



Newsletter of the Manchester Wildlife Group

# The Magpie

Number 8

Winter 1988



Broad Ees Dole  
Nature Gardens  
"Green Plans"





# News

## MEETINGS

Our meetings will now be held at Manchester Town Hall in Committee Room No.7 on the following Thursday evenings during 1988:

28th January	30th June
25th February	28th July
31st March	29th September
28th April	27th October
26th May	24th November

All meetings begin at 7.30pm and are open to all members.

Our annual General Meeting will be held in April and you will all be notified in due course.

## TREE PLANT 87

In November we planted 500 whips just south of Hough End Clough WITH THE HELP OF various schoolchildren and girl guides. Very few of our members turned up and apart from one local resident the sole contribution from the locals consisted of moaning about how we were wasting our time etc etc. I like a bit of encouragement.

## TREE SALES

About half a dozen orders came in for trees and shrubs and due to the generosity of one of our members we made over £50 for our funds.

## Hough End Clough

The woodland officer at Manchester's Recreation Dept. is currently drawing up a work plan for the Clough and their MSC team should be able to clear most of the invasive species this year and hopefully in future years as well.

## MEMBERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

Although we appreciate very much the financial support given to the group we still need more people to come forward to help run the group or do something in their area. There are also several jobs which improve the environment for wildlife, raise funds for MWG and pay you money on a commission basis. If any of this interests you then please get in touch ( 226 2029 - Shaun).

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish a happy New Year to all of you.

Shaun Wilson

# Broad Ees Dole

Where in Sale might you find Kingfisher, Snipe, Hare, Pipits, Long-Billed Dowitcher and a good raptor or two? Answer: Broad Ees Dole, a small but important nature reserve nestling between the northerly bank of Sale Water Park and the River Mersey.

Admittedly, the Dowitcher, a N.American vagrant, was a chance-in-a-million migratory visitor in September of this year, but interesting birds can (and do) turn up regularly here.

Situated between the A56 through Sale and Junct.8 of the M62, it's difficult to mention Broad Ees Dole and not think of our avian friends. They really form the focal point for most visitors to the dole, which has proved to be an important nesting, migratory and wintering ground for birds year-round. This has resulted in the official opening earlier in November of an exciting new attraction for birds and bird-watchers, the scrape or 'jheel (apparently Hindi for lagoon). A pump will control the water level inside the scrape, flooding it in the winter to form an added attraction to waterfowl.

Regular winter visitors to the dole include short-eared owl, snipe, heron, water pipits and a variety of ducks, with previous year's records showing jack snipe, woodcock, water rail and bittern. Spring and autumn migrations produce wheatears, wagtails, the odd whinchat, sandpipers and other wading birds, such as members of the plover family. Birds staying to breed include mallard, lapwing and common sandpiper.

The area has been conserved and improved for the benefit of wildlife in a marvellous fashion by the Mersey valley wardens, who are continuing to introduce pond plants in parts of the canal surrounding the scrape, such as flowering rush, water starwort, yellow and sweet flag and other species which should greatly enhance the area for amphibious and surface dwellers alike. Water soldier and arrow-head were in evidence later this summer.

Butterflies in the vicinity included small tortoiseshell, green veined white and peacock. A hare is being spotted at present (November) with semi-regularity, whilst patience may produce voles and the odd weasel along the path.

Whatever the season, it's a place of interest, although the red-spotted bluethroat seen in late spring 1987 will take some beating. This Scandinavian cousin of the white-spotted bluethroat was a migrant seen ~~only~~ by one extremely lucky observer.

Duck numbers will have built up nicely by the year end and hopefully will include the ferruginous duck seen in previous winters.

continued...



It always pays to explore the area immediately around the dole, picking your way carefully through the fishermen and their tackle. Disturbance can be a problem here, where the odd dog-walker may throw a stick for Fido to retrieve from the canal surrounding the scrape, and the occasional thoughtless visitor has been seen inside the reserve fence trying to get that closer look. Having said that, there's usually a friendly face at the viewing point by the pylon, with a bench and telescope rest thoughtfully provided by the Mersey valley crew.

A walk from the dole downriver to Chorlton via Jackson's Boat can produce much of interest, including ragwort, biting stonecrop, red and white campion, lesser celandine, common spotted orchid and on the bird front, grasshopper and sedge warblers in spring and summer, as well as cuckoo, whitethroat, kestrel, sparrowhawk. A summer's evening return to the dole can also produce a good collection of martins, swallows and swifts over the reserve taking their last meal of the day.

