



Wild About Beds

Summer 2018

Dogfight in the skies above Toddington

by John Pitts

Just doing some gardening when I heard some irritated twittering overhead. Just too loud for our House Martins. Looked up a noisy clutch of Starling were screaming around nearby and then I saw the cause of the kerfuffle, a Sparrowhawk flapping around the rooftops, being seen off by the Starlings and several corvids. The battle continued as the predator circled and climbed, closely followed by several corvids. This went on until the Sparrowhawk was just a dot in the sky and doggedly pursued by just one Corvid, possibly a Rook.



Immature sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* (this one was not the source of the Toddington Kerfuffle!). Photo by Dave Curtis

The neighbours, had they heard me, must have thought I was one crazy old git as I shouted words of encouragement to the Rook far far above me. Eventually the Sparrowhawk tired of this sport and stooped very fast from that height and out of sight, closely followed by the Rook. Made my day. The simple pleasures and free.

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Wild About Beds is the newsletter of:



The Bedfordshire Natural History Society
www.bnhs.org.uk
 Registered charity number 268659



BedsLife
www.bedsbionet.org.uk

The BNHS

The BNHS was formed in 1946, its main function to record the fauna and flora of the county. It has over twenty active Recorders who cover many branches of natural history study and whose annual reports are published in the *Bedfordshire Naturalist* journal.

Members receive a quarterly newsletter, Wild About Beds, and programmes of meetings. These meetings include field meetings to Bedfordshire sites and occasionally farther afield. During the winter months there are illustrated lectures normally held in Maulden; the Christmas Members' Evening is held in Maulden.

The Society depends on annual subscriptions which are devoted to its working, as all offices are honorary. Membership is open to anyone, whether resident in the county or not. If you would like to join the Society, please contact **Mary Sheridan**, Honorary Membership Secretary, 28 Chestnut Hill, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 2TR. Tel: 01525 378245, email membership@bnhs.org.uk.

BedsLife

BedsLife - Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Partnership is a consortium of government and non-governmental agencies dedicated to promoting the maintenance and enhancement of Bedfordshire's biodiversity. The Partnership oversees the implementation and monitoring of the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan, which can be found online at www.bedsbionet.org.uk.

Editor: Heather Webb

The Wildlife Trust, Priory Country Park, Barkers Lane Bedford MK41 9DJ.

Email: newsletter@bnhs.org.uk.

Your comments/notes on anything that you have observed in the field, on the road or in a past Wild About Beds issue are welcome/essential for continuity. Please do send articles to me either as an attachment via email or through the post. Pictures are always welcome; material required by **15 September 2018** please.

Thank you in anticipation.

The next Wild About Beds will be published in **September 2018**. Please note that any views are independent of the Bedfordshire Natural History Society and BedsLife.

The Third BNHS Insect Conference: mark your calendars!

by Alan Outen

More Neglected Insects in Beds will be held on **Saturday 17 November 2018**.

The conference will be of interest to specialists and enthusiastic naturalists alike, both from Bedfordshire and further afield. The format will be much the same as in 2014 and 2016 with four talks in the morning and three in the afternoon. There will be a coffee/tea break mid-morning, lunch will be provided as well as refreshments at the end of the event as part of the entry fee, so the cost for the day is excellent value. The venue will again be at the Marston Vale Forest Centre, which has plenty of good parking (*free for conference delegates*) and excellent facilities, as well as being easily accessible for those coming from distance.

We have another excellent line up of highly acclaimed specialists as speakers (not in running order):

Craneflies	John Kramer
Dolichopodidae - Long-legged flies or 'Dollies'	Martin Drake
Sciomyzidae - Snail-killing flies	Stuart Ball
Ladybirds	Peter Brown
Scarabaeids - Scarab Beetles	Darren Mann
Ichneumons	Gavin Broad
Scale Insects and Mealy Bugs	Chris Malumphy

It promises to be another very interesting day. There will also be various displays including specimens and books by some of the speakers, information about various groups of insects in the county, the BNHS nature table as well as sales.

We are again limited to 100 places and following an initial period for members to have priority booking we will be advertising this nationally as we did in previous years, when we have had some coming from as far away as Leicester, Norwich and Isle of Wight!

Tickets: £20 for BNHS and Bedfordshire Bird Club members, £25 for non-members (the BNHS is again subsidising the cost).

BUG LAB is back!



Our Summer partnership BUG LAB events are fast approaching and once again we'd like the help of BNHS members please!

Like last year's events, we'll advertise and organise each session with pre booking, making them far more manageable and lots of fun.

