



Wild About Beds

Summer 2021

Queen's Honour for BNHS member

Peter Smith, BNHS member and co-founder of the Greensand Trust, has been honoured by Her Majesty the Queen for Services to Wildlife and Conservation in Bedfordshire in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2021. Congratulations Peter Smith MBE!

A resident of Eversholt, a Chartered Surveyor and Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, he is highly respected having led various organisations at partnership and or directorship level.

Peter and his wife Sandy are passionate supporters of the local environment, in which they have invested both time and resources for its protection.

Peter also founded another charity, The Peter Smith Charitable Trust for Nature which aims to support wildlife at home and overseas.



In this 199th issue:

Contents

Help wanted!	2
From the Chair	3
Update from the Flora Group	4
Ladybirds vs Shieldbugs	4
Toads of the Flit Valley	7

Contents

Spring programme highlights	8
The flowering plants of Wilden	12
Looking for speakers	16
Upcoming events	16

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 **Kath Hindley**, Honorary Membership Secretary, Tel: 01525 841256, 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.

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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 2021** please.

Thank you in anticipation.

The next Wild About Beds will be published in **September 2021**. Please note that any views are independent of the Bedfordshire Natural History Society and BedsLife.

Exciting opportunity to help your society to run smoothly; - Publicity and Communications Officer

We'd love to reach more people and highlight the fabulous wildlife we have in Bedfordshire so to help with this BNHS is looking for a Publicity and Communications Officer.

As with all positions within BNHS the role is voluntary and unpaid.

The Publicity and Communications Officer will look at how the BNHS currently manages its public face and suggest and implement new ways to raise the profile of the BNHS, increase public awareness of its work and help attract and retain membership across all ages. You will get involved with communicating items of interest, forthcoming events and natural history news to existing members as well as potential members.

The role would suit someone with a good working knowledge of social media and communication or someone seeking experience in this field. Ideally you will have an interest in Natural History and be happy to join the BNHS if already not a member. If you are interested in publicity and communication, why don't you get in touch for a chat?

The Officer will be supported by a working group of experienced naturalists and will be able to call on the expertise of Council, Recorders and the specialist groups. For further information about the BNHS see our website <https://www.bnhs.co.uk/index.php>

For further information and to arrange an informal chat contact Graham Bellamy after the 15th of July.
chairman@bnhs.org.uk

Notes from the Chair

by Graham Bellamy

Summer suddenly arrived after a prolonged cool and wet spring. The May blossom lived up to its name and forsook the recent trend of flowering in April. Before the rain started in earnest the toad spawn laid in the small pond at Knocking hoe National Nature Reserve hatched and perished as the pond became nearly dry. However, the wet spell re-filled the pond and a second round of spawn was laid in early April. Let us hope this see-sawing weather allows the toadpoles to develop before the next dry period.

My attempt at encouraging Swifts to nest on our house has been a little dispiriting over a number of years now, except for the House Sparrows who seem to like the boxes. However, this year there has been some determined aerobatics and screaming with a pair looking seriously at the eaves by landing for several seconds on the wall before swooping off again. Great to watch and has restored my faith in my attempts to attract the Swifts. I hope they stay and breed...but then there's always next year. The Bedfordshire Swift group (affiliated to the BNHS) has been working hard to provide more nesting opportunities for Swifts for a number of years now with cabinet boxes being put up in several church towers..the message would be don't give up it may take several years to attract them. It's really exciting when they do. If you are involved with your local church and think it might be suitable for Swifts contact the Swift group via me and we will arrange to have a look.

It's been great to be able to get out and meet fellow members again on society field trips; also both the Beds. Invertebrate Group and the Flora Group have been active and have been finding new records or rediscovering old records to increase and update our knowledge of Bedfordshire's biodiversity. Individuals have been busy recording and I know that Keith Balmer has appreciated the butterfly records being sent in, we are receiving good numbers of orchid records via the orchid adnoto reporting system. We have received well over 3.5 thousand records of orchids since the we began in 2012. Our Recorder for Grasshoppers and Crickets, Kevin Sharpe, has decided to step down after 30 years. We will still be able to send in records via the adnoto record form but we are on the lookout for someone willing to take on being recorder for this interesting group. If you are interested, please contact myself (chairman(at)bnhs.org.uk) or Mike Roberts the secretary of the Scientific committee. (science(at)bnhs.org.uk). Thanks for being our recorder Kevin.

Congratulations to BNHS member Peter Smith for being awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Peter's award was for services to Wildlife and Conservation in Bedfordshire. Peter was co-founder with Richard Woolnough of the Greensand Trust 22 years ago and the establishment of important wildlife sites such as Sandy Smith nature reserve and Rushmere country Park. Peter's support has, among other things, enabled the society to introduce colour plates to the Bedfordshire Naturalist and also help keep up our record of publishing books on the county's fauna and flora.

See further inside this Summer edition of *Wild About Beds* for a request for a Publicity and Communications officer. Your society wants to review and go forward with the most effective ways to communicate with you and also reach new members. If you have an interest in communication and would like to help the society do have a look and get in touch.

Thanks to those who responded for the request for editorial support in the spring WAB, we now have a happy editor and others engaged with producing the Bedfordshire Naturalist. Thankyou.

I hope you all have an exciting wildlife-filled summer.



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.

Flora Group Update

by John Wakely

It has been wonderful to meet up at last, albeit only in groups of six (or multiple separate groups thereof).

We first met mid-April at Barton Hills to see the early season specialities. These included Moschatel and Herb Paris by the stream, and Spring Sedge, Hairy Violet and of course Pasque flowers on the chalk downland.

Late April saw a strange group on their hands and knees on the sandy slope above the football pitch on Maulden recreation ground. Annual Knawel, a national rarity, is frequent there at the only known Bedfordshire site. Corn Spurrey and a few measly plants of Blinks, and Subterranean Clover were other notable finds. The last species enjoyed a good year with impressive displays carpeting the ground on road verges and short turf at a number of sites on the Greensand from which it had not been reported previously.

