

OXFORD WILDLIFE

NUMBER 117 NEWS SUMMER 2018



**Are you a friend of Hedgehogs?
See inside!**

A Message from Janet Keene, Editor of Oxford Urban Wildlife News.

Those of you who have been readers of this magazine for some time, may remember that in issue Number 114 (Summer 2017) I wrote in an editorial that, in May of that year, I was diagnosed as having had a mild stroke. The prognosis for an eventual good recovery was considered good, as long as stress was avoided.

I decided upon advice that it was in my best interests to resign my post as ‘chairperson’ of the committee of OUWG as soon as possible. The transfer of ‘chairperson’ to Jens Evans has been smooth and lifted a heavy weight of responsibility from me. Jens introduces himself in the following page.

At the time that I resigned the chair, I also announced to the committee that after editing the OUWG Newsletter for 100 issues (since 1992), I would be happy to pass that responsibility to a younger member of the group but would continue as editor until a new editor was found. As is so often the case with that sort of statement, I found myself remaining editor by default. However, I continued to enjoy the responsibility of providing a magazine which was focussed on Boundary Brook Nature Park but provided an umbrella organisation, drawing attention to the work of other environmental organisations throughout the city. See this issue.

The JR Hospital periodically monitored the effects of my mini stroke for a year and at that point, I was released from further monitoring, although I was still not allowed to drive and the loss of full physical fitness and some short term memory problems have persisted.

Attention is drawn elsewhere in this issue to serious problems immediately facing the Boundary Brook Nature Park. These are associated with the long-term maintenance of the site, the lack of volunteer labour; the perceived need, both of the committee and the city council, of wider community access and participation; and the looming need to prepare for our lease renewal from the city council next year.

The committee’s response to this has been is to focus our energy on Boundary Brook and therefore not to be diverted by running public events at Boundary Brook this summer, and to pause in the publication of the OUWG Newsletter, determined in part by the cost of hard copy printing and postal distribution costs. It will also re-examine its size, frequency and focus when eventually re-established.

This seemed to right moment for me to relinquish editorship of the OUWG Newsletter, without the need for any cumbersome transfer of duties. I shall continue to be an active member of Boundary Brook Nature Park without having the pressing need of always preparing a pending newspaper.

Janet Keene. Tel 01865 820522. Email: keene@ouwg.com.org

Some pleasing and encouraging events in the past few months.

On 12th May we had our **Open Day at Boundary Brook Nature Park** with a record 117 visitors passing through our gate. Visitors were either given a guided tour or were given a map to help them explore the site. Many local residents had never experienced this extensive site on their doorstep. A welcome desk had books and plants for sale, whilst children had feely boxes to test their sense of touch or set off with a treasure hunt, or most popular of all, went pond dipping supervised by a watchful Chris Lewis.

On June 2nd we had a stall at “**The Wild Fair**” at **Oxford University Museum of Natural History**. We clicked 97 people who paused and talked with us at our stall on the green outside the museum. They took pamphlets about Boundary Brook and how to join the OUWG and bought books and even adults tried the feely boxes. A very successful day. The crowded event apparently had 4000 visitors in total!

On 16th June we had a stall at the Florence Park Festival. Another crowded open air event. We had a set of mini pond dipping troughs, the main interest being newt tadpoles. Feely boxes often help to strike up conversations about Boundary Brook, helped by the distribution of a location map and brief description.

On June 23rd we had a stall at **Fun on the Green at Wolvercote & Wytham Midsummer Festival** Families dominated. Feely boxes and books and pamphlets encouraged deeper conversation with adults, which it seemed might encourage visits to Boundary Brook, but it would be nice to know just what was achieved.

Introducing your OUWG Chair – Jens Evans



Hello! I'm honoured to have been elected OUWG Chair at May's AGM. I've got big boots to fill in taking over from Janet Keene, and I hope to live up to the standards that she has set over the years. I first spoke to Janet and other OUWG members earlier this year, when I was interested in becoming involved in the Group. I was hugely impressed at the amazing work that the Group has done over nearly 30 years, especially to create Boundary Brook Nature Park. It is still one of the few urban wildlife parks to have been completely created and managed by volunteers. That's an amazing achievement. It also shows just how much volunteer groups can do to promote urban wildlife.

I've joined at a busy time for the Group. We need to expand our membership, especially within Oxford, and engage more with the local community.

