

Chichester Natural History Society



Registered Charity No 259211

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Website: www.chichesternaturalhistorysociety.org.uk

NEWSLETTER No 193 February 2019

FROM THE CHAIR

As I write this, I am just in from a lovely cycle ride through the warm spring weather we are currently enjoying. However, will this weather develop into a nice early spring or are we going to have another “beast from the east” like last year? No doubt our phenology records will show what happens when we analyse them later this year so please do continue to fill them in; as I have previously emphasised, a sheet with just one record is still very valuable to us. The Society has had some great events over the winter and I would like to thank Helen and Gill for the work they do in setting them up. I particularly enjoyed the walk around Chichester Lakes, as I am always amazed at the variety of bird species living so close to the urban area. Similarly, the talk on Bumblebees was fascinating, I never knew there were so many different species or that there are bumblebees which have a cuckoo-like lifestyle! I am really looking forward to the last two lectures in this season’s series and then getting out into the countryside on our summer field outings and Medmerry surveys. (There is a paper about the Society’s Medmerry surveys in the latest *Adastra* journal from the Sussex Recorders).

I am very pleased to see that the Society’s legacy projects are going so well, with several of last year’s projects continuing, as well as new projects and enhancements to existing ones. We will be continuing with our bat survey using the Society’s automated bat recorder and supplementing this with a hand held device which can be used to immediately identify a bat species. Linda and Ken Smith did a fantastic job last year and will continue to organise this project in 2019. We have a backlog of members who have not yet had the recorder, however please contact Ken and Linda if you would like to participate this year. John K will continue putting up Swift boxes to try and help reverse the decline in this beautiful species and Philippa is finishing off our work with one of the local primary schools.

The new legacy projects we are kicking off this year include a nature writing competition for local schools being run by Terry Timblich, in conjunction with the *Observer* newspaper. In addition, we are providing some funds to assist the National Trust build a pond in the Northwood and will be adding to the Society’s equipment with a laser height finder and a wildlife camera trap - more details of how members can use these will be provided later in the year. We have also started a library of books that members can borrow, more details below.

Finally, I would like to thank all the many members who help run the Society. We are a very active and successful Society and this is built upon many members all “doing their bit”. It is important to keep involving different people in helping run the Society so if you have any spare time that you would like to use helping, please let me or another committee member know. At the moment the main role we are looking to fill is a deputy newsletter editor to help John, however new roles appear all the time e.g. Philippa Arnott has kindly stepped forward to take on the management of our books.

Christian Hance

chair@chichesternaturalhistorysociety.org.uk

MEMBERS

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

Judy and Roger Smith

William Bodey

Sarah Hughes

Melanie Hughes

2019 Photographic Competition

The normal rules apply – no main theme– just natural history photos and the entries to be in the form of 3 prints, any size. Preferably all taken in 2019. Entries should be brought along to the members’ evening in December, where fellow members will judge them anonymously. The photos from 2018 were exhibited in Chichester Library and we would hope to do the same for the 2019 entries.

Sightings

Please enter any observations in the sightings book on lecture evenings or add them to the blog on the website.

Publicity

We have purchased some promotional lapel badges and some car stickers to advertise our existence. They can be obtained at lecture evenings at £1 for a badge and all members receive a free car sticker.

Phenology

Please make sure you have a phenology sheet (download from website) and complete it during the year in order to keep our records complete and continuous.

Book Loan Scheme

As we are accumulating a selection of books for the use of our members, it was thought that someone ought to be in charge of their care and distribution. We now have 3 copies of Collins Wildflower Guide which will be of particular use to Medmerry surveyors and a Flora of Sussex. To begin with, I will keep all the books and can bring them to the indoor meetings. However, they will mostly be needed in the spring and summer when we do not have indoor meetings. Therefore, if anyone would like to borrow a book on a 4 week loan they can contact me and arrange either to collect the book from me or to meet somewhere mutually convenient. There will be a signing out sheet so I can keep tabs on the books and make sure they are back in time for the next borrower. A full list of titles will be available once I have all the books.

I do hope members will take the opportunity to use these books and find them useful.

Philippa Arnott 01243 575345 07840 859122 philippa.arnott@uwclub.net

LECTURE PROGRAMME

All lecture evenings will be held on Wednesdays in THE PALLANT SUITE, MASONIC HALL, SOUTH PALLANT, CHICHESTER. Non-members cost £3.00. Members free. Lectures begin at 7.15pm.. Doors will open at 6.30 pm. .

