

Issue 157

August 2022

Registered Charity No. 510146

Welcome to the August edition of the Newsletter.

Our Chairperson, Phil Hotchkiss will be standing down from the position at the AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> November. Anyone who feels they would like to be involved with the smooth running of the Society, please contact the secretary, Ian Spence at [secretary@deenats.org.uk](mailto:secretary@deenats.org.uk)

We have been informed by Uniper that the Leadbrook which runs from the papermill, past the West hide and into the estuary is in urgent need of dredging. Excavators will shortly be in operation; the silt being deposited along the fence line to the west of the Ash pool. This will unfortunately cause some disturbance to the birds.

As you will be aware that covid restrictions in Wales have been lifted, however with infections remaining high we ask that you be covid aware and take whatever precautions you feel comfortable with when accessing the hides.

Thanks to Julie Rogers, Raymond Roberts, Hazel Jones, Bill Dickinson and Malcolm Down for your contributions.

*Alan Smethurst*

The current membership system has been in place for many years and does not take full advantage of the online technology now available. Consequently, we have decided to move the current system to one online with the ability to continue with the paper-based system for those members who are unable to use the internet.

We have chosen to use Membermojo to provide this service. This will provide a comprehensive system that enables application and renewal online, members to update their own records such as changing address, with membership cards being sent electronically via email. Cheque and Bank Transfer payments can continue to be made. Postage costs will reduce.

Full details of new system will be available online prior to launch and in the December Newsletter in time for renewals at the end of the year.

Having carefully considered the current finances of the Society and likely expenditure this year there will be no increase in subscriptions for 2023.

*John Briggs: Membership Secretary*

**This year's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the Field Study Centre on the Reserve at 2.00pm on Tuesday November 15<sup>th</sup>.**

# *Around and about* – Eyarth Rocks

## Butterfly species to look out for

Pearl-bordered Fritillary

White-letter Hairstreak

Grizzled Skipper

Dingy Skipper

Dark Green Fritillary

Brown Argus

Common Blue

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Eyarth Rocks is situated about three miles south of Ruthin just to the east of the A494 near to Pwll Glas. It is a part of Craig-adwy-wynt, a limestone outcrop with areas of limestone pavement and grassland. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with wonderful panoramic views.

32 species of butterfly have been recorded here and it is becoming a stronghold for the endangered Pearl-bordered Fritillary

The grykes in the limestone pavement not only provide ideal basking for the likes of Common Blue, Small heath and a variety of skippers but gives refuge to shade loving plants such as Hart's-tongue Fern, Wall rue and Yellow Archangel, allowing them to grow alongside the regular lime loving Hound's tongue and Bird's foot Trefoil.

Eyarth also boasts areas of well grazed grassland which gives rise to many specialist plants like: Bloody Crane's-bill, early purple Orchid, Greater Butterfly Orchid, Moonwort and Mountain Melick. The reserve is home to numerous moth species many of which are day flying such as: Speckled Yellow, six-spot Burnet and Silver Y

### ***To get to the reserve:***

There is limited roadside parking just over Eyarth Bridge SJ 127 553, by the remains of the old rail bridge which used to cross the road.

From Eyarth Bridge take the public footpath starting at the kissing gate at the road junction by the bridge, then southwest along the old railway line and up through woodland. At the stile walk up the field to the stile ahead on the right. Cross the lane and follow the path behind the house then take a right into the open clearings. Keep following the path up the cliff to another stile and onto the reserve.



# Reserve Report March- June

A Little gull found on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March which stayed for 8 weeks, a Puffin and an Eider duck were outstanding records during a busy Spring / Summer. A pair of Avocet nested on the Ash pool island and hatched three eggs. Two were predated within days and one successfully matured enough to fly away. A Black-headed gull colony (40 pairs) occupied the island for a second year.

