



## Birdie of the Month 2

### The **Great Spotted Woodpecker**

(*Dendrocopos major*) is of medium size with pied **black and white** plumage and a **red** patch on the lower belly. Males and young birds also have red markings on the neck or head.

This species can be seen **all the year round** at Childwall Golf Club due to the perfect habitat of many deciduous trees.

It chisels into trees to find food or excavate nest holes. The pecks will involve either **drumming, drilling, hammering or tapping**. They drum up to **20 times per second**. Drumming is for contact and advertising territory. Whilst playing golf, you may hear a **“click”** call as well as “drumming”.

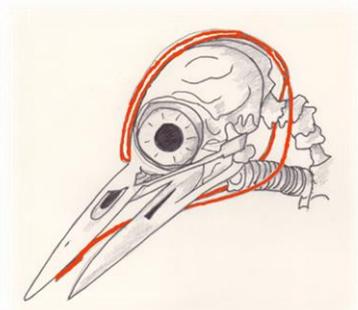
The feet of the woodpecker are **zygodactyl** which mean it has **two toes facing forwards** and **two toes facing backwards**. This helps the woodpecker perch on the side of tree bark.

Unlike other birds, the **tail feathers** of the woodpecker are **thick and strong** to help prop them up against the side of the tree.

In between the **beak and the skull**, there is a special tissue which **cushions the impact of drumming**.

Woodpeckers have a **long tongue** which helps them to eat a variety of foods including **spiders, ants, beetles, grubs, larvae** and other foods rich in protein like **eggs** and **chicks** of other birds. Throughout the winter, **nuts** and **conifer seeds** are crucial food for the woodpecker.

It **breeds in holes** excavated in living or dead trees. When the young fledge they are fed by the adults for about **ten days**, each parent taking responsibility for feeding part of the brood.



Skull showing long tongue



A woodpecker's flight is typically “undulating”