



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Malvern Local Group

Summer 2023

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Connemara & the Burren May 2023

Heather Hayward & Sheila Jones

Our stay in Clifden, Connemara, was a good base for exploring and visiting the islands as well as for a spot of traditional Irish music. The scenic Sky Road up among the hills afforded wonderful views over Clifden Bay. Connemara National Park had magnificent and diverse scenery with beautiful beaches and a horizon dominated by more than 50 mountains in four ranges. Diamond Hill at 500m was tackled by several members who were treated to superb views. Clare and Inishbofin islands were remote and beautiful, such a contrast to Inis Mor, which turned out to be a tourist hotspot! Anyone walking the trails was in serious danger of being knocked down by dozens of cyclists, horse-drawn carriages or tourist minibuses!!



Connemara Coastline (Sheila Jones)

The Burren....a must for any naturalists' trip list. A limestone paradise with its huge rocky pavement, dotted with rock formations, caves and fossils. An incredible array of flowers from native species to Arctic, Alpine and Mediterranean grow in the gaps.

Amongst the flora and fauna seen:

Mammals: otters, foxes, red squirrels, a stoat carrying prey, hares, bottlenose dolphins, common seals plus the rear end of a pine marten!

Birds: a total of 99 species including corncrakes, choughs, grasshopper warblers, snipe and cuckoos heard and seen every day.



Limestone pavement on The Burren (Sheila Jones)

Butterflies: walls, pearl bordered fritillaries, wood whites and more common species (but a dearth of other) insects.

Plants: many, including spring gentian, mouse-ear hawkbit, sundew, the Irish bean tree and orchids.

A wonderful trip and many thanks to Lyndon for his brilliant driving and to Margaret for her hard work in making the trip so successful; so sad she could not share it with us.

A Right Royal Day at Wrexham

Philip Chambers

Accompanied by the call of a distant cuckoo we explore the first vast quarry. We scan the vertical cliff faces and isolated buttes, flat-topped and monumental, for raptors and corvids; coltsfoot and cowslips and multi-coloured snails at our feet. Solid domes above the nests of meadow ants, red plantain, salad burnet, purple orchids and one common spotted are among the early sightings in the Minera Quarry. Up above, jackdaws harry a carrion crow, two pairs of stock doves over the quarry faces, three Canada geese over our heads. Somewhat smaller but of no less interest are the sluggish black *Bibio marci*, commonly cleped St Mark's flies, long legs dangling down as they hover in the air. To access this nature reserve, we walked by a peaty stream, home to stonefly and mayfly, then along a woodland edge with the pungent aroma of wild garlic.

A Right Royal Day at Wrexham (cont)

As we depart for the second quarry of the day, a mistle thrush carrying nesting material crosses our path. I crowned a cuckoo king of the morning.

The rides at Marford Quarry shelter a large white and a couple of orange tips. Greater stitchwort and wild strawberry are instantly identified but it takes longer to sort the common stork's-bill from the dove's-foot crane's-bill, the latter identifiable by its geranium leaves and deeply notched petals. Spring is holding on here, where primroses and wood anemone are resisting the takeover by dog violets and bluebells. Unfurling ferns, chiffchaffs calling, the cast-off, worm-like catkins of silver birch, the laughing yaffle of a green woodpecker and the drumming of the great spotted woodpecker are indications of the increasingly vibrant presence of the natural world.

Further on into wooded habitat the golden-yellow flowers of the high-growing, prickly gorse and the spineless broom give way to broadleaved woodland comprising birch, ash, oak and sycamore. A dark wood of conifers, indicative of infertile soil, with needles for floor covering, catches the eye but it is the glorious, creamy-coloured mayflower blossom of the ubiquitous hawthorn that proliferates here. The speedwell blue of Jan Struther's children's hymn, some early bird's-foot trefoil in its 'bacon-and-eggs' colouring and the round, glossy-green leaves of creeping Jenny, as yet without its yellow flower, are the last of the flowers to be seen before we depart. Wheezing greenfinches and a pair of jays are the last to be seen and heard.

On the return journey we stop off at the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct that carries the Llangollen Canal over the River Dee. A dipper, swifts and an aerial view of a heron round off a splendid day. As is customary, the day is concluded with a fish and chip supper, al fresco of course.

Dotterel spotted!



Mark Hamblin/2020VISION

Unfortunately, there isn't space for a report on our four-day trip to Anglesey in April but I couldn't close without celebrating our marvellous sighting of a female dotterel on Great Orme near Llandudno! (Sadly, this magnificent photo isn't of 'our' individual).

Indoor Meetings 2023-4

All at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of the month at Lyttelton Rooms, Church Street, Malvern, WR14 2AY. Adults £2.50. Children free. Non-members welcome.

September 7th 2023. Marvellous Molluscs

Rosemary Winnall MBE, Wyre Forest Study Group.
Snails and slugs: some of our British land, freshwater and marine species.

October 5th 2023. Floodplain Meadows

Emma Rothero, Floodplain Meadows Partnership, and Chris Greensmith, WWT Trustee and volunteer warden of Hardwick Green Meadows
Floodplain meadows and their conservation, the Trust's Hardwick Green Meadows and the local Forgotten Floodplains project.

November 2nd 2023. Fungi and Tree Structure

Bob Watson, Head of School of Forestry & Woodland Management at The National School of Forestry.
Fungi and their effect on tree structure and survival.

December 7th 2023. Wetlands for People & Wildlife

Jackie Harris, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
A look at WWT's mission and four major conservation projects at home and abroad (Bewick swans, Eurasian curlew, Madagascar pochard, spoon-billed sandpiper)

January 2nd 2024. Nature reserves talk by staff member of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. TBC

February 1st 2024. Don't Count your Butterflies Before they Pupate

Mel Mason, project Leader/Vice-chair West Midlands Butterfly Conservation
Update on the Malvern Hills Lost Fritillaries Project and the reintroduction of the pearl bordered fritillary.

March 7th 2024. The Work of the Vale Landscape Heritage Trust

Gary Farmer, Vale Landscape Heritage Trust
Conserving old orchards and flower-rich grasslands in the Vale of Evesham. *We hope to organise a guided walk in June to VLHT's Hipton Hill.*

April 4th 2024. Creatures of the Twilight

Paul Wilkinson, herpetologist & ecologist for British Waterways
Vampires, dragons and flying mice!

May 2nd 2024. The Fascination of Plant Galls - Identification, Biology & Ecology.

Dave Taft U3A Natural History Group
What causes the strange and wonderful growths?

Local walks and ambles are organised at short notice by email. If you would like to be kept up to date, please get in touch malverngroup@live.co.uk. You can unsubscribe at any time.