



Newsletter of the Manchester Wildlife Group

The Magpie

Number 10

Summer 1988

Planning Nature Gardens
A Watery Tale

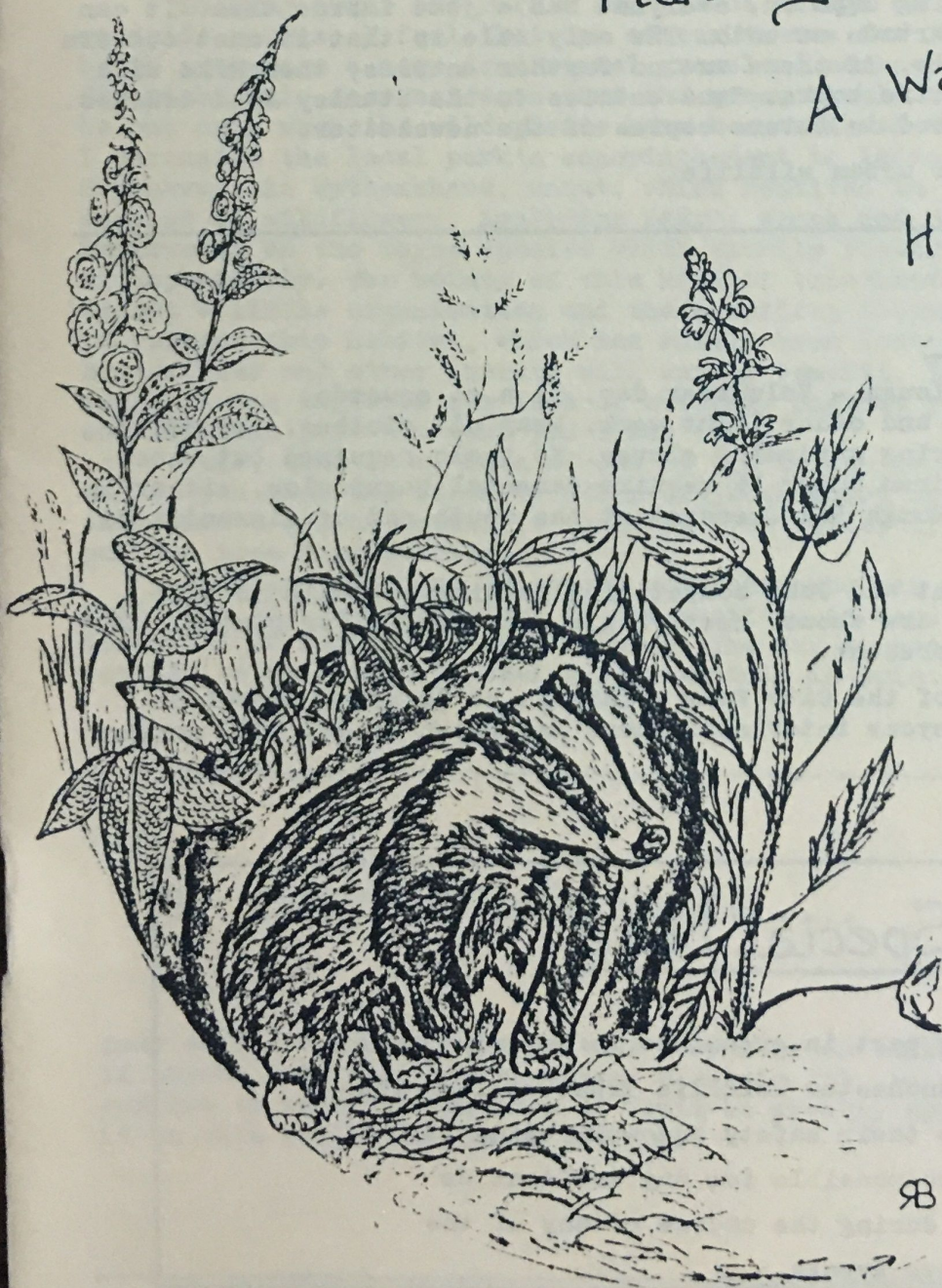
Hough End Clough

Book Review

Coming Events

News

and
there's
more



Editorial.

Welcome to the latest copy of our newsletter. We hope you enjoy the contents and will take advantage of the events we have laid on, at great expense, by joining us. It has been suggested that the format of the newsletter should be changed by increasing the size from A5 to A4. The main advantages of this are that the larger type would be easier to read and the quality, particularly that of the artwork, will be improved. One disadvantage is that it would cost twice as much. Let us know what you think.

In the next issue we will be publishing a membership list. The reason for this is so that members will know who the other members are and who, if anyone, lives in their locality. Name and neighbourhood only will be published; eg. Will Shakespeare, Chorlton. Anyone wishing to contact another member will do so through head office. If any member does not wish to be included in the list, please inform us by the last day of August.

