

## FOREWORD

The best value £6 I know. Where else could we get the benefits provided by membership of the Wharfedale Naturalists Society for so little. If it was only the programme of Summer and Winter events set out on the previous pages it would be considerable, but this is only part of it. More important is the fellowship and sharing aspects of a common interest in nature with others who also love and appreciate our fauna and flora. A shared interest in and enjoyment of natural things of great value to each of us. We are fortunate indeed. No wonder we currently have in excess of 250 members, and in the region of 80-120 regularly attending our Winter Programme meetings.

During 2000 we enjoyed together two successful trips. In the summer to reserves at Waitby Greenriggs and Smardale, where amongst many interesting sightings, particularly memorable were the show of orchids, especially Marsh Helleborines at Waitby, and the all too brief views of Hummingbird Hawkmoth and Red Squirrel at Smardale. In the autumn our destination was Martin Mere where in addition to the fascinating spectacle of wild Whooper Swans and other wild fowl, extra interest was provided by the Northern Bird Fair programme and exhibits.

At our Open Evening and Members Evening we rely heavily upon member participation and this year we were well supported with a good variety of exhibits and slide contributions, once again proving that there is much ability within our membership. Member support and participation was again much in evidence at our coffee morning, many providing items to be sold and manning the various stalls which enabled us to make a number of donations to Nature Conservation.

Our Society depends for its existence on those who have the interest of Natural History and Nature Conservation at heart and who are willing to devote time to it in various different ways. It currently has a strong backbone, i.e. its Officers, Committee and Recorders who I know devote much personal time on behalf of the membership, especially so the Secretary and Treasurer upon whom we rely greatly and who handle their considerable duties with such enthusiasm and efficiency, and I wish here to record how much we all appreciate their work. Also valuable are the efforts of many others who help in so many ways to ensure the smooth running of this Society which means so much to us all. Thank you everyone.

As I write this I am conscious of the delight experienced recently by numerous members in viewing the Waxwings present for a week or so in Ilkley, and following Doug Simpson's lecture, Red Kites Restored, the sightings some members have had of these graceful birds in the Harewood area. Just two recent examples of the delights of nature which as members of the Wharfedale Naturalists Society we share and enjoy.

David Alred

## EDITORIAL

The current Review for 2000 brings the decade to an end and the ten issues for 1991-2000 will now be bound to match the other five volumes in the Society's possession,<sup>1</sup> which provide a fascinating insight into the Society's development of more than half a century.

As you look through this, Vol 55 of the Review, you will see that, as usual, it includes articles, reports and records. We now have records going back to 1945. Ken Limb's article about a beetle on Ilkley Moor, first recorded in 1891, emphasises the importance of this aspect of the Society's activities.

We should like draw your attention to an important report on part of Ilkley Moor, a Countryside Stewardship Agreement Area. This survey continues the Society's interest in Ilkley Moor from one century to the next. Ilkley Moor is not only a SSSI but part of a larger Special Protection Area of the North Pennines. The interest, now on a European scale, is mainly connected with its unique patchwork of vegetation which in turn attracts insects and birdlife. We look forward to further studies in this direction.

We thank all those who have contributed.

DL and JD

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<sup>1</sup> . For those members who would also like to have their copies bound, we recommend bookbinders Hollingworth and Moss on Enfield Terrace, Leeds. Their phone number is 0113 243 8642 and the cost is around £20.

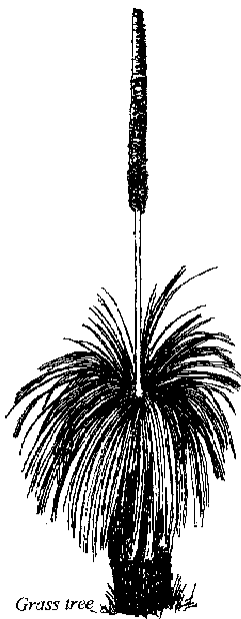
## AGAINST ALL ODDS!

### *How plants adapt to beat the competition*

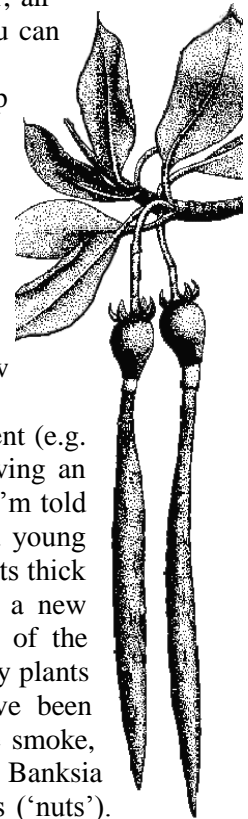
Life is tough if you're a plant! Any place with good growing conditions – light, water, air and fertile soil – will be snapped up before your flowers are even fertilised unless you can ensure that *you* are first off the stocks, or you adapt to life where others fear to tread!

In this country, the dandelion stands out to me as a *successful* plant – it has a tough tap root to anchor it in the soil (and even if this is broken, the remaining part will grow two or more new shoots); the leaves lie low, or even flat, to catch the sun and rain (which is funnelled to the centre around the root) and to make it difficult for grazing animals to eat them (they are bitter to the taste as well); the flowers open early in the year (traditionally at their peak on St. George's Day, 23<sup>rd</sup>. April), are bright yellow to attract fertilising insects, and quickly turn to seed; the seeds are produced in large numbers and have their own little parachutes to carry them far and wide in search of new land to conquer. Meadows and verges carpeted with dandelion blooms in the spring show how successful they are!

In other places plants have other challenges – in countries where bush fires are frequent (e.g. South Africa, the Mediterranean countries and Australia) some plants survive by having an insulating layer, like the Australian Grass Tree (often called the Black Boy, although I'm told that this is not considered politically correct so perhaps it should be the 'sun tanned young person') which has the protection of a thick layer of dead foliage, or the cork oak with its thick bark. Another strategy against fire is to ensure that there is a new generation to follow even if the adults are lost – the seeds of the Banksia trees in Australia, together with the Eucalypts and many plants of the African 'fienbos', will only germinate after they have been exposed to smoke (it is now known that it is chemicals in the smoke, rather than the heat of fire, which initiate germination) and the Banksia actually waits for fire before it ejects its seeds from the cones ('nuts'). This also means that the seeds have clear, fertilised ground in which life.



Grass tree



Red Mangrove

Another strategy for success could be summed up as 'If you can't stand the heat (of competition) get out of the scrum' – the mangrove type plants in the tropics have found that there is little competition for the soft salty mud beside river estuaries (which is hardly surprising!) and they have made this habitat their own by growing aerial roots to provide oxygen to their anchoring roots, developing glands on their leaves to exude excess salt, and seeds that germinate on the tree and grow there until they are big enough (up to three feet long! – see picture) to plant themselves in the mud by spearing down into it. If they land when the tide is in, then another clever trick comes into play – they float horizontally in sea water but if they float into more congenial brackish or fresh water, the difference in the density causes them to float

vertically until they run aground and settle into the mud.

Another difficult environment in which to get established is the dark of the tropical rainforest where as little as three percent of the light penetrates to the forest floor. Here some of the trees drop their seeds to the ground, where they germinate and grow a foot or so tall but then run out of energy and stagnate until a tree falls and lets in the light. If this doesn't happen they live for ten or even twenty years and then die frustrated, poor things! Another way of coping with the rainforest is to stay in the canopy – there's plenty of light up there, and water, but a distinct lack of soil! However, by developing fleshy leaves or pseudo-bulbs (and by making the most of the humid air and the accumulations of dead leaves in the tree forks) orchids, bromeliads and ferns manage to find their niche. Some of the figs start the same way but then send roots down to the ground to give them extra nutrients which enable them to grow more roots, eventually surrounding and murdering the tree which is supporting them, by strangulation.

However, I suppose that the ultimate in adaptation must be the desert plants; to survive long periods of drought the cacti have turned their leaves into spines (which limits water loss and protect the plant), and formed a globular or cylindrical 'trunk' in which to store water, with chlorophyll in the surface skin to make up for the loss of leaves. Some succulents protect themselves by growing almost underground, with only the

ends of the stems flush with the ground surface, but these stem ends are almost transparent to let in light to the underground chlorophyll.

I have mentioned just some of the ways in which plants succeed – others include the carnivorous plants which eat flesh to compensate for the lack of nitrogen in the bogs, and there are many more. Ain't nature marvellous!

Don Barrett

### **CARABUS NITENS 1891–1998**

*Carabus nitens* is a species of ground beetle described as being confined to sandy regions, moors and boggy country, mainly in the north and centred on the North York Moors and Pennines, with outlying populations on the New Forest and Dorset Heaths. Its status in Britain is described as very local. ('Notable B')

In May 1998 I was searching for Hoverflies on Ilkley Moor and was attracted by 3 beetles running at the side of a bog. I eventually caught one of these beetles in a glass tube and inspected it with a hand lens. The elytra were golden green, with a series of dark ridges and bordered with gold, head and thorax were also gold. I later identified the specimen, with the aid of a Field Guide to Beetles, to be the above species.

Last year Joan Duncan passed on to me the old insect records compiled by Dr F.H. Fidler, who was once the insect recorder for the Society, together with a box containing specimens which he had collected. I was interested to see that *Carabus nitens* had previously been recorded twice before. The first entry for this species was "1891 Ilkley Moor from John Flint in sphagnum bog". John Flint, who I had the pleasure to meet 30 years ago, was an eminent Yorkshire entomologist. The second record was for "May 1961 Burley Moor recorded by Freda Draper and determined by Dr F.H.Fidler".

I was delighted that this splendid insect still survives in our area, 107 years since it was first recorded and hope that in another 100 years some future member of this society has the opportunity to observe it.

Ken Limb

### **ICELANDIC SAGA**

Having reached the age of taking things slowly, Eric and I have become dedicated cruisers and when we read that Saga Rose (the ship for re-cycled teenagers) was heading for Iceland on a Natural History cruise we knew we just had to be aboard, and what a wonderful experience it turned out to be. Our guest lecturer was Simon Davey who has visited Wharfedale Naturalists and is well known to several members. Joining him at the ship's rail early one morning I saw just one seabird whilst he spotted 3 cormorants, 9 puffins and a whale – even Nevil Bowland could not have beaten that.

In a voyage packed full of interesting experiences, I think the small island of Heimaey stands out most in memory. I well remember seeing dramatic pictures on the TV news in January 1973, (yes, Iceland fascinated me even then) when in the middle of the night of the 23rd the volcano began to erupt. Fortunately there had been a storm at sea the previous day so the fishing boats were in harbour and everyone got safely away to the mainland. The eruption continued for 5 months and it was realised that the lava flow was going to block the harbour entrance so giant hoses were brought in and turned on the molten rock as it poured out of the crater, successfully diverting the flow and creating a new sea wall which now gives shelter to boats approaching the harbour entrance in stormy weather. Homes and possessions were all lost under the relentless flow of lava and volcanic ash so the houses today look quite new apart from one, left as a reminder of what happened, with just a corner of its roof showing above the debris. The crater is still warm to the touch and spirals of smoke still emerge here and there; indeed for 15 years following the eruption the volcano provided all the heating for the island.

Our time in the crater was all too short for I was finding small plants and flowers emerging from the ash and how I wished for Joyce Hartley at my side to tell me what they all were. Incidentally, the bits of lava I picked up look exquisite under the microscope. There is a strange beauty in a volcanic crater that can be utterly spellbinding as one considers the forces that lie beneath the Earth's surface, and this was enhanced by the simple wooden cross which expresses the islanders' gratitude that no lives were lost in the eruption.

Heimaey has its large colony of puffins. I was disappointed that by the time of our visit the adult birds had finished feeding their young and gone off to sea. However, the youngsters were still around and, driven by hunger, they are attracted by the lights from the houses. They clumsily descend into streets and gardens, totally disoriented, thus putting themselves in danger from predators. We were delighted to learn that during

this period the children of Heimaey go out at night with cardboard boxes, rescuing the bemused birds and releasing them down on the shore the following morning. A few children like these in Ilkley and the WNS would soon have some junior members again.

Easily visible from Heimaey is the “new” (1963) island of Surtsey still in the process of being formed. Only scientists and conservationists are allowed to land there. Conditions being calm and clear, our ship circled Surtsey and it was a sobering thought that millions of years ago our own island was being formed in this way. Surtsey is a golden opportunity for environmentalists to monitor step-by-step what happened “in the beginning”.

One does not visit Iceland for palm-fringed beaches and constant sunshine, indeed the early astronauts were shown the centre of the country, as it was anticipated that similar conditions would be found on the moon. For us it was a journey that filled us with awe, admiration and a very healthy respect for the unbounded force hidden in the heart of our planet.

Margaret Hutchinson

## TREES

For some trees 2000 was a bumper year. Beech nuts were found in profusion on the ground and fallen horse chestnut fruits opened to reveal large healthy conkers. In Ilkley walnuts fell from the tree on the Grove at a more ripened stage than usual with the kernels brown and nearly edible. Among the garden conifers some cupressus bushes produced copious and crowded tiny cones, many more than usual.

It is interesting to relate the performance and development of trees to the weather conditions, careful observations through the seasons being needed.

The above examples would all have been wind-pollinated, but in the case of blossom trees which depend on insects for pollination, bad weather at flowering time would keep the pollinating insects away. Flowers which are not pollinated would not continue their normal cycle and so wither and fall instead of producing fruit.

The growth and development of different species of tree through the seasons can be an interesting study and sometimes any relevant or unusual effects are included in our records.

Observations, with dates, of the following would be of interest:

- opening of buds and leafing,
- abundance of foliage,
- flowering and fruiting,
- autumn colours,
- leaf fall.

Results from any particular area may be compared from year to year.

Joan Duncan

## THE ROAD TO CORRYVRECKAN

The Isle of Jura (‘Deer Island’) is a rugged and sparsely populated island 30 miles by 7 with only one road, about 200 human inhabitants and almost 6,000 red deer.

Most of it is made up of quartzite, an ancient metamorphic rock that forms part of a basin which curves under the sea towards the mainland and surfaces further east. This dip means that Jura’s rocks are tilted to the east ( about 30°) and brings about a rugged wilderness of rocky outcrops, lochans and waterfalls. Around 65 million years ago, molten rock was forced up into cracks to form the Tertiary volcanic dykes. The fine-grained, black rock, known as epidiorite, is harder than the surrounding rocks and today the dykes are left standing as walls. During the Ice Age the weight of ice pushed the land downwards, then as it melted, some 15,000 years ago, the land rebounded, raising beaches and sea caves well above sea level. Great stretches of boulders, weathered by the sea, are found 30 feet and 100 feet above sea level.

Jura’s west coast is virtually uninhabited, save for deer, otter, wild goats and adders, whereas the sheltered east coast is more gentle with some sandy beaches and a few settlements.

At the northern end of the island, between Jura and its uninhabited neighbour Scarba, is the Whirlpool of Corryvreckan. This maelstrom, the graveyard of many ships, is the third largest in Europe. At times it can look unimpressive, but when a strong westerly wind blows in opposition to a high spring tide, its great turbulence is very powerful. To this day it is classed as un-navigable by the Royal Navy.

I have been fascinated by Corryvreckan since, as a child, I saw the film *I Know Where I'm Going* in which the whirlpool is featured, and in later years, when walking on the mainland and seeing the silhouette of Scarba and Jura from a distance. Then, in early May last year we were finally able to visit Jura and view the phenomenon from close by.

Access to Jura is via the Feolin Ferry from Islay. We stayed at Craighouse, eight miles from Feolin, which left a journey of nineteen miles along a narrow, one-track twisty road, six miles of rough Landrover track, then 2½ miles on foot.

From Craighouse the road skirts Small Isles Bay, each inlet bringing a new delight. Some were sandy with bushes – birch, willow and alder – alive with thrushes and wrens, others rocky and colourful with crotal lichen, brilliant gorse and thrift. Grey seals lazed on the rocks, shag kept guard from outlying skerries, and stonechats searched among the rocks. Damper areas were covered with milkmaid, marsh marigold and flag. We saw several herons and, in the bay, were about twenty mute swans, including a pair of black swans. It is said there are a pair of otters for every three miles of coastline, but we saw none. On the landward side was an area of 'lazy beds', Hebridean cultivation strips where seaweed is heaped on the land, both as a fertiliser and to stabilise the soil.

Further along, the view of the Paps of Jura (of pink, white and grey quartzite) is spectacular, whether they are beginning to emerge from the morning mist or bathed in evening sunshine. As the road climbed onto the moorland there were masses of cottongrass and a few rowans surviving on cliffs. Here a pair of buzzards were circling lazily. There were many meadow pipits and several curlews around, and later we saw a hen harrier swooping low over the heathland. Deer were going to the coast to graze on the new growth, now showing at these lower and more sheltered areas. Among them would be some Cromie stags with a crooked antler formation, unique to Jura. As we dropped towards Tarbert, the deer were sharing the grazing with a herd of cattle. In deep ravines mosses, ferns and liverworts grow in abundance. There were gnarled oak trees, covered with lichens, lady fern and golden saxifrage, shady banks with violets and primroses and open glades with anemones, bluebells and greater stitchwort.

Willow warblers frequent these wooded areas, also whitethroat, blackcap, chiffchaff and wood warbler which favour mixed woodland with thick scrub.

As we drove on, the strip of grass in the middle of the road became wider and, just beyond Lealt Bridge, we reached the end of the road where we parked and met up with Mike, whose Landrover would take us along the rough road for the next six miles. Driving across moorland we watched as a cuckoo was mobbed by three meadow pipits, then descended across watercourses with rue-leaved saxifrage and bogbean. Scree vegetation in the dry gorges included wild thyme, stonecrop and foliate lichen.

We eventually reached Kinuachdrachd, the sole remaining dwelling in the township – at one time the preferred crossing to the mainland. The jetty is still there, and sheep and cattle were brought over this way, too. As we set out on the last stretch on foot, Mike reminded us to watch out for sea eagles from their nest sites in Rhum. Jura is home to fifteen pairs

Blackcap

PB

of golden eagles, but we saw neither. Underfoot were all shades of milkwort – white, mauve, purple, pale and deep blue – also tormentil, heath spotted orchid and masses of bog cotton. In a fenced off regeneration area, rowan trees were flourishing. The rocky end of Scarba came into view and after several bumpy hillocks we came into full view of the Gulf of Corryvreckan. Low tide and the calmest of seas meant the whirlpool wasn't the maelstrom it could be in stormy weather, even so it was entrancing to see the small white-edged waves circling so strangely.

As we walked back we found a perfect pair of antlers; we were crossing a boggy patch when Doug looked down to see that the 'stick' he was standing on was an antler, and close by was the other! Antlers are shed in April and May with the increase in food supply and the onset of the new antlers in velvet. We arrived back at Kinuachdrachd with our prize and the sight of the whirlpool in our memories, and happy to have the bumpy ride back to the car. We'd had a superb day. Jura is a wonderful island and a trip to Corryvreckan must be one of the best in the Hebrides.

Olwen M Middleton

## BIRD OBSERVATION

With much flapping of wings a big brown bird landed on the roof of the bird table. It was probably attracted by a piece of food on the shelf below. There was still more clumsy flapping as it moved to the apple tree nearby, but it didn't seem to be capable of manoeuvring onto the shelf. In fact, it was thoroughly gawky.

We estimated its length at about twelve inches, and we saw that the feathers in the neck region were a lighter brown than the rest.

The bird finally flew off, but it reappeared a few minutes later accompanied by an adult jackdaw. The adult flew straight onto the bird table and demolished the food, a first class demonstration of how to tackle a bird table with a roof. Junior, watching from the front, must have felt frustrated, but no doubt he will learn in due course, when he can manage his wings better.

M M Kennedy

## LOCAL GEOLOGY

### **Some results and remaining problems arising from recent British Geological Survey (BGS) work in the Bradford District**

Some readers interested in geology may not be aware that the BGS has recently published new geological maps of the 'Bradford district' on a scale of 1:50 000 that include an area of Wharfedale from Skipton Moor and Farfield Hall to Leathley and Bramhope. Maps at the 1:10 000 scale have also been produced. These maps result from a geological survey carried out mainly in 1993-1996. The advances in knowledge they represent are derived largely from an analysis of the huge amount of new underground data from the records of boreholes. Most of these were drilled for site investigation purposes in urban areas and road routes. However, three on or near Rombalds Moor, at Jaytail Farm, Bradup and Hag Farm, were drilled by the BGS to obtain new details of the succession of the various rock types, their relative ages from their fossils, and their mode of deposition, in the middle part of the Millstone Grit succession.

A glance at the geological map shows nine separately named sandstones (or gritstones) cropping out on Rombalds Moor in the uppermost part of the recently redefined Millstone Grit Group. It was known from boreholes elsewhere that shaly strata between these sandstones contain bands of marine fossils and it is only when these 'marine bands' are found that the sandstones can be correlated and identified with confidence; none are exposed on Rombalds Moor. The lowest four sandstones have been given names after the features they form on the moor namely, from the lowest upwards: Addingham Edge Grit, Long Ridge Sandstone, Doubler Stones Sandstone and High Moor Sandstone and it is this succession together with the essential intercalated marine shales, that was proved by the three BGS boreholes. Unfortunately, although the Hag Farm Borehole managed with difficulty to reach a depth of 74.59m (c. 245ft) below the base of the Addingham Edge Grit, the lowest sandstone, it failed to reach a marine band that would indicate this sandstone's position in the succession and this is the main unsolved stratigraphical problem.

It is now tentatively concluded that the Addingham Edge Grit is also the sandstone, previously mapped as the Caley Crag Grit, capping the Otley Chevin escarpment where it closely overlies the remarkably fossiliferous, but now poorly exposed, marine band known as the Otley Shell Bed. However, although a long list of fossils has been recorded from this band, this list does not include any diagnostic species that would indicate its precise stratigraphical position. It seems likely that the Addingham Edge Grit in part represents the fill of a valley incised into previously deposited sediments including perhaps the Otley Shell Bed, thus explaining its absence from the Hag Farm Borehole.

Some day, excavations for road or building foundations in or around Ilkley may turn out fossiliferous strata that would help to solve the problem outlined above, and interested readers of this article are urged to report any such excavations, especially in dark shale, to David Leather or me. The recent excavations for the new hospital building on Springs Lane exposed about 3m of promising-looking dark grey shaly mudstone with ironstone nodules, but only yielded a few small bivalves which are unlikely to be diagnostic of any particular level in the succession.

Neil Aitkenhead

## **ILKLEY MOOR**

### **WNS Botany Group Survey of Countryside Stewardship Agreement Area**

The official designation and status of Ilkley Moor has changed significantly within the last decade. In 1994 the whole of Ilkley Moor was classified, by English Nature, as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Moor was included as part of the designation of the South Pennine Moors as nationally important habitats for upland birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. In 1997 the European Commission recognised the importance of the South Pennine Moors SSSI internationally, and an additional designation as a Special Protection Area was confirmed under a European Directive.

These designations mean that Bradford Metropolitan District Council, in consultation with English Nature is legally obliged to ensure that the management of the Moor at least conserves, and where appropriate increases, the habitats and species of conservation value. A management plan has been drawn up covering Ilkley Moor as a whole and its habitat types have been listed as Upland Heath, Upland Acid Grassland, Wetlands and Open Water, Woodland, and finally Bracken. Upland Heath (formed of a mosaic of Heather, Cross-leaved Heath, Crowberry and Bilberry) is further sub-divided into areas where Heather is dominant and those, now relatively small, where Crowberry is dominant.

#### **The Survey Area on Ilkley Moor**

In addition to this overall plan, a 10 year Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreement has been entered into with the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) to manage a small area of the Moor so as to deliver particular environmental benefits. This area comprises two previously enclosed allotments (south of Panorama Reservoir and west of Silver Well Cottage) which are outside the 'Urban Common' boundary, but still under Bradford Council's ownership. This factor is significant as it means sheep grazing levels can be controlled – whereas in the main part of the Moor which is designated 'Urban Common', grazing rights are held by others. The aim is to restore drystone walling and improve vegetation cover so that regeneration of Heather and other shrub species is encouraged.

Cross-leaved Heath    HB

Following a suggestion from Midge Leather who lives on the edge of the enclosed area, as a Society we felt it would be of interest as a long-term project if we recorded the existing

vegetation and monitored it again in 5 and 10 years time. The limited size of the area made the project feasible for us. The date for the main survey was fixed for 27th July, but before then several recesses were made to ascertain the lie of the land. The base of the area is along the back of the houses in Panorama Drive, past Panorama Reservoir to the top of Heber's Ghyll and the Swastika Stone as far as the next wall up the Moor. In this area the Moor has three distinct 'terraces' separated by resistant bands of Millstone Grit, the scheme area lying mainly along the lowest terrace and the first Millstone Grit band. The terrace slopes quite steeply upwards and bisected by Black Beck (which then descends into Heber's Ghyll).

