



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre

Newsletter—6th Edition

Spring 2021

**Spring has well and truly sprung now. As the weather gets warmer and restrictions ease across the country, many of us are getting ready to resume recording again.**

For the BMERC Team, the early part of 2021 was almost entirely consumed by planning our Annual Recorders' Seminar, which we held online for the first time ever. You can read the seminar report on the next page.

As summer swiftly approaches, the team is now preparing for surveys to begin again. There are a number of ways you can get involved, so if you're interested in any of the following projects, please get in touch:

- Traditional Orchard Surveys: do you have or know of a traditional orchard that we should include? Let us know!
- Noble Chafer Monitoring: many of you have already been in touch with site suggestions. We still have some traps available and we will provide training, so please contact us if you'd like to learn more.
- Buckinghamshire Pond Project
- Ancient and Veteran Trees Inventory

In this issue, we have reports from across our patch looking back on the past few months—but also looking forward on upcoming projects and ways to get involved with recording now.

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Primrose. Photo © Julia Carey.



**Buckinghamshire  
Council**

Would you like to write for our next issue? For more information, email [erc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:erc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)



## Report on the Annual Recorders' Seminar: Home is where the wildlife is

**After the disappointment of the late cancellation of last year's seminar due to the approaching lockdown, we were pleased that many of you could join us this year at our Annual Recorders' Seminar, held online for the very first time.** The theme of the day, *Home is where the wildlife is*, was selected as a reflection of the unusual year preceding the seminar, which saw many of us recording mainly from our gardens or other local green spaces.

Organising an online conference was a new experience for our team; just as much work goes into an online seminar as a physical one, if not more! We were joined by over 100 people during the day and we were delighted to read the positive feedback so many of you left for us afterwards.

*"Thank you so much for putting this on. Having attended yearly for many years now, the cancellation last year was a huge (but necessary) disappointment. Today may not have given us the chance to network or buy books but it went a long way to feeling 'included' as a recorder."*

Feedback was anonymous, so please email BMERC if you had a specific query! There were also a lot of learning points: emails sent from Zoom wind up in many people's junk mail folders, regular breaks are as important as ever, and even pre-recorded presentations can go wrong! While for many of us meeting online cannot take the place of meeting face to face, it was great to be able to come together for the day to discuss and learn more about our local natural environment.

For those who could not attend, the day included presentations on a range of topics from Pond Restoration to Saproxyllic Beetles, the perspectives from two young recorders who are just beginning their journeys, and the usual updates from the BMERC Team and some of our county recorders. Thank you to all of our speakers, as well as our excellent host, Mick Jones MBE.

*"Great to hear from the recorders of the future."*

*"A great variety of speakers ... plus good chairing made it a pleasure."*

The recording of the day is available on YouTube, and includes most of the talks:

<https://youtu.be/K3dKpsXwC7Y>

You can also find information about the day, such as the running order and a copy of the programme, on the BMERC website:

[www.bucksmkerc.org.uk/seminar-2021](http://www.bucksmkerc.org.uk/seminar-2021)

A big congratulations also to the winner of our photography competition, Barry Webb! Barry's stunning photographs of fungi took both first and second prize. You can find Barry's photography on the Bucks Fungus Group's website and it is really worth a look, such as [this collection of Slime Moulds](#). Julie Lane's beautiful misty scene of Goosey Bridge, Olney secured third place. Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's competition.

Whether it is online or in person, we look forward to welcoming you again next year!



## BFG: Beating the Covid Blues!

*Penny Cullington, Buckinghamshire Fungus Group*

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**The onset of Corona virus in the UK soon brought the activities of many local fungus groups to a complete standstill, the Buckinghamshire Fungus Group amongst them.** Ironically this coincided with the best and most prolific Autumn fruiting of fungi in our area for years. Sod's law comes to mind! The group has a large though not particularly active or expert membership, so we needed something which would replace our normal activities and which everyone could enjoy and contribute to, however limited their expertise. Our website was the obvious way forward, so our Members' Finds Autumn 2020 page was set up and members were encouraged to get out there and start sending in their photos which, if suitable and able to be identified, were to be uploaded together with helpful field identification notes.

