

also a very special place botanically and was designated as a S.S.S.I. in 1986 for containing 8 nationally important species; namely Wild Daffodil, Quaking Grass, Meadow Foxtail, Pepper Saxifrage, Green Winged Orchid and Great Burnet. All of these are still present, plus Yellow Oat Grass and Devil's Bit Scabious which we have yet to find.

We have carried out wild flower surveys, using five 2m squares located at 30m intervals along a transect line to include quadrats in the lower, wetter parts and the higher, slightly dryer areas. We now know that Wild Carrot likes the higher areas and tolerates shade, whereas the Daffodils and Green Winged Orchids prefer the sunnier, lower, damp areas.

The reserve is a single field of 2.1ha (5.2acres) overlying Keuper Marl, and is cut for hay in late summer and grazed during the winter. The transect line is set up afresh each year and is sighted between a power pole near the car park and a large Ash in the opposite corner. Canes mark each quadrat and are put in at 30m intervals for the early May survey. They are left in place for the late June survey, but are removed before mowing takes place.

We have also recorded every tree and large shrub in the surrounding hedge. The species vary with location on this sloping, north-facing field. There is one fine Oak and a belt of Blackthorn scrub along the lowest part of the reserve beside the seasonal brook. There are several large Ash and an area of Wild Plum scrub along the highest boundaries, and several medium sized Field Maples at mid-slope on the other boundaries.

Buzzards frequently soar overhead, and on this September's visit a flock of 10-15 Long Tailed Tits came chattering and swooping along the hedge line. They seemed to be working along each boundary quite systematically, for we saw them in several places in the space of half an hour.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Indoor Meetings

Indoor meetings are held at 7.30 pm on the first Thursday of the month at the Malvern Evangelical Church, 204-208 Pickersleigh Rd, WR14 2QX. Adults £2, children free, refreshments available. Non-members of the Trust welcome.

THURS 6th DEC: 'Mistletoe Miscellany' by Jonathon Briggs, Ecologist and Mistletoe Consultant.

THURS 3rd JAN: 'My Falklands Experience' by Margaret Vernon.

THURS 7th FEB: 'Notable Trees of the Malvern Hills' by Peter Garner.

THURS 7th MAR: 'On the Wild Side: from Downing Street to our Local High Street' by Iain Green, Wildlife Photographer.

THURS 4th APR: 'Alfrick – a Village and its Insects' by Bill Indge.

THURS 2nd MAY: 'Otters' by Dr. Daniel Allen, Affiliate Member of the IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group.

Outdoor Meetings

If you are joining us for the first time – welcome! If you need a lift or more information, please phone: Margaret Jupe on 01684 893808 regarding walks (when donations to the WWT will be appreciated) and Brian Bradford on 01684 565994 regarding coach trips – see enclosed Booking Form for details of these. Always wear suitable clothing and footwear.

WED 26th DEC: Meet Brian Iles at 9.30am at North Quarry car park (SO771469) for a Boxing Day morning walk on the Hills.

MON 21st JAN: Meet 10.15am at Swinyard car park, grid ref: SO765382, for a walk around Castlemorton Common enjoying the winter landscape. Mostly on lanes but one rough, possibly muddy, uphill section. A simple lunch of homemade soup, bread and cheese will be available afterwards at Margaret Jupe's home in Upper Welland – directions on the day. Lunch must be booked with Margaret (01684 893808) by Sat 19th Jan.

SAT 16th FEB: Meet 10am for a winter walk at The Knapp, grid ref: SO751522. Bring a camera, as the Trust would like to receive photos.

TUE 19th FEB: Coach trip to Somerset Levels. Cost £12. Meet at the Splash at 8.30am. Wetland visit centred on Shapwick and Ham Wall. Bitterns, grebes, white egrets and possibly hobbies. Early evening opportunity to watch starling murmurations. Booking essential.

MON 8th APR: Meet Garth Lowe at 9.30am for a 2-3 mile walk in and around Crews Hill Wood. Please share cars as parking is very limited at The Warren (by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Craddock), grid ref: SO735544. Drive half a mile up a steep, narrow lane starting just above and on the opposite side to The Fox and Hounds pub (good fish and chip lunch!).

THURS 9th MAY: Meet Michael Pettigrew at 10am at The Fir Tree Inn, Dunhampstead, near Droitwich, (the pub is next to the level crossing), grid ref. SO918600 for a varied 3 mile walk to Oddingley and back by a different route, skirting the western edge of Trench Wood. A few stiles, woodland, farmland, a church and churchyard with an interesting story, and a canal towpath. Lunch will be available at the pub.

