

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2000



**Fylde
Bird Club**

LANCASHIRE

Chairman: Paul Slade

Secretary: Paul Ellis
18 Staining Rise
Staining
Blackpool
Lancashire
FY3 0BU

Tel. Eve : 01253 891 281
Day : 01772 852975

From The Chair

As the new "millennium" chairman of the Fylde Bird Club I felt it was only right that I wrote a few words for an introduction to the latest newsletter.

Firstly I would like to thank Len Blacow for his many years of hard work on behalf of F.B.C. without which I am sure the Club would not be held in such high regard by its past, present and hopefully future members.

Not wanting to step out of the limelight completely, Len has very kindly offered to take on the role of Bird Report Editor, ensuring yet more on time, high quality reading as produced by the excellent editorial team of Paul and Kinta over the last couple of years, which brings me nicely on to thanking our Secretary for the huge amount of work he does behind the scenes on behalf of the Club.

As a founder member and past committee member of the club I know only too well the amount of hard work that has gone on over the last seventeen years. With the membership's continued support, we can hopefully look forward to many more years of success and growth.

Remember Fylde Bird Club is **YOUR** club, if you have any ideas or suggestions please feel free to stand up at the meetings and voice your opinions and concerns.

I will be trying very hard to continue the superb work done by all the past members of F.B.C. (if I don't please let me know and I will keep your chair warm Len !)

Good Birding!
Paul Slade

E-Mail --- Is there anybody @out there ????

Well I am and so are a few others including Ian Chandler (famous Treasurer), Stephen Dunstan (famous doer of many jobs), Paul Slade (shiny new Chairman), Peter Bainbridge (famous ex Treasurer and Citrine Wagtail finder), Ian Gardner (famous foreigner), Phil Tomkinson (Inspector Gadget), Mike and Pauline McGough (famous counters and hide builders) and Dave Pitman (just infamous).

E-mail is very handy if you've got it and I think that in the near future most of us will end up with it. However don't worry though if you've no intention of ever getting it, we won't forget you.

We could e-mail your Meeting Minutes and other info and maybe eventually the whole newsletter (anyone got a scanner we can blag (Phil)?). Plus, you could e-mail in your annual records, recent reports, newsletter articles, Club Announcements, Adverts to sell things, etc, etc.

If you have access to e-mail and would like to link up with the rest of the Club then e-mail me on paul.ellis2@bae.co.uk or kinta.beaver@man.ac.uk and tell me if:

- a) you would like to make your address known to everyone in the Club or*
- b) only the Officers*

We will respect your wishes and only publish the addresses of those who are happy for it to be done.

Waiting online; Paul Ellis.

Recent Reports

October Sightings

The month was unsettled but mild with a series of low pressure systems bringing strong South-westerlies and moderate rain fall. During the third week high pressure over Scandinavia brought some Easterlies.

On the 29th a Little Grebe was on Fairhaven Lake. 8 Goosanders including 7 males were on the Wyre at Little Singleton on the 21st. The next day saw 12 Whooper Swans on the old tip at Freckleton with 20 Bewicks at the Naze. On the same date a Ruddy Shelduck was on the Ribble at Freckleton. A Light-bellied Brent was on Fleetwood beach on the 29th when 2 drake Manderins of unknown origin were at the Mere. A pair of Gadwall were at Jameson Road on the 17th whilst 5 Pintail were noted at Little Singleton on the Wyre on the 25th.

A female Merlin was at Fleetwood tip on the 19th and Jameson Road had a Short-eared Owl on the 19th and 23rd with a Barn Owl also present on the latter date. The resident Little Owl at the Mere was noted on the barn on the 30th. A Woodcock was present on the 17th and 25th at Bourne Hill. On the 26th a Greenshank was on the Wyre at Little Singleton with a Spotted Redshank on the estuary on the 31st. The 24th saw 340 Lapwing on Lytham Moss whilst a Jacksnipe was at the Mere on the 26th. The last Swallow reported appeared to be at Little Singleton on the 15th. Perhaps the best sighting locally was the Richards Pipit found at Fleetwood Golf Course on the 17th – unfortunately it flew off South after only 20 minutes. 2 Grey Wagtails were at Little Singleton on the 15th. A female Stonechat was at Jameson Road on the 17th with 1 at Fairhaven on the 21st. The 25th brought 70 Redwing to Bourne Hill with 40 at Burglars Alley. On the 28th 2 Rock Pipits were at Fairhaven when a Twite also flew over the site. 100 Fieldfares flew over Freckleton on the 22nd whilst on the 30th the Starling roost at the Mere held a massive 50,000 birds. Numbers of Goldcrests moved through Freckleton towards month end and up to a dozen Long-tailed Tits frequented the Little Singleton area. The 17th brought a female Snow Bunting to Rossall Point and 2 Brambling to Mount Park Fleetwood. 20 Siskins flew over Freckleton on the 22nd whilst the Tree Sparrows at Lytham Moss kennels numbered 24 on the 24th.

November Sightings

The month was again unsettled with many low pressure systems bringing mild, wet and windy weather from the West and South-west. The third week however saw Northerlies with colder conditions for a time.

On the 9th there were 13 Red-throated Divers off Rossall Point. The 22nd saw a Great Northern fly south close in off Blackpool prom whilst on the 28th a Black-throated Diver was off Cockersands. By the 21st 2 Bitterns were at the Mere again. On the 9th 14 Whooper Swans flew out onto Pilling sands. On the 17th there were 8 Bewick Swans flying east over Lytham Moss whilst on the 27th 38 were on the Wyre at Little Singleton. The next day there were 8 Whoopers at Fluke Hall. Geese numbers were still low with 1995 Pinkfeet Over Wyre on the Goose count with 2 Barnacles and a Light-bellied Brent. 800 Pinks were at Fleetwood with 2 Barnacles on the 13th – next day there were 2000 with 3 Barnacles. The 29th saw 9 Goosanders on the Wyre at Little Singleton. On the 16th 426 Pintail were feeding on the mud at Grannies Bay, whilst a female Scaup was on Fairhaven Lake on the 5th.

Ring-tailed Harriers were noted at Bank End on the 7th and the 28th with 2 Merlins there on the 14th. A Common Buzzard flew over Staining on the 14th with 1 noted near the M55 at Kirkham on the 27th. The month saw regular sightings of

Merlin and Short-eared Owl at Fleetwood Power Station, whilst a Barn Owl was seen there on the 9th. A Purple Sandpiper was at Rossall Point the same day, whilst on the 12th there were 1000 Lapwing and 288 Golden Plover at Cockersands with a Woodcock at Fluke Hall. On the 17th there were 2000 Golden Plover at Thurnham whilst 3 days earlier a Spotted Redshank and a Greenshank had been noted at Cockersands. On the 23rd there were 4 Sanderling on the Wyre at Little Singleton whilst LSANR had 5 Jack Snipe and 11 Common Snipe on the 24th – a very good count. A Water Rail was also present at the site from the 14th. A Kingfisher frequented Jameson Road area until the 14th also. An adult Med Gull was at the Mere on the 12th whilst an adult Glaucous Gull was noted on various dates from the 20th in the area around Fleetwood tip.

