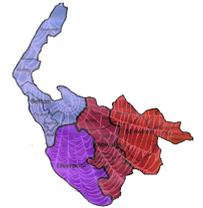


Jan/Feb 2017
Issue 40



Merseyside Nature Friends of Merseyside BioBank



Merseyside BIOBANK Active Naturalists

Naturalists are always welcome at MBB and can make use of the available library, equipment and facilities

Created by and for Volunteer Naturalists. Edited by Bob Jude

Views expressed in this newsletter are those of individual authors.

Articles, photographs, real life stories, web links and events from active naturalists are welcome additions to this newsletter. **Please send them in.** Stories from 250 words with accompanying photographs will take us all on your journey. Please E-Mail your work to: newsletter@activenaturalist.org.uk

Eurasian Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*) can sometimes be found at bird feeders attracted by the abundance of prey. This one was spotted in a Childwall garden close to Merseyside Biobank on 13/2/2017.

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*What are you doing
to help wildlife?*

WILDLIFE NOTES DECEMBER 2016 - Dr Phil Smith

In complete contrast to last year, this desperately dry Autumn and winter continued throughout December, with only nine days producing measurable rainfall. Much heralded in the media, two named storms were little more than damp squibs, producing an hour or two of light rain and a fresh breeze. Predictably, the dune water-table remained stubbornly low, a visit to Cabin Hill National Nature Reserve finding almost no surface water in the slacks and, as a consequence, only three **Common Snipe**.

A **Chiffchaff** calling from the willows eventually gave close views showing no hint of greyiness and therefore typical of the western European race, rather than one from Scandinavia or Siberia that occasionally turn up here in winter. While the dunes are always rather quiet in December, the Ribble marshes invariably provide some excitement.



Wigeon (*Anas Penelope*)

Over 2500 **Wigeon** close to the coastal road embankment at Crossens on 5th were an impressive spectacle, while later in the month, 1100 **Golden Plover** and a **Great White Egret** added further interest from the same viewpoint.

In addition to the now ubiquitous **Little Egrets** and regular Great Whites, the **Cattle Egret**, is being seen much more often in our area, having started to breed in the UK in 2008.

An email from Tim Vaughan alerted me to one near Hightown on 11th that was patrolling the verge right next to a fairly busy road, completely ignoring the traffic. What it was finding to eat at this time of year is a mystery, as this species usually relies on insects disturbed by grazing animals, especially of course cattle.

On 6th, I joined a group of about 30 *Biodiverse Society* volunteers and organisers on a walk from Ainsdale Discovery Centre to the Green Beach. This fascinating pioneer habitat is not seen at its best on a dull cold December day; nevertheless a variety of gulls and waders competed for attention with a perky **Stonechat**.



Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Ben Deed of Merseyside BioBank collected two notable fungi: a **rust** called *Puccinia recondita* on leaves of **Sand Couch** and an **ergot** from **Common Cord-grass** that rejoices in the name *Claviceps purpurea* var. *spartinae*. Both seem to be new to the Sefton Coast.

Another fascinating fungus is the **Winter Stalkball** *Tulostoma brumale* which turned up again in some abundance on track-sides near the Devil's Hole, where I found it last January. Described as "strange and other-worldly" the stalkballs are found amongst moss on sandy alkaline soils and are related to the more familiar puffballs.



Winter Stalkball (*Tulostoma brumale*)

WILDLIFE NOTES DECEMBER 2016 - Dr Phil Smith



Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

I never get tired of tracking down the **Pink-footed Goose** flocks that are such a feature of the mossland landscape in winter.

Downholland Moss is a prime site and I was delighted to find a spectacular noisy gathering of over 5000 on 29th. Searching through with a telescope from the car, I soon spotted a **Barnacle Goose** and a **Brown Hare** grazing contentedly amongst the throng but no other geese were on view.

The excellent Wildlife Trust reserve at Mere Sands Wood is usually worth a visit, this being one of the few places locally where **Goosanders** can be seen in winter. Sure enough, on 18th I counted eight there, including two smart males.

Stock Doves were calling from the trees as I did a circuit of the reserve, unexpectedly flushing a **Little Egret** from a trackside ditch.

Less welcome was a **Grey Squirrel**. Mere Sands often supports a few **Red Squirrels**, these being susceptible to the pox virus transmitted by Greys. Just after my visit, a **Bittern** was photographed from one of the many hides.

I hurried over to Ormskirk on 28th in the hope of seeing a group of **Waxwings** which had been feeding on ornamental **Rowan** berries in Coronation Park for nearly a week. Fortunately, eight were still there, though rapidly running out of berries which were also being eaten by several **Blackbirds**. The **Waxwings** disappeared the following day, a flock of about the same size appearing soon afterwards at Seaforth.

One of the highlights of December was receiving my copy of the *Lancashire Bird Report for 2015*. Edited by Steve White and superbly produced by the Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna Society, the report is packed full of fascinating information, including a summary of ringing recoveries that show where many of our birds have come from or go to during their extraordinary migrations.



Waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulus*)

A case in point is an **Avocet** colour-marked as a nestling in France in 2008. This individual was reported no less than 35 times in western France, five times at Leighton Moss, then in Lincolnshire and, finally, at Hesketh Out Marsh on the Ribble in 2015.



Pied Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) : Nilfanion, WikiCommons

A link to the **Sandwich Tern** survey I mentioned in the August and September notes is a bird ringed at its nest on the Farne Islands in 2013, seen at a salt-works in Namibia, 8800km to the south, in the following year and on Ainsdale beach in September 2015. Quite a journey!

WILDLIFE NOTES JANUARY 2017 - Dr Phil Smith

The driest Autumn and winter in living memory continued throughout January with only six rain-days. Total precipitation for the Northwest was said to be 50% of normal but I suspect it was much less than that here. At the end of the month, the Devil's Hole water-table was 16cm (6 inches) below the ground surface, a full 54cm (21 inches) lower than last year. Of course, this has major implications for our wildlife, especially the **Natterjack Toad** which will have very few places to breed unless there is a deluge in February and March.

Following a tip-off from Dave Hardaker, I drove across the mosses to Hill-house on 8th to a harvested carrot field where a flock of 1900 **Pink-footed Geese** was clearing up the last of the spilt carrots. Views from the car were excellent and I soon picked out an adult **Tundra Bean Goose** (*Anser fabalis rossicus*) with its bright orange legs. But there was no sign of the family party of four that Dave had seen earlier.



Pink-footed Geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

The following day, the Hillhouse field was empty but I located a larger flock of about 4000 **Pinkfeet** on Downholland Moss, this time including the solitary **Barnacle Goose** I saw in December. Again, using the car as a hide, I was enjoying great views from a safe distance until another car stopped. Its occupants jumped out next to the geese, the inevitable result being that the entire flock panicked and disappeared to the north. These people were not birders, most of whom are familiar with the protocol of staying in the car when viewing wild geese. Unfortunately, this sort of irresponsible behaviour is all too common. On the 10th, Dave was watching the same flock when a woman got out of her car and clapped her hands to spook them in order to get a "flight shot"! Apart from stressing the birds unnecessarily, this can push them onto unharvested crops, causing conflict with the growers. These **Pinkfeet** and others, totalling an impressive 5000, ended up on a Barton Moss carrot field near Fine Jane pumping station. Here they were too distant from the road to search properly, even with a powerful telescope, and only the **Barnacle** was visible. Good news from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust is that the Icelandic **Pink-foot** population wintering in Britain exceeded half-a-million for the first time when 536,000 were counted in October 2015. Of these, 32,200 were at Martin Mere, the third largest roost in the UK. Icelandic **Whooper Swans** have also increased by 16% since 2010, reaching a total of 34,000.



Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

Reports of a **Mediterranean Gull** coming to breed at Southport Marine Lake prompted me to call in on two occasions during the month. Sure enough, within a few minutes of my arrival with a bag of crusts a handsome adult bird appeared just south of the pier with 100 or so **Black-headed Gulls**. As it came to within a few metres and posed for photographs, I was able to enjoy its distinctive white wings and bright-red bill with a black band. On my second visit, it was assuming summer plumage with the jet-black hood starting to show. I well remember being shown my first "Med Gull" by Maurice Jones on the shore at Formby Point in 1969. Then it was a rarity but this gull soon became a regular sight on our coast, with a few pairs breeding on the Ribble marshes and elsewhere from 2001. Ringing recoveries show our birds come mostly from Holland and Belgium, though one originated from as far afield as Ukraine.



Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

Several trips to Marshside during the month were often blighted by dark clouds and gloomy light. However, the usual flocks of **Wigeon**, **Teal** and **Black-tailed Godwits** were enlivened by distant views of **Great White Egret**, **Marsh Harrier** and **Raven**.

WILDLIFE NOTES JANUARY 2017 - Dr Phil Smith

On 4th, I managed to miss a brief appearance by a **Red-breasted Goose**, associating with **Pinkfeet**. It was probably the individual that had been seen earlier in Norfolk during an influx of **Pink-footed** and **Bean Geese**.

This gives it more credibility than those previously recorded in Lancashire, which have been listed as "of unknown provenance" because of the possibility of escapes from captivity.

Most of my indoor time this month was spent compiling a "Bryophyte Inventory" for the Sefton Coast. This area has long been renowned for its **mosses** and **liverworts**, with many rarities, including **Baltic Bryum** new to science found near Southport in 1854. Several years ago, I produced an Inventory of Vascular Plants for the Sefton Coast, so I thought it was high time to pull together all the records of the "lower" plants.

This proved to be a daunting task but, using a variety of sources, I eventually ended up with a list of 225 mosses and liverworts, 23 of them being regionally or nationally notable. The total equates to about 21% of the British bryophyte flora, which isn't bad when you consider that many species are found only in the mountains. The downside, however, is that at least 27 of them seem to be extinct here, probably due to habitat change.

Most of our rare bryophytes are associated with dune-slacks that have become overgrown with coarse vegetation and scrub during the last 50 years or so. This is a familiar refrain, so many of our specialised duneland plants and animals being threatened by the same changes.



A GUEST AT HALEWOOD TRIANGLE - A Contribution by Darren Wilson and Janet Markey

Darren Wilson the park ranger at Halewood Triangle forwarded these photos taken by Janet Markey, who is Chair of Halewood Park Triangle Volunteers. Winning a Green Flag Award in 2011 these volunteers perform great work in the park in keeping this area as a marvellous local natural resource to walk and visit. .

This particular guest at the Ducky Pond hasn't been seen in this vicinity for longer than the 16 years Darren has been there. A great tribute to the work of these volunteers and to Darren.



Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) at the Ducky Pond.
Image (Cropped) by Janet Markey



Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) at the Ducky Pond.
Image (Cropped) by Janet Markey

MARTIN MERE - Hugh Harris



Editors Note: Photography for publication is discouraged by the charity. This cropped image, overlooking the mere, is attributed to Andrew Huggett, WikiCommons.

WWT Martin Mere is a wetland nature reserve managed by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust near Burscough Lancashire, England, on the West Lancashire Coastal Plain, 6 miles (10 km) from Ormskirk and 10 miles (16 km) from Southport (Merseyside). It is one of nine reserves managed by the charity, and it is designated an **SSSI** (Site of Special Scientific Interest), an **SPA** (Special Protection Area) and a **Ramsar Site** where wilderness and family-friendliness combine.

Martin Mere is one of Britain's most important wetland habitats and is run by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), the largest international wetland conservation charity in the UK.

The name of the centre comes from the mere on the west side of the reserve which is ringed by 11 observation hides. On the east side of the reserve there are a number of pens providing habitats for birds from Africa, Australasia, North America, South America, Siberia, and Asia. The reserve itself covers over 350 acres and is visited by thousands of migratory wildfowl throughout the year, as well as being home to over 1,000 tame birds, many of which are on the endangered list. In fact, Martin Mere has its own Doomsday Book listing over 500 species of plant, 300 fungi, 1,500 invertebrates, nearly 300 types of birds as well as 28 different mammals and 19 types of fish. It's an ideal wildlife habitat, but to find out why and how it became such a haven we have to travel back in time to the last ice age.

Wetland creation

As the glaciers retreated from Northern Britain, the meltwaters carved a huge shallow bowl in the landscape, just north of Liverpool. When this became filled with water, creating one of the largest lakes in the North West, Martin Mere was born. Although the ancient lake was later drained by a local lord who wanted to harvest the rich peat reserves underneath, its name lives on in the now-famous nature reserve. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust reclaimed the land for wildlife conservation in 1972, flooding huge areas of land across the site every year to maintain this wetland habitat.

Its year-round attractions include an otter enclosure, pond dipping zone, an inspirational eco-garden and the opportunity to enjoy close-up encounters with around 100 species of international water-birds as they swim, feed and wander in wetlands custom-designed to mimic their natural homes. To this, nature adds many other treats. A survey in 2002 recorded well over 2,000 different species of birds, mammals, insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles and mini-beasts living in and around the mere which gives the site its name. In addition, the site is a haven for many traditional Lancashire plants, such as the endangered **Whorled caraway** *Carum verticillatum*, **Golden dock** *Rumex maritimus*, **Tubular water-dropwort** *Oenanthe fistulosa*, **Early marsh orchid** *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, the large-flowered **Hemp-nettle** *Galeopsis tetrahit* and **Purple ramping-fumitory** *Fumaria purpurea*.

But what makes Martin Mere truly world class are the many thousands of migrant wild ducks, geese, waders and swans which over-winter at this Ramsar-rated marshland and especially the spectacular displays of feather and flight provided by huge migrant flocks of Pink-footed geese, Wigeon and Whooper swans.

Winter

This reserve is at its best in winter, attracting huge flocks of **Pink-footed geese** *Anser brachyrhynchus* and **Wigeon** *Anas penelope*, many **Whooper swans** *Cygnus cygnus* and occasional rarer birds such as the Snow goose. It is also excellent for wintering birds of prey such as hen harrier, peregrine and merlin. The reserve fills with many more *over-winters*, including families of Whooper swans which are regulars here and, often, a rare species blown in by cold weather, and large migration flocks of Wigeon

Ron Barker Hide

Undoubtedly the best hide on the reserve; it has plenty of seating and two levels. The areas around the Ron Barker Hide are good for raptors (birds of prey) all year round. Common Buzzards being the most common large raptor regularly perched on fence posts. Keep an eye out for Peregrine, Merlin and Marsh Harrier. Kingfisher can be regular perched on or near Miller Bridge in front of the Ron Barker Hide – usually April - September. It's the main area for breeding Avocet.

