

# The Clap



## Newsletter Mar 2025

**Welcome to the Spring 2025 GBG newsletter!**

# Badgers and planning

Members of the public regularly contact GBG with concerns over housing development projects and badger setts, and the government's commitment to "build more" and unblock infrastructure means that this issue will only get more pressing over the next few years.

**If you are aware of a badger sett that is affected by ongoing or planned construction work, there are a number of steps you can take:**

- Contact your local council to check if there is planning consent and/or a planning reference number.
- Check if there has been an ecological or badger survey and, if so, try to obtain a copy.
- Obtain details of the developer, the landowner and the ecologist.
- Check local knowledge about any setts in the area. If there are, you can check whether the sett is active as defined by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Is there currently adequate protection of the sett?

- Inform Badger Trust/police/wildlife crime officers if necessary.
- Write to the planners about your concerns regarding the badgers.



- Liaise with your local badger group.

A recent DEFRA press release unveiling proposals to "*unblock vital infrastructure and drive nature's recovery*" suggests that many such projects will be accelerated by means of a proposed *Nature Restoration Fund* aimed at enabling developers to meet their environmental obligations faster.

Developers will be able to "*pool contributions to fund larger strategic interventions for nature.*"

While further details as to what this means are thin on the ground, it does look as if the government is signalling major changes around the planning process and these are likely to impact unfavourably on badgers.

Badger Trust is currently looking into this proposal and will be providing more information shortly.

## Sett for spring!



**As we know, badgers live in social groups of around seven individuals and mating occurs year round, but mainly from February to May.**

Regardless of when the mating occurs, badgers can delay implantation meaning cubs will not be born until February. This means, after spending a couple of months underground, they can emerge in mid to late spring when their food source is good and the weather is warming up.

Young badgers may sometimes leave their family group and join another territory.

Just like us, badgers like to have clean bedding. They will drag out old bedding of leaves, moss, straw and hay that they have used for a while and replace it with fresh materials. Keeping the sett clean reduces the risk of infestations of lice, ticks and fleas and provides a safe environment for the cubs.

They leave the bedding in the entrance to air or discard and get new!

***A brief look at what badgers get up to throughout the rest of the year...***

**January** Female badgers are pregnant. Badger activity is irregular this month.

**February** This is the peak time for cub births. It is also the height of badgers' mating season.

**March** Badgers are now very active. As a result, sadly many are killed by road traffic at this time of year. At the sett, much bedding collection takes place.

**April** Cubs are now exploring their setts, right up to the entrance holes. Many will emerge for the first time this month.

**May** Badger cubs are now exploring the areas around their setts, making May a good month to start badger watching.

**June** Most cubs should be weaned by the end of this month. However, in dry weather, mothers may suckle their cubs for longer. Badgers will emerge in daylight in undisturbed areas.

**July** Cubs are now around half the weight of an adult badger, and are finding food for themselves. Droughts may lead to more badgers being killed by road traffic.

**August** Badgers do a lot of digging at their setts this month. If earthworms are scarce, badgers will take other foods such as cereal crops and fruits.

**September** This month many badgers will be gathering bedding material and taking it down into their setts. This is part of their preparations for winter.

**October** Feeding is the main priority for badgers this month, as badgers need to put on fat to see them through the winter. Fortunately, there are now lots of fruits for badgers to eat.

**November** Badger activity levels gradually decline during November. The badgers start coming out later, and there is very little mating activity.

**December** Badgers may spend a lot of time sleeping in their setts this month. Because of this, fewer badgers are killed by road traffic. The fertilised eggs of female badgers now implanted in the uterus and start developing