A Great Spotted Woodpecker was at Little Singleton on the 22nd whilst a Collared Dove of the pale form (isabelline) was on Lytham Moss on the 3rd. 2 Water Pipits were reported at Bank lane on the 7th with 1 at Jameson Road the next day. There were 3 male and 2 female Stonechats at Jameson Road on the 7th with a pair at the Mere on the 12th, when 96 Fieldfares were near Thurnham. 19 Corn Bunting were at Bone Hill on the 5th whilst on the 9th there were 4 Twite at Rossall Point and 4 Brambling at Fluke Hall. An excellent record of 60 Twite were at Cockersands along with 20 Tree Sparrows on the 12th when a pair of Yellowhammer were unusual at the Mere. On the 13th 8 Snow Bunting were at Rossall.

December Sightings

The weather continued to be unsettled with a series of low pressure systems. It was generally mild, wet and windy with mainly West or South-westerly winds. An odd wintry spell brought a few frosts around the 3rd week of the month.

A Little Grebe was on the Mere on the 14th when an immature Shag was at Preston Docks. Good numbers of duck were on the Mere with 336 Teal there on the 14th and 3 Gadwall on the 17th. 27 Pochard were on Fairhaven Lake on the 16th and up to 5 Mergansers were noted at the same site during the month. Up to 3 Goosanders were on the Mere whilst 7 were on the Wyre at Little Singleton on the 29th. On the 20th 32 Whoopers, 15 Bewicks, 1 Mute and 1 Black Swan were at Black Lane Head, Pilling. 27 Bewicks were at Newton Marsh on the 6th with up to 11 on the Wyre at Little Singleton during the month. The 20th saw 4400 Pinkfeet on the roost at Lane Ends whilst on the 27th 2300 were at Black Lane Head with 1 Barnacle. 2 escapes, a male Mandarin on the 5th and a Black Swan on the 21st were on Fairhaven Lake.

A Common Buzzard was seen near Moss Side Station on the 14th whilst a Sparrowhawk hunted over Royal Lytham Golf Course regularly during the month. On the 4th 3100 Golden Plover were on the reclaimed marsh between Pilling and Cockerham, whilst the 5th saw a Jack Snipe and 11 Common Snipe on LSANR. A Jack Snipe was also noted at the Mere on the 11th. A Ruff on Lytham shore on the 20th was a good record whilst St Annes beach held 200 Grey Plover on the 28th. Also on the 28th 161 Curlew were on Lytham Moss with 30+ Sanderling on the Wyre at Little Singleton the previous day.

On the 14th there were 32 Grey Partridge on Lytham Moss, a site where this species is apparently holding its own. The 10th and 11th saw a first winter Little Gull at Rossall whilst on the 9th a Great Skewer was reported at the same site. Great Spotted Woodpeckers were seen on nuts/feeders at Little Singleton and Ansdell during the month – this species is being increasingly seen in gardens. The Long-eared Owls continued to roost at the Mere, 4 being the most regular count. A Short-eared was at Pilling Lane Ends on the 10th and a Tawny at Little Singleton on the 17th. A good count of 92 Skylarks were on Lytham Moss on the 18th. Chiffchaffs were noted at LSANR on the 12th and Division Lane on the 1st, whilst 180 Fieldfares were at

Fairfield Farm, St Michaels with 300 Chaffinch on the 29th. 100 of the latter were at Warton Bank on the 20th, whilst 2 Snow Buntings were still being seen at Rossall on the 11th. 2 Jays were at Esprick on the 20th whilst next day 110 Magpies roosted on Royal Lytham Golf Course.

January

The first couple of weeks of the new Millennium brought the usual low pressure systems with mild, wet and windy weather. This was followed by a period of high pressure with light winds and some frost. Towards month end milder south-westerlies returned.

A Red-throated Diver close in offshore at Knott End on the 8th was tangled in fishing line. Luckily it was caught by Bob Danson and Barry Dyson and released unharmed. The Bittern or Bitterns remained at the Mere being rarely seen, dusk being the best time – 1 was noted on the 9th. On the 26th 5 Goosanders were on the Wyre at Little Singleton with a male at the Mere 2 days earlier. Good numbers of Pinkfeet were Over Wyre – 7000 being counted on the 14th with 10,000 at Eagland Hill the next day. Few oddments were with them however – 1 Barnacle being noted on the 14th. The Dark-bellied Brents continued to frequent the marsh at Lane Ends with 2 on the 14th and 4 on the 31st. 13 Whooper Swans were at Bonds Farm (Over Wyre) on the 7th, 28 Bewicks at Little Singleton on the 5th and 41 Mutes at Bank End, Warton on the 24th. In addition the Black Swan continued to be seen at various sites. An escaped Chiloe Wigeon was on the Mere on the 7th, a Common Scoter on the 14th with 3 Gadwall still present at the site. The male Mandarin was again seen on the 21st. On the 16th a male Long-tailed Duck was at Cockersands, whilst on the 26th there were 6 Mergansers on Fairhaven Lake.

Sparrowhawks were regular at Marton Mere during the month with Merlins being noted on the 24th at Bank End and Lytham Moss the next day. Water Rails were heard calling regularly at the Mere if not always seen. There appears to be a healthy population there this winter. 29 Grey Partridge on Lytham Moss was a good count on the 24th, with a Woodcock noted there on the 26th. 1 was also seen at the Mere on the 9th. On the 23rd on the wader count, there were 600 Oystercatcher, 230 Sanderling and 165 Grey Plover on St Annes beach.

A Collared Dove was noted on a nest in the centre of Lytham on the 27th, but the eggs were later abandoned. 5 Long-eared Owls were visible at the Mere on the 3rd, whilst on the 26th a Barn Owl hit by a car on Lytham Moss unfortunately later died. 100 Pied Wagtails roosted at BAE on the 13th whilst on the 21st there were 2 Water Pipits at Bank End. 54 Skylarks were counted on Lytham Moss on the 25th whilst a male Stonechat was there on the 20th. 1 also frequented the Mere during the month with a Chiffchaff noted at the same site on the 23rd. 100 Fieldfares were at Cogie Hill on the 31st. 3 Snow Buntings were still on Lytham shore on New Years Day, with 3 at Rossall on the 16th. Small numbers of Tree Sparrows were noted Over Wyre at various sites whilst 14 were at Lytham Moss kennels on the 13th. 24 Twite at Little Singleton on the 9th was a good record as was the 12 Yellowhammers at Great Carr Side Farm, Warton the same day.

Alan Hinchliffe

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

16TH Friends of Marton Mere
Snippets of Marton History with Terry Regan at 8pm
Blackpool Cricket club.

Saturday 18th

Winter Birdwatch
Looking for waders and wildfowl
With the Wyre Ranger's and Fylde Bird Club
Start 9.00am Rossall car park.

Thursday 23rd

Birds of Lesbos at the R.S.P.B. centre
Fairhaven START 7.30pm price £2.50p to members
£4.00p none members. to book ring 01253/796292

APRIL

Sunday 9th

Join the Wyre Rangers spring clean up at Burrows Marsh
start at 10.30am.

