

Summary of activities of the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project education programme

From July to mid-September we engaged with **981** people through the education programme. As part of the events programme, we ran three guided walks (Butterflies of the Gully, Spiders of the Avon Gorge and Trees of the Granny Downs), a children's holiday event (Mammal detectives) and a Music event for toddlers.

In July, we taught 531 school children. Two schools (Barton Hill Academy and Nova Primary School) visited us for the first time; in one of the classes only four of the 28 children had been to the Downs before.

Over the school holidays 114 children visited for play scheme sessions. Compared to 2018, the number of sessions we ran was down slightly, partly due to a patch of wet and windy weather in August which caused groups to cancel their visits.

During this period we ran our final 'Botany without Boundaries' project sessions with a group of older Asian women from an organisation called Dhek Bhal. This was an Audience Development Plan project, run in conjunction with Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, with funding from Arts Council England, as part of the 'Natural Selection' exhibition.

In the penultimate session, Rhian Rowson from Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and Botanist Libby Houston, led a workshop on creating herbarium sheets from the specimens collected and pressed during the previous session on the Downs. The group also visited the 'Natural Selection' exhibition and we ran an art workshop with the women, decorating greetings cards and book marks with pressed flowers.

For the final session, at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, we created a display about the project including: a summary of each session and accompanying photos, examples of their herbarium sheets, botanical drawings and pressed flower cards. The women had the opportunity to talk to the public about the project, telling them about the process of making herbarium sheets, and several of them invited family along. At the end of the day we held an evaluation session where we asked the participants what they remembered, what they had learnt and what they had enjoyed. The final report is currently being prepared.

Mandy gave talks about the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs, and the work of the project, to three groups (The Parkinson's Society, St Monica's Trust and Downend Ladies Club).

We attended both days of the Downs Festival. We took along our display and range of leaflets and talked to festival goers about the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs. Later in September we'll also be taking along our stand to the University of Bristol Freshers' 'Welcome Fair'.

The Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project partners began to draw together their ideas for a three-year National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid covering both sides of the Gorge, the Downs and Leigh Woods. Meetings have already taken place to prepare for this bid (the deadline for submission is the 19th November).