## Wild Service by Nick Hayes

**“It’s a call to action that might just be the founding text for a new environmentalism”**

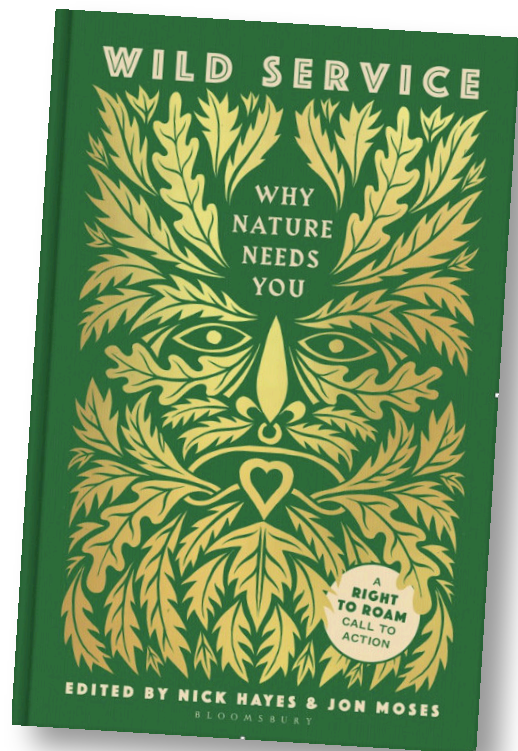
*Patrick Barkham, The Guardian*

This quirky, articulate anthology of essays and case studies on how to reconnect with the land and nature is a must-read for anyone passionate about healing the environment and our toxic relationship with it. *‘Wild Service’* is a meditative exploration of the various concepts of service to nature – like homage, guardianship, healing and reconnection, but is neither dull or difficult to read.

Written by two of the leading protagonists of the Right to Roam movement, the book is elegantly structured, with inspirational stories of people who’ve made a difference by following their passion for nature. These tales are interleaved with explorations of the different concepts of wild service.

The book is named after the *wild service tree*, once common throughout England but which now are vanishingly rare.

The authors see wild service as a culture of connection and care that must be re-established in our interaction with the land to replace the current attitude of pillage, exploitation and destruction. They draw on knowledge of indigenous philosophies which see kinship, reciprocity, guardianship and community as vectors for a more traditional relationship with nature. It all sounds a bit heavy – but it isn’t, in spite of the jargon.



The wild service tree  
(*Sorbus terminalis*)

For me, the most inspirational parts of the book were the case studies (*Wild Service in Action*) of how people had been lovingly reconnecting with nature.

One describes how Becca, a 12-year-old girl with a love of butterflies, uses the family garden to restore habitat suitable to sustain thousands of individual butterflies by allowing plants like garlic mustard, stinging nettles and summer lilac to flourish.

Another describes how a Syrian migrant and PhD student opted to live alone on Coquet Island monitoring and studying seabirds like puffins and roseate terns.



## Wild Service review continued



He developed an incredible affinity to the birds and a massive connection with the island, but despite this strong sense of belonging, 13 years of legal employment and forging a natural bond with his environment, he's still waiting for his UK residency.

The sections dealing with the concepts of wild service are written by artists, poets, landowners and conservationists, and range from the whimsical *'Belonging'* to the contemplative *'Inheritance'* and the political *'Kinship'*, and are often highly personal and idiosyncratic.

Harry Jenkinson, in his chapter *Kinship'*, points out that the natural world is not threatened today by who we are as a species but by how our political systems treat it.

He writes: *"In Britain today, beavers are praised for their role as ecosystem engineers, creating vital biodiversity-enhancing habitats...But humans are also ecosystem engineers and when we are properly connected with nature, we too know how to care for it."*

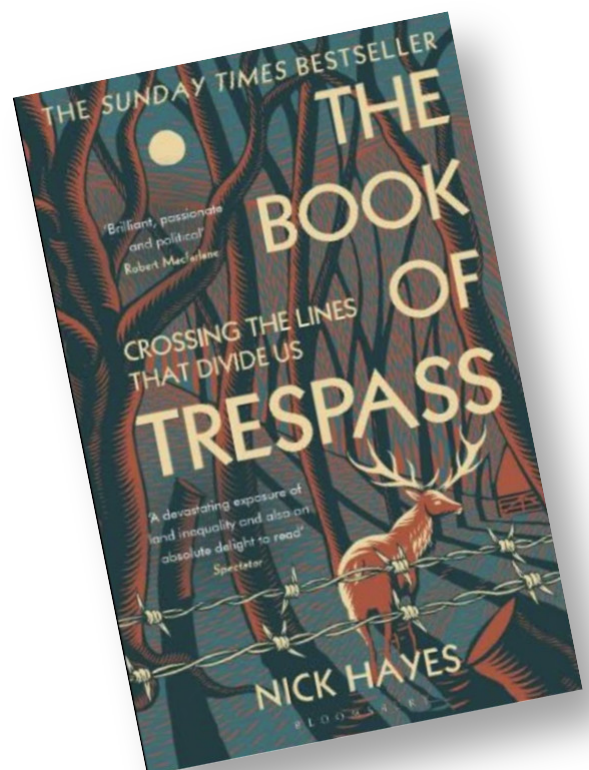
*Around the world there are inspiring*

*indigenous examples of such care, even in the face of the fiercest adversity."*

For Nick Hayes, a renaissance of nature in culture can only happen alongside challenging property rights which exclude others from the land.

