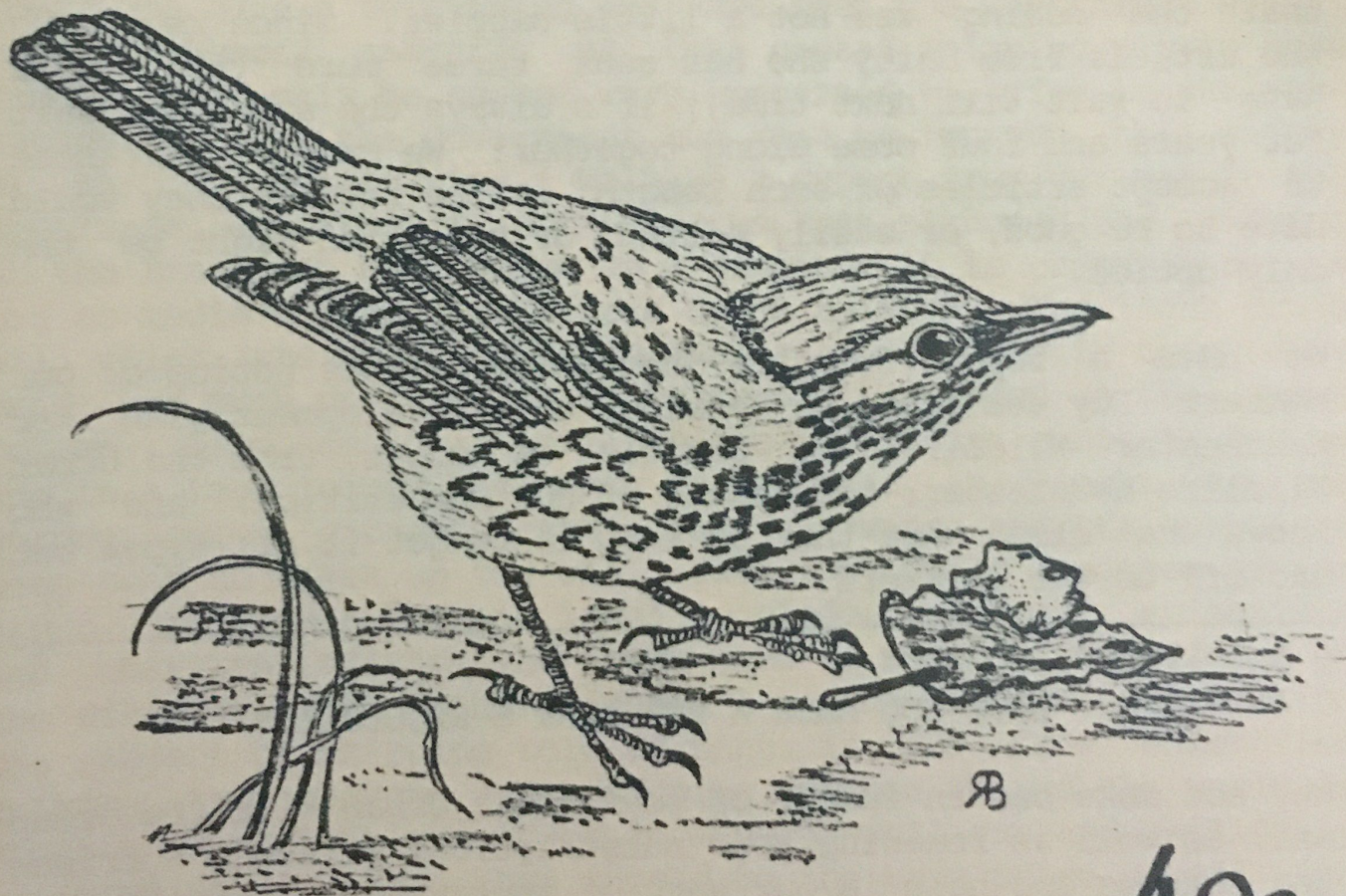


THE MAGPIE

Manchester Wildlife's Official Newsletter

Number 25

Winter 1992/93



40p.

Editorial

Editor's Office 437 7040

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND READERS

The 25th issue of Magpie; some sort of landmark, perhaps. I must have edited almost twenty of these and just hope that I can keep going a little longer. It seems to get harder each time but, if I keep my nose to the grindstone and with help from our contributors, the Magpie should continue to appear, on your door mat, roughly once a quarter.

This time we have a good variety of items to hold your interest. The article, "Wild Western Street", by Unity Kelly has only received minor editing. I make no apologies for this; we have been waiting some time for a major piece from Unity, significant editing would have turned a good story into a report, and it's what urban wildlife is about; an isolated, inner city site which has developed good wildlife interest without anyone doing anything (intentionally). It's a pity that the ending was not a little happier. Since receiving the article from Unity she has sent three more (they will have to wait till next time); it's always the same, you wait for years and four come along together! We cannot guarantee to accept articles of such length, in the future; they would have to be good, or easily edited, or rejection might be the only option.

We have a report from the Shetlands; advance notice of our Members' Day and a one day seminar on a development plan for Manchester Wildlife; an article on hedges, from the Urban Wildlife newsletter; the result of our competition; and who knows what else. All that is left is to get it all typed out and off to the printers.

HAVE YOU MADE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Why not make one in favour of your local Urban Wildlife Group and, as well as renewing your subscription, persuade a friend to join us and help in our work of improving the environment in Greater Manchester. Help us to help you, and wildlife!

