

# welters world™

*A Government World Supplement*

*April - June 2026*





A magnificent, centuries-old ancient oak standing proudly in the Scottish Borders. ▲

Its massive, gnarled trunk and intricate, leafless April branch structure are a powerful testament to long-term survival.

The heavy moss and lichen growth on the bark and the surrounding rocks are all essential parts of this unique woodland ecosystem and, as the soft morning light and mist create a mystical backdrop, we can truly appreciate the perfect start to the spring season.

#ancientoak #whithaughtower #scottishborders #ancientwoodland #naturalscotland

A beautiful heifer calf, born just in time for Easter. This calf represents the continued success of welters' commitment to native cattle breeds and traditional hardiness.

She is the result of a deliberate cross: a Blue Grey dam (the time-honored Galloway x White Shorthorn cross) put back to a Pedigree White Galloway bull.

This pairing doubles down on the legendary hardiness and "thrifty" nature of the Galloway line, ensuring the calf possesses the superior characteristics and foraging ability essential for upland environments.

Vigor: Already showing excellent strength and a dense, high-quality coat.

Heritage: A perfect example of why these traditional Galloway-based crosses remain vital for sustainable, rugged farming.

A fine start to the season and a testament to the enduring quality of these breeds. #BlueGreyCattle #WhiteGalloway #TraditionalFarming #SustainableAgriculture #NatureAndTechnology ▼





On April 1st 2026 earth's horizon was ignited by the launch of NASA's space launch system during the historic Artemis II moon mission. ▲

A powerful rupture of the atmosphere fuelled by human desire to transcend the confines of the planet.

Yet, despite the rising plume of chemical fire and steam, nature remains unmoved. Two native White Galloway Cattle stand knee-deep in swaying grass, their existence unaffected by the technological marvel happening around them.

While Humans reach again for lunar exploration, nature keeps its own time—vast, silent, and utterly resolute. Our endeavours, even this monumental step toward deep space, will often leave temporary scars, but the natural order continues its enduring trajectory regardless.

#natureandtechnology #design #nativebreeds #gallowaycattle  
#NASA

In today's fast-paced world, finding a balance between design and nature is more than a trend—it's a breath of fresh air. Good design isn't just about functionality; it's about a symbiotic relationship with the environment.

This image is a perfect example:

The doves, nestled within a bed of vibrant green moss and rocky textures, showcase a curated aesthetic enhanced by living plant life. This demonstrates how intentional design and natural growth work in harmony to create something truly beautiful.

Let's continue to be inspired by the natural world and strive to integrate its organic beauty into our creations.

#Design #Biota #NatureAndTechnology #Aesthetics  
#CreativeInspiration ▼





Ancient oaks and standing stones anchor us to our past, while the White Galloway cattle remind us of our enduring bond with nature and our fight against global climate change. ▲

To the right, a Biota sculpture pulses with life as a rocket pierces the sky, signalling our continued advancement toward the stars.

Evolution isn't just about moving forward; it's about what we bring with us.

We strive to merge nature and technology, by keeping with and developing our biota principles and environmental concepts whilst being forward thinking as concept originators.

#design #natureandtechnology #biota #environmentalengineering #conceptoriginators

There is something deeply satisfying about watching this garden snail navigate the rugged textures of one of our Welters Standing Stones.

While these stones are engineered for aesthetic precision and durability, nature has a way of complimenting them the moment the spring rain hits.

A perfect reminder that even in a busy world of high-tech infrastructure, the simplest inhabitants still dictate the final pace.

#StandingStone #NatureAndTechnology #NaturalWorld #Scotland #Biota ▼



At Welters Organisation, we believe that “design” is more than a sketch on a page or a digital model—it is a conversation with the environment. Our greatest inspiration comes from the intrinsic architecture of the natural world.

This timeless metamorphosis, is a beautiful example of organic structural design. What looks like a hand-finished sculpture is actually a result of geological precision. The intricate banding and tiered textures are not random; they are a deliberate response to the pressures and minerals of the earth over millennia. It is design in its purest form: where material, process, and environment converge to create a structure that is as strong as it is beautiful.

We mirror these natural blueprints in every project we undertake:

#### Deliberate Intent:

We design with the “why” in mind, ensuring that form always follows function.

#### Structural Integrity:

Like the ancient calcite, our work is built to endure. We value ageing not as wear and tear, but as a testament to durability.

#### Timeless Aesthetics:

True design transcends trends. We strive for a timeless quality that feels as relevant in a century as it does today.

Nature doesn’t rush its masterpieces, and neither do we. We don’t just build for the present; we design for the permanent. ►



#### Breathing Easy

You know the air quality is good when lichens thrive like this.

This stunning lichen is a perfect example of symbiosis - fungi and algae working together to create a masterpiece of nature.

A reminder that the best designs aren’t manufactured, but evolved.

#design #natureandtechnology #fungi  
#lichen #biota  
◀





There is a profound permanence to the British landscape, and these matured Welters Standing Stones capture that essence perfectly. Designed with nature's heavy influence and crafted right here in Britain, these stones don't just sit on the land—they belong to it. ▲

Offering a multitude of Applications:

Memorial & Natural Burial Grounds: Creating a timeless, non-intrusive tribute.

Public Parklands: Distinctive wayfinding and historical markers.

Private Estates: Dramatic focal points and garden features.

Ecological Boundaries: Natural barriers that support local flora and fauna.

Designed to harmonize over time with the environment, these stones serve as a bridge between the past and the present and bring a sense of “place” to every horizon.

Unlike traditional monuments that stand against nature, our stones are crafted to stand with it.

Over the years, this Welters Standing Stone has evolved and matured alongside its neighbors—the ancient oaks and the rolling mist.

It has invited the moss to cling to its surface and the lichen to paint its texture, creating a living piece of history that feels as though it has been there since the dawn of time.

A spider has spun his web and made his home in the crevices of the stone. When wildlife moves in, you know the balance is perfect.

Bring a sense of permanence and peace to your landscape.

Visit [www.welters-worldwide.com](http://www.welters-worldwide.com)

#StandingStones #Biota #SustainableDesign #NatureInspired  
#natureandtechnology ▼



Native breeds (such as this beautiful Highland cow pictured enjoying the Borders sunshine) are far more than just livestock; they are “ecosystem engineers” that maintain the health of the rolling hills and moorlands. They are the perfect example of natural design.

Unlike modern “continental” breeds, native cattle (like Highlands, Galloways and Belted Galloways) have a digestive system adapted to coarse, “poor” vegetation. By eating the tougher grasses and scrub that other animals avoid, they prevent delicate wildflowers and rare plants from being smothered. Their trampling also creates “microsites” in the soil for seeds to germinate, supporting a wider range of insects and birds.

The most striking evidence of their resilience is the ability to outwinter. This isn’t merely surviving the cold; it is a specialized biological adaptation that allows them to remain on the hills year-round. They grow a thick, mossy undercoat for insulation and a long, oily outer coat that sheds rain and sleet, keeping their skin dry even in a downpour.

Their bodies are tuned to extract maximum energy from frosted, dormant vegetation, maintaining body condition in harsh conditions. with minimal feed. For the farmer, this hardiness removes the need for costly winter housing making these native breeds a cornerstone of truly sustainable hill farming. ▼



Unlike traditional memorials that can present a stark contrast against the natural environment.. Welters Memorial Orbs are crafted to age with grace and blend into their surroundings. ▲

Over time each orb develops a unique patina—weathering, mossing, and maturing to mirror the textures of the earth and natural rock.

