

## **FoHCPNR 2025 events programme**

### **Saturday 18th Jan. 2025, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the Isabel Blackman Centre Standing up for Trees, with Emma Lansdell from The Woodland Trust.**

The glens of the Nature Reserve are classic examples of woods with steep sided valleys, known locally as 'gills' ('ghylls' is an alternative spelling). Emma's talk, "Standing up for Trees", covers the work of the Woodland Trust nationally, with an emphasis on the importance of ancient woodlands, such as those in the Reserve's glens, woodland restoration and the conservation of veteran trees. Emma will also bring a local focus by looking at the significance of the woodlands of Sussex, including gill ancient woodlands.

Emma has extensive experience as an ecologist and landscape manager, having worked in local government in London, Bucks and Kent where her last role was 'Plan Bee officer', implementing the county's pollinator strategy. Emma has also undertaken consultancy work and worked for wildlife charities. After moving to East Sussex she became a regional speaker for the Woodland Trust whilst volunteering on one of their flagship sites in Kent.

### **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 2025, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the Isabel Blackman Centre Whales In Our Waters, with Callum Mair from ORCA.**

In today's talk members and guests will have the opportunity to learn about ORCA's conservation work and the species of cetaceans found around the British Isles, including harbour porpoise and bottlenose dolphins, the species most likely to be seen along the local coast. Callum will also explain how to identify these amazing mammals.

Callum joined ORCA in 2019, initially conducting surveys with the Marine Mammal Surveyor programme. Now an Ocean Conservationist, Callum travels on cruises around the world to share his passion for cetaceans and teach others about how to help the creatures we share our home with. Callum specialises in telling stories about nature, and worked with TV production companies, museums, charities and universities before beginning his freelance career.

### **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2025, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the Isabel Blackman Centre Landscape Geology, with Ken Brooks**

Today we are quite familiar with the hills and valleys that surround us, but the creation of these very different landscapes is a fascinating story. We will look at the geological evidence, such as the results of continental collision and the continuing processes of erosion and deposition. Other features to be discussed and illustrated will include the chalk downs, glaciers, river valleys and erosion of the Fairlight coast.

After twenty years as a schoolteacher, Ken moved into adult education as a tutor specialising in history and geology. In 1992 Ken's enthusiasm for earth sciences led to his formation of the Hastings and District Geological Society. He was later awarded the Halsted Medal by the Geologists' Association, and published *Geology and Fossils of the Hastings Area*. He also appeared on 'The Sussex Coast with Kate Humble', contributing a piece on fossils found on the local coast.

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the Isabel Blackman Centre  
Hazel Dormice, with Sophie Streeter**

Few of us will be fortunate enough to see these tiny mammals which, regrettably, are listed as vulnerable to extinction in the British Isles. In order to learn more, we are delighted to welcome Sophie to tell us about the life of the hazel dormouse, why they are so rarely encountered, and why they have become a nationally threatened species.

Sophie has long had a love of the natural world. She volunteers at RSPB Fore Wood completing conservation work and surveys. Recent work has seen her involved with surveying dormice nest boxes, and this has led her to assisting at RSPB Broadwater Warren too. She holds a dormice handling licence, and is licenced to complete dormouse surveys, and offers advice within the local community about dormice.

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025, from 10:30 – 12.30 p.m. in the Nature Reserve.  
Identifying birds, with James Duncan**

We are delighted that James has agreed to lead another guided walk in the Nature Reserve. It will be an excellent opportunity to extend your knowledge of the species to be found there in late spring.

James has an enviable knowledge of birds. He is Communities and Wildlife Officer with Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) and has become a regular, valued contributor to our Events Programme. He has described himself as ‘fanatical about conservation and the natural world and wanting to share that.’ James has a wide range of interests in conservation and is a keen and accomplished photographer. SWT’s website articles ‘Archive of: James Duncan’ are well worth looking up.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025, from 10:30 – 3:00p.m. in the Nature Reserve.  
Creating A Portrait of Hastings Country Park, with John Cole.**

We are delighted to offer you the opportunity to hone your photography skills working with John Cole. The session will commence with a short discussion of a few photography basics and then looking at some of the greats of wildlife/nature photography. Participants will then move on to a supervised photographic shoot, culminating in a review of the pictures taken and a feedback session. Participants are encouraged to bring their own cameras, but further information will be circulated prior to the day. There will be a charge of £10.00 for this event.

John has worked successfully as a professional photographer for over forty years, specialising in reportage and documentary photography for leading international publications. He has also worked as a teacher and lecturer at the London College of Printing, University of Westminster and Sussex Coast College. John is probably best known for his photos of the Hastings fishing community, which were published in Generations: Hastings Fishing Families. To see more of John's work, please visit his website <http://www.johncole.co.uk>

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025, from 10:30 – 12.30 p.m. in the Nature Reserve.  
Plants of the East Hill, Hastings, with Judy Clark and Jacqueline Rose**

This is a chance to join Judy and Jacqueline on one of their popular guided walks. This year they will be looking at the flora at the western end of the Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve (HCPNR). The East Hill was recently included in the management plan for the Reserve and is now being managed for the benefit of wild plants and insects. It might look as if there’s not a lot besides grasses, but the area is surprisingly diverse, with a good variety of plants within a relatively small area. Come along and discover what is growing there.

