



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre

Newsletter—7th Edition

Summer 2021

For many of us, summer is the busiest time of the year as we get moving with surveys, species monitoring and just generally enjoying the outdoors!

One very exciting announcement and hot off the press: we will soon be adding to our BMERC Team! We have appointed an additional Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) Surveyor, who will be working full-time across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

This is a fantastic development for BMERC and we are very pleased to be able to announce the extra member of the team. The new post will be working alongside Fiona to survey potential new LWS, provide advice and management support to landowners and managers on existing sites, and to promote the role that these often overlooked gems provide by supporting a wider network of wildlife-rich resources right across the county—and beyond. We will introduce you to our new team member and their work in the next issue of the newsletter.

There are so many ways to get involved with recording over the summer months and we've included some in our Resources Round-up on the final page. There are also two nature-themed festivals in our patch this August, with guided walks, family friendly crafts, and some online activities too:

⇒ [Colne Valley Festival Fortnight](#) (until 8th Aug)

⇒ [Chilterns Celebration](#) (1st to 8th Aug)

Visit the website links above to learn more.

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Above: River Colne.

Top image: Essex Skipper (photo: Claudia Bernardini).



**Buckinghamshire
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Would you like to write for our next issue? For more information, email erc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk



Colours of the urban floodplains

Dr Irina Tatarenko, Floodplain Meadows Partnership

Milton Keynes sits in a big loop made of the River Great Ouse and the River Ousel and their floodplains, which have been included into the urban landscape as valley parks. The smaller valley locations along the brooks are also floodplains, continuing to accommodate floodwaters. More than 45 hectares of these valley parks are floodplain meadows, open landscapes that are both attractive and inspiring. These habitats also offer a range of ecosystem services including flood protection, long-term carbon sequestration and pollination services, to name few.

Ancient floodplain meadows are the result of a long-term traditional management for hay and aftermath grazing. These once typical floodplain landuses have experienced a 97% decline during the 20th century. There has been a recognition of the increasing rarity of this biodiverse habitat which has stimulated conservation and restoration programs across the UK. The Floodplain Meadow Partnership (FMP) hosted by the Open University started in 2008 provides expert support for those projects.

The FMP has been monitoring fifteen meadows restored in Milton Keynes along the river valleys in the 1990's and the beginning of this century. We have found a relatively high species diversity (up to 19-22 species per 1m²) in small meadow patches in Browns Wood Estate, Waterhall (Ouse Valley park), Stony Stratford Nature Reserve, and Tattenhoe. Floodplain meadow sites around Walton Hall, which were used as long-term pastures, have recently been converted back to traditional management: mowing in summer and aftermath grazing in autumn-winter. That change has already shown an increase in plant species diversity, including some typical

meadow species such as Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Autumn Hawkbit (*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*), Ladies Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).

Up to 40 different species can grow on one square meter of the ground in a floodplain meadow, making a great display of shapes and colours. This diversity has arisen because of the hay cut in the middle of summer, which is the most ancient type of land management on river floodplains. Winter floods deposit sediments with nutrients – free natural fertilisers for plant growth in spring ensuring a good hay crop in summer. Most meadow species are well adapted to being mown because of a natural seasonal mid-summer break in their growth. In contrary, a lack of mowing often negatively affects meadow species, because nutrients deposited by floods are not absorbed by plants and removed as a hay crop. Not mowing increases the soil fertility, supports faster growing grasses and causes a decrease in species diversity in the sward.



From top: Oxley Meadow; Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) on Great Burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*). Photos by Mike Dodd. 2

Small herbs like Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), and Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*) can't compete with vigorous grass growth. Mass decline of those species caused by an increase in grass biomass and density, was recorded in Stony Stratford Nature Reserve in our 2021 survey. The hay cut is a major tool for keeping the nutrient balance in meadow soils and grass vigour under control (Rothero et al 2016).



