

contrary to all expectations, a single large blue. In considerable optimism we moved on to Hibbitt Woods, where there were more bee orchids in the adjoining meadow, whilst the wood gave us sedges, woodruff and enchanter's nightshade.

We stayed very comfortably at the Kingcombe Centre, and thanks to their cockerels, there was no difficulty in getting up the following morning for breakfast. On a guided walk of Powerstock Common Nature Reserve, we saw very large numbers of butterflies, including common blue, marbled white, dark green fritillary, ringlet and gatekeeper. Golden ringed dragonflies were spectacular and we had stunning views of a very obliging yellowhammer.

Next day, after an informative talk about Chesil Beach and the Fleet Lagoon from a Wildlife Trust warden, most of the group went across to see the protected little tern nests. The afternoon was spent at the King Barrow Quarry Reserve at Portland where we had fantastic photo opportunities of silver-studded blues mating, as well as a wonderful variety of wild flowers and birds.

The final day at Collard Hill revealed a larger number of marbled whites than anyone in the group could recollect ever seeing previously. Ten large blues were seen, some mating and depositing their eggs on the wild thyme.

Thanks must go to Margaret for organising a wonderful trip, to Lyndon for negotiating narrow lanes, and to Richard for his daily showings of the moths collected overnightand for sharing his 60th birthday with us!

Dyfi Osprey Project and Glaslyn Nature Reserve*

22nd July

By Bonni Sinclair

Black baby lizards, thumbnail-sized baby frogs and ready to fledge baby ospreys! What a start to a morning at the 35 acre nature reserve created in 1995 by the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust.

The day began gently, with a wander along the boardwalk with a guide pointing out the plants of interest in the boggy ground, including ragged robin, marsh bedstraw, royal fern and marsh pennywort. The huge bird feeder was covered in birds; a reed bunting, chaffinches, greenfinches, tits, siskins, redpolls and a nuthatch – astonishingly, all at once. We found fresh otter spraint where the five otters cross the boardwalk; then we reached the magnificent new wood and glass edifice constructed by volunteers, specifically for viewing the breeding ospreys.

Great excitement among the visitors and wardens – the young ospreys were fledging, that very morning! Earlier that day Merin had already left the nest. When we arrived at 11.30, we were just in time to see the other female chick, Celyn, launching herself for the first time, followed by her brother Brenig a minute later. At one point all five ospreys were circling over the viewing station, giving alarm calls and uncertain what to do. Dad had a fish in his talons, but there were no young in the nest to feed it to. After a while all three juveniles returned to perch on the camera pole near the nest, but Brenig landed clumsily on his sister, knocking her off. There was some concern, whether she would be able to take off from the ground, but all was well.

What a calming contrast after lunch, to arrive at the wind-ruffled waters of Glaslyn Nature Reserve. We spent an hour wandering along the lake edge, careful not to tread on the sticky leaves of sundews, or the sulphur-yellow spikes of bog asphodel. The purple heather was in full bloom, two peregrine falcons appeared in a ravine, and two merlin were spotted over the moorland.

It would be hard to beat a day like that!

P.S. from editor: While we were at the Dyfi Estuary, we were encouraged to sign votes of support for National Lottery funding for the project. In September it was announced that it had been voted the winner in the Environment section. Splendid news.

***Full reports and photos of both the above trips can be found on our website.**

A Garden for Wildlife

By Alison Uren

My garden is an ordinary one, about the size of a tennis court, in the middle of Malvern. It is surrounded by thick hedges and mature trees, it has quite a large pond and there are a lot of shrubs and flowers, most of which I have chosen because they appeal to wildlife.

Nothing especially unusual visits my garden, but it is never dull, and I love it. Robins and blackbirds nest in the hedges; wrens and dunnocks sing loudly in the spring. The starlings do well and there are a dozen or so babies every year, very noisy and quarrelsome on the bird feeder. About 40 sparrows nest in the roof next door and spend their lives chirping in our bushes; I feel we are doing our bit for declining species! A sparrowhawk appears from time to time and I've seen it catch the occasional unfortunate victim. Redwings visit in the winter, eating every berry and then moving on. Every spring I anxiously await the return of the swifts, who nest in the house opposite us and then scream around our garden until they leave in August. Newts, frogs, dragonflies and damselflies breed in the pond; a heron visits regularly to dine on my fish. All the common butterflies visit us, occasionally hornets too, and we have had a bumble bees' nest in the garage.

