

Newsletter 23

The twenty third meeting of the ILBs' was held on 15 January 2019 at the EWT Belfairs Woodland Centre, where Sue Stacey and Lynn Morris presided.

Thanks to Sue Stacey: - "There were 14 attendees and 3 ladies went for a walk. Alison EWT manager gave the ladies 2 plates of biscuits in appreciation of the group's support. Everyone asked where Kris was and were told that Kris & Graham had both been unwell. All present said they were sorry to hear this and wished them both well."

Thank you all for the get-well card and gift and all your good wishes, Graham is now back to normal and I am getting there.

Indoor Meeting 02/01/2019 thanks to Rita Merrick: -

Simon Gunnaw's 'Local Patch' is Mote Park, near Maidstone, a very interesting place to visit. He certainly sold it to many of us. A year's look at all kinds of wildlife from plants, fungi, birds, mammals, insects to a vast number of trees. An excellent presentation, including a dawn chorus, bird calls and musical accompaniment.

Sue Stacey told the ladies "If Kris was there, she would bore everyone with her memories of Mote Park. It was where she went on her very first dawn chorus walk and heard tawny owl to start and finished with wood duck on the lake. The leader was a lovely, older, very knowledgeable gentleman named Fred Booth who did loads of stuff for Kent Wildlife Trust. Simon Gunnaw told her that Fred, amazingly, still leads short walks around where he lives but not further afield as he is now looking after his wife who is very ill."

Sue reported that Jane said that she also has fond memories of Fred Booth and his walks and talks.

Local Sightings: - Thanks to Anne Sanford

Canvey Point - Great Northern Diver, Gannets, Guillemot, Red Breasted Merganser, Razorbill, Eider, Common Scoter and Black-throated Diver.

Eastwood Brook (Near St Laurence Church) - Kingfisher and Little Owl.

Foulness - Hen Harrier, Fieldfare and Short Eared Owl.

Bowers Marsh - White Fronted Geese, Stonechat, Redwing and Yellow Hammer.

Rayleigh Weir (Near Homebase) Siskin.

Abberton - Great White Egret, Bewick's Swan, Scaup, Red Head Smew and Black Necked Grebe.

Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 January - Abberton Reservoir - Great White Egret, m&f Smew, Black-necked Grebe, Long-tailed Duck, Goosander, Pochard, Goldeneye and Pintail

Thanks to Sue Stacey: - "Lynn had recently made a trip to Southend seafront, and seen Turnstones, Plovers with a report of a Gannet. She spoke about the number of birds near St Laurence Church, Eastwood, Redwing, Fieldfare, Goldcrest with a Kingfisher sighted in the Prittle Brook. She laughingly advised that if you go, to go at the weekend as the people working in the area think you are mad! There is so much noise and litter it is a wonder there is any wildlife at all. She went on to say that for the first time she is going to create a list of sightings – having seen approximately 100 Pied Wagtail at Bowers Marsh with Ruff and Pintail. Coal Tit and Woodpeckers in Hockley woods with a Parakeet on a feeder. Cutting down the mature trees in the area and climate change will have an effect on the bird populations."

Sue said that she had seen a Sparrowhawk in her back garden, around dusk, chasing a Blue Tit.

Sue Stacey told the ladies that Kris said – "Steve Sanford has not scheduled any field trips for this season that warrant hiring a coach and all venues should be close enough for car share. Kris was asked at the Christmas meal to organise trips to Fingringhoe and Southwold again."

Thanks to Sue Stacey: - "10 ladies would like to go to Southwold and 12 to Fingringhoe subject to the dates being ok"

Sue Stacey told the ladies that Kris said – "Please ask if anyone is prepared to help her at Wallasea either regularly or on a rota to clean the kitchen. There are still only 2 reserve staff at Wallasea to organise and do everything, so cleaning is currently Simon's job and the volunteers are busy facing the public or working on the reserve."

Sue asked that anyone interested in helping in the kitchen contact Kris directly.

Rita informed the meeting that Simon at Wallasea needs more volunteers to carry out bird counts. As there are lots of visitors now, there is also a need for a visitor centre with toilet facilities etc. Problems at Wallasea include fly tipping, hare coursing and wrecked cars.

Jane brought up the problem of fly tipping and this went on to be discussed.

Planning permission has been given for a Visitors Hide at Wallasea, but the RSPB are still trying to find a sponsor to help fund the project. There is power to the proposed site but no water or sewerage so the costs will be very high.

