



Newsletter - MAY 2010

W.V.B.S. Events Reports

Thursday 15th. April - *Patagonia-In Darwin's Footsteps*

At our April meeting, held at Weston Longville, WVBS member Peter Lambley MBE, gave us a well illustrated talk about his three week expedition to Patagonia. It was an action packed adventure about birds, natural history, geography and geology. At kick-off, we were shown a map of South America peppered with places of interest overlying the coloured geographic zones. The Patagonian region consists mainly of desert and arid scrub, occupying almost the entire southern half of Argentina. Following the footsteps of Darwin is an intriguing idea for any naturalist. Darwin had explored South America by sea and land, and found sites of great importance to the development of his famous theory of evolution (The Origin of Species), such as geological areas where rock contained fossils of dinosaurs, or environments where species exist today that had clearly descended from the now extinct forms. Many tourist spots had information boards quoting Darwin, and visitor centres had some of his fossils on display. Part of Tierra del Fuego is named Beagle, after Darwin's ship, and a mountain in the south Cordilleras is named Mt Fitzroy in honour of the ship's captain.

On visiting Buenos Aires, Peter noted that pigeons are abundant in the city. The Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve, a large and popular nature reserve adjoining the western suburbs of Buenos Aires was unfortunately closed but Peter's talk included photos of many less familiar bird species, including the Chalk Browed Mockingbird, Monk Parakeet, Burrowing Parrot, Burrowing Owl, Razor billed Pochard, Speckled Teal, Upland Goose, Guira Cuckoo, Kelp Goose, Chilean Skua, Black Necked Swan, Southern Lapwing, Chilean Flika, and Austral Parakeet.

In a southern coastal region Peter saw abundant penguins, many with eggs, and Cormorants in large groups. Then, swimming just offshore, Southern Right whales.

Inland again, interesting sightings of wild life included the flightless rheas that look similar to emus, the Patagonian hare and an iconic "must see" armadillo. On the plateau were relatives of the camel/ llama/ alpaca family group of animals that are adapted to the arid plains of Patagonia.

Peter also ventured into Peru, where some of the terrain is similar to Patagonia, and captured a surprising shot of a flock of flamingos wading in a sewage works, alongside some ducks and geese that were quite unperturbed by this environment. Peter then closed with a picture of the red "National Flower" (of the pea family) and commented that this was a 'land of contrasts' and that he wanted to go back to Tierra Del Fuego to see more of these islands, forests and birds.

Derek Harvey

Saturday 24th. April- Trip to East Norfolk

What a treat to arrive at Horsey Mill and to see the newly returned Swallows flying about the car park, deciding whether or not to nest under the thatched roof of the toilets. It was a warm sunny day, although when the breeze came it did feel cold. By the time we left the car park everyone had seen or heard the usual for this time of year – Chiff Chaff, Willow Warbler, Chaffinch, Blue Tit, Goldfinch etc. In fact walking along the water side Willow Warblers were in abundance and we enjoyed some stunning views. We also heard a Blackcap but did not find him. The highlight of the first 45 minutes was a Sedge Warbler sitting on top of a reed singing at the top of his voice. Was this to attract a mate or an excess of exuberance because he already had? Much Sedge and Willow Warbler song accompanied us as we wandered along, together with the occasional song of a Wren. Then turning a corner what must really be the highlight of the day. Eleven Cranes feeding in the field. I, for one, have never had a better view except at Pensthorpe! Then, as if to say, 'don't forget other birds', a group of five Whimbrel flew in. No doubting them with the stripe on the head. Imagine giving directions for finding Whimbrels by saying 'just to the left of the furthest crane on the right!' Some of us could have sat with a cup of coffee and watched the Cranes in the sunshine, but we had no coffee and no chair. However, as we continued on our way four of the Cranes took off and gave us a flypast. Wonderful! And the Whimbrels moved on as well.

We had very good views of both female and male Marsh Harriers, and the occasional Reed Bunting sat high on the reeds. Some of the us thought we heard a Grasshopper Warbler, but although standing quiet and still for some time we did not manage to find him. A Fox put in an appearance and with the sun on his back he looked very splendid. At the same time a Cetti's was singing behind us.

So back to the car park for lunch; it was good to be out of the cold wind!

