

# **AVON MEADOWS COMMUNITY WETLAND**

## **Newsletter of the Friends of Avon Meadows**

### **Newsletter No.4**



Fig 1. Early April with trees coming into leaf. Note with willow growth in the left and right foreground (R D E Stott)

### **Annual General Meeting**

The AGM for the Friends of Avon Meadows has been scheduled for **Wednesday 25 May 2011 at 6.00pm**. It will be held in the Committee Room of the Pershore Civic Centre. There will be light refreshments and an illustrated talk afterwards on Worcestershire Butterflies by John Tilt. Please come if you can.

### **Review of our progress**

It is excellent news that Bob Gillmor has successfully applied to the Chestnut Fund for a small grant for hand tools which are now in our possession. Bob has also made a successful application for £2000 from the National Lottery Fund 'Awards for All' scheme in order to purchase a secure storage shed and more tools. As you can see below our sponsors have asked us to use their logos on our documentation to indicate their support.

It will soon be easier for anyone to check water level information as the Environment Agency has agreed to install 2 gauge boards, one beside the boardwalk and one beside the tilting weir. Work has already started on this and the gauge board supports are in position. The intention is that they will be installed such that the indicated levels relate to the ordnance datum so that this data can be compared with that collected elsewhere in the county.



Fig 2. Val kindly offered to model a pair of our new waders! Thanks to the Chestnut Fund.

We have the start of a new regular feature on wild flowers by The Duffer, who is one of our members, which we hope you will find interesting.

As you may have noticed we have come to a full stop with the website. Unfortunately the person who was creating it is not able to continue. We are seeking to resolve this as quickly as possible but please bear with us in the meantime.

## Avon Meadows – Access For All

We are pleased to announce that Wychavon District Council has been successful in securing a Stage 1 approval in its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for monies to develop a project aimed at strengthening the links between local schools and the Avon Meadows Community Wetland. The project, which has been called Access For All, will also see improved access facilities for disabled people as well as more information about what you can see and telling the various stories about how and why the Wetland was created.

The Project will fund the employment of person to work with the schools and the local community for the next three years and will provide an exciting opportunity for all of us to get more involved with the Wetland and the variety of users.

The next step will be to develop the Stage 2 submission and undertake various surveys and information gathering over the summer.

## Flora & Fauna Surveys

A date for your diaries! We have arranged for a **Moth Night** on **27/28/29 June 2011** to trap (and later release) moths on the Wetland. I will confirm the exact date nearer the time as the success of this exercise is almost wholly dependent on the weather.

We need to borrow some Longford traps (humane mammal traps) in order to conduct a small mammal survey. If any of you know where we might borrow some we would be very interested to hear.

We have been carrying out a weekly bird count from the beginning of the year. The total species count for the year so far is 62!

Our butterfly transect survey is in operation and takes place weekly under the auspices of Butterfly Conservation. It will run from 1 April to 30 September.

Please note that if anyone is interested in taking part in any of the survey work let me know. Also, let us know if you see anything unusual or interesting.

## Recent Sightings

In March there was a small party of Bramblings in trees on the SW perimeter of the Wetland which could be regularly observed plundering bird feeders in the gardens of the houses along Cherry Orchard! Around the same time a single Siskin was seen in the willow trees on the south side of the Wetland.

On 3 April Sand Martins, House Martins and Barn Swallows were recorded passing through going north. Early April also saw our first chicks; Mallard were first closely followed by Coot. Now there are at least 2 Coot broods that have hatched and one brood of Moorhen. The first Sedge Warbler of the year was recorded chattering from the reeds on 5 April.



Fig 3. One of our first Coot chicks. (R D E Stott)

Reed Warblers are yet to arrive. On 21 April two Common Whitethroats were recorded, a first for the Wetland.

In spite of the warm April weather many species of butterfly will not appear until later. We have recorded 8 species so far this month including Orangetip, Holly Blue, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell.

## Worcestershire Wardens

The Worcestershire Wardens Partnership, of which we, as the Friends of Avon Meadows are a member, is a network of various countryside volunteer organisations throughout the County, providing resources and training for groups and individuals who are involved in outdoor conservation work.



Fig 4. Jim Burgin (centre) with some of the Worcestershire Wardens visiting Avon Meadows. (V Wood)

Recently, a number of volunteers from other organisations visited the wetlands for a guided tour and to find out about what the Friends of Avon Meadows are up to. They were most impressed with our wetland and some even indicated that they would like to get more involved here as well as with their own organisation. It must be good!

If you want to find out more about volunteering please contact Jim Burgin at Wychavon on 01386 565366 or [jim.burgin@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:jim.burgin@wychavon.gov.uk)

## Flowers of Avon Meadows by The Duffer

I have tried manfully for more years than I care to recount to identify the flowers of Britain without huge success; so the opportunity to relive some of my struggles and write them up was too tempting to miss.

The plan is to find 3 flowers a month and share them with you; if I get one wrong I am sure there is an expert out there who will correct me and please feel free to do so.

**March:** All the flowers this month were found in the field within 100 yards of the south carpark (north of King George's Field, the football ground).

