

Wilmslow Guild **BIRDWATCHING** *Group*

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NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2018

TONIGHT'S MEETING (Friday 28th September)

A warm welcome to all as we begin the 51st season of the Wilmslow Guild Birdwatching Group. As usual your Committee has been working hard to assemble an exciting programme of indoor and outdoor events that we hope will both entertain and educate the members over the coming year.

In a change to the advertised programme, John Gardner has kindly stepped in at the last minute to replace Brian White. The subject of John's talk will be "Iberian Birding".

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

FIELD TRIPS

Our first coach trip is on Sunday 21st October to Spurn nature reserve on the Yorkshire coast, departing from the Guild at 7:30am.

Over the years Spurn has proved to be a very successful destination for our first trip 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 are toilets and a café available on site.

The next coach trip after that is on Sunday 25th November to Attenborough reserve near Nottingham, departing from the Guild at 8am.

Book your seat for both trips at the desk.

WEEKEND AWAY 22 - 24 FEBRUARY 2019

Continuing in the by now well established tradition, your committee has decided this year to return to Minsmere and the small family run hotel which made us so welcome last time. We will be staying at the Furzedown Hotel, Great Yarmouth. Booking Forms are available tonight.

COST £174 per person sharing.
We have only 3 single rooms at £194.
Supplement for single occupancy of a double room is £40; total cost £214
£70 per person **DEPOSIT** payable by 19 October 2018
£104 per person **BALANCE** + any supplement + packed lunch money payable by December meeting – 07 December.
For non members of Birdwatching Group there is also a £15 supplement.

Cheques payable to WILMSLOW GUILD please.

The terms we have obtained from the hotel are very competitive, representing an excellent discount for the weekend on the current published rate.

INCLUDES Coach Travel
2 Nights Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

HOTEL Furzedown Hotel, 19-20 North Drive, Great Yarmouth. NR30 4EW
01493 844 138

As usual Single rooms are limited, so it would be helpful if singles would be willing to share.

We will be leaving the Guild at **7.30 am on the FRIDAY morning**. This will mean that you may wish to take a packed lunch with you for Friday.

Packed lunches from the hotel will be available on the other days if required.
Price £6.50 per person per day if ordered on the Booking Form.

We aim to be back at the Guild early **SUNDAY** evening – approx. 7.30 pm.

As these trips have proved extremely popular over the last few years we would recommend that you make a firm booking early so that we can give priority to our members. Please see Barbara or Annette tonight with your booking form and deposit money.

Our itinerary for the weekend is as follows.

Friday: We intend to stop at a reserve on the way, spending the best part of the day there and aiming to arrive at the hotel 5.30 - 6.00 pm.

Saturday: Minsmere all day

Sunday: Birding around the local hot spots till about 2 pm. We aim to be back in Wilmslow 7.30 to 8.00 pm.

Don't forget to bring your RSPB and WWT cards with you this weekend.

For those of you who have not been away with us before, you will enjoy some excellent birding at a number of sites and habitats in the area. Members will be willing to assist those without binoculars or telescopes to ensure that nothing is missed! Birding skills are NOT required as others will be on hand to help with finding and identifying birds for you. Our evening meal is a relaxed, enjoyable, sociable get-together.

Remember, as we will be birding on the way, **DON'T** put your optics in your case!

As we did last year, we would request that all members fill in the ICE form (In Case of Emergency).

Cancellation charges

After 28 October 2018: loss of deposit plus a charge to cover fixed costs.

After 01 February 2019: no refund.

Any refund due will be paid after the trip.

Please keep this page for future reference.

Copies of the booking form and ICE form are included at the end of the e-newsletter. You may wish to print your booking form and fill it in ahead of the meeting.

FIELD TRIP TO RUTLAND WATER 29th APRIL 2018

I look forward with anticipation to the April field trip, migration is in full swing, birds are singing whilst woodland and hedgerow birds are visible before the trees become fully clothed in leaves. Days are longer and, I say with caution, the weather should be warmer but this year's spring has been colder and wetter than normal.



Oystercatcher & Common Sandpiper

Rutland Nature Reserve was created in the 70's along with the Anglian Water reservoir and since then the site has matured with much of the planting and habitat creation maturing. It is a large and impressive reserve covering over 1000 acres, well provided with excellent facilities including two well equipped visitors centres and over 30 hides overlooking the reservoir and a series of 8 lagoons served by good pathways.

We left Wilmslow at 7.30 and it was a grey and cold day, continuing the year's long winter and late spring. During the journey we were rewarded with sightings of Red Grouse, Curlew, Buzzard and Red Kites as we travelled over the Pennine moorland.

Our visit started at the Anglian Bird watching Centre and the nearby feeders were busy with Blue, Coal and Great Tit, Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Goldfinches, with both Tree and House Sparrows active.



