

# Chichester Natural History Society

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Registered Charity No 259211

**Chair:** Christian Hance, 389 Chichester Road, Bognor Regis, PO21 5BU  
(01243 825187)

**Membership:** Heather Hart, The Hays, Bridle Lane, Slindon Common  
Arundel, BN18 0NA (01243 814497)

**Website:** [www.chichesternaturalhistorysociety.org.uk](http://www.chichesternaturalhistorysociety.org.uk)

## NEWSLETTER No 195 September 2019

### FROM THE CHAIR

Observing new species of animals and plants in the local area is always an exciting event. I was lucky enough to be with several members of the Society at the RSPB Medmerry Reserve, when we recorded the first sighting in West Sussex of the Norfolk Hawker dragonfly (*Aeshna isoceles*). On the same day we also observed a Red-Veined Darter (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*) - another first for our Medmerry Surveys. (This was good excitement - unlike the "bad excitement" of the first discovery of the Box-Tree Moth caterpillars infesting the box in our garden !).

Over the summer, members of the Society have also enjoyed several field outings. A first for me, was a trip to Iping Common, where we experienced an interesting heathland habitat and saw amongst others - a Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), the beautiful Silver-Studded Blue butterfly (*Plebejus argus*) and some feisty Yellow Hammers (*Emberiza citrinella*). A select group enjoyed a walk above Burpham, where we were lucky enough to see Lapwing Chicks (*Vanellus vanellus*), as well as lots of other bird and flower species. Members of the Society were also fortunate to accompany Chris Furlepa & Dorothy Rodefild, Society members, as they carried out one of their regular butterfly surveys on Levin Down. A glorious day during which we saw 21 species ! Seeing a different side of nature, three Society members kindly opened their gardens for members to look round - which was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

We have a series of diverse and interesting topics to be covered during our winter evening lecture series including talks on Ocean Plastics, Gilbert White, Amphibians and the Bar-Headed Goose - The World's Highest Flying Bird ! I hope that you will be able to join us for these talks at the Pallant suite. Please be aware that to help reduce wastage we will be asking members to bring their own cups for tea/coffee at evening meetings, from October onwards.

In addition to our Medmerry surveys, the Society continues to record various species via our members efforts - Linda/Ken Smith have continued to co-ordinate the use of the Society's two bat recorders to great success ; in addition, John Kelsall has been lending the Society's wildlife camera out to any members who wish to record what is in their garden late at night. As the summer draws to a close, can I please remind you to return your phenology sheets to me, if you have not already done so. Even one recording is of value and I would like to complete the analysis soon.

Finally, the Society's AGM will be held in early November. If you wish to raise any items for possible inclusion on the agenda please let Lesley Mann or myself know before the evening meeting on October 2nd. After the AGM, there will be three interesting, illustrated presentations by members-not to be missed !

Christian Hance

[chair@chichesternaturalhistorysociety.org.uk](mailto:chair@chichesternaturalhistorysociety.org.uk)

### MEMBERS

#### 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.

## **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](mailto: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 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 'An outdoor naturalist, the life of Gilbert White' - Kimberley James, Gilbert White's House.**

Gilbert White studied nature around his home in Selborne and published his book "The Natural History of Selborne" in 1789. Come and hear about his life and work.

### **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 - AGM and Members' Presentations**

### **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019 - Christmas Party**

With quiz, raffle, first drink on the house, as well as member's choice of poems to read out, and the photographic competition. Please bring a plate of finger food.

### **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 The Bar-headed Goose – the world's highest flying bird by Lucy Hawkes, Exeter University**

### **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 - Amphibian Conservation-by Cici Blumstein, Sussex Amphibian and Reptile Group Outreach Officer, Artist and Frog Collaborator**

Conservation both locally and around the world, with a special focus on frogs and toads, and urban pond/habitat creation.

