

Newsletter



Issue 134

Apr 2014

Registered Charity No. 510146

Welcome to the April edition of the Newsletter. There's not much space in this edition for the Editor's bit apart from saying that the programme of events for the next four months can be found on page seven. This will form a permanent feature of the Newsletter designed to help the new members and those who have misplaced their programme cards issued with the December edition.

Important Notice

Issue of New Keys For Reserve Locks

Very shortly after receiving this newsletter all fully paid up members will be receiving a new key, which like the previous one will fit all locks on the reserve. The only exception to this being the outer shutter on the Field Studies Centre main door and the shutters in the west hide.

It is intended to send out the keys in a small padded envelope so look out for one of these dropping through your letter box and make sure to remove the contents before disposing of it. The envelope should also contain advice as to the date when the new locks will come into use.

The plan is to replace all the locks in one day, replacing the lock on the barrier should present no problem but hang onto your old key initially just in case we hit any snags on the hides.

Replacing all the locks has become necessary due to the fact that the barrels on most of the locks have become severely worn. Many members have experienced difficulty entering the reserve some having worse problems when it came to leaving.

We would like to remind all members that the keys remain the property of the Society the £10 you pay to obtain one is a refundable deposit and not a purchase price. If you decide you no longer wish to be a member of the Society please return your key promptly on the expiry of your latest subscription.

Annual subscriptions expire on 31st December.

David Ross
Membership Secretary

Deeside Naturalists' Society

Chairmans Report

Dear Members,

Those of you that visit the reserve would have noticed that the hide shutters have been replaced with new glass ones. Shortly after this installation some of the windows were damaged due to misuse in opening and closing the windows. All the windows have now been replaced with a larger grade of metal on the bottom bar.

This should limit any future damage, but care should still be taken in opening and closing so you do not twist the window. If it is stiff or hard to push up or down STOP and look at it, are both locks unlocked? Is the top window fully up? Are you twisting the frame? Do not force the window.

Thank you

Phil Hotchkiss

Dee Estuary Conservation Group

The Dee Estuary Conservation Group (DECG) is a representation of twenty-four local and national organisations that have an interest in the Dee Estuary. The organisations represent both the Welsh and English sides of the river. The group was on the point of dissolution in August 2013 but as often happens when there is a threat that something will end people will come forward to 'take up the cause'.

In the case of the DECG four members have offered to take on the officers positions. At the AGM on 27th February at Burton Point Farm (RSPB Inner Marsh Farm Office) the following were voted in:

Chair - David Parker representing Cheshire Wildlife and Wirral Wildlife Trust

Vice Chair - Adrian Lloyd Jones representing North Wales Wildlife Trust

Secretary - Ray Eades representing Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society (CAWOS)

Treasurer - Peter Coffey representing Mersey Ringing Group

The total number of people at the AGM was 12 so only half of the Organisations were able to send representatives. The main discussion of the meeting was what role the DECG should have and what issues they can address. It was considered by those present that the DECG should maintain a close awareness of development proposals affecting the estuary, and act as a lobbying group. The Chairman cited 13 current proposed developments.

It was suggested that the group should also maintain an awareness of local Regulations and Designations (e.g. Cockling and Red Throated Divers). The group should also promote Conservation and sustainable management of the estuary.

DECG will meet quarterly, Deeside Naturalists will aim to have representation at these meetings, should anyone wish to pass information to DECG they can do this via the Deeside Naturalists Committee.

Helen Simpson

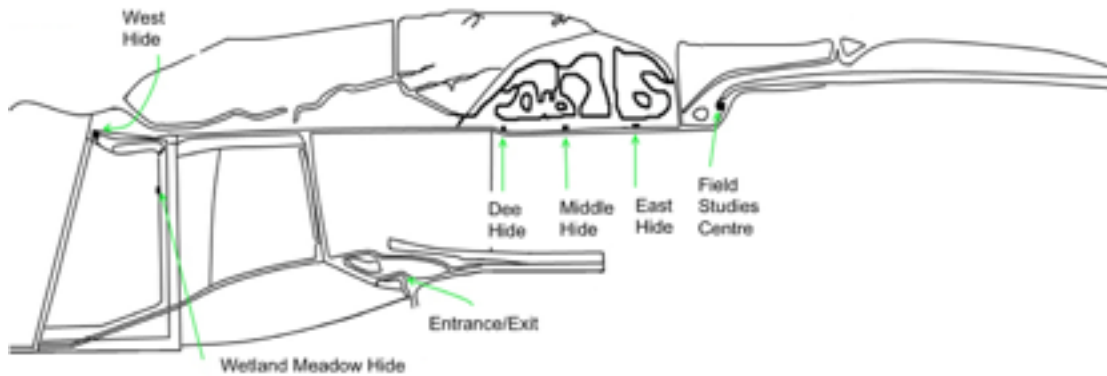
New Members

Reserve Access

The Reserve is closed every Monday from 5.00pm to 6.00am. There is strictly no admittance at this time due to an agreement with *e.on* to carry out site maintenance.

Hides and Toilet Facilities

Your key will open all five hides and the toilet facility which is located at the Field Studies Centre.



