



for birds
for people
for ever

The Heron



Newsletter - October 2005

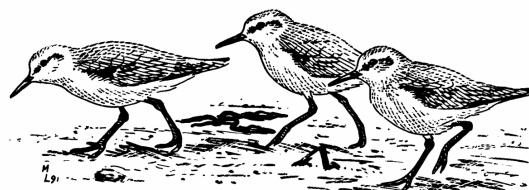
FOR YOUR DAIRY

Sun 23 October	Outdoor Meeting – NOTTINGHAM GRAVEL PITS A new venue from which to witness the autumn migration. Depart at 8.00 am from Duke Street Car Park for an all day trip.	Leader: Ray Evans 01625 432635
Sat 29 October	A National RSPB Event - FEED THE BIRDS DAY See page three for full details of a full day's entertainment	
Sun 6 November	Coach Trip – FYLDE COAST Depart at 8.00 am from Wilmslow Guild, Bourne Street, Wilmslow	
Sat 12 November	Tittesworth 50 Challenge See article on page three for information on this fun day out.	
Sun 13 November	Outdoor Meeting – MOORE NATURE RESERVE An excellent site for woodpeckers, woodland birds and wildfowl Depart at 9.00 am from Duke Street Car Park for an all day trip	Leader: Graham Palmer 01625 420179

GROUP OUTING TO LEASOWE AND THE RSPB INNER MARSH FARM RESERVE ON THE WIRRAL SUNDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 2005

Despite leaving Duke St. (just after 8 o'clock) in steady drizzle, we were most pleased to arrive at Leasowe in bright sunshine, there meeting up with those who had travelled directly, making up a party of 12 in total. Heading up from the Lighthouse car park to the sea front, we watched the incoming tide progressively pushing the sea birds off the sand banks.

As the banks were overrun, we walked along the front, and settled down for a quite productive sea-watch, getting a variety of birds, ranging from distant Skua and possible Merganser, to more immediate views of waders such as Ruddy Turnstone, Knot, Oystercatcher etc., the highlights being a pair of Curlew Sandpipers flying in to rest on the end of a groyne, and small flock of Sanderlings playing near the waters edge. A rather weary looking Guillemot (probably exhausted or sick) was swimming close by, and we were treated to the sight of a quite large grey seal in the water. Returning back toward the car park, we enjoyed a lunch in the sunshine, sat on the sea wall watching the world (and his dog) go by.



Sanderlings by Langman

After lunch we enjoyed a pleasant stroll around the local nature reserve, looking for passerines, where we saw flocks of Goldfinch and lovely views of a couple of stonechats.

Leaving the Leasowe area we headed off to re-group at the RSPB Inner Marsh Farm reserve where the overview of the reserve as we walked down to the hide in the sunshine was, as ever, quite splendid. We remained there to enjoy the sights of water fowl and waders, again being treated to a pair of Curlew Sandpipers. (Did they follow us from Leasowe?).

The sight of a large fox, walking along by the apparently unconcerned geese was a pleasant interlude. A total of forty seven species were recorded by the group, which pleasingly ranged from expert (not me!), to beginner, and a most pleasant and productive day's outing was enjoyed by all.

Gordon Howard

CHAT FROM THE CHAIR

DEAR Friends,

The majority of our summer migrants departed some weeks ago and, with the advent of autumnal weather, we can expect the first of our winter visitors to appear shortly.

We can all feel a sense of relief following last week's announcement that Macclesfield Borough Council have chosen Wilson Bowden to redevelop Macclesfield Town Centre. Although their plans involve demolition of the existing Senior Citizens' Hall, they propose to replace it with a multifunctional 'landmark' building. This new building, as well as providing all existing facilities, will have an additional first-floor exhibition area. The phasing of the whole development guarantees continuity of use with demolition of the existing building taking place only after completion of the new Senior Citizens' Hall and Arts Centre. This will be built on Churchill Way directly facing the current Exchange Street Car Park, which is to become the new Town Square. Work on this phase of the project is due to commence in January 2008 with completion by August 2009. On your behalf, I will continue to closely monitor developments relating to the Senior Citizens' Hall and keep you informed accordingly.

You will be pleased to hear that our recipe books have been 'selling like hot cakes'. So much so that we have had to do a reprint. If you haven't got your copy yet, now is the time to buy. 'The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group 25th Anniversary Recipe Book of Tea-Time Favourites', conceived, compiled and published by Trisha Thompson has already raised for the Group in excess of £300. Well done, Trisha and all who contributed recipes.

