

Keer to Kent



Journal of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust



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'High Brown Fritillary butterfly on
Common Spotted Orchid at Hawes
Water'

Photo by Rob Petley-Jones

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Keer to Kent

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Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Trust

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Editorial

Taking up the role of editor of Keer to Kent is a daunting prospect. So said Barry Ayre in 1992, before serving ten years in the role. So also said Terry Keefe in 2003, at the start of a seven year period of editing the journal.

Seventeen years on, it is no less daunting. Indeed the task is even more demanding. The previous long serving editors increased the quantity and quality of the contents, and the complexity of producing the copy as a print-ready disc.

However, although daunting, it is also a challenge. A challenge to keep up the standard, whilst constantly being alert to any means of improvement. I cannot do this without your help. Please comment upon any changes made, or suggest any you would like to see, either to myself or to the AONB office – see back page for contact details. And, in 2010, I am repeating the requests of 1992 and 2003 for 'editorial items, photographs (especially old ones), letters to the editor, country recipes, details of future events, snippets of information, ideas – all are welcome.'

For several years, as Arnside and Silverdale Village Correspondent for the Westmorland Gazette and Lancaster Guardian, my information gathering has been directed towards news items. Therefore, unlike my predecessors, I specifically asked for an Editorial

Advisory Committee, to give me the support of people having useful contacts, and to suggest and solicit items for inclusion in Keer to Kent. I am very pleased that Colin Patrick, current Landscape Trust chairman, Jill Smith, a previous chairman (amongst other roles), and Barry Ayre, previous editor, have agreed to serve on this. Liza Henderson, our Landscape Trust presence in the AONB office, is my eyes and ears on the ground, and I have already received much support from AONB staff. I am grateful to Ann Kitchen, who has helped to ensure that this copy reaches you produced to the standard you have come to expect, and is willing to continue to give technical advice. Terry Keefe, immediate past editor, has generously handed over ideas in progress, and well deserved thanks to Terry for his time at the helm are expressed under Events.

Having been a published author since my teenage years I am used to my work being scrutinised by others. That task now falls to you. Please do let me have your ideas and comments, and help me to continue to produce a publication that you can receive with pleasure.

I look forward to my time as your editor.

Sheila May

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Letters to the Editor

Lichen Recording

When I started lichen recording for the North Lancashire Naturalists, deciding where to record was a dilemma. As a member of the Landscape Trust I thought of Coldwell Parrock. I am in favour of land ownership as this affords the chance to practise the appropriate management, and I was pleased to find that the site was good for lichens.

Earlier this year I had to decide on a lichen venue for a North Lancashire Naturalists field trip and Coldwell Parrock proved ideal. Corticolous lichens in our area have still not recovered from the earlier air pollution but the open nature of the site has encouraged lichen growth. Apart from the trees the site has both limestone, and volcanic erratics, which have their distinct floras. The area of limestone pavement is worth further examination and there is a quantity of *Peltigera membranacea*. This genus more resembles a fungus than do many other lichens.

I am confident that the management practised at the site will also benefit the lichen community. If examining the lichens beware of the ants which are less docile than the cattle used to manage the vegetation.

Brian Carlyle

Grid References

Just a suggestion, but it would help if grid references accompanied the articles. For example in the Autumn/Winter issue, Coldwell Parrock and Teddy Heights are mentioned on page 17. Neither are on the OS map and we have no idea where either are. There are many examples like this in every issue. I am sure it will be helpful to others.

Danny Calderbank

On the face of it this seems to be a useful suggestion, thank you for it. What do other readers think about the idea? Please let me know by letter to the editor for publication, or as a separate comment. Email preferably, or telephone the office. In the meantime Danny, here are the grid references for Coldwell Parrock - SD479778 and Teddy Heights - SD474791 - Ed.

An appeal for volunteers from the Chairman

The Landscape Trust is approaching a crisis, and urgently needs volunteers to act as officers, committee members, and general assistants. In June 2007 we didn't have this problem: we had three new officers, an editor, and full main, and events committees. The future for the Landscape Trust seemed assured. Problems first appeared when the editor of Keer to Kent announced that, after more than 6 years as editor, he needed to stand down to pursue other activities. After a long and fraught search Sheila May stepped into the gap. We were very fortunate to obtain the services of someone as experienced and committed as Sheila. However further problems developed in November 2009; our secretary felt it necessary to resign for health reasons, and the chairman of the events committee announced he wished to resign for family reasons. We now have an immediate need for a secretary, an events committee chairman, and are short of committee members and general volunteers. Things can only get worse as I will cease to be chairman in June 2010, and the treasurer stands down in 2011. Unless we can recruit more members to serve as officers, on the main and events committees, and as general volunteers, we run the risk that the Trust as we know it will gradually peter out for lack of support. This is an appeal to all members of the Landscape Trust; please consider whether you could have an interest in, and be willing to serve in, one of these capacities.

Colin Patrick

Arnside Viaduct

It has always been the tradition in Arnside to walk across the viaduct on Christmas Day (though absolutely illegal to do so).

The tradition reminds me of a true story told to me by the late Mr Eric Roscoe who lived on Redhills Road. His father was the Methodist minister in Arnside 1918-1922, during which time the Peace window was installed in the Methodist Church.

Part of his duties was to take Sunday Evening Service in Grange. In the summer months he would walk across the viaduct, and wave a large white handkerchief when he reached the far side so that his family in their promenade home in Arnside could see that he was safely across, before continuing alongside the railway track to Grange in time for the service.

The trains did not run on Sunday evenings, and approaching darkness when the service was over made it dangerous to return on foot. How was this problem to be solved?

The Furness railway company was approached and they came up with the perfect solution. They would arrange for the Royal Mail train to make a special stop at Grange station to pick up the Rev Norris Roscoe, and then make a further special stop at Arnside for him to complete the journey home on foot. How times have changed! (P.S. The viaduct had a thick covering of snow this year which made the crossing a very special one!).

Barry Ayre

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Landscape Trust Events

Many Thanks Terry

As regular readers will know, Terry Keefe has resigned as Keer to Kent editor. The Chairman of the Landscape Trust has sent the following appreciation:

Terry took over the editorship of Keer to Kent from Barry Ayre in the autumn of 2002. Since then he has been responsible for the production of 21 issues, over a period of 7 years. Under Barry's editorship Keer to Kent had grown to the well-produced and highly respected magazine with much of the current format with which we are now familiar. It could have been thought that Terry's job would be restricted to "keeping the ship on course". In fact he has continued to improve Keer to Kent, adding extra colour pages, and himself composing the whole magazine in computer compatible form ready to go the printers.

Terry has been a quiet, self-sufficient and modest editor, producing the magazine with limited assistance, no fuss and always giving the impression that copy came to hand easily and in final form. Such an impression is misleading, and he had to work hard for some, perhaps many, articles. In fact the appearance of copy was often not a matter of good luck but a combination of imagination, doggedness, persuasiveness and literary skill. I know this from personal experience, as these skills were applied to me. I was asked to write an article about The Trough. I agreed, but went no further until, some time later, Terry suggested we went out in the field to examine The Trough; if I told him about its origin etc he would record what I said. We did, and he then transcribed our conversations into an article. This was emailed to me for comment and any corrections

(little or none, as far as I can remember). The thing that amazed me was that, although I had "written" the article, it was expressed in a much more reader-friendly manner than I could have achieved, and been much easier to produce. Terry's involvement was beneficial to all.

Terry has now decided that he wishes to pass on the editorship to give himself time to pursue other interests; his current project is a study of the history of detective novels. The surprising thing is that he has ever had time to edit Keer to Kent as he has had many other commitments during his period as editor. He has been a very active member of Arnside Parish Council, deeply involved in the production of the Parish Plan, a strong supporter of Arnside Educational Institute, has run evening classes on literature and philosophy, and carried on his own writing. It would be sad to say farewell to someone who has contributed so much to the Landscape Trust, but fortunately we do not need to do this as Terry will continue as a member of the main committee. He has already passed on the editorial role to Sheila May, has given her considerable assistance in coming to grips with the editorial process, and will still be available to assist with inevitable glitches for some time to come. In thanking Terry for all he has contributed to the life and success of the Trust we must not forget the contributions from members of the AONB Unit, and the volunteers who stuff and deliver magazines. Nevertheless the credit must go to Terry, supported by his wife Sheila, whose forbearance has made it possible for him to produce 21 issues of Keer to Kent on time, to an exceptionally high standard, and full of interesting and stimulating articles. On

behalf of all members of the Landscape Trust - many thanks Terry.

