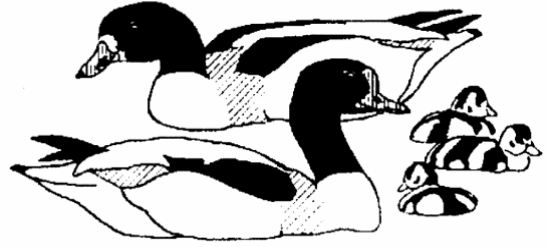


Newsletter



Issue 129

Sep 2012

Registered Charity No. 510146

As with all the Newsletters thank you to all those who have contributed articles. This edition is tinged with sadness due to the passing away of Dr. John Raines. Ray Roberts remembers him in his article on page two. There has also been an outbreak of Crassula on the Reserve and the details for that are on page four.

On the positive side we have been advised by Ian Spence that he has ringed four peregrine chicks this year. Also, the new website is about to be launched and a guide to that is on page six and seven. *(It might already be 'live' by the time you read this)*. I would like to thank Andrew Wallbank for all his work in maintaining the previous version, and his help in moving to the new website. I would also like to thank John and Val Ledsome for the butterflies photographs that can be found in the 'What is It' website page.

For your diaries the Open Day is due to take place on the 14th October. We had a record number of people visiting during the last one. Let's see if we can break the record again. Finally, due to the number of articles in this edition there has been no room for a quiz. However, it will be back for the Christmas release.

The Role of Chairman

As you may be aware Stewart Smith has decided to resign from the position of Chairman of our Society and we would like to take this opportunity to thank him for the work he has carried out during his tenure. As we currently have no volunteers to take over from him the position remains vacant and committee are appealing to someone within the Society to take on the role.

Previously, the Chairs role has covered a wide variety of topics and the committee has for some time been looking at ways to share out those responsibilities. It has therefore been agreed that one of the current committee, Bob Must, will take on the role as the Focal Point to the external organisations that the Society has to deal with. This will leave the Chairs role to deal primarily with the internal issues of the DNS.

The role covers areas such as the chairing of the Committee meetings and the AGM, dealing with members concerns, overseeing the maintenance days, arranging for the collation of the members booking in sheets and any day to day issues that may occur. Other areas such as the programme of events and the group and educational visits are dealt with at committee level.

In order to continue to be successful the Society is totally dependent on volunteers from within its membership to fill the Trustees post in accordance with the requirements of our Constitution. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact the Secretary or any one of the Trustees in the first instance.

YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU – PLEASE!!

Obituary

It is with much sadness that I record the death of Dr. John Raines who passed away on 3rd May and was buried in Blacon cemetery.

John was a lifelong friend of the Society and did much to improve the ornithological knowledge of the membership through his colour slide lectures and his informal conversations on the Reserve. One of his early talks was on the Dee Estuary. It was a real eye opener for many of us who had lived in the area for many years but had no knowledge of what could be found on our doorstep.

In the early days the membership consisted of green but keen ornithologists with a sprinkling of those with experience. I remember on one of our field meetings, I think it was the second we visited the nature reserve at British Steel. On one of the dried up beds was a round bodied bird, boldly patterned black and white with a stout red bill and orange legs. Nobody knew what it was, that is until Bill Evans came from the back of the group and declared that the bird was not new to science -

it was an Oystercatcher! Such was our ornithological expertise in those early days.

Over the years John took us, through his slide shows, to countries world wide such as Russia, France, Iceland and many more with a tremendous knowledge and insight into the birds and their habitat. John Raines was an outstanding ornithologist of countrywide renown.

Members of the Society were also invited to his large garden where a goodly range of plants and birds were to be seen. While this was going on moths trapped the previous night were being identified prior to release. John was also an entomologist of some merit. The evening would then end with tea, coffee and cakes provided by his wife Joan.

Dr John, an expert in so many fields was a kind, friendly and generous man who gave his time freely and without fuss. We in Deeside Naturalists' will miss him greatly.

Raymond Roberts

40th Anniversary of Deeside Naturalists'

Friday 25th January 2013 Iolo Williams Talk

The Society will be 40 years old in April 2013. As part of our "celebrations" we have managed to make a booking for Iolo Williams to come and speak to us about the Wildlife of Wales.