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

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Oily Disaster

Those who have a television may have seen the Government's man, Lord Caithness, assuring us that costal shipping was in safe hands. Apparently he seemed very concerned to bring to our attention all that the Government had done to improve the safety of the Channel ferries. We have a report from our man in the Shetlands, Jon Proctor, who tells us that although the sinking of the Braer can be classed as a disaster it is probably not as bad as media reports would lead us to believe. The light crude oil which was spilt tends to evaporate more easily than heavy crude and much of it appeared to remain suspended in the water column. Also, an oil spill in the Shetlands is not as bad as one in a land locked bay, such as happened in Alaska, as the strong ocean currents soon clean the water and the turbulent seas tend to break up the oil. Jon, previously a member of our group, has been using his local knowledge to escort scientists and conservationists, who have come to monitor the effects of the disaster, around the island. A recent Radio 4 programme on the subject of shipping told us that, in our free enterprise culture, the charge for shipping cargoes around the world is about $\frac{1}{3}$ of what it should be in modern, well run and skillfully sailed ships. What then should be the true price of oil with thousands of disasters waiting to happen! //

Wake up the World is Dying

by Hugh Warwick

On Thursday the 28th of January, I am going to commit an illegal act. With some 400 other people, I am taking a protest to Parliament. It is illegal to demonstrate within one mile of Parliament.

In November last year I was one of a large group of people who took part in a lobby of Parliament. We presented our MPs with copies of the Forest Charter and asked them to highlight our concerns to the House (If you would like to see a copy of the Charter, please contact me). However, since then, not one single piece of legislation has been promised. This would indicate that our MPs are unaware of two important points: that there is a broad base of support for the cause we espouse, and, more importantly; that small scattered indigenous groups who's home is the forest, who have lived there in harmony for thousands of years, are being systematically slaughtered in the name of greed.

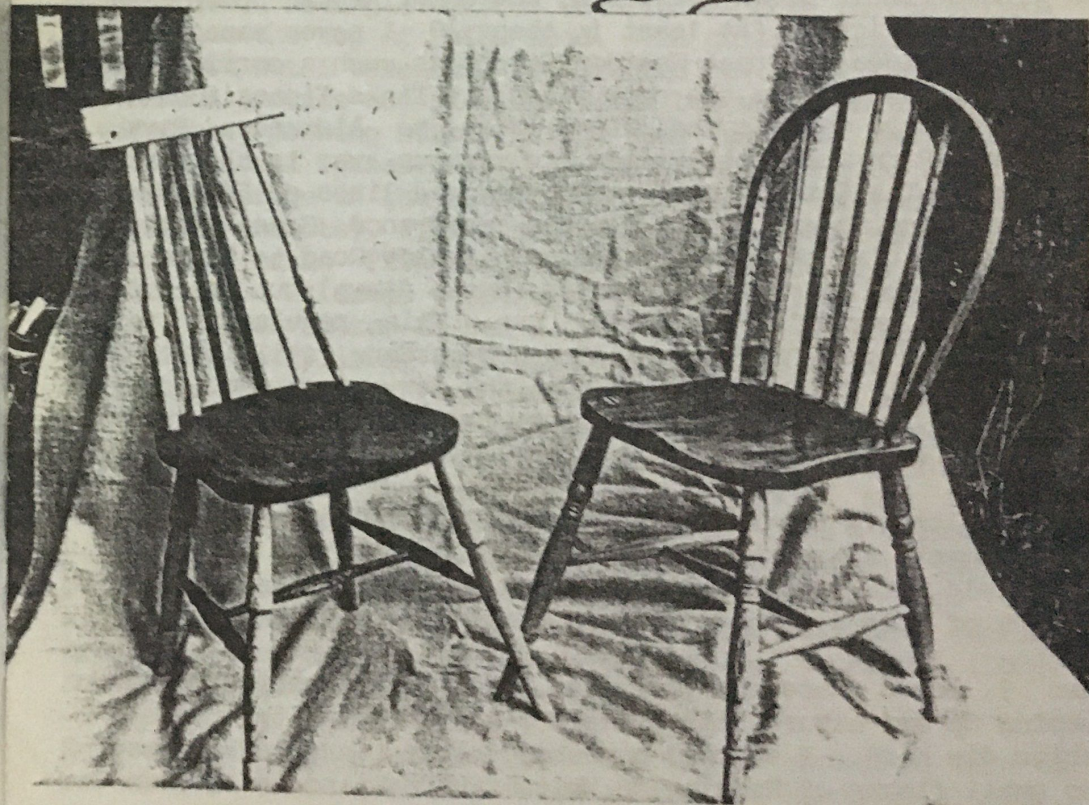
The earth is currently undergoing the fastest rate of species extinction it has ever experienced. Many species, that have never been described, are lost each day as their homes, the forests, are destroyed. Why are the forests being destroyed and the land being raped? Greed is the only answer. Greed of the multinational companies who yearn for greater profits from mineral extraction, greed of those people who insist on having tropical hardwood fixtures in their homes, the greed of our "friendly", "listening" banks, who, despite pressure from the United Nations and the Rio Summit, insist that they have to have their debts repaid.

So, why should such an international issue be voiced in a local magazine? Well, did you know that 80% of this country used to be covered by Ancient Woodland, and that now only 1.5% is left? You would have thought that this small remaining area would be safe, but it isn't. The same motivating force which destroys the Amazon Rainforest is at work in this green and pleasant land. Greed. Why does Sainsburys want yet another superstore on a superb area of Species Rich Wildflower Meadow at Bruntwood Park?

I could carry on a rant about all the destruction that occurs at home and abroad, but it is well documented. I am going to the Houses of Parliament, risking arrest, to highlight the continual destruction of our planet, not just in exotic locations, but in our own backyard. I hope that you will support me in this, and that the editor will let me tell you what happened in the next Magpie.

Editor's Note: I welcome hearing more, it should liven up the next issue! Hugh Warwick is a member of Manchester Wildlife; he also does voluntary work for other conservation organisations such as Earth First and The One World Centre. Hugh can be contacted at home, Tel. No. 881 6956.

