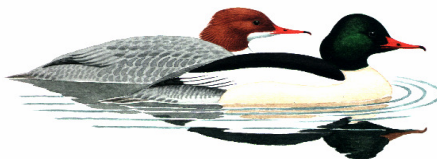


# MOOR GREEN LAKES GROUP NEWSLETTER



August 2010

Dear Members

Well, this summer has certainly lived up to its name so far and we hope you have been out enjoying the weather, our reserve and the local countryside. I say local being mindful of 'global warming' and the harm all our travel does to the environment, sometimes, a closer look at nature on the doorstep can lead to a real desire to stay put and enjoy nearer home and what better place to do it than Moor Green Lakes? Come along and see so much more at our Open Day on 5<sup>th</sup> September – details are at the back of this newsletter.

Since our last Newsletter, at the AGM, we found and installed a new Chairman, Iain Oldcorn and a message from him, or what he calls his 'chunterings' can be found inside. We are very lucky when a volunteer suddenly appears and, thankfully we have another, John Westmacott, who answered our call to help with *Lepidoptera* recording following Sue Proudley's retirement. John has also made a valued contribution to this Newsletter.

Of course, we cannot let this opportunity pass to express our sincere thanks to Peter Scott for his excellent, diligent work as Chairman of our Group, and Sue for her very long stint as our butterfly recorder. Our sincere thanks go to both of them for their important contributions to Moor Green Lakes Group in the past and we hope they will still be seen at the reserve well into the future. Peter is continuing to contribute in the plant recorder role thankfully, his escape is not complete!

Yet another change awaits us as Ken Crick, our resident dragonfly expert, has announced his wish to stand down at the end of this season. Ken is well known locally for the enthusiasm and skill he brings to the role and we know he will be hard to replace but Chris Bean has kindly volunteered henceforth, enjoying the chance to visit the site's inner sanctum to record the wealth of *odonates* resident there. I am sure we all wish to thank Ken for his big contribution to the reserve in many ways in the past, we hope we continue to see him and benefit from his advice in the future.

For those of you fortunate enough to have access to the internet I can recommend our website [www.mglg.org.uk](http://www.mglg.org.uk) where a wealth of information about the reserve and the work of the Group can be found. Bruce Archer our Treasurer, is also our webmaster and keeps the site well up to date with all the latest information and pictures, some examples are mentioned inside.

Enjoy autumn, bring your camera and try to catch one of the lovely Moor Green sunsets !

**Colin Wilson, Editor**

Blakeney, St Catherine's Road, Frimley Green, Camberley, Surrey, GU16 9NP  
Tel 01252 837411, Email [colin.wilson@mglg.org.uk](mailto:colin.wilson@mglg.org.uk)

**Membership** enquiries should be addressed to our Membership Secretary:  
Dave Bishop, email [dave.bishop@mglg.org.uk](mailto:dave.bishop@mglg.org.uk) or phone 01252 876966



## Chairman's Chunterings

by Iain Oldcorn

Hello. I came upon MGLG by accident and with a long, intermittent and inexpert interest in birds. My wife Susan and I sometimes walked from the NT car park on Wellingtonia Avenue, past Halls and Moor Green Farms down to the Blackwater and then east to Mill Lane before heading back north alongside Ambarrow Farm and Beech Hill to the car park. About four years ago the 'phone number on the Colebrook hide gate was contacted and I was "in". Subsequently, after my retirement in late 2008, Susan decided to find me more things to do and persuaded me to volunteer and thence it was an "easy" step to apply when Peter Scott "advertised" his post.

