

Medlock & Tame Valley Conservation Association Newsletter



Spring/Summer 2017



**Welcome to the 2017
Spring/Summer edition
of our newsletter.**

**So, what's been
happening since our
last newsletter...**

Well, the work of conservation both within and without the walls of Burlinson House has been slow and methodical and has certainly produced results. The refurbishment of the house is now almost complete with only the flooring and part wallpapering of the bathroom outstanding. There are of course general maintenance jobs which are ongoing as with any house and some of these include pointing of some brickwork to the front and side of the house, clearing the guttering, de-greening the garage roof, keeping the pathways clear, cutting back unruly thorns and shrubs and some jobs needing to be undertaken in the roof space.



Burlinson House, 5 Oaken Clough Terrace, Ashton under Lyne, OL7 9NY
E: mtvca@yahoo.co.uk W: www.medlockandtame.org.uk T:07989 147095

Registered Charity No. 504558

Continued...

Thank you to David Borrell, one of our members, who has applied his joinery skills to hanging a couple of new doors with new surrounds for us in the kitchen, upstairs and on the landing and office. This has made a noticeable difference. Also thank you to other members who have kept the birds in and around our garden well fed and satisfied. Your gifts have been much appreciated by them, and us!

The bathroom has been a huge undertaking in terms of work and finances and the basic work was finished at the end of November 2016. I'm sure you can see the radical improvement from the photographs. A little bit more 'spit and polish' needs to be applied by way of floor and wall coverings and we should have it looking spic and span by end of Spring.

Greenhouse – We commenced the growing period last year since the greenhouse had been tidied and compost and tubs were purchased with great excitement. Tomato plants were put into the greenhouse around end Feb/beginning of March but because of little light due to so many trees in the vicinity, alas did not produce a harvest (flowers were produced but too late in the season to bear fruit). We will have to consider this when discussing our planting ideas for this year. It would be a good source of income for MTVCA at our meetings were we able to grow some fruit and vegetables.

One of our bird boxes (at least one we know about) had a new resident family last year. We had a blue tit flying in and out of the nest and we were able to observe them through the back room window of Burlinson House. What a delight that was and makes everything we do in the garden very worthwhile!

Our most recently made pond in the butterfly and bee garden produced so much frog spawn last year and all successfully hatched. We observed them until they were almost 8 weeks old. When we returned to see them they had all disappeared and we have not seen any since! Hopefully they are making their merry way in the world. We were all very pleased at this effort as, for the last couple of years, our frog spawn all but disappeared in the large pond and it was thought that the newts had them on their menu. We will watch intently from now on to see what happens.

OUR NEW PROGRAMME FOR 2017



20 March	Wine & Cheese Evening with overview of the work of MTVCA
24 April	Owls
22 May	Lichens & Mosses with a walk around the grounds for identification purposes
26 June	Herbs and their uses
24 July	Moths
26 August	Pond Dipping (2.30 pm)
25 Sept.	Hydroponics

All events start at 7.15 as usual except for the pond dipping. Please ensure if you are coming to the events by car that you park at the Oldham Road End of Oaken Clough, as parking is strictly limited. Alternatively, a bus from Ashton bus station runs regularly and stops almost at the end of Oaken Clough.

All events are open to the public. £2 per person £5 per family including refreshments.

CAN YOU THINK OF ANY WAYS YOU COULD HELP MTVCA BY WAY OF RESOURCES?

The work of conservation is vital in caring for our wildlife, protecting species and securing their habitats. We want to ensure that we always have enough funds for outdoor projects and equipment to do just that. Could you...

- Hold a coffee morning at your home as a fundraiser for MTVCA?
- Organise a sponsored activity such as a book-read; sponsored walk; sponsored silence; short run?
- What about a car boot sale? We would be happy to contribute books and some tables for you to use?
- A one-off donation to secure compost/seeds/bird food/gardening tools?

All help much appreciated!



Bird Seed is always welcome as there are many birds that visit the grounds of Burlinson House.