> More Bodging <



Conservation in Action
Bringing you Furniture from (British) Firewood

Wild Western Street

by Unity Kelly
Life and death on an everyday street in Manchester

Is this a piece of misguided social comment from a disgruntled resident fed up with media coverage of recent violence? Not at all. The title was inspired in November by nothing more newsworthy than the normal urban "life cycle" or planning process - demolition, "neglect" and redevelopment. It so happens that I view the same process in a different light and draw different conclusions to those who are built into conventional planning wisdom. My evidence is drawn from observations collected from countless journeys on foot or bike to shop or work.

Great Western Street does not in any way match the image of a "wildlife corridor" - and where would Urban Wildlife Groups be without their green corridors, now enshrined in up to date planning policies (at least in theory)? I never managed to "sell" the idea of Great Western Street as such a corridor to a planner, though, as the crow flies, it links Victoria Park, with its large gardens and mature trees, to Alexandra Park, Whitworth Park and Platt Fields are minutes away to the north and south. The Street itself, and the grid lines of Edwardian terraced housing has a very planned appearance. Great Western Street runs in a straight line from Wilmslow Road to Princess Road and once carried the tramway (horse drawn) out to leafy Stretford - land of the setting sun. This regularity was superimposed on farmland and market gardens (still part of folk memory). I like to think that the few remaining lofty Ash trees and ancient hawthorns mark vanished hedgerows. Maine Road has a recognisable farmhouse with cobbled yard.

Halfway along is the boundary between Rusholme and Moss Side. An allotment, a sportsfield and the expensively revamped Broadfield Park provide welcome green and open spaces but the absence of proper gardens defines this area as "inner city".

When I moved here six years ago, from the Yorkshire Dales, keeping up my "nature notes" was not a high priority, but old habits die hard. I started by noting birds, inspired by seeing small flocks of Redwing in Whitworth Park and in the orn-

amental trees by the Health Centre in Walmer Street during the 1986 cold snap. They were in the same spot this January. At that time the great Magpie controversy raged in the letter page of the Gaurdian. In Great Western Street, as elsewhere in Manchester, these are the birds you cannot overlook. Like the rustic I had become, their "chutzpah", as well as their abundance, rather alarmed me. I empathised with the one pair of Crows in Whitworth Park who appeared to be the last in line and seemed to have conceded defeat. But Crows have made a comeback (Magpie 24) - others seem to have noticed this. I often hear and see them about the place and last year counted eight, all in one tree on the street; surely a development sub-committee if not quite a 'parliament'?

Blue Tits and Hedge Sparrows seem the best adapted of our small birds, to local conditions. Now my backyard plantings have matured, I have a pair of my own - more or less. Hedge Sparrows are pairing already and they seem to like municipal shrubberies. Roving flocks of Goldfinches come to the Alders planted at the top of Maine Road. The gulls (3 species) are conspicuous but I take them for granted now. They feed on all the school grounds and playing fields but where do they nest? A very early morning stroll brings home just how many gulls use the local grasslands. In November, the Pied Wagtails arrive to forage on the wasteground and along the back alleys (rubbish = insects). There are even more as you go towards Moss Side, cross Princess Road and move into the Alexandra Park estate. It seems to suit them there - it's much more leafy. I was amazed to see a Grey Wagtail (with its colourful yellow tail) in my back alley but, having found them in residence on the Irk (and Medlock), perhaps it's not so surprising that they turn up here every winter - this year on my clothes line. My favourite residents are the Mistle Thrushes, usually in pairs. They are big bold and vocal and survive well in our parks. Occasionally one sings from a chimney pot - one fine spring morning, the song was so penetrating that people came out all along the alley to listen. I know they are doing well because in July and August "extended family" groups (?), up to 13, can be seen feeding together (Ducie School and Platt Fields).

Kestrels are the urban raptor and anyone should be able to see them at close quarters - and admire the handsome plumage.

I could never become blasé about Kestrels, however common - they are still a properly wild bird. Until recently, Great Western Street had a pair based at each end, so sightings were frequent and often interesting. One pair had a claim on the knobbly spire of Christ Church on Moss Lane East. If a Magpie dared to dispute this, the ariel combat could be heard long before it was seen. At the other end of the street, was a pair attached to the conspicuous and redundant spire of St. James Church, now reincarnated as a single story pastoral centre. Cycling to work in 1989, I was stopped in my tracks by the high pitched screaming of a very cross and desperate Kestrel. She was perched on the spire only feet away from a workman who was putting up the top platform of the scaffold tower; the tower was only a stump when I came home. It was quite a distressing experience, especially for the Kestrel - and as the incident lasted for 15 minutes, I was late for school. I wonder if the male Kestrel I watched last summer, perched on the builder's board (Jacksons, making ideas take shape on time) also knew that the writing was on the wall for his hunting ground - the Great Western Street urban common.

It was this clearance site, of about three acres, stretching between Wilmslow Road to Walmer Street and Heald Grove, that really put wildlife on the map in Great Western Street. The housing was cleared in the 1980's and in 1986 the site was still a expanse of rubble with a light cladding of weeds and rubbish. A typical urban "eyesore" - but wait a bit! On Heald Place, the contractors had left a length of privet hedge to flourish unpruned. In June and July it was a mass of scented white blossoms, smothered in pollinating insects; bees, hoverflies and butterflies. This is supposed to be a characteristic of the Wild Privet but I assumed it must have been the Garden Privet (native of Japan). My observation is that privet attracts more insect life, including butterflies, than the more popular buddleia. On hot afternoons, when wishing to imagine myself in the "real countryside", I just had to stand underneath this hedge and listen to the hum of the bees, and count the Small Tortoiseshells.