But that is comparatively recent stuff. I was born during WWII in Ewyas Harold, a small village near to where my father was running a Ministry of War depot in Herefordshire, now an SAS base. By age eight, I had lived in four different places and attended three different schools; I remember my mother telling me that the bright yellow bird declaiming "little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese" was a yellowhammer and I had acquired my first field guide: "Birds" by MKC Scott (good name – he drew the "48 coloured pictures" while JA Henderson described them). However, my interests were more mechanical – such as dismantling the back door bell and being late home from school as watching the earth-movers was so interesting. Birding was also absent during secondary school and university where Maths, Physics and Chemistry and then Chemical Engineering reigned. However, before I started to earn a living I persuaded five University biologist friends, who had decided to spend a couple of months birding and botanising in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, that it would be good to take me along as photographer. One of the more spectacular sights we witnessed when standing on the bank of a small river early one morning while hundreds of white storks flew past at eye-level as they started another days' migration. Looking back at "The Accounts" I see that it cost the six of us altogether £652, of which £390 was for the vehicle and £65 on petrol and oil!

My first job was at ICI in Middlesbrough designing gas plants, but after only a couple of years North Sea gas was discovered and seeing that it would be the end of the work I had been doing I emigrated to London and joined Castrol for the start what was to be the computer revolution.

To assist me in Bulgaria I had purchased Collins "A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe" by Petersen, Mountford and Hollom, 1964, 9<sup>th</sup> impression. And this sufficed for many years of limited birding activity – for example a visit to Slimbridge in the late 60s – as I now concentrated on a career, marriage and subsequently watching Susan raise our two children. Somewhere along the way we joined the RSPB and I bought the Collins "New Generation Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe" by Christopher Perrins (now Her Majesty's Swan Warden) 1987 – a magnificent book, only about 10 half lines on each species but what a wealth of information. I also purchased the 1993 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Petersen, Mountford and Hollom – but I have never liked it and so it has scarcely been used; then in 2003 I bought Helm's "Birds of Europe" by Lars Jonsson, but I still prefer Perrins. (Given half a chance, Susan will explain to you that I am a hoarder, mainly but by no means exclusively, of books – many only partly read.)

I had joined Foster Wheeler in Reading in 1978 and in late 1998 they sent me to run their IT group in Houston, Texas for two years. I found birding easier there, like many Americans, its bigger and brasher than here (not peregrines nesting on roof tops but black vultures and you can spot a Whooping Crane from several miles across the flat terrain) and more colourful (Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Cardinal and Painted Bunting – even the American Robin is amazing). Mind you it can be difficult telling apart the 8 varieties of swallow, the 9 varieties of wren, the 10 sparrows, the 14 vireos, 16 different flycatcher and the 49 (I think) varieties of warbler! Maybe it is no easier than here after all.



Of course the English language can be a problem in the States. The nature reserve might only protect its denizens Monday to Friday so that there are more to shoot at over the weekend! When leaving one information centre to return to my apartment I was asked if I had visited the rookery, when I said "No, as I had seen plenty in England" they seemed offended and so I promised to return and look at it another time – good job I did, it was spectacular. It wasn't a rookery, it was a glorified heronry and of course not just Great Blue Heron (equivalent to our Grey Heron) but also Little Blue Heron and Green Heron, to say nothing of the Roseate Spoonbill, Great Egret, Snowy Egret and White Ibis all breeding in their dozens cheek by jowl in the trees on islands in a smallish lake the size of Colebrook Lake.

However, enough of the ramblings.....I look forward to helping to continue the great work done at MGL by the likes of Peter Scott, Ken Crick and Simon Weeks and the team of recorders, volunteers and other helpers and supporters not forgetting the excellent backup provided by Sue Dent and Stuart Croft from BVCP. I hope that you will be able to play a part over the next few years when we expect to help CEMEX to bring to life the next section of the reserve to the west.

### **Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust offers help to local Groups**



The Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust (BVCT) has been awarded £1715 from the OPAL Grants Scheme, supported by the Big Lottery Fund and administered by the Natural History Museum, to purchase surveying equipment for use within the Blackwater Valley.

This project will enable local conservation groups to access equipment to undertake wildlife surveys on their sites and to record and build up data of what lives in, on or visits their areas and with the aid of a GPS system accurately record where it is found. If groups feel that they do not have the knowledge or experience to conduct surveys themselves but still wish to have one done let BVCT know where and when you want assistance and every effort will be made to help.

Nets have been purchased for pond dipping, an exciting exercise for both grown ups and children that will indicate how healthy the water is in supporting life. A moth trap and generator will enable surveys of moths to be conducted and butterfly nets will make possible the safe capture and identification of these delicate creatures as well as bumblebees which need to be handled carefully if you wish to avoid being stung.

