

2011

Stroud *festival* Nature

SAT 10 SEPTEMBER 2011
10 - 6PM
STRATFORD PARK
STROUD

Exhibit
Volunteer
Sponsor

Your invitation to
be a part of this
year's Stroud
Festival of Nature



Stroud Festival of Nature 2011 in Stroud Festival Fortnight

EXHIBIT, ENGAGE, INVOLVE

This is the official invitation to you from Stroud Nature, to be a part of the Stroud Festival of Nature 2011.

This year the Festival moves from a June date to a September one - Saturday the 10th. This is slap bang in the middle of Stroud Festival Fortnight, a two week celebration of so many things that are good about the Stroud Valleys.

The fortnight kicks off with the Fringe Music Festival over the weekend of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of September. Then for two weeks the Stroud Walking Festival takes place. This has rapidly become one of the biggest Walking Festivals in the UK. Over the same two weeks, the Stroud Food Festival takes place and on the same weekend as the Festival of Nature, the Open Homes Project.

It is estimated that approximately 3,000 people visited last year's Festival of Nature, which was fantastic, given that the event was organised in the space of just eight weeks. It was wonderful to have the BBC on board and to make the event one of their Springwatch Wild Days Out. The marquees and various stalls snaked their way around the lawns and between the trees of Stratford Park offering all manner of interest and activities for the public.

We do not have the BBC this year, although we always get great coverage from BBC Local Radio and the local press. Nevertheless, we intend to make this year's Festival the best ever.

That is where you come in. We need you to come and spread your knowledge, display your skills, engage the public in your passion.

We like to link to topical themes and events. This year is the International Year of the Forest, so any ideas, activities that link to this would be great. The Park does have a fine Arboretum and woodland that could be a source of ideas.

The full range of activities at the Festival will develop over the next few months and we will keep everyone informed. However a mention of one or two potential changes from last year. Holding the event in September means that the daylight hours will be shorter. We hope to make this work to our advantage.

Exhibitors are free to keep their stalls active after 6pm if they so wish, for we intend to stretch the event by linking with the organisers of the Fringe Music Festival, held the weekend before, to have live music in the evening. This also opens up possibilities of links to the Food Festival. This event would finish around 9.30pm.

Following this, there may be bat walks and a moth capture event, (the Park has four species of bat and almost 300 species of moth).



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VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

We need volunteers to help us set up the Festival and provide valuable support on the day.

We would welcome the help of individuals and groups both on the Friday of the set up and during the event.

- Helping exhibitors with marquees and furniture.
- Putting up signs and way markers.
- Helping exhibitors run their activities.
- General stewarding and public enquiries.
- Assisting Walk leaders on guided walks around the park.
- Selling raffle tickets and organising the raffle itself.

For anyone interested in conservation, wildlife and the landscape around us, a chance to help some of the region's most important groups and organisations engaged in this kind of work.

A Friends of Stratford Park group exists and you might like to join the Group and help them run their stall. Membership leaflets are available at the Museum in the Park and at the Leisure Centre.

If you represent a local community/volunteer group which could provide a number of helpers, we would love to hear from you.



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SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDING

Would you like to provide some funding support for the Festival and link your organisations name to this great event.

Now in its fourth year, it still remains only the second Festival of Nature in the UK. It attracts many of the major regional organisations engaged in wildlife conservation, countryside management and associated activities, plus many more smaller local groups.

Last year thirty organisations attended the Festival.

These included:

WWT Slimbridge

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

National Trust

Forestry Commission Westonbirt

Cotswold Canals Trust

Global Bee Foundation

RSPB

Stroud Valleys Project

Stroud Community Agriculture

Butterfly Conservation...

plus many more.

The event was busy all day with around 3000 visitors coming to the Park.

The Festival was well publicised through the local press (full page spreads before and after the event), three advance radio interviews and an outside broadcast on the day.

Five thousand leaflets were printed and distributed.

Many of the larger organisations taking part publicised the Festival to their own members and subscribers, (tens of thousands).

This year, linking with the Fringe, Walking and Food Festivals, we can further expand the publicity. In addition to the Stroud Festival of Nature web site, there is the main Festival Fortnight site. Stroud Festival of Nature has a well supported Facebook site.

In years to come, we hope to continue to develop links, widening the Festival with educational resources for local schools and community groups.



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THE VENUE

Like so many of our parks, Stratford Park is probably taken for granted to some extent by those that use it or pass through it.

Stratford Park is a jewel. Fifty six acres with a fully equipped leisure centre, museum, woodland, arboretum, play-area, lake, lawns, flower borders and open spaces. It is a fitting venue for the Festival of Nature.

