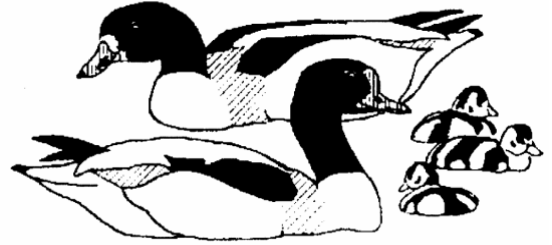


Deeside Naturalists' Society



Newsletter 125

Registered Charity No. 510146

April 2011

I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles to this newsletter which is my first as Editor. Thanks also to Walter Griffiths for preparing the True or False questions on page five and Andrew Wallbank for supplying the map of the reserve on page six.

I would welcome any comments or suggestions as to what you would like to see in future editions. I would also like to introduce a letters page where you can send in short articles that you think other members of the Society would find interesting. However, as with all magazines and especially due to the constraints on the size of the newsletter the Editor reserves the right to select the ones for publication and to abbreviate where necessary. Any comments or articles should be e-mailed to: **dns@vbahelp.net** Please include your name within the e-mail. The next edition will be in August.

Chairman's Report

My thanks to EON who have kindly provided us with display boards and new recording pads in each of the hides, the boards show the areas that can be seen from the hide along with photographs of the bird species you are likely to observe from that hide. The abbreviated lettering on the displays is for recording purposes and should help us manage the areas in a more informed manner. The recording aspect is so important and to help Andrew Wallbank (DNS Recorder) produce a meaningful Annual Report, we need your help, please take the time to log your observations.

For those of you who venture towards the Flintshire bridge you may have noticed an increase in activity on land owned by National Grid adjacent to the Nature Trail. Work has started on a new substation; this will replace the old outdoor plant which is coming to the end of its life. From the point of view of the Society this is good news because at least two pylons will eventually come down and will open up the area as you first enter the Nature Trail.

Another project currently taking place in our vicinity is the East West Interconnector, this consists of high voltage cables laid under the Irish Sea and will enable two way transmission of electricity. The cable will follow a route from Barkby Beach in Prestatyn to the coastline north of Dublin. The interconnector will bring benefits to both countries when it is completed. It will enable electricity to be carried in both directions, allowing export of energy from North Wales as well as providing potential imports should the need arise. Where the cables come ashore at Prestatyn, they will be buried and have no visible impact on the coastline. From there, they will continue underground to a converter station which will be used to change the current for transmission across the Irish Sea. The converter station will be located near to UPM's paper mill on the Deeside Industrial Estate. In order to get the cables to and from the industrial estate boring under the river is necessary; this will enable the electricity to be fed into the National Grid at Connah's Quay. Both National Grid and EirGrid have kept the Society informed about the works and their ecologists are working closely with us. During this period of work there is likely to be considerable disruption and restricted access to the Nature Trail, for your own safety please comply with any warning notices.

Finally the saga of the combination lock fitted to the barrier, in principle the idea was good but in practice it created a lot of problems with members and the phone calls received justified the decision to remove it and go back to the old system of the padlock.

David Jones

Reserve Notes

I visited the Reserve on 21st March, the first day of Spring. I was welcomed at the gate by the drumming of a woodpecker in the nearby woodland. It was a lovely day – bright blue sky, warm sunshine, a reasonable number of birds and an incoming tide. All the necessary ingredients that make the Reserve such an attraction for so many people.

This time of the year is an in between period for the ornithologist. The winter visiting birds are on their way to their breeding grounds and we await, with some anticipation, the return of our summer visitors. I have scanned the Reserve fields for the return of the Wheatears, the harbingers of Spring for me, but to no avail. Swallow and House Martin are also yet to arrive.

The majority of our winter birds such as Black tailed Godwits, Lapwing and Teal are on their way to their breeding grounds but smaller numbers are still to be found on the wetland meadow. The island is a particular focus of interest for a range of birds such as the remnants of a flock of Godwits and some Teal together with a few Curlew, Oystercatcher, Tufted duck, Widgeon, Coot, Moorhen and Mallard.