Wednesday 6 March 2019 “Woodland Management of English Woodland” by Susan Davies of the Woodland Trust

This talk will cover trees, current threats and diseases, creation of new woodland, protecting existing and ancient woodlands. Susan is a Fellow at the University of Edinburgh who lives locally. Previously working in the city as a risk analyst, she is now an 'NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellow' who works in the area of natural disturbance risks to forests i.e. wind, fire, pests and diseases, drought etc to adapt academic science on forest risks to be of use to external audiences such as the Forestry Commission, forest insurers and managers and so forth. The Woodland Trust is also a project partner of her work.

Wednesday 3 April 2019 “The Development of Medmerry over 5 Years” by Steve Webster – Manager, RSPB Pagham and Medmerry

Medmerry reserve was created in 2013, the largest coastal realignment in the UK, providing a fantastic new saltmarsh and meadow habitat. Chichester Natural History Society has been involved for several years with surveys. Come and hear more about how the wildlife is moving in.

MEDMERRY

2019 - 6th Year of Surveys at Medmerry

ALL surveys (approx. 2 hours in length) will start at 13:00 PROMPT, meeting at the RSPB Earnley Car Park at Grid Ref SZ 816 968, post code PO20 7JL, and then car sharing either to 1: Easton Lane for the 2 Plant Surveys (Fridays 7th & 14th June) and the Grasshopper Survey (Friday 2nd August) or 2: along the track to the pools for the Dragonfly Surveys (Fridays July 5th & September 6th). (Little walking required on any date.) See Main Events List for more information. Sessions are open to all, no matter what your level of expertise, as guidance will be provided. We shall use the Society's equipment but hand magnifiers, binoculars and reference books will be useful. Any questions or if help required with transport then please contact Philippa Arnott on philippa.arnott@uwclub.net or phone 01243 575345.

FIELD OUTINGS

These field outings, led by one of the expert members of the Society, enable participants to see different aspects of wildlife and nature in the field. No meeting will be cancelled because of the weather so please wear suitable clothing and footwear. These meetings are open to members and non-members, children over 8 are welcome but should be under parental control. These outings always start promptly so please arrive in plenty of time. Any questions about these events, or if help needed re transport, please contact Gill Hance (hanceatbognor@aol.com or 01243 825187). In addition, if members have any ideas for outings or can offer to lead one themselves, then please contact Gill.

In accordance with Health & Safety Requirements, Chichester Natural History Society hereby gives notice- “The Society is prepared to assist members in making arrangements to enable them to participate in activities arranged by the Society. It cannot accept any responsibility whatsoever for any loss, injury or damage sustained by any person in consequence of their participation in any activity. Persons attending field outings do so on the understanding that they attend at their own risk”.

Friday 22nd March 10.00 – 12.30 FARLINGTON MARSHES

Leader Tony Wootton

Grid Ref SU 679 044

Take the A27 west, from Chichester, for approx. 12 miles, then exit for A2030. At the end of the slip road, at the roundabout, turn very sharp left into the unclassified road, going back alongside the slip road. Park at the far end of lane. A variety of habitats, partly maintained by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, including marsh, shoreline, ponds and harbour, offering great sightings of a variety of birds.

Thursday 4th April 10:30 A RETURN TO HOLLYBANK WOODS

Leader John Bond

Grid Ref SU 746 078

General natural history and woodland management. A 2 hour walk, a follow up to our visit 2 years ago. Meet at top of Hollybank Lane by the "Friends of Hollybank Noticeboard". From roundabout on A259 in centre of Emsworth, turn north passing under A27. Follow Horndean road for approximately 1 mile and then right into Southleigh Road. After approximately a quarter of a mile turn left into Hollybank Lane. Park in Hollybank Lane itself or local side roads. Take a picnic lunch to enjoy at end.

Friday 3rd May 10.00 start. AMBERLEY WILDBROOKS

Leader John Kelsall

Grid Ref TQ 030 163

A half day walk through this SSI, especially on the lookout for migrant bird species. Meet at Greatham Bridge, which can be found by turning right off the A29 in Coldwaltham into Brook Lane, signposted Greatham, approx. 4.5 miles north of the Whiteways Lodge roundabout. Check Chichester Natural History Society Website and/or await May Events email for exact parking details nearer the time, as at time of writing there were restrictions due to the recent rain.

Monday 20th May 19.00 start. ‘RISE OF NORTHWOOD’.

