

CNS



CARDIFF NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Founded 1867

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Cover photos Large Parasols found on the CNS
Cowbridge Walk 15-10-2006 By Graham Duff

GLAMORGAN WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB



Programme of Meetings 2006/7

To be held in the Village Hall Bonvilston near Cowbridge Opposite the shop on the A48

At **7-30** until 9-30pm on the **Second Wednesday** of each month

- 13th Dec **Graham Duff** – **The Greek Island of Lesbos in May**
- 10th Jan 2007 **Peter Rees** – **Coral Reefs of the World**
- 14th Feb **Linda & Rob Nottage** – **Exploring Aberthaw**
- 14th Mar **Paul Denning** – **Natural History of the Picos de Europa**
- 11th Apr **Richard Marks & Roy Williams**–
Woodland Management at Coed-y-Bwl
- 9th May **Margaret & John Samuel** – **Birds of Western Australia**

Everyone Most Welcome

Fungus Foray Cwm Colhuw Saturday October 28th 2006

Despite a bad weather forecast and a good swell in the sea there were still a good number of people who met at the Llanwit Major beach carpark. Unfortunately I had bad news for them as our leader had double booked us by mistake, so invited them for a walk around the reserve and surrounds.

We started by going along the cliff path and up onto the grasslands which were reported to be good for waxcaps. Here we found snowy waxcap and golden spindle and also possibly another waxcap, *Hygrocybe strangulate*. We then went into the more wooded area of the reserve finding a splendid stand of large fungi among others including a King Alfred's cake found by Bruce. When we met the road Roger took us up to the outskirts of the town and through so we could return along the other side of the valley. In the fields adjacent here we found some shaggy ink caps and also some tiny fungi which were growing in soil accumulated in the concrete around the seats dotted alongside the path. We also found yellow stainers in a number of locations and we may have identified *Coprinus plicatilis* later.

Specimens were collected and extensively examined in the afternoon on my dining room table but I think lessons we did learn if we didn't know already – fungi are difficult and you do need some 'expert' guidance – so they are adding to my compost heap!

Patricia Wood.

Presidential Amblings - December 2006

Glancing out of our window (in mid November) I spotted the recent emergence of tender green growth tips from a large well established clump of single flower snowdrops. They will surely be in full flower before Christmas, several months earlier than previous years.

The following rather exceptional wildlife sightings / occurrences have been recently reported in the national press: Indian white-backed vultures spotted in Richmond Park, also recent sightings of vultures over Croydon, Norfolk, Snowdon and Bodmin Moor.

Swarms of Harlequin Ladybirds (originally from Asia) have invaded the south coast, presenting our own Ladybirds with "voracious and possibly overwhelming competition".

The Oak Processionary Moth has been found infesting the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and surrounding areas. The caterpillars from this little fellow apparently have thousands of defensive bristles containing toxins poisonous to man. These have caused human death on the near Continent. They also of course seriously damage the oak. Teams of climbers in fully protective gear were despatched to eradicate the known hotspots.

Many unusual fishes have been caught in the waters off the British Isles during the past few months. Perhaps one of the most surprising was a two metre plus Swordfish landed at Newbiggin by the Sea in Northumberland (subsequently, we are told, consumed with vigour in a local fish restaurant).

Large numbers of feathered summer visitors not normally associated with the British Isles have caused increasing interest within the ornithological community and the forthcoming winter migration may be of exceptional interest this year and not only because of the prospect of avian flu.

Continued over page

The linking factor is of course global warming so we are told. Seasons are gradually becoming less well defined and definitely very much less predictable. In the world arena, global extinctions are running at, in terms of recent history, an unprecedented scale and we are all living in an exciting and challenging time of change. Perhaps this will encourage our fellow man to consider the preservation of our ecosphere and its wildlife in a somewhat more considerate light.

Roger Milton

Note: Will those members who have not yet renewed their Annual Subscriptions please do so as soon as possible and please remember that if you are in a position to complete a Gift Aid Form (and have not already done so) Margaret would be most appreciative as it will enable Joan to claim back an additional 28p in the £ for the Society.

