

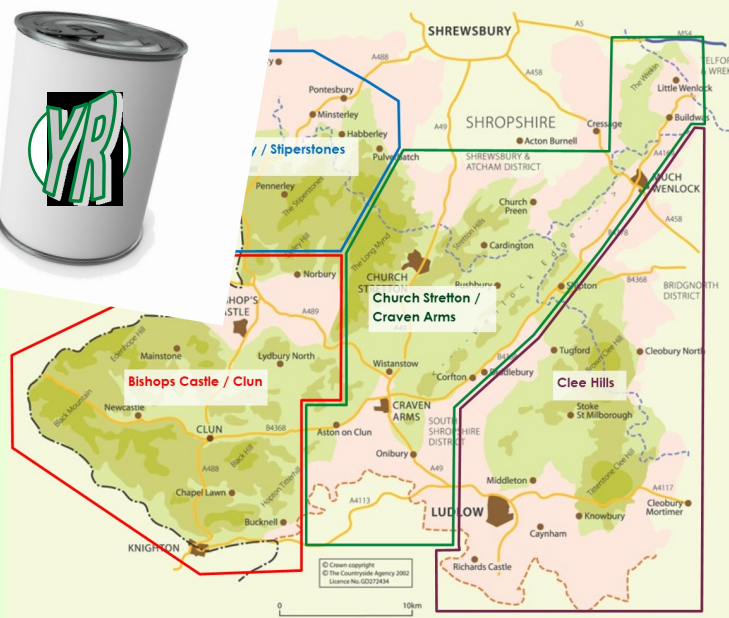
Welcome to our NEW newsletter!

This is the first newsletter of *Shropshire Hills Young Rangers*, a project supported and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund until the Summer of 2023. Each issue will include a round-up of events and project activities, special features, interviews and factoids, as well as details of what we have in the pipeline.

But hang on a minute....What is Young Rangers?

'Young Rangers'...as it says on the tin.

Young Rangers offers young people aged 12-16 opportunities for exploration, learning and adventure in the great outdoors. Led by qualified and experienced outdoor leaders and youth workers, the project offers meaningful and fun activities in the special landscape of the *Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*.



What's involved?

Action - positive and fun work to help protect and conserve some of Shropshire's most important wildlife, landscapes and habitats.

Skills - opportunities for outdoor learning and skills development, including countryside crafts, navigation training and wildlife surveying.

Leadership - finding a voice for, and promoting greater representation of young people in decisions which affect them and our local landscape.

Recognition - celebrating and receiving recognition through the John Muir Award.

The Shropshire Hills— our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Young Rangers aims to set up four YR groups across different parishes in the *Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*. The AONB, shown on the map in green, is a landscape whose character and 'natural beauty' are precious enough to be protected and enhanced for nature, people, business and culture.

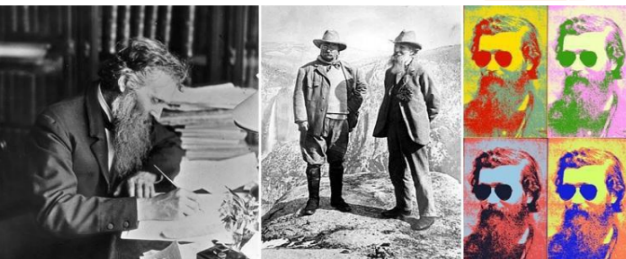
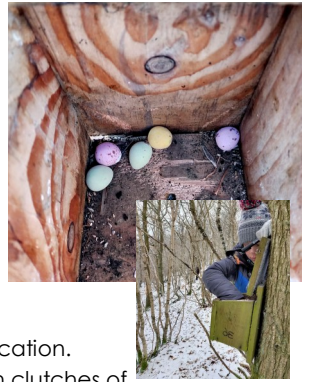
England, Wales and Northern Ireland has 46 AONB's, covering 18% of the countryside!

Can you name any others?...

NEWSfeed

Like all shops, business and services, we too have found the last year especially challenging. Covid restrictions meant a delay in kicking-off the project but despite the lockdown we've still been able to deliver a limited range of permitted activities in the lead up to Spring. The **Craven Arms and Church Stretton** young ranger groups started back in October 2020 and spent the winter months **coppicing** at Onny Meadows, as well as striding forth across the Shropshire hills in a series of **landscape discovery walks**. Hot on their heels, a **new fledgling group** was set up in the Pontesbury/Stiperstones area. Having familiarised themselves with **Poles Coppice** in Pontesbury, the group have since taken an interest in monitoring a local population of birds (**Pied Flycatchers** to be exact) at a secret location in Snailbeach.

