

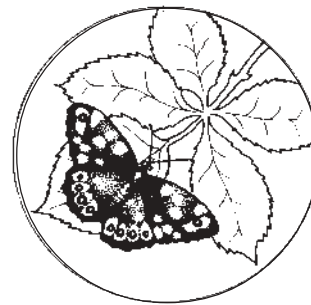
THE ESSEX FIELD CLUB

HEADQUARTERS:

THE PASSMORE EDWARDS MUSEUM,

ROMFORD ROAD, STRATFORD,

LONDON, E15 4LZ



NEWSLETTER NO. 1

July, 1991

Dear Member,

This is the first of our new format newsletter. It is hoped that it will prove to be a useful way to keep our membership informed of Council decisions, as well as giving reports of meetings, notices of forthcoming events and short articles of interest to Essex naturalists.

It is hoped that any members who feel so moved will send their contributions, roughly along the lines indicated, which we will be pleased to publish.

To run alongside this newsletter we intend to continue with the Essex Naturalist series, but future issues will not necessarily be on single topics, as they have recently. Instead some will be compilations of papers, reverting back to the tradition of Essex Naturalists of earlier decades.

In making these changes, the Council has taken into consideration printing and postage costs, and we hope that this new format will be no less informative whilst making some financial savings. We would welcome any comments on these changes from the membership.

Del Smith, Editor, 12 Tring gardens, Harold Hill, Romford, Essex, RM3 9EP.
Telephone Ingrebourne 75555.

PUTTING ESSEX SPIDERS ON THE MAP

A small number of dedicated Essex arachnologists are busy helping to record the distribution of spiders in the county. This is all part of a national survey being undertaken by the British Arachnological Society in conjunction with the Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood. In 1997 it is hoped to publish an atlas of British spiders which will include a map for each species.

At present 407 species of spider have been recorded in Essex, out of a national total of approximately 650, and their distribution is being mapped using a computerised database and mapping program.

Essex contains nationally important populations of rare spiders. The jumping spider *Heliophanus auratus* is found nowhere else in Britain except on small areas of shingle in the Blackwater Estuary. Another jumping spider *Euophrys browningi* has populations on shingle and shell banks in Suffolk, Essex and Kent. The species is closely related to the European species *E. obsoleta*, but these east coast populations have apparently been isolated for a long time.

Baryphyma duffeyi is a rare money spider found in areas of brackish saltmarsh such as survive for example along the Crouch, Stour and Thames rivers. Last year *Haplodrassus umbratilis*, a spider previously recorded only from the heathlands in Dorset and Hampshire, was found in grassland in the Hadleigh area. *Steatoda nobilis* is a species that has been recorded from several places on the south coast. These records have always been assumed to be casual introductions. Now the species has proved to be widespread in the Portsmouth and Swanage districts and last year the species was found by Roger Payne in his house and garden at Westcliff-on-Sea.

Recent years have turned up several species in Essex that are new to Britain. In 1985 *Zodarion italicum* was found in the Grays area and it has since been recorded in other parts of south Essex as well as in London and Kent. *Harpactea rubicunda*, hitherto known only from central and eastern Europe and Belgium has been found in the Tilbury area, and *Scotophaeus scutulatus*, a widespread European spider, has been found in Colchester. Other species new to Britain have also been found elsewhere. In Kent a *Zodarion* species has been found that has so far defied identification by British and European experts. In the same locality a money spider common on the continent and a European species of the jumping spider genus *Euophrys* have been found in several localities and the latest news is of still more new species being discovered.

The origin of all these populations and their status is of considerable interest. Were the species present before the English Channel was formed or have they been transported by man, and how long have they been here? Many spiders are mobile and can probably "balloon" over large distances.

Species such as *Euophrys browningi* have almost certainly been isolated for a long time, but is not so clear about the other species. We need more information about the distribution and ecological requirements of these species in order to be able to come to a better understanding of their likely origin.

