



The Countryside Centre, Kingsmead Depot, 60 Fennels Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1SL
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IN THIS ISSUE

The Countryside Centre moves to Kingsmead

Announcing :
Move to Kingsmead 111

Update :
Hang on to Hedgerows',
progress report. 112

Wycombe Notebook :
Wycombe Show,
Challenges for 2000. 113

Wildlife Gardening : Review of
our Demonstration Garden. 114

Surveys : A Hedgerow Survey,
Garden Bird Survey. 115

Reports :
Unseasonal Happenings. 116

Reports :
European Congress Kelkheim. 117

Penultimate : Buckinghamshire
Woodland Forum. 118
wildlife WATCH report,
New members, welcome,
Farewell **BBONT**. 119

Wildlife Notice
Board

Readers will have noticed the change of address of **Wycombe Wildlife Group** at the top of this newsletter. The move took place during October 1999, and the Group now shares premises at Kingsmead with the **Wycombe District Ranger Service** as well as **BTCV**.



However, the transfer is seen only as an interim measure, as **WyWG**, and **BTCV** along with the **Ranger Service**, expect to settle finally at the **Rye Environment Centre**, when it has been completed. Those of you who read the local press will have seen the news about the Rye Centre announced last September. We hope to give more details in our next issue. In the meantime, a big thank you to those Trustees of the Group who helped with last year's move, and also to Mike Ambrose of Wycombe District Council, who organized crates and transport which made the move much easier.

Pat

Wycombe Wildlife Group is supported by
Wycombe District Council

The "Hang on to Hedgerows" Campaign



Wycombe Wildlife Group is a voluntary organization the **OBJECT** of which is to further the ecology and knowledge of the urban and fringe areas of **High Wycombe**, Buckinghamshire; to conserve, protect, restore and create wildlife habitats; to encourage colonization and survival of all plants & animal life in such areas and to promote the education of the public in matters pertaining to wildlife and its conservation.

Within **Wycombe District** the Group aims to :

- Survey and map wildlife habitats.
- Protect important wildlife sites.
- Study wildlife sites and associated flora & fauna.
- Manage wildlife sites and associated flora & fauna.
- Stimulate public interest in wildlife & its conservation.
- Encourage wildlife gardening.
- Co-operate with other groups of similar aims.
- Promote the objectives of the Group.
- Encourage active participation in conservation of all persons and groups and provide appropriate training to that end.

(A detailed copy of the aims is available on request)

Wycombe Wildlife News is published 3 times a year to promote the Group's activities and inform members & public of its progress.

Editor : Pat Morris
 Produced by : Maurice Young
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 Pat Morris, Lorna Cassidy,
 and Maurice Young.
 Printed by :



Wycombe Wildlife Group
 is a Registered Charity
Reg. Charity no: 1075175

The "Hang on to Hedgerows" Campaign is the Group's **Millennium Project**. So now the New Year has started, here is a summary of what we have achieved so far.

September 1999

1. The launch of the Campaign at the Wycombe Show and the "Hedgerow Hamper" raffle.
2. An inaugural "Hedgerow Hike" round ancient hedgerows at Grange Farm, Hazlemere. Although only six stalwarts attended, one of them was David Gantzel, who has written a history of the area. Perhaps torrential rain during the morning put off the 100 people who took away leaflets at the Wycombe Show ?

October 1999

3. Two members revisited other hedgerows at Hazlemere to assess changes since Brian Saunders' survey of 1986 - "A Field in H7".
4. A "Members Meeting" was held to discuss local hedgerows and the format of survey forms.
5. Two members received training and have already completed hedgerow surveys.

November 1999

6. Hedgerow planting at West Wycombe Garden Centre planned. This, however, is "on hold" at the time of going to press.
7. A "Winter Wander" to review recently planted hedges at Hughenden, and how they are developing, Some were laden with sloes.

December 1999

8. Liaison with **Risborough Countryside Group** who are also organizing a Millennium Hedgerow Project.
9. Joanne Hodgkins, of County Museum, agrees to co-ordinate survey data.

Stop Press : The EU Strikes Again !!!