Looking down across the site from the top south-western corner, the greens and fairways of the old last century golf course can be made out, emphasised by the differing vegetation – they appear as bracken-free. Of the five habitat types designated for the whole of Ilkley Moor, two are hardly represented here – Woodland, and Wetlands and Open Water. A very few isolated trees are to be seen scattered across the terrace and a few more in the steep bouldery area below Woodhouse Crag. (Silver Well Cottage and its shelter belt are excluded from the area.) The mire at Crawshaw Moss, important for breeding birds, is out of the area, being above on the next terrace. Also from this viewpoint, the extent of the bracken problem is evident, particularly on the steeper parts which were presumably wooded in the past. Bracken is said to have an approximate upper limit of the 1100 foot (340m) contour and this seemed to be borne out when we climbed up the side of Black Beck all through Bracken until we reached the top, when we came out into a large area of Heather. Another recess was made by Midge Leather particularly to record the steep, difficult area below Woodhouse Crag.

On 27<sup>th</sup> July 2000 a dozen members assembled at the Leather household and conveniently split up into three groups to cover the area. The western section, including Black Beck was taken by one group. The eastern section being much larger and going further up the Moor, was covered by two groups, one taking the land above Silver Well Cottage, and the other the land below. Each set off with a request to record separately (1) Trees and Shrubs, (2) Ferns, Rushes and Grasses and (3) all other flowering plants and particularly the amount of Heather. They were also asked to give their conclusions as to the dominant species in their section. Stationery was provided and we arranged to meet at midday at the top of Heber's Ghyll. As we were returning from there to Panorama Drive, a very heavy thundershower came and the last few hundred yards were covered at a sprint. The rain drummed down on the conservatory roof as we had lunch, collected the reports and tried to discuss the conclusions. The sound of the rain was so loud, conversation was difficult.

## CONCLUSIONS

A. Western Section The dominant species was without doubt Bracken. There were some small areas of Heather along the line of the old golf course and a significant amount right up at the top on the southern boundary. There were very small areas of Cross-leaved Heath. Bilberry and Crowberry were also present lower down, and they together with Cranberry were also in the two wet areas not far from Black Beck. The becksides themselves were not very productive. Most of the trees were in this section, but even then there were less than two dozen – mainly Rowan. There was a full range of ferns especially in the boulder area. Up near the top boundary was an unusual patch which appeared to have been treated (sprayed?) in the past, and this had been colonised by Sheep's Sorrel. A group of Foxgloves was nearby.

B. Upper Eastern Section No species was dominant over the whole area. There was a wide band of Heather from the Neb Stone all along the top boundary wall westwards until just before the head of Black Beck, where it was replaced by rushes. The next band across lower down was comprised of Bracken at the eastern end changing halfway to a mixture of Heather, Crowberry and grasses. The lowest band just above Silverwell Cottage was Bracken throughout. There were many patches of Cross-leaved Heath, both Cottongrasses were present, many mosses and lichens, but only one fern and four trees.

C. Lower Eastern Section Under Silver Well Cottage was a long steep bank of Bracken, the only break in it being a very large patch of Cross-leaved Heath. Below this was a spring, the water from which flowed diagonally across to the bottom ditch creating a large marshy area. Going westwards, there was an area of rough grass, with Bilberry, some Crowberry and vestigial amounts of Heather. Continuing along the line of the old golf course and opposite Panorama Reservoir, the Heather areas increased until rocks came near the surface when Bilberry took over, though still mixed with some Heather and with Crowberry, Cranberry and grass. An area of Bracken was crossed, a small stream, and then Heather occurred again. There were two trees only. Although Heather seems to be holding its own on the line of the old golf course, in many places especially on the uphill side (adjoining the lower band of the previous section) it is surrounded by encroaching Bracken. A strip alongside the bottom track had vegetation very different from the rest of the area, there being more species typical of rough grassland rather than moorland.



A full list of species follows. It is appreciated that although the optimum time was chosen, one survey cannot guarantee to find all, and particularly some of the early species may have been missed out.

**Species seen within the Countryside Stewardship Agreement Area.**

A = Western Section. B = Upper Eastern Section. C = Lower Eastern Section

Species	Section	Species	Section
<u>TREES</u>		<u>OTHER FLOWERING PLANTS</u>	
Silver Birch	A – –	Heather	A B C
Elder	A – –	Cross-leaved Heath	A B C
Hawthorn	A – –	Bilberry	A B C
Larch	A – –	Crowberry	A B C
Oak (small sapling)	A – –	Cranberry	A – C
Rowan	A B C	Heath Bedstraw	A B C
Sycamore	A – –	Common Marsh-bedstraw	A B C
Goat Willow	– – C	Foxglove	A B C
<u>FERNS</u>		Sheep's Sorrel	A B C
Bracken	A B C	Common Sorrel	– – C
Broad Buckler-fern	A – C	Creeping Thistle	A B C
Hard Fern	A – –	Marsh Thistle	A B C
Lady Fern	A – C	Spear Thistle	A – C
Lemon-scented Fern	A B C	Tormentil	A B C
Male Fern	A – –	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	A B C
<u>SEDGES RUSHES GRASSES</u>		Cleavers	A – C
Common Sedge	– B –	Rosebay Willowherb	A – –
Star Sedge	– B –	Broad-leaved Willowherb	A – –
Common Yellow-sedge	– B –	Great Willowherb	– – C
Heath Wood-rush	– B C	Marsh Willowherb	A – C
Compact Rush	A – C	Wood Sorrel	A – –
Hard Rush	A – C	Broad-leaved Dock	A – C
Heath Rush	A B C	White Clover	A – C
Jointed Rush	A B C	Nettle	A – C
Sharp-flowered Rush	– B C	Cuckooflower	– B C
Soft Rush	A B C	Common Chickweed	A – –
Toad Rush	– – C	Common Mouse-ear	– B C
Common Cottongrass	A B C	Sticky Mouse-ear	A – –
Hare's-tail Cottongrass	A B C	Bog Stitchwort	A – C
Mat-grass	A B C	Selfheal	A – C
Tufted Hair-grass	– B C	Lesser Spearwort	– B C
Wavy Hair-grass	A B C	Creeping Buttercup	– – C
Purple Moor-grass (small amounts)	A B C	Meadow Buttercup	– – C
Yorkshire Fog	– B C	Marsh Pennywort	– B –
Common Bent	A B C	Hawkweed sp.	– B –
Perennial Rye-grass	A – C	Common Water-starwort	A – C
Crested Dog's-tail	– B C	Wavy Bitter-cress	A – –
Cock's-foot	– – C	Greater Plantain	A – C
Sweet Vernal-grass	– – C	Dandelion	A – C
Sheep's-fescue	– – C	Germander Speedwell	A – C
Timothy	– – C	Wood Avens	A – C
Rough Meadow-grass	– – C	Pineappleweed	A – –
		Bramble	A – –
		Daisy	A – –
		Ground-elder	– – C
		White Dead-nettle	– – C

Thanks to all who took part in the survey: Mike Atkinson, Nevil Bowland, Heather Burrow, Audrey Gramshaw, Sam Hartley, Jim and Joan Horsman, Midge Leather, Olwen Middleton, Joan Powell and Anne

Tupholme. Even more special thanks are due to Midge Leather for the help and background information as she knows the area so well, for the photos she took specially for the presentation board and finally for her hospitality at the crucial moment when the members would otherwise have been soaked.

Bradford Council hope to complete restoring the walls of the area by 2003 and thereafter to operate low controlled stocking with sheep and with Bracken control if necessary. Sheep (at the rate of one ewe per hectare) will be allowed into the area only from early May to early August, with no grazing for the rest of the year, until such time as Heather cover reaches 40%. From what we have seen we feel sure that this will take some considerable time, and it would appear that separate Bracken control will be needed. It is encroaching on the patches of pure Heather and also covering up areas of mixed Heather, Bilberry and Crowberry. In these circumstances English Nature, who do not agree with total eradication, do permit its control.

We hope when we survey again in five years time to see some progress.

Joyce Hartley

Cranberry

HB

### **WINTER WALKS – 2000 – 2001**

Hi folks, it's Review time again and, as in times of yore, it falls to me to remind you all of the fun we have had on the past season's winter walks.

In February last year we started our first walk from Leathley near the ancient almshouses and proceeded along Leefield Lane, up through Riffa Wood, pausing by the enigmatic carved stone, onwards through the fields passing Bogridge Farm and continuing by way of Round Hill where we were amused by a herd (if that's the right word) of dancing ostriches who decidedly didn't bury their heads in the sand at our approach but keenly followed our progress as we went sedately on our way. Further on we contemplated the charming little church of St. Mary's at Stainburn with its odd windows. Later we passed Lindley Bridge and the fish farm where, as usual, we observed the besieging army of grey herons and so returned to the cars at the end of yet another day's walking.

March found us on what has become one of our favourite jaunts, namely the world-famous Mosaic Walk at Dallowgill near Kirby Malzeard. Even if you do not see anything special as you trundle along the twenty-two charming little mosaics you encounter on the way make up for it. They are a delight to the eye and so excellently executed it makes you wonder at the patience and hard work that has gone into the making of them. They were put down about five years ago to commemorate the designation of the Nidderdale Moors as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and they depict the culture and wildlife to be found there. One bonus of the day was meeting up with Tom Holman of Dallowgill, the stickmaker and dresser, a great character with many a tale to tell. His sticks topped with every type of horn are marvellous to behold, and Les Dewdney, a fellow craftsman, was particularly pleased to see them. After the walk a few of us tasted the delights of Roselea Tea-room at Kirby, an unforgettable experience and a reward for a good day's walking.

I always like to finish the season off on a limestone high, so in April we were to be observed gathering at the National Park car park at Colvend in Grassington for an assault on the tops and a stroll to Coniston. The day was rather dree and dowly but we were in high spirits as we cantered up the high street and lugged it up Hungry Laugh Hill and onto Yarnbury. Here we introduced Lorelei Fox to the mournful moonscape setting

of the old lead-mining operations with the humps and bumps of the long lines of bellpits which so scar the landscape around here. We proceeded along Limekiln Lane to the romantic ruin of Bare House, a typical Dales longhouse which in its day would have housed both humans and their beasts, Homo sapiens inhabiting one end and the cows etc living at t'other. After a good look around and a contemplation of what life might have been like up here in this lonely spot we girded up our loins and passed on our merry way, carrying on towards the top of Coniston Dib where we took Lorelei to see the fine stretch of limestone pavement on Wassa Bank. This is one of the many jewels to be found in the Park, for the grykes, the gaps between the clints, harbour many rare species of plants. Afterwards we wandered down the spectacular gorge of Gurling Trough into Coniston, then up by Dib Scar, along the back of Grass Wood Reserve and, by way of Lea Green, to Grassington, and so ended yet another season of winter walks.

However, once again the wheel has turned full circle and another series began in October when our intrepid band met once again – this time at the Cavendish Pavilion, for our grand assault on Simon's Seat. Wending our way up via Hammerthorne Gate, we crossed the moors, always on the lookout for what we could see. We soon spotted a lone meadow pipit fluttering about the tussocks of heather. We also had fine views over into the Washburn Valley and beyond. On the summit we paused to take in the splendid vistas of upper Wharfedale before sauntering down the well known Bielby track towards the Valley of Desolation with its wild cataracts of white water tumbling over the ragged rocks into the deep pools far below. How well did the silent traveller describe the scene, likening it to similar ones in his homeland of China. Here the Chatsworth Estate has erected some picture boards showing what life must have been like here during the time of the early hunter-gatherers. Near this point a kestrel demonstrated its keen dexterity by plunging into a chicane around a tree trunk, plucking forth a vole and flying out again without mishap. This fine example of avian aerobatics had us transfixed for a while. When we had recovered we came down via Waterfall Cottage and so back to our vehicles.

Mid November saw us sampling the delights of Gargrave where we were somewhat rained upon. Here we were joined for the first time by new WNS member John Giles. The constant rain never once fazed him – long may he walk with us. We set off along the Pennine Way, went around by East Marton with its unusual double-arched bridge and, venturing round Inghorpe Grange, followed the canal back towards Gargrave keeping an eye on the well known collection of wildfowl to be seen on its silver waters. Back at Gargrave the Alreds had a treat in store kindly taking us to a favourite hang-out of theirs, the local bistro, where we enjoyed hot steaming mugs of chocolate and marshmallows, a welcome finishing touch to the day's walking.

December took us to another of our favourite haunts, the lonely Washburn Valley, at Blubberhouses to be precise. From the little car park below the church we wended our way past the site of the former Westhouse Mill and on through the fields towards Thruscross Dam. Here the river was racing along like a thing possessed, which could only mean that water was being released from the mighty reservoir; and so it proved to be. As we hove in sight of the awesome edifice we could see three columns of it slithering down the overflow, looking for all the world like three lacy curtains flapping in the breeze. Climbing out of the chasm we made our way through the fields to Spitalhouse Farm where we followed the track out onto the desolate moors. In spite of the heavy rainfall we managed to successfully negotiate the treacherous Willow Bog to eat our luncheon well within sight of the A59. We returned by the historic Kex Gill road to our cars and farewells after another day's strolling.

The turn into the new year, and, according to some pundits, the new millennium, we embarked on our next little jaunt from Draughton, by the alluring little chantry of St Augustine's. We set off in the direction of Haw Pike, climbing steadily with views opening up towards Wharfedale and Bolton Priory. Looking to our left we could see towering into the air the great gaunt alien pillars of the four wind vanes at Chelker. Descending to the road, we crossed over and made our way to the riverside where we were greeted by the sight and sound of a whirlybird coming in to land at the Devonshire Arms. Recovering from that experience we ambled on to the Priory where we ate our snap, chatted for a while and passed some time away in the shop by the village car park. We continued on our way to Halton East and then across the fields and back to Draughton. I have to say, however, that the highlight of the day was not on the walk itself but in Ikley car park where we encountered a small band of waxwings. These buccaneering little rascals sally forth from their Scandinavian homes during the winter when food there is short and come, like the Vikings of old to plunder our rich granaries of berries. So here they were with one lone mistle thrush playing the role of an avian Alfred the Great trying to drive them away but with little success. It was my first sighting of these delightful small birds and I calculated that there were about 40 of them all resplendent with their buff crests, russet bodies and the brilliant reds and yellows on their wing-tips and tails. This colouring looks as if has been applied in wax, giving the birds their name, and once seen never forgotten. I shall certainly look out in case they arrive next year.

As we go to press there are three more walks in this season's programme – in Nidderdale, Wharfedale and Liffordale. I hope that if you would like to join our happy fellowship you will soon have a go.

Chris Hartley

## **SUMMER OUTING TO WAITBY GREENRIGGS AND SMARDALE NATURE RESERVES SATURDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2000**

There is nothing like a thrilling start to up the anticipation, and we had it on this trip. The difficulty with Waitby Greenriggs Reserve is access. It is reasonable for a private car to go round the minor roads at the back of Kirkby Stephen to an old railway bridge and park on a small verge – the official entrance to the reserve is just opposite. For a large coach this is impossible and a different approach had had to be devised with much forward planning. Going up the M6 towards Kirkby Stephen, our leader David Leather announced over the intercom that the coach would be drawing up very briefly on the roadside approaching the town at an unauthorised place. To avoid the driver being prosecuted, would we please get all our gear ready for a commando style exit and disappear up the alleyway nearby. You have never seen such a prompt response – we popped out like rabbits. The excitement did not end there. No right of way to the Reserve exists from this end and permission had been obtained from the local farmer to go through his farmyard, unfortunately his dogs did not appreciate this and a chorus of barks and growls accompanied us as we hastened through. A very rough field had to be negotiated (no path) and a dodgy fence climbed before we entered woodland and then finally emerged on to the Reserve to take stock of our surroundings.

The Reserve is on part of an old disused railway line which eventually curves round and goes to Smardale. At the Reserve the line went through a deep cutting in the Carboniferous limestone which forms a broad band between Orton and Kirkby Stephen. Now all that remains are just two well-drained grass-covered banks, one far steeper than the other, with a damper area in between in the bottom. The flora they support is remarkable.

A member of the Cumbria Trust which cares for the Reserve was there to meet us and show us round. Orchids are a speciality of the site and they were in a concentration and variety that few of us had ever seen before. We were told there had been 94 flowering spikes of the Lesser Butterfly Orchid which flowers quite early. This had just finished but the ten other species were in full bloom. The first we saw were the Fragrant Orchids of which there were three different kinds. The normal one (which we get in Wharfedale) varied widely in colour, some being the typical mauvy-pink, whilst others were much deeper in colour and a few were pure white. Then there was the rarer Marsh Fragrant Orchid (previously called Dense-flowered) a much bigger and more robust plant, up to 18 inches tall, with in some cases a six inch long spike of flowers – cherry-coloured – making it a very striking species. Both these species were present in dozens. Finally there was one plant of an extremely rare sub-species 'borealis' (no English name) which has a lip which is scarcely lobed. Common Spotted-orchids were common and the Twayblades were huge.

In addition to the usual Frog Orchids there were a group which were obviously different – having very long bracts – these also are very rare and were protected by a cage. Marsh Helleborines formed large patches at various places and when we eventually went down to the damper area, there was a Fly Orchid and several Northern Marsh-orchids.

Orchids however were only the start of the colourful spectacle. On the steep north-facing slope there were the red (or pink) flowers of Betony, Great Burnet, Salad Burnet, Zig-zag Clover, Herb Robert and the beautifully marked buds of the rare Saw-wort, which had great variation in the shape and colour of its leaves. Yellow was provided by St John's-wort, Kidney Vetch, Yellow –rattle, Mouse-ear Hawkweed, Creeping Cinquefoil, Meadow Vetchling, Rough Hawkbit, Autumn Hawkbit and in a damper hollow, Globeflower. Blue came from Common Milkwort, Tufted Vetch, Germander Speedwell and Devil's-bit Scabious. White was mainly provided by the numerous Oxeye Daisies and Fairy Flax. The clumps of Black Bog-rush were

enormous – over two feet across – and up from them came the very dark flower heads, over a foot tall, making a striking contrast with the colour around. The Hoary Plantains were also of giant size. There were areas of Blue Moor-grass. The other slope, south facing and not so high, seemed to have some quite different flowers – there were very large patches of yellow Lady's Bedstraw, white Hedge-bedstraw and pink Wild Thyme. Towards the foot of the slope were Cowslips in seed and larger plants such as Foxglove and Meadowsweet together with one clump of its daintier relative, Dropwort. The bottom of the Reserve – the track-bed of the old railway line – was much damper with consequently an entirely different flora. Bird's-eye Primrose and Common Butterwort had their last few flowers whilst Field Gentian was just coming into flower and Grass-of-Parnassus was in bud. There was also Round-leaved Sundew, Eyebright, Long-stalked Yellow-sedge and Jointed Rush.

Because of the extensive flora, it had been hoped to see many butterflies, but unfortunately the weather was 'cloudy-bright' rather than sunny and as a result only three species were seen all day – Ringlet, Common Blue and Meadow Brown. A Six Spot Burnet moth was found which had just emerged from its chrysalis, and also seen were Chimney Sweeper, Large Yellow Underwing and Hummingbird Hawk moth. A Grasshopper was hiding in the vegetation at the side of the track.

After lunch at the Reserve, we walked down the country lane to Waitby village and then continued on to rejoin the old railway line near Smardale Hall. Thereafter we were revisiting Smardale Reserve where we had last been on the 1996 Outing.

The views from the lane over rolling countryside were very pleasant. The hedges were largely Blackthorn with some Downy Roses and the verges were full of the normal common wayside flowers including Field Scabious, Goat's-beard, Meadow Crane's-bill and there was a long stretch of Sweet Cicely now in seed. Wood Crane's-bill was over here, but was later seen in flower in the wood.

Entering Smardale Reserve along the railway line, the first section is a wooded gorge and here we refound Common Wintergreen which had been such an attraction last time. Unfortunately this year many of the plants were past their best. We saw Common Spotted-orchid, Valerian, Bitter Vetch, Marjoram and all three Scabious, Field, Small and Devil's-bit. The Bloody Crane's-bill made a beautiful sight, with patches stretching for many yards – most were the usual colour, but we did find a pure white, and also a very unusual flower with deep blue patches around the rim, but red in the middle. The variety 'Lancastriense' (pale pink flowers with dark maroon pencil lines) was still there. Nearing the end of the wooded section, just before the viaduct there was the highlight of the afternoon. Several members noticed chewed pine cones on the ground – usually the action of a Red Squirrel – and then they caught sight of the Squirrel itself high up in a tree. They had excellent views as it gradually came down to a lower branch before disappearing in undergrowth. After a break at the viaduct, there was the level walk along the line with fields on either side, distant views of the Howgills and many wild flowers. Particularly noticeable were large clumps of Melancholy Thistle, Common Restharrow and Hop Trefoil. There was also a little Heather and one Jacob's-ladder. A few energetic members detoured into the quarry and found Carline Thistle, Greater Knapweed and Mountain Pansy.

Ken Limb reported that the ornithologists had seen 19 different species during the day, almost all of them in the afternoon. There was one raptor, Common Buzzard. The other birds were Curlew, Swift, Swallow, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Wren, Robin, Redstart, Stonechat, Northern Wheatear, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Goldcrest, Spotted Flycatcher, Blue Tit, Rook, House Sparrow and Goldfinch. Interestingly although the bird lists for this year and for 1996 were roughly of the same length, only seven species were common to both.

The final treat of the day awaited us at Newbiggin-on-Lune, with tea and home-made cakes at the little café. Gratefully, members sank down. It had been a long day, but a very rewarding one to a beautiful area, difficult of access and only made possible for us by careful planning. Our appreciation was shown to David for all his work.

Joyce Hartley

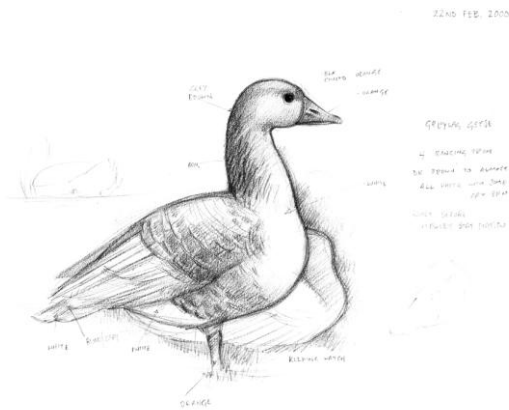
## WINTER OUTING TO MARTIN MERE RESERVE, 18TH NOVEMBER 2000

This year's winter outing to the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Reserve at Martin Mere near Ormskirk in Lancashire was particularly well attended, necessitating a small minibus in addition to our usual coach. It was a wet and misty morning as we began our journey, and the rain accompanied us for most of the way. Then, as we approached the reserve, the weather cleared and a watery sun appeared.

Martin Mere Reserve comprises a series of pens and pools for the Trust's captive collection of wetland species from all over the world including some of our own residents and visitors. Beyond these is an extensive area of lake, pools and connecting waterways backed by low lying fields intersected by dikes. There are several well placed and roomy hides; one is actually heated! From these we were able to have splendid views of the overwintering waterfowl for which Martin Mere is famous.

There were over 5000 whooper swans on the reserve and a large proportion of these could be observed from the "Swan Lake" hide together with a few mutes. It was fascinating to watch the interactions within and between the various family groups as they greeted each other or postured to protect their own small area of water. The morning sunshine highlighted the brilliant colours of the various species of duck on the lake and ponds including pochard, teal, shelduck and a few handsome pintail.

Further along the track from the lake hides the Trust has set up a feeding station in a small bushy dell. Here



Greylag

JG

we were able to watch various finches and tits visiting the feeders and goldcrests foraging among the alder twigs. From the hide overlooking the fields we could watch great flocks of geese flying in to graze or rest: there were large numbers of pink-footed geese and grey-lag and a sprinkling of barnacle geese. The only raptor on view was a rather distant peregrine falcon which spent a great deal of time sitting on a fence post.

By lunchtime the weather was changing and the afternoon saw a return of the mist and rain. However, we had once again planned our visit to coincide with the annual Northwest Bird Fair so there was plenty to do under cover. There was a full programme of lectures on offer, ranging from "The Secret Life of Garden Birds" to "Wildlife on the Galapagos", and lots of stalls selling

books and tapes, outdoor clothing and paintings and photographs. There was also the usual display and demonstration of binoculars and telescopes. So, with all these delights and the Visitors' Centre cafe, we were well occupied until it was time to return over the Pennines after a most enjoyable day out.

Thanks to Ken Limb who supplied the following bird list for the day:

Great Cormorant, Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Whooper Swan, Pink-footed Goose, Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Barnacle Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Shoveler, Common Pochard, Goldeneye, Peregrine Falcon, Pheasant, Moorhen, Coot, Lapwing, Black-headed Gull, Greater Black-backed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Pied Wagtail, Dunnock, Robin, Blackbird, Goldcrest, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Magpie, Tree Sparrow, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch.

