

Grimsargh Wetlands Newsletter

Summer 2019



Welcome

Dear Member,

Welcome to your Summer Newsletter! A great deal has happened since our last Newsletter, with the emphasis on outreach and fund-raising – you can read all about it here. Summer is, of course, the best time to see the incredible diversity of insect life on the Wetlands and we would encourage you all to visit and make the most of the expected (weather permitting!) butterfly and dragonfly extravaganza! Two important dates for your diary are: Saturday 22nd June - Grimsargh Field Day (the Trust will take part in the parade and will have a stall) and Wednesday 3rd July - the Trust's Annual General Meeting – all members invited!

With best wishes,

The Trustees

News

BBC – North West Tonight visits the Wetlands

Although it seems a long time ago now, the highlight of the early Spring was the visit to the Wetlands, on Thursday 14th February, of the BBC's North West Tonight team. Their visit was blessed with wonderful weather and coincided with the return of the first Curlew to the Wetlands, providing a magnificent backdrop to the day. Presenter Annabel Tiffin and her cameraman spent the day talking to, and filming, volunteers at work on the Wetlands. Annabel also joined in with the willow clearance work and, as trustee Andy Small said, proved to be a 'Natural'.



It's a wrap! Presenter Annabel Tiffin (holding her 'Wetlands Mug' mementoes) and cameraman with volunteers and trustees after the successful completion of filming (photo by Geoff Carefoot).

The report finally aired on Friday 28th February. It was shown on both the lunchtime and evening shows and proved to be a wonderful 'showcase' for the Wetlands with lots of positive feedback from viewers.

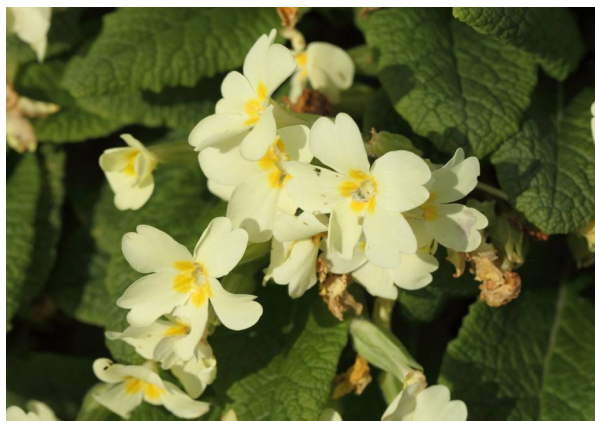
Wild Flower Walk – Mothering Sunday

On Sunday 31st March, over 70 people took part in our Wild Flower Walk. Trustees David Hindle (Trust Chair), Andy Small, Lesley Walker and Mike Fisher each led groups around the site. For many families, this was their first visit to the site. In addition to following the public footpath, areas of the site, normally closed to public access, were opened up. This allowed everyone the opportunity to explore the site in full.



Trustee Mike Fisher (far right) leading a group on the Wild Flower Walk (photo by Lesley Walker).

Despite the ‘bracing’ wind, the walks were a huge success with large numbers of spring flowers on show. Perhaps the most memorable were the huge numbers of Wild Primrose, on the south-facing banks of the site, with plenty of Lesser Celandine, Wood Anemone, and Coltsfoot also in evidence.



One of countless clumps of Wild Primrose in the early Spring sunshine.

The only disappointment was that we were just one day too early to see the first of the Early Purple orchids in flower.

After the walks, everyone returned to Grimsargh Club where there was food for all.

Many thanks to everyone who took part in the ‘Jacob’s join’ and brought food to share.

The event was a tremendous success, introducing many families to the site and raising over £150 for the Trust through donations and an enthusiastically subscribed raffle.

Grimsargh Cubs and the Wild Flower Meadow

On Saturday 13th April, we were delighted to welcome Grimsargh Cubs to one of our regular volunteer sessions. The Cubs worked on the Wild Flower Meadow in support of their Community Badge. The young volunteers prepared the ground with much strenuous spade, fork and rake work, scattered seeds and watered them in with the ‘regulars’ on hand to assist. Perhaps most importantly, the Cubs were able to rescue and relocate several frogs that had ventured onto the Meadow! We are particularly grateful to volunteers Linda and Sue who, as always, provided delicious cakes and biscuits to keep the energy levels up on what was a very challenging day of work for the Cubs.



Trustee Andy Small led the Wild Flower Meadow project working with both Grimsargh Cubs and our Sponsor, Red Rose Blinds and Curtains, to ensure the success of the day (photo by Lesley Walker).

We are extremely grateful to our sponsor, Red Rose Blinds and Curtains who supplied the wild flower seeds for the event. The Cubs will be returning in the near future in order to see the outcome of all their hard work.

