

# THE CHILTERN NEWSLETTER

Wildlife Trust news, views and event information from the Chilterns Group, College Lake and around Buckinghamshire.

Issue **100** Autumn - Winter 2019

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE BBOWT  
PLANT AND PRODUCE  
CHARITY MARKET**

**GREAT MISSENDEN**

**Memorial Centre, Link Road,  
Great Missenden HP16 9AE**

**Sunday 20 Oct 10 - 12 noon**

- Excellent value plants
- Tasty homemade produce
- Tea, coffee, cakes
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**For contributions & queries  
please contact**

**John Catton on 01494726616**  
[richard.catton1@ntlworld.com](mailto:richard.catton1@ntlworld.com)

Or **Julie Pomfret**, 01296486854  
[cyberpom@btinternet.com](mailto:cyberpom@btinternet.com),

**One Hundred Issues and Still Going  
Strong**

100

This is the one hundredth issue of the Chilterns Newsletter – in the next number we'll make a nostalgic trip through some early newsletters to see what has changed over forty years! And this is also my 35th newsletter as editor since 2006: I thank everybody who kindly writes articles, provides work party information and supplies photos to make it an enjoyable read with a campaigning edge. With great professional help from the media department at HO our Newsletter is enjoying a new lease of life as an attractive online publication so **please** get your friends and acquaintances to sign up to receive it. Following the new data protection laws the Trust's legal advisers ruled that it was not sufficient to have one's email address simply registered with one's membership details as we had all previously understood – a specific request was necessary. Please ask them to send an email to be put on the circulation list for two issues a year to:

[membership@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:membership@bbowt.org.uk)

**Julie Birch**

## **Dealing with eco-anxiety**

These can be gloomy times for those of us keen on wildlife and the countryside. A whole series of scientific research projects and both international and national government reports have been highlighting the precarious state of nature and the looming threat of global climate change. To add to this, we are faced at local level with planning decisions and processes that seem to prioritise enormous infrastructure projects and abstract economic growth models over the special characteristics of the Buckinghamshire countryside and hundreds of valued local wildlife sites that we enjoy.

Is it surprising that psychiatrists are reporting a marked increase in general anxiety specifically related to worries about the environment? Even people not directly involved in wildlife activities are feeling that the background and context for their lives has become unstable and uncertain and extreme weather events and disruption are feeding into this. For those of us more involved with nature, the lovely warm, sunny weather of last summer and even more so during this July, has brought mixed emotions. At times clouds of butterflies, bees and other insects have delighted us and it has felt as though the tide of insect declines might have reversed. Some of our meadows have had spectacular displays of flowers and there have been lots of fine days for exploring them. Just like the old days!

Then we remember that our desperately rare chalk streams have dried up, there are new concerns about butterflies like common blue, our bumblebees and once-common farmland birds. At some sites our special Buckinghamshire flower Chiltern gentian seems not to have recovered from the drought in 2018 and hasn't reappeared this year. Latest reports on climate change and species loss paint a very bleak picture, leaving us feeling utterly powerless as individuals.

What is the solution? Get involved! Get active! Your Wildlife Trust is at the forefront of fighting for policy changes, including a new comprehensive Environment Bill that will protect and improve the UK's natural world. BBOWT is also a major player in land management, directly protecting the most important places for wildlife and managing sites to make them more resilient in the face of threats from climate change and the spread of diseases. The BBOWT Chilterns Group supports this work through publicity and information events, fundraising and campaigning ... and we currently need more help! Can you offer some time to the Group?

Or, you could get active with physical conservation work or species recording on our nature reserves. Getting outdoors and active with like-minded volunteers has been shown to give both physical and mental health benefits. And you would know that your work is directly benefiting wildlife.

So, don't just sit at home worrying about the news – come and join your local volunteer group. If you would like to know more about getting involved, please contact me for a chat – [jonesmick365@gmail.com](mailto:jonesmick365@gmail.com) or 01296 720623.

**Mick Jones, Chairman BBOWT Chilterns Group**

## **Bacombe Hill - junipers, orchids and elusive sheep**

Bacombe Hill has looked fantastic during spring and summer this year thanks to all the work from the South Bucks team, the Bacombe hill volunteers and a small flock of four legged woolly helpers.

