



# Wild About Beds

Summer 2015

## Old Birds can Tweet *Courtesy RSPB*

Hitchin birder Val Thompson recently contacted BBC Radio 4 on a whim to find out if 'Ramblings with Clare Balding' might be interested in joining her group 'Old Birds' on one of their monthly walks. To her surprise a few days later producer Karen Gregor got in touch and on 8 April eight Old Birds — including several BNHS members — met for a recording session at Pegsdon Hills NR. 'Our nerves



Clare Balding on a ramble with the Old Birds, including BNHS Council Secretary Betty Cooke (front row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left) and Bedfordshire Bird Club member Kathy Blackmore (back row, 3<sup>rd</sup> from right). Photo by Karen Gregor

were soon calmed by Clare and Karen's friendly and relaxed approach; they made it feel just like any other Old Birds walk', said Val. 'Later that day Clare had updated her Twitter page and posted a picture of us. Soon family and friends were getting in touch and asking us what we were doing on Twitter and uploading pictures to Facebook. It just goes to show you're never too old to tweet!'

In this 175<sup>th</sup> issue:

### Contents

Spring programme event highlights	2
Birth of a naturalist	4
Neglected insects: parasites	4
Bug Lab is back for 2015!	7
Marston Vale treetop walk opens	8

### Contents

Queen's Award for Forest volunteers	8
Award for BNHS volunteer	9
New Conchological Society President	9
Rushmere Park Summer Fayre	10
Upcoming events	11

Wild About Beds is the newsletter of:



The Bedfordshire Natural History Society  
[www.bnhs.org.uk](http://www.bnhs.org.uk)  
Registered charity number 268659



BedsLife  
[www.bedsbionet.org.uk](http://www.bedsbionet.org.uk)

## The BNHS

The BNHS was formed in 1946, its main function to record the fauna and flora of the county. It has over twenty active Recorders who cover many branches of natural history study and whose annual reports are published in the *Bedfordshire Naturalist* journal.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter, Wild About Beds, and programmes of meetings. These meetings include field meetings to Bedfordshire sites and occasionally farther afield. During the winter months, there are illustrated lectures normally held in Elstow, Haynes, Toddington and Maulden.

The Society depends on annual subscriptions which are devoted to its working, as all offices are honorary. Membership is open to anyone, whether resident in the county or not. If you would like to join the Society, please contact **Mary Sheridan**, Honorary Membership Secretary, 28 Chestnut Hill, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 2TR. Tel: 01525 378245, [www.bnhs.org.uk](http://www.bnhs.org.uk).

## BedsLife

BedsLife - Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Partnership is a consortium of government and non-governmental agencies dedicated to promoting the maintenance and enhancement of Bedfordshire's biodiversity. The Partnership oversees the implementation and monitoring of the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan, which can be found online at [www.bedsbionet.org.uk](http://www.bedsbionet.org.uk).

### Editor: Heather Webb

The Wildlife Trust, Priory Country Park, Barkers Lane Bedford MK41 9DJ.

Email: [newsletter@bnhs.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@bnhs.org.uk).

Your comments/notes on anything that you have observed in the field, on the road or in a past Wild About Beds issue are welcome/essential for continuity. Please do send articles to me either as an attachment via email or through the post. Pictures are always welcome; material required by **15 September 2015** please.

**Thank you in anticipation.**

The next Wild About Beds will be published in **September 2015**. Please note that any views are independent of the Bedfordshire Natural History Society and BedsLife.

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## Spring programme highlights

*by Julia Powell*

### Pond dipping Harrold CP April 18<sup>th</sup>

It was bright spring sunshine for this event attended by about 14 people including old and new members and some YounGnats. The lake was very productive keeping everyone entertained for a couple of hours. There were some exciting finds with a Spined Loach — a BAP fish species — and at least two leech species indicating good quality water as they are intolerant of pollution. Look out for another visit in the next programme.

### Spring ramble Barton Hills April 29<sup>th</sup>

In complete contrast the weather for this visit was dismal. The heavens opened as a select group of six braved the elements but had to shelter under a tree for ten minutes before setting off. Mitigation for the poor weather was discussed in the health and safety talk and we set off on a modified route. However drier weather was encountered later and over 350 Pasqueflowers were seen between the group members.