Effects of timing of the hay cut on plant diversity in floodplain meadows is not fully understood. In 2020, the Park Trust together with the Open University began a trial of hay cuts at three different times through the growing season. The trial is based on the Oxley Meadow SSSI in the western part of Milton Keynes. The meadow has been monitored by FMP for over ten years. In 2010, the number of species per 1m² varied from 10 to 25 (average 17). However by 2020 it had decreased down to between 6 and 15 (average 11) species per 1m². This decline is most likely due to the lack of a hay cut in 2016-2019. The current trial will reveal which timing of hay cut: mid-June, mid-July or early autumn is more efficient for restoring the species diversity.

The species-rich and colourful tapestry of meadows has attracted artists and poets for centuries. In the summer of 2021, artists of all ages are being asked to take part in our national arts and crafts competition to help raise awareness of the UK's diminishing floodplain meadows. The OU and the Floodplain Meadows Partnership have launched the competition encouraging people to visit a local floodplain and create a piece of art that represents the importance and beauty of these natural habitat. Visit the Floodplain Meadows Partnership website for details: www.floodplainmeadows.org.uk/projects-and-events/art-competition-2021

Above: The flooded River Ousel in winter. Below: how many species can you spot in this floodplain meadow? Photos: Mike Dodd.





iRecord Records—An update on progress

Neil Fletcher, BMERC Data Officer

Many of you are using iRecord to capture your wildlife records, with some people submitting substantial numbers of records. The main advantage of this is that many of the national recording schemes are using this method and therefore any records submitted will be verified by national experts. You may be aware that we have allocated time this year to download these records into our database. Here is a short update on progress.

The number of records in iRecord is staggering. When I last checked, there were over 335,000 records for the BMERC area, i.e. administrative Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. About 80% of those records have been verified and accepted.

So far we have loaded records up to and including 30th June 2020. Whilst that might seem quite good, it only accounts for a third of the available records.

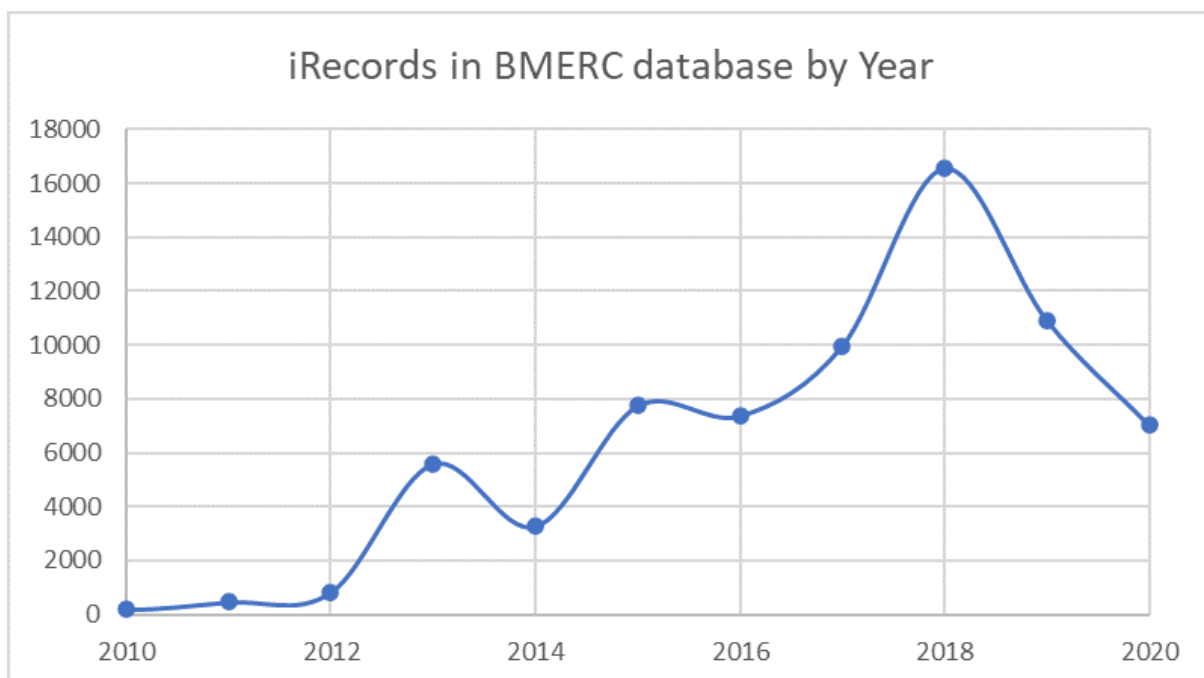
I'm currently working on the next 6 months, July to December 2020 which is a further 80,000 records and which demonstrates the dramatic growth rate.