He has a very busy schedule and unfortunately could not come at the end of April but will be coming at the end of January. He is an excellent speaker and his widespread knowledge, enthusiasm and photographic expertise make this an oc-

casional not to be missed. Last time he came it was standing room only! So if you want to secure tickets please send off the booking form enclosed with this newsletter and your cheque as soon as possible. Don't forget to send a stamped addressed envelope.

Ticket sales will be open only to members up to the end of October and after that will go on sale to the general public. Tickets will also be on sale at the Friday evening indoor meetings.

Changes to the Booking in Sheet

We will shortly be changing the requirements for the booking in sheets. The new ones will require the membership number found on the front of your membership card instead of your address.

Society News

RSPB Ynys Hir 21st April

On Saturday morning at eight o' clock, six members set off from Queensferry in three cars to go to Ynys Hir. The weather didn't look all that promising but, nothing ventured, nothing gained. We travelled in convoy and as we approached our destination the heavens opened and the rain bounced down, until nearing Ynys Hir it eased off and stopped as we reached the car park. Here we were joined by two more members who had arrived earlier.

Everyone then decided to don waterproofs. Then it was up to the centre to check in. We all stood for a while just watching the birds on the feeders, Siskins, Chaffinches, Coal Tits and Nuthatch to name but a few were duly noted down on a form that one of the wardens had given to a member to fill in for them. Walking around the rear of the centre we passed through a door in the wall and turned right along the path searching the trees around for birds. At the gate into the wood proper one of the members informed the rest with a quiet call of Spotted Flycatcher and sure enough there he was a beautiful male sitting on a low bush. What a start to the day.

After making sure that everyone had seen him we continued on through the wood searching the trees as we went but also watching our feet as the paths were a bit slippery due to the rain. The woodland floor was turning a shade of blue as the Bluebells were just starting to bloom, it was a beautiful sight. We reached the Ynys Hir hide at the end of this path and sat there for quite a while searching the tree tops below us for Redstart, which by the way, we never saw.

From there we walked to the Covert Du hide

which looks out over some pools and the lowland raised bog. On the way Willow Warblers and Black Caps were seen and heard singing but still no sign of the elusive Redstart. From the hide we saw our first Red Kite while looking to see if we could catch a glimpse of the Ospreys flying over the estuary but luck was not with us. By now the sun had come out and the day had improved no end. Four of us then returned to the car park along a very muddy path for dinner; while the rest carried on to visit the Salting and Marian Mawr hides.

It was just at the end of their visit to these hides that we all met up again and a man with a telescope asked us did we want to see the Ospreys as he had them in the 'scope. We all took a look and were quite glad to have seen them and thanked him very much.

The group saw fifty species of birds during the day with things as diverse as Little Egret and Raven, Wheatear and Oystercatcher, Osprey and Treecreeper. We left Ynys Hir about five o' clock having all agreed it had been a great day out. Six of us now decided to visit the Osprey Project which was just down the road on our way back. All of us agreed after that that was an excellent move. Small but very well organized it is the best place to see Ospreys that I have ever seen including the other Welsh site and the ones in Scotland. Here you are nearer the birds and the live action screens are wonderful. Every detail can be seen. It really was a great experience and I would recommend it to anybody if you are down that way. All in all it was a great day out.

Walter Griffiths

Caption Competition

This photograph was taken by Roy Plummer at the Rhyl Air Show. He thought it would make a good photo for a caption competition. No prizes but the winner could be the first to be named on our new website. Captions to:

editor@deesidenaturalists.org.uk



Society News

Puffin Island 9th June

There is a quote attributed to various people that goes along the lines of “There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing” and from the way those attending were dressed in the photograph you could be forgiven for think that it was more in keeping with an autumnal trip rather than one in June.

The weather which could at best be described as damp when we left the car park in Northop worsened the closer we came to Beaumaris to the extent some of us became convinced we would arrive to find it cancelled. But, it wasn't and the wind dropped and the rain stopped just before the thirteen of us boarded the catamaran Cerismar Two used by the RSPB for the trip round the island. More importantly the rain held off – more or less – for most of the voyage. Even the swell wasn't too bad. *Although that is perhaps a bit more subjective and there may be some who would disagree with that.*



Everyone was given a bag when stepping on to the deck and no it wasn't for that but it did contained various leaflets and brochures.

