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# **Bulletin**

[www.iwnhas.org](http://www.iwnhas.org)

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## **President`s Address**

On the previous occasion that I held office as President, we were in the fortunate position of having been left a legacy by past stalwarts of the Society, Oliver and Dorothy Frazer. Interest rates were high and we were able to benefit from the interest accrued to offer grants to members of the Society and others to carry out projects which fulfilled the aims of our Society. Today, we are in a very different economic climate and statutory bodies, local authorities and others are going through a period of unprecedented austerity. There is a somewhat unrealistic expectation that voluntary bodies and individuals will pick up the tabs for the work previously carried out by these bodies or by paid contractors.

Many of the activities undertaken by our Society, and its members, already contribute considerably towards training, education, recording and monitoring of wildlife and archaeology. Indeed, recording of flora and fauna in the field is carried out almost entirely by the voluntary community, many of whom are Society members.

We are good at what we do in the Society and the packed and diverse programme of events included within this envelope is testament to that. What we are less good at is in promoting ourselves to a wider audience and, for those who are actively engaged in making the Society work, making our jobs easier and more productive. I`m keen that we can progress both of these whilst I am President but it will require some investment if we are to benefit from this. These are topics which I will come back to.

I cannot close without reference to Mike Cahill, whose obituary appears elsewhere in this Bulletin. His sudden death was a huge loss to the Society. He was someone who was liked and appreciated by all who knew him and the work he did for the Society was enormous. Not just producing Wight Studies and the Bulletin single handed, but transporting the equipment to every meeting and setting it up, and helping in countless ways at the Society`s

headquarters. I'm very grateful to all the people who have offered to help out to fill some of these gaps but it will take time and we need to build systems that are not entirely reliant on one person. Our thoughts and best wishes go to Anne. Finally, this Bulletin was cobbled together in a rather amateurish fashion. Apologies if it isn't up to the usual standard – we're working on it – but it least it's here!

Colin Pope

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## NOTICE BOARD

### APPEAL - PLEASE READ THIS!

It is becoming increasingly difficult to encourage Members to pay their subscriptions promptly. This year 75 Members had still not paid by the time the next delivery was due in February. Reminders are sent out by post, now costing 53pence postage each, to all those who do not have an Email.

I would appeal to all Members who still pay by this method to

1. Pay promptly
2. To consider paying by Standing Order so that reminders do not have to be sent out
3. If you are a tax payer, to help our Society even more financially, by considering signing a Gift Aid so that the tax can be claimed back from the Government. For each £20 Subscription we receive £5 and for each £25 Subscription we receive £6.25. All very helpful for our running costs.

A Standing Order Form and a Gift Aid Declaration is enclosed. Please complete and return to me @ 18 Pell Lane Ryde PO33 3LW.

If you have not advised me of your Email, or have recently changed it please let me know ASAP by e-mailing me [tonigoodley@onwight.net](mailto:tonigoodley@onwight.net)

Our Society needs your help and consideration.

Toni Goodley(Mrs)  
Membership Secretary

### NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING BIRD MEETING

I have another good speaker for a general 'all birders' meeting.

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> Sept. Speaker Dr Jeremy Brock, entitled 'Birding on the Spanish Steppes, Laguna de Gallocanta'.

Arreton Community Hall, 7pm, tea-and-biscuit interval, finish about 20.45. [Supper in the White Lion afterwards, I will book the meal for anyone who lets me know they would like to join us].

Jeremy worked in Spain for many years and has a home overlooking this huge bird-rich lake in southern Aragon. He lives in Gatehouse of Fleet and talks regularly to wildlife groups mainly on Scottish circuits. As a birder he has watched the lake in all seasons so this is not just a 'what I did in my hols' talk but a study of the birds of the lake and the surrounding

steppes and the way it has evolved over the years. His pictures are good too. Gallocanta is a major staging post for migrants including Great Bustards and tens of thousands of European Cranes. It is threatened by extraction of water for crop irrigation and increasing salinity.

Daphne Watson

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**Obituary**  
**Michael Cahill 1934-2014.**

So many members have been greatly saddened by the sudden loss of Mike Cahill, a true stanchion of our Society. Mike and Anne joined our membership in 1991 and quickly engaged with a wide variety of activities, including fungi and geology. Ornithology and archaeology eventually gained the upper ground, but Mike did so very much more than simply attend. When the Society was obliged to vacate its premises at Salisbury Gardens, Ventnor, it was Mike that that was dismantling the towering ranks of racking and making those innumerable delivery trips to the new premises in Cowes. When faced with the dispiriting task of modifying and re-erecting everything, Mike simply smiled.

When the new geophysical equipment arrived, Mike quickly turned his RAF knowledge of flying and instrumentation to the mastering of this somewhat obdurate technology. When serious archaeological fieldwork began, the Cahill field arrows appeared from Mike's workshop. With quivers at our backs, we then stalked the plough-lines like Robin Hood and his merry companions. A significant item to arrive in Mike's car was the 'Cahilla'. To some observers, this was simply a broken one-tine garden fork, fit only for Lynn Bottom tip. In Mike's sunny world, here was a tailor-made groundbreaker. This could be used for inserting those tagged arrows across a sun-baked field. In Mike's company, everything had a positive aspect.

At home, Mike and Anne quietly proceeded with the compilation and editing of our *Wight Studies*. Here was no small task of cajoling authors and satisfying a discerning academic readership. Assembling a publisher's format, negotiating with printers and juggling timetables were equally challenging. Mike's patience, diplomacy and good humour never showed bounds. On the wettest, muddiest and least inspiring site, the arrival of Mike would ever bring to us an immediate illusion of sun. In April, Mike's last role as sun god was in a mud waste at Newchurch. Here, the geophysics team was doggedly pursuing its 'Below-ground Project'. Suddenly, Apollo has slipped from sight, and we are left with a changed landscape.

David Tomalin

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**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: New Management Plan for 2014 to 2019**

Our Society is part of the AONB Advisory Group, and is thus afforded an opportunity to influence the AONB Partnership as it carries out its primary purpose – conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. In 1963, the Isle of Wight obtained AONB designation for five 'land parcels' that includes approximately half of the Island. Designation entails that the Isle of Wight Council has to endorse a Management Plan. (A new Plan has recently been approved for 2014 to 2019). The Plan is coordinated by a small AONB team, co-located with the Planning Department at the Seaclose offices, Newport.

