

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No. 149

Spring 2015

*Chorley and District Natural History Society is a  
Registered Charity: Registration Number 513466*

## THE BIRDS OF YARROW VALLEY PARK



We have just published (May 2015) a full colour 48 page booklet describing the birds found at Yarrow Valley Park.

The photographs used were taken by the late Colin Smith FRPS, who was a founder member of the society. The booklet is our memorial to him.

The text was written by our Bird Recorder, Neil Southworth. The booklet is priced at £3.00 for members, who should obtain their copy through the Secretary, and £4.00 for non-members and is available at:

Birkacre Garden Centre, Birkacre Road, Chorley.

Ebb&Flo Bookshop, 12 Gillibrand Street, Chorley.

Tree Face Cafe, Yarrow Valley Park, Birkacre Road, Chorley

## FLORA REPORT

The year started with very mild weather. It was so mild that there was even Creeping Buttercup in flower on January 8<sup>th</sup> and Butterbur on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Nationally records of opened flowers were TEN times more than in the average January. That soon changed by the middle of the month when winter arrived with frost, winds and snow evident until mid-February.

Snowdrops did make an appearance on February 9<sup>th</sup> but other species were back to their usual times. March had its usual explosion of yellow with Lesser Celandine, Coltsfoot, Daffodils, Golden Saxifrage and Primrose reminding us that the sun was on its way north.



By the time you read this, Bluebells should be in profusion in Cuerden Valley Park, Yarrow Valley Park, Roddlesworth and Duxbury.

Do get out and enjoy the colour and perfume of my favourite flower.

**David Beattie**

## BIRD REPORT

### January

Up to 150 Pink-footed Geese were feeding regularly on the mosses. 80 flying west over Heapey Lodges (20<sup>th</sup>) and 250 west over Tinklers Lane fields (27<sup>th</sup>) were perhaps birds returning from East Anglia. Whooper Swan records were limited to 10 on Croston Moss (1<sup>st</sup>) and 4 there on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. 5 Mute Swan remained at Loch Meadow until at least 2<sup>nd</sup>, when a pair was also at Lower Healey. 5 were on Tinklers Lane fields on 22<sup>nd</sup>. There was a good selection of duck during the month, although generally in small numbers. Several Wigeon were heard flying over Heskin (2<sup>nd</sup>). The female Shoveler remained at Yarrow Valley Park. A Mandarin was at a pond in Tinklers Lane fields (2<sup>nd</sup>) and 6 were at Arley nature reserve (11<sup>th</sup>). A single Pochard was at Anglezarke Reservoir (11<sup>th</sup>). Tufted were in better numbers with 13 at Yarrow Valley Park (1<sup>st</sup>), 20 at Croston Twin Lakes (2<sup>nd</sup>) and 11 at Lower Healey also on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. 4 Gadwall were at Croston Twin Lakes on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Goldeneye records were confined to 2 at Lower Healey (2<sup>nd</sup>) and 4 at Heapey Lodges (19<sup>th</sup>). Goosander numbers were usually in single figures and included 7 at Yarrow Valley Park (13<sup>th</sup>), 3 on Yarrow Reservoir (11<sup>th</sup>) and 15 at Lower Healey (25<sup>th</sup>). Finally, best Teal count was 50 at Belmont Reservoir (24<sup>th</sup>), with 10 at Croston Twin Lakes (10<sup>th</sup>) and 10 at Arley (11<sup>th</sup>).

Including Grey Heron at Yarrow Valley Park, seven species of wader were recorded. Green Sandpiper were seen both on Syd Brook (2<sup>nd</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>) and at Croston Twin Lakes (18<sup>th</sup>).



Flocks of Golden Plover included 11 on Croston Moss (17<sup>th</sup>) and 53 there (20<sup>th</sup>).

A Curlew at Euxton on the 4<sup>th</sup> was an early record for the area. A single Woodcock was noted at Chisnall (18<sup>th</sup>) and Snipe included 6 on Croston Moss (2<sup>nd</sup>) and 2 on Tinklers Lane fields also on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Flocks of Lapwing included 20 on Croston Moss (2<sup>nd</sup>), 110 Gale Moss (14<sup>th</sup>), 50 Croston Twin Lakes (21<sup>st</sup>), 21 on Lower Rivington Reservoir (22<sup>nd</sup>) and 60 at Belmont Reservoir (24<sup>th</sup>).

