

NOAK BRIDGE NATURE RESERVE NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 2 October, 1999

What's been happening?

It's been a busy summer and early autumn for the Society. A total of four walks, on a variety of topics, were attended by enthusiastic local residents who gained a lot from the knowledge of the leaders. As well as the walks specifically for the members of the Society, Basildon District Council's 'Nifty-Fifty' health walks have visited Noak Bridge Nature Reserve several times over the last year, introducing lots of new people to the delights of the area.

Don't forget our logo.....



Wildflowers of summer was led by Steve Prewer. A group of six people enjoyed the sight of swathes of tufted vetch, birds-foot trefoil and lupins, accompanied by the mid-summer chorus of warblers such as blackcap, whitethroat and chiffchaff.

Graham Bailey led the *Butterflies of Noak Bridge* outing. It was a poor day for butterflies, being rather wet, but the few members that did turn up were treated to Graham's usual enthusiasm and persistence, so that by the end they had seen several species including common blue, speckled wood and green-veined white.

The *Late summer ramble* was, again, rather poorly attended but Simon Fathers, the Council's new warden at Norsey Wood, pointed out some of the natural delights to be found at this time. Hedgerow fruits and early autumn fungi, and some late butterflies - red admiral, comma and peacock.

A *Fungus Foray* in mid October was led by Steve Prewer, with fourteen members ready to 'rummage' under bushes and amid dead leaves and logs to look for these mysterious fruits of autumn. It was a beautiful day for the event and a full write-up and species list appears below.

Fungus Foray - 16th. October.

Steve described the basics of fungus biology and how to begin the process of identification. He showed examples of the different types, from the ones with gills under the cap - like the 'supermarket' variety, to those with pores - holes below the cap (a variety like this is the main ingredient of mushroom soup). There were a few that didn't fit into either of these categories. One was like a deflated ball that puffed spores whenever it was touched. Then there was the sinister slimy one that just sort of 'crept' out of the wood. Yes, fungi are varied in size, shape and mode of life, but most do have one thing in common. They need warm(ish) damp conditions to be able

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to produce their fruiting body (the bit that we see above the surface that produces the spores). Hence autumn being the best season for mushrooms.

However, the 'business end' is below the surface. In most cases it's like a mass of threads spreading through the tissues of the host, using chemicals (enzymes) to break down whatever the host is made of. There is a fungus species that can feed on just about any organic host, living or dead (and including us!) Athletes foot is a fungal infection.

Steve has identified as many of the species that were found during the foray as he can (and he has declared that he isn't an expert). The twenty species named here represent a good total for this first outing, and after a long spell of dry weather had reduced the yield. Next autumn it is planned to invite an expert mycologist (that's a person who really knows their fungus) to lead the foray.

When asked about the edibility of fungi, Steve was at pains to point out that it is not worth taking a chance on eating any wild mushrooms, unless you really know what you're looking for. The risks of getting it wrong can be fatal.

Species List

Mycena (speirea?)
Flammulina velutipes (Velvet shank)
Incrustoporia semipileata (Bracket-type)
Collybia peronata (Wood woolly-foot)
Scleroderma (areolatum?) - (Earth ball)
Collybia fusipes (Spindle shank)
Nectria cinnabarina (Coral spot fungus)
Laccaria laccata (Deceiver)
Armillaria tubescens (False Honey fungus)
Lepiota rhacodes (Shaggy parasol)
Clitocybe flaccida (Tawny funnel-cap)
Cortinarius purpurascens
Russula fragilis (Fragile russula)
Nolanea staurospora
Galerina mutabilis
Agrocybe erebia
Coprinus comatus (Shaggy ink-cap)
Boletus - unsure of species.
Heteroporus biennis (Mazy-gill bracket)
Coriolus versicolor (Many -zoned polypore)



Steve has stressed that he is **not** an expert and many of these identifications are open to challenge. It will be interesting to compare this list with next year's, when a mycologist leads the foray.

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General Society newsround.

As well as the walks, Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society had displays at two major district events. The Basildon Festival, in late July, and the Norsey Wood Open Day in early October. There was a lot of interest shown in the Society's activities and we may have gained a few extra members as a result of the publicity. Memberships now stand at 46 households, which translates into approximately 100 individuals.

