New Wildlife Viewing Platform at the Ayres

Monday 12th March 2012

The Trust is delighted to announce that its new wildlife viewing platform, located within the Ayres National Nature Reserve, is now open to the public.

Situated just behind the nature conservation charity’s Visitor Centre, approximately two thirds of the way up the sand dunes, the viewing platform will allow visitors to the Reserve an increased chance of seeing an impressive array of wildlife, including seabirds such as gannets and common, sandwich and little terns as well as seals and other marine creatures.

Generously funded by a grant provided by the Lockington Marshal Trust Fund that was established under the will of the late Bill Lockington Marshal to provide financial assistance to Manx charities, the viewing platform was officially opened on Saturday, 31 March 2012 by two of the Fund’s Trustees – Sam Alder, President of the Rotary Club of Douglas and David Gawne, Co-ordinating Trustee.

Before declaring the viewing platform open, Sam Alder said, “As Trustees of the Lockington Marshal Trust Fund, the members of the Rotary Club of Douglas were delighted to have the opportunity to support the Manx Wildlife Trust in their creation of this wonderful wildlife viewing platform and hope that it will encourage more people to visit this very special area.”

David Gawne endorsed Sam’s comments and added, “As far as the objectives of the Lockington Marshal Trust Fund are concerned, the wildlife viewing platform project ticked all the boxes. “It is a truly inter-generational project and in particular it will enhance the learning experience of schools and other groups for young people coming to the Ayres for wildlife education activities. Given his interest in wildlife and the outdoors in general, the viewing platform is something that I’m sure the late Bill Lockington Marshal would have approved of wholeheartedly.”

Both Sam and David also paid tribute to the many volunteers for the considerable effort they had put into the construction of the platform.

Manx Wildlife Trust Director, Duncan Bridges thanked the members of the Rotary Club of Douglas, representatives from DEFA, Manx National Heritage and Bride Commissioners, John ‘Dog’ Callister and some of the Manx Wildlife Trust volunteers who built the platform, together with Manx Wildlife Trust staff and volunteer Visitor Centre wardens.
The wildlife viewing platform will be open all year round whilst, this year, the Visitor Centre will be open from 2 to 5pm throughout the Easter holiday weekend, at the same times during the first two weekends in May and then daily from mid May until mid September.

The Visitor Centre provides a focal point for exploring the special wildlife habitats at the Ayres and its facilities, including a display depicting life on the Reserve and a short film which beautifully illustrates some of its natural highlights, will now be complemented by the wildlife viewing platform nearby.

Photographs from top: Volunteers help build the structure; David Gawne and Sam Alder cutting the ribbon to officially open the wildlife viewing platform; The view from the top of the platform; The completed platform.

More information:

The Ayres is the Island’s only National Nature Reserve and the site is co-owned by Department of Environment Food and Agriculture (DEFA) and Manx National Heritage (MNH). The Visitor Centre is managed by the Manx Wildlife Trust and manned wholly by Trust volunteers.

The Ayres National Nature Reserve Visitor Centre, Opening Hours 2012:

The wildlife viewing platform will be open all year round whilst, this year, the Visitor Centre will be open from 2 to 5pm throughout the Easter holiday weekend (6th to 9th April 2012), at the same times during the first two weekends in May and then daily from mid May until mid September.

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