



Newsletter of the Manchester Wildlife Trust

The Magpie

Number 18 - Autumn/Winter 1990-1

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High Speed Drains

Recycling

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and More.....



Editorial

Editor, Ian Brown 437 7040

When reading environmental literature or hearing media reports on the environment, one realizes the complexity of the problems which must be solved if life on earth is to enjoy a sustainable future. The brevity of this editorial does not allow space to go too deeply into these matters, but the occasional airing of a specific aspect of conservation will do no harm. We humans are very wasteful creatures and this is particularly so when it comes to the use of power. Most energy used for power generation comes from finite resources such as coal or oil. Instead of worrying about how we can meet an increased demand for power we should be considering ways of reducing that demand. One way which many may not have considered involves our wasteful street lighting. Over half the light from a street lamp shines upward and sideways. If these lamps were designed to reflect the light downwards, where it is needed, less power would be required for the same amount of reflective light. This has been done in some parts of the U.S.A., and, based on calculations made there, if adopted throughout this country, a saving equivalent to about two nuclear power stations could be made. There is little the individual can do about this; except to point it out to those who install street lighting. We can, however, save electricity in the home and one easy way to do this is to install compact fluorescent light bulbs. These are much more expensive than the normal incandescent bulb, but consume one fifth of the amount of electricity and last about eight times longer. Over its life time, a compact florescent has a running cost (including bulb) of about £22. The equivalent cost of incandescent bulbs and power over the same period is about £52; some cash saving! But the saving in cash is not as important as the saving in power. If every household in the country fitted two compacts, it would save about 3½ billion kilowatts of electricity in a year. Now this means nothing to me but sounds like a lot of electricity (about £200 million worth per year) which would mean the saving of a considerable amount of our finite fuel resources and much less pollution. Every little helps. When the electricity industry is privatised it would seem hardly likely that this sort of saving would be encouraged, as it might reduce the profits to be made. In the U.S.A., the government gave grants to encourage companies to produce compact fluorescents in sufficient quantity to make the price more attractive, and in Canada, a power company gave them away free, to customers, which saved them

building a new power station. Would either of these happen in this country? It would be nice to think so but I have an idea that it will not come to pass.

The above may not seem to have much to do with urban wildlife, but it must have a bearing on the environment which is important to all living things. If there are other articles in this newsletter following a similar vein; do not be surprised. Read on, you are sure to be fascinated. //

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PEAT SUBSTITUTE

by Anthony Phelps

As a birdwatcher, I have wondered how I can help to protect and preserve what wetland areas remain in this country, as they are vital as breeding sites, and overwintering areas for so many species of birds. The RSNC's "Peatlands Campaign" highlighted on BBC television's "Gardeners' World" aimed to educate people on what they can do now to reduce the demand for peat, which is sadly the main cause for the loss of so much of our wetland habitat. They tested many different types of alternative products, many of which were not, then, readily available to the public. However, one of the products tested, a peat alternative made from Coir-fibre (produced from coconut husks in Sri Lanka) is now being sold nationwide. Its main benefits are:

- 1/ It is a 100% renewable material;
 - 2/ It can hold larger quantities of water, nutrients & oxygen than peat, thereby improving aeration;
-over

- 3/ It prevents leaching (by its water retention properties);
- 4/ It reduces the amount of feeding required (again by retaining the feed applied more efficiently than peat);
- 5/ It is 100% weed free;
- 6/ In tests up to 25% more root growth than with peat;
- 7/ It is a neutral product (pH of 5);
- 8/ You can save on extra material buying by not needing to add perlite (due to the high water retention), or bark, etc.

This material, marketed as "Wessex Cocopeat" is now available from the following address:

Wessex Peat Group
South Newton
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP2 0QW

Telephone Number: 0722 742500

So there is no need to buy peat any more, and, should you have work done in your garden, insist that the contractor uses non-peat products. Why not write to the council and ask them to consider changing from peat to an alternative. By doing this, we can save what remains of the world's wetlands.

"Treat the Earth well -
It was not given to us by our Fathers,
But loaned to us by our children"

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VERY INTERESTING - According to the recent White Paper on the environment, "the Government welcomes the continuing widening of car ownership as an important aspect of personal freedom and choice". In a previous Government publication, entitled "Roads to Prosperity" (alternatively "Roads to Ruin"), it was projected that British vehicle numbers would increase by between 80% and 142% by the year 2020. If the number of vehicles increases by 142%, there will be 55.7 million of them in this country - one vehicle per person, man, woman and baby. Freedom and choice will not come into it. You will have to drive a car, even if you cannot see over the dashboard. Only 30% of women hold a driving licence and only one third of those have the full time use of a car.

