

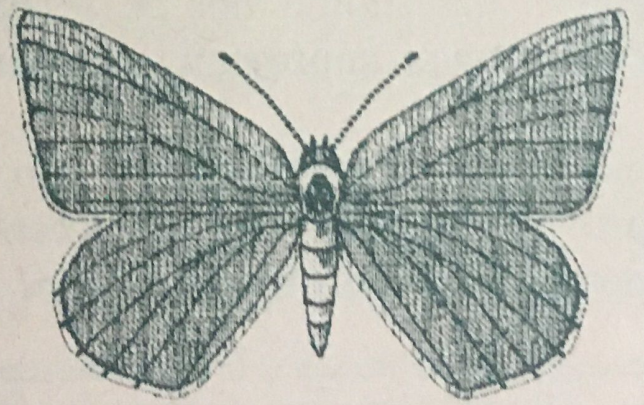
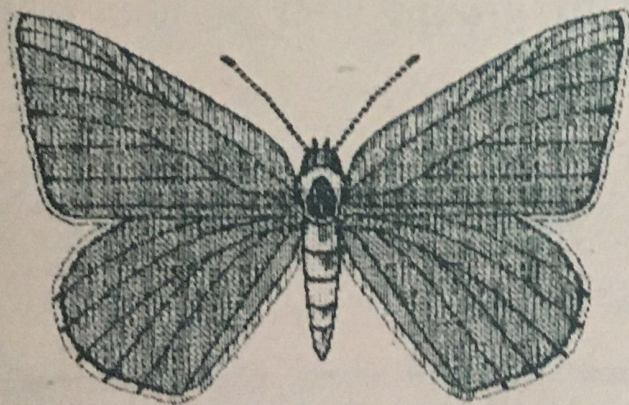
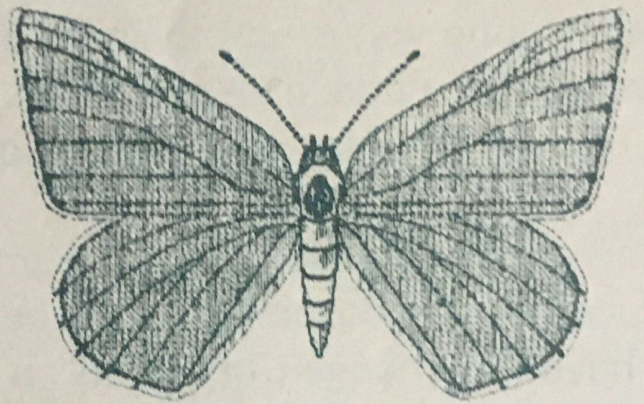
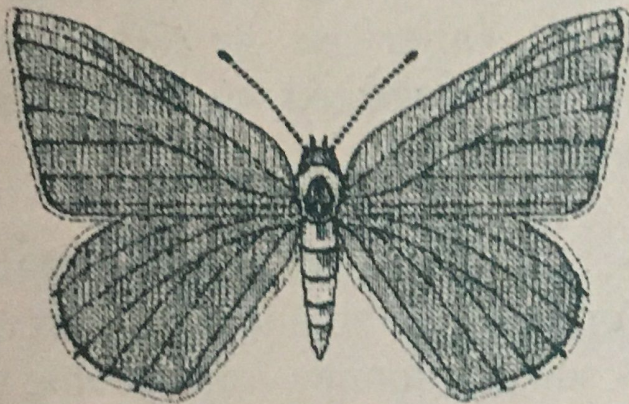
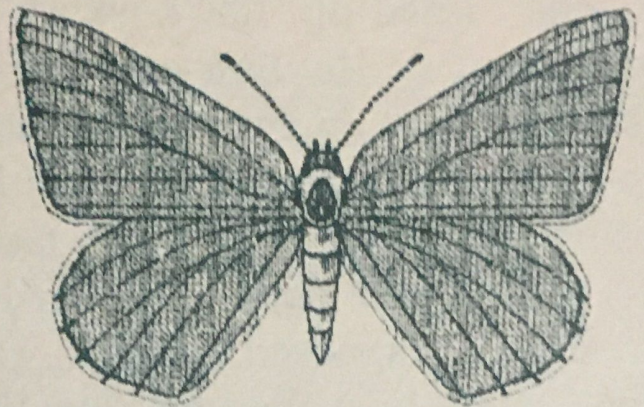
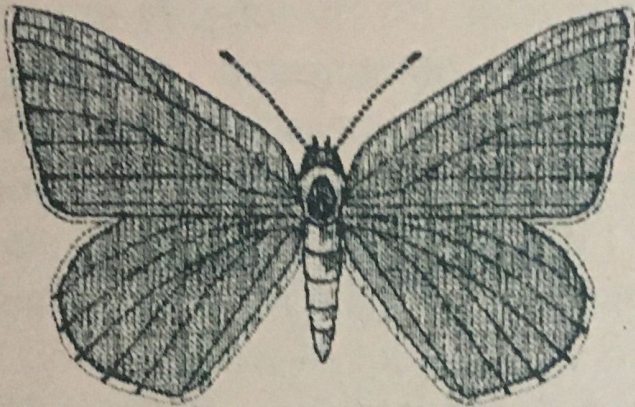


Manchester Wildlife's Newsletter

Magpie

The

Number 38 - - - - - Summer 1996



40p

STANDING UP FOR WILDLIFE IN GREATER MANCHESTER

Editorial

Editor's Office 0161-437 7040

Now I don't usually complain but I spent five or six weeks, working solidly, editing the spring "Magpie", then re-vamping our exhibition and doing a million other arduous tasks preparing for Manchester Wildlife's fantastic Members' Day; and what happened? Hardly anyone turned up; that's what! Those who did thoroughly enjoyed what must be the best event of its kind in Manchester. A bodging demonstration, superb exhibitions, the South Lancashire Bat Group, Environment Question Time, with an excellent panel, another money losing raffle and much, much more. I did not enjoy the day as much as I should have done. I had had a severe head ache for over a week; my doctor diagnosed shingles. Others put in a lot of work as well. I don't know how they feel but I'm not doing it again. If there is a popular demand for a similar event next year then we will need a few willing volunteers to share the work. Otherwise the A.G.M. will have to be a much simpler affair. Anthony suggested we should take a train to a nature reserve and hold it on the way.

The article, "Hanson is as Hanson does" in Magpie 37 resurrected the question of sponsorship and where (or who) we should take it from. I have not changed my mind on this subject; money from people or organisations who despoil the environment in any way is dirty money and should not be accepted by groups who purport to be conserving or improving the environment.

Apologies to two members who did not receive their copies of the spring **Magpie**. This has been put right; such errors are usually spotted when sorting the membership details.

