

Main Work Party Reports

Nov 10 - Strumpshaw Stone Pit - Area mown on 08 Nov raked and cleared to spoil heap.

Nov 24 - Snowdrop Acre - Scythed nettle and saplings, raked and cleared to spoil heap. Cleared fallen timber to wood piles. Attend to fallen White Poplar by pond. Plant 1 Hazel. Trimmed back falling branches on boundary hedge.

Dec 08 - Jary's Meadow - Areas mown on 06 Dec:- West meadow in front of blackthorn - bracken area in SW corner - seat area - orchard area, all raked and cleared to fire/spoil sites. Areas of S boundary hedge on meadow side cut.

Additional Work Party Reports

Nov 03 - Walsham Fen - Boardwalk repairs carried out. 2 sections replaced.

Nov 08 - Limpenhoe Church - Conservation area mown
Strumpshaw Stone Pit - Area mown

Nov 22 - Limpenhoe Church - Conservation area - scythed round gravestones and raked and cleared all cut vegetation to spoil heap.

Dec 06 - Jary's Meadow - West meadow in front of blackthorn - seat area - bracken area at SW corner - and orchard area, all mown, 2 mowers used.

WORK PARTY DATES

All work parties start at 10:30am, finishing at 1.00pm.

5th January—Lingwood Pond

19th January—Howes Meadow

2nd February—Limpenhoe Church (Hedge planting)

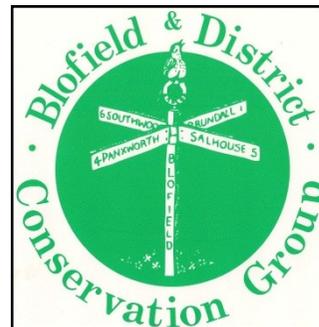
16th February—Lifting/planting trees. Meet at South Burlingham Church.

2nd March—Buckenham Woods

16th March—Holly Lane Pond.

30th March—Walsham Fen/ Jary's Meadow.

Any short notice changes will be published on the BADCOG website @ www.badcog.co.uk



BADCOG NEWS.

No.199 January 2019

President: Richard Hobbs

Chairman: Ernest Hoyos, Sunny Cottage,

Buckenham Woods, Lingwood

Norwich NR13 4HG.

Tel 01603 712913

Clarkes Wood receives protection

MEMBERS OF BADCOG are celebrating after defending an under-threat woodland they planted at Shack Lane in 1984 following the construction of the Blofield bypass. Earlier this year members of the group applied to Broadland District Council for a Tree Preservation Order after the land was sold and concerns were raised about its future.

The TPO, a woodland Order, was granted in July, but it prompted an appeal against the Order from the new landowner who said he was being "unfairly treated".

The appeal was considered at the Broadland District Council offices on Wednesday 21 November.

BADCOG's chairman Ernest Hoyos (Lingwood and Burlingham Tree Warden) said: "The woodland had been named after the previous landowner, who allowed volunteers to plant the trees 34 years ago. It was the change in ownership that made BADCOG apply for the TPO. "We don't know what the new owner might want to do and if there is no TPO, and they want to do something with the land, the first thing to go could be the trees."

Ernest said the woodland contains around 50 to 100 trees, which include oak, hazel and scots pine. A report to Broadland's appeal panel said the woodland provides a "significant wildlife habitat and ecological value to the site". Blofield Parish Council also submitted a statement to Broadland District Council in support of the woodland. Responding to John Cole's objection, Broadland District Council said the TPO was made following the council's usual process and was not a targeted approach. I am delighted to report that the woodland TPO that BADCOG requested for Clarke's Wood was confirmed at the Broadland District Council appeals meeting. Ernest, together with Blofield Tree Warden David Pilch and Blofield Parish Council Chairman Rob Christie, attended the appeal. Mr Cole also attended with a colleague.

The entire case was outlined by Mark Symonds, Broadland District Council's Conservation Officer (Arboriculture and Landscape).

Extract from an article in Broadsheet by John Fleetwood.

David Cullen has been a member of BADCOG for many years. Knowledgeable about many aspects of wildlife and able to identify many plants, insects and particularly birds perhaps his special talent lies in recognising birdsong.

Until a few years ago he used to cycle to work parties and he enjoyed coming on the walks with other BADCOG members. On hearing the tune of a small bird David could readily identify it, much to the admiration of the rest of us. Back in the 1940s when David was a pupil at Gresham's School his teacher, Dick Bagnall Oakley, encouraged his interest in the natural world. In 1947 David was persuaded to enter a public school essay competition. Part of his essay is reproduced below with more to follow in the next edition. The prize for his entry was a medal from the RSPB.

How would you yourself identify in the field, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Blackcap and Garden Warbler.

All these birds belong to the Family Sylviidae (Warblers) and they are summer migrants to this country. All four of them are generally distributed in most parts of Great Britain. They are found in the same sort of habitat, but exceptions are given under the birds' individual haunts described below.