Designed to nestle into rockeries, woodland or private gardens, the organic, spherical form provides a gentle focal point that honors a loved one without disrupting the tranquility of the environment.

As the seasons change and the surface matures, the memorial evolves, standing as a permanent, grounded testament to a life well-lived creating a unique space for remembrance in the heart of the natural world.

[www.welters-organisation.com](http://www.welters-organisation.com) #SustainableRemembrance  
#natural #Natureandtechnology #Memorial #Biota

Nature doesn't move in straight lines, and neither does art.

Whether it's the beauty of a coastal evening or the abstract energy of a patterned print, we believe that the most compelling designs are those that carry the "pulse and heartbeat" of the outdoors.

Over many years, Welters Organisation have developed a selection of graphic art designs which were created for printing onto fabric, canvas, plastics and a range of other material.

These designs reflect natural elements into bold, rhythmic patterns and don't just mimic nature; they capture its momentum.

Click on the link below to visit our website and find out more:

[www.welters-worldwide.com/gallery-graphics](http://www.welters-worldwide.com/gallery-graphics)

#design #naturalart #biotaart #art #nature



Pareidolia is the mind's refusal to accept randomness. ▲

When wandering through ancient farmland in the historic parish of Bewcastle, you are completely surrounded by the raw, untamed forces of nature.

Yet, as you stare into the tangle of weathered, moss-covered hawthorn roots and shifting shadows, your brain instinctively imposes order. Watchful faces and creatures appear in the rough bark, effortlessly transforming the chaotic growth of the wild into a perceived, intentional, and familiar design.

Good design can utilise the process of taking the "accidental" beauty or logic found in pareidolia and turning it into a repeatable, functional, and purposeful reality.

Visit [www.welters-worldwide.com](http://www.welters-worldwide.com) to find out more.

#nature #biota #design #welters #pareidolia

We have been conditioned to view time as a thief that steals our aesthetic, but what if we looked at things differently? Many things in this world do not reach their visual peak until they have been weathered and every passing year adds a layer of visual complexity and patina that “newness” simply cannot simulate.

As these matured examples of Welters Stone Orbs rest quietly in an ancient Borders woodland, nature continues to adorn their surfaces with moss and lichen, creating an aesthetic that only time can gift. Designed with nature’s heavy influence and crafted right here in Britain, these stones don’t just sit on the land—they belong to it.

Offering a multitude of Applications:

Memorial & Natural Burial Grounds: Creating a timeless, non-intrusive tribute.

Public Parklands: Distinctive wayfinding and historical markers.

Private Estates: Dramatic focal points and garden features.

Ecological Boundaries: Natural barriers that support local flora and fauna.

Designed to harmonize over time with the environment, these stones serve as a bridge between the past and the present and bring a sense of “place” to every installation.

Please visit us at the link below for more:

[www.welters-worldwide.com](http://www.welters-worldwide.com)

#moss #lichen #design #nature  
#standingstones



Welters are pleased to share this latest addition to our shutterstock portfolio, featuring a detailed study of sedimentary rock formations and their reflections in the calm spring waters of the River Liddel.

These layers of rock, formed from sediments deposited over millions of years, are characteristic of the typical geology in the Scottish Borders.

For this and many more high quality images please visit us at:

<https://www.welters-worldwide.com/gallery-images>





▲ The wild native goats on Langholm Moor are descendants of the Old British Goat, a breed brought to the British Isles by Neolithic farmers thousands of years ago. Unlike modern commercial breeds, these goats have evolved to thrive on a diet of coarse grasses, heather, and woody scrub. While they are technically “feral,” these goats play a vital role in the conservation of the moorland.

They are expert grazers that tackle vegetation that sheep and cattle often ignore. By eating gorse, birch scrub, and tall grasses, they help maintain the open moorland habitat.

Here at Welters Organisation we continue to utilise native breeds as part of our ongoing cattle breeding programme and understand the importance of genetic preservation in maintaining these rugged landscapes. By integrating the hardiness of traditional livestock into strategic conservation grazing, we ensure that the delicate balance of the ecosystem remains intact for future generations.

#nativebreeds #conservation #nature #biota #wildgoats

These unusual images taken at Whithaugh Tower this morning showcase the beautiful, geometric “fiddlehead” stage of Bracken (Pteridium), one of the most successful plants on Earth.

Bracken is considered one of the most widely distributed plants in the world, found on every continent except Antarctica. It is an evolutionary survivor, with fossil records indicating that similar fern species have existed for over 55 million years.

Below the soil, Bracken has a massive network of underground stems called rhizomes, which can travel deep underground and allow the plant to survive fires and frost. To protect itself from herbivores, the plant produces chemical compounds that are toxic to many insects and mammals. ▼

A “pioneer” plant, often being the first to colonize land that has been cleared or disturbed by human activity or natural disasters Bracken thoroughly demonstrates Natural resilience resulting from natural design.

For these and many more high quality images please visit us at:

<https://www.welters-worldwide.com/gallery-images>



In folklore, the Hawthorn is a highly sacred—and sometimes dangerous—tree. According to Celtic lore, cutting one down or harming a Hawthorn stood alone in a field invites severe bad luck, illness, or financial ruin from the angry Sidhe (fairies). This belief is still respected by some today.

Famously, in 1999, a multi-million-pound highway scheme in County Clare, Ireland, was actually rerouted and delayed to protect a solitary historic hawthorn tree that sat right in the middle of the planned bypass.

The Hawthorn's reputation as a bridge between worlds isn't unique to Ireland however. Along the Anglo-Scottish border, the tree takes on an even darker, more historical edge—deeply intertwined with the bloody history of the Border Reivers and the folklore of places like Bewcastle / Newcastleton

During the 13th to 17th centuries, the Border Reivers (clans of cattle thieves and raiders) terrorised the region.

Lone, sturdy hawthorns were frequently used as makeshift gallows ("Dool Trees") by March Wardens to summarily hang captured reivers. Because hawthorns often grew near bogs, mosses, and hidden tracks used by reivers to smuggle stolen livestock, a lone tree was a notorious ambush point.

It is widely believed that the hawthorns of the border grew so twisted and white because they were nourished by the blood of slaughtered reivers.

#borderreivers #tree #north #scotland #celtic



How about this for an example of low-impact housing

Just as the song thrush builds using whatever it finds, we can also prioritize locally sourced, abundant, and recycled materials to drive down costs and minimize environmental impact.

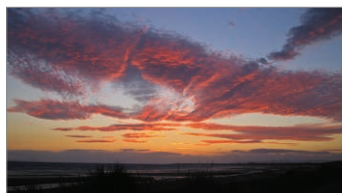
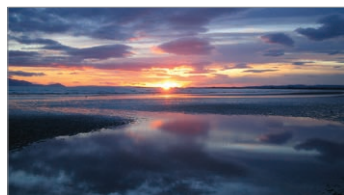


By studying and applying nature's proven engineering, we can then develop products that are not just cost-effective, but smarter, more sustainable, and inherently higher-performing.

These solutions truly reflect the ingenuity of natural design.



