



BOURNEMOUTH NATURAL SCIENCE SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Share our love of science

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2018



Our field trips are often hit and miss affairs, and in matters of the natural world, we would not have it any other way. We are never positive on what to expect, nature does not perform to order for the BNSS or to any other decree. Sometimes the weather misbehaves, sometimes, as last year, an air ambulance is called, sometimes nothing of note is seen; but that is the fascination.

It is rare that everything is perfect. So it was, when with an invading army from the BNSS, one of our largest ever groups, we ventured to Down Farm owned by Martin Green, with the perfect, but good storm (if there is such a thing), and the double-whammy of archaeological interest and Martin's wildlife friendly farm. Correction, make that a sextuple whammy (if there is such a thing).

The farm includes surely one of the best private museums in the UK and like everything else here, put together and paid for by one man, Martin Green. It was different, colourful, cheerful, professional and full of curiosities from Archaeology, Rural History and Geology.

Beautiful landscapes, including the perfect, picture-postcard wildlife conservation pond created by Martin. A myriad of wildlife and botanical species such as 'Small Blue' butterflies, Longhorn Beetles, Corn Buntings, Ravens squabbling with Buzzards, House Martins occupying all of the many artificial nest-holes, Orchids, etc.

(Maybe everywhere is much like this, it just needs the farmers or others to notice and care about things.) We chanced to visit on probably the most lush and verdant week of the year.

For most of us, it was an incredible discovery, a day to remember and a place to revisit. A couple of weeks later some of the members returned and conducted a bio-blitz which was successful and Martin was once again a great host and he was very impressed by the results. This is just one example of a BNSS event - and they are all free to members. Bryan Popple

BNSS Annual Coach Outing June 2018

This was my first year organising the BNSS annual coach excursion, and I admit it was with some trepidation. It is one of our major events of the year, has been running for nearly 100 years, and reached a standard that has come to be expected. We thank Margaret Evelyn for running it so successfully – but it does put on the pressure!



Early morning start, we headed to the west of the county. First stop was Abbotsbury Tropical Gardens, always worth a visit both for its views and its botanical treasures. This is a place that some of us have been to before, but the majority had on the 'must visit'



list. The drought had not yet kicked in, in fact if you recall, it

had been very wet for a year, so everything was lush and in full bloom, plus there are stunning vistas of the Chesil Beach and our Jurassic Coast.



Onto Bridport, but not the famous bay where you normally go, but the actual town, with its shops and market day stalls, the unique Palmers Brewery, and the 'oldest business in Britain', a 500 year-old butchers shop.

Perhaps the highlight was our visit to Mapperton House, where we were privileged to enjoy personal tours of the ancestral seat of the Earl and Countess of Sandwich. Much of the house is 16th century and it has been called the 'most perfect

Jacobean mansion in the country'.

We were allowed time to tour the gardens, which should not be missed, and then it was time for tea and group photos.

The WI at Bere Regis again excelled themselves by providing a huge afternoon tea. The coup de gras, for me anyway, was the third cake course!

To home, 39 Christchurch Road, with thanks expressed to our coach driver, who uniquely had made it clear he did not wish to have a collection! The thanks were perhaps more heartfelt than usual, for his skill at navigating through an emergency road-works along a country lane, where it seemed not possible. But he thought it was. Plenty of room to spare, at least 3 inches either side we reckoned.

The advantage of a coach trip like this is to share delights (and sometimes things going wrong) with like-minded colleagues, to just relax and let others worry, about bookings, times, driving, food, and where we investigate places of interest that we might not do by ourselves. It gives members the 'flavour' of a place, and if they enjoy, they can return for further investigations.

So, to organising next year. Plans already afoot, with a few ideas, and of course members are welcomed to give me their opinions. Places that will appeal to many, a distance further than we as individuals would normally go – but not *too* far, with places of interest to stop off at on the journey, places that might be historical, beautiful, wildlife-rich, not too strenuous, not common touristy spots. In this country, we are fortunate in actually being spoiled for choice. See you in 2019.



Jolyon Crane

The Lantern Roof

Last year I wrote about progress with our lantern rescue appeal. To briefly recap, on the first floor of our building above the large glass display case (the diorama) is a lantern roof light that was part of the house when originally built in 1880. Time, weather and wood rot has taken its toll and the lantern now needs *major* renovation.

Because the building is grade 2 listed the repair has to be carried out in situ retaining as much of the original structure as possible. Where replacement is necessary the materials have to match those originally used. The repair covers not only the glazed area but the whole supporting structure below and the rainwater gullies above. Specialist work like this is expensive and will cost £100,000.



I'm pleased to say we are making good progress. We are obtaining Listed Building consent from Bournemouth Borough Council earlier in the year, and have now received offers of a grant from both the *Heritage Lottery Fund* and *Canford Environmental Ltd*. I am sure we all wish to express our thanks to them.

At the time of writing (end of August), subject to finalising the remaining formalities, the predicted start date is late September with completion expected around Xmas 2018.

The project will have implications for both BNSS members and visitors to the building. Firstly the contractor will need to create a secure compound at the side of the building for temporary storage, portaloos etc., which it is anticipated will mean the loss of the car spaces adjoining the rear garden.



Then a scaffold tower will be erected from the compound up the side of the building, and the current temporary scaffold roof over the lantern will be replaced by a larger structure covering all of the lantern and inner slopes of the main roof. This will enable the contractor to work on the lantern without needing to come through the building.

