

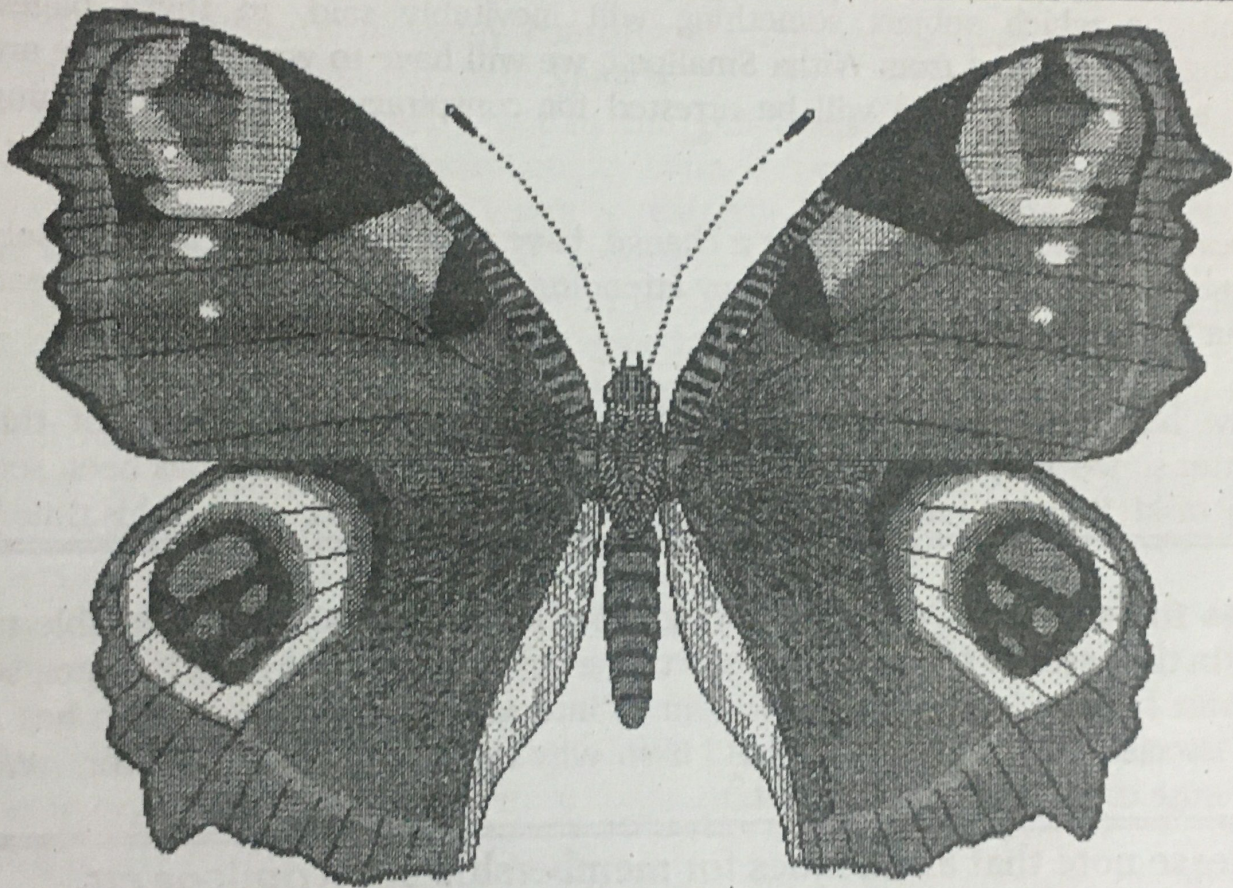


Manchester Wildlife's Newsletter

Magpie

The

Number 39 - - - - - Spring '97



***"The Magpie, the excellent newsletter of
Manchester Wildlife."***

John Vidal, Environment Correspondent, The Guardian.

50p

STANDING UP FOR WILDLIFE IN GREATER MANCHESTER

We had considered calling this issue the "Winter/Spring" Magpie, just to be a little different. However, as winter is almost over (I probably speak too soon, as there is still a chill in the air today), let's call it the "Spring Magpie", all optimistic like, having missed autumn and winter.

Mind you, is there anything to be optimistic about; the airport 2nd runway springs to mind, on which subject something will inevitably said, in these pages. According to the report from Witha Smallpea, we will have to watch what we are saying, and writing, or we will be arrested for conspiracy to incite something rather nasty.

Our Local Agenda 21 article will, for a change, have a theme which is more closely connected with wildlife and if you fancy attending an AGM with a difference, read all about it in **Magpie**.

We now have a seconder to John Vidal's endorsement on the quality of this newsletter so we will have to strive to keep up to the standard which has been set. No easy task! Why not read on and see if you think we have managed it this time?

Articles for Magpie - We are always looking for articles which are suitable to include in the pages of Magpie. They say that everybody had one book in them, so **YOU** must have at least some small item of interest or information which has a theme associated with urban wildlife. If so why not send it to the Editor. We rarely refuse as it sometimes offends!

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

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Loonts Lake - View from the Tee

by Anthony Phelps

Following publication of my article "Treasure Hunt" in the Magpie, and the RSPB Manchester Members' Group Newsletter, I received a letter from Mr. Watson, Manager of

Didsbury Golf Club Limited. In it, many of my descriptions were questioned, and I feel I should publish these comments so you can make up your own mind. Manchester Wildlife is a legally constituted group which does not condone or encourage people to take part in illegal acts.

Mr. Watson pointed out that the golf course, including the woodland border and the access road from Longley Lane, is owned by the club and no rights of way exist to the lake. Any attempt to reach the lake is in fact an act of trespass. I can only point out that during my two visits, I was unaware of this fact, passing no signs or notices to this effect. Also, I was not questioned by any of the golfers I met, and with whom I passed friendly greetings.

Mr. Watson then advised of the risk of injury from taking the route I did, both from golf balls and from vandals and muggers. He included descriptions of two incidents; one where a lady golfer was threatened and robbed, and another, when a cygnet was taken and brutally killed. He added that some of the (illegal) anglers also threaten their members.

