



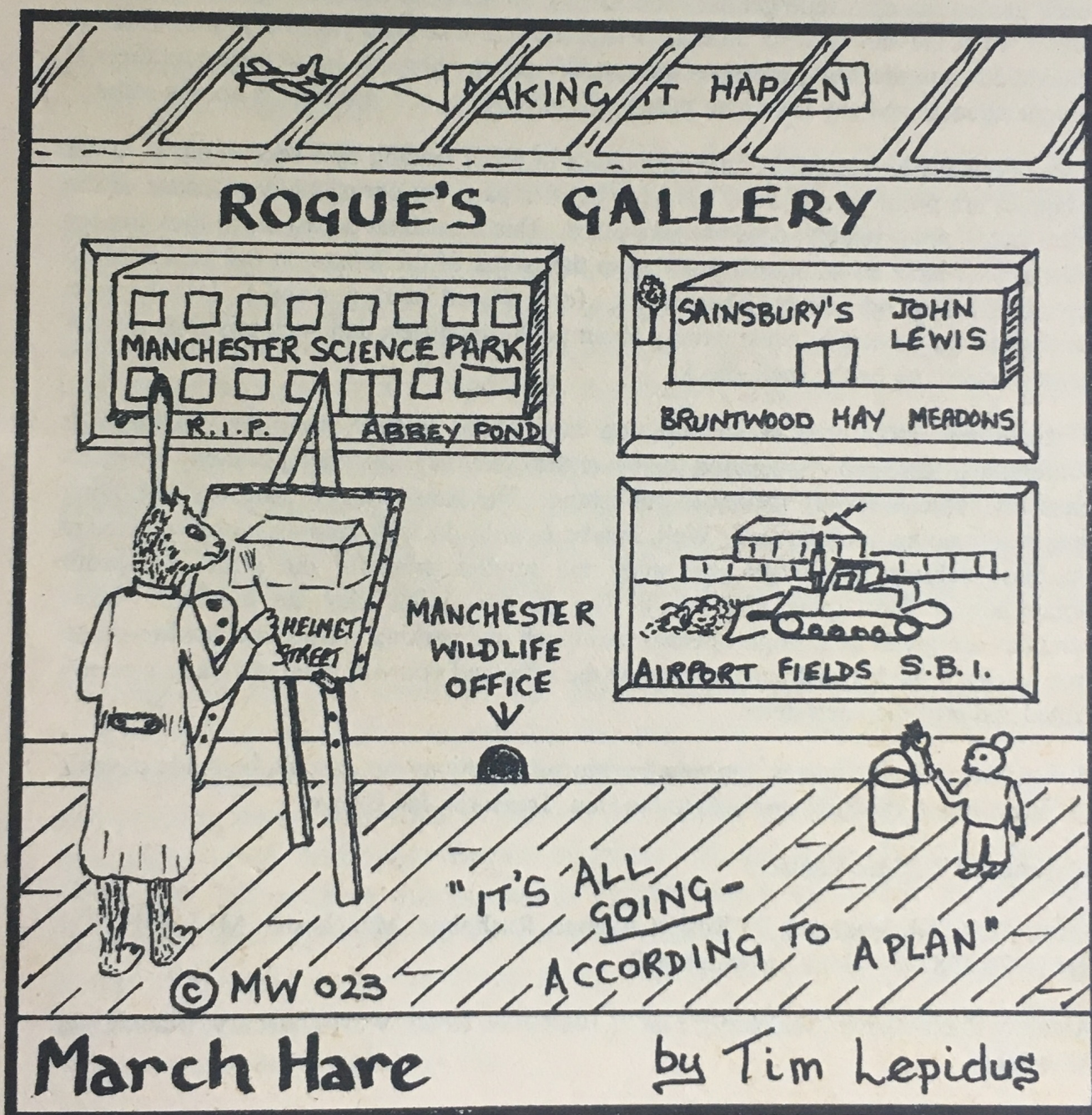
MANCHESTER WILDLIFE'S NEWSLETTER

The

# MAGPIE

Number 35

Summer 95



"Standing Up For Wildlife"

40p



## Editorial

Editor's office - 437 7040

Some of you may have noticed that this summer Magpie is somewhat late; almost two months late, in fact. I hope you have not been sitting there fuming, "Where's my Magpie?" Or maybe I hope you have noticed the lateness of your quarterly newsletter; it would at least mean that it was appreciated. My only excuse for this tardiness is that I have felt disinclined to spend my days sweating over a hot keyboard during the recent spell of sweltering weather. Much more pleasant to spend the days, in the shade of my back garden, doing a little gentle wood turning on the pole-lathe, taking the occasional siesta when the sun is at its hottest. I suppose if one is paid to do a job, one has to buckle down to the work, whatever the conditions but when one is not paid, and there is no one about to see you keep your nose to the grindstone, the incentive is not the same.

I am occasionally reminded of the importance of proof reading by a second party. Most Magpies are proof read in such a way, at least in part, but occasionally, because of the time factor, proof reading does not take place. This is such an occasion, so look out for mistakes. I have an additional problem in that some of the letters on my keyboard do not make very good contact. These are, s, , (orry missed aain), g, v and l. L is the most embarrassing, especially when writing about public inquiries, and such mistakes are not always picked up by the spell-check.

Through my letter box, at an alarming rate, come leaflets from the Business & Professional Research Association (whoever they may be) advertising one-day seminars on many subjects mostly related to publishing. The latest was on "Successful Editing and Proofreading Techniques". Well, maybe I could do with gaining more knowledge on these subjects but when you study the smaller print for the price; non-profit organisations: £160 (plus £28 VAT); who do they think they are kidding? Most seminars are given by a single speaker and lunch and parking are not included (wot, no free lunch). I think I shall have to decline the offer and you will have to endure a poorly edited and prof-read newsletter.

