



# Hay Bridge News

*The Newsletter of the Hay Bridge Nature Reserve Society. Registered Charity No. 501384*

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## SUMMER 2019

### Warden's Report for the Society Newsletter Summer 2019

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A very mixed summer weather-wise, drought and flood, storm and tempest, hot and cold, but it would appear that there have been conditions to suit most wildlife at least some of the time; because we have had a wildlife-rich summer so far. Our summer visitors have all arrived more or less on schedule:

April Birds – Ospreys (5th), Swallow (6th), Willow Warbler (11th), Tree Pipit (14th), Cuckoo (22nd), Garden Warbler (29th)

May Birds – Wood Warbler & Swifts (4th), Spotted Flycatcher (14th), Honey Buzzard (23rd)

PLUS - Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, Stonechat, Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler, Goldcrest, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Wheatear, Crossbill, Hooded Crow, Peregrine, Hobby, Red Kite, Curlew, Lapwing, Water Rail and of course all our regulars – too many to mention individually.

The Ospreys raised one chick this year (fledged 20/7), the Lapwings raised at least two, but despite a few early sightings, it doesn't appear as though the Honey Buzzards nested in the Rusland Valley this year.

The later warm spell was good for butterflies – as well as the inundation of Painted Lady, we have had Green and Purple Hairstreak, Holly Blue, Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Orange Tip, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral, Brimstone, Comma, Large Heath, Silver Washed and Dark Green Fritillary, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Skipper and Small Copper. Not such a good season for dragon and damselflies due to the long, cold wet spell, but there was some recovery later.

Very good numbers of Grass Snake with many young ones early in the season and a good number of large adults that appear to have taken up summer residence in our terrace. Good numbers of Adder for those lucky enough to spot them, but they are never as visible as their 'cousins'.

The first red calf made an appearance on 18th June and was followed by quite a few more, all of which are growing well. No sightings of a Roe Deer kid this year, and our young rabbit has disappeared – whether it went looking for friends or was taken by a predator will remain a mystery.

The meadows have been a picture this summer, the plug planting was only about 33% successful (probably mainly due to the deer) but the extra seeding is helping them to continue to improve year on year. The hay crop has been taken now from all but Littlelands; this has been left in the hope of having a few fine days together for the brush-harvesting of seed, but things are not now looking too hopeful and we will probably have to wait until next year. All the new hedges and trees are doing well, and a group of Society volunteers spent a day removing plant guards from the Littlelands hedge to allow more light and help the plants to spread at the base. Fungi season and the Rut coming up.....



**Its dark out here but there are some birds somewhere!**

### **2019 DAWN CHORUS WALK**

The Dawn Chorus Walk is one of those events where you draw breath and then say, “Yes, I can do this....waking up at 5.30 in the morning is just great!” But it is, when the reward is to walk through the Hay Bridge woods listening to and identifying the various birds that are also up an about marking their territory or making a claim to a mate. There is something magical about an early start to the day combined with a purpose other than just getting somewhere first! Listening to nature, absorbing the calm of Hay Bridge in the company of others and learning something new from Chris, who is such a store of knowledge, makes it all worthwhile. And then on return to the Study Centre the chance to compare notes, talk and share a hot drink and bacon butty make the effort all worthwhile. Try it one day!



**Gail Armstrong and her rescued bats**

### **GOING BATS AT HAY BRIDGE!**

Despite torrential rain 36 Members turned out on a Saturday evening to listen and learn about bats. Gail Armstrong's presentation is always fascinating and full of information about the over 1800 species of bats in the world. We learnt about the good, the bad and the downright ugly (fortunately none of which live in the UK!). Gail then zoomed in on home territory with lots of detail about our own bats, where they live locally (over 900 in one colony alone not far from Hay Bridge) and how we can help bats by making our gardens more bat friendly by planting honeysuckle. We were then able to see some real bats for ourselves, as Gail had brought with her some of her rescued bats. Apparently cats are the worst offenders when it comes to bringing down bats and Gail explained she had been busy all year rescuing sometimes as many as 10 bats a day. Finally, even though it was still raining, we all went outside with bat detectors and managed to identify several bat species that were out and about (perhaps with bat umbrellas?).

### **IDENTIFICATION SHEETS**

A series of sheets that help identify insects, flora and fauna on the Reserve are being produced by several of the team that are currently working on the Moss Survey. These sheets will be laminated and the intention is that the sheets can be taken out by Members on a walk around the Reserve to help them identify what they see in the various Reserve habitats.

Andrew Musgrave and Paul Bainbridge have been working hard on producing these sheets and are to be both thanked and congratulated for producing such an immensely useful resource.

### **TICKS**

**While there have been no incidents at Hay Bridge so far this year, ticks are about so it is worth heeding this advice from the Lyme Disease Action Group.**

Check your skin carefully after a walk – especially moist protected areas like the groin, behind the knee and the hairline of small children. Ticks can be brought into the house on clothing and pets and may find you later. Check your dogs after a walk and leave your outdoor clothes outside or brush them off well.

## HBNRS VOLUNTEER GROUP

Finding a day when a group of us can meet is a challenge. Getting one with perfect weather an achievement! Four of us met in mid-July and though rain in the night before prevented us from applying preservative to the hides; we were able to remove a good number of plant guards from the newly planted hedgerow at Littlelands. We set up a steady rhythm, feeling very pastoral, surrounded by wild flowers and butterflies. A perfect day for it in the most beautiful place.

If you would like to do some volunteering at Hay Bridge please email [janechaloner@btinternet.com](mailto:janechaloner@btinternet.com). There is always something to do!

## 2019 AGM

The AGM was opened at 2.30pm by Roderick Smith, President of the Society, who welcomed all those attending the meeting. Although numbers were slightly down on last year the Study Centre still seemed full. Robin Cope, Society Chairman, thanked all those who had given their time free of charge to keeping the Society going over the last year. The Treasurer, Cathy Johannesen, reported on both income and expenditure for the year, noting that memberships now stood at 817. The question of putting a cap on total memberships was raised and Robin advised that this was actively being considered by the Trustees and Committee. The formal part of the meeting ended with a report from the JSCF Warden and the election of the Committee and officers for the next year. The current Committee and officers were all duly re-elected. A full AGM report is available on the Society website.

Attendees then enjoyed tea, sandwiches and cake as well as a chance to talk. This was followed by an excellent illustrated presentation by Richard Tanner of the National Trust about dragonflies in the South Lakes area. Finally a bumper selection of prizes were drawn for the raffle, which raised £46 for the Society.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Events Programme for the rest of 2019

**14 September** – Guided Autumn Walk

**22 September** - Fungal Foray

**Guided walks** are led by Chris Berry, who is a Society committee member and professional Lake District guide with a wealth of knowledge of Hay Bridge Nature Reserve and an infectious passion for wildlife.

**The Fungal Foray** will be led by local expert Helen Speed.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Please be aware that the Society Committee have now decided that new membership applications are temporarily suspended with effect from 15th July 2019.

This is due to memberships reaching an unsustainable level with regards the facilities and resources of the Reserve. Updates will be posted to Society website when we re-open the application process. We apologise for any inconvenience and thank you for your support!