All Year – Ruff, Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Marsh Harrier, Grey Heron, Stock Dove, Barn Owl, Linnet.

Autumn / Winter – Wigeon, Teal, Pink-footed Geese, Merlin, Hen Harrier, Short-eared Owl

A winter visit, January 2017 - viewed mainly from the comfortable and warm *Discovery Hide*; the best hide on the day!

Whooper Swan, Shelduck, Mallard, Pintail, Coot, Pink-foot Goose, Feral pigeon, Moorhen, Jackdaw, Wigeon, Shoveler, Oystercatcher, Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, White-fronted Goose, Teal, Greylag, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Greenshank.

Pheasant, Blackbird, Woodpigeon, Robin, Chaffinch.

HH@BTO

THE WETLANDS OF WICKEN FEN -- BRITAIN'S OLDEST NATURE RESERVE — Hugh Harris



Wicken Fen: Andy Mabbett, Wiki Commons

Wicken Fen introduced me to diversity and linkage within a wetland ecosystem. Wetlands are found around the world. They're noted for their massive diversity of animals and plants within them. But they're also threatened by drainage or by exploitation for agriculture.

Ecosystems are dynamic and responsive to the influences around them, which may be natural or human induced. Understanding the effect of all these factors is important because the flow of energy through the system ultimately affects all the organisms.

Some 7,000 different species of mammals, birds, plants, insects, and other invertebrates have been recorded here, making this one of the most biologically diverse places in the UK.

Why is **Wicken Fen** so rich in species?

What is the relationship between habitat diversity and species diversity?

And what role does conservation play in promoting biodiversity at this very special reserve?



Muntjac Deer : J.Hayward, WikiCommons

Wicken Fen, this is one of the last surviving fens in Western Europe.

For much of the year, this low-lying land is waterlogged, creating the unique fen environment of waterways, marshes, meadows, and woodland.

A remnant of the great fen that once covered six and a half thousand square kilometres, **Wicken Fen** is situated in Eastern England, just below The Wash in the county of Cambridgeshire. Today, 99.9% of what was the great fen has been replaced by farmland, and Woodwalton, Holme, Chippenham, and **Wicken** are the only remaining areas of fen. Wicken Fen, though it covers less than 4 square kilometres, is now the largest fen in the region.

A nature reserve for just over 100 years, the fen is home to a tremendous diversity of species. Near the woods, a herd of deer, one of the fen's 29 mammal species, graze the scrub. Among the grasses and wildflowers of the fen meadows, Ringlet butterflies flutter, one of a thousand species of butterflies and moth recorded here. There are 200 species of bird on the fen, including reed warbler. Counting all of the different species of **Wicken Fen**, including animals, plants, and fungi, is one way of determining its level of biodiversity.



Wicken Fen: Hugh Venables, WikiCommons

But biodiversity is more complex than just a headcount. It's influenced by a number of factors. One of these is the range of habitats within an area. A habitat is an environment in which a species, be it plant or animal, can live.

The open water is just one of many habitats at **Wicken**, each with its own characteristic species. Because Wicken is a fen, its multiplicity of habitats depends in part on moisture levels. The wettest areas are the waterways, ditches, and ponds. These contain aquatic plant species like water lilies and pond weeds. Adjacent to these areas are shallow waters which are suitable for reeds. In areas where these waters dry in summer, fields of sedge dominate. Drier areas are the fen meadows, which are home to wildflowers and grasses. Drier areas may also be covered by woodland and bushes, like birch and guelder rose.

In terms of biodiversity, habitat and species are closely linked to each other.

THE WETLANDS OF WICKEN FEN -- BRITAIN'S OLDEST NATURE RESERVE. — Hugh Harris

FOOD WEB IN WICKEN FEN

The century old habitat is made up of many different species. The **Saw sedge** *Cladium mariscus* predominates but other plants also thrive. These include **Marsh bedstraw** *Galium palustre* and **Bindweed** *Convolvulus arvensis*. Invertebrate species found here include snails and beetles.

This can be clearly seen by comparing the species of two neighbouring fen habitats-- a fen meadow and woodland. The meadow is filled with grass and wildflower species. There's the **Marsh pea** *Lathyrus palustris*, for instance and **Thistles** *Asteraceae*. These plants are home to a wide variety of invertebrate species. The woodland habitat beside the meadow includes tree and shrub species like **Hawthorn** *Crataegus monogyna*. This habitat is suitable for a different group of invertebrates. Biodiversity doesn't simply depend on the range of habitats. It's also influenced by the way species interact with one another. This is the **Lode**, the main water channel running through **Wicken Fen**. One way its plants and animals interact is through the food web. Each species is food for other species.

The more species there are to eat, the more there will be eating them. The food web underpins biodiversity because it means many different organisms can coexist. At the base of a food web are plants. The slow-flowing clear waters of the **Lode** offer the perfect growing conditions for submerged aquatic plants. Plants use energy from the sun to create new tissue through photosynthesis. In the **Lode** waters, herbivores like **Water snails** *Gastropoda* nibble the aquatic vegetation. Small carnivorous fish, including **Roach** *Rutilus rutilus* and **Minnow**, *Phoxinus phoxinus* are prey for larger, freshwater carnivores like **Pike** *Esox lucius*. While some of these species spend their entire lives under water, others may move between habitats at different stages of their development and so become part of different food webs.

Dragonflies and **damselflies** *Ordonata*, for instance, spend much of their life under water as larvae and emerge from the water when they mature. In the process, they're part of two food webs-- the aquatic and the terrestrial. Underwater the larvae are carnivorous even pursuing a water snail. But at the same time they are food for other carnivores. A carnivorous insect, the **Water boatman**, feeds on damselfly larva. Within the aquatic food web, the larvae are both predator and prey. Now part of the terrestrial food web, adult **damselflies** and **dragonflies** are also prey for a diversity of carnivores including **Spiders** *Araneae*, **Wasps** *Vespidae*, **Frogs** *Anura*, and small mammals. This example demonstrates how complex food webs support many species within the habitat. So the range of habitats, the diversity of species, and the complicated way in which parts of the food web interact, are all factors in determining biodiversity.

MANAGING HABITATS IN WICKEN FEN

Key to the maintenance of this diversity is the management of habitats, a human intervention that has been happening for centuries. At the edge of the fen, the Cottage Museum depicts how life may have been for workers on the fen before it became a nature reserve.

The vegetation was cut for thatching local houses, and as bedding and feed for domestic animals. Tools such as this were used to cut peat for fuel. The result is a landscape stamped with centuries of rural culture-- physically, in the peat diggings, paths, ditches, and dykes, and ecologically, in the plant and animal communities that have developed over time.

Wicken Fen was given to the National Trust in 1900, since when it's been run as a nature reserve. Tasks, such as hay cutting, used be part of people's livelihood. Today, they are continued as a means of conservation. The driving force behind much of the Trust's activity is managing a natural process known as *succession*.