We need to refocus our management of Boundary Brook Nature Park before we renew our lease from Oxford City Council in 2019. The Park needs significant maintenance work this year to improve its boundaries (we are looking at hedging) and to control overgrown areas. We also need to review the Park's management objectives to reflect the City Council's strategy for managing green spaces, which emphasises the importance of engaging the local community in conservation.

This sounds like a lot to do, but it's also the perfect time to do it. Nature conservation has never been more important than today, when UK wildlife is in decline. The increasing trend of community-led initiatives also plays to OUWG's strengths and means that we can position OUWG as a voice for wildlife and for the community. Many of this year's Trustees have joined OUWG because they care about having wildlife at the heart of their urban lives. We can do amazing things if we harness that passion.

I don't talk about myself very much, but you'd probably like to know a little more about me. As my name suggests, I have a Swedish mother, although I was actually born in Oxford. My house is next to Park and so I have enjoyed a view of it for years before joining the Group (rather sheepishly, as I should have done this a long time ago). I'm married with a 4-year old son, who is fast discovering the joys of pond-dipping in the Park's pond. By profession, I'm a government advisor on environmental policy and especially climate change.

Finally – your committee needs you! It takes a lot of work to manage Boundary Brook Nature Park, run OUWG events and produce this newsletter. I'm enormously grateful for the hard work of the Trustees and active committee members, but we need more support from our members. In particular, we need help with:

- Boundary Brook Nature Park – could you spare a few hours to help cut grass, maintain paths and cut back trees? Do you have wildlife management skills, such as coppicing or hedge-laying? Can you help us to develop a management plan? Do you have experience of running volunteer work-parties? We need ideas and we need labour!
- Community engagement – we need to engage with communities and other wildlife groups in Oxford. Can you help us to develop and manage the networks that we need?
- Charity management – we need help to run the committee, update our policies, renew memberships, apply for grants, manage our accounts and all the other corporate tasks that charities need to do. You need to have worked in charities to help – you probably have relevant experience from your daily work.
- Our website – can you help us to design a new one?
- Pretty much anything else!
- Do get in touch if you have suggestions, questions or would like to help run OUWG – it's your group.

