

Holbeton News Climate Change & Environmental section

Environmental Tip for October: Wood Burning Stoves

With Autumn now upon us and temperatures finally falling, many of us will be thinking about lighting our woodburning stoves. The Climate Change Committee have therefore been investigating ways we can be as energy efficient as possible, save on fuel and minimise pollution, whilst continuing to enjoy the pleasure of using a wood burning stove.

Therefore here are our top tips for using your stoves as efficiently and responsibly as possible:

- 1) Burn only dry and well-seasoned hardwood. Properly seasoned wood has a moisture content of 20% or less, which burns hotter and cleaner.
- 2) Invest in a moisture meter to check the moisture content of your firewood. This ensures you burn wood at the optimal moisture level. (The cost of a moisture meter is between £15 and £20)
- 3) Regularly clean and inspect your chimney and flue to remove creosote buildup, which can reduce efficiency and pose a fire hazard. Schedule annual inspections and maintenance with a professional chimney sweep.
- 5) Burn fires at higher temperatures to minimize smoke and increase combustion efficiency. Use smaller, hotter fires rather than smouldering, low-intensity fires.
- 6) Use the stove's air controls effectively. Use the air controls to start and maintain the fire and to control burn intensity and reduce emissions.
- 7) Burn only wood (preferably sustainably sourced) and avoid burning treated wood, or other materials that can release toxic chemicals.
- 8) In some cases it can be more efficient to leave a layer of ash at the bottom of the stove. This can act a layer of insulation and help to transfer heat back to unburnt logs.
- 9) Ensure your stove is the right size for the space you want to heat. An oversized stove can lead to inefficient burning and excess pollution.
- 10) Consider using a chimney cowl that reduces emissions. For example, take a look at Mid Cat Puriflue : <https://www.chimneycowlproducts.co.uk/midcat-puriflue-solving-woodburning-stove-emissions/>

These can be fitted to new or old appliances and uses technology similar to that found in car exhaust systems. It converts toxic compounds into less harmful gases such as CO₂ and water vapour and releases extra heat energy.

By practicing responsible wood-burning habits, you can make your wood-burning stove more energy-efficient and reduce pollution, benefiting both your indoor air quality and the environment.

Tony Callcut

The Big Butterfly Count results

Butterfly Conservation now have the results of this year's survey (14th July to 6th August) on their website. In Holbeton there were just 6 reports of sightings from within Holbeton Parish. By using the interactive map it was possible to see the 5 most commonly reported species in our parish, and compare these to the findings nearby.

| Holbeton Parish | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Number of observers | 7 |
| Number of counts | 6 |
| number of butterflies | 173 |
| gatekeeper | >101 |
| red admiral | 22 |
| meadow brown | 20 |
| large white | 7 |
| small white | 6 |
| peacock | 6 |
| speckled wood | 2 |
| comma | 2 |
| holly blue | 1 |
| common blue | 1 |
| ringlet | 1 |
| green veined white | 1 |
| small tortoiseshell | 1 |

| comparison areas top 5 species | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------------------|------|
| 5 parishes and Ivybridge | | Plymouth and around | |
| red admiral | 541 | red admiral | 1763 |
| peacock | 303 | gatekeeper | 1062 |
| meadow brown | 288 | meadow brown | 1060 |
| gatekeeper | 260 | large white | 1017 |
| large white | 198 | small white | 800 |



The red admiral has had an especially good year, coming top nationally, as locally. The abundance of gatekeeper butterflies in Holbeton was due to a cloud of them that had just hatched. A day or two later and most had dispersed.

Over the last 13 years of Big Butterfly Count, many species of butterflies have significantly declined. The Green-veined White has had the most severe Big Butterfly Count decline in the longer term with a decrease of 61%, the Ringlet has seen a decrease of 40% and another garden favourite, the Small Tortoiseshell, has seen a decline of almost 30%.

A big thankyou to those who took the trouble to report butterflies in the parish. For those who didn't manage to take part, better luck next year: it's easy and fun, especially done with children!