Finally, does anyone remember the Joke competition? Judging from the response, not many. The original closing date has now passed and we have only had one entry. This being the case we have decided to set a new closing date; well we can't let Mike Savage win unopposed! This new date will be the 14th of August at Sale Water Park (see below). So get your thinking caps on; everyone has a joke inside them. It can be in the form of words or a cartoon or both. The only rule is that it must concern urban wildlife, at least vaguely. If there are no further entries, then Mike will collect all the wonderful wildlife books. Send entries to the Stanley Road address. Winning entries will be published in future copies of the newsletter. Till the next issue, enjoy your urban wildlife.

Coming Events.

Sunday 24th July - Hough End Clough - Volunteer day. 11 a.m. onwards. TASK: Pulling Himalayan Balsam and other light work. Wear old clothes, trousers, wellies and long sleeves and bring gardening gloves. No tools required but wheelbarrows would be welcome. Children under 16 require parental permission, either in person or in writing. Meet in Hough End Crescent at the south end of Alexandra Rd. South.

Sunday 14th August - Insect Hunt and Joke competition judging - A walk in Sale Water Park to see what insects are about. Meet, 2 p.m. at the Visitor Centre. We hope to have an insect expert present.

Sunday 4th September - A tour of the City Farm - This is at Sharston School on Altrincham Road. Time 2 p.m. Anyone interested phone Ian Brown on 437 7040 nearer the date.

Special Note

All those taking part in events do so as volunteers and while the Manchester Wildlife Trust will do its utmost to ensure their safety and well being it cannot be held responsible for any accident or injury occurring during the course of any of the above events.

A message from your Chairman

Firstly I would like to thank Shaun Wilson for the excellent way in which he lead the Trust from its inception in January 1987 and before that, the Wildlife Group from June 1985. This means that we are three years old. Happy birthday. The fact that we have made it thus far as a quietly thriving group of concerned individuals, intent on improving the wildlife of Manchester, is a testament to Shaun's leadership.

Secondly I would like to thank the members for voting me to the post of Chairman; such confidence, and I only hope I can do half as good a job as did Shaun. Of course it's not going to be entirely up to me. As with any organisation, a group like ours is only as good as the sum of its parts and we here at head office depend on the support of members in order that we may be effective. I feel this support is going to be increasingly important in the future as we take on more ambitious projects. I said earlier that we were "quietly thriving" but I think in the future we should make a little more noise. I am not suggesting any form of rowdiness but that we should become a little better known to those in authority. This is where you come in. Contact your councillors to inform them of our existence and to find out if they are sympathetic to our aims and willing to support specific projects. You could do the same with your local park's officers to persuade them to manage the parks in a way which would be more beneficial to wildlife.

Talking about the Park's Department brings me to the subject of managing our roadside verges. I feel that one of our themes for the coming year (years?), should be to encourage a more traditional grassland management to allow wild flowers to flourish. This does not mean that the grass should never be cut but that it should be cut only when the wild plants have been allowed to flower and set seed. In May, I persuaded the local park's superintendent to leave a small section of verge on Simonsway, in Wythenshawe, uncut, which resulted in the flowering of at least 15 species of wildflowers, including Lady's smock and Marsh thistle. This is a great improvement on the three species which usually flower if the grass is cut regularly or haphazardly. The beauty of this kind of treatment is that it costs nothing, except a little organisation and the resulting flower rich verges will go some way to replace this habitat, which has mostly been lost in the open countryside. Butterflies and other insects will surely benefit. If you have an example of grass verges being improved for lack of cutting, contact your local Recreational officer and tell him just how much you liked it.

Well, that is my idea of one of the things we ought to be doing in the future and if you have any ideas of other subjects which should be receiving our attention then please get in touch. It would be even better if you could spare the time to put the idea into practise.

Finally, if there is anyone out there who has any articles, suitable for inclusion in the newsletter, do not hesitate to send it in. It should not be too difficult to improve on this rubbish. The pay is not very good but there is a certain satisfaction in seeing your article in print.

Ian Brown.

a desperate plea....

Your editor's fingers are getting very sore on this old mechanical typewriter. If anyone out there has a compact electric job, in reasonable condition, which is surplus to requirements then it would be greatly appreciated if you could throw it in this direction. Phone 437 7040.

Hough End Clough

Jan Brown

Most of you will at least have heard of this wild area, sandwiched between the houses of Chorlton and Hough End Playing Fields. The Clough has been neglected for many years and although it is fairly good for wildlife it has become overgrown with invasive non-native plants. The paths have become eroded, making walking difficult and there is much litter which detracts from the otherwise attractive surroundings. We feel that improvements can be made to create more wildlife diversity and enhance the Clough as a place where peaceful leisure activities may be pursued.

