



Issue 138

September 2015

Registered Charity No. 510146

I would like to introduce myself as the new editor of the Newsletter. As a relatively new member of the society, I was rather disturbed by the letter we all received recently, spelling out the consequences of the possible loss of the reserve facility if we could not fill the various posts becoming vacant later this year, so I decided that I would help out where I could and here I am!

I am resident locally in Connah's Quay, and although I am no expert in bird or plant identification by any stretch of the imagination, I am nevertheless an avid lover of all aspects of nature and am a keen walker and (very amateur) photographer.

I am sure you will all join me in offering our thanks to Bob Must, who has done an excellent job editing the Newsletter over the past five years. Hopefully I will be able to emulate his efforts.

Please forward any material you would like to be inserted into the Newsletter to me at the Editor's email address:-

alansmethurst44@gmail.com

Don't forget to mark the AGM in your calendars on the 11th December, to be followed by a talk by Ron Plummer who will be talking to us about his trip to New Zealand.

We now have a new address for the website which will replace the old one immediately. Please note that all eMail correspondence will change accordingly.

www.deenats.org.uk

Alan Smethurst

Reserve Report May-August

This summer has seen proof of breeding for Tufted Duck (12 chicks), Oystercatcher (on both the bunded pools and fly ash lagoon), Little Grebe, Moorhen, Coot, Canada Goose, Whitethroat, and, at least nearby, Pied Wagtail, Linnet and Goldfinch. Among the more interesting visitors were a Green Woodpecker on July 19th, a Hobby on July 20th, a Yellow-legged Gull on June 26th, a Med Gull on June 29th and a Marsh Harrier over the fly ash lagoon in August. The smaller migrants included 3 Garden Warblers on May 3rd, up to 4 Lesser Whitethroats during July, and a Redstart.



Although both Greenshank and Spotted Redshank were back by the end of June, return passage got off to a very slow start with only a single Ruff in mid-August to liven things up a little. There have been no new species so far this year to add to the Reserve's current list of 223. You can now see at a glance the history of these 223 bird species over the past 40 years in a new book, which will be available at the Reserve Open Day in October (£5: or £6 by post).



Glenn Morris

Field Trip

Gronant Sands - evening walk 20th May 2015

The evening of the 20th was a sunny evening after five wet days. Eleven people met at the car park in Gronant, and set off in the evening sunshine to walk across the dunes to the Little Tern Colony on the beach.

We paused at the pumping station to check the reeds and the gutter. Whinchat and Sedgewarbler were identified. The Grasshopper warbler that had been recorded by the pumping station did not show itself.

During the route across the dunes (*Rhinanthus minor*) and Restharrow (*Ononis repens*) the Natterjack toad scrapes were checked but there was no sign of tadpoles. Wildflowers were also identified but unfortunately the orchids (Pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*), that the area is noted for were not in bloom as it was too early in the year. Sea Holly (*Erygium maritimum*) was in evidence as were Yellow Rattle

On the walk over the dunes several species of bird were identified including Skylark, Meadow pipits and Linnet.

As the shore was approached the absence of the calls of Little Terns was noted. On arriving at the observation post and the shore the lack of Little Terns was evident although the pens protecting the nesting site were in place. A Warden was seen at the far end of the pens so it was agreed as a group to walk along the shore to the warden.

On meeting up with the Warden he confirmed that there were 106 pairs of Little Terns at the sight but that due to the previous day's bad weather they were probably out at sea feeding. As he explained the behaviours and pairing ritual of the Little Terns a single pair appeared over head and gave a display of this pairing ritual with the male carrying and offering a sand eel to the female.

Although the lone pair of Little terns was less than had been anticipated it was agreed by the group that the information from the Warden and the 'fly by' display made it all worthwhile.

Information from the twitter feed (Gronant Little Terns@GronantTerns) record this year there have been 410 adults and 99 fledglings counted. The breeding season has finished for this year but anyone interested in wardening or visiting the colony next year there is also a face book page [facebook.com/gronantlittleterns](https://www.facebook.com/gronantlittleterns) or contact Denbighshire County Council Countryside Services.

Helen Simpson

Quiz

1. If a countryman was referring to the spur of an otter, what would he be describing?
2. What are the proper names for the tails of the fox and the hound?
3. What type of creature is a cavy?
4. When does the Grouse shooting season start normally in the UK?
5. What is the collective noun for a group of foxes?
6. What is the bony projection on the lower leg of a horse called?
7. Dark Cornish and Dorking are breeds of what?
8. An Australian Parakeet is more commonly known as what?
9. It was thought that dogs descended from wolves, yet what is it that wolves cannot do that dogs do?
10. What is the plural of Mongoose?

Field meetings 2016

Hi all,

I have recently taken over the responsibility of organising the field meeting programme from the beginning of 2016. Whilst I have a number of places that I am able to pull together for the programme, I would be interested to hear from members about what their favourite wildlife spot is and why.

I would like to incorporate, if possible, a few of your special places into the field meeting programme over the coming years. I look forward to hearing from you.

Please contact me on :- fieldtrips@deesidenaturalists.org.uk

Bill Dickinson

Members Event

Wildflower ID on the reserve. 5th July 2015

After several warm dry days the rain started at 1.55pm, the member's event started at 2pm.

12 members gathered in the Field Study centre and had a cup of coffee waiting to see if the rain would ease.

As a diversion from the rain 19 Little Egret, 1 Heron and 1 Common Tern were spotted.