Two visits were made to Tebworth Marsh, a relatively pristine area, at the beginning and end of May. The site is dominated by Lesser Pond Sedge, Soft and Jointed Rushes with a large number of impressive tall Tussock Sedge plants. There are also good populations of Marsh Pennywort, Marsh Marigold and Ragged Robin. The later visit enabled us to identify Bottle and Brown Sedges. A further visit is planned.

The Wildlife trust's new acquisition, Roger's Field was visited mid-May. In recent years the land has been extensively horse-grazed, this being the first year for a long time the no grazing had occurred. The late growing season meant that there were a number of tantalising plants which we could only tentatively identify. The site is a mosaic of different wet areas which demand further exploration. And those orchid leaves

By the times we visited Sandy Heath Quarry at the end of May, the sun had come out and the flower season was catching up. Extensively rabbit grazing means that low-growing plants can flourish. The flora was dominated by Early Hair-grass, Common Storks-bill, Squirrel-tail Fescue and Cudweeds. There is a reasonable population of Smooth Cat's-ear, presumed extinct in the county until it was re-found in the Sandy area some 25 years ago. Since then, it has been found in a couple of other disused quarries, and this year on a sandy horse pasture in Millbrook. The tiny flowers only open in bright sunshine, so perhaps the plants have been overlooked in the past, or maybe there has been a genuine increase in range.

Other notable finds this year have been Mousetail, a rare arable weed in the east of the county, Wood Sorrel from Flitwick Moor for the first time, and Small Cleavers from Dunstable.

Ladybirds vs Shieldbugs – A half-time report

story and photos by Keith Balmer

This article was submitted for Wild About Beds in June 2017 but it wasn't chosen for publication then. Following the interesting zoom talk on May 12th 2021 by Dr Peter Brown on the Ladybirds of Britain I thought I would re-submit the article in the hope of encouraging local surveying for these colourful insects (and for Shieldbugs too!)

After finding a Pine ladybird on my apple tree trunk on March 25th, and inspired by Stephen Plummer's quest in 2010 to see all of Bedfordshire's mammals in one season, I set myself the task of finding and photographing as many Bedfordshire ladybird species as I could this year. This would ensure that I visited a range of habitats: woodlands; grasslands; heathlands and wetlands; and I'd be pretty sure to find other interesting things along the way.

So, equipped with a sweep net and my trusty cat-litter tray for beating into, I set off to Cooper's Hill on March 26th to try for the heathland specialists, Heather and Hieroglyphic ladybirds. I found neither but did have my first encounter with Harlequin ladybird, an orange form with many black spots which seems to be the commonest. Noting a Gorse Shieldbug that day I decided that I may as well keep a tally of shieldbugs too.

Trying next for conifer species I made my first visit to Rowney Warren on 2nd April and beat a 10-spot ladybird from a young fir, though it isn't a conifer specialist. This is a very variable species and the one I got



Larch ladybird *Aphidecta obliterata* at Rowney Warren

was a blotchy form that doesn't have 10 spots! Larch ladybird though is a conifer specialist and I did beat one from something with needles (I don't distinguish conifers well) but I wasn't sure about the ID until it was confirmed from photos by Helen Roy of the national Ladybird Recording Scheme a few days later. It was rather smaller than I'd expected and not very ladybird-like. Birch shieldbug was a by-catch that day.

My apple tree produced a Hawthorn shieldbug on 4th April, but no more ladybirds.

Rowney Warren proved successful again on 6th April with conifer specialists Eyed and Cream-streaked ladybirds, the latter being another new species for me. (It's in the same genus as Harlequin ladybird and looks a bit similar). Hairy shieldbug was also encountered, but ladybirds were still ahead of shieldbugs 6 – 4. There are remnants of heather there too but no sign of Heather or Hieroglyphic ladybirds.

On 8th April I was back at Cooper's Hill to look for these species again but instead found 7-spot ladybird and several Common Green shieldbugs.

In the heat of 9th April I strolled the banks of the Great Ouse at Roxton, losing my sunglasses but finding Pied shieldbug on white dead nettle and a Cream-spot ladybird beaten from hawthorn.

On 15th April a visit to Chicksands Wood to see early purple orchids resulted in two more species, an Orange ladybird beaten from a conifer and a 14-spot ladybird beaten from bramble. The latter is one of our two black and yellow species, the one with the chunkier spots often fused together.

On 19th April my garden Woundwort shieldbugs appeared. Later that day I visited Fenlake Meadows to try for Water ladybird (unsuccessfully) but did find our other species of black and yellow ladybird, the tiny 22-spot, with its clearly separated spots. Slender Groundhopper was another interesting find there.

On 20th April I was volunteering with the Wildlife Trust at Sharnbrook Summit NR doing fence repairs and spied a Juniper shieldbug sitting on a fence post. (Score now 11-8 to ladybirds.)



Cream-streaked ladybird *Harmonia quadripunctata* at Rowney Warren



The diminutive 22-spot ladybird *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata*

A return visit to Rowney Warren on April 28th resulted in no new species but I did beat from a rowan my first ever *Pogonocherus hispidulus* longhorn beetle, which I sadly misidentified at the time as the very similar *Pogonocherus hispidus*, but was later re-educated by the National Recorder when I submitted the record with a photograph!

May 6th was cold and cloudy so I went to Priory Country Park to look for the tiny Water ladybird which I eventually swept from waterside vegetation once I became brave enough to get right to the water's edge which seemed to be their lair. This is a surprisingly "flat" ladybird, not domed like most of the others, and changes colour in winter.

