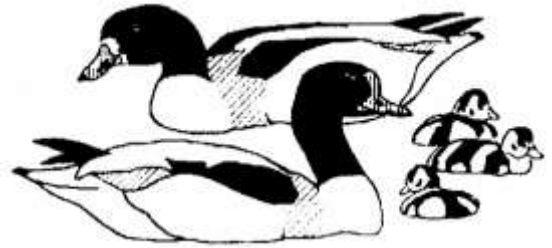


# Newsletter



Issue 130

December 2012

Registered Charity No. 510146

Welcome to a bumper edition of the December Newsletter. Due to the number of articles this edition has been increased to twelve pages and as it's Christmas we have had the centre pages printed in colour. Thanks to all those who have supplied articles and also to Hazel Jones and Helen Simpson who provided some of the quiz questions. Answers to quizzes are on the last page.

There is a slight change to the programme card this year. Due to the number of activities the Wildfowl & Waders High Water counts have not been included. However, they will be available on our website, as will the updated Constitution.

The problems with the West Hide car park and steps have been passed to e.on and they are investigating ways of resolving them. If members have any concerns over this or any other issues could they please pass them on to the Committee.

I've noticed from previous Newsletters that around this point I usually start to ask for help for something or other and this time it's for assistance with packing the newsletter for posting. It's three times a year and normally takes four people two to three hours usually on a Thursday at the FLVC in Mold. If anyone is prepared to assist could they please let me know, either by email to [editor@deesidenaturalists.org.uk](mailto:editor@deesidenaturalists.org.uk) or by phone on 07413685156.

May I take this opportunity to wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year (*Nadolig Llawn a Blwyddwyn Newydd Dda*).

## Iolo Williams Talk

All the tickets for the evening with Iolo Williams in January have now been sold.

Please note that admission to the evening will be by tickets which have been purchased in advance. It will not be possible to pay for admission on the door as we must adhere to the maximum number allowed by the Civic Hall for health and safety purposes.

## Annual General Meeting 2012

The AGM took place on Friday 14th December at 7.30pm in the Connah's Quay Community Centre. The following were elected to the Executive Committee.

Chairman:	Phil Hotchkiss	Secretary:	Pauline Moulton
Treasurer:	Bob Lee	M'ship Secretary:	David Ross
Committee:	Carl Boswell	Committee:	Helen Simpson
Committee:	Christine Hamer	Committee:	Joan Hotchkiss
Committee:	Bob Must	Committee:	Vacant

## Annual End Of Report 2012

Another year has gone quickly by and although there have been several changes to the Committee it has been another successful year for the Society.

The Wednesday Group, Photographic Group and Art Group have continued to flourish and we thank John & Daphne and Carl & Doreen for their continued input and leadership of these groups.

There has been a mixed programme of six Indoor Meetings, five Field Meetings and one Members' Day. The Open Day in October was successful with 18 new members joining on the day and 55 species recorded.

Membership of the Society remains healthy in these austere times with over 500 members.

The Society remains in a healthy financial position. The funds were boosted by a bequest from the estate of the late Keith Gourlay and there have been no major capital projects this year with the exception of replacing the hide roofs. A project to create a third scrape in the Wetland Meadow area has had to be put on hold pending the eradication of the *Crassula Helmsii* (New Zealand Pygmyweed). Work has been undertaken by e.on's contractor to improve the Ash Pool. Overgrown reeds have been removed and some replanted at the southern end of the pool and muddy margins have been created.

The Trustees have signed an agreement with National Grid to allow cables to be placed underground in compartment 3, (at far end of reserve adjacent to the river and round the bend past the bridge). This will not affect the use of the land in the long term.

During 2012 there have been a few changes to the membership of the Executive Committee.

Andrew Wallbank resigned in the summer and the role of recorder has been taken on by Glenn Morris (although Glenn is not currently a member of the Committee), Stewart Smith resigned as Chairman and Membership Secretary in July but continued to act as Membership Secretary until recently when David Ross has been co-opted on to the Committee to take over this role. In the absence of a chairman Bob Must took on the role of liaising with external bodies and is happy to continue with this. After seven years' service to the Committee Cliff Aincham has decided to stand down this year. We would like to thank Andrew, Stewart and Cliff for all their contributions to the Society. *(The good news is that Phil Hotchkiss was voted in as the new Chairman at this year's AGM 14th Dec).*

We would also like to thank all those members who give their time to the Society in many and varied ways, often "behind the scenes" but carrying out necessary tasks. We hope to set up a list of volunteers who can be called upon to help, especially with maintenance tasks so if any members are willing or have any particular skills they can offer please contact Pauline Moulton, Secretary.

