

Newsletter



Issue 136

Jan 2015

Registered Charity No. 510146

Welcome to the January edition of the Newsletter. I'd like to start with an apology to Bob Lee for misspelling the title of his article in the August 14 edition. It should have read "Digiscoping on the *Cheep*" not as it was changed to - "Digiscoping on the *Cheap*". I managed to have it amended during the printing so half the copies were correct and the other half were wrong. *Will it become a collectors edition in the future?* Also, my thanks again to all those who have contributed articles and quizzes to this edition.

Sadly we are saying goodbye to one of our Committee members Carl Boswell who has decided to stand-down from the Committee and we would like to thank him for his work and support during his tenure. He is, however, still continuing with the Photography club.

Please note the membership renewal form can be found on the back page. The form should be with the Membership Secretary by the end of January 15. For those who would rather not 'cut up' the Newsletter then it can be downloaded from the Website. From the main Home Page select **About Us** then **Join Us** and the link to the membership renewal form is at the bottom of that page.

In the last edition I mentioned I was finishing as the Newsletter Editor at the end of 2015 which will be the September edition. So far no one has volunteered to take over. It is not too arduous a job; there are only three Newsletters a year and as the articles are mostly written by others it is more around the layout of the document and coordinating the printing and packing of them for posting. The address labels and number of copies required are dealt with by the Membership Secretary.

We have a regular team of volunteers to help with the preparation for distribution and the printer we use to print the Newsletter allows us the use of one of their rooms to help with this.

As I also look after the Website and act as the External Affairs link with e.on I want to concentrate on those areas and feel that after five years as Editor it is time for someone else to bring a fresh approach to it. Anyone wishing to volunteer or discuss further what it entails can contact me on 01244 831537 or by email to :

editor@deesidenaturalists.org.uk

Finally, can I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy New Year for 2015.

Deeside Naturalists' Society

Chairmans Report

I would like to welcome all new members and hope that you have enjoyed your time on the reserve and continue to do so. If you have any ideas on how to enhance the reserve then please get involved and let me know.

Unfortunately I have not been down on the reserve as much this year, but I understand that we have had a better year than last year with the number of sightings.

Last year I mentioned about the new windows being fitted and to be careful in the opening and closing, unfortunately some members were more ham fisted than others and three windows were broken. We have had all the windows re-fitted with stiffer bottom rails, but care is still needed in their use.

You can now enjoy a wet and windy day looking out over the Oakenholt marsh at all the birds and keep your hat in your pocket. What a vast improvement!

The floor in the West hide has been repainted and we have also planted some shrubs along the footpath leading to it.

All the comments that have been left on the notice boards have been taken on board, but unfortunately as only four people turned out for the maintenance day, we were not able to implement or carry them out.

As most of the committee have served for a number of years now and some are thinking of giving up in the next two years, its time to encourage other members to become involved in the running of the society. The reality is that, if we do not get new committee members then the society will not be able to run and will end. It's up to you the members to get involved to keep it running.

I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and I wish you all a Happy New Year.

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

*Phil Hotchkiss
Chairman.*

Website

The website now has the new annual programme for 2015 and can be found under the **Members Area** and selecting **Events**. I intend to work on the 'What Is It?' area over the next few months and would like to thank all those who have contributed to it so far.

One concern I have received is over the size of the photographs. The new website takes

advantage of the new web design technology that allows it to be viewed in a different format depending on the type of device being used and if it's using wifi or a phone connection.

I've left the images small because of the download time for phone connections. However, I intend to add an option that allows the larger images to be viewed by choice.

The Members area password will change during the weekend of 24th/25th January.

