



Registered Charity No 701627

Winter Spring 2022

# Holderness Countryside



Bee Friendly! By Jenny Bird

**Journal of the South Holderness Countryside Society**

**No 141** - Free to members. Available to non-members for a minimum donation of £1.50

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## Sad loss of a stalwart member



**Jeff Marshall**

We are very sad to announce the passing of our good friend Jeff Marshall on 26<sup>th</sup> February. Jeff was a staunch supporter of SHCS. He took his turn on the committee for many years and was always a practical help in any club activity. On fund raising weekends he would bring his caravan and not only stay overnight with our stall but would provide bacon butties and tea for the team! He was invaluable on 'pig roast' day where he would be chef. A good friend and easy to talk to. RIP Jeff. The club won't be the same without you.

Tribute by Fred Kennedy.

## NEWSY ITEMS

### Hull Blitz Memorial & Celebration of Eva Crackles' work

Older members of the SHCS will remember our locally famous botanist, Miss Eva Crackles, who wrote the, "Flora of the East Riding of Yorkshire", among lots of other things including support for this Society.

Eva began her career in botany by studying the plants growing on the rubble of bombed sites in Hull during the period 1950-1953. She recorded about 270 species of plant in total of which about 50 were uncommon in the East Riding.

The National Picture Theatre in Beverley Road has lain as a heap of rubble since 1941, and is significant now as the last remaining bombsite. Following its compulsory purchase the Hull City Council is looking to make the site into a permanent memorial to the blitz. This involves protecting the building and capping the walls with soft landscaping. They say they want to, "**celebrate to the great work of local botanist Eva Crackles and her extraordinary surveys of post war bomb site flora**". Mr Jennifer Woollin, Open Spaces Development Officer in Hull City Council, has contacted me and other local botanists for ideas. Done sympathetically I think this is an excellent proposal.

### Real Christmas trees - Real Waste

About 8 million live Christmas trees were killed in the UK over the Christmas bash just past. At a time when there is knee-jerk panic planting of trees to save the planet, is it time to stop this habit?

I have listened to arguments about composting old trees, tree rental schemes and countryside economics but I am not convinced by the energy equations. Letting a tree smothered in bits of plastic die over 6 weeks, followed by a further 6 weeks of picking dead spruce needles out of one's toes and socks, is not my idea of celebrating Christmas. Last year Charlie Eldred and I tried to 'rescue' some still alive trees by

planting them out on Toffling, but they were killed by rabbits.

### We've Sedum here, Sedum there, Sedum everywhere

About 20 years ago a fisherman's compound was erected in Withernsea, roofed with a turf of various species of stonecrop (*Sedum* sp).

In recent years there has been a proliferation of various stonecrops in roof gutters and pavement edges under walls (mainly Biting Stonecrop, *Sedum acre*); on the top of 2 bus shelters and a garden shed (White Stonecrop, *Sedum album*) and a yet to be identified miniature cultivar of a blue-leaved variety of Stonecrop (possibly Reflexed Stonecrop, *Sedum reflexum*) found on gravel. I have seen Herring gulls flying about with tufts of stonecrop, presumably to nest on, and inadvertently doing a good job of distributing the plants.

### Arachnidological Alarmist

Ivy House is protected by intruder detectors (PID's) hidden about the place. Any movement in a room triggers an alarm system which our near neighbours Mick and Pauline Moore kindly check for us when they rarely go off.

In February there was a spate of random alarms so I went to investigate. I checked all the PID's and found one with a web stretched across the corner of the room in front of a PID but with no evident resident spider. The web was a funnel with the tunnel leading behind the PID. I cleared the web and disturbed a large house spider (*Tegenea domestica*) that was encamped behind the PID! It was eventually poked out with my little finger and caught without harming it, and then released into a new residence – the toolshed.

Peter J Cook

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the South Holderness Countryside Society held at the Ivy House Centre on Saturday October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2.00pm

There were 8 members present, not counting the 2 officers, and the Gen Sec had 3 proxy votes.

