

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE *Wildlife* Trust
Mansfield & Ashfield Local Members' Group
"Bringing the work of *the Trust* to your doorstep"



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2003

COME TO OUR WILDLIFE DAY!

We are holding our first *'Wildlife Day'* on **Thursday 30th October 2003** at the **Palace Theatre, Mansfield.**

We are celebrating the Trusts' 40th birthday and bringing together all those who have an interest in their local environment. We're not sure that anything like this has been tried before locally - so we are hoping to get as much support for the event beforehand as possible.

We are inviting local RSPB groups, Greenwood Community Forest, local 'friends' groups and linking with MASP (environment group) and the WI!



- An interesting days programme of talks is being organised including:-
 - *'Gardening - for the birds and bees'* - John Stirland (right), presenter on BBC East Midlands Today and Radio Nottingham
 - *'Thinking Big in Conservation'* - John Everitt
 - a wonderful film about Nottinghamshire *Barn Owls* - filmed in 1963!
 - *'Aren't Bee eaters brilliant'* - an RSPB presentation
 - *'Partnership for Wildlife'*, including the NWT video - Stephanie Hilbourne, Chief Executive Officer of Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.

- There will be a whole day programme of workshops for children aged 5 to 14.
- Organisations are being invited to take part in a lunchtime exhibition.
- There will be lunchtime historical/urban wildlife walks around Mansfield centre.

We are very excited about the event and hope to get 300 people there! See the poster on the back page of this newsletter.

Tickets cost £6.00 for adults and £1.00 for children, and are available from:
Mansfield Palace Theatre **Box Office - Telephone 01623 633133.**

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**BARCLAYS BANK £FOR£ SCHEME - CALLING ALL STAFF!**

Barclays Bank encourages their staff to take part in community activities. If they become involved with fundraising events the bank will match the amount raised pound for pound!

If you are a Barclays Bank staff member and would like to help us to raise funds for wildlife we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Rob Carlyle by e-mail at [robcarlyle@ntlworld.com](mailto:robcarlyle@ntlworld.com).

## **NOT TOO LATE TO TRY OUR MONTHLY WALKS OR TALKS!**

Our events are held on the **second Monday of each month** at **Abbey Gates Primary School, Vernon Crescent, Ravenshead**. There is parking available in the adjacent Ravenshead Village Hall car park. Our talks start at 7.30pm in the main hall and refreshments are available. For our evening walks, we meet in the car park and leave at 7.00pm, or you can meet us at the walk location, where we will set off promptly at 7.30pm. For Location details, contact one of the committee members. Remember to wear suitable footwear and clothing, taking our unpredictable weather into account! Why not come along and enjoy the following:-

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September** - relaxing evening walk along the Linby trail, looking at local flora and fauna

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October** - talk on the magnificent barn owls, by Clive James

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November** - talk on hedgehogs and how to care for them at this time of year, by Janet Peto

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December** - come along for festive fun to our Christmas talk and wildlife quiz!

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WALKING THROUGH BRIERLEY FOREST PARK by Carol Pritchard

I had some preconceived ideas about the wildlife that we were likely to see in Huthwaite! I had not visited Brierley Forest Park before and had imagined that it would be quite urban and formal. How wrong I was! It was early June and my first walk with the Mansfield & Ashfield Local Members' Group. It was led by Tessa Safhill who gave us some interesting background and history to the area including the geology and farming practices. The visitor centre has some interesting statues outside which have connections to the local industries, and there were other sculptures through the park which also seemed very apt.

As soon as we walked behind the centre I was impressed by the wildness of the area that was much bigger and more diverse than I had anticipated. My personal love is hedges and there were several areas of ancient hedgerow that were packed with wildlife and a variety of flora. We spotted bellflowers and could hear a variety of birds including chiffchaff and whitethroat. I saw a lapwing over one of the grassy areas. There was a great variety of grassland and meadow species, with several orchids and yellow rattle. Others on the walk were naming grasses, flowers and birds, while I tried to look intelligent! There was a demonstration of how to identify three different types of buttercup, but I need more practice on that!

