



Supporting:

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
The Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland The British Trust for Ornithology
The Yorkshire Naturalists' Union The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
Butterfly Conservation The British Dragonfly Society

Registered Charity No. 503860



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2018



INDOOR MEETINGS PROGRAMME 2018-9

St. Robert's Centre, Robert Street, Harrogate (opposite Waitrose), starting at **7.30 pm**. Parking is either on the adjacent streets or, with their kind permission, in the Waitrose car park. Visitors welcome (fee £3).

10 October Progress with the “Wildwatch” Project

Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is home to spectacular, and in some cases, threatened wildlife including Curlew, Great-crested newts and Water Voles. We are working with volunteers, families, naturalists, students and others to gather information on over 50 species right across the AONB, We will carefully analyse this information and what we discover will help us decide how best to look after the land in the future.

(nb change of speaker, but subject remains the same) **John Altringham**

24 October The Mists of India

Birds, mammals and insects of Bharaptur.

Roger Parrish

7 November Fungi, or “Can You Eat it?”

Why fungi are important, how to make a start on identification.

Malcolm Greaves, Mid-Yorks Fungus Group Recorder

21 November Garden Birds

A talk on behalf of the British Trust for Ornithology beginning with an introduction to the work of the Trust and then some observations on helping garden birds and the reasons why they choose to be in your garden.

Mike Gray

5 December Nidd Gorge

The chronicle of a walk from the A59 at New Park in the West along the Nidd Gorge Footpaths via Knox/Bilton to Scotton/Knaresborough - encountering our wonderful Flora and Fauna *en route*.

Keith Wilkinson

9 January 2019

Rainforest on Four Continents

Impressions of flora and fauna of a variety of rainforests around the world; their diversity, status and future.

Nick Gaunt

23 January

Earthworms and their Balls of Calcite

Do you know that many earthworms release small balls of calcium carbonate (chalk, calcite) into the soil? In this talk I will explore why earthworms produce these balls of calcite, the effects that they have on soils and how we can use these balls to address a number of science challenges from tracking climate change to producing invisibility cloaks.

Mark Hudson, University of York

6 February

Wildlife of Sri Lanka

A fantastic two week trip in the southern end of the country during November 2016. We managed to see all the 33 species of endemic birds, also lots of mammals including leopard and blue whale, insects and reptiles.

Colin Slator

20 February

Planning for Wildlife

An overview of how Yorkshire Wildlife Trust approaches planning so that we can work for gains for wildlife through the planning system. Also an update on any recent campaigns or cases that we are working on.

Sara Robin, YWT planning officer

6 March

Wild Photography – Tales & Tails

Sharing techniques which will help you to improve your own photography. From to how to handle a 600mm lens while being charged by a bull grey seal to taking better landscapes by focussing 5 metres in front of you - there will be something for everyone, no matter what your level of experience.

Carl Watts

20 March

Bats

The enormous diversity of bats, arguably the most successful of all mammals; some of the world-wide research my group has done to better understand and conserve these amazing animals. Stunning photos, surprising facts, the latest science.

Professor John Altringham University of Leeds

17 April

Annual General Meeting

**HDNS DISPLAY at KNARESBOROUGH LIBRARY 29 October -2
November 2018**

Knaresborough Library will once again be hosting a display by the Harrogate & District Naturalists' Society during the October 2018 half term holiday. It will run from Monday 29 October until Friday 2 November. Details about the activities of the Society will be on show, together with application forms for any newcomers. As usual, there will be a short quiz with prizes for the children

If any members have information or images they would like to have on display, please email them to: Sonia Starbuck – soniastarbuck50@gmail.com.

Please also contact Sonia if you would like to 'staff' the display at any time. The library opening times are:

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday - 9.30am to 5pm

Thursday - 9.30am to 1.30pm

Friday - 9.30am to 7pm

Saturday - 9.30am to 1.30pm Sunday - closed

OBITUARIES

Isabel Crawford

Isabel Crawford, the Deputy Head of Harrogate Ladies' College for many years, died on 10 June, 2018, aged ninety. She was a member of the Society from 1962 until 2010, served several terms as a Council Member and Vice-President, and edited the Annual Report for a number of years. She was a lover of the countryside and natural history in all its aspects.

Neil Baker

Neil Baker was a member of HDNS from 2006, and also a keen fisherman. He was actively involved in the work at Farnham. He died suddenly in May, 2018, aged seventy-eight.

Peggy Haley

Margaret Edna (Peggy) Haley, 1927-2017, joined HDNS in the 1980s, moving to Austwick in later life. She was particularly interested in botany and was a very keen gardener. She served on Council from 1990-3, and as Archivist from 1991-8.

The Society sends condolences to family and friends.