New European rules on how farmers are to measure their fields to claim EU subsidies, will mean they are forced to cut back their hedgerows and reduce their grassy field margins, if they are to qualify. The new rules state that the field measurements must start from the centre of the field boundary, i.e. the middle of the hedge, and only allow a two-metre strip between this and the crop. Hedges in 20 metre set-aside strips should not be more than two-metres wide either.

After all the work by conservationists to persuade farmers to leave shaggier hedges and wider field margins for the sake of wildlife, this is a disastrous piece of legislation !

Pat

Views expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Group. For the purposes of management of the Group membership information is held on computer. Any members who object to their membership details being held in this way should notify the secretary.



Wycombe Show 1999

The winners of the "Hedgerow Hamper" raffle, held during the Wycombe Show, 4th/5th September 1999, were as follows :

Prize	Donated by	Winner	Ticket no.
Hedgerow Hamper	Dawne Lemon	Rose Owens	198.
Framed Picture	The Framing Gallery Cryers Hill Road High Wycombe	Rob Oldham	273
Bottle of Wine	Bottoms Up Frogmoor High Wycombe	Mego O'Riley	261
Pot Plant	Sylvia's Flowers Cressex Road High Wycombe	Margaret Simmons	234

The winners of the Children's' Colouring competitions were Octavia & Florence Bingley-Hall, and their prizes of a set of colouring crayons and a "Hedgerow Hedgehog" ornament were donated by Wycombe Art Shop, Easton Street, High Wycombe and Hazlemere Pharmacy, Hazlemere Cross-roads, respectively.

We thank all the prize donors for their generosity, all purchasers of tickets and helpers, who each contributed to the success of the event.

Also, a special thank you to the Show President Kathleen Peatey, who came specially to our stall to draw the prize winning tickets for us.

The Framing Gallery asked us to point out that they sell Gary Hodges Limited Editions, Floral Prints, and that they have the most innovative, custom picture-framing in the area.

Challenges for the year 2000

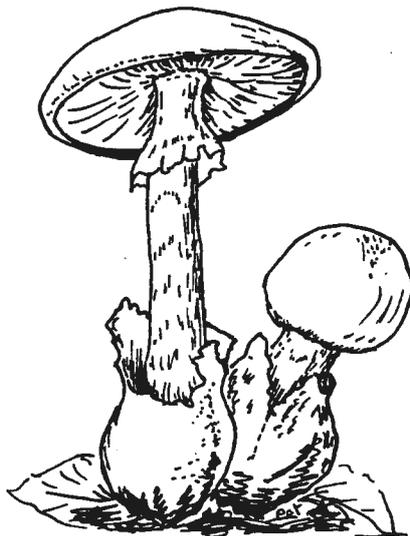
Other ways to make it a bumper year, as well as taking part in the Millennium Project.

1. Take part in practical conservation tasks. Work parties took place at Chairborough, Sheepridge and the Gomm Valley nature reserves during 1999, and the number of supporters has increased, but we could do with more. Why not join them and make this a bumper year for Working for Wildlife.

2. Help at our Demonstration Wildlife Garden at West Wycombe Garden Centre. 120 volunteer-hours of wildlife gardening were completed last year; with your contribution, this year could be a record.

3. Attend one of our walks. Seven took place last year at such diverse situations as Bulstrode Park, Gerrards Cross, Medmenham, Davenport Wood and Marlow Common. At this past venue, 55 species of fungi were recorded, Don't miss out. Be one of those who sees the White-legged damselfly, the Death Cap fungus.

Pat



Death Cap fungus (Amanita phalloides)

**Meet the challenge in 2000 and
make it our best year yet. !**



West Wycombe Wildlife Garden -1999



A look back on a year of mixed results

Our first session of 1999 started on a beautiful spring day. The robin who owns the garden greeted us, and daffodils, hellebores and primroses were in flower. We saw a brimstone butterfly, a ladybird, two frogs, and were delighted to see our own frog spawn for the first time - in previous years we imported it from other ponds.

On 12th May we saw our first tadpole, many more followed and our efforts through- out the summer were enlivened by frogs of all sizes, including this year's tiny ones, jumping out at us wherever we were weeding.