## *Sightings.*

**March.** Little gull, 4000 Pink-footed geese, 2000 Canada geese, 4 Barnacle geese, Greylag geese, Gadwall, Shoveler, Teal, Tufted ducks, Wigeon, Pintail, Spotted redshank, Greenshank, Red-legged partridge, White-fronted goose, Twite, 20 Linnet, Stonechat, Grey partridge, 3 Whooper swans, 20 Mute swans, Common sandpiper, Goosander, Chiffchaff, Bullfinch, Bar-tailed godwit, 700 Black-tailed godwit, Avocet, Snipe, Red kite, 30 Knot, 6 Little grebe, Great egret, Green woodpecker, Dunlin and Redshank.

**April.** Peregrine, 250 Knot, 1000 Black-tailed godwit, 30 Rooks, Cetti's warbler, 7 Willow warblers, Swallows, House martins, Sand martins, 6 Chiffchaff, Little ringed plovers, Grey partridge, Bar-tailed godwits, Common whitethroat, 8 Whimbrel, 20 Sandwich terns, 27 Common terns, Wheatear, Reed warbler, Little gull.

**May.** Little gull, Blackcap, Stock doves, Reed bunting, 30 Swift, Whinchat, Wheatear, 10 Whimbrel, Sedge warbler, **Puffin**, Ringed plover, Common terns, Avocet hatchings, Sanderling, Little ringed plover, Mediterranean gull, Gannet, Great egrets, 226 Mallard, 220 Shelduck.

**June.** 13 Avocet, 500 Mallard, 2 Mediterranean gulls, Stonechats, 3 Ruddy Shelduck, 5 Great egret, Red kite, Lesser whitethroat, Spotted redshank, Greenshank, Whimbrel, Little ringed plover, Peregrine, Reed warbler, Cetti's warbler, one male Pintail, female **Eider duck**.



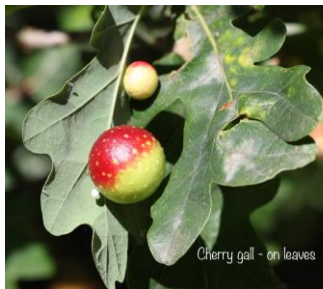
*Pete and Sue Haslem (Bird recorders).*



# Oak Galls to look out for this autumn



The knopper gall wasp, *Andricus quercuscalicis* produces ridged galls on the acorns of our native Pedunculate Oak; forming in August they are sticky and red, later becoming woody and brown. A second generation then develops in the catkins of Turkey Oak.



The cherry gall wasp, *Cynips quercusfolii*, causes galls on the undersides of oak leaves. The grub remains in the gall after leaf-fall, emerging as an adult wasp in winter.



Artichoke galls, caused by the wasp *Andricus foecundatrix* can be seen from mid-summer and mature in August where the inner gall is forced out, falling to the ground. The single larva that is housed inside will pupate in the fallen gall, emerging next spring.



The oak apple gall wasp, *Biorhiza pallida* causes galls on oak twigs. These galls can be found between May and June where the female has laid her eggs in the leaf bud. Inside the gall, there are several chambers, each housing a larva which eats its way out. Adults emerge in June and July.



The oak marble gall is caused by the *Andricus kollari* wasp and is found on common oaks. The wasp was actually introduced intentionally in the 1800s for its high tannin content, useful for leather tanning and cloth dying. Look out for small dimples on the surface.



# 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. Our work tends to be nature related but by no means restricted to that.

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

Contact Kay Mattocks on 01244 821810



*Kay Mattocks*



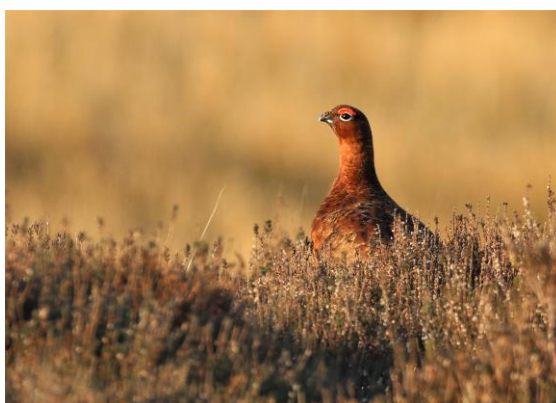
# Worlds End

World's End lies on a single-track road from the small village of Minera near Wrexham, which crosses Esclusham mountain and the Ruabon moors to the top of the Esclusham valley. World's End, a spectacular and dominating outcrop of carboniferous limestone from World's End and Eglwyseg to Trevor gives the north side of the Dee Valley an easily identifiable character with the 'Seven Sisters': great curves of outcropping limestone providing walkers, ramblers and birders with panoramic views all along its length.

