

Wild about nature

Jobs for the boys

Darren Hi Spud! Are you busy?

Spud Hi there. No, I've delivered my last papers so my paper round's finished for another week. I was just going to get my wages from my dad. Have you come to buy some comics or chocolate bars from the shop?

Mike No, we're both broke. That's the problem. We were hoping your parents would employ us.

Spud Hey Jess, you don't want to give up your paper round, do you? These two need a job.

Jess I would like to, because I haven't got much spare time. I've just joined the Wildlife Group and the local members normally meet twice at weekends.

Mike What's that about then?

Jess Oh, well, they meet to watch badgers and count bird's nests and things like that. There's a rare bird in a secret place, which poachers would give anything to see.

Mike Poachers?





Darren

It's hard to save up for a decent bike when you haven't got a job. Some of my friends have got paper rounds, or they babysit or walk dogs. Some people just get loads of pocket money.

Have you got a weekend job? How much do you get for it? How do you pay for things you need?

Jess

Yeah, they're basically criminals. They shoot rabbits to sell, and they steal baby birds and eggs. But anyway, I can't give up my paper round, I badly need the money as well. Have you tried washing cars?

Darren

Forget it! I was washing cars outside in the freezing cold for hours. My fingers turned to ice and I only earned £8. I'll never save enough money for a quad bike that way!

Spud

What did you say you were saving for?

Darren

A quad bike. You can get a brand new quad bike with a 4-stroke engine for £350.

Jess

You're too young to ride a quad bike, aren't you?

Mike

Under 16s are OK on private land. There are special tracks in nature reserves where you can legally ride quad bikes.

Jess

I think it's crazy for kids to have powerful bikes. And nature reserves should be protected places where animals and birds can be safe. That's what I think. Oh and you definitely can't have my job! Bye!

Mike

Huh! I knew she wouldn't help. She's so selfish.

Spud

Don't worry. She's just given me a really good idea. I think I can help.

Darren

What, you've thought of how Mikey and I can earn some money?

Spud

How all three of us can earn some money, my friend. Leave it to me. I'll call you when I've decided the best way to do this – OK?

Mike

We want to help, right?

Darren

Yeah, you won't forget us, will you?

Spud

No, no, I won't. Look, we can meet here at my place, at seven tonight, OK?

**Mike/
Darren**

OK, bye then, see you.

Night life

Mrs Khan

Oh, hello boys. Would you like to come in? How are you?

Darren

Thank you, Mrs Khan.

Mike

We're fine, thanks. Is Spud in?

Mrs Khan

Oh yes, my dear, he's upstairs. He was busily working on his homework when I called him for supper. He was doing a special Nature project for school.

Darren

He was ... what?

Mike

Sorry, what did you say?

Mrs Khan

He often leaves his homework until Sunday evening, but he's never studied so hard before. He's in his room, first left at the top of the stairs, OK?

Mike

I didn't know about that, did you Darren?

Darren

Nope. Hey Spud! What's the idea?

Spud

It's right here – look, I was just printing it out. OK, read this poster!

Mike

Have you ever wanted to know what's out there in the night?
Have you ever seen the secret nest of a very rare bird?
NO!? Join our Night Watch ... and you will!

Darren

Night Watch? What on earth's that?

Spud

It's an excellent way to earn some money, that's what it is! Read on, Mikey!

Mike

We are inviting you to see magical night creatures and learn more about their mysterious habits. Would you like to see the things that fly in the night sky or play on the river banks? Would you be interested in finding the home of the rare and wonderful *Bubo bubo* bird? Meet us in front of the school gates at nine o'clock and bring your torch. The Night Watch is very good value at £5 per person, and lasts for one hour. Call or text Spud on 07969 333 222 for more information. Five pounds! That's a lot!

Spud

We can't ask for less. People would think it was rubbish.

Darren

It is rubbish! We know nothing about birds. What's a *Bubo bubo* anyway?

Spud

I was chatting to Jess online, and she said it was some sort of eagle, and that people would pay anything to find its eggs. So we simply need to follow her and find out where it is, OK?

Mike

Spud, are you sure about this?



