



# Bracknell Forest Natural History Society



TALKS PROGRAMME January – June 2024

15th January  
2024

**SILKY SNARES AND INJECTED VENOM – An exploration of Spiders** Eton College's Natural History Museum is one of Berkshire's hidden gems. Opened in 1875 and housing over 17,000 objects, it's a perfect place to explore and learn more about the natural world. Until you can make that visit, Curator **Dr George Fussey** will bring some of the Museum to us and open up the fascinating world of the spider.

19th February  
2024

**'BLACKWATER VALLEY NATURE WALKS' – an adventure born out of lockdown** **Colin Wilson** has been a Trustee of the Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust for 15 years and during lockdown he used his extensive knowledge of the area to create 'Blackwater Valley Nature Walks', a website that has been visited a quarter of a million times since 2020. His journey led to a book which sold out within a year, providing a resource to help local people connect with our abundant nature.

18th March 2024

**COMMUNITY CONSERVATION IN ACTION – an introduction to Ealing Wildlife Group** Wildlife presenter, conservationist and naturalist **Dr Sean McCormack** hosts his own wildlife podcast and YouTube channel and runs the growing conservation organisation Ealing Wildlife Group, which he set up in 2016. He has engaged the local community with wildlife and green spaces and now the group has over 3,700 members to safeguard and improve habitats for nature and urban wildlife. Come and be inspired!

15th April 2024

**BLACK-BACKED JACKALS – Unlocking the Secrets of their success** Many social predators are thought to accrue fitness benefits by hunting co-operatively. However, few studies have shown conclusively that these benefits are influenced by group size. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that individual group members coordinate roles during a hunting event. This study, by Berkshire College of Agriculture researcher **Jack Merrifield**, aims to elucidate factors influencing various aspects of co-operative hunting by Black-Backed Jackals in the Namibian Desert.

20th May 2024

**UNDERSTANDING ALIEN SPECIES THROUGH CITIZEN SCIENCE** Citizen Science is seen as key to providing information about alien species, particularly those which are invasive - and to inform action to prevent them becoming established in countries, or to reduce their spread and impact. **Dr Helen Roy** from the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology explains how the collaborative network of over 40 countries has mobilised public interest in monitoring alien species through engaging communication materials and events.

17th June 2024

**ORCHIDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE** Our speaker is **Jacopo Calevo** from Kew Gardens, who is currently working on a 3 year project examining the effect of climate change on European and UK orchids and their mycorrhizal fungi. His PhD was on ecology and conservation of Italian orchids and has recently been involved in a major European funded project on orchid conservation.

**Our illustrated talks are held on a Monday each month (September to June)  
at 7:30pm in the Recital Room, South Hill Park, Ringmead, Bracknell RG12 7PA**

**Also in the pipeline:**

**21st April A Trip to the Eton Natural History Museum** Following on from our talk in January, join us for an exclusive visit exploring this hidden treasure trove of the natural world. Highlights include an extensive collection of fossils from the Pre Cambrian era onwards; The Thackeray Collection of British Birds; a Herbarium containing 4,000 pressed plants from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a two headed Kitten, a four-footed Duck; and an overstuffed Platypus known as Fattypus!

**22<sup>nd</sup> June A Guided Orchid Walk** An excursion around Bracknell to find Orchids, including the stunning Bee Orchid.

# ***If you haven't yet JOINED (OR RE-JOINED!) THE SOCIETY, now's the time to do it!***

Please note that our Membership Year runs from 1st September annually.

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP** remains the same for the 2023-24 year: **£12**

**Members' Entrance Fee is £1**

Visitors are always very welcome – VISITORS' ENTRANCE FEE IS **£3**

## ***HOW TO PAY YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE***

### **PAY ON THE DAY...**

You can pay (£12 per person) with cash or by a cheque made out to *Bracknell Forest Natural History Society* at any of our Meetings.

Please also fill out our New Member's form which will be handed to you.

### **PAY ELECTRONICALLY**

If you wish to pay your Annual Subscription electronically, or to set up an annual Standing Order, our Lloyds Bank details are:

**Account Name:** *Bracknell Forest Natural History Society*

Account Number: **03481989** Sort Code: **30-91-11**

***IMPORTANT*** When you pay **online**, please make sure you also contact our Treasurer - whose email address is [johnwilliams288@hotmail.com](mailto:johnwilliams288@hotmail.com) - with your name, address, telephone number and email address **to identify your payment and ensure that we have a complete record of your details for communication purposes.**