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

### Manchester Wildlife Contacts

Unity Kelly (Chairperson), 13 Ruskin Avenue, Rusholme, Manchester. M14 4DP - Tel: 0161-226 4583 (24 Hour Answerphone)

Anthony Phelps (Hon. Secretary), Flat 7, 104 Clyde Road, West Didsbury, Manchester. M20 2JN

Ian Brown (Hon. Treasurer & Editor), 82 Crantock Drive, Heald Green, Cheadle, Cheshire. SK8 3HA - Tel: 0161-437 7040 Fax (One World Centre): 0161-834 8187

## MEMBERS' DAY 1995

"One of the best events I've been to", was the verdict of one speaker on our Panel for Environment Question Time, highlight of our AGM and Members' Day. This was praise indeed from a veteran of many such occasions and an acute observer of the conservation scene. What you see, is what we are was the motto for the day; with so many aspects of our work, from research to recycling, from correspondence to crafts, set out for all to see. Many thanks to all of you who helped and attended. We always wish it could have been a more impressive sample of our (healthy) membership, but those of you who came were irrepressible by way of compensation. Our decision to go for a panel of five speakers rather than the traditional speaker with slides proved to be an outstanding success. We are truly appreciative that five such busy people, (from Wigan, Bolton, Stoke and Rusholme) were willing to give of their time and talents to enthuse and entertain our audience. The questions were a diplomatic display of "guided choice" the Manchester Wildlife way, and it worked a treat! The audience's attention never wavered and the event had to be brought to a compulsory conclusion, but not before the panel demanded to answer "What aspects of the environmental scene (national or local), would the panel like to consign to Room 101?" Heartfelt approval greeted the nomination of Peel Estates (owners of the Ship Canal) and "economists who tell me I don't live in the real world". Can you guess which came from the Earth Firster ! and which from the local authority ecologist?

To return to the real world of our own finances, the costs of presenting Members' Day were not covered by the proceeds of the refreshments, the raffle and donations and the event ran at a substantial deficit. The room hire and printing and distribution of posters etc. not to mention the sale value of the raffled stool, (a Bodger Brown original), exceeded the day's income by about £50. If you think this is a heavy handed hint to send MW a little extra with your next subscription or even an unsolicited donation, well it IS. Better still, make sure you come along and show your support next year. We look forward to another Question Time and an even bigger audience, now we know how well it works



## OMBUDSMAN STIRS UP "POND" MEMORIES by Unity Kelly

We said the destruction of Abbey Pond would come back to haunt and empower (Press Release: Jan. 1994). In December, MW submitted a detailed and well documented complaint of maladministration in respect of the failure of Manchester City Council (and their Hulme Sub-Committee) to implement the planning condition bolted on to the pre-ordained planning consent for Phase 4 of Manchester (not much) Science (even less) Park on 21st Dec. 1993. On 29th June 1995, I received a letter from the Commission's Office in York, telling us that investigation would now proceed as set out in the following statement:

"that when granting planning permission for development, the Council imposed a condition, intended to protect a pond and its ecology, which was vague and ineffective. Furthermore the Council allowed the development to go ahead without first ensuring that the ecology of the pond had been or would be properly protected by the developer. (I'll say!) As a consequence the original pond was destroyed (as seen on TV) and that which was created in its place was inadequate in size, location and construction to meet the intentions of the planning condition and the ecological value of the original pond was lost."

We couldn't have put it better ourselves, which of course, MW did its best to explain at the time. The investigation process has begun but it will some months before an outcome is published. The City Council is said to be stirred but not shaken, or was it the other way round? IF the Ombudsman upholds the complaint, we understand that this will be the first ecological condition or mitigation in the UK to be thus judged:

We are considering whether to put forward the muddy depression inside 500 feet of "designer" fencing in St. George's to the Guinness Book of Records as the EU's most expensive puddle?

### CORRIDORS OF POWER

Manchester City Council's well thought out draft Nature Conservation Strategy, "Wildlife Matters...." officially closed for consultation in June with about 30 responses. There may be many community groups and concerned individuals who have not yet seen this document, if the people we come across are anything to go by. You could still have your say on a discretionary basis. Phone Elaine Norsworthy and ask for a copy. An interesting development was the Council's decision to extend the consultation period and refer specifically to about 30 private sector consultees, who presumably had not risen to the bait the first time round. The Strategy suggests the setting up of a Wildlife Advisory

Group (WAG). It would have been useful to have had a WAG to discuss the Strategy, rather than groups, and individuals, making their comments in isolation.

In the meantime, nature conservation (Council style), has gone into premature hibernation while the draft City Development Guide, or son of the Urban Design Code for Hulme, hits the streets (goes out to consultation). This is a slim and very glossy document compared to the well-researched and sober appearance of the NC Strategy. It is very similar in feel to a company prospectus - "Manchester plc" and, of course, many of Manchester's open spaces are up for sale, including school grounds and established amenity landscaping. The NC Strategy, as and when it is amended and adopted, will have to fit in with the prescriptions of the Development Guide. This gives MW cause for concern, as the latter document hardly mentions green spaces, let alone wild spaces, except as places where security and social control are paramount. The Chief Executive will be looking at both documents to "ensure there is no conflict between them". This will require semantic contortions not seen or heard since Global Forum and if the logic demonstrated in the chief executive's submission to the Ombudsman, re ponds, is anything to go by, wildlife will be somewhere underfoot.

### NOTICE BOARD

#### *Sic Transit...*

Since the last edition of the Magpie, both Chief Officers with responsibilities for conservation and habitat management, Dr Ted Kitchen, (Planning) and Sinclair McLeod, (Highways) have packed their bags and left Manchester.

#### *Reclaim the Streets.*

Hard on the heels of the success of the City Council's Dirty Diesel Freepost report cards, comes another wizard idea from the Pollution Control Section, Planning and Environmental Health, (0161) 234 4873: Traffic Pollution Watch. Pick up a card and nominate a street in your area for pedestrianisation. We found these easy-to-use cards at the One World Centre. Who knows, perhaps traffic-free residential streets will appear as fast as the fume-belching buses and lorries are disappearing from our roads? Dream on.



## HOW MANY COUNCIL OFFICERS DOES IT TAKE TO SET UP A BOTTLE BANK?

I'm sorry we haven't a clue but it's almost a year since we offered to adopt a site in Rusholme and we are still waiting. We might have raised several hundred pounds by now and kept glass off the streets, a problem which seems to get worse every year.

(The answer is one; Mike Shearing, the Waste Minimisation Officer, is working on the problem and was last seen cycling round stores, in the City, trying to get the owners to give permission for recycling centres on their land. - Ed.)

We've been waiting even longer for English Nature's North West Office to fix up a mutual interest meeting, originally proposed in March 1994, somewhere, sometime.