User name: 

Password: 

www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk

DNS Accounts Ending Oct 14

Deeside Naturalists Society Accounts for the year ended 31st October 2014
Registered Charity No. 510146

ACCOUNTING STATEMENT
Receipts and payments basis

<u>Income</u>	2013/2014	2012/2013
Bank Interest	8.70	9.68
Donations	130.00	145.00
Subscriptions	5327.00	5381.50
Raffle		43.00
Gift Aid Tax Rebate	1008.64	1170.00
Visits	82.00	281.00
Iolo Williams Tickets		165.00
Total Income	<u>6556.34</u>	<u>7195.18</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>	2013/2014	2012/2013
Insurance	113.00	113.00
Printing, Photocopying, Stationery, Postage	2190.63	2348.44
Room Hire	111.00	187.00
Refreshments	3.24	
Education	59.20	8.80
Guest Speakers	404.40	1034.00
New keys / locks	5634.11	580.00
Bird Food	288.43	401.93
Books		26.85
FLVC Subscription	15.00	15.00
Membership	50.00	50.00
Web Hosting	36.00	
Travel	54.00	257.70
Telephone		32.50
Conferences		47.00
Equipment	148.98	58.99
Repairs & Maintenance	151.00	1004.88
Hide Windows	7287.00	
Total Payments	<u>16545.99</u>	<u>6166.09</u>
Balance for Year	-9989.65	1029.09
Cash funds last year end	21275.92	20126.83
Transfer from Key Money	10.00	120.00
Cash Funds this year end	<u>11296.27</u>	<u>21275.92</u>

DNS Accounts Ending Oct 14

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ACCOUNTING STATEMENT Receipts and payments basis

	2013/2014
Receipts	6556.34
Payments	<u>16545.99</u>
Balance for Year	-9989.65
Transfer from Key Money	<u>10.00</u>
Cash Funds this year end	<u>-9979.65</u>

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at year end

<u>Cash Funds</u>	2013/2014	2012/2013
Barclays Bank	16636.27	25935.92
Key Deposits	-5340.00	-4660.00
Working Balance	11296.27	21275.92

Signed.....Treasurer Date

Signed.....Independent Examiner Date

DNS Committee 2015

The AGM was held on the 12th Dec and the following members were elected to serve on the committee.

Chairman	Phil Hotchkiss
Secretary	Pauline Moulton
Treasurer	Bob Lee
Membership Secretary	Dave Ross
Web/Ext Affairs/Newsletter	Bob Must
Committee Member	Dave Coulton
Committee Member	Joan Hotchkiss
Committee Member	Helen Simpson

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

Members Events

Leighton Moss RSPB Reserve 15th November

The primary reason for this trip was to see the Starlings coming into roost and perform a murmuration. In preparation for the trip up to Leighton Moss contact was made with the reserve. I was informed that Starling numbers were increasing and if the weather was dry there was a chance of a murmuration display.

A small group set off from Wales and Chester late morning, entertainment on the journey was spotting bird species along the route. Kestrel and Buzzard were spotted amongst others, then, as we approached Leighton Moss RSPB a raptor flashed out of the hedge in front of the car. After a few moments of discussion 'did you see that' 'what was it' it was decided that we had seen a juvenile sparrow hawk.

At the Leighton Moss RSPB reception we were given an update on what had been seen on the reserve and where including where the Starlings had been coming in to roost the last couple of days.

It was decided to eat our 'butties' at the picnic table in the car park and then visit the hides to the east, finishing up on the causeway where the starlings had been coming into roost. We were entertained whilst at the picnic table by a Robin and a Wren.

After lunch on the way to the hides we noted the new 'tower' Lookout being constructed which will give an elevated view over the reserve. (A good reason to return to the reserve in the future).

The hides added to the list of birds seen including very good views of a Marsh Harrier and several Red Deer. Whilst watching the deer in the fading light small groups of Starlings were seen flying over. It was time to

head to a vantage point to see the starlings coming into roost.

We joined other people also eagerly hoping to see the spectacle. More small groups of starlings were seen and Little Egrets and Ravens flying into their roost. We then became aware of the noise of starlings in the reeds. They had flown in to roost without their aerial display. We were disappointed but agreed that that is the nature of nature nothing can be guaranteed.