Wonder Week at Alston Lane Primary School

On Tuesday 23rd April, as part of their 'Wonder Week' of science-based activities, over 200 children from Alston Lane Primary School visited the Wetlands. All children from the Reception Class through to Year 6 were able to visit and all successfully participated in a range of wildlife identification tasks. Throughout the day, Head Teacher, Mr FitzGibbon and colleagues, led groups of children across the fields from the School to the Wetlands. There, they were joined by trustees Andy Small and Mike Fisher who provided guided tours around the site for each group. Trust Chair, David Hindle was also there to offer his encouragement and good wishes to the young naturalists. The sunny weather meant that there were good numbers of Orange-tip butterflies in evidence and the children were kept entertained by the aerobatic displays of the Lapwings and the 'screaming' Oystercatchers.



Greylag geese escorting their newly hatched goslings (photo by Richard Moss).

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly a group of newly hatched Greylag goslings. Fortunately, Wetlands Photographer, Richard Moss was on hand to share his exquisite images of the new arrivals with the children.

Appointment of Wetlands Warden

We are extremely pleased to announce that Ken Maylor has been appointed to the position of Wetlands Warden. Many of you will be acquainted with Ken who has been associated with the Wetlands site for nearly thirty years. In the days of the Red Scar Angling Society he acted as Bailiff/Wildlife Ranger and, with others, was responsible for the safe relocation of fish when the reservoirs were eventually drained. Since then, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that the site remains a haven for wildlife. Ken is one of the 'Founding Fathers' of the Wetlands Project and the site we have today owes a great deal to Ken's vision and hard work.

In addition, Ken has worked tirelessly to raise funds in support of the Trust. Most recently raising over £600 by chopping and sawing 'user friendly' sized logs for owners of wood-burning stoves and fires.



Wetlands Warden – Ken Maylor.

As Warden, Ken is able to answer questions, from visitors, about the site and current wildlife highlights – the best places to look and the best times to see them. If you see him (often accompanied by his dog, Luca), when visiting the site, do say hello!

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Wetlands Signage Project

Following the completion of recent work on the footpath, we have been upgrading the signage on the site. Trustee Phil Atkinson has been leading the project and the first phase of this work, updating warning signs, has now been completed. The second phase of the work will involve the introduction of a number of illustrated informational boards.



New signage on the Wetlands.

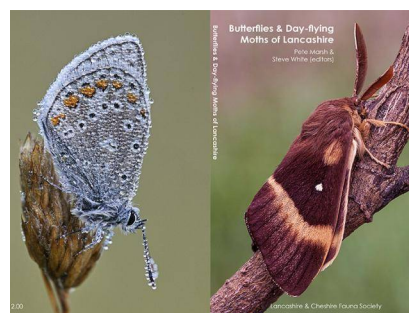
In recent months there have been a number of unauthorized incursions onto the site. Hopefully, the new signage will discourage any further incursions. Remember, access is via the public footpath only and only Trust-sanctioned activities (e.g. volunteer work, trustee-led guided walks and tours, scientific recording and survey work) are permitted in other areas. The reasons for this are two-fold. Firstly, many areas on site are potentially dangerous with areas of deep water and other, often unseen, hazards. Secondly, the very essence of the site is that it provides a quiet and undisturbed refuge for wildlife – something that could, all too easily, become compromised by continued unauthorised access by members of the public.

Butterfly Conservation in North West England

Trustee Geoff Carefoot has provided the following report on the recent conference on Butterfly Conservation in North West England.

On Saturday 23rd March trustees Geoff Carefoot and Mike Fisher attended an all-day conference at Lancaster University on various aspects of butterfly (and moth) conservation in our region. This was organised jointly by Butterfly Conservation (<https://butterfly-conservation.org/>) and Lancaster University but also featured inputs by Lancashire and Cumbria Wildlife Trusts, Lancashire Moth Group (<https://www.lancashiremoths.co.uk/>), The National Environmental Research Council, The National Trust and Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. The many and varied speakers and presentations included the importance of conservation work carried out by volunteers, data collection and data use, data and habitat change, bio-diversity data and recording, nature reserve habitat management and conservation grazing, the factors affecting the distribution and falling numbers of some of our 'at risk' butterflies and, finally, moth recording.

There was much of interest and of potential benefit to our understanding of the drivers of insect numbers and breeding success, and our future management of habitats on our reserve to maximise varied and thriving butterfly and moth populations for our own and future generations.



The new 'Butterflies and Day-flying moths of Lancashire' book (produced by the Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society) is an important resource for anyone interested in our local populations of butterflies and moths.

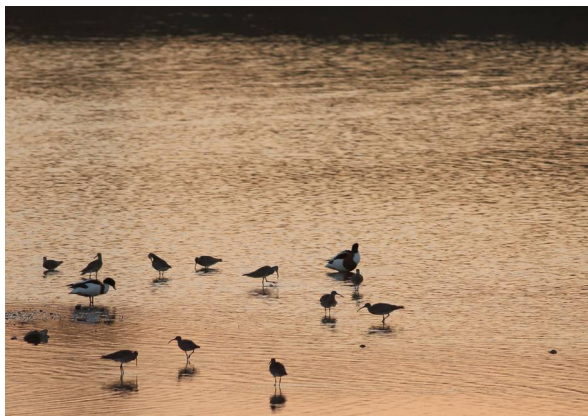
The Lancashire Branch of Butterfly Conservation (<https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/lancashire->

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[branch](#)) provides a wealth of local information and an easy to use sightings submission form.

