

1.Membership Renewal

There are 3 possible ways of renewing your membership this year:

1. Make a bank transfer to the Society's account (£15 per person) – Account No. 34055789, Sort Code 01-04-69. Enter your Surname as Reference. (**Please let us know that you are using this method of payment for our records**)
2. Fill in the attached (or enclosed) Renewal Slip and send a cheque by post to Jean Gilbert, Greta Bank Farm, Brundholme Road, Keswick CA12 4NS
3. Come to the first meeting (Oct 13th) and pay then, by cash or cheque.

Membership Cards may be collected at indoor meetings.

Please confirm to us your permission to contact you by e-mail for purposes of new Data Protection laws

2.Lecture Programme for 2018 – 2019

Meetings are at 7.30 pm in Crosthwaite Parish Rooms

Oct 4 Kevin Scott Reintroducing Species – how and why?

This talk gets our season off to a forward-looking start by considering Cumbria's possible future as a home for creatures such as beaver, lynx and wolf. Kevin is the Northern Reserves Officer for Cumbria Wildlife Trust and pays his first visit to our society.

Oct 18 Peter Mawby The Inuit people and their relationship with wildlife

This is Peter's 4th visit to our Society since his iconic talk on Dippers in 2011. His talks regularly feature his own original research into his subject combined with a great clarity and enthusiasm for his subject. In this talk he looks at the Inuit people to whom, for thousands of years, the High Arctic has been home. Peter considers in detail their relationship with the wildlife of these inhospitable northern regions.

Nov 1 Mick Durham Shetland Wildlife

Mick has been a wildlife photographer for 42 years and, after first visiting Shetland in 1989, became fascinated both by the islands and in particular the coastal otters. After moving to Dumfries, Mick joined the local camera club, of which he has been president twice. He also holds a fellowship with the Royal Photographic Society and is a member of the Assessment Board for Nature.

Nov 15 Neil Harnott Natural Flood Management

Neil has been a Senior Conservation Officer with Cumbria Wildlife Trust for the last 10 years. Having worked closely with the Environment Agency and academics since the 2015 floods, Neil looks closely at river flows through hydrographs and addresses a subject close to our hearts, namely what can be done through natural means to alleviate the risk of flooding.

Nov 29 Mike Hambrey Impact of climate change on the Arctic/Antarctic

Mike lives locally but has a long and illustrious academic career including Professor of Glaciology at Aberystwyth University. He has recently been awarded the prestigious Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research's 2018 Medal for Excellence in Antarctic Research. He has also twice previously been awarded the Polar Medal by HM The Queen, in 1989 and 2012. In this talk he brings us up to date with the latest thinking on climate change and its effects on the our two polar regions.

Jan 10 Ian Winfield The Story of Schelly

The schelly is a freshwater fish related to salmon and trout, occurring in four lakes in the Lake District. This visit by Ian Winfield, of the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology in Lancaster, completes a trio of talks by him on rare fish in our

region, the earlier ones covering vendace and Arctic charr. Another fascinating discovery of a creature many of us may not have heard before!

Jan 24 Joe Murphy Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Reserves

Joe is Senior Reserves Officer for Cumbria Wildlife Trust and pays his first visit to this Society. He will provide an overview and history of CWT nature reserves, focussing on the big things that are happening on these reserves, including new acquisitions, habitat works and visitor infrastructure improvements. South Walney is one of CWT's flagship reserves and will feature quite heavily in the talk.

Feb 7 Mike Porter Wetland Flowers/Plants

Mike is well known to the Society both as a speaker and a leader of several excellent local outings to find and inform us about our local plants and flowers. He is also a Botanical Recorder for Cumbria. In this talk he will focus on the plants of our Wetlands.

Feb 21 Tony Marsh Wildlife of Madagascar

Tony is of course well-known to members, now running all of our outings as well as giving talks in the Keswick area on wildlife in various parts of the world. All of these are supported by his wonderful wildlife photography where he has the uncanny knack of pointing a camera at a tree and coming up with a great shot of an almost invisible bird! He recently went to wildlife-rich Madagascar and we will doubtless see and hear about the lemurs for which that island is famous as well as its other birds and animals.

2.Field Outings 2018-2019

This year we are going to trial not specifying actual dates until much nearer the time in order to take advantage of better weather and sightings. The specific date will be on the website two weeks in advance and the membership will be notified by e-mail. Tony Marsh is the contact for all outings. Please get in touch by email at marshlamb1@aol.com (or if you're not on email tel. 07974 909522) with him by the day before the outing so that he can ensure enough places are available in cars for members without transport or where car-sharing is needed due to lack of parking space at the venue. Where cars are shared we recommend drivers are reimbursed on the basis of 20p per mile divided between each occupant. Guests are welcome but we regret no dogs.

