

*THE
NORTHWESTERN
NATURALIST*

New series



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Contributions for the next issue by December please!

Nantwich Natural History Society: a different approach to running a society.

This account of a new format adopted by a local society is offered in case it is of interest to others.

Nantwich Natural History Society (NNHS) was set up in 1979. Like most societies, it ran regular indoor and field meetings. However, one specific original objective was to record and prepare a report on natural history within its defined recording area (the 10k squares SJ 54/55/64/65, agreed with the then Cheshire Ornithological Association).

By 2013 two factors led to questions over the future of the society and the need for change. First was a divergence of interest between what is best described as a small but active group of members who were heavily committed to the maintenance of the recording system and the annual report, and the majority of the then committee, who saw their priority as providing indoor meetings and attached less importance to the report. Second, and ultimately decisive, was a gradual reduction in attendance at the meetings, coupled with problems in filling places on the committee.

In this situation, the committee announced that the “social” side of NNHS was closing down. The “recording” group wished to continue running the society. The upshot was a meeting, in October 2013, of about eight or ten “recorders”; by February 2014, 22 members had paid subscriptions. Since then, a year-on-year increase has brought membership up to close to 60 (March 2019). Virtually all recruitment has been by word-of-mouth recommendation from existing members, with only 5 non-renewals in that time. As one veteran committee member put it: “we must be doing something right.”

What are we doing? First – what we are not doing, and that is holding indoor meetings. Given the emphasis placed on recording, this seemed unnecessary as well as complicating life. Members keep in touch primarily by e-mail: literally with a single key-stroke, information about sightings of birds, butterflies or whatever can be circulated to all members. Our secretary edits and sends out (electronically) an excellent monthly newsletter: contents include, in addition to news about society activities, regular “plant of the month” and “moth of the month” contributions from the appropriate recorders, less regular pieces about birds, and items of interest culled from national publications. All the evidence is that these newsletters are highly valued by members. Additionally, the annual report is circulated electronically, with paper copies available at cost to those requiring them.



Inspecting nest-box at Deer Park Mere

There are opportunities for members to meet. Two “Bird Counts” each year, in January and May, are followed by call-over meetings in the back room of a pub; the first of these doubles as a short AGM. In addition, though less well-attended, are working parties on nestbox renovation and checking and hide maintenance. Occasional field meetings focus



Rebuild hide platform at Bar Mere

on, e.g. demonstrations of bat detection and moth-trapping, and recently a “bio-blitz” at a local fishery. This pattern of informal and occasional meetings is much easier to operate than the previous indoor programme.

One consequence is less work for the committee: four people (recently increased to six) again operate largely by e-mail, meeting face-to-face only a couple of times a year to deal with major items such as risk assessment and major expenditure. Another is financial: routine expenditure is low and subscriptions (£5.00

per person from the outset, generating an annual surplus) reflect this. The major challenge to this came with the need to reconstruct a hide (the society has access to four, and responsibility for maintaining two of them). Particularly difficult circumstances meant the total cost was not far short of £1,000 but was comfortably met from reserves and generous donations from members and external supporters.

So – the NNHS in its new form is working well. We do not for a moment suggest this is the best or only model for a society: it suits our circumstances. However, given



Demonstration of moth catching in a member's garden



Checking overnight moth trap catch at a bioblitz at Coole Pilate Fishery

that certain factors (declining attendances at meetings and problems filling committee places) are known to occur elsewhere, we offer our experiences in case they are of use to others.

Anyone seeking further information is welcome to contact me on 01270 523044 or at robert@andersons.myzen.co.uk

Bob Anderson, Chair Nantwich Natural History Society

SOCIETY DIARY

Please note that members of the Northwestern Naturalists' Union are welcome to attend the meetings of all the affiliated societies.

ACCRINGTON NATURALISTS' AND ANTIQUARIANS' SOCIETY

Meetings start at 2.30 pm at Antley Methodists' Church Hall, Blackburn Road, Accrington. Enquiries 01254 381236. Non-members welcome - £2.00 minimum lecture fee.

ALTRINCHAM AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The indoor meetings are held at Jubilee Community Centre, The Firs, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 2TQ at 7.30pm. Excursions leave from the Jubilee Centre car park at 6.30pm, or meet at the venue itself. Entrance charges: £2.00 members, £3.50 guests. Please contact us at least 3 days in advance if you wish to attend any of the excursions.

