

Nocturnal Creatures

Porthcurno Valley is just as alive at night as it is in the day. Lots of nocturnal animals call Porthcurno home, such as badgers, foxes, owls, and bats.

Porthcurno is part of an international dark sky park, which means there are very few outside lights on at night. This helps to protect all nocturnal animals, as they need darkness to hunt, and bright lights can confuse them.

There are lots of things we can do ourselves to help nocturnal animals thrive:

- Keeping cats indoors at night can protect bats and small nocturnal mammals from predation.
- Planting night scented flowers in your garden such as honeysuckle and jasmine can also attract nocturnal insects and bats.
- Most importantly, at night, keeping your outside lights off and drawing the curtains will protect every single nocturnal animal.



Here are a few stills from our night vision camera showing who is out and about in the Valley when the sun goes down.

Masks and Montol

You may have seen or heard about Penzance's Montol Festival. It happens on the 21st of December every year and involves many people wearing masks - but why?

Montol started in 2007 as a way to revive old Cornish Christmas and Midwinter customs.

One very famous custom is guise dancing. Although it does involve music and dancing, the real point is guise - which is short for disguise.

In guise dancing, people wear clothes that they would not normally wear, and a mask or veil to hide their face. But it is not fancy dress. The kind of things people wear include:

Mock formal: People wear very formal clothes like bow ties and top hats.

Ribbons and rags: Coats or other clothes are covered in many rags, ribbons or "tatter" that may be sewn or pinned on.

Animal imagery: People might wear animal masks or even an entire animal costume complete with a set of antlers. Animal masks like you made today would be great for this. The lights fit in really well, too, as Montol often involves fire performers, and always includes a bonfire.



Photo credit: Paul Betowski

Some examples of the various guises worn on Montol



Photo credit: Gavin Goulder

You don't have to limit your imagination to just animals - this person has made a mask from a cabbage!