1. Chairman's Welcome.... The Chair (Tracey Netherton) welcomed those present and set the meeting in progress.
2. Apologies for absence: John Windass; Rohan Lewis; Jane Bone ; Peter Cook ; Andy Mason ; Gill Hart ; Nora Garton ; Karen Constantine
3. The Chair Called for the adoption of the minutes of the previous AGM  
Prop Denise Failey; Sec Harry Failey AIF
4. Matters arising from those minutes..... None
5. Annual Report.... The Chair read out the report compiled by PJC . There were 3 sections of the report namely " Toffling Hill" ..."Beacon Lagoons" and "Ivy House Centre" There was a further report with ref to Hollym Carrs Nature Reserve written by Andy Mason.  
The Chair Thanked PJC and AM for the reports  
Acceptance of these reports: Prop Charlie Eldred; Sec David Constantine AIF  
The chair said that she will arrange to send copies of the reports when requested by e-mail. The reports will be published in the next Journal.
6. Treasurer's Report.... Again there was a full and detailed report supplied by Peter (treasurer)  
Acceptance Prop Harry Failey Sec Richard Netherton. AIF
7. Appointment of inspector of accounts for next year  
Again Steve Morgan was proposed by Harry Failey sec Denise Failey.... AIF
8. Chairman's Report.... Tracey read her detailed report to those present mentioning the difficulties experienced by all active members during this period of unusual circumstances. However the administrative work had been fully maintained (PJC) and some work on reserves and maintenance at Ivy House had been carried out,(Andy and Charlie )whilst Denise continued as membership secretary. The Young Nats club had been closed down for this year and will re-start when conditions are more favourable.  
Acceptance of report Prop Margaret Kennedy.. Sec Richard Netherton.
9. Election of Officers  
In these unusual circumstances together with the fact that there had been no nominations whatsoever it was therefore decided that those people now in office would retain their positions *for the time being*.  
Tracey Netherton (Chair) Prop Richard Netherton. Sec Fred Kennedy. AIF  
Peter Cook (Treasurer) Prop Tracey Netherton, sec Richard Netherton AIF  
There were no proposals for Vice Chair. Margaret Kennedy having relinquished her position
10. Election of Committee members  
Charlie Eldred was proposed by Fred Kennedy and sec by Richard Netherton AIF. Charlie was officially welcomed onto the committee even though he had been accepted by last year's e-meeting. Jeff Marshall retired from the committee. And Andy Mason retains his position
11. There was no "Other Business". Next AGM will be OCT 2022 ( Date to be advised)

The reserve is visited by Hollym residents and users of the Garth Farm camping and caravan site.

The central area was again reaped for hay by the Fisher family in 2021 and pathways were maintained. A makeshift seat was installed using logs from Ivy House.

Apple trees in the small orchard produced lots of apple blossom in Spring 2021, but there was not a lot of fruit.

Ideas to lead nature walks to the reserve as an alternative to indoor meetings were thwarted by changes to covid restrictions and illness. Biodiversity on the reserve continues to be recorded.

There is a lot of work to be done in 2022 with signage, repairs to tree protection, safe access to the pond and some tree planting for the Queen's platinum anniversary Green Canopy project.

### **Ivy House Centre – Annual Report 2021**

Covid restrictions prevented public gatherings for most of 2020 and 2021 and there has been no use by Young Naturalists and for member events. We were pleased to host a successful open-air fund raising event in support of a local Alzheimer's Disease charity, which showcased our grounds, facilities and what we do.

A problem with drainage across a neighbour's field has been suggested to be due to roots penetrating a drain across our grounds. We are of the opinion that there is a blockage under the A1033 and we are resisting taking potentially expensive action until East Riding Highways have investigated their drain. We have excavated down to the drain at our side of the road to facilitate access for cameras, root cutters and water jets. If it is shown that the pipe under our land is blocked we have been given some pipes and we anticipate only having to pay for pipelaying.

Following last year's work on the trees the paths through the woodland have been delineated with branches and surfaced with wood chips. Andy and Charlie have done some work to clear branches overhanging the ditch. The lawns and gardens are maintained by Richard and Tracey. The mower became moribund with exhaustion and has been replaced with a new machine.

Ivy House is visited at least 3 times per week for security checks, to collect the mail, and to do any printing and filing jobs. It is with regret that we have to keep the grounds locked. There is occasional evidence that people climb over the gate. If any member would like to see the grounds, use the building or the library, just talk to us and arrangements can be made to let you in.

### **Beacon Lagoons NR – Annual Report 2021**

The Spurn Bird Observatory Trust (SBOT) and friends manages the Little Tern breeding area and reports the season's outcomes separately. Measures to give the SBOT security of tenure and more autonomy by leasing the various parcels of land to them is currently in a lawyer's 'black hole'. We are in the process of transferring this work to another firm of solicitors and we are hopeful that we can report a satisfactory conclusion in 2022.

**Peter J Cook**

**Hollym Carrs Nature Reserve Annual Report 2020**

## **General**

The reserve continued to be a sanctuary for local wildlife and people during a very difficult year indeed. A warm and dry spring leading into a lovely summer meant that being in 'Lockdown' was a lot easier. There were very few visits to the reserve between March and May, so wildlife just got on with it undisturbed. When restrictions eased, we were able to visit the reserve and check on things. As the summer progressed and people looked for places to go outside, we did have more visitors. Most were respectful but a small minority did vandalise the site and leave rubbish. This was quickly tidied/repared and local people informed so-as to 'Keep an eye on the place'.