Leader David Hart

Grid Ref SU 959 099

An evening walk, led by David Hart, to see all the latest developments at the ‘The Rise of Northwood Project’ (see National Trust website) and to check up on the trees planted by the Society in February 2018 as part of our Legacy Projects. We shall also see the new Littlewood Lookout, proposed pond site and how the rewilding areas are doing. Meet at the parking area towards the end of Nore Wood Lane approximately 1 mile north of Slindon. (Bring along your bat recorders if you have one, just in case.....)

LOOK OUT FOR NOTIFICATIONS OF VISITS TO MEMBERS’ GARDENS OVER THE SUMMER

How can we help/observe wildlife in our own backyards/gardens. Please contact Gill Hance (as above) if you would like to welcome members to your patch, whatever size. Perhaps you have ideas to share or are after some suggestions from other members?

Friday 7th June 13:00 start RSPB car park at Earnley - FIRST MEDMERRY SURVEY

Grid Ref SZ 816 968 Postcode PO20 7JL See above for detailed instructions.

Plant Survey 1 (a species list) - bring wildflower books

Friday 14th June 13:00 start RSPB car park at Earnley - SECOND MEDMERRY SURVEY

Grid Ref SZ 816 968 Postcode PO20 7JL See above for detailed instructions.

Plant Survey 2 (using quadrats for gathering more quantitative data) - bring wildflower books

Monday 17th June 10.00 start. IPING COMMON.

Leader Helen Dignum

Grid Ref SU 852 220 Postcode GU29 0PB

A morning’s walk through this excellent example of lowland heath with its wealth of fauna and flora. Large car park on Elsted Road just off the A272, approx. 2 miles west of Midhurst.
See - <https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/visit/iping-stedham-commons>

Tuesday 25th June 10.00 start, finish by 2.00 BURPHAM

Leader David Hart

Grid Ref TQ 041 097

A chance to see farm-land birds as well as good numbers of raptors, hedgerow species and grey partridge which the Norfolk Estate is well known for breeding. As you are leaving Arundel, going east heading towards Worthing, go over railway bridge and turn immediately left and drive through Warningcamp and Wepham. As you approach Burpham, go down steep hill and as you go up the other side the main road branches left but members should head straight over. This is a dangerous bend, so slow down and follow David's signs. Meet at the top of the next hill. Bring a picnic to enjoy, as we're promised an excellent picnic spot.

Friday 5th July 13:00 start RSPB car park at Earnley - THIRD MEDMERRY SURVEY

Grid Ref SZ 816 968 Postcode PO20 7JL See above for detailed instructions.

Dragonflies 1 (earlier-flying species) - bring binoculars and dragonfly books and/or iRecord Dragonflies app (free for Apple and Android devices) <https://www.brc.ac.uk/app/irecord-dragonflies>

Thursday 11th July 10.30 LEVIN DOWN - BUTTERFLIES

Leaders Chris Furlepa and Dorothy Rodefled

Meet at Grid Ref 879 114

A Butterfly focused walk through this Wildlife Trust Reserve, led by Chris Furlepa and Dorothy Rodefled who have recently followed in Ann Griffiths' footsteps in monitoring the butterflies here. Initial steep climb. Close focusing binoculars useful. Take a picnic lunch. Meet at the 'Triangle' car park on the north side of The Trundle at above Grid Reference for car share to the foot of Levin Down.

Friday 2nd August 13:00 start RSPB car park at Earnley - FOURTH MEDMERRY SURVEY

Grid Ref SZ 816 968 Postcode PO20 7JL See above for detailed instructions.

Grasshoppers and Bush Crickets (using bat detectors and the Society's nets). Bring orthoptera books and/or iRecord Grasshoppers app (free for Apple and Android devices)

<http://naturelocator.org/irecord-grasshoppers.html>

Wednesday 21st August 19.00 start CHICHESTER CANAL

Grid Ref SU 865 023

An evening nature walk along the canal with the added chance of using the Society's new Bat Equipment as dusk falls. Meet at the car park close to the canal 'bend' just north of Hunston. If you have bat detectors of your own and reference books then do bring them along, together with a small torch for personal safety.

Friday 6th September 13:00 start RSPB car park at Earnley – FIFTH MEDMERRY SURVEY

Grid Ref SZ 816 968 Postcode PO20 7JL See above for detailed instructions.