Grazing Konig Ponies: | Mitchell, WikiCommons: Help maintain environment

If woodland were the only habitat here, then biodiversity would plummet. And if succession were allowed to proceed naturally, much of the fen would be covered by bushes or trees. It's only by halting the process of *succession*, at various stages, that so many habitats can be maintained. This idea of conserving habitats by managing *succession* was first explored in the early 1900s.

Wicken was one of the first sites at which the effects of management on habitat diversity were explored. An early exponent of this was Harry Godwin, a pioneer of plant ecology.

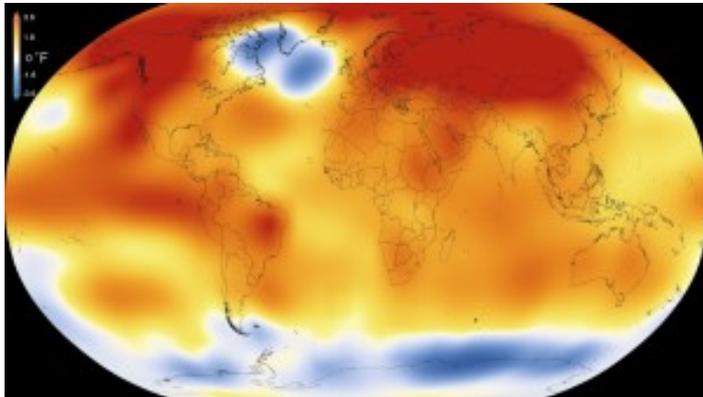
Even as little as one year difference between cutting periods has a significant impact on the species that are able to grow. This difference can be attributed to succession.

The trees and bushes of the control plot, which hasn't been cut at all, represent the final stage of *succession* in this area. The plots illustrate the process of *succession* from an open meadow to woodland. The different stages are entirely a result of how frequently each plot is cut.

HH@MBAN

CLIMATE CHANGE AND WEATHER - Hugh Harris

The Warmest Year since Records Began (1880).
 Scientific Visualization Studio/Goddard Space Flight Center Details



NASA Global "Record Shattering" Temperature Map 2015: Wiki Commons

2. - What is climate?

Mr Nick Hurd MP, Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry faces questions on key outcomes of UN Climate Change Conference (COP22) held in Marrakech, Morocco in November 2016. I thought I would share with you some course-notes from the University of Exeter on what it is.

To be able to understand climate change we need to understand climate.

What is it?

How does it work?

What is the difference between weather and climate?

First of all, let's answer the question of 'what is the difference between weather and climate?'. Weather is the elements we see daily such as temperature rain and wind. These can change hour and hour and day by day.

Climate on the other hand looks at how the weather changes over a long period of time, typically around 30 years. Scientists have been able to define climate zones around the world. Here in the UK we have a *temperate climate* that is neither especially hot or cold, or hot or dry when compared to other climates. Ours is a very different climate to that in the Sahara for example which is known as *arid* because throughout the year the weather is dry and hot.

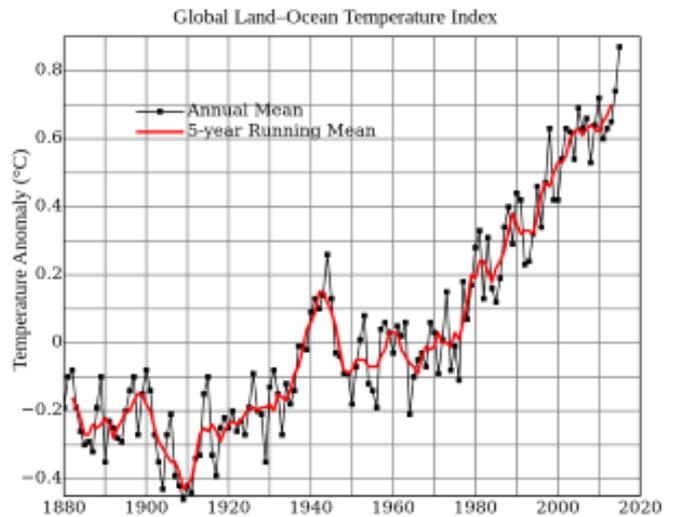
Scientists have to look at how the atmosphere interacts with the oceans, ice sheets, land masses and vegetation. These different interactions create a climate system and these interactions as well as the composition of the atmosphere itself make a very complex system.

The sun also drives our climate. Sunlight provides energy which heats the Earth. Without the Earth's atmosphere and certain gases our climate would be very different to what it is now. The atmosphere stops the heat from escaping into space. If it didn't do this our planet would be a very cold place indeed.

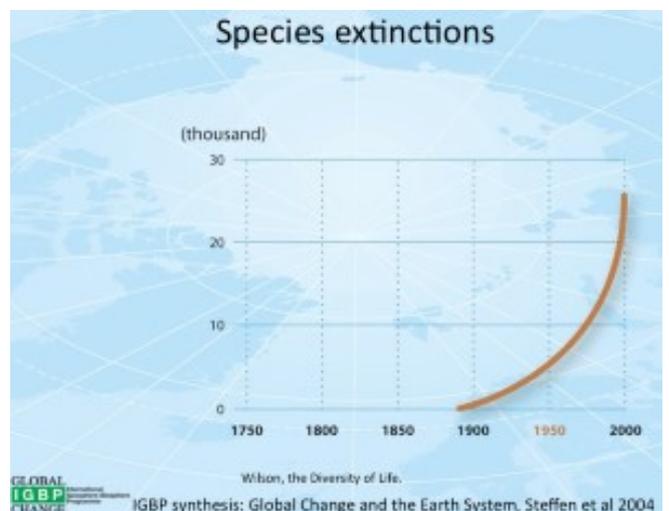
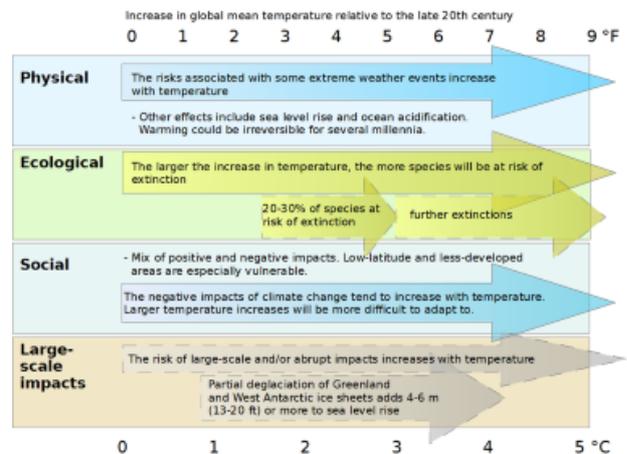
Certain gases allow the sun's energy through but stop it from escaping back into space, acting like a green house. That's why it's called the *greenhouse effect*.

The gases responsible for this effect such as water vapour, carbon dioxide and methane are called *greenhouse gases*. Scientists explained the heat trapping effects of greenhouse gases more than 150 year ago. They discovered that without the greenhouse effect the Earth would be about 30 degrees Celsius cooler, making it uninhabitable to most forms of life.

Greenhouse gases are so effective at keeping the Earth warm that any changes will affect the Earth's temperature. For any more information about our weather and climate visit the climate change websites.