Mr. Watson seemed astonished at my use of terms such as, "little evidence of abuse", "lack of litter" and "loved by most of the people who visit". I can only say that, as a member of an urban wildlife group, which visits sites all over the region, this is one of the most beautiful that I have visited. I can only report from my own experience. I must therefore congratulate the golf club for their numerous attempts to keep the area free of litter, and repair vandalism attacks. As for my "not feeling threatened", again, that is how I felt. Other members of our small party share my view.

Mr. Watson finished by saying that the club's efforts are aimed at the preservation and improvement of their course and the adjacent environment.

I would point out that, had I not read the original letter in the South Manchester Reporter, I would not even have known of this lake's existence. However, having read that letter, I felt impelled to have a look.

I would like to state that should Manchester Wildlife want to revisit this area, it will only be with the permission, and co-operation of Mr. Watson and his committee. I would hope that he would not refuse a reasonable request to revisit as the area is, in urban terms, a real wildlife gem.

Manchester Environmental Resource Centre initiative (MERCi)

"Well I left Sarah in the crèche, and had just found what I wanted in the library, when I bumped into Mr. Jordan from my old school. He was in such high spirits that he offered to buy me and Sarah a drink in the cafe. I found out - over a fair trade coffee and an organic apple juice - that he'd just arranged for some workshops to happen at his school on alternative energy. We chatted for around 20 minutes about all the different groups and things going on here, and we were just about to go when something caught Sarah's eye - she wanted to feed the rubbish monster. 'Ooh', Mr. Jordan said, 'you must have a look round the recycling exhibition, it's beautiful and it's given me a few ideas'. Well I was amazed, Sarah loved it. I even managed to sneak down to the food co-op in the basement to pick up some tea, while Mr. Jordan took her up to have a look at the roof garden... Anyway, what I was really ringing to say was there's a play on there later by a local youth group - it's really easy to get there by bus - do you fancy going?"

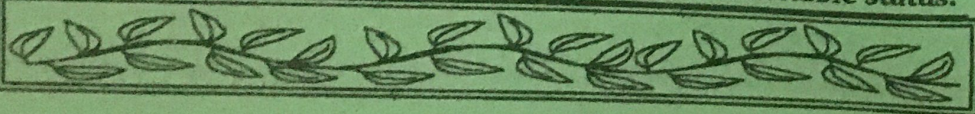
MERCi is simply about what you have just read, a restored warehouse in the centre of Manchester which provides the energy, support and resources that the environment sector requires. A centre that will provide the physical focus for sustainable development, a one-stop shop where information is accessible and advice gladly given. A building which incorporates a cafe, exhibition and meeting space, an area for gigs and theatre, eco businesses, cheap office space for the voluntary sector and a demonstration of green building design. But ultimately the building will contain what the users want.

We are consulting with the voluntary sector and working with a cross-section of organisations. We are sending out questionnaires and holding open days to ensure the plans for the centre remain relevant. Only then can we develop an in-depth feasibility study. With this we will go to the European Union, and the National Lottery and secure substantial funding. We want MERCi in Manchester by the end of 1997. So please let us know what you think. Are we wasting our time?

If you would like to receive more information, make your views known, become a friend of MERCi, or make a much needed donation write to us.

MERCi C/o O.W.C. 6 Mount Street, Manchester. M2 5NS
Or ring Chris on 0161-819 1139

MERCi is a not-for-profit organisation applying for charitable status.



RTS4 . Another Fluffy One

by Anthony Phelps

I spent the afternoon of Saturday the 19th of October dressed as a judge. Before you send for the men in white coats, it was my part in the play "The Car Trial" which we, "The Green Street Theatre Company", were to perform at the fourth "Reclaim The Streets" (RTS4) in Manchester.

For those who don't know what an RTS is, it's a collection of people who take over a usually car-full street and then hold a party. Why? To illustrate an alternative to the lunacy of ever increasing car usage for non-essential journeys, leading to more and more road building.

For RTS4, about 300 people met in Albert Square, together with everything needed. The other "essential" for a good RTS are the police who, like an iceberg, keep most of their resources hidden, still trying to retain the pretence of being in charge. They even deployed six police horses.

The excitement was intense, with only a very few of the "organisers" knowing the target street - this being more closely guarded than a run-of-the-mill government secret!

After an interview by the Salford University Documentary Unit about the "trial" to come, we set off at about 2 pm, following the camouflaged lorry containing the sound equipment, arriving at Oxford Road, which had already been "taken", up to the Odeon Cinema, by an advance unit from Portland Street. There was a manned tripod with the lorry at one end and a van outside the cinema which had the band's sound equipment. We pushed the car ("defendant" in the trial) from beside the cinema. Some very brave (foolhardy?) climbers were up the high street lamps tying huge banners across the road, on one of which was the motto of the day: "Turf Out The Traffic". Soon the road was full of people sitting on carpets, eating excellent food provided by Sunflower, whilst others were dancing furiously around the lorry.

I always feel "safe" on an RTS, under constant surveillance - from the police van with the telescopic camera on the back, to the police helicopter, with at least one stills photographer working through the crowd.

A question I am often being asked is, "Am I worried about being arrested?" I answer, "no". Yes, it is illegal but, in my growing, but limited, experience the Manchester police don't arrest people for simply taking part. There are always brightly-vested and fully briefed people acting as legal, police and media liaison officials. So, with all this taken care of, all that's left is just to enjoy yourself, meet loads of like-minded "real" people and try to spot the plain-clothed police! Actually, that's too easy - our two were spotted leaning against the cinema with

folded arms, in a pose that they must learn on a course. After a while, they got fed up with the attention and we didn't see them again.

The band were excellent, after a minor power problem, and following their set, we borrowed their microphones for the trial. The performance was well received (as with football, it's easier playing to a home crowd), with plenty of audience participation. We'd changed the ending slightly, to mirror the afternoon, and my verdict was to "turf out the car" and as if by magic, turf was produced and volunteers helped to cover the car with it. With hindsight, I'd choose a different verdict. How many of you have tried to "unturf" a car?

Despite rumours that the police wanted us off earlier (obviously!), we started to tidy up at 5.30 pm so we could all be ready to leave en masse at 6 pm, finishing where we'd started the afternoon, for the end of another successful RTS.

My verdict, in the vernacular of the day, was that it had been "cool and fluffy". The only downside was the police impounding one van. Such events are often marred by the pettiness of the odd officer. For example, I observed one policeman ask a small, accompanied boy to get off a litter bin, whilst all around there were people up lamp-posts, on the advertising hoardings and on top of the telephone boxes. There was even a lady fire eater! They really don't like losing "control"!

