

Issue 58

W
N
N
L
E
D
W
I
S
E

JANUARY
2009



Left: Hazel leaf and twig. The leaf is up to 10cm long, rounded and double-toothed. The buds are round and smooth and alternate.

(See "What's in your hedge" on page 56.)



Above: Post with drilled holes

*Below: Leaf of Great Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*)*

(See pages 51 -52 to see their relevance to the conservation of wild Bees.)

SOLITARY BEES

END OF 2008 MOTH TRAPPING SEASON

FASCINATING FUNGI

THE THAMES PATH

FAMILY GROUP REPORTS

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2008

MISTLETOE

WHAT'S IN YOUR HEDGE?

REVIVE THE WYE

SITE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

NEWS OF NICOLE

THE YEAR IN THE WILDLIFE GARDEN

BIRDS ON THE RYE - OCT AND NOV 2008

CONTACT & MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS



Contact address, telephone and e-mail :
see page 59

Registered Charity No : 1075175



Wycombe Wildlife Group is a registered charity with the following objects:

To conserve the environment, mainly using volunteers, for the benefit of the public.

To educate the public in the principles and practice of conservation.

Within **Wycombe District** the Group:

Surveys wildlife habitats and their associated flora and fauna, giving those taking part plenty of opportunities to increase their knowledge and identification skills.

Helps manage local wildlife sites, undertaking practical conservation work on local nature reserves.

Provides advice to schools, other bodies and individuals on all aspects of wildlife.

Stimulates public interest in wildlife and its conservation.

Organises walks, talks and other activities covering a wide range of wildlife topics.

Provides advice on and encourages wildlife gardening.

Organises activities for young children and their parents.

Co-operates with other groups with similar aims and supports the Environment Centre on Holywell Mead.

Wycombe Wildlife News

is published 3 times a year to promote the Group and wildlife issues and inform members and the public of its activities.

Editor : Pat Morris

Produced by : Roger Wilding

Illustrations : Pat Morris and Frances Wilding

Printed by : Design & Print, Wycombe District Council

COPY DATE

Friday, 6th March 2009

Registered Charity No : 1075175

- IN THIS ISSUE -

Editorial	50	What's in your hedge?	56
New members	50	Revive the Wye	56
Solitary bees	51	Site management update	57
End of 2008 moth trapping season	52	News of Nicole	57
Fascinating fungi - talk and walk	52	The year in the wildlife garden	58
The Thames Path -talk	53	Birds on the Rye - Oct and Nov 2008	59
Family Group reports	54	WWG contact and membership details	59
Christmas party 2008	55	Wildlife observations	60
Mistletoe	55	Local environmental groups	60

Editorial

With 15-16 million gardens in Britain offering a huge potential wildlife resource, it has been good to note greater interest for wildlife gardening in the media during 2008. This has ranged from the creation of linked wildlife-friendly gardens to four-day garden makeovers to form habitats for specific wild creatures, such as Badgers. Wycombe Wildlife Group has always put emphasis on wildlife gardening, as something any individual with a garden can do to protect and encourage wildlife. To this end, the Group has in the past run wildlife gardening competitions, maintained a demonstration wildlife garden at the former West Wycombe Garden Centre for ten years, and now cares for a native wildflower garden created by the Group within the walled garden at Hughenden Manor. To support the wildlife gardening theme, advisory leaflets produced by the Group have recently been updated and sponsored by Nottcutts Booker Garden Centre and the adjacent Waterlife Studio. And, of course, individual members have always been ready to advise on wildlife gardening problems.

The Group's priority project for 2008 was to set up a wildlife gardening exhibition, which the public could easily visit and which would show just how simple it is to incorporate features in one's own garden, such as Bee tubes, which not only benefit the creatures concerned, but benefit mankind in general. Without Bees there would soon be no food. The wildlife gardening exhibition took place during the summer of 2008 at the Environment Centre on Holywell Mead and it was a major achievement.

In spite of the current economic downturn, wildlife gardening should be something unaffected by job and income loss. In fact, it could provide a distraction and comfort to those now forced to spend more time at home. No one can deny the sense of peace and satisfaction that working in one's own garden can bring. Observing the wildlife that is encouraged into it is an added bonus, and an activity in which anyone can participate.

So get out there and, more importantly, come along to Wycombe Wildlife Group activities to meet like-minded people and discuss your wildlife gardening successes and failures.

Pat Morris

WWW.WYCOMBEWILDLIFE.CO.UK

New Member

We welcome the following new member, and look forward to seeing him at future events:-

Richard Andrews

Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Group.
For the purposes of management of the Group, membership information is held on computer.

Since Phil Space's article on a Leaf-cutter Bee using his garden seat as a nest site (May 2008), Wycombe Wildlife Group has received several enquiries about Bee tubes for Solitary Bees. In view of this interest, we are publishing the following information on Solitary Bees for our readers.