KeithWelters



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KeithWelters



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This beautiful little blue plant, spotted this morning at #whithaughtower, is the understated Bugle (scientific name: *Ajuga reptans*). ▲

It is a fairly common sight in the Scottish Borders, typically found in damp woodlands, shady grasslands, and hedgerows. It is easily recognized by its distinctive features: Small, hooded, bright blue or violet flowers that grow in dense, upright spikes.

The foliage often has a dark purple or bronze tint, which helps it stand out from surrounding green grasses. It is a low-growing plant that spreads via “runners” (stolons), similar to a strawberry plant, forming a thick carpet on the ground.

In the Scottish Borders, Bugle is particularly valued by conservationists because it is a magnet for pollinators. It is a vital early-season flower which has evolved to be hardy enough to withstand late frosts and is an excellent nectar source for bees and various butterfly species.

The return of the rain this morning highlights the unique beauty of the native temperate rainforest here at #Whithaughtower.

This is a vivid reminder of nature’s rich color palette, wrapping this special environment in everything from deep moss greens to bright canopy golds.

We take great pride in safeguarding this native ecosystem and drawing inspiration from its beauty.

For this and many more spectacular images, please visit our gallery at:

[www.welters-worldwide.com/gallery-images](http://www.welters-worldwide.com/gallery-images)

#Conservation #Moss #Lichen #Scotland ▼



To understand how the 16th-century Border Reivers would have coped with an intense summer heatwave, you have to look at the climate they actually lived in.

The 16th century was smack in the middle of a mini Ice Age—a centuries-long period of bitterly cold winters and cool, wet summers.

A genuine, modern-style heatwave would have felt completely alien, if not downright apocalyptic, to them. If a scorching heatwave did strike Liddesdale back then, here is how the Armstrongs and their rivals would have handled it.

Whithaugh Tower (recreated in the attached image) was a classic stone tower house. These structures were built for defense, but they happened to have incredible thermal mass.

With stone walls often four to six feet thick, the burning sun would take days to penetrate the interior. Inside the tower, the air would stay remarkably chilled.

The simple truth is that outside the tower any actual raiding or reiving would stop.



Reiving was traditionally an autumn and winter activity. The phrase “a Reiver’s moon” refers to the long, dark nights of October through February, when the cover of darkness was maximum and the cattle were fat from summer grazing.

Summer was meant for grueling agricultural work—specifically cutting and drying hay to keep their livestock alive through the next winter. In a massive heatwave, both the Scottish and English Marches would likely call a temporary, unspoken truce. Men and horses would be too exhausted to fight, the rivers (which they used to navigate and track stolen

goods) would run dry, and the focus would shift entirely to keeping their livestock from dying of thirst. ▲

Instead of fighting, you’d likely find the Armstrongs of Whithaugh cooling off in the shaded pools of Liddel Water, without any armour, drinking weak ale, and praying for the rain to return.

#whithaughtower #heatwave  
#bordereivers #clanarmstrong  
#peeltower

Take a close look at this gorgeous Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) caught soaking up the afternoon sun on an old drystone wall last week in the Scottish Borders.

While you might associate lizards with tropical heat or more ancient times, these resilient little reptiles are perfectly adapted to our rugged modern northern landscapes...

The Latin name “viviparous” means this creature gives birth to live young rather than laying eggs—a brilliant evolutionary trick to help its offspring survive the cooler Scottish climate. As cold-blooded creatures, they rely entirely on the environment to regulate their body temperature.

This mossy drystone wall is prime real estate for a quick energy recharge, yet the intricate patterns of browns, greys, and greens make them absolute experts at blending right into the heather and lichen, protecting them from predators overhead.

Next time you are out hiking near the borders, slow down and keep an eye on the rocks—you might just spot one of these mini dragons basking in the wild!



At Welters, we believe that honoring a legacy means creating a living, breathing space of beauty and environmental harmony. ▲

We don't just design memorials, we shape the future of heritage and remembrance by merging cutting-edge ideas with natural elements and aesthetic.

Crafting timeless features which elevate community spaces with peaceful, eco-conscious products for generations to come.

Find out more at

[www.welters-worldwide.com](http://www.welters-worldwide.com)

#natureandtechnology #stoneorbs #biota #welters #natural



At welters organisation, sustainability isn't just a concept—it's an active, daily practice.

Just like these Biota Figures meticulously tending to sycamore Saplings , we ourselves are dedicated to cultivating environmental responsibility, structured growth, and lasting legacies.

From memorial design to ecology and sustainable farming practices we believe in nurturing the roots of tomorrow..

Find out more at  
[www.welters-worldwide.com](http://www.welters-worldwide.com)

◀ #Sustainability #Innovation #EnvironmentalStewardship

This incredible Wasp Queen (*Vespula vulgaris*) establishing her hive inside a secure rock hollow at Whithaugh tower yesterday perfectly mirrors the core principles of advanced engineering and design.

By building directly into the environment the structure is seamlessly anchored into its surroundings rather than imposing upon them.

Just as nature constantly employs precision manufacturing and robust design, our own focus remains on advancing our designs with dignified, long-lasting solutions that respect both form and natural function. ▶





The Border Reivers were legendary for their lawless cattle raids, fierce guerrilla tactics, and absolute dominance along the Anglo-Scottish border. ▲

But even the toughest Liddesdale Armstrong would have been completely at the mercy of this tiny, bloodthirsty terror:

### The Notorious Midge!

While they might be almost universally despised for the discomfort and distraction they inflict... these microscopic monsters are actually a vital cornerstone of the Scottish ecosystem serving as a massive, essential food source for native bats, birds, and spiders.

Some even argue that the midge is the true “Guardian of Scotland,” single-handedly keeping vast swathes of the breathtaking wilderness wild, untamed, and completely free from habitation and over-development for centuries.

Turns out, Scotland’s smallest, and most aggressive inhabitant, may also be its fiercest environmental protector!

#ScottishHistory #BorderReivers #Midge #Nature #EcoSystem

Here in the Scottish Borders, the temperate rainforest environment around Whithaugh Tower is currently alive with an almost otherworldly green glow.

Japanese culture has a word for this:

Shinryoku

Translating literally to “new green” or “fresh greenery,” ..... Shinryoku represents the fleeting, lush beauty of vibrant leaves when they first unfold in late spring and early summer.

So, as the ancient moss-covered stone walls frame the bubbling Whithaugh Burn on a wet Thursday morning, we are reminded that wherever you are in the world.. nature speaks the exact same language.

#shinryoku #nativerainforest #scottishborders #canopy #temperate ▼





A Blue Grey cow and her heifer calf enjoying the warmth of the morning sun. ▲

This legendary hybrid, traditional to southwestern Scotland and northwestern England, is strictly bred by crossing a hardy, black native Galloway cow with a Whitebred Shorthorn bull. By crossing these two distinct native lines, the offspring inherit the ultimate “superpowers” of both parents. They boast the unmatched hardness of the Galloway alongside the exceptional milk output and docility of the Shorthorn.

Blue Grey cattle thrive on marginal land, easily holding their body weight and condition on coarse hill grasses and heather where other breeds would struggle. Because they graze more lightly and selectively than sheep or heavy continental breeds, they are perfect for conservation grazing—helping to manage delicate ecosystems, promote biodiversity, and control aggressive weeds without destroying the turf.

In a modern agricultural world obsessed with high-input, fast-growing continental breeds, traditional choices like the Blue Grey are seeing a massive resurgence. And rightly so!

There’s something deeply humbling about standing in the presence of these ancient oak trees at Whithaugh Tower.