There was great excitement about hearing a grasshopper warbler and one particular orchid that may have been a northern marsh orchid. Experts were to be contacted to give an opinion. We also saw common spotted and marsh orchids. Tess demonstrated the "orchid hop" when going to check on a variety in the middle of some grassland. This is a means of delicately jumping over areas of grass towards the orchid without leaving heavy footprints to alert others that there may be something of interest at the end of the trail.

It was a lovely summer evening and we could have spent hours exploring - as well as grassland and hedges there was an ancient lane, some wetlands and a lake. We did not see evidence of water vole but it is possible there are some on the site. We did not have time to walk on the pit tip but I will return at some point to do that. It is a very accessible site with a great deal of interest, which I would recommend to all.

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### **DENNIS JAGGER**

It is with great sadness that we received news of the death of former group chair Dennis Jagger. Dennis was a popular member of the group who did a great deal for wildlife. He will be sadly missed by his family and many friends.

## WALKING AROUND EAKRING FLASH by Jill Carlyle

We spent a pleasant, warm and sunny July evening at Eakring Flash on the Mansfield & Ashfield Group monthly walk. There were numerous species of birds both on the pond and in the surrounding vegetation, including sedge warbler, kestrel, goldfinch, pochard, little grebe and grey heron. One lucky member managed to glimpse a hobby out of the car window, before even parking at the site! The spotted flycatcher (right) that had been recently seen in the area unfortunately escaped all of our eagle eyes!



Photograph courtesy of Trevor Pendleton

We were fortunate to see several different species of damsel flies followed by the highlight of the evening - two brief sightings of the now all too rare water vole in the beck that runs along the length of the site.

For everyone who missed our visit to this small but prodigious habitat, try visiting the following website - [www.mysite.freeserve.com/eakringbirds/index.htm](http://www.mysite.freeserve.com/eakringbirds/index.htm) - a very comprehensive and informative website.

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LOVELY LEOPARD SLUGS! by Chris du Feu



Photograph courtesy of Rob Carlyle

The **Leopard Slug** (*Limax maximus*), also known as Tiger or Great Grey Slug, is Britain's second largest slug. It is widespread and common but nowhere abundant.

Leopard Slugs are not pests. They seem to be fairly solitary and long lived (2-3 years?). Their diet is lichen, algae, fungus, decaying animal matter, live animal matter (other molluscs at least - I have seen one attacking a Black Slug). They don't seem to go for live green plants.

Individuals should be recognisable by their patterns, which are unique to each individual, just as fingerprints are to humans. Photographs of slugs are very often not sufficient to identify the species. However, in the case of the fine creature pictured above, the photograph can be used to identify not only the species but also the individual. If you see one in your garden, it could be worth observing it over a long period of time. It is likely to spend its days resting in the same hidey-hole.

Incidentally, this record of *Limax maximus* was not a new 10 km square record. However, it is the first record in square SK55 since before 1960. This illustrates how badly under-recorded is our slug fauna. Distributions, even of common and easily identified species, are poorly documented. If you want to help rectify this situation, start slug recording today! If anyone would like an identification key, please let me know and I will forward the latest draft by email.

You can write to me at 66 High Street, Beckingham, Nottinghamshire, DN10 4PF, or e-mail to chris@beckingham0.demon.co.uk, or telephone on 01427 848400 - but I go to bed early in the evenings!

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### **Your local group contacts:**

Rob Carlyle  
Tel: 01623 400344  
[robcarlyle@ntlworld.com](mailto:robcarlyle@ntlworld.com)

Jeune Price  
Tel: 01623 623824  
[jeuneprice@totalise.co.uk](mailto:jeuneprice@totalise.co.uk)

Sarah Kelly  
Tel: 01159 630561  
[sedge101@hotmail.com](mailto:sedge101@hotmail.com)