



Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

A society for everyone interested in nature and its conservation

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER – Spring 2020

Welcome to the second edition of our quarterly Newsletter. The Society will be up and running again as soon as possible. We were sorry to have to cancel the Meetings Programme and equally sad that we will have to delay the Birds of Prey demonstration planned for June. However, to keep going was not an option - we are now working under current government guidance during the lockdown.

South Hill Park will honour our bookings until later in the year. We are unsure as yet about when we will be able to hold our AGM. We are hoping that we will be able to resume in September, with a published Programme taking us up to December at least. Our annual Subscriptions will be due in September – we really appreciate your support for the Society at this difficult time.

There are many beautiful green open spaces in Bracknell Forest, that are easily accessible – wildlife does not go away and there are plenty of things to spot when you take your daily exercise.

Also, it's important to know that [National Police Chiefs' Council \(NPCC\) guidelines](#) say driving to a suitable destination for a walk is acceptable, as long as far more time is spent walking than driving.

With best wishes to you all Gill Cheetham, Chairman – April 2020

Nightingale Triangle - Our Woodland Project



The woodland is bursting into bloom with thousands of Bluebells emerging to form a blue carpet. Foxgloves planted in 2018 have flourished during the wet winter, and are about to send up flower spikes, complimented by Pink Campion, White Dead Nettle, Yellow Archangel (rogue, but good nectar), Feverfew and Ragged Robin.

Our regular Volunteers Days will be staying on hold until we know that it is safe again to meet. Locally, volunteers who walk there regularly have been removing litter, and a small amount of

dumped rubbish. In the Autumn we will be able to barrow donated chippings onto the pathways to rebuild and redefine the lines. *Read more on page 2.*

Good news for the Orchid bank You may remember the stunning orchid bank situated outside an industrial park on the Southern Industrial Area (formerly BMW) in Bracknell. The bank had become overgrown with self-set Salix runners. Left alone these would have taken over the bank and completely prevented the orchids from growing. Bracknell Forest Council's landscaping team has recently cut back the growth and two BFNHS volunteers have treated the stumps with appropriate PPE.

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Email: bfathistsoc@rocketmail.com

www.bfnathistsoc.org.uk

Watch out for these...

- Butterflies - there are many species emerging or arriving. When out on your daily exercise spot the different ones - this week we have seen, for instance, Peacock, Speckled Wood, Holly Blue, Brimstone and a Comma (*pictured*).
- Tawny Owls and Pipistrelle Bats have been heard and seen locally.
- The Loddon Lily (*Leucojum aestivum*) is flowering in Northerams Wood. This is an iconic plant for Berkshire, and is the county flower. There are also large numbers of cowslips and some wood anemones and celandines. <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/plant-fungi-species/summer-snowflake>
- If you're not sure about identifying the Willow Tit from the Marsh Tit, you'll find this item interesting: <https://britishbirds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Willow-Marsh-Tits.pdf>
- And of course, you'll be watching out for nesting birds – everywhere.



And as for birdsong... because of the reduced traffic noise while most residents are locked down, you must have noticed how much more you hear!

Nightingale Triangle – the story unfolds

Bracknell Town Council has again made us a grant of £200.00 towards the ongoing costs of running the project, which is greatly appreciated.



Summer. Wildflower seeds which were collected in the Autumn are now plug plants, ready to be planted at a later date.

Shortly before the restrictions were introduced, we and a group of Bracknell Conservation Volunteers cleared the bank on the perimeter of the woodland. Bramble, gorse and seedling trees have all disappeared, making way for a now grassy bank to be planted with cowslips and dog violets. Glossy yellow celandines have already appeared, and grasses and other species will flower during the

Our official Open Day celebration will now take place in 2021. A plinth for Nightingale Triangle has been ordered, which will be installed at the entrance on the Firlands side of the site. On the plaque attached to the plinth, information about the woodland and our website address will show visitors how to find out more.

The Swans at South Hill Park

The two resident swans on the North Lake of South Hill Park have been removed for their own safety. Illegal, sunken fishing lines had been installed into the lake. Once spotted and removed it became evident that from entanglement in these lines, the swans had suffered damage to their legs and feet. They have been taken to a safe place - lets hope they are eventually able to return.





GO WILD IN YOUR GARDEN!

Help the Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership to celebrate the Year of the Garden 2020! While we are staying home to help save lives, your garden can become a great place to improve your wellbeing and support nature.

Whether you have a small courtyard or a large garden, here are some simple suggestions from Marlies Boydell, one of our Members and Bracknell Forest Council's Biodiversity Officer, that you can undertake to attract wildlife:

- Create a log pile as a haven for beetles and other invertebrates
- Grow a nectar bar for bees by sowing wildflower seeds
- Make a small hole in your fence as a hedgehog highway

For more ideas on how to rewild your garden, or to enter the Wild Garden Awards competition, visit: www.digforbracknell.org.uk/yog.html

Want to know more about growing wild flowers?



Wild flowers, plants and fungi are the life support for all our wildlife and their colour and character light up our landscapes. But without our help, this priceless natural heritage is in danger of being lost. If you're interested in introducing or adding wild flowers to your garden, follow this link to information on Plantlife's Wildflower Garden:

https://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/wildflower_garden

How you can help... EVERY FLOWER COUNTS!

Every Flower Counts is Plantlife's new 'citizen science' research project, designed to help them take a health-check of our lawns. With 15 million gardeners in the UK, they want to know which flowers are most abundant on lawns - and work out how much nectar they are producing for our beleaguered pollinators.



Every Flower Counts is taking place over the late May Bank Holiday weekend - **Saturday 25th to Monday 27th May** and again on **Friday 12th to Sunday 14th July**. It's incredibly easy to do, and takes just a few minutes. Once you've submitted your results, Plantlife will reveal your own Personal Nectar Score, showing how many bees your lawn can support. Then, the results from all around the UK will be combined to produce a Top Ten of lawn flowers and a National Nectar Score.

For more information and to register, go to <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/everflowercounts>

And for more inspiration on how to grow wildflowers, **Gardening botanist Trevor Dines** has some great ideas! You can sign up for his monthly Gardening Tips email, here:

<https://love-wildflowers.us8.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=6387c261b542b56fc9cdf7726&id=a5c675e99e>

SWIFTS WELCOME!

Swifts, now Amber-listed as Birds of Conservation Concern in the UK, will be arriving back from Africa any day now. It is vital to identify existing nest sites and places where they fly low over houses, house-hunting for survival.

For more information, see the new Swift fact sheet at www.digforbracknell.org.uk/yog.html and click on 'Support a Swift'.



Photo courtesy of Jon Perry

This is your Newsletter, so if you have anything you would like to be included in our next (Summer) issue, please send it to your Editor Gill Cheetham:
bfmathistsoc@rocketmail.com



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