Nestled in the beautiful Scottish Borders, these majestic, historic giants feel like guardians of the past.

They stand tall and in full leaf today alongside some maturing Welters Standing Stones, all under this morning’s blue sky.

#oaktree #ancienttree #scottishborders #bluesky #biota



## Fact or Fiction: The Whithaugh Alien?

**Fiction:** If you stumbled upon this in the temperate woodland of Whithaugh Tower, you would be forgiven for thinking an alien pod had just landed, or a legendary forest monster was creeping around on spidery legs.

**Fact:** This otherworldly creature is 100% natural!

It is actually a massive tree burl, safely and carefully removed from a tree deep in the forest.

So.. what is a BURL?

It is nature's scar tissue. When a tree experiences stress, a viral infection, or an injury, it protects itself by growing these large, chaotic, knotty lumps. This one is about the size of a large boulder.

Those creepy, crawling limbs are simply attached branches acting as a natural tripod stand!

The Verdict:

Pure Fact.

While we haven't photographed any aliens at Whithaugh (yet)... Instead, what we find is deep, driving inspiration and a reminder that the greatest engineer on Earth is nature itself.

#treeburl #naturesdesign #scottishwoodland #factorfiction #biota



This AI reconstruction offers a fascinating glimpse into the past, bringing the recently excavated waterwheel pit at Whithaugh Tower back to life.

Uncovering these historical sites is only half the story—visualizing how they actually functioned changes everything.

While only the giant, beautifully constructed wheelpit remains today, this overshot wheel was once the heartbeat of the estate's agriculture, driving massive efficiencies in threshing, turnip chopping, and woodcutting.

It's a fantastic testament to the ingenuity, skill, and foresight of the generations who shaped this site long after the Border Reivers were gone.



Peel Towers (like the one recreated here from a painting of Whithaugh Tower) were small, free-standing fortified keeps built between the 13th and 17th centuries.

Dotted across the landscape on both sides of the Scotland-England border, these towers weren't built to project royal wealth or host lavish banquets. They were survival bunkers designed for one specific purpose: outlasting the lawless, violent era of the Border Reivers.

While massive castles were meant to hold territory against national armies, Peel Towers were built by local families to protect themselves from fast-moving, heavily armed raiding parties.

The powerful Armstrong clan of Liddesdale, for example, utilised key strongholds like Whithaugh Tower and Mangerton Tower to defend their lives and livelihoods.

During a raid, a family's wealth wasn't measured in gold—it was measured in cattle, sheep, and horses. Because of this, the design of a Peel Tower was entirely practical.

Unlike a standard castle, where the ground floor might feature a grand hall or armoury, a Peel Tower featured a windowless, stone-



vaulted basement used exclusively for livestock.

When the alarm sounded, the animals were quickly driven into the bottom floor to prevent them from being stolen, while the family retreated to the safety of the upper levels.

Today, a Peel Tower is more than just a historical monument; it is a testament to

purposeful design.

This perfectly embodies our ethos: truly good design is derived directly from an understanding of necessity, which can only be forged through extensive experience.

#ScottishBorders #PeelTowers  
#Armstrongs #BorderReivers

## Celebrating World Rainforest Day

Today (Monday 22/06) marks World Rainforest Day, an important reminder of the breathtaking, life-sustaining ecosystems we share our planet with.

While many immediately picture the tropics, the image above captures the deep, moss-draped magic of our own native temperate rainforests

The ancient, interwoven branches and incredibly lush forest floor you see here

aren't just a beautiful landscape—they form a highly sensitive and vital living habitat.

Through dedicated work we we are putting immense, ongoing effort into preserving and maintaining this native rainforest environment at Whithaugh Tower.

Safeguarding the rare lichens, dense mosses, and unique wildlife that rely entirely on this damp, shaded microclimate.

Allowing fallen timber to naturally decay and blanket the ground, which actively fosters new growth and sustains the woodland's delicate balance ensuring that the historic,

untamed natural beauty surrounding the Whithaugh grounds thrives for future generations.

Let today be a reminder of the quiet, enduring beauty of our native uk rainforests—and the shared responsibility we all have to protect them.

[www.worldrainforestday.org](http://www.worldrainforestday.org)

[www.welters-worldwide.com](http://www.welters-worldwide.com)

#scottishrainforest #biota  
#scottishborders #conservation #trees





All projects start with a spark of creativity—but successful execution relies on a solid foundation of experience.

The move from concept to a physical, enduring reality requires more than just a beautiful drawing.....

It demands balancing innovation with time-tested design principles to ensure that what works on paper translates seamlessly into the real world.

At Welters, we take pride in being innovators of original forward-thinking designs that provide not only form, but function.





Beneath the sprawling canopy of the ancient oaks at Whithaugh Tower, a silent shift is taking root.

We are invited to witness the dawn a provocative realm where the boundaries between organic heritage and technological futures entirely dissolve.

Standing amidst the wild thistles and untamed summer grasses is a creature that feels both deeply historic and unapologetically futuristic.

This native icon has been reimagined through the lens of forward evolution.. but... Rather than clashing with its environment, the entity stands perfectly within the ecosystem, appearing to grow from the earth rather than interrupting it.

Under the watchful, centuries-old gaze of Whithaugh's oaks, the past and the future graze together in harmonious coexistence.

◀ #biota #natureandtechnology #abstract #nativebreeds

Look at what appeared in the woodland at Whithaugh Tower over the weekend! An absolutely stunning, vibrant flush of Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*).

Standing out against the dark woodland bark, the bright sulfur-yellow and neon orange shelves are almost impossible to miss. With the recent mix of summer warmth and rain, this incredibly striking fungus is growing fast right now, but it won't last long and can reach full maturity in only a few days.

If you are out walking in the woodland today, keep your eyes peeled for this beautiful display of nature's design.

#ChickenOfTheWoods #ForagingUK #WhithaughTower  
#ScottishBorders #WildMushrooms ▶



Within the soil of every healthy forest lies a bustling, invisible metropolis. While we often look up and admire the towering canopy, the true foundation of a forest's success is hidden just beneath our feet.

Trees and Fungi constantly engage in a profound, life-sustaining partnership often affectionately called the “Wood Wide Web.” This symbiotic relationship is formed by the mycelium—the vegetative part of a fungus consisting of a massive, branching web of thread-like structures called hyphae.

These microscopic threads weave through

the soil and physically intertwine with the tree roots.

This is a partnership which sees the fungi act as highly efficient scavengers, absorbing essential minerals—like phosphorus and nitrogen—as well as water, and delivering them directly to the tree.....Fungi, however, cannot photosynthesize, meaning they cannot produce their own food. The tree, acting as a massive, solar-powered sugar factory, shares up to a third of the carbon-rich sugars it creates with the fungal network in exchange for those vital soil nutrients.

The connection goes far beyond a simple exchange of food and water. This sprawling subterranean network connects individual plants, sometimes uniting entirely different species into a massive, interconnected super-organism. A forest is not merely a collection of isolated trees, but a highly complex, cooperative society where individuals constantly communicate and support one another.

Through this fungal internet, forests achieve remarkable feats of collaboration:

Older, larger trees—often referred to as “Hub Trees” or “Mother Trees”—use the fungal network to shuttle surplus nutrients and water to younger saplings struggling to survive in the shaded understory.

