

Village benefits from hedge-laying help

Volunteers learned traditional hedge-laying skills to transform field boundaries in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park village of Marloes during National Tree Week.

The Park Authority's Voluntary Wardens joined villagers to work on a hedge near the clock tower and transformed an overgrown hedge at the Recreational Area in December.

National Park Ranger Hayley Barrett led the group, with help from Marloes resident and former Ranger Malcolm Cullen.



Photo: PCNPA

The first session took place during National Tree Week, which is organised annually by The Tree Council, encouraging organisations and individuals around the UK to do something positive for their local trees and hedgerows.

Hedge-laying is a traditional way of maintaining the hedge to create a secure boundary – in the past it would have been to keep livestock in or out, but it is also an excellent way of extending the life of the hedge. By cutting it at the bottom and creating a hedge using living, laid branches, it encourages new growth – it's the same method we would use for coppicing trees.

PEMBROKESHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



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In this Issue



Village Benefits from Hedge Laying Help
Pages 1-2

What Lurks Under the Bridge?
Pages 2-3



Welsh Wildlife Centre Benefits from Green Energy
Page 4



Pembrokeshire Wildlife Sightings Event 2013
Pages 5-6

2013 UK Fungus Day Events
Pages 6-7



Studying the Purple Topshell
Pages 7-8

Pembrokeshire Garden Wildlife Survey: An Update
Page 9

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Agriculture Regulations
Page 9

Courses and Events
Pages 10-11

Contact details
Page 12



It was a beautiful, calm day so it was great to be outside in the National Park learning a traditional conservation skill. Anyone who would like to have a go themselves – and help us to conserve the Park – is welcome to join us next time. Email

Hayleyb@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk for more details.

The National Park Authority has its own Pembrokeshire Tree Wardens scheme in association with The Tree Council. The scheme provides practical training to help in the care of local trees and to encourage community involvement through projects with local schools and groups.

To become a Tree Warden in Pembrokeshire you do not need specific skills, just a love of trees. To get involved call Mike Higgins or Celia Thomas on 0845 345 7275 or email treechampions@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk

Hayley Barrett

Ranger

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

What Lurks Under the Bridge?

One of the wonderful things about diving in Pembrokeshire is that other than when a gale is blowing there is always somewhere interesting to find to dive. 2011 was the summer of rain and wind limiting explorations out on the open coast so much of the season was spent tucked into sheltered locations.

Whilst driving over the Cleddau bridge have you ever given a thought to what lurks in the murky waters below? The Cleddau has a tidal range of 7m which means there are some very strong currents and an almost fully marine environment. The strong currents and tidal flow give rise to plankton rich waters and diverse

marine life. Below the bridge steep rock faces are smothered in sponges, hydroids and bryozoans, all filtering food from the waters. Take a closer look and you will find fabulously camouflaged sponge crabs and nudibranchs. Anenomes make pretty displays but are actually waiting to prey on anything coming too close – yes they can eat crabs whole! Seasearch surveys were completed at sites between Llangwm to Angle Bay. In addition to habitat and species recording the surveys also completed counts on the native oyster, *Ostrea edulis* which is now sparsely distributed in contrast to the super abundance of the slipper limpet, *Crepidula fornicata*, a non native species which carpets the river bed.

Shredded carrot sponge
Francis Bunker



In 2012 we were treated to a summer! Not just glorious sunny days but some underwater visibility too which is a real bonus when you are doing diving surveys. Seasearch in the past has completed lots of surveys along the inshore coast of the Castlemartin range between Linney Head and St Govans Head. Here the limestone cliffs give way to limestone plateau down around 12m surrounded by sand. With calm seas we had the opportunity to explore 3-5 miles offshore where the charts indicated small isolated reefs amongst the sandy plains. Strong tidal currents in these areas allow a diverse

