

VISIT TO SCOTLAND



I am grateful to Ralph Allen-Simpson for contributing another item for our newsletter.

"During a recent visit to Dunbar in January I saw a variety of interesting birds. The first morning I explored the town and found my way down to the old harbour. Gulls and terns were in the sky and a Common Gull posed nicely on the harbour wall. On the sandy harbour floor a lone Oystercatcher systematically combed the area for food. Moving on into

the harbour there were about 30 Eider ducks. Amongst the black and white adults there were some light brown juveniles but all could be distinguished with their large tapered bills.

Over the Dunbar Castle wall I had a magnificent view of Bass Rock, the central core of an old volcano, with its vertical rock walls rising high above the waters of the Forth of Forth. Closer to me several small rocks bore a grand display of basking cormorants. Dunbar is the birthplace of John Muir, the Victorian biologist, conservationist, writer and explorer, so I spent a cold afternoon in the museum there.

Gannets were due to arrive on the Bass rock at the end of February. A few years ago the gannets took full residency of the rock to the exclusion of all other birds with about 150,000 of them. The gannets are of great local interest and the best views may be seen from the Scottish Seabird Centre at North Berwick."

I am sure more of you have interesting birdwatching experiences which you could share with us.

COACH TRIP TO RSPB BEMPTON CLIFFS

Sunday 24th June

Our next coach trip is to RSPB Bempton Cliffs in June

We have had a good response so far so if you have not yet booked a place please see Colin this evening.

This is the peak time to see all the nesting sea birds, including of course the puffins. Bempton has the largest mainland breeding colony of gannets. You can get close to the action from six, safe cliff-edge viewing platforms. Inside the seabird centre, there's an interesting exhibition area and large TV screens screening live images from the cliffs. There is a grab and go facility offering hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, pies, cakes, snacks and ice creams, and decked area overlooking the reserve with tables and chairs.

Cost for this trip is £17 per head and the coach will leave the B&M car park at 7.30am.

Free admission to Bempton for RSPB members, otherwise £4 for adults.

RSPB England is part of the RSPB, the UK's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home.

The RSPB is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654.

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RSPB Lichfield Local Group

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LOCAL BIRDWATCHING WALK: TUESDAY 24th APRIL

Brandon Marsh

This is a great reserve which we have visited in the spring in the last two years. It is the headquarters of the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, near Coventry. The reserve contains large areas of pools created by gravel extraction. It consists of reedbeds, willow carr, grassland and woodland. There are seven bird hides throughout the reserve. It holds a good variety of birds and the warblers will have started to arrive.

Membership is free for Wildlife Trust members (you need to take your membership cards) or £2.50 for adults (£1.50 concessions). Meet at the main car park at 10am as usual.

It is just off the A45 to the south-east of Coventry. From the Toll-Bar Island where the A45 and A46 meet, follow the A45 away from Coventry for about 200 metres, then turn left just after a 'Texaco' filling station into Brandon Lane. The Nature Centre is about 1 mile along on the right hand side. Just follow the brown Tourist Signs for Nature Centre. Postcode is CV3 3GW.

I suggest we have a 3 hour visit rather than the usual 2 hours as it is a large reserve and a bit further than normal to travel to. There is a good café at the visitor centre.

LOCAL BIRDWATCHING WALK: THURSDAY 3rd MAY

RSPB Coombes Valley

This is our group's first visit to this woodland reserve in north Staffordshire. There is a good chance of seeing pied flycatchers (I have seen them here in May for the last three years), redstarts and a good range of warblers. The main part of the reserve is in the bottom of a wooded valley reached by following a path down a fairly steep hill, which it is necessary to climb back up afterwards.

We will meet at the reserve car park at 10am which is off the A523 Ashbourne to Leek road, three miles east of Leek. Just before Bradnop, turn left up the minor road (and across a railway line) to Apesford (signposted to RSPB Coombes Valley) – the reserve is on the left after a mile. Postcode is ST13 7EU.

I suggest we have a 3 hour visit rather than the usual 2 hours as it is quite a large reserve and a bit further than normal to travel to.

If anyone requires a lift from Lichfield please see me this evening or contact me either by phone on 0121 353 6886 or email (dennis.muxworthy@btinternet.com).

NEXT MEETING: 8th MAY

Wader Quest – Rick and Elis Simpson

Rick and Elis are a husband and wife team who dedicate their lives to promoting wader conservation.

Rick is a lifelong birder, writer and artist and has worked as a bird guide in the UK, Spain and Brazil, while Elis is a keen photographer whose main interest is birds and wildlife in general. In Brazil they worked to promote the conservation of the Atlantic rain forest, especially among children in poorer areas and in schools.

Returning to the UK in 2012 they set up Wader Quest, a charity which seeks to raise awareness of the problems that these elegant birds face across the world, 48% of which are in decline. Their presentation will include stunning photos and some amusing personal anecdotes.

SUTTON COLDFIELD RSPB GROUP COACH TRIPS – Sutton group are running a coach trip to Whisby, the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust reserve on 29th April. For further information and to book please contact Tony Green on 01827 750633 or tonygreen777@hotmail.co.uk.