A brief introduction to Solitary Bees

Compiled by Clive Hill - Chairman of the High Wycombe Beekeepers Association (HWBKA)

We have had a number of queries which are, from the beekeeper's point of view, about Solitary Bees. Since such queries come each year, I've prepared some information that we can use more widely.

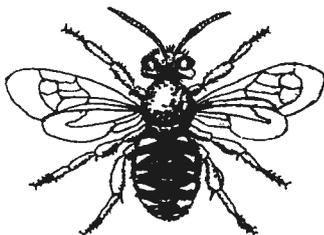
Solitary Bees are quite common in late springtime each year. They tend to re-occur in the same place year after year. The Bees are most unlikely to be dangerous, or to cause any significant damage. There are over 200 species of Solitary Bee in the UK. It is difficult to find out much about them, but their nesting habits allow them to be broken down into two broad groups. Cavity nesters, also known as Mason Bees, use mud to build their nests and to separate different parts of the nest. Mining Bees make short tunnels in which they make their nests. Often these have small heaps of soil particles at the entrance, so they look like little 'volcanoes' with a narrow tunnel in the centre.

Solitary Bees often nest in close proximity to each other and we call such groupings 'Bee villages'. Often you get what appears to be a large number of Bees drifting about close to the ground, or an old wall. (In many cases these will be male Bees, which have hatched out first and are waiting for the later-emerging female Bees to start flying. The males will then try to mate with them.) Once you have recognised this typical flight pattern, you will probably see other groups of these Bees and realise how frequent they are. Mining Bee villages are located in exposed garden soil, some in short grass, some in the softer mortar of old walls. Some are found in soil supported by garden walls - with the Bees using cracks in the mortar as passageways to the soil behind. Mason Bee villages can be in hollow tubes, like old plant stems, or in the ends of

bamboo canes, or old beetle borings in rotten wood, or even in the tubes of air bricks. Some species of Bee use parts of leaves to form their nest (Leaf-cutter Bees) and some collect soft mud to use as a building material (Mason Bees).

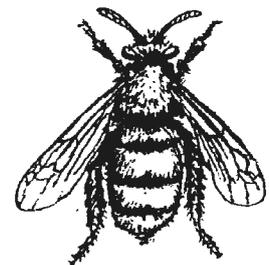
Solitary Bees come in a many different body sizes but their bodies will always have the same underlying structure as a Honey-bee (although some species carry pollen on a brush under their abdomen, rather than in bundles on their back legs as Honey-bees do). The different species tend to be active for quite short periods of time, say around four to six weeks. But as the Summer progresses, different species emerge so that over a prolonged period there will be different species of Solitary Bee working the flowers in a garden for the whole Summer. So if you are host to a Bee village, or just one or two little 'volcanoes', what you have is a small world to admire, and perhaps learn about. You should also be proud and feel both lucky and honoured to be hosting the Bees.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to find out much about this type of Bee, but the book 'Bees of the World' by Christopher O'Toole and Anthony Raw is probably the best information source (ISBN 0-7137-2085-9). The Field Studies Council has recently produced a useful illustrated, laminated pamphlet covering both Bumble Bees and some Solitary Bees, giving some identification details and pictures (ISBN 978 1 85153 230 8). The International Bee Research Association also has an illustrated pamphlet 'Guide to Solitary Bees in the Garden'. You will also find some information about Solitary Bees on the following websites: www.bwars.com and www.britishbeekeepers.com or you can contact HWBKA for further information and for answers to frequently asked questions.



Left: Wool Carder Bee (*Anthidium manicatum*)

Length 11mm. Black with yellow markings. Collects fluff from plants such as Verbascum or Lamb's ear to line its nest made in a wood tunnel. It lays an egg on a mixture of pollen and nectar.



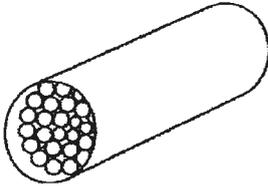
Right: Tawny Mining Bee (*Andrena fulva*)

Length 14 mm. Like a rich brown Honey-bee, but smaller, and found in gardens. Digs a nest in soil. Also known as the Lawn Bee.

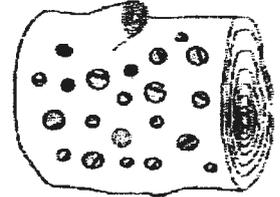
Solitary Bees - what you can do

If you missed seeing our display at last Summer's wildlife gardening exhibition, and would like to help Solitary Bees, why not install some hollow stems and canes like we had on show there. Bundles of straw tied together and fixed under a window ledge, lengths of bamboo cane or dry, hollow stems packed into a canister can all be hung up in a sunny

position to encourage the Bees to nest. If inquisitive birds try to pull out the canes or stems, fix wire netting across the entrance to prevent them doing so. There are plenty more ideas in our leaflet 'Gardens for Bees & Wasps' obtainable from Pat Morris, 30 Amersham Hill Drive, HP13 6QY. Please enclose a S.A.E.



