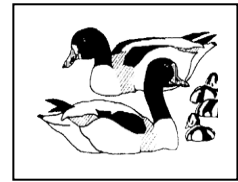


Newsletter



Issue 145

December 2017

Registered Charity No. 510146

Deeside Naturalists' Society

Season's Greetings to each and every one of you. Hopefully the new year will bring with it lots of opportunities to engage with and enjoy our wildlife on both local and global stages.

A huge thank you to Phil Hotchkiss who stood down as chairman at the recent AGM. Phil has put in a lot of his time and effort into the Society over the past five years and has been greatly influential in a number of issues and projects during that time. Also we give a warm welcome to our new Chairman, Paul Shenton who I am sure will be an admirable replacement.

The issue dates for the Newsletter have now been changed to April, August and December, mainly to facilitate a longer period of time between the AGM and the membership renewal date.

Just to remind everyone of the 13 month rule.

'If membership of the Society is not renewed within 13 months of the date of expiry, the key deposit monies will be forfeited and incorporated into the Society's funds. Keys returned within 13 months will have their deposits refunded.'

In the light of some really lamentable attendances for this year's field meetings, the committee are requesting feedback from the membership as to what they would like from the Society. It is demoralising and frustrating having put in all the organisational work to have two or maybe none turning up for a meeting.

Many thanks to Bob Must for his continuing work on the website and to Ron Plummer on his administration of our new Facebook page. I would encourage members to join our Facebook page as it is an excellent platform for sharing photographs, experiences and news. I believe Ron is working on an event notification facility whereby members can indicate if they intend to attend Field Trips.

Sadly I have to report another incident of pilfering from within one of the hides. One of Glenn Morris's books has either been taken without payment or a payment was taken from the box. As access is only by key holders it would appear the culprit is yet again a member. On a brighter note we have had no further seed thefts this year.

Alan Smethurst

Chairman's Report

I would like to welcome you all to this AGM especially to our new members. This will be my last Chairman's report as I am stepping down as Chairman this year.

Since becoming Chairman there have been some improvements to the Reserve, mainly the replacement of the hide windows and planting of trees/plants by the west hide. In the next few years we are looking at the resurfacing of the hide floors with concrete or another hard wearing surface, so if any member has any recommendations on carrying out this work we would appreciate you contacting any of the Committee. We will be planting more shrubs for screening by the sluice gate and towards the Dee hide.

Members will have noticed a drop in water level in the lagoon by the west hide. We have asked Uniper to investigate why this has happened. The white mounds around the pool are over 100 tons of salt that has been put down to try to stop the spread of New Zealand Pygmy Weed.

This year we had a very successful Open Day with over 45 non members attending with 14 new members joining on the day. One couple came from Norfolk to visit the Chester area for the weekend and went away members. (Hope you had a good time.)

The Friday night talks have once again been well attended, unfortunately the Field trips have attracted very poor numbers.

I would like to put a plea out there for any members with any ideas on improving the Reserve to contact any Committee member with their ideas.

Finally I would like to thank all the Committee members and the regular volunteers who help on the maintenance days throughout the year for their support in keeping the Reserve tidy. I hope the incoming Chairman gets the same support.

I wish you all an early Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Please remember to send in your membership renewal early and don't forget the SSAE.

Phil Hotchkiss (Chairman)

Indoor Meetings 2018

All indoor meetings will be held at Connah's Quay Community Centre, Tuscan Way, off Chapel Street, CH5 4DZ and will start at 7.30pm.

Friday 19th January. *Vicky Knight,*
Work of the AONB-Wildlife Conservation.

Friday 16th February. *Malcolm Ingham,*
Badgers, Otters, A Wildcat and other Strange Creatures.

Friday 16th March. *Brian Anderson,*
A 30 Year Affliction with Wanderlust. (Images from: Antarctica, North Pole, Galapagos, Petra and many other places.

Friday 21st September. *Barry Probin*
A year on the Moss.

Friday 19th October. *Jeff Clarke,*
How to build a Naturalist.