Best wishes,

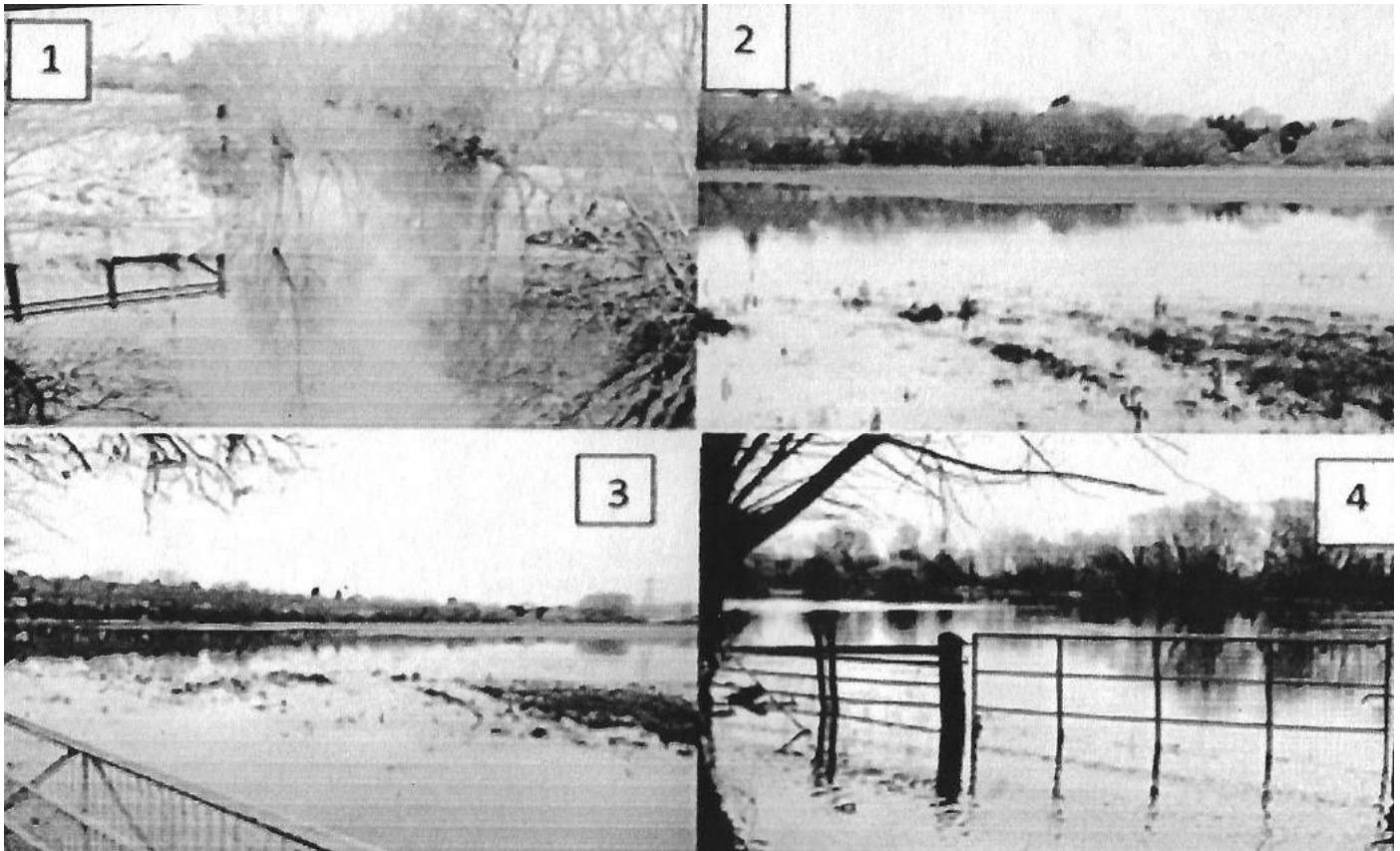
Jens Evans

Dr Jens Evans – OUWG Chair.

Contacts: Email: jensevans@yahoo.com

Tel 01865 522866.

Fritillary Count, Hinksey Meadow 2018 and heavy rainfall in early April causes unexpected flooding of Hinksey Meadow



Tim King writes

The OUWG has been involved in the fritillary counts on Hinksey Meadow since 2003, when there were 58 flowers. Since then the numbers of flowers of Oxfordshire's county flower have increased, peaking at 294 in 2013. In 2018 the numbers, at 210, were down from the 226 last year, but there may have been particular reasons for the delayed flowering and lower numbers in 2018.

The burst of heavier rainfall around the beginning of April would not normally have caused any flooding of the Hinksey Meadow. This year, however, the lack of maintenance of the waterways seems to have created a problem. The photographs above were taken on 7 April. The Seacourt Stream was partially blocked beneath the bridge leading from North Hinksey onto the **Seacourt Stream (Photo 1)**.

The six culverts installed beneath Willow Walk in 2011 were blocked, causing water in the meadow to accumulate against **Willow Walk (2)**. Silting of the Seacourt Stream about 100m above the bridge was causing water to flow onto **Hinksey Meadow (3)**.

An unusual blockage south of the bridge was causing water to accumulate on the creeping marshwort field on the southern side of **Willow Walk (4)**. Whilst the water level fell over the next couple of days, the water table around the fritillaries must have been far higher than usual during the critical period between the end of a cool winter and the April flowering season.

This lack of maintenance, which in recent years has enabled cattle to walk in autumn from Hinksey Meadow across the Seacourt Stream into North Hinksey, does not bode well for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme. The new channel planned across Hinksey Meadow avoids the main fritillary area, although it will remove 2 hectares of precious MG4 grassland. Its success depends critically on the maintenance of the secondary channel, its sloping edges covered perhaps twice a year on average. If the Environment Agency cannot afford at present to carry out the troubleshooting excavations, let alone regular maintenance, what is likely to happen to the sides of the new channel over the next hundred years?

Elephant Hawk Moth (*Deilephila elpenor*)

Rachel Fell writes: I took this photo in my home recently, not far from Oxford.

Has anyone else seen one of these?

The email edition of this newsletter shows it in full colour, a subtle pink and olive green.

It is certainly a more colourful recent evening visitor than usual.



