Berkshire Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire



THE CHILTERNS NEWSLETTER

Issue 98 Autumn - Winter 2018

WildlifeTrust news, views and events from the Chilterns, College Lake and around Bucks



Why wildlife needs you!

It's wonderful that you are a BBOWT supporter and, hopefully, take a special interest in what happens in our area – the Buckinghamshire Chilterns. Your membership subscriptions, donations and appeal responses are crucial to the Trust – the money raised enables the day-to-day work of our staff and the basic maintenance of our reserves.

There is still never quite enough money for BBOWT to do everything it would like to do and I hope some of you have responded positively to my recent letter urging you to consider increasing your subscription. However, giving some of your time is just as important and for many people provides a very rewarding additional connection with the Trust and its work for wildlife.

We have a proud history of volunteer-led activity amongst the Chilterns members of BBOWT – wardening and working at our nature reserves, running a programme of guided walks and talks, organising fundraising events, which have kept this local newsletter going for 35 years. Can you give some of **your** time?

A small committee co-ordinates these local activities and would welcome new members, but if you just have a few hours to offer please make contact and we can find a group for you to join or a task that would suit your interests and availability.

The successful Plant and Produce Markets in May and October, the Orchid Extravaganza programme, information stalls at events like Wendover Celebrates, the sequence of Chilterns reserves work parties, our talks evenings starting up again in September – all rely on groups of enthusiastic volunteers. Do come and join us!

Mick Jones MBE, Acting Chairman, BBOWT Chilterns Group jonesmick365@gmail.com

Plant and Produce Charity Market Sunday 21 October 2018, 10 - 12

Once again we will be holding the market on a Sunday but please note this time it will be for just two hours, from 10am to 12 noon concentrating solely on plants, a produce stall and the pop-up café. Almost everything we sell is donated by enthusiastic local gardeners and cooks, so as you divide your perennials please pot up some spare ones, label them attractively and bring them along. If you need plants collected, contact Janet Philpott on 01494 722737, janetleath48@aol.com and she'll do her best to help. Herbs, shrubs and winter bedding like pansies will also be very welcome – but no trees please.

For the produce stall please bake cakes, biscuits, scones and flapjacks, or whatever your speciality is, but don't overlook home-made jams, marmalade and pickles. Fruit and vegetables from your garden are also very welcome.

Remember all proceeds will go towards BBOWT's work in the Chilterns.

For general enquiries please contact me up to 1 October and thereafter Julie Pomfret on 01296 486865, <u>cyberpom@btinternet.com</u>.

John Catton, Chilterns Group Events Organiser

richard.catton1@ntlworld.com or 01494 726616

HS2 update

HS2 Ltd. recently published a <u>Green Corridor</u> <u>Vision</u>. You will notice that the visual representation in this document is far removed from reality! It does not show the gantries and other railway infrastructure including high fences that will impact on the movement of wildlife.

However, the good news is that there is a stated aspiration to create a green corridor along the route and we certainly hope that it will create more wildlife habitats, and integrate these with the wider landscape. More information is available on the <u>BBOWT website</u>

The Trust is in liaison with HS2 Ltd. regarding the local effects of the scheme on our land holding, e.g. at Finemere Woods near Quainton. Other sites affected directly by the line include Calvert Jubilee, Bacombe Hill and Weston Turville Reservoir.

Christopher Williams Director Conservation & Education (Bucks)

Yoesden Wildlife

The adonis blue had its largest spring brood ever and I have seen 4 silver-washed fritillaries nectaring together.

I relocated a patch of small teasel which Roger Kemp had informed us about a couple of years ago. We feared it had been lost when new fences were



erected in the wayleave.

Above is the photo of a great green bush cricket female seen this summer.

I continue to record insects on the reserve and have been fortunate to see both colour forms of the scarce andrenid, the large scabious bee andrena haffortiana. I have seen also all four species of the commoner leaf-cutter bees.

Ched George, Volunteer Warden

Weston Turville Bird Hide

Regular visitors to this reserve will have noticed the unfortunate closure and subsequent removal of the Susan Cowdy bird hide.

This hide has sadly been a repeated target of vandalism and anti-social behaviour, with the most recent damage forcing the removal of the roof and side screens. While we were working out how best to go about repairs, further inspection revealed structural problems. Due to safety concerns, the decision was therefore made to take it down completely.

