

The Ross of Mull in May

First Impressions of Mull by Beverly Shrub

It was a calm, sunny evening when the ferry arrived at the pier at Craignure, a small collection of cottages backed by green slopes. A long but scenic drive took us towards our accommodation near Fionnphort, passing Ben More, the highest mountain on the Island, and along the shores of Loch Scridain. As a first-time visitor I was impressed by the varied landscape of mountains, heathland, quiet lochs and rocky coastline with white sandy beaches and scattered communities of sturdy cottages. It is a great stopping off point to visit other Islands like Iona and Staffa. As soon as you get away from the 'main road' it is quiet and peaceful. Time and space to walk, spot the wildflowers, birds (we saw a white-tailed eagle fishing close by) and hopefully otters!

A Kind of Magic by David Russell

The sun was shining, the going was spongy underfoot and the view of Iona was stunning. When I was asked to write a brief piece, the title had to be from the Queen melody - it fits it one hundred percent. This was my first trip to the Scottish Islands: the Ross of Mull was therefore quite an expedition. Arrangements were sometimes challenging due to Covid restrictions but when you are with delightful people, what matters? A base with first rate accommodation is a major plus and we certainly had that at Achaban House. This was enhanced by a week of almost perfect weather (while Malvern endured torrential rain).

Birds were the primary purpose of the trip and to me, a relative novice, the knowledge of my companions was enlightening. Three golden eagles soaring, great northern divers, redpoll, hen harrier, puffins and guillemots to name but a few as well as two corncrakes, only heard by me but seen by others in the group. Local trips took us to exceptional places from which to walk and observe. Copious arrangements included a glorious trip to Staffa and Lunga, a day on Iona with a voyage back in an open boat after a sumptuous dinner!

A WEEK OF MAGIC – AND DON'T FORGET THAT LOVELY BIG OTTER.



My Wildlife Garden Story

by Sue Bienkowska

How was I to make my newly acquired, sterile 135 square metres of plain grass on a severely landscaped modern development, into a beautiful, lively wildlife garden? I read and researched and paid great attention to talks from Plantlife and our Wildlife Trusts. Ken Thompson, author of 'No Nettles Required' cheered me: his research shows that non-native plants can be included, high density is the most important for wildlife success. Abundance is slow to grow in clay but there is mulch. The plot is small so I have gone upwards: fruit cordons on the fence and trellis, with ivy, honeysuckle and clematis. An accumulation of simple but diverse flower shapes chosen to suit the variety of structure of insect mouth parts.

Every plant needs to work hard for nature, mass inflorescences have a large pollen mass and scent draws the night-time flyers. Gradually I am supplying a long flowering season for pollen. Leaves and stems are encouraged for caterpillars' food and shelter.

No to chemicals and peat, yes to homemade compost: the worms writhe happily in it and the blackbirds enjoy turning it over. Neighbours' windfalls made a good starter ingredient. It seems to me that the 'untidiness' of long grass, log and leaf piles present can be incorporated into an attractive garden design. I grew the lawn long but mowed a path through to give it character. Little frogs made it their home and toads found cool damp patches under nearby stones. Beyond the back garden there is woodland and an unkempt field, an important ready-made wildlife corridor that links with neighbours' plots. There is significant potential for supporting small creatures and birds if we combine access to our gardens and our result will be the added joy and beauty of the resulting visitors.

Toad by Sue Bienkowska



Contributions

Please send any ideas or contributions for future Newsletters to the editor Christine Seymour
cseymour121@hotmail.com or phone 01684 568430



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Summer 2021

Malvern Group

www.malverngroup.epizy.com

malverngroup@live.co.uk

Welcome to the Malvern Group

Christine Seymour (Editor)

This spring has been challenging and not just the weather! We have emerged from another lockdown and are starting to enjoy our freedom to explore the world around us. We have had a visit to Mull and more trips and walks are planned for the rest of the year. We are hopeful they will go ahead and that the indoor meetings will resume from September. In the meantime, the online talks have been a great success and helped us to keep connected. Derek Bradley and Trevor Smart have worked hard to set up a new website (see below). It is such an essential means of communicating information relating to our group.

