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TENTSMUIR NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

NEWSLETTER No. 20

JANUARY 2009

Welcome to the twentieth Reserve Newsletter. Another landmark, it doesn't seem that long ago when we produced the special tenth edition, how time flies!

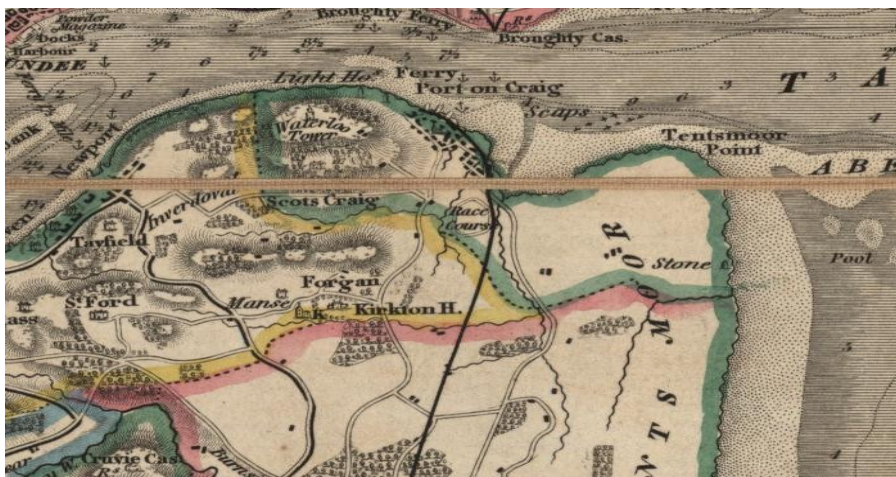
A miserable day (and we've had a lot of them this year) can turn to a cheery one with the simplest of encounters: a brazen red squirrel eyeballing you as you quietly look at him; a kingfisher perched on a branch outside the bird hide; the smell of autumn; a crisp days walk with frost laden trees; meeting a visitor who has had a great day out even in the rain. How easily our moods can be uplifted is just amazing.

What's going on in this edition? This last six months have seen a tremendous amount of management work carried out, mostly unseen, until now! Our new interpretation structures and interpretation panels along with the cartoon style behavioural panels have all been installed, and they are magnificent. And of course a lot more besides, read on inside.

History Lesson Part 13. As promised I've delved into some really interesting facts, read on inside.

The ninth annual Family Day event in July went very well, excellent fun enjoyed by over 140 visitors. It's very rewarding when people take time out to say how much they enjoyed the day.

And new species observed on the Reserve and surrounding area, read on inside.



The race course at the Garpit north of Morton Lochs, 1850. Map from National Library of Scotland

Tom Cunningham,
Reserve Manager

TENTSMUIR NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

TENTSMUIR POINT

Have you noticed our new interpretation structures and panels around the Reserve sites yet? I'm quietly very pleased (in fact I'm well chuffed) with the quality and style. At long last we have some real information and interpretation of value and interest. Let me know what you think?

Over the years and in partnership with our partners in our local Liaison Group, the Forestry Commission Scotland, Fife Coast & Countryside Trust and Tayport Community Council we have developed all these initiatives including our bespoke website, see the front cover and there is a lot more to come.

The wet summer didn't dampen the enthusiasm of our visitors or the Reserve staff, definitely not as pleasant as a hot summer, but hey we are used to it.

The Great Slack did bloom eventually and colour up with the slack flora specialities, such as the grass of Parnassus, northern marsh orchid, the centaury family, birds foot trefoil and creeping willow all bursting forth.

At long last we have cattle grazing on the whole site and allayed the little doubts of local farmer Robert Lamont, they were totally relaxed and didn't bother about the visitors at all.

The new Reserve leaflet has been in great demand and so far visitors have enjoyed the read and the information. Hopefully, you will be able to find one very soon in the new leaflet dispensers which will be erected over the summer months. You can always stop Alex, Bid and myself and ask for one.