Spud

When you need a really good plan, I'm your man! There's money in this. You see, people in Britain are crazy about birds and animals that you normally never see.

Are there people like that in Holland too? Do you know anybody who walks miles to spot birds?

Spud Listen ... Hey Jess! You know you were telling me about the Wildlife Group you've joined?

Jess Yes ...

Spud I'm really curious about it. Er, where and when's the next walk?

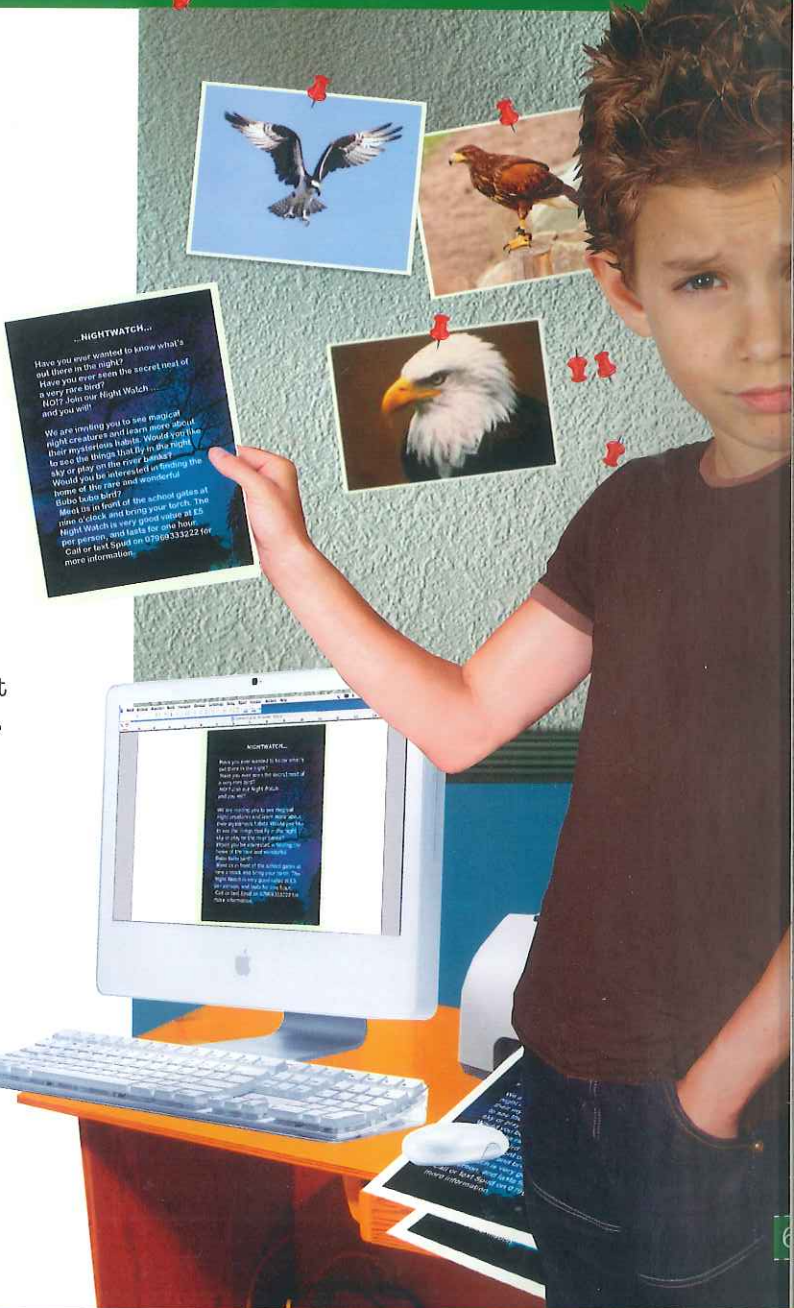
Jess Well, it starts in the fields by the river, 9pm next Sunday. Then it goes through the woods and along the side of that low stone wall, but it's members only ...

Spud Oh I see.

Jess Would you like to join the group?

Spud No, I wouldn't, thanks Jess. I'm not that curious. Bye ... There, you see? It's cool, we'll just hide and then silently follow them. So no worries, OK?

