



**FYLDE BIRD CLUB
LANCASHIRE**

FROM THE CHAIR

Recent enquiries about local bird sites have reminded me how much we need to learn about our own patch. A couple of one hour visits with an environmental consultant or a pre-work search aren't really good enough if the future of a habitat is at stake. More and more of our urban and suburban patches are under pressure, we must take stock of what we have and be alert to planning applications made on our patch.

We all know about Morecambe Bay and the Ribble, we all appreciate their importance but how much do we know? We don't know how many Lapwing and Redshank nest on Clifton and Newton Marshes. We don't know what is on our own Marton Mere, no census work has been completed on Sedge and Reed Warbler but we know how many Mediterranean Gulls have been seen there.

At our last committee meeting we discussed producing a sites list of our important bird habitats, not the Ribble or Marton Mere - they already have protection! We need to look at those special patches that perhaps only one or two of us visit, those patches that could disappear before we realise they are threatened.

We need your help to produce the list, please, if you have a favourite corner don't assume it is safe. Let us know about what makes it special and why we need to fight for it. Anyway, I think spring may have finally arrived; I heard two Willow Warblers today (21st April). Go out and check your patch and don't forget to let us know about it.

Good birding
L.G.B.

RECENT REPORTS

January

January was dominated by a series of Atlantic depressions with belts of rain and very mild temperatures. Towards the end of the month winds turned northerly with more settled conditions and near normal temperatures.

On the 2nd 26 Great Crested Grebes were off Rossall along with 17 Red-throated Divers. At Marton Mere the Bittern was reported to the 16th whilst Bewick's Swans roosted regularly. Biggest counts were 52 on the 16th, 69 on the 24th and 70 on the 25th. On the 4th 28 Whoopers were at Out Rawcliffe. Few counts of Pink-feet were reported but up to 1200 used the fields around Fleetwood and roosted in the Wyre estuary, whilst 700 were at Shard Bridge on the 30th.

There were 17 Goldeneye off Rossall on the 2nd, with 12 at Stanah on the 27th. A female Gadwall was at Fleetwood Marine Lake on the 20th. There were 3 male and 3 female Red-breasted Mergansers at Stanah on the 29th. Two male and four female Goosander were at Larbreck on the 30th; 2 female Goosander were seen at the Mere on various dates along with the female Smew.

A female Merlin was at Carleton on the 11th whilst a male was at the Mere on 23rd. On the 16th a Sparrowhawk was seen to catch a Lapwing at the Mere. Buzzards seem to be becoming more common in our area and one was seen over Long Wood on the 16th, when one roosted at Wyresdale Nurseries. Another was noted over Stanley Park on the 25th. A Woodcock was seen at the Mere on the 5th and waders at Rossall included 102 Ringed Plover and 110 Grey Plover on the 17th. A Ringed Plover noted at Rossall on 31st had been colour ringed at Snettisham, Norfolk. Further counts of waders included 370 Dunlin at Stanah on 28th and 450 Golden Plover at Hambleton on the 30th.

An unusual record was a first winter Arctic Skua flying west over the Mere on the 16th. Med Gulls continued to be seen at the Mere, with a couple of sightings of an adult at Bispham playing fields and the regular adult at Hope Street, St Annes. Little Gulls and Kittiwakes were much in evidence early in the month with 12 Little Gulls at Rossall on the 2nd and 116 on the 3rd. Kittiwake counts included 26 at Rossall on the 2nd and 245 on the 3rd. A first winter was also seen at the Mere on various dates to mid month.

There were 10 Rock Pipits at Stanah on the 27th with two at Hambleton on the 30th. Ten Tree Sparrows were noted at Cockersands on the 25th. At the Mere the two Stonechats continued to be seen on various dates whilst a Chiff-chaff was on the bird table there on the 16th. Three male Song Thrushes were in song in bas weather at the Mere on the 18th whilst on the 29th 44 Redwing were noted. An early breeding record was of a Mistle Thrush on eggs near Kwik Save in St Annes on the 10th. On 25th there were 46 Fieldfare at Shepherds Farm, Cockerham.

The two Snow Buntings were still at Rossall on the 17th, whilst at the Mere four Redpoll flew south-east on the 17th. There were seven Redpoll there on the 25th together with nine Siskin. On the 28th 14 Reed Buntings were counted. Finally the Magpie roost at the zoo reached 354 on the 30th.

February

February was very mild with light winds. A south-west airstream brought temperatures of 16°C over much of the country. Some heavy rain occurred in north-west Scotland but elsewhere it was mainly dry.

Small numbers of Gannets were seen off South Prom from the 15th. On the 20th there were probably 3 Bitterns at the Mere. Also on the 20th there were 21 Bewick's Swans at Larbreck with small parties of geese being noted Over Wyre. One large flock of 5200 Pinks was seen on 7th Feb in the Pilling area, whilst 9 Whitefronts were at Hambleton the same day. Ten Whitefronts were at Moss Edge on 28th Feb, including some of each race. The four dark-bellied Brents were reported at Lane Ends until the 13th.

A Common Scoter was on the Power Station Pool at Fleetwood on the 14th whilst a male Velvet Scoter was off South Prom on the 22nd. At Rossall 190 Eider were noted on the 1st together with 30 Mergansers. At Marton Mere there were two pairs of Gadwall on 3rd, a male Merganser on the 13th, together with the female Smew and 23 Goldeneye on the 15th.

On the 14th a Merlin flew in off the sea at Rosall Hospital and a Peregrine was noted on the 15th. On the 7th another Buzzard was seen, over Bryning. On the 17th a Lesser Yellowlegs was reported off Lane Ends - could it have been one of the Southport birds? All the gulls reported came from the Mere with the usual sightings of Med Gulls, both adult and second winter on various dates. Common Gulls peaked at 847 on the 13th and a very oiled Kittiwake was noted on the 6th.

