



South Holderness
Countryside Society

Making a better place for local wildlife

Registered Charity No. 701627

Holderness Countryside

Journal of the South Holderness Countryside Society

Spring 2019



The new Bird Hide at Kilnsea Wetlands see report inside

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NOTE OUR NEW VENUE FOR MEETINGS ...See Back Cover.

No 134 Free to members. Available to non-members for a minimum donation of £1.50

Annual Report of the South Holderness Countryside Society for 2018

A year consisting of quite an amount of administrative background work as well as our normal day-to-day running of the Society.

Maintenance work is on-going on all of our holdings, including our latest purchase, Toffling Field. This mainly consisting of controlling any over abundance of such like bramble and reed, and some ditching work carried out. Barbed wire, now old and rusted is being searched for and removed from all of our sites. Wild animals especially deer, who try sometimes unsuccessfully to jump over the wire are known to become entangled (but not on our reserves) to lie in extreme pain until they die. We do not want any animal to suffer because of an oversight by us, therefore such fencing is now banned from all of our Reserves.

Some survey work has been carried out at Toffling and some Hazel saplings planted. An aerial survey professionally carried out by "Drone" is planned for both Toffling and HCNR in the near future.

At Ivy house, a tree ranch was found to have been almost severed by gale force winds and a team of four of the committee set about roping it up to make it safe, and It took quite a bit of pulling and heaving to get it done.

Our resident electrical expert, Steve, examined, and corrected our meter settings etc. and found a couple of discrepancies. Our electricity charges had been, we thought, rather excessive for some time, and we hope he has found the solution.

We have been concerned for some time now about the falling attendance at our monthly meetings. Very often a maximum of fifteen individuals making the effort to turn out, from a membership of some eighty-odd families, which doesn't say a lot for our Society. All sorts of changes have been suggested, all of which have been rejected for one reason or another. It is very disheartening for a speaker to travel very often a fair distance to be faced with an almost empty hall. Watch out on our website and face-book for up to date information.

Peter and Margaret continue to represent the SHCS in the development of Kilnsea Wetlands. An extremely large project in which our Society is closely involved, as some of our land holdings in that area are part and parcel of the whole scheme in which a number of other Natural History organisations are represented. A new bird hide is being constructed to replace the old one which was storm damaged, and will very soon be installed on site. Watch this space.

For a number of years now, we have seen the need to up-date our equipment with the purchase of a large capacity, ride-on mowing machine. But we had no-where to securely keep such a large vehicle. To this end we negotiated the purchase of an ex shipping container which arrived on site in the early part of the year. But the large vehicle which delivered the container was unable to enter our grounds at Ivy House. However our neighbour Mr Moor, who lives directly opposite our site offered to organise the final positioning with the help of one of his friends. This was carried out without any problems thanks to Mick, so now we are ready to purchase the mower.

The Young Naturalists Club, the only one of its kind in the area is entering its seventh year of operations. It has proved to be a great success with almost thirty young people being on our books at one time or another, and Margaret has great plans for the club members for 2019.

Many different events are being negotiated for the coming season. More illustrated talks and some "hands-on" experiences. Keep an eye on our future programme and keep up-to-date- via our website or face-book. These events take a great deal of organising. Come and see us, and have an evening or an afternoon away from the television. You may be surprised by what you can learn.

Report by Freddy Kennedy (Gen Sec)

Toffling Hill NR– Annual Report 2018/2019

Peter J Cook

Not as much was done on this site than perhaps should have, due to a number of other commitments and a shortage of volunteers. A plan to plant a number of early-flowering woody species got underway with a hazel, purging buckthorn and alder buckthorn planted out by a small group of volunteers. Planted in groups in the shelter of existing stands of shrubs and trees, these should provide food for bees. More hazel was planted in some of the gaps in the grown-out hawthorn hedge along the green lane to begin the non-destructive improvement of the hedge-with-trees boundary. This will continue. The open grass area had become rank and species-poor due to high underlying fertility so we asked Martin and Paul Fisher to reap and bale it leaving some bales with which to create habitat for snakes and mammals. This should make ongoing management easier. Steps (literally!) have been taken to manage potential risk at the pond and work started and is ongoing to finish this and to remove old barbed wire.

The Society encourages research and we were approached by the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre to participate in some overnight soundscape recording and later some aerial photography by drone. We look forward to inviting members to a show of results.