As to the species seen and it is here where I have been reliant on the other members on the trip they were in no particular order; Heron, Little Egeret, Cormorant, Shag, Mallard (even I saw them), Eider, Oystercatcher, Common Tern, Great Blackbacked Gull, Herring Gull, Kittiwake (seen by Walter), Guillemot, Razorbill, Black Guillemot, Gannet, Red-breasted Merganser (distant flock seen on the way back), Corvid (crow family species not identified). Also, a few Seals in and out of the water. And yes, as you may have already guessed:

NO PUFFINS!!!!!!

Bob Must

Old Records

We are trying to track down missing logbook records for the years 1990-2001 inclusive. A Report was produced for the years 1992-1996, but nothing is available for 1990-1991 or 1997-2001. Please let us know if you have the original logbooks OR other information (for example, old newsletters with “Reserve Reports”?). The Clwyd Monitoring Group produced splendid reports for E-on on high and low tide wildfowl and wader counts during this time, but with few records of raptors, passerines and brief visitors. Please let us know what you have available (glennmanc@hotmail.com) and we can collect and return it

Important Notice Crassula

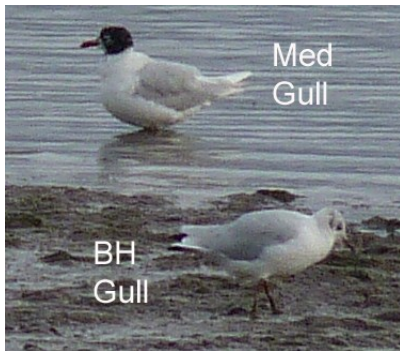
We have been informed by e.on that Crassula (New Zealand Pygmy weed) has invaded the Northern Marshy Grassland. This is a major threat to native species and will need to be eradicated.

To avoid possible spread please do not walk on the Wetland Meadow Area and also keep to the designated footpaths, tracks and car parks on the reserve.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Reserve Report

A Cape Shelduck on 23rd Jan, although an escapee, was a new bird for the Reserve and so was the Diamond Dove from Australia that was almost caught by a Peregrine on 3rd Aug. July brought good views of Mediterranean Gulls among the crowds of Black-headed Gulls. These gulls are still increasing in the UK and already nest in Wales. There were only 2 pairs in Britain 30 years ago, but there may be over 1,000 pairs now. They are often seen in late summer away from their breeding areas.



By the end of July, Greenshank numbers were already building up on the bunded pools and Spotted Redshanks were just starting to appear. The best time to see waders on the bunded pools is on or just after a very high tide, because many of them may be invisible on the river mudflats at other times. A very early Goldeneye appeared there briefly on Aug 1st and Kingfishers have already been sighted, but the spectacular numbers of ducks and waders are yet to come. Raptors are already making a show, with a few records of hobby, merlin, sparrowhawk and both harriers, as well as the more common buzzard, peregrine and kestrel. The best day-time spring tides are due from 15th-20th Sep and strong NW gales during that time will certainly bring some more unusual sea-birds down to the west hide.

Data collection for the national BTO Bird Atlas and the local North Wales Breeding Bird Atlas

has just finished. For waterbirds, the most likely breeding indicator is to see adults with chicks and this summer the fly-ash lagoon has produced family parties of Little Grebe, Moorhen, Mallard, Tufted Duck and Canada Goose. Hopefully, most of them will have survived predation by the foxes that raised a family nearby. Oystercatcher, Coot and Black-headed Gull also appeared to be nesting, though without evidence of success this year. Considering that the Reserve has been operating since 1976, there is still no confirmation of breeding for some common birds, such as Dunnock and Woodpigeon. This year Blackcap and Chiffchaff were seen feeding young and so added to our breeding list, apparently for the first time. Peregrines fledged one young this year and a pair of Ravens brought two young birds onto the fields next to the Power Station. Three pairs of Whitethroat nested and at least one was successful, but Lesser Whitethroat, Willow and Sedge Warbler were only recorded as passage migrants. Two Reed Warblers were seen in the reeds around the fly-ash lagoon, at least one remained for the summer and 2 lone “juveniles” were reported in August, so this may be a future addition to the breeding list. Reed Buntings near the West Hide are already likely breeders, but unproven this year. Some birds we have definitely lost as nesting species, partly due to habitat loss and partly national trends. It may surprise many recent members to learn that Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Redshank, Whinchat, Stonechat, Wheatear, Meadow Pipit and Yellow Wagtail have all nested successfully in the past.

