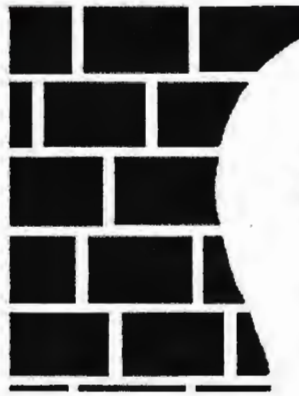


WYCOMBE

WILDLIFE



NEWS

no. 32

WILDLIFE GROUP

APRIL 2000

The Countryside Centre, 60 Fennels Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1SL
01494 536930

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The Butterflies of Buckinghamshire



An illustrated talk by
Dr. Roger Kemp

Monday 17th April, 2000

8.30 p.m. Bassetsbury Manor

preceded by refreshments
and sale of raffle tickets from 8.00 p.m.

The main raffle prize will be a video

"Jewels of the Air"

made by Dr. Kemp

of all the butterflies that breed in Britain.

(Copies of Dr. Kemp's video will also be on sale)



p.s. there will be a short AGM starting at 7.30pm

Wycombe Wildlife Group is supported by
Wycombe District Council

The Rye Environment Centre

In our January 2000 issue of Wycombe Wildlife News (No. 31) we promised you further details of the new Rye Environment Centre, where Wycombe Wildlife Group hopes to transfer its office in 2001.

The bulk of the grant (£576,551) for this prestigious Centre came from a special fund set up by Biffa Waste Services, with a further 10% provided by Wycombe District Council and the Environment Agency.

The successful funding bid for the new Centre was handled by Philippa Lyons of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, and the Trust is now a key partner in the scheme. They have appointed a special manager, Nick Forster, to carry the project forward.

The need for an Environmental Centre was identified by Mrs Frances Alexander when she was Chairman of Wycombe District Council in 1997. Having chosen Local Agenda 21 as her main theme for her year of office, Frances invited 16 local environmental groups along to contribute ideas. As a result, the existing redundant cafe building at the Holywell Mead Outdoor Swimming Pool, on the Rye, was chosen as the most suitable site. It will be renovated, using recycled and local materials, and will provide examples of energy conservation in action and waste recycling, as well as becoming a centre for local environmental activities.

Nick Forster is currently working with the District Council, the Environment Agency and Wycombe Wildlife Group, who have agreed to represent all the local environmental groups, to make the project an outstanding success. Wycombe Wildlife Group have already held one meeting to inform people about the new centre which James Donald reports below. If you have any ideas you wish to contribute, or any questions about the new Centre, it is not too late to get in touch with :-

Nick Forster on 01865 775476

or Wycombe Wildlife Group.

Pat Morris

The Rye Environment Centre II

What we all wanted to know

Wycombe Wildlife Group is closely involved with the project and on 14 February was pleased to host a meeting for representatives of local groups with an environmental interest at which Nick Forster and Mrs Frances Alexander were in attendance to answer questions.

We have collected together some of the questions and comments raised at our meeting. They give an indication of the way thinking is going and are subject to change as more input is received from local people and groups.

It is important to remember that firm decisions about the building layout and its eventual use have yet to be made so feel free to make suggestions or offer help, in writing please, to Wycombe Wildlife Group at the Countryside Centre address. (continued opposite.....)

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
 Illustrations by :
 Fiona Wilding, Roger Wilding and Maurice Young.
 Printed by :

Design & Print
 Wycombe District Council

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

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.



Answers to questions about the Rye Centre

Funding

- ★ Funds have been obtained to enable the building work to be done.
- ★ Wycombe District Council has promised funding over three years to support the running costs but the intention is that the Centre should become self sustaining.

Building design

- ★ The architects will be selected soon and invited to come to a meeting to ensure they reflect as many views as possible in the building design.

When will the Centre Open and who will use it ?

- ★ Local groups and anyone with an interest in environmental matters.
- ★ It needs to have fixed opening hours, but not necessarily every day
- ★ The Centre should provide shelter, toilets and resources for school parties within a secure environment.