Thursday 20th

Birds of Florida U.S.A. at the R.S.P.B. centre Fairhaven
Start at 7.30pm price £2.50p Members £4.00p none Member
to book ring 01253/796292

MAY

SUNDAY 7TH

Catch the early bird
With the Bird club and Wyre Rangers at Grizedale Valley
Meet at Higher Lane between Scorton and Barnacre.
at 7.00am

SATURDAY 13TH

Visit Claughton Heronry start at 10am
To book ring Discovery Centre on 01995/602125

Thursday 18th

The Friends meeting at Blackpool Cricket Club
at 8.00pm with Mr Brian Unsworth illustrated talk-
"Aspects of Nature"

Letter Sent to the Gazette 10-2-00 but Never Published

Every time there's a hold up in the Mains Lane area the corpse of the Red Route is dug up and resurrection attempted. Guess what? Its still a bad idea, its still not wanted and it should stay dead.

Your recent correspondent states that the land along its route has already been spoilt by development, when in fact the opposite is true. The Planners have actively protected this land from development in the hope that one day they will be allowed to build their motorway. Last time the public saw the route on a map it still went through Staining Nook County Biological Heritage Site and the outstandingly important Marton Mere Local Nature Reserve and none of the many people who live near the route want it.

As stated before, the best solution to this problem would be the upgrading of the A586/ A585 This would have by far the least impact on the environment and would affect the homes of by far least number of people. Where else would a new motorway-class road be considered in preference to upgrading an existing main road which does not pass through urban areas? Consider this: those who live in the vicinity of Mains Lane are not without influence and they would prefer that their traffic problem became someone else's new road.

Also consider what would become of the land enclosed by the Red Route : inevitably it would be developed and yield an enormous profit for a few. Remember the massive Wyndyke Farm proposal? That plan included the southern end of the Red Route and all of it was on green countryside.

Therefore I urge everyone with any environmental conscience to oppose this potentially devastating new road.

Paul Ellis
18 Staining Rise
Staining

The Gazette Tuesday, February 1, 2000

Bypass bid revived as traffic rethink urged

AN urgent traffic summit meeting needs to be held in order to solve chronic congestion problems in a Fylde village, it has been claimed.

Fylde MP Michael Jack is encouraging residents of Singleton and Staining to meet with himself and County Council representatives to discuss proposals to resurrect a controversial bypass scheme.

Singleton parish councillors reckon the 'red route' bypass which would link the M55 with Fleetwood is the only solution to the huge tailbacks and pollution problems that plague their village.

But councillors in neighbouring Staining are equally adamant that the red route - once officially backed

by the Government but shelved in 1994 amid environmental concerns - should not be resurrected.

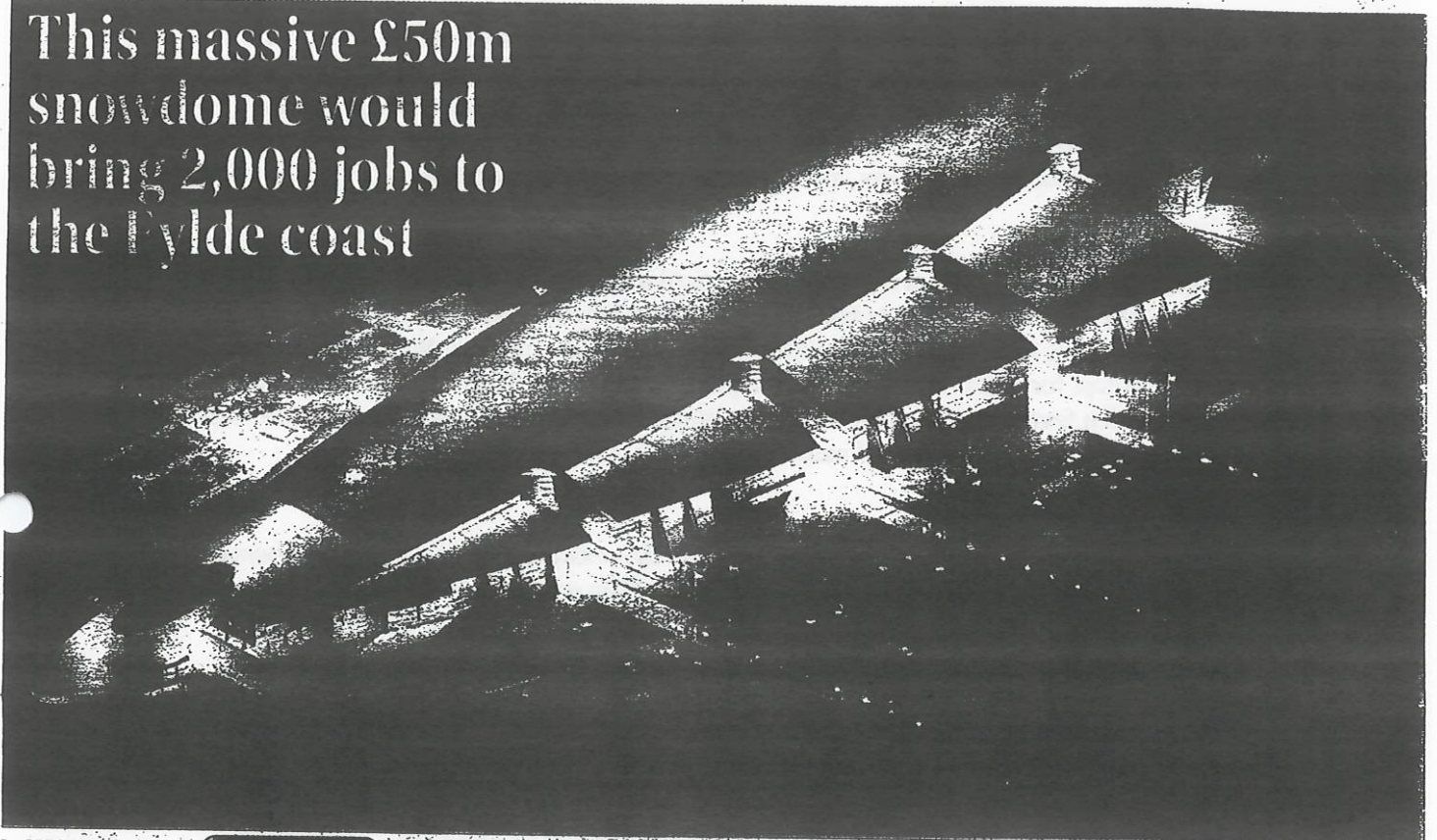
The A585 at Mains Lane has for years been one of the Fylde Coast's worst traffic jam blackspots and only last Wednesday there was commuter chaos when an overturned lorry caused the road to be blocked for eight hours.

Michael Jack MP believes that parish councillors from all the communities concerned need to resolve their differences.

Fylde Council's economic development and transportation committee was expected to back the bypass scheme at a meeting today.

A 'mountain' of a project!

This massive £50m snowdome would bring 2,000 jobs to the Fylde coast



By GREGG FRAY

THIS massive £50m snowdome with a ski village and real snow pistes could become a new attraction on the Fylde coast.

The Whyndyke Development Consortium today confirmed that its plans for a huge indoor facility at Whyndyke Farm at Marton are being considered by Fylde Council.

The ski village scheme incorporates a business centre with hotels and shops together with sports, leisure and entertainment facilities and a park and ride.

