

between these islands and thereafter we walked extensively.

We enjoyed evening talks and slideshows by local naturalist Will Wagstaff (pre-booked thankfully, since well oversubscribed) and local archaeologist Katharine Sawyer.

A shearwater/puffin evening boat trip was a popular event, cruising around the western rock outcrops and the uninhabited island of Annet. We saw great northern divers, Manx shearwaters both in rafts and in flight, a few puffins, some seals, gulls and shags plus an evocative sunset over Bishop Rock.

Outstanding among our many highlights were the clear sapphire and turquoise seas, the glistening white beaches, our own modest count of 65 different species of birds, exotic plant life, interesting insects, the archaeological sites and history, wonderful Tresco Abbey Gardens, cream teas, and picnic crab sandwiches on a deserted beach!

Seas were calm for our return on the Scillonian III ferry to Penzance, where we boarded the coach for Worcestershire. Our sincere thanks go to Margaret Vernon and Lyndon Knott for such a well organised holiday, even arranging dry, sunny, though at times windy, weather every day!

Flowers and Butterflies at Cleeve Hill

Alison Uren



Duke of Burgundy (Richard Newton)

(May 30th and 31st) Two trips were made on cloudy but fairly warm days to Cleeve Hill near Cheltenham, with John Tilt as our guide. Not only does he know the butterfly and moth species that are found there but he also knows exactly where to find them. "Here we are likely to find Duke of Burgundy" he would say and there it was. "This spot is good for small blue butterflies" – and lots of them appeared. "This is the bank where we should find dingy skipper" – and there they were. A single wall butterfly appeared on cue, even in rather cool conditions. All wonderful stuff, complete with descriptions of their food plants and lifecycles and how well they are doing as a species.

Cleeve Hill is a limestone grassland with some acid areas so there is a wide variety of flora and fauna. Day-flying moths were abundant and included narrow-bordered five-spot burnet, forester, burnet companion and Mother Shipton. There were many common spotted and chalk fragrant orchids just coming out; large healthy broad-leaved helleborines promised well for flowering in July. The hillsides were yellow with masses of kidney vetch, bird's-foot trefoil, rock-rose and crosswort. More unusual plants included a purple milk-vetch, a patch of

monkshood, hairy rock-cress, sainfoin and common gromwell. A cuckoo flew past and sang on and off for the next hour. Swifts sailed overhead and a red kite was spotted being mobbed by a crow. A seven mile walk in total, so it was good for our health as well as very interesting!

Pied Flycatchers at Old Storridge

Garth Lowe

My wife and I live in a house on the edge of The Knapp and Papermill nature reserve in Old Storridge. On April 18th while in the garden in the early morning, I was delighted to hear the odd jumble of notes that announces pied flycatchers coming from my adjacent woodpile, where there is a nestbox nearby on a tree. On the 25th, very early as it was a day of departure on holiday, a visit to the woodpile showed a newly-arrived female who was already collecting leaves as a base for the nest. My pleasure could not be measured!

On our return a week later a check revealed the complete nest and by May 3rd, two greenish-blue eggs had been laid. This was the day 16 members of the Malvern Group came to the Knapp for a guided walk, and they were delighted to hear about the ongoing success of the nest. By the 10th she was sitting on seven eggs and by the 21st they had hatched. On May 30th I counted six young, now old enough to be ringed. The following day Mike Uren came to look and discreetly took a few photographs:



Editor's postscript: Garth sent the following report to the Malvern Bird Group on June 4th:

"Eat your heart out folks, not only have we had a dipper breeding on the brook plus a pied flycatcher by my wood pile with six well feathered young now, a redstart nesting just down the lane in the end of a triple box put up for sparrows, NOW to our great joy a spotted flycatcher is nesting under our eaves with five eggs."

Garth's pied flycatchers fledged on June 6th. Sadly there is bad news too: no pied flycatchers have been recorded breeding on Midsummer Hill this year - the first time since a nestbox study began in 1990. As with many of our migrant species, numbers are declining at an alarming rate. Turtle doves were not recorded on the Hills in 2018 and we have all noticed fewer swifts, swallows and house martins in recent years.