## **Management**

There was no physical management of the reserve between March and June 2020. Prior to this we did carry out some pruning of the footpath network and a diversion path was opened-up to avoid the encroaching blackthorn. Lots of old tree guards were removed and disposed of too.

A new bench was installed, near to the bridge and this has proven very popular with visitors. Unfortunately, it was damaged by vandals placing a disposable BBQ on it and littering the site. All evidence of their abuse of the reserve, was removed.

There have been reports of dogs off leads, running around the site. This might be illegal hunting and as such it is important to report it to the police. Never approach these people but retreat and call for assistance.

The meadow was cut in July and the hay crop removed by Paul Fisher. Later in the summer I borrowed the tractor and flail from YWT Spurn and cut back a lot of the blackthorn and bramble encroaching under the powerlines and main access track. It was very effective but there is still plenty to do. The reeds have been encroaching into the Burnham Meadow, so I cut these back too.

We managed to get an autumn task list together and made a start on raking up the cut reeds and felling over-hanging trees. Our new electric chainsaw works a treat and is very efficient.

Later in the season as more restrictions came into force, we had to abandon tasks. Charlie made up lots of tree sparrow boxes and with the assistance of Peter, these were installed on the reserve.

We thank our volunteers who have helped to keep the management of the reserve ticking over in difficult times.

Surveys have been difficult to do but new species are emerging and colonising the site. One species of note is the Adder's Tongue Fern found by Peter. Moth trapping has revealed a broad diversity of these night-time visitors. Hollym Carrs is an oasis for local wildlife.

We are already in the autumn of 2021 so a new report for this year is due soon. Throughout the pandemic there has been great emphasis on the healing power of nature. People have used the reserve to help with mental health and well-being, not least those who look after it. We are proud of how this little gem is developing.

Andy Mason

## **Accounts for the Year Ended 31 January 2022**

Peter J Cook, Treasurer

## ANALYSIS

Pandemic control measures affected the Society, first in a significant reduction in membership, member donations and fund-raising both for the Society in general and Young Naturalists'. Second, jobs have had to be done within the limitations of lockdowns so an opportunity was taken to make life easier for the handful of people who work in small number to keep the Society moving. A new lawnmower for Ivy House grounds, a battery chainsaw for cutting back the overhang on rides at HCNR and a trail camera for monitoring activities and wildlife recording at HCNR have all contributed to a net deficit of £453. However, this is not the whole story.

We had to tackle a major liability at Ivy House. Tree branches hanging over the public highway had to be dealt with by an insured professional, who did an excellent job for £1500. Incredibly a significant reduction in services and administration costs coupled with an £1100 increase in total receipts made up for this large but necessary cost.

We have not received an automatic grant of £1000 from the Sir James Reckitt charity this year. The pandemic has affected this Charity too, and it has asked that in future we ask for a grant for a specific project.

We had adverse experience with HSBC at a time when Young Nats' were in existential crisis and it was resolved to close their accounts and hold the funds in a restricted reserve account (See Note 3).

In conclusion we have achieved a lot of essential work incurring only a small deficit during a difficult year. Thanks to all who have contributed time and effort at this exceptionally difficult time.

## Income and Expenditure

|                                  | Unrestricted<br>Fund<br>£ | Restricted<br>Fund<br>£ | Total<br>£   | 2021<br>£    |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Receipts</b>                  |                           |                         |              |              |
| Member Subscriptions             | 588                       | -                       | 588          | 744          |
| Member Donations                 | 762                       | -                       | 762          | 851          |
| Gift Aid                         | 212                       | -                       | 212          | 205          |
| Countryside Stewardship (RPA)    | 1,961                     | -                       | 1,961        | -            |
| Fundraising – General            | -                         | -                       | -            | 20           |
| Young Naturalists' Fundraising   | 176                       | -                       | 176          | -            |
| Young Naturalists' Subscriptions | 3                         | -                       | 3            | -            |
| Bank Interest Received           | 2                         | -                       | 2            | 18           |
| Grants and Donations             | 250                       | -                       | 250          | 1,000        |
| Wayleave                         | 170                       | -                       | 170          | 170          |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>            | <b>4,124</b>              | <b>-</b>                | <b>4,124</b> | <b>3,008</b> |
| <b>Payments</b>                  |                           |                         |              |              |
| Services and Administration      | 313                       | -                       | 313          | 1,074        |
| Insurance                        | 1,627                     | -                       | 1,627        | 1,657        |
| IT and Website Costs             | -                         | -                       | -            | 56           |
| Ivy House Costs                  | 1,800                     | -                       | 1,800        | 551          |
| Young Naturalists' Expenses      | 45                        | -                       | 45           | 45           |
| Conservation Projects - General  | 388                       | -                       | 388          | 495          |
| Depreciation                     | 404                       | -                       | 404          | 300          |
| <b>Total Payments</b>            | <b>4,577</b>              | <b>-</b>                | <b>4,577</b> | <b>4,178</b> |