## ENCY RISING

by Daphne Laureola

It was with some relief that we read of Geoffrey Lean's inconclusive encounter with ENCY, (Independent on Sunday). If one of Britain's most distinguished environmental journalists could be so underwhelmed, then perhaps MW's "Iese-majestie" (Magpie 33) was excusable? Well-behaved organisations have dutifully added ENCY to their public utterances or literature, just as in 1960's Uganda, we had to add "and nation-building" to everything from newspaper editorials to university lecture courses. In 1975 ECY put habitat conservation on the European map, (I still have the publications) and set Geoffrey Lean on his career as specialist on the environment. As he said in this article, "it soon became clear that the environment was not primarily about the fate of flowers and trees, or even about toxic waste or global warming but that it was about the well-being of people." And the message we get back from people we encounter or who get in touch with us, is never mind the posters, pamphlets and jolly exhortations, of which the Manchester Planet, (LA21 Newsletter) is a prime example; why is it that their valued and irreplaceable patch of

local greenspace and wildlife, is up for grabs. Examples have reached MW since April, from Gorton, Beswick, Cheetham, Crumpsall and Moston. In two cases, drive-thru MacDonalds are involved. So much for well-being.

## POSTER PUFF

by Merton Niven

### The Cosmetic Approach to Conservation



*Lady Sainsbury launches Landlife's giant poster campaign.*

Liverpool based Wildflower business and educational charity rejoices in the Sainsbury connection in order to promote its innovative work selling "creative conservation", (UWP newsletter, Summer 1995). One of these striking photos of amenity grassland transformed by cornfield annuals against a frieze of tower blocks adorned Yew Tree Road, Rusholme for two weeks. - As we say in these parts, "never mind the wildlife, feel the sponsorship." The list of sponsors for this poster campaign reads like an out-of-town retail park. The idyllic acres of Bruntwood, Cheadle, an ancient complex of meadow, hedge, pond and associated wildlife have finally been done away with by Sainsbury's, John Lewis and the enlarged tentacles of the A34, not forgetting the parking provision for 2,000 cars. MW considered



this poster, then thought of the 153 species of plants recorded at Bruntwood and then did some calculations. How many individual flowering plants have been destroyed on this site? A guesstimate of one million was the result and this does not include the grasses. As these meadows held the most prolific butterfly populations ever observed by MW in Greater Manchester, we added about a hundred thousand individual butterflies to this litany of destruction; a significant percentage of the total bio-diversity in south Greater Manchester. Anyone who thinks that "creative conservation", (Magpie 31) is some kind of re-placement therapy for such habitat loss would be suffering from delusions of...

I met a youth worker from a centre in Chorlton-on-Medlock, one of the least green and most socially deprived parts of inner Manchester, (during Global Forum) who recognised the photographs of the Meadows (pre-Sainsbury) and who told me that was where her streetwise teenagers took her on their annual "magical mystery tour", leading her blindfolded from the van to experience the magic of the meadows.

(If another poster campaign is run by Landlife I would suggest a good site would be on one of the hoardings on the edge of the Sainsbury/ John Lewis superstore at Bruntwood. - Ed.)

#### LOCAL RADIO NEWS REPORT

by J.A. Turner

"For every £10 spent at Sainsbury's, David Sainsbury gets 3p" Doesn't sound a lot but this means that £10,000 spent provides him with £30, for doing nothing. David Sainsbury is the third richest person in the country thanks to those who make the mistake of shopping at his stores. Would he pay you to live a life of luxury?

*Before you shop at Sainsbury's, think of the destruction of Bruntwood Hay Meadows; you're sure to change your mind.*

#### RED MOSS UPDATE: A POSSIBLE CASE OF "BOGMAIL"

by Des Poiler

MW made a discrete visit to Red Moss, near Horwich to celebrate National Bog Day on 23rd July, in the company of an informative local guide. Red Moss is full of interest and beauty but painfully vulnerable to deliberate damage from fly tipping and fires which had the appearance of having been started deliberately. Our photographer was kept busy in pursuit of plants, insects and cloudscapes framing the handsome proportions of the former Horwich railway works. A pile of industrial paint tins and the still smouldering burned areas were also in the picture.

Only a month ago, Red Moss had been ratified as an SSSI, as one of the last remnants of lowland peat bogs in the north west. Since then John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, has intervened, after intensive lobbying by the Peat Campaign Consortium, which includes L.W.T., R.S.P.B. and FoE, to prevent Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council from using the site as a "profitable" landfill for waste from all over Greater Manchester. "Red Moss Saved" made headline news on TV and in current edition of the UWP newsletter,

R.S.P.B. magazine, The Globe, etc. However, Bolton Council are not afraid of little John. He is not averse to annoying Labour Councils and has the tiny majority of Tom Sackville, Bolton North's Tory M.P., to consider. Bolton's defence is that protecting Red Moss will lose the Council £2 million a year which "could be spent on other services" and cost every local tax payer £1 per head per year for the projected life of the tip (15 years). These figures do not add up and assume that the Government will not claw back money from other grants if the tip is so profitable. (Where there's muck, there's brass, as Yorkshire folk say.)

On July the 27th, Bolton Council reworded their draft UDP, which of course will protect all SSSIs, to enable a planning application for the tip to go forward on the grounds that the ecological importance would have to be weighed against the economic benefit. Red Moss is not saved and local and national conservation bodies are remarrying their forces in preparation for the public inquiry which the Secretary of State will be obliged to set up.



## Local Agenda 21 is Dead

by Ian Brown

Those of us who are involved in the Local Agenda 21 (LA21) process, that is working to make our towns and cities better places in which to live in the 21st Century, are occasionally reminded how many and great are the forces ranged against us. One such occasion occurred recently; you must have read about it in the local press. Five Law Lords, in their wisdom (or lack of it, more likely), dismissed a last ditch challenge by opposing town halls and retailers claiming that former Environment Secretary. Michael Howard, was wrong in law to approve planning permission for a vast £200m shopping centre at Dimplington. The case had already been before the High Court and the court of appeal and there was a good chance that the development would not have gone ahead, until the Law Lords made their decision.