The table below shows iRecord records in our database by year from 2010 to June 2020. Note that the apparent decline after 2018 is simply because of the lag in verifying and importing records from other sources.

A few statistics from the records loaded so far:

- We are only downloading verified records and excluding records not accepted, i.e. an expert has reviewed them and accepted them as correct.
- Up to June 2020, 113,500 records were downloaded.
 - 13,800 of these were moth records downloaded from iRecord by the County Recorders, processed by them and sent to BMERC separately, accounting for 12% of the records.
 - A further 6,700 records (5.9%) were rejected by us, either because we had received them from another source (i.e. already in our database), or for some other reason, (e.g. verification only as probable).
- Records have come from 1,567 different recorders.
- The top active recorder contributed 6% of the records, congratulations Ryan Clark!
- 80% of the records were submitted by 65 recorders (4.1% of total)
- A lot of records of scarce species were included.
 - Almost 150 species which were new in our database.
 - Over 1,200 records of species with fewer than 10 records in our database.

Over the next couple of months we are hoping to make further progress loading records from iRecord.





Nature reserve gets an 80th birthday present

Mick Jones, BBOWT Volunteer Warden

Dancersend Nature Reserve which helped inspire Charles Rothschild to start the UK's nature reserve movement has received a special birthday gift to celebrate its 80th anniversary – a grant of more than £90,000.

The money will be used to further develop Dancersend Reserve which was one of the first nature reserves in the UK. The 211-acre site is where a young Charles Rothschild discovered his love of nature. He went on to help found the conservation society that eventually became The Wildlife Trusts. He secured the core area of the nature reserve in the 1920s when the Halton Estate was being broken up and sold off.

Now, the Rothschild Foundation has given the funding to the **Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)** to develop the site which was formally established as a nature reserve in commemoration of Charles Rothschild's achievements 80 years ago. The donation will provide new equipment, help create a mosaic of new habitats, including a large wildlife pond, and display boards telling the little-known story of Dancersend. BBOWT, which part-

owns and manages the reserve, is also planning a series of events to celebrate the anniversary and will work with neighbouring landowners to help protect and enhance the natural environment in the wider area around the Dancers End valley and Aston Hill. The two-year program of works starts on July 1.

BBOWT CEO Estelle Bailey said:

"Dancersend is like the mother of all nature reserves – one of the foundation stones on which The Wildlife Trusts was built. This beautiful place inspired the man who became a pioneer in the UK's nature reserve movement, so it has an important place in history as well as in our hearts."

The Rothschild Foundation commented:

"We are proud to continue the work that Charles Rothschild started on the site, which represents a historic turning point in the way that our society interacts with the natural environment. As our entire planet rallies to tackle the problems of global climate change and ecological damage, there has never been a better time to recognise the importance of this modest patch of woods and grassland in the English countryside."

Under BBOWT's care, Dancersend has nearly trebled in size to 211 acres of woodland, chalk grassland and scrub stretching across three parishes - almost all of it open to the public. Nestling in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the reserve boasts 390 species of flowering plants and ferns, over 800 species of fungi and more than 770 species of butterflies and moths. Part of the new funding will be used for specialist surveys to uncover additional species from some of the more difficult to identify wildlife groups.



An example of chalk grassland found at Dancersend.
Photo: Mick Jones.

