



PAISLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Newsletter, November 2005

Coming Events

Thursday 1st December 2005 Christmas Social

Come and join our informal Christmas Social and do bring a friend with you. An annual feature is the sociable but infuriating 'Name Game' – unique to PNHS. Curious? Then why not come along and find out about it. There are other quirky quizzes and general frivolity is generated. Will members please remember that a contribution to the festive fare is welcomed?

Thursday 2nd February 2006 The Isle of Eigg

Susan Longbridge is coming along to tell us about her passion for this seldom visited Inner Hebridean island.

Reports on Recent Events

Renfrewshire Plants (September) - Keith Watson, Biodiversity Officer for Glasgow City Council, talked enthusiastically to our members about his plans for publishing a Flora of Renfrewshire. In his travels around Renfrewshire he visited many out-of-the-way parts of our area and discovered many interesting plants which are new to our Vice County. Only one site has been located for the Small White Orchid. A search for this inconspicuous plant will be included in our Summer Outings programme for 2006.

Scottish Insects (October) – Stuart Glenn, from the Scottish Wildlife Trust, talked about his passion for insects. Fortunately he only talked about our more attractive insects and excluded the 'nasties' and 'creepy-crawlies'. He illustrated his talk with many fine slides of Scottish Butterflies, Moths and Dragonflies. All present were greatly impressed by Stuart's enthusiasm for his chosen subject.

Sand Martin nesting wall

Our local Biodiversity Officer, Petrina Brown, is keen to build a Sand Martin nesting wall in our area near the Newshot Island Local Nature Reserve at Erskine on land owned by Scottish Water.

The first Sand Martin nesting wall in Scotland was built on farmland owned by Bobby Smith near Dumfries. This wall was made from concrete. Access to the nests was made possible and much information has since been obtained about Sand Martins by ringing the young before they take to the wing.

Three highly successful sand walls have been built in Fife, one at the SWT Montrose Bay nature reserve and two on sand dunes near Broughty Ferry. These structures are fronted with large 'sleepers' of recycled teak and back-filled with compressed sharp sand. Holes are then drilled into the wood to give the birds access for building a nesting tunnel. The sand wall is then landscaped by adding turf to the top. These sand walls were occupied immediately and thriving colonies of these attractive martins now nest in Fife. There are no sand walls in the west of Scotland and Sand Martins are seen in springtime on the upper reaches of the Clyde Estuary. Only a few nesting sites are available - mainly in derelict dockland stonework. Sand wall construction costs are high and a 7 metre wall will cost approx £7000! Some financial support has been given by Scottish Natural Heritage. The Committee of PNHS is supporting this project and will make a sizable donation from the PNHS Conservation Fund. Personal donations are invited (see attached sheet).

Subscriptions

Some subscriptions are still outstanding. The rates are the same as last year: Ordinary £6; Family £8; Unwaged £3 and may be paid to the Treasurer, Marian Coates at the next meeting.

T. Norman Tait