One last word, it always pays to make the visitor's centre your first Port-of-call where the staff are always friendly and willing to tell you what's about.

Donald and Ian McGeorge.

WOULD YOU LIKE A NATURE AREA IN YOUR GARDEN TO MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE FOR WILDLIFE AND A LASTING PLEASURE FOR YOURSELF.

IF SO CONTACT IAN BROWN ON 061-437-7040  
Site Visit and Verbal Advice..... £10 Minimum.  
Landscape Plan and Written Advice... £10 Minimum.

Cost can be saved by avoiding mistakes and is dependent on travelling distance, requirements, time etc. and on your generosity, as all money will go towards the Wildlife Group's funds.....

# Blackleach Update

In the last issue of Magpie, I wrote an article about Blackleach reservoir in the Walkden area of Salford, which was under threat of destruction, and I painted a rather gloomy picture of its future.

Since then, the fate of the reservoir has made the pages of the Manchester Evening News, though less because of its wildlife interest than the attentions of local nudists. Considerable local opposition to British Coal's plans has resulted in the creation of the Blackleach and Boatshed Action Group (Boatshed is another reservoir, with great importance to industrial archaeology), and BBAG aims to lobby for the preservation of these local features.

British Coal seem to be willing to abandon their proposals, provided Salford City Council takes on the maintenance of the area. The funding required to do this, and to develop the area as a country park, is not large by national or even regional standards, but may well be beyond the resources of the local council. If British Coal could be given a Derelict Land Grant to level land for yet more private housing, filling in the reservoir as a result, why can't Salford City Council receive half the amount to create a wildlife reserve of great local importance?

Mike Savage

BBAG can be contacted via BBAG Secretary  
59 Ridyard St.  
Little Hulton  
Worsley  
M28 6WF

## Heald Place Primary School Nature Area

The plan reproduced in this edition of the Magpie shows the scheme at present being constructed by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers in Rusholme at the corner of Claremont Road and Heald Place. The total area is about the size of a large garden and the school did not want a water feature. Ease of maintenance is assured by covering a large part of the area with shrubs trees and climbers, sowing a meadow requiring once a year mowing and an annual patch needing digging over every Autumn. The cultivated area is for kiddies to grow spuds in etc. and the fence should keep out the more idle of the local hooligans. The most exciting part of the scheme is the amount of bulbs planted which will look grand in t'Spring - just like Harrogate.

Shaun Wilson.



PLAYGROUND

### Cultivated Area

Topsoil accessed by 600mm paving stones.

### Central Meadow

200gms E2 (Tall meadow mix)  
MINUS 50gms of grass seed

100gms E12 (Wet meadow mix)  
MINUS 50gms of grass seed

50gms E13 (Cornfield annuals)

Mix together and sow at 5gms per m<sup>2</sup>

Plant randomly at approx. 10 bulbs per m<sup>2</sup> :

Snakeshead Fritillary  
(*Fritillaria meleagris*) 250

Wild Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) 250

### New Fencing

Chainlink 2m high with access gate

CLAREMONT ROAD

### Path

1 metre wide path of crushed sandstone or limestone chippings

### Exotic Shrubs

*Cotoneaster buxifolius* 5 (Z)

*Mahonia aquifolium* 6 (Y)

*Berberis aggregata* 6 (X)

*Buddleia davidii* 5 (O)

Pit plant whips one metre centres

### Annual Patch

Existing annuals plus 10gms E13 (Cornfield Annuals) sown at 1gm per m<sup>2</sup>

### Dense Native Hedge

40 Hawthorn (*C.monogya*)  
10 Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)  
10 Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)  
5 Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)  
5 Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)

Planted at 100mm centres in 300mm x 300mm trench, in blocks of 5 creating a seven metre hedge.

### Hedgerow and Woodland Edge \*

100gms Emorsgate Hedgerow mix (E7) MINUS 60gms of the grass seeds plus 10 gms of Cornfield Annuals (E13) sown together at 5gms per metre<sup>2</sup> along edge of trees and shrubs as marked (\*).

Plant randomly at approx. 10 bulbs per m<sup>2</sup> :

Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*) 100

### Climbers

*Hydrangea petiolaris* 2

*Clematis armandii* 2

*Clematis montana* 2

*Celastrus scandens* 3

*Honeysuckle (Lonicera periclymenum)* 4

*Ivy (Hedera helix)* 3

Above to be planted in this order from gate to bottom corner in pits 300mm larger than root ball, at one metre centres.

### HEALD PLACE

### Dense Woodland Understorey

3-year old whips pit planted at one metre centres.