G. E. Morris

Maintenance Day

The next Maintenance Day will be held
Sunday 7th October
Meet at the Field Studies Centre at 09:30

WEB SITE

The new website has now been launched and is available through the usual internet address of www.deesidenaturalists.org.uk. It comprises two areas. One for the general public and a members' only area. The members' area is passworded and the current version will be published in the Newsletter.

The username and Password (which are both case sensitive) for the next four months are:

User Name: dnsuser
Password: dns1908

The website is designed not only for use with mouse and keyboard but also with tablets that utilize touch screens hence the use of 'buttons' to other areas of the site.

THE TECHNICAL BIT

It has been tested on a PC using Internet Explorer (versions 6, 8 and 9) and the latest versions (as at Aug 2012) of Safari, Chrome and Mozilla Firefox. And on the iPad and Android tablets.

While all internet browsers will generally load and display internet sites without any problems because of their design they may display them slightly differently. In testing the following minor differences have been noted:

Internet Explorer
Versions 6 and 8:

The corners of the text boxes and some of the buttons will be displayed with square corners.

Safari:

Certain colours may show as different shades depending on the configuration of the PC.

iPad:

Text on buttons and some pages will not centre correctly.

The horizontal scroll bar (see 'What is it' on the next page) works but the scroll bar does not appear.

Android:

The horizontal scroll is not supported by Android system (see 'What is it' on the next page). Therefore a separate set of pages are available for use with this operating system.



Deeside Naturalists' Society

Home About Us Find Us Join Us Group Bookings Tide Tables Members Area

Introduction

Formed in 1973, the aim of the Deeside Naturalists' Society is 'to stimulate interest in natural history and to play a part in the conservation of flora and fauna on Deeside and in the surrounding area'.

In 1974 the Society approached the C.E.G.B. (now e.on) at Connah's Quay Power Station to ask if a hide could be located on their land overlooking the River Dee. They agreed, and it was from such humble beginnings that a fine Reserve was established. Now, the Reserve benefits from the protection provided under Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, as well as enjoying Special Protection Area (SPA) status.

The Society is a registered charity and, with a membership of well over 500, it is in a stronger position than ever to further its original aims.

Our annual subscription provides Members with regular newsletters and an annual Programme card with information about forthcoming events and field meetings which are organised throughout the year to places of special ecological interest and importance. During the winter a series of talks, held in Connah's Quay Community Centre, give the opportunity to hear specialists on a variety of natural history subjects. Members can also find a wealth of additional information by logging into the Members Area.