MANAGEMENT

It was wonderful to see the Limousine cattle graze and roam freely over the whole site, the first cattle on this part of the Reserve for some four years. Local farmer Robert Lamont of Scotsraig Farm was a little apprehensive about the amount of visitors to the site and the reaction of the cattle. We were all pleasantly surprised as the cattle were totally relaxed and didn't bother about the visitors at all. The cattle of course grazed the site well and were taken off in October, they will return in April next year.

The borehole pump system worked very well and the cattle quickly adapted to its whereabouts on site. We had a pump breakdown which required replacing and the batteries developed a fault. However, overall the system is a boon to our time management. Gone are the days when we filled the 1000 gallon water tank, hauled in with the tractor and trailer.

Contractor David Mackie and his team continued the herbicide management of our target species including Tayport Heath. We are particularly happy with this progress. Looking back, the massive change in the flora landscape over the last eleven years is nothing short of miraculous. Very satisfying, I hope you agree.

Several unseen ongoing tasks were completed including fence maintenance as well as the continuous hand pulling hundreds of young pine plants, especially when growing among sensitive plants and the spreading heathers. The Icehouse visitor shelter saga? Watch this space. Winter tasks will include the annual sea fence maintenance, more hand pulling target species, washing down the interpretation panels among the many.

THE DYNAMIC COASTLINE

Yes, the Icehouse footpath is again shorter now than it used to be and at this time of the year and towards the foreshore covered with the seas disgorged flotsam. The erosion at this point of the Reserve continues, albeit a little slower than before. A further four metres has been

eroded from the old observation tower area. The eastern dune edge, submits to the ravages of the storms and very high tides. However, the southern areas continue to grow seaward and the marram and lyme grass follows and colonises towards the new foreshore. The northern finger of sand dune continues to grow well into the Tay and hopefully the sand dune system will continue to grow behind it. These are both excellent area to observe and study plant colonisation and sand dune development.

EDUCATIONAL PACK

The second edition of the Education Pack was printed earlier last year and it was distributed to every school in Fife. The pack has also been delivered to every school in Dundee and Angus, as well as requests from schools further a field. This magnificent education resource is now enjoyed by many teachers and pupils. Remember, everyone can enjoy the activities and the benefits by looking at the pack and downloading it from our website – see the front page.

It's been busy over the end of summer through autumn and into winter with several schools, colleges and universities visiting, especially High Schools. The students and teachers enjoyed the benefits in the outdoor classroom. Some streetwise senior pupils make me chuckle, they look totally disinterested when they come off their coaches and then get that jaw dropping moment when they catch sight of the seascape and seal colony.

TENTSMUIR INTERPRETATION PLAN

The behaviour panels which have been created in a cartoon style have been well received by visitors as well as the wonderful interpretation. Let me know what you think?

Our Forestry colleagues will soon have their interpretive centre constructed in the picnic area at the car park, as well as structures in some parts of the forest. The Eden Centre bird hide will also soon benefit from new interpretation.

Special walks have also been developed and these will soon be signposted through the forest and reach as far as Morton Lochs. Look out for the waymarkers, the specific symbols and routes for the Feathers walk, Seashell walk, habitat trail, pinecone walk and the Eden Estuary walks.

WILDLIFE UPDATE

Ever wondered who is being observed? Who is watching who? Got that feeling that you're being watched? Is it you that spies the bird, butterfly, seal or whatever, or is it them that's observing you first? Probably the answer is a bit of both; its fascinating the situation we constantly find ourselves in.

The seals numbers fluctuate daily, some days it would appear there are none around but listen and you can here their eerie call. They sometimes haul out on the far side of the sandbars. It's one of the best sounds around, melodious, sometimes tuneful, sometimes eerie and sad. There are a one or two grey seal pups around and while fascinating to watch please stay a suitable distance away and help reduce the stress in their lives.

