

Menaces of the Future, continued...

the regular nester returning or just a visit from one that has wintered here, I do not know. Both the Marsh and Hen Harriers have been seen in the parish during the winter, along with the Short Eared Owls which are regularly seen hunting on the long grass on the Outmarsh. Fifty years ago they were known as Dutch owls by the locals, for during the winter we get many migrating here from Holland. The same day I saw some Frogspawn and the Hedgehogs making their rounds at night which says spring is on the way.

1st May update: By now most of our summer visitors have arrived. The Cuckoo was a week early, giving its call for many residents to hear over the Easter weekend; the Egrets continue to be seen around the Parish Drains; the Green Plover (Lapwing) are once more nesting with us for the fifth year running after a period of 40 years absence, along with the return of the Marsh Harrier. The pair of residential Churchyard Tawny Owls have once again succeeded to rear four offspring that are about ready to leave their nesting box at the time of writing (I have named them Ben, Tom, Jade & Chloe - hope I got their sex right). This means they must have laid their eggs in late February. During the spring, the pairs of Mallard ducks were in reduced numbers compared with last year, as were the Water Hens (Moor Hens) whose numbers in 2007 were greater than in living memory with flocks of over 20 to be seen in the drain side fields in several places within the Parish.

There are continual reports in the Press of new species or rare birds arriving which have not been seen in the UK for a century or more (all due to this Global warming of course). The return of most is due to protection - having in the past being shot or trapped for their meat and their eggs gathered for omelettes driv-

ing them out of the country, they are now finding it a safe haven and are returning. I have been looking forward to the return of a species that I have never seen, but was often spoken of when I was a kid - a "Kelly Loo Loo Bird". A Curlew was always called a Kelly, so I thought it would be similar with a long beak and legs for when I asked what it was like I was told "it sticks its beak in the ground and whistles out its bum hole." Maybe it was shot or trapped to extinction for it has not returned to date.

In the future, with this new species of bird and three animals increasing in numbers, the Gardens & Fish Ponds will have to be watched - for Herons and Egrets by day and Otters by night, and the Deer will come and munch away anytime at anything in gardens that suits their taste or fancy, browsing like a goat at all the expensive or exotic plants and shrubs that are the Gardener's pride. It will be a 24-hour job.

What to do about the herons, egrets and otters, I don't know. Today I would say they are un-eatable - unlike 250 years ago, when anything with flesh on its bones was eaten. Only the Deer could be an addition for the larder - 300 years ago Venison could only be eaten by kings and his lords with many a Peasant convicted for stealing a deer from his Lordship's forest to feed his starving family and shipped to Australia as a prisoner never to return home, however things have progressed and venison is now allowed on everyone's table and you can too now live like a lord (and don't forget the wine). If the deer become a menace or times become hard in a recession, who knows? Perhaps they will disappear in the dead of the night and appear on a table or in a freezer. Problem solved, and the deer will not munch your beloved garden plants anymore.

Ron Parker (May 2009)

Good Wines, Good Company, and Lots of Laughs

The charity Wine Tasting Evening held in the Memorial Hall on Saturday 18th April was declared an unmitigated success by all who attended.

The hall echoed to the sound of laughter and the clink of glasses as 78 people gathered to raise money for the Help for Heroes charity. The evening was enjoyed by wine "connoisseurs" from as far away as Wakefield, Scunthorpe, Barnetby, Saxby as well as Goxhill.

There was a choice of 10 wines to try from local wine merchant, MR Wines and 3 bottle beers from the renowned Tom Woods brewery all supplied at very competitive prices. A very impressive bread and cheese supper was subsidised by local supermarkets and wholesalers. All of which ensured that the majority of the ticket money went to the charity.

The support given to the organisers by Goxhill businesses was amazing with over 30 prizes donated for the raffle and we would like to thank each and everyone for their generosity.

At the end of the night we had raised a total of £600 for our chosen charity HELP FOR HEROES, which raises money to provide additional medical and support services for injured service personal and their families.

Despite the fact that we had posters throughout the village, leafleted over 200 houses, advertised in the Gander and had tickets on sale at three businesses in Goxhill less than 10% of ticket sales came from this form of promotion. It is difficult to understand why our evening attracted so little support from the general public in Goxhill but we are interested if you know why.

Please feel free to contact me and give me your views, we may hold other fund raisers or social evenings and your views may alter the way we promote them.

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