Your committee has had three meetings to date. These are attended by representatives from Basildon District Council. There has been a recent reshuffling of personnel within the Council's Countryside Service which now means that Luke Bennett, former Warden at Norsey Wood, has been promoted to the post of Ranger, still based at Norsey. As such, he will take over from Steve Prewer as the representative at committee meetings. Incidentally, Luke's place at Norsey has been taken by Simon Fathers, the former Assistant Warden at Wat Tyler Country Park. Congratulations to them both.

Among the items discussed by your committee are the following:

1. The idea has been broached about installing access for the disabled at the Eastfield Road entrance to the reserve.
2. Placing some benches at strategic positions around the trail.
3. Signs requesting that visitors keep their dogs under control.
4. A new dog-waste bin has been placed at the western entrance to the reserve.
5. Hay cutting and clearing was carried out in early October.
6. An information board, detailing Society events and wildlife sightings is to be placed at the Eastfield Road entrance.
7. Menacing dogs on the loose at the Goodview Road end of the reserve. If anyone has a threatening experience as a result of the dogs that are frequently patrolling just outside the boundary you **MUST** inform the local Police directly. Make sure that you inform Basildon Council too (numbers appear later in this newsletter).
8. The condition of the water in the storm gully has given cause for concern for some time. The Environment Agency are to be called in to inspect.

Those members that know the Coppice Road pond will be pleased to learn that a management plan has been organised to help this delightful neighbourhood site attract more wildlife. We will keep you posted about the progress here from time to time. For more information on the pond, contact the Secretary (185 Crouch Street).

Finally, a big "thankyou" to Ralph Chapman and his wife for the extra photocopying they carried out for the Society to ensure that there were enough copies of our first newsletter available for distribution at the Basildon Festival.

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Forthcoming events.

Wednesday, 10th. November - Basildon's Wildlife & Countryside.

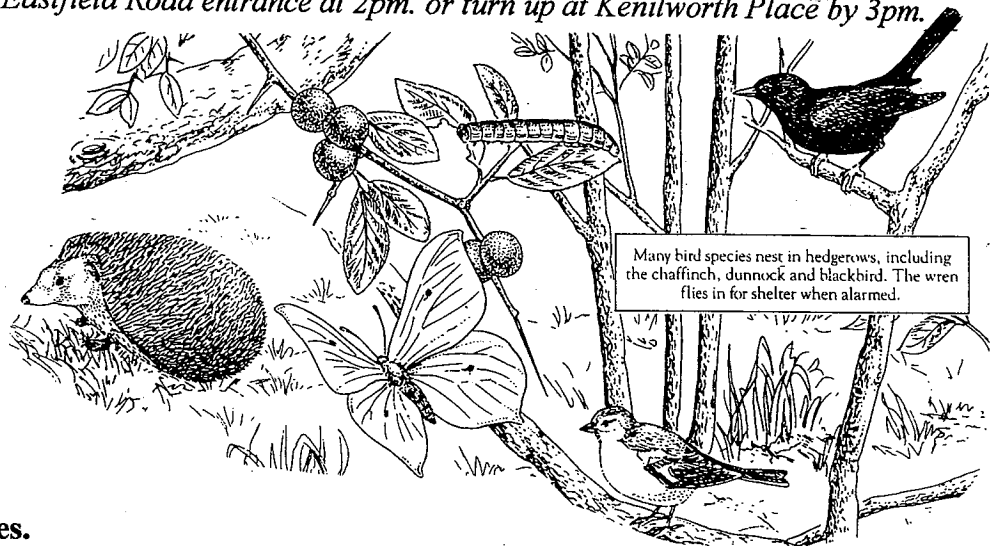
An illustrated talk given by Steve Prewer, Basildon Council's Manager of Countryside Services. It will cover a wide range of habitats and species to be found in the district, many occurring at Noak Bridge, and explain why they are so special and how we can help protect them.

Meet at the Kenilworth Place complex at 7.30pm.

Sunday, 12th. December - Christmas Ramble.

Join the regulars on our first Yule-tide outing on the reserve. There should be seasonal wildlife activity, with redwings and fieldfares feeding on the wealth of bright hawthorn berries and rose hips, small mammals scuttling about in the dead leaves and maybe a few late fungi to see. and afterwards, it's back to Kenilworth Place centre for a warming drink and mince pies. Sounds great!

Meet at the Eastfield Road entrance at 2pm. or turn up at Kenilworth Place by 3pm.



Work Parties.