It can't have escaped your notice that it is The RSPB's 'Feed the Birds Day' later this month and, as usual, to promote this national event we have arranged activities for all the family. There is a feeder and birdfood making session in the afternoon followed by a showing of the film 'Winged Migration' in the evening. The aim of all this activity, of course, is to remind everyone that, as natural food supplies in the fields and hedgerows dwindle, our birds start to rely more and more on the food we provide for them in our gardens. In fact, birds are returning already to garden feeders; so now is the time to stock up on supplies of sunflower seed, peanuts and other nutritious items.

Ray Evans
Group Leader and Chairman of Committee

OCTOBER OUTDOOR MEETING AND WEEKENDS AWAY

This month's outdoor meeting takes us to the Nottingham area to visit The Attenborough Nature Reserve. A superb gravel pit development, becoming very popular with migrating birds and people alike. The Reserve has an excellent eco friendly Visitors Centre, incorporating a restaurant, shop and toilet facilities as well as educational areas for children. We aim to meet as usual at Duke Street car park at 8.00 am for an all day trip by car. Please contact either the trip leader Ray Evans or Ian Taylor if you require further information.

I am now taking names for both programmed weekend events in February and May 2006.

We plan to take a short weekend, Saturday and Sunday with one over night stop, to the Dumfries and Galloway area in February. Hotel accommodation has yet to be arranged depending on interest.

The second weekend will be a two night stay in the Mariners Hotel, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. I have already reserved a number of rooms at this hotel but registering your interest early will help me enormously to negotiate a Dinner / Bed & Breakfast package.

Please have a word with Lydia if you think you may be interested, unfortunately I am unable to attend tonight's meeting. Alternatively you can contact me by phone or email next week.

Ian Taylor
Outings Secretary

BRUSHES WITH WILDLIFE

We have received a very good response to our 'Brushes With Wildlife' art and photography exhibition. Over 50 children have entered the competition and their paintings and drawings will cause the judges great difficulty in choosing the prize winners. We have also received a wonderful selection of paintings and photographs on a wide range of British wildlife. Overall these pictures will produce a varied and excellent display in the Bollington Arts Centre. Please come along to the viewing sessions when tea and coffee will be available and you might spot the ideal Christmas present.

Sunday afternoons from 2.00pm to 4.00pm from 16 October to 13 November
Tuesday evenings from 7.00pm to 8.30pm from 18 October to 8 November

For further information please contact David Tolliday 01625 432105 or email art@macclesfieldrspb.org.uk

TITTESWORTH 50 CHALLENGE

Want to try something different? Why not come up to Tittesworth Reservoir on Saturday 12th November and try to find 50 species of bird – or as many as you can – in a ‘Bird Race’ organised by the Staffordshire Branch of the West Midlands Bird Club (WMBC). Teams, family groups and individuals are invited to join the WMBC for this fun event. Andy Lawrence, the event organiser, believes that, with a bit of legwork and also a bit of luck, 50 species can be found in a morning. Come and join the fun. Andy will be providing a checklist of birds and a map of the site. Prizes are on offer, donated by the WMBC and Severn Trent Water.

The event is **free** but, to add a little spice, there will be a voluntary sweepstake to predict the highest score for the day. If you would like to take part, then please arrive at about 9.30am, ready for a 10am start. The event will finish at 1.30pm. Please assemble at the large covered barbecue area near the visitor centre with notebook, binoculars and field guide at the ready. Please note that Severn Trent Water levies a small parking fee.

If you are unfamiliar with the site and its potential for birdlife, then why not obtain a copy of the latest Tittesworth Bird Report, available from Margaret and Tony Hayter’s sales table. ALL proceeds will go to Macclesfield RSPB Group funds. If you require more information you can ring Andy on 01782 253502 or, if it’s more convenient, then ring me on 01625 432668. If you’re coming, don’t forget to wear appropriate footwear and clothing. Let’s hope for dry weather!

Ray Perry

‘FEED THE BIRDS DAY’ FILM SHOW

Don’t miss this unique opportunity to see the spectacular award winning film ‘**Winged Migration**’ at Bollington Arts Centre on Saturday, 29 October 2005.

Avoid disappointment and get your ticket now !!!

The film chronicles the incredible journeys of a variety of birds in forty countries and each of the seven continents. Why not visit www.sonyclassics.com/wingedmigration/index_flash.html for a preview?

The evening will commence at 7.30pm with the awarding of prizes to the age group winners in the Junior Section of ‘Brushes with Wildlife’. However, to allow sufficient time beforehand for those of you who wish to view the splendid artwork and photographic exhibits, doors will open at 7.00pm.

Tickets are available this evening or by post from Gordon Howard, 67 Thirlmere, Macclesfield, SK11 7YJ at a cost of £3.50 (Adults) and £1.50 (Under 16). Cheques should be made payable to ‘The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group’. If applying by post, please enclose a stamped SAE or collect tickets at the door.