I still had two more conifer species to find so moved my search to Stanford Wood where I was immediately showered in 18-spot ladybirds when beating the trees,

surprisingly having found none in nearby Rowney Warren. Striped ladybird, the final conifer specialist, still eluded me. (Score now 13 – 8 to ladybirds).

I saw only two ladybirds on a visit to Sandy Smith NR on 14th May but fortunately one was a “missing” species, the Kidney Spot, crawling on an ash tree trunk looking for scale insects to eat. A Bishop’s Mitre shieldbug was also swept from grassland there.

On 21st May a visit to Rookery Pit proved interesting in many ways (especially for Dingy and Grizzled Skippers) but not for ladybirds, but another shieldbug species was observed, the Forget-me-not. (Score now 14 -10).

On 24th May while we were man orchid monitoring at Totternhoe Quarry Wilf Powell swept a 24-spot ladybird from low vegetation which I took home to photograph. This is our only hairy ladybird and the hairs showed well in the pics. I submitted the record into iRecord, as I have done with all the ladybird species encountered, and received the comment “Thank you Wilf - beautiful photo!” from Helen who verified it, as I’d credited him with the record!

New ladybird encounters have since dried up but trees at Cooper’s Hill were swarming with Red-legged Shieldbugs when I visited on 23rd June, still looking for Heather and Hieroglyphic ladybirds.



Red-legged shieldbug *Pentotoma rufipes* at Cooper’s Hill



The 24-spot ladybird *Subcoccinella vigintiquattuorpunktata* is our only hairy ladybird.

I have twice seen 16-spot ladybird this year (at Dropshort Marsh and Cooper’s Hill) but failed to photograph them each time, so hopefully that will be rectified soon. I have therefore seen 16 ladybird species so far and of course new ones are now harder to find. The potential remaining targets are 2-spot; Heather; Hieroglyphic; Striped; Adonis and 11-spot. I’ve also had a stab for Scarce 7-spot ladybird in Maulden Wood as it is associated with wood ants, but without luck, though it may not even be present in the county. I’m also checking white bryony for the Bryony ladybird, but that is a long shot as I think it’s still further south.

The current score of ladybirds to shieldbugs is therefore 16 – 11, but it’s still only half time... Photographs of all the species can be found on my blog at <http://kbalmer.blogspot.co.uk/>

Keith Balmer, June 2017

Hoopoe would like to say that in her defence, the Editor never received the original article and the author was too polite to complain about it not being published!



Toads of the Valley

by Lloyd G. Rose

The humble common toad (*Bufo bufo*) is in severe decline with a reported decline of 68% across the UK in the last 30 years (Petrovan & Schmidt, 2016). These declines are due to many factors including habitat loss, road mortality (an estimated loss of up to 20 tonnes of toads a year), disease and development of suitable habitats. Our little warty friends are rapidly vanishing before our eyes, although nationwide conservation projects and toad patrols are doing everything they can.



Common toad *Bufo bufo*. Photo by Rolf Dietrich Brecher

My findings from many night time torchlight surveys from early February until May throughout the Flit Valley suggest that our fragmented populations within the valley are doing reasonably well with populations peaking back at breeding ponds in the area by late March. Flitton Moor Nature Reserve pond demonstrated numbers in excess of 800 individuals in a single night, along with large numbers in the adjacent drainage ditch and crossing the path travelling from the wooded areas back to the pond.

Duck End Nature Reserve in nearby Maulden also produced large numbers spread across the numerous ponds, although mostly concentrated in one pond with just low counts in the other ponds. The adjacent allotments seem to be the stronghold for the Maulden population, with all but a few travelling across the track from the allotments every night for a few weeks in large numbers nightly. Sandy Smith Nature Reserve south pond produced reasonable numbers (low 100s) by early April although survey conditions were not ideal due to recent flood water still draining off, during day time surveys on the site many could still be heard calling from the pond and surrounding area.

Numerous other ponds throughout the area produced low numbers (below 10 individuals), Maulden Meadow SSSI produced very few and numbers in ponds within Maulden wood were also low with the old fire pit being the preferred place for them within the wood. Sites were surveyed with permission from The Greensand Trust and Forestry England. Scattered individuals were recorded throughout the area within Maulden and the surrounding area but not in any significant number.

One aspect of concern is size, larger and older female toads are rarely seen with the vast majority (approximately 99%) being fairly small, which raises a question. Has the lifespan of the species been impacted by outside factors be it environmental, disease or the genepool of these fragmented populations becoming smaller?

These are things we will not know without further survey and study, along with the dynamics of these populations through time as the data above only covers a single survey season. My plan is to continue my survey work throughout the valley running from Amptill and Flitwick through to Shefford, gaining permission to access more sites along the way to get a better idea of all amphibian and reptile populations throughout the Flit Valley.

If any members would like to assist me on this large scale ongoing project then please contact me through BedsRAG or our social media platforms.

References

Petrovan, S. O., & Schmidt, B. R. (2016). Volunteer conservation action data reveals large-scale and long-term negative population trends of a widespread amphibian, the common toad (*Bufo bufo*). *PLoS one*, 11(10), e0161943.

Spring Highlights BNHS and BIG meetings 2021

by Julia Powell, Ann de Winter, Betty Cooke and Andrew Green

Zoom talks:

Tuesday April 20th Much Ado About Mothing by James Lowen

James Lowen is an energetic speaker and his talk was received with much enthusiasm. Travelling the length and breadth of Britain, from Cornwall to the Cairngorms, he gave us some interesting snippets from the first part of his year spent hiking up mountains, wading through marshes and roaming by night amid ancient woodlands. If you want to know more, James's book *Much Ado About Mothing* is published by Bloomsbury in July 2021.