Two of the illustrations in WWG's leaflet 'Gardens for Bees and Wasps'

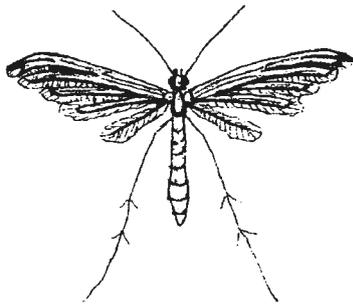


End of 2008 moth trapping season

The 2008 moth trapping season concluded with two sessions, one at Holtspur Bottom, and the other in Pat Morris's garden. The weather was cloudy but dry for the event held at Holtspur Bottom on 12th September 2008 and 12 species were recorded, including four Brimstone Moths and four Dusky Thorns. Only one moth, the Red-green Carpet appeared on 3rd October 2008 at 30 Amersham Hill Drive, not surprising as it was very cold. So everyone retired indoors to drink hot tea

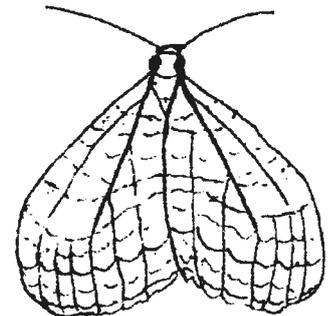
and examine dead specimens found earlier in the year, and a Plume Moth, caught inside the house the previous evening. Although the official moth trapping season was over, Winter Moths and November Moths were still coming to lighted windows towards the year's end. Moths can be found at any time!

As always, thanks to Paul Bowyer and Karen Roberts who unfailingly support this activity.



Left: Plume Moth (*Stenoptilia pterodactyla*). Wingspan 20-25mm. Smaller than the more familiar White Plume Moth. Pale brown and delicate.

Right: Winter Moth (*Operophtera brumata*). Wingspan 28-32 mm. Grey brown, with slightly darker wavy bands. Female has only short stumps for wings, and cannot fly.



Fascinating fungi

The first talk of the Autumn season was entitled Fascinating Fungi and was given by Roger Wilding. Although Roger has given fungi talks to WWG in the past, illustrated with slides, this talk was illustrated with a Powerpoint presentation containing lots of new digital photographs covering the wide range of fruiting bodies within the Fungi Kingdom. The talk referred to the deadly poisonous Amanitas, the strange Earthstars, the nasty effects of Ergot poisoning and even mentioned slime moulds which have now been moved to the Protozoa Kingdom. It

was a pity that only nine people attended this fascinating talk, although the follow-up fungus walk, led by Roger, in Kings Wood on Saturday 25th October was well-attended by members of Wycombe Wildlife Group as well as by Friends of Kingswood. The 34 species found on the walk brought the total number of species recorded during Roger's annual forays in the wood since 2006 to 52. Details can be found on the WWG website.

Pat Morris

The Thames Path

Following the course of the River Thames from its source in Gloucestershire to the Thames Barrier was a project undertaken by Roger and Frances Wilding in 2007. The 213 mile walk along the Thames Path (which includes a stretch on both sides of the river from Teddington to Greenwich) was completed in sections, and accessed almost entirely by public transport. As far as possible, the walks were undertaken when the weather and visibility was suitable (in the interests of photography). This talk was a record of Roger and Frances's experiences.

Roger's talk started with an image of the stone marking where the Thames rises, though the river rarely flows from that point. The river soon collects water from numerous springs and small tributaries, however, and gradually gets wider as it progresses through different countryside, villages, towns and cities, until the Thames Barrier is reached. We were shown where our own River Wye and other rivers joined the Thames. We also saw where the Kennet and Avon Canal and the Lee Navigation linked the Thames to Bath and Hertford respectively and Roger casually mentioned that he and Frances had walked these two canals during 2008.

Difficulties experienced included the floods which had occurred both in early 2007 and in the Summer of that year and the need to walk away from the river in some places where public access was not permitted. Transport was a major issue and required very careful advance planning. Where buses only ran every three hours, keeping to planned time schedules was essential. In one village there were two separate stops for the same bus and Roger found out that one of the stops was only used on Thursdays. At another location, Roger had to run out in the road in front of the bus to make sure it stopped when it suddenly appeared from the opposite direction to the one expected.

There were shots of interesting churches and stained glass windows, places of historical interest and the most

attractive and the most ugly properties seen. Not surprisingly, however, many of Roger's photographs illustrated the wide variety of wildlife encountered along the river, including Dragonflies such as the Banded Demoiselle, the Blue-tailed Damselfly and the rare Club-tailed Dragonfly, and birds, including Swans, various Geese, Herons, Cormorants and a pair of Stock Doves. Roger was lucky enough to secure an amazing shot of a Heron in flight over the water. A series of photos showed how Frances managed to tame an aggressive Mallard drake that started pecking through the slats of the seat on which she and Roger sat whilst eating their sandwiches. After being tamed, Frances was able to pick the Mallard up and feed it by hand: it then followed them for quite a way when they re-started their walk.