FIELD TRIPS 2018-9

Tuesday 11 December

CHRISTMAS WALK

Leader: Colin Slator

Meet at Skelton village, outside the Black Lion, at 9.00am. Local walk for finches and buntings. If time allows, drive to Ripon Race Course, walk down the R.Ure (*not* the Canal), view an area of the new YWT Reserve. Drive to Staveley for lunch at the Royal Oak. After lunch, the option of a walk to Staveley YWT Reserve, for owls and perhaps a murmuration.

Lunch must be **prebooked** by **1 December**.

Contact Muff Upsall, mjupsall@btinternet.com 01423 340 694

Tuesday 8 January

**NOSTERFIELD LNR
and LINGHAM/FLASK COMPLEX (am & pm)**

Meet at Nosterfield car park 10 am (in cars). Chasing geese and other wildfowl. After lunch transfer to Lingham Car Park to explore the area to Flask.

Tuesday 12 February

**HARTLEPOOL, TEESMOUTH
and RSPB SALTHOLME (am and pm)**

Minibus trip. Booking required.

Meet at York Place Car Park Knaresborough at 8.30 am.

Tuesday 30 April

**GOUTHWAITE RESERVOIR, SCAR HOUSE
and ANGRAM (am and pm)**

Meet at Gouthwaite main car park at 9.30 am (in cars).

Looking for waders & spring migrants, stopping en route for raptors, Pied Flycatchers, Dipper. Scar House car park for lunch looking for Ring Ouzel, Wheatear, etc. A walk to Angram for those who so wish.

Please note the following precautions: stout footwear and suitable outdoor clothing should always be worn. Bring plenty of food and drink, with sun blocker and insect repellent when relevant. Members take part entirely at their own risk and are responsible for their personal safety and the security of their personal belongings. The vehicles, where used, will be a 16-seater with a hired driver. Various field guides will be available on most trips. Of course the weather can never be guaranteed, so some events may have to be altered slightly to work around any inclement precipitations! Also note that return times are approximate only.

FUTURE FIELD TRIPS

Are you a frustrated botanist or ornithologist? Are you one of the 100+ HDNS members who never come on the field trips? Perhaps you are a new member and have not yet sampled the delights of windy moorlands, wet picnics, very distant birds and very small plants. If so, hopefully you will give it a go this next year!

The various trips we have enjoyed this summer have hopefully offered something for everybody, whether their interests focus on fungi, birds, mosses or flowering plants. Venues have been on the doorstep or as far afield as Teesdale, Yorkshire Dales and the East Coast. Read the reports in this newsletter, or better still look on the website to see the full account and the photographs. You will notice that everyone appears to be having fun, there is a very friendly and informal atmosphere and there is always something to be learned. We are by no means all experts, sometimes we are able to use a professional leader, sometimes it's a "DIY" affair!

We would love to have suggestions for members' preferences, ideas for future venues, particular orders you would like to focus on – or perhaps you have a specific expertise that you are willing to share with the rest of us? Please get in touch with the field trip organisers, June, Kerry or Muff – contact details are on the membership card.



FIELD TRIP REPORTS 2018

The following reports are edited. The full versions, with photos, are available on the HDNS website.

RSPB FAIRBURN INGS RESERVE

1 May 2018

Leader: June E. Atkinson

Ten members made a good start with Reed and Sedge Warblers, a pair of Common Whitethroats choosing a nest site and an Avocet. House Sparrows were noted at the feeding station, and a few Greylag Geese with a Moorhen, while Blue and Great Tits were on the feeders. Along the streamside a Large Red Damselfly was found, Orange Tip butterflies were on the wing and Chiffchaffs were singing. A Willow Warbler gave good views and, once on the coal track, a Sky Lark and a Green Woodpecker were heard and an

Oystercatcher was at a pool. We had close views of five Black-necked Grebes in breeding plumage; Little Grebes and Pochard were also present.

Telescopes showed us Great White Egret and Spoonbill some distance away at their breeding site in the willows. A Cuckoo flew by then perched obligingly for us and a Bittern began booming from the reedbed. A single Egyptian Goose was found at Lin Dyke. Due to the heavy rainfall in this area recently, the water level was very high. Gadwall, Shoveler and Shelduck were among the ducks present, two Common Terns gave good views as did a Little Egret. From the willows, a Cetti's Warbler gave us a few bursts of song but remained elusive, as usual! Towards the canal bank a Willow Tit was seen by two lucky members. Garden Warbler and Common Whitethroat were present along the way and another Common Tern and Avocet were on Higson's Pool. On our return, Yellowhammer, Goldfinch and Greenfinch were added to the list and a singing Lesser Whitethroat was heard and eventually seen. After much sky-watching in the car park, a Common Buzzard and a Sparrowhawk were found and a Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen from the bridge — a fine end to the day.