Round the corner was another favourite plant which only appeared when this particular site was banked off around the edge to stop illicit parking. A sprawling pink mallow (*Malva sylvestris*), which flowered until November, and cheered up a

Magpie

Winter 92/93

dreary stretch of pavement, attracting Silver Y moths. The site has now been cleared completely, privet included, for rebuilding. The most unusual and impressive botanical visitor (or had the seeds been dormant since the days of the horse tram), appeared in 1989 on freshly exposed wall footings of the demolished tram sheds, latterly a car repair business - the Great Western Street Henbane. "Now a rather rare plant of spasmodic appearance....It is evident that henbane was once a common plant of waste ground particularly where there was once organic enrichment." (The Wild Flowers of the British Isles - David Streeter) It flourished, a handsome bushy plant with yellow and purple flowers (bracts) followed by goblet shaped explosive seed pods. Henbane is fatally poisonous in every part so perhaps it was just as well no one took the slightest notice of it, even though it was right next to the pavement.

The main "wasteland" site seemed a good place to try out our Butterfly Survey in 1991. By this time the site had been transformed, without costing a penny, into a wonderful urban common, as different from expensive municipal green deserts (sorry! amenity grassland) as any unimproved rustic heath is from a farmer's field of rye grass. Because of the diversity of artificially created substrates; brick, mortar, clay, sand concrete and assorted fly tipping combined with the way that clearance had created mounds and hollows of all sizes, it had become colonised by a complex mosaic of plant communities. This was lovely to look at, even with rubbish, throughout the year and provided the most favourable conditions for invertebrates of all kinds - hot dry spots, cool damp crevices, and a wide variety of food plants. Some parts were really tussocky, others were covered in short thick fescue grass, with clover, medic and Bird's-foot-trefoil. Thickets of Reed Canary grass swayed and rustled; thistles and brambles were dominant. The willow clump was popular with children, for playing dens, but the emergent ash grove, seedlings from over the road, grew undisturbed into a mini-wood. Garden escapes provided splashes of colour and I coveted a double purple *acquilega*. Footpaths became established as they have always done, by common usage.

It was easy to see that Large and Small Whites, and Small Tortoiseshells were abundant - especially in 1992. The Small

Magpie

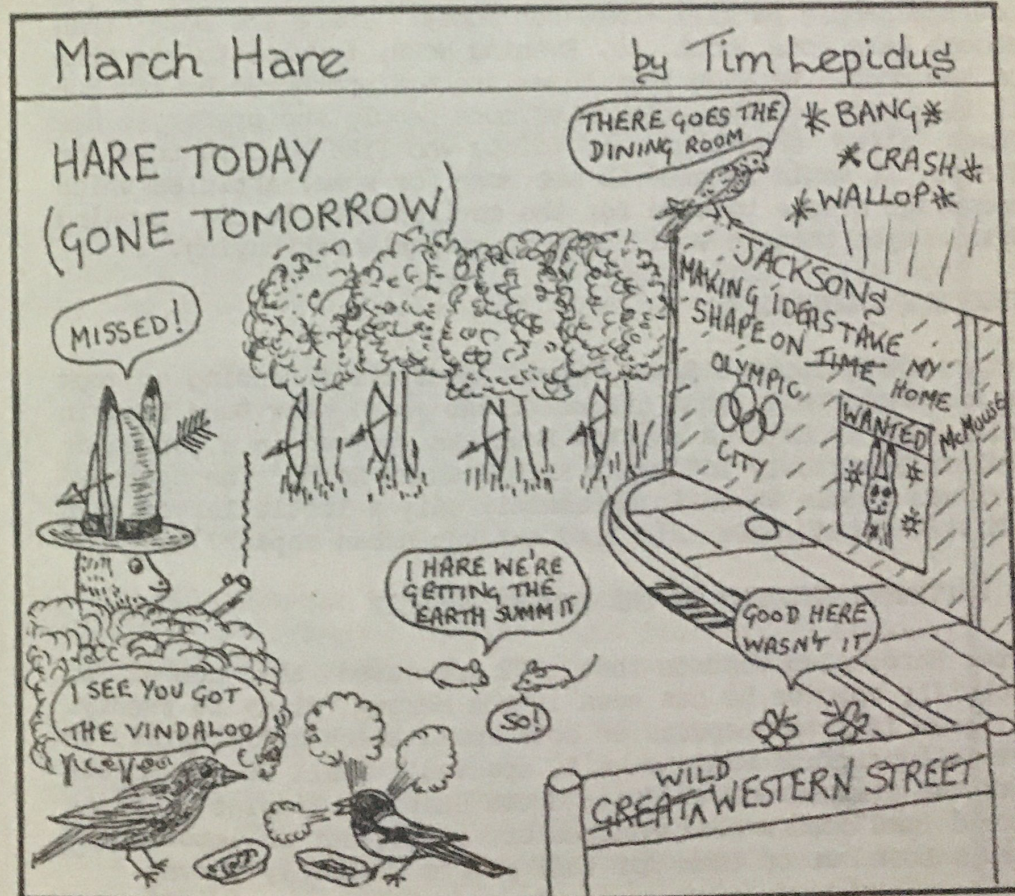
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Tortoiseshells were nicely synchronised with the thistle flowering. Caterpillars were much in evidence too. At first I was quite surprised to find Five-spot Burnet moths but in '92 they were hatching out everywhere. My first recording visit yielded a passing Comma, a Meadow and Wall Brown, and eventually both Large and Small Skippers. Small Copper was added later on. This impressed me because there are no nearby comparable grassland habitats - the railway banks at Fallowfield must be the nearest. I began to look at the site with new ideas. By 1992 I was better prepared and looking forward to finding out if my 1991 sightings were mere flukes at the end of a generally good season.

