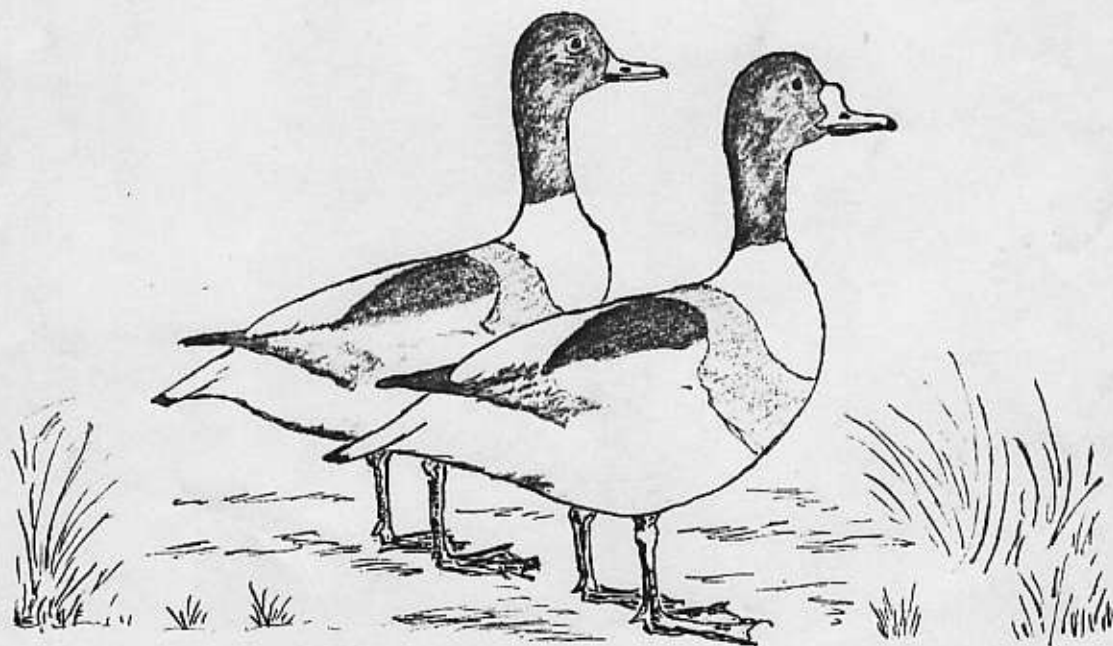

DEESIDE NATURALISTS SOCIETY

A Report on the Reserve
Areas at the
Power Station
Connahs Quay

1st Jan - 31st Dec 1976



DEESIDE NATURALISTS SOCIETY

The Deeside Naturalists' Society is now in its fourth year. It was formed in May 1973 when it was felt that there was a need to stimulate interest and play a part in the conservation of flora and fauna on Deeside.

Since its formation the membership of the Society has steadily increased, largely due to the success of the wide ranging programme of activities planned for members and the interest stimulated by a quarterly newsletter.

During the winter months a series of indoor lectures is arranged when experts in various fields address the members, often illustrating their talks with colour slides or films.

Monthly outdoor meetings are also a part of the Society's activities when, with experienced leaders, members meet together to visit places of interest concentrating where possible on areas of special interest within the locality.

The Society works closely with other national and local organisations. It has, for three consecutive years, been host to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds for the successful showing of new release films at the Civic Hall, Connah's Quay. Deeside Naturalists' Society is active in its membership of the Dee Estuary Conservation Group and plays a significant role in supporting the Little Tern Colony at Gronant.

In November 1975 members of Deeside Naturalists' Society were invited by the Station Manager of the Power Station at Connah's Quay to assist in the development and management of proposed conservation areas on the Power Station site. Much of the major earthworks are now complete and the reserve areas are being left, at this stage, to develop naturally. To achieve the best results for the reserve it is essential that this natural development is carefully monitored.

This first report, produced by Deeside Naturalists' Society, summarises the observations and notes made by members when visiting the Power Station conservation areas over a twelve month period from 1st January to 31st December 1976. It is in no way comprehensive but will serve as a useful basis for future reports.

Officers

Chairman	R.A. Roberts	Committee	B. Burnett
			J. Coupe
Treasurer	M.L. Passant		W.E. Griffiths
			Mrs. H. Jones
Secretary	Mrs. E.F. Roberts, The Steppes, Dean's Place, Connah's Quay.		J.C. Peters

Acknowledgments

CEGB

In presenting this report the members of the Deeside Naturalists' Society wish to express their appreciation and thanks to the Central Electricity Generating Board, the Station Manager Mr. K.W.F. Steward and the Power Station personnel for their interest and involvement in establishing conservation areas along the shoreline of the Dee Estuary.