I think that's what RTS is really about - taking control, and enjoying yourself. I have heard disturbing rumours, from Oxford, where RTS has become extremely popular, that police tactics are changing and they are now "co-operating" with the organisers, helping to block the roads. Let's hope that the Manchester police don't get on to this as I, for one, would get no fun if it wasn't illegal anymore!

The Gandalf Six and Freedom of Speech

by Witha Smallpea

our political Correspondent

I would ask you to read this without prejudice to the groups or publications mentioned. I realise that extremists are not everybody's "cup of tea", but I would hope that freedom of speech is something that we all believe in, and would not want taken from us.

At the time of going to press, there are six activists on trial for "conspiracy to incite criminal damage". They include people who are "allegedly" involved with "Green Anarchist" magazine (which publishes details of past actions of various animal rights groups), one

person who is the current editor of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) Supporters Group newsletter, and Robin Webb, the current ALF Press Officer.

This charge of "conspiracy to incite" is not the same as "inciting criminal acts", but "conspiring to incite" such acts. The reason it is important is that this could include simply publishing a newsletter, or writing about actions that have taken place in the past. The entire burden of proof is on the defendant to prove they had no intention to incite.

It is interesting to note that, before the six were arrested (in dawn raids by Hampshire CID, with Special Branch and MI5 involvement!), half of the "conspirators" had never even met! I thought, naively, that conspirators were supposed to know each other.

Robin Webb had been targeted as an individual for over a year prior to the arrests, and has been cleared in court, on the same evidence, many times (the sort of recycling I feel we can do with less of). A judge has described this "recycling of evidence" as "oppressive" and "an abuse of the judicial process". The Criminal Prosecution Service have also admitted that Robin shouldn't be tried twice on the same evidence "on his own" (as if that makes any difference). He has been bailed, and when that didn't curtail his job as the ALF Press Officer, he was imprisoned for seven months. On release, he had such "draconian" bail conditions set that he was virtually a prisoner in his own home. Despite all of this attention, he was found not guilty on all counts. The only thing that the prosecution could prove was that he had issued a Press Release, and conducted a few TV and radio interviews! To show what bad losers the authorities are, they are even seeking a judicial review to challenge this judgement!

It seems to me that "the authorities" are trying to criminalise direct actions across the board. The trial can only be seen as a political trial, and if the six are made scapegoats, then who knows who would be next?

If you feel you can offer some support, the contact details are: Gandalf Defendants Campaign, PO Box 66, Stevenage. SG1 2TR Telephone: Neil Hanson 01442 215664



Inaction Breeds Discontent

by Gerald Dawe

Which of the following is correct?

1. "Whilst undesirable in itself, transport congestion in a town or city can be a crude but effective measure of its attractiveness: quiet shopping streets can be a sign of economic decline".
2. "Traffic growth poses a particular challenge for urban areas. Poor air quality, noise and congested roads can make towns unattractive and inaccessible - that is bad for residents and bad for business."

Answer: they both are.

The contradictory statements come from a recent Government report [Transport: The Way Forward - The Government's response to the transport debate. HMSO, London], pages 95 and 93 respectively.

A bit of a mixed bag, really. Like the curate's egg: good in parts. But the road-lobby is still in there desperately wriggling, trying to persuade us all that fume-filled air brings delight to both residents and business alike; in fact, that we are all more than happy breathing in the potent mixture of pollutants that the motor car is responsible for; that the aesthetics of endless queues of traffic and their largely miserable incumbents is preferable to any natural townscape - and that it actually boosts trade.

The whole notion is so absurd that it brings a degree of disquiet to find it, in 1996, in a Government publication. For, competing land-uses and resources are involved here, at a deep level; urban nature versus traffic. And Government, despite its "green rhetoric" is still ploughing on with new road-building, for no other reason than to guarantee the state-subsidised employment of the road lobby companies into the indefinite future.

Take another view. The Convention on Biodiversity is a magnificent Convention, and there have been some good books written on it. Perhaps none better than the Government's own report [Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan. HMSO London]. In this we find that (1.10) "Biodiversity is the variety of life forms we see around us".

The publication is filled with comforting platitudes that the Government has signed the Convention and therefore, one thinks, will

do whatever it can to maintain "biodiversity". Here again, however, actions speak much louder than words. The Convention, despite being nationally adopted, *has no statutory force at local level*.

Therefore, with one swipe of a bulldozer, Guinness can wipe away a putative Site of Metropolitan Importance in London, with all of its human and natural biodiversity (250 species of wildflowers ... including several "extremely rare" in London). In other words, at local level, the Convention counts for nothing.

One can recount other examples too. In 1983 the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) produced a publication called "Providing for the Cyclist". In it, was this:

"There is a need in modern traffic management for measures concerning cyclists to be considered ... links, routes, junctions and parking restrictions have been developed with only car and commercial vehicle drivers in mind. In acknowledgement of the new emphasis on the cyclist, traffic engineers will look again at older and outdated town centres ...". Result: nothing.

Finally though, with another reiteration of this view, some 13 years on, there is perhaps an inkling of something happening with the DoT's National Cycling Strategy. But, still, will it happen?

All in all it is understandable that there is a scepticism around about Government intentions and even the notion of democracy in the UK today. And it does not take long for such scepticism to become converted to anger, and to civil disobedience ... within the law, an honourable and sadly necessary British tradition.

[Gerald Dawe is the Founding Editor of "Urban Nature" magazine. The above article is reprinted with his permission. "Urban Nature" is an excellent publication. For past contents and subscription details (this article came from Volume 3, Issue 1), please contact: Urban Nature Magazine, 40 Molford Road, Birmingham. B17 9RL Telephone: 0121-428 2452]

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"The Magpie, a newsletter for which I have a considerable degree of respect."

Gerald Dawe

On a local level, this is probably a good time to mention: (a) The No M66 Campaign; (b) Reclaim the Streets; (c) Critical Mass; (d) The No 2nd Runway Campaign, and many other examples of Non-Violent Direct Actions happening in Manchester. Also, the lack of a "Nature Conservation Strategy" in Manchester, *despite the fact that one exists, gathering dust!* To find out more about what's going on, call the One World Centre on 0161-834 8221, or contact your Secretary. It's time for people to show they care.