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"WHEN WASTE BECOMES A RESOURCE"

by Anyhony Phelps

As an employee in the Head Office of the Co-operative Bank in Manchester and being passionately involved in nature conservation, it was frightening to realise how much paper was wasted, and disheartening to know that all this was collected and burned! Reasons for this were 'confidentiality', and, to my way of thinking, that it had always been done this way.

During August, however, I was very pleased to receive a memorandum outlining a major change to this procedure. What interested me was that this was highlighted as both a "substantial cost" saving, as well as an "environmental" saving. Basically, a local firm is contracted to collect not just the confidential waste, but all waste paper, including computer printouts.

This is not charity - the paper is bought, treated confidentially, and recycled. Special bins have been put in each Department, one for confidential material, one for other waste paper, and one for computer printouts (which have a higher commercial value), and these sacks are emptied each day.

I see the "way forward" is to encourage other companies (even your own company) to consider looking into this way of dealing with waste paper. In doing so, we can stress:

- 1 The environment - Waste is a resource;
- 2 The economics - Waste is a valuable resource;
- 3 The savings - Cut costs by not having to dispose of a large proportion of business waste;
- 4 The safeguarding of confidential matter - "If it's secure enough for a major Clearing Bank....."

[Points 2 and 3 are very important, I believe, as if you can convince the firm's Accountants, then the battle is usually won!]

Let me know if you have any success in persuading other companies. The more that is recycled, the more recycled products will be produced, and the cheaper they will become. This is all in addition to the saving in trees!

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High Speed Drains

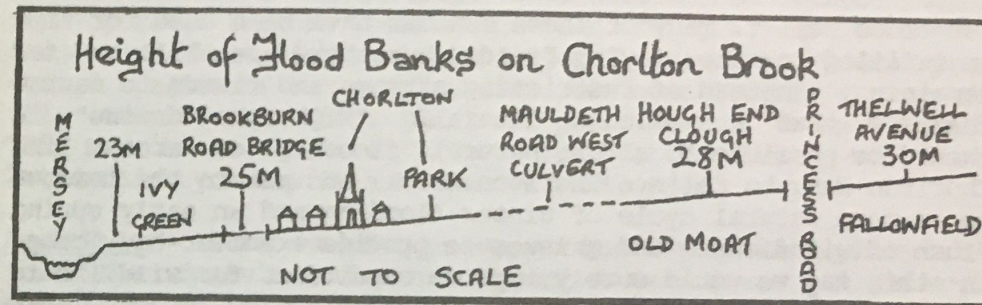
by Basil Faucet

Frequenterers of Ivy Green in Chorlton may have noticed that part of Chorlton Brook has been canalized. The National Rivers Authority is to commence on the second stage (upstream to Brookburn Road) this autumn. We are told that the cost for this work is £300,000 for each stage. Before flood prevention work is done a cost benefit analysis should be undertaken. In the past, much work has been undertaken by the Water Authorities to drain wetlands; the benefit being to enable farmers to increase food production; the cost being enormous and borne by you, the taxpayer. On Chorlton Brook the benefit (or reason) for the canalization is not to drain the land for agriculture but, we are told, to ensure that (1) the Brook flows out faster into the Mersey and (2) to prevent the flooding of some gardens in Thelwell Avenue, Fallowfield.

1) This sounds fair enough, but what will happen in the event of the Mersey being in flood? I would think that the river will back up into the Chorlton Brook, preventing the water from the Brook getting out into the river. Try this. The flood bank at the Mouth of Chorlton Brook is 23m above sea level (ASL) and by the nearest housing, which could be affected (immediately upstream of Brookburn Road), 25m (ASL). In the last 29 years the gardens of these houses have been flooded only once, in 1973, the kitchen of the nearest house being affected. According to a witness the reason was, that the water backed up behind the Brookburn Road bridge, not because the capacity of the Brook was insufficient downstream of the bridge. It seems that the capacity of bridge is less than the capacity of the brook.

