

Issue 60

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SEPTEMBER
2009



Brimstone
Note the wing spots
and pointed wing tip.



Painted Lady
Has pebble-like
markings on the
underwing. Note the
rounded tip of the
forewing.

- BBOWT AND WWG
- PRESTWOOD PICNIC SITE AND LNR
- WOODLAND WALK IN KING'S WOOD
- MOTH TRAPPING AT MOP END
- POND DIPPING
- FORTHCOMING FAMILY GROUP EVENTS
- BUTTERFLY IDENTIFICATION
- INSECT FRIENDS AND FOES
- HOW TO REDUCE HORSE-CHESTNUT LEAF MINER DAMAGE
- FARM WALK
- GLOW-WORM WALK
- REVIVE THE WYE WALKS
- BIRDS ON THE RYE - APR TO AUG 2009
- WWG CONTACT & MEMBERSHIP DETAILS
- WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS
- LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

See page 83 for our contact details



Comma
Has a characteristic
"ragged" shape and a
white "comma" mark

See page 79 for more tips on
identifying butterfly species.

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, 27th November 2009

Registered Charity No : 1075175

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Editorial - Autumn 2009

These are difficult times, and most organisations have undoubtedly been considering what steps they can take in order to survive. We were delighted to discuss this widespread problem with John Hoar, Chairman of the South Bucks Region of BBOWT. The outcome of our discussions can be read on the opposite page.

It has been a remarkable summer. The hot weather we were told to expect somehow never came, though we did experience one heatwave, and odd days have been gloriously sunny. However, the on-off pattern of rain and sunshine does not seem to have affected wildlife adversely at all. In fact it seems to have been beneficial. Plants have flowered prolifically, especially early in the season, the only problem with so much wet weather being the amount of vegetative growth, good for Runner Beans but otherwise involving constant cutting back in the garden. Bees, said to have been in trouble, have responded on fine days to the availability of so much nectar, along with other insects, though the abundance of aphids has not been so pleasing. However, armies of Harlequin ladybirds and, later, 7-spots, and wasps, have worked hard to keep them in check. The local Song Thrush has gorged itself on the surfeit of snails.

Butterflies have had an excellent season at long last. An invasion of Painted Ladies, added to Peacocks, Commas, a few Red Admirals, and a solitary Small Tortoiseshell have nectared together on our Buddleja for the first time in years, though hordes of Large Whites may not have pleased everyone. At the same time the garden has been inundated with tits - I have not seen flocks of this size for many years, so some birds, at least, must have had a good breeding season.

We have every reason to feel hopeful, in spite of the weather, with all these signs of a healthy environment and with the support of like-minded organisations like BBOWT to help us along.

Pat Morris

New member

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

Michael Chadwick

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.

BBOWT and WWG

It is 50 years this autumn since a small group of dedicated individuals met in a village hall near Oxford and resolved to form what is now known as the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, usually shortened to BBOWT (pronounced "bee-bout"). From these small beginnings, the Trust has grown to become a major force for conservation in the area, with a membership of over 50,000, assets worth £8 million and responsibility for managing more than 80 nature reserves.

BBOWT is one of 47 wildlife trusts working across Britain to achieve the shared aim of securing a better future for wildlife. To this end, BBOWT aims to:

- Inspire, encourage and support people to take action for wildlife.
- Buy, create and manage nature reserves to safeguard species and habitats.
- Work in partnership with other organisations and landowners to conserve and enhance wildlife in the wider countryside and urban areas.

All this may seem a little remote from the specific interests of Wycombe Wildlife Group. But



recognising the dangers of size, BBOWT divided the three counties into regions for certain purposes. The South Bucks Region is centred on High Wycombe and Beaconsfield, with the Gomm Valley Reserve being one of the five reserves within its boundaries. The activities of the regional group include organising talks on wildlife subjects, conducting walks and field trips, arranging events targeted at families with children, representing BBOWT at public events and offering opportunities for those wishing to do hands-on conservation work or to carry out wildlife surveys.