Contributors

The substance of this report is the field work of the contributors. Deeside Naturalists' Society are indebted to them for their interest and commitment in compiling, writing-up and submitting their notes.

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Connahs Quay Power Station Nature Reserve

The nature reserve is situated on the Dee Estuary foreshore, between the main channel of the River Dee and Connah's Quay Power Station and Oakenholt (SJ2771). The land is owned by the C.E.G.B. and comprises approximately 90 acres of saltings, mudflats, standing water and rough grassland.

A feature of the reserve is the large bunded pool, created by impounding water behind mud banks. The outer sides of part of the bund have been strengthened by the addition of hard core, following a breach of the bund by the river. Furthermore, the bare mud bund has been seeded with saltmarsh plants in order to strengthen it.

The pool attracts a wide range of birds, notably good numbers of waders and wildfowl. It is hoped that wildfowl in particular will be encouraged on to the pool by a variety of management techniques. These include: regulating the water level by means of concrete weirs set in the bund; lowering the salinity of the pool by pumping in freshwater (a wind pump has been built for this purpose); planting up areas with reeds to provide cover; and thickening the willow screen behind the pool so that visitors will not disturb the birds.

Management work has also been carried out to improve the habitat for other birds. Steep-sided islands in the pool are expected to provide nesting sites for Common Terns; scrapes have been dug to create ideal wader feeding conditions; and Wheatear "tunnels" have been constructed. To observe the rich ornithological interest of the pool without disturbing the birds, a hide has been erected.

South-east of the bunded pool is an area of rough grassland and scrub, colonising reclaimed land which has been left to develop naturally. Although of little interest at present, it is proposed to increase the diversity of plant and animal life in this zone, and to create a nature trail for school children.

Fronting the rough grassland/scrub area, around the bunded pool, and further north-west on to Oakenholt Marsh are extensive saltings and mudflats, characteristic of the wildlife habitats found throughout the Dee Estuary. The saltmarsh vegetation - dominated by Spartina anglica, Halimione portulacoides, and Puccinellia ssp. - supports many passerines, which are in turn preyed upon by raptors, such as Merlin, Sparrowhawk, and Short-Eared Owl. In the saltmarsh gutters, Redshank and Oystercatcher regularly feed. The mudflats, rich in invertebrates, provide feeding grounds for vast numbers of waders of many different species, including such uncommon birds as Ruff, Black-tailed Godwit and Little Stint.

A hide has been built which looks over Oakenholt Marsh, so that the birds of the saltings and mudflats may be observed without disturbance. Moreover, scrapes have been made to encourage waders to feed close to the hide, and large numbers of birds feed in the scrapes at high tide.

The variety of habitat-types and rich wildlife interest associated with this stretch of foreshore are emphasised in the following sections which describe the fauna and flora of the reserve. It is clear that the site is of considerable importance for wildlife conservation, and by continuing with the sort of ecological management practised so far, it is hoped to maintain and increase the natural history interest of the nature reserve at Connah's Quay Power Station.

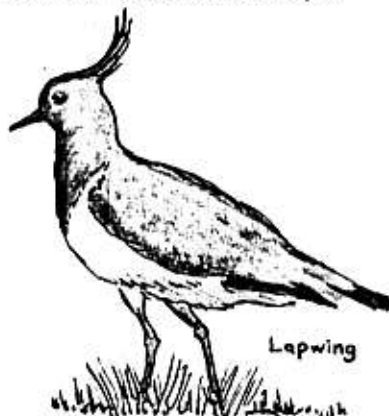
Systematic list of Birds recorded in 1976

The following abbreviations are used to denote status within the site boundary.

