



Newsletter of the Manchester Wildlife Trust

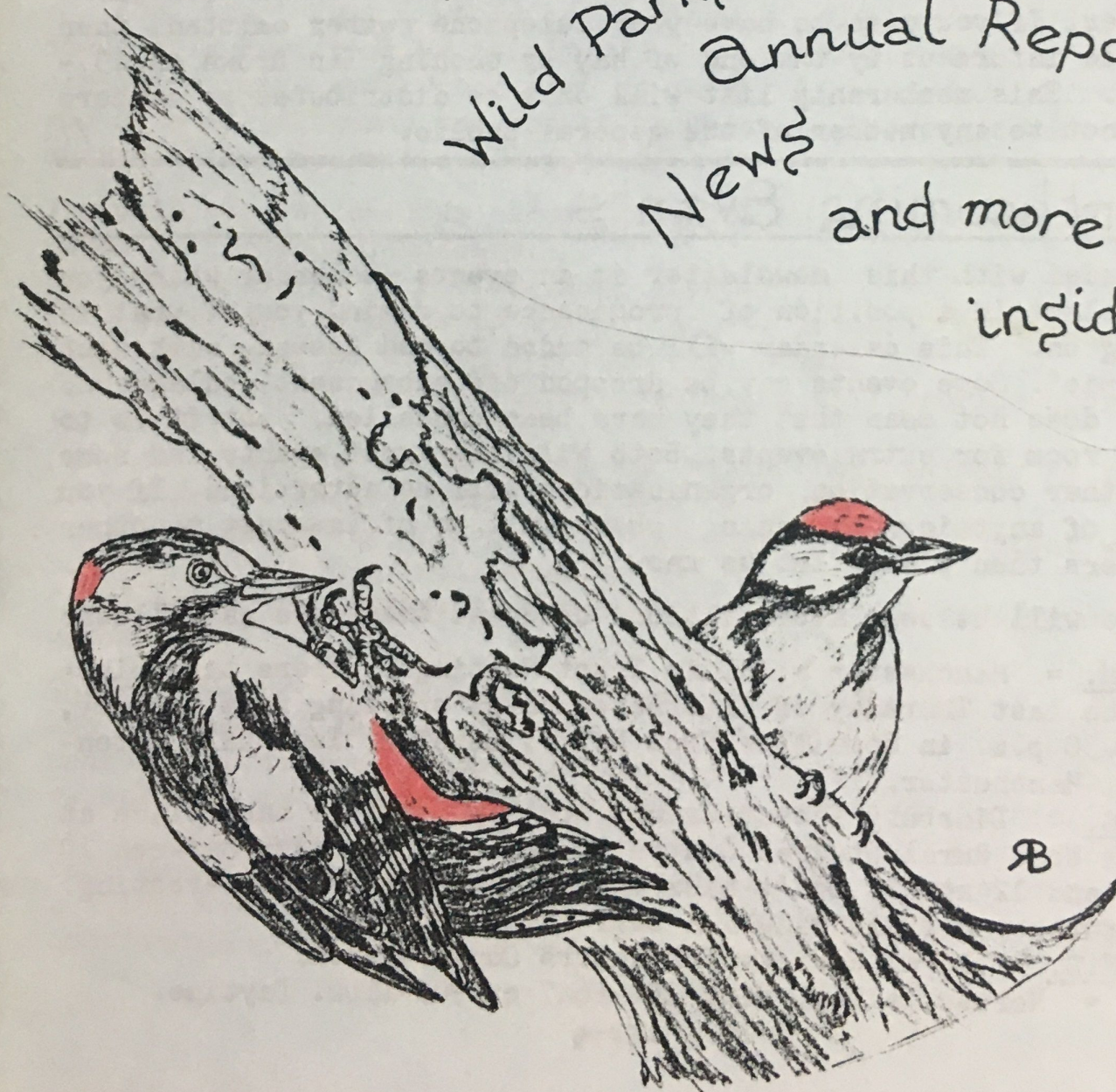
The Magpie

Number 12

Spring 1989

River Valley Special
Wild Parks
Annual Report
News

and more
inside.....



RB

Editorial.

