

GNS NEWS

MARCH 2015



Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society
www.glosnats.org

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Members

I received a sad piece of news the other day: the death of one of the very first members of GNS, Terry James (or TOJ), as readers of early issues of the Gloucestershire Bird Report will recognise him). Terry had a small farm near Shurdington, and with his inseparable companion, Frank Whittingham, regularly led field meetings on birdy topics all over the county. I think I made my first ever visit to Coombe Hill with Frank and Terry (that must have been in the 1950s), to do what we then called a “Duck Count”, now morphed into the British Trust for Ornithology’s WeBS or “Wetland Bird Survey”; I still do a monthly WeBS count at Coombe Hill, now a Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust reserve, with the help of other observers. Terry then gave up farming, and went to be a warden at the famous RSPB reserve at Minsmere. But he never lost touch with GNS, and I received a couple of letters of encouragement from him in recent years. He has also remembered GNS in his will, which shows what a long term respect he had for the Society.

On the other hand, it is very important for GNS, as a Society, not merely to continue in its traditions, but to keep up with the times. For this reason, the Executive Committee has been looking at the Rules of the Society and has found that, in some respects, we are getting out of date: the current Rules do not for instance refer to the many electronic forms of communication that everybody routinely uses nowadays. For this reason, the Committee proposes to hold a Special General Meeting, in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting, to be held at the Gala Club in Gloucester on Friday 27 March, to discuss and (it is hoped!) to accept, some amendments to the Rules – the first Rule changes that have been made for 20 years! The proposed changes to the Rules have been posted on the GNS website www.glosnats.org, so that Members can consult them in advance; any Member who would like a written version of the proposed changes can obtain one by contacting the Membership Secretary, Andrew Bluett. Please come along to the Annual and Special General Meetings, to discuss the Society’s activities, and to listen to a presentation on the new Barn Owl project, by one of its leaders, Mervyn Greening.

Another way in which the Society would like to move forward is through greater use of these modern electronic tools. In order to keep in touch with members, especially the younger ones, the Society needs to make greater use of its website, and of Facebook, Twitter, phone apps, and all the other paraphernalia of modern life. The Society would like to use social media to improve exchanges between existing members (especially younger folk), and to attract new ones. The Committee already has some ideas on these lines but is very open to suggestions from any Member who wishes to help.

One way in which the Society has attempted to reach out to existing and new naturalists in the last year is by the organization of introductory courses on a variety of aspects of natural history, in conjunction with the GWT: I led one such course in Ashleworth Memorial Hall, which ventured out (in pouring rain) to the nearby GWT wetland reserve, and was delighted to meet a number of budding birdwatchers, many of them from the village and environs, as well as some damp ducks and geese. This programme is continuing in 2015, and details may be found on the

GWT and GNS websites. Do please join in, perhaps in a field in which you are not so expert - I would love to have attended all those organised last year. Indeed, GNS and GWT are working ever more closely together, and members of the GNS Executive Committee have recently held a joint session with the GWT Senior Management Team, to discuss how best to obtain concrete results. GNS remains essentially the recording and publishing body which feeds information into the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records on all aspects of natural history. GWT in turn uses these data for its management plans, Key Wildlife Sites and many facets of its outreach and community programmes. Watch this space for further details of cooperation between the two bodies.

Looking forward to meeting many of you on 27 March.

Yours sincerely

Mike Smart

Hon. Chairman, GNS

The weather in October to December 2014, and a look back on the year as a whole

Nationally, October came as a contrast to September, as a particularly active weather system caused the weather to become unsettled and wet, remaining so through most of the month with only short bursts of drier weather inbetween. Light rain fell practically every day from 8 to 20 October, followed by ex-hurricane Gonzalo which brought very strong winds from the southwest for a short period but with little or no rain, calming by 22 October. Total rainfall in Gloucester for the month was 59mm. With winds frequently from the south, October temperatures were above average, and were notably warm on the last day of the month, the warmest Halloween on record.

The generally unsettled and mild theme of October continued across the UK through most of November, with only short periods of drier weather. Low pressure was often over the west of the country for the first half of the month, bringing rain and strong winds at times. Once again winds were often southerly, thus maintaining higher than average temperatures. Total rainfall in Gloucester was 89mm.

Nationally, December was a shade warmer than average, and was the driest since 2010; it was notable for a very mild period between 16 and 24 December, followed by a sharp drop in temperature with several severe frosts. Most regions of England and Wales were drier and sunnier than average because winds came mainly from the west, tending north-westerly after Christmas. Rainfall in southwest England and Wales was only 66% of the norm with total rainfall in Gloucester only 30 mm (compared with 87mm in December 2013 and 98mm in December 2012).

The total rainfall for Gloucester in 2014 was slightly above the 30 year average at 769mm (heavily affected by massive rainfall in January and February when 162 and 121 mm were recorded).

Looking back on 2014 as a whole, it was - according to the Meteorological Office - the warmest year on record for the UK (ahead of 2006) with all months except August recording above average temperatures. The most extreme weather events of the year were the winter storms of January and February which brought damaging winds with inland and coastal flooding, though temperatures in Gloucestershire remained relatively mild with little or no frost. In comparison the rest of the year was relatively quiet. Summer 2014 brought some fine weather, particularly in June and July, though there were no major heat waves and some torrential summer downpours caused flash flooding. The eight warmest years in UK have thus all occurred since 2002; similarly 2014 was the fourth wettest year in the UK since 1910, behind 2012, 2000 and 1954; five of the six wettest years in this series have all occurred since 2000. Little doubt that these weather conditions will affect the natural history on our doorstep!

Mike Smart

14th December 2014 GNS Field Meeting – In the Steps of Laurie Lee



Searching high and low for species big and small © Juliet Bailey

On a biting cold December morning, nine of us met on the roadside of the Swifts Hill reserve in Slad. The grasslands of the hill were bleak, and it was with considerable relief that we went into Tranterhill Plantation, the object of our field meeting.

The aim was to record everything we could, as there are not many records for this recently acquired Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust reserve and few of them are up to date.

We made an amazing 194 records: 1 mammal, 26 birds, 29 molluscs, 5 millipedes, 4 centipedes, 3 woodlice, 5 spiders, 2 mites, 1 pseudoscorpion (pictured), 7 springtails, 1 true bug, 1 fly, 8 beetles, 2 moths, 3 bees/wasps, 34 higher plants, 5 ferns, 23 mosses and liverworts, 28 fungi (including lichens). Not bad for the middle of winter! I was very proud to be leader on this occasion.

Quite honestly, I had not expected the wood to be of such interest to us. It looks to me like an ancient woodland site, but clear-felled at some point in the 20th century and replanted. There are big old beech *Fagus sylvatica* trees round the edge, but the interior contains narrower beech, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* reaching for the light, and a sparse shrub layer of yew *Taxus baccata*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and hazel *Corylus avellana*. The wood is on a steep north facing slope, treacherous underfoot with slippery roots and fallen branches covered in a mat of beech leaves.