Colin Patrick

Landscape Trust meeting

The last Landscape Trust meeting of 2009 was held at Yealand Village Hall and, following recent practice, was a Jacob's Join followed by a lecture. For the first hour 45 members enjoyed a range of savoury and sweet items provided by themselves, washed down with wine, coffee or tea. Mixing and discussion was freer, more productive than in the past two years, and much enjoyed by all.

Following the meal, the lecture was given by Rod Ireland on the topic of "Westmorland south of the Kent". Since retiring to Silverdale several years ago Rod has been caught by the "old-postcard bug", and become fascinated by the changes in the local scene which they record. In a sequence of pictures of old maps and cards he illustrated the changes, geographically from north to south in the area of Westmorland west of the A6, and over the period from late 19th century to mid 20th century, which have occurred. Two changes were pronounced; the increase in built-up area in the main settlements, and the tremendous increase in tree cover. This latter has meant that many initially large and obtrusive buildings, and groups of buildings, are now hidden, as are the outlines and details of our landscape.

The chairman thanked the speaker and complimented him on the quality of his presentation. Later discussion with members of the audience confirmed that this view was held by all present.

Colin Patrick



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AONB Apple Day

by **Barbara Henneberry**

The Arnside and Silverdale AONB is designated as one of England's finest landscapes. Integral to that landscape are the orchards, which not only add value to the scenery with their displays of apple and damson blossom in spring, but also contribute enormously to the rich biodiversity of the area which we all enjoy. Traditional orchards are extremely valuable for wildlife. Woodpeckers and other birds like starlings and owls nest in tree holes, and windfall apples are an important food source for birds in autumn and winter – thrushes in particular. Decaying wood provides refuges for invertebrates and blossom is a nectar source for bees, butterflies and moths. Food is abundant for bats and small mammals.

To celebrate the value of our orchards and their produce, the AONB Unit organised an Apple Day last October, very kindly hosted by Peter Goulder and Sheila Porter at their 250 year old orchard in Arnside, which boasts over 60 different varieties of fruit.



Thanks in part to concerns about climate change, more people are stopping to consider the impact that

everyday goods, including food, have on the environment. So this was an opportunity to learn, not only about orchards, but also about the range of local produce connected to them.

There were opportunities to taste and buy the many unusual varieties of apple, many of which are unfortunately no longer to be found on our supermarket shelves. Then there were apple pancakes and soups to eat, jams and preserves to sample, freshly pressed apple juice and local cider to taste and apple cakes to buy to take home.

Sue Swatridge and Roy Whiting demonstrated the art of working with



apple wood to produce a range of goods from spoons to gates while Angie Mitchell, local potter, made ceramic birds and apples. The Arnside Art Group joined in by exhibiting their work of orchard and fruit paintings and a local artist, Janette Phillips, provided activities for the children. Back by popular demand after last year's Greenwood Fair were the storyteller, Honor Giles, who regaled visitors with her fruit-themed stories, and Inspector Clueless who solved the mysteries of the orchard with the help of our young visitors.



Help and advice about orchards and fruit varieties were on hand from the South Lakeland Orchard Group and RSPB attended to promote the value of orchards for birdlife. Hincaster Honey demonstrated the art of beekeeping. Traditionally associated with orchards, the honey bee is one of the most important pollinators known to man. Einstein has been cited as saying "If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth, then man would have only four years of life left". A sobering thought!

In spite of the early rain and 70mph winds which passed through, there was plenty for the 450 visitors to enjoy at the 2009 Apple Day. Hopefully some will have been inspired to plant a new fruit tree or orchard, to make their own apple juice, or to support the local economy by buying local produce.

For more information on apple varieties and caring for orchard trees, visit South Lakeland Orchard Group's website at www.slorchards.co.uk

Barbara Henneberry is a member of the AONB Office Staff

Photographs by Ian Henderson

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Chasing Butterflies

(or Walking a Transect)

by Martin Elsworth

Near to where I lived in Westhoughton for many years there was a patch of spare land which had been designated for a new school when the estate was first planned. Nothing came of that and the land was largely left to its own devices. There were a couple of ponds, a few thickets, brambles and a stream in a little valley down one side. People used it for walking their dogs.

I think I only ever used it to walk to the doctor's surgery a little way beyond; until I got married and retired from work that is. Then Jenny and I discovered that walking round the patch made a pleasant way to stretch our legs. It wasn't long before we realised that butterflies liked this area too, so we started making a list of what we saw, and when. At the end of the season we sent our records to Laura Sivell, the butterfly Recorder for Lancashire, and didn't really think much more about it.

Some years later we moved to Warton and became involved in local conservation work. Then Tony Riden asked us if we'd like to take over responsibility for a local butterfly transect – we had no idea what that involved, a bit of quick research was called for.

A butterfly transect turned out to be very similar to what we had been doing when we walked round that patch in Westhoughton, but perhaps rather more regularly. Basically you walk at a steady pace around a predefined route and count the species of butterflies that you see within a 5 metre box around you, and you do this on a weekly basis from 1st April until 30th September. In an ideal world you do it on "the best day of the week", when the sun is shining, the temperature is high and there's not much wind - and the butterflies are flying in abundance. Dream on!

Terms and conditions apply, as they say in the adverts, and things are a bit more constrained than described above, but first I should attempt to explain the purpose of a transect. Butterfly transects are a way that a person with relatively little experience can monitor the number and variety of butterflies present at a site from year to year. There are two main reasons for wanting to do this;

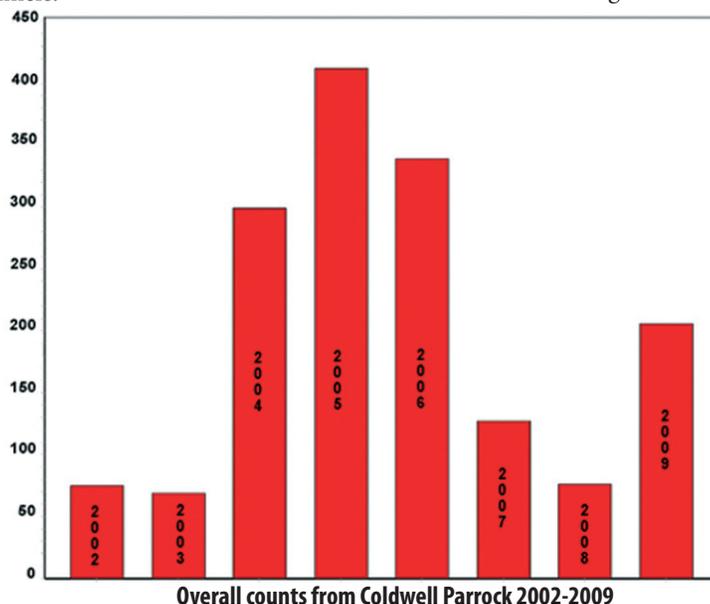
first the site may be home to a special species, and the health of the population needs to be monitored, and second the health of the butterfly population generally is a good indicator of the success or otherwise of any conservation work being carried out at the site. Data from long standing transects, say more than 10 years continuous data, is also proving valuable in assessing the effects of climate change.

The Arnside/Silverdale AONB is famous for its butterflies and there are a lot of people interested in monitoring the health of these populations, so we have a lot of transects that need walking. The AONB office co-ordinates eight of these but many other conservation organizations run their own; Lancashire Wildlife Trust, English Nature, The National Trust, the Forestry Commission and the RSPB are all involved.

The Landscape Trust's two properties, Coldwell Parrock and Teddy Heights, are both monitored in this way and although they don't yet host any of the exotic varieties that can be seen on Warton Crag, Gait Barrows or Arnside Knott the information gathered is helpful in monitoring the progress of management on these sites. Last year started well but by July the weather had deteriorated and the initial promise of a bumper year was not fulfilled. The bar chart shows the overall counts from Coldwell Parrock for 2002-2009, which illustrates the impact of the recent poor summers.

Gait Barrows had a mixed year with High Brown and Dark Green Fritillary numbers well up but Pearl Bordered and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary numbers both down. Most worrying of all though was the very poor showing of the Duke of Burgundy – and this despite extensive habitat management to try and improve life for these insects. Although the Duke of Burgundy is managing to hang on in a few sites around Morecambe Bay concern is growing that the populations are too isolated and are being weakened by a lack of genetic variation. I understand that a project to move stock between sites may be started this year.