We're back again, after missing out on the winter edition of "Magpie". As we promised in the news-sheet this "Magpie" would be a bumper issue. Well here it is and we hope you agree that it is as promised. We have articles from a variety of contributors, which we hope you will enjoy. From the sublime to the ridiculous as the expression goes. However, we are always open for articles from new (and old) contributors for our next newsletter: starting from now to the end of May.

If you look at the bottom of any page of this newsletter you will notice some hieroglyphics, such as - 9SP89. This is the page, issue and year coding and will help you to re-order the pages if, for any reason, your newsletter should fall apart. We will leave it to you to work out what the figures stand for.

MEMBERSHIP LIST - Our previous membership list was not a success so we will issue another with member's name, area and telephone number. If you wish to have your telephone number omitted, then please inform us by the end of May by phoning Ian Brown on 437-7040. This membership list will only be distributed to members and not to any member of the general public. //

Forthcoming Events

Included with this newsletter is an events calendar which you can place in a position of prominence to remind you of what is going on. This calendar will be added to and issued with each "Magpie". Some events may be dropped off subsequent calendars. This does not mean that they have been cancelled, but it is to make room for extra events. Both Wildlife Trust events and some of other conservation organisations will be advertised. If you know of anything happening which will be of interest to other members then please let us know.

There will be some abbreviations used and these are as follows:

W.T.M. = Manchester Wildlife Trust Meetings. These take place on the last Thursday of alternate months starting from January, at 7.30 p.m. in Committee Room No. 7, Level 3, Town Hall Extension, Manchester.

D.I.G. = Didsbury Insect Group. Monthly meetings take place at Parrs Wood Rural Studies Centre on Saturday mornings between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. Don't miss these; they are very interesting. For further details ring Jon Delf on 445-9648.

R.S.N.C. = Royal Society for Nature Conservation.

M.V. = Mersey Valley. Ring 491-1647 or 905-1100. Daytime.

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Contacts

Ian Brown (Chairman),
82 Crantock Drive,
Heald Green, Cheadle,
Cheshire. SK8 3HA
Tel. 437 7040

Unity Kelly (Treasurer),
13 Ruskin Avenue,
Rusholme,
Manchester. M14 4DP
Tel. 226 4583

Wild Parks?

by Sue Sharpley

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF MANCHESTER'S PARKS

Readers should be pleased to hear that a growing number of the officers responsible for the running of our local parks have adopted a conservationist/ecological approach.

I spoke to Jim Hall, a divisional officer in the Recreational Services Department, to find out what changes are taking place. He deals with the Fallowfield/Withington/Didsbury area, including Fog Lane Park, where his office is. Consequently it was about this park that he mainly spoke. However, similar plans are being made around the city by other like-minded officers who have all attended courses at Manchester University in conservation for recreational officers.

Jim outlined the various areas in which he has implemented, or hopes to implement, changes:-

- (i) The creation of a wildflower meadow;
- (ii) adapting the ponds to a more natural layout;
- (iii) providing bird, and possibly bat, boxes;
- (iv) planting native and local trees which will provide habitat for wildlife;
- (v) changing the pet's corner to allow the animals to roam around and to include rarer species;
- (vi) educating the public, both through direct contact with schools and through noticeboards;
- (vii) achieving greater community involvement and thus reducing vandalism.

Several factors are slowing down progress, unfortunately; first and foremost a lack of finance. There are also problems with manpower. Existing manpower is usually too busy with day-to-day maintenance to take on new projects. In addition, initially at least, the workforce needs to be supervised quite closely so that ways of doing things can be changed. For example, to obtain a wildflower meadow, the frequency of mowing has to be reduced considerably.

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Another perennial problem facing the parks is vandalism. Partial success has been achieved from time to time by providing extra leisure facilities for the young but this needs to be kept going on a long-term basis.

Finally, the Recreational Services officers are at the present facing the added burden of privatisation. This is having to take precedence over other matters at the moment. Jim and his colleagues are hopeful that the ecological approach can be integrated when certain functions are privatised. Let's hope so.//

Agricultural Pollution of Rivers - by Ian Johnson

In general, rivers have been suffocated by factory effluents since the Industrial Revolution - part of the price the nation has paid for its prosperity. But whilst steel plants, coking works and coal mines have continued to use urban waterways as open drains for toxic waste, ensuring that the U.K.'s dirtiest urban waterways remain dirty, a new threat has emerged to taint our once pure rural rivers - pollution from agriculture!