Jenny Dixon

## GEOLOGY EXCURSIONS

**Crummackdale and the Norber Erratics** (18 May 2000) Not just one, but two classic sites in one, at this easily traversed miniature Yorkshire Dale. First we walked up to see the Norber erratic boulders, huge chunks of Austwick sandstone scattered about (of Silurian age), many of them perched on a base or plinth of Carboniferous Limestone. At Nappa Scars we stepped along the ancient eroded surface of the basement rocks where we could view the first pebbly (even bouldery) beds of the Carboniferous Limestone, representing an ancient shoreline. We saw where the Norber erratics had originated and crossed a syncline in the Austwick sandstones. At Moughton Whetstone Hole a spring emerges around which are pieces of rock striped red and green. They are of Ordovician age and show changes in the rock (liesegang rings) that came about probably before the Carboniferous Limestone was laid down.

**Conistone Dib and Mossdale Scar** (8 June 2000) The dry gorge of Conistone Dib evidently was once full of rushing water when the ground below was still deep frozen – the narrowest part is less than a metre across. Above the Dib we examined some of the best limestone pavements in the area. We passed a limekiln and dew pond before striding out along the Bycliffe Road to Mossdale Scar. Here a stream dramatically disappears beneath a limestone cliff. Some of the limestone appears glazed by the water and we found many examples of the large *Gigantoproductus* shells in cross section. There was so much water in the beck that it was difficult to cross. The track had been surfaced by rubble from an old leadmine and contained good examples of galena.

**Dowber Gill, Kettlewell** (20 July 2000) This is a pretty little valley whatever the season and makes for a pleasant stroll. We looked out for anything of geological interest along the way, soon passing from the Great Scar Limestone to the Yoredales, where there was a sandstone layer, a rarity in the Yoredales of Wharfedale. We examined leadmine tips and the entrance to Providence Pot. The shales round the corner appeared rather barren of fossils. On the way back we had a closer look at a small recent landslip and discovered several loose specimens of *Gigantoproductus*.

*Gigantoproductus*

JT

**Scotgate Ash Quarry, Pateley Bridge**  
(26 Oct 2000)

The sandstone band at Scotgate Ash is near the middle of the Millstone Grit Group and is named the Libishaw Sandstone. Above it is the Brimham Grit which forms Brimham Rocks. The stone has been used in many famous buildings including the museum at South Kensington. We examined structures and evidence of biological activity in the sandstone. These included a swirling shape which represented a feeding burrow system called *Zoophycus*. There were also many worm tracks, some small ones were dotted across broad ripple marks. One of our members searched for a possible coal seam in the shales but without success. After returning down the incline most of us visited Coldstones Quarry at Greenhow to look down into what must be the biggest hole in Yorkshire, invisible unless you are right on its rim.

Impression of Scotgate Ash quarry at work, late nineteenth century

The September meeting to Helwith Bridge and upper Ribblesdale was postponed until further notice.

David Leather

## MICROSCOPE GROUP

Over the last year the group has covered many aspects of flora and fauna and held a number of practical workshop sessions.

We looked at geology, freshwater pond life and had a second session on lichens with Albert Henderson's help in recognising thallus, foliose or crustose forms and their fruiting bodies.

An evening on ferns with the Curator of the British Pteridological Society – one of John Hobson's many contacts – included a demonstration on how to make a microscope slide of the fern spores, used to identify hybrids. Then it was our turn to try with the specimens and equipment provided and to realise that it's not quite as easy as the expert makes it look.

Spores of a different kind, fungal, were provided by Ann Bickley and Joan Powell who instructed us on making spore prints and cutting gill sections as an aid to fungi identification, again with specimens and help on hand.

Thank you to all those who have introduced topics and brought along specimens and given so generously of their time.

Heather Burrow

## OBITUARIES

During the year 2000 we were sorry to hear of the deaths of eight of our members.

### **Mr R A Craven**

Bob Craven, who died 4 August 2000, joined the Society in 1970 together with his wife Dorothy. They attended evening lectures and summer evening walks over many years, but Bob's main interest was geology. He attended a WEA geology course at Ilkley College and later gained an 'O'-level in the subject. Bob trained as an engineer and later went into teaching, as a tutor at Shipley College. He was a member of Pudsey Rambling Club as well as the Evergreens, joining in their many activities. He enjoyed walking the Dales, geology outings, and was always keen to share his interest with his friends.

### **Mr R W Draper**

Bob Draper who died in July was one of those members who worked quietly behind the scenes. When his wife Freda was lecturing with her excellent colour slides, it was Bob who worked the projector; they were so well attuned that the presentation would go without a hitch. Working together in the Ilkley Moor Survey in the 1960s they studied ecological features which Bob photographed and these monochrome prints form a valuable historical record in the Society's report. Other WNS projects were shared by Freda and Bob, such as Ben Rhydding gravel pits and the Sun Lane tip at Burley. Bob constructed some ponds in their garden which attracted pondlife colonisers of interesting species. Bob's records, especially of birds, were diligently passed to the recorders and will remain a lasting contribution by a respected member. Although latterly Bob found it difficult to attend meetings, he valiantly came as a guest to the Annual Dinner of the year 2000 and members were pleased to greet him.

### **Mr John Kennedy**

John Kennedy returned to his profession after war service and eventually came to Ilkley where he was a highly respected solicitor. When he joined the Society in 1954 someone asked him what was his main interest in natural history. With his quiet sense of humour he replied that he was interested in the secretary! – then Margaret Bartle. They were married in 1955.

John's chief hobby was photography. He took excellent landscapes (prints and slides) of the countryside where he enjoyed long walks and cycling. He did later combine photography with natural history, taking close-ups of flowers and fungi. Margaret and John with their two boys spent happy holidays caravanning and walking in the Dales, Lake District, Scotland and Ireland. This favourite kind of holiday continued



throughout their married life. John attended the WNS lectures as long as he was able, maintaining his interest and supporting the Society.

### **Miss N Rosemary Payne**

Rosemary Payne died on 18 May 2000 in Threshfield Court. A member of WNS since 1954, her interests in botany, archaeology and geology led her to play a full part in the Society. From 1960-70 she was Geology Recorder chiefly for Upper Wharfedale. She was an exceptionally observant naturalist, enjoyed field meetings and helped Joyce Hartley with the recording squares in Wharfedale, as well as contributing to her own meticulous records. Rosemary joined in YNU field meetings and weekend Fungus Forays.

As a worker, warden and Committee member, Grass Wood YWT Reserve was a high priority for her to the end of her life. (She read and commented on the National Vegetation Classification survey of the wood in her last weeks.) She grew hundreds of trees from Grass Wood stock, which have been planted there as the conifers are felled. These trees are now a living memorial to her practical conservation interests. A good listener with a quiet, dry sense of humour, Rosemary made many long-standing friends. It was a privilege to be among them.

### **Miss Nellie Saunders**

Miss Saunders was a Founder Member, one of those enthusiasts who started the Society. As an early Committee member she was always ready to help and make suggestions for activities. She enjoyed the Society's lectures, outings and friendship. It is some years since Nellie left Ilkley and could no longer attend meetings but her contribution in the early days was recognised by making her a Life Member.

We are also sad to record the deaths of **Dr J Southern** (joined in 1994), **Mrs Maxted** (joined 1996) and **Miss R M Prior** (joined 1998) . We extend our sympathies to their families and particularly to Mrs Southern who is still a member.

# RECORDS FOR 2000

## THE WEATHER IN 2000

**General** Most people may remember 2000 as a very wet year which was rather cooler than usual. As for rainfall that memory is undoubtedly correct. The UK as a whole suffered the wettest year for over a century (probably much longer) and Ilkley was no exception. Its total rainfall of 1292mm (50.88 inches) was 42% above the long term average and far exceeded the previous wettest year of 1980 when there was 1112mm (43.78 in). As for temperature, memories may be clouded because the last three months of the year were all very cool but for the year as a whole the temperature exceeded the long term average by 0.5%. This was much in line with the figure for the UK as a whole. The year was probably one of the twenty warmest since records began 350 years ago.

### Month by month in brief:

Month	Comment	Deviations from Average	
		Temperature	Rainfall
January	Warm and rather dry	+0.5°C	-19%
February	Much warmer than average. Quite a lot wetter	+1.4°C	+38%
March	Much warmer than average. A little drier	+1.4°C	-10%
April	Temperatures average. Rainfall a little above average	+0.1°C	+15%
May	Much warmer than average. Rainfall average	+0.1°C	-2%
June	Temperature and rainfall well above average	+1.3°C	+57%
July	Cooler than average. Rainfall average	-0.4°C	-2%
August	Much warmer than average. Fairly dry	+0.9°C	-17%
September	Much warmer and very much wetter than average	+0.9°C	+107%
October	Much cooler than average. Exceptionally wet	-0.6°C	+158%
November	Much cooler than average. Exceptionally wet	-0.7°C	+132%
December	Cooler than average. A little wetter	-0.4°C	+8%

**Temperature** Eight months of the year were warmer than average; those which were cooler were July, October, November and December but no records were broken either for heat or for cold. Probably the best spell of the year was in the first half of May which was consistently dry and produced no less than nine days with temperatures of 20°C or more. The warmest days were the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> when the thermometer went up to 25°C. Of the other days which produced temperatures of 20°C or more, ten were in June, only nine in July and nineteen in August. Surprisingly there was only one such day in September; the high average temperature for that month can be attributed to a series of very warm nights. The hottest spell was in mid-June with temperatures on two days reaching 31°C.

The coldest nights were at the end of December when the thermometer fell to -7°C on three occasions and when there were four days in which the temperatures was below zero all day. The last spring frost was on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The first frost of the Autumn in my garden was not until the extraordinarily late date of December 14<sup>th</sup> but the thermometer just managed to fall to zero on October 22<sup>nd</sup> so it is possible that others in the area might have experience frost on that night.

**Rainfall** The year broke all records. Not only was the year as a whole the wettest for at least 75 years (and probably much longer) but October and November also broke long term records. From September 9<sup>th</sup> to December 13<sup>th</sup> there were only three days on which there was no measurable rain but it was the quantity of rain as well as its persistence which was so remarkable. The wettest spell of the year was one of nine days at the end of October and the beginning of November on which almost 8 inches of rain fell. Included in that period are the following extraordinary records – 1.54 inches on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1.47 inches on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1.22 inches on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1.17 inches on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1.42 inches on November 5<sup>th</sup>. There was however one day which beat all of them and that was on June 3<sup>rd</sup> when 1.71 inches of rain fell. It was this day alone which produced a very much above average fall for the month as a whole, a somewhat curious result because in the UK as a whole, June was a dry month.

The driest spell was one of eighteen days beginning on 28<sup>th</sup> April. The only snow of significance was on 15<sup>th</sup> February and over the Christmas period.

**Note** I am grateful to Jenny Dixon for providing me with her weather records for periods when I was away; also to Heather Burrow for letting me have her records for Addingham. The total rainfall for the year at Addingham, 49.42 inches, was slightly less than in Ilkley and the month by month picture followed the Ilkley pattern very closely.

John Ward

## BOTANY

It has been a most unusual year. At the beginning, the relatively mild winter resulted in a wide range of early flowering reports: Snowdrop (ADL) and Primrose (UWFS) on 7th February followed by Celandine (OM) and Marsh-marigold (CJD) later in the month, and in March Butterbur, Coltsfoot, Ground-ivy and Wild Daffodil (N&AB). At the end of the year December was also very mild with Common Centaury, Bitter-vetch and Nipplewort still in flower (FCD). In between, the summer was dull and at times very wet.

In the following report the scientific name is added the first time a species occurs.

### SPECIAL RECORDS

Wood Club-rush (*Scirpus sylvaticus*) – 1st record. Thrispen Beck woodland (PPA).

Knotted Crane's-bill (*Geranium nodosum*) – An alien. 1st record. Burley Old Tip Field (FCD).

Orpine (*Sedum telephium*) – 2nd modern record. Mossdale Scar (MHA).

Broad-leaved Ragwort – previously Saracen's Woundwort (*Senecio fluviatilis*) – 3rd record. Parceval Hall grounds (AT).

Alpine Cinquefoil (*Potentilla crantzii*) – 3rd record. Dowber Gill (PPA).

Fool's Parsley (*Aethusa cynapium*) – 4th record. Burley-in-Wharfedale (FCD).

5th record – new site in Otley centre (SH).

Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) – exceptionally large specimen 8 inches tall with flower over two inches. Menwith Hill (JH).

Marsh Arrowgrass (*Triglochin palustris*) – hundreds were found on the side of the Blubberhouses – Duck Street road near Humberstone Bank. This plant is not frequent in our area and normally occurs only in small numbers (JH).

Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) – a group of female plants on the small island on the Wharfe behind Burnsall Church. This is our most northerly record for female plants, which are uncommon (J&SW).

### FLOURISHING PLANTS THIS YEAR

Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) – was reported from widely spaced sites all through the area. It was flowering profusely at Castley (Botany Outing) and down the Wharfe from Grassington to Burnsall. (J&SW, MHA). It was also seen at Threshfield (Botany Outing), Hudson Wood (MHA), Menston Old Lane, Burley (Sarah Ward) and Clarence Drive, Menston (Sarah Ward).

Herb Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*) – over a hundred seen in woodland on the east bank of the Wharfe at Bolton Abbey (Society evening outing).

Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem (*Gagea lutea*) – excellent displays at the main sites in Ilkley and Addingham (HMB) and a new site in Ilkley (MHA). At the site in Bolton Abbey Woods flowering was seen and there were many seedlings (AMG).

## BOTANY SECTION OUTINGS

We had mixed weather for the outings this year – two beautiful days, two which were reasonable and one very wet.

### Castley area – 4th May

The outing was to explore further this eastern section included in WNS recording area last year.

The vegetation was much more advanced than up-river. As we passed through the village, the grass on the verges was already so high it covered the Celandines (*Ranunculus ficaria*) and male Butterburs which were already dying back. The usual spring flowers were in abundance – Dame's-violet (*Hesperis matronalis*), White Dead-nettle (*Lamium album*), Red Dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Sticky Mouse-ear (*Cerastium Glomeratum*), Garlic (*Allium ursinum*), Crosswort (*Cruciata laevipes*), and in wet places Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*). The hedges were white with flowering Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and there were considerable colonies of Leopard's-bane (*Doronicum pardalianches*). Following the lane uphill away from the river, steep banks had large areas of Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) and Bulbous Buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*), and also far more Goldilocks Buttercup than we normally find (see special records).

Along the top road to Weeton were several clumps of Winter-cress (*Barbarea vulgaris*) and in a plantation at the side of the railway embankment many Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). Returning through the fields alongside the railway there was little of interest until we came to a small stream at the bottom, whose banks were covered with Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*). In a damp hollow nearby, amongst many rushes, were Slender Tufted-sedge (*Carex acuta*) and Square-stalked St. John's-wort (*Hypericum tetrapterum*). After going through the underpass, the embankment sides which in the past have had hundreds of Cowslips (*Primula veris*), this year unfortunately had less than two dozen clumps. (It appears that considerable railway maintenance work has taken place, disturbing the ground, and this has encouraged the spread Brambles to the detriment of everything else.)

In the afternoon the verges and riverbank westwards towards Pool were explored. Many Allium were found on the verges, Field Garlic (*Allium oleraceum*), Sand Leek (*Allium scorodoprasum*) and Few-flowered Leek (*Allium paradoxum*), together with Slender Speedwell (*Veronica filiformis*) and more Leopard's-bane. On the riverbank were several Water Figwort (*Scrophularia auriculata*) and on a sizeable island in the middle of the river were over a hundred female Butterbur – striking even at a distance.

### Chester Wood, Threshfield – May 25th

The trip was ruined by pouring rain. Although several interesting species – including Goldilocks Buttercup, Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) – were seen on the approach path, it was too dangerous to proceed into this limestone woodland. We returned home.

### Arncliffe to Litton – June 15th

A beautiful day. As we left Arncliffe, the old limestone walls were covered with small plants – Ivy-leaved Toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*), Rue-leaved Saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*), Biting Stonecrop (*Sedum acre*), White Stonecrop (*Sedum album*), Wall-rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*), Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) and Polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*). Broad-leaved Ragwort was thriving at its classic site by the bridge and Dame's-violet was also there in profusion along with the large leaves of Butterbur.

At first, as it goes up the valley, the track follows a deep ditch full of plants – Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*), Large Bitter-cress (*Cardamine amara*), Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria uliginosa*), Cuckooflower, Sticky Mouse-ear, Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*) and Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*).

It then goes into open fields, well sheep grazed, where the most interesting items occur along the many streams which cut across on their way down to the river. They were edged with Yellow-sedges both Common and Long-stalked (*Carex viridula* ssp *oedocarpa* and ssp *brachyrrhyncha*). Pyrenean Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia pyrenaica*) was present, along with Marsh Arrowgrass and Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*). Three other Veronics were seen. In places where the sheep could not get were Bird's-eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*), Common Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Wild Thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*), Salad Burnet (*Sanguisorba minor* ssp *minor*), Common Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*) and, in shady places, Primroses (*Primula vulgaris*) were still in flower. A beautiful deep red Rose with a pale centre and downy leaves could not be reached – only

seen through binoculars. Down by the river again there was Common Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*) with Dame's-violet and in many shady areas were stands of Wood Crane's-bill (*Geranium sylvaticum*). Part of a site, which had been occupied as a settlement in times past, contained a barn with Good-King-Henry (*Chenopodium bonus-henricus*) nearby and an old Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) under which unusually were a large number of Sand Leek, presumably brought by some high flood.

Up the steep slopes of Scoska Wood were seen Common Spotted-Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Melancholy Thistle (*Cirsium heterophyllum*), Marsh Hawk's-beard (*Crepis paludosa*) and more Scurvygrass. The enclosed hay meadows were brilliantly yellow with Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), but also contained Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*). Along a rough section by the river just before Litton there were all three Avens – Water Avens, (*Geum rivale*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*) and Hybrid Avens (*Geum x intermedium*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and many Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*). By a stile was a Hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) and at the entry to the village was an area of Common Bistort (*Persicaria bistorta*).

Returning by the road down the other side of the valley the verges were tall with Sweet Cicely (*Myrrhis odorata*) in seed. There was much Meadow Crane's-bill (*Geranium pratense*), but as yet with only a few flowers, and at intervals there were Gooseberry bushes (*Ribes uva-crispa*). In one section along the road Blackthorn was infected by Banana Gall. Interspersed amongst these main species were Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), Melancholy Thistle, Hairy Rock-cress (*Arabis hirsuta*) and Giant Bellflower (*Campanula latifolia*).

### **Malham Tarn – 6th July**

Heavy rain early in the morning fortunately cleared by the time we arrived although it remained dull all day. We were kindly taken round by the National Trust Property Manager, Martin Davies. We went down a track and onto the board walk which took us through different areas, some wetter than others and some more acid than others, some through woodland and finally onto the edge of the open raised bog. The resultant variety of plants was remarkable, many of them we do not have in our area or they are very rare here. Some of the most interesting were Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Common Wintergreen (*Pyrola minor*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), Northern Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*), Marsh Lousewort (*Pedicularis palustris*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*), Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*), both pale and dark forms, Marsh Arrowgrass, Deergrass (*Trichophorum cespitosum*), Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), Star Sedge (*Carex echinata*) And Fibrous tussock-sedge (*Carex appropinquata*).

In the afternoon we had permission to go up onto the hill and the limestone pavement behind the Tarn. On the way up there was a white form of Fairy Foxglove (*Erinus alpinus*) on a wall, and nearby a magnificent stand of Melancholy Thistle. Going up the hill we found Limestone Bedstraw (*Galium sternerii*) Blue Moor-grass (*Sesleria caerulea*), Flea Sedge (*Carex pulicaria*), Small Scabious (*Scabiosa columbaria*), Autumn Gentian (*Gentianella amarella*) and a white Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*). Amongst the grikes of the limestone pavement were a wide range of ferns:- Hart's-tongue, Hard Shield-fern (*Polystichum aculeatum*), Black Spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*), Green Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes-ramosum*), Brittle Bladder-fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), Lady-fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) and Male-fern.

### **Ilkley Moor (Countryside Stewardship Agreement area) – 27th July morning**

See separate article.

### **Burley Old Tip Field – 27th July afternoon**

Mrs Draper took us round as the rain stopped. Due to the dull weather the hundreds of Common Centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*) now covering part of the site were closed up. In the same area there was also a large number of Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*) and the Large Evening Primrose (*Oenothera glazioviana*). New species seen were Monk's Rhubarb (*Rumex pseudoalpinus*), Southern Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*), one only, Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Slender St. John's-wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*) and Giant Bellflower (*Campanula latifolia*). There was also a good specimen of Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*). The huge Water Dock (*Rumex hydrolapathum*) has survived and has several heads this year. Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) is increasing and there are now three clumps of Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*). Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*) is however under intense competition in the ditch although it is still present in two places, but Water-violet (*Hottonia palustris*) has disappeared from the pond. White Bryony (*Bryonia dioica*) is still thriving in the hedge and Viper's-bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) is doing well up the stony track. There are now two quite different clones of

Yellow Loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*); that in the side ditch brought in by the contractors during the reclamation work has short fat spikes, but the one that has appeared this year in the bottom ditch is the usual type found in our area. The biggest surprise was shown to us last of all, for in addition to the existing Meadow Crane's-bill, French Crane's-bill (*Geranium endressii*) and Dusky Crane's-bill (*Geranium phaeum*), there is now one plant of Knotted Crane's-bill (see Special Records).

This is a site with a constantly changing vegetation. We have comprehensive records of the arrival of species since work started on the reclamation, but we do not have equally full records of when any disappeared. This has certainly happened as smaller species have been swamped by larger and more aggressive ones. Mrs Draper hopes this year to make a record of all now present, so that comparison can be made with previous records.

## LOCAL SURVEYS

### An Orchid Day – 1st July (SH & JH)

Knotted Crane's-bill                      HB

One of our northern orchid specialists, Neil Barrett, accompanied us on a visit round several of our sites. First to be visited was Lindley Moor Plantation where last year amongst the Common Spotted-orchid colony were found over two dozen of the special beautiful "*Var rhodochila*". This year all the orchids were late in flowering

and unfortunately only five of the special ones were found and these were not as good as previously. We then went to Menwith Hill again looking for the same specialities. The area had become more overgrown than last year but two excellent specimens were found. Also present were Southern Marsh-orchid, a few Northern Marsh-orchid and an unusual Common Twayblade (*Listera ovata*) with three leaves. In the afternoon we went to Grass Wood to meet Audrey Gramshaw who then took us to see a newly appeared plant. This had unusual features but was determined as 95% Southern Marsh-orchid with a little other ingredients. (Orchids are an evolving species and frequently cross). Next we visited the old railway site at Westville Road, Ilkley (intended for school development) where last year several orchids had been found and, with permission, moved to a member's garden for safe-keeping until they could be returned later (see article in 1999 Review). This year it had been discovered that several others still remained. By now they were past their best, but were certainly hybrids exhibiting some of the features of Southern Marsh-orchid with the rest of the parentage being uncertain. Finally we went to see the plants at the eastern end of the Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits as described elsewhere.

### Yockenthwaite – 25th July (AMG) and 26th July (SH & JH)

Just before cutting, the meadows downstream from the hamlet were magnificent. They were brilliant with sheets of Betony (*Stachys officinalis*) and Small Scabious, many Fragrant Orchid, including one pure white, Common Spotted-orchid and Great Burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*). Closer investigation also revealed Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), Selfheal, three Clovers – Zig-zag, White and Red (*Trifolium medium, repens and pratense*), Melancholy Thistle, Hare-bell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), both Meadow Crane's-bill and Wood Crane's-bill, Eyebright (*Euphrasia* agg.), Field Forget-me-not (*Myosotis arvensis*) and many others. It was the best spectacle for many years.

### Grass Wood (AMG)

Several new records were reported from the wood: Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), Square-stalked St. John's-wort, New Zealand Willowherb (*Epilobium brunnescens*) and Southern Marsh-orchid (see Orchid Day Report). Horse-shoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*) was doing well and Alpine Penny-cress (*Thlaspi caerulescens*) was nearby. Sixty-four Early-purple Orchids (*Orchis mascula*) were counted and four Fragrant Orchid. Unfortunately again it was not a good year for Autumn Gentian – it was present in several places but only in small numbers.

### **Bolton Abbey Woods**

There was one of the best displays for years of Primroses all along the East Bank to Posforth Gill. In woodland on the same bank were over a hundred Herb Paris – they have been seen in this area before, but not in such numbers (see Flourishing Plants). Just on entry to the woods was a new site for Toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*) – twelve heads being counted. Other new records for this section of the East Bank upstream from the Cavendish Bridge were:- Hairy Wood-rush (*Luzula pilosa*), Early Dog-violet (*Viola reichenbachiana*), Wood Stitchwort (*Stellaria nemorum*), Greater Stitchwort and Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*). On the Western Bank near the Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem site was Moschatel and Few-flowered Leek (AMG).