The South Bucks Region has always maintained close relations with WWG, which has objectives and activities similar to its own. Recently the two organisations have agreed to offer a joint programme of talks and walks. This hopefully will encourage wider support for both parties and provide a greater choice of venue and dates to members. The indoor events arranged for the following three months can be found in WWG's autumn programme.

John Hoar
Chairman BBOWT South Bucks Region

John Hoar manning the BBOWT table at the recent Open Weekend held at the Environment Centre on Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th July, where children had the opportunity to make their own animal facemasks. WWG had a stall alongside, with wildlife scenes for children to colour for a competition. The WDC Ranger Service were also there, busy helping their young visitors to create dragonflies. The three organisations provided an excellent example of working together with a common interest.

Winners of WWG children's colouring competition

Age 4-5 Sami Mitchell (Age 5)
Age 6-7 Kitty Mackenzie (Age 6)
Age 8-10 Natasha Smith (Age 10)

Acknowledgements

- Essentials and W.A.Child's of Park Parade, Hazlemere, who generously provided the prizes.
- Will Dawbarn, who judged the competition, and donated one of his own cartoons to be used as a picture.
- Julie for use of artwork and crayons.
- Mary, Olive, Wendy, Peter, Rosemary and Gita who gave up part of their weekend to help.



Prestwood Picnic Site and Local Nature Reserve



*Clustered
Bellflower
(Campanula
glomerata)*

*Chiltern Gentian
(Gentianella germanica)
Usually larger than the similar
Autumn Gentian (Gentianella
amarilla) although
hybridisation often makes
identification difficult*



Many of you will already know this reserve, which lies just beyond Hughenden Valley just north of Perks Lane, Prestwood (SU866991). It comprises a steep west-facing chalk bank with scrub and incipient woodland surrounds. It has long been valued for its butterflies and flowers.

An account surviving from the 1930s describes the flowers, which then included several species of orchid including Man Orchid, no longer found in Bucks. Unfortunately the building of the Perks Lane development at this time replaced the best south-facing slope with houses and gardens. Man Orchid did survive until the 1960s on the other side of the Perks Lane valley, on a north-facing slope, but finally succumbed. Fragrant and Early Purple Orchids also seem to have gone, although the second of these still grows nearby. The account, by a student teacher as a dissertation for her course, also mentions Chalkhill Blues here, along with their principal foodplant, Horseshoe Vetch, which unfortunately does not seem to have survived.

Just after the war the site was used as a scrap-car dump, the proprietor, a former bus driver from London, living there in a caravan. Wycombe District Council purchased it in 1976 and it was cared for until 2000 by the County Council, who removed 16 lorry loads of car-parts, before landscaping and re-seeding part of the site. Car-parts are still regularly seen on site, including a hub-cap embedded in the main path up the slope. Since 2000 the site has been managed by Wycombe Rangers, helped by Chiltern Society and Prestwood Nature volunteers. Prestwood Nature has also carried out regular surveys of the flora and fauna, including a butterfly transect, glow-worm monitoring and bird surveys.

The main management problem has been the persistent spread of Dogwood scrub, threatening to destroy the open grassland where most of the interesting flowers, insects and reptiles are found (although Dogwood is the foodplant of one of the butterflies found here, the Green Hairstreak). Periods of relative neglect (occasioned by staff shortages) and the advent of foot-and-mouth

disease (which prevented access for a year) have resulted in the loss of some grassland and conversion of some periodically-cleared scrub becoming fixed secondary woodland. In view of this deterioration, Wycombe Rangers have just produced a new management plan, in close consultation with Prestwood Nature, which will attempt to remedy the situation. If the funding can be found, it is intended to introduce sheep-grazing to the site to help control scrub in a way that regular work parties have difficulty doing.