From the end of March to early June, male Black Grouse gather at dawn on the edges of the forest to strut their stuff, flash their white tail feathers and impress the watching females hiding nearby.

Whilst travelling to the meeting point, we passed a site with about eight male Black Grouse displaying. After leaving the cars we were fortunate enough to be viewing, from the road across a small gorge, a group that comprised of 5 males (blackcocks) unfortunately no females (greyhens) were seen.

The noises were a smooth bubbling call, and a loud throaty, scratchy, hissing call that seemed to be the threatening tone. All this was being acted out on the only flat and open area around. The males seemed to posture, pose, and threaten each other with bright red inflated wattles and rasping noises without striking each other. We also saw, in this area four Red Grouse amongst the heather and bracken.



After watching this spectacle and taking in some well-deserved refreshments we heard a very short burst of a cuckoo calling, we then made our way across the open moorland towards the cliffs at World's End and saw more Red Grouse, Stonechat, Willow Warbler, Meadow Pipet and Raven. There was another lek of twelve Black Grouse and as well as a further two Black Grouse there were two Canada Geese their heads protruding out of the heather like a pair of black and white periscopes.

Around the car park several woodland and open country birds were seen and heard; Chiffchaff, Chaffinch, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, wood Pigeon, Wren, and Pheasant. Just before descending Esclusham Mountain, we spotted a Northern Wheatear on the righthand side of the road.

I would like to thank the few who made the effort and were justly rewarded, in all as a group we probably saw circa twenty-seven Black Grouse and eight Red Grouse, but this compares poorly with the seventy Black Grouse seen in 2016. All together we had 25 species.

*Bill Dickinson*

## World's End addendum



World's End is at the head of a steep sided valley which is enclosed by the rugged limestone cliffs of Eglwyseg mountain and the rounded tops of Cynr-y- Brain.

The grandeur and tranquillity of the place is an unlikely setting for a scandal that rocked the Royal Court in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The central figure was Nest, the daughter of the King of South Wales, a lady of great beauty and charm. She had been a mistress of Henry I by whom she had a son. Nest also had affairs with others including the Constable of Cardigan by whom she had a son. Eventually she married Gerald of Windsor who had been appointed by the King to be keeper at Pembroke castle. They had one daughter and at least three sons.....(I put it down to the Welsh water!).

Owain Cadwen, later to become Prince of Powys met Nest, his cousin, at a Christmas celebration in 1109. He was so taken with her that he abducted her almost in her husband's presence and fled to the Manor House at World's End. This so enraged the Norman Court that the couple had to flee to Ireland for safety. They later returned to gain favour with the King.

*Raymond Roberts*

*In partnership with natural Resources Wales, Merseyside Ringing Group have instigated a program of ringing 200 Black headed gull chicks per year at Shotton. They will be fitted with a black ring with white numbers (2\*\*\*) on the left leg and a BTO metal ring on the right. If any members happen to come across one in the future it would be very helpful if you could report it to: [peter.coffey@zen.co.uk](mailto:peter.coffey@zen.co.uk) , Thanks.*

# The River Dee Tidal Cycle

The tide which sweeps twice daily down the Dee Estuary is crucial to the sustainability of the Dee Estuary as a wildlife resource. It is the spin of the Earth and its relationship with the Moon and the Sun which brings about the tidal cycle.