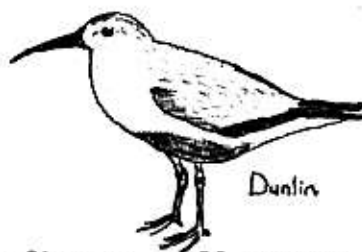
R - Resident B - Breeds SV - Summer visitor WV - Winter visitor
PM - Passage migrant

Great Crested Grebe	WV	Seen fishing offshore on Dee.
Little Grebe	-	Recorded on shallow pool from July '76.
Cormorant	R	Present at all times of year including non-breeding sub adults in summer.
Grey Heron	R	Present at all times of the year on shallow pool and on shoreline of the Dee below the revettment. Up to twenty birds recorded in the autumn.
Mallard	R	Present in all seasons. Breeding not yet proven.
Teal	WV	Occasional birds recorded in large scrape area and overflying the reserve.
Garganey	PM	Single male recorded 11.9.76.
Wigeon	WV	Recorded mainly on marsh. Fifty birds seen on large scrape in December.
Pintail	WV	Seen overflying the reserve and on large scrape where sixty birds were recorded in December.
Tufted Duck	WV	Overflying reserve.
Goldeneye	WV	Up to eleven recorded on shallow pool in December '76
Red Breasted Merganser	WV	A drake was recorded on shallow pool on 5.12.76.
Shelduck	R	Present in all seasons. Probably attempts to breed on the marsh.
Greylag Goose	WV	Single bird on shallow pool pre flooding winter 75/76.

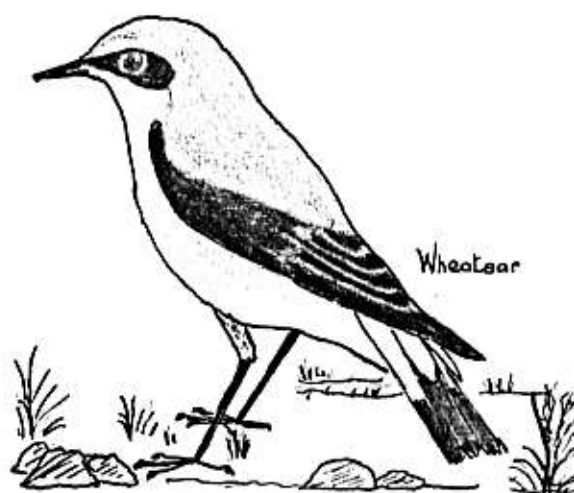
Mute Swan	R	Records in all seasons. Breeds in close proximity to the reserve.
Bewick Swan	WV	Records in November and December. Up to twelve birds recorded.
Sparrowhawk	WV	Breeds adjacent to the reserve.
Merlin	WV	Feeding on finch flocks and pipits etc.
Kestrel	R B	
Partridge	R B	
Pheasant	-	Solitary female seen 28.11.76.
Oystercatcher	R B	
Lapwing	R B PM	
Ringed Plover	WV PM	
Little Ringed Plover	SV	
Grey Plover	PM WV	
Golden Plover	PM	
Turnstone	PM	Spring and autumn records.
Snipe	WV	
Jack Snipe	WV	
Curlew	PM WV	
Whimbrel	PM	
Black Tailed Godwit	PM	Six hundred birds recorded late August '76.
Bar Tailed Godwit	PM WV	
Green Sandpiper	PM WV	Up to three on passage. A single bird off ash lagoon December '76.
Common Sandpiper	SV PM	
Redshank	R WV	Breeding suspected but not yet proved.
Spotted Redshank	PM	Autumn records only.



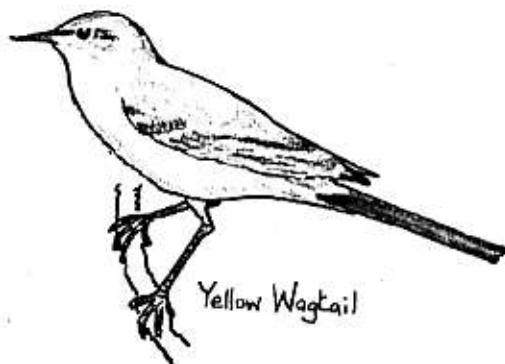
Greenshank	PM	
Knot	WV	
Little Stint	PM	Up to five on small scrape August/September '76.
Dunlin	WV PM	
Curlew Sandpiper	PM	Two recorded on scrape 28.8.76.
Sanderling	WV	
Ruff	PM	
Great Black Backed Gull	R WV	Non breeding birds present throughout summer.
Lesser Black Backed Gull	PM	Small numbers present in all seasons.
Herring Gull	R	Records throughout year.
Common Gull	PM WV	
Black Headed Gull	R	Breeds in Steelworks.
Common Tern	SV PM	Breeds in Steelworks.
Little Tern	PM	
Sandwich Tern	PM	Recorded over river.
Guillemot		Recorded on high tide on Dee Date August 1976.
Stock Dove	R	
Wood Pigeon	R B	
Collared Dove	R	
Cuckoo	SV	
Little Owl	R	Recorded 31.10.76 and 14.12.76.
Short Eared Owl		Single bird recorded 11.6.76.
Swift	SV PM	
Kingfisher	R	Recorded in most months.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	WV	Breeds in adjacent wood. Recorded in most months outside breeding season in willows.