### **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: Plant Discovery and Conservation. Tim Pearce, Kew - Conservation Partnerships Coordinator for Africa**

Tim describes Kew Gardens conservation work, particularly the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place, Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

### **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 - Wildlife Travels in Nepal - Jill Sutcliffe**

## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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".

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 10:00 – 15:30 TITCHFIELD HAVEN NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE**

**Leader Tony Wootton**

**Grid Reference SU 536 024 Postcode PO14 3JT**

An all day visit (or depart after the morning session if you wish) to a carefully managed Reserve in the Meon Valley, which gives a mosaic of natural habitats – river, fen, pool, reedbed and meadow

Check their website <https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/titchfield> for more info and directions, as well as sightings closer to the time.

Take a picnic lunch or eat at the Reserve's cafe. Contact Gill Hance (01243 825187) if willing to offer lifts to other members or if you need a lift yourself (£5 contributions to petrol are kindly requested). Car park next to Hill Head Sailing Club or along the sea wall. Meet at ticket office at 10:00 and quote "Hance" to gain group entry rate of £3.75 per person.

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 10:00 start SNOW HILL AND ELLANORE**

**Leader - David Hart**

**Grid Reference SZ 765 984**

A half day walk looking for sea birds and waders, meeting at the far end of West Beach car park, West Wittering (parking fee payable). Optional - bring a packed lunch and drink and continue around East Head in the afternoon.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November 10:00 start PULBOROUGH BROOKS RSPB RESERVE**

**Leaders – Tony Nevard and Sylvia Gill**

**Grid Reference – TQ 059 165 Postcode RH20 2EL**

A wealth of birdlife. A half day walk around the Reserve (members may wish to stay on into the afternoon). Much to see on the flood plains, marsh and farmland whatever the weather, as there are several excellent hides available.

Entry fee is payable for non-RSPB members

Optional – take a picnic or buy lunch in the restaurant.

Reserve is well sign-posted just off the A283 between Pulborough and Storrington. Meet in the main Reserve Car Park.

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 10:00 start THORNHAM LANE and GREAT DEEP**

**Leader John Kelsall**

**Grid Reference SU 756049**

A morning's walk to observe seabirds, waders, divers and passerines as we pass by harbour shoreline, saltmarsh, mudflats and farmland. Turn left off the A259 Chichester to Emsworth road, just before entering Emsworth, onto an unclassified road signposted Thorney. Pass the entrance to Emsworth Marina on your right then, after approximately 100 metres, take turning off to the left into Thornham Lane. Park immediately on the verge on the left.

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020 10:00 start CHICHESTER LAKES**

**Leader Jim Bagley**

**Grid Reference SU 873 029 Post Code PO20 1LA**

A morning's walk around our local gravel pit lakes and nearby woodland with much wildlife to be seen, especially a variety of water birds and passerines.

From A27 Chichester by-pass, take B2145 s/p Selsey. Take first exit at roundabout onto B2166 s/p North Mundham and Bognor Regis. At North Mundham, turn left at chicane onto unclassified road. Turn almost immediately right into village hall car park.

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 10:00 start CHIDHAM**

**Leader John Kelsall**

**Grid Reference SU 793 034**

A (Valentines!) morning walk, looking for farmland and shoreline wildlife. Meet at the 'sunken' car park at the above grid reference. From A259, 1.5 miles west of Bosham roundabout, turn south into Chidham Lane, car park is a further 1.5 miles on.

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 10:00 start BURTON MILL POND**

**Leader David Hart**

**Grid Reference SU 979 181 Post code GU28 0JR**

This area offers a microcosm of different habitats – woodland, heath, bog and lakes, so always much of interest. Take A27 east from Chichester, turn left onto A285 to Petworth. A mile past Duncton, turn right sign posted Burton Mill. Park, as ‘tidily’ as you can, in the car park nearest the mill.

