

January

Sunday 4 Jan
ELMLEY RSPB (WC)

10am - 4pm

Meet at the reserve car park, **TQ226905**. An excellent location for wintering wildfowl, waders and raptors, including harriers, and possible peregrine, and several species of owl. *Leaders: Malcolm & Sally Jennings.*

Wednesday evening 14 Jan 7:45pm - 10pm

"SPRING IN SHETLAND" by David Cotteridge - The northern isles of Fetlar, Unst, Yell and Hermaness hold huge seabird colonies; host breeding waders and spring migrants and the beautiful Loch Funzie is home to red-necked phalaropes, arctic terns and red-throated divers.

Saturday 24 Jan 10am - 4pm

DUNGENESS OBSERVATORY & DUNGENESS RSPB (WC)

Park in the Old Lighthouse car park, **TR088169**. Afterwards we will visit the RSPB reserve, parking in the main visitor car park at **TR067184**. For whooper swans, rare grebes, possible smew, wintering ducks, harriers and maybe merlin. *Leaders: Jeff & Wendy Kirk.*

Tuesday afternoon 27 Jan 2pm - 4pm

Millbrook Garden Centre
"OUT TO LUNCH" by Brian Nobbs - how birds manage to exploit the various opportunities for finding food - including hummingbirds, seed-eaters, fish eaters, mammal hunters and a few specialists!

February

"HOMES FOR WILDLIFE' MONTH - see back page for details.

Sunday 8 Feb 10am - 4pm

ALLHALLOWS MARSHES

Meet by the British Pilot, **TQ845783**. We will walk out to the sea-wall for sea watching over the Thames, then along Yanett Creek for roosting waders and scanning the fields for raptors and over-wintering buntings plus wintering ducks on Stoke Lagoon. *Leaders: Ian & Sue Griffin.*

Wednesday evening 11 Feb 7:45pm - 10pm

"RED KITES & GOING WILD IN THE HEBRIDES" by Phil & Ann Farrer - Come and find out about the work on the re-introduction of Red Kites into Britain and Hebridean wild-life.

Tuesday afternoon 24 Feb 2pm - 4pm

"Homes for Wildlife" by Malcolm Jennings - earwigs to egrets - we all need somewhere to live!

Saturday 28 Feb 10am - 4pm

RAINHAM MARSHES RSPB ESSEX (WC)

Meet in the reserve car park, **TQ551790**. Wildfowl, waders, finches, pipits and birds of prey then retire for something hot in the visitor centre! *Leaders: Jeff & Wendy Kirk.*

March

Wednesday evening 11 Mar 7:45pm - 10pm

"BIRDS & BIRD PROTECTION IN POLAND" by Lars Lachmann - Lars is the RSPB Country Programme Officer and will present the beauty and richness of the birds and their habitats in Poland and the challenges faced by birds in this rapidly developing country.

Saturday 21 Mar 10am - 1pm

SEVENOAKS WILDLIFE RESERVE KWT (WC)

Meet in the visitor centre car park, **TQ520565**. For a variety of waders, water fowl, woodpeckers, warblers and tits. *Leader: Reserve warden.*

Tuesday 24 Mar 10am - 1pm

RIVERSIDE COUNTRY PARK (WC)

Meet in the reserve car park, **TQ808682**. For wildfowl and waders plus the possibility of early migrants. The visitor centre has a café for refreshments afterwards. *Leader: Malcolm Jennings.*

Tuesday afternoon 24 Mar 2pm - 4pm

Millbrook Garden Centre
"THE HAUNTING NORTH KENT MARSHES" by Irene Palmer - Irene is the KWT warden at Downe House and a well-known speaker on all aspects of wildlife. This talk will present some lovely slides of the birdlife and scenery of the North Kent Marshes.

April

Sunday 5 Apr 10am - 2pm

OARE MARSHES KWT

Meet at the car park, **TR013647**. This is probably the best and most accessible place in Kent to view wading birds and wildfowl. With only a little bit of luck we could see marsh harriers, peregrine and other raptors. *Leader: David Johnson.*

Wednesday evening 15 Apr 7:45pm - 10pm

St Botolph's Hall
"ROLE OF A POLICE WILDLIFE CRIME OFFICER" by Barry Kaufman-Wright - This is a light-hearted and entertaining talk on the highs and lows of wildlife crime detection through Barry's own experiences serving as a Wildlife Crime Officer for 19 years.