Farm pollution is the single most important cause of the alarming deterioration in river quality in the past seven years and the resulting decline in fish and wildlife. The switch to intensive farming methods since the war has achieved remarkable increases in productivity. Spurred by EEC incentives, farmers have used millions of tons of fertilisers and pesticides to extract even larger yields from the soil, whilst livestock has been herded into rearing-houses, where animals gain more weight for less feed, resulting in the accumulation of large amounts of slurry. Only recently has the environmental cost of this agricultural revolution begun to be appreciated.

Silage and slurry associated with dairy farming and intensive livestock rearing and the widespread use of nitrate and phosphate fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides have been gradually poisoning what were once our cleanest rivers. From 1979 to 1986 illegal farm pollution incidents rose from 1,484 to 3,427 cases recorded. A government report published early last year showed a further overall increase of 13% with a massive 60% rise in serious incidents, a situation described by the Agriculture Minister, Mr. John Gummer, as unacceptable.

A more insidious threat to rivers from modern agriculture, is the use of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides. When used in large quantities nitrates accelerate plant growth - but not all is absorbed by crops and some finds its way into streams, aquifers

and ultimately domestic water supplies. Nitrate levels in many parts of the UK are well above the 80 milligrammes a litre maximum concentration permitted by the E.E.C., and even if they were banned today, there would almost certainly be further increases in nitrate levels because seepage through the ground can take up to ten years. Nitrates and phosphates exacerbate the effect of slurry or silage spillages by de-oxygenating the water, suffocating the fish and invertebrates important to a river's ecology.

So what is happening to improve this situation? Unfortunately, within the Government there are two opposing points of view. The Ministry of Agriculture barely concedes that agricultural pollution has been heavily implicated in a major threat to our water quality, whilst the Department of the Environment recognises that the increase in production has led to an increase in the problem of pollution. Very little is actually happening and it can only be hoped that with the "greening" of the Government there will be more concern about the condition of our rivers.//

Annual General Meeting

THE SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MANCHESTER WILDLIFE TRUST WILL BE HELD IN THE CONFERENCE HALL, 2nd LEVEL, TOWN HALL MANCHESTER, STARTING AT 2pm ON SATURDAY THE 22nd OF APRIL 1989.

AGENDA. MANCHESTER WILDLIFE TRUST LTD. SECOND A.G.M. 1989.

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| 1. Apologies for absence. | 6. Election of Treasurer, Vice-Chairs, Secretary and other officers. |
| 2. Minutes of the last A.G.M. | |
| 3. Matters arising. | |
| 4. Chairman's annual report. | 7. Co-options to committee. |
| 5. Election of Chairman. | 8. Election of Auditors. |
| Last. Any Other Business. | |

ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND and please bring along anyone who is interested but is not yet a member. There will be a talk with slides on Water Privatisation and the River Valleys and an exhibition of some of the work of the Trust. Please try to come as this is an excellent opportunity to meet other members.

There is full access for disabled people. If you have problems attending (transport etc.) please ring Ian on 437 7040. We may be able to sort something out.

Continued over.....

Annual General Meeting - continued.....

Members standing for election and re-election.

Chairman.....Ian Brown.	Vice Chair (1)....Donald McGeorge
Secretary....Tony Phelps	Vice Chair (2)....Mike Garnham.
Treasurer....Unity Kelly.	Vice Chair (3)....Ian McGeorge.
Council Member without title, retiring by rotation and not offering himself for re-election.....Glyn Syson.	

Our rules allow for up to six Council Members without a title so if you would like to fill one of these positions or that of SECRETARY then please write to the Chairman before the A.G.M.

News - Mersey Valley Break-up.

