



Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

A society for everyone interested in nature and its conservation

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER – Summer 2020



We are still here! Although times have been tough for all of us, myself and our Committee are still looking towards the future with optimism. When South Hill Park is able to let us know when it is intending to hire out the Recital Room once more, we may be up and running again. This could be some time yet, as the layout of the mansion makes it very difficult to convert into rooms where numbers can be managed efficiently, to comply with government guidance on health and safety. When the restrictions are eased enough to allow indoor gatherings, we will set up the first meeting for the coming season.

Meanwhile, our wildlife sightings have continued – or indeed, have increased. Many thanks to all of you who have kindly submitted information and photographs – I have used most of them in this edition.

I recently visited a small independent plant nursery, Butterfly Cottage Garden Plants, in Cheriton, near Alton www.butterflycottageplants.co.uk (please phone for an appointment, or they do mail order). It specialises in plants that attract butterflies and other pollinators. It was great to see so many different butterflies gliding around the plants, and even better to purchase some of them for my own garden. I am now seeing more and more wild bees, moths and butterflies tasting the latest blooms as the Summer progresses.

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

Beautiful Orchids in Bracknell Forest



Since early spring well known sites in the area have once again provided an abundance of flowers. These are (*left to right*) Bee Orchids outside Boehringer Ingleheim, Pyramidal Orchids at Amen Corner, the Common Spotted, seen at many locations in Bracknell Forest, and Southern Marsh Orchids at the Running Horse roundabout.

And below we have Broad Leaved Helleborine in Easthampstead Churchyard (*left*) and Twayblade on the former BMW Bank.



Wild Garden Awards

During those dire lockdown days, many of us took particular pride in our garden/allotment/shared greenspace. There's still time to acquire some glorious recognition for your efforts - by entering **The Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership's Wild Garden Awards**, organised to celebrate The Year of the Garden 2020.

See over for more details



It's really easy to enter the **Wild Garden Awards**. Just download the Entry Form, which gives full instructions... and you'll also need to provide photographs of some areas of your garden. **Entries close on Monday 31st August, so go for it!**

This is the link to the **Entry Form** www.digforbracknell.org.uk/yog.html

Good luck!

Peregrine Falcons

A pair of Falcons have nested on the top of the Fujitsu building in the Southern Industrial Area. They have been observed bringing building materials and food. It is hoped that they successfully fledge some chicks this year. The Management Team at Fujitsu is aware of the Falcons' presence and has made the rooftop safe and secure.

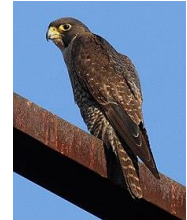


Photo: Wikipedia

Nightingale Triangle

At our woodland restoration project, the Friends of Nightingale Triangle have continued to litter-pick and undertake general maintenance tasks during the lockdown. We are very grateful for the work they have put in, during very difficult times.



Many species of Summer wildflowers are now in evidence, and our seeded areas have produced plants such as White Campion and Ragged Robin (*left*). The Nettle beds are yet to be inhabited by the caterpillars of Red Admiral, Peacock, or Small Tortoiseshell butterflies, although Ladybird larvae are already quite at home feeding on the leaves.

The grass bank which was cleared this Spring now has several types of Vetch, red and white Clovers and Fescule grasses in flower. Brambles will become a problem if left to grow. We will be holding a small work party during the morning of **Saturday 1st August**, when hopefully large areas of Brambles can be removed – and also some dumped waste. The next date for your diary will be **Saturday 5th September**, when a full-scale work party will be organised once more.

Our AGM

It is likely that it will not be possible to hold a physical AGM in September. However, emails will go out to all Members with the necessary documents, and they will have the opportunity to comment. More information about the AGM will follow by email.

Colin's Move to Wales



Our former treasurer Colin Griffin sends regular nature notes and photos from his new home in Mid Wales.