The AONB Management Plan is available on the web ([wightaonb.org.uk](http://wightaonb.org.uk)) and a copy has been placed in the Society's library. The Plan has 18 sections, all of which may be of interest to members, but four relate specifically to sectional interests – geology, wildlife, historic environment and cultural associations. In respect to the latter, (that is not precisely defined in the document), the Plan points out that the historic environment has statutory protection as opposed to the 'less formal context for cultural association issues'. The AONB policies adopted for cultural association are Policy (P)37 'support initiatives that celebrate the relationship between landscape, its use and people', and P 38 'ensure that landscape based cultural associations (such as names, dialect, stories, folklore, customs) are not lost or forgotten'. I should like to suggest that landscape walks and articles in the Proceedings by John Margham and others support, these two policies, but perhaps more could be considered. The section on 'wildlife' is quite brief and makes reference to the national 'Biodiversity 2020' strategy. The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (that can be found at [www.wildonwight.co.uk](http://www.wildonwight.co.uk)), is not referenced, whereas local strategies for health and well-being (human), the economy and sustainability are sourced. The AONB Plan notes: *'Wildlife is rightly valued for its aesthetic qualities and the enjoyment people gain from visiting wildlife sites. However, this view sells short the true importance of wildlife on our continued health and wellbeing. Wildlife also:*

- *provides genetic diversity, from which we derive our agricultural foods,*
- *provides the photosynthesis of plants (producing the oxygen we breath),*
- *enables carbon sequestration (removal of one of the most influential greenhouse gases from the atmosphere),*
- *is fundamental to the pollination of flowers and crops,*
- *regulates the virility and spread of pests and diseases,*
- *reduces erosion by binding soils together'.*

If wildlife does not have intrinsic rights, but depends on its utility to humans, what are the views of members of the Society on the above list? A debate on the ethics involved might prove controversial, but then there are strong development pressures and self-interests to counter.

Appendix C to the Plan summarises the results of the 2013 local species review, and this is reproduced here as it may be of interest to members. (The tables have been slightly amended for this article. The complete review can be seen at [www.wildonwight.co.uk](http://www.wildonwight.co.uk)).

Species	Group	Comments
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#### Species recently extinct on IOW

Corn Bunting	Birds	Lost as a breeding species c. 2003
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Butterflies	Very recent loss as a breeding species
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Butterflies	Very recent loss as a breeding species
Duke of Burgundy	Butterflies	Lost as a breeding species c. 2007
<i>Osmia xanthomelana</i>	Hymenopteran	Lost 1993. One other UK site
Corn Buttercup	Flowering Plants	Arable species last recorded c. 2000

Data deficient species (Nationally important – no current IOW data)

Desmoulin's Whorl-snail	Molluscs	
<i>Soutbya nigrella</i>	Liverworts	One of 2 UK sites
Brown Hairstreak	Butterflies	Present

Successful species (Nationally important – doing well on the IOW)

Dormouse	Mammals	A UK stronghold
Bechstein's Bat	Mammals	A UK stronghold
Grey Long-eared Bat	Mammals	A UK stronghold
Barn Owl	Birds	
Early Gentian	Flowering Plants	A UK stronghold
Ox-tongue Broomrape	Flowering Plants	A UK stronghold. One other UK site
<i>Fulgensia fulgens</i>	Lichens	Possibly strongest UK population
<i>Padina pavonica</i>	Brown Algae	One of the best locations in the UK

Vulnerable species (Currently at risk. Recovery dependant on targeted action)

Brown Trout	Fish	Population very low but signs of recovery
Eel	Fish	
Reddish Buff moth	Moths	Population currently very low
<i>Trachysphaera lobata</i>	Millipede	Sole UK site. Subject to breeding programme
Pillwort	Ferns & allies	Last seen at sole IOW site 2004
Juniper	Conifers	Population reduced from 2 to one plant
Greater Butterfly Orchid	Flowering Plants	Handful of sites. Plants in single figures
Foxtail Stonewort	Stoneworts	Last recorded from sole IOW site c 2000
<i>Marchesinia mackaii</i>	Liverworts	Known from a single rock outcrop

At risk species (Currently stable but could be at risk if circumstances changed)

Red Squirrel	Mammals	Vulnerable if grey squirrels introduced
Wood Calamint	Flowering plants	Sole UK site
<i>Cryptolechia carncolutea</i>	Lichens	Ash is sole host
<i>Wadeana dendrographa</i>	Lichens	Ash is sole host

Climate change indicator species

Glanville Fritillary	Butterflies	Vulnerable to excessive costal erosion
<i>Anostirus castaneus</i>	Beetles	Vulnerable to excessive costal erosion
Dartford Warbler	Birds	Vulnerable to extreme weather events
Slender Hare's-ear	Flowering plants	Vulnerable to estuarine sea-level rise
<i>Teloschistes chrysopthalma</i>	Lichens	Vulnerable to short term extreme weather

The AONB priorities for delivery of its wildlife policies are:

- *'Develop regular wildlife and habitat monitoring and recording programmes and establish ways in which the data obtained from this can be shared more effectively,*
- *develop targeted programmes to deliver Biodiversity 2020 through a landscape scale/NIA approach,*
- *support Catchment Sensitive Farming for its wildlife gains,*
- *recognise and encourage the appropriate management of roadside verges and hedgerows for their wildlife value and interest'.*

Perhaps these could be ‘unpacked’, especially the second and third priorities, at a general IWNHAS meeting on the AONB.

During my three year term as the IWNHAS representative to the AONB I will seek to act as an effective two way conduit of views. Please do not hesitate to contact me via the IWNHAS office if you have issues/views.

Paul Bingham

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### **The Lunar Hornet Clearwing Moth – an exciting find**

Ian Boyd had a surprising and exciting find on 5<sup>th</sup> July whilst visiting the wide roadside verge at Arreton Cross, familiar to most people because of the wooden hare and magpie carvings by Paul Sivell. A striking day flying moth which mimics a hornet moth landed in front of him and he was able to take a photograph and identify it as a Lunar Hornet Moth. This is the first confirmed modern record from the Island. Although it is considered to be a widespread and not uncommon clearwing moth nationally, adults are very rarely seen. The larvae feed on the wood of willows.

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### **VISIT TO THE LONDON WETLAND CENTRE 26th April**

Despite a rather slow uptake of members initially, an almost full coach of people set off for the London Wetland Centre on 26<sup>th</sup> April, thanks to Daphne Watson and Val Gwynn who invited members of some of the Island’s birding groups to join us.

Barnes in SW London is not where you would expect to find a wetland centre of international importance, but that is exactly what it is. By the entrance lake to the centre is a bronze statue of Sir Peter Scott, whose vision it was to create a truly urban nature reserve in the heart of London.

The landscape here is completely man-made, the Wetland Centre has been created on the site of former reservoirs owned by Thames Water. In a unique partnership between the WWT, Thames Water and Berkeley Homes, this dream of Sir Peter Scott has been realised.

The centre was started in 1997 and finally opened to the public in 2000, at a cost of £16million. In his speech at the opening of the LWC, Sir David Attenborough described it as ‘the ideal model for how humankind and the natural world may live side by side in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’.