**Darren/
Mike** Hmm, well OK ...



Things that go bump

Darren

Wow, this would be a great place for quad bikes. Loads of big jumps and ditches. I can't wait to get one.

Spud

First we have to find that bird's nest and work out a good route for our Night Watch.

Mike

It's very dark. The street lights were shining brightly when I left my house half an hour ago, but it's nearly pitch black out here.

Darren

Spud, I don't get it. Even when people have accepted your invitation to this night walk thing, what are you going to say to them?

Spud

Oh, well I'll just talk the talk, walk the walk and then we can all go home afterwards.

Mike

How will we see the bird in the dark?

Darren

Yeah, I'm still not completely sure about this.

Mike

And my mum didn't know where I was going tonight. I bet she would be mad if she knew.

Spud

Look, I told you not to worry so much, didn't I? Trust me, it'll be perfectly all right! It's a lovely night, look, the bats are flying about.

Mike

I don't like bats, and I don't like these spooky noises. What's that?

Spud

It's just the wind in the leaves. There's no need to be scared of bats, Mikey. They can't hurt you.

Mike

I heard something strange and it wasn't a bat.

Spud

People think that bats drink blood.

Darren

Yeah, they do. Human blood.

Mike

Oh shut up Darren!

Darren

Well, perhaps it was a badger.

Mike

I thought Jess's group was walking in front of us. But I saw a light behind us just now! And badgers don't normally carry torches, do they?

Darren

Don't be so daft. Let's go and have a look.

Mike

But I'm afraid of the dark.

Spud

Then why didn't you tell me that before? Have no fear, Spud is near!

Mike

There's something moving towards me ...

Spud

What's happened? Who are you?



Mike

I'm not too sure about Spud's plan and when we get to the woods, it's dark and spooky and I really don't like it. Darren's pretty horrible to me but I bet he's scared of something – everybody is.

*What are you scared of? Do your friends know about it?
Do they tease you about it?*

Mr Gregg What are you doing here? Hah! Over here! I've found a young poacher!

Spud A ... what? No, sorry, you've got the wrong end of the stick! I'm not ...

Jess Ah, Mr Gregg, er, this is my friend Spud. Sorry, I forgot to tell you he was coming tonight.

Mr Gregg Oh. I see. And are these two friends of yours too, Jess?

Darren Let me go, you! Hands off me!

Jess It's OK, Mr Gregg, they're my school friends. The reason they're here is ... er ... they would really like to join the Wildlife Group.