For those members who have never been along we aim to encourage youngsters with their families to look closely, identify and record creatures at a number of different Central Bedfordshire and Greensand Trust sites on a number of different days. It can be hectic but it's also rewarding seeing the young people who attend engaging with nature in such a way.

If you have a particular expertise and would like to come along to help identify species and inspire the youngsters please do get in touch, but also please encourage your children, grandchildren, friends and neighbours to book onto one of the sessions and give it a try. Visit the Greensand Trust website for more information or www.greensandtrust.org to book – places are limited!

We're looking for volunteers for the following locations, dates and times. Please contact [Erika.Pratt\(at\)greensandtrust.org](mailto:Erika.Pratt@greensandtrust.org)

Amphill Park	Tuesday 24 July	12.30 – 13.45	14.00 – 15.15
Rushmere Country Park, Heath and Reach (nr Leighton Buzzard)	Monday 30 July	12.30 – 13.45	14.00 – 15.15
Houghton Hall Park, Houghton Regis	Tuesday 31 July	12.30 – 13.45	14.00 – 15.15
Linslade Wood, nr Leighton Buzzard	Wednesday 1 August	12.30 – 13.45	14.00 – 15.15
Tiddenfoot Waterside Park, Leighton Buzzard	Thursday 2 August	12.30 – 13.45	14.00 – 15.15
Flitwick Wood, Flitwick	Friday 3 August		14.00 – 15.15
Centenary Wood, Pulloxhill	Monday 6 August		14.00 – 15.15
Rushmere Country Park, Heath and Reach (nr Leighton Buzzard)	Tuesday 7 August	12.30 – 13.45	14.00 – 15.15
Working Woodlands Centre, Maulden	Wednesday 8 August		14.00 – 15.15

Linking up with Whipsnade Zoo

by Wilf Powell & Alan Outen

BNHS has developed a rewarding link with The Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) Whipsnade Zoo. During the last couple of years BNHS recorders and members of the affiliated Bedfordshire Invertebrate Group (BIG) have made several visits, at varying times of year, to record British wildlife living within the zoo grounds. This collaboration arose following discussions in 2016, initiated by Alan Outen, at which zoo staff expressed a desire to discover and record native flora and fauna occurring on the Whipsnade site.

On agreed dates, BNHS recorders and BIG members are given free entry to the zoo and are taken to suitable habitats, many of which are not normally accessible to the public. This is organised by Tyrone Capel, who is released from his normal zoo duties for the day, though various other staff have also been involved at times and we have had tremendous cooperation and interest from all the staff there. So far, a wide variety of fauna and flora has been recorded during these visits and the resulting data have been passed on to the zoo authorities and to the Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BRMC). This is proving to be a very enjoyable and beneficial activity for both the BNHS and ZSL and has provided a range of new county records. These include several synanthropic invertebrates (i.e. associated with human activities) living in the butterfly house and/or the old discovery centre. One of these, discovered by Mark Telfer, is the woodlouse *Anchiphiloscia pilosa* which is an exotic species mainly known from islands in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Mark and Steve Gregory have recently published its discovery as a new species to Britain in the *Bulletin of the British Myriapod and Isopod Group*, volume 30 (2018). The butterfly house has proved to be a productive hunting ground for invertebrate enthusiasts in search of exotic synanthropes and other species discovered include another woodlouse, a millipede, 2 centipedes, a beetle, a scale insect, two ants, two snails and an earthworm. All of these were new to Bedfordshire and each of them was only previously known from one or two other sites in the country such as Kew, Wisley, Eden Project etc.



Caloplaca albolutescens: on top of a brick wall beside the Sea Lion enclosure. Perhaps the most photogenic of the lichens we found on the preliminary survey on 18 February.



Cylindrodesmus hirsutus: a tiny white millipede, Whipsnade Zoo, butterfly house, only known from a couple of other synanthropic sites in the UK

In addition to the Invertebrate work other groups of organisms have not been neglected. Members of the Flora Group have joined several of the excursions whilst a fungus foray was held there last year and there will be another this year. A group of us have also visited and conducted a preliminary lichen survey. On last year's foray the species list was one of the highest ever for day in the county with the list including several species new to the county. One synanthropic species (*Gymnopus multijuga*) was only the second UK record (previously only known from Kew) whilst another species from the butterfly house still has experienced mycologists completely baffled! The lichenologists also had a very successful day with 93 species recorded including two NCRs. As only a few areas were studied there will certainly be further visits.