Next year will be the 40th anniversary of Deeside Naturalists' Society and to start off the celebrations we have Iolo Williams coming in January to give us a presentation on "The Wildlife of Wales". In May, June and July we will be holding Members' Days exploring Bats, Flowers and Butterflies on the reserve. Details are in the newsletter and on the Programme Card.

We wish all our members a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you at the meetings and events in 2013.

*The Executive Committee of Deeside Naturalists' Society*

## Caption Competition

We received one entry for the caption competition from John Phillips and it was:

*"pew thought I would never get past".*

Thank you John for sending it in.



## Guidelines

This page lists the current guidelines. Please note that if anyone has any concerns or wishes to raise any issues regarding the reserve can they pass them on to a member of the Committee and not leave notes or messages pinned in the hides.

### RESERVE GUIDELINES:

When visiting the Reserve please ensure you 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.

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

## Cryptic Quiz

Decipher the cryptic clues to find the names of birds:

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Match Bird .....   | 2. Margaret's Tart .....  |
| 3. Get Up Puss! ..... | 4. Quick Bather .....     |
| 5. Royal Angler ..... | 6. Ode To A? .....        |
| 7. Deep Digger .....  | 8. Rene's Call Sign ..... |
| 9. A Wizard .....     | 10. Murder Victim .....   |

# Statement of Accounts Part 1

**Deeside Naturalists Society Accounts for the year ended 31st October 2012**  
Registered Charity No. 510146

**ACCOUNTING STATEMENT**  
Receipts and payments basis

<u>Income</u>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>
Bank Interest	9.69	4.95
Donations (1)	527.00	161.00
Subscriptions	6480.50	5958.00
Bequest (Estate K Gourlay) (2)	501.03	8600.00
Raffle	158.00	144.00
Gift Aid Tax Rebate	1096.95	1196.70
Visits	160.00	173.00
Iolo Williams Tickets (3)	1205.00	
Easement Fee (4)	750.00	
Courses		38.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>10888.17</u></b>	<b><u>16275.65</u></b>
<u>Expenditure</u>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>
Refreshments	20.14	64.86
Insurance	110.00	110.00
Donations	70.00	
Printing, Photocopying, Stationery, Postage (5)	2213.03	1467.03
Room Hire	94.50	115.00
Education		26.40
Courses		100.00
Repairs & Maintenance (6)	3037.69	1407.32
Guest Speakers	476.00	333.00
Open Day	11.78	
New keys / locks	195.00	367.60
Bird Food	369.64	648.20
Books	43.02	3.98
FLVC Subscription	15.00	15.00
Membership	50.00	50.00
Web Hosting	46.56	
Travel	301.75	207.20
Telephone	72.77	96.17
Clothing/Workwear		31.91
Equipment (7)	544.33	136.32
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b><u>7671.21</u></b>	<b><u>5179.99</u></b>
<b>Balance for Year</b>	<b><u>3216.96</u></b>	<b><u>11095.66</u></b>
Cash funds last year end	15229.87	4134.21
Transfer from Key Money (8)	1680.00	
<b>Cash Funds this year end</b>	<b><u>20126.83</u></b>	<b><u>15229.87</u></b>

# Statement of Accounts Part 2

Deeside Naturalists Society Accounts for the year ended 31st October 2012  
Registered Charity No. 510146

**ACCOUNTING STATEMENT**  
Receipts and payments basis

	2011/2012
Receipts	10888.17
Payments	<u>7671.21</u>
Balance for Year	<b>3216.96</b>
Cash Funds last year end	15229.87
Transfer from Key Money	1680.00
<b>Cash Funds this year end</b>	<b><u>20126.83</u></b>

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities at year end**

<u>Cash Funds</u>	2011/2012	2010/2011
Barclays Bank	24381.83	20719.87
Key Deposits	-4255.00	-5490.00
<b>TOTAL CASH FUNDS</b>	<b><u>20126.83</u></b>	<b><u>15229.87</u></b>