Notices

Society Bye Laws

The Three Bye Laws for the Society covering Group Visits, Dogs and Family Membership are now able for viewing on the website Members area on the Reserve Guide page. The current version of the Constitution can also be found in the same area.

Concerns Procedures

Anyone wishing to raise concerns about any aspects of the Reserve should, in the first instance contact a member of the Society Committee. The Chair and Secretaries details are:

chair@deesidenaturalists.org.uk
secretary@deesidenaturalists.org.uk

Details of all committee members can be found on the website within the Members Area on the Reserve Guide page.

Northern Coleopterists' Meeting

This year's Northern Coleopterists' Meeting will take place from 10am on Saturday, 13th Sep 14 at Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL. All are welcome, even if they only have a passing interest in the beetle fauna of the UK and beyond. The agenda is available through the DNS website.

Members Events

Hilbre Island - Saturday 29th March

This was the date of our first outing and our destination was Hilbre Island always an interesting place to visit just as long as you abide by the times to cross and to return in accordance with the tides. Hilbre provides interest at any time of the year, flora and fauna changing with the seasons and the fact it is an island adds to the feeling of being somewhere different. Bob Must commented it looked very like the Falklands as we approached and he should know.

The route from the West Kirby Slipway is out to Little Eye and then right over Middle Eye onto the main island of Hilbre. It is just 2 miles and should take about an hour depending on how long you take to look in rock pools on the way. We were onto the island and off between tides. You can remain on the island for the tide which means a stay of at least six hours. This can provide excellent birdwatching. However, if it is a wet and cold day it can be a bleak place to be stuck.

I am pleased to say 11 members came on this trip including our Chairman on what I believe was his first society outing, setting a good example to the membership. We were lucky for the weather it was dry and



comfortably warm with a brisk breeze. Before reaching Hilbre the more observant of us saw our first Swallow of the year to the annoyance of the less alert. A Seal Pup was hauled out of the water close to the island whilst the rest were out on the



Hoyle Bank as usual. I wonder why he was on his own? Family dispute over fishing rights? Was he an outcast? What

drama were we seeing? Whatever the reason, he provided good photographic opportunities that were readily taken.

A large flock of Brent Geese were close in giving excellent views of these lovely winter visitors. A Common Scoter was to be seen close to the

Lifeboat Station, this was a treat because I usually see them at a distance off the North Wales Coast. During almost the whole visit we saw a constant stream of Meadow Pipits all migrating inland, I dare bet there was the odd rarity amongst them but I am not hot on identification in flight. The usual waders were there in numbers and the Cormorants sporting their white breeding flash. There was plenty of interest.



On the day of our visit the Wirral Borough Council joined with RSPB in an open day on the island. This was a mixed blessing in that hot drinks were available and telescopes to use without having to carry them. The down side was it attracted large numbers of the public many with their dogs not on a lead as requested by the clear notices, one such hound raided my sandwich tin behind my back and stole my lunch at a speed that was almost admirable, there was the smell of murder in the air!

Oh, I almost forgot to mention the Mermaid swimming off the lifeboat station end of the island. There was a suggestion it was a seal but when your lunch has been snaffled there has to be some compensation.

Field trips are fun, do come on one.

Bill Griffiths



Not forgetting a Curlew
Ed

Reserve Report

December 2013 to March 2014

The Bird and Butterfly Report for 2013 is now published on the DNS website and describes the 140 bird species seen on the Reserve last year (this is a revised version with a few corrections since it was first published).

On November 30th, 4,000 Pink-footed Geese were seen across the estuary and 147 of them seem to have made their way across to our side of the river. These geese are making a notable come-back to the Dee estuary, a major refuge for them historically.

In December, 5-6 Brent Geese of the dark-bellied form were recorded three times on Oakenholt marsh between the 22nd and 28th and there was also a very high count of 60 Coot on the fly ash lagoon on Dec 28th, which equals the Reserve record in 2009. A Goldeneye on the fly ash lagoon was interesting, since they used the lagoon often many years ago, but seem to have preferred the bunded pools in more recent years.

High tides in February brought a Guillemot close to the West Hide on the 16th,



(photo by S. Palin, via P. Haslem)

followed by a Common Scoter on the 17th.



(photo by R. Beckett)

Scoter, especially, are not seen very often on the Reserve (4th record since 1976).

Twite, on the other hand, continue to be regular winter visitors and the maximum count this winter was 86 birds on Dec 11th. They were frequently feeding in the West Hide car park, only temporarily disturbed by the regular traffic. Richard Beckett tells me that several birds have been trapped and ringed on the Reserve, a significant contribution by DNS to the conservation of this species in North Wales.



(photo by R. Beckett)

A male Red-breasted Merganser seems to have stayed in the bunded pool area for much of the winter, with several records between mid-December and early March.



(photo by GEM)

Chiffchaffs and Wheatears have already arrived in March and mid-April is the time for major influxes of terns, hirundines and warblers, so there is much to look forward to. (Please send more photos, if you can).

