



Wexford Naturalists' Field Club,
c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, North Slob, Wexford, Ireland.

WNFC Newsletter

Issue number 32

December 2013

Welcome to the December issue of WNFC newsletter.

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

January

Thursday 2nd: "The Lonely Bat of Wexford-Discovery of Greater Horseshoe Bat in Co. Wexford" by Paul Scott, Bat Conservation Ireland.

Saturday 11th: Birdwatching Workshop. Meet at 11 am at The Pumphouse. Bring a packed lunch. **Leaders:** Simon Collins and Dave Daly.

February

Thursday 6th: AGM at 7 pm followed at **8 pm** by "Where to go Birdwatching in Wexford" by Dave Daly, Wildlife Artist.

Saturday 8th: Garden Walk and Bird Ringing Demonstration (weather permitting) at Barnland, Killinierin. Meet at 11 am at Killinierin School (T157 657). Bring a packed lunch. **Leaders:** Janet Whelehan and Michael O'Donnell.

Directions to Killinierin: Travelling north on N11/M11 exit at Junction 22 for Gorey North. Turn left at the Roundabout for Gorey and then turn right for Killinierin opposite Green's Fruit Farm. Continue to village and the school is on your right.

March

Thursday 6th: 8 pm at John F. Kennedy Memorial Park & Arboretum, New Ross (S 727 193) (Note change of venue) "A Passion for Mammals - Major Gerald E.H. Barrett-Hamilton" by Chris Wilson, WNFC member (see page 3).

Saturday 8th: Field trip to Courtown Wood and Cahore. Meet at 11am in the Forest Park Leisure Centre car park in Courtown Harbour (T 199 567). Bring a packed lunch. **Leaders:** Simon Collins and John Kinsella.

Date for your diary Join in the Club's 10th Birthday celebrations at the Irish National Heritage Park on Saturday 13th September.

2014 PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

A copy of next year's programme is included with this newsletter. When planning the events, the committee introduced a number of new ideas. Your comments and feedback on these changes are welcome.

To help members improve their bird identification skills a workshop will be held on Saturday 11th January at 11 am in The Pumphouse. Simon Collins and Dave Daly will be on hand to share their knowledge on bird topography, give ID tips and advice on bird guides and optical equipment. The birdwatching theme will be followed up in our February lecture and field trip and there will be further opportunities to improve skills at other field events throughout the year.

Some members have indicated that they would like to have longer field trips especially if they have travelled a distance to the site. To facilitate this, a number of this year's field trips have 11 am starts and members are encouraged to bring a packed lunch. Participants should not feel under pressure to remain on if they would prefer to leave earlier.

If you wish to receive emails with reminders of upcoming club events, and details of other events which may be of interest, please ensure that Nicholas Egan, Membership Secretary, has an up-to-date email address for you. Since events may change due to unforeseen circumstances please check for last minute updates on our website, www.wexfordnaturalists.com or phone Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, (076) 1002660 (**Note new phone number**).

Where available, bring field guides, lenses, binoculars etc. to field events. Don't forget a notebook and pen/pencil to record all you see and hear! There are a number of guidebooks in the Club Library. Check these out on www.wexfordnaturalists.com/library or find out more details from Will Warham, Club Librarian.

WELCOME

Special welcome to the following new members:

Eamonn Lawlor, Castlebridge; Kristina O'Toole, Wellingtonbridge; Trevor Sargent, Broadway; Aine Neville, Broadway; Dave Daly, Drinagh; Maureen Goodbody, Ballycanew

AGM

"Under Section 4 of the Club Constitution, "Members who wish to stand for any position on the Committee, Officer or General member, should submit their names, plus that of a proposer and seconder, to the Club Secretary for receipt at least 21 days (this year that will be 16th Jan 2014) before the AGM which is being held on Thursday 6th Feb 2014. Officers are Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer, and there can be up to 6 General members. Nominations to WNFC, c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, North Slob, Wexford. Email: info@wexfordnaturalists.com

Any nominee who is unopposed will be automatically elected at the AGM. Where there is no nominee for an Officer position, or the number of General members falls short of 6, the vacant positions may be filled by election at the AGM itself. Elections by secret ballot will only occur at the AGM, where there is more than one candidate for an Officer position or where the nominations for General member exceed 6." Items for inclusion on the agenda should also be submitted by 17th Jan. 2013 (See section 5.2 of the constitution).

RECORDING

Your records, as usual please, to Records Officer at records@wexfordnaturalists.com. Postal records can be sent to Records Officer c/o Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, North Slob, Wexford or dropped into the suggestion box at any lecture.