Wednesday May 12th The Ladybirds of Britain by Dr Peter Brown

Dr Brown gave an excellent presentation at the last BNHS Conference in 2018 but his talk in April 2020 had to be cancelled so we were delighted that he agreed to give us a talk in May. He spoke about ladybird habitats, distribution and interactions between species including discussion of some of our tiniest ladybird species. Britain has at least 47 resident ladybird species and many of them are present in Bedfordshire. He is co-author of *Field Guide to the Ladybirds of Great Britain and Ireland* published by Bloomsbury Wildlife in 2018.

Field events:

Thursday April 22nd Knocking Hoe NNR

There was a really good response for this walk necessitating the offices of an extra leader in Chris Boon for the morning and Graham Bellamy, who volunteered to stay on to take another group around in the afternoon giving him a day off from lambing duty. Altogether 16 people were present, organised into three groups on what turned out to be a gloriously sunny day with a cool wind in places. It started well with some hares in the arable fields, but the afternoon people missed the Green Hairstreak although Peacock and Brimstone butterflies were about. The pond seemed to be on the way to drying out and was badly overgrown. Group members took the opportunity to photograph the numerous Pasque flowers, but many plant species were identified by their leaves as little else was flowering at this time of year. It was also interesting to see the flags enclosing the Burnt Orchid colony – we could just see the emerging leaves, and also the bank where the Autumn Lady's-tresses can be found. Ann de Winter and JP.



Pasque flowers *Pulsatilla vulgaris* at Knocking Hoe NNR. Photo by Ann de Winter.

Wednesday April 28th The Forest Centre and Millennium Country Park

Again there was sufficient response that another leader had to be co-opted and it was good to see that there were some different faces again. Bob Hook and Judith Knight led a smaller group of ten members, a little depleted from the number booked but an excellent walk none the less. We had a brief history of the site before we set out round the wetland area on a rather cloudier day. We stopped near the artificial Sand Martin bank which was well occupied and which has proved a worthy investment, having been utilised from its first season. A few observations of the birds on the bank of the Pilling and the islands were made and we carried on round for a better view. The chilly wind deterred the butterflies from appearing but the birds sang well; seven warbler species were good to hear. Keen eyes spotted a few tiny creatures hiding among the leaves such as the micro-moth, *Esperia sulphurella*. Another stop at a little grove of Elm



A juvenile *Araniella cucurbitina*. Photo by Sheila Brooke

trees generated a long photo stop for a tiny spider on Ground Elder. This was identified as a juvenile *Araniella cucurbitina*. The elms had been micro propagated from a small number of mature elms that had survived Dutch Elm disease elsewhere and they seemed to be thriving. They were planted as part of “The Great British Elm Experiment”. The highlight for everyone was near the end of the walk at the exit to the wetland area. We stopped to listen to the magnificent sound of a Nightingale and were treated to a long burst of song that lasted for several minutes. We finished with a flock of Red Poll near the main buildings. After that everyone went home happy! Betty Cooke and JP

Friday May 7th Walk from Jordans Mill to Broom Gravel Pits CWS

The popularity of this walk together with the restriction on member numbers proved to be a bit of an organiser’s nightmare. Altogether 21 people tried to book this one with numbers restricted to six people including the leader. However Betty enlisted the help from two knowledgeable locals as extra leaders and with some people dropping off the waiting list, numbers were down to a more manageable 14 on the day. So the groups enjoyed a walk from Jordan’s Mill along the River Ivel and across the fields to Broom East CWS, on a welcome sunny morning. Over 50 bird species were seen. Most notable were Grey Wagtails, seen from the bridge near the mill, and the numerous House and Sand Martins, Swallows and Swifts flying over the Broom East water. Other birds seen here included Greenshank, Ringed Plover, Lapwings and Common Terns. A distant Cuckoo was heard and an excellent view was had of a singing Sedge Warbler. Several Orange-tips and two Peacock butterflies were spotted. An iridescent small green beetle was later identified as a *Harpalus* species. A few members took advantage of relaxing with coffee at Jordan’s at the end of the walk. One member “liked to see all the trees planted to see it become a conservation site”. Many thanks to Kathy and Peter Blackmore who helped the group to conform with Covid safety guidelines. Betty has agreed to repeat this walk again on July 9th. Betty Cooke and JP.

Wednesday May 12th Forty Foot Lane and Great Hayes Wood

Seven members of the Beds Invertebrate Group enjoyed a trip to Souldrop in North Bedfordshire where we surveyed Forty Foot Lane and Great Hayes Wood. The weather was fair for the most part with spells of sunshine and some passing light rain. The vegetation was more akin to early April than mid-May with hazel not yet fully in leaf and ash and oak breaking bud. The herbaceous layer was also rather scant though bluebells were in flower. Great Hayes Wood is a large site, and we probably only dipped a toe in as far as coverage goes. Most of the group departed at around 2pm whilst Nick Millar stayed on in pursuit of beetles. Two blackthorn feeding sawfly, *Pristiphora biscalis* were swept from the hedges and woodland margin. A new one for me (AG), it was last recorded in Beds in 1979 and previously at Gt Hayes Wood on 8th May 1960. Also found was a slime mould *Lycogala terrestris* (later identified by Alan Outen), probably under recorded and new to me (JP). Andrew Green and JP.



The slime mould *Lycogala terrestris*. Photo by Julia Powell

Wednesday May 19th Duck End Nature Reserve



Photo by Sheila Brooke

For our first evening meeting of the year the weather outlook was less than ideal. However, the rain and chilly wind moved away and left nine of us with a very welcome mild, dry and sunny evening. Due to Covid-19 there had been no conservation work done on the site for a year. Duck End Nature Reserve is maintained by the Greensand Trust and Honorary Warden, David, explained what would have been done and how different the site was from the previous year. There are some very old trees that have succumbed to old age, new growth had concealed the results of last year's fire, the meadow was unusually long for the time of year and the Common Spotted-orchid was looking good. It was too early in the year to see the Round-fruited Rush but we were shown where it is expected to appear. We all enjoyed an informative and leisurely stroll round one of our much

loved reserves and look forward to another visit when the summer warmth, that we are all hoping for, brings out the insect inhabitants and other wildlife. Sheila Brooke and JP.