Jacqueline and Judy are field botanists with many years’ experience recording plants in East Sussex. For the past 10 years they have conducted vegetation surveys in HCPNR as part of the monitoring of the Higher Level Stewardship agreement. When this became the Countryside Stewardship agreement in 2024 they continued to survey the flora in the Nature Reserve. These agreements provide government funding to Hastings Borough Council for the management of HCPNR.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2025, from 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. at The Stable Studios, Fairlight Place Farm, Barley Lane, Hastings, TN35 5DT**  
**Open studios, with local artists.**

The building that became The Stables Studio was originally the farm's coach house, stables and walled garden. It now houses a thriving picture framing business and artists' studios. We are pleased to have several local artists who are based there available to talk about their working practices and answer questions about their work, which will be on show. They live locally and are influenced by the natural world in East Sussex and further afield.

Toilet facilities and refreshments will be available. Parking at the studio yard is limited so, unless they have mobility issues, visitors are kindly requested to park at the top of Barley Lane in the Nature Reserve car park and enjoy the walk to the studio.

The artists at The Stable Studios are:

Sally Cole

Sally is a landscape painter and printmaker. As an artist she wishes to reveal the mystery and majesty of the land - the essence of what we see and feel when looking at a landscape.

[www.sallycoleartist.co.uk](http://www.sallycoleartist.co.uk) [Instagram.com/hobbsavitch](https://www.instagram.com/hobbsavitch)

Anny Evason

Anny is mostly inspired by local landscape, often the Hastings Country Park and sometimes France. Anny's work is mostly black and white drawings and occasionally paintings.

[www.annyevason.com](http://www.annyevason.com) [Instagram.com/annyevason](https://www.instagram.com/annyevason)

Denise Franklin

Always inspired by the sensation of an encounter with the natural world, usually walking or swimming, Denise works in the studio where she endeavours to recreate the intensity of meditative walks or joyful moments of sublime wonder.

[www.denisefranklin.co.uk](http://www.denisefranklin.co.uk) [Instagram.com/denisefranklin6004](https://www.instagram.com/denisefranklin6004)

Sarah Palmer

Sarah works mainly in clay. Her work is constantly evolving and is inspired by the places she visits, memories, objects and emotions. She tends to create work in a series influenced by what she has recently experienced or seen.

[www.sarahpalmer.me.uk](http://www.sarahpalmer.me.uk) [Instagram.com/fairlightstablestudios](https://www.instagram.com/fairlightstablestudios)

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025, from 10:30 – 12.30 p.m. in the Nature Reserve.**  
**A Wellness 'Walk and Talk', with Kelly Morgan**

"Walking is the best medicine" is an aphorism appearing in many journals, books and online as a quote attributed to Hippocrates. Although there is dispute as to whether he said it or not, there is a wealth of support in favour of the benefits of walking. From keeping your heart healthy to mental wellbeing, going for a walk is good for you. Join Kelly on this 'walk and talk' to learn about some of the work the Friends and Volunteers do to maintain and improve habitats within the Reserve.

Kelly has a wide range of experience in ecological work and has helped manage projects within the Reserve. As a 'hands-on' contributor to habitat improvements in Hastings, such as scalloping woodland edges and creating bee banks, ideal for bees which nest in the ground, she is well placed to inform participants about recent work here.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2025, from 08:00 – 10.30 a.m. in the Nature Reserve.  
Migration watch, with Ralph Hobbs**

We welcome Ralph Hobbs again to lead this popular activity. The Country Park Nature Reserve provides a wonderful backdrop to the summer visitors heading across the Channel on their way to relatively warmer wintering grounds and some autumn arrivals to the UK which might also be seen. Which species participants might be treated to cannot be guaranteed. Be there to see what's about!

Ralph has been a keen naturalist and birder all his adult life, since first becoming interested in butterflies at junior school! With a degree in Zoology his career began in agricultural research and crop advisory work, before joining the Sussex Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group as a conservation adviser. He became a land management adviser for English Nature and Natural England, more recently working as a freelance ecologist. Ralph has enjoyed watching and studying birds and bird migration not only in Hastings Country Park and Sussex, but around the world. In retirement Ralph is kept busy as a trustee for the Amateur Entomologists' Society, and three nature reserve-owning NGOs.

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2025, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the Isabel Blackman Centre  
Bees and the Recovering Rare Bees in Hastings Project, with Andy Phillips**

Hastings is an exceptional urban area for bees with a diversity of botanically rich grasslands, wetlands and woodland. The exposed sandstone outcrops and soft rock cliff & undercliff habitats of Bulverhythe, Hastings Castle and Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve provide habitat for some of the rarest bees in the UK. This talk gives an overview of the bees of Hastings and the recent bee conservation work carried out by Groundwork South.

Andy Phillips has nearly three decades experience studying invertebrate ecology and currently specialises in urban ecology and wasps. His previous roles have included the Sussex Biodiversity Officer, Sussex Spider Recorder and Hastings Local Nature Reserve Officer but now works as a freelance Consultant Ecologist working on projects for Natural England, wildlife trusts, local authorities, RHS, National Trust, University of London, private landowners and charitable trusts.

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2025, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the Isabel Blackman Centre  
The Damselflies and Dragonflies of Sussex - a success story, with Alan Martin**

At a time when we are seeing a decline in much of our biodiversity, our Odonata (which includes Damselflies and Dragonflies) are doing rather well. In this talk Alan will describe some of the changes in distribution and population in Sussex over the last twenty years, and the new species that have arrived from the continent.

Alan has been interested in conservation and wildlife since he was a small boy, but recently he discovered the wonderful world of dragonflies and has been spending his time photographing and recording them in the local area. He lives nearby in Staplecross and is a trustee of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.