Thank you to all who have contributed in the past in this way. We can't ALL do physical work in the garden but there are many other small ways that you can support the work which are very important and all contribute to the success of what we as a group are doing. Any garden donations of birdbaths, garden seats, flower bulbs, compost etc. are welcome.

Just a reminder that every Saturday on site from 12 midday, several of us are at Burlinson House doing various tasks around the grounds and inside the house. If you wish to come along it would be good to see you. Bring a packed lunch, enjoy a cuppa with the team and have a guided tour to see all of what has been happening. Strong shoes recommended!



Above is a photo of our on-site herb tablet, which was refurbished in November 2016 . In the Spring time we will be refreshing with fresh compost, herbs and labels. The new programme this year includes an evening on "Medicinal Herbs and their uses." Don't miss it!

Extracts from Butterfly Conservation & British Butterflies and UK Butterflies website



Energy Labs – Update

We were keen to get a measure of the turbine performance on site so over the last few weeks we have been monitoring the wind turbine to record the output during the week - when we can't be there.

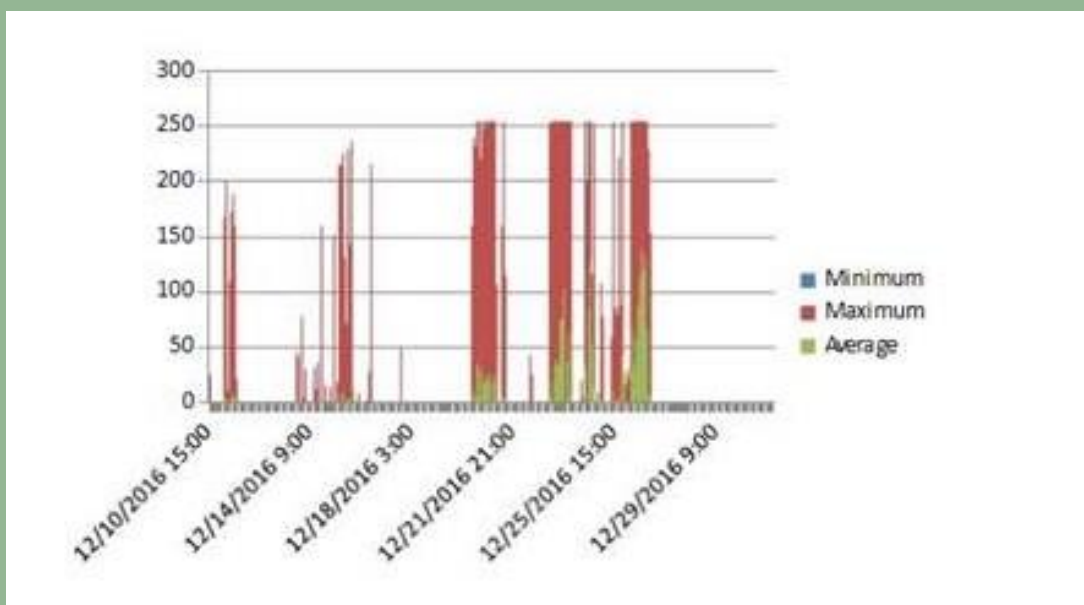
We have computed the minimum, maximum and average output for each hour during the period we were monitoring. The graph on the next page, shows how the output varies for a period of three weeks. The equipment uses an analogue to digital converter calibrated to show a peak reading of 255 for an input of 20V. There are peaks in output exceeding 20V during the Christmas period when we experienced heavy winds.

We have also been experimenting with a new kind of electrochemical cell which is based on the osmotic potential between two different salt solutions. Metal ions from a concentrated solution migrate across a paper membrane to a less concentrated solution generating an electric current. The concentrated solution could be made by evaporating liquid using the heat from a solar concentrator, which would provide a new way of exploring solar energy. The results of the first experiment only generated a very small voltage but it was enough to demonstrate the effect. We are investigating ways to improve the performance. For anyone who wants to learn more the video clip which inspired this experiment can be found at :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfvmAom8ZnA>

Lee and Carl Borrell

Our renewable energy lab has invested in a digital weather station in order to record the weather daily, with the information being collated and recorded at the end of each week. It will be fully customized to No. 5 and we can record the weather and its effects on the surrounding garden areas and wildlife, currently and as a reference in years to come. We hope to record wind function/direction/force/; rain levels; temperature; air pressure; rain forecasts; solar energy. This will be a new venture for the group this year and will be very interesting and informative to have as a record. It is also information we could possibly share with other wildlife groups in the region.



