

## Planning Matters

### Midlothian Council

We have been asked for a scoping opinion under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations on a proposal for the erection of 12 Wind turbines at a 'proposed Mount Lothian Wind farm' near Howgate close to but not on one of our reserves.

New housing applications to the North East of Penicuik are increasing in number and extent and our members are keeping a close eye on them.

### City of Edinburgh Council/National

We have responded to a national consultation from the Directorate for Local Government and Communities, on future Policy on Architecture and Placemaking for Scotland. We emphasised the important role of greenspace and biodiversity in the built environment which is increasingly being recognised by government and institutions.

Reminder: for Midlothian and East Lothian planning matters please write to Susan Manson, Castlesteads, Dalkeith, EH22 2NJ, in the first instance

*Tim Duffy, Lothians Members Centre Planning Secretary*

*Flat 4F2, 34 Warrender Park Terrace, Edinburgh, EH9 1ED Tel/Ans 0131 228 8785*

## Report of AGM

At our AGM in April the following office-bearers were appointed. There remain three vacancies on the main committee and one on the Membership sub-committee, so there is good opportunity for volunteers to contribute to the work of SWT locally :

Chair Tim Duffy (also member of SWT Council); Secretary: Gordon Swann; Treasurer: Trevor Paterson; Reserves Management Group: Ken Knowles; Membership Subcommittee & fundraising: Averil Stewart (01506 842676); Editor Lothian Talk Quintin Blane editor@qab.org.uk; Webmaster: Barry O'Kane

## Scottish Biodiversity Week in Edinburgh

The City of Edinburgh Council runs a Biodiversity Week in tune with the umbrella national initiative. This year they ran it on 19-27<sup>th</sup> May with SWT contributing by moving its annual Red Moss of Balerno Nature Reserve Open Day from its usual slot in July to 20<sup>th</sup> May. Nick Wright, SWT People and Wildlife officer contributed also by bringing his public interaction facilities like tents, posters and touchy feely boxes containing (Norwegian road kill) beaver pelts. Various other items were also on view including the one being Health and Safety checked by the LMC and reserve chairman Tim Duffy (see accompanying photo). Other adult members of the public were not above also modelling this item and contributing donations for the privilege.



## Yahoo Group

If you are not already a subscriber to the SWT Lothian Members Yahoo Group, why not sign up? All subscribers receive e-mail reminders for SWT talks and outings, sent out approximately one week before each event. If it becomes necessary to change the arrangements for an event we do our best to notify you by a further e-mail. Occasionally we may also let you know of events run by other organisations if we think these may be of interest. Membership is free and entails no risk of spam. Simply submit a membership request to the administrator at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/swt-lothian>

## Collectors' News

Congratulations collectors: over 8 days since April you helped raise a total of £3330.97. Next collections will be early in 2013 and Averil is always looking for more volunteers. This involves a 2-hour stint and could be in a supermarket near you! Contact 01506 842676 if interested.

## Stop Press

Thanks to can collections in 2012, Lothians Members Centre Committee has just granted £2400 to two of its reserves: *Bawsinch* has been given £1400 for excavation work on one of the main ponds, the Connel Pond close to Goose Green meadow, and *Red Moss* £1000 towards major work on the board walks. Report on progress will be in March Lothian Talk.



# Lothian Talk

Lothians Members Centre Newsletter  
<http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/local-member-group/lothian/> Winter 2012

## Evening Events

### Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November

#### The Water of Leith - A Ribbon of Green Through our Capital City

Helen Brown from the Water of Leith Conservation Trust will lead us in an armchair tour of the river, revealing the natural and industrial heritage which make the Water of Leith such a special place. We will also hear about the work of the Conservation Trust to conserve the river and protect its wildlife. Helen has worked on the Water of Leith for nearly 9 years, prior to which she managed the Jupiter Urban Wildlife Centre for SWT in Grangemouth and worked at the Falls of Clyde in New Lanark.

*This is the talk cancelled last season on account of inclement weather.*

### Woodlanders and Stories of the Forest

#### Ian Edwards

### Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> Dec

In the first half of the evening Ian will talk about the new Woodlanders who have played their part in the resurgence of interest in British native woodlands. From basket makers to builders, from berry pickers to bee keepers, they are prepared to share their home with the local wildlife and offer an inspiring model for a greener future. After the break for festive refreshments Ian will tell a few short stories from his latest book *Tales of the Forest*. Both books will be available for sale.

### Caerlaverock Wetlands and Beyond

### Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013

Dave Fairlamb, Manager of the Caerlaverock Wetlands Centre in Dumfries-shire, will offer a presentation on the ornithological phenomenon that is Caerlaverock, which we hope will be precursor to a subsequent site visit.

### Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013

There will be an illustrated lecture by Dr John Holland on Alpine Plants in the Breadalbane Hills. More information in March Lothian Talk.