A Merlin was noted on Croston Moss (21<sup>st</sup>). Peregrines were noted on Morrison's chimney (2<sup>nd</sup>) and on Croston Moss (20<sup>th</sup>). A Sparrowhawk was seen taking a Starling at Heath Charnock on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. A Little Owl was noted at Heath Charnock (4<sup>th</sup>), and Tawny Owls were at Eccleston (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Great Knowley (14<sup>th</sup>).

Game birds include 5 Red Grouse on Winter Hill (20<sup>th</sup>), 16 Grey Partridge at Hic Bibi (20<sup>th</sup>) and 3 Red-legged Partridge were on Croston Moss (19<sup>th</sup>). A flock of 80 Stock Dove was counted on Croston Moss on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

A Dipper on Syd Brook on the 18<sup>th</sup> was one of only a handful of sightings at the site over the last 30 years for the observer. A Grey Wagtail was also present. Pied Wagtail flocks included 14 on Tinklers Lane fields (14<sup>th</sup>) and 13 at Lower Healey (11<sup>th</sup>). Kingfishers were recorded at Birkacre (1<sup>st</sup>), Croston Twin Lakes (4<sup>th</sup>), Arley (11<sup>th</sup>) and Croston Moss (19<sup>th</sup>).



*Grey Wagtail*

Winter flocks included 250 Fieldfare on Tinklers Lane fields (4<sup>th</sup>) and 300 on Blainscough fields (20<sup>th</sup>). Largest Redwing flock was one of 110 on Tinklers Lane fields (22<sup>nd</sup>). 150 Skylark were on Bretherton Eyes (4<sup>th</sup>) and 100 were on Croston Moss (19<sup>th</sup>). The Linnet flock on Croston Moss was estimated at 300 on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Smaller flocks on the moss included 20 Tree Sparrow (19<sup>th</sup>), 10 Yellowhammer (18<sup>th</sup>), 30 Corn Bunting (25<sup>th</sup>) with 18 Reed Bunting at Croston Sewage Works (25<sup>th</sup>). 13 Lesser Redpoll were at Great Knowley on the 4<sup>th</sup>. A few Brambling were with Chaffinch at Rivington (4<sup>th</sup>).

Wintering Blackcaps found a Chorley garden to their liking with males there on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and a female on the 18<sup>th</sup>. 3 wintering Chiffchaff were noted at Croston Sewage Works on the 4<sup>th</sup> including one of the Siberian race *tristis*. Stonechat sightings included 4 on Croston Finney (4<sup>th</sup>), one at White Coppice (19<sup>th</sup>), 3 on Great Hill (19<sup>th</sup>) and one at Hic Bibi (20<sup>th</sup>). A Willow Tit was noted on Croston Moss (2<sup>nd</sup>).

## February

A Little Egret roaming the ditches on Croston Moss was a good find for one observer on the 1<sup>st</sup>. It was seen again on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Pink-footed Geese were still feeding on the moss with 150 on the 1<sup>st</sup> reducing to 50 by the 14<sup>th</sup>. Return passage from East Anglia was evidenced by flocks of 80 over Eccleston (4<sup>th</sup>), 20 over Euxton (6<sup>th</sup>), 200 over Yarrow Valley Park (6<sup>th</sup>) and 700 over Coppull (9<sup>th</sup>). A Whooper Swan was on Croston Moss (7<sup>th</sup>), 3 flew low over Eyes Lane (14<sup>th</sup>) and 5 flew over Yarrow Valley Park (15<sup>th</sup>). 20 Greylag Geese were on Lower Rivington Reservoir on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 40 Canada Geese were at Yarrow Valley Park (1<sup>st</sup>). Shelduck had started to move inland with 6 on Croston Moss (7<sup>th</sup>) and an impressive 52 along Eyes Lane on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The female Shoveler of suspect origin continued to reside at Yarrow Valley Park, where Tufted Duck numbers peaked at 15 on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Tufted at Croston Twin Lakes numbered 11 on the 15<sup>th</sup>. 2 Gadwall were at the site on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The single Pochard remained at Anglezarke, and Mandarin were again noted at both Arley and along the Yarrow at Eccleston.