LEISURE WALKING

by Janet Cuff

In recent years, countryside leisure walking has increased in popularity. There are complex reasons for this, but whatever the reason, the trend has to be welcomed because, the more contact urban dwellers have with the countryside, the more likely they are to put pressure on their elected representatives to implement measures that will bring about protection of the countryside.

This increased use of the countryside has certain consequences. Some are beneficial; for example, local traders can benefit from increased use of village shops, cafés and country pubs. Some, however, can be seen as problems. For instance, there is the question of erosion, which can arise in well-used areas such as Malham or Dovedale. I do not deny that this problem exists and I have seen examples of it on many occasions. I feel, however, that it is a problem which is often overstated and, given the resources, can be quite easily dealt with by countryside management techniques such as a durable path surface or temporary diversions.

There is another problem which is not so easily dealt with, largely because of people's entrenched attitudes. This is the strong tendency for walks to be car-based, and it is a tendency which is found in organised walking groups just as much as in individuals and families out for a walk. Time and again, when looking up a walk in a walks programme, I have found that the venue is a car park or place well out of reach of public transport. The Ramblers' Association have a tradition of striving valiantly to gear a high percentage of their walks to public transport, but even they are gradually succumbing to the influence of the car.

What can be done about this? If you live in a rural area you probably will have to rely heavily on the car, once you have exhausted the immediate locality for walks, as rural transport is infrequent in many areas and often non-existent at weekends. Urban dwellers, however, have an option. There is usually an adequate, if not good, public transport service from town centres to the suburbs and beyond, and even if walkers wish to venture well out of town, public transport can still often be utilised. The Manchester area is well served in this respect; for example, ambitious walkers can use the Hope Valley Line (where services have been improved specifically to aid walkers) to get as far afield as Hope or Hathersage for a day's walking. Within the Manchester area, public transport can be used to take you to areas such as Marple, Romily, Styal or Dunham, where a pleasant day's walking can be enjoyed. And being unencumbered by a car, you are free to do a linear walk or change plans as you go along.

A linear walk which is one of my favourites, and which is very relevant to the people of Stockport, is the Cown Edge Way, an 18-mile walk running from Hazel Grove to Gee Cross. The Way was originally conceived in 1970 by the Manchester Area of the Ramblers' Association and, as a current member of this

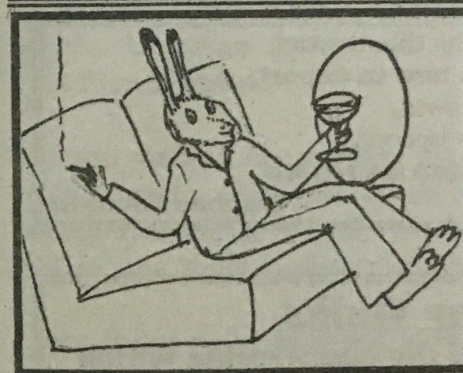
group, I volunteered, last year, to assist in checking over the route to produce a revised edition of the booklet.* This was no chore, but a delight; there is so much variety along the route in terms of geology, fauna and flora, industrial history and much more. Fit walkers could cover the route in a day, with frequent public transport connections at either end of the Way, but there are several points at which those wanting a shorter walk can drop off and make their way home.

There are other local "ways" such as the Goyt Way or the Ladybrook Valley Trail - Information Centres may be able to help here - or you can contact me as below. Or you can phone the GMPTE on 0161-228 7811 for a "Passenger Guide" giving maps of the local bus and rail networks, purchase the local OS map(s) and work out your own walks.

Enjoy your walking!

* Phone 0161-431 7654 for a copy, price £1.

(Editor's note: There are some stations where trains do not stop on Sundays and Bank Holidays. For example Styal and Moses Gate, for the Croal Valley at Rock Hall. This is an omission which should be rectified!)



March Hare Abroad

by Tim Lepidus

Hi there, and cheers! A little in-flight bubbly there! I'm just off to the old U.S. of A. on a well earned break - Skiing the snowy slopes; should be fun. They do say that the economy of

Manchester relies so much on tourism - so I'm just doing my little bit. "What about the environment?", you may ask. True, air travel is polluting but not so polluting as the taxi which brought me to the airport (per passenger mile, that is)! Then there's the roads which will need to be built to carry the extra traffic to the airport. I don't know what all the fuss is about. After all roads only take up a narrow strip of land and 25% of passengers will travel by public transport, so, with a doubling of the numbers using Manchester Airport, that will only mean a 50% increase in road traffic.

A small sacrifice when you consider some of the other benefits. Those of us who have worked on Local Agenda 21 appreciate the importance of providing

jobs. Expansion of the airport since the 1960's has made a great difference to the unemployment problems in Wythenshawe. The coming of the second runway will make the same difference in the whole of Greater Manchester.

And what about the wildlife? Past expansion of the airport may have trashed many acres of fine countryside, including Manchester's only Grade A SBI meadowland. The second runway will destroy a lot more but those nice chaps at the airport have promised to take extensive mitigation measures; so that's all right then. They will be transplanting lots of wildflowers, planting lots of trees to replace ancient woodland, digging new ponds (two for every one destroyed), so the newts will be all right. The badgers will be getting a new sett, in beautiful concrete; they say that they prefer soil but if we all thought like that we'd still be living in mud huts!

With the airport people showing all this concern for the environment it's difficult to appreciate what those eco-protesters are going on about, with their tunnels and tree-houses. It's going to cost a fortune to evict that lot; they'd be better off spending the money on hanging people. (apologies to Mark Steele)

The sooner it's all over the better. With a second runway I'll be able to take more of these skiing holidays. I'm looking forward to it.

LimericktimeLimericktimeLimericktimeLimericktimeLimericktime

An ecologist employed by the Airport,
Said, "hang on while I fix how to deport,
Badgers and newts,
Who've just got to uproot,
Then I'll send in my bill and my report."

