

Wild Cymru

Amman Valley Newsletter

March and April 2026



Its that time of year again when lots of the valley's upland habitats go up in smoke. This year, because of the wet winter and early spring, the fires are continuing well into April where they cause even more damage to our wildlife.





A big thank you to all the volunteers for helping at the nature reserve earlier this month.



The task was to create a stone path through muddy sections of the path. This will allow us to get wheelbarrows and tools across the reserve and help us to show more visitors around. Thank you.



We had a very strange visitor to the streets of Garnant in March – This is a Red-legged Partridge

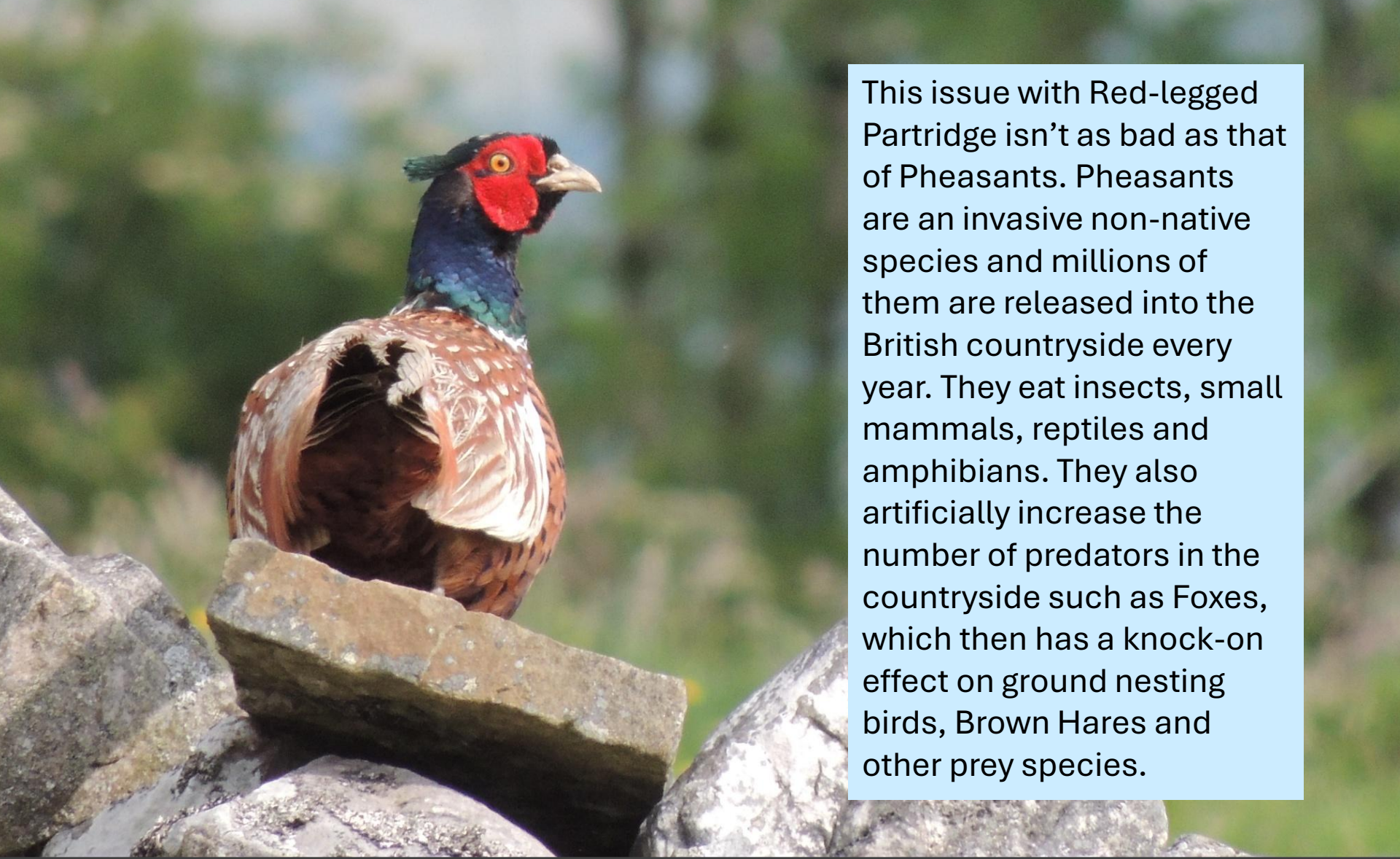
Red-legged Partridge are not native to the UK but are instead reared and released for shooting. Most birds don't get shot but instead breed in the countryside.



