



The Path More Taken

(with apologies to Robert Frost and good grammar)

Our slavish traipsing to the bird-table wore a deep, muddy furrow in the lawn, making the already too high table beyond my reach. Its six-foot pole, meant to hinder squirrels, hindered only me. My sleeves seemed forever filled with seeds. The squirrels, including one-eyed Squinty, ascended it effortlessly, using the conical baffle midway as a springboard onto the feeder.

We'd frequently observed poor Squinty circling the bird bath solemnly burying peanuts, followed by unseen rivals, gleefully exhuming and consuming them.

My husband and I reluctantly agreed that a path was necessary and filled the rut with innocuous Cotswold pebbles. Next day their volume seemed paltry so we added more.

Two days after being laid, almost all of the stones had vanished; sheds get burgled so did thieves stoop as low pinching paths? We applied another bagful but next morning stared out disbelievngly at the trench where the path had been.

Suddenly Squinty zigzagged down the lawn, dispersing flickering chaffinches and dunnocks like a living pinball. Halting at the path's pitiful remains he lifted a chipping to his nose. He sniffed it, turned it this way and that like a connoisseur considering a fine cigar. Then. He nibbled it! Placing stone on lap, he selected and appraised another, inserted both into his mouth and vamoosed!

The performance was repeated several times. "Where's he going? What is he doing with them?" I wailed. "Laying a path in his drey?" my husband suggested.

Our path's destination remained unknown. Its replacement of pointy, red gravel, Squinty disregards.

Months later, investigating pots labelled 'crocus', from which nothing had grown, I was astonished to find bits of our missing path. Caches of Cotswold stone were buried inside. Re-potting old perennials, I discovered path concealed down there too as well as in the compost heap, old growbags and shallow graves all over the garden.

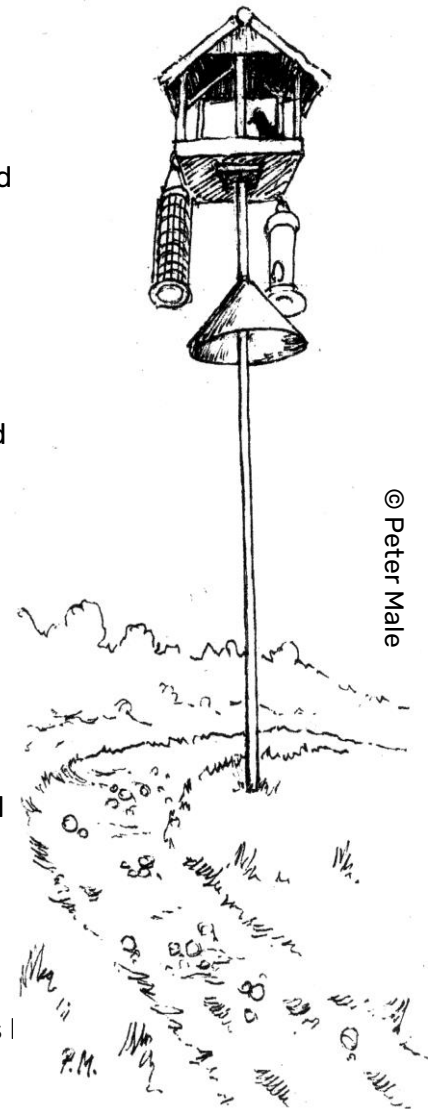
Whether Squinty really thought them edible or was using them as decoys buried to deceive and demoralise thieving cousins I cannot fathom.

There must be hundreds of them yet to be disinterred!

Caroline Male

Thank you very much Caroline for your lovely account of Squinty's escapades. Also thank you to Peter for the super illustration.

Ruth, Editor



Talks

Everyone is welcome to all meetings
Holy Innocents Community Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Thursday 5th December

Annual Review followed by our Christmas Social

Thursday 2nd January 2025 Monarchs of Mexico

Roger Butler

Roger is an experienced lecturer who speaks to groups throughout the UK. Come and find out about these iconic butterflies.



Thursday 6th February Work of the Severn Rivers Trust

Alice Fallon

Alice is the head of community engagement at this charity set up in 2008 to help to protect the River Severn. They aim to have "A healthy, resilient River Severn for everyone"

Thursday 6th March Creating and Maintaining Meadows

Dr Wilson Wall

Dr Wilson, director of Bewdley Orchids, will talk about meadows and his experience of restoring an acid grassland meadow



Thursday 3rd April Aliens in the Garden and the Environment

Roger Umpleby

We warmly welcome back Roger who has been a consultant entomologist for over 40 years. It will be interesting to find out all about the aliens around us.

This is the last newsletter I will compile and edit. I would like to thank the many people who have been so supportive over the years and given me wonderful articles for the front page.

Also thanks to the committee for the second page info and to Wendy at the Trust for her endless patience.

Ruth

Walks

All start 10.a.m.
Donations to Trust funds. Well behaved dogs on a lead welcomed.

Sunday 15th December Wending our way around Wilden Top led by Richard Cory

This circular walk of approximately 3.75 miles follows local lanes and the disused Leapgate railway line. No stiles.

Meet: St Audreys, Wilden Top Road Stourport.
Parking along drive to the house.
Postcode: DY13 9JF Grid ref: S0827722

Sunday 12th January 2025 Spennells Stroll

Led by Jean Maffei

A slow walk looking at over-wintering birds.
2 miles and no stiles.

Meet: Car Park on Heronswood Road.
Nearest PC DY10 4EX GR842747

Sunday 16th February A Spring Stroll

Led by Roy Hall

A circular walk past Stourton Castle, returning through Chance Wood nature reserve to see snowdrops. 3 miles, two stiles.

Meet: KSCA car park, Legion Drive, Kinver
Postcode: DY7 6ET Grid ref: S0845839

Sunday 9th March On the Monarch's Way led by Mervyn Needham

A walk along part of the Monarch's Way. Lovely rural views.

Meet: The Potting Shed, Cutnall Green. Going towards Droitwich, 2nd left turn after village.
Postcode: WR9 0PP Grid ref: S0880675

Sunday 13th April In Search of Wood Anemones

led by Jackie and Paul

Walking through a reclaimed industrial area with waterfalls and anemones. c3 miles, 150 steps.

Meet: Severn Valley Country Park (pay & display)
Postcode: WV15 6NG Grid ref: S0760841

For further information about the group please contact
Joan Kearton-Jones: joan.kj@sky.com

Would you like to suggest a walk or lead one that is special to you? If so please contact Glyn Walters
01562 637556