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

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

by Anthony Phelps

It was a cool, cloudy but dry afternoon as four **MW** members met in the Tatton Arms car park in Northenden to start the walk. Luckily, I had checked the route of the walk during the previous weekend, finding that the golf course had fenced off my previous approach to the woodland from the north-west, but we still got through, a little further along, around the remains of the soon to be demolished Rose Hill Centre.

Despite the woodland being used by the local children, there is very little litter and dumping (though we did rescue a pick-axe head from one of the wetland areas), although the area immediately behind the new houses seems to have been adopted by the owners as their own private compost heap! One of our party wandered around, apparently totally disorientated, until he found a tree with a burned out centre, and felt at home again! One of the highlights of this woodland walk was the largest area of Marsh Marigolds that any of us could remember.

We arrived at the lake and found one Mute Swan sitting on a nest and after a while, the other was spotted on the opposite bank, under a large willow. Other sightings included one Great-crested Grebe looking extremely beautiful, Mallard, Coot and Sedge Warbler with a singing Whitethroat present.

Loonts Lake to Gatley Carrs Walk

I thought the Sand Martins that I had seen on my previous visit would not show again, but one suddenly appeared and gave a wonderful aerobatic display, playing with a feather. I now know that these Martins are from a colony opposite The Waterside Hotel, East Didsbury, which I have also seen feeding over the hay meadow on Millgate Fields, which are just across the motorway from this lake.

Our second stop was in a small patch of woodland off Longley Lane, beside the railway. This is a mixed woodland, mainly young regeneration, with a few very old trees. There seems to be a lot of fruit species, so I think it's worth a visit later in the summer.

Next, we visited the ex-Manchester Business Park site on the other side of Longley Lane. I feel that this site should be studied, and used as a blue-print for future play areas for the "yoof" of Manchester. It seemed purpose-built for them; activities included rafting, paddling (I'm sure we'll see swimming in warmer weather) and fishing. It has a circular "race track" for motorbikes and bags of room for bonfires. The designers had also provided a good supply of garden centre waterside plants, which, judging from the bare soil, were being gratefully received by the local population. Despite all this activity, we found a pair of Lapwings, one sitting, a Moorhen and a party of four Linnets feeding. I still cannot help wondering about the large brick "gateway" and two "windows" overlooking the motorway.

It was only a short walk to Gatley Carrs. The reed-bed was full of Orange Tip butterflies. This was, for me, a low point of my two walks. I cannot help thinking that something is wrong with this area. What we have is a large lake, a large reed-bed and plenty of trees but from my observations, very little using them. I have not heard a single Sedge Warbler in the area. I know examples of this habitat elsewhere which would be teeming with the sight and sound of many different species of birds. Why not here? We finished our walk back to where we had started, finding three Grey Herons feeding at the Weir.

What Do YOU Think LA 21 Is?

by Ian Brown

Writing about a subject from a base of little knowledge and the minimum of research, makes you think. The main conclusion I came to after re-reading my article in **Magpie 36** was that re-cycling of domestic waste is best done "in house". Once it has gone into the refuse collection it becomes more difficult to separate. Also, giving up using shampoo, not to save money but to cut down on plastic bottle use, made me think of other ways of reducing the plastic coming into the home. Solid fats and spreads come wrapped in paper which can go on the compost heap, as can other scraps of paper and card. I've almost cut my waste to nil; but what to do about toothpaste tubes?

Others have been thinking too:

Saving Water and Wildlife

by Janet Cuff

I couldn't really think of any particular recycling or reuse tips à propos Ian Brown's article on RUBBISH in **Magpie 36**, but it did get me thinking about saving resources in general and in particular, since we seem to have entered a period of persistent drought, about saving water. A dry summer followed by light autumn rainfall. Then plenty of winter snow, but apparently 9 inches of snow is equivalent to only one inch of rain; we're going to have trouble and something has to be done.

Water companies must, of course, take a major share of the responsibility. They have not put nearly enough resources into repairing leaky pipes or making adequate arrangements to move water from one area to another. They need to address these problems without delay. But consumers also need to do their bit. Most people seem to think they have a God-given right to use as much water as they like and it needs to be impressed upon us all that water is a precious resource which should not be squandered. Government has been lacking here in not publicising this message adequately, and opposition parties have compounded the problem by making political capital out of putting all

the blame on the water companies, thereby implicitly exonerating wasteful consumers.

Education may not, however be enough. Financial incentives may be needed and I will make the controversial statement that I am in favour of the introduction of water metering. Proponents of this are usually vigorously opposed by community workers, health and social workers, etc., who claim that water metering will lead to health problems and financial hardship. But I really cannot see that flushing the lavatory less frequently, turning off the tap whilst brushing one's teeth or washing some clothes less frequently need cause health problems. Of course there are people with large families, or sick or disabled relatives to care for, who need to use a lot of water, and would be financially hit by metering. Special allowances could be made in cases of hardship, as is done with gas and electricity. Any allowances should be adequate but, in principle, I do not think it unreasonable to ask people to pay for the water they use.

In the end, I think metering is the only way to get people to save water, and I say this from experience. Until I had a meter installed, I thought I was economical in the use of water, but I've since realised that I was unnecessarily wasteful. I've always known that showers were more economical on water than baths, and for that reason have always used a shower. However, other everyday activities had not really impinged on me concerning waste of water. When you wash the dishes, water is run off before it gets hot. This used to go down the drain but now I collect it in a bucket and use it for washing vegetables or rinsing glass jars for the bottle bank. We've installed a water butt to collect rainwater from the roof, providing ample water for the garden and cleaning windows. Ann Coffey, MP for Stockport, also thinks water butts are a good idea and, following a suggestion from a constituent, has written to North West Water suggesting they supply them free to households. She thinks they can well afford it out of their massive profits. Lavatory flushing uses a large amount of water. Put a water filled plastic bottle in the cistern and flush less often. I've been to small Youth Hostels out in the wild where their only source of water is a mountain spring which may dry up in a drought. Here "flush if you must" notices operate and I've adopted that policy at home. I find the thought you're paying for the 3 gallons of water which cascades out every time you flush soon overcomes sensibilities on this score. And we're saving money; our water bills are less than two-thirds of what they were previously. The £100 cost of the meter was soon recouped. There are only two of us in the house and we're economical but I think everyone would make

some saving unless they were a fanatical shower-taker or complete-change-every-day person. Moreover, you'll have a cleaner conscience even if not a quite so clean body.

What has all this to do with wildlife? The answer is, a lot. If we continue to use water as we have become accustomed, the need to make new reservoirs will be ever more urgent and precious habitats may have to be sacrificed. And water companies will inevitably apply to take yet more water from rivers which already have a reduced flow. Some rivers will dry up completely and in others the flow will become so reduced that pollutants, such as sewage and farm run-off, will be insufficiently diluted. Fish will die out and the wildlife dependent on the river will dwindle; the Kingfisher you used to see on your walk along the local stream will no longer be there.