The wet weather appeared to have set in for the afternoon. Some of the group decided to finish early they were shown the Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) outside the Field study centre and told of the Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) on the bank going towards the West Hide from the Heliport, and of the Great Mullen (*Verbascum thapsus*) by the gate to the Meadow Hide. The last two specimens had been seen the day before.

Seven members braved the weather and ventured on to the Nature Trail. The rain eased, or we ceased to notice it. Several species of wild flowers were identified despite the work being carried out on the trail.

The most notable specimen was a Pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) (by a small Sycamore bush in front of the pylon that is due to be demolished.)

Other specimens were

White Campion (*Silene latifolia*)

Bladder Campion (*Silene vulgaris*)

Seaside Centaury (*Centaureum littorale*)

Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*)

Wound wort (*Stachys sylvatica*)

Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*)

Evening Primrose (*Oenothera glazioviana*)

Greater Willowweed (*Epilobium hirsutum*)

Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*)

Slender St Johns Wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*)

None of the group claim to be experts the above identified species are the ones we believe we identified.

Helen Simpson

Field Trip

South Stack - 20th June 2015

It was probably due to the miserable start to the morning, low cloud and persistent rain, that it came as no surprise when by 09:15 I was still standing alone at the Spar car park in Queensferry.

I knew from the previous evening that one couple were already spending the weekend on Anglesey and we would meet in the South Stack car park at 10:30.

Here I had a choice, do I phone the couple and say the day is cancelled and drive home or do I drive to South Stack?

The decision was easy, I don't like letting others down without good reason. Despite the weather I got back in my car and drove west along the A55 to Anglesey.

At South Stack car park the couple were waiting for me. Weather conditions here were slightly worse than at Queensferry. The patchy fog and rain were not ideal conditions for bird watching, especially along a cliff edge.

Inside the cafe we bought coffee, had a good long chat about life in general and waited. The day's forecast for Holyhead looked favourable; cloud would lift by lunchtime to give a warm sunny afternoon.

By 11:45, although still slightly misty, the fog horn at South Stack lighthouse ceased its loud warning blasts and we could make out the pathway leading down to Ellin's Tower.

From our high vantage point we could now see the ledges below were full of chattering auks, guillemots, razorbills and a few puffins. Bridled guillemots are not common here but at least two were seen.

The sky began to clear even more and the sun came out. Across the water gulls, kittiwakes, fulmar, shag and gannet were now visible. We could even watch a coast guard helicopter and an inflatable lifeboat practice sea rescues further along the coast towards Treaddur Bay.

A family of five chough flew noisily past, close enough to make out their bright red bill and legs without the need of binoculars.

Moving away from South Stack we drove along the coast, past Treaddur Bay to Rhosneiger. By now the day was bright and the sky cloudless. Parking the cars at Rhosneiger we walked along Glan-y-Mor Road and sat at the edge of the beach. Looking out across the bay, although too far away to distinguish with any certainty, we could see large flocks of terns flying above the rocks a mile off shore. Three species of tern can be seen here, Common, Arctic and Roseate. Along the beach were also little egret, raven, ringed plover, and various gull species.

Returning to the cars our last stop was to be at Llyn Maelog, a mile back along the road from the way we came.

From our vantage point at the end of the board walk that runs along the lake side we identified dunnoek, linnnet, sedge warbler, reed bunting, great crested grebe, gadwall, mallard and mute swans.

The time was now approaching 16:00 and we decided to call it a day.

Saying our farewells we set off on our separate ways home.

In all there were over forty species of bird identified.

Ron Plummer

Events Programme

Field Trips

Sunday 7th November - *Martin Mere - The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust Reserve*

This Reserve receives record numbers of Pink Footed Geese, Swans and other water fowl at this time of year. Also Marsh harriers and other raptors. Level paths and a visitor centre.

Please note admission fees apply.

Meet at the Spar car park at 9 am.

For more information contact Bob Must on 01244 831537.

Indoor Meetings

All held at Connah's Quay Community Centre, Tuscan Way, CH5 4DZ at 7.30pm.

Friday 16th October

Gareth Jones and Rhion Pritchard

Birds of Uganda.

Friday 20th November

Jeff Clarke

Biscay and Picos de Europa (Northern Spain).

A journey through the beauty and splendour of the Picos de Europa contrasting with the vastness of the cetacean rich Bay of Biscay.

Friday 11th December

Annual General Meeting

Ron Plummer will give a talk on his trip to New Zealand.

Website

The password for the members area will change on the weekend 26th/27th September to


www.deenats.org.uk

URGENT NOTICE

As you will be aware I have given notice that I will be standing down from the position of secretary at the AGM. This was discussed at the Extra-ordinary General Meeting in July. So far there have been no volunteers to take on the job of secretary and as the AGM is less than 3 months away it is now urgent that we find a recruit to take on this job.

The main responsibilities are sending out the agenda and taking, recording and storing the minutes of the committee meetings, which are held bi-monthly and preparing paperwork for and recording minutes of the AGM. Other jobs include admin/clerical duties e.g. booking the room for the indoor meetings and receiving and processing applications for group visits. All society business including emails is carried out on the lap top computer provided by DNS which has templates for forms and minutes etc.

The role is not too time consuming but is a pivotal role within the committee and needs to be filled in December. Ideally I would like to recruit someone now to enable a “hand over” period. If you feel you could take on the job or would like to know more information please contact me on 0244 313404 or email secretary@deesidenaturalists.org.uk

Pauline Moulton

Quiz Answers

1. It's footprint
2. Brush, Stern
3. Guinea Pig
4. 12th August
5. Skulk
6. Fetlock
7. Chicken
8. Budgerigar
9. Bark
10. Mongooses