**Lectures start at 7.30 and are held at 33 Melville Street Edinburgh. Admission is free but donations appreciated. Non-members welcome.**

Lothian Talk is printed by Abbey Print of Leith on environmentally-friendly FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council [www.fsc-uk.org](http://www.fsc-uk.org)) paper.

The editor would be pleased to receive reports of interesting wildlife observations or phenomena from the local area (editor@qab.org.uk; Tel 01968 670017)

The *Scottish Wildlife Trust* is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland (registered number SC040247) having its registered office at *Scottish Wildlife Trust, 110 Commercial Street, Edinburgh, EH4 6NF*. It is also a Scottish registered charity (charity number SC005792).

## Wildlife Watch thriving!

There have been some recent changes within the Lothians' *Wildlife Watch* groups. The Edinburgh group has been on a short hiatus and will be relaunching at the end of October. The group will now be run by a new group of volunteers, on the last Sunday of the month in Holyrood Park Education Centre. They are putting together a fun programme of events at the moment and look forward to starting things off with a spooky Halloween session!

The winners of the *Best New Wildlife Watch Group in the UK* award, North Berwick Wildlife Club, have decided to expand their empire, and have now split into THREE separate groups! The latest addition is the *New Buds*; *Junior Twigs* is for the younger children and started up at the start of the school term. The kids are loving it, and the groups are all very popular!

The group at Newhailes, East Lothian, is also doing very well, with the recent addition of some new leaders.

All in all, *Wildlife Watch* is thriving in the Lothians at the moment.

For further information contact Donna Matheson

Tel: 0131 312 4712

[dmathieson@swt.org.uk](mailto:dmathieson@swt.org.uk)



## Colin McLean

An article about Colin McLean in our Autumn 2011 issue noted that he had recently retired from the position of Convenor of the Bawsinch and Duddingston Loch Reserve. In fact he did not retire from either the Bawsinch committee or the main Member Centre committee and was still attending meetings and doing excellent work for the Centre this year. Sadly I now have to report that Colin died recently after a short illness aged 91. He will be very greatly missed in the Members Centre having made an enormous contribution over many years to its work not least after thirty-four years as Convenor of Bawsinch and over twenty years as Convenor as Addiewell..

A Celebration of his life in August, included the following poem which Colin wrote on leaving the Forestry Commission. It is very apt and with that in mind we share it with the many SWT members and friends who will remember him with respect and affection.

Contorta pine, I leave you gladly, Time surveys, farewell, not sadly, Bureaucratic paper bungles, And wet and spiky Sitka jungles.	Assessments when it's cold and pourin', Good hot cups of canteen chlorine, Statistics and databases, Can quickly sink and leave no traces.
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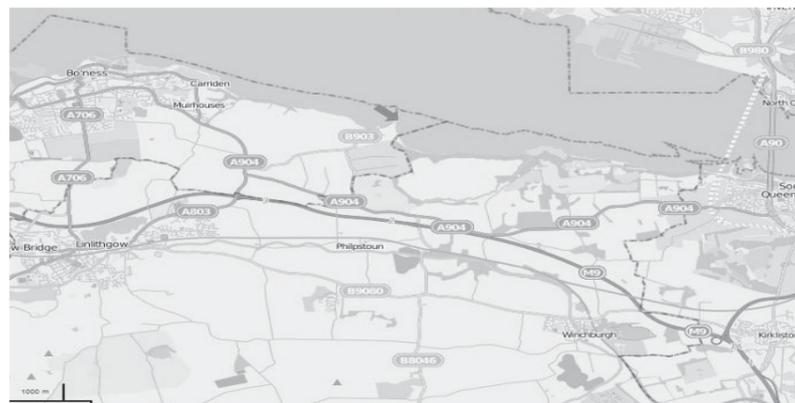
But these quips are just a measure,  
Of a time of work and pleasure,  
Thanks for all the help and laughter,  
Health and joy to you hereafter.

Ken Knowles

### Birdwatching from the Blackness Battlements Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December - talk and walk

Blackness Castle (EH49 7NH) near Bo'ness and Linlithgow, with its stunning views of the Forth bridges and over the Forth to the Fife coast, was built in the 15th century and massively strengthened in the 16th century as an artillery fortress. Since then it has served as royal castle, prison, armaments depot and film location for Hamlet and the BBC production of Ivanhoe. This 'walk and talk' event is being arranged through Historic Scotland with assistance from the RSPB. It will begin at 12 noon with a talk on the Inner Forth Futurescape and recent work at Skinflats reserve, followed by birdwatching, with scopes set up on the battlements and a chance to tour the castle, then a walk through adjacent woodland. Finishing time is 4pm. Standard charges, to include castle entry and refreshments, are £5, £4 concessions and £3 for children. A discount will be offered to SWT members.

*Getting there:* parking is available at the Castle. There are no buses on a Sunday. Nearest rail station is Linlithgow (4miles), where taxis are available.