The Barn Owl was seen near St Annes Radar Station on the 1st and a Short-eared Owl was seen at the Mere between 7th and 13th. There were 104 Skylark at Warton airfield to the 10th whilst the highlight at the Mere was then Great Grey Shrike which gave good views throughout the month. The two Stonechat were All the gulls reported came from the Mere with the usual sightings of Med Gulls, with both adults and second winters on various dates. Common Gulls peaked at 847 on the 13th and there was a very oiled Kittiwake on the 6th.

Finally in early February there was a Lapland Bunting at Warton airfield. On the 15th a Bullfinch in a Kirkham garden was a good record.

March

March was unsettled with westerly winds and moderate rainfall. The end of the month was again extremely mild with a light southerly wind.

Four Little Grebe at Newton Marsh on the 23rd were noteworthy but probably the most remarkable count was off 3261 Common Scoter off South Prom on the 8th. On the 3rd 1500 Pinkfeet were at Preesall, 2 adult and 5 first winter Greenland Whitefronts were at Out Rawcliffe with one adult and one first winter Russian type.

On the 13th a male Merlin was at Marton Mere and a Jack Snipe was noted on various dates. The usual Med Gulls were noted there with a first winter on the 13th, and 3 adults on the 22nd when there was also an adult Little Gull. There was also a first summer Med Gull on the 23rd and 27th.

Migrants began to appear from the second week. There were 15 Sand Martins at the Mere on 29th and 30th, and 100+ on the 31st. A large movement of Meadow Pipits occurred on the 29th with 2000 at Rossall and 100+ at LSANR. On the 18th a White Wagtail was noted at Newton with Scales, and on the 23rd six were noted with a flock of 20+ Wagtails at the Mere.

The first Wheatears reported were two males at LSANR on the 11th, with two on the 15th and three on the 17th. A large influx occurred from the 29th with 51 at Rossall, 17 at Lane Ends, 16 at LSANR with 15 thereon the 31st. On the 3rd a male Stonechat was at Gulf Lane and two females were at Gulf Lane the following day.

A Chiffchaff was noted at Out Rawcliffe on the 15th. A small passage of Goldcrests occurred during the month at various sites - there were 2 at Out Rawcliffe on the 15th, 2 at LSANR on the 18th and 2 more there on the 28th. Three male Yellowhammers were at Newton with Scales on the 23rd, with two there on the 27th. At the same time there were 2 Jays in the 19th and 20th.

AJH

Note

Thanks are due to Jane Dunstan for the drawing of Great Tit in the last bird report, which was inadvertently not attributed.

NEST BOX MONITORING - 10/5/97

This is a report of a typical day spent with Bob Danson checking just some of the 610 nest-boxes he has made and fitted at many farms and gardens in the Over Wyre district. No two days are ever alike, something different is always observed, and hopefully stored in the memory for future recall. It is a rewarding feeling gaining first hand experience of the breeding biology of birds, not forgetting all the incidental things one is fortunate to see or hear during the day. These may be interesting, informative, or just plain funny, but they all go towards making an enjoyable day out.

The forecast was for showers, but when we arrived at Hackensall woods the weather was cool and overcast. Hackensall is soon to see "improvements" in the form of tree felling and replanting. Undoubtedly the dead elms are a danger and need coming down but I shall be sorry to see the loss of the vegetation and scrub that fringes and overhangs the pond. Their presence adds to the beauty of the place and should be allowed to remain. The pond itself is a magnet for all the species living there, and the loss of the surrounding cover will be detrimental to their existence.

All the nestboxes are numbered for identification purposes and the first one we checked was coincidentally number 1 which has been there since 1983. Inside was a Blue tit nest with 6 eggs. The eggs were covered over with nesting material indicating that the full clutch had not yet been laid. The female lays one egg each day until she decides enough is enough. The most we have seen in one box this year is 15, surely enough for any self respecting Blue tit.

Further boxes occupied by Blue tits had clutches ranging from 3 to 10 eggs. One box had all 5 eggs punctured by woodpeckers on the lookout for an easy meal. Great spotted woodpeckers are resident here and it is a constant battle to repair the damage they inflict on the nestboxes. On this occasion the woodpecker had won but when there are over 600 boxes to check, maintain, and repair, there are always going to be some casualties.

3 boxes were home to Great tits and had clutches of 6, 7, and 9 eggs. All were occupied by the sitting bird. While we are checking the nestboxes we are alert to all that is going on around us. Alarm calls indicate the presence of a bird of prey. We look up and sure enough a circling Sparrowhawk is the reason for concern. It drifts away and the anxiety goes with it. A Chiffchaff sings his simple song heralding the arrival of spring. A Garden warbler too is singing his wonderfully beautiful song, a continuous mellow warble, similar to the Blackcap but more sustained. Had we not heard the song we would not know it was there for it can be a difficult species to see. Resident species are also in full song with Blackbird, Wren, Robin, Song Thrush all proclaiming their territories.

Bob disappears and when I next see him he is clinging on to a overhanging tree to observe the resident Moorhen's nest. Only one young from a clutch of 4 eggs is disappointing. We move on to another nestbox where a pair of Nuthatch have 8 eggs. Inspection is hurried so as not to alarm the parent birds. 4 eggs have hatched, the remaining 4 are infertile. Nevertheless a marvellous success story as this is only the third record of Nuthatches breeding in the Fylde, the previous being at Weeton in 1987

and Singleton Hall. The Nuthatches had been present the previous year but we had been unable to prove breeding.