Bird Atlas 2007-2011

As many of you will have already noticed the Bird Atlas 2007-2011 has recently been published. Described by BirdWatch Ireland as "the most important book on Irish & UK birds in the past 20 years" it is based on 4 years of field work by 40,000 volunteers collecting 19 million records.

It is the fruit of seven years joint effort of BirdWatch Ireland, the British Trust for Ornithology & the Scottish Ornithologists Club. Over 1300 maps describe patterns of distribution, abundance and change for nearly 300 species. Wexford Naturalists' Field Club were very proud to provide support towards its development by sponsoring the Roseate Tern species profile (p. 424). The club has recently purchased a copy of the atlas for our members use. Just ask at the next lecture if you are interested in taking a look!



Bumble bees

The photos which follow are two insects which are new to Wexford this year.



BUMBLEBEE MIMIC LEUCOZONA LUCORUM
(photos J. Whelehan)



BUMBLEBEE BOMBUS BARBUTELLUS

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

The club's new Facebook and Twitter pages are proving to be a great success with many members already signed up. We're very pleased to have 97 people with us on Facebook! We update the page with all the latest wildlife news from the club and around the county. After all lectures and fieldtrips we post photographs so be sure to log on and take a look! Don't worry, you don't even have to be signed up to Facebook or Twitter to take a peek.

And don't forget you can also send us your photographs via Facebook if you need any help with identification. Similarly, if you have any identification skills, if you know your buzzard from your bumblebee, we would love to have you with us on Facebook to help identify the many photographs we receive.

The pages are moderated by Michael, Mark and Nicholas, and they would be delighted to welcome more members to the page (see www.wexfordnaturalists.com for details)

COCA-COLA COASTCARE GROUP OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Friends of the Raven who won the Coca-Cola Coastcare Group of the Year award at An Taisce's 2013 Coastcare Merit Awards on 28th November. A number of WNFC members are also members of this group who do great work keeping Raven Woods clean.

CLUB JACKETS

Regatta jackets with the club logo embroidered are available to order in blue, green or black. Price €56. For more details contact Mary Foley at any club event.

THE LEPIDOPTERA OF COUNTY WEXFORD is for sale at all club events at a reduced price of €5

DISCOUNT

As WNFC is a member of Co. Wexford Community Forum, club members can avail of a discounted admission rate to The National Heritage Park in Ferrycarrig. The discount applies to the club member only and club membership cards must be presented. Prices are correct at time of publication of this Newsletter.

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all
WNFC members, and their families.*

MAJOR GERALD EDWIN HAMILTON BARRETT-HAMILTON

Kilmannock House, Campile, Co. Wexford
1871 – 1914

Gerald E. H. Barrett-Hamilton died suddenly in South Georgia on 17th January 1914 and was brought home and buried in his home parish, in Co. Wexford, on 2nd March 1914.



To commemorate the Centenary of the death of one of Ireland's truly 'Great' Naturalists, three events are taking place in Co. Wexford in March 2014.

1. On Sunday 2nd March 2014 at 10.15 am the Morning Service at All Saint's Parish Church, Duncannon will have special emphasis on celebrating the life of Major Barrett-Hamilton with the sermon given by Bishop Henderson. There will be time for quiet reflection at the Major's graveside.
2. This will be followed at 12 noon with the unveiling of a commemorative Blue Plaque at Kilmannock House, Campile. Major Barrett-Hamilton's Grandson Michael Nesbitt and Granddaughter Clare Nesbitt will officiate at the ceremony. Refreshments will follow and are provided by Patrick and Edel Barnwell of Kilmannock House.
3. On Thursday 6th March 2014 at 8 pm at John F. Kennedy Arboretum, the Major Barrett-Hamilton Memorial Lecture, hosted by Wexford Naturalists' Field Club, and titled 'A Passion for Mammals', will be given by Christopher J Wilson FZS (WildSide).



Major Gerald E.H. Barrett-Hamilton was a prolific writer and contributed greatly to our knowledge of mammal species not only in Ireland but also in UK and the world. In April 1895 he with Mr. Oldfield Thomas, first described the Irish Stoat. Major Barrett-Hamilton is remembered primarily for his 'A History of British Mammals', published in parts between 1910 and 1921 (he died before completion) and the huge amount of contributions in published papers of the time – *Irish Naturalist* and *Zoologist* amongst others.

JAMESTOWN NATURE RESERVE

Jamestown Nature Reserve is one of Wexford's hidden gems for the wildlife enthusiast. Located just outside Oilgate on the banks of the river Slaney it is home to an impressive variety of habitats and species. Owned by club librarian, Will Warham, much time and effort has gone into its development, made all the more impressive as it is also a working farm.

