

Friday 09/11/07 0945-1300 Woolston Eyes
Blue Clear Cold Sunny Skies Fresh!

The cool conditions seemed not to discourage the 'Keen Team' and by the appointed time those who had managed to avoid all the distractions that life seems to throw at our *168 hour 365 day* fully occupied lives were assembled and ready to take on the joys of an amble round the Eyes (well some of it at least!).

We were joined by George and Catherine from the WEA who were to accompany us on this trip and hopefully enjoy the delights of this exquisite reserve that has only been in existence since 1979 when the founder members of Woolston Eyes Conservation Group saw the potential of this Ship Canal dredging site as a unique wildlife area.

Our first views were across the 'Basin' area which is basically a deep area of water that heads up the new weir and on this we encountered our first wildfowl of the trip i.e. **Tufted Duck** and **Mallard** these were also joined by **Black Headed Gulls** which at this time of the year sport only a speck of 'black' behind their ears proving once more that the naming of anything in nature needs very careful consideration of all the seasons that a species may chameleon like pass through and in the case of the BHG I believe too much haste was the order of the day in it's nomenclature!

We next peered down onto the bunded loop of the River Mersey that sits between beds (settling 'beds' for the dredged detritus that the Ship Canal constantly needs clearing of otherwise it would soon silt up) two and three to take in views of **Shoveler**, **Gadwall** and **Teal**.

Finally we entered the island 'domain' of No3 bed and were soon captivated by this mix of habitats that gives safe harbour to a mix of wildlife, especially birds. This meant that before long we were noting wildfowl such as **Teal**, **Mute Swan** and **Pochard** all taking advantage of the large expanse of reed filled water that this bed offers whilst the Meadow and Tree clad areas held **Reed Bunting**, **Chaffinch**, **Bullfinch** and **Greenfinch**. (These latter birds were making good use of the Countryside Stewardship crop that had been planted especially for such species).

Then as is always the case time had chased away our morning and lunch loomed on the Horizon pushing us ever onward in a homeward direction. Dave