Daphne Laureola

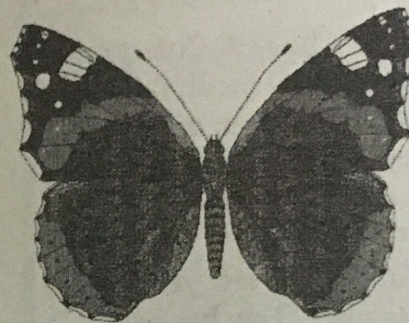
Second Runway Walks

A series of walks are planned in the countryside which will be destroyed by the second runway, at Manchester Airport. If you would like to see what you might be missing contact FoE ☎ 0161-834 8221 to find out details of these rambles in the beautiful Cheshire countryside - don't miss it, next year may be too late!

Funday - Saturday 22nd March
Walks - 6th & 20th April, then Fortnightly

Butterfly Survey

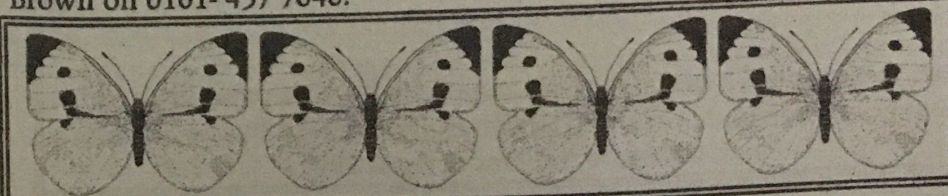
by Ian Brown



This is just a brief reminder that our Butterfly Survey continues and we are still keen to involve our members, and others, to help in gathering records of the butterflies in Greater Manchester. 1995 and 1996 were generally good years for butterflies, apart from short periods when the weather turned a little unseasonal. Will 1997 produce surprises like Camberwell Beauties and Clouded Yellows? It may, but essentially we are looking for reports from sites with good populations of common butterflies. Yes, this is a SITE based survey, as opposed to one based on kilometre squares. We feel that site boundaries are more likely to confine butterfly populations than artificial lines on a map and many of the kilometre squares, in urban areas, will be too built up to be suitable for butterflies to breed.

So if you visit an open space, on a fairly regular basis, why not make the trip more enjoyable by recording the butterflies you see and sending the results to us. Whether it be a formal park or informal wildlife area, there is always something interesting to see.

Survey forms were sent out with Magpie 38, which you may photocopy, but if you need more send an A5 s.a.e. (marked - Butterfly Survey) to the Treasurer. The same address applies for the receipt of records. If you require any advice on how to carry out the survey, contact Ian Brown on 0161-437 7040.



Manchester Wildlife - 6th AGM - Saturday 26th April 1997

And now for something completely different. The MW Committee have decided that, for a change, the Annual General Meeting will be held outside Manchester. The exact venue has not been decided but it will be somewhere between Piccadilly Station and Leighton Moss Nature Reserve.

Another reason for this decision is that, for the last few years, the amount of work put into staging our Members' Day has been disproportionate to the numbers attending and we feel that a less stressful occasion will be good for the sanity of the Committee.

The meeting will start at **10.30am** in the foyer of Manchester Piccadilly Station. We will then catch the 11.03am train to Silverdale (changing at Lancaster at 12.17pm) for a short half mile walk to Leighton Moss, one of the finest nature reserves in the North-West. The return fare is £10.20 but for 10+ the group travel fare is £7.55. If you are interested in attending, please phone Ian Brown ☎ 0161-437 7040 so that we can gauge the interest (we need at least five members to be quorate) and perhaps arrange group travel.

Chair's Annual Report and Accounts will be available on the day but if you would like a copy before then, send an A5 s.a.e. (marked - **accounts**) to the treasurer. Those not able to attend the **AGM** will receive Accounts with the summer "**Magpie**".

We cannot guarantee the weather but it should be an unusual, and enjoyable excursion.

This year we need a new Chair. Nominations for that position, and for other Committee members, will be gratefully received by the Secretary, on or before the 21st of April 1997.

by Ian Brown

Bio-diversity IS Local Agenda 21

Rio '92 was an international bio-diversity conference

This is a fact which may have been forgotten in all the activity which has been taking place in the run up to the production of Local Agenda 21 (LA21) Draft Statements but, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was a bio-diversity (b-d) conference out of which came two international agreements:

- The aim of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity, which requires countries to adopt ways and means to conserve the variety of living species and ensure that the benefits from using biological diversity are equally shared.

The definition of b-d should be self explanatory but if you are still unsure, see Gerald Dawe's article. Why is it so important? One reason is that b-d is the **BIG indicator**, the most important single factor as far as the future of the planet is concerned. Two examples which effect the British Isles:

- **International:** Declining b-d in the Brazilian rain forest would indicate that destruction of the rain forest had gone too far. This could have a disastrous effect on our climate, and could already be happening.
- **National:** Lack of breeding success in Arctic Terns. Shortage of their main food, Sandeels, would indicate over-fishing, leading to an inability to feed ourselves.

What has all this to do with Manchester?

We ought to maintain b-d, even if only to set an example. How can we tell people in other countries, or other parts of this country, not to destroy their ecosystems when we continue to destroy ours.

Maintaining and improving b-d, in Manchester, will be of benefit to people, both in Manchester and elsewhere. (We cannot improve b-d qualitatively on a global scale but a quantitative improvement will help to prevent loss of species. A qualitative improvement is possible, locally, as habitat improvements will encourage forms of wildlife, not present in Manchester, to colonise suitable areas.) Here are a couple of examples which can help, not only the variety of wildlife, but other aspects of our everyday lives:

- **Red Rose Forest:** Planting trees will be of benefit, not only for b-d, but for employment, the economy, reduction of pollution, health and education. There would be little point planting trees on every open space and leaving them to get on with it. That would lead to a loss in b-d. Woodlands need management. This produces timber which can be used to make a variety of products. Using wood from a local resource, for local sale, will create many

jobs and save on imports. It will also have the benefit of helping to save destruction of tropical rain forests.

- **Hay Meadows:** Most of the grassland in Manchester's parks is cut on a regular basis. This is a great expense and costly in terms of fossil fuel use and a waste raw material (grass). Annual cutting as a hay crop would raise income and save those who need hay in Manchester (stables) having to buy from further afield. It would also be a great benefit to b-d; increasing the number, and variety, of wild plants, insects (particularly butterflies) and therefore the variety of other forms of wildlife.