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) 8 ①  
Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) 8 ②  
Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) 6 ③  
Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) 6 ④  
Bird cherry (*Prunus padus*) 4 ⑤  
Dogrose (*Rosa canina*) 4 ⑥

### Standards

2 Rowan (lettered A)  
(*Sorbus aucuparia*)  
2 Silver Birch (lettered B)  
(*Betula pendula*)  
1 Oak (lettered C)  
(*Quercus robur*)  
2 metre standards pit planted 1m wide, 600mm deep.

### Existing Iron Railings

HEALD PLACE PRIMARY SCHOOL WILDLIFE AREA

Designed by Manchester Wildlife Group  
31 Stanley Road Whalley Range M16 8HS.



# Planning Nature Gardens

Jan Brown

Gardens of private houses or schools give us an excellent opportunity to create nature areas which are not only good for wildlife but also pleasant for people. If the area at your disposal is large enough then you can create a diversity of habitats which can be sufficient to attract much wildlife not just to visit but to breed in your garden. To do this successfully it is important to plan your area before any planting takes place. It is best if you can start with a bare site but if there is established growth then this must be incorporated into your plan, moved or removed.

**MAKING A PLAN** - Let us assume you have a garden of about 50 - 20 feet (or more) and the site has nothing significant growing upon it. The first thing to do is to find where the south lies. This enables us to avoid planting trees in positions where they would cast excessive shade on habitats requiring an open aspect, such as the pond and meadows (except woodland meadow). The garden in the plan on the next page runs longitudinally SW-NE so that it is mostly open to the sun.

**Trees and Shrubs** - These are mostly planted in the NW corner, away from buildings but some are positioned to the south so as to cast some shade on areas of shrubs and woodland meadow. The trees should all be native species and those given in the key are good examples but need not be adhered to. Shrub and hedge planting create a lower layer to edge the trees. The following species are suitable. (Hedge plants underlined) Light tolerant - Dogwood, Purging buckthorn, Broom, Guelder rose, Blackthorn, Dog rose, Honeysuckle, Wild privet. Shade tolerant - Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly, Elder.

**Pond** - This should be placed in an open position and the marsh and tall water plants should not overshade the pond or obscure it from view of the garden. The hard standing by the pond will be useful, especially in school grounds for pond dipping. It can be made from stone slabs, wooden boards or merely be a sand or stone beach.

**Meadow** - The wet and spring meadows will contain similar species and should be placed in mostly unshaded areas. These areas should be left to grow until early July and then mown for the rest of the growing season.

Summer meadow must also have an open aspect and be mown in the autumn. This area should include some tall herb for cover and breeding butterflies, which can be left unmown until the following spring. This tall herb area can be moved around within the summer meadow from year to year. The nettle patch will serve a similar purpose.

Woodland meadow requires a mixture of sun and shade and the flower species to be grown will be partly dictated by the amount of sun (or lack of it) available at any part of the meadow.

There is not space in this article to list species of plants for each meadow type but reference to a good wildlife gardening book should be of assistance. Species suitable for the flower beds can also be obtained from this source.

Once you have the main habitat types in place you can consider incidental items. The exact positioning of these items is not vital but they are nevertheless important. Log piles are good for some insects and fungi and as hibernation sites. These and the compost heap can be put in the woodland. A compost heap will be used as a hibernation site and the resulting compost can be used on your vegetable patch (if you have room for one).

In future articles we will go into detail on the creation of individual habitats. We have already covered ponds and their construction and if you would like a copy of our article on that subject please send an S.A.E. and an 18p. stamp to cover duplication costs to:- 31 Stanley Road, Whalley Range, M16 6HS.

If you would like a wildlife garden designed to meet your particular requirements, please contact us at the above address or telephone 437 7040.

## KEY

- Mown Grass
- Stone Path
- Shade & Light Tolerant Flower Beds (for nectar)
- Wet & Spring Meadow
- Marsh
- Pond
- Water Plants
- Cornfield Annuals
- Summer Meadow
- Nettle & Thistle Patch
- Tall Herb
- Trees
- Shrubs
- 1 - Alder
- 2 - Alder Buckthorn
- 3 - Berry Bearing Shrubs
- 4 & 11 - Rowan
- 5 - Birch
- 6 - Wych Elm
- 7 - Aspen
- 8 - Oak
- 9 - Wild Service Tree
- 10 - Wild Cherry
- 12 - Crab Apple
- 13 - Bird Cherry
- 14 - Goat Willow
- 15 - Buddleia
- Climbing Plants (Ivy)
- Mixed Hedge
- Light Tolerant Shrubs
- Shade " "
- Log Piles
- Compost Bins or Heaps
- Seats
- Hard Standing for Pond
- Bird Table (Winter)
- Woodland Meadow