It's imperative to conserve water resources but it has to be a combined effort by both users and providers. By all means write to your MP, urging him/her to put pressure on the water companies to cut down on wastage. But at the same time don't forget to play your part by putting that plastic bottle in the cistern and investigating the back of your house for a suitable site for a water butt.

(Editor's note: This article was written in the early spring. We've had a reasonable amount of rain since then but the reservoirs are still low so we must still economise on water, for the sake of wildlife. I've had a bag, full of stones in my cistern since the drought of 1976.)

So has anyone else had thoughts on saving wildlife; if so let us know. You'll have bought low-energy light bulbs, you'll be shopping locally; reducing, reusing and recycling. Your ideas on roads and transport might be appropriate at this time, with the Newbury by-pass having been so much in the news. How do we cut down on the need to travel and have less reliance on road transport? I don't know whether or not it was anything I said in my article, "Local Agenda 21 IS Rubbish!", but Heald Green is looking a lot tidier now; not perfect but better.

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Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge - T.S. Elliot

Butterfly Survey

by Ian Brown

Aren't computers wonderful. Though I have often said that a monk with a quill pen would probably be quicker, they do enable those whose artistic talents fall short of perfect to make a reasonable job of printing reports (and even newsletters). The recent acquisition of a computer means I can now turn out a butterfly survey which will be fit to publish. We started the survey in 1991. In the first two years records came in at a very satisfactory rate and, even though the that rate has slowed down, we now have enough information to make the end result interesting.

We have decided that our survey should be site based rather than mapping kilometre squares. This seems to make sense in an area which is mainly urban. While butterflies can be seen almost anywhere (I recently saw a Brimstone when passing through Davenport Station) it is the open sites where they live and breed. There will be space in the report for records of butterflies seen in gardens. Though very few gardens have the conditions which are ideal for breeding they are important as they make good feeding stations, especially in late summer when wildflowers become scarce. Also the report will be in loose leaf form so that it can be constantly updated. A page will be devoted to each site with a map, a table of species seen and a brief description of the site, its habitat and butterflies. I hope some of you are out surveying your local butterflies, this summer; reports will be welcome at any time. There is a survey form on the back of the events list. If you need more, please feel free to take photo-copies. If you have any problems with your surveying, do not hesitate to contact me.

How long it will take to complete the report is a little difficult to say. The first few pages have taken an age but I'm getting quicker with experience so, with a little luck, there could be something ready by the end of the year. We have enough funding remaining from our British Gas award to pay for a reasonable print run (hopefully) so those who have submitted reports should get a free copy. Others will be charged on a scale which will vary

to suit their means. This, we hope, will provide funds for further work on the survey.

The more sites which are surveyed, the better. Insects are a good indicator of the health of our open spaces and butterflies are fairly easy to identify. When we know which sites are good for butterflies we will be in a better position to protect them. If we find open spaces which are not good for butterflies we will be able to recommend ways of improving these sites.

So, the next time we have a fine day, why don't you go to your local open space and see what butterflies you can find.



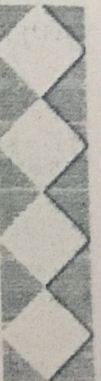
Why is a butterfly, what is it for.
For what, for why, the butterfly.

Why is a butterfly, where does it go,
When earth is covered with winter's snow.

But winter's soon over, then comes the spring.
Oh what beauty that season does bring.

Fluttering wings that fill the sky.

Why, oh why, is a butterfly.



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Diana Downing recommends the following publication:

"Wildlife in Church and Churchyard" by **Nigel Cooper** - ISBN 0 7151 7574 2 @ £6.95 - Published in 1995 for the Care of Churches by CHURCH HOUSE PUBLISHING, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ - **Readable, practical advice.**

Observations, survey results, news - would-be welcomed by Francesca Greenoak for the book she is writing for the Harper Collins New Naturalist series on churchyard wildlife and conservation. Send to: 4 Wood Row, Wiggington, Tring, Herts. HP23 6HS

Too Hot for Orchids? by Unity Kelly

National Wildlife Week, 15th June

Painted Ladies fluttered round the University "green bits" as we assembled to board the Openshaw Community Bus for our second Orchid Safari in National Wildlife Week. Some of our customers heard about it on BBC 1's "Watch Out".

Our first destination was the far side of Philip's Park, Bradford. A loud bang puzzled us but we were soon distracted by the enormous wooden barriers blocking off the site we had come to admire. It had been swept away by a large scale sewage installation. Ian revealed that he had been told that the operation should not have a significant impact on the environment of the park. So no wildflower meadow and only a couple of Common Spotted Orchids, discovered by Anthony when he plunged into the woodlandwhich covers the slope down the River Medlock.

We set off for the next site at Hulme Locks on the Bridgewater Canal, and as soon as we hit Oldham Road, two large pillars of black smoke dominated the view. We arrived at Swan Street to find the surreal scene of broken glass all over the pavements but life apparently going on as normal. As we approached Victoria Station, the reality struck home as we glimpsed the devastation in Corporation Street and met the first taped off roads. Superbly navigated and driven by Ian and Denise, we slowly worked our way round the diversions, decided to give the canal a miss and head for some much needed fresh air and open space at our third site, Chorlton Meadows.

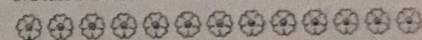
The lush greenery and cool shade, birdsong and flowers. It was like arriving on another planet. Everyone enjoyed their picnics and the chance to roam around, especially the younger ones. No Bee Orchids to be found here this time. The vegetation was very luxuriant (in need of rabbit grazing?)


though evidence of last summer's petrol attack, which burnt out the old orchard, could still be seen on the trees. Sweet Rocket, Goat's beard and butterflies were abundant and some fine clumps of Common Spotted Orchids were growing near the path. We then upped the orchid score dramatically, by driving round to boggy Kenworthy Fields on the far side of the Mersey Valley. Marsh Orchids thrive here and there were still some Orange Tip butterflies on the wing. Ian found the Common Spotted Orchids growing in the glade we coppiced in 1994.

The dry banks of the road cutting on the Wilmslow Road, near the airport, offered a complete contrast. This is an SBI, with five species of orchid recorded. Only Common Spotted and Twayblade were in evidence, together with other species which flourish on sunny, well drained sites, Birds Foot Trefoil and Mouse-ear hawkweed, over which danced Common Blue Butterflies.


