



**Worcestershire**  
Wildlife Trust

## **Malvern Local Group**

*Winter newsletter 2025*

### **Indoor Meetings**

These are held in the Lyttelton Rooms adjacent to Malvern Priory starting at 7.30pm. £3 per person, cash only.

**Thursday December 4<sup>th</sup>**

#### **The biodiversity of Castlemorton Common by Richard Newton**

Discover more from this keen local naturalist and wildlife photographer.

**Thursday January 15<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Close-up nature photography in 3D**

Presented by Tej Kaushal, a keen amateur naturalist with expertise in photography.

**Thursday February 5<sup>th</sup>**

#### **The Wildlife of the Avalon Marshes**

Presented by Alison Uren, a past Chair of the Malvern Local Group, now volunteering at RSPB Ham Wall and for the Somerset Wildlife Trust. She has written a book entitled The Wildlife of the Avalon Marshes.

### **Walks and more**

Malvern Local Group runs a programme of ambles, walks and trips organised throughout the year. All are welcome. Please see our website [www.malverngroupwwt.org.uk](http://www.malverngroupwwt.org.uk) for further information.

Please contact Tim Lawrence on 07483 231427 for more information about our nature rambles.

We are involved in conservation working parties on local Trust nature reserves every Thursday and on the third Sunday of each

month. Please contact Brian Iles on 07483 231427 if you are interested in being involved.

We send updates to those on our email list. You can be added to it by emailing us at [malverngroup@live.co.uk](mailto:malverngroup@live.co.uk). You can unsubscribe at any time by sending us an email to let us know.

### **Group trip to Orford Ness**

**11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

On one of the hottest weekends of the year, 12 of us packed into a minibus, very well driven by Lyndon, to travel to Suffolk. We had an interesting stop at Wicken Fen National Nature Reserve, Cambridgeshire. This is the National Trust's oldest reserve and a national centre for dragonflies and damselflies. It's an important wetland dissected by lodes that cut through undisturbed peat beneath the ancient fens, attracting rare birds such as hen harriers and bitterns. Ladybirds and butterflies were very much in abundance. Open areas are grazed by Highland cattle and Konik ponies as part of the management. Our cooling boat trip along the lodes was a welcome relief from the sun.

Saturday was spent at Orford Ness, Suffolk. What a strange place, where nature and military history have evolved side by side, amidst extensive, almost eerie, stretches of shingle spit. It's only accessible by a small National Trust ferry boat, which regularly crosses the River Ore to and from Orford town. Exploring the fascinating myriad of buildings and information relating to the military history - which ranged from before WW1, through WW2 and to the end of the Cold War and involved radar development, testing the dropping of bombs and nuclear experimentation - involved much walking on exposed shingle. Luckily, clouds kept the temperature down a little. It was a great treat to watch hares running across the shingle

and to glimpse Chinese water deer, with fawns, in the distance. A separate trail took us around Kings Marshes and the lagoons and ditches where numerous butterflies and birds were spotted, including

herons, little egrets, shelducks, oystercatchers, avocets, dunlin, redshanks, black-tailed godwits and marsh harriers.

On Sunday we turned homeward, stopping at Landguard Point, Suffolk. This small nature reserve on the shingle spit is bordered by the North Sea and the estuary where the rivers Orwell and Stour meet. Although dotted with the remains of WW2 defences, the spit has developed into a very rare habitat for flora. Again, butterflies were in abundance but otherwise there was evidence of the hot dry summer. The nature reserve is bordered by Landguard Fort and Felixstowe Museum but the area is dominated by the constant activity of Felixstowe port.

Our last stop was Lackford Lakes nature reserve (Suffolk Wildlife Trust) where there were lakes and pools and peaceful hides. Kingfishers and otters remained elusive but there were plenty of dragonflies, butterflies and birds including great crested grebes, tufted ducks and Egyptian geese.

It was a lovely weekend, enjoyed by all. Many thanks to Lyndon, Sheila and Jane for the organisation

*Gill Collin*

## **Our trip to Hilbre Island 21st August 2025**

Arriving at West Kirby in order to walk across the seabed to Hilbre Island, it was comforting to see that the tide really was right out as we had planned. We knew that we could safely get back before the tide came back in.

The first thing I noticed was the brightness and



the very big sky. The fine sand on the beach was so soft and dry that my feet sank and I felt like taking my firmly fastened walking boots off. How lovely it would have felt to have walked with bare feet across that beautiful sand! That fine, dry sand soon became wet, though, with the water the tide had left behind; not smooth anymore but bumpy so that one could try to walk on the higher, drier bumps. Eventually giving up on that, we splashed across to the first island, Little Eye, a rocky, sandy little place with the sound of birds beginning to be part of our experience.

Onward then, splashing over the firm, wet sand to Middle Eye. Once again, this was a sandy, rocky place but this time with grassy mounds similar to sand dunes.

By now we were beginning to see and hear more and more birds around and above us. Stunning flocks of oystercatchers overhead, cormorants standing around together at the edge of the water, very still and black, a wheatear and a ringed plover with its orange and black bill.

A short walk now to Hilbre Island, the largest of the three. The colour of the rocks that began to change now from mostly grey, white and red to almost totally red sandstone. Smoothed and shaped in places by the tides, beginning to remind me of pictures I'd seen of the Grand Canyon in America. The sea seemed a long way down now and I wondered how high it rose at high tide.

By now we were spotting more and more birds all around us as well as more flocks of oystercatchers above us and at the waters edge. Several herons were standing gracefully in the water and dunlins were feeding at the waters edge with their long black bills.

Hilbre Island has been important in other ways too. We looked at the now disused telegraph lookout building, used to spot ships and receive messages from vessels. At the pointed end of the island were the remains of the lifeboat station and the track running down to the sea. It is a very atmospheric place steeped in history and the home of a great many wonderful birds.

Now back to the shore to beat the incoming tide and enjoy the ice cream we promised ourselves.