

BIRDWATCHING *Group*

Visit our website at <http://wgbwcopy.wikidot.com/wgbg>

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2023

TONIGHT'S MEETING (7th September)

A warm welcome to returning members and any new members as we begin our 56th season of the Wilmslow Guild Birdwatching Group. Hopefully this season we will now be fully settled in to our new Thursday evening time slot.

As always your Committee has organised a full programme of indoor and outdoor meetings to keep us entertained until next summer.

To start the season off, tonight's speaker is David Winnard who will give a talk entitled "Discovering the Birds of North Wales"

David Winnard's background in wildlife started when he was 5 years old. His Grandma use to encourage him to find mushrooms and he would get 1p if it was common, 2p if it was uncommon and 5p if it was rare. These treasure hunts into the woodlands around his native Rochdale taught him about identification and foraging. Since then David went on to gain a first class honours degree in wildlife photography before starting Discover the Wild where his aim was to share his passion for identifying species and to help people forage safely and sustainably for wild foods.

David Winnard is one of the most respected foragers and naturalists in the North of England, having worked with and for organisations including the BBC, RSPB, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, City of Trees, Groundwork, Brockholes as well as many local councils, groups and organisations. He also works closely with a number of gin companies helping them use wild plants and fungi in their drinks.

This is David's first visit to us at the Guild.

Please join me in welcoming David for what I am sure will be a very entertaining evening.

COACH TRIPS

Our first coach trip of the season is on Sunday 22nd October to Spurn nature reserve on the Yorkshire coast, departing from the Guild at 7:30am.

We often go to Spurn as our first coach trip since over the years Spurn has proved to be a very successful destination because this reserve can be exceptionally good at this time of year – just about anything can turn up here while migration is in full swing. A good variety of seabirds, waders and wildfowl can be found on the coast and pools, while migrating passerines can be found on the extensive scrub and bush area. There is an excellent Visitor Centre on site with toilets and a café available.

The next coach trip after that is on Sunday 19th November to Attenborough reserve near Nottingham departing from the Guild at 8am.

Book your seat for both trips at the desk.

MINSMERE WEEKEND 23 – 25 FEBRUARY 2024

Bookings will be taken at the 05 October meeting and 02 November meeting. There will be no bookings taken at our September meeting.

Please note the change of date for the weekend away.

Again we will be returning to the Furzedown Hotel at Great Yarmouth where we have always been made so welcome and comfortable. Although I have booked out the entire hotel for the weekend, there are only 3 single rooms, so it's first come, first served for those. We usually require 13 singles but there are enough rooms for single occupancy of a double or twin.

Cost of the weekend.

Single Room £315 per person

Double/twin Room sharing £270 per person

Single use of a double/twin £335 per person

Packed lunches are available at £10 per day.

Please note if you wish to pay the complete bill, payment by 02 November.

If you wish to pay in 2 instalments there is a Guild charge of £2.75 which will be added on to the second payment. Deposit of £160 by 02 November and final payment at the latest by 07 December.

The hotel requires our final numbers and deposits by 10 November.

The itinerary is as follows:

Friday: Leave Wilmslow 7.30, arrive Welney WWT by 12 noon. Leave Welney 4.00/4.15 to arrive at hotel two hours later.
Saturday: Westleton Heath for Dartford Warbler and Woodlark for about an hour then on to Minsmere 11.30 – 5.00 pm.
Sunday: Birding around the local hot spots till 2.00 pm, then heading for home intending to arrive in Wilmslow 7.30 – 8.00 pm.

BARBARA P

MEMBERSHIP 2023 / 2024

Welcome back everyone to the new season and especially to any new members joining us for the first time. We have a full programme planned for the season and details are on the Membership card so don't forget to pick up yours from Tina when you arrive.

We now have a full complement on your committee for the first time for a long time and thanks to Janet and Michael T for joining and helping.

As a committee we have been reflecting on the group's past season and feel that after a period of some turmoil due to Covid restrictions, we have begun to turn a corner and come out of what felt like survival mode to a more settled phase where the aim is still to provide the same mix but to concentrate some effort on rebuilding membership numbers. The viability of the group depends upon maintaining a healthy membership level. Whilst we do what we can to attract new members and have had some success with crossover from some of the other classes and groups joining field trips, there is some way to go.