BIRDS DOING BEST BOAST BIGGEST BRAINS

Recently published research throws some light on the possible reasons why some farmland birds have been unable to adapt to the changes in farming practices over the past fifty years. Dr Suzanne Schultz of the University of Liverpool and her team suggest that brain size helps determine how well birds adapt to long-term threats to their survival. Their research shows that birds that have suffered the greatest declines such as corn bunting, tree sparrow and grey partridge have relatively smaller brains for their size than birds that have been able to adapt such as great tit, blue tit and magpie. These latter species have been able to adapt and survive because they were able to solve problems and change their lifestyles as their environment altered.

See www.rspb.org.uk/birds/biggestbrains.asp for further information.

PIGEONS SHOW WHITE FLAG TO PEREGRINES

Scientists in the US have shown that feral pigeons with white patches on their rumps are up to 50-times more likely to escape from a peregrine falcon attack than birds showing no white feathers. The researchers reasoned that the white patch might be an evolutionary adaptation that helped its inheritor to live longer and therefore procreate more. As a pigeon cannot outfly a peregrine falcon, its only means of escape is aerobatics. It is thought that the white patch somehow distracts the peregrine falcon during its 120 – 250 mph stoop enabling the pigeon to get away.

See www.guardian.co.uk/life/science/story/0,12996,1464654,00.html for further information.



Peregrine by Busby

Did you Know?

You would think tawny owls must have 20:20 vision to be able to fly around in the middle of the night, but in fact, their eyesight isn't much better than ours. Their secret is to know every inch of their territory like the back of their wing, so that they can fly from memory. It's their fantastic hearing that enables them to pinpoint their prey.



STOP CLIMATE CHAOS

Climate change now threatens billions of people across the world, particularly the poorest. By 2050, up to one third of species on land may be on the pathway to extinction, unless we take urgent action now.

Do you want to help?

If so, please logon to The RSPB website at <http://www.rspb.org.uk/climate> and add your name to the **STOP CLIMATE CHOAS** petition. What's more, you can demonstrate how seriously you take climate change by pledging to reduce your own energy use by adopting one or more of the suggested ways and means. If you want to know more about the campaign and why it's so important that you sign the petition look in the 'Get The Facts' section accompanying the petition.

RECYCLING BRINGS IN £117.30



Our Wildlife Explorers Group has just received a cheque for £117.30 for recycled computer ink cartridges and old mobile phones. Thank you to everybody who has helped with this recycling effort.

Please keep bringing your old mobile phones, computer ink cartridges, old binoculars, tea strainers, sieves and stamps to our meetings. They will all be made very good use of.



Cheshire Wildlife Trust Macclesfield & Congleton Group

Wed 2nd Nov. 2005 The Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve by Joy Frost of English Nature

Meetings held at St. Johns Church Hall, Earlsway, Macclesfield, SK11 8RS. Start at 7:30pm. Cost £2, including refreshments.

PLEA FOR HELP

The Group's day, this year, for manning the Christmas Card Charity Shop in Wilmslow Library is Wednesday 9 November.

Could you help for a morning or afternoon selling all charities cards and gifts. If so, please ring

Trish Thompson on 01625 526546

Or see her at Indoor Meetings - you'll find her slaving over a hot teapot!

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR COPY YET?

60 delicious recipes supplied by Macclesfield Group members and their families and friends - all tried and tested.

It will make a superb Christmas present for anyone who likes baking.

£4.50 at indoor meetings or send to

Trisha Thompson
6 Hawthorn Park
Wilmslow Cheshire
SK9 5BP

(Add 50p for postage)
tel: 01625 536546

RSPB MACCLESFIELD LOCAL GROUP
25TH ANNIVERSARY RECIPE BOOK OF
TEA-TIME FAVOURITES



Did you know?

Bird song at dawn carries 20 times more effectively than later in the day.

Please pass on a copy of this newsletter to any member or non-member of the Group that you know who may be interested

Health and Safety

In the event of fire or other emergency necessitating evacuation of the building, please leave in an orderly manner via the nearest available Emergency Exit or as instructed by a designated Committee member. Emergency Exits, indicated by the internationally recognised symbol of a 'running man' on a green background, are situated through the door at the rear of the hall either straight down the corridor or directly on the right through the main entrance with further exits to the right and through the door to the left of the stage.

If required, there is a first aid kit in the kitchen off the entrance corridor. (If you do have an accident, however minor, while here tonight please report it directly to a Committee member who, amongst other things, will ensure that details are logged in the Accident Report Book.)