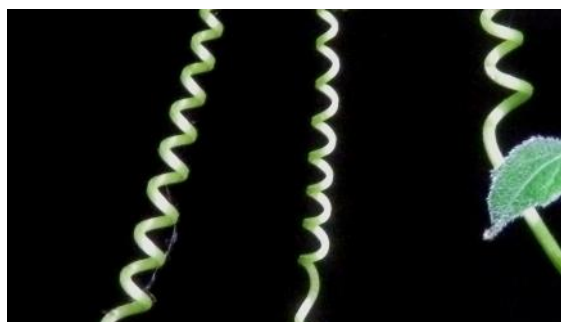
For more information and to find out about volunteering at Dancersend or other BBOWT reserves go to: www.bbowt.org.uk



What on earth is that?

The BMERC Team

In honour of Dancersend's 80th birthday, can you identify these species found at Dancersend Nature Reserve? Thank you to Mick Jones for the photos, answers will be in our next issue!



Answers from last issue:

Brimstone butterfly
(*Gonepteryx rhamni*)



Foxglove
(*Digitalis purpurea*)

Agrimony
(*Agrimonia eupatoria*)





Canopy Monitoring for Dormice

Joyce Moore, North Bucks Dormouse Group

Nonagenarian dormouse researcher John Prince is back in the woods and looking for your help.

He's using two methods to establish the presence of dormice high in the canopy of Little Linford Wood near Milton Keynes. Firstly there is a baited camera trap specially designed to focus on dormice that have found their way into his uniquely designed box. This was instantly successful last year, finding a pregnant-looking dormouse high in an oak tree on its very first outing. This was the first sighting of a dormouse in the woods for almost five years despite constant monitoring using nest boxes and, latterly, footprint tunnels.

In addition he will be sighting multiple treetop feeding stations combined with footprint tunnels, again in large oaks. This is based on the experiments of Goedele Verbeylen in Flanders who found that dormice, with their sticky foot pads, could access swinging platforms with a large overhang that other rodents just couldn't manage. John has adapted these for woodland use and, if he has enough support, hopes to place at least five through the wood.

The first date for putting his monitoring equipment into place was Sunday 25th July, however both methods will need regular checking once they are in place, so John would love to see anyone who can help either with setting up or subsequent monitoring. No experience required and you won't need a dormouse licence.

John is happy to chat to anyone on the phone about his project and will be delighted if you can help him out. To be put in touch please email:

joycetm@uwclub.net



Above: A dormouse spotted by John's camera trap.

Below: Ready to search for dormice.

Photos: Frazer Waller.





Peregrines in Aylesbury

Paul Holton & Emma Foster, Ecology Officers, Buckinghamshire Council

As lockdown eased, our ability to shop in the real world rather than online became a possibility. For those of you that ventured into the market stalls in Aylesbury, if you glanced up while being handed your bag of pears you could be rewarded with one of the most spectacular displays in the natural world. The Aylesbury Peregrines were back!

Well they never actually went away. While we were hunkered in our homes surfing the internet for details of the latest travel restrictions, the Aylesbury Peregrines were doing what they've done for the last ten years: pairing up, making a scrape on the platform on the council tower block, and laying eggs. This all happened a little earlier this year, rendering our efforts to fix the cameras so we could live stream their endeavours in tatters. However, plans are afoot to fix them in early August in preparation for the 2022 season.

This didn't stop the birds continuing their plans, of course. Three eggs were laid and one successfully hatched. With careful monitoring from members of the Bucks Bird Club and Bucks Owl & Raptor Group, the progress of the chick was assessed through the activity of the adults. Cashes of food were provided and stunning displays of prey being caught mid-air above the streets of Aylesbury occurred with the good majority of Aylesbury residents being blissfully unaware of what they were missing.

On the 19th May our volunteers managed to catch the chick while still in the nest and placed a BTO ring on her leg. She was a very healthy weight and her feathers were developing well. Being the only one in the brood to hatch, the benefits of all the food being brought would be hers and hers alone.

A week later she fledged, taking her first tentative flight. This is where the volunteers really come into their own. The perils of those early weeks learning to fly in an urban setting are stark. The vast majority of urban juvenile peregrines perish within the first few weeks of fledging. In the last 10 years we have taken at least one of the fledged chicks to



The new Aylesbury chick gets on the scales.

Photo: Emma Foster.

Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital pretty much every year. Thankfully the council's security team take their CCTV monitoring very seriously and have become incredibly adept at training some of the cameras in the hazard hot spots, during late May and early June, for us. Indeed, it was the case again with this year's chick: filmed and found caught in some pigeon netting. She was rescued with no damage caused so no need for the wonderful team at St Tiggywinkles to intervene this year. She was released away from the netting to continue her perilous life, all the while being watched by her doting parents circling above.

She has been seen but glimpses are becoming increasingly scarce and soon she will disappear to find her new home. Over the course of the last 10 years we have been sent two images of the Aylesbury Peregrines rung as chicks, both outside of the county. With the nest now empty works are afoot to re-establish the web camera so next year's activity can once again be captured and streamed in the hope we can re-engage Aylesbury residents with one of the wonders of our natural world.



What to look for in summer

The BMERC Team

Well the long-awaited spring left a lot to be desired, to say the least! Perhaps this is the new normal that our wildlife will have to learn to live with and adapt to over time? The combination of cold rapidly followed by wet seems to have hammered many invertebrate species with the knock-on impact on nesting birds such as Blue Tits with many people reporting complete failure of early broods.

On the positive side some species look to be having a bumper year with amazing displays of Cowslips followed by swathes of orchids, particularly Bee and Pyramidal. Both appear to be doing well this year popping up in great numbers in areas where they haven't been seen before. Grasses seem to have taken on Triffid-like qualities – great news for many invertebrates, and the birds, amphibians, and mammals that subsequently feed on those, but not so good for hay-fever sufferers!

Keep an eye on the road verges and grasslands around you to see the progression of species throughout the summer: Oxeye Daisies giving way to Common Knapweed and various Scabious species, and the many different grasses providing subtle colour and texture throughout.

Plantlife held their National Meadows Day this year on 3rd July. We highly recommend having a look at their website as they have many excellent resources and campaigns going on to protect and enhance this diminishing resource. [The Meadows' Hub](#) has all things meadow related, from making them to caring for them, or if you just want to find out more about plants, [Plantlife has resources for that too](#).



Above: *Oedemera nobilis*, no prizes for guessing which is the male!

Below: Barn Field Local Wildlife Site in bloom.



Hopefully the warmer weather will bring out more insects, although our early impressions seem to be fewer invertebrates around than usual. One insect our colleagues often bring to us to identify is the appropriately named Thick-legged Flower beetle, or Swollen-Thighed beetle if you prefer (*Oedemera nobilis* to avoid confusion). When you see a male specimen, it's easy to guess how he got his name! While the females lack the swollen back legs, both male and female can be identified by the metallic green elytra (hardened forewings) which are thin and slightly separated.

Who doesn't look forward to seeing butterflies fluttering past in summer? If you do, then there's still time to participate in Butterfly Conservation's [Big Butterfly Count](#), which runs until 8th August.

Speaking of insect surveys, are you doing FIT Counts? Claudia wrote about this survey developed by the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) in our [very first issue](#) last summer. Since then, the project has developed a dedicated app and website for survey results. Find out more on the new [FIT Count website](#), or watch this [great webinar](#) by Martin Harvey for more information about PoMS.

Bats should be at their most active during this period, so break out the bat detector and see if you can identify some of the more common species.

And most of all, stay safe and hydrated as you enjoy nature this summer!



Oak Processionary Moth Update

Caterpillars of the Oak Processionary moth (OPM) are a pest which can be a hazard to the health of oak trees, people and animals in this country; they are a Notifiable species. The caterpillars eat oak leaves. Large numbers can strip whole trees bare, leaving them vulnerable to other threats.

OPM is a native species of southern Europe which was accidentally introduced to England. Left uncontrolled, it would spread across much of Britain. The Forestry Commission (FC), local authorities and landowners are working hard to control this pest so that we can continue to safely enjoy our parks, gardens and woodlands. It is a species which is now known to be in Buckinghamshire, particularly but not necessarily limited to the south of the county. You can help by reporting signs of OPM.