WED 22nd MAY: Coach trip to Blashford Lakes. Cost £16. Meet at the Splash at 8am. Visit to this Hampshire WT reserve to see early summer wildlife. The various habitats are home to many wildflowers and a host of insects including butterflies, plus hides for birdlife observation. Introductory talk by local wildlife expert followed by free exploration. Booking essential.

See enclosed booking form for details of the following coach trips later in the year:

THURS 20th Jun: Symonds Yat & Lady Park Wood.

FRI 12th July: Welsh Botanical Gardens.

WED 14th Aug: Shrops WT Flagship Res., Wem Moss.

Contributions

Please send ideas or contributions for future Newsletters to Brian Dawkins (01684 573562) email db.dawkins@hotmail.co.uk

Committee Contact

Margaret Vernon (01684 565079)



NEWS & VIEWS from the Chairman New Indoor Venue

I am delighted to say that, after the surprise of having to move from our indoor venue of many years, we are now well settled in our new one - Malvern Evangelical Church in Pickersleigh Road. We have been made to feel very welcome and it has provided us with much greater flexibility – but also a few more responsibilities. We now need to set out the room ourselves, putting out chairs and tables, but as usual, many of you have volunteered to help with this on an *ad hoc* basis. We also decided to be as environmentally friendly as possible and use the crockery in the kitchen (rather than re-cycled disposable cups), and this again involves more volunteers now being needed to wash up at the end of the meeting – just a 10 minute job – but again you have stepped in to help. Thank you so much – please just sign up at an indoor meeting for a date that suits you.

Morrisons Collection

Our efforts in June 2012 were splendid – a full rota of helpers over the 2 days and a total of £761.56 collected. Excellent! The Wildlife Trust benefited directly and was well advertised in the process. Thank you to everyone who gave of their time and help. Our dates for 2013 are Friday and Saturday, 29th and 30th June.

Coach Trips

Our outdoor meetings have continued to be very popular. For 2013 we have decided to provide you all with details of our coach trips up to August plus a booking form (enclosed). We hope this will help you to plan ahead, and also enable us to have a standard form for reference. If required, further forms will be available to download from our website as well as at our indoor meetings. We hope the variety of walks and trips will provide something for everyone.

Malvern Group e-mails

Don't forget you can send e-mails to us at malverngroup@live.co.uk and we will respond and forward them if necessary. You can also join the secure e-mail list – contact us or send an e-mail requesting this. Any info or replies to e-mails that we send to you will not be seen by anyone else.

Newport Wetlands Nature Reserve Carol Bradley

On a rare dry, bright and breezy day last July, 18 of us spent a day at the Newport Wetlands Nature Reserve guided by Cherry Greenway, focusing on the flora. Established in 2000 to mitigate habitat loss due to the Cardiff Bay Barrage, the reserve covers 437 hectares on the northern shore of the Severn Estuary. It is on low-lying land partly reclaimed from a fuel ash disposal site adjacent to the Newport coal-fired power station. There are large areas of wet grassland and reed beds interspersed by freshwater scrapes above saltwater marshes and mudflats. A drier area with soil of low fertility close to the power station produces an abundance of flowers, some quite rare.

The morning walk from the car park, partly along the Orchid and Wetlands Experience trails, took in this area. With the expert help of Cherry and others, the aspiring botanists among us were able to identify many of the plants – highlights and rarities were Yellow Birdsnest, Southern Marsh and Bee Orchids, Dittander, Tubular Water Dropwort, Brookweed and Thyme-leaved Sandwort. Bill Indge spotted some interesting invertebrates including a Puss moth caterpillar. A full list of the plants, invertebrates and other wildlife seen is on our website.

After lunch at the RSPB Visitor Centre, we followed the Woodland and Estuary trail, passing the lighthouse and along the coastal strip on low cliffs with magnificent views across to the Somerset coastline. The path overlooked salt marsh and mudflats, with reed beds and open water on the landward side. Brief visits to hides allowed us to see Tufted Duck, Swans, Curlews, Oyster Catchers and Shelduck, but many more birds should be visible at other times of year.

An enjoyable day out, and well worth another visit. The Reserve accommodates all age groups: the paths are mostly flat and smoothly gravelled, ideal for cycling as well as for pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters. There is a well-stocked RSPB shop and a cafe with seating area overlooking open water and reedbeds, and a picnic area and children's playground.

Duke of York Meadow Reserve

Caroline and Steve Spacie (Volunteer Warden)

Anyone can enjoy the Daffodils, Orchids and Cowslips whilst having a picnic in the car park at the reserve (SO 782354). However, the Meadow is