Now extremely thirsty, we had

visions of an ice cream van in the car park at Abney Hall Park, in Cheadle. This proved illusory, despite the numbers of people in the park enjoying the lakes and meadows. A desperate search party went back into Cheadle. The rest of us plunged into the marshy area and were instantly wallowing in Marsh Orchids, the finest colony in Greater Manchester, each stand more exuberant than the last. A flourishing clump of Common Spotted Orchids were soon found, growing much larger than the specimens on the road cutting. Green-veined Whites decorated the site and Ian spotted a Painted Lady, bringing his butterfly count for this site to 16 species. The high point for me was a pair of Four Spotted Chasers (*Libellula quadrimaculata*), a species of dragonfly which is quite common in North Cheshire and likely to turn up anywhere the conditions are suitable, including garden ponds. So ended another most memorable day out with Manchester Wildlife.





Anthony's Wildlife Sightings



Sunday 2nd June 1996: Something I seem to observe every year at Kenworthy Fields, but have never understood, is the annual movement of Millipedes as they cross the road through the fields, sometimes in huge numbers, over a period of a couple of weeks. Does anyone know why they do this? Today, on my walk around various parts of the Mersey Valley I noticed Painted Lady butterflies everywhere. These sightings have since been reinforced by other people I have spoken with, and also by Simon King on the television. These butterflies are migrants which arrive from North Africa each year, sometimes only a few, but in occasional years, in vast numbers (as with most migrant species). This year, however, I have heard a rumour that this year's influx may have had more than a little help from the hand of man (or child?). The information is that the Butterfly Society has been issuing chrysalises to schools for them to study the process of metamorphosis. However, the rules state that they can only observe the emergent adults for about 3 days, and then must release them into the wild. I don't have to tell you that the species involved is the Painted Lady. I have no confirmation, as yet, of how many schools were involved but, according to the reports received, it could be a massive nation-wide release. Isn't nature wonderful!

the same "little birdy" who told me about the Painted Ladies, also informed me that Groundwork have surveyed Trafford Ecology Park (where they are thinking of setting up their new HQ), and that the translocated Great-crested Newts, from Parbold Quarry in Wigan, are still there and doing nicely. We had thought that this area was totally unsuitable for them, unlike English Nature who licensed the translocation. If this report is true, I'm glad they weren't flushed down the toilet, which was one suggestion after seeing their new home.

Sunday 9th June 1996: When I started my walk along the River Mersey from Stanton Avenue, I got the immediate impression that the whole area was on fire - there seemed to be huge smoke clouds everywhere. There had, in fact, been a massive hatching of tiny flies, and they were forming into large "clouds". I did notice two formations that surprised me; these started from the bankside vegetation, going straight up for about 30 or 40 feet at about 10 degrees from the vertical. What amazed me about these columns was that the sides were perfectly straight. Again, I have no explanation for this.

Beal Valley Blues!

by Merton Niven

Once again, yet another urban green wedge providing amenity, tranquillity and a haven for wildlife is scheduled for destruction by a local authority in their U.D.P. The authority is Oldham (who proclaim their concern for open spaces and nature conservation when it suits), and the area is the Beal Valley, which runs from Oldham through Shaw and Milnrow. The valley has traditional farmland, both grazing and hay meadows and a number of wetlands, including Royton Moss SBI; the only lowland peat bog in Oldham. The whole area was recently classified as Green Belt and the all of the valley is well used for recreation, with many footpaths. The fields and wetlands support a year round variety of birds, some of which are now locally and regionally at risk. Conveniently, no survey has of mammals, amphibians, invertebrates or archaeology has been undertaken, despite the wealth of local expertise, both professional and amateur.

And what is the threat to this precious environment on the doorstep of densely built up urban communities? The area is to be made into a tip in the form of a huge bowl constructed from "inert" spoil, industrial and commercial waste, up to a depth of 14 metres; some 2 million cubic metres delivered over eight years. The site of the planned tip is underlain with old mine workings and a geological fault, aquifers supplying drinking water and is of course on the flood plain of the River Beal. The waste will not include liquid chemicals but will include commercial food waste. Having destroyed a large area of the Beal Valley, and endangered the groundwater systems, the "crowning glory" will be a golf course! Cogent objections have been expressed by C.P.R.E., Lancashire Wildlife Trust, by a senior officer of the (late) N.R.A. and by Oldham's own senior planning officers. The Council ignored this advice and steamrolled the planning permission through in 1994.

A local group, Beal Valley Rescue, is still trying to halt the proposal since the tipper has yet to be granted a Waste Management Licence. Jim Stidworthy, a local resident and LWT supporter led a very successful ramble around the site in June - remember MW's "Last Chance to See" at Bruntwood Meadows? The whole scheme makes a mockery of responsible planning and waste management, public good, local democracy and, not least, protection of historic landscapes and bio-diversity.

Contact Jim Stidworthy ☎ 01706 841074 if you want to support Beal Valley Rescue.

Recycling Waste

by Malcolm Practice

We need recycling sites in Manchester and it would be thought that when an opportunity presents itself it should be taken up with a great deal of enthusiasm. MW member, David Schofield, has told us a sad tale of a missed opportunity near his home in Fallowfield. This is written in diary form:

Bottle bank sites in Manchester - The reality Main dates in my two year battle- by David Schofield

1994 - Jul/Aug: I make weekly complaints to the Land & Property Dept. (L&P) and/or Planning Dept. re: (1) Building waste being dumped on land; (2) Building without planning consent by developer; (3) Building on land, not owned by the developer, the covenant on which forbids such work; (4) Trees felled, site levelled by bulldozer - topsoil, trunks, etc. bulldozed into dangerous and unsightly pile at one end of the land; (5) This former partly to create an access road across the land not owned by developer.

1994 - October: Developer instructed to cease illegal activities and remove walls etc. built on land not owned by him and covered by covenant.

1995 - Feb: I continue to make complaints, receive empty promises of action but nothing is done. **March:** I ask for bottle bank site potential of the site to be assessed by Planning Dept. **April:** Cathy Brooks (of Planning) visits site and discusses - sends me a letter throwing onus of decision on various third parties.

L&P again assure me that the site will not be sold without resolution of these abuses, which they are dealing with. **July 18th:** Still no action - I complain to Ombudsman - Council respond by asking for extra three months to consider their reply.

1995 - August 1st: L&P give four weeks notice of auction of site - "Landscaping" must be completed within six months of sale and purchaser must pay £500 costs to L&P in addition to purchase bid (this for a site which cannot be used commercially if covenant is to be observed). The conditions of sale mean that any purchaser must accept all illegal actions, including access road, as a fait accompli - i.e., only one purchaser in the running. The effect of the illegal road cutting the land in two is to isolate a small section at one end. L&P tell me that this is to be sold separately to house owners whose properties back onto the land. One of these owners has created a car park feeding onto the already over-used Moseley Road. The real result of Council Policy is to create up to four extra roads feeding onto Moseley Road.

