



# THE MAGPIE

Number 22

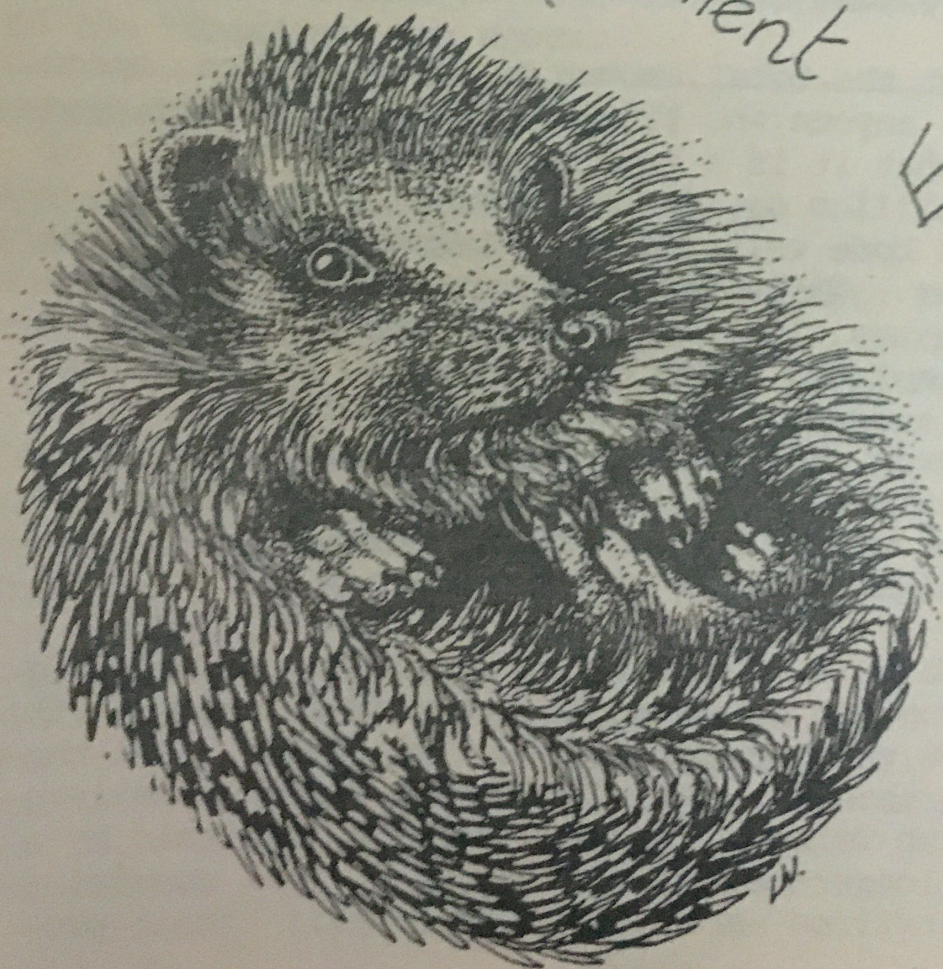
Spring 1992

Can you trust the National Trust  
Butterfly Survey 1992

Woodland Management

Flood  
Control

Environment  
Week



Planning  
→ Boddington  
Wardens  
and  
Hedgehogs



In the 1990 winter Magpie I penned an article about business parks. I concluded by saying, "Let's hope that we don't end up with a situation where we lose all our open space, have a lot of empty offices and no new jobs." Not wishing to appear too negative at that time my phrasing may have given the impression that such a situation might not occur but in my heart I was convinced that what I said was exactly what would come about. Those of you who remember the office building boom of the 1960's, and its subsequent collapse, will not be in the least surprised at the amount of newly built, empty offices in Manchester City and other districts of Greater Manchester. The difference is that the latest bout of office building has been mostly on greenfield sites, whereas in the 1960's old bomb sites were used. Property development companies collapsed at that time and one would think that we would learn from experience. One problem is that many property developers who operated during the recent building boom were new to the game and had no experience of previous property slumps; but is it not possible to learn from the experience of others?

We do not know as yet the total amount of empty office space in Manchester but anyone who travels about, with their eyes open, will confirm that it is a heck of a lot. In the City of London there is 30 million sq. ft. of empty office space, a fact which does not bode well for the prospect of filling the offices in Manchester. While many businesses require traditional office buildings, it is becoming easier to conduct office type jobs from home. With the telephone, fax machines, word processors and other miracles of modern technology, it is becoming less necessary to travel to work and in the future office space will become increasingly superfluous. This is a situation much to be desired as it should reduce traffic congestion and the need for further office buildings.

The saddest thing to me was the loss of the fields between Big Wood and Little Wood by Simonsway in Wythenshawe, along with the ancient hedgerow which connected the two woods. Of the offices built on these fields, the largest, which I believe was built for British Telecom, is still empty (I was told by a local that they no longer require the office). The remaining smaller (not much) offices were taken by Ferranti; their pre-

vious premises, across Shadow Moss Road, is now for sale. The Ferranti office on Park Road in Gatley is also for sale (as is a recently built office opposite). Those of you with long memories will perhaps remember that on the site of Ferranti's Gatley office there used to stand a row of old cottages. I am no expert on architecture or history, and time does tend to dim the memory, but I seem to remember that those cottages were timbered and thatched and probably 400 years old. They were certainly listed buildings and because of this planning permission was originally refused. I did hear that a bulldozer accidentally backed into the cottages and they fell down. Our history and open spaces gone; for what. For nothing, that's what; but forever.