Summary of global warming impacts



MBAN FACEBOOK IMAGES



Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)



Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) :Image by S.McWilliam



European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) : Image by S.Marley



Carolina Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*): Image by S.Marley



Female Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) :Image by S.McWilliam



Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*): Image by S.McWilliam

MBAN FACEBOOK IMAGES



Female Eurasian Black Cap (*Sylvia atricapilla*): Image by B. Jude



Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*): Image by B. Jude



Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*): Image by S. Marley



Song Thrush (*Turdus philamelas*): Image by Tony Wills, WikiCommons



Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*): Image by S. Marley



Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*): Image by S. McWilliam

MBAN IMAGES



Cormorant (*Phalacrocoracidae*): Image by S.Marley



Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) at Sefton Park: Image by B.Jude



Signs of Spring: Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*): Image by S.Marley



Top: **Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*)

Bottom: **Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*): Image by M.Pritchard



Signs of Spring *Episyrphus balteatus*: Image by B.Jude

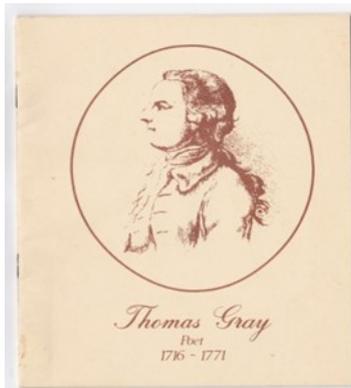


Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*): Image by B.Jude

TEN YEARS A PHENOLOGIST - Rob Duffy

Phenology, is the recording of the responses to temperature change of events in the animal and plant world. Those events being recorded in Spring, or Autumn, actually cover most of the calendar year.

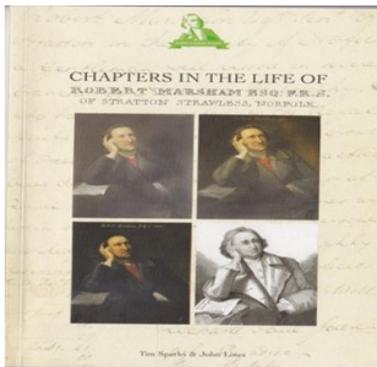
In the last 20 years, particularly, it is those responses, which have become significant because they act as indicators of climate change (global warming); significant, ecologically, where one species has lost the timing link with another which it requires for sustenance- due to environmental triggers being disturbed.



Natural historians have recorded such events for over 200 years, but it is only since 1998 that "phenology" has been rolled out as a science in its own right with the establishment of the UK Phenology Network under the auspices of the Woodland Trust and Tim Sparks' work at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Underpinning the phenology has been just over 100 years of consistent UK wide tem-

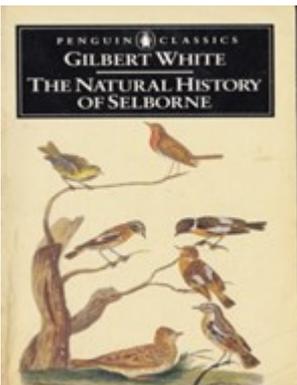
perature and rainfall recording.

The UKPN has grown from 70 recorders in 1998 to the current 40,000. The Network has 10's of thousands of records submitted annually. Records can be submitted on line or on a twice yearly recording sheet (its days may be numbered!)



HISTORY

Below, the 18th Century pioneers of phenology with the "father" of phenology, Robert Marsham, (centre) who recorded 27 indicators of Spring from 1736 (and his family did so up to 1958). Gilbert White is regarded as the founder of natural history, primarily an ornithologist.



* See below for further discussion of his work.

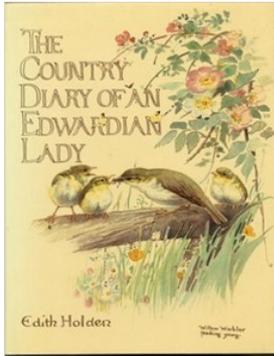
Marsham and White were in correspondence after the publication of White's book in 1789.

Despite being near contemporaries, in Cambridge, in the 1730's, Gray (better known for his "Elegy in a country churchyard") and Marsham never met.



From 1875 until 1947 the Royal Meteorological Society co-ordinated a nation-wide network of recorders to examine the relationship between meteorological events and the natural world .

During this period, in 1906, Edith Holden, who was also a superb artist, was able to travel around Britain, by train, recording nature's calendar, rather than being restricted to a single county, as had been her male predecessors.



Assiduous women recorders of the late 20th century include Mary Manning, Dr Anne Phillips, Anne Hall and Jean Combes who had acquired 225 years of recording between them by 2007!

THE CRITERIA

Benchmarks are used to compare an individual year's records against a 30 year average of temperatures from 1961-1990. So, 2007, is a benchmark for Autumn sightings and 2001, for Spring sightings, as these are closest to the 30 year average for Autumn and Spring temperatures.

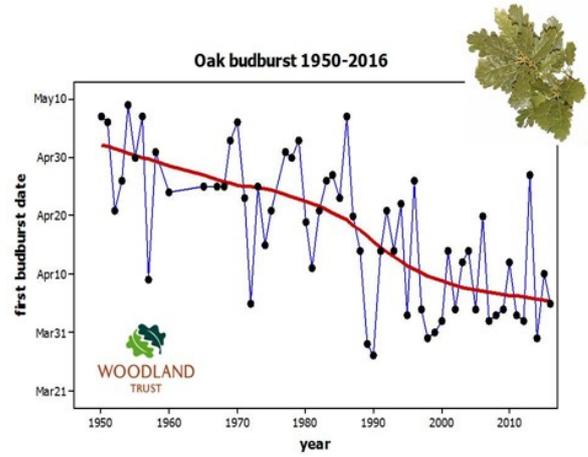
Spring and Autumn are 5 month recording periods, not 3 months, and this makes it necessary to be careful liaising a species event with its qualifying meteorological period; not only its temperatures but rainfall; eg. Blackberrying is regarded as an Autumn event, that actually takes place in the summer but is dependent on Spring temperatures -see below!

The Species which are recorded for Spring are 8 flowering plants, 5 grasses, 10 trees, 6 shrubs, 13 insects (including 10 butterflies), 20 birds (particularly arrival times) and amphibians.

1. For Autumn, 1 flowering plant (Ivy), 8 trees, 7 shrubs, 5 migrant birds (arrival and departure times-but no Partridges in pear trees), 1 fungi (Fly Agaric).

TEN YEARS A PHENOLOGIST - Rob Duffy

nature's calendar spring



NB All author's own data below, except 2006, which are UK averages; comments/descriptors are from UKPN News and relate to the benchmark year. It is difficult to generalise over 3 months, let alone 5.

"Average" means close to the benchmark.

Bird sightings are purely from the back garden. Far fewer sightings of Swallows and Martins than Swifts ('cos they're noisy, probably). Swallows and Martins observed from WA7 (Murdishaw).

Frog spawning is obviously dependent on Winter temperatures.

"Average" refers to the 30 year baseline and "50:50" means, very approximately, half the winter was cold, half mild.