Thanks to the weather and a great team effort by the members, a total of 75 species was seen.

UPPER TEESDALE

11 May 2018

Leader: Richard Campbell

Seventeen members met at the Bowlees visitor centre for a botanical field meeting to study the flora of the area. The walk was led by long-time HDNS member Richard Campbell who knows the area very well.

We walked behind the visitor centre along Bow Lee Beck to an old quarry. We found very many plants in a short space of time. Many were in their early stages of flowering as we were further north than Harrogate and at a higher altitude. To pick out a few we saw Twayblade, just at the two leaf stage but it is very distinctive and we saw hundreds of plants over the day. We also saw Common Spotted Orchid, Arum Lily, Wood Anemone, Barren Strawberry, Wood Forget-me-not, Marsh Marigold, Butterwort, Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage and Welsh Poppy.

We drove a couple of miles further west just the other side of the river from the Pennine Way. On the more acidic roadside verge we saw the distinctive silver leaves of Melancholy Thistle, also Greater Knapweed and Water Avens. We followed a track down to the River Tees. We saw Heath Wood-rush, Birdseye Primrose, Common Scurvygrass, Spring Gentian, Creeping Willow, Cowslip, Sweet Vernal-grass, Marsh Valerian, Early Purple Orchid and many more. There were Sand Martins by the river.

After lunch we walked from the car park by a wood. We found Great Wood-rush, Winter Aconite, Bluebell, Wood Sorrel, Common Whitlowgrass. Thyme-leaved Speedwell, Slender Speedwell, Globe Flower and Bitter Vetch, *Lathyrus montanus*. We crossed the river at a very interesting geological feature where the river washed down over rocks and small waterfalls to reveal a polished limestone platform revealing many fossils. We walked back along the river bank in the direction of the Wynch Bridge and Low Force where the plant life was verdant. We saw good numbers of plants we had already seen and one new one for the end of a great day - Goldilocks.

On the way home some of us stopped off at Eggleston Abbey where we were treated to the sight of thousands of plants of Meadow Saxifrage.

Many thanks to Richard Campbell for a really wonderful Field Trip.

Valerie Holmes

STAINBURN FOREST: NIGHTJARS & WOODCOCK 14 June 2018

Leader: Mike Smithson

Storm Hector blew itself out during the early evening to leave a perfectly calm night for the trip. The wild weather had greatly weakened the midge population which was a bonus for us, but the lack of moths, the food for Nightjars, was a concern. 16 members joined Mike Smithson for the walk up to the clear fell area. Before the sun went down Tree Pipits entertained us with their parachuting antics and as dusk gathered the Woodcocks began to rode. There were several sightings, quite a few coming very close to the group and giving excellent views of their distinctive profile and rapid wing beats. As darkness fell and the sunset faded, a single Nightjar gave us good views and started to churr quietly. There followed sightings of a pair sitting on a dead tree outlined against the sky. The churring started up again and in the increasing darkness a single bird was observed again outlined against the ever darkening sky. The track back to the carpark was thankfully made from limestone chips which showed up well in what by now was total darkness, approaching midnight. Thanks to Mike for leading.

ASHBERRY & ELLERBURN BANK 27 June 2018

13 enthusiastic would-be botanists set off through the tall vegetation at YWT Ashberry to the crystal clear stream fed by calcium rich springs which runs through the reserve. There were many plants typical of limestone marsh and grassland, the first we noticed being extensive patches of Marsh Lousewort; Marsh Valerian, Marsh Pennywort and Marsh Bedstraw were also found – it was marshy! There were abundant sedges such as Glaucous, Carnation,

Hairy and Bottle and at least four species of rush, all providing useful practice for those of us who were trying to improve our identification skills. Butterwort and Bird's-eye Primroses were plentiful but most not flowering.

At Ellerburn Bank we were met by the YWT site manager Kate Yates. This reserve is a small but stunning meadow which has never been interfered with by agriculture. We were impressed before we even went through the gate by the enormous and exotic looking Woolly Thistles which guarded the entrance. Kate described the management strategies, which included chasing the Butterfly Orchids around the meadow with anti-rabbit corrals, and showed us the Fly Orchids, slightly past their peak flowering. A huge list of other plants was accumulating – see website – highlights included Dropwort, Pyramidal Orchids, Musk Thistle and many beautiful grasses which were at their best, particularly Purple Moor grass and Yellow Oat grass.

The hot sunshine brought out a bonanza of butterflies – blues, skippers, marbled whites, a beautiful dark green fritillary and many others (see website). The site is also notable for reptiles but to see adders and slowworms we would have needed more time to search the dry stone wall.

