

# My Local Patch: Marley

Malcolm James

Since an agreement was reached with Yorkshire Water in August 1994, members of our Group have had access to Marley Sewage Treatment Works. To a certain extent this was a local patch for me prior to then but as this had involved trespassing it was limited to areas away from the working centre: the lagoons to the south of the dual carriageway and the area of scrub that could be overlooked from Marley Playing Fields. Parking was difficult and, as I found out once to my own cost, illegal on the main road. Now provided you keep to the main paths, we have the freedom to roam across the site.

Over the last twelve months a start has been made on investigating the bird life of the varied habitats of this site. This has produced several potentially promising areas with species not normally associated with the Aire Valley in the Group's recording area; most notably, a long-staying Water Pipit and breeding Grasshopper Warbler. Additionally our first spring here gave us good breeding numbers of several of the more common species. It will obviously be several years before we can fully assess all parts of the site but the following is a summary of the observations in the last twelve months.

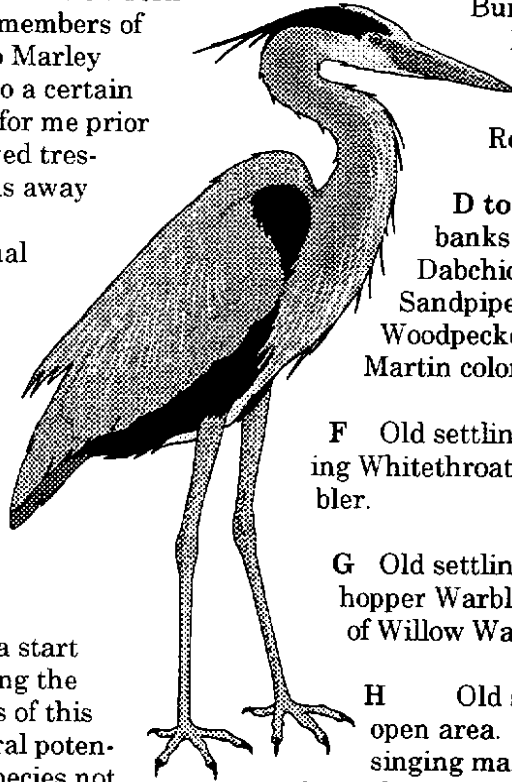
The letters A, B, C etc. refer to areas shown on the map opposite:

**A** Main gates (Please remember to leave as you find them eg. if unlocked do not lock)

**B** Parking by main offices. A flock here contained six Brambling and at least 25 Chaffinch

**C** Three lagoons, reeds and scrub. On entry from under railway bridge approach quietly as cover is limited and the birds are easily flushed. The variety of species is dependent on water level. Breeding grounds for Oystercatcher (failed '95, one young '94), Moorhen, Coot, Mallard, Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat, Long-tailed Tit, Lapwing (five nests in '95), Grey and Pied Wagtails amongst others. Other species which can be seen at particular times during the year include Green Sandpiper, Heron (up to 20), Goldeneye,

Wigeon, Shoveler, Pintail, Tree Creeper, Tufted Duck, Water Rail, Kingfisher, Jay, Dunlin, Sparrowhawk, Woodcock, Kestrel, Canada Goose, Goldcrest, Chiffchaff, Bullfinch, Grasshopper Warbler, a maximum of 150 Teal, Reed Bunting, Snipe, Common Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover, Greenshank, Redshank and mixed flocks of Linnet and Redpoll.



**D to E** River and associated banks, trees and scrub. Goosander, Dabchick (up to six), Green and Common Sandpiper, Redshank, Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, Goldcrest and two Sand Martin colonies (approx. dozen holes) near E.

**F** Old settling beds and willow trees. Breeding Whitethroat, Reed Bunting and Sedge Warbler.

**G** Old settling beds and willow trees. Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler, good numbers of Willow Warbler.