If you would like to help the arachnologists working in Essex, there are regular field meetings (see list) and I would always be very pleased to examine and determine specimens for other people.

Peter Harvey, 9 Kent Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6DE.

HOUSE SPIDERS: A SURVEY THAT MEMBERS CAN HELP WITH

Peter Smithers has conducted a survey of house spiders in the Plymouth area and some interesting results have emerged, for example *Tegenaria domestica* the supposedly common domestic house spiders was surprisingly rare, and *Steatoda bipunctata*, normally a widespread species of houses, was noticeable by its absence.

Peter has become increasingly curious about the regional variation in house spider communities. He is now seeking volunteers all over the country to monitor the spiders associated with the buildings in which they live and work:

If you would like to help, survey recording sheets are available from Peter Smithers, Department of Biological Sciences, Polytechnic Southwest, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 8AA.

Anybody who would like to take part in the survey but is unable to identify their spiders can send them to Peter Smithers or to the Essex Field Club Recorder, Peter Harvey, 9 Kent Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6DE.

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1990

During 1990 14 new members joined the Club, but at the end of the year 20 names were taken off the membership list because of resignation or failure to pay subscriptions. A further 11 names were also removed because of very low standing orders, which had not been increased despite many reminders. The membership had fallen, therefore, by 17 in the year, standing at a total of 247 on 31st December, 1990.

Early in the year, Naturalist No. 10, 'Essex Elms' by Mark Hanson was published. Two issues of the Bulletin were printed, edited by Adrian Vernon.

At the AGM in March, Mark Hanson was elected President for one year, and Del Smith Vice President. Alan Bunker and Del Smith retired as the longest serving Ordinary Members of Council and David Bloomfield and Jeremy Ison were elected. The revised Rules were adopted at the AGM.

Thirty-one meetings were held during the year. General Meetings arranged included visits to Danbury Common, the Chelmer Canal, a Basildon garden to see amphibians, Danbury to learn about bees, and fungus forays in Epping Forest in the spring and autumn.

At the March AGM John Dobson gave his Presidential address on 'A Natural History Photographer in Essex' which he illustrated with many slides.

The Bird Group again went to different parts of the county to visit varying habitats, arranging a total of 9 meetings. Botany Group meetings were also held throughout Essex and included studying lichens, mosses and liverworts. Badger watching from a hide, a bat walk and a deer meeting were arranged by the Mammal Group. As well as organising a visit to Woodbridge, the Geology Group heard Mr. Graham Ward lecture on the Geology of Essex. As usual the year ended with the Boxing Day Ramble.

Sheila Leswell

NEW MEMBERS

Since the last issue of the Bulletin, the following members have joined the Club. We wish them many happy days with us.

Mr. & Mrs. J. Claydon
Mrs. A. Kidd
Mr. M. J. Parsons
Mr. T. Pyner
Mr. C. C. Romer

Basildon
Wanstead
Billericay
Westcliff on Sea
Chelmsford

Mildred Parker

BIRD GROUP MEETINGS

HANNINGFIELD RESERVOIR, 25TH NOVEMBER, 1990

A glorious, sunny morning for the ten members attending the meeting at which access to the Reservoir had been arranged.....

we were struck by the almost total absence of Coot, the.....

Duck, Pochard, Mallard, Canada Goose and Shelduck were.....

there were distant views of a Pintail from the Causeway.....

entered the Reservoir at West Hanningfield, Wigeon, Golder, Duck and the first visiting Long Tailed Duck of the winter was added. Common Sandpiper, Pied and Grey Wagtail were taking ... of exposed mud. The highlights, however, were to be seen in of conifers where we saw Goldcrest, Long Tailed Tit and finally a group of Crossbills, feeding immediately above our heads.