|                                 |               |   |               |                |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Net Deficit for the Year</b> | <b>(453)</b>  | - | <b>(453)</b>  | <b>(1,170)</b> |
| Opening Reserves                | <u>31,546</u> | - | <u>31,546</u> | <u>32,716</u>  |
| Closing Reserves                | <u>31,093</u> | - | <u>31,093</u> | <u>31,546</u>  |

## Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2022

|                                | Unrestricted<br>Fund<br>£ | Restricted<br>Fund<br>£ | Total<br>£   | 31 Jan<br>2021<br>£ |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| <b>Fixed Assets</b>            |                           |                         |              |                     |
| Large Mower                    | 3,000                     | -                       | 3,000        | 3,000               |
| Chainsaw & Batteries           | 601                       | -                       | 601          | 601                 |
| Small Mower                    | 270                       | -                       | 270          | -                   |
| Trail Camera & Rods            | 174                       | -                       | 174          | -                   |
| Less: Accumulated Depreciation | (704)                     | -                       | (704)        | (300)               |
| Net Book Value                 | <u>3,341</u>              | <u>-</u>                | <u>3,341</u> | <u>3,301</u>        |

## Current Assets

### Bank and Cash

|                               |        |       |        |        |
|-------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Nat West Current Account      | 2,913  | 4,755 | 7,668  | 3,272  |
| Nat West Current Account (YN) | -      | -     | -      | 1,081  |
| Nat West Deposit Account (YN) | -      | -     | -      | 3,524  |
| Nat West Bus Reserve Account  | 20,063 | -     | 20,063 | 20,061 |
| Cash in hand                  | -      | -     | -      | -      |
| Cash in hand (YN)             | 21     | -     | 21     | 307    |

|                                   |                      |                     |                      |                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Total Assets @ 31 Jan 2022</b> | <b><u>26,338</u></b> | <b><u>4,755</u></b> | <b><u>31,093</u></b> | <b><u>31,546</u></b> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

## Reserves

|  |        |       |        |        |
|--|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Unrestricted Reserves                          | 26,338 | -     | 26,338 | 31,546 |
| Reserve Account for Young Naturalists (Note 3) | -      | 4,755 | 4,755  | -      |

|                                     |                      |                     |                      |                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Total Reserves @ 31 Jan 2022</b> | <b><u>26,338</u></b> | <b><u>4,755</u></b> | <b><u>31,093</u></b> | <b><u>31,546</u></b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

## Note 1: Investment assets (not valued as at 31 January 2022)

1. Hollym Carrs nature reserve
2. Beacon Lagoons nature reserve
3. Ivy House
4. Toffling Hill reserve
5. Kilnsea Wetlands bird hide

## Note 2: Other assets (not valued as at 31 January 2022)

Original Cost



|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
|                      | £     |
| Marquee              | 1,423 |
| New Projector        | 988   |
| Generator            | 60    |
| 2 Stihl Brushcutters | 870   |
| Ivy House Chairs     | 780   |
| Storage Container    | 2,856 |

### **Note 3: Reserve Account for Young Naturalists**

This restricted reserve account has been established following the cessation of the Young Naturalists' Club during 2021/22. The funds will be retained for future use by the Society's young people.

The Society's members believe that the Young Naturalists' Club will become active again.

**Copies of this report including the appointed Inspector's comments are available from the Treasurer.**

## **South Holderness Countryside Society – Hollym Carrs Nature Reserve.**

### **Winter/Spring task list 2022**

#### **Information**

Covid-19 precautions. Please note that we will be following current government guidance. We need to be sensible and practice good hygiene.

**Where to meet:** Ivy House, Hollym. Located next to the council apron on South Carr Dales Road.

**Time:** 10 am unless otherwise stated. Usually on a Sunday.

**What to bring:** A packed lunch and drink, stout boots/footwear, waterproofs, warm clothing and work gloves. Tasks usually last 3-4 hours.