Despite all these problems, the site still has a remarkable assemblage of wildlife and is a popular place with local people. With over 100 notable and locally uncommon species (not bad for a site of less than 2 hectares, and each year we add more), I have no space to mention them all. While Rock-rose was last recorded in 1984, Kidney Vetch seemed to have been missing for even longer until I re-found it this year, and four different orchids can still be found, along with a fair colony of Chiltern Gentians, over 100,000 Cowslips (and a whole shade of hybrid intergrades with Primrose), Sweet-briar, Long-stalked Crane's-bill, Clustered Bellflower, the large-flowered Eyebright (*Euphrasia pseudokernerii*), Wild Pear, and a large number of Fragrant Agrimony. Butterflies include Clouded Yellow, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, Brown Argus and Small Heath. It is a long time since any Fritillaries were seen and the last record of Duke of Burgundy was in 1980, although some were seen in a neighbouring field three years ago (their tentative colonisation probably thwarted by the recent run of cool wet summers). Lizards and Slow-worms have been seen recently. Bullfinches nest. The national priority snail *Abida secale* lives here, tiny and hard to find despite its common name the Large Chrysalis Snail. The False Slender-footed Robberfly, seen here last year, was one of only a handful of sightings ever in this country. The delightful tiny Bird's Nest is one of several interesting fungi, including Vermilion and Persistent Waxcaps. There are rare bees, hoverflies, beetles ...etc.,etc.

So small you walk round the reserve in a few minutes, it is a place to sit and contemplate (perhaps on the bench dedicated to the late Ron Beaven, who spent many hours here documenting the butterflies), and wait for the wildlife to find you. I have never visited and failed to find something to delight or surprise. Geraldine Fisher spent years documenting the site in the 1980s, filling diaries with notes and watercolour sketches - art inspired by the nature of this place. It is truly worth preserving and Prestwood Nature will continue to work with Wycombe Rangers to look after it. Do visit - and let us know on ecorocker@gmail.com of any interesting sightings.

Tony Marshall, Prestwood Nature



Clouded Yellow - always settles with wings closed so you need to see it flying to appreciate its full glory.

Woodland Walk in King's Wood

A joint event on 25th April 2009 with Friends of King's Wood

It was a dry day with sunny intervals for a walk around King's Wood led by Roger and Frances Wilding. The walk was very well attended by all ages and we were joined by those who turned up for a walk organised by the Ranger Service.

There were plenty of wild flowers to see, including Goldilocks Buttercup, which usually has one or two incomplete petals on each flower, and is usually an indicator of ancient woodland.

Roger showed us the difference between the various Violet species we saw. He pointed out that Dog Violet species have pointed sepals whereas Sweet Violet and Hairy Violet have rounded ones. He also explained the differences in the colour and shape of the spurs on the Dog-violet flowers which help to determine whether it is a Common Dog-violet, Early Dog-Violet or a hybrid between the two species.

While Roger concentrated on the plants, Frances listened to the bird song. Sometimes three or four birds were heard at the same time but she was still able to tell us which species were singing. Whilst waiting for the walk to start, we could hear Skylarks in the fields across the road. As we walked into the woods, a variety of birds were singing including Song Thrush, Robin, Wren and Great Tit.

Many thanks to Frances, Roger and John for a very enjoyable and informative walk.

For a full list of plants and birds seen, go to the Wycombe Wildlife Group website at www.wycombewildlifegrp.co.uk.

Karen Roberts and Paul Bowyer



*During the King's Wood walk an unusual tree was seen which none of us could put a name to. It was later identified by John Shaw as a Bastard Service Tree (*Sorbus x thuringiaca*) which is a hybrid between Whitebeam and Rowan.*

Moth trapping

Amersham Field Centre, Mop End

22nd May 2009

The weather was dry, cloudy and warm for this event, and yielded a total of 23 different species of moth, among which the Nut-tree Tussock and Brown Silver Line were the most numerous (eight of each).

The event was enthusiastically supported by Laura and friend, as well as Laura's parents. Thanks to Karen Roberts who kept a tally of the species found, and to leader Paul Bowyer, who operated the light trap. Thanks also to the staff at the Centre for hosting this most successful evening.

A full list of species can be found on our website.