We started off at the beginning of September in a modest way but it was not long before a dated species list was needed to help navigate around the many and varied collections sent in from all over the county by a range of people. A few collections were identified using a scope but most were sent in by beginners eager to learn and just thoroughly enjoying being involved and seeing their photos on the website. It really took off in October with ridiculous numbers of interesting things appearing and the photos and skills of many members clearly improving – that after all was the main object of the exercise.

None of this would have been possible without our webmaster, Peter Davis, being prepared to update the site day by day – his patience and fortitude were

just amazing. We went from one unlikely target to another: first could we get to 200 species? Then possibly 300? Eventually by the end of December we'd made it to 508, including over 30 species new to the county, 2 of which, having been sequenced, are new to the UK (both found on the same day at the same site and only a matter of few yards apart – what a day that was!)

It was gratifying to receive the many appreciative messages both from members and non-members as the project gained momentum, and it does seem to have really ticked the boxes and given participants a much needed sense of purpose and achievement in what has been for all of us a very trying time to say the least. At the start of 2021, we introduced our follow-up project, Members Finds 2021, to give members another challenge: something everyone can support by keeping an eye on their local patch.

I'd highly recommend this sort of activity to other groups but it does need a few people to head it up and take on the commitment: there is certainly a fair amount of work involved but it has turned out to be one of the most rewarding and enjoyable things I've done in mycology. The one thing we've all got plenty of at the moment is time and anything which gives us a reason to get out there and enjoy fungi has to be good. It's also produced a whole load of records which we'd otherwise have missed; that has to be another plus. Visit [www.bucksfungusgroup.org.uk/finds.htm](http://www.bucksfungusgroup.org.uk/finds.htm) to take a look at how it works.



## Slow Worms settle in at Local Nature Reserve

*Trevor Brawn, Chesham & District Natural History Society, Chesham Environmental Group*

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**A large re-development site, formerly 90 Asheridge Road in Chesham, has been derelict for over 10 years and, as is so often the case in these situations, it is biodiversity that benefits most from this type of situation.** However, before the re-development for new social housing by Paradigm House Builders could start, there were numerous planning conditions attached to the planning permission that had to be complied with, before, during and on completion of the re-development of the site.

Having carried out a detailed environmental survey of the Asheridge Road site, in accordance with one of the planning conditions, it was immediately evident that there was a large number of Slow worms enjoying the secluded and slightly overgrown site conditions, following the demolition of the existing buildings several years ago. It was decided however, that it would not be possible to create safe areas to retain the Slow worms on the site once building work commenced, so the search was on to find a suitable local site to transfer the Slow worms.

After assessing various possibilities, the Berkhamstead Field Community Meadow (BFCM), adjacent to the Recreation Ground at the bottom of Nashleigh Hill in Chesham, fitted the bill almost perfectly.

The Meadow is owned by Chesham Town Council (CTC) which is important as there needed to be a long term management plan in the form of a legal agreement between CTC and the developer, Paradigm, before any Slow worms could be transferred, so that their future safeguarding could be assured.

Since 2010 the Meadow has been specifically managed as a chalk grassland area to maximise the biodiversity potential of the site. The key management principles were agreed between Chesham & District Natural History Society and CTC, and after only the second year of a new management regime the site clearly merited designation as a Local Nature Reserve for its floral diversity. So we were off to a flying start. The number of orchids varies quite significantly from year to year but there has been years with over 100 bee orchids, and more recently over 100 pyramidal orchids on the site. The key management principle is to cut the Meadow just once a year after the wildflowers have set seed in late August, and to remove the cut vegetation from the Meadow. The area is surrounded by mature hedging, woodland and coarse grassland all of which are beneficial to the Slow worms.

In order to ensure that all of the Slow worms were located on the development site, refugia mats were placed in suitable locations and checked on a daily basis over a period exceeding six weeks. Any Slow worms located under the mats were collected and transferred to the BFCM which was enhanced before the arrival of the Slow worms late on in the Summer of 2020 by the construction of two hibernacula. These are large structures, excavated partly below ground, formed of masonry blocks and logs that provide safe and sheltered refuges for the Slow worms when they hibernate through the cold winter months.

