

Bromsgrove & NE Worcestershire Summer 2019



Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust

Memories of a speaker

I have given talks to various groups for some 45 years and I had many interesting situations occur that encouraged me to write about them in my records. For example, there was the time at an early Worcester Local Group meeting when a man had to be wrestled to the floor while attempting to steal the door takings. I remember the time I arrived to give a talk to the Protection of Rural England group when no one turned up to consume the huge buffet laid on by the committee. Then there was the Pershore Ladies Group with a membership of only four elderly ladies, lost in the emptiness of an old church hall. Then I have particular memories of a 90 year old lady at Shrawley Gardening Club who, each time I visited, viewed my slides on screen with the use of binoculars! However, only once did I intend to go to a talk given by someone else and then end up doing it myself.

On the first Tuesday in May this year my intention was to visit the Trust's Redditch Local Group to hear a talk about the Falklands. It was being given by Peter Beckhelling, the committee's chairman, who had been fortunate enough to visit there and had acquired enough material to give an illustrated talk. Most older people remember the Falklands because of the war in 1982 or, at least, the defensive action taken by Britain against Argentinian invaders. I remember it more because the action was taking place when me and my old friend and nature associate, Eric Simms, were on holiday on the Island of Mull. There, our two week stay was blessed with cloud-free sunshine on each

and every day. In our boarding house each evening before dinner Eric could be found in the bedroom listening to reports of the fighting on the radio and then reporting his views on it throughout the evening meal. For the sake of others present, this was intermingled with our wildlife experiences on that day!

A couple of days before I was due to attend the talk in Redditch, I had a call from one of the committee members to inform me that Peter had been taken ill and was being treated in hospital. I realised that I was about to be asked if I would step in to do the talk myself. This I was prepared to do, agreeing to give them a talk I hadn't done for them before on a local farm and its wildlife. On the evening, the man taking the money at the door explained the situation to the people arriving, giving them the option not to stay as the talk was different to the one advertised...or to stay anyway as they were already there. The first two ladies that arrived decided to leave before giving it any consideration!! Thank goodness I knew who they were and that they had seen plenty of my talks. However, I don't blame people for keeping their money when they came for a particular subject. Other than that, I'm pleased to report that no-one else left and the talk went down well, being much appreciated by the audience. On top of that, Peter is continuing to recover and I hope you'll join me in sending him our best wishes.

Gordon

Indoor meetings

We look forward to welcoming you to our illustrated talks...

October 2nd Gordon Forrest – Upton Warren Wetland Reserve

November 6th Derek Crawley – Returning Wildlife

December 4th Dr Page – Flowers of the Dolomites

Our meetings take place at Bournheath Village Hall, Claypit Lane, Bournheath, B61 9LA
All meetings start at 7.30pm, cost £2.50 and we welcome both members and non-members

Upton Warren update

Many of you will be familiar with our wonderful Upton Warren Wetland Reserve between Bromsgrove and Droitwich. It's a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for the wetland birds and grasslands there. The Moors is freshwater and The Flashes is saline (an unusual inland habitat) and they attract a wide range of birds throughout the year.



Running parallel to The Flashes, the Hen Brook flows into the River Salwarpe and also consists of a variety of habitats that include a series of currently overgrown pools, scrub and reedbed. The great news is that with funding from Severn Trent Water's Cash for Catchments we are going to carry out restoration and wetland creation works along the Hen Brook to enhance the SSSI.

Over the years the brook has been channelised, which has created a uniform habitat. By reinstating meanders and a more sinuous channel, as well as different depths, we hope to increase both diversity and abundance of the wildlife.

During the works, which will hopefully begin later this year, we will remove accumulated leaf litter and the build-up of silt. This will aid flow and reduce the dominance of reedmace to create more open water habitat. It will also give more space and light for other species to come through such as water mint, pink water speedwell and fool's watercress.

Further down the line we're hoping water voles will expand further south from their current locations in Bromsgrove and recolonise this area that they used to be found in. The work will also benefit the otters that use the site as well as invertebrates that prefer more open water.

We also hope to dredge part of the Hen Pool to create more open water and better viewing opportunities for people visiting the Hen Brook hide.

There's lots to be done before work begins but we hope that it will get underway in autumn.



Otter at Upton Warren by Ken Broadmore

Eleanor Reast

Eastern Reserves Officer