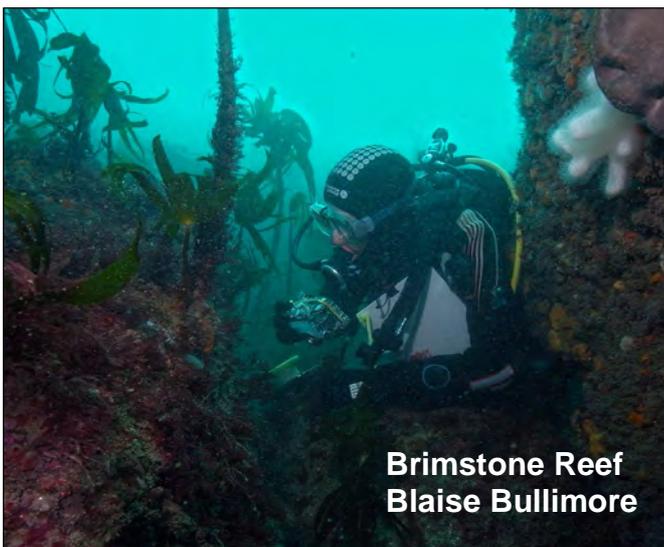




**Dahlia anemone, *Urticina feline*.
Prof David Kipling**

selection of marine life to flourish. In the shallows kelp park and red algae meadows dominated providing shelter and food for fish and crabs. Deeper, the rocks were festooned in sea squirts, sponges and hydroids - the filter feeding specialists. Crustatean scavengers filled the crevices and territorial fish hid amongst the boulders.

Tide swept areas were the theme of the year, with a couple of exciting drift dives completed off the west side of Grassholm and one on the notorious 'wild goose race' off the west end of Skokholm. At both locations vast areas of rock covered with blue mussels were found with large dahlia anemones and crabs tucked in any sheltered hole they could find so as not to get swept away!



**Brimstone Reef
Blaise Bullimore**

A special focus during 2012 was given to sea squirt identification which is particularly difficult. Sea squirts are the Phylum Tunicata and most identification books depend on sampling, dissection and microscopes – not particularly helpful when trying to do field recording. Seasearch divers Prof David Kipling and Sarah Bowen are therefore working on a new Seasearch photo ID guide to help field identification. To help with this we have targeted sites rich in sea squirts to enable sampling and photography to verify identification along with a training course run during the summer. The guide is currently a work in progress but will add to a collection that has been produced by Seasearch and will be very welcome by all marine field workers.

In 2014 a programme of training and diving events is being organised which will start with an Observer course being run in Marloes on the 26/27th April. For full details of the programme and to read the full summary report for the 2011 and 2012 seasons go to www.wmmc.org or contact Kate Lock rumba-lock@tiscali.co.uk

Kate Lock
Seasearch Co-ordinator S&W Wales



The Welsh Wildlife Centre benefits from Green Energy

The Welsh Wildlife Centre at Cilgerran



The replacement of the degrading boiler system at the Welsh Wildlife Centre in Cilgerran with a new biomass boiler has finally been completed. The Austrian biomass boiler was commissioned in the middle of October. The boiler was chosen for its ability to utilise a variety of fuel sources such as woodchip, grain, pellets and more importantly for the Cilgerran site, common reed.

Teifi Marshes has large expanses of common reed covering most of the reserve. This habitat is managed on an annual basis through a regime of reed cuts which helps to remove the build-up of dead matter from the site and prevent the reedbed from drying out. It also promotes new fresh growth. As added benefits, it provides material to help support the business one of Wales' Master Thatchers and now also supplies biomass which can be chipped to utilise in the biomass boiler. The boiler will also run on woodchip coming from local Wildlife Trust reserve management arising's although the majority will have to be bought in. None-the-less, this is a far cheaper alternative to the LPG that was used before.

After much research and development and support from the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park's Sustainability Development Fund, it is great to see the boiler up and running. To be able to utilise biomass from various nature reserve management regimes is a great step to becoming more sustainable as an organisation and promoting the use of renewable energy to the wider public.

Reed Cutting at Teifi Marshes



The boiler has been a huge financial investment for the Wildlife Trust yet it goes some way to meet the charities commitments to implementing renewable energy in its visitor centres and offices. The Wildlife Trust is now also able to claim the Renewable Heat Incentive which is a feed in tariff provided by the government for every unit of energy it produces. It is estimated that, all being well, the incentive should have paid off the cost of the boiler by 2023.

Nathan Walton

Wildlife Officer

Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales

<http://www.welshwildlife.org/>



Pembrokeshire Wildlife Sightings Event 2013

The Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum (PCF) hosted another memorable 'Pembrokeshire Wildlife Sightings Event' on Wednesday 20th November at the Merlin Theatre, Pembrokeshire College. This was the fifth wildlife sightings event organised by the PCF team celebrating the diversity of Pembrokeshire wildlife. The event was aimed at raising awareness of our local environments and wildlife to ensure that they are cherished and protected for the future.