I will start by comparing the four species concerned in plumage, song and continue by describing breeding, general habits, food and flight respectively. This will enable the birds to be compared from angles of observation and assist in their identification according to circumstances in which they are observed. The Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita collybita*) and the Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus trochilus*) are more likely to be confused than the Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla atricapilla*) and the Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*), so I will deal with the first two first and the latter two afterwards. This may then clear up all doubts of identification and plumage difference.

The Willow Warbler is slightly larger than the Chiffchaff and I have noticed that the latter is, if anything, the more delicately built bird. Both birds have an average length of about 4½ ins. The colouring in both species is nearly identical in the field, & very exact identification is needed if the plumage alone is to be used as a means of recognition. I have observed that the Chiffchaff is slightly less colourful than the Willow Warbler, which has more yellow in the plumage, and the feet and legs of the Chiffchaff are darker than the Willow Warbler's which are light brown in colour.

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Mention the word Africa to most people, and it usually conjures up images of Elephants, Giraffes, Lions etc., and certainly not Penguins. The popular image of Africa seems to be the product of wildlife films, that show plains teeming with big game animals. Sadly, today, many of the 50 or so countries that make up the African continent, do not have any Giraffes, Elephants, Lions or other large animals. To see these, one has to go to the areas that have been designated as National Parks or sanctuaries for wildlife. Thankfully, there are lots of these, and many are very large. The Kruger Nation Park, where we camped for our last two nights, has an area of two million hectares. These last two nights and days were the best part of the trip, and perhaps, the biggest surprise of all.



Black Girdled Lizard



Jackass Penguins

BADCOG Evening Meetings/Talks

January 11th – Paul Metcalf – The life of Bees

February 8th – Dr. Ian Bedford (Head of Entomology at the John Innes Institute) Research findings of Butterflies & Moths in your garden.

Talks and meeting take place ever 2nd Friday of the month (October— April only), in the Methodist Chapel, Chapel Road Lingwood starting at 7.30pm.

Refreshments are available.

Membership Renewal

Thank you to those of you who have renewed your membership. To those of you who wish to renew (**Individual £5, - family £10**) and have not done so, please forward any cheques made payable to BADCOG to: **Frances Milliken, 45 Hearthway, Blofield Corner NR13 4RS.**

The nests consist mostly of grass and roots, lined with finer material like hair & rootlets. The Garden Warbler also has the habit of making “cock’s nests”, like the Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes troglodytes*). These are not so well built as the real nest, & sometimes only a platform of grass stalks is made.

As the nests of the Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler are domed, & the Blackcap and Garden Warbler open, the nest characteristics of these four birds can be summarised in pairs. The Chiffchaff builds its nest off the ground, and the Willow Warbler on the ground. Both nests are lined with feathers. The Blackcap’s nest is usually higher up than the Garden Warbler’s, & is very much more frail & unsubstantial. The Garden Warbler also makes “cock’s nests”, but in building material there is little difference between the nests of the two birds.

To be continued in the next BADCOG News Letter!

African Surprises Hans Watson

Last October, I was fortunate to visit South Africa, which was very different to other African countries that I’ve visited. The first few days were in Cape Town, where I was able to spend an hour or so on top of Table Mountain, photographing the wonderful spring flowers, and admiring the awesome view of the town and coast spread out below us. Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was for 18 of his 27 years in prison, was clearly visible. We also visited the nearby Cape of Good Hope, where I found and photographed several jet black lizards. At the time, because they seemed to be quite common, I assumed that they were not very special. However, we did not see any more on our travels, and so I did some research on the internet, and found that it is the Black Girdled Lizard, and is endemic to the southern-most part the Cape. It is found in only three tiny areas and therefore a privilege to see, and quite special. Another surprise, was that the most common butterfly was the Painted Lady.

Before we left the Cape, I was keen to go to a beach where my son had told me to visit, because it had some special residents. Fortunately, we were able to do this, and were not disappointed, because it is here that Jackass Penguins are found. It almost seemed absurd that at least 40 of these lovely birds were happily mingling with people on an African beach, showing no fear. A sanctuary has been created for them behind the beach, where they nest, under strict protection.

It must be taken into account however, that the plumage differences between these two birds is exceptionally difficult to observe with accuracy due to the varying effects of light, & also seasonal differences. I have found these birds to be extremely active, & detailed colour observation is very limited in most cases. See fig 1 & fig 2.



The Blackcap and Garden Warbler are in a different category, as far as recognition by plumage is concerned. They are both larger than the last two species & have an average length of 5½ ins. I have found that the Blackcap appears the more sleek bird of the two, while the Garden Warbler is more plump & compactly built. There is moreover, a noticeable difference in colour, and no other bird has plumage which can be confused with them.