This rather handsome moth is not particularly rare: its name derives from the appearance of its caterpillars, which are said to resemble an elephant's trunk. The caterpillars or larvae feed on species such as rosebay willow-herb (*Epilobium angustifolium*) and other willow-herbs, bedstraws (*Galium*), enchanter's nightshade, fuchsias and Himalayan balsam. They are usually seen when looking for somewhere to pupate, or when resting on stems in good weather, as they are very large, with noticeable eye markings.

They overwinter as pupae in fragile cocoons at the base of plants in loose plant debris, or just below the surface of the ground.

The adults are nocturnal, flying from dusk and coming to light, resting by day among their food plants. Their wingspan ranges from 45-60mm. They feed from honeysuckle and other tubular flowers on the wing. They have very sensitive eyes that enable them to see colours even in low light and were one of the first species in which nocturnal colour vision was documented in animals. They inhabit a wide variety of habitats, including rough grassland, heathland, sand dunes, hedgerows, woodland, the open countryside and even urban gardens. The moths also play important role as pollinators.

Overwintering underweight hedgehogs

Rachel Fell writes: For two or three years I have looked after autumnal small hedgehogs found in the village and in need of care to reach an appropriate weight to survive the winter. Hedgehogs need to weigh about 550-600g from November onwards to be able to survive hibernation in the wild. If found at a lower weight and size, they can be taken to a vet for assessment, which is normally free of charge, and I have taken some of these to my local vet and helped to rid one of them of 16 or more ticks, which are one of the things that plague them. Vets can also tell if they have other conditions, such as lungworm, which seems to affect many of them, and in which case they should normally be cared for by a specialist group or agency, such as St. Tiggywinkle's in Haddenham, near Thame, or Oak & Furrows Wildlife Rescue Centre, located inside the Blakehill Nature Reserve, near Cricklade, where they can provide the necessary treatment for the condition.

If kept to overwinter at home, they need to be provided with plenty of water, as they get thirsty, and food: cat or dog "wet" or "dry" meat (not fish-flavoured) food, or hedgehog wet or dry food that can be bought in garden centres, etc. : dry kibbled food can be good for their teeth, I have been told. They also like dried mealworms, and a few bits of sweet corn kernels, banana, apple or other fruit may be appreciated. Their living area needs to have bedding material such as hay, and possibly newspaper, and sawdust to soak up water spills, etc., and it needs to be changed daily or so. I kept mine in large plastic lidded rectangular storage-type boxes with lids, weighed down to prevent them escaping and allow them protection, but not closed so that they have enough air. Sometimes they want to venture out of their confines, and one of two of them managed to climb out of the deep boxes and climbed into another box, where the two seemed to get on fine together, with no fighting (both were males).

Another one escaped, and we presumed it had somehow escaped outside last November, as we were unable to find it anywhere despite careful searching, and it remained a mystery until spring, in April, when a small hedgehog (only about 300 grams) suddenly appeared in a back room. It must have gone to hibernate in some inaccessible place in the room and been able to hibernate although underweight because it was indoors. We took it to the vet, where we were advised to take it Oak & Furrows, as it had suspected lungworm. After spending about six weeks there, it had reached a healthy weight and been cured of its lung condition, and we were able to collect it, take it home and release it. This is not usually the case with hedgehogs entrusted to St. Tiggywinkle's unless you are one of their registered "releasers".

Hedgehog "homes" can also be purchased from garden centres, shops or online, made from wood and other various materials. Having bought a sort of rustic "igloo" hedgehog home, the first hedgehog overwintered took to this readily when it was placed in the shed (rather than the garden as usual) and built up a neat nest inside it from bits and pieces found inside the shed. The hedgehogs latterly placed in the shed this last winter however showed no interest in it and made alternative nests or homes in e.g. a half-empty compost bag. However, having later put the "igloo" back in the garden, a hedgehog now seems to have taken up home in it.



Janet Keene writes:

Earlier this year, this small hedgehog emerged from some shelter in our garden and soon began scavenging for titbits below our bird table.

When disturbed, it retreated into a defensive ball but, as you may see if you look carefully, it kept its beady eyes on Peter, as he took this photograph.

From our Foreign Correspondent!

John Gorrill Canine Correspondent! (Formerly a local regular contributor to the OUWG Newsletter but now living in Cumbria), writes: Say 'Cheese and sign this consent form.....