An assortment of tubes, pots, trays and the all important viewers and magnifying lens have been purchased together with identification charts and field guides and books to confirm the identity of species caught and trapped.

If you are involved in a wildlife group in the valley area and wish to make use of the equipment just contact the Trust on 01252 331353 for more details. This equipment will be available free of charge to affiliated members such as MGLG (annual membership charge £10) and to other groups at a nominal charge of £10 per loan.

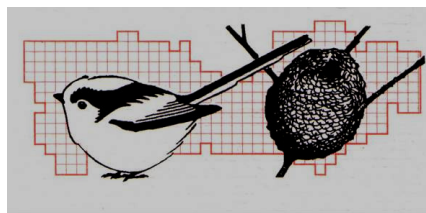
### **Birds, birds and more birds!**

It is quite clear that the majority of Group members are very interested in the bird life of the reserve. It is impossible to give you detailed information in a Newsletter like this but you will find a wealth of information in our annual report and on the website, including monthly updates of the highlights. But read on for a few interesting items.....



## Berkshire Bird Atlas

The Berkshire Bird Atlas continues and some fascinating results can be seen on the BOC website. In particular, based on data to the end of last summer - 2009, you can see the status of breeding birds and winter records by species in every tetrad. See <http://www.berksoc.org.uk/atlas/index.shtml>.



Another summer's surveying has now finished and the results will be updated soon. The project is finding it challenging to get the necessary breeding evidence across the whole of Berkshire. As an average each tetrad should have at least thirty proven species breeding based on past experience and some will be considerably more, while possibly town centre or downland locations will be lower. The Atlas team needs all the help it can get, even with garden birds where evidence is much easier for householders than recorders not living in the area who may have to peer over garden fences to see nestboxes or Song Thrushes carrying food on lawns!!

Have you told the Atlas team of birds you have seen nesting or feeding young? There are several ways to tell the team, the best is by signing on as a Bird Atlas surveyor at <http://www.bto.org/birdatlas/about.htm>, or by entering records with details of the evidence via <http://www.berksbirds.co.uk/submittngrecords.asp>. If you don't have internet access your records are still wanted - we can send you simple record forms to help us. Just contact the Editor.

The winter surveys continue from 1 November to 28 February and all sightings can be submitted as above. All the birds you see are possibly valuable records so just make a list when you go for a walk. Do some birding with a real purpose this winter, please contact the Editor to learn more.

## Berkshire Bird Bulletin

If you like your bird information regularly and in detail, you can subscribe to Berkshire Bird Bulletin, a monthly newsletter about all birding matters in the county. It's cheap and informative so if you like information on paper or by email call Brian Clews on 07071-202000 for details.

## Berkshire Ornithological Club News – Celebrity Lecture

Berkshire Ornithological Club will be holding one of its celebrity lectures introducing Mike Dilger, Presenter and Naturalist, on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at the Palmer Building, Reading University. The talk will be entitled 'The Trials and Tribulations of a Natural History Presenter' and offers a fascinating insight into the making of tv programmes and includes a number of film clips from his time with The One Show. Mike is well known as a regular contributor to the BBC, has written several books and leads tours abroad, so offering plenty of wildlife knowledge and experiences. More details will be announced later but an outstanding evening is in prospect.

BOC Members can attend free of charge but non members are also very welcome for just £5, refundable against joining on the night. More details will be shown on the BOC website [www.berksoc.org.uk](http://www.berksoc.org.uk) in due course but advance tickets will not be necessary – just come along on the night.



The BOC programme for 2010/2011 has just been announced including fourteen indoor meetings, twenty five walks and visits to birding habitats, including a field trip to Andalusia - so check it all out shortly at [www.berksoc.org.uk](http://www.berksoc.org.uk).



## MOOR GREEN BUTTERFLIES

*By John Westmacott*

When Sue Proudley intimated last year that she would be stepping down from her role as Butterfly Recorder, my wife, Rachel, and I volunteered to take on this responsibility and following approval at the AGM we are now carrying on the work previously undertaken by Sue.