Many thanks to Kate and the YWT, they do a fantastic job in saving and maintaining these important sites.

Muff Upsall

GRASSES, SEDGES & RUSHES AT STAVELEY NR

6 July 2018

Leader: Kevin Walker

This was Kevin Walker's identification workshop day at Staveley Nature Reserve, teaching us about grasses, sedges and rushes. These are topics which I had previously managed to avoid, by using the lame excuse that my botany book did not include grasses.

We began our foray in the orchard of the reserve where an astonishing array of meadow grasses were to be found. Although it was suggested that we should try and use the Latin names, it is difficult when the English names are so attractive – Sweet Vernal Grass, Meadow Foxtail and Golden Oat Grass all sound so Summery! We then progressed into the wetter(?) areas, walking through to Upper Marsh, to find rushes and sedges, which were plentiful despite the very dry weather. Of course a visit to Staveley would not be complete without including some orchids, so following on from grasses, sedges and rushes we then went in search of Marsh and Dune Helleborines, and even spotted one Bee Orchid.

Thanks to Kevin for sharing some of his extensive knowledge and for his patience in dealing with our questions.

Sonia Starbuck

NATIONAL MEADOWS DAY AT FARNHAM GP

7 July 2018

13 of us attended at FGP on this fine morning, and spread ourselves out around the lake in the marked areas previously mapped by the organising team, led by Sonia Starbuck. We proceeded to record all the flowering plants possible – fortunately, fresh from our training session on grasses, sedges and rushes with Kevin Walker on the previous day.

FGP is a particularly rich site – it has the largest species count of all the HDNS sites surveyed – and at this, the peak flowering season, it was a feast of flowers despite the preceding weeks of drought. Speaking for myself, it was a useful exercise to have to key out all those Willowherbs, St John's Worts & Forget-me-nots which I normally ignore!

We amateurs got nowhere near to the full species tally but we did record 197 plants between us, and we did enjoy ourselves. Nine plants appeared to be new or previously overlooked. Some of the areas were not covered – you just can't get the staff! – so the project may be continued in future years. See website for the list of plants recorded.

Muff Upsall

FERNS & HIGHER PLANTS: SKRIKES WOOD & HEYSHAW MOOR

Leader: Kevin Walker

14 July 2018

Upper Nidderdale was a known fern hotspot to the Victorians, who dug up specimens for their ferneries, unfortunately causing the decimation and even local eradication of some rare species in the process. However there was still much for the 14 members to see.

We walked to Fish Pond Wood for instruction from Kevin on the fern life cycle, morphological features, habitats and tips on how to identify common species, illustrated by the examples surrounding us. We then continued to Skrikes Wood for more unusual species including Beech Fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*) and Oak Fern (*Gymnocarpium dryopteris*). Interesting sedges, rushes and other plants were also pointed out.

The wood contains deep ravines which we negotiated after a somewhat perilous and exciting adventure, scaling collapsed giant boulders and decaying trees. Everyone delighted in observing Wilson's Filmy Fern (*Hymenophyllum wilsonii*) growing in its highly specialised habitat at the end of the assault course. Leaving the wood we sidetracked to see a large area of Chickweed Wintergreen (*Trientalis europaea*).

The final treat was a visit to Heyshaw Moor for a completely different flora including Lesser Twayblade (*Listera cordata*) growing in saturated sphagnum despite the weeks of drought. It survives in a tiny moorland island surrounded by species-poor grouse moor where managed burning prevents growth of

most plants. Thanks are due to Kevin for sharing his encyclopaedic knowledge and time so generously.

Hazel Mitford

NOSTERFIELD BIOBLITZ

5pm 18 July to 5pm 19 July 2018

'Nature Reserves are Not Enough!' says Chris Packham whose team selected Nosterfield Nature Reserve as one of 50 sites he visited in a ten day period, aimed at highlighting the extent to which nature is under threat by undertaking a 'bioblitz'. This audit of wildlife will create a bench mark, helping to measure the rise and/or fall of different species over a given time period. The Nosterfield event started with a Bat Walk and Gull Roost Watch on the Wednesday evening. There was a guided walk during the day on Thursday into the heart of the Reserve, which many enjoyed, opening of the moth traps from the previous night, pond dipping and a demonstration of microscopes by Grovers Optics. Another guided walk on the Quarry included the Heritage Lottery Fund and Local Nature Partnership initiative which is allowing LUCT to collect local seed and propagate wetland plants which were growing in the area around 5000 years ago, before mineral extraction was ever dreamt of. The hope is to recreate these Neolithic conditions and attract birds which would have lived hereabouts such as Little Bittern.

