

Alnwick Wildlife Group



Promoting awareness of the countryside and its flora and fauna

www.alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

email: redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk

Review of March 2014

NEWSLETTER 151

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY 28TH MAY 2014

ALL ABOUT MINI-MAMMALS – ESPECIALLY AROUND ALNWICK SPEAKER: VERONICA CARNELL

Veronica Carnell leads the Northumbria Mammal Group which is a specialist group within the Northumberland Wildlife Trust. Last year when a number of AWG members were involved with surveys at Slainsfield Moor Veronica came up from Newcastle with her husband John to carry out the small mammal trapping that added greatly to the range of results we were able to collect.

She is very knowledgeable about mammals, and particularly small mammals. In 2012 a definitive account of Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles of the North East was published by the Northumbria Mammal Group. Veronica was on the editorial team and she wrote the species accounts for our two squirrel species. Her talk should give us a fascinating insight into the elusive little mammals that are so often around us but are so rarely seen.

WHAT TO LOOK OUR FOR IN MAY

In our skies, the symbolic **Swallow** and the **Swift**, with its uniform coloration and scythe-shaped wings, should now be with us in considerable numbers.

More and more returning warblers will be singing in their chosen habitats. Listen for **Reed** and **Sedge Warblers**, with their distinctive trills and whistles, in the very places their names suggest. Hedgerows and scrubland are more likely to offer up the scratchy songs of **Common and Lesser Whitethroat**. The former is always the one likely to be more of a visible presence, often giving observers a song flight, as its party piece.

If we travel to higher ground this month we will inevitably hear the infectious warbling display call of the **Curlew** and the clicking call note of the **Whinchat** alongside the inimitable chirruping of resident **Skylarks**.

On our rocky coastline and islands, the air will be filled with competing calls of Gulls and Auks, those of the **Kittiwake** and **Puffin** being perhaps the most evocative.

Our rivers should now be showing evidence of successful first broods with **Mallards**, particularly in evidence, shepherding their downy young through the first days of the great adventure that is life. Wherever there is a semblance of protruding rocks and fast flowing water, now is a good time to search for more elusive riverine species like **Dipper**, **Grey Wagtail** and even **Common Sandpiper**.

May is very much the month when our native flora “takes off”. Hedgerows will be flushed white with flowering **Hawthorn**, in many people’s eyes symbolising the end of winter and beginning of summer. Among the many flowers now in full bloom, you may look out for **Greater Stitchwort**, typically on hedge banks and in wood rides. It is much loved for its modestly beautiful white flowers, which helps to explain one of its many country names – **Poor Man’s Buttonhole**.

Another member of the Pink family now showing itself off to advantage, is **Red Campion** often growing alongside its cousin. Although its flowers are usually rose red – pink and white bloomed varieties are common. This is one of a number of May flowering plants that share popular names associated with the supposed arrival of the Cuckoo.

May is indeed the time to see the **Cuckoo Flower** itself, to be searched for in damp grassland and ditches. Some of you may know this flower by its rather more expressive name of **Lady’s Smock**. But probably, most people’s favourite wild flower spectacle this month is having the opportunity to feast on an extensive carpet of native **Bluebells**, most commonly found in our deciduous woodland.

Venture out and enjoy the audiovisual delights of May!

Peregrini

What's your Committee been up to?

At our most recent committee meeting at the end of February we thought we should provide members with a summary of key decisions and ideas that were discussed after each meeting. We meet only twice a year, but any other AWG members would be very welcome to give us feedback or constructive criticism that we can then discuss at the next meeting. Any thoughts can be emailed to redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk.

1. The current committee consists of: **George Dodds** (Chair), **Barbara Welch** (Secretary & Newsletter Editor), **Richard Poppleton** (Treasurer), **Jim Clark**, **Ian Davison**, **Keith Davison**, **Jane Poppleton**, **Stewart Sexton**, **Mick McMahon**. Mick was attending his first meeting.
2. Colin and Angela Scrutton recently stood down. Many thanks are due to them for having been willing to make the long trek up from Newcastle for committee meetings for the last three years. They are remaining as AWG members.
3. We felt that many AWG members won't know who all our committee members are, so we are to make an attempt to get 'mug shots' of as many as possible on the website.
4. Efforts are to be made to spread the tea/coffee task more widely so that it is not always the same people who miss the discussion session after the speaker. Volunteers are requested to join a rota (not gender specific!)
5. The speaker programme for 2014/15 is nearly complete and the exciting news is that it is to include a special February meeting at the Alnwick Playhouse where Laurie Campbell will show and talk about his most recent wildlife images.
6. The 2013 accounts were approved by the committee and are now finalised subject to an audit. Because of the donation sums received from the Northumberland Estate a credit balance has built up. We agreed that AWG should use some of this to offer donations to **local** wildlife causes, allowing for the retention of a balance of £2,000 as a working reserve.
7. AWG is to offer to have a peripheral involvement in a pair of Local Nature Reserves that the Town Council is seeking to set up in Alnwick. Further news will come if this initiative gets off the ground, but we are **not** offering to form work parties or do ground maintenance! David Farrar is the Town Councillor who is leading this idea.
8. Jim Clark is almost ready to put the latest survey report on the website for the five upland sites that we survey for Northumberland Estates. Two of our existing surveyors are no longer able to continue, so Jim would really like to seek some replacement volunteers. If you think you might be interested, have a word with Jim at the next meeting.
9. For the summer we are trying to arrange field trips to Holy Island; to the coast for a geology session; to a new site for a plant identification day; for a moth night. Further information will follow as soon as we know more.
10. We need to get our act together so our meetings are included in the Northumberland Wildlife Trust "What's On" leaflets. It's happened in the past but at the moment our lines of communication have broken down.