### **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, 23 October 2019 - ‘**Life in the Soil**’ - **John Arnott**

Wednesday, 20 November 2019 - ‘**Trees and How They Work**’ - **Brian Hopkins**

Wednesday, 22 January 2020- ‘**Bats**’ or ‘**Woodpeckers**’ - **Ken Smith (Ken is deciding on the subject title)**

Wednesday, 19 February 2020 - ‘**Belize**’ - **Jenny Etienne**

Wednesday, 18 March 2020 - ‘**Radioactivity 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) Monitoring and encouraging swifts in Chichester – will continue into 2019
- 2) 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 Nature Writing Competition**

For Junior schools in West Sussex – a competition with nature at its heart. Chichester Natural History Society offers £200 to the winning school (best single entry); £100 to outstanding entries in each category. All being well, another £500 available for similar competition in 2020/21). Emphasis on originality, the themes for essays (300 words max.) or up to five verses of poetry (which need not rhyme)are:

- 1 How can we make the planet safer and healthier?
- 2 My favourite countryside place in West Sussex.
- 3 My top British animal.

For school year 2019/20 – handwritten submissions by May 31, 2020. Each competing school is required to sift entries down to best three per category. The judges will represent Chichester Natural History Society, West Sussex County Council and the Chichester Observer (naturalist Richard Williamson).

It is expected that prize money will benefit the winning schools’ nature projects or materials, including books. Results will appear in the Observer in July 2020.

*Terry Timblick*

## Swifts

This project is aimed at encouraging swifts by erecting swift boxes in the appropriate place to enable more breeding pairs. We have now completed erecting our stock of boxes with a grand total of 44 boxes installed. We have had invaluable assistance from Richard Kennedy of Team Endeavor to actually climb the ladder and drill the screw holes. We shall be monitoring any activity in the installed boxes.

*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 has continued through 2019.

A summary of the results for 2018 is available on the legacy projects page of the ChiNats website. For 2019, Ken and Linda Smith continued to co-ordinate the arrangements for deploying the detector and downloading and analysing the results of each recording session. As well as giving all members the chance to record bats in their own gardens, we have used the detector on the Medmerry grasshopper survey (not very successfully) and the immediate bat detector at Northwood and Chichester Canal Field Outings. 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](mailto: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](http://www.woodpecker-network.org.uk/index.php/news/38-bat-monitoring-in-chichester-area)

*Project co-ordinators - Ken and Linda Smith.*

## Equipment

### *Laser rangefinder*

The laser range finder was purchased in December 2018. ChiNATS member Brian Hopkins has used it to measure trees and also the heights of the city walls in the Bishops Palace Gardens.

The West Dean Botany Group is about to embark on its annual tree survey this autumn, when the range finder will be used to measure the heights of the mature trees amongst the tracks and coppiced areas of West Dean Nature Reserve. Autumn measurement allows for the full summer's tree growth to be included.

*Camera trap* – has been purchased and several members have used it in their gardens overnight. So far we have the odd fox, lots of cats and pigeons but the highlights were pairs of hedgehogs in the Arnott garden

This equipment is now available to members in order to ascertain what wildlife they have in their gardens. The procedure is that members have the equipment for a few nights and then return the kit. John Kelsall is the coordinator so if you want to participate please contact John on 01243 788092 or [jjkelsall70@gmail.com](mailto:jjkelsall70@gmail.com).

*Immediate bat detector* – this piece of kit is a gadget attached to an Ipad and will immediately identify any bats flying around. This use will be coordinated by Ken and Linda Smith.

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

### **Monday 20 May      Northwood, Slindon National Trust      Leader David Hart & National Trust Rangers**

Eleven members met on the National Trust Estate and were joined by Gabby and Hannah, two Slindon Estate Rangers, who were kind enough to lead the walk. As we walked along Stony Bottom track, Hannah took us back over a hundred years in time and explained that some 180 acres of woodland were felled to support the First World War dependency on wood. Canadian soldiers did the hard work of felling, we looked at numbers carved in some of the mighty beech trees but no positive reason for these has ever been established! This area was also used as a prisoner of war camp holding German personnel. On a lighter note a black cap sang just a few metres away and for once obliged by allowing us good views, a first for some folk.