WYCOMBE WILDLIFE FAMILY GROUP

Pond dipping on the 13th June 2009

“No, no. You don't need those. Julie's going to be bringing nets and everything else we need”, I say to Mikki and her friend, Laura, as they load themselves up with old margarine and ice cream tubs, etc., to go pond dipping.

We arrive at the Environment Centre. Where is everyone? One other family is there. Maybe everyone else has gone ahead. We wander over to the pond. No they are not here. “Good job Mikki and Laura brought the margarine and ice cream tubs, though”, I think to myself.

Everyone had a good time, finding various creepy-crawlies and the weather was fine. Not having nets, we didn't get any big stuff - dragonfly larvae were about as big as anything we found. We couldn't identify much of what we found, but in a way that didn't really matter.

“I wonder why Julie isn't here and what about Will and Martha and family”, I think to myself. “I wonder

if that lady has a mobile phone”. She has and I phone home. I direct my wife to the WWG events programme on the fridge door. She reads out Martha and Will's number. I phone it and Martha answers the phone. She says the event had been cancelled as Julie's car had broken down. “I'm surprised Julie didn't contact you”, says Martha.

On Monday morning I arrive at work. On the phone on my desk, a light is on. A voicemail is waiting for me. It's Julie saying that her car's broken down and she has had to cancel the pond dipping event. Clearly I should have given Julie my home number as well as my work number.

In the end, the pond dipping wasn't entirely cancelled and we had a fine time. I don't suppose that the Family Group has ever had a cancelled event that went so well!

Peter Bailey



Laura Cook and Jake Bailey pond dipping

Photograph by Peter Bailey

FORTHCOMING FAMILY GROUP EVENTS

The Family Group meets again on Saturday 12th September to watch birds and make bird feeders, and on Saturday 12th December to make Christmas decorations with natural materials. Both events start at 2pm at the Environment Centre on Holywell Mead. Contact Martha or Will on 01494 536291 for more information.

Butterfly Identification

This is only part of the report by Paul Bowyer on the most informative talk by Nick Bowles of Butterfly Conservation at the WWG AGM on 11th May 2009. It includes a number of butterflies still on the wing at this time of the year. The rest of the report will appear in our April 2010 issue, when many of the other butterflies covered by the talk can be seen. If you can't wait till then, visit our website where you can read the whole version now!

Nick Bowles is a well respected authority within the organisation "Butterfly Conservation". He has participated in this field for a number of years at a national and regional level.

He started his talk with a brief description of Butterfly Conservation, the largest conservation group in the world concerned with insects. Wycombe lies within the Upper Thames area of Butterfly Conservation, which covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Nick then proceeded to explain how to differentiate between similar species of butterflies found within the Upper Thames region. He started with the Small Tortoiseshell and the Comma where he pointed out two distinguishing features. The upper sides of the wings of the Small Tortoiseshell have a border of small blue markings which are called lunules. The Comma has no blue markings at all but has a prominent white, comma-shaped marking on the underside of the hind wing. The Peacock, Nick explained, is unique in its false eye markings and its multicoloured upper wings. The Painted Lady can be distinguished by the colours of the underside of its wings, which match the rocks and pebbles of the African deserts from where it originates.

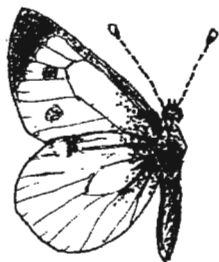
The Red Admiral has a strong red band across the upperside of its forewing with black and white markings at its wing tips. The White Admiral has a white band running across the uppersides of both wings. It also has a unique flying pattern of 3 to 4 strong wing beats followed by a glide. The Purple Emperor has a white band on the upper sides of its wings and, in the case of the male, a purple sheen. It also has a black dot on the underside of its wings which may be used to differentiate it from the White Admiral.