We are continuing to 'halo' our juniper bushes: we have over forty junipers and we plan primarily to give the female (berry bearing ones) a small dead hedge to try to keep sheep, rabbits, deer and anything else that sees them as food away from them. We hope that we will have some seedling junipers growing in these protected areas.

We have successfully recruited some more local volunteers to help us from the posters we put up, but we still have room for more so if you want to come along and join in on our work parties, which are held on the

second Thursday of the month, watch out for the notices at the entrances to the site, or contact Volunteer Warden Steve Keene on [steve\\_keene@btinternet.com](mailto:steve_keene@btinternet.com).

On 22 June we ran a wild flower walk across Bacombe Hill. This was well attended and the weather was just about perfect for us as we talked about the work that we do to manage the site for wild flowers, butterflies, juniper and the scheduled ancient monuments. We found a good crop of orchids this year - common spotted were the most abundant with pyramidal, fragrant and a few bee orchids as well.

At the moment we have lots of harebells and clustered bell flowers in bloom and hope to have some autumn gentians in the near future.

Please note that we will continue to graze the site with sheep so please keep your dogs on a lead when you see the stock grazing signs on the gates. These sheep can be very elusive so please do not assume that if you cannot see them, they are not there.

Hope to see you enjoying the views and the plants up on Bacombe Hill soon .



**Steve Keene, Volunteer Warden**

### **A good breeding season at College Lake**

It's been another exciting summer for the wildlife of College Lake. We have been paying particular attention to the fortunes of our breeding waders and terns on the marsh. These birds are our target species for the site and we are therefore very concerned with how successful they are each year and watch with baited breath as parents raise their little families on the islands. Despite a spell of bad weather in June that definitely had some impact on the success of the breeding birds it looks like being a reasonable year overall, with at least ten lapwing fledging along with three redshank and around fifteen common terns. As all of these species are in decline nationally and all are rare breeders locally, it is fantastic news to see these young birds fledging.

We have also been seeing many different types of butterfly over the summer including brown argus, painted lady and small blue. One species we are particularly excited to see is the chalkhill blue. A small number have been breeding at College Lake for the past few summers, and it would seem numbers are up this year, which is great news for this beautiful and rare butterfly. Interestingly they have been spotted in a few different parts of the site, suggesting they may be spreading from the bank of horseshoe vetch where the breeding colony is located.

Anyone visiting College Lake recently may have noticed some of the improvements we have been making to site infrastructure thanks to the efforts of our hard-working volunteers.



There is now a fantastic new boardwalk running along a section of the lower path that has previously been prone to flooding when water levels are high. In another part of the site, the main track has been resurfaced and will make what was a rather slippery and muddy stretch much easier to negotiate once we get into wetter weather. We hope all our efforts will continue to make the reserve better for visitors and enable people to carry on enjoying the wonderful wildlife at College Lake.

**Leo Keedy, Reserve Manager**

## A busy time at Finemere Wood

Finemere Wood has been buzzing with life over the spring and summer months. The bluebell display was, once again, truly spectacular. And from this point on there has been a sequential array of floral delights:



**Scalloping woodland edge"**

greater stitchwort, early purple orchids, and common spotted orchids, through to lady's bedstraw, betony and devil's-bit scabious. Clouds of butterflies can be seen on a warm and sunny day, amongst them the silver-washed fritillary, the white admiral, and the elusive purple emperor. Birdsong reverberates throughout the wood: willow warblers, garden warblers, blackcaps, and goldcrests to name just a few. And once again the cuckoo returned here to breed.

The volunteers have been buzzing too. Much cutting and raking of grassy rides and meadows has been accomplished, using an assortment of tools and machines: tractors, brushcutters, and scythes. DIY is a high priority at this time: fences and culverts

have been fixed and rotten waymarkers have been replaced.

As the warmer months come to an end, the team looks forward with anticipation to the winter work of cutting and clearing of shrubs and trees, a favourite pastime for all. Fortunately, this is good for wildlife too, which benefits a great deal from the removal and regrowth of vegetation. The result is a wide range of biodiversity-rich habitats.

