

## HWT Ross Branch Newsletter September 2025

As summer winds down and I'm surprised by how early it is getting dark on a daily basis, we want to share some highlights from recent months and let you know what's coming up next for our branch! As always, it's been wonderful to see so many people joining us at events, supporting the trusts' work, and celebrating nature together.

### Regen Ben Farm Visit - Friday 1st August

What a fantastic evening! At the start of August, we and over 40 other people were welcomed to Townsend Farm by Ben Taylor-Davies (Regen Ben). Following on from his inspiring talk, Ben gave us a tour of his farm to see regenerative practices in action. It was a fascinating evening, from herbal leys to diverse crop rotations, showing how farming can work together with nature. The visit was well attended, and many came away inspired by what can be achieved through a shift in mindset and land management. Our thanks to Ben for his generosity in sharing his knowledge, his food and drink and for welcoming us so warmly!

### Coming Up - Mobile Planetarium with the Usk Astronomical Society

We're now turning our eyes to the skies! On **Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> of September**, we're hosting a special evening with the **Mobile Planetarium at The Venue, Ross Baptist Church**. Step inside the dome for an immersive journey through the night sky (no clear weather required!).

There will be **two sessions, one at 6:30pm (6:15 arrival) and the second at 7:30pm (7:15 arrival)**, each lasting around **45 minutes**. Numbers are limited to 20 per session and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Suggested donations are £10 for adults and £5 for children, and light refreshments will be available.

**If you would like to reserve a space, you need to email [hwtrossbranch@gmail.com](mailto:hwtrossbranch@gmail.com).**

We're really looking forward to this unique, family-friendly event, and if it proves popular, we'll look at running more sessions in the future!

### Coming Up - Autumn Talk Series

As the evenings draw in, we'll also be starting our annual Autumn Talk Series on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October**! These events are always a highlight of the year, bringing together expert speakers, local stories and plenty of inspiration. More details, including topics, dates and venues, will follow in next month's newsletter, so do keep an eye out.

If you have Facebook, you can join our Facebook group where we will regularly post updates regarding our talk series. You can do so here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/756402213041005> or type Ross-On-Wye Branch into your search bar and you should find us.

### Coming Up - Wild About Gardens Workshop

We're pleased to share advance notice of the next **Wild About Gardens workshop** with the Wild About Gardens Team, which will take place on **Saturday 25th October, 2-5pm at St Mary's Church Hall**.

The workshop back in March was a real success, sparking plenty of ideas and discussion about how to make gardens more wildlife-friendly regardless of the size. We're excited to be running another one this autumn, and we'll have more details to share in next month's newsletter.

Bookings aren't open yet, but for now do **save the date** as we'd love to see you there!



## Looking Ahead - A New Chapter

We have two important updates to share.

First, our branch will soon become the South Branch of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. This change reflects the wider area we represent, not just Ross, and gives us a stronger, more inclusive identity moving forward. Our reserves, events, and volunteering opportunities will continue as before, simply under a new name. We're excited to begin this new chapter and to keep building a welcoming community across South Herefordshire.

### **Second, some news from our Chair, Andrew De La Haye:**

"I have been the chair of the Ross branch for over 2 years now, but I am soon going to engage in another project for a year or two, building a house and integrating it into the landscape. Therefore now is the time to step aside from the role of leader of the group and ask that someone else takes up the next stage of work, either temporarily until the house is complete or permanently if desired.

Over the last 2 years the committee has developed into a cohesive group of passionate and active people who have expanded the horizons of the trust in South Herefordshire.

We would also like to change the name of the branch to HWT South in recognition that the area covered is indeed South Herefordshire and not just Ross on Wye and hopefully we can organise across more of the South than currently. We would also change the role description to Leader rather than Chair and the change the Committee to the Team. Chair sounds so dry and formal whereas the role is actually a joyful one leading to many interesting and productive relationships with local people and organisations. I have certainly had a great time doing it and hope that somebody out there will be excited to follow on.

So we are asking for somebody to step forward to become the first Leader of the South Branch Team of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. Please respond to [hwtrossbranch@gmail.com](mailto:hwtrossbranch@gmail.com) if you would like to know more and I would be very happy to hear from you.

Plus we would like to continue to grow our team and invite any enthusiastic volunteers to develop our work further by joining our Herefordshire Wildlife Trust South Branch Team. If you have enjoyed the events we have organised this last couple of years and would now like to help do more then again contact us at [hwtrossbranch@gmail.com](mailto:hwtrossbranch@gmail.com)." Andrew De La Haye

If you are interested in taking on the role, or would simply like to know more, please contact [hwtrossbranch@gmail.com](mailto:hwtrossbranch@gmail.com). Andrew would be delighted to chat about what the role involves.

We are also looking to grow our team more generally. If you've enjoyed attending our events and would like to help shape what we do next, from talks and workshops to supporting our reserves, we'd love to hear from you.

We are enormously grateful to Andrew for all his hard work, energy, and vision over the past two years, and we wish him every success with his exciting new project.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event, and to sharing this exciting new chapter with you as the South Branch of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.

The Ross Branch Committee