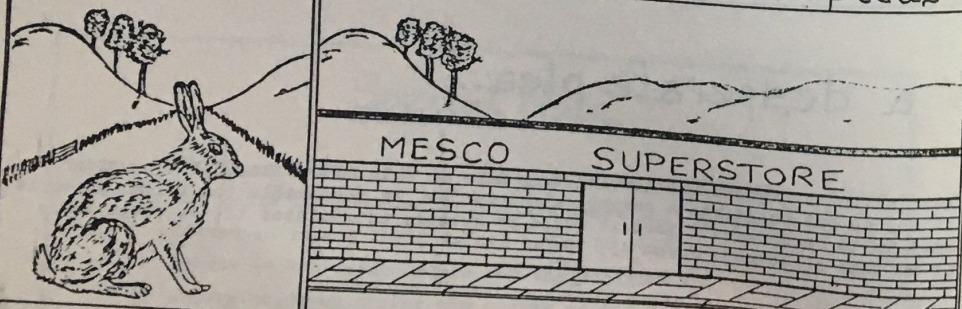
In order to bring this situation about, we first surveyed the area. We found a good variety of flora but we suspect that if there ever was anything unusual growing on the site, it must have long since succumbed to the domination of Himalayan Balsam. We concluded from our survey that all was not lost and a programme of planting and management would bring about the improvements required to encourage wildlife and facilitate easier access.

There will be planting of trees and shrubs, both to increase quantity and species diversity. Although the amount of this planting is perhaps a little more than at first envisaged, there will still be generous areas left as meadowland. This meadow will be managed in a traditional way, taking hay crops at various times of the year so as to encourage both early and late meadow flowers. The paths will be improved by levelling and stepwork and the boundaries enhanced by hedging, with stiles and gates for easy access. Add a few seats and a nesting box or three and the improvements can easily be imagined.

Of course all this will need money and for this reason we will be applying for a Community Initiative Fund grant. At the moment plans are with the Planning Department for them to consider if the scheme is appropriate for a grant, so we will have to wait a while for funds to become available. In the meantime work is going ahead on control of invasive species and much Himalayan Balsam has already been removed. (See elsewhere in Newsletter: coming events.) In July we hope that one of the lower meadows will be cut and if we are lucky we could sell the hay to the police stables, next door. So if the worse happens and funds fail us, then there will be some management work taking place which in itself should contribute considerably towards the environmental improvements which we are seeking. But in that case work such as tree planting, disabled access and improvement to the iron railings at the entrance, would not be possible. Anyway, let us be optimistic and hope that the necessary will be forthcoming. I'm keeping my fingers crossed and I hope the rest of the members will do likewise.

March Hare

by Tim Lepidus



Hare today gone tomorrow.

News.

MIDLAND RAILWAY LINE

An action group in Didsbury is making a walk way and doing environmental improvements on a section of this old railway line, between Palatine Road and Burton Road. One of our members, Pam Siddons is a prime mover in this project and she reports good progress. There have been two clean up days and it seems to be remaining tidy, despite the refuse collectors strike. A C.I.F. grant is approved in principle and C.T.A.C. (Community Technical Aids Centre) are helping with the finishing touches. The only problem is that Dave Parker who works with the Mersey Valley and has been helping and advising on practical problems, such as path laying, is leaving for Huddersfield (Where?). This being the case they are looking for a replacement. If there is anyone out there who has the time and necessary expertise to help them contact us and we will pass the message on. The pay is not good but the work rewarding.

UPGRADED

The fields near the Airport have been promoted from a Grade B to a Grade A Site of Biological Importance. Considering that in December 1985 the site was only thought of as being of less than local importance (under Grade C) this is progress indeed. The orchids, ox-eye daisy and tufted vetch have been wonderful this summer, with the yellow-wort just beginning to flower and more marvellous wildflowers to come.

FOREIGN RUBBISH

You may have read this elsewhere but there are plans to dump both New York's finest trash (courtesy of the Mafia?) and the Rhine's top quality, mercury impregnated mud at Woolston Eyes, near Warrington. As if we don't have enough rubbish and pollution of our own. If you object to this vile threat to the environment of our surrounding countryside, then why not write to your M.P. or Nicholas Ridley. They can both be contacted at the House of Commons, London. SW1A 1AA.

BY-PASS

Between £6m. and £25m., depending on the route, is to be spent on the Altrincham and Sale by-pass. We have not as yet seen the routes although no houses are to be demolished, the road will pass through Dunham Park and destroy at least a little of Carrington Moss. The road may give some relief to the A56 but this void will soon be filled by more local people going to Manchester by car (as happened in London when the M25 opened), thus negating the benefit of the supertram, which will come into operation at about the same time as the road opens.

Because of a slight miscalculation in scale we have ended up with a blank space. Well, it had to go somewhere so we've put it here. You may use it for doodling, composing your wildlife joke or writing your next article for the Newsletter.

please turn over....

Book Review

by Ian Boucher.