Spring Wildlife Highlights

The botanical highlights of the Spring have already been mentioned as has the return of the Curlew in February. The number of Curlew recorded, roosting on the site, reached a very impressive 150 on the evening of 7th March.



Whimbrel at dusk on the Wetlands.

The number of Whimbrel recorded in the coordinated Lancashire Whimbrel count reached 64 on the evening of 25th April. Both these figures are magnificent and, once again, highlight the importance of the Wetlands for these 'red listed' waders. Even more impressive was the visit of a pair of Avocet for a few days in April.



Visiting Avocets (photo by Richard Moss).

The birds also spent time at the nearby Alston Wetlands site; unfortunately, they have not remained in the area. We were extremely fortunate that Wetlands Photographer, Richard

Moss was able to record their visit in a series of stunning photographs. Around the same time, small numbers of Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Little Ringer Plover other waders were also recorded on the Wetlands. This again emphasizes the importance of the Wetlands in attracting waders and other birds to the local area.

It has also been good to see numbers of Sand Martin, House Martin, Swallow and Swift returning to the Wetlands in recent weeks. A very impressive record of a group of 9 Swift, flying over the Wetlands, was recorded on 25th May. A number of Preston Rd. residents have reported the building/repair (using 'Wetlands' mud and sand!) and occupation of 'under the eaves' House Martin nests.



The new residents at 281A and 281B Preston Rd.

Fund-raising activities

The highlight of our recent fund-raising activities has to be the talk given by David Hindle (Chair of the Trust) at Grimsargh Club on 20th February. As many of you will know, David is a renowned local historian and writer with a particular interest in the history of local railways. His talk on the Preston to Longridge Railway fascinated a packed Grimsargh Club and, for many, brought back memories of waiting for the steam train to go by the old Grimsargh level crossing! For the younger and newer residents the talk was a revelation, highlighting the 'hidden' history of the village and surrounding areas. We are delighted that the evening raised over £260 for the Trust and we would like to thank David for his time and

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enthusiasm. We thank everyone who attended and made the event both memorable and successful. We plan that there will be more talks in this series later in the year.

The Trust is delighted that our stall at the Grimsargh Farmers Market events continues to be tremendously popular and, again, we thank everyone for their generosity. As a reminder, if you have any paperback books, cds or dvds that you would like to donate for the stall, please contact trustee Andy Small (07870 294158).

Remember, it is also possible to buy your 'Wetlands Mug' at the Farmers Market. The mugs cost £5 each and, as a consequence of the generous sponsorship of the mugs by the Alderbank Physiotherapy and Sports Injuries Clinic, Grimsargh (<http://www.alderbankphysio.co.uk/>), all proceeds from the sale of mugs are available to support the work of the Trust.

Membership information

Current membership fees are as follows:

Individual - £20

Life - £100

Corporate - £50

Volunteers - £10 – (if a member attends 3 volunteer days per year).

Membership fees are due on the date of the Trust's AGM (Wednesday 3rd July 2019) and can be paid, on the night, at the meeting. If you need to update your contact details or have any other queries about membership (e.g. requests to upgrade to Life membership) then you should contact Jayne Woollam (email: jaynewoollam@hotmail.co.uk).

Volunteer days and other important dates

There will be volunteer days as shown below:

Saturday 29th June

Sunday 28th July

Saturday 31st August

In addition, there are three other important dates to note:

Saturday 22nd June - Grimsargh Field Day. The procession will start from the Village Hall at 1pm – all members and volunteers welcome to join the procession! There will also be a stall on The Green, please do visit if you get the chance.

Wednesday 3rd July - the Trust's Annual General Meeting, 7.30pm at the Village Hall.

Saturday 6th July – Longridge Show – the Trust will have a stall in the Community Tent, please do say hello if you are there.

The arrangements for volunteer days (start time, where to meet etc.) are always announced on the Wetlands Facebook page. Additionally, if you would like to be added to the volunteers mailing list, then please contact Jayne Woollam (email: jaynewoollam@hotmail.co.uk).

Please note that it is now possible for young people, under 16, to volunteer and families are welcome to attend volunteer days. The team-leaders will ensure that everyone is able to contribute to the volunteer day, irrespective of age, experience or fitness levels!

Please ensure that warm waterproof clothing and strong boots/wellingtons are worn. Appropriate tools will be supplied along with plenty of refreshments.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Geoff Carefoot, Richard Moss and Lesley Walker for allowing the use of their photographs. We are grateful to the Lancashire Environmental Fund and our sponsors, Alderbank Clinic, Grimsargh and Red Rose Blinds and Curtains, Preston for their generous financial support.

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