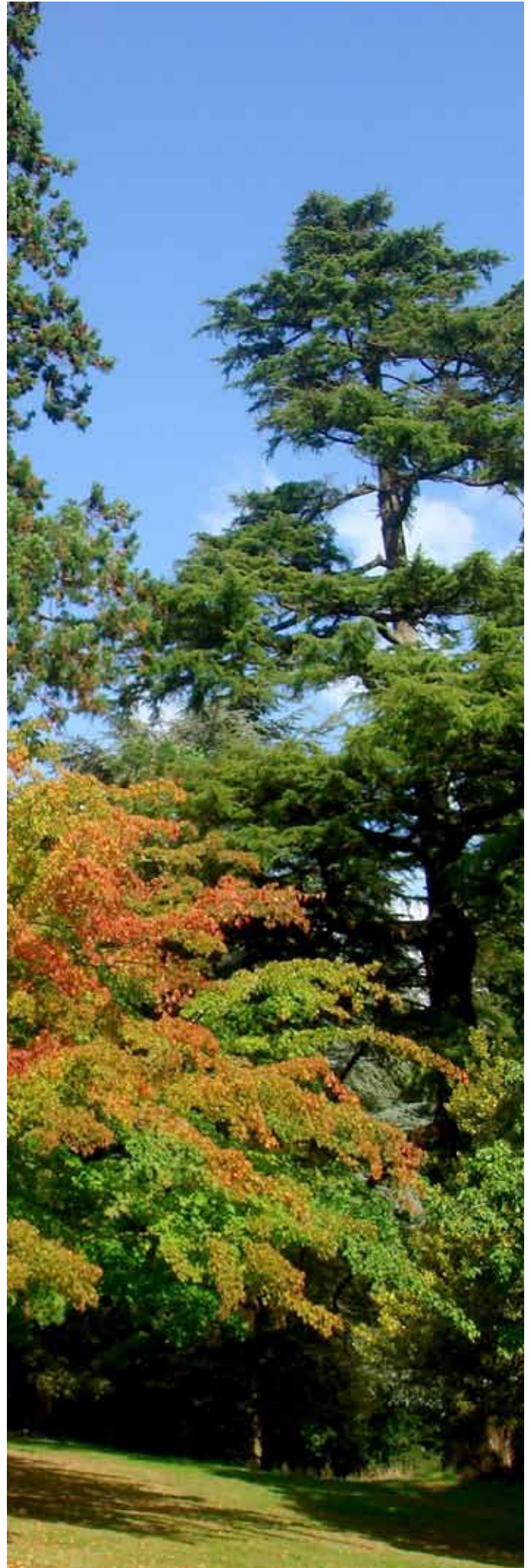
In early September the Park will look a picture as late Summer begins to turn to Autumn. The main area of marquees is sited around the area of the arboretum, beneath some wonderful species, some of which will be showing the first signs of seasonal change. There are historic links between the collection at Stratford Park and that at Westonbirt.

There are walks around the lake and pathways through the woodland to the top of the Park, where one can enjoy views of the surrounding valleys and commons.

Improving biodiversity is a pivotal part of the management plan for the park. The park already has a good variety of animal species and recent schemes have seen it increase. Nearly 300 moth and butterfly species have been recorded and nearly 70 species of bird. Nest box schemes in recent years have proved very successful. A monthly Biodiversity Report is now produced.

Last year's festival witnessed the beginnings of a new pond at the top of the lake. This is finished and should begin to spring into life in the months ahead. Work on a pond dipping platform is underway for local schools and community groups.

We are looking at running some form of landscape activity during the Festival that leaves a legacy once the event is finished.



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Stratford Park



A map of the Park. More detailed map with arrival/loading details will be available nearer the time.

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NATURE AND WALKING

The links between the Stroud Festival of Nature and the Stroud Walking and Food Festivals are obvious. The main reason why this year, we have become part of the Stroud Festival Fortnight.

We would like individuals and organisations involved in the Festival of Nature, to consider running walks as part of the Walking Festival. We would like to promote these under the Festival of Nature banner.

The Walking Festival takes place over the whole Festival Fortnight. Walks can be short or long, for all ages and abilities. They can take place anywhere in the Stroud District.

If any costs are involved in setting up the walk, you can charge accordingly. You can take bookings in advance or have people turn up on the day walk. Whichever you choose, the walk will be advertised through the Walking Festival web site and literature and by the Stroud Festival of Nature. Of course, if your walk can have a nature theme, or better still, engage the walkers in some appropriate activity, so much the better.

You might like to link the walk to the Food Festival and have a picnic, a local ice cream or food and ale at a local inn or restaurant.

We are keen to exploit the habitats in Stratford Park itself, so you might like to organise a walk on the day of the Festival, within Stratford park or from the Park into the surrounding countryside.



