

Wildlife in Merseyside



March 2007
Issue 6

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"Wave The Flags For Wildlife was funded by an award from the Local Heritage Initiative"

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Wildlife and Clinkham Wood



Some of the nature flags produced as part of Wave The Flags For Wildlife

Wildlife is taking centre stage at Clinkham Wood Local Nature Reserve in St Helens thanks to the woodland's busy 'Friends of' group.

With support from environmental regeneration initiative The Mersey Forest, the Friends of Clinkham Wood have offered a wide variety of arts and wildlife activities over the course of an innovative project called 'Wave The Flags For Wildlife', including insect surveys, woodwork sessions and nature-inspired flag making. The project was funded by an award from the Local Heritage Initiative which the Friends of Clinkham Woods successfully applied for with support from The Mersey Forest Community Contracting Initiative.

"As well as being excellent for the environment and for your health, woodlands can also provide great

inspiration, so we're really pleased to have been involved in such a creative project," said Paul Nolan, Director of The Mersey Forest.

In November 2006 the Friends group also launched a new map and leaflet about Clinkham Wood to encourage people to visit the site. This year, plans include a further series of community events, including a photography competition to take the best wildlife photo within Clinkham Wood.

The Friends group are on the look out for new members, so if meeting new people and helping improve your local nature reserve appeals to you, why not get involved? For information or to receive details of future activities and events call 01744 600938.



“The development of the new woodland will take place in stages over the next few years, starting with the planting of thousands of trees during February and March this year.”

New St Helens Griffin is Born as Residents' Woodland Dreams Come True

There's a new beast in Merseyside with the news that a young griffin has been born in south St Helens. However, there's nothing to fear as local residents have taken the new addition under their wing and are grooming it to become one of the area's new best friends.

Griffin Wood is a new community woodland being developed at the bottom of Hall Lane, off Gorse Lane between Clockface and Burtonwood, whose design has been shaped by the visions of nature-loving local residents. In the autumn they visited the wood with site managers The Mersey Forest Team and submitted their sketches and ideas for how they would like to see the woodland take shape.



Now the plans for the site, currently a 'blank canvas' of ex-farming land with one strip of mature woodland, are moving swiftly into action.

"The Griffin Wood name was picked in January from a shortlist suggested by members of the public," explains Paul Nolan, Director of The Mersey Forest. "The name has special links with the local area as a griffin features in the legend of how the Bold area of St Helens received its name, as well as appearing on the St Helens coat of arms."



Work has also begun to prepare the ground for sowing the wildflower meadows and planting the trees on the site. The development of the new woodland will take place in stages over the next few years, starting with the planting of thousands of trees during February and March this year.

The woodland has its own interactive website where you can keep up-to-date with the latest news and photos which can be found at www.griffinwood.blogspot.com.

The Mersey Forest Team are also offering the chance for all those interested in the Griffin Wood project to get involved at a pair of community planting days. Come along to the site between 10.30am and 3.30pm on Wednesday 21st or Sunday 25th March 2007 to plant trees and sow wildflower seeds. Please note that parking is not permitted on Hall Lane, with the nearest car park at Clockface Country Park. For more details on the planting days, visit www.griffinwood.blogspot.com or contact The Mersey Forest Team on 01925 816217.

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North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan

The North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan (NM BAP) was five years old in September 2006. To mark the occasion and review progress over the first five years, a partnership event was held on Friday December 1st at the National Wildflower Centre in Knowsley. The event was attended by upwards of 40 partners who listened to the following presentations:

- **Wetlands and Water Voles**
Paul Thomas (Environment Agency)
- **Birds**
Steve White (Lancs Wildlife Trust)
- **Woodlands**
Claire Mennim (The Mersey Forest)
- **Sefton Coast**
John Houston (Sefton Coast Partnership)
- **Red Squirrels**
Steve White (Lancs Wildlife Trust)
- **Sandhill Rustic Moth**
Steve Cross (Liverpool Museums)
- **Dragonflies**
Phil Smith (Lancs Wildlife Trust)