Please send sightings reports for April, no later than 6th May 2014 to: Ian & Keith Davison, The Bungalow, Branton, Powburn, NE66 4LW

or Tel: 01665 578 357 or email to redsquirrel@alnwickwildlifegroup.co.uk Copies of the monthly Newsletter and sightings will be made available on the web site one month after the paper publication.

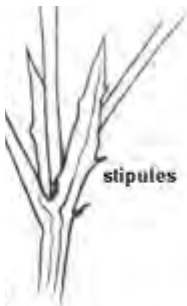
PLANT CORNER

Are you a lumper or a splitter? It's the sort of question that, if asked of a stranger in some less salubrious pubs, might get you thumped because it somehow sounds offensive. Even in the botanical world it can be a provocative question.

In the 19th century one naturalist might decide that a particular plant he'd found (and it was usually a man) was so different from an existing named species that it deserved a new species description and name of its own. Then a second 'expert', looking at the same plant, might think that the differences were less significant than the similarities and decide that the specimen was just a variety and so did not require a new name. A third botanist might then think that both the similarities and the differences were important and so describe the plant as a subspecies, which required a third Latin name to go after the original two.

The end result of all these splitting processes was chaos. So some botanists started to ignore what they believed were irrelevant differences and to lump together many varieties and subspecies as single species, much to the fury of the splitters.

Modern botanists have largely tried to steer a middle course between the two extremes, creating new subspecies only when the structural differences are both clear and consistent. Of course, most recently, the whole scene has become muddled again by DNA analysis which throws a completely different light on some previously cherished and trusted aspects of classification. But for the field botanist, DNA differences aren't much use if you can't actually see morphological differences. So to the genus *Viola*!

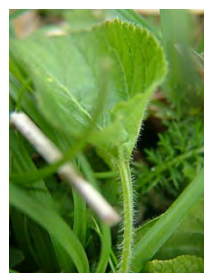


All members of this genus are either **Violets** or **Pansies**. Even defining the differences between the two sub-groups isn't entirely straightforward although it's often easier with garden varieties than it is with some of the wild species. The key difference can be seen by looking at the points where leaf stalks join the main stem. At these junctions there are structures called stipules. If they are comparatively small and only toothed along their edges then the plant is a violet (left hand drawing). If the stipules are larger, leaf-like and deeply lobed (like the frilly, 'fingered' ones in the right hand picture) then it's a pansy.



If you look at a flower 'face-on' then violets tend to have the side petals straight out at the sides or angled downwards while pansies have them angled upwards. The pictures show a typical violet on the left and a pansy on the right.

By 1950 the keen splitters had achieved a list of at least 50 species, subspecies, hybrids and varieties of violets and the pansies were similarly sub-divided. By the time Clive Stace's definitive *New Flora of the British Isles* appeared in 1991 common sense had reduced these numbers to 23 for the violets and just 10 for pansies.

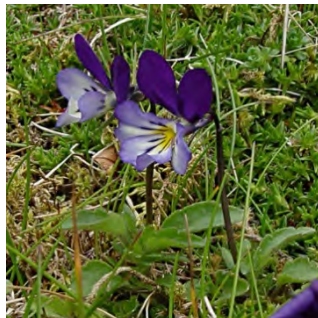


In our area probably the commonest *Viola* species are Common Dog Violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Field Pansy (*Viola arvensis*). But if you are on the search for less usual species this spring and early summer then I can suggest two species to look out for. The **Hairy Violet** (*Viola hirta*) in Northumberland is a

plant of sandy places and occurs quite frequently on the mid to southern parts of our coast. It also occurs further inland in grassland on limestone and whin outcrops. The photos show a typical whole plant and then a flower and a leaf in close-up so you can see the hairiness of both.

Then, to cater for those whose searches are more likely to be in the hills rather than on the coast you can look out for **Mountain Pansy** (*Viola lutea*). Its strongholds are in the Cheviots and in the areas of the South Tyne and the rivers East and West Allen.

There's a range of colour variations and the photos show the two extreme states.



Richard Poppleton

Stewchat...



While February blew us away, March came in as it should – like spring. Not a bad month weather wise, with dryer and sometimes mild days.



Figure 1- Long tailed Tit with nesting material.

On Sunday 2nd, JWR arrived at our house early just in time to catch sight of 2 Ravens flying south, calling, quite high up. I wonder if these are the same birds I've seen on and off over the last 5 years?

Off we went over to Branton, but on our way, another bird made headlines as it flew over the road, again quite high up, this time, a male Hen Harrier. Always nice and exciting to see.

At Branton itself, an Adder showed well on the verge, and summering Oystercatchers had returned in force with many loafing on the island. Other summer arrivals included 3 Lesser black backed Gulls and a lone lapwing.

At nearby Beanley Wood a few Crossbills were calling and feeding along the roadside.

During March I am using up holidays from work by the month end so regular Mondays off added to the chance of finding some wildlife.