We started off along the relatively level and safe path that the Trust maintains through the wood. My aim was for the party to walk the length of the reserve which would have taken maybe five minutes, then go our separate ways in search of our own taxa. However, it was no more than two minutes into the wood when people started stepping off the path, rummaging in the leaf litter, turning stones and calling others over to look at each new discovery. The two hour meeting was full of wonder, and we never did get to the far end.

The star species for me was the diminutive snail, *Lauria sempronii*, found here previously by John Fleming, who was able to demonstrate its continued presence in considerable quantity on a short stretch of the perimeter wall. Not much bigger than a pin-head at only 3mm high, it is known from two other Cotswold walls in Gloucestershire but nowhere else in the UK. Its European distribution centres on the Pyrenees and Alps, so our population is a real outlier.

We were joined for a short while by a group from the North Cotswold Ornithological Society led by Andy Lewis that had set off from Bull's Cross with the intention of meeting us in the wood. With their help we were able to bump up the avifauna tally from 3 species (kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* and chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* in 1988 and blackbird *Turdus merula* in 2011) to 26, including a sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* scattering a group of small birds (and possibly taking one) by the roadside as they arrived. Other birds of note: there were several jays *Garrulus glandarius* calling in and around the wood, and less obviously, several bullfinches *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. A raven *Corvus corax* flew over, and there had been a female kestrel on the recce visit a few days earlier.

This demonstrates how important it is to submit records, even of very common things. Everyone can contribute, not just the experts. All of our records have been forwarded to the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER) and will be the foundation of knowledge on which the future management of the reserve is based.

I do not think this site is exceptional for its natural history even though several nationally



Phenacolimax major, 5mm, a nationally scarce species of ancient woodland mainly in southern England and Wales, found by John Fleming in the leaf litter © John Fleming



Pseudoscorpion, *Neobisium carcinoides*, body size 2mm, found by David Scott-Langley in the leaf litter © Joyce Barrus



Candle-snuff fungus, *Xylaria hypoxylon*, about 3cm high © Joyce Barrus

rare species were encountered. It is like many another Cotswold woodlands, and shows what can be found if you know what to look for. What is exceptional is the site's place in our cultural heritage. It was bought in the late 1960s by the poet and author Laurie Lee who was born and brought up locally. He loved the place and wanted to protect the Slad Valley and this wood from development. When the Wildlife Trust took over from his estate, they renamed it Laurie Lee Wood.

There is a post at the southern gate bearing Laurie's poem *The Wild Trees*. You can stand there, musing on which species he might have been describing, with Trantershill Plantation behind you, Swift's Hill to the fore, and Slad across the valley. This is a nostalgic poem of the distant and lost landscapes of his youth, but here we are right now, in the present, with it all about us. Good to be in Gloucestershire.

Juliet Bailey

Fly Spotting in the Cotswolds

Yes, that is ‘spotting’, not ‘swatting’. During the summer of 2014, as a newly appointed county fly recorder, I thought I should make a positive effort to extend our knowledge of the local flies. I decided to concentrate on the Cotswolds and seek out new sites for some of the interesting species already known from that area. What follows is an informal, and very incomplete, account of some of my fly encounters of 2014.

Walking in the Washpool Valley on Cleeve Common in April, I noticed some quite delicate craneflies with spotted wings. Although we have three county fly recorders, our expertise only covers some of the families in this very large insect order, and none of us claims a particular knowledge of craneflies. Fortunately I took photographs of this one and was later able to confirm that it is *Limnophila schranki*, a species for which there appear to be very few Gloucestershire records, and none from the north Cotswolds. Later in the summer I also noted the largest British cranefly, *Tipula maxima* (an easy species to identify), in the same area. Apparently: “Single site visits in ideal cranefly habitat can produce at least 30 species...”¹ Well, two species in a summer is a start, but I was really hoping that I would be dealing with fly families more familiar to me.



Limnophila schranki, at Cleeve Common © Martin Matthews

One hot day in July I decided to take a break from exploring Rodborough Common to buy an ice-cream from the well-known parlour there. After a frustrating failure to find anything of interest on the common itself, it was a pleasant surprise to find the interior of the premises, or at least the inside of its windows, alive with the horsefly *Tabanus bromius*. This is not an uncommon species, but it was amusing to see it present in numbers in such close proximity to the, blissfully unaware, parents and children queueing for refreshments. Perhaps as long as the flies stay away from the counter their presence is tolerated, or perhaps most people don't even realise that they are there.



Leptarthrus brevirostris, found at Masts Reserve, Cleeve Hill © Martin Matthews

As well as horseflies, other groups that get my attention include bee-flies, soldierflies and conopids. I had interesting records of all of these in 2014, but I was particularly pleased with my progress in expanding our knowledge of the distribution of our county's robberflies, fearsome ambush hunters of the insect world.

For many years I have noticed a small, distinctively hunchbacked robberfly, *Leptarthrus brevirostris* (slender-footed robberfly), on Cleeve Hill, particularly near the Masts Reserve where it perches on wire fences and wooden



Machimus atricapillus, at Stanton © Martin Matthews

posts. During the summer I looked for it at other sites I visited and discovered that it is actually quite widespread along the hills. Between May and July I encountered this robberfly from as far south as Nailsworth, northward through Cranham and the empty quarter east of Winchcombe, as far as the farmland above Lidcombe Wood near Stanway. In total, these observations added four new 10 kilometre grid squares to our records of this species.

Machimus atricapillus (kite-tailed robberfly) is a common species found throughout the county but my records from several sites during the summer included one new 10 kilometre square record, from the hills above Stanton. A closely related species *Machimus rusticus* (downland robberfly) proved harder to find. The Cotswold populations are nationally important² but seldom recorded and, as I had never seen it, I made persistent, hopeful forays within its known range. Eventually I came across it at two sites near Sheepscombe and Nailsworth, and finding it was probably my most satisfying achievement of the year.



Machimus rusticus, at Sheepscombe © Martin Matthews

Martin Matthews

Joint Diptera recorder

1. Stubbs A.E. Provisional atlas of the long-palped crane-flies (Diptera:Tipulinae) of Britain and Ireland; (NERC Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, 1992)
2. Alexander K.N.A. The two-winged flies (Diptera) of Gloucestershire: Part I Soldier Flies to Bee Flies ('Larger' Brachycera); (The Gloucestershire Naturalist No 26, 2014)

Feral Wild Boar in the Forest of Dean

The Dean Forest Forum brings together a wide range of local organisations and groups under the auspices of the Forestry Commission. I attend Forum meetings as a representative of the Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group (GIG). Roger Gaunt also attends, as a representative of GNS, but he was unable to get to the one-day Forum conference on Feral Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* which took place at Whitemead Park, Parkend on June 20th 2014 and which I attended.