Signed..... *Robert Lee* 6 Nov 2012 .....Treasurer

Signed..... *Jat Payne* 6 Nov 2012 .....Independent Examiner

NOTES:-

- (1) Includes £310 from Grant Arms Hotel
- (2) Total received £9,101.03
- (3) Advanced ticket sales for talk 25/01/2013
- (4) Easement fee paid by National Grid
- (5) 3 Newsletters printed and posted, cf. 2 during 2010/11
- (6) Includes £2,225 for replacement of hide roofs
- (7) Includes purchase of new laptop for secretary
- (8) Surplus key money

## Web Site

Work on the website continues and I would like to thank Glenn Morris, Val and John Ledsoe and Christine Hamer for their help in the Bird and Butterfly pages within the members area. These pages will be made available sometime in January. If anyone has any ideas for additional information they would like to see on the website please pass them to:

[editor@deesidenaturalists.org.uk](mailto:editor@deesidenaturalists.org.uk)

The password to the members area will change on the 6th January to:

User Name: **dnsuser**

Password: **pln2034**

## Butterfly Report

The cold, wet weather in April delayed the start of the butterfly monitoring on the DNS reserve and numbers recorded tended to be low early on in the season. However, by July all the recorders were noting large numbers particularly of Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers & Small Skippers on the nature trail and around the wetland meadow. Sometimes there were so many an estimate of the numbers had to be recorded. There were certainly more than in 2011.

The next page has two pie charts detailing the species recorded. A comparison between 2011 and 2012 can be found on our website.

New species recorded this year are Holly Blue, Ringlet, Small Heath, Grayling and Silver washed Fritillary. Altogether 21 different species were recorded as shown overleaf.

It was thought that with all the work carried out on the nature trail early on in the year the butterflies

would be affected as a large part of that area was left bare. However, this does not appear to be the case. This area has now recovered well, see photos attached showing before and after.

I would like to thank all the recorders who gave their time to record the data which is submitted to Butterfly Conservation and is used for nature conservation, research, education and public information.

The recorders were Val and John Ledsoe, Pauline Moulton, Barbara Rigg, Barbara Lowens and Roy Hamer.

If you would like to be involved in the recording in 2013, which starts in April, please contact me on 01352 716273 or email:

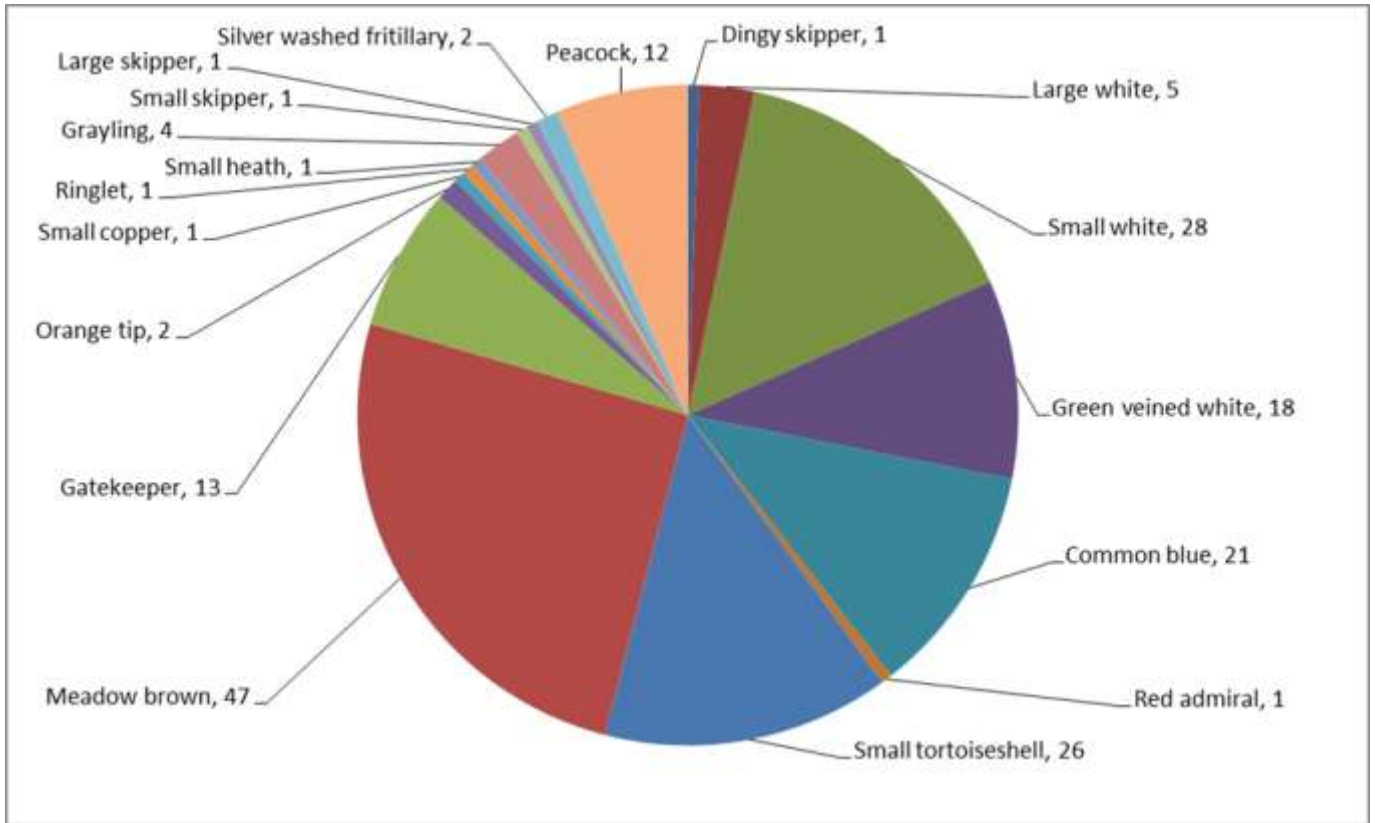
[christine.hamer@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:christine.hamer@tiscali.co.uk)