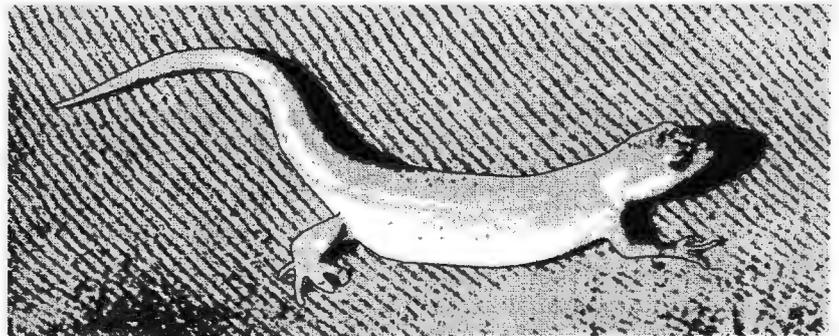
Late March we belatedly re-erected the tit box and to our surprise on the 26th May two bluetit parents were in residence. In June we saw the babies climbing up to the hole to be fed, and a fortnight later - nothing, so we assumed they had fledged successfully.

The cowslips in the spring meadow were beautiful, through the fritillaries were disappointing. Angus was impressed with the variety of grasses in the summer meadow, and scabious, musk mallow and vetches put on a great show. However the foxgloves spurned the woodland area blooming magnificently on the rockery where they were not wanted !

As the Group's 10th Anniversary Walk started from the Garden, we organized a photographic display showing its development from scratch. Also for the occasion Angus helped produce our information boards incorporating our own logo. The Garden did its bit by putting up a riot of growth and colour.

Other wildlife seen during the year included long tailed tits, nine species of butterfly, (including green-vein and marbled whites), plus damselflies, an emperor dragonfly and common sympetrum. A rabbit jumped out at Irenke from the compost bin and our mole was always an unseen presence.

On the very last session, a magnificent red kite flew by. However, all these were eclipsed when the cornfield was being forked over in the hope of improving its performance next year - our first common newt ! We hope it likes the garden and attracts some friends.



Our first common newt !

The plan for a new fence went on hold due to the uncertain plans for the future development of the garden centre - our garden may be moved and/or enlarged.

Frogs of all sizes jumping out at us

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the 120 hours worked in the garden. However, even this level of input left much maintenance undone so please, gardeners out there,



come and join us in the new millennium !

Mary Williams & Irenke York





A Hedgerow Survey

The hedge I have chosen is on the south side of Wycombe and is located between Desborough Avenue and Carver Hill Road. It runs along the top of steep flower-rich field, facing west accessed from either end of Carver Hill Road and bordering their back gardens.

The hedge is completely unmanaged and has six tree species in it - ash, oak, beech, whitebeam, cherry and field maple.

Apart from shrubs such as blackthorn and hawthorn there is quite a lot of wild privet, hazel and buckthorn, although, surprisingly, no dogwood, although it is present in the field.

The chalky soil and sunny position of the site supports a good range of wild flower species such as yellowwort, autumn gentian, rough hawkbit,

small scabious, eyebright, cowslip, burnet saxifrage, wild basil, fairy flax and yellow rattle.



Bullfinch

I have seen or heard 21 species of birds. Several kinds of warblers visit in the summer, and redwings in the winter. There are usually song thrushes and bullfinches with their soft calls, both of which have become fairly scarce. Two blackcaps have over-wintered here in the last few years and

have started singing in mild Februarys, and I have heard the song of a garden warbler once or twice.

All in all, this is a hedge well worth surveying and visiting.

Frances Wilding

Garden Bird Survey

Many of you will be familiar with the survey. Participants record the maximum count of each species of bird seen in their garden each week, and send the results to the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) on a quarterly basis. With over 10,000 gardens now represented nationally, and records going back 4 years, the survey is beginning to reveal the importance of gardens as a habitat for wild birds, with different species benefiting at different times of the year.

I contacted BTO recently to see if I could get a breakdown of data for Wycombe. Unfortunately this isn't possible due to the sheer volume of paper recording forms being handled, but the BTO was able to let me have some information of the general location of their recorders in our area. By postcode, the number of gardens contributing data is:

HP10	2	HP11	5	HP12	4
HP13	8	HP14	6	HP15	6
SL06	22	SL07	6	SL08	8

Total: 67

I'll continue to talk to the BTO, to see if I can get some consolidated Wycombe data. In the meantime if any of you would like to take part in the survey (especially if you are in a postcode area with low representation), then contact the BTO at:

Garden Bird Survey
c/o British Trust for Ornithology
The Nunnery
Thetford
Norfolk IP24 2PU

There is a £10 membership fee, but this covers all the recording forms and a quarterly newsletter.