Soon we arrived at the re-wilding area which was established 5 years ago, high deer fencing has allowed natural regeneration of a wide variety of vegetation which made us all realise how quickly nature will re-establish itself if left to its own devices.

The newly created pond (partly sponsored by Chi Nats) was the next point of interest and needs time to blend in with the surrounding landscape but will become an important part of the jig-saw in establishing the ideal habitat for our much treasured feathered and furry friends. Time allowed us to stroll up to the fast becoming famous sculpture, 2.5 ton of Portland stone that since 2014 has been located in eight separate areas on the estate so that any passer-by could use their own imagination to interpret the Rise of Northwood. Expert sculpturer, John Edgar, put the finishing touches to this fascinating piece of work and I would highly recommend anybody going to admire it. Littlewood Lookout is quite close to the sculpture and the new pond. It is built entirely of wood from the estate and mostly by the Estate Rangers and again I highly recommend a visit on a warm summers evening, it really is the most tranquil of places to be (you might even spot the barn owls). At that very moment two skylarks were singing their hearts out but none of us could spot them.

Our very pleasant walk was drawing to a close as we wandered across the area known as War Ag Five where Chi Nats have sponsored some standard trees, namely oak, beech, field maple and whitebeam, all are doing very well. This area will become grazed parkland and is already open to the general public, serviced by several gateways strategically placed for easy access.

All evening our Chairman had been wandering around with our new portable bat detector and much to his relief and our delight, the bats came out about 21.15 hrs, and he confidently recorded: Common Serotine, Common Pipistrelle, Nathusius Pipistrelle, Noctule and Soprano Pipistrelle.

Hannah and Gabby were thanked for giving their time to make the evening so informative, relaxed and enjoyable. I suggest it could well become a very enjoyable annual evening.

*David Hart*

### **Early June Wildlife Gardening**

On June 3rd, thankfully a sunny day, Members enjoyed Bonita's garden with its delightful and wildlife-friendly array of native and 'garden' plants, as well as some delicious refreshments!

On June 10th, it poured with rain, not so conducive for garden visiting, although it was wonderful to have pointed out, the brimstone caterpillars on the alder buckthorn planted at 389, Chichester Road (see the Society's blog). Have members checked their buckthorns, recently sourced from Mary Iden?

And it was Mary, on another damp day, June 13th, who led a hardy group (including members of the Chichester Eco Group) around Oaklands Park and nearby areas where she has been striving to establish hedges and native wildflowers, truly inspirational. A visit, right now, to see what has been developed on the north side of the New Park Centre is thoroughly recommended.

Thank you to all hosts, for their hospitality and enthusiasm, and to all attendees for their perseverance against the elements.

*Gill Hance*

### **Friday 14 June 2019 Medmerry Survey - Botany 2 - Quadrats**

The first survey was called off due to inclement weather but the second one went ahead in better conditions..

Nine members undertook the survey of the frequency of the plants, using the quadrats.

In a systematic way we covered nearly the whole plot, spacing out into four groups of two, to make sure we had figures from the different parts of the bank.

The weather looked a little grey at first, and felt rather chilly, but the sun came out, we heard skylarks, and it turned out to be a pleasant afternoon.

The copies of Collins Guide to Wild Flowers, provided by the society, were found useful in checking on the identification of plants, especially the grasses.

Helen Dignum will be analysing the data and producing a report which we can compare with previous years.

All in all, we felt we are getting better at identifying grasses. The plot is extremely colourful in June, and although from a distance it seems to be almost completely dominated by Ox Eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) there are large patches of bright purple Tufted Vetch, (*Vicia cracca*).