The talk then moved to identifying white butterflies. Nick told us about the Marbled White which belongs to the family of Brown butterflies. It is a brown or black insect with large white patches and lunules on its wings. The Green-veined White is best identified by the green veins apparent on the undersides of its wings. The Small White's underside has no markings and is a grey/green colour. Both species have one or two black spots on the upper side of their wings and some black markings on the tips of their wings. This black edging continues past the black spots in the Green-veined White and stops short of the spots in the Small White. In comparison with these 2 species, the Large White has larger and stronger black markings on the upper sides of its wings. These markings can be seen through the wings from its undersides. The female Brimstone butterfly can appear to be white but is distinguished by its pointed wing tips. The female Orange Tip is another species which could be confused with the other whites but can be identified by the dappled green markings on the undersides of its wings. A further confusing species may be the lighter-coloured Clouded Yellow, but this species always settles with closed wings and has a noticeable white spot on the underside of the wings.

Nick concluded his talk with a plea to all of us who have gardens, to think about the welfare of butterflies when gardening and, in particular, to avoid using a strimmer to remove grass from near to fences and walls, as it provides a valuable habitat for his favourite insects.

Thanks to Nick for all his identification tips. His vast knowledge of his subject was apparent, as was his dedication to their cause.

Paul Bowyer



Large White (left)
Black on wing tip extends below black spots
Small White (right)
Black on wing tip does not reach down as far as black spots.



Green-veined White (right)
Black on wing tip extends slightly below black spots



Insect friends and foes - A talk by Martin Harvey on 20th April 2009

Martin introduced his talk by telling us about the importance of gardens to insects and about surveys to prove this, undertaken by Jennifer Owen in Leicester and Dr Ken Thompson in Sheffield. For details, visit our website. The rest of his talk is summarised below.

Insect friends

Some of our insect friends in the garden are those which help decompose dead vegetable and animal matter. The most easily identifiable of these are the Woodlice, of which there are 8 different species. The Sheffield survey found that very small insects called Springtails were the most numerous, and these play an important role during the final stages in the decomposition of vegetable matter.

All insects in the garden are important, even if they are only part of the food chain. Few of the larvae of the herbivorous insects, including moths, butterflies and shield bugs, are a problem and they add to the diversity within our gardens and attract other creatures as well. Martin suggested that within most gardens, it would be easy to see over a hundred moth species within a year.

There are invertebrates which act as predators, maintaining an ecological balance within the garden, keeping the herbivores in check. There are over 300 species of garden spiders, many of them specialising in the type of prey they hunt. Ground Beetles will eat the larvae and eggs of insects. Other predators will parasitise the caterpillars of insects by injecting their eggs into them. Amongst these are the Ichneumon Wasps, a large family of parasitic insects.

More friendly insects are those which pollinate plants when moving from one flower to another in order to feed. There are many of these, Honey

Bees, bumblebees, moths, butterflies and even some beetles.

Insect foes

One of our insect enemies in the garden is the Vine Weevil, the larvae of which feed on plant roots. There are species of hoverfly whose maggots will feed on bulbs, and wasps may be a dangerous pest if they nest in or close to the house.

The Harlequin Ladybird, an invasive migrant, has become notorious in recent years. Although it eats aphids and greenfly, it will also eat the larvae of other species of ladybird as well as those of butterflies and moths, threatening the existence of our native species. The Large White butterfly can be a pest in the vegetable garden, where its caterpillars will feast on all sorts of brassicas.

Wildlife gardening tips

Martin said that insect numbers do not correlate to the size of garden. The value of the garden is its diversity. Martin gave us the following tips:-

- Do not keep the garden too tidy
- Do not deadhead flowers immediately
- Grow a variety of trees and shrubs
- Do not use pesticides - squash pests instead
- Have a variety of habitats

For more information on this subject, Martin recommended the following books:-

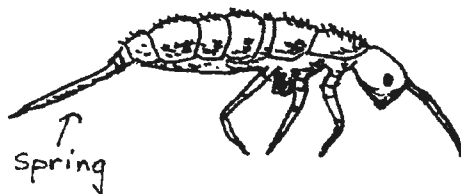
“Garden Creepy Crawlies” by Michael Chinery:

“Guide to Wildlife Gardening” by Richard Lewington

“No Nettles Required” and “An Ear to the Ground” by Ken Thompson

Thanks to Martin for a captivating talk.