We next checked out the Owl box which once again contained Grey squirrel litter. It is not just the Red squirrel which is suffering from the relentless tide of this alien species. If it can deter a Tawny Owl from returning to where it had previously bred successfully then what other harm is it likely to be doing. This was the seventh consecutive week we had cleaned the box out. On one occasion 7 of the little blighters fled the box as Bob approached the entrance hole. Rather him than me.

The woods are perhaps at their loveliest at this time of the year. The woodland floor is carpeted with spring flowers. Bluebells, Red Campion, Primroses, Lesser Celandine and Cow Parsley all share the woodland scene and are complimented by the grasses and ferns without which the picture would be incomplete. Nothing garish, nothing fancy, just pure beauty. Go and see for yourself and experience that indefinable feeling that only woods in springtime have. It beats any other feel good factor hands down.

Before leaving Hackensall we heard a Cuckoo calling, found a half built Robins nest, discovered further woodpecker damage, noted unoccupied nestboxes, saw broken Song Thrush egg shells!, and so on.

From there we made a short visit to a house in Preesall where two broods of Blue tits had 9 and 10 eggs respectively. We then made our way to Fluke Hall via Bourbles where a pinioned Mallard on the track in front of us desperately tried to fly away with hilarious results. Sorry but it really was funny as it repeatedly fell over. Had it not done so it would have flown round in circles which would have been even funnier.

The cloud cover darkened as we reached Fluke Hall and we speeded up our progress in anticipation of rain. Here we checked two clutches of Blue tits and two of Great tit all of which had 8 eggs. Two Starling broods were also checked. One had 4 young approximately 3 days old and the other had 5 young which were in-pin and 6 days old. In-pin is a term used to describe nestlings whose feathers are emerging from the quill shafts and is a reliable indicator of the birds age albeit in terms of days only. A Garden warbler was singing as we left.

Our next port of call was Ridge farm. After checking one box that contained a fully built Blue tit nest the heavens opened and we made for the car where we had lunch. Incredibly we had parked next to yet another singing Garden warbler. In all my years bird watching I have never heard so many Garden warblers in the Fylde. A pair at Knowle Wood, Singleton, seen later that day only served to reinforce that view.

The rain continued to pour down. We drove off and as we approached Lane Ends a herd of cattle were bolting towards the road fence no doubt spooked by a spell of thunder and lightning. Impending disaster loomed as a Lapwing beckoned her 4 offspring to her. They responded erratically and were in serious danger of being trampled by the heifers but one by one they eventually made it to the outstretched wings of their mother. Shielded from the cold rain the birds would remain warm but

only luck would save them from the startled herd. They were still all there later in the day so they had survived one of their first trials of life.

The rain stopped and we returned to Ridge farm about an hour later. Here we found 6 nestboxes being used by Tree Sparrows. This species is declining nationally but Over Wyre appears to be holding its own, no doubt due in no small part to Bob's efforts in providing them with secure accommodation. The BTO consider the Over Wyre population to be of local and possibly even of regional significance. Here at Ridge farm one nest was half built, one three quarter built and two fully built. Two other boxes contained two eggs each.

Also at Ridge farm one nestbox held 3 Blue tit eggs, another 2 Little owl eggs, while a third had 3 Starlings no more than 3 days old + 1 infertile egg. Three natural scrapes/nests contained 3 Oystercatcher eggs, 1 Lapwing egg, and 6 Moorhen eggs. Finally one box was in the process of being re-lined by the resident pair of Stockdoves after successfully raising two young while another pair of Stockdoves had set up 'home' in a Kestrel box.

As the rain returned we decided to call it a day and made our way back to Preesall. It wasn't raining in Preesall so we ended the afternoon by paying a visit to the 'flashes'. As usual we were not disappointed. Water birds included Great crested grebe, Coot, Moorhen, and Ruddy duck. Hawking over the water for small flying insects were House and Sand Martins, Swifts and Swallows most of which would have been new arrivals from Africa. They may not yet have reached their destination as all can be found much further north in Scotland and Scandinavia. Warblers were everywhere. Sedge and Reed warblers were the most numerous followed by Whitethroat, Willow warbler, Lesser whitethroat and a single Chiffchaff. 4 Whinchats also put in an appearance. Not bad for a chance visit.

So you can see, you don't have to travel far to marvel at nature's wonders. Look no further than your own parish boundaries, and you will witness all kinds of 'goings on' in the life of its inhabitants and derive great pleasure from doing so. So do it now, and see and feel for yourself just what you are missing. But be warned, once hooked life will never be quite the same again. Take it from me however it will be greatly enhanced.

B. DYSON.

May 1997.

Colour Ringing of Waders & the Internet

While taking part in the low water count on the Ribble on Sunday the 25th Jan. I was fortunate enough to get good views of a colour rung Black Tailed Godwit, marked as: Left leg: green over white on tibia. Right leg: white tibia, white tarsus.

I decided to send in this sighting to the BTO to see where it had been rung. Anyone who has sent in ringing recoveries / controls will be well aware of the length of time it takes for a response, so I decided to enlist the help of the electronic age and try the internet. That evening I posted a message on the internet newsgroup uk.rec.birdwatching, detailing what I had seen, asking if anyone knew of an ongoing scheme for ringing Black-tails. The next evening (Mon.) I had a response from Ireland telling me to try contacting a Dr. Jenny Gill at the University of East Anglia, and I was also given the e-mail address of Stephen Browne at the BTO (the colour marking register co-ordinator for waders). I e-mailed both parties and by the following evening (Tues.) I had a response from Dr. Gill. The bird had been rung as an adult (male) at Terrington on the Wash on the 1st of August 1996. These birds are being marked as part of a study into the distribution and movement of black-tailed godwits throughout Britain in winter. Although all the birds have been marked whilst moulting on the Wash, resightings have come from throughout the winter range; England, Ireland, the Netherlands and as far south as Portugal.