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REGISTRATION

We do not wish the event to be held in big marquees, though one may be available as a wet weather contingency. We prefer small marquees, tents and gazebos, spread out through the grounds so that exhibitors feel a part of the Park itself. It also spreads the crowds and makes each exhibitor more accessible.

There is one standard price for a pitch, regardless of the size. That charge is £30.00. We do ask you to bring your own marquees, although we do have some available. Similarly with tables and chairs, we have some available, but it helps if you can bring your own.

We are happy to negotiate the charge with volunteer groups who do not have a source of income.

We will utilise the Museum in the Park and a room in the Leisure Centre. This will give us wet weather options.

You can use the form on the next page to:

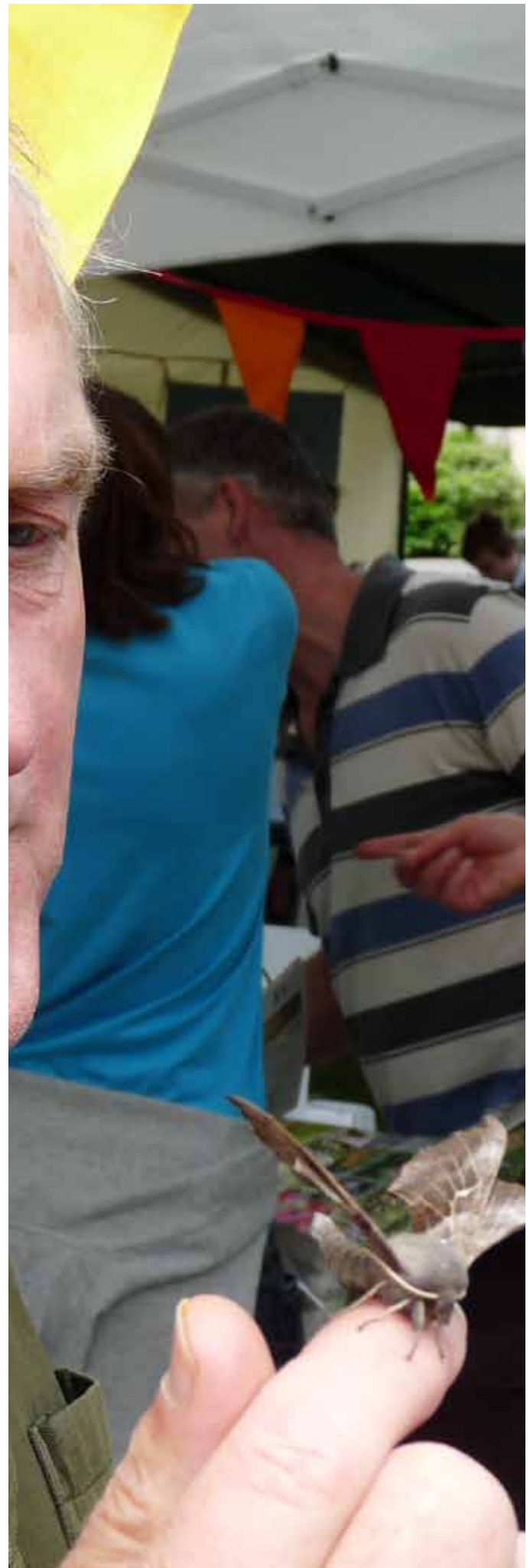
Register for a stall/pitch at the Festival of Nature.

Register a Stroud Festival of Nature Walk that you would like to organise as part of the Stroud Walking Festival.

Volunteer your help leading up to and during the Festival of Nature.

Offer support by way of sponsorship or funding.

Once we have your completed forms, we will contact you to discuss any relevant details. The main Festival Fortnight brochure is printed in May. We will need forms by the end of April, as evidence of your commitment, if we are to include details in any printed material.



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REGISTRATION FORM

Name/organisation:

Contact name:

Tel No:

Email:

EXHIBITORS

I/We wish to book a pitch at the Stroud Festival of Nature 2011.

I/we have our own marquee/gazeebo

Of a size:

I enclose a cheque to the value of £30.00 as payment.

Kind of exhibit/activity:

VOLUNTEERS:

I/we wish to volunteer our help at the Stroud Festival of Nature:

Kind of help offered:

WALK LEADERS: Sat 3Sept to Sat 17 Sept

I/we wish to run a guided walk on:

Route and destination:

Free Charge

Maximum number of walkers

Activities:

FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP:

I/We would like to sponsor the Stroud Festival of Nature.

We would like to contribute:

Email: steverob.illus@virgin.net

Stroud Nature, Bankfield House, Wallbridge, Stroud, GL5 3JQ

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