OPM caterpillars are now very visible but have had a staggered development this season. We suspect they will soon be at their 5th or 6th (final) instars and will shortly be pupating. The flight of this moth is typically from mid-August onwards. The FC is

continuing to receive a large number of public reports of OPM in the core and control zone through TreeAlert, email and by phone. These reports are a very useful supplement to our formal surveying and demonstrates the value of an informed and observant public to help us monitor and minimise the population, distribution and impact of OPM. BMERC would very much welcome our recorders support by reporting this species if you see it.

Report it using the Tree Alert online reporting form: treealert.forestryresearch.gov.uk (preferred)

You can also submit sightings by email or phone:
opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk
0300 067 4442

When submitting a report, please include photographs and location details.

For more information about this species, including identification and health information, the FC has produced a leaflet, [which you can view in full here](#).

Identifying OPM caterpillars

- 1 They live almost exclusively in oak trees, which are identifiable by their distinctive leaves.
- 2 They move in nose-to-tail processions, in oak trees or on the ground, hence their name.
- 3 They often cluster together.
- 4 They build white, silken webbing trails and nests – usually dome or teardrop-shaped – on oak trunks and branches (not among the leaves).
- 5 The nests soon become discoloured.



If you see nests or caterpillars:

- Follow the advice in this leaflet for staying safe.
- Report it using our Tree Alert on-line reporting form at forestryresearch.gov.uk/opm (preferred); or
- e-mail it to opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk, or telephone it to 0300 067 4442.
- When submitting a report, please include photographs and location details.

But first, please:

- CHECK that they're in or near an oak tree – OPM caterpillars usually only attack other trees if they run out of oak leaves to eat.

For further information

For OPM tools and resources, visit forestryresearch.gov.uk/opm

Tel: 0300 067 4442
E-mail: opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk

Health information is available from NHS Choices at nhs.uk/conditions/insect-bites-and-stings

The Forestry Commission will consider all requests to make the content of publications available in alternative formats. Please call 0300 067 4000.

For more information on tree pests and diseases, visit gov.uk/government/collections/tree-pests-and-diseases



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Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

Information for the public



forestryresearch.gov.uk/opm



What have we been up to?

We're hitting our busiest time of year, when many of us are juggling site visits, volunteers, and trying to make the very most of the summer months! So in this issue, our updates from the Team are a bit longer than usual and we hope you enjoy hearing what we've been up to.

Julia

Of late there seems to be a common thread in conversations with fellow recorders or land managers that this year, again, has been a very unusual year in weather terms. As a result of this it seems many of the things normally hunted for at certain times, appearing at others. A common experience no doubt, and one which we may all need to adapt to like the wildlife we search for.

As many of you will know this year the BMERC team had another big push on locating Noble Chafers using pheromone traps, following last year's survey cancellation due to Covid. Leaving the EU caused a few unexpected wrinkles but just in time the extra traps needed were secured from a specialist research company in Hungary. The unseasonal weather has made targeting the adults flight period challenging, and requiring all those who have kindly volunteered to help much more work than might be the norm. There are roughly 40 traps out and about across the county all the way from Denham and Burnham in the south to Olney and its surroundings in the far north. There is even one near Bromyard - which the eagle eyed will suggest is somewhat out of Buckinghamshire, but is being considered partnership working in action.

As a result of the recent stretches of wet and windy weather some of the traps monitored seem to specialise in catching dead leaves and twigs as well as confused earwigs and shield



Volunteers checking bottle traps for newts.
Photo: Claudia Bernardini.

bugs (all released unharmed) but that is very much the nature of surveys and doesn't diminish necessarily from eagerly awaiting the results every time a trap is checked. It's always worth looking outside the traps as one surveyor found out when they spotted a Lesser Stag Beetle, which is a lovely find and still widely under-recorded in Bucks. In the next newsletter a run-down of the year's results will be included.

And finally - newt wrangling skills have been honed in sessions kindly organised by Claudia and Marcus Militello from BBOWT near Stewkley, as well as with Fiona in Milton Keynes. Working alongside other volunteers both professionals and amateurs, all of whom share a keen love of our little damp friends, is always a lovely experience. And provides insight into what drives volunteers and some amphibians' choice of habitat, the challenges to clean habitats posed by seemingly indestructible crisp packets, and how newts do seem to use areas which don't seem prime habitat in that they have mini shoals of goldfish, and a lone crayfish...

