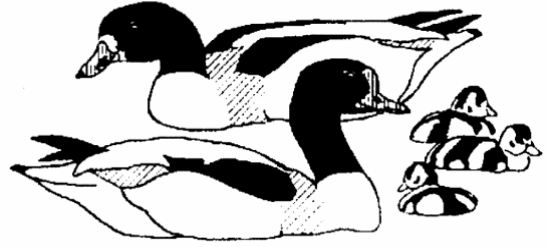


Newsletter



Issue 128

April 2012

Registered Charity No. 510146

As with previous editions thank you to all those who have contributed articles. If anyone has any ideas as to what they would like to see in future editions please let me know. Also, if any readers would like to send in a quiz for future editions they would also be gratefully received. They should be e-mailed to me at: newsletter@deesidenaturalists.org.uk. Please also include your name within the e-mail. Alternatively you can reach me on: 07413685156.

The next edition of the Newsletter will be in September.

June Field Meeting to Puffin Island

The Puffin Island trip has been booked for the 9th June. The boat leaves Beaumaris at 10:30 and the cost will be £9.00 for RSPB members £11.00 for non members. Pay at the kiosk called Cerismar Two on the pier at Beaumaris. I've been advised that they can only accept cash payments due to the kiosk having no electricity. There are twenty-five places available so book early to avoid disappointment. Meet at the Public Car park Northop at 08:30.

Please contact me to reserve a place on: 07413685156 by the 14th May as I need to let the RSPB organisers know numbers. Please note the mobile phone number quoted on the Programme of Events card is incorrect.

Bob Must

Maintenance Day

Unfortunately there is a clash of dates with these arrangements as the only date available in June for Puffin Island is the 9th (see above). We have, therefore, re-scheduled the Maintenance Day for June 16th.

If you are aware of any items that need repair/renovation, please contact any Committee member and we will put it on the To-Do list.

Stewart Smith

National Grid Nature Trail update 2012

There is now access to the Nature Trail, although there is still a section fenced off where National Grid is carrying out work. However, you can still walk through and onto the estuary, under the bridge to Compartment 3.

Christine Hamer

Chairman's Report

For a number of reasons this will be a brief update, mainly due to me still getting my feet under the table! The first few months of the year were hectic and I did wonder if I had bitten off more than I could chew but things are settling down now.

By the time you get this newsletter we hope that all of the single storey hides will have new roofs. Securing a contractor and choosing the right materials was quite a headache but hopefully the new King-span panels will give us many years of service.

We have had considerable dialogue with solicitors about an "easement" agreement between ourselves, Eon and National Grid. The National Grid is running power cables from Scotland, down the Irish Sea, underground on the Wirral, under the Dee and under the land we lease from Eon. There will be no interference with our activities and little or no surface impact. We are dotting i's with the Charity

Commission as I write this and hope to finalise the agreement by the end of April.

Finally, our Recorder, Andrew Wallbank, has had to step down from the role and I would like, first of all, to take this opportunity to express our thanks for the work he has done for the Society.

The role of the Recorder is vitally important to our planning and future activities and we would welcome the input of any member(s) interested in continuing this work. As well as assimilating records, the Recorder has the opportunity to liaise with other organisations such as the Clwyd Bird Recording Group, making this a really interesting aspect of the Society's work. If you would like more information please contact myself or any other Committee member and we can provide further details about the role.

Stewart Smith

Membership Subscriptions

A gentle reminder to members who haven't renewed their subscriptions this year. As agreed previously by Trustees, only one issue of the Newsletter (this one) will be sent out to members who haven't renewed following the reminders sent out at the beginning of the year. If subscriptions are not renewed after this, members will be contacted to check if they wish to renew and, if not, will be asked to return their Reserve keys to the Society.

When renewing subscriptions would all members **please enclose a SAE?** More than 10% of mem-

bers didn't do so this year, at a cost to the Society of about £30. As well as the cost, it is very time consuming writing out addresses and can lead to mistakes when permits are sent out. With the huge increase in postal charges due at the end of April this will be even more important.

