

# Chichester Natural History Society

---



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 197 May 2020

### FROM THE CHAIR

Firstly, let me say, that I very much hope that you and your family and friends are keeping well during this perplexing time. It is important that everyone keeps, not only physically well, but mentally strong too. The Chichester Natural History Society is made up of interesting and knowledgeable members and I, for one, am missing the interactions with everyone. Let us all hope that the country can continue to “recover” and that a “new normal” can be re-established.

One thing that I have noticed during this period is the beauty of the bird song. On early morning walks, in the fields close to our house, I am hearing a wonderful, varied selection of song. It has got me thinking .... is there more bird song than normal? (a possible result of the decreased human interruption into nature combined with a mild winter and good spring? ), or is the bird song more noticeable because I, for one, have the time to stand and listen to it ? Something to ponder.

Obviously, the necessary restrictions on movement and meetings have temporarily closed down the Society’s events. However, I hope that you have all been continuing to observe nature and recording it, either on the Society’s phenology sheets, the blog on our website or retaining the record for entry into our sightings book.

We have an exciting range of field outings/surveys already arranged for this summer and we will re-start them as soon as we can. Therefore, please keep the already established dates for these events free. Monthly email updates will continue to be sent out and these will advise as to whether events are to go ahead.

Let me close by re-iterating the message to you all - please keep fit and healthy. I hope to see you all at Society’s activities in the near future.

Dr. Christian Hance.

*Christian Hance*  
*chair@chichesternaturalhistorysociety.org.uk*

### MEMBERS

#### New Members

We Welcome the following new members  
Jamie and Glenys Wood

#### 2020 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 2020. Entries should be brought along to the members’ evening in December, where fellow members will judge them anonymously. The photos from 2019 were exhibited in Chichester Library and we would hope to do the same for the 2020 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)*

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL EVENTS SHOWN BELOW ARE SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE ACCORDING TO THE STATE OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC. THE GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT INSTRUCTIONS ARE THAT NONE CAN TAKE PLACE UNTIL THE LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS ALLOW.**

## **INDOOR MEETINGS 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 2nd September**

**The Rise of Northwood at Slindon National Trust.** by Hannah Thompson and Gabby Crisp, National Trust Rangers. The National Trust's project to return Northwood to woodland pasture. ChiNATS have walked around this project and constructed retainers for the trees planted by the Society. Hear more about the history and future of this regeneration project.

### **Wednesday 7th October**

**Flies** by Dr Erica McAlister, Scientist and Senior Curator of Diptera at the Natural History Museum, London. We are very fortunate to have Erica, the renowned enthusiast of Diptera (flies) to speak to us on the amazing world of flies. Erica has appeared on several Radio 4 programmes and published a book "the Secret Life of Flies".

**Wednesday 4th November** AGM and Members' Presentations

**Wednesday 2nd December** Members Evening

## **MEDMERRY**

### **2020 - 7th 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 to appropriate Survey Site. (Little walking required on any date.) See Field Outings 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 always 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, generally 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 ([ghance98@gmail.com](mailto:ghance98@gmail.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 2<sup>nd</sup> June 10:00 start, LEVIN DOWN NATURE RESERVE near Singleton**

**Leader Helen Dignum**

**Grid Ref SU 879 114**

Following on from last summer's visit to Levin Down when members looked specifically at butterflies, we return to focus on wildflowers. Handheld magnifiers and reference books useful but not essential. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy. There is an initial steep climb. Meet at the 'Triangle Car Park' on the north side of the Trundle at the above Grid Reference in order to car share to the foot of Levin Down.

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June A Special Private Visit to the NEW FOREST REPTILE CENTRE Lyndhurst**

**Date now arranged and with precise details to come later .....watch this space and check Society's website**

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 13:00 (back up day for Medmerry survey if weather 'stopped play' on 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> June)**

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> 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>

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 13:00 (back up day for Medmerry Survey if weather 'stopped play' on 3<sup>rd</sup> July)**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 14:00 – 16:00 WHITE STORK PROJECT at Knepp Estate, near Dial Post**

**Leader Lucy Groves**

An opportunity to hear about this exciting Project and to see these magnificent birds for ourselves. Our visit will start with a 15 mins talk about the Project, its aims and achievements so far. (Tea/ coffee available). We will then head out for a 10 minute walk plus a further 10 mins to reach the storks' 6 acre enclosures. Plenty of time for questions before returning back to base.

The session will last about 1 and a half to two hours and the walking distance is about 1 and a half miles. We shall not be on footpaths and the terrain can be uneven, rough and slippery so as well as being fit, members must be appropriately shod and clothed!

**Maximum number for this trip will be 30. It is essential to register participation with Gill Hance**

**([ghance98@gmail.com](mailto:ghance98@gmail.com) or 01243 825187) Members will need to car share, arriving in good time for the 14:00 start and park as per precise instructions to be given out nearer to the 16<sup>th</sup> July. The Society is grateful to be given free admission for this event, although donations towards the Project will be welcome on the day. (THE SIGN ON LIST FOR THIS OUTING STILL EXISTS AND IS CURRENTLY FULL. LUCY IS STILL HOPING THAT THE VISIT CAN GO AHEAD, SO WATCH OUT FOR FURTHER NOTIFICATIONS.)**

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 14:00 start, THURSLEY NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE (check out their website)**

**Leader John Arnott**

**Grid Ref SU 900416**

This is one of the best places in the country to see dragonflies and other heathland species. Bring a picnic to enjoy

next to the Moat Pond, prior to a 14:00 start. Limited benches available so folding chairs may be useful and please note that there are no toilets!