**Contact details:** Task leader – Andy Mason (andymace 2305@yahoo.co.uk)

#### **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

Widening of rides and access track. Tree felling and pruning.

#### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

Glade creation and scrub management.

#### **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

Glade creation and scrub management.

#### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Barbed wire removal and tidying up edges of Burnham Meadow.

#### **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

Footpath maintenance and tree guard removal.

#### **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Fencing work and pruning vegetation.

Other dates can be agreed as and when help is needed such as grass cutting etc.

## **The Humber Forest**

Why plant trees?

A good question really. They look good, provide homes, fuel, timber and shelter. Give us a feeling of satisfaction and wellbeing. Fruits feed us and wildlife, cool the hot summer air and take the bite out of winter winds. They absorb pollution, slow down floods and convert carbon dioxide into solid wood. They change a landscape and create extensive habitats. Just a few reasons... and we want to create a Humber Forest.

Recently I had the chance to get involved with the planting of trees in our region. My passion for trees and all things woodland got the better of me. I'm absolutely loving the challenge. As Trees for Climate Officer with Heywoods/Humber Forest, I get to enable others to plant thousands of native trees on urban open spaces, former industrial sites and rural areas. We work closely with the Forestry Commission, Natural England and various charities to place the right trees in the right places.

The Humber region did once have a huge forest – The Forest of Deira. This ancient woodland extended north from Hull. Burstwick was known for its hunting woods in medieval times, so forests did exist here. Much of the low-lying parts of Holderness were covered in willow and alder carr, alongside the many meres and marshes. A landscape bursting with nature. It would be nice to get at least some of this living landscape back...

An issue is that this once wet, marshy land has been transformed through drainage and removal of forests into some of the best farmland in the country. As we keep saying – 'The right trees in the right place!' Some fields are not as productive as others, soils are harder to work in some areas, so these will be sites for new woodland. A1 arable should be kept in production, as we need food.

Something is wrong with our climate; we all know this. Landowners are already planting

trees on their land to gain Carbon Credits to offset carbon dioxide produced.



Trees are one of the best ways to absorb carbon and store it as wood. By helping landowners plant the right trees (not conifers) in the right places, we have an opportunity to really put back the forests and with them the wildlife. Hollym Carrs is a great example of what can be done on arable land to bring back nature through our intervention.

A forest is not just a closed canopy wood. The best forests have a mixture of open ground, young and old trees with an understorey adapted to the dominant species. To achieve this will take decades and centuries but we must start somewhere. To hug a mature oak tree, I reflect on all the history that has passed. That tree started its life before the Industrial Revolution. Makes you think...

Ancient forests in East Yorkshire have gone, replaced by farming, housing and industry and an obsession with keeping things tidy. We can put in place a forest that will be enjoyed and treasured by future generations. This will be a good legacy.

Humber Forest are looking to 100% fund tree planting projects, from small areas up to hundreds of hectares, in East Yorkshire. As a passionate conservationist I believe this is a good way forward for people and wildlife.

Please let me know if you want to get involved: [andrew.mason@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.mason@eastriding.gov.uk)

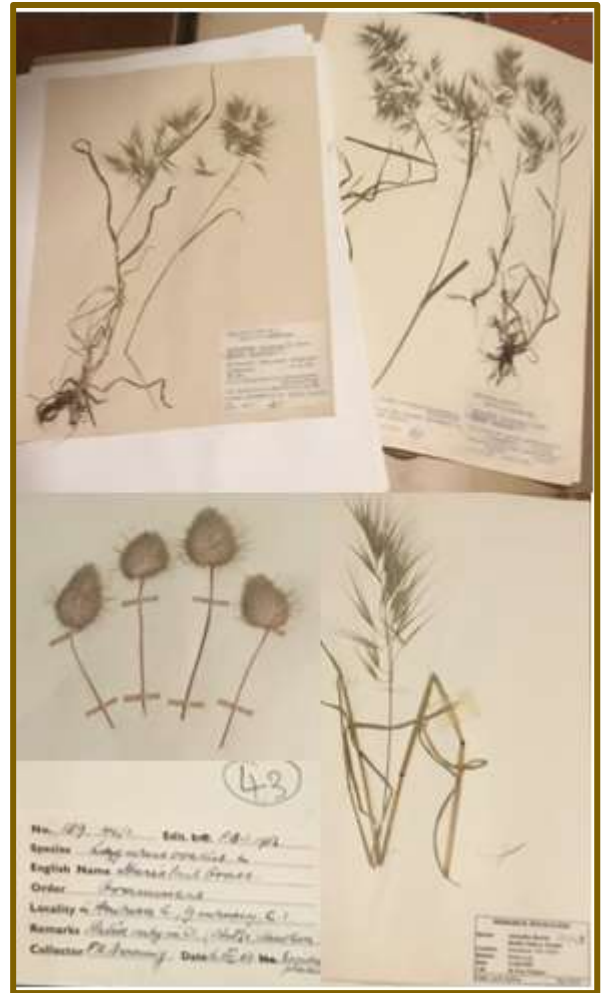
## Indoor Event at Ivy House

Our first event of the year and an exciting opportunity to view a rare collection!