The snow element would provide skiing, snowboarding and other winter sports on 200 metre slopes of man-made wet snow, all within a state-of-the-art dome.

It is set to rival the all-year ski centre at Tamworth in the Midlands and the developers hope it will become the country's leading practice piste while providing at least 2,000 new jobs for the area.

Richard Gee, of the Whyndyke consortium, said: "The snowdome will provide a major boost to the Fylde's economy, both through direct job creation and improved tourist and visitor numbers."

"We have had strong interest from potential oper-



DO you think a snowdome would be an asset to Blackpool? Give us your views by ringing TALKBACK now and leaving your comments along with your name, address and telephone number. Calls are charged at standard rate.

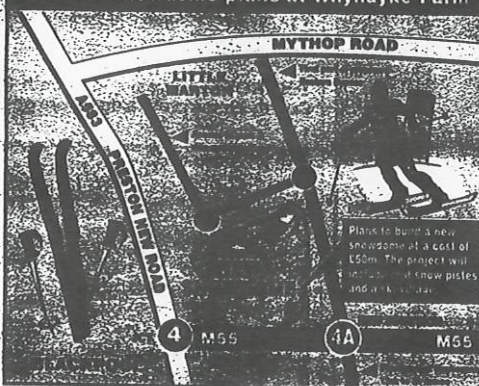
ators and we believe the business and funding case for the whole masterplan is highly robust."

The consortium has also put forward plans to access the site by a new junction, 4a, off the M55. New roads would provide the final part of the Heyhouses Link to St Annes and the start of the long-mooted Easterly Bypass.

A written representation was handed to the council before Christmas and the consortium is to meet councillors tonight to further discuss the proposals.

If the council pledges its support, more detailed plans would be put to the Fylde Local Plan Inquiry later this year.

The new Snowdome plans at Whyndyke Farm



HIGH FLIER: A skier in action at the Tamworth ski centre

Slopes covered in hi-tech snow

HI-TECH machines will help make snow to cover the slopes in the Fylde's snowdome.

Snow cannons mix together water and air using several agents to bind them, in a similar way to how technology is used to create ski runs in the Alps if necessary.

Freezing air blasts the soft, wet mixture out of the machines and onto the chilled surface of the slopes.

The room is kept at such a temperature that the mixture does not become ice and does not melt.

Countryside no place for such development

I SUPPOSE it was only a matter of time before another unwelcome plan was produced to build all over Wyndyke Farm.

Although I'm not surprised, we really should not be faced with these proposals because this land is designated as Countyside in our Local Plans.

The arguments against this development remain the same as those against the last building proposal here. The implications are horrendous, especially the Red Route which would ruin the Marton Mere Nature Reserve.

Out of town developments on greenfield sites should be resisted. If such a development is required it should be built in the town on a brown-field site.

PAUL ELLIS
Staining Rise
Staining

SEASIDE SIX ON POOL'S PLIGHT: PAGE 38

THE PILOT RIVER RIBBLE WeBS JAN-FEB 2000

Counts from the few rivers in the country which have been surveyed for the Wetland Bird Survey (e.g. in the North-west the Irwell and the Lune) have indicated significant numbers of wintering wildfowl may be uncounted each year. As a result of this identified gap it was decided to do a pilot census this winter involving 35 rivers across the country. The River Ribble was one of the selected rivers, and I was asked to arrange the counts.

The requirements of the pilot survey were not particularly onerous, involving one visit some time in January / February. Counts had to be completed between 9am and 2.30pm to ensure that species roosting elsewhere were not overlooked. All of the standard WeBS species were to be counted except for gulls. In addition to Kingfisher, which is a WeBS species two other passerines which favour riverine habitats (Grey Wagtail and Dipper) were also included in the birds to be counted. All hybrids and naturalised wildfowl were to be included.

The count stretch on the River Ribble stretched from the seaward side of the estuary counts, near Clifton Marsh tip, to Long Preston in Yorkshire. This was split up into 158 sections of 500 metres each. Of these 19 were in the Fylde Bird Club recording area, the eastern most ending at the A6 bridge at Walton-le-Dale.

The results for the Fylde area are set out below.

Little Grebe	1	Mallard hybrids	8
Cormorant	17	Goldeneye	2
Mute Swan	2	Goosander	4
Greylag	1	Moorhen	1
Domestic Greylag	8	Lapwing	500
Chinese Swan Goose	1	Snipe	2
Shelduck	49	Redshank	21
Wigeon	71		
Teal	287	Kingfisher	1
Mallard	422	Grey Wagtail	6

It is easy to place too much stall on results based on one-off counts, but there are some things which can be said about these figures. The suspected importance of rivers for Mallard is backed up, and this is further corroborated by the results further east on the river. The Lapwing are probably already included in the estuary WeBS results; they haunt the Ribble in central Preston and move out in flocks onto Clifton Marsh at high tide. The small Cormorant population in the Savick Brook / Preston Dock area is highlighted, and the regular wintering Grey Wagtails are well demonstrated by the half dozen seen in a stretch of about five miles.

The results for the Ribble as a whole and the other 34 pilot stretches will be used to establish the benefits of future river survey work, and make any necessary improvements to the count methodology. The way forward may include sampling representative stretches of less bird rich rivers. The Ribble probably comes into this category, compared for example with up to 60 Goosander on one small stretch of the Lune and up to 150 Goldeneye on a similarly small part of the Irwell. However all information is valuable to complete the picture of our wintering waterfowl.

Stephen Dunstan

Lapwing

Almost ever present during the winter and very good numbers stayed on to breed. Productivity was also good, with several family groups being noted.

Dunlin

At least one in May.

Ruff

Two 17th September and a male complete with ruff this spring.

Black-tailed Godwit

A few small groups in March, and 28 on the 21st of that month.

Whimbrel

Up to three around the pools and overhead in May.

Greenshank

One 17th September.

Wood Sandpiper

One in April and one 30th-31st May. To get two in Spring on such a habitat is good going!

Green Sandpiper

Two birds appeared in early March, one of these stayed for a few days.

Yellow Wagtail

One on spring passage in May.

This list is not exhaustive, but highlights the main features of the period. It is certainly very respectable for a flooded field. Hopefully it highlights the need to go out and look for less recognised sites with some interesting birds. Personally, whilst the flood is dried up I have identified another site which is not well-watched, but close to home with the possibility of turning up one or two nice surprises. In three visits to date it has produced a Little Grebe and a Common Sandpiper, not earth shattering but nice to see and an indication of promise. Perhaps you might like to identify your own new or under-watched site, and maybe tell everyone how you get on.

Stephen Dunstan

MYTHOP ROAD FLOOD

On Mythop Road, past the entrance to the Mere and the turn-off for Staining are a couple of fields which flood in wet weather. The more easterly of these beyond the farm has been particularly productive over the last nine months or so, due to the wet weather last summer. The habitat has thus been attractive to waders last autumn and this spring, and more attractive than usual to ducks over the winter.

Set out below are some of the highlights from last September, when the first notable wader were recorded, to this month (July) when the flood completely dried up. These are intended to show how attractive to bird life even a flooded field can be, if left undisturbed in favourable conditions. The records listed are those which I am aware of, and there will presumably be some significant omissions. They are the result of the efforts of several birders.