Our Chairman contends that new office buildings do create new jobs, if only for 24 hour security guards! It's now two years on from the article on business parks. So have we got new jobs? Have we got empty offices? Have we lost our open space? I will refrain from saying "I told you so", but.....it seems that Town Planning is a triumph of hope over experience! //

Please note that all cheques, for membership subscriptions etc., should be made payable to - Manchester Wildlife and sent to the Treasurer, Ian Brown. //

#### Manchester Wildlife Contacts

Anthony Phelps (Chairman & Secretary)  
Flat 7, 104 Clyde Road,  
West Didsbury,  
Manchester. M20 8WN

Unity Kelly (Vice-chair).  
13 Ruskin Avenue,  
Rusholme,  
Manchester. M14 4DP  
Tel (061) 226 4583

Ian Brown (Treasurer & Editor),  
82 Crantock Drive,  
Heald Green, Cheadle,  
Cheshire. SK8 3HA  
Tel. (061) 437 7040

Did You Know? - The correct definition for a Bodger is someone who never completes a job. Traditionally, a Bodger was a craftsman who made legs, stretchers and other spindles for chairs. These were turned on a pole-lathe, in the woodland and sold to a chair maker, who finished the job. //



# North Ronaldsay Hedgehog Project

(Hugh Warwick, Manchester Wildlife Committee Member, reports from a far flung outpost of the British Empire)

North Ronaldsay is the most northerly of the Orkneys. It has an international reputation for its diverse bird populations and a very popular bird observatory. In 1972 the postman introduced a pair of hedgehogs in a misguided attempt to control slugs in his greenhouse. They escaped and bred prolifically.

In 1986 I undertook a study of the hedgehog population after reports of 10,000 hedgehogs had appeared in many newspapers. The actual figure turned out to be just over 500, though there is evidence that the population had peaked the previous year. The study was prompted by a very noticeable decline in the breeding success of the ground nesting birds, coinciding with an increase in hedgehog numbers. The Bird Observatory decided that the threat posed by these animals to the delicate ecosystem of the island was too great. A much publicised airlift ensued, with nearly 200 hedgehogs being evacuated to Scotland.

Last year I went back to assess the success of the airlift. I spent 3 months on North Ronaldsay. Almost every night of the study period the island was searched for hedgehogs. During the day many hours were spent investigating the behaviour and numbers of the birds, mapping vegetation and land use. The population estimate was 105, much lower than initially expected. A total of 70 hedgehogs was marked to obtain this figure. Surprise was expressed by the islanders that even this many were present. Some evidence of hedgehog predation in the Arctic Tern colonies was found, though whether this had a significant impact is uncertain. Many other factors were identified as potentially damaging to the success of the birds such as domestic cats, Arctic Skuas, Starlings, sheep, vehicles and starvation. The breeding success of the birds has not improved in the period since the removal of the hedgehogs; they may not be to blame but something else may be.

I believe that there is probably a combination of factors causing the decline in the bird's success. These include the state of the sandeel fisheries around Orkney and Shetland. This small fish is one of the main food sources of many sea-

birds and there is evidence of heavy over fishing in recent years. Undoubtedly hedgehogs do take some eggs and chicks but the damage would probably go unnoticed if the birds were not in such a poor state already. My recommendation would be to leave the hedgehogs alone, but to continue to monitor their numbers. If another dramatic increase were to occur, then further intervention may be justifiable. //

## Flood CONTROL

by Anthony Phelps  
(as Basil Faucet - our expert on high-speed drains)

Am I destined never again to sit watching Sand Martins nesting in the Mersey Valley between Stretford and Chorlton? After my walk today (15th February 1992), I guess not! Why? you may ask. In the cause of "Flood Control", the National Rivers Authority (NRA) have undertaken "improvement" works on the banks of the River Mersey. This involves scraping the soil and vegetation away to get that "nice and smooth" trapezoidal shape. Whilst doing this work opposite Broad Ees Dole, they "improved" an area of bank which was not to their liking, being vertical. Unfortunately, this was perfect for Sand Martins, who used it a couple of years ago, and could well have used it again in the future, were it not for the NRA.

Whilst observing this destruction, I asked Anthony Phelps for his views. He said that laws protecting wildlife and habitats are basically a joke, a mere token gesture by Government to be seen to be "green", but offering little or no protection in reality. He added that we treat the countryside as if we were the owner/landlord, and wildlife were simply squatters. Whilst the nests are occupied, the fauna have "squatters rights" and both they and their "homes" are protected. However, when the Martins return to Africa for the winter, we lay claim to "our" property again. Unlike with human squatters, when we would just change the locks, the NRA decided to knock the houses down.

Why am I making such a big thing about this? Surely the NRA are protecting us from flooding? What land is this work aimed at keeping "dry"? It's called the "Mersey Overflow". I expect they'll change that name so that they can't be accused of wasting our money yet again!! //



# In Trust

by Anthony Phelps

## Thinking of Joining the National Trust? - Think Again

Another story has hit the environmental news which has grave repercussions for the protection given to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), although not from Superstores or Industry this time! I used to believe that, being owned by the National Trust (NT) was safer than most other methods of (so called) protection, and being owned by NT and being a SSSI was "pretty safe" (unless, of course, you are a fox!!!).

However, this is no consolation to Marsden Point, an NT SSSI on the coast of County Durham. NT decided the cliffs were "unsafe for the public and interfered with the sport of anglers below", and unceremoniously blew them to bits.