### **Bolton Abbey Station – 17th August**

Anne Tupholme received permission for us to make another check of the flora at the station and along the line. Surprisingly the most striking sight was of numerous Wood Dock (*Rumex sanguineus* var. *viridis*) the flowering stems of which at this time of year were a beautiful red. There were also several Rose bushes of the Downy Rose group, with bright red globose fruit covered with prickles. Plants recorded for the first time were Smooth Hawk's-beard (*Crepis capillaris*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Fen Bedstraw (*Galium uliginosum*), Marsh Cudweed (*Gnaphalium uliginosum*), Cut-leaved Crane's-bill (*Geranium dissectum*), Lesser Hawkbit (*Leontodon saxatilis*), Water Mint, Tufted Forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*), Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Oxford Ragwort (*Senecio squalidus*) and Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*). The St. John's-worts seen this time were – Hairy (*Hypericum hirsutum*) all along the line, Square-stalked in dampish sites and, near the station buildings, a large hybrid swarm of *Hypericum* x *desetangsii*. This hybrid can occur in the absence of both parents and this seems to have been the case here as neither Perforate (*Hypericum perforatum*) nor Imperforate (*Hypericum maculatum*) were found. It was pleasing that Small Toadflax (*Chaenorhinum minus*) had spread very well along the line. Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and Common Knapweed were there in profusion and a good clump of Weld (*Reseda luteola*) was photographed. Regrettably Common Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) and Common Toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*) which were seen previously could not be found this year. Anne sent a copy of the up-to-date list – now containing 197 species – to the Railway Museum Trust.

### **Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits – June 16th and July 1st**

The ever-changing nature of this site provides its fascination. This year on entering, the ground was seen to be covered with Changing Forget-me-not (*Myosotis discolor*) and Common Bird's-foot-trefoil. To the left in a damp area were about 50 orchids, mainly Southern Marsh-orchids. Just ahead were several Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*), small and partly eaten, and a striking pair of Common Spotted-orchid, one normal colour, the other white with purple line markings. Continuing towards the river the only orchids found were three Common Twayblade, this where previously there had been a very large colony of hybrid orchids. Pendulous Sedge has spread considerably in this area and also to the east. Along the riverside towards the east Lagoon shrubs and brambles were evermore rampant. The stout Tall Eryngo (*Eryngium giganteum*) is holding its own, but the colony of Perforate St. John's-wort is being overwhelmed. In the midst of the tangle were several beautiful Rose bushes (*Rosa* ssp), mostly pale pink, but one with very deep colour. Approach to the bank of the lagoon was not possible.

The area immediately to the east of the lagoon was a sea of orchids estimated at between 500 and 600, mostly Southern Marsh-orchids or hybrids, with possibly 5% Common Spotted of which two were of the pure white form – s.sp. O'Kellyi. In one corner was a group of Northern Marsh-orchids. Further east were several Bee Orchids, with one magnificent specimen bearing ten flowers (this was found by JMC).

Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), one of the specialities of the Gravel Pits, was in full flower and has spread, now being found in three widely spaced places. There were considerable patches of

Grass Vetchling

HB

Ragged-Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), a good clump of Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*) and Narrow-leaved Vetch (*Vicia sativa ssp nigra*) in profusion. In the open area between the lagoons there were hundreds of Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) and a good number of Large-flowered Evening-primrose and Musk Mallow (*Malva moschata*) both pink and white.

#### Otley (GW)

Mrs Woolliscroft's record of the 1km square in which she lives revealed the trend that several species had disappeared and that the riverside was being overwhelmed by the spread of Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

#### Washburn (OM)

A section of Askwith Moor Road had a wide group of species together including Cut-leaved Crane's-bill, Common Centaury, Oxford Ragwort, Common Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and Weld. In the same area of the valley were Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*) and Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*). At the head of the valley Knotted Pearlwort (*Sagina nodosa*) and Eyebright (*Euphrasia agg.*) were found. near Swinsty were new sites for Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*) and Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*) and further south were Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*) and Bitter-vetch (*Lathyrus linifolius var. montanus*).

#### U.W.F.S.

The Field Society travelled far afield this year with the result that most of their records were made outside our area.

### B.S.B.I RECORDS

#### Tetrad – Humberstone Bank – 13th June and 8th July (HMB), (SH)&(JH)

This area is at the head of the Washburn Valley at over 1100ft and extends to the Blubberhouses – Duck St. Road. Much of it is rough grassland but there are plantations, marshy areas and stream and roadside verges. Almost two hundred species were recorded which was quite surprising for such unpromising land.

Most of the trees were plantations of conifers including European Larch (*Larix decidua*), but near the farmhouse was a mixed wood shelter belt containing Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*). On some of the drier hillsides amongst the Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) were extensive patches of Sheep Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) which at this time of year was more colourful than the Heather. There was also Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Heath Rush (*Juncus squarrosus*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*).

A large marshy hollow contained Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*), Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*) and Marsh Violet (*Viola palustris*) – both in profusion, also Heath Milkwort (*Polygala serpyllifolia*), Spring Sedge (*Carex caryophyllea*), Hare's-tail Cotton-grass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) and Toad Rush (*Juncus bufonius*). Near the stream were found Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), Bog Stitchwort (*Stellaria uliginosa*), Blinks (*Montia fontana*), Round-leaved Crowfoot (*Ranunculus omiophyllus*), Field Forget-me-not, Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*) and two ferns, Hard Fern and Lemon-scented Fern (*Oreopteris limbosperma*).

The roadside verges are very wide with deep ditches and the flora was prolific and diverse. At intervals all the way along were the tall spikes of Monk's-rhubarb – this being its main site in our area. Similarly for very long distances just at the edge of the tarmac were hundreds of Marsh Arrowgrass (see Special Records). Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) appeared quite frequently, as did Ragged-robin, Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon pratensis*), Greater Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella major*) and all three Avens – Water, Wood and Hybrid. Both Wood and Meadow Crane's-bill were present along with Red Campion (*Silene Dioica*), but we saw only one clump of the much rarer White Campion (*Silene alba*). The road is renowned for its orchids, but on this section we found only Twayblades. There were large bushes of Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*), Blackthorn and

Marsh Arrowgrass HB



Rose – Harsh Downy-rose (*Rosa tomentosa*) with deep pink flowers. The ferns seen were Male, Lady (*Athyrium felix-femina*) and Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*). In the bottom of the ditches were found Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*) Pyrenean Scurvygrass and Square-stalked St. John’s-wort.

**OTHER MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS – in order from Rougemont up the dale**

Wild Daffodil ( <i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i> )	Riffa Wood (Sarah Ward)
Wild Daffodil	Farnley Lake (NB & AB)
Bogbean ( <i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i> )	Thrispin Beck (PPA)
Pendulous Sedge	Path by stream below Lindley Res. (AMG & JMC)
Wood Stitchwort	“ “ “ “
Giant Bellflower	“ “ “ “
Butterbur (female)	“ “ “ “
Marsh Violet	Blubberhouses A59 (PPA)
Bog Asphodel ( <i>Narthecium ossifragum</i> )	“ “
Round-leaved Sundew ( <i>Drosera rotundifolia</i> )	“ “
Narrow Buckler-fern ( <i>Dryopteris carthusiana</i> )	Between Blubberhouses and Thruscross (PPA)
Deadly Nightshade ( <i>Atropa belladonna</i> )	Thruscross, below dam (PPA)
Pale Forget-me-not ( <i>Myosotis stolonifera</i> )	Thruscross Reservoir, northern tip (PPA)
Bristle Club-rush ( <i>Isolepis setacea</i> )	“ “ “ “
Meadow Crane’s-bill (white form)	Menwith Hill (JH)
Common Spotted-orchid	Menston, Halstead Drive (JMC)
Wild Carrot ( <i>Daucus carota</i> )	Burley Bypass roundabout, a few still remaining on Otley side (JH)
Common Spotted-orchid – in profusion	Bow Beck Gill (PPA)
Ragged-Robin	“ “
Giant Horsetail ( <i>Equisetum telemateia</i> )	“ “
Marsh Hawk’s-beard	“ “
Shoreweed ( <i>Littorella uniflora</i> )	March Ghyll Reservoir (PPA)
Celandine ( <i>Ranunculus ficaria ssp bulbifera</i> )	Ilkley, Westville Road (JED)
Pendulous Sedge	Ilkley, Lido (MHA)
Goat’s-beard	Ilkley, riverside path (MHA)
Pink Purslane ( <i>Claytonia sibirica</i> )	Ilkley, Heber’s Ghyll (MHA)
Snowdrop ( <i>Galanthus nivalis</i> )	Addingham, Gatecroft Lane (ADL)
Columbine ( <i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i> )	Howgill, Wharfe gorge (JH)
Hard Fern – in profusion	“ “ “
Meadow Crane’s-bill (double form)	Skyreholme (JMC)
Ragged-Robin	Parceval Hall woods (AT)
Water Figwort	“ “ “
Water-plantain ( <i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i> )	“ “ “
Mountain Pansy ( <i>Viola lutea</i> ) in flower 2nd May	Bastow Wood (AMG)
Bird’s-eye Primrose - in flower 17th May	“ “
Primrose - in flower 6th Feb.	Lea Green (UWFS)
Lesser Meadow-rue ( <i>Thalictrum minus</i> )	Mossdale Scar (MHA)
Smooth Lady’s-mantle ( <i>Alchemilla glabia</i> )	“ “
Shining Crane’s-bill ( <i>Geranium lucidum</i> )	“ “
Black Bog-rush ( <i>Schoenus nigricans</i> )	North bank of Skirfare, upstream from bridge (AB)
Selfheal (white form)	Dowber Gill Beck (MHA)
Lesser Meadow-rue	“ “

Records were received from the following (with apologies for any omissions):

P P Abbott (YNU Recorder)	C J Dixon	A Tupholme
M H Atkinson	F C Draper	J K & S Ward
A Bickley	A M Gramshaw	Sarah Ward
N. & A. Bowland	S Hartley	G Woolliscroft
H M Burrow	A D & M Leather	
J M Clapham	O Middleton	

Thank you all.

Joyce Hartley and Joan Duncan

## FUNGI

‘A mycological explosion’ was one description given for the 2000 main season – a naturally occurring Millennium event perhaps?

Colourful Russulas fruited well, noted particularly in the Washburn valley, as did Milk-caps (*Lactarius*) and Wax-caps (*Hygrocybe* etc.) in the usual open areas. An uncommon Russula, *R. curtipes*, with bright yellow gills, was a new record for Strid Wood (3rd Oct.). It was useful to go otter surveying with a friend, as *Lactarius lilacinus*, not in our records, was abundant in the alder habitat (10th Oct.).

Three new Wax-caps in Bastow Wood were *Cuphophyllus colemannianus*, the aptly named orange-red *Hygrocybe aurantiosplendens* and small *H. laeta* (17th Oct.). We recorded seven Wax-caps in a rather small patch, including the pink *Hygrocybe calyptraeformis*.

Some keen-eyed members made interesting discoveries, such as the tiny Field Bird’s Nest, (*Cyathus olla*) in a Farnley field (N Bowland, 17th Sept.). When members were asked to look for target species, Common Bird’s Nest (*Crucibulum laeve*) was on the list. That has not turned up again, but *Cyathus* is part of the group.

Dog Stinkhorn (*Mutinus caninus*), on Otley Chevin, was the only record from a site that once had many (D Alred, 15th Sept.). The striking Panther Cap (*Amanita pantherina*) by the river near Barden, and Cauliflower Fungus (*Sparassis crispa*) again in Strid Wood, were good finds (DA, 27th Sept.).

Regular visits throughout the season added to the Grass Wood list. Most memorable was the amazing quantity, but there was quality too in that some species fruit only at intervals and were re-found last season. There were three new Cortinarius, *C. carviolaceus*, *C. osmophorus* and *C. simulatus*. Other records were Common Morel (*Morchella esculenta*) (22nd April, MYFG), *Melanophyllum eyrei* with blue gills (Sept. UWFS), a cup-shaped Helvella (*Macroscyphus macropus*) (14th Oct.) and a new small Parasol Fungus (*Echinoderma echinaceum*) (J Powell, Oct.). An uncommon Club Fungus, (*Macrotyphula fistulosa*) in beech litter, is perhaps under-recorded (E. Tinsley, Nov.).

The Joint Foray in Rudding Park on 1st October was organised by Jim Neary, HDNS recorder. It was very well supported, partly due to outside publicity. In the private grounds, one hundred species were found, making it one of the most productive joint forays so far.

Common Bird’s Nest Fungus      RC

*Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*, a jelly fungus with spines, and Earth Fan (*Thelephora terrestris*) were among the distinctive fungi collected for the display

We were once more grateful to Tom Hering for his patient teaching and expertise.

An excellent and well-attended Society Microscope evening on Fungi was organised by Ann Bickley and Joan Powell as a follow-up to the Joint Foray, with plenty of material to determine and discuss. It is hoped this will encourage more members to work on fungi.

Much has been written in journals recently about popularising fungi by inventing English names. The suggestion that this could happen for all species seems unattainable. Accepted names in use such as Sulphur Tuft and Poison Pie are fine, but incorporating a Latin generic name is also questioned. Is it easier to remember Russula or Brittle-gills? Common Yellow Russula has been in use for some years. The choice of names will be difficult to agree.

Once again, I express my thanks to P & J Andrews, T Hering and F Remblance for the invaluable help with identification, and for records from D Alred, N Bowland, J M Clapham, J Powell, E Tinsley (Skipton) and UWFS members, with apologies for any omissions.

Audrey Gramshaw

## VERTEBRATES OTHER THAN BIRDS

### AMPHIBIANS

#### CAUDATA tailed amphibians

##### GREAT CRESTED NEWT *Triturus cristatus*

No records.

##### PALMATE NEWT *Triturus helveticus*

No records

##### SMOOTH NEWT *Triturus vulgaris*

No records

#### SALIENTIA tail-less amphibians

##### COMMON TOAD *Bufo bufo*

7 March many Toads crossing lane Grass Wood (UWFS). 8 March lots of spawn in dam below Thruscross (DA). 25 Apr spawn and 2 Toads same area (R&HB). 16 Aug 1 disturbed in Grass Wood (AG). 19 Sep Toad in Ilkley garden (D&ML).

##### COMMON FROG *Rana temporaria*

7 Feb first seen. By 23 Feb 80 Frogs plus spawn, then only one batch seemed to hatch and mature, Ilkley garden pond (JWB). 26 Feb 3 batches of spawn at Hoodstorth and 14 at Harden Gill (N&AB). 1 March masses of spawn and Frogs calling and mating Harden Gill (N&AB). 8 Mar 20 batches of spawn Bleach Mill (N&AB). 12 Mar many Frogs in amplexus Greenhow (DA). 13 Mar 50 plus spawn Hawksworth Moor (N&AB). 14 Mar 22 Frogs with spawn Grimwith (JMC&AMG). 18 Mar spawn in Chevin pond and White Rose pond (N&AB). 20 Mar Plenty of spawn Gallows Hill (DA). 25 Mar tadpoles in spring at Heber's Ghyll (D&ML). 25 Apr 5 Frogs below Thruscross (R&HB). 16 Aug large red/brown

Common Toad

RC

Frog and 19 Sep 3 yellow/brown Frogs in Ilkley garden (D&ML).

### REPTILES

#### SQUAMATA scaly reptiles

##### ADDER *Vipera berus*

26 Feb 3 females Hoodstorth (N&AB). 1 Mar 5 females Harden Gill (N&AB). 4 Mar 10 Adders above Thruscross (DA). 16 Mar 6 at Hoodstorth (N&AB). 18 Mar 10 at Harden Gill (DA).

##### SLOW WORM *Anguis fragilis*

4 Aug 1 at Lindley Wood (DA).

##### COMMON LIZARD *Lacerta vivipara*

19 Mar 1 seen Hoodstorth (DA), and 3 seen near Twelve Apostles (JWB). 6 Aug 2 seen and 11 Sep 3 at Lindley Wood (DA).

### MAMMALS

#### CARNIVORES flesh-eaters

##### FOX *Vulpes vulpes*

9 Jan 1 dead on Burley bypass (JD). 25 Jan 1 dead Lindley (JMC). 19 Sep 1 seen above Lindley Wood Reservoir (PR).

##### OTTER *Lutra lutra*

18 Apr B Parkin saw an otter near Knotford Nook. The sighting was confirmed by Sylvia Joy (Otter and Rivers Project Officer). From an otter survey, spraints and a print have been found in our area (JMC).

##### POLECAT or POLECAT FERRET *Mustela putorius*

18 Jul a badly damaged specimen found dead on road near the Strid (N&AB, KL). 9 Aug a full grown adult female found dead near Farfield Hall, taken to Cliffe Castle Museum for identification. DNA testing is the only way to prove 'true Polecat' and at the moment this is too expensive, therefore: Polecat/Polecat Ferret.

**STOAT** *Mustela erminea*

21 Jan Stoat in ermine 'all white' Farnley Moor (PR). 19 Mar 1 seen Lindley (N&AB). 10 Apr 1 at Beaverdyke (PR). 27 Jun 2 playing on road Timble, on return 1 dead Nats walk Timble, N&AB). 2 Jul 1 dead Snowden Moor (N&AB). 26 Jul 1 seen Snowden Carr road (PR). 21 Aug 2 seen near Skirfare Bridge (R&HB). 25 Aug 1 at Timble (KL). 12 Sep 1 Timble Ings (PR). 20 Sep 1 at Thruscross (DA). 16 Oct 1 on Barden Moor (R&HB)

**WEASEL** *Mustela nivalis*

20 Mar 1 on edge of Farnley Moor (PR). 22 Mar 1 near Norwood mast (R&HB). 29 Mar 1 at Beaverdyke (PR). 23 Sep 1 Timble Ings (KL).

**AMERICAN MINK** *Mustela vison*

17 Jan 1 near Lindley Wood (PR). 10 Aug 1 seen below Swinsty Dam (PR). 10 Oct Mink scat at Lindley (JMC).

**BADGER** *Meles meles*

25 Jan 1 nearly run over on Westwood Drive (D&ML). 12 Feb small Badger seen near Addingham Bypass (JD). 8 Apr 1 in front garden, on 22 Aug 2 seen again (D&ML). 28 Apr 1 Addingham Moorside (N&AB). Prints seen in Grass Wood (AG). All setts active, between 2 and 4 animals seen (JD, N&AB). At one sett cubs playing with inquisitive lamb (JD).

**ARTIODACTYLA** even-toed ungulates

**RED DEER** *Cervus elaphus*

12 Oct Red Deer stag with sheep between Askwith and Snowden Moor. Still there Dec (LD, N&AB).

**ROE DEER** *Capreolus capreolus*

Many reports again this year from Ilkley, Thruscross, Swinsty, Lindley Wood, Leathley, Long Ashes, garden Panorama Drive (buck and doe), Grass Wood, Castley, Fewston, Timble and Addingham. 2 Feb 3 seen below trout farm (PR). 25 Apr doe with kid Grass Wood (AG). 30 Nov 4 near Dob Bridge (PR).

**MUNTJAC** *Muntiacus reevesi* No reports.

**INSECTIVORES** insect-eaters

**HEDGEHOG** *Erinaceus europaeus*

Often seen Menston Garden (KL). 30 Apr 1 seen at Hubberholme (D&ML). 20 May 1 seen Ilkley garden (JD). 13 Jun 1 several times Ilkley (JD). 23 Jun 1 dead Buckden Gill (J&SH). 10 Sep 1 dead Nell Bank (D&ML).

**MOLE** *Talpa europaea*

As usual great activity early in the year. 12 Jul 1 foraging above ground near seat at Fewston inlet (PR). 3 Sep 1 dead Lindley Wood (DA). 8 Sep 2 dead Moles at Lindley with burying beetles (N&AB).

**COMMON SHREW** *Sorex araneus*

8 Aug 1 dead Hebden Gill (AG).

**PYGMY SHREW** *Sorex minutus*

5 Aug 1 dead Hawksworth Moor (N&AB)

**WATER SHREW** *Neomys fodiens* No reports.

**RODENTS** gnawing animals

**GREY SQUIRREL** *Sciurus carolinensis*

Very many reports. If anything they seem to be on the increase (PR, JMC, N&AB). 9 Sep 1 dead Panorama Drive (D&ML).

**BANK VOLE** *Clethrionomys glareolus*

No reports.

**FIELD VOLE** *Microtus agrestis*

No reports

**WATER VOLE** *Arvicola terrestris*

1 seen River Wharfe near caravans WNS walk Addingham (JMC)

**WOOD MOUSE** *Apodemus sylvaticus*

19 Jan 1 on wood pile in garden (D&ML). 2 Aug and 3 Aug 1 on peanut feeder in garden (JMC). 7 Sep 1 on compost heap (D&ML).

**COMMON RAT** *Rattus norvegicus*

30 Jan 1 on Westwood Drive Ilkley (D&ML). 29 Aug 1 below Grass Wood (N&AB). Oct in Menston garden (KL).

LAGOMORPHA rabbits and hares

RABBIT *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Still prolific in WNS area with signs of myxomatosis early in the year. Seen near Pool, Hoodstorth, Barden Moor, Hawksworth Moor, Menston, Grassington, Buckden, Marsh Gill. (D&ML, N&AB).

BROWN HARE *Lepus europaeus*

More sightings than last year. Seen Leathley, Denton Moor, Hoodstorth, Harden Beck, Hawksworth Moor, Lindley Wood, Castley, Swinsty, Timble, Thruscross. 30 Apr 11 seen east of Leathley Hall (PR). 27 Jun 5 seen Timble (Nats walk). 4 edge of Denton Moor (PR). 26 Jul 3 Dob Bridge (PR).

CHIROPTERA bats

PIPISTRELLE *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

30 Apr 2 bats Addingham (R&HB). 8 Jun 1 flying above garden (D&ML).

NOCTULE *Nyctalus noctula*

4 Sep 1 flying over house (D&ML).

Contributors:

DA	D Alred	AG	A Gramshaw
JWB	J W Bell	CH	C Hartley
N&AB	N & A Bowland	J&SH	J & S Hartley
R&HB	R & H Burrow	M&DL	M & D Leather
JMC	J M Clapham	KL	K Limb
LD	L Dewdney	UWFS	Upper Wharfedale Field Society
JD	J Dixon	PR	P Riley

Many thanks to the above for their records.

Nevil Bowland

## ENTOMOLOGY SECTION

### ORDER LEPIDOPTERA

### BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

The species follow the order, nomenclature and serial numbers of Bradley and Fletcher (1986). These numbers are widely accepted and included in Butterflies and Moths of Yorkshire (YNU, 1989)

#### BUTTERFLIES

For the third year running most members noted the scarcity of the Small Tortoiseshell butterfly, this year in line with many comments nationwide. Generally however, many of our residents had satisfactory years, indeed several species thrived, and there were a pleasing number of migrant sightings, notably of the Clouded Yellow. The Holly Blue was expected to have entered a cyclic decline, and so it proved.

It became clear this year just how rich in butterflies were the grassy borders of the forest footpaths around the Stainburn Moor/Lindley Moor Wood complex (SLM).

#### HESPERIIDAE

##### 1526 SMALL SKIPPER *Thymelicus sylvestris*

Recorded from sites around Ilkley and Otley, but little further up the dales this year. Still expanding its range in Yorkshire, but in our area had a slightly poorer year than last year.

Recorded first on 4<sup>th</sup> July along the forest footpath at SLM and last on 25<sup>th</sup> August at Timble Ings. A peak count of 65 at SLM on 11<sup>th</sup> August, and there were counts of over 40 at Ben Rhydding Gravel Pits (BRGP) and Timble Ings. The counts at Burley and on the Middleton Hospital site were well down on last year.

##### 1531 LARGE SKIPPER *Ochlodes venata*

Not as common as the Small Skipper, with no records far up the dales, in fact none beyond Bolton Abbey. Its range seems to have remained constant here and in Yorkshire over many years, although a recent Welsh survey showed an alarming decline in its numbers.

First seen on 20 June at BRGP, last seen on 11 August at SLM. Counts were in single figures, with the exception of 34 seen on 30 June at SLM. Unfortunately there was no record from the promising Middleton Hospital site.

#### PIERIDAE

##### 1545 CLOUDED YELLOW *Colias croceus*

Eight reports of singletons, five around Ilkley and Burley, three near Blubberhouses and Thruscross. Nationally, the insect was widespread this year.

First seen, a female of the pale variety *helice*, on 26 June at BRGP. The last report was on 23 September, a male near Blubberhouses.

##### 1546 BRIMSTONE *Gonepteryx rhamni*

Once again there were sightings of this wandering resident, five in all. The dates range from 18<sup>th</sup> March, at BRGP, to 30<sup>th</sup> May at Grass Wood. Unfortunately there have been no reports of larvae on the alder buckthorn in Burley. In Yorkshire, brimstones are only reported in numbers well to the East or South of our area.

##### 1549 LARGE WHITE *Pieris brassicae*

Many sightings of small numbers. The first was on 8<sup>th</sup> May in Ben Rhydding, the last on 18<sup>th</sup> September also in Ben Rhydding, and the largest number was 15 on 19<sup>th</sup> July at Oughtershaw, Upper Wharfedale.

The status in upland areas, where we had several records, is of interest as it is usually thought of as a town insect. Both Large and Small Whites have at least two generations a year, sometimes supplemented by immigrants.

##### 1550 SMALL WHITE *Pieris rapae*

Like the previous insect, many sightings of small numbers. The first was on 19<sup>th</sup> April, at Castley, and the last was of 10 at the Middleton Hospital site on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. The largest number, again, was 15 at Oughtershaw, Upper Wharfedale.