Back to

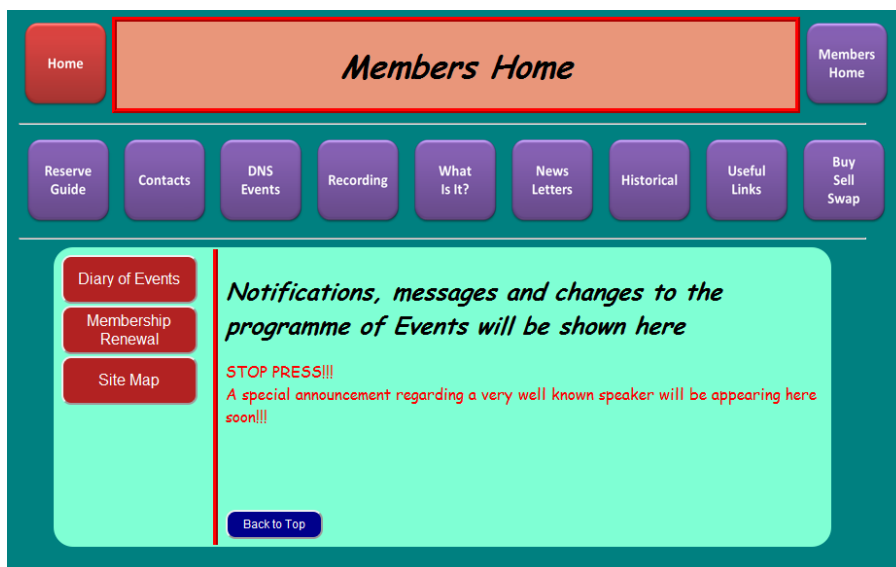
Web Site

MEMBERS PAGES

The first page is for general information and will be used to display updates to the programme and important notices that cannot wait until the next edition of the newsletter.

There is a page containing the programme for the year and a Diary of Events giving brief details in a calendar style format. We have also added a Buy, Sell or Swop page. Please see the introduction at the top of the page for details.

The 'What is It' page is designed to help newcomers to the Society and those who are still learning about what can be seen within the reserve. The idea is to provide a photograph and a brief guide to identification and where on the reserve it can be seen.



It is very much an on-going project and totally relies on the members who are more experienced in these areas in helping to provide the details. There are three areas covered Birds, Butterflies and Plants & Trees. Currently they only have photographs but it is hoped that those members with more knowledge will be able to provide additional details. For those who would like to assist all you have to do is e-mail the information to the editor@deesidenaturalists.org.uk and we will put them into the correct format for publishing on the website.

There will also be a page on Recording, the importance of it and how you can assist. The History page now has copies of the records maintained by the Society going back to 1992. Thanks to Stewart Smith who painstakingly scanned them in for us.

Bob Must

On The Reserve

The rain earlier in the year, followed by warm weather, turned out to be helpful for the plants, and brought the colour to the reserve. The nature trail has been in full show with Scarlet Pimpernel, Yellow Ragwort and Evening Primrose. Teasels and Weld have grown well again.

The only disappointment this summer has been the White and Yellow Mullein, but being biennials, perhaps next year they will be better. There has been a very good show of Orchids

(especially Bee Orchids) The home-made netted cages have been a good protection for the orchids from the rabbits.

The road to the helipad in August is colourful with Black Horehound, Campions, Hedge-Woundwort and Prickly Lettuce. This is often called Compass Plant as the leaves with prickly leaf spines twist towards the sun even when it is not always shining!

Mary Wright.

Annual Report 2012

We will be producing an Annual Bird Report again this year and hope to have it available on-line by March 2013. Please send any bird photographs that you would like included to:

glennmanc@hotmail.com

with details of how you would like your name printed under the photo. The photos need not have been taken this year. If you see any unusual

birds on the Reserve, please take an identifiable photograph and send it in for the record (even if, or especially if, you're not sure of the ID).

Earlier reports included plants and butterflies, so please let me know if anyone would like to include information on these in the Report (otherwise, it will be birds only!).

Group Corner

DNS Photography Group

The group attracts around twenty five members and meets at 2pm on the second Wednesday of each month in the Field Studies Centre. This is a social group with a good mix of beginners and more experienced photographers aiming to share an interest in all forms of photography through presentations and practical sessions. If you would like more information please contact the convener.

Carl Boswell

Telephone. 01352 757309

DNS Art Group

The DNS Art Group meets each month on the second Thursday at 2pm in the Field Studies Centre. We have about twelve members who enjoy painting together in various mediums. Earlier in the year we had a very stimulating demonstration by Jan Gardner who was the Artist in Residence for Deeside. We held an exhibition at the October meeting which attracted many favourable comments. If you enjoy painting and would like to join us you would be very welcome.

Doreen Boswell

Telephone. 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.

Programme for Field Trips 2013

Do you have favourite local places you go to watch wild life? Share it with others! Put your favourite place on the programme and the map! All you have to do is join us and direct us to the site.

Bird and wildlife watching as a group is fun! Plus

more eyes mean more things seen! We need ideas for the programme (2013). Suggestions and offers for the programme to:

Helen Simpson

Telephone: 07711964820

Email: hlsimpson@gmail.com