The Nosterfield team, headed by Simon and Jill Warwick with an amazing set of volunteers smashed last year's BioBlitz total with two hours to go. Members of the North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre did a sterling job collating the total number of species identified by 5pm at the end of the day as an amazing 816 with some more specimens still to examine and classify. Subtotals: 321 plants, 89 birds, 212 Lepidoptera, 122 other invertebrates, 12 mammals, three amphibians and 57 other species. All totals are requested to be in by 10 August nationally, when there will be further publicity about the audit.

Well done to all the team and volunteers and thanks to Chris Packham for his early morning inspirational team talk.

Sue Coldwell

RIBBLEHEAD QUARRY

1 August 2018

Our day started with Colin Newlands giving us a brief history of this quarry. Colin is Natural England's Senior Reserve Manager for the Ingleborough NNR, and we were delighted that he had offered to lead us for the day. In 2000 English Nature (now Natural England) took over the care of this former limestone quarry, which had been worked from 1943 until the 1960s. Since

then the quarry has been managed as a Nature Reserve, with minimal management and tree planting, in order to watch over the progress of natural regeneration.

We were quickly absorbed by the diversity of plantlife at our feet and, as usual, had not moved far from the parked cars by lunchtime. In many areas the soil was thin, yet numerous species seemed to be thriving: from tiny Autumn Felwort (*Gentianella amarella*) to sizeable stands of Soapwort (*Saponaria officinalis*) reaching 70-80 cms in height. The recent rainfall had replenished the ponds and Colin pointed out the Northern Spike Rush (*Eleocharis mamillata*) (Nationally Rare), growing with the Common spike rush (*Eleocharis palustris*). Towards the western edge of the quarry, with nesting ravens 'croaking' at us, we found Rigid Buckler Fern (*Dryopteris submontana*), a single Rustyback Fern (*Asplenium ceterach*), numerous Bird's-eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*), and Mountain Everlasting (*Antennaria dioica*) to name but a few species found.

By the end of the day our plant list totalled 157 species. We had a great day and certainly benefitted from Colin's knowledgeable leadership. The trip was a very enjoyable way to celebrate 'Yorkshire Day'. **Kerry Morrison**



FARNHAM NEWS

During the first week of **April**, a Redwing was present on 1st, there were 15 singing Chiffchaffs, seven Song Thrushes and a Peregrine Falcon on its usual pylon. An Osprey flew north in the morning and one was seen again at mid-day. A drake Red-crested Pochard was present several times from 5th until the end of the month and 13 Whooper Swans flew north on 8th. The first Willow Warbler was singing on 11th followed by a Blackcap four days later. The Great Crested Grebes had one egg in the nest, Sand Martins were arriving at the wall and a Common Tern flew through on 20th. The heavy rainfall during the first half of the month caused rising water levels around the islands which resulted in the Great Crested Grebes' nest being lost. Four pairs of Oystercatchers were on nests and the Great Crested Grebes were trying to breed again; a pair on the North Lake was having more success with a nest containing four eggs. Sand Martins were absent from the wall for most of the month, which was not surprising as a total of 62mm of rain fell during the month, this being detrimental to all insect-feeding birds.

On 1st **May**, with rising temperatures, the Sand Martins were excavating sand from the wall. Six species of warbler were present on 5th. Ten pairs of Black-headed Gulls dominated the tern platform, denying the Common Terns a place on it. A single Common Sandpiper on 5th was the only passage wader to be recorded during the month. Bird Census Day, which took in the whole area around both lakes, was on 13th. Thirty-six breeding species were recorded, including five species of warbler – a pair of Reed Warblers not arriving until 19th, the day on which a Hobby flew over. May is usually the month when birds are passing through on the way to their breeding grounds but this year proved to be the exception; there were no south-easterly winds, and winds from the west are of little value to migrating birds. Ten species of butterfly were recorded including Brimstone, Common Blue and Red Admiral. The first breeding record of Large Red Damselfly occurred on 19th, when the first Four-spotted Chasers of the year were seen. Three Otters were recorded during the month.

On 3rd **June**, a pair of Egyptian Geese was seen, the Mute Swans had six cygnets, the first broods of Mallard ducklings appeared and Reed Warblers were established in the *Phragmites* bed. Family parties of Blackcaps, Garden Warblers and Tree Sparrows were noted on 6th. Since the otter fence was erected around the North Lake, Great Crested Grebes have bred successfully with a pair having four young. A pair of Little Ringed Plovers appeared on 15th but could not find a suitable breeding site. A pair of Common Whitethroats was successful with young seen. As the Black-headed Gulls on the tern platform began to leave with their young, a pair of Common Terns which had been around for weeks, managed to find a space to breed on the platform. Sand Martin young were on the wing by the end of the month but only one pair of Tufted Ducks was seen with five young – not a good breeding season for them. A Sedge Warbler was present on 23rd, an uncommon warbler for the site. The pair of Great Crested Grebes on the South Lake had a third attempt with a new nest on 30th and a pair of Little Grebes took up residence after being absent as a breeding species for four years. The Secretary from the Rifle Club came to inform us of a large number of orchids on their site, prompting us to go along to investigate. On 26th June, 580 Common Spotted Orchids, 93 Twayblades and six Bee Orchids were counted there by Valerie Holmes. This was an exceptional count of orchids in such a small, confined area.

