



Hay Bridge News

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

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WINTER 2019



THE NEWSLETTER TEAM WOULD LIKE TO WISH A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!



White Moss and distant fells on a wintery day

News from the Reserve.....

“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, close-bosom friend of the maturing sun;” so wrote John Keats on 19 September 1819, two hundred years ago; as descriptive of autumn now as it was then, and we have had some such glorious days. Of course, that is only part of the autumn story; we also have the gales and heavy rain, and there have been no shortage of those this year either, although thankfully we have not been as affected as other areas

further south. As I write this, we can probably expect to see the robin in the barn - hiding his head under his wing, poor thing!

However, nature ploughs on regardless. The flora is shutting down for the winter, the fauna is taking advantage of the heavy autumn crop of berries and nuts to lay down stores for the winter, the summer migrants have gone, the winter ones have arrived or are arriving, and the hibernators are hidden from view.

The single Osprey chick fledged successfully and is long gone to warmer climes. Despite the lack of sightings over the summer, a single young Honey Buzzard was sighted over the valley, so the parent birds nested successfully somewhere, and the occasional balmy late-summer days enabled a late flush of butterflies, including the usual 'drunk and disorderly' clouds of Red Admiral around the fallen fruit.

The Red Deer rut has been reasonable with several medium-sized stags around. Several spent quite a lot of time in Fogmire and Sammyfield so we got good sightings there before they drifted round to Littlelands and Pool Meadow overnight – we could still hear them though, as well as those further up the Mosses.

Flocks of Fieldfare and Redwing have been taking advantage of the heavy berry crop, and a substantial flock of Redpoll have been around, 100+ according to one sighting logged in the book.

Woodcock are being sighted regularly, as are a family of Stonechat, and the Kingfisher has returned to his winter-feeding territory – the pond and runner below the Study Centre. Of course, all our usual residents are around, and once the feeders go out, they will be easily watchable.

Winter, of course, is the best time for spotting most resident wildlife, without the obstruction of vegetation, so remember – there is no such thing as 'bad' weather, just the wrong clothes! We look forward to seeing you soon.....

November 2019

WHY NOT JOIN IN AT HAY BRIDGE

THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO AT HAY BRIDGE!

ENJOYING EVENTS, VISITING THE STUDY CENTRE OR JUST SOAKING UP THE PEACE AND CALM OF THE RESERVE.

BUT HOW ABOUT JOINING IN AND VOLUNTEERING TO HELP WITH SOME OF THE THINGS THAT NEED DOING TO ENHANCE AND PRESERVE THE RESERVE?

IT MIGHT BE OFFERING TO UPDATE OUR PHOTO LIBRARY, OR HELPING TO TIDY UP THE HIDES. THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH THE SECRETARY VIA EMAIL

The Rusland Show



It is always a delight to be at one of the Lake District's many local shows and the Rusland Show is one of the best, with a cross section of traditional activities from stick making through to Cumbrian wrestling via fiercely contested WI cake making. The Society has taken a stand at the Show for the last few years and it is a great opportunity to meet Members as well as our 'neighbours' in the Rusland Valley. For a change there was no rain this year to interrupt the afternoon's events (despite the rain in the days leading up to the show - which did however make the show field rather damp) the weather was good all day and the Society team on the stand were kept busy.

Haybridge Natural History Group – SSSI Raised Bog Survey.



Our group are celebrating 4 years of regular surveys (plants, birds, mammals, reptiles and insects) and this year, thanks to a slight change in the survey procedure, we have been more successful in sighting some of the rarely sighted insect species on our Key Species list. For the first we have recorded Green Hairstreak butterflies and Bog bush-crickets (BBC) out on the moss. Both of these insects are very well camouflaged and we needed to use a Bat detector to track down the one and only BBC we have actually seen. Only slightly easier to spot is the Raft Spider, the UK's largest spider, and although a few have been seen each year, this year we have recorded them more frequently. These spiders hunt on the surface of the water but they can also stay underwater if they feel threatened. Immature spiders moult as they grow and the greenish colour to the legs on this one would indicate that it is freshly moulted. Now that winter is upon us the adult raft spiders will have died but, incredibly, the immature spiders will overwinter on the moss ready to mature and breed next year. Just how do they survive in such a cold inhospitable space, we are not really sure?

There are still 3 key insect species that we haven't yet recorded during a survey: The Emerald Damselfly, and two day-flying moths, the Emperor moth & Northern Eggar Moth. Does this mean that they are not present within the SSSI or have we just failed to record them? If you have seen them in the area of the SSSI this year then please let us know. Better still, come and join us – no previous experience required just a love of all nature and a sense of humour. (If you have a spider phobia you will be excused spider hunting).

Fungal Foray 2019



Mushrooms, mushrooms everywhere but not one that could be ate!

Helen Speed, our fungal expert, has sent this report about the 2020 Fungal Foray. "We had a full complement of attendees for the Foray and luckily the torrential rain stopped about 30 minutes after the start time so that we could get out. The children raced about and brought all manner of nice finds. We didn't cover the usual course, instead heading for the car park (thinking it's easier to beat a retreat given the forecast), then through the gate. We really found plenty of fungi so there was no need to travel further afield. I think the most unforgettable find was a half-hatched stinkhorn, which lived up to its name!"

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Outline Events Programme for 2020

Below are the proposed events for 2020. Details will be confirmed on the website and details will be sent by email if you have registered your email address with us. Please note that events are limited to members and numbers are restricted. **ADVANCE BOOKING IS RECOMMENDED.**

- 18th January – Tracks and Signs
- 14th March - Spring Walk
- 25th April – HBNRS AGM
- 16th May – Dawn Chorus
- 11th July – Hay Bridge in Summer
- 8th August – Bat Evening
- 20th August – The Rusland Show (provisional date)
- 12th September - Autumn Walk
- 26th September – Fungal Foray