



Hay Bridge News

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

Hay Bridge Nature Reserve Society, Bouth, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 8JG Tel: 01229 861727

Email for Membership: membership@haybridgereserve.org.uk

Email for Reserve matters, Warden, bookings: haybridge@supanet.com

Email for Secretary and HBNRS Events: n.jc1@btinternet.com

SUMMER 2016

JSCF Warden's Report for the Society Newsletter Summer 2016



One minute brilliant sunshine...next minute gunmetal sky and torrential rain.....cool north-westerly wind, typical April weather.....except it's July!

The Red Deer are out grazing the fields with a handful of calves chasing around strengthening their legs, the first one was seen on 30th May. We also have a pair of Roe twins, as well as a single kid. A superb sighting of an Otter for some lucky members from the Crooked Dale Hide. It approached along the runner, got out, rolled in the grass and preened itself – engaging the members for a good ten minutes. There have also been some opportune sightings of a Stoat.

The Ospreys returned and began the season with fishing, nest building and mating. Unfortunately, a third bird has disrupted their behaviour to such an extent that the pair have given up the idea of breeding for this year. We'll keep our fingers crossed for 2017! The first sighting of a Honey Buzzard was on 1st May, and two were seen together soon after. The Pied and Spotted Flycatchers have turned up again and bred successfully, with the other migrants appearing in good numbers – Chiff Chaff, Blackcap, along with Garden, Wood, Willow and Sedge Warblers, Cuckoo (11th May) and Redstart. The Lapwing (at least two pairs on Hay Bridge Moss) have raised at least one chick, with adults feistily seeing off the Ravens and Crows.

Butterfly numbers have been low but sightings of Orange Tip, Peacock, Tortoiseshell, Green Hairstreak, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown and Skipper have been recorded. There was an

incredibly diverse haul from Butterfly Conservation's moth traps, much increasing the species count for the Reserve. Full details will be available in the Study Centre in due course.

It may have been a poor year so far for butterflies, but it has been good for amphibians and reptiles. There have been thousands of young frogs and toads everywhere, and a lot of grass snakes; the largest shed skin found measured well over four feet. Adders are seen frequently, along with Slow Worms and Common Lizards.

Wild flowers abound and the hay meadows are improved again this year, but the most exciting discovery so far has been the Coralroot Orchid; 50+ specimens seen alongside, and even on, the boardwalk. We have been led to believe that this Orchid has only previously been known on two sites in the north-west – Sandscale dunes and Ribblehead quarry – unless you know different of course!



2016 DAWN CHORUS WALK

A Willow Warbler spotted on the Dawn Chorus Walk

Photograph by Ged Gill

I arrived at 5:20 for the 5:30 kick off, and saw 40 to 50 deer in one of the fields and an osprey seeing off a heron. Good start! There were about 20 people on the walk, including Chris.

As far as the walk is concerned, Chris started by explaining that he was not an expert on bird song (so he was on safe ground compared to the rest of

us!). He then pointed out a whole variety of birdsong, expertly describing each song, doing his versions of impersonations.

We heard blackcap, chiffchaff, robin, wren, song thrush, mistle thrush, lesser-spotted woodpecker, green woodpecker, tits (especially great tit), cuckoo, wood pigeon, willow or garden warbler, blackbird ... I'm sure there were otherswe saw a tree pipit.

Chris explained that the purpose of the calling or singing is to mark out and claim territory as well as attracting a mate. He also pointed out that whilst the singing is species specific, many birds have alarm type calls when they sense danger, and generally all species recognise each other's 'panic button' call (poorly phrased, but you know what I mean!) e.g. when a sparrow hawk is around (or when a cat catches a bird in the garden). Unfortunately the trees were getting a little too leafy to see most of the birds we heard due to the canopy of leaves.

There was a Roe Deer watching us from across the road as we returned towards the Study Centre, and while the birds did go a little quiet for a while, they restarted when the sun came out again.

Chris encouraged everyone to 'take everything in!' Stop - look, listen, smell..... He pointed out in a couple of places where there was the musky whiff of a fox, and where there had been recent deer activity.

Anyway back at the Study Centre we found two bird's nests on the wall of the centre and enjoyed 30 minutes of chat, tea, coffee and kit-kats.

Chris' enthusiasm, expertise and persona is great in this type of situation, and I could tell by the attendees' interest and response that everyone enjoyed it despite the early start.