The Common Terns hatched two chicks on 6th **July** and, two days later, the Great Crested Grebe had one chick on its back. A Common Sandpiper was seen on 9th, with several records during the month until 29th. A second pair of Great Crested Grebes on the North Lake was seen with two young on 17th.

The pair of Reed Warblers was feeding at least two young. One of the tern chicks fell off the platform onto the island but was not seen again after two days. A charm of 50 Goldfinches was feeding on thistle seeds, 26 Swallows were sitting on wires and 13 Mistle Thrushes were counted. A Black-tailed Godwit flew over on 23rd. The Little Grebe was seen with four chicks and the one remaining Common Tern young was flying; unfortunately, there was no sign of the Great Crested Grebe chick by the end of the month. A total of 19 species of butterfly occurred during the month and, thanks to a visit by our Recorder, a new species, Purple Hairstreak, was recorded which was long overdue.

On **Members' Day**, 15th July, many thanks were due to Mike Smithson who led the butterfly walks and found 14 species including Small Skipper, Brimstone, Small Copper and Holly Blue. David Alred, who was up against a drying out pond, found 12 species of dragonfly, including Ruddy Darter, Black-tailed Skimmer, Banded Demoiselle and several Emperors ovipositing. David shared his knowledge of this mating process with members as the dragonflies obliged on the day. Richard Stobbs had to make several visits before the event in order to place 25 mammal traps. The traps produced five Common Shrews, ten Bank Voles and one Wood Mouse, the small numbers reflecting the very hot conditions. Moth trapping was very successful with five traps operating; the total count was 100 species of Macrolepidoptera and 30 species of Microlepidoptera, Beautiful Hook-tip and Scarce Footman being the star moths, not to mention the thousands of Mayflies which invaded the traps. Many thanks to the moth trappers Jill Warwick, Charlie Fletcher and Whitfield Benson who set the traps in various areas on the site according to the habitat, to bring in the most diverse range of species. We are most grateful to Jill who stayed on to show members some of the most interesting species that had been caught.

The botanical walks were led by Valerie Holmes and Sonia Starbuck who produced a good list in spite of the hot weather which had reduced the flowering period of some plants. Labels naming the plants were put in place beforehand by Valerie, thus making it easier to find the more hidden species such as Eyebright, Betony and Harebells.

A most enjoyable day for those who were present, even though it was so hot!

A Greenshank was present on 2nd **August**, with a Green Sandpiper next day which was asleep when a party of Greylag Geese dropped around it, whereupon it flew off never to be seen again. Goose numbers had begun to increase at the end of July with 130 Canada Geese and 238 Greylags which together occupied all available space on the islands, preventing any visiting waders from dropping in to feed and rest. After a brief visit by a Greenshank

early on 5th, the temperature steadily rose to 26°C, a family party of Green Woodpeckers was seen and a Hobby gave excellent views later in the day as it hunted over the lake for prey. The pair of Reed Warblers breeding in the *Phragmites* bed was carrying food to their fledged young on 12th. Looking back to earlier records, it is apparent that they had had a second brood, which is a more common occurrence in the south. A Little Egret, present on 18th, had orange colour rings on both legs but, unfortunately, they could not be read because of the tall vegetation on the island. Little Egrets have been ringed at Leighton Moss. Two Spotted Flycatchers, the first for the year, were seen on 19th while a Green Sandpiper and four juvenile Goosanders dropped in. There were three Green Sandpipers on 20th and a Swift flew over. A pair of Great Crested Grebes bred for a second time on the North Lake rearing three young. Lapwing numbers increased with 420 on 25th in the company of 100 Starlings. Three holes in the Sand Martin wall were still occupied and 11 Chiffchaffs were present as the temperature fell to 16°C. Common Blue butterflies were on the wing with a count of ten of a second brood on 4th, Small Copper and Painted Lady were also seen and a Migrant Hawker dragonfly was present. The botanists found an excellent display of Blue Fleabane, and Red Goosefoot was re-located due to the low water level leaving muddy margins; the last record was in 1990.

