



Gravesend RSPB Local Group

December 2014 Newsletter

www.rspbgravesend.org.uk

As the year draws to a close I look back at what our Local Group has done during 2014.

This year our indoor meetings have moved to two new venues: our evening meetings, which are held on the second Thursday of the month starting at 7:30pm, are now at **Northfleet School for Girls**, (NSFG), and our afternoon series of meetings, which are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month starting at 2pm, are now at the **Gravesend Masonic Halls**, (GMH). Both venues offer good parking facilities, a superb hall with a large screen and good acoustics, and an area where we can enjoy tea and coffee and catch up with friends at the interval. Our talks this year included fascinating topics such as bird migration and bird senses to stunning visual presentations of places as close as Mote Park to further afield places such as Bulgaria, the Camargue and Peru. And each of these for an entrance fee of just £3.50.

The Group organised 26 outdoor trips to wildlife places around Kent, coach trips to Minsmere and to the London Wetland Centre, a family 'scavenger hunt' at Northward Hill RSPB reserve and a volunteering day 'beach clean' at Rainham Marshes RSPB reserve.

Whether you are new to the RSPB or a long-time member but have not yet joined us, then please give these trips and events a try. If you are already a regular, why not bring along a friend? There is no need to book and no experience is required; these events are relaxed and informal and a great way to meet people who love nature.

Members of our Group have actively engaged with the wider community to share our passion for nature. Earlier this year we were with the Horton Kirby Rainbows looking for the 'signs of spring' and in the summer we ran an RSPB information stall at the Gravesend regatta. Last but not least, our fundraising efforts have enabled us to contribute £1540 towards projects at our local RSPB reserves.

All this needs you – our members - to be involved, firstly by joining or renewing your Local Group membership, supporting us at our organised events, buying from our RSPB goods table and making donations. So a big thank you to everyone for supporting our Local Group this year and I hope that you will be able to continue to do so.

Attached to this short newsletter is our membership renewal form. For 2015 we have increased our annual membership fee to **£5 per person**, which we believe is still excellent value. The entrance fee for our indoor meetings remains at £3.50 for members. Non-members will be charged £4.50 but their first indoor meeting will be free if they join the Group.

Myself and the committee wish you all a Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

Paul Yetman, Gravesend RSPB Local Group Leader

Indoor Meetings

Our 2015 indoor meeting season kicks off with:

- **Thursday 8 January** starting at 7:30pm (NSFG) when Barry Wright will be returning to entertain us with his infectious enthusiasm about his, no doubt 'hairy', adventures in Colombia.
- **Tuesday 27 January** starting at 2pm (GMH) when Ralph & Brenda Todd will be making a welcome return taking us to the fascinating wonder that is Iceland with its astonishing scenery, wildlife and volcanic activity.
- **Thursday 12 February** starting at 7:30pm (NSFG) when Sue Buckingham will be sharing her knowledge and beautiful photographs of the diverse flora found in Kent.

Outdoor trips

Our first outdoor trip is on **Sunday 4th January** when we shall be 'blowing away the cobwebs' with a trip to **Shellness and the RSPB raptor watch point at Capel Fleet**. Dress up warmly, bring a packed lunch and a hot drink and we hope to show you the spectacular numbers of waders that come to roost at Shellness and, with a bit of luck, a variety of raptors in the afternoon. In recent years we have seen short-eared owls, barn owls, peregrines and marsh harriers.

See our 2015 programme for our full schedule of events.

Coach trip to RSPB Minsmere Reserve on Saturday 16th May 2015

This lovely reserve by the coast has everything – so much so that we can't keep away! We shall be visiting again in 2015 to enjoy once more the reed-fringed pools, sea shore, dappled woods, sandy heaths and breeding birds. This is one of the best bird-watching sites in Britain where we expect to see terns & avocets feeding young and marsh harriers and hobbies gliding over reed beds. Perhaps we will see the elusive bittern too. Even BBC Springwatch want to visit again, but this time we will be there before them! The reserve has hides, trails, a good visitor centre & cafeteria.

Please take your RSPB membership card if you are a member. Please note that there is an entry charge for those who are not RSPB members of £8.00

Book early to avoid disappointment. Tickets are **£19** each and are available at Group meetings **OR**

Make cheques payable to Gravesend RSPB Local Group & send to Sally Jennings, 206 Lower Higham Rd, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2NN (01474 322171)

Please pay for tickets in advance as we have to pay for the coach beforehand.

The coach will leave Gravesend Railway Station, Clive Rd, at **8.00am** and leave Minsmere at about 5.00pm (back in Gravesend at about 7.30pm).