### The Higgins Bedford May 6<sup>th</sup>

Several members of the seven-strong group met on the park and ride bus with most enjoying a free ride with their bus passes. The museum café opened early for us and we were able to enjoy a cup of coffee before paying the pensioners reduced rate for the Collections in Focus session set up by our very own Melissa Banthorpe. The small size of the group enabled everyone to see the archive material at close quarters and the many questions generated were very ably answered by Melissa who had obviously put a lot of effort into the presentation, drawing on her expertise as an editor of the Annual Report. The session

was tailored for the BNHS and if you are interested in seeing the notes and specimens of early naturalists that comprise the county records I would recommend that you get a small group together and ask for this session to be repeated. The morning finished with lunch in the museum café.



The BNHS stand at Swiss Garden. Photo courtesy Julia Powell

### **Family day Rushmere CP Heath and Reach May 9<sup>th</sup>**

There was a dual focus at this event with the Nature Table and quizzes set up in the Education Room and a bug hunt in the Lower Meadow. Many families visiting Rushmere for general enjoyment or to see the herons also browsed the antlers, bones and insects including live material on the Nature Table, took part in the quizzes and viewed the photographic display before setting off to the Lower Meadow where the sweep nets and pitfall traps revealed a world not normally seen by the general public shown off by NHS members. At least one YounGnat had a very good time.

### **Butterfly Walk Whipsnade May 17<sup>th</sup>**

The fine weather brought out a large group of about 18 people for this joint walk with the Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire Butterfly Conservation group. The Duke of Burgundy showed well with over 50 specimens seen over a wide range of the walk. There were also good views of Green Hairstreak, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers to satisfy the keen photographers and ardent watchers. A total of 12 butterfly species were seen plus a Cinnabar moth.

### **Invertebrate Walk Swiss Garden Shuttleworth May 27<sup>th</sup>**

Members of the Bedfordshire Invertebrate Group were out in force sweeping the Swiss Garden. During intervals between sweeping and examining their finds, they supported the BNHS stand set up under the trees showing off the Nature Table and encouraging young people to do the quiz. For the first time we had two YounGnats get all the answers right! We were also treated intermittently to a fine but deafening display by a male Peacock in whose territory we were standing. Staff at Swiss Garden looked after us very well, setting up a gazebo for us, lending us tables and chairs and being very welcoming.

### **Park Grass experiment Harpenden May 30<sup>th</sup>**

We are very grateful to Dr Jonathan Storkey who gave up his own time to take us round the Park Grass classical experiment started in 1856 at Rothamsted Research Institute and running continuously since then. The small group of eight heard the history and principles of the grassland experiment set up to show the effect of artificial fertilisers and without the use of pesticides. He also gave a wonderful insight into his own research and the modern theories of soil ecology. The effect of soil acidity on different fertiliser combinations was demonstrated particularly spectacularly. We also had time to have a distant view of Broadbalk Wilderness, a wood showing secondary succession by natural colonisation of a small piece of arable land left unmanaged in the 1880s resulting species poor ground flora. In addition, we had a brief look at the Broadbalk Wheat experiment, sown with winter wheat every year since 1843 to show the effect of artificial fertilisers and farmyard manure versus no treatment. Unfortunately the control strips where arable weeds proliferate is fallow this year.



Pasqueflower *Pulsatilla vulgaris* at Barton Hills. Photo courtesy Julia Powell



Please note: to reduce the risk of email spam being sent to contributors and others, '(at)' appears in email addresses in place of '@' in this newsletter. -Ed.

### *Birth of a naturalist*

by Andrew Milne

Unlike Beryl Rands who can pinpoint her interest in natural history to a certain time, (Edith Beryl Rands obituary by Bernard Nau in *Bedfordshire Naturalist* 2013 Part 1) I cannot recall any specific point in time but rather a series of incidents that led to my interest in natural history. It may have been in my blood. My father was a keen cyclist and camper and my mother was born and bred on a small farm in Mayo so the love of the outdoors was there. I was born in Ireland but we moved to England — Romford, Essex — when I was two. I also had an aunt who was very keen on birds and she helped to look after us when we were young. In fact one of my earliest memories concerns her. When I was about six she drew our attention to a flock of starlings and other birds creating fuss in the elm tree in the neighbour's garden. When we returned from school for dinner she then showed us what the row was all about. A tawny owl was asleep in the tree.