- **Biobank**
Gareth Davies (BioBank)
- **Nature is about opportunity**
Richard Scott (Landlife)
- **Summary**
Richard Burkmar (NM BAP)

The presentations were of a consistently high standard. There were several question and answer sessions and an extended open forum discussion at the end - all of which were very lively. The presentations and discussion focused on progress with the BAP over the last five years and the directions in which it should move over the coming years. The event was supported by a review document which is freely available from Merseyside Biodiversity Groups website (<http://www.merseysidebiodiversity.org.uk>): goto '*Progress Reports*' and then select '*2006 Five Year Progress Report*'.



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Rare plant news from the Sefton Coast

Dr John Twibell, curator of the National Artemisia Collection, writes that, in his opinion, *Artemisia campestris ssp. maritima* is almost certainly native to the British Isles (BSBI News 104 p. 60, January 2007). In addition to the plant recently discovered on the Crosby sand-dunes, he cites material that he collected under license in 1990 from Crymlyn Burrows dunes, South Wales.

On the continent, this maritime sub-species shows a distinct progression of form as it is followed south. In Brittany, the plants are lax and spreading but south of the Gironde they become more erect, producing clumps about 0.5m high. On the coasts of Portugal and Spain, the plants are even more strongly erect with fleshier leaves. The Welsh form fits the European trend, resembling plants from northern France in being relatively prostrate, the stems

almost hidden in the grass. However, the Crosby specimen appears intermediate in form, being semi-erect.

Dr Twibell thinks it is only a matter of time before this plant turns up elsewhere on coastal dunes in Britain. Its relatively inconspicuous appearance means it may have been overlooked in the past.

The Botanical Society of the British Isles has now mapped the Crosby discovery in its Atlas Scheme under the new English name "Dune Wormwood" proposed by Eric Clement (see www.bsbiatlas.org.uk).



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Ashurst pupils dig in with The Mersey Forest's Jo Sayers (left) and Cory's Jenny Doyle

"As well as a new open air classroom space, the woodland is also now home to an archaeological dig area, bat boxes, a nature trail"

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Ashurst Primary and Prescott schools go greener

A pair of local schools are celebrating becoming greener than ever thanks to an environmental project that has seen pupils, mums, dads and staff all mucking in to make a difference.

Youngsters at Ashurst Primary School in Haydock have been busy planting special aromatic plants in raised beds at their school to bring an unusual multi-sensory twist to the improvements to their school grounds. The pupils previously brought parents along to a special tree planting day run by environmental regeneration initiative The Mersey Forest at the school. The families planted apple and cherry trees that, as well as being pleasing on the eye, will also provide healthy snacks when they bear fruit.

"The children have done really well, and the effort put in by everyone at the planting day was tremendous," said Jo Sayers, The Mersey Forest's Community Development Officer. "The fruit trees will improve the school's grounds and provide healthy fruit - and planting them was great green exercise too."

Meanwhile lessons at Prescott School in Knowsley are taking on a new dimension thanks to a makeover for the school woodland, managed by pupils and staff. The wood, owned by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council and located next to the school on Knowsley Park Lane, has been transformed over the past four years from a derelict wasteland into an innovative outdoor learning zone - and pupils are now

reaping the benefits.

As well as a new open air classroom space, the woodland is also now home to an archaeological dig area, bat boxes, a nature trail and a new pond created by Year 10 pupils and environmental charity BTCV. Prescott pupil Lyndsey Lee, who has been involved in the project since the beginning, said: "Before you couldn't even step inside this woodland. Tonnes of litter cluttered the ground and the brambles and nettles made it impossible to walk anywhere without getting stung. We knew we had to do something!"