Paul Bowyer



Left: Springtail
Length less than 5mm

Right: Vine Weevil
(*Otiorhynchus sulcatus*)
Length 9mm



How to reduce Horse-chestnut leaf miner damage

If possible, burn any fallen Horse-chestnut leaves affected by the leaf miner *Cameraria ohridella*. This will break their breeding cycle, and prevent some of next year's moths from emerging, thus reducing the population and resultant damage.

Visit to the Wren Davis Farm at Prestwood - Sunday 17th May 2009

Seven trusty stalwarts clad in raincoats, wellies, hats, and armed with umbrellas, attended the visit to Wren Davis' Collings Hanger Farm in Prestwood on a grey and very wet afternoon. Not really the weather we had hoped for in the middle of May, but then again we have had a very strange year haven't we?

We were given a warm and cheery welcome from the farmer Virginia Deradour, who took us through to the barn, where she gave us an introductory talk before we braved the weather for our farm tour. Virginia filled us in on the history of the farm, pointing out some of the old photos and artefacts displayed. She explained that the farm no longer had a dairy herd, buying milk in for their deliveries, and now raised cattle for meat which they supplied to M&S. She told us that she loved having school visits and other groups visiting the farm and hosts these visits, tours and other events as part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

After twenty minutes or so, the rain was not going to go away but had subsided slightly, so we decided to take a chance and do the tour. We crossed the yard and entered the orchard where Virginia said they had not long planted some new fruit trees, good strong old local varieties. After passing through the field, we then carried on walking amongst some wonderful old trees, including a massive Lime. The views, unfortunately, were marred by the weather which was such a shame as, when I had been there earlier in the week, it was sunny and the vista was absolutely stunning. The photograph (top right) was taken on the Tuesday evening before the visit.



Further on we came across some of the calves which were all very inquisitive and wanted to say hello. Virginia explained that each year the calves that were born were named with a certain letter of the alphabet. This year it was G and the most recent calf had been called Gabriel. She introduced us to Frank, one of last year's calves, and said that the calves were given a stress free life with lots of attention and care, beautiful rich meadows to graze, and were not sent for meat until nineteen months old. Frank was such a gentle animal and was extremely good with the children I visited the farm with, on the Tuesday evening.

After walking on through the woodland, we made our return journey back past some of the crops. Again Virginia gave us lots of information about these, and the grants and schemes that helped the farm to function. On our return to the barn, we were greeted by the wonderful smell of Virginia's freshly baked fruit bread which we enjoyed buttered, with a nice warm cuppa. It was just such a shame that so many people missed this visit, but those who did come had a really lovely afternoon for which we owe a big thank you to Virginia for all her wonderful knowledge and hospitality. We look forward to doing it again, if possible, when maybe the weather will be kinder.

Julie Hopton

Glow-worm walk on 15th July 2009

Four members and a dog met our leader Julie Hopton in the Whiteleaf Hill car park for a walk around Brush Hill Nature Reserve in search of Glow-worms.

Glow-worms belong to the beetle family Lampyridae. There are two native species in Britain, the Glow-worm and the very rare Lesser Glow worm. Females are wingless and emit light from the last three segments of their abdomen to attract the male. While it was still light, Julie showed us round the reserve. As darkness fell, we came to an area of

grass and scrub, where we found four Glow-worms. Then, after a slow walk, for me, up the hill (the others having to wait for me at the top) we came to a vast area of open grassland. As we walked around, it was amazing to see the little green lights we were looking for. A total of 16 Glow-worms were found during the evening.

Thank you Julie for leading an interesting and enjoyable walk around the reserve.

Karen Roberts

Revive the Wye walks

This report covers the second of two walks arranged under the Revive the Wye project, which is supported by WWG, along with the Chiltern Society, High Wycombe Society, WDC, the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Environment Agency. The first walk was held in June 2009 and covered the Wye and back stream around King's Mead and the second covered the watercourses around the Rye and Holywell Mead. The first walk was led by Roger Lerry of the Chiltern Society's Rivers and Wetlands Group assisted by Roger Wilding of WWG and the second was led by Roger and Frances Wilding of WWG assisted by Roger Lerry. Both walks were well attended, the first mainly by Chiltern Society members and the second mainly by WWG members.