The event, kindly supported by The Crown Estate and The Pembrokeshire Coast

National Park Authority, was a platform to update the public of the work of the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter and Marine Code groups in developing and publishing best practice advice and training for all those who wish to get out & make the most of the stunning outdoor environments and wildlife of Pembrokeshire.

Six speakers shared stories and images of their wildlife sightings in Pembrokeshire from the past year.

Kate Lock presented beautiful images and spoke on the underwater wildlife of the tidal races of The Cleddau and South Pembrokeshire coast which highlighted different sponges, sea slugs, crabs, and fish living in Pembrokeshire waters.

Cliff Benson shared stories, images and videos of his encounters with the species of porpoise, dolphins and whales that he has seen around the Pembrokeshire coastline.



Seal Pup at St Non's
Photo: Mat Mackenzie

David Redhead enlightened us about the Hair-streaks of Pembrokeshire; several species of the butterfly are very elusive whilst others you can easily find in your garden or on a walk around the County if you know where to look.

Marten Lewis entertained the crowds speaking about his work with the Darwin Centre and displayed images of tide pool exploration and the rocky shores of the area through the eyes of local young people.

Sue Burton & Geoff Liles explained why Pembrokeshire is such a great place to “Spot Otters”. They also explained some of the work being done to understand the habits and territories of our sea going Otters.

Julian Cremona’s enthusiasm, knowledge, and amazing imagery of dragonflies and damselflies that are easily viewed in the area thoroughly entertained the audience.

As part of the event, PCF ran a wildlife photography competition which was open to all. We would like to thank all those who entered and to CONGRATULATE the winning photo ‘Seal Pup at St. Nons’ taken by Mat Mackenzie.

Paul Renfro

Sustainable Recreation Co-ordinator
Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum

<http://www.pembrokeshirecoastalforum.org.uk/>

2013 - UK Fungus Day Events

Often considered the Cinderellas of the natural history world, fungi rarely tap into the enthusiasm and support of a wider audience in the way that, for example, birds, bats and bees seem to. Fungi are more likely to hit the news headlines when some unfortunate eats a poisonous one, or a new fungal pathogen threatens to wreak havoc on some aspect of the natural world. But in fact, very few fungi actually cause a problem - and without them animals and plants could not and would not exist.

Things may be changing as the British Mycological Society and the Association of British Fungus Groups work with other parties to raise the profile of fungi and their conservation. This year saw the first UK-wide national fungus day - a programme of fungus-themed events across the UK with many on or close to the designated day of October 13th. The plan was developed from the very successful 2012 Wales Fungus Day organised by Bruce Langridge and colleagues at the National Botanic Garden of Wales.



Photocall at Narberth Museum
Photo: Kate Smith

For our part, the autumn season kicked off in September with a month long exhibition of photographs and posters hosted by Narberth museum. The West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre generously funded the printing and mounting of photographs and posters for the display. Many of the exhibits were subsequently used for a UK Fungus Day display at the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

Field events commenced with a rather soggy foray on October 13th at Freshwater East. This was organised in conjunction



with the Freshwater East Reserve for Nature group led by Vicky Tomlinson. The foray was well supported and a reasonable selection of grassland and dune species was collected, though not on the scale of the previous year.



Sand Dunes
Photo: Robin Crump

The following weekend opened with a joint venture with the Field Studies Council - a fungal Bioblitz at Orielton Field Centre with Operations Manager, Tom Stamp. This was fully subscribed following a notice in the local paper - and this time the rain held off (mostly). It proved to be an excellent family event, including several people who had not previously taken part in forays. Although the lawns failed to yield the grassland species seen in other years, the woodlands more than made up for it. The event was judged a great success with an invitation to repeat the



Classwork after the field excursion
Photo: Trevor Theobald

event next autumn.

The following day was a more formal affair with a fungus training and recording event held at the National Trust Centre at Stackpole. Fully subscribed, and with three visitors making the journey from Glamorgan, the group enjoyed excellent weather, superb scenery, a fine collection of specimens and lunch laid on.....what more could you ask for.