BRITISH NATURALIST'S ASSOCIATION GUIDE TO WILDLIFE IN TOWNS by Ron Freethy,
Published by the Crowood Press, ppl28, Price £7.95 ISBN 0-946284-46-6

It is not easy to progress from an admiring armchair wildlife supporter to someone with a practical, useful knowledge of his or her urban environment. Most urban wildlife books are written and produced for those who like to wallow in coffee-table lavishness or those who not only have enthusiasm but who also have the time and the money, the energy and the garden. Why aren't there books written by ordinary blokes for the general urban inhabitant who wants to know what's going on about him/her, how he/she can recognise it and what can be done to improve it?

Do not despair; help is at hand, in the shape of a nifty book "B.N.A. Guide to Wildlife in Towns". Ron Freethy tells you the things you need to know in a free and flowing manner, easing the process of learning and making it a real pleasure.

Under chapter headings as succinct as "WATER", "BUILDINGS" and "CHURCHYARDS", the author takes you on a tour of the "much maligned Mersey" river, London Parks, and other interesting places giving informative cameos of the animals and plants and pointing out various types of environment that exist around you. Mr. Freethy holds your attention while explaining the worth of such creatures as the water hog louse (*Asellus*), the arrival and spread of the Brown Rat, the scattering of seeds along the A1, etc., etc., etc.

Much of the author's knowledge was gained from first hand experience and he tells the reader how useful experiments and wildlife improvements can be achieved, on a low or even a very low budget, eg. how to classify water pollution in your local river for less than a pound.

Good pictures only enhance the book's success. Highly recommended.

A Watery Tale

by Ian McGeorge

Happy Birthday Pond! One year old this week. Thanks due mostly to MWT without whose help, etc. For design, etc., refer to Chris Baines epic "How to make a Wildlife Garden". Actually, at it's inception you could have been forgiven for disregarding it as a rain-filled hole on a building site. The neighbours were rightly suspicious of the new folk at no. 10. What on earth were they doing? Net curtains twitched. One chap a couple of doors away joked about how soon he could expect to see ducks on it. I should be so lucky. At 10 x 8 ft. when full I think any wildfowl would have to be pretty desperate to pay a visit. (although Canada Geese do breed only a few hundred yards away).

However, within a couple of weeks the first frog appeared, soon followed by 2 or 3 others. Word was spreading. Presumably they'd been breeding in an ornamental pond a few doors away but now here was a 'real' pond.

Birds were also soon attracted and house sparrows, starling, blackbird, great tit were soon drinking and bathing, mixed bathing even!

Soon after I introduced several pond plants taking advantage of one of the MWT Plant Sales and several generous gifts from other members. That's another good thing, anyone with an established pond already usually has several plants they can afford (and be glad) to crop. Water mint, bog-bean, water plantain, water soldier, yellow-flag iris, monkey-flower, pond weed. Within a few weeks any algae that had previously formed when initially filling the pond with tap water, had altogether disappeared. Following on from that I went to a long-established local pond and took a bucket of mud and water and tipped that into my pond. It must have had all sorts in it because within a month a 'frog-let' emerged from the pond, still with tail but otherwise fully frog-shaped. Also it brought with it pond-skaters, water boatman, pond snails and leaches. At the end of August as we departed for Norfolk for a week we looked in at the pond and hawking over it was a dragonfly. Had it emerged from the pond? Unfortunately nothing has appeared yet this year so it could have been passing through but I'm hopeful.

Winter set in, although in a very mild fashion. The birds appeared in large bathing flocks. Sometimes 30 Starlings at once. Also individual Greenfinch, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Song Thrush. The water soldier sank to the bottom as is usual, however not to re-appear.

In early March the first frog of the year appeared and hey presto! frog-spawn the day after. Watching it develop since has been fascinating. With such a marvellous spring and early summer the pond and its surround have flourished. Up to nine frogs at a time basking among the pond-weed. About 10 pond-skaters now. Thousands on pond-snails. In April we even had linnets visiting the pond to drink and bathe. Song Thrush has appeared regularly to extract mud and grasses for nesting material.

The pond plants have done extremely well. The Bog-bean flowered, the Marsh Marigold likewise in profusion. Water Bettony, Water Mint, Marsh Trefoil (the frogs like to lie up in that on hot days), Ragged Robin, Water Plantain, Water Forget-me-not. The Flag-Iris hasn't though. Not sure why.

The level of the pond has of course been extremely low after our hot, dry spell but a few heavy showers soon put that right. A recently installed water butt should also help matters.

All in all, an extremely satisfactory 12 months. If you have the space don't hesitate. It's incredible just how quickly a pond does establish itself. And, as Shaun and Rachael will tell you, the bigger the better!

Want to advertise in our Newsletter?

The Manchester Wildlife Group Newsletter, Magpie has a circulation of about 200 copies quarterly to urban wildlife enthusiasts in Manchester. If you have something to sell or an event to publicise, which would interest such people, then please phone, 061 437 7040 for our competitive advertising rates.