However, it appears that at least someone (or 'something') outside of the YR group knows of the location. Recently, when surveying the 50+ nest boxes at the survey site, several boxes were found to contain clutches of eggs - curiously early in the nesting season, we thought. On closer examination the eggs were found to be made of chocolate! Perhaps that the Easter Bunny paid a visit? If anyone has any other theories we'd like to know...



John Muir: The man behind the beard. 1838-1914

With a beard to compete with today's hipsters, John Muir was an adventurer and explorer, botanist and inventor. Born in Scotland, aged 11 he emigrated with his family to north America. He is famed as a founding father of the conservation movement and was instrumental in the creation of Yosemite National Park, one of the first National Parks. Muir devoted his life to safeguarding the world's landscapes so his message is as relevant today as it was then. If he were around today he'd surely be best buddies with David Attenborough! He was passionate that everybody should be able experience, enjoy and care for wild places, and become active conservationists, campaigners, practical project workers, scientists, writers and artists.

Many people take on the **John Muir Award Challenge** which helps participants to discover and explore a wild place, to do something to conserve it, and to share their experience. The John Muir Award is a key part of Young Rangers.

For **More about Muir** - the man, the legend - watch this inspiring short film: <https://vimeo.com/95260067>



Young Rangers - 'it's all about you'.

Young Rangers is for 12-16 year olds who live in or near to the Shropshire Hills AONB. Our aim is to conserve our special landscape by creating meaningful, achievable and fun activities for young people to get involved with.

So how do I get involved?

Easy! Fill in the simple form here and we'll be in touch.

<https://forms.office.com/r/CdUzuAtuul>

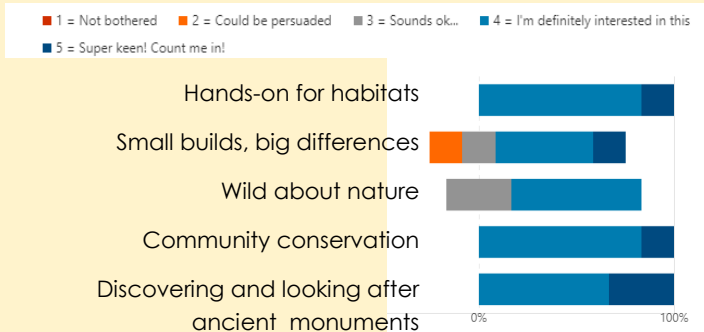
When registering, participants are also asked to complete a short 'Activity Menu'.

One of the questions on the Activity Menu focusses on Ranger 'theme areas'. As you can see below, all the activities we're suggesting seem pretty popular.

Remember, this is your chance to have a say in the Young Rangers programme so if you've not completed the survey yet please do so here!

<https://forms.office.com/r/wJKJQidJpD>

And our survey said...



Creature feature...the hairy wood ant

Not to be confused with its relative the Scottish wood ant, the hairy wood ant has a fringe of hairs at the rear of its head which extends down to its compound eyes... should you ever get close enough to inspect them! This tiny ant has made a big impact on Resting Hill, in an area of woodland above Snailbeach. It's partly the reason why the wood has SSSI status (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and is managed as a coppiced woodland. The hairy wood ant likes open sunny glades in woods where smaller woodland plants and scrub thrive. If the trees get too dense, the ant retreats to the woodland edge in search of sunlight.

The hairy wood ants can be found near to the nest box survey site, so why not join in on the survey and look out for them whilst you're there?



Don't mess with the hair, it's protected!

Up and coming activities

Sat 15th May - Nestbox Survey

Time: 12:30-2:30pm
Location: Snailbeach

Sat 22nd May - 'What bat is that?'

Bat walk with Shropshire Bat Group
Time: 7:45pm - 10pm approx
Location: Poles Coppice, Pontesbury

HALF TERM

Thurs 3rd June - BUILD PROJECT: Pond-dipping platform with Shropshire Council Rights of Way

Time: 10:30am-14:30pm
Location: Poles Coppice, Pontesbury

Tue 1st June - Rock climbing

Rock Progression 1: the basics
Time: 7-9pm
Location: Creative Outdoors, Shelve

Sat 5th June - Rock climbing

Rock Progression 2: movement on rock
Time: 10:30-2:30pm
Location: Stiperstones

PLUS MUCH MORE IN THE PIPELINE!

For further information, booking and to join our mailing list, please email: joe.penfold@shropshire.gov.uk