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS.

The AGM held on Thursday, September 28th 2006 was adjourned because it was not possible to present the accounts for the Society for the year, 2005 / 2006. The AGM will be re-constituted prior the Members' Evening on Thursday, January 25th 2007 for the presentation of the accounts for approval.

EDITORIAL

At the last AGM Patricia Wood finished her term in Office as President, we thank her for the work she undertook for the society, and still does as Field Meetings Secretary. Roger Milton was welcomed as our new President, and Dr. Joan Andrews has temporarily (so she thinks) taken over as Treasurer.

Will Members who have not been to an indoor meeting recently please note that UWIC Llandaff Campus has put in place a pay and display machine in the car park, 50p coin is needed.

COPY FOR MARCH NEWSLETTER BY
17th MARCH PLEASE

downland landscape of long wet grass, gorse and bracken, where volvariella and orange waxcap fungi were seen. Then we walked downhill to bravely cross the A 48 onto Stalling Down/Cowbridge Common, another downland where some of us saw a flock of linnets, a skylark and some crows. Coming down through the bracken towards Aberthin we found some yellow stagshorn.

The return to Cowbridge took us along the stream through Aberthin, across fields of horses grazing and back to the car park.



A thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

Liz Davies

(but shaggy parasols are not), entolomas with their pink spores, and field mushrooms. Coming down alongside the woodland towards Beaupre, we noted spindle berries,

sweet chestnuts, conkers, hazels and acorns, as well as crab apples and sloes. In the wood we could see signs of pheasant-rearing, a shelter and a feed container. Another fungus, the red cracking bolete, was seen, and some



f a i r y r i n g champignons, whilst a speckled wood butterfly posed on a mushroom for us. A dark bush cricket minus one back leg was found in the field opposite the disused railway line and a dragon fly was photographed settled on a trouser leg.



At Lower Beaupre House we crossed the stile to the left into the woods, where a lane took us up the hill to St Hilary. More berries were noted: rosehips, haws and holly. In the village were late Cambrian poppies, periwinkle and speedwell growing on roadside banks, and a ruby tiger

caterpillar, plus a psathyrella fungus. We walked past the Bush Inn and into a green lane up to the Clump, (an old walled copse dating back to 900AD where a dawn church service is still held every New Years Day and was reputedly a hangman's site).

The track took us up onto St Hilary Down where the masts are, a

INDOOR MEETINGS, SPRING 2007.

First, an important change of date to note. The talk by Paul Bowden originally arranged for Tuesday, 9th January, will now be on THURSDAY, 11th JANUARY 2007. His talk, "Continental Birds – from Finland to Portugal" will, as usual, be given in the Speech Therapy Lecture Theatre, Room ST.04 on the UWIC Llandaff Campus. Paul's talks are always superbly illustrated on film and video, and this is sure to give a good send-off to this second half of our indoor meetings programme for 2006/07.

The annual Members' Evening is on THURSDAY, 25th JANUARY. Graham Duff, who organises this for us, has already had a good response to his request for contributions, so we can expect the evening to give us an entertaining and instructive range of items. The speakers for the evening are listed on page 6.

Dr. Madeleine Havard, Chief Executive of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, is our speaker on WEDNESDAY, 7th FEBRUARY. She will talk on 'Caring for our Coastal Waters – Marine Conservation in Action', reflecting her long involvement in marine science and conservation.

THURSDAY, 22nd FEBRUARY sees the welcome return of Derek Moore, former Chief Executive of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales before Madeleine Havard's term of office. Derek gave us a memorable talk a few years ago, on the birds of East Anglia. He is now offering something quite different: 'Alaska – the Last Wilderness', a fascinating insight into a wild and remote area which few of us have the chance to experience for ourselves.

Another great friend of ours, Dr. Mary Gillham, is coming on WEDNESDAY, 7th MARCH, to tell us something of the scenery and wildlife of the Aran Islands in County Clare. Mary has given us many delightful and informative talks over several years, and we can certainly look forward to her description of the scenery and wildlife of these near neighbours of ours.