On a very pleasant day, our visit began with coffee and cakes in the café, though most of us sat outside by the lake and were able to enjoy the squawking and antics of Ring-necked Parakeets on the buildings! We then split into two groups for an introductory talk. There seemed to be a bit of a mix up here as we started with the chief ecologist, who appeared to be drafted in at the last minute, and later another guide appeared, who evidently had arrived late! Hazel and I broke away from the introduction quite quickly as we had heard it on a previous visit, and headed into the World Wetlands, where wetlands from all over the world have been recreated. Because the birds here have been hand reared at various WWT centres, they are much tamer than the wild birds and allow you to see their amazing plumage and character close up. Amongst the habitats here are the African Floodplains, the Frozen North, Northern Forests, South America and Australia. Not being birders, I can only list some of the beautiful birds we saw in this section but they included Egyptian Geese, Smew, Whooper Swans, Red-breasted Geese, Eider Duck and Black Australian Swans amongst many others.

The whole site is beautifully landscaped: 300,000 aquatic plants, 25,000 trees and hundreds of native bulbs have been planted, including fritillaries and orchids. The horticulturist in me was

very impressed by the magnificent plantings of *Phyllostachys nigra* (Black Bamboo) in the World Wetlands section. Hazel was lucky enough to spot a Water Vole in this section, near a bridge, having followed the advice to look out for the droppings. We wandered back to the main entrance, where it was time for lunch in the Water's Edge café.

We continued with the south route in the afternoon, which took us to the pond zone, where in a building modelled on a Neolithic roundhouse, there are exhibits you can interact with, whilst outside the roundhouse you can discover ponds for real and do a spot of pond dipping. The next feature is a number of very impressive sustainable gardens, which give lots of ideas as to how to make your garden more ecologically friendly, including the use of log piles, "creature towers" for invertebrates, as well as a superb plantings of mainly native species of plants, including *Geum rivale* (Water Avens).

Once past the sustainable gardens, there is a bird hide, the Dulverton Hide, which has a distinctive stoncrop roof. From this hide you can see great views of the main lake, and shingle islands where, in spring and summer, Lapwings and Little Ringed Plovers can be seen. At several points along our walk we heard the distinctive song of a Cetti's Warbler. The Peacock Tower is a large hide 3 storeys high which offers spectacular views of the reserve, and the best birdwatching the site has to offer. It looks out on the main lake, the grazing marsh and a sheltered lagoon. Other features in this area included the Berkeley Bat House, designed by Turner winning artist Jeremy Deller, using the best in sustainable building materials, and potentially a home to new bats, especially Pipistrelles and Daubenton's Bats. Also close to the Peacock Tower is the Sand Martin nest bank.

It was in the Peacock Hide that Val Gwynn and Daphne Watson showed immense patience in pointing out to me a Little Ringed Plover, which I managed to photograph!

All in all, the London Wetland Centre makes for a superb day out, the site is flat, easy to access, well landscaped, has excellent interpretation and good facilities.

We personally thought, having been once before, that we were pleased to take some members for the first time and a few who were able to see such progress since their last visit.

Dave and Hazel Trevan

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## The Library

Did you know there are nearly a thousand books on the library shelves at IWNHAS headquarters? The vast majority are for loan but many books from the reference section may also be borrowed by special arrangement. There is a particularly good selection of Isle of Wight books.

Some of our most recent acquisitions are:-

'One Island Life well Lived' by Brian Greening and Bill Shepherd

'Bird Atlas 2007 – 11 (Breeding and Wintering Birds of Britain and Ireland'

'The Roman Villa at Brading IOW' by Prof. Sir Barry Cunliffe

'Bembridge Harbour' by Bembridge and St, Helens Harbour Association

Some of our older books are:

Morey's 'A Guide to the Natural History of the Isle of Wight'

Percy Stone's 'Architectural Antiquities of the Isle of Wight'

A number of the books have been written by IWNHAS members past and present such as Oliver Frazer, Jack and Johanna Jones, Alan Phillips, Bill Shepherd, David Tomalin,

Many books have been generously donated to us over the years; recently we have received books from Bill Shepherd, Tony Joyce, and Joyce and Dai Morgan-Huws.

We also have a range of field guides, past copies of the proceedings, publications and periodicals from other associations and annual reports such as The Botany Report and the Hants and IOW Butterfly and Moth Report.

The best time to visit is on a Thursday morning when the office is usually manned, but it's best to phone and check before coming. If you can't get there in person maybe another member can collect books for you or you could speak to one of the Society officers who have access to the premises. If you attend a section meeting at HQ this could be a good time to browse and borrow books.

We run a self-check system so you can take books out at any time you are there. To borrow simply fill in the borrowing book on the library desk and record when you return the book. You can leave the book on the desk and I'll return it to the shelf for you.

There is a database of the library on the society's website so you can search for the title or subject you need. Click on the library link.

Helen Jackson, Library Administrator

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## Reports of General Meetings

### **11<sup>th</sup> January            Hubert Poole and the Great Pan** **An illustrated talk by Paul Bingham, with additional information from Steve Hutt & David Tomalin**

As a young man Hubert Frederic Poole fought in some of the fiercest battles of the First World War, in Northern France, and was promoted to Lieutenant. His war experiences had a profound influence on his life.

In 1935 he was Honorary Curator of the Natural History Museum in Shanklin and in 1937 Isle of Wight Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries and Honorary Curator of the Carisbrooke Castle Museum, but ill health forced him to resign. In 1940 The Hampshire Field Club Proceedings published an article entitled 'Country Words and Ways' containing reminiscences about his dad working hard outdoors in cold, wintry weather and carrying a potato in his pocket to prevent rheumatism. An article in the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society's 1938 Proceedings describes visitors to a bird bath that Hubert installed outside his window when he was ill. This is more anecdotal than scientific writing. When Poole returned home from the First World War, he was looking for a new focus. A gravel pit had been opened in 1912 at Great Pan Farm in Shide, and there he found a flint implement. The gravel was a terrace of the River Medina on a 25 foot contour, suggesting old, but not really old, but the gravel had come from higher terraces upstream. Hubert identified seven beds, or layers, in the pit. During the last Ice Age it was too cold for Man to live there, but rivers washed huge deposits of gravel down.

Over the two or three years before Pan Pit closed, Poole found 140 implements there. He sent them to Reginald Smith at the British Museum, who wrote on a label on the back what he thought each item was. There was some controversy as to how old the implements were, and this is still being discussed. From the very lowest level of the pit an elephant's tooth was



found in bluish sandy clay. The tooth is from a straight-tusked elephant and helps to date this layer.

In the 1970s Myra Shackley held a rescue dig there when the Newport Road threatened the Pit. Trial trenches were dug with a JCB and flooded overnight. A trial boring revealed only a metre of disturbed gravel. The conclusion was that this was beach sand. The sea level was substantially higher than it is now and so the tide would have reached beyond Newport. An archaeological evaluation of the Pit before the Pan development began revealed one flake and no implements from four terraces. Poole's Figure 19, a symmetrical hand axe, has been dated to the Neanderthals' last visit to Britain. This deluxe hand axe, *bout coupe*, is a very characteristic form.