Recording Signs of Spring



Oak leafing (or budburst) dates are regarded as indicators of climate change. Leafing was recorded variously over the last 10 years as:-

- a) 2006:- May 3, an average Spring ;
- b) 2007:-April 15, a notably mild/warm Spring;
- c) 2008:-May 2; an average Spring
- d) 2009:- April24; a cold first half and warmer second half, Spring
- e) 2010:- April 29; a cold first half and warmer second half, Spring
- f) 2011:-April 19, a notably mild/warm Spring;
- g) 2012:-April 15, mild/warm, but then colder
- h) 2013:- May 14, a notably bitter Spring;
- i) 2014:- April12, a mild/warm Spring;
- j) 2015:- April 27, an average Spring;
- k) 2016 :-April 22, a mild/warm Spring

Thus mild/warm Springs give April 12-23 leafing; average Springs April 24- May 3 leafing and cold Springs (a rarity!) May 4 to mid May

The benchmark (2001, remember) was May 6th but if the benchmark is recalibrated we may soon regard May leafings as belonging to chilly springs.

Robert Marsham showed how Oak leafing was responsive to Spring temperatures but Oak leafing has advanced (got earlier) as **Spring temperatures have shown marked warming from the 1990's** (Jean Combes' data).

Indeed it has advanced 12 days in 14 years!

b) Hawthorn flowering (2001 benchmark was 11th May) follows a similar pattern as for oak leafing with warm springs producing flowering first 3 weeks in April, then average springs producing flowering in late April and early May:-

- 2006:-May 8;
- 2007:- April11;
- 2008:- May 2 ;
- 2009:- April28;
- 2010:-May6;
- 2011:-April11;
- 2012:- April4;
- 2013:- May14;
- 2014:- April13;
- 2015:- April30;
- 2016:- April 24



Beware the outlier! The Hawthorn flower above, photographed on March 6th, was a "sport" at the Eric Hardy reserve and well ahead of its general flowering and must be discarded for recording purposes. (Elder and Hawthorn are "notorious" for producing leaf in January, in sheltered areas, and confusing recorders of early Spring events).

TEN YEARS A PHENOLOGIST - Rob Duffy

c) Frogspawn (in the author's pond, apart from 2006) occurred over the last 9 years, as below, but please remember we are looking at purely winter determinant temperatures here:-

2006:-Mar 15

2007:- Feb23

2008:- Feb 23

2009:- Feb26

2010:- Mar14

2011:- Mar17

2012:- Feb 29

2013 :- Mar11

2014 :- Mar5

2007 and 2008 were very mild winters but 2010, 2011 and 2013 were cold.



Regrettably, in early February 2015, I left my pond in Runcorn!

"Overall there is a definite trend towards earlier spawning," says Tim Sparks, "although it's not the best indicator of climate change because frogspawn varies so much in timing from year to year."

The 2001 benchmark for frogspawn was March 12th; by 2008, nationally, spawning crept forward to February 27th. According to Dr Anne Phillips' run of data from 1976- frogspawn and tadpoles are appearing 16 days earlier, ie Feb.24th.



*White- recording in 1770's Hampshire, was not convinced by bird migration (vs hibernation) but he was a scientist and carefully noted that swifts were very different from Swallows and Martins ; despite this he referred to them all as "hirundines". He noted the Swift

arrives about April 26th and leaves, in the main, by the 10th August and no later than the 20th. He was disturbed by its early departure in relation to the lingering into the Autumn of its fellow hirundines; not departing us until early October and sometimes a lot later (see below).

Personal records, for the 10 year period, from 200 miles to the north, indicated the Swift arrived first or second week in May (but with a couple of exceptions) and left mid August (with a couple of exceptions).

White's notes for the time of arrival of the swallow, in 1772, are identical to recent years (13/14th April). I have too few sightings of the swallow.

The House Martin is recorded as arriving at the end of April in 1774. My own notes for the arrival of the House Martin are too variable (May3rd-19th) to show any trend or agreement with White; they are also later than UK averages for 2001-07. My records are that departure dates were (apart from one exception) around the autumnal equinox.

This above data is consistent with the UK averages (2001-07), unless otherwise stated.

White's findings still hold pretty well providing us with a 250 year time frame.

However change is happening quickly! National data does indicate that migrant birds are now arriving 5-6 days earlier compared to the 2001 baseline.

Recording Signs of Autumn



For plants these are fruiting, first and full tinting and leaf fall/bare tree, pretty much.

The determination of Autumn trends is much more difficult than for Spring and must include consideration of rainfall and

summer temperatures on fruiting and tinting.

Recent autumns are variously described below as:

(2005) **warm** (2006) **warm** (2007) **average** (2008) **average** (2009) **warmer**(2010) **colder** (2011) **warmer** (2012) **colder** (2013) **warmer** (2014) **warmer** (2015) **warmer**

2007 was established as the benchmark for Autumn being an average Autumn in terms of its similarity to the 30 year Autumn temperature averages. So, if we take three years- an average, a colder and a warmer than the benchmark, and look at my data for some Autumn markers:-

2008 An Autumn very similar to 2007

2011 The second warmest year in 100 years

2012 The coldest Autumn in 20 years

	Grass last cut*	Bare Field Maple	Bare Silver Birch	Ivy first flower
2008	16/11/08	25/11/08	18/11/08	23/09/08
2011	26/11/11	29/11/11	23/11/11	20/09/11
2012	03/11/12	23/11/08	16/11/12	28/09/12

*This is a genuine Autumn marker-It is pleasing to see that humans are tied to the rhythms of the season!

The table gives you some idea that very limited sets of one's own data can be correlated with environmental events and can be stand alone relevant. Unfortunately, a lot of Autumn data accumulated is difficult to interpret without reference to complex factors. Here the individual recorder must submit to the summaries from 10's of thousands of records to make sense of the vagaries of the season.

TEN YEARS A PHENOLOGIST - Rob Duffy

Notwithstanding this, warm, or warmer than average Autumns, are in the ascendancy.

The lateness of Autumn events, running into the increasing earliness of Spring events, is blurring the boundaries for recorders eg. the BSBI's revelatory New Year's Day flower hunt.

Some notes:-

The photos of the **Ash** and **Rowan** (directly below) indicate the difficulties of using tinting as a marker for autumnal events:



Identical locations do not lead to identical seasonal responses!



The **Hazel** (left), in Springfield Park, still green on December 7th, may be a good indicator of Autumnal warming as it is reluctant to shed a lot of its leaves before the end of the year.

The **Norway Maple** (below) (*Acer platanoides*) is not on the official recording form so its full tinting date cannot be submitted-but its colours are emblematic of Autumn and the prospect of spectacular colours draws us out for Autumn rambles.



c) Fruiting events on shrubs and small trees (such as Hawthorn and Holly), show huge variation and point to the need for more recorders.

NB Bramble fruiting, usually the first "Autumn" event, is dependent on Spring temperatures.

Bramble first fruiting has happened on July 13,8,17,8,25, August 9, July 7, 19 and 18 (2008-16).

It is obvious that the bitter Spring of 2013 left its mark in the late first fruiting -August 9th.

The "UK Average 2007" for Bramble fruiting is cited in "Nature's Calendar News" as August 4th, but this is far later than my own observations (bar one) in WA7 and LI4/LI6.