There would also be benefits to other sectors of the community:

- **Energy Use** - Using wood, and charcoal, from sustainably managed woodland is carbon neutral.
- **Transport** - Trees help to absorb vehicle pollutants and noise. Using local raw materials cuts down on the need to transport.
- **Waste and Pollution** - Trees help to absorb general pollution. Making products from local wood, instead of burning or land fill. Traditionally made furniture, tools, etc. last longer than mass produced items.
- **Economy and work** - Employment in forestry and farming (haymaking). Reducing imports of raw materials. Traditionally made furniture, tools, etc. require more labour intensive work.
- **Health and Safer City** - Trees help to absorb general pollution.
- **Education** - Practical environmental education can be carried out locally.

In previous articles on LA21 we have demonstrated how recycling, water saving and other measures can help wildlife, and how certain types of development can do harm. Here we have examples of how helping wildlife can help us in other ways. Unfortunately, at the moment, the emphasis seems to be on unsustainable developments such as second runways, multiplex cinemas, etc. (of which more elsewhere). We can only hope that wiser counsels prevail, but it doesn't seem very likely.

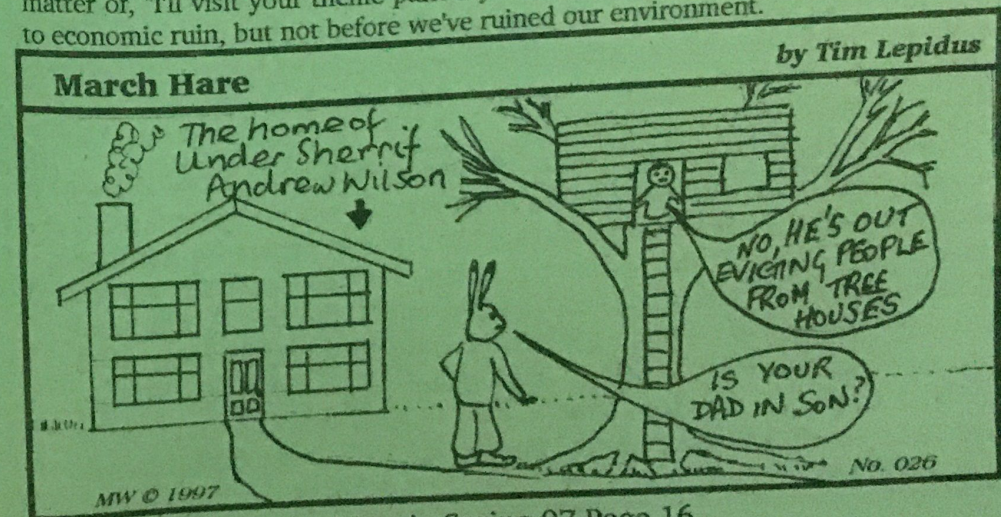
Is there any sustainable development out there? by Des Poiler

This is a question which has been asked before in these pages. So far there has been no answer; or has there. Reports of multiplex cinemas - 24 screens near the G-Mex Centre, 24 at Sharston Green, 18 next to Stockport's pyramid, 12 at the new Trafford Centre and 11 at Handforth Dean (89 in total), all with massive car parks. Where is the money going to come from so that people can afford to fill all those cinema seats. A little irony in the fact that the cinema in Withington has recently closed down. What will the multiplex cinemas become when they close down; we've already got enough bingo halls! Then we hear that the "world famous Imperial War Museum" is to build its northern headquarters in Trafford Park

"creating hundreds of jobs". The Trafford Centre (Dumplington) will rival Meadowhall (Sheffield) and the Metro Centre (Newcastle), but what about all the boarded up shops which have proliferated in our community centres.

And now comes the most unsustainable development of all time; the second runway at Manchester Airport. Much has been said in the press on the advantages of this development (mostly in adverts, presumably paid for by the airport - or the citizens of Manchester). The Focus column in the M.E.N of the 10th of February was entitled "Anti-runway protesters are just Luddites!" by Graham Stringer. One of the "facts" he mentions is the 50,000 jobs the second runway will create. Well you know what they say about statistics! Even as long ago as the Runway II public inquiry it was admitted that this quoted figure for jobs was a vast over-estimate. On the same page Mr Stringer was reported as labelling the anti-runway protesters as, "self-indulgent parasites" and, "the worst kind of hypocrites". A bit rich, that! He has also said, of the beautiful country which the 2nd runway will destroy, "It's only a bit of greenery". You have probably heard all about the protesters, at Flywood, through the popular media, so I will add little more, except to say that if it were not for those excellent folk who are prepared to live up in tree houses, and down in tunnels, to protest against environmental destruction on such a vast scale, we would indeed be a depraved society.

So where is the sustainable development? Who is going to pay for all these unnecessary luxuries? Those who work in such jobs as teaching, council officers, police, health service, etc. are not actually adding to the wealth of the nation, vital though their services may be. Who is doing the work, making things which actually make a positive contribution to our economy. Please let me know; I don't think anyone can give an example of sustainable development in Manchester, but I would be delighted if someone could prove me wrong. Otherwise it will be a matter of, "I'll visit your theme park if you'll visit mine.", which would be the road to economic ruin, but not before we've ruined our environment.



Woodland Craft Centres

A hardy perennial which keeps cropping up, but this time we have something positive to report.

After much hard work by ourselves, the Bolton Wildlife Project (BWP), Bolton Council, the Croal/Irwell Valley Wardens and the Bolton Conservation Volunteers, a pilot project is being set up at Rock Hall, in Moses Gate Country Park. Which is, guess where? You've got it; in Bolton. Tools and equipment, which had already been accumulated, by spending some of our award money for the project, have been taken up to the centre. More tools have been purchased; some from Bryony Driver, a blacksmith from near Reading who makes traditional woodworking tools, and others from Paul's Tool Emporium, near Stalybridge Station, a veritable Aladdin's Cave of new and second hand tools which is well worth a visit, even if only to be amazed. (A little plug there, as we were given a reasonable discount.)

MW member, John Rudd, who also does voluntary work for the BWP, has taken on a great burden of the work on getting the centre off the ground. He is as keen as we are to get a project going, in Greater Manchester, which will demonstrate sustainable development, but much thanks to all those involved for making it possible. We cannot give an opening date, just yet, as there is much physical work to be done to get things up and running. If you would like to help us in this preparatory work please contact, Ian Brown ☎ 0161-437 7040. Or John Rudd, at the BWP, ☎ 01204 361847.