There are three transects walked on Warton Crag and throughout the season it was very curious to note the differences in weekly counts for the various species; one area would report high numbers whilst the others were seeing very few. Variations in altitude and exposure must have something to do with this but don't seem to be able to account for all the differences. I'm sure the statisticians will say that "luck" does not come into it! On the Local Nature Reserve transect the overall count was the highest since 1992 but, to some extent, this must have been influenced by the extraordinary invasion of Painted Lady butterflies from North Africa this year – the count for this species being three times the previous highest in this century. The Meadow Brown and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary also recorded their highest counts since



Overall counts from Coldwell Parrock 2002-2009



Duke of Burgundy butterfly - female

1992 and the Pearl Bordered Fritillary was well up on the previous three years. The Brimstone recorded the highest count ever!

Arnside Knott seems to have had a reasonable year with Scotch Argus doing particularly well, but Dark Green Fritillary numbers were down, and no Pearl Bordered Fritillaries were recorded at all.

I can't report here on all the many transects in the area but anyone interested to see details of these can find them and their data on the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme's web site at <http://www.ukbms.org/map.htm>

Although the transect method was designed primarily to record butterflies it can also include day flying moths – there is, after all, very little difference between butterflies and moths apart from the nocturnal habits of some. There are only about 60 species of butterfly in Britain compared with over 100 larger (macro) day flying moths. Then there are the small (micro) day flying moths whose numbers run to many hundreds. Some are quite

spectacular like the *Pyrausta purpuralis* which was photographed at Teddy Heights but which is also seen in other parts of the AONB flying from May to June and July to August. Sadly the micro moths are often overlooked and lack common English names, but getting to know them can be very rewarding.

We are always looking for people to help with walking transects, just being able to cover the odd week or two while someone goes on holiday can make an enormous difference to the quality of the year's records; it is also a good way of finding out if you'd like to take on a more regular commitment!

There are a couple of transects in the wider Morecambe Bay area that need new walkers and within the AONB we are looking for someone to walk the Beetham Fell transect for one year as the regular walker won't be around much in 2010. If you'd like to help or would just like to know more you may phone me on 01524 732533 or email me, Martin Elsworth, at chairman@lancashire-butterflies.org.uk.

Photographs by Martin Elsworth



Pyrausta purpuralis

Harry Bratherton of Silverdale

As this edition was being assembled we were sad to learn of the death of Harry Bratherton on December 23 at the age of 92.

He was an ardent member of the Lakeland Trust and for ten years was proof reader for Barry Ayre when he edited Keer to Kent. He is survived by his wife Dorothy.

Peter H Woods

Many readers of Keer to Kent will remember Peter, beloved husband of Helen and father of Graeme and Rebecca, who collapsed and died on a hillside whilst birdwatching, near his home in Strachur, Argyll on 29th October.

I knew him for many years when he lived close to Farleton Knott near Burton.

In the 10 years I edited Keer to Kent he was a strong supporter of the Landscape Trust and a fount of knowledge on the River Keer when I needed information for articles in the journal.

He did in fact publish a book entitled "Childhood memories - the wanderings of a Country Boy during the 1930's and 40's," mainly about the lovely River Keer which rises in the fells beyond Hutton Roof, meandering down through the Keer valley, its mid-section containing beautiful water meadows and sandy 'S' bends before finally emptying into Morecambe Bay at Carnforth.

Peter's love of nature was unsurpassed, whether it be the trout and salmon in the Keer, the birds (of which he could identify scores), or the flora on the banks of the Keer.

He will be sadly missed by his many friends both in the AONB and in Strachur.

Barry Ayre



Peter with one of the young buzzards May 1964

Arnside Horticultural Society

still growing after 75 years

by Melville Thompson

Our Society was founded in 1934 as The Arnside Flower Show Association. The primary objective was to stage a Flower Show worthy of a close-knit, independent community far enough from the county towns to have a vigorous life of its own.

The first show was held in a marquee on 'Big King' field, now the War Memorial Playing Field. This was well documented and, clearly, the initial concept was much wider than a simple flower show. Fringe activities were varied and enthusiastically received. These included a gymnastic display under the direction of Mr. H. Cliffe with music provided by Arnside Band led by the conductor Mr. T. Gardner. There was also Maypole dancing, in which the young dancers trained by Mrs. Coles "made a delightful picture when stray shafts of sunlight, piercing a slate-grey sky, lighted up the children's faces" according to The North-Western Daily Mail of 30th July, 1934.

The infant show offered 60 classes for flowers, fruit and vegetables, as well as covering 'produce', handicrafts and children's classes, much as today. The diversity of the fruit classes and the popularity of egg classes (white and coloured), reveal a different way of life when we were much more self sufficient than today.

The first Show was opened with

considerable aplomb by Lady Bromley-Wilson of Dallam Tower. In spite of the wide choice of classes she "expressed the hope that it would be possible at next year's show, for she was sure they would have one, to have a class for budgerigars or love-birds".

Entries were drawn from a wide area, and some from Levens, Newby Bridge, Preston Patrick, Silverdale and Stainton were among the principal prize-winners. Arnside residents were protected from the challenging competition of professional gardeners by the inclusion of 'Local Classes'.

The 1935 show was blessed by much better weather than the downpour which had failed to extinguish the first event. This allowed children's sports to feature for the first time. The number of horticultural entries doubled and, with due respect for her ladyship's suggestion the previous year, cage-bird classes were introduced. The innovation was justified by attracting 94 entries for love-birds, with Lady Bromley-Wilson winning 8 prizes for hers. Mrs. Coles introduced displays of 'rhythmic dancing'.

On this occasion, a vote of thanks to the committee was voiced by Dr. J.F. Dow, Chairman of the Parish Council, who lived at Inglemere, then a private residence. His young gardener, George Fallows, participated in the Fell Race to the top of the Knott and back. George was destined, some fifty years later, to



1939 Platform Party, left to right, Mr Timbrell, Mr G B Wilson, Mrs G Matchett, Miss Silcox and Mr Horner.

become a major exhibitor and senior committee member of the society.

The following year was largely unrecorded for some reason but the 1937 show, opened by Lady Fell of Ulverston, related to a former Arnside vicar, was even more successful. The Westmorland Gazette reported that "the brilliant sunshine which prevailed throughout the whole of Saturday more than realised the hopes of the organisers, and large crowds passed through the gates to make this the most successful effort of the association. A summer and holiday atmosphere prevailed throughout, and was improved by the summer dresses of the ladies and sports attire of the men".

Mrs Gwen Matchett, who came as a young bride to Arnside, where her husband, Alec, was the GP, was asked to open the 1939 Show. This was the start of a long and fruitful link to the society – Dr. Alec became President and Gwen, the Show Secretary. A trophy they donated for success in Floral Art is still a highly valued award.

There were more important concerns for the next five years but the society came back to life after the war.

After concentrating on Digging for Victory during the war years, the society's activities were resumed with enthusiasm. In those days, the shows tended to be held later in the year to cater for the aspirations of



1934 Lady Bromley-Wilson opened the first Arnside Flower Show Also shown from 2nd left J Wilson, Miss A Silcox, Mr C B Wilson and Kathleen, Rev C Pickering. Can anyone name other people?

chrysanthemum lovers and, particularly, fruit growers. There must have been many more orchards and garden fruit trees to support the large entries for apples and pears. In 1953 there were fourteen distinct fruit classes, nowadays reduced to four. There were separate classes even for different varieties such as the old standbys like Bramley, Bridget, Newton Wonder, Lord Derby and Cox's Orange. It is interesting to note that one of the prominent prize-winners was R. Lemon whose orchard off Briery Bank is still the base for Arnside Apple Day over fifty years later, and may well include some of his original trees.

During this period, the range of interests covered was broadened to include more handicrafts and cookery classes. This trend is illustrated in a photograph taken at the prize giving following the 1953 show, where Mrs Enid Lindsay is proudly displaying a loaf which won a Diploma awarded by Woman's Own as an "Outstanding Exhibit". Her handicraft skills were to be recognised 13 years later when her 'Gardening Apron' was awarded a Diploma of the same status sponsored by the same magazine. The actual apron is still treasured by her daughter who kindly loaned it for display at our 70th anniversary in 1999.

Another aspect of the fifties and sixties was the introduction of evening talks, which continued to be part of our winter programme. Although there have been many superb local speakers such as Reggie Kay, Malcolm Hutcheson, Chris Crowder and Eddie



Following the 2002 Spring Show a prize-giving was held at Arnside National School. Best 'bulb gardeners', left to right, back row, Anna Sellars, Amy Kerr, Jade Flynn, front row, Emma Gleave, Hannah Smith, John Elliott, India Richardson.