On 3rd, a visit to Low Newton found lots of interest with 3 Russian White fronted Geese with resident Greylags, 9 Bar tailed Godwits, 150+ Sanderling, 20+ Purple Sandpipers and a few Dunlin. At the same spot on 9th, a good numbers of emigrating Blackbirds were in the paddock opposite the Tin Church with several Song Thrushes and at least 18 Pied Wagtails. The local Rock Pipits were joined by a bird of the Scandinavian race, *littoralis*.

Back home I recorded my first new moth species of the year in the garden – *Agonopterix ocellana*. It always amazes how, after 4 years of intensive study, new species continue to appear as if from an inexhaustible supply.



Figure 2. *Agonopterix ocellana*

On 10th 3 singing Chiffchaffs appeared in our village wood equalling my earliest ever spring arrival of this species. Other migrants on the same date were 100+ Barnacle Geese flying N and later followed by 16 Whooper Swans.

Meanwhile in the lane hedge, a Long tailed Tit had finished its feather filled lichen covered nest. They are often early nesters and when building they are quite easy to locate. As the shrub they live in 'greens up' the nest gets harder to locate. After completion, about 8 eggs are laid. As the young grow in the confines of a moss and cobweb tennis ball, it becomes elastic and stretches to accommodate. They are fed by both adults and sometimes by young from last years brood, and all too soon they are off to form the first tit flocks of the year.



Figure 3. Great Diving Beetle.

This large Great Diving Beetle was an unusual catch in the Howick moth trap. It is a female, told by the ridges on the wing cases. These large beetles are ferocious predators and most garden ponds have them where they devour any soft creature smaller than themselves. They have a particular liking for tadpoles. If you build a pond in your garden, this insect is often the very first visitor to take up residence.

Look out for the larvae too, they are even hungrier predators than the adult, and look a bit like a prawn with fangs!



Figure 4. Red Dead Nettle

It is still a little early for flowers on the Northumberland coast, but common 'weed' species brighten up bare or stony corners, like this Red Dead nettle.

March came to a close, shrouded in thick fog filled with orange dust from the Sahara desert. This made the birdwatching in particular very difficult but I was pleased to catch up with a Wheatear and Black Redstart before April.



Figure 5. Poor weather images. Black Redstart (Boulmer) at the top and Wheatear (Newton Point) below.

Stewart Sexton, Howick.

Meeting of Wednesday 26th March 2014

An audience of 30 gathered to hear a talk by George Dodds in place of the advertised one by photographer Ron McCombe who couldn't make it. George began with an underwater photograph of a cushion-shaped organism on a rock in a burn near Whalton. No-one had any useful thoughts on its identity. There was then an excellent four-point antler from a Roe Buck, an early Garden Bumblebee (*Bombus hortorum*) and a photo of early-emerging adders.

George's talk was entitled "*The College Valley – the hidden gem of the Cheviots*". It is more like a Scottish glen than other Cheviot valleys. A £10 day pass allows you to take your car up to Mount Hooley, but otherwise not beyond the Hethpool car park. The road would not cope with masses of tourist vehicles.



The valley of the College Burn covers 5200ha of which 200ha is in-bye grazing at the north end, 1200ha is forestry land in the middle and the large southern area is moorland and the crags, slopes and corries of the Cheviot. The valley is rich in Iron Age, Bronze Age and Romano-British archaeology. Most of the small farms and shepherds' cottages are now holiday properties and there are only two working farms. Unlike Coquetdale there are no traditional hay meadows.

The whole valley is within the National Park and the Sir John Knott Trust bought it in 1955 and still manages it via a committee. The decision was taken in 2011 to remove all the sheep on the moorland and to allow re-wilding to take place. It was recognized that some grazing would still be needed and Scottish cattle were brought in. Some of these animals have been tracked using radio collars. The effects of these decisions are currently being monitored by the regular surveying of 250 sites throughout the valley.

The peatlands of the Cheviot are similar to the flow country in NE Scotland. On the tops a few pairs of Golden Plover breed and there is ample Cloudberry above 2000ft. Slightly lower down is the blanket bog of the moorland. Notable species here are Merlin and Large Heath Butterfly. The dominant plant species are the Cotton Grasses and Bog Asphodel. Sheep tend to eat the flower heads of Cotton Grasses, so their removal has allowed large swathes to flower and create spectacular white areas in June. Sundews and Cranberry are common in the blanket bog.

Elsewhere there is dry heath where controlled burning gives some relief from solid masses of Ling Heather, but cutting could achieve similar effects and without the air pollution. There are only five days of shooting each year. The dry heath supports Emperor, Fox and Northern Egg Moths. In wetter flushes there is Butterwort, Grass of Parnassus and Starry Saxifrage.

The rocks, crags and corries (Hen Hole and The Bizzle) support breeding Peregrine and Raven and a variety of often rare and interesting plants. Lower down are acid grasslands with many good fungi and Clubmosses. Ring Ouzels arrive from early April and breed here.



The conifer plantations are now mature and being felled and replanting is deliberately sparse, with many pools being created which are proving excellent for Dragonflies and Damselflies. It is hoped that the creation of new wilderness areas may attract a return of Black Grouse.