The work at both schools is part of a series of school environment projects supported by Cory Environmental Trust, partly through the Landfill Communities Fund. Extra funds at Prescott School were also provided through European Objective 1. The partnership between Cory and schools in the local area, co-ordinated by The Mersey Forest Team, is set to continue - with funding in place for improvements at more schools over the next four years.

"It's great to see the difference that has been made," said Angela Haymonds, Trust Secretary of Cory Environmental Trust in Britain. "The pupils have worked really hard and it's a project we are delighted to support."



Prescott pupils with teacher Peter West and The Mersey Forest's Jo Sayers

Caring for wildlife in the community

It all began innocently enough. I was persuaded by our church council to organise a church grounds maintenance workshop. This was to be provided by Operation Eden, a Diocesan environmental initiative, in conjunction with Neil and Roz from BTCV.

The pleasant October Saturday morning gave us the opportunity to cast a critical eye over our 4 1/2 acres and decide how we might look after our church grounds with wildlife more in mind.

Neil's parting shot was: 'why not apply for Lottery funding under the BBC's Breathing Places scheme?' Now as churches and Christians we have not always been very good at putting into practice our belief that we are stewards entrusted with the world's care. So here was an opportunity to think about how we might care for our particular plot in creation in a more responsible way.

The church family reacted positively to proposals for wildflower meadows, improved paths accessible to wheelchair users, and a sensory garden. But question 6 on the Lottery application form stopped us in our tracks. 'Explain how you know that people in your community want this project'. We realized that we didn't know!

Who might benefit from opening up our church grounds? We have good links with a local school so that was a good place to start. What about the traders in Crosby village? Perhaps the residents of the local sheltered housing complex? And of course the North Merseyside Biodiversity Manager! We could advertise our proposals in Crossroads cafe, an ecumenical initiative within the church grounds. In the end we had around 15 letters of support for our application. 100 people signed our sheets in the cafe, including one person from the local Mencap who simply wrote: 'I love gardening'.

Initially we proposed to plant hawthorn and beech hedges along the graveyard boundaries. "Do you really think that is appropriate?", queried a designer from

Lady Green garden centre. "How about ornamental hedging or groups of shrubs, more appropriate to a graveyard in an urban area?" And so our proposals were refined right up to the last few days before the deadline for submitting the bid at just under the £10,000 maximum. Of course we took the advice from our ecologist colleagues at Merseyside EAS and refrained from including large-seeded species in a red squirrel buffer zone.

We don't hear about our bid until May, but in the meantime were awarded £400 from Operation Eden and £1,000 from the church council to get us started. This enabled us to organise a planting session with Years 5 & 6 from St Luke's school in January, which got good press coverage ('A blooming great job!'). This provoked an email from an ex Crosby resident who has been living in the US for 25 years and who visits the graveyard periodically. He agreed it could "use a makeover".

Further planting is planned for late February with the help of Crosby High (a special needs school) and Mencap. And we are organising a wildlife activity morning in March - planting a butterfly garden, making bird boxes, following a nature trail, creating a miniature garden, making badges...

In all of this I have discovered that the parishioners of St Luke's - and the wider community of Crosby - definitely want to play their part in caring for creation. They just need to be given the opportunity.



"we are organising a wildlife activity morning in March - planting a butterfly garden, making bird boxes, following a nature trail, creating a miniature garden, making badges..."

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(Aside from being involved with St Luke's Church, Steve is co-ordinating the preparation of a greenspace strategy for Sefton)



“The population in the buffer zone woodlands shows a slow but sure recovery after a decline in 2003 due to a squirrel pox outbreak in the Ince Blundell and Little Crosby woodlands.”

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Red Squirrel News

Squirrel pox broke out on the Ainsdale National Nature Reserve in September 2006. The virus is deadly to Red Squirrels but harmless to Greys which nonetheless are major carriers of the disease. Since the start of the current outbreak, there have been 16 confirmed cases - all from the Ainsdale area.