Let us introduce ourselves. We are both in our seventieth year and live in Wokingham, have been members of the Group since 1998, and our interest in butterflies began about five years ago. For three years we recorded butterflies on a small private reserve in Finchampstead, and last year took part in transect surveying at BBOWT's Wildmoor Heath reserve in Crowthorne. We also stood in for Sue last year when she was away chasing rarer species.

There are about seventy species of butterfly which regularly occur in the British Isles; of these 26 species have been recorded at Moor Green since 2000. Amongst our favourites are the skippers, members of the *Hesperiidae* family, three of which are regular on site. These three are among what are known as the 'golden' skippers because of their orange-brown colour with varied blotches and markings. A characteristic of the 'golden' skippers is that when basking they hold their forewings at an angle to their hindwings ready to launch themselves into the air at a moment's notice.



The first to appear is the Large Skipper which flies from June to August. This butterfly lives in colonies of perhaps a few dozen adults in sheltered areas of grassland such as we have at Moor Green. Each individual male establishes a territory, perching on a leaf or grass-head, from where it flies out to challenge a passing insect or rival male, and when the danger is over returns to its perch, to resume its watch. The Large Skipper has dark blotches on its golden wings, and male and female are easily distinguished. You may see this butterfly almost anywhere as you walk round the reserve.



The two other 'golden' skippers are the Small Skipper and the Essex Skipper. These are somewhat plainer than the Large, and are much less abundant on the Reserve. They tend to stay close to their breeding patches of tall grass. They are quite difficult to tell apart for the casual observer, but if you get close enough to view them from the front, the underside of the antennae tips differ in colour; those of the Small are orange, and of the Essex, inky black. Though emerging a little later than the Large, they also fly from June into August.

To assist you in identifying these and the many other species, you will find displayed in Colebrook hide a 'Guide to the Butterflies of Britain', together with a chart showing approximate flight periods of those which have been recorded on site. Please don't forget to add your own sightings to the monthly sheets.



## **Bird Ringing at Moor Green**

*by Tim Ball, Reading and Basingstoke Ringing, [www.rbringing.co.uk](http://www.rbringing.co.uk)*

Some bird ringing has taken place at Moor Green in the past but as far as I'm aware this has been limited to gulls and tern chicks and a few birds breeding in the nest boxes. Since 2007 I have organised the ringing of the gull, tern and Little Ringed Plover chicks, although due to predation 2007 was the only moderately successful year and Gulls ringed then have been recovered in Wales and France

We are starting to develop Moor Green as a routine ringing site to study the bird populations as they develop and stabilise during the restoration programme. Things will obviously develop and change rapidly as the work gathers pace and habitats develop. Whilst bird watching will provide a lot of information on these populations, ringing means this can be increased. Reed beds in particular are very hard to monitor and census by visual checks as birds like Reed Warblers are generally colonial and counts of singing birds can give a very inaccurate impression of the population size. The quieter, scarce and less demonstrative birds and particularly winter visitors and migrants are also very hard to monitor solely by watching, the classic example is Aquatic Warbler – the vast majority of UK records are of birds caught during routine ringing.

By definition ringing projects are almost always long-term and if the project runs successfully we would expect to provide good quality monitoring data to MGLG for many years. We are starting with roughly monthly sessions and our first two mornings have resulted in nearly 80 birds of 19 species ringed – including 6 types of warbler, a Little Owl brood and 2 female Mandarin. The numbers we are ringing will hopefully increase substantially now young birds are fledging.



Ringling a nest of Little Owls, 2 June 2010 - © Tim Ball

The UK bird ringing scheme was 100 years old last year and currently about 800,000 birds are ringed each year. Data obtained from ringing is an essential part of the BTO's Integrated Population Monitoring programme which is fundamental to much of the national conservation effort as it aims to identify species of concern and where the problems are in their life cycles. Reading and Basingstoke Ringing are an independent group of ringers, we operate a number of sites in Berkshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire. Our web site has details of our projects including regular updates

on our Black-headed Gull colour ringing project. Hopefully the Moor Green Gull colony will be re-established and we'll be able to add Moor Green birds to this project.