Shelduck

Maximum of nine in March.

Mallard

Up to 100 present in winter.

Wigeon

Up to 50 present in winter.

Teal

Up to 40 present in winter, and 29 on spring passage.

Gadwall

Pair present on 10th May.

Shoveler

Highest known winter count of 16 birds. Up to 34 during spring passage.

Pochard

Five present on 13th February.

Moorhen

Bred, an adult with five young appearing just before the pools dried up.

Coot

Up to 13 in winter, numbers were still increasing when the water levels began to drop dramatically.



**Fylde
Bird Club**

LANCASHIRE

FYLDE BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 8:13 PM ON MONDAY THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER AT THE HOLE IN ONE AT LYTHAM

Present

President; Secretary; Treasurer; Peter Bainbridge; Alan Hinchliffe; Stephen Dunstan and Dave Pitman.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 8th of July were approved.

Matters Arising

1) 1980's Breeding Birds Survey

Stephen Dunstan announced that he had completed compiling a draft Report and produced two copies at the meeting. It was agreed that the President would review one copy and Maurice Jones would be invited to review the other. All present thanked Stephen for his efforts. It was confirmed by the meeting that when the Report was issued, the contributors would be supplied with a copy free and all other Club members would be required to cover the cost of photocopying.

Action: President

2) Newsletter

The President reported that the November Newsletter was copied and assembled ready for the forthcoming meeting. The most recent sets of minutes had been copied separately from this Newsletter and made available at the last Club meeting. After some discussion it was agreed that all minutes should be reunited with the Newsletter to reduce the distribution workload. It was further agreed that full Club Business minutes should be published prior to the following Business meeting, to remove the requirement for the Secretary to read out the minutes.

Alan Hinchliffe stated that he had no copy in store for the next Newsletter. The President suggested that cuttings from BTO News could be included, this was agreed.

Action: President

3) 1997/1998 Bird Reports

The Secretary asked members to check if reports were on display at the usual outlets as some were very poor at restocking their shelves when empty. He also reported that the Club had yet to receive payment for the 30 1997 reports sold at Leighton Moss and the 5 sold at Mere Sands Wood. The President offered to take some reports to the Bird Fair at Martin Mere and Stephen Dunstan offered to take some to the forthcoming BTO conference.

4) 1999 Bird Report

The Secretary reminded the committee that it needed to identify someone to take on the role of project manager, now that work commitments had forced Kinta Beaver to step down. The President agreed to assume the role of Chief Editor and take on the responsibility for getting the 2000 Bird report to the August Club Meeting.

It was also noted that a volunteer with access to a computer would be needed to perform on the task of typing and final compilation of the report, ready to be taken for printing. This was another role which Kinta had performed for the previous three reports.

5) Important Unprotected Bird Sites

The President reported that he was still working on this task.

Action continuing: The President to produce Newsletter article

6) Honorary Memberships

The Treasurer asked for the addresses of honorary membership for Len Worthington, Paul Baker and Geoff Whitely in order that he could provide them with their honorary memberships. The committee members agreed to provide the information. It was decided that these memberships should start in January 2000 and include a 1998 Bird Report.

Action: Treasurer

7) Lytham Moss/ County Biological Site Proposals

The Secretary reported that he had received an assessment from Frank Walsh, which he had used as the basis for a proposal to have the site considered for County Biological Heritage Site status. He added that he had received a response stating that the proposal would be considered by the Heritage Sites Committee in November. In addition Frank had produced an assessment of a site at Clifton Marsh adjacent to an existing C.B.H.Site. The Secretary stated that he had used this data in support of a proposal to extend the existing C.B.H.Site which would also be considered in November.

Action complete

The Secretary noted that Stanley Park would qualify as a C.B.H.Site owing to its heronry. It was agreed that the Secretary should advise Nik Bruce (ecologist at Lancashire County Council) of this fact.

Action: Secretary

8) B.T.O. Winter Farmland Bird Survey

The President reported that when he examined the squares, which had been selected for survey, they all appeared very poor for birds. The Committee agreed that even so the membership should be advised. It was noted that data, which showed a particular site was poor for birds, was still useful data, even if it only served to highlight the value of other bird rich sites. The President agreed to present this request to the membership at the next meeting.

Action: The President

9) 2000 Meeting Programme

Dave Pitman presented a draft programme for 2000. The Committee accepted the draft and thanked Dave for his efforts. Only one meeting remained unfilled and two possible speakers were agreed which Dave agreed to contact. It was noted that the number of meetings centred on foreign trips was reduced compared to 1999. Dave agreed to produce the final Programme in time for distribution at the AGM. The Secretary agreed to produce the membership cards incorporating the Programme in time for the AGM.

Action Dave Pitman & Secretary

Mike McGough was still believed to be working on a site guide for goose watching in Over Wyre. It was agreed that this work could form the basis of a short presentation, following the October business meeting next year.

Action continuing Mike McGough

10) Venue

No suitable alternative had been identified by any of the Committee members. The Secretary reported that he had enquired about prices for the use of the new Staining Community Centre. However the only suitable room costs £10 per hour which would be unacceptably expensive. Dave Pitman reported that Lytham St.Annes High School was no longer free and would cost £20 per night.

Ian Chandler stated that he was awaiting a reply on the availability of the room in the bar at Blackpool Airport. The Treasurer confirmed that the cost of the room at the Cricket club was £150 per year. The Committee members agreed that the venue was probably less of a problem than the night of the week. It was stated that 'big' football matches are now commonly held on Wednesday nights and that this fact discouraged members from attending Club meetings. It was also noted that the Fylde Naturalists also meet on the same Wednesday night and share some of our members. It was agreed that the issue should be put to the membership at the AGM and that all members should be informed of the issue by post in advance.

Action: Secretary

11) Guided Walks

The President announced that he would be attending a meeting in early December to arrange a guided walk at Lytham Hall. He then asked the Committee members if it was worthwhile owing to the very poor support from Club Members for the bird Club led Wyre Guided Walks. All agreed that such a Guided Walk would be worthwhile because it was a site to which there is normally no access. It was believed that for this reason Lytham Hall would be a popular event. The Secretary opined that the Guided walks were not publicised well enough and recommended that every newsletter should carry the dates of all forthcoming events. This was agreed.

Action President and Secretary

12) Celebrity Speaker Event

It was agreed to hold this proposal owing to the less than overwhelming response to the two events of this nature, which had recently been held at Lowther Gardens.

Action Cancelled

Agenda

1) AGM

The status of the position of President was debated. It was noted that the appointment of a President was strictly unconstitutional owing to the fact the current constitution does not contain such a provision. It was agreed that the constitution would need to be altered at the AGM to accommodate this change. The terms of reference of the office of President were then discussed and it was agreed that the position should be a life position but without any automatic right to a seat on the Committee, however this would not prevent the President from standing for election to the Committee.

The Secretary asked all the members present if they intended to stand for re-election. All except Peter Bainbridge indicated that they would do so. It was confirmed that the important office of Chairman would need to be filled at the AGM.

It was agreed that a raffle should be arranged for the AGM but that no buffet should be ordered.