Continued

A Wildlife Group Meeting

To give members, who do not normally attend meetings, an idea of what goes on, here are the minutes of our last meeting (slightly abbreviated).

Meeting of the 26th of May 1988, 7.30 p.m. Town Hall. Committee Room 7.

Present - Ian Brown (in the Chair), Diana Downing, Mike Garnham, Eileen Land, Sue Sharples, Glyn Syson, Sue Tellet and Shaun Wilson.

Apologies for absence - Rachel Harvi, Unity Kelly, Mike Savage.

1/ Minutes - Taken as read, corrected and signed by the Chairman.

2/ Matters arising - a) Annual report omitted from accounts; to be sent. b) End of Year date to be changed to 31st December. c) A.G.M. Minutes to be read and signed at next A.G.M. d) Landscaping of City Farm woodland area. Plan sent in and thanks received. e) Castlfield - No article had been sent in for literature.

3/ Future Meetings - Ian Brown to chair but could circulate. No meetings were to be held in June, Aug., Oct., Dec. Need to keep in touch by phone agreed.

4/ Annual General Meeting - The meeting had been satisfactory. Next year we need a smaller room with blackout.

5/ Planning - Fairly quiet at the moment. Curzon Green - Ian visited with John Turner and residents. Photographs confirm Great Crested Newts present. Dr. Gemmell to investigate. In Ian's opinion (and that of others), if planning permission is refused and Newts not confirmed, the decision could be reversed by the Secretary of State. Possible bats roosting to be investigated. Simonsway - Great Crested Newts found in pond by industrial development site. Countryside Unit have recommended a modified plan. Possible private housing or open space use of part of the site. Have suggested Council retain ownership of landscaping areas to have more control. No response. Nell Lane - (Siemens) Ian will recommend leaving rural part last bit to be developed. Didsbury Station - Ian to inquire re. green corridor.

6/ Fetes and Exhibitions - We have not been present at any lately. They are a lot of work for little result. "Plant Sale" success declining. Attendance at Fetes etc. would be appropriate now as we offer landscape planning service. A new "glossy" brochure needed to project our image and attract members. Ian Tate interested in helping here. We could get sponsorship for this. W.W.F. have a list of sponsors. Some companies would be unacceptable, eg. MacDonalds. Shaun to contact W.W.F. Marler Haley Boards - Grant supplied by Silver Jubilee Fund. Shaun to purchase soon. Hospital Arts Team - Mike Garnham has contact phone number. He says that they have space? (Chairman's query)* Manchester Animal Protection Exhibition - Aug 20th 9-5, Piccadilly Plaza. "Living without cruelty", "Manchester Meat Free Zone"? * Possible stall but there may be extremes and conflicts. Didsbury Festival - No presence. Rusholme Festival - Date unknown.

7/ Hough End Clough - Community Initiative Fund - Ian has prepared an application and will see Planner, Bob Williams, for comments. Sign board and photographs to be included. Repair of iron railings costly but good for locking up bikes. B.T.C.V to cost six volunteer days per year. Insurance disclaimer in next Newsletter. Work to begin in July "Balsam bashing". Hope C.I.F. grant is in time for tree planting. C.I.F. is government money for environmental improvement. Some districts, Manchester for example, take it up; others, like Stockport, don't. Stockport's view is that planners should develop the open environment rather than just improve it for wildlife. There is a C.P. team working in the Clough. The supervisor, Brian seems to be a knowledgeable chap.

8/ Tree Plant '88 - Ian to contact Jim Hall regarding possible C.I.F. for unused pitch at Hough End and about Tree Plant. Council not keen to release unused sports pitches for environmental improvements. North Manchester - Diana Downing reported more building in Cheetham; Kwik Save and MacDonalds taking a site with intentions to landscape. Could plant woodland as "Tree Plant" has a business section. Planting Plan - We could prepare plans in advance for schools and businesses. We did prepare a woodland/copse plan for "Tree Plant '86" that could still be used but most people want to plant specimen trees. Pass on street tree enquiries to the

Woodland Officer (Alan Goodman). Plant Plant - We should encourage the Council to plant and encourage wildflowers as well as trees. A strip of verge on Simonsway left uncult but with neat edges; with good effect. This is not policy but Assistant Director of Recreation backs it in general. By the University opposite the Museum, a 20 foot strip of grass left unmown round trees; some wildflowers emerging. Members should contact us if they wish to see more of these and other improvements.

9/ Wildflower Week - We missed this. There was a Mersey Valley wildflower walk led by David Bishop. Very good. Last year, walks were advertised nationally (on T.V.) but local publicity is as good. We could well plan a walk in July. Wildflower seed is available from Shaun.

10/ Membership List - To publish names and location in Newsletter. Membership is 75.