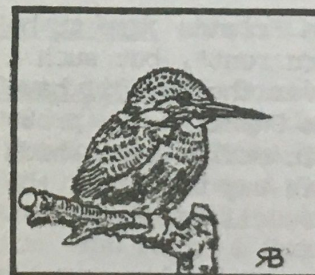
2) It looks a little unlikely that flooding at Thelwell Avenue, where the flood bank is about 30m (ASL), (7m higher than at the Mersey) could be caused by anything happening in the Ivy Green area. On the other hand, at Hough End Clough, the flood bank is about 28m (ASL) and we have been told that, in periods of very heavy rain, the brook there rises about 2m in a very short time and we can see how this could cause flooding at Thelwell Ave. But why should the brook rise so quickly in Hough End Clough? In May 1989, during a torrential downpour, it happened that some boys, in a boat, drowned in the culverts, between Hough End Clough and Platt Fields. (The culverts filled to the top.)

We have been told that, at the public inquiry following the incident, the cause of the flooding was discovered to be rubbish in the culvert downstream of Hough End Clough. Tony Rowland, of the River Authority, told me that the culvert was full of rubbish, "to the roof". This explains why the level of the brook should rise so quickly. The rubbish has been cleared, which should solve the problem. To summarise:-



The cost, £600,000 (your money); the benefit (or part), to prevent flooding at Thelwell Avenue(?) One would have thought that local flood prevention measures would be cheaper.

Back to Ivy Green. Presumably, another reason for canalization is to allow easy access for heavy machinery which will be used to lower the stream bed. This will make the drainage of the surrounding area more efficient, lowering the water table and adversely affecting the wet meadows of Ivy Green. We have been told by the Rivers Authority that they will minimise the damage



caused by canalization and restrict it to one bank, but take a look at the work already done. I don't think you'll find it very attractive. The Kingfisher nesting site is to be saved. Very good, but what if the site were to be damaged; it could collapse; there would be no alternative site in the newly angled banks. Also the change in the surrounding habitat may not suit the Kingfisher.

Would not a better way of approaching flood prevention be to slow down the flow of water into the river system. The upland peat bogs, such as found in the Pennines, act as a sponge which soak up rainwater and release it slowly but many of these areas have been drained, to improve grazing, for forestry and even by the Water Authorities. This ensures a more immediate run off of

suddenly, causing flooding, downstream. Similarly, the open spaces near the towns will hold water temporarily, releasing it slowly into local brooks. If these open spaces are given over to hard development, rainfall drains off quickly and the likely effect will be local flooding. It is probable that there is not much to be done to rectify these past mistakes but perhaps some relief could be achieved if riverside meadows were to be used for flood relief. Many of these meadows have been used for tips or infilled to make playing fields, but there are still a few remaining. Instead of restricting streams and rivers to narrow channels, that are almost literally "high speed drains", it should be possible to allow natural flooding of areas, like Chorlton Ees, to relieve Chorlton Brook, and return the meadows to a more natural cycle of winter flooding and an early spring flush of wildflowers and grasses to provide a summer hay crop. In this way we would surely improve conditions for wildlife in the Mersey Valley. //

FRIENDS OF PARRS WOOD RURAL STUDIES CENTRE - An Update.
from our Educational Correspondent

The Centre is now up and running and the autumn term well under way with The Friends of Parrs Wood undertaking the management role. The courses are many and varied and some are generating much needed income for the Centre. Produce is being sold and other services are being offered for a modest fee. The premises may be hired for suitable functions.

It has been reported in the press that The Friends are to be allowed to use the Centre for a "peppercorn rent", but such a rent is not recognised by the Council. However the Council have agreed, in principle, to lease the Centre to PWRSC Trust (probably for two years initially) at a realistic market rent which would be off-set by a grant. It is done this way so that the amount of "subsidy" being provided by the Council is clear.

Texaco have promised £50,000 providing the Centre is run for at least three years. An anonymous Trust will only give similar funding if the centre can be run for 5 years. In any event, the Trust are faced with raising 100% of the running costs for the foreseeable future.

Congratulations to Unity Kelly (Chair), the committee and the rest of the "Friends" for having come thus far. //

Odds and Ends

Member's Page

Late Tadpoles & Butterflies - from Pam Siddons comes a report of masses of tadpoles, in various stages of development, in the pond of her West Didsbury garden; in October! Were they late developers or had the local frogs been trying a second brood? Can anyone throw light on this subject? Also, in the same garden, 8 species of butterflies were seen over a three day period this summer, including; Small Copper, Meadow Brown & Comma. This may not be a record, but can you beat it? Let us know what butterflies you saw in your garden, this year.

Hens Eggs - A report of hens eggs found buried in a garden. We think that foxes are the most likely cause. Where did the eggs come from; no laying hens were being kept, close by. Do foxes pinch eggs from people's doorsteps? Anyone who has found buried eggs, had eggs gone missing or can solve this mystery; let us know. Everyone else; watch this space!

