Nature Diary Notes from 40 years ago

ROSEMARY WINNALL

From 1979 Rosemary Winnall and her family spent 19 years living at the Frank Chapman Centre in a house at the edge of Rock Coppice on the south side of Wyre. The garden dropped down into ancient semi-natural oak woodland, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and over the hedge was arable farmland.

Excerpts from her Nature Diary:

12th January 1980 - In the stubble field I counted 30 Tree Sparrows, with Chaffinches and Bramblings.

27th January 1980 - John Milner ringed Bullfinches, a Willow Tit and a Marsh Tit amongst others.

31st March 1980 - 75+ Siskins in our Silver Birch tree, many of them flying down to feed on seeds on the ground.

3rd May 1980 - Tree Sparrows are nesting in our bird box in the garden.

14th May 1980- I found both Willow Tits and a pair of Starlings feeding young in their nest holes.

25th May 1980- There is a Turtle Dove male purring again from the undergrowth near the house. It flew out as I walked past.

21st October 1980- There was a flock of about 40 Siskins and Redpolls feeding in our garden birch.

11th January 1981- 62 Skylarks were feeding around manure spread in the field.

21st September 1982- There were eight Red Admirals feeding together on rotting fruit on the bird table.

8th January 1983- 17+ Yellowhammers were feeding with Chaffinches in the stubble field.

3rd May 1983 - A male Pied Flycatcher was seen in our garden birch tree catching insects.

4th May 1983- A Tree Pipit was present on the garden lawn.

25th May 1983- A Hoopoe has been present all day, feeding on the playing fields, and I took a photograph of it perched in our garden tree.

14th June 1983- Checked two Lesser Spotted Woodpecker nests in our woodland today.

18th December 1983 - Through the kitchen window I spotted a flash of white disappearing into the bracken. Then it came out streaking and leaping across the lawn – a white Stoat in ermine with a black tail tip – an amazing sight!

23rd April 1984- First Cuckoo of the year seen and heard in our garden.

3rd May 1984 - At least three male Wood Warblers singing at the bottom of the wood, and a Cuckoo present.

4th July 1984- Spotted Flycatchers are nesting on the climbing tower this year and feeding young.

23rd July 1984 - Nigel Jones saw a White Admiral butterfly along the edge of the woodland – a first for the site!

4th May 1985 - A Lapwing is nesting in the ploughed field over the hedge. It demonstrated an amazing distraction display as I walked past.

26th February 1987 - Found our Little Owl roost site in an old nobbly oak tree and collected pellets from below.

3rd May 1988- Watched a Hawfinch drinking from a puddle outside the house with a second in the tree above. They flew off together.

12th May 1988 – There's a Hawfinch's nest along a horizontal branch of a beech tree. We identified two males singing high in the canopy. The Broad-leaved Helleborine nearby has three flower stalks, and Spotted Flycatchers are singing in the woodland.



Hoopoe Craig Reed