However, there will also be scaffolding inside the building on the first floor to create a working platform just below the lantern. This is to create a barrier between the works and the museum as well as to give contractors access to the underside of the lantern. The platform will be set just above the top of the doors and will cover the entire first floor landing area. As a consequence the diorama will need to be dismantled and put into storage. Access to the rooms will be maintained but whether we will be able to allow visitors to access the first floor is currently under consideration.



Otherwise we anticipate we will be open as normal and other than the loss of a few car spaces, the lecture programme shouldn't be affected.

Look out for a press release when we get the final go-ahead!

Colin Lord

Young Explorers

Young Explorers have had some excellent sessions of late. June saw them re-enacting a local smuggling story - the battle of Mudeford of 1784. Children were fascinated to find out the fate of the Halsewell and her crew, imaginatively recounted by Steve. They heard shanties and a live rendition of a wonderful song by Mick Ryan which *he'd written specially to tell the tale.*



In July we took a closer look at ecology and habitats. Sweep-nets and quadrants were used to see what creatures live where. We found out about food chains, producers, consumers and how you can work out what a Sparrowhawk had for breakfast!

August saw us getting a closer look at plants with microscopes. It was a hands-on session led by Grenham which included the explorers studying dyed celery to see how water is taken up. We found out about heathlands and plants from arid areas. Mark, Steve, and Grenham have led these sessions with help on the door from Jill. Veronica and Anna have assisted where they can and a prize should be awarded to Jackie who has continuously impressed us with her baking.



We look forward to seeing more enthusiastic children and their parents for our next sessions. Young Explorers is once a month on a

Saturday from 10 -12.30 and costs £5 per child. This includes all materials and a drink, as well of course as our wonderful expertise! Come along and see how we support the curriculum with our 'hands on' mornings. Book via youngexplorers@bnss.org.uk or private message us on:

<https://www.facebook.com/BournemouthNaturalScienceSociety/>

Anna Cuccia

Another year of free website hosting from 34SP

The BNSS website has been hosted since September 2017 on the servers of the company 34SP whose head office is based in Manchester. 34SP offers free hosting for UK based charities. As they say "A pound not spent on an expense like web hosting, means a pound can be spent directly on a charity's core activities". 34SP is a specialist in hosting WordPress websites and currently offers free hosting to 420 charities. BNSS is most grateful that we will again have free hosting in 2019 due to their generosity. - so thank you from us.

Grenham Ireland (BNSS Website Officer & Trustee)

BNSS VISIT TO THE NUFFIELD

Recently Steve Limburn, Jonathan McGowan and I together with some of our Young Explorers had the pleasure of visiting the radiology suite at the Nuffield Hospital for the purpose of scanning our ibis mummy. This was arranged by Ravi Ayer the consultant radiologist whom I met at one of our open days last Christmas.



Ravi kindly gave us a brief explanation of the workings of the CT scanner and we were all keen to see whether or not the mummy actually contained an ibis. I warned everyone that statistically one in every three non-human Egyptian mummies do not contain anything. It soon became clear that ours certainly didn't hold an ibis but there were some areas of resonance that were solid enough to be bone chips. In addition there was an interesting larger area that was thought to be solidified resin or something similar.



The Nuffield are happy to assist us further to try to establish what that area consists of and Ravi has offered to do a biopsy when it can be arranged to see what further information we can get.

Notwithstanding the mild disappointment that there was no ibis, everyone, including the Young

Explorers, were fascinated by the process and the detailed output that we got.



Watch out for a further report in due course.

Pam Field

Talks at the BNSS CIWF

Philip Lymbery is head of 'Compassion in World Farming', million-strong and the principal worldwide charity fighting for an end to factory farming and compassion for *all* of our fellow creatures. We might campaign for a few Hen Harriers being persecuted, cruelty to circus animals or whatever, but in reality, the real persecution based on sheer numbers, are the farmed animals, many of which have a short, miserable existence never seeing daylight or grass beneath their feet, and here we are talking of numbers in the billions – and that is just Britain.



But the charity is more than that, it is all based on *science* and conservation, knowing full well that we still have to feed 7 billion people. We were grateful for Philip, for fitting us in, in between addressing the European Union the week before, then the United Nations the following week! So maybe he was not overawed by the BNSS, but he was impressed, and willing to give more talks in the future.

Ian Julian

Open Weekend – October

One of the highlights of the year for the BNSS, and indeed for the public, are our Open Weekends, and the time is coming around again.

As usual, volunteers required to welcome our guests, to show around, supplying refreshments, assist in the car park, caterers, washer-uppers, showing our exhibits, showing your exhibits, each and every job is as essential as the next. So, **if you would like to help in any way**, please email contact@bnss.org.uk Thanks.

And Finally

During the recent hot summer, we had one day's rain in 2 months, it was another blue, cloudless day. So like schoolkids at the last day of term, we were excited, and playful when Mary Thornton said we could have our programme meeting outdoors. Bring a chair.

Unprecedented. What possibly could go wrong?

After 30 minutes, the skies darkened, the wind rose and we felt a little speck or two of moisture on our cheeks. This was not forecasted, so we laughed it off. Then, the heavens opened, and most of us moved at a speed we have not even attempted for many, many years. As they say on social media - sad.

Really Finally thanks to Chris Davison for editing previous issues of this newsletter. Thank you for these articles, keep submitting them. A perfect article will be:

Informative but interesting to all abilities and knowledge

Not too technical, not too dry, but not dumbed down

Easy to read both online and on hard copy

Ian Julian



www.bnss.org.uk

Find us on Facebook and follow @BNSS1



on Twitter and Instagram!