Contributions

Please send any ideas or contributions for future Newsletters to the editor alison.uren@gmail.com or phone 01684 567819



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Summer 2019

Malvern Group

www.malverngroup.btck.co.uk
malverngroup@live.co.uk

Indoor Meetings 2019

PLEASE NOTE! Indoor Meetings from now on will be held at the new venue: the **Eden Centre, Grovewood Road WR14 1GD**. It's just behind the Malvern Spa Hotel and there is plenty of street parking. Usual time 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month. Adults £2.50 with refreshments included. Children are free and non-members of the Trust are very welcome. The next four meetings are:

September 5th. Worcestershire's Wildlife: Wyre to the Vale
Wendy Carter, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

October 3rd: An Orchid Odyssey
Alison Uren, Chairman of the WWT Malvern Group

November 7th: Life and Death on the Underside of Leaves
Jean Young, insect specialist

December 5th: Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
David Armitage, AONB Officer

Outdoor Events 2019

Full details of all 2019 walks and trips can be found on the website. Day-trips are organised by **Margaret Vernon, 01684 565079**. It is always worth putting your name on the reserve list, even if a trip is full. (At the time of going to print, all trips are full except October 16th).

September 10th: Hilbre Island Local Nature Reserve, travelling by train.

October 16th: National Memorial Arboretum and Croxall Lakes (Staffordshire Wildlife Trust). Cost £17.

November 3rd and 4th: rescheduled trips to the Pine Marten Hide.

November 17th and 18th: 2-day trip to the Ribble Estuary.

Four excellent walks were organised by **Neil Edwards** and all were fully booked. They will all be described in the next Newsletter.

Other walks and ambles are organised at short notice by email, so if you are not on our list then please send your email address to malverngroup@live.co.uk so that you can be kept informed.

Other Events

We are very grateful to Waitrose for the Community Matters scheme in April, which raised £483 for the Malvern Group. Thank you all for dropping in your green tokens!

On **August 12th** we are doing a cash collection in the foyer of Morrison's supermarket.

On **September 7th** we will have a stall at the Alfrick and Lulsley Show. Please come and support us.

Just a Perfect Day

Philip Chambers

(March 27th and 28th) Arriving at the reedbeds and peat bogs of Ham Wall, scratchy blackcap, chiffchaff and dunnock were all in song. Along the old trackbed of the Somerset and Dorset Railway a great white egret coasted above us and on silver birch a goldcrest shone in the sun. Against a blue background we watched the differing flight patterns of marsh harrier, buzzard and snipe. On a wintry-looking alder a peacock on a catkin signalled the spring. Speckled wood, comma, brimstone, red admiral and orange tip confirmed its coming.

"Heron on nest," called Alan Baxter, our guide. Behind the nest and in the distance rose Glastonbury Tor, once the mythical Isle of Avalon. From Tor View Hide we could see perfectly camouflaged but visible male and female garganey.

What a coup when Alan took us to the crossroads and suggested that we head for the Avalon Hide. Two bitterns in easy, glorious flight; barred buff-brown plumage vivid in the sun. Bitterns booming and bees buzzing over Shapwick Heath saw us into the afternoon. Thanks go to Jane for introducing us to Flossy the glossy ibis. And was that an otter? Almost certainly. But we had to be happy with what it left behind after the splash - a ring of bright water.

The Avalon Marshes presented many of us with a first. There were two big fish in surprisingly shallow water. We watched for a while and then someone pointed out the dorsal fins positioned well back on the body - pike spawning.

As we left the Somerset Levels swans were grazing and a heron stood sentinel. The following day twenty-three cattle egrets made up the farewell party.

Isles of Scilly - May 2019

Cameron & Kathy Badenoch

(May 8th to 15th) Early in the morning, 44 of us set off by coach for Land's End airport, where we transferred to St Mary's via several 15-minute flights in small planes. Flying at just 1000ft we had awesome panoramic views of the islands. We then went by minibus to our respective abodes in Hugh Town for the week's stay.

No formal itinerary arrangements had been made; it was left to individuals to do what they wished according to their particular interests.

We opted to explore each of the five inhabited islands, visiting Treco, St Agnes, St Martin's, Bryher and, of course, St Mary's itself. Good ferry services were available