Saturday 18 Apr 10am - 4pm

BLEAN WOODS RSPB

Meet in the reserve car park, **TR121594**, along New Road, off Rough Common Road. This is a beautiful ancient woodland where we should hear or see drumming woodpeckers, warblers, treecreepers, blue, great, coal and marsh tits and thrushes. *Leaders: Malcolm & Sally Jennings.*

Tuesday 21 Apr 10am - 1pm

NORTHWARD HILL RSPB (WC)

Meet in the Bromhey Farm car park, **TQ768764**. A chance to connect with nightingales, turtle doves, a variety of warblers, plus little egret, grey heron and of course enjoy the bluebell spectacle. *Leader: Malcolm Jennings.*

May

Saturday 2 May 6am - 1pm

DAWN CHORUS AT STODMARSH NNR (WC)

Meet in the reserve car park, **TR221608**, with ears ready! Warblers such as cetti's, blackcap, garden, reed, sedge, chiffchaff, willow & possible grasshopper, finches, buntings, whitethroats and nightingale, plus raptors such as harriers and hobbies - (it should be worth the early start!) *Leader: Paul Yeitman.*

Wednesday evening 13 May 7:45pm - 10pm

St Botolph's Hall
A short A.G.M. followed by an update on the work being done by the RSPB on our local reserves, presented by an RSPB staff member.

Sunday 17 May 6:30pm - 9pm

EVENING VISIT TO NORTHWARD HILL RSPB (WC)

Meet at Bromhey Farm car park, **TQ768763**. Another aural experience this time towards dusk - listening for nightingales, turtle doves and warblers. *Leader: Malcolm Jennings.*

Tuesday 26 May 10am - 1pm

DARLAND BANKS LNR

Meet in Hoath Close just off the A278 in Hempstead, **TQ795653**. This flower rich chalk grassland habitat is good for orchids and butterflies and the adjoining Ambley Woods holds typical woodland species. *Leader: Malcolm Jennings.*

June

Saturday 6 June

8am - 7pm

COACH TRIP TO WICKEN FEN, NT, CAMBS (WC) & LAKENHEATH RSPB (WC)
Meet at the Woodville Halls, Gravesend, **TQ647738**. Wicken Fen is one of the most species rich nature reserves in Britain. The rich, peat soil and centuries of management enable hundreds of plant species and associated animals to thrive. By contrast, Lakenheath is a newly created fenland. You should see a variety of birds, dragonflies, butterflies and wild flowers as you walk around the reserves. Further details, including pricing, will be announced in our newsletter and on the website. *Organiser: Sally Jennings*

Tuesday 23 June 10am - 1pm

KNOLE PARK NT

Meet at Godden Green, **TQ553551**. This open parkland holds a range of birds including green woodpecker, thrushes, pipits, yellowhammer and redstart. *Leader: Malcolm Jennings.*

July

Sunday 12 July 10am - 4pm

LANGDON CLIFFS NT (WC)

Meet in the National Trust car park (fee payable) **TR335422**. We will walk towards St Margaret's Bay and back, looking for breeding birds such as kittiwake, fulmar, peregrine, warblers, finches and buntings. *Leaders: Ian & Sue Griffin.*

Saturday 25 July 10am - 4pm

CLIFFE POOLS RSPB & DITCH DIPPING AT NORTHWARD HILL RSPB (WC)

Meet in the new car park off Salt Lane, **TQ724763**. Cliffe Pools is renowned for its patchwork of saline and fresh pools which attract numerous breeding waders, wildfowl and common terns. Please note that this site is currently being re-developed so please confirm the meeting place nearer the time via the website or by calling Malcolm. In the afternoon we will take a close look at the insect life of some of the ditches at Northward Hill. (meet at **TQ768763**). *Leaders: RSPB Warden (am) & Julie Peeling (pm).*

August

Tuesday 4 Aug 10am - 1pm

TROSLEY COUNTRY PARK (WC)

Meet in the car park, **TQ636611**, signposted off the A227 near Vigo village. A mixture of woodland and open chalk grassland slopes, the park is home to a rich variety of wildlife. The chalk grassland supports a fabulous array of butterflies each summer including the Chalkhill Blue. *Leader: Julie Peeling.*

Sunday 16 Aug 10am - 4pm

OARE MARSHES KWT

Meet at the car park, **TR013647**. Another visit to this gem of a reserve, this time also looking waders returning early from their summer-breeding grounds. *Leader: David Johnson.*

September

Sunday 6 Sep 11am onwards

WILDLIFE COUNTRY FAIR AT BROMHEY FARM - (NORTHWARD HILL RSPB)

Please contact Malcolm Jennings if you are able to volunteer help for this annual event. Or bring your family along to enjoy the fair, site entrance at **TQ765761**.