On 1st **September**, two Black-tailed Godwits dropped in for a while until being chased off by Lapwings and over 200 Swallows were counted as they moved through during the day. The day after, a large hirundine flock appeared ahead of the approaching rain; this was made up of an estimated 200 House Martins, amongst which were numerous Swallows and Sand Martins. Nine Chiffchaffs were counted on 3rd.

June E. Atkinson

Honorary Warden and Chairman , Management Committee.

FARNHAM MANAGEMENT DAYS 2018 – 2019

SUNDAYS

16 September	14 October	18 November	9 December
13 January	17 February	17 March	7 April

Please meet at the hide at 10 a.m.

MOTHS

After a very slow start to the year due to the “Beast from the East”, the “Mini Beast from the East” and goodness knows what else, the mothing season only really started when the first lawnmowers were heard calling in the middle of April. What followed was way beyond expectations with the hottest summer for years resulting in moth traps bulging at the seams with winged visitors.

With over 600 species already reported at the time of writing, the final total is likely to be one of the best ever. So far three new species of moth have been added to the HDNS list. Willow Ermine looks superficially like many other of the “Small Ermine” moths but has some subtle shading in the middle of its white spotty wings. It was reported from three separate sites in our area this year, and along with records from many other parts of the county, these moths must have been part of an influx, as this moth can at times be migratory.

Clepsia senecionana is a moorland moth and it is surprising it has never been recorded in our area. One was netted at Guisecliffe in May. The third new moth was a big surprise - a Dotted Footman turned up at Hutton Conyers in July. This species is resident in small numbers in the Norfolk Broads but records away from there are thought to be migrants.

Many species of moth wandered widely on warm nights and turned up in unusual places: for example, Fen Wainscot which appeared at several new sites. Dusky Thorn appeared in huge numbers, Beautiful Hook-tip numbers continued to expand, Small Blood-vein continued its expansion north and west into VC65 and Beautiful Snout continued to increase its range with records at Guisecliffe and Sharow. The 24 hour “BioBlitz” at Nosterfield was a huge success with over 1100 species recorded. This included 214 species of moths attracted to light – and other species found flying by day or in their larval stages. This is comfortably the biggest number of species ever trapped on one night in Yorkshire, beating the total of 208 at Strensall Common in 2015. Traps were set up across the reserve in a variety of areas and the totals show what a wonderful mosaic of habitats has been created at this exciting site.

Late autumn is usually a good time for migration so it will be fascinating to see what arrives. It has been a good migrant year so far across the county with some exciting sightings. Humming-bird Hawk-moths seem to have been reported widely across our area and we may be heading towards a record total. So although the nights are likely to get considerably cooler, do keep that moth trap running. You just don’t know what might be in it next morning!

Jill Warwick & Charlie Fletcher

MAMMAL INTRODUCTIONS

Two records for 2017 started me thinking about which mammals are native and which are not in our area. The first record was for Raccoon Dog, one of which was seen at Leighton. It was bred in huge numbers in Russia for the fur trade and also released into the wild for the same reason. It is now spreading across Northern Europe. Where the one at Leighton came from is a mystery and hopefully there was only the one animal. The other record was a possible sighting of Muntjac Deer. Muntjac were brought from China to Woburn Park in Bedfordshire in the early 20th century. They are now widespread and increasing in number and range owing to deliberate releases, and escapes from Woburn.

Fallow Deer have long been kept in deer parks and were first brought to Britain during the Roman period. These first deer became extinct after the fall of the Roman Empire and were reintroduced in the 11th century and provided a valuable source of venison for the nobility. The fashion for deer parks declined leading to escaped deer that led to today's naturalised population. Sika Deer were introduced in 1860 into parks in Dorset where it is now common with small populations elsewhere. Locally they are kept in Studley Deer Park but there are no current records of a wild population in our area.

Brown Hares were introduced into Britain in the Iron Age and are now widespread. American Mink were released from fur farms in the 1960s and spread quickly having a devastating impact on the native wildlife. Grey Squirrels were introduced in the 1800s as an ornamental species and subsequently escaped, and are now widespread to the detriment of the native Red Squirrels. The Ferret is a mammal that is now becoming quite common in our area in certain sites.

Other introduced or escapee mammals are:-

Chinese Water Deer, Feral Goat, Red-necked Wallaby, Wild Boar, Black Rat, Edible Dormouse, Black-tailed Prairie Dog, Raccoon, Siberian Chipmunk, Mongolian Gerbil, Himalayan Porcupine, Golden Hamster, Greater White-toothed Shrew.

While most of these (if not all) are unlikely to be recorded in our area – you never know!!