11/ Future - Plans to contact Councillors. Our knowledge could be used and we are consulted on some planning applications. Nest Boxes - "adopt a box". Donations for nest boxes in Hough End Clough a possibility. Those at the meeting had plenty of ideas, it's the "doing" that presents the difficulty. Anyone with ideas and the time/energy, contact Ian, Unity etc.

12/ Any Other Business - a) Finance - Suggestion that savings be put in a deposit account with auto-transfer to current account. Change of bank mandate needed. Members should have the chance to pay by direct debit. b) Development Plan - Shaun to look into this. c) A standard letter "Thanking you for your enquiry" needed. d) Fairbrother - (National Forum for Urban Wildlife Groups) meets quarterly. We do not have the time or the money to attend at the moment. e) Mersey Basin Campaign - (Phil Barton) Aim to improve the environment of our river valleys. G.M. Wildlife Working Group shares information and it is felt that such a group may achieve more and have more clout, eg. in dealing with Water Authority, who can operate without constraint. f) Badger Group - (Graham Pollard) Plan to set up a Group to record badgers and setts in Greater Manchester and to protect them. We are to send a sub. and Sue Tellet will contact them about being our rep. g) Injured Wildlife - Shaun and Rachel have received requests for this service. Maybe small cost but could lead to publicity. h) Newsletter - Articles needed by end of June. Contents decreased? * Contributions welcome. To be larger, easier to read but dearer. Costs £25 at present.

Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 28th July. 7.30 p.m. Committee Room 7. Town Hall Extension. (Manchester).

You may not fully understand everything contained in these minutes, (this could apply to some of those present) but if you wish to know more then please attend a meeting; you will be most welcome and we are sure you will find it interesting.

The agenda for the meeting of Thursday the 28th of July is as follows:-

Apologies for absence.

- 1/ Minutes of the previous meeting.
- 2/ Matters arising from the minutes.
- 3/ Wildlife Working Group.
- 4/ Schools. Problems with future work on Nature Areas.
- 5/ Hough End Clough.
- 6/ Events. Insect walk and City Farm visit.
- 7/ Parrswood Rural Studies Centre - Open week.
- 8/ Woolston/Thelwall Eyes. Dumping of New York trash and Rhine mercury sludge.
- 9/ Newsletter/Advertising.
- 10/ Manchester Badger Group.
- 11/ Membership List.
- 12/ Planning.
- 13/ Any Other Business.
- 14/ Date of next meeting.

Please bring your Newsletter to the meeting. It's the only copy of the Agenda that you will have.

Planning Nature Gardens

Ian Brown.

WETLAND AND EARLY MEADOW

It is convenient to deal with these habitat types together as they have characteristics or management requirements which are similar.

Pond and Marsh - As previously mentioned these should be situated so as to be open to the sun. Pond construction was dealt with in our summer '86 newsletter. The marsh should be included within the pond liner and should be placed so that the tall marsh plants do not obscure the view of the pond. Place soil in the pond to the level of the surrounding land. As there are many marsh plants, all of which will add greatly to the attractiveness of the garden, it is a good idea to make the marsh as large as possible. If it takes up about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the surface area of the pond you should find that about right. Some suitable marsh plants are:- Marsh Marigold - Purple Loosestrife - Meadowsweet - Yellow Flag - Marsh Cinquefoil - Marsh Woundwort. Planted directly into the soil of the marsh, these plants should flourish and for management, all that is required is for any dead stalks to be cut back and removed in winter, or earlier if you prefer a neat appearance.

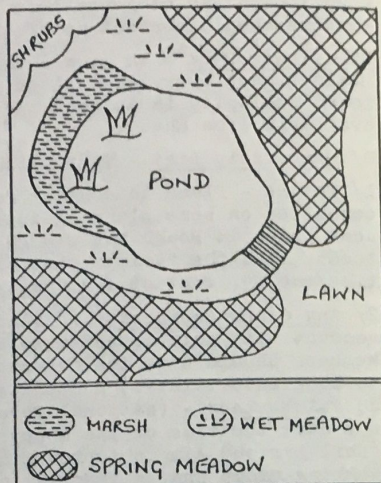
Wet meadow - This is best placed by the pond as water wicking out should keep this area damp enough to support a wide variety of moisture loving plants. These species would be suitable:- Lady's Smock - Ragged Robin - Snake's-head Fritillary - Water Avens - Greater Stitchwort.

Spring meadow - Site this next to the wet meadow. (The reason for this will become apparent later.) Some suitable species are:- Lesser Stitchwort - Cowslip - Daisy Bugle - Selfheal - Yellow Rattle - Cat's ear - Bearded Viper's-grass.

