

We have a range of opportunities for people of all ages and interests to give something back to your local community. You could help to hold **arts and crafts** activities for young people or the elderly at local care homes; **carry out research** into local heritage or get hands-on in helping to look after your local environment with **our practical conservation volunteering** team. We also have an exciting programme of **free training** courses planned for 2014, ranging from traditional crafts and skills to wildlife surveying and monitoring and first aid training, so why not come along and develop your skills and interests?

Contact Honia **(HD)** or Karen **(KC)** for more information (the initials refer to the lead person for each project- see contact details at the end).

### Updates from activities

**A roundup of the volunteer activity over the past months:**

#### Volunteers build new homes for otters

Volunteers helped to build an otter holt, creating a vital habitat for local wildlife.



#### Volunteers carry out footpath improvements in Flatts Wood



Volunteers came along and lent a hand to improve footpath access in Flatts Wood.

#### Felt making workshop

The course has proved to be hugely popular; being fully booked well in advance and with a long waiting list. The course aimed to give everyone the basic skills of felt making and was led by Natasha Wake from Teesdale YMCA. Everyone who attended managed to create not only a small felt pot but also a felt picture, and were really pleased with the "beautiful items" they were able to take home. "It was a lovely way to spend a gloomy day" said one participant, "Natasha was a very good teacher".



**Please note that our Natural Dyes workshop with Natasha is already fully booked.**

#### Discovering Britain Walk



Volunteers are now adding the finishing touches to the walk's script. It will be a self-guided tour between Barnard Castle and Whorlton exploring how life around this area has developed and been shaped by the River Tees. The initial feedback from the Discovering Britain team was very positive: *"The walk commentary is excellent. The style is terrific and I rather liked your stop headings. All absolutely consistent with the DB style. I wish all the DB contributors were as good."*

Thank you to everyone involved: Peter, Heather, David and Hazel.

For more info check: [www.discoveringbritain.org](http://www.discoveringbritain.org)

## Upcoming Events

### Otter Holt Building

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 10.30am-2.30pm**

We will be creating another desirable residence for otters. Meeting at the entrance to Deepdale Woods opposite the Silver Bridge at 10.30am.

**KC**

### Easter Fun Day

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April, 12 – 3pm**

**Scar Top, Barnard Castle**

This will be a fun afternoon of activities provided by both Heart of Teesdale and our partners. There will be a number of craft activities such as sow your own herb and sunflower seeds, as well as an Easter egg hunt running throughout the afternoon. We will also be showcasing our projects, upcoming events and opportunities to get involved with the Heart of Teesdale.

**For more information contact Susie Lane on 03000 264903 or [susanne.lane@durham.gov.uk](mailto:susanne.lane@durham.gov.uk).**

### Eggleston Walk

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1.30 – 3pm**

**Eggleston**

This free walk is led by volunteer Sue Laycock who has been researching the history of the beautiful village of Eggleston. The walk will start in front of the Village Hall and will end at Eggleston Gardens. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear.

**Free event, please book**

**HD**

### Down Chorus – Spring Birdsong by the Tees

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May, 5.30 to 9.30am**

**Cotherstone**

An event to gladden the heart by listening to the wealth of early morning bird song in this beautiful part of Teesdale. Songs of resident birds as well as newly-arrived migrants such as Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap and Redstart will be heard. This short walk will be followed by breakfast.

**Free event, booking essential.**

**Contact Ian Moorhouse on 01833 650 730 or email: [ian.bafl@gmail.com](mailto:ian.bafl@gmail.com)**

### Foraging

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1.30-3.30pm**

**Flatts Wood**

An introduction to wild food: find out what's edible and what's not! Join experienced wild food forager Bruce Ferguson on an exploration of the common plants that you find all around you that are good to eat. Bruce has been foraging since the early 1980s and has a wealth of knowledge to share.

**Free event, please book.**

**HD**

### Bushcraft

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1.30-4.30pm**

**Deepdale Wood**

Learn about two of the basics for survival skills - shelter and fire. You'll learn how to set up a shelter and a range of different ways to light a fire without matches, including in wet conditions.

**Free event, please book**

**HD**

### An Introduction to Limestone Grassland Species

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June, 10am-3pm**

**Bowlees Visitor Centre, Newbiggin**

This course will focus particularly on plants and flowers associated with the limestone grassland of the Dales and will include an indoor presentation and discussion as well as a practical outdoor workshop.

**KC**

### Otter Surveying & Monitoring

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July 10am-3.30pm**

**Low Barns Visitor Centre, Witton-le-Wear**

The day will cover otter ecology, identification and monitoring and includes a practical outdoor workshop looking for signs of otters within the nature reserve.

**KC**

### Butterflies & Bees

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 7-9pm**

**The Witham Hall, Barnard Castle**

An evening talk, introducing easily identifiable bees and butterflies as well as other common flying insects such as wasps, flies and beetles.

**KC**

### Ongoing volunteering opportunities

We are looking for volunteers to help with wildlife conservation tasks, historical research, guiding walks, running events and many more.

**HD/KC**

### Music at the Heart of Teesdale

The project is looking for a new newsletter editor to take lead in establishing a social media presence for the project, initially with a Facebook page for their planned 'Friends' group.

**HD**

For details of volunteering opportunities across the Partnership, please visit our website or contact one of the volunteering officers.

**[www.heartofteesdale.net/volunteering](http://www.heartofteesdale.net/volunteering)**

### VOLUNTEERING CONTACTS

**Karen Collins (KC)**

**Volunteering Officer - Green & Environmental Issues**

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**Honia Devlin (HD)**

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