

22 July

Visit to Dyfi Osprey Project and Glaslyn Nature Reserve

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

As we wandered along the broad boardwalk guiding us safely over the very boggy ground; occasionally flooded by salty estuarine water from the nearby tidal River Dyfi; through tall rustling reeds *Phragmites australialis* that give cover to bittern and all sorts of warblers, our attention was drawn to the pink spotting of ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, the spikes of purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, hemlock water dropwort *Oenanthe crocanta*, gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, royal fern *Osmunda regalis*, marsh pennywort (edible) *Hydrocotyle bonariensis*, spearwort *Ranunculus flammula* to name but a few of the cornucopia of species that can cure or kill growing along the edge of the boardwalk.

Moving on past the petrified stump of 3-4000 year old bog oak; rescued from the grey clay layer 6m down when the toilet block was being built; the fresh otter spraint where the 5 otters go across the boardwalk for easy fishing in the pond of the next door caravan site; past the pond filled with acidic, salty (from the 2013 river flooding) water to turn a corner and there was the three storey, 360° viewing, wood and glass edifice constructed by volunteers.

A nest box put up in 2007 has been in use since 2011.

Great excitement by the crowd and the wardens – the young osprey were fledging: first to go was Merin (the oldest at 54 days) at 08:22. Standing on the edge of the nest and stretching her wings she was blown away unseen by her mother, Glesni, who had her head in her breakfast, and when she looked up and espied a strange osprey on a nearby pole she thought it was an intruder osprey and shouted alarm. The two remaining young flattened in the nest, behaviour called thanatosis, meaning play dead.

Celyn launched herself at 11:39 to be followed at 11:40 by her brother Brenig.

Brother and sister landed on the station mast at Dyfi rail junction before returning to the camera pole. Merin had gone down by the river and returned 40 minutes later. Then Brenig returning from another short flight managed to land on his sister, Merin, and knocked her off the perch. Brenig did another fly-pass and knocked his other sister off too. Both he and Celyn landed on the ground but managed to take off and get back to the nest. Then dad arrived with a fish.

(At one point when the three siblings and mum were sitting on the camera pole, Monty (dad) came in with a large twig and tried to land too, but Glesni screeched at him and sent him off to fish.)

Staff, volunteers and two water buffalo manage the reserve.

Next project - install a chairlift to raise the handicapped to the viewing platform.

Such an exciting and very windy morning!!

And what a calming contrast to arrive at the wind-ruffled waters of Glaslyn Nature Reserve where the land is mostly heather moorland.

We wandered along the lake edge being pipped at by two meadow pipits and carefully not treading on the round reddish fleshy leaves covered with fly-trapping sticky hairs of sundew *Drosera rotunda* its spikes of small white flowers not yet open, or the sulphur yellow spikes of bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*.

All three 'heathers' were plentiful: the purple bell heather *Erica cinerea* in bright bloom; ling *Erica vulgaris* just beginning to colour up and a few pink patches of cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*.

From the lookout overlooking wonderful welsh scenery and a water eroded ravine, peregrines were marvelled at. Meanwhile back at the bus, its waiting occupants had seen two merlin.

Lyndon drove us home the country route way. We stopped briefly at Rhayader to use the conveniences and were treated to close views of two circling Red Kites.

Well, it'd be hard to beat a day like that.

Many thanks to the organiser and driver.