North Reddish Mini-wood - Butterflies had a good breeding season in the Mini-wood, this year. Small Tortoiseshell, certainly and possibly Peacock. This is good news and bodes well for the future of this newly landscaped site. After only two full years of growth, it is maturing well and this year, wildflowers, including a marsh area, have been planted.

Greenshank - seen flying over a Timperley garden.

New Leaflet - Some of you may have seen our new leaflet, which we hope will help the public to become aware of the Trust's existence and inform them of our aims and objectives. Many thanks to, Mike Garnham & Anthony Phelps for the hard work they put in on this project, and to the Royal Society for Nature Conservation and Marks & Spencer for providing the funds to pay for the artwork and printing.

Poor Hedgehog - A member reports finding a dead Hedgehog in her garden pond. Hedgehogs, like most mammals, can swim but they do have difficulty getting out of ponds with steep sides. If your pond has steep sides, help the Hedgehogs by putting a plank, or pile of stones, near the edge so that they can scramble out. We will have more on this subject in the next newsletter.

What a Waste

THE KILLING FIELDS

by Ian Brown

Since World War II about 95% of this country's wildflower rich meadows have been lost and while they may not have the immediate visual impact of woodland, are none the less very important for wildlife. The main culprit for this destruction is probably modern agriculture. Old meadows have been ploughed for cereals or "improved" by sowing with a single species like rye grass. Although hay is still a significant crop, most "improved" meadows are cut early for silage which prevents any wild herbs that might be present, flowering and setting seed. I think this is very sad and incredibly foolish. Livestock grazing on meadows with a variety of herbs and grasses, or eating the hay thereof, will have a far more balanced diet than those fed on rye grass. It is like humans having the choice of a wide variety of foods or existing entirely on say, cornflakes. It's also thought that a diet of a wide variety of herbs for livestock, reduces vet's bills. Herbal medicine on the farm! (Taming the Flood - Jeremy Purseglove. pp. 127-132 - a thumping good read, Ed.)

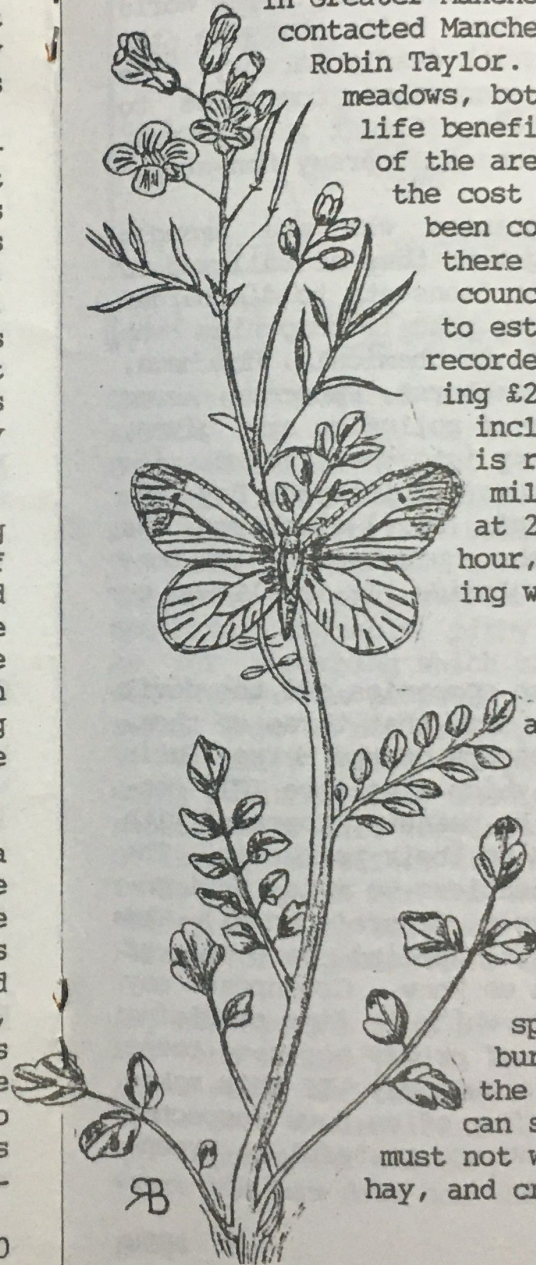
This sad decline of herb rich meadows must have had an alarming effect, not only on the wildflowers, but also on the larvae of butterflies, moths and other insects which feed on them and denied the adults of these insects a source of nectar. The appearance of butterflies in urban gardens is probably in some ways a bad sign as it could indicate a lack of nectar plants in the surrounding countryside. The shortage of suitable breeding places for insects will lead to a dearth of food for those animals higher up the food chain.