The bird species on Tentsmuir Point have enjoyed a fairly good summer with some good observations by Bill Alexander, Ruth and Paul Blackburn and Reserve staff. For example gannets (800) have had a great year up here, the best record that I have seen. Other good observations and counts include osprey (2), sand martin (6), common tern (650), artic tern (600), sandwich tern (900), mute swan (90), grey plover (310), ringed plover (51), common scoter (380), bar-tailed godwit (80) and a new species recorded for the site raven (2).

Skylarks and stonechats again benefited from our crow control management however, one species I didn't hear or observe this year was the cuckoo. Winter numbers are doing well especially Pinkfoot geese (3000) and eider duck (5200).



Common Tern on the Abertay Sandbar – Image by Marek Malecki

Red squirrel numbers are good throughout the forest and Reserve and the counts are carried out faithfully by Elmwood College Conservation Management students and tutor Stuart MacDonald, our thanks goes to them. On a recent count the group observed eleven red squirrels and one grey and this grey was the first observed for some time.

Bat species and numbers are also very good and Keith Cohen of the Fife Bat group kindly supplied an article for this newsletter. Read Keith's bat report later in this newsletter.

In late autumn bottle nosed dolphins were observed over a period of five weeks, cruising the waves as they do, and venturing beyond Tayport towards the Tay Bridge.

Moth expert Duncan Davidson enjoyed his evening visits and kindly provided a report for his year on Tentsmuir Point. Read Duncan's Moth Trapping at Tentsmuir NNR in 2008 article below.

The poor summer weather had a big effect on the butterfly species and reduced the numbers on the Reserve sites, as it did UK wide. It was due mainly to the low temperatures; windy conditions and the lack of sun, butterflies and humans have a lot in common then? Species that did enjoy a good season were the orange tips, peacock, green veined whites and small coppers and only one green hairstreak was observed on the north transect.

The winter hues have taken over and where once the lush summer green changed to autumn gold's, now into the hoary frosted trees and grasses is just magnificent, aren't our seasons fascinating?

A new species of hoverfly have been recently observed in the forest, the rare pinewoods hoverfly *Callicera rufa*. *Callicera rufa* is probably the most emblematic insect of the Caledonian pinewoods, on a par with other species such as the crested tit, twinflower or pine marten. It is intimately associated with the large ancient "granny" pines for which these woodlands are so famous.

Moth Trapping at Tentsmuir NNR in 2008 by Duncan Davidson

Duncan Davidson kindly provided this report: I captured a single example of the Nationally Scarce and LBAP priority species Lunar Yellow Underwing, *Noctua orbona*, on the night of 1 September last year. During my various larval searches and trapping sessions since 2006 I have built up a list of moths present in the reserve and I was keen to add to that list this year, as well as continuing the search for *N. orbona* larvae and adults.

With these aims in mind, I visited the NNR on six occasions through the year and the following is a narrative report of these visits. Although I did not see any further evidence of the target species I am pleased to say that I did add 25 new species to my own Tentsmuir list, bringing the total to 149. At some stage, I would be interested to see the complete list that you possess for the reserve to see if we can target more specific gaps for the future.

10 February The evening was calm and relatively mild at 10°C, with constant light drizzle. Between 6pm and 8pm I searched the grass from the Ice-House gate to the Observation Post and from there to the stile on the most southerly boundary of the reserve. I found a total of four larvae during this period, and although none was immediately identifiable, they were not Lunar Yellow Underwing. A brace of adult Chestnut moths was observed on a tree trunk at 8pm by which time the temperature had dropped to around 5°C.

19 April On this occasion there were clear skies, an easterly wind and a near full moon. The temperature at 9pm was 7°C. As well as searching for larvae, I also set two Robinson light traps. The traps attracted only four species: Hebrew Character, Clouded Drab, Common Quaker and Red Chestnut. Between 9pm and 11pm I found 27 caterpillars, 18 of which were of the *Xestia* genus (either Square-spot Rustic or Six-striped Rustic), six were unknown (but not Lunar Yellow Underwing) and three were Garden Tiger.

