



Bulletin

February 2020

Issue No. 73





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The inaugural meeting of our Society took place in the Lecture Theatre of the Newport Literary Society at 6pm on the 8th November 1919. The meeting was convened by Frank Morey, editor of 'A Guide to the Natural History of the Isle of Wight' which had been published by The County Press in 1909. About 50 people were present out of exactly 100 persons who had agreed to join the Society as foundation members.

Exactly one hundred years to the day, members of the Society gathered at Caffè Isola in Newport to celebrate our centenary. A letter from Her Majesty Queen was read out by President-elect, Matthew Chatfield, in which she sent her '*warm good wishes to all those who will be present as you celebrate this most significant milestone*'. Nearly one hundred members and friends were present and a special celebratory cake, created by Ellie Beaman (see cover) was cut by Bill Shepard, the Society's oldest and longest standing member (he joined in 1955), along with our youngest member, Natalie Bone, 18. Natalie, an experienced bird ringer, has been a family member of the Society since she was six years old.

This year, our Centenary Anniversary Year, we will be holding a number of special events which you can read about in the Programme and on social media. We hope you will be able to come along to some of them and help us celebrate our special year.

President's Address

On the first day of a new decade, in order to meet tomorrow's copy date for the Bulletin, it is a challenge to formulate my final President's Address. However, the event that is predictable, is that we will have left the EU, and no doubt be in continuing need of the Archbishop's New Year's exhortation for

reconciliation. Promises have been made of better environmental regulations than those we will be leaving behind, but these worthy aspirations will come up against 'political short-term gain' and 'personal greed'. I suggest that *as individuals*, we may all need to become more political.

With the 'Caffe Isola' inaugural event of 8th November, which is reported in this issue, I feel our centenary got off to a good start. Thank you to everyone that supported the concept that was framed some three years ago.

Our Society has much to be proud of, but the steep decline of biodiversity in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, that was underlined by Debbie Tann in her presentation to us on 14th December, is deeply shocking. The theme of our forthcoming conference (Saturday 4 April) 'Environmental change on the Isle of Wight: past, present and future' could not be more appropriate. Please support this event if you can.

Finally, in looking back, and it is my personal opinion, although our Society has been among the best in recording species, we have been less good in documenting habitats and how these have changed in quality and quantity. Maybe in our next 100 years, this could be given greater impetus?

Paul Bingham

P.S. Editor's Note: A timeline of the last 100 years of the Archaeology of the Isle of Wight has been produced to complement a 'Timeline of changes to species and habitats on the Isle of Wight since 1919', that appeared in the last Bulletin. This timeline is full of interesting information gathered together in one place but regrettably, there is not space in this Bulletin to accommodate the eight pages it would occupy. However, both timelines will be made available on the Society's website and you are encouraged to look at them there.

The Wood Calamint, the Island's special plant

Early in 2019, we received a phone call from a lady botanical artist, Vanda Adamson, who had recently moved to the Island. She was offering to produce a botanical watercolour for the Society. We felt that Wood Calamint would make an ideal subject. It is a plant which is confined in this country to just a single location on the Isle of Wight and members of our Society have been active in its conservation since the 1950s. Indeed, without our efforts, it is likely that the plant would have become extinct. We provided Vanda with a potted plant grown from cultivated material and she set to work.

After weeks of meticulous work, Vanda produced a wonderful watercolour for our Society.



A successful start for our Centenary Events

Happy Birthday to us! Our Society celebrated turning 100 on November 9th 2019 at a special event to celebrate the inaugural meeting and the official start to our year of Centenary celebrations. It was fantastic to see so many members attending on the night as well as invited guests with longstanding links to The Society.

However, just ahead of our 100th Birthday during September 2019, we must also flag-up the Isle of Wight Embroiders exhibition which was on show at Newport Minister. The group holds an exhibition every 3 years to highlight the work of its members. For 2019 the theme was Wild on Wight, chosen to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of IWNHAS. Vice President, Dr Colin Pope opened the exhibition and the opening was also attended by the Lord Lieutenant, Susie Sheldon and about 100 visitors. The show was packed with beautifully crafted pieces celebrating local natural history and heritage – thank you to the IW Embroiders for getting our special year off to a wonderful start.

Back with the programme, the next event in the calendar was supporting Quay Arts with their biennial Open exhibition ‘A Life in Nature’. The Society currently had specially commissioned artwork, specimens and artefacts on show as part of the show representative of The Society’s activities over the last 100 years to the present describing how we used to work, collect and catalogue and methods of recording now and how that data is used. Specimens were on loan from Cothey Stores where Heritage Services, IW Council are custodians of some of The Society’s historic specimens. Also on display is an exquisite watercolour sketch of birds’ eggs. This is an item of ‘Darwinalia’ with an Island connection. It is currently thought to be the only surviving example from the original suite of paintings made by Harriet Darwin-Fox. The sketch is on kind loan from Carisbrooke Castle Museum.

We are extremely grateful to RHS Botanical Artist and Island Resident – Vanda Anderson for creating a stunning watercolour painting of our special plant, Wood Calamint, and gifting it to the Society for our Centenary. The show featured work by 40 artists and ran until Saturday 1st February 2020.

Tina Whitmore

Photograph credits (opposite):

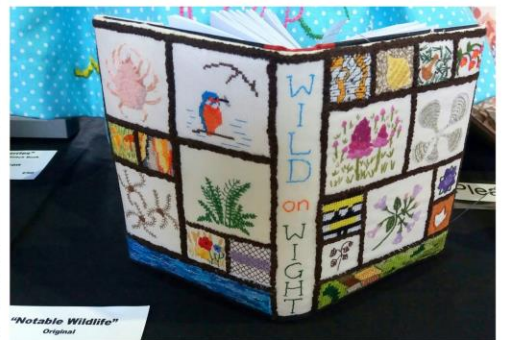
IWNHAS Centenary Launch pictures by – Cat James / David Bone

‘Notable Wildlife’ Embroidery piece by Anne Marston (picture by Tina Whitmore)

Life in Nature images by Tina Whitmore



LOSSES	GAINS
WIGHT WAVE MOTH; WILD GLADIOLUS	1962 COLLARED DOVE
1930'S CORNCRAKE	1967 FULMAR (BREED)
NARROW-BORDERED BEE HAWK-MOTH	1973 CANADA GOOSE
BROAD-BORDERED BEE HAWK-MOTH	1979 NEW ZEALAND
1951 WOOD VETCH	1987 BUZZARD (BREED)
SPOTTED WOODPECKER (BREEDING)	1990 JERSEY TIGER
1954 RED-BACKED SHRIKE (BREEDING)	1995 MEDITERRAN
1956 MARSH FRITILLARY BUTTERFLY	1998 HIMALAYAN
DOG LIVERWORT (PALAVICINIA LYELLII)	1999 SUMATRAN
1970 BLADDERWORT	2000 CETTI'S WA
ELM LICHEN (PHYSICIA TRIBACIOIDES)	EYED DAMSELFLY
2004 HARLEQUIN	2012 GOLDEN-E
2014 MARSH H	CHRYSOPTHALM
FIELD FLEAWORT; MARSH SPEEDWELL	



Environmental change on the Isle of Wight: Past, Present and Future - The Society's Centenary Conference

Our special all-day centenary conference will be held on Saturday 4th April, from nine o'clock at the Riverside Centre, Newport.

The recent designation of the Isle of Wight as a UNESCO Biosphere reserve is recognition of the quality and magnificent diversity of the Island's landscape and habitats and is testament to the stewardship of Islanders over millennia. For 100 years, members of the Isle of Wight Natural History & Archaeological Society have recorded the wildlife and investigated the geological and archaeological contexts that make this Island so special. While it is important to reflect on the past, the current 'climate emergency' has focussed our attention on the present and the future. It is therefore fitting that we celebrate the centenary of the Society with a conference that enables us to learn, understand and discuss how we can protect the Island's wildlife and landscape in an era of unprecedented environmental change.

To help us achieve our conference aims we have invited local speakers and national experts with knowledge of the Island. There will be plenary sessions for open discussion associated with each theme. Our Keynote Speakers will be Prof. Stephen Hawkins, Southampton University, Marine Biological Association of the UK; Prof. Helen Roy MBE, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Wallingford; Prof. Juliet Brodie, Natural History Museum London, National University of Galway; Clive Chatters, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust; and Dr Emilie Hardouin, Bournemouth University.

The event is open to everyone. The heavily subsidised cost will be £12 to include lunch, teas and coffees (on line booking). Please make a note in your diary and tell your friends about it.

On Sunday 5th April, we will be holding a field day. The Society will lead a Bioblitz in the vicinity of Bembridge Harbour, based at Brading Haven Yacht Club, Embankment Road, St Helens. Individuals and groups will lead excursions to record as many different plant and animal species as possible with a summing-up of the days finds at 15:00. Sunday lunch may be booked at the club on 01983 872289 and there is a bar available.

Dr Roger Herbert

HELP NEEDED WITH THE DISTRIBUTION OF BULLETIN & PUBLICATIONS

One of the many benefits of our Society is the arrival twice yearly of the Bulletin, Wight Studies (Proceedings of the IWNHAS) and the Bird Report, plus the Programme and other documents. Our Society saves large amounts of money each year by organising the distribution of these documents ourselves.

An enthusiastic band of volunteer helpers meet at Arreton Village Hall in February and August where the items are "stuffed" into envelopes, bundled up and then distributed all over the Island by volunteers. Prior to this event a lot of work goes on behind the scenes. Our Membership Secretary and the Distribution Managers ensure that the database of member's names and addresses is up to date, labels are printed and stuck onto envelopes, all of which ensures the "stuffing day" runs smoothly.

Recently, some of our stalwart helpers have had to stand down for various reasons, so we are on the lookout for some new volunteers. The actual stuffing takes about two hours, so is not too onerous.

We are on the lookout for people to:

- Help stuff envelopes
- Carry the bundles of envelopes to cars
- Distribute to various areas of the Island.
- Prepare and clear up the hall on the stuffing day.

In addition, we particularly need people to distribute in the West Wight area, but any offers of help would be greatly appreciated. [PTO for contact details]

What's in a Name? *Armeria maritima* / Thrift

It seems quite plausible that the generic name *Armeria* has derived from Armorica, the Latin name for Brittany. The old Gallic word aremorici means dwellers by the sea, 'are' meaning on and 'mor' meaning sea. These translations may well be the reason for the Cornish local name for Thrift which is Brittons, while in Devon the same plants are known as French pinks. The specific name *maritima* is self-explanatory. A straight-forward botanical translation of *Armeria maritima* is Dwellers-by-then-sea, growing by the sea.



The English common name, Thrift, relates to the verb to thrive, which has derived from Old Norse, *thriftr*, to grasp. Whether grasping coastal rocks and cliff-tops or thriving in sand dunes and salt-marshes, Thrift is aptly named. In a non-botanical context, thrift means economy or frugality. In the past, some banks and building societies used an illustration of a thrift plant as the emblem for thrifty savings accounts. Between 1936 and 1952, when King George 6th was our monarch, coins worth three pence were minted with a Thrift plant depicted on the reverse side. It is debatable whether or not this was intended as an enigmatic

suggestion that the populace should become thrifty and save up their 'thruppeny bits', eighty of which amounted to one pound.

Printed and published during the mid-twentieth century, Thrift books also used an illustration of a Thrift plant as their logo. As a companion series to The Thinker's Library series of books, paperback editions of Thrift books were on sale during the 1950s at the reasonable cost of one shilling and six pence each.

In Gerard's Herbal (published in 1597), Thrift was given the Latin name *Gramen polyanthemum*. *Gramen* is the Latin word for grass, so referred to the plant's grass-like leaves. *Polyanthemum* referred to the many/poly flowers/*Anthos* in each flower head. During the same era, an alternative name was *Gramen marinum* or sea grass.

Flemish botanist Matthius de L'Obel (1538-1616) called the same plants *Caryophyllus marinus*, *Caryophyllus* being an old name for Clove Pinks and *marinus* being Latin for sea. This must surely be the origin of the alternative English name, Sea Pink.

It is interesting to note that in Clive Stace's fourth edition of the New Flora of the British Isles (2019), the English common name for *Armeria maritima* is listed as Thrift. The synonym Sea Pink is not used.