Several Little Grebe are to be seen about the pool with Mallard and Canada Geese. It is quite likely that the Canada Geese will breed again in the reed bed surrounding the pool but, sadly there are no Mute Swans about at the moment. It has been suggested that successful fledging for Mutes, on the meadow, is a no no and they have caught on to this fact at last!

The Peregrine is back with us. I noted on 24th a Peregrine perched alongside the eyrie on the riverside chimney and later on the adjacent handrail overlooking the river. (two seen on 25th.) The spectacular flights of these birds will add much to the Reserve scene.

As you walk by the Wetland meadow tip your hat to the rabbits you might see there this year. The 3rd February saw the beginning of the Chinese New Year which has been designated as **“the year of the rabbit”!**

The bunded pool continues to attract a range of interesting species which includes Greenshank, Spotted Redshank and several Little Egret.

The many blackthorn bushes dotted about the Reserve are now in blossom. They are proving attractive to a range of insects and I saw one Peacock butterfly feeding on the blossom. If the bushes fruit successfully I can provide an excellent recipe for Sloe Gin perhaps in the next newsletter.

P.S.

The flights of starlings flying across the back of the College toward Shotton which I referred to in my last notes, eventually formed a very large roost at Sandycroft - to the chagrin of the local residents.

Ray Roberts

Maintenance Day

The next Maintenance/Work Day will be held

Saturday 21st May

Meet at the Field Studies Centre at 09:30

Society News

INDOOR MEETINGS

The three indoor meetings held earlier this year proved to be very popular. The first, in January, was Paul Hill's 'Wildlife of Catalonia' with some superb photographs of the Butterflies and Moths found in that region.

In February Glyn Parry talked about 'The Silk Road'. Apparently it was not until 1877 that it gained that name when the German geographer Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen used the term '*Seidenstraße*' to describe it. And it was not just one route but a whole series of interconnected ones. It also carried far more than silk.

The third, and final talk for this part of the year was in March. 'Mytilini to Antalya' by Mike McKavett. Mike set himself the task of photographing ten birds with a restricted range within the Eastern Mediterranean. Most of the talk was based on his regular trips to the island of Lesbos and the ten birds in question – just to show I was listening - were: *the Black-headed Bunting, Rock Nuthatch, Cretzschmar's Bunting, Olive-tree Warbler, Sombre Tit, Masked Shrike, Cinerous Bunting, Rüppell's Warbler, Krüper's Nuthatch and the White-throated Robin*. Mike is a perfectionist and spends hours setting up the shot just to obtain one photo and his talk was full of slides that demonstrated his skill and patience. He still uses film as opposed to digital and there was an interesting discussion after the talk regarding the merits of both and the people who use them! My contribution to the discussion can be found on page seven.

The Indoor meetings resume on 16th September with Jan Miller and Wildlife Gardening.

Bob Must

VISIT TO LLANFAIRFECHAN AND THE SPINNEYS

Sunday 20th February 11

Having met at Northop we set off for Llanfairfechan and the further west we travelled the brighter it became. Only nine members came, some meeting us at Llanfairfechan.

The rising tide in the Menai Strait was flat calm, the light perfect, giving us few, we happy few, excellent views of Sea Duck, Grebes and Divers. As the tide pushed the waders into tightly packed roosts we had memorable views of Knott, Curlew and more than 150 Ringed Plover, an unusually high number of these waders in a group.

As the high tide passed we moved to the Spinneys' nearby. It was open day at this lovely North Wales naturalists trust reserve so it was busy, but a little patience was rewarded with good views of Water Rail from the main hide. Out on the strait were a lot of Golden Eye, the males in full breeding plumage and some displaying, always a splendid sight.

We saw about 50 species for the day. Good weather and good company made for an enjoyable outing. It is a pity more members don't come out on field trips, you don't have to be an expert. Give it a try you never know it may start a trend.

Bill Griffiths



Society News

VISIT TO MOORE NATURE RESERVE

Saturday 19th March 2011

This is an interesting reserve near Warrington. There are twelve hides across the reserve giving plenty of opportunity to observe the different habitats plus there are well defined paths with a variety of trees again creating good habitats for the birds.