But what can be relied upon was the reviving effect of a cup of tea and we had just enough time to get a cuppa before the café closed. Whilst being revived by tea (and cake for some of us) a tally of species seen was made 39 birds and 2 mammals (second one was a mouse). Not bad for a late afternoon's work.

Helen Simpson

Foot note

The following are examples of nature's unexpected events and the need to always keep an eye out for the unexpected. Coming out of the NEC Birmingham on the 26th November a large flock of starlings gave an impressive display coming into roost on the roof of nearby buildings.

To entertain my visitors on Saturday 29th November I took them to Park gate and West Kirby Marine Lake. Whilst watching the sunset two large flocks of birds flew low over the water giving a wonderful display of reciprocity and synchrony! I think they were Knots rather than Starlings but still wonderful to watch.

If you are interested in this phenomena this link may be of interest;

<http://www.creatingreciprocity.com/2012/02/22/whispering-murmuring-swarming-pulsating-wonder/>

Members Events

Penmon Point Anglesey 20th September

It was good to meet with friends old and new on this field outing, eight members came. It was a pity the warm spirit of friendship did not extend to the weather, a brisk breeze off the sea made for spectacular waves crashing on the rocks of the headland and making a local photographic group's struggle with the wind and the female models in white diaphanous dresses an interesting spectacle - *now see what you missed out on by not coming with us!*

Alas we had no sightings of Dolphins or Porpoises in the tide race between the point and Puffin Island and to be honest we did not get an impressive bird list today either. A pair of Ringed Plovers made an appearance, each had red leg rings on the left leg. To date my enquiries on the internet have produced no answers as to where and when they were ringed. A number of swallows were struggling in the wind, they were the last I saw in 2014, my first swallow of this year was seen on the DNS trip to Hilbre.

Having exhausted the possibilities at Penmon Point we retreated the short distance to Penmon Priory and its calm atmosphere out of the wind. The Priory was dedicated to Saint

Seiriol, a 6th century saint. The Island we call Puffin Island is Ynys Seiriol. The remarkable ruins of the Priory and its Church are well worth a visit as is the impressive Dovecote.

Making our way back to the mainland we passed the remains of the Saunders Roe works where Flying Boats were made, evidence of more recent history. Views over the sea walls out over the Menai Straits produced nothing new and much the same applied to 'The Spinnies' where we met Alan Davies and Ruth Miller who set a world record by seeing 4,327 species of bird in the twelve months of 2008. You may recall they gave us the most inspirational talk of their adventures at a DNS evening meeting. Even they were having a quiet day, so it can happen to the best of us! A visit to RSPB Conway did produce a Curlew Sandpiper which was more welcome than as the cafe was closing as we arrived.

Was it worthwhile? You bet it was, out in brisk weather in lovely countryside in good company and with happy memories of a Curlew Sandpiper in white diaphanous dress – well it was some bird in such attire.

Bill Griffiths

Humour In Answers

The questions and answers below all featured in genuine quiz shows:

Name an animal beginning with J? - Giraffe.

An animal with horns? - A Bee.

An animal with a three letter name? - Lion.

Name an orange vegetable? - Aubergine.

Name an animal with a long tail? - A rabbit.

A place you would keep a pen? - A zoo.

Which famous racehorse has a name that spells murder backwards? - Shergar.

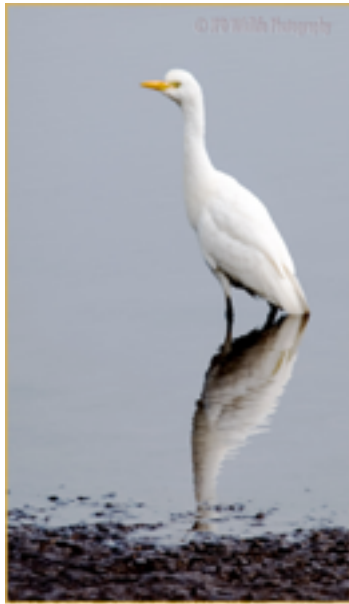
What is the correct name for the Australian wild dog? - Dingbat.