Who will manage the Centre ?

- ★ Management 'board' will be set up, well before the building opens in the fourth quarter of 2001.

Who will staff the Centre ?

- ★ Mainly volunteers.
- ★ Volunteer Focus could be used to recruit volunteers.

Community involvement

- ★ Children could be involved in designing the trails.
- ★ Local groups will be encouraged to contribute ideas.

Communication & Publicity

- ★ It will be promoted in Wycombe Community News
- ★ The Wycombe Wildlife Newsletter is circulated to schools so they will be informed of progress.
- ★ A Rye Centre Newsletter would be useful to start promoting the project.

Agenda 21 (see separate article)

- ★ If it was seen as a centre for Local Agenda 21 there would be lots of different groups keen to promote things such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable transport, etc..

James Donald



We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter if you are not already a member and would like

**to join Wycombe Wildlife Group
and receive the newsletter regularly
and take part in our activities**

complete the membership form on page 129
and send it to the Countryside Centre
(address on front page).



Remember Rio ?

During the 1980s continuing concerns about mankind's use of world resources and the effects of our lifestyles on the natural environment led to the realization that carrying on as we were was not a long term option and a UN appointed World Commission on the Environment and Development produced a report called Our Common Future which set out the idea that *"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*

This was followed in 1989 by the UN deciding to hold a conference on Environment and Development. For some two years governments, other organizations and experts debated the issues and agreed an agenda for action in the 21st century. In 1992 Brazil hosted a world conference in Rio de Janeiro and Agenda 21 was born when 179 states agreed to it.

What is Agenda 21 ?

To quote from the preamble : Agenda 21 addresses the pressing problems of today and also aims at preparing the world for the challenges of the next (21st) century. It reflects a global consensus and commitment at the highest level on development and environmental co-operation. Its successful implementation is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments. National strategies, plans, policies and

processes are crucial in achieving this. International co-operation should support and supplement such national efforts. In this context, the United Nations system has a key role to play. Other international, regional and sub-regional organizations are also called upon to contribute to this effort. The broadest public participation and the active involvement of non-governmental organizations and other groups should also be encouraged.

What does it mean to the national & local government ?

As a signatory the UK is committed to the aims of Agenda 21 and in June 1997 Tony Blair said "I want all local authorities in the UK to adopt Agenda 21 (LA21) strategies by the year 2000". Bucks County Council has passed the responsibility for LA21 to the District Councils and so Wycombe District Council is responsible for LA21 within its area of influence.

What does it mean to us ?

We can expect to see change. We have the opportunity to think about our life styles. Importantly Agenda 21 encourages public participation and active involvement of non-governmental organizations and other groups in the development of LA21. Wycombe Wildlife Group will be happy to contribute to the debate.

James Donald

Wildlife Garden - West Wycombe

The first work party at our Demonstration Wildlife Garden of the new millennium took place on Saturday March 18th and was attended by 8 people who spent the afternoon on tasks the over winter rest had produced.

Fences were repaired and the pond was cleared of blanket weed during which task a newt was found. The grass was mown and the woodland area cleared to reveal daffodils and other spring flowers.

All worked hard but there was much to enjoy and the company was good.

Mary

Hang on to Hedgerows Project

In February we contacted primary schools in Wycombe District to promote the project through poster and poetry competitions, open to 5-11 year olds, on the theme of hedgerows. To date five schools have taken up the challenge.

The winning entry will be used to publicize the hedgerow campaign across Wycombe with selected entries being used on our new web site. All the schools that have entered will be undertaking a hedgerow survey of their own.

Mego



A Living Churchyard

Did you visit St Mary-le-Moor, Cadmore End, last year? Did you notice the lovely patch of wild flowers and grasses in bloom in our butterfly conservation area, just inside the Lych Gate.

We cut it just once a year, in the late summer, after the Small Skipper butterflies hatch out and before they lay eggs for the next year's brood. One Sunday in mid-July after church we counted seven different species of butterfly nectaring or sunning themselves on knapweed, ox-eye daisies, bird's-foot trefoil and harebells. Over a four year period we have recorded twenty different species of butterfly, which is a very high number. In fact we are running third highest in the County. Lots of churches help with the Butterfly Recording Scheme run by the Butterfly Conservation Society.