Weatherwise the day was perfect with sunny spells and high cloud. Eighteen members came either meeting at Queensferry or at the reserve. Two members went early to try and spot the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker so that the rest of the group could go to the most likely area to spot this elusive bird. Unfortunately, although it was heard it was not seen.

At the start of the day we headed east visiting the hide overlooking the Birchwood Pool and the hides overlooking the Pump House Pool. We also visited the hide overlooking the Lagoon and eastern reed bed. This is where the Bittern had been reported but, like the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, it was not seen on this occasion. We made our way back to the car park along bank of the old Mersey and Irwell Navigation canal for lunch. A good variety of birds were seen during the morning.

In the afternoon we went to the western side of the reserve to hides overlooking Lapwing Lake before heading to the bird feeding station.

To finish the day we went along the old canal before heading back trying to spot the Yellow Hammers. We were successful! We visited the rest of the hides as we made our way back to the car park.

Over the day 40 different species of bird were recorded by members of the group. The light was perfect for observing the colours of the birds which included Ruddy Duck, Pochard, Wigeon, Teal, Reed Bunting, Goldcrest, Great Crested Grebe, Shoveller and Tree Creeper.

Christine Hamer



Quiz

TRUE OR FALSE

Just answer True or False to the following statements. Answers on page eight.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1) The Latin name for the Winter Wren means Cave Dweller. | True/False |
| 2) Lapwing, Peewit and Green Plover are all names for the same bird. | True/False |
| 3) The Norse Grayling is a type of fish. | True/False |
| 4) Mallards are found in Africa. | True/False |
| 5) The Great Kiskadee is a bird from South Africa. | True/False |
| 6) The Hadedda is a type of Ibis. | True/False |
| 7) The Velvet Asity is a type of monkey. | True/False |
| 8) A Mire Drum is an old English name for a Bittern. | True/False |
| 9) The Elephant is the biggest existing mammal. | True/False |
| 10) The average Koala sleeps for 22 hours a day. | True/False |
| 11) Red-necked Wallabies are found in the wild in Britain. | True/False |
| 12) There are only two different snakes found in Britain. | True/False |
| 13) An otter's home is called a 'set'. | True/False |
| 14) The Kingfisher is also known as 'The Halcyon Bird'. | True/False |
| 15) A Gowk is an old name for the Cuckoo. | True/False |
| 16) The Miller is an edible fungi. | True/False |
| 17) Lyrebirds come from India. | True/False |
| 18) An Albatross was killed by the Ancient Mariner. | True/False |
| 19) The Robin is a member of the Thrush family. | True/False |
| 20) Spurdog is a kind of seashore plant. | True/False |

WORD SEARCH

There are twenty-three common names of birds hidden within the grid. They could be horizontal, vertical, diagonal and spelt normally or backwards and the same letter may be used in more than one answer. The only clue I will give is they are all in the RSPB Handbook of British Birds (2002 edition). Answers on page eight.

S	R	E	D	S	T	A	R	T	L	I	A	U	Q	G
I	D	Z	H	K	Y	B	B	O	H	Q	U	T	H	N
S	F	T	C	F	E	R	N	N	X	Z	S	C	P	I
K	C	O	R	N	C	R	A	K	E	N	N	D	S	L
I	R	O	A	A	E	E	S	S	O	I	I	K	O	R
N	A	C	R	T	J	D	F	K	F	K	P	R	T	A
K	N	X	T	N	K	I	C	L	L	L	E	A	E	T
L	E	I	M	N	B	E	L	N	M	U	F	F	S	S
O	B	A	Q	U	L	U	V	D	L	I	N	N	E	T
E	J	K	T	Y	B	B	N	F	R	L	H	F	F	W
B	U	Z	Z	A	R	D	D	T	G	A	B	Z	U	I
J	M	A	L	L	A	R	D	C	I	W	H	Z	O	T
C	R	O	Q	W	T	E	A	L	Z	N	L	C	D	E
V	T	A	H	C	E	N	O	T	S	P	G	X	O	G
C	O	M	M	O	N	R	E	D	P	O	L	L	H	P

General Information

This page is designed for newcomers to the Society and lists the current Guidelines, access information and a map showing the location of the hides and the Field Studies Centre.