Limonium vulgare / Common Sea-Lavender

Thrift and Sea Lavender belong to the same family. In Linnaeus binomial system of plant nomenclature, Thrift was for a short time classified as *Statice armeria*, while Common Sea Lavender was called *Statice limonium*. The generic name *Statice* comes from the Greek verb *statikos* which means to bring to a standstill or to remain the same, ie. Static. Flowering stems of *Statice* cultivars and Sea Lavender remain the same colour and form when dried, so are popular in dried floral arrangements.

Today, Common Sea Lavender is classified as *Limonium vulgare*, *limus* being Latin for mud. The plant's natural habitat is coastal mud of saltmarshes and saline estuaries. The lavender element of the English common name is with reference to the colour of the inflorescence and bears no relation to Lavender or *Lavendula* species.

Sue Blackwell

A Seal on Ventnor Beach

On Thursday afternoon 7th November, a post appeared on the Isle of Wight Nature group on Facebook showing a video of a Grey Seal (*Halichoerus gypus atlantica*) on Ventnor Beach. Hazel and I immediately jumped in the car with our cameras as it seemed too good a chance to miss!

When we arrived there, a small crowd had gathered in the centre of the Esplanade. The seal was lying on the beach close to the lifeguard's hut. At first, he seemed to be sleeping but after a while he opened his eyes and rolled over, enabling me to get one or two nice photos. The lifeguards had very thoughtfully roped off the steps to stop people and dogs disturbing the seal.



According to Stephen Voight, the IOW area coordinator for British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR), the seal was “Grumpy”. “He is a well-known adult grey seal who likes to travel and just came across from West Sussex. He is fine and in good condition, and is doing what seals do- having a rest on the beach. He has a fishing hook in his rear flipper that will dissolve and drop off. Any intervention will cause more harm than good”.

Anyway Grumpy, you brightened up a rather grey November day for us!

Dave & Hazel Trevan

A Correction

Thank you and your reporter for such a thorough and appreciative report of my talk on rat lore in the last *Bulletin*. I should however, correct one error. Globally the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*) is not threatened or endangered in any way. It remains a widespread and successful pest. In Britain, however, thanks to a combination of pest control, loss of habitat and dominance of the encroaching Brown Rat (*R. norvegicus*) numbers and range have declined drastically, and it has been eliminated from most parts of the country. It would not be an overstatement now to call it one of Britain's rarest mammals. There seems a disinclination to protect any remaining colonies, however!

Paul Cowdell

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) News

The core surveys, plus the one-off English Winter Bird Survey and the English Farmland Woodland Survey all received good coverage during 2019. Many thanks to the IWNHAS members who participated in the surveys and I look forward to their continued support in 2020. There are still vacancies in some of our 2020 surveys so if you would like to get involved please contact me for further details.

The Wild Bird Populations in the UK, 1970-2018 report was published recently and shows the latest updates of the UK and England bird indicators based on population trends. They are part of the government's suite of biodiversity indicators and show how the fortunes of birds of farmland, woodland, waterways and wetlands, and marine and coastal areas have fared between 1970 and 2018.

Population trends of common birds that are native to, and breed in, the UK are assessed using two assessment periods: the long-term (for most species between 1970 and 2018) and the short-term (2012-17). The wintering bird indicator shows how the internationally-important numbers of wintering waders, wildfowl and other waterbirds using our coasts and in wetlands have changed since ca. 1975. These indicators are calculated annually by the BTO and RSPB for Defra using mainly the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) data.

- The breeding farmland bird index continued to fall and has declined by more than half between 1970 and 2018 in the UK. Farmland specialists showed the most prominent declines; for example, Corn Bunting, Grey Partridge, Turtle Dove and Tree Sparrow all declined by at least 90% since 1970. Grey Partridge and Turtle Dove also declined strongly in the short-term. Conversely, some farmland specialists (e.g. Stock Dove and Goldfinch) have more than doubled in the long-term. This illustrates that responses to pressures are likely to vary between species.
- The breeding woodland bird index for the UK has declined by 30% between 1970 and 2018, and 5% over the recent short-term period. These declines are driven by the declining numbers of woodland specialists; down 46% since 1970. Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Spotted Flycatcher and Willow Tit have shown the most serious declines (more than 80%) since 1970, whilst numbers of Long-tailed Tit, Blackcap and Nuthatch have almost doubled, and the Great Spotted Woodpecker is three times as abundant as it was several decades ago.
- The breeding water and wetland bird index for the UK fell by 6% between 1975 and 2018, but over the short-term increased slightly by 3%. Over the long-term, species associated with slow-flowing and standing water, and with reedbeds, fared better than those associated with fast-flowing water or with wet grasslands. Lapwing, Redshank, Snipe and Common Sandpiper showed the strongest declines over the long-term, although Snipe has shown a recovery of 27% in the recent short-term period.
- The breeding seabird index has not been updated due to a shift of effort by the JNCC Seabird Monitoring team towards the ongoing Seabird Census. In the UK, the seabird index declined by 22% between 1986 and 2015. Declines began in the mid-2000s; and more recently, between 2009 and 2014 there was a 14% decline in the indicator, driven largely by large declines for Arctic Skua and Kittiwake.
- The wintering waterbird index was 106% higher than in 1975/76 in the UK. The index peaked in the late 1990s, and has been declining since; by 4% between 2010/11 and 2015/16. Some wintering waterbirds have increased markedly over the long-term, including Gadwall, Whooper Swan, Avocet and Black-tailed Godwit. Conversely, White-fronted Goose, Eider, Ringed Plover and Dunlin have declined.

Dr David Noble, Principal Ecologist at the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), said, "Despite a wide range of pressures continuing to affect many of our UK bird populations, and driving declines in many of our habitat specialists, there are a few positive stories where species could be responding to more nature-friendly management and spreading northward to suitable landscapes."

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

As mentioned in the last Bulletin, I have collated the preliminary results from the 2019 BBS which had the best coverage to date on the Island with 20 1-km squares compared to 8 in 2015. Many thanks to all of the surveyors for taking part, your efforts have resulted in a dataset comprising mixed habitats which is so important for this survey to produce meaningful data.

The table below shows the most widespread species recorded during the 2019 survey.

Species	1-km squares	% of squares surveyed
Woodpigeon	20	100
Blackbird	20	100
Blue Tit	19	95
Carrion Crow	19	95
Dunnock	19	95
Jackdaw	18	90
Wren	18	90
Robin	18	90
Goldfinch	17	85
Herring Gull	16	80

There are still 1-km squares requiring coverage so please contact me if you are interested in taking part in the 2020 survey.

English Winter Bird Survey

This survey was a one-off spanning the 2018/19 winter period, commissioned by Natural England. Locally the IW AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and Natural England have asked if I could coordinate the survey locally for the 2019/20 winter period to produce a dataset over a longer period. The 1-km squares being covered for 2019/20 are based purely on farmland so this will hopefully give a better indicator in time to see the effects of agri-environment scheme (AES) management on birds in winter, especially for species which fall within the IW Biodiversity Action Plan.

Thanks again to those volunteers for agreeing to visit their square(s) between December and March.

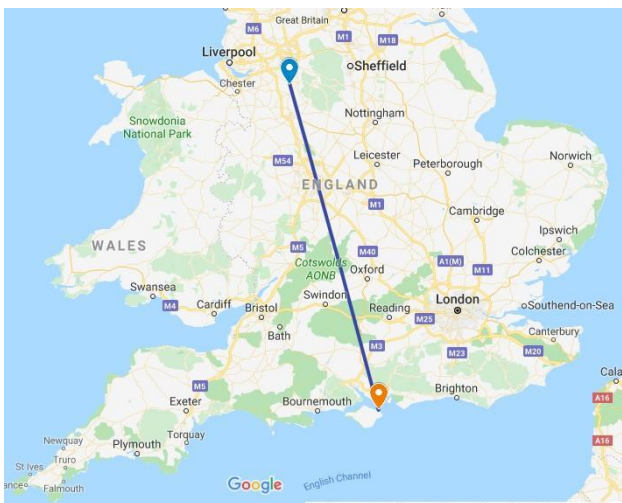
Colour ringing sightings

The importance of bird ringing was once again highlighted when I visited the Hersey Nature Reserve on 27th December. To my delight I found an adult winter Mediterranean Gull with a white colour ring which is likely to have been ringed in Belgium (awaiting confirmation from the ringer) while the real surprise was finding a colour-ringed Coot.

The ringer, Kane Brides from the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust, was equally enthusiastic about the discovery as it was ringed as an adult bird, age unknown, at Redes Mere, Siddington, Cheshire on 13th October 2019. This means that the bird has travelled 295km south! Is it going to travel further south? We often think of Coot as a sedentary species, but this sighting underlines the fact that wintering Coot

populations are boosted by birds travelling south and from Europe. Bird observatories have also recorded Coot migrating at night hearing their strange trumpeting flight call.

Please keep an eye open for any colour ring sightings of birds and report your sightings either directly on the colour ringing website <https://www.cr-birding.org/> or send your sightings to myself as I am trying to maintain a local database of colour ring sightings on the Isle of Wight for 2020. I will also forward your reports to the cr-birding website.



Above: Colour-ringed Coot at Hersey Reserve (Jim Baldwin). Map courtesy of Kane Brides (WWT)

If you require further information or are interested in becoming a member of the BTO please contact myself, Jim Baldwin (BTO Regional Representative) either by phone (01983 721137(home), 07528 586683(mobile)), email (wightbto@hotmail.com) or write to me at 21 Hillcrest Road, Rookley, I.W PO38 3PB.

Jim Baldwin

White-tailed eagle project December update



Photo credit: Ainsley Bennett

Find out what our young eagles have been up to over the past few months in this guest blog from Steve Egerton-Read, the White-Tailed Eagle Project Officer on the Isle of Wight.

After a really wet and windy autumn, winter is truly underway now. The days are short and we've had a number of heavy frosts – even here on the sunny Isle of Wight! Despite the difficult weather conditions, the young White-tailed Eagles are doing well; conserving energy on wet and miserable days but making the most of the breaks in the weather to search for food.

Following the epic flights of a couple of the birds early after release, perhaps the most surprising fact is that in the past six weeks none of the eagles have moved particularly far. Three birds remain on the Isle of Wight, and bird 'G3 93' is still in Oxfordshire. The satellite tracking data gives us a fascinating insight into the young eagles' daily movements, and has shown that they are often extremely sedentary; perching quietly in wooded areas for much of the day and seldom flying more than a few kilometres from their roost site.

This is why White-tailed Eagles are referred to as 'sit-and-wait' foragers. They would rather sit and watch for prey than make longer flights in search for food like Golden Eagles tend to do. This saves valuable energy, which is particularly important for young birds in their first winter. Our fieldwork indicates that the birds are finding plenty of carrion in the landscape, although one bird – G3 18 - is continuing to return to the release site on a daily basis to feed on the fish we're still providing. As the days lengthen in the New Year it will be interesting to see if the birds begin to wander further afield.



Photo credit: Nick Edwards (left) and Ian Day (right)

Interestingly, two of the birds 'G3 24' and 'G2 74' have spent much of the past four months together on the Isle of Wight. These two birds were not reared in the same pen but found each other on the Isle of Wight whilst exploring after fledging. Although the birds are reared in pens with at least one other, they have no contact with the other young eagles during this period. This means that when they meet each other after release, it replicates the natural process of young eagles from different nests encountering each other.

The tag data shows us that the two birds frequently roost in the same copses, and sometimes even in the same tree, and we have had a number of reports of them tumbling with each other mid-air. The project team were also told that they had been seen soaring with paragliders over the west Wight, which must be the most extreme sighting we have had to date! The satellite data indicates that the two birds also soared together over Newport early in December, but it seems that they went unnoticed on that occasion.

Although White-tailed Eagles do not breed until they are around 4-5 years old, it is sometimes possible for pair bonds to become established much earlier than that. G3 24 is a female and G2 74 a male, and so there is a chance that if the two birds survive the next few years, they may eventually form a breeding pair.

The winter is also a great time for us to enjoy birds that visit our shores to escape the extreme cold of the Arctic. Much of the Solent is designated a Special Protection Area (SPA), because the Solent coastline is an incredibly important site for wintering wildfowl and waders. As many as 125,000 birds travel here to overwinter. Many of these are easy to see in places like Yarmouth Harbour or off Ryde Pier head; perhaps the most charming of these visitors is the Brent Goose with its chocolate brown plumage and chattering call. These birds having travelled in excess of 3,000 miles are here to feed until they return to their summer grounds in the high Arctic to breed.