Simpson, there can be even more interest in a national figure. We have now established a sequence of annual lectures by well known personalities such as Roy Lancaster. He delighted us with his recollection of coming as a boy, by train from Bolton at weekends, to Arnside, his idea of the Promised Land for anyone with an interest in the countryside.

Our development of more children's classes led to strengthening links with Arnside National School. In the sixties, Mr Bryan favoured Handwriting as the best competitive medium but recently we have had milk bottle dolls, exotic

masks, and even flying piggy money-boxes. More relevant to our main activities is an annual bulb competition when every child in the school is offered bulbs complete with compost and pot to compete at the Spring Show.

Since the eighties, between the two shows, we have the pleasure of Garden Visits, ideally on sunny Saturday afternoons or balmy summer evenings, though the reality can be quite different. We tend not to travel far and some of the more rewarding visits have been to gardens within the AONB. Reggie Kay's garden at Waithman Nursery in Silverdale and Betty Kershaw's garden next door were both a delight. More recently, we have enjoyed Anne Robinson's Beetham garden with really interesting plantings as well as Mrs. Reckitt's charming personalised hideaway at Haverbrack.

The continuing health of the society is mainly due to the long-standing support of not just the committee, but a legion of helpers who give their time freely to collect subscriptions, set out and clear up all the paraphernalia needed for show days, assist the judges and so on, which helps our society to remain a significant link in the activity network that holds our community together

Based in an AONB, we hope that our activities in the contrived field of horticulture complement those of the guardians of our natural environment and add to the beauties of this lovely area.

Photographs - AHS Archives



1953 Annual Show. Presentation of prizes, left to right, Mr John Coope, vice chairman, Mr James Lindsay, Headmaster Arnside National School, Rev Harold Capsey, chairman, Miss Lilian Braithwaite (president and trophy donor), Miss Mary Steel, Mr Walter Chorley (Lilian Braithwaite Trophy winner), Mr Ken Jolleys, Mrs Enid Lindsay (with prize-winning loaf), Mr William Elliott, treasurer, Mrs Annie Green, secretary.

Local Wildlife Management

by Roger Cartwright



Wild fallow doe at large in the woods between Beetham Fell and Hale Moss

Deer parks are possibly one of the first methods of wildlife management, and Nature Reserves such as Leighton Moss and its associated lagoons and wetland restoration projects are a good example of the latest. The RSPB looks after the full range of wildlife on its reserves and was one of the first conservation organisations to take a world view of its role and to try and influence management over a wider area.

Modern nature reserves are in their infancy, whereas deer parks have endured through the centuries. They evolved from hunting to provide a more controlled and protected environment for the deer. There is evidence of enclosures for deer associated with Roman villas. The deer were usually fallow deer which originated from wild populations in the Middle East. They were the preferred species for parks as they were easier to keep in captivity and to hunt than the wide ranging large and strong native red deer.

Hunting was the passion of Medieval England; the need to hunt provided an irresistible challenge and excitement for a people that still lived partly as hunter-gatherers.

Royal Forests, such as the Forest of Bowland in Lancashire, and Inglewood in Cumbria, were initially protected areas, but licences to produce revenue for the Crown (taxation) undermined this protective role.

In the late medieval period fallow deer were reintroduced and enclosed in deer parks, which were an important part of the economy. Oliver Rackham, in "History of the Countryside", suggests that in England around 1300, there may have been 3,300 deer parks. There are a few of these early deer parks still surviving. Besides Rydal in Cumbria, the ones I am most familiar with are Chillingham in Northumberland and Bradgate Park in Leicestershire.

They are important because they have not been disturbed by modern agriculture and provide valuable evidence of early landscapes, having generally been less affected by changing fashions than gardens. Levens Hall is a good local example and Bradgate Park is still a perfect example of a pre-enclosure open Medieval Leicestershire landscape.

Bradgate Park is enclosed around a hilltop viewpoint (St. John's Hill) that enabled a good vantage for spying the deer and watching the hunt. Seen from the summit of this hill, the modern urban countryside is only just visible "beyond the pale" in the misty distance.

Scattered around the country and outside deer parks there are many such lookouts named Hunting Hill. In most places this use has been forgotten and only the name remains. We have a Hunting Hill at Carnforth beside the railway and M6 motorway. The construction of both, combined with urbanisation, effectively put an end to hunting in this vicinity long before the recent Hunting Act.



Black fallow bucks in summer coats and velvet antlers in Levens Park

Emparking protected the deer from poachers and predators, allowed controlled breeding and relatively easy hunting to provide fresh venison throughout the hungry days of winter. Parks were also valued for their natural beauty.

In the 18th century many deer parks evolved into the fashionable designed parks of the 'landscape movement', this created 'near natural looking' picturesque scenery to enhance a

gentleman's country house and status in the community.

Dallam Park and Leighton Hall are good examples of this and a 'menil' variety of fallow deer are still kept in the park at Dallam. At Leighton there is no record of park deer and a herd of red and the ubiquitous roe roam freely over the whole estate. There had been no recent record of roe in this area until the 1960s.



Fallow bucks beside the Bela river in Dallam Park

Since Victorian times and the evolution of the fashion for shooting driven game, wildlife management has concentrated on shooting reared pheasants, and much of the Arnside and Silverdale landscape is still influenced by this preoccupation.

Wildlife legislation parallels the history of both hunting and poaching - G. M. Trevelyan in his "English Social History" said: "There was no luxury about the field sports of those days. Hard exercise and Spartan habits were the condition of all pursuit of game. This devotion took the leaders of the English world out of doors, and helped to inspire the class that then set the mode in everything from poetry to pugilism, with an intimate knowledge of woodland, hedgerow and moor, and a strong preference for country over town life which is seldom found in the leaders of fashion in any age or land."

Indirectly, therefore, the passion for shooting did much for what was best in our civilization. But it was unfortunately connected with the poaching war and all manner of unneighbourliness. The legislation affecting 'game' was exclusive and selfish, not only towards the poor but

towards everyone except an aristocratic few. By a new law of 1816, the starving cottager who went out to take a hare or rabbit for the family could be transported for seven years if caught with his nets upon him at night. Less sympathy need be felt for the bands of armed ruffians from the towns who invaded the preserves and fought pitched battles, twenty a side, with shotguns at close range, against the gentlemen and gamekeepers who came out against them”.

There was another dark side to game keeping. In a heavily populated and settled country like England, large game had long gone and for centuries animals and birds that competed with man had been treated as pests and gradually exterminated. Some of the smaller predators and birds of prey had survived but they were now added to the list and classed as vermin, and soon became the main exhibits on the gamekeeper's gibbet. Thus many became locally extinct.

For the last two centuries the gamekeeper, who to do his job properly had to be a field naturalist, has been as much part of village life as the Squire, the vicar and schoolteacher. Many (together with hunters) were the fore runners of the conservation movement and gradually a generally more knowledgeable and tolerant approach to predators has developed. They have been joined by and, in this small coastal area, now have to work alongside, modern wildlife managers, like the Nature Reserve Wardens and Countryside Rangers (who report regularly in “Keer to Kent”). With the complex range of interests and urban pressures, wildlife management in this situation is a severe challenge.

In recent years pheasant rearing has tended to follow poultry farming and become increasingly intensive, although the young pheasants are still released into the woods for a short period of real freedom. More natural forms of hunting, like ferreting for rabbits, rough shooting and wildfowling, have continued relatively unchanged alongside the driven shoots (or battues). From about the middle of the 20th century wildlife management for conservation, dominated by the popular interest in birds (the RSPB and Wildlife Trusts) has joined game shooting in the management of extensive tracts of countryside.

Although the resulting protected landscapes and the scientific basis for management are similar there is an

inevitable philosophical difference, which sadly is sometimes reinforced by prejudice, misunderstanding and ignorance on both sides. Both forms of management are facing similar problems from:

- urbanisation and intensive land management, destroying habitat
- and the disruption of proper management through poaching and wildlife crime.

The real problem remains the “armed ruffians” who come out from the towns to both rob and poach. Surreptitious, mainly nocturnal, poaching of deer has been a major problem in this area in recent years.

It may seem hypocritical of land managers to try and prevent poaching when they are going to kill some of the animals as part of a planned culling programme. The difference is that illegal killing is indiscriminate, totally disregards animal welfare considerations and usually involves unacceptable cruelty. It can completely upset years of careful management to maintain a balance of deer numbers and measures to protect significant and increasingly rare animals and birds.

It would help if you could report any suspicious activity involving deer or other game to your local gamekeeper, and serious threats to other protected wildlife such as badgers, bats or birds of prey to a nature reserve warden - see later War against Wildlife Crime.