Action President to organise raffle

2) Bourne Hill Fleetwood

The Secretary reported that he and Ian Gardner had noticed that the whole of this site was earmarked for Industrial Development in the Wyre Local Plan. Following informal enquires with Wyre Planning Department the Secretary had written to the Deputy Chief Executive. The letter suggested that this green field site should be preserved in view of the fact that it was adjacent to a huge brown field site, which was now available for development. The letter was sent in September but a reply had yet been received. The Secretary agreed to make enquires with Wyre Borough Council.

Action Secretary

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:10 pm.



**Fylde
Bird Club**

LANCASHIRE

FYLDE BIRD CLUB
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 20:00 ON WEDNESDAY
THE 17TH OF NOVEMBER AT BLACKPOOL CRICKET CLUB

Present

Secretary, Treasurer and 12 members. No apologies were received.

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last business meeting on 21st July were agreed to be a true and fair record.

Matters arising

1) Resignation of chairman

The Secretary reminded those present that the position of Chairman was vacant, and that somebody would need to be found to fill the position at the Annual General Meeting under the terms of the club's constitution. The Secretary urged anybody who knew of potentially suitable candidates to encourage them to stand.

Action: membership

2) Lytham Moss development plans

A proposal had been submitted to obtain county biological heritage site status, with assistance from Frank Walsh. The proposal is to be considered this month at a meeting of representatives of Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and English Nature. The designation would not afford any official protection, but would demonstrate that the biological value of the site. The Fylde borough local plan in which development of the moss is envisaged is now due to reach the deposit stage, the last opportunity for public objection.

On a related subject the Secretary reported that other information supplied by Frank Walsh had led a proposal to extend the Clifton Marsh biological heritage site. This information concerned nesting Long-eared Owl and Yellowhammer.

3) Black-tailed Godwit nest site

No formal brief on developments had been received from the RSPB, which was considered regrettable. It was hoped that the lessons of the experience had been learned and the protection plan would be better organised and implemented this year.

4) Marton Mere LNR new hide

4) *Marlon Mere LNR new hide*

As indicated at the last meeting the hide had been closed at times during the school holiday to prevent damage by children. The opening hours should be less restricted now, but anybody still requiring a key is urged to borrow one from Dave McGrath or Paul Ellis and make a replica.

The hide is currently taking in excessive water due to a design fault. Sealant now needs to be applied to prevent this problem continuing. After discussion it was agreed to approach Dave McGrath to see if he intended to do this, and then raise the matter at the Management Committee if necessary.

Action: Secretary

5) *Coastguard station*

Len Blacow reported that the repairs to the windows and interior were complete. He still needed to find out which council section was responsible for maintaining the building going forward, and then obtain keys to the door for members to use.

Shatterproof glass has been fitted, funded by Wyre Borough Council. The intention is to install interpretative material as previously committed to by the club.

Action: Len Blacow

7) *Lancashire Bio-diversity Action Declaration*

The copy of the declaration signed by the bird club had been submitted.

8) *Wyre Borough Council / bird club joint walks*

The Secretary reported that Len Blacow had requested better attendance at these events by bird club members. The club receives significant sponsorship for assisting with these walks, and in this context attendance had been unsatisfactory in 1999.

The Secretary reported that events were to be included in future newsletters to increase the likelihood that members would note them in their diaries and be able to attend.

Action: membership

9) *Bird talks at Lowther Pavilion*

The bird club had been represented at the two recent bird talks. Publicity information had been available at the talks and was all taken.

Any other business

1) *Fylde bird report*

Volunteers are required to sell copies of the latest Fylde bird report.

Action: membership

2) Proposed development at Bourne Hill

This site at Fleetwood is earmarked for development. The Secretary read out a letter he had sent to Wyre Borough Council objecting to this given the amount of derelict land in the area, and explaining the biological value of the site. The letter also requested the bird club be copied in on all future general planning correspondence. No reply had yet been received to the letter, which was sent in September.

3) Kite Hall Wood

For information the Secretary advised that Kite Hall Wood on Lytham Moss was for sale.

4) Committee vacancy

The Secretary informed the meeting that Pete Bainbridge was standing down from the committee, and there would thus be a vacancy at the AGM month.

5) Breeding Bird Atlas

Stephen Dunstan reported that the draft species accounts were now complete, and copies had been provided to Len Blacow and Maurice Jones for comment.

6) Farmland Wintering Bird Survey

Len Blacow explained the requirements of this survey, for which there are a number of squares in the Fylde requiring surveying. Further details are available from Len for interested members.

7) Accounts

The Treasurer circulated copies of the accounts and AGM agenda to members present.

8) Meeting venue

The Secretary distributed a note on club meeting dates, to be discussed at the AGM, with the newsletter.

There being no further business the meeting closed at approx. 20:45.



**Fylde
Bird Club**

LANCASHIRE

FYLDE BIRD CLUB 1999 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 8:00 PM ON WEDNESDAY
THE 15TH OF DECEMBER AT BLACKPOOL CRICKET CLUB

Present

President; Secretary, Treasurer and 24 members.

Apologies were received from Roger Scholes; Barry Dyson; Steven Dunstan and Alan Stamford.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 16th December 1998 were read and approved.

Review of the Year

The President made the following address : -

As you know it is customary for the Chairman to review the past year.

First I must thank our Secretary Paul for another year of unstinting efforts.

Thanks to our Treasurer Ian keeping a tight grip on our money, thanks also to Malcolm Evans for helping Ian and auditing his accounts.

Thanks to Dave Pitman who again arranged a varied meetings programme and thanks to those members who spoke as part of the programme.

Thanks to Alan Hinchliffe for producing our newsletter and thanks to Paul and Mike McGough for behind the scenes work on the newsletter.

I must also thank your committee for their work during the year particularly.

I have to thank the editorial team for their efforts in producing our Annual Bird Report, particularly Kinta and Paul for compiling the data and overseeing production. Thanks to Peter Bainbridge and Alan Dawe who sub-edited sections of the report. I should also thank Alan Hinchliffe for distributing the Report to various outlets and extracting money from previous year's sales.

During the year we led 9 guided walks attracting 93 visitors, I must thank those of you who came along to help on the walks.

The highlight of the year was the construction of the new hide at Marton Mere, thanks to all who helped with the building work but I must make special mention of Mike and Pauline McGough who organised the project, oversaw deliveries of materials and generally made sure we all did a full day's work. I'd like to add that several people have commented on the quality of the hide, so we can feel a sense of pride in our achievement.

During the year we attended several meetings with other bodies and were consulted on planning issues by local authorities. It is now routine for the RSPB regional office to contact us on local matters. The Club also signed up to the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan which involves Local Authorities and Conservation organisations in work to identify and protect key habitats.

I must also thank all of you who supported our annual Bird Race so enthusiastically helping three teams to raise £182 towards the RSPB's campaign against illegal hunting in France.

Our members have continued to support the work of the Friends of Marton Mere and I hope that more of you will be able to do so as their efforts on behalf of the Mere compliment our own.

Members continued to support field work, particularly the Wetland Bird Survey and the county wide breeding birds atlas. The pink-footed goose counts were re-launched and several members conducted individual surveys. Low points were the unfortunate failure of our only black tailed godwit nest due to egg collectors and the continued closure of Rossall Coast Guards Tower.