As we move into Spring 2021 and the weather becomes increasing warmer, we will see the Slow worms venturing out of the hibernaculum and moving under the numerous roofing felt mats placed around the reserve. The most successful mats at attracting the Slow worms will be the ones placed in secluded locations close to the base of the well established biodiverse hedges surrounding the meadow. They also need to be in areas that are in the sun for at least part of the day, enabling the Slow worms to warm up ready to go hunting for food in the late afternoon, evening or even overnight for their usual prey of slugs, snails, spiders and earthworms.



Above: checking the refugia mats for Slow worms.  
Right: the completed hibernaculum.  
Images © Alan Power.



Above: Slow worms on site. Slow worms are neither worms nor snakes, they are Britain's only legless lizard! Image © Trevor Brawn.

Regular work parties are arranged at the BFCM with the Chesham Environmental Group providing most of the equipment and manpower needed to ensure that routine maintenance and habitat enhancement work is carried out successfully.

However, the key to the success of the meadow is the annual cut and collection of the herb rich chalk grassland in late August or early September, carried out by the Maintenance Team of the Chesham Town Council. This is one of the most beneficial aspects of the project and is the result of an important partnership approach from a number of different groups, working closely together, to create a habitat that continues to attract a superb range of flora and fauna in a peaceful setting which is enjoyed by many locals and visitors on a daily basis.

**Chesham & District Natural History Society website:**  
[e-voice.org.uk/cheshamnhs/](http://e-voice.org.uk/cheshamnhs/)

**Chesham Environmental Group website:**  
[cheshamenvironmentalgroup.org.uk/](http://cheshamenvironmentalgroup.org.uk/)





# Cowslip Survey: Take a peek in a cowslip to help our meadows!

Felicity Harris, Plantlife

With a myriad of local names such as 'Cowslops', 'Fairy cups' and 'Bunch of keys', cowslips are steeped in folklore and one of our most familiar spring wild flowers, popping up on banks, verges and meadows in April and May. The drooping, butter-yellow flowers with orange throats are an iconic sight, but have you ever looked closely at one?

This April, Plantlife is asking us all to take a close look at cowslips and record what type we see: are they an "S" or "L" type of cowslip? The difference is in the flowers:

- The "S-morph" has the male parts of the flower (the stamen) which are easy to spot
- The "L-morph" has only the top of the female part (the stigma) visible

## Why do I need to look at cowslips?

In healthy cowslip populations, there should be equal numbers of both types of flower to enable successful breeding. However, this 50:50 ratio becomes imbalanced when the cowslip population declines due to loss of habitat or if there is a change in agricultural practices. Knowing the ratios in the area helps us understand more about the quality of our grasslands.

Researchers at the University of Tartu, Estonia have reported greater instances of the S morph than the L morph in cowslip populations. This could indicate pressures of land use change and declining habitat health. As genetic diversity within populations decreases this could make cowslips more vulnerable to climate change.

Sadly, wildflower meadows and species-rich grasslands now cover less than 1% of the UK, and the remaining meadows are fragmented, neglected and forgotten. Once common meadows species have declined, yet a healthy wildflower meadow can be home to an unparalleled and concentrated diversity of over 700 wild flowers and can support over 1000 species of insects. Meadows provide one of our most iconic wildlife spectacles: a wealth of beauty, scents and sounds that everyone should be able to enjoy.



Can you spot the difference? S morph cowslip on the left, L morph on the right. Photos courtesy of Plantlife.

To get started in the cowslip survey, and help Plantlife and its European partners understand more about the health of our grasslands, visit [the website](#).

## 5 things about cowslips

- The cowslip's Latin name, *Primula veris*, comes from *prima rosa* meaning 'first rose', while *veris* means 'of the spring'.
- Cowslips have a sweet, fruity smell, which many liken to apricot.
- Cowslip Sunday was a tradition in Lambley, Nottinghamshire to celebrate the arrival of spring and held on the first Sunday in May. It was a day for celebration, storytelling, performances and for picking cowslips, which grew in abundance, to make wine. The tradition was revived in recent years.
- In the language of flowers, cowslips symbolise grace.
- They may be known as Cowsups, cowpats and cooslops because our ancestors noted that they tended to flower where a cow had 'slumped'.