Chairman's Update

Margaret Vernon (Acting Chairman)

It was with great disappointment that we learned of Alison's move to Somerset and therefore her departure as chairman of the Malvern Group. On behalf of the group, I wish to say a huge "thank you" to her for all the work she did in leading the group forward over the past five and a half years: always supportive, thorough in all she did and keen to provide inspiring speakers at our indoor meetings. We shall miss her and Mike but we wish them well in their new surroundings.

I am taking over the reins on a temporary basis, stepping down at the end of May 2022. We have a small and reliable committee and I am delighted that John Denham has joined it and takes up the position of vice-chairman. Brian Iles, Dave Cook, Neil Edwards and Christine Seymour have all taken on extra responsibilities as a result of Alison's departure, **so we do need two extra people to join our committee, helping with such things as administrative tasks, at indoor meetings and if you have some IT or technical knowledge that would be very helpful - or any other way you can.** Attendance at our committee meetings (normally three or four per year) would be expected. Please contact me (01684 565079), John (01684 561448) or any member of the committee if you would like to find out more.

Our Malvern group has been operating for more than 40 years. It was the first local group in Worcestershire and it is too important to us all for it to be allowed to fold.

As some of you will know, we have had to change our website provider and I would like to pay tribute and give our thanks to Derek Bradley and Trevor Smart (from Ravenshill Nature Reserve) for setting up the new website.

We are keen to meet up – how good it will be to meet face-to-face again. **We are unable to return to the Eden Centre so plan to return to the Lyttelton Rooms from September. Further details will be on our website and emailed out in due course.**

Malvern Group Talks 2021

September 2nd Nick Martin: Britain's Best Wildlife

October 7th Neil Homer Forbes: The Global Vulture Population Crisis

November 4th Tom Kitching and Marina Palacios: Bat Conservation with Vincent Wildlife Trust

December 2nd Tom Mabbett: Bird and Mammal Hotspots of Europe

Outdoor Events 2021

The day trips are nearly full, for more information or to book a place, then ring Margaret Vernon on 01684 565079.

Ancient trees walk at Moccas Park with Paul Rutter (Plantlife and Woodland Trust) Sunday 26th September
Cost £22 (includes guide £8pp). Depart Splash at 8.00 (return mid-evening). Limit 15. Bring packed lunch.

Steart Marshes with Alan Baxter

Thursday 11th November & Friday 12th (2 separate day trips): Cost: £16. Depart from Splash at 07.30 (return mid-evening). Limit 15. Bring packed lunch.

Wildgoose Rural Training & Nature Reserve (walk)

Friday 20th August at 10.00 (approx 2.5 hours)

Limit of 15, booking is essential.

Ring Neil on 01684 564288

A guided walk around this six acre smallholding and 36acre nature reserve with Wildlife Reserve Manager Roger Bates. We will see how the centre has been transformed from old gravel quarry settlement beds to a green oasis. Donations will go to ongoing project works. Meet at the Wildgoose Centre car park, off Old Quarry Drive, near Hallow, WR2 6LS (SO832612).

If you are not on our email list, add your name by emailing malverngroup@live.co.uk to be kept informed about future events (you can unsubscribe at any time).

Our new website

by Derek Bradley

The old Malvern Group website was hosted free by BT but this service has been withdrawn so the old website is no longer useable. Trevor and I have set up the new website: address www.malverngroup.epizy.com. We have kept the old format for now but work is ongoing to redesign it. Just a few points about the new site: unlike BT's, this one doesn't support a Guestbook but your inputs would be gratefully received via email to malverngroup@live.co.uk. We'd be particularly interested in any sightings with date and location and these would be entered onto the website unless considered to be sensitive. Also, we would welcome your photographs, which would be credited to you and would go in the new, improved Gallery - have a look!