It will not be news to many that Trafford wish to withdraw from the Mersey Valley Joint Working. We are against this move as we feel that The Mersey Valley is best managed as a single unit. The Valley is a very important wildlife corridor, stretching from Stockport to the open countryside, west of the Greater Manchester conurbation and if run by more than one organisation there could be conflicting management policies which would almost inevitably be to the detriment of wildlife in the area. We have not heard much about Trafford's plans for their section of the Valley, except that they feel they can get better value for their £149,000 annual expenditure. (Enough to employ about 15 people?) As this probably represents less than one pound a head for Trafford residents living within easy reach of the Valley then one would have thought it was excellent value for money. Unless, of course, the Trafford Councillors are of the opinion that their electorate should not have some of their own (the ratepayers) money spent on leisure facilities. The latest is that it has been decided to delay any decision till the next full Council meeting. In the meantime consultation will take place with interested bodies. This, at least, is an improvement on the secrecy which shrouded the first meetings on the matter. Do you desire to keep the Valley whole? If you are against this move by Trafford then write to one of their Councillors. More details can be had from the Sale Water Park Visitors Centre (Tel. 905 1100). If the move goes ahead, considerable Countryside Commission funding will be lost and the Warden Service could go which would be very sad, considering all the good work they have done in the past. //

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Chorlton Water Park - S.B.I (site of birdwatching interest)

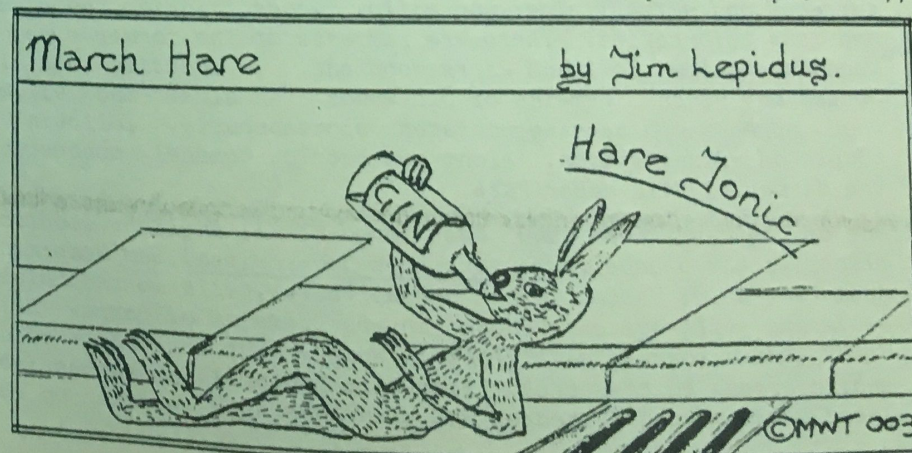
Most Sundays I can be found somewhere in the vicinity of Chorlton Water Park. I was once spotted by a friend ~~2~~ (unfeathered) who said "I knew it was you, because you are so well equipped", and who can argue with that!

Almost every time I visit, I see something new, and, occasionally rare (-ish), although most of the very rare sightings seem to occur mid-week, and go away at the weekends! Can't understand it, Myself!

There is a set procedure for spotting something unusual; first look out for another (almost as well equipped) watcher, walk up and start a conversation with this, or some other similar opening gambit - "Had anything interesting?" Alternatively, if you are very lucky, you will see a group of watchers (a "twitch"?) all crowded together, gazing in the same direction. This is always a magnetic attraction for me-it takes a lot of the effort out of searching for something new. However, there are some teething problems with this technique; this involves the "location reports" which ensue. If the artillery spotters had given reports of similar accuracy, we would never have won a war! I have, hand on heart, heard such reports as "It's behind the Pochard" (?), and "It's swimming left". etc., etc.

Sometimes, the bird will be lonely, and "need" to be seen and good views are had by all. Other times, you can stare until you start to resemble Patrick Moore, and not see a thing. This is the whole facination of the hobby for me.

Anthony J. Phelps. //



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Plant-Life in the Mersey Valley

Part One - Woodland Plants

by David Bishop

For an area of land which has been so ruthlessly exploited in the past and is currently in the midst of very heavily populated suburbs, the Mersey Valley has an amazing variety of plant-life. I have been studying these plants (in an, admittedly, rather amateurish and slap-dash fashion) for over 15 years now and thought that it was time that I got some of this information down on paper. Apart from this the Mersey Valley has become almost synonymous with bird-watching so this is also an attempt to restore the balance.