*Stephanie Carn*

### **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June Burpham, Leader David Hart**

Where was everyone? Perhaps it was the threatened warm forecast for the day? The conditions meant that 4 Chi Nats Members proceeded at a sedate pace north from Burpham, which in turn meant that there were lots of opportunities to stop and observe birds, plants and the farmland management being carried out on the Norfolk Estate; learning all the way.

We had had lapwing chicks pointed out to us by David at the start of our walk and from then on, our list of birds grew:- Buzzard, linnet, goldfinch, great tit, chaffinch, blackbird, house sparrow, swift, red kite, greenfinch, jay, whitethroat, crow, rook, song thrush, pied wagtail, red legged partridge, skylark and a (potential) corn bunting.

There were not too many individual butterflies to be spotted but we noted painted lady, meadow brown, red admiral, marbled white with cinnabar moths over some ragwort. On the mammal front, Hampshire and Romney sheep were identified, whilst fallow and roe deer joined our list, together with the odd (singular, not peculiar!) rabbit.

It was an excellent time of the year to enjoy the plants characteristic of the chalk downlands and especially those flourishing in the headlands (eg chicory) around the fields and those along the hedgerows. This is by no means a complete list:- hounds tongue, clematis, black horehound, melilot, agrimony, mignonette, white campion, bladder campion, silver weed, kidney vetch, pyramidal orchid, yellow rattle, goats beard (or Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon), nipplewort, marjoram, common toadflax, ploughman's spikenard, teasel, rosebay willow herb, juniper, Russian comfrey, nettle-leaved bellflower, field scabious, chamomile, greater and common knapweed and finally a fine specimen of dark mullein. I made a note to allow some privet to flower in our garden to benefit a range of insects including butterflies, having seen the 'buzzing' on a stretch of hedge.

Needless to say, we didn't make it up to the intended picnic spot – David's saving that for another occasion. Many thanks go to him for passing on his knowledge and for finding us a nice flint barn to lean against, for our picnic!

*Gill Hance*

**Friday 5 July 2019**

**3<sup>RD</sup> MEDMERRY SURVEY – EARLY DRAGONFLIES**

The day was warm with sunny spells and a slight refreshing breeze. The temperature dropped towards the end of the survey when thicker cloud developed. Eleven members were joined by the new RSPB Warden of Pagham and Medmerry, Adam Taylor, who had asked if he could come with us. He was warmly welcomed and he told us he was just getting to know his patch and was interested to meet the Chi Nats surveyors and see how the surveys worked. It was really good to get to know Adam and a lot of questions were asked on both sides.

The first sighting was of a Four-spotted Chaser, followed by a 2<sup>nd</sup> one. The usual Common Blue and Blue-tailed damselflies were seen. Then something different was noticed, a reddish brown dragonfly which started chasing the Four-spotted Chasers. It flew tirelessly so fast that it was difficult to focus binoculars on it to look for distinctive features. Various possible species were discussed but it didn't fit any of them but by process of elimination it came down to a possible Norfolk Hawker. After a while most of the group continued on with the survey leaving a small number waiting for the mystery dragonfly to land. Eventually it settled on a leaf briefly, about 10 seconds, just enough time for Christian to get a fabulous couple of photos and John to get a good clear view through binoculars – which confirmed its identity as a **Norfolk Hawker**.

John went back to get some fuzzy photos of it flying, by which time an Emperor had appeared and the two dragonflies started chasing each other in what looked like a game of tag. Mostly the Emperor was dominant though as it is a slightly bigger species.

This record was later sent in to iRecord and SxBRC and, if validated, will be a first for the species in Sussex! Adam was very pleased to be there when a new species was found on his patch.