There were lots of pictures of flowering plants seen on the walks. As well as the usual riverside flora such as Purple-loosestrife, Celery-leaved Buttercup and the attractive but invasive Indian Balsam, many non-riverside plants were seen and photographed. As expected, Roger included a few photographs of fungi including the Alder Bracket, and he showed a picture of Meadowsweet leaves almost completely covered with a species of plant gall only found on that host.

Pictures of a fierce bull scratching its nose with its back hoof, a llama and a Saddleback pig with her newly-born piglet all provided alternative interest. In fact this was an amusing, all-encompassing talk, and we look forward to hearing more of Roger and Frances's adventures as they follow the Thames from the Barrier to the sea on both the Kent and Essex sides of the river.

After Roger's talk, Frances went through a list of the flora and fauna she had recorded on the walks and Roger answered the many questions put to him.

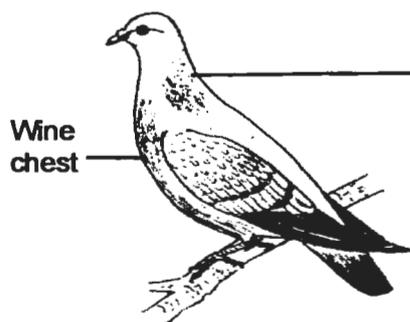
Thanks to Roger and Frances for a most interesting evening.

Pat Morris

Celery-leaved Buttercup
(*Ranunculus sceleratus*)



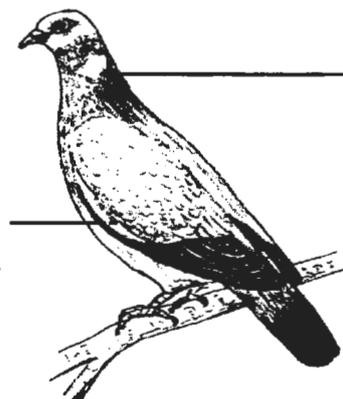
Stock Dove



Woodpigeon
(larger than Stock Dove)

Iridescent green on side of neck

White band on wing, seen in flight



white collar

WYCOMBE WILDLIFE FAMILY GROUP

Reports on the Autumn and Christmas meetings by Peter Bailey

Will and Martha led an outing to Keep Hill Wood on 18th October entitled "Autumn Sensations". The idea was to focus on our different senses in turn, whilst in the Autumn woodland environment. Fortunately, we were blessed with good weather - dry and, at times, even sunny. Four families, consisting of seven children and four adults, attended the event.

After a short walk up the hillside from the Environment Centre, we started on the range of activities that Will and Martha had prepared in advance. First there was a "feely bag". The children were asked to close their eyes and guess the woodland objects in the bag, from touch alone. Understandably, some of the children were nervous of what might have been in the bag. Next the group was divided into teams, with each team trying to find objects related to words that had been given to them. The idea was that we would all come together at the end and try to guess the words that the other teams had been given. My team had "prickly" and "tickly". We had no problem with "prickly" - Nettles, Thistles, Holly, etc., but "tickly" proved more difficult and we came back with a Yew twig and a Hazel nut. No-one in the other teams guessed "tickly" and somebody even questioned whether the objects we collected were really "tickly". A brief demonstration, however, showed

that both Yew twigs and Hazel leaves were indeed "tickly".

Next, the teams were sent out into the wood to find leaves that matched the shapes that had been given to them on a board - Oak, Hazel, Sycamore and Beech. My two (Mikki age 7 and Jake age 5) were surprisingly quick at this. Although they didn't recognise the leaf shapes as belonging to particular tree species, within a couple of minutes they had found leaves that matched the shapes they needed. Next we moved on to rubbings of tree bark (like brass rubbing but on trees instead of on brasses), exploring the different barks of different tree species. We then tried rubbings of a number of other materials including leaves, the annual growth rings of the wood of a park bench and even a piece of corrugated cardboard - though I'm not sure that the last two were deliberate. We went on to collect "smelly cocktails", mixtures of smells from the woods that smelt good or bad. Jake commented that he seemed to be better at collecting bad smells than good smells. After taking a whiff of what he had collected, his sister agreed with him. Finally, we searched the woodland floor, finding a Toad, some brightly coloured fungi and a Beetle.

My two had a fine time and were thoroughly looking forward to the next Family Group session.



Photographs of the Family Group events by Peter Bailey



*Left: Will holds out the "feely bag".
Top: Jake proudly displays his wreath and the angel he had made.*



Right: Mikki holds up her wreath for Christmas.