The area that I know best is the central part of the Valley, stretching approximately from Didsbury in the east to Stretford in the west. This narrow corridor of land contains a fairly representative number of the habitats which make up the modern Mersey Valley.

In this projected series of articles I hope to look at various groups of plants. These groupings may be based on habitats, botanical classification or historical associations (eg. herbs, garden escapes etc.).

For the present article I want to write about woodland plants. It may surprise some people to know that there are still woodland plants around, especially as ancient woodland is an almost forgotten memory in this area (apart, that is from a few pathetic little scraps).

I suspect that, in the past, woodland took two major forms in the M.V. - oak and ash woodland on the drier ground of the river terraces and scrubby alder and willow woods fringing the river and its tributaries. There are remnants of the former type of woods at Barlow Hall and Parrs Wood and, in addition some old hedges may be the remains of old woods. An alder and willow wood appears to have regenerated spontaneously, following a couple of winter floods, along the outflow channel connecting the Mersey to Sale Water Park.

One of the best known and best loved of all English woodland plants is the bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta). Sam McKernan, Assistant Chief Warden in the Mersey Valley, tells me that bluebells are still quite abundant in what remains of Barlow Hall Wood (known locally as, "Bluebell Wood") but that there is no public access to this area. Elsewhere bluebells appear as isolated clumps under hedges and even as single plants on the

River bank. Unfortunately the picture has been complicated by well meaning people transplanting bluebells from their gardens. These are often Spanish Bluebells (H. hispanica) which readily hybridise with the native plant leading to a range of forms in between.

Another plant which occurs in Barlow Hall Wood, is the Wood Anemone (Anemone nemorosa). Like many woodland plants this beautiful little, white flowered member of the buttercup family tends to persist for long after the woodland trees have disappeared. You can find isolated colonies of this plant on the bank of Chorlton Brook, on a scrap of wasteland near Jackson's Boat and on the River Bank near Northenden Golf Course.

A plant which must have been common in the damper woods was the native wild garlic known as, Ramsons (Allium ursinum). This has broad, elliptical leaves and white, six petalled, star-like flowers and also smells very strongly of onions/garlic. A few years ago I found a small colony of this plant growing on the bank of Chorlton Brook. This was in imminent danger of being deposited into the brook along with the crumbling bank, so Sam rescued some and planted them in a safer place nearby; they are now spreading rapidly.

Dog's Mercury (Mercurialis perennis) is, frankly, not very inspiring to look at, with dull, dark foliage and small, greenish-yellow flowers. Nevertheless it is a classic woodland plant and is very rare in the M.V. I know of a small patch growing under a hedge by Ford Lane in Didsbury. This may mean that the hedge is a woodland remnant. Can anybody confirm this and does someone know of any more Dog's Mercury?

Flowering times Dog's Mercury - Feb-Mar. Ramsons - Apr-June.
Wood Anemone - Mar-May. Bluebell - Apr-June.

With the increase in the tree cover on Chorlton Ees, two non-flowering woodland plants are spreading rapidly. These are Male Fern (Dryopteris filix-mas) and Broad Buckler Fern (D. dilatata). These ferns add variety and interest to the newish plantations in the area. I believe that I have now found another fern - Soft Shield Fern (Polystichum setiferum) but I need to check this.

Anyone who is interested in ferns should not miss the latest title in the Collins New Naturalist series - "Ferns, a natural History" by C.N. Page (Collins, 1988). This is a companion volume to Dr. Page's earlier taxonomic study, "The Ferns of Britain and Ireland" (Cambridge, 1982).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

If we have not achieved as much this year, as in previous years then it could be because we have had only 9 months instead of the usual twelve. It has been more a year for starting projects than seeing them through to a conclusion, but this is often the case with the sort of work in which we are involved. This report gives a brief summary of our recent activities.

Unitary Development Plans - In co-operation with other like-minded organisations we made a start on submissions to the Secretary of State on these plans which will set the planning guide lines for 10 years from 1991. This is very important work as it is up to us to ensure that urban wildlife is taken into consideration in the future development of our towns. We're not against sensible development but wish to see adequate open spaces within the conurbation of Greater Manchester.