Night time is full of activity. A pair of tawny owls live nearby and often sit calling on the chimney pots of our house. There are a few pipistrelle bats, a hedgehog who potters about, and occasional glimpses of a fox. My sons put out the moth trap when they visit and on a good night they catch up to 40 species, including all the local hawk moths (lime, elephant, eyed and poplar) and attractive species like leopard moths, swallow-tailed moths and scarlet tiger. This last species is an interesting one, as its range is gradually extending northwards and has only appeared around here in recent years.

Sadly there are some species which have disappeared over the years, notably siskins, thrushes, greenfinches and goldfinches. However, I am glad to say that people in other parts of Malvern still report seeing these.

Contributions

Please send any ideas or contributions for future Newsletters to the editor alison.uren@gmail.com or phone 01684 567819



NEWS & VIEWS from Alison

Firstly, a huge thank you to Margaret Vernon, who has been a wonderful Chairman of the Malvern Group for 8 years. Under her leadership, everything has been beautifully organised, including many exciting trips away. She cares passionately about our Group and the wildlife of Worcestershire, helping to raise funds for numerous projects, including the purchase of Hollybed Meadows and Blackhouse Woods. She was awarded the Wild Service Award for outstanding voluntary service to the Trust in 2011, and it was so well deserved.

What an act to follow! Well, I will do my best. The Indoor Meetings are all planned for next year and I hope everyone will find something of interest there. Margaret is staying on as Vice-Chairman (excellent!) and at the time of writing is busy organising a very promising trip to Derbyshire next summer. Our very able committee was described in the last Newsletter and I look forward to working with them over the coming months.

I would like to increase the number of people on our group email list, as this is by far the most effective way of communicating news and plans. The Newsletter only appears 3 times a year. Please let Carol Bradley or me have your details, or email malverngroup@live.co.uk. You will also see that I have described my garden wildlife in this Newsletter. I am hoping for follow-up articles from YOU, describing what happens in your gardens!

Morrisons Collection

Our efforts in July were splendid – a full rota of helpers over the two days and a grand total of £734.35 collected. Brian Iles put together an excellent information board on Blackhouse Wood which resulted in a lot of interest. Many thanks to everyone who helped.

Waitrose Community Matters

The Community Matters initiative at Waitrose (Malvern) in September raised £480 which will go towards Blackhouse Wood.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Indoor meetings

Indoor Meetings are held at 7.30 pm on the first Thursday of the month at the Lyttelton Rooms in Church Street, Great Malvern, WR14 2AY. Adults £2, children free, refreshments available but a donation is requested. Non-members of the Trust are very welcome.

December 3rd: Question and Answer Session with Harry Green, John Tilt, Rosemary Winnall and Johnny Birks.

January 7th: “Wild Plants of the Malvern Hills” Peter Garner, botanist and member of the MHC Wildlife Advisory Group.

February 4th: “Scottish Wildlife” Marcus John, expert on mammals and Naturetrek Tour Leader.

March 3rd: “The Nature of Randan Meadows” Gordon Forrest, photographer and author of books on Worcestershire wildlife.

April 7th: “Introduction to Insects” Rosemary Winnall, general naturalist with special knowledge of the Wyre Forest.

May 5th: “Birdwatching in Britain” Roger Pannell, keen birdwatcher and member of the WWT Council.

Outdoor meetings

2016 Day Trips: the list, including full details, can be found on the enclosed booking form. If required, further forms are available at our indoor meetings or can be downloaded from our website.

Tuesday 19th April: Snake’s-head Fritillaries at Cricklade North Meadow and Upper Waterhay. Cost £10. Depart Splash 9 am. Limit 16. Contact: Brian Bradford 01684 574849.

Walk: Saturday 7th May, 9 am: Birds of the Southern Commons. A 2 to 3 hour guided walk with Mick Woodward to look for early spring migrants on Hollybed and Coombe Green commons. Meet at the Mill Pond, Golden Valley (SO 774369). Donation to WWT appreciated. Contact: Margaret Vernon 01684 565079.

Other Outdoor Events

The following are organised at relatively short notice and will be advertised on the website and by email: Strolls with a Purpose, with Andrew Cartlidge. Ambling Group, with Carol Bradley. Four Seasons Walks, with Alison Uren.

Twelve go wild in Dorset*

28th June to 1st July

By Helen Tudge

Despite promises of a heatwave, our group of Dorset adventurers set off in more typical British conditions. At the Somerset Wildlife Trust Reserve at Green Down, the wild flowers were prolific: frothing bedstraw, architectural thistles, butterfly irises and bee and butterfly orchids. There were significant numbers of marbled white butterflies and,