

CBO e-News

Copeland Bird Observatory e-Newsletter (Summer 2015)



New CBO Merchandise

New CBO merchandise (e.g. blue T-shirt/polo shirt, royal blue fleece and royal blue/black beanie) have been produced and will be available to order shortly.



Ron, Brenda & Philip modelling new CBO merchandise

The Copeland Bird Observatory (CBO) was formed in 1954 and is Northern Ireland's only bird observatory. The CBO is situated on Old Lighthouse Island off the County Down coast, at the southern side of the mouth of the Belfast Lough. It is operated on a part-time basis by volunteers and is open from late March to the end of October.

CBO Website:

www.the.cbo.org.uk

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/copelandbirdobservatory



CBO weather vane

Outdoor Recreation NI – Volunteer Ranger Social Event (19th Sep. 2015)

Outdoor Recreation NI is a charitable organisation that is responsible for developing, managing and promoting outdoor activities including walking, cycling, canoeing and adventure activities throughout Northern Ireland by working in partnership with a wide range of organisations. Part of this remit includes a commitment to running a volunteer programme to audit and monitor the Ulster Way, Quality walks, Canoe Trails and Ecotrails.

Over 100 volunteers are currently active in the programme. An annual reward scheme is organised for the Volunteer Rangers to thank them for the work that they complete for the organisation, which includes Summer and Winter Walks, and training and social events. One of this year's social events was a guided tour of Lighthouse Island, one of three islands that make up the Copeland Islands.



Volunteers aboard the 'Ocean Crest'

Twenty nine Volunteer Rangers were met at the pier at Donaghadee Harbour, by our guides for the day, Niall Waterman and Ron Bishop from the Copeland Bird Observatory, and we set off for Lighthouse Island.



Ron welcoming and introducing the party to the island

Once on the island, Ron and Niall gave the group some background information on the island, the CBO and the activities that went on there. The group was split into two and led off around the island by both Niall and Ron. The groups were able to learn about the species of birds found on the island and the important work carried out by the CBO volunteers in terms of monitoring and recording the species found there. The Volunteer Rangers were able to watch the CBO volunteers processing and ringing several Redpolls that had been caught in the mist nets that morning.



Volunteers making their way to a 'Loo with a View'

The tour of the Island and facilities concluded at 1pm for lunch and the group enjoyed eating their sandwiches in the sunshine outside the living quarters of the observatory. After lunch the Volunteer Rangers were able to wander round the island at their leisure before meeting at the east jetty at 3.15pm to be transported back to Donaghadee. Some enjoyed taking in the sights of Mew Island from the sea as kayakers paddled past and Grey Seals called to each other, whilst others were lucky enough to watch a Grey Seal pup playing at the water's edge at the south of the island.

The Volunteer Rangers thoroughly enjoyed their trip to Lighthouse Island and special thanks goes to Niall, Ron and David from the CBO for their informative tour of the island and for helping to organise the day.

Diane Crookes

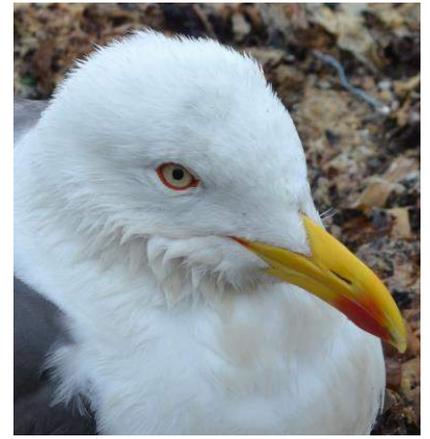
Test Your Identification Skills (Answers on Page 8)



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)



(g)



(h)

Visiting the Copeland Bird Observatory (CBO)

Trips to the CBO should be booked in advance through the Bookings Secretary.

David Galbraith (Bookings Secretary) – **Tel:** 028 9338 2539, **Mob:** 07885 834398

Email: davidgalbraith903@btinternet.com

Roof Working Party (9th May 2015)

On the 9th May, a work party of over twenty CBO volunteers met at Donaghadee Harbour. The work party had been organised to help with the transportation of new roofing panels and associated materials out to the island. One of the big logistical challenges of the new roofing project.

On the Saturday morning, the roofing materials were brought to Donaghadee Harbour on a large lorry. A boat (*Ocean Spray*) had been chartered to transport the materials from Donaghadee Harbour to the island. Volunteers were tasked with the loading/unloading of the boat and with the transportation of materials up to the observatory buildings.



Lorry arriving at Donaghadee Harbour



Kingspan roof being unloaded at Donaghadee Harbour

The *Ocean Spray* arrived at the South Jetty with the first of the roofing materials. Some members of the work party arrived with the materials while other members remained at Donaghadee to assist with the next load.