<http://www.altnats.org.uk>, info@altnats.org.uk, 0161 865 0118

BLACKBURN & DISTRICT BIRD CLUB

Indoor meetings are usually held on the first Monday of the month at St. Silas's Church Hall, Preston New Road, Blackburn at 7.30 pm. Outdoor meetings are held to observe and study birds in the field, and are usually led by a member of the committee.

CHESHIRE ACTIVE NATURALISTS

To find out more information about how to join Cheshire Active Naturalists visit www.cheshireactivenaturalists.org.uk or email Martyn at Martyn@czd.org.uk

CHORLEY AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Meetings September - April St Mary's Parish Centre Chorley.

See www.chorleynats.org.uk for details or telephone Phil Kirk 01257 266783

DERYSHIRE AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL RECORD CENTRE

Any queries contact: Steve Atkins, Local Record Centre Development Officer

E-Mail: Stephen.atkins@tameside.gov.uk

Mobile 07792 041 528

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Council Offices, Clarence Arcade, Ashton-under-Lyne, Tameside, OL6 7PT

Tel: 0161 342 4409

LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are at 7.30pm, unless indicated and are at Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham

LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST : CROAL-IRWELL GROUP

Indoor meetings are at the Creative Living Centre, 1A Rectory Lane, Prestwich, M25 1BP (on the opposite side of the car park from Prestwich Library) on the first Wednesday of the month, at 7.30pm. Admission and refreshments by £4 donation. Monthly field trips on Sundays start at 10.30 am. Details of these at the indoor meetings or from listed telephone numbers. Programme may be subject to change; please check before setting out. Stephen Harris Mob: 07831 627208, Work: 0845 458 6680

LEIGH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are in the Derby Room at Leigh Library. There is ample free car parking in the car park next to the Library (but please note that you do park at your own risk). Meetings are on Fridays at 7:15pm for a 7:30pm start. Everyone is welcome free of charge but a small donation to our funds from non-members would be gratefully accepted. A varied programme of speakers and slideshows on wildlife subjects is organised, commencing in September running through to May each year.

For all up-to-date information visit our website www.leighos.org.uk. A warm welcome is guaranteed at any of our meetings.

LIVERPOOL BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are held in the Clore Natural History Centre, World Museum, Liverpool, starting at 11.00am. Unless otherwise stated field meetings begin at 10.30am.

Saturday 14 September : Walton

Leader – Dave Earl (01772 437526)

Meet at Rice Lane Station, Liverpool (SJ361960) L9 3DD

Recording meeting, urban habitats.

Saturday 19 October : Freshfield Fungal Foray

Leader – Steve Cross (07807 341220)

Meet at Freshfield station (SD291082) L37 7DD

Saturday 9 November : Tour of World Museum's Botanical collections & LBS library

Wendy Atkinson

(+ members' holiday photos)

Saturday 14 December : Breadalbane Flora + Christmas Social

Peter Gateley

Saturday 11 January 2020 : The Botany & Archaeology of Lunt Meadows

Howard Harris & Julia Simons

Saturday 8 February : AGM + members' field meeting photos

Saturday 14 March : Urban plants of Waterloo

Steve Cross

MACCLESFIELD & DISTRICT FIELD CLUB

Indoor meetings commence at 7.30pm at the Salvation Army Hall, Roe Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6PH www.maccfieldclub.co.uk.

MANCHESTER AND NORTH MIDLANDS FERN GROUP

All meetings at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

Field meetings organiser : Mike Canaway mikecanaway@gmail.com

Wednesday 25 September : Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre Work Day

Leader Yvonne Golding, yvonne@buxtonhouse.free-online.co.uk

Meet at Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre. See <http://www.jodrellbank.net> for directions and further information. Please bring any spare ferns for planting.

10.30-11 Arrival tea/coffee/admin

11-12.30 Carry out task

12.30-1.30 Lunch: packed lunch or café

1.30-3pm Continue and complete task

3pm Finish and return tools

3.15-5pm Volunteers free to look around Discovery Centre

For field meetings members must abide by the BPS Code of Conduct <https://ebps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/BPS-Code-of-Conduct-2015.pdf> and https://ebps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/BPS_Safety_Code_A42015.pdf - the Safety Code which covers responsibilities, clothing and equipment etc.

MANCHESTER FIELD CLUB

Indoor Meetings are held at Sale United Reformed Church Hall, Montague Road, Sale, M33 3B near Sale Metro station, commencing 7.00pm. Members £1.00, visitors £2.00.