Saturday May 29th Invertebrate Day at Flitwick Moor

This was a joint event between Flit Vale Wildlife Trust Group, BNHS and BIG. It was with some relief that we were able to hold this event as we had not been able to do so since 2019. It was also lovely to have a sunny, warm day as we have had some awful weather to contend with in the past weeks. Four members of the Flit Vale committee were in attendance as were five members of BIG, one being Colin Carpenter who is representing both! A couple of Colin's volunteer helpers also came along to join us. As this event was organised relatively 'last-minute' it was unfortunate that more BNHS recorders could not be present, but those who did attend appeared to enjoy their time looking for specimens on the Moor. Colin's gazebo was put to good use both as a shelter from the sun and a meeting point for people to bring back their finds. We only had two families participate but they really enjoyed themselves hunting for various beasties to bring back for identification. Although one rather frazzled dad said he had difficulty being enthusiastic as he wasn't feeling great after having his Covid jab the day before! Colin made a note of finds and these will be published in due course. We arranged the date this year to coincide with the Greensand Country Festival, but I don't think we get any benefit from doing so. The consensus seemed to be that we arrange this event for a little later, perhaps the beginning or middle of June. Ann de Winter.

Wednesday June 2nd Sandy Heath Quarry

Nine of us joined with half a dozen other BNHS members on our visit to Sandy Heath Quarry, on what was a hot and breezy day. The quarry is an early successional ecosystem and as such is likely to be low in biodiversity, but high in specialist species. With three coleopterists amongst us, it will be interesting to see what they found but Green Tiger beetles and Garden Chafers were noted. An impressive (13mm long) click beetle swept from birch at the end of the day was later identified as *Agrypnus murinus*, a sand specialist with a largely coastal distribution. On the way out of the quarry Andrew also swept one of only two adult sawflies found. The solitary bee, *Andrena nigrospina*, was a nice find and has been recorded at Sandy Heath Quarry since 2015. Andrew Green and JP.

Thursday June 10th Wassledine

Eight of us were hosted by Guy and Jane at Wassledine Farm yesterday. The weather was pleasant with a light breeze and broken cloud cover. Small Heath butterfly was common on the meadows, but invertebrate life in general has seemingly not yet caught up after the cold start to the year. The morning was spent surveying the older meadows, hedgerows, scrapes and wetter areas along the River Hit. After a pleasant lunch in the barn with rock cakes and beverages provided by our hosts, Sheila and I visited the farm's small coppice woodland, whilst Wilf headed down towards the willow beds. The woodland is well managed coppice that proved highly productive for sawflies. I found the small black and cream *Ametastegia pallipes*,

the larvae of which feed on violets, and on alder, a chunky, orange female *Nematinus steini*. These are the first Beds records since 1946 and 1980 respectively. Guy and Jane have said that any BIG members are welcome to visit informally for further survey work by contacting them via their website. Andrew Green.

Monday June 14th Walk on Dunstable Downs

An enthusiastic 28 members met at Dunstable Downs for a guided walk looking for butterflies and orchids. Apart from looking forward to any interesting finds, it was good to see people catching up with others they hadn't seen for some time and some new members were also present. It was a very hot and sunny day, but sensibly-clad in hats and dollops of sun cream, we set off for what was a fascinating two-and-a-half-hour walk. We went past the Visitor Centre and down to a sheltered, narrow path between high banks. It was here we saw the first of the orchids: Common Spotted, Pyramidal and Twayblade. A little further on, several of the lovely Chalk Fragrant orchids were found. A couple of participants also noted Bee Orchids, but not everyone saw these. Several other wild flowers were observed including: Lady's Bedstraw, Yellow Rattle, the wonderfully-named Squinancywort and, one of my favourites, Sanfoin. It wasn't long before we began to spot butterflies, having seen Painted Lady near the café. Before we got to the main orchid area, Wilf pointed out the first Meadow Brown of the season, then onward for Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, so small and fast-moving but thanks to Wilf's expertise we all were able to have good views. One participant spotted 'something green' which turned out to be a Green Hairstreak one of our 'target' species. A little later, Wilf was delighted to show us the main 'wanted species' the very rare and exquisite Duke of Burgundy butterfly. All of us were really pleased to have had the opportunity to see this lovely little butterfly. Other butterfly species were also in evidence – Common Blue, Brimstone, Brown Argus, Small Copper, Large Skipper, Peacock, Small Heath and Speckled Wood. Day-flying moths were also seen – Mother Shipton, Cinnabar and Yellow Shell. Everyone agreed it had been a most enjoyable morning and were very happy to have seen so many species, particularly the scarce and threatened Duke of Burgundy – long may they prosper on this interesting site. Thanks to Wilf for leading the walk and Sheila and Julia for organising it. Ann de Winter and JP.



Duke of Burgundy *Hamearis lucina* (top) and Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*. Photos by Merve de Winter



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Flowering Plants of Wilden

by Nigel Willits

Like many people during the spring of 2020, I became intimately familiar with the footpaths around my home village, where I had walked only rarely before. You see, the area can seem rather boring for the wildlife enthusiast, being dominated by intensively farmed arable land that is sprayed with copious pesticides several times a year. There are a couple of farms following a less destructive regime, I am pleased to say, where birds such as Skylark and Yellowhammer manage to cling on and even a Corn Bunting or two still turn up in the breeding season to jangle a bunch of keys. But otherwise I think it is fair to say the locality's biodiversity is decidedly impoverished, like much of lowland Britain, and probably the greatest variety of wildlife is found within the environs of the village itself, rather than the surrounding fields.