Black-tailed Skimmers were seen, though fewer than usual, and Small Red-eyed Damselflies. One solitary Azure Damselfly was spotted. Then, just as we were turning back at the end of the transect, a red dragonfly landed on the path just in front of us. Was it a Common Darter or a Ruddy Darter? No, on closer inspection of a photograph it turned out to be a **Red-veined Darter!** Another first for our list and a beautiful animal to see. This took our total number of species to 9.

Other wildlife seen included: Reed Bunting singing quite close to the cars, Yellowhammers and Reed Warblers also. Skylarks were singing constantly and a few Swallows were spotted. Butterflies included the ubiquitous Meadow Brown, Small Skipper, 6-spot Burnet moth, Painted Lady and a solitary Marbled White while Cinnabar moth caterpillars were observed on Ragwort. Water Plantain was in flower and Lesser Reedmace was growing in one patch beside Greater Reedmace. A Red-tailed Bumblebee was busily feeding and there were many grasshoppers.

There were notably fewer individual dragonflies and damselflies. We wondered whether this could be due to the changing vegetation, the lack of sunshine later in the afternoon or other factors. However, as someone remarked, this survey was all about quality rather than quantity!

*John and Philippa Arnott*

**Thursday 11 July 2019**

**Levin Down Butterflies**

**Leaders Chris Furlepa and Dorothy Rodefeld**

Chris Furlepa and I were pleased the day turned out so well, both weather-wise and for the 20/21 accompanying us on our transect walk yesterday. Temperatures hovered around 22 deg. C. and the sunshine, with only a light south westerly breeze proved ideal for butterfly watching. Having split into two groups (hard climb or easy climb) we met up again in section 6 where some of us had already had an extended break. It was in this area that a Small Elephant Hawk-moth caterpillar was discovered and photo taken from my mobile. The larval food plant of the moth is bedstraw, particularly Lady's Bedstraw which grows in profusion on Levin Down. Much time was spent botanising and I am grateful to Bonita and Gill for their help in the flower identification of several uncommon plants.

A few left early taking a short cut back and the rest of us enjoyed a leisurely lunch break with a panoramic view from section 7, in fact it was somewhat difficult to get everyone back to the task of recording the butterflies.

A large number of members managed the entire walk, not easy on a hot day. With the help of those present an amazing 21 species were seen and a total of 507 butterflies recorded. The species most abundant were the Meadow Brown (238) and Marbled White (21). There were sightings of a few notable species and some excellent photos were taken during the day by keen photographers accompanying CF in sections 1-5, including a Brown Argus and an Essex Skipper. My small party in sections 8 and 9 lay claim to two Dark Green Fritillaries which unfortunately proved camera-shy and flew far away.

It was marvellous to see the abundance of different wild flowers, all there due to the skilful management of the reserve and which are so important for the nectaring butterflies. We are indeed fortunate to have Levin Down on our doorstep

*Dorothy Rodefeld*

**Friday 2 August 2019 4<sup>TH</sup> MEDMERRY SURVEY - GRASSHOPPERS AND BUSH CRICKETS**

The afternoon was pleasantly warm, though not totally cloudless, with a slight breeze. Seven members plus Adam Taylor, the RSPB Warden, met to catch and record grasshoppers and bush crickets. They were everywhere on the site, jumping through the grasses. However, they proved quite difficult to catch even with our two new nets.

Nevertheless, six species were caught including a new one for our surveys – the Common green grasshopper. As usual, Meadow grasshoppers were the commonest followed by Lesser marsh, Common green and Field grasshoppers. Long-winged conehead and Roesel's bush cricket were also recorded

Other notable wildlife seen included a flock of gulls (mostly Black-headed), 2 Emperor dragonflies, 2 Painted ladies, 1 Meadow brown, several unidentified whites and 3 Wasp spiders. A Green woodpecker was heard nearby.

*Philippa Arnott*

### **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August Chichester Canal Evening Walk**

"It was a beautiful evening for a walk" it was agreed, as 18 members and friends gathered in the canal turn car park. Initially, we set off towards Chichester, watching out for all kinds of wildlife. The current management of the vegetation alongside the canal was noted and appreciated, benefitting wildlife and still allowing frequent use of the path by the many walkers, cyclists, runners and scooter riders!