You might ask, what has this to do with LA21, or even wildlife. The development, on a 300 acre site between the M63 and Trafford Park will be known as the Trafford Centre. It will be similar in size to the Meadowhall Centre at Sheffield, providing 6,000 new jobs, boast more than 100 shops, ten stores, restaurants, a cinema, a nursery and parking for 10,000 cars. In other words it will be exactly the same as any other "shopping city" in the country. So what about the wildlife? 300 acres of open land going under concrete is bound to have some effect. We know little of the wildlife on the site but have heard that Short-eared Owl and Barn Owl are present. We also heard that the site, where the Barn Owls nested, was blocked up at the end of a breeding season, to deny them further access, but this could be just an ugly rumour. But it's not just what wildlife is there at present; what about the potential? 300 acres would make a great contribution to the Red Rose Forest! Enough said. And what about LA21? As mentioned before in these pages, there are Action Groups to discuss the problems which must be tackled if we are to make Manchester a better place in which to live. As well as the Greening, Land Use and Open Space Action Group, in which we are most interested, other interests covered include Energy, Transport, Waste & Pollution, Health & Safer City and Economy & Work. The concern of the first Action Group is loss of open space, as mentioned above. The concerns of the other Action Groups become more obvious when one

discovers what the development will entail. With 10,000 car parking spaces the Trafford Centre is obviously intended to be accessed mainly by motor vehicle; there may be a Metro link but that would only be convenient for a minority. Therefore there will be problems of pollution and congestion, with the possible "need" for new roads with more loss of open space. To quote Bernard Spilsbury in the Business Section of the M.E.N. (24.5.95), under the headline; *"Shopping city dream that rivals fear could prove a nightmare"*, "A MAJOR stimulus to the economic regeneration of Greater Manchester the best retail centre in the UK, providing one stop shopping and leisure for more than 11 million people within 90 minutes drive.... that is the dream. But the nightmare, on the other side of the coin, is that the Dimplington "shopping city" is a giant white elephant clogging motorways and killing off town and city centres round the region." One of the main points of LA21 is that local people should buy locally, not travel 100 miles or more to shop. If local shops close those with out first call on a car for transport (a majority) will be put at a distinct disadvantage. It's happened before; do we never learn from experience?

And what about employment? 6,000 new jobs; sounds great but to quote more of Bernard Spilsbury's article, "It would attract shoppers not only from the North West but from Cumbria, West Yorkshire, Merseyside, North Wales and the Midlands, claimed the developers.... stemming the flow of wealth out of the region caused by shoppers travelling to giant retail centres like Sheffield's "Meadowhall." In fact it will just move retail business around causing job losses, not just in Greater Manchester, but further afield. And because of the economies of scale there will be fewer jobs created than lost. You cannot create more jobs merely by building more shops because retail development is not sustainable development; there's no added value, so no more money available for spending in the shops. To achieve that great changes will have to be made in the way we run our economy. Jobs must be created making things from inexpensive, local raw materials where the added value is in the labour. MW is showing the way in this respect with our woodland crafts initiative, using cheap local wood to make many useful items from rakes to chairs. All we need is an enlightened authority to fund a craft officer to run and manage a centre where the necessary skills can be taught. With the coming of the Red Rose Forest there should be plenty of raw material available locally. Sheffield seem to be ahead in this field. As well as having a centre, with a manager, they employ a charcoal burner and a pole-lathe turner who coppice local woodlands.

Back to Dimplington; who benefits? Well the developers, Peel Holdings, seem to be quite happy about it; they should make loads of money, and the retailers who set up shop there should do well in the short term. But what about the long term? What indeed!



As already mentioned the extra traffic will cause pollution which will effect people's health. But less obvious is CO2 emission which will contribute to global warming. This effect, now recognised by most scientists, will change our climate which could have a disastrous effect on wildlife and its bio-diversity. A warmer, and less moist climate could lead to the loss of bluebells from our woods. That would be unthinkable; it would make you want to throw

your arms up in horror and say, "What on earth can I do about it?" But you can do something about it; be ever so small, it can make a difference.

I have to thank Chris Morley, writing in Walk for the Earth's newsletter, Earthbound, for the following: Under the heading, *Global Warming and Universal Apathy*; "Over a quarter of UK CO2 emissions result from domestic energy use - that's **your** emissions, that's **my** emissions; it's **not** the country's emissions, it's **not** the government's emissions, it's **not** even the power station's emissions. It's emissions caused when we switch a light on, have a shower or boil a kettle; it's the emissions saved when we use low-energy lights, turn down the thermostat or draught-proof our doors and windows. Don't moan about government inaction - they've already tried grants and subsidies, newspaper and TV advertising campaigns, not to mention the incredibly ill-judged VAT on fuel. All hopelessly inadequate, of course, because hardly any one took any notice. Did you?" Chris goes on to say that you can do something to reduce CO2 emissions and suggests, "you can tell all your friends about it and see if they don't get turned on to doing a bit more about the CO2 that they pump into the atmosphere. Then they can do the same. And then.... And then...." In the same newsletter, under *The Green Light*, Chris says, "A recent incredibly learned article by an incredibly learned Swiss scientist in the incredibly learned CADDET newsletter studied the various technologies which are supposed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in terms of life-cycle analysis. (Life-cycle analysis is a 'cradle to grave' way of looking at these things, i.e. it takes into account emissions released during the manufacture and disposal of these things as well as emissions saved during use.) The study compared, amongst others, conventional and nuclear power stations, wind farms, solar cells, and the humble low-energy light bulb, in terms of effective emissions per kilowatt hour. The conclusion was spectacular - the low-energy light bulb was so far and away the best of the lot that it was hardly visible on the accompanying bar chart!" and under, *Local Energy Advice Centres*, "There is a national Freephone network on 0800 512 012 to get in touch with your nearest LEAC - use it because they're there to help you and it will cost you nothing. Ask specifically for a Home Energy Survey - you'll be amazed at the amount of information you get back as a result of filling in this questionnaire, and you can translate that directly into CO2 savings. On average they save each caller around £36 per year on their fuel bill, which translates roughly into 400 kilos of CO2 annually, at a one-off cost of £28 per caller. All these services are available to small businesses as well as homes."

So you can do something about global warming and save money at the same time. We believe that there is to be a promotion of low-energy light bulbs in the coming autumn. Why not take the opportunity to buy some of these fantastic lights and do yourself a bit of good. If you want to do more to help LA21, like take part on an Action Group or form a local action group to solve problems at a ward or neighbourhood level, contact the Local Agenda 21 Forum (Tel. 0161 236 5195) and ask for the Administrator, Brenda Sedgwick.

To get back again to Dimplington, the decision made by the Law Lords was probably correct according to the law, as it stood at the time of the original decision. But was it wise? A recent Government

Directive has come out against out of town shopping developments but too late to stop the Trafford Centre which will cause problems for LA21 for many years to come. But is Local Agenda 21 dead? No it is not! Are we downhearted? No we are not! (Are you sure about that? - Ed.)

*If not you, then who? If not now, then when? - Earth First! slogan*

## *National Wildlife Week*

by Dawn Crews

Manchester Wildlife celebrated Wildlife Week in considerable style with two events which broke new ground by being both unusual and chargeable. Both were a great success but only by the skin of our teeth and after some anxious moments when it seemed as though all the advance preparations had been scuppered by lack of basic publicity.