Beacon Lagoons NR (with Kilnsea Wetlands) – Annual Report 2018-2019

Peter J Cook

As usual Beacon Lagoons NR elicits very little to report upon other than that it remains in place despite being frequently battered by the North Sea. From a habitat dynamics point of view the site is better for it. Part of the reserve is visited annually by Little Terns to breed and a considerable amount of effort goes into managing the site by the Spurn Bird Observatory Trust and friends. The site preferred by these birds is becoming encroached by Sea Buckthorn and a request is being made of Natural England to stop it spreading further. We no longer have the human resources to help directly with this protection scheme and we are aware that in 2019, funds to support a paid warden will be difficult to source. We look for ideas and ways to help.

The Kilnsea Wetlands reserve was developed seven years ago to compensate for the erosion of Beacon Lagoons Special Protection Area (etc) under the EU Habitats Directive, and part of our reserve (Beacon Field) was key to linking available land to the sea thereby making Kilnsea Wetlands viable. We therefore became a 'stakeholder' in this massive project by leasing this key 22 acre field into the project. As Chairman of the SHCS at the time of its design and planning, I represented the SHCS on the steering group, and still do, joined recently by Margaret Kennedy. Coincidentally we lost the Beacon Lagoons bird hide to a tidal surge and the insurance claim of £7000 has been committed to the construction of a new bird hide on Kilnsea Wetlands itself, thereby cementing our continuing stakeholder status in this highly popular reserve. In effect our most inaccessible asset has been made accessible by this project and we commend it to you.

A looming problem for the Society is the proposed positioning of the Coastal Footpath project which may present us with a number of health and safety and legal problems into the future.

Haverfield Quarries – Recent Developments on an old SHCS Reserve

Peter J Cook

Longer-subscribing members of the Society will remember the time when we managed a fascinating reserve called Haverfield Quarries, a linear system of worked out-gravel quarries along a remnant dune system running between Welwick Bushes on the Humber Bank, almost to Patrington Haven. Seasoned volunteers will remember the many hours we spent working there in the 1990's, and the frequent and intense management meetings! The well drained sandy soils in the quarry are part of what was once a sand dune ecosystem supporting an unusual and important combination of plants and animals ("psammophiles"), some of which are locally, even internationally, rare. This management consisted of targeted scrub control and reed-bed mowing to management plan agreed with the owner. When the owner retired the land passed to a farmer with whom we could not work to a gentleman's agreement in the same way. We therefore 'lost' one of our best nature reserves but, mercifully, the land did remain out of agricultural development.

In 2015/16 I submitted a proposal that the site should be adopted by the East Riding Council as a Candidate Site for designation as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). As a Surveyor on the LWS evaluation panel I surveyed the whole of the non-SSSI, north-western section and found that despite numerous years of unsympathetic management the site still qualified for designation. However, significant areas of species-rich grassland had been lost to shade. LWS designation proved timely as the land had recently been acquired by the Environment Agency for inclusion in the proposed Skeffling to Welwick realignment project. On-site discussions with key personnel in the Environment Agency and their ecological consultants, together with the appropriate officer in East Riding Council, led to agreement that high value areas should be restored by scrub clearance.

I am pleased to report that on January 21st 2019 work was started to clear overgrown scrub in six locations at the north western end and at two sites along the access track lying to the north of the ponds in the SSSI section. This was deemed necessary in order to return the land to its former state as a grassland habitat of high ecological value (described as 'remnant fixed dune grassland'). Aerial photographs of this area before 2003 show that it was actively managed to preserve a more open and varied vegetation structure. Removing some patches of the existing scrub (rather than clear felling) should allow the grass to return and create a more diverse range of habitats while succession to woodland would be allowed to continue in selected areas.

These open grassy areas will be used as 'receptor sites' for grass snakes and lizards translocated from the existing Humber embankment before construction work is started there. This is part of the mitigation strategy to avoid or minimise damage to local populations of animals and plants. To minimise disturbance to any hibernating reptiles on site, felling will be done using hand tools and the stumps will be left to rot down over time. Some of the smaller bushes will be dug up and replanted in another part of the site where we want to create a more mature tree layer. Overall this scrub clearance will enhance the range of different habitats across the site and support a greater variety of wildlife. The SHCS had to write-off and dispense with the bird hide parts of which are still there. Apparently this will be replaced.



The site, edged in red, is a hot-spot for species of high conservation interest and has always been considered by naturalists knowledgeable of their specialist interests to have greater biodiversity on a more stable system of habitats than the Spurn peninsula.