Friday 16th November.
To be arranged

Friday 23rd November
AGM

Corinne Williams

Did you know that sheep are not designed to be on their backs? If you come across one in that predicament then it most definitely has a problem.

A sheep with a heavy, possibly wet fleece, or that is heavily pregnant or fat (resulting in a broad flat back) is most at risk if it rolls over. It may have been resting, or may have tried to scratch an itch, but most certainly it would not have got itself into that position on purpose.

Not only is a sheep stuck on its back easy prey for Badgers and Crows, but its own biology starts to work against it:

In order to digest grass, sheep (and cows) have a four chambered stomach. The largest chamber is the rumen, where all the fibrous foods ferment. Fermentation produces gas, and when the sheep is the wrong way up the gas can't escape. The gas builds up and causes pressure on the sheep's lungs until it simply cannot breath anymore.

So the scenario is grim for the upturned sheep, whether from suffocation or predator attack, but it is one that is easily solved. If you come across an upturned sheep when you are out and about (tether your dog at a distance if you have one) and don't worry about taking hold of a good two handfuls of fleece to turn the animal upright. Unfortunately evolution hasn't got around to providing handles on sheep just yet!

Field Meetings 2018

SUNDAY 14th JANUARY, **North Wales Coast**. A days birding along the North Wales coast looking at winter birds. Meet at the Field Study Centre, DNS at 8.30am. Contact Bill Dickinson 07968438121 for more details.

SUNDAY 18th FEBRUARY, **Denhall Lane, Ness and RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands**. Marshland birds and more. Meet at Denhall Lane, Burton, Cheshire (SJ303749) at 9.30am Bring RSPB membership card. Contact Alan Smethurst 07896758222 for more details.

SUNDAY 1st APRIL, **Worlds End, Llangollen**. Black Grouse. Meet 7.00am at Worlds End car park, (SJ233485) Contact Bill Dickinson 07968438121 for more details.

SATURDAY 28th APRIL, **Consall Nature Park**. Woodland birds within the beautiful valley of the River Churnet. Consall Visitor Centre, Consall Nature Park, Consall Forge, Wetley Rocks, Staffordshire ST9 0AF, Meet at visitor centre at 10.00. Contact Ron Plummer 07778557402 for more details.

SATURDAY 5th MAY, **RSPB Blacktoft Sands**. The tidal reedbed is the largest in England and is important for its breeding Bearded Tits, Bitterns and Marsh Harriers. Meet at 10.00am Blacktoft Sands reserve car park (SE843232) Goole. Bring RSPB membership card. Contact Bill Dickinson 07968438121 for more details.

THURSDAY 14th JUNE, **Llandegla Forest**. Nightjars. EVENING MEETING 8.00pm at Llandegla Forest visitor centre (SJ240524). Contact Bob Lane 07985704963 / 01352 770633 for more details.

SUNDAY 12th 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.

SUNDAY 9th SEPTEMBER, **Hoylake**. High tide wader roost meet at Kings Gap, Hoylake at 8.30am. Contact Bill Dickinson 07968438121 for more details.

SATURDAY 17th NOVEMBER, **Pennington Flash Country Park**. Water and woodland birds. Meet PENNINGTON FLASH COUNTRY PARK car park, (pay & display) St Helens Rd, Leigh (SJ645987) at 9.30am, Contact Bob Must 07712 713397 for more details.

SATURDAY 8th DECEMBER, **Marbury Country Park**. Woodpeckers and woodland birds, wintering Bittern and other water birds. Meet at the car park (pay & display) (SJ652764) at 9.00am. Contact Bill Dickinson 07968438121 for more details.

Bill Dickinson

Reserve Report Aug-Dec

It was an excellent autumn for wind-blown sea-birds on the Reserve, with NW gales on three successive spring tides in September and October. First of all, on Sep 11th, a Manx Shearwater (5th Reserve record and first photo) and a Gannet (7th Reserve record) came close to the West Hide for photographs. On October 3rd, Arctic Skua (last recorded 23 years ago!), Arctic Tern and Black Tern were seen, together with another Gannet. Perhaps the best day was Oct 22nd, when 2 Pomarine Skuas and 2 Leach's Petrels were seen, with Kittiwake, Gannet, Guillemot and Razorbill. The Pomarine Skua was only the 3rd Reserve record; both previous sightings were in 1989. Even the Leach's Petrel, once an annual visitor, had not been reported since 2010.