*Christine Hamer*

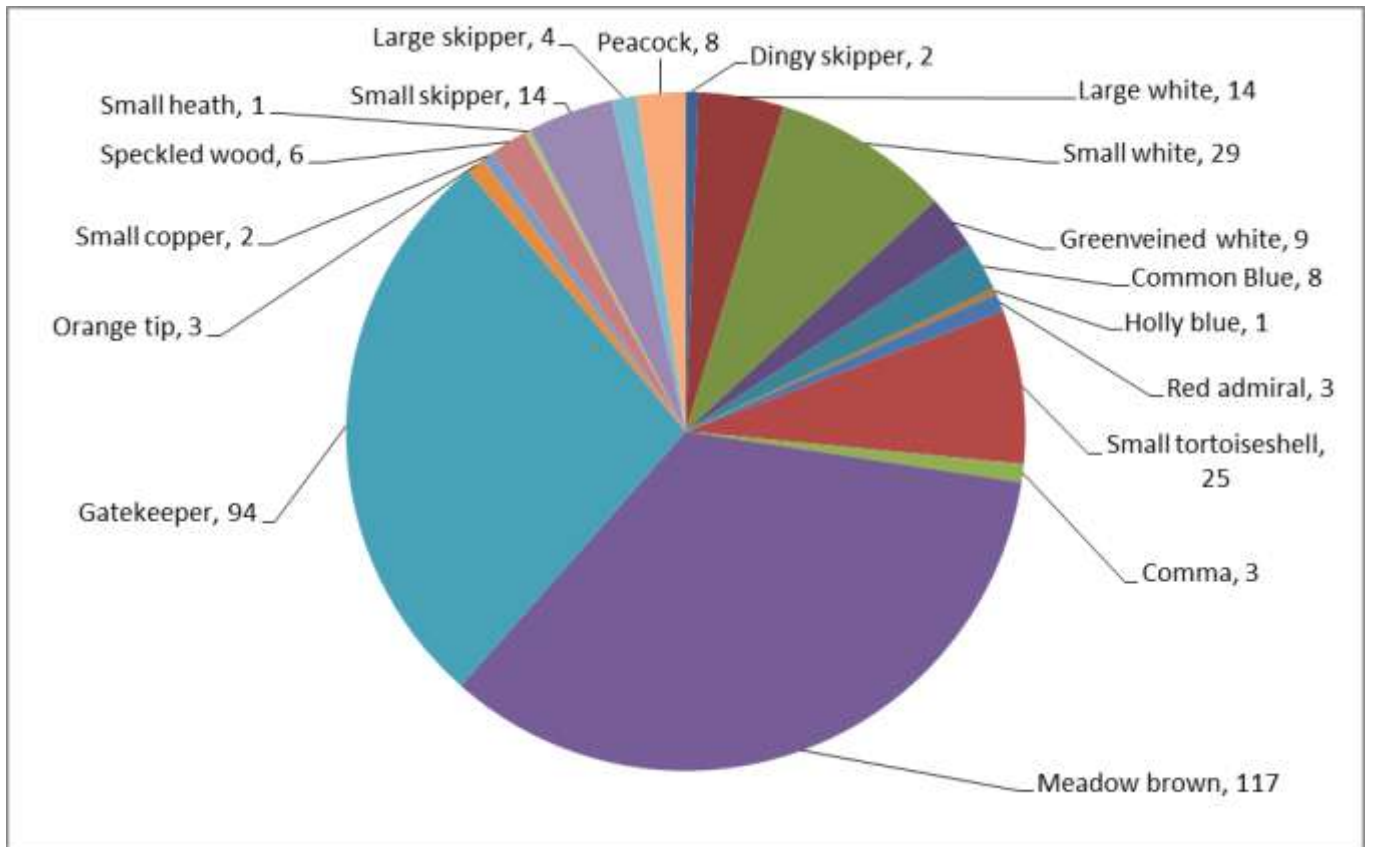


# Butterflies On The Reserve 2012

## Nature Trail



## Wetland Meadow 2012



# Reserve Report

## Reserve Report for Aug-Nov 2012

Another new species for the Reserve (and for me) was this female Reeve's Pheasant, a very tame escapee feeding on the Rockcliffe path on our Oct 14th Open Day. It hasn't been seen since and may have made a meal for the foxes that frequent those woods.



The rarest "real" bird seen was a Manx Shearwater seen flying up-river on Sep 19th (PD Shenton). This was only the 3rd record for the Reserve, the previous one being 25 years ago. Although they are common enough along the coast in September, they rarely come so far inland. Similarly, a Red-throated Diver on the bunded pool on Oct 6th (G Jones) was only the 5th reserve record. Other autumn migrants making very brief appearances were Avocets, Ruff and Little Stint. The only reliable migrant specialities on the bunded pool were Greenshank (maximum 18) and Spotted Redshank (maximum 11) and these are expected to remain in smaller numbers all winter. Wildfowl numbers were building up by November and included a large flock of Mute (up to 39) and Whooper (up to 9) Swans from Oct 31st onwards. A Brent Goose, the 2nd this year, was seen on the marsh on Oct 3rd. Although Canadas are the only goose seen commonly on the Reserve,