Urban Nature Conservation Initiative - The Wildlife Trust and other conservation organisations have begun a survey of the Urban Open Space in the Manchester area and are working on a strategy which will put forward reasons for retaining an adequate and even distribution of open space in the urban environment. This conservation initiative will, hopefully be used as evidence at any public inquiry into the forthcoming U.D.P.s.

Planning - We are still monitoring planning applications in the area, though this year there has been a mixture of success and failure in regard to those where we have made objections. Nell Lane Playing Fields are to be developed without much consideration for the urban wildlife, as an area which was developing some wildlife value is to become a car park, and the landscaping is rather abysmal. Land between woods, south of Simonsway, Wythenshawe is to be developed for industry and we fear that the loss of the fields, which are used for informal recreation, will put pressure on the woods and therefore decrease their wildlife value. We have had some success. Major developments on fairly large areas of open land in Stockport have been suspended for the time being, mainly because they would be contrary to present planning law, but we will have to watch these areas in the future. We do not yet know the outcome of the public inquiry on superstores, which we attended in the summer of 1987 but we can only hope that the delay is good news and the magnificent hay meadow, opposite Cheadle Hospital, can be saved from an enormous carpark with attached shed. We were successful in persuading the City Council to reduce the size of the car park at the Jackson's Boat Pub which has saved an old hedge where Autumn crocus is growing.

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Habitat Creation and Management - The application for a C.I.F. grant at Hough End Clough has hit snags but we will continue to pursue this in future. However, some work on paths, tree planting and management was done by the Recreation Department, for which we thank them, and we had a successful volunteers day on clearing Himalayan balsam in the summer. Our Tree Plant at Hough End was again a success and should in time improve the area for wildlife and in appearance. One really successful project was on a rather dull, overgrown and untidy patch of land in North Reddish. We were asked to design a landscape plan, which was accepted. Funding was secured by a local resident and as of this date tree planting and other work, with the co-operation of the Stockport Conservation Volunteers, has been completed. This should be a model for other similar open spaces in the Manchester area. The landscaping at 1 Elizabeth Slinger Road has hit C.I.F. problems but we hope for better progress in future.

Education - We continued with our educational walks and the publishing of our newsletter to keep the public informed about our activities. Unfortunately our work on designing school nature areas has come to a standstill, mostly because of lack of funding. We must hope to see an improvement in this type of work.

We are still a small, but growing, group and I feel that considering this we have again achieved much in the past year. We look to the future years to consolidate the firm foundations we have laid in the past and I thank members, and others for their good support and they can be assured that we will continue to fight for a pleasant environment in Manchester.

Special Event

Jan Brown.

PATHLAYING AT HOUGH END CLOUGH - Sunday the 19th of March This is very short notice but we can do with as many volunteers as possible to help on this task. Please try to come. Meet, 10 a.m. onwards at Hough End Crescent (South end of Alexandra Road South.) Wear Gloves, wellies and old clothes.

Planning Matters

by Jan Brown.

Some of you may have heard of the development by Seimens on Nell Lane Playing Fields. This was a co-operative venture between the developers and the City Council. It was supposed to be a low key development, with a high standard of landscaping. What we got was gross over-development with minimal landscaping. As Confucius said, "He who kisses the shoe places himself in the ideal position for a kick in the teeth".

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We now have a similar arrangement for a development on Sharston Playing Fields and in this case the developers will fund environmental improvements to Hollyhedge Park and the old school to the north. This will make a linked walkway/cycleway between the Hollyhedge Road and Sharston Centre with the creation of woodland, wetland and other nature areas. We will have to see whether or not this is to be another Nell Lane situation but almost anything would be an improvement to Hollyhedge Park. Some local people are a little disturbed (furious?) about the loss of open space and this trend of developing sports fields is worrying as it could put pressure on open space of wildlife value, for use as sporting facilities. At the moment Sharston Playing Fields are mostly mown grass with a few mature trees (which should remain in the development) and the proposed plans could improve the area for wildlife, if we get what the council lead us to expect. However we must be on our guard and watch out for plans in the future. //

Winter(?) Birds by Donald McGeorge

No wonder the birds and hedgehogs are confused! Lesser Celandine in flower at the beginning of February? This was seen recently on a walk in Poynton. In my own garden, cowslips and pink campion have been flowering for more than three weeks. Returning home from work this evening (17th Feb.) I found properly formed frogspawn in the pond. I say "properly formed" because I did actually have frogspawn in early January but it was a poor attempt by the frog that laid it.