Roger Cartwright is chairman of the Arnside and Burton Deer Management Group, which co-ordinates deer management and includes the main landowners and farmers who lawfully cull the deer with the help of trained and experienced deerstalkers.

Deer photographs - Geoff Taylor

Do you have a Favourite Photograph?



Safe in an Arnside garden

photograph - Sheila May

This is one of my favourite photographs because I love to see deer in our garden. I know that many keen gardeners will not agree, because of the damage deer cause, but living part way up Arnside Knott, the rocky nature of our land means that gardening for pleasure is not an easy option.

If you would like to see your favourite photograph printed in Keer to Kent, please send it to me. I might be able to include it to supplement an article, or pop it into a spare space. However, I cannot guarantee to include it, it might be some time before I can do so, and there are conditions:

1. Your photograph must have an AONB subject, landscape, wildlife, activity etc.
2. The photograph must be sent to me by email, as a high quality jpeg.
3. You need to state your permission for it to be printed in Keer to Kent.

I cannot offer a financial reward or prize, but hope that some of you will be interested enough to send your favourite photograph to your journal. Ed.



A Thomas Bewick print of Chillingham Medieval Deer Park

Wells of Silverdale

A circular walk around the wells of Silverdale

The wells and springs of Silverdale once supplied water for all the villagers and their livestock. They are no longer used, the water in the wells is impure and unsuitable for drinking or bathing, but they are reminders of a past way of life.

This easy walk, suitable for all ages, visits some of these wells and explores a fascinating aspect of Silverdale's history. The walk is about 4 miles long, allow 2–3 hours. It may be shortened at several points by taking other footpaths and minor roads back to the village.

Woodwell

The walk starts from Woodwell, at the bottom of a track marked Woodwell Lane off Lindeth Road. Cars may be parked at the bottom of the track.

Here at Woodwell water drips from the roof of a small recess in the base of the cliff and is collected in a small trough from which it flows into a large basin originally used for watering cattle. Like most of Silverdale's wells this is really a spring, and now is a good opportunity to consider the geology of the Silverdale area and the origin of its springs.

Arnside/Silverdale peninsula is made up of Carboniferous Limestone which is exposed in the cliffs above the well. This rock was formed from the accumulation of skeletons of marine creatures in the warm shallow seas that covered the area about 300 million years ago. Any rain or surface water that falls or runs onto the limestone flows down through cracks and fissures in the rock until it reaches an impermeable layer through which water cannot flow. Above this layer the rock is saturated and the water builds up to a level known as the water table. Where there are several layers of impermeable material such as clay within the rock, the rock above each of these becomes saturated leading to the development of a series of perched water tables. The water in each of these perched water tables moves sideways through the rock and emerges as springs where the clay layers outcrop. Here at Woodwell the layer of clay is just visible near the base of the rock face.

There is no surface water in the form of streams or rivers across the limestone so the local people depended on springs such as this for their water supply. The flow of water here fluctuates widely but

rarely stops flowing altogether and the people of Silverdale relied on Woodwell for many years to provide water for themselves and their livestock.

From Woodwell take the gentle route around to the right, signposted Heald Brow, which leads you along a path on the edge of the woodland for 200 metres then up the slope to the left. At the top of the slope turn left and follow the path along the top of the cliff. From here walk through the wood and the fields through several stiles, and take the footpath along the wall out onto Stankelt Road. Turn right, then take the second lane on the left, The Green. Bear right at the finger post, then left at the T-junction at Bottoms Lane. Take the next track on the right signposted to Burton Well and Lambert's Meadow.

Burton Well

Burton Well, which probably arises in the same way as Woodwell, supplied water to the people of Silverdale Green for many years. Eventually the roofs of the houses were fitted with gutters and downspouts and the rainwater was collected and stored in tanks. Many houses were later built with tanks in the cellars from which water was pumped by hand into the kitchen. By then the wells were used only to water stock and in times of drought when supplies were delivered to the houses in water carts.

From Burton Well follow the footpath through the kissing gate into Lambert's Meadow and across the wooden bridge.

This wet meadow lies in a peaty hollow between wooded outcrops of limestone and is owned by the National Trust.

Cross the meadow and go through the cleft wood gate into the wood. Climb the steps and hill and then take the small track to the left to Bank Well.

Bank Well

This saucer shaped depression is probably lined with loess, similar to that underlying Lambert's Meadow. Water flowing from Bank Well has formed a pond here, now restored to its former glory and rich with wildlife.

Walk round Bank Well to the road (The Row), turn right, then left onto

the track which runs between the houses and the golf course and is signposted to Dogslack Well. The well is 200 metres along the track and has been restored, complete with pump.

Dogslack Well

Here a hole has been dug out to about 3 metres to reach a perched water table and forms Silverdale's only true well. This supplied water to The Row cottages, finally going out of use in 1938 when the aqueduct from Haweswater in the Lake District to Manchester was constructed and water was piped from this supply to the village.

Carry on along the track, cross a stile on the left and continue up to the left to The Row via a gate and to the side of a garden. Turn right and follow the road to Park Road. Cross the road and walk through the National Trust car park into Eaves Wood.

This woodland is growing on the limestone that underlies much of the Silverdale area. It is owned by the National Trust and many rare and uncommon plants may be found here.

Turn left where the path meets a broad track known as Inman's Road and walk towards The Woodlands Hotel. Keep to the lower track ignoring several diversions to the right and left.

The concrete tanks behind The Woodlands were used to store water piped from perched springs further up the hill and supplied the house before the mains supply was available.

Continue along the track to a tarmac road at Elmslack. Elmslack Well is marked on the map at this point.

Elmslack Well

The litter bin probably sits on the site of the old well.

From here take the footpath signposted to Cove Road. Continue straight on to Cove Road and take the first left, a lane leading to the sea at The Cove.

Cove Well

Cove Well is shown on maps of the area just beyond the gate but there is no trace of a well there now. If, however, you follow the base of the cliff round to the left a small depression marks the spot of another spring which rises here

after heavy rain. Although the jet of water sometimes reaches a height of 1 metre, at other times the well dries up and is difficult to find. The wells that have been visited earlier in the walk have all risen from perched water tables but here on the shore the springs arise from the main water table. The water flows sideways through the rock until it reaches the edge of the shore where it appears as springs such as this one. These springs are not always visible; they stop flowing in very dry weather as the water table drops and the water drains out seaward. At high tides they may be covered completely by the sea.

In the cliff to the north there is a small cave formed by groundwater circulation and Red Rake, a prominent vein of red rock, runs through the limestone cliff to the south. Iron ore, which gives the rock its red colour, was mined from this rock at one time to form a small working going back into the cliff, the roof of which has long since collapsed.

From The Cove take the footpath along the top of the cliff and across

The Lots, (signposted). You will pass through two fields, The Lots, owned by the National Trust. There is often livestock in these fields and dogs should be kept on leads.

The first field, which has never been fertilised, still supports a rich flora including the green-winged orchid. Leave The Lots through a gate and down steps to the road. Turn right and follow the footpath round the corner to pass the Silverdale Hotel on Shore Road and past the cattle grid onto the shore. Walk back up Shore Road.

Bard's Well

Bard's Well, on the edge of the car park, is also known as the Battling Stone Well because clothes were washed here and no doubt beaten clean against the stones. As with Cove Well this well may be covered at high tide, and in dry weather stops flowing altogether.

Recent loss of saltmarsh has made it easier for water to flow out into the bay, so Cove Well and Bard's Well springs flow only after heavy rain, if at all.

Walk back up Shore Road and follow the footpath off to the right signposted to Lindeth Road. Turn right along the road and then left into Woodwell Lane opposite Kay's Nurseries.