The final significant habitat is the oak woodlands on the slopes of the College Burn, although these have the disadvantage of being all single-aged and experiments are being done to try to encourage natural re-seeding without simply allowing everything to be dominated by scrub.

Recording Wildlife - Finding an accurate Grid Reference.

At the February indoor meeting we were treated to Katherine Pinnock from the ERIC recording centre at the Hancock Museum (I believe its called something else now, but it will always be the Hancock!) giving advice on how we can send in our wildlife records and how they will be used.

At some point in the discussion, mention was made of finding a Grid Reference for your sighting and how some may find this tricky.

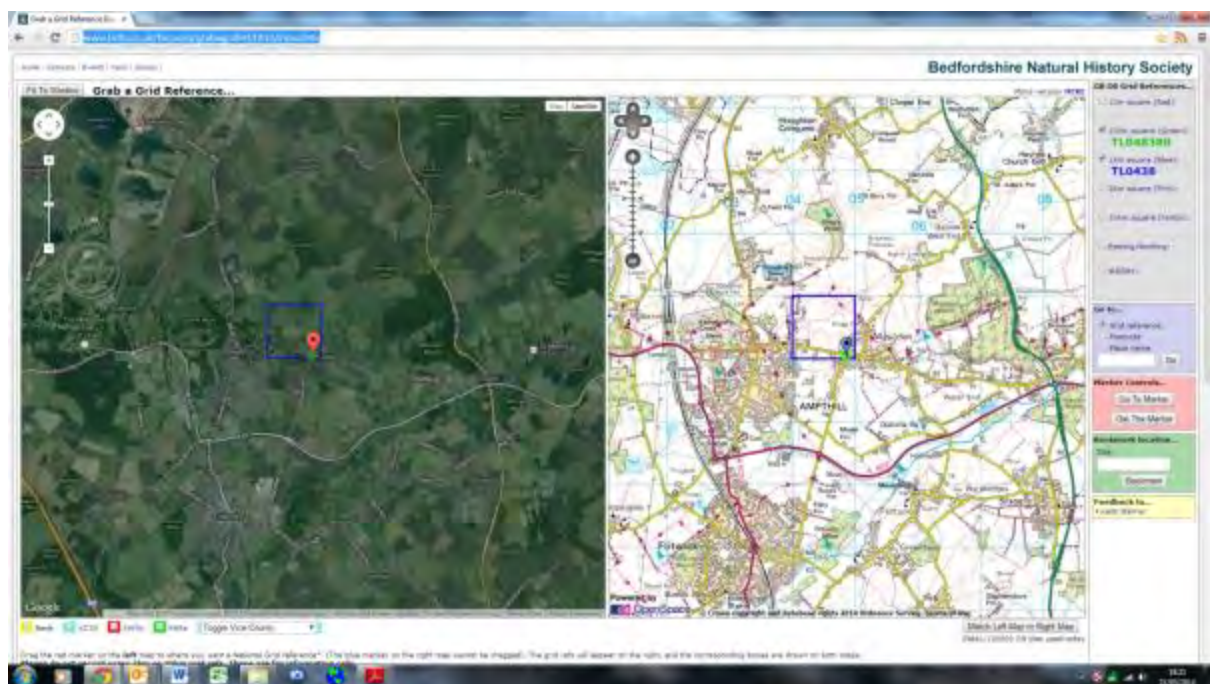
This is how I do it...

I use a great little website as a tool to give me an accurate reference as follows –

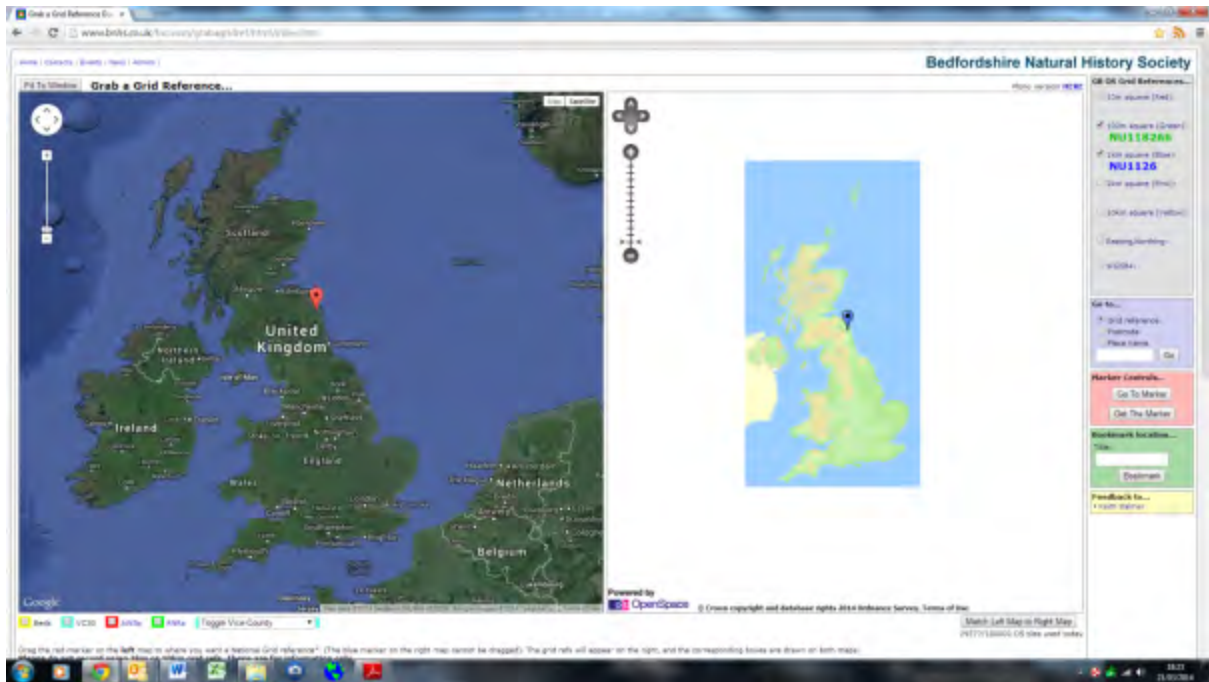
The site is produced by the Bedfordshire Natural History Society and I thank them because it fits our purpose just as well. This is the link – copy and paste it into your browser...