The Family Group event on 13th December took place in the Environment Centre and was well attended. Julie, who led this event, assisted by Wendy, provided supplies of Clematis to provide the main structure of the Christmas wreaths, along with many types of leafy branches (especially Holly and Ivy) to decorate them. The fact that Julie had run events like this for years was obvious from her relaxed but efficient and friendly approach. Many of the adults were impressed by the quality of wreaths they were able to produce themselves. Jake's main concern was that he had the biggest wreath so he opted for a fairly minimalistic approach to

decorating it. Mikki had a more orthodox approach to wreath design.

A number of other activities had been prepared in addition to wreath making, including decorating Pine cones to make them look like Christmas trees. Upstairs, the Environment Centre was running its own craft event. Many people who came for one of the events ended up going to both. Mikki and Jake came away with clay and paper angels from the Environment Centre's event and one of the paper angels ended up sitting on top of our Christmas tree.

Family Group meetings in 2009

It is currently planned that the Family Group will meet approximately quarterly. The next meeting will be on Saturday 14th March and will be held at Brush Hill Nature Reserve (see the WWG Spring Programme for more details).

WWG Christmas Party 2008

Held on Monday 8th December 2008 at the Environment Centre

In spite of the cold, damp weather, ten members gathered for this last and unusual event of the year, the Group's Christmas party, which this year took the form of a Beetle drive. After tucking in to all the delicious food and drink, members sat down at two tables, prepared to do battle with the dice, and draw their Beetles.

M.C. James Donald explained, however, that even after throwing an appropriate number with the dice, teams could only add additional Beetle parts if his wildlife questions were answered correctly. This led

to tense and exciting moments, and more refreshments were needed before tackling the second round.

It was a very different form of Beetle drive, and everyone's thanks go to James Donald for devising this ingenious evening. Thanks too to everyone for all the gifts of food and drink.

A good time was had by all.

Pat Morris

MISTLETOE (*Viscum album*)

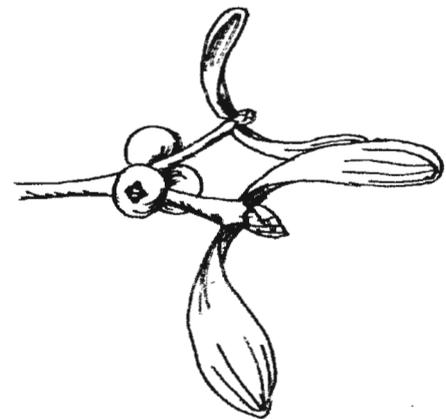
Although 2008 was a good year for Mistletoe after the mild, wet winter of the previous year, survival of this parasitic plant could now be under threat. One of the reasons is that too many old Apple trees, its most common host, are being grubbed up. Another reason is over-harvesting of the berried female plants and ignoring control of the non-berried male plants.

To help in the survival of Mistletoe, you could try growing it yourself. Obtain local seed, if possible, growing on a tree similar to your own. Press the sticky berry to the underside of the branch, where birds are less likely to find it. If the seed has

germinated, the area will swell, and, by Autumn, leaves could appear. You will have to wait for five years for flowers and berries to be produced, however, and only if you have been lucky enough to select a female seed. So plant several, to increase your chances of success.

Wycombe Wildlife Group carried out a Mistletoe survey in the past, and it was found growing on Poplars, Willows, Limes and other trees as well as Apples.

Pat Morris



What's in your hedge?

The members' meeting on Monday 13th October opened with a brief introduction to the history and importance of hedges, which began as strips of woodland left when Stone Age people cleared the forest. Some hedges date from around Roman times, but all hedges, whatever their age, support a huge variety of wildlife, from birds and insects, to plants and mammals.

Hedges are used as safe wildlife corridors, along which creatures can travel from one area to another. They provide food and shelter, not only for wild creatures, but also for man and his crops, although the amount of protection depends on the height and depth of the hedge. All these facts, plus photographs of hedgerows, trees, shrubs and other plants were displayed on boards. Some of the photographs were used as the basis of a quiz, to see how many hedgerow fruits members could identify. Members were also asked if they

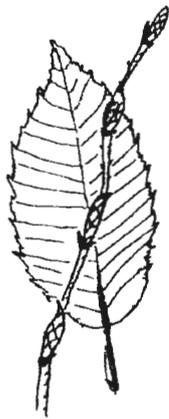
could recognise samples of twigs collected from hedges, and submitted their own finds for Angus, Roger, Frances and Pat to name.

Identifying some twigs led to quite a lot of debate, the wet Summer having caused some leaves to grow to abnormal size, but in the end there was agreement.

It was a pleasant and instructive occasion, which provided a good opportunity for members to enjoy one another's company, as well as discuss wildlife.

Thanks to all those who brought along plant material, and to everyone for their support. Thirteen members had attended, in spite of confusion over the date due to a typing error in the published Autumn Programme.