NB In flight this species is very difficult to separate from the Green-veined White so when many 'whites' are around an acceptable way forward is to count the flying insects and allocate them to the two species in the proportion of the numbers of those seen settled!

##### 1551 GREEN-VEINED WHITE *Pieris napi*

Numerous records of this widespread species, which seems to have had a good year. The first seen was on 30<sup>th</sup> April at BRGP. The last noted was on 22<sup>nd</sup> September at the Old Tip Field, Burley. There were several

counts in double figures, amongst them 30 on 20<sup>th</sup> August at Fewston reservoir, and 20 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> August near Pool Bridge. No records from sites in the higher reaches of the dales, where the insect can be numerous.

1553 ORANGE TIP *Anthocharis cardamines*

Many single-figure counts of this distinctive insect, which is widespread in the Southern part of our area, and for which there are previous records right up the dales. There is a single generation a year. First seen on 20<sup>th</sup> April near Addingham, last seen on 16<sup>th</sup> June close to Ilkley golf course. The highest count was 4, on 9<sup>th</sup> May near Lindley.

## LYCAENIDAE

1555 GREEN HAIRSTREAK *Callophrys rubi*

The number and distribution of sites is one of the delights of Wharfedale – there must be more to be learned about this spring-time gem.

First recorded on 23<sup>rd</sup> April at Badgers Gate, Langbar Moor, and the last on 31<sup>st</sup> May on Ilkley Moor just off Cowpasture Road. The largest number seen was 30 on 4<sup>th</sup> May at Badgers Gate. The Burley Moor site yielded sightings well up onto the moor, and possibly round to Rushy Beck. Others were noted on Barden Moor, Snowden Carr, and singletons in a garden near the Old Bridge Ilkley (on a guest's trousers), and in Grass Wood.

1557 PURPLE HAIRSTREAK *Quercusia quercus*

No sightings–yet very probably present in our area – it has been seen just outside at Hollins Hall. It may be most fruitful to search late on a fine summer afternoon or into the early evening, particularly on sunlit oak tree-tops, and neighbouring trees such as ash, situated on the south facing edges of woods or wood rides.

1558 WHITE-LETTER HAIRSTREAK *Satyrium w-album*

A new colony was discovered this year by Dave Curran, in the elm trees on the Addingham Old Road. There were sightings by several observers on 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July. The maximum number seen in the tree tops at any time was 4.

Unfortunately there were no sightings again at the other known site, the Old Tip Field Burley, where Bob Draper's presence is sadly missed.

1561 SMALL COPPER *Lycaena phlaeas*

Most records were of singletons, and once again there were few first generation (April-June) records, the earliest being on 15<sup>th</sup> June at Humberstone Bank, Washburn. The best second generation record was 15 on 28<sup>th</sup> August at Timble Ings. An experienced observer has been quoted as seeing 65 on Barden Moor this summer but unfortunately we have no date.

The latest record was 16<sup>th</sup> September at BRGP, so no third generation records this year.

1573 NORTHERN BROWN ARGUS *Aricia artaxerxes ssp. salmacis*

The status of the small number of North of England Brown Argus colonies has recently been reconsidered, and we await the findings. Whatever these may be, the Wharfedale colonies are important, and under-recorded.

This year we have good records from just two of the five known colonies. On 17<sup>th</sup> June 72 insects were seen near Bastow Wood. On 27<sup>th</sup> June 17 insects were seen near Skirethorns. None were seen on a visit to the site near Buckden, or the possible site near Parceval Hall.

1574 COMMON BLUE *Polyommatus icarus*

Some good records from the limestone regions of Wharfedale, although few records from the Southern part of our area. First recorded on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2 males near Bastow Wood. Last recorded on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2 near Trollers Ghyll. The largest number seen was 32, on 27<sup>th</sup> June near Skirethorns. 15 insects were noted at Oughtershaw, Upper Wharfedale on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

1580 HOLLY BLUE *Celastrina argiolus*

Few records this year, only singletons being seen around Menston, Burley, and Ilkley. The first was on 30<sup>th</sup> April in Menston, the last on 1<sup>st</sup> October in Burley. A second-generation female was seen in Burley by Freda Draper.

## NYMPHALIDAE

1590 RED ADMIRAL *Vanessa atalanta*

A large number of records, seven of which were in double figures, shows that the Red Admiral had a good year. The first sighting was on 12<sup>th</sup> June at Manor Park, the last on 19<sup>th</sup> October in Ben Rhydding. The largest number was 24 between Farnley and Leathley, on 19<sup>th</sup> September.

1591 PAINTED LADY *Cynthia cardui*

Like the previous insect, a large number of records, although no double figure counts. The first sighting was on 11<sup>th</sup> June at Ben Rhydding, the last on 4<sup>th</sup> October in the same area. The largest number seen was 7 on 3<sup>rd</sup> September at the Middleton Hospital site, and 7 on 21<sup>st</sup> September in Menston.

1593 SMALL TORTOISESHELL *Aglais urticae*

A large number of records, mostly of small numbers. Felt by most observers to have had a disappointing year. First seen on 11<sup>th</sup> March near Otley, last on 13<sup>th</sup> October near Lindley. Interestingly, the largest numbers recorded were seen well way from observers' gardens. These were 15 on 8<sup>th</sup> August at Yarnbury near Grassington, 35 between Pool Bridge and Castley on 15<sup>th</sup> August, and a remarkable 150 on creeping thistle in the same area on 11<sup>th</sup> August. In gardens, however, there were generally few in comparison with the peacock.

1597 PEACOCK *Inachis io*

Seems to have had a reasonable and lengthy season, and there are many records. However we had to wait until August to obtain them in double figures. The first seen was on 26<sup>th</sup> February on the edge of Middleton Wood. The last was on 4<sup>th</sup> November at the Chevin. The largest counts were 30 on 20<sup>th</sup> August near Fewston, and 36 on 3<sup>rd</sup> September at the Middleton Hospital site.

1598 COMMA *Polygonia c-album*

Plenty of sightings, including one up the dale at Grass Wood. Again a long season with the first seen on 11<sup>th</sup> March at Burley, the last two on 19<sup>th</sup> October on different sites at Ben Rhydding. The largest number in the first generation was 4, seen at Farnley Lake on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, and at BRGP on 5<sup>th</sup> April. In the second generation 7 were seen at Timble Ings on 25<sup>th</sup> August, and 7 at BRGP on 19<sup>th</sup> October. The hutchinsoni variety was again noted.

## SATYRIDAE

1614 SPECKLED WOOD *Pararge aegeria*

No record this year, but we can hope for better things as this woodland butterfly is spreading in Yorkshire.

1615 WALL *Lasiommata megera*

A better year than last year, with a good scattering of records across the Southern part of our area. The first on 13<sup>th</sup> May at Manor Park, the last on 23<sup>rd</sup> September at Timble Ings. The highest count was 12 on 4<sup>th</sup> September near Dob Park.

1625 GATEKEEPER *Pyronia tithonus*

New locations and much larger numbers than previously reported. It is now clear that there is a large colony along the forest track at SLM, and that the colony at the Old Tip Field Burley is doing well. Also reported at Timble Ings and near Swinsty reservoir. The first sighting was of 6 on 6<sup>th</sup> August at Burley, the last of 3 on 25<sup>th</sup> August in the same area. The largest number reported from the Burley site was 17, but there was a count of 100 at SLM on 11<sup>th</sup> August notwithstanding a curtailed visit.

1626 MEADOW BROWN *Maniola jurtina*

Another successful season with many records, although numbers a little less than last year. Nevertheless, almost exclusively observed in the Southern part of our region. First seen on 13<sup>th</sup> June at SLM, last on 4<sup>th</sup> September near Dob Park. The largest numbers were 104 on 18<sup>th</sup> July at BRGP, 140 on 19<sup>th</sup> July at the Old Tip Field, Burley, and 87 on 10<sup>th</sup> August at the Middleton Hospital site.

1627 SMALL HEATH *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Again this year few recordings and small numbers. Primarily an upland insect, Butterfly Conservation has commented that perhaps many sites are unvisited. The first record also was the largest, 10 seen on 17<sup>th</sup> June near Bastow Wood. 7 were seen near Skirethorns on 27<sup>th</sup> June, and the last one was seen near Fewston reservoir on 20<sup>th</sup> August.

1629 RINGLET *Aphantopus hyperantus*

Wet summers seem to suit this insect and certainly this has been another successful season. The ringlet is extending its range in Yorkshire, although virtually unknown in Lancashire.

This year it has been seen on more sites than ever, Middleton Hospital and Cocking End being new in Wharfedale, Timble Ings and Menwith Hill being two of several new sites in Washburndale. The first was seen on 27<sup>th</sup> June at BRGP, and the last record was of 40 on 11<sup>th</sup> August at SLM. Var. caeca was seen as usual at BRGP. The largest number recorded was 125 on 19<sup>th</sup> July at SLM. Included were several var. caeca, and one var. lanceolata.

(1999 records suggest there may be three distinct sites in the SLM area. The figures above refer to one).



**Records** were received from the following observers:

D & J Alred, M Atkinson, A Baines, Dr & Mrs JW Bell, N & A Bowland, RJ & H Burrow, JM Clapham, CJ & P Cope, D Curran, M & R Densley, FC Draper, JE Duncan, AM Gramshaw, S & J Hartley, B Hockey, D & R Howson, L & M Jones, AD & M Leather, K Limb, C Moore, PC Quin, P Riley, D Storey, A & B Thompson

As a new recorder I feel a real debt to everyone who has contributed. All the records and comments have been of interest, and you have all helped to build up an understanding of the overall scene. I apologise for any errors or omissions.

DP Howson

## MOTHS

A disappointing year. Heavy rain and some frost affected early trapping, with only small counts of even the common spring moths such as Clouded Drab, Common Quaker and Hebrew Character. Results improved in the summer but the late autumn moths were again rain affected. The WNS has purchased a new moth trap which will extend recording opportunities in 2001. The second National Moth Night was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September when the Society ran three traps and contributed to the national records.

## GEOMETRIDAE

1760 RED-GREEN CARPET *Chloroclysta siterata*

Two specimens were taken at the Menston trap on 18 October. There are only four previous WNS records for this fairly scarce moth.

1827 FREYERS PUG *Eupithecia intricata*.

A single was trapped at Otley on 18 June, only the fifth WNS record since the first in 1994. First recorded in Yorkshire in 1990.

1904 SCORCHED WING *Plagodis dolabraria*

Not a common moth; singles were recorded from Menston and Roseville Burley-in-W. The only previous records were in 1988 and 1989 from Roseville.

1909 SPECKLED YELLOW *Pseudopanthera macularia*

Again recorded from Grass Wood. There were two sightings of this unmistakable day-flying moth 30 May.

1919 PURPLE THORN *Selenia tetralunaria*

A single was taken at the Menston trap on 8 May. More common in southern England, this was only the fourth WNS record. The first in 1984 at Menston, in 1996 at Nell Bank, and in 1997 at Roseville, B-in-W.

1926 PALE BRINDLED BEAUTY *Apocheima pilosaria*

Only occasionally recorded, probably due to its early flight period. A specimen was taken at the window on 11 Feb in Menston.

## SPHINGIDAE

1979 LIME HAWK-MOTH *Mimas tiliae*

Continues to be recorded in small numbers since the first record in 1993. Two males were trapped at Menston on 6 June.

1984 HUMMING-BIRD HAWK-MOTH *Macroglossum stellatarum*

A regular migrant, recorded only intermittently in our area. Recorded at Otley, Ben Rhydding, Burley in Wharfedale and Ilkley – feeding on Red Valerian and Lavender. There have been reports of a number of sightings in the County of this day-flying moth.

1992 SMALL ELEPHANT HAWK MOTH *Deilephila porcellus*

Again only one record, a single trapped at Menston on 18 June.

## LYMANTRIIDAE

2026 THE VAPOURER *Orgyia antiqua*

Several males were reported from Manor Park, Burley in Wharfedale in late August. A day-flying moth not recorded since 1997.

2028 PALE TUSSOCK *Calliteara pudibunda*

Occasional records since the first in 1986. A single was trapped at Bradford Road, Otley on 18 June.

## NOCTUIDAE

2091 DARK SWORD GRASS *Agrotis ipsilon*

An annual immigrant, recorded occasionally, usually as singles. One was taken at Menston on 15 October.

2179 PINE BEAUTY *Panolis flammea*

Again there were two records of this spring moth from the Menston trap which is adjacent to a group of Pine trees.

2240 BLAIR'S SHOULDER-KNOT *Lithophane leautieri*

Still maintaining its status in Wharfedale since the first Yorkshire record in 1991.

2247 MERVEILLE DU JOUR *Dichonia aprilina*

A female of this beautiful green autumn moth was trapped at Menston. Only occasional records previously and always as singles.

2452 RED UNDERWING *Catocala nupta*

A single from Ilkley was the only record of this very large distinctive moth

Records were received from the following:

D Alred	G Parkinson
A M Atkinson	P C Quin
F C Draper	B Rhodes (Nell Bank)
A M Gramshaw	P Senior
D P Howson	A I Wilson

I would like to thank everyone for their records and comments and to apologise for any omissions.

Jeanette M Clapham

## DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

### ORDER ODONATA

Sightings in species order as follows:

LARGE RED DAMSELFLY *Pyrrosoma nymphula*

Recorded 30<sup>th</sup> April to end of June at usual sites in Wharfedale and Washburn Valley.

30 at BRGP 25<sup>th</sup> June.

BLUE TAILED DAMSELFLY *Ischnura elegans*

Recorded 28<sup>th</sup> May to 26<sup>th</sup> July, all in Otley, Burley and Ilkley areas.

30 at BRGP 29<sup>th</sup> May

30 at Burley 25<sup>th</sup> June

AZURE DAMSELFLY *Coenagrion puella*

Recorded 29<sup>th</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> July at BRGP, Timble Ings pond and Thruscross

COMMON BLUE DAMSELFLY *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Recorded 6<sup>th</sup> June to 28<sup>th</sup> August, mainly at Otley, Burley and Timble Ings.

EMERALD DAMSELFLY *Lestes sponsa*

Recorded only at Beaver Dam, Yarnbury and Timble Ings between 8<sup>th</sup> August and 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept.

BANDED DEMOISELLE *Calopteryx splendens*

Recorded 7<sup>th</sup> July to 11<sup>th</sup> August in Wharfedale at Pool, Otley, Burley and BRGP.

Also on 19<sup>th</sup> June way out of expected area at Timble Ings Pond.

BROWN HAWKER *Aeshna grandis*

Recorded 25<sup>th</sup> June to 9<sup>th</sup> September from Pool, Otley GP, Chevin Pond, Sun Lane Burley and BRGP.

Blue-tailed Damselflies

DA

COMMON HAWKER *Aeshna juncea*

Recorded 21<sup>st</sup> June to 23 September from Lindley, Timble, Thruscross, Hebden and Grassington areas.

SOUTHERN HAWKER *Aeshna cyanea*

Recorded 15<sup>th</sup> July to 13<sup>th</sup> September at Lindley, Timble, Ben Rhydding and Ilkley. On 18<sup>th</sup> July at Lindley Pond 4 flying and 10 exuvia collected (this pond was previously a stronghold for *Aeshna Juncea*).

MIGRANT HAWKER *Aeshna mixta*

One record only this year. 1 at Otley Gravel Pits 19<sup>th</sup> October.

BLACK DARTER *Sympetrum danae*

Recorded in August and September at Yarnbury and Thruscross.

COMMON DARTER *Sympetrum striolatum*

Recorded 21<sup>st</sup> July to 19<sup>th</sup> October at Lindley, Timble, John O'Gaunts Reservoir, Swinsty, Thruscross, Otley GP, Burley and BRGP.

RUDDY DARTER *Sympetrum sanguineum*

Not recorded this year.

EMPEROR *Anax imperator*

Recorded 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July at Otley Gravel Pits and 30<sup>th</sup> July at Timble Ings Pond.

GOLDEN RINGED *Cordulegaster boltonii*

Two records at Timble Ings, 19<sup>th</sup> June and 16<sup>th</sup> July, and in centre of Ilkley 8<sup>th</sup> August.

FOUR SPOTTED CHASER *Libellula quadrimaculata*

Recorded at 3 sites between 18<sup>th</sup> June and 30<sup>th</sup> July.

Two at Low Dam, Thruscross, Two at Timble Ings Pond and one at Otley GP.

BROAD BODIED CHASER *Libellula depressa*

Recorded 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June at Timble Ings Pond.

1 male holding territory on both days. On 19<sup>th</sup> 1 female ovipositing for a short period.

Records of main interest in 2000 were from Timble Ings pond with sightings of *Calopteryx splendens*, *Libellula depressa* and *Anax imperator*, and the *Anax imperator* at Otley gravel pits.

Records submitted by: D & J Alred, N & A Bowland, M Densley, F C Draper, A Gramshaw, D Howson, M & D Leather, K Limb and K Moir.

David Alred

## LADYBIRDS

## Order Coleoptera (beetles)

Family COCCINELLIDAE (ladybirds) Again numbers well down.

SEVEN-SPOT LADYBIRD *Coccinella 7-punctata*

Seen Otley Chevin, Farnley and the Washburn

FOURTEEN-SPOT LADYBIRD *Propylea 14-punctata*

8 Sep 2 seen at Lindley

TWO-SPOT LADYBIRD *Adalia 2-punctata*

21 June (has two crosses on its carapace instead of spots) seen at the Gravel Pits. 12 July typical form seen Otley Chevin and 20 July many at Weston on Creeping Thistle.

17 Sept the melanic form, *Adalia 2-punctata f quadrimaculata*, seen at Farnley

CREAM SPOT LADYBIRD *Clavia 14 guttata*

23 April at Beacon Hall (DPH)

TWENTY-TWO SPOT LADYBIRD *Psyllobora 22-punctata*

6 May Otley Chevin, mating pair.

11 and 16 Sept again on the Chevin

KIDNEY-SPOT LADYBIRD *Chilocorus renipustulatus*

8 Sept 20 on a wall below an Ash tree at Lindley Wood. A new record for WNS area.

Contributors: N & A Bowland, D P Howson.

Help is still urgently needed.

Nevil Bowland

## ORNITHOLOGY

The year 2000 was one of mixed fortunes for birds in our area in terms of both breeding success and the incidence of unusual passage migrants. As always the weather was the critical factor with a continuation of trends established in the nineties namely a mild winter, a relatively poor spring, some decent summer spells although occasionally unsettled, and a lack of east winds in late summer/autumn thereby significantly reducing the potential for misplaced migrants from the continent.

The mild winter undoubtedly encouraged early nesting – a large family of Mallard chicks were seen at Lindley Wood Reservoir on 30<sup>th</sup> March for example. Herons, Tawny Owls, Doves and Pigeons, Dippers, Thrushes (singing in early January) etc found the conditions much to their liking for breeding purposes and a settled and sunny March did nothing to discourage them. Yet again however April proved a damp squib with almost winter-like conditions for the first part of the month which must have caused substantial loss of broods and this was exacerbated by a period of high winds sufficient to damage tree-nesting species such as Rooks. In addition the heavy rain and regular downpours were bad news for ground-nesting species such as Pipits and game birds some of which, such as Grey Partridge, can ill-afford this additional handicap to any prospect of reversing their downward trend. Similarly later nesting birds and early migrant species had to put their breeding operations on hold thus probably reducing their later prospects for multiple broods.

The winds shifted to the south and east in late-April and early-May which caused migrants, some of which will have been delayed, to flood into the country. This relatively settled spell of weather did not last as a change in mid-May brought a return to unsettled weather with showers and cool days. This lasted through much of June but at least it was a warm month so breeding operations in our area were not too disrupted with many species successfully raising families. The main exception to this was the torrential downpour on the night of 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> June which caused extensive flooding and washed out nests in some instances. The worst affected were riverine species with Sand Martins and Kingfishers, for example, losing broods to drowning from the high water levels. Fortunately most species will usually settle down and breed again but, for Sand Martins, this meant only one brood was produced instead of the usual two.

Average temperatures in July and August and below-average rainfall were generally of assistance in completing nesting operations but September to November produced consistent westerly winds and heavy rain which meant the migration watching at this time was less than exciting with waders, for example, generally being restricted to the usual species with few, if any, exceptional records.

The year ended on a cold note which produced interesting wildfowl sightings on local reservoirs to give an upbeat end to the ornithological year.

The weather conditions for the year 2000 are now becoming fairly typical resulting in clearly-discernible trends in the bird world. Mild winters mean that more of our smaller resident species are surviving producing high winter populations of species such as Long-tailed Tits, Coal Tits, Wrens, Robins, Grey Wagtails and Kingfishers. Also larger species such as Herons are thriving. This trend goes a long way to mitigating the effects of poor breeding conditions, such as cold/wet weather, which are causing problems for some of our commonest birds such as Blue and Great Tits. In addition the mix of species, particularly in winter, is showing signs of changing – Stonechat for example are now becoming quite a common sighting on local moors throughout the year and more species are finding they do not necessarily have to move out of the area to survive. For the birdwatcher however this pattern is reducing the opportunity for sightings of unusual birds as is evidenced by the rash of more unusual observations when a cold spell makes its mark.

The concern must be that the weather trends outlined above, especially the mild winters, are perhaps masking the negative impact on bird populations of agricultural intensification (there is little doubt now that this factor is the main problem) and keeping these populations 'artificially' high until such time that a hard winter and enhanced bird mortality reveals the true picture. Only time will tell.

Nonetheless I remain convinced that our area has been spared the worst of the ravages of recent decades and our bird populations, even where declining, remain generally healthier than the national average – let us hope not only that this picture does not change but that we start to see real improvements as general conservation awareness and specific programmes to assist target species gather momentum. With this in mind you will see

that all the species' reports given below now start with a simple statement of the 'status' of each species (e.g. common breeding resident) followed by, in the case of breeding birds, a comment on their current population trend (e.g. population declining). These comments are based on my own observations, national trends gleaned from BTO surveys and magazine articles etc. and discussions with other local ornithologists. I hope they are accurate but please tell me if you disagree.

At the end of the species' accounts you will find an article by Brin Best about his sighting of a Little Gull at Otley Gravel Pits in May – I think you will agree that his delight at seeing this beautiful bird is amply conveyed to the reader. This is followed by a final few thoughts by myself entitled 'In Defence of the Sparrowhawk'. Regrettably there is much misunderstanding about the impact of the Sparrowhawk (and other raptors for that matter) on local bird populations. In particular the attempt to blame the decline in songbird populations on the Sparrowhawk is unscientific and misguided. As naturalists, I hope you will agree it is our duty to set the record straight and in fact welcome the prevalence of the Sparrowhawk in our area as an indicator of a relatively healthy environment.

Finally, once again many thanks to all contributors to this report and especially those who submitted their sightings in the order given in the report – it really is a very great help at this end. Please keep your observations coming in through the year, including your own views about local bird populations and trends and examples of unusual behaviour, all of which helps me make the report a more interesting read.

## **CLASSIFIED LIST**

In the Classified List I have used the usual abbreviations of GP for Gravel Pit. 'Burley' is Burley-in-Wharfedale, and when referring to Lindley, Swinsty, Fewston, Thruscross, Chelker and Grimwith, I mean the reservoirs or their vicinity at these locations. Lower Wharfedale is taken to mean the area downstream from Barden Bridge and Upper Wharfedale the area above Barden Bridge. The sequence and nomenclature used is that of Voous, K.H., List of Recent Holarctic Species (1973 & 1977), B.O.U. 1977.

### **LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis***

Uncommon breeding/local migrant. Population stable.

Sightings were received for most months of the year mainly from Knotford (maximum of 9 on February 10<sup>th</sup>), Otley GP, Low Dam (below Thruscross) and along the Wharfe at various locations. At least 2 broods were reared at one site and breeding was suspected from at least one more site. Maximum count was 4 at Knotford in January and September. (PJC, JKW, CJC, KL, MVB, BP, D&HB, LD, PR, GSH)

### **GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus***

Common breeding resident/local migrant. Population stable.

Common and widely reported throughout the year for much of Lower Wharfedale, the Washburn and Chelker, with a maximum of 14 birds at Otley GP on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Breeding was confirmed at Knotford and attempts were made elsewhere, including Lindley, but were not thought successful probably due to disturbance and/or fluctuating water levels, both of which appear to be a real problem for this species in the Washburn Valley. (KL, MB, N&AB, PD&JBP, CJC, BP, PR, PJC)

### **BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis***

Rare passage migrant.

Just one sighting this year at Otley GP between April 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>. (PJC, PD&JBP, BOG)

### **CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo***

Common passage/long-staying visitor. Population numbers markedly rising.

Reported increasingly in both Wharfedale and the Washburn, with a maximum of 50+ birds at the Lindley roost in November. Although no evidence of breeding, presence is now noted throughout the year. Several 'sinensis' birds (i.e. of the race *P. carbo sinensis* which is from central and southern Europe and Asia) were present in the Washburn for part of the year. (PJC, N&AB, PRW, CJC, KL, PD&JBP, JW, MHA, DLR, GT, GSH, JMC&AMG, PQ, PR, MVB)

### **GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea***

Common breeding resident. Population stable/increasing.