## National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS)

Now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year, data from the NPMS has been used to input into the [UK Biodiversity Set](#) as part of C7 Plants of the Wider Countryside indicator. The robust methodology and long term monitoring of plants and habitats is providing essential data on how plant communities are fairing under increasing pressures. More information is available on the [NPMS website](#) and [YouTube channel](#). There is also a series of webinars about the NPMS and habitat training, [click here](#) to learn more and register.



## Knowing Your Place—Discovering Buckinghamshire’s Parishes

*Lucy Lawrence, Archaeology Officer, Buckinghamshire Council*

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**Within the structure of Buckinghamshire Council, BMERC sits alongside a number of Environmental Specialists, including the Heritage & Archaeology Team. Some of our projects dovetail neatly together, whilst others vary, but we all enjoy keeping abreast of what each team is up to within the county.**

In August 2020, the Archaeology Team launched the Buckinghamshire Heritage Portal, an online interactive website which allows interested residents to learn more about the history and archaeology of Buckinghamshire. A wonderful resource years in the making, the portal draws heavily on its predecessor Unlocking Buckinghamshire’s Past. It includes an interactive map linked to the Historic Environment Record, period summaries, teaching packs and a timeline. It can be accessed via:

[heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk](https://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

A key part of the portal are the parish summaries, one for each of the county's 163 parishes and outlining the key discoveries of each period within each parish. Whilst they are fascinating and informative, some of the summaries are now over 10 years old and need updating in light of more recent local parish discoveries. This would be a large undertaking to do on our own so in February 2021 the Archaeology Team launched ‘Knowing Your Place’, a project working alongside local historians, archaeology and history groups to assist with updating the summaries. It was felt that not only would volunteers be able to help update the summaries with information we already hold within the Historic Environment Record, but that they might also be able to add their own invaluable local knowledge.

We have had a great initial response, with nearly 40 parishes allocated to various volunteers, both individuals and on behalf of local societies. We have even already had one entry updated and returned to us! However, that does still leave over 120 parishes in need of allocating, and we would love to hear from anyone who may be interested in helping out.

### **Help update the parish summaries:**

For further information and details of how to take part, email [her@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) with the subject heading ‘FAO Lucy Lawrence - Knowing Your Place’ and include the following information:

- name of participant(s)
- parish(es) of interest
- association to parish(es) of interest
- affiliation to local archaeological or historical societies
- any particular area of expertise

We will allocate a volunteer group or individual to each parish on a ‘first come first served’ basis, although we will be looking for an association with a parish from the participant. This will be a real two-way relationship and we will provide positive support to volunteers. Training on using the portal to update the text will be provided, and all assistance will be acknowledged on the relevant parish pages once updated. Of course, additional information, known to the local community but missing from the portal, is very much welcomed.

There is no deadline for expressions of interest, and volunteers are welcome to take on further parishes if any remain after the first round of applications.



## Volunteer with Chiltern Rangers

*Steph Rodgers, Ranger*

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**Hello! We are Chiltern Rangers - a Community Interest Company working with communities to provide practical habitat management in Bucks and the wider Chilterns. We love what we do and others seem to like it too!** We manage 13 nature reserves for Buckinghamshire Council and help a range of conservation and local authority partners with habitat management in their woodlands, chalk grassland, commons, ponds and chalk streams; this is all achieved with the help of volunteers and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, schools, colleges and other partners.

Our core values have volunteers and volunteering at the heart and our vision is all about engaging local people and communities to improve people's lives and enhance the places in which they live, especially if that involves drinking tea and eating biscuits.

Investing in our volunteers is really important to us and we make sure that we engage, train and support all of our volunteers. We welcome people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to give us a hand. Whether indoors or out in nature, there are plenty of things you can help us with. All we ask for is enthusiasm! We run practical group sessions at different times

for specific projects and regular sessions on Mondays and Fridays by booking only.

Our volunteer conservation group meet every Thursday at Wycombe Rye Lido Car Park at 10 am and it is open to all. Come along, meet us and keep fit while helping take care of your local environment in the woods. Everyone is welcome to turn up to these half day 'Green Thursday' sessions and join in with whatever we're doing that day!

Maybe you are looking for a volunteering opportunity inside? We often have a need for someone with PR, marketing, fundraising or administrative skills so if you are interested in helping for a few hours a week please contact us to find out opportunities we have available.