RESERVE GUIDELINES:

When visiting the Reserve carry your permit and show it to security staff if requested.

Please sign in and out of the Reserve at all times, the signing sheet is located in the box to the left of the barrier; you do **NOT** need a key to open the box. This is a requirement by E.ON our landlords to comply with their safety regulations.

Please lock the barrier on entering and leaving the Reserve; on no account should the barrier remain unlocked for the duration of your visit.

Do not let anyone enter the Reserve on your key unless they hold a current permit or are authorised by E.ON Power Station Personnel. If you find the barrier lock missing please inform the security staff. Tel: 01244 894065

Dogs are not allowed on the Reserve except for Registered Assistance Dogs.

RESERVE ACCESS:

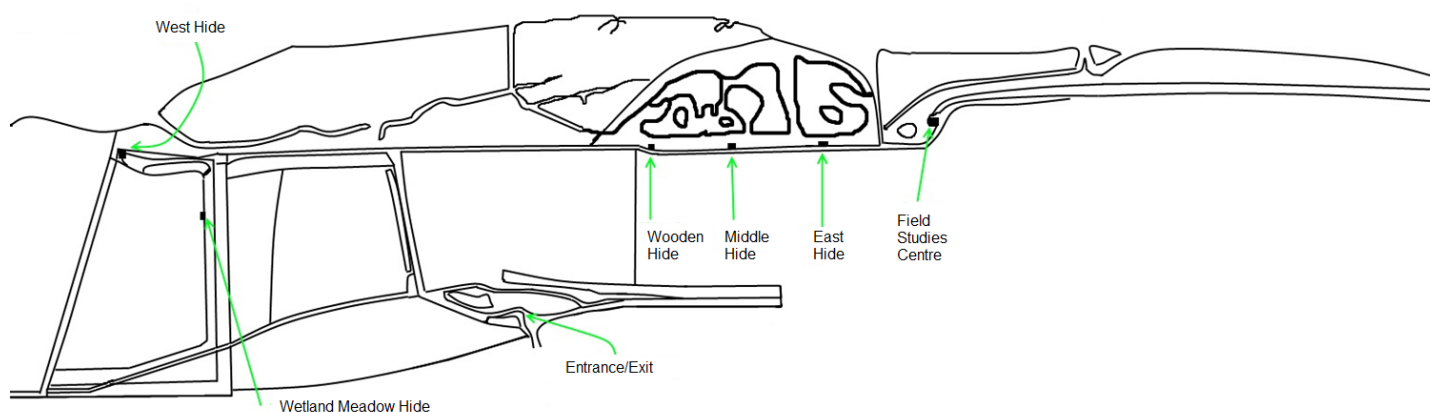
The Reserve is closed every Monday from 5.00pm to 6.00am.

There is strictly **NO** admittance at this time.

This is in agreement with E.ON to carry out site maintenance.

The key will open all five hides and the toilet facility at the Field Studies Centre.

The downstairs shutters on the two-storey West Hide can only be opened with an additional key which is available inside the West Hide.



Any Changes to the programme issued at the beginning of the year will be posted on our website.

www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk

Through The Editors Binoculars

Let me admit right from the start that within the domain of the naturalist I am a novice. Not only in the art of species recognition but also in the terminology, the laws that govern the various subjects and perhaps, even more importantly, the codes of behaviour surrounding it. Therefore becoming the Editor of this Newsletter is a bit like being elected on to a golf club committee while still having a handicap of 28. It is not something that beginners usually have a chance of doing. *(For those who know nothing about golf let me say simply that the handicap system goes from 0 to 28 and the lower your handicap the better player you are. The higher the handicap the not so better. And yes I was once the treasurer on a golf club committee and yes my handicap was and still is 28 – but that's another story.)*

As a beginner I thought it would be a good idea to include a regular feature in the newsletter dealing with topics that a newcomer (like me) should have a better understanding of, or subjects that you may have questions about. Things like the Wild Bird List, The Butterfly Red List and the Postcode Plants Database are a few examples. The general information and the map relating to the DNS on page six is the start of that journey - I did not know there was a Wetland Meadow Hide. *By the way, I would suggest you don't try to download the Wild Bird List document from jncc.gov.uk as it has over four-thousand pages.*