*Goosander at Common Bank Lodge*

Goosander numbers began to build up at Common Bank Lodge, peaking at 18 on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Ten were also on the Douglas at Croston (21<sup>st</sup>). Goldeneye records came from Heapey Lodges and High Bullough Reservoir. Numbers of Teal on the Douglas at Croston increased to 70 by the 21<sup>st</sup>, and at Withnell Fold Flash to 20 by the 23<sup>rd</sup>. A good count of 34 Coot was made at Yarrow Valley Park on the 6<sup>th</sup>. A Water Rail was at the E-shaped Pond on the same day.

Green Sandpiper were again noted at Croston Twin Lakes and on Syd Brook at Eccleston, with another along the Douglas at Croston (10<sup>th</sup>). Jack Snipe were encountered at the E-shaped Pond (6<sup>th</sup>), Bretherton Eyes (8<sup>th</sup>) and Tinklers Lane (9<sup>th</sup>). Counts of Common Snipe on the 6<sup>th</sup> included 40 each at Croston Moss and the E-shaped pond and 13 at Croston Twin Lakes suggesting perhaps Spring passage.



*Golden Plover*

Golden Plover were again noted on Croston Moss with a flyover on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 12 down on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Waders moving back inland to breeding territories included 2 Redshank on the Douglas at Croston (6<sup>th</sup>), a Curlew at Eccleston on the 10<sup>th</sup> and an influx of Oystercatcher on the 14<sup>th</sup> with 4 at Anglezarke, 2 at Lower Rivington and a single in Eyes Lane. 15 were on Croston Moss by the 28<sup>th</sup>. Prenuptial Lapwing flocks included 80 over Euxton (4<sup>th</sup>), 60 on Croston Moss (4<sup>th</sup>), 137 on Gale Moss (13<sup>th</sup>), 200 at Withnell Fold (23<sup>rd</sup>) and 200 by the Douglas at Croston (24<sup>th</sup>).

Merlin sightings included birds on Croston Moss (1<sup>st</sup>), at Yarrow Reservoir (10<sup>th</sup>) and at Mawdesley Moss (15<sup>th</sup>). Multiple Kestrel sightings included 6 on Croston Moss (6<sup>th</sup>) and Buzzards included 3 on Croston Moss (1<sup>st</sup>) and 4 at Euxton (4<sup>th</sup>). Sparrowhawk sightings came from Eccleston, Euxton, Heskin, Hic Bibi and Withnell Fold. A pair of Peregrines was on Morrison's Chimney on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Barn Owls were noted on Mawdesley Moss (13<sup>th</sup>), Eyes Lane (17<sup>th</sup>) and Eccleston (20<sup>th</sup>). Little Owls were at Adlington (4<sup>th</sup>) and Croston Moss (2 on 6<sup>th</sup>). Tawny Owls were calling at Eccleston (2<sup>nd</sup>), Euxton (9<sup>th</sup>) and possibly 3 in Copperworks Wood on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

A Green Woodpecker by Anglezarke Reservoir on the 14<sup>th</sup> remains at the time of writing the only record received so far this year. Kingfishers on the other hand were recorded in Yarrow Valley Park, on Croston Moss, along Syd Brook, and along the Yarrow at Croston. Three Dipper were noted on the Yarrow in Duxbury Wood (8<sup>th</sup>), with a pair in Yarrow Valley Park throughout and another pair at Common Bank Lodge on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Winter flocks continued to be recorded. 100+ Skylark were on Croston Moss (2<sup>nd</sup>) and 80 were on Mawdesley Moss ((6<sup>th</sup>). 200 Starling were at Rivington (1<sup>st</sup>) and another 200 were at Withnell Fold (23<sup>rd</sup>). 100 Fieldfare were on Croston Moss (3<sup>rd</sup>), 40 were along the Yarrow at Eccleston (22<sup>nd</sup>) and 200 were at Withnell Fold (27<sup>th</sup>). Around 100 Redwing were at Euxton (4<sup>th</sup>) and 200 were at Eccleston (8<sup>th</sup>). 60 Pied Wagtail were at Croston Sewage Works (14<sup>th</sup>). The linnet flock on Croston Moss was around 100 birds on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Goldfinch flocks included 45 at Euxton (15<sup>th</sup>) and 40 at Withnell Fold (27<sup>th</sup>).