Finally, and most importantly, many thanks to all of you who signed up for Gift Aid this year. Gift Aid makes a huge difference to the Society and helps us to further our plans for the Reserve.

Stewart Smith

Web Site

We are pleased to let you know about some changes we are making to our web pages (www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk). From May 1st you will find a different Home page with a login option in the bottom left hand corner.

The User Name is: **dnsuser**
The Password (for the moment) is: **2012**

We will change the password regularly and inform members via the Newsletter.

The log in will take you to the members area where we will post useful/interesting information and keep you informed with the latest news. Please let us know if you would like to suggest ideas for publication.

Society News

Pennington Flash 17th March

The first field trip for the society in 2012 was to Pennington Flash near Wigan on Saturday 17th March. Stock Dove and quick visits by Marsh Tits, or were they Willow Tits?

We were lucky, the promised rain held off until we were finished, just. Pennington lived up to expectations, we saw about 47 species of bird on the day all in breeding plumage and seen at their best at this time of the year.

This was especially true of the ducks the Teal, Shoveller, Gadwell and Goosander. Pennington affords excellent views of birds in the wild. A collection of Snipe and Herons nesting in the trees added to the interest. At the bunting hide we enjoyed close views of Bullfinch, Reed Bunting,

What has been achieved at Pennington is remarkable, from a tip for coal spoil at the local coal mines to the excellent facility it is today. I love the place and enjoyed sharing it with fellow society members. To those of you who came, thank you for your company.

Bill Griffiths.

If you fancy a snack after a visit to Pennington Flash I can recommend Bents Garden Centre. Carry on up the East Lancs Road and turn right at the next roundabout. The soup is excellent. Ed

Butterfly Monitoring 2012

The butterfly monitoring on this area starts from 1st April walking the same transects as 2011. Hopefully the species seen last year will be there this year and maybe we will be able to add grayling to the list. This was reported as seen on the estuary section, towards the bridge last August but not by the transect recorders.

for Butterfly Conservation, Wales, please contact me either by e-mail:

(christine.hamer@tiscali.co.uk) or telephone: 01352716273.

I can meet volunteers on the reserve to walk the transects, which take between 45 mins and an hour to walk.

If there are members out there who are interested in taking part in the recording, which is being done

Christine Hamer

Open Day 7th May

We will be opening the Field Studies Centre for members on the next available Bank Holiday (May 7th) from 10 am to 4 pm. welcome this opportunity. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available.

This will be just a trial to see what interest there is but we are aware that some members cannot get to the Centre during the week and thought you might

As luck would have it, high tide is around midday so the bird viewing should be good. Feel free to bring a friend or family members.

On a Lighter Note

Genuine questions and answers heard during quiz shows:

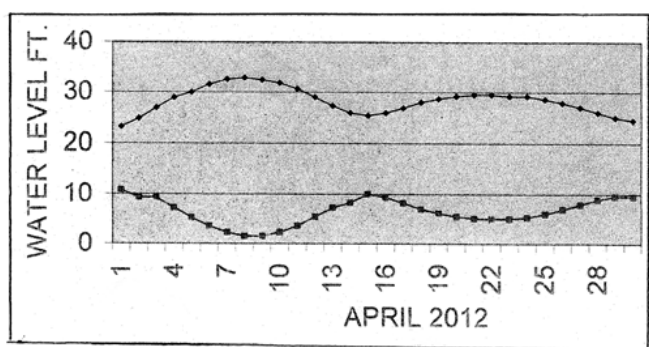
- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Q. A compass heading of 180 indicates what direction of travel?</i> | <i>Ans. Backwards.</i> |
| <i>Q. What animal builds dams and lodges?</i> | <i>Ans. Sheep.</i> |
| <i>Q. An animal with three letters in its name?</i> | <i>Ans. Frog.</i> |
| <i>Q. What name is given to plants that live for more than 2 years?</i> | <i>Ans. Trees.</i> |
| <i>Q. What insect can be found hovering above lakes?</i> | <i>Ans. Crocodiles.</i> |

Learning Curve

RIVER DEE TIDAL CYCLE Part 2

The following graph shows the variation in Dee tide levels during the month of April 2012. The upper line showing the high water mark and the lower line showing low water data. Now consider a single tide sequence Diagram 2.