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This issue with Red-legged Partridge isn't as bad as that of Pheasants. Pheasants are an invasive non-native species and millions of them are released into the British countryside every year. They eat insects, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. They also artificially increase the number of predators in the countryside such as Foxes, which then has a knock-on effect on ground nesting birds, Brown Hares and other prey species.

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This is a wonderful time of year to go spotting wildflowers. Our woodland and hedgerows are full of colour now – like these Lesser Celandine



Common Dog-violet is one of our commoner violet species. They grow along woodland edge and hedge banks. Despite being common, it is the favoured food plant of Wales' rarest butterfly – the High Brown Fritillary.



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Greater Stitchwort



Bluebell

Many places in the Amman Valley are naturally acidic, which give rise to acid/neutral loving plants such as Bluebells, Lesser Celandine and Greater Stitchwort. Whilst there are a few lime loving (calcareous) plants in the area, you need to travel up the road in Trapp to see great profusions of them. These are Wild Garlic.



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Wild Garlic close up





Moschatel - also known as Townhall Clock is a small woodland plant of calcareous soils.

Cuckooflower can be found on damp grassland at this time of year. They are important early nectar sources for insects, and they are a foodplant for the Orange Tip butterfly.





One of the best flowers for wildlife is the humble Dandelion. It is full of nectar and the seeds are eaten by insects, birds and small mammals. If you can keep a few in your garden you are helping wildlife.





Some plants seen at this time of year are not so good for wildlife. This is the invasive non-native Skunk Cabbage. Named because of the awful smell it gives off. There are a few records of the plant in the Amman Valley, especially along the Nant Berach.



Its not just plants to keep an eye out for at this time of year. Early flying damselflies like these Large-red Damselflies are on the wing.

I am happy to report that the only rookery in the valley (that I know of) appears to be doing well. If you know of a rookery close by, please do let me know.



Rooks are amazing members of the Crow family. Rooks have suffered a huge decline in population over the last 25 years, so if you see one, please do let us know.

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There has been lots going on at the nature reserve in March and April, including some moth trapping.