HS2 continues to be a challenge. Preparatory works for the railway, which will run alongside the wood, are up and running. The National Grid has been working along the main track into Finemere since the beginning of the year, modifying overhead electricity lines, pylons and gas pipelines along the HS2 route. The wood will not be accessible via this route for much of the year, but follow this link for alternative footpaths into the reserve:

<https://www.bbwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/finemere-wood>

**Charlotte Karmali, Volunteer Warden**

## Orchids galore at Aston Clinton Ragpits

2019 is turning out to be a remarkable year. Certainly the summer was to be notable for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the bee orchids, which are never numerous at the Ragpits - those that do emerge seem to prefer to do so perilously close to the path edge and so always risk getting trampled. Bee orchids produce their leaf rosettes during the winter and during those short, chill, grey days there were a good number of distinctly glaucous leaves dotted about. Indeed, there was a dark, overgrown and rather neglected part of the reserve that had produced a few leaf rosettes. Bee orchids can be found in ranker, shaded areas, it's true, but I had never noticed them in this part of the reserve before.

It seemed promising but perhaps I had mistaken them for one of the commoner orchid species - time would tell.

So to the annual orchid count, it was the third weekend in June and for once it was going to be good weather. We had our work cut out as it looked like a good year overall with species spreading across the reserve and in particular, the back meadow. This part of the reserve, beyond the quarry, has been improving year on year and now resembles a very fine wildflower meadow. Yellow rattle has spread and this attractive meadow species is thought to keep the more aggressive grass species in check.

What is apparent is the steady colonisation by more and more orchid species - fragrant, common spotted, twayblade and especially pyramidal are now thriving here. This is also by far the best area for white helleborines with some very robust specimens showing earlier in the year.



We actually had a record year and when the numbers were all added up we had counted over 40,000 flowering plants!

The following week I led a guided walk and arriving early, I had a quick walk around the reserve and thought I would revisit the quiet area where I had seen the bee orchid leaves in the winter. Sure enough, there were about four very fine flowering bee orchids in the shade with some pyramidals and common spotted orchids here too.

As I write, we still have the broad leaved helleborines to count as they are only just coming into flower but the overall tally and species breakdown is given below. Many thanks once again to all the volunteers who help conserve this reserve and its orchids and to those who managed to count so many - your help is very much appreciated!

|  |              |                                 |       |
|--|--------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Chalk fragrant orchid                    | 20292        | Bee orchid                      | 15    |
| Chalk fragrant orchid ( white albiflora) | 1            | Pyramidal (white albiflora)     | 6     |
| Common twayblade                         | 12589        | Common spotted x Fragrant Cross | 1     |
| Common spotted                           | 11166        | Pyramidal orchid                | 1756. |
| Greater butterfly                        | 47           | White helleborine               | 188   |
| Grand Total                              | <b>46061</b> |                                 |       |

**Phil Townsend, Volunteer Warden**

## **An Interesting Summer at Dancersend**

It's difficult to start a report this year without thinking about the weather! Overall it was a good spring at Dancersend with quite spectacular displays of primroses for our traditional spring flower walk mid-April, followed by sheets of vivid bluebells and a good scattering of fly orchids. Late April stayed quite mild and much drier than April 2018, with just the occasional shower to keep everything fresh.

In early May there were plenty of opportunities to observe early butterflies like holly blue and green hairstreak and many other insects, despite more periods of rain. Sue Taylor found lots to show participants on the 'Introduction to Identifying

Invertebrates' course she ran over four sessions in our workshop/classroom at the Waterworks and quite a few new reserve records came from the focus she brought to some insect groups and snails, in particular. By late May it was clear that our spring/early summer orchids were having a great year, with more white helleborines than we've seen for some years and new sites for both fly and greater butterfly orchids. It was rewarding to see some fresh



Rhinoceros Beetle

plants of Solomon's seal and wood sage, two species that seemed to be hit very badly in 2018. However, I was now concentrating on insects, especially beetles, as I had managed to get some funding for the noted coleopterist, Mark Telfer, to carry out beetle surveying, concentrating on saproxylic species dependent on dead and partially rotten trees. Managing a series of interception traps hanging in trees kept us busy up ladders and sorting through catches, most of which remain to be identified in Mark's quiet season.