Amongst the plants were purple loosestrife, water mint, great willowherb, hemp agrimony, yarrow, branched bur-reed, marsh woundwort, pendulous sedge, hemlock water-dropwort, amphibious bistort, white dead-nettle and finally (after some checking in reference books) skullcap, gypsywort and purple toadflax were identified.

Birds included moorhen, coot, swallow, martins and a party of long-tailed tits over some blackberry bushes. Also, mallard (plus accompanying teenagers), magpie, dunnock, blue tit, blackbird and a solitary sparrow hawk flying east to west.

The operation of the Society's two different bat detectors had been explained and as dusk began to fall about 8.00pm we headed west, this time, towards Crosbie Bridge hoping to both see and record some of these fascinating creatures. We had been advised in advance by Nik Knight (of the Hampshire Bat Group) who has been closely surveying the canal, as to which species to look out for. Common pipistrelle and Soprano pipistrelle were detected on all bat detectors and also spotted by eagle-eyed members. As it darkened further, the remaining members of the group were rewarded with the detection on the Society's equipment of a Myotis species, probably Daubenton's, and Nathusius pipistrelle.

Do remember to make contact with Linda and Ken Smith if you'd like to borrow any of the equipment. The results are always fascinating.

*Gill Hance*

### **Friday 6 September 2019 5<sup>TH</sup> MEDMERRY SURVEY – LATER DRAGONFLIES**

Unfortunately it was not a good afternoon for a dragonfly survey. The wind was quite strong and gusty making it feel cold and it was total cloud cover which made it very dull and gloomy. At least the rain held off and it stayed dry. Nevertheless, 9 intrepid surveyors arrived to conduct the survey but, as we feared, no dragonflies or damselflies were sighted. This could have been partly due to the dense vegetation and very low water as well as the weather conditions.

However, the disappointment in the lack of dragonflies was mitigated by other wildlife seen. Notably a Water vole swimming along a ditch, unconcerned by our presence. Notable birds seen were Sand martins, Snipe, Yellow wagtails and Linnets of course with a large flock of Starlings – winter is on its way! With nothing to record we carried on down to the first of the Stilt Pools where we saw Common sandpiper, Gadwall, Teal and Wigeon amongst many Canada geese.

A Holly blue and a couple of bumblebees were noted amongst the vegetation on the bank on the return journey but they were keeping well down out of the wind.

The traditional tea was taken at Russells Garden Centre which was much enjoyed and we raised a cup in memory of Rosemary Marshall whose idea it was to have a celebration tea at the end of the surveys.

*Philippa Arnott*

### **FROM THE EDITOR**

It has been a strange summer, very hot spells interspersed with some rain showers but generally dry. Garden watering has been an essential part of the season. We wait and see what effect this type of weather has on wildlife migrants

Please find attached the Membership renewal form for 2019/2020. Please pay promptly and preferably by cheque not cash

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](mailto:jjkelsall70@gmail.com)

**Deadline for articles for Newsletter 196 is 21 February 2020**

**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).



**Chichester Natural History Society  
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2019/20**

**This form is for new Members or existing Members paying by cheque.**

Members are reminded that annual membership subscriptions are due on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Subscription rates have not increased from last year and are:

Full membership	£12.00
Joint membership	£22.00

Please complete this form and return it, with your subscription, to the Membership Secretary, Heather Hart, The Heys, Bridle Lane, Slindon Common, Arundel, BN18 0NA or bring it along to the next lecture meeting.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Chichester Natural History Society'. Members who wish to commence paying by standing order please use the form below.

Please note that, as the Society's membership year runs from October 1st to September 30th the following year, please pay subscriptions by cheque or S/O as promptly as possible.

**Thank you.**

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