1996 - March: No action has yet been taken about illegal activities and nothing has changed. **18th April:** I discover that the land has still not been actually sold. The conditions of sale have been altered and approved at a Sub-committee (L&P) and a full Council session. Minutes of these meetings have been classified as confidential by the Director of L&P who writes to me - 'I do not agree with your comment that "I failed to inform you that funds were available to protect sites such as this under the Local Agenda 21 bottle bank scheme". Firstly I was not aware of any such scheme and secondly if you were considering tendering for the site you should have made your own enquiries to ascertain if any financial grants were available to assist a possible purchase'.

Malcolm Practice comments: As I said, a sorry tale but it is interesting to see how the Council actually goes about its work. Does the Council really expect members of the public to apply for grants (from the Council) so that they can buy land (from the Council) to enable them to set up recycling centres. What a way to run a country! If the Council had any bottle they would identify possible recycling sites and do it themselves, saving all the messing around. As the land in question is covered by a covenant - cannot be developed and must be preserved as a landscaped open space - it would make a much needed green lung in this heavily developed area and a recycling centre, in one corner, would be a great convenience for the local people.



A View from the Trough

by Daphne Laureola

On the 23rd of April I found myself at the glittering portals of the Mayfair Inter-continental Hotel in London, at the kind request of B.P., a guest at the 1996 B.P. Conservation Awards Ceremony. The credit for this drink in the warm bath of

corporate hospitality goes to my zoologist daughter whose undergraduate expedition was a runner up in B.P./Birdlife International Awards. The guest list (set out in a smartly produced programme) ranged from the leading lights in Birdlife and Fauna & Flora International, assorted academics and expedition patrons (Bill Oddie graced the Mangaia display in person and a very bizarre smock), other corporate sponsors and lots of B.P. high ups, representatives from the embassies of the expedition destinations and, of course, proud parents of the young people on the 13 expedition award winners. These 13 conservation projects had been selected from some 270 applications. The Smirking presence of his Excellency the Indonesian Ambassador, whose genocide-concealing platitudes were to go unchallenged on B.B.C. News, almost put me off the buffet.

Like shining beacons of integrity and commitment, vibrant with energy and enthusiasm, the youthful (20-35 yrs) expedition members lit up the Crystal Room, as they clustered proudly around their exhibition stands. Each project seemed more fascinating and deserving of support than the last. The "characters" soon made their presence felt. I warmed to all of them, glowed with pride for my own daughter, knowing how much work has gone into the planning and fund-raising. I could but wish that this remarkable and delightful sample of the up and coming generation would be truly able to influence the future rather more than the collection of self-satisfied suits with their well honed corporate double speak (and that includes the academics).

Then came the well orchestrated presentation ceremonies complete with Jill Dando, as continuity girl and cheer leader, in sugar-plum pink. John Browne, Group chief Executive of B.P. did his bit, declaring that B.P. never permanently damaged the environment. The four winners in each conservation category gave fascinating short presentations on the purpose of their expeditions and took away expensive chunks of glass trophy. Then, following a second adulatory introduction, Sir David Attenborough came on stage to deliver his address. He waved his arms about, rocked backwards and forwards a lot, got Birdlife International and Fauna & Flora International hopelessly confused with the RSPB and WWF! and delivered a speech of such breathtaking complacency and intolerance for contrary opinions that I could hardly believe my ears, even allowing for the fact that B.P. was calling the tune. The young woman next to me was being, metaphorically, sick into her handbag. She was a FoE national campaigner specialising in RTZ and the Bakun Dam. Geoffery Lean, doyen of environmental journalists (the only one there, I think) rolled his eyes and swallowed hard, scribbling the while. Among Sir David's gems was the astounding dictum that the more uncompromising environmental campaigners, who unfortunately got too much media coverage (Newbury was daily in the news at the time), were not only hypocrites but, like the dinosaurs, had no future and would become extinct, and rightly so! This was predicated on the grounds of their lack of enthusiasm for polite dialogue with the multi-nationals. Sad to say, this outburst sent a ripple of (defensive) laughter around the pompous generation. The young conservationists sat stony faced, having become accustomed to putting private convictions to one side in the hunt for funds. Sir David is a traditionally well educated man, though probably past his sell-by date, and had clearly forgotten Voltaire's great dictum: "I may disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." I engaged the great man in some "polite dialogue" over the vol au vents, to the effect that I had been involved in conservation (in my own small way) for almost as long as he, but had found his assertion that it only took a bit of dialogue

(with the right people of course) to resolve conservation conflicts remarkably ineffectual, even when backed up by all the necessary scientific and policy information. The only thing which ever tipped the balance was people power and a direct challenge to so called authority. He waffled off. I had some more wine.

And whilst on the subject of food (there was masses) I have to reveal that such is the finesse of the B.P. public relations machine, that the 70 young expedition members who had to spend the previous day at seminars at a nearby hotel, found that no provision had been made for vegetarian food and requests for such were met with incomprehension and annoyance!!

So back home to the ongoing saga of worldwide environmental "rape and pillage", together with the continued destruction of indigenous peoples (in which Indonesia, China and Brazil are the world leaders). Maybe Sir David is indulging himself with a bit of dialogue in the front parlour but, for the rest of us doing our bit in the back garden, the council lobby or up a tree, or just watching in horror as the destruction continues, take the advice of the Victorian mother to her newly wed daughter: "Just lie back and think of Attenborough".



Butterflies Again



Painted Ladies are back! There has been another continental influx which has added to those bred here from the earlier invasion. They have been seen in great numbers on the buddleia at Great Western Street (behind Aldi). So look out at any buddleia or thistle patch, near you, and prepare to be enchanted by these beautiful creatures. There has also been a mass migration of Silver Y moths. These apparently come from southern France. What other butterflies and moths have you seen in great numbers? Let us know. After a poor start to the summer, things are certainly looking up, butterflies wherever you go, makes life worth living; don't you think?

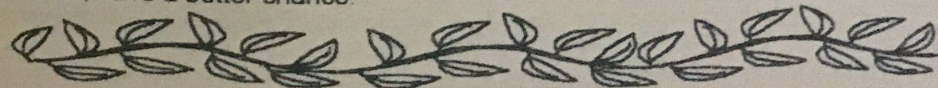
The Sweeny's Back!

by Anthony Phelps

No I don't mean the TV show with John Thaw as Jack Reagan, but my new nickname for the Environment Agency, neé the NRA ("Sweeny Todd - the demon barber") [sorry, it didn't work at Windscale either!]. They're at it again, mowing the river banks to death. I would like to know why, during one of the longest drought periods in living memory, they are still so concerned with preserving the River Mersey as a High Speed Drain. I see that they've now signed all the low lying areas as "Flood Basins", which they always have been, but now they're official! (Memories of existing woodland suddenly becoming the Red Rose Forest spring to mind.)

My last article on the River Mersey was quite optimistic, about its flowering last year. Well, today it just looked a mess. If people have to cut every blade of grass, I wish they'd take the cuttings away!