Talks by a range of invited speakers dealt with a variety of topics including methods of estimating boar numbers, the “social implications” of boar in the Dean, the management of boar populations in Germany (where they are well-studied) and studies of the impact of boar on plants and invertebrates.

From initial releases and “escapes” at a couple of sites in the Dean, the population has increased from about 50 animals in 2008 to an estimated 535 in 2013 and 819 in 2014. These apparently precise estimates are what the arithmetic produces on the basis of various survey methods, notably thermal imaging. The confidence limits on these estimates are quite wide. However it is probably safe to say that the density of boar in the Dean is currently somewhere around 10 boar per square km. In Tuscany for example, populations can reach three or four times this density.

Research in Germany by Ulf Hohmann at the Research Institute for Forest Ecology and Forestry, Trippstadt, has concluded that the likely explanation for the very rapid increase and spread of boar populations throughout the Continent is agricultural change - the current pattern of land use in his area of Germany at least seems to suit the boar very well. They are very fond of maize and oilseed rape and densities are now higher in farmland than in large tracts of woodland. At the moment the Dean boar are mainly confined to the Forest itself and the immediate surroundings, but if the situation in Germany and elsewhere is typical, they might well spread out into the surrounding farmland. It is noteworthy that the same agriculture-based reasoning has been suggested for the recent increase in badger populations in Britain.

In Germany over 600,000 boar are currently “harvested” (shot by hunters) each year - a seven-fold increase compared with 30 years ago. All German boar populations appear to be hunted - they even allow boar shoots in the supposedly “no-hunting” core area of at least one National Nature Reserve - but numbers continue to rise. There has been a suggestion that hunters do not want to exterminate the boar completely or they will have nothing left to hunt - there is even a suspicion that hunters re-stock some areas with boar after the end of the shooting period. “Successful population control needs a significant increase in harvest rates”.

It seems certain that current and projected culling rates by the Forestry Commission in the Dean will have very little impact on the population increase. In fact it is debatable whether the culling to date has really made any significant long-term impression.

Given that the boar seem to be here to stay and increasing in number, it is of course very desirable to know what their ecological impact might be. Their “rooting” causes a very obvious and apparently significant effect on grassland and the woodland floor, but is it really as damaging as it appears?

“Studies of the impact of Wild Boar on Plants and Invertebrates” by Nigel Straw, Programme Group Manager at Forest Research (part of the Forestry Commission), tried to look at the effect of boar on woodland ground flora (particularly bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and selected invertebrates (mainly ground beetles but also some flying insects including hoverflies - basically

any insects that were attracted to pan traps). The studies were carried out in south-east England as well as in the Dean.

They found no significant relationship between the distribution of most plant species and the amount of “rooting” by boar. There was an apparent weak, non-significant positive association between the density of bluebell cover and the amount of rooting, but it doesn’t look as if boar are actually targeting bluebell-rich areas. Boar don’t eat all that many of the bluebell bulbs which they dig up, and they can re-grow; also opening up the bluebell sward allows new young bluebell plants to grow.

It is thought that a “moderate amount” of disturbance to the ground by boar can be a “good thing” for ground flora, as it increases species diversity. This assumes of course that an increase in diversity is always a “good thing” in itself, which is debatable in bluebell woods where the flora can be 90+% bluebells. It is agreed that “too much disturbance is a bad thing” presumably because the ground is continuously turned over and no plants get a chance to re-establish.

An initially surprising result of the beetle survey using pitfall traps was that the more boar rooting there was in an area, the higher the numbers of beetles that were caught. However this seems to be because the boar were preferring to forage in areas that were already rich in beetles. It couldn’t be established whether or not the boar were having any effects; there was certainly no obvious or significant negative effect.

Slightly higher numbers of flying insects were caught in pan traps in undisturbed areas than in boar-rooted areas. None of the differences were statistically significant but of the four insect groups reported on, all showed higher catching rates in undisturbed areas, which I think tends to suggest that there might have been some effect - if there was really no effect either way you would expect some catching rates to be higher in rooted areas. However this is not going to be statistically significant either.

Given that boar do dig up flowers, and the insects caught in pan traps are caught because they mistake the trap for flowers, it seems logical that more would be caught in undisturbed, more flowery areas because these are the places that are going to initially attract the insects. Alternatively, you could argue that a pan trap is more likely to attract insects in an area where there are no real flowers because the boar have dug them all up!- It rather depends on how big the study area is. In any case, nectar-seeking insects can fly off somewhere else to feed if there are no flowers, assuming that boar densities are not so high that they have wiped out all the flowers for miles around. What is more fundamental is what happens to soil-dwelling or turf-dwelling larvae that are going to be dug up (and eaten?) by the boar - but of course this is very difficult to study.

The speaker made the point that it is very difficult to draw conclusions from one-off surveys of this type; it would be better to monitor plants and invertebrates at undisturbed and rooted areas over a long period of time. However there is the usual problem with obtaining funding. He also pointed out that it is impossible to know whether an apparently undisturbed area was in fact rooted up by boar an unknown period of time ago.

The conclusion so far is that there seems to be no really noticeable effect on the species and groups of plants and invertebrates studied, at the densities of boar that currently exist in the Dean and south-east England. More research is clearly needed.

John Phillips

Notes for Nightjar Watchers in Gloucestershire



Heathland habitat at Crabtree Hill © Ivan Proctor

Nightjars *Caprimulgus europaeus* have a reputation for being difficult to get to grips with as they are nocturnal and require special visits to specific sites in order to find them. But if you are in the right place at the right time they must be one of the easiest species to detect because of the male's very distinctive churring song. So how do you get into the right place at the right time?

In Gloucestershire breeding nightjars are now restricted to the Forest of Dean. Even in the Dean there are only about 20 pairs with usually, but not always, one pair to a site. They nest in open spaces which may be permanent heathy areas or young forestry plantations. They rarely choose recently felled areas, preferring to wait until the sites have a year's vegetation growth, but where they do colonise a young plantation they will usually stay for five to ten years depending on how quickly the new crop grows.

The Forestry Commission have four heathland restoration areas in the Dean. For people coming into the Forest of Dean over the Severn Bridge, The Park at Tidenham is the closest of these and has held nightjars for a couple of decades. For anyone coming into the Dean from Gloucester, the Heywood ridge extending from Plump Hill south to Cinderford is an easy site to reach. In the middle of the Forest Crabtree Hill is the longest established nightjar site having held birds continuously since the late 1980's.



Recently cleared habitat at Crabtree Hill © Ivan Proctor

In the north-east is Wigpool Common; a traditional nightjar site written about by John Christian in his book *Sketches of Dean Birds*. In recent years the Forestry Commission have cleared an extensive area there to recreate heathland but although nightjars have been recorded nearby they do not seem to have colonised the site yet. It is little watched but must, one feels, soon hold nightjars once again. Who will be first to find them there?

