

Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society

NEWSLETTER - Autumn/Winter 2000

POND DIPPING

On Friday, 28 July our monthly work party assignment was pond dipping, and we had a great time! It is a pity that more of our members do not make the effort to come along and join in the fun. The ponds are full of wildlife and you really need to bring along a magnifying glass to see what the pond has hidden in its depths. Our thanks to Luke Bennett our ranger who has shown us the mysteries of this unknown area of our ponds.

SPIDERS GALORE!

On Sunday, 24 September our Spiders Galore! morning walk seemed to catch the imagination of young and old alike. We had a good turnout of Noak Bridge members and members of other Countryside Services reserves. The walk was led by Peter Harvey, and what Peter doesn't know about spiders is not worth knowing! As you will have already seen, the local press were also interested in this event and our creepy 'finds' were displayed prominently in several local newspapers. We were also joined by Steve Prewer from Basildon Countryside Services which made it double-delight day! If it wasn't a spider we were looking at, then it was something equally interesting as Steve is knowledgeable on many different topics and species. It was a really good day for all who came. Our thanks to Peter Harvey and Steve Prewer for making our day!

Annual General Meeting

The first AGM of the Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society took place at Kenilworth Place, Noak Bridge, on the 21st June 2000. Members were welcomed by chairperson Betty Haynes, and thanks were given to everyone for their interest and support, especially Steve Prewer of Basildon Countryside Services, who had helped with the setting up of the Society. The steering committee was replaced by an elected committee (for details, see elsewhere in this newsletter) and a Constitution was adopted. Ranger Luke Bennett (representing Basildon Countryside Services) has helped the Society to acquire a £30,000 grant from the Cleanaway Trust to enhance the Reserve. The annual Statement of Accounts and Membership information were presented – the Society now has more than 170 members.

After formal business was completed an Open Forum was held, and plans for notice-boards, maps, information sheets and markers for the Reserve were discussed, together with other improvements being planned, including the provision of benches and easy-access facilities for the handicapped. After the meeting a nature quiz using slides and a variety of plant and animal specimens was conducted by Luke Bennett.

Full minutes of the meeting are available from the Secretary, Janet Bircham.

Norsey Wood Open Day

Sunday, 8 October dawned with a threat of rain but turned into a perfect autumn day. Representatives from our neighbouring reserves at Mill Meadows and Norsey Wood along with the RSPB and ourselves (Betty Haynes, Janet Bircham and Peter Hobbs) set up our booths on one side of the show arena.

The arena proved to be the centre of attention, with an almost continuous display of mediaeval hand-to-hand combat. The clash of swords and the thud of shields kept the constant stream of visitors enthralled. Various country crafts were the subjects of live exhibits with the daring tree trimming display using chain saws, carried out by the Anglia Tree Surgeons, being the highlight of the afternoon. Among the displays were bee-keeping, wood carving, twig brooms, willow basket making and garden plants. However, for the younger generation the steam traction engine proved to be a magnet for their attention and there were also craft projects for them to try. The most visited tent was probably the one with the refreshments! Hot food and drinks, crisps and confectionery were in continuous supply at very reasonable prices.

A great deal of interest was shown in our very own display. Our wonderful colour photographs (Betty's best!) attracted many visitors and once they were there they were captivated by the long-eared bat (deceased) which Betty tried to save after it was found on a Noak Bridge doorstep a few weeks ago. It is our firm expectation that our exhibits and information will bring new faces to our reserve and hopefully, new members for the Society.

RUSTIC BENCHES

The initial task in improving our Nature Reserve was the installation of the first of our benches, the Dereck Gould Memorial Bench sited at Pond No 1. The bench was constructed and set up by our own members with the help of our Ranger. Come along and enjoy the view, and you might even spot the kingfisher, as we did on the day.



Society members Ralph Chapman, Peter Myerson and Weed, assisted by Luke Bennett, Ranger.

BETTY'S SLOE GIN

$\frac{1}{2}$ kg sloes
 $\frac{1}{3}$ kg sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ litre cheap gin

Weigh the sloes then freeze until ready to use.

METHOD

Put the sloes (still frozen), sugar and gin into a Kilner jar.
Leave the jar in the kitchen (do not refrigerate).
Turn the jar gently, once a day only.
Ready to bottle and drink when all the sugar has dissolved.

HAPPY DRINKING!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Membership subscriptions are now due for members who joined the Society in 1999. Attached to this Newsletter you will find a tear-off form to complete and return with your subscription, to Mr. Ralph Chapman, Treasurer. If you would rather pay a committee member in person, please telephone Ralph to arrange a convenient time for a committee member to call at your home.

Your subscriptions are really important as they are our only regular source of income. We use the money for secretarial supplies and production of the Newsletter. . Basildon Council Countryside Services have very supportive, but eventually we will have to do most of the administrative work ourselves. Our notice/display board for taking to exhibition, shows, etc. has to be replaced and we will shortly be producing a leaflet about our reserve for members and visitors. The leaflet will be used at shows and will be available in the reserve when the improvements have been completed.