Dragonflies 2 (Later-flying species) - bring binoculars and dragonfly books and/or iRecord Dragonflies app (free for Apple and Android devices)

<https://www.brc.ac.uk/app/irecord-dragonflies>

PUB MEETINGS 2019/2020

These are informal gatherings held at the **Bull's Head, Fishbourne**. They are led by experienced members of the society with specialist knowledge of the subject and are a chance to learn more in the company of an 'expert.' They usually last about an hour to an hour and a quarter. There is a small charge of £1 per person.

They are also social gatherings, as we have lunch first, but there is no obligation to join this. However as we do not pay the pub for hire of the room could any attendees not having lunch please purchase at least a small drink !

These small meetings are limited to **15 members who must pre-book** usually at the preceding lecture meeting. Start time is at 1:30pm – members may wish to meet for lunch beforehand at 12:30pm. New management at the pub requires that menu selection is chosen and passed to them ahead of the meeting.

Wednesday, 20 March 2019 - '**Planning Issues and Wildlife**' - Jill Sutcliffe

CNHS LEGACY PROJECTS

Subsequent to consultation with Members and Committee discussions the following projects were set up in 2018 and are ongoing or completed.:

- 1) Tree planting in Chichester – now completed – see report below.
- 2) Monitoring and encouraging swifts in Chichester – will continue into 2019
- 3) Monitoring bats in Chichester – will continue into 2019

Another consultation has taken place and the following projects have been approved for 2019

1. A Nature writing/poetry/art competition in schools
2. Contribution to establishing a pond on the Northwood project
3. Purchase of surveying and recording equipment
 - a) Laser range finder for establishing the height of trees
 - b) Motion activated Camera trap for recording mammals and other wildlife in gardens
 - c) Immediate bat detector and identifier to complement the bat recording project. .

CNHS Challenge to Schools

£500 for each of two years is being allocated from our legacy funds, with schools throughout West Sussex invited to enter a new competition with nature at its heart. In each category (junior and senior) £100 will go to the schools of winners, plus £75, £50, and £25 for the best three contestants per age section. With the emphasis on originality, the themes for essays (300 words) or up to five verses of poetry, which need not rhyme, will be:

- 1 How can we help keep the planet safe and healthy?
- 2 My favourite countryside place in Sussex.
- 3 My top British animal.

Schools will be asked to sift entries down to three per category, to be judged by Chinats, the Chichester Observer, and naturalist Richard Williamson.

It is expected that prize money, for school and pupil alike, will be spent on nature projects or materials. The competition will be widely publicised in Chichester Observer Group papers, starting in the academic year 2019/2020.

Terry Timblick

Tree Planting in Chichester

Over the past year, we have been working with Justin Jones, Green Spaces Lead Manager, Chichester District Council about providing and planting a number of trees in Jubilee Park and are happy to report that this project has now been completed.

After careful consideration, the selection made was based on notable trees that will provide blossom, autumn colour and historic interest to Jubilee Park. Five trees were selected after discussion with our own Brian Hopkins and were purchased with our legacy money from a nursery in Cambridge

The selection was :-

- 2 x Flowering Cherry
- 1 x Golden Maple 'Princeton Gold'
- 1 x Cedar of Lebanon
- 1 x Forest Pansy (Judas Tree)

On a cloudy, damp morning on December 6th Justin and his gang of seven planted the five mature trees attended by some members of the Society. Timed for a 9:30 start all the trees were in the ground by 10:00. One was “officially” planted by Brian Hopkins (sorry, no silver spade) followed by a perambulation of all five before the heavy gang completed the backfilling and staking as required.

These trees should provide a part of Jubilee Park for many years to come and join the other grand old trees planted at the time of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

John Kelsall

Swifts

This project is aimed at encouraging swifts by erecting swift boxes in the appropriate place to enable more breeding pairs and we hope to continue erecting boxes in 2019. We shall also be monitoring any activity in the boxes we have already established.

John Kelsall

Bat recording in and around the Chichester area using an automatic bat detector

The project to record bats flying at night in the Chichester area has been very successful so far and will continue in 2019.

In 2018, from April to October, the bat detector was deployed at 51 locations in Chichester area (mostly members' gardens) for a total of 160 nights collecting 75,000 bat encounters of at least 10 different species. Because the detector is vigilant all night, it gives much more comprehensive results than a hand-held device. A summary of the results is available on the legacy projects page of the ChiNats website.

For 2019, Ken and Linda Smith have agreed to continue to co-ordinate the arrangements for deploying the detector and downloading and analysing the results of each recording session. Bats are hibernating at present and will become active again when the weather warms in April. As well as giving all members the chance to record bats in their own gardens, we want to try to fill some of the gaps in coverage, particularly to the north of the city.

