

Ongar Wildlife Society

An Occasional Newsletter

Number 5

April 2004

Meeting Room

Members and visitors are welcomed at all our meetings, of course. However, it will not have gone without notice that our meetings on a Monday evening are being increasingly well supported. Attendances have stretched the facilities so much so that at one recent meeting, owl traffic control was forced to restrict the flying of our guests. Towards some explanation, this meeting did attract more visitors than is usual.

Alternative meeting rooms have been considered. At present there appears to be no obvious, convenient alternative on a Monday evening. We believe that for this membership year we will have to stay in the Essex Rooms. We hope that you will not be too inconvenienced. The committee welcome any views you may have on the issue?

OWLS Summer Visits

Please note meeting place is

Ongar Lorry Park (opposite Two Brewers) at times stated.

Danbury Common

Saturday, 8 May

meet at 9.30 am

It seems that Danbury is not always fully appreciated. Yet the number and variety of the wildlife reserves in the area make this a unique Essex resource. Blake's Wood, owned by the National Trust (NT) and managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT), is covered in spring by wood anemones, rapidly giving way to bluebells in May. Danbury Common is maintained as common by using modern methods to simulate traditional grazing. Abutting the common, the Backwarden is a small but rich reserve, leased by NT to EWT. Hitchcock's Meadow is ancient pasture and home of a wealth of wild flowers. The Danbury Ridge Complex is the largest of the Danbury reserves, with an area of 250 acres of varied habitat. Waterhall Meadows, bounded to the east by Sandon Brook, are an example of unimproved flood meadows. Heather Hills, leased to EWT by Little Baddow Council, and Lingwood Common, owned by the NT, complete the set of fine and varied wildlife opportunities.

Blue House Farm, Fambridge
(GR 856 971)

Saturday, 5 June

meet at 9.30 am

Blue House Farm, a farm of 601 acres, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, important for the wetland bird species and rare water beetles. The site is within the Essex Coast Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). The area has been drained in the past but the EWT is putting in sluices to control water levels in order to achieve a balance between farming and conservation. The site can be visited at all times via the public footpath on

the sea wall with access to the bird hides. From April to June breeding birds and hares are plentiful.

Chigborough Lakes, near Maldon
(GR 877 086)

Sunday, 25 July

meet 1.30 pm

The lakes are worked out gravel extractions to the north of the Blackwater Estuary. From April to July, the reserve is rich in birds, flowers and butterflies. The vegetation that surrounds the lakes supports dragonflies in a good summer. Totalling 46 acres in extent, the reserve offers space for at least a packed tea on a sunny summer's afternoon!

Phyllis Currie Reserve, Great Leighs
(GR 723 182)

Sunday, 15 August

meet 1.30 pm

Mrs Phyllis Currie left this reserve of 22 acres to the Essex Wildlife Trust. The reserve, bounded by the River Ter, is a good example of an area managed to increase the variety of habitats. A lake was created in the 1960s. More recently, reed beds have been added, and thinning and planting has increased the variety of trees in the reserve. Twenty-three species of butterfly have been recorded. Tufted duck nest and kingfishers visit.

Please also note the talk:

Is there any future for Essex's wildlife and does it matter anyway?

Wednesday, 19 May at 7.30 pm

Given by Simon Lyster, former director of the Wildlife Trusts, at Writtle Agricultural College.

and

Annual General Meeting and BARBECUE
12.00 pm for 12.30 pm, Saturday 26 June
at Repentance Cottage

Tickets at £6-00 are available from Tanya Welford.

OWLS Committee

The current Committee is:

Rob Brooks (Chairman) (tel: 01277 364305)

Tanya Welford (Secretary) (tel: 01277 363947)

Brian Turnpenny (Treasurer)

Allan Cook (Programme Secretary)

Anne Brooks

Richard Cook

Mike DevonaId

Rosina Lacome

Rob Brooks
Chairman