What C is a large American reindeer? - Moose.

Coney is a name for which animal? - Badger.

Reserve Report

Another new bird was added to the Reserve list on Sep 5th when a **Cattle Egret** was photographed on the bunded pools by Joe d'Arcy.



This bird has been present for some time on the other side of the river, where there are more cattle (a bird with an appropriate name for once!).

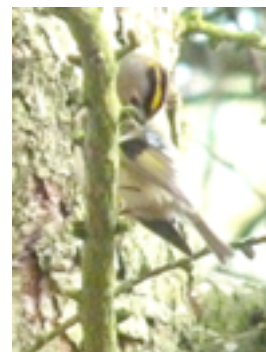
A **Water Rail**, seen by several people on the fly ash lagoon during the WebS count on Nov 9th, was last recorded on the Reserve 28 years ago. The same small reed beds are also hiding good numbers of **Snipe**. Among earlier passage migrants, an **Avocet** was seen on Aug 10th and 13th and a **Curlew Sandpiper** on Sep 9th and 10th.

Numbers of **Greenshank** and **Spotted Redshank** on the bunded pools are holding up well into November, sometimes reaching double figures. A flock of **Little Grebe** here has also been reaching double figures quite regularly. As usual, Shelduck, Mallard, Teal and Wigeon are now regular with a few Shoveler and Tufted Duck always on the lagoon and occasional visits by Pintail, Goosander, Merganser and Goldeneye. Numbers of **Black-tailed Godwit** using the Reserve appear to be recovering after a very poor season last winter, when they seemed to prefer other parts of the estuary. With the aid of a telescope, one can often get good views

of 500-1000+ **Pink-footed Geese** across the river on the Welsh side of Burton Marsh. It's wonderful to see this species using the estuary regularly now in such large and growing numbers, after very lean years in the 1990s. **Twite** returned in flocks of 30-100+ birds and are best seen around the West Hide car park or along the road between there and the bunded pools.

We have had quite a number of ringing "recoveries" this autumn, including a cormorant ringed in the Bristol channel, a black-tailed godwit from the Wash, a grey wagtail from Lancashire and several ringed Twite (full details in the annual Report out in March next year).

Sparrowhawks and **peregrines** continue to be reported frequently, including the one below, demolishing an unwary teal in October, plus **Goldcrests** at Rockcliffe in Oct/Nov.



Glenn Morris, Nov 23rd, 2014.

Cranes and Bean Geese

Cranes and Bean Geese In Germany

We happened to be in Berlin on a business trip in October and took an extra day to hire Rolf Nessing of Birding Berlin (65 euros per person for the day) to show us the local specialities. On Oct 12th, we took an early train to a stop near Linum, about an hour north-west of Berlin, and Rolf met us in his van. October is the time when Cranes stop-over here in their tens of thousands, on the way to their wintering grounds in central Spain. It is also the time when tens of thousands of Tundra Bean Geese arrive from Russia for the winter, along with smaller numbers of White-fronted Geese (only 1000s!). During the previous week, we had seen skeins of Bean Geese flying over Berlin on their way to these wetlands. As if this weren't enough to attract the birdwatcher, the area is also the last breeding ground in Germany for the Great Bustard (and you definitely need a guide to be sure of finding these birds). The first birds we saw were a Rough-legged Buzzard with 6 Common Buzzards and a Red Kite, together in a field of Lapwing. Nearby ponds had similar wetland species to Connah's Quay with the welcome addition of Bearded Tits and Hawfinches and pretty soon the Cranes and Geese were all around us.



At Gulper Lake, the thousands of Bean Geese were accompanied by a Caspian Gull, common here but a new bird for me, while the woods around had crested tits and a goshawk just above our heads.