We are also available to hire for practical land management and run Be A Ranger team building sessions. We've always got projects on the go, so if you're interested in learning more about our work or any of our volunteering opportunities, contact us or visit our website:

[info@chilternrangers.co.uk](mailto:info@chilternrangers.co.uk)  
[www.chilternrangers.co.uk](http://www.chilternrangers.co.uk)



## Biodiversity Net Gain

*Paul Holton, Ecology Officer, Buckinghamshire Council*

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**Buckinghamshire Council now has a small team of Ecologists whose role includes dealing with planning related impacts on the environment. One key piece of legislation that is soon to be mandated under the pending Environment Bill and within existing or establishing Local Plans is the need for developments to generate a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).** Though not a new concept globally, here in the UK it is rapidly becoming one of the key ecological considerations when considering developments. Colleagues within the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP) are establishing a Buckinghamshire model for developers to apply but it is the Council's ecologists who are assessing the applications submitted for their BNG merits.

BNG is a system that assigns a numerical value to the habitat being impacted. It uses a metric calculation, established by DEFRA and Natural England, with the third iteration of a national metric due at some point in 2021. Warwickshire County Council who have implemented BNG for some years now are on their 19th version of the metric. This demonstrates how complicated determining a score for a habitat can be. Once a score has been assigned a second assessment is established post development. For the developer to be compliant with the establishing legislation a minimum of 10% BNG is required. A further assessment is made on hedgerow impacts pre and post development. This system assesses habitats alone. Species specific impacts are assessed separately. Attempting to establish a numerical value for the species impacts is some way off but may well be considered in future iterations.

The great hope for this system is that it establishes a level playing field to assess development not only here in Bucks but across the whole of England. A developer has to follow a defined set of principles when applying BNG. Those being: retaining protected habitats, compensating and enhancing within the boundary of the development and as a last resort seeking offsite enhancements. It is the last of these that has raised much concern and certain degrees of excitement within the conservation world.

For now the council ecologists are working closely with members of NEP and colleagues in BMERC to see how Buckinghamshire fully adopts BNG principles. As we get closer to full adoption of these principles all major and minor planning applications will need to demonstrate a BNG. There will be much more to follow on this as the system is established here in Buckinghamshire and nationally.

The principles of BNG have long been established, it's the national model which is new. One development in Aylesbury where developer contributions have enabled a suite of conservation project work to be established was the Berryfields development, adjacent to the Aylesbury Parkway railway station. This development was identified in the previous local plan as an allocated site for houses. Ecological assessments were carried out and it was identified that a number of species and habitat impacts could not be adequately compensated for within the development zone so off site compensation was considered as an option to address this issue. What was sought at the time was a financial contribution in the form of a Section 106 agreement with the developer. These funds have been used to establish a number of different projects within an agreed area of the development. 30ha of wildflower rich meadow were established near Oving and a new three year project with BBOWT was created to facilitate projects on the ground called Hedgerow Havens. Many of you will know Marcus Militello who leads this project.

Some headline figures from this project include the restoration and creation of over 5.1km of linear feature including hedgerows; which have been planted, gapped up, coppiced and laid, road verges and shelter belts. In addition to this, over the course of the last three years, the project has seen the restoration and creation of approximately 9ha of wildlife rich habitats, such as meadows, woodland, rotational scrubs mosaics and 9 new wildlife ponds. This work has been possible through forming partnerships and creating agreements with 8 parish councils and 15 landowners. Further outputs include

assisting in the formation of three local wildlife groups, surveying 18km of linear habitat, the development of a fortnightly practical volunteer work group and the creation of the volunteer led Bucks Pond Project alongside BMERC and BucksARG. The latter project is currently in operation working to establish pond locations and condition, along with reptile and amphibian distribution.

Hedgerow Havens is one example on how developer contributions can help facilitate conserving nature in Buckinghamshire. It can be controversial but with the current scale of housing and its associated infrastructure proposed across the county Biodiversity Net Gain is another tool in the Council Ecologist's box they can use to protect and enhance those areas that need most attention.

*Thank you also to Marcus Militello, Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust, for his contribution to this article.*



Hedgelaying with the Vale Countryside Volunteers.  
Photo © Marcus Militello.



## What on earth is that?

*The BMERC Team*

Can you identify these species found in Buckinghamshire and/or Milton Keynes from these close-up photos? Answers will be in our next issue!