If, at regular intervals, the height of water on an incoming and outgoing tide was measured the theoretical graph shown would result. This particular graph is called a sine curve or in nautical terms a tidal curve. In scientific terms the water moves up



and down with simple harmonic motion.

An examination of the curve reveals quite a number of interesting facets. First consider the low water period. For an hour or so on either side of low water there is no significant change in water levels. Yet as the tide begins to run over the next three hours the levels will rise up to nine feet every hour. Clearly the Estuary with its mud banks and creeks is a highly dangerous place for anyone who does not know what they are about.

At peak tide the estuary becomes almost pond like and the organic material carried by the tide and the river settles out on the mudflats to be fed upon by the invertebrates- the creatures of the mud. Mind you the creatures of the mud have a pretty rough time of it all round. When the tide is in they are preyed upon by the fish. When the tide is out they are prodded, poked and dragged from the sheltering mudflats and eaten by the birds.

In the winter the mudflats are subjected to extremes of cold and in the summer extremes of heat. The invertebrates also have to cope with salinity changes and for all that they survive in enormous numbers and are a huge food source for birds from the

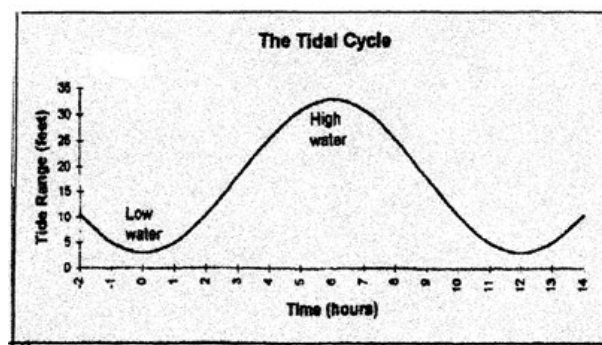
arctic regions for local fishermen.

The international acclaim of the Dee Estuary as a wildfowl and wader resource is to a large degree down to the invertebrates. Quite simply no invertebrates, no estuary birds. Also no tidal cycle to freshen the estuary no invertebrates.

Wader and wildfowl feeding time obviously depends upon water levels. Because the mudflats occur at different levels the feeding opportunities can be quite lengthy before the birds are forced on to their roost sites on the saltmarsh. There to await the ebb of the tide before returning to their feeding grounds, day or night.

Perusers of the Dee tide tables will have noticed that an incoming tide reaches its peak in five and a half hours whereas an outgoing tide takes six and a half hours. This will mean that our theoretical curve will be skewed. The reasons for tidal skews can be many and include islands which affect tidal flow (Ireland) shoreline form and the nature of the river bed.

Sea going ships sail with Admiralty Tide Tables and the UK Hydrographic web site which can give the times and heights of tides together with port configurations and tidal curves for all ports in the world. This will allow the navigator to calculate when his ship will have sufficient water to enter



and leave port. In our theoretical situation, possibly requiring fifteen feet of water, we could sail the Dee channel three hours either side of high water on a 32ft tide.

Raymond Roberts

General Information

This page 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 EON 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 EON 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:

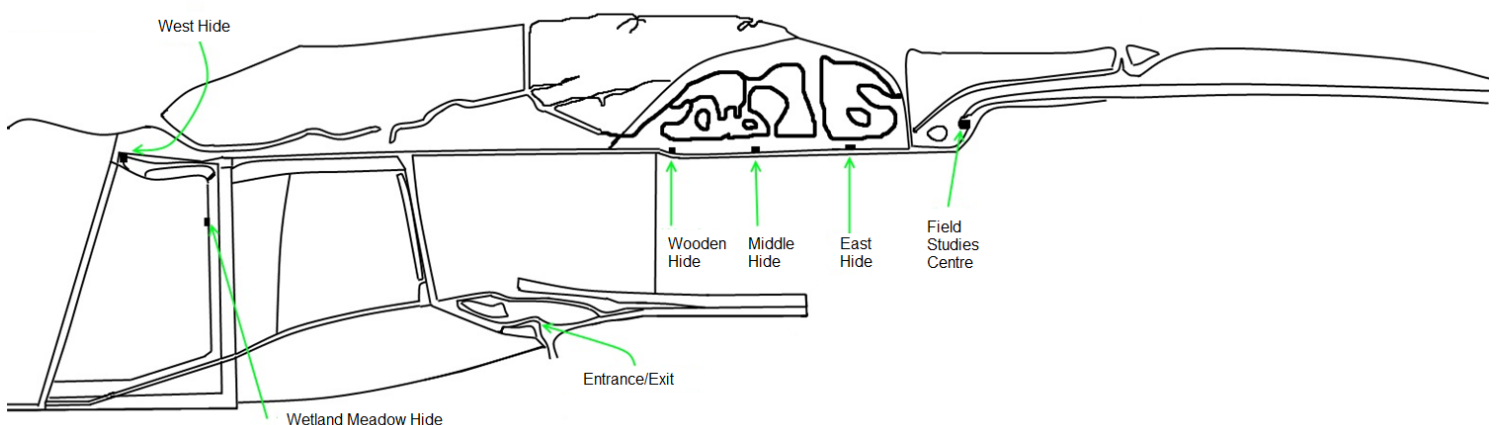
The Reserve is closed every Monday from 5.00pm to 6.00am.

There is strictly NO admittance at this time.

This is in agreement with EON to carry out site maintenance.

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

Please make sure that ALL viewing shutters and doors are secured when leaving each hide.



Any Changes to the programme issued at the beginning of the year will be either posted on our website or promulgated in the Newsletter.
www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk

Reserve Security, Safety and Housekeeping

Members may come across incidents on the Reserve which they consider need attention. or 01244 313404) know as soon as possible.

In general terms, if the incident relates to site security, vandalism or the like, EON security must be contacted as soon as possible (01244 894065). If you suspect a crime has been or is being committed, contact the police (999 for emergency calls or for non-urgent calls, dial 0300 330 0101).

If the incident directly affects the Society's interests, e.g. vandalism or theft, please also let the Chair: (chair@deesidenaturalists.org.uk or 07858 776397) or the Society secretary (secretary@deesidenaturalists.org.uk)

On no account should members put themselves at risk and you should always consider carefully whether or not you should approach anyone who you think is acting unlawfully or who shouldn't be on the Reserve.

Finally, please let the Chair or Secretary know as soon as possible about any other form of damage, wear and tear etc. to Society property so that we can rectify any problems as quickly as possible.

Stewart Smith

Quiz (answers on page 8)

Word Search

There are eighteen common names of butterfly's hidden within the grid. They can all, according to Butterfly Conversation Wales, be found in North Wales and Northern England.

They could be horizontal, vertical, diagonal and spelt normally or backwards and the same letter may be used in more than one answer.

To make it more interesting the answers are given on page 8 but not the position in the grid.

If you would like a copy of the grid showing the answers please e-mail me at: newsletter@deesidenaturalists.org.uk and I will send one to you.

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

Cryptic Birds

Decipher the clues to obtain the name of the bird.
(Thanks to Hazel Jones for these Ed.)

1. You can depend on this bird to make a car
2. Also known as wind hovers
3. Does this bird know the words?
4. All we need is;
5. Build your own house!
6. Young feline arise
7. Drape the flags
8. Aerial antic
9. They really shouldn't sing in this tunnel
10. Raise the entrance
11. Look out, it may be a trap?
12. Good for cooking roast potatoes
13. Marine creature finds peace companion
14. Run out of this and you have to walk
15. Lemmon Mallet

Group Corner

DNS Photography Group

The group attracts around twenty five members and meets at 2pm on the second Wednesday of each month in the Field Studies Centre.