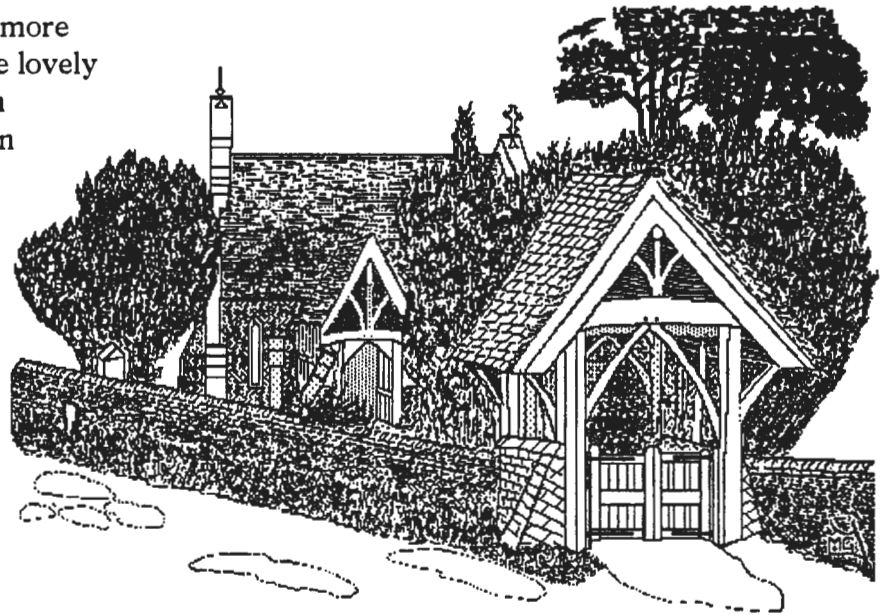
Our churchyard is also sixth best in the County for wild flowers and plants, with a total of one hundred and thirteen different species. The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust award certificates for conservation efforts in churchyards and we were delighted to receive one in 1994 and again, last year, in 1999.

We also have a good variety of birds, not to mention badgers, who visit us and a Spotted Flycatcher nested in the porch a few years ago. A National Scheme called "The Living Churchyard Project" will give information and advice to anyone interested in managing their churchyard for wildlife.

Adapted from an article in the South Chiltern News (the newsletter of the South Chilterns Group of Churches), September 1997, by kind permission of Barbara North.



Harebell



**St Mary-le-Moor
Cadmore End**

If you would like to see this lovely little church and its wildlife Barbara says:

The Living Churchyard Project organized by the local Wildlife Trust has selected our churchyard for its open day this year on

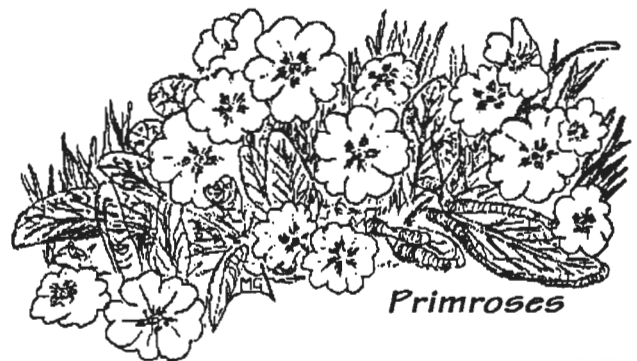
Sunday June 17th. 2000 (10a.m. - 4 p.m.).

There will be experts from Butterfly Conservation - Dennis Burroughes, I expect. The Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) - Roy Maycock, and possibly a lichen expert and a geologist. So it should be an interesting day. With a bit of luck we might also see some Red Kites.

Anyone interested will be most welcome at any time during the day.

Tea and biscuits will be available in the Church Hall.