We are very sorry for the loss of this facility and are currently investigating options for a replacement that would both meet the needs of visitors and be more resistant to vandalism.

I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped with the removal of the hide (particularly in the recent hot weather!) as well as all the previous repairs and improvement work.

Stacey Hewitt, South Bucks Reserves Officer

Summer at Dancersend

The end of spring saw the need for some serious tree trimming in the Crong Meadow to protect the power line running through the valley. Our wonderful regular tree surgeons climbed a large old beech and took off the branches whilst saving the part-rotten trunk with its colony of jet ants (Lasius fuliginosus) and interesting beetles. Conditions were perfect for a rather late 'Spring flowers and butterflies' walk on 5 May and



participants enjoyed a superb show of bluebells, stitchwort and wood spurge as well as butterflies like holly

blue. Orchids were plentiful for the 'Orchid Extravaganza' walk on 3 June. All the target species were seen, including fly and greater butterfly orchids, but it was hard to find white helleborines that had not been eaten by muntjacs or slugs.

The joint 'Discovering Insects' event with Bucks Invertebrate Group (BIG) on 15 July was a new venture that we will repeat. Around 15 people had the advantage of experts from BIG on hand to show and talk about a range of fascinating insects, including the rare downland villa bee-fly, whiteletter hairstreak and many different flies, beetles and bugs.

Work parties continue to be well attended and have often been s p l i t between practical



work like mowing, raking and path maintenance in the morning and more gentle survey work in the afternoon. The volunteer team has also constructed an insect hotel in the Waterworks orchard, which now has many interesting tenants, including leaf-cutter bees and ruby-tailed wasps.

Mick Jones, Volunteer Warden

BBOWT Mandeville School Project

As part of our Wild Trax youth project we have the opportunity to use the Spacehive crowdfunding platform to raise funds to develop the grounds at The Mandeville School in Aylesbury into a wildlife area and outdoor classroom.

We need your help! If you are able to spare a pound or two to get us started that would be amazing-please http://www.spacehive.com/ wildlife-garden Also if you can promote this to other volunteers or people you know that would be fantastic. We will be advertising this on our social media, newsletters etc and through the school itself.

The deadline is Friday 19 Oct and we have to raise all of the money or we don't get any of it and it is returned to the pledgers. Our target is £8316.

All contributions are much appreciated. Thank you

Kate Sheard & Beth Searle

Aston Clinton Ragpits

I am standing in the middle of the meadow at Aston Clinton Ragpits. It is the third week of a July and the second wildlife peak after the mid June orchid flowering (the third peak if you include the primrose/cowslip extravaganza).

We are in the midst of a heatwave, everything looks more like the Spanish plains than Merry Old England. In spite of the prolonged drought, I am surrounded by colour and verdant growth. There are towering stands of deep purple greater knapweed and powder blue field scabious. Betwixt and between are constellations of umbellifers - wild carrot, burnet saxifrage and hogweed.

Aside from the high summer floral burst, this is the peak time for butterflies. 15 species seen on one day is not the record for this reserve but a healthy number for such a small site. Gatekeepers and commas are out, but there are still some marbled whites, meadow browns and ringlets around. Even nicer to see are all three species of blue butterfly that we have on the reserve. Secondbrood common and holly blues and the silvery blue



f r e s h m a l e chalkhill blues in relatively good number.

After a summer when orchid books seemed to be everywhere there has been an extended interest in this group of

plants and perhaps more visitors than in previous years. This year was another good one, butterfly orchid numbers were up, but we only had one very sickly looking bee orchid. The trusty volunteers managed to survey the whole reserve so a great effort from all and thanks again for their hard work.

Survey results

8965 Chalk Fragrant orchids

- 5215 Common Twayblade
- 2925 Common Spotted orchid
- 111 Greater Butterfly orchid
- 673 Pyramidal orchid
- 67 White Helleborine
- 1 common spotted x fragrant hybrid
- 1 bee orchid
- 20 broad leaved helleborine

17978 total

Please note work party dates for 2019 are Saturday 26th January and Saturday 23rd February

Thank you again to all the volunteers who help to manage this reserve - and don't forget to come and visit. Even after the orchids have gone over, there are still many wildlife treasures to enjoy!