If a tree is attacked by a swarm of insects or experiences severe drought, it can send chemical distress signals through the mycelium. This prompts neighboring trees to ramp up their own chemical defenses before the threat even reaches them.

When a tree is nearing the end of its life, it can dump its remaining resources into the network, bequeathing its gathered energy and carbon to the surrounding community.



## In a world of their own...

Most of us go about our daily lives without a thought to the other lifeforms constantly around us. They have their own little world and our world would not be the same without them in it and yet, we do not notice. So here are a few pages dedicated to our friendly little bugs, photographed in our own 'backyard'.



This fascinating insect is a Scorpionfly (genus *Panorpa*). ▲

Despite its intimidating appearance, this creature is entirely harmless. The prominent red, upturned tail resembles a scorpion's sting, but it is actually a modified capsule containing claspers. Only the males possess this feature, using it strictly for mating.

Scorpionflies are the clean-up crew of our hedgerows. They scavenge dead insects—often stealing them directly from spider webs!!!

Thriving in damp, shaded habitats rich in stinging nettles and brambles, which provide excellent cover, Scorpionflies belong to the ancient order Mecoptera with a lineage that predates modern flies and butterflies, making them true living relics of evolution.



A Snail Hunter (*Cychrus caraboides*), caught red-handed, in our Borders temperate rainforest environment, doing exactly what its name implies. Evolution didn't skip a beat with this one. ▲

Notice how unusually narrow and elongated its head and thorax are?

That is a specialised design that allows it to reach deep inside coiled snail shells to grab its dinner.

These ground beetles are flightless, nocturnal predators, so spotting one out in the open during the day having a feast on a wet leaf was an absolute treat!

Pictured in the Scottish Borders is the FEMALE Orange-tailed Mining Bee (also known as the Early Mining Bee), (*Andrena haemorrhoa*)

These are solitary bees, meaning there is no queen and no grand colony.

Every single female digs, provisions, and defends her own underground burrow independently. However, they love the same real estate; you will often find dozens of their tiny, volcano-like nests clustered right next to each other in a meadow.

The male's sole purpose is reproduction. Because they don't dig burrows to shelter from the elements, the adult male lifespan is incredibly short—usually lasting only a few weeks in early spring before they die off, leaving the females behind to handle all the heavy lifting of building the underground chambers for the next generation.



This is the Snipefly



She can be identified her by that distinctively striped grey-and-black thorax, the elegantly marbled dark wing patterns, and her slender, yellow-brown legs.

These flies are entirely dependent on clean, well-oxygenated, moderate-to-fast-flowing water with gravelly or stony beds. The pristine, unpolluted river systems of the Scottish Borders provide the ideal habitat for them.

Because their larvae are highly sensitive to pollution, spotting this fly is a wonderful indicator of the top-tier local river health and water quality surrounding us at Whithaugh tower.



The insect captured here (again at Whithaugh tower) is a Golden- ▲  
bloomed grey longhorn beetle.

The beautiful, velvety golden-yellow colouration you see on the beetle's face and body in this image is actually made of thousands of tiny, delicate hairs.

As the beetle ages and goes about its daily life brushing against rough plants and undergrowth, these hairs gradually rub off. By the end of the summer, an old beetle can look completely shiny, bald, and black, looking like an entirely different species.

As an aside...if you gently disturb or pick up one of these beetles, it might talk back to you.

They are capable of stridulation—rubbing the back of their head against their thorax to produce a faint, high-pitched squeaking or buzzing sound. A very clever defense mechanism designed to startle predators.

The colourful insect captured here in the sun at Whithaugh tower is a Red-and-black froghopper (*Cercopis vulnerata*).

This is an unmistakable true bug featuring a glossy black body marked with bold, bright red-orange patches across its wings. Adults typically grow to about 9–11 mm in length, making it one of the largest froghopper species in the UK. Finding this in the Scottish Borders is quite rare.

While this species is incredibly common throughout England and Wales, it has historically been recorded as much scarcer or largely absent further north into Scotland.

Froghoppers are famous for their phenomenal jumping power. Gram-for-gram, they possess a more powerful leap than a flea, using their catapult-like hind legs to launch themselves up to 70 centimeters into the air in less than a millisecond.

While you might be familiar with “cuckoo spit”—the frothy white foam nests that common meadow froghoppers leave on plant stems—the nymphs of the red-and-black froghopper actually feed on underground plant roots, meaning their foam nests are rarely seen. The adults emerge above ground between April and August to feed on plant sap. ▼





These slugs belong to the family Arionidae, commonly referred to as roundback slugs. Given their dark coloration and distinctive orange-tinted foot fringe (the rim at the very bottom of their body), they are likely young or color-variants of the Large Black Slug (*Arion ater*) or the closely related Spanish Slug (*Arion vulgaris*).

**The “Roundback” Shape:** Unlike some other slug families (like the Limacidae or keelback slugs), members of the genus *Arion* do not have a sharp ridge running down their back. Instead, their backs are rounded, and when threatened, they contract into a tight, dome-shaped ball.

**Distinct Texture:** Their skin features deep, coarse longitudinal ridges or tubercles, giving them a heavily wrinkled texture.

**Color Variability:** While called “black slugs,” their colors can vary widely from deep jet black to brown, grey, orange, and tan. A classic identifying feature is the contrast between their dark upper body and

a lighter, often yellowish-orange foot fringe striped with fine dark lines.

**Rocking Defense:** If disturbed or picked up, these slugs exhibit a unique defense mechanism. They contract into a compact semi-sphere and rock or sway rhythmically from side to side. This makes it incredibly difficult for a predator (like a bird or hedgehog) to get a secure grip on them.

**Sticky Mucus:** They produce a highly viscous, sticky mucus that is distasteful to many predators and serves to keep them from drying out.

**Environment:** They thrive in moist environments, including woodlands, hedgerows, fields, and gardens. They are predominantly nocturnal or active on overcast, rainy days.

**Diet:** They are opportunistic omnivores. While they eat living plants—making them notorious pests to gardeners—they play a crucial role in the ecosystem as decomposers by feeding on fungi, decaying vegetation, leaf litter, animal feces, and carrion.





### The Antler Moth (*Ceratopryx graminis*).

The larvae of the Antler Moth are commonly found throughout the upland pastures, hillsides, and moorlands of Scotland.

As a typical “roller” caterpillar, it is plump, cylindrical, and built for a life hidden in the turf. It sports a glossy, bronze-brown or greenish-grey color that blends perfectly with damp soil and dead thatch, masquerade-ready with clean, pale stripes running all the way down its back and sides.

### The Annual Life Cycle:

The Antler Moth goes through just one generation a year, precisely timed to survive chilly northern climates:

- Winter (Egg): Spends the coldest months tucked safely away as an egg in the grass.
- Spring to June (Caterpillar): Hatches and wakes up hungry, feeding on grass until it reaches full size by June.

- July (Pupa): Burrows just beneath the soil surface to form a shiny brown chrysalis.
- Late Summer (Adult Moth): Emerges as a medium-sized, day-flying brown moth boasting distinct, “antler-like” markings on its wings.

### Diet and Behavior:

- Preferred Greens: They are strictly grass-lovers. Their favorites include Mat-grass, Fescues, and Bent-grasses common across the Scottish Borders.
- The “Tiny Army” Phenomenon: Every 9 or 10 years, this species experiences a massive population boom. Instead of the usual scattered individuals, thousands of caterpillars hatch at once. They march across the hillsides like a miniature army, momentarily stripping the grass bare before moving on.