Firstly, we want to encourage participation by younger people and have negotiated with the Guild a concessionary rate as follows:

- Guild membership for children aged 15 and under £10 pa.
- Coach Field trip (15 and under) £ 15
- All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
-

Secondly, perhaps one of the most effective ways of promoting the group is by word of mouth and this is where we are asking for your help. If members were to encourage a friend, relative or lapsed member to join we could increase membership quickly. If you yourself know someone who might be interested in joining it is a very powerful way of explaining what we do and that we are friendly, sharing group encompassing a wide range of birding knowledge and experience from absolute beginner to seasoned bird watcher. Many people may be put off joining a group like ours thinking that having a good knowledge of bird identification is a prerequisite.

You can help.

Do you know of anyone that may be interested in joining us?
Are you able to recruit a new member(s)?

STUART M

COACH TRIP TO ANGLESEY – 23rd APRIL 2023

On arrival at South Stack I was pleased to see my first swallow of the season from the coach window and as I got off a skylark could be seen from the car park distinguishable by its fast high pitched song.

Heading along to the cliffs we were welcomed by the loud noises of razorbills and guillemots each with their selected spot on the cliff face. Four puffins could be seen bobbing down in the water. It was a very busy sight.



Some of the Group at South Stack (MT)

We walked down the steep path that leads to South Stack Lighthouse more swallows could be seen overhead, just to the side of us by the wall there was a good view of a male and female wheatear.

The lighthouse stood out with gannets flying very close to it, apparently there were some kittiwakes nesting down there but we did not manage to see them. On the way down we met an enthusiastic RSPB volunteer keen to share his knowledge, he told us that the day before we arrived there had been very few birds on the cliffs and that they had arrived overnight how lucky were we!



Chough (DS)

Fulmars could be seen flying high in the cliff face and a chough flew close by again heading towards the cliffs. Looking out over to the cliff face a puffin was running up and down the grass looking very precarious at the edge but managing to pick up nesting materials and return without falling. The path also had a lovely selection of wildflowers.

On heading back up to return to the coach there was a rock pipit, raven, stonechat, a single linnet, a wren on the gorse and an egret flew past.

Our next stop was Maltreath where we walked along a scenic path to Newborough inland on one side and marshes on the other. There was bird activity on both sides of the path initially we saw crows, buzzards and a willow warbler on top of the tree.



Stonechat (DS)

Various ducks could be seen including shelduck, teal, pintails, and gadwall.

Further out there were curlews, herons, and cormorant. Then the scopes came out on an island a lone whimbrel was seen flying in and it was confirmed that there were six others this was the spot of the day for many with a definite clear sighting.

At the end of the path blackcap and chiffchaff were heard before heading back onto the coach.



Penmon Point (JR)

Back on the coach again for the last stop of the day to Penmon Point where the coach parked up at the top of the road and we walked down to a very picturesque bay.

Willow warblers and chiffchaffs could be heard and seen all the way along in the shrubs and trees as we made our way down.

On reaching the bay there were lovely views of Puffin Island and the little black and white lighthouse. In the distance seals could be seen on the beach. There was a large group of

eider ducks out on the water. Sandwich terns and a shag flew by and cormorants were fishing in the water.

A lovely place to visit where some of the group enjoyed an ice cream and a good end to the day.

Photos by Dave S, Michael T & Jules R

ANNETTE R

CAR TRIP TO THE GOYT VALLEY - 17th MAY 2023

Ten enthusiastic birdwatchers arrived at 8am at the Street car park. Greeted by the call of a Cuckoo and song of Willow Warblers.

Setting off down the road going south alongside Errwood reservoir sharp eyed Lesley spotted a Tawny Owl. We watched for a while, until it flew to another perch.

Strolling along the road Canada Geese with a flotilla of goslings were seen on the reservoir and many other geese across the water and along the banks. A handsome Redstart was heard singing, and with difficulty seen at the top of a tree, a Willow Warbler sat out nicely for identification and sang his fluid song.

Continuing along the road a Lesser Black-backed Gull was spotted having breakfast of a gosling on the far reservoir bank, watched by an Oystercatcher (and dismay by some members). Two smaller birds on the far bank were difficult to ID, lovely Wheatear had arrived. A Cormorant flew over the reservoir and two gulls mobbed a Grey Heron. A couple of Mallard sailed past.