A visit to the Jamestown Nature Reserve is a real treat, as obvious to the members who attended any of the events held there this year, including the bumblebee workshop, BioBlitz species count and summer BBQ. The range of habitats open to

exploration is impressive; wildflower meadows, rough grasslands, old and new woodlands, streams, reedbeds, rivers and hedgerows. If you are particularly lucky on your visit to the reserve you may even spot some out-of-the-ordinary species such as Barn owl, Otter, Kingfisher, Stoats and there was once even a Bittern spotted!

Since its establishment about eight years ago Will has dedicated much effort into developing the reserve. A fantastic wooden boardwalk leads visitors through the reed beds to observation hides and towers with beautiful views of the river Slaney and the surrounding Wexford countryside. In addition to this he has renovated farmyard outbuildings into classrooms and toilet facilities, welcoming school groups and other educational tours.

Asked about his favourite feature of the reserve, it's quite difficult for Will to choose, "I enjoy every little bit of it! Probably I enjoy spring the most, and like many others, I anxiously look out for the first swallow". As you can imagine living on a nature reserve must be idyllic. When asked what inspired him to create the reserve Will admits there was no eureka moment. He has both a degree and diploma in agriculture and had always tried to farm in an environmentally-friendly way since moving from Dublin in the 1960s after working as a film cameraman for RTE. After mulling over the idea for a number of years he decided to try it out in 2005.

Jamestown is a great example of what can be achieved when balancing conservation with farming. Most of the Irish landscape is farmed in some way, so wildlife conservation can reap huge benefits from working hand-in-hand with agriculture. In recognition of this, the reserve has been a REPS (Rural Environment Protection Scheme) demonstration farm, and is now in the AEOS (Agri-Environmental Options Scheme). The reserve accommodates a broad range of farming activities including beef cattle, red deer, cereals and forestry.

So what next for Will and the Jamestown Nature Reserve? Well there is certainly no shortage of ideas! He has a programme of courses lined up for 2014, as well as plans to erect an osprey nesting platform beside the river Slaney and has just started to build a new trail through the old woodland. Further down the line he hopes to expand the reed bed boardwalk into a looped walk with an additional hide. As Will enthuses, "there are all sorts of exciting possibilities!"

Jamestown Nature Reserve is open to the public and club members are very welcome. Pre-booking is essential though. Look out for some club events being hosted by Will in 2014.

www.JamestownNatureReserve.com (new website coming in 2014); wwarham@eircom.net; 053-9138892 / 087-2052266

Written by Mark Nolan in conversation with Will Warham



VIEW OF THE SLANEY FROM JAMESTOWN (photo C.Wilson)

CERTIFICATE IN BIOLOGICAL RECORDING AND IDENTIFICATION

The UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science, in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Data Centre and with support from the Heritage Council, are delivering a new one-year course which may be of interest to some members. The 'Certificate in Biological Recording and Identification' is Ireland's first university certificate in biological recording and identification. It is aimed at those who wish to hone their species identification skills and engage in biological recording.

The course will commence in January 2014 with taught modules taking place on Friday mornings (8 or 9 mornings from Jan to May). The project work will take place over the summer months.

The fee for the course is €2,000. However, bursaries from the Heritage Council may be awarded, on application, to cover part of this fee. Applications can be made online at www.ucd.ie/apply or through Dr Mary Kelly-Quinn: mary.kelly-quinn@ucd.ie who can also provide further information.

WONDERFUL WILD WETLANDS PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

To help celebrate International Wetlands Day on 2nd February, Wexford Country Council, in partnership with the Irish Ramsar

Wetlands Committee, is holding an amateur photography competition. There is over €500 in prizes and categories for under 18s and adults in both the 'Wetlands in Wexford' county competition and the 'Wetlands and Farming' national competition. The closing date is Friday 17th January.

The winning images will be displayed in a special Wetlands photographic exhibition to be held in the Country Hall during International Wetlands Day on 2nd February 2014.

Further details can be found on www.irishwetlands.ie, or www.wexford.ie, or by email from Niamh Lennon at niamh.lennon@wexfordcoco.ie.

ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be published in March. This is your newsletter, and natural history articles are always welcome. Items for inclusion may be passed on to me, Nicholas Egan, at newsletter.wnfc@gmail.com; or 086 0757976.

If you would like to save paper and help reduce the club's carbon footprint, please contact Nicholas as above to receive your newsletter by email.



CLUB MEMBERS WITH EOIN DONNELLY AT THE COACH TRIP TO MANAGED WOODLAND IN STRADBALLY (photos M. O'Connell)