Manx Shearwater from West Hide. Photo: GEM



Gannet over the river channel. Photo: GEM

The ringtail Pallid Harrier which stayed on the estuary for 2 weeks was seen from the West Hide on Sep 30th, when it flew along the Welsh part of Burton Marsh across the river; needless to say this was an “honorary” new bird for the Reserve. Pallid Harriers, typically birds of the Russian steppes, nested successfully for the first time in Holland this year and raised four young there, though these were all ringed so the Dee bird may not be one of them.

It was also a great year for egrets on the Reserve. Great White Egrets were regular visitors from June onwards and a record number of 4 Great Whites were present on the Reserve itself on both July 31st and Aug 8th. A Cattle Egret re-visited the bunded pools briefly on Aug 13th (our 2nd record) and 2 Yellow Wagtails were seen on the fly ash lagoon on the same day. A Water Rail was seen again on the lagoon on Nov 21st, so you may be lucky if you scan the bottom of the reeds patiently. Another Hobby was seen on Sep 10th, but a visit at dawn on Sep 29th was needed to find a Barn Owl over the fields. We also had a light sprinkling of the more transient autumn waders, like Ruff (3+), Little Stint (up to 5) and Curlew Sandpiper during Sep/Oct.

Of course, you're not likely to find so many unusual species on a single winter visit, but the Reserve favourites, Greenshank, Spotted Redshank and Kingfisher, will be on the bunded pools all winter, though a high tide is sometimes needed to bring in the Spotted Redshanks. Patience was rewarded for one visitor on Aug 28th when a Kingfisher was seen to catch and eat 5 fish in 4 hours.

Glenn Morris.

Foxglove Covert, Catterick Garrison

Situated on Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire is Foxglove Covert Nature Reserve. It is well signposted from the road and open to anyone to visit but as the entrance is located inside the garrison fence you need to take two essentials with you - a mobile phone and some form of photo identity. You book in at the Guard Room and are then escorted to the Reserve which is a couple of minutes from there by car.



There is a fence around this part which resembles more of a prison than a nature reserve. The guard unlocks the gate, lets you in and re-locks it and goes off back to the guardroom. To leave you have to ring the guardroom (hence the mobile phone) and the guard comes back and lets you out. Travel along the track by the side of the fence to get to the car parks.

The reserve is around 100 acres of mixed habitats ranging through woodlands and wetlands to moors and sports a huge range of species. It has a good visitors centre which is staffed by volunteers and one of the largest two-story hides made of wood I've seen. There is no entrance fee but there is a collection box in the visitor's centre for donations. Tea and coffee is available there as well.



There are various routes that take you through woodlands down to a lake and others that go over the moors. The Swaledale sheep that are scattered over the moorland trails are so used to visitors they either ignore you completely or just stare at you.



There is a wooden path trail that is suitable for wheelchairs that takes you around the woodlands and part of the wetlands in a circular route - which includes the hide shown above. It also has a couple of the most impressive wooden bridges spanning a quite deep ravine and the lake.

It is around 136 miles from Chester and takes about 3 hours to get there so it is, perhaps, a little too far to go in a day. However, if you are in the area it is well worth a visit and don't be put off by the fact that you have to book in at the guardroom.

We visited it in October while on holiday in the area and the photos were taken on the day. The website <http://www.foxglovecovert.org.uk> is excellent and it also has an interactive map. There is also a shopping complex with a Greggs, Tesco's and several other well-known stores five minutes away from the guardroom.



Bob Must

Field Trip

Hilbre Island 9th September

The Hilbre Islands Local Nature Reserve is within the Dee Estuary on the north west coast. The Dee Estuary is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area, a Ramsar Site which is a Wetland of International Importance and a candidate EU Special Area of Conservation.

The group comprises of three tidal islands, Little Eye, Middle Eye and Hilbre Island.