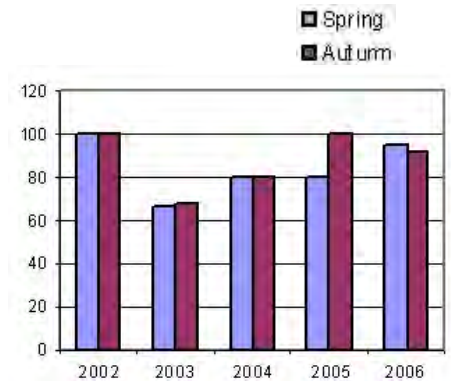
Volunteers work with Ainsdale NNR and the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside to locate dead or sick squirrels. There is an updated protocol for dealing with infected and dead squirrels. (You can see a copy if you have web access at <http://www.merseysidebiodiversity.org.uk>. Click on 'News' and then select the relevant news item for 15th February.)

The amended protocol accounts for a new agreement with Stapeley Grange RSPCA Wildlife Centre whereby all sick squirrels will now be sent there until healthy. Searches are still being carried out on the NNR and members of the public are asked to inform the Wildlife Trust of any sick or dead squirrels (Fiona Whitfield on 0151 9203769 or 07894 096046). There are plans to put up nest boxes as a further means of monitoring the disease.

The long-term aim is to start a research project looking at the health of the Red Squirrel population. The aims of the PhD project will be:

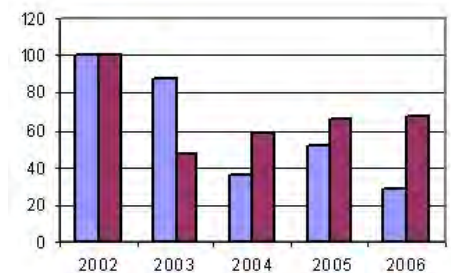
1. To monitor the red population at Formby and the Sefton coastline and investigate the main causes of death in red squirrels over a three-year period.
2. To monitor squirrelpox infection within the red and grey population adjacent to Formby and also at a distant population in Thurstaston, thereby allowing assessment of disease transmission risk to reds.
3. To advise on effective culling campaigns for the adjacent grey population.

Annual monitoring of red squirrels is carried out across the refuge and buffer zone area.



Overall, the red squirrel population in the refuge area is stable as shown above. Estimated mean autumn densities here are between 1.3 and 2.4 per hectare giving a minimum population of between 800 and 1200 animals.

Monitoring in the buffer zone is carried out in the main woodlands; it does not take in to account the population living in the urban area, as there is no practical monitoring technique that can be applied here.



The population in the buffer zone woodlands shows a slow but sure recovery after a decline in 2003 due to a squirrel pox outbreak in the Ince Blundell and Little Crosby woodlands.

The 'Save Our Squirrels' project hotline number and website is to be launched at Lifeboat Road on the 15th March by Range High Students.

Merseyside BioBank Arrives!

The seven strong BioBank team are moving into their newly refurbished office base, the former Estate Barn at Court Hey Park, adjacent to the National Wildflower Centre, Knowsley. *"We want BioBank to be a focal point for biological recorders and recorder groups, a home base, where they can enter their data or just meet up to discuss their activities over a cup of coffee"*, said Gareth Davies, BioBank Manager. The new premises contain a designated office space for recorders with workstations, computers and other resources.