Glenn Morris

Web Site

www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk

ALL MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

Any changes to the programme of events, or any other notices will be made via the website. This, apart from posting notices on the Reserve is the only quick and easy way to let members know what is happening in between the Newsletters. A message indicating the date and type of entry will be placed on the main home page. Members are urged to login to this on a regular basis.

HELP REQUIRED

As the longer serving members of the Society are aware I have, since taking over the website in 2012, requested help on a regular basis through this section of the newsletter in putting together the members 'What is it?' area.

For the benefit of the newcomers to the Society these pages are designed to show the

birds, butterflies and trees or flowers that can be seen on the reserve, where they can be found and the time of year best for their viewing. To do this I had hoped to enlist the help of the more knowledgeable members in providing the details for these pages.

Unfortunately, apart from the butterfly pages I have so far received very little help in putting these together. As a result the bird pages contain only a few images with very basic details and the trees and plants area still has no entries.

If anyone would like to help provide any information for the above areas or has any suggestions for things they would like to see on the website please pass them to:

editor@deesidenaturalists.org.uk

*Bob Must
Website Editor*

The password to the members area will change on the weekend of the 10th/11th May.

Username:

Password:

Quiz

ANAGRAMS

The anagrams below are all members of the animal kingdom. *Answers on page 8.*

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 1. throne | 11. emitter |
| 2. tang | 12. paroled |
| 3. greet | 13. go pinewood |
| 4. toga | 14. low bran |
| 5. strayling | 15. optima wiped |
| 6. emanate | 16. Sandier |
| 7. raptor | 17. freelance roping |
| 8. garbed | 18. wash war pork |
| 9. corona | 19. trim hats |
| 10. seashore | 20. bald brick |

Programme of Events

MEMBERS' EVENTS

Moth Trapping and Identification - Saturday 17th May

Meet at the Field Studies Centre in the morning to identify and then release the moths which have been captured during the previous night. If you haven't experienced this before do come along you will be surprised at the diversity and beauty of some of these night fliers.

The moth traps will be put out on Friday night weather permitting and the trapped species will be examined and identified by Justin Williams Recorder for North Wales Macro Moths.

Contact Helen Simpson on 07711 964820 to book a place and for more details.

FIELD TRIPS

Sunday June 15th - A Walk on the Wild side.

Discover Cheshire Wildlife Trust's Gowy Meadows.
Contact Helen Simpson for more details 07711 964820.
Meet at the Spar car park at 9am.

Saturday 12th July - Formby - A walk with the ranger

We will have a guided walk with the ranger looking for red squirrels, birds, flowers and prehistoric footprints!

The area is National Trust and although entry is free, there is a charge for car parking however National Trust members get it free. If you intend to come and are a National Trust member please remember to bring your NT membership card with you otherwise parking is £5.50 per car. Bring a picnic lunch. We will travel via the Mersey Tunnel (Toll of £1.70 each way so please bring change. Note, price correct as at Apr 14.)

Please book with Pauline Moulton on 01244 313404. We will meet at the Spar Car Park Queensferry, to leave promptly at 9.30am.

Saturday September 20th - Penmon Point, Anglesey

For seabirds and possibly seals and dolphins.
Contact Bill Griffiths on 01244 815941.
Meet at the Spar at 9am.

Any changes to the programme will be posted on our website
www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk

Club Corner

DNS Photography Group

The group continues to attract around twenty members to meetings which take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 2pm in the Study Centre. Typically we look at different aspects of photography and weather permitting we have photography forays around the Reserve.

For information on the group please contact Carl Boswell on 01352 757309.

DNS Art Group

We are a small group of members who enjoy painting together each month. We paint in various mediums and gain stimulation and encouragement from each other.

If you would like to join us you would be most welcome. Our meetings are on the second Thursday of the month, from 1-30 until 3-30 pm.

Contact Doreen Boswell on 01352 757309

Wednesday Group

This group meets at the Field Study Centre on the first and the third Wednesday of the month between 1.00 – 3.00 pm. It is an informal gathering of members who usually have lunch and then go for a short ‘walk and talk’ on the reserve, before returning for a final cup of tea. Topics of discussion range from the flora and fauna found on the reserve to local, national and international issues.

There is a good mix of viewpoints, experiences and ages within the group, and at the end of the day we all go home still friends, having enjoyed each others company.

Before And After???

I over-ordered some native bushes for Clwyd Badger Group so it was agreed a few could be planted along the inside bank by West hide. This is the bank at present.



Helen Simpson and I did a really good job. This is what it might look like in a few years time! No, we didn't use magic-grow-more, we just planted a dozen mix of spindle, guelder rose and hawthorn.

Betty Lee

Answers To Quiz

ANAGRAMS
1. Hornet, 2. Gnat, 3. Egret, 4. Goat, 5. Stingray, 6. Manatee, 7. Parrot, 8. Badger,
9. Raccoon, 10. Seahorse, 11. Termite, 12. Leopard, 13. Woodpigeon, 14. Barn Owl,
15. Meadow Pipit, 16. Sardine, 17. Peregrine Falcon, 18. Sparrow Hawk, 19. Marsh Tit,
20. Blackbird