



Website: www.keswicknathist.co.uk

NEWSLETTER September 2025

Welcome to our newsletter revealing the programme for the coming season and a summary of the last year.

Details about how to join or renew your membership are at the end of the newsletter.

Please contact Tony Marsh with any comments or ideas for the Society either at a meeting or via e-mail: marshlambl@aol.com.

Indoor Lecture Programme 2025/26

All meetings are held in The Crosthwaite Parish Room, Keswick on a Thursday evening, commencing at 7.30 pm. Free to members but non-members are very welcome with a £5 entry fee.

We would like to reintroduce the reporting of interesting nature sightings at the start of each meeting. If you have observed something noteworthy, or perhaps the first sighting of the year, e-mail Tony Marsh, (see above), and we can let the membership know.

2025

16th October **Liz Holden**
What have Fungi ever done for Us?

Scottish fungi expert Liz, will share how integral these often-unseen heroes are integral to the health of the planet and us.

30th October **Ann Linguard**
Honeycomb Worms and You

Ann, author and low-tide shorewalker, will talk about the animals, especially the reef-building honeycomb worms, that live in Allonby Bay's new Highly Protected Marine Area

13th November
Working in Partnership

Mike Farrell

Mike draws on 24 years' experience of working at the EA, to talk about the improvements achieved in fisheries and the environment in the Derwent catchment and projects across Cumbria.

27th November
The Missing Lynx Project

Faye Whiley

Senior Project Officer, Faye, will discuss the pros and cons of a re-introduction programme of this top carnivore predator back into our environment

11th December
National Trust- Borrowdale Rainforest National Nature Reserve

Jade Allen

Learn about temperate rainforest, and the special species Borrowdale NNR is home to.

2026

8th January
The Bats of Cumberland and Beyond

Gail Armstrong

Gail will talk about worldwide and local bats. She will bring along some captive bats which she keeps under licence, for us to look at.

22nd January
How to help Hedgehogs

Tanya St.Pierre

Tanya works alongside Millcroft vets and Melbreak Wildlife Groups' recovery project to rehabilitate hedgehogs. Find out how you can help these enigmatic creatures.

5th February
Skiddaw Forest

Pete Jones

Pete is Cumbria Wildlife Trusts Project Manager for this very exciting local project. Hear what is being planned to restore and manage the 3000 acres of Skiddaw Forest

19th February
Cumbrian White Tailed Eagles?

Deborah Brady

Debs, from The Lifescape Project will talk about feasibility studies to re-introduce white tailed eagles, an apex predator, back into our landscape.

5th March

AGM

Will be followed by **David Gardiner** from the **Melbreak Wildlife Group** telling us about their **Curlew Recovery in the Cocker Valley - The first 2 years.**

Field trips 2025-26

The programme of outings is not currently finalised but will include our traditional visits to a Wetland and Wildfowl Trust reserve, probably Caerlaverock, in the late Autumn, as well as RSPB Leighton Moss

Outings will be notified via the website and e-mail to members at least two weeks before the event.

Tony Marsh is the contact for all outings. Please get in touch by email at marshlamb1@aol.com (or if you're not on email tel. 72137 or 07974 909522) with him by two days before the outing so that he can organise car sharing. We recommend drivers are reimbursed on the following basis:-

0 – 20 miles: £3 per passenger
21 – 40 miles: £4
41 – 60 miles: £5
61 – 80 miles: £6
Over 80 miles: £7

(It might be prudent for drivers to check with your insurance company that this payment of expenses will not interfere with their insurance cover)

Guests are welcome but we regret no dogs.

Reports for Field Trips 2024-25

December 24

Martin Mere Wetland Wildlife Trust

We started off at the RSPB Marshside reserve, just to the north of Southport. On one side of the road are extensive Salt marshes extending out towards Morecambe Bay which held a few Pink-footed Geese, visible as they raised their dark brown heads between bouts of ducking down to graze. On the other side are large manmade shallow lagoons which held a number of ducks, mostly Tufted, Pintail, Teal, Wigeon and Shoveller, but most impressively large aggregations of Lapwing, Golden Plover, Redshanks and Black-tailed Godwits. It was quite a spectacle when they raised up into the air in unison, sometimes flying over our heads. We suspected but didn't locate a raptor causing them to all go up in unison.