Badger protectors are inherently part of the wider **Right to Roam** movement, which seeks to reclaim access rights to the countryside lost in the aftermath of the Enclosures Acts of the eighteenth century. Those checking badger setts are often forced to take the footpath less travelled to keep an eye on vulnerable setts on private property, so this book will strike an immediate chord.

**An important and stimulating read, and one enhanced by Nick Hayes' beautiful illustrations, but not as exciting as his earlier "Book of Trespass", which I would thoroughly recommend to all.**





# Brock

by Anna Saunders



## Brock

Unseen Architect  
how immaculate is your work -

your arched entrances are Romanesque,  
your caverns hold a byzantine dark.

Invisible archaeologist,  
your body excavates the past,

you unearth dinner plates, smashed glasses  
minute green ink bottles, an oyster shell.

I pay you in the scattering of alms,  
broken brazil nuts and berries.  
Small change for the relics you offer me.

Who have you met down there, *brock*,  
Whose grandfather, whose great aunt?

Those who have passed  
keep company with you.

At home I brush soil from chipped plates,  
decipher ant-small lettering  
hold up the ink bottle as the light floods in.

Ancient landowner, how generous you are.

You share your earth – and you have gifted me  
the entire night sky – look *brock*,  
my soiled tips  
carry black crescent moons.

**Anna Saunders** has been described as a “*poet who surely can do anything*” by **The North**, a ‘*modern mythmaker*’ by **Paul Stephenson**, and **Tears in the Fence** said of her “*Anna Saunders’ poetry is reminiscent of Plath – with all its alpha achievement and radiance*”.

Anna is the author of eight books, her latest is **Eurydice in the Ruined House** *Indigo Dreams, 2025*.

Anna is the Founding Director of Cheltenham Poetry Festival.

# Badger news from Stroud & about



Hiyabadger takes a stand

**'Hiyabadger' couldn't wait to have his photo taken outside Labour HQ in Stroud and we are all pleased to have Simon Opher MP as our local representative in parliament.**

We now need the Labour party to fulfil their promises of bringing the cruel, unscientific Badger cull to an end.

**The Stroud Valleys Badger Vaccination Group** vaccinated their first site in the Stroud Area in 2024. Ten badgers were caught, vaccinated and released. We also came across APHA (*Animal, Plant Health Authority*) carrying out a vaccination programme locally which caused us concern to start with, as badgers were found trapped in cages where local dog walkers often go. After a chat with the APHA vaccinators, hopefully they will take more care next year.

## Protection of badger setts

We're always on the look out for untoward activity on or around our local setts. Unfortunately, some people have no regard for where badgers live. We have had an ongoing problem on a local sett where residents have been dumping their garden waste on top of the sett. The Rural Crime Team were made aware and put up a warning poster. This was removed by some uncaring person and is now replaced. Local members of Gloucestershire Badger Group, have tried their best to speak to immediate locals and educate them about protecting badgers.

A Rural Crime PCSO also spoke to locals in the area. Since then unfortunately the dumping has continued so now we have a camera on the sett to catch whoever is fly tipping which is also a crime. Our latest findings are now with the police and the case is ongoing. The good news is this sett is still active and cubs were born last year despite human interference.

One of our very active local members noticed some contractors removing trees over an active badger sett. A rural Crime officer was called and attended the scene. This resulted in the contractors and landowners responsible giving a donation to the Badger Trust.

## Planning Developments

This is one of hardest things we have to deal with, both locally and nationally.

New roads and houses are constantly posing a threat to our beautiful badgers as well as a range of wildlife that becomes displaced by human activity. Ecologists



# Badger news from Stroud & about

are constantly faced with a conflict of interest when surveying for new builds. In Stroud, we know of a few planned developments that are causing concern.

We are working closely with a Stroud resident that is challenging the council over a development that will undoubtedly disturb a badger sett on the perimeter fence of their property.

Luckily, this resident is happy to stand up for the badgers under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992* and we are hoping for a good outcome.

We will continue to monitor any local developments where setts are, but it's becoming increasingly difficult.

## Badgers in gardens

With increasing development and loss of habitats, badgers will be seen foraging naturally in back gardens. To many of us, having a badger in our back garden is a treat, whilst others consider badgers to be nocturnal pests.

We have been known to offer advice on badgers trespassing through cat flaps and in one instance, excavating garden steps. Both problems were resolved even though



Some members of the team at the Gloucester vegan Fair



A local active sett entrance

one involved putting up a fence and some concreting! Most of the time it just requires us to refer people to the BT leaflet '*Badgers in gardens*'.

