

Ryburgh Wildlife Group Christmas supplement

It's that time of the year when newspapers and magazines produce Christmas specials. Not to be outdone here's our Christmas supplement.

Thankfully the Winter solstice is now in the past and we can look forward to longer days.

Unless you are a last-minute shopper, by now presents will have been bought and wrapped. Food and drink stocked up ready for celebratory gatherings. Vocal cords will be put to the test with the singing of carols and winter songs. This is no different to the past but one task we don't normally have to worry about any longer is the cutting of the Yule log. This would have been a large log that had to burn throughout the twelve days of Christmas.

Another rural custom that has thankfully fallen out of practice is the ***Hunting of the Wren – the king of the birds***. The wren was considered the king of the birds following a competition when all the species set out to see who could fly the highest. The eagle soared high and thought it had won until someone pointed out that on its head was perched a wren who was therefore proclaimed the winner and thus the King of the Birds.

Like all old customs there are local variations but generally the custom was that on St. Stephens day a group of people would hunt and kill a wren. The wren would then be decorated and paraded around to people to bring them good luck for the year ahead in return for giving some money.

If you want to sing something different this year why not try singing While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks to the tunes of Cranbrook (Ilkley Moor fame), Crimond (23rd psalm fame), Liverpool or Pentonville. Tell me which one you enjoyed the most.

Merry Christmas



David

Membership Secretary

ps – no squirrels were harmed in the making of this picture taken by Julie Bunker 😊