Did you get annoyed in May by emails from companies begging to keep in touch with you? It was all about GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation - which came into force on 25th May. I've skimmed through the 99 articles in 11 chapters written by the European Parliament just so you don't have to, and most of it is about big companies respecting your private information. One thing may trip up a wildlife group however, apart from the bramble across your path, is consent to being in a photograph or a video which can identify the person or the people in the picture. You may have heard that sneaky companies have used facial recognition software to gather information and then sell it or use it to target people with advertising - all without their knowledge or consent. GDPR aims to stop that but it also stops you from assuming that everyone at your open day, your work party or your OUWG stall agrees to being filmed all without their knowledge or consent.

Or does it? The 99 articles in 11 chapters do not specifically mention photographs or videos. They talk about personal data, sensitive information and 'unambiguous consent' but it's all very abstract. I've been sending group photos of volunteers to big organisations that help our beach-cleaning work. The photos then get published on Facebook pages, websites and in newsletters like this one - everyone loves a smiley picture with a 'good news' story. Recently one public body told me that everyone in a group photo taken after 25th May must sign a consent form. That's a problem when twenty or even thirty volunteers turn up and the work is outdoors in all weathers. It's worse when each person who gives written consent has the equal right to withdraw it later at any time. That's called 'the right to erasure'. This is all new and untested, so I don't know what I'd do if one person in a group photo later wanted to be 'erased'. Would I delete the whole picture or somehow cover just one face?

Most people agree that photos of children need their parents' or guardians' consent - I've asked for that in the past without any problem. I think a consent form for adults is too much trouble, so I've simply stopped taking photos of people who could be identified. In fact once you've seen two or three group photos, they all look alike so that's no great loss. And dogs! My dog Roly appears in many photos because he's with me all the time and because he gives a sense of scale to the landscape in the picture. People say he's cute, so it makes a funny photo if I ask him to sit next to odd things we find on the Cumbrian coast.



Long-distance shots, close-ups of hands holding tools or before-and-after pictures of the worksite are all OK. So far, we've removed two fridges, a freezer, two vacuum cleaners, many traffic cones and tyres, half a boat, a burnt-out motorbike, rusty bicycles, carpets, car seats and broken chairs. If we didn't laugh at these things, we would cry; a cheerful group with a serious purpose (and a friendly dog) seems to me the perfect mix. Finally, plastic! Photos of beaches covered with plastic bottles are misleading for two reasons. Firstly, bottles are easy to pick up and not a big problem after the first beach clean.



Secondly, much more plastic on a British beach comes from the fishing industry in the form of nylon rope, net, fish crates, broken gear such as lobster pots and orange floats plus barrels used as marker buoys. The other big source of pollution is the sewage treatment process which somehow allows wet wipes, cotton buds, sanitary pads and syringes to wash up on the shore. Of course, we need to reduce, re-use and recycle as individuals - but we also need certain industries to clean up their act.

LETTERBOX

Owl Sense by Miriam Darlington (Guardian Faber, £15.99)

