

## Nature comes to life at Winterbourne House and Garden

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Bug counts and worm surveys are set to be the highlights of a forthcoming biodiversity event hosted by the University of Birmingham's Winterbourne House and Garden in partnership with Open Air Laboratories (OPAL).

Continuing the historic house's series of free events about biodiversity, their next talk will focus on resources that the OPAL project can provide to those interested in wildlife and their local green spaces. OPAL is a national initiative designed to involve and inspire a new generation of nature-lovers and their next talk is open to the general public and will take place on Tuesday 6 March at midday.

OPAL want to encourage people from all walks of life to see themselves as nature detectives. The talk will explain practical tips for helping the environment and monitoring nature in your local area. Taking part in OPAL events is a fun way to interact with the outside world.

Lee Hale, Curator at Winterbourne House and Garden comments:

*"We are often asked by our visitors about how they can help encourage wildlife and take a greener approach in their gardens, and we feel that the OPAL project is the perfect 'way in' for anyone who is interested in biodiversity and how that impacts on a larger scale."*

Previous talks in the series have focused on bees, shedding light on the recent revelation the decline of Honey Bees. Dr Adam Bates from the University of Birmingham's School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, whose own research has been investigating pollinating insects, explained more about how we can encourage bees in our own green spaces explains:

*"Part of the work of OPAL is to create a better understanding of the natural environment and by talking about practical things we can do, everyone feels more able to contribute. Whilst there has been a significant amount of media coverage of the decline of Honey Bees, wild species of bee have received much less attention, despite their importance for pollination and their own relative decline."*

Whilst getting your hands dirty is not a prerequisite of the talks, they are certainly very hands-on with things to look at and engage with. The next OPAL session in the series of biodiversity talks will take place at midday on Tuesday 6 March and is free and open to members of the public.

For further information contact Anna Williams in the press office on 0121 414 9113 or email [a.m.williams@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.m.williams@bham.ac.uk) (<mailto:a.m.williams@bham.ac.uk>). The talks are detailed on [www.winterbourne.org.uk](http://www.winterbourne.org.uk) (<http://www.winterbourne.org.uk>).

### Notes to editor

1. Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) is a nation-wide partnership initiative that will inspire communities to discover, enjoy and protect their local environments. It aims to create a new generation of nature-lovers by stimulating interest through local and national projects which are accessible, fun and relevant to anyone who wants to take part. For more information, please visit [www.OPALexplore nature.org](http://www.opalexplornature.org) (<http://www.opalexplornature.org>).
2. The Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme was launched in November 2005 to help communities enjoy and improve their local environments. The programme funds a range of activities from local food schemes and farmers markets, to education projects teaching people about the environment. Imperial College London (the leading OPAL partner) was awarded a £11,760,783 Changing Spaces grant in August 2007.
3. The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004. It was established by Parliament on 1 December 2006. Full details of the work of the Big Lottery Fund, its programmes and awards are available on the website: [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk) (<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk>).

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