Pied Flycatcher

Continuing along the road Wood Pigeon flew overhead, Carrion Crow, Blackbird and a Great Spotted Woodpecker were sighted in a tree. Stopping at the bridge Curlew with his wonderful bubbling trill and Blackcap with his full throated song were heard. Great Tit and Robin lurked in the bushes. Now Angela joined the group. Two Common Sandpipers were spotted by Michael and Janet, but I missed them.

Further along the road passing the Errwood car park we were delighted to see a Pied Flycatcher sitting out well on a branch for all to see, a reward for our early

start to the morning. Chiffchaff and Redstart were heard. Now Gill had caught us up. By the nesting box the Pied Flycatcher was seen again perching on a long branch, we moved on so as not to disturb it.

Along the Woodland walk, 3 orange tipped butterflies were noted. Barking dogs gave us little chance of seeing any birds. Dappled light through the newly leafed Beech trees was beautiful.

Goyts' Clough Quarry gave us time to sit for refreshments. Above a Buzzard soared adding to our growing list. The Dipper was busy collecting food and obliged us by bobbing on a rock giving good views of himself. A Grey Wagtail hunted for flies and small insect amongst the rocks below.

Walking back down the road Coal Tit busied about in the bushes, and the Cuckoo was heard again. Walking along the track we hoped to see the Redstart more clearly but nowhere to be seen, and Tree Pipit did not put in an appearance unfortunately. Wild strawberries, Violets, and Speedwell made colourful borders along the banks.



Dipper

Nearly back at the car back a small beetle, Red breasted carrion beetle, walking on the road was rescued from harm's way, and tenderly replaced on the verges by Janet. Later an Oak Eggar caterpillar was recorded, this will hatch as a furry moth. A Kestrel hovered overhead.

Other birds to add to the morning list were Nuthatch and Treecreeper.

Derbyshire Bridge at 2pm.

A Hobby flew over just as we were getting out of the car, not seen by me. A Curlew was flying overhead, the amazing long, downward curved bill very distinctive. A couple of Kestrels hovered overhead searching for prey. We wandered up the old Buxton road; a very cold wind was blowing. Pheasant was spotted in the distance and a couple of Meadow Pipits ran around on a grassy mound searching for insects. Red Grouse was heard in the distance.

Other birds to add to the list Stock dove and Red Kite.



Meadow Pipit

Back into the car to seek out the elusive Ring Ouzel at Dane Bower Quarry. The group had parted company which left five to search. On arrival we heard yet again the bubbling evocative call of the Curlew and a couple of Meadow Pipits were pecking for food in the grass. No Ring Ouzel. Two determined members later reported they stayed an hour but no sign of the Ring Ouzel. Such hopeful patience we birders have.

Once again we had a wonderful day birdwatching in the Goyt Valley and beyond, enjoying the sightings and sounds of the landscape, although the weather was dull to start with eventually the sun came out. Thank you to all who attended to make such a good contribution to the bird count.

Photos by Robert D (archive)

JENNY I

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

The Festive Lunch will be held at the Egerton Arms, Chelford on Saturday 16th December at 12.00 prompt.

A menu will be left on the desk at our first meeting; if interested can you pick up a copy to take home and bring back at the meeting in October. Please remember to add your name and underline your choices.

£24.95 2 courses

£27.95 3 courses

Teas and coffees are not included.
Further details at the meeting in September.

JULIE

WHATSAPP GROUP

The Committee has launched a WhatsApp Group called “The Cheshire Birders” – all members are invited to join. We hope that members can use the app to informally share birding information with each other – sightings, news, photos etc. Over last year’s season a very lively community has built up with lots of discussion, comments and photos.

The focus is primarily on birding, but I am sure that we can tolerate the occasional post on other interesting wildlife. Photos of sunning yourself on the beach at Benidorm would most definitely be deleted.

If you would like to join the group then see Dave S at the meeting tonight or text a message to him or ask any committee member. Of course you will need the WhatsApp app installed on your mobile device.

NEXT MONTH’S MEETING

The next indoor meeting will take place on Thursday 5th October starting at 7:30pm when our speaker will be David Tolliday with a talk entitled “UK Travels with Wildlife”.

Hope to see you all then.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Still required – your articles for the newsletter. Tell us all about that birding holiday of a lifetime or that unusual visitor to your garden bird table. Send any interesting photos you have taken on our coach trips.

Deadline is the Friday before the meeting.