June was quite mixed weather-wise, with quite a few very windy and rainy days, and ended up being much wetter than June 2018. There were still plenty of sunny days, but it didn't really get very warm until the final week. Highlights for me from searching trees and shrubs with a new sense of purpose (and slightly improved skills!) were many sightings of the remarkable hazel leaf-roller beetle and the cigar-shaped rolls it makes, more rhinoceros beetles than I've ever seen before, some wonderful



Wood vetch

longhorn beetles and the Michelin-man shaped caterpillars of birch sawfly. The conditions seemed to suit plants in the pea family resulting in spectacular displays of bird's-foot trefoil at the Waterworks and the county-rare wood vetch in the centre of the reserve. At the end of June I was seeing more dark green fritillaries than silver-washed flying at the reserve and was thrilled to watch two dark greens egg-laying in the Meadow Plots. It became clear that the reserve Extension – ex-arable fields where we are restoring chalk grassland – was probably going to be in its best-ever condition.

Much of the reseeded grassland was carpeted with wild carrot, oxeye daisy, knapweed, clustered bellflower and scabious and in the three chalk scrapes both kidney and horseshoe vetch had increased – the latter being very good news for the prospect of finally attracting chalkhill blues to the reserve.

In early July I was able to see that Chiltern gentians were growing rapidly in the Extension scrapes and at the Waterworks, but didn't seem to have recovered in other areas where the 2018 drought had proved too much for them. I then left for 3 weeks in South Africa (their winter) and missed the exceptionally hot conditions interspersed with heavy showers here. On my return it was amazing how much growth there had been and work parties quickly had to be devoted to mowing paths, cutting back vegetation and pulling bracken which was starting to overwhelm some of the grassland.

The changing weather patterns and increased frequency of extreme events is leading us to review management on our reserves and at Dancersend I think we are now seeing the value of re-coppicing and creating more open, patchy areas of woodland and scrub. Some plants and insects need a wider range of micro-habitats if they are to survive different conditions from year to year and the vegetation mosaic we are creating at the reserve is probably part of the answer. Dancersend also serves as a demonstration site for showing other landowners how chalk grassland can be restored, the value of soil disturbance and approaches to scrub management. We couldn't do all this without a dedicated band of volunteers and I would like to pay tribute to the long-standing work party regulars without whose help the reserve would not be so rich in wildlife. We can always do with more volunteers though, so don't hold back!

**Mick Jones, Volunteer Warden**

### **Hay Cutting for Conservation**

The end of summer marks a dramatic change for hay meadows and woodland rides. The hay cut, occurring mid-June to July, appears at a glance to be extremely destructive. From an ocean of

wildflowers to a cropped lawn, the cut removes large areas of habitat used by ground nesting birds and a range of invertebrates. So why do it?

Eutrophication – or nutrient enrichment, is one of several enemies of the wildflower meadow. Perhaps counterintuitively, more nutrients mean fewer species of flower, due to the ability of some bigger, coarser species to use those nutrients to bully out the more delicate species. But when's best to cut? Too soon, and we lose the nectar source and the flowers won't set seed. Too late, and the nutrients return to the base of the plant. By taking the hay cut when the grass is at its richest, then grazing the subsequent regrowth with cows or sheep, we remove lots of the nutrients.

Also, left to its own devices a meadow would undergo 'succession', transforming from flower rich, to scrub rich, and eventually to secondary woodland, meaning an eventual loss of the habitat completely. Cutting and grazing physically slows down scrub like hawthorn and bramble. Add to that a mighty volunteer work party, equipped with tools for scrub clearance, and our hay meadows thrive.

At some sites, the topography makes a hay cut impossible. On permanent pasture like Pilch Field, cows slowly munch their way through, creating a variation in structure between the areas they've eaten, and those they haven't reached yet. Again, this promotes biodiversity, through creating varied structure, and delaying the cut in some areas benefits late flowers like devil's-bit scabious. Where we do hay cut, we leave 'refugia' – uncut areas for those late flowers and invertebrates to have a fair go.

Moving into winter, our focus now moves to the hedgerow. By coppicing and laying blackthorn, we create new habitat for brown hairstreaks, and thicken up the hedge for when the plants reawaken and the birds nest again. And onward the seasonal cycle goes...