In May, the Large Skippers were so mint fresh, so possessive of the clover bank along Heald Grove, that it seemed a small breeding colony had become established. I only found 1 Small Copper; so vivid it glowed, on a white bramble flower-another possible resident. A single pair of Small Skippers were spotted in July. All very encouraging - signs of a nicely maturing grassland but the real change was the "explosion" of Meadow Browns. In June they were everywhere. Grasshoppers, first heard only on one bank near the Children's Centre, were found across the site. There was a big hatch of Lattice Heath moths in the long grass and clouds of assorted crambids (grass moths) and lacewings. No wonder House Martins came to feed - something I had not seen before 1991. On the buddleia planted by the Children's Centre, Peacocks, a Comma & Painted Lady joined the Small Tortoiseshells, and, in August a Red Admiral. The Comma, like the Large and Small Skippers, is extending its range. Great Western Street had become an established stepping stone in this story. If the site had survived I wonder if the Clouded Yellow might have called in?

The wildlife of all kinds has only arrived and flourished here because of the time-lag between demolition clearance and eventual redevelopment. Nature will transform any site given time. I have been fascinated by the speed at which this site acquired, not just a mantle of cosmetic vegetation but, increasing ecological interest and value. Urban wildlife is characterised by opportunism, and often transience. The lesson many planners and other "improving" agencies seem loath to learn is that wildlife does best at least cost, even on the most urban and unprepossessing sites, when you leave well

alone. In practice, the sites where this happens are precisely those which are left alone because something else is scheduled to take their place in due course. There is no doubt that housing, and other buildings, which are now going up on all but one small pocket of land, are for the common good and socially necessary. There will be less to attract the fly tipper. The local children have lost a safe and exciting play area where they could let off steam without doing damage. Some of them were just beginning to get interested in the Butterfly Survey. It was amazing just how little notice the general public took of my strange antics. The rule of thumb round here is, "no look, no comment". As far as I am concerned, Great Western Street is no longer wild, despite what you read in the press. //



Odds and Ends

Members' News and Views

FOXES AS FOOD

One of our Wythenshawe members reported being distressed by an article on foxes in the Evening News of January the first. Maybe you saw this sensitive piece of journalism. Apparently it was about a Manchester game dealer who reported that there was a good trade for foxes, especially to Italian and Chinese restaurants where they were considered a delicacy. It would seem that Oscar Wilde was only half right when he said that foxhunting was "the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable". The point is, we would have thought it possible that our only regional daily evening newspaper should be more responsible and desist from printing "news" which could be likely to encourage people to kill foxes for money. There are more than enough barm pots about, so, Evening News, try not to egg them on too much. We know that foxes are not protected by law but it is a safe bet that there are more people who prefer to see foxes alive than there are idiots who like to have them for dinner. It would be nice to see more (or some) articles which encourage people to care for the environment, in the Evening News; maybe then it would be a newspaper worth buying.

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

Peter Hardy found a Small Copper caterpillar feeding on dock in his very small front garden (front yard) near Dane Road in Sale. Also in Sale, a Sparrow Hawk was spotted in a garden at Hesketh Road, only 100 yards from Washway Road. The Sparrowhawk was a male which is apparently only a little larger than a Mistle Thrush. Is this bird our sub-urban raptor?

22 BUTTERFLY SPECIES IN THE MERSEY VALLEY?

Peter Hardy also reports that 1992 increased the number of butterfly species he has seen in the Mersey Valley to twenty. We have isolated reports of both Small Heath and Ringlet, in the Valley. This would make 22 species! Small Heath occurs near the airport and at Heald Green Station; Ringlet is widespread and occurs near Manchester, so neither is impossible. Keep a look out of them for this year's Butterfly Survey.

WRITE A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR MANCHESTER WILDLIFE IN ONE DAY

It can be done. The Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC) have produced a D.I.Y. Guide to Development Plans - this was the outcome of a one day seminar at Lincoln, which was attended by Anthony Phelps, Unity Kelly and Ian Brown, in March 1992. Now, more than ever before, we need to work out where we are going and how we can get there. Chris Gordon, the RSNC Urban Development Officer for the Urban Wildlife Partnership, is coming to Manchester on Saturday the 13th of February to lead a one day workshop at The One World Centre, on Paton Street, off Picadilly from 10.30 am to 3.30 pm. Our aim is to really get our act together and produce a document which is feasible and sets achievable targets.

If you would like to take part and help to shape the future of Manchester Wildlife, phone Ian Brown (437 7040) for more details or come along on the day. //

Manchester Wildlife Members Day 1993

DON'T MISS THIS! - MAKE IT A DAY TO REMEMBER!

This Manchester Wildlife Extravaganza will be taking place on Saturday the 24th of April at the Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education, Parrs Wood, East Didsbury from 11 am - 4 pm

We will be featuring our Woodland Initiative and will start the day with demonstrations of woodland crafts and Bodging. Why not become a woodland volunteer or give bodging a try - or you could find out what we have been doing for wildlife. What is MW's involvement in the Red Rose Forest? - Meet the Officer and find out what Community Forests are all about.

For our main speaker we have invited Prof. Tony Bradshaw, University of Liverpool derelict land reclamation expert, an excellent speaker who deserves a good audience.

We have to have an Annual General Meeting. This will be from 2-2.30 pm. It's not at all dull and doesn't last long. You could bring a picnic, but light refreshments will be provided. Meet fellow Urban Wildlifers from Sheffield. This is a provisional programme, to be confirmed in the next Magpie. If you would like to help set up ring Ian Brown on 437 7040. Transport needed for Windsor Chairs.