Answers from last issue:

1) Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*)



2) Large White Caterpillar (*Pieris brassicae*)



3) Silver-ground Carpet Moth (*Xanthorhoe montanata*)





## Pond Project Update

*Claudia Bernardini, Environmental Project Officer, BMERC*

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### Spring is here and we are finally back in the field!

The Bucks Pond Project is now live and active with the support of many enthusiastic and helpful volunteers and hundreds of reptile and amphibian refugia already placed in sites across the Chilterns and central Bucks.

Last month the 'pond team' Claudia, Marcus, Sam and Nick have been very busy working on the information packs and survey forms for volunteers.

In March we delivered two online training courses and after the change in the government guidelines we could also hold two training days at Steart Farm, North Marston.

The calendar is now busy with day site visits and evening Great Crested Newt (GCN) surveys until the end of June. Several survey forms have already been returned and records are coming in!



Images from top: First training day © Marcus Militello  
Trying out the survey forms © Claudia Bernardini  
GCN found during a volunteers evening © Caroline Heron



## What to look for in spring

The BMERC Team

**It's been a long, long winter but spring is well and truly sprung now with so many signs of renewed life and hope for sunshine and blue skies again.**

The winter visitors have mostly left and summer visitors are starting to trickle in, maybe you already have your House Martins and Swallows back? Perhaps you have spotted a Wheatear on its way to breeding grounds further north. Most birds are in full song and have been for many weeks.

Woodlands are at their best early in the year, with dappled light reaching the woodland floor and illuminating the many springtime flowers: Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and of course, Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), which carpet woodlands in a haze of mauve: a truly magical sight to behold each spring.

Keep a keen eye out for Coralroot (*Cardamine bulbifera*): it seems to have a relatively short flowering period and easily goes unnoticed. Although it is restricted in distribution, we have a healthy population within the Chilterns. Other spring flowers you might spot in woodlands include many ancient woodland indicators: Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*), Bird's-nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*), Herb Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*) and the diminutive Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), charmingly known as Townhall Clock and often overlooked.

Venturing into grasslands look out for Adder's-tongue (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*); this tiny fern can be an indicator of old meadows and pasture.



Left: Coralroot. Above: Moschatel. Title image: Wood Anemone.  
Photos © Neil Fletcher.



From left: Large Bee-fly (*Bombylius major*), Tawny Mining Bee (*Andrena fulva*). Photos © Gail Hampshire, CC-by-2.0.

Bees, butterflies and all manner of other insects will be on the wing now. Several moths will be appearing including the Burnet Companion (*Euclidia glyphica*) which should be around between May and June. From mid-May start looking out for the day-flying Large Red-belted Clearwing (*Synanthedon culiciformis*); although nationally scarce, it can be attracted using pheromone lures. (And if you're interested in moths, Neil has a great tip in his update on the next page for attracting Early Oak Piercer moths using lures.)

In your garden or while out on a spring walk, you may also be spotting Bee-flies: distinctive furry flies that are usually on the wing from late-February until June. If you do, submit your sightings to iRecord as part of Bee-fly Watch. Learn more on [their website](#).

This spring and summer, the Bees, Wasps & Ants Recording Society is collecting data on first recorded flight date of 18 species commonly encountered in gardens and parks across the country. The selected species are widespread and easily identifiable, such as Tawny Mining Bee, Red-tailed Bumblebee and Field Digger Wasp. If you'd like to learn more or participate in the project, information is available on [the BWARS Facebook page](#).

Try and refrain from breaking out the mower and let the insects feast on those gorgeous dandelions adorning your lawn. Perhaps take part in Plantlife's [No Mow May](#) and [Every Flower Counts](#). If you get really carried away perhaps carry on with [#LetItBloomJune](#) and [#KneeHighJuly](#)...



## What have we been up to?

Claudia is busy liaising with volunteers for training days and going out on pond and great crested newt surveys. As the ancient and veteran trees project is also picking up again Claudia was approached by Gerrard Cross Town Council to survey their trees. An initial virtual meeting with councillors and members of Bulstrode Camp Limited Resident Association led to a very good response. The uptake on survey day was great with several residents participating during the survey.