Continues to prosper both nationally and in our area no doubt partly due to the absence of severe winters. Widely reported throughout the year from our area, usually involving single birds or small groups outside the main Heronries – an exception to this is the large number (up to 20) often present at Leathley Trout Farm outside the breeding season. Breeding was reported from Askwith, and in the Washburn.

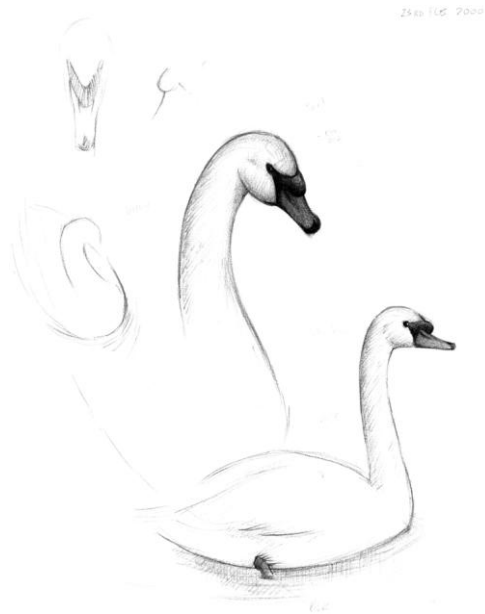
#### WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*

There were several reports of this species in the lower Wharfe but there seems little doubt that these are free-flying birds from the Harewood Bird Garden which, unfortunately, are not tagged in any way.

#### MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Common local breeding resident. Population stable.

Only reported from Lower Wharfedale with apparently successful breeding noted at Otley GP with up to 8 cygnets present in September. A maximum of 25 birds were present at Otley GP on January 26<sup>th</sup> and December 27<sup>th</sup>. They are rare in the Washburn with the only records this year from Farnley and a pair, seemingly looking for a nest site, at Lindley, Swinsty and Fewston. (CJC, PD&JBP, PJC, PR, GSH)



Mute Swan

JG

#### WHOOPER SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Scarce passage migrant. Usually just a few sightings each year.

Apart from 12 birds at Chelker on March 20<sup>th</sup> the only other record was the marvellous sight of 51 birds on Fewston on April 6<sup>th</sup>, presumably on their northern migration – a splendid record for those lucky enough to witness it. The hybrid Mute/Whooper at Knotford has continued to cause some comment through the year. (BOG, PD&JBP, BP, PJC)

#### PINK FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Scarce passage migrant/visitor.

Single birds were observed at several sites in the Lower Wharfedale and the Washburn between March and May with 2 at Knotford Nook on April 21<sup>st</sup>. There were 5 birds by Swinsty dam wall on May 7<sup>th</sup> and 3 on the river near Knotford on April 27<sup>th</sup>. A skein of c100 was observed flying over Burley Woodhead on October 13<sup>th</sup>. Otley GP produced sightings of a single bird in November and December. Finally there were 7 at Otley GP on December 28<sup>th</sup>. (CM, SR, PJC, PD&JBP, BP, DLR, CJC, PR)

#### GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Common resident breeder/visitor. Recent significant population increase.

The local, presumably originally feral, population continues to prosper with breeding suspected at Lindley and Fewston. However breeding must have occurred much more widely judging by the numbers of juveniles and the size of flocks which included 186 on Fewston on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 157 at Lindley on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 120 at Manor Park on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Juveniles were observed at a wide variety of sites including Ben Rhydding (6 broods), Fewston, near Askwith, Lindley Wood, Swinsty and Knotford. Most sightings were for the early months of the year at sites throughout Lower Wharfedale, with a relative dearth for the second half – the post-breeding moult appears to take place outside our recording area. (PD&JBP, GT, D&HB, PQ, JW, KL, PR, JMC&AMG, BP, N&AB, DLD, GSH, PJC, MVB)

#### CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Common breeding resident/visitor. Recent significant population increase.

Now occurs commonly at Grimwith and downstream, with breeding at a wide variety of sites. However there is evidence to suggest that it is no longer increasing in numbers in our area. Although observed virtually throughout the year most numbers are noted in the early half of the year. There was a maximum of 221 at Otley GP on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 157 at Grimwith on June 24<sup>th</sup> and 100+ at Fewston on January 7<sup>th</sup>. (PJC, N&AB, O&DM, CJC, GSH, PD&JBP, GT, PR)

#### BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Scarce passage migrant – sightings may be escaped/feral birds.

One sighting of 2 birds at Otley GP on January 26<sup>th</sup>, and singles at the same site in June, July and September. Also a single bird at Grimwith, on June 10<sup>th</sup>, and July 18<sup>th</sup>, with Canada Geese. (CJC, PJC, PR)

#### BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Rare passage migrant/visitor.

There were three sightings this year namely 2 birds at Lower Barden on April 27<sup>th</sup>, a single bird at Thruscross for several days in mid-May and one at Fewston (possibly the same bird) on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Scarce passage migrant/visitor – may breed some years.

The maximum number seen was 10 at Otley GP on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Single birds were seen occasionally at

Otley GP for much of the year and 3 were observed on the river at Burley on May 10th. A single bird was also seen at Fewston on September 12th. (PJC, PR, CJC, CM)

**MANDARIN DUCK** *Aix galericulata*

Rare visitor/escaped species.

Seen on several occasions in April/May in the Strid/Barden Bridge area and may have bred in the vicinity. A party of 5 were seen on the river at Haugh Wood on December 22<sup>nd</sup> but the most significant sighting was 27 (16male/11female) at Drebley on December 26<sup>th</sup> – presumably (?) released/escaped birds. (MVB, PD&JBP, PR CJC, JMD & AMG)

**WIGEON** *Anas penelope*

Scarce breeding resident and passage migrant with breeding probably confined to one site. Population stable/increasing.

Some 80+ birds were observed at the breeding site on February 25<sup>th</sup> and other records for this location were observed throughout the year. Further records (small numbers) were received from Knotford, Swinsty, Lindley and Thruscross for all months outside the breeding season. (GSH, JW, DLR, PJC, PR, CJC, PR, PD&JBP, BP, JMC&AMG)

**TEAL** *Anas crecca*

Common breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Probably in shallow decline.

Regularly present at a number of sites in the Washburn and Wharfedale valleys and breeding certainly occurs in the area. A female with 4 juveniles was observed on the roadside at Bingley Road-end above Menston on June 7<sup>th</sup> and a female with 7 juveniles was seen at Grimwith on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Winter gatherings are usually in small numbers so a count of 83 on Swinsty on December 27<sup>th</sup> was exceptional. (CJC, PJC, PR, PD&JBP, KL)

**GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

Rare passage migrant.

One sighting of 2 birds at Otley on May 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup>. (BOG, CM)

**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Common breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population stable.

Broods of ducklings with adults were reported throughout the breeding season at a variety of sites, the earliest being a female with 11 young at Lindley on March 30<sup>th</sup>. Breeding no doubt occurred throughout our area. In late December there were reports of 395 between Linton Falls and Grass Wood, 243 between Cavendish Pavilion and Barden Bridge and 123 between Barden Bridge and Burnsall. Large numbers (up to 100) were also reported from Lindley and Swinsty in the late autumn/winter. A female was found dead on the nest (thought to be a fox kill) on Ilkley Moor on June 11<sup>th</sup>. (GT, PR, O&DM, PD&JBP, MVB, PJC)

**NORTHERN PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

Scarce passage migrant/winter visitor.

One sighting of 2 birds at Otley on February 29<sup>th</sup>. (BOG)

**GADWALL** *Anas strepera*

Scarce passage migrant/winter visitor.

Three records only namely a single male at Knotford between mid-February and mid-March, a family party of 6 at Otley GP on Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> and 2 birds on Fewston on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. (BOG, CJC, PJC, BP, CM)

**SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata*

Scarce passage migrant. Bred this year for the first time.

Sightings from one site only where breeding was eventually confirmed. This may be a first for our area. (PR, BOG, PJC)

**POCHARD** *Aythya ferina*

Uncommon passage/winter visitor.

This species remains relatively uncommon throughout our area sightings being generally restricted to the colder months. It is not thought to breed. Otley GP produced the most number of sightings with a maximum of 51 birds on November 11<sup>th</sup> and other large counts through the winter months. Knotford occasionally had small numbers in winter as did Chelker and the lower Washburn reservoirs. (PR, N&AB, CJC, PD&JBP, GSH, PJC)

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*

Common passage/winter visitor/local breeder. Population probably stable.

Widespread on reservoirs in the lower valleys at most times of the year and breeds at selected sites. Good numbers included c50 at Knotford from January 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> and 58 at Otley GP on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. A juvenile was observed at Knotford on July 12<sup>th</sup>. (PR, PJC, CJC, PQ, GSH, KL, PD&JBP, MHA)

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

Rare passage migrant.

Given the rarity of this species in our area a sighting of 14 birds at Otley GP on May 9<sup>th</sup> was a significant event. (BOG)

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Rare passage/winter visitor.

One sighting only namely a female at Grimwith on April 19<sup>th</sup>. (PR)

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Rare passage/winter visitor.

A male was present at Otley GP/Knotford (thought to be the same bird) in January, February and March. Later in the year 4 were seen at Otley GP in mid-October, 2 in November and 1 through December. (BOG, PD&JBP, CJC, KL, BP, GSH, PR, PJC)

COMMON SCOTER. *Melanitta nigra*

Rare passage migrant.

The only sighting was 2 birds at Swinsty on April 6<sup>th</sup>. (BOG, PD&JBP, BP, PJC)

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Regular passage/winter visitor.

Present at a few sites in the Lower Wharfe and Washburn with some birds still being seen into April. Regularly observed at Knotford with up to 34 on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and a surprising record of 30+ at Grimwith on December 17<sup>th</sup>. For the second year running Otley hosted a female bird all through the summer. The maximum at Lindley was 16 on December 26<sup>th</sup>. (PJC, PR, PD&JBP, CJC, GSH, BP, AB, JW)

SMEW *Mergellus albellus*

Rare winter visitor.

A drake was present at Lindley between December 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> giving splendid views at the upstream end of the reservoir. (PR, BOG, PJC)

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Scarce breeding resident and common winter visitor. Population significantly increased in recent decades but a marked downturn in the last year or so is thought to be due to culling by fishing interests.

Widespread throughout our area as a wintering and breeding species. The highest winter number reported was 25 at Lindley (well down on the previous year) on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Reports from other sites in winter included various stretches of the Wharfe, Knotford, Otley GP, Thruscross, Fewston and Swinsty, although numbers were generally small. Adults with young were reported from Burley, Barden, Starbotton, Addingham, and Ilkley. (N&AB, CJC, MVB, PR, MHA, JD&MB, PD&JBP, PJC, JW, GT, LGD, JMC&AMG, DLR)

RUDDY DUCK *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Scarce passage migrant/local breeder. Population probably stable.

A relatively recent addition to our fauna with a few sightings each year and now breeding. A private site again proved to be a regular haunt with up to 4 birds present in April. Other sightings of up to 2 birds occurred at Knotford and Otley GP. (PJC, PR, DLR, CJC)

HONEY- BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*

Rare passage visitor.

Our area shared in the late-September/early-October influx with 5 birds roosting on the edge of Ilkley Moor (near the old Ilkley College site) on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> and 2 birds at Kex Gill on October 8<sup>th</sup>. (BOG, CM)

RED KITE *Milvus milvus*

Very scarce passage migrant.

There were sightings of 4 individual birds over Barden Fell between February and May and 2 near Weeton (just in our area) on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. It remains surprising that the Harewood released birds show so little inclination to come into our area the reason being that most are showing a clear inclination to roam in an easterly direction. Nonetheless there is still every reason to be optimistic that this marvellous raptor will become a regular feature of these reports as the release project gathers momentum. (CJC, BOG - subject to adjudication by the relevant ornithological authorities)

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Very scarce passage migrant.

Barden Fell produced 5 sightings between April and September with a single bird at Timble on June 11<sup>th</sup> and another over Pockstones Moor on August 8<sup>th</sup>. (BOG, KM, CM)



#### HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Uncommon passage/winter visitor.

There were 5 sightings this year (a low number), at Snowden Craggs on February 14<sup>th</sup>, Hardisty Hill on February 15<sup>th</sup>, Kex Gill on October 8<sup>th</sup> and Barden Moor October 25<sup>th</sup> and November 22<sup>nd</sup>. (PJC, BOG, PR)

#### GOSHAWK *Accipiter gentilis*

Scarce passage migrant. May breed in the area.

Single birds were seen over Timble Ings on April 5<sup>th</sup>, Blubberhouses on March 11<sup>th</sup>, Valley of Desolation on March 12<sup>th</sup>, Thruscross on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and Pockstones Moor on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Otherwise sightings were restricted to one site in the area on a number of occasions through the year – breeding may have occurred here but could not be confirmed. (KL, BP, KM, CM, PJC)

#### SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Common breeding resident/passage visitor. Population stable.

The number and range of sightings reflect the widespread distribution of this species and reports were received from a large number of sites in Wharfedale and the Washburn. This is a bird likely to be seen at any locality where woodland is in the vicinity and a number of reports have been received of hunting (occasionally successful) in gardens. From accounts received prey includes Collared Doves, 'white' Doves, Tits, Finches, Blackbirds and Starlings. A nest at Timble fledged 4 young. (N&AB, KL, CJC, GT, JD, PD&JBP, JWB, GSH, PR, DLR, MHA, PJC)

#### BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Scarce passage migrant/visitor. Thought to have bred. Population increasing.

Thought to be spreading back into the area after a long absence. Another interesting set of records this year with sightings covering most months. Reports were from all areas up to Yockenthwaite with a maximum of 8 seen at Halton Gill on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 5 at Barden on October 25<sup>th</sup> and 4 at Barden and Buckden on February 20<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup> respectively. Observations, usually of 1-2 birds, were also submitted from Starbotton, Conistone, Littondale, Beamsley, Grass Wood, Hawkswick, Valley of Desolation, Kilnsey, Parceval Hall and Kettlewell. (N&AB, PD&JBP, MVB, PR, O&DM, GT, PJC, D&HB, BOG, MVB)

#### OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce passage migrant.

Usually seen at local reservoirs en route to breeding/wintering grounds. Number of sightings increasing no doubt linked to the steady rise in numbers on the breeding grounds in Scotland. This year there were more sightings in Spring/early Summer than in Autumn with single birds seen at Otley GP, Barden, Timble, Fewston, Thruscross, Valley of Desolation and Chelker. There was just one record of 2 birds, over the river at Barden. One bird appeared to linger in the vicinity of Barden for a number of weeks in May/June and again in August. Unusually there were no Sept/Oct. records. (BOG, DA, PR, PJC, PD&JBP, CM)

#### KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Common breeding resident/passage visitor. Population probably stable.

Reported in small numbers, usually individuals or pairs. Sightings were year-round (although concentrated in Spring/Summer) covering much of the Washburn and Lower Wharfedale with several sightings from Upper Wharfedale including Grimwith, Grassington and Buckden. Winter sightings may include birds from the continent. Noteworthy records included 5 juveniles at Barden on July 6<sup>th</sup>, a bird in the middle of a flock of Sand Martins (looking quite confused) on July 21<sup>st</sup> and 2 birds in a melee with 3 Peregrines! (N&AB, PJC, GT, PR, CJC, O&DM, JW, MVB, KL, GSH)

#### MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Scarce breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population in recent decline.

A number of reports were received through Spring, Summer and Autumn from moorland areas. Poor weather, yet again, in June would not have helped breeding birds but there were a number of reports of breeding success at the usual sites albeit somewhat down on a few years ago. Most reports were for single birds with an occasional pair including juveniles. One report referred to aggression between this species and Kestrel. The first record was on March 18<sup>th</sup> and the last was on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. (JW, GT, PD&JBP, N&AB, KL, MVB, BP, GSH, PR, CJC, JW)

#### HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Scarce summer visitor/possible breeder. Population increasing.

This species is undoubtedly spreading northwards and the number of sightings is consequently increasing in our area. Single birds were reported from Otley, Ilkley Moor, Barden, Sun Lane, Lindley and Kex Gill between the beginning of May and the beginning of October. Any confirmed records of future breeding activity would be much appreciated. (BOG, PR, CJC, CM)

**PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce resident/passage/winter visitor. Probable breeder. Population increasing.

A number of sightings this year although information about potential breeding (likely to be in the upper Wharfe valley) was scarce. There were two separate reports of 3 birds – at Grimwith (with 2 Kestrel) on July 30<sup>th</sup> and Trollers Gill on August 11<sup>th</sup>. There were also sightings at Barden (most reports from this site), Hawksworth Moor and Lindley. (PR, JW, PJC, MVB, MHA, BOG, CJC)

**RED GROUSE** *Lagopus lagopus*

Common breeding resident (UK endemic). Population generally stable but subject to setbacks.

Numbers were mostly reported as being on the low side and there were reports that some moorland owners abandoned shooting for the year to help stocks recover. In part this is cyclical caused by, for example, disease and several recent difficult breeding seasons due to weather. High counts included c20 on Round Hill on August 8<sup>th</sup>. (PD&JBP, CJC, PR, GSH, PJC)

**RED LEGGED PARTRIDGE** *Alectoris rufa*

Uncommon breeding resident all emanating from released birds. Population stable except where releases occur.

A smaller number of sightings this year although a majority were from one Washburn observer with records throughout the year. Grimwith again produced several sightings of large numbers of released birds with c200 on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Even outside Grimwith it may safely be assumed that the vast majority of sightings would be released birds. (PR, MVB, D&HB, GSH, JW)

**GREY PARTRIDGE** *Perdix perdix*

Uncommon breeding resident. Population thought to be declining except where releases occur.

Last year was thought to be another difficult breeding year given the poor weather in Spring/early Summer and this may explain the absence of any reports of large coveys this year – the most observed was c20 near Kettlewell. Coveys were also reported from Catton Wood (c15) and below Swinsty (8). Most other reports were of either 1 or 2 pairs, covering most months of the year, mainly in the lower reaches of the valleys. A covey of 75 was seen at Grimwith on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, presumably released birds. (N&AB, PD&JBP, CJC, PR, KL, DLR, JW, DLR, PJC)

**COMMON PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus*

Common breeding resident subject to extensive rearing/releases. Population stable overall.

The rearing programmes ensure these birds are numerous in most areas, mainly on the valley sides and moorland fringes. Unusually, a Menston garden has had a resident pair through the year that successfully reared 3 youngsters. (KL, PR, N&AB, AMG)

**WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

Rare passage/winter visitor.

Single birds were seen at Sun Lane on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and at Otley GP on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 24<sup>th</sup> (PD&JBP, CJC, CM)

**MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

Common breeding resident/passage visitor. Population increasing.

Reports were received from throughout the year mostly from the lower parts of the valleys. Elsewhere breeding was proven on the river at Barden and Burley, at Sun Lane, a number of sites in the Washburn including Timble and Blubberhouses Quarry, and Otley GP. The maximum number recorded was 22 on May 15<sup>th</sup> at the latter site. Declined severely in the Washburn through the eighties but appears to have recovered well – almost certainly following local efforts to control Mink which find the Moorhen an easy meal. (CJC, KL, PR, GSH, GT, PJC, LD, MVB)

**COOT** *Fulica atra*

Locally common breeding migrant. Population stable.

Breeding bird which undertakes local migration to the lowest reaches of our area in winter. This species continues to do well in the valleys with sightings as far upstream as Grimwith. Maximum counts were again at Knotford with an astonishing 353 on January 13<sup>th</sup>. There was evidence of breeding at Fewston, Lindley, Knotford, Otley GP, Chelker and Sun Lane. (PR, MVB, GT, CJC, GSH, PJC)

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Locally common breeding migrant. Population probably increasing.

Breeding bird which leaves our area in winter. There was again plenty of evidence of an early return to breeding areas, this species having widely established itself in the area as a breeding bird in recent times. The earliest record was 2 birds on the river at Burley on February 2<sup>nd</sup> followed by 16 and 36 at Otley GP on February 5<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> respectively. There were plenty of other February records. The maximum number at any site was c65 at Grass Wood on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Breeding was no doubt successful at a variety of

locations although there were no positive records and the early-June rains may have destroyed a number of attempts. (N&AB, PD&JBP, CJC, GT, PR, AMG & JMC, GSH, PQ, PJC)

**LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce breeding migrant. Population stable.

Present on occasions, up to a maximum of 5, at two sites in the area. Breeding was confirmed this year at one of these sites with juveniles being seen. (PR, CJC, GT, PD&JBP, PJC)

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Scarce breeding migrant. Population stable.

Recorded at two sites, with sightings of up to 7 birds. Successfully bred in the area with one of the adults returning to the breeding site as early as February 25<sup>th</sup>. (BOG, PR, JW, PD&JBP, MVB, DLR, PJC, JMC&AMG, CM)

**DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus*

Rare passage migrant.

Again a very poor year with just one sighting, namely 7 birds on the slopes of Great Whernside May 6<sup>th</sup>. (GT)

**GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Uncommon moorland breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population probably in decline.

Returns to the moor for breeding in February the earliest record being February 6<sup>th</sup> with a single bird on Burley Moor. The only report of large numbers were c2000 on Lindley Moor on March 25<sup>th</sup> and c300 near March Ghyll Reservoir on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Juveniles were observed on Rombalds and Beamsley Moors on July 1<sup>st</sup> and July 19<sup>th</sup> respectively. The latest reports were 16 birds over-flying near the Sun Inn on September 9<sup>th</sup> and 21 birds at Otley GP on December 12<sup>th</sup>. (CJC, JW, GT, PR, KL, N&AB, CM, PJC)

**NORTHERN LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population probably declining.

Breeding bird which usually migrates west and/or south out of the recording area in winter. Winter sightings of large flocks are likely to be from the continent. Maximum assemblies were c500 at Otley GP on December 28<sup>th</sup> and c420 on January 19<sup>th</sup>, c400 at Denton on January 24<sup>th</sup> and 300 at the same site on November 27<sup>th</sup> (with a Curlew flock of a similar size). Denton produced a number of other reports of 200/300. Other sites with good numbers included 350 at Askwith, 150 at Ash Holme, Burley on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 60 at Timble Ings on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 80 on Hawksworth Moor on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 120 at Hebden on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 100 at Burley Woodhead on June 28<sup>th</sup>, and c250 at Chelker on December 7<sup>th</sup>. There were many reports of display flights and breeding was proven throughout suitable areas of the valley sides. Many reports were received of birds seen in the lower valleys and in the breeding season but there were very few reports for the period September to December when the birds move away. Concern remains that numbers are gradually reducing in accordance with current national trends. (GSH, N&AB, PR, KL, CJC, MVB, PD&JBP, PJC, O&DM, GT, S&JH, JWB, DLR, CM)

**KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

Rare passage migrant.

Otley GP produced 2 birds on May 5<sup>th</sup>. (BOG)

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

Scarce passage visitor. Probably still breeds in the area but numbers much reduced.

There was a single bird at Otley GP on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2 birds 'reeling' on Great Whernside on May 6<sup>th</sup> and a pair were at Grimwith on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The final records were a single bird at Lindley on September 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> and 2 at Otley GP on September 13<sup>th</sup>. (CM, GT, PD&JBP, PR, PJC)

**JACK SNIPE** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Rare migrant/winter visitor.

Secretive, with sightings usually limited to birds flying away when inadvertently nearly trodden on! True to form there was only one record of a flushed bird on Barden Moor on March 5<sup>th</sup>. (BOG, CM)

**COMMON SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago*

Uncommon breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population either stable or in shallow decline.

This is a well-established breeding species in the area thanks to the extensive availability of its breeding habitat of marshland, especially around moorland sites. It is subject to movement out of the area in winter but may retain a presence at lower valley sites such as Otley GP if the winter weather is not severe. The earliest record this year was a single bird on Burley Moor on February 9<sup>th</sup> and the latest was 8 birds on Middleton Moor on November 11<sup>th</sup>. There was a group of 42 at Otley GP on March 12<sup>th</sup>. A particularly interesting record was a single bird 'drumming' at Timble Ings by moonlight at 11-25 pm! The only large

flock was c120 at Mossybank Reservoir, Hebden on July 6<sup>th</sup> – a noteworthy record. (PD&JBP, GT, CJC, KL, MVB, BP, D&HB, GSH, PR, CM, PJC)

**WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*

Scarce breeding resident/passage migrant/winter visitor. Possibly in decline.