There are three ways of dating soil layers: unpacking marine oxygen Isotope stages through deep core drilling, considering fossilised mammals as time markers, or assessing the age of stone tools found there. Steve Hutt described how he found a mammoth humerus, or arm bone, protruding from the cliff at Chilton Chine, and nearby an elephant's jaw with the teeth intact. They belonged to a young and quite small mammoth. There was no sign of any human activity there. At Compton there are three metre thick river gravel beds, but the bone was found in peat and was therefore well preserved. It could be that this mammoth returned to the area after the last Ice Age, another post-glacial find reveals.

David Tomalin described how 140 implements were found in a relatively small pit. He visited the Great Pan Pit area in 1973, at about the same time as Myra Shackley. Prior to the JCB excavations, he found it small and overgrown with stinging nettles. He was disappointed that he couldn't see much and he didn't return after Shackley's dig. In 2008 the cricket ground was constructed and diggers removed about four metres of gravel from over the whole site. A group of enthusiasts from IWNHAS examined the site and dug their own long trenches, but found no flakes or stone implements.

Paul concludes that there may have been a knapping floor at Shide and that elephants may have been butchered there.

For most of the audience of some thirty-five members, the Great Pan Pit was, I imagine, something of a novelty, and I, for one, found this talk fascinating.

Maggie Nelmes

**8<sup>th</sup> March 2014      The fascinating world of plant galls**  
**An illustrated talk by David Biggs**

It happened by chance. One day in 1975 David was strolling along the Cowes-Newport cycle track with his five year-old daughter when she discovered a bright green, spiky growth around an acorn. It made her hand sticky. This was, it is hard to believe, the first Knopper gall record for the Isle of Wight. Now they are widespread.

A gall is a tumour caused by either an increase in the number of plant cells or an increase in the size of the cells. These structures are triggered by the invasion of a plant's tissues by a parasite, whether a bacterium, fungus, mite, fly, wasp, midge or aphid, for the purpose of laying its eggs. Galls are the plant's way of protecting itself from harm, following an attack, by sealing off the attacker. The saw fly inserts its ovipositor into plant tissue, and the plant responds by isolating the invader's eggs. The gall also protects the parasite and often provides food for the parasite's young.

Practically any vascular plant can be galled, but in several different ways. Just the surface of a leaf may be altered by thickening and /or rolling at the edges, an insect may become embedded in a gall when its tissues grow over it, or the invader may sink from the outside into a space caused by dissolving plant tissue and then the chamber is sealed up.

Alternatively, the parasite may already be deep inside the plant's tissues before the gall is formed to isolate it there.

Gall-causers, like other parasites, tend to be host specific. Most gall wasps are found on oaks and sawflies of the genus *Pontania* are found only on willows. However, the crown-gall bacterium and some eelworms can occur in many species. David showed us a series of slides of the great variety of galls occurring on a very wide range of plants.

Gall mites cause leaf edges to thicken. They also cause hairiness to prevent their offspring from drying up. Mites are only visible under a microscope. They belong to the same family as spiders and ticks, but have only four legs, instead of eight. On the upper surface of lime leaves horn-like protrusions contain hundreds of thousands of mites.

All gall aphids are woolly aphids which produce honeydew. Their woolly surface protects them from drowning. They cause green galls on noble fir, carmine galls on currants, purple folds on ash, tassel galls on rush, and more.

A fly species causes hardened hairy buds on germander speedwell, and rosette galls on narrow-leaved willow, as found along the old railway track near Alverstone. Each fly gall contains just one fly larva. They cause galls on fern shoots, causing a mop effect, and rivet galls on dogwood, as found in Shide Chalkpit and at St Lawrence Shute. The artichoke gall occurs on yew and was used by Ancient Greeks as a poison to kill an enemy. On oak a fly causes folding of the leaf edges.

Gall wasps cause blisters to form on the edge of a leaf and a right-angle turn on the twigs. In autumn the leaf falls and the gall wasp larva develops in the shelter of the leaf litter on the woodland floor, unless it is eaten by a pheasant. The wasp emerges in spring. On ground ivy a fleshy, succulent gall is produced that is eaten by children in Hungary. Four varieties of spangle gall occur on oak, pea galls are found on rose, both smooth and spiked. Seventy different galls are found on oaks on the Isle of Wight and each has two forms. Gall wasps go through an alternation of primary and secondary galls.

In past centuries galls have been used for various purposes. The Aleppo gall from the Levant provided an ink with which the Magna Carta was written and in Germany it was a legal requirement to produce important state documents in gall ink, as it does not fade. Tannins from galls were therefore used to make dyes. Galls were also used in medicinal remedies. Galls do not cause harm to host plants, because they are the plant's protective mechanism. Something in the insects' saliva triggers the growth of a tumour, but the tumour doesn't harm the plant because the plant automatically walls off and thus isolates the tumour. The horse chestnut leaf miner, caused by a micro-moth new to science, has caused alarm in parts of Britain. It was first observed at Lake Ochrid in the Balkans and from there it spread rapidly. Horse chestnuts on the Island were so heavily infested that their leaves turned brown and fell earlier than usual. However, the spread has stopped in the past two years and David says that these problems eventually resolve themselves.

I did not think I knew much about plant galls, but David's photos revealed a number of familiar structures that I recognised as having found on our various field trips in recent years. David is always patient and willing to explain. I find galls intriguing and I greatly enjoyed this talk and the amazing diversity of sizes, shapes and colours.

We are also very grateful to David for offering to give a talk at very short notice when the scheduled speaker was unavailable.

Maggie Nelmes

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## Reports of Section Meetings

### Looking at the Countryside

#### 24<sup>th</sup> January St Helens

Despite the weather forecast for rain five people turned up for the winter waders walk to St Helen's Duver. As usual we met at St Helen's Green car park and walked part way down Duver Road and took the foot path alongside St Helen's Common to The Duver. We then looked out to the Solent for any sightings of birds. There we saw a Cormorant, Curlew, three Brent Geese, three Great Black Backed Gulls, some Black-headed Gulls, and a Herring Gull, two Great Crested Grebe and 7 Redshank. Normally we see many more Cormorant fishing for fish in the sea and also resting on St Helen's Fort but there was not much life on the sea in general. We then walked along the sea wall to the Point and looked at the harbour where we saw Dunlin, Grey Plover, Teal Mallard, Shelduck, Little Grebe, Mediterranean Gull, Lapwing, Coot and about 30 Gadwall. We also noted two Pied Wagtail, two Rock Pipit as well as two Mute Swan and a Greenshank. The usual Canada Goose was with his three farmyard-type Goose companions near the Old Mill House.

The Winter Heliotrope lined the footpath by St Helen's Common and a few were in flower – in other years they have been more in evidence. There were also a large number of heavily galled Alexanders. David Biggs told us about the Tree Lupin that can be found on The Duver. About ten years ago it was attacked by a large black aphid specific to Tree Lupin and many of the plants were lost but it is now making a comeback. On the walk up Mill Road we passed some Sweet Violets out in flower.

Despite the drizzle we managed to see 28 species of birds during the morning.