Fiona

Despite the odd and often unpredictable weather I have been catching up with site surveys. Wandering through a haze of Bluebells, hearing the mewing of Red Kites overhead or finding new sites makes me appreciate what an amazing job I have!

I have crossed the border into Northamptonshire to help out with the dormouse surveys in Hazelborough Wood near to Silverstone circuit. Fortnightly checks of footprint tubes have revealed a healthy population of slugs that seem to enjoy eating the card and leaving pretty charcoal trails across the remnants – there have also been a few potential dormouse footprints but these are not yet confirmed, so we wait to hear...

Again, whilst over the border I've taken part in the Bats in Churches Citizen Science project. Out of 7 churches approached I only gained access to 2, so not an awfully good success rate – maybe a lesson that I should stick to Buckinghamshire?

I've also been doing a bit of training in monitoring techniques for interested groups and advising on changes to road verge management – a seemingly 'hot topic' at present.

I even managed to sneak in a holiday during the survey season but don't tell the rest of the team, I said 'I was surveying in the south', I just didn't specify how far south...



Rhiannon

Most of my work with BMERC involves sitting at a desk and staring at a screen, but I've been able to get out and enjoy the sunshine a bit in recent weeks, including helping Claudia set Noble Chafer traps (*left*) in the south of the county, and brushing up on my plant ID skills with Fiona.

Like Fiona, I also squeezed some surveying into my annual leave, although I went north and had the opportunity to participate in a transect survey for one of Britain's rarest bees: the Bilberry (or Mountain) bumblebee, *Bombus monticola*. Unfortunately for me, the bee was not so excited to see me and didn't make an appearance. But plenty of other insects were about, so it wasn't an entirely wasted trip. Maybe I'll have better luck next time!

Claudia

The year 2021 has been exceptionally busy so far. In particular, the Pond Project and the Reptile and Amphibian Survey have taken most of my time between March and July, despite a delayed start due to lockdown and cold weather.

Records are at the core of BMERC work and the two schemes hope to gather information about species and habitats that are currently poorly recorded in the county and fill the gaps in our database. Hence the decision with the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme and BBOWT to create two groups of volunteers to be trained and then assigned to specific sites to survey ponds and monitor the reptile and amphibian population. I spent the spring months in very good company, working with Nick Marriner in the Chilterns, and Marcus Militello and Sam Knowles in central Bucks, training the volunteers and organizing site visits and field work. Volunteers and landowners are now independently monitoring several hundred artificial refugia across Bucks Farmland. Although the main objective is to determine the status of Bucks ponds and herpetofauna, once entered into the BMERC database the records will also help conservation and inform planning decisions when provided in response to data enquiries. With the help of the volunteering community the projects should grow in the next few years.

Nick and I have also been approached by the ARC (Amphibian and Reptile Conservation) Trust for some support. The Trust is establishing a monitoring framework at national level and launching two national surveys and it has offered to make their new ArcGIS online recording apps available to volunteers and landowners. The desktop and mobile apps should facilitate volunteers and landowners to set up a survey and enter the data in a mobile phone, tablet or on a desktop version. After some training sessions and field trips the volunteers should be able to use the tool easily when out surveying.



Volunteer Phil sets a Noble Chafer trap at Taplow Court.
Photo: Claudia Bernardini.

Watch this space for updates and contact us for more information if you want to get involved.

The South Bucks Ancient and Veteran Tree Project is now on its second year and it has already gathered very valuable information about the distribution and status of ancient, veteran and notable trees in the south of the county, with over 350 trees recorded from private land. The project has also attracted interest in some parishes where the residents and community groups have offered to help with the survey. The survey will pick up again in autumn with a few sites already on my list.