Chair: Alan Hill, 24 Kingsfield Drive, Didsbury, M20 6JA; e-mail: awhill@globalnet.co.uk

Tel: 0161 215 0971; mobile 07719 659 689.

www.manchesterfieldclub.org.uk

MANCHESTER MICROSCOPICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

All meetings are held in the Stopford Building (Medical School) University of Manchester M13 9PT, corner of Oxford Road and Aker Street (next to the Holy Name Church), Manchester, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. **All are welcome** – feel free to bring a friend or two. Non-members and members of other Societies are welcome. The Society's library will be available at all Stopford meetings and includes copies of our Newsletters and literature on microscopic history, as well as many books on microscopy and Natural History.

See also our Internet site at <http://www.manchestermicroscopical.org.uk>

MARPLE NATURALISTS

Meetings commence at 8.00 pm at United Reform Church, Hibbert Lane, Marple, SK6 7NN. *Visitors welcome: £4 for individual meetings, Children free.* For further information:

Jane Michael 07917 434598 or Derek Clifford 427 4611 or Marple Naturalists Community page on www.marple-uk.com or www.facebook.com/marplenaturalists

*Outdoor meetings - arranged separately and announced at meetings.

MERSEYSIDE NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION

Full programme listings are on our website www.mnapage.info and reports of previous trips on our blog at www.NaturalistsNotebook.mnapage.info

NELSON NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

All meetings are held at Christ Church, Carr Road, Nelson BB9 7JX and start at 7.30pm.

Enquiries and requests for copies of East Lancashire Butterfly Report and enquires contact David Nelson 01282 863012 davidnelson@btinternet.com Visitors welcome £2.50

NORTH WEST ENGLAND FERN GROUP

Field meetings organised with an indoor meeting in October at Holehird, Windermere.

Contact: Robert Sykes r.sykes56@gmail.com

NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION - BRYOPHYTE & LICHEN SECTION

All meetings on Saturdays, starting at 10.30 am and will commence whatever the weather. Bring food and clothing adequate for a full day in rough country and bad weather. Please check with section secretary a day or so before the meeting, in case of cancellation or changes.

“Beginners” are welcome any ANY meeting and there will always be a more experienced field bryologist present who will be more than happy to name and talk through the identification features of species encountered. There will not always be a Lichenologist present.

Section Secretary: Norman Bamforth, 1 Corporation Road, Audenshaw, Manchester. M34 5LY (0161 336 3914)

NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION – VASCULAR PLANT SECTION

Contact: David Earl - david.earl@talktalk.net

NORTH WEST FUNGUS GROUP

Forays start at 10.30am and are planned so that they can continue into the afternoon. Please bring food and drink. Please contact the foray leader to confirm your attendance and for possible last minute details.

Beginners always welcome at all forays. Forays are not suitable for small children. No dogs.

<http://fungus.org.uk/nwfg.htm>

OLDHAM MICROSCOPICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Meetings at Werneth Centre, Oldham, at 7.30 pm for more information call Phil Whiteman

01612900722, philipwhiteman333@hotmail.com or <http://www.oldham-wildlife-link.org.uk/micro/>

PRESTON BIRD WATCHING AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The meetings are at St. Mary's Church, Church Avenue, Penwortham, PR1 0AH. All enquiries should be made to the Secretary, Kayleigh Roebuck, who can be contacted on prestonwildlife@gmail.com or on 07713 975321. www.prestonsociety.co.uk. There is a charge of £3.00 on the door for any visitors.

ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

www.rochdalefieldnaturalistsociety.co.uk

Indoor Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, September to April at Cutgate Baptist Church, Edenfield Road, Rochdale. Start 7.30pm.

Enquiries: 01706 630707 and 814884. Charges: Members £2.00, Non-members £3.00.

All Excursions depart from the cul-de-sac at Manchester Road, Rochdale. Time: Coaches 0900hrs, Cars 1000hrs. Coaches return at 1700hrs except during the months of November, December, January and February when return is at 1600hrs

Queries: Field excursions – Joan Carter Secretary 01706 524255

/secretary@rochdalefieldnaturalists.co.uk

Coach bookings – contact Ruth Hardcastle on 07970 948175 Coach Price: £15.

The Conservation & Education events meet at 10.00am same rendezvous as excursions above.

SADDLEWORTH NATURALISTS

Indoor meetings are held at 7.30 pm at Saddleworth Conservative Club, 75 High Street, Uppermill OL3 6AP.

To assist with venue costs and speakers' expenses a small collection will be made - suggested donations: £2.00 for members, £2.50 for non-members. Guests are welcome - please introduce yourself at the start of the meeting.