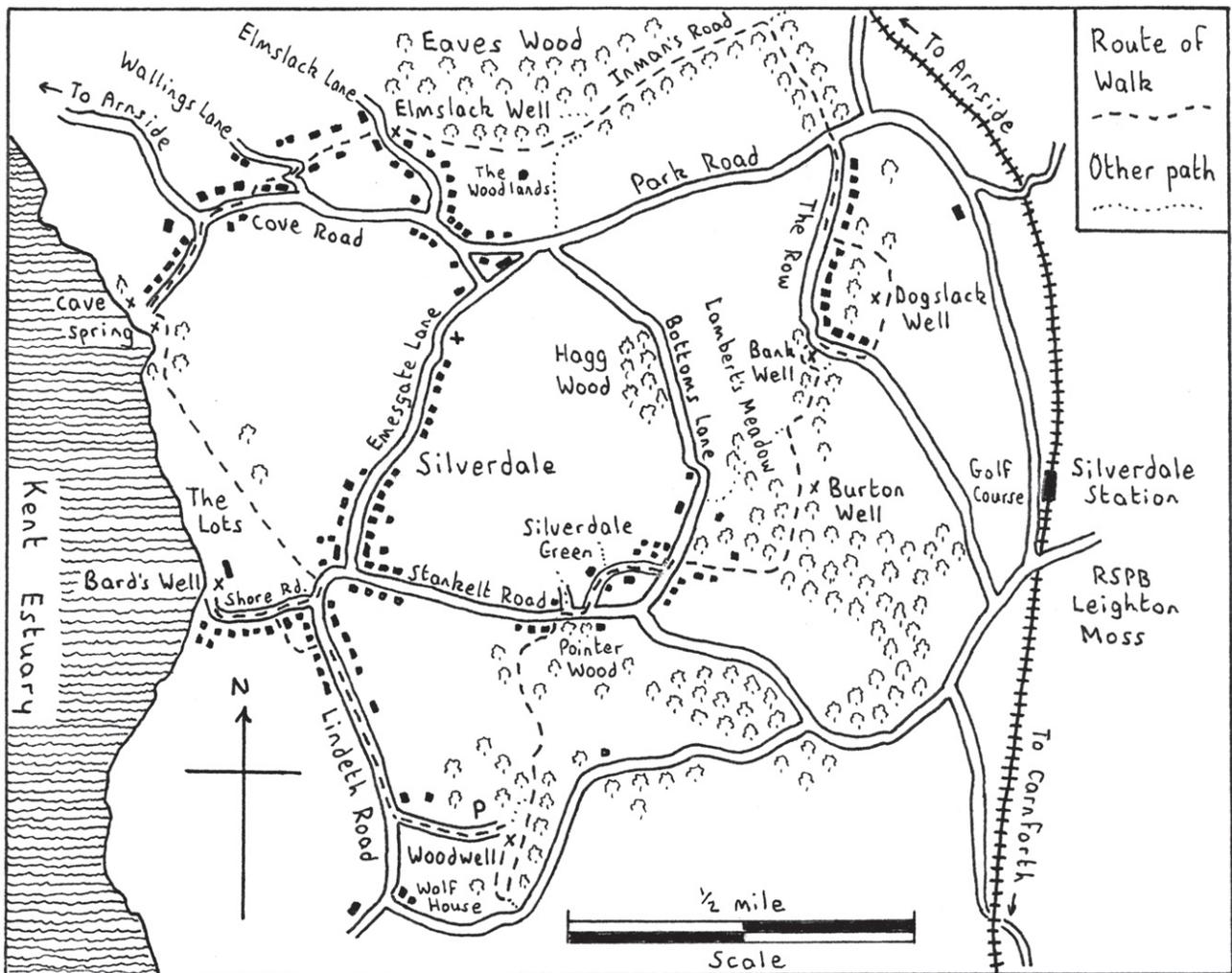
Let me know if you would, or would not, like to see more walks, with or without historical notes, in Keer to Kent. Ed.

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Thanks to map maker, Richard Daly, and to those who researched, walked and checked the route. They hope that future walkers will enjoy the fruits of their efforts.



a million
voices for
nature

The following has been compiled from a report by **Robin Horner**, RSPB's North-West Estuaries Reserves Area Manager, who oversaw the restoration work at Leighton Moss, and **Malcolm Ausden**, Senior Ecologist at RSPB, based at its headquarters at Sandy, with additional information provided by **Jen Walker**, RSPB's North West Visitor and Publicity Officer.

Enthusiasm, innovation and sheer hard graft have achieved successful results in a number of recent ventures by RSPB Leighton Moss nature reserve. Gaining the 'Gold' award in the Green Tourism Business Scheme, the national sustainable tourism certification scheme for the UK was one. They were assessed by a qualified grading advisor against a rigorous set of criteria, covering areas such as energy and water efficiency, waste management, and biodiversity. Already well known for its important wildlife conservation and education work, the nature reserve is also striving to be as environmentally friendly as possible. The recently renovated Visitor Centre, is an example of how this is being realised. There is a new area with a lot of wildlife information for people to learn more about what they can see. The shop sells many ethical gifts as well as having a wonderful wildlife care range, and now has a special area to try out binoculars. In the café, where a special opening event was held, attended by more than 80 guests, new chairs

Leighton Moss Innovations

have been made from recycled games consoles, and new table tops have been made from recycled plastic coffee cups. The popular home-cooked meals, made with seasonal local produce, continue to be served and the café has 'Taste Lancashire' accreditation. Volunteers are needed to help in the café and anyone interested should contact Patrick Keating, catering manager on 01524 703016.

Out on the nature reserve

Major conservation work has taken place to help the wildlife. There was increasing evidence of deterioration in the quality of the aquatic fauna and flora, which was thought to be causing a decline in its breeding bittern population, and the loss of otters in the nature reserve. To restore the vast reedbeds an innovative method was used to remove sediment.

What was the problem?

Knowledge of the habitat requirements of bitterns suggested a number of problems. The wet reedbed margin used by feeding bitterns appeared to be dying back, or at least ceasing to expand, in many areas. There was evidence from ongoing monitoring of a decline in abundance of aquatic macrophytes (vascular plants and stoneworts), and an increase in the frequency of algal blooms. This was thought to be making the water bodies less suitable for feeding bitterns by reducing visibility in the pools and affecting the abundance of rudd, one of its main prey species. A principal cause of these changes

appeared to be the accumulation of nutrient-rich, soup-like sediment up to 1.5 m deep in some of the ditches, and up to 0.75m deep in most of the pools.

What needed to be done?

It was decided that a key step in restoring the aquatic system at Leighton Moss should be to remove the nutrient-rich sediment, and to use this opportunity to improve the habitat for feeding bitterns in a number of other ways. These included re-profiling ditch edges, re-opening ditches and lowering areas of the reedbed to provide open water and sparse, wet reed (known as 'bed-lowering').

What was done?

The work took place, by Alaska Environmental Contracting, over three winters. The sediment was removed and pumped onto the adjacent fields. Some reedbed material was also pumped to the edges of the reedbed and used to repair and enhance a track within site.



Dredging and pumping operation

Has it worked?

Early signs are very encouraging. Monitoring results show an impressive recovery of aquatic vegetation in most



TV Celebrity Sean Wilson (formerly of Coronation Street), seen left, opening the 'new look' centre with RSPB staff.

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of the water bodies from which sediment was removed. Aquatic vegetation has also increased in species-richness and abundance in one of the two uncleared pools. The cover of submerged macrophytes along the ditches increased from an average of 21% before clearance (in 2004) to 66% after clearance (in 2007). This was mainly due to large increases in the abundance of bladderwort and small/lesser pondweed. The proportion of the sediment removed from different areas has undoubtedly been more variable than using the traditional agitation and mud-pumping removal technique which produces a cleaner lake bottom. There are still some localised patches of thicker sediment. It is not thought that this will be a problem and the benefits of the ease of dealing with the material at the receptor end far outweighed this. Monitoring will continue to determine the long-term effects of the project. The fields that received sediment were ploughed and re-seeded back to grass. The reserve is now working with neighbours and regulators to reduce the levels of nutrients entering the water bodies.

The rudd population appears to have increased following sediment removal. The reserve has also been re-colonised by otters after a 10 year absence and these have bred successfully. Two young otters were seen in the Autumn and there were some great sightings of an otter in front of Lilian's hide towards the end of the year.