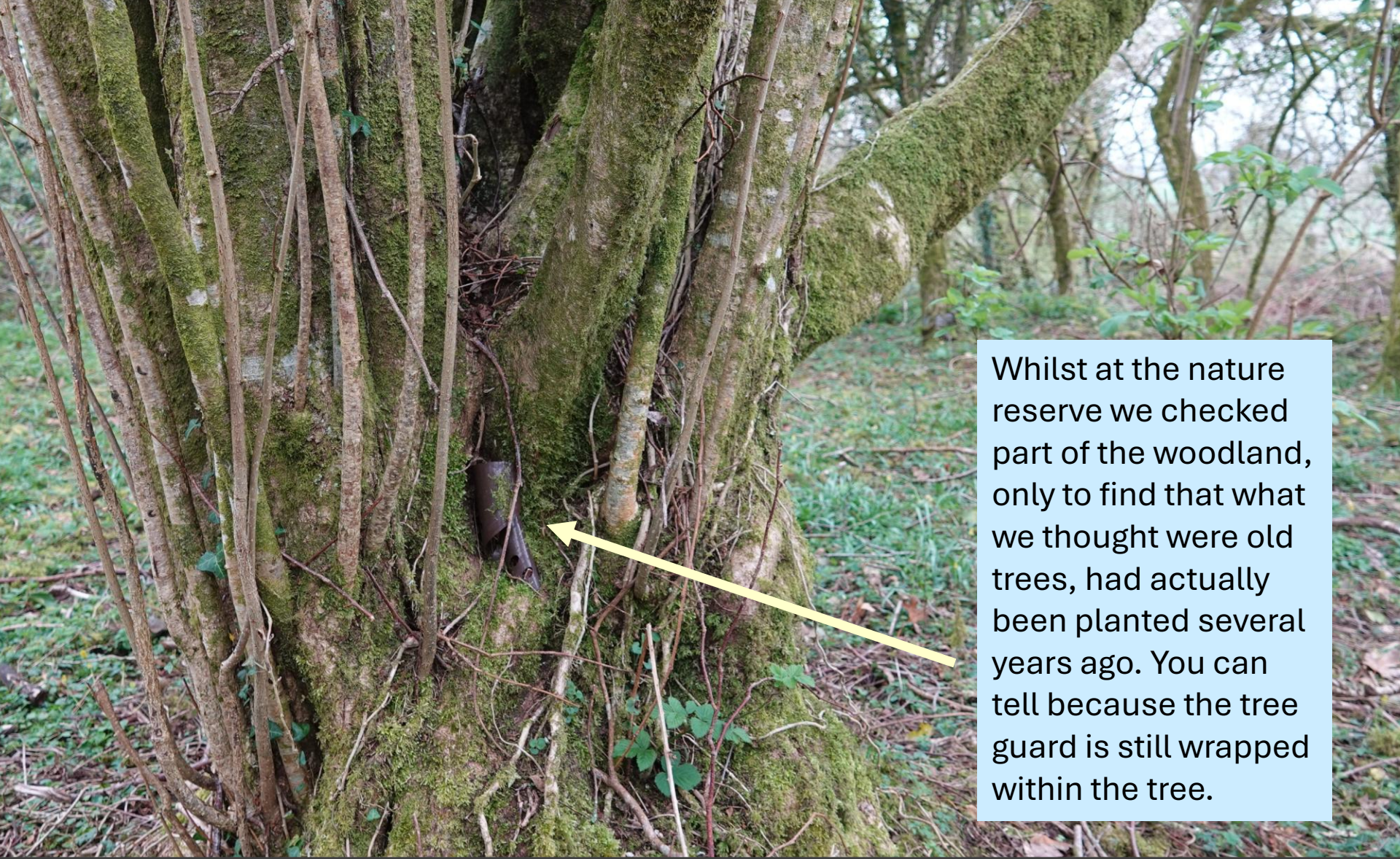
We didn't see many moths mind you, but this Red Chestnut was a bit of a treat.



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Whilst at the nature reserve we checked part of the woodland, only to find that what we thought were old trees, had actually been planted several years ago. You can tell because the tree guard is still wrapped within the tree.



On a recent check on our Kestrel nest boxes in the valley, I was surprised to see this nest. I don't know what it is yet, but it's not a Kestrel. If you have any ideas, please do get in touch.

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Our Swift nest box at home is once again being used by House Sparrows.



The wonderful little Pied Flycatchers have returned to the Amman Valley. We are currently in the process of monitoring the nest boxes to gain a better idea of how the population is doing in terms of breeding success.

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Pied Flycatchers have only recently arrived back to Wales from Africa, so they are only now starting to build their nest. Fingers crossed they have a good year.



Our Marsh Fritillary butterfly caterpillars are finally entering pupation. They have eaten an awful lot of Devil's-bit Scabious over the past two months and all of us at Wild Cymru are looking forward to a few weeks of relative calm in the rearing pens.

HELP NEEDED. Please could you take part in a quick survey we are doing about the nature reserve.

[Click Here](#)

Thank you.

Please do keep sending us your wildlife and landscape photos of the Amman Valley. If you have any questions, please do get in touch at:

Rob.parry@wild.cymru

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