*Stonechat seen on Croston Moss and on the Moors*

Over-wintering warblers included a female Blackcap at Eccleston on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and up to 5 Chiffchaff at Croston Sewage Works including at least one Siberian bird. Other records of interest included Ravens at Healey Nab, Syd Brook and Whittle, up to 4 Stonechat on Croston Moss with another at a moorland site, Willow Tit at Hartwood and on Croston Moss, and Goldcrest in Chorley, Croston, Eccleston, Euxton and Yarrow Valley Park. Other finch records included 3 Brambling at High Bullough, 4 Lesser Redpoll in an Adlington garden and Bullfinch at Rivington, Croston Moss, Euxton, Eccleston, Gale Moss and Ulnes Walton.

## March

The last Whooper Swan record was of 15 flying over the Yarrow at Eccleston (14<sup>th</sup>). The last Pink-footed Goose record was even earlier on Croston Moss on the 4<sup>th</sup>. A surprising sighting was of 3 Barnacle Geese on Croston Twin lakes between 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Mixing with Canada Geese they were of suspect origin but there were no further records from the general area after they had left. Three Shelduck were at an inland site at Brindle (1<sup>st</sup>). 53 were along Eyes Lane on the 5<sup>th</sup>. 2 Gadwall were on Croston Moss (15<sup>th</sup>) and a Wigeon was there on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Teal numbers peaked at 40 at Withnell Fold (6<sup>th</sup>) reducing to 20 by the 25<sup>th</sup>. Goosander included 13 on Yarrow Reservoir (1<sup>st</sup>), 18 on Common Bank Lodge (5<sup>th</sup>) and 10 on Anglezarke Reservoir (8<sup>th</sup>). 4 on the Yarrow at Croston on the 3<sup>rd</sup> were probably part of the breeding population. A Little Grebe in Cuerden Valley Park on the 10<sup>th</sup> was the first for several years. A Water Rail was at Arley nature reserve on the 14<sup>th</sup>. First breeding record was of a Mallard with 9 young at Ulnes Walton on the 20<sup>th</sup>.



*Black Tailed Godwit*

Including Grey Heron, 11 species of wader were recorded during the month. These included 3 Black-tailed Godwit on Croston Moss (28<sup>th</sup>) and a Dunlin at the same site on the next day. The Green Sandpiper was noted along Syd Brook throughout the month until the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Oystercatcher numbers peaked at 24 on the Douglas (3<sup>rd</sup>) with pairs noted at Charnock Richard (4<sup>th</sup>) and Withnell Fold (6<sup>th</sup>). A Jack Snipe was flushed on Lower Burgh Meadow (8<sup>th</sup>) with Common Snipe sightings including 30 on Mawdesley Moss (23<sup>rd</sup>). Woodcock were reported from Eccleston, Arley and Anglezarke. Redshank on the Douglas (5<sup>th</sup>) and Curlew at Brindle and Eccleston were birds moving onto breeding territory. Lapwing were still in flocks of 200 at Withnell Fold (6<sup>th</sup>) and 150 on Croston Moss (7<sup>th</sup>).





An Osprey was reported over the E-shaped Pond by visiting birders on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Merlin records included one near Croston Sewage Works (8<sup>th</sup>) and one on Croston Moss (28<sup>th</sup>). The pair of Peregrines remained around Morrison's chimney. A pair of Kestrel was noted on territory at Whittle-le-Woods on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Multiple Buzzard sightings included 4 at Great Knowley (1<sup>st</sup>) and 4 over Yarrow Valley Way on the 5<sup>th</sup>. A Short-eared Owl was noted on Anglezarke Moor on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Barn Owl records came from Croston, Eccleston, Mawdesley and Heskin in the west and from Withnell Fold and Abbey Village in the east.