We will be holding a ringing demonstration as part of Reserve Open Day on the morning of 5 September – so why not come along and see ringing first hand.

### **Editors Note**

We welcome articles based on member's visits and experiences at Moor Green Lakes. If you have a favourite species of any sort or recall a special moment why not tell us about it? Contact me, the Editor, I will be pleased to hear from you.



## **Volunteers wanted to become butterfly recorders**

Can you spare some time to help us look after the butterflies in the Blackwater Valley? Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership are currently looking for people who would like to develop their butterfly and moth identification skills by becoming recorders to survey selected sites in the Valley area. Training will be given by Butterfly Conservation at a special two-hour session on **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August** at their Bentley Station Meadow Reserve in Hampshire. For more details follow this link [http://www.blackwater-valley.org.uk/butterfly\\_recorders.htm](http://www.blackwater-valley.org.uk/butterfly_recorders.htm) or call 01252 331353.

## **Paying subscriptions by Online Banking**

*By Bruce Archer*

Last year 365 membership cheques and 5 cash payments were received and processed by the Moor Green Lakes Group. Having started to use email and the website to distribute and receive membership information, the next step towards a less paper based system is the introduction of online payments, for those that want to use it.

The MGLG bank details and payment information are explained on the Application and Renewal instructions available on the website (see [www.mglg.org.uk/Joining.htm](http://www.mglg.org.uk/Joining.htm)). To ensure that we can associate each online payment to a Member, we are requesting that the optional 18 character field that comes with the payment, contains your post code, house name or number, and an indication of single or family membership. Optional donations are welcome and can be included in the amount of the payment.

If you are renewing your membership, and your contact information has not changed, all you need to do is make the online payment. Your renewal information will be emailed to you; however it would be helpful if you don't all wait until the 1<sup>st</sup> September to make your payments!

## **Free trees to Community Groups**

The Woodland Trust has launched 'More Trees, More Good', a new campaign that aims to double the number of native woods and trees in the UK. Research gathered over recent years has highlighted the countless essential benefits to people, wildlife and the environment that come from planting trees. To maximise these, the UK needs to plant 20 million native trees per year - but at the moment we're planting just 6 million.

From farmers and communities to schools and companies, they need to rally those who can plant trees and inspire those who can contribute financially. Big organizations have already risen to the challenge including Sainsbury's, the National Association of Local Councils, the Ministry of Defence and the Women's Institute. The coalition government has also committed to a national tree planting campaign.

As part of 'More Trees, More Good', Woodland Trust are offering free trees to community groups - The offer: each autumn and spring there will be FREE community tree packs to give away. Packs are available in two sizes: 105 trees (suitable as a hedge or copse) and 420 trees (approx one acre) and there are four themes to choose from:  
Year-round colour - beautiful views in every season.  
Wood fuel - keep the log fires burning.  
Jams, jellies, chutneys and cordials - treats to eat.  
Wildlife - provide new homes for our native wildlife.  
To register your interest for a pack go to [woodlandtrust.org.uk/communitytrees](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk/communitytrees)



# MOOR GREEN LAKES NATURE RESERVE

## A Morning At

## Moor Green

# Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September

## 9 - 13.00 pm

**Meet the experts and join a guided walk to learn more  
about the wildlife of Moor Green Lakes**

<p><b>Meet the experts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See the bird ringing group in action</li><li>• Get close up to Moths &amp; Butterflies</li><li>• Dragons and damsels and creatures of the deep!</li></ul>	<p><b>Guided Walks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Birds (9.30 and 11)</li><li>• Mammals and reptiles (10 and 11.30)</li><li>• Find out more about Moor Green and plans for Manor Farm (10.30 and 12)</li></ul>
<p>Join a mini-beast hunt Colouring &amp; nature quizzes</p>	<p>Meet the creatures from the lake</p>

For more details contact Sue on 01252 331353

Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Ash Lock Cottage, Government Road, Aldershot, GU11 2PS