Pat Morris



Hornbeam leaf and twig

The leaf is 4-10cm long, oval, double-toothed and has up to 15 pairs of veins.

The bud is slightly curved, and pressed to the twig.



An idea for a wildlife gardening New Year's Resolution - plant a Hawthorn.

We missed organising an activity for National Tree Week, which this year ran from 26th November to 7th December, but you could still do something relevant in your garden. If you haven't already got a Hawthorn in your garden, why not plant one. More than 40 species of moth breed on Hawthorn and it is valuable for its blossom and berries and for nesting birds. You could make this your wildlife New Year's resolution.

Revive the Wye

The Revive the Wye project aims to protect and improve the natural environment of the River Wye chalk stream and to make it a special place for people and wildlife. The project's Steering Group includes representatives from the Chiltern Society, the High Wycombe Society and Wycombe Wildlife Group as well as the Chiltern Conservation Board Chalk Streams Officer and representatives from WDC and the Environment Agency.

The project organised its first practical river task on Friday 26th September 2008. The task involved the removal of litter and the clearance of excessive vegetation on the stretch of the river on the north side of the Rye downstream from Pann Mill. Eight volunteers from TNS Global, a market research company based in London Road, together with representatives of the project's supporting

organisations took part and an enjoyable day was had by all. The water level was quite high and some of the volunteers, who were new to wearing waders, got a bit wet, but that did stop them saying they would love to help again.

A programme of further events should be published soon, so if any members would like to get involved, please let me know. I did mention last year about the need to identify locations where invasive alien plants were growing and to remove them: this task was postponed until 2009 to give chance for a couple of university students to undertake a research project related to such plants. The results of this research will probably be used to target areas for priority action.

Roger Wilding



Photographs of the Revive the Wye task on 26th September taken by Christine Breden of the Chiltern Society Conservation Volunteers.

Site management update

It has not been the easiest of Autumns for fitting in the usual end-of-year strimming, raking and burning tasks on the sites where WWG has been carrying out site management tasks over many years. I took advantage of a few days of good weather in September to strim and rake the banks in the Cock Lane cemetery. I also managed to cut the bank and most of the grassland immediately below the steps leading down into Gomm's Wood before the day I had arranged for Earthworks Conservation Volunteers to come and give a hand with an on-going selective scrub clearance task there. As usual, the Earthworks team did a marvelous job and they had their annual opportunity to see the progress that has been made to increase the amount of chalk grassland habitat and associated flora on the site since they first started helping there several years ago. The only problem this year has been the burning of all the cut material. Just as we got a couple of days of fine weather and the cut material started to dry off, it rained overnight and everything got soaked again. A series of very smoky bonfires got rid of some of the cut material but the pile still there at Christmas would have enriched the soil too much if left much longer. Fortunately, the cold, dry spell at the end of the year gave an opportunity to start the New Year with just a pile of ash.

More clearance than usual has taken place this year on the Sheepridge Reserve next to the Little

Marlow Cemetery. The reason for this is that the Parish Council are considering the future cemetery needs, which will necessitate extending the area consecrated for burials to encompass much of the land currently managed as a nature reserve. I am hoping that the additional clearance work I have undertaken will enable the wildflowers on the site to spread to parts which have been too shady to support many of the species on the reserve: unlike at Cock Lane, there is no available adjoining non-cemetery land for the plants to migrate to. I recorded a total of 136 plant species on this small reserve during the last two years so it is worth making the effort to try to retain as much of the site's biodiversity as possible.

Hopefully, there will be opportunities to carry out some maintenance tasks on the Chairborough Reserve early in the New Year, before it's time to get along to Hughenden Manor to make sure the wildflower garden is ready for the public. The walled garden will open to the public again in early Spring.

Although I'm quite happy doing site management tasks on my own, I wouldn't want anyone reading this report to think I don't need anybody to help. All you have to do if you want to give a hand is to let me know when you are available.

Roger Wilding

News of Nicole

Members who knew Nicole Prater, who joined the Group in 2006 and gave a lot of support to Roger in his site management activities, will remember that, when she left Wycombe, it was in response to an offer of employment in conservation work in Hampshire. She later took up a post in Devon and has now been appointed

the Oxfordshire Reserves Officer for BBOWT. This achievement is a tribute to her dedication and hard work over the past few years. We send her our congratulations and, now she is back near us, look forward to a visit from her one day soon.

Pat Morris

The year in the wildlife garden

The weather produced some startling contrasts during 2008, from snow in April and again in October, to a very warm 28C in Wycombe on 1st July. This warmth was short-lived, however. Despite research, reported in the Daily Telegraph on 2nd September 2008, that the past decade was the hottest in the Northern Hemisphere for 1300 years, August 2008 was the least sunny since records began, and rain typified the year. A pond even formed at the bottom of my garden, for the first time in 50 years.