1999 sees the start of what will become an annual Christmas bird Count. On 28th December our members will be counting birds at Brock, Marton Mere and Fairhaven and all of you are welcome to come along. Sadly this is my last review as your Chairman, I would like to thank all of you for your support over the last 10 years and can promise that my successor and his committee will continue to work on your behalf for the conservation and well being of the birds of the Fylde and their habitats.

Treasurer's Review of the Year

The Treasurer presented the accounts for the previous year, which had been audited by Malcolm Evans. Copies had been distributed to all members prior to the meeting. The Treasurer's conclusion was the Club's finances were in a healthy position and that no action was required.

It was noted that the Club had a surplus of £627 from 1999, however this figure would be closer to £300 once outstanding commitments were paid. These were comprised largely of the meeting room fee and Bird Race money which had yet to be forwarded to the RSPB.

An improved record of Bird Report Sales was emerging which would assist in planning future publications. It was stated that the standard should be maintained which would require efforts to secure new sponsorship.

The President thanked the Treasurer for his report.

Election of Officers

Chairman : Paul Slade was proposed by Maurice Jones and seconded by Dave Pitman.
The vote was in favour.

Secretary : Paul Ellis was proposed by Don Rusling and seconded by Stephen Beastall.
The vote was in favour.

Treasurer : Ian Chandler was proposed by Mike McGough and seconded by Dave Pitman
The vote was in favour.

Auditor : Malcolm Evans was proposed by Don Rusling and seconded by
Mike McGough.
The vote was in favour.

Committee: Dave Pitman; Alan Hinchliffe, Mike McGough and Stephen Dunstan were prepared to stand again. And Peter Bainbridge wished to stand down.
On behalf of the Committee, the Secretary put forward the Committee's suggestion regarding the status of the newly created position of President. It was proposed that the office should be for life but without automatic right to a seat on the Committee. This proposal was accepted by the membership and Len Blacow offered to stand for election to the committee. The candidate committee members were proposed by Don Rusling and seconded by Maurice Jones.
The Vote was in favour.

Subscriptions to Outside Bodies

The Treasurers read out the names and subscription costs of the bodies to which the Club had belonged to last year. They were: -

British Trust for Ornithology	BTO	£19
Lancashire Wildlife Trust	LWT	£33
Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society		£10

The Treasurer pointed out that while the BTO and Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society subscriptions were unchanged the LWT cost had increased substantially from last year when it was £25. There was some debate as to whether it was important for the Club to belong to LWT. It was opined that it was very useful because LWT were always consulted about planning issues and always contacted the Club for input, which assisted our awareness of Planning Proposals.

Renewed membership of the LWT was proposed by Frank Walsh and seconded by Mike McGough.

The vote was in favour.

Renewed membership of the Lancs. & Cheshire Fauna Society was proposed by Frank Walsh and seconded by Don Rusling.

The vote was in favour.

Renewed membership of the BTO was proposed by Frank Walsh and seconded by Mike McGough.

The vote was in favour.

Any Other Business

- 1) Mike McGough thanked Len Blacow for all his hard work on behalf of the Club during his years as Club Chairman. Many members echoed this tribute.
- 2) On behalf of the local YOC committee, Don Rusling thanked the Club for its support during the year.
- 3) Frank Walsh asked if the Club had sent a copy of the 1998 Bird Report to the BTO for review. The Secretary replied that a copy had been despatched shortly after the report was issued.
- 4) Maurice Jones asked if the Club would address the problem of water ingress through the walls of the new hide at the Mere. The Secretary replied that at the last Club meeting, it had been decided that the question should be raised at the next Marton Mere Management Committee meeting which was in January.
- 5) Mike McGough offered thanks to Kinta Beaver for all her hard work in producing the 1998 Bird Report and expressed the hope that the current high standard of the publication could be maintained. Others seconded this message.
- 6) Club Meetings : Venue and Night
The Secretary reported that following the written advance notice to the members of a debate on the subject, he had received no comments prior to the meeting. The debate was opened and it eventually became apparent that the venue was generally well liked and should be retained but that a change of night to Tuesday would be welcome. It was agreed that the meeting should break to allow enquires to be made regarding which nights were available and reconvene in 15 minutes.

The meeting reconvened and the Secretary reported that the Tuesday nights were not available for 2000 but that Monday nights were. However examination of a calendar revealed that a large number of bank holidays fell on Mondays during 2000, making the night unsuitable. The membership agreed to retain the same night (3rd Wednesday) and venue for 2000 and action the Committee to investigate an alternative evening for 2001.
- 7) Copies of the meeting Programme for 2000 were distributed by Dave Pitman and the Secretary stated that by the January meeting membership cards with the programme printed on it would be available.

There being no further AGM business the meeting closed at 21:25 p.m.

There were two post-meeting announcements

- 1 There would be a Christmas bird count at Fairhaven, Marton Mere and Brock on the morning of the 28th December.
- 2 There would be a guided bird walk at Knott End on the 8th of January at 10:30 am



**Fylde
Bird Club**

LANCASHIRE

FYLDE BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 8:18 PM ON MONDAY THE 3RD OF FEBRUARY AT THE PICKWICK IN WARTON

Present

Chairman; Secretary; Mike McGough; Alan Hinchliffe; Stephen Dunstan and Dave Pitman. Apologies were received from the Treasurer who was on holiday.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 15th of November were agreed to be correct.

Matters Arising

1) 1980's Breeding Birds Survey

Stephen Dunstan reported that he had received comments on the draft Report from Maurice Jones some time ago but was still awaiting a response from the President. It was agreed that production of the Report should not be delayed and should proceed as soon as possible. Stephen agreed to prepare several copies. It was confirmed that copies of the Report would be made available to the members at cost and that when ready a copy would be presented at a Club meeting where the demand could be ascertained.

Action: Stephen Dunstan

Stephen asked the committee, if there would be any objection to releasing the data to the Lancs. Breeding Birds Survey editors for use in that publication. All present were happy to the data to be released.

2) Newsletter

Once again Alan Hinchliffe reported that he had very little copy in store for the next Newsletter. However it was noted that the President was still to supply an article on the Important Local Site Dossier project and cuttings from BTO News. Mike McGough offered to type up a page of dates of forthcoming events and Stephen Dunstan offered to produce an article describing a pilot study on the Ribble. Stephen also offered to include a short piece regarding inland count sites for wildfowl, owing to the fact that at present Marton Mere is the only inland WeBS site and other sites could be added.

**Actions continuing: President
Action: Mike McGough
Action: Stephen Dunstan**

3) 1997/1998 Bird Reports

The Secretary reported that payment had been received from the RSPB at Leighton Moss for the 30 1997 reports and all outstanding monies had been paid by Mere Sands Wood.

4) 1999 Bird Report

Owing to the absence of the President little useful discussion could be held over this issue. The Secretary reported that he had already suggested to the President that he may wish to convene a separate meeting of contributors.

Stephen Dunstan reported that he had not found Bird Recorder easy to use and proposed using an alternative program to collate the 1999 records. The Secretary agreed that the Help for Birdrecorder was poor and offered to assist Stephen with getting started. It was agreed that Stephen and the Secretary would meet with the aim of finding a solution. The Secretary stated that it was particularly useful, when commenting on planning applications, to have all the bird records from as many years as possible on one database.