A management organisation is still to be determined and it is hoped by many that it will be multi-disciplinary in interest and work to protect sensitive habitats rather than allow their exposure to the stressors of visitor pressure and overgrazing by sheep.

Some rare species are already creating a problem for determining public access routes. Together with early consideration of vegetation management, breeding rare species and reptile translocation, conservation is already being taken seriously.

Photo: Google maps

New bird watching hide at Kilnsea Wetlands

Peter Cook

We start 2019 with the good news of the installation of a new bird hide at Kilnsea Wetlands. The Society's interest in this arises partly in the opportunity to replace the hide on Beacon Lagoons Nature Reserve, lost to a tidal surge a few years ago, and to overtly support what has become a very popular wetland nature reserve, much enjoyed by some of our members.

The Society has maintained a partnership role in the Easington Biodiversity Study Group (EBSG) responsible for the development and management of Kilnsea Wetlands and we felt it was appropriate to donate the £7000 insurance claim that we received for the loss of our old hide. The remainder sum of £5000 has been donated by partners making up the organisation of the annual Migfest Festival including the Spurn Bird Observatory Trust, British Trust for Ornithology and Mr Andrew Wells at Westmere Farm.

The EBSG, under the leadership of the Environment Agency, installed a small bird hide on completion of the development work in 2013. This hide seated only 8 people (fewer depending on the number of 'scope tripods) and was not easy to use by people with impaired mobility, especially when full of people. In 2018 it was decided to commission the construction of a new hide at least twice as big as this, and to move the small hide to a location overlooking scrapes on Long Bank Marsh to the East. The Society's offer of financial assistance was the catalyst to move the idea forwards. The project was overseen to fruition in the week beginning 21 January by Mr Andy Gibson of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, whom we thank for his hard work.

The hide was manufactured by a not-for-profit company called Green Future Buildings using a recycled wood fibreboard product manufactured near Paull. See greenfuturebuilding.org.uk for more details.

In catalyzing this project we have

- made up for the loss of the hide at Beacon Lagoons Nature Reserve;
- part funded what could be used as an 'outdoor classroom' for bird id;
- replaced a valuable asset with one that will not involve us in any maintenance expenses;
- cooperated and worked together with locally active groups;
- indirectly supported the local economy and employment;
- indirectly supported not-for-profit social enterprise in part-funding a GFB product and
- part funded an asset that is a shop window on the work of local groups including SHCS.

and we should be proud of it, use it and promote it!

The front cover shows the front elevation in course of construction - work in progress on 24 January 2019. Note leg box for scooters and wheelchairs. This is a rare shot because access to the front will not be permitted after completion.

Any member interested in visiting this hide with a guided walk please contact us. Better still, anyone willing to lead a bird observation/identification session for the Society?, please contact us. (Contact numbers on the inside of the back cover).

Spring is a time when everything is growing and bursting into life. Birds are singing, leaves are unfolding, butterflies are starting to be seen and mammals are beginning to wake from their winter sleep.

Spring is usually said to start at the beginning of March and the 20th of March is the Spring Equinox; the date on which day and night are of equal length.

This season is a time of days getting longer and the spring sunshine bringing growth and greenery everywhere with buds bursting and leaves unfolding. Birdsong reaches a peak and many flowers appear, in turn attracting insect-life, including bees and butterflies. Animals that hibernated over winter appear on the first warm days of spring so keep an eye out in early Spring for hedgehogs, newly emerged queen bees, frogs, toads and grass snakes.

Other animals such as squirrels become more active and are easier to spot. Millions of migrant birds arrive, with chiffchaffs, sand martins and wheatears amongst the first to appear in March and swallows, swifts, cuckoos, nightingales and many warblers in April and May. Nature is at its most busy in Spring, every day brings changes.

Wild Spring - top five things to do

Visit a seabird colony: Britain has some of the most important seabird colonies in Europe.

Watching puffins, guillemots, razorbills, gannets, cormorants, shags, fulmars and gulls is one of Britain's top wildlife experiences. You don't just watch a seabird colony; you smell it and hear it too! Fantastic!



Visit a local Wildlife Trust woodland nature reserve: Many woodland flowers are at their best before the leaves are fully open on the trees. If you find carpets of bluebells, wood anemones, wild garlic, wood sorrel and early purple orchids you can be sure it is an ancient woodland and likely to be good for many other kinds of wildlife too. So make sure you go on a Spring woodland walk – it will keep you healthy too!

