

MBS Local Outing to Loddon Nature Reserve and Charvil Wildlife Reserve 24/9/22

Our first Local Outing of the season was to a new site for us, recommended by one of our Heath regulars who lives nearby. **Loddon Nature Reserve Twyford** is a 14-hectare reserve on the edge of the village of Twyford. It contains a flooded gravel pit with several islands and a ragged, scrubby fringe that skirts around the shallows. The website recommends visiting between December and August and we were going there late September. Even our leader Paul suggested we might not see much but it would be a pleasant walk – and there was a Costa Coffee nearby! But, on his recce, Paul had found how to extend the walk into Charvil Wildlife Reserve which added to the variety of habitat. We all agreed it was a lovely site to visit with its mixture of wetland and woodland especially in the sunshine we enjoyed that day.



For several of us it was our first adventure on the Elizabeth Line. Currently you still have to cross Paddington Station from one section to the other and a dozen of us were relieved to find one another in the same section of the 9.41 train a good 10 minutes before it set off.

25 people gathered at Twyford Station including new member Rhona, Mary's friend from out of town and Paul's neighbour. We walked through the village and soon turned off the road to find our way onto the Loddon Nature Reserve. From sunlit woodland paths we got occasional views of the flooded gravel pit where we saw water birds including Grebes, Grey Heron, Little Egret and some glimpsed a Kingfisher.



At one point we realised half the party had stopped on the path to gaze up into the trees overhead. This proved to be everyone's highlight of the day – a pair of Goldcrests displaying what looked like mating behaviour. Clearly male with orange crest and female with yellow. As Rhona posted on our Facebook MBS 2020 Vision "The foliage didn't allow me to get great photos but nonetheless it was a fantastic sight!"

Rather than continue round the Loddon Nature Reserve we then turned right through a tunnel and walked alongside The Heronry – a private fishing lake surrounded by a very high fence. We had to negotiate a stile and cross a field in order to get round a ford. It was in that field that some saw a Green Woodpecker and we had good views of Red Kite and Buzzard as well as a little flock of



House Martins. We did wonder whether Paul might have booked us into the posh pub for our midday meal but we later stopped in a clearing for our packed lunches.



We then wandered round paths within the Charvil Country Park before emerging onto the old London to Bath Road for our walk back through Twyford. Some people went straight to the station and some found a pub but half the group went into the Costa Coffee Paul had promised us for use of the facilities and to enjoy a welcome sit-down with cuppa+ and sociable chat reflecting on the outing.

But our birdwatching wasn't over... Andy spotted Sparrowhawk as the last of us approached the station for the 3.21 GWR train homeward.

I wasn't very efficient noting birds on the day and it was asking a bit much of fellow-participants to remember two weeks later so this may not be a complete list of what we saw and heard.

Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Shoveler
Gadwall
Wigeon
Mallard
Teal
Tufted Duck
Little Grebe
Great Crested Grebe
Grey Heron
Little Egret
Cormorant

Sparrowhawk
Red Kite
Buzzard
Moorhen
Coot
Black-headed Gull
Herring Gull
Woodpigeon
Kingfisher
Green Woodpecker
Jay
Magpie
Jackdaw

Carrion Crow
Blue Tit
Great Tit
House Martin
Cetti's Warbler H
Long-tailed Tit
Chiffchaff
GOLDCREST
Nuthatch
Blackbird
Robin
Dunnock

One person thought they remembered seeing a Great Spotted Woodpecker and another thought they may have seen a Barn Swallow.

We also saw a Muntjac Deer and lots of interesting fungi.



Fungus photos and Goldcrests by Rhona Richardson, others by Marion Hill.

This report is written by Marion Hill who hopes to make a wider range of photos available somewhere other than Facebook.