The BioBank team have been recruited to enhance environmental information management, life-long learning and access to environmental information at all levels. **Diane Miller** (Education Liaison Co-ordinator) was project co-ordinator for the Education for a Greener Future Project at Lancashire Wildlife Trust before starting at BioBank. A crucial part of her role will be to develop training and education programmes with schools, colleges and universities. **Ros Bray** (Education Liaison Officer) will be working with Diane and was previously Eco Schools officer for the North West and has piloted work using woodland as an 'outdoor classroom' for the Woodland Trust. Both have teaching experience and have a particular interest in Education for Sustainable Development. **Hannah Betts** (Information Co-ordinator) worked for five years as a Biodiversity Information Specialist with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee before starting with BioBank and has observed the development of the National Biodiversity Network and its Gateway at first hand. **Vicki Powell** will be working with Hannah on data collection, management, interpretation and access to information and worked as an environmental consultant after completing her research on the conservation of the Rodrigues fruit bat. **Ian Roberts** (Administrative Officer) will be the first face to greet visitors at reception in the new BioBank offices and has recently graduated in Business and Sport from Liverpool Hope University. **Ross Andrew** (Community

Liaison Co-ordinator) was working for Herefordshire Nature Trust as a community biodiversity outreach worker before starting at BioBank. Previously manager of the Orkney Biodiversity Records Centre start-up project, he will work closely with recorders and develop new audiences for recording, wildlife survey and monitoring in the wider community. **Gareth Davies** (Manager) was working in enterprise development for a European Interregional Project in Rhyl, Denbighshire, and Athy, in County Kildare, before joining BioBank. A former science teacher, he also has experience of overseas education and development work in Africa.

There will be a formal launch for the BioBank project later in the year, meantime, biological recorders who are interested in seeing the new facility at Court Hey Park and assisting the future Local Biological Records Centre for Merseyside should contact Ross Andrew. [\(See last page for a location map.\)](#)

"Biological recorders who are interested in seeing the new facility at Court Hey Park should contact Ross Andrew."

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Outside the new office at Court Hey Park, from left; Diane Miller, Hannah Betts, Ros Bray, Ian Roberts, Ross Andrew, Vicki Powell, Gareth Davies.



Sefton Coast Nature Conservation Strategy

Consultation on the draft Nature Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Delivery Plan for the Sefton Coast will be launched in early April. An update of the work was presented at the NMBAP conference in December 2006 and all background information can be found on www.seftoncoast.org.uk/index_consultnature.html

The work will be presented in three parts; the overall strategy and vision for the Sefton Coast, the rationale for management / objectives and a work programme. The aim will be to produce the rationale as a web-based resource so that files can be updated as new information becomes available.

Natural England will be preparing revised Conservation Objectives for the

Sefton Coast SSSI in 2007 and these will be incorporated into the strategy. The strategy will also incorporate the revised targets for the habitats and species of the NMBAP.

The work on developing the nature conservation strategy has led to considerations about landscape management and these, in turn, have led to a submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Planning Grant for the development of a Landscape Partnership scheme. Biodiversity targets would be a key element in such a scheme. If successful we would see a period of intense activity in late 2007 to develop programmes and projects for biodiversity delivery on the coast.

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New dragonfly atlas survey launched

Work has begun on the Dragonfly Atlas for Lancashire, Greater Manchester and North Merseyside. Survey work will begin this spring and will continue until September 2009, with publication of the atlas expected in 2010. Those wishing to be involved can take part in several ways:

1. Volunteer to survey a particular area

The majority of the atlas work will be undertaken through a network of volunteers who will survey a designated area during May-September for the next three years using the atlas survey methodology.

2. Submit casual records

If you would like to take part in the atlas but feel that you could not commit to taking on a survey square it will be possible for you to submit your casual records of dragonflies. You will be able to do this through the dragonfly atlas website which should be online by the end of April or alternatively you can email or post them to the North Merseyside Coordinator - Steve White (see sidebar). We are also very keen to

get hold of any past records you may have for dragonflies within North Merseyside which can also be sent to Steve White.

3. Dragonfly garden pond survey

As part of the survey, a dragonfly garden pond survey will run concurrently that will encourage the general public to take part in recording dragonflies. This project will run through the website.

In order to encourage participation in the atlas a number of training events will be organised. If you would like to be informed of these as and when they are organised or would like to contribute to the survey in any other way, please send an email to Steve White.