The 'Ocean Spray'

Once docked, the roof panels and building materials were unloaded from the boat and left on the foreshore. While the boat returned to pick-up the next load, the work party on the island started to bring the heavy materials up to the observatory buildings.



Roofing panels being unloaded at South Jetty



Roofing materials on the foreshore



Roof panel being transported up to the observatory buildings

Wheelbarrows and other improvised lifting methods were employed to move the roof materials up to the observatory buildings. This operation continued for two more boat trips. By the time the third and last boat was unloaded the water was up to the top level of the South Jetty. Another half hour or so and this jetty would have been unusable.



A heavy load requiring a team effort



Work party transporting materials



Roof panels outside the observatory on Saturday evening

By late afternoon all of the roofing materials had been transported up to the observatory buildings. This had been a very productive day. The weather had been great with the work party labouring long and hard to complete this important phase of the project.

Many thanks to all the volunteers for their time and effort on the day. Also, thanks to Brian Meharg, skipper of the Ocean Spray for three smooth trips, and Philip our boatman for acting as pilot.

Installation of New Kingspan Roof (7th – 16th June 2015)

With the successful transportation of roofing materials to the island in May, the last phase of the project, the actual roof installation, was now ready to be started. On Sunday 7th June, contractors from TH Engineering, along with the first pair of CBO volunteers (Larry Donnelly and Peter Munro), went out to the island to get settled in for the hard working week ahead.

On Monday 8th June, the work started in earnest. First, the old roof had to be removed before the new roof could be installed. Stripping the old roof off was a messy job but good weather conditions allowed steady progress to be made. The following photographs show the roofing project in various stages of development.



Roof stripped from east side of building



New roof partially installed on east side of building



Old roof partially stripped from Dormitory 2



New roof over Dormitory 2



Sheets covering the Kitchen during stripping phase



New roof on Kitchen



New roof starting to take shape (Sunday 14th June)



West gable with no end flashing fitted



West gable with end flashing fitted



Roof nearly finished but some clearing-up work required at front of building (Monday 15th June)

The installation of the new Kingspan Trapezoidal insulated roof was completed on 16th June. This had been an ambitious project for the observatory involving several months of planning (e.g. securing funding, engaging contractors, ordering materials and organising shipping to an offshore island). Hopefully, this new roof will last for many years to come, providing visitors with a dry and secure roof over their heads.



Finished roof (Tuesday 16th June)



Craig McNeilly, Harry Magill & Tommy Gray

The CBO would like to thank everyone who supported the project:

- All the CBO volunteers who contributed to the funding application, planning, transportation and installation of the new roof. A special thanks to Wesley Smyth for all his hard work behind the scenes managing the project.
- The first class T&H Engineering team (Harry Magill, Tommy Gray and Craig 'Cecil' McNeilly) for their tireless work and good humour during their nine day stay on the island.
- Finally, to the NIEA Challenge Fund 2015 administered by the Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL), who financially supported the project. Without this generous funding, this project would not have been viable.

Answers to Identification Skills Test on Page 3:

(a) Common (Mew) Gull (b) Black Guillemots (c) Lesser Black-backed Gull (d) Nest: Reed Bunting (e) Spotted Flycatcher (f) Jackdaw (g) Cuckoo (h) Hooded Crow (Juvenile)

Updating Contact Details

Please contact the Membership Secretary if your contact details change (e.g. new email address).

Ron Bishop (Membership Secretary) – Tel: 028 9336 4040, Email: rh.bishop1@gmail.com

Volunteer Work Done on CBO

Ulster Wildlife volunteers visited CBO on Thursday 6th August to take part in habitat management work. They surveyed four areas, and discussed why the various vegetation communities benefit the birds, rabbits, and visitors. They then found out why and how the current approach to managing and restoring habitats has been successful and worthwhile to ensure the habitat condition continues to improve, and access around the island is maintained.



Ulster Wildlife volunteers on CBO

Many hands really make a difference! The group then worked in the North Garden Millennium plantation, replacing 48 tree protectors with new larger mesh ones. After that, they quickly got to grips with the lawnmowers. The upper Well Path and the Cricket pitch area in front of the house was treated to its penultimate mow of this season.

This added to the work that had been carried out earlier in the week by Ian McKee and Paul Roberts, who stayed from the Sunday to the Friday. All in all, just over 20 hours were spent mowing during the week. This was the third week of mowing carried out this season.



Plantation with mesh tree protectors fitted

If you or your friends are interested in learning more about habitat management opportunities then please contact Ian by emailing cbohabitat@gmail.com.

Ian McKee

CBO is supported by the following:

