

## Editorial Comment

Summer is always our busiest time at Foxglove but this year was very special; we chose to have an Open Day to thank our supporters and over 600 turned out to help us celebrate the opening of some of our new facilities. In this issue of Undergrowth John summarised some of the highlights from a very memorable day, and we try to catch up with a multitude of other interesting events that have occurred in the last three months as well as look forward to some of the major events of the next three months, which culminate with our Christmas party.

Tom Dewdney

## A few words from the Chairman

This edition of Undergrowth will highlight some of the landmarks of the last 10 years, and others are better qualified than me to comment on the number of achievements that stand as testament to those who have been involved since Day 1. But as a relative new boy to the Foxglove experience I applaud the vision and work of those who have done so much over the years. I can however offer particular thanks and express my admiration to the volunteers, who over the years have done so much as well, and without whom, there would not have had such a well-tended local nature reserve to justify the big projects! This was crystal clear to me during the build up to and during the open day last month. I thanked some on the day, but I wish to thank all those I did not catch after the open day. It was a great day, reliant upon very hard work by a number of volunteers. Without you it could not have happened. Many, not just me, appreciate your efforts even if I do not say so very often!

May I also take this opportunity to welcome Adam to the team and thank Marion for her significant contribution over the last three years. People may come and go but their efforts always leave a lasting impression. We all wish Marion well for the years ahead and look forward to seeing her as a visitor and good friend. Adam will bring fresh ideas to Foxglove and we look forward to the years ahead.

Guy Deacon

## New Arrival at Foxglove



Adam joined us on 22<sup>nd</sup> August as the Deputy Reserve Manager and as the photo shows, Adam is already getting stuck into some of the management problems on the Wetland. Adam is a graduate in Ecological Science and has since

trained at Rutland Water Nature Reserve and worked as an Ecological Surveyor in his native Leicestershire. We all hope that Adam can apply his many skills to the benefit of Foxglove whilst doing a real job!

Sophie

## Q. Where can you see both Marsh and Willow Tit?



A. Foxglove Covert.

## Didn't We Have a Lovely Day!

The Open Day dawned bright and promising after what seemed like weeks of awful weather. There was a great sense of excitement as the early arrivals put the finishing touches to displays, which had been in preparation for several days. A lot of hard work and planning was coming to fruition – would it all work? Would anybody come?



After a bit of nifty traffic management the site was cleared of vehicles and people started to pour in as the faithful mini-bus did its regular transits. It was great to see so many families with young children – exactly what we had hoped for – and the face-painter was immediately busy! The first demonstrations got us off to a spectacular start, the tree climbers wowing the audience with their lopping skills and then the horse-logger showing just how valuable the old method is in these modern times. The first lot of pond dippers went off with Sarah to the scrapes, using the magnificent Foxglove facilities in an activity which proved popular all day. Deep in the workshop Paul slaved over a hot stove demonstrating the art of making fat balls.

Our celebrated guests had arrived by now and toured the new facilities. First was Professor David Hill, Deputy Chairman of Natural England that is the government organisation funding many of the improvements at the Reserve. He opened the new Outdoor Classroom with its lovely display boards and spoke very kindly of the work of Foxglove Covert LNR and its importance as a beacon of what can be achieved by local groups. Next The Rt. Hon. William Hague MP, Foreign Secretary, unveiled the shiny brass plaque at the new bridge. This bridge completes the wheelchair accessible route around the reserve and is a very important development in making it available to a wide range of people. Mr Hague is a busy man at the moment and it was great that he and his wife took time to support the

Reserve, and to say how impressed they were by it. Last, but certainly not least, Professor David Bellamy opened the full access hide overlooking the lake. All of the guests took time to look at the various other developments on the reserve.



At the Field Centre many local conservation groups were busy at stands describing their activities, these included the Badger Group, North Yorkshire Bat Group, The Dales Black Grouse Group, Richmondshire and Hambleton RSPB Local Group and Richmond Beekeepers. The internal beehive that the latter maintain at the Centre was a real honey pot for visitors! Many watched the bird-ringing demonstrations and remarkably, given the number of people around, more than 70 birds were caught and ringed. Nearly everybody bought tea and cakes from the seemingly tireless volunteers who did a fantastic job all day.





Meanwhile, back in the reserve, lots of small creatures were lurking and who could be better to head the bug-hunt than Roger and Rosy Keys who led several laughing and excited groups in an activity that seemed a lot of fun. Small creatures also seemed to abound in the outdoor classroom, but these were made out of toilet roll tubes and beads by lots of young people. They also made some clever kites and designed some excellent nature reserves in tomato boxes! Other groups opted for Elizabeth's wild flower walks, thrilled at the range and variety in the reserve at this time of year.



At lunch the sun came out strongly and many families found pretty picnic spots. David Bellamy gave a rousing address from the front of the Centre, getting the audience to roar their approval of all the Reserve is doing. He spent time chatting to people and cheerfully posed for many photographs.



The atmosphere was enhanced by the sound of the Northumbrian Small Pipes beautifully played by Brian Tyldesley. Not far away Marion demonstrated the art of wild cuisine and Tom showed visitors how to make bird-boxes. Near the entrance of the reserve a wonderful display of chainsaw carving included the production of a

magnificent owl, which is being raffled to raise funds. Elsewhere the results of the moth trapping from the previous night were being examined and a magnificent butterfly collection was on display.



Later, as we gently wound up the Open Day, we reflected on its fantastic success:

- We had wanted to celebrate our ten years as a Local Nature Reserve and we had certainly done that.
- We had wanted to show off the reserve and what it could offer to a range of visitors and wow, had we done that! Over 600 visitors were tallied and the total was probably much higher as we did not count correctly at the beginning!
- We had wanted to show what we were doing with the money we were getting from Natural England and the comments from our visitors were very positive indeed. Many indicated they would be coming again and, indeed, many have already returned as new volunteers.
- Finally, we had wanted to involve our wonderful volunteers in a major project and were stunned by their magnificent response. Over 70 excellent volunteers put in the hard graft needed to make this day the huge success it was, and if that does not show the world how healthy and strong we are I don't know what can!

Very many thanks to you all; you made the day really extra special.

John Ginnever

Congratulations to Bob Longridge who is now the proud owner of the wooden carving of the owl that he won in the draw on 1<sup>st</sup> September!

## Army Ornithological Society Visit

Opportunities for members of the Army Ornithological Society to meet, other than at the Annual General Meeting, are few and far between so the idea of meeting at Foxglove Covert in Catterick Garrison for a weekend of ringing was an offer too good to refuse!

To make life easy it was decided to meet at the annual Rutland Bird Fair on the Friday before making our way up to Catterick. Eventually eight of us made up the party. We were a mixture of ringers ranging from experienced to first time novice but all managed to gain something from the weekend. The Saturday involved helping with the scheduled Constant Effort Site day with over 40 nets deployed! Birds came thick and fast involving a mixture ranging from Great Spotted Woodpecker to the diminutive Goldcrest and with over 160 new birds ringed and 100 or more “re-traps” a good day’s work was deemed to have been done. The first timers soon gained confidence under very watchful eyes of the expert trainers and all ringed and handled many birds each. Foxglove Covert has ringing facilities second to none and a better place to begin a ringing career would be hard to find!

Sunday morning and back to reality as we gathered on the Bardon Moor to begin the second session. No well-lit warm and dry room with tea on tap but ringing as most know it from the back of a vehicle! No lack of enthusiasm though as we erected several nets hoping to catch mainly Meadow Pipits on migration. Sadly, the wind was a little too strong and after a few hours it was decided to end the session. Not a total failure though as over 60 pipits and a solitary Linnet was ringed.

It had been a splendid weekend with friends old and new. Many thanks to all who made it possible particularly Major Tony Crease who is always keen to encourage ringing within the Army, and to John Bell and Tom Dewdney for their knowledge and patience.

Those attending were Roger Dickey, Julia Springett (RAFOS), Martin Routledge (RAFOS), Dave Pentelow, Lynne Millard, Phil Cook, Ann and Carl Powell.

**Carl Powell**



## What's On

- Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> Oct. – join our Poetry Workshop and convert your wildlife observations into poetry. This is a new event run in conjunction with Plantlife.
- Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> Nov. – join us for some well earned fresh air on the first of our Winter Worky Days
- Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> Nov. – sees us return to Richmond Town Hall for a Coffee Morning to raise much needed funds. All help welcome!
- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> Dec. – join in our traditional Willow Weaving event and prepare a wreath or star for Christmas.
- Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> Dec – sees the year turn full circle with our last event of the season, the Christmas Dinner

If you would like to attend any or all of these events, please look on the website or talk to the Reserve Managers to obtain more details.

## What do you do with the Children during the summer holidays?

This is an age-old question, but not any more as the Reserve Managers have devised a new set of events in their ‘August Antics’ programme to keep both the young and the ‘young at heart’ busy during August. Topics like Nature Detectives, Meet the Birds, Flying Things and Wet Wildlife were enjoyed by all and judging by the response will return in future years.

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Articles for inclusion in future issues are welcomed by the editor at: [foxglovelnr@btinternet.com](mailto:foxglovelnr@btinternet.com).

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