The Orchid Safari, by Minibus, was an event well worth repeating. Thanks to the Openshaw Minibus Group, and their volunteer driver, twelve people and two cars were able to zoom from Moston Fairway, a fascinating former railway siding re-colonising to acid wet heath (with no need for "creative conservation"), to Abney Marsh, near Cheadle, for a final photocall amidst the massed ranks of giant marsh orchids. "I never would have thought of coming into Manchester to see orchids." was just one enthusiastic comment. Each site had a different history, atmosphere and entirely different ecology, although two orchid species were predominant. This is the fascination of urban nature. We also visited a Park, a canal, a reclaimed site, a "Transplant site" and newly colonised road cuttings which are about the closest thing to "downland" in Manchester. Were it not for the destructive slip-stream of peripheral airport development, we could have gloried in the five species which grew there in abundance, on the edge of Wythenshawe, until 1993.



The Dawn Cruise from Castlefield to Throstles Nest Bridge, in Trafford, was inspired by the Breakfast with Wildlife theme suggested in the original Wildlife Week briefing from the Wildlife Trusts national office. To make this a social and financial success we really did need the advance publicity of the national leaflet and the good offices of the local media. Thanks to a "bulk buy" from members of the Manchester Environmental Education Network (who then went on to a "normal" day at school), the voyage was rescued from financial disaster and provided a stunning photo in the Evening News. Egerton Boats hired us their silent running battery powered trip boat and then gave a fascinating commentary. I shall never forget the sight of Jim Ramsbottom's silver Roller arriving on the dot of 5 am with Lance in close pursuit, on the world's tattiest bike. The Evening News reporter and photographer were impressed and enjoyed an eye-opening trip. The children wrote things down, everyone chipped in with observations and comments and we all tucked into freshly brewed, real coffee and mouth watering croissants, which had been kept warm in a specially created "hay basket". Unity will supply the secrets of success for breakfasts afloat in return for SAE and a donation to Manchester Wildlife.

We could have catered for another five passengers and thus broken even. Both events were in our Members' Events List and the 1995 Calendar. It was a good chance to have a mixture of members and new faces on both events but do most of you really make the effort to support MW events?

The MW press releases suffered a variety of fates in the media leading to a loss of vital advance publicity and this was compounded by lack of publicity from the Wildlife Trusts and worst of all by the fact that only 40 leaflets were allocated to MW for Greater Manchester. We sent a constructive, but critical, report back to head office. We might just as well have run these events as "Manchester Wildlife Week". "Why don't you do that?" was the response from several of our local media contacts.

The question has to be asked; what is "National Wildlife Week" for and does it work? Compare and contrast the success of National Bog Day.

Editor's note: We had commissioned Mini Bustrip to write a piece on Wildlife Week but she missed the deadline. We have to thank Dawn for stepping in at the last minute.

## YHA boo!

by Janet Cuff

In March, the Board of Trustees of the Youth Hostels Association (England & Wales) approved a recommendation to reduce the post of Countryside Officer from a full-time one to part-time, probably three days a week.

This move, if implemented, would impair the Y.H.A.'s ability to play any significant role in environmental matters, and would seriously damage its credibility as a countryside organisation. At present, the Countryside Officer performs invaluable work, representing the Y.H.A. on various outside bodies, involving it in consultation processes, and co-ordinating volunteer activity in countryside matters. All this would be threatened.

Those of us in the Y.H.A. who are proud of the Y.H.A.'s long tradition of campaigning and working to protect the countryside are very concerned about this move. We are asking those Y.H.A. members who share our concerns to write to the President, David Bellamy, to ask him if he can bring some pressure to bear on the National Officers to persuade them that this short-sighted decision should not be implemented.

Please write, as a Y.H.A. member, to:

Professor David Bellamy, President, Youth Hostels Association, The Mill House, Bedburn, BISHOP AUCKLAND, County Durham. DL13 3NN

## Why do I do it?

by Anthony Phelps

When I say "it", I mean care about wildlife. Many a time when I've attended a conservation event, a local has been heard to mutter "You're wasting your time", to which my usual, truthful answer is "I know". How many times have we revisited sites to find planted trees mown down; limestone (which nearly killed us to lay on a path) thrown into the brook; plants and rubble dumped into a newly dug pond, and other evidence of our "wasted time".

I suppose the main reason for me continuing is that I'm mad. No, but seriously, if you agree with all those locals, stay at home and do nothing, then things can never improve. If you're seen to care and want to conserve, and some of that enthusiasm rubs off on others, then that is reward in itself; like the help we received from locals at Painswick Park, or the success we have had in creating the much loved English Martyrs School wildlife garden.



All right, I didn't want to use it as a reason, but "I love wildlife". I'd be happy spending all day and every day wandering around watching whatever was about, be it flora or fauna (or birds!). Wildlife all over the world seems to be short on friends, so, following the maxim "Think Globally, Act Locally", and always ignoring pessimistic locals, this is what I believe is the role of Manchester Wildlife. and our new slogan "Standing up for Wildlife" backs up this assumption.

If this article needs to have a moral, I suppose it's "do whatever you can, it will make a difference". With that, I hope to many more people keen to "waste their time" on all the wonderful Manchester Wildlife events we have planned.

### ***"It's All Gone...(According to a Plan)"***

by Basil Faucet

Whilst checking on the new fencing around the River Irk at the end of Victoria Station, I decided to check on the butterflies and plants that I enjoy seeing on the bank leading up to Cheetham Hill Road. In previous years, along the bottom of the track, there had been a small but important colony of Common Blue butterflies, the closest to the City centre. All that was visible this year were the spoil heaps from the fence work.

I looked up the bank, and the tall grassland was dotted with Ox-eye Daisy, and I remembered the picture in my mind of Vipers Bugloss, White Campion, and the sea of Clovers on the flatter meadow at the top of the bank, next to the main road. Sadly, this had been "converted" to amenity grassland, mowed to death.

Surely there must be better ways to "bring wildlife into the City"?

### **WINTER BIRD FEEDING SURVEY**

by Janet Gorst

A mild winter, although wet and windy, continued the trend of recent winters. However, this did not affect the variety of species visiting MW members' gardens. 44 species of garden birds (plus 9 others) were recorded in an around our gardens but numbers were slightly down - due to the availability of natural food?