Phil Townsend, Volunteer warden

Red-tailed Bumblebees

I visited Yoesden Bank for the first time a few weeks ago. We parked on the Chinnor Road by 'The Boot' and walked the narrow path between two fields to the entrance of the BBOWT reserve. Walking diagonally down a semi-wooded slope you emerge onto the Bank and wonderful views across a quintessential Chilterns landscape. The sheer number of wild flowers took my breath away - this was before the long heatwave finished them off. They attract innumerable invertebrates, especially butterflies and bumblebees. Bumblebees have catholic tastes, but one that caught my eye and which thrives on the chalk

l o v i n g wildflowers was the redt a i l e d bumblebee.

One bumblebee can be hard to distinguish



from another, but the red-tailed is an exception. None of the usual yellow and black stripes for them, the (large) queens and (smaller) workers are jet black

with a red tail! Worker bees can be seen flying / foraging between May and August, when the colony breaks down, however next year's queens will be foraging up to October as they fatten up to survive winter hibernation.

For further details see

http://www.bbowt.org.uk/species/red-tailedbumblebee

https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/redtailed-bumblebees/red-tailed-bumblebee/ http://www.bbowt.org.uk/reserves/yoesden

John Catton, Chilterns Group Events Organiser

Birding news from College Lake, summer 2018

During the summer months, a hive of birding activity has taken place on the two main islands where lapwing, redshank, little ringed plover and common tern have all bred successfully along with black-headed gulls and dare I say Canada and greylag geese.

Elsewhere on the reserve, smaller breeding birds such as whitethroat, chiffchaff and willow warbler have also been equally successful.

The resident pair of mute swans improved their parenting skills this year and have managed to retain two cygnets (fingers crossed). Hirundine numbers seemed lower than usual in line with national statistics and hobby has made only the briefest of appearances. A great highlight for me was seeing a drake garganey on the marsh. Fortunately, it remained for a few days allowing



other birders to enjoy this

summer

duck

Yellowhammer has made a pleasing addition on the feeders by the education barn along with the usual residents such as coal tit, bullfinch and great spotted woodpecker.

Autumn migration is already underway with black tailed godwit, greenshank and dunlin making appearances. I am sure it won't be long before the first snipe returns to the marsh and the avian year begins again.

Liz Turner, College Lake Volunteer.

College Lake updates.

The Reserve

2018 has been a great year for our breeding lapwing and common terns here at College Lake, with both fledging record numbers of young.

Both these species breed on the islands of the marsh and are two of our 'target species' for the site. This means they are some of the most important species at College Lake and we aim our management at providing good habitat for them. Other target species include redshank, little ringed plover and oystercatcher.

At least 17 young lapwing fledged from the site along with around 40 common tern! Last year we had 9 lapwing and around 20 terns.

It is fantastic news to see these birds do so well and it is really encouraging to see that our management of the site is helping them to breed successfully here. Both of these species are declining nationally, so it is really important that we are able to provide a suitable site for them. This combined with the fact that both species are rare breeders locally means that our population here at College Lake is a very important one.

Fingers crossed for another good year for our breeding waders and terns in 2019!

Leo Keedy, Reserve Manager



The shop

This is a great time for the shop. After a very successful trip to the Spring Fair with Martin Whitfield we will see lots of exciting new products on sale. At the moment we are currently in a review period - looking at where we are and where we aim to be. It's quite obvious that we have outgrown the current visitor centre at College Lake and are now looking at how we can change the way we work and what can be done differently. Sales continue to rise which is great. We want to make sure that we offer our customers a great variety of good guality products. If any of you are out shopping and see something that you think could be a good seller or fits perfectly at our shop then please do let me have your ideas.