His local birds include Redstarts (nesting box), Pied Flycatchers (also in a box), Short Eared owls, Marsh Tits, and plenty of Bullfinches and Greenfinches.

Lately, he says, two polecats have begun to visit his garden, scaring the hell out of the resident rabbits!

You Could Learn a Thing or two!



Formed in 1943 to create a world where everyone feels connected to the environment, so that they can enjoy the benefits and make choices to protect it, **The Field Studies Council** runs 29 centres throughout the UK, with 165,000+ guests catered for each year.

The nearest centre to us is Juniper Hall in Mickleham (situated between the towns of Dorking and Leatherhead) – and despite the current restrictions, they still have plenty of interesting courses available. The **Natural History Courses** explore all aspects of the natural world for beginners, enthusiasts, volunteer recorders and professionals – covering animals, plants, habitats and conservation.

Visit their website www.field-studies-council.org, call 01306 734501 or email enquiries.jh@field-studies-council.org



It's Not Too Late to Count Butterflies!

The Big Butterfly Count is a UK-wide 'Citizen Science' survey aimed at helping us assess the health of our environment – simply by counting the amount and type of butterflies we see, in 15 minutes. The survey is underway now (closing date is Sunday 9th August) so visit the website – it's very easy to take part.

<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>

A Message from The Bat Conservation Trust

As well as being of great value to bat conservation, the surveys organised by The Bat Conservation Trust's **National Bat Monitoring Programme** are fun and rewarding to carry out.

They usually involve visiting a roost or potential foraging site on two evenings in the Summer, and the NBMP team run different surveys catering to different levels of experience and knowledge.

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/surveys>



The following is a message from the NBMP team:

“Please take notice of the latest updates to our **COVID-19 Guidance** for NBMP surveys following further discussions with our government agency partners and reviewing our health and safety guidelines.

“Please carefully read the guidance for the survey(s) you take part in that is relevant to you. Our top priority is keeping everyone safe, so if you have any concerns about carrying out your surveys this year then please do not feel that you have to take part. Please be reassured that the NBMP is a long-term monitoring scheme; reduced survey coverage in any one year is not detrimental to the long-term value of your surveys.”

The updated guidance can be found here:

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/covid-19-advice-for-nbmp-volunteers>



Hedgehog Street is a joint campaign by [People's Trust for Endangered Species](#) and [The British Hedgehog Preservation Society](#)

The dry weather in early Summer brought difficulties for hedgehogs and other wildlife as water and food became scarce. Putting out a shallow dish of plain, fresh water can provide a lifeline for hedgehogs, and in hot weather this simple action becomes even more crucial.



Natural food sources such as earthworms can also become inaccessible due to dry, compacted soil, so [supplementary food](#) can also really help.

Some of our BFNHS Members may have taken part in **Hedgehogs After Dark**, helping to discover the hidden lives of hedgehogs. You may also have entered the prize draw when logging hedgehog behaviours. We have now been advised that the hedgehog hamper prize will contain a **state of the art wildlife camera** courtesy of [NatureSpy!](#)

If you haven't yet logged hedgehog behaviours and entered the prize draw, it's not too late. Hedgehogs After Dark is running until the end of July and you can find out more [HERE](#)



Summer Gardening Advice

The folks at Hedgehog Street regularly put out gardening advice, and you can click here to access their recent [Top Tip](#) which focuses on making your garden hedgehog friendly. It's important to think about suitable flowers and shrubs and features like log piles - and ensuring hazards are removed is vital too. Avoiding chemicals, checking before strimming and adding exit ramps to ponds are as essential as your choice of plants and hedgehog houses.

Not sure where to start? Check out their three-part guide to [Wildlife Gardening for Beginners](#)



And Lastly...

Remember, if you have a sick, injured or orphaned hedgehog please call the **British Hedgehog Preservation Society** on **01584 890 801**. Alternatively, if your query isn't urgent, email info@britishhedgehogs.org.uk.

There is also a Frequently Asked Questions page on their website. <https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk>

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



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