If you would like to host the detector for a couple of nights in your garden or other suitable location please get in touch with project co-ordinators, Linda and Ken Smith, email kenandlindasmith@gmail.com or 01243786079 or see their bat project webpage at www.woodpecker-network.org.uk/index.php/news/38-bat-monitoring-in-chichester-area

Project co-ordinators - Ken and Linda Smith.

FIELD OUTING REPORTS (see our website for photos taken on the day)

Friday 28th September 2018 Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve Leader David Hart

It was a beautiful Autumn morning, a chill in the air (as in ‘how many layers should I put on?’) with the promise of warmer sunshine to follow.

There were twenty attendees, including three visitors and one of our members who had hired one of the motorized buggies that are available. The buggy proved a great success, readers please note!

David Hart took us on an anticlockwise version of the Wetland Trail from which we could overlook grassland, ditches and pools - the different habitats on the Reserve. Barely had we set off than Heather (note taker for the morning, thank you!) had recorded house sparrow, moorhen, crow, wood pigeon, jay, stock dove, magpie, dunnock and green woodpecker. On a large mass of flowering ivy some beady eyes spotted hornets which the photographers amongst us attempted to ‘capture’. It must be mentioned that we saw wonderful displays of fruits, hips and berries on our walk, including spindle, hawthorn, wayfaring-tree and wild rose.

On our way to Nettley’s Hide we recorded nuthatch, bullfinch, swan, robin and goldfinch. From the Hide we could appreciate the current low water levels but we could easily see the flocks of both Canada and Greylag geese. With the kind help of those members with telescopes, we could also confirm sightings of heron, lapwing, mallard and teal. On a post, we spotted a rather pale buzzard which had been noted previously by visitors. Before the next hide, we saw jackdaw, rook, green sandpiper and kestrel before we settled down to enjoy two (or was it even three?) marsh harriers flying low over the far side of the Reserve. Magic.

On a sunny stretch, butterflies posed for us – speckled wood, comma and red admiral. As lunch called, wheatear and chaffinch were seen and for the lucky dawdlers, a trio of tits (long-tail, blue and great) together with willow warbler were clearly seen in a bare branched tree.

Many of us lunched in the sunshine overlooking the Brooks, enjoying the view (and a kite overhead). A lovely morning. Thanks to David for his excellent leadership and to all those in the group.

Gill Hance

Saturday 13th October Fungi Foray at Houghton Forest Leader Sara Shepley

A total of 25 people gathered around Sara Shepley at Whiteways Car Park at the start of our Foray. She explained something of the complexity of the Fungi Kingdom. The different habitats (whether woodland, field, specific host tree, above or underground) were mentioned as well as the vast numbers of species. Identification can involve appearance, smell, taste and location, leading to the next problem of actual ‘naming’ as continual research, particularly DNA analysis, is resulting in almost constant recategorization and new names (both Latin and common!) Participants were encouraged to wander and keep their eyes open. Quickly, fungi were spotted, collected, photographed or pointed at and we were delighted to see Sara go to work on identification and then giving us associated stories, uses and folklore. Some members were especially pleased to have their own identification confirmed.

I was particularly taken by the common names e.g. porcelain fungi, glistening ink cap, curtain crusts, sponge caps, brittle stems, magpie fungus, jelly rot and puff balls. Others were wonderfully descriptive like King Alfred’s cakes, angels’ bonnets, dead man’s fingers, funeral bell and horn of plenty. And as for Poison Pie?!

Sara’s basket soon filled up, particularly with fungi needing further identification (full list below). Final finds were a splendid slime mould was found on an ash tree (very cauliflower like!) and ergot on a Cocksfoot grass inflorescence. A great morning, with many thanks indeed to Sara for her enthusiasm and knowledge, so clearly dispensed.

Gill Hance

Sara Shepley comments:

The most noteworthy of our day’s finds was the small, apparently nondescript fruitbody which had improbably blue/green gills (and spores). This turned out to be *Melanophyllum eyrie*, a not very common, but possibly overlooked, species. Also worth mentioning are *Macrolepiota konradii* and *Lepiota echinacea*. *M. konradii* is described as “uncommon” in field guides and one distinguishing feature is the way the central scales break up to form a starfish shape. One of the features of *L. echinacea* is the bristly brown warts on the cap surface. However,

there are several other similar species that don't appear in the field guides, so I put this forward as a suggestion rather than a definite identification.