Brent Geese they are one of the many species of migratory waterbirds that encounter White-tailed Eagles throughout the year. They see White-tailed Eagles on their breeding grounds and also on migration through the Baltic. Our water birds are well adapted to evading avian predators, but it's important to remember that predators play a key role in keeping prey populations healthy and ensure only the fittest

survive. In Denmark, for example, White-tailed Eagles are known to feed on dead or sick Dark-bellied Brent Geese, but have no negative impact on overall numbers.

One threat to the survival of all our coastal birds through the winter is disturbance by people. Persistent disturbance at feeding or roost sites (for our wildfowl, waders and eagles), causes birds to expend more energy when they should be conserving it to better survive the winter weather. The Bird Aware Solent Ranger team can be seen on our coasts helping people enjoy our coastline and its wildlife without causing any disturbance. More information can be found on their website and @BirdAwareSolent on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

We receive a number of queries asking where is best to view the eagles and we hope as the project progresses there may be a suitable place we can recommend. However, on a sunny day, you have a good chance to see the Isle of Wight eagles at any of the Island's many landmarks – you just need some luck. If out exploring, please stick to public rights of way and if you are lucky enough to encounter an eagle, or any other wildlife, give the animal plenty of space and avoid scaring it from its position. In future years it will become easier to watch White-tailed Eagles as they establish as a breeding species in southern England. It seems only moments ago that the first White-tailed Eagles arrived on the Isle of Wight from Scotland; but 2020 is just around the corner and promises to be an exciting year for the project. We will be looking to release more birds next summer. It will also be exciting to follow the progress of the 2019's cohort of eagles as they learn more about their landscape heading into their second year. As the year closes, it's important to remember how much work has gone into making this project possible; a great many people have helped the project along the way and wished it well and we are really grateful for this support.

The IWNHAS is part of the White-tailed eagle project Steering Group, represented by Jim Baldwin who is also a volunteer in the project. You can report any eagle sightings directly to Jim (contact details in the BTO News article elsewhere in the Bulletin) if you do not use social media or have internet access. Further online information about the project can be found at the following links:

<http://www.forestryeng.land/eagle-update-December>

<http://www.roydennis.org/>

Steve Egerton-Read

Andy's Nature Notes July to December

July

1st. Went to Newtown with Dave Nordell. Recorded 14 Purple Hairstreaks, 2 Broad-bodied Chasers and one Emperor Dragonfly. Notified by Mick Green that he had a Large Tortoiseshell fly into his workshop at Brighstone. He sent me a photo to confirm it. A very good record.

2nd. Dave and I went to Brook Down for Dark-green Fritillaries. We saw 256 which wasn't bad.

3rd. Along to Shepherd's Chine, Atherfield, this morning. About 20 Banded Demoiselles, 2 Golden-ringed Dragonflies and a Humming-bird Hawkmoth [HBHM]. Went along to a private reservoir and had 19 Red-veined Darters, the highest number I have recorded ever, and 11 Black-tailed Skimmers. Also one Essex Skipper.



5th. Pete Campbell and I went over to an area near Porchfield and saw 2 Migrant Hawkers, c.1000 Marbled Whites (the most I've ever seen in one field), 3 Silver-washed Fritillaries, one White Admiral and a Gatekeeper.

7th. Watched a Humming-bird Hawkmoth [HBHM] attempting to take nectar from an Echium. It gave up.

8th. Hiked out to Blackgang Terrace on my annual visit, accompanied by John Caws. We saw around 35 Keeled Skimmers plus an additional 5 back, in Rocken End corner. I have not seen them there before.

9th. Back to Newtown with Dave. We saw 13 Silver-washed Fritillaries (right above) plus 2 of the form *valesina*. Also one Purple Hairstreak (left below), 7 White Admiral and one male Beautiful Demoiselle (left above).



12th. Went to Yarmouth with Pete. We saw around 30 Black-tailed Godwits, 2 Curlew, 15 Redshank and 6 Little Egrets. Back home, I saw a 6-belted Clearwing moth along the revetment.

16th. First Jersey Tiger moth of the year in the garden.

17th. 11 Dark-green Fritillaries on Nansen Hill this morning plus many 6-spot Burnet Moths.

18th. Found a number of Round-leaved Fluellen plants in the garden. I have never recorded them here before.

20th. 5 Bottle-nosed Dolphins off here heading down channel. 2 Holly Blues in the garden.

23rd. 8 Dolphins off Bonchurch heading east.

24th. 7 Chalk-hill Blues along the revetment plus a Southern Hawker Dragonfly.

25th. A Chalk-hill in the garden this morning.

27th. Along to Atherfield with Pete. We saw around 100 Small Red-eyed Damselflies in the reservoir. Also 2 Little-ringed Plovers, 4 Common Sandpipers and a Little Grebe.

August

1st. 16 Common Blues, 3 Painted Lady, 1 Brown Argus, 4 Chalkhill Blues and 1 Small Copper along the revetment.

2nd. A male Chalkhill Blue near Porchfield, miles from any known site. Also a Small Red-eyed Damselfly (above right).

3rd. 22 Jersey Tiger Moths in the trap this morning.

13th. About 70 Painted Lady along the revetment today, plus 8 HBHM (right below).

15th. A Clouded yellow of the *helice* form on the bank at the back of my house (left below) along with 8 Painted Lady and one Silver y moth.

21st. 106 Painted Lady along the revetment many of which were flying south straight out to sea. Reverse migration. Also 8 HBHM and a Migrant Hawker.

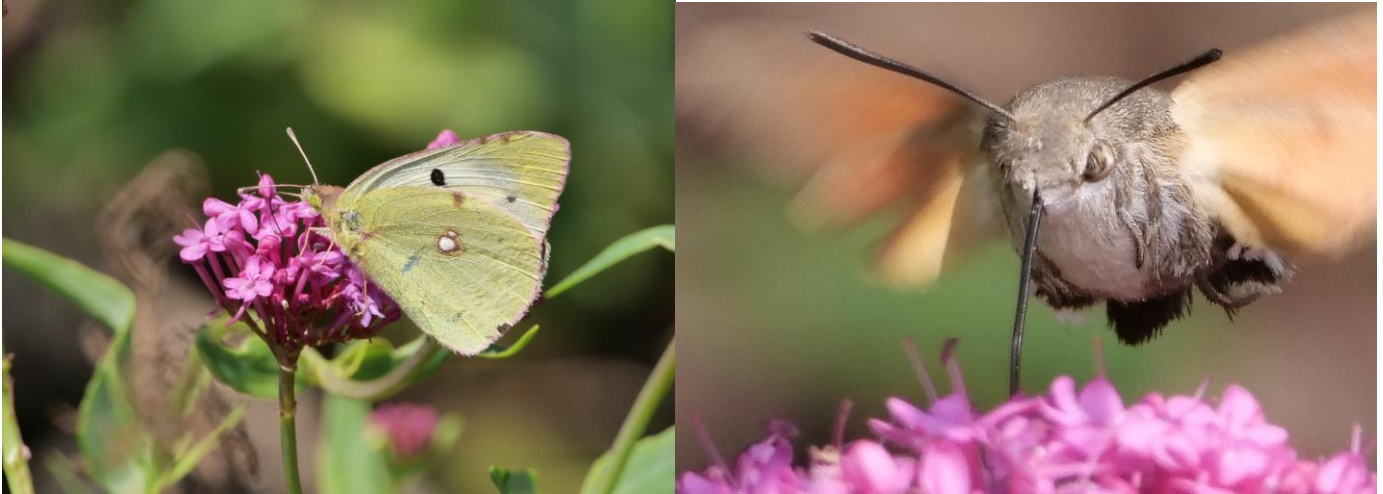
22nd. 3 Clouded Yellow and a large Glanville Fritillary web along the revetment.

25th. Went up to Bonchurch Down with Pete and Dave. Recorded 55 Adonis Blue, 10 Chalkhill Blues, 4 Brown Argus and 8 Small Heath.

26th. Pete and I went up to Ventnor Downs early this morning. 6 Pied Flycatchers, 20+ Spotted Flycatchers, 6 Redstarts, Wheatears etc.

27th. A large turtle was seen off Bembridge today by some anglers. It was estimated to be the size of an average dining table, around 6ft long, and therefore was presumably a Leatherback Turtle. Danny Vokins

kindly provided the information. It was seen by all who were aboard the Albatross from Bembridge, skippered by Ross Stalphurst around 3miles southwest of St Catherine's lighthouse.



28th. A single dolphin off home.

29th. A Small Tortoiseshell in the garden and 6 HBHM at the back bank.

30th. A Green Sandpiper on the Atherfield Reservoir plus a Golden-ringed Dragonfly.

31st Many White sp. butterflies about today.

September

2nd. One Clouded Yellow, 13 Large White, 12 Small White, 15 Painted Lady, 2 Red Admiral and one Common Blue on the bank at back of house. In the garden were 15 Large White, 16 Small White, 11 Painted Lady and 3 Red Admiral.

3rd Over to Laundry Lane with Pete. We saw 2 Marsh Harriers, a Peregrine and a Great Egret.

7th. C.30 Whites on the bank plus 3 HBHM and one Clouded Yellow.

8th. Went round to Newtown in my son's boat. We saw 3 Peregrines and 4 Seals (both Common and Grey).

10th. Went to Blackgang, a had brief views of a Wryneck.

13th. Newtown with Pete. We watched an Osprey fishing; it took six stoops before eventually catching something. Also 93 Curlew, 4 Knot, 10 Dunlin and 110 Oystercatchers. Back home there were 30+ Whites, 18 Painted Lady and 4 HBHM at the back of the house. A Bloxworth Snout moth on the back door.



14th. En- route to Atherfield with Pete we saw 1000's of Hirundines, first along the cliffs at Blackgang (opposite) and even more over Chale recreation ground. Also, many Gannets diving for fish out in the bay. At Atherfield we counted 9 Pochard, a female Reed Bunting, 4 Teal and, in the Chine, about 20 Blackcaps. On returning home found the Bloxworth Snout in the dining room.

15th. Went with Pete to see an Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, a very rare bird, at Farlington Marshes. We saw it well but only briefly.

18th. Back to Blackgang this morning. Wryneck, 8 Blackcaps, 3 Stonechats, 2 Wheatears, one Clouded Yellow and

one Small Copper.

19th. A fresh Wall Brown in the garden, 3rd generation.

21st. Went over to Porchfield and parked by the village hall. Walked through Emsworth and down to the beach then turned west along the shore to Newtown. I have never done this before. Saw 2 Ospreys fishing in the Solent but not much else. Walking back up past Burnt Wood, I saw 3 Meadow Browns, one Wall, 10 Common Darter, 2 Migrant Hawkers and a Cuckoo by the farm.

24th. SW gale and rain. A Balearic Shearwater off home heading West.

27th. A Southern Hawker Dragonfly along the revetment.

30th. Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Comma and Large White in the garden. About 200 Swallows and Martins flying round the bay and house.

October

2nd. Went to Newtown early, and was in the hide by 07.00 hrs. An Osprey was sat on the piles to the NE, then took off looking for fish. It caught one in the estuary entrance and then came back and ate it over the far side of the marsh. A seal caught and ate a fish in front of me. A lovely morning with plenty to see. Back home by 10.00, having had a good day!

3rd. A HBHM in the garden as well as Painted Lady, Red Admiral etc.

5th. Shepherd's Chine with Pete. We saw 12 Buzzards, one Common Darter, 3 Wall, one Small Copper, one Common Blue and a Migrant Hawker.

6th. 2 HBHM, 3 Painted Lady, 3 Small White, 2 Large White, 3 Red Admiral and one Peacock all in the garden.

11th. Westerly gale. One Arctic Skua west.

15th. A Black Redstart on the boathouse roof in front of the house.

19th. A Guillemot on Monk's Bay beach covered in what turned out to be palm oil.

27th. A Migrant Hawker along the revetment.

29th. Saw a Wryneck on Ventnor Downs with Johnno. We heard about a Snow Bunting on Bembridge Down while we were up there so we headed over and had good, close views of it. They are always so tame.