To view or study: a collection of pressed grasses, sedges and rushes. Marvel at the diversity across the range of the British species. Binocular microscopes, reference books and refreshments will also be available.

Peter has a very large collection of preserved grasses, sedges and rushes (hundreds of species) which he is proposing to let local members of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland study in Ivy House on the 16th & 17th March (subject to the Covid rules of the day of course). This is a follow-up to a similar event about 4 years ago resulting in a cash contribution and a new member.

Peter is also proposing to keep the collection there for any member of the Society to peruse on **Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm to 4 pm**, or later by arrangement directly with Peter.



## Young Nat Achievement!

We are so proud of Adam who has worked hard on his SHCS awards, and has also now completed his Nature Ranger award with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust during last Summer. He created a wonderful and detailed project on hedgehogs as part of the award.

During the award he came up with some wonderful activities such as baking hedgehog cakes and painting pebble hedgehogs, he created a sand 'track trap' so see if any hedgehogs visited his garden, he interviewed members of the Holderness Hedgehog Hospital. Most importantly he found out lots of key facts about hedgehogs and put them all into a beautifully laid out presentation. Well done Adam!!



## Planting at Toffling



At the end of last year I ordered, free of charge, a mix of a hundred trees and shrubs plus canes and rabbit guards. The intention was to plant them at Toffling. I took delivery in January and stored them at Ivy House and the word went out looking for volunteers to help plant them on 13th February.

You may recall that this was the weekend that we were visited by storm Dudley, Eunice and

Franklin! Burstwick All Saints Scouts were due to visit to help with the planting but, following their risk assessment of the weather, decided this would not be possible. Despite the dreadful conditions the planting needed to go ahead to limit plant losses.

There were 8 of us who turned up on the Sunday morning ready for the task. After a quick demonstration from Andy we all got to it. In what seemed no time at all the trees were in the ground, we even had time to put up some nesting boxes. Thank you to those involved and making it an enjoyable morning.



Charlie Eldred.



# Beacon Lagoons Little Tern Project 2021

## Short Report

### Breeding success

#### Little Tern

Breeding results in 2021 were that 17 chicks fledged from 38 pairs of Little Terns. Compared to the previous two years success this year was quite poor, but, in reality, considering recent success levels, the result was ok. The 2017/2021 5-year average chicks fledged/pair rate stands at 0.67, which includes the two worse years in the last 11 years, i.e. 0.3 in 2017 and 0.1 in 2018 – the 2019-2021 3-year average fledging rate is 1.09.

Clearly in order to move forward we need to see the fledging success increase again in order to sustain and potentially increase the size of the colony. On a more positive note the number of pairs attempting to nest on site represented a good increase over the 27 pairs in 2020 with the 5-year rolling average number of pairs being the second highest since 2005.



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#### Ringed Plover

A more concerted effort to record and manage breeding Ringed Plover was instigated this year.



For the first time a Ringed Plover survey using standard surveying techniques was carried out and a number of Ringed Plover nests were “caged” in an attempt to protect them from predators.

A total of 14 pairs of Ringed Plover was counted across the full extent of Easington Lagoon and Beacon Lagoons with a total of, at least, 22 chicks having fledged. A concentration of 14 pairs of Ringed Plover in such an area is now considered to be relatively high on a national basis as is the fledging rate of 1.57 chicks per pair.

The “caging” of nests proved a success by way of all clutches of caged nests successfully hatching, but it appears that one or more of the local Sparrowhawks

became familiar with the cages being seen to perch on them occasionally much to the disgruntlement of the incubating Ringed Plovers.

#### Oystercatcher

Oystercatchers had a poor year with only one chick fledging of seven that hatched from four pairs on Beacon Ponds and one pair on Kilnsea Wetlands. It is not known why Oystercatchers had such a poor breeding season this year, though simple starvation seems likeliest. See below.

#### Weather

Weather during the season was poor to start with and generally improved as the season progressed.

#### Food supply

Food supply generally appeared to be good based on general observations of the amount of food being brought in and the only specific comment made was that the majority of food seen to be brought in to the colony appeared to be fish, presumably clupeids, with few sand eels appearing to be brought in. The exception appeared to be Oystercatcher, where starvation appeared the likeliest cause of failure.

