

Ryburgh Wildlife Group December 2025 Newsletter

I have to admit I've been caught on the hop a bit this month. An unexpected family health issue, the planting of over 1,500 bulbs, making a snowman, building an ark, and packing for a birthday holiday next week and suddenly it's midday on Sunday and I haven't written a single word for the December newsletter. So, I'm sitting on the lounge floor laptop open listening to some Khachaturian for inspiration.

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership. Your continued support really is vital so thank you.

I know we are probably feeling frustrated by all the rain we have had recently but it is helping fill our newly restored ponds.



Zombie pond by the old railway line. Photo by Barley Wilson.

We hope that water plants will emerge from seeds in the original pond base. The committee is looking for an individual to engage in the monitoring of the pond's re-emerging flora and fauna. Anyone interested should please contact a committee member. You don't have to be an expert, just keen to make a regular trip and note what you see. If you find something you don't recognise, we can find an expert to help.

I know our ponds are filling up but we have a long way to go to fill our reservoirs. I went to the "last Hurrah" steam train event on the Great Central Railway in Loughborough last weekend. On the Friday storm Claudia deposited lots of water and several fields and watercourses were flooded, but one of the reservoirs alongside the railway was still only about 50% full. More water may now made its way into it by now, but there's still a great deal of water that needs to be captured ready for next year.

The recent walk in Sennowe park to see special trees made me think of our relationship with trees. Mankind has been managing trees for hundred years. There are three main types of management: coppicing, cutting the tree back to ground level to stimulate new growth from the woodland floor; pollarding, cutting branches around head height; and stripping, removing all the side branches from the main trunk.

Coppiced wood regrowth could be used for things like broom handles, making hurdles or making charcoal. Pollarded branches and foliage were often used to feed livestock and ensured that the tree produced new growth at a height that would have been easy to crop in future years. Stripping too produced branches and foliage that was fed to livestock.

Take a trip into some woodland near you and see if you can spot any old coppiced or pollarded trees. Tell us what you find and where. Email us at info.ryburghwildlife@gmail.com.

Dates and events for your diary

Saturday 31st January 2026 – 4.15pm 2nd annual Wassail! with Holt Ridge Morris.
This will take the same format as last year with the celebration in the community woodland followed by morris dancing and some joining-in dances in the memorial hall.

Last year Barley and Mike from the committee became the Wassail Queen and King. Let's hope this year for new temporary monarchs. Feel free to put your name in the frame.

We plan to play some folk music tunes during the evening too. If you have an instrument that you can easily transport and you fancy playing some folk tunes, do bring them along and join in. I played in a music session in a busy pub following the City of London Lady Mayor's Show and it was great to see so many people tapping their feet in time with the music.

The Pop-up-Pub will also be in attendance so too will be Askers woodfired pizza van.

Monday 2nd February 2026 – Ryburgh Wildlife Group AGM

This will be in the memorial hall. The AGM will recap what the Group has achieved this year; how our local wildlife hotspots are faring; its finances; and our plans for 2026.

Do come along. We still have space for a couple more committee members. If you like to become a committee member, please let us know.

After the formal AGM there will be an illustrated talk by Janet Smith on hedgehogs. The challenges they face; how people can help; and the work of Ryston Rachel's Hedgehog Hotel. We all know hedgehogs are in trouble and I'm sure this will be a fascinating talk. Do please register by email to info.ryburghwildlife@gmail.com for the AGM and the talk.

Advert

We are down to just a handful of RWG 2026 calendars. We are not printing any more copies so as Aldi would say "when they're gone, they're gone".

The price of the calendar is £9.50. They are available from the village shop, or you can order directly from Gill Waldron by phone - 01328 829158. All the photos have been taken by members of the wildlife group. We have some talented photographers.

Caption Corner



Can you think of a good caption for this photo from Barley Wilson? I'll publish the best next month. My offering is, Mike asking two of the group "*ok who stole the carpet I was carrying?*".

Normal service resumed next month when I'm another older, not sure about wiser though.

David

Membership Secretary