English Nature, responsible for protecting SSSIs, were peeved, as they had not even been consulted, and commented "How would they like it if we blew up one of their bloody stately homes?" It has come to light, however, that being blown to bits by dynamite is not listed as a "potentially damaging operation". If this news becomes common knowledge, I fear for the fate of other "unwanted" SSSIs up and down the country. //

## What a Waste

### Managing for Wildlife

by Ian Brown

There is much emphasis to day on managing our countryside "for the benefit of wildlife". This is a laudable aim but I feel that the emphasis is a little misleading.

If the countryside is manage solely "for the benefit of wildlife", the costs of surveying sites, drawing up management plans and carrying out the recommendations of these surveys and plans can deter land owners, especially local authorities, from even making a start; so the grasslands are over managed, by constant mowing, and the woodlands are neglected; wildlife suffers.

I feel that our countryside should be "worked" in such a way which creates employment, financed by using the products of

the countryside in a sustainable way. Grassland could be managed as hay meadows to provide an income at no cost. Woodlands should be worked using traditional methods employed by the old woodland craftsmen, who converted low value standing timber into useful, high value articles, on site, so as to avoid the high costs of transport and storage which make seasoned wood so expensive. (Greenwood-£10/cu.m., Seasoned wood-£1000/cu.m.)

Old farmers and country craftsmen did not manage the countryside "for the benefit of wildlife", but to earn a living. Even though that living might not have been to the high standard which we have come to expect today, it was sustainable; they were living off current input rather than off their capital, and because their methods of management were constant, over centuries, the wildlife had time to adapt to any evolutionary change in a way it cannot adapt to revolutionary change. In effect, the countryside was managed "for the benefit of wildlife", even though that may not have been the intention.

Some of our countryside is managed to benefit wildlife but often in a high cost, high input way, to produce low value products such as wood-chip, fire wood and compost.

Let us manage our countryside in a low cost, low input way to yield high value products, leaving the waste to be converted into low value products. Our parks should not be polluted by the fortnightly assault of the power-mower; annual hay making is far less disturbing. The peace of our woodlands should not be disturbed by the whine of the chain saw and wood-chipper but by the ring of the axe, the purr of the hand saw and the swish of the pole-lathe; all operated by simple folk making useful and beautiful woodland craft products and at the same time managing our countryside "for the benefit of wildlife"!

(The above is an abbreviated version of a paper given at the "Conference on Community Involvement in Environmental Improvements" held on the 5th of February 1992.)

What is the relevance of this to our metropolitan boroughs. As far as grass cutting is concerned, there are many grasslands in our parks and other open spaces which would benefit from hay meadow treatment. Logically annual hay cutting must be more economical than regular mowing and, providing areas with reasonable species richness are chosen, wildlife must benefit.



There is a problem that it is perceived that the public will not appreciate hay meadows in parks, but ask anyone who walks in Bruntwood Meadows and they will tell you just how much they like it. The hay cutting could be done by local farmers which would leave the park's staff free for other things, like.....

**BODGING** - There are some good woodlands in this area, particularly in Manchester and Stockport, but many are much in need of management. One problem is that this costs money. We are hoping to encourage the setting up of woodland craft centres in some Manchester Parks; Wythenshawe Park and Heaton Park are suitable. Practical woodland management skills are not difficult to learn and it would be simple to train a small team in the arts of coppicing, and the use of basic hand tools and a pole-lathe to cleave and turn the wood, to enable the products of woodland management to be used and made into items of value such as rakes, furniture and small craft goods, the sale of which would help to offset the costs involved. It would be most unlikely that a profit would be made by this activity but far better this than to virtually throw away the wood on habitat piles, open bonfires and wood chipping. Brash and waste from woodland crafts can be used for these purposes and wood should only be burned for heating or charcoal making.

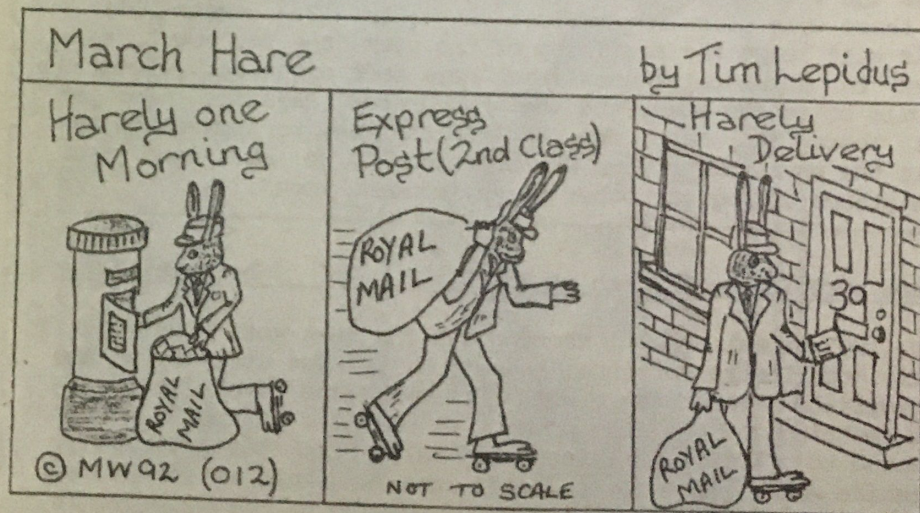
Woodland management is not such a mystery. If a wood is divided into compartments and these are coppiced in rotation, as of old, then few problems should arise. Understorey species such as Hazel, Holly and Elder thrive on coppicing and predominating species like Ash and Sycamore can be kept under control in this way. Coppicing keeps trees young and more timber is produced than if a tree is left to grow to full maturity. Using traditional methods and hand tools is fairly slow and it is unlikely that serious damage will be done to the ecology of a wood but a little direction from a woodland officer should ensure nothing untoward occurs. Sensitive sites would require more specific direction to protect rare woodland fauna and flora but those working in woods on a long term basis soon get to know which areas require care.