Mike Goff

If any readers are already taking part in the above survey, or even keeping their own records of birds visiting their gardens, Mike is appealing for photocopies of recording forms. He can then use the data to get a picture of which species occur in the area. His address is:

15a Little London
Silverstone
Northants NN12 8UP

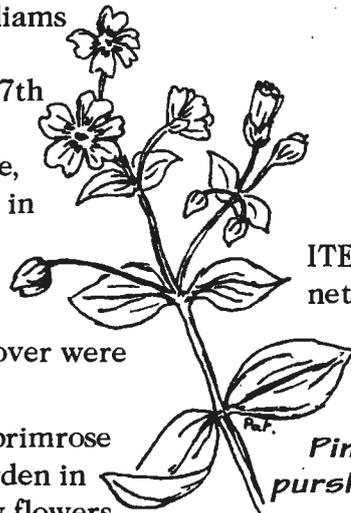


Unseasonal happenings

More evidence of changing weather patterns

The sunniest autumn for 40 years (Daily Telegraph 01/12/99) produced some strange anomalies in the plant world at the end of 1999. Some plants were persuaded to flower early, other to undertake a second blooming, while others did not cease to bloom once their normal flowering period was over. Mary Williams of Totterage sent in a list of some 23 plants in bloom in her garden on the 7th November 1999, while Pat Morris of Amersham Hill Drive, High Wycombe, counted 16 different species in flower in her garden in the first week of December. The field rose & brambles were producing flowers in the hedge, while the black knapweed and red clover were blooming in the grass at Hazlemere.

Roger Wilding reported that he had primrose and pink purslane in flower in his garden in November. The latter plant generally flowers between April and July, but it was noted by Brian Saunders in his study "A Field in H7" (1985/6) as still in flower when his survey began in September 1985. Yellow corydalis is an excellent plant for the length of its flowering period, being one of the species still in flower in both Mary's and Pat's gardens in December. Osteospermums were in bloom in Peter Hazzard's garden and elsewhere. A comparison of flowering times (yes, that word phenology again!) is



something anyone can undertake, and if you are prepared to record your findings on the forms provided by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (ITE), you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to scientific research. Forms are available from:

Tim Sparks
Institute of Terrestrial Ecology
Monks Wood
Abbots Ripton
Huntingdon
Cambs PE17 2IS

ITE revived the UK phenological network with a pilot scheme in 1998 for which they received some 74 returns. Some of the results of this first year were reported in the British Wildlife Magazine (Vol. 10, No.2 December 1998).

Our school members might like to note that phenology can provide some interesting work for schools, for it was stated in the British Wildlife magazine article that "Dennis Bellamy offered to include phenological recording as part of his SCAN (Schools in Communities Agenda 21 Network) project." Another point gleaned from this article was that information on phenology in other countries could be accessed on the web: <http://www.student.wau.nl/~arnold/gpmn.html>

Plants in Bloom in Totteridge, 7/11/99

Primrose (in bud)	Honeysuckle	Wild strawberry	Red campion	Achillea
Yellow corydalis	Sedum spectabile	Oregano	Fuchsia	Penstemon
Marigold	Chocolate cosmos	Oriental poppy	Sweet pea	Scaevola
Viburnum tinus	Osteospermums	Cyclamen (in bud)	Antirrhinum	Sunflower
Nasturtium	Bacopa snowflake			

Plants in Bloom, Amersham Hill, 5/12/99

Viburnum farreri	Bush rose	Trailing lobelia	Minature rose (The Fairy)
Nasturtiums	Primula sp.	Herb Robert	Winter jasmine (in full flower)
Bats in the belfry	Candytuft	Yellow corydalis	Meadowsweet (in bud)
Cyclamen	Bergenia cordifolia	Berberis darwinii	Echinops sphaerocephalus
White deadnettle	Hebe "Midsummer Beauty"		



European Congress Kelkheim

In October **Kelkheim**, our twin town in Germany, organised a European Conference under the theme "Air for Life" At the invitation of Wycombe District Council I represented **Wycombe Wildlife Group** and joined a small party from High Wycombe who attended the two day event. The local authorities of Saint Fons, France, and Lastra a Signa, Italy were also represented and each town made a presentation, a brief summary of which follows:

High Wycombe - Green Transport, & promotion of Agenda 21 within the community, such as recycling and environmental awareness.