The crafts to be undertaken at the centre will be of a traditional type associated with woodland work. Bodging, rake-making, tent pegs, basketry, besoms, hurdles (for fencing), and many others as demand dictates. The Valley Wardens have purchased a charcoal kiln, so we will have fuel to fire the blacksmith's forge and make our own special tools. The centre will be open for leisure crafts and for the interest of visiting public but we also hope that people who wish to take up woodland crafts, for a living, will be able to gain the necessary skills there. The possibilities are almost endless and we hope that this will be the first of many such centres in Greater Manchester.

In Brief

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Genesis - Chapter 1, Verse 1

Did you see the article in M.E.N (Wednesday March 5th) headlined - Protest 'threat to wildlife'. It was about the Runway II protesters and the threat they were said, by "local ecologists and a top environmentalist", to be posing to the wildlife in the vicinity of the Flywood Camp. They are, "endangering wildlife and destroying precious woodland"; and this on a site which will be buried under tons of rubble and concrete, if the 2nd runway is constructed.

It is claimed that mitigation measures, such as relocation of Badgers, and re-creation of ponds, to be undertaken by the airport, are being put in jeopardy. But the best bit was about transplanting ancient woodland. Who do they think they are, God or someone! It just can't be done. Even moving grassland and Bluebells is not guaranteed of success (if nearby woodland is suitable for Bluebells then they will probably already be growing there; planting in the open would probably not work as the climate, in these parts, is not moist enough), but transplanting ancient woodland! How? Pick it up in one piece and move it to a place where the ground conditions are exactly the same. Maybe someone out there will explain; how about the "top environmentalist"? (Name her! - Ed.)

Daphne Laureola Transplanted!

After extensive forays by train, bus and on foot to the Forest of Dean in sunny (?) Gloucestershire, Ms. Laureola finally located her rural retreat and probably last resting place. Confusion as to her whereabouts was generated by an extended stay in MRI, continued teaching work in Didsbury and periods of absence to progress the bottom up renovations on the homestead. Among the delights of Lydbrook, and a large south facing garden overlooking a patchwork of wooded hills and assorted homes and gardens, are resident Buzzards, Ravens, Sparrowhawk, woodpeckers and all kinds of smaller fry. Glow-worms have been located, frogs, newts and dragonflies visit, and could well take up permanent residence after pond construction. The 'lawn' is a tapestry of wild flowers and the growing season seems to last most of the year.

A stalwart team from MW has visited to coppice and clear out an old and mutilated hedge and to eradicate a monstrous line of Leylandii. With such encouragement, Daphne was able to plant a double mixed hedge (150 plants and 9 species). Fruit and nut trees will be added in the autumn. It's a far cry from Rusholme and MW visitors will get a warm welcome.

Can't see the Trees for the Leaf

by Anthony Phelps

co-founder of the Manchester Poplar
Front

At the time of writing, Manchester has a Tree Officer with a seemingly apt name, Mr. Leaf. I say "seemingly" because he appears to be embarking on a genocidal, Klu Klux Klan style destruction of one particular species of tree, the European Black Poplar (*Populus Nigra*).

I have been attempting to establish the reason Mr. Leaf wishes to rid our lives of this tree, but so far all I have unearthed is that they are old, and there may be a risk of them falling on us.

Personally, I know of no-one who has been injured by a Black Poplar. Maybe this is because Mr. Leaf chopped them down before they could hurt us. I just don't know. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has any information on "Black Poplar" related injuries. The Council say they don't keep information on the numbers of this type of tree they have destroyed, which I feel would be essential to help gauge the risk of living with this obviously dangerous species.

I find it ironic that the Council should care so much about keeping us safe from this species, but seem unwilling to help us when it comes to the danger from urban vehicles, and the pollution they cause. As Councillor Ken Franklin said, at the launch of LA21, "If you take the cars out of Manchester, you'll create a desert". Much the same can be said about deforestation.

Footnote - There is another theory, which I feel is too ridiculous to be taken seriously, which states that by chopping down lots of Manchester's trees, the percentage of tree cover will become poor enough to qualify for European money to enable more trees to be planted. I did say it was ridiculous - or is it?

Bat Helpline

- If you see a sick or injured bat...
- If you want to carry out the first ever comprehensive monitoring programme of British Bats...
- If you need practical advice or information on bats...

Call the new national "Bat Helpline" on **0171-627 8822**. This has been set up and jointly funded by "The Bat Conservation Trust" and "The People's Trust for Endangered Species".

In Brief

Local Agenda 21 - Latest - Manchester LA21 Draft Statement - *Manchester: A Sustainable Future* - has been launched. It sets out the principles for sustainable development and includes chapters on greening, waste & pollution, transport, health & community, economy & employment and energy. The public consultation period ends on May the 1st 1997, so get your copy of the statement and let LA21 know what you think. They are available (free) in libraries, the One World Centre, MARC and through partner organisations. If you can't find a copy contact Glyn Carter at the LA21 office: c/o CTAC, 2nd Floor, 1-3 Stevenson Square, Manchester. M1 1DN ☎ 0161-236 5195.

Recycling in Manchester - At the moment about 2% of domestic waste is recycled in Manchester - the aim is to reach 25%. This is not good enough. With care, it is possible to reach almost 100% - someone who used to live in Stockport was able to manage it, so we all can if we try. Over to Local Agenda 21.

Malcolm Practice Moves Up North

After many years of living in Bredbury, saying "it's gone to the dogs", Malcolm Practice has upped sticks (almost literally) and moved to Helmsdale, which is about as far north as it is possible to go without taking up residence in the Arctic Circle. Stockport's Council officers were heard to give a collective sigh of relief. After years of trying to stem the tide of "Motorway Madness" (it's going to get worse- Ed.), he's given it up as a bad job to live in tranquillity on Scotland's eastern seaboard. This sort of thing seems to be catching! Malcolm (alias John Turner) has been trying to move for some while now. We don't like to lose members but we wish him well in his new life. One problem; who is going to pick up the al-cans, bottles and other recyclable stuff which left strewn about the streets and open spaces in Bredbury?