Woods need management, or they deteriorate. If we combine the management with woodland crafts, we will not only improve our woods for wildlife but raise revenue and create employment. The craft work will be of great interest to those who use the woods and a great educational asset to children of all ages.//

## Watch This Space

The South Manchester Watch Group is thriving and the events are well attended. In March, wormeries were made which was suitably messy. April saw the group on the Middlewood Way, where pond dipping was on the agenda. To come there is a continuation of the River Watch project and a visit to the Mersey Valley with the Wardens. The usual assembly point is Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education, in East Didsbury, on the second Saturday of each month (except August) at 2.30 p.m. The exception is the May meeting, which takes place on Sunday the 17th at Hough End Clough, where the group will be helping with the tidy-up (see events list for details). For more details of coming events contact Leslie Fletcher on 445 9605. The programme is varied and guaranteed to fascinate children of all ages, so bring yours along and they are sure to have a most enjoyable time learning about nature and the environment.

**Hare Today, Thare Tomorrow** - The winter Magpie was posted on a Tuesday evening, in Heald Green, at 11.45 p.m., to catch the first collection on the following day. We had a report that a copy was delivered to an address in Heald Green by the first post on Wednesday morning. The envelope bore a 2nd class stamp but received a first class service. Well done Royal Mail. //





# Environment Week

By Merton Niven

It's that time of year again, when a multitude of Green organisations get out and do things to the environment. Manchester Wildlife considers that every week is Environment Week so we have decided to pace ourselves during the official Environment Week so that we don't end up, as last year, burnt out wrecks and feeling we needed a month to recover.

We start off with a clean up at Hough End Clough (details on events sheet). We will have to take care as we know that Kingfishers are present and it is possible they may be nesting. This would not surprise us as we know they are no longer using their former site on Chorlton Brook, at Ivy Green, where the NRA undertook canalisation work, last year. The event at Hough End is being organised jointly by ourselves, the City Park Wardens, the Mersey Basin Trust and the Friends of Hough End and as well as tidying-up, meadow wildflowers will be planted. We hope our members will make this a successful event by turning out to support us.

The second Sunday of the week (24th May) is down on the official programme as a day of reflection but we will be having a wildflower survey of the Bridgewater Canal/Castlefield Basin area and would appreciate assistance from members, particularly those with plant identification skills. (See events list.) This will leave the remainder of the week free for you to take part in any local events which have been organised. Details should be in the press and the Manchester Magazine. So get out there and have fun, but use the week to appreciate and help the environment, and don't overdo it, we may need your assistance during our other 51 environment weeks. //

## Where were YOU on the 5th of April

by Unity Kelly

Our 1992 Annual General Meeting was the best yet. The venue, Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education, is most attractive and appropriate for such an event. Following the diverting business meeting and the announcement of our Award winners we were treated to a brilliant illustrated talk from David Harpley, Cheshire Wildlife Trust's Conservator, who kept us enthralled with a witty delivery on his role working of for wildlife in

Cheshire. During the refreshment break, those attending had a chance to view our exhibition, which is now looking its best, particularly with the addition of a magnificent display board on bodging, by Susanne Clarence, and examples of craft work by our resident bodger, Ian Brown. After the break we were treated to a great display of live bodging by Ian and new recruit, Yvonne Watson, with Susanne assisting on the shaving horse.

With all this super entertainment on hand it was a little disappointing that there was not a larger attendance. An AGM is a potentially dull occasion which we could easily hold in some bleak committee room and dispense with in half an hour, but we prefer to make the event as entertaining as possible. After all this is one of the few times in the year when members can get to meet one another, so we may as well have a little fun, and I am sure that those who did attend will agree this year's AGM was a most enjoyable occasion. Whether or not we will be able to maintain such a high standard we cannot be sure, but we will try and hope that next year more of our members will attend to make the 1993 AGM even more memorable. //

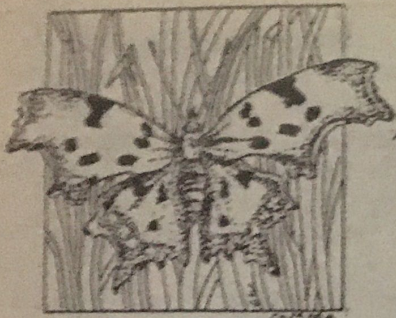
## Manchester City Park Wardens

The Park Warden Service started in November 1991. A team of young and enthusiastic men and women have been employed and they are determined to put life into the City's parks. With virtually no funding (we assume their wages are paid), they have already staged a number of entertaining events, the most notable (to us) being the environmental week-ends early in the year. We put on a display of woodland crafts, launching our team of bodgers on an unsuspecting public. Hopefully we can do something similar in the summer (when it comes) in slightly more clement conditions.

Why don't you go down to your local park, get to know your wardens and support them whenever they put on an event in your area. They are making great efforts on meagre resources and will welcome any help you can give them. Why not make a start by coming along to Hough End Clough, on Saturday the 16th or Sunday the 17th of May, where Wardens will be in attendance.

We hope to bring you a more detailed article on the work of the City Warden service in a future edition of Magpie. //





# Butterfly Survey 92

by Ian Brown

After a successful start to our Butterfly Survey, with over 100 site reports in 1991, we are looking forward to an even better survey in 1992. I found that hunting for butterflies was a most enjoyable experience but I perhaps made the mistake of trying to cover too many sites. In this second year of the survey I will be a little more selective; I now know which sites require more work and those where only a few species remain to be found can be visited at specific times.