First summer migrants were 3 Sand Martin over Adlington Reservoir (14<sup>th</sup>) and the Chiffchaff singing in nearby Arley may well have been a newcomer. Two Wheatear were at Belmont on the 15<sup>th</sup> followed by 2 on Withnell Moor on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The Blackcap in an Eccleston garden is more likely to have been a wintering bird.

Winter flocks began to diminish with most of the larger numbers in the first week or so. Fieldfare included 50 at Withnell Fold (6<sup>th</sup>), 60 at Yarrow reservoir (8<sup>th</sup>) with the last being 3 at Eccleston on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Redwing included 80 at Eccleston (4<sup>th</sup>), 30 at Yarrow Reservoir (8<sup>th</sup>) and the last 10 at Eccleston (20<sup>th</sup>).

Other records of interest included a Common Redpoll with its Lesser cousins at Clayton on the 5<sup>th</sup>. An albino Chaffinch was noted along the Yarrow at Croston for the second year.

Many thanks to the following for submitting records:-

I.Ball, D.Beattie, D.Beevers, J.Cobham, B.Derbyshire, D.Downing, T.Dunn, J.Edwards, M.Fishwick, J.Frankland, R.Hoyle, C&T.Johnson, P.Kirk, P.Krischkiw, E.Langrish, A.Leach, G.Lilley, J.Love, I.Lynas, A.Makin, S.Martin, M.Nightingale, L.Poxon, C.Rae, J.Riley, N.Root, L.Rose, P.Ross, P.Rowlands, I.Ryding, N.Southworth, R.Spencer, M.Stuart, C.Thistlethwaite, M.Thornhill, J.Waidson, N.&T.West, P.West, T.Westhead, P.Whittaker, I. Whittle, C.Winder, K.Woan.

Please continue to send your records to the forum or the editor.

**Neil Southworth**

## BILBERRY BUMBLEBEE ID DAY

On April 10<sup>th</sup> Carol Thistlethwaite and I joined Ben Hargreaves of the Lancashire, Manchester & N.Merseyside Wildlife Trust and several other enthusiasts to attempt to confirm previous reports of the rare Bilberry Bumblebee (*Bombus monticola*) in the White Coppice area. Like many other bee species, its numbers are in decline.

At first we went in the direction of Waterman's Cottage closely observing bees around *Salix* sp. (willows) with which the Bilberry Bumblebee is associated in spring. No joy. However we did see other species including Common Carder, Buff Tailed and White Tailed bumblebees.

Just to mention that it is not until the summer that the Bilberry Bumblebee is associated with bilberry and bell heather. It can also be associated with birdsfoot trefoil, clovers and bramble in early summer.

Back to White Coppice and while some bee hunters were attacking their butties, the first Bilberry Bumblebee was seen by Ben and Carol. Ain't it always the case – go for a walk and find what you're looking for by the car park! It was an unmistakable restless bee with an extensive orange abdomen.



Refreshed we set off in the Brinscall direction and almost at once observed another in a *Salix* and, a little further on, another. Ben was delighted and possibly a little surprised that at least 3 queens of *B.monticola* had been spotted.

So what does this insect look like? Its most striking feature is the orange-red tail that occupies almost the entire abdomen. It also has a bright yellow band on the front of the thorax and a duller yellow band to the rear of the thorax.

Confusion species are Red Tailed Bumblebee or the related Early Bumblebee. In these the red on the abdomen is much less extensive being confined to the rear and the lower yellow band is on the abdomen.

More bee surveys are planned up until 20th June. If you are interested, call the Wildlife Trust's Volunteer Co-ordinator, Catherine Haddon on 01772 318374 or e-mailing [volunteer@lancswt.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@lancswt.org.uk). Ben gave us training on the day.

**Lydia Rose**

## THE FUTURE FOR BRITISH ORCHIDS

The February 2015 issue of Curtis's Botanical Magazine contained an interesting article by Michael F Foy (Senior Research Leader in Conservation Genetics at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew). In the article he looked at the records for British Orchids in "Red Lists" published to cover Great Britain in 1999 and 2005, Wales in 2008, Europe in 2011 and England in 2014. Climate change and threats to habitats mean that all our orchids are being challenged but some are under very severe threat whilst others are actually expanding their range and many seem to be reasonably stable.