I started taking nature study more seriously during the war. I was in the Scouts and became a patrol leader. My patrol was the Woodpigeons and we were supposed to specialise in nature study. My seconder was also keen on the subject so a lasting friendship grew (he later became my Best Man). Back to the Scouts: there was a district event for all troops to compete in various Scouting activities. One of these was nature study and involved the identification of common English trees. So I went to our *Arthur Mee's Children's Encyclopaedia* — ten volumes of excellent reading on all subject and also literature and poetry and wonderful maps. (They don't make them like that these days.) I knew there were pictures of the common trees showing their leaves, flowers, buds and bark so I used these for swatting for the competition. The day came and I expected to see some twigs or flowers of the trees, but what met my eyes was the same set of Arthur Mee pictures! No wonder I got 100%. (This must have stayed with me: a few years ago I was with a group in Maulden Woods with Richard Woolnough and was able to identify most of the trees. He called me the Tree Man.)

The next stage on my journey came when I was in the sixth form and opted to study botany and zoology, having done neither at a lower level. This was a boys' Catholic grammar school in Forest Gate and we had no teacher for these subjects so the three of us involved went to the neighbouring convent school for the first year of the course. In the second year we had our own master and had a few field trips to Epping Forest, which was a happy hunting ground in my Scouting and cycling days. I didn't get very good grades in my exams and then followed my period of National Service in Aldershot and Egypt. Not much 'nature' there but I was able to continue my studies thanks to a good library service. Then followed two years at training college — again no biology department — it was a men's college and men don't do biology! Instead I did Chemistry and Music, an odd combination but there were five of us doing it, and Borodin was a qualified chemist.

After qualifying it was back to Essex with a teaching post at a junior school in Hornchurch. I joined the Essex Natural History Society and learned a lot on the field trips and indoor sessions in Stratford Museum. I still remember one man turning to some of the youngsters on a field trip and saying, 'one day you will be able to clip something onto the leaf of a plant and the gadget will identify it!!' And that was before Watson and Crick let alone any idea of computers. I also attended courses for teachers and started taking groups of children out on trips on Saturdays. It was about 1954 I read an article in *The Observer* about the Plant Atlas being prepared by the Botanical Society of the British Isles and decided to offer my limited knowledge and join the Society. This led to the next stage of my interest - and my moment of fame.

### Neglected insects: fleas, ticks and thrips

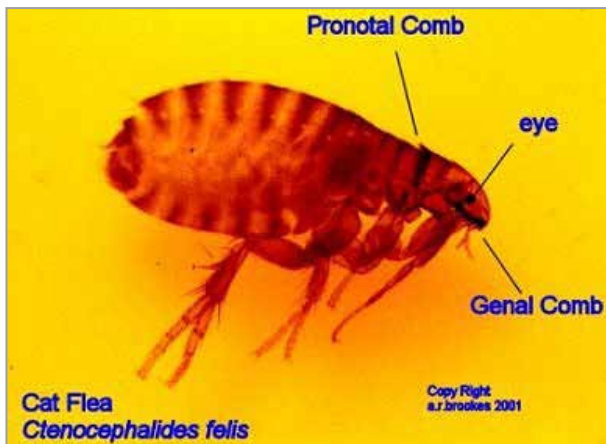
by Alan Outen

Following the successful conference on Neglected Insects in Bedfordshire it was suggested that I make available some of the information that was used in my poster display. This is the second instalment in which I cover some groups in which the species occur as external parasites of animals.

#### SIPHONAPTERA - Fleas

Fleas are wingless external parasites of mammals and birds with mouthparts adapted for piercing skin and sucking blood. Their bodies (1.5 - 3mm long) are laterally compressed, permitting easy movement through





Cat flea *Ctenocephalides felis*. Photo by Andy Brookes

the hairs or feathers on the host's body (or in the case of humans, under clothing). The flea body is hard, polished, and covered with many hairs and short spines directed backward which also assist its movements on the host. The tough body is able to withstand great pressure. Even hard squeezing between the fingers is normally insufficient to kill a flea. The larva is small and pale, has bristles covering its worm-like body, lacks eyes, and has mouth-parts adapted to chewing. The larvae feed on various organic matter, especially the faeces of mature fleas.