I hope more of our members will take part this year; don't be afraid if you feel that you are not qualified in the identification of butterflies, I didn't know much at the start of last year but found it relatively easy to learn. Survey forms went out with our last mailing (take photo-copies if you require more) and new members should have received forms, on joining. Our Butterfly Survey Booklet will help you with your survey so if you do not have a copy, let me know. They will also be available in the Mersey Valley Visitor Centre at Sale Water Park, where there will be an exhibition on butterflies and moths, starting on the 22nd of June.

So, what of 1992? Up till now the weather has not been very inspiring; spring being almost like a continuation of winter, though a little warmer. However, any brief sunny period will bring out the butterflies; Orange Tip, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell have been seen in the Mersey Valley and 5 pairs of the last named species were spotted on the grassy bank in the Castlefield Basin (unfortunately, this is to be turned into seating for an open air amphitheatre).

So, join in the butterfly survey; pick a local open space, one you use regularly, hunt down the butterflies and when you have finished your report, let me have the result. //

## Planning Matters

Malcolm Practice

**More Empty Offices?** - Readers may have heard about the saga of the proposed office development at Heyescroft on Palatine Road in Disbury. We pointed out that the development would have been contrary to the Mersey Valley Local Plan because it would involve the felling of many trees and shrubs. The application was refused by Councillors, against the advice of the planning officers. The developers appealed, and lost. They appealed to the High Court (a determined lot) and the Judge decided that, because of loose wording, the inquiry inspector's report did not conform with normal practice and should therefore be invalidated. We believe that the inspector had said that the previous planning permission, for housing, did not set a precedent in respect of trees being felled. The developer had claimed that a precedent had been set but this ignores the fact that the housing, unlike the offices, would not have destroyed trees in the Mersey Valley. The Secretary of State and the City Council conceded the case in the High Court and it has been referred back to the S.o.S. who will re-think his decision. We will be keeping an eye on this one. The local feeling seems to be - who's this High Court Judge, anyway!

**UMIST at Lower Hardy Farm** - No more news as yet; well I can't be every where at once! We will be looking into this matter, when time permits, and we will let you know.

**Business Park at Cheadle Royal** - This application for a large office development, on open fields north of the Cheadle Royal Hospital, has been passed by Stockport Council. Even though there were legitimate reasons, under the Greater Manchester Structure Plan, for refusing the application. The problem is that if the Council had refused, the developers would have appealed and the Secretary of State could have, on a whim, overturned the Council's decision. The council would then have been liable to massive financial penalties. Isn't it time that there were fundamental change in the Town Planning system so that the odds were not quite so much in favour of developers ruining our much loved open spaces.

**Basketball in Fir Coppice** - This development, in Wythenshawe Park, has gone a little quiet; at least as far as the Council is concerned. At the Wythenshawe Area Committee, amid much



*Member of the Commission of the European Communities*

CARLO RIPA DI MEANA  
Brussels, 19. 11. 1992  
(10608)

Dear Mr. Ford,

Thank you for your letter of 29 October 1991.

I have arranged for the letter from Mr. Turner which you enclosed to be registered as a formal complaint.

Once the registration process is complete, Mr. Turner will be informed of the file number. This complaint will then be assessed, and he will be kept informed of developments in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

*Carlo Ripa di Meana*

Mr. Glyn Ford, M.E.P.  
46 Stamford Road  
Mossley  
Lancashire  
OL5 0BE  
UNITED KINGDOM

public fury, the plan was deferred for further consultation. A covenant on the park, which was given, by Lord Simon, to the citizens of Manchester, may forbid such a development but the Council are refusing to allow the local people to view the covenant. One would not have thought that they had a right to do this. We have a feeling that the Council are determined to push this development through but are keeping quiet until the local elections are over. However, the local people are not keeping quiet. They have staged a protest march and formed a human ring around the coppice. They are equally determined that the development should not go ahead. (See copy of poster on the reverse of events list) The developers, Loxton Leisure, seem to be a mystery company; Leo Riley cannot trace them via Australia House or the phone company! We believe their plan is to build a network of basketball stadia to start a league for satellite T.V. Manchester United Basketball Ltd. wound up in 1990 with a deficit of £100K. Is basketball popular? Do we have another over-ambitious Australian company building pie in the sky? Not a planning matter!

**Bruntwood Meadows Update** - So Sainsburys are to revert to the original plan, the buildings are smaller but the meadowland will still be destroyed. They had declined another public inquiry, which I suppose is some victory! As we warned in the last Magpie, they have plans to destroy more open spaces. At Horsham in West Sussex we hear that there are plans for a big Sainsbury store. We do not know if the land in question is as good a wildlife area as are Bruntwood Meadows but, on looking at the O.S. map, the most suitable spot would appear to be a rather pleasant looking river valley, to the west of the town and adjacent to the A24 by-pass.

However, in Cheadle, all is not lost. The A34 by-pass, which is necessary for access, both for the Cheadle office development and the superstore, has not had an environmental impact assessment. We contend that this is necessary, as the road will be an express way, and reported the fact to the European Environment Minister, Carlo Ripa di Meana, via Glyn Ford MEP. His reply to Mr. Ford is printed opposite. The proposed grade separated junction at the north end of the by-pass (necessary for the office development) makes the road more of an express way and this was not mentioned at the A34 public inquiry. It is beginning to dawn, on Councillors, that this proposed by-pass will worsen traffic congestion, not improve it. //



# Odds and Ends

## News and Member's Views

**Winter Bird Survey** - We have just received the report of the survey from the co-ordinator, Janet Gorst. About 50 species were observed from a Cormorant to a white budgie. Around 10% of our members took part which is a good proportion for this type of activity. Janet is willing to repeat the survey, next winter; maybe we can involve the Watch Group to increase the number of records. A full report will appear in our next newsletter. (I would have sent in a report but it gets a little wearing putting down 12 sparrows every week. Mind you, once they are put down, they make a superb individual pie! - Ed.)