The afternoon was spent walking the dunes and the beach at Horsey Gap. Wheatear and Stonechat were a delight, but the most impressive were the two or three Common Whitethroat as they darted about in the scrub and bushes. We trekked along past the campsite in the hope of seeing the Ring Ouzels which had been reported, but no luck. Lots of white feathered chickens and a pair of Oystercatchers, but no Ring Ouzels.

The tide was just turning so we went down to the beach. Nothing could be seen on the sea. A pair of Herring Gulls flew by. Four seals watched us from a comfortable distance and then, with a flourish for the end of the day, Sand Martins flew in and we watched a Turnstone and a Ringed Plover amidst the stones left behind by the tide.

A really pleasant day, and thanks to Ray for organising the Cranes. Some 60 species were seen and/or heard by most of the group.

Liz Bridge

News Items

Annual General Meeting.

Our A.G.M. took place at our indoor meeting on Thursday 15th. April 2010. The current Committee was elected en bloc to stand for another year. Your Committee members are listed at the end of this Newsletter.

Our New WVBS Clothing

Our new clothing is now on sale and a good number of orders have already been taken. If you haven't yet got an Order Form or would like more information please contact me, David Knight, on 01362-668931 or david.knight142@tiscali.co.uk. Samples of the clothing will, again, be

available for inspection at our next indoor meeting complete with order forms. Please note that a cheque or cash is required with your order.

Binoculars for Hire.

We wish to remind members that your Society have four pairs of binoculars for your use which we bring to each outdoor event. If you wish borrow a pair please ask the event leader at the start of the walk.

Sightings

Please continue to send in your Sightings Records. PLEASE send them in the correct format as it makes the Recorder's job so much easier. For those of you who do not record your sightings on a computer we would, again, urge you to use the official form. Copies can be obtained from Liz Waller (see below), or you can pick them up at any of our indoor meetings. If you, still, have any 2009 records you have not sent in please do so a.s.a.p. Much appreciated

Although all your sightings may not always appear in the monthly Newsletter, they are all recorded in our Database and used to compile the Society's Annual Report. So they are very important. Please send all sightings to Liz Waller, 228, Taverham Road, Taverham. NR8 6SX or by e-mail to recorder@wvbs.org.uk (or records@wvbs.co.uk) within a week of the end of each month. We ask you to include a location and grid reference of the sighting. If you refer to page 45 of your 2008 Bird Report you will find these details for the majority of places in the Wensum Valley.

Appeal for Articles/Reports.

We always want to hear from members who have any items of interest they would like to share, be it a holiday report, visit to a reserve, a research project etc. Do you photograph/digiscope wildlife? Have you been on a recent twitch? We'd love to hear from you. **Please** send them to David Knight, The Holt, Church Road, Worthing, Dereham. NR20 5HR or by e-mail using the following address :- david.knight142@tiscali.co.uk .

Guests at Meetings.

Can we remind members who bring guests to any of our meetings that they, **please**, ensure an entry fee of £2 per guest is paid and that they sign in on the form provided. Many thanks

Membership Subscriptions

After considerable discussion, your Committee have decided to increase the Membership subscriptions with effect 1st. January 2010 for new members and 1st April 2010 for existing members.

The new annual subscriptions are Single £11; Couple £16 (an increase of £1 per member)

As previous years Richard will be taking subscriptions from members at our indoor meetings . A renewal form for your subscriptions was attached to the end of last month's Newsletter.

2009 Annual Report.

We are seeking articles from members for inclusion in the WVBS 2009 Annual Report. Articles of about 300/500 words on any birding subject are required by the very latest 30th. June to enable us to achieve a publication target date of 1st. October. If you have been monitoring a particular bird on your patch, had a special birding experience or whatever then we would like you to share it with us. Come on, members, we need your help!

Holiday / Trip Reports

The Raid on the * S.S.Tern-raft (* Slightly Sunk)

The day having been deemed suitable for the enterprise, even though so close to that April day known throughout the land as All Fools Day, a small group of non-descript figures collected by the old empty house. The weak light slid through the cold early morning mist and touched them as they lurked suspiciously by the side of the road.

As they waited two more detached themselves from the hedgerow whence they had left their noisy metal carts. Most were in some form of disguise, wearing several layers of clothing to apparently mask their normal shapes. Slowly they drew together then at a signal from the `Tall One`, one of the crew known by the sinister code name of --`The Chairman` moved swiftly down the green lane by-passing the house. The others having been given the all clear moved after. With sudden action a secret barn was discovered and quickly, making no sound, the group uncovered a Jolly Boat.

Making sure that none had seen them, they moved back to the road and attaching the boat on its carriage to one of the metal carts they swiftly vanished down the road. Through the village they went on well-greased wheels, following each other on a pre-arranged route to the gate barring the way to the dock.

One of their number, despatched earlier had luckily forced an entry by use of a Key and waved the cavalcade onwards towards the waters. Following the leader they fetched up behind a sheltering hedge by the boat dock. Dismounting from the carts a discussion took place as to the best way to proceed. Peering out from behind the cover of the hedge the object of their raid could be seen. The S.S.Tern-raft --- listing badly to one side and grounded on a sand bank, appeared to be disserted. They knew that the previous crew and passengers had left late in the last year autumn, they having been seen abandoning the sinking raft dressed in spick and span white tropical outfits and carrying small backpacks.

This nefarious crew proposed to board the raft and search through the bilges and decks for any treasure, gold, jewellery left behind. To that end the Jolly Boat was launched, a captain elected and a first scouting party detailed. The boat having drifted away slightly into the reeds, the captain already having dropped off to sleep, it needed to be recovered. `The Chairman` leant over the waters edge and woke him up by giving `a—lan (g) hale ` , this had the desired effect, the boat backing up to the dock for embarkation. Across the calm waters they went, approaching with caution, avoiding the anchor flukes left protruding from the sand, possibly as traps. Coming alongside the crew member known as Richard or sometimes Dick Deadeye volunteered to test the depth of water. Boldly stepping out from the boat he soon discovered that the water was taller than his welly- boots! He rapidly scrambled on board, muttering strange mystical words under his breath.(for protection no doubt).

The others quickly followed and the boat returned for the rest of the raiders. Meanwhile the ones on board began to rake through the thick debris. Buckets were produced and the deck sluiced, washing dubious looking black material away through the scuppers. Suddenly a shout of Gold Dust went up from the sluicers---- but this proved to be nothing more than sand washing out from below the stones covering the deck. After some time `The Tall One` declared that no treasure had been found. Then up spoke the one known as `Josh`. He offered to investigate the bilges. The round covers were with difficulty removed using a small shovel and a broom handle only to find, as suspected, that the bilges were flooded,--- the cause of the list methinks. Luckily, or due to forethought, `Bernie – the- Bosun` had brought along a strange contraption. Looking like a tin box with fins, it had a long pipe-like snout which he proceeded to push deep inside the flood.

Then twisting various levers and pulling on a short rope the tin box set up such a racket, growling and coughing like a pair of badgers fighting in a box! Quickly the water was sucked up through the snout and spat vigorously overboard. Well I for one would not have wanted to drink it and obviously the Badgers wouldn't either. Still no treasure being found the raid was declared over. The boat captain ferried all to shore, including the now quietened Badgers. For some strange

secret reason he insisted on taking the Jolly Boat backwards all the way to the dock and with such a tilt that `Bernie-the-Bosun` was almost swamped.

All disembarked and having repositioned the boat upon it's carriage enjoyed a feast of buns and drink(not rum) supplied by `The Tall One`. Silently the procession left the dock and the waterside, vanishing away through the gate leaving the one crew to repair the entrance as best he may with his key.

Although no treasure was found, the raid was pronounced successful and the S.S Tern-raft now floats at anchor awaiting a new crew.

The one known as `money-bags`.

Special Moments

In visiting reserves and wild places we often neglect the wildlife dramas on our doorstep, in our gardens and in the countryside around our home. This was brought home to me a few days ago. I was at the kitchen sink and became aware of something streak across the garden in a trail of feathers and out of sight. Rushing to the back door and looking out there was a Sparrowhawk on the ground by the side wall. One leg was holding down it's prey, a dove. Obviously fatigued from carry the load it had lost height and had been unable to clear the wall. On seeing me it left its prey and moved to a high spot a few feet away from me. For a few moments we stared at each other. The Sparrowhawk menacingly and myself in excitement at being so close to this magnificent wild bird of prey. I dodged back into the house for a camera, but, on my return the Sparrowhawk and prey had vanished. The other encounter was less dramatic, but never-the-less interesting. Having just retired and not yet used to not having to get up so early, I pulled the blind up and sat up in bed looking out the window early one morning. I soon became fascinated by two long-tailed tits performing aerial acrobatics just outside my window. It was soon apparent that they were building a nest in a bush at the side of the window. This time I was able to take some pictures of their coming and going (pictures available) .Later I had a look at the hedge as I walked down the front pathway and spotted the nest at eye level. The frantic nest building has now finished and the acrobatics ceased, but walking past I have spied the face of the female peering out from the hole in the nest. Wonderful opportunities to observe without scope or binoculars.

David Biddle

W.V.B.S. Records for April 2010

Good to see the new migrant arrivals creeping in and still some winter visitors hanging on. Here's to a good summer!

Mute Swan, 40-55 present all month at Attlebridge. WO, MS

Shoveler 2 at Sculthorpe Moor on 2nd. PL

Two **Grey Partridge** at Daffy Green on 28th. IB

Great Crested Grebe 6 at Sparham Pools on 4th. B&BP, and 2 **Little Egrets** at North Tuddenham on 2nd and at Sparham Pools on 3rd. B&BP,CH

Again there were sightings of **Red Kite** in the Valley on various dates. PH,IB,NM,B&BP. Also

Marsh Harrier at various sights. PS,PL,NMs, IB

Single **Goshawks** also seen. CH,NM. There were 4 **Sparrowhawks** at Sculthorpe Moor on 10th. PL

Common Buzzard – up to 4 seen at any one time in the Valley. IB,C&FN,NM,B&BP,DK. Two

Kestrels at Ringland on 18th. IB and single **Hobby** at Sculthorpe Moor on 23rd and Lyng on 27th. MP,NMs

One **Water Rail** at Dereham Sewage Works on 19th. IB

On the 10th there were 4 **Oystercatcher** at Sparham Pools on 10th. B&BP
 At Sculthorpe Moor on 8th there were 2 **Redshanks**, NM, with one **Green Sandpiper** NM. There was also 1 **Green Sandpiper** at Dereham on 18th, IB.
 The **Common Terns** had returned with 4 at Lyng on 23rd, NM, and 3 at Attlebridge on 30th, MS.
 12 **Stock Dove** at Worthing Church on 3rd, DK, and 1 **Turtle Dove** at Worthing on 27th, DK, and one at North Tuddenham on 30th. B&BP
 One **Cuckoo** arrived at Sculthorpe Moor on 19th, PL, and one at Worthing on 23rd, DK. A **Hoopoe** visited Great Ryburgh on 27th, AJ&PL.
 Three **Green Woodpeckers** at Upgate on 5th MS and single **Gt. Spotted Woodpeckers** at Worthing, Taverham, Sculthorpe Moor. DK,NS,PL.
 One **Woodlark** at Ringland between 6th and 9th. PS
 Single **Sand Martin** recorded at Hoe on 18th & 19th DK and 10 **Swallows** at Worthing Church on 19th and 7 at Felthorpe on 26th. DK. Also 4 **House Martins** at Sculthorpe Moor on 17th PL.
 Four **Meadow Pipits** seen at Sculthorpe Moor on 2nd, PL, and one **Yellow Wagtail** recorded at Lyng on 27th, NMs.
 One **Black Redstart** at Lyng on 17th, NMs, and 2 **Stonechats** at Guist on the 4th, IB.
 Single **Wheatear** at Costessey on 2nd and at Sculthorpe Moor on 20th. PS,NM
 Of the Winter Thrushes, there were still 26 **Fieldfare** at Swanton Morley on 20th, NMs and 2 **Redwing** at Reepham on 10th, NMs.
 The Warblers have been arriving! One **Grasshopper Warbler** at Sparham Pools on 27th, NMs.
 One **Sedge Warbler** at Sculthorpe Moor on 9th, NM. One **Lesser Whitethroat** at Hoe on 18th, DK, and 2 **Whitethroats** on 23rd at Lyng, NMs. Also, 2 **Garden Warblers** at Sparham Pools on 27th, NMs, 6 **Blackcap** recorded on the Hoe Walk on 18th, DK, 6 **Chiffchaff** at Sparham Pools on 10th B&BP and 2 **Willow Warblers** at Swanton Morley on 2nd, CH, and 5 at Sparham Pools on 10th, B&BP.
 A large count, 8, of **Marsh Tits** was recorded at Sculthorpe Moor due to survey work being carried out on this species.
Nuthatch, 2 at Taverham on 7th & 18th NS. Max. 16 **House Sparrows** at Worthing on 8th, DK. There was 1 Brambling recorded at Taverham on 1st, CH and one at Sculthorpe Moor on 9th AR. Finally, 2 **Bullfinch** recorded at Ringland on 30th, MS.

