



Linkline

Spring 2013 Issue 42

Newsletter of the Gainsborough Area Group of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust



GAINSBOROUGH AREA GROUP NEEDS YOU!!

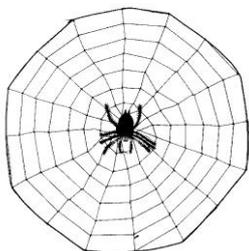
The Gainsborough Area Group's Annual General Meeting and Supper will be held in Morton Village Hall on Wednesday 24th April, starting at 7.30pm. This will be followed by an illustrated talk by a representative from the Idle Valley Nature Reserve at Retford which we shall be visiting in May (for details see Dates for your Diary on P4).

Please don't be put off coming to this final indoor meeting of the season thinking you will have to sit through lots of tedious reports and other business. Gainsborough Area Group prides itself on brevity and democracy where AGMs are concerned – and usually all is done and dusted in under a quarter of an hour. The sales stall that evening will feature books and quality magazines, not necessarily on a wildlife theme.

The current Committee members are all willing to stand for re-election though some of the multi-taskers would be only too pleased to share their roles. For instance Secretary and Linkline Editor Joy Bannister would be pleased if there was a volunteer to take over organising refreshments – and please note this is not a task exclusively for female members! We usually have plenty of willing helpers to prepare and serve refreshments - and wash up - on meeting nights but could *you* be responsible for bringing along the tea/coffee/biscuits etc. ? Expenses are, of course, paid so you will not be out of pocket. Incidentally there's no obligation to be a Committee member in this instance, although the Committee holds only 2 meetings a year, usually in January and September. These are very relaxed, informal and socially enjoyable occasions where team-work and mutual support prevail.

Meanwhile we are still without a Chairman, although Jean Blades, Vice-chairman, kindly continues to front the indoor meetings and chair Committee meetings. Could you take on this role? If you feel you can help at all get in touch with Jean or Joy as soon as possible, please – and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that *you* are helping to keep *your* Area Group active and successful.

Contact Jean on 01427 838325, or Joy on 01427 628457 or e-mail her at gjban786@btinternet.com



Gainsborough Area Group On The InterWeb!

www.gainsboroughwildlifetrust.webs.com

The Gainsborough Area Group is now in the digital age. We have a WEB SITE to provide more and up to date information for you about the Trust's activities in Gainsborough and Lincolnshire.

Its success and value depend largely on it being used, so please use it. There's an excellent gallery of photographs taken by our members, reports from our outdoor meetings, past and current copies of Linkline, material from our guest speakers, links to other local wild life resources as well as Twitter and Facebook links from Lincolnshire HQ with lots of live news, photos and comment.

We welcome your ideas and suggestions for improvements, and we need more visitors to feature in Google search results, so get surfing and use the website to send in those suggestions...

...or failing that, email gainsboroughlwt@gmail.com!



Notes From An Uphill Garden: a further extract from the diary of two Area Group members who live in uphill Gainsborough. Their garden, which they have designed to attract wildlife, backs on to some old mixed woodland.

2012 Autumn/Winter 2012/2013

28 Sept – Two Small Tortoiseshell butterflies feed on flowers of *Verbena bonariensis* in the front garden. These days it is unusual for us to see one of these insects here, and rarer still to see two.

29 Sept – A tawny orange Comma butterfly suns itself on the gravel path. Later a male Tawny Owl hoots while we finish dinner in the conservatory in the half-dusk.

8 Oct – Several Blackbirds in the garden, feeding on Hawthorn berries. One decides to spruce up in the bird bath recently re-positioned near to the hedge but manages to oust nearly all of the water in a lengthy flurry.

19 Oct – Two female Pheasants in the garden. One stretches up to peck at a low-hanging, transparent red berry on the Honeysuckle. We have seen fewer Pheasants this year, perhaps because it was a poor breeding season as a result of the wet spring.

29 Oct – Autumn colours have developed well. Wild Strawberry and Geranium leaves a fiesta of green, yellow and intense red. Hawthorn and Honeysuckle berries have already attracted considerable attention from Blackbirds, but the orange-red Wild Rose hips and translucent red Guelder Rose berries are always left until last.

18 Nov – A Hedgehog trots briskly from the hedge, past the garage and down the drive in broad daylight, with the pre-occupied air of one who knows exactly where he is heading. Sure enough, he turns without hesitation into the neighbours' drive and disappears into their back garden. We realise that he must be going to the dried cat food that the neighbours leave for their pet whilst they are out, and that this is a well-rehearsed mission.

2013

1 Jan – Primroses and Pulmonaria in flower. The Primrose earned its name (which derives from *prima rosa*, meaning first rose or flower) from this habit of precocious blooming and in fact it puts up a flower or two at a time throughout most of the autumn and winter.

6 Jan – A fat, bright green caterpillar is discovered, curled up under a tuft of moss dislodged when sweeping the drive. It is placed in the shelter of dead leaves under the hedge.

12 Jan – Wren forages in the ivy on the wall with rapid, darting movements as it searches under leaves. It is able to find enough purchase in the rough surface to cling directly to the brickwork. The morsels it finds are too tiny for us to discern, even through binoculars.

21 Jan – A Magpie flies silently across the blank, white sky, its monochrome matching the snow covered landscape below.

26 Jan - A Redwing forages on the ground in the woodland margin and ditch and then briefly enters the garden before flying off. The snow continues to thaw, revealing the pink flowers, cheerfully unharmed, of winter heather and the unfolding flower stems of a white Lentern Rose.