Cranes and Bean Geese In Germany *cont:*

Finally, thanks to Rolf, we did manage to see 24 Great Bustards, though at a safe distance in a field of crops. The “Bustard Hide” a little further away had plenty of birdwatchers, but no bustards, though it did have three hen harriers quartering the fields.



We were unlucky with the White-tailed Sea Eagles, but satisfied with a day out from the City, and if I do see a “rare” Bean Goose on the Reserve in future, I’ll be able to identify it.

Glenn Morris, November, 2014.

Notices

The Cheshire Wildlife Trusts’ next fundraising speaker event – ‘An evening with Bill Oddie’ at Chester Racecourse will be on 5th March 2015. Further information can be found on their website at:

<http://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/bill-oddie>

Please note:

The field tip on Saturday April 18th is to *Seaforth Docks*. The reserve is within the Seaforth dock system and is only accessible by permit. If you wish to come on this trip you must contact Bill Griffiths on 01244 815941 by 3rd April, as names of participants have to be given in advance to comply with the docks’ strict security procedures. You must also bring photo ID in order to be admitted. See programme card for further details.

Maintenance Day Volunteers

We are trying to establish a team of volunteers that can be called upon to assist with the maintenance of the Reserve. Anyone wishing to assist should pass their name to any of the Committee listed on page four or by email which can be found on the website.

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

Quiz

Tree Twisters. Thanks to Hazel Jones for suppling another set of questions.

1. This tree is a churchman.
2. This tree is smart.
3. This tree is a container.
4. This tree is a hors d'oeuvre.
5. This tree is a "busybody"
6. This tree is used for punishment.
7. This tree languishes.
8. This tree survives the fire.
9. This tree is like yourself.
10. This tree reminds you of the seaside.
11. This tree is evident
12. This tree is good for a cold.
13. This tree is a London district.
14. This tree is an old joke.
15. This tree is an island.
16. This tree keeps one warm.
17. This tree sounds like two.
18. This tree sticks.
19. This tree makes one shy.
20. This tree expresses possibility.
21. This tree is as sweet as sugar.
22. This tree is a pattern for china.
23. This tree pinches in Israel.
24. This tree is OK without it's centre.

There are twenty names of RSPB Reserves contained in the grid below

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

Answers can be found on page 11

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.

Quiz Answers

RSPB Reserves:
1 Elder; 2 Spruce; 3 Box; 4 Avocado; 5 Medlar; 6 Birch; 7 Pine; 8 Ash; 9 Yew; 10 Beech;
11 Plane; 12 Eucalyptus; 13 Poplar; 14 Chestnut; 15 Cypress; 16 Fir; 17 Pear; 18 Gum;
19 Coconut (Palm); 20 May (Hawthorne); 21 Honey Locust; 22 Willow; 23 Juniper; 24 Oak.

1 Ailsa Craig; 2 Airds Moss; 3 Bampton Cliffs; 4 Blacktoft Sands; 5 Canvey Wick; 6 Conwy;
7 Darts Farm; 8 Dungeness; 9 Fetlar; 10 Fiddra; 11 Hoy; 12 Inversnaid; 13 Lodmoor; 14
Marshside; 15 Mousa; 16 Udale Bay; 17 Vane Farm; 18 Yell; 19 Arne; 20 Parkgate

Membership Renewal

DEESIDE NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Membership Renewal Year: _____ Membership Number: _____

Title: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Phone No: _____ Email Address: _____

Subscriptions: (please tick the appropriate box)

Basic (inclusive of family if required)	£14
Over 60 (including family if required)	£12
Single (over 60)	£10
Single (under 60)	£12
Student/Junior	£3.50

Please make a cheque payable to "DEESIDE NATURALISTS SOCIETY" and send to:

Membership Secretary
1 Hambledon Close
Little Sutton
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire
CH66 4YF

IMPORTANT: PLEASE ENCLOSE A STAMPED, SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE FOR YOUR NEW PERMIT

GIFT AID

If you pay tax, Gift Aid will return the tax paid on your subscription/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 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: _____

Address (inc. post code): _____