The effect of the weather on wildlife was varied. Damp conditions affect the life cycle of insects. Butterflies, and therefore their larvae, were generally in short supply. The Large Whites, which bred on my Nasturtiums, soon had their caterpillars picked off, not, I suspect, by birds, but by Wasps taking them to their own larvae. Orange Tips, quite plentiful in May, failed to breed at all on plants provided. However, the Common Darter dragonflies, delighting children and present in good numbers over the Hughenden Stream, were freely ovipositing at the water's edge, though it is doubtful whether their nymphs will survive.

It is said that Great Tits had a bad breeding season, but my garden feeding station has been overwhelmed by Blue and Long-tailed Tits and larger than usual numbers of Coal Tits. Nuthatches, too, have been vociferous in several gardens, including mine. All these were still emptying the feeders at breakneck speed at the year's end. Greenfinches, few at first, started to return by December, but there was a rare and worrying absence of Goldfinches all

Autumn. Starlings were a species totally absent from my garden since July. Usually, the installation of a special fat bar brings them at once, but it totally failed to attract them. (Were there better things to eat in a Totteridge member's garden, where up to 16 Starlings feeding at once and many more in the surrounding bushes were recorded?) The fat bar is being devoured instead by the many Tits, two Blackbirds (who have learnt the technique of perching on the holder), the Nuthatch and a Greater Spotted Woodpecker. A female Blackcap also appeared one day.

Numerous Woodpigeons are not so welcome. They quickly strip the Ivy and Cotoneaster berries, leaving none for resident or migrating Thrushes. However, the plentiful supply of windfall apples in gardens should help these birds survive, Opportunist Woodpigeons also learnt to perch on feeder trays, so in my garden at least, the trays have had to be removed, to avoid Woodpigeon monopoly of seed feeders.

The Red Kite continues to patrol overhead from Bowerdean to Hughenden and to Hazlemere and is a familiar sight over the town, even taking scraps from many gardens.

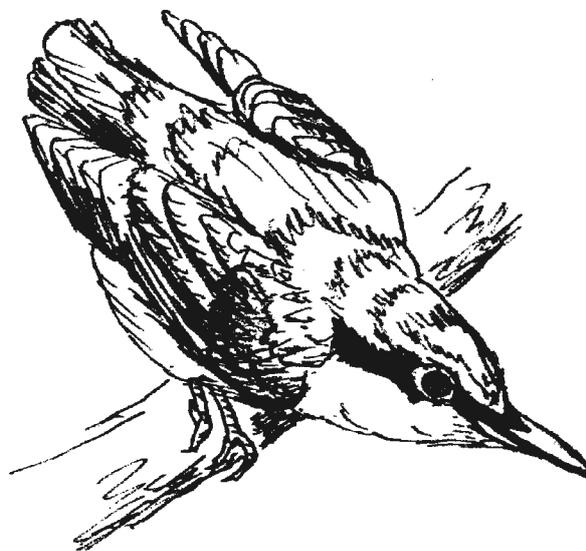
It promises to be an exciting Winter in the wildlife garden. Let's hope the weather is kinder in 2009 and redresses the balance of currently threatened species.

Pat Morris

Nuthatch

Distinctive black eye-stripe.

Heard calling in many gardens and seen on many feeders.



Bird sightings on the Rye during October and November 2008

Recorded by Roy Barkes

	30 October	18 November		30 October	18 November
Mute Swan	43	41	Mistle Thrush	5	2
Mallard	218	163	Goldcrest	4	3
Tufted Duck	37	33	Nuthatch	3	
Coot	31	18	Redwing	17	
Moorhen	17	10	Fieldfare	9	
Grey Heron	1		Black-headed Gull	245	165
Kingfisher	1		Common Gull	2	1
Grey Wagtail	2				

To join Wycombe Wildlife Group

Please complete the forms below (or photocopies) and send to the Membership Secretary, 73 Carver Hill Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2UB.

Subscription rates: £6 per annum, if paid by standing order or £7 per annum, if paid by cash or cheque.

WWG Contact Details

Postal correspondence should be addressed to:
 Chairman, Wycombe Wildlife Group,
 c/o 129 Deeds Grove, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 3PA

Chairman & Site Management Co-ordinator:
 Roger Wilding 01494 438374
w.w.group@btopenworld.com

Newsletter Editor: Pat Morris 01494 529484
roymorris@freeuk.com

Membership Secretary: James Donald 01494 637877

Treasurer: Peter Hazzard, 15 London Road,
 High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1BJ

Biological surveys: Angus Idle 01494 563673
angusjanet@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.wycombewildlifegrp.co.uk
 Webmaster: Malcolm Pusey
mac@mpusey.freereserve.co.uk

Please enrol me as a member of Wycombe Wildlife Group

Name:.....
 Address.....
 Telephone:..... Email:.....

Payment options

EITHER Payment by bank standing order

ToBank
Branch
 Address.....

