

Friday 24/05/13 0950-1300 WOOLSTON EYES RESERVEBreezy Fresh Brightish!

Admittedly this sessions schedule is a little out of kilter but I hadn't expected that the weather would intimate that we had been catapulted into the grip of winter since we last met only a mere couple of weeks ago but as I took the register I almost found it difficult to dig out the physiognomy of those present for all were wrapped as if the Russian Steppes were our destination!

The steadying of our perception of what was the reality of the season then came when we tuned our ears into the song of a Lesser Whitethroat from deep within a Bramble Tangle which lined the loop of the River Mersey for this bird would only be present in Spring/Summer being an insect eating Sylvia Warbler.

Thus we continued with our 'Progress' into Woolston Eyes which is an 800 acre gem of a reserve which sits but three miles from a bustling Warrington Town Centre.

Windswept views were then 'enjoyed/endured' from atop the track that skirts No2 Bed (there are four deposit beds on this site all set up to take dredging by the Ship Canal Company) but as we could only make out Shelduck and Tufted Duck from this vantage point we pushed on to gain shelter (of sorts) on No3 bed.

Swallows then demonstrated their supremacy at low level flying sorties as they took advantage of the insect bounty that abounded in the shelter of the tree-lined Ship Canal Track and once we had admired this demonstration of flexible feeding techniques required when gusting winds dominated the landscape we crossed the Rubicon and entered No3 Bed.

A trek then led us to the almost 'Luxurious' environs of the Morgan Hide which easily absorbed our number and once all were settled we set about unravelling the mysteries that lay before our gaze.

Swift, House Martin and Sand Martin skimmed o'er the insect rich water upon which sat Pochard, Gadwall and one of the rarest birds of the UK Black-Necked?

Grebe whilst around and about Black Headed Gulls noisily progressed with their **breeding season mayhem**. A wander round the paths of the bed then led us back to our entry point onto this wonderland after which we broke free of its spell and headed homeward.

Dave Steel

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WEA Sale group

S31213 Field trip 09

04/06/2013

Tuesday 04/06/13 0935-1300 WOOLSTON EYES

Sun + Sunshine + Sunny!

There seemed to be an 'end of Term' air about Team Tuesday as we gathered on Weir Lane for this our penultimate fieldtrip before we all fade gently into the coming Summer but what all seemed to forget the fact that there was the coming exam period for which it appeared most of those gathered had not yet prepared but I am sure next Tuesdays 'Rest-Day' will be spent revising the six Learning outcomes that are on the Individual Learning Plan forms so happily received into enthusiastic hands prior to our perambulation about Woolston

House Sparrows 'chirped' away as we moved past the end of the Runcorn-Latchford Canal (this structure having been first encountered at Moore) followed by a few snatches of song uttered by a Lesser Whitethroat which only seems to give views when I am not with a WEA Team!

A Common Whitethroat then managed to give brief views as we greeted a founder member of Woolston (Dave Bowman) who had joined our happy throng on this our long delayed visit to this 'Gem' of a reserve which sits but three miles from Warrington. Next a Garden Warbler toyed with our patience as it sang from nearby leaf-clad trees never once giving us a glimpse of its beautiful understated plumage.

A push was then required in order to move our collective gaze onto a few birds which were 'definitely' in view once we had entered the 'Isle of Tranquillity' No3 Bed but for sanities sake we did pick out a few easy to note species i.e. Grey Heron, Cormorant and Buzzard en-route!

Views from the South Scaffolding Hide then gave a sense of the size of this part of the reserve whilst adding Tufted Duck, Gadwall and Black Headed Gull (all of which breed on this site) to our day-list.

Then after a brief pause to admire the vegetated inner part of the Bed we made a bee-line for the resplendent Morgan Hide which easily absorbed our number and once we had relaxed into our panoramic viewpoint we set about the relatively easy task of gaining the autographs of the lead roles played by Black Necked Grebe, Red Crested Pochard, Little Ringed Plover after which lesser stars Reed Bunting, Lapwing and House Martin were mopped up.

Star-Struck we then wended our way homeward on this perfect sunny day.

Dave Steel