<http://www.bnhs.co.uk/focuson/grabagridref/html/index.htm>

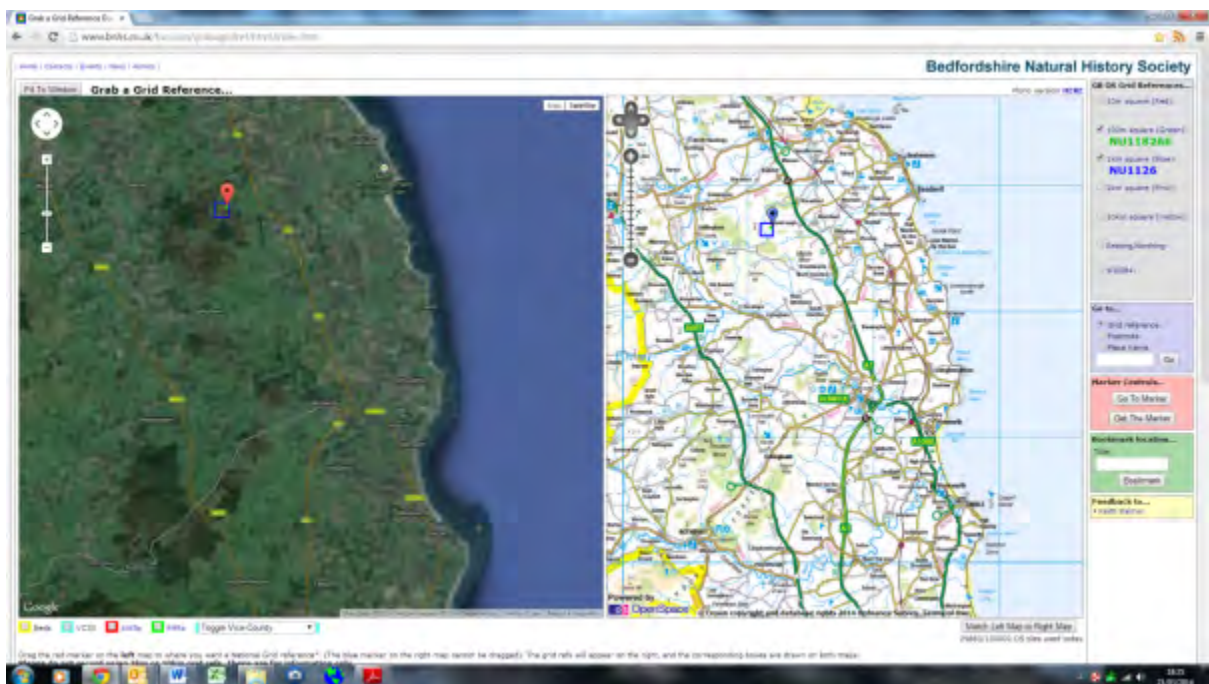
At first you will see this page –



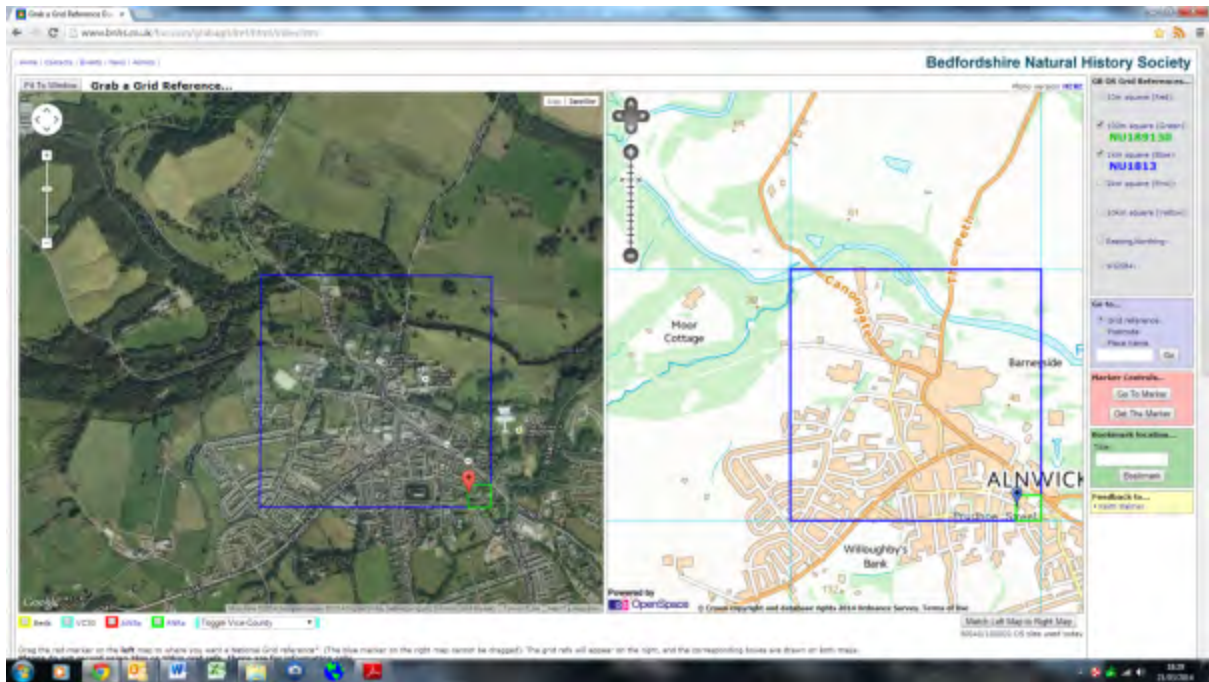
Centred on Amptuil, Beds. Using the left hand side satellite image first, hold your cursor over the little red marker and scroll out until you can see the British Isles like this –



