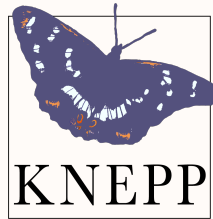


From: Knepp Wilding safaris@knepp.co.uk
Subject: News from Knepp: A boom of a season for butterflies and moths 🦋
Date: July 17, 2026 at 11:09 am
To: maryannsteggles@icloud.com



In this edition of News from Knepp: our boom year of butterflies and moths continues with surprise spottings of **crimson underwings** and the return of the **large tortoiseshell**; the **Church of England's vote on rewilding**; September's **Author Supper with Lee Schofield**; and the latest **Knepp Wilding Podcast on eels**.

Crimson underwings found breeding at Knepp



According to our butterfly expert, Neil Hulme from Butterfly Conservation, these stunning nocturnal moths - dark and light crimson underwings - haven't been seen in numbers like this in Sussex since the mid-19th century.

And the numbers seem to be biggest of all at Knepp, where they're loving our ancient oaks, feeding on sap bleeding from the bark.

It's difficult for the non-specialist to tell dark from light crimson underwings. In fact, it's difficult to find them at all, so well do they camouflage themselves in the crevices of oaks where they hide during the day. But just before dusk they begin flying around the canopies or resting on trunks and branches, and that's when you can see them, flashing their brilliant crimson underwings to warn off predators.

They're currently only known to breed in the New Forest. Seeing them here at Knepp in such numbers is a hopeful sign that, this year, they're breeding here

too.

VISIT KNEPP

The ‘extinct’ large tortoiseshell is back!



First spotted breeding at Knepp in 2006, sightings have since spread across the country, boosted this year by a wider migration from the continent on the back of warm weather.

Its decline, possibly accelerated by 1970s Dutch elm disease, has long puzzled lepidopterists. It was declared extinct as a breeding species in the UK in the 1980s.

But its caterpillars also feed on willow, birch, aspen and poplar, all thriving here at Knepp, alongside the scrub and woodland edges it needs to breed, and this year it is, indeed, breeding again.

"It's thrilling to have this native species back," says Isabella Tree. "It once again confirms the old adage: provide, and they will come."

This year, Butterfly Conservation has officially declared that the large tortoiseshell is once again a resident breeding species – making it the UK's 60th butterfly.

BOOK A SAFARI

Church vote against rewilding



This week the General Synod had the opportunity to vote on whether to rewild 30% of Church of England land by 2030, a target that would have aligned the Church with the UK's own 30by30 commitment. We are deeply disappointed that the decision was made against rewilding.

Knepp owners, Charlie Burrell and Isabella Tree, featured in a film shown to

Synod ahead of the vote, sharing what 25 years of nature-led recovery has taught them.

Synod instead passed an amendment with no measurable targets. Currently, just 3.5% of the Church's 102,000 acres of rural land is managed for nature. We'll keep making the case, with evidence, not pressure. Land given the chance to recover rarely disappoints.

It's disheartening that, faced with the chance to act decisively on the biodiversity crisis, the bishops chose not to save the earth.

WATCH THE VIDEO

National Parks or National Embarrassment?

Author Supper with Lee Schofield

Thursday 17 September, 6-9.30pm, Wilding Kitchen & Shop



Author and ecologist Lee Schofield is a landscape-scale thinker and a major voice in conservation. Join us as he shares the pioneering nature recovery work behind his award-winning book *Wild Fell*, drawn from over a decade as RSPB Site Manager at Haweswater.

Now leading one of the country's largest landscape recovery projects, Lee continues to challenge how our national parks treat species and habitat. He'll give us a first look at his new book, exploring what national parks overseas might teach us about

how to reinvigorate nature at home.

Join host Charlie Burrell for a welcome glass of bubbly, followed by Lee's talk, audience Q&A and book signing, and a three-course supper at Knepp Wilding Kitchen.

Tickets: £65 pp

BOOK TICKETS

The Wilding Podcast





This month, Isabella Tree is joined by Carl Sayer, Professor of Limnology & Freshwater Ecology at UCL, an eel devotee since boyhood, still captivated by the mystery of eels' extraordinary lifecycle.

Carl talks us through his eel survey at Knepp, offering real grounds for optimism, plus a few tales of students wrestling to measure and weigh their famously slippery subjects.

[LISTEN TO THE EPISODE](#)

Saturday Night Supper & Dusk Safari



Dusk is a magical time for wildlife at Knepp. As the sun begins to set over the

rewilding project, birds throw their energy into the day's last chorus and nocturnal creatures begin to emerge.

Our Dusk Safari is one of our most popular summer safaris and now you can add to the experience with supper at Knepp Wilding Kitchen, with a new sitting at 5.30pm on Saturday evenings only. Enjoy a delicious, seasonal menu in the courtyard before journeying into the heart of the Wildland on a guided 2.5-hour walk.

BOOK A DUSK SAFARI

BOOK A TABLE

Other experiences...

GATHER & GARDEN

Enjoy breakfast or lunch at the Wilding Kitchen followed by a self-guided tour of the Rewilded Walled Garden at Knepp.

Tuesday 4 August

FIND OUT MORE



TOMATO TASTING EXPERIENCE

Saturday 8 August

BOOK NOW





Join the community



Discover more

BOOK A TABLE

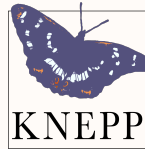
BUTCHERY

STAY

SAFARI

GARDEN

Photo credits: crimson underwing by Neil Hulme; large tortoiseshell by Neil Hulme; still of Charlie Burrell and Isabella Tree taken from Joel Scott-Halkes & Andy Jackson's 30by30 video



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