

Keyhaven Marshes, Hampshire Sat 13th May 2017

Our leader, Andrew, reports:

We arrived in bright, warm sunshine, after showers. Looking up a narrow water channel at the start we watched 3 Reed Warblers flycatching from the reedbed sides. On the roadside pools we saw Gadwall, and little Egret.



On the saltmarsh there was a Whimbrel, Turnstone and Oystercatcher, with Common Terns flying distantly over the sea. On the grassland / freshwater marsh there were single Redshank and Lapwing, with Whitethroats and Linnets prominent amongst the gorse. We heard a Cuckoo calling, then saw it flying for a distance, low and fast. It was the first of several, one an unusual brown morph female.

At our usual lunchspot there were Shelduck and Avocet on the lagoon, with 2 Little Terns sitting on a sandbank; one eagle-eyed person found a Cuckoo sitting in a bush. Walking along the seawall we enjoyed wonderful views of the Little Terns hovering above the lagoon at eyelevel, then a male Stonechat sitting on the wire fence below us. Next we were watched by a Roe Deer stag. A female Marsh Harrier quartered the lagoons spooking all the waders, then we saw a group of roosting Grey and Ringed Plovers. Sandwich Terns flew by, some making their creaky "I need oiling" 2 note calls. 2 Little Egrets danced together then mated. We were disconcerted (temporarily!) by terns on a raft – not quite right for any species... they were plastic decoys! We saw Swifts and a distant Hobby. There was a Wheatear running about a lagoon bank, perky as ever. On the return walk, a flock of Grey Plover and Dunlin displaced by the rising tide flew around, then we followed a Skylark and Meadow Pipit feeding in the rough pasture.

Marion adds:

There were sadly only 21 of us on this trip which, apart from anything else, made it difficult to pass things – raffle, Fairtrade snacks, information about the reserve and the sightings tick list -round the coach. It was World Fair Trade Day so I distributed bite sized tasters of the new Geobar Organic and Vegan Carrot and Ginger wholefood bar and Divine Chocolate mini bars. And we took part in two virtual international celebrations with this photo taken opposite the pub!



One person on the coach was Will Hitchins who had just recently contacted the MBS via Twitter. He writes:

My first coach outing with the Marylebone Birding Society was as enjoyable a day as one could hope for. It was an incredibly friendly group and I was made to feel welcome by one and all.

As a relatively inexperienced birder I was extremely grateful for Andrew's guidance and expertise, patiently answering all my questions and teaching me huge amounts along the way. I can't wait for the next trip.

He has since booked his place on our trip to the New Forest 3rd June.