The Moon is 250 thousand miles from the Earth and the Sun is 93 million miles away and yet there is sufficient gravitational pull on the Earth to cause water to rise. As the Earth spins thro' the rise tides are created. The Moon a satellite of the Earth completes its orbit of the Earth in a lunar month. c27.5 days. The Earth spins about its axis every 24 hours. The Earth and its satellite Moon orbit the Sun every 365 days approx. It is the juxtaposition of the Sun and Moon which brings about the variation in tide levels.

At the surface of the Earth the gravitational pull of the Moon is 2.5 times the pull of the Sun. When these two pulls are in line the gravitational pull is maximised resulting the creation of Spring tides, which is a term derived from 'springen' meaning fullness of water. Consider a single tide sequence. If tide heights are measured in regular intervals of time, then a curve will be produced. This curve is called a Sine Curve by mathematicians and scientists or in nautical terms a tidal curve.

An examination of the curve shows several interesting facts. At low water there is no significant change in water levels for quite some time. This allows birds to feed on the invertebrates in the mud. After which the water level rises rapidly to high water when again there is no significant change in water level for some time, at this time the Estuary becomes almost pondlike. This allows organic materials carried by the tide to settle on and refresh the mudflats to be fed on by the invertebrates.

Invertebrates have a pretty rough time all round. When the tide is in they are fed upon by the fish. When the tide is out, they are pulled from their sheltering mudflats by the birds. Not to mention extremes of temperature in both winter and summer. Notwithstanding the mudflats do supply food for a huge number of birds to sustain them through the winter and to give them sufficient energy to fly to their breeding grounds in the Arctic regions.

Therefore, the Dee Estuary Tidal Cycle is of vital to sustain the Estuary's International importance for our wildlife

## *Threats*

Future threats may come from barrages (a major scheme was proposed some years ago) and Energy generation, including the possibility of a future tidal lagoon project at Mostyn. These Schemes could change the river dynamics and affect the habitat.

All such schemes will require a thorough impact assessment always considering the Estuary's designations such as SSSI, SPA, A Ramsar Site under the terms of the European Convention and A Wetland Site of International Importance.

*Raymond Roberts*



# A few DNS invertebrates 2021

There are plenty of “creepy-crawlies” to be found across the Reserve, many of which are every bit as attractive as the butterflies and dragonflies that are well-reported. Insects are often overlooked, being tiny and tending to whizz around and they seem especially skilled at flying away the second you finally focus the camera on them! The vegetation all along the roads, car park, meadow trail and gardener’s compound are great for finding really interesting and often colourful species. After consulting a good insect handbook and doing a fair bit of “googling” a complete beginner can identify a good number to species and many others to genus. Although the scientific names are challenging, it is possible to find common names for many insects, especially on Flickr, where a common name is usually also given – not all insect guides do this! This is a small selection from last year, all on the Reserve, mainly June-August:

*Julie Rogers*



# Whixall Moss 14/5/2022



Straddling the English border near Whitchurch lies one of the biggest and best raised bogs in Britain. Its astonishingly varied wildlife makes it a place of international importance.

The reserve has 18 species of bog moss as well as many other characteristic bog plants. Invertebrates are thriving after the restoration of the bog, including Raft spider and 29 species of dragonfly and damselfly. There are also 670 different species of moth and 32 species of butterfly including the unmistakable Brimstone and Green Hairstreak. Adders and Common lizard are also thriving. With the restoration of water levels there have been major changes in the birdlife of the Mosses. The 166 recorded species include wetland birds such as breeding Curlew, Teal and Shoveler. There have been many sightings of raptors including Hen Harrier, Hobby and over wintering Short eared Owl.

A pre-start look from the new Charles Sinker hide produced a Northern Wheatear and on the opposite side of the road was a dark bellied Brent goose amongst a few Canada's, also in the car park a Cuckoo was heard calling together with Collared Dove, Wood Pigeon, Robin, Blackcap and a Whitethroat singing on the wires above.



We headed east along the canal towpath, the hedgerow was full of Blackbirds and the occasional warbler, on the opposite bank there were several Chiffchaff calling. We turned off the towpath onto the reserve, first going to a small area that was full of ponds with numerous dragonflies, darters and Speckled wood butterflies.