Male Emperor dragonfly
by Phil Smith

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Launch of UK sand dune and shingle network

At the national LBAP conference in Liverpool in December 2006 workshop sessions were held to launch the UK sand dune and shingle network, an initiative from Liverpool Hope University with support from Natural England. More information can be found on the website www.hope.ac.uk/coast. Please visit this site if you wish to register your interest with the network.

The network will help to deliver some of the targets in the UK Habitat Action

Plans for sand dunes and shingle. One of these concerns the development of links with other sites in Europe. The Sefton Coast, as one of the largest dune systems in the UK will be well placed to take part in wider network activities.

Network activities will include field events, workshops and conferences and reviews of current issues such as scrub management and recreation.



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Wetland enhancement at Freshfield Dune Heath

The Environment Agency and Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside have been working together to enhance existing wetland habitats at Freshfield Dune Heath, a nature reserve to the north of Formby. The Wildlife Trust reserve is known principally for its expanse of 'dune heath' - one of the rarest habitats in England. Less well known is the fact that there is an extensive network of ditches and small ponds around the reserve.

The Environment Agency provided £10,000 to carry out the wetland

enhancement at the reserve as part of its ongoing programme to enhance wetland biodiversity.

Paul Thomas - an ecologist with the agency - designed and supervised the work on the ground which included the restoration and enhancement of existing waterways as well as the creation of new ponds.

In all, some 20 new ponds were created as part of the work and should greatly enrich the habitat as they mature over the coming years.

"In all, some 20 new ponds were created as part of the work and should greatly enrich the habitat as they mature over the coming years"



Paul Thomas of the Environment Agency surveys some of the enhanced wetland

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Spring in the Dunes

Ainsdale Sand Dunes National Nature Reserve is 508 hectares of rare dunes, beach and pinewood. There are approximately 10 km of way-marked footpaths to guide you through the site. The Reserve is about to explode with wildlife with the onset of spring. It is a great time to see and hear some spectacular wildlife.

We are approaching the breeding season of the natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*), an important species on site. Another, more local name for this species is the 'Birkdale Nightingale', when you hear the chorus made by the males in the breeding season you understand why. A good way to see this impressive species is to sign up on one of our Natterjack Toad Walks on 26th or 27th April.

Early wildflowers typical of the dunes at Ainsdale include sticky stork's-bill (*Erodium lebelii*) or hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*). An Early Wildflower Guide is available from the Reserve Office. The wildflowers throughout the dunes are beautiful in summer and we run guided walks from May to August which help to unlock their secrets and introduce some of the folklore associated with them.

For information about this site or an events list email Nick Haigh (see sidebar). If you want to know more about Natural England who manage this site visit www.naturalengland.org.uk.

Ainsdale NNR Wildlife Garden Planned

The wardens at Ainsdale National Nature reserve are planning some improvements to the garden around the warden's offices. Staff at Natural England have ambitious plans to turn the currently neglected garden into an area that can be used to demonstrate some of the principles of wildlife gardening to visitors.

A pond has already been developed and ideas being considered include bird feeding stations, a 'mini-beast' area and a wildflower meadow. The staff would be pleased to hear from volunteers who would be willing to help create and maintain the garden.

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Nick Haigh, Alice Kimpton and Anne Brenchley of Natural England discuss plans for the new wildlife garden at Ainsdale.



Merseyside Biodiversity News is produced for the Merseyside Biodiversity Group.