There are 3 native species which have consistently been listed as "Critical". These are –



***Cypripedium calceolus*** – The Lady's Slipper Orchid. This is confined to a single small colony in the depths of Yorkshire. Its reduction from its formerly widespread distribution on grassy slopes on limestone to this single colony is due in part to the Victorian craze for collecting wild orchids, partly to over-grazing and partly to quarrying for limestone. This orchid was considered extinct following Victorian collecting but a single plant with 14 shoots and a single flower was rediscovered in 1930. Its state was parlous; it did not flower even once between 1944 and 1957 but it was not until 1970 that active measures were taken to protect the plant by caging the plant to stop grazing. Since then it has flourished with an annual average of 40 shoots and 12 flowers and finally in 2012 the first self-sown seedling was found. Surprisingly genome analysis showed some genetic variability – an essential if the species is to survive in a changing world. Now attempts are being made to reintroduce seedlings propagated in the laboratory into new suitable habitats and to date the species is now flowering in 11 new sites in England. One of these sites, closely supervised, is open to the public to view at Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve at Silverdale, overlooking Morecambe Bay.

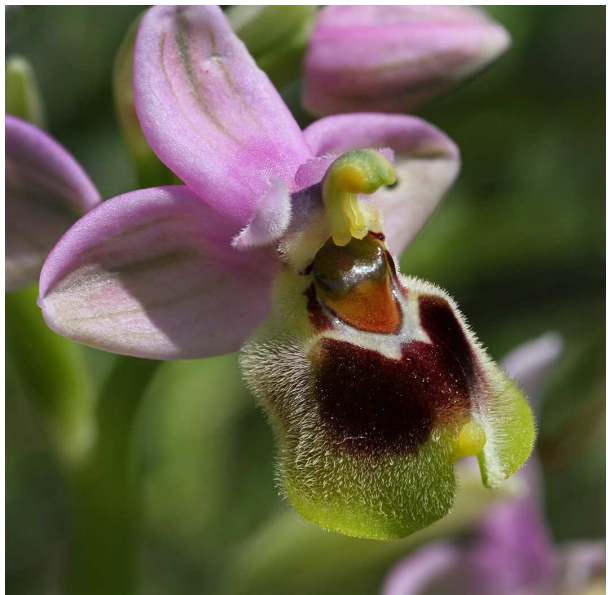
***Cephalanthera rubra*** – The Red Helleborine. This species is reduced to a very few locations in Beech woodlands on chalk or limestone in an arc from eastern Gloucestershire and Buckinghamshire to northern Hampshire. For many years the species was only known from the one site in Gloucestershire first recorded in 1797 but has now been found in 3 sites in these counties though only the Gloucestershire site, managed by the National Trust, is a flourishing colony and this only by careful management.

***Epipogon aphyllum*** – The Ghost Orchid. This very rare species is a saprophyte with no chlorophyll so depending for energy on the carbohydrates its long creeping rhizomes can extract from rotting Oak and Beech trees along the borders of England and Wales. This species was thought to be extinct but a single plant appeared in 2009 so is still struggling to survive.

Two other species which are equally rare are –

***Serapias parviflora*** – the Lesser Tongue-Orchid – which is doubtfully a native as its distribution outside the single site on grazed coastal cliff-top grassland in eastern Cornwall is Mediterranean

***Ophrys tenthredinifera*** – the Sawfly Orchid – A single plant was found in flower in Dorset in early 2014. Again, like *S. parviflora*, it is a plant which otherwise has a Mediterranean distribution. Whether either of these species is a natural increase in their distribution as a consequence of climatic warming or are artificial introductions is yet to be determined.



There are 5 species of native orchids which are suffering severe decline, almost all because of loss of habitat. They are (in order of degree of loss) –



*Common Twayblade*

***Neottia ovata*** (formerly *Listera ovata*) – Common Twayblade. Despite its name it is in decline. It was once common throughout the British Isles in a wide range of habitats including woods, hedgerows, grassy fields and dune slacks. Sadly so many habitats are under threat whether it is redevelopment or change in management or “improvement” to increase agricultural productivity.