Barbara North



Primroses



Wildlife legislation - an Update

I'm sure that most of our readers will know about the hope, last year, that new legislation would be brought in by the government to strengthen the protection for the countryside & in particular Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Over one third of SSSIs are in "unfavourable condition" according to English Nature, due either to direct damage or simple neglect.

Many environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth, Plantlife and the Worldwide Fund for Nature collaborated last year in organizing a letter-writing campaign aimed at raising awareness of this issue amongst MPs, in order to ensure that it was addressed in the new parliament.

The good news is that this seems to have worked, with the publication of the "Countryside and Rights of Way Bill" this year. The principal provisions of the bill are :

- ♣ for the first time courts will be able to order the restoration of SSSI land after it has been damaged.
- ♣ there will be powers to tackle the problem of third party damage to SSSIs, helping responsible owners to control the action of others.

- ♣ there will be significantly higher fines for damaging SSSIs
- ♣ public bodies will be required to manage and conserve SSSIs in their ownership
- ♣ English Nature will be given new powers to refuse consent for damaging activities on SSSIs without being required to offer compensation payments
- ♣ the bill will also contain provision for greater access to the countryside.

English Nature's Chairman, Baroness Young, has called this bill,

"One of the most significant improvements in the fortunes of England's wildlife in the last twenty years"

The bill has still to progress through parliament, and of course, may be subject to amendments on its way to becoming an Act. Last week (March 20th), however, it successfully passed its second reading in the House, so current progress is promising. Further letters to MPs may be needed during this time in order to keep the Bill on course and undiluted, but the evidence so far is that if enough people take part in these campaigns, then together we can make a difference for the better.

Mike Goff



Hang on to Hedgerows

Wycombe Wildlife Group's project to identify the best hedgerows in the District



Enclosed in your newsletter this time is a Copy of our 'Guide to Hedgerow Trees & Shrubs' and two survey slips in the hope that you will be able to survey at least one hedgerow near you. It would be great if you could do more and if you need more survey slips please contact the Countryside Centre or me (Maurice).

As was reported in our September newsletter, when we announced this project, the legislation is there to protect hedgerows but it can only be invoked if there is reliable evidence of the quality of the hedge.

Trying not to be too political we do need this

evidence, for with the Government imposing more houses on Bucks, green field sites and any rich hedgerows within them are again under threat. Help us and your Councillors protect them by going out and recording all our good hedgerows.

We have tried to keep the survey as simple as possible but if you would like to provide more information, such as the plants growing within a metre of the hedge, do by all means send it in - on an extra sheet of paper, please.

Although it is now even more important that we get this data - do enjoy gathering it.

Maurice



Flowers of the Hedgerow

Hedgerow flowers fall into three groups: 1. the flowers of the hedgerow shrubs; 2. the flowers of the climbing plants that scramble through the hedge and 3/. the flowers of the plants that grow on the bank along side the hedge.

At this time of the year, spring, the flowers of the hedgerow shrubs are very conspicuous, as the leaves have yet to break. In early February hazels in untrimmed hedges are festooned with golden tassels and as they darken and begin to fall in March the bare stems of blackthorn become clothed in white and, along Winchbottom Lane, a vivid splash of yellow forsythia draws attention to a gate which leads through to a cottage set back from the road so not readily noticed. Just before Easter as the first buds begin to show signs of green the palm or pussy willow comes into flower - it is the showy male flowers that we notice, the smaller, green female flowers are far less conspicuous.

Later in the year when the leaves are fully open the hawthorn will come into flower along with the elder in this hedges that were not flailed last year. In one or two of the more special hedges, the sort we hope to identify in our hedgerow survey, the viburnums - the guelder rose and wayfaring tree - will flower. The presence of these two shrubs in a hedgerow suggest that the hedge may have been formed from shrubs of a woodland edge left when the wood behind them was cleared.