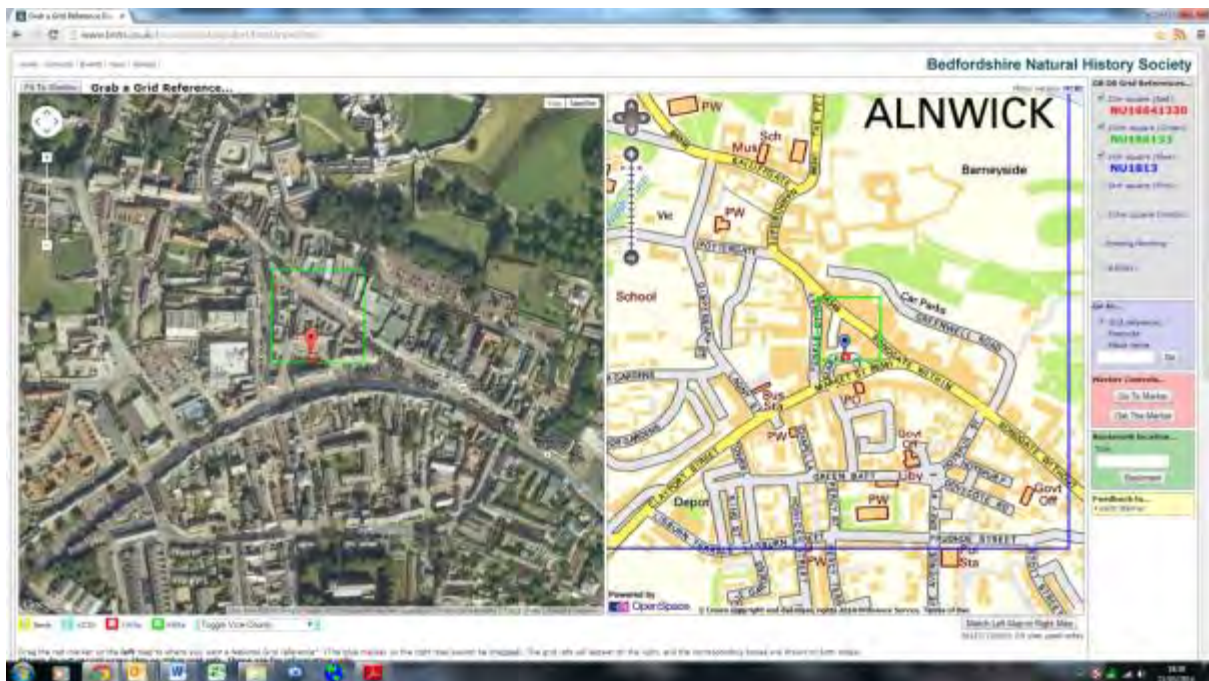
Then drag the red marker up roughly to the point you want it, in this instance Alwicks. Then keeping the marker roughly central by holding your right mouse button down and dragging the image to the middle, scroll or zoom back in, making sure you can always see the red marker...



On this example I have clearly missed my point here by several miles, but this doesn't matter because I can now fine tune this by dragging to a nearer point and zooming in even closer, using the right hand side OS Map to help me. The two sides of the page move in synchronisation. ...



Now say for example, my sighting was in Alnwick Market Place I can move the marker to the exact spot and zoom right in...



...then look at the top right corner of the page in the grey side bar you will see in red , green and blue the different accuracies of Grid Ref, just click the little box indicating '10 mtrs' and you can instantly see the reference is - **NU18641330**.

If you only need a 100 mtr 6 figure ref the green writing shows - **NU186133** and the blue is 1 sq km **NU1813**

While reading and trying these instructions might take a while, if you do it once, thereafter it only takes seconds to get an accurate reference for everywhere in the UK you might visit.

Go on find your garden its easy! Then you can enjoy knowing you are playing a part in 'citizen science' by using your records and sightings to good effect rather having them languishing in notebooks out of sight!