What is to be done? Much of the agricultural countryside is a lost cause for the time being though there are exceptions, like North Meadow, Cricklade and Harold Ody's Clattinger Farm. There is a solution, on our doorstep. Municipally owned grassland, as found in parks, on playing fields, roadside verges etc. could be allowed to grow as hay meadows. This is done in some parks, such as Boggart Hole Clough, but on Heaton Common, wildflowers which grow there, such as Lady's Smock and Ox-eye Daisy, are systematically murdered in early May each year. We managed to persuade the local parks people to leave uncut an area of grass verge on Simonsway. This is probably the last remnant of Moss-

land in south Manchester and since it has been allowed to grow, many wildflowers have thrived, including Marsh Thistle, and it is very attractive to butterflies. The large adjacent field, which had similar flora and butterflies, has recently been lost to a business park. One great incentive to persuade councils to manage grass as hay meadows, is the expense of regular cutting. Chris Baines estimated that the cost of council grass cutting

in Greater Manchester would be about £25m per annum. I contacted Manchester Recreation Services and spoke to Robin Taylor. He seemed to be in favour of creating meadows, both to save cutting costs and for wildlife benefit. The council is conducting a survey of the area of grass under council control, and the cost of management. The survey has not yet been completed but Mr. Taylor estimated that there are 2.8K hectares of grassland, under council control. Cutting cost is difficult to estimate but in 1974 a Government report recorded 90K h/ares of domestic lawns, costing £20m to maintain (£60m today). Did this include labour? Probably not. 90K h/ares is represented by a foot wide strip, 1.8m miles long, which if cut 16 times a year at 2 m.p.h., with a labour cost of £5 per hour, would cost £75m. Council grass cutting would be quicker but it gives an idea.

There is hope that we will see more hay meadows in many of our town parks and the resulting hay could be used to feed local livestock. One can imagine the scene; tall grasses and colourful wildflowers shimmering in a gentle summer breeze; butterflies abound, as you walk in Wythenshawe Park. This would go some way toward replacing past losses in the countryside and future urban losses such as the splendid Cheadle hay meadow to a Sainsbury superstore. Let the grass grow, for the sake of wildlife and so city dwellers can see how the countryside used to be. We must not waste the grass; let it grow, make the hay, and create fields of everlasting beauty. //

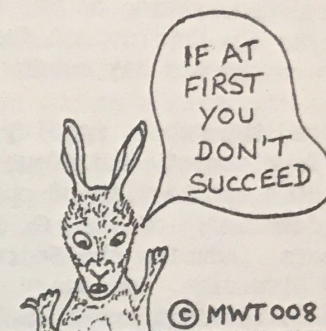
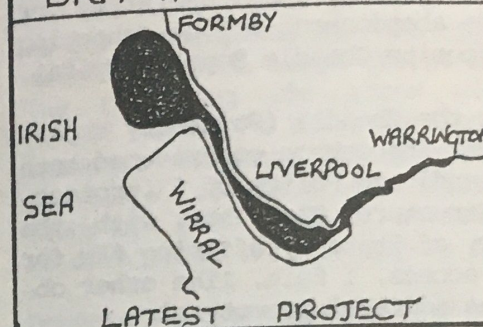


A report, headlined "Murder on the Mersey", from Greenpeace, give the "Facts" on Mersey pollution. They say that, "Dirty Mersey industries produce enough pollution each year to kill the river outright. The river is only alive because much of the Mersey's sewage, including large amounts of industrial waste, is dumped as poisonous sludge into Liverpool Bay. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is ringing alarm bells because the Bay and its fish are so contaminated with deadly mercury. The Government's Mersey campaign actually encourages companies to pollute by allowing them to funnel their effluent into sewers. 37 sewers & 50 industrial outfalls poison the Mersey non-stop."

Greenpeace go on to name 12 of the companies who are amongst the Mersey's biggest polluters, saying that they are allowed to pollute the river but many flout their "consents to discharge" and pollute far more than the law allows. The 12 companies who are named are; ICI, Shell, Morganite, RV Chemicals, Unichema, Lever Bros., Norsochem, Consolidated Bathurst, Panocean, Assoc Octel, Kemi RA, Laporte. Some examples of pollution are given, such as - ICI pumps 2½ tonnes of mercury into the river despite WHO warnings. Half the mercury goes down to Liverpool Bay. The rest poisons the river itself. Panocean's (sic!) discharge was tested and showed it was discharging the equivalent of 122 tonnes per year of cancer causing tetrachloride. It is allowed to discharge 17.5 tonnes.