flocks of Pink-footed and Greylag can sometimes be seen across the estuary with the aid of a telescope. On Oct 31st, an Orinoco Goose appeared with Canada Geese on the fly ash lagoon (photo below). Another first for the Reserve, it was seen several times with the Canada's after-



wards. There have also been further sightings of the Cape Shelduck since the last Reserve Report.

Open Day on Oct 14<sup>th</sup> was a spectacular success with 56 bird species recorded. The most popular by far was the **Kingfisher** that showed well on the bunded pools. The five raptor species seen during the day included the **Merlin** below, seen by just a few visitors as it perched briefly on the busy road to the Study Centre.





## Reserve Report Continued

The Peregrines, of course, were much more reliable, perched on pylon or Power Station and seen by many visitors, as were the large flocks of Oystercatcher (3,500) and Black-tailed Godwit (3,000).

Visitors to the Reserve should not neglect the Rockcliffe woodland, just below the entrance gate. A flock of about 8 Song Thrush, unusual in such numbers, joined the Blackbirds in this area during late September and October and a pair of Grey Wagtails were seen on the path several times in October and November. The Lesser Redpoll here on Oct 29th was only the 4th reserve record. Coal Tits were also seen here on Open Day, common enough you may say, but only the 5th record ever for the Reserve, and a large flock of up to 20 Long-tailed Tits were around the same day. A Marsh Tit seen here in July 2011 was the very first Reserve Record (although logbooks for the 1990s are still missing!).