St Fons - Major Technological Risks (and plans for managing dangerous events), centred around the major chemical factories in the centre of the populated area.

Lastra a Signa - Ecological Action within the context of Urbanisation, centred around the preservation of traditional forms of landscape, particularly the terraced cultivation of olive trees, the maintenance of dry stone walls and traditional irrigation against the cost benefits of modern agricultural practices.

Kelkheim -

- 1) Green Composting - The Way to Waste Avoidance centred around the centralised composting of green waste.
- 2) Traditional Orchards - centred around the loss of the traditional orchards earlier this century and the importance of conserving the remaining orchards for their landscape and environmental benefits.

General comment.

I was particularly struck by the similarities of problems and that each community was trying to find ways of meeting common objectives under Agenda 21. (We will cover Agenda 21 in more depth in a future Newsletter)

The conference was considered a success and will hopefully be the first of a series of such contacts.

Ideas were being expressed about the nature of future conferences, possibly with themes to be considered by mixed nationality syndicate groups, so that problems and ideas can be shared and worked on in a less formal setting.

A full report of the event is being compiled by Kelkheim and this will be made available to us in due course.

Contacts made.

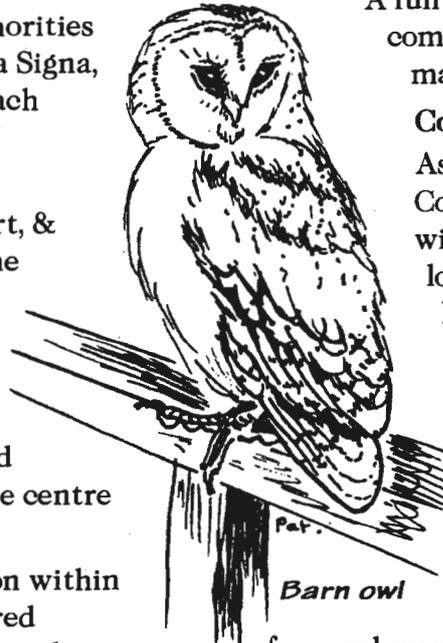
Aside from the formality of the Congress I was fortunate to stay with Oliver Conz who is active in local environmental matters.

He took me to see the Orchards which are now being conserved, and a Barn Owl nest in one of three purpose built nest boxes installed in the roof spaces of old churches. Oliver is particularly interested in birds and has a good knowledge about the numbers of breeding pairs

of several species in the locality. He has a special knowledge of lesser spotted woodpeckers.

Oliver first became known to the Group, albeit at a distance, when he wrote an article for our International Edition of the Newsletter in September 1991. He met Matthew Ellis at that time but contact did not continue. He is very interested in making a trip to High Wycombe, with others from Kelkheim wildlife groups, and we are looking into the possibility of an invitation during 2000. Although plans are at an early stage it would be helpful to know if any members might feel able to host a visitor for say 2 or 3 nights. If so please let me know on 01494 445334.

James Donald



Barn owl





The Buckinghamshire Woodland Forum

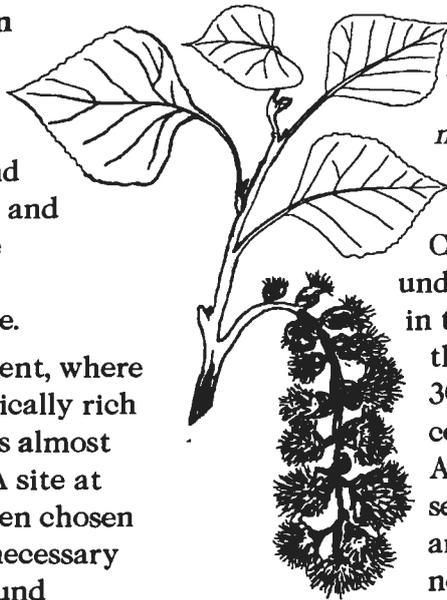
The annual Buckinghamshire Woodland Forum was held at Green Park in Aston Clinton on the 18th September. The introduction was made by John Craven who sadly advised us that he would no longer be able to continue his association with the Group.