November

2nd. Snow Bunting still on Bembridge Down (left below). Later on, a severe westerly gale blew up with gusts at the Needles to 109mph.

3rd. A Migrant Hawker in Monk's Bay.

5th. Yet another Migrant Hawker this time along the revetment.

6th. Went to Newtown first thing this morning, a lovely calm day. 5 Spoonbills out on the marsh were the highlight (right below).



7th. A Purple Sandpiper along the revetment this afternoon (left below). Not seen one for some years about here; they used to be seen regularly but not now.

8th. 2 Painted Lady and 2 Red Admiral along the revetment.

13th. A male Blackcap in the garden (right below).



17th. 19 Goldfinches on the garden feeder. Also, the first record of a Coal Tit here.

23rd. Went to Newtown with Pete. There were 12 Spoonbills, Greenshank and a Kingfisher.

28th. A late Large White along the revetment.

29th. Pete and I went to Merstone to see the juvenile Great Bustard from Salisbury Plain which has been here for several weeks (below).



December

1st. Red Admiral at Bonchurch.

7th. Went over to Bembridge in the afternoon with Pete. 52 Gadwall, c100 Teal, 2 Marsh Harriers, one Kingfisher, 10 Black-tailed Godwits, 15 Curlew and 10 Redshank. 2 Black Redstarts in St.Catherine's St.

12th. 10 Bar-tailed Godwits heading west in a gale off home.

17th. 10 Long-tailed Tits and a Goldcrest in the garden.

22nd. Newtown again. I saw around 60 Knot and had close views of a Kingfisher (left below) and 2 Great-crested Grebes (right below).



25th. Last trip to Newtown this morning. Beautiful day, very calm and 6 Spoonbills on the marsh.

30th. Male and female Blackcaps in the garden.

Andy Butler

iWatch Round up

iWatchWildlife, the IWNHAS led community species recording project is set to continue into 2020 after receiving a funding from the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership since the completion of its three year funding from 'Down to the Coast'. iWatchWildlife will continue to encourage and support the observation and sharing of species records through Social Media and at events alongside raising awareness of the work of the IWNHAS. In this issue you can find out about our 'Species of the Month' for 2020 plus our very first 'Species of the Year'.

Total number of records submitted to iRecord – an online recording platform and the Isle of Wight Species Database held by the IWNHAS stands at 1,633 across 43 species groups. Most recorded: Flowering Plants (406 over 233 Taxa), Birds (309 over 90 Taxa), Terrestrial Mammals (199 over 18 Taxa).

Many thanks to everybody involved in helping make the project a success and helping its continuation into the future.

Tina Whitmore

A Big year for Hedgehogs

Hedgehog Island is a brand new campaign led by 'The Wildheart Trust' at the IW Zoo and local voluntary hedgehog rescue group 'Save Our Hedgehogs Isle of Wight' to see how many hedgehogs there are on the Island through the 'Big Hedgehog Count'. They are asking the Island community to help find out more about the abundance and location of our local Hedgehog population.

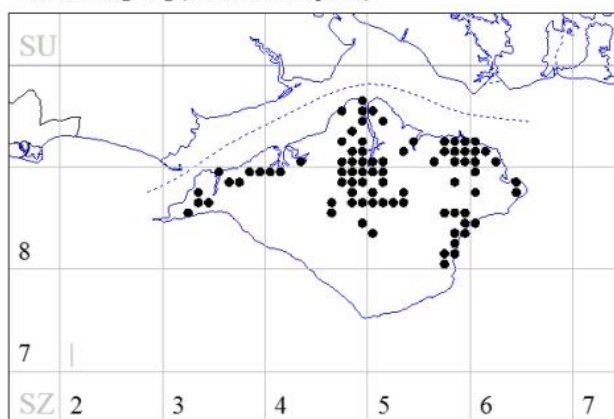
iWatchWildlife and IWNHAS are supporting the project with the data collection, sharing and analysis. We will also be featuring Hedgehogs as our first 'Species of the Year' throughout 2020.

Please get in touch with iwnhas@btconnect.com with your observations including the date and location.

Find out more: <https://isleofwightzoo.com/whats-on/2019/the-big-hedgehog-count>



Western Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)



Tina Whitmore

New icons

Look out for some new icons recently designed for us by Pinkeye Graphics including the 'Family Friendly' badge which will flag up events and activities that are suitable for all the family.



Tina Whitmore

Species of the Month Spring / Summer 2020

Each month throughout the Spring / Summer iWatchWildlife highlights a particular species and asks you to share your observations with us. We've some of the usual species featured once again e.g. Brown Hare and Stag Beetle alongside some new species for 2020 e.g. Adder, Wasp Spider etc. which we'd love to find out more about.

@iWatchWildlife (Facebook); #iWatchWildlife (Instagram); iWatchWildlife@gmail.com (email)

Paper observations also welcomed sent to IWNHAS HQ

See montage overleaf. Picture credits are:

March 2020	Brown Hare	By Daphne Watson
April	Adder	By Mike Cotterill
May	Bloody-nosed beetle	By Tina Whitmore
June	Stag Beetle	By Cat James
July	Golden-Ringed Dragonfly	By Andy Butler
August	Hawkmoth Caterpillars	By Selena Bone
September	Wasp Spider	By Tina Whitmore
Species of the year	Hedgehog	By Ellie Ward



General Meetings

Saturday 27th July

Brighstone – 1066 and All That

John Margham was present at Brighstone church to introduce his annual walk to twenty-four members and friends, but owing to a recent leg injury he then had to pass the baton over to Dr Vicky Basford, who proceeded to lead the 7-mile walk with the assistance of Alan Phillips, both using John's copious notes and handouts. We began with a brief look inside the church, including especially its very old altar stone. John's walk focused this time on the Anglo-Saxon multiple estate based at Calbourne but encompassing what later became Brighstone parish, as well as a part of the old parish of Mottistone. The Calbourne charter purports to record a grant made in 826 by King Ecgbert of Wessex to the bishopric of Winchester, but is in fact a concoction of the 10th century to justify the church's holding of the Calbourne estate. The bounds themselves however can be considered authentic and the estate was probably in existence by the later 7th century. A key theme throughout the walk was differentiating 'landscapes of continuity' and 'landscapes of colonisation', which proved not an easy concept to grasp.

At Waytes Court we stopped to delineate the estate boundaries of the Bishop of Winchester's Calbourne estate, which extended from the Solent to the English Channel; before traversing a little-used path eastwards towards Thorncross, a potentially early example of colonisation associated with a small green within the estate. Limerstone, or 'Lēofmær's *tūn*', i.e. 'Lēofmær's farm or settlement', is not specifically named in Domesday Book 1086, but is almost certainly referred to as part of the estate. The former manorial chapel of the Holy Spirit was probably founded here by Mabel de Tichbourne, and the altar slab that we looked at in Brighstone church is purported to have come from here.



Ascending via Limerstone Down and stopping at the greensand ridge with a good view of the knoll known as Coombe Tower, we considered several versions of the story associated with Elizabeth Bull of Northcourt in the early 19th century. Arriving at the Tower itself, Vicky introduced the Domesday entry for Coombe and the former small farms in the valley, each a variation on the Coombe name, before we wound down several paths to Coombe Farm itself. We also considered the possibility of 'continuity' from an extensive estate attached to Rock Roman Villa originating in or before the Romano-British period in the area.

Next up was Mottistone Mill, former home of Society stalwarts Oliver and Dorothy Frazer. A key question often asked is why the mill is so far from Mottistone village, but in fact it lay just within the eastern extension of the *old* parish of Mottistone, with the Brighstone parish boundary right next to it. The probable founding of Mottistone church, alongside that of Brighstone church, as daughter churches of the bishop of Winchester's church at Calbourne, shows that the agricultural multiple estate became equated with the mother parish of Calbourne.

We descended Moortown, formerly a settlement specialising in rough pasture for cattle within the estate; then reaching the main road again we stopped to note the lost place-name Uggaton, once the name for the settlement alongside Buddle Brook.

Circling south of the village, we reached Chilton farm, whose '*tūn*' derivation suggests mid- to late-Saxon clay-land colonisation (750–950) and settlement round its extensive green. Another footpath brought us to the now lost Shate, meaning 'the nook, corner or angle of land', at the end of Galley Lane; both this and the hamlet of Marsh Green suggest further clay-land colonisation by the bishop's estate. And the

adjoining Wicken Hill Lane, most likely deriving from a *wīc* or dairy farm, suggests specialised dairy production within the estate.

A short footpath brought us back to the church, where we had begun, and there we attempted to summarise John's ideas. The Saxon multiple estate may have been formed of an amalgamation of smaller landholdings by the 7th century, but by the 11th century it was already beginning to fragment. We also made some attempt to consider where the central settlement in Calbourne for rendering goods and services is likely to have been – probably in the vicinity of the church, but now lost completely, though this manorial role later passed to Swainston Manor. In Brighstone itself, we know that Berry Barn, again close to the church, was regarded as the manorial centre in the Tudor period, and may possibly have been so regarded in the earlier period also.



Left: Waytes Court & Marsh Green

Right: Coombe Farm from the east

Thirteen people made it to the finish, where we parted company just before 4pm, making a round trip of just under six hours. Once again John had provided us with a fascinating account of his research in the area: it was just a shame that this time he was unable to accompany us on the actual route!

Alan Phillips

Saturday 19th October

Annual Fungus Foray Osborne Estate

We were grateful to English Heritage for allowing our group to visit the grounds of Osborne House for our main foray of the year. Our group of twenty four included experienced mycologists Alan and Patty Outen from the Bedfordshire Fungi Group, Eric & Sue Janke, Alan Lucas, Sue Rogerson and Ginnie Copsey from the Hampshire Fungus Recording Group and Jackie Derby. The prolonged wet weather over the previous few weeks had produced a spectacular display of fungi and there was so much to find that we only managed to cover the lawns in front of the house and the walled garden during our all day foray. In all we recorded 169 species including some which were new for the Island.

Interesting finds including the bracket fungus, *Ganoderma resinaceum*, with a waxy reddish bracket, an unusual bolete *Gyroporus castaneus* and, on woodchip in the Walled Garden, the delightful Bird's Nest fungus, *Crucibulum laeve*. It was nice to see this particular bird's nest as it has not been recorded on the Island for over fifty years.

Perhaps the most interesting find was a single *Amanita* fungus growing in bare ground beneath a cypress tree. It proved to be *Amanita inopinata*, for which there are currently only a handful of records from the UK. This *Amanita* is believed to have originated in New Zealand and has only recently appeared in this country. An interesting non-mycological find by Mike Cotterill was a Hornet. Hornets, once very rare with us, seem to be on the increase. Thankfully, to date, none of the reported hornets have been Asian Hornets.

Colin Pope

Saturday 14th December A Wilder Hampshire and Isle of Wight, an illustrated talk by Debbie Tann, Chief Executive of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

In her introduction, Debbie explained to us how the Trust's vision for a wilder Hampshire and Isle of Wight has taken shape in the past few years, driven by the ecological and climate crises the world is facing. In 2018, HIWWT launched its discussion paper, and in 2019 they talked to two thousand people, listened to their concerns, and tried to take their views into consideration when formulating their plan. On 24 October this plan was launched at a dedicated conference held in Winchester.

The Trust has a lot of nature reserves, such as Farlington Marshes and Winnall Moors in Hampshire, and Arreton Down and wetland reserves along the Eastern Yar on the Island, and wildlife is flourishing in them. But these reserves accommodate only one per cent of wildlife. Until now, nature conservation has focussed on the rare, leaving common species to take care of themselves. Yet 'common' species are no longer thriving.

A recent State of Nature Report finds that the UK is one of the worst countries in the world for biodiversity, despite all the efforts made by wildlife organisations to improve habitats. Why? People have become complacent, thinking that our landscapes are really 'green and pleasant', but our Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are small and isolated. Wildlife needs corridors to be able to pass safely from one reserve to another or risk becoming inbred. Our largely intensive agriculture has been using too many chemicals in the past fifty years, leading to loss of field margins. And insects have experienced the sharpest population decline, giving rise to concerns about future food crop pollination, if this trend is not halted. Climate change, pollution, urbanisation and fisheries are the other main problems.