Thanks to all who sent in records this month.

William Oram WO, Barry and Bridget Pummell B&BP, Phil Littler PL, Pete Sewell PS, Martin Spriggs MS, David Knight DK, Alwyn Jackson AJ, Carole Jackson CJ, Ian Brittain IB, Nick Street NS, Charles Neale CN, Fran Neale FN, Nigel Middleton NM, Eric Jarvis EJ, Rosemary & Derek Harvey R&DH, Chris Hudson CH, Nigel Mears NMs, Mike Pearson MP, Adrian Riley AR, Pete Lambly Ply.

Liz Waller

Birds to look out for in May/June

All of the summer visitors will have arrived by the end of this period. It is also the time when some of the rarer migrants & vagrants turn up. Very few winter visitors will be still here, note all records. Please record first arrival dates and any movements of summer & passage birds e.g. Spotted Flycatcher, Honey Buzzard and Black Tern resp.

Records are required for all the species below

Departing winter visitors:-

Redwing & Fieldfare, Brambling, Siskin & Redpoll. The latter 2 may stay to breed.

Record remaining **Teal, Wigeon, Shoveler, Pintail, Pochard & Tufted Duck.** Latter may stay to breed so please record, also **Hen Harrier**

Summer Visitors & Passage Migrants

1. Warblers – most should be in by end-May

Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Garden Warbler & Blackcap, Grasshopper Warbler. Cetti's Warbler is a resident but listen for its explosive song.

2. Wagtails

Yellow Wagtail is now a very rare bird so please submit all sightings. Do not confuse with **Grey Wagtail** which is a resident along our streams & rivers. All breeding records.

3. Wheatear, Black Redstart, Ring Ouzel & Redstart will be mainly passing on the coast but can occur in WVBS area

4. Cuckoo, all records of this declining species

5. Spotted Flycatcher – late May / early June, declining rapidly, all records

6. Ducks

Garganey – a rare summer visitor. **Shelduck** – now moving back inland to breed

7. Waders

Green Sandpiper & Common Sandpiper are mainly passage birds but **Lapwing, Redshank** and **Snipe** may just stay to breed. **Oystercatcher** move inland to breed.

8. Gulls & Terns

Common Tern - record numbers and any evidence of nesting. **Arctic Tern** are not easy to separate but like **Little Gull** may pass through. All records please

9. Raptors – please treat all records as confidential

Hobby, Honey Buzzard & Montagu's Harrier are all scarce / rare summer visitors. **Marsh Harriers** will be establishing breeding territories. **Red Kite & Goshawk** are very rare

Residents

Great Spotted and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers will become more difficult to see as the trees are in full leaf. Raptors including **Sparrowhawk & Common Buzzard** will soon stop displaying **Linnet record** flock size & nesting pairs

Mainly Coastal these waders may be in spectacular breeding plumage

Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Knot, Grey Plover, Turnstone, Dunlin, Ruff, Avocet, Curlew Sandpiper

Please send those records to Liz

Ray Gribble

Forthcoming Events

Thursday 20th. May – *The Wildlife of Kenya* (This is a change to the talk previously advertised)

Our speaker for this evening's indoor meeting is Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS . A lifelong interest in birds and all things natural. A busy local GP he has, over the past 10 years or so, started to take what began as a hobby more seriously. "I started just wanting to take pictures of birds but, over the years, my interest in wildlife has expanded into just about everything," When not working as a GP, Kevin spends his time travelling the world, taking photographs and leading tours for a UK based wildlife holiday company. He also gives lectures to UK wildlife and photography groups, and on-board cruise ships whose destinations have included the Amazon, South Georgia and the Galapagos Islands.

Kevin recently spent six weeks in Antarctica as a member of an expedition team. "My favourite experience has to be flying out to Costa Rica on New Year's Eve in 2006," Kevin said. "On New Year's Day, I was 8,500 feet up a mountain looking at a bird called the Resplendent Quetzal, considered by many the most beautiful bird in the world."