Birds have certainly been proceeding with nesting arrangements earlier than is usual. The Daily Telegraph at the beginning of February showing a photograph of a Blackbird nesting in the "green man" section of a pelican crossing light. Collared Doves made an attempt at breeding on my bird-table roof-top in mid-December. Song Thrushes have been in full song now for several weeks. Throughout early January we found House Sparrow's eggs on the back-door step on three occasions.

The winter began quite normally with the usual frosts and fog in October and November. In fact the birds that migrate here for the winter months were in early and in larger numbers than the previous winter, leading us bird-watchers to rub our hands in glee at the prospect of the coming months. Pink-footed Geese, Whooper and Bewick's Swans, flooded into Martin Mere about two weeks earlier than normal. Fieldfare and Redwing also came a little earlier and in much larger numbers than last year, mainly due to the failure of the berry crop in Scandinavia. This

also caused an influx of the most beautiful Waxwing. One day alone in December brought in about four hundred of these striking birds. There have been many sightings locally, including a flock of two dozen or so between Middleton and Rochdale and one or two birds at Parrs Wood High School. Starling-like in flight and with a faint bell like trill, They're actually quite easily approachable.

Bramblings, on the other hand, have been noticeable by their absence, the beech crop in Europe having been a good one, last year, obviating the need for a migration in our direction.

The weather movements which brought flocks of Pink-footed Geese over Sale and Timperley in December have now given way to some weeks of South-Westerlies and local bird-watching has certainly taken a nose-dive. Nevertheless one or two surprises have turned up elsewhere, amongst them a Golden-winged warbler in a car park in Kent.

Coming back down to earth, a singing Chaffinch in the garden at weekend seems to be another indication of an even earlier spring than last year. I heard a couple of weeks ago of someone who was in Morocco at the end of January and reported hirundines in quite large numbers, so who knows? Swallows in March? It surely can't be very long now before we see the return of Sand Martins to the Mersey and Little Ringed Plovers to Broad Ees Dole. Let us all hope there's a sound future for them. //

Controlling Slugs and Snails by Mandy North

The mild weather we have been enjoying recently has been greatly appreciated by our slug and snail populations. This has been favourable for me as I am carrying out research at Manchester University on the ecology and behaviour of slugs, and it is ideal to have plenty of specimens to observe all year round rather than relying on getting all the work done in the warmer months. However, the mild winters and wet summers, resulting in increased numbers of slugs and snails, have caused havoc for the farmers and gardeners.

For the farmer, with acres of crops to protect, the only practical way at the moment is to spray the fields with slug pellets containing either metaldehyde or methiocarb. Metaldehyde can also be sprayed directly onto the crop where it vapourises, giving off toxic fumes which are absorbed by the slugs, but this method is not very reliable. Research is now being carried out

to find more effective ways of using these chemicals to reduce their impact on the environment. One possibility is the development of a repellent seed coat which would protect the plant at its most vulnerable seedling stage and would be totally specific to that plant so that the surrounding environment would not be affected in any way.

For the gardener with only a small plot to protect, there are numerous other ways to deter slugs and snails from damaging plants. Pellets are again the most effective but must be kept away from children and pets and there is the added problem of birds eating the pellets and becoming poisoned. New brands of pellet are coloured blue which appears to offer a deterrent to birds while still making them attractive to slugs.

Another method for the garden is the old-fashioned idea of putting saucers of beer to attract slugs which drink the beer, become inebriated and as a result fall in the beer and drown. Unfortunately, slugs and snails do not have many natural enemies. Thrushes will take snails and break open the shells on a stone, commonly called an anvil, in order to eat the contents. Many birds are deterred from eating slugs because the mucus is distasteful and also makes the slug difficult to handle. Occasionally a blackbird or thrush will wipe a slug on the ground to try and remove the mucus.

It is also known that ground beetles will prey on slugs and further work is being carried out to investigate this potential method of biological control.