## Badger in Stroud bus depot

This was a sad story of a badger that crawled up a bus's front wheel then into the compartment above and sadly died. At first, they could not understand where the strong smell was coming from, even after a thorough cleaning. Eventually the poor badger was found.

**Surveying local badger setts** – we have a small team of sett surveyors that keep an eye on our local setts around Stroud.

We're pleased to say that most setts seem to be doing very well and we are all looking forward to their clans increasing in the coming months.

# Round-up



## Growing the Clan

We would love more like-minded badger lovers to join our group, so we can check more setts and have our call-outs attended for badger rescues.

Here's a few ways you can help us.

- Print off the attached poster at A5 and A4 size for local community and shop public noticeboards
- Talk about our badger group to badger-friendly people you meet (not everyone is, so please be discerning) and ask them to join online
- Hold a fund-raising Coffee Morning with cakes and/or cookies for your neighbours and friends. This way you can fundraise and raise awareness!

Again point fellow badger lovers to join via our website, which captures all their details and payments in one place. You can download a pdf of this A4 poster by clicking here



## Sett Survey Sundays

These Sett Survey Sundays are intended to be in the "field" once a month again, around the county, where we cover training to track, detect and record badger setts.

If you are interested, please email [chair@gloucestershirebadgergroup.org](mailto:chair@gloucestershirebadgergroup.org)

## Are you an artist or writer?

We would love to showcase your passion for badgers through your creativity, in our newsletter and on our stalls, like Anna has contributed for this Newsletter.

Please let us know if we can feature your talents with us, via [chair@gloucestershirebadgergroup.org](mailto:chair@gloucestershirebadgergroup.org)

## Our Spring Social and Annual General Meeting

This year it will be on Sunday 13th April where we will have drinks on arrival for the AGM starting at 1pm. We will also provide food, Trail Cam and Thermal Imaging camera training.

It promises to be a great catch up on events with a Q&A for specific queries you may have.

The meeting will be held at *The Stanton Suite, Church Street, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham GL53 8AR* with parking at Church Piece off Horsefair St.

We can help you liaise for lift shares. Email [chair@gloucestershirebadgergroup.org](mailto:chair@gloucestershirebadgergroup.org)

## Badger Trust Events

As our group is affiliated to the national Badger Trust, we are able to offer our members access to their events.

## Groups Regional Meetings (online)

WEST & SOUTH WEST - Tuesday 1st April, 7pm register here:

<https://badgertrust.beaconforms.com/form/c1f3d6ac>





# Round-up



These are smaller informal meetings for you to engage with other groups in your area and openly discuss any current issues you are dealing with.

## **Rescue & Rehabilitation Training with Pauline Kidner (online)**

*Saturday 12th April, 10am - 2pm (with short breaks)*

Pauline will share her wealth of experience in rescuing badgers covering equipment, techniques, scenarios, injuries and treatments, health & safety and rehabilitation overview.

Register here:

<https://badgertrust.beaconforms.com/form/f6e2fab2>

## **AGM & Groups Networking Event (in person)**

Saturday 17th May, 10.30am - 3.30pm, The Forest of Marston Vale Centre, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire.

This free event incorporates the Badger Trust AGM, vegan lunch, guided walk, networking, speakers and more.

Register here:

<https://badgertrust.beaconforms.com/form/8ef3dd7b>

## **Visit to Secret World Wildlife Rescue with Pauline Kidner**

Some of you may remember last year we had a most inspiring talk from badger rescue specialist Pauline Kidner from Secret World.

Pauline tells me they've been having some upgrades at the centre, so we have had to wait for our visit.



Artwork by Glyn Ellis

If you are interested in a talk and tour of the facilities, the dates are Saturday April 5th or Saturday May 31st.

Our itinerary will be from 10.30 to 4pm and bring a packed lunch. we can arrange lift shares.

Here is all about the centre:

<https://www.secretworld.org>

## **Membership**

Please help us by making sure your membership is up-to-date. If in doubt, please contact Jackie on [secretary@gloucestershirebadgergroup.org](mailto:secretary@gloucestershirebadgergroup.org)

We have put up our memberships, in line with other badger groups. For this year. Single membership is now £15 annually and Family membership is £20.

We really appreciate your support in keeping 'boots on the ground', education in our community and passion in our hearts for our wonderful badgers.

**Thank you.**