Now that's what I call information technology, a turn around of only three days from sighting to gaining the information.

I recently sent in another record of a ringed plover with colour rings, seen at Rossall on the 31st Jan. This bird was marked as Left leg: red over green on the tarsus. Right leg: yellow on the tibia, blue over metal on the tarsus. I sent the details off to Stephen Browne at the BTO and received an equally swift response: "The Ringed Plover you saw on 31/1/98 was definitely ringed by Paul Fisher at Snettisham, Norfolk. I will forward your sighting and he will send you more details." fascinating stuff, don't you think?

Anyone sighting colour ringed waders can contact Stephen Brown at:

Stephen Browne
Wader Study Group
Colour-Marking Register
British Trust for Ornithology
The Nunnery
Thetford
Norfolk
IP24 2PU
United Kingdom
Fax: +44 01842-750030

E-mail: stephen.browne@bto.org (work) SBatHOME@aol.com (home)

If anyone wants to give me their sightings, I can pass them on by e-mail.

Peter Bainbridge 11 February 1998



**Fylde
Bird Club**
LANCASHIRE

FYLDE BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 8:20 PM ON WEDNESDAY THE 2ND OF FEBRUARY AT THE PICKWICK AT WARTON

PRESENT

Chairman; Secretary; Treasurer; Paul Slade; Alan Hinchliffe; Stephan Dunstan; Mike McGough and Dave Pitman.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 12th of December were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

1) Breeding Birds Survey

Stephan Dunstan reported that he had not received any data from the breeding birds survey and consequently he had been unable to commence the task of typing it up. The Chairman agreed to ask Andrew Cadnam if he would pass whatever he had to Stephan.

Action: Chairman

2) Marion Mere

The Secretary reported that he had received a letter from Dave McGrath, in his capacity as Warden, on the subject of the provision of a permanent hide at Marion Mere. In his letter Dave proposed that the Club consider funding the construction of a hide. The Chairman explained that Pauline McGough had already compiled an estimate to produce a hide with a concrete base; concrete block walls; a corrugated steel roof and a fire door of dimensions 33ft x 9ft x 7ft (height). This estimate came to around £1300 allowing for recent price rises. This estimate assumed free labour and Len Worthington has already offered to do the brick laying free of charge. Dave McGrath had informed the Secretary by telephone that the issue of planning permission has been resolved, (post meeting note: a second letter has been received from D.McGrath which states that planning consent has been granted for a structure of less than 4m high and 200m³). It was agreed that the proposal should be put to the membership at the next meeting.

It was noted that the Voluntary Wardens had not yet been approached to provide a representative for the Management Committee as agreed at the last Management Committee meeting. The Chairman stated that the ByeLaws were displayed at the site and were now theoretically enforceable.

3) New Club Car Sticker

Paul Slade reported that he had obtained another price, which was very close to last one, both in terms of minimum quantity and price. It was agreed that even if the cost was to be £250 for 500 then we should consider proceeding with an order. It was stated that they could be sold for £1 each and eventually a lot more than one for each current member would be required as people changed their cars and new members appeared. Paul agreed to get one more quotation.

Action: Paul Slade

4) Newsletter

The next issue was due to be ready for the February meeting. Alan reported that although he had enough copy for the forthcoming issue, his stock of material was running low. It was noted that Dave Pitman had previously agreed to produce an article on rarity recording.

Actions: Dave Pitman to produce article on Rarities Recording and All to provide copy.

5) Newton Marsh

The Treasurer reported that he had secured some data on breeding birds at the site, however it did not comprise a lot of information. The Secretary suggested that it would be up to Club members to collect data in the future. It was agreed that we should find out who was responsible for the site during the Lancs Breeding Bird Survey and Stephan Dunstan offered to find this out.

Action: Stephan Dunstan to talk to the area steward for the Lancs B.B.S.

6) Proposed Wildfowl Reserve Over Wyre

The Secretary reported that he not contacted the RSPB since the last meeting. (The RSPB's initial response was that land ownership was not the way to conserve geese). The Secretary offered to secure a formal response from the RSPB's on the concept of a refuge.

Action continuing : Secretary to contact to the RSPB

7) Bird Report

The Secretary reported that the 1996 Bird Report was almost ready to go to the printers. All that remained was the provision of artwork by one advertiser, who had been reminded several times and the selection of some illustrations for inclusion. Alan Hinchliffe had some drawings, which he had brought with him to the meeting, however the collection of the Club's best drawings were not with them. Paul Slade stated that he may have some and agreed to take them to the Secretary if he had them. Stephan Dunstan offered to supply two or three drawings which had been produced by his wife and it was agreed that he would take them to the Secretary. (Post meeting note: Drawings found by Paul Slade and drawings provided by Stephan Dunstan).

Alan Hinchliffe suggested that the number of copies printed should be cut because sales were expected to be low owing to the late publication date. The usual order was for 200 copies. It was agreed that 150 should be ordered unless a large saving was available by reducing the quantity to 100.

The Treasurer reported that in recent years no money had been received from the RSPB at Leighton Moss from the sale of reports there. The Treasurer agreed to contact Leighton Moss on the subject.

Activities required for the 1997 Bird Report were reviewed. The Chairman agreed to ask one of the members to write a review of the geese Over Wyre and Dave Pitman agreed to ask a member if he would write a review of the Whimbrel counts on the Ribble.

The committee was reminded that there was an intention to ask members to record and submit ALL sightings in 1998, of Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Skylark. Mike McGough offered to interpret the results when they were collected.