26 April I set the light traps a few hundred yards north of the Observation Post this time. Once again there were clear skies but with a slightly milder west wind the temperature was at 9°C at 9pm. It dropped quickly at around midnight to just 4°C. There were a number of caterpillars seen, but again no evidence of Lunar Yellow Underwing. The traps yielded 13 species, including the first reported vice-county record of the micro-moth *Agonopterix ocellana*.

20 July Strictly speaking, this was not a moth trapping session, but a butterfly walk organised on behalf of Butterfly Conservation. I was accompanied by Gillian Fyfe and Daphne Macfarlane Smith. We were looking for Dark Green Fritillary and Grayling butterflies, and saw plenty of each as well as Green-veined White, Common Blue, Small Heath, Ringlet and Meadow Brown. We also noted a number of day flying moths: Shaded Broad-bar, Latticed Heath and Common Carpet, and also saw Cinnabar moth larvae on Ragwort plants. A number of Ragwort plants looked as if they had been sprayed with weed-killer. It wasn't obvious whether they had been specifically targeted or if they were the victims of general scrub clearance, but it would be disastrous for the Cinnabar if ragwort was to be killed off like this. A Red Swordgrass caterpillar was also observed crawling quickly across a path.

19 September This is probably the latest viable time for Lunar Yellow Underwing adults. The night was overcast, very calm and dry, with temperatures remaining at around 14 °C throughout. Once again there was no sign of the elusive *Noctua orbona*, but the light traps did catch 29 other species and I also observed Fox Moth and Ruby Tiger larvae during the earlier part of the evening.

10 October This was my final outing of the year. Although far too late for the target species, I wanted to take the opportunity of adding some autumnal species to my Tentsmuir list. I didn't pick a particularly good evening, as there was constant and sometimes heavy rain until nearly midnight. However, temperatures stayed up around 10°C and it always surprises me that even small moths seem to fly during rain. I don't know if they manage to shrug the rain drops off or if they somehow detect and avoid the drops as they fly. I had a total of 15 species in the traps, which was good for that time of year.

MORTON LOCHS

MANAGEMENT

What a busy period we have had once again, this time probably exceeding our expectations and that is due a to lot of people.

Robert Lamont of Scotsraig Farm, sons Rob and John and cattleman Jock of Scotsraig Farm were busy over the season managing the cattle and they also carried out several other tasks for me. I am especially grateful for them topping the grasses in the heather seeding area. This management will encourage heather growth and prevent a grassy sward building up which would otherwise inhibit the heathers. They also looked after the cattle on the site and once again the grazing has huge benefits for us, by opening up areas and keeping the grassy sward down.

The new interpretation structures and panels were all installed throughout the site and they have been enjoyed by all the visitors.

Perhaps the greatest achievement was the daunting task of controlling the massive growth and spread of gorse and broom on the north plantation site. Over the summer contractor Dave Mackie's herbicide management on these target species enabled us to start cutting it back. I was very fortunate to respond quickly to a plea from SPICe (Scottish Parliament Information Centre) for a team bonding day outdoors. The group arrived on their rather splendid coach and settled into their day out. Alex and I wondered what they could achieve; we were ecstatic at their response. Thirty-eight colleagues got stuck in cutting, sawing and dragging the broom and gorse to piles ready for drying and burning. Our grateful thanks go to the SPICe team.

Then we had Elmwood College Conservation Management NC students led by Victoria Pendry in for three days and they burned the massive piles of broom brash, another great task. They also cut down many other areas of gorse.

Regular visitors to Morton Lochs will have noticed the car park was prone to flooding in some parts, thankfully that is sorted out now. Contractors Dave Simpson and Jack Black brought in their JCB and constructed a French drain for us in the car park and cleaned out an ancient railway drainage ditch along the south railway line. This has helped clear the wet areas of the wild walk footpath and the car park. The old railway ditch was fascinating as a large part of it was constructed using railway sleepers.

There have been complaints regarding the condition of the access road up to Morton Lochs. We have been working with our Forestry colleagues and with local residents to find a solution and we anticipate that it should be repaired soon. The car park hopefully will also receive another covering of suitable quarry material.