Membership: Whilst it is exciting and rewarding to be involved in MTVCA at the present time, our membership is on the decline and we need you to help us publicise the work by telling your neighbours, friends and family about what we are trying to achieve. The website is an excellent resource as is Facebook. If you aren't 'computer minded' then we are happy to meet and greet at No. 5 for guided tours and to share further information. This is something all of us can do. As our membership are getting older we need 'new blood' and new energy in the group and so we must think of the future to secure the success of the important work the MTVCA does. Please help us to do this. If you have opportunity to share with other groups you may belong to, and wish us to come to speak at a meeting, then please contact me (Susan) on the telephone number on the back page to arrange. Attached, toward the back of the newsletter, is a membership application form. Please feel free to make use of it if you need to renew your own membership or pass on to interested parties!

BUMBLE BEES

At the close of 2016, the December issue of the Telegraph reported the following:



Butterfly and bee numbers are plummeting because Britain has not had a good summer since 2006, the National Trust has said following its annual review of its estates.

A decade of unsettled weather, with ‘pulses’ of extremely wet conditions in June, July and August has led to a boom in grass growth which has squeezed out the natural wildflower habitats required by insects to survive.

Bumblebee numbers on the Trust’s Somerset estate of Lytes Cary have fallen by 85 per cent since last year while at Purbeck in Dorset, meadow butterfly populations declined by 73 per cent.

Common blue butterflies have struggled this year.

However the weather has been good news for fruit crops, with cider producers claiming that the mild autumn produced apples which were sweeter and juicier than usual.

Farmers have also been rewarded with a bumper year for livestock grazing, haymaking and silage while the long growing season has benefitted damsons, acorns and hazelnuts.

It is the tenth year that the National Trust has conducted its annual review, to find out how wildlife and farming is being affected by changing weather patterns at its estates.

In the past decade experts have noticed that winters are becoming milder and summers wetter, which is having a devastating effect on warmth-loving insects, their bird and bat predators, and many low-growing plants.

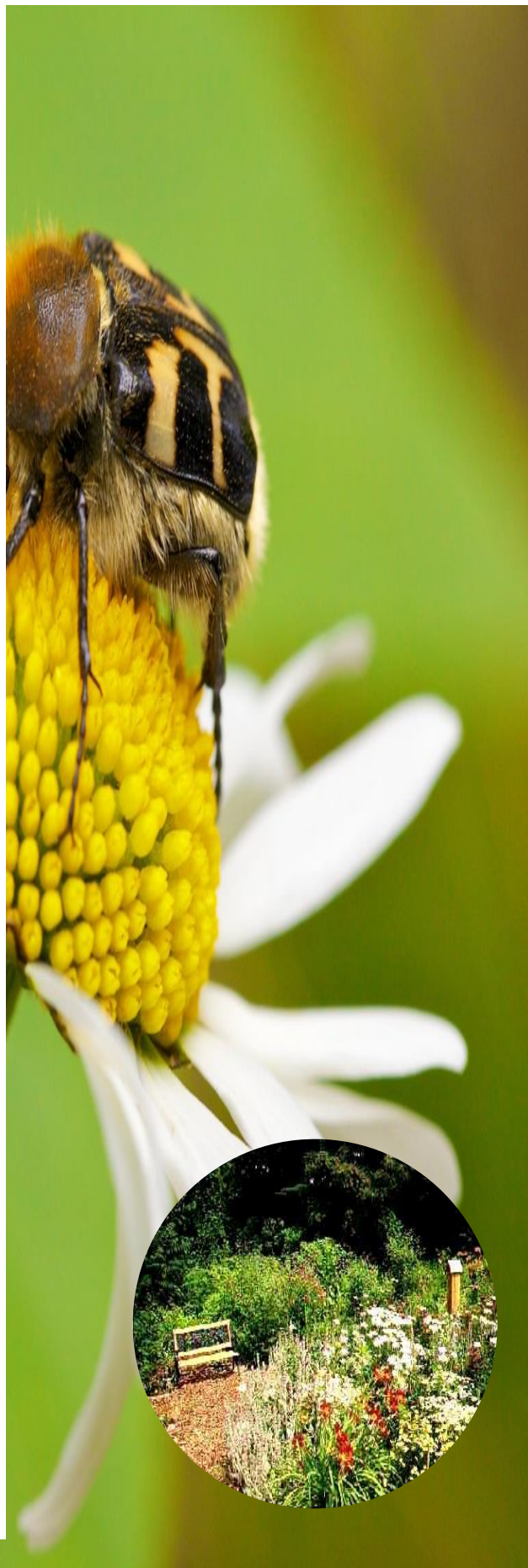
National Trust nature expert Matthew Oates said: “In the ten years we’ve been reviewing wildlife at our places we’ve noticed pulses of unsettled weather become the norm. We last enjoyed a good summer in 2006.