So how do we tip the balance in the other direction? The Lawton Report (2011) recommended joining up nature reserves to form connected landscapes and habitats, known as Ecological Networks. We also need to engage far more people in helping wildlife to thrive. Whereas thirty-five per cent of the UK population say that they are wildlife enthusiasts, membership of wildlife societies is only about nine per cent. "Why", asks Debbie, "aren't more people involved?"

Eighty-six per cent of people say they are concerned about the environment, but there is a big gap between what people think and what they do. This is known as the Value Action Gap. Nature conservation has been a rather niche activity, but is now beginning to become more mainstream. "We have to make conservation more normal", says Debbie, "But people don't like change." Studies have shown that to make something normal, you only need twenty-five per cent of the population to engage to tip the balance. The Trust has been going into communities to tell people this. "We aim to tell people that nature is everyone's responsibility", says Debbie.

A Nature Recovery Network

Everyone can help nature to recover: it doesn't have to involve creating a big nature reserve, but can be making part of your garden or school grounds wilder, or making a green roof.

These are HIWWT'S key messages:

- To tell the truth more. Wildlife is NOT OK – it is in freefall. There is NO time to waste. We must act now.
- We cannot fix this alone. We need a lot more people and more space. We need a wildlife recovery network, connecting habitats and green spaces.
- People CAN make a difference. We need at least one on four people on board to tip the balance.

We need a wilder Isle of Wight and a wilder Hampshire, a wilder England and a wilder UK for nature's recovery and people's welfare. And this is now starting to impact the public. "I really want this sense of dynamism to take off", says Debbie. She has been having meetings with Members of Parliament and says there has been a lot of positive feedback.

At the same time as the ecological emergency has started to take off, in early 2019 the climate crisis has become of mainstream concern. These crises are intrinsically linked, and yet they were seen as separate issues until now. "So tackling both of them at the same time makes sense", says Debbie.

Responses from 'WILDER': People wanted the Trust to do more campaigning

- for stronger legislation
- for better agricultural policy

- for stronger laws to reduce pollution
- for more influence in new development
- to buy more land and create more space for nature
- to embrace rewilding
- to restore habitats and wildlife
- to bring together action on the climate and ecological crises.

People also wanted to do more themselves, to learn more about nature, to garden for wildlife and to make their towns and communities wilder. “This feedback has led to our finished WILDER plan”, says Debbie. “We want nature’s recovery to be at the forefront of tackling the climate crisis. We want broken ecosystems restored and missing wildlife to return. We want people to benefit from a healthy natural environment. Our mantra: ‘We need more people on nature’s side and more space for nature to thrive’. This means we need one on four people to take action, a third of our land and sea to be where wildlife is recovering. And we need the pressure on nature to be reduced everywhere else.”

HIWWT’s three main delivery strategies are to do it ourselves; guide and support others; and influence change, inspire action and engage with more members of the public.

HIWWT’s two programmes:

1. Team Wilder

- get one on four people to engage with wildlife and take action for nature’s recovery
- provide training and support for people who want to be campaigners or leaders
- encourage wilder communities
- create a wilder Solent, supported by the National Lottery Fund
- foster wilder lives – every child needs time spent outdoors.
- promote wilder giving

2. Wilder Land and Sea:

- advocacy for nature’s recovery
- rewilding and replacing missing species
- farming with nature
- development that delivers for nature
- wilder public and private spaces
- wilder seas

HIWWT’s Headline Goals:

- support wilder communities in every town
- double our membership
- double our freehold estate, especially land that isn’t good for wildlife, for us to restore. Charlie Burrell from the renowned Knepp Estate Rewilding Project in West Sussex has offered his full support.

WILDER Wight:

- **Team Wilder - HIWWT is looking to develop the idea of Team Wilder on the Island and get it running in 2020.**
- **The Wilder Solent project will continue with more training for marine champions and marine ambassadors for the Secrets of The Solent project that was launched in early 2019.**
- **Wilder Landscape aims to double the Trust’s estate, work with farmers and influence development.**
- **Making Room for Nature comes under the auspices of Team Wilder and its Wilder Communities engagement work. A pilot project is being run in Portsmouth, encouraging and supporting children to engage their community in making green spaces wilder.**

The Island has eleven HIWWT nature reserves, some of the best sites in Britain for specific species, such as Arreton Down for chalkhill blue butterflies. Rare species found on the Island include dormouse, red squirrel, water vole, reddish buff moth, Glanville fritillary and field cow-wheat. There are opportunities for wildlife tourism, to put the Island on the map, especially now that it has UNESCO Biosphere status. We need to create a bigger Nature Recovery Network on the Island. A prime example

is the Eastern Yar Wilder Landscape. Gradually, over recent years, the Trust has been adding to its reserves along the Lower East Yar Valley and restoring wetlands. At Morton Marsh in Sandown the recently restored wetland will attract wading birds. Sandown Meadows is another very important reserve along the river. “The more we can get the wetlands to recover, the more wildlife we will attract”, says Debbie. The marsh harrier is one example. The Trust has just acquired two more areas of wetland: Parsonage Farm and Hill Heath at Newchurch. It will carry out surveys and ecological baseline studies to find out what wildlife is living there now, before improving the land for wildlife.

Taking inspiration from the Knepp Estate Rewilding Project, the Trust has formulated A Wilder Vision for the Sandown Levels, eight miles of conservation development. This includes bringing back the beaver, the bringer of life to wetland areas. Beavers build dams and create pools, attracting greater wildlife diversity.

How Rewilding Helps Us:

- cleans air and water
- reconnect us with nature
- prevents flooding
- revitalises wildlife
- locks away carbon
- restores soil
- supports new economic opportunities

Tackling nutrients in the Solent:

There is a lot of nutrient run-off in the Solent and we need a moratorium on building and development until the problem is solved. Talks are going on with water companies and farmers.

Taking land out of production:

Some arable land is unproductive because it is in the wrong place. It can only be viable if it is pumped with chemicals and drained. Turning these farm fields into wetlands or wildflower meadows is making the best use of the land. Creating wetlands in flood plains cleans the water.

The Trust is considering reintroducing some iconic species into our countryside, including the beaver, the chough (already reintroduced in Kent and Cornwall) and the curlew (still very common in mainland Europe, once widespread in southern England, but fell victim to intensive farming methods. Lost to the Island in the 1990s, but brought back recently to South Devon.) HIWWT is working in partnership with the RSPB to reintroduce some iconic bird species.

Questions raised by the audience:

Q: How is farming on the Isle of Wight different from that in Hampshire?

A: Farming on the Island is not as economically viable. Productive soils are not as good. Farmers have approached the Trust to offer to sell their land.

Q: Don't we need legislation to support these WILDER actions?

A: The Environment Bill began to pass through the legislative process before Parliament was prorogued and the general election called. There were some good ideas to benefit wildlife in the draft. Boris Johnson has said he wants to bring this Bill back. Its underlying principal is that the polluter pays. The Agriculture Bill's draft also contained some good ideas, such as money for rewilding. “We need to lobby to bring these bills back. That is why public pressure is so important”, says Debbie.

Q: Don't forget the historic landscape. Wouldn't it be good to build that into the WILDER strategy?

A: “Yes, indeed. It might be worthwhile doing some research.”

Q: What are your relations with the National Trust on the Isle of Wight?

A: They have a more conservative attitude, but we are good partners. We definitely want to work together. We are more flexible and quicker as a small organisation. In fact, HIWWT is ahead of other Wildlife Trust organisations across the country in starting to implement some of the initiatives in its WILDER Plan.

We thanked Debbie for such an inspiring talk. In the past year or so of grim warnings about the dire state of the environment and nature, and a bleak future for mankind, many of us who care about wildlife have been feeling powerless and depressed. Despite putting in a lot of personal effort for years, in recording species, conservation work and encouraging others to join in, we are told that it is not enough, we need to do

far more. We feel helpless at the enormity of the challenge. So the Wildlife Trust's WILDER plan comes as a great relief, showing us how together we CAN tackle the joint environmental and ecological crises. From my lifetime experience, taking action with others, especially as part of a wider movement, makes you feel energised and empowered. Those who do nothing, however, can become consumed with anxiety and depression. Everyone can do something to help, whatever their age or state of health or mobility. Many small actions can together make a big difference. We can start with wilding our own garden and encouraging others to do so, and if we have even a little spare time, we can look at the HIWWT website for volunteering opportunities with training and support. I have trained as a Marine Champion to help run Secrets of The Solent Project events, and I am about to do some more training for an Intertidal Survey Leader role.

Maggie Nelmes

Looking at the Countryside



19th June

St Catherine's area

Twelve members met at the Buddle Inn for a circular walk up to the car park at Rocken End. The weather which had been bright and sunny the previous two days was a little grey but luckily the rain held off. Dave and Hazel Trevan pointed out many wild flowers along the route which was a riot of colour and interest.

At the start of the walk, a lone specimen of Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*) was observed and Dave pointed out the narrow leaves and whiskery buds that are characteristic of the species. As we hiked up the first section, lovely views of St. Catherine's Lighthouse could be seen, the third most powerful lighthouse in the British Isles with a range of 25 nautical miles. Many interesting plants were observed. One of the most notable were some fine specimens of the Weld (*Reseda luteola*), a robust tall plant with yellowish flowers.

Many dramatic rock large outcrops are to be seen as you walk along towards Rocken End. These were clothed with various species of Lichens (below left) and we wished that Colin or George Greiff was with us to help identify them! Several plants of parasitic Broomrape (*Orobanche* sp.) were observed on in short vegetation, probably common *Orobanche minor*.



Spectacular views of Gore Cliff could be seen as we progressed along the path. We came across a really good stand of "Blessed St. Mary's Thistle" or Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*) in one of its known locations (above right). This spectacular plant has spiny leaves with white veins and purple flowers heads with spiny bracts. The walk concluded by taking a path through fields which led us back to Old Blackgang Road. As it became more wooded we saw some rather splendid examples of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). We had one dramatic find

before we reached the road. We came across a large stand (perhaps 50 or more) Bee orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) quite close to the gate that took us back to the road. It was nice to end the meeting on such a high note.

Dave & Hazel Trevan

10th July Five Bridges Walk

Several members came to the stroll. It was good to have John Hague with us as he had been the Project Manager for the wonderful improvements made in 2018 to this area, and three new members were welcomed.

The walk used five Brading footpaths. We enjoyed a perfect summer's day with pleasant views all around. Butterflies danced along with us, Marbled White and Meadow Brown being the most abundant, we also had Gatekeepers, Ringlets, Skippers, a few Blues, and Cinnabar moth. High summer is a quiet time for birds, a small party of Long-tailed Tits, a Tree Creeper and Green Woodpecker were spotted, and a Skylark sang loudly above us. The walk across the marshes was funded by 'Down to the Coast' Lottery Fund, IW Council and IW Ramblers. It provided a really nice circular walk, made so much easier with the provision of the kissing gates and bridges.

Jill Green

3rd August Walk at Gatcombe

Nine members met outside Gatcombe Church for a ramble on a warm, slightly overcast morning. This is a lovely, almost hidden piece of the Island with its bumps & dips, fragments of woodland & steep downland. We wound our way past George Brannon's grand house and up through a small beech & sycamore wood, keeping to a narrow path. Occasional glimpses through a quickthorn hedge allowed us to see a patchwork of fields of wheat, corn, sheep and horses; England in miniature. Down and up, up and down we went, tramping over flints caught in thick chalk. Even after 40 years dealing with rocks & fossils, I still have to pinch myself to imagine this land was formed under the sea millions of years ago! We searched for fossils along the path: flints formed of sponge silica are everywhere. Here, the best time to find fossils is after the plough has turned over the soil. Ammonites, or bits of, are common although we did not find any today. As we turned to the right at the foot of the down we mused on the name Garston, Garstang for this Humpty Dumpty landscape – rocks formed & folded over millions of years. Gulls, rooks and crows were spotted and Buzzards were heard. After a longish steep climb, we made the top and examined a small official enclosure protecting not an ancient Bronze Age Barrow but an underground water reservoir. Glorious views all around allowed us to recognise many famous features. I enjoyed our ramble and hope everyone else did.