Skylark	R B WV	Present in large numbers winter and summer.
Swallow	SV B PM	
House Martin	SV	Breeds on buildings adjacent to the reserve.
Carrion Crow	R	
Rook		A regular visitor in all months.
Jackdaw		A regular visitor in all months.
Magpie	R B	
Great Tit	R	
Blue Tit	R	
Long Tailed Tit	WV	
Wren	R B	
Mistle Thrush	R B	
Fieldfare	WV PM	
Song Thrush	R B	
Redwing	WV PM	
Blackbird	R B	
Wheatear	PM SV	
Stonechat	R B	Two pairs breeding 1976
Whinchat	SV B	Three pairs preeding 1976
Black Redstart		Present 12th December 1976
Robin	R B	
Grasshopper Warbler	PM	
Blackcap	SV B WV	Two records 4.12.76. One male and one female.
Whitethroat	SV B	Number steadily increasing.
Lesser Whitethroat	SV	Bird singing and giving alarm - hawthorns near Rockcliffe Hall June '76.
Willow Warbler	SV	In song early summer.



Chiffchaff	SV PM WV	In song early summer. Two birds of the 'green' type (P.C. Colligya) present 12.12.76.
Goldcrest	PM	
Spotted Flycatcher	SV B	
Hedge Sparrow	R B	
Meadow Pipit	PM WV	
Water/Rock Pipit	WV	
White/Pied Wagtail	PM R WV	
Grey Wagtail	WV	
Yellow Wagtail	PM SV B	Two/Three pairs breed annually on reserve.
Starling	WV PM	
Greenfinch	SV B WV	
Goldfinch	SV B WV	
Siskin	PM	Twelve recorded on passage 9.10.76.
Linnet	R B PM WV	
Twite	WV	Recorded overflying the reserve.
Bullfinch	R	
Chaffinch	WV R B	Large flocks feeding on the marsh in winter.
Brambling	WV	Feeding with chaffinches.
Yellowhammer	WV	
Corn Bunting	WV	Mainly winter visitors with up to fifteen recorded. Two males in song in summer '76.
Reed Bunting	R B WV	
House Sparrow	R	
Tree Sparrow	WV	



Lepidoptera noted at

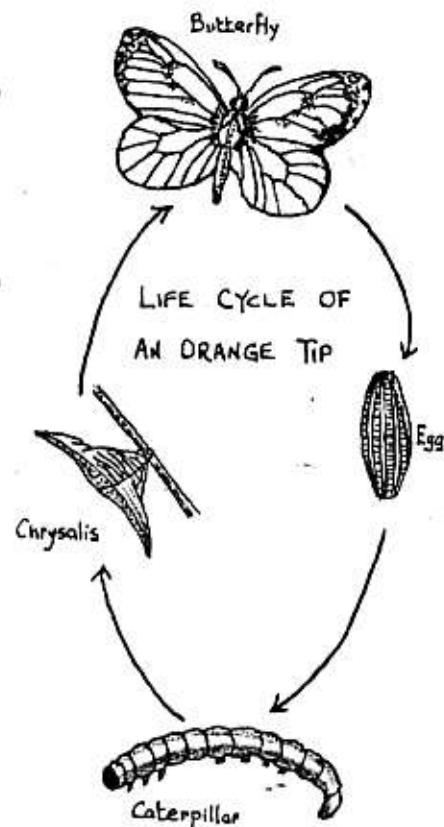
Connahs Quay Power Station Reserve 1976

The following list is far from exhaustive, consisting of a few casual observations made by a very small number of observers, and the status data is tentative. It is hoped that this information will serve as a basis for a more comprehensive list next year.