Wednesday evening 9 Sep 7:45pm - 10pm

"ADVENTURES IN ETHIOPIA" - by Barry Wright. Another hair-raising trip this time to Ethiopia.



Gravesend Local Group 2009 Programme

Group Leader: Malcolm Jennings
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Membership secretary: Jeff Kirk
Treasurer: Neville Luness-Barnes
Indoor meetings organiser: Penny Leeves
Outdoor meetings organiser: Paul Yeitman
Coach trip organiser: Sally Jennings
Sales organiser: Josie Brown
Group website: www.rspsbgravesend.org.uk

Annual Membership Fee: £2.50 per person

We hold two series of **INDOOR MEETINGS** each year :-

Wednesday evening meetings start at 7.45pm and are held at **St. Botolph's Hall**, Northfleet, Gravesend, TQ623741, on the second Wednesday of the month.
Tuesday afternoon meetings start at 2pm and are held at **Millbrook Garden Centre**, Gravesend, TQ618721, on the fourth Tuesday of the month.
Admission to each indoor meeting is £2, which includes refreshments during the interval.

We run **OUTDOOR MEETINGS** at the weekend approximately twice a month and a monthly Tuesday morning meeting during the spring and summer. We visit bird-watching "hot spots" in and around Kent and try to ensure that everyone, no matter what their experience, has an opportunity to view and enjoy the birds that we see in an informal atmosphere. Bring a packed lunch with you and wear clothing and footwear appropriate to the weather and terrain. Please also be aware of your own capabilities. Our leaders are familiar with the locations and carry small first aid kits. If you are uncertain about whether you should join an outdoor meeting, or would like further information about a location or in the case of inclement weather please contact Malcolm Jennings. When visiting RSPB reserves remember to bring your RSPB membership card, if you have one.

There is no charge for the outdoor meetings, unless otherwise indicated. Note that (WC) next to the location name indicates that toilets are available at the site or are nearby.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME AT ALL EVENTS - RSPB MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS

The RSPB is a Registered Charity, number 207076

December

Sunday 6 Dec 10am - 3pm

CLIFFE POOLS RSPB

Meet in the new car park off Salt Lane, TQ724763. During winter this reserve hosts spectacular numbers of winter waders and ducks. We will look out for goldeneye, rare grebes and hunting raptors. Please note that this site is currently being re-developed so please confirm the meeting place nearer the time via the website or by calling Malcolm. *Leader: RSPB Warden.*

Wednesday evening 9 Dec 7:45pm - 10pm

"BIRDS - THEIR HABITS & HABITATS" by John Buckingham - A look at where birds live and how they are adapted to survive, feed and reproduce in our very varied and ever-changing UK environment.

Saturday 19 Dec 10am - 3pm

SHELLNESS NNR & CAPEL FLEET RSPB RAPTOR WATCHPOINT

Park by the seawall, TR043698. For large numbers of waders and gulls plus the possibility of divers, grebes and sawbills. In the afternoon we will visit the RSPB Capel Fleet watchpoint, TR015689, where we hope to see several species of raptor. *Leaders: Malcolm & Sally Jennings.*

We're going WILD in February - 'HOMES FOR WILDLIFE' MONTH

Over the past few years we have worked closely with Millbrook Garden Centre to raise awareness, educate and promote wildlife care. During February at Millbrook we'll be going wild during our 'Homes for Wildlife' month. We've got a great programme of activities, talks, workshops and free roadshows where you can learn about everything from insect hotels to white-tailed eagles!

Some events are strictly limited, so book your place early by contacting the information Desk at Millbrook or as indicated below.

Thursday 5th 1:30pm - 4pm

Homes for Life - Insect Hotels workshop

Help build an Incredible High Rise Home for insects at our make and take workshop! Maximum 25 people - Great for adults. Don't let kids have all the fun! Price £2.50.