Why not grow a meadow of your own? If you have a patch of garden, you can learn how to transform it here: [www.bbwt.org.uk/actions/how-grow-wild-patch](http://www.bbwt.org.uk/actions/how-grow-wild-patch)

**Pete Bray, North Buckinghamshire Reserves Officer**

## **Walking on the Wild Side**

Walks with reserve wardens and enthusiastic specialists are a great way to widen one's knowledge or simply enjoy a relaxing half day in good company. The 'What's On' part of the BBOWT website under 'Getting Involved' will give you details of events in your area if you key in your postcode. Two accounts of walks from this summer below will give you the flavour of these activities and hopefully encourage you to take part in the October event at Dancersend or the several events at College Lake during the autumn and winter. Staff will continue to plan and lead walks there and Chilterns Group is looking for someone to help organise their programme for other reserves around the region – please email [jonesmick365@gmail.com](mailto:jonesmick365@gmail.com) if you can give us a hand.

## **Summer Flowers and Butterflies at Aston Clinton Ragpits on 3 August**

It was a perfect summer's day for one of Phil Townsend's slow walks round the reserve he manages for BBOWT as volunteer Reserve Warden. Fifteen people came to hear him describe plants, identify butterflies and encourage questions. My list of butterflies totalled fourteen by the end of the walk including three blues, silver washed fritillary, red admiral, and painted lady. Listing all the plant species would take too long but let me mention broad leaved helleborine, the adder's tongue fern which spreads through spore dispersal and ground thistle (not one to sit on!) – isn't it amazing how evolution has created so many varieties of one species.

Thank you Phil for such a well-led, enjoyable and informative walk.

**Sheila Harry**

## **Butterflies at College Lake Reserve on 21 July**

Chris Trew of the reserve staff applied his inimitable style to showing an enthusiastic group of both seasoned and strictly amateur butterfly lovers just how many species there are in two small areas of the reserve. After an introduction and a display of field guides available at the reserve shop, we combed the wildlife garden and quickly clocked up the commoner species while they fed on the nectar rich flowers planted specially for them. Netting and examination under a lens enabled us to see the difference between the Essex and the small skipper – it's all in the antennae!

Moving on to the cornfield, where once common, now rare, flowers of Britain's agricultural heritage are nurtured, we added more species including the beautiful chalkhill blue. For me it was a revelation to see close up and with expert guidance just how attractive and different are the 'small brown jobs' of the butterfly world like gatekeepers and ringlets. These informal field trips are one of the delights of BBOWT – thank you Chris, Leo, Kate and all staff members who lead walks and enable us to have fun getting to grips with nature's amazing variety. We saw fifteen species in a couple of hours and had time for a sociable cuppa in the Badger Café afterwards.

**Richard Birch**

## **Walk: Sputnik Galls, Elf Cups and Slime Moulds, Dancersend, Sunday 6 October**

Volunteer Warden Mick Jones hosts a series of walks through the year at our extensive and endlessly fascinating BBOWT reserve tucked away in a quiet corner of the Chilterns. This Sunday afternoon stroll will introduce us to some less well known natural phenomena, usually small but often colourful and with intricate private lives... Please go online to get full details and to book a place. Be aware that the terrain is hilly - you'll need good footwear and be comfortable with some steep slopes.

**See 'What's on' leaflets or go online for other walks and events**

## **Chilterns Group Autumn Talks**

Great Missenden Memorial Centre. HP16 9AE

Admission £4 including refreshments. Free parking. 7.45pm start.

### **The Year of the Fly**    Tuesday 17 September

Well known local entomologist Martin Harvey talks about the diversity, significance and beauty of flies and how they affect our lives. Flies have fascinating life histories and play an important role in the planet's ecosystem. 2019 is The International Year of the Fly and there is no one more knowledgeable and enthusiastic than Martin Harvey to tell us about just some of the 7,000 Diptera species found in the UK.

### **The Fate of the Badger**    Tuesday 15 October

A talk by author Dr Richard Meyer on the Badger: Both a Hunted Villain and Wildlife Icon. Richard wrote his book 'The Fate of the Badger' 30 years ago. In it he looked at the UK Government's relentless persecution of the badger as villain in the Bovine TB debacle. While recently updating his book Richard found that little had changed over the years and that the UK's largest terrestrial carnivore and BBOWT's icon was still in the dock. In his talk he'll discuss the life history and habits of badgers and outline his findings on the misplaced view that badgers cause the spread of Bovine TB. Richard started his wildlife career working under Sir Peter Scott at The Wildfowl Trust before serving on HM Government's Consultative Panel looking at badgers and Bovine TB. Richard lectures on wildlife, has written twelve books and numerous papers and articles and is an accomplished artist. There is likely to be a lively debate at question time.