This is a social group with a good mix of beginners and more experienced photographers aiming to share an interest in all forms of photography through presentations and practical sessions.

If you would like more information please contact the convener.

Carl Boswell

tel. 01352 757309

Art Group

The DNS Art Group meets each month on the second Thursday at 2pm in the Field Studies Centre. We have about twelve members who enjoy painting together in various mediums.

Earlier in the year we had a very stimulating demonstration by Jan Gardner who was the Artist in Residence for Deeside. We held an exhibition at the October meeting which attracted many favourable comments.

If you enjoy painting and would like to join us you would be very welcome.

Doreen Boswell

tel. 01352 757309

Looking Forward

FLOWERS ON THE RESERVE

The spell of warmer weather has brought into leaf several of the willow and hawthorn bushes (the less common Midland Hawthorn is flowering early as usual), but the flowering plants are still slow to show.

By June and July most of the species that are on the reserve should be in full colour. As the building work seems to be over, the nature trail area should show how resilient the vegetation can be. After the previous works a couple of years ago, it was a colourful succession as the flowers reappeared, changing monthly from orange Scarlet Pimpernel, fol-

lowed by blue Selfheal then the white, yellow and red of the Ox-eye Daisies, Buttercups and Cranesbills. The taller plants such as Weld, Thistles, Teasels and Mullein will be opening nearer to July and August.

The Orchid leaves are growing up now (two new patches have been found already) so if the grass cutting and the rabbits leave them alone, we expect a good show around June.

Mary Wright

Useful Websites

www.visitwirral.com

What's on around the Wirral.

www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk

Events and places of interest in North Wales.

www.northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

North Wales Butterflies information and events.

www.first-nature.com

Pictorial guide to nature — also has a page for 'Wild Wales'.

www.birdsinwales.org.uk

Welsh Ornithological Society.

www.ispot.org.uk

Free website where you can upload a photograph of something you cannot recognise and they will try to identify it.

Areas Of Interest

I've been asked to publish the following meeting agenda for those who are interested.

Northern Coleopterists' Meeting 2012

Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL
Saturday 22nd September 2012

10.00-10.15 'Welcome' Tom Hubball & Dmitri Logunov

10.15-10.45 'Subterranean Beetles: The British Fauna in Context of the World' Graham Proudlove

10.45-11.00 Tea/Coffee

11.00-11.45 'Beetle Diversity in Dunes and Pine Plantations at Newborough, Anglesey' Dick Loxton

11.45-12.30 'The Rediscovery and Current Status of *Cryptocephalus coryli* at Sherwood Forest NNR'
Trevor Pendleton

12.30-13.15 'Beetles and Buglife: Conservation Work in the UK' Sarah Henshall

13.15-14.15 Lunch (Either bring sandwiches or visit the museum's Café Muse).

14.15-16.30 Afternoon discussion and identification session in the Entomology Dept.

Attendees are welcome to bring any exhibits, literature or other entomological items to display at the meeting.

The Northern Coleopterists Forum website needs content. If you have any articles, pictures or other content, especially field trip notifications and reports, which you think may be suitable for inclusion, please either post it on the website or contact me to publish it for you.

Tom Hubball

Tel: 01535 678334 after 6pm

Email: ukbeetles@blueyonder.co.uk

Answers to Quiz

Word Search
Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Grizzled Skipper, Peacock, Brimstone, Comma, Large White,
Large Heath, Common Blue, Green Hairstreak, Orange Tip, Meadow Brown, Holly Blue, Small Copper
Painted Lady, Wall Brown, Ringlet, Grayling
Cryptic Birds
1. Robin, 2. Kestrel, 3. Humming bird, 4. Love bird, 5. Cuckoo, 6. Kittiwake, 7. Bunting, 8. Skylark,
9. Dartford Warbler, 10. Jackdaw, 11. Booby, 12. Goose, 13. Turtle Dove, 14. Petrel, 15. Yellow
Hammer.