The Chairman reported that the BTO had reviewed the '95 Fylde Bird Report in their magazine and given it a very favourable write up.

The Secretary recognised that he must still chase Wyre Borough Council over payment of advertising fees.

**Actions: Chairman and Dave Pitman to secure articles for the 1997 Report.
Secretary to remind WBC about payment for advertising.**

8) Special Projects

The Secretary reported that he had not yet made an approach regarding the possibility of establishing a birdwatching hide at a site on the Ribble. The Chairman reported that he had not yet pursued the possibility of such a scheme at a site Over Wyre. It was noted that the possibility of the Club funding a hide at the Mere might influence the Membership's view of these proposals however the concepts should still be pursued.

Actions continuing: Chairman and Secretary.

9) Planning Application at College Farm Cleveleys

The Secretary reported that he had written to the Chief Planning Officer stating the Club's opposition to the plan to build houses on part of the land used by geese between Blackpool and Fleetwood.

Action complete.

10) 1998 Meeting Programme

Dave Pitman had produced the 1998 programme and copies had been made available at the AGM.

Action complete.

11) Friends of Marton Mere

The Chairman reported that the raffle at the AGM had raised £44 for the Friends of Marton Mere Group.

12) 1998 Bird Race

It was agreed that the Secretary should write to the North Fylde YOC Group stating that the Club would help by means of a sponsored Bird Race with their attempt to raise money for an information panel at Rossall Point Coast Guards Tower. The Secretary and Paul Slade offered to form a team and the Treasurer responded that he would also attempt to field a team.

AGENDA

1) Committee Jobs

The Chairman stated that it was important for someone to greet new members at the meetings because both he and the Secretary were usually preoccupied with running the meetings. It was agreed that **ALL** Committee members had a responsibility to welcome newcomers.

Action: All Present

Paul Slade agreed to manage the distribution of newsletters. This task involved maintaining a checklist of all those who took copies at the meetings and then arranging to have copies delivered to those who were not present. The Chairman offered to assist with the job of distribution and the Treasurer agreed to provide up to date checklists of members.

Action: Paul Slade

The Chairman asked for a volunteer for the job of Press Officer to ensure that the Club's activities and events are promoted. Stephan Dunstan offered to take on this job.

Action: Stephan Dunstan

2) 1999 Meeting Programme

It was agreed that work should begin on the next programme as soon as practical in order that it could be printed on card and distributed well in advance of the New Year. It was agreed that the next committee meeting should deal in depth with the next meeting programme.

Action: Dave Pitman

3) Moss Side

The Secretary reported that he had received a letter from Newfield Jones Homes withdrawing the offer to donate land at Moss Side to the Bird Club. He read out the letter. It was agreed that no response was required but that it raised some other questions. The intention to hold money raised for Moss Side for the upkeep of this donated land, could no longer be satisfied. The Secretary reported that the site had recently been declared a County Biological Heritage Site. It was agreed that the Secretary should write to Lancashire County Council to inform them that the Club would not become the landowner.

The Secretary read out another letter from Mr.S.M.Meredith requesting the return of the sum of £32 raised for Moss Side. The Treasurer confirmed receipt of a cheque from Mr.S.M.Meredith but stated that his name did not appear on the cheque. It was agreed that because, in his letter, Mr.Meredith had stated that the money would be passed on to one of two other organisations, one being the RSPB, then the Club should send the money directly to the RSPB and copy the letter to Mr. Meredith.

Action: Secretary to write to LCC; SMM and RSPB

A.O.B.

1) Fund Raising

The idea of a collection tin at local 'twitches' was raised, however no volunteer was forthcoming to look after such a collection.

A numbers of other fundraising ideas were proposed but it was agreed to put the subject on ice until the Club had actually agreed to spend some money on something significant.

2) Membership Cards

The idea of having membership cards printed, instead of issuing members with receipts was proposed. The Chairman stated that it would help at Rossall Coast Guards, if users could easily show that they were FBC members. The proposal was agreed and Alan Hinchliffe offered to approach the Bird Report's printers for a price.

3) Family Membership

Mike McGough asked if the Club had considered a reduced membership charge for married members because only one Bird Report and set of newsletters were required for two members. Those present agreed that these costs were lower for married members but that there were other costs to consider and the right to a vote each on the issue of spending Club funds. There was no agreement to change the status quo.

4) Local Birdline

Stephan Dunstan raised the idea of establishing a non-profit making local Birdline based at someone's home address. He stated that a midlands bird club had established such a service already. The system would require an answering machine and possibly a second telephone line with associated installation and line rental costs. The Secretary opined that it would create lot of work for whoever operated the service, however Stephan stated that he would be prepared to run the Birdline if sufficient interest existed. It was agreed that Stephan would research the potential demand for such a service and if it was sufficient, then the costs should be explored.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:00 pm.



**Fylde
Bird Club**

LANCASHIRE

FYLDE BIRD CLUB
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 8:00 PM ON WEDNESDAY
THE 18 TH OF FEBRUARY AT BLACKPOOL CRICKET CLUB

Present

Chairman; Secretary, Treasurer and 26 members.

Apologies were received from B.Dyson; J.Hopkinson; A.Stamford; D.Mc.Grath; H.Andrews; A.Hinchliffe and P.Slade.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last business meeting held on the 15th of October were read and approved.

Matters Arising

1) Friends of Marton Mere

The Chairman reported that the Friends of Marton Mere Group had elected Officers and a Committee. He also stated that they were working on leaflet and were organising a birdwatch for the end of March.

Other matters arising are covered under Correspondence and Agenda.