The season closed with a highly successful woodland excursion in Ffynone Woodland (North Pembrokeshire) led by Pat O'Reilly. This is a site that Pat knows very well, and, although he felt it was not fruiting quite as well as in other years, our enthusiastic recorders found plenty of specimens to keep Pat busy with identification. Pat has very kindly agreed to host a return visit next year.

David Harries

Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network
<http://www.pembsfungi.org.uk/>

Studying the Purple Topshell

The Milford Haven waterway is teeming with wildlife (see article 'What Lurks Under the Bridge'). However, the sheltered, deep channel has also made the Haven one of the key energy hubs in the UK and a centre for local industry. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) monitor a wide range of environmental parameters to ensure that the industrial activity along the Haven does not adversely affect the wildlife of the area. However, a new study being conducted by researchers at Orielton and Dale Fort Field Studies Centres aims to monitor one parameter (temperature) by a novel method.



As two Centres with histories deeply seated in marine research, Dale Fort and Orierton Field Centres have set up a new marine study to support the temperature data collection being carried out by NRW. With advice and support from staff at NRW and the Marine Biological Association (MBA), members of the education team at both centres are carrying out monthly surveys of *Gibbula umbilicalis* (Purple Topshell) at four sites, three in the Haven and one outside the Haven as a control.

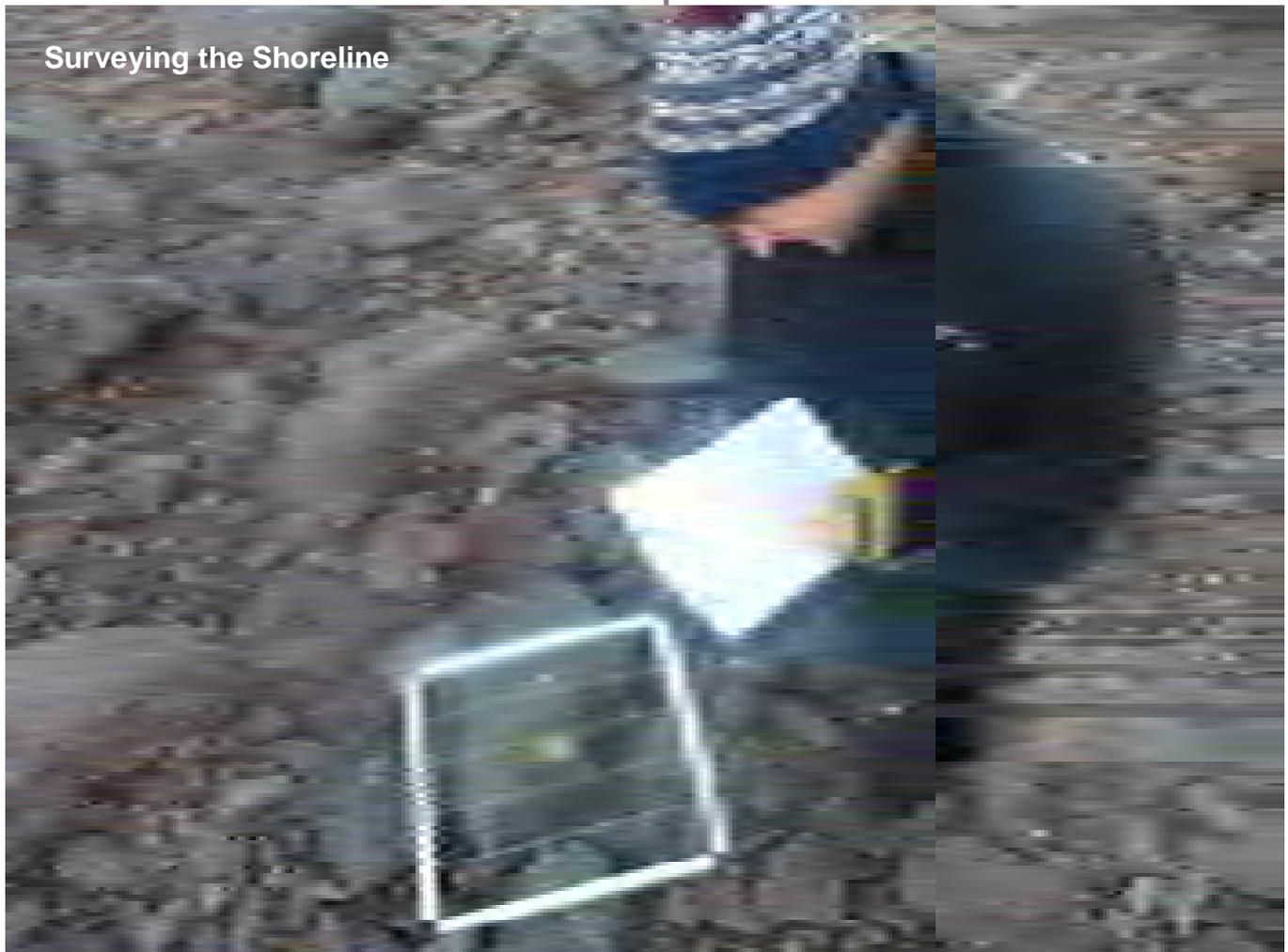
Gonads from a small sample of the population of *G.umbilicalis* are being analysed to see if there is change in the periods of maturation within the populations, a possible affect of thermal pollution. As well as this survey an MBA MarClim general site survey is carried out and daily water temperature at each site is recorded.