Please send any comments, stories or news to:

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Wildlife in Merseyside: Diary of Events

Dancing Drakes Sunday 4th March 10.30am – 1pm RSPB Marshside	RSPB Marshside 01253 796292	Free event, but booking essential (call 01253 796 292). Join us on the nature reserve to take a closer look at the many ducks and geese preparing to migrate north. Meet at the car park adjacent to the sand plant on Marine Drive.
Formby and Southport Red Alert Group meeting Thursday 15th March 7pm Ainsdale Discovery Centre	Fiona Whitfield. 0151 9203769. fwhitfield@lancswt.org.uk.	
Wildlife Activity Morning Saturday 17th March 10am to 1pm St Lukes Church Hall, Liverpool Rd, Crossley	Steve Matthews. 0151 934 3559.	Plant a butterfly garden; make a bird box; nature trail; badge making
Spring into Action Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th March 10.30am – 4pm Botanic Gardens	RSPB Marshside 01253 796292	Visit the RSPB in Botanic Gardens where you will be able to talk to our experts about the wildlife in your garden with badge making for children and the chance to buy nest boxes and feeders to attract birds to your garden.
Community planting days Wednesday 21st March and Sunday 25th March 10.30am - 3.30pm Griffin Wood, bottom of Hall Lane, off Gorsey Lane, south St Helens	RSPB Marshside 01253 796292	Plant trees and sow wildflowers at these community planting days run by The Mersey Forest Team. Note that parking is not permitted on Hall Lane, the nearest car park is at Clockface Country Park (20min walk through Park). If you have mobility problems please contact us to make alternative arrangements.
Little Crosby Red Alert Group meeting Monday 26th March 7pm Crosby Hall Education Trust	Fiona Whitfield. 0151 9203769. fwhitfield@lancswt.org.uk.	
Aren't birds brilliant! Friday 6th – Monday 9th April 11am – 4pm Southport Pier	RSPB Marshside 01253 796292	Southport Pier is the place to see thousands of wading birds resting and feeding on the Ribble Estuary – a motorway service station for birds. Friendly RSPB guides will be on hand to show you the birds close up.
Garden Birds Friday 13th April 11am – 4pm Hesketh Park	RSPB Marshside 01253 796292	Visit the RSPB in Hesketh Park to learn more about the wild birds there and in your own garden. Our friendly guides will be on hand to answer all your questions and help you choose the right feeders, food or nest boxes for your wildlife.
The Red Squirrels at Formby Saturday 14th April 10am – 11am or 2pm – 3pm The National Trust, Victoria Road, Formby	The National Trust. 01704 878591.	Two warden guided walks – booking essential. £2 per person.
Natterjack walk Friday 20th April 10pm – midnight The National Trust, Victoria Road, Formby	The National Trust. 01704 878591.	Bring a torch – booking essential. £2 per person.

