



Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

A society for everyone interested in nature and its conservation

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER – Winter 2019/20

Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly Newsletter. Each month our Members receive several emails with information about forthcoming events etc. supplied by other societies or organisations which have similar interests to ours – and are relevant to our programme or ethics. In future we are hoping that, with sufficient advance warning, some of this information can be included in our Newsletter. We will also be setting out articles and other information which we hope you will find interesting and useful.

Seen in Bracknell this Summer – beautiful butterflies

It's a little while ago now, but we thought you'd be interested in these sightings – and we hope you'll be able to provide us with more, during Summer 2020. The first is really exciting - a female **Pale Clouded Yellow** was seen in the grass buffer zone around the **Wickery Copse** open space on the western outskirts of Bracknell.



The **Pale Clouded Yellow** (*photo © Padfield*) is an extremely rare immigrant to the British Isles, and was first recognised as occurring in England in the late 18th century. Historically, this species was considered to be an irregular migrant that could be relatively-common in some years but not seen at all in others. Between 1826 and 1950 there were 8,500 records, with over 2,000 in 1900. Good numbers were also seen each year from 1945 to 1949. However, such numbers have not been recorded since and this species is now considered one of our rarest migrants. They have been recorded mainly in the south of England, the south of Ireland and the Channel Islands.. Those that reach our shores are believed to have come from northern France or central Europe.

Its species is *hyale* (Linnaeus, 1758) and the wingspan varies from 52mm to 62mm (male to female).

See more at <https://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/vicecounties.php>



Another visitor this Summer was the **Silver Washed Fritillary**. There have been several local sightings of this large and graceful butterfly. Its swooping flight is one of the most beautiful sights to be found in woodland during high Summer. This is a large fast flying butterfly, separated from other fritillaries by its pointed wings and silver streaks on the undersides which can be viewed as it stops to feed on flowers such as bramble. Although it is seen mostly in sunny glades and rides, it actually breeds in the shadier parts of

adjacent woodland.

This butterfly's conservation priority is low, but it is a regional priority in several UK regions. Its wing span ranges from 72mm to 76mm (female to male). It is found across Southern England and Wales, and throughout Ireland.

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Email: bfnatistsoc@rocketmail.com

www.bfnatistsoc.org.uk

2020 - Bracknell's 'Year of The Garden'

Gardens and allotments are now seen as valuable refuges for wildlife and should be celebrated in a similar way to that of our green open spaces. Added together they make the largest contribution to green area in the Borough. It is important to encourage those of us with gardens to continue to provide the right conditions in which wildlife will flourish.

It could be your front or back garden, you could choose somewhere that you care for... but the exciting news is that **Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership** will launch a '**Wildest Garden**' contest for 2020, themed to sit within the '**Year of The Garden**'.

This is a 'one off' event specifically for next year, and judging will take place during the summer months. Details of criteria and entry forms to be available in early Spring. But remember, if you have this sort of garden or cared-for area and wish to enter, it may be useful to photograph your winter conditions, habitats and inhabitants.



Helping hedgehogs in Bracknell Forest

You'll probably have heard of the local '**Help a Hog**' initiative, with which we are highly involved, and are supporting in every way we can. The programme is now falling into place...

Briefly, we're here to advise residents in the area on how to make their gardens welcoming and safe for hedgehogs, encouraging people to become Hedgehog Champions and record sightings of hedgehogs (alive – or, sadly, dead) to Hedgehog Street www.hedgehogstreet.org/



And we're encouraging householders to speak to their neighbours so that several consecutive houses at a time can create **Hedgehog Highways**, where they can range and feed freely.

Also, if you're interested, there's a **map of sightings in the Bracknell Forest area** at <https://bighedgehogmap.org/> and the Hedgehog Preservation Society has lots of interesting information on its website: <https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/>

Future Planning in Bracknell Forest

The Local Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted for consultation. It can be viewed at several locations around Bracknell Borough.



Bracknell Forest Council is currently consulting on the draft Plan – comments are due by 6th December.

To meet the required number of homes that the Council is required to deliver between now and 2036, the Plan includes recommended new sites for 1,877 homes. This is in addition to the sites for 9,356 homes that have already been allocated or have planning permission. The Council is also recommending approval for a further site for a 'Garden Settlement' of 4,000 homes on Green Belt land in north Warfield.

Volunteers needed! (For one day in February only)...

You may remember the stunning **orchid bank** outside an industrial park on the Southern Industrial Area (formerly BMW). The bank has become overgrown with self-set Salix runners. Left alone these will take over the bank and completely prevent the orchids from growing.

Bracknell Forest Council's landscaping team has recently cut back Summer growth, now making access possible. **We are looking for as many volunteers as can spare the time to help remove the willow sapling growth.**

Work can commence in February and the session should take just a few hours between a number of us. Please help if you are able. We are looking at a weekend that does not compete with Nightingale Triangle's 1st February Work Party day, and are open to suggestions at this point. **Please email me, Gill Cheetham with your preferred date (Saturday 15th February?) at bfmathistsoc@rocketmail.com.**

Re-emergence of the beautiful orchids can be seen as part of our contribution to the 'Year of the Garden, 2020'.

Look Out For...

Birds such as Redwings, Fieldfares, Siskins and maybe Waxwings will be over-wintering here, to enjoy the wonderful abundance of berries and seeds in our area.



This is your Newsletter, so if you have anything you would like to be included in our next issue, which will be issued in the Spring, please send it to your Editor (and Chairman!) Gill Cheetham:

bfmathistsoc@rocketmail.com



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www.facebook.com/bfnathistsoc/