Correspondence

1) Wyndyke Farm

The Secretary read out a letter from Fylde Planning Office inviting the Club to comment on the planning application to build at Wyndyke Farm. The issue of whether or not the Club should object to the application was debated, It was pointed out that this development may make the building of the red route bypass more likely. The red route bypass would have a direct and damaging affect on Marton Mere LNR because the new road would run adjacent to the dam of the mere. Frank Walsh proposed that the Club should object to the application. Don Rusling seconded the proposal. A vote was taken which was overwhelmingly in favour.

2) Moss Side

The Secretary read out a letter from Newfield Jones Homes, which withdrew their offer to give an area of land to the Club as a nature reserve. The letter sited objections from residents and potential house purchasers as the reason.

The Treasurer was asked how much money remained in the Club's Moss Side fund. The Treasurer replied that he would examine the accounts and calculate the figure.

The Secretary read out another letter on the subject of Moss Side. This one was from the Biological Heritage Sites Project, which was a joint Lancs County Council and Lancs Wildlife Trust venture. The letter informed the Club that the site had been officially approved as a Lancashire County Biological Heritage Site. The Secretary offered to write to the Project Officer informing her of the owner's decision.

3) Bird Race

The Secretary read out a letter from The North Fylde YOC Group, which asked for the Club's assistance in raising funds for an interpretative display unit to be erected at Rossall Point. The Chairman announced that the Committee had discussed the project and proposed that the Club should use its annual bird race to support it. The weekend of the 22/3/98 was announced as the Bird Race date because it coincided with a number of other related events. Sponsorship forms would be available from Don Rusling and Len Blacow shortly.

4) Permanent Hide at Marton Mere

The Secretary read out two letters from the Warden of Marton Mere LNR, requesting the Club to consider funding the construction of a permanent Hide on the south bank of the reserve and stating that planning consent had been obtained.

The Chairman outlined the construction specification of the proposed building and stated that an initial costing had been prepared by Pauline McGough which indicated that the cost would be in the order of £1300. The Chairman stated that this cost might rise owing to possible changes which may be required by Blackpool Council Planners when they had seen a plan and other contingencies. The building would be open to the public and would be situated on the site of the one which was destroyed by fire last year. Robert Stinger stated that Blackpool Borough Council intended to replace the burnt hide with a new one of the same design by the end of February. The Chairman replied that this should not present a problem because the existing hides were not fixed and could be moved to new locations relatively easily. Frank Walsh put forward the view that the Club should make sure that the site of a permanent hide was agreed before any commitment were made by the Club. It was agreed that the Club should only proceed if the hide could be built on the site of the fire damaged building, as this was the best vantage point.

Maurice Jones asked if the Club could afford the project. The Treasurer replied that the Club had a total of £5413 in its accounts and that many 1998 membership subscriptions were yet to be collected and therefore we had sufficient funds. Dave Pitman asked if the caravan park owners had been consulted as the building may stand on land which they rent from the Council. Others asked if the Caravan Park might be prepared to contribute to the costs because the hide would be an amenity for their clients. It was agreed that these issues would need to be explored should we proceed. A show of hands indicated that the committee should pursue the project further.

Agenda

See Correspondence 1) and 4).

1) Bird Report

The Chairman announced that the '96 report was now at the printers. He asked contributors to the '97 report to submit their records before the end of February and stated that all records already received had been input into a computer ready for editing. The Chairman asked members to submit ALL records of Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Skylark collected during 1998 to Mike McGough. An attempt would be made to judge populations of these species and Mike McGough had volunteered to interpret the data. It was noted that few records are submitted for these species. Mike asked observers to record the nearest lamp post identification number, when recording kestrels on main roads to assist with analysis. The Chairman suggested that we may pick on different species to investigate in more detail in the coming years.

The Chairman requested members to consider sponsorship and advertising possibilities for the forthcoming report.

A.O.B.

- 1) Frank Walsh asked if the classroom at Stanah had a plaque indicating that the Club had contributed to its refurbishment. The Chairman replied that it did not. Frank stated that it should and the Chairman and others agreed.

- 2) Andrew Myerscough asked the Chairman about access to the Rossall Observation Tower. The Chairman replied that members should see him to arrange access.
- 3) Stephen Dunstan asked the members if there would be a demand for a local telephone bird information service. He envisaged a system which was based on an answering machine operating on Friday and Saturday evenings at local call cost. People would need to ring in the information for use on the line. Notts. Bird Club apparently operate such a service for their members. A number of members expressed their interest in such a service and Stephen agreed to investigate the practicalities of the idea further.

Announcements

- 1) The Chairman reported that Tim Melling of the RSPB had contacted him asking the Club to survey breeding waders on the North Ribble Marshes. Frank Walsh stated that the site would be covered during the Lancs Breeding Bird Survey. The Chairman replied that a member of the committee had been actioned to co-ordinate efforts with the Lancs Survey. Peter Bainbridge announced that Roy Leeming had secured the permission of a farmer to allow access to Newton Marsh by a few Club members.
- 2) The Treasurer requested any members who had not already done so, to pay their membership subscriptions.
- 3) Stephen Dunstan announced that there would be a talk on swans by Wes Holton at next month's Friends of Marton Mere Group Meeting.
- 4) Newsletters were available at this meeting.
- 5) Maurice Jones announced that '96 Lancashire Bird Reports were available from him price £4. He also announced that in May a Bird Race was being run in support of a project to fund the publication of a County Bird Book. Sponsorship forms were available from himself.
- 6) There would be a Fylde Bird Club/ Wyre Borough Council guided walk at Lane Ends Pilling on 8/3/98 meeting at 10:00 am.
- 7) There would be another Fylde Bird Club/ Wyre Borough Council guided walk at Rossall Point on 14/3/98 meeting at 9:30 am.
- 8) There was to be a Friends of Marton Mere Group Walk at the Mere on Sat. 28/3/98 commencing at 10:00 a.m.