Learn bird songs: Spring is the perfect season to enjoy and appreciate bird song. Many local Wildlife Trusts organise dawn chorus walks that you can take part in. Why not get up early and start by learning bird songs in your own garden? Taking an early morning walk is always great for watching wildlife and early morning is the best time for listening to bird song.



Become a phenologist: This means keeping a record of when and where you see your first spring flowers, migrant birds, trees in leaf, frog spawn, first butterflies and dragonflies and other seasonal signs. Your records can help scientists who are studying climate change and its impact on wildlife. So start a wildlife diary today!



Sow some wildflower seeds:

Think local; by planting and growing some wild flower seed you can attract butterflies and bees to your garden.

GROYNES ON THE SPIT

Last stand of the Amazon warriors,
their leaders of different girths and heights,
with flowing orange fish-net hair, half-dressed
in creeping green sea-weed with heavy duty
bolts through necks and nipples, all bleeding

reds and browns into fading skins of wood
smoothed by sea. A once proud race
now in decline? Look closer and you might see
the hair flecked with black and grey;
even closer, rusty eyes weary with battle?

And what of the enemy? Perhaps those tall
white plastic-armoured regiments
strung out in equal rows on the horizon,
slender but tough, engineered to spec,
their pristine blades rotating in the wind?

Legions confronted by barbarians?
Humans versus war machines from Mars?
Missionaries confronted by heathens?
Or perhaps a ruthless modernity
about to crush traditional ways of life?

But take another look at the facts of life
here on the spit. There are no enemies.
As the tide turns, they all wait to dance
in the sea, the smack and the clap of the waves
returning them to a deep wet forest.

John Quicke

SHCS Privacy Policy.

THE South Holderness Countryside Society is committed to the protection of your personal data. The personal data you provide will only be used by the Society for the purpose of administration of your membership and for communicating with you with regard to the business of the Society to keep you informed about news, events and activities. This data will be held until October 31st each year (two months after the renewal date of your membership) whereupon it will be securely erased from our records. Processing is also necessary for carrying out legal obligations in relation to Gift Aid. This data must legally be kept for a period of six years. We will never sell your data nor share it with any other organisation. You have a number of rights, including the right to access your data, right to rectification, and the right to object. You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office if you feel there is a problem with the way the South Holderness Countryside Society is handling your data. The data controllers are the Officers, the Membership Secretary and the General Secretary of the Society.

The next membership renewal form will ask you to confirm once again the details you would prefer us to use to contact you for SHCS business as above.



The new hide under construction



The special images inside the hide

The new hide at Kilnsea Wetlands

The Young Nats Bit

2018 was a year of achievement for our youngsters. Two new members started, and achieved their RSPB Bronze award and, better still, our two "Senior" veterans (at nine and eleven years old) gained the highest award to be undertaken. The RSPB GOLD, having studied some eighteen different disciplines covering everything from the basic construction of plants, identification of trees and flowers, nest box construction, bugs, beetles and birds and even re-cycling and compost making.

We hope to have two new members in the coming year who will be starting the sequence all over again by trying for their Bronze.

The club is a happy place where everyone answers to their Christian names. Even the instructors, something which helps to create the friendly atmosphere in which the children are never afraid to ask questions, or to research answers for themselves through our extensive library of Natural History books.

It is, however, somewhat of a rather sobering thought to realise that long suffering mums have to cope with all manner of strange, squelchy, sticky things that may appear, having been stuffed into pockets (in the course of scientific research, of course) and discovered on wash-day as a glutinous smelly mess, hopefully *before* it disappears into the washing machine.

Margaret has, once again, great plans for the youngsters in 2019. A study level higher than even the Gold Award is being investigated at the time of writing this note, in order to encourage our "senior" members to advance their knowledge, and, what has become a tradition now, our annual coach trip to some interesting places where cameras, binoculars, and magnifying glasses will be employed to the full and, (most important,) sandwiches and ice-cream will feature largely. All in the name of science, of course.

All children of primary school age are eligible for membership to the South Holderness Countryside Society's Young Naturalists Club. Get in touch. Our phone and e-mail numbers are on the back page of this Journal. Bring your children along, you may learn something yourself.

Freddy

PUBLICATIONS

Holderness Countryside is the journal of the South Holderness Countryside Society, and is issued free of charge to members, up to four times per year. All Rights Reserved.