Why, you may ask, do I keep going on about this when it seems that no attention is being paid to me? Well, I attend the meetings of the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit's Wildlife Working Group, as do the Environment Agency, and the main task at the moment is producing species lists and plans for "Biodiversity". For a long time now, it has been noted that the Water Vole, both nationally and locally, is in extreme decline, if not extinct in some areas. Popular opinion usually blames predation by Mink as being the only or main cause for this. However, I'd like to suggest that loss, and mismanagement, of habitat is possibly as great a cause. Voles need lush waterside vegetation in which to feed. It also provides shelter from predation. So, come on Environment Agency, do your bit for biodiversity, let the River Mersey live with pride and allow it to "let its hair down". If you have to mow things, try controlling the huge forests of Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, and let some of the native vegetation, and associated wildlife, have a better chance.



Local Agenda 21 Needs Your Help

The Manchester Local Agenda 21 Forum is attending a number of fairs, festivals and carnivals in Manchester. If you would like to help out at any of these events, please contact Paul Sanguinazzi on ☎ 236 5195. Information on the work of LA21 can be obtained from Brenda Sedgwick on the same number.



In Brief



Woodland Craft Centres

When Manchester Wildlife manages woodland we do not like to waste the wood but put it to some useful purpose. This was the way of the old woodland craftsmen and some of our members are taking part in the woodland crafts revival. Pole-lathe turning and chairmaking seem to be the most popular but we have one member making besom brooms and another who is keen on blacksmith work using charcoal. Maybe there are others, out there, beavering away at some woodland craft or would like to have a go. If so let us know, for the next stage in this initiative is to establish craft centres in the Red Rose Forest so as to create opportunities for people to take up craft work both for pleasure and even to earn a living. We are negotiating in some districts of Greater Manchester in order make this dream a reality. A meeting is being arranged to discuss the possibilities in Manchester and the BTCV headquarters at Philips Park in Prestwich has great potential. In Bolton we have aroused the interest of council officials and a site has been identified. Unfortunately much money would be needed to bring the buildings back into use but they would be suitable for many environmental uses. In Salford we have met with the Craft Officer, Paul Smith, and Mike Leiber, from the Museum. We visited Clifton House Farm in the Irwell Valley which would be ideal for craft work and Salford Council seem quite keen to put the farm to such a use. So, though there is nothing definite, yet, we are working hard to bring our plans to fruition. We will keep you posted.

Reddish Mini-wood

Some of you will have heard of this small area of woodland in Reddish: maybe you've been there. A few years ago we helped to create what is now a haven for wildlife on a rather scrubby patch of grassland which was used mainly as a rubbish dump. Despite the occasional outbreak of vandalism it is now thriving. It is being managed by the Stockport Conservation Volunteers and ourselves. Local resident and MW

member, June Greaves, whose idea started the whole thing off and who raised funds and did much else to get the scheme off the ground, has persuaded the Woodland Trust to take over responsibility for the wood. Details have yet to be finalised but the owner has agreed to sell the land for a nominal fee, so the future of the Mini-wood should be secure and continue to provide a safe haven for wildlife in Reddish.

Painswick Park Meadow

by Ian Brown

Another success story for Manchester Wildlife. Located in the west corner of Painswick Park, this the site to which we transplanted wildflowers in 1991. The plants, which included orchids, came from part of a Grade A SBI which was destroyed by the access road to T2 at the airport. (The rest of the site is now underneath a car park.) The area in the park is doing well; the orchids are down in number but have spread themselves about a bit, as have most of the other plants. Common Blue butterflies seem to like it. On my last visit I met Len Birchenall who helped us with the transplant and did other good work as Chairman of the Woodhouse Park Tenants & Residents Association. After Len had left a small party of women and children walked round the meadow. I spoke to the oldest woman who told me how much she enjoyed seeing the orchids and other wildflowers. They reminded her of her childhood home, Tymaer Farm at Llangasty near Brecon, which had meadows full of flowers. The farm has now been purchased by the local Council and Wildlife Trust so will be saved from agricultural "improvement". Though the woman had lived in Wythenshawe for 40 years she had lost none of her Welsh accent and its satisfying to know we have done something which will always remind her of home.

Second Runway Walks

A series of walks are planned in the countryside which would be destroyed if the second runway, at Manchester Airport, gets the go ahead. If you would like to see what you might be missing contact Lance ☎ 0161-998-1888 (evenings) and book yourself a ramble along the beautiful Cheshire lanes and footpaths - don't miss it, next year may be too late!

Postscript from Irianjaya

by Daphne Laureola

One of the first announcements at the B.P. Conservation Award Ceremony concerned the fate of Cambridge graduates taken hostage by freedom fighters in Irianjaya (a.k.a. West Papua New Guinea) and the efforts being made to secure their safe release. Nod to H.E. the Indonesian Ambassador. The expedition had been one of the 1995 Award winners and "everything possible was being done to retrieve the joint British/Indonesian research team from their unfortunate predicament." No mention, of course, of the horrific predicament of the entire Irianjayan nation and territory after conquest, immigrant translocations from over populated Java, open season for transnational exploitation and environmental degradation (RTZ gold mine at "Freeport") and the 10 year programme of genocide, aided and abetted by UK arms sales, which has killed an estimated hundred thousand Irianjayans, mainly civilians, and subjugated the rest to an inhuman dictatorship.

Then came the great rescue - crack troops from Indonesia, plus support from the SAS and Scotland Yard. Even more repellent than the gloating of H.E. the Ambassador and members of the government, was the appalling bias and racist terminology of the B.B.C.'s. news reports. No mention of the fact that West Papua Guinea is as much a conquered territory as any European country annexed by Hitler or Stalin. References to "primitive tribespeople" and jungle stereotypes found only in Tarzan films. The reports of the release must surely have been scripted by the F.O. and Indonesia, secure in the knowledge that millions of pounds of investment in both arms and (their) national resources would maintain a veil of hypocrisy over the state of affairs in Irianjaya. And the slaughter will continue. I phoned the Radio 4 duty officer to complain of bias, inaccurate terminology and absence of independent reporting. Of course it was both unsafe and provocative for a joint UK/Indonesian team to go into Irianjaya in the first place during a war of independence, but the dictatorship of Indonesia is dedicated to preserving the fiction that this struggle does not exist. Any genuine hope for the last world strongholds of biodiversity, including the integrity of the indigenous cultures will rest with the eventual liberation and self-governance of Irianjaya by the Irianjayans. Their day will come but painfully and with much suffering.

You can find out more by phoning Survival International

☎ 0171 242 1441

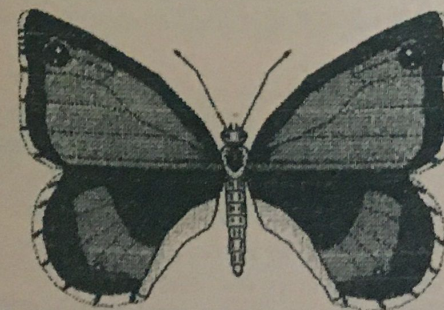
Watch Out

The South Manchester Wildlife WATCH Group was launched (re-launched) on Sunday the 2nd of June at Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education. And a good day was had by all.