## **Butterflies - poetry and photography**    Tuesday 19 November

Rikki Harrington describes Britain's butterflies in a unique combination of beautiful photographs and his own verses which, perhaps due to his scientific background, are also factually correct. Drawing on his career as a zoologist and entomologist at Rothamsted Research in Harpenden, Rikki will also fascinate you with intriguing facts about the lives and habits of butterflies. For his new book 'The Butterfly Collection' he has written 58 poems, one for each of the UK's butterflies, and during the evening he invites the audience to choose their favourite species. This promises to be an evening of pictures, poems and facts put over in a fun and interactive manner.

## **The Forgotten River**    Tuesday 17 December

A talk on the wildlife and history of the River Thame by local naturalist John Tyler. The River Thame is so often in the shadow of its big brother the Thames. In his talk John explores with customary humour the unexpected wildlife found on the banks and in the waters of the river and shows how man has used it through the ages.

### **2020 programme:**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Tues 21 January  | Ancient woods in the Chilterns by John Morris                |
| Tues 18 February | Chalk, Cherries and Chairs by Katie Horgan and Nick Marriner |
| Tues 17 March    | Testing the Water by Hannah Worker                           |

## **Remember the shop and café at College Lake!**

Do not forget that our shop always has new and interesting items for sale, from leather wallets and purses to plush notebooks for those vital sightings; from make your own charm bracelet or necklace kits to walking sticks and canes to aid you as you explore our reserve. Our very popular cards are always here for that special occasion and for you collectors we have gemstones, rocks and minerals. So, please visit us soon. What are you waiting for?

Feeling hungry? Along with the selection in our café we now have our new barbeque up and running at weekends, weather permitting. Our new full time café assistant, Stella, has joined the team bringing many years' experience in the catering trade with her and she will be adding her ideas to our range of delicious food and drink.



**Howard Davies**

## **Wild Trax on track**

We've had a busy summer engaging with young people in Tring and Aylesbury through the Wild Trax project!

Progress has been made on The Mandeville School's wildlife garden, where we've installed weed-proof matting, woodchip and benches for their sensory area, with the help of BBOWT's South Bucks Reserve team. We've also established an exciting collaboration between The Mandeville School and Buckinghamshire University Technical College (Bucks UTC). Bucks UTC's Yr10 students will be building raised beds for the wildlife garden, bringing to life designs made by students at the after school club we helped set up at Mandeville! Construction will begin as a part of a 6-week project in September, which will give Bucks UTC students an opportunity to develop their technical skills with a wildlife perspective.

On 11 July, we welcomed 116 Yr10 students from Tring School to College Lake and the Natural History Museum at Tring for their Extended Learning Day. Students enjoyed a guided walk and 'mini bioblitz' at College Lake, where they learned about the history of the site and had a go at sweep netting, bug hunting and surveying moths. At the Natural History Museum, the Yr10's engaged with a conservation workshop and Darwin trail, exploring the museum's specimens and exhibitions.

Our partnership with Action 4 Youth has had new developments, as we've been able to link up with their National Citizen Service (NCS) programme. As part of the programme, young people help deliver a social action project, and Action 4 Youth approached us to find out if we had something suitable. Aylesbury Town Centre Partnership

and Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) had also reached out to Wild Trax to ask if we had a group who could help them install new, wildlife-friendly features in the Bear Brook area by Aylesbury Waterside Theatre. We thought this was a perfect project for the NCS group to meet the targets of their program while contributing to their community and benefitting wildlife. Despite the heat on 16 and 17 July, the group did a fantastic job of building and installing bird feeders and bird boxes, planting climbers and pulling up weeds to help manage the brook habitat. Hopefully, the local wildlife will appreciate all our efforts!



**Action 4 Youth NCS group at Bear Brook, Aylesbury.**

**Claire Wainwright, Wild Trax Project Officer.**

## **Rough Around the Edges**

In the last newsletter, Mick Jones introduced the **Chalk, Cherries and Chairs** Landscape Partnership Scheme, led by Chilterns Conservation Board. The Scheme is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and has three key themes: *Wildlife*, *History*, and *People and Communities*, and is being delivered through 18 interlinked projects. Many of these are collaborative and community-focused, working with parish councils, community environment groups, special interest groups and wildlife charities, with a strong emphasis on volunteer and community engagement.

