

The Naturalist.

Newsletter of the BSDNHS

No 1. May 2006

From Bob Reed:

This is the first of what is planned to be an occasional Newsletter aimed at keeping all members abreast of what is happening in the Society. It is intended to be a route by which information, views, ideas and events within the Society can be publicised. I would welcome contributions on any natural history topic, they can be submitted written, typed, on disk or as e-mail.

AGM 2006

The AGM was well-attended and it was good to see many old friends and members. We were honoured by a visit from Ian Allan, son of founder member P.M.B Allan. Ian is very keen that the tradition started by his father should continue and gives us his full support. Thanks was given to Mary Brace and Carol Wylde for the efforts they have made in keeping the society active and viable over the past few years. We are pleased to welcome new committee members Margaret Jones, Keith Barnes and Francis Oldfield and are very happy that Barrie Hills is still prepared to carry on his role as Treasurer. In my role as chairman and Chris Swan as vice-chairman we will hope to manage the society between us with Chris taking the main role in meetings when he is available.

After the main business of the AGM there was a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the problems facing the society and the possible solutions. The main theme of the presentation was that we need to recruit new members and to stimulate and encourage existing membership. With these points in mind I have set out the following items.

Community directory web site.

Our entry on this web site has been updated and I have included as wide a range of information, for potential members, as space allows. For the future it would be very good if the society had its own dedicated web site. It is beyond my capabilities to undertake this task and if anyone is able, or knows somebody who can build and launch our own web site then please let me know.

Hatfield Forest. Publicity and events.

David Sampson has produced some excellent coloured posters giving general information on society. These will be laminated and displayed in at least two prominent places where visitors congregate. In addition I propose to organise some field meetings which will be open to the general public and hopefully may act as a focus for recruitment. These events are as follows :-

Friday 7th July. 8.00pm. Bush End entrance. Moth trapping using a mercury vapour lamp, we shall also try sugaring and 'wine-roping'!

Friday 18th, Saturday 19th August. Small mammal trapping using Longworth traps. Set out traps at 7.00 pm Friday evening. Collect traps and hopefully the catch on Saturday morning 10.00am. Bush End entrance.

Details from Bob Reed. 01279 600726.

I would ask that as many of you as possible support these events and give a general hand to help. In particular the proposed mothing evenings need some 'experts' present or else we shall be more than generally fumbling about in the dark! I would be very pleased to hear from any of the Herts Moth group who might be available to help and advise. Please let me know in advance if you propose attending.

Hatfield Forest Wood Fair.

I have already set out the reasoning behind having a display at the Wood Fair in September. So far, we have a small number of people who have volunteered to help over the two days but we need more! Help is needed to set up the display, talk to the general public and help pack away. Margaret and I will be more or less fully involved with the Coppicing display which we also organise! On this occasion we are trying to split ourselves in two but there is a limit to what we can achieve. Please support us to make this a successful event for the society. If anyone can supply the following items we would be very grateful- photographs of wildlife or natural history activities showing the public what the society is about, display boards, does anyone have any or know where we can borrow some from? Margaret and I are willing to put the display together and to organise some practical activities but we cannot be in two places at once- please volunteer to help if only for a couple of hours. The slots when people are needed are as follows:-

Saturday September 9th. 9.00am to help set up. Gates open 10.00 am. The morning session is from 10.00 until 1.00pm and the afternoon session from 1.00pm until 4.30-5.00pm. Sunday September 10th, the daytime sessions are the same but help is needed to pack away at 5 pm.

Mammal group.

At the AGM I proposed setting up a specialist interest Mammal group, the initial focus would be to carry out a small mammal survey in Hatfield Forest. This could be integrated into the publicly advertised events. Alf Gudgin has kindly lent us 15 Longworth small mammal traps. Would you like to learn about small mammal live trapping? I have also become East Herts coordinator for the Herts and Middx Badger group and would welcome help in updating the local survey. Are you interested in badgers? Would you like to find out more about them? Would you like to go badger watching? If so, then contact me for more information. 01279 600 726.

New venue for meetings?

There is a distinct possibility that the Apton Road Day Centre may not be available for bookings in the not too distant future. The committee will be looking into a new venue for Winter meetings and these currently include Bishops Stortford College and Thorn Grove Junior school.

Local patch recording.

Part of the PowerPoint presentation highlighted the variety of habitats available for study and monitoring in our local area. I would encourage individuals to adopt a 'local patch' and study it throughout the year, providing records and specimens for meetings.

Summer and winter programme.

Along with this newsletter you will have received the summer and winter programmes. Mary has gone to a lot of trouble to provide us with a wide variety of speakers so please support the evening and daytime meetings in the summer and the evening meetings in the winter.

My contact is 01279 600 726. I look forward to seeing you at the meetings and hope for support at the special Hatfield Forest events and the Wood Fair. Bob Reed.

PostScript.

Since writing this letter I have been informed of the death of Eileen Taylor. Eileen was a stalwart member of society and a regular attender at meetings. In spite of her advancing years she took a keen interest in all of our talks and could be relied upon to ask astute questions which often made both the speaker and audience think. She had a deep love of Hatfield Forest and her ability, right up until the last months, to walk considerable distances in order to observe and photograph the forest, often literally left younger members standing. She will be sadly missed at our meetings. A card of sympathy has been sent on behalf of the society.