Some species are entirely dependent on a single host species, others to just a few closely related host species while a few have been found in association with many apparent hosts, eg. *Ceratophyllus gallinae* (Hen-flea), which has been found in the nests of a wide variety of birds and even some mammals.

A total of 62 flea species are known in the UK. The group was studied in Bedfordshire in the 1970s – early 1980s when the late Bob George made a few visits to the county as well as looking at specimens collected by BNHS members. However little has been done since. At least 16 species (and several varieties) have been recorded in the county with no fewer than eight of these found associated with Harvest Mouse. There is a National Recording Scheme and I am now in contact with the new national Recorder. He is very amenable to receiving specimens so I am proposing to add these to the suite of groups for which I will coordinate the records/specimens from those who don't feel able to identify these themselves.

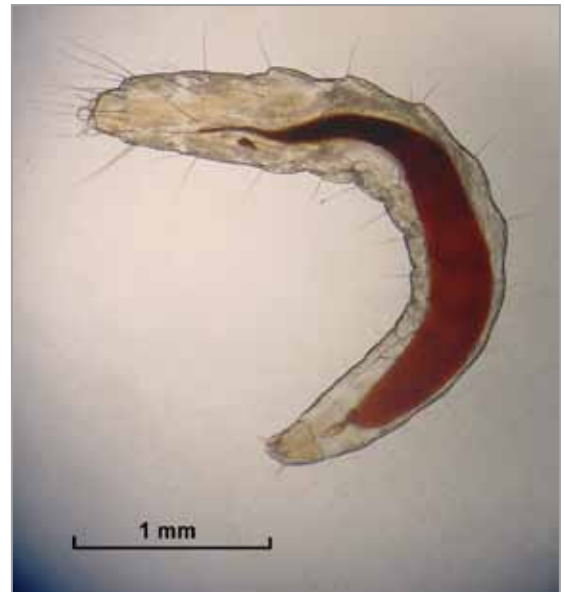
Fleas may be found on domestic pets such as cats and dogs, rescued hedgehogs and other mammals and birds as well as corpses of these. I can provide specimen tubes if anyone wants these and can then transfer the specimens to alcohol. It is important to record host data, location, including grid ref (or post code), date, and name of collector. I will send off collections in batches and will feedback identifications when I have them as I do with caddis etc. Many more fleas are actually found in nests than are found on the body of the host. If any anyone would like to bag up nest material (again with occupant data) then the national recorder will be happy to check that for fleas as well. Particularly good targets may be: moles, bats, carrion crows and feral pigeons but those checking dormouse nest boxes and small mammal traps etc. are also invited to be on the look out for specimens!

#### ACARI - Ticks and Mites

These are in fact arachnids in the sub-class Acari (i.e. related to spiders, harvestmen and scorpions rather than insects. As such they have four pairs of legs and no wings. Nonetheless as many are parasitic they may well be encountered by those looking for fleas, lice etc.

Ticks are ectoparasites feeding on the blood of mammals, birds, and sometimes reptiles and amphibians. It should be possible to achieve identifications of some of these. There are just 24 species that can be found in the United Kingdom spread between two families:

1. Argasidae – 'soft ticks, so called because they have a spongy and wrinkled back, which extends like a hood over their mouth parts. In Britain soft tick species are most often found on birds, particularly pigeons.
2. Ixodidae – 'hard ticks' which have a hard plate-like shield that covers their backs. Unlike soft ticks, the



Larva of cat flea *Ctenocephalides felis* showing ingested blood. "Flea Larva" by Kalumet - self created 11/01/2006. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flea\\_Larva.jpg#/media/File:Flea\\_Larva.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flea_Larva.jpg#/media/File:Flea_Larva.jpg)

mouth parts can be seen from above because the shield does not cover them.



Sheep tick *Ixodes ricinus* full of blood. This species can occur on sheep, deer, cattle, cats, dogs and is also the one that most often bites humans. Photo by AJ Cann

The ticks most commonly found on cats and dogs (and humans!) in the UK are all hard ticks. *Ixodes ricinus* and *Ixodes hexagonus* are the most common and then *Ixodes canisuga*. Other *Ixodes* species are only very occasionally seen. *Dermacentor reticulatus* and *Haemaphysalis punctata* also are indigenous and found occasionally on pets but are mainly restricted to coastal areas. In Britain soft ticks are more likely to be encountered on birds or bats.