A book review by Clare Passingham

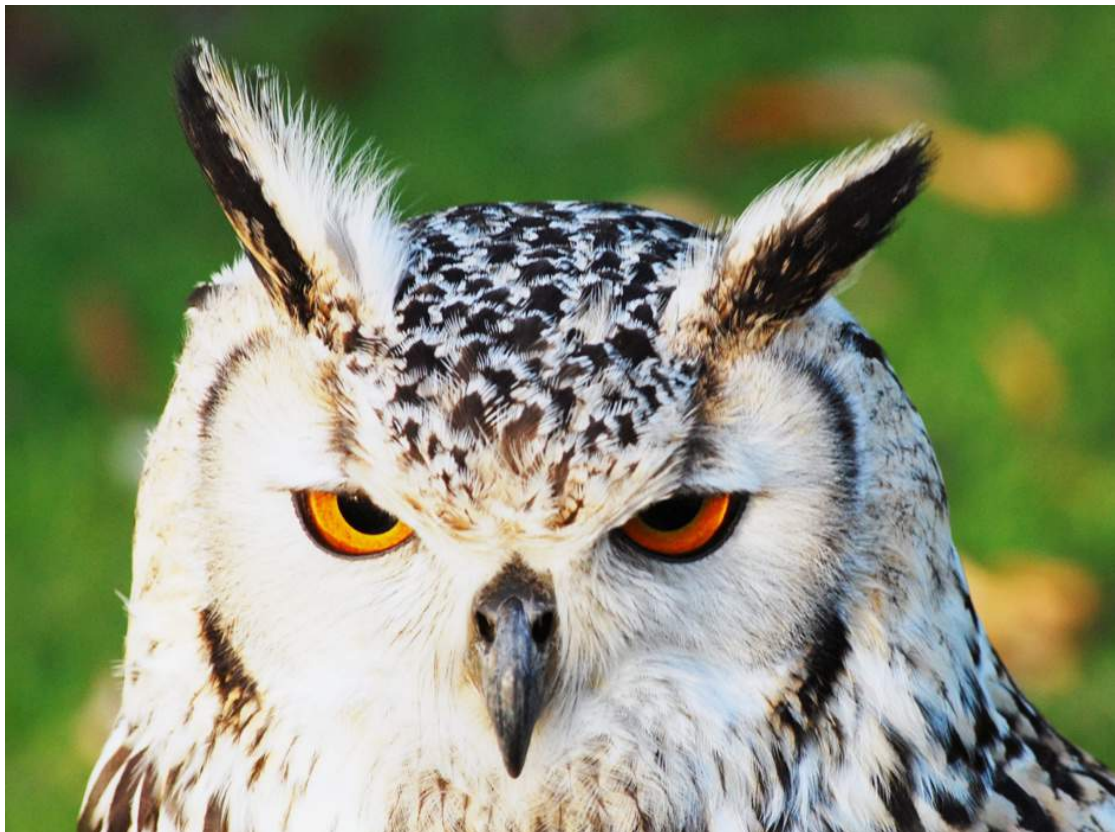
This is a beautiful book – both the wonderful cover and the elegantly written contents. I will own up straight away – Miriam is my niece, so don't expect critical words here. She is an established nature writer – her first book (Otter Country) was about the wild otter and was much praised. In that book, she was looking at the hopeful story of the recovery of the otter from its dire position as a heavily persecuted animal, when it was almost hunted to extinction. She had a cautiously optimistic tale to tell.

Her view of our owls cannot be so sanguine. The widespread loss of habitat, climate disturbance and changing farming practices, makes her book a cry for the protection and nurturing of our native and visiting owls. She writes poetically and movingly, each chapter focusing on one species. You will learn about owl biology and how they hunt, and the problems facing each type of owl. She ventures abroad too, and also talks about unusual species such as the Pygmy Owl and the Burrowing Owl. Hers is a heartfelt plea for them all. It is a very readable book.

Post script: Peter Keene writes:

So many people have never seen a live owl close up, and so I thought I would add a note on a small memorable experience I had when I visited a falconry and owl display at Fallowfield Hotel in Southmoor, unfortunately now closed. One particular owl attracted me. It had a mesmerizing unblinking stare, almost hypnotising in its intensity, so I was drawn to try and outstare this motionless owl. But I failed, for its very motionless gaze made me blink and look away. I did however take the photo below.

I think the owl and the falcons came from Millet's Aviary which is part of the Millet's Farm complex in Frilford. The Aviary is well worth a visit and at set times can be combined with a falconry display.



CONTACTS: LOCAL INTERESTING ORGANISATIONS

Local Wildlife Trust (BBOWT): Oxford 775476
 Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire (ANHSO): Oxford 863660
 Barracks Lane Community Garden (BLCG) 07729 655 543
 Botanic Garden: BGO Oxford 286690
 British Trust for Conservation Volunteers 01296 330033
 Butterfly Conservation: David Redhead Oxford 772520
 Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) Sietske Boeles Oxford 728153
 City's Countryside Sites or Biodiversity in Parks Oxford 252240
 Friends of Aston's Eyot (FAE) Ruth Ashcroft 01865 248344
 Friends of CS Lewis Reserve (FoCSL) Oxford 775476
 Friends of Lye Valley (FoLV) Judy Webb 01865 377487
 Friends of the Earth (Oxford): Fiona Tavner 07954390933
 Friends of Milham Ford Nature Park (FoMFNP) Judy Webb 01865 377487
 Friends of the Trap Grounds (FoTG) Catherine Robinson Oxford 511307
 Friends of Warneford Meadow (FoWM) Sietske Boeles Oxford 728153
 Fungus Survey of Oxfordshire (FSO) Molly Dewey Oxford 735525
 Hogacre Common Eco Park Judy Chipchase Oxford 726122
 Oxford Conservation Volunteers www.ocv.org.uk (OCV): Jo 07887 928115
 Oxford Ornithological Soc. (OOS): Barry Hudson 07833 350288
 Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT)6 Rachel Sanderson 01865 242918
 Oxfordshire Amphibian and Reptile Group Rod d'Ayala, 01235 511 861
 Oxfordshire Badger Group: Julia Hammett Oxford 864107
 Oxfordshire Bat Group: David Endacott 01235 764832
 Oxfordshire Flora Group (OFG) Sue Helm 07774205972
 Oxfordshire Mammal Group (OxMG) Judith Hartley Oxford 775476 ext. 211
 Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum now Wild Oxfordshire
 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Peter Wilkinson Oxford 452579
 Science Oxford Live (SOL): Oxford 810000
 Shotover Wildlife (SW): Chair: Ivan Wright Oxford 874423
 SS Mary & John Churchyard Group, Ruth Conway 018865 723085
 Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) Hannah Boylan Oxford 815418
 Wild Oxfordshire (Formerly ONCF): Oxford 407034