A special survey of the use of grazing land on the reserve by Curlews and Lapwings was carried out between Sep. 23rd and Nov 23rd and the preliminary results can be disclosed. The four grazing areas are the East (or E-on) field, the West (or Hughie's) Field, the Back Field towards the railway and the Mitigation Field next to the fly ash lagoon. Counts were done on 18 days and the number of times that Curlews were present was as follows (with maximum count in brackets):

East: 15 days/18 (max. 46)

West: 8 days/18 (max. 40)

Back: 4 days/18 (max. 94)

Mitigation: 6 days/16 (max. 72)

Overall, curlews were present in one field or another on 17 out of 18 counts and the total counts

varied between 11 and 120 birds. In all cases, the Curlew were actively feeding, rather than roosting, and they were very easily disturbed by human activity. When disturbed, they flew either into another field or out onto the river mudflats. The results show the importance of these fields for winter feeding of a declining species. The four fields are equally well-used and it is important for the birds to have the option of moving to a nearby field when disturbed. I was surprised by the use of the Back fields by the railway by large compact feeding flocks in the wetter areas, never having noticed them there before. Although this study began on Sep 23rd, 20 curlews were first seen using the West field immediately after the grass was cut on Aug. 11th. Lapwings used the fields for a more limited period and were present on only three days between Sep 23rd and Oct 14th. They used only the East (twice, 12-20 birds) and West (once, 50 birds) fields. The only other "wildfowl/wader" using the fields during the counts was a Grey Heron on the back field. Members will know the Black-tailed Godwit also feed occasionally on the East, or E-on, field, but this is usually earlier in the autumn. The mitigation fields are also used by Canada Geese and other wildfowl from the fly ash lagoon (as in the Orinoco Goose photo above!), but their only presence during the survey counts was 150 on the last day (Nov 23rd). I should like to thank members who contributed counts, especially K Lloyd-Jones and B Hayes, and all who hopefully will continue to add counts to the list (kept in the entrance key-box) in this on-going study.

The flock of Twite that has become a regular winter feature of the Reserve in recent years has returned to its haunts around the West Hide and there were already 30 there on Nov 23rd. It's easy to find six species of duck at the present time, even at low tide, and it can only get better as winter progresses.

*Glenn Morris*

## Society News

### LiverBirds RSPB Mersey Ferry trip Saturday September 8th

On a beautiful sunny day a small group of us collected at the usual meeting point in Queensferry. Having decided that the sunshine had persuaded others to stay at home and sunbath we set off arriving at Seacombe docks in plenty of time to meet other eager birders and have a coffee. By boarding time I gave up the chance of the last remaining tickets that had been pre-booked being claimed.

The sun continued to shine and the river was calm. Having made the extra stops either side of the river to pick up other passengers the ferry headed out to sea but not before the Peregrine roost and nesting ledge had been pointed out and spotted by all interested birding passengers.

We were also given a description of the rotting fish that is used to bring the gulls in to the wake of the boat. It was described as the prime job for the RSPB volunteers to dish out the bait.



Gulls did follow the ferry and we had good and close views of the five locally common gulls with descriptions of the different plumages leading to maturity.



A Sandwich Tern was also heard (by those with acute hearing) and then seen in the distance. Other birds and species were spotted including butterflies a seal plus other insects.

The sun continued to shine making the journey pleasant but as explained the river is used in stormy weather by birds as a shelter. It appeared that as we were enjoying the calm weather so were the birds and the assumption was that the more exotic birds had gone further out to sea.

However, the scarcity of different species didn't detract from the enjoyment of being on the river on a nice day.

*Helen Simpson*

## General Knowledge Quiz

1. Birds Britannia is a book from a TV Series. Who wrote it?
2. Nidology is the study of what?
3. What decade was the Observers Book of British Birds first published?
4. What is the official state bird of Texas USA?
5. What year was the Deeside Naturalists Society Founded?
6. Which cut flower is the most popular?
7. What environment do Dragonfly nymphs live in?
8. Where was the RSPB's first nature reserve founded?
9. What is the most popular breed of domestic cat?
10. Aspen is from which family of trees?

## Society News

### Raven Roost Newborough Forest Anglesea November 24th

This trip is one I ‘acquired’ not one I had originally volunteered to do. The day started with a mixture of apprehension and anticipation as the day before as the heavy rain had brought floods and even the A55 had been closed. The news advised only essential travel and for rain to start again late afternoon.