More details at <http://www.oldham-wildlife-link.org.uk/saddleworth/>

SOUTH EAST CHESHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Indoor Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month from September to April, starting at 7.30pm. Tea, coffee and biscuits are available at the end of each indoor meeting. We meet at Ettiley Heath Church Community Centre; Elton Road, Ettiley Heath, Sandbach, CW11 3NE. Visitors are charged £3 and are welcome at any indoor meeting.

Field trips are held on one Sunday a month from September through to June and a long weekend meeting in March is very popular. More local field meetings are also held on the first Tuesday of each month and local evening walks in the summer. Travel is usually by car, or sometimes by bus or mini-bus, to sites of particular birding interest and will be led by experienced birdwatchers. Bookings for the trips are made at the indoor meetings. Further information is available at www.secos.org.uk or by telephone from 01270 582642. Chairman Colin Lythgoe 01270 582642

Friday 13 September : A Year on the Moss

Barry Probin

Sunday 15 September : Hilbre Island Field Trip

Tuesday 1 October : Doxey Marsh Field Trip

Friday 11 October : Ardnamurchan - Almost an Island

Mike Roberts

Sunday 20 October : RSPB Leighton Moss Field Trip

Tuesday 5 November : Pennington Flash Field Trip

Friday 8 November : In Search of Flower Kissers

Mike Leach

Sunday 24 November : WWT Martin Mere Field Trip

Tuesday 3 December : Sandbach Flashes Field Trip & Christmas Lunch

Sunday 8 December : RSPB Middleton Lakes Field Trip

Friday 13 December : RSPB Reserves and their Birds

Gary Prescott

Tuesday 7 January 2020 : Marbury Country Park Field Trip

Friday 10 January : Wild Life, Wild Places

John Gardner

Sunday 26 January : WWT Slimbridge Field Trip

Tuesday 4 February : Tittesworth Reservoir Field Trip

Friday 14 February : Fantastic Farnes

Jeff Clarke

Sunday 16 February : North Wales Field Trip

Tuesday 3 March : Moore NR Field Trip

Friday 13 March : Burton Mere Wetlands and the Dee estuary
Graham Jones

Saturday 15 March : RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands Field Trip

Tuesday 7 April : Tatton Park Field Trip

Friday 17 April : AGM and Members' Evening

Friday April 24 – 27 : Dorset - Long Weekend Field Trip

Tuesday 5 May : Goyt Valley Field Trip

Sunday 17 May : Anglesey Field Trip

Sunday 14 June – 15 : Lincolnshire - Short Weekend Field Trip

WEST LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE

Meetings are held in Room B003 in the Business School Building , Edge Hill University, St Helen's Road, Ormskirk, L39 4QP. Please note that you can park in the car parks A & B in front of the main university buildings, and walk to the Business School Building. Please arrive by 19.15 for a prompt 19.30 start. Admission charge (including refreshments): £1.50 members, £2.50 non-members. More details at www.westlancswildlife.org.uk or contact 01704 83538. Membership Secretary: Hilary Bedford 01772 519090

Wednesday 18 September : The Tanyptera Project
Gary Hedges

Wednesday 16 October : Sedges
Mary Dean

Wednesday 20 November : Purse Web Spider
Richard Burkmar

Wednesday 18 December : Members Photographic Competition

WILMSLOW GUILD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Indoor meetings are held at Wilmslow Guild, 1 Bourne Street, Wilmslow, SK9 5HD
Monthly on Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. from Sept to Apr and field trips Feb to Oct
Visitors welcome to indoor meetings (£4) and field trips (free)

Contact Steve Osborne on 01625 879087 steve.osborne42@googlemail.com

Thursday 26 September : Uganda, the Pearl of Africa
Mike Roberts

Thursday 24 October : Shetland
David Tolliday

Thursday 14 November : Cruising on the Wild Side
Alan Jones

Thursday 5 December : Christmas social with fun quiz

Thursday 16 January 2020 : Flowers of the Drakensberg Mountains

Judith Lovelady

February : Dunham Massey Field Trip

Thursday 13 February : Wild Britain (part 2)

Brian White

Thursday 19 March : Gardening for Butterflies

Jan Miller

April : Styal Woods Field Trip

Thursday 16 April : AGM & Hedgehogs

Barbara Roberts

May : Hedge Row, Pott Shrigley (evening) Field Trip

May : Tideslow Rake Field Trip

June : Joint Field Trip with Grange-over-Sands group

July : Eyarth Rocks, Ruthin Field Trip

September : The Roaches Field Trip

October : Fungus Foray Field Trip

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