Tyrone Capel is making a presentation to BIAZA (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) on 19 June about the partnership between ZSL/BNHS/BIG and the many exciting finds made.

On behalf of ZSL, Paul Pearce-Kelly (Senior Curator, Invertebrates and Research) recently sent an email message to Alan Outen, to thank us for all the time and expertise helping to record the biodiversity at Whipsnade. The next visit is scheduled for Wednesday 18 July.

WANTED

Assistant to Membership Secretary
with a view to taking over the main
role in two/three years' time

For further information please contact

Mary Sheridan

Tel: 01525 378245 Email: membership@bnhs.org.uk



Please note: to reduce the risk of email spam being sent to contributors and others, '(at)' appears in email addresses in place of '@' in this newsletter. -Ed.



More Neglected Insects in Beds
Another Bedfordshire Natural History Society Conference
of interest to specialists and enthusiastic naturalists alike.



Venue: The Forest Centre, Millenium Country Park, Marston Moretaine, MK43 0PR ,
Date: **Saturday 17 November 2018** Open at 09:30 for 10:00 prompt start – finish at 16:30hrs

Entrance: £20 for BNHS & Bird Club members, £25 for non-members.

This fee includes all refreshments and cold buffet lunch. Note ticket price is NON-REFUNDABLE

Please complete and tear off the application form below and return with a cheque to:
Mike Bird, Treasurer, BNHS, 69 Cotefield Drive, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 3DN

To secure your place a booking form is included on the back of this page

For your diary
by Julia Powell

It is a long way ahead I know but please do not forget that our **programme of winter talks** starts on TUESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER at 8pm in Maulden Village Hall.

Orchards East is an exciting new environmental and cultural project covering six counties in the east of England - Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Funded by the Heritage Lottery fund and based in the School of History at the University of East Anglia (UEA), it is devoted to discovering and understanding the past, present and future of orchards in Eastern England, and will last for three years. Steve Halton will be bringing us the latest information and after the break he will be showing us some of his magnificent artwork.

Christmas Social Members Evening

The date for our festive get together has been confirmed as TUESDAY DECEMBER 11th in Maulden Village Hall at 8pm. We look forward to sharing the best of your beautiful photos, videos and festive food.

Hoopoe would like to remind us that our feathery friends need water too, especially in this dry summer weather. Please if you can leave some fresh water out for them.



More Neglected Insects in Beds conference booking form

Please send me [] Conference ticket(s). I enclose a cheque, made payable to Bedfordshire Natural History Society for the sum of £

I understand that the ticket price is non-refundable (Please tick)

Please name all the delegates below or on a separate sheet

Delegate 1 Name: _____ Tick if BNHS member

Delegate 2 Name: _____ Tick if BNHS member

Address to which tickets should be sent:

_____ Post code: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Please indicate if you have special dietary requirements: _____

Please tell us how you heard about this event: BNHS member/Beds Bird Club member/Personal email/Wildlife Trust mailing/Other (please specify: _____)



Events Programme Summer 2018

Please check the website www.bnhs.org.uk or join the BNHS News Group for the latest information.

In severe weather, the leaders may cancel the event if conditions are unsuitable. Please check the website early on the day or contact Sheila or Julia.

Indoor talks start at 8pm at Maulden Village Hall, grid reference TL048380, post code MK45 2DP. Parking is free. Visitors are encouraged.

A small charge is requested for refreshments at the talks and possibly on other occasions too. Donations are always welcome.

For field meetings, please wear stout footwear and warm clothing, bring a hat, water and sun cream if it is hot. OS Landranger Numbers 152, 153, 165 & 166 cover Bedfordshire.

REGRETTABLY NO DOGS ARE ALLOWED and children under 16 years must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Unfortunately some trips will not be suitable for wheelchair users and pushchairs. Please contact the leader in advance if you have any concerns about accessibility.

Please check the web site www.bnhs.org.uk or join the BNHS News Group for the latest information.

(F) Particularly suitable for families and young people.

(L) Bring a picnic lunch for all day events.



Meetings organised by the ornithological section, the Bedfordshire Bird Club (BBC)

WEDNESDAY 4th JULY, MAULDEN 10:30am – 1pm (F)

Visit Duck End NR for the abundant wildlife at this small, varied reserve. Limited parking at the site in Moor Lane, Maulden, TL051374, MK45 2DJ.

Leader: David Withers

SUNDAY 8th JULY, STRUMPSHAW 9am 

BBC Day trip joint with BNHS to RSPB Strumpshaw Fen Reserve, Norfolk for specialty breeding birds and dragonflies plus an excellent chance of Swallowtail butterfly. Meet in reserve car park at Low Road, Strumpshaw, Norwich, NR13 4HS, TG342068.