There are plenty of other ephemeral sites in young plantations. The Cannop Valley has been a centre of activity for some years. If you are

out birding in the Dean watch out for likely sites. Young plantations with bare ground (nightjars only lay eggs on bare ground) and trees low enough to see over are potential places.

When you have decided on a site to visit it is a good idea to make yourself familiar with it on a daytime 'trial run.' Where will you park? How long will it take you to get from car to where you will be watching? How will you get back to your car again in the gathering night? All the Health and Safety stuff so that you know just what you will be doing.

Then how do you time your visit? Aim to get to your site at sunset or very soon afterwards. Even on a dull night nightjars are unlikely to be active before sunset but they may get going soon afterwards. You need to strike a balance between getting there too early and having to wait ages (swatting the midges) for the birds to start and getting there late and missing the first magical moment when the nightjar's song breaks the silence.

Time of year is easy. Nightjars arrive in the second or third week of May. The earliest I have heard was May 3rd but that was exceptional. They then stay until the middle of August. Only once have I known a site occupied until the first week of September and if a pair fail in their nesting they may leave in July. It can be worth selecting a night with a moon between first quarter and full so that it gives a bit of light as darkness falls but the mid-summer twilights are long and good weather is more important. Remember that wind blowing through vegetation can be very noisy when you are straining to hear distant sounds.

So you are in the right place at the right time. What can you expect? Usually the first thing that happens is you hear either a 'co-ic' flight call as the male leaves his roost or, more likely, the highly distinctive churring song will just materialise out of the dusk silence. Sometimes, especially if the site only has one pair of birds, this first burst of song will be quite brief and a silence of up to quarter of an hour follows. Don't be put off when the male becomes active the female may leave the site to feed leaving her mate on watch, and only when she returns does he begin more singing and display behaviour including clapping his wings together above his back making a loud cracking sound.

The male may sing from several perches as he defines his territory and as he moves between them you may catch a glimpse. If you are close to him he may even come over to investigate giving you fine views as he flies around to inspect you or even display at you. Each pair of



Sunset at Clearwell Meend © Ivan Proctor

birds have their own behaviour patterns. The males like showing off and making themselves conspicuous. The females, in contrast, are very reticent. They are largely silent, not even calling in flight very much. They fly directly and discreetly and lack the eye-catching white wing and tail flashes of their partners. Only when she has young and feels you are close to them will a female make herself obvious, and then she may circle you closely making clucking anxiety calls.

All pairs vary. Just to give the lie to what I've written, some males hardly sing at all. Some years ago a male at Crabtree Hill would become active at dusk, churr for about ten seconds and that was it. After that you would never have known there were nightjars on the site. And behaviour may change during the season. Last year I watched a pair who, at the start of the season used to become active quite late into the night (about three quarters of an hour after sunset), but were then very active with the male singing from a high, conspicuous perch and flying after the female each time she passed him. Then mid-way through the season all the activity stopped. The birds were still present but the only indication was that when it was nearly dark the male would fly over the site flight calling 'co-ic' and maybe in the encircling dusk you might catch the shadowy form of one of the birds flying past. But this is the delight of watching nightjars; there is always something new happening. One thing to be aware of is that if you watch a site where the male sings very persistently without any other form of display then he may be on his own. Unmated males spend a lot of time singing to advertise their presence and attract a mate.

By mid-May males are arriving and at first are alone, singing to establish their patch and attract a mate. You can tell when a female arrives on site as the male will start displaying, flying with wings held up and tail fanned out. Often his singing will break down in a bubbling sound followed by wing clapping as he leaves his song post to pursue the passing female. This period of intense activity ends after a couple of weeks when the female lays eggs and the middle part of June can see a quiet spell with the female incubating and the male just churring at various song posts to maintain his territory.

Late June into July is the busiest time for nightjars. Song may decrease if the male helps in feeding the young and especially if he takes over the first young while the female incubates a second clutch of eggs which does sometimes happen. There may be less sound but the birds will be active getting food and visiting the nest so you have a good chance of watching them. This is the time when they are most likely to notice you and both birds are likely to mob an observer within their territory. I have seen a pair at this time mobbing a fox that walked along a path nearby.

Young birds may be on the wing anytime from mid-July but they are surprisingly difficult to see. I think I could count on my fingers the number of times I have seen young; frustratingly as it is the best way of confirming breeding. The young birds are recognisable by their more rounded wings and slightly shorter tails so that they lack the assured flight and easy elegance of their parents. Males will continue to churr as long as they stay on the site but by August song will only be in short snatches and by the third week in August most sites are deserted.

So if you do see nightjars, especially young, please be sure to pass on your record to Richard Baatsen, the county recorder. There can be few better ways of spending summer nights than watching nightjars. Woodcocks *Scolopax rusticola*, tawny owls *Strix aluco*, bats, deer, wild boar *Sus scrofa* and, if you are very lucky, glow worms *Lampyrus noctiluca* will be there too and though you may find it hard at times to work out just what the nightjars are doing there will never be a dull night.

Ivan Proctor

Note: Nightjars are a legally protected species and sensitive to disturbance. Although brilliant to hear/observe, watch from a respectful distance and take care when walking across potential nightjar habitat where there might be eggs or chicks at risk of trampling.

GNS Field Meeting at Hobbs Quarry Reserve: 23 November 2014

"A Gloucestershire Gem"

..... was how geologist Dave Green described Hobbs Quarry GWT Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located a mile to the north-east of Longhope when 21 members and guests enjoyed a visit that took us back 420 billion years. He explained in clear terms how the "ball reefs" visible at the site are not the same as modern coral reefs, but could be a type of Stromatolite, similar to those that evolved shortly after the earth came into being. These are not corals (of animal origin) but algae (of vegetable origin) similar to blue/green algae and an early producer of the oxygen that was

so essential for life on earth. As far as Dave is aware, this form of stromatolite outcrop does not occur so clearly anywhere else in the UK and possibly the world.



Dave Green explaining the formations and history of the quarry
© Tiz Butler



A typical fossil find © Tiz Butler

Overlying the stromatolite balls, and forced down over them by the weight of all the rocks of the Forest that were once above them, are layers of Wenlock limestone that are fossil rich. In former years the spoil heaps have been good sources of brachiopods, crinoids and corals such as *Heliolites*. Some specimens of these were uncovered by intrepid hunters in the quarry floor mud from a recent rock fall! Others in the group searched higher up for tiny lichens and found 14 to add to the records.