Now I have never heard of some of these companies and the devil only knows what they produce, but I do know that three of them, ICI, Lever Bros. and Shell are sponsors of the Mersey Basin Campaign Voluntary Sector (MBCVS), to which I believe ICI contributes £30,000 per year. This must be peanuts, compared with the money saved by failing to clean up their pollution. The MBCVS gives grants to voluntary organisations to make environmental improvements in the Mersey Basin. (There's moral) The Manchester Wildlife Trust has not as yet applied for one of these grants. Should we? Members let us know. Greenpeace say that the only hope is clean technology, which is fine providing the taxpayer doesn't have to pay; some of us may not need these polluting products. No, the companies should pay. If this makes their products too expensive; tough! Many of us have suspected that the problem was as bad as it is. We are grateful to Greenpeace for bringing it to our attention. //

AU90

SMELL BETTER
BRITAIN CAMPAIGN

MWT Awards

This was introduced in the summer "Maggie". The rules are quite simple. The March Hare "Mad" award is for what we consider to be a ridiculous scheme. It need not be implemented, merely suggested. If it was implemented it would probably be nominated for the "Des Poiler" award, which is for environmental damage. This damage must have already happened or be certain to happen. The award for environmental improvement (for which we still do not have a suitable, pithy title - Any suggestions?) must also be for something which has happened, or is certain to happen. John Turner has proposed a new category, the "Malcom Practise" award. This is not as simple as the title would suggest. To put it briefly; those eligible would be persons or organisations doing something they should not do, or not doing something they should do or said they would do (in relation to the environment or laws which effect it). All will become clear later. The MWT is not eligible for the environmental improvement award but, in theory could be eligible for other categories. (Let's hope not) Persons or organisations may not nominate themselves.

Any nominations must be for the Greater Manchester area. Awards for each category will be judged at our March Town Hall meeting (come along and take part) and announced at the A.G.M. in April 1991. More nominations are needed especially in the environmental improvement category. Surely, there must be someone, somewhere who has done something to improve the environment.....

AU90

NOMINATION FOR THE "MALCOM PRACTICE" AWARD

Stephen Day M.P.

by John Anthony Turner

In January, Stephen Day, MP for Cheadle, Stockport, gave out a press release, saying he was still pressing the Secretary of State for the Environment for the abandonment of the "shopping scheme" on the old hay meadow, opposite Cheadle Royal Hospital.

I attended the public inquiry, on the Cheadle (Sainsbury super-store) development, and argued that the scheme contravened both Policy OL 4 (protection of open land) and Policy OL 6 (protection of farmland), of the G. M. Structure Plan but, with the developers inducing the Secretary of State by offering £Xm for the A34 Diversion, necessary for access, I felt, like other objectors to the inquiry, that I was addressing empty air.

However, Mr. Day's comments in January gave me cause to think that perhaps here is my recourse to get the balance tipped back onto an even keel. I subsequently wrote to Mr. Day, requesting a meeting at which I could advise him on what issues to press the Secretary of State with in the house. One week went by, two weeks; by the fourth week it seemed fairly obvious that the M.P. was not going to respond, and one can only deduce that he made the comments, as reported in the press, for purely political reasons, to give the impression to his electorate that he is on their side whereas, at least on this matter, the opposite would appear to be the case.

I duly sent a long letter to the "Stockport Messenger" on the above attitude of the M.P. The Messenger must have contacted Mr. Day, as he duly telephoned me on the following Wednesday (before publication) saying that he had misplaced my letter and that at the moment he was busy but would contact me to arrange a meeting as soon as practical. I would have thought that from February to July was ample time in which to have arranged a meeting to discuss this simple problem.

And so with Stephen Day M.P. making comments for the abandonment of the "shopping scheme" at Cheadle, and with apparently no intention of carrying them out, he is duly nominated for the Malcom Practice award. //

John Turner nominates S.M.B.C. in the next issue of Maggie

by Ian Brown

PLANNING MATTERS

Davenport Green — News comes to us of a proposed business park development on Davenport Green, 350 acres of farmland between Hale and the M56 motorway. The area, which is in the Green Belt and mostly used for grazing cattle and horses, has been selected for development by AMEC Properties, with 90 acres being reserved for three large office buildings, in a parkland setting. The remaining 260 acres will be run as a farm with improved public access, a lake, woodland and other environmental improvements. For more information, a glossy brochure and times and locations of a mobile exhibition, contact Paul Dimoldenburg on freephone 0800 181263. We are reviewing the situation and will no doubt have more to say on this matter.