The data will help to inform local management of the Haven, as well as contributing to academic knowledge on the effects of environmental temperature on other marine gastropods in the face of climate change and warming seas.

To Find out more, contact Orierton Field Studies Centre on: 01646 636205.

Jack Burrows

Education Assistant
Orierton Field Studies Centre



Pembrokeshire Garden Wildlife Survey: An update

2013's Garden Wildlife Survey project for Pembrokeshire has come to an end with just over 150 surveys submitted by residents. An analysis of the data received has yet to be done but from looking at results so far one can confirm that our gardens are a good haven for a number of different species. Gardens surveyed ranged from small, terraced back yards to land consisting of a few acres. A species that has cropped up a few times is the Brown Hare where records seem to be clustered in the North of the County, especially around the Nevern valley. This mammal is one where further survey work on the ground can be considered to better understand its distribution as records at present are few and far between. 2013 was certainly a better year weather wise than most and so good numbers of bird and invertebrate species were recorded. It will be interesting to see the species diversity found in certain areas when analysing the data and although the project has completed, the survey will still be available online so further records can be submitted and passed on to the Local Record Centre. Please do continue to record any wildlife you see in your garden at: <http://www.welshwildlife.org/pembrokeshire-garden-survey>

Nathan Walton

Wildlife Officer

Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales

<http://www.welshwildlife.org/>



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Agri- culture Regulations

The purpose of EIA is to allow agricultural changes that do not seriously affect the environment, whilst providing protection for land with significant environmental, historic or cultural importance.

If you intend to carry out an agricultural improvement project on any uncultivated or semi-natural land, you will need to receive a screening decision from the Welsh Government (WG) before you proceed.

Uncultivated or semi natural land is any area containing less than 25% of improved agricultural species (e.g. Perennial Ryegrass and/or White Clover). This can include a range of land, from lowland meadows to moor. Examples of projects could be cultivation (ploughing, harrowing, rotovating, etc), re-seeding, new drainage and clearing scrub. Existing highly improved agricultural land (e.g. silage fields) will not need screening, if it contains more than 25% of Ryegrass and/or White Cover.

You will need to submit a Screening Application Form [EIA2 (W)] to your local WG Divisional Office and await a response before proceeding. Application forms are available from your Divisional Office or WG website.

Responses can take up to 35 days so please plan ahead. There is no charge for the process of applying for screening and decisions are valid for 3 years.

For more information, or to discuss the works proposed before applying, please contact the EIA team through your local WG Divisional Office in Carmarthen on 01267 225 300. More information is also available on the Welsh Government web site:

www.wales.gov.uk/eiaagriculture



Biodiversity Events

January - April 2014



Date	Title	Information	Contact
20 th Jan	Encounters of the Cetacean Kind	Illustrated talk by Lyndon Lomax. 19.30 – 21:30 at Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest.	John Steer: 01646 278966
21 st Jan	Pembrokeshire Coast Path (North section)	Coastal ecologist John Archer-Thompson will be talking about the geology and natural history of the Coastal Path. 19:30 – 21:15 at Foundry House Community Centre, Pembroke.	Lynda@thehicklins.co.uk
5 th Feb	Skomer Island	Illustrated talk with Skomer wardens Birgitta Bueche and Eddie Stubbings. 19:30 – 21:30 at the Catholic Church Hall, Cardigan.	Margaretpowellcal@hotmail.com
18 th Feb	Castlemartin Range – History & Habitats	Talk by Lynn Houlston, Castlemartin MoD Ranger. 19:30 – 21:15 at Foundry House Community Centre, Pembroke.	Lynda@thehicklins.co.uk
22 nd Feb	Waders & Wildfowl Walk - Dale	Meet at the carpark at grid reference SM809 066 for a walk near Dale 10:30 – 15:00	John Steer: 01646 278966
24 th Feb	Dip into Spring at Carew Castle.	Spring to life and wake up to springtime in the National Park. These fun family events encourage you to come outside, explore, discover and create. 13:00 – 14:30	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. 01834 845 040
24 th Feb	Build a Minibeast Hotel	An afternoon of fun helping to construct a minibeast hotel at the Wildlife Centre, Cilgerran. 14:00 – 16:00	Sharon at the Wildlife Centre: 01239 621600
25 th Feb	Wake up to Wildlife at Colby Woodland Gardens	Explore the meadows, woods and ponds of Colby woodland as nature wakes up from its winter sleep. A gentle walk around Colby looking for signs of spring, followed by a craft activity. 11:00 – 15:00.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. 01834 845 040



Biodiversity Events

January - April 2014



Date	Title	Information	Contact
26 th Feb	Wake up to Wildlife at Colby Woodland Gardens	Explore the meadows, woods and ponds of Colby woodland as nature wakes up from its winter sleep. A gentle walk around Colby looking for signs of spring, followed by a craft activity. 11:00 – 15:00.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. 01834 845 040
28 th Feb	Dip into Spring at Castell Henllys.	Spring to life and wake up to springtime in the National Park. These fun family events encourage you to come outside, explore, discover and create. 10:30 – 12:00 & 13:00 – 14:30.	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. 01834 845 040
5 th Mar	Are Honey Bees Native and Does it Matter?	A Talk by John Dudman, Pembrokeshire Beekeeper's Society. 19:30 – 21:30 at the Catholic Church Hall, Cardigan.	Margaretpowellcal@hotmail.com
17 th Mar	The Marine World of Pembrokeshire	An illustrated talk by Sue Burton, Pembrokeshire Marine SAC Officer. 19.30 – 21:30 at Furzy Park Community Centre, Haverfordwest.	John Steer: 01646 278966
18 th Mar	Dragonflies & Damselflies and How to ID Them	Talk by Dr Wendy Harris. 19:30 – 21:15 at Foundry House Community Centre, Pembroke.	Lynda@thehicklings.co.uk
23 rd Mar	Estuary Walk, Newport	A walk around the estuary at Newport to look for migrant birds, waders & wildfowl. Meet at Parrog Carpark for 10:30 start.	John Steer: 01646 278966
15 th April	Community Wildlife Projects in and Around Pembroke	News on community projects in the area. 19:30 – 21:15 at Foundry House Community Centre, Pembroke.	Lynda@thehicklings.co.uk
26 – 30 April	Identifying Seaweed course, Dale Fort.	A five day course on Identifying seaweeds. For more information, see: http://www.field-studies-council.org/media/872081/	Tel: 0845 3307365 E-mail: enquiries.df@field-studies-council.org



Biodiversity Newsletters

Mae'r cylch-lythyr hwn ar gael yng Nghymraeg, cysylltwch â Ant am gopi cymraeg.

PBP would like to thank all those who contributed to this newsletter. If you would like to write an article for the next newsletter please contact Ant.

PBP Contact Details

Biodiversity Implementation Officer:

Ant Rogers. Tel - 01437 764551

anthony.rogers@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Pembrokeshire Biodiversity website:

www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk (search - biodiversity)

Wales Biodiversity website:

www.biodiversitywales.org.uk

PBP Members



County Landowners Association



Farmers Union of Wales



Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group



Keep Wales Tidy



MANOR HOUSE Wildlife Park



National Farmers Union – Wales



Natural Resources Wales



Pembroke 21C Community Association Limited



Pembrokeshire County Council



Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority



Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development



Prince's Trust Cymru



Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



The National Trust



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales

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