

## Animals on the move

During autumn the days shorten and the need for food and shelter grips local wildlife. The search for an adequate store of food and a safe place to spend the winter months means animals are constantly on the move. The hedges along the canal towpath are a great place for animals to stock up with nectar, fruit and berries, or to shelter from the worst of the weather.



Also trying to find a shelter are **insects** such as ladybirds. They will cluster together deep in the heart of evergreen shrubs. Over-wintering butterflies such as small tortoiseshells and peacocks look for a protective curtain of evergreen foliage against a dry wall, or take up temporary residence in dry shed or garage.

Keep a look out for winter visitors of the feathery kind. When the first gust of cold weather sweeps in from the north east, look out for a sudden arrival of **migratory birds**, including the redwings and fieldfares that usually are seen in small flocks in nearby fields. Also look out for Little Grebes, especially in the northern half of the canal, together with a few different duck species.

**Frogs** will settle into the soft mud at the bottom of the canal, while toads and newts are expert at squeezing into impossible narrow dark, damp gaps along the canal bank.

**Fallen oak leaves** We have two types of oak tree: pedunculate and sessile. Pedunculate acorns do have stalks, but the leaves don't and sessile acorns don't have stalks, but the leaves do. Spot oak leaves falling usually in October or November.

## Hedgelaying Weekend

A fun packed weekend was on offer at the Country Park, when it staged its annual 'Have a go at hedgelaying' weekend. The event was held on Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th October from 10am until 4:30pm. The weekend, led by the Ranger Service, was part of 'Devon Hedge Week'. This annual celebration of Devon hedges is run by the Devon Hedge Group and the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group. Its purpose is to raise awareness and appreciation of Devon's magnificent network of hedges. It takes the form of a week of hedge-related events and activities for all the family.

For more events on the Grand Western Canal please visit [http://www.devon.gov.uk/grand\\_western\\_canal](http://www.devon.gov.uk/grand_western_canal) or contact the Ranger Service on 01884 254072 or email [gwcanal@devon.gov.uk](mailto:gwcanal@devon.gov.uk).



## Works due to start

- The Ranger Service will be starting to coppice overhanging trees on both the towpath and offside of the canal.
- More hedgelaying with our volunteers at our next Volunteer Day on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008.
- The Ranger Service will be leading one of its regular Healthy Walks on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December, meeting at Tiverton Road Bridge car park at 10.30am.