Jackie Hart

#### 26<sup>th</sup> March Shorwell

On a fine, breezy morning 14 people set off from the Crown in Shorwell for Alan Phillips' walk. We soon left the road and crossed a field known as Ladylands, the reason for the name is unknown. As we climbed we had good views over West Court and Troopers Bog, where it is reputed that some Civil War troopers were lost. The stream that feeds the bog is that which rises near North Court and eventually reaches the sea at Grange Chine.

We learned that Farriers Way in Shorwell is the oldest known habitation on the Island, thousands of flint tools dating back to the Mesolithic and Neolithic have been found there showing that the area was inhabited by hunter gathers 4 to 5,000 years ago. A near-by field has also yielded items from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 2004 some high status grave goods were excavated including silver brooches.

We gained the crest of the low ridge and looked down into the depression known as Rancombe in 1227, but is now known as Renham from which Renham Down gets its name, the name indicates the presence of roe deer at one time. The name Fore Down which is also in the area suggests the presence of pigs. The little valley was inhabited in living memory but the old farm house that was once there is now gone, the last inhabitant moved out in the 1940s after bombs landed nearby. The only remnant of habitation is the well that is covered but still there. It is reputed to be at least 90 ft deep and could be as deep as 150ft.

As we descended towards the road there was some discussion about old boundary stones in the area that are reflected in the local names, Limerstone, Hoarstone and Broadstone. There are records of a farmstead at Limerstone in 1252. As we looked towards the coast we learned that there have been Romano British roof tiles found at Grange Chine and at Barnes High there is a Mesolithic Urn cemetery. A stone coffin has also been found in a field near Limerstone.

In the lane descending to the main road we saw plenty of signs of Badgers, extensive excavations on one side of the track and a latrine on the other. David Biggs found a Rust originally from Australia on Groundsel and another Rust on Mallow. A field was being ploughed on the other side of the road and there were a large number of Black-headed Gulls and also about 50 Mediterranean Gulls busy behind the plough.

We followed Muggleton Lane to Yafford Mill. Alan suggested that Muggle may refer to Rats or Midges. Yafford is recorded as Yoghe ford in 1408 but by 1637 it had become Yafford. The name may mean a ford with a grating (to stop debris being washed downstream) or ford by the weir (sluice). We returned to Shorwell via Wolverton and enjoyed the view of one of most beautiful houses on the Island.

We had a most enjoyable walk - lots of interesting information from Alan and from Delian and others with archaeological interests. The weather was kind too making up for the wet and windy walks in January and February. Thank you very much Alan.

### **29<sup>th</sup> April Firestone Copse**

The venue for the walk was changed from the Belmont area because Park Road, where we were to have met, was closed for road works. However the messages sent out in the few days before were successful and eleven people met on a fine morning after rain to see what we could find in Firestone Copse.

Mary had worked out a pleasant route through lesser-walked paths and down to the creek, where there was plenty of mud, however, we managed to avoid the worst. Near the start of the walk we admired a Balsam Poplar, interestingly some people could smell it and others (including me) couldn't. Another interesting smell was that of the leaves of Foetid Iris (*Iris foetidissima*) which was variously described as roast beef, OXO cube, and Marmite. The walk took us through beautiful beech woods where the sunlight filtered through the soft green of the young leaves and lit up the masses of Bluebells beneath the trees. David Biggs found several galls including 'tangled hair' galls on willow catkins and Redcurrant gall on oak, which looks just as its name suggests; it is the spring version of Spangle gall. Another interesting gall was the Rams-horn gall which has arrived from the Mediterranean in recent years. He also found leaf miners on Holly and Honeysuckle and a rust that alternates between Spindle and Larch.

There were many wild flowers, including Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), the pinky Wood Speedwell (*Veronica montana*), and the brighter blue Heath Speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*). Sue Blackwell showed us the difference between Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*) and Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*): Barren Strawberry petals are a little wider spaced and have a notch at the top of the petal. There were also Early Purple Orchids (*Orchis mascula*).

By the creek we saw a Wild Service tree, and discovered that the leaves of the Grand Fir smell of tangerines.

A Buzzard was perched in the trees across the creek, and there were Shelduck, and a Little Egret by the lake. We heard but didn't see Chiffchaff, Goldcrest and Blackcap.

At this time of year there are a few fungi around and we saw a good clump of St Georges Mushrooms (*Calocybe gambosa*), this fungus is named because it appears around the time of St Georges Day, though usually it is a week or so later, so these were right on time! Also found were some Coral Spot (*Nectria cinnabarina*) on a log, and a very good piece of wood stained bright bluey-green by the Green Elfcup (*Chlorociboria aeruginascens*).

A very pleasant and informative two hours in an interesting place and in good company.

Thank you Mary for a lovely morning.

Lesley Atkins

### **15<sup>th</sup> May Walters Copse, Newtown**

As Lesley Atkins was unavailable to lead the walk in Walters's Copse, David Biggs led eleven members through mud, mud, glorious mud on a very warm sunny morning. Vicky Basford gave us some historical information about the site and Helen Parry explained management of the woodland. Under the Biodiversity Action Plan the copse is divided into sections which are cut back in rotation every six years to allow vegetation to regenerate for conservation of butterflies such as White Admiral and Silver-washed Fritillary. She also explained about butterfly transects which she undertakes in the copse. En route David pointed out many fascinating plant galls and rust fungi, notably oak apples on the oaks adjoining the marsh and a rust galling Meadowsweet which Toni Goodley found and which proved to be new to Walters Copse and Newtown Nature Reserve. An area of Ridge and Furrow was pointed out as well as the original boundary banks. On *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder Rose) were several larvae of the *Viburnum* beetle.

Robins, Great Tits, Song thrushes, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, and male Pheasants were heard rather than seen, though a female pheasant was observed sitting so still and quiet it was assumed she was incubating eggs.

Very few butterflies were seen, just a small number of Speckled Woods and male and female Orange tips.

Four species of orchid were admired; approximately one hundred *Orchis mascula* (early purple orchid) and three *Listera ovata* (twayblade) were in flower while *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (common spotted orchid) and *Platathera chlorantha* (greater butterfly orchid) had flower spikes still in bud. Other botanical species of special note include *Hypericum androsaemum* (Tutsan), *Sanicula europaea* (wood sanicle), *Potentilla erecta* (Tormentil) and a small quantity of *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks buttercup) identifiable by the very narrow upper leaf segments and bright yellow mis-shapen petals.

At the edge of the copse by Clamerkin Creek where *Armeria maritima* (sea pinks) were flowering we saw two Whimbrels on late spring migration, and a pair of Shelducks flew past. The uncommon coastal plant *Seriphidium maritimum* (sea wormwood) was growing among other salt-marsh vegetation such as *Triglochin maritima* (sea arrow-grass).

A small spider in its web intrigued us, as the web showed two 'filaments' (or stabilimentum) above and below the spider. Les Street made an identification of a young male wasp spider (*Argiope bruennichi*).

With so much to see and discuss it was a thoroughly interesting outing, much enjoyed by all who attended.

Thank you David for leading the walk and to Sue Blackwell for providing the write-up.