Sue Stacey told the ladies that Kris said, "As a result of the EWT meeting where she heard about Surfers against Sewage, she has now got a 'bee in her bonnet' and would like to find a way for the ILBs to be involved. The SAS website does not have any beach cleans organised yet for this year, but she has found Southend Beach Care Group who have 3 beach cleans scheduled.

Sunday 17 February at Chalkwell

Saturday 9 March at Southchurch

Friday 19 April (Good Friday) at Shoebury

If anyone is interested in taking part, Kris will contact HQ to see how we can be involved but identifiable as RSPB and how to arrange the liaison. If we are identifiable it would help raise RSPB Awareness.

We could do something on our own, but she would prefer to let someone else advertise and organise (i.e. provide sacks, litter pickers, refuse collection) and just join them."

Thanks to Sue Stacey: - "those present expressed an interest in this initiative and took the dates for beach clean-ups. It was thought essential that any volunteers from the RSPB were identified as such."

Lynn wondered if the group could contact Hi Tech and the dental surgery in Aviation Way asking for sponsorship to clean up the area around St Laurence Church.

There could be used needles in amongst the litter and request that on any beach clean-up, that the 'weeds' are not pulled up.

It is vital that any litter picking is done using gloves and litter pickers. I am still waiting for a reply from RSPB HQ about supply of these and tabards.

Lynn reported on a talk she attended at Writtle College, the Chelmsford RSPB meet there, Mick Davies behavioural ecologist of Cambridge University gave a fantastic talk on Cuckoos. Could he be considered as a future speaker?

Rita said that she will not be at the February meeting, so could someone make notes about it for her.

Field Trips –07/01/2019 RSPB Wallasea, there were 27 people including 7 new ones and 1 ILB, (Lynn plus Ted the dog). It was cloudy, cold, and 42 species were seen including a Sparrowhawk eating a starling in the field beside the car park. Photo on the website under Trip Reports. The group split into 2 groups - John Atfield and keen birders, including 3 new ones on the seawall, Steve Sanford, Graham, Kris and 5 new comers on the marsh flats trail across the grassland from the metalled path.

Thanks to Sue Stacey: -"Lynn said that the group were pleased to see the number of waders over the R. Crouch including Brent Geese, Lapwing, Golden Plover, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Marsh and Hen Harrier."

20/01/2019 Southend Pier, 22 people attended including 3 ILB and 5 new people 2 of whom joined the local group that morning. It was frosty to start but the sun shone, and it was warm enough to sit outside the café. 12 species were seen including Shag, Eider, Kittiwake and a ringed Mediterranean Gull. Graham sent details to the BTO who returned the following information: -

White 3263 ringed 29/05/2011 at Antwerpen, Belgium by Arent Raepsaert

Sighted 12/05/2018 at Antwerpen, Belgium by Camille Duponcheel

Sighted and photographed 20/01/2019 at Southend Pier, Essex GB by Graham Mee

Forthcoming Events: -

The next indoor meeting will be Wednesday 6 February 2019 at the Belfairs Woodland Centre. The Birds of Gambia by Colin Kirkland.

The next field trip Sunday 10th February 2019 at Chigborough Lakes/Heybridge Basin. Meet at 10:00 in Chigborough car park.

Or Wednesday 20th February 2019 at RSPB West Canvey Marsh. Meet at 10:00am.

Or Tuesday 5th March at South Fambridge. Meet at 10:00am

Next Coach Trip – Sunday 12 May – Minsmere Phone Cath 01702 293357 to book a seat and then send a cheque to Cath or pay at the February Indoor Meeting to secure the seat. Don't forget lifts will be arranged for ILBs who cannot get to pick up points

The next Essex Wildlife Trust meeting will be Thursday 28th February 2019 - Paul Beckett, City of London Corporation, 'Greening the City for People and Wildlife' at the Belfairs Woodland Centre 7:45pm.

Any lady requiring transport to attend meetings or to go on any field trip please contact Kris Mee.

The **next ILB meeting** is scheduled for **19 February 2019** at the Belfairs Woodland Centre. Meet at 10:00am for a walk or 10:30am for coffee and a chat.

This newsletter will be available on the local group website at: <http://www.southendrspb.co.uk> . Click on ILBs on the Menu Bar.

If you no longer wish to hear from the RSPB South East Essex Local Group, please contact **Kris Mee 01702 525152 krismee28@googlemail.com** confirming your name and address and stating that you wish to unsubscribe from the RSPB South East Essex Local Group's communications.