



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Stanpit Marsh Walk

Date: 8th November 2022
 Weather: Heavy rain showers including hail, with sunny spells and a strong wind
 Walk Leaders: Lyn and Gerry Traves
 Attendees: 9

Stanpit Marsh is situated on the north side of Christchurch Harbour, just below the confluence of the rivers Avon and Stour. The 65 hectare site has an unusual combination of habitats including salt marsh with creeks and salt pans, reed beds, freshwater marsh, gravel estuarine banks and sandy scrub. The marsh and surrounding area was originally purchased from Gordon Selfridge in 1930 by Christchurch Borough Council and managed by Christchurch Countryside Service. It was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1964 and in 1986 as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Marsh is home to over 300 species of plants, 14 of which are nationally rare and endangered. The diversity of plants supports a strong community of wildlife: invertebrate which includes a great number of butterflies and dragonflies and there have been over 300 bird species recorded, some of which breed on Stanpit but most arrive with the spring or autumn migration. New Forest ponies and cattle are used for land management purposes.

Stanpit Marsh has a 7000 year history of human activity, from Mesolithic coastal wanderers to The Doomsday book entry for Stanpit village which reveals that Stanpit was once known as 'Stanpeta' (meaning 2 estates with meadows). More recently in the 18th century the marshes have provided cover for smugglers transporting their cargoes from the harbour to Stanpit and Purewell.

Due to the recent bad weather, we started by walking from Stanpit car park round Riversmeet Meadow, formerly a golf course and now a SANG. Its on higher ground and offers views across Central Marsh and Priory Marsh. Then we crossed the Recreation Ground to reach the Visitor Centre known locally as the Pod, following the path past Crouch Hill, crossing the prototype Bailey Bridge over Mother Siller's Channel to Grimbury Marsh and its Bank. Although it was low tide the water levels were too high to continue, so we retraced our steps back to the car park.

Birds	Birds Cont.	Flowering Plants	Others
Mute Swan	Black-tailed Godwit	Bristly Oxtongue	Rabbits
Canada Goose	Grey Plover	White Melliot	New Forest Ponies
Dark-bellied Brent Goose	Carrion Crow	Dandelion	
Black-headed Gull	Little Egret	Smooth Sow Thistle	
Herring Gull	Grey Heron	Daisy	
Great Black-backed Gull	Starling	Yarrow	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Sparrowhawk	Sun Spurge	
Wigeon	Goldfinch	Shepherd's Purse	
Mallard	Pied Wagtail	Bramble	
Teal	Wood Pigeon	Sea Astor	
Oystercatcher	Collard Dove	Gorse	
Lapwing	Cormorant	Lesser Hawkbit	
Curlew	Coot	Buckshorn Plantain	
Redshank		Common Reed	



Teasel Heads by Lyn Traves



White Mellott by Lyn Traves