We then drove the few miles to WWT Martin Mere itself and at the very first hide we were treated by amazingly close views of Black-tailed Godwits and Ruff as well as good numbers of Shelduck, Mallards and the odd Pintail, Wigeon and Pochard. A group of Pintails were spending much of the time flying around and at one point we managed to spot a couple of Snipe, which gradually became a dozen as we got our eye in and became less fooled by their amazing camouflage.

We spent a short while in a hide overlooking a small pond, surrounded by trees and which held bird feeders. Apart from the usual tits and a glimpse of a Reed Bunting, the most significant visitors were a couple of Brown Rats and a Grey Squirrel. Up until now it had been dull but dry, the rain started however and soon was bordering on torrential. Nevertheless we were dry in the hides we visited and had distant views of a Group of about eight Marsh Harriers, seemingly fixated with a particular spot in the reeds. In retrospect I wonder if there might have been an Otter there munching on a fish. Hoped for sightings of Barn Owl was unlikely in the heavy rain and we also missed out on a close up views of a Kingfisher, although one of us did see one in flight from an earlier hide. (Allegedly!).

We returned to the last hide to see the melee of Ducks and Whooper Swans caused by the warden feeding them grain from a wheelbarrow. Interestingly, one of the Swans was bearing a chunky Satellite transmitter around its neck. It didn't seem to affect its swallowing!

Although the weather put somewhat of a dampener on things, (and certainly made the route back to the M6 challenging with multiple flooded roads to contend with), it was a worthwhile day.



Mixed Waders Marshside



Drake Pintail



Whooper in the rain

May 25

Carrifran Wildwood

The outing to the Carrifran Wildwood, near Moffat in the Southern Uplands, went very well with full sun alleviated with cool winds. It is really a remarkable to see this semi-mature woodland transforming this attractive glen from the nature-depletion that we saw in the surrounding glens and hills to a vibrant varied area full of bird song, insects and wild flowers. A true insight into what the Skiddaw area might look like in twenty-five years.

Bird-life was mostly heard rather than seen; with Cuckoos, Willow, Sedge and Garden Warblers, Blackcap and Chiffchaff being especially prominent. Scanning the ridges above us did not reveal a Golden Eagle unfortunately, so we had to make do with a Buzzard high up over the tops hanging in the wind. (Remarkably, I had also had a fleeting glimpse of a Red Kite as we were driving up the M74). Much more visible was an abundance of visible insect life. We were blessed to have Peter Macqueen with us and who was able to identify the day flying moths that we were seeing, and he was able to temporarily catch the odd one with his sweep net to allow us to get a better look. Species of moth seen included Common carpet, Common Heath, Burnet Companion, Mother Shipton and Brown Silverline with butterflies including Large and Small Whites, Orange tips, Green-veined White, Peacock and Red Admiral with by far the most numerous, Small Heaths. (The latter characterised by always holding its wings closed when perched, usually on the ground). Our favourite butterflies were, however, the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries which were widespread throughout the walk. Views of the underside were required to differentiate from the much rarer "normal" Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Many of the flowers held Soldier Beetles, Hoverflies and Bee Flies. It was wonderful to hear the gentle "hum" of hundreds of insects busying themselves in the trees around us. Another interesting find was a small puddle on the path which not only contained Tadpoles but also strange cylinders of fragments of reed etc. which contained Caddis Fly larvae which crawled around on the bottom.

We held an extensive lunchbreak at the farthest point up the glen and in close proximity to a large stand of Meadow Cranesbill, (*Geranium pratense*), which was attracting many of the butterflies and other insects. The main interest of flora was in the trees, with a few posts naming the species being especially helpful, and shrubs, Burnet Rose being very beautiful at the moment, but it was also good to see the delicate blue flowers of numerous insectivorous Butterwort plants sitting on long thin stems a few inches above the rosettes of leaves with their sticky surfaces and to find the odd Globeflower at the side of the beck.