What I'm trying to say is that for those who have had an interest in the world of flora and fauna for long enough to know the subject well it is, perhaps, easy to forget that new members, of any age, may not be aware of even the most basic rules or protocols. Simple things like "do not walk in front of a hide" may be obvious to many but not necessarily to all, especially when there appears to be a path running past it. Programmes like the One Show regularly have short pieces on wild life where it becomes apparent that many of our species need those involved to have some form of licence or authority to handle or approach them. Who supplies the licences and who decides who needs them? As for the terminology the first term that caught me was in a conversation with other members of the committee and that was a Scrape. A Scrape? OK, a quick visit to the Internet provided an answer to that, and I even found an interesting document produced by the RSPB on them. You can find it at: http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Scrape_creation_tcm9-255102.pdf



However, I can state one thing that I do know to be true and it relates back to the talk by Mike McKavett and the discussion over the merits of film and digital photography. I would like to offer the two photographs here as evidence for both sides of the argument. They were both taken by me with a digital SLR. I



could probably have taken the one on the left with a film camera. I could not have done so with the one on the right.

To end, what do Knot, Ringed Plover, Water Rail and Goldeneye have in common. The answer is that they are all species which, thanks to the patience of those involved in the trip to the Spinneys, I can add to the list of birds I can recognise without the need of a book. Oh I almost forgot, the photographs I thought I had taken of the Bullfinch during that trip – the first turned out to be Chaffinch, the second on closer inspection was a Robin.

Bob Must

email: dns@vbahelp.net

Answers To Quiz

Answers to True or False

1) True. 2) True. 3) False it is a butterfly. 4) True. 5) False it comes from Central and South America. 6) True. 7) False it is a bird. 8) True. 9) False the biggest mammal is the Blue Whale. 10) True. 11) True, they are found in the Peak District National Park. 12) False, there are three Grass, Adder and Smooth snakes. 13) False, it is a 'holt'. 14) True. 15) True. 16) True. 17) False, they come from Australia. 18) True. 19) True. 20) False it is a type of shark.

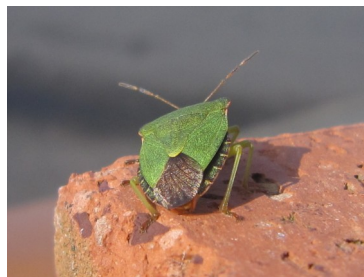
Word Search

S	R	E	D	S	T	A	R	T	L	I	A	U	Q	G
I	D	Z	H	K	Y	B	B	O	H	Q	U	T	H	N
S	F	T	C	F	E	R	N	N	X	Z	S	C	P	I
K	O	R	N	C	R	A	K	E	N	N	D	S	L	
I	R	O	A	A	E	E	S	S	O	I	I	K	O	R
N	A	C	R	T	J	D	F	K	F	K	P	R	T	A
K	N	X	T	N	K	I	C	L	L	L	E	A	E	T
L	E	I	M	N	B	E	L	N	M	U	F	F	S	S
O	B	A	Q	U	L	U	V	D	L	I	N	N	E	T
E	J	K	T	Y	B	B	N	F	R	L	H	F	F	W
B	U	Z	Z	A	R	D	D	T	G	A	B	Z	U	I
J	M	A	L	L	A	R	D	C	I	W	H	Z	O	T
C	R	O	Q	W	T	E	A	L	Z	N	L	C	D	E
V	T	A	H	C	E	N	O	T	S	P	G	X	O	G
C	O	M	M	O	N	R	E	D	P	O	L	L	H	P

- Bittern
- Bullfinch
- Buzzard
- Common Redpoll
- Coot
- Corn Bunting
- Corncrake
- Crane
- Eider
- Hobby
- Knot
- Linnet
- Mallard
- Pochard
- Quail
- Redstart
- Serin
- Siskin
- Snipe
- Starling
- Stonechat
- Teal
- Twite

Answers Next Month

What is the common name for the bird, insect and butterfly shown below?



No prizes but whoever is the first to e-mail the correct answers to me will be mentioned in the next edition.