“Really all summers since 2006 have been damaged by significant spells of inclement weather, and much of the best weather has been restricted to some parts of the UK. The best, most reliable month has been September, which is rather too late in the year.

“Mild winters and periodically wet summers have seen common wasp numbers apparently slump in many parts of the country, along with common ‘meadowland’ insects like the common blue butterfly.

“This could have a knock on effect on the invertebrates, birds and bats that eat them and what affects insects today could well affect us tomorrow.”

Once we have our new herb tablet at 5 Oaken Clough Terrace topped up with compost and herbs, our on-site honeybees and local butterflies will benefit. We’ll try to catch a photograph of the refurbished tablet when finished, together with a few of the bees and butterflies posing and smiling for us as a reward for our efforts! “Smile and say nectar”!





MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL FORM

Subscriptions due October each year

Individual: £10 each year [] Please tick box

Concessionary: £7.50 each year []

Household: £15 each year []

Donation (Optional) £.....

Names(s)

.....

Address & Post code

.....

Phone No Mobile Phone No

E-mail

.....

Signature

If you are a taxpayer and complete as simple Gift Aid declaration we can reclaim the tax paid on your donation and significantly increase the value of your gift at no extra cost to you.

I would like the MTVCA to treat all donations I make on or after the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations until I notify you otherwise.

Signature Date

.....

Please remember to tell us if you no longer pay tax.

Please either send your completed form and cheque made payable to: "MTVCA"

To: MTVCA, Burlinson House, 5 Oaken Clough Terrace, Ashton under Lyne OL7 9NY

OR:

Pay by Bank Transfer to our account: MTVCA Sort code: 010608 Account number: 43550452

Please type your name in "reference details" when making the transfer.

We will e-mail a receipt when payment has been received.

Registered Charity Number: 504558

www: medlockandtame.org.uk E-mail: mtvca@yahoo.co.uk

Phone: 07989 147095 or 0161 330 9959



Committee members

Chairman: Bryan Stringer

Vice Chairman: Paul Lythgoe

Secretary: Susan Stewart
Tel: 07989147095

Treasurer: Jean Lythgoe

Newsletter: Susan Stewart
thepliedes@yahoo.co.uk

Webmaster: Lee Borrell

Other committee members: Katie Caine

Membership Fees

- Individual Adult: £10.00 per annum
- Family: £15 per annum
- Concessionary: £7.50 per annum

Burlinson House, 5 Oaken Clough Terrace, Ashton under Lyne, OL7 9NY
E: mtvca@yahoo.co.uk
W: www.medlockandtame.org.uk
T: 07989 147095

Registered Charity No. 504558