Otter - photograph by Karen Wright

One booming male bittern continues in residence and there is hope for the number increasing given time. In 2009 research carried out throughout the UK by Natural England and the RSPB revealed that the bittern enjoyed its best ever year for at least 120 years, continuing this formerly extinct British bird's dramatic recovery. The number of calling (booming) male bitterns had increased to a record minimum of 82. There have been plenty of bittern sightings over the last few months



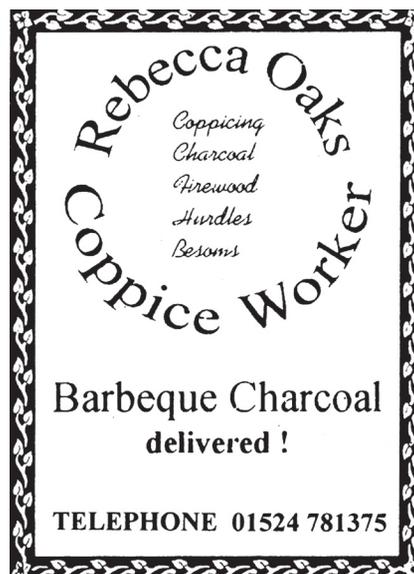
Male bittern found starving in Preston and released at Leighton Moss in February 2009 - photograph by Dave Mower

(including the male with the red ring that was found starving in Preston and was released at Leighton Moss in February 2009, which is great news). Recent advances in digital photography helped to identify a ringed bittern as a female bittern that was ringed at Leighton Moss as a nestling. When it was seen at the Lower hide in October it would be, amazingly, the oldest bittern recorded by the British ringing scheme at 9 years and 157 days since ringing! October was busy, with many people coming to see the great views of bearded tits as they ventured out of the cover of the reeds in good numbers to the grit trays. In November, the rain then flooded most of the trails, which posed problems for any 'welly-less' people visiting, and the high water levels literally put a damper on the warden's winter reed cutting regime again, unfortunately. Starling flocks still put on some amazing displays with up to 100,000 coming on to roost at dusk. It is hoped they'll stay throughout the winter this year as they did last year! There are now 4 or 5 cettis warblers over the winter (certainly 3 different birds can be identified by their rings). Numbers of this bird at Leighton Moss

have been building, probably due to the recent mild winters. They are one of the UK's most recent colonists, first breeding in 1973. Most commonly found in the South of England, the population range seems to expand northwards when there is enough insect life and larvae for them to feed on. Colder winters affect the insect life and the range seems to contract again. Their song can be heard along the Causeway – an almost explosive series of liquid notes 'pwit, pity-chewit, chewit, chewit' Leighton Moss wishes to acknowledge the help given by The Bittern II EC LIFE-Nature Project which contributed substantially to the cost of the reedbed restoration work, also the Heritage Lottery Fund, SITA Trust, Lancashire Environmental Trust and Co-operative Bank plc. And also thank Mike Harding et al. Harry Bowell, Will Bond of Alaska Environmental Contracting, Graeme Lyons and Matt Self who carried out the monitoring. For more information e-mail: robin.horner@rspb.org.uk or tel: 01524 701601. For information on the EC LIFE-Nature Project visit www.bitterns.org.uk

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Book Review

Mourholme Local History Society Book Group: 2009 pub; Warton Parish 1850 - 1900; paperback, 281 pages, £13.50.

This is the third book in a series published by Mourholme Local History Society, describing life in the parish of Warton, and in the townships once part of that parish. It is an account of late Victorian years in this area, which today contains the town of Carnforth and six villages - Borwick, Priest Hutton, Silverdale, Warton, Yealand Conyers and Yealand Redmayne.



Haymaking

The book is unusual in having no one author, nor even one editor. The chapters were each written by one or more of a group of people, who live in the area, were all interested in its history, but each having his or her own specialised interest in some part of that history. Consequently there are some aspects left out or not covered in the detail they might deserve. Nevertheless the authors hope that they have dealt with the themes of major local importance. The chapters include: agriculture, railways, canals and roads, poverty, drink and crime, woman's role, politics, religion, public health and private medicine and leisure time.

It was a time when many of the institutions and systems that we recognise today were evolving. There was both greater centralisation and more detailed record keeping in local and central government, and a wider dissemination of information. This helped the group put together what they hope is a comprehensive and accurate portrait of the area between 1850 and 1900. The result is an insight into life at that time, which could be picked up for interest or used as a local history study resource.

The book is dedicated to John Marshall (1919-2008), President of the Society for more than two decades, who helped with the book until ill-health reduced his involvement.

In addition to a comprehensive index there are lists of sources consulted. The book is delightfully illustrated, examples of which are shown here. Price per copy is £13.50, and it is available from Carnforth Book Shop, Carnforth Station Visitor Centre, or plus p & p from Jane Parsons tel. 01524 734223, or email: parsonseasterling@hotmail.com.



Carnforth Methodist Church

News on the War against Wildlife Crime

There have been a number of items in the local press regarding the extent to which wildlife crime has risen, with more than half the reported incidents relating to deer poaching.

Large numbers of deer are lawfully and professionally culled by trained deer stalkers every year. Many more are killed, often cruelly, by poachers intending to sell the meat on the black market. The lack of standards in game and venison handling can then result in diseased and unfit meat being offered to consumers.

As well as taking animals, poachers are often responsible for thefts in rural areas, and damage to crops and property.

A new initiative in the war against poachers has been launched. The British Association for Shooting and Conservation, the Environment Agency and the Deer Initiative have combined to provide the funding for England and Wales' first poaching priority officer who will work with the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit and will offer support to police forces investigating poaching offences.

Former Lancashire police detective, countryman and BASC member Gareth Cole, has been appointed to the post.

As an experienced deer stalker and founder member of the Lancashire Police Poacher Watch scheme, and with a wide experience of major criminal investigations, Gareth is well qualified for the role.

He stated: "By combining my police knowledge and my love of wildlife and the outdoors, I look forward to contributing to ensuring that police response to this crime is enhanced."

He added: "We need the help of rural communities and farmers to help disrupt and catch these offenders. To do this effectively we need you to report any suspicious activity to the police."

If something serious is in progress:

1. Dial 999, and ask for police communications rooms
2. State you are reporting a criminal offence and need uniformed assistance.
3. If offenders are at the scene or about to leave, then state this.
4. If safe, maintain observations.
5. Do not challenge the offenders unless safe to do so.
6. Say if other criminal matters have occurred eg damage to fencing or crops.
7. Say if dogs or firearms are involved.
8. Even if the offence has occurred some

time ago, please report all suspicious behaviour or signs of illegal activity.

Report other incidents to your local wildlife officer. Tel. Police Communications Room 08451 253545 (Lancashire) – 0845 33 00 247 (Cumbria).

Although predominant, deer poaching is only part of the wildlife crime problem - see Local Wildlife Management article.

It has been said that such cases are given a low priority, and that a fundamental 'shake up' of the way that wildlife crimes are dealt with is needed.

Poaching hot spots have recently been monitored by the PoacherWatch initiative with vehicles being stopped and investigated, so it does appear that efforts are being made to crackdown on these crimes. However the words of one police source have to be acknowledged "Tackling wildlife crime is challenging in Cumbria due to the nature and location of the offences".

Sadly the number of convictions for such crimes is a very small percentage of those committed, so many criminals are getting away scot free.

If you have any solutions or comments to make please put them forward - contact details on the back page. *Ed.*



This winter, in addition to the continuing chipping away at encroaching scrub and secondary woodland on species-rich grasslands on many of our sites, areas of hazel coppice – unworked for decades – have been re-cut. These small blocks on Heathwaite, Redhills Wood and Eaves Wood will provide a continuously-rotating sequence of habitats from bare ground, through bramble scrub to closed-canopy hazel under mature standard trees. This should benefit all kinds of wildlife as well as creating a

more varied landscape; and of course providing carbon-neutral fuel (logs, charcoal), useful coppice products, and helping to employ local contractors.

As I write, the ground is carpeted in snow after a prolonged cold spell over the Christmas period. It will be interesting to observe the effect these conditions – unusual in recent years – have on the wildlife of our sites. Will the cold encourage better germination of specialist plants such as Juniper and Daphne? Will insect larvae survive better than in the damp winters which encourage fungal infections? Will our northern species such as Teesdale Violet and Scotch Argus butterfly respond with a bumper year?

I hope that by the time this article appears we will be basking in spring sunshine and looking forward to the

summer and the change in emphasis of our work from the heavy physical graft of winter tree and scrub clearing to the more varied summer work including species monitoring, school groups, guided walks and events. Look out for our exciting programme of events and summer volunteer opportunities on our notice boards in Silverdale and Arnside and displayed on our sites, or contact us on 01524 702815. Here at the Morecambe Bay Property we are in the process of an organisational change which will see us joining a larger property unit including Sizergh, Fell Foot and Acorn Bank. This may in time lead to some changes in the work we do, but we are confident that our core duties of site management for public access and nature conservation within the AONB will continue.



Readers may have heard of the sad plight during 2009 of our Duke of Burgundy butterflies at Gait Barrows NNR, where a previously healthy population that was widespread across the nature reserve in previous years was reduced to just a few breeding areas in the north-east of the site.

This shocking reduction in extent and abundance of Duke of Burgundy in Gait Barrows was very dramatic and wholly unexpected by Natural England staff and Volunteers who have been monitoring the annual performance of this lovely butterfly over the years. We were convinced that we would keep our Duke of Burgundy population thriving at Gait Barrows NNR, despite the ongoing decline of the species across the Morecambe Bay Limestone Hills over the past decade, not least because

of the huge amount of work we have invested in the site to keep the habitat for this butterfly in excellent condition.