5) Important Unprotected Bird Sites

The President was believed to be still working on this task and preparing a newsletter article.

Action continuing: The President to produce Newsletter article

6) Honorary Memberships

No one present knew if the honorary memberships for Len Worthington, Paul Baker and Geoff Whitely had been processed.

Action: Treasurer

7) County Biological Site Proposals

The Secretary reported that he had not yet notified Nik Bruce (ecologist at Lancashire County Council) of the fact that Stanley Park would qualify as a C.B.H. Site owing to its herony.

Action continuing: Secretary

8) Goose Watching Site Guide

It was noted that this action was placed on Mike in his absence, however he agreed to prepare a site guide for goose watching in Over Wyre. Paul Slade offered to assist Mike with the preparation. Mike stated that he would not be able to present it at the October meeting. It was agreed that someone else could do the presentation or it could be rescheduled

Action Mike McGough and Chairman

Mike McGough reported that counts made by shooters over Wyre continue to exceed those by birders by many thousands. These shooters' counts were considered to be inaccurate but were being accepted by the Wildfowl Trust as correct. He stated that more counters were needed and that counts would be made of birds arriving at Lane Ends to roost. Paul Slade cautioned that on moonlight nights some geese stay on the fields and feed all night.

9) Venue

It was agreed that the availability of an alternative night should be investigated before mid year.

Action: All

10) Lytham Hall Guided Walks

The Secretary announced that he and Len Blacow had attended a meeting in January at Lytham Hall to discuss guided walks and that it had been agreed in principle. He added that permission to conduct a breeding bird survey at the site was also likely and that he had agreed to record the proposals in a letter from the Club to the Lytham Town Trust.

Action Secretary

11) Threat to Bourne Hill Fleetwood

The Secretary reported that the Club had received a reply to the letter sent in September and read out the letter. It stated that the Club would be kept informed over this matter. However the Secretary stated that he had heard nothing since. It was agreed the Secretary should make further enquiries with Wyre Borough Council.

Action Secretary

12) Godwit Protection at Newton Marsh

The Secretary stated that at the last Club meeting he had read out a letter from the RSPB requesting assistance with wardening during the coming breeding season. It was agreed that this should be reproduced in the Newsletter. Mike McGough accepted the letter and offered to prepare its inclusion.

Action Mike McGough

Agenda

1) Rossall Coast Guards Tower

It was agreed that the Secretary should write to Wyre Borough Council asking they intended to re-open the building and if so whether it would contain interpretative material as originally planned.

Action Secretary

2) Membership Renewal Reminders

The Chairman reported that he had spoken to an ex member recently and was surprised to learn that he would have re-joined, had he been sent a reminder by the Club. The Secretary expressed extreme disappointment at this fact, owing to reassurances which he had received that ALL recent ex-members had been sent reminders last year. He stated that this was unacceptable and the Club must do all it could to retain and attract new members.

The Chairman suggested that the Club should send Christmas cards to all members and other who assisted the club. These cards could contain a reminder to re-subscribe and a print of the New Year's meeting programme. All agreed that this was an excellent idea and the Chairman agreed to perform the task at in December.

Action Chairman

3) Committee Jobs

The role of Press Officer was discussed and it was agreed that this would be a worthwhile activity. Publication of meeting content and dates and other events could be offered to the local newspapers and radio for publication and broadcast. Paul Slade offered to take on this job.

Action Chairman

Any Other Business

1) E-mail

The Secretary suggested that copies of Meeting Minutes and other information could be circulated by e-mail amongst those members who were on line. It was agreed that this could eventually significantly cut down on the amount of copying required. It was also noted that it would assist communications between the members if they knew one another's e-mail addresses. The Secretary offered to prepare a short article for the Newsletter covering the subject.

2) Committee Positions

Stephen Dunstan suggested that committee positions should be limited in duration to ensure a healthy circulation in the Club. While it was agreed that a greater circulation would be a good thing, it was recalled how difficult it could be to find volunteers for key roles. The process of re-electing the Committee was questioned by the Secretary, who proposed that in future the members should be proposed and voted on one by one, to give potential new candidates a chance to stand. All agreed. In addition it was agreed that nominations for the Committee and Officers should be invited in advance of the AGM.

3) Starting Time of Meetings

Alan Hinchliffe requested that the Club should always start its meetings on time as late starts caused irritation with members who arrived on time, only to wait for others to arrive and settle. All agreed and the Chairman and Secretary undertook to endeavour to commence the meetings at 1945 hours sharp and to ensure that any breaks were strictly timed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:10 pm.



Marshside Nature Reserve, Beechwood, Cat Tail Lane, Scarisbrick, Southport PR8 5LW
Tel/fax: 01704 880797

Black-tailed godwits at Newton Marsh

Firstly, I trust you have had a good Christmas and may I wish you all the best for the year 2000. I must apologise for not getting in touch with you sooner to thank you properly for your efforts to protect the godwits in 1999.

As you know, despite our best efforts it turned out to be a bad year. We had targeted what we thought would be the most vulnerable times for the nest, i.e. dusk and dawn, but in the event the robbery took place in broad daylight. It would appear that the monitored nest was robbed on the afternoon of Saturday 8 May by egg-collectors from the Newcastle area. The thieves were seen leaving the site by the farmer, Mr. Rhodes, who had previously been telephoned by a local resident who had seen men walking around on the marsh. Although the thieves got away, the vehicle details enabled us to link the incident to two well-known egg-collectors and investigations are continuing. There were probably two nests on the marsh last year but the outcome of any other nesting attempts is not known. I certainly did not encounter any evidence of young on my subsequent visits. This means that we only know of one successful nesting in the last four years, which is clearly not a satisfactory situation.

I know that some people have expressed doubts about the wisdom or otherwise of erecting an electric fence around the nest area last year. As you will appreciate, the fence was erected because of the danger of the nest being trampled by the large numbers of cattle that are on the marsh at this time. The danger of making the nest more obvious to any potential egg-collectors was taken into account, but the fact is that the godwits tend to nest in the same areas each year and these are well known to the egg-collecting fraternity. In any case, the methods used by 'professional' egg-collectors are such that they can very easily find any nests without this help.

For 2000 it is clear that nothing less than a 24 hour protection scheme will be effective whilst there are eggs in the nest. Details have not yet been finalised but I can promise that we will be mounting a much more intensive protection campaign in 2000. We will be looking for your help once again of course and I hope that we can rely on your continued support. A lot of good work was done in 1999 and we now have a good handle on the situation and have built up some good relationships and understanding with local landowners which will stand us in good stead next year. With your help the year 2000 will mark the turning point in the godwits' fortunes and the start of their rise to becoming an established breeding bird in Lancashire.

Finally, I would be very grateful if you would complete the attached form and return it to me by return of post if you are able to give us your assistance with wardening the godwits this year.

With thanks and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Baker', written in a cursive style.

Tony Baker
Site Manager



VOLUNTEER

Interest

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Daytime telephone _____

Skills/interests _____

Amount/frequency of time prepared to give _____

Type of work interested in _____

RSPB member Yes No

Any other comments _____

RSPB use only

Next steps

Date _____ Met by _____