We gathered at by the Sailing Centre prior to walking over to Hilbre Island. There were two other groups of birders, Knutsford Ornithological Society and Wrexham Birdwatchers Group, between the three groups were nine DNS members. We had in our little team Jen, Faye, Peter and me.

The walk out to Hilbre was against a head on 20 mph wind. We did see Ringed plover, dunlin, Great Black Backed gulls, Redshank, Curlew, Shelduck, Lesser Black Backed gull and Oystercatcher.



Photo: Trevor Taylor



Photo: Trevor Taylor

Almost as soon as we set foot on the Island the heavens opened and rain driven by the winds was dumped upon us, we took shelter in the old life boat station, yes the one without a roof! Fortunately the rain didn't last too long before the dark clouds gave way to blue skies with a few clouds.

There was a bonus from having the strong winds, they blew in good birds. There was a distant Storm Petrel but we had reasonable views of Leach's Petrel, Razorbill, Manx Shearwater and Fulmar. As the tide reached its peak and things began to quieten on the sea, a walk on the island produced Meadow Pipit, Crow, Wheatear and a Kestrel was seen by some.

Back at sea were distant Gannets, Knots and Common Scoter, closer in to the shore we saw Cormorants and Sandwich terns.

Making our way back to West Kirby the wind had abated and it was a nice end to the day. We had sightings of Turnstones between Hilbre and Middle Eye. A small flock of Linnet were on Middle Eye and whilst coming down from Middle Eye we had a view of a very close solitary Common Scoter flying along the estuary.

Bill Dickinson

Field Trip

Moore Nature Reserve, Warrington 22nd October

Bill must have known the long-term weather forecast when he asked me to lead the walk! Storm Brian was still making its presence truly felt as Barry and I drove towards Warrington and it was hardly a great surprise that there were no other DNS members present at the car park. As we sat in the car mulling our options over, the rain started to ease so we decide to brave the elements. From the hide over-looking Lapwing Lake, we noted Mallard, Coot and Little Grebe. Further round the lake, a single Cormorant perched in a tree with wings spread. Water birds were clearly going to be the main feature of the visit. The strong wind continued for most of the day making passerines elusive, with mostly brief, rear-end views as they disappeared into bushes! However, the feeding station peanuts did draw in Chaffinch, Robin, and Blue, Great and Coal Tit but alas no Willow Tit - normally a regular here. We also had fairly good views of a male Great-spotted Woodpecker, the first of several sightings of this species. Jays and Magpies were seen flying around the woodlands together with Blackbirds and a single Song Thrush.



After a short refreshment stop back at the car, we continued to the eastern half of the reserve. Birchwood Pool was dominated by at least 600 Canada Geese, with a supporting cast of half a dozen Greylags and several all white greylag-types. A Great-crested Grebe fished right in front of us, and a second bird was still feeding a young “humbug” – this must have been from a very late brood.

On to Pumphouse Pool, we added Teal, Pochard, Shoveler, Gadwall, Tufted Duck and Mute Swan. There were several Black-headed Gulls loafing on the water but unusually no other gull species here. Distant Herring Gulls were seen over towards the Mersey though. The gate to Phoenix Hide was locked, with no explanation. So we returned slowly to the car park, adding a charm of Goldfinch and a small flock of Redwing flying overhead. Sod’s Law, on our way back the sun started to break through the grey clouds and a couple of Buzzards took to the air. OK, so we missed the Leach’s Petrels at New Brighton! But despite the inclement weather, Barry and I had a good time and managed to list 35 species. Hopefully the conditions will be more favourable for the next visit to this great reserve.



Hugh Stewart

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 Field 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. in the Field Study Centre.

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.

Digital Media

The password for the members area is applicable for the next 12 months.

