

Gibraltar Point 13th-16th April 2013

Malvern Group visit to Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve; report by Tina Indge

Gibraltar Point, a Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust reserve is three miles from Skegness and the Wash Study Centre was our base for three nights.

The closure of the A43 meant that a diversion took us underneath the Haringworth viaduct which, with 82 arches, is the largest masonry structure in Britain – a truly striking sight! This was followed by a visit to Vine House Farm from where the Wildlife Trusts obtain their bird food. The owner, Nicolas Watts, gave us a very interesting and informative tour of the farm and we saw bramblings, a marsh harrier and a barn owl to name but three. A brief stop at Boston cemetery, which included a large conservation area, yielded green woodpecker, two sparrowhawks and carpets of daffodils and scillas.

At the Centre we were free to explore the wide range of habitats but were always keen to return for the excellent meals provided by the staff. There was warmth in the sun and we soon started seeing swallows, sand martins, house martins and the first wheatears of the year. Chiffchaffs were singing, swans and gulls were nesting but one of my highlights was to see and hear a skylark. It was a delight to see to have excellent views of greenshank, a group of avocets and many other birds such as redshank, Brent geese, shoveler and pochard. A walk in the woods was full of the perfume of *Viola odorata*, small patches of coltsfoot, daffodils and snowdrops and, on the dunes, the pussy willow was covered in pollen, so attracting bees. A barn owl hunting at night, a fantastic sunset and a short-eared owl gliding by the lounge before breakfast were memorable moments for all.

Our final day included a visit to Castor Hanglands, a National Nature Reserve. Here the wood anemones were in full flower and a nightingale was heard and seen by some. Finally we stopped in Stamford, a town which was declared a conservation area in 1967, where we had the opportunity to view some of the wonderful buildings.

A very enjoyable trip.

(For a fuller list of sightings, please see the website.)