Steve Hutt

Wednesday 4th September Compton Bay

We met at the Compton Farm National trust carpark for a circular walk along the coast and up over the downland ridge led by Colin Pope. This was a repeat of a walk held last September in poor weather conditions. Today, the weather was better but very windy. As we crossed the Military Road at Whiteways, observant eyes spotted the first Autumn Lady's Tresses flowers, a plant we were delighted to see at intervals all along our route. The track which leads up Afton Down from the road was more sheltered from the wind and here we had excellent views of Chalkhill Blues, Adonis Blue and a good variety of other butterflies. The alien bushes of wind pruned Cotoneasters were bright with scarlet berries, a useful food source for migratory birds on passage. The views from the downland ridge extending in all directions were splendid. Despite the wind, Stonechats, Buzzard, Raven and a Hobby were seen. The walk was much enjoyed by all who took part, with lots to see.

Colin Pope

16th October Golden Hill Country Park

We visited Golden Hill for a walk around the site with Gift To Nature Countryside Ranger, Nick Webb. Eight members of the group arrived for the walk on a day that had reasonable weather in what has been quite a wet period. This is an interesting time to visit as Gift to Nature are currently working on an improvement project for the park having secured a Lottery Heritage Grant earlier in the year. The project is titled 'Golden

Celebrations for Golden Hill' as it coincides with the 50th anniversary of the country park and the 150th anniversary of the fort itself.

The walk started by looking at the new community orchard area to the left of the fort entrance. Here there is a bench with a large apple tree and the 'Mountbatten' beech. Gift To Nature, assisted by volunteers from the Sainsbury's store in Newport, have been clearing this area of brambles, dead and poor quality hawthorn in order to make space and light for a small orchard. The volunteers have started the planting with six apple trees to include Discovery, Cox's Orange Pippin and Sunset. The area around will be managed as a wildflower meadow similar to the orchard planting at Merstone Station with a mown path through. This will provide a community asset and provide a welcome to visitors to the park. Lord Mountbatten brought the beech tree from the Broadlands nursery in Romsey and planted it in 1970 at the opening of the park and in memory of 'Palmerston's Follies' as many of the forts from the 1860s have become to be known. They were considered follies because they were never needed for the defence of the coast from what at the time was an expected French invasion.

Moving on from the entrance, we circumnavigated the fort itself stopping at various points of interest. The Fort was built between 1863 and 1872. This is an impressive six-sided, brick structure with original accommodation for 128 soldiers on two floors. Guns were mounted on the roof and in part it was intended to defend the coastal forts on the west of the Island from landward attack from the south and east. At the same time the soldiers stationed at the fort would be used to reinforce the coastal forts in the area such as Fort Victoria, Fort Albert, Fort Warden and the Needles Battery.

From here we moved to the eastern viewpoint that allows excellent views to Yarmouth and the Solent, together with glimpses of the lower Yar estuary with Mill Copse and Yarmouth Mill beyond. You can also see what was St Andrew's Church and is now a private residence. This church was originally built in 1903 as an infant school for the Norton Green area. At the time it was built to allow a dual use as a church and in 1913 it was re-dedicated and re-opened as such following extension works. The church was adopted by the fort and soldiers would attend services there.

Moving around the park we discussed the management of the grassland and scrub areas. The site would be difficult to graze so the grassland areas are cut in the autumn every year. This is important to prevent the spread of the extensive scrub on the site with vigorous growth from dogwood, blackthorn and brambles. Where scrub has been cleared these areas quickly revert to grassland if cut regularly with a mixture of flowering plants. The group were shown several areas where this has happened. Areas of scrub within the park are good nesting habitat for lesser whitethroat and black cap and parts are periodically coppiced to rejuvenate and stimulate vigorous new growth. Whilst walking around several fungi were spotted on the open areas including shaggy ink cap, wax cap and dog sick slime mould (Nice!)

Following on from the scrub and grassland areas we moved into the secondary woodland to look at the three ponds. Two of these were cleared of scrub and willow a few years ago now and at the time hand dug to deepen to allow them to hold water for longer into the summer months. Work will continue in the winter to re-coppice the scrub around to allow more light to maintain the bankside growth and herb margins. In this area you can also spot white admiral butterflies in the summer as there is a good stock of the food plant, honeysuckle in the area.

On the way back to the car park the group were shown some of the woodland paths which have been and continue to be widened to create pleasant, sunny woodland rides with an abundance of ground flora and associated insects. The paths have also been surfaced to allow year round access. The final path into the car park is a fairly recent addition from around 2014 when at the time the Learning Zone home educated group assisted with its creation. The path was cut through thick blackthorn scrub, its route widened and surfaced. As a result, early purple and bee orchids have been recorded in the long grass and vegetation to the sides which are managed as a woodland ride and is a hotspot for summer butterflies.

Nick Webb

Archaeology Section

We have spent considerable time this year on a long-term study provisionally titled 'The Shalfleet Parish Project'. Metal detecting and other finds submitted to the Portable Antiquities Service indicate that the area

was highly significant from Prehistoric to medieval times. Our main focus has been in the Churchill's farm area where we have carried out field-walking, geophysics and landscape walks. Activities are constrained by the demands of arable farming so the research is intermittent but is already producing interesting results.

We have also returned to the Garlic Farm, again fitting fieldwalking and geophysics into the farming cycle. We dug two small test trenches in one field to 'ground-truth' geophysical anomalies. In both cases features were found within the ploughing level. This was evidenced by plough marks and the presence of crushed lime added as fertilizer; Colin Boswell confirmed that this was done in his father's lifetime. Having agreed that there was no evidence of archaeology we dug no further. This was a useful exercise in learning to interpret geophysics. Another trench was put through a boundary bank. This will form the subject of a fuller report in due course.

In October we were delighted to take delivery of a new gradiometer to replace our aging and unreliable magnetometer. We are grateful to the Society for funding this purchase. Two days of training by Patricia Vokes of Wessex Archaeology have been followed by a few weeks of practice. We are already finding the machine more efficient than the old one; it is quicker to set up and cover the ground and seems to be producing clearer results. A further day's training is planned for the New Year to improve processing and interpretation skills.

About seven members of the group attended the CBA Wessex annual conference in November, held at Bournemouth University. The focus was on Neolithic and Bronze Age Wessex and we heard some excellent presentations from highly regarded archaeologists.

September 2019 Archaeology Section's Visit to Yorkshire

Following our successful trips to Orkney and Dartmoor we were looking for suggestions for our 2019 adventure. John Margham suggested that we consider a visit to Yorkshire, where he currently lives, as the county has a wealth of archaeological sites from all periods and is particularly strong in churches featuring early medieval features, which is John's particular area of expertise. John kindly offered to work out a programme of visits for us and to lead our group on tours of the area.

We now needed to find suitable accommodation for about 20 guests for the week. After considerable research Ann found Newton House in Knaresborough, an award winning B and B which had just enough rooms for our group and a resident's lounge which we could use for pre trip meetings and evening presentation. Newton House was booked for the group from Friday 30 August to 6 September. Members made their own way to Knaresborough, but, as several trips covered large distances, a coach was booked with a local company for 3 days of the visit.

Newton House lived up to our expectations, providing really comfortable, well appointed rooms and excellent home cooked, organic breakfasts featuring local produce and home made preserves. It was also within walking distance of John's home and the lovely town centre which provided excellent options for our evenings. At John's suggestion, we booked a local restaurant for our group for the evening we arrived and had a wonderful evening discussing our plans for the week ahead.

Saturday

We began our first day with a short bus ride to avoid having to retrace our steps. It soon became clear what a delightful place to live Knaresborough must be as we followed a quiet lane past picturesque houses and the site of the old priory down to the river as it passes through Nidderdale gorge.

Our first stop was at St Robert's cave, a peaceful spot looking onto the gorge. Born in York in 1160, Robert finally settled at what was already a hermit's cave with chapel attached. He gained a reputation as a holy man and various stories spread about him. It was he who founded the aforementioned priory.

At our next stop, The Chapel in the Rock, we were greeted by volunteers who care for the site and a delightful medicinal garden. It was created as a shrine by a local mason to thank God for saving his son's life and it remains an atmospheric place for quiet contemplation.

John showed us a number of other points of interest before we climbed up to Knaresborough church and the castle ruins. Also admiring the famous view of the railway viaduct were 3 ravens and their keeper, appointed by Prince Charles.

After lunch a smaller group headed off in cars to Aldborough Roman Town. It is hard to imagine what a busy significant place this was in Roman times as it is now a peaceful, traditional looking village with a large green and a very tall maypole. The volunteer guide panicked somewhat as this was his first day in the post and he was not prepared for 14 archaeologists, including some who were guides at a Roman villa. He coped well and helped us make sense of various earthworks and sections of walling.

We then went to Kirby Hill church, in a stunning situation overlooking the landscape. Much of the building stone for the Anglo-Saxon building came from the Roman site.

Our final stop was at The Devil's Arrows, 3 Neolithic standing stones thought to be part of an alignment of five millstone grit monoliths.



Left: Chapel in the Rock
Right: Devil's Arrows

Sunday

Sunday's visit to the famous deserted mediaeval village of Wharram Percy began with an attractive $\frac{3}{4}$ mile walk down a hollow way in use since the Iron Age. Pioneering archaeology was carried out here from the 1950s by Maurice Beresford, intrigued by the existence of the isolated St. Martin's church. Aerial photography enabled him and his partner, John Hurst, to carry out extensive excavation which revealed a Saxon settlement in the valley, followed by a mediaeval village on higher ground.

John guided us round the humps and bumps in the grass that covered two mills and two manor houses on land granted to the Percy family after William the Conqueror's "harrying of the North", as well as rows of dwelling plots of various sizes. Contrary to my expectations the village was not abandoned because of the Black Death. Numbers had dropped significantly after the Great Famine of 1315-17 as well, but some people continued to live there until the 16th century, when the land was enclosed for sheep. In keeping with earlier IWNHAS visits to Orkney and Dartmoor the heavens opened while we were exploring the village, so we sought shelter in the ruined church for our picnic.

We visited two more churches in the afternoon, the first at Wharram le Street. John pointed out the features that have led him to conclude that it was probably built in the early Mediaeval period, but retaining some Saxon architectural styles and techniques. The second church, St. Andrews at Weaverthorpe, can be dated to the early 12th century. Adjoining the churchyard were strange earthworks which pre-date the mediaeval manor houses that stood there. Across a field from the coach we saw the great Bronze Age Barrow of Duggleby Howe, one of 4 such barrows in E. Yorkshire, but it is on private land and we were unable to get any closer.

Monday

Today was another busy day. We headed by coach to Thornborough Henges, now recognised as one of the foremost prehistoric monumental sites in Britain. Though the main approach to the three circular henges was closed off owing to roadworks, even from a distance the scale of the earthworks was impressive.

Predating them was a Cursus, running east-west for a few miles to the River Ure; originally covered with gypsum, these monuments would once have appeared outstanding in the landscape.



Left: Wharram le Street church



Right: Wharram Percy and church

In the delightful market town of Masham (pronounced Mas-um) we looked at the decorated ‘Mercian’ cross-shaft outside the church and the Anglo-Saxon sculptural decoration inside. We also noted the fifty-eight Anglo-Scandinavian Christian burials dated AD 679–1011, which were excavated in 1988–9 during building works near the town hall and are now reburied in the churchyard.

The privately-owned Jervaulx Abbey was next on the tour. Dating from the second half of the 12th century, in its decayed ‘Gothic’ splendour with plants growing out of the walls, it looked like a Romantic picturesque painting; but in its Cistercian heyday it had once possessed a wide range of economic interests and owned vast tracts of upland moor around the Dales.

At the attractive village of Thornton Steward we took a long walk through woodland to the small, remotely situated church of St Oswald. There were again remnants of 9th–10th century Viking stone sculpture inside the church, whilst outside early Christian burials dating to 680–1020 have been discovered. This proved to be by far my favourite church of the week: small, remote, very simply decorated and, for me at least, much more atmospheric than some of the more grandiose examples.

Last stop was the unmissable Bryson’s ice-cream parlour, located in an unexpectedly rural spot, for some of the best ice-cream many of us had ever tasted! And rounding off the day was a talk by John’s academic colleague Dr Maurice Turner on the history of the Forest of Knaresborough – which bore some remarkable parallels with the work of Vicky Basford on Parkhurst Forest!



Left: Jervaulx Abbey



Right: Thornton Steward church

Tuesday was a free day. Some people spent the day with John mainly focusing on churches, some took the train to York whilst others went by bus to Harrogate.