The pathway out to the open area was strewn with yellow Brimstone, orange Tip and Peacock butterflies. Some of the fields at the side were for grazing with Jackdaws and the odd Pheasant but the others were a mass of buttercups giving a suspended yellow carpet. On reaching the open bog land it is very impressive to see the extent of the reserve. The area gave us several stonechats and Reed Buntings with the occasional Meadow Pipit and Willow Warbler. Rosemary spotted the tail end of a lizard as it scuttled away into the long grass at the side of the path. The open area of water was colonised by Black Headed Gulls, very noisy. We saw a number of Green Hairstreak butterflies, generally in pairs chasing each other.



From the elevated viewing platform, which provided a superb view of the reserve we could see the groups of Black Headed gulls flying over their territories. In the distance there was a pair of Buzzards and a Kestrel, but no hobbies that could be positively identified.

After lunch we moved to the east of the reserve but not before going into the Charles Sinker hide again which overlooks a new scrape and ponds to the back. This area had Shelduck, Shoveler, tufted duck, mallard, mandarin drake, Canada and Greylag geese. Smaller birds were lapwing, Pied Wagtail and Sedge warbler.

The move towards the Manor House gave us the bird, in fact circa ten, of the day, Hobbies. A number were flying in small groups, extremely fast and agile, swooping and diving for the insects as they emerged from the ponds. Then lastly before returning to the cars a Peregrine flew past, making the perfect end to the day.

Again, I would like to thank those who joined me for a tremendous day's birding.

*Bill Dickinson*

### I'M ON A COMMITTEE

Oh, give me your pity, I'm on a committee  
Which means that from morning till night,  
We attend and amend and contend and defend  
Without a conclusion in sight.  
We confer and concur; we defer and demur  
And reiterate all of our thoughts  
We revise the agenda with frequent addenda  
And counter a load of reports.  
We propose and compose, we support and oppose  
And points of procedure are fun,  
But though various notions are brought up as motions,  
There's terribly little gets done.  
We resolve and absolve but we never dissolve  
Since it is out of the question for us,  
What a shattering pity to end our committee,  
Where else could we make such a fuss?

ANY VOLUNTEERS??

Hazel Jones



# Field Events 2022

**Saturday 27 August, FRODSHAM/WEAVER BEND.** Migrants and waders on the settling pools and the Weaver Bend. Meet at Brook Furlong (motorway bridge) Frodsham at 9.00am. Contact Bill Dickinson 07968438121 for more details.

**Saturday 10 September, CONNAH'S QUAY RESERVE,** high tide watch, Members Open Day, Meet Field Study Centre at 9.00am. Contact Bill Dickinson 07968438121 for more details.

**Sunday 16 October:** Field trip to **POINT OF AYR AND BIG POOL WOODS.** Coastal and woodland birds. Meet at the Station Road car park at 9.00 am. Contact Alan Smethurst 07896758222 for more details

**Saturday 12 November** Anglesey **MALTRAETH AND CORS DDYGA.** Meet at RSPB Cors Ddyga, grid ref: SH463725 at 9.30am. Contact Bill Dickinson 07968438121 for more details.

**Saturday 10 December, GREENFIELD PARK AND DOCK.** Woodland and estuary birds. Meet at Greenfield Valley Park car park, off Greenfield Rd, at 9.00am. Contact Alan Smethurst 07896758222 for more details.

*Bill Dickinson*

The highest-flying bird that has ever been recorded was in 1973, when a Ruppell's Griffon collided with a commercial airliner at 37,000ft (11,250m) over the Ivory Coast damaging one of its engines. Earlier, in 1967 a wedge of Whooper swans was observed near to the Hebrides by an airline pilot at 27,000ft (8,250m).

The world's most prolific highflyers are Bar-headed geese. Once their breeding season is over in Tibet they fly to the warmer climes of India to over winter, regularly flying at over 18,000ft (5,500m) to overcome the Himalayas. There have been reports of these birds being seen flying over the summit of Mt Everest at least 30,000ft (9150m) above sea level

## Digital Media

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