[this newsletter has been scanned in, and the original had a corner missing, so not all the text is present]

DAGENHAM CHASE, 20TH JANUARY, 1991

A good mixture of habitat in this area managed by the London Wildlife Trust brought one of the year's highlights when we had really close up views of a Long Eared Owl roosting in a small hawthorn bush, one of three that wintered in the area. A party of Fieldfare was briefly seen and Magpies were present in huge numbers, it often being possible to count anything from 12 to 20 at any one time.

ABBERTON AND FINGRINGHOE, 24TH MARCH, 1991

It was interesting to visit the new centre at Abberton, the distant views of Ruddy Duck and a Long Tailed Duck little worthy of mention to be seen. Fingringhoe was productive although there were Redshank, Curlew, Dunlin and Oyster Catcher on the foreshore.

WALTON ON THE NAZE, 28TH APRIL, 1991

Kestrels were nesting in the Naze Tower, but migrants were difficult to find, just one each of Swallow, Sand Martin, Tree Pipit and Sedge Warbler and by the shore one Little Tern nesting on the mud but no sign of any Sylvia or Leaf Warblers. Every gorse bush produced a Linnet and there were numerous Meadow Pipits.

DANBURY, 3RD MAY, 1991

What a delight this evening meeting proved to be after a cold, wet, windy day had destroyed all hopes of Nightingales. Probably 5 were heard, but the start of the show was the one perched in a leafless tree which kept us enthralled for a considerable time. The Cuckoo was also much in evidence as were Whitethroat, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler.

LITTLE BADDOW HEATH, 12TH MAY, 1991

A new venue to us, an area of very attractive woodland but not very productive for the birdwatcher. Garden Warbler, Nightingale, Jay and Cuckoo were the only species worthy of mention.

John Bath

GENERAL MEETING, EPPING FOREST, 13TH APRIL, 1991

A beautiful, sunny, spring morning brought several Field Club members out for the third general meeting of the year, meeting at the Suntrap Field Centre on Church Road at High Beech. The intention was to investigate old enclosure boundaries in the Forest and several were looked at including the boundaries of a former churchyard in the Forest not far from the Field Centre. There were a number of enclosures in this area. Evidence was forthcoming, not only from the existing boundary banks, but in places also from the many introduced plants now growing in land restored to the Forest, including Hazel, Sycamore, Cherry Laurel, Gooseberry, Raspberry, Horse Chestnut, Norway Maple and Alkanet. Ivy was also found to carpet the ground, a feature typical of secondary woodland. The group walked on up to High Beech Church, noting small Heather plants in the sward and a Holly Blue in the churchyard. Beyond the churchyard a rot-hole in a Beech tree was examined: it produced beetle larvae and the puparium of a hoverfly with its notably elongate apical syphon (breathing tube in the larva). Despite being early in the year, the warm sunny weather brought out several insect species, including queen bumble-bees, a queen wasp, a peacock butterfly and a single specimen of the Cerambycid beetle *Rhagium mordax* in Paul's Nursery, a single specimen of the long-tongued bee-fly having been noted earlier. A few fungi were noted during the course of the day, all common species, among them *Daldinia concentrica*, *Pseudotrametes gibbosa*, *Polyporus brumalis* and *P. squamosus*. The curious myxomycete *Enteridium lycoperdon* was noted on a cut birch stump near High Beech itself. Of the mammals - a Bank Vole was spotted at High Beech and several Grey Squirrels were seen. Mole hills were seen on Fairmead and much evidence of Rabbits noticed on grassland near Paul's Nursery.