This may be a recording artefact based on recorder number bias in the South and East and the fact that Autumn recording is nowhere near as popular in Spring.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Getting involved in "Citizen Science" recording has been very addictive for me, a therapeutic tool for the mind, allied with physical activity, getting me to walk my local area on a semi regular basis, whereas I would otherwise stay in, watching TV, drinking too much tea and eating comfort food (It probably would suit a dog walker better as ideally you need to be out every day, walking the same route, clocking the same plants).

Data from the project I understand largely goes to support undergraduate and postgraduate projects but it is also used by DEFRA and anybody wanting to get involved should visit the website:-naturescalendar.org.uk.

We are living amidst unprecedented environmental change, affecting many species, most of which makes us feel uncomfortable, but at least by getting involved in recording change you are improving your awareness of it and contributing to those compiling the bigger picture and raising the alarm.

References:-

- UKPNews The Woodland Trust et al.
- Chapters in the Life of Robert Marsham, 2008
- Tim Sparks & John Lines
- Thomas Grey 1971 The Vicar of Stoke Poges
- The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady Book Club Associates 1977
- The Natural History of Selborne Richard Mabey 1977

NORTH WEST FUNGUS GROUP FORAYS AND PROGRAMME 2017

The NORTH WEST FUNGUS GROUP



Home Page: <http://fungus.org.uk/nwfg.htm>

In association with the British Mycological Society

The North West Fungus Group is a regional group aiming to promote an interest in fungi across the counties of Cheshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cumbria and North Wales.

Benefits of membership include:- two newsletters per year

Recording forays and special events

Outreach activities centering around National Fungus Day#]

Membership Individual membership - £7.50

Family membership - £10.00

Members joining after November 1st will receive membership for the following year. Membership Form available on website or from Secretary to whom cheque may be posted.

Officers include:

Chair:

Dr. Irene Ridge, Smalley's Farm, Whalley Old Road, Billington Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 9JF Tel. 01254 247274

Treasurer and Membership Secretary:

Kathleen Ryan, Skovhuset, Under Billinge Lane, Blackburn BB2 6RL

Bring strong footwear.

Details about terrain and accessibility of sites can be obtained from the foray leader.

Forays start at promptly at 10.30 - (or else at 10.00 after the clocks have gone back) - and continue into the afternoon with a pause for refreshments over lunchtime.

If travelling a considerable distance it may be advisable to confirm with the leader that the foray is taking place as on rare occasions forays have had to be changed at short notice. Any changes will be sent around by email.

Beginners are welcome at ALL forays. Please note that forays may not be suitable for very small children.

No DOGS.

Saturday 25th February – Risley Moss, North Warrington, WA3 6QS SJ66492D (Sheet 109). AGM & Presidential address with Geoffrey Kibby. Access from M62 Jct II. Continue along A574 to first island, turn left. Reserve signposted. Ample parking. 10am (Coffee) for 10.30. Short foray after lunch.

Saturday 25th March – Stuart Skeates leads an frdbi.info recording-training day; Risley Moss, (WA3 6QS).10.30 into afternoon; bring packed lunch; bring lap top, if available, to be able to be signed up with password and explore website. NWFG members will have first priority.

Sunday 9th April – Ainsdale NNR, PR8 3QW). Meet at car park at Reserve Manager's Office SD303112 (sheet 108) Take A565 north past Woodvale Airport, turn on to Coastal Road, over railway bridge and left into private drive. Leader - Tony Carter (0151-724-4600).

Sunday 21st May - Rostherne Mere,WA16 6SB.Take the third turn on the left going south on the Chester Road (A556) from the M56 Jct 8. The car park is 200 yards past the church on the left hand side SJ743833 (Sheet 109); or park on road. Leader - Tim Rogers (07890949997).

Sunday 18th June - Moor Piece NR, Bashall Eaves, BB7 3DA. Meet in Bashall Eaves Village Hall car park at SD696434 (Sheet 103) on right just past Red Pump Inn before onward journey to the Reserve. (Follow signs for Whitewell/Trough of Bowland). Terrain is rough and wet. Leader - Irene Ridge (01254-247274).

Sunday 16rd July – Smithills Hall Woods, Bolton BNI 7NP. Approach Smithills Dean Road off A58 Bolton ring road or from Scout Road after it turns off A675 Belmont Road. Turn into drive and immediately after R branch towards Hall, take L towards Open Farm and park 10 yards on along roadside opposite rhodies: SD699 119.(Sheet 109). Cafe and toilets on site. Leader – John Watt (07768 043 461).

Sunday 13th August - Hay Bridge Nature Reserve, Low Hay Bridge, Bouth, Ulverston, LA12 8JG. 10.30 in the meeting room adjacent to the car park at SD336876 (Sheet 97). Leave the M6 at J36 and bear left onto the A590 signposted to Barrow. After ~3 miles take the first left signposted to Barrow. (NB 60mph speed cameras on A590). At Newby Bridge roundabout take 1st exit, stay on the A590 signposted Barrow/Ulverston then after ~ 4 miles turn right to Bouth. At Bouth village, turn right at the White Hart Inn and follow this lane for ~ ½ mile. Where it swings left, go straight ahead on a small narrow lane signposted 'Hay Bridge Only'. Follow this

NORTH WEST FUNGUS GROUP FORAYS AND PROGRAMME 2017

narrow lane until you reach the car park at the end (about 2 miles). The building immediately before the car park has facilities.

Suggested donations towards private reserve for non-members £2.00. Leader - Mike Hall (015242-76460).

Sunday 20th August – Microscope Workshop and Beginners Foray. Risley Moss, nr Warrington (WA3 6QS). Meet 10.30. A morning foray will be followed by an afternoon microscope workshop. Details and bookings to be made with Irene Ridge (01254 247274).

Sunday September 3rd - Beginners' Foray at Moore NR, Lapwing Lane, Warrington. WA4 6XE. 2 miles south of Warrington on A56 turn north to Moore at traffic lights at Higher Walton. 1 mile turn right, crossing railway and ship canal. Go to end of road to reach entrance. Car park to right of entrance road. SJ578855 (Sheet 108). Leader- Paul Hamlyn (0161-434-1401).

Sunday 17th September – Dibbinsdale, CH62 2BJ. Meet at Woodslee Cottages. SJ346828 (Sheet 108) Leave M53 at Jct4 onto B5137 Spital Road. Reserve on right about 2 miles after RH bend. 15 mins walk from Spital Railway Station. Leader – Jeanette Maddy (07548 838946).

Sunday September 24th Clock Face Colliery Country Park, Bold, St. Helens, WA9 4SN. – Meet 10.30 at Gorse Lane Car Park. From Jct 7 of M62 follow A57 Warrington Rd. After 2 miles turn left on to A569 Clock Face Road. After 1.5 miles, (passing back under M'way), turn right into Gorse Lane (blue cycling sign Burtonwood). Continue to entry on right. SD 535915 (Sheet 108). Leader – Tom Ferguson (01744 739774/ 07743 509671).

Friday 29th Sept to Monday 2nd October: Residential Foray at Keswick Convention Centre. Cost inc. meals, for members and for non-members will be announced later. Booking form in Newsletter. Contact Irene Ridge (01254- 247274).