The Blackcap takes its name from the male bird of this species only. He has a sharply defined glossy black cap, while that of the female is reddish brown. The upper parts are greyish brown in the male, but in the female I have observed a warmer brown on the upper parts, which remains a useful recognition characteristic even in a poor light. Underparts are ash-grey in the male & more brown in the female. The belly is creamy white. The Garden Warbler is a rather insignificant bird when judged by its plumage. Both sexes are alike, but they have a pleasing shade of buff shading to a darker sandy brown on the upper parts. I have frequently noted that the legs of the Garden Warbler are much blacker than those of the Blackcap which are a dull shade of brown. This, however, is more a point of general interest than it is of value as a field characteristic. See fig 3, fig 4 & fig 5



Summing up the plumage of these four birds, it is evident that the Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler are smaller in comparison with the Blackcap and Garden Warbler. Plumage of the first two & the latter birds are markedly different the first two having a general colour of greenish-yellow. The Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler are, however, very difficult to distinguish by their plumage, & I have found the song to be the most reliable means of identification as the following observations will show.

The Chiffchaff derives its name from its song, which is entirely different from that of the Willow Warbler. It consists of two notes, one rather higher-pitched than the other. "Chiff-chaff-chaff-chiff-chiff- chaff" & so on, is its song. The sequence is very irregular & no bird sings just the two notes "chiff-chaff". Several "chiffs" or "chaffs" may follow one after the other. This song may continue for as long as 15 seconds, but I should say that it is usually about 12 seconds. The call note is a soft "hweet- hweet", much like the Willow Warbler, & difficult to distinguish. It has also a subdued Sedge-Warbler-like note before commencing its song. Something like "churr-churr".

The song of the Willow Warbler is entirely different from the above species. Once recognised this song cannot be mistaken. It is a continuous, pleasing warble, which descends the scale and fades into silence, gaining strength and vigour in the middle and than fading away. I always feel this initial crescendo sounds like the prelude to a magnificent burst of song which never follows. It is very rippling and plaintive. It lasts about five seconds & is often repeated, & is delivered while the bird actively moves about the bushes and trees. It has a call-note very like the Chiffchaff.

The song of the Blackcap is rather hard to distinguish from the Garden Warbler. It is certainly the better performer of the two, & I think, probably one of the best songsters of the small birds. It has a clear, loud, warbling song consisting of many rich notes. It has also a short and a long version to its song, some birds singing more of one than of another, but always using both. The short version is just a rapid warbling of clear notes, & the long version is the same but finishing with a loud crescendo of rich liquid notes. It also mimics in its song, & I have heard it warble a few notes of a blackbird. But to distinguish its song from that of the Garden Warbler is not so easy. His song is practically on the same lines, but he has a different way of presenting it. While the Blackcap definitely phrases his song which lasts about half a minute, the Garden Warbler's song is more uniform & lasts anything up to two or three minutes or even longer,

without a pause. He has no loud notes whatsoever, which helps to identify him from the Blackcap. Thus, the Garden Warbler's song is more subdued & prolonged. There is however, some difficulty when the Blackcap discards his typical songs and warbles softly. This he often does, & then the two songs are very hard to distinguish. Both birds have a harsh "tac tac" note and other subdued notes. In addition the Garden Warbler has a grating "kurr kurr" used more often than it is by the Blackcap.

As explained above, these four birds have different songs.

The Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler's songs have nothing in common, and are different from those of all other birds & need no further comment. The Blackcap and Garden Warbler may be confusing, but if one bears in mind that the Blackcap's song, though shorter, has a greater range of tone & volume & appears to be more expertly delivered, while the Garden Warbler's is more uniform & of greater length, there is little chance of a mistake. The only chance of confusion is when the Blackcap may warble softly & may than resemble the Garden Warbler. Sight of the bird is than necessary.

On account of the Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff & Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) all building domed nests on or near the ground, some care has to be taken in the identification of the species if a nest is found. The Willow Warbler in most cases builds its nest on the ground. There are exceptions, & a reliable ornithologist told me that he found one four feet up in a hawthorn hedge. This, however is most unusual. The Chiffchaff's nest is similar in structure to the Willow Warbler's, but is situated off the ground, usually a foot or more up. I have observed that the Chiffchaff's nest is more loosely-built than the Willow Warbler's, & contains more leaves. At this point the Wood Warbler must be taken into consideration as this bird's nest may be confused with the Willow Warbler's except for one thing. It contains no feathers in the lining, as in the Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler's nests. All the above nests contain mostly grass and moss, and are lined with many feathers, in the case of the Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff.

There is very little difference between the nests of the Blackcap and Garden Warbler. They may also be confused with the other few members of the Sylviidae who build similar nests. The Garden Warbler's nests, I find to be more substantial than the Blackcap's nest. Both nests are about four feet up, but usually the Garden Warbler's nest is the lower of the two birds.

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