Enjoy a Good Read? - Why not try a copy of **Lateral Moves** (sometimes called "Mortal Leaves" or "Late Removals" - they're into anagrams) the magazine of **Aural Images**: send £2.35 to them at 5 Hamilton Street, Astley Bridge Bolton. BL1 6RJ - ☎ 01204 596369. Full of humorous articles, poetry, quotations and much more; you're sure to enjoy it. Sample - "Any great truth can - and eventually will - be expressed as a cliché, because a cliché is a sure and certain way to dilute an idea. For instance, my grandmother used to say 'the black cat is always the last one at the fence'. I have no idea what she meant, but at one time it was undoubtedly true." - Solomon Short. **Aural Images** advertise **MW**, so we are returning the compliment.

Sorry Folks - It's Soggy MacNoPond

by Pondswoman

Ombudsman pronounces: there is a pond in the expensively tarted up and still vandalised St. George's Park - a greenish oasis on the Border of Hulme and Old Trafford. After producing the "best documented, best constructed and best written" evidence to the Local Government Ombudsman for the North (comment by the Investigator), Mrs. Pat Thomas produced a lacklustre, judgement full of internal contradictions and delphic pronouncements. Whatever are the mysterious "six principles", which others better informed than we have never heard of, which apparently enable an ecological planning condition to be rendered totally ineffective, both in concept and execution? Yes **ALL** the abundant and varied wildlife in Abbey Pond died, quickly or slowly, and a casual visitor to St. George's can see that no 'new' pond exists. Indeed it had vanished by the time the excellent Investigator, from York, visited in 1995! Nevertheless the Ombudsman concluded that not only that there had been no maladministration in Hulme Regeneration's attempt to translocate (masterminded by the "top ecologist" referred to in the M.E.N. item about the runway protesters on 5.3.97), but there was still a pond, however inadequate its flora and fauna. With judgements like these, who needs planning guidelines? The report was received on the 12th of October 1996 and has, like both ponds, sunk without trace. Imagine the consternation in planning and developer circles, if ecological planning conditions were actually required by law to deliver the promised goods/wildlife.

questiontimequestiontimequestiontimequestiontimequestiontimequestiontime

Q - When is a planning condition not a planning condition?

A - When it is a planning condition!

Campaigning Can Count!

Red Moss Saved - After a vigorous campaign by local people, Friends of the Earth and others, Red Moss Has been saved from becoming a waste tip. This is very good news and when we have the full, and authorised, story there will be a comprehensive report in **Magpie**.

Alport Valley Forest Design Plan and proposed Access Works - The plan, a proposal from Forest Enterprises, would have done serious damage to this beautiful area in the Hope Forest, which includes an SSSI. After a strong, local campaign, led by Mr. & Mrs. Robinson and backed by the Ramblers' Association and CPRE (the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and RSPB Backed down), Forestry Enterprises have withdraw the plan!

If you are a campaigner, for a just cause, never give up. It can work!

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South Manchester wildlife WATCH and YOC Programme - April to June 1997

Sunday 13th April - 2-4p.m. at Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education - Amphibian antics and pond activities - Wear suitable clothes for pond dipping

Sunday 11th May - 2-4.30 p.m. at Fletcher Moss Park/Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education - Wonderful wildflowers - Meet at 1.50 p.m. Fletcher Moss Park, Didsbury at the main entrance off Wilmslow Road near tennis courts.

Saturday 7th June - First Anniversary day out - summer wildlife walk along the Middlewood Way to Lime Park for a picnic - Please book with leaders.

Saturday 29th June - 2-4 p.m. at Parrs Wood Centre for Rural Education - Tales of the riverbank - Explore the plants and wildlife of the river bank.

South Manchester wildlife WATCH and YOC is the group for children ages 8-12 years who would like to learn about wildlife and have some fun! Under 8s are welcome but must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Parents are welcome to stay and join in the activities. All leaders are registered with WATCH or the YOC and have been approved by the relevant authorities.

There is a charge of 60p for YOC and WATCH members (£1 for non-members) per child for each meeting. A consent form must be completed for each child. For Further details please contact registered **WATCH** leaders **Chris Swinburn** ☎ 0161-434 0362 and **Sarah Ross** ☎ 0161-446 1068.

Manchester Wildlife Events List - With A Difference

The difference is that there is not much on it. If you think we should be doing more, why not organise a walk or a visit to your favourite local wildlife site; contact the Editor for advice and how to get **YOUR** event on our next list.

MEETINGS: Social meetings take place in the Old Monkey Public House, Portland St./Princess St., City at 7.30 pm. on the **second** Tuesday of each Month, except August - Coming dates are: 8th April, 13th May, 10th June, 8th July.

General Meetings take place at 7.30 pm. in the One World Centre (basement of the Friends Meeting House, down Central Street), 6 Mount Street, Manchester on the **last** Tuesday of every **other** month, starting January - Coming dates are: 29th May, 31st July. Please try to support **MW** by attending meetings.

1997 - Sunday - April 13th - WOODLAND SURVEY - We will be surveying the perimeter woodland on Kenworthy Fields with the aim of drawing up a management plan. Meet at 11 am. in the Car Park of Chorlton Water Park, Maitland Avenue (off Darley Avenue), Barlow Moor. Wear wellies, or strong boots, and old clothes and bring food and drink.

Interested in office work for MW - Our office in the One World Centre is up and running. If you would like to help in this aspect of our work please contact Ian Brown ☎ 0161-437 7040 to find out more.

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Useful Contacts

RSNC, Urban Wildlife Partnership.	Chris Gordon, 01522 544400
English Nature.....	NW Regional Office, Bernard Flemming, 01942 830342
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
Medlock & Tame Valley Conservation Association.....	Mildred Burlinson, 0161-330 2721
BTCV.....	Salford & Trafford, Val Sutton, 0161-872 7640 (day)
	Sale & Altrincham, Shelagh Aston, 0161-860 6910
	Stockport, Kim Porter, 01625 874729, (weekends & eve)
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
Stockport Countryside Ranger Service.....	0161-477 5637
Trafford Council.....	Roz Park, 0161-912 4174
Manchester Sustainability Group...	Adrian Pearce, 0161-234 4594
Manchester LA21 Forum.....	Brenda Sedgwick, 0161-236 5195
Manchester FoE.....	0161-834 8221
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 List, are we included on yours? Please inform us if any details are incorrect.

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

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Stop Press - 13th March 1997. A Sparrowhawk was observed chasing Starlings over Piccadilly Gardens. This brings wildlife right into the centre of Manchester.

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