Meet at the Moat Car Park at the above grid reference. Simplest route is to take the A27 and then the A3 north. Approximately 1 and a half miles north of the Hindhead Tunnel, fork left, signposted Thursley. Proceed through the village and then turn right at T junction. Parking is approx. 1 mile on the right, next to the Pond.

**Friday 7th 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>

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August 10:30 start, KITHURST HILL near Storrington**

**Leader David Hart**

**Grid Ref TQ 071125**

Chalk downland plants, birds and butterflies. Members will visit the lovely wildflower area close to the car park, hoping for butterflies, and then make their way westwards to eventually enjoy a picnic with a view (bring something to sit on!) near Rackham Hill before returning, via a slightly different route, to the car park.

One mile west of Storrington on B2139, take great care turning south into unmarked lane just to the east of Springhead Farm (look out for one of David's helpful signs). Route is easily accessible as there is excellent parking on the top of the Downs, adjacent to the South Downs Way. Although please note that there are no toilets.

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August 13:00 (back up day for Medmerry Survey if weather 'stopped play' on 7<sup>th</sup> August)**

**PUB MEETINGS 2020/21**

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, 28th October 2020 - '**Radioactivity and Wildlife**' - **Jill Sutcliffe**

Wednesday, 18th November 2020 - '**The History of Fenland**' - **Jim Bagley**

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

**We managed to get one Outing in before the lockdown!**

**Tuesday 3rd March 2020**

**Burton Mill Ponds**

**Leader David Hart**

After a frosty night the day was clear and sunny. A pleasant change after the past dreary winter and the sun, now higher in the sky, creates more warmth and is much brighter than a few weeks ago. Signs of spring was everywhere with new growth pushing its way through the very moist soil. Tree buds were at the point of bursting into leaf and many trees were laden with catkins. Our group of 17 moved to look over Burton Pond leaving a Chaffinch singing in the car park. Sadly a fisherman crossing the lake in a punt moved all viewable wildfowl to the far corners of the pond. With the sun in our eyes, identification was a bit of a guess. We would have expected to see Mallard, Tufted Duck, Gadwall, Coot and Moorhen at least.

Walking towards Burton Park we saw both Robin and Dunnock. An unidentified dark butterfly flew past, probably a Red Admiral. A Buzzard flew over and a Woodlark was high above singing its fluty song. We admired an avenue of very old Sweet Chestnut trees. At Black Pond was a lone Canada Goose and in the surrounding fields we saw Woodpigeon, Crow, Jackdaw and Green Woodpecker. A queen Buff Tailed Bee was feeding on some wayside Snowdrops.

On the way to Chingford Pond we noted Red Kite, Kestrel, Song Thrush and a resplendent cock Pheasant. At the pond we observed Cormorant, Mallard, Coot, Tufted Duck, Little and Great Crested Grebes. After

much searching we found a Grey Wagtail. At Welches Common we watched a Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming on a dead tree. All through our walk we were serenaded by Robins, Blue Tits and Wrens. I have listed the wild plants separately as a tribute to the skill of our botanists having to identify immature specimens. They are as follows: - Pig Nut, Stitchwort, Lesser Periwinkle, Ladies Smock (also called Cuckooflower), Opposite Leaved Golden Saxifrage and Sticky Mouse Ear. On our way back through the mill both Goldfinch and a pair of Grey Wagtail were seen. Our thanks to David for his knowledge and guidance on this delightful walk with our friends.

*Jim Bagley*

## NEWS & VIEWS

### **This trip is still on.**

One of our members, Denise Bowerman, is organising a trip to the Carmague that members may be interested in. If you wish to understand this in more detail then please contact Denise directly. Please note that this is not a Chichester Natural History Society activity

An Autumn Break in Provence - Countryside & Culture. Departing 8th October 2020 6 days, Staying in Avignon for the 5 nights and visiting Aix-en-Provence, Arles, Carrieres de Lumieres show and the Camargue - a rare habitat for flamingos, the famous White horses, Camarguais, and the magnificent black Bulls. Coach from Chichester to Gatwick and return included, and Tour Guide throughout our stay. 4 Single rooms and 3 twin/double remaining. Maximum of 20 in the Group.

I am leading the Group and as always, book through a Tour Operator so we are ABTA bonded and ATOL protected. All participants have their own Travel Insurance or can take it out through the Tour Company, Tailored Travel. It is a wonderful opportunity for a small Group of like-minded people to travel together and enjoy all this beautiful region has to offer. There is a full Itinerary as I have out-lined or with the help of our Guide in Avignon, people can explore on their own, there is ample free time.

*Denise Bowerman. [d.bowerman@live.co.uk](mailto:d.bowerman@live.co.uk) 01243 576981*

### **Food for thought from Richard Mabey**

In his 2015 book "The Cabaret of Flowers" Richard Mabey questions an increasingly popular trend: the move to grow nectar-rich flowers for pollinators, bees especially. "This is a commendable policy – except that the majority of pollinating insects, unlike bees, grow from larvae that feed not on nectarous flowers but dull green leaves, some of them the weeds that are hoicked out to make way for the dazzling floral border."

*Terry Timblich*

## FROM THE EDITOR

Just as we had organized a full programme for the summer the dreaded virus appeared and then lockdown!. The weather then went warm and dry and all we could appreciate was our gardens and local patch. But the silence – all you could hear was birdsong! Let us hope that by the next Newsletter we are allowed to meet up again.

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 198 is 21 September 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).