Manchester Wildlife Awards 91/92 by Merton Niven

In the autumn edition of Magpie we told you about the "Golden Magpie" Award for 1991, but what of the other awards. All can now be told. The "Des Poiler" Award, for environmental destruction, was won by Ringway International Developments (whoever they may be) for the destruction, by ploughing, of a Grade A Site of Biological Importance near the airport. This was a species rich grassland, one of Britain's rarest habitat types, especially in Manchester. The March Hare "Mad" Award went to U.M.I.S.T. for their plan to destroy the Grade B SBI at Lower Hardy Farm in Chorlton by tipping inert waste to a depth of 23 feet, and appealing when Manchester City Council refused the proposal. The "Malcolm Practice" Award was won by Stockport Leisure Services for tipping grave spoil and other rubbish, at Highfield Cemetery, in the adjacent Royley Wood. To do so, those responsible had to pass a skip (provided for the purpose) and a sign declaring, "No Tipping". These awards have not yet been presented; lack of time and too many other commitments have proved to be a problem. This has led us to decide that two awards should be adequate for future years; the good and the bad. The "bad" would still include three categories; environmental destruction, some daft proposal to destroy the environment and doing something which should not be done or not doing something which should be done (Malcolm Practice). This should simplify the system and make presentation less of a problem.

We are still looking for 1992 nominations. Send any you have to the Editor by the 25th of March.

STOCKPORT COUNCIL NOMINATED FOR "BAD" AWARD

We have just heard that Stockport Council's Development Control Sub-Committee have approved an application for a golf driving range on Green Belt land, near Stanley Road, in the Cheadle area. This will include a building of one hundred yards in length. We had not opposed this development, as it was contrary to all current, and future, planning law and the Planning Officers had recommended refusal; but can you trust your local councillors? The District Advertiser headline, "A decision that undermines the planning process", Independent

Party Leader", tells us that Councillor Ron Stenson is not a happy man and points out that the decision sets a precedent for further applications in the Green Belt. He ends the article saying, "What is the point of the effort and massive cost of producing Stockport's Unitary Development Plan and having the nerve to ask people and organisations their views, if at the end of the day political parties combine and say 'We will decide what is good for your area, even to the extent of getting rid of all your Green Belt'. Will it be Halls and Parks next?". So, with apologies to Councillor Stenson and other Stockport Councillors who were opposed to the development, Stockport Council (Councillors not Officers) are nominated for the Manchester Wildlife 1992 "Bad" Award (Malcolm Practice category).

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Good News from Stockport

by Ian Brown

Yes, we sometimes have good news to report. Firstly there was a near disaster at the Cheadle Area Committee. This happened when a proposal to create new ponds at Bruntwood Park and transfer amphibians, from the pond which will be destroyed by the A34 by-pass, to these new ponds was narrowly turned down (voting, four all, but the Chairman used his second and casting vote against). We hear that Councillors Anne Shaw and Sandy Broadhurst got the proposal brought up a second time at the Leisure Services Committee. They passed the proposal so there will be a future for frogs and newts, and dragonflies, in what remains of Bruntwood Hay Meadows.

Secondly, also from Stockport Leisure Services, a management plan for Heaton Mersey Common. In the winter of 1990, Paul Carvajal, a Manchester Wildlife member, brought our attention to the fact that this area was not being managed in such a way that would encourage wildlife. We had a close look and could see that there was great potential for improvement of what remains of this once much larger open space; some hay meadows, instead of regular grass cutting, was the first thing which sprung to mind. In March 1990 we wrote to Leisure Services with some suggestions to improve the ecology of the area and, after some delay, we spoke with Council Officers and Councillors. A management plan has been produced and the Council acknowledge that they have pinched some of our ideas. We can hardly fault the proposals; tree planting and woodland

management have been added. Further suggestions we would like to make are; hedgerows, both sides of the path from Rosgill Close to the raised meadow, and a woodland crafts display at woodland management events. If you would like to see what is proposed there is a display at The Heatons Library during February with someone there to answer questions: Mondays; 8th, 15th, 22nd, 6-8 pm and Wednesdays; 10th, 17th, 2-4 pm or call Eleanor Fidler on 474 4430 with your comments. Making your views known can pay dividends for wildlife, even if it can take some time. Be patient!

We can see the wood from the tree

Stockport has a declared policy to use wood, from trees which need to be felled, for high value products such as furniture making. How this works out in practice we have, as yet, no evidence but recently a mature Manchester Poplar was felled in Vernon Park. Unfortunately it was cut into small slices so cannot be used for furniture, even if the wood is suitable. However, recently John Turner noticed a Laburnum which was dying back in the same park. He reported this to the park keeper and asked that, if the tree fell down or had to be felled, could we have the wood. The tree blew down in the recent gales and we were contacted to say that the trunk was awaiting collection. We now have a nine inch diameter four foot length of Laburnum which should be enough for a Windsor chair and a reproduction 16th century Carver. These should look great at our Bodging displays. //

Red Rose Forest Update

We hear, from the Greater Manchester Wildlife Working Group, that the Red Rose Forest may not keep to their commitment not to plant trees on sites which are important to wildlife for reasons other than woodland. This makes it even more important that they should be informed of areas which have wildlife importance which could be degraded if trees were planted so, if you know of, for example, a wildflower rich meadow which is good for butterflies, contact them and use your persuasive powers to help ensure we do not lose good existing wildlife habitats. Address as in Magpie No. 24 but the phone number is 875 0010 not 975 0010. //

A hedge against difficult times

GOOD news for urban hedges! They could soon become protected much in the same way as trees that have tree preservation orders.

The Hedgerow Bill is being drafted at the moment, ready to have its second reading on January 22 next year.

It looks as if any hedge - rural or urban - will be covered by the law so long as it is at least 20 meters long.