Looking out for Asian hornets

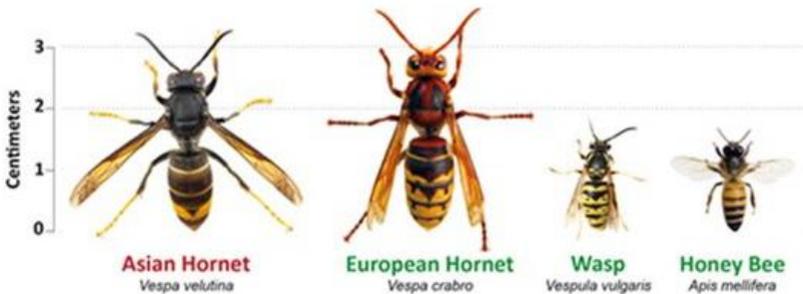
You may well be aware of the problem of Asian hornets, a non-native species, whose sightings have been recorded by the government since 2016, mainly from southern counties. 2023 is proving to have greatly increased numbers of sightings, including as close as Plymouth.

The problem with these invaders is that they are aggressive and major predators not only of honey bees but others including solitary bees.

In France they have been a major problem. In the UK the authorities are still aiming to track them down and destroy their nests.

We are asked to report any sightings of Asian hornets. Perhaps inevitably there is an app with images of the 2 species of hornet and other similar looking insects. Easily downloaded, it also provides the means to report them as it allows you to include photos as well as automatically included information on location, date and time.

Think you've seen an Asian Hornet? Report it!



Report through the Asian Hornet Watch app or www.bit.ly/asianhornetreport

Update on WATER

The Wild About The Erme River group is gaining momentum. Preparations for an application for Bathing Beach status by Coastguards Cottages are well under way. A survey of those using this area is complete, and their target has been met: more than 100 swimmers/paddlers in the water on two consecutive days.

The next step, a public consultation, is nearing completion. At the latest count no fewer than 395 responses have been received, pretty well all in favour. Organisations including local authorities, the chamber of commerce, tourist office, environmental organisations and local businesses including farming are all being asked.

The Erme Dippers, a group of citizen scientists across the Erme catchment area, are now coordinated from within the WATER group. More dippers are always required. Dipper have been featured in a recent [BBC article](#) and on BBC spotlight.

The group has voted to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a board of Trustees, an invited Members/Steering group and a supporters programme. Registration with the Charity Commission is ongoing.

Their first newsletter has been mailed out and they hope to issue this quarterly.

The wildflower area by the Reading Rooms

This has now been cut, raked and left to dry, then scarified, with yellow rattle sown for vernalisation (exposure to long cold periods over the winter to induce flowering). It will be kept short during the winter months and we will look forward to seeing it all come again in the spring.

A big well done to Holbeton Cricket Club for decarbonising their cricket pavilion at Flete as reported in last month's HN. We supported them in their project as did others including Devon County Cricket, but it was their (especially Giles Ebbutt's) ambition and persistence that achieved it. What next? A solar powered robot to mow the outfield using sunlight, we gather. They must surely now be the envy of their rival cricket clubs, and of course we hope that this is also equally true with our local team's cricket!

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Yealm Community Energy's share offer is closing soon. Be quick!

Yealm Community Energy's share offer launched this summer is due to close on 27th October 2023. We invite you to invest in 3 local solar farms and to help us support more inspiring projects locally.

Minimum investment is £250 and Maximum £100,000. YCE is offering people their last chance to become shareholders. All our investor members will be offered a target 6% per annum on their investment, an equal say in how YCE is run and the opportunity to make any investment do good. The project over its lifetime (27years) has the potential to give back over £7M (after running costs) into our local communities. This is significant. YCE have already donated £100,000 to local projects via its Community Benefit Fund. You can read YCE's share offer document and its business plan on our website www.yealmenergy.co.uk and we are using positive investment platform Ethex for the share offer www.ethex.org.uk Capital at Risk.

If you would like to know anything further or chat directly to one of YCE's directors with specific questions we would be very happy to hear from you by emailing info@yealmenergy.co.uk.

Help us to unlock this lasting legacy for our local parishes!

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