In forestry, exotic bark beetles are a particular threat because they can be concealed in imported timber. The most damaging species tunnel to form galleries within the bark of living trees where their larvae feed and develop, ultimately killing the tree.

Here in the Scottish Borders, The Great Spruce Bark Beetle (*Dendroctonus micans*) is a well-established pest that was accidentally introduced from continental Europe in the 1970s.

As Spruce is one of our most important commercial tree species, managing this pest is a high priority for landowners.

Locally, Kershope and Kielder forests represent a massive commercial softwood resource, this area is a “main concern” zone.

To combat the invasive pest forestry teams actively deploy a secret weapon: The Predatory Spruce Beetle (*Rhizophagus grandis*), a highly specialized predatory beetle that eats only the Great Spruce Bark Beetle. These are released at infestation sites across the border forests to successfully keep the pest population controlled and prevent widespread tree. ▼



The Tiger Fly (*Coenosia tigrina*). ▲

The Tiger Fly is a miniature, aerial apex predator common across the UK, particularly thriving in damp, insect-rich riverbank habitats like the Scottish Borders.

While it resembles a common house fly at a glance, it is a highly evolved, beneficial hunter rather than a scavenger.

As captured in this image, it features a distinct upright, alert posture. Its grey-bristled body is supported by legs with dark thighs that abruptly transition into bright yellowish-orange shins. Its legs are lined with long, needle-sharp spikes that lock together to form an inescapable basket, allowing it to snatch prey right out of the sky.

An ambush predator, it stakes out prominent perches—frequently stinging nettles—and launches explosive aerial attacks on passing insects

Serving as an excellent natural pest controller by relentlessly hunting down swarms of biting midges, gnats, and fruit flies.

The Common Stretch Spider (Tetragnatha) (or Long-jawed Orb-weaver) is a highly specialized arachnid celebrated for its striking metallic appearance and masterful camouflage.

Found widely across the UK, Europe, and North America, these spiders are an essential, harmless component of healthy wetland and garden ecosystems.

They possess an exceptionally elongated, pencil-thin body. Their legs are remarkably long and slender, with the front pairs stretching far ahead of the body. The abdomen features a brilliant, shimmering metallic coat—often silver, gold, or bronze—overlaid with intricate dark leaf-like or branching patterns.

The “Long Jaws” are named for their oversized, powerful chelicerae (mouthparts) and fangs, which are proportionately much larger than those of typical orb-weavers.

When threatened or resting during the day, the stretch spider pulls its front legs straight forward and its back legs straight backward, pressing its body tight against a stem or blade of grass. In this rigid pose, it becomes virtually invisible, perfectly mimicking a dead twig or a strand of dry vegetation.

Unlike the vertical webs of typical garden spiders, stretch spiders usually spin horizontal or heavily slanted orb webs low to the ground over water or damp soil to catch



emerging aquatic insects. They often leave the center (hub) of their web open or loosely woven, sitting right in the middle or waiting on a nearby stem with a signal line attached to the web.

They heavily favor damp environments, including riverbanks, lake margins, marshes, bogs, and overgrown garden ditches and are voracious predators of small flying insects, particularly midges, mosquitoes, and gnats.

By consuming vast quantities of aquatic

and terrestrial insects, they act as an excellent form of natural pest control.

Despite their intimidatingly long jaws, stretch spiders are completely harmless to humans. They are docile, non-aggressive, and possess venom that is only effective against their tiny insect prey.

If you encounter one, it is far more likely to freeze into its “stick” posture than to react defensively



Green Dock Beetles Mating. ▲

This photo captures a unique, close-up look at the intense breeding cycle of the Green Dock Beetle (*Gastrophysa viridula*).

- The Female (Right): is exhibiting extreme physogastry—a phenomenon where the abdomen stretches and distends massively to hold eggs. The swelling is so pronounced that her dark body has completely separated her brilliant, iridescent green wing cases, forcing them forward.
- The Male (Left): The smaller, entirely green male is attempting to mate. Because the female's body is so spherical, he is forced into a comical, nearly vertical climb. Look closely and you can see one of his legs flailing straight up into the air as he struggles for a grip.
- The Environment: They are resting on their namesake dock leaf, which is already covered in the signature large, ragged holes left behind by their voracious appetites.

This is a field slug, a member of the genus *Deroceras*, which includes the common field slug (*Deroceras reticulatum*) and several closely related species.

The slug is small and slender, rather than the larger, bulkier shape of a leopard slug or large garden slug.

It has a pale tan to amber colour with little obvious patterning.

The mantle (the saddle-like section behind the head) covers about the front third of the body, which is typical of *Deroceras* species.

The habitat—moss growing on stone in damp conditions—is exactly where field slugs are often found. ▼





The mayfly (order Ephemeroptera). This one was found taking a rest on a leaf. It is easily recognizable by a few distinctive features: ▲

**The Wings:** They hold their large, heavily-veined wings straight up and together over their backs when resting, much like a butterfly.

**The Tails:** They have long, thread-like tails (called cerci) extending from the end of their abdomen. The one clearly has two very long tails.

**The Body:** A slender, elongated abdomen and short, inconspicuous antennae.

Based on the slightly dull, cloudy appearance of its wings, this looks like it's in the subimago stage (often called a "dun" by fly fishermen). Mayflies are unique because they are the only insects that molt one more time after they have already grown functional wings. Shortly after this stage, it will shed its skin one last time to become a shiny, clear-winged adult (an imago or "spinner") dedicated entirely to finding a mate.

This is a communal larval nest typically made by tent caterpillars (genus *Malacosoma*) or webworms.

These caterpillars spin a thick, dense silk nest in the forks or branches of trees and shrubs to protect themselves from predators and harsh weather. They congregate inside or on the surface of the web when they aren't feeding.

If you look closely near the center and lower-middle parts of the web, you can see numerous small, dark caterpillars gathered together.

They are highly attracted to fruit and ornamental trees, particularly wild cherry, apple, and related species.

While these nests can look quite alarming and may cause localised defoliation on the branches immediately surrounding the web, a healthy tree will almost always survive the damage and grow its leaves back later in the season. ▼



This is an amber snail, belonging to the family Succineidae.

The amber snail get their common name from their beautiful, translucent shells, which are typically an amber, golden, or yellowish-brown color. As you can see, the shell is quite thin and delicate compared to a standard garden snail, allowing you to partially see the soft body and mottled patterns underneath.

Unlike many common garden snails that prefer drier land, amber snails are semi-aquatic. They thrive in damp, wetland environments and are almost always found near water sources, frequently crawling along the leaves of lush, damp vegetation, making the Scottish Borders a perfect home for it.

If you look closely at its structure, its shell has a relatively large, wide opening (aperture) and a very short spire at the top tip. Additionally, their bodies often look somewhat oversized or “plump” compared to the small shell they carry on their backs.

Amber snails are famous in the biology world because they are the primary hosts for a parasitic flatworm called *Leucochloridium*. When infected, the parasite crawls into the snail's eye-stalks, making them swell, turn bright green and striped, and pulsate to look like caterpillars. This tricks birds into eating the eye-stalks, completing the parasite's life cycle.



This is a soldier beetle (family Cantharidae) ▲

It has an elongated, soft-looking body, rather than the hard, domed shape of many beetles, with dark grey-black wing cases (elytra).