This outcrop of Wenlock Limestone was worked on an industrial scale from the mid-nineteenth

century to just after the First World War with several old limekilns spread along its length of approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. Thanks to Forest of Dean Reserves manager, Kevin Caster, the newly cleared kiln site demonstrated how the lime blocks were heated to become quicklime, with many uses in agriculture and industry. Further areas of the quarry were inspected as potential exposures that could be maintained in shade thus reducing the frequent need for clearance of scrub from the rock face.

We were able to compare the northern part of the quarry as John Perrin of The Pines, kindly allowed us to use their car park. This area also shares some of the special features of Hobbs Quarry: small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*, dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* and greater butterfly orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*. An appeal was made to the group for more records to be submitted to GCER as even mammals and birds were poorly documented. Dave Green had given us an invaluable insight to this very Special Site of Scientific Interest which it is hoped he will develop into a future article for GNS News.

Tiz Butler

Special General Meeting 27 March 2015: Proposed Rule Changes

Dear Members,

The Executive Committee of the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society have been considering and discussing some changes to the rules of the Society, first set out at the Society's inauguration in 1948 and revised at a Special General Meeting on 29th March 1996.

The proposed changes result from a number of practical considerations, the reduced number of members willing to assist in managing the Society's business and from the effects of the modern world, e.g. the advent of electronic communications. The Committee see this as a part of the modernisation of the Society; the proposed changes reflect the different situation now in the 21st Century compared with the mid-20th Century when the Society was established.

A copy of the Rules of the Society (as revised on 29th March 1996) with the proposed changes alongside are available on the Society's web-site at <http://www.glosnats.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/02/GNS-Rule-Change-Proposals-REV-Final.pdf>.

Paper copies of the proposed changes are also available from Andrew Bluett, Hon. Membership Secretary at 50 Kingsmead, Abbeymead, Gloucester GL4 5DY, 01452 610085 or gnsmembership@btinternet.com.

A Special General Meeting to allow members to vote on the proposed rule changes will take place within the Annual General Meeting of the Society that is due to take place on Friday 27th March 2015 at 7.30pm at the Gala Club, Fairmile Gardens, Gloucester GL2 9EB.

In the meanwhile, any member who wishes to comment on the proposed changes ahead of the meeting should address their comments to Andrew Bluett as above.

Please also note, if the proposed rule changes are approved at the Special General Meeting the changes will then be subject to the final approval of the Charity Commissioners in accordance with Rule 18, paragraph 2.

Kind regards all,

Andrew Bluett

Hon. Membership Secretary

Recent Additions to the library

The Society maintains an extensive library of about 2000 books, kept at the main house at Hartpury College. It is open during the day on week days but ring 01 452 702100 before visiting to check that the room is free.

Recent additions:



Bird Atlas 2007-2011, D E Balmer, S Gillings, B J Caffrey, R L Swann, I S Downie and R J Fuller. BTO, 2013. The result of the countrywide recording effort providing a comprehensive overview of bird distribution and change in Britain and Ireland.



Docks and Knotweeds, BSBI Handbook no 3, J R Akeroyd, 2014. A new edition of the Docks handbook with a key to all the Polygonaceae of Britain and Ireland, and detailed text, line drawings and distribution map for each. The GNS Library holds most of the BSBI handbook series, invaluable for botanists.



A provisional red data book of Gloucestershire Bryophytes, R V Lansdown. GNS 2014. Introductory chapters on the habitats, conservation status, methodology and presentation of the data, conservation status of the bryophytes, then 271 pages of species accounts of 170 mosses and liverworts that are rare in Gloucestershire. Well illustrated with maps and photographs.



A History of Lower Woods Nature Reserve Part II The Timeline, M H and J Martin, Hawkesbury Local History Society, 2014. A compendium of information on the history of Lower Woods from pre-Roman times right up to the present. 334 pages. Scholarly but accessible, with abundant illustrations.

Juliet Bailey

GNS/GWT Training Courses to Continue 2015

For anyone interested in nature the ability to identify wildlife is a wonderful skill. The Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust are working together to offer beginner courses in wildlife identification. Run by local expert tutors, these half day sessions are the ideal opportunity to learn how to identify and record a wide range of species. Further details, including how to join will be advertised shortly or you can contact the Trust on 01452 383333.

Course Title	Description	When	Time	Location
Reptile Surveying for Beginners	Interested in learning to survey for reptiles with Gloucestershire Amphibian and Reptile Group? We are conducting a survey of lizards and adders at the reserve and are looking to train people as volunteer surveyors. Come along and learn reptile ecology, how to survey and how to record your findings so you can survey independently or with a group.	18-Apr-15	10am-1pm	Nagshead RSPB Reserve
Introduction to Woodland Ecology	Lower Woods Nature Reserve SSSI is one of the most extensive and species rich areas of woodland in the SW. This field course will introduce the wide variety of plant species present in this ancient semi-natural woodland and will concentrate on explaining factors that affect the distribution of woodland plants, including geology and micro-climate. Led by Dr Mike Martin.	29-Apr-15	9.45am-4pm	Lower Woods
Wildlife Survey Techniques	Do you want to see with more expert eyes? If you spot something unusual do you know who you should tell? Surprisingly, many vital conservation and planning decisions rely on accurate records from amateur naturalists. On this friendly and practical course expert tutors will take you through basic surveying techniques for three groups – plants, invertebrates and birds. Meet like-minded naturalists and come away confident in tetrads and timing, grid references and the all important how to submit your records.	10-May-15	9.30am-4.30pm	Cranham
Bird ID and Recording	If you enjoy bird watching come and find out more about bird identification by sight and sound with a friendly local expert, and learn how to report your records to contribute to bird conservation. Robinswood Hill Country Park has stunning views and a mixture of woodland and grassland habitats within easy reach of Gloucester, so is ideal for beginners and those looking to improve their skills.	17-May-15	10m-1pm	Robinswood Hill Country Park
Introduction to Grassland Ecology	Led by Dr Mike Martin, this field-based course will consider how lowland grasslands evolved, the range of grassland types in Britain and their dependence on biotic and soil factors. We will utilise the neutral grasslands that occur in the reserve to study grasslands that have been improved vs. unimproved and are ancient or more recent and compare their species diversity.	10-Jun-15	9.45am-4pm	Lower Woods
Meet the Invertebrates	Mesmerised by minibeasts? Here's your chance to meet some incredible invertebrates – vital to life as we know it. After a brief introduction to the amazing variety of this group and how to record them, we will go bug hunting and try to identify and record what we find. With two experts on hand to help, the beauty and diversity of butterflies, grasshoppers, ladybirds, hoverflies and bees will have you hooked!	14-Jun-15	1pm-5pm	Cirencester
Cotswold Meadow Botany	This close-up course will get you looking at wildflowers as you never have before. Focussing on rare Cotswold limestone grassland at stunning Cranham Common SSSI national nature reserve you will learn to identify and record the beautiful and unusual flowers you see from their detailed structure, and compare grazed and ungrazed habitats by number of species present and their abundance. With expert tutor Diane Hyett-Hudman.	20-Jun-15	10am-4pm	Cranham
Wildflowers and Shrubs, their friends and foes	Starting with beautiful wetland wildflowers and shrubs, you will learn to identify and record what you see. We will then begin to explore the amazing relationships plants have with the animals that depend on them – the fascinating pollinators, predators and parasites that make up their friends and foes.	04-Jul-15	10am-1pm	Coombe Hill
Marvellous Moths and Beautiful Butterflies	What could be better than learning to identify and record moths and butterflies in a gorgeous wildflower meadow? With two expert trainers from Butterfly Conservation to help you, explore fascinating moths trapped overnight before releasing them and turning to some of the how and why of species recording. Then you'll head outdoors to get practical experience of identifying and recording butterflies you find among the wildflowers, woods and gardens of beautiful Hawkwood College.	11-Jul-15	10am-1pm	Hawkwood College