Recommended Field Guides:

Collins Fungi Guide which is by Stefan Buczacki, Chris Shields and Denys Oviden

Collins Complete Guide to British Mushrooms and Toadstools by Paul Sterry and Barry Hughes (out of print, but more portable for field outings)

The Hidden Life of Trees, what they feel, how they communicate. Peter Wohlleben

Monday 12 November 14

Nutbourne Marsh

Leader John Kelsall

On arriving the parking area was almost full, a sure sign of the popularity of John's walks. The weather forecast was for heavy showers and a great deal of wet weather gear was donned. Sure enough a short, sharp shower came through. John welcomed sixteen birders including two new members to Chi Nats, Roger and Judy Smith on their first walk with the society, and also a prospective new member.

Heading down our usual footpath, a small herd of Belted Galloway cows with calves at foot were seen on the right hand side, no longer a commercially viable breed but a great favourite of the hobby farmer. The three small paddocks are more commercially managed and sadly we no longer see the roe deer in the long grass. Slightly further west, a row of poplar trees had a perfectly symmetrical circle of mistletoe high up in the branches, a sure early sign that Christmas isn't far away!

I scanned the freshly sown wheat fields on the left of the footpath for partridge, but without success. Before reaching the shore-line, meadow pipit, sparrow, wood pigeon and moorhen were seen. The mudflat was just a mass of waders, large numbers of black-tailed godwit, wigeon, lapwing and grey plover, turnstones and dunlin were seen. A skein of brent geese arrived making flying and landing on water look so easy, a few pintail and redshank were also feeding frantically before retiring to the long grass to roost before the next low tide. A small charm of goldfinches were spotted in brambles and teasels close by. As we continued the walk, red breasted merganser, great crested grebes and oyster catchers were seen looking towards Emsworth. The habitat changed to rough grass for pony grazing and a completely different range of bird species were seen including robin, wren, blackbird and yellowhammer. At last we found a small group of roe deer, unusual to find five together at this time of year, probably young immature bucks, long-horn cattle lay peacefully nearby.

Towards the end of our walk greenfinch, starling, long-tailed tits, a dragonfly that was not positively identified but a red admiral butterfly that was. During our walk the wind had strengthened but was still surprisingly warm - no more showers. I feel sure the walk was enjoyed by one and all. A total of 40 bird species were seen and we all thanked John for leading us on such a pleasant mornings walk.

David Hart

Wednesday 12 December 2018

Hayling Island Oyster Beds

Leader Tony Nevard

Fifteen people including two visitors, gathered on a very cold but dry morning for a walk around the old Oyster beds on Hayling Island. A good start to the morning as parking was not a problem; the tide was so far out that the usual water sports enthusiasts were absent.

A large expanse of mud was exposed so several species of birds were logged before we had left the car park. These included curlew and redshank on the mud, common scoter on the distant water and a charm of goldfinch around the bushes.

We then set off to walk to the remains of the oyster beds which look rather like a ghostly sunken town. A mix of waders and gulls were on the mud with plenty of Brent geese on the mud and close in on the water. Everyone was grateful for the help of the people who had brought along and shared their telescopes. Without these most of the group would have only seen an assortment of little black dots. Looking through the scopes the dots turned into several mergansers and an eider.

A very special sighting (thanks to John Arnott) was a group of black necked grebe. Only about 130 of this Amber-listed bird overwinter in Britain. Leaving the Oysterbeds the group turned onto the Billy Trail where goldcrest and blue and long tailed tits were crossing the path.

A bird of particular interest was a ringed greenshank. This had a black and a red ring on the left leg and two yellow rings on the right leg. We reported this bird to the Greenshank Migration project, which has been running in the area for several years. The aim of the project is to understand the migration strategies of the greenshank and their behaviour and survival rates in the Chichester/Langstone Harbour area. Birds are ringed, then the project team collates reports of any sightings including date and location. This information will help to manage the area to support the greenshank.

We duly reported this greenshank to the Greenshank Migration project who informed us that the bird had been reported more than 70 times since September 2013 and said: 'Thank you for that. This is a creature of habit - except for the one sighting in Scotland! When the field near the beginning of the Billy trail is flooded it's quite often in there.'

Thirty bird species were seen. Thank you Tony for leading. Hopefully everyone has warmed up by now!