Osprey on nest

The series of lagoons are of varying sizes and depths and surrounded by both meadow and woodland with plenty of mature hedges making for a varied and interesting variety of habitat. Walking on to the first of the hides we heard a mixture of Warblers in song, Chiffchaffs, Willow Warblers, Sedge Warblers and Blackcaps all keeping themselves deep in the protective foliage. Some were fortunate to see and hear Lesser Whitethroat, a bird that I have difficulty identifying but, the jewel in the crown for me was the brief but unmistakable song of an unseen Nightingale, a bird that I had not heard live for 50 years. Sand Martins, House Martins, Swallows, and Swift were present as were both Common and Arctic Tern with their distinctive calls.



Egyptian Geese

The first of the hides gave us a good count of seven waders, Redshank, Oystercatcher, Avocet, Common Sandpiper, Curlew, Dunlin and Ringed Plover. The Ducks were well represented as well, Mallard, Shelduck, Wigeon, Tufted, Gadwall, Teal and Goldeneye. Some were fortunate to see Garganey. A scarce secretive duck similar in size to the Teal and our only summer migrant duck with, according to the BTO only about 100 breeding pairs in the country.

For the second part of the day, following lunch, we moved by coach to the Lyndon Visitor Centre, again with excellent facilities giving access to a series of hides overlooking Manton Bay where the reserve's Ospreys are. It was in 2001, following a successful translocation project that Rutland Water became the first site in England

where Osprey had bred for 150 years. Since then a total of 117 young have fledged from the site which now has a self-sustaining population of currently 8 breeding pairs. Seven of the pairs are breeding on private land whilst the eight pair has used the breeding platform situated in Manton Bay. Both male and female were showing well and sharing duty on the enormous twiggy nest which being close to the hide provided excellent viewing.

The visit proved to be a rewarding day with a collective total of 75 species being seen or heard and also included Little Egret, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Greylag, Canada and Egyptian Geese, Kestrel, Reed Bunting, Bullfinch, Blackbird and Mistle Thrush whilst Reed Warbler and a squealing Water Rail were heard but not seen. A good day.

Photos by Robert D

STUART M

COACH TRIP TO BEMPTON CLIFFS & FLAMBOROUGH HEAD 13 MAY 2018

There was a pleasingly large queue of people waiting early Sunday morning for our coach to Bempton; our regulars, some new faces and some returning after a couple of years. As we climbed aboard we were greeted by a smiling lady driver. A first for us, and didn't she do well!!

We drew into our allotted space at Bempton at 10.45, all eager to start and were greeted by a small flock of Tree Sparrows chirruping from the trees adjacent to the visitor centre. That was a good beginning. Once inside the shop, the latest sightings board was eagerly scanned and members decided which way to go. As many of you know, you walk through the visitor centre towards the cliffs and then have a choice either right or left along the cliffs.



Gannet colony

The bulk of the group opted to turn right and we set off, quickly donning woolly hats, scarves and gloves as the wind was rather chilly. Our first stop at a gap gave us a taste of what was to come; Gannet and Kittiwakes gliding past, a few Guillemots and



Razorbills on the cliffs and our first Puffin – fast asleep. Walking on eastwards toward New Roll-up and Staple Newt the vista opened up and we had our first views of the fantastic Gannet colony on the sheer cliffs. It was just jaw dropping. Everyone without exception went WOW. All of our senses were assailed; the sight of thousands of Gannets on the rocky outcrops and cliff face, the sounds of the Kittiwakes calling as they flew past and particularly the smell as we approached the colony. The Guillemots and Razorbills were constantly flying between their nests

and the sea. We soon noticed that the cliff face was overcrowded and many Gannets had started to nest on the steep grassy slopes. Both Kittiwakes and Gannets were gathering any dry grasses available to use as nesting material. This meant that many Gannets were closer to the footpaths and we had superb views of them pair bonding with heads nodding in synchronisation and plenty of bill tapping.

It was also obvious that the Gannets in particular were taking any material lying around to use in their nests, especially fine blue netting. Although the Gannets are doing extremely well and thriving, the same cannot be said about the Fulmars. A drop of 30% has been recorded at Bempton since 2000. Because they feed off the surface of the sea, they ingest more plastic; this takes up space in their stomach meaning they are unable to take in the amount of food they require to sustain themselves.

We pressed on past the colony in search of a group of 30+ Corn Buntings which had been reported much earlier in the day. Our luck ran out here and we only saw one bird at a great distance which could (or not) have been the bunting. Reluctantly we turned back and headed for the coach and lunch.



