

## Newsletter 20

The twentieth meeting of the ILBs' was held on 16 October 2018 at Belfairs Woodland Centre and 10 ladies plus Kris Mee attended.

A group of the ladies were led by Stephen Aylen on the 2nd part of his guided walk through Belfairs woods. He explained that the area had been known as Four Acres and had been farmed since 1212 and in some places traces of the ancient furrows can still be seen today. This area then became a 9-hole Golf Course and then became known as the Gunners Field because of a gun emplacement there during the Second World War. Apparently the first powered flight took off from Belfairs and there is still a nuclear bunker underneath a roundabout near the children's' playground. The main path through the woods that leads to Scrub Lane was a Roman Road and was called Scrub Chase. In the trees behind the Green House Restaurant there was once a pond which had a monkey cage in the middle of it and the restaurant was originally First Field House. The front of this house which is currently being restored, faced into the woods towards the current path which was originally the main road into Leigh. There used to be a Lodge where the bowling green is now, and the stables were built for the Lodge. Steve has researched extensive details of the history of the woods and he was only able to pass on a small part of that knowledge during the walk which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. *Thanks to Diana Smith.*

Indoor Meeting 3/10/2018 thanks to Rita Merrick: -

Jo Loman gave a very comprehensive, informative and interesting talk of her study and work with penguins. She took a 3-month sabbatical from her job as Education & Communications Officer at EWT Belfairs, to undertake a 'sea-bird rehab & care' internship at The Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) in Cape Town. Jo's knowledge of the 17 species of penguin and many other sea-birds is very extensive. She explained how SANCCOB care for the bird's general health, from eggs through to mature birds, the specialized feeding required and then returning them back to their habitat. She also spoke about the problems, such abandonment by parents, predation, plastics and fishing equipment, to name just a few. Jo's enthusiasm for her work certainly shone through and as a result she has returned to Africa and left the very next day after her talk!

Local Sightings: - 6/10/2018 River Crouch, Wallasea – Shag, 6/10/2018 Canvey Point – Great Skua, Gannet, Red-throated Diver. 7/10/2018 Foulness – Turtle Dove, 9/10/2018 RSPB Rainham – Cattle Egret, 11/10/2018 – Spoonbill  
There are now 4000-5000 Brent Geese off Leigh and Foulness

Field Trips - 30/9/2018 Bradwell *thanks to Anne Sanford:* -

15 people which included 1 ILB and Kris, weather was sunny with clear views across the Blackwater to Mersea. 37 species were seen, including a Tree Sparrow, and four butterfly species including several Clouded Yellow.

14/10/2018 Dungeness *thanks to Diana Smith:* -

With a forecast of low cloud and light rain showers five ILB and a sister plus five LG members met at the Power Station. From the beach several Gannets were seen along with the Gulls. On the shrubby land near the lighthouse a flock of Goldfinch flew over. The weather held out and on transferring to the Reserve we saw Little Egret and 19 Great White Egrets and then two Cattle Egrets. A Black Redstart was feeding on the many insects flying around the roof of the Visitor Centre and Tree Sparrow on the feeders at the farm at the reserve entrance. In all 62 species were seen. We were delighted that the rain held off but as we returned home the skies darkened and most of the return journey was in rain! We felt truly lucky that we had walked and picnicked outdoors and observed birds without getting wet!

Forthcoming Events: -

The next indoor meeting will be Wednesday 7 November at the Belfairs Woodland Centre. Green Birding by Gary Prescott, The Biking Birder.

The next field trip Monday 12 November at EWT Thameside, meet at 10:00am

Or Sunday 25th November at Two Tree Island. Meet at 8am in the car park.

The next Essex Wildlife Trust meeting will be Thursday 25 October 2018 at the Belfairs Woodland Centre. Tyne to the Thames by David Fairlamb.

Christmas lunch Tuesday 18 December 13:00pm Royal Oak £18 a head.

Any lady requiring transport to attend Indoor meetings or to go on any field trip please contact Kris Mee.

**Please Note:** - Until now I have been contacting ladies to check if they would like a lift but there are now so many ladies in the group who potentially need a lift that this has become very time consuming. I have reluctantly decided that I will no longer be telephoning to check but will rely on ladies to ring me.

The **next ILB meeting** is scheduled for **20 November 2018** at the Belfairs Woodland Centre. Meet at 10:00am for a walk or 10:30am for coffee and a chat.

This newsletter will be available on the local group website at: -<http://www.southendrspb.co.uk> . Click on ILBs on the Menu Bar.

*If you no longer wish to hear from the RSPB South East Essex Local Group, please contact **Kris Mee 01702 525152 [krismee28@googlemail.com](mailto:krismee28@googlemail.com)** confirming your name and address and stating that you wish to unsubscribe from the RSPB South East Essex Local Group's communications.*