Diana Grosvenor

Friday 11 January 2019

Chichester Lakes

Leader Jim Bagley

Twenty two members gathered at North Mundham village hall car park for our Field Outing round Chichester Lakes. The weather was dry with high light grey clouds and very little wind as we set off up the lane towards the lakes. Jim stopped us so we could all look up at the trees and surrounding area to report what birds we could see. There was some discussion as to whether it was a goldcrest that was spotted but agreement was finally reached that it was. Long tailed tits were flying into the trees together with goldfinches and two stock doves flew past. We continued on whilst looking up and around as keen bird watchers should do. However, a certain amount of chatting also took place.

We soon came to the lake looked after by the Sussex Ornithological Society. There was a shoveller on the water, grey heron and numerous cormorants with the trees, on the far side of the lake, in which they roost and nest.

On the various lakes we saw mallard, coot, tufted duck, Canada geese, two grey lag geese, great crested grebe and pochard but no huge flocks of birds. A black headed gull was seen and starling, blackbird, chaffinch, great spotted woodpecker were added to our list. In all 28 species were seen.

Bladder campion, Oxford ragwort, yarrow and oxeye daisy were also recorded by our keen botanist Helen.

Jim stopped every now and then to chat about the species we were looking at and also, as ever, to entertain us with his humorous remarks. This is one of the many delights of being a Chichester Natural History Society member.

A lovely morning with friends.

Daphne Flach

Tuesday 5 February 2019

Pagham North Walls

Leader John Kelsall

On a cloudy, dull morning 12 members and friends joined John Kelsall for a walk around Pagham North Walls and adjoining harbourside.

As we gathered we saw blue, great and long tailed tits together with magpie and the inevitable woodpigeon. A robin gave us a close inspection and a burst of song as we walked down the track to the pony field. In the pony field were song thrushes, blackbirds and moorhens and a flock of goldfinches flew over. A snipe also made a quick dash overhead.

On reaching the sluice the harbour appeared with an incoming tide. Large flocks of lapwing were around with wigeon, redshank, mallard, black tailed godwit amongst them. In the distance were spotted pintail, brent geese and little grebe. The main sounds were coming from the lapwing flock with the occasional whistle of wigeon and the call of brent.

The Breech pool was almost deserted except for a small flock of tufted duck and a few wigeon.

By this time the cold wind had increased so a return to the shelter of the trees was called for and as we walked back the lapwing flocks took off, gave us a flying display and settled back down again. They were joined by a small flock of golden plover.

Heading down the fields we had a solitary collared dove sharing a line with woodpigeons and when we reached the harbour we found shelduck and closer views of pintail.

Further down we had a roosting flock of lapwings with a single grey plover and a few dunlin. This gave us a chance to notice the difference in size of the birds. The adjoining hedge was twittering with house sparrows.

The lagoon was the furthest reach of our walk where we added coot, mediterranean gulls, common gulls and better views of little grebe.

Our final sighting was a pair of red-breasted merganser way out on the harbour water.

The final total was 34 species seen on a friendly, sociable walk.

John Kelsall

NEWS AND VIEWS

People's Walk for Wildlife 22 September 2018

The idea behind this was Chris Packham's. He wanted to get as many people together as possible to protest, peacefully, about the wildlife that was disappearing from this country and to try to turn things around. Everyone who turned out to walk with Chris, from all corners of the country – including Jersey and even someone from Uganda! - were amazed at the amount of people who kept on coming. We all felt empowered and, in a way, comforted, by the strength of feeling shown by young and old.

The day dawned grey and drizzly but the weather certainly did not dampen the spirits of the 10,000 people who congregated at The Reformer's Tree in Hyde Park. John and I arrived sufficiently early to be close enough to the stage to see and hear the speakers – and get some photographs. As we reached the stage we could see Lucy Cooke talking to children then Mike Dilger introduced Robert Macfarlane who read out some of the selected poems and spells submitted by children. Chris Packham then introduced his Manifesto for Wildlife. There was then a succession of short speeches by some of his "Ministers", some of whom were very passionate young people. We were then entertained by singers Grace Petrie, Billy Bragg and Saskia Eng from The Voice. After Chris had joined Billy Bragg in the "Turtle Dove's Lament" we all joined in with "Where Have All The Flowers Gone?" An RSPB staff member then asked everybody to take photos of themselves and each other against the backdrop of the banner behind the stage and Tweet it. This resulted in 32,000 Tweets by the time the walk ended!