Gareth Parry
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

GLOUCESTERSHIRE NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Registered charity No. 252710

WILDLIFE RECORDING INFORMATION SHEET

The Society's official recording area is the whole of the vice-counties 33 (East Gloucestershire) and 34 (West Gloucestershire). However, for practical purposes, certain recorders only cover the administrative county of Gloucestershire, comprising the districts of Cotswold, Stroud, Forest of Dean, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury, since the Bristol Naturalists' Society covers the Unitary Authority of South Gloucestershire and the City of Bristol (further details available from the individual recorders as listed below).

The Society welcomes observations and records from members and others, and these should be sent to the Recorders as detailed below. Records may be submitted in any form (so long as they are legible and intelligible); some Recorders prefer them on A6 cards (one per species), or, for certain groups, on the appropriate recording form (available from the Recorders - see below), though a simple list (preferably in systematic order) is acceptable for groups such as **moths**.

Ideally the following information should be supplied:

- * Species name.
- * Where seen (name of location, preferably using names on the 1:50000/1:25000 Ordnance Survey maps; if in doubt include a sketch map of the site) plus six figure map reference. It is helpful to Recorders if the tetrad number is also given. For sightings in the Cotswold Water Park observers are asked to quote the official County Council pit numbers whenever possible.
- * Date.
- * Observer's name and address.

Also useful:

- * Number or abundance.
- * Habitat.
- * Where appropriate a description of the species or a note of how identification was made including details of any guidebook used.
- * Any other relevant information.

These details should be sent to the appropriate Recorder from the list below. The precise location of rare species will be kept confidential in the interests of conservation - records should be clearly labelled CONFIDENTIAL if they are to be so treated. Straightforward records are too numerous to be acknowledged individually by the Recorders, but when a reply is required please enclose a stamped addressed envelope if the recorder asks for a voucher specimen.

It is also possible to record your sightings online – see details below.

The most interesting records are published in the Society's "GNS News", but all records (common species or not) are valuable in building up a picture of the present status and distribution of species in our county, for compiling annual reports and for updating our records and those at the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records and the national Biological Records Centre, CEH, Wallingford.

Under the Data Protection Act the GNS advises members and other observers that their personal details (name, address, telephone number, email address) will be stored, either on paper or electronically, as part of the Society's recording system. These details will not be passed on, or sold, to third parties with the exception of the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records, subject to the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations. Should the observer wish that certain parts of a record remain confidential (e.g. for reasons such as sensitive species, sensitive site, restriction of access to land, anonymity), they should contact the relevant Recorder and discuss the matter, stating their reasons.

COUNTY RECORDERS' CONTACT DETAILS

Details of checklists and other GNS-published articles are available on the website and in The Gloucestershire Naturalist.

BIRDS: Richard Baatsen (01452 740161); email: baatsen@surfbirder.com. For those observers who are reporting a county rarity or BBRC species, the appropriate forms can be obtained from the Recorder; a guidance document listing all the species that require detailed descriptions is also available (please send sae); submission of records by email preferred (see also Gloucestershire Bird Report 2005 pp 18-20). The GNS website has a recording form showing all required information that can be printed off.

British Trust for Ornithology Representative: Gordon Kirk (01452 741724);
email: GordonKirk@aol.com

Gloucestershire Bird Report (annual report on the county's avifauna) published by Gloucestershire Ornithological Coordinating Committee (GOCC).

MAMMALS: John Field, c/o The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Conservation Centre, Robinswood Hill Country Park, Reservoir Road, Gloucester GL4 6SX (01452 383333);
email: john.field@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

Gloucestershire Bat Group Recorder: David Wells email: dave-wells@mypostoffice.co.uk

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS: David Dewsbury (01594 832068);
email: david.dewsbury@btinternet.com

FISH: Pete Bradshaw, c/o The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Conservation Centre, Robinswood Hill Country Park, Reservoir Road, Gloucester GL4 6SX (01452 383333);
email: peter.bradshaw@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

CRAYFISH: John Field, c/o The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Conservation Centre, Robinswood Hill Country Park, Reservoir Road, Gloucester GL4 6SX (01452 383333);
email: john.field@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

INVERTEBRATES:

Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group (GIG): Andrew Leach, c/o The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Conservation Centre, Robinswood Hill Country Park, Reservoir Road, Gloucester GL4 6SX. (01452 383333); email: Andrew.leach@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk



BUTTERFLIES: Chris Wiltshire (01453 545509); email: chriswiltshire164@o2.co.uk
Butterfly Conservation Gloucestershire Branch: www.gloucestershire-butterflies.org.uk

MOTHS:

VC33 East Gloucestershire: Robert Homan (01242 235408);
email: theapiary@hotmail.com

VC34 West Gloucestershire (west of the Severn): Michael Bradley (01531 822315);
email: michaelw1184w@hotmail.co.uk

VC34 West Gloucestershire (east of the Severn): Neale Jordan-Mellersh (0117 9854730);
email: sneale48@hotmail.co.uk

Online distribution maps and additional information for Gloucestershire moths can be found at
http://www.gloucestershire-butterflies.org.uk/Guys_maps/mothmap.html

DRAGONFLIES: Ingrid Twissell (01452 714413);
email: canditwissell@btinternet.com

DIPTERA (Part) LOWER BRACHYCERA (Robberflies, Hunchback-Flies, Water-Snipeflies, Bee-Flies, Snipeflies, Windowflies, Soldierflies, Horseflies, Stiletto-Flies, Awl-Flies, Wood-Soldierflies): Martin Matthews

email: martmatt@btinternet.com. John Phillips email: jandvphillips@talktalk.net

HOVERFLIES, CONOPID FLIES AND LADYBIRDS: David Lliff (01242 674398);
email: davidliff@talk21.com

ANTS, BEES & WASPS: Tony Taylor (01452 728734);
email: taylor.ant@cotswoldwireless.co.uk

