



## ORE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

*Seeking to acquire land in the Upper Ore Valley to save and enhance urban woodland and green space for community use and to protect animal habitat*



# Speckled Wood Newsletter

March 2017

*Spring! Spring! Spring! What a difference a month makes. Yesterday in Speckled Wood was just great: warm sunshine, little buds and spring flowers everywhere. We are so lucky that the Wood is in a valley: as soon as you head down, the traffic noise is gone and you are deep in nature. I can't say it was quiet though; the birds are on the move and what a chorus, it was like being in the rainforest! Wonderful twitters, squawks and cooing coming from all angles. I think the valley sides act as an amphitheatre, as the sound really was remarkable. You wouldn't believe Old London Road is a five minute walk away.*

*As I ascended the steps on the other side of the valley, I saw a young teenage girl coming down, on her way back from school. She stopped above me, looked up at the sky, spread her arms out and gave a big sigh, "It's so peaceful here" she said. We had a lovely chat, mostly about her amazing dreams of unicorns and dragons, but you could tell she was so grateful to have the Wood there. I realised that we just wouldn't have had that fun conversation if we had passed each other in the street.*

*Going down another path back to the stream, I saw a teenage boy: he was in the stream checking something out and his dog was supervising. He was enjoying being on his own, so I kept my distance, giving us both space to enjoy our own little worlds. It made me realise how important having the chance to have our own space is. Many thanks to Speckled Wood.*

*Here are some spring mood inducing scenes from Speckled Wood this month:*



*Please enjoy the wood when you can and send any photos you would like to share to our website, especially of Geometry in the Wood (for details, see February's Newsletter on our website). Use subject heading 'Newsletter' and how you would like to be named.*

## Present Activities

*Well, the major activity was our Spring Clean. Speckled Wood has accumulated debris from its past uses as allotments, pig keeping, housing and dumping ground so it was no mean feat to give it a clear up.*

*With thanks to a skip donation by HBC, which acted as a catalyst, we spent two days with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), dragging and piling up heavy bits of rubble in readiness for "Skip Day" on Saturday March 18th. It was a hard slog, but there was a thrill on the second day as we found the kitchen sink to add to our collection of 'everything but....'!*



*Finding some broken but serviceable chairs, an occasional table, to add to our freshly brewed tea and donated cup cakes; we had a lovely morning tea break in the sun: facing a small clump of daffodils and a huge pile of rubbish behind us!*

*Skip day on Saturday was blessed with more good weather, and we had a good crowd to lift the rubbish into the skip and do a general litter pick.*



## Wildlife in the Wood

*Things are bursting into life now, of course, and here are some of the flowers we found in the woods:*



Herb Robert



Forget-me-not



Wood anemone



Lesser celandine



Lesser celandine

*The Lesser Celandine is a member of the Buttercup family, although, it differs from its 5 petal cousins by having 7 to 12 petals. It was originally named Celandine due to its flowers resembling the Greater Celandine (which is in fact very different and a member of the poppy family). It is a woodland plant and emerges in early spring to take advantage of the light before the tree canopy forms*

*Herb Robert has many health properties and also acts as an insect deterrent. Some rub the fresh leaves on their skin to deter mosquitos or in a pet's bed to deter fleas. For the same reason, it is said to be a good companion plant for vegetables and flowers.*

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