Other species can be found on rabbits, shrews, bats etc. Any records or specimens of ticks are welcomed.

Many mites are free living with the soil mites (Orbatida) alone comprising 324 British species. Others occur on plants causing galls whilst others are found on insects.

One family (Pyroglyphidae) live primarily in the nests of

birds and animals. The gall causers on plants are the species for which there is the greatest chance of achieving identifications. Some of those in the family Pyroglyphidae might be identifiable but the free-living ones and those on insects are difficult and there are very few specialists in the UK.

### THYSANOPTERA - Thrips

Thysanura literally means 'fringed wings'. Their mouthparts are very unusual in that they lose one half of their mandibles during development, so they are lop sided, or asymmetrical, with only one mandible on the left hand side! The name 'thrips' is singular as well as plural. There is no such thing as a 'thrip'! These tiny insects, also known as Thunder-flies, are often found behind the glass of picture frames and for many people this is their only experience of them.

Most species are only 1 - 3mm with the largest in the UK just 7mm. Many live on wheat and other cereals, others can be found in flowers on leaves and on fungi. They can cause damage to leaves, flowers and fruits on a range of plants. Others are important in pollination of host plants. Some are host species whereas others are fairly catholic in their choice of plants.

The Thysanoptera are divided into two main suborders, each of which is further subdivided into families:

- Suborder: Terebrantia
- Aeolothripidae (often have banded wings)

Thripidae (most British species are in this family, in which the female has a curved ovipositor)

Suborder: Tubulifera

- Phlaeothripinae

About 160 species occur in the UK but they do not appear to have been studied at all in Bedfordshire. So far as I am aware there are no published or authenticated records for the county. If anyone knows otherwise I would be grateful for the correction. I have seen them on several occasions in the past but have never collected them or documented sightings. However I intend doing so from now on and propose to add them to the suite of neglected groups for which I will coordinate records. As such would welcome records or specimens accompanied by data (host plant, location, including grid ref [or post code], date, and name of collector. There is no national recording scheme but there is a recent checklist of British species as well as a key so identifications might be practical.



Join us again at a Bug Lab near you to discover amazing mini - beasts. Experts on hand, bug hunting and craft sessions.

<b>Monday 3rd August</b>	<b>Linslade Wood</b>
<b>Tuesday 4th August</b>	<b>Tiddenfoot Waterside Park</b>
<b>Wednesday 5th August</b>	<b>Flitwick Wood</b>
<b>Thursday 6th August</b>	<b>Houghton Hall Park</b>
<b>Friday 7th August</b>	<b>Rushmere Country Park</b>
<b>Monday 10th August</b>	<b>Working Woodland Centre</b> <small>Off the lay-by, Maulden Wood, A6</small>
<b>Tuesday 11th August</b>	<b>Centenary Wood</b> <small>Near Flitton and Greenfield</small>

Bug Lab events are aimed at families. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Drop in from 1.30 till 3.30pm. Call 01525 378101 or 01525 234260 for more information.

Please note, parking is limited near many of the sites and charges may apply so why not walk or share a car journey with friends?

This event is kindly supported by Central Bedfordshire Council and the Bedfordshire Natural History Society



**Central Bedfordshire Council**  
Working in partnership





## Lord-Lieutenant opens Tower Hide

by Sam Hayden, courtesy the Forest of Marston Vale



Photo courtesy the Forest of Marston Vale

We are always honoured whenever we have a VIP visit the Forest, so we were delighted to welcome Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis on 2 June to officially open our new woodland walkway and tower hide. The latest addition to our Wetlands Reserve offers stunning views across the Country Park and local area, and is fully wheelchair accessible – making it a perfect addition to our Park.

Thanks to the amazing funding and support from GrantScape, Central Bedfordshire Council and Natural England, the Forest of Marston Vale Trust has been able to create a beautiful, panoramic experience for Wetlands visitors. The Lord-Lieutenant was delighted to be opening the project, and recalled the opening day of the Forest Centre itself, when she was visiting a wedding over the road and remembered the particularly bad weather. Thankfully, we avoided the wind and rain by about half an hour, this time!