Fiona claims to have done nothing of interest or merit, but is fortifying herself for the busy survey season ahead.



Neil recently heard about a new moth pheromone aimed at catching the invasive Oriental Fruit Moth *Grapholita molesta*. It was being widely reported that it also caught a scarce native moth, the Early Oak Piercer *Pammene giganteana* (below), which lives on oak. So he bought one and tried it out in his garden: "Within a couple of hours I had caught 9! (They were all released unharmed).



The surprising thing is that I have moth trapped here for over 20 years and never once recorded it. I'm looking forward to a lot more moth trapping!"

On any warmish day, Rhiannon can be found scouring her garden for insects or hovering over flowers undertaking a [FIT Count](#)—try it!



Emma has accepted a secondment position with the Ecology Team, so although we will still work closely with her, we have to say au revoir for now! Thank you for all your contributions to the BMERC Team, Emma!



Julia has been eagerly awaiting things of spring and enjoying the profusion and procession of flowers both garden and wilder ones as each in turn celebrates the extending daylengths. The emergence of some familiar insects always brings Julia joy, and she has spent probably too long watching bee-flies and hairy-footed flower bees doing thing, one day even whilst it snowed which is a first. Julia is looking forward to getting out and doing some newt surveys and hopefully hearing the cuckoos this year.



## Resources Round-Up

This is a round up of all of the web links included in this issue, plus other projects, ways to get involved or general interest:

### **BMERC Annual Seminar 2021**

[www.bucksmkerc.org.uk/seminar-2021](http://www.bucksmkerc.org.uk/seminar-2021)

### **Buckinghamshire Fungus Group**

[www.bucksfungusgroup.org.uk](http://www.bucksfungusgroup.org.uk)

### **Chesham & District Natural History Society**

[e-voice.org.uk/cheshamnhs](http://e-voice.org.uk/cheshamnhs)

### **Chesham Environment Group**

[cheshamenvironmentalgroup.org.uk](http://cheshamenvironmentalgroup.org.uk)

### **Plantlife Cowslip Survey**

[www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/cowslip-survey](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/cowslip-survey)

### **National Plant Monitoring Scheme**

[www.npms.org.uk/](http://www.npms.org.uk/)

### **Buckinghamshire Heritage Portal**

[heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk](http://heritageportal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

### **Chiltern Rangers**

[chilternrangers.co.uk](http://chilternrangers.co.uk)

### **Bee-Fly Watch**

[www.brc.ac.uk/soldierflies-and-allies/bee-fly-watch](http://www.brc.ac.uk/soldierflies-and-allies/bee-fly-watch)

### **Bees, Wasps & Ants Recording Society, First Flight:**

[www.facebook.com/notes/uk-bees-wasps-and-ants/bwars-first-flight-date-project/2008621562612708/](https://www.facebook.com/notes/uk-bees-wasps-and-ants/bwars-first-flight-date-project/2008621562612708/)

### **Plantlife No Mow May**

[www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/nomowmay](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/nomowmay)

### **Plantlife Every Flower Counts**

[www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/)

### **Bucks Buzzing**

[www.bucksmknep.co.uk/bucks-buzzing](http://www.bucksmknep.co.uk/bucks-buzzing)

### **FSC Biolinks Online Courses & Events**

[www.field-studies-council.org/biolinks-courses](http://www.field-studies-council.org/biolinks-courses)

### **Hedgehog Awareness Week: 2-8 May**

[www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/hedgehog-awareness-week-2021/](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/hedgehog-awareness-week-2021/)

### **Milton Keynes Natural History Society Webinars**

[mknhs.org.uk/programme](http://mknhs.org.uk/programme)

### **People's Trust for Endangered Species: Various Surveys in your garden or the wider countryside**

[ptes.org/get-involved/surveys/](http://ptes.org/get-involved/surveys/)

### **UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme**

[www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/pollinator-monitoring](http://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/pollinator-monitoring)



## Our Final Thoughts

Thank you to our guest authors from this issue: Felicity, Lucy, Paul, Penny, Steph and Trevor. We enjoy reading all of your contributions and love hearing about the projects going on across our patch. Please keep sending us your articles!

If you have a suggestion for an article or would like to contribute to the next issue, please contact us. The next issue will be our Summer edition in July.

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



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