The first topic to be discussed was the Floodplain Forest Restoration Project by the Milton Keynes Parks Trust. As part of the Government's Biodiversity Action Plan floodplain woodland is considered a priority habitat and this project is supported by the Forestry Agency, Countryside Commission and English Nature.

The floodplain forest environment, where it still exists, is the most ecologically rich natural system in Europe and is almost completely absent in Britain. A site at Manor Farm, Wolverton has been chosen for restoration. To create the necessary topography, a great deal of ground modelling is needed to create channels, reed beds, pools, islands, sandbanks, meadow and woodland areas. The restoration costs will be high and Milton Keynes Parks Trust have decided on a, possibly contentious, way of raising the necessary finances by mineral extraction from the site to provide the funds for the project. Other forms of funding would require matching funding which is simply not available and the argument for the gravel extraction seems a sensible one.

Once the restoration work has been completed, an operation which is likely to take between four and six years, the habitat created should support a very diverse wildlife community, including the water vole (Britain's most rapidly declining mammal) otters, many woodland, wetland and meadow birds,

butterflies and amphibians. Various hardwood tree species including oak, ash and poplar will be planted and within 3-4 years the appropriate natural cover will begin to develop. Together with the changes in the river management these trees will grow good hardwood timber, improve water quality and fish stocks and recreate the rich lowland habitat suitable for the native black poplar.



Leaves and female catkin of Black Poplar

The male & female catkins of poplars are borne on separate trees. The male catkins produce lots of pollen. The female catkins are wind pollinated and, following fertilisation, produce lots of seeds covered with long silky hairs which are dispersed by wind. Because the masses of fluffy seeds they produce cover everything around the tree, female trees are rarely planted

The native Black Poplar (*Populus nigra* ssp. *betulifolia*) was the subject of the next talk by Alan Holmes who, along with Aylesbury Countryside Management Project, undertook a survey of Black Poplars in the Aylesbury Vale. It had been thought that there were only 2000 - 3000 specimens in the whole of the country but on closer investigation Alan Holmes observed that there seemed to be an awful lot in the local area and indeed a total of 3660 have now been identified and plotted.

With the addition of a further 500 on the Hertfordshire side of the Vale the total now stands at around 4,100.

The condition of the trees has been assessed and shows that over 70% are pollards. Of these half have not been pollarded for some time

and the survey will enable re-pollarding to be prioritised. Aylesbury Countryside Management has re-pollarded many trees over the last six years and virtually all have survived.

The survey has also identified gaps in the distribution and a programme for growing-on cuttings and planting has recently started.

Dawne Lemon

Most of the black poplars to be seen around Wycombe are hybrids or Lombardy poplars



Rare Species Alert !

Wildlife Watch Leaders have become a very rare species indeed, so rare that if more can not be found Wycombe Watch will close by March 2000 at the very, very latest.

Although it is a small group, one of the members has been attending since the first meeting in May 1994 and others for three or four years. The age range is from 8 to 13 years.

Wildlife experts would be nice but are not essential, more important is enthusiasm and an ability to relate to young people. The two remaining leaders are still willing to help but can no longer take sole responsibility; members of **Wycombe Wildlife Group & the Local Wildlife Trust** may help with expertise and there is now a full-time Watch Co-ordinator for Berks, Bucks, and Oxon. who will help with ideas and training - small mammal trapping and environmental art, at the Warburg Nature Reserve. Emma Firth (01865 775476) also organizes regional events which groups can attend - Watch Camp in July 2000.



It is fun, that is why the current leaders have been doing it for 5 1/2 years and do not want to give up entirely. Past events have included pond dipping, bug hunts, fungus forays, mammal trapping and camps and we have learnt a lot about wildlife and had a good time.