Items for publication may be emailed to the Editor (brian.gill60@btinternet.com). Please ring the Editor to discuss items in manuscript. The Society welcomes articles of general interest in the genre of natural and social history pertaining to southern Holderness. These must have educational value under the terms of our Charitable Objectives (see below). The views expressed are those of the contributor. Contributions are acknowledged along with the relevant articles. Other publications may be produced from time-to-time.

YOUNG NATURALISTS CLUB

The Young Naturalists' ("Young Nats") Club meets twice monthly at our Ivy House Centre in Hollym. Supervisors have Enhanced DBS certification. Members must be of primary school age, 5 – 11 years. Young Nats are taught and encouraged to take a more positive interest in natural history and to publish articles in *Holderness Countryside*. Articles should be sent to the Editor via email or a telephone call to arrange collection.

SCHOOLS

Copies of *Holderness Countryside* are distributed to local schools. Schools are permitted to photocopy extracts from the Journal for educational use within their school. All other reproduction in whatever form is subject to copyright.

MEMBER SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Adult: £12. Family: £14.
Corporate membership will be considered.

CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES

The South Holderness Countryside Society was first registered as a Charity No 701627 on 30th May 1989. Defined objectives of the charity are;

(1) *Work principally within the area of Holderness, (East Riding of Yorkshire) for the region's natural and local history.*

(2) *Educate the public in the natural and local history of the area.*

(3) *Secure the preservation and protection and improvement of natural history.*

Management of the Society's affairs is by elected Trustees.

The restoration of Ivy House, our headquarters, was part funded by the National Lottery.



THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Position	Name	Telephone
Chairman	Tracey Netherton--	01964 623261
Vice Chairman	Margaret Kennedy	01964 671492
General Secretary	Fred Kennedy	01964 671492
Treasurer	Peter Cook	01964 614466
Journal Editor	Gill Hart	01964 671499
Elected Member	Andrew Mason	01482 817835
Elected Member	Jeffrey Marshall	01964 630045
Elected Member	David Constantine	01964 631354
Elected Member	Terry Lount	01964 604307

OUR WEBSITE

www.holdernesscountryside.org

is managed by Mrs Claire Ashton.

Please keep this site alive!

clairelouiseashton@hotmail.com

E-mail contacts: Chairman
tr_netherton@hotmail.co.uk

Vice Chairman/Secretary:

scruffeighteen@talktalk.net

Treasurer: botanical748@gmail.com

Editor: brian.gill60@btinternet.com

Membership Secretary Mrs Denise Failey
Demswood ,Boreas Hill, Paul HU12 8AX
01964 622576

Please make all membership payments to Denise.



FUTURE PROGRAMME

PLEASE NOTE OUR CHANGE OF VENUE

In future, unless specifically stated otherwise, all of our events, illustrated talks and “hands-on” drop-ins will take place at our IVY HOUSE CENTRE in HOLLYM.

Ivy House, post code HU19 2SQ is approached from the main A1033 Patrington to Withernsea road.

From Patrington the Ivy House WOODLAND is clearly visible from the main road. As this road turns sharply to the Right, turn off Left down Church Lane, then Right at the small cross roads. Ivy House is on the Right.

From Withernsea, after passing through Hollym, on the A 1033 the woodland is clearly visible behind the commercial waste site, just after the first steep bend .Turn Right along South Carr Dales Road. Ivy House is on the Left

A full programme is being planned for this year. Dates and times will be advertised on our website and on face-book, or ‘phone 01964671492; 01964623261; 01964614466 The events will not necessarily take place on an evening.

Watch out for illustrated talks on.....

- Roos Woodland
- New Zealand.
- Cowden Nature Reserve
- The Isle of Arran.

We also offer “Drop Ins” , a hands-on experience and/or short power-point talks on the following..

- Fossils and Shells
- Herbaria
- Collections.

Identification workshops on.....

- Bird-song (from software)
- Botanical

There is also the possibility of Claire Langricks Soundscape (Sounds from our own Nature Reserves)

- Aerial photos of our new Reserve at Toffling Hill and of HCNR Taken by Drone.
- Fungus Foray.
- A visit to our new Bird Hide at Kilnsea Wetlands
- Practical Tasks at Toffling Nature Reserve and Ivy House
- Visits to Spurn; Flamborough; Hornsea Mere; Bugworld; Paull Holme Strays

Our AGM on Fri May 10th will take place at the Patrington Church Rooms at 7.30 pm.

These events take many hours to prepare, therefore the above are offered subject to sufficient interest, otherwise they will not take place.