Mark Hanson

ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS

29.12.90	Barn Owl, Burnthouse Lane, Mountnessing	Juliette Leswell
1. 1.91	80 Rooks working on old nests White House Farm, North Fambridge	J. Friedlein
12. 1.91	Grey Phalarope, Abberton	A. Boniface
13. 1.91	10 Waxwings, Clacton	P. J. Peak
13-23.2.91	Build up of 20 Shelduck and 300-400 Wigeon and Teal at White House Farm, North Fambridge	J. Friedlein
23. 2.91	1 Pink Foot, 1 White Front and 6 Barnacle Geese, Abberton	A. Boniface
3. 3.91	1000 Brent Geese leave, North Fambridgs	J. Friedlein
14. 3.91	First Chiffchaff arrives, North Fambridge	J. Friedlein
29. 3.91	Short Eared Owl, Lion Creek, Canewdon	A. Boniface
6. 4.91	First Sand Martins, Abberton	A. Boniface
24. 4.91	First Swallows, North Fambridge	J. Friedlein

John Bath

W H A T ' S O NESSEX FIELD CLUB

Sat. 27th July Botany Group. In the Steps of Varenne. Meet Kelvedon Station 11.00 a.m. Leader Ken Adams. Phone 081-508 7863 for details.

Sun. 8th Sept. Bird Group. Bradwell-on-Sea for Migrants. Meet near Eastlands, TM 023078 at 10.30 a.m. Phone 0277 651890 for details.

Sat. 21st Sept. Botany Group. Mosses and Liverworts at Fingringhoe Wick. Meet at Reserve Car Park 11.00 a.m. Leader Ken Adams. Phone 081-508 7863 for details.

Sun. 22nd Sept. General Meeting 1362. Small Mammal Trapping in Danbury Area. Contact John Dobson, Danbury 4408 for details.

Sat. 28th Sept. Botany Group. Stoneworts in North-East Essex. Meet Wivenhoe Car Park, TM 038217 at 11.00 a.m. Leader Ken Adams. Phone 081-508 7863 for details.

Sun. 6th Oct. Bird Group. Coalhouse Fort, East Tilbury. Meet Car Park TQ 690768 at 10.30 a.m. Phone 0277 651890 for details.

Sun. 13th Oct. General Meeting 1363. Fungus Foray. Meet Epping Forest Conservation Centre 10.00 a.m. Leader Martin Gregory. Phone Danbury 3300 for details.

Sat. 19th Oct. Mammal Group. Deer Meeting in North Essex. Phone Brian Eastcott, Saffron Waldon 22680 for details.

ESSEX SPIDER GROUP FIELD MEETINGS FOR 1991

Peter Harvey, 9 Kent Road, Grays, RM17 6DE (0375 371571). Phone to confirm.

SUN. 16th June NORTHEY ISLAND Meet 10.30 a.m. at TL868056 (car parking area behind sea wall)

Sat. 29th June GREAT DUNMOW AREA, N. ESSEX Meet 10.30 a.m. at car park at TL633219

Sat. 13th July BRAINTREE AREA, N. ESSEX Meet 10.30 a.m. at 19/21 Bocking End, TL757233

Sat. 14th Sept. COPT HALL ESTATE, N.E. ESSEX Meeting place to be confirmed

Sun. 28th Sept. Meeting place to be confirmed

Sat. 12th Oct. Meeting place to be confirmed

Sat. 9th Nov. Meeting place to be confirmed

Sat. 23rd Nov. BIRCHANGER WOOD & BAILEY HILLS, N.W. ESSEX Meet 10.30 a.m. at TL502222 in Heath Row, a residential road. Birchanger

Wood is a threatened site so records are needed.

HAVERING COUNTRY PARKS

Bookings and enquiries to Irene Godwin, Romford 766999, ext. 4610,
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