Good luck, if you need any help at all please email me at – stewchat@btinternet.com

Stewart Sexton, Howick.

A MORNING AT BRANTON PONDS

On 6th April the dank fog of the week had finally gone and ten of us gathered on Saturday morning at Branton Ponds to meet Keith Davison in dry and reasonably mild conditions.

We spent a pleasant couple of hours doing the circuit of the two large ponds. There were plenty of birds on the water, including Little Grebe, Goldeneye, Shelduck and Shoveler and with everything in fresh new breeding plumage many of them looked stunning. Those of us with an ear for bird song heard their first Willow Warbler of the year to go with the numbers of Chiffchaff all around the site. We even heard a couple of Water Rail calling from deep in the reed bed.



Not so encouraging were the corpses of quite a number of adult frogs in the shallow water at one point. The bodies had the appearance of frogs that have frozen to death in heavy ice conditions, but that can't have been the cause this year, so the reason for the concentration of corpses all in one small area was rather a mystery.

Botanically it was still very early in the season, but the Willows, Hazels and Alders had plenty of catkins and Colt's-foot was in flower. Near the Branton road gate there were good patches of a white-flowered form of Sweet Violet and the tracks had diminutive specimens of Common Whitlow Grass in flower. The site has many Cowslips and some of these were just starting to open their flowers.

Perhaps the highlight of the visit was the number of Adders that Keith found for us. Still sluggish from their hibernation, we saw around half a dozen, seemingly most if not all females, trying to catch a bit of warmth in one of the sunny intervals.



So we enjoyed a good morning's visit and thanks are due to Keith for leading us.

	SIGHTINGS MARCH 2014
BIRDS	
Red Throated Diver	1 at Beadnell Bay on 1 st 11 at Stag Rocks on 1 st and 12 on 9 th 2 at Boulmer on 22 nd
Black Throated Diver	1 at Boulmer on 22 nd 1 at East Chevington on 4 th
Little Grebe	2 at Branton Ponds on 15 th and 4 on 25 th
Slavonian Grebe	4 at Stag Rocks on 1 st 1 at Warkworth on 1 st 2 at East Chevington on 4 th
Red Necked Grebe	1 at Stag Rocks on 1 st 1 at East Chevington on 29 th 1 at Old Law on 29 th
Great Crested Grebe	1 at Branton Ponds on 12 th and 2 on 23 rd
Gannet	6 at Boulmer on 22 nd
Little Egret	1 at Fenham Flats on 16 th 1 at Warkworth on 16 th
Whooper Swan	19 at Branton Ponds on 7 th 28 at Craggside on 9 th 16 over Howick on 10 th 5 at Branton Ponds on 21 st and 20 on 23 rd
Greylag Goose	162 at Branton Ponds on 15 th
Pink-footed Goose	80+ over Howick on 10 th 1 at Branton Ponds on 12 th 56 at Fenham le Moor on 16 th 1500 at Stag Rock on 31 st
White Fronted Goose	3 at Newton Scrape on 13 th
Barnacle Goose	100+ over Howick on 10 th
Brent Goose	6 at Fenham Flats on 16 th 63 including 2 Dark Bellied at Fenham le Moor on 16 th
Goldeneye	14 at Branton Ponds on 15 th 6 at Fenham le Moor on 16 th
Teal	31 at Branton Ponds on 15 th
Shoveler	A pair on Branton Ponds on 13 th
Wigeon	300+ at Beadnell Bay on 1 st 48 at Branton Ponds on 15 th 97 at Fenham le Moor on 16 th
Gadwall	A pair on Branton Ponds on 13 th
Garganey	1 at Buston Links on 31 st
Shelduck	12 at Branton Ponds on 1 st 40 at Smeafields on 31 st
Common Scoter	500+ at Stag Rocks on 1 st 1500 at Stag Rock on 31 st
Long Tailed Duck	4 at Stag Rocks on 1 st 2 at Guile Point on 16 th 12 at Old Law on 29 th
Pintail	7 at Fenham le Moor on 16 th
Scaup	1 at Boulmer on 22 nd
Red Breasted Merganser	6 at Stag Rocks on 1 st 3 at Alnmouth Bay on 6 th
Peregrine	1 at Fenham Flats on 16 th 1 at Old Law on 29 th
Merlin	1 at Long Nanny on 9 th 1 near Football Hole on 10 th 1 near Glanton on 11 th
Sparrowhawk	1(male) Harwood Forest on 10 th 1 at Shilbottle on 17 th
Marsh Harrier	1 at East Chevington on 29 th
Kestrel	2 at Smeafields on 17 th
Grey Partridge	2 at Howick on 10 th 2 at Glanton on 12 th
Water Rail	1 at Branton Ponds on 19 th
Woodcock	1 at Glanton Pike on 12 th
Avocet	2 at Cresswell Pond on 29 th
Sanderling	44 at Old Law on 29 th
Grey Plover	16 at Old Law on 29 th
Ringed Plover	2 on River Breamish on 18 th