"The appeal to me of taking pictures is to try and capture wildlife in its natural environment, but, more than that, to capture animals in action and record their natural behaviour," he said."

It promises to be an interesting evening so we look forward to seeing you all there.

Saturday 22nd. May -*Wild About the Wensum at Pensthorpe 10am – 5pm.*

As you know we are having a stand at the **Wild About the Wensum** environmental awareness event at **Pensthorpe** again this year. There is **FREE ENTRY** into Pensthorpe all day with a parking fee of £4 per car. There will be guided walks, many creative crafts, bird watching activities, nature quizzes, puzzles, face painting, local craft demonstrations, local conservation groups, a recycling display and lots more. It is usually a great day out.

All proceeds and donations will go to support work in the valley for this years nominated species - the **House Sparrow** which has declined 71% between 1977 and 2007 and is still, fairly certainly, declining, so urgently needs help. Your Committee has, already, decided to donate £50 to support this worthy cause.

We are appealing now for members to come forward and volunteer for duties on the day. We have been asked to try and provide some assistance as car parking stewards or donation collectors but we do need the usual help with manning our stand for a short time. So far we have had a poor response to our appeal. **So, come on, members! We need your help!** If you are able to give an hour or so of your time please contact Alwyn Jackson a.s.a.p on 01362 637752 or by email at alwynandcarole@my-emails.com

Sunday 30th. May – *Dawn Chorus(& Bacon Butties) at Sparham Pools.*

Join us for our annual Dawn Chorus event at NWT Sparham Pools. We meet for a 04.15 start and finish around 08.00. Bacon Butties are available at the end to all those who booked them. Please add your name to the Attendance Sheet with your order at the next indoor meeting or contact our event Leader, Alwyn Jackson (tel 01362 637752). Please note that parking in the reserve is limited, so please park tidily . There is also room for a few cars just along the main road near the bridge.

Thursday 17th. June - *Nightjar Evening at Marsham Heath*

Our nightjar evening will follow the usual format. Those who would like to have a bit of a social and have a meal will meet at the Marsham Arms at 7:00pm ish so we can all sit down and order our meals at 7:30ish. If you would just like to have a drink you can join us at any time in the evening. We will aim to finish our meals etc. so we can leave the Marsham Arms no later than 9:20pm and arrive at Marsham Heath by 9:30 in time to catch the nightjars coming out. Please let me know if you would like directions or more information and also numbers so I can inform the landlord. by **10th. June** latest as nothing is pre-ordered. Contact me (Josh Leeder.) on 01603 872660 .

Don't forget your gnat repellent and appropriate clothing for the weather. Also a torch is useful for finding your way back to the car.

N.B. Nightjars are sensitive to noise and we will only enjoy close views if the birds are not disturbed. As responsible birdwatchers we must set the standard and if any other groups on the heath are not so responsible a polite word may be necessary.

Sunday 27th. June-*The Length of the Valley - Part 1*

This is the first in a series that will take us along the Wensum Valley from West to East. It won't necessarily follow the river closely, but it will stay in our reporting area and hopefully introduce you to places you may not have been before. This first trip will concentrate on Sculthorpe Moor and the Great Ryburgh area, including the Raptor Watch Point.

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Community Nature Reserve at Sculthorpe Moor, west of Fakenham, Grid Reference TF900306. We will spend about 2 hours here, taking in the boardwalk and hides, looking for Water Rail, wood and marshland warblers and other birds, with the possibility of Hobby, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Spotted Flycatcher if we're lucky. We'll then move on to the Raptor Watch Point at Great Ryburgh, leaving a couple of cars at the village and taking their drivers with us to the Watch Point where we'll hope for some nice raptors over Sennow Park. We should also see hirundines and maybe some farmland birds. We'll have our lunch here, then take a farmland walk on tracks and bridleways back to Great Ryburgh, where we will complete this trip at around 2 – 2.30 p.m.

Wear shoes or walking boots appropriate to the weather and to walking on both marshy paths and bridleways. Bring packed lunches and folding chairs if you'd like to take it easy at the Watch Point. Don't forget water bottles especially if it's hot, and sun hats, sun cream, insect repellent and raingear as appropriate! You can nip into Morrison's at Fakenham en route between Sculthorpe and Great Ryburgh if you need anything.

Your leader for this trip is Jacky Pett, mobile 07880 820084, home 01603 879890, email jacky.pett@btinternet.com. Please sign up for the trip on the notice at the next meeting, or at one of the earlier June events.

If you'd like to start your 'Length of the Valley' trip even further up the river, look at the **Wensum Valley Bird Walks – No 3** (provided for your own use, not an organised walk) at **West Raynham** at the end of this newsletter (page 11) or on the website.

Thursday July 15th. - *Members' Summer Social BBQ*

Our annual summer social event is a Barbecue at Weston Longville Village Hall and the Taverham Scouts have kindly offered to organize this again. Join us from 19.30hrs. with hot food being served from 20.00. The cost will be **£7** per person payable at the door.

Please would you bring a plate of either salad /savoury nibbles OR sweet to share (enough for about five people). Lin Pateman will be co-ordinating the event so please call her on 01603 262737 soon to let her know a) that you plan to attend and b) what food you will be bringing or to get inspiration from her for what you might bring.

You should also bring your own drinks and crockery/cutlery (and please take them home with you too!). A picnic blanket and/or chairs may prove useful as you may wish to sit outside if we are blessed with a lovely summer's evening. Car parking will be on the adjacent football field leaving the usual car park free for us to sit/wander. Tea, coffee and squash will be provided on the night as usual. The hall will be open for us to use as necessary and a slide show may be on the cards. This event proved very popular last year so please contact Lin to make your booking. You can pay for your tickets on the night but we need to know numbers as soon as possible so the right amount of food can be ordered. There will be a raffle as usual and raffle prizes are more than welcome.

Your Committee

Alwyn Jackson(Chairman) tel 01362-637752
Liz Waller (Recorder)
Martin Spriggs (Treasurer) tel 01603-869832
Richard Norris (Membership Secretary) tel 01603 746723
Josh Leeder (Loan Library) tel 01603-872660
Colin Wright (Publicity) tel 01603-740548
Ray Gribble (Programmes Coordinator) tel 01603 - 872709
David Knight (Newsletter Editor) tel 01362-668931
Lin Pateman(Secretary) tel 01603 262737

N.B.

All indoor meetings are at Weston Longville village hall (Grid TG113158) starting at 1930 hrs

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Wensum Valley Bird Walks

No.3 - West Raynham (Grid Reference TF873253)

This is a charming area at any time of year but probably best for birds in spring and early summer. The villages of West, South and East Raynham surround Raynham Hall and its parkland, and there is plenty of interest for lovers of scenery and old buildings as well as bird watchers and walkers. Lots of easy walking routes on waymarked paths and tracks, some of which go alongside the river Wensum.

Bird species

All year.

Common wildfowl & waterbirds
Sparrowhawk
Kestrel
Kingfisher
Green Woodpecker
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Sky Lark
Pied Wagtail
Common scrub birds
Marsh Tit

Summer.

Cuckoo
Turtle Dove
Hirundines
Sedge Warbler
Reed Warbler
Common Whitethroat
Blackcap
Garden Warbler
Chiffchaff
Willow Warbler

Winter.

Winter thrushes, Siskin, Redpoll

Park in the village of West Raynham (c.8 miles SW of Fakenham) somewhere near the middle near the triangular green with cherry trees (great blossom in May). A notice board on the west wall displays the routes around the area, varying from whole day walks to an hour or so.

A nice 2 hour birdwatching walk goes along the road towards East Raynham, with views of the lake across the field (best view of lake) and crosses a stile to the south before the bridge. This takes you over a field and through a couple more stiles, alongside a pleasant stream at the edge of the woodland, before crossing the Wensum on a safe bridge. You can choose to go straight on up the hill and come back along the road, turn left to walk beside the river (the shortest route, but involves a couple of ditches with narrow planks), or to go right and take a much longer route. Whichever option you take, you come back to the entrance to St Mary's Church where walkers' paths are clearly signposted through the farmyard. Lovely view of Raynham Hall on your right.

Walk on a level track to the end of the field and turn left through the kissing gate to cross the river once again. Take care here as it might be a good place for kingfishers and grey wagtails. The path goes through wet scrubland with plenty of warblers in season (close views) before emerging onto farmland where you have a choice of routes back to the village, the quickest being diagonally left across the field. Admire the ruined church of St Margaret from this path. Take care on the road back into the village but spot some nice wildflowers on the bank on your left.