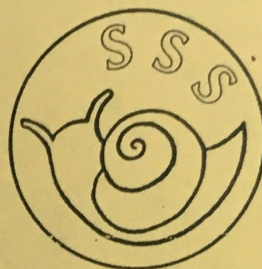
Planting and management of meadows - The meadows could be seeded but for ease we would recommend plug planting of mature wildflowers into already existing turf. The reason for this is that the plants in these meadows are early flowering and therefore will not be dominated by grass growth. One of the reasons why it is convenient to have both meadow types in close proximity is that they are managed in a similar way. This is very simply achieved by cutting the grass about mid-July, or after the flowers have set seed, to about 3 inches. The cuttings are removed after a few days, either as hay or for compost, which will in time reduce the fertility of the meadow. This reduction in fertility will decrease the strength of the grass growth, giving the flowers a better chance. (Some hay meadows in Austria contain very little grass and are composed mostly of wildflowers and very good they look.) After the first cut the meadow should be mowed about once a month, if necessary, until early January. Another reason for the desirability of close proximity of these meadow types, both to themselves and to the marsh and pond is that some species will migrate from one area to another giving a mixed and colourful effect.

There is not space in this article to go into great detail but if you would like more comprehensive notes for the creation and management of nature areas then send an A4 size S.A.E. with a 20p. stamp and enclose 3x18p. stamps to:- Ian Brown, 82 Grantock Drive, Heald Green, Cheadle, Ches. SK8 3HA. (mark your envelope "Nature Areas".) For a more comprehensive list of wildflowers for each habitat, consult a wildlife gardening book or a wildflower guide.

Until the next issue, happy wildlife gardening.



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER



SNAILS & SLUGS SURVEY

The Department of Environmental Biology at Manchester University is organising a survey of snails and slugs to determine patterns of distribution of the many species found in the North West of England.

The survey is based on observation only, handling of snails and slugs will not be necessary.

All types of habitat will be covered and the results recorded by km² based on the 1:50,000 series Ordnance Survey maps.

If you would like to take part in this project, information packs containing instructions, a map of your area, recording card, identification guide and key are available from:

Miss Mandy North,
c/o Dr. S. Bailey,
Department of Environmental Biology,
Williamson Building,
University of Manchester,
Oxford Road,
Manchester M13 9PL.

Additional educational material can be provided for schools, WATCH groups etc. on request.

A copy of the survey results will be sent to all participants.

Membership Application Form.

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 and events.

I would like to join the Manchester Wildlife Group and enclose the following annual subscription:-

* £6 - Family / Group.

* £4 - Individual.

* £2 - Unwaged, children under 16, Senior Citizens, etc.

(* Please delete those that do not apply)

Which of our activities interest you the most?

Name..... Tel. No.

Address.....

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

The Manchester Wildlife Group aims to protect places of interest and provide new wetland, woodland and meadowland habitats in our gardens and local neighbourhoods. At present we depend mostly on our members' subscriptions to cover our running costs. Members receive the Magpie quarterly and can get help and advice with their wildlife gardens. Members can participate in any events organised by the Group and even have the chance to become involved in the running of the Group, which can be very rewarding. If you would like to know more about the Group please contact the Chairman, Ian Brown on 437 7040 or the address below. Articles, letters etc. are always welcome.

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While every effort has been made to ensure that information given in the Magpie is correct, the Trust 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.

Close-up Photography with Flash.

In the last issue I left you with too little light and needing the aid of a flash gun. The use of flash not only enables you to take a photograph in such circumstances but will enhance your pictures even when the ambient light is adequate and you will be able to use a smaller aperture to give a better depth of field. The technique used is fairly simple but for the unfamiliar a little explanation is needed.

Here it would be best to explain a few symbols which will be used in the text: Gn = Guide number; Ne = Effective aperture; f = marked aperture; Fd = Flash distance (in metres); M = Magnification; ISO = International Standards Organisation symbol for film speed rating.

A manual flash gun gives out a constant light for about 1/1000 of a second. It is necessary to know the power of this light in order that we may ascertain the correct aperture to use when taking a photograph.

The power of a flash gun is evaluated by a Gn which is calculated assuming its use indoors with reflective, light coloured walls. This Gn can be found on the flash gun itself or in the operator's manual. If not you can work it out by using the dial or chart on its back. The Gn of the flash is for a film speed of 100 ISO, so set the dial for this speed and multiply the aperture reading by its corresponding distance in metres. If this reading is 15 metres at f2, then the Gn is 30. If the ISO of the film you are using is different from 100 then calculate the new Gn thus:-

$$\sqrt{\frac{\text{new ISO}}{\text{old ISO}}} \times \text{old Gn (30)}. \quad \text{eg. } \sqrt{\frac{200}{100}} \times 30 = 42 \text{ new Gn.}$$

Alternatively set the dial on the back of the flash to the new ISO, then multiply the distance in metres by its corresponding aperture. This is not quite as accurate. We have not yet finished with the calculation because when a flash gun is used out of doors it loses 15/16ths of its power. The reason for this is that outside, there are practically no reflective surfaces. To calculate the Gn which is applicable in such conditions, divide the stated Gn by 4. (Don't ask me to explain why only 4 but it is something to do with the square of something or other.) Obviously it is an advantage to have a powerful flash gun so we will assume that we are using one which has a Gn of 30. Out of doors this will be reduced to a Gn of 7.5.