**Urban Wildlife Partnership** - On Friday the 16th of May there will be a re-launch of the Fairbrother Group at Edinburgh Zoo. Chris Baines, founding father of the group, will be guest of honour and we hope to be sending a representative. The group's new name will be the Urban Wildlife Partnership which, though linked to the RSNC, will remain independent and for all organisations concerned with urban wildlife. These could include Council leisure services departments and local residents associations as well as urban wildlife groups. One reason for the change of name is that few people knew who Nan Fairbrother was. (I've forgotten, so if you want to know, ask Unity Kelly who will also tell you how to join the group.) The RSNC has a new Urban Wildlife Officer, Chris Gordon, who is no stranger to Manchester as he once worked for the Salford and Trafford Groundwork Trust and he will be the UK Urban Wildlife Group's chief link with the RSNC. We (half of your committee) met Chris on his first day at work, in Lincoln. We were there to attend a one day seminar on budgeting and development plans. It was a most rewarding day and we met other UWG reps. When we get a moment, we will put what we learnt into action and we will meet Chris again, when he visits Manchester.

**Wildlife Sightings** - by Anthony Phelps - **Mediterranean Gull**, on Turn Moss Playing Fields on 12/1/92 - **Twite**, on Old Barlow Hall Tip, Chorlton on 19/1/92 - **Tawny Owl** (daytime roosting) and a pair of **Willow Tits**, by bus-stop at Barlow Moor Road/Palatine Road crossroads on 26/1/92.

When in Rusholme..... do as the Magpies do. Why not try nest building with coat hangers? A Magpie, on Walmer Street, trying to get away with a metal coat hanger. Seen by Unity Kelly.

**Swans go to BED** - Several people have noticed that there are Swans nesting by Broad Ees Dole this year. This is a welcome sight and we believe the Swan population is increasing in this country. The banning of lead weights for fishing is believed to be one of the main reasons for this recovery. It is also thought that swans, not fatally affected, suffer diminished faculties from lead poisoning which makes them susceptible to death by other means, like colliding with power lines. Less lead is good news for wildlife but this is no consolation for people living near junctions 4 & 5 on the M56.

**Manchester Wildlife Awards** - Those of you who attended our AGM will know the winners of our awards for 1991. We will not be announcing the results in Magpie until the presentations have been organised as advanced notice could be seen by the press, which would spoil the impact.

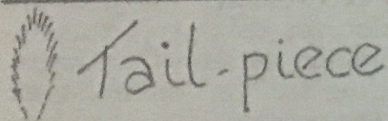
**Gray Hill** - Well we escaped, but not without a drenching! If you read our March news sheet you will be aware that Anthony Phelps, Unity Kelly and Ian Brown took time off to do a few days work at Gray Hill, near Newport in Gwent. This 15 acres of countryside is owned by the Land Reform Group and in the 17th century used to be occupied by four farms. The group are restoring the farms to their condition, at that time. This includes restoring buildings, re-planting hedgerows and trees, particularly old species of fruit trees in the orchards, and clearing brambles and bracken from the meadows. Since we were last there an old well has been reinstated, and beautiful it was, and much clearance and planting work has taken place. Our tasks were, more bramble clearing and roofing, and thatching, an old barn. Unfortunately, there have been conflicts with Monmouth Council, the local authority. They claim that there has been a change of land use, from agricultural to recreational, and wanted the Group to knock down all the restored buildings and even remove all the stones from the site (they must be mad!). The group do sell produce from the farm but the Council contend that they don't make enough money so they cannot be considered to be commercial. The whole thing went to appeal where the public inquiry inspector found for the Council; fortunately this decision was overruled by the Secre-



tary of State for Wales. We found this out on the last day so there was some celebrating to be done at the local pub, where we also had a chance to dry out in front of an enormous log fire. So what has this to do with urban wildlife? If the Group had lost their case, any conservation organisation who owned or purchased land, for conservation purposes, could have been faced with the prospect of having to apply for planning permission if they wanted to erect any structure; a boardwalk or a bird hide. This would be expensive and very time consuming. Even farmers who were not commercial enough could face the same problems! So the Land Reform Group, by standing up for their rights, have done the voluntary conservation movement a great service. As we travelled home, through Monmouth, we were tempted to thumb our noses as we passed the Town Hall, but we thought that it was best to be gracious in victory. At least it's great to know that the good guys sometimes win!

**Flooding** - It's strange, with all the efforts the NRA put into flood control, that the two hotels on the Mersey Valley flood plain suffered an inundation during the last floods.

**Country Crafts** - We have taken on bodging and other woodland crafts but it would be interesting to know if there are any of our members who are skilled at other country crafts. Are you interested in basketry, rush and straw work; why not get in touch and maybe you could help to make our craft exhibitions more varied and promote the cause of country crafts. //



a last word from the editor

We like to cheer up our readers by putting a few jokes in the *Magpie*. O.K., so they weren't all that funny, but we do try. There were two swear words in this edition. Hopefully these caused no offence. In future, anything worse than "bloody" will not get past the editor, even if contained within a quotation. The *Magpie* is printed at the Community Recourse Unit, Longsight Library. We thank them for the use of their facilities.