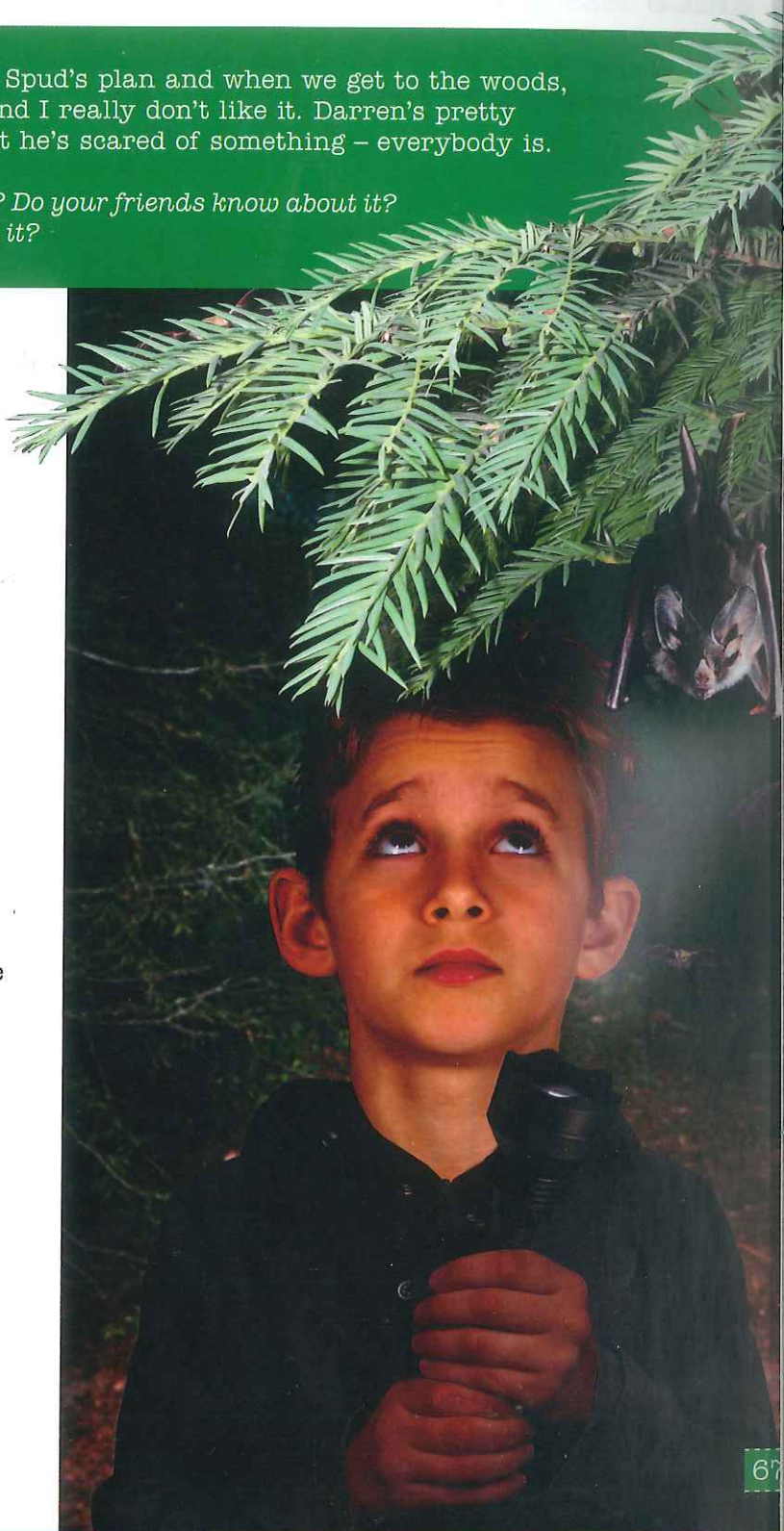
Mike No, we wouldn't. We've come to find the rare bird's nest so we can bring lots of people here and make some money.

Spud I don't believe you just said that Mikey.

Mr Gregg Well, well, well ...

Jess Oh no!

Darren Goodbye, quad bike ...



Badger watch



Wildlife Watch form

If you want to find out the truth about UK wildlife, then why not join Wildlife Watch, the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts. For just £10 a year, you'll receive three issues of the action packed magazine Watchword, three colourful Wildlife Extra posters and a chance to join in with loads of wild activities with your local Wildlife Watch group – badger and otter watching, hunting for creepy crawlies or pond-dipping for newts and toads.

10 Call The Wildlife Trusts on 0870 036 7711 for contact details of your local Wildlife Trust or visit the website at www.wildlifetrusts.org.

Badger FAQs

Where do badgers live and how can I see them?

15 Badgers live in families, in underground places called setts. They are very private creatures but when you know where to look, you can see them hunting for food at night. You can also see them playing, especially the young ones which are called cubs.

20 *What food can I put out in the garden to attract badgers?*

Some badgers will thank you for water to drink or wet cat food or dog food to eat. However, they have few table manners, so don't use crockery! If you really want to use a dish (and you don't have to), then use a large metal dog-food dish.

What do I do if I see badger diggers or strange people near a sett?

Take their car number, do not disturb them and call 30 the police (dial 999) and in England or Wales the RSPCA (0345 - 888 999), or in Scotland the SSPCA (0131 - 225 6418) at once.



ADOPT A BADGER

35 Badgers are probably the best-loved British animals. They are shy creatures that come out at night. They share our countryside, although many of us have never even seen one. Sadly, our need for houses and roads threatens the places they live and even their lives.