If you haven't popped over to experience the walkway and tower hide yet, make sure you grab a Wetlands Pass from Reception\* and come and take a look – there's something strangely peaceful about being up in the trees.

## Queen's Award for Forest of Marston Vale volunteers

by Guy Lambourne, courtesy the Forest of Marston Vale

On the anniversary of the Queen's coronation, we can finally announce the spectacular news that our volunteers have won the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their communities. The awards were created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and winners are announced each year on 2 June.

187 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups will receive the prestigious award this year and we are very proud and excited to be amongst that number.

Two of our volunteers, Joan Ferguson and Nigel Davis were invited to attend a garden party to Buckingham Palace last week and by the sound of it, had a thoroughly enjoyable time, despite being sworn to secrecy regarding the reason for their invitation.

"I'm thrilled that our volunteer group has received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service" said Nick Webb the Forest of Marston Vale Trust's CEO. "Well over 100 people regularly volunteer time and skills to help create this wonderful Community Forest and they are an absolutely vital part of our team. We're always looking for more volunteers to join us, so if you have some spare time and fancy making a difference to the environment in the Marston Vale, please get in touch".

The Volunteers will receive a certificate and a piece of English crystal which we hope will be presented by the Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire later in the summer.

This has been a terribly hard secret to keep, but what marvelous news – thank you so much to all our excellent volunteers.





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## Much-deserved recognition for a local volunteer for nature

Hundreds of people celebrated the achievements of Central Bedfordshire's volunteers at the first Cheering Volunteering awards evening.

The event was organised by Central Bedfordshire Council, working in partnership with the Volunteer Centres as part of Central Bedfordshire Together, to say thank you to those who give their time to help others.

More than 400 people attended the celebration at the Grove Theatre, in Dunstable, on Tuesday evening (2 June).

The Panel's Choice Award was presented to John Buxton for his work with the Greensand Trust.

John, 84, has been involved in volunteering for most of his life, working tirelessly to clear ponds, cut hedges, trim overhanging branches, and clear pathways and bridleways to improve access and habitats at various green sites across Bedfordshire.

As well as the Greensand Trust he has supported the Bedfordshire Natural History Society, the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire and the Bedfordshire Geology Group.

Innovative John has also converted his Vauxhall Astra estate car so that he can boil a kettle and saucepan in the back, allowing him to keep other volunteers supplied with cups of tea, hotpot and puddings.



As well as the awards ceremony, guests had the chance to find out more about voluntary organisations across Central Bedfordshire and enjoyed entertainment from internationally renowned Tom Jones tribute act Billy Lee.

Councillor Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing, who was instrumental in organising the awards, said: "What a fantastic evening! I would like to thank all of the sponsors and everyone involved in the event who made it such a success.

"It was wonderful being able to celebrate the achievements of our volunteers – not just the winners but the thousands

of people who give their time across Central Bedfordshire – and we are already looking forward to next year's event."

## New Conchological Society President

**Congratulations** to our Mollusc Recorder, Peter Topley on being elected Honorary President of the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Peter is our second Bedfordshire Natural History Society Mollusc Recorder to achieve this position, following in the footsteps of the late Beryl Rands.



**Hoopoe says a big CONGRATULATIONS and THANK YOU to all our local volunteers who have been so wonderfully recognised for their hard work and contributions to our county's wildlife**

Photo by John Pitts

events at  
**RUSHMERE**  
Country Park

Sunday August 16th | 11am - 4pm

**SUMMER FAYRE**  
*Doggie Fun Show*

Can you help us make this year's Summer Fayre Fundraiser a success?

Arts, crafts and activity stalls  
Discover more about the local wildlife and join in fun activities

*Doggie Fun Show*

Would you like to sponsor a class in our Doggie show?

1. Most handsome fella, sponsored by.....you?
2. The Loveliest Lady
3. Dog most like it's owner
4. Cutest puppy (up to 12 months old)
5. Junior Handler (age 6-16yrs) and their Best friend
6. Best rescue/rehome
7. Best sausage catcher?
8. Most Endearing - Ahhh.....
9. Golden oldies
10. Waggiest tail
11. Cleverest Dog (training / trick)
12. The dog the judge would like to take home
13. Best in show

Registrations for the Doggie show open 1st May £2 per entry

Refreshments Cider & Pimms Tent, BBQ, Cake and bread stall  
**All proceeds reinvested in the Park**

Could you Volunteer to help before or on the day?  
Do you know anyone who might like to book a pitch for a stall or activity?  
Would you like to sponsor a class in our Doggie show?  
Are you a local business or can you help make our fundraiser a success?