The meeting point at Northop at 12 noon was the first stop with a massive crowd of ...two – myself and Bill Griffiths who had offered to drive (so no escape Bill). It could be said that due to the weather reports we should have gone no further but it was dry and for late November a reasonable day. Plus there was a possibility of people going directly to the car park at Newborough Forest. The journey passed uneventfully with no sign of the floods that had closed the road the day before.

We arrived on Anglesey in plenty of time, so called at Braint Estuary, 14 species were seen including Turnstone, Ringed Plover and Mergansers. We then called at Llyn Parc Mawr another 9 species seen including a group of Snipe flying in right in front of the hide giving a wonderful view.

We arrived at the Newborough Forest car park before 2pm. It was time for the obligatory ‘Birders’ flask and butties. The ravens were first heard then seen over head. To our amusement they seemed to be going the wrong way! Were we going to head in the wrong direction? Had the Ravens moved the roost? To investigate further and to make use of the remaining light we walked along the Cob. Another 14 species seen.

Bill’s curiosity was raised by a car in a field on the opposite side of the Cefni estuary, it had flashing lights! We then noted a helicopter coming into land. A couple of dog walkers pointed out the cottage in the trees where HRH William and Kate live. Is that another tick on the list?

As we continued on, the sky to the east became filled with lapwings starlings and others. We couldn’t see what had lifted them but it was another impressive sight.

Walking along the Cob we were able to identify the direction the Ravens were going. It was a continual stream of two’s and three’s heading south east. We chose the least water logged path into the forest and the overhead croaking of Ravens. On reaching a stretch of board walk at the edge of the forest we established that the roost was in the trees way over near Ynys Llanddwyn island. We could not walk that far before dark and the rain was starting. But we were able to watch the groups of Ravens continuing to fly in. Although no count was made the numbers of ravens seen were in the hundreds.

Returning safely to the car an opinion poll of the day was taken from those present - two - the day was deemed a success and an impressive 37 species seen (plus a Helicopter).

This trip is one I ‘acquired’ not one I had originally volunteered to do - but I’m glad I did.

*Helen Simpson*

## Group Quiz

What is the collective term for the following: (i.e. A Fling of Sandpipers—there may be more than one)

- |              |                 |                |               |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Rooks.    | 6. Badgers.     | 11. Seahorses. | 16. Butchers. |
| 2. Ruffs.    | 7. Bloodhounds. | 12. Tuna.      | 17. Critics.  |
| 3. Storks.   | 8. Weasels.     | 13. Whittings. | 18. Hunters.  |
| 4. Falcons.  | 9. Skunks.      | 14. Eels.      | 19. Police.   |
| 5. Mallards. | 10. Voles.      | 15. Cod.       | 20. Vicars.   |

## Group 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.

At our November meeting we welcomed Steve Dewsnap of Rockcliffe Raptors ([www.rockclifferaptors.co.uk](http://www.rockclifferaptors.co.uk)) who spoke about a Barn Owl, a Tawny Owl and a Kestrel which he brought for us to photograph in specially constructed naturalistic settings.

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.

## Answers to Quiz

### Cryptic Quiz

1. Swan, 2. Magpie, 3. Kittiwake, 4. Dipper, 5. Kingfisher, 6. Nighthawk, 7. Myna, 8. Hawk, 9. Merlin, 10. Robin

### General Knowledge

1. Stephen Moss; 2. Birds Nests; 3. Thirties (1937); 4. Mockingbird; 5. 1973 (Shame if you didn't know that see page 2); 6. Rose; 7. Water; 8. Romney Marsh (1930); 9. Persian; 10. Popular.

### Group Quiz (Alternatives are shown in brackets).

1. Parliament (*Building, Clamour, Congregation, Shoal, Wing*); 2. Hill; 3. Mustering (*Flight, Phalanx*); 4. Cast; 5. Sord (*Flush, Pudding*); 6. Cete (*Colony*); 7. Sute; 8. Sneak (*Gang, Pack*); 9. Surfet; 10. Colony; 11. Herd; 12. Float (*Troup*); 13. Pod; 14. Swarm; 15. School; 16. Goring; 17. Shivel; 18. Blast; 19. Posse; 20. Prudence.