## Predation

Predation proved to be an issue this year with a number of predation events occurring – a full account of predator activity will be included within the Colony Report, but some aspects are worthy of note here. An **unknown predator** caused a worrying aspect of this year's project, i.e. the fact that a number of dead adult Little Terns and chicks were found in the colony, including a number of adults that had been decapitated with the body and severed head being in close proximity – there appeared to be little other damage to the corpses. At least one of the dead chicks found appeared to have been nibbled or pecked at on its back.



This is the first time that we are aware that predation by **Little Owls** has occurred. Single birds were seen to fly in to the colony on a number of occasions and were frightened off when they were encountered. Remains of a ringed Ringed Plover were found in the Little Owl nest box and a Little Tern ring was found in what was believed to be a Little Owl pellet found nearby. Advice has been sought re the best means of managing Little Owl predation.

**Carrion Crows** proved to be an issue early in the season as their eggs hatched and the chickss began to grow. Action was taken in line with the current legislation in order to control Carrion Crows which led to no further predation at the colony by them.

**Oystercatcher** was not proven to have taken any Little Tern eggs or chicks this year, but we cannot be 100% sure that none was taken. Oystercatcher was seen to kill a Redshank on 10 July, which was quite unexpected.

Other than the above, it appears that Sparrowhawk and Hobby may have preyed a small number of Little Terns, but otherwise no other predators impacted the colony this year although many other predators and potential predators were observed.

## Habitat

The condition of the habitat on site was good again, but possibly of reduced extent and is likely to need continued Sea Buckthorn management and possibly some Marram Grass management, all subject to agreement and consent. Consent and agreement is in place for Sea Buckthorn management until 28 February 2023, but nothing is in place for Marram Grass.

## Human disturbance

There were concerns that human disturbance could have been significant this year due to the relaxation of Covid 19 restrictions coupled with the continued restrictions on overseas travel. As a result of these concerns additional funding was secured in order to employ a third warden in an attempt to minimise any impact from additional people using the beach and areas around the Little Tern colony. All incidents of human-related disturbance were reported via the Humber Nature Partnership again this year. Our concerns re disturbance were, thankfully, unfounded and the level of human-related disturbance appeared to be less than in 2020. There are a number of reasons why disturbance may not have been at the level we considered possible and these reasons include:

- Quick action being taken by Wardens when a potential disturbance event became apparent
- The very steep profile of the beach which naturally led the majority of people to keep lower down the beach away from the colony
- The apparent fact that there appeared not to be appreciably more people in the area than usual

## Monitoring

A more methodical approach to monitoring was attempted this year with a degree of success and it included better mapping Little Tern and Ringed Plover nests and Ringed Plover population size surveys.

A spring trap constructed specifically for the colony was trialled to catch a Ringed Plover and a Little Tern, both on the nest. The Ringed Plover was ringed and later found dead in the local Little Owl nest box and the Little Tern already carried a BTO ring and was fitted with a Darvik ring.

A number of Little Tern chicks, one adult Little Tern and a number of Ringed Plover were ringed this year.

## Wardening

A team of three wardens was employed this year as opposed to the usual two. The additional warden was employed to help manage an anticipated increase in visitors to the beach this summer as a result of a relaxation of Covid 19 restrictions in the UK combined with continued restrictions for international travel. One warden was employed from end April to end August with the other two being employed from the start of June to end of August.

This Report has been extracted and edited from the Minutes of the annual Project Review Meeting led by Mike Coverdale.

## Richard Boon

6 October 2021

Photo credits are; Jonnie Fisk, Toby Phelps and Richard Boon



## Parasites – Not So Galling!

I went on a sponsored walk at the start of September and used the opportunity to enjoy nature, the sunshine, and to let my mind wander as to what I should write about for my next article. I should realise by now that the subject matter can't be forced, the inspiration just comes of its own accord, and often presents itself in the most unexpected of places.

We walked just over eleven miles, starting from Burstwick, following the old railway track into Hedon, through Hedon towards Paull along the drain bank, then back to Burstwick via Thorngumbald. The change from summer towards autumn was evident in the bushes which were heavy with bright red, or bloomy black, jewels. Geese, who have spent the last few months flying twice daily over my house honking like callers at a fish market, starting to gather for their long journey. A dragonfly sped past, then hovered briefly, before skimming away reminding me of the TV show Airwolf. However, it was in the centre of Hedon that my eye was caught and my interest was fully spiked.