My colleague Alex Easson, along with Forester Graham Paul continue the battle against the flora target species and they have been very busy managing the extensive gorse on the main areas of the north and south lochs, cutting and treating the stumps of broom and gorse.

Management planned for spring and summer months include: replacing the west loch spillway, continuing the reed management in both lochs, continuing the management of gorse and broom and bracken control. However, don't despair as we will keep areas of reed in the lochs as well as small areas of gorse and broom on the site for the flora and fauna specialities that are associated with these plants. For example reed buntings, dragonflies and damselflies, butterflies and moths as well as the stonechats and other small birds will still enjoy the safe refuge of gorse.

Volunteer Andrew Ford continues the management of collecting data from our hydrological monitoring system around the Morton Lochs and surrounding area. This will give us a better understanding of the hydrology of the area.

WILDLIFE UPDATE

BATS

Keith Cohen kindly provided this report: Bat Boxes at Morton Lochs, May 2008

Members of Fife & Kinross Bat Group including Keith Cohen, Les Hatton, and Elspeth Christie gathered to check some of the 100+ bat boxes at Tentsmuir on Sunday 11th May. With 2 licensed bat handlers and several trainees present we were well prepared and hopeful that we would locate some bats.

We started at Morton Lochs, and quickly found signs of activity below several boxes, with small scatters of bat droppings evident. These were the smaller droppings typical of

Pipistrelle bats. The boxes above were rather empty though, but we did find six boxes with pipistrelles in: one box with 2 single males, one box with 2 male and one female, one with 4 pregnant females and one with 2 pipistrelles.

Les Hatton was testing out a new gizmo, viewing the boxes on the screen of a thermal imaging camera to see if the boxes with bats were in fact any warmer than the others. Initially it seemed as though there was no difference, as where the small groups of pipistrelles were found the boxes showed as cool as the adjacent trees (12 degrees C or so). But, picture the grin on Les' face when one box was about 2 degrees warmer.

It was one of the original 1988 boxes too, erected when Dave Bullock & John Altringham were members of the group. Below this box were the distinctive larger droppings typical of Natterer's bats, so we were hopeful of a few bats. Les shimmied up the ladder and gently eased the lid open, to find 42 bats crammed in the top of the box!

Trying to capture 42 excitable and wide-awake bats is no mean challenge. With Les up the ladder gently catching those trying to fly away as he carefully eased the lid up and Keith catching those trying to squeeze past the cloth blocking up the slit at the base of the box, all bar one were expertly transferred to the large cloth bag for safe keeping.

Each bat was then carefully examined for a ring with a unique identifying number, sex and breeding condition. The rings are tiny aluminium horseshoe-shaped tags that are carefully closed around the leading edge of the wing along one of the arm bones. The ring is harmless, causing no pain or discomfort to the bat. Every time the bat is caught, the unique number is read and information can be gathered about how long the bat has lived for and how far it has moved geographically between each capture.

The three not already ringed were given new rings. It was pleasing to find many that were ringed back in the first year of the study, and who are now at least 8 years old! After the examination each bat was carefully transferred back to the box none the worse for their exciting morning! It was a real treat to handle so many Natterer's bats and we all smelt rather 'batty' by the end of it. Just as well that we wear gloves to handle bats as the excited Natterer's bats had forgotten their manners and had urinated over each other whilst in the cloth bag!

At the Ice house box group were a further 28 female Natterer's bats, this time roosting in the crown of a bullet-shaped Schwegler box made of woodcrete.

Of the 77 boxes checked in the day, 21% were occupied by bats, and 2 by bird nests; 14 boxes (18%) had a total of 24 pipistrelle bats inside, and two boxes held 70 Natterer's bats between them.

OTHER WILDLIFE NEWS

There have been some great sightings, good moments and some sad news around the Lochs.

We are saddened to report on the death of George Evans last June; George was a great birder, very knowledgeable and regularly informed us what was observed in and around the

lochs. He also provided data on new species for Morton Lochs. George also frequented the Eden Centre bird hide where the bird hide was re-named in his honour. His gentle ways will be missed.