### **18<sup>th</sup> June St. Lawrence**

A group of 12 people set off for a walk in St. Lawrence, led by Dave Trevan. After giving some fairly severe 'Health and Safety type' advice necessary due to the winter cliff falls, recent rainfall that had made the woodland paths quite slippery, and coastal gales that had swept away access steps to the beach, the group set off down Hunts Road, and entered an unmarked entrance to Charles Wood. The whole area is part of the AONB and an SSSI, and before entering the woods we discussed some of the unusual cultivated and naturalized plants such as the Giant Viper's Bugloss (*Echium pininana*) that are a feature of the area, and thrive in its warm microclimate.

Charles Wood is owned by the Council, and as far as is known, no management has been carried out in recent years, it is dominated by Sycamores (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). As a result the wood is quite gloomy but some plants are thriving, especially the magnificent stands of Hart's Tongue Fern's" (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) which can be seen all over the wood. Other notable feature are some magnificent lime trees (*Tilia x europaea*). Dave pointed out the

distinctive tufts hairs in the vein axils on the underside of the leaves, which are a distinctive characteristic of the lime genus. The group noticed the huge “liana” like growth of *Clematis vitalba* growing up many of the trees.

The group were also able to see good stands of Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*) and Butcher’s Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*).

With the help of Tony Stoneley, another St. Lawrence local, we peered into the Old Park estate, once the home of William Spindler, a wealthy German chemist, who carried out many public works in and around the village. Tony also discussed the possible origin of stone walls which are a feature of the area.

We then made our way down to Binnel Bay, past a distinctive spinney of sycamores, where Dave and Hazel pointed out a large badger’s sett. As we descended the steps down to Binnel Bay, large stands of Tamarix (*Tamarix gallica*) could be seen. These were in flower, with their pink feathery inflorescences. They are typical maritime shrubs, often planted as a first line of defence against salt winds.

At Binnel we observed “Spindler’s Folly”, the remnants of a harbour wall built by Spindler. St. Catherine’s Lighthouse, the third most powerful lighthouse in the UK, is a feature of the coastline here, visible for 30 miles in clear weather. We could also see evidence of recent landslips, with trees lying at all sort of peculiar angles.

After traversing a fast flowing stream, we continued onto the coastal path. This area has been one of the best sites for the Glanville Fritillary (*Melitaea cinxia*) due the unstable nature of the soft undercliff and the abundance of its food plant the Narrow Leaved Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), but in recent years the butterfly has really declined here, and in fact few have been spotted this year. We saw good stands of Thrift (*Armeria maritima*).

As we progressed along the cliff path, we saw the seedheads of large numbers of Cowslips (*Primula veris*) and the group admired the wonderful lichens growing on the large rocks, though none of us were brave enough to put names to them.

We observed Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), a fleshy leaved edible plant that was used in salads and pickles, in the past collected by ‘Cliffsmen’. Dave pointed out one of his favourite plants the Yellow Horned Poppy (*Glaucium flavum*), which is established on the cliffs.

The group were curious about the remains of the old radar aerials that were part of RAF St. Lawrence, the bases of which can still be seen as well as bunkers that were control rooms and Nissan huts.

Pyramidal Orchids (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) were quite common on the walk and found a few Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*). One of the feature plants of the area is the gorgeous Hoary Plantain (*Plantago media*), perhaps the most attractive of all the plantains with their distinctive pinky flowers.

The walk concluded with a rather steep climb up the “Sugar Loaf”, a distinctive hill with tilted rock strata visible. From the top of the Sugar Loaf we could enjoy magnificent views towards Binnel Bay and beyond, and in the other direction we could look towards Ventnor and St. Boniface Down.

The group then walked back into the village, but several people were curious about a plant called Cock’s Eggs (*Salpichroa organifolia*), a South American plant which is established by the side of the footpath leading down to the cliffs. Luckily we found just one or two plants by the footpath but the owner of the property who heard us and came out to say that it was quite abundant in her garden!

Other invertebrates seen on the walk were Cinnabar Moths, a brood of Small Tortoiseshell Caterpillars, several Burnet Moth caterpillars and swollen-thighed beetles. Amongst the birds, David Biggs drew our attention to a Whitethroat singing.

All on all, an enjoyable walk, and one that could be repeated in different seasons.

## Archaeology

### Wednesday Activities

The Archaeology Section has continued to flourish, with new members acquiring skills and knowledge but also contributing their own expertise. Mud has been a recurring theme this year with some entertaining visits to Wroxall Down, Brook, Mottistone and Priory Bay. Even an indoor visit – to Dinosaur Isle – involved high tides and spray over the road and cars.

We have continued our survey at the Garlic Farm and found evidence of enclosures and a trackway to the river, but we're still searching for signs of a Romano-British farmhouse.

On Castle Hill at Mottistone much of the vegetation had been cut down, making it easier to see the earthwork enclosure and entrance.

On Ventnor and Wroxall Downs we followed ancient routeways and looked at the site of Cook's Castle.

Visiting Fishbourne beach at low tide we saw the wooden remains of the old shipbuilding stocks and the prehistoric trackway and fish trap, all within a few feet of each other. Further along, below Quarr Abbey, numerous pieces of slate and Quarr stone on the beach were evidence of the trading activity during the time of the medieval abbey. David told us about the Roman pottery and coins found along this stretch of coast.

We are delighted about the opportunities for further work at Quarr, including the postponed excavation with Southampton University. For further information, check our webpage - [www.iwarch.roselake.co.uk](http://www.iwarch.roselake.co.uk)

### Archaeology at Quarr Abbey: May 2014

Little now remains of the original Cistercian abbey buildings at Quarr as most of the building material was removed for recycling following the dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII.

Visitors can see parts of the perimeter wall and tantalising remains in the field adjoining the lane to Binstead, but this is not often open to the public.

Much can be learnt from various medieval documents and also a comprehensive plan of the site produced by Percy Stone following his excavation in the mid nineteenth century. More recently Southampton University carried out topographic and geophysical surveys (1997 and 2002).

So when a team laying a new water main beneath the track to Binstead in 2011 encountered stone walling the evidence suggested that this could be part of the old abbey church.

Thanks to Father Gregory and David Tomalin the archaeology section had the opportunity to investigate further in May as the lane was to be closed for the laying of a cycle track. We had a week (better than Time Team's 3 days!) to investigate. This was a great opportunity to hone some of our skills and learn new ones, with 19 members taking part on a rota basis over the week.

As preparation we walked over a large part of the medieval site, identifying features on Percy Stone's plan. Only one complete building survives and that is now used as a barn. A substantial amount of the perimeter wall survives including rare examples of gun ports (in a Solent-facing wall) as the abbey, unusually, was given permission to fortify ('crenellate') the site.

The first stage of the dig seemed easy – watching a small digger open 3 trenches. Then the heavens opened and we returned after lunch to find deep water in the trenches and more water draining down the lane into them. Fortunately a pump and generator were available, but we

still had to bale out water and work in mud. At one point we felt like we were in a World War One re-enactment group.