Orange Tip on Cranesbill



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Common Heath Moth

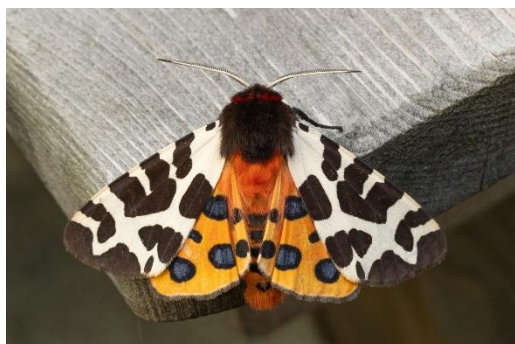
June 25

Moth Trapping at Brackenrigg

There was an excellent result from the moth trapping undertaken by Peter Macqueen our resident expert, at Brackenrigg, the home and garden of KNHS member and Secretary, Judy Sutcliffe. With a total of over 200 individuals and about sixty species, crowd pleasers such as Elephant Hawk Moths (both the normal one and the "Small"), and Poplar Hawkmoths were present as was a bewildering number of equally beautiful, if less large varieties; all of which Peter was able to identify with many decades of experience behind him. My particular favourite was the Garden Tiger Moth, although a Sallow Kitten was also stunning, albeit that it had been in the wars and lost a portion of one of its hind wings.

We then had a wander in a wet meadow where Judy has planted numerous trees and dug a large pond. It was a bit early in the morning for a large showing of Damselflies and Dragonflies, but Common Blue and Large Red damselflies were seen and a Four-spotted Chaser Dragonfly performed an occasional fly past. The little beetle on the leaf is a Garden Chafer, indeed Peter had trapped a Cockchafer, or May Bug, in with the moths overnight.

Very many thanks to both Peter and Judy for an informative morning enjoyed by over a dozen of us.



Garden Tiger Moth



Sallow Kitten Moth



Peter Macqueen reveals the moths

July 25

High Borrowdale

A dozen of us visited the wonderful upland High Borrowdale hay meadows along with Jan Darall, Land Manager and Policy Officer of Friends of the Lake District, the organisation who transformed sheep pastures into incredibly rich flowering hay meadows and continue to manage the area. A grazier puts sheep on the land for few weeks after the hay is cut. There is a mile or so of a walk in from the A6 road which was accompanied by scores of Ringlet and Meadow Butterflies with glimpses of two flying Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries and a few Small Heaths. Sand Martins were flying above us and we had glimpses of a Grey Wagtail and a Dipper on the beck.

In spite of the challenges of land slippage on the valley sides which have threaten the field barns and the top edges of the meadows they are looking mighty fine with a striking floral display. Tree planting on the fell-sides has been less successful, mostly because of the unstable slopes and choosing Ash as a major shade tree before Ash Dieback had hit the country. We were surprised that there were actually few pollinators flying around the wonderful flowers in the meadows but were pleased to find a late season Chimney Sweeper Moth and there were plenty of Grasshoppers.

Lunch was consumed leaning against a remaining wall of the ancient farmhouse and we watched Buzzards high up above the ridges, a Goosander flew up the river and a Wheatear worked its way up a field wall.



Membership Renewal for 2025/26

There are 3 possible ways of renewing your membership this year:

1. Make a bank transfer to the Society's account (£15 per person, Students and Juniors £5) – Account No. 34055789, Sort Code 01-04-69.

Most importantly please enter your Surname as Reference and let Jean Gilbert know you have done so via e-mail on keswickvets@aol.com so that we can subsequently contact you.

2. Fill in the Renewal Slip at the end of this newsletter and send a cheque by post to Jean Gilbert (Treasurer) Greta Bank Farm, Keswick CA12 4NS
3. Come to a meeting and pay then, by cash, cheque or card: **we now have a portable card reader for you to pay with at a meeting if you wish.**

KESWICK NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY Membership & Renewal Slip 2025/26

NAME(S)

.....

Email Address (please supply even if we have this already as this will confirm your permission for us to contact you for Data Protection purposes)

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Amount Enclosed: Cash..... Cheque (payable to Keswick Natural History Society)