



Volunteers' Week 2020



A Volunteer's Tale



Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has more than one thousand volunteers! That many 'hands to the plough' makes a significant contribution to the upkeep and maintenance of reserves and sites under the care of the Trust and to its administration and governance.

Volunteers have always been important to the Trust. When it first established in 1946 as the Yorkshire Naturalist Trust, until it appointed its first member of Staff in 1973, a certain well-known and fondly remembered Stephen Warburton, it was run entirely by volunteers giving freely of their time and expertise.

The YWT magazine, called 'Yorkshire Wildlife', at one time was entirely produced by volunteers. Joyce Simmons recalls when she and her husband Paul were part of the team when they produced the magazine. They joined Mary Sykes, also a volunteer, whose job it was to proof read the text and

find photographs to illustrate the articles. She was excellent at this job, persuading photographers to allow us to use their work for the good of our wildlife. There were times when specific photos were needed and the four, Mary's husband joined the expedition to remote corners of the county for just the right shot. Mary's slideshows and short films were popular, particular at AGMs. She was an excellent advocate for YWT in the days when there were very few paid members of staff and volunteers fulfilled many more functions.

There are many 'Volunteers' Tales' to be told. Members of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust are indebted to them and appreciate their generosity and enthusiasm.

Mary died last year. She belonged to a groups of volunteers who meet regularly to help on reserves nicknamed- the Board Walkers. Very descriptive, and appreciative of the wonderful boardwalk constructed at Askham Bog. Mary will be remembered by a small plaque and bat boxes to be installed at Askham Bog.

By H Muir

Photo– Mary (left) and Soo at Moorlands taken in 2008