# "Green Plans"

Fairbrother Group Conference, Liverpool Maritime  
Museum, 16th October

This Fairbrother Group conference (the Fairbrother Group is the umbrella organisation for urban wildlife groups) was hosted by Landlife, and held in the splendid surroundings of the Albert Dock complex. The blazered attendants and high-tech lecture theatre immediately signalled a very different event to that staged at Manchester Town Hall in July, even if the title gave few clues. While the Manchester conference was an 'open' event, 'Green Plans' was of interest to those already active in urban wildlife conservation, and dealt with aspects of local and regional planning.

An area of increasing importance to groups like ours is the attitude of the local authorities, and the first two speakers discussed Nature Conservation Strategies. These are documents drawn up by local authorities (LAs) in consultation with voluntary and statutory organisations, which detail areas of conservation interest, and outline priorities and procedures for developments that might affect these areas. A Nature Conservation strategy for Greater Manchester was drawn up by the GMC before abolition, but has yet to be adopted by any of the ten District Councils; strategies have fared better in other parts of the country. It was pointed out that one of the off-shoots of the creation of a strategy is communication between both small and large groups and the local authority, and the theme of 'networking' was taken up by the next speaker, Phil Barton.

Phil, formerly director of Manchester's Community Technical Aid Centre, is now the manager of the Mersey Basin Campaign Voluntary Sector Network. With a title like that, it surprises me he has the time to do anything other than introduce himself, but he is responsible for organising links between, and lobbying on behalf of, the voluntary organisations with an interest in the campaign to improve the environment of the Mersey Basin. An important point is that 'green' concerns take a lower priority

than economic and employment considerations; like Chris Baines at the Manchester conference, Phil emphasised the need to identify the economic advantages of conserving wildlife, and increasing the public's awareness of the environment.

A lecture by David Parker followed, detailing research into the wildlife of the North-West's estuaries (particularly wildfowl) and the possible effects of development on populations. I'm afraid I found the results raised more questions, and gave little in the way of hard advice. Such research could be used by either side in a planning debate with equal effect, and it is worth noting that the research group operates as a private consultancy.

Satellite imaging was the next subject. This is a survey technique beyond most organisations (though you don't need your own satellite, just a very expensive computer), but may allow local authorities, and possibly county trusts, to monitor land use. Not a very useful talk, but very, very pretty...

The final speaker was Paul Fitzpatrick, a consultant for St. Helens and Knowsley. He has carried out a survey to assess the possibility of 'a minimum-intervention approach to the management of open space'. This took the form of recording the use of every area of open space in the districts at various times, noting both who was there and what they were doing - "surveying people", as he put it. The results may seem self-evident, but point to a less 'involved' use of open space than many would imagine; the most common use of both managed and 'waste' land was "crossing" - though of course the quality of the time spent could not be assessed. The three factors most influential in determining intensity of use were level of management, number of access points, and footpath quality. All this is rather dry and academical, but it does suggest ways of manipulating the use of open space, directing people towards resilient areas and away from sensitive ones.

I suspect many of those attending this conference felt some of the topics were irrelevant - but all of them were useful to some of us. The problem of casting such a wide net, perhaps?

Mike Savage



If you care about our City's wildlife please join us by filling in the form below and returning it with a cheque/P.O. made out to Manchester Wildlife Trust Ltd. to 31, Stanley Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8HS. Members receive "Magpie" quarterly and are welcome to all meetings.

I would like to join Manchester Wildlife Group for one year and enclose the following:-

\* f6 - Family / Group.

\* f4 - Individual.

\* f2 - Unwaged, children under 16, Senior Citizens.

( \* Please delete those that do not apply )

Which of our activities interest you the most ? .....  
.....  
.....

Name..... Tel.No.....

Address.....  
.....

Signed.....Date.....

Manchester Wildlife Group aims to protect places of wildlife interest and provide new wetland, woodland and meadowland habitats in our gardens and local neighbourhoods. At present we depend almost totally on our members' subscriptions to cover our running costs. Members receive the Magpie quarterly and can get help and advice with their wildlife gardens. If you want to know more about the group please contact Shaun Wilson at the address below. Articles, letters etc. are also always welcome.

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While every effort has been made to make sure that information given in the Magpie is correct, the group cannot be held responsible for any mistake in the text. Likewise any person undertaking any project based on information from this newsletter does so at their own risk.