Debdale — The proposal by North West Water for a business park ("Kingswater Park"), housing, a hotel and golf course, on land between Debdale Park and Audenshaw Reservoirs, have been well reported. We have made our comments against the scheme and the local opposition is very strong. Denton Golf Club are against the proposals and have a long lease which they would be most unwilling to let go. This open space is an important green lung not only for the people of Tameside but for those of Gorton, in Manchester and North Reddish in Stockport. Let us hope it can be saved.

Ashton Moss — Yet another green area is threatened by a business park (the disease is spreading). This is Ashton Moss, just north of Audenshaw, where most of the proposed development site is occupied by an organic farm. Produce from this farm is sold locally in Ashton and we feel that this environmentally sympathetic form of food production and distribution should be given encouragement; not destroyed by yet another business park.

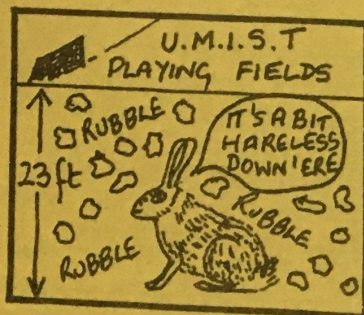
Mirlees Housing — The public inquiry into the application by Barratt's and Wimpey's, to build houses on the last open space in Woods Moor, Stockport has just reached its conclusion. We thank John Turner for presenting our submission to the inquiry and for his astute cross examination of the opposition's weaknesses. As well as the wildlife and open space implications, there were strong cases put for objection on traffic and noise grounds. We think that Stockport M.B.C. should have asked for an Environmental Impact Assessment on the development. We await the inspectors report. Again we hope. //

Hardy Farm

by David Rydeheard

In the summer issue of Magpie we reported on plans by U.M.I.S.T to develop their playing fields at Hardy Farm in the central Mersey Valley. We believe that the case against development is strong. The area covered by the plans includes the current playing fields, a wild site bounded by Chorlton golf course and the river, and a area of scrubland to the west.

The wild site is of particular interest. It has been designated a Grade B Site of Biological Importance by the G.M. Countryside Unit. This means that it is of importance to the Greater Manchester area. Indeed, it is floristically very rich, with areas of marshland, willow carr, sandy heathland, mature hedgerow and wet meadow. Outstanding plants include two orchids - the Early Marsh Orchid and the Common Spotted Orchid - & the magnificent Royal Fern. Mention of the site dates back to 1849 in Buxton's "Botanical Guide" and 1859 in Grindon's "Manchester Flora" as being of botanical importance. It is also a haven for birds including partridges, sparrowhawks and flocks of winter visitors; mammals, such as hares, voles, woodmice, shrews and weasels and butterflies, including Orange Tip, Green-veined White, Meadow Brown, Wall Brown and Small Copper.



U.M.I.S.T.'s plan is to redevelop the whole Hardy Farm area by tipping with builders' waste, to a height of up to 23 feet, for a period of 5 years, and then surfacing it with playing fields. The obvious disruption that this will cause, in Chorlton, has generated much local opposition and an Action Group has been formed, including MWT representation. A report has been prepared, outlining the biological value of the site as well as objection on grounds of nuisance and the inappropriateness of the development for the Mersey Valley. (It violates the Mersey Valley Local Plan.) A petition of around 15,000 signatures has been collected and over 600 letters of objection have been sent in.

We now await the deliberations of the Planning Committee. While we believe we have a chance of success at this meeting, we also believe UMIST will persist in attempts to develop the area. //

STOP PRESS — At the Manchester City Planning Committee Meeting, today, Thursday the 8th of November, Councillors have refused the application, by UMIST, to redevelop their playing fields at Hardy farm. For this we thank the Councillors. For reinstatement of the existing playing field the Council have attached 10 very stringent conditions. Of course, UMIST might decide to appeal. Watch this space!

by A.P. & I.B.