From June 2001, all Memberships will be renewable on 1 June each year.

Project News:

If you have visited the Reserve lately you will have seen the great new benches that have been made and installed by members of the work party. They are made from chestnut wood, cut from Norsey Wood during the coppicing works. Two more benches will be added later.

The work party has also been renovating the two sets of steps and clearing back overhanging vegetation from along the paths.

The next stages of the project will be carried out throughout the autumn/winter and is programmed as follows:

- First, the pond will be cleared of silt and vegetation. This will be done by a contractor using an excavator.
- Then the route of the new path will be cut through the scrub.
- The path works will then be carried out, again by contractors, and will involve levelling of the ground and construction of the path.
- A 'drop kerb' and new barrier will be constructed at the main entrance.
- The boardwalk will be replaced with a new, more stable design.
- The final stage will be to install signs/ way markers to mark the new trails.

So, by the end of the winter the project should be completed and the reserve made more accessible to visitors in the Spring. The Work Party will be involved throughout the project, so if you would like to get involved - why not come along and join us?

WILDLIFE

It has been a good year for the wildlife in our nature reserve and here are just a few of the species found during July and August.

Birds:

Dunnock	Bluetit	?? Spotted Flycatcher
Chaffinch	Stonechat	Long-tailed Tit
Blackcap	Redwing	Green Woodpecker
Robin	Goldcrest	Spotted Woodpecker
Wren	Heron	Treecreeper
Jay	Dove	Crow
Rook	Kingfisher	Fieldfare
Pied Wagtail	Kestrel	Sparrow Hawk

Bats:

Pipistrelle	Long-eared Bat
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Snakes, etc.

Adders	Grass Snakes	Slow Worms
Common Lizards	Great Crested Newts	

Butterflies

Brimstone	Black-veined White	
Skipper	Small White	Large White
Orange Tip	Green-veined White	
Gatekeeper	Speckled Wood	Ringlet
Purple Hairstreak	Bergia Clouded Yellow	??
Peacock	Small Tortoiseshell	
Red Admiral	Painted Lady	Comma
Marbled White	Small Heath	

Animals

Foxes	Weasels	Pigmy Shrews
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This survey was not done on a daily basis but in odd hours spent here and there, when the weather permitted.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If you joined the Society in 1999 your membership is now due for renewal. Please send your fee (OAP/Concession: £1.50 or Family/Household Membership: £3.00) to:

Mr. Ralph Chapman, Treasurer
Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society
16 Bramble Tye
Basildon SS15

Tel. 531333

Make cheques payable to Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society.

If you would like a member of the committee to collect your contribution at your home please call Mr. Chapman and arrange a convenient time for a committee member to come around.

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Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

1 June 2000 - 31 May 2001

Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Telephone No.....

Type of Membership: (circle one)

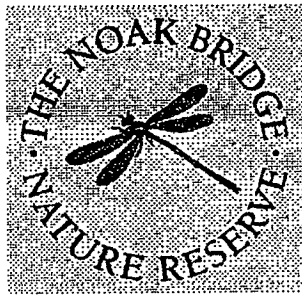
OAP/Concession: £1.50 per year Family/Household: £3.00 per year

Please find enclosed my subscription renewal of £

Signed

Date:

I do/do not require a receipt



NOAK BRIDGE NATURE RESERVE SOCIETY

Committee Members - 21 June 2000

Betty Haynes - Chairperson

185 Crouch Street

Noak Bridge

Tel. 531365

Ralph Chapman - Treasurer/Membership Secretary

16 Bramble Tye

Noak Bridge

Tel. 531333

Janet Bircham, Secretary

42 Crouch Street

Noak Bridge

Tel. 526344

Peter Hobbs - Events Coordinator

1 Coppice Lane

Noak Bridge

Weed - Communicator

44 Lower Street

Noak Bridge

**Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Conservation Work Party Program
September 2000 - February 2001.**

- SEPTEMBER 29th. STEP MAINTENANCE: We will be doing some maintenance on the steps, and providing new hand rails too.
- OCTOBER 27th. STEP MAINTENANCE: Continuing the work from last month.
- NOVEMBER 24th. NEW BENCHES: We will be installing two new benches.
- DECEMBER 15th.* SCRUB CLEARANCE: We will be clearing scrub that has encroached onto the grassland.
- JANUARY 26th. SCRUB CLEARANCE: Continuing the work from last month.
- FEBRUARY 26th. NESTING BOXES: We will be putting up Bat boxes around the reserve.

10.00 a.m. - 12.00 noon.

Meet at the main gate, Eastfield Road.

Wear appropriate clothing with stout footwear.

* Because of Christmas, this is not the last Friday of the month.

This program is provisional and may need to be changed due to weather conditions etc.

For further information contact the Countryside Ranger - 01277 624553.