It is identified by its orange-brown legs and its distinctive pale yellow/orange collar (pronotum) behind the head with a dark central marking, as well as its long, thread-like antennae.

Soldier beetles are generally considered beneficial insects. Adults feed on pollen, nectar, and small insects. Larvae are predators of aphids, caterpillars, and other garden pests and they do not damage plants significantly or sting.

The insect captured in this image is an Alderfly, most likely the Common Alderfly (*Sialis lutaria*). They belong to the order Megaloptera and are closely related to lacewings.

One of the most defining features of the Alderfly is how the wings are held.

When resting, they fold their heavily veined, dark, translucent wings over their back like a roof or a tent.

They have a stout, dark brownish-black body and a notably broad head with long, prominent antennae.



Though they look somewhat similar to stoneflies, adult alderflies can easily be distinguished by the complete absence of “tail” filaments or bristles (cerci) at the tip of their abdomen.

#### Life Cycle and Behavior:

While you see the adult flying version on a leaf in this image, they spend the vast majority of their lives (one to two years) underwater as predatory larvae.

They live at the bottom of ponds, lakes, and slow-moving rivers, burrowing into the silt and mud to hunt smaller invertebrates.

Adults emerge en masse during late spring and early summer (typically around May and June). Their adult lifespan is incredibly short—usually only lasting 2 to 3 days.

Because they live such short adult lives solely to mate and lay eggs, adult alderflies do not feed at all; they survive entirely on energy reserves built up during their larval stage.

They are relatively sluggish, docile insects and quite poor flyers. You will almost always find them clumsily resting on vegetation right along the water's edge, just like the one in this image, pictured on our own land in Scotland.

The insect in these images is a type of beetle known as a weevil (family Curculionidae). More specifically, it belongs to the genus *Polydrusus* or *Phyllobius*, commonly known as green leaf weevils or broad-nosed weevils.

#### Identification & Features:

**The “Snout”:** The most distinguishing feature of weevils is their elongated head that forms a distinct snout or “rostrum.” Their antennae are attached right along the sides of this snout.

#### Metallic Shimmer:

Look closely at its body in the images, and you will see a beautiful metallic, golden-green coloration. This shimmer isn’t actually from the beetle’s shell itself; it is caused by thousands of tiny, iridescent scales covering its body, much like the scales on a butterfly’s wing. As the weevil ages, these scales can rub off, sometimes revealing a darker black or brown body underneath.



#### Behavior and Ecology:

**Plant Eaters:** These weevils are entirely herbivorous. As adults, they feed on the leaves and buds of various trees and shrubs (such as birch, oak, and hazel). In these images, it is scaling a tree branch, which is exactly where they spend most of their time during the spring and summer months.

#### The Next Generation:

While the adults hang out in the canopy eating leaves, the females lay their eggs in the soil or under bark. Once hatched, the larvae live underground, feeding on plant and tree roots before pupating and emerging as beetles the following spring.

#### Defense Mechanism:

If you disturb a green leaf weevil while it’s sitting on a branch, it will often pull its legs in close and drop straight to the ground, playing dead among the leaf litter until the danger passes.

This is a Copse Snail (scientifically known as *Arianta arbustorum*). It is a very common land snail native to Europe, particularly well-distributed across northwestern parts including the UK and Ireland.

The shell is sub-globose (somewhat spherical) with a relatively low spire. While many copse snails have a distinct single dark brown spiral band running along the whorls, their background color can vary heavily from yellowish-brown to dark, mottled brown with fine flecks, much like this individual.

They typically have a dark grey to near-black body with a somewhat pebbled skin texture, which matches the snail navigating the stone in your photo perfectly.

Despite its name (“copse” meaning a small group of trees), it isn’t strictly confined to woodlands. They are frequently found in damp places, hedgerows, meadows, gardens, and, as shown here, rocky surfaces covered in moss and lichen.

They are generalist herbivores and decomposers. They feed on a wide variety of green plants, decaying vegetation, fungi, and they love to scrape nutrient-rich moss and lichen off rocks.



The snail in the center of this image is a White-lipped Snail (scientifically known as *Cepaea hortensis*). ▲

This snail is easily distinguished by its glossy, smooth shell with bold, distinct, unbroken spiral bands of dark brown against a bright yellow background.

These snails are famous among biologists for their extreme variation in color and banding (a trait called genetic polymorphism). They can be yellow, pink, or brown, and can have anywhere from zero to five dark spiral bands.

Their shell patterns are a classic example of natural selection in action. Thrushes (birds) love to eat them by smashing them against rocks (“thrush anvils”). In woods, darker or heavily banded snails hide better from birds, while in open grasslands, lighter, yellow-shelled snails survive better because they blend into the grass and stay cooler in the sun.

The insect pictured is a hoverfly known scientifically as *Xylota segnis*. It is commonly referred to by several names, including the orange-belted leafwalker, the orange-belted hoverfly, or the brown-toed forest fly.

The most distinguishing feature of *Xylota segnis* is a vibrant orange or yellowish-red band across the middle of its otherwise slim, black abdomen. In this particular image, the orange band is completely hidden beneath its resting wings.

It has a metallic, greenish-black thorax. Its front and middle legs are noticeably yellow, while its hind legs feature highly enlarged dark femora (thighs) lined with two rows of thick spines.

They are reasonably large for hoverflies, typically measuring between 10 to 14 mm in length.

True to their common name, these flies are famous for “scuttling” or



running back and forth over sunlit leaves rather than spending all of their time hovering.

While most hoverflies are heavily associated with flowers, *Xylota segnis* rarely visits them. Instead, adults graze on wind-blown pollen that has collected on the surface of leaves, and they eagerly eat the sugary honeydew left behind by aphids.

They are incredibly common and widespread across Europe and parts of North America, particularly around woodlands, hedgerows, and leafy gardens.

The adults lay their eggs in wet sawdust, decomposing vegetable matter, or rotting wood. The larvae are saprophagous (they feed on decaying organic matter) and play a helpful role in breaking down dead wood.



The creature resting on this log is a Common Lizard (scientifically known as *Zootoca vivipara*), which is also widely referred to as the Viviparous Lizard. ▲

The most noticeable feature of this particular individual is its missing tail. The stump is relatively fresh or is in the early stages of healing. This is a survival mechanism called autotomy; when a predator (like a bird, cat, or snake) grabs them, the lizard can drop its still-moving tail to distract the attacker and make a quick getaway. The tail will eventually regrow, though it will typically be shorter, thicker, and more stubby than the original.

While most reptiles lay eggs, the common lizard is highly unusual because it is viviparous. The female incubates the eggs inside her body and gives birth to live young (usually encased in a thin membrane that bursts immediately upon birth) in mid-to-late summer.

They love open, sunny spots with nearby cover—exactly like the decaying log seen in this photo. They use these surfaces to bask in the sun to raise their body temperature, which gives them the energy to hunt insects, spiders, and worms.

They hold the record for living further north than any other land-dwelling reptile on Earth, even extending into the Arctic Circle. They survive the harsh cold by spending the winter hibernating under logs, rocks, or deep leaf litter.

This little insect is a plant bug nymph (the immature, wingless stage), specifically from the family Miridae (true bugs). Given its distinctive coloration, it is very likely a nymph of a capsid bug or tarnished plant bug species.

It features a vibrant green abdomen paired with striking black-and-white or dark-banded legs and antennae.



