

GREENScene

England's polluted beaches

At the same hour on the same day each week, May to September, a curious scene is played out at each of England's 500-odd designated coastal and inland bathing waters. A van pulls up, someone gets out. They walk along the beach until they reach the same spot as each week. They wade out into the water, lower the bottle to half a metre below the surface, and fill it up. Then it's off to the next beach with another bottle. The samples are analysed for bacteria representative of the gut content of a warm-blooded creature. While these may not necessarily be harmful, they do indicate the presence of faecal pollution.

England's bathing waters though are undeniably far cleaner now than 25 years ago. The EU's new Bathing Water Directive, roughly twice as strict as the current standard, comes into force in 2015.

Extract sourced: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/jul/07/england-polluted-beaches-tide-of-filth>

Fewer bat sightings spark breeding fears

Britain's bats could face difficulties this summer following two cold springs in a row, a charity suggests. Latest figures from the National Bat Monitoring Programme revealed that fewer of the flying mammals were counted in 2012 than the previous year.

The Bat Conservation Trust is concerned that this year's "unseasonable start" could mean that bats struggle to bounce back. However it suggested it is too early to tell if bats are on a downwards trend.

During the summer bat activity reaches its peak. But this year the animals are faced with the challenges of a delayed breeding season and a lack of winged insects on which they feed, according to the Bat Conservation Trust. Bat Conservation Trust's Philip Briggs explained breeding in bats appeared to be reduced or delayed last year, probably due to the cold spring and exceptionally wet summer.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/23161183>

£5m project to restore more than 800 acres of damaged woodland on the edge of Dartmoor

A £5m project to restore more than 800 acres of damaged woodland on the edge of Dartmoor to its native state has begun.

The joint Woodland Trust and National Trust project will see much of Fingle Woods, replanted during the 1930s with fast-growing imported conifers, gradually replaced with native species like oak trees.

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Fingle Woods has more than 525 acres of damaged ancient woodland - the equivalent of 293 football pitches - which have been planted with conifer trees.

Plans include creating almost 30 miles (48km) of footpaths.

Norman Starks, operations director for the Woodland Trust, said: "Ancient woodland is the richest land habitat for species in the UK, having been present since at least 1600."

Source: <http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Default.aspx?tabid=118&Id=496>



Who likes their grub? Can insects 'feed the world'?

A diet rich in insects is not new: in 1885, amateur naturalist Vincent M Holt wrote a pamphlet called *Why Not Eat Insects?* praising slug soup and moths on toast. It's not taste that is the motivation now; it's the need to grow a vastly expanding world population. Plus, a reduction in livestock generated greenhouse gases (they are responsible for up to 18% of greenhouse emissions) is attractive to many.

The Western World faces a strong argument that eating insects will be inevitable. Insects are full of protein, have a small carbon footprint and are potentially much cheaper than both meat and lab-meat.

Already there are restaurants and shops dishing up delicacies primarily made from insects. The question isn't "why eat insects?", it's "how are we going to eat insects?"

Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/aug/05/can-eating-insects-feed-world>

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Email your entry with your name and address to: fiona@outdoor-learning.org or send your answer on a postcard to Fiona at IOL, Warwick Mill Business Centre, Warwick Bridge, Carlisle, CA4 8RR. Closing date: November 1st 2013.

Winners will drawn and notified by November 14th.

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