These flowers are a major source of nectar and pollen for insects and, later in the year, their fruits: nuts, sloes, and berries are an important food source for many birds and small mammals. Dr. Paul Bright, who has been at the forefront of research into the current status of the dormouse and its conservation, has recently been looking at the importance of hedgerows to dormice and, in one

report observes that "*Hedgerows are vitally important to wildlife in Britain*" and notes that "*In the past a third of all dormice records have come from hedgerows, which gives some idea of how important they are to the species*".

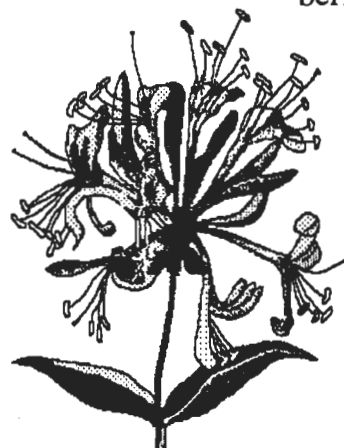
As I have reported in a past issue of our newsletter we learnt from Graham Thorne that the hedgerows in Coleshill support dormice.



Blackberries
One of the many fruits of the hedgerow

Hedgerows are vitally important to wildlife in Britain

The climbers are those plants that grow over shrubs of the woodland edge and glade. They flourish in the hedgerow and make their own contribution with flowers and fruits to this rich habitat. Bellbind with its large white trumpets and the black and white bryonies with their somewhat inconspicuous flowers but vivid ropes of juicy red berries. My favourite of these climbers, in mid-summer, is the honeysuckle with its gloriously fragrant flowers that scent the evening air.



Honeysuckle
The fragrant flowers of which attract many night-flying moths

The flowers of the hedgerow bank will often denote the nature of the soil and even the origin of the hedge. If you see bracken in the hedgerow you can be certain it is an acid soil, a sandy soil or more often clay in our area. The presence of bluebells in a hedgerow is a indicator that the hedgerow shrubs were once part of a woodland.

Maurice



Your Reserves Need You - An Update on WWG's Practical Conservation Commitments

Looking at the Wycombe Wildlife Group's (WWG) programme of events for 1998/1999, work parties on nature reserves were conspicuous by their absence. Apart from tasks carried out on the Chairborough Nature Reserve in my capacity as Voluntary Warden, regular work on reserves for which we had responsibility had come to a halt. At WWG's planning meeting on 24 May 1999 it was agreed that practical conservation needed to be stepped up and it was made one of our key strategies for the remainder of 1999/2000.

Having undertaken to co-ordinate the site management work I contacted WWG members who had expressed an interest in carrying out practical work and a programme of regular Saturday work parties started in October. In the six months up to the end of March 2000 a total of 10 work parties will have been held and all the backlog of essential maintenance work will have been carried out at each of the three sites for which the WWG is currently responsible. In addition WWG has helped with an urgent task on the local Wildlife Trust's Gomm Valley Reserve.

Four of the work parties have been held on the Wycombe District Council's Chairborough Local Nature Reserve, where routine scrub, path and grassland maintenance has been carried out, some

in readiness for a major task scheduled for April. Two of the work parties were held at the Sheepridge Nature Reserve where some tree and scrub maintenance and general tidying up took place. Another two work parties were devoted to cutting up and burning some of the trees and scrub which had been cut by contractors on the Gomm Valley Nature Reserve to avoid damage of overhead power lines. The remaining two work parties concentrated on bank & hedgerow maintenance and scrub clearance in and adjacent to the Cock Lane Cemetery.

Cemeteries are a valuable place for wildlife conservation and WWG has been given the opportunity of enhancing the wildlife value of this particular cemetery right from the outset. I would like to thank those members who have been helping me with the above practical work and make a plea for additional support.