We sat for a moment beneath a couple of trees and noticed that the Lime had tiny red devil horns covering quite a number of its leaves. The tree next to it, an Oak, had the underside of many leaves covered in what looked like insect eggs. Wrong on both counts. They were both types of gall. A gall is a growth on a plant caused by another organism that has forced the plant tissue to develop in an unusual way. Insect galls are the most common, with around 133,000 different types known across the world,

but they all have the same purpose; and despite being a parasitic relationship most galls don't actually have any harmful effect on the host plant.

The insect, or gall maker, needs to start its staycation with the plant at a specific time of year which must coincide with the start of its lifecycle. The insect releases growth regulating chemicals which react with the plant hormones and the plant material starts to develop into the galls which can develop on leaves, bark, flowers, buds, acorns or roots, depending on the type of gall maker. The gall provides both protection and a source of nutrition for the insect larvae.

The little red devil horns on the Lime tree leaves (*Tilia sp.*) were Lime nail galls, caused by a mite, with each little point growing to around 8mm long. They are also known as pouch galls, or, to Star Wars fans, leafy Darth Mauls! The female mite (*Eriophyes tiliae*) needs to visit the Lime tree twice to complete her mission. In the spring she visits to feed by sucking sap from the new leaves and as she feeds she secretes chemicals onto them which then stimulates the galls to start to form. She will then return once the pouch has started to develop and will lay up to a hundred eggs inside each one. By the end of the summer each leaf will house hundreds of larvae which will leave the gall as winter approaches to spend the cold months under the bark of the tree. The red nail gall itself will not drop off the leaf, even after the larvae have left, but will remain until autumn and fall still attached with the rest of the leaves. Despite this infestation the Lime tree itself does not appear to be affected in any way and the tree remains healthy.

The second tree, which was right next to the first, was an Oak. On the underside of many of the leaves were little golden hoops that I had mistaken for insect eggs. The Oak galls I had knowingly come across before were all acorn galls. However, there are actually around 70 different gall wasps connected with Oak in Britain, and they can affect various parts of the tree. This particular one affects the Oak leaf. Their life cycle alternates between sexual and asexual generations, each generation can cause not only different types of gall to form, but can also prefer different types of oak.

This particular gall was one of the four types of Oak spangle gall. They look fairly similar from a distance, but up close they each have a different surface appearance. The pale one was the Silk Button gall, caused by a wasp of the same name (*Neuroterus numismalis*), when it lays its eggs on the leaves in late summer to early autumn. Each hoop is around 3mm across and is actually a disk with a flattened centre. It is only the asexual



generation of this wasp that produces this particular type of gall. The sexual generation produces small oval galls known as Blister galls. When you examine the gall closely it is covered in tiny golden hairs and has the shape of a beautifully covered button; hence its name. Each gall houses a single wasp larva which will mature, inside the gall, on the fallen oak leaf on the ground over winter. It will finally emerge somewhere between February and April depending on the climate. Once again, the gall on the leaf seems to have no detrimental effect on the oak tree, despite covering some of the leaf surface and preventing a small percentage of photosynthesis.

Galls, on the whole, are a perfect example of differences to be embraced rather than be eliminated. There's no need to try to 'treat' or destroy using chemicals. In fact, you are more likely to harm the host tree in doing this. Each little gall microcosm is part of the natural biodiversity of the tree. The tree acts as a good host should by providing both protection and food. The parasite, or gall maker, is the perfect guest by graciously accepting this hospitality and doing a little 'Changing Rooms' decoration on the side.



## Explorer Scouts Return to Ivy House

Burstwick Explorer Scouts have helped at Ivy House on a few occasions and asked if they could return in December for one of their challenges and to help with any projects.

On 13<sup>th</sup> December they arrived at Hollym and set about investigating the building and their new domain. Their first task was to make some bird boxes and hand them in the woods at Ivy House.

Tea time always comes around quickly when you have been working hard so they set about preparing a scouting spag-bol! The explorers cut all the vegetables while Willem, the lead Explorer, cooked outside. Delicious by all reports!



Their fire remained lit until the first downpour when they all returned indoors and sorted out the washing up and tidied up from their earlier work.

The evening finished with games followed by a movie night – Monsters!

Despite the choice of film everyone had a good night's sleep and woke to a fantastic Explorers' breakfast wrap.

The morning warranted a brisk walk so they all trekked to the local beach to explore and then it was back to Ivy House to scrape off the layers of caked mud before setting about the final clean up of their accommodation and returning home.

A fantastic weekend was had by all and they are already looking forward to returning again.



## 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 ([tr\\_netherton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tr_netherton@hotmail.co.uk)). 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. (Young Nats meetings temporarily suspended)

## 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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.



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