Leader: Peter Marshall

SATURDAY 21st JULY, FLITTON from 12 noon. (F)

Visit Flitton Moor for the 30th Anniversary celebrations of its inception. Art exhibition, BBQ, duck race, pond dipping, nature trail and displays. Meet at the barn at the end of Brook Lane, TL057360, MK45 5EJ where there is limited parking.

Leader: David Sedgley

SUNDAY 22nd JULY, SHEFFORD 9:30am – 1pm 

BBC Joint with BNHS morning birding and looking for some interesting butterflies in Chicksands Wood. Park and meet at entrance to wood, at Standalone Warren, MK45 3QQ, TL106411.

Leaders: Kevin Sharpe for birds and Peter Glenister, for Butterflies

WEDNESDAY 25th JULY, EATON BRAY 10:30am - 4pm (L)

Visit Bellows Mill for dragonflies and other invertebrates. There is a good variety of habitats here so lots of interesting creatures could be seen. Follow Bellows Mill Lane to the end where you will see the old mill house in front of you. Carry on round to the right past the short-let chalets and into the field by the lake to a crushed stone car park, SP980196, LU6 1QZ.

Leader: Rory Morrisey

SATURDAY 4th AUGUST, FLITTON 10:30am – 1pm (F)

Visit Flitton Moor to look for dragonflies and explore the nature trail. Meet at the barn at the end of Brook Lane, TL057360, MK45 5EJ where there is limited parking.

Leaders: John Curd and David Sedgley

FRIDAY 10th AUGUST, DUNSTABLE 7pm – 9pm 

Visit to Dunstable Sewage Treatment Works for a variety of wetland species. Meet in Birdwatchers' car park, off Thorn Road, TL004242.

Leader: Peter Marshall

WEDNESDAY 22nd AUGUST, SHUTTLEWORTH 10am – 4pm (F) (L)

Visit Swiss Garden for their Bug Hunt, a joint meeting with Bedfordshire Invertebrate Group (BIG). Walks through the grounds, insect recording activities and nature table display. Please book with Alan Outen to reserve your place: alanouten@virginmedia.com 01462 811374. Entrance fee will be waived for members entering with the group at 10:00 prompt. Meet in the car park, TL150448, SG18 9EP.

Leader: Alan Outen

SUNDAY 26th AUGUST, HARROLD 10:30am – 1pm (F) (L)

Pond dipping at Harrold-Odell Country Park and find out what is living under water. There will also be quizzes, the nature table and a photographic display. Meet at the visitor centre car park, SP956566, MK43 7DS.

Leader: Sheila Brooke

SATURDAY 1st SEPTEMBER, MAULDEN 9:30am-12 noon (F)

Visit Duck End NR for Small Mammal Trapping (mice, voles and shrews). We are hoping for Water Shrew this time. Limited parking at the site in Moor Lane, Maulden, TL051374, MK45 2DJ.

Leader: Mick McCarrick

SUNDAY 9th SEPTEMBER, LUTON 10:30am-1pm (F)

Walk along the Upper Lea to look at the early autumn habitats of the River Lea and its tributaries from the source to Limbury Meads. The historic common, marsh and Rotten Corner wood were once a SSSI and still have a great deal of interest while history and heritage are important features too. Meet in the Leagrave Common car park TL056246, nearest post code LU3 3AA.

Leader: Trevor Tween

TUESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER, MAULDEN 8pm

Talk "A New Orchard Survey of Beds and A Creative View - Sketching Wildlife" by Steve Halton, Senior Countryside Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council. 'Orchards East' is a new HLF-funded project with the aim to survey, record and promote orchards in the Eastern counties. Come along to find out how you can contribute to surveying Bedfordshire's orchard heritage. Steve has worked in conservation in Bedfordshire and beyond for over 30 years. He is also a passionate wildlife artist, writer and poet who records our wildlife and landscapes in a unique and individual way.

If you wish to know more about any of the events please contact either :

Sheila Brooke Tel: 01525 873396 Mobile: 07905 949901 Email: [brooke.se\(at\)btinternet.com](mailto:brooke.se(at)btinternet.com)

or Julia Powell Tel: 01582 661328 Mobile: 07958 161938 Email: [JuliaCPowell800\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:JuliaCPowell800(at)gmail.com)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The BNHS thanks all who have kindly given permission to visit and to hold field meetings on their properties.

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