In the last newsletter we said that this Events List would flag-up some work party days. It is intended to start these as soon as possible, but as of the print deadline for this edition (which is behind schedule anyway) there are no dates fixed. Luke has asked that you bear with him in his new role as Ranger - he will be setting and leading the tasks just as soon as he gets to grips with his new and demanding schedule. Dates will be circulated to all members ASAP.

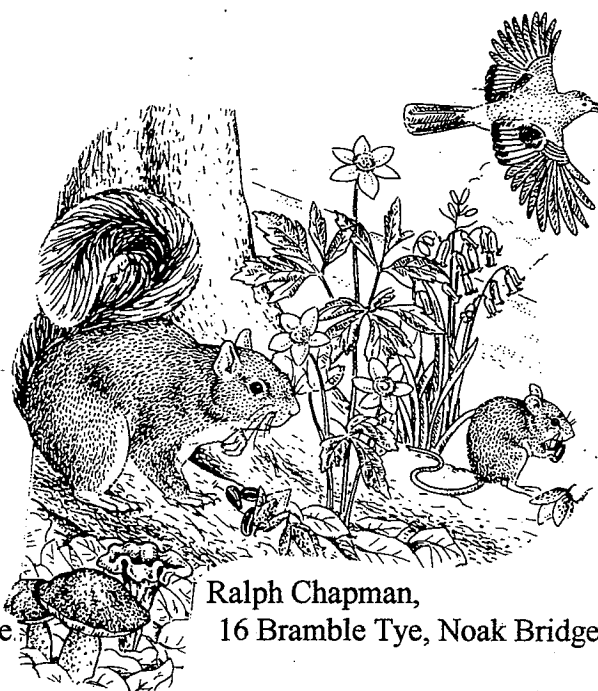
Countryside Services events.

Don't forget, BDC's Countryside Services has a full programme of events spanning the whole of the coming year. It will be printed by early December and it's free. You can pick one up at Wat Tyler, Norsey Wood, the Basildon Centre, Barleylands Depot and many of the district's Libraries. It will include non-Society events held at Noak Bridge. You are encouraged to attend any of the meetings that take your fancy.

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Important note.

These Newsletters are produced quarterly. The next edition will herald the start of the new millennium and look forward to the glories of springtime on the reserve. Please remember - this is your newsletter. Let's hear from you with an article/observation/record on any subject (vaguely) connected with the reserve or its wildlife, history etc. How about a poem? Failing that, let us know what you think about any aspect of the Society. For instance, what sort of subject areas should be covered by our walks and talks. Come on, get scribbling. YOUR EDITOR NEEDS YOU!



The Committee.

Ron Francis,

153 Crouch Street, Noak Bridge.

Carole Davis,

New Waverley Road, Noak Bridge.

Betty Haynes, (Secretary)

185 Crouch Street, Noak Bridge.

Ralph Chapman,

16 Bramble Tye, Noak Bridge.

Peter Myerson,

43 Crouch Street, Noak Bridge.

Marion Gould,

64 Lower Street, Noak Bridge.

Emergency & general enquiries - phone **Basildon District Council** on either
(01277) 624553 - **Ranger (Luke Bennett)** at Norsey Wood Information Centre,
Outwood Common Road, Billericay
(01268) 550088 - Wat Tyler Country Park, Pitsea Hall Lane, Basildon SS16 4UH

If you have any **wildlife records** for the reserve just jot them down, with the date you saw them (it) and your name/address, and send them off to Wat Tyler Country Park. We need to start recording this information to enable the most appropriate forms of management to be exercised. A Management Plan for the reserve will be prepared by next summer. Your committee will be commenting on the draft copy of the plan.

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Membership Application Form

I wish to become a member of the *Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society*.

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

Type of membership: (Tick appropriate category)

Household, at £3.00 pa. How many people in your household? ()

Concessionary, at £1.50 pa. (Retired, unemployed, disabled)

Donation, thankyou (please indicate amount).

All cheques should be made payable to: **Noak Bridge Nature Reserve Society**.

Send to: **185 Crouch Street, Noak Bridge.**

Membership will run from April - March, inclusive.



Please send this form and your subscription to the Secretary.

Would you like a receipt? **YES** **NO** (please tick)

Please list below any other person(s) you know that would like to join the Society so that we can send them a Newsletter/Membership Form.

1.

2.

3.

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