Dec 18 Martin Mere

A WWT reserve with wild Swans as well as extensive reed beds etc. To be combined with nearby Marshside RSPB Reserve, Southport.

Jan 19 Manesty/ South Derwent Water

Winter wildfowl + woodland birds.

Feb 19 Red Hall Farm, near Wigton

Winter farmland birds with large flocks of feeding finches

Late April 19 Ashness Woods

Spring bird arrivals: Pied Flycatchers, Wood Warblers, redstarts etc.

23rd May 19 Woodland Trust

To view a recently established woodland site to see the environmental benefits. Venue to be confirmed.

Late May 19 **Gait Barrows NNR**

Limestone pavement, woodland, fen and grassland for Lady's Slipper Orchid, rare butterflies, exotic moths and unique flora, to be combined with **Leighton Moss**: flagship RSPB reserve

Jun 19 **St Bees Head**

Sea bird colony/Spring migrants/?? Cetaceans

July 19 **Drumburgh Moss, Solway Coast**

Dragonfly bonanza!

3.Past Field Trip Reports

All reports and photographs by Tony Marsh except Leighton Moss, (David Thomason)

7th September: Bat Walk, (changed to an informal talk) with Sally Phillips

The weather on the proposed night was awful, extremely wet, windy and cold so we reconvened to Portinscale Village Hall where Sally Phillips talked to us about bats. She started off describing how a chance encounter with a lost young Pipistrelle bat entranced her so much she proceeded to train in bat handling with Natural England and even worked for some time as a bat consultant. Topics ranged over the species that occur in Cumbria, (8 in total), the lifestyle and lifespan, (bats live in excess of 30 years at times), and even Rabies and Vampire Bats. What was very clear is that although there is still much that we don't know about such small, elusive nocturnal creatures they are absolutely fascinating. We were delighted to be able to see close up a young Pipistrelle Bat that Sally was caring for as it was unable to fly properly, although with Sally's care and good feeding it was starting to make progress.



Pipistrelle Bat

14th September: Fungal Foray (An additional outing to the programme)

A good number of us joined a Cumbria Fungal Group foray in Great Wood last Thursday. We were led by Paul Nichol, a highly knowledgeable mycologist, who patiently explained some of the very basics to us beginners. We found a large number of species varying from Tripe Fungus, which grows only on dead Elm to an Amethyst Deceiver via the Jelly Baby fungus, scientific name *Leotia lubrica*.

One of the CFG group spent most of the morning crawling underneath Holly bushes and eventually found a single specimen of a tiny and rare Holly Parachute Mushroom, *Marasmius hudsonii*, which bears even tinier red hairs. We were struck by how much fewer specimens there were around compared to a similar trip 3 years ago.



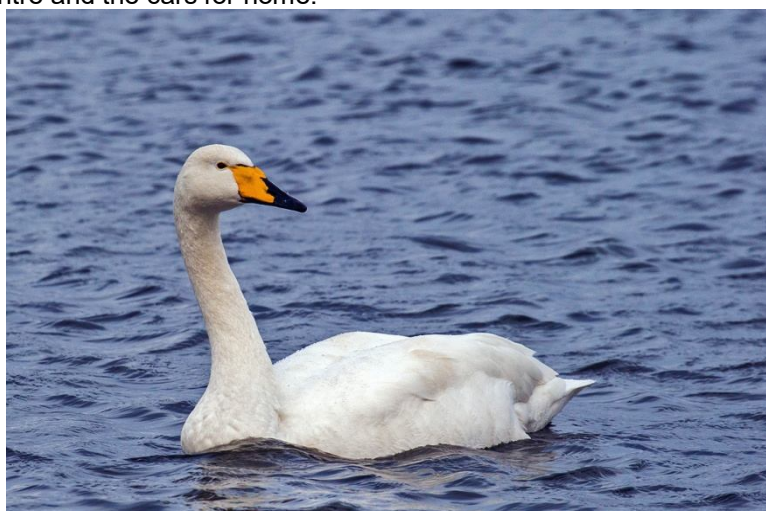
Holly Parachute Mushroom

23rd Nov 2017: Caerlaverock WWT reserve

In spite of mixed weather we enjoyed a productive day at the Wetland and Wildfowl Trust reserve at Caerlaverock. Shortly after arrival we enjoyed the spectacle of scores of wild swans both Mute and Whooper feet away from the hide window as they followed the warden and his wheelbarrow of grain. Numerous Teal and Wigeon along with a single male Gadwall added to the excitement. A few Yellowhammers as well as at least one male Reed Bunting were feeding with the House Sparrows on the lane and walking down the track to the tower hide we got good views of Bullfinch, (at least three pairs), a Tree Creeper and a Grey Wagtail and an extremely fleeting view of a pair of Goldcrests. There was a flock of Barnacle Geese very close in to the Tower Hide which included one with an all white neck, (usually white, black and grey), a possible Snow Goose/Barnacle cross.