If you would like more information, please contact Elaine Tague (01494 716492) or Wendy Thomas (01494 814068)

Finally, although having tried our utmost to avoid the Millennium word we must wish all our readers, members especially, a

Happy New Year

and hope to see you at our meetings. Agenda 21 exhorts us to think globally and act locally. Make it your new year's resolution to work for your local environment by helping at our work parties.

New Members - Welcome !

We welcome the following new members, who joined during 1999 and look forward to meeting some of them at our future events :

Miss Heather Barbaresi, Ms Sue James, Mr Glyn Paradise, Mrs Bingley-Hall & family, Mr M Pusey, Miss Pamela Harris, Ms Pauline Cauvain, Mr & Mrs John and Jean Lay, Ms Pauline Reader, Mr Andrew Buckland, Ms Helen Foster, Mr & Mrs M Lambert, Mr Roger Carter, & Mr John Andrews.

Many thanks to all our other members for their loyal support which for some of them has lasted 10 years.

Farewell BBONT



Last November BBONT celebrated its 40th anniversary and chose this auspicious occasion for a change of name to come into line with the other 46 Wildlife Trusts. The Trust is now the

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.

Would you like to join us ?

If so complete this application (or a photocopy) and send to : **WyWG Membership Secretary** c/o, The Countryside Centre, (see front page for the address)

I / We wish to join WyWG
Name :

Address :

Tel. no.

Amount enclosed, (please circle)
£5 (Individual/Family/School member)
£2.50 (Student or Retired Person)

WILDLIFE NOTICE BOARD

Did You See ?



- August**
Marsh tit -
on seed feeders, Amersham Hill (14/08/99)
- September**
Humming bird hawk moth on
summer jasmine, Amersham Hill (13/09/99)
Wood pigeon on nest -
Outside back door, Amersham Hill (13/09/99)
- October**
Last comma butterfly- Penn Wood (02/10/99)
Common aeschna & common. sympetrum
dragonflies - Mop End (11/10/99)
- November**
Last Red Admial -
Amersham Hill (02/11/99)
- December**
Red fox - Terriers Green, 10a.m. (04/12/99)

The WyWG Contact list:

Chairman & Newsletter Editor :
Pat Morris, 01494 529484
Site Management Coordinator :
Roger Wilding, 01494 438374
Treasurer : Peter Hazzard, 01494 447949
Membership Secretary :
James Donald, 01494 445334
Project Officer :
Mego O'Riley, 01494 536930
wildlife WATCH : Emma Firth, 01865 775476
Biological surveys : Angus Idle, 01494 563673
Education Officer & Assistant Editor :
Maurice Young, 01628 472000

MEMO : COPY DATE Friday, 3 Mar 2000

Correction to did you see -
First cuckoo 02/05/99 NOT 02/03/99
A date for your Diary
Wycombe Wildlife Group AGM
Monday 17th April 2000
starting at 7.30p.m.
Hopefully, back in Bassetsbury Manor

Names of Contacts for Wildlife Groups in Wycombe District

BBOWT	Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust South Bucks Region, Vol. Reserves Manager	(Oxon Office) Maurice Young	01865 775476 01628 472000
BNA	British Naturalists' Assoc, S. Bucks Branch	Marion Hussey	01494 488336
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	Marion Lyon	01494 536930
BBG	Bucks Badger Group	Mike Collard	01494 866908
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology (Regional Rep.)	Mick A'Court	01494 536734
BC	Butterfly Conservation	Jaci Beaven	01494 444158
BBC	Bucks Bird Club	Graeme Taylor	01296 625796
CPRE	Council for the Protection of Rural England	Tom Cotton	01844 345183
CWP	Chiltern Woodlands Project	John Morris	01844 271315
EN	English Nature (Thames & Chilterns Team)	Corina Woodall	01635 268881
SWS	Saunderton Wildlife Sanctuary	Margaret Baker	01844 342188
St.T	St. Tiggywinkles	Les Stocker	01844 292292
SL	Swan Lifeline	Tim Heron	01753 859397
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature	Valerie Lambourne	01494 443761
WDC	Wycombe District Council Ranger Service	Julie Hopton	01494 421824



For other groups or if you have any queries about BATS contact the COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE,
Kingsmead Depot, 60 Fennels Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1SL 01494 536930