Wilden is a small settlement a few miles north-east of Bedford town. The place-name dates back to at least the Domesday Book of 1086 and comes from the Anglo-Saxon for 'willow-valley' (Skeat 1906). The High Street follows closely the course of South Brook, a stream that arises from the high ground upon which Thurleigh Airfield sits, joining the Great Ouse north of Roxton. It may be classed as a winterbourne, I suppose, running dry during periods of drought and increasingly prone to flooding in wet spells. Surprisingly steep slopes enclose the village to north and south, making it something of a frost hollow in winter.

My primary wildlife interests are insects and birds, of which there is not a great abundance in late March and early April, when Covid lockdown restricted me to a daily exercise walk within the immediate vicinity. As a result, I was attracted more than usual to the first emerging blooms of wildflowers popping up from road-side verges, field margins, hedge-banks and St. Nicholas churchyard. Some of the commoner ones I knew already, such as Lesser Celandine and Primrose, but my lack of botanical knowledge became embarrassingly obvious as the season progressed. I realised that an opportunity had presented itself, a silver-lining amidst the pandemic gloom, to broaden my floral identification skills and to observe the unfolding phenological calendar. Armed with a camera, I took to noting the flowering species that I encountered and ascertaining their names at home from books and the internet, despite often blurry images that were inevitably missing some key feature or other. Photography is not my strong suit!

Very few of the plants I found were anything other than common and widespread in this part of the country and I made no discoveries to trouble the record-books. I cannot even claim to have conducted a thorough and consistent survey of the village, as my efforts were subject to the vagaries of weather and personal whim. I was also up against the Tidy Brigade of course, with their battery of mowers and strimmers. On more than one occasion, I pointed out to some local worthy that a little less diligence could result in a more colourful environment for the local community to enjoy in those difficult times and provide valuable resources for our beleaguered pollinators too. It had little impact, I am sad to report.

Nevertheless, I managed to record 107 species between March 26th and September 24th, of which 98 were given a flowering date. It should be noted that at the beginning of the period, several of them would have been in flower already for some time before the date I recorded. And I can give no guarantee that any of the dates truly represent the onset of blooming in the area. Of the 30 families recorded, Asteraceae (the composites) was by far the most speciose, accounting for about a fifth of the list given below. And that does not include various hawksbeards, hawkbits and hawkweeds that defied a confident identification. I was particularly pleased to notch up 7 types of umbellifer (Apiaceae), a family I have been meaning to get to grips with for years, carefully avoiding the urticating hairs of course! No grasses appear on my list, as you may notice. I must confess to being almost completely ignorant about the Poaceae, something that I have begun to rectify this year (2021).

Naturally (or unnaturally!), some of the recorded flora was derived from human activity, either deliberate planting or accidental escapes over the garden wall. For example, the stand of Yellow Archangel, where a public footpath passes between a private garden and the brook, looked to me like the cultivar *argenteum*, rather than the native taxon. A nearby clump of Wood Spurge too may have had horticultural origins and the violet blooms of Periwinkle were found sprinkled suspiciously about the neighbourhood, both in and out of gardens. Agriculture also made a contribution in the form of Rape, widely sown for its oil of course, and Phacelia, an occasional and rather lovely nitrogen-fixing cover crop. One of my favourite finds, a small patch of Star-of-Bethlehem on a road-verge, may belong to this anthropogenic category as well. Somehow

they seem to survive regular mowing. I checked for them this year and they had flowered again, before their gleaming white stars were shamefully decapitated. One can only suppose the mower failed to notice them or simply didn't care.

St. Nicholas churchyard has distinct potential to be a haven for wildflowers with a minimum of 27 species observed during those 6 months (marked * below), including the tiny mauve gems of Slender Speedwell and the flaming orange of Fox-and-Cubs. If only the maintenance regime was a little more sympathetic, I am sure many more might be found. The idea has been mooted with a couple of folk involved in the local parish, but it met with less enthusiasm than I hoped, which is both disappointing and surprising. Surely God would approve!

No attempt was made to record all the types of tree growing in and around Wilden nor their flowering dates. Having said that, the spectacular blossoming of Norway Maple provided one of my inspirations for the whole project in March, when I noticed the bright yellow clusters hanging amongst a small plantation of Grey Poplars. Subsequently, I discovered that the species is not uncommon around the village, whether planted or self-seeded I am uncertain. A number of other trees were noted when they piqued my interest. For instance, my eye was drawn to what I thought was a knopper gall (caused by the cynipid wasp *Andricus quercuscalicis*) on a hedgerow Turkey Oak. Upon reflection however, I decided it was simply the dried remains of a 'hairy' acorn cup, which is typical for that species. Galls (caused by the mite *Aceria ulmicola*) also attracted my attention to English Elm, which continues to grow quite plentifully in the hedges here, but only as suckers that would succumb to the dreaded Dutch disease if left to reach a height of more than a few metres (according to Wikipedia). A roadside Laburnum provided leaf-mining interest, in addition to its golden pendulous inflorescences. I found evidence of the fly larvae *Agromyza demeigerei* and *Phytomyza cytisi*, and the micromoth *Leucoptera laburnella*. There are a number of the village's eponymous willows still growing alongside the brook, but none seem ancient enough to have looked upon the medieval Anglo-Saxons who named the village and I have not yet made a definitive identification to species or hybrid.

All in all, I was quite pleased with the outcome of my little project. It may have only limited scientific value, but it would certainly be interesting to repeat the process in a future year for comparative purposes. At the very least, I added many new species to my personal list and increased my botanical knowledge considerably. And without doubt it helped to maintain my mental health during those trying times.