The Folly Pond Hide gave us views of Shelduck and Black-tailed Godwits and at times some beautiful sunlight with a dark grey sky and a rainbow with Whooper Swans occasionally flying across.

We ended the day to coincide with High Tide at the hide overlooking the Merse and the Solway. A few Little Egrets, about ten Redshank, a medium flock of Golden Plover and an ever increasingly large flock of Barnacle Geese, but the star was a distant, but satisfying by telescope, view of a female Peregrine sitting for the duration on a log on the marsh. Suddenly all erupted up into the air when an incredibly violent hail squall passed over us. We sat it out and then returned to the visitor centre and the cars for home.



Whooper Swan

Thursday 5th April 2018: Leighton Moss RSPB reserve

Members had a wonderful visit to the RSPB's reserve, with lots of birds to watch. Some spring migrants had arrived though not many, Willow warbler, Sand Martin and a single Osprey were seen, the now regular Avocets had arrived and along with Great White Egret were added to the years lists of those who keep such records (myself being one of them). At the Merse hides there were waders, ducks, geese and gulls; Canada and Pink-footed

geese, Pintail, Gadwall, Wigeon, Shelduck, Tufted Duck, Coot, Teal, Mallard and Shoveler with Black-headed, Lesser Black-back and Great Black-backed gulls. Waders included Black-tailed Godwit, Oystercatcher, Lapwing, and Redshank. One or two Little Egrets were also seen but no Kingfisher. On the main part of the reserve all the usual small birds were present and Marsh Tit, Chaffinch, Robin, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Wren, Bullfinch, Dunnock and Nuthatch were seen. Visits to all five of the hides were made with mixed success, the two western hides (Grisedale and Tim Jackson) were fairly quiet birdwise but the other three hides (Lilian's, Causeway and Far) certainly made up for them with lots of waterfowl across the pools. Moorhen, Gt Crested Grebe and Marsh Harrier were all added here and the highlight of the day occurred at Causeway Hide when we had a single Osprey fishing right in front of the hide with a male Marsh Harrier flying in the background. A final tally of 53 bird species at the end of the trip.....oh.and A TOAD.



Hovering Osprey

Thursday 24th May 2018: Chapel Wood, above Wythop Mill

Perfect weather for a gentle walk up to and through a lovely Oak Wood above Kelsick Farm and beyond to get iconic views down Bassenthwaite Lake & across to Skiddaw. A fox was spotted below the farm but I was surprised not to see any Stonechats on the walk up there or indeed during any part of the day. We did spot a single Linnet going up to the farm and there were a few more coming down at the end of the trip.

We heard Cuckoo calls including when one flew over us whilst calling, and we had good views of at least two Tree Pipits, calling and performing display flights. We had a glimpse of a male Redstart early on and again a pair at the end of the trip but not everybody got to see them. We did however have excellent views of quite a number of Pied Flycatchers, especially singing males, and the females were entering some of the many nest boxes in the wood. A couple of Treecreepers had a high speed fracas in front of us spiraling around tree trunks and we also witnessed a spat between two Greater Spotted Woodpeckers, as well as sightings of singles and we heard a lot of drumming. Somebody heard a Green Woodpecker but we didn't see one.

Emerging onto the fellside above the wood the gorse seemed very sorry looking, barely alive, and we were surprised that there were no Wheatears. There were, however, a number of Small Heath butterflies actively flying around, often in spiraling pairs and occasionally landing and sitting with their wings characteristically closed. A single Small Copper did however open its wings for a photo. There were quite a few pale day-flying moths that I couldn't identify but a single highly mobile little yellow one that I have subsequently identified as a Speckled Yellow. There was a Large Red Damselfly chomping on a fly as we left the wood. (These are much smaller than their name suggests!).

We quickly walked around Dubwath Silver Meadows on the way back and picked up Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting but no Grasshopper Warblers.



Male Pied Flycatcher

Thursday 14th June 2018: Siddick Pond and Oldside Workington

A very windy morning following an even stormier night. Siddick Ponds were initially quiet with a few singing male Reed Buntings the main interest, plus a number of Herons flying around and four Gadwalls along with great numbers of Mallard. One of the volunteers working there showed us a small toad he had found. There were also some fine specimens of Jelly Ear Fungus, (*Auricularia auricula-judae*), on an Elder tree

We then proceeded to walk to the Old Side area, crossing the main road via a footbridge where we watched a pair of Whitethroats, then under the railway via a low bridge. There were two fine specimens of Bloody Cranesbill adjacent to the railway. As expected in the windy weather we didn't see any of our target species of Small Blue Butterfly but in the shelter of trees and after the sun emerged we did see pristine single Speckled Wood & Ringlet butterflies. There were a number of empty cocoons of Burnet Moths on grass stems and we spotted a single adult hunkered down against the wind and a Blue-tailed Damselfly. The flora was exceptional though with a number of rather battered looking Spotted Orchids, Yellow Toadflax, a few Bugloss plants amongst the vetches and around the beach a display of maritime specialists that would have looked good at Dungeness, with large numbers of Sea Kale & Sea Holly amongst them. The waves were exhilarating and a small group of Ringed Plover were flying up and down the shingle beach. We also got a reasonable but brief view of a female Stonechat.