Status C - Common F - Frequent O - Occasional

BUTTERFLIES

		<u>Status</u>
Large White	- <i>Pieris brassicae</i>	C
Small White	- <i>Pieris rapae</i>	O
Orange tip	- <i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	O
Peacock	- <i>Inachis Io</i>	O
Red Admiral	- <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	F
Painted Lady	- <i>Vanessa cardui</i>	O
Small Tortoiseshell	- <i>Aglais urticae</i>	C
Comma	- <i>Polygonia c-album</i>	O
Grayling	- <i>Eumenis semele</i>	O
Meadow Brown	- <i>Maniola jurtina</i>	F
Wall Brown	- <i>Lasiommata megera</i>	O
Small Copper	- <i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	O
Large Skipper	- <i>Ochlodes venata</i>	F



MOTHS

No list of Moths has yet been produced. It is hoped to undertake some light trapping work using a mercury vapour lamp in the future.

Systematic list of plants recorded in 1976

Note Unless information is given to the contrary then the plant can be assumed to be abundant.

Map Key A1 A2 indicates that the plant can be found in areas A1 and A2.

A1/2 indicates that the plant can be found on the boundary of A1 and A2.

PTERIDOPHYTA

Filicales

Male Fern	(<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>)	a few plants only	A3
Wall-Rue	(<i>Asplenium rutamuraria</i>)	" " "	A3
Hart's-tongue	(<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>)	" " "	A3

SPERMATOPHYTA

Gymnospermæ

No species noted on the reserve.

Angiospermæ

Field Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*)
(A2/7 A5)

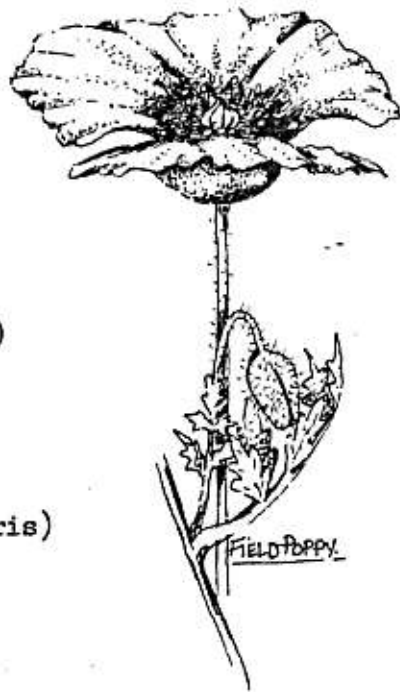
Common Fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*)
A5 (only one flower seen)

Shepherd's Cress (*Teesdalia nudicaulis*)
A5 (only one flower seen)

Hedge Mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*)
A2/7

Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)
A2/7

Weld (*Reseda luteola*)
A2/7 (only two flowers seen)



White Campion (*Silene alba*)
 A2/7

Lesser Sea-spuley (*Spergularia marina*)
 A7

Common Orache (*Atriplex patula*)
 A2/7 A5

Annual Seablite (*Suaeda maritima*)
 A7

Glasswort (*Salicornia europaea*)
 A7

Common Mallow (*Malva sylvestris*)
 A2/7

Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*)
 A2/7 (only one flower seen)

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)
 A2/7 A5

Lucerne (*Medicago sativa*)
 A5 A2/7

Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*)
 A2/7 A5

Common Melilot (*Melilotus officinalis*)
 A2/7 A5

White Melilot (*Melilotus alba*)
 A2/7 A5

Hop Trefoil (*Trifolium campestre*)
 A2/7

White Clover (*Trifolium repens*)
 A2/7 A5

Hare's foot (*Trifolium arvense*)
 A2/7 A5

Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*)
 A2/7 A5

Birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)
 A2/7 A5

Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*)
 A2/7 A5

Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*)
 A2/7

Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*)
 A2/7



Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*)
A2/7

Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
A2/7

Small-flowered Willow-herb (*Epilobium roseum*)
A2/7

Rose-bay Willow-herb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*)
A2/7 A5

Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*)
A2/7 A5

Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*)
A2/7 A5

Redshank (*Polygonum persicaria*)
A2/7 A5

Pale Persicaria (*Polygonum lapathifolium*)
A2/7 A5

Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*)
A2/7

Curled Dock (*Rumex crispus*)
A2/7 A5

Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)
A2/7 A5

Common Centuary (*Centaureum erythraea*)
A4

Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*)
A4 (Only one flower seen)

Great Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*)
A2/7 (Only one flower seen)

Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*)
A5 (Only two flowers seen)

Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*)
A2 A4 A5

Hoary Plantain (*Plantago media*)
A5

Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*)
A7 A6 A5

Cleaveis (*Galium aparine*)
A2/7

Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
A2/7

Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*)
A2/7

Oxford Ragwort (*Senecio squalidus*)
A2/7 A5

Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*)
A2/7 A5

Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*)
A7 A5

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
A2/7 A5

Scentless Mayweed (*Tripleurospermum maritimum*)
A2/7

Scented Mayweed (*Matricaria recutita*)
A2/7

Rayless Mayweed (*Matricaria matricarioides*)
A2/7

Feverfew (*Chrysanthemum parthenium*)
A2/7

Tansy (*Chrysanthemum vulgare*)
A2/7

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)
A2/7 A5

Great Burdock (*Arctium lappa*)
A2/7

Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)
A2/7

Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
A2/7 A5

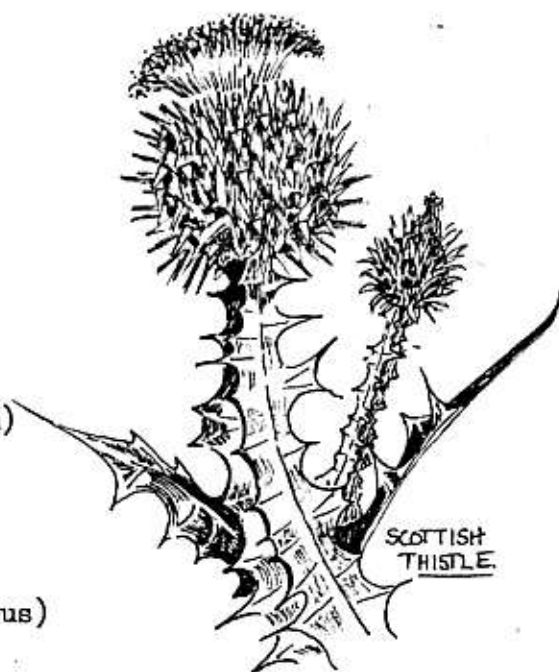
Cat's-ear (*Hypochoeris radicata*)
A2/7

Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*)
A2/7

Goat's Beard (*Tragopogon pratensis*)
A4

Smooth Sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*)
A2/7

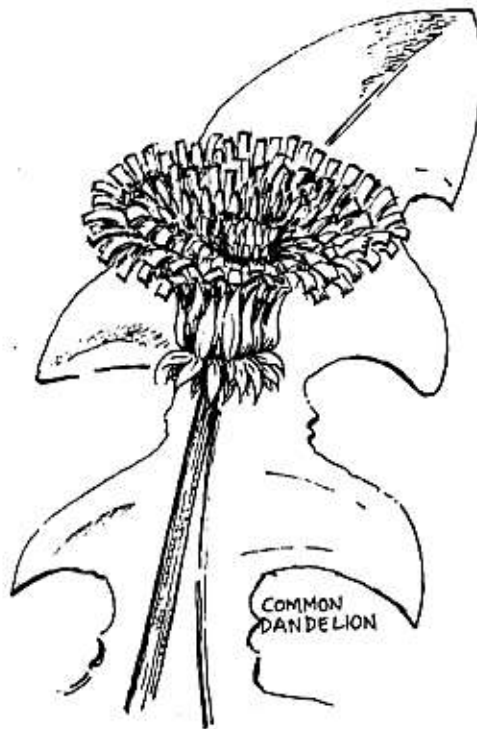
Perennial Sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*)
A5 (Only one flower seen)



Common Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)
A2/7 A5 A4

Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*)
A4 (several hundred flowers seen)

Great Water Grass (*Glyceria maxima*)
A2/7



MAMMALS

So far there have been no formal mammal surveys on the Reserve. However, we now have a number of live-traps for small mammals and we anticipate that some useful information will be gained through the use of these in the future.

All the records we have at present have been the result of chance observations by people looking for other things i.e. birds, plants etc.

A family of foxes, with two cubs, was reported earlier in the year and lone foxes have been seen from time to time since.

Weasels have been reported occasionally but, so far, no stoats.

Rabbits are in the area and up to half-a-dozen can be seen in some places within the Power Station grounds. They are usually more active at dusk and dawn.

One or two voles have been reported - probably short-tailed field voles.

Between April and October, bats can be seen around the Reserve, but these are extremely difficult to identify while on the wing. We could have four or five species in the area.

Domestic mammals have a considerable effect on landscape, flora and fauna. The cows and sheep which graze the Reserve area are mentioned here as they also have their part to play in the working of the Reserve.

Wherever possible sightings of mammals should be recorded in the hide log book. Please note date, time, weather and exact location on the Reserve.