That Gait Barrows is in excellent condition for Duke of Burgundy butterflies is not in question, and the decline is likely to be the one thing butterfly conservationists dread – genetic decline through population isolation! This occurs when populations become detached from other nearby populations (which may have died out, or where habitat links between sites have been lost) and begin to suffer from a gradual loss of genetic diversity that can lead to poor breeding success. Coupled with this, the series of bad springs that we have had since 2005 means that even Gait Barrows cannot hold on to its irreplaceable Duke of Burgundy population.

The shock of the 2009 flight season convinced us in Natural England and colleagues in Butterfly Conservation that immediate action was necessary if we were not to lose this butterfly from the site. We decided on a five year plan to take as many Duke of Burgundy

larvae as possible into captivity each summer, and to rear these in secure and safe conditions ready for release back as mature pupae into the site the following year. In addition, we are gathering larvae from another currently healthy Duke of Burgundy site to release at Gait Barrows NNR at the same time. This action will reduce the mortality of larvae and pupae through the winter months, and the mixing of released pupae from the two different populations will hopefully address the loss of genetic viability from the Gait Barrows population. In effect we are providing the natural mixing that can now no longer take place because the sites have all become isolated.

This programme of action is to continue as a Natural England led project for five years, and we hope that lessons we learn will allow us to apply this approach to other sites in the Morecambe Bay Hills where Dukes have already been lost. We may then be able to restore this critical element of the wildlife of these wonderful landscapes that might otherwise be lost forever.

Michael Dearden 1931-2009

Michael Dearden was born near Rishton, Lancashire. His father was a factory manager in a protected industry and Michael spent his first years with a benevolent but strict aunt. He was reunited with his parents, in Streatham, London just before the war then evacuated

Back in London, an impressive performance at St Olaves Grammar School was followed by National Service in Malaya where he developed a passion for cricket. Upon his return he resumed

his BA studies, working part time for the Medical Research Council. In the late fifties he moved to Manchester and taught at various schools, finally as senior lecturer at Didsbury College.

In addition he became an experienced and widely respected teacher trainer and adviser to Granada Television schools and colleges programmes. In the late sixties he wrote two biology textbooks, used at 'A' level for many years. Shortly after retirement Michael moved to Warton absorbing himself in his passion for the countryside, particularly N Lances,

Cumbria and W coast Scotland, which combined well with his photographic ability. Another great interest was music.

Michael was widely liked and will be fondly remembered. He was a natural teacher, knowledgeable about the local area and the organiser of walks, exhibitions and talks. He was determined and single minded without causing offence - an important attribute in his role as Footpaths Officer.

These happy years were followed by only a few less happy days before he died from a blood infection on October 5 2009.

AONB Office by Lucy Barron



Spring is the perfect time to get out and about in the AONB, perhaps discovering or rediscovering parts of it that you don't know so well.

To help you on your way look out for the 2010 AONB Guide available in April and a new leaflet guide to Warton Crag. A new-look redesigned AONB website will also be launched this spring and will be a great resource for everyone to use www.arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk

The Arnside and Silverdale Wildflower Festival 4-8 June aims to celebrate how special this area is for flowering plants – over half the nation's wildflowers occur in the AONB. During the festival you'll be able to see the Lady's Slipper-orchid and learn about the successful reintroduction programme at Gaitbarrows National Nature Reserve open weekend. And there'll be impressive displays of limestone grassland flowers at the Landscape Trust's own reserve of Coldwell Parrock. A programme of guided walks and talks at other locations will enable more people to see and experience our wonderful wildflowers. Details available soon.

A full programme of twice-weekly volunteer outings with Tony continued over the winter months including: orchard planting, pruning and site maintenance tasks at Ashmeadow and Beachwood, habitat management work at Coldwell Parrock and Dobshall Wood, monthly litter-picks around the lanes of the AONB, and tasks at Warton Crag and Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserves.

April is the start of the butterfly survey season involving volunteers in

detailed monitoring of these important environmental indicator species. Volunteer tasks will continue over the spring and summer but there may be some changes to the current programme so that we can keep our work focussed and targeted effectively.

The Hedgerow Project saw the completion of the hedgerow survey which has informed an ongoing programme of restoration to conserve, enhance and reinstate our traditional hedgerows. The hedgelaying competition in November, and hedgelaying and planting training events in February, were also part of the project, part funded by the Landscape Trust.

An updated Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment will soon be available which will help local authorities, along with other agencies and local communities, make decisions that better protect the AONB landscape, giving detailed guidelines on how to protect the landscape character of the area.

The AONB's Sustainable Development Fund has funded a wide range of projects to the tune of about £65,000 this year from an energy saving initiative at Leeds Children's Holiday Camp in Silverdale to a new apiary for Lancaster Beekeepers Association. The Fund provides grants to organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals for projects that support AONB objectives. Applications are now welcomed for this year's fund.

Dates for your diary include the AONB Conference on 28th April and the AONB Office Open Day on 10th September.

Please get in touch if you'd like more information about anything you've read about or if you have anything of interest to report. Enjoy your AONB experiences over the coming months, and we look forward to seeing you at one or more of our events!

Landscape Trust Properties by Jill Smith & John Wilson

Bird interest in winter switches to the feeding station where a range of species occur. We first started feeding in 1997. We were then mainly getting tits with a few greenfinches, but the number of species recorded has increased steadily in recent years with birds such as bullfinch, goldfinch and chaffinch becoming regular visitors. This winter we have added grey wagtail, lesser redpoll and brambling.

Each winter we make several visits to ring the birds. This gives us a very good guide as to how successful the previous breeding season has been for the common species of the reserve. This winter there were lots of young blue, great and coal tits, suggesting a good breeding season in spring 2009, and much better than the two previous seasons. Chaffinches, greenfinches and bullfinches have also been caught in good numbers along with smaller numbers of great-spotted woodpeckers and nuthatch. Two years ago we caught a blackbird which had been ringed on autumn passage in Denmark.

One interesting spin off from the ringing is discovering how long birds live. To date the reserve record is held by a blue tit re-caught seven years and 77 days after ringing. We also have three other blue tits over six years. The oldest coal tit is just under seven years and a great tit just over six years while a great spotted woodpecker attained five years. All of these were re-caught, so were still going strong.



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Dates for your Diary

Landscape Trust/AONB

March

Thursday 18th: 7.45pm. Yealand Village Hall. 'Reflections on Landscape Conservation and Recreation - Fifteen Years On' Speaker: Jim McQueen, *

April

Saturday 24th: 10am-4pm. Landscape Trust Open Day. Arnside Cemetery Chapel, Silverdale Road. Coffee/tea, displays including local art, Trust goods, plants and preserves for sale.

Wednesday 28th: 10am-1.30pm. AONB Conference, Arnside Educational Institute. Lunch available, book via AONB office 01524 761034.

May

Thursday 13th: 2.30pm-5pm approx. Walk to Deepdale, looking at flowers and geology with leaders Jill Smith and Colin Patrick. Meet Yealand Redmayne Pound (GR 498762). Book via AONB office 01524 761034. *

June

Wednesday 2nd-Tuesday 8th: AONB Wildflower Festival 2010 - a series of events across the area to celebrate our spectacular and diverse wild flowers. See posters, notices, ads nearer date.

Friday 4th: 7.30pm. AGM, Heron Theatre, Beetham. Speaker: Grace Prendergast (Kew Gardens),

'Lady's Slipper Orchid Species Recovery Programme.'

Sat 5th/Sun 6th: Coldwell Parrock Reserve Open Weekend. Flower spotting and walk around Landscape Trust own reserve. Unguided, but there will be a display in the stable.

July

Saturday 24th: AONB Marine Event highlighting Morecambe Bay, see posters, notices, ads nearer date.

*Members £1, non-members £1.50.

Mourholme Local History Society

7.30pm. Yealand Village Hall

March

Wednesday 24th: Speaker: Mrs Elizabeth Kissack. 'Thomas Mawson, Landscape Architect.'

April

Wednesday 28th: AGM. Speaker: Mr Derek Longmire. 'The Seven Martyrs of Kendal'

Arnside and District Natural History Society

7.30pm. Arnside WI/Village Hall

March

Thursday 11th: 'Wildlife of Mull.' Speaker: Jacqui Fereday.

April

Thursday 8th: AGM. The Recordors 'Fauna of Arnside and District 2009'.

MEMBERSHIP: Walks, talks & events!

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