- Sun. 21st July Historical Havering. Morning Walk. Please book.
- Thurs. 25th July Pond Dipping at Havering Country Park. Please book.
- Fri. 26th July Fun and Games for children at Albyns Farm.
- Sun. 28th July Picnic by the Lake from noon at Albyns Farm.
- Thurs. 1st Aug. Minibeast Hunt for children 5-12, p.m. Please book.
- Fri. 3rd Aug. Treasure Hunt 2-3.30 p.m. Squadrons Approach Car Park.
- Tues. 6th Aug. Explore the Airfield, for children. Squadrons Approach Car Park.
- Thurs. 8th Aug. Bedfords Park Nature Trail children 7-12. Please book.
- Thurs. 13th Aug. Bird activity day. Please book.
- Thurs. 15th Aug. Mad Hatter's Tea Party, children 6-12. Please book.
- Fri. 16th Aug. Mini Beast Safari for children, 2-3.30 p.m.
Squadrons Approach Car Park
- Sat. 17th Aug. Batwatch, 8-9 p.m. Berwick Ponds, Rainham.
- Sun. 18th Aug. Get to Know Havering Country Park, p.m. Please book.
- Thurs. 22nd Aug. Caring for newly planted trees, children 7-12.
Bring buckets! Please book.
- Fri. 23rd Aug. Fun and Games, children 8-12, between 12 noon and 2 p.m.
- Sun. 25th Aug. RAF Hornchurch Airfield Tour. 1½ mile, 2.30-3.30 p.m. Squadrons Approach Car Park.
- Thurs. 29th Aug. Puppets for children, free: Workshop £3.00.

HAVERING COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Ring Romford 746040, ext. 2208, for further information and booking.

Sun. 21st July Kite making and flying at Tylers Common. 50 p. for materials.

Wed. 21st and Thurs. 22nd July Duck Wood Fun Days, for children 7-12.

- Fri. 23rd Aug. Bats at Chase Nature Reserve.
- Sun. 15th Aug. Walk round Cranham's hedgerows and nature reserve.
Cream tea. 50 p. per person.
- Sun. 13th Oct. Footpaths on Havering/Brentwood border.
- Sun. 24th Nov. Country crafts at Cranham Marsh.

LEE VALLEY PARK COUNTRYSIDE ACTIVITIES

Bookings and Information 0992 713838.

- Sat. 20th July Green Medicine, all about herbs. 10 a.m. Lee Valley Countryside Centre, Waltham Abbey. Please book.
- Sun. 28th July King Harold's Town. Waltham Abbey and Abbey Church. 2 p.m. Lee Valley Park Countryside Centre, Waltham Abbey.
- Tues. 30th July Teddy Bear's Picnic. 11 a.m., last entry 2 p.m. Lee Valley Countryside Centre.
- Thus. 1st Aug. Boat trips, stories, craft linked to wildlife of River Lea. Lee Valley Ice Centre Car Park. 11 a.m., last entry 2 p.m. Cost £1.50 children, £1 adults.
- Sun. 4th Aug. Find out how plants and animals have developed ways to fly on Walthamstow Marsh. Lee Valley Ice Centre Car Park. 2 p.m.
- Mon. 26th Aug. Countryside Open Day. Explore countryside between Broxbourne and Rye House on boat trips and guided walks. Dobbs Weir Car Park, Hoddesdon 2-6 p.m.
- Sun. 8th Sept. Three Mills & Bow Back Rivers. Find out the history of one of Britain's largest tide mills from staff of Passmore Edwards Museum, and explore Bow Back Rivers. Meet Three Mills Sports Centre Car Park, Three Mills Lane, Bromley by Bow, London, E.3. 2 p.m.
- Sat., 21st Sept. Waterbirds and Wetlands of Lea Valley. Illustrated talks and visits to Chingford Reservoirs and gravel pits. Meet Lee Valley Park Countryside Centre, Waltham Abbey. 10 a.m. Please book.

RARE BEETLE

M. W. Hanson, looking through a collection of beetles, has found a specimen of a rare Cerambycid (Longhorn) from Knighton Wood in Buckhurst, Hill found on 9th July, 1985. The species is *Leptura scutellata*, a species of ancient woodland. It has been reported on previous occasions from the Forest.

D. A. Smith

Enquiries to Mrs. Sheila Leswell, 19 Church Road, Mountnessing, Brentwood, Essex. Telephone 0277 353917.