Saturday 7th 1:30pm and 3pm

Sunday 8th 11:30am and 2pm

RSPB Birds are Brilliant Roadshow

It's fab, it's feathery and it's FREE for kids! Places must be pre-booked at the information Desk or via our website: www.rspsbgravesend.org.uk.

Wednesday 11th

Kent's Special Orchids

Talk by orchid specialist David Johnson. No booking required, price £2.50.

Monday 16th drop in any time between 2pm - 4pm

Help wildlife by making your own re-usable carrier bag. Half term family drop-in make & take workshop. Price £2.50.

Thursday 19th 2pm - 4pm

Discover Kent Wildlife Family workshop

Crafts, quizzes, puzzles with the Gravesend Library Service. Booking required.

Saturday 28th 2pm - 4pm

White-tailed eagles and other birds of prey

Film and slide presentation by Malcolm Jennings - how the RSPB have returned the White-tailed eagle to Scotland and how to spot other birds of prey, some of which visit our gardens every day! Price £2.50. No booking required.

Saturday 19 Sep 10am - 4pm

DUNGENESS OBSERVATORY & DUNGENESS RSPB (WC)

Meet in the Old Lighthouse car park, TR088169. This is a migrant hot spot with birds such as firecrest and ring ouzel recorded each year. Black redstart breed near the power station. Off shore the 'patch' attracts numerous terns and gulls and maybe a passing skua. Afterwards we will go to the RSPB reserve, meeting in the main car park, TR067184, looking for more migrants and wildfowl. *Leader: Roy Gardner.*

Tuesday afternoon 22 Sep 2pm - 4pm

Millbrook Garden Centre

"PLANTLIFE AT RANSCOMBE FARM RESERVE" presented by the Ranscombe reserve warden, Ben Sweeney. Ranscombe Farm reserve is a combined nature reserve and working farm that is home to an exceptional diversity of plant species and provides the habitat for a range of other wildlife. Come along and find out more!

October

Sunday 4 Oct 10am - 4pm

STODMARSH NNR (GROVE FERRY END) (WC)

Meet in the Grove Ferry car park, TR236631. We should see a variety of waders, such as plovers, godwits and sandpipers, there should be numerous wildfowl and we will be watching out for bearded tit, hen and marsh harriers. *Leader: Paul Yeitman.*

Wednesday evening 14 Oct 7:45pm - 10pm

St. Botolph's Hall

Our third special **"RSPB FILM NIGHT"** introduced by Malcolm Jennings. Look out for details in our newsletter.

Saturday 24 Oct 10am - 4pm

ELMLEY RSPB (WC)

Meet at the reserve car park, TQ926905. An excellent location for wintering wildfowl, waders and raptors, including harriers, peregrine, and several species of owl. *Leaders: Malcolm & Sally Jennings.*

Tuesday afternoon 27 Oct 2pm - 4pm

Millbrook Garden Centre

"SPRINGTIME IN CYPRUS" by Don Weeks - Don will give a digital presentation about the wildlife and flora in Cyprus during March and April.

November

Sunday 8 Nov 10am - 3pm

RAINHAM MARSHES RSPB, ESSEX (WC)

Meet in the reserve car park, TQ551790. Possible species are bullfinches, ringed plovers, oystercatchers, golden plovers, water and rock pipits, little egrets, snipe, chiffchaffs, curlews, lapwings, dunlins, redshanks, shelducks, peregrines, kingfishers, short-eared owls (and that's before leaving the visitor centre!) *Leaders: Jeff & Wendy Kirk.*

Wednesday evening 11 Nov 7:45pm - 10pm

St. Botolph's Hall

"WILDLIFE OF THE NORTH DOWNS" by Robert Canis - Robert is the protégé of Ted Colman and is a well-known photographer and wildlife expert. Come and hear him speak about the wildlife of the North Downs and enjoy his lovely slides.

Sunday 22 Nov 8:30am - 6pm

COACH TRIP (DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED) (WC)

Meet at the Woodville Halls, Gravesend, TQ647738. Details, including pricing, will be announced in our newsletter and on the website. *Organiser: Sally Jennings.*

Tuesday afternoon 24 Nov 2pm - 4pm

Millbrook Garden Centre

"A WALK IN WINTER" by Ian Rumley-Dawson - Come and enjoy Ian's spectacular views of the British countryside and wildlife in winter including a close look at some of the many migrants that arrive here to escape the even colder climates of the far north.