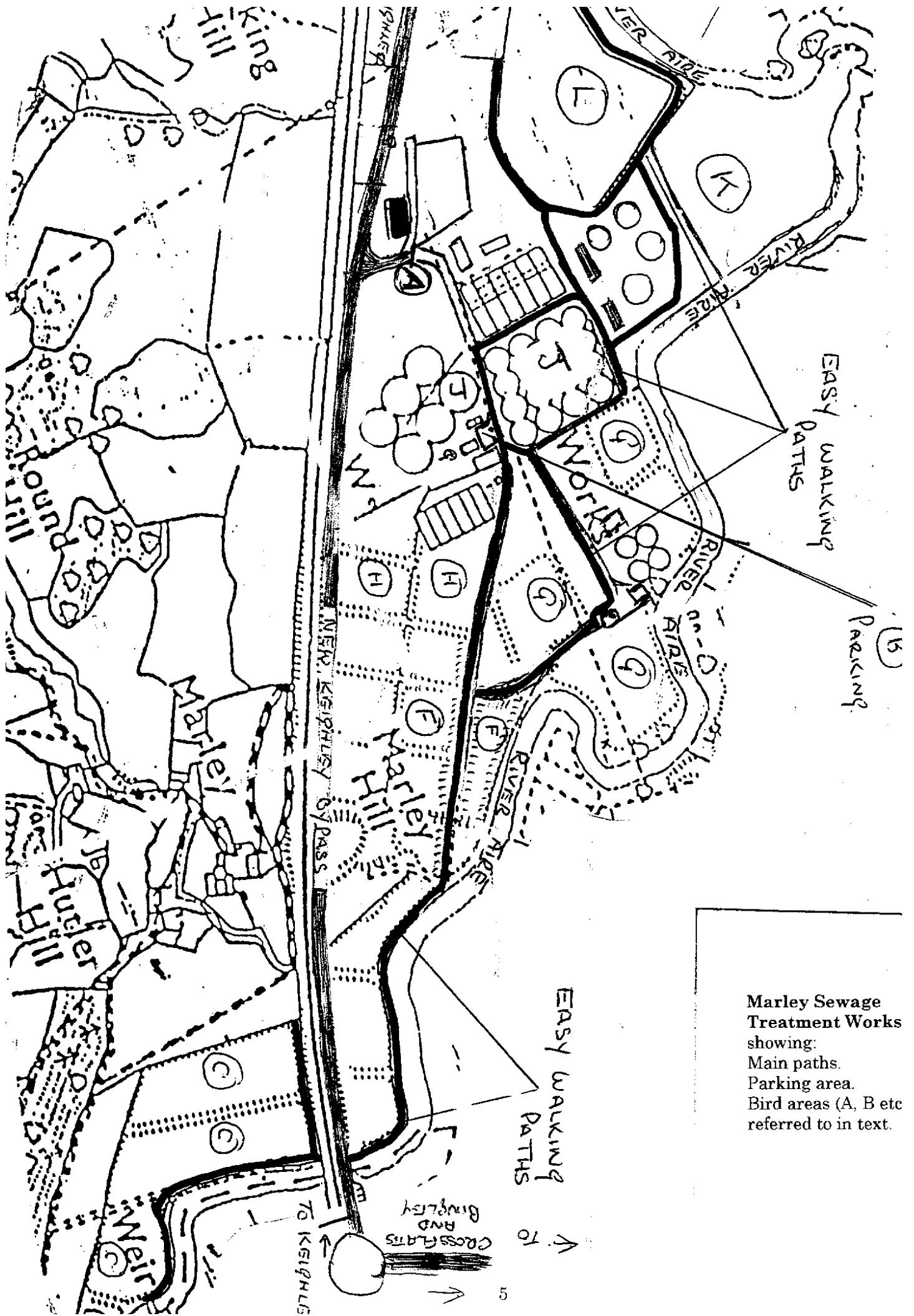
**H** Old settling beds and tanks, more open area. Sedge Warbler (four or five singing males), Reed Bunting, good numbers of Wren, Water Pipit, Kingfisher. Heron and Green Sandpiper on settling tanks.

**J** Modern round filter beds and tanks. Water Pipit, Grey Wagtail (up to 11), Pied Wagtail (up to 200), White Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail, Sedge Warbler, Black-headed Gull (250+), Common Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Linnet (possibly breeding), Meadow Pipit (up to 20), Redshank, Oystercatcher, up to 1000 corvids and breeding Pheasant. Stonechat and Wheatear in early spring.

**K** Meadow and newly planted trees. Grasshopper Warbler, Whinchat, Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat, Partridge, Sparrowhawk, up to 30 Lapwing, Heron and breeding Meadow Pipit. A potentially rewarding site in spring and autumn.

**L** Large old bed with many willows and scrub. This is a fenced off area with NO access, viewing is only possible from the perimeter. Sedge Warbler (18 singing males), Chiffchaff, Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Reed Bunting and Tree Pipit.

In addition to the above numerous common species can be found throughout the entire site. Fly-overs have included Common and Arctic Terns, Osprey, Merlin and Peregrine.



Marley Sewage Treatment Works showing: Main paths. Parking area. Bird areas (A, B etc referred to in text.