Commoner tits, Blue, Great and Coal were seen in most gardens feeding at peanut and sunflower seed holders; two **Marsh Tits** were recorded in a Didsbury garden. Parties of **Long-tailed Tits** passed through ten gardens. Wintering **Blackcaps** were reported in six; a female Blackcap was a complete "amateur" when it tried to copy a Blue Tit on a bag of peanuts and

soon returned to its favourite cotoneaster berries. Another Blackcap was seen eating ivy berries in Altrincham.

A notable sighting was an over-wintering **Chiffchaff** found in Heaton Mersey; a lone Tree Sparrow in the same area was the first for the survey. Six **Wrens** were observed in a Didsbury garden going to roost in an empty tit box. A male **Bullfinch** was a good find in West Stockport, quite rare for that side of Stockport.

Twelve Goldfinches were seen in a garden feeding on lavender seeds and teasel heads (no finches were abundant in MW members' gardens this year), although **Siskins** were observed in ten gardens, 22 in a Stockport garden, 10 in Didsbury and six in Heald Green; a male Siskin met an untimely end by flying into a window; two **Redpolls** were noted with a flock of Siskins.

Redwings (40) appeared on **Priestnall Allotments** along with Starlings (50), Mistle Thrush (8), Sparrows (8), Greenfinch (30), Chaffinch (30), two Pied Wagtails, one Grey Wagtail and one Fieldfare. A female **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was a first for the writer's garden, seen three times on its favourite sycamore tree; **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** appeared in four gardens, **Nuthatches** were noted in a scattering of gardens and a **Tree Creeper** in one.

Although two **Song Thrushes** were watched eating *Pyracantha* berries in a Stockport garden it was the ONLY record this winter. Regrettably, such a lovely songster is in a sad decline. The tiny **Goldcrest** appeared in many more gardens this year; 10 were seen in a mixed tit flock. **Jays** visited twice as many gardens as last year and a **Jackdaw** was recorded in an Ashton garden. An unexpected visitor was a female **Sparrow-hawk** that banged into a MW member's window chasing a sparrow it missed!

**Kestrels** were observed by six MW Members. A large flock of **Lapwings**, 100+, were seen flying over Manchester at dusk (November). In Ashton-under-Lyne a **Tawny Owl** was observed for three weeks in a daytime roost on a tall holly tree and seemed to be accepted by the local birds without hysteria.

At the end of the survey, early April, six **Barnacle Geese** were seen moving North, so were four **Brambling** and six **Redpoll**. A **Linnet** was spotted moving in the opposite direction. A pair of **Restrels** were seen in courtship; so were two Great Spotted Woodpeckers. Three

Sparrow-hawks were sighted in aerial combat, two fly-over **Teal Duck** were noted, **Willow Warblers** were calling and a **Buzzard** was seen soaring high over Mauldeth Road in Stockport.

Thanks to all who took part in the survey.



## "Early One Morning..."

by Anthony Phelps

May Bank holiday weekend marked "International Dawn Chorus Day". not that anyone much noticed.

on the Sunday morning, I decided to leave for Chorlton Ees at 2.30 am so I'd not have to hurry and wouldn't miss anything.

Walking along Barlow Moor Road at that time I felt quite different. I was starting my Sunday, whilst everyone else was being helped, by taxi-drivers, to finish their Saturday night. Once onto Hardy Farm, I left most of civilisation behind, but not the residue of their street lighting.

If you're wondering, no, I wasn't late - I had about an hour to spare, arriving at the field across the river from Sale Hay Meadows at 3.20 am. I didn't feel threatened as there was no one else about. I was greeted by the sound of a Grasshopper Warbler reeling, and, after almost tripping over a hedgehog, found a log on which to rest and listen to nature's "late night radio show". After a while, I was able to filter out most of the motorway noise, and the Grasshopper Warbler was joined by Sedge Warblers.

Moving quietly around the paths in the darkness, I was able to stand right alongside the singing warblers without frightening them. It was then I realised there were two Grasshopper Warblers; nature's own "stereo system".

After that, I moved into the woodland to listen to the sounds of the awakening birds, and then I returned to the field, and had superb telescope views of the second Grasshopper Warbler, the sort a dentist would appreciate!

It is something I would recommend for everyone to try at least once. Some of your senses become heightened; especially sight - changing from a monochrome darkness, with shadows, to the gradual awareness of colours as the sky brightens; and hearing - with no barking dogs or joggers. It's incredible to feel that you are alone in this overpopulated world.

If you are crazy enough to venture out in the early hours, I suggest you learn to "stalk", remaining totally silent. I was crossing the bridge at the end of Chorlton Brook the next day, when I came face to face with a Brown Hare, my best sighting ever.

Another thing I "discovered" later was that a tripod and telescope disguise the outline of the human form. I was on Kenworthy Fields looking at Sedge Warblers when I noticed a pair of ears. I followed the fox as it moved onto the path. It was a beautiful day, and the fox stood, glistening with dew, the inside of its legs seeming silvery. Then a strange thing happened - it turned

and walked down the path towards me. I kept it in my telescope until out of focus, (about 15 yards away?) and had to look to one side. Only then did it turn and run - I'd become human again! I wish I knew what it thought I looked like.

If, unlike me, you do not feel confident out alone, for whatever reason, there are organised Dawn Chorus walks. Ask your local river valley wardens, or rangers. Failing that, ask me.

## The Pedley Wood Interchange

by Bufo\* Low Bob

A number of Manchester Wildlife supporters will have seen, if only at an open day, the wholesale transformation of Jepsons Clough near Adlington by its owner Paul Bromley into a centre of experimentation into highly worthy efforts at sustainably produced electricity with a water wheel. It does indeed seem churlish to in any way criticise this laudable effort to produce energy in an eco-friendly way, bound eventually for low impact technology use in the third world.

However, on my last visit with the Stockport Conservation Volunteer we were yet again requested to stone the already adequate paths that thread through the clough. For one thing, the area is beginning to take on a kind of theme park look; however, in my opinion some basics are starting to be overlooked in the pursuit of excellence. All that stone has to come from somewhere - and that somewhere is probably some horrendous quarry scarring the Peak District and the stone is trucked down the choked overburdened roads through scenic Cheshire.

It occurs to me that coarse wood chippings, possibly provided in situ, thereby obviating the need for transport would be much more sustainable, with the bonus of also being more aesthetically pleasing. One hopes that this doesn't sound too carping but with footpaths being laid all over the country it strikes me if it is not done thoughtfully that that could add up to a lot of quarries and a lot of lorries belting up and down those lovely new motorways.

\* Bufo bufo - The Toad

Editor's note: This is something we must always be careful of when we are working to improve our environment. However worthy the work, we must be sure that in carrying it out we are not damaging the environment in other ways. Global Forum 94 engendered a lot of unsustainable activity, such as global travel; it would have been better if everyone had stayed at home and held conferences and exchanged ideas by satellite link. Local Agenda 21 is churning out a lot of paper work and the paper used to promote Red Rose



Forest could need a forest to replace it. Manchester Wildlife is not free of guilt in this respect. When promoting woodland crafts we travel to put on demonstrations. With the amount of stuff that needs to be carried, the only practical means of transport is by car. What is needed is a woodland craft centre in every river valley and country park and then the demonstrator could travel by a more environmentally friendly means of transport. There may be other aspects of our work which need scrutiny in this respect.

## NOTICE BOARD

### Rough End of the Stick

Hough End has been in the news lately because it now seems certain that it will remain as open space. The trees which we, and others, planted there over a number of years have also been the subject of some attention, but not the sort which they, or we, appreciate. In the course of recent grass mowing, by the Council, shrubs, including Honeysuckle, were mown down and many trees were damaged, and it's not the first time this has happened. It can't be possible, can it, that council workers are so stupid that they are unable to avoid trees when mowing the grass. Or could there be something more sinister behind this? Could there be a deliberate policy to get rid of trees? A few more goes and they'll have the lot. This may be an irrational thought (just because you're paranoid it doesn't mean they're not out to get you), but it's not rational to believe that people on mowers can't see trees.

### Street Trees

We have a report from Wythenshawe of street trees being felled. We gather that the reasons are age/danger/disease/damage to pavements and that they will be replaced. As most of the tree are (or were) Manchester Poplar wouldn't pollarding have been appropriate in some cases. We are investigating the problem and hope that the timber, from the trees, will be put to good, high value, use. We hear that park trees will be next in receiving the Councils attention; so watch out.

### No M66 Campaign

A camp has been set up to protest about the M66 Denton to Middleton section. The camp can be found across the road from the Daisy Nook Country Park visitor centre. If you would like to visit the camp, or in any other way protest about this motorway, contact Dave Boardman on 0161-628 4727. Manchester Wildlife appeared at the public inquiry objecting to the motorway in general and the fact that it would cross the Medlock Valley on an embankment in particular.

## Butterflies Galore

The Cheshire and Peak District Branch of the British Butterfly Conservation Society is holding a one day conference called "Butterfly Conservation in the North West" to celebrate their 10th Anniversary. It takes place on Saturday the 30th of September at Holmes Chapel; the speakers are excellent and with a cost of £9 per person we would suggested that it is not to be missed. If you are interested, contact: Paul M. Hill, 1 Clive Cottage, London Road, Allostock, KNUTSFORD, Cheshire. WA16 9LT Sorry we have no phone number.

## MEEN Jamboree

The Manchester Environmental Education Network is staging a Jamboree on Saturday the 14th of October 1995 at Cheetham Community School. If last year's event is anything to go by then this also should not be missed. Contact Ruth Levy on 0161-431 7610.

## Global Forum '94

### A Historical Report by Paula Thompson - Part 2

### What Went Right

Whilst the core conference has struggled along - local charity groups have been busily organising events to run alongside Global Forum. They have rallied round an raised money to host their own individual environmental conferences despite being axed by Global Forum organisers back in February.

Phil Barton, Chair of North West Focus, has been behind what he described as a festival: "We have put together a fringe programme of events around Global Forum that will offer the opportunity for the people of Manchester, and those visiting, to participate and become involved".

Activities range from conferences on Business to an International Peace Festival to the British Council's Conference on Healthy Cities. The Festival will be launched at a Public Meeting in Albert Square on June 19th. Phil Barton adds "We have done a lot on very little money and we are proud of that - but we wouldn't have organised these events without Global Forum". Quite clearly it's the local charity groups that have shown the entrepreneurial talent that Global Forum needed.



## The Green Team

If Global Forum achieves anything locally, it will be to raise awareness on environmental issues. At the very least, it has encouraged the Council to clean up their act and the fruits of their labour will be launched at Global Forum.

The Council has set up the 'Green Team' to look at the City's problems of sustainable green initiatives. The Team will develop a green action plan for the City, work on Local Agenda 21 and outline a City strategy for recycling. Assistant City Planning Officer, David Kaiserman points out that the Green Team shows the Council's commitment to the environment. "We want to make Manchester - and the world - a greener and healthier place".

## It Must be the Weather!

We had a report of a Camberwell Beauty butterfly down by the Mersey near Cheadle. We were a little sceptical about this but another report from the moors by Belmont leads us to believe that this rare and beautiful butterfly really must be taking a summer holiday, up north. Have you seen one? Do let us know if you have.

## PLANNING MATTERS

- by Tim Lepidus

### Rare Fern Saved?

A recent planning application to rebuild a sports pavilion and extend a playing field in the Mersey Valley, at the end of Brookburn Road, Chorlton, threatened trees and some Soft Shield Fern. At the time of the application this was the only example of the fern known of in Greater Manchester where it was thought to be extinct. After objections from local people, and MW, the planning application was passed but with the condition that there should be tree preservation orders on the trees and the area where the fern is growing will be protected.

### Metro to the Airport

The public inquiry into the Airport Metrolink is now over and we await the result. We are not against extensions to the Tram network but we did express our opinion that there would be more potential for passengers if the

route went down the Wilmslow Road corridor rather than across the Mersey (see Magpie 33). We got the impression that our alternative was not looked upon favourably at the inquiry. However, our main reason for attending the inquiry was to persuade the inspector that minimum damage should be done to nature conservation interests by the planned route. At Hardy Farm (SBI) the line will cross on a viaduct, which is better than the embankment we were expecting. However, we were told that three of the rarer plants found in a willow carr would have to be transplanted as they were in the path of the line. The plants in question were, Common Spotted Orchid, Wood Club Rush and Royal Fern (which is particularly rare in Manchester; I am told that it is the star plant of Wem Moss NNR and I have only seen it once before, on a Broad edge in Norfolk). There was doubt about the success of transplanting the last two plants and we were doubtful that the orchid could be moved successfully as it only grew in the one spot and if anywhere else on the site was suitable it would already be there. I also thought that the line of the route would miss the willow carr and that with care taken during construction, damage could be avoided. **On a site visit, with the inspector and the ecologist, I think I managed to bring the inspector round to our point of view.**

I don't think I had the same success over the area by Big Wood, in Wythenshawe. There, a station is planned on the site of the last remaining area of the South Manchester mossland, where both Orange Tip and Green-veined White Butterflies breed. Our suggestion to route the line through the adjacent "business park" did not go down so well. Still, we can but hope.

## Editorial Apology

I apologise to our readers for the absence of the second half of the Wildlife Gardening story. I have not had time to do the necessary editorial work so it will now appear in the autumn issue of Magpie. Not too long to wait as autumn will be with us before we know it.

*Not quite enough room for the March Hare Cartoon so you'll have to wait till autumn. The script was proof read by Unity so there should not be too many mistakes. Oh, and have I got the print size right!*

**Manchester Aviation Tree Challenge? More next Issue**



## USEFUL CONTACTS:

- RSNC, Urban Wildlife Partnership** . Chris Gordon, 01522 544400
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust** ..... (North Group, Trafford), Liz Blackman, 0161-962 6748  
..... (Wilmslow Group), Tony Browne, 0161-436 1761
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust** ..... Bolton Wildlife Project, 01204 361847
- BTCV** ..... (Salford & Trafford), Val Sutton, 0161-872 7640 (day)  
..... (Sale & Altrincham), Shelagh Aston, 0161-860 6910  
..... (Stockport), Kim Porter, 01625 874729 (weekends & evenings)
- British Trust for Ornithology** ..... (Greater Manchester Recorder), Judith Smith, 01942 712615
- 
- RSPB** ..... (Stockport Group), Tony O'Neill, 0161-962 2449  
..... (Manchester Group), Simeon Rydz, 0161-945 3831
- South Lancashire Bat Group** ..... Martin Prescott, 0161-796 6211
- Mammals/Insects** ..... (Bolton Museum), Steve Garland, 01204 522311
- Amphibians/Ponds** ..... Dave Bentley, 0161-724 8606
- 
- Mersey Valley Wardens** ..... (Sale), 0161-905 1100; (Chorlton), 0161-881 5639
- Medlock & Tame Valley Conservation Association** ..... Mildred Burlinson, 0161-330 2721
- Manchester City Council** ..... (Countryside Officer), Elaine Norsworthy, 0161-273 5843
- Manchester FoE** ..... 0161-834 8221
- Manchester Earth First!** ..... 0161-274 4665 (Day), 0161-248 9224 (Evening)

---

Manchester Wildlife is a networking organisation. You are included on our Contacts Lists, are we included on yours?

---

© Copyright Manchester Wildlife: 82 Crantock Drive, Heald Green, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 3HA. Telephone: 0161-438 7040

The "Magpie" is the newsletter of Manchester Wildlife. The opinions expressed within its pages are not necessarily those of Manchester Wildlife. Every effort is made to ensure that the information in the Magpie is correct. Anyone who undertakes a project based on the information contained in the Magpie does so at their own risk.

Printed at MARC on Recycled Paper





## "Standing Up For Wildlife"

### EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Please try to take part in as many events as possible. It is best to phone the contact to make sure there are no alterations.

- |                    |      |  |
|--------------------|------|--|
| <b>August 1995</b> |      |  |
| Monday             | 28th | <b>Parrs Wood Family Fun Day</b> - 11 am to 5 pm at the Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education. <b>The Best Show of the Year.</b> Manchester Wildlife will be represented by Roger Jackson & John Rudd demonstrating pole-lathe turning. Much, much more. Contact PWCRC 445 4566  |
| <b>September</b>   |      |  |
| Sunday             | 10th | <b>Hough End Clough Hay Cut</b> - Conservation is fun on our annual meadow mowing at the Clough. Meet at 11 am on Hough End Crescent, Mauldeth Road West (south end of Alexandra Road South). Wear strong footwear and old clothes, bring waterproofs, lunch and drink. Contact Ian Brown 0161-437 7040.                     |
| Tuesday            | 12th | <b>Social Meeting</b> - Old Monkey Public House, Portland St./Princess St Time 7.30 pm. A more convenient City Centre location. Convenient for Piccadilly bus station, Metro (Peter Square/Piccadilly Gardens). Hope to see you there to chat about Wildlife Matters in Greater Manchester. Contact Ian Brown 0161-437 7040. |
| Thursday           | 28th | <b>General Meeting</b> - Time 7.30 pm. At the One World Centre, Friends Meeting House Basement, Central Street (off Mount Street) Contact Unity Kelly 226 4583.  |
| Saturday           | 30th | <b>Butterfly Conservation in the North West</b> - See Magpie Page 20.  |
| <b>October</b>     |      |  |
| Friday             | 6th  | <b>Mersey Basin Weekend</b> - We are trying to arrange an event. If you are interested in taking part contact Unity (226 4583) or Ian (437 7040)   |
| to Monday          | 9th  |  |
| Tuesday            | 10th | <b>Social Meeting</b> - Old Monkey Public House, Portland St./Princess St Time 7.30 pm. A more convenient City Centre location. Convenient for Piccadilly bus station, Metro (Peter Square/Piccadilly Gardens). Hope to see you there to chat about Wildlife Matters in Greater Manchester. Contact Ian Brown 0161-437 7040. |
| Saturday           | 21st | <b>Apple Day</b> - Contact Unity Kelly 0161-226 4583.  |
| Tuesday            | 24th | <b>Strategic Planning Meeting</b> - 7.30 pm at the home of Unity Kelly, 13 Ruskin Avenue, Rusholme - Contact 226 4583  |
| <b>November</b>    |      |  |
| Tuesday            | 14th | <b>Social Meeting</b> - Old Monkey Public House, Portland St./Princess St Time 7.30 pm. A more convenient City Centre location. Convenient for Piccadilly bus station, Metro (Peter Square/Piccadilly Gardens). Hope to see you there to chat about Wildlife Matters in Greater Manchester. Contact Ian Brown 0161-437 7040. |
| Wednesday          | 22nd | <b>National Tree Week</b> - Woodland tasks - to be announced. Contact Ian Brown 0161-437 7040.   |
| Thursday           | 30th | <b>General Meeting</b> - Time 7.30 pm. At the One World Centre, Friends Meeting House Basement, Central Street (off Mount Street) Contact Unity Kelly 226 4583.  |
| <b>December</b>    |      |  |
| Sunday             | 3rd  | <b>National Tree Week</b> - Ends.  |
| Tuesday            | 12th | <b>Christmas Social</b> - Contact Ian Brown 0161-437 7040.   |

MEMBER OF



Putting *wildlife* on the map