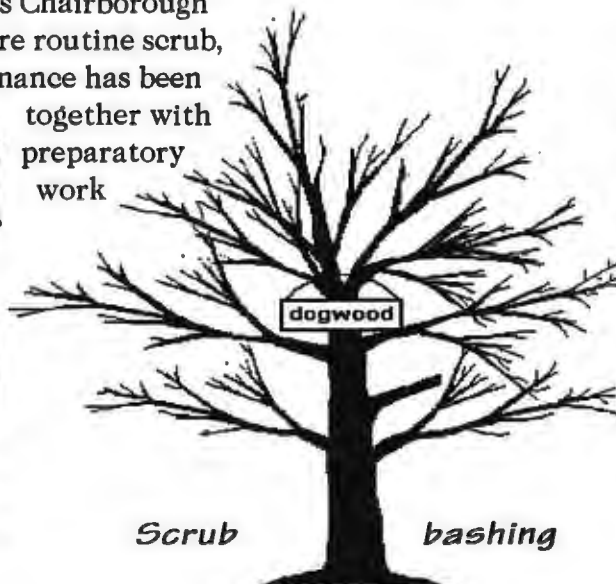
We have achieved a great deal with the small number that have been involved; just think what we could achieve if we doubled or even trebled the number of helpers.

Give me a ring if you would like to help.

Roger Wilding.



together with preparatory work



Scrub

bashing





Wildlife Records

1. Records are required of: **Small Copper and Wall butterflies**

If you see these butterflies over the coming season send your records to:

Dr. Roger Kemp, Kemp's Farm, Chapel Road, Ford, Aylesbury, Bucks HP17 8XG. Tel: 01296 748932
or e-mail info@kempsfarm.datanet.co.uk

SEE BELOW (Important notice)

2. Any records, past or present of: **Dragonflies & Damselflies**

Send to: Jeremy Halls, Hill View, 31 Abbots Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1HY. Tel: 01296 434786
or contact Jeremy for a recording form or card.

These records will be used to compile a BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DRAGONFLY ATLAS

SEE BELOW (Important notice)

3. **Songthrush** records.

Please send to Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, FREEPOST OF2051, Oxford OX4 4BR.
or fill in a special survey form and return to same address.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Records are of little scientific value without the following:

- a) Name and location of site, e.g. park, nature reserve, your garden and its address
- b) 4 or 6 figure grid reference
- c) Date of observation
- d) Recorder (probably you) - in which case your name
- e) Species recorded. and how many of each

Thanks to the one person who sent bird records in to Mike Goff.
Presumably no one else saw any birds in their gardens.



New members - Welcome

We welcome the following new members who joined in the first three months of this new millennium.

Mrs Frances Alexander
Mrs Diana Pfetscher
Jill Grimble

We look forward to meeting them at future events.

Notice of AGM

Monday 17 April, 2000, 7.30pm

Programme

- 7.30pm a/. Reports
- b/. Election of Trustees
- c/. AOB
- 8.00pm Refreshments & sale of raffle tickets
- (first prize a video donated by Dr. Kemp)
- 8.30pm Dr. Roger Kemp's talk on the **Butterflies of Buckinghamshire**
- 9.30pm Raffle draw & an opportunity to buy copies of Dr. Kemp's video if you don't win one.



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 WWG

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 ?



January

- First frogs of the new millenium
- Pat's pond, Amersham Hill (30/01/00)
- Irenke's pond (31/01/00)

- First butterflies of the new millenium
- Peacock - Sands Bank LNR (04/01/00)

February

- First frogspawn
- Pat's pond, Amersham Hill (23/02/00)
- Small tortoiseshell - Downley (13/02/00)

March

- First tadpoles
- Pat's pond, Amersham Hill (19/03/00)
- Red admiral - Pat's garden (12&13/03/00)
- Holly blue - Pat's garden (19&21/03/00)
- 5 Commas - King's Wood (21/03/00)
- 9 Mandarin ducks - Dyke, High Wycombe (24/03/00)
- 2 Red kites - Hughenden (24/03/00)

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 :

- Post vacant
- wildlife WATCH** : Emma Firth, 01865 775476
- Biological surveys : Angus Idle, 01494 563673
- Education Officer & Assistant Editor :
Maurice Young, 01628 472000



MEMO : COPY DATE Friday, 28 July 2000

WANTED

Project Officers

- Ideal post for new graduates -
- Come and show what you're worth
- It could lead to full-time paid employment
- p.s congratulations to Mego who has moved on to full-time employment with BTCV

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