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Our lecture programme for this season ends on TUESDAY, 20th MARCH, with a visit from Greg Nuttgens of the Countryside Council for Wales to tell us something of the Tir Gofal Agri-environment scheme in South Wales, with which he has been involved for the past six years. PLEASE NOTE; THIS MEETING WILL BE IN THE MAIN UWIC BUILDING, in Room DO.02 on the ground floor. All the others will be in the Lecture Theatre ST.04, as usual.

I hope there is something here to appeal to everyone.

Margaret Leishman
Indoor Meetings Secretary.

SPEAKERS FOR MEBMBERS EVENING 25TH Jan 07

Margaret & John Samuel	Costa Rica Video
Bruce McDonald	2006 Highlights
Dave Wellings & Lynda Garfield	Geology & Mineralogy of Barry Island
Mike Dean	Lago Massaciucoli Tuscany
Phil Blanning	Gargano Italy
Linda Nottage	CNS Field Trips
Mary Salter	Outer Islands of the Seychelles
Eirian Edwards	Vancouver Island & Alaska
Graham Duff	Our Feathered Friends

Butterflies	Birds		
Clouded Yellow	Little Grebe	Cormorant	Little Egret
Large White	Grey Heron	Mute Swan	Shelduck
Common Blue	Wigeon	Gadwall	Mallard
Small Copper	Buzzard	Kestrel	Peregrine
Painted Lady	Coot	Moorhen	Lapwing
Comma	Curlew	Redshank	Cetti's Warbler
Meadow Brown	Willow Warbler		
Speckled Wood			

Thomas Simcock

WALK AROUND COWBRIDGE
(ST HILARY AND ABERTHIN)
SUNDAY OCTOBER 15TH

We assembled in the Town Hall car park on a bright breezy afternoon, and were introduced to our leader, Roger Milton. There were 21 attending.

Roger took us alongside the river, where we saw trout and mallards, then through the town where a painted lady was spotted on a garden buddleia. We took the old cattle track up the hill towards Beaupre, there were many ferns growing alongside the old mossy walls as well as herb Robert and herb Bennett. It was on this track we saw our first of many fungi on this walk, the aptly named King Alfred's cakes on a fallen ash branch.

There were plenty of stiles and gates on this walk In the first fields there were common inkcaps, which Linda Nottage explained are edible, but have such a reaction when taken with alcohol that they are still used in aversion therapy for alcoholics. We saw parasols which are edible,

Along the green lane, several Shaggy Inkcap and frequent Weeping Widow fungi were seen. Most had already gone over, except for one Inkcap and some of the Weeping Widow. A Willow Warbler was heard calling. Three species of gall were seen on one Pedunculate Oak – Artichoke, Marble and Knopper galls. A huge bracket fungus (of unknown species) and what might have been Chicken in the Woods were seen on a Black Poplar. A very fresh, newly emerged Small Tortoiseshell was spotted. As we approached the car park, an Emperor dragonfly flew past.

After lunch, some of us went on to the Goldcliff lakes. Here, the avian highlights were several Little Egrets, a couple of Herons, a flock of Lapwings and two immature Shelducks. A Black-tailed Godwit was seen in flight. Most of us were keeping an eye out for the rare sandpiper. The water level was very high, though, and so there was hardly any mud for waders to feed on. Despite this, a wader was spotted on the far lake, and quite some time was spent trying to identify it. Several species, such as Little Stint, Dunlin and Common Sandpiper were ruled out, and the conclusion was reached that it almost certainly was a sandpiper, and that it definitely might have been *the* sandpiper.



This had been a good way to celebrate the return of summer after the washout of August. Even though a lot of the birds had gone quiet, there was still enough to see to keep everyone interested.

The following is a list of butterflies and birds seen during the day, although it is not exhaustive.