28 Jan – A male Blackcap flits along the hedge. We are used to hearing its bubbling call in the wood in the spring and early summer but have never before seen one here at this time of year. The Woodland Trust website notes that in the 1940s there were about 20 reports annually of Blackcap overwintering in Britain, whereas now the RSPB estimates that around 3000 of these warblers come here at this time, increasingly from Germany and north-east Europe.

Once again, many thanks for this beautifully descriptive view into a fascinating garden! We would love to hear from anyone who keeps a similar wildlife diary, but perhaps in a different type of location. - Ed.



WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN...

...Winter reports from Area Group members

A Heapham member reports flocks of Golden Plovers and Lapwings on Sturgate airfield; also a pair of Buzzards are frequently seen flying overhead. When snow was lying on the ground tracks made by 5 deer were to be seen on the edge of the village.

At Susworth a garden on the Trent bank has been host to a flock of 14 Bramblings as well as Yellow Hammers, Siskin, Reed Buntings and what the garden owner describes as 'a real treasure' – a Lesser Redpoll.

A vixen appears to have made a home in a woodpile in a Loughton orchard. Can she be responsible for the 'offerings' of doggie toys which appear, inexplicably, from time to time on the ground under the fruit trees?

WILDLIFE AT STRAWBERRY FARM - *Richard Williamson writes:*

Following the wet year of 2012 when many birds had difficulty in rearing their young, our Barn Owls produced 5 families, but the numbers per nest were very low, producing only 10 young altogether.

Watching a Barn Owl hunting on one of our fields, the owl was seen to dive on prey, when suddenly out of nowhere, a Buzzard followed the owl to the ground, caught, killed it and carried it off.

We haven't seen many Barn Owls during the winter, but we shall tell better when we check the boxes in the near future. We have seen no Little Owls since the bad winter 2 years ago.

We think our Grey Partridges have produced about 50% of their usual number, as hatching time was so wet. We had a similar number of coveys, but the number per covey was about half the usual. This is quite good compared with national statistics.

STURTON'S DIAMOND JUBILEE WOOD

On a damp Saturday morning in mid-November about 80 enthusiasts turned up to plant the 3 acre Parish Field at Sturton by Stow with 1,350 broad-leaved trees. The weather improved as the morning progressed and by 12 noon all trees of 14 different species were in the ground surrounded by a tube and stake. At the end of the month Sturton Junior School completed the planting with another 150 trees. This will create a living memorial to our Queen's 60th Jubilee in the village.

ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY RESTORATION

In 2011 Newark Internal Drainage Board trialled drain bank restoration using coir rolls - coconut matting rolled up. These were staked to the ground and the space behind the roll infilled and graded. The rolls will prevent erosion and bank collapse. The added bonus is that already planted into the rolls are water loving plants including Water Mint, Purple Loosetrife, Reeds and Sedges. The process looked successful and was repeated on a further section of drain in 2012. The added vegetation that this has established will hopefully favour Water Voles and has already attracted a good number of Brimstone Butterflies.

[Thank you to Sturton by Stow members Rodger and Alison Brownlow for the above 2 items. - Ed.]

Dates For Your Diary - INDOOR MEETINGS



WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL: AGM and Supper followed by a presentation on the Idle Valley Nature Reserve, Retford by a representative of the Reserve.

SALES STALL: Pre-read books and quality magazines (on a sale or return basis, please).

WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER: We start the new indoor season with a searching question: "What else can you do with a nest box?" Chris du Feu reveals all!

All indoor meetings are held at Morton Village Hall and begin at 7.30pm. Admission is by donation at the door (minimum £1.00) which includes tea/coffee and biscuits. Raffle, sales table and good company.

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY 8 MAY: A walk around the Idle Valley Nature Reserve, Retford.

Meet at the Rural Learning Centre/Visitor Centre car park, North Road, Retford for a 6.30pm start. (Note – the Centre will not be open.) Please ring 01427 614915 for directions if necessary.

WEDNESDAY 24 JULY: A visit to the Gelder Group Environmental Project at their Sturton by Stow headquarters.

Meet at Gelders' car park for a 6.30pm start. We will walk through the different habitats that have been created and along the bank of the adjacent River Till.

PROGRAMME SECRETARY: Linda Woodward, 24 Cromwell Ave, Lea, Gainsborough DN21 5HX

Tel: 01427 614915. E-mail: woodentops@darter.plus.com



Bird Food Sales:

Our local distributor is Clare Holmes. Regular customers are still welcome to call at her home as before, but if you wish to buy bird food from the stall at indoor meetings please pre-order from her in good time - 01427 613128 - and she will bring your order to the meeting. In the past Clare has often lugged quantities of bird feed to meetings, sales have been poor ...and she has had to lug the stuff home again. By pre-ordering you will save Clare much time and effort.

Weight	Peanuts	Mixed seed	Black sunflowers	Niger seed	Sunflower hearts
Kg	£	£	£	£	£
2.5	6.75	3.00	4.15	5.30	5.50
5	12.50	5.25	7.30	9.20	10.25
20	-	20.00	26.00	-	40.00
25	55.00	-	-	42.00	-
Fat Balls	30p each				
Charcoal	4.75 per bag				

Please note supplies and prices are subject to availability and change.

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



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