



Linkline

Summer 2011, Issue 38

Newsletter of the Gainsborough Area Group of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust



Your Area Group – Who Does What

At the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 28 April the majority of officers and committee members were re-elected en bloc, but once again there were no nominations for the post of Chairman. Vice-chairman, Jean Blades, agreed to

continue to hold the fort, as she has done so cheerfully and efficiently for the past two years, but Jean already has many other commitments, and although she is a mistress of multi-tasking, she would much prefer to have a more minor role.

It was with regret we said goodbye and farewell to Raffle Organiser Ann Corringham as she prepared to move to the Grimsby area. Ann, and her late husband Peter, have been stalwarts of the Area Group, joining soon after its inception in 1975 and both served on the Committee in various posts, apart from the period when they and their family lived at Great Limber. Ann's willingness to help, reliability and smiling face will be greatly missed and we wish her well in her new, though possibly temporary, home at Keelby.

The good news came when Dave Stockley, who earlier had so kindly offered to undertake the electronic publication of Linkline - this is his second issue - also agreed to become Publicity Officer. Thank you, Dave. Can you hear the sighs of relief from both the Programme Secretary and the Editor??

The 2011/12 Officers and Committee are:

Chairman	Vacant
Vice-chairman	Jean Blades
Secretary & Linkline Editor	Joy Bannister
Treasurer & Programme Secretary	Linda Woodward
Sales/Membership/Mailing Officer	Hilary Harris
Birdfood sales	Clare Holmes
Publicity Officer	Dave Stockley
Refreshments Officer	Vacant
Door Warden	Graham Bannister
Raffle Organiser	Vacant
Reserve Manager (Scotton Common)	Roly Barber
Committee member (will do almost anything!)	Richard Williamson

Please give the vacant posts your consideration. If you feel you could do the raffle or see to refreshments but don't wish to be on the Committee, that's fine. These posts can be ex-officio. However we have only 2 Committee meetings a year which are friendly social gatherings and there is no pressure to take on extra tasks. Go on, give it a try! Volunteer!

Contact Joy on 01427 628457 or e-mail her at gjban786@btinternet.com



Notes From An Uphill Garden: We are very fortunate to have two Area Group members living in the uphill residential area of Gainsborough who are keen and knowledgeable observers of wildlife. Their garden, managed with wildlife in mind, backs on to some old mixed woodland. Here are some of their sightings:

18 March: Two Treecreepers chasing one another round the trunk of an oak, followed by flight out of sight. Unsure whether they were courting or settling a boundary dispute!

3 April: Bee Fly on the wing, hovering in front of Primrose or Forget-me-not flowers and feeding on the nectar via its long, rigid proboscis. Its round, fat body covered in tawny fur does indeed resemble that of a Bumble Bee but it is a true Fly (Diptera), with one pair of wings instead of the 2 pairs that bees have.

9 April: Orange Tip, Green-veined White, Peacock and Holly Blue butterflies all on the wing and benefiting from the unusually warm weather, one imagines.

11 April: Buzzard circling overhead was driven off by two Carrion Crows.

15 April: Female Blackbird collecting mud and fibrous roots from the edge of the pond on several occasions, clearly busy with nest building. Blue tits repeatedly collecting hair and teased-out, natural string fibres we had put out for them.

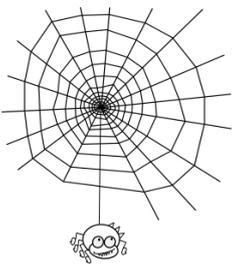
19 April: First sighting of Speckled Wood butterfly. Hundreds of Long-horned Moths active about the hedge and in the trees above. These small moths, the males of the species with very long antennae, have a habit of dancing vertically up and down in large groups during daylight hours, resembling the behaviour of mosquitoes and midges. There seem to be many more of them about this year than in previous years. The caterpillars feed on leaf litter.

25 April: Large Red Damselfly on the wing. First sighting of Hornet, coming to drink at the pond and no doubt using some of the water in making paper pulp for its nest. Male and female Blackcaps came to the pond together in the early evening, bathing at the same time.

30 April: First Cuckoo call, heard some distance to the east.

Very many thanks for this diary extract. We would be pleased to hear from anyone else who keeps a wildlife diary with similar interesting recordings. I was surprised not to receive any other reports of the 'first cuckoo' - perhaps they were sent instead to The Times, which traditionally notes this sign of spring on its letter page! Incidentally, we first heard a cuckoo in Laughton on 20 April, calling early in the morning in the grassland area to the east of the village. –

Ed



Websites: With more and more people having access to the internet, here are just a few sites of interest that are well worth a look.

<http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/> - Loads of detail here:

- Lincolnshire reserves,
- ID guides for butterflies, moths, orchids etc. (under species)
- building nestboxes, wildlife gardening, injured animals and who to contact (factsheets)
- countryside events

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/b/beckinghammarshes/index.aspx>

Latest news from RSPB Beckingham Marshes (watch out for our talk and visit early in 2012)

<http://trentvale.wordpress.com/>

News of happenings from Trent Vale Landscape Partnership

<http://www.paulhobson.co.uk/>

Website of our November speaker – stunning photographs and be sure to look at the 'awards' section!

Our thanks to Programme Secretary Linda for providing this information

Indoor Meetings - Dates For Your Diary



WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER: Otters, water voles and other wildlife, from an Internal Drainage Board perspective. Chris Manning is back to tell us about the creatures he meets in the course of duty.

WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER: Wildlife Watch to Wildlife Warden - Matthew Blisset has grown up with the Trust and we'll hear about his adventures on the way.

WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER: We're heading west tonight when Paul Hobson gives an illustrated talk on Derbyshire Wildlife.

All indoor meetings are held at Morton Village Hall and start at 7.30pm. There is usually a raffle, bird food sales and other fund raising items. Everyone is welcome whatever your age and whether members or not. Admission is by donation (minimum £1.00) which includes tea/coffee and biscuits. See you there?

Programme Secretary: Linda Woodward, 24 Cromwell Ave, Lea, Gainsborough.

DN21 5HX Tel: 01427 614915 E-mail: L.Woodward@virgin.net



Field Trip To Thurlby Wood

Michael Barke, walk leader, writes: Seventeen members visited the privately-owned Thurlby Wood, near Gainsborough, on 7 May, by kind permission of the owner, Mr Colin Watkin. Colin himself kindly showed us round and started by explaining that he had realised a long-held ambition to acquire his own nature reserve when he was able to purchase the wood on his retirement a number of years ago. Thurlby Wood

comprises 80 acres of semi-natural ancient woodland which Colin explained had been clear felled in 1951 and allowed to regenerate. Fortunately the then owners had not planted any conifers and following natural regeneration the wood now consists of mainly standard ash trees with some oak and silver birch, and an under storey of hazel coppice with dogwood and some spindle. A smaller plantation, Top Fox Covert, at the side of the main wood, some 15 acres, was somewhat different in character, having a more sandy and acidic soil and contained oak and hazel with some sweet chestnut, beech and holly.

The woodland has a very impressive list of flowering plants, including ancient woodland indicators such as Wood Anemone, Primrose, Early Purple Orchid and Woodruff. We were of course too late to see early flowers such as the Wood Anemone but we were treated to the lovely sight of sheets of Bluebells mixed with drifts of the white Wild Garlic, the colourful Yellow Archangel, the deep blue-purple of Bugle, the nodding, pinkish Water Avens, its close relative Wood Avens, with which it hybridises, the rose-purple of Early Purple Orchid and the rare and curious Herb Paris, with a single, strange, greenish bloom with a black, plum-pudding centre held above a quartet of leaves.

In the rides and clearings we saw Orange-Tip, Speckled Wood, Green-veined White and Comma butterflies and a Broad-bodied Chaser Dragonfly. Colin explained that management efforts so far had been to widen and clear the rides to encourage these species, and others.

One member found on the ground an abandoned nest of a Long-tailed Tit. The group wondered at the marvellous construction, a ball of moss and grey-green lichen with a small entrance at the top, lined with many tiny feathers and held together with a net of cobweb over the outside. Sadly the nest had been raided, Colin thought perhaps by a squirrel, which had torn a hole in the bottom. Birdsong around us as we went indicated the presence of Chiff-chaff, Blackcap, Wren and Robin. Colin told us that Nuthatch and Tawny Owl are also present.

Returning via the main ride members saw the leaves of many Common Spotted and Marsh Orchids which promised a good show in June and a spike of the green-flowered Twayblade orchid was found.

Many thanks to Colin Watkin for kindly letting us visit his delightful private nature reserve.



What You Have Seen: We are always interested to know what members have seen (and heard) in the way of wildlife in their gardens or as they travel around the countryside. Here are some of your recent reports:

* About two weeks after the Thurlby Wood botany walk owner Colin was monitoring some bird boxes when he found a very young baby roe deer. It tottered unsteadily towards him so that he had to back away. Aaaaah! What a magical experience. Colin, this must be your reward for all the hospitality you have extended to the Gainsborough Area Group!

* A rider in Laughton Forest reports seeing a lesser spotted woodpecker on a tree and then on the wing. Greater spotted woodpeckers are common in the Laughton area but their smaller cousins are not so frequently seen.

* A quail was heard in a barley field near Scotter at the beginning of June. This summer visitor has a characteristic call 'quic-ic-ic', often interpreted as 'wet-my-lips', and is more usually heard rather than seen as it lurks in rough grassland and cereal crops. It is reluctant to be flushed, preferring to hide or run from danger, its flight covering only short distances, low over the ground.

* Towards the end of May 3 otters were seen on Messingham reserve. Latest thoughts indicate these may be a female with two juveniles. Marsh harriers were also seen but there was no evidence of them breeding at that time.

* A female Great Crested Newt has been spotted in an Upton farm pond - sadly this poor lady has lost part of her tail, although this does not appear to trouble her!



Success! Do you remember the report on Heather Procter's swifts in a previous issue of Linkline and how she was using a special swift tape recording in the hope of luring them back to her outbuildings at Upton again this year? Happily the swifts are back and have been seen regularly entering the barn under the pantiles.



Bird Food Sales:

Our local distributor is Clare Holmes, on 01427 613128. Please note supplies and prices are subject to availability and change.

Weight	Peanuts	Mixed seed	Black sunflowers	Niger seed	Sunflower hearts
Kg	£	£	£	£	£
2.5	4.75	2.50	4.00	5.25	5.25
5	8.75	4.00	7.25	9.00	9.50
10	-	-	-	-	-
12.75	-	-	17.50	-	-
20	33.00	15.00	-	34.00	36.00

Please send your wildlife sightings or other info to the Editor, Joy Bannister, 01427 628457 or gjban786@btinternet.com



Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Banovallum House, Manor House Street,
Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 5HF

Tel: 01507 526667

Fax: 01507 525732

website: www.lincstrust.org.uk

email: info@lincstrust.co.uk

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