SPIDERS: David Haigh (01242 513544);
email: djrhaigh@hotmail.co.uk

BETLES (other than Ladybirds), BARKFLIES, WOODLICE, CENTIPEDES, MILLIPEDES, HARVESTMEN, FALSE SCORPIONS, LACEWINGS, SPRINGTAILS & FRESHWATER INVERTEBRATES: David Scott-Langley
email: dscottlangley@hotmail.co.uk

GRASSHOPPERS, BUSH-CRICKETS, EARWIGS, & COCKROACHES, BUGS (HEMIPTERA): John Widgery (01242 673873); email: johnwidgery@waitrose.com

LAND & FRESHWATER MOLLUSCS: David Long (01242 527673);
email: david@long55.wanadoo.co.uk

ECTOPARASITES (Lice, louse-flies): Robin Sellers (01946 725453);
email: sellers@craghouse7.freemove.co.uk

FRESHWATER TRICLADS: Larry Bellamy (01594 516420);
email: lar.amy@btinternet.com

FLOWERING PLANTS, FERNS & STONEWORTS:
Mark and Clare Kitchen (01453 810958); email: clareandmarkplants@yahoo.co.uk

MOSSES AND LIVERWORTS: Peter Martin (01666 503791);
email: petermartin@btinternet.com

FUNGI: Cotswold Fungus Group & VC33 County recorder email: recorder@cotswoldfungusgroup.com. Dean Fungus Group & VC34 recorders: Keith & Valerie Davies (01452 760278); email: keith.val@hotmail.com

LICHENS: Juliet Bailey email: glos.lichens@gmail.com

PLANT GALLS: Robert Homan (01242 235408) email: theapiary@hotmail.com

ONLINE RECORDING at www.universalquestions.com/nature

There is now an online county wildlife recording system at Richard Beal's website covering Birds, Butterflies, Dragonflies & Damselflies, Mammals and Orchids. It is a straightforward, but nevertheless sophisticated way, of getting your sightings from your desktop to the county recorders and by using the system you can make a valuable contribution to the GNS ongoing recording effort. After a simple registration procedure you can start recording straightaway and you can return to the web site at any time by simply logging in.

NEW RECORDERS

The Society is always looking for new Recorders to fill vacant positions (particularly DIPTERA and FRESHWATER FAUNA) or to cover groups not listed above (no matter how obscure!). Anyone willing to undertake these tasks or to organise (or help organise) surveys in the county is invited to contact David Scott-Langley (Chairman, GNS Scientific & Publications Subcommittee), 19 Chesterton Grove, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1XN; Tel 01285 659631; email: dscottlangley@hotmail.co.uk

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS AND ADDRESSES

GNS Website:
www.glosnats.org for sightings, recorders, events, archives and species information.

GNS Webmaster:
Richard Beal; email: richard.beal@richardbeal.com

GNS Library:
Our library has moved to the main house at Hartpury College.
Phone 01452 702100 before visiting to check the room is free for use.



GNS Chairman:

Mike Smart, 143 Cheltenham Road, Gloucester GL2 0JH (01452 421131);
email: smartmike@btinternet.com

GNS Membership Secretary:

Andrew Bluett, 50 Kingsmead, Abbeydale, Gloucester, GL4 5DY (01452 610085);
email: gnsmembership@btinternet.com. See also Membership page on GNS Website.

GNS Secretary:

Lynne Garner (01452 614354); email: lynne@moorend1989.plus.com.

GNS Cirencester Branch Chairman:

David Scott-Langley, 19 Chesterton Grove, Cirencester, Glos GL7 1XN (01285 659631);
email: dscottlangley@hotmail.co.uk.

Editor of the GNS News (records and general matters; appears quarterly): Kate Kibble;
email: kkibble@sky.com

Editor of The Gloucestershire Naturalist David Scott-Langley, 19 Chesterton Grove,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1XN (01285 659631); email dscottlangley@hotmail.co.uk.
Articles and reports for TGN should be sent to the Editor by February 28th of the year of
publication. Notes for contributors and page layout are available from the same source.

Natural England (Southwest Region) Natural England, First Floor, Temple Quay House, 2 The
Square, Bristol, BS1 6EB Tel: 0300 060 2065

Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records: Conservation Centre, Robinswood
Hill Country Park, Reservoir Road, GLOUCESTER GL4 6SX (01453 389950);
email: gcer@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk. Development Manager: Linda Moore (01172
309119) email: linda.moore@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust: Conservation Centre, Robinswood Hill Country Park, Reservoir
Road, Gloucester GL4 6SX (01452 383333). Web site: www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

Gloucestershire Orchard Trust: Ann Smith (secretary/coordinator) 01452 855677
www.gloucestershireorchardtrust.org.uk; email: info@gloucestershireorchardtrust.org.uk

Issued by the Scientific & Publications Sub-committee of the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society, January 2014.

Diary

New Feature – Post codes are provided to help satnav users get roughly to the right location, but please bear in mind that for rural locations these will only be approximate and you will still need to find the exact location from the grid reference.

Field Meetings

Tuesday 10 March 2015, 11 am. Lichens of Marshfield Church – Meet at ST781736 (approx SN14 8NT). Leader: Juliet Bailey, 01452 722310.

Sunday 15 March 2015, 11 am. For a morning meeting. Frampton on Severn, a general interest meeting along the canal and back through the village. Meet at the canal bridge SO746084 (approx GL2 7HZ). Leader: Andrew Bluett, 01452 610085.

Saturday 21 March 2015, 11 am. Botany around Dymock. An appropriate time in the year to visit the “Golden Triangle” and hopefully sample a daffodil tea. Meet along the minor road just north of M50 beside Dymock Wood. SO691286 (other side of M50 to Four Oaks which is GL18 1LU). All day, bring lunch. Leaders Clare and Mark Kitchen, 01453 810958. Mobile on the day 07783448203.

Sunday 29 March 2015, 11 am. Botany of Alney Island. Early spring meeting to record flora especially spring ephemerals and look in detail at some willow catkins as several species are known to occur on the Island. Meet at 11.00am (note first day of summer time) at the small reserve car park at SO823190 (approx GL1 2RX). To find, leaving Gloucester, turn left down little slip road 100m after crossing the Severn (before you get to the traffic lights). Meeting will continue after picnic lunch. All welcome to join us for as long as you would like. A joint meeting with Friends of Alney Island, GNS and Glos Plant Group. Leaders: Mark and Clare Kitchen. Mobile on the day 07783448203.

Tuesday 14 April 2015, 11 am, Lichens of Crickley Hill Country Park. Meet at SO929163 (very approx GL3 4UH) Leader: Juliet Bailey, 01452 722310.