Like most of BMERC Team, this year I've also taken part in the Noble Chafer monitoring season. Gathering the traps and distributing them across sites and volunteers has given me the opportunity to see some interesting places such as Stampwell Farm and also meet some lovely people such as Phil Rollinson from Taplow Court and Michael Andrews from Cliveden Estate. Although the beetle seems to be quite shy this year, the team has now established a good network of sites that will be monitored in future years.

Neil

Because of the lockdown, I've done no moth trapping, other than in my garden, for almost two years. With the recent lifting of restrictions I've been keen to get out moth-trapping again. I've had a couple of outings in recent weeks.

The first was to join a neighbouring moth group on National Moth Night, the theme this year was Reedbeds and Wetlands. We visited Springwell Reedbed just over the border in Middlesex (VC21). Unfortunately it was quite cool but there a few reedbed specialties found including Silky Wainscot (*Chilodes maritima*), Obscure Wainscot (*Leucania obsoleta*), Brown-veined Wainscot (*Archanara dissoluta*) and Southern Wainscot (*Mythimna straminea*). Overall I recorded only about 40 species in my two traps, while the list for the evening (several traps) was over 100 species.



The second outing was to College Wood near Nash in the north of the county. This was a memorial mothing evening for George Higgs and Gordon Redford, it was very well attended, and the weather was significantly warmer. This time I had over 100 species to my two traps. The list for evening has not yet been published, but I would not be surprised if the 12 traps exceeded 200 species. The best species for me was not a moth but a longhorn beetle *Leiopus linnei*, which I believe will be only the second record for Buckinghamshire.



Above: Neil's moth trap.
From left:
Brown-veined Wainscot (*Archanara dissoluta*);
Leiopus linnei.
Photos: Neil Fletcher.

In Remembrance

We heard with regret the sad news of Gordon Redford's unexpected passing. He was a well-known and valued member of the recording community, in particular the Milton Keynes Natural History Society. Always willing to share his considerable knowledge of moths, there are hopefully many young people out there who have been inspired by him sharing his passion for wildlife. He was also a compelling advocate of green space management for wildlife as well as people. He always seemed to have a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye whenever you chanced upon him, be it at an event or bumping into him unexpectedly in a bird hide. Gordon will be greatly missed and we send our sincere condolences to his family and many friends.



Resources Round-Up

This is a round up of all of the links in this issue, plus ways to get involved and items of general interest:

Colne Valley Festival Fortnight (until 8th August)
www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/colne-valley-festival-fortnight-2021/

Chilterns Celebration (1st to 8th August)
www.chilternsaonb.org/ccf-fest.html

Floodplain Meadows Partnership Art Competition
www.floodplainmeadows.org.uk/projects-and-events/art-competition-2021

iRecord www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/

BBOWT www.bbowt.org.uk

Big Butterfly Count
bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/

Plantlife Meadows Hub
meadows.plantlife.org.uk/
www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature

UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme
FIT Count: ukpoms.org.uk/fit-counts
Webinar: youtube.com/watch?v=8alvnn7fABs

Oak Processionary Moth Resources
treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk/
www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/7935/OPM_leaflet_2020.pdf

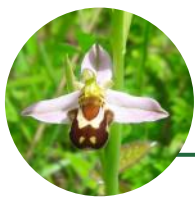
FSC Biolinks Online Courses & Events
www.field-studies-council.org/biolinks-courses

Nature's Calendar, The Woodland Trust
naturescalendar.woodlandtrust.org.uk/

PTES Surveys
ptes.org/get-involved/surveys/

Natural England announces Chilterns AONB Boundary Review
www.chilternsaonb.org/chilterns-aonb-boundary-review.html

Environment Agency, Chief Scientist's Group, The State of the Environment: the urban environment
www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/the-state-of-the-environment-the-urban-environment



Our Final Thoughts

Thank you to our guest authors from this issue: Emma, Irina, Joyce, Mick and Paul.

If you have feedback or a suggestion for an article, we would love to hear from you. The next issue will be our Autumn edition.

We hope that you're able to get out and enjoy the beauty of nature this summer, whether in the rain or while the sun is shining!

*Best wishes from the BMERC Team,
Claudia, Fiona, Julia, Neil & Rhiannon*



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