Little Ringed Plover	1 at Cresswell Pond on 29 th
Golden Plover	3 over Glanton Pike on 12 th
Oystercatcher	75 at Branton Ponds on 2 nd
Black Tailed Godwit	6 at Druridge Pools on 29 th
Bar Tailed Godwit	26 at Boulmer on 22 nd
Curlew	54 at Branton Ponds on 2 nd 406 at Fenham Flats on 16 th
Green Sandpiper	1 on River Breamish near Hedgeley on 15 th
Purple Sandpiper	1 at Alnmouth on 29 th
Common Gull	202 at Branton Ponds on 15 th
Lesser Black Backed Gull	7 at Budle Bay on 1 st 7 at Branton Ponds on 2 nd and 16 on the 18 th
Mediterranean Gull	1 at Beadnell Bay on 1 st
Black Headed Gull	474 at Branton Ponds on 15 th
Woodpigeon	322 at Branton on 30 th
Tawny Owl	3 at Glanton on 12 th
Little Owl	1 at Glanton on 12 th
Kingfisher	1 on River Breamish on 4 th 2 at Branton Ponds on 27 th 1 on River Breamish on 18 th
Great Spotted Woodpecker	2 at Smeafields all month
Sand Martin	1 near Lesbury on 19 th 6 at Brandon on 22 nd 1 at Hedgeley on 18 th
Meadow Pipit	30+ at Branton Ponds on 27 th
Pied Wagtail	30+ at Branton Ponds on 27 th
Grey Wagtail	Over Howick on 8 th 2 at Wooler Water on 12 th 1 near Hipsburn on 16 th 1 at Brandon Ford on 31 st 2 on Swarland Burn on 15 th
Dipper	1 singing on Wooler Water on 12 th 2 on River Breamish near Hedgeley on 15 th carrying food.
Black Redstart	1 at Buston Links on 31 st
Wheatear	1 at Druridge Pools on 29 th
Mistle Thrush	4 at Smeafields on 31 st
Fieldfare	20+ over Brandon Ford on 27 th
Redwing	16+ near Hipsburn on 16 th
Chiffchaff	1 at East Chevington on 4 th 2-3 at Howick on 10 th 2 at Branton Ponds on 11 th 2 at Wooler on 12 th 1 at Fenham le Moor hide on 16 th 1 at Druridge Bay country park on 4 th
Willow Tit	1 at Branton Ponds on 4 th and 6 th a pair at Branton Ponds on 13 th
Jay	2 in Harwood Forest on 10 th
Brambling	1 at Lesbury on 20 th 1 at Lesbury on 20 th 1 at Swarland on 29 th
Greenfinch	10 at Swarland all month
Goldfinch	25 at Smeafields all month 7 at Swarland all month
Siskin	A family group at Lesbury on 20 th 8 at Smeafields all month
Tree Sparrow	21 at Branton on 17 th 20+ at Smeafields all month
Crossbill	Several in Beanley Woods on 3 rd 2 near Eglington on 18 th
Common(Mealy) Redpoll	2 at East Chevington on 17 th
Yellowhammer	Several near Football Hole on 10 th 70+ near Newham on 25 th
Reed Bunting	Many near Football Hole on 10 th
Snow Bunting	6 at Long Nanny on 1 st 12 at Holy Island on 2 nd 2 at Titlington Mount on 17 th 1 at

	Brandon on 21 st 2 at East Chevington on 4 th
MAMMALS	
Red Squirrel	1 at Harwood Vilage on 10 th 1 at Howick on 10 th 1 at Swarland from 18 th
Pipistrelle	2 at Glanton on 12 th
Badger	1 at Harehope on 14 th
Fox	1 at Newton on the Moor on 9 th
Stoat	1 at Smeafields on 9 th 1 at Newton on the Moor on 6 th
Weasel	1 at Monks House Pool on 31 st
Porpoise	1 at Stag Rock on 31 st
Grey Seal	500 at Old Law on 29 th
REPTILES	
Adder	2 at Branton Ponds on 2 nd and 6 by 3 rd
AMPHIBIANS	
Frog	Frogspawn at Beanley Moor on 3 rd large numbers in Harwood Forest on 10 th also lots of Frogspawn 2 at Cragside on 9 th
Toad	Spawning at Branton Ponds on 23 rd
PLANTS	
Coltsfoot	1 plant at Branton Ponds on 4 th at Howick on 8 th
Primrose	At Howick on 10 th
Lungwort	At Howick on 10 th
INSECTS	
7-Spot Ladybird	1 at Whittingham on 6 th
Small Tortoiseshell	1 at Warkworth on 16 th
Epinotia Immudana(moth)	1 at Branton on 5 th
Dotted Border	1 at Branton on 10 th
Early Moth	1 at Glanton on 11 th
Early Grey	1 at Branton on 12 th
Pine Beauty	1 at Howick on 14 th
Mottled Grey	2 at Branton on 13 th (1 of the pale variety and 1 of the dark northern variety f. nubilata)
Marmalade Hoverfly	At Howick on 10 th
Early Bumblebee	1 at Branton Ponds on 18 th
Buff Tailed Bumblebee	Several at Branton Ponds on 11 th at Howick on 10 th
INVERTEBRATES	
Marphysa Sanguinea	1 (a seashore worm) at Fenham Flats on 16 th
RAINFALL	12.8mm
OBSERVERS	W Banks, G&R Bell, S Binyon, T&M Cadwallender, I&K Davison, G Dodds, A Keeble, D Makepeace, M McMahon, E Panton, R&J Poppleton, S Reay, M Rolley, J Rutter, S Sexton.