

Thursday 12/05/11 1045-1340 WOOLSTON*Breezy Bright Fresh and Dry*

There seemed to be a slight hint of the strains of Nat King Coles perennial song '*The Party's Over*' drifting through the air as Team Thursday gathered for our fifth and final fieldtrip but the end of term celebrations were deferred for a couple of hours longer in order that we could gain a taste of this eight hundred acre site.

The usual 'stop-start' style of walking was soon adopted as we encountered birds almost at each five or so footfalls hence by the time the basin area was reached we had added Chaffinch, House Sparrow, Chiffchaff and Dunnock to our 'final' day list.

The windswept open water seemed to hold little for us to observe save for the rush of the Mersey over the weir but peering across to the backwater section four species of birds revealed themselves up to our scrutiny hence Shelduck, Black Headed Gull, Coot and Great Crested Grebe doubled our tally with the latter two species sat firmly on their nests which they had lashed onto submerged logs.

The hike along the west bank of No2 bed held refreshing gusts of wind against which we steadied ourselves in order to note a mix of hirundines which were feeding over the waters of No3 bed and after a little effort we noted the brown backs and chest bands of the Sand Martin, the white rumps of the House Martin and the scimitar shaped wigs of the Swift all of which were taking insects that were emerging from the reed beds and water.

A push onward found us at the gated community of No3 bed which sits in splendid isolation from the right of way that passes through this area and is gained by crossing the footbridge that once served as the original pathway along Weir Lane.

Views from the platform hide showed the extent of the bed and added Lapwing and Little Grebe to our list before we moved into the centre of the bed in order to check out the views from a few of the hides that are dotted about this bed.

The breeding season being well underway plus the stiff breeze kept some of the smaller birds from our gaze and hearing but on gaining the dizzy heights of the Morgan Hide Black Necked Grebe, Pochard, Cormorant and Greenfinch fed our bird hungry appetite. Then came the about turn and the fond farewell. Dave