

Derbyshire Amphibian & Reptile Newsletter

Issue No 29. February 2020 This newsletter is produced for members of the Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group and other interested persons on an occasional basis and includes news items, advice and information and results from toad crossing patrols. If you have any items that you wish to be included in future editions please e-mail them to the Group

Derbyshire ARG EVENTS FOR 2020

Saturday 22nd February 2020 Pond Management working party at Middle Lane pond, Brassington From 10.30 to 13.00,

Working party to carry out clearance of garden variety of *Glyceria maxima variegata* from old pond at Middle Lane, Brassington. This is to assist Brassington Parish Council who wish to improve the wildlife value of the pond by removing alien species.

Tools supplied, you need to bring wellies and suitable clothing. Please email derbyshirearg@gmail.com to take part and receive location map and extra details.

View of Middle Lane pond



Saturday 29th February 2020 Spring meeting on Toads + AGM at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust HQ, Sandy Hill, Main Street, Middleton by Wirksworth, DE4 From 14.00 to 16.00

14.00 Talks and discussion on Toads on Roads looking at the national picture and how to develop further the coverage of toad crossings in Derbyshire and the adjacent counties.

15.15 Tea break

15.30 AGM

Free admission and car parking

DERBYSHIRE AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE GROUP

We are an affiliated member of



ARG UK

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK

Volunteers working for the
conservation of amphibians & reptiles

www.arguk.org

Registered charity
(number 1165504)

Derbyshire ARG

Chair - Kelvin Lawrence

Vice Chair - Christian Murray-Leslie

Secretary - Chris Monk

Treasurer - Jayne Thompson

Committee Members -

Richard Fenn Griffin, Lisa Lawrence, James Longley, Emily Major & Trevor Taylor

Contact details

General ARG e-mail

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Toad crossings email

derbyshirearg.toads@gmail.com

Derbyshire ARG website

<http://groups.arguk.org/DARG/>

Follow us on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/DerbysARG>

Or on our Facebook page



facebook.com/DerbyshireARG/

Derbyshire ARG EVENTS 2020

TOADS ON ROADS

Late February/early March to mid April

Depending on the weather from late February or early March toad patrols will be starting at several locations across the county. Extra volunteers are always welcome, so if you would like to help please email our County Toad Co-ordinator on derbyshirearg.toads@gmail.com

ADDER EMERGENCE FIELD SURVEY

Saturday 14th March 2020

Weather dependant field trip to survey for adders in the Peak District National Park. Restricted to Derbyshire ARG members, please contact us on derbyshirearg@gmail.com to book a place and find out more details. It may be postponed to Saturday 28th March if weather condition are not suitable on the 14th.

AMPHIBIAN SURVEYS

Throughout May & early June

A series of field survey visits, particularly for great crested newts but also recording all amphibians, are planned for May at ponds in the White Peak area of the Peak District National Park and possibly other locations across Derbyshire. These will be mainly evening torchlight newt surveys and possibly bottle trapping or eDNA sampling at some sites.



Restored Peak Park farm dewponds where for successive years we will be monitoring them for amphibian colonisation. Hartington restored 2018/19 (above), Hand Dale restored 2016/17 before filling with water (below)



To put your name down to be notified of dates and locations please email us at derbyshirearg@gmail.com

REPTILE SURVEYS

Summer 2020

We are planning to undertake reptile surveys this year at sites in the south of Derbyshire near Ticknall once the cover objects have been moved there and laid out. Dates for these surveys will be announced later and placed on our website.



Slow-worms under a cover object in 2019

TRAINING COURSES

May 2020

Most years we have run training courses on great crested newt ecology & surveying or on reptile surveying. A decision on what training course(s) we will run will be taken at the next committee meeting at the beginning of March 2020.

Details and dates for the 2020 course(s) will be announced after the meeting and placed on our website.

Derbyshire ARG at Public Events in 2020

We will be having a stand and sometimes doing activities at the following events in 2020:

**Saturday, Sunday & Monday 23- 25th May
10am to 4pm each day**

Derbyshire Countryside Weekend

To be held at Cromford Mills, Mill Road, Cromford

We have been invited to have a stand at this event over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend.

Saturday 4th July

Avenue Washlands Open Day Event

At the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Avenue Washlands Nature Reserve, Mill Lane, Wingerworth. Organised by the Chesterfield Local Group of the Wildlife Trust.

We will be having a stand & also running pond dipping sessions during the day.

**Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th September
Derbyshire Woodland Festival**

To be confirmed, as in previous years we will probably be having a stand at this very popular event at Elvaston Castle Country Park, Derby.

Other events

WEST MIDLANDS ARG REGIONAL CONFERENCE

**Saturday 4th April 2020
10.00am to 4.30pm**

Location: Himley Hall & Park, Himley, Dudley, West Midlands, DY3 4DF

Meeting organised by the Birmingham & Black Country ARG and ARG UK. On the theme of:

'Managing reptile and amphibian conservation in a time of increasing public pressure on wildlife'.

Speakers from the National Trust, Natural England, ARG UK, Back from the Brink Project, Birmingham & Black Country ARG, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, Gloucs ARG & Nigel Hand.

Bookings now open via Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/west-midlands-regional-arg-conference-2020-tickets-83773224971>

(Link also available on the ARG UK website)

Cost £25 includes refreshments and a buffet lunch.

HOE GRANGE DEWPOND PROJECT

Last year Derbyshire ARG held it's second pond clearance task at the farmyard dewpond at Hoe Grange near Longcliffe. This dewpond is last known to have been completely cleared out in the mid 1980s but has been choked with Typha and badly silted since at least 2009.

As with the first working party in 2011 it was very difficult to clear a small area around the edge of this large dewpond that was choked with dense Typha growth forming a mass of interlocking rhizomes.



DARG working party in 2011 (above) and the 2019 DARG working party (below)



A survey of the created open water area later in spring 2019 proved that great crested and smooth newts together with frog and toad were still in the dewpond.

HOE GRANGE DEWPOND PROJECT (continued)

As our working parties could not clear the centre of the pond, the clearance was only a temporary measure to keep a little open water for the amphibians for a few years. Therefore a bigger project was drawn up to try and get the pond completely cleared out using an experienced contractor, who has restored many dewponds in the nearby Peak District National Park. As part of the project it was hoped to arrange the restoration of at least one other pond at Ballidonmoor farm, where a former great crested newt dewpond was completely silted up and grown over with grass.

An application was made to the ARG UK 100% Fund for a grant to put towards the cost of employing a contractor and the Peak District National Park Authority offered a grant to clear out the pond on Ballidonmoor farm as that was within the National Park boundary. The grant application was successful and the contractor cleared out the Hoe Grange Farmyard dewpond in January 2020. The clearance of the pond at Ballidonmoor farm and the relining of another nearby long dry small dewpond on Hoe Grange land are now being organised by Sheffield Wildlife Trust's Wildscapes using funding from Natural England / Defra.



Work about to start at Hoe Grange January 2020



Most Typha gone, de-silting underway



Nearly finished



All done, just waiting for rain to refill it



Waiting to hear that Wildscapes have successfully de-silted this former GCN pond on the adjacent farm to Hoe Grange.