A huge amount of building stone was recovered, plus floor and roof tile, medieval and later pottery sherds, oyster shell and a few miscellaneous items. Finds have been washed, labelled and catalogued and now await further study. Some wall / foundation and floor was in situ and scale drawings were made.

We were invited into one of the nearby gardens to see some of the stone, apparently from the abbey, used in walls and rockeries. It was good to see that people value the history in their own back gardens.

So next time you walk along the lane past the field where you can see parts of the abbey buildings, remember that you are walking along the nave of the original abbey church.

Helen Jackson

## Botany

### January 18<sup>th</sup> Indoor meeting

Our indoor meeting gives the opportunity to review last year's recording, and looking forward to the new season's programme. Reports were given of the two rare plants (field cow-wheat and wood calamint) which the botany group members monitor. Colin Pope showed photographs of some of last year's special finds including dwarf sedge (*Carex humilis*) found by Paul Stanley during the Mottistone Down meeting

Several people brought pressed specimens of plants and photographs to be examined in the tea interval.

Roger Powley has a particular enthusiasm for finding and photographing orchids and after tea, he showed us photographs of the species he found in the last season. For anyone who missed this have a look at this website to see his beautiful photographs <http://www.rogerpowley.co.uk/>

Roger also brought his camera and ancillary equipment and gave us some good advice about flower photography.

### February 9<sup>th</sup> and April 5<sup>th</sup> Wood calamint conservation

On 9<sup>th</sup> February, we carried out our usual clearance of rank vegetation on the two original laybys, pulling out brambles and other coarse weeds to get the banks back to soil level to assist the growth of the plant in the coming season. An area of coppicing took place in the following month, so a small group gathered at the beginning of April to set out small wood calamint plants grown from seed by Ann Campbell. The new plants were set out in groups were marked with sticks bearing a numbered flag, and later in the year we will visit the site to monitor how well the plants are growing.

### April 12<sup>th</sup> Whitefield Woods

We visited this site on a beautiful bright afternoon in mid April when the spring flora was just coming to its best. It is a 'Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site' (PAWS), meaning it has had woodland cover since the 1600's but there has been felling and replanting with various tree species, depending on the market for particular types of wood, during that time. However because the soils have never been cultivated for arable crops, they retain their woodland characteristics and seed bank and therefore the plants described as ancient woodland indicators (AWI) are often still found in some variety and quantity.

Walking along the main ride from Hardingshute we found 22 species of these AWI plants including a magnificent display of narrow-leaved lungwort (*Pulmonaria longifolia*) and early



purple orchid (*Orchis mascula*). Wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) is very frequently found in ancient woodlands on the Island and eventually we found a clump of it quite some way into the wood. Bitter vetch (*Lathyrus linifolius*) was another good find; once seen, several more plants were found as we retraced our steps along the track.

### **May 3<sup>rd</sup> Knighton Wood East**

We had a delightful spring woodland walk in this privately owned wood, courtesy of Mr Eaton, in bright sunny conditions. The spring flowers, dominated by bluebells and red campion, made a fine show. Climbing corydalis (*Ceratocarpus claviculata*) was frequent at the western end of the wood and other finds included impressive sheets of Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and Wood millet (*Milium effusum*). Knighton West wood is another ancient woodland site and the management carried out over the last ten years has opened up the wood allowing many of the ancient woodland indicator species to flourish.

### **June 14th Pallancegate**

This site consists of several meadows which formerly were part of Pallancegate Farm. They are an excellent example of unimproved neutral grassland which have either been grazed or cut for hay and do not appear to ever have had artificial fertilisers applied. The results of our visit will help to determine how the meadows are managed in the future by their new owners. We attempted to record the flora of each field separately and estimate the abundance of each species using the DAFOR scale (**D**ominant, **A**bundant, **F**requent, **O**ccasional, **R**are)

The most northerly and largest field had a magnificent show of flowering dyer's greenweed (*Genista tinctoria*) rated as '**F**' along with corky-fruited water dropwort (*Oenanthe pimpinelloides*) (**O**), sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) (**F**), meadow barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) (**O**), black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) (**O**) and ox-eye daisies (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) (**A**)

One of the other fields was similar in composition, but additionally saw-wort was present in small quantities (**R**). Another was damper, with compact rush (*Juncus conglomeratus*) (**F**) being more noticeable.

Anne Marston

## **Entomology**

### **10<sup>th</sup> May**

### **Bonchurch**

The aim of this meeting was to see whether any Glanville Fritillaries could be found. Ten members attended. The conditions were far from promising because the winds were very strong for the time of year. However two Glanvilles were seen. One below the cliffs behind Wheelers Bay, and another seen briefly as the wind caught it behind Monks Bay. Few other insects of note were found. A Gorse Shield bug was seen and a couple of nymphs of the Dark Bush cricket.

### **27<sup>th</sup> May**

### **Martins Wood, Newchurch for Bioblitz**

Two one hour walks were organised for members of the society, and members of the public who wished to join in, attracting a total of eight individuals. The weather was overcast, with the odd brighter spell, and some spots of rain, not ideal for many of the species that we were looking for.

A cockchafer and a couple of garden chafers were found, as were a couple of hoverflies, most strikingly *Xanthogramma pedissequum*, with strong yellow stripes at the side of the thorax. Pill woodlice and a common shiny woodlice were found. A couple of Cinnabar moths and a

Marbled Minor were also observed. In one open area, ants were taking sand up from the surface and coating the stem of a number of ragwort plants, which was visually very striking.

## **20<sup>th</sup> June**

### **Haseley Manor – moth trapping**

This meeting was hosted by Anthony and Vivian Roberts, who kindly supplied refreshments, and gave us the use of the ringing hut as a base, where species could be studied. Eight members attended. A total of 26 species were seen, of which nine were micro-moths. A single mercury vapour lamp was run, but other species were caught with a net as dusk fell near the ponds. Species netted included Common Wave, Sandy Carpet, Snout, Swallow-tailed Moth, Clouded Silver and a white plume moth.

Among the more unusual species attracted to light were a Ghost moth, and the July Highflyer. Poplar Grey came from a nearby tree, and other species included the Beautiful Plume, Small Magpie, Small Dusty Wave and three examples of the attractively patterned Buff Arches. Unusually for the time of year no hawk-moths were found at the light.

Richard Smout

## **Ornithology**

**10<sup>th</sup> January 2014.** 15 people met at Bluett Avenue, Seaview on a lovely sunny morning for a walk in the area led by Mae Rees. Since December we have had a huge amount of rain which had saturated the ground, but the temperatures have been relatively mild for the time of the year. This seems to have affected the number and species of birds we usually see in the winter months. We first had a seawatch and saw at least six Red Breasted Mergansers, some Brent Geese flew by and Cormorants were in the area. The usual ten Oystercatchers were on the beach. We had Black Headed Gulls and two Mediterranean Gulls and a Slavonian Grebe swimming on the sea. Far out was a Great Northern Diver. We then visited Hersey Reserve where the water levels were high although the flooding on the fields from the previous week had subsided. We heard a Cetti's calling and then saw Little Egret, 2 Greenshank, 3 Little Grebe, 10 Snipe, 2 Lapwing and 2 Tufted Duck. Many Mallard were seen on the pond adjacent to Seaview Wildlife Park. During the course of the morning we also saw Common Gull, Buzzard, 10 Coot and Great Spotted Woodpecker as well as hearing a Song Thrush. In all 26 species were recorded.