Richard Stobbs, Mammal Recorder



WHY A NATURALIST SHOULD ALWAYS LOOK TWICE

Almost three years ago, I was exploring our new garden, trying to identify what plants we had inherited. There was one shrub I had never seen before, with dark red stems, rather nondescript leaves, a suckering habit, and flowers in June. The flowers were long and drooping, salmon pink and orange - not a favourite colour combination of mine. I was interested to see if it was attractive to pollinators, but soon realised that it wasn't visited by any bees - the flowers seemed too long. Also, by the end of the summer, it looked a mess; flowers and leaves were shrivelled and blotchy, and there seemed to be dark sticky deposits. I wasn't sure why, and I mentally marked its card for removal.

However, I had identified it as *Phygellus capensis*, the Cape Fuschia or Figwort. I cut it back hard, and forgot about it, until this scorching hot summer. Then one day I noticed insect activity round the bush; could it be attracting pollinators after all? On a closer look, there were two species of what looked like wasps. They didn't seem to be after nectar or pollen though; the smaller species was too fast, but I took a picture of the other.

Thanks to the Internet, I soon had an I.D. My 'wasp' was in fact a Figwort Sawfly, *Tenthredos scrophulariae*, smartly marked in black and yellow, with striking orange antennae and trailing legs, but of course no 'wasp waist'. That was the clue I'd missed. These Sawflies were looking to lay their eggs on the Cape Figwort.

The other smaller insect was a Mason Wasp, *Symmorphus gracilis*, that was hunting the larvae of the Figwort Weevil, *Cionus hortulanus*. I couldn't see any of the weevil larvae, which are apparently slug shaped and covered in very shiny sticky 'glue', resembling a droplet of tar. However, that, and the depredations of the Sawfly larvae, explained why my shrub was looking so ratty and dirty for most of the year.

So for the moment, the Cape Figwort stays. It may not be a thing of beauty, but thanks to my second look, I've found that it is supporting at least three invertebrates that I had never heard of before.

Ginni Darbyshire

REFRESHING THE WEBSITE

We are planning to refresh the design of the HDNS website in the next few months. Your views about the site, how you use it and what you would like to see improved will be key to a successful redesign. Look out for an invitation to participate in a survey about the website that we will announce both by e-mail and on the website in October.

Nick Gaunt

HARROGATE NATURALISTS' FORUM

Get the very latest wildlife news from our area, recent sightings, reminders of HDNS meetings, members' photos (and even sound files!), advice, explanation, good natured discussion and humour. The more members who join the Forum the more useful it becomes as a means of communication within our Society. So, if you have use of a computer you really must visit http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/Harrogate_Naturalists/ and sign up.

Contact **Robert Marshall** for more information:
telephone 504186 email: hdns.wildwatch@btinternet.com

DISCOUNTS

Black's 10% discount on fully priced items.

Cotswold & Leeds North Face Store 15% discount (excluding sale goods, gift vouchers, carriage) in store, online or mail order. Quote the affiliation/promotional code AF-HDNS-W3.

Bass & Bligh Flexible discount, including photo printing and services.

Valerie Holmes, Hon. Treasurer

MISCELLANY

CALL FOR RECORDS

All members – please send your observations and records for 2012 to the appropriate Recorder (see membership card for details). Unusual sightings, unusual habitats, early or late sightings, interesting observations – include time and place, and make sure that what you see becomes part of our cumulative records of the local wildlife.

WEBSITE PASSWORD

The password is available on the membership card for the current year.

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

If you would be happy to receive the newsletter by email (saving the Society at least a pound a time, and Nature a small tree) please contact Richard Bion at richard.bion@talktalk.net

TEA AND BISCUITS

Thank you to Cynthia and Robert Chandler and all the volunteers who have kindly made the tea and coffee at our meetings over the winter months. It's very pleasant having a chat over a cuppa and a biscuit after the lectures. If you would like to help out please contact Cynthia.



FROM THE EDITORS

Thanks to Brian Darbyshire for line illustrations.

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Material for the **Spring newsletter** should be sent to Valerie Holmes by **14 March 2019**

email: valerieholmes@hotmail.co.uk

ADVANCE NOTICE: INCREASE IN SUBSCRIPTIONS 2019-20

Subscription increase from 1 April 2019

Your subscription to Harrogate & District Naturalists' Society has remained the same for 10 years. In order to balance the income and expenditure we need to increase the subs from 1 April 2019 as follows: Single £20.00 Joint £30.00

Please contact your bank to change your standing order. As your subscription will have already been paid for 2018-19 by the time you receive the Newsletter, you can contact the bank right away to have the correct sum in place for April 2019.

If you do electronic banking you will be able to make this change yourself when you log into your account.

The standing order form can be found at the end of the newsletter.

HARROGATE & DISTRICT NATURALISTS' SOCIETY
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