Field Meetings January to March 2007

Sunday January 28th
Start time 9.00 am

Cardiff Birdwatch.
Packed lunch.

Our annual local birdwatch will start with a stroll around Roath Park. As last year this will be a joint meeting with the Cardiff group of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW). Afterwards we will go onto other sites in the Cardiff area depending upon the weather. Meet at Wild Gardens Road on the north end of Roath Park.

Saturday February 10th
Start time 10.30am

Gower geology.
Packed lunch.

Meet in the National Trust car park at Rhossili (SS 414 880) for which there will be a charge. The total walking distance will be a maximum of 8 kms (5 miles) but we can shorten it if required. The section up Rhossili Down (if we do it) is very steep and there will be walks down into and out of Mewslade Bay and Fall Bay which are not particularly steep gradients and are fairly easy walking. Much of the rest of the walk is fairly level along the cliff top, paths and roads. There are toilets and a café/pub at the car park but nothing in between. Steve Howe will be our guide to the geology of the area.

Sunday March 11th
Start time 10.00am

Parc Slip/Tondu Ironworks.
Packed lunch.

Mike Clark will be guiding us around this WTSWW reserve on a reclaimed coal mining site in the morning (SS 880 840). In the afternoon we will go on to the Tondu Parc with

conserved structures of the former Victorian ironworks for a tour of the park.

Sunday March 25th
Start time 8.00am

Somerset Levels.
Packed lunch.

A joint coach trip with Cardiff and District Local RSPB group, as usual for members of both groups please book with either Joy Lyman or myself not both. We will be visiting Ham Wall RSPB reserve in the northern part of the Somerset Levels, a newly created wetland with one of the largest reedbeds in England and also Shapwick Heath, a National Nature Reserve which boasts a variety of habitats on a former peat harvesting area.

We will be picking up at Penlline Road, Whitchurch only. Booking form is included in this newsletter.

For all field trips it is expected that members will have read and agree to comply with the Field Meetings Safety Code.

It is always useful to know who is coming on the trip especially if you are willing to give a lift to those without transport. Please contact me if you need a lift and hopefully I can arrange one. Contributions towards drivers' petrol are appreciated.

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FIELD TRIP REPORT: GWENT LEVELS NNR AND
GOLDCLIFF
10TH SEPTEMBER 2006

A good crowd of people met in the car park at the entrance to the reserve on a hot, sunny day. We were informed that there was a rare species – the Semipalmated Sandpiper - down at Goldcliff. This is a vagrant from North America, and apparently not a regular one. We decided not to join the ‘twitch’, however, but to walk around the main reserve first. A Cetti’s Warbler sang in the car park. The voluntary warden from the Countryside Council for Wales, Sheila Dupe, explained that the best plan was to walk straight to the sea wall, as the tide was high and so the timing would be right for seeing waders on the shore.

Sheila proved to be an excellent guide, who obviously knew the reserve very well and was full of interesting information. Several butterflies were seen along the path from the car park including several Small Coppers. Two Clouded Yellow butterflies were seen just before the lagoons, as well as a Common Darter dragonfly. Two Gadwalls and a Little Grebe were seen on the lagoons themselves and a Kestrel was observed sitting on telegraph wires. Migrant Hawker dragonflies were actually very abundant and several good views were obtained.

Then the sea was reached, and the shore was combed for birds. Many Shelducks were seen, as well as some Wigeon further along. A Little Egret was spotted, although only its head could be seen and a couple of Cormorants and a Redshank flew past. A Peregrine Falcon was seen sitting on telegraph wires, and then gliding above the shoreline. A single Common Blue butterfly flew past.

Sheila then suggested that we walk back via a green lane. We agreed and continued to walk parallel with the seashore. A Painted Lady and a Speckled Wood were observed. An interesting find was a Lesser Stag Beetle in the middle of the path. These beetles are usually active at night and are not often seen in the open. Galls of the fly *Lipara lucens* were seen on the reeds. The fly had caused the reeds to grow incorrectly, so that the spikes hadn’t separated and had become clumped together.