References

Domesday Book, 1992, Alecto Historical Editions (Penguin Classics)

Skeat, Walter W., The Place-names of Bedfordshire, 1906, Cambridge Antiquarian Society

Species	Common Name	Grid Reference	Flowering Date
Amaryllidaceae			
<i>Allium vineale</i>	Wild Onion	TL109553	21/06/2020
Apiaceae			
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Wild Angelica*	TL093552	10/08/2020
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	TL1055	02/04/2020
<i>Chaerophyllum temulum</i>	Rough Chervil	TL100550	23/05/2020
<i>Conium maculatum</i>	Hemlock	TL0954	31/05/2020
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut	TL096551	01/07/2020
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	TL100550	09/05/2020
<i>Sison amomum</i>	Stone Parsley	TL100551	24/07/2020
Apocynaceae			
<i>Vinca major</i>	Greater Periwinkle	TL097549	30/03/2020
Asparagaceae			
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	TL099550	16/04/2020
<i>Ornithogalum angustifolium</i>	Star-of-Bethlehem	TL099550	16/04/2020
Asteraceae			
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	TL096549	14/06/2020

Issue 199 – June 2021

Species	Common Name	Grid Reference	Flowering Date
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy*	TL0855	26/03/2020
<i>Carduus crispus</i>	Wetted Thistle	TL100550	23/05/2020
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	TL113552	21/06/2020
<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Chicory	TL099549	02/07/2020
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	TL096551	01/07/2020
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	TL111552	13/06/2020
<i>Crepis vesicaria</i>	Beaked Hawksbeard	TL093559	04/05/2020
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp-agrimony	TL105553	14/07/2020
<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	Bristly Oxtongue	TL094554	01/07/2020
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Catsear	TL099550	06/06/2020
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort*	TL093552	06/06/2020
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	Rough Hawkbit*	TL098549	06/06/2020
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy	TL106552	02/05/2020
<i>Matricaria chamomilla</i>	Scented Mayweed	TL112554	07/06/2020
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed*	TL094552	17/07/2020
<i>Pilosella aurantiaca</i>	Fox-and-cubs*	TL093552	03/06/2020
<i>Scorzoneroides autumnalis</i>	Autumn Hawkbit	TL096549	01/07/2020
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel*	TL1055	29/03/2020
<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	Dandelion*	TL1055	29/03/2020
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	Scentless Mayweed	TL113552	25/05/2020
Boraginaceae			
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not*	TL0955	12/04/2020
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	Water Forget-me-not	TL106553	23/09/2020
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Green Alkanet	TL1055	29/03/2020
<i>Phacelia tanacetifolia</i>	Phacelia	TL112554	22/08/2020
<i>Symphytum x uplandicum</i>	Russian Comfrey	TL1055	15/04/2020
Brassicaceae			
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	TL1055	07/04/2020
<i>Brassica napus</i>	Rape	TL1055	09/05/2020
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's-purse	TL107552	22/08/2020
<i>Lunaria annua</i>	Honesty	TL1055	07/04/2020
<i>Raphanus sativus</i>	Garden Radish	TL112554	22/08/2020
<i>Sinapis arvensis</i>	Charlock	TL113554	21/04/2020
Caprifoliaceae			
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	Field Scabious	TL097549	12/08/2020
Caryophyllaceae			
<i>Silene latifolia</i>	White Campion	TL092559	04/05/2020
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Greater Stitchwort	TL0855	26/03/2020
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	TL0954	30/03/2020
Crassulaceae			
<i>Sedum acre</i>	Biting Stonecrop	TL114552	13/06/2020
Euphorbiaceae			
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge	TL095551	01/04/2020
Fabaceae			
<i>Laburnum anagyroides</i>	Laburnum	TL104552	02/05/2020
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Birds-foot Trefoil*	TL094552	29/05/2020
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick*	TL093552	17/07/2020
<i>Onobrychis viciifolia</i>	Sainfoin	TL098549	29/05/2020
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	TL0954	27/04/2020

Issue 199 – June 2021

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<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover*	TL096551	27/05/2020
Fagaceae			
<i>Quercus cerris</i>	Turkey Oak	TL092559	
Geraniaceae			
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Storksbill*	TL096549	27/04/2020
<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>	Hedgerow Cranesbill	TL106553	10/07/2020
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert*	TL0954	27/04/2020
Juglandaceae			
<i>Juglans regia</i>	Walnut	TL1055	
Lamiaceae			
<i>Ballota nigra</i>	Black Horehound	TL096552	16/06/2020
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy*	TL1055	29/03/2020
<i>Lamiaeum galeobdolon argentatum</i>	Yellow Archangel	TL095550	01/04/2020
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle	TL1055	29/03/2020
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint	TL104552	02/08/2020
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal*	TL0955	06/06/2020
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort	TL102552	16/06/2020
Malvaceae			
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Common Mallow	TL096549	26/05/2020
<i>Tilia x europaea</i>	Broad-leaved Lime*	TL093552	
Onagraceae			
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb	TL101551	02/07/2020
Papaveraceae			
<i>Papaver dubium</i>	Long-headed Poppy	TL097549	13/05/2020
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy	TL1055	10/07/2020
Plantaginaceae			
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	TL093552	14/08/2020
<i>Linaria purpurea</i>	Purple Toadflax*	TL093552	28/05/2020
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain*	TL1155	25/04/2020
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain*	TL094552	28/05/2020
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell*	TL0954	27/04/2020
<i>Veronica filiformis</i>	Slender Speedwell*	TL094552	08/05/2020
<i>Veronica persica</i>	Common Field-speedwell	TL0855	26/03/2020
Polygonaceae			
<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>	Amphibious Bistort	TL106553	10/07/2020
<i>Persicaria lapathifolia</i>	Pale Persicaria	TL095549	12/07/2020
<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>	Redshank	TL094549	12/07/2020
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass	TL096553	14/08/2020
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	TL0954	
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	TL1055	
Primulaceae			
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip*	TL0855	26/03/2020
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose*	TL0855	26/03/2020
Ranunculaceae			
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Traveller's-joy	TL100551	24/07/2020
<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Lesser Celandine*	TL0855	26/03/2020
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	TL0954	31/05/2020
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup	TL0955	22/04/2020