The ideal slug predator is of course the hedgehog, which can consume up to 500 slugs in a night. A lady I know of encourages a local hedgehog to visit her garden by putting a saucer of dog meat out for it. The dogmeat also attracted a number of slugs, so the hedgehog ate the slugs along with the meat. Hedgehogs will also take slugs from beer traps and will drink the beer as well - this must be the ultimate in hedgehog delicacies! A number of trials have been carried out, using a barrier method to prevent slugs reaching your (and their) favourite plants. None of these barriers are very successful but you might find them useful for protecting specific plants and they have the advantage of being totally harmless. Suitable materials to use are coarse grit or sand, ash or soot. These should be spread round the base of the plants you wish to protect. Salt is an ideal deterrent but it is not suitable for outdoor use as it is easily washed away and can also change the chemical composition of the soil.

Ideally plants which are most susceptible to slug damage should

be interspersed with less favoured plants as this reduces the chance of a slug finding its preferred food. Slugs prefer young seedlings to mature plants, so varying ages of plants in a bed should help. If you want to grow vegetables, choose a variety which is more resistant to damage by slugs.

The main problem with slugs is that they are not plant specific and will remain after one crop of plants has finished, waiting to attack the next lot of seedlings. Good garden management, eg. cleaning up delons on a regular basis, will reduce the number of places where slugs and other pests can remain until the new plants appear for them to attack. Another form of good management where slug damage can be minimised, is to choose the best time for harvesting vegetables. For example it has been shown that potatoes harvested in September have one tenth of the damage of those harvested in October, so it is well worth accepting a smaller potato size for greatly reduced slug damage. One species of slug, Limax flavus, the cellar slug, is attracted to buildings and often enters houses. Although these slugs are harmless, most people do not want them in their homes. Slug pellets can be used to get rid of them, but this method is not advisable if there are children or pets in the house. The best way to deter them is to first of all try and block up all possible entrances, although this is not easy as a slug will squeeze through the tiniest of gaps, and then use salt as a barrier around the skirting boards, accross doorways etc.

Can I remind everyone who sent for an information pack for the snail and slug survey, which was advertised in the Autumn issue of "Magpie", that the closing date is the end of May and record sheets should be returned to me by that time. //

Cover Competition

The cover competition in the last issue of "Magpie" was won by Philippa Lloyd. On her third telephone call she correctly gave the identification of the bird depicted as a Long-billed Dowitcher. Well done Philippa but you forgot to collect your prize.

THIS ISSUE'S COVER COMPETITION. There is a deliberate mistake in the red colouring of one of the Great-spotted Woodpeckers on the front cover. The catch is that this is so on only one copy of "Magpie". If the person who is lucky enough to receive that copy and to spot the deliberate mistake will ring the editor on 437 7040, they will win a free copy of our forthcoming booklet, "Creating Nature Areas". Please have your copy of "Magpie" with you when you call. //

Membership Application Form.

Do you care about City wildlife? Then join us by filling in the form below and return with a cheque/P.O. made out to Manchester Wildlife Trust Ltd. to 13 Ruskin Ave., Rusholme, M/Cr. M14 4DP.

The Manchester Wildlife Trust aims to protect places of natural history interest and provide new wetland, woodland and meadowland habitats in our gardens and local neighbourhoods. At the present we depend mostly on our members' subscriptions to cover our running costs. Members receive "Magpie" quarterly and can get help and advice with their wildlife gardens. They can take part in any events organised by the Trust and have the chance to become involved in the running of the Trust, which can be very rewarding. If you would like to know more, please contact Ian Brown on 437 7040 or Unity Kelly on 226 4583. Articles for "Magpie", letters etc. are always welcome.

I wish to join the Trust and I enclose my annual subscription:-

- * £4 - Individual. * £6 - Family/Group.
- * £2 - Unwaged, under 16 years of age, senior citizens, etc.
- (* Please delete those which do not apply)

Which of our activities interest you most?

.....

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

Address.....

.....

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

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82 Crantock Drive, Heald Green, Stockport. SK8 3HA Tel 437 7040

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that information in the "Magpie" is correct, the Trust cannot be held responsible for any mistakes in the text. Likewise, any person undertaking any project based on information from this newsletter does so at their own risk.