All maps supplied by Openstreetmap

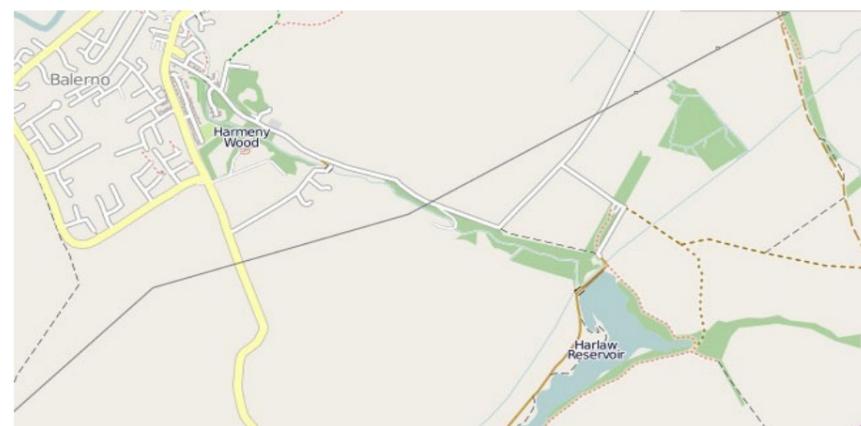
## Wanted: Webmaster for LMC Website

Lothians Members Centre is looking for a volunteer to assist our Web Manager Barry O'Kane administer the Lothians pages of the SWT Website (<http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/local-member-group/lothian/>). The duties are not onerous, mostly ensuring that the site is kept up-to-date, although the exercise of imagination will be encouraged. The successful individual need not be a member of SWT, and this position may suit a young person who is interested in acquiring web design and development experience. Contact Barry O'Kane ([barry@endzone.co.uk](mailto:barry@endzone.co.uk)) for further information.

## Red Moss Reserve: A Profile

The SWT reserve of Red Moss covers some 23 Ha, situated north of Bavelaw Marsh on the northern side of the Pentlands. It comprises mainly a raised bog but also includes birch woodland, marshy grassland, scrub and a pond. The natural history interest of the area was formally recognised in 1952 when Red Moss was designated as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), but, although SWT was interested in the site for many years, it was not until 1975 that it was established as a reserve by agreement. Some of the time taken to establish as a reserve is explained by the lengthy investigation of its legal history which had to be undertaken involving reference to court decisions in the eighteenth century establishing its common ownership and the commoners' rights. Indeed the Moss might well also qualify as an SSLI (Site of Special Legal Interest) if any such designation actually existed.

The primary interest of the site is the raised bog, with some 43 species of bryophyte recorded including ten species of sphagnum moss. Although identification of mosses is not for everyone, the mixture of sphagnum moss species in the wetter areas among the more extensive heather and cotton grass in particular forms



kaleidoscopic patches of colour which can be readily appreciated by all. Round-leaved sundew is also quite common and these species can readily be seen from the raised walkway which allows easy access for visitors to walk around the reserve and appreciate the raised bog. Another species worth looking out for in the marshy grassland areas near the road is the pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly which can usually be seen flying on warm sunny days in June and July.

The history and development of the raised bog is described in some detail in a series of interpretative panels adjacent to the raised walkway. One of the problems of managing a raised bog, particularly in the drier east of Scotland, is preventing it drying out and the consequent spread of trees, particularly birch, across the moss. A series of dams using plastic sheets across old drainage ditches is very visible from the walkway which, even if not an aesthetic delight, is proving effective in helping to reduce drainage from the bog.

Tim Duffy

## Red Moss: Open Day

Our Open Day this year had brilliant weather and was well attended, with the extra publicity provided by Edinburgh Biodiversity week. Wildlife sightings on the day included: palmate and smooth newt in the pond dipping, 10 common crossbills, goldcrest, long tailed tit and redpoll, all spotted by the local bird expert Richard. The bog itself was looking great (ie wet with lots of sphagnum growth).

## West Lothian Notes

Is West Lothian's climate going backwards? If so, shouldn't we have our own calendar with April put beside November, and the end of March tacked on to the end of May? By the way the weather has been behaving this year, there is every reason for being puzzled about which page of the calendar we are looking at. In late May our local woodlands were magnificent with great carpets of wood anemones, wood sorrel, greater stitchwort, herb robert and healthy clumps of bluebells - my father, I recall, painted bluebells in a beechwood which was still without its leaves. Cabbage whites and a handful of painted ladies appeared in March, in response to a few days of fine weather and then, presumably because of a shortage of food, disappeared again - and have not come back. Right on cue, spotted orchids came up well in tubs in my garden. Livingston has at least one colony of oystercatchers, patrolling in ones and twos the grassed verges of the principal inter-district roads. with families of eight or more picking up their suppers round the fringes of the carpark. Surely amongst the most decorative of our medium-size birds, and most entertaining to watch.

Nothing remotely twitchable in these observations - but wonderful all the same.

Tom Inglis