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD - Department for Continuing Education

Many Day and Weekend classes get booked up in advance. There are many more courses so look on the website. Some are online courses There are many excellent courses coming up. Here are just a few of the details. Tel 01865 - 270380 or by email: pp@conted.ox.ac.uk Website: www.conted.ox.ac.uk

Ecology of Port Meadow Short courses - Wed 24 Apr 2019 to Wed 26 Jun 2019. 10:30am-12:30pm 10 meetings
 Port Meadow is a great landmark of Oxford and a fascinating ecosystem. We explore what processes shape meadow ecosystems generally, and Port Meadow specifically. Frequent field trips explore aspects of natural and local history.

Exploring the Animal Kingdom Short courses Thu 25 Apr 2019 to Thu 27 Jun 2019 7:00-9:00pm 10 meetings.
 Nature supports an impressive diversity of animal species. Learn how these are grouped in an evolutionary framework and explore fascinating physiological, morphological and behavioural adaptations across the animal kingdom.

Wildlife and People: Conflict and Coexistence Short courses Sat 19 Jan 2019. While people value animals as a source of income, food or medicine, communities living with wildlife may consider it a nuisance or threat.
 This course explores the intricate relationship between humans and animals from a conservation biology perspective.

Invasions and Diseases: Conserving Wildlife in a Changing World. Short courses. Sat 02 Feb 2019.
 With increased human activity, travel and trade, comes an increase in the spread of non-native species and wildlife diseases. What impact do they have on global biodiversity? How can we conserve wildlife in such dynamic times?

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A Short History of Time. Boundary Brook Nature Park 1988-2018

The Nature Park is former allotment land. In the 1980s, unlike today, many allotments were being abandoned and were eventually returned to the City Council, who were considering selling off redundant allotment sites. In 1988, the newly formed Oxford Urban Wildlife Group, lobbied the City Council to consider other non-development uses for the land, such as giving the land to schools or to allow wildlife groups to develop plots as a nature reserves.

The Council offered the OUWG just over two acres of abandoned allotment land on East Ward Allotments. On the production of a five-year management plan, we were given an 11-year lease at a peppercorn rent. The land was fenced off by the Council in the Spring of 1990 and then on 30 June OUWG launched the Park with an Open Day/ Litter Blitz. This was a family occasion. >