Wednesday

On another changeable day – rainy, windy, sunny – we headed for Ripon, stopping at St Anne’s Gate to look at the site of the medieval hospital. Situated next to Victorian almshouses, the scene is *now* very picturesque.

We then spent some time in Ripon Cathedral, which only attained cathedral status in 1836, but remarkably had once previously been a cathedral for just five years – in the 7th century! All that remains of that earlier Anglo-Saxon building is Bishop Wilfrid’s crypt, and those of us who ventured down its narrow, atmospheric corridors had no difficulty in imagining the devout pilgrims processing through there in former times and being hypnotised by the saints’ bones and sacred relics. A cross-head inside the cathedral depicted the Norse myth of Sigurd sucking his thumb after he had slain the dragon Fafnir: the dragon’s blood gave him the power to understand birdsong and warned him of treachery. The image was a sure sign of elite Scandinavian patronage of St Wilfrid’s church.

During the afternoon the main destination was Fountains Abbey, where some of us accompanied John on a Georgian landscape walk round Studley Royal Park, with its follies, statues, and a ‘surprise view’ of the abbey itself.

Fountains is hugely impressive, even in its ruined state. Dating from 1132, the Cistercian abbey had extensive pastures in the Yorkshire Dales and by 1291 was recorded as possessing 18,000 sheep, and expected to sell seventy-six sacks of wool a year. But the end came quickly for the abbey in 1539 when Abbot Bradley, his prior and thirty monks signed the deed of surrender to the crown in the Chapter House.



Left: St Wilfrid’s Crypt in Ripon Cathedral Right: Fountains Abbey

Thursday

One of the advantages of staying in Knaresborough is the frequent bus service into Harrogate where we could catch the Ripon bus to Ripley. This is a rare example of a planned medieval village that was rebuilt in the 19th century by the same family, Ingleby, who built the original. There is a wealth of information about the village and its surroundings as it forms the core of ‘Landscape Detective: Discovering a Countryside’ by John Muir (publ. 2001).

An earlier church, known as the ‘sinking chapel’ was built near the River Nidd, but was rebuilt in the village in about 1390. Much of the stone from the old church was re-used, the tomb of Sir Thomas Ingleby and his wife was transferred, as was the ‘weeping cross’ where pilgrims could use the carved knee holes to kneel in discomfort and pray. From the church we went into the grounds of Ripley castle and walked round the deer park, learning about the history of the site and its surroundings.

In the afternoon five of us accompanied John on a walk from the village. The farmhouse, Cayton Grange, stands where there was probably a grange of Fountains Abbey and earth marks in one field indicate

a possible village site. There was a semi-octagonal building that used to house a horse-driven mill. We saw an intriguing stone post with what seems to be a prehistoric cup and ring mark.

Having been wowed by the scale of Fountains Abbey we were now impressed by the size of their fishpond. Although now silted up overgrown, we could still track the outline of what was more like a lake than any stately home would be proud of. The earth bank that dammed the stream was still clearly visible.

We continued to the 'shrunk' village of Birthwaite. This was once an assart, developed to extract timber from the surrounding woodlands, now all but disappeared. According to Muir. Building platforms can be seen in a field but we could not access that. All that now remains is a farmhouse and a triangle of grass in the middle of the junction that was probably the village green. We completed an interesting and enjoyable walk with a well-deserved ice cream before catching the bus back.



Left: The Weeping Cross, Ripley



Right: Cup and ring mark, site of Fountains fishpond

When we gathered for our final evening, in the same restaurant as on the first night, there was unanimous appreciation of the hard work by Ann and John that had made such an enjoyable and informative week,

Report compiled by Ann Ticehurst, Helen Jackson, Janie Martin, Alan Philips

Photos by Mike Cotterill, Peter Jackson

Saturday 12th October Churchill's Farm, a talk by David Marshall

The land at Churchill's Farm is now owned and farmed separately from the old farmhouse. David has been able to arrange access for the Archaeology Section to work there as fields become available throughout the farming year. We have carried out field walking and geophysics on several areas but there is much more to cover once the cauliflowers and ground conditions permit,

Whilst the group has spent many mornings on field work, David has spent numerous hours on the desk-based research that helps to put our finds into context and to draw some tentative conclusions. So this talk was of interest to those of us who have worked on the site as well as those who knew nothing about it.

First David set the geographical context, explaining that Churchill's farm is on limestone with a typical thin covering of fertile soil and springs providing good water supply. A Lidar image revealed features that are not always apparent in the modern landscape - trackways, ridge and furrow, field boundaries and long axial boundaries from Wellow to the median ridge. David also finds Google Earth images from 1945 useful to hint at features no longer visible.

David showed us graphs based on 6 field-walking areas we have covered. Already differences are becoming apparent. For example, some areas have more worked flint, implying early occupation. Iron Age / Roman, early and later medieval are all represented in different places. It also seems that there were highs and lows of occupation within each period. David then showed some of the results of the Geophysical surveys with possible points of interest.

To put this work in the wider parish and Island context, David has used GIS (Geographic Information System) to create overlays. Metal detecting finds that are reported to the Portable Antiquities

Scheme (PAS) are a valuable research tool that David has mapped to show clusters of finds sorted by type and date.

As with field-walking, there is a health warning. Some sites are visited frequently by metal detectorists, others are not available to them so results may not be representative and must be treated with caution. Nevertheless, it seems that the Shalfleet area is rich in finds. Published research by Katerina Ulmschneider proposes that this was a 'productive site'. With no building evidence found to date, there may have been a 'market' fed by surrounding settlements. This is supported by the trackways on and parallel to the median ridge and a routeway running North/South.

There are too many hypotheses to list in this report, and many questions posed.

A few examples:

Roman villas have been found mostly in East Wight, yet more coin finds are recorded in the West. A significant number of Roman brooches have been found at Churchill's. Were they being bought and sold there, or recycled or used as currency?

Grouping finds of Anglo-Saxon brooches and coins by date suggests a surge of activity contemporary with the founding of 'Hamwic' (early Southampton) as an *emporium* (major trading centre). Most of the *sceattas* (Anglo-Saxon coins) found in West Wight were minted in Hamwic, but the widespread origins of others hints at the extent of trade and / or travel taking place.

Tantalising theories are being proposed but there is much work still to be done. What is clear is that this is a highly significant site that could keep the Archaeology section busy for the foreseeable future.

Helen Jackson

Saturday 30th November 30th A talk by Alan Phillips: Norse Myth and Religion

Alan warned the packed room that this talk was not for the faint-hearted – whilst violence features in many ancient religions the Norse traditions took it to a high level!

The main written sources are the classical writers, such as Tacitus, and the Scandinavian 'Eddas' which set down the ancient oral traditions in the 13th century. Whilst this was long after the conversion to Christianity, the ancient pagan tales were still remembered. Whilst we think of the Norse (or Viking) age as beginning in the 8th century, the culture was many centuries older than that. Tacitus wrote about them in the 1st century AD, and the first Anglo-Saxon settlers to Britain brought their own versions of the mythology with them in the 5th century. Many of the images Alan showed, such as carvings and amulets, date from 6th century Scandinavia. In fact Tacitus' description, and some of the details of the mythology, bear similarities with the Celts, such as use of sacred groves and horses. This may hint at the earlier versions of the belief system which, for example, focused on the 'earth mother' and fertility, so common in early religion.



Of course there are variations across time and different regions with many weird details and inconsistencies. One of the most accessible books on the subject is still Hilda Ellis-Davidson's 'Gods and Myths of Ancient Europe' (1964), complemented by John Grant's 'Introduction to Viking Mythology' (2002).

After taking us through a detailed list of the main gods and their attributes – including such deities as Odin, Thor, Freyja and Loki – we learnt about the concept of the 9 worlds, the creation myth and Yggdrasil, the sacred ash tree. Ragnarok, the 'death of the Gods', is foretold in great detail but will not be the end of the world. After the final battle a new order will emerge on a new earth.

Some time was spent looking at ship burials, including a rather gruesome account of one such funerary rite by an Arabic traveller in the early 10th century. He was visiting the Volga area and witnessed the funeral of a chief of the Rus – Vikings who gave their name to Russia.

Alan concluded a fascinating talk with a reference to Rene Girard, the philosopher-anthropologist who proposed a new theory to explain the ancient beliefs that involve so much violence and sacrifice. Other

thinkers have focused on myth as primarily propitiating the gods or the earth-mother, encouraging fertility, or centring on the hero's journey, but Girard supports the idea of the scapegoat whereby the sacrificial victim is to atone for human violence. The idea goes some way to explaining the bog bodies we heard about at the beginning of the talk. This is a highly-simplified summary of an intriguing idea – perhaps the subject for more research and a future talk?

Helen Jackson

Botany



Saturday 13th July Medham

Ten of us met at the commencement of the cycleway at Arctic Road, Cowes and we walked along the track to reach the saltmarsh at Medham. Many saltmarsh plants were in full bloom – a purple haze of Sea Lavender (*Limonium vulgare*) and clumps of yellow flowered Golden Samphire (*Inula crithmoides*). Sea Heath (*Frankenia laevis*) was looking particularly showy; it has increased here considerably and is now widespread. Marsh Mallow (*Althaea officinalis*) was just coming into bloom. We were also pleased to find interesting but less showy plants such as Parsley Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe lachenalii*), Long-bracted Sedge (*Carex extensa*) and Distant Sedge (*Carex distans*). However, we failed to find any evidence of Slender Centaury (*Centaureum tenuiflorum*) which has been recorded from here in recent years.

August / September Wood calamint monitoring

Several visits were made to the site during August and September to assess the progress of the translocation project and the lay by populations. The most recent planting had established well. Vigorous growth of bramble and other coarse vegetation is evident on all sites, but the plant continues to flower and set seed in a number of locations across the slope. The lay by populations show signs of encroachment by hemp agrimony and would benefit from some clearance in late June.

Saturday 7th September Shide Chalk Pit

Shide Chalk Pit, which designated both as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Local Nature Reserve, is a prominent landmark on the skyline south of Newport. It was an active chalk quarry, providing raw material for the cement works on the Medina, until the late 1940s. Since its abandonment, chalk-loving species have recolonised the floor of the quarry. Amongst the short rabbit-grazed turf we found a good population of Autumn Gentian (*Gentianella amarella*) together with Quaking Grass (*Briza media*), Carline Thistle (*Carlina vulgaris*), Dwarf Thistle (*Cirsium acaule*), Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) and Eyebright (*Euphrasia agg.*) still in flower, and leaves and seed heads of Horseshoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*) among other species.

A stream runs through the site, and in one of the damper flushes we found many seed heads of Southern Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*) and Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*).

The base of the site and the scree slopes on the sides of the quarry in particular have been colonised by species of Cotoneaster, to the extent that they have a reddish hue from autumn into winter. Samples of material were collected and critically examined by Eric Clement. In total, five species were found to be present: Ascending Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster ascendens*), Hollyberry Cotoneaster (*C. bullatus*), Wall Cotoneaster (*C. horizontalis*), Hardy Cotoneaster (*C. induratus*) and Himalayan Cotoneaster (*C. simonsii*).

Saturday 28th September Golden Hill Country Park

This meeting focussed on finding galls, leaf miners and micro-fungi on the buds, leaves, stems and seed heads of plants. In total, 59 species were found and identified. Nineteen of these were galls; English Oak (*Quercus robur*) was the host plant for nine of these and they generally have very descriptive English names.

Artichoke and marble galls form on buds; spangle galls, silk button and oyster galls are on leaves; knopper galls are on acorns and the curved leaf gall-causer modifies the stem. All had previously been found at this site.

Eighteen leaf miners were found and 7 of these were new species records for the site. The micro-fungi list was made up of 22 species, with 13 being not previously recorded on the site. One of these, *Ramularia menthicola*, which produces a leaf spot on Water mint (*Mentha aquatica*) was also a new record for the Island.

Anne Marston

Ornithology



28th July

Fort Victoria

There were six people on the Bird Walk at Fort Victoria, two of whom were thinking of joining the Society. The weather was slightly cooler with a nice breeze. We did some sea watching first and even managed to see the odd gannet. We then did our usual round walk along the cliff and back over farmland but it was rather quiet.