October 7th/8th – National Fungus Day.

To see events - <http://www.ukfungusday.co.uk/>

Sunday 15th October – Lyme Park, Disley, Stockport. Meet in car park 200 yards from house; SJ962824 (Sheet 109) By road: Entrance on A6 only. SatNav: Use SK12 2NR and stay on A6. Ignore any directions other than those to the A6 entrance. By train - Disley ½ mile from entrance. The house, garden & car park are about one mile from main gate. Leader - Jeanette Maddy (07548 838946).

Sunday 22nd October – Wigan Flashes Nature Reserve. Meet at Welham Road entrance SD579032 (Sheet 108/Explorer 285). Turn off Poolstock Lane (B5238) into Carr Lane (sign-posted Hawkley Hall High School) and follow this for approx. 1 mile. Street parking in vicinity of high school WN3 5NY. Level walking on good paths but can be wet underfoot in places; canal-side and mixed woodland(carr) ; No facilities. Leader - Christopher Bowden (01772 812910/07597 921981).

Sunday 29th October – Lytham Hall, FY8 4JX. Meet at 10.00 SD 3592864 (Sheet 102). From M55 J4 take A583 (Kirkham) at first roundabout, and take first right (Whitehall Rd) after second then immediately left onto Peel Rd. After 1.6 m turn right onto Ballam Rd and after 0.6 m turn right into Lytham Park and proceed to Hall (free entry for NWFG). Leader – Irene Ridge (07484 242523).

Sunday 5th November – Turn Slack Clough, Littleborough. Meet at 10.00 at Clough. Left off A58 onto Whitelees Road approaching Littleborough from west, continue along Calderbrook Road turning left at Clough Road. SD935173 (Sheet 109) (DL15 9JZ). Leader - Norman Bamforth (0161-336-3914).

Sunday November - Raven Meols Hills, Formby – 10.00. (SD275065) From 12th A565 Formby-By-Pass turn west to Formby at Tesco traffic lights on to B5195 Altcar Road. Continue to travel west to Formby Point, past Formby Railway Station to end of Kirkdale Road (1.8miles). Turn left past church to Shorrocks Hill Night Club (L37 2EB) then right on to Lifeboat Road to car park Bay One. Leader – Tony Carter (0151-724-4600)

FUNGI OF THE MONTH



This beautiful **Scarlet Elfcup** (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*) image recorded in Sef-ton was kindly sent to us by Peter Gately. This fungi is often found in Winter in damp shady places on dead twigs covered in moss. Often found feeding on the hardwood twigs of Hazel, Willows and Sycamore.

Similar in shape and colour this fungi can be easily confused with **Ruby Elfcup** (*Sarcoscypha coccinea*) that is more frequently found on the dead wood of Beech or Elm.

Scarlet Elfcup (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*) can often be distinguished by its longer stems and the hairy outer surface of the cups like matted felt (tomentum) that are coiled "like a corkscrew".

"For certainty of identity a DNA analysis needs to be performed."
<http://www.first-nature.com/fungi/sarcoscypha-austriaca.php>.

EVENTS SUMMARY



Events are run throughout the year by Liverpool Museum.

These include Mammal Trapping at Knowsley Park and other venues.

Learn all about Ants Saturday 5th December

Please contact Tony.Parker@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk for details and to book places. Museum collections are open to amateur naturalists and volunteers (by appointment)

Other activity events

Knowsley: www.knowsley.gov.uk/things-to-see-and-do/events.aspx

Liverpool Parks: liverpool.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-events

Wildlife Trust: www.lancswt.org.uk/what-s-on

Court Hey Park: www.courtheypark.co.uk

National Wildflower Centre: www.nwc.org.uk/events

North West Fungus Group

There are forays and special events, with help and advice on a range of fungi related topics.

NWFG Home Page: <http://www.fungus.org.uk/nwfg.htm>



Liverpool Botanical Society

www.liverpoolbotanicalsociety.co.uk



Merseyside Naturalist Association

The MNA organize informal nature events including field trips, talks and practical sessions

Visit www.mnapage.info for the programme of events



Merseyside & West Lancashire Bat Group

The group runs events and training throughout the year check the group website, twitter or Facebook.



Facebook links require membership of Facebook

Some links may additionally require permission which can be obtained by contacting the group over Facebook as a pre-requisite. These links are increasingly becoming a major contact point for rapidly expanding naturalist groups and volunteers. Interested then link to:

Merseyside BioBank

www.facebook.com/MerseysideBioBank

MBAN

www.facebook.com/groups/ActiveNaturalists/

UK Hoverflies

www.facebook.com/groups/609272232450940/

WeBS

www.facebook.com/pages/Mersey-Estuary-WeBS

Lancashire Lepidoptera

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/119829941488294/>

British Wildlife Photography

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/415160405188412/>

Lancashire Mammal Group

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lancashire-Mammal-Group/169476803103866?>

BTD Garden Birdwatch

<https://www.facebook.com/gardenbirdwatch>

RSPB

<https://www.facebook.com/RSPBLoveNature>

British Spider ID

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/829354860449271/>

British Mycological Society (BMS)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/18843741618/>

Conopids

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/british.conopids/>



Interested in arranging one yourself next year?

For advice contact

ben.deed@merseysidebiobank.org.uk

HELP!

BIRDERS ALWAYS WANTED

The Mersey Estuary is one of Britain's best wetlands. We know this because each month we count the waterfowl as part of the national Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS).

However, we need 'new blood' volunteers. You don't need to be an experienced wildfowl counter, though you should be able to identify common waders and wildfowl. If you think you can help then please email Dermot Smith at dermot.smith71@gmail.com or phone 07505 418832 for further details.

For more information plus recent reports and photos visit the Mersey Estuary WeBS page on Facebook

SUMMARY of EVENTS PROGRAMME of 2016 at SEFTON COAST PARTNERSHIP www.seftoncoast.org.uk

Booking is essential for Sefton Coast events
Call 01519342964



Walks last around 2.5-3 hours and require good footwear. The walk may include small hills and undulations. It would also be advisable to wear appropriate clothing for the day.

Heritage & Health Walks

"Discover the heritage along with coastline with a series of walks. Part of the Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership scheme"

"The walks will take you through a variety of habitats including woodlands, sand dunes and beach walks"



Other Events

Why not visit Facebook page SeftonCoast?

RSPB <https://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/seenature/events/results.aspx>

RSPB Tel: 01704 226190

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside.
Additional Details from

<http://www.lancswt.org.uk/whats-on>



THE BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

We are coming to the end of the habitat surveys for 2016 and the trainees will be writing up the survey reports. However there are plenty of opportunities to get out and about and record wildlife.

Remember you can get in touch with us anytime in Lancashire 01772 324 129 cgreen@lancswt.org.uk or Merseyside 0151 737 4152 jsimons@lancswt.org.uk.

You can also follow us on Facebook [HERE](#), tweet us [@Lancswildlife](#) & use [#wildlifecounts](#).

Biodiversity Courses: Will be restarting in 2017.

Consisting of indoor theory and some outdoor sessions the course will cover plant morphology, physiology and adaptations and is suitable for beginners or individuals with limited experience who have an interest in plants.