Date Of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be on the 18th of March when Pete Marsh would present a talk on The Birds of North Lancashire.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:00 pm.



**Fylde
Bird Club**

LANCASHIRE

FYLDE BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 8:10 PM ON WEDNESDAY THE 8TH OF APRIL AT THE PLOUGH AT STAINING

PRESENT

Chairman; Secretary; Treasurer; Paul Slade; Alan Hinchliffe; Stephen Dunstan and Mike McGough.
Apologies were received from Dave Pitman.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 2nd of February were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

1) 1980's Breeding Birds Survey

The Chairman agreed to continue to attempt to secure the data from Andrew Cadnam.

Continuing Action: Chairman

2) Marion Mere

The Secretary reported that he had written a letter replying to Dave McGrath, (in his capacity as Warden), on the subject of the provision of a permanent hide at Marion Mere. The letter stated that the Club was agreeable in principle to the plan, providing that the hide could be located on the site of the old burned out hide. No response had yet been received.

Action: Complete

3) New Club Car Sticker

Paul Slade reported that he had ordered a batch of Car Stickers from local firm Campbell Innes. The price would be in the order of £80 for 300 stickers, which would be circular and have the Lapwing logo in black and white with green lettering. The stickers should be ready in next few days. Paul was congratulated on finding such a good quotation. It was agreed that they should be sold for 50p each to everyone.

Action: Complete

4) Newsletter

The next issue was due to be ready for the May meeting. Alan reported that he had little copy for the forthcoming issue and that the deadline was the end of April. It was noted that Dave Pitman had agreed produced an article on rarity recording for use in the forthcoming bird report, which could also be used in the Newsletter. The Secretary asked how much it had cost to get the last issue copied. The Treasurer replied that on this occasion it had been done without cost to the Club, however the Club could now rely on this and should be prepared to cover the cost in the future. The Secretary reported that he had received a price of £40.88 from Office World to produce 70 copies. Mike McGough offered to arrange to get the Newsletter copied without cost to the Club if it could be given to him with sufficient notice. Mike's offer was accepted. The question of who would

type it was raised. It was noted that Kinta Beaver had typed the last issue, at very short notice, when it had become apparent at the last minute, that no arrangements had been made to get it done. Stephen Dunstan offered to type up future issues of the Newsletter and his offer was accepted.

The Chairman reported that he had sent out a copy of the last issue to the members, with each Bird Report. The Chairman agreed to manage the distribution of future newsletters.

Continuing Action: All to provide copy.
Action: Stephen Dunstan to type the issues
Action: Mike McGough to arrange copying
Action: Chairman to distribute the Newsletter

5) Newton Marsh SSSI

The Secretary reported that he had found out that English Nature had requested data on breeding birds at the site from a third party. The data was required urgently to assist with a meeting between English Nature and the farmers concerning drainage. The Treasurer had informed the Secretary that the person concerned would be away on holiday and unable to respond. The Secretary reported that he had gathered together all the available data and incorporated it in a letter which he had written to Mark Beard of English Nature and copied to Tim Melling of the RSPB. The outcome of the meeting was not yet known. There was also some concern over the surveying of breeding birds on the site, an unknown person had been observed walking the fields apparently searching for nests and the Treasurer reported that he had been told that some elements of EN were unhappy with anyone going into the fields to count. The Secretary offered to phone Tim Melling when he returned from holiday and clarify the current situation.

Action: Secretary to contact to the RSPB

6) Proposed Wildfowl Reserve Over Wyre

The Secretary reported that he not contacted the RSPB since the last meeting. (The RSPB's initial response was that land ownership was not the way to conserve geese). The Secretary offered to secure a formal response from the RSPB's on the concept of a refuge.

Action continuing : Secretary to contact to the RSPB

7) Bird Report

The 1996 Bird Report had been printed and the Chairman reported that he had distributed copies to the members. The Secretary offered thanks to the Chairman for undertaking this time consuming but important task. The cost of printing was reported to have been £495 for 200 copies, Alan Hinchliffe reported that there would have been no saving if fewer copies had been printed.

The Treasurer reported that he had contacted the RSPB at Leighton Moss concerning the sale of reports there and had secured payment of £72.5 for past sales.

Action: Complete

The 1995 Reports, which were delivered to other outlets, were reviewed from past minutes which revealed that: - 30 copies were taken to the WWT Martin Mere
5 copies were taken to Mere Sands Wood
5 copies were taken to the Lancaster Society
5 copies were taken to the Lancs Forum.

The Treasurer offered to visit Leighton Moss, WWT Martin Mere and Mere Sands Wood to deliver 1996 Reports and to collect whatever proceeds were owing to the club for past sales.

Action: Treasurer to deliver Reports and collect proceeds.

The Secretary reported that he had contacted Wyre Borough Council over payment of advertising fees. He had received a verbal agreement that they would settle the bills for the 1995 and 1996 advertisements on receipt of a replacement invoice for 1995 and an invoice for 1996.

He also reported that he had received payment for the 1996 adverts from Bird Line N/W and Birdnet and he passed the cheques to the Treasurer. The Treasurer reported that Sumners had already paid for their 1996 report advertisement.

Stephen Dunstan noted that the artists had not been credited for their work in the 1996 Report. It was agreed that this was an unfortunate oversight and that it would be better if a proof copy of the report could be made available for checking before the print run was commenced. It was agreed to add a note in the next newsletter stating the missing acknowledgements and apologising for their omission from the report.

Activities required for the 1997 Bird Report were reviewed. It was noted that there were no new site guides. The Chairman offered to produce a guide to Skipool Creek and Stephen Dunstan agreed to produce one for the Over Wyre Goose fields.