Please contact [visitorservices@greensandtrust.org](mailto:visitorservices@greensandtrust.org) visit our visitor services desk or call 01525 234260 for more details .

The Greensand Trust

Rushmere Country Park is managed by The Greensand Trust and is a not for profit trust. It is a 501(c)(3) charity and governed by The Greensand Trust and Charitable Trustees (Limited)



Events Programme Summer 2015

For field meetings, wear stout footwear and warm clothing, bring a hat, water and sun cream if it is hot. OS Landranger Numbers 152, 153, 165 & 166 cover Bedfordshire. REGRETTABLY NO DOGS ARE ALLOWED.

All indoor talks start at 8pm and are held at Maulden Village Hall, grid reference TL048380, post code MK45 2DP. Parking is free.

Visitors are encouraged. A small charge is requested for refreshments at the talks and possibly on other occasions too. Donations are always welcome.

Please check the web site [www.bnhs.org.uk](http://www.bnhs.org.uk) or join the BNHS News Group for the latest information.

**(F)** Particularly suitable for families and young people.

**(L)** Bring food to meetings. Lunch is eaten in the car park area. If joining the meeting for the afternoon, please arrive by 1.30pm.

 Meetings organised in conjunction with the ornithological section, the Bedfordshire Bird Club (BBC).

**NEW:** Our partners the Greensand Trust are holding another series of Bug labs for children during the summer holidays between 1:30pm and 3:30pm. Please go along with your children or grandchildren. Members are also encouraged to attend to help the children identify what they find. Further details from Erika Pratt telephone 01525 378101 or email [erika.pratt\(at\)greensandtrust.org](mailto:erika.pratt(at)greensandtrust.org).

Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Amptill Park – near the playground or hub
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> August	Linslade Wood – clearing in wood
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> August	Tiddenfoot – dog free meadow with play equipment
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> August	Flitwick Wood – near entrance
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> August	Houghton Hall Park
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> August	Rushmere Country park – top meadow
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> August	Working Woodland centre WDA
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> August	Centenary wood – clearing in wood

**SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup> June, STREATLEY (F)**

**Visit** Sharpenhoe Clappers for Pyramidal Orchids and other chalk flora, Dark Green Fritillary and other butterfly species. Meet in the car park, TL065295, MK45 4SH at 10am. Leader: Graham Bellamy.

**SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup> June, NORFOLK/SUFFOLK BRECKS **

**BBC Day trip** to Norfolk/Suffolk Brecks for local specialities. Meet at 9am in the RSPB Lakenheath Fen reserve car park, Suffolk TL719863, IP27 9AD. Leader: Pete Marshall.

**SATURDAY 4<sup>th</sup> July, FLITWICK (F) (L)**

**Flitwick Moor SSSI Invertebrate Day:** Joint meeting with Flit Vale Wildlife Trust Local Group recording invertebrates and other wildlife. Starts at 10am and goes on to 4pm. Bring a packed lunch if you want to stay all day. Meet in the car park at end of Folly Lane TL045354, MK45 5BW, off Maulden Road by Folly Farm. Leader: Colin Carpenter and others.

**SUNDAY 12<sup>th</sup> JULY, NORFOLK BROADS **

**BBC outing joint with BNHS** to the Norfolk Broads area including a guided boat trip on Hickling Broad NNR. Meet at 9:30am in car park of Hickling Broad Reserve, TG427221. Booking by 25th May is essential. Make your reservation with Don Green on 01582 867258 as numbers are limited. Cost for non NWT members £10.00/head, members £8.00. Leaders: Carolyn & Malcolm Hawkes

**SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup> July, POTTON (F) (L)**

**Visit** Potton Wood followed by Gamlingay Wood looking for butterflies and dragonflies including Silver-Washed Fritillary and Purple Emperor. Bring a packed lunch if you want to stay all day. Meet at 10:30am and park by the water tower, TL247494 Potton Wood, Gamlingay Wood TL 241534. Leader: Ian Woiwod.