Flash distance when using full flash

To calculate how far away the flash gun should be from the subject, use this formula: $\frac{\text{Gn}}{\text{Ne}} = \text{Fd}$. The guide number we have just worked out. The effective aperture is found by multiplying the aperture marked on the lens by M + 1. Say f=11 and M=1 then Ne = 11 x (1 + 1), or Ne = 22. So the flash distance in this case will be $\frac{(\text{Gn}) 7.5}{(\text{Ne}) 22} = 0.34 \text{ Metres or } 34 \text{ centimetres}$. It's as simple as that.

Shutter speed

When using flash the shutter speed should be set as instructed in the camera's manual. This is usually 1/60th of a second, but a slower speed can be used. The shutter speed does not effect the exposure time; this is controlled by the flash time (1/1000 sec.). If the shutter speed used is faster than that recommended then the shutter will start to close before the flash has gone off and part of the photograph will be unexposed.

Full flash can be used, whether or not there is any ambient light, which is ignored in the above calculations. If you wish to use a combination of flash light and ambient light, then the procedure is slightly different.

Flash with ambient light

Set the shutter speed at 1/60th of a second or less and adjust the aperture to give the correct exposure for ambient light. Using this marked

aperture calculate the Ne, then work out the Fd as shown before. Proir to taking the photograph, reduce the aperture by one stop. Say fl1 to fl6.

Setting up the Flash

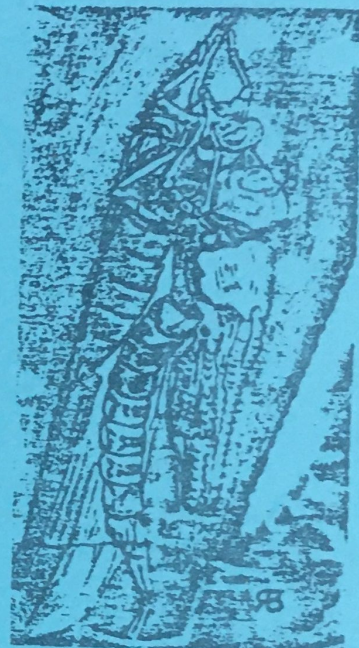
The above calculations are only correct if the flash is used, remote from the camera, at an angle of 45° from the line of shot. The flash can be operated, either mounted on a tripod or held by yourself, using the camera's self timer to operate the shutter. Alternatively, you could employ an assistant. It is important to be exact with the flash distance as accuracy will give perfect results.

To illustrate this, take an extreme example. Your flash has a Gn of 20 for indoor use or a Gn of 5 for outdoor use. If $f = 22$ and $M = 1.5\times$, then $Ne = 55$. This gives a Fd of 0.09 metres.

$$\frac{(Gn)}{(Ne)} \frac{5}{55} = 0.09 \text{ metres (Fd) or 9 centimetres.}$$

If you were only 1cm out this would effect the exposure considerably. Have the flash on the darkest side of the subject. Only use one flash as two will produce two sets of shadows, which looks odd. If you want to lighten the side on which the flash will produce shadows, then use a white card reflector, on the opposite side to the flash, angled to bounce the flash onto the subject. Close the aperture by one stop to compensate. The effective aperture need not be recalculated.

I hope all the calculations and adjustments which have so far been required will not have given you a headache because here comes another one. Subjects vary in thier lightness or darkness and this must be taken into account when calculating exposure, independently of the amount of light available. The table below will help you to make these adjustments and while plants are mostly used to indicate the various shades, it applies equally well to insects such as the dragonfly on the right



necessary adjustment to incident illumination compared with mid- green (in stops)		SUBJECT illuminated at (35° -) 45°
+1.5	Glossy black objects on dark & black ground.	* Average wild flowers + = wider aperture - = smaller aperture
+1.0	Glossy dark; wet humus.	
+0.5	Darker or wet foliage.	
0	Mid (lawn) green; moist moss.	
-0.5	Lighter foliage; dark flowers.	
* -1.0	Lighter foliage; mid flowers.	
-1.5	Pale foliage; mid flowers; brick.	
-2.0	Green apples; oranges \uparrow lighter flowers; palm of hand \rightarrow	
-2.5	Very pale flowers (almost) filling frame.	
-3.0	Pure white flowers (almost) filling frame.	

There is obviously a little room for error, so if you have a particularly fine subject, try bracketing shots. That is take several photographs, with the aperture adjusted in stops or half stops, either side of the calculated exposure.

With the information given in this article and the one in the winter issue you should now be able to have a good shot at photographing stationary wildlife, close-up. Moving wildlife is a slightly different matter and I will deal with this and other things in the next newsletter. I hope! Any queries please write to : 82 Crantock Drive, Heald Green, Cheadle, Ches. SK8 3HA

Jan Brown.