Ged Gill

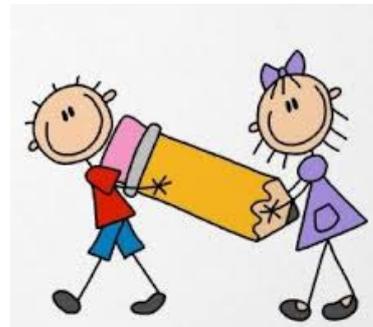
Some comments from others who attended the Walk:

"I attended the Dawn Chorus walk last Saturday with Chris and had a fabulous morning. The weather was perfect and I really enjoyed the walk through the woods and the information and entertainment that Chris delivered. It was the first time I had attended anything like that and I feel I am now hooked!!" Sally Ellis

"I so enjoyed the walk on Saturday, I knew absolutely nothing about birds (my thing is fungi) and now I know next to nothing. But I can spot a Willow Warbler when it's singing." Helen Speed

DEADLINE FOR CHILDREN'S CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION ENTRIES EXTENDED TO END OF DECEMBER 2016

We are delighted to say we have extended the final entry date for our competition to the end of December so that young writers and schools can make the most of their Summer and Autumn visits. We're really looking forward to some fun stories, poems or even limericks. The winning entries will be published in the Spring Newsletter, and don't forget there are prizes of £50 for winners and £25 for runners-up. Full details on the website under news and events or pick up an entry form from the study centre when you come to visit.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

We would like to remind those Members who don't already pay by standing order that due to postage costs and volunteer time involved we are no longer sending out annual subscription renewal reminders and that it is the responsibility of each Member to make a note of when their subscription is due. If you prefer to make the switch to standing order, an authorisation form can be downloaded from the website (part of the Membership application form which can be detached) or one can be sent to you on request. Thank you.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Events Programme for 2016

Below is the list of events for the rest of 2016. Details are available on the website and will be sent by email if you have registered your address with us. Please note that based on previous experience and because the guided walks have become so popular, for everyone to really benefit numbers are limited to approximately 20 members and their friends, so please do book your place as soon as you can.

6th August – Bat Evening

20th August – The Rusland Show

10th September – Guided Autumn Walk

October/November – Rut Walks on the Mosses

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.

Rut Walks: These are guided by Keith Loxam, the JSCF Warden. The Rut Walks are extremely popular but dates are still to be confirmed, probably late in October or early November, dependent on the start of the Rut. Please advise Nick Chaloner (n.jc1@btinternet.com or 015395 34943) if you would like to be included on the mailing list for the 2016 Rut Walks.

Fungal Foray: Unfortunately this year fungal expert Dr Mike Hall cannot lead a foray. We wish him well for a speedy recovery and hope we can hold this event next year.

NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

Committee Member Bernie Young reports on just some of the progress made by the Natural History Group



The Group completed three animal surveys in the month of May, thanks very much to Barbara, Hilary, Ken and Meg. Hazel, Hilary and I completed the first one for June. It was HOT, HOT, HOT!

The early Dragonflies were making the most of this sunny period. The Four-spotted Chaser, Large Red Damsel, and Golden-ringed dragonfly have been recorded. But most impressive (but not on our list because they are not normally found at acidic sites) were the Broad-bodied Chasers who were very busy chasing and perching in and around the main drainage ditch by the big 'tractor' bridge.

Above: *Four-spotted chaser (top) and Broad-bodied Chaser (male) on the same perch. This photo does not do justice to the width (or pale blue colour) of the body of the broad-bodied chaser compared to the Four-spotted chaser. Both have dark wing bases but the broad bodied-is much darker and the Four-spotted has yellow at the base of the wings.*

It took quite a time for us to get close enough to identify them and it was difficult to distinguish the female four-spot from the female broad-based in flight. We also recorded in 'others' the very lovely 'Beautiful Demoiselle' damselflies.

More help needed: It would be wonderful to have some more volunteers to help carry out the surveys. People who have had previous experience of ecological monitoring would be particularly welcome but anyone who is keen on Natural History and would like to be part of the group should please contact Bernie Young on 01229 587391 or young@hillview345.wanadoo.co.uk

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.

2016 AGM

The AGM was well attended although numbers were slightly down on last year. It's always a good time to come to Hay Bridge as it's a chance to meet the Trustees and Committee of the Society as well as hear a full update on the previous year's activities. There was an excellent presentation by Richard Tanner of the National Trust about his role as Tree Warden in the South Lakes area and then tea and cakes provided an interlude before a bumper selection of prizes were drawn for the raffle, which raised £44 for the Society.