



Curlew Action



April newsletter 2023

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Rhyl Henzell, 2nd place, over 16 art

World Curlew Day

Back in 2016, our Founder and Director, Mary Colwell, started World Curlew Day (21st of April). Each year, this special day grows bigger and reaches more people. Organisations and individuals across the world have joined the celebrations and helped to spread the word. This year, the 21st of April saw events and celebrations taking place across the UK. Curlew Action hosted four events, two evenings of music and conversation with David Gray and Mary Colwell, one in Bristol, one in the New Forest. A guided nature walk, in partnership with Leica Sports Optics and Wild New Forest, and a special webinar about Curlews in myths and legends. A huge thank you to our Patron, David Gray, for his tireless support of Curlews.



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WEBSITE: CurlewAction.org





Our 2023 World Curlew Day art & poetry competition was our biggest yet, we received curlew-inspired creations from across the world, from 7-year-olds to 73-year-olds! Congratulations to our winners, we hope you wear your Curlew socks and pin badges with pride! Click to hear recordings of the winning Over 16 and Under 16 poems, read by Mary Colwell

**Curlews, by
Clare Donnison**

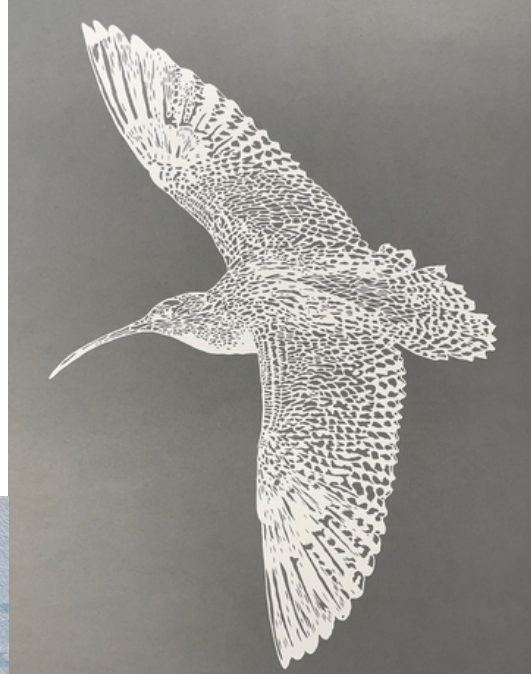
**I still go on,
by Findlay List, 14**



Emily Pritchard, 3rd place U16 art



Richard Sawyer, 2nd place U16 art



Stevi Benson Addy, 1st place, over 16 art



Jean White, 2nd place, over 16 art



Jenny Hammond

Coming Back to Curlew Country

*Even now, I hear that song,
I smell Cumbrian earth
punctured by a tent-peg.*

*Creaking from the car to set up camp,
that lonesome fluting overhead. We were,
in every sense that mattered, home.*

Norman Hadley, 2nd place, over 16 poetry



Freya Salter, 1st place, U16 art

Thank you to everyone who took part in World Curlew Day, whether you went to an event, created a piece of Curlew art or poetry, shared curlew photos on social media or simply wished your friends & family a Happy World Curlew Day. Together we can help this very special day continue to grow and raise awareness about these beautiful birds.



Barbara Goodchild



Ann wilton



Yip - Curlews and Grebe Grass

Jill Kerr



Rachel Fotheringham



Michael Curram



Jill Dunn



Jamie



Fiona Breathnach



Amy Watson



Gareth Watts



Penri Blakeway



Vivienne Sillar



Emily



Keith Brockie



Ali Parks



Sarah Ling

Webinars

In the run up to World Curlew Day 2023, we held a webinar on Curlews in myths and legends. The haunting call of the Curlew has made it a creature of mystery and awe intertwined in many tales and stories from different cultures around the world. Our wonderful panel included storyteller and environmentalist, Lisa Schneidau; medievalist and author, Dr Michael Warren and Director of Curlew Action, Mary Colwell. The panel discussed the origin of these legends and how they influence modern society, and our relationship with Curlews and nature. Watch the recording [here](#).

In March, we discussed Curlews and Silage. As ground nesting birds, Curlews are vulnerable to land management practices. Balancing food production while leaving space for breeding Curlew is a complex question and one that spanned two webinars. We were joined first by farmer John Turner, manager of Curlew Country, Amanda Perkins and Curlew Action trustee, Russell Wynn. The follow up session included Rebecca Pringle, bird senior specialist from Natural England, life-long birder and Curlew expert, Mike Smart, and Pete Webster, first generation farmer. This was a fascinating and important discussion, watch the recordings of [session one](#) and [session two](#). See our upcoming webinars [here](#).



Welcoming a new Trustee

We are very excited to welcome Professor Russell Wynn to the Curlew Action board of Trustees. Russell is the Director of Wild New Forest CIC, a not-for-profit conservation organisation in the New Forest National Park. Previously he enjoyed a 20-year science career at the UK National Oceanography Centre, as well as ornithological and conservation positions including Chairman of the Seabird Group of the UK and Ireland, and Manager of the England Curlew Recovery Partnership (CRP). Outside of work, he is a keen naturalist and photographer, having previously captured the first photo of a Blue Whale in English waters!

Fieldworker's notes

Mike Smart is Curlew Action's in house Curlew expert, and is heavily involved in Curlew conservation in his home area of Gloucestershire. To keep us all up to date, Mike produces a circular of his Curlew observations which we have summarised below:

"In March, breeding Curlews returned to their nesting sites in the Severn and Avon Vales in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. After a very dry February, March proved extremely wet - not ideal conditions for ground nesting birds.

Returning birds which have previously been tagged were identified with the help of a telescope to read the coloured bands placed on their legs. A male bird ringed in 2010, known as 'Blue Red Red' has been seen back at the same breeding site every year since. However, due to the continued flooding, in April this previously nest site faithful bird relocated 10 miles away. Curlews are usually site faithful, returning year after year to the same nest sites - it will be interesting to see if these changes to nest sites are permanent or a temporary result of the flooding.

The same site, two days apart. Photos by Dan Gornall



As well as ringing, birds are now being fitted with satellite transmitters so their movements can be tracked throughout the year. Last year a female fitted with a satellite tag was tracked to South Wales, then Northern Spain and then to the Algarve in Portugal. Her satellite tag stopped transmitting in Portugal, leaving those involved in tracking her anxious she may not have survived. However, all worries were subdued when she was observed returning to the breeding grounds in Gloucestershire this spring.

“Ringing and tagging is a highly skilled process, whereby those involved have gone through extensive training. Catching birds before breeding starts is key, so the team of bird ringers in Mike's neck of the woods have been busy catching, ringing and tagging birds. The birds which are tagged with satellite transmitters before nesting begins should allow nest sites to be found more easily, and much more precise data on behaviour around the nest site should be provided.”

Mike's first nest this season!





What's next for Curlew Action?

We are working to expand our international outreach work to develop a picture what is happening to Eurasian curlews across Europe. In May, we will be visiting Curlew nesting sites in the Netherlands and Finland. Some key questions that we will be looking to find out more about are how trees impact nesting Curlew in Finland and how intensive agriculture is impacting Curlew in the Netherlands. We will be sharing the information from our trip in our next newsletter.

More photos from our New Forest event with David Gray ↘



Photo by Ben Stoney



Photo by Ben Stoney



Photo by Ben Stoney