Toyah Baulk, Centre Manager

Volunteers in Focus – Ann Wilson, Weston Turville

Few of the 150 or so volunteers in the region can compete with Ann Wilson's BBOWT pedigree. After gaining a horticultural diploma from Waterperry Horticultural School, Wheatley in 1948, she spent some time back in her home county of Norfolk recovering from polio. She then worked in London eventually becoming the senior secretary at the World Wildlife Fund from 1962 to 1965. Ann recalls helping in 1970 to organise in Oxford the sixth County Trusts Conference for the Society for the Preservation of Nature Reserves and treasures a letter of thanks from the chairman of the council of BBONT, the renowned ornithologist Richard Fitter. Ann became the membership secretary for BBONT about that time when the Trust had just 5000 members and ran a tight ship. She worked from her kitchen table and members' address labels were produced using the kit in the BTO office in Tring those for Berkshire being collected for distribution by Vera Paul of Warburg. The kitchen table also served for stuffing Wildlife News into envelopes: some forty years later it was still being used for preparing the batches of 500 Chilterns Newsletters for her ten deliverers in the Wendover area. In her early days Ann was encouraged in her Trust activities by a young neighbour, Roger Jefcoate, and she remembers the passing of the stalwarts who forged the Wildlife Trust in our area like Sir Thomas Barlow and Susan Cowdy. She was present when the hide at Weston Turville Reservoir was dedicated to Susan's memory in 1998.

Ann is still helping with Chilterns Group fundraising at the twice yearly Plant and Produce Markets at Great Missenden while husband David continues to add daily to the bird records at the Reservoir – thank you Ann and David for a lifetime of active support for the cause.

Richard Birch

Chilterns Group Talks 2018/19

Talks are held on the third Tuesday of the month at Great Missenden Memorial Centre, Link Road HP16 9AE starting at 7.45 pm. They will now cost £4 which includes tea and coffee during the break.

Members and non-members are equally welcome.

September 18 – The How and Why of Bird Breeding by Tim Seller

Researcher Tim Seller explains the reasons why birds breed and how they adapt to seasonal changes.

October 16 – Decline of Woodland Flowers by Keith Kirby

As Research Associate in the Department of Plant Sciences Oxford University, Keith Kirby has enormous knowledge and experience to help us understand why woodland plants have declined.

November 20 – Hedgehogs by Pat Morris

Pat Morris President of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society explains how habitat loss among other reasons has caused a fall in population and gives some excellent advice on how we can help them thrive.

December 18 – The Forgotten River by John Tyler

Local wildlife expert John Tyler explores the River Thame from just about every angle in this wonderfully illustrated talk.

January 15, 2019 – Chiltern Landscape Natural History and Man's Use by Tony Marshall

The Chiltern Landscape is both beautiful and useful. Local ecologist Tony Marshall talks about the wildlife of the Chiltern landscape as well as how man has altered its shape through thousands of years of farming and forestry

February 19 - National Parks of California

Following a recent tour of California's National Parks local wildlife enthusiast Barry Oxley treats us to a fascinating and gloriously illustrated evening looking at all aspects of wildlife in one of the wildest areas on earth including places such as Death Valley and Yosemite

March 19 The Rhythm of Nature

We are planning an informal evening of poetry and music related to the natural world. Richard Birch will be the curator of this treasury of gems and musical contributions will be welcome. If you can help please contact him on <u>richardbirch60@yahoo.com</u> and save the date.

Other Talks

See on-line version for details of Mick Jones's talk on **Friday 19 Oct**. at 8pm in Mursley Village Hall MK17 0SB

'The wildlife in & around the parishes of North Buck'

£5 including refreshments. Contact Barry Agnew 01296672857 or <u>barry@mursley.info</u> to reserve.

Walking on the Wildside

BBOWT walks are more relaxed field trips than hikes and are designed for all abilities as far as it is practical. During the spring and summer a dozen walks have explored birdsong, butterflies, orchids, insects, chalk grassland, woods and fens – something for everyone. Knowledgeable leaders from among the Bucks conservation staff, the volunteer wardens and species champions make sure all participants have a good time. Booking is essential, as we do need to keep groups small, so look at the programme on bbowt.org.uk/whats-on and plan ahead.

Highlights this autumn include a return to Dancersend with Mick Jones on 8 September, wild medicines and natural remedies with Lucy Blunden on 6 and 13 October at College Lake and badgers with Mike Collard on 25 November. More walks will appear on the website so have a look, book and come along.

> Julie Pomfret, Chilterns Group Walks Organiser

MAIN CONTACT DETAILS

Head Office: <u>www.bbowt.org</u>.uk / 01865 775476

College Lake: 01442 826774

Conservation: Leo Keedy, ext 210 leokeedy@bbowt.org.uk

Visitor centre: Toyah Baulk, ext 214 toyahbaulk@bbowt.org.uk

> Education: Claire Garrity, clairegarrity@bbowt.org.uk

Volunteering Information: www.bbowt.org.uk/how-you-canhelp/volunteer

Mick Jones, Acting Chair Chilterns Group, jonesmick365@gmail.com

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

By agreement with Chris Williams, we are covering topics from around the county to encourage members to spread their wings. The Trust's reserves beyond Aylesbury have year round interest but are less visited, so please explore them and support the hard work of local staff and volunteers.