That's All Folks!

**Did You Know?** - There is only one did you know in this *Magpie*. If you have any environmentally based snippets - Let us know.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

- Bats** CWT Bat Group - 0270 610180 (day)  
LINC Bat Group - Steve Garland - 0204 22311 (day)
- Bees** (Swarms, information etc.) Keith Taylor - 793 7335
- Insects** Peter Hardy - 969 4771 (evenings & weekends)
- Birds** RSPB-Stockport - Tony O'Neill - 962 2449  
RSPB-Manchester - Simeon Rydz - 434 2720

**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)

**Cheshire Wildlife Trust** (Stockport and Tameside Group)  
Rhian Pendlebury (Secretary) 427 4529

**Friends of the Earth** - Neil Lea - 789 8880  
- Kevin McGovern - 945 1097

**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.

Copyright Manchester Wildlife 82 Crantock Dr., Heald Green, Stockport. SK8 3HA Tel 437 7040

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that information in the "*Magpie*" is correct, we 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 "*Magpie*" is the newsletter of Manchester Wildlife - the opinions expressed therein are not necessarily those of MW.



# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

## Subscription rates

☐ Family membership \_\_\_\_\_ £6

☐ Individual membership \_\_\_\_\_ £4

☐ Reduced membership  
(Senior Citizen, Unwaged, Under 16) \_\_\_\_\_ £2

☐ Schools, Groups and Societies \_\_\_\_\_ £6

☐ Please send me details of Life Membership

☐ I enclose a donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ which I understand  
will go towards the funding of local nature and  
conservation work.

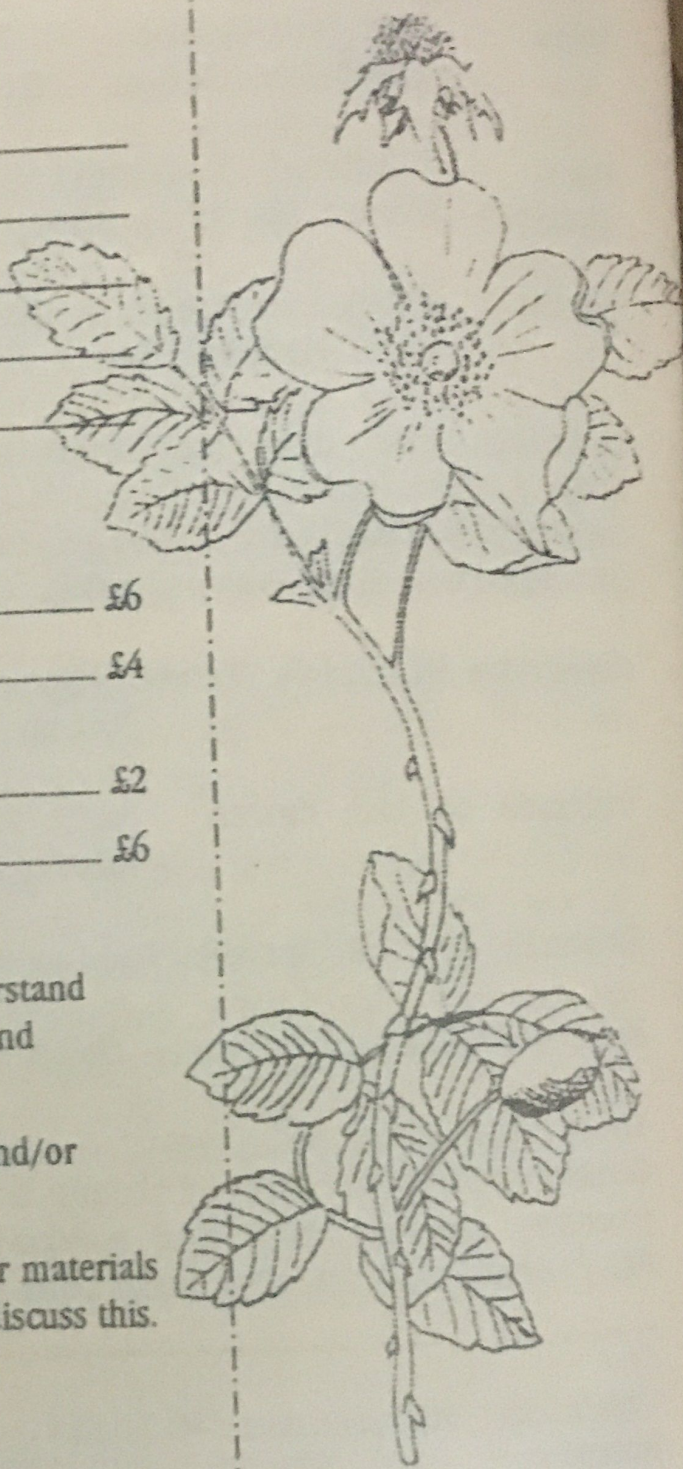
☐ I am interested in sponsoring a Newsletter and/or  
leaflet. Please send me further details.

☐ I may be able to sponsor tools, trees or other materials  
in exchange for publicity and would like to discuss this.

Please send completed forms with cheques made  
payable to Manchester Wildlife  
to:

Ian Brown  
82 Crantock Drive  
Heald Green  
Cheadle  
Cheshire SK8 3HA

*Space here for Sponsor's  
Name + Logo + Phone No.  
Inquiries to Editor - 061 437 7040*







# Manchester Wildlife

## EVENTS AND MEETINGS

The following events and meetings have been arranged. Other events may be organised at short notice, so to keep up to date, or for further information on advertised events, please contact Ian Brown Tel. 437 7040. Please try to take part in our events, and come to meetings. You are sure to enjoy the experience.