**Nymph Stage:** Because it is a nymph, it doesn't have fully developed wings yet. Instead, you can see tiny "wing pads" starting to form on its back. It will go through several molts before reaching adulthood and growing full wings. ▲

True to their name, plant bugs feed by piercing plant tissue with needle-like mouthparts to suck out the nutrient-rich sap. You'll often find them on flowers, buds, and fresh new growth.

Because they feed on sap, some species in this family are considered minor garden pests. Their feeding can sometimes cause leaves to curl or flowers to distort.

If you try to get too close, these nymphs are surprisingly quick. They will typically scurry to the opposite side of the stem or petal to hide from sight.



The insect captured in these images is a specialized ground beetle commonly known as a Snail Hunter (specifically from the genus *Cychrus*, likely *Cychrus caraboides*).

**The “Long Neck” (Elongated Head):** The most fascinating feature visible in the image is its narrow, dramatically elongated head and thorax. This is an evolutionary adaptation that acts like a specialized tool, allowing the beetle to reach deep inside the spiral shells of snails to extract the meat.

**Body Shape:** It has a distinct, matte-black, pear-shaped body. Its hardened wing cases (elytra) are fused together, meaning this beetle is entirely flightless and relies strictly on its long legs to get around.

**The Plant:** It is clinging to the whorled leaves of a plant from the bedstraw family (likely Cleavers or Woodruff), which grows densely in the damp, shaded forest floors these beetles prefer.

**Diet:** As the name implies, they are highly specialized nocturnal predators that feed almost exclusively on snails and slugs.

**Habitat:** Because their preferred prey requires moisture, Snail Hunters are typically found in damp woodlands, wet meadows, and under rotting logs or leaf litter where snails gather.

**Defense Mechanism:** Since they cannot fly away from danger, they have another trick up their sleeve. If threatened, they can emit a loud, hissing sound (stridulation) by rubbing their abdomen against their wing cases, and they can exude a foul-smelling chemical defense from their rear to deter predators.



This is a Silver-ground Carpet moth (*Xanthorhoe montanata*).

It belongs to a large group of moths known as “carpet moths” (family Geometridae). They get this name because the intricate, geometric patterns on their wings historically reminded people of traditional patterned carpets.

It is easily identified by its silvery-white or creamy background color and the prominent, dark-brown or greyish band running right across the center of its forewings. This central band often pinches or narrows in the middle. ►

In the UK and Europe, they are highly active in the late spring and summer, typically flying from May to July.

While they are technically nocturnal and regularly attracted to artificial light traps at night, they are easily disturbed during the daytime. If you walk through long grass, woodland clearings, or hedgerows, they will often flutter out into the open before settling back down on a leaf, just like the one in your photo.

Diet: As caterpillars, they feed on a variety of low-growing plants, with bedstraw (*Galium*) being one of their absolute favorites.



◀ A Crane Fly (family Tipulidae), sitting on a leaf on a summer's day.

Because of their appearance, they are frequently mistaken for giant mosquitoes, and they are colloquially known by several names, including “skeeter eaters,” “mosquito hawks,” or “daddy longlegs” (not to be confused with the arachnid).

They have elongated, slender bodies, exceptionally long and fragile legs, and a single pair of narrow wings. The pointed tip at the end of this specific insect's abdomen is an ovipositor, which the female uses to lay eggs in soil or organic matter.

Are they dangerous? Not at all. Despite the scary “giant mosquito” look, adult crane flies are completely harmless. They do not bite humans, they do not suck blood, and they carry no diseases.

Despite the nicknames “skeeter eater” or “mosquito hawk,” adult crane flies do not eat mosquitoes. In fact, most adults do not eat at all because their lifespan is so short (usually just a few days to a couple of weeks), dedicating their time entirely to mating. If they do feed, they typically sip nectar or liquid organic matter.

The larval stage of the crane fly lasts much longer than the adult stage. Often called “leatherjackets” due to their tough skin, the larvae live in moist soil, decaying wood, or water. They primarily feed on decomposing organic material, though some species can occasionally damage the roots of turfgrass.



This hairy creature is the caterpillar of a Drinker Moth (*Euthrix potatoria*).

This caterpillar is highly distinctive. It is covered in dense, golden-brown hairs with a dark speckled back, highlighted by a vibrant line of yellow-orange spots running down its center and a row of white tufts along its sides.

They are called “Drinker” moths because the caterpillars have a well-known habit of drinking large droplets of dew or rain from the grass blades and leaves they live on.

You will most commonly find them in damp, grassy areas such as fens, marshes, ditches, wet meadows, and open woodlands.

They primarily feed on various coarse grasses and reeds, such as Cock's-foot, Common Reed, and Canary Grass. In this image, it appears to be exploring bramble or raspberry foliage, though grasses



remain their staple diet.

These caterpillars hatch in late summer, feed for a bit, and then spend the winter hibernating while still quite small. They emerge again in the spring to finish growing—which is when they reach this large, strikingly hairy size—before spinning a yellowish, spindle-shaped cocoon to pupate.

When it transforms, it becomes a large, warm-toned, yellowish-brown moth that flies during the summer months (typically July and August).

While they are beautiful to look at, it is best to avoid handling them directly. The dense hairs of the Drinker Moth caterpillar can easily break off and cause mild skin irritation or allergic rashes for some people.



This is a Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*). ▲

It is easily recognizable by its brilliant red abdomen, which features black bands toward the tail end. It has prominent dark, bronzy-black markings on its thorax and bright red-and-black eyes.

You can tell this is a damselfly rather than a dragonfly because of how it rests. At rest, damselflies fold their wings back along their bodies (as seen here), whereas dragonflies hold their wings out flat and perpendicular to their bodies. Damselflies also have slimmer bodies and eyes that are separated rather than meeting in the middle.

The Large Red Damselfly is famous for being one of the very first damselflies to emerge in the spring, often seen on the wing as early as April or May in Europe and the UK.

They love slow-moving or still water, so you will typically find them around garden ponds, marshes, ditches, and peat bogs resting on reeds and tall grasses like the ones in this photo.

Don't let the delicate look fool you; they are fierce aerial predators. They use those big eyes to spot smaller insects—like midges, mosquitoes, and flies—and snatch them right out of the air.

The insect in the image is a stink bug nymph (immature stage), belonging to the family Pentatomidae. Based on its coloration, flattened body shape, and distinct banded pattern along the edge of its abdomen (the connexivum), it strongly resembles



▲ a late-stage nymph of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) or a closely related shield bug species.

This is not a fully-grown adult. Stink bugs undergo incomplete metamorphosis (hemimetabolous development). They start as eggs, hatch into small nymphs, and go through five immature stages (called instars) before developing fully functional wings as adults. This particular nymph is likely a 4th or 5th instar, as its wing pads are starting to become visible on its back.

Most stink bugs, including this one, use piercing-sucking mouthparts (a proboscis) to puncture plant tissue and suck out the juices. They are frequently found on leaves, fruits, and stems.

They enjoy a wide variety of plants, ranging from wild brambles and weeds (like the leaf it is sitting on) to agricultural crops, orchards, and garden vegetables.

They possess specialized scent glands located on the underside of their thorax (and on the abdomen in nymphs). When they feel threatened, handled roughly, or crushed, they release a pungent, foul-smelling chemical liquid as a defense mechanism to deter predators like birds and lizards. Hence the name sink bug.