STOCKPORT WOODLAND OPEN DAY

This event was held at Ernocroft Wood in Etherow Country Park on the 15th of September. We decided to go along and see what it was all about and were given a conducted tour round the wood which, although mostly coniferous, is a Site of Biological Importance. We saw demonstrations of tree felling and timber extraction by working horse. There was a display of tree planting and an area where a clearing had been created to encourage the woodland ground flora. However, we thought that the most interesting feature was the demonstration of a portable bandsaw mill which could cut trees into planks and posts, on site. This is a most useful woodland management tool and we think that councils should be encouraged to make use of such equipment to help them improve the nature conservation interest of our urban woods. //

WILDFLOWER TRANSPLANT — Over the summer months, I was lucky to take part in an important project involving Manchester City Council, the Airport and a number of conservation groups, primarily the Manchester Wildlife Trust. The project was to transplant a meadow, rich in flowering plants (over 130 species) including Marsh Fragrant Orchid, Blue Fleabane, and Yellow-wort, which were in the way of the airport extension. Over the period representatives from the Cheshire Conservation Trust, Sale and Altrincham Volunteers, local schools, tenants association and the Recreation Services Department took part. Turf was cut and taken to a safe site, nearby, where despite our hot summer they are thriving again.

Jonathan Proctor

There will be a visit to the Transplant Site next summer, where we will indulge in plant identification and photography, or to simply admire the wildflower rich meadow in a City park. //

NEW CHAIR — The present chairman must retire at the end of this year so the post is open. Light duties but poor remuneration. Any volunteers? Let us know. Other committee posts also open. //

EVENTS and MEETINGS

Practical Voluntary Work - We are insured for accident & public liability, we carry a first aid kit but it for the volunteer to ensure that their anti-tetanus injections are up to date. The following events are organised — **Sat 8th Dec** - Painswick Park, Wythenshawe - Pond clean up and woodland management — **Sun 16th Dec** - Priory Gardens - Woodland Management (SACV Contact Andy Bell 905 1609) - **Sun 27th Jan '91** - Hough End Clough - Woodland & Grassland management — **Date to be arranged** - Peel Hall Park, Wythenshawe - Pond Clean up & Shrub Planting. — Time for all events 10am - 4pm. For directions and as changes may be made please contact Ian Brown on 437 7040. If you wish to become more involved in this sort of practical work, why not contact one of the BTCV organisations on the opposite page. There may be events arranged at short notice. To find out; get in touch.

Pub Meetings — These take place on the first Tuesday of every month in the Parrswood Hotel, School Lane/Parrs Wood Road, East Didsbury. Start 7.30 p.m. Dates - 4th Dec, 1st Jan, 5th Feb and Mar.

Town Hall Meetings — These take place on the last Thursday of every other month in Committee Room No. 7 (this could change - contact Ian Brown 437 7040) Town Hall Extension, Manchester - Start 7.30 p.m. Dates - 29th Nov, 31st Jan & 28th Mar. The AGM will take place in late April.

Special Events - We hope to hold a Christmas Party jointly with the **Friends of the Mersey Valley**. Date and venue to be arranged but if you are interested in taking part, ring Ian Brown on 437 7040 in early December. - **Christmas Green Fare** (Greenpeace) Sat 1st December at Cavendish Road School, West Didsbury. We hope to be there.

New Year's Resolution - Members who regularly attend events and meetings have expressed a desire to see more of other members. So why not make a New Year's Resolution to join us at one of events or meetings. You will be most welcome.

Late Magpie — Apologies for the fact that your newsletter is a little late this time. The editor has been under some pressure and has been getting a little bit behind. Also there will be no separate winter issue. Back in February. **Merry Christmas to All**

Useful Contacts

Bats CCT Bat Group - 0606 781868 (day)
LTNC Bat Group - Steve Garland - 0204 22311 (day)

Bees (Swarms, information etc.) Keith Taylor - 793 7335

Insects Peter Hardy - 969 4771 (evenings & weekends)

Birds RSPB - Tony O'Neill - 962 2449

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

Sale & Altrincham - Shelagh Aston - 275 3146 (day) 928 2223
Salford & Trafford - Brian Taylor - 872 7640 (day)
Stockport - Kim Porter 0625 874729 (evenings & weekends)

Bury Wildlife & Countryside A. G. - Dave Bentley - 724 8602

Cheshire Conservation Trust (Stockport and Tameside Group)
Julia Mottishaw (Secretary) 494 7831

Friends of the Earth - Neil Lea - 789 8880

Friends of the Mersey Valley - Ann Buckingham - 881 1814

Mersey Valley Wardens - Sale 905 1100 - Chorlton 881 5639

This list will help you to contact the correct organisation. Conservation groups wishing to be included on future lists - please let us know and maybe, in return, we could be similarly featured in the publications of others.

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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 who undertakes any project based on information from this newsletter does so at their own risk.

The opinions expressed in the "Magpie" are not necessarily those of the Manchester Wildlife Trust.

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..... Postcode

Telephone Number

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