Thousands of badgers die every year on our roads. Some cruel people catch badgers for fun, and now the government are killing thousands more. They think that badgers cause a sickness called TB in cattle. When mothers die, their defenceless cubs have little hope of living.

45 But the lucky ones go into the expert hands of Pauline Kidner at the Secret World sanctuary in Somerset. Pauline raises countless orphaned cubs every year. With her helpers, she bottle-feeds them, even through the night, until they can eat solid food. She makes sure they see vets

50 when they are ill and she gives them all the love and attention they need until they are ready to return to the wild.

Adopt a badger, and you can make its life at the sanctuary safe and happy.

55 For just £15.95 you will get:

- A certificate with a colour picture
- A cuddly badger (size 15cm)
- A badger fact sheet
- A window sticker
- 60 • An update after six months

CARE for THE WILD INTERNATIONAL

1 Ashfolds, Horsham Road,
Rusper, West Sussex,
RH12 4QX.

Telephone (01293) 871596
Fax (01293) 871022

E-mail: info@careforthewild.com
Web: www.careforthewild.com
Registered charity no.288802

The great outdoors!

Junior Quad Biking



Mix mud with dirty water and you have one mega exciting junior quad bike safari. This is great fun, but don't expect to come back nice and clean!

Check carefully the details for each venue as some offer quad treks, others offer special quad parties and the age limits are different too. And of course, the bikes are not the same high powered versions used for adult quad biking.



PRICES
FROM £32.00
TO £150.00

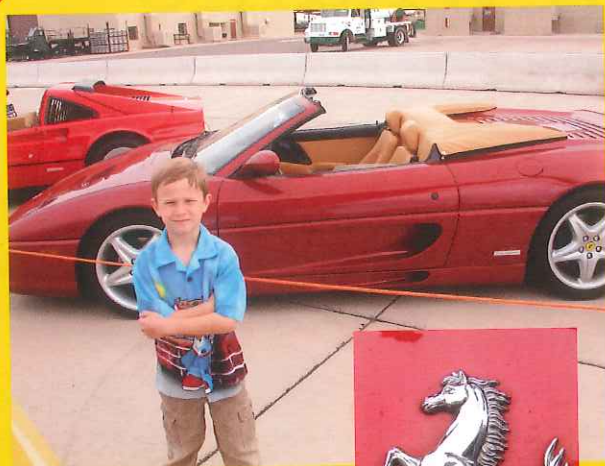
JUNIOR RALLY DRIVING

These are pretty much dreams come true for kids and teens - not only do you get to be behind the wheel of a car, but it's a full on proper rally car as well.

Of course, all drives are with expert instructors who give you an exciting introduction into the world of driving. So, come on kids, it's time to turn off the Playstation and get rallying for real!



C



Drive a Ferrari

So here's the Ferrari lowdown ... 400 bhp, top speed 191 mph, 0-60 in 4.3 seconds, 3.6 litre water cooled V8, 6 speed manual or F1 paddle shift gear box ... Just five reasons why every boy and girl will love to get a Ferrari drive for an extra special day out.

The Drive a Ferrari Course is open to all keen kids 12 years old or over and for the high speed passenger ride, 8 years old is the minimum age.

Prices from £75.00 to £99.00

D

Paintball Tank Party



Now this is what we call a party! You and up to 9 mates get to ride on 13 tonne FV432 tanks with semi-automatic paint ball guns! You can shoot paint at the targets located around the course. The birthday boy or girl can then take the controls and drive back to base camp.

A maximum of 10 children.

Minimum age 8 years.

Maximum age 16 years.



Parents and friends are welcome to come and watch. There will be time to pose for photographs and video.

A to Z of Amazing Wildlife

B is for ...

Blue-footed booby

How did the booby get its name? It's thought these birds are called boobies because sailors found it easy to catch them for food. Although they are extremely elegant in the air, they seem clumsy on land. Booby comes from the Spanish word 'bobo', meaning 'stupid' or 'clown-like'.



Blue-footed boobies are found in Central America, on the Galapagos Islands, the west coast of Mexico and northern South America. This strange-looking bird has large blue feet, a white chest and throat and brownish feathers on its back and wings. It has a greyish-blue face with a large grey beak.