The otter has entertained many visitors to the north lochs and one lucky visitor observed the female and three kits cavorting on the ice. Lucky man.

The kingfishers were also observed and photographed on many occasions, again another wonderful observation.

At the moment we have six mute swans on the north loch which is unusual as the resident male normally chases new swans off. Somehow, they are all living in harmony, but for how long?

The bird hides are well used and visitors to the Len Fullerton bird hide should be able to view the loch in relative comfort now as we have recently replaced the wooden shutters with windows.

Visitors to Morton can normally enjoy the activities of the red squirrels scuttling about the trees and feeding stations. Elmwood College conservation students continue the squirrel monitoring at Morton Lochs setting up three more transects in the forest and the good news is red squirrel sightings are on the increase and greys are decreasing.

IRRESPONSIBLE VISITORS

DOG POO!

The usual problem continues and sad to say is on the increase, if you are a dog owner; please keep your dog under close control, preferably on a lead whilst on the Reserve. The problem of dog poo left around by irresponsible dog owners is still showing no sign of improving. It's no one else's responsibility of clearing up dog poo and removing and disposing of the dog poo bags – it's yours!

BAG IT. TAKE IT HOME TO BIN IT!

HISTORY Part 13

Tsunami waves wiped out prehistoric Scottish communities

A **tsunami** (IPA: /t(s)ʊ'nɑ:mi/) is a series of waves created when a body of water, such as an ocean, is rapidly displaced. Earthquakes, mass movements above or below water, volcanic eruptions and other underwater explosions, landslides, large meteorite impacts comet impacts and testing with nuclear weapons at sea all have the potential to generate a tsunami

Where do tsunamis' occur – if you answered in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans areas you would be almost right but how many readers know about the tsunami which David Smith and Alastair Dawson believe occurred many thousands of years ago that hit Scotland. This is an extract from their research paper undertaken in 1990.

An unusual bed of sand, preserved between layers of peat and mud, bears witness to tsunami waves that struck the northern and eastern coasts of Scotland about 7000 years ago. It started in the Norwegian Sea, where there are now traces of a huge submarine landslip and spread south as series of giant waves across the North Sea. The coast of Scotland bears eloquent testimony to the effects of the growth and decay of ice during the last glaciation. It records the fluctuations of sea level that resulted from changes in the relative heights of land and sea.

The sea levels during and following the decay in the ice sheets are now represented by natural terraces of sand and other seashore sediments, stranded above the waterline as the land rose relative to the sea.

We can only guess at the human tragedy of the tsunami. Mesolithic peoples in the area at the time generally lived near the coast and were vulnerable to such large and sudden surges. At

some coastal sites, archaeologists have found evidence of prehistoric settlements that are overlain by this evidence of sand. For example, in Inverness, a layer dated 7080 years old, with evidence of a Mesolithic settlement, is covered by several centimeters of fine sand at about the height of the sand layer in that area. At Broughty Ferry there is a similar stratigraphic pattern, and at Morton, Mesolithic people are known to have migrated inland at about the same time.

The Garpit Race Course and the beginning of local Golf.

I've never seen the sense in hitting a wee white ball towards a hole, a good walk spoiled they say, or was it perhaps my golf was getting that bad, anyway I digress. It was towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) that some of the members of the St Andrews Society of Golfers - later to become the Royal and Ancient Golf Club - began to feel they would like more golf than the Society's infrequent meetings afforded.

Amongst them was Mr William Dalgleish of Scotsraig, whose lands included an area known as the Garpit, around part of which ran a racecourse (although there is no record of any racing there, the course is carefully marked out on the first ordnance survey maps). In the centre of this racecourse, golf was played over six holes, long before a club was thought of.

Scotsraig golf club was founded one August evening in 1817, as William Dalgleish entertained some friends in Scotsraig House. Scotsraig golf club is amongst the 12 oldest golf clubs in the world and is steeped in fascinating history.