Returning to the Siddick Pond area we came across a family of Great Tits, a singing Sedge Warbler and a dozen or so of the tiniest froglets crossing the cycle path.



Ringlet Butterfly

Thursday 5 th July 2018: High Borrowdale near Tebay

A large group visited to this wonderful valley off the A6 south of Shap where we were guided by Jan Darrall of Friends of the Lake District and who was highly involved in the purchase and renovation of this parcel of land and then instigated a scheme to recreate an upland hay meadow, an increasingly rare environment nowadays. Jan

explained the various means whereby they established the wildflowers there, including the necessary grazing regime and the FLD's efforts to control land slippage and erosion of the hillsides along the Borrow Beck.

The hay meadow was magnificent with lots of Yellow Rattle, an essential plant to have as this reduces the vigour of the competing grasses. We didn't see much in the way of bird life although we did pass a Sand Martin colony en route and I was disappointed not to see any Chimney Sweeper moths although there were a great many Ringlet butterflies and finally we did spot a single Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary resting on a Foxglove and David Thomason did spot some Small Heath Butterflies before we arrived. A small black insect with a yellow body turns out to be a Red-necked Footman moth. The floral display made up for any lack of invertebrates and Jan also give us a fascinating insight into what life must have been like for the farmers who lived there right up until the 1950s.



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Thursday 19th July 2018: Eycott Hill Nature Reserve

We were a bit worried that the prolonged dry weather would have adversely effected the wildlife on offer at this Cumbria Wildlife Trust reserve near Mungrisedale we ended up having a fascinating and productive morning. We were shown round by Imogen Rutter, CWT warden for the reserve, who explained the history of the area, previously used to graze large numbers of sheep, and the management techniques they are using ranging including blocking drainage channels, creating pools, establishing hay meadows, (using seed from Piper Hole, the Coronation Meadow near Ravenstonedale), planting hedges, juniper shrubs and broadleaf trees, especially Alder, and grazing with a special breed of cattle called Luings.

For those who haven't been the views are impressively panoramic. Just below the car park was one of three hay meadows, although late in the season and only in its first year it was still impressively colourful with lots of Yellow Rattle and a number of Small Tortoiseshell butterflies on these and thistles. Other butterflies we saw were Large, Small and Green-veined Whites, (including a mating pair of the latter), Ringlet and Small Skipper as well as Antler and Silver Y moths. We photographed a couple of spiders, one of which was a Four-spotted Orbweb Spider, *Araneus quadratus*. There were huge numbers of a pale micro-moths, presumably Grass Moths and in some parts of the wetter zones, (although even here the Sphagnum was amazingly dry), a lot of a small but attractive blue coloured Leafhopper, *Cicadella viridis*. At least two Emperor dragonflies were patrolling the ponds.

There are a large variety of different eco-zones within the reserve and this was reflected by the variety of flora to be seen with perhaps the standout species being flowering Grass of Parnassus and some tiny Round-leaved Sundews. Other drier areas held Harebells and even sections of flowering heather. Other plants we were able to identify were Knapweed, Eyebright, Lesser Willowherb, Cross-leaved heath, Marsh Cinquefoil, Bottle sedge, Bogbean, Cotton Grass, Tormentil Marsh lousewort, Bog asphodel, Heath rush, Marsh thistle.

It was quiet birdwise but there was a large mixed flock of Linnets and Meadow Pipits feeding on seeds in the Hay Meadows, a number of Wheatears, mostly juveniles, numerous hawking Swallows above us and a vocal family group of 5 Kestrels. At least two different types of bird regurgitated pellets caused speculation as to what had produced them. One contained mostly insect cases, the other small mammal bones and fur.



Grass of Parnassus

Thursday 2nd August 2018: Langholm Moor

Unfortunately a depressingly wet weather forecast caused this trip to be cancelled.

KESWICK NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY Membership & Renewal Slip 2018/19

Annual subscriptions are £15 per person (students £5, juniors £3). Please either post this slip with remittance to Jean Gilbert (Treasurer) Greta Bank Farm, Keswick CA12 4NS or just pay at the first meeting. Alternatively see Newsletter for how to make a bank transfer. Membership Cards may be collected at indoor meetings.

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