Jackie Hart

**16th February 2014.** 21 people met at the start of the old railway line in Thorley Road, Yarmouth on a glorious morning. We had no need to walk very far, only as far as 'Kingfisher Bridge' just past Mill Copse pond as there was a wide variety of birds on offer. Where we parked the cars and at the beginning of the track we heard Cetti's Warbler and also heard one later. The flooded area held 12 Tufted Duck, Coot, a pair of Shoveler, Mallard, Wigeon and a Little Grebe. The water was too high to see any Snipe. However, later on the estuary, 21 Common Snipe were seen to fly passed our binoculars as we were admiring a Marsh Harrier that was quartering the reed beds in the distance. One group of about 45 Black Tailed Godwit were together on the flooded area and another group of at least 100 were seen on the estuary. A Reed Bunting sang to us from a lone bush in the middle of a reed bed and a few of us managed to see it through the telescope before it was disturbed. Golden Plover were tucked down on the far side of the river with some Lapwing. A Buzzard and Peregrine disturbed them and we saw the Lapwing fly around in two flocks and the Golden Plover in another flying above the Lapwing – the bright sunshine picked out the golden brown wonderfully. Spectacular. Brent and Canada Geese were feeding on the marsh before the water levels increased too much. We also had two Little Egret, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull and two

Great Black Backed Gull. In all 47 species were noted during the course of the morning, a lovely morning after the storms of the last ten days. Jackie Hart

**9<sup>th</sup> March 2014.** 20 people met on a beautiful, mild morning for a walk from the car park in Mill Road at Shalfleet for a walk to the quay and back. Our first port of call was the little wooden bridge over the river Caul Bourne to look up and down the creek. Two pair of Jackdaw had found some decaying trees on the river bank and were taking nesting material into very large holes. We then slowly progressed up the track to the boatyard. Two Song Thrushes were singing away near the car park and Mediterranean Gulls could be heard calling overhead. On one of the islands in the estuary many gulls were sitting on their prospective nest sites, at least six of which were Mediterranean Gulls and the rest Black-headed Gulls. Moorhen, Mallard, Teal and one or two Wigeon were on the mud or in the water with a few Redshank, Oystercatcher, Curlew and a Turnstone. We saw two Canada Geese and 11 Brent flew in. On the marsh we saw a Little Egret and in the distance behind some Shelduck. Along the hedgerows and trees we saw a lovely bright yellow Yellowhammer, three Redwing, Dunnock, Robin, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, House Sparrow, Great Tit and Blue Tit and on the house roof two Pied Wagtail. At least three Buzzards were noted during the course of the morning, one of which was very pale. A Sky Lark soared high singing in the sunshine. We heard a Green Woodpecker as well as heard the drumming of a Great Spotted Woodpecker from Corf Camp. In deep cover we heard a mystery bird, which sang for some time although we were unable to locate it. On returning home one of our members identified it as a Coal Tit. A very enjoyable morning with 42 species noted. The sun also brought out four species of butterfly: Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma and Brimstone. Jackie Hart

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2014.** Eight members and one visitor met at Shepherd's Chine for a walk inland to Samber Hill, Dungewood, Ashill Farm, Little Atherfield and Compton Fields. As expected we saw a wide variety of birds on our three mile three hour walk on a sunny, mild morning. We had good views of our birds despite not having the use of Jackie's telescope. At the reservoir we saw a pair of Canada Geese, one sitting on a nest, many Mallard, a female Tufted Duck, a Little Grebe. As hoped for we saw three Red-Legged Partridges on the farmland as well as many Pheasant. Birds of prey were represented by a passage of Buzzard (including six circling together), Sparrowhawk and three Kestrels. Migrants were around with Skylark singing, Swallows flying overhead, Chiffchaff singing, and a Wheatear. There were quite a number of Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Linnet and one Greenfinch as well as many Yellowhammers and one male Reed Bunting. Although there were many Dunnock only one House Sparrow was noted. In all 34 species were recorded during the course of the morning. David Biggs

**18<sup>th</sup> May 2014.** A clear blue sky and rising daytime temperature was enjoyed by ten members and a guest on today's walk around Parkhurst Forest, utilising the main walkways rather than many of the criss-crossing network of minor pathways and bridleways which are still in a quagmire condition following last winter's excessively high rainfall level. There was little requirement for an update of 'Mud, mud, glorious mud' thus the mud was left to remain in the musical archives of Flanders and Swann. Although a walk may be listed solely as a 'bird walk' there is always the additional and valuable contribution from various members' expertise in other related items such as botany, insects etc. On this particular forest walk we enjoyed the best weather conditions of the year so far, with 17 species of bird seen or heard e.g. Robin, Wood Pigeon, Blackbird, Jay, Mallard, Swift, Black-headed Gull, several Chiffchaff, Dunnock, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Blackcap, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted woodpecker, male Chaffinch, male Bullfinch, Wren. Butterflies seen, male and female

Brimstones, Holy Blue and Speckled Wood also several Speckled Yellow moths. Other items specifically looked at were a Crane Fly, a Glow Worm larva, a Wood Ants' nest and Zig-Zag Clover, which was not in flower.  
Roger Blackwell

**31<sup>st</sup> May 2014.** Ten members met at the small National Trust car park in Strawberry Lane, Mottistone on a cloudy but calm evening for a walk on to Mottistone Common. Although the reconnoitre the week before on a perfect evening produced two calling Nightjars and one flying, the night of 31<sup>st</sup> May only produced one calling bird. We also heard in the far distance a Little Owl.  
Jackie Hart

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

### New Members

### Deaths

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### Society Officers

**President** Dr Colin Pope, 14 High Park Road, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 1BP  
**General Secretary** Ms J. Tolley, 31 Glynn Close, Seaview, IOW. PO34 5JZ  
**Treasurer** Miss J. Hart, 18 Cherrytree Road, Nettlestone, Seaview, IOW. PO34 5JF  
**Membership Secretary** Mrs T. Goodley, 18 Pell Lane, Ryde, IOW. PO33 3LW

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### Next Bulletin

Items for inclusion in the next Bulletin and Reports of Meetings for 1st July 2013 to 30th December 2014 should be sent to:-

Isle of Wight Natural History & Archaeology Society, Unit 16, Prospect Business Centre,  
Prospect Road, Cowes PO31 7AD Email - [iwnhas@btconnect.com](mailto:iwnhas@btconnect.com)

The closing date for acceptance of items and reports will be **10th January 2015**