'Rough Around the Edges' (RATE) is one of the six projects under the *Wildlife* theme and is being delivered by BBOWT, with me as the new Project Officer (I'm already having fun introducing myself and my job title). This is a very community focused project, supporting groups who want to develop wildlife friendly spaces on small, local and often forgotten sites in the Central Chilterns. I help by offering management advice, help with volunteer recruitment, and practical resources and training, with a small amount of funding available for each group. It is important that each project in RATE has a sound ecological basis, is volunteer based and can continue into the future.



I've hit the ground running, with around 8 groups already working with us, and several more that are being developed. Examples include Risborough Environment Group's project to make Risborough a swift friendly town, with a talk and walk from Dr. Andrew Lack on 29 June that introduced people to the

project and swifts. From this several people have registered to be involved and there will be a box building and installation day on 18 September. We are providing advice and training to Lindengate to help with their hedgerow and meadow management, while a cluster of churches in and around Chinnor (Chinnor Churches Go Wild!) are planning how to make their beautiful churchyards more wildlife friendly. RATE has again been providing practical advice and ideas with a plan to deliver some churchyard focused training in the future. There are also two orchard projects that I'm working with, as I'm also responsible for the 'Chilterns Orchards' project in **Chalk, Cherries and Chairs** – one at Lindengate and one at Donkey Lane, Chinnor.

Of course, the knowledge and experience of the staff and volunteers from BBOWT is key to ensuring that the groups get the best wildlife advice around. They are also invaluable to me as I find my way into the role. As for me, I have just returned from several years in Switzerland where I completed a Masters in Environmental Science, studying solitary bees and their parasites that we collected from allotments in the city of Zurich. I then completed a PhD in Ecology, where I studied how people understand and value the spaces for wildlife that they live near or work in. This all sounds very academic but before I moved to Switzerland I was a Community Ranger around Greater Manchester and a Park Ranger in Bolton. In both roles I spent a lot of time working with groups in the local communities and partners to deliver environmental education, community events and environmental projects.

If you are interested in supporting 'Rough Around the Edges', please get in touch. I particularly need people who can help with basic species surveys for several sites, especially wildflowers and grasses, butterflies and invertebrates. If you would like to get involved, or just want to find out a bit more about Rough Around the Edges, I'm in Tuesday to Thursday and can be reached by phone at College Lake on 01442 826774; or by email at [katiehorgan@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:katiehorgan@bbowt.org.uk)

**Katie Horgan, Project Officer**

## **Chris succumbs to the Rhythm of Nature**

In March we celebrated the end of our autumn/winter talks programme with a special event at Great Missenden enjoyed by seventy people. The Wick Trimmers from Prestwood and six fine BBOWT voices, including that of Chris Trew, showed that conservation has a softer side by staging an evening of poetry and music taking us through the seasons of the year. To find out what two mythical beasts were doing to Chris you'll have to come to the next edition of the show, if there is one, or drop an email to Lewis Carroll, if you can find his address. Our thanks go to all who contributed by playing, reading, producing and managing front of house.



## **Goodbye to a much - valued member of staff.**

In July we said a farewell to the lovely Paul Simmons. Paul has been working for BBOWT since 2014 when he became a DGT and then later became a Visitor Centre Assistant. He has been fantastic in leading guided walks, building Paul's Pond, which will remain his legacy here, and he is a great person to work with. He has enjoyed working alongside and helping the volunteers with the Wildlife Garden which is looking amazing. It will be sad to not have Paul as part of our team but I know he will remain a long term friend of College Lake. Paul has joined Lindengate at Wendover, a place dear to his heart, so we all wish him the best of luck and we know he will do a fantastic job there.

**Toyah Baulk, Visitor Centre Manager**



## And a Sad Farewell to a special volunteer, Ann Wilson

Last October we reprised Ann's long and varied volunteering career with BBOWT and she received a long service award from Barbara Muston, Chair of the Trustees, at the annual AGM and Conference. In late July this year Barbara and a group of Ann's Chilterns friends were there to say goodbye to her at Amersham Crematorium. She was an extraordinary person, good company, generous with her time and unfailingly cheerful. Our condolences go to David and all her family.