***Orchis mascula*** – Early Purple Orchid. Formerly this orchid was considered frequent or common throughout the British Isles in neutral or base-rich grassland and shady woodland but it is now in severe decline with the disturbance of its preferred habitats.

***Dactylorhiza incarnata*** – Early Marsh-Orchid. This species can be divided into several sub-species but all favour damp or thoroughly wet habitats. Its numbers have been severely reduced as bogs and damp meadows have been drained.

***Dactylorhiza viridis*** – Frog Orchid – sometimes classified as ***Coeloglossum viride***. It has the same number of chromosomes (40) as many of the ***Dactylorhiza*** species and DNA sequencing shows it is rightly placed in the genus ***Dactylorhiza*** but is rather distinct morphologically from other species in the genus. Historically this species was widely distributed throughout Britain and Ireland on calcareous grassland but its present restricted distribution is a direct consequence of either the ploughing of grasslands or the heavy use of fertilizers to increase grass productivity.

***Platanthera bifolia***. This species has suffered the greatest decline as its habitat of broad-leaved, mixed and yew woodland is under great threat both from development and recreational use.

***Orchis militaris*** –Military Orchid. This species, though exceptionally rare, and classified in the Red Lists as “Vulnerable”, does not feature in the list of orchid species in decline. There is no evidence that within its highly restricted range, which is chalk grassland in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and west Suffolk, there appears to be any decline or change of status in recent years.

Other orchid species under threat which have been reallocated in the most recent 2014 Red Lists for England, compared with the 2005 Great Britain Red List, to “Endangered” or to the less severe status of “Vulnerable” are –

**Endangered –**

***Cephalanthera longifolia*** – Narrow-leaved Helleborine. A wide spread species found scattered in woods and shady places from southern England as far north as Argyle and Sutherland in Scotland where it continues to flourish. Its decline, primarily in southern England, is probably due to warmer weather and changes in woodland management practices.

***Herminium monorchis*** – Musk Orchid. A native species found on chalk and limestone grassland in southern England. Its decline is almost certainly a consequence of the ploughing of many grasslands and over-grazing elsewhere.



***Platanthera bifolia*** – Lesser Butterfly Orchid. This species is commoner than its close relative ***P. chlorantha*** the further north it is found. In central and southern England it has suffered loss of habitat from woodland clearance but in western Scotland it has a large, relatively stable population. It is also probably under threat in southern areas from competition from ***P. chlorantha*** which appears favoured in warmer areas.

**Vulnerable -**

***Hammarbya paludosa*** – Bog Orchid. A native species of *Sphagnum* moss bogs. These bogs are under great threat so the loss of its habitats, largely due to drainage, has been an important factor in the decline of this orchid

***Neottia nidus-avis*** – Bird’s-nest Orchid. A species found in shady woodlands, often beech woodlands on calcareous soils in the south of England. Extensive beech woodlands are rare further north so increases in climate warming mean this species cannot readily move further north to cooler climates.

***Anacamptis morio*** – Green-winged Orchid. A species found occupying short undisturbed grassland. This is habitat under great threat of ploughing so the orchid can only be found lingering in areas such as Ayrshire where the pressure to plough up or improve with the use of fertilizers is less acute.

There is fortunately some good news as a few orchids are increasing their range. In many cases they are spreading northwards thanks to climate warming. In order of spreading, with the most successful first, these are –

***Ophrys apifera*** – Bee Orchid. It has a natural habitat of calcareous grassland but is a frequent coloniser of disturbed sites such as roadside verges. With a widespread distribution in Europe it is likely to be benefitting from warmer conditions in the British Isles in recent years to increase its distribution by spreading northwards.



***Anacamptis pyramidalis*** – Pyramid Orchid. It likes similar habitats to *O. apifera* and again is spreading thanks to climate warming.

***Neottia cordata*** (formerly *Listera cordata*) – Lesser Twayblade. This species has a natural habitat of coniferous woodland and is frequent in Scotland. Its apparent spread may well be due to under recording in past years in more southern localities rather than any real invasion of new territory.

***Dactylorhiza praetermissa*** – Southern Marsh-Orchid. This species has spread vigorously in recent years from its original stronghold in bogs, damp meadows and dune slacks southern and central England to colonise damp former industrial sites such as colliery and ash tips in northern England, most probably as a consequence of climate warming.