Regular events are planned, including attendance at the Parrs Wood **Family Fun Day** on Monday the 26th of August; An **Earth Walk** on Sunday the 1st of September 2-4pm; **Night Life** (bat detecting) on Sunday the 6th of October 6-8pm, with **Tree planting, Fungus foray** and **Crafts for Christmas** to come. All events take place at Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education, East Didsbury.

The group is for children aged 8-12 years who would like to learn about wildlife and have some fun! Under 8's can attend but must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Parents are welcome to stay and join in the activities if they wish. The cost is 60p. per child for each indoor and outdoor meeting. A parental consent form must be completed for each child attending. For further details please contact registered WATCH leaders Chris Swinburn ☎ 0161-445 3433 and Sarah Ross ☎ 0161- 446 1068.

If you have children who are interested in wildlife and the environment, this is for you.



**wildlife
WATCH
and YOC**

by Unity Kelly

Last October I received an urgent phone call from Chris and Helen (FAN) after they had spotted a jessed hawk of unusual appearance in Upper Brook Street, near the Happy Eater. They had phoned around all the usual rescue and bird organisations, and got nowhere, as they were concerned for the bird's safety - from mobbing Magpies to the tidal waves of traffic. So, early next morning, a Sunday, I pedalled up to the disused church and there, on a lamp post was an elegant brown hawk which was about the size of a kite. It flew over to the church displaying the white and black barring on its tail (straight edged, unlike the deeply forked tail of a kite). Then I noticed its owner, identified by the cage, bait (rabbit) and ladders. Clearly a man in search of his falcon. I learned that the bird was a young female Harris Hawk, captive bred but only recently arrived in Reddish.

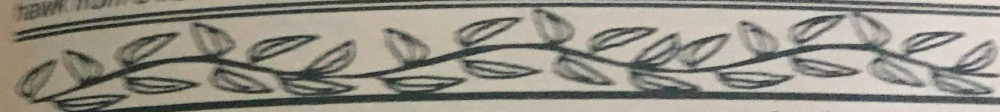
Harris Hawks are one of the more common American desert raptors, very light for their size and able to land on cacti without getting spiked. They have become popular with falconers as they are (relatively) easy to breed and train and they like company. You will almost certainly meet one at a falconry display. They are good with people and chunter quietly when stroked. How do I know this? I met a Harris Hawk on Sunday (4th of August) at the excellent Rural Craft Fair put on by St. Helens Council, Groundwork & B.T.C.V. near Rainford. It was a great day out.

Meanwhile, back in Upper Brook Street the bird refused all inducements to return home. She had been living off pigeons and cast out offal very happily for over a month, having been accidentally let out. The disused church provided a secure (indoor) refuge which served her well right through the winter, while her owner, and other falconers, tried to recapture her without success. She was even taking rats from the banks of the Ashton and Rochdale Canals behind Piccadilly. (Clearly we need more hawks in central Manchester.) I had a phone call from Chorlton-on-Medlock Primary School asking about the beautiful hawk taking pigeons on their playing field. I told them what I knew and said I would let them know the outcome.

I never got round to phoning Steve, the bird's owner, but meeting Phil Hudson's Harris Hawk at the Rural Fair, I mentioned the visitor to Upper Brook Street. Imagine my delight when Phil said he had been the one to finally retrieve the escapee, with considerable difficulty and cunning. As the region's leading falconer, with 30 years experience and all the relevant licences, he had been called in to help on the 18th of January! She's back home after her 4 month "adventure", a resourceful and intelligent bird who apparently settled back into the

"domestic" routine by the next morning. I wonder how many people spotted this beautiful bird while she was "mistress of Chorlton-on-Medlock"?

"Handsaw" - a contraction of "heronshaw", from "heronseau" (Fr.), a young heron. Even a novice falconer should know the difference between a hawk and a young heron. Hence: "I am but mad north-west, when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw." Hamlet and "What's in a Name" by Denis Owen.



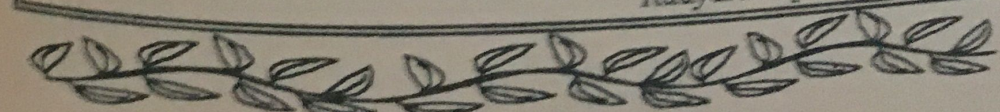
GEOFF HAMILTON - an appreciation

Of all the celebrities featured in close up on the cover of the oddly sized ENCY 95 magazines, Geoff Hamilton, who died far too soon on the 4th of August, did most for conservation. Without Geoff's constant plugging (pun?), the Peat Consortium's campaign to get gardeners to use peat-free compost would never have reached past the "converted". He kept this issue in the forefront of the gardening public's mind - and there are far more active gardeners than there are conservationists. Without being "cranky or obsessive" (The Independent, 6th Aug.), Geoff Hamilton brought his down to earth expertise to bear on all kinds of conservation related issues and changed the climate of gardening opinion as a result. He fronted the most recent campaign to stop illegal use of limestone pavement in rockeries. "His millions of fans did not include the makers of fertilisers and pesticides," (The Independent) as he demystified organic gardening and brought this approach into the mainstream of ordinary gardening practice. Friday evenings will not be the same without him, and his camera loving cat.

Anthony & Unity

quoteboxquoteboxquoteboxquoteboxquoteboxquoteboxquoteboxquotebox
"And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away!"

Rudyard Kipling 1865-1936



◆◆◆In Miniature◆◆◆



Planning Matters - There are times when urban open space comes out best in the planning system. The proposal by Manchester Metropolitan University to build houses on playing fields at the back of Longford Road have been ruled unacceptable by Manchester planners. We objected to this, as did many local people, including Councillor Mary Humpheries. Common sense does sometimes win.

Car Saves Tree - When council workers came to fell a 120 year old Copper Beech tree on quiet suburban Leith Road, in Sale, they found a parked car underneath and the owner away on holiday. Then local people swung into action when they realised how close the beloved tree had come to extinction. They contacted Councillor Helen Busted and the matter was brought up as an emergency item at the Technical Services Committee. Now, when the road is resurfaced, workers will excavate, round the tree, by hand. (Cars parked under trees in Manchester could help quell the enthusiastic chain-saw gangs who operate in the area - Ed.)

More Butterflies - The reason for the Common Blue butterflies on the front cover is that this species was abundant during the early summer on some sites. Look out for the second brood of this most beautiful jewel of an insect in the next few weeks. Natural meadows, where the grass is fairly short, are the best places to look.