Chris then told us to turn on the birdsong which had been downloaded to mobile phones and we set off. The sensation of walking through central London with surround sound of birdsong both loud and close and distant was quite surreal. The walkers included an elderly woman with a wheeled walker, a man on crutches, small children on Dad's shoulders and in buggies. Older children were dressed as butterflies and bees or wore fox or badger masks. Banners and placards carried covered all British animals. There were hares and badgers, hedgehogs and hen harriers, a giant bat was carried on 4 sticks and a similar sized stag beetle. Placards from The Woodland Trust, RSPB, wildlife trusts, badger groups, swift groups and many others were proudly held aloft. A few friendly dogs also accompanied us. We wended our way to Richmond Terrace where Chris Packham was on a podium to welcome us. We then had more, short, rousing speeches from Mark Carwardine, Mark Avery and Kate Bradbury. George Monbiot finished with a flourish. Then 5 of the children who had been on stage earlier, delivered a petition with the Manifesto to No 10 with Chris in attendance. Someone from No 10 thanked them and said how glad he was to be here as it was right up his street and he would make sure the Manifesto was presented to Michael Gove who had, last week, sent his regrets that he would be unable to make the Walk after all. We then dispersed.

It was a truly memorable day with so many well-known conservationists, campaigners, authors and film-makers lending their support. Two MPs, Caroline Lucas and the MP for Bristol walked with us. We also met Neil Hulme and Matthew Oates. Neil said that there was a good showing from Butterfly Conservation, including many from Sussex. Luke Dray a local young photographer was spotted. He was working for the Woodland Trust and some of his brilliant images have appeared in the media. We used to meet him at the cathedral volunteering with the Peregrines.

Chris Packham hopes that this will become an annual event. However I have learnt that, if it does, it could be in Edinburgh, Belfast or Cardiff next time. If it does happen to be in London again next year I think we should get a Chi Nats team together and show our support.

Philippa Arnott

The Chichester Elm.

The "Chichester" Elm is one of many hybrid elms raised south of the Midlands in the 18th century from *Ulmus hollandica*, through cloning, hence the name *Ulmus x hollandica vegeta*. "Chichester" title derives, not from this city, but from Chichester Hall in Rawreth, Essex (c.1777) via Thomas Holt-White, a brother of Rev. Gilbert White of Selbourne. Hybrid elms were popular in early 1800s for estate planting and many collections were made and given place names according to their origin.

This information was supplied to Chichester Natural History Society by Richard White of Midhurst who is keen to encourage elm planting locally. He has in fact planted two dozen of the hybrids, but not "Chichesters", during the last 18 years along the Canal west of Crosbie Bridge. These now stand up to 30ft. Gay Dent has further information if anyone requests it

Gay Dent

ADASTRA

The Sussex Biological Recorders' Seminar at Haywards Heath was attended by about 250 naturalists and was a very interesting day. The Adastra journal handed out to all participants contains the Medmerry monitoring paper by Christian and Gill, so lots of good publicity for CNHS.

The Adastra meeting (SxRBC) was an excellent day and really worthwhile. As well as raising the profile of ChiNats with our display on the Bat Recording Project and Medmerry monitoring, it was great to meet other natural history enthusiasts with a huge diversity of expertise from all over the county. The range of talks was also good, featuring earthworms, grasshoppers, fungi and more and as a bonus John Arnott gave an excellent talk on the seals in Chichester Harbour. You can see his lovely soft toy seals featuring on our display in blog on the website

Linda Smith

FLIGHTS OF FANCY: A CELEBRATION OF BIRDS

A music and words evening glorying in our feathered friends - **7.30 Friday May 3 at Christ Church**, off South Street, with retiring collection for Save the Children. Refreshment interval. The RSPB and the WWT reserve at Arundel, together with Chinats, are being offered promotional spots during the event.

Terry Timblick 537812

FROM THE EDITOR

The fall of snow yesterday has all but disappeared and the spring flowers are starting to appear. Reports are coming in of very early wild flowers so the (so far) mild winter seems to have brought things forward. We can expect some frog spawn soon (in fact mine appeared on 13 Feb) but hope we do not then get a frost (as last year) and they have to do it all again. It is noticeable that my early morning dog walks are now being serenaded by the dawn chorus.

Thanks for our reporters for their contributions to the Newsletter. We always welcome articles on any natural history subject for the newsletter so if you have something please send it to me for publication. It does not have to be about an exotic location – it could just be a wildlife event in your garden. All reports and articles should be sent to me at jjkelsall70@gmail.com

Deadline for articles for Newsletter 194 is 21 May 2019

Data base: Names, addresses and telephone numbers of members are stored in a computer file for the sole use of the Society according to our privacy policy (see website).