Actions: Chairman and Stephen Dunstan to produce site guides.

8) Special Projects

The Secretary reported that he had not yet made an approach regarding the possibility of establishing a birdwatching hide at a site on the Ribble. The Chairman reported that he had not yet pursued the possibility of such a scheme at a site Over Wyre. It was agreed to delete these actions for the time being and wait until the outcome of the Club Funded Hide Project at the Mere was known.

Actions deleted

9) Planning Application at College Farm Cleveleys

The Secretary reported that he had written on 1/3/98 to the three local councillors stating the Club's opposition to the plan to build houses on part of the land used by geese between Blackpool and Fleetwood. He also reported that no replies or any form of acknowledgement had been received. It was agreed that the Secretary should write again, enquiring if the letters had been received.

Action: Secretary to write to Councillors

10) 1998 Meeting Programme

The Chairman thanked Alan Hinchliffe for getting the 1998 programme printed on cards and reported that he had sent one out with each of the Bird Reports to the members.

11) 1998 Bird Race in support of North Fylde YOC Group's Information Panel Project

The original date of 22/3/98 had been slipped because there would have been insufficient time to secure sponsorship from the time that sponsorship forms were available. A new date of 3rd May was agreed although if teams wished to race on a different date, this would be acceptable. The Chairman, Secretary, Paul Slade and the Treasurer confirmed that they would take part.

The Chairman stated that he would like to make the Annual Bird Race the main subject of the next Committee Meeting, with a view to making it a bigger event.

12) Committee Jobs

It was agreed that the action to greet new members at the meetings was going well.

The Secretary produced a newspaper clipping from the Gazette, which invited Clubs to submit their details for publication in the paper. It was passed to Stephan Dunstan in his capacity as Press Officer for action. Mike McGough recommended that information should be faxed as for some reason they seemed to use more of it, if transmitted by this means.

Action: Stephan Dunstan

13) 1999 Meeting Programme

The 1999 Programme could not be discussed at this meeting owing to the absence of Dave Pitman.

14) Moss Side

The Secretary reported that he had written letters to the County Biological Heritage Sites Project Officer and to Chris Band who had offered to act as the Club's solicitor in the matter informing them that the Club would not be receiving the land at Moss Side.

The Secretary reported that he had sent the £32 raised by Mr.S.M.Meredith directly to the RSPB and copied the letter to Mr. Meredith.

The Chairman offered his thanks to the Secretary for all his work in relation to this matter.

15) Membership Cards

Alan Hinchliffe reported that he had asked the printers for a price to print cards but had not received a reply yet. He offered to chase them for an estimate.

Action: Alan Hinchliffe

16) Local Birdline

Stephan Dunstan tabled a written plan detailing how a non-profit making local Birdline, based on his own home telephone number, could work. He proposed to begin the service in the next week for a month long trial and agreed to announce it to the membership at the forthcoming meeting.

A.O.B.

1) BTO

The Treasurer announced that he had paid the 1998 subscription and that he would be the point of contact for the Club if that was acceptable to the Committee, it was agreed that it was.

2) Dockacres

The Secretary reported that he had written to Lancashire County Council objecting to the planning application to use Dockacres as a land fill site. He added that he had mentioned the application to Steve White of the Lancs Wildlife Trust who had been unaware of the proposal.

3) Co-operation with Lancs Wildlife Trust

The Secretary reported that he had written to Lancashire Wildlife Trust informing them of our objection to the Wyndyke Farm development and other local planning issues, recommending that we keep each other informed of potentially damaging planning applications.

4) Leys Nursery

Following the Leys Nursery Action Group's request for help with compiling an ornithological survey of the site: the Chairman reported that he had visited the site and compiled an initial report. Mike McGough offered some data from previous years on breeding Lesser Whitethroat and Sparrowhawk. The Secretary agreed to type up the data and forward it to the action group.

The Chairman stated that more survey work was required. On a broader issue, the Chairman stated that he believed that the Club should compile a file of all valuable ornithological sites in the Fylde, which could conceivably come under threat. The file would contain records of breeding birds and all other relevant records of birds at the sites, which demonstrated their value. He stated that such a file would prove invaluable should the Club be called upon to comment on a planning application. All agreed that this was very good idea and the concept should be discussed in detail at the next committee meeting as an agenda item.

Action: Secretary to write to Leys Nursery Action Group

5) Bill Oddie at the Norbreck Castle

The Chairman announced that Bill Oddie would be speaking at the Norbreck Castle on Monday the 23rd of November and the Club would have the opportunity to promote itself at the event with a stall. The Secretary volunteered to attend and represent the Club.

Action: Secretary to attend the Event

6) Problems with Gulls at Blackpool Zoo

The Secretary reported he had been informed that Blackpool Zoo had experienced problems with gulls and were considering a number of solutions which included killing the gulls. He went on to report that he had exchanged letters with Blackpool Council and the Zoo on the matter which had established that no decision had yet been taken and that he had secured an assurance that they would consult with the Bird Club before reaching any decision. It was noted that the Zoo could legally kill certain species, including Herring Gull, which was believed to be the problem species in this case. The Zoo had claimed that a keeper had been attacked and injured and that the Gentoo Penguin colony had been almost wiped out by a virus which 'probably' came from gulls. The Secretary reported that he had consulted with Steve White of LWT and the RSPB on the issue and that both concurred that killing the gulls is unlikely to solve the problem and may result in the pointless extermination of a large number of gulls. It was agreed that the Secretary should arrange a meeting with the Zoo management and the Club to discuss the problem.

Action: Secretary to arrange a meeting with Blackpool Zoo

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:50 pm.