Grave Matters - We have had a call from a company who is setting up a woodland cemetery in Worsley. The emphasis would be on tree planting and meadows which would be of great benefit to wildlife. This sounds most interesting and more eco-friendly than traditional burial or cremation. When we find out more you will be the first to know.

Ombudsman Stirrs up Abbey Pond

Coming soon in "Magpie" - What will the Ombudsman think of Manchester City Council's effort to replace the Abbey Pond, which was destroyed by office building at the Manchester Science Park? In an attempt to fulfil planning condition number 8, a pond was built in St. George's Park. Is it a pond, a puddle or merely a hole in the ground. Don't miss the next exciting episode in this saga. Make sure your subscriptions to MW are fully paid up so that you will not fail to receive your autumn "Magpie".

Urban Wildlife Partnership Conference

This takes place at Birkenhead on Friday the 25th and Saturday 26th of October. The Conference theme is Post Industrial Landscapes (the best sites for wildlife which usually get built on). It's informal, in-formative and inexpensive, and anyone can attend. Organisation is a joint effort by the UWP (part of the Wildlife Trusts) and Merseyside Environmental Trust. For further information contact Chris Gordon or James Marshall ☎ 01522 544400. Highly recommended

Have You Seen a Grass Snake in Manchester

If you have (or not) and would like to know more about these fascinating creatures, send an A5 S.A.E. (38p in stamps) to Frog Life, Trion House, Branfield, Halesworth, Suffolk. IP19 9AE. Mark your envelope, "Grass Snake Appeal".

Beal Valley - Stop Press

We hear that tipping is soon to start!!

Manchester Nature Conservation Strategy - We have made inquiries regarding this strategy and Council policy; we will let you know the position when we receive a reply.

Interested in office work for MW - See Events List

USEFUL CONTACTS:

RSNC, Urban Wildlife Partnership	Chris Gordon, 01522 544400
English Nature	(NW Regional Office), Bernard Fleming, 01942 820342
Cheshire Wildlife Trust	(North Group, Trafford), Liz Blackman, 0161-962 6748 (Wilmslow Group), Tony Browne, 0161-436 1761
Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Bolton Wildlife Project, Mick Weston, 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
Red Rose Forest Team	Jonathan Woods, 0161-872 1660
RSPB	(Bolton Group), Tony Johnson, 01204 468850 (Stockport Group), Tony O'Neill, 0161-962 2449 (Manchester Group), Simeon Rydz, 0161-434 2720
Bat Groups	(South Lancashire), Angela Graham, 0161-797 4745 (Cheshire), Mike Freeman, 01606 41581
Butterflies/Moths	Barry Shaw, 0161-491 0753
Mammals/Insects	(Bolton Museum), Steve Garland, 01204 522311
Amphibians/Ponds	Dave Bentley, 0161-724 8602
Mersey Valley Wardens	(Sale), 0161-905 1100; (Chorlton), 0161-881 5639
Medlock & Tame Valley Conservation Association	Mildred Burlinson, 0161-330 2721
Stockport Countryside Ranger Service	Dewi G Morris, 0161-477 5637
Trafford Council	Roz Park, 0161-912 4174
Manchester LA21 Forum	Brenda Sedgwick, 0161-236 5195
Manchester Sustainability Group	Adrian Pearce, 0161-234 4594
Manchester FoE	0161-834 8221
Manchester Earth First!	0161-274 4665
Networking Newsletter	Michael Bane, 01457 871609
Visions Community Design	Judith Mottram, 0161-834 6309
Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education	Jo Frazer, 0161-445 4566

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

You are welcome to reproduce anything contained within "The Magpie", with an acknowledgement.

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.



"Standing up for Wildlife"

Events and Meetings

Please try to take part in as many events as possible and phone the contact to make sure there are no alterations

August 1996

Monday 26th

Parrs Wood Family Fun Day - 11am to 5pm at Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education, East Didsbury. Crafts, plants, fruit and vegetable show and much more, including MW bodging display. Contact ☎ 445 4566.

September 1996

Sunday 8th

Hough End Clough - Meadow Mowing - Meet at Hough End Crescent, Mauldeth Road West (south end of Alexandra Road South). Time 11 am. Wear old clothes and strong footwear. Bring refreshments.

Sunday 8th

Winter Hill Centenary Walk - To commemorate the mass trespass in 1896 to protest against the closure of the footpath by local land owners. Meet 10.30 am for 11 am Halliwell Road/Blackburn Road, Bolton. Contact Stuart Murray ☎ 01204 417268. "Will yo come o' Sunday mornin?" - from a poem written at the time of the mass trespass.

Tuesday 10th

Social Meeting - At the Old Monkey Public House. Junction of Portland St./Princess St., City Centre. Time 7.30 pm. Convenient for Piccadilly Gardens Bus & Metro Station. Contact Ian Brown ☎ 0161-437 7040.

Sunday 22nd

Simon's Day - Wythenshawe Park - 12 noon to 4pm. All sorts of things going on. We will be bodging. Be sure to be there.

Thursday 26th

General Meeting - Time 7.30 at the One World Centre (Friends Meeting House Basement, Central Street (off Mount Street). Contact Ian Brown ☎ 0161-437 7040.

October 1996

Tuesday 8th

Social Meeting - Details as for the 10th September.

November 1996

Tuesday 12th

Social Meeting - Details as for the 10th September.

Thursday 28th

General Meeting - Time 7.30 at the One World Centre (Friends Meeting House Basement, Central Street (off Mount Street). Contact Ian Brown ☎ 0161-437 7040.

If taking part in practical conservation tasks, make sure that your tetanus jabs are up to date.

Office Working Dates - One World Centre, Central St. (off Mount St.), Manchester.

These will be every Thursday evening, starting now, at 7 pm. If you are interested in helping us with our work at a convenient City Centre location, please come along. Contact Ian Brown ☎ 0161-437 7040. Because we have taken on the running of an office, on top of the many other things we do, we have not the time to organise as many events as usual. **If you would like to see us doing more (wildlife walks, etc.) why not organise an event on your local open space. Let us know, well in advance, and it can be put in the Events List.**

Manchester Wildlife - Greater Manchester Butterfly Survey

Survey Form

Location:

O/S Grid Ref:

Date/Period:

A-Z Map Ref:

Edition No.

Recorder's Name & Address:

Telephone No.

Species \ Date

Small Skipper

Large Skipper

Brimstone

Large White

Small White

Green-veined White

Orange Tip

Small Copper

Common Blue

Holly Blue

Red Admiral

Painted Lady

Small Tortoiseshell

Peacock

Comma

Speckled Wood

Wall Brown

Gatekeeper

Meadow Brown

General Comments:

Description of Location:

Description of Habitat:

Please Return to: 82 Crantock Drive, Heald Green, Cheadle, Cheshire. SK8 3HA

☎ 0161-437 7040