NEW standing order instruction:
Account to be debited (your account details)

Sort code:
 Account number:
 Account name:

Beneficiary bank and payee details

HSBC 1 Corn Market High Wycombe HP11 2AY
 Sort Code: 402417
 Account number: 92116685
 Account name: Wycombe Wildlife Group
 Ref:

Payment details

Amount of payment: £6.00 Six pounds
 Frequency: Annually
 From: Date in box below
 Number of payments: Until further notice

Signature Date

OR Payment by cheque or cash

I enclose my cheque/cash for £7.00, payable to Wycombe Wildlife Group.



WILDLIFE NOTICE BOARD



Observations



September

22/08 to

- 01/09 Common Darter dragonflies ovipositing in Hughenden Stream
- 01/09 Last Small Tortoiseshell - Amersham Hill Drive
- 14/09 Wheatear on fence - Hughenden Park near Coates Lane
- 14/09 Best butterfly day - 8 Red Admirals, Brimstone, Large White, 4 Small Whites, Comma, Peacock - Littleworth Road
- 16/09 Last Green-veined White - Littleworth Road
- 16/09 9 male Blackbirds on lawn at same time - Booker
- 17/09 Migrant Hawker dragonfly (freshly dead) - Hazlemere
- 18/09 Chiffchaff - Carrington Road
- 25/09 25 Mute Swans - The Rye

October

- 03/10 85 Fieldfares & 35 Redwings - Beacon Hill
- 08/10 Last Large White - Littleworth Road
- 09/10 Last Speckled Wood - Amersham Hill Drive
- 24/10 Last Comma - Downley
- 26/10 First Brambling - Amersham Hill Drive

30/10 5 Yellowhammers - Puttenham Farm

30/10 3 Lapwings - Puttenham Farm

30/10 7 Linnets - Puttenham Farm

30/10 13 Skylarks - Puttenham Farm

November

02/11 Bumblebee - Downley

07/11 6 Buzzards - Beacon Hill

07/11 9 Jays - Puttenham Farm

07/11 3 Yellowhammers - Puttenham Farm

07/11 14 Meadow Pipits - Rushmoor Fields

08/11 Speckled Bush-cricket - Rushmoor Fields

11/11 2 Stonechats - Grange Farm

14/11 300 Greenfinches - Penn Wood

14/11 25 Siskins - Penn Wood

December

05/12 Last Red Admiral - Oxford Road

08/12 30 Fieldfares & Redwing eating apples - Amersham Hill Dr

29/12 Female Blackcap & Brambling - Amersham Hill Drive

Additional sightings can be seen on the website.

Contacts for Wildlife, Conservation & Environmental Groups in Wycombe District

Bassetsbury Group	David Reed	01494 439665
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust	(Oxon Office)	01865 775476
Booker Common & Woods Protection Society	Ron Walker	01494 444824
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	Alison Smith	01296 330033
British Trust for Ornithology (Regional Rep.)	David Lee	01844 347576
Bucks Invertebrate Group	Mike Palmer	01296 624519
Bucks Badger Group	Mike Collard	01494 866908
Bucks Bird Club	Roger Warren	01491 638691
Bucks Community Association	Francis Gomme	01844 274865
Bucks County Council Countryside Initiatives Team	Anna Humphries	01296 382288
Butterfly Conservation	Paul Bowyer	01628 526225
Chiltern Society	Angus Idle	01494 563673
Chilterns Chalk Streams Officer	Allen Beechey	01844 355502
Chilterns AONB	Steve Rodrick	01844 355500
Chilterns Conservation Board (Activities and Education)	Cathy Rose	01844 355506
Chilterns Countryside Group	Julie Rockell	01628 526828
Chilterns Woodland Officer	John Morris	01844 355503
Downley Common Preservation Society	Bill Thompson	01494 520648
English Nature Conservation Officer Bucks	Jenny Young	01635 268881
Frieth Natural History Society	Alan Gudge	01494 881464
Grange Action Group	Dave Wainman	01494 716726
High Wycombe Beekeeping Association	Christine Hazell	01494 531599
High Wycombe Society	Frances Presland	01494 523263
Lane End Conservation Group	Bärbel Cheesewright	01494 882938
Marlow Society	Bob Savidge	01628 891121
National Trust	(Office)	01494 755573
Pann Mill Group	Robert Turner	01494 472981
Prestwood Nature	Tony Marshall	01494 864251
Ramblers Association	J.L. Esslemont	01494 881597
Princes Risborough Countryside Group	Francis Gomme	01844 274865
St. Tiggywinkles	Les Stocker	01844 292292
Swan Lifeline	Wendy Hermon	01753 859397
The Environment Centre on Holywell Mead Co-ordinator		01494 511585
Woodland Trust (voluntary speaker)	Michael Hyde	01628 485474
Wycombe District Council Ranger Service	Julie Hopton	01494 421825



For queries about **BATS** contact the **WDC Rangers** : 01494 421824