Puffin

We arrived at Flamborough at 2.10 to be greeted by sunshine and a Greenfinch calling from a tree in the car park. We walked the usual route past the old lighthouse, across the fields with a thick hedge-row to a

wood, then on to the coastal path and return to the coach. Normally this hedge-row and wood provides shelter for warblers and finches at the end of their migration. Although the afternoon was warm the preceding days had been cool and the birds either had not

arrived or had moved on to find warmer conditions elsewhere. We did see a beautiful male Yellowhammer just glowing in the sunshine and two Whitethroats sitting out on the bushes. A skylark sang above us whilst a Siskin obligingly landed on the path just ahead of us. Out to sea a couple of seals bobbed their heads in and out of the water keeping a wary eye on us.

The group split and several went back via the short route to enjoy the now customary cup of tea (and cake) or ice-creams. Those who went the longer way round had excellent views of Puffins on the sea close to shore, as well as Cormorants and a couple of Shags.

All too soon it was time to board the coach for our return journey. The last trip of the season certainly lived up to expectations but only 46 species recorded. These included Grey Heron, Great Skua, Sandwich Tern, Lesser Whitethroat and Raven, none of which were seen on our 2013 trip.

My thanks to Chris S for his excellent photographs. I was spoilt for choice when deciding which to include.

BARBARA P

CAWOS INDOOR MEETINGS 2017 – 2018

All meetings are held in the hall at St Vincent's Roman Catholic Church, Tatton Street, Knutsford, WA16 6HR on the first Friday of the month, **unless otherwise stated - please check the programme**. There is a large and free car park off Tatton Street close to the hall.

An entrance fee of £2.00 to members and £4.00 for non-members will be charged at all meetings except the AGM when there will be free admission. A coffee break is taken halfway through the evening. The doors open at 7:30pm for a 7:45pm start.

Details of the next meeting are as follows –

5th October 2018

'WHITE AND WILD - NATURE IN COLDER CLIMES' by Mark Sisson

Snow, ice and frost make for challenging conditions for wildlife in the winter months and this talk involves a photographic journey from Canada to Japan, Finland to Yellowstone and many more locations beside to see just how this creates both dramatic photographic opportunities, but also the chance to witness just how nature copes when the conditions are white and wild.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

This year's Christmas meal will be at the Rope and Anchor, Paddock Lane, Dunham Massey on the 15th December for 1230pm following the morning car trip to Pennington Flash [apparently our favourite venue at Pennington Flash, The Raven, is closing down!].

The cost is £23.00 for 2 courses or £28.00 for 3 courses

It is a £15.00 deposit per person which can be paid at the September/October meetings with final full payments being due at the meeting on the 23rd November.

Copies of the menu will be available at this Friday's meeting.

ANNETTE R

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING

Our next indoor meeting is on Friday 19th October at 7:30pm when our speaker will be Mike Roberts with a talk entitled "Plains, Cranes, and Autovians".

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.

Deadline is the Friday before the meeting.

THE DARTFORD WARBLER



You are unlikely to see the delightful Dartford Warbler in Cheshire. Their main UK range is very much in the southern counties. However it is a possible species on our weekend away to Minsmere. They can be found on Dunwich and Westleton Heaths on the northern border of Minsmere reserve. Hopefully we may have an opportunity to look for them.

ROBERT D

Wilmslow Guild Birdwatching Group
Booking Form for Minsmere Weekend 22-24 February 2019

Hotel:
Furzedown Hotel
19-20 North Drive
Great Yarmouth
Tel.No. 01493 844 138

Coach Departure
Corner of Altrincham Rd and Bourne St.
FRIDAY 22 February at 7.30am prompt.

Payments: Deposit of £70 per person payable by 19 October 2018.
Balance of £104 per person sharing + suppl. £20 single
room/£40 single in double by 07 December.
£6.50 Packed lunch(es) each.
£15 supplement for non-members of the Birdwatching Group

Cancellation: Cancellation 28 October to 01 February- loss of deposit plus
an amount to cover fixed costs (coach etc). Any refund due
will be paid after the trip.
Cancellation after 01 February – No refund

Please record booking details and retain this portion of the form for your information

Number of persons..... No of packed lunches Saturday..... Sunday.....

Preferred room type single (£20) twin double double for single use (£40)
.....

Booking form for Minsmere Weekend 22-24 February 2019

Name(s).....

Address.....
.....

Tel.No.....Email.....

Packed lunches required (£6.50 each) please state number per day
Saturday Sunday

Preferred room type (please circle) Single Twin Double Double for single use

If willing to share, please indicate the other person.....

Any special requirements

Please attach deposit (£70 per person) to this form and return at the September or October meeting. Cheques payable to Wilmslow Guild. A receipt will be given.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

Please complete this form, one per person, put into a sealed, named envelope and hand in with your final payment. It will be returned to you unopened during the homeward journey.

Name

Date of birth

Address

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Tel: Mobile.....

Your contact in case of an emergency

Name

Address

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Tel: Mobile.....

Relationship

Medical conditions we should be aware of in an emergency.

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Please record your regular medication or state none, if appropriate.

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Signature..... Date.....

If your medication or condition changes, please fill in a new form. Barbara has spares.