Left: The King's Mead walk

Right: The Rye walk

Photographs by Roger Wilding



About a dozen people took part in the walk on 5th August and we were particularly pleased to welcome a young family with three children.

We set off across the Rye to where a branch of the river runs behind London Road properties on its way to Bassetsbury Mill. Frances pointed out a plant growing in the river bank here called Pellitory-of-the-wall, a member of the Nettle family.

It seems only a few years since a row of trees were planted between the children's playground and the river, but the Willows and Walnuts are quite big trees now. Roger spotted that the Walnut leaves were badly deformed with lumps and bumps. He said these were galls (*Aceria erinea*) caused by mites. But the main topic of conversation at this point was the beautiful mass of Indian (or Himalayan) Balsam, which has come up in huge quantities this year all along the Rye next to London Road. It was introduced in the mid 18th century as an ornamental plant, like Japanese Knotweed. Both of these problem plants overshadow indigenous plants, which then die. The Indian Balsam is an annual and, when it dies back, the river bank often has no vegetation and becomes subject to erosion. Because the plants produce huge numbers of seeds, which float downstream to produce new colonies of the plant, the plants need to be removed before the flowering stage. Frances showed us plants of Watercress and Fool's Watercress, explaining that the first is a crucifer with flowers

having four petals and that the second is an umbellifer.

At Pann Mill, some strange creatures were seen on a fence post. They were mauve with orangey spots and about 5mm long. They were ladybird larvae.

The next stop was Wendover Way near the boathouse. We looked over the fence into the grounds of Wycombe Abbey to see the lake which is partly fed by springs but also is believed to take some water from the culverted river. We then walked along the Dyke noticing many Coot chicks and some quite large fish. When we reached the waterfall, Roger pointed out the Grotto which was blocked up many years ago and said that the stream at this point used to be a good place to see the native Crayfish: now all you can find here is the alien Signal Crayfish.

There was just enough time to walk across to Bowden Lane and look at the springs near the entrance to Funges Meadow. Roger mentioned that he had once seen a group of Muslims here filling containers with the spring water which they said was holy water.

And that was the end of a really enjoyable morning, and I regretted not being able to have gone on the King's Mead walk in June. Thanks to Roger and Frances for making this walk so interesting.

Harry Wheate

Birds on the Rye - Apr to Aug 2009 (recorded by Roy Barkes)

	April 16 th	May 21 st	June 19 th	July 23 rd	August 20 th
Mute Swan	46	39	38	34	29
Mallard	112	118	92	128	131
Tufted Duck	23	14	2	1	-
Little Grebe	3	2	-	-	-
Coot	33	30	26	28	26
Moorhen	31	26	24	24	19
Lesser Black-backed Gull	3	-	-	4	2
Herring Gull	1	-	-	-	3
Black-headed Gull	285	94	3	-	46
Kingfisher	2	-	1	1	-
Mistle Thrush	5	7	4	2	6
Song Thrush	3	3	2	3	4
Blackbird	7	9	5	4	4
Robin	3	4	2	-	-
Pied Wagtail	4	3	2	-	2
Grey Wagtail	5	4	2	2	-
Nuthatch	2	3	-	2	2
Treecreeper	-	-	-	-	1
Goldcrest	3	-	2	3	1
Chiffchaff	2	1	2	-	2
Willow Warbler	-	-	1	-	-
Greenfinch	6	8	4	-	3
Bullfinch	-	-	-	-	2
Wood Pigeon	86	74	12	34	22

To join Wycombe Wildlife Group please complete the form on the right (or a copy) and send to the Membership Secretary, 73 Carver Hill Rd, High Wycombe, HP11 2UB. Subscription £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:.....