Anyone wishing to remove any part of such a hedge will have to tell the local council, which will then have 40 days to decide whether it wishes to register the hedge.

Advice will shortly be going to authorities to help them decide which hedges merit protection, and it is important that we get our views across here.

Applicants will be able to appeal against registration and authorities are unlikely to want to defend too many cases due to cost.

The advice may not cover all that we want unless we press hard.

On the other hand, if we push for

too much, the Bill may be lost.

The Hedgerow Bill is third on the list of private members bills being introduced on January 22, and there is hope it will reach committee stage then - though it only takes one MP to say no for it to be delayed a month.

Time could run out.

A meeting is taking place with the MP taking the Bill, Peter Ainsworth, on October 21, and further meetings are due with the Department of the Environment, while strategy is being worked out with the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Please let Caroline Steel at RSNC The Wildlife Trusts Partnership know if you have any views on the legislation or advice to be given to local councils, or any good stories about hedgerow destruction or conservation to use in the media.

Please be ready to write to your MPs in the New Year, to ensure that we can put maximum pressure on Parliament to help the Bill's progress.

And approach councils to try to get their support.

The above article is reprinted from the Urban Wildlife newsletter, the Royal Society for Nature Conservation publication for Urban Wildlife Groups. We have given information about urban hedges for an article which should appear in Natural World, which is distributed to members of County Wildlife Trusts. If you receive this publication, look out for this article; there could be a photograph of a traditionally laid hedge in a local sub-urban garden. //

Competition Time

by The Bodger

I hope you remember the competition from the autumn Magpie, which was a sort of wildlifer's film/play/book club and based on an idea from the Radio 4 programme, "I'm sorry I haven't a clue"; they no doubt pinched it from somewhere else.

Not many people took part but those who did had quite a prolific output. Gerald and Diana Downing invented 65 titles; they must have had an enjoyable evening. Some examples of their output are: "Annie get your Gnu" - "Kiss me Skate" - "As you Lichen" - "Cress of the D'Urbervilles" - "A tale of Two Civets" - "The Pewit Peppers" - "A Louse in Wonderland" - "Penguin's Progress" - "Hare". From Nabil Abbas we have: "The Merchant of Venison" (that's dead wildlife - Ed) - "The Fly Who Came in From the Cold" - "A Midsummer Night's Bream" - "Robocarp". Anthony Phelps had some botanical titles: "Man with the Golden-rod" - "The Woad to Manderlay (starring Bob Hop)" - "Deadly Nightshade on Elm Street" - "The Spiraea who came in from the Coltsfoot" - "I'll met by Moonwort" - "Back to the Fuchia". Sharon Smith came in with: "101 Spotted Orchids". I managed a few: "The Importance of Having a Nest (by a Wild Osprey)" - "Tortilla Bats" - "Lake Woadbegone" - "84 Charing Cross Woad" - "A Tale of Two C.I.T.E.S." - "Bat on a Hot Tin Roof" - "The Wrong Fox" - "Hen (starring Ilkley Moor)" - "Buck Cassowary and the Sundew Pig", all winners but as judge I'm not eligible. I decided that, as I am making the prizes, I should have the privilege of judging (very democratic - Ed). And a most enjoyable task it was. You are saying to yourself, "did I hear the word, prizes". Indeed you did. It was difficult to decide on one winner so I have decided that there should be two. And they are:

P. Mitchell with "Waiting for Godwits" by Samuel Beckitt.

Gerald & Diana Downing with "Sense and Scents of Billygoats".

All I have to do now is to make the prizes. So it's back to the pole-lathe and get treading. The needle cases should arrive with this newsletter but if time is not on my side, they will be along later. I had great fun reading the entries and I hope you enjoyed the published selection. //

Events - Past and Future

by Tim Lepidus

As usual, there is an events list enclosed with your copy of Magpie. This time there is a bonus! Wait for it! It's your new and superb, Manchester Wildlife 1993 Calendar. This is on the reverse of your events list. We have gone Hareless to get this together! Blood has been sweated! Please keep it handy and try to take part in as many events as possible. We need your support and interest.

The previous events list has now run its course. There was a good turn out for our Woodland Management & Green Woodwork Demonstration day with the Watch Group, and a good time was had by all. Continuation on the Sunday was not necessary as we completed the task in one day. The Greenpeace Christmas Fair was cancelled - I hope no one turned up. Apparently, there are now too many such Fairs; there was one at Parrs Wood on the same day. The woodland management at Big Wood was only attended by three members; most of our regular volunteer force were otherwise occupied and one was suffering from back trouble. The task took place in the north-east corner of the wood which is an area of recent Alder regeneration on a wet grassland site. Orange-Tip butterflies have been breeding there. The Alders were beginning to overshadow the site which could have led to it being unsuitable for the butterflies. We managed to coppice two trees which should help to keep the clearing open to some sunlight. The wood is being used by our Bodger who has already made a Windsor chair (with arms!) as a demonstration of what can be done with a scrappy bit of Alder from a Manchester bog. He tells me that it's the best Alder he has used, so far, and it bears out the theory that the best Alder comes from waterlogged sites. The Christmas Pub Night only attracted four members but we had a good evening. There were another four Manchester conservationists at the Friends of the Mersey Valley Annual Meeting, on the same night. They were treated to David Bishop's excellent slide show on the wildflowers of the Balkans. Our January General Meeting was not quorate. A pity really, it was a jolly good meeting. Why not come to the next one and help shape the future of your local Urban Wildlife Group.