Thought to breed extensively throughout the area at appropriate sites. Numbers are supplemented by continental migrants in winter with resident birds thought to over-winter if not too cold. 'Roding' birds were seen at Strid Wood, Timble Ings, Bolton Abbey, Beecroft Moor, Menston and Addingham Moorside, all records coming from May to early July. Birds were also flushed at Lindley, Timble Ings, Thruscross, Bolton Abbey and Litton, all these being winter records. (N&AB, KL, PJC, CJC, PR, GT, D&HB, JD, MB, MHA, JMC&AMG,)

**CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population stable.

A widespread breeding bird throughout the area at suitable sites, which usually moves west and south for winter. Appears to be doing well. Also over-winters in the Wharfe valley bottom (although these are thought to be usually continental birds) if there is no severe weather to drive them away. Denton yielded the largest count with c600 on February 19<sup>th</sup> and other large counts between late January and late February. More noteworthy winter flocks included c150 at Ash Holme, Burley and at Otley GP, c50 at Grass Wood and c250 at Manor Park. Reports of singles, pairs and small/medium groups were received from many sites extending as far up the valley as Kettlewell. Sightings were concentrated in the early half of the year with several examples of successful breeding. (N&AB, PD&JBP, PR, KL, CJC, GSH, GT, JW, PJC, MVB, AMG, O&DM, JD, PQ, S&JH, D&ML)

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce passage migrant.

A small group was seen over-flying Otley GP on May 12<sup>th</sup>. (BOG)

**COMMON REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*

Uncommon breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population probably stable.

Breeding in small numbers was proved or suspected from a number of sites in the Washburn and Wharfedale including Grimwith, Thruscross and March Ghyll. Small numbers were also seen at a number of additional sites throughout the recording area, with a maximum of 9 birds at Otley GP on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The first record was a single bird at Otley GP on January 19<sup>th</sup> and the last was 2 birds at Otley GP on December 27<sup>th</sup>. (PD&JBP, PR, CJC, GT, JW, PJC, N&AB, MVB, BP, AB)

**COMMON GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

Scarce passage visitor.

This is an uncommon migrant for the area with records usually restricted to summer. All records were for the period August to early-September and all involved single birds at Lindley, Otley GP and Burley. (PD&JBP, PR, PJC)

**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus*

Scarce passage visitor.

There was one record of 2 birds at Otley GP on July 11<sup>th</sup>. Records of single birds were received from Kex Gill on August 7<sup>th</sup> and Lindley on August 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The latter sighting was terminated by a Swallow chasing the Sandpiper round and round the reservoir until it disappeared (with the Swallow in hot pursuit) never to be seen again! (CJC, PR)

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population possibly in shallow decline.

Present throughout the area at suitable sites in spring/summer. Many records were received, usually of 1/2 birds, between April 11<sup>th</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>, from Barden, Grimwith, Grass Wood, Strid Wood, Lindley, Fewston, Swinsty, Burley, Otley GP, Knotford, Grassington/Addingham (6 pairs on a river walk), and Kex Gill. There was a high count of 10 at Grimwith on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Breeding was confirmed at Barden Bridge, Strid Wood and Kex Gill. (PR, CJC, MVB, GT, PD&JBP, PQ, GSH, JD, LD, AB, DLR, N&AB)

**BLACK HEADED GULL** *Larus ridibundus*

Common breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population may be declining after big increase in recent decades.

This species winters in the area in large numbers with roosts of c3000 at Swinsty for example. These large roosts commence in late September and build to a peak by February then rapidly diminish towards the breeding season. Breeding occurs on local moors insofar as it is allowed by gamekeepers who usually discourage large colonies. The main site is at Upper Barden Reservoir which held some 2500 breeding pairs this year. Most Gulls seen in the area through the year will be this species. (CJC, PR)

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Common passage/winter visitor.

A species which usually only winters in the area although a few immatures have been observed through summer and a small number are thought to breed in the Upper Barden Black-headed Gull colony. There were a few reports of flocks over 100 with the best being 1500 at the Swinsty gull roost in November. Otley GP had between 240 and 560 birds on several occasions early and late in the year. Other sites include Grassington, Thruscross, Knotford and Lindley. (N&AB, PD&JBP, PR, PJC)

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*

Rare passage migrant.

A single bird was seen at Otley GP on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Uncommon breeding resident/passage visitor. Probably declining due to control at breeding sites.

This species both winters in the area and breeds on local moors where not disturbed by gamekeepers concerned by their propensity to eat anything that moves! The largest number seen was c30 at the Upper Barden Black-headed Gull colony in July. Small numbers were seen throughout the area in all months of the year. (PR, CJC, GT, PJC)

GREATER BLACK BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon passage/winter visitor.

A few birds winter in the area eventually flying north to their breeding grounds. The odd immature may stay all year. Sightings were received from Grimwith, Chelker, Thruscross, Swinsty, and Otley GP. (PR, CJC, AB, DLR)

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Scarce visitor.

Less common than other Gulls with just a few reports each year. There are a small number of breeding pairs at the Upper Barden Black-headed Gull colony. Seen at a variety of sites, mainly in winter, in both valleys. (CJC, PR)

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Rare passage/winter visitor.

A single bird was seen at Knotford on March 13<sup>th</sup>. (BOG)

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Rare passage/winter visitor.

A first-winter bird was seen at the Swinsty Gull roost on December 24<sup>th</sup>. (BOG)

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucooides*

Rare passage/winter visitor.

An adult was seen at the Swinsty Gull roost on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. (BOG)

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Scarce passage migrant. Occasionally breeds.

Usually a few birds pass through in spring/summer and this year was no exception with six sightings at Otley GP between May and July including 6 birds on July 12<sup>th</sup>. May have bred in our area at another (unknown) site. (PD&JBP, CJC, PR, BOG, PJC)

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*

Rare passage migrant.

One sighting of a single bird at Otley GP on May 7<sup>th</sup>. (BOG)

FERAL PIGEON *Columba livia*

Uncommon resident breeder. Population probably stable.

Mainly seen in urban areas of Ilkley and Otley with a few small groups also in rural areas.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Although probably present all year in most years, numbers likely to fluctuate during winter as resident birds move out in a cold snap and it may disappear altogether for a time. This is very much a rural bird in the area and is certainly under-recorded. Extensive observations in the Washburn valley suggest that this area is a stronghold with up to c20 birds seen at one time in late winter. There are a number of breeding sites and there is every reason to expect that the bird holds a similar status in the Wharfe valley. There was one unusual record of a garden sighting – a juvenile feeding with Collared Doves. (PR, N&AB, PD&JBP, KL, DLR)

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Present all year in good numbers throughout the area but with a tendency to move to the lower parts of the valleys in winter and may disappear in a severe cold spell. Nonetheless there was a surprising record of c1000 at Grass Wood on December 27<sup>th</sup> and this appears to be part of a significant winter influx. The largest flock reported elsewhere was c800 in the lower Washburn valley on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The largest flock in the early part of the year was c400 in the same area on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Garden records are now quite common particularly where regular feeding occurs. (PR, N&AB, GT, GSH, DLR, JW, PJC, CM, MVB)

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Present in the area with a significant concentration in urban, suburban and village environments.

Surprisingly rare in rural habitats – in the Washburn, for example, the only record upstream of Leathley was at Timble where breeding is thought to have occurred. At Stockeld Road, Ilkley there were c25 feeding on beech mast on the roadway. May nest for most of the year – a Burley garden had juveniles on the lawn in mid-December. (PD&JBP, DLR, JW, PR, MHA, PJC, CM)

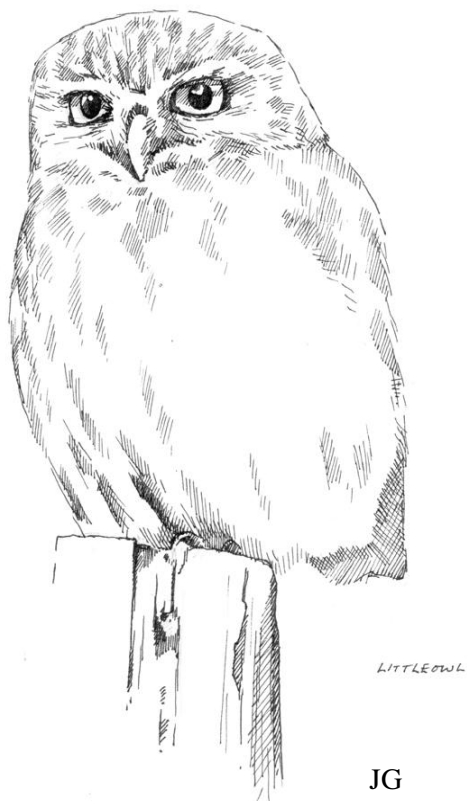
CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Scarce breeding migrant. Population declining.

The earliest calling bird was from Barden on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Five more April records were received. More records came through May and there were a further 7 records for June including one from as far up the valley as Starbotton. Disturbingly there were no records received beyond June and consequently no juveniles were recorded. There was a distinct impression of numbers again being reduced this year – this would be consistent with the national trend over the last five years at least. (GT, CJC, PD&JBP, JW, PR, LD, GSH, PJC, JD, MHA)

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*

Locally common breeding resident. Population stable.



Apparently still doing well but markedly fewer records from the upper sections of the valleys. Single birds and pairs were widely reported from Otley up to Starbotton and Foxup and a few breeding sites were noted. Records were concentrated in the period April - August. (MVB, KL, CJC, GT, PD&JBP, D&HB, PR, PJC, O&DM, JWB)

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Again sparsely recorded in Upper Wharfedale, no doubt linked to the reduced woodland cover, but apparently widespread elsewhere. Records were received for all months of the year. Evidence of breeding was received from Barden and Menston and several sites in the Washburn. (PD&JBP, PR, GT, KL, MVB, GSH, AMG, PQ, PJC, D&ML)

SHORT EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce breeding migrant/resident. Population either stable or in shallow decline.

Mostly vacates our area in winter although winter records can occur. All records this year were for the period May to August with the exception of a Thruscross sighting in March. Other observations came from Denton Moor, Beamsley Moor, Barden and Middleton. Not a vintage year for sightings with no confirmed breeding records. (PR, PD&JBP, GT, AB, GSH)

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population probably stable/may be in shallow decline.

The first of the year was a single bird over Burley on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Subsequently seen throughout Wharfedale and the Washburn but concentrated in the lower valleys with nest sites typically in urban areas. More sightings through to July although concentrated in May. The largest flocks observed were c50 over Burley on June 26<sup>th</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup>. The last record was a single bird over Lindley on September 8<sup>th</sup>. (N&AB, CJC, GT, PD&JBP, JW, D&HB, DLR, PJC)

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Uncommon breeding resident along suitable rivers and lagoons. Population probably stable.

Reports from throughout the lower part of the area with sightings as far up the Wharfe as Barden. Birds were seen throughout the year although the records tended to be concentrated in the spring/summer presumably linked to greater activity through the breeding season. This species appears to be thriving at the moment presumably linked to the absence of prolonged, hard, winters but broods were certainly lost in the early-June flooding. There was evidence of breeding along the Wharfe although not, this year, along the Washburn. (KL, CJC, DLR, D&HB, PD&JBP, AB, MHA, GT, BP, PJC, MVB, PQ, LD, DA, J&JD)

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Appears to be holding its own throughout the area. Records received were usually of single birds often detected by their distinctive 'yaffle' and they covered as far up the Wharfe valley as Grass Wood. There were also a good number of records for the Washburn up to and beyond Thruscross. A number of the records involved juvenile birds including several sites in the Washburn, Drebley and Strid Wood. (N&AB, PD&JBP, CJC, GT, MVB, PQ, MHA, LD, PR, JW, AMG, O&DM, GSH, PJC)

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

A good number of reports for a species that appears to be doing well in our area. Breeding was noted for Middleton Woods, Bastow Wood, Ben Rhydding, Lindley, Thruscross, Addingham, Strid Woods and Burley. There were a number of reports of garden visiting at various times of the year but most commonly in winter and, with juveniles, in summer. (PR, DLR, D&HB, GSH, AMG & JMC, GT, CJC, JW, JD, PJC)

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus minor*

Scarce breeding resident. Population possibly in decline.

This species is not far from the northern limit of its range and obviously remains difficult to find from the few sightings received. Reported from near Ilkley, along the lower Washburn and, unusually, from Howgill. The observations in the Washburn were between late-March and late-April when a pair were observed nest-building over a period of a week. Regrettably however the site was then taken over by a pair of Blue Tits and the Woodpeckers were not seen again. Apparently this is not unusual behaviour as the male usually excavates several sites. (GT, BOG, S&JH, PR, CM)

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Common breeding resident. Population declining – in danger of becoming scarce.

Records received this year numbered less than a third of the previous year which must be cause for concern although my own observations suggest a fairly stable picture. Nonetheless the steep national decline is well-documented and is perhaps being reflected in our area. Favoured sites were Great Whernside, Hawksworth Moor, Harden, Hoodstorth, Lindley, Pool, Otley Chevin, Middleton Moor, Grimwith (6 heard here), Timble (an October migrating party of 11 birds) West End, Burley Moor, Denton Moor, Ilkley Moor (6 singing here) and Littondale. Records were usually of 1-3 singing birds. This species usually vacates our area through the depths of winter and the first record of the year was March 19<sup>th</sup> at Thruscross with the latest being Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> on the edge of Denton Moor. (N&AB, CM, PR, KL, CJC, BP, GSH, GT, PJC, CM)

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population liable to fluctuate strongly.

The main event this year affecting this species was the torrential overnight downpour and flooding on June 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> which must have washed out many colonies at a critical time. As would be expected the adults rapidly resumed breeding and a number of sites were successful eventually, although overall numbers fledged for the year for this double-brooded species must have been well down. Nesting sites were noted along the Wharfe at a number of suitable sites between Castley and Buckden although the only known site in the Washburn was a small colony at Hoodstorth just north of Thruscross. The most seen was c350 on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at Otley GP. The earliest record was 2 at Otley GP on March 18<sup>th</sup> and the latest was 2 at Fewston on September 21<sup>st</sup>. (CJC, DLR, MVB, PD&JBP, PQ, PR, MHA, BP, KL)

#### BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population stable.

This species appears to be well distributed throughout the area, mainly in rural areas wherever suitable nesting sites exist. The earliest arrivals were 6 birds at Otley GP on April 8<sup>th</sup> and c50 at Lindley on the same date, although most reports commenced around mid-April. The return migration produced several hundred over-flying the Washburn in mid-September and the last record was of a single bird over a Burley garden on October 14<sup>th</sup>. (MVB, PR, N&AB, CJC, DLR, S&JH, JMC & AMG, PJC)

#### HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population stable.

An under-reported species which, despite population concerns, appears to be doing well in our area. None of the observations received referred to a decline whilst several reported a possible increase. Some significant numbers were mentioned with several reports of 100+ in the migration period including one report of c400 moving south on September 7<sup>th</sup>. The first sighting was April 18<sup>th</sup> with a single bird at Timble and the last was from October 10<sup>th</sup> with 2 birds over-flying Burley. One memorable sighting was c150 seemingly sunbathing on a chapel roof at Lindley September 3<sup>rd</sup> and then all abruptly flying south as if in response to some pre-determined signal. (CJC, DLR, N&AB, PR, PJC)

#### TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Scarce breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population increasing.

Although still uncommon in the area the Washburn valley has certainly seen an increase in recent years at suitable sites on the valley side. Numbers in the Norwood Edge/Sword Point area of the Washburn were again high compared with several years ago and it is thought that successful breeding occurred here with up to 5 birds being seen on several occasions. Other sites included Ilkley Moor, Timble Ings, Snowden Crags, Gallows Hill, Langstrothdale and around Buckden, with up to 5 birds being seen in the area from Kettlewell to Hubberholme. The earliest and latest sightings were from the Washburn on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and August 25<sup>th</sup> respectively. (PR, PD&JBP, CJC, GT, PJC)

#### MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common breeding resident/migrant/passage visitor. Population probably in decline.

Mainly found high on the valley sides but usually moves off the moors and down the valleys in winter. Seemingly enjoyed a reasonable season, with good numbers of birds, and breeding reported from most suitable areas within our region. Overall numbers however are probably reduced from a few years ago. Birds were being seen as early as January including 7 birds on Denton Moor on January 10<sup>th</sup>. Return to upland areas was well underway by March and good numbers were being reported at suitable sites by April e.g. Barden, Linton (c80)) and the Washburn valley. Flocks of 50+ were noted in September and October around Otley Chevin, Otley GP, Grimwith and Kex Gill. At the latter site observers from BOG have observed autumn early-morning migration of numbers running into thousands. A few birds were still being seen in the valleys in December. (BOG, N&AB, PR, KL, GT, CJC, JW, PJC, GSH, MVB)

#### WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

Rare visitor.

One record from Otley GP from March 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>. (BOG, CM)

#### YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Scarce breeding migrant/passage visitor. Still holding on despite significant decline.

As usual most reports were from the upper valley with breeding confirmed at Halton Gill, Coniston, Foxup and Kettlewell/Starbotton. On July 8<sup>th</sup> a total of 9 birds were seen at Halton Gill. There was no report of a repeat of last year's breeding success at a site near Otley although a pair was seen at Knotford on May 26<sup>th</sup> and a single bird at Otley GP on May 9<sup>th</sup> and August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The latest record was a single bird at Otley GP on September 9<sup>th</sup>. (CM, MVB, PD&JBP, DLR, JW, GT, N&AB, JWB, CJC, PJC, LD, GSH)

#### GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Common breeding resident/partial migrant. Population possibly increasing.

Appears to have had another good season – this is one of those species that benefits significantly from the absence of harsh winters and is currently plentiful and widespread at suitable sites. Reports of successful breeding came from both the Wharfe and Washburn valleys including Conistone, Addingham, Barden, Ilkley Moor, Burley Moor, Otley GP, the river at Burley and Dob Bridge. Sightings were submitted from throughout the area. One unfortunate report of a pair killed by a car in Ilkley. (PR, JD, MVB, PD&JBP, MHA, GT, DLR, AMG, GSH, PJC)

#### PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Common breeding resident/partial migrant. Population possibly increasing.



Present throughout the year with some local movement including coming together in large roosting flocks in winter in the lower stretches of the valleys such as central Ilkley – the roost (c200) opposite Lloyds Bank is still in use. There was also an interesting report of c25 following a farmer's drill at Farnley. A good number of reports from the area including evidence of breeding. The population of this species would appear to be in a healthy state. (N&AB, O&DM, PQ, PR, KL, JMC & AMG, S&JH, CJC, GSH, PJC)

**WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus***

Scarce winter visitor with reports in most years.

This year there were three reports namely 34 birds going in to roost at Timble Ings on January 15<sup>th</sup>, c40 on a cotoneaster in a Burley garden on February 6<sup>th</sup> and 3 birds in the Sun Lane area on December 31<sup>st</sup>. (BOG, CJC, JD)

**DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus***

Scarce breeding resident. Population stable.

Seemingly unchanged in status, with single birds and/or pairs reported along the Wharfe from Yockenthwaite to Burley. Also in the upper and lower stretches of the Washburn, including a number of confirmed breeding reports from Bolton Abbey, Strid Wood, Barden and Thruscross. As usual sightings were all year round. (JD, MHA, PD&JBP, KL, N&AB, CJC, GT, PR, PJC)

**WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes***

Common breeding resident. Population has probably increased.

A widespread breeder even up on to the moors. Plenty of evidence of successful breeding. This is one of our commonest birds which is benefiting from our current mild winters.

**DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis***

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Status apparently unchanged – a widespread and successful resident. Reports were received from most areas covering the whole year. A common garden species.

**ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula***

Common breeding resident/winter visitor. Population stable/increasing.



Juvenile Robin

JG

A familiar and much-loved resident in good numbers throughout our region. Seems to be doing well. Reported again feeding from peanut feeders in several gardens and plenty of evidence of successful breeding. One garden was host to 4 birds on January 15<sup>th</sup> (JD) whilst an observer at Timble watched up to 8 fighting vigorously (N&AB).

**BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochrurus***

Rare passage visitor. Has bred in the past.

Three sightings this year – a male at Lindley on August 6<sup>th</sup>, one at Manor Park trying to feed on peanuts on November 17<sup>th</sup> and a female at Grimwith on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus***

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population probably increasing.

Appears to have had another good year in the area. The first record was on April 18<sup>th</sup> (later than usual) at Dob Bridge – many sightings were submitted for May, June

and July. Records cover the whole area from Leathley to Langstrothdale and extend through to late-August although most of these later records are thought to be migrants passing through the area. Successful breeding was noted at several sites in the Wharfe and the Washburn including juveniles in an Addingham garden on July 6<sup>th</sup> and August 7<sup>th</sup>. The last record was August 28<sup>th</sup> near Timble. (DLR, GT, PR, CJC, PD&JBP, PJC, JW)

**COMMON STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata***

Scarce breeder/passage/winter visitor. Population increasing.

The number of sightings this year has increased dramatically presumably linked to the recent pattern of mild winters. There were confirmed breeding records from Burley Moor, Barden Fell and Denton Moor. Other sightings were reported from Askwith Moor, Blubberhouses, Bordley, Kex Gill, and Whetstone Gate with an astonishing 14 at the latter site on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Most of these records were for pairs. (PD&JBP, GT, BP, DA, BOG, DA, GSH)

#### WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Scarce breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population may be in shallow decline.

Continues to be found in a few favoured localities. The first record was May 2<sup>nd</sup> from Snowden Crags and numerous other records were received from Ilkley and Burley Moors, Farnley, Otley GP, Barden and Grimwith. Several of these reports gave evidence of breeding. There were the usual late records, probably of passage migrants from the north, with the last being a single bird near Bland Hill on August 30<sup>th</sup>. (PD&JBP, CJC, GT, GSH, PR, DA, PJC)

#### WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Uncommon breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population probably stable.

Many reports were received going as far up the valley as Kettlewell with some evidence of breeding, from sightings of juvenile birds, around Conistone/Kettlewell, Barden, Burley Moor and Kilnsey. The earliest record was on March 26<sup>th</sup> on Conistone Moor and the latest was a single bird on September 16<sup>th</sup> on a wall at Menston. Late August and September records are thought to be mostly passage migrants from the northern breeding areas. (N&AB, PR, CJC, PD&JBP, GT, GSH, AB, DA)

#### RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population declining.

There were a number of early records this year beginning on March 14<sup>th</sup> with a female at Grimwith and March 22<sup>nd</sup> with a pair on Burley Moor. Others quickly followed on local moors. There was evidence of successful breeding but only from one locality. The last sighting was very late with 4 passage birds at Kex Gill on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. There were the usual reports from the Grimwith area but none from higher up the valley except for a single record on Conistone Moor, on June 8<sup>th</sup>, although more are likely to be present in the higher reaches. (GT, PR, CJC, BOG, MHA)

#### BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Common breeding resident/winter visitor. Population stable.

Remains a common and widespread breeding bird present throughout the year, with winter numbers being significantly enhanced due to the influx of continental migrants. Nationally there is some evidence of a decline in breeding numbers but this trend is not yet obvious in our area with gardens reporting breeding success from a number of broods.

#### FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common winter/passage visitor.

The last report in the early part of the year was from May 6<sup>th</sup> (a very late date) with 2 birds at Lindley and the first for the second half of the year was October 23<sup>rd</sup> with c40 birds on Pockstones Moor. Reports of large flocks were mostly from early in the year and presumably were caused by passage birds stopping to feed – one such group near Lindley numbered c800. By contrast the reports of flocks later in the year did not exceed c200. Otherwise most reports were for between 25 and 100 from Grimwith south with one report of 'flocks' at Littondale. The change in the second half of winter from berry-feeding to ground-feeding, as the former supply became exhausted, was again noticeable and flock numbers tended to reduce somewhat around this time, prior to building again just prior to departure. (MVB, KL, CJC, JD, DLR, GSH, PJC, D&ML)

#### SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common breeding resident/winter visitor. Population increasing.

Although birds are present in autumn/early-winter they are generally very skulking and difficult to see in addition to which migration south and west occurs which is exacerbated if winter conditions turn harsh. Many records were received although almost exclusively concentrated in the Lower Wharfe and Washburn. Several observers commented that there were good numbers of singing birds compared with several years ago and it now seems clear that an improvement is occurring in our area – might this be related to the mid-nineties drought and the feeding difficulties this might have caused for this species? There were numerous records of singing birds – one as early as January 12<sup>th</sup> in a Burley garden. There was also a December record of a songster. Plenty of evidence of nest building was received but few sightings of young birds the best being 4 in an Addingham garden on July 7<sup>th</sup> – the heavy rain in early June may have washed out some nest attempts. One unusual record was c50 passage birds feeding on the edge of Ilkley Moor having been forced down by heavy rain. (BP, D&HB, PR, KL, CJC, PD&JBP, GT, DLR, PJC)

#### REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common winter/passage visitor.

Few large flocks were observed the best being c550 at Otley GP and two records of c200 in late January for the Washburn and at least 200 in the Sun Lane area on December 31<sup>st</sup> – otherwise most submissions were for between 20 and 100. The 'latest' record was April 10<sup>th</sup> near Lindley and the 'earliest' was October

17<sup>th</sup> with 30 around Ilkley graveyard. Several instances of garden feeding were reported particularly in the cold snap at the end of the year. (JD, BP, CJC, DLR, PD&JBP, PR, GSH, PJC, D&ML, MVB)

**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

Common breeding resident/passage breeder. Population stable.