### The Chilterns Group

## Plant and Produce Charity Market - Plants, Home Produce and Coffee – Sunday 20 October

They are locally popular, busy and fun, last for two hours and are, thanks to the endeavours of some 45 volunteers, held twice a year raising £2,000 for the Trust. That in a nutshell, sums up our Plant and Produce Charity Markets.

The next Market is being held on Sunday 20th October starting at 10am – details can be found on the BBOWT website, the latest 'What's on' leaflet and elsewhere in this newsletter.

But the success of the events depends entirely on your generosity - those donations of plants and home produce. So could you please make a note of the next market in your diary and:

a) pot up and label any excess plants (especially the rarer ones) you may have as you divide them in the autumn and / or..... b) bake a cake (or two), some biscuits, make jams and marmalades, perhaps conjure up some fudge or pick late fruit from your garden.

If you would like to help us in any way, or have any queries about the October Plant and Produce Market, please contact John Catton on 01494 726616 or [richard.catton1@ntlworld.com](mailto:richard.catton1@ntlworld.com)

As an aside, it is inevitable that not all the donated plants get sold. But I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that those remaining are not simply composted but given to the Wendover based charity Lindengate and the wildlife garden at College Lake.



**Plant Market volunteers**

**John Catton, Chilterns Group Events Organiser**

### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

We are covering topics from around the county to encourage members to spread their wings. The Trust's reserves north of 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 April to August please submit them by Mid February** [juliebirch60@yahoo.com](mailto:juliebirch60@yahoo.com).

**To be put on the mailing list for this newsletter please contact** [membership@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:membership@bbowt.org.uk)

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## 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

- 10 Nov, 8 Dec** Meet at western end of reserve near Chivery. Turn south off B4009 Wendover - Tring Road towards St Leonards for approx 1.7 miles. 150 yds S of Chesham Fencing Supplies, take track on left signed to BBOWT car park, then follow signs to work site. OS sheet 165 SP 8980901313
- 13 Oct, 11 August** Meet at Thames Water pumping station. SP 905088, HP23 6LB. Where Wendover - Tring Road B4009 meets old A41 turn right after 1 mile and continue for 0.75 miles to car park on left by waterworks

**Contact** Judi Fisher 01494 722073, [judiandbryan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:judiandbryan@yahoo.co.uk)

### ASTON CLINTON RAGPITS (near Wendover)

For information please **contact** Phil Townsend 01923 353410, [philjtownsend@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:philjtownsend@yahoo.co.uk)

- FINEMERE WOOD** (near Quainton) Work party dates: 9.30am - 3pm on second and fourth Thursday of the month: 26 Sept, 10 Oct, 11 Oct, 24 Oct, 14 Nov, 28 Nov, 12 Dec.
- Contact** Charlotte at [charlottekarmali@outlook.com](mailto:charlottekarmali@outlook.com).

### WESTON TURVILLE RESERVOIR (near Wendover, 10am - 2.30pm) last Thursday of month

26 Sept, 31 Oct, 28 Nov (no Dec ) 30 Jan, 27 Feb, 26 March

Meet at eastern entrance to reserve in the lay-by in Halton Lane, off B4009, map ref SP866096, HP22 6AZ. Work is mostly in wet areas so waterproof footwear is essential. New volunteers from the area will be very welcome.

**Contact** Stacey Hewitt (see below).

### COLLEGE LAKE (near Tring) 10.00 - 4pm

Please call or email **Leo Keedy** - 01442 826774 ext. 210 or [leokeydy@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:leokeydy@bbowt.org.uk)

For Roving Teams **contact** Stacey Hewitt ext. 208 or [staceyhewitt@bbowt.org.uk](mailto: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. [steve\\_keene@btinternet.com](mailto:steve_keene@btinternet.com)

**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](mailto:c5hed.george@btinternet.com)

### Bacombe Hill

(near Wendover) 10am on second Thursday of month, contact [steve\\_keene@btinternet.com](mailto:steve_keene@btinternet.com)

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## **MAIN CONTACT DETAILS**

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**College Lake: 01442 826774**

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[leokeedy@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:leokeedy@bbowt.org.uk)**

**Visitor centre: Toyah Baulk, ext 214  
[toyahbaulk@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:toyahbaulk@bbowt.org.uk)**

**Education: Claire Garrity,  
[clairegarrity@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:clairegarrity@bbowt.org.uk)**

**Volunteering Information:  
[www.bbowt.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteer](http://www.bbowt.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteer)**