**May 1992**

- |                 |             |  |
|-----------------|-------------|--|
| <b>Saturday</b> | <b>9th</b>  | <b>Cotterill Clough Open Day with the Cheshire Wildlife Trust</b> - 10am to 4pm. Take the A538 Wilmslow Road from junction 6 on the M56 towards Wilmslow. Turn right, before airport tunnel, down Mill Lane. Park in lay-by on left. Walk down hill. Clough on right. (A-Z 96 1B) if you require, or can offer, a lift contact Ian Brown 437 7040. |
| <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>12th</b> | <b>Pub Meeting</b> - Parrs Wood Hotel, Junction of School Lane/Parrs Wood Road, East Didsbury. Time 7.30 p.m. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040.  |

### Environment Week

- |                 |             |  |
|-----------------|-------------|--|
| <b>Saturday</b> | <b>16th</b> | <b>Hough End Clough Spring Clean</b> - Meet at Hough End Crescent (south of junction of Mauldeth Road West/Alexandra Road South, Chorlton.) Meet between 10am and 4pm. Wear old clothes. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040. |
| <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>17th</b> | <b>Castlefield Environmental Fun Day</b> - Our exhibition will be displayed  |
| <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>17th</b> | <b>Wildflower Survey</b> - Bridgewater/Castlefield Basin - Meet at the YMCA Hotel, in Castlefield, in the foyer (or bar) at 1pm. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040.   |

- |                 |             |  |
|-----------------|-------------|--|
| <b>Thursday</b> | <b>28th</b> | <b>General Meeting</b> - At the home of Sue Sharples, 11 Cottonfield Road, Withington, M20. (A-Z P72 2C). Tel. 445 5659. Time 7.30 pm. |
|-----------------|-------------|--|

**June 1992**

- |                |             |   |
|----------------|-------------|---|
| <b>Tuesday</b> | <b>9th</b>  | <b>Pub Meeting</b> - Parrs Wood Hotel, Junction of School Lane/Parrs Wood Road, East Didsbury. Time 7.30 p.m. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040.                                       |
| <b>Sunday</b>  | <b>21st</b> | <b>Bruntwood Hay Meadow</b> - Walk in the meadows, if they're still there. (A-Z P92 1C) Meet in lay-by, Schools Hill/Wilmslow Road Junction at 2pm. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040. |

**July 1992**

- |                 |             |   |
|-----------------|-------------|---|
| <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>5th</b>  | <b>Orchid Spot</b> - We will be counting orchids and identifying other plants at the Transplant Site in Painswick Park, Wythenshawe. Time 2pm. (A-Z P91 2D) Contact Ian Brown 437 7040. |
| <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>9th</b>  | <b>Pub Meeting</b> - Parrs Wood Hotel, Junction of School Lane/Parrs Wood Road, East Didsbury. Time 7.30 p.m. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040.   |
| <b>Thursday</b> | <b>30th</b> | <b>General Meeting</b> - Venue to be arranged. 7.30pm. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040.  |

**August 1992**

- |                |             |   |
|----------------|-------------|---|
| <b>Tuesday</b> | <b>11th</b> | <b>Pub Meeting</b> - Parrs Wood Hotel, Junction of School Lane/Parrs Wood Road, East Didsbury. Time 7.30 p.m. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040. |
|----------------|-------------|---|

**September 1992**

- |                 |            |  |
|-----------------|------------|--|
| <b>Saturday</b> | <b>5th</b> | <b>Hay Meadow Celebration</b> - At Sale Water Park. Country crafts, green Woodwork including Bodging. Fun/Games. Contact Ian Brown 437 7040. |
|-----------------|------------|--|

**Working for Wildlife in Greater Manchester**

- A Member of the Fairbrother Group -

- The National Association of Urban Wildlife Groups -





# WYTHENSHAW PARK ACTION COMMITTEE

COORDINATOR: Leo Riley  
998 4496

CHAIRMAN: Kevin Donnelly  
998 4791

## SAVE WYTHENSHAW PARK CAMPAIGN

### DO YOU KNOW THAT:

THE MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL IS ENCOURAGING  
A PRIVATE AUSTRALIAN COMPANY TO DESTROY  
ANCIENT WOODLANDS TO BUILD:

A LARGE CAMPING AND CARAVAN SITE

A LARGE CAR PARK

A LARGE UGLY BUILDING HOUSING A RESTAURANT  
LICENSED BAR AND BASKET BALL CENTRE -

OPEN 9 A.M. 11P.M.

BUILDING IS TO START SOON.

ONLY MASSIVE PUBLIC SUPPORT CAN STOP IT.

WRITE TO YOUR

YOUR M.P. YOUR COUNCILLORS & NEWSPAPERS

ACT NOW

Manchester Evening News 164, Deansgate, Manchester, M60 2RR

Manchester Metro - same address as the Evening News

Wythenshawe World 3 Malden Grove, Baguley M23 8BT

The Guardian, The Telegraph, The Independent, Mail, Express, The Sun ,  
The Mirror, The Star.

Alf. Morris MP, House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA

Councillor Tony Burns, Chairman of Wythenshawe Area Consultative  
Committee, (standing for Baguley in May council election)- 4 Buxton Ave,  
Manchester M20 8JT (445 5479).

Name and address and phone no. of any councillor can be found by calling  
the Town Hall 234 3235