There is little doubt that many of our orchid species are under threat as a consequence of man's activities, whether it has been drainage, large scale use of chemical fertilizers, ploughing of meadows, changes in woodland management or development for industrial or housing use, which have resulted in loss of valuable habitats. This, coupled with our changing climate as the world generally warms up, entirely as a consequence of our profligate use of fossil fuels, has put many species under increasing threat.

**Robert Yates**

## **EVENING WALKS**

The walks take place on the third Thursday of the month and commence at 7.00 pm prompt at the venue.

### **Hic Bibi – Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July**

A repeat of last year's walk with the focus being on recording. Meet in Coppull Moor Lane opposite the track which leads to Hic Bibi nature reserve via the plant nursery.

### **Cuerden Valley Park Kem Mill Area – Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August**

Meet at the Kem Mill car park in Factory Lane, Whittle-le-Woods for a circular walk at the southern end of Cuerden Valley Park



## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Will members please note that subscriptions were due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Subscription rates are to remain unchanged for the forthcoming season and are now as follows:-

<b>Grade of Membership</b>	<b>2014 / 2015</b>
Adult	£10.00
Family	£15.00
Seniors.	£8.00
Senior Family	£12.00
Junior (under 18)	Free

*Members who attend meetings are requested to make a donation at the door. A charge of £2.00 is made for non-members.*

Members who are not able to attend meetings may send their subscription direct to the Membership Secretary:-

Mr Nigel Fairclough,  
122, Brook Street,  
Chorley,  
PR6 0LB

Subscriptions may also be paid by Standing Order. This reduces administration, particularly in enabling the Society, which is a registered Charity, to claim back tax on the subscription of those members who have also signed Gift Aid Declarations, and at no extra cost to the member. For further details, contact the Membership Secretary or the Treasurer. Thanks to those members who have already arranged to pay by Standing Order. Thanks also to those who have signed Gift Aid Declarations. One advantage of this over the covenant scheme is that we can claim for all subscriptions - not just those paid by Standing Order - as long as you have signed a Declaration.

## DATA PROTECTION

Records of name, address, telephone numbers and type of membership of the Society's members are now stored on computer. If you object to this information about yourself being stored in this manner, please notify the Membership Secretary in writing of your objection.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks to Joan Smith for kindly allowing us the continuing use of her late husband Colin's photographs in our publications.

## WINTER PROGRAMME 2015/2016

<i>Sep 17</i>	'Techniques of Bird and Wildlife Photography'	<i>John Gardner</i>
<i>Sep 24</i>	Annual General Meeting	<i>Members Only</i>
<i>Oct 15</i>	'Eagles on Mull'	<i>Alan Fielding</i>
<i>Nov 19</i>	'Gardening for Wildlife'	<i>Ken Green</i>
<i>Dec 17</i>	Members' Evening	<i>Volunteers please</i>
<i>Jan 21</i>	A Shot at Wildlife 2014	<i>Pauline &amp; Ian Greenhalgh</i>
<i>Feb 18</i>	Wild Flowers of Lancashire	<i>John Ball</i>
<i>Mar 17</i>	The Plight of the Humble Bee	<i>Richard Hall</i>
<i>Apr 21</i>	50 Great British Trees	<i>Phil Kirk</i>

All the above meetings will be held at St Mary's Parish Centre, Devonshire Road, Chorley and commence at 7.30 p.m. Please note that all meetings are on a Thursday evening. Visitors are welcome at all the meetings.

For confirmation of the programme and further information about the Society, please contact:- Secretary:- Phil Kirk on Chorley (01257) 266783.

Or visit our Website: [www.chorleynats.org.uk](http://www.chorleynats.org.uk).

## DEADLINES

The deadlines for receipt of articles, letters and book reviews for the forthcoming issues of the Newsletter are :-

<i>No 150</i>	Summer 2015	<i>21<sup>st</sup> July 2015</i>
<i>No 151</i>	Autumn 2015	<i>21<sup>st</sup> October 2015</i>

All contributions for Newsletters should be sent to the Editor - Neil Southworth, 9, Queensgate, Chorley, PR7 2PX (01257 276065).