We are grateful for everyone's contributions to the newsletter. If you have ideas for the next issue, **covering March – September please submit them to** juliebirch60@yahoo.com. by **Friday 8 February**

The full digital version of this newsletter will be available on the BBOWT website.

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust. Picture copyright from Mick Jones, Phil Townsend, Ched George, Google & BBOWT website pictures.

HANDS - ON CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Work parties are sociable and satisfying local events with opportunities to learn new skills. Beginners are particularly welcome and you can stay for whatever time you can spare. Please wear stout footwear and work clothes, including gloves, and take care on steep slopes and uneven ground. Tools and instruction are provided. Children (10+) are welcome but please contact the organiser if you wish to bring them. Parents must supervise children at all times.

DANCERSEND (near Tring) 10 - 4pm - Second Sunday of month

12 August, 9 SeptMeet at western end of reserve near Chivery . Turn south off B4009 Wendover – Tring Road11 Nov, 13 Jan,Meet at western end of reserve near Chivery . Turn south off B4009 Wendover – Tring Road10 Feb, 14 Apron left signed to BBOWT car park, then follow signs to work site. OS sheet 165 SP 89809014 Oct, 9 Dec,Meet at Thames Water pumping station.S P 905088, HP23 6LB. Where Wendover – Tring Road10 Mar, 12 MayB4009 meets old A41 (through Aston Clinton), take lane south signposted Dancersend.. Turn
right after 1 mile and continue for 0.75miles to car park on left by waterworks.
Contact Judi Fisher 01494 722073, judiandbryan@yahoo.co.uk

ASTON CLINTON RAGPITS (near Wendover) Saturday 26 Jan & February 23 February 2019

For information please contact Phil Townsend 01923 353410, philitownsend@yahoo.co.uk

 FINEMERE WOOD (near Quainton) Work Party Dates: The second and fourth Thursday of the month:

 13 Sept ,27 Sept; 11 Oct; 25 Oct; 8 Nov 22 Nov; 6 Dec.
 9.30am-3pm.

 .
 Contact Charlotte at charlottekarmali@outlook.com.

WESTON TURVILLE RESERVOIR (near Wendover, 10am -2.30pm) Last Thursday of month from August -November., 30 Aug, 27 Sept, 25 Oct, 29 Nov. No December work party

Meet at eastern entrance to reserve in the lay-by in Halton Lane, off B4009, map ref SP 866096, HP22 6AZ. Work is mostly in wet areas so waterproof footwear is essential. Contact Stacey Hewitt (see below).

COLLEGE LAKE (near Tring) 10.00 - 4pm

Please call or email Leo Keedy - 01442 826774 ext. 210 or leokeedy@bbowt.org.uk For Roving Teams contact Stacey Hewitt ext. 208 or staceyhewitt@bbowt.org.uk

Pitstone Fen work party is 1st Saturday of the month. Meet at College Lake for 9:45am. I need to know how many to expect so please contact me if you want to attend. <u>steve_keene@btinternet.com</u>

BERNWOOD GROUP Rushbeds/Lapland on first Sunday of month. Whitecross Green Wood on other Sundays.

For more details contact **Becky Woodall** on 01844 238399

YOESDEN BANK For more information contact Ched George on c5hed.george@btinternet.com

BACOMBE HILL (near Wendover) Second Thursday of month, contact steve_keene@btinternet.com

BBOWT PLANT AND PRODUCE CHARITY MARKET SUNDAY 21 October, 10.00am - 12.00 noon at GREAT MISSENDEN MEMORIAL CENTRE

Please help with our fundraising for BBOWT by contributing items for sale and coming to this event.

If you need plants collected, contact Jane Philpott on 01494 722737, <u>janetleath48@aol.com</u> and she'll do her best to help. For general enquiries please contact me up to 1 October and thereafter Julie Pomfret on 01296 486865, <u>cyberpom@btinternet.com</u>.

John Catton 01494 726616, richard.catton1@ntlworld.com

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