

Coast to Coast

In August, Channel 5 Television came to Foxglove. With them came Tony Robinson, best known for his role as Baldrick in the series *Blackadder* and for presenting *Time Team*. This time he was filming *Coast to Coast*, a series that is to be broadcast in the autumn, where he loosely follows the route of the long distance footpath across Northern England, stopping to take part in various local activities on the way. Tony spent a day at Foxglove, getting stuck in with the volunteers for a variety of activities. The main task of the day was to create a new floating island, as a perch and safe haven for the various waterfowl that use the lake, whilst giving viewers in the bird hide a better chance to see them. To achieve this, the plan was to fell a large Ash tree hanging over the lake, drop it into the water and anchor it there. This involved a lot of preparation, and both the Tuesday and the Thursday Foxglove volunteers were kept busy clearing the area in preparation for the big day. Once the ground was clear our tree surgeon Sean, was brought in to carefully remove all of the extra branches.

The filming day itself dawned bright and sunny. The volunteers turned up in good numbers, Eleanor launched her canoe into the lake to provide support where needed, the winch was put into position and everything was ready for the filming to begin. When the film crew arrived, everyone got to work. Tony Robinson helped the volunteers remove the last of the tree branches, leaving only the enormous three pronged tree trunk standing. Everyone then waited with bated breath as Sean carefully made the final felling cuts. The tree came down in the lake with an almighty splash, just where we had hoped it would, and was then winched out into position in the centre of the lake by Willie. Once



Sean preparing the tree for felling



Filming at the lake

everything had settled, the tree was anchored into position with stakes to stop it drifting downstream to the weir.

Next, Tony and the film crew spent some time identifying moths with Glennis and some of our other moth recorders, looking at the different species and seeing how a moth trap works. He then proceeded to the bird ringing room, to learn about the process of bird ringing and its value in nature conservation with Sophie and me. The film crew left in high spirits, after a long and very successful day.

The waterfowl very quickly showed their approval of the new island, and these days it is unusual for visitors not to see Mallard or Moorhen perched there. The event was a real team effort, not only by those who showed up on the day to help out, but also those who gave their time in the week building up to the event. We are all looking forward to seeing the programme broadcast in the autumn.

Stacey Adlard, Reserve Manager


Come and join us at the Foxglove Christmas Party!

Wednesday 14th December
7.00pm for the meal at 7.45pm
at Wathgill

Enjoy an evening of festive fun with
Full Christmas Dinner,
quizzes, raffles, live music and more!

All welcome - bring along a friend

Tickets £13
Available from the office or
Book through the Events section on
Foxglove Covert website

Please book by 30th November 

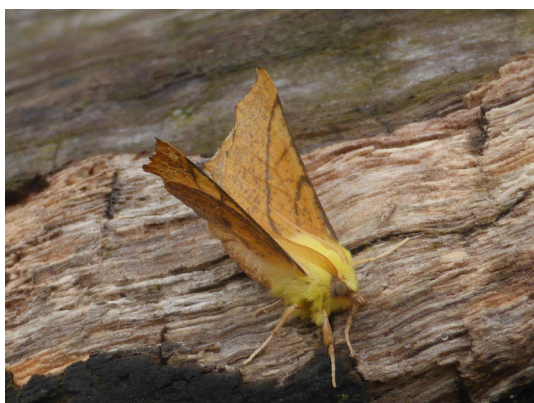
Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve **"A Tree, a Leaf, a Blade Of Grass"** *An Audio-Visual Presentation by* **John Webster ARPS, MPAGB**



On Friday 18th November 2016
Doors and Bar Open at 7.00pm for 7.30 start
At Wathgill Army Camp, Downholme, DL11 6AH
(Between Leyburn and Richmond)
Admission by £10 Ticket which includes a Buffet Supper
From Foxglove Covert Tel. 01748 831113

September Moths

After a very warm autumn day yesterday, we anticipated catching a large number of moths in the light trap which had been set out on the verandah as the managers left the reserve. But a dramatic thunderstorm and very heavy rain during the evening, diminished our expectations this morning as we arrived to identify those in the trap. There were 37 moths of 10 different species, and whilst numbers were low, there were some beautiful specimens to record, including Canary-shouldered Thorn, Angle Shades, Pink-barred Sallow and for the first time this year, Frosted Orange.



Canary-shouldered Thorn

In the first half of 2016, species and numbers recorded were well down on recent years, probably due to the cold, wet and windy weather - no more than 10 species were caught on any one day. Whilst more were recorded as summer progressed and the weather improved, at no time did the volume equal species listed in 2015. On one day last summer the recorders worked from 9am until 2.30pm, noting 26 species and 76 moths from one trap! On 2nd and 3rd August this year, Dr Charles Fletcher, the County Moth Recorder, spent the evening with Roger at Foxglove, and 7 traps were set in contrasting habitats around the reserve. This was the most successful session this year and 158 species were recorded, including 21 new records for Foxglove and one very scarce moth which was a new record for the County. Using generators, it was possible to put the traps in areas away from the centre, attracting species which were less likely to come to the verandah; one on

the heath close to the beck-side woodland was the most rewarding.

With a consistent group of recorders, and others joining whenever their commitments allow, the moth sessions take place every Wednesday throughout the year. Species lists are maintained, and photographs taken, sometimes to confirm identities, but also for displays, the blog, and for illustrated talks given to community groups. We welcome visitors to the centre and often groups of children have an opportunity to see just how fascinating these insects are. The photographic enlargements enable observers to see their beautiful patterns, the cryptic colouring, details of their eyes and the dramatic antennae on some species.

For most of us, before we had the privilege of volunteering at Foxglove, unidentified moths were caught at night in car headlights, or found curled and faded on our windowsills. To observe them closely each week is an exciting and rewarding experience.

Glennis Walton



Angle Shades

Starting at Foxglove

I've now been working at Foxglove for nearly four months and it's a privilege to be here. Foxglove is a beautiful place and the work is so varied; for me the combination of outdoors, education and the chance to keep learning is irresistible! I've been made to feel very welcome by staff and volunteers alike – thank you all.

It's been all go from day one, with still no two days the same. There have been volunteer work parties, visiting school groups, family events, bird ringing, talks and guided walks, a TV crew and I joined a trip up to Cape Wrath to ring Storm Petrels!



A Water Vole on the feeding platform

Then of course there's the getting to know the reserve - the main public routes, net rides, cut-throughs and small paths, and also the initially-baffling series of unofficial names by which parts of the reserve are known and referred to: Kidney-spot corner, the scrapes, the voley ponds, the gabions, Fountain's Abbey...! It was therefore with a secret delight that I recently confidently escorted two very lost members of the public along the most direct route to see their sponsored bird box situated off a barely visible unofficial path! It was a further bonus to be able to inform them that three Tawny Owlets had been raised in their box this year!

Other highlights of my first few months include running education events and working with children. It's wonderful to see them keen, excited and learning - I've had a group of Beavers sing me a song, a school child declare 'Best day ever!' and, when asked if he knew what a herbivore was, a young boy answer with confidence 'Yes! It's a type of dinosaur!' ... well, I can work with that!

Something I saw working well at another nature reserve and have now introduced at Foxglove is the Water Vole feeding platforms which have been a big success, increasing the visibility of the Water Voles and photo opportunities.

Now my focus is on preparing and starting winter work – there's lots to do especially after such a good growing season. Coppicing, scrub clearance, bird box maintenance...lots more mini-adventures await!

Jennifer Care, Reserve Manager