### THURSDAY 30<sup>th</sup> July, MAULDEN (F)

**Visit** Duck End NR for the abundant wildlife at this small, but varied reserve. Meet at 7pm and finish at 9pm. There is limited parking at the site in Moor Lane, Maulden TL051374. MK45 2DJ. Leader: David Withers.

### SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup> AUGUST, LEIGHTON BUZZARD (F)

**Visit** Tiddenfoot Lake to look for Dragonflies and other water related animals and plants. Meet at 10:30am in the car park, SP913239, LU7 2AE. Leader: Rory Morrissey.

### SATURDAY 8<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, HOUGHTON REGIS (F)

**Visit** Houghton Regis Chalk Pit to see the richest Chiltern Gentian site in the country, the clouds of Chalkhill Blues and other wildlife. Meet at 10am at Lake View, off Houghton Road, TL013233, LU5 5GJ. Finish at 12:30pm. Leaders: Rebecca Pitman and Peter Glenister.

### SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, RADWELL/FELMERSHAM (L)

**Visit** a boulder clay grassland at Thursdays Farm, Radwell that has been pesticide-free for 19 years and is now in Higher Level Stewardship. It boasts large numbers of butterflies. There is an option to visit Felmersham NR in the afternoon so bring a packed lunch if you want to stay all day. Meet at Felmersham NR car park SP987583, MK44 1JW at 10:30 to be led to the field. Leader: Tony Smith.

### SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> AUGUST Marston Thrift

**BBC morning birding** around Brogbrough Hill and former landfill area and other nearby sites for late summer visitors and possible passage migrants. Meet at 8am in Marston Thrift LN Reserve car park, Wood End near Marston Moretaine, SP972412. Finish by 1.00pm. Leader: Steve Blain.

### FRIDAY 21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST, BEDFORD

**Visit** Priory Country Park for a joint meeting with the Bat Group to look for flying bat activity around the lake. Four species are regularly encountered at Priory, with one or two others possible. The Bat Group will be harp-trapping for Nathusius' Pipistrelle (success not guaranteed). An opportunity to use a bat detector and get guidance on what to listen for to identify species. Meet at 19:45 in the Priory CP car park TL072493, MK41 9DJ and finish at 10pm. Please let leader know in advance if attending. Leader: Bob Cornes. 01525 403951.

### SATURDAY 5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, PEGSDON (F)

**Visit** Knocking Hoe NNR for Autumn Ladies' Tresses orchid and other wildlife. Meet at 10:30 and park in the field off Hitchin Road opposite the Live and Let Live Inn, Pegsdon, TL120301, SG5 3JX. Leader: Graham Bellamy.

### SATURDAY 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER MAULDEN (F)

**Visit** Maulden Wood for Small Mammal Trapping (mice, voles and shrews). Meet at 9:30am in the lay-by on A6 at top of Deadman's Hill TL072394. Finish at 12noon. Leader: Mick McCarrick.

### SUNDAY 13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, SUFFOLK

**BBC outing** to Landguard Point and Trimley Marshes, Suffolk for a good variety of passage waders and other wetland birds. Meet at 9am in the Viewpoint car park, at the end of Viewpoint Road, Landguard Point, TM283317, IP11 3TW. Leader: John Tomlin.

### TUESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, MAULDEN

**Talk** by Brian Eversham, CEO of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust, on Climate Change and Local Wildlife. At 8pm in Maulden Village Hall, TL048380, MK45 2DP. Chair: Graham Bellamy.

### SUNDAY 27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER FLITWICK (F)

**Dung Beetle Safari** at Flitwick Moor. Come and find the fabulous beetles that live in cow pats! Meet at 10am in the car park at the end of Folly Lane TL045354, MK45 5BW, off Maulden Road by Folly Farm. Finish at 12noon. Leader: Nancy Reed.

If you wish to know more about any of the events please contact either Sheila Brooke [brooke.se\(at\)btinternet.com](mailto:brooke.se(at)btinternet.com) 01525 873396 or Julia Powell [JuliaCPowell80\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:JuliaCPowell80(at)gmail.com) 01582 661328

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