



## **RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

### **Hengistbury Head Walk**

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023  
 Weather: Sunny with a cool breeze (except on top of the Head)  
 Walk Leaders: Pat Holder and Jean Crawford  
 Attendees: 15

Our walk started from Wick Lane car park. Wick is a village on the south bank of the River Stour in Dorset, just short of the Stour's entry into Christchurch Harbour. Along with the nearby village of Tuckton, it originally formed a tithing in Christchurch, before becoming part of the Civil Parish of Southbourne in 1894. The latter being incorporated into the Borough of Bournemouth in 1901. Wick Fields form an important part of the Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve and constitutes a SSSI. Hengistbury Head, Wick Fields and adjacent land were declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) on 18 May 1990. The meadows here have not been improved for agriculture and are therefore regarded as 'ancient grassland', rich in flowering plants and rushes. An increase in birds has been reported here, including Dartford and Cetti's Warblers, Skylark, Kestrel, Barn Owl and Little Owl. Otters and Water Vole have been seen here occasionally. A herd of Galloway Cattle graze the land, these cattle are ideally suited to the harsh conditions of the coast and estuary and help manage the land by chewing and trampling down any overgrowth.

We followed the River Stour to Wick ferry, then through fields and along the signed path north of the golf course coming out opposite the Hiker Cafe, then past the Visitor Centre and following the path past Holloway's Dock on the left, turning to the right (just before the beach huts) up some steps to the top of Hengistbury Head, walking over Warren Hill and down past the National Coastwatch Station. Having lunch sat eating outside the Hiker Cafe. Afterwards returning closer to the golf club, then back along by the river.

<b>Birds</b>	<b>Birds cont.</b>	<b>Flowering Plants</b>	<b>Others</b>
Curlew	Dunnock	Common Gorse	Red Admiral Butterfly
Carrion Crow	Greenfinch	Daisy	Rabbit
Blue Tit	Little Egret	Dandelion	Water Vole
Great Tit	Black-headed Gull	Wild Plum	
Jay	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Blackthorn	
Wood Pigeon	Greater Black-backed Gull	Crocus	
Robin	Herring Gull		
Blackbird	Mallard		
Water Rail	Stonechat		
Black-tailed Godwit	Kestrel		
Teal	Grey Wagtail		
Redshank	Mute Swan		
Starling	Oystercatcher		
Grey Heron	Goldfinch		
Stock Dove	Chaffinch		
Magpie	House Sparrow		
Cormorant			



*Mudford Sandspit taken from the top of Hengistbury Head by Lyn Traves*