I'll be asking questions later

WHAT'S ON

JULY 2008 - FAMILY DAY OUT, "Bugs, Birds and Butterflies".

The ninth annual NNR event held at Tentsmuir Point held last July was a great day out, enjoyed by over 140 people of all ages. The new style of running the event was a great success and I can tell you all my colleagues, volunteers and the activity leaders were exhausted after such a busy day. The visitors' response was excellent and very positive and I received many emails and phone calls to say thanks and let me know how much they enjoyed the day. Keep an eye on the press for the next Family Day Out this July!

VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

Have you noticed there is less litter about the foreshore, dunes and forest? A group of forest users who are fed up with irresponsible behaviour have taken matters into their own hands. Alison Pattie, who has set up the group with some neighbours, also said that rubbish had been left behind including broken bottles, female hygiene products and even human excrement. Alison and Moira are seen regularly walking the area lifting and bagging rubbish, its all helping to make our beautiful place a more pleasant day out for all visitors.

Volunteers have been extremely busy on the Reserve carrying out a range of management tasks including 38 employees from SPICe (Scottish Parliament Information Centre) who carried out the mammoth task of cutting down a jungle of broom on gorse, Elmwood College conservation students did some work experience cutting and burning the gorse and broom over several visits and HNC students are carrying out the second year of a squirrel survey along with our regular team of volunteers who do wonderful work on the Reserve. A heart felt thanks to you all, without you we couldn't carry out half the management tasks.

WALKS & TALKS

Want to know more of what we do, or just want to see the wonderful sights on the Reserve? If you have a few friends or a group who fancy a guided walk or talk about the Reserves, please contact me. If you would like to see how effective the management of the Reserve is, or observe a little more of the hidden secrets and gems, then give me a ring and I will arrange a guided walk or talk.

See you on the Reserve sometime.

KIDS CORNER

I've always wanted to let our young visitors express themselves and let us know what they think of their day out on the Reserve. It's very important to hear what the young point-of-view is; I'll listen that's for sure. So please let me know, email or write your story about what you saw, how you felt, is there anything you would like to do or see on the Reserve sites? And maybe you would like a better title for this?

STOP PRESS

The horrendous problem of dog poo left all around our towns, countryside and in particular the Reserve and Forest is a growing concern. We all have a responsibility to find a solution, what is it? We have started putting up signs stating our message to the lazy, irresponsible dog owners. It must concern dog owners who are responsible?

BIG THANKS

Many thanks to all those who contribute information for the Newsletters and the valuable data collected for our flora and fauna records and to the local newspapers for articles. Also a very **BIG thank you** to all the staff, visitors, volunteers and honorary wardens who put in a lot of time and effort which produces great results.

Enjoy your visits to all the sites in the Reserve. Take away only memories and leave behind only footprints.

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PS I'm back on Raith Rovers business and its very enjoyable at the moment, we sit top of the league and I go about with a big smile on my face. Quietly confident of promotion, but realistic enough with a life time of highs and lows, of agonies and low points and there is always a banana skin somewhere.

Be aware of ticks in the UK countryside and elsewhere in Europe. This is a message from all the responsible environmental organisations in the UK who are aware of the rise in the number of ticks in our countryside. All visitors to our countryside should really examine themselves and check for ticks as soon as you can. If you do happen to have one attached remove it as soon as you can. To guard against ticks: Keep trousers tucked into socks and wear light coloured clothing. Examine your body for ticks in the backs of the knees, groin, under the arms and on the scalp, dog owners should also check their dogs. Stay safe, be aware.

SNH and now there are activity guides you can use for your children. For more information have a look at: www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/educationresources

Useful websites: www.snh.gov.uk www.nnr-scotland.org.uk and www.tentsmuir.org for information on the Reserve and surrounding area as well as our work in SNH,

Have a look at www.placebookscotland.com and put your own images, stories and poems on this new website, it's yours to use and put all your favourite places on it, including Tentsmuir NNR!