<p>Proud pewits Saturday 21st April 9am – 11.30am RSPB Marshside</p>	<p>RSPB Marshside 01253 796292</p>	<p>Free event, but booking essential (call 01253 796 292). Lapwing, known locally as Peewits, are sadly declining across the UK but are thriving here in Lancashire. Join our warden to take a closer look at these beautiful birds and witness their acrobatic breeding displays. Meet at the car park adjacent to the sand works on Marine Drive.</p>
<p>African Arrivals Sunday 29th April 8am – 11am RSPB Marshside</p>	<p>RSPB Marshside 01253 796292</p>	<p>Free event, but booking essential (call 01253 796 292). Join us on a guided walk looking at the first migrating birds to arrive at the reserve. Meet at the car park adjacent to the sand plant on Marine Drive.</p>
<p>Natterjack walk Friday 4th May 10pm – midnight The National Trust, Victoria Road, Formby</p>	<p>The National Trust. 01704 878591.</p>	<p>Bring a torch – booking essential. £2 per person.</p>
<p>Signs of Spring Saturday 5th May 2pm – 3.30pm The National Trust, Victoria Road, Formby</p>	<p>The National Trust. 01704 878591.</p>	<p>A guided walk with a warden. £2 per person.</p>
<p>Awesome Avocets Saturday 12th May 9am – 11.30am RSPB Marshside</p>	<p>RSPB Marshside 01253 796292</p>	<p>Free event, but booking essential (call 01253 796 292). Avocets were once extinct in the UK for a hundred years but now breed at many RSPB reserves. Marshside is one of the best places to see these beautiful birds and we're keen to show them off! Meet at the car park adjacent to the sand plant on Marine Drive.</p>
<p>Aren't birds brilliant! Sunday 27th – Tuesday 29th May 11am – 4pm Southport Pier</p>	<p>RSPB Marshside 01253 796292</p>	<p>Southport Pier is the place to see thousands of wading birds resting and feeding on the Ribble Estuary – a motorway service station for birds. Friendly RSPB guides will be on hand to show you the birds close up.</p>
<p>Sefton Coast Partnership Annual Forum Saturday 7th July Floral Hall Southport</p>	<p>Lorna Lander. 0151 934 3605. lorna.lander@planning.sefton.gov.uk.</p>	<p>Free all day event including a buffet lunch but registration is essential and application forms can be obtained from Mrs Lorna Lander at lorna.lander@planning.sefton.gov.uk. or by telephone 0151 934 3605. The event this year will be looking at how the activities of the Sefton Coast Partnership are closely aligned with the new body called Natural England.</p>
<p>Awesome Avocets Sunday 3rd June 10.30am – 12noon RSPB Marshside</p>	<p>RSPB Marshside 01253 796292</p>	<p>Free event, but booking essential (call 01253 796 292). Avocets were once extinct in the UK for a hundred years but now breed at many RSPB reserves. Marshside is one of the best places to see these beautiful birds and we're keen to show them off! Meet at the car park adjacent to the sand plant on Marine Drive.</p>

<p>Saltmarsh Safari Sunday 10th June 1pm – 3.30pm RSPB Marshside</p>	<p>RSPB Marshside 01253 796292</p>	<p>Free event, but booking essential (call 01253 796 292). Join local expert Dr. Alan Bedford to take a closer “hands-on” look at Southport’s saltmarsh and the wildlife that lives on this important habitat. Wellies are a must!! Meet at the car park adjacent to the sand plant on Marine Drive.</p>
<p>Moth Morning Sunday 24th June 7am – 9am RSPB Marshside</p>	<p>RSPB Marshside 01253 796292</p>	<p>Free event, but booking essential (call 01253 796 292). Moths are amazing animals coming in all shapes, sizes and colours. We’ll be taking a look at moth traps set up the previous evening and learning more about these fascinating creatures. Meet at the car park adjacent to the sand plant on Marine Drive.</p>
<p>Rubus for Beginners Saturday 21st July 10.30am Beacon Country Park</p>	<p>Led by Dave Earl 01704 540337</p>	<p>Meet at Visitor car park, Mill Lane (SD508068). Open to people of all botanical abilities. Come prepared for adverse weather conditions, wear suitable clothing and have bring food and drink. Most meetings finish by 17.00 at the latest. All people attend at their own risk and are advised to inform the leader of any health problems in advance of the meeting.</p>
<p>In Search of Exotic Plants Saturday 22nd September 11am Otterspool Park & Sefton Park</p>	<p>Led by Dave Earl 01704 540337</p>	<p>Meet Jericho Lane (SJ378864). Open to people of all botanical abilities. Come prepared for adverse weather conditions, wear suitable clothing and have bring food and drink. Most meetings finish by 17.00 at the latest. All people attend at their own risk and are advised to inform the leader of any health problems in advance of the meeting.</p>
<p>IEEM Events</p>	<p>rooneyp@hope.ac.uk</p>	<p>NW IEEM events are open to non-members. Book by e-mailing rooneyp@hope.ac.uk Events are listed at http://www.ieem.org.uk/NW Events.htm.</p>
<p>Dune and Shingle Network Events</p>	<p>dunes@hope.ac.uk</p>	<p>Events are listed at http://www.hope.ac.uk/coast/pages/event.html</p>

Wildlife in Merseyside: Merseyside BioBank Location Map