User Name	dnsuser
Password	rtnb5834

Web site: www.deenats.org.uk

Email address: webeditor@deenats.org.uk

Facebook page: MEMBERS OF DEESIDE NATURALIST SOCIETY

We are in the process of compiling a list of member's email addresses in order to facilitate rapid communication by mail shot to members if and when the need arises. If you are happy to provide your email address please contact: Bob Must at: webeditor@deenats.org.uk

Treasurer's Report

Deeside Naturalists Society Accounts for the year ended 31st October 2017
Registered Charity No. 510146

ACCOUNTING STATEMENT
Receipts and payments basis

<u>Income</u>	<u>2016/2017</u>	<u>2015/2016</u>
Bank Interest	1.87	7.48
Donations	613.90	102.00
Subscriptions	5343.00	5130.00
Gift Aid Tax Rebate	1076.41	1051.96
Visits	86.00	106.00
Total Income	<u>7121.18</u>	<u>6397.44</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Insurance	113.00	113.00
Printing, Photocopying, Stationery, Postage	2353.06	1961.88
Room Hire	150.00	190.00
Visits		20.00
Guest Speakers	170.00	289.52
New keys / locks	552.15	867.55
Bird Food	175.89	258.21
FLVC subscription	15.00	15.00
Membership	50.00	50.00
Web Hosting		36.00
Travel	50.00	60.00
Equipment	1094.78	1162.49
Repairs and Maintenance	93.52	325.80
Business rates	434.13	
Books	1.95	
Total Payments	<u>5253.48</u>	<u>5349.45</u>
Balance for Year	1867.70	1047.99
Cash funds last year end	13973.64	12999.65
Transfer to/from Key Money	2727.00	-74.00
Cash funds this year end	<u>18568.34</u>	<u>13973.64</u>

Bob Lee , Treasurer

Committee Members 2018

The AGM was held on the 24th November 2017 and the following members were elected to serve on the committee.

Chairman:	Paul Shenton
Secretary:	Julie Rogers
Treasurer:	Bob Lee
Membership Secretary:	Bob Lane
Indoor Meetings:	Corinne Williams
Outdoor Meetings:	Bill Dickinson
Web/Ext Affairs:	Bob Must
Newsletter:	Alan Smethurst
Nature Trail:	Dave Coulton
Committee Member:	Peter Haslem
Committee Member:	Sue Haslem

Contact details for the Committee can be found on our website.

Dates for the Diary

RESERVE MAINTENANCE DAY 2018

This year we will be tidying up the Reserve on **Saturday 20th October** prior to the Open Day on the following **Saturday 27th October**.

Help is always needed to carry out tidying and maintenance jobs around the Reserve and all members are welcome to come down to the Reserve to give a hand.

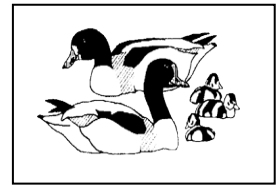
Meet up in the Field Studies Centre at 9.30am. For more information please contact Julie Rogers: 07858776387

NEST BOX MAINTENANCE

We will be carrying out cleaning and maintenance of the Reserve's 40 nestboxes at the back end of February next year. Anyone interested in giving a helping hand please contact: Betty Lee 01244 550993

DEESIDE NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Registered Charity 510146



****Membership Renewal** ****Membership Number:** _____

or

***Application for Membership**

Date _____

Title _____ Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone No. _____ email Address _____

Family - two adults at the same address and children under 18 £14

Family - as above, one member over 60 £12

Single (under 60) £12

Single (over 60) £10

Student / Junior £3.50

***Application for Membership:** Please add £10 key deposit

Name of additional person (over 18) requiring a permit if required

GIFT AID

If you pay tax, Gift Aid will return the tax paid on your subscriptions/donations to the society with no cost to you. The Society will then receive from HMRC £2.50 for every £10 of the subscription and/or donation paid.

If you would like to support the Society in this way please complete the following:- I would like Deeside Naturalists' Society, Registered Charity No. 510146, to treat all the subscriptions and/or donations I will make to Deeside naturalists' Society from the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

I confirm that I have paid an amount of UK income tax or capital gains tax equal to any tax reclaimed.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name (print): _____

Address (inc Post Code) _____

****MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: PLEASE ENCLOSE A STAMPED, SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE****

Please send your application together with your cheque, made payable to the DEESIDE NATURALISTS' SOCIETY to the Membership Secretary:

Mr Lane,
Ael-Y-Bryn,
Llanfynydd,
Wrexham,
LL11 5HH