer there too, but usually it's just that solid sentinel standing as I walk by.



The turn of the year is a time to look back, as well as forward. I caught the diary habit about 25 years ago, and wonderfully one has appeared under the Christmas tree again this year. Not for everyone, I know, but recording events, the weather and a few gardening jottings along the way helps me to enjoy the rich tapestry of the ups and downs of our lives.

A Rocha national events

National Conference Celebrate 10 years of A Rocha UK, be inspired for the future, make contact with other A Rocha Friends and relax together. **18-20 February** at King's Park Conference Centre, Northampton. Speakers: Dave Bookless, Steve Hughes & Peter Harris from A Rocha; Dewi Hughes from Tearfund. It's filling up fast, so don't miss out! Booking forms on the website, www.arocha.org.uk or from the UK office, 020 8574 5935. Let David & Jean Morgan know if you're going and they'll look out for you.

You might also like to know about...

'Greening your church'

Interested in your church becoming more green and sustainable in its impact on creation as part of our mission responsibility? The Salisbury Diocesan Environmental Group have organised two half-day sessions (9.30am–1pm) to guide church leaders and environmentally concerned individuals towards a greener church future: **Friday 18 March (Corfe Mullen)** or **Saturday 19 March (Devizes)**. David Hughes, National Co-ordinator for Ecocongregation (an A Rocha project) will be the main speaker, churches will share their experiences, and information about resources will be available. Further details and booking form from David Morgan, 01202 883504; david.morgan@arocha.org

East Dorset Give & Take Days Chance to get rid of something you don't want and pick up something you do – all for free. Keep stuff out of landfill that could be recycled and re-used. Next events: Saturday 29 January, Colehill Memorial Hall, Colehill, Wimborne; Saturday 26 February, Leigh Park Community Hall, Wimborne; Saturday 19 March, West Parley Memorial Hall, West Parley. 9.30am–12 noon (items can be dropped off from 9am).

Looking back...

Living lightly: Christian living that doesn't cost the earth



Ruth Valerio was the featured speaker at two A Rocha-linked joint-church events at both 'ends' of Dorset during November – firstly in Wimborne, then in Uplyme. Ruth's talk majored on virtues (humility, frugality, generosity, justice, courage, hope, patience and love) and how to put these into practice in our day-to-day choices about food, shopping, travel, energy-use and waste, and also in how we seek to influence national and international decision-makers. At both venues, members of the audience came up with environmental issues, shared practical eco-tips, took part in a Q&A session and had an opportunity to reflect and record personal aims to 'live more lightly' in the year to come. Responses were very positive: 'encouraging and balanced', 'refreshingly different' and 'very inspirational'. (More from Ruth on www.arocha.org.uk/livinglightly)



Jottings

Eco-friendly giving You A Rocha folk probably already know about many such options, but the Morgans wanted to pass on a couple of suggestions inspired by Christmas gifts they received: 10 metres of hedgerow ('hedgehog heaven') via the RSPB's 'good natured gifts', www.rspbshop.co.uk and one square foot of footpath repair in the Lake District ('Fix the Fells') via the Good Gifts Catalogue, www.goodgifts.org

And finally...

If you have any relevant news/info about local events/website links/book or film recommendations/recycling or grow-your-own tips, etc, which you would like to be considered for the newsletter, please contact John & Jane Cribb at jandjcribb@btinternet.com; 01202 883307.

Please contact David & Jean Morgan (david.morgan@arocha.org, 01202 883504) if:

- you would like any more information about the Dorset/West Hants local group;
- you would like to get your church interested in A Rocha/Christians and the environment;
- you don't wish to receive local group info in future.

More local group information is also available at <http://www.arocha.org/gb-en/makeadifference/community/1464-DSY/6614-DSY.html>