

# Countrycare's Catch-up



## Summer 2021

What a *Summer* we have had! Following the mild, wet Spring there has been an unprecedented amount of growth across all of our nature reserves - everywhere looks healthy and wildlife is thriving.

*Countrycare* have been very busy bees, from cutting the meadows, fixing bridges, completing various surveys and maintaining access to the nature reserves. We hope you enjoy hearing a little of what we, and nature, have been up to this Summer, as well as some of the first signs of Autumn to keep an eye out for!



### What's about? – An Oasis of Orchids

Orchids are one of the largest families of flowering plants, approximately 30,000 species grow in the wild and some of these are in the UK! 1. *Bee Orchid*: This rather sneaky orchid mimics a female bee to increase its rate of pollination, unfortunately the bee it mimics does not live in the UK so the orchid self-pollinates here. 2. *Pyramidal Orchids*: A pyramid of densely packed purple flowers adorn a single flower spike - sometimes up to 100 flowers! The seeds of the orchid do not hold enough nutrients to feed the flower so it forms a relationship with fungi which feed the orchid in exchange for protection. 3. *Broad-Leaved Helleborines*: Generally found in Woodlands and Scrub this orchid grows multiple drooping flowers along a single flower spike.

## Volunteer update

What a fantastic 3 months worth of Volunteer days and we were even able to provide tea and coffee again with help from the Kelly Kettles! This summer we have run 14 volunteer days amounting to approximately 864 volunteer hours! We have visited 11 of our nature reserves doing plenty of work including...

- Reinstating a memorial bench at Linder's Field for Charles Linder after the previous one had been vandalised.
- Installing a fantastic new Minibeast Hotel at Roughtalley's Wood and inviting the public to help us fill it with natural materials the minibeasts will love.
- Looking after the Heather saplings at Norton Heath by both protecting them from being eaten and also removing the bramble that would swamp them out.
- Cutting and Raking the meadows, removing nutrients helping the wildflowers to flourish year after year.
- Seeding new areas with valuable wildflowers enabling them to develop into more biodiverse patches

Minibeast Hotel at  
Roughtalley's Wood



Heather Saplings at Norton Heath

Bench Reinstated at Linder's Field



"Tea's up!"

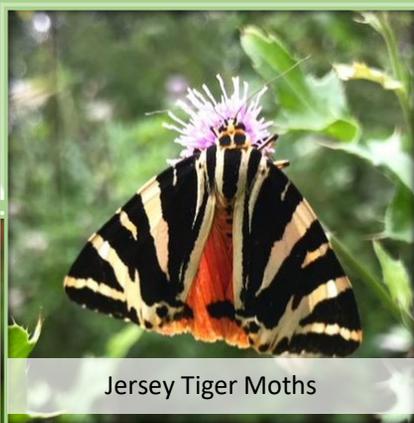


Partial Eclipse on 10<sup>th</sup> June

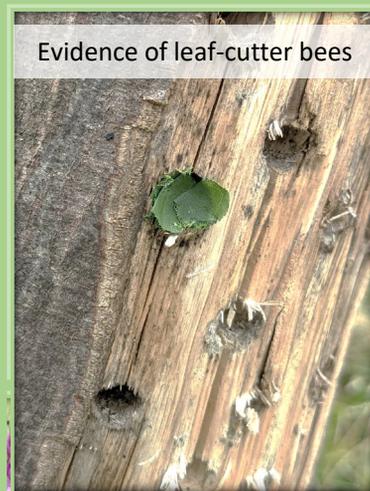
## Summer Highlights

What a glorious summer we have had, here's just a few highlights:

- A minimum of 49 Pyramidal Orchids were found at Church Lane compared to only a handful in previous years showing a healthy population.
- Leaf-cutter bees appear to have moved into the solitary bee hotel installed by volunteers at Linder's Field as they have plugged a hole with leaf sections.
- There have been multiple sightings at multiple reserves of a Nationally Scarce moth, the Jersey Tiger - they seem to approve of our habitat management!
- A pair of Hobbies (Fast-flying falcon) have been spotted at Thornwood Common Flood Meadow. In the next month or so they will begin their journey back to tropical Africa for the Winter.



Jersey Tiger Moths



Evidence of leaf-cutter bees



Pyramidal Orchids

## Looking for the first signs of Autumn

Autumn is almost upon us, soon leaves will be changing colour as the tree absorbs its chlorophyll for next year, migratory birds will begin to leave us for warmer winter climates, Ivy will be flowering feeding insects and birds late into Autumn and keep an eye on the ground for conkers, acorns and an array of other seeds.

**We invite you to visit our social media pages to keep in touch and learn about our other nature reserves – there might be one closer than you think!**

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/EFCountrycare](http://www.facebook.com/EFCountrycare)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/efcountrycare](http://www.twitter.com/efcountrycare)

**Website:** <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/countrycare>