### LESSER CELANDINE *Ranunculus ficaria*



A plentiful member of the Buttercup family; distinguished by having 8 or more petals and heart-shaped leaves as opposed to 5 petals for the more usual buttercups. They should continue flowering through to May.

**CUCKOOFLOWER** *Cardamine pratensis*



Also known as Lady's Smock. A pretty and delicate member of the Cabbage family or Crucifers. I only found a couple of plants but more should follow as March is a little early for them. They should continue to flower through to June. Cabbages are a varied family of 4-petalled flowers which are often yellow or white. Other than the pretty colour of the petals the leaves are quite distinctive in being made up of lots of sub-leaflets (pinnate) making the plant overall fairly easy to identify.

**RED DEAD-NETTLE** *Lamium purpureum*



A member of the Labiate family many of which have those wonderful hooded flowers and which includes mints; it is also a group I have trouble identifying. The colour of the petals and its stalked, heart-shaped leaves are what help to identify this one. Some of the leaves can have a reddish hue. It can be seen in most months of the year.

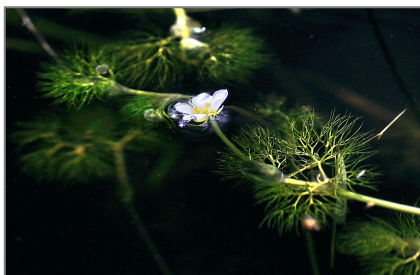
**April:** This month a couple of flowers usually associated with wetter areas and a couple of very common ones widely distributed pretty much everywhere.

**MARSH MARIGOLD** *Caltha palustris*



A member of the buttercup family this lovely deep yellow plant is easy to spot with its quite large flowers and its distinctive kidney shaped leaves. Quite a few clumps along the path behind the houses in the damper areas. It should flower through to the summer.

**THREAD-LEAVED WATER CROWFOOT** *Ranunculus trichophyllus*



Another member of the buttercup family but with small white flowers and strange distinctive underwater thread-like leaves. The Crowfoots are a difficult group of similar plants that can take some sorting out and I 'fess up to having had a little help with this one. The flower floats on the surface of some of the dykes in the wetland. It is easy to miss and hard to see without getting wet but the tiny white flowers in the canals beneath the footbridges

in the north east part of the Wetland are examples of this species.

# COW PARSLEY *Anthriscus sylvestris*



A member of the Umbellifers which are a large sometimes difficult to identify family with mainly white or yellow flower heads. Cow Parsley is a white flowered one and very common with

most road side verges having some and there are quite a few behind the houses on the Wetland (and probably elsewhere). Its early flowering and parsley type leaves help identify it. It will have finished flowering by the end of June but others of its family will replace it as the year progresses.

# WHITE DEAD-NETTLE *Lamium album*



Our second member of the Labiate family and very common. I like this one with its hooded white flowers and heart shaped leaves. It should be in flower most of the year. There are a few plants on the wetland on drier parts behind the houses and plenty in and around Pershore.

## Water Levels

The recent spell of warm, dry weather and the surge in plant growth has served to increase the water level loss to 4.5 mm per day. The rainfall over the period has been as follows (average figures are in brackets):

February	40.6 mm (25.4 mm)
March	9.8 mm (24.3 mm)
April	2.3 mm (32.4 mm) - up to 22 Apr.

For the first time since the Wetland has been operational the water level has reached the top of the tilting weir due to the melt water from the snow. As it turns out this is just as well for with such low rainfall over the last 2 months the water level is very low for this time of year. As and when we do get some rain an increasing water level may cause problems with nests for birds that nest close to the water.

## How you can help us

We, the Committee, are always pleased to hear constructive suggestions as to how we can improve things or new things to try. In putting forward suggestions please bear in mind we have lots of enthusiasm but very limited funds!

1. You are all very welcome to attend the AGM. Please come if you possibly can.
2. The scheduled Work Party days for 2011 are and we are looking forward to seeing you there.

Wed 27 April	Sat 3 September
Sat 7 May	Wed 5 October
Wed 1 June	Sat 12 November
Sat 2 July	Wed 7 December
Wed 3 August	

Please let Ken know if you can come (kenPomfret@btinternet.com) a few days before.

3. Let us know if you seem something interesting, bird, butterfly, plant, insect, etc. If you can send us a photograph you could even get published in the Newsletter!

### Diary Dates

27 April 2011 - Work party.

7 May 2011 - Work party.

25 May 2011 - Annual General Meeting at 18h00 at the Pershore Civic Centre

1 June 2011 - Work party.

27/28/29 June 2011 - Moth Night on the Wetland from 19h00 till late.

2 July 2011 - Work party.

3 Aug 2011 - Work party.

### Officers of the Committee

Chairman - Richard Stott richarddestott@gmail.com

Treasurer - Bob Gillmor robert.gillmor@btinternet.com

Secretary - Val Wood valeriewood@uwclub.net

### Website

<http://avonmeadowspershore.org/> (under development)

### Contact

Either directly by eMail to an officer of the Committee or by telephone to:

Mr Jim Burgin on 01386 565366 at Wychavon District Council.

We hope that you all have an interesting spring on the Wetland.

Richard Stott