The Future - The winter programme is not very extensive, we

will start to warm up in the spring, but there should be enough to attract your interest. Why not come along to the **Development Plan Meeting** and help to decide the direction of the group. The **Butterfly Survey** day gives you the opportunity to help us to compile the survey report. We've got the money, all it needs now is a little work. If you have any reports from 1992, bring them along. At the **Woodland Management Day** in Big Wood we will be carrying on the good work we started in December. Come along and try your hand at the traditional art of coppicing.

The **Woodland Conference** at the Poly should be interesting, if last year's similar event is anything to go by. Why not phone Phil Wheeler and get the full details. Last, but certainly not least, is our **Members Day**. This is a must for all of our members. It promises to be better than last year, if that is possible. See you there. //

Bits and Pieces

Re-forest the Earth - An update from Hugh Warwick on his trip to Parliament. He says it was a good demonstration; there were a few arrests but Hugh managed to avoid that fate. Just as well as he was recording the proceedings with the hope of broadcasting on the B.B.C. Unfortunately, he missed the quote of the day; Roy Hattersley said he supports no demonstrations and that "they're a bunch of boneheads". Brilliant, Roy! More on this next time. Hugh asked us to let you know about a conference which the National Sensitive Sites Alliance is holding to highlight the loss of green spaces, such as Bruntwood Hay Meadows. This takes place on 20-21st Feb. in Sheffield. Details, 210 Kellaway Ave. Golden Hill, Bristol. BS6 7YL Tel. 0272 754185

Apse Valley Expressway - This is an update on the cartoon of the previous Magpie by Söcratûs Sûr (anagram for Ursus arctos the European Brown Bear). The good news is that there is to be an Environmental Impact Assessment on the possible effects of the proposed road through this unspoilt Pyrenean valley, which is the last EEC home of the Brown Bear. Let us hope that this internationally important nature reserve will be saved from the ravages of the European Single Market.

Chorlton Brook - The National Rivers Authority have a flood alleviation scheme for this brook and its tributaries. We've had a look at the plans and they include silt traps and trash screens, which are sensitively designed, and local flood protection banks. We could not have suggested a better solution to the problem. A rumour that half of Hough End Clough would be needed, as a work site, is being investigated.

Outside Arenas (in Manchester?) - There is a steep meadow in the Castlefield Basin which is to be converted into a seating area for an arena. This is a pity as it has become good for butterflies. How often will this concrete structure be used?

Angel Meadow (also known as St. Michael's Flags) - This area, by New Mount Street, has been "tidied-up". It was a good site for wildlife, particularly butterflies (and rabbits); we hope it hasn't been ruined - we must take a look.

Ethical Consumer - Those who took our advice and purchased a copy of this excellent magazine will have noticed the 14 page article on the supermarket giants titled, "Superstores and Global Warming"; excellent stuff giving a damning report on the record of these organisations from an ethical standpoint. We get a mention re. Sainsburys and Bruntwood Meadows.

Wildlife Working Group - At the recent meeting Anthony Phelps gave a short presentation on the work of Manchester Wildlife; the Windsor chair, made from Big Wood Alder, was present as a demonstration of our woodland management/crafts work. Golf courses were mentioned. There are three applications in Wigan for such sporting facilities. The developers will bend over backwards to please the planners; they say they will lay them out in any way the local authority wants (providing they get the go ahead). David Harpley (Cheshire Wildlife Trust's Conservator) was heard to say, "we'll make you a golf course you can't refuse". Peter Hill (LWT) has discovered a fungus which is new to Britain; we've forgotten its name!

Longsight Library Community Resource Unit - This excellent facility is in danger of closing because of Council cuts. As we print this newsletter at the Unit, we hope it will remain open. There is a possibility that it can become self funding and there will be a meeting to discuss this. Let us hope!

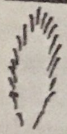
Woodland Crafts & Bodging - (Unity suggests an update) Well, we've come a long way in 12 months. You will have noticed that there is to be a demonstration at the Members Day; some will say, "not again!", but there are many members who haven't yet seen us in action and those who have will be surprised at the progress we have made. Windsor chairs are commonplace and the current project is making 17th Century Carvers. We hope to add other crafts to our chair and rake making and we have bodgers undergoing training; this old art form is beginning to spread amongst the Mancunian population.

Earth Summit II - or Global Forum, or whatever! Manchester is to host this event in September. At the end of the Rio summit it was decided that there would be no follow-up for three or four years, to give everyone time to assimilate the massive agenda which was discussed. However, John Major caught everyone by surprise by announcing that there would be a follow-up in Manchester. We are not yet sure what is going to happen but then, who is? If you have any ideas as to what we can do to highlight the local environment (ecology begins at home), please let us know. Groundwork are staging a two day Green Fair at Salford University; we should be there.

Unitary Development Plans - We have commented on 116 Policies in the Manchester Plan. The public inquiry will last for six weeks, in June (not June - Ed.). Trafford's Plan should be on deposit this month (Feb.). Stockport will be a little later.

Frogs and Hedges - Frogs croaking in the editor's pond on the 29th of January and Heald Green Hawthorn hedges sprouting on the 1st of February. What was that about global warming?

Butterfly Survey - Not wishing to bore you but the Survey is going on and on. Please help us by keeping records in 1993. There is no more pleasant way to spend a sunny day than to go searching for butterflies. Record forms with next Magpie.

 Tail-piece

a last word from the editor

PHEW!

Magpie

Winter 92/93

USEFUL CONTACTS

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 -

North Group (Trafford) - Liz Blackman (Chair) 962 6748
Stockport & Tameside Group - Rhiah Pendlebury (Sec) 427 4529
Wilmslow Group (South M/cr) - Tony Browne (Chair) 436 1761

Lancashire Wildlife Trust -

Bolton Wildlife Project - Annie Surtees - 0204 361847

Manchester Friends of the Earth - 13 Paton Street - 236 4155

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, 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.

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