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:
 Number of payments: Until further notice
 Signature Date

OR Payment by cheque or cash

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



WILDLIFE NOTICE BOARD



Observations



May

22/05 Cuckoo - Holmer Green
 23-29/05 Invasion of Painted Ladies in Town Centre

June

01/06 Cardinal Beetle - Lude Farm
 05/06 2 Garden Warblers - Beacon Hill
 12/06 Female Glow-worm - Hughenden
 24/06 Common Blue - Farther Barn Field, Common Wood

July

01-31/07 Up to 30 Swifts at a time in the Deeds Grove area
 10/07 Silver-washed Fritillary - Penn Wood
 20/07 Southern Hawker dragonfly - Common Wood
 20/07 12 Cinnabar Moth larvae - Common Wood

August

04/08 Approx 30 Long-tailed Tits - Carrington Rd
 56 mixed Tits - Deeds Grove (coming from the direction of Carrington Road)
 08/08 Common Blue - Penn Wood
 11/08 Female Wheatear - Puttenham Farm
 13/08 Female Hawfinch - Tylers Green
 14/08 Tawny Owl, 2 Yellowhammers, 6 Linnets - Puttenham Farm
 25/08 Lesser Calamint and Orpine - Sheepridge Lane
 Round-leaved Fluellen - alongside path from Flackwell Heath to Sheepridge Lane
 31/08 Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*) - Amersham Hill Drive

Additional sightings can be found on the website.



Contacts for Wildlife, Conservation & Environmental Groups in Wycombe District

Bassetsbury Group
 Bat queries
 Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust
 Booker Common & Woods Protection Society
 British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
 British Trust for Ornithology (Regional Rep.)
 Bucks Invertebrate Group
 Bucks Badger Group

Bucks Bird Club
 Bucks Community Association
 Bucks County Council Countryside Initiatives Team
 Bucks Invertebrate Group
 Butterfly Conservation
 Chiltern Society
 Chilterns Chalk Streams Officer
 Chilterns AONB
 Chilterns Conservation Board (Activities and Education)
 Chilterns Countryside Group
 Chilterns Woodland Officer
 Downley Common Preservation Society
 English Nature Conservation Officer Bucks
 Frieth Natural History Society
 Grange Action Group
 High Wycombe Beekeeping Association
 High Wycombe Society
 Lane End Conservation Group
 Marlow Society
 National Trust
 Natural England Conservation Officer
 Pann Mill Group
 Prestwood Nature
 Ramblers Association
 Risborough Countryside Group
 St. Tiggywinkles
 Swan Lifeline
 The Environment Centre on Holywell Mead Co-ordinator
 Woodland Trust (voluntary speaker)
 Wycombe District Council Ranger Service

David Reed 01494 439665
 WDC Rangers 01494 421824
 (Oxon Office) 01865 775476
 Rita Luxton 01494 436807
 Jane Craven 01296 330033
 David Lee 01844 347576
 Mike Palmer 01296 624519
 Mike Collard 01494 866908
 Mobile (at any time) 07887 955861
 Neil Foster 01296 748597
 Francis Gomme 01844 274865
 Mark Bailey 01296 382389
 c/o BMERC 01296 696012
 Nick Bowles 01442 382278
 Angus Idle 01494 563673
 Allen Beechey 01844 355502
 Steve Rodrick 01844 355505
 Cathy Rose 01844 355506
 Julie Rockell 01628 526828
 John Morris 01844 355503
 Bill Thompson 01494 520648
 Jenny Young 01635 268881
 Alan Gudge 01494 881464
 Dave Wainman 01494 716726
 Sheila Borwick 01494 739313
 Frances Presland 01494 523263
 Bärbel Cheesewright 01494 882938
 Bob Savidge 01628 891121
 (Office) 01494 755573
 Rebecca Hart 01189 392070
 Robert Turner 01494 472981
 Tony Marshall 01494 864251
 John Shipley 01494 862699
 Francis Gomme 01844 274865
 Les Stocker 01844 292292
 Wendy Hermon 01753 859397
 01494 511585
 Michael Hyde 01628 485474
 Julie Hopton 01494 421825