Boobies leave their nesting grounds in the morning and head out to sea to look for fish such as anchovy and squid. They dive for food from up to 24 metres, hitting the water at incredible speed. Their bodies are well-adapted for diving and they fold their wings right back moments before impact to make themselves ultra-streamlined. Blue-footed boobies sometimes hunt together.

Famous for their unusual courtship ritual, the male booby flashes his blue feet at possible mates. The bluer the feet, the fitter and healthier he is likely to be, and so more attractive to the girls! Boobies also point their bills in the air, extend their wings and make strange whistling sounds and males bring nesting material to the females. The pair of boobies don't actually use a nest. Instead the female lays 1-3 eggs in a shallow hollow in the ground.

Blue-footed boobies keep their chicks warm with their feet!

The parents mark their nest with guano (bird droppings). If a chick strays outside, the parents won't let it back in and it will die. Booby chicks stay with their parents for about two months.

Bats

Vampire bats are the only mammals that feed exclusively on blood. The three species are all found in Central and South America. Two feed almost entirely on bird blood, but the common vampire bat feeds on the blood of mammals.

These bats fly close to the ground in search of food. They land near their victims, and use their feet and the long claws on the front of their wings to crawl up close enough to feed. The common vampire usually feeds on cattle and horses, and is most active on dark, moonless nights. Its nose has a built-in heat sensor which it uses to detect blood before breaking through the skin with its razor-sharp teeth.



Vampire bats are often described as blood-suckers, but in fact they use their strong tongues to lick up their liquid lunch. Their spit has a chemical which stops the blood clotting, so they can feed continuously for up to 20 minutes.

Adult bats need about two tablespoons of blood each day, and often fill themselves so full they find it hard to fly.

They live in social groups of up to 2,000 individuals. Females give birth to a single young which feeds on a combination of its mother's milk and blood that she spits out. After about four months, the baby bat will go with its mother on her night-time hunting sessions.

The animals they feed from are not in danger from blood loss. But vampire bats are pests because they carry deadly diseases, like rabies.



Basking shark

The second largest fish in the world, the basking shark, can be found off the shores of Britain. But don't worry, this big-mouthed giant feeds on plankton!

Basking sharks can be found in the north and south Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. They swim slowly near the surface with their mouths open, taking in litres of water. They filter plankton (microscopic organisms) from this water using filters inside their mouths. It's estimated that in one hour a basking shark can take in enough water to fill an Olympic swimming pool – that's about 1,480,000 litres of water!

Basking sharks are most easy to spot because of their huge open mouths. They are a greyish colour with a lighter underside and usually measure between three and nine metres long.

Basking sharks often swim in groups of three or four but as many as 100 can be seen at one time. They can be spotted off the coast of Britain during the summer, from west of Dorset and all the way up the west coast to Scotland, and off the east coast of Ireland. Scientists have no idea where they go in winter! It's thought that they either sleep near the sea floor or move to other areas of the ocean.

Beaver

The hard-working beaver lives by adapting its environment to find food and accommodation for its family. Beavers were once widespread but there are fewer of them now because they were hunted for their valuable coat. They can now only be found in North America and Northern Europe.

The beaver's coat is practically waterproof. It is a great swimmer, with large webbed feet. It can close its nose and ears when diving and has a thin layer of see-through skin to protect its eyes.

The beaver has a broad, flat tail that is very useful. It acts as a rudder when the beaver is swimming, helping it to change direction. It is also a warning device. If the beaver senses danger, it slaps its tail against the surface of the water.

Beaver teeth never stop growing. They are powered by huge muscles and kept sharp by grinding against one another. Beavers eat tree bark, grass and other plants and they are most active at night.

A beaver builds its dam from small trees, branches, stones and mud. The dam is usually about three metres high and can be quite long, depending on the size of the stream or river it's trying to block. Up to three generations of beavers may live together in the dam's lodge where they are safe from wolves and bears. Beavers mate for life and their babies are called kits.

On average, a beaver cuts down an incredible 216 trees each year and can bring down a tree with a diameter of 30 cm in a single night!



Source: www.bbc.co.uk/nature/reallywild/amazing/