Saturday 25 April 2015, 11 am. Newts of Awre’s Glow between Mallards Pike and Staple Edge Wood in the Forest of Dean. All-day meeting if weather favourable. Meet SO637090 (very approx GL15 4HD). This is a Pay and Display carpark, so you may wish to walk to the site. There are several ponds at the top end of Awre’s Glow where we can find newts, lizard and slow worm and also a place to eat a picnic. It would be good to find adder which has not been recorded here. It is a bit early for most butterflies but grizzled skipper possible. Leader: David Dewsbury, 01594 832068, 07786 543961.

Sunday 10 May 2015, 11am. A morning revisit to Brockeridge Common following the tantalising winter visit of February 2015. This is a fantastic site with extensive unimproved grassland, scrub and wet areas. Meet at SO885379, on A38 north of Junction 1 of M50, approx GL20 6HB. Leader: Mike Smart, 01452 421131.

Wednesday 27 May 2015, 6.30pm. Botany of Doverow Hill, Stonehouse. We hope to re-find *Minuartia hybrida*, Fine-leaved Sandwort last seen in 2006. Meet in Stonehouse town car park. SO80620544, (GL10 2NG) which is free after 6.00pm at time of writing. Leaders Clare and Mark Kitchen: 01453 810958; mobile on the day 07783448203.

Tuesday 9 June 2015. Lichens of Lower Woods. Meet at Lower Woods Lodge ST745881, (GL9 1BY). Leader: Juliet Bailey, 01452 722310.

Saturday 13 June 2015, 10.30am. Cinderford Linear Park for day-flying moths and butterflies. Meet on Forest Vale Road opposite Winner garage, SO645151 (approx GL14 2YE). Bring packed lunch if required. Will continue in afternoon. Leader: Roger Gaunt 01594 530475.

Tuesday 16 June 2015, 2.00pm. Botany of Alney Island. Meet at the small reserve car park at SO822190 (approx GL1 2RX), for general recording, and 6.00pm for a highlights tour for those who cannot make the afternoon. If staying for both bring tea. Leaders Clare and Mark Kitchen. 01453 810958. Mobile on the day 07783448203.

Saturday 4 July 2015, 10.30am. Cinderford Northern Quarter, a big push to get as many records as possible on the Cinderford Northern Quarter site which is scheduled for development. This will be a joint meeting with the Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group. Meet on Forest Vale Road opposite Winner garage, (approx GL14 2YE) SO645151. Bring packed lunch if required. Will continue in afternoon. Leader: David Scott-Langley, 01285 659631.

Tuesday 14 July 2015, 11am. Lichens of Lawrence Weston Moor Avon Wildlife Trust reserve. Park near to the Social Club at the end of Lawrence Weston Road ST545788 (BS11 0ST). Leader: Juliet Bailey, 01452 722310.

Sunday 19 July 2015, Time TBA. Newent Lakeside for Hoverflies, Conopids and Ladybirds. Meet in Pay and Display car park, (approx SO722260). Given good weather, hoverflies would almost certainly be findable, but the other two groups could not be guaranteed. Leader: David Iliff, 01242 674398.

Tuesday 11 August 2015, 11am. Lichens. Kilkenny Picnic site in morning, meet at SP004186 (west of Kilkenny pub, postcode GL54). Lineover Wood Woodland Trust reserve SO987185 in afternoon. Leader: Juliet Bailey, 01452 722310.

Long weekend of 24-28 September 2015. Lichens in the Forest of Dean. British Lichen Society meeting, but all welcome. Leader: Juliet Bailey, 01452 722310.

Tuesday 13 October 2015, Lichens of Willsbridge Valley Avon Wildlife Trust reserve. ST664707, Car park is on Long Beach Road at ST663710 (approx BS30 9UG). Leader: Juliet Bailey, 01452 722310.

Annual and Special General Meeting

27 March 2015, 7.30pm. The next GNS AGM will be held at a slightly different venue - the Gala Club in Longford, Gloucester which has a large function room. The meeting will also include a brief Special General Meeting to accept/reject the proposed rule changes (see article herein). Following Society business, Mervyn Greening will give a talk on the new Gloucestershire Barn Owl Monitoring Programme. The Gala Club is located at Fairmile Gardens, Gloucester GL2 9EB.

Contacts for Special Interest Groups

Dean Fungus Group

The Dean Fungus Group runs forays throughout the year. Contact Keith or Valerie Davies for information on 01452 760278 or email keith.val@hotmail.com.

Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group

The GIG has field meetings mainly at weekends from April to October. GNS members are welcome to come along and see what they do. Contact David Scott-Langley (01285 659631) for further advice.

GNS Lichen Group

The Lichen Group meets once a month during the warmer months. New people, including beginners, always welcome. Lichen meetings begin at 11am and generally go on until about 4pm, though you are encouraged to stay for just as long as you wish. All you need is a x10 hand lens, and a picnic if you intend staying after lunch. To join the mailing list, email Juliet Bailey, glos.lichens@gmail.com.

Plant Group

The botanical meetings listed in the diary above are for recording and will not have had a recce visit beforehand so the excitement of what we find is for all participants. We will identify as many plants as possible so suitable for learners and more experienced botanists. Contact Clare and Mark Kitchen for email updates. clareandmarkplants@yahoo.co.uk.

Cirencester Indoor Events

13th March 2015. Cirencester Branch AGM. This only takes up a small amount of the meeting and is followed by cheese and wine, photographic projected image, photographic print and artwork competitions.

10th April 2015. To be announced

The Gloucestershire Naturalist – Back Issues

As a result of having to provide copies of back issues of The Gloucestershire Naturalist Volumes 1 – 12 to the British Library and through the generosity of some of our members, we now have on file scanned copies of all of those issues on a single CD ROM.

We have two further back issues available as scanned files on a second CD ROM, volumes 13 (2000) and 14 (2008), Stephen Bishop's New Flora of Gloucestershire.

Both discs are available at a cost of £6.00 each from Andrew Bluett, Membership Secretary, at gnsmembership@btinternet.com or on 01452 610085.

Further information on our web-site at www.glosnats.org including an index of the articles in volumes 1-12.

Society Officers & Contacts



President: Mrs Anna Jones

Chairman:

Mike Smart, 143 Cheltenham Road, Gloucester GL2 0JH
tel: 01452 421131 email: smartmike@btinternet.com

Vice Chairman:

David Scott-Langley, 19 Chesterton Grove, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1XN
tel: 01285 659631 email: dscottlangley@hotmail.co.uk

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Treasurer:

Andy Oliver, email: gnstreasurer@btinternet.com

Membership Secretary:

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tel: 01285 659631 email: dscottlangley@hotmail.co.uk

GNS Website:

www.glosnats.org

GNS Library:

Our library has moved to the main house at Hartpury College.
Phone 01452 702100 before visiting to check the room is free for use.



Sunset over Clearwell Meend © Ivan Proctor