Issue 199 – June 2021

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<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup*	TL094552	08/05/2020
Rosaceae			
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	TL106553	10/07/2020
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil*	TL097549	29/05/2020
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry	TL1055	07/04/2020
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose	TL095554	24/05/2020
Rubiaceae			
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw*	TL094552	01/07/2020
Salicaceae			
<i>Populus x canescens</i>	Grey Poplar (P. alba x tremula)	TL101552	
Sapindaceae			
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	TL1055	
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway Maple	TL101552	02/04/2020
Solanaceae			
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet	TL106553	30/07/2020
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Black Nightshade	TL107552	22/08/2020
Ulmaceae			
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	English Elm	TL094559	
Violaceae			
<i>Viola odorata</i>	Sweet Violet	TL096549	30/03/2020
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet	TL0855	26/03/2020

* - present at St. Nicholas churchyard

Plea for speakers

At present we do not know when it will be feasible to return to having face to face talks at Maulden Village Hall. The presentations via Zoom have been very successful and it is proposed to include some extra ones in the winter programme. So we are on the lookout for topics and suggestions for speakers. Please contact me or Sheila with any proposals. [Juliapowell800\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:Juliapowell800@gmail.com), 01582 661328 or [Brooke.se\(at\)btinternet.com](mailto:Brooke.se(at)btinternet.com), 01525 873396.

Many thanks

Julia

Summer Programme 2021

THIS IS A PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME ONLY. Details may change and additional events may be organised at short notice. All places must be booked in advance.

BIG – Bedfordshire Invertebrate Group, book your place with Andrew Green, [emailsawflies\(at\)bnhs.org.uk](mailto:emailsawflies@bnhs.org.uk) telephone 01234 772555

Please book a place for other events as mentioned in the write-up with Julia Powell: [JuliaCPowell800\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:JuliaCPowell800@gmail.com) or 01582 661328, or Sheila Brooke: [brooke.se\(at\)btinternet.com](mailto:brooke.se(at)btinternet.com), telephone 01525 873396

FRIDAY 9th JULY, BROOM 10:30am (F)

Walk from Jordans Mill following a path along the River Ivel with chance of Kingfisher and Grey Wagtail. Then along a bridle way across the fields to Broom East CWS to overlook the wetlands with waders and wildfowl, and areas of wildflowers and shrubs with butterflies and dragonflies. We end the walk with care along a short stretch of grassy, roadside verge. Meet in Jordans Mill overflow car park, (a little further on from the main one) SG18 9JX, TL184430. Café on site is open for takeaway food and drink. Book with Julia.

Leader: Betty Cooke

WEDNESDAY 14th JULY, LEIGHTON BUZZARD 10:30am

Visit Astral Lake Park for dragonflies and other wildlife. Then going on to Stanbridge Meadows LNR. Keen birders may wish to visit Grovebury Quarry nearby afterwards. Meet at the Astral Park Sports and Community Centre car park, LU7 4AY, SP936239. Book with Julia.

Leader: Rory Morrissey

WEDNESDAY 21st JULY, SHUTTLEWORTH 10:30am (F)

Guided walk in The Swiss Garden which is an important botanical collection within Bedfordshire with 11 of its trees being county champions, the largest or tallest of their species. Several are rare enough to have only been found on a few other sites throughout Britain and one tree, a Scarlet Willow, by the boat house, is the largest of any of this species known in Britain. The woodland also has exceptionally tall specimens of native Ash and Grey Poplar. Entrance fee is reduced to £6.50 for members entering with the group at 10:30 prompt. Meet in car park, SG18 9EP, TL150448. Book with Sheila.

Leader: David Alderman

WEDNESDAY 11th AUGUST, SHUTTLEWORTH 10am – 4pm (F) (L)

Visit Swiss Garden for their Bug Hunt, joint with BIG. Walks through the grounds, insect recording activities and nature table display. Entrance fee is waived for members entering with the group at 10:00 prompt. Meet in car park, SG18 9EP, TL150448. Book with Julia.

Leader: Julia Powell and Andrew Green

MONDAY 23rd AUGUST, HARROLD 10:30am – 1pm (F) (L)

Pond dipping at Harrold-Odell Country Park. There will also be quizzes and a photographic display. Meet at the visitor centre car park, MK43 7DS, SP956566. Café on site. Book with Sheila.

Leader: Sheila Brooke

SATURDAY 28th AUGUST, MAULDEN 9:30am-12 noon (F)

Visit Duck End NR for Small Mammal Trapping (mice, voles and shrews) joint with the Mammal Group. Followed by a search for the Willow Emerald damselfly and other Odonata. Limited parking at the site in Moor Lane, Maulden, MK45 2DJ, TL051374. Book with Sheila.

Leaders: Mick McCarrick and Rory Morrissey

FRIDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER, PEGSDON 10:30am (F)

Visit Knocking Hoe NNR for Autumn Ladies' Tresses orchid and other wildlife. Park and meet in the field off Hitchin Road opposite the Live and Let Live Inn, Pegsdon, TL120301, SG5 3JX. Book with Julia.

Leader: Graham Bellamy

SUNDAY 19th SEPTEMBER, FLITWICK 10:30am (F)

Visit Flitwick Moor SSSI for a fungal foray, joint meeting with Flit Vale Wildlife Trust Local Group. Numbers limited. Please book with Ann de Winter dewinterann1@gmail.com or 01582 618935. Meet in car park at end of Folly Lane, off Maulden Road by Folly Farm, TL045354, MK45 5BZ.

Leader: Alan Outen

WEDNESDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER, BEDFORD 10:30am

Autumn walk round Priory Country Park observing the varied wildlife. Café and toilets on site. Meet at the visitor centre car park, TL072493, MK41 9DJ. Book with Sheila.

Leader: Sheila Brooke