Apparently widespread and prospering. Easily observed virtually throughout the year although does become rather more elusive whilst breeding. Song was reported by many observers in January. Post breeding flocks numbered 20+ through late-summer/autumn, with 30+ on October 13<sup>th</sup> at Dobpark. Proof of breeding came from Conistone, Middleton Woods, Strid Wood, Barden and Timble. Singing birds were reported from October onwards and there were a number of examples of them guarding berry-covered trees. Again the reported national decline does not appear to be replicated in our area. (N&AB, KL, MB, CJC, JK&SDW, GT, PR, PJC)

**SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Scarce breeding migrant. Population stable.

Most sightings came from Fewston where successful breeding occurred once again. Otherwise there were several sightings at Otley GP with 2 birds on May 5<sup>th</sup>, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, July 4<sup>th</sup>, July 7<sup>th</sup> and finally on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Also 2 at Grimwith on June 19<sup>th</sup>. A Burley garden had one feeding for 2 hours on September 13<sup>th</sup>. (CJC, JW, PJC, PR)

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca*

Scarce breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population fluctuates but currently in decline.

Only five records received with single birds at Castley on May 4<sup>th</sup>, Lindley on June 6<sup>th</sup>, Otley GP on July 16<sup>th</sup>, Ben Rhydding GP on June 24<sup>th</sup> and a pair in an Otley garden from April 24<sup>th</sup> to June 28<sup>th</sup>. which successfully produced two broods. The number of reports were well down on the previous year. (CJC, KL, PR, PJC, CM)

**COMMON WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

Scarce breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population probably increasing.

The first sighting was a single bird feeding on gorse near Dob Bridge on April 27<sup>th</sup> and there were numerous other sightings concentrated in the period May to July. Evidence of breeding came from Fewston and Gallows Hill and, possibly, near Dobpark and Sun Lane. Other sightings came from Middleton Wood, Otley GP, Weeton and Yockenthwaite. The last sighting was at Fewston on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. (GSH, PD&JBP, CJC, DLR, N&AB, MHA, PR, PJC)

**GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population stable.

Well distributed in the Lower Wharfe and Washburn. First reported from Lindley on May 1<sup>st</sup> followed by numerous sightings in May and June from Barden, Ben Rhydding GP, Ilkley, Gallows Hill, Bolton Abbey, Starbotton, and the Strid. Breeding was proven at Gallows Hill and Ben Rhydding GP – at the latter site there was a most surprising record of 9 birds, on July 5<sup>th</sup>, including an agitated parent. This record was also the last for this species this year. (JMC&AMG, PJC, KL, CJC, GT, MVB, PD&JBP, MHA, DLR, PR)

**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor/winter visitor. Population increasing.

Distributed throughout the area (but not on higher ground) though rather scarce in the upper reaches of the Wharfe. The recent national increase appears to be reflected in our area with many reports, including evidence of breeding. There is also evidence of birds, believed to be from the continent, over-wintering in the area and many winter records (usually garden) were received. (NB. The latest estimate of over-wintering Blackcaps is 55,000 for the whole of the U.K. and rising). Apart from winter records birds were observed from April to September. The 'first' record was April 9<sup>th</sup> in a Burley garden and the 'last' was September 21<sup>st</sup> from below Lindley Wood dam. Though there were many sightings the only proof of breeding came from Gallows Hill. (JD, CM, KL, CJC, DLR, MVB, PD&JBP, PQ, PR, AMG & JMC, PJC, BP, DA)

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Uncommon breeding migrant. Population declining.

Nationally in decline and this is being reflected in our area with numbers well down in the Washburn valley for example and numbers of records submitted on a declining trend. However Strid Wood remains a stronghold and most reports were from here including one count of 8 birds on May 29<sup>th</sup>. Other sites were Middleton Wood and Grass Wood. The first sighting was 3 birds at Strid Wood on April 27<sup>th</sup> and the last was on July 5<sup>th</sup> when a pair were feeding young, at the nest, in Strid Wood. (N&AB, JMC&AMG, GT, PR, KL, CJC, PJC)

**CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita***

Common breeding migrant/passage/winter visitor. Population probably increasing.

There were no reports of wintering birds this year. The first presumed migrant was at Ben Rhydding GP on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Reports were received from suitable sites (on lower ground) throughout the Washburn and Lower Wharfe with good numbers of singing birds, again apparently mirroring the national increase in recent years. Breeding was extensive throughout the area wherever suitable habitat exists. The last presumed migrants were seen on October 7<sup>th</sup> in an Addingham garden. (KL, DLR, MVB, PD&JBP, CJC, ADL&ML, PJC, MHA, JW, GT, BP, JMC&AMG, O&DM)

**WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus***

Common breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population stable/possibly increasing.

Breeds in good numbers throughout the area including the upper reaches of the Wharfe. This is another species that may be increasing in numbers at the present time. The first birds were seen at Lindley with 3 on April 10<sup>th</sup>, building to high numbers throughout the area towards the end of April. There were no proven breeding records submitted. The last record was for October 7<sup>th</sup> in an Addingham garden. (PR, MVB, PJC, DLR, GT, MHA)

**GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus***

Common breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population increasing.

Although resident, local movement does occur particularly in prolonged cold weather. This is another bird that has benefited from the absence of harsh winters. Unobtrusive, and generally located by unique, but somewhat indistinct, high-pitched call and thus elusive and undoubtedly under-recorded. However, appears to be present, and doing well, throughout the recording area at suitable sites particularly around stands of conifers. Garden records are becoming increasingly common including feeding on peanuts and fat. (GT, MHA, JD, N&AB, PR, CJC, PJC)

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata***

Uncommon breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population decreasing.

This species has been in long term decline both nationally and locally, a trend that seems to be showing no sign of abating. The first record was in Strid Wood on April 28<sup>th</sup> followed by a number of reports through May to August including evidence of successful breeding at Appletreewick, Conistone and Barden.

A number of family parties were noted and records extended along the valleys and valley sides up to Yockenthwaite. A walk between Grassington and Addingham produced at least six pairs. As usual late-August produced several records of good numbers of passage birds including 20 on August 25<sup>th</sup> at several sites in the middle-Washburn. The last record by far was a single bird on September 13<sup>th</sup> in an Addingham garden. (N&AB, KL, GT, DLR, MB, PJC, PD&JBP, CJC, SR, GSH, BOG)

**PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca***

Uncommon breeding migrant/passage visitor. Population possibly declining.

This species is generally restricted to a few selected breeding sites. At least one observer thought numbers were somewhat down this year. First reported from near Bolton Abbey Woods on April 16<sup>th</sup> – the next record being April 20<sup>th</sup> near Burnsall. Further reported from Strid Wood (which remains a stronghold), Barden, Dob Bridge, Middleton, Thruscross, Grass Wood, Starbotton, Manor Park and several sites along the Washburn river where breeding was confirmed, as it was at Barden and Middleton. The last sighting was a pair of juveniles on June 19<sup>th</sup> at Barden. (KL, GT, PJC, PR, JMC&AMG, PQ, GSH, PD&JBP, CJC, D&HB)

**LONG TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus***

Common breeding resident. Population increasing.

Thought to be doing well at the present time, a trend no doubt linked to our mild winters. Large flocks were reported from both the Wharfe and Washburn valleys in autumn/winter with groups of 20+ birds being commonplace. A number of examples of successful breeding were also reported including a pair nesting at Manor Park (PQ) in March with young successfully fledged on May 10<sup>th</sup>. There was also a continuation of the trend for birds seen feeding on peanuts in gardens.

**MARSH TIT *Parus palustris***

Rare passage visitor/possible breeder(?).

One record only from an Otley garden on September 8<sup>th</sup>. (PJC)

**COAL TIT *Parus ater***

Common breeding resident. Population stable if not increasing.

No apparent change in status – appears to be doing well at suitable sites in both valleys and often frequents gardens. A Menston garden (KL) has had up to 4 regular visitors throughout the year.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Clearly very common, widespread and successful. However, once again the poor June weather led to concerns about nesting success. Nonetheless, a Burley garden (CJC) reported all young fledging successfully and leaving the box on June 14<sup>th</sup>.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Comments much as for Blue Tit including evidence of only limited nesting success in June. Birds were heard singing on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

NUTHATCH *Sitta europaea*

Locally common breeding resident. Population probably stable but has declined in the Washburn valley.

No apparent overall change in status this year – doing well in Wharfedale and nationally thought to be doing very well with generally increased numbers. Sightings in the Washburn however continue to be virtually non-existent (just three reports from the middle valley) following a marked downturn over the last decade – there appears to be no obvious explanation for this phenomenon. A significant number of sightings were received in Wharfedale as far as north as Starbotton. Garden sightings, usually on peanuts, were common and there were several examples of breeding success including Strid Wood where this species is particularly easy to see/hear. (N&AB, KL, CJC, PR, PJC, PD&JBP, GT, JD, LD, JMC&AMG, DA, BP, MHA, GSH, DLR, S&JH, DLR, D&ML)

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*

Common breeding resident. Population stable/possibly increasing.

Although present throughout our area tends to be concentrated in the lower valleys where numbers are thought to be at a high level. No specific breeding records but there is no reason to doubt that this species has had another successful year. A few garden records were submitted. (N&AB, PJC, AD&ML, GSH, JMC&AMG, O&DM, PR)

JAY *Garrulus glandarius*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Widespread and successful throughout our area but less so in Upper Wharfedale, presumably linked to the sparse woodland cover. Coming increasingly into gardens sometimes on a regular basis, especially in the winter, in the Addingham/Ilkley/Burley area. Juveniles were observed in gardens and in Riffa Wood. (N&AB, CJC, PR, PJC, PQ, LD, GSH, MVB, AMG)

MAGPIE *Pica pica*

Common breeding resident. Population stable.

Widespread in suburban locations although surprisingly scarce in rural situations – perhaps due to competition with game rearing interests? Despite continuing concern about the impact of this predator on local songbird/garden populations BTO research has shown a negligible effect on overall numbers. However the destruction of a Song Thrush's nest in a Burley garden is illustrative of why this handsome species is so disliked in suburbia.

Treecreeper

JB

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Common breeding resident/winter visitor. Population stable.

Large winter flocks running into hundreds, often mixed with Rooks. No apparent change in status. Their cheerful calls are especially welcome in winter when there may be very few other birds to be heard.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Common breeding resident/winter visitor. Population probably increasing.

Rookeries are common at suitable wooded sites in Lower Wharfedale and the Washburn. Winter flocks can number several hundred often mixed with Jackdaws. Increasingly inclined to visit gardens albeit remaining very wary. As with Jackdaws their winter calling can be very welcome at a time when few other species are vocalising.

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

Common breeding resident. Population increasing.

Remains numerous throughout, including the high dales and moors, notwithstanding the inevitable competition with game rearing interests. Numbers are thought to have increased in recent decades as culling has somewhat diminished and this will certainly cause problems for other species (e.g. Lapwing) whose nests and chicks it readily predated. Liable to nest wherever suitable trees occur, including in suburbia, and will visit gardens if suitable food is available.

**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

Scarce breeding resident. Population increasing.

Another good year for sightings appearing to suggest that this bird is continuing to slowly make breeding inroads into our area albeit limited to Upper Wharfedale where at least one breeding record was confirmed. Observations were mostly of 1/2 birds spread virtually throughout the year. The Barden area appears to be a favoured site but they may now be seen almost anywhere in our area as is evidenced by 2 birds over a Burley garden on July 29<sup>th</sup>, coming from the north and flying off in an easterly direction. There were records of 4 birds around Norwood Edge on November 11<sup>th</sup> and Barden on June 21<sup>st</sup>, and an observation of 2 birds, in seemingly playful interaction with Buzzards, on September 8<sup>th</sup> at Beamsley Beacon. (BOG, CM, PD&JBP, PR, GT, MHA, KM, CJC, PJC)

**STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common breeding resident/winter visitor. Population probably decreasing.

Although there is no obvious change in status it seems likely that the significant national reduction of recent times has been felt in this area. Winter flocks may be found anywhere around the valleys and often run into hundreds, quite regularly seen in mixed flocks with winter thrushes. One flock near Cracoe was counted at c1000 (GSH) but the best numbers were at an Otley garden roost (PJC) with up to 9000 in January/February, often raided by two Sparrowhawks. Breeding occurs throughout the area in suitable tree holes and buildings.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

Locally common breeding resident. Population decreasing.

Undoubtedly declining in the area in accordance with the national trend over at least the last 25 years, as measured by the BTO. One Menston garden with an average count of 20 throughout 1990 has been reduced to a maximum of 4 in July and August of this year. It is not far from being extinct in the Washburn valley (although one farm in particular is maintaining a healthy population for some unknown reason) – the decline would appear to be particularly marked in rural areas. Declines in garden visitors were reported from villages/towns in the lower valley although there were also reports of maintenance of numbers. Overall this is a disturbing trend with no clear explanation as yet – national research is ongoing. In sum there would appear to have been an overall decline in our area in the last decade or two but the effect has been patchy and there are examples of numbers being at least retained. (GT, DLR, KL, O&DM, N&AB, CJC, PD&JBP, D&HB, AB, MHA, GSH, PJC, PR)

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

Rare breeding resident. Population declining, probably near extinction in our area.

Probably just hanging on as a breeding bird after a significant decline in the lower reaches of the Wharfe valley in parallel with the precipitous national decline. Sightings restricted to 1/2 birds at Knotford seen on three occasions in March, May and June, once carrying food. (PD&JBP, CJC, DLR, BP, CM)

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

Common breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population stable.

Widespread throughout the area. No exceptionally large flocks reported, the most being c100 in the Washburn valley in June. Winter numbers are significantly augmented by visitors from the continent. Garden records of 20+ were received for the winter months.

**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Scarce passage/winter visitor.

A winter non-breeding migrant from the continent. The beech mast harvests were poor in both 1998 and 1999 so sightings for this period and early-2000 have been few and far between and generally restricted to gardens, with no large flocks being reported. The 'last' sighting was April 24<sup>th</sup> in a Menston garden and the 'first' was November 10<sup>th</sup> at Fewston. This year produced an exceptionally good beech mast harvest and sightings consequently increased significantly towards the end of the year. (DLR, CM, KL, PR, PJC, PD&JBP, AMG, CJC, JD, D&ML)

**GREENFINCH** *Carduelis chloris*

Common breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population increasing.

Thought to be doing well at the moment not least because of its increasing propensity to utilise garden feeding stations. Consequently most sightings tend to be from gardens, with up to 20 in a Burley garden in December. One exception to this is roosting sites although numbers reported from these were lower than in previous years with c30 birds on the edge of Burley Moor in January. There were a number of examples of successful breeding. (KL, CJC, PR, PJC, DLR, D&HB, PR)

**GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

Common breeding resident/migrant/passage visitor. Population stable/increasing.

Reports from throughout our area as far north as Parceval Hall. Increasing evidence of garden feeding including use of peanuts and, more particularly, sunflower seeds. Although still not common, several observers thought that an overall increase appeared to have occurred in recent times. Good numbers (c50) seen in several flocks around Thruscross and the lower Washburn in September. (KL, PR, CJC, PJC, DLR, PQ, JD, JWB, GSH, PR)

**SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

Uncommon breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Breeding population increasing.

Most often seen in over-wintering flocks prior to a northerly breeding movement but evidence is increasing of birds staying, and presumably breeding, in the locality. There were numerous reports of small flocks of 20/30 birds with occasional higher numbers of 50+ both early and late in the year. Sometimes seen with Redpoll. Records were concentrated in the lower valleys. Garden sightings were plentiful (up to 6) with the 'last' sighting in mid-May in an Ilkley garden and the 'first' on December 12<sup>th</sup> in a Burley garden. There was also an isolated record of a male in the garden on July 24<sup>th</sup>. (PD&JBP, KL, PR, D&HB, DLR, CJC, PJC, JK&SDW, AMG, JMC, JW, DA, O&DM, BP, GSH, MVB)

**LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*

Uncommon breeding migrant. Population stable/possibly declining.

A summer visitor which migrates south for winter. Records were received from March 22<sup>nd</sup> to November 5<sup>th</sup> the latter from the Washburn valley. Breeding occurs in small numbers at suitable sites in the area, often linked to gorse bushes. Small flocks can be seen through August/September with one observation of c60 on September 4<sup>th</sup> near Thruscross. (PR, N&AB, KL, CJC, PJC, PD&JBP)

**TWITE** *Carduelis flavirostris*

Scarce breeding resident/passage migrant. Population declining.

The decline of this species is continuing and it is now very scarce in our area. There were sightings at Grimwith of 3 birds on April 24<sup>th</sup>, a few on June 19<sup>th</sup> and 4 on July 18<sup>th</sup>. This may be the last remaining stronghold in the area although breeding in the upper reaches of Wharfedale is still possible. Grimwith is a 'traditional' site having had this species present at least 25 years ago. National efforts are now underway to try to reverse this species' decline. (PD&JBP, PR, PJC)

**COMMON REDPOLL** *Carduelis flammea*

Uncommon breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population probably declining.

Most records were of small numbers with the maximum being 35 at Otley GP. Sightings covered most months of the year. Reports were mainly from the Washburn and Otley GP although there were two separate garden records from Burley – 4 birds on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and a single bird on a garage roof at around the same time. Breeding is thought to occur at Timble Ings and several other areas of coniferous woodland. (PD&JBP, KL, CJC, BP, PR, PJC)

**COMMON CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

Rare breeding resident/passage/winter visitor. Population erratic due to irruptive behaviour.

A rare breeding bird which occasionally irrupts into the area from the continent. Such an event occurred in 1997 and numbers of sightings were above the norm for several years but are now back to their normal rare level. The largest number was 6 in Timble Ings on April 21<sup>st</sup>. The only other site to produce a record was Middleton Woods with 2 on January 25<sup>th</sup>. (PD&JBP, PR, BOG, CM)

**BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Common breeding resident. Population stable/declining.

National downward trends continue to give considerable cause for concern but there were again an interesting set of reports for our area albeit down on the previous year. Reports covered the whole year but were exclusively from the Lower Wharfe and Washburn valleys with many being garden records.

Successful breeding was confirmed for sites at Ben Rhydding, Burley and in an Otley garden. (N&AB, CJC, PR, DLR, PJC, GSH, D&HB, JD)

**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon breeding resident/passage visitor. Population probably stable.

Generally scarce species which is subject to local winter movement out of our area and/or to lowland sites such as Otley GP. Most reports are therefore for the breeding season from March to July at a few suitable localities such as Grimwith (now a stronghold), Knotford, Otley GP, Sun Lane, Ben Rhydding GP, Gallows Hill, Pool, Fewston, Lindley, Burley Moor and Swinsty. Unusual late records were a female on the moor edge near Panorama Drive on December 29<sup>th</sup> and several birds wintering on a farm in the Washburn with a House Sparrow flock. There were also several garden records. Many reports were of singing birds and breeding was proven at several of these sites. This species appears to have benefited from the ending of the mid-nineties drought, given its preference for nesting in damper areas. (N&AB, PR, CJC, DLR, PD&JBP, AMG & JMC, PJC, JW, GSH, D&ML)

#### LAPLAND BUNTING *Colcaurus lapponicus*

Rare passage migrant.

There were two sightings of a single bird at Kex Gill on October 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. (BOG)

#### SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare passage migrant/winter visitor.

Records are usually from moorland areas. Only one report this year of a single bird at Kex Gill on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. (BOG, PR)

#### YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Scarce breeding resident subject to local movement down the valley in winter. Population declining.

Apart from Castley (a single bird on May 29<sup>th</sup>) and Weeton (6 birds on May 20<sup>th</sup> and a splendid 25 on December 2<sup>nd</sup>), all reports were from a site north-west of Leathley where breeding was thought to have occurred with 10 birds being seen in a stubble field on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Sightings occurred at this site at regular intervals from March to December. (PD&JBP, CJC, AB, PR)

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These records are, where appropriate, subject to adjudication by the relevant local, Regional and National ornithological authorities.

#### GUIDANCE FOR CONTRIBUTORS.

The schedule for the production of the Annual Report is very tight – it normally has to reach the Editors by the end of January. Thus, the Recorders must start work by the first few days of the New Year. Please ensure that all remaining records are submitted for inclusion in the report by then. You can greatly assist the Recorders further by submitting your reports in batches throughout the year – monthly if you generate a lot, quarterly or half-yearly if you have fewer. In any case, please try to avoid submitting large amounts all at the end of the year. In the case of bird records, at least, we can do the most justice to your records if they are submitted on the Forms produced by the Society ( available from the Recorders if not at the meetings), and please try to enter them in the correct scientific species order – i.e. the order in which they appear in this report. Your co-operation will greatly assist us in making the greatest possible use of your records, and enable us to produce a comprehensive report.

Peter Riley



## LITTLE GULL AT OTLEY GRAVEL PITS, MAY 13<sup>th</sup> 2000

I was delighted to find a superb Little Gull in breeding plumage at Otley Gravel Pits on May 13<sup>th</sup>. I regularly visit this site as it is close to my home, and the pools that have been created close to the auction mart have been proving very attractive to birds. May is always an exciting month for birds and I arrived hoping there'd be something unusual on the pits. I wasn't disappointed.

I raised my binoculars to see a tern-like bird hawking insects over the water. I soon realised it was a gull and as it banked round I caught a flash of the dark, almost black underwing and white trailing edge to the upperwing that could only mean Little Gull. Little Gulls are tiny: the world's smallest gull and have a distinctive tern-like flight. My bird was in full breeding plumage, with a black hood, much darker and fuller than on Black-headed Gull. The upperwings lacked the black tips of many gulls and when perched its legs were tiny.

The gull spent about half an hour hawking insects in the warm May sunshine. It also settled on the water and on a muddy island in the company of some Black-headed Gulls. Through binoculars and a telescope I was able to get excellent views and was pleased when another Otley bird-watcher arrived and I could share this little gem. However, when I returned in the early evening the bird had gone.

Little Gulls breed in freshwater marshes in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. They are regular spring visitors on migration to the east coast of England, but are rare inland. They can also be found at sea in winter off the Yorkshire coast. Most birds visiting this country in spring are young birds, so it was particularly pleasing that Wharfedale was host to such a fine example of the species in breeding plumage. Perhaps it had overshot its breeding grounds due the fine weather that Europe was experiencing at the time?

Wharfedale Naturalists' Society is part of a team producing a new management plan for the Otley Gravel Pits. We hope to be able to negotiate a future that will ensure that a variety of migrant birds such as Little Gulls, together with a healthy population of breeding waders and waterfowl, grace the site in years to come.

Brin Best

## IN DEFENCE OF THE SPARROWHAWK



The Sparrowhawk must be one of the bird world's most exciting hunters, especially in the limited confines of a suburban garden where its amazing agility and sheer speed can take the breath away if you are lucky enough to be looking at the right time. Regrettably however it is this talent that no doubt is contributing to the ongoing campaign against raptors in general and Sparrowhawks in particular, not least by people feeling (somewhat understandably) aggrieved as the hunter disappears round the corner with 'their' Robin in its talons.

This campaign has recently been fuelled by articles in one of our broadsheet newspapers (not renowned for its support of avian raptors) in which a member of the land-owning aristocracy has accused the Sparrowhawk of being a major reason for the decline of 'Skylarks, Tree Sparrows, Thrushes, Linnets, Spotted Flycatchers, Greenfinches, Woodpeckers *and the rest*' (my italics). This was followed by the suggestion that we should not bother with scientific research on the grounds that responsible writers in this area would be better 'leaving their offices for a while and going into the country'. I could quote more but I think the gist of the article is clear.

JG As Naturalists, it is incumbent on us to take a more considered and scientific view on this issue and, from this standpoint, the Sparrowhawk is, without any shadow of a doubt, a 'good thing'. Let us consider the following facts, based of course on extensive scientific research :

- no studies have shown a sustained decline in songbird populations as a consequence of Sparrowhawks.
- there was no subsequent rise in songbird populations when organochlorine pesticide poisoning nearly eliminated the Sparrowhawk from large parts of the UK in the sixties.
- many of the principal prey species of the Sparrowhawk are actually not in decline (e.g. Chaffinch, Robin, Great Tit, Woodpigeon, Greenfinch etc.)

Even leaving aside these demonstrable facts this anti-Sparrowhawk view is totally at odds with predator/prey dynamics which demonstrates that the populations of raptors are ultimately controlled by the populations of their prey, not vice versa. The Sparrowhawk is an integral part of our native fauna – it has evolved with, and has both influenced and been influenced by, its prey. Both parties involved have developed together to a position of equilibrium whereby both can co-exist satisfactorily in the natural world. This relationship will of course continue to evolve but, if Sparrowhawks were removed from the equation, this would, in the longer term, be to the detriment of songbirds who would become subject to over-population and genetic stagnation as the weaker, less-fit, members of the population are less likely to be removed.

The purpose of this short article is to urge all members of the Society to resist the temptation to join the anti-Sparrowhawk campaign. I am personally well aware of the ambivalent feeling when I see yet another pile of feathers on my lawn but our duty as naturalists is clear – to support the Sparrowhawk and other raptors against those who would wish, be it for benign or malign reasons, to allow emotion and ignorance to overrule science.

Peter Riley