The bird species seen and/or heard were Pied Wagtail, Wood Pigeon, Black headed Gull, Gannet, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Great Black-backed Gull, Shag, Cormorant, Mediterranean Gull, Jay, Magpie, Wren, Buzzard, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Pheasant, Robin, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Chiffchaff, Blackbird, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Swallow, Herring Gull, Linnet, House Sparrow, Rook, Jackdaw and Carrion Crow.

Butterflies seen were Marbled White, Common Blue, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Red Admiral, Large White, Small White, Brimstone, Small Copper, Ringlet, Comma, Meadow Brown and White Admiral and we also saw a female Emperor Dragonfly. **31 bird species**

Leader: Toni Goodley

17th August

Mottistone Down

Five members, including one new to the section, enjoyed a walk from the Jubilee NT car park down Strawberry Lane, then taking the footpath to The Longstone. We then wended our way along some footpaths up to Harboro and Mottistone Down and back to our cars. Although it was overcast to begin with it brightened up but the windy conditions persisted resulting in few birds in exposed spots. However, the footpath at the foot of the downs was sheltered and we found a variety of birds which were on migration: Spotted Flycatcher, Willow Warbler, Whitethroat, Tree Pipit, Yellowhammer, only the odd Swallow and House Martin. At the beginning of the walk we saw two Sparrowhawk and a Kestrel vying for airspace and a Buzzard. During the course of the morning we also saw or heard Woodpigeon, Pheasant, Crow, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, a juvenile Great Black Backed Gull, Chiffchaff, Wren, Blue Tit, Herring Gull, Green Woodpecker, Magpie, Blackbird, Robin and Jackdaw. A Weasel ran across the path in front of us – my first for the year. **24 bird species.**

Leader: Jackie Hart

28th September

Newtown

Eight members met at the National Trust car park for a walk let by Nicky Falconar on the nature reserve. It was very windy and the tide exceptionally high. Despite this we saw 44 species during the course of the morning. One of our number saw a Pied Flycatcher by Causeway bridge on his way to the car park. A few Swallows flew by and about 10 Meadow Pipits were disturbed from the marsh near the salt pans by the

rising tide, a few Sky Larks were in the meadow. Lapwing was seen in the distance. Flocks of about 50 Dunlin and 60 Ringed Plover took to the air. 12 Turnstone were seen on the remnants of the causeway as were one Grey Plover, 7 Cormorants and 2 Sandwich Terns. We also saw a Mediterranean Gull with 28 Black-headed Gulls on Gull Island. About 50 Canada Geese were dotted about. 35 Curlew and at least 40 Oystercatcher too were seen as were 7 Little Egret, a Greenshank and at least 13 Redshank. We were hoping for an Osprey but were not lucky, however a Peregrine obligingly sat on a post for us to admire through the telescope. We also had a Marsh Harrier, Buzzard and a Kestrel. The ducks were represented by Wigeon, Mallard and Pintail as well as 18 Shelduck. **44 bird species**

Jackie Hart.

October meeting cancelled because of the poor weather

17th November

Yarmouth

Eighteen members met at Thorley Road for a walk along the cycle path to the scrape in front of Mill Copse led by Jim Baldwin. It was a glorious sunny morning with a light north easterly breeze and a rising tide making perfect conditions. As a result, 62 species were seen during the course of the morning. We stopped at Rofford Marsh with the highlights being 5 drake Shovelers, 3 Gadwall, a drake Pintail, 6 Snipe and 2 Kingfishers while 2 Sky Lark flew overhead and a Cetti's Warbler was heard. Moving on to the Western Yar estuary there was c.900 Golden Plover and Lapwing which made a lovely sight when they all flew round the estuary as a result of a passing Sparrowhawk before returning to their roost site in the marsh. Everyone managed to have great views in the telescopes of a confiding Kingfisher which sat on a post in the scrape. Further sightings of Kingfisher ensued with two together over the Yar and another one catching a fish with an overall total of five different birds seen during the morning. Turnstones were busily turning over the seaweed close to the cycle path while a Curlew was also observed at close range. 30 Black-tailed Godwit were at roost, 2 Greenshank was a nice bonus while other waders seen were Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Dunlin and Redshank. Wildfowl was represented by Shelduck, Wigeon, Teal and Mallard. 12 Little Grebe were fishing in the Yar. The elusive Spotted Redshank was not seen at the scrape but a number of passerines were observed including Stonechat and Yellowhammer. The walk concluded with a Marsh Harrier quartering the reed bed opposite Off the Rails café. **62 bird species**

Leader: Jim Baldwin

Bird Walk Seaview 8 Dec 2019

Eight members met in Bluett Avenue, Seaview for a circular walk in the area. We started off with a sea watch. Although the sea was calm and the tide about half way, no divers or grebes were spotted. However, later we did see two Great Crested Grebes. On the breakwater near Hersey Reserve we noted a Turnstone and a Mediterranean Gull, the latter was one of a number seen during the course of the morning. A few Brent were on the sea and Cormorant further out. Other gulls seen: Black-headed, Common and Herring. A Kingfisher was very obliging and flew from one post to another and finally flying over to Hersey Reserve where we again had good views. In the Nature Reserve we saw or heard Crow, Rook and Jackdaw, Magpie, Blackbird, Robin, Blue Tit, Green Woodpecker. The solo Greenshank was in his usual spot on the mud spit and a Little Egret too. We also saw Coot, Moorhen, Oystercatcher, Little Grebe, 2 male and one female Shoveler, 7 Tufted Duck and plenty of Mallard. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen in a tree as were two Buzzard. We then continued our walk and saw a Pied Wagtail and a Black Redstart on the corner house at the bottom of Oakfield Road. The feral flock of Barnacle Geese (about 133), with one Snow Goose and Swan Goose were seen on the usual field off Nettlestone Hill. The only other birds heard or seen were Wren and a flock of mixed tits which included Long-tailed Tit with David seeing a Great Tit when he made his way back to his car. **38 bird species**

Jackie Hart



Fungi Group

Saturday 29th September Firestone Copse

We had a damp start for our first foray of the season but, until recently, the weather had been dry. Fungi were just starting to make an appearance. Firestone Copse is reliably good for fungi but our group of eight forayers were able to name just 34 species. We hope to do much better over the coming weeks!

The smallest fungi are sometimes the most beautiful and interesting and that proved to be the case on this foray. *Marasmius bulliardii* is a little Horsehair Fungus which grows on fallen oak leaves. One distinguishing feature of this *Marasmius* is that the gills under the cap are joined near the base to form a collar (referred to as a collarium) around the top of the stem or stipe. Also growing on fallen oak leaves, a tiny white cup fungus, *Lachnum ciliare*, has beautiful fringed cups on stalks when viewed under a lens.

Sunday 6th October Parkhurst Forest

Today proved to be an extremely productive foray although we only got from the carpark to Signal House and back in a circular route. We were a group of 13 members and friends and we were blessed with a sparkling sunny day.

We were puzzled by a large slim unopened fungus pushing up through the grass but this proved to be just a Parasol Mushroom, *Lepiota procera*. There were plenty of earthballs, *Scleroderma*, about and we were delighted to find one fine specimen with two parasitic boletes attached. We also found a cluster of Oysterlings, *Panellus stipticus*, on dead wood.

Selena made the best find of the day, three small fungi growing from a pine cone. It was only when someone remarked that they had spines instead of gills that the penny dropped that we were looking at the Earpick Fungus, *Auriscalpium vulgare*. The cap of this fungus is laterally placed making it look like a kidney-shaped cap on a hairy stipe. Fungi books describe the Earpick Fungus as being common and widespread but that does not appear to be the case with us. It is indeed inconspicuous but we have held many forays at Parkhurst Forest and other Island sites, often with very experienced and professional mycologists, and yet this fungus has never been recorded in recent years. Indeed, there are just two previous records: at Mottistone in 1932 and at Shanklin in 1924!

We frequently find two species of Cauliflower Fungus, *Sparassis crispa* and the rarer *Sparassis laminosa* when we visit Parkhurst and today was no exception. What was surprising this time was that both specimens of *Sparassis laminosa* were growing closely associated with fungi associated with conifers. *Sparassis laminosa* is generally considered to be associated with broadleaved trees. We found one specimen growing over Rootrot, *Heterobasidion annosum*, and the second with Earthfan, *Thelophora terrestris*.

We also found some interesting smaller fungi. *Chromelosporium ochraceum* is a remarkable mould that looks spectacular under the binocular microscope. It is actually the asexual stage of a *Peziza* cup fungus. It has been reported from here once before on a visit of the British Mycological Society. Far more spectacular was the splendid display of Fly Agarics, *Amanita muscaria*, growing alongside the path back to the carpark. There would have been plenty more to find had we stayed longer.

Saturday 2nd November Jersey Camp, Porchfield

Today was the day of a storm with winds up to 109.4mph recorded at The Needles together with heavy rain. Understandably, that put off several in the group who were planning to attend but nevertheless six hardy souls did turn out and we did carry out a sodden foray on MOD land. Initially, we walked around the edge of Lock's Copse, wary of falling branches, but eventually we entered into the wood and also the meadows. Nevertheless, the weather did cut our foray short and we retired to the Range House where, in the warmth, Stuart kindly provided us with drinks and a place to work. There was plenty to see and we recorded 65 species.

Saturday 9th November

Golden Hill Country Park

We have never visited Golden Hill for fungi before but, because next year will be the fiftieth anniversary of the Country Park, we thought it was about time we had a foray here. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind to us and some of our group of thirteen turned back early which was a shame because we made some really nice finds. Particularly spectacular was a dense ring of mycorrhizal fungi around a Holm Oak comprising a mixture of Clouded Agaric, *Clitocybe nebularis*, a *Russula* and astonishing quantities of a milk cap, *Lactarius chrysorrheus*.

We also found lots of Webcaps, *Cortinarius spp.*, which are very difficult to identify. One attraction of visiting Golden Hill is to see if the grassland holds a good range of waxcaps and other grassland fungi. Unfortunately the cold very wet weather precluded a proper search of the grassland but a short search revealed a few species and there must be more to find. Interestingly, the more sheltered woody scrub had several grassland fungi, surviving from its grassland origins.

We also found some interesting smaller fungi including several fungi producing cup-shaped fruiting bodies on stalks. *Rustroemia firma* growing on oak twigs was found with remarkably long stalks. Small creamy discs of *Bisporella subpallida* on twigs also had very short stalks. More obviously stalked were the little white cups of *Hymenoscyphus fructigena* confined to the cupules of acorns, in this case of Holm Oak. In total we recorded 48 species

Sunday 24th November Ryde Cemetery

Our last foray of the season saw 13 of us gathered at the entrance to Ryde Cemetery. At first we saw little in the way of fungi and we thought that this sometimes prolific site was not going to deliver. However, during the course of the morning we found 40 species. A good variety of species although not in quantity. Most showy was a ring of Honey Fungus, *Armillaria mellea*, around a beech tree. Sadly, the beech tree was dying.

We found a good selection of grassland fungi, for which this site is notable, including the Pink Waxcap, *Hygrocybe calyptriformis*, a huge specimen of *Hygrocybe quieta*, with orange gills, and the splendid *Hygrocybe punicea*. We also found earthtongues, *Trichoglossum hirsutum*. Whilst wandering around the cemetery we were entertained by a flock of greenfinches feeding in a tree and a pipistrelle bat flying around catching winter gnats.

Interestingly, we found the white coral fungus, *Ramariopsis kunzei*. We have not recorded this fungus before 2019 but this year we found it at Quarr and Osborne. It must be having a good year. Best of all was an *Amanita* found by Mike Cotterill beneath a pine. After much examination and investigation, it proved to be *Amanita mairei*, new to the Island and a fitting end to our foray season.

Colin Pope

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

We welcome the following new members for 2019:

SOCIETY OFFICERS:-

President Dr Paul Bingham, 6 Forest Close, Newport, IoW PO30 5SF
General Secretary Dr. Colin Pope, 14 High Park Rd, Ryde IOW. PO33 1BP
Treasurer Miss J. Hart, 18 Cherrytree Road, Nettlestone, Seaview, IOW. PO34 5JF
Membership Secretary Mrs T. Goodley, 15 The Lawns, Fairlee Rd, Newport, IOW. PO30 2PT

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NEXT BULLETIN

Items for inclusion in the next Bulletin and Reports of Meetings
for 1st January 2020 to 30th June 2020 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

The closing date for acceptance of items and reports will be 2nd July 2020

Bulletin Editor: Colin Pope