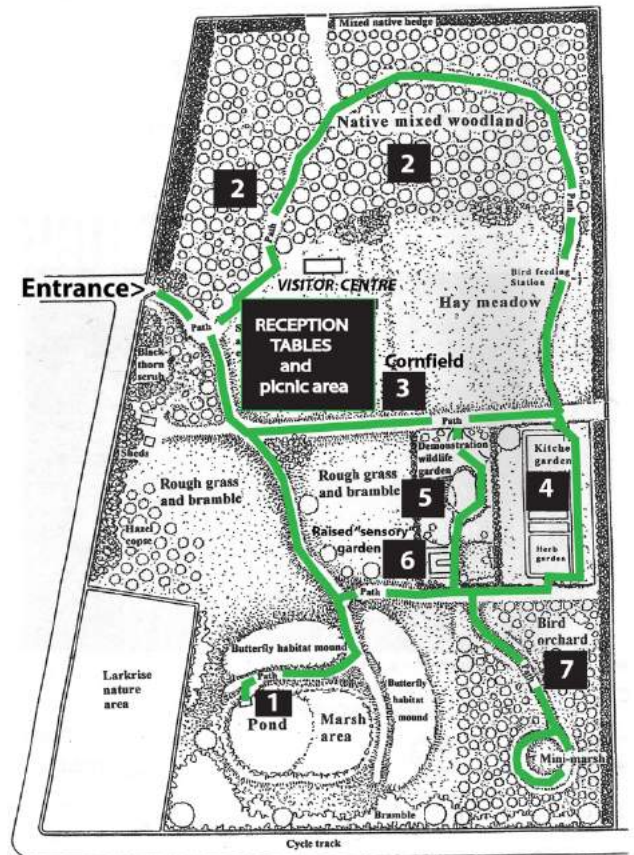


Abandoned allotment huts had to be cleared, the walls of which revealed old metal posters which were saved and sold to enthusiasts. Since then, whenever we had a work party there, the public was invited on site to look around or to help with the work.

This map, plots our plan of action, showing the way we wished to develop the site.

Principally we hoped to design a protective haven for plant and animal wildlife in an urban setting and, parallel to that, an education programme with the assumption that understanding nature is the best way of fostering its protection. We produced an education pack for schools visiting Boundary Brook (Key stage 1 and 2), and offered help to visiting school groups, or others, if required.

1. The pond and marsh. In 1990 our first big project was to have a pond and marsh excavated. The clay subsoil grades into a flood plain terrace which overlies Oxford Clay so that a crater some two metres deep soon filled with water by rain and a fluctuating water table is sufficient to keep a reasonable level of water throughout most summers.



A wooden platform near pond level makes supervised pond dipping a popular attraction for young visitors. They can recognise their catch from photographic identity cards: snails, caddis fly larvae, diving beetles, newts and frogs. Dragonflies, damselflies are common visitors. A solo visiting bittern was a rarity. Sticklebacks were initially introduced as an interesting fish but were soon too dominant, so one very dry summer when the pond dried out, they were never replaced. Visit the pond and see what it looks like today.

Photo: Children identify their catch, (next page).



2. Mixed Native Woodland. This area (above right) was planted in November 1990. We were advised that oak was the predominant type on heavy Oxfordshire Clay so we made oak the dominant tree. Other trees planted included ash and wild cherry. If you get the chance, have a look at the size of these saplings now. They were planted 18 years ago so considerable thinning has been necessary. On stumps of a felled trees you may be able to count the rings estimating when that tree was felled.

3. The Cornfield and Hay Meadow. A variety of colourful plants flourished amongst grain crops before the advent of herbicides. Unlike most wild plants, they can flourish in rich soils without being shaded out by the companion crop. To replicate the joy of these colourful old cornfields, flower seeds were sown with wheat and barley seeds (photo left). Annual ploughing prevented the establishment of grass and wild perennials.



4. The Kitchen Garden (right) A demonstration plot of five raised beds where fruit and vegetables were cultivated organically, as garden chemicals are harmful to all forms of wildlife. A hose system provided water and the beds were tended by volunteers.

5. A Demonstration Wildlife Garden, showed how ordinary back gardens can be made attractive to wildlife.

However, if you visit sites 3,4, or 5, you will search in vain for the scenes shown above. After some 15 years of member's voluntary conservation parties and supportive grants, the initial planned design of the Nature Park had been successfully achieved and successfully maintained. In 2006, the Nature Park was expanded, creating a woodland with glades to the north and a new woodland and pond with a bridge to the east. This doubled the size of the original park and, in the long term, undoubtedly put a strain on the capacity of volunteer members to maintain the balance between the needs of a wildlife refuge and the servicing of the educational facilities of the original design. By 2006 membership was over 200 but an increasing proportion of these were passive members as age and other commitments took their toll. The support for 'work parties' had gradually withered and finding new committee members was increasingly difficult.

Recently a new lease of life has been provided by an injection of new committee members who are addressing the needs of justifying the park as the renewal of its lease comes up. This is the background to calls for members to consider joining conservation parties to put the park into a trim condition to face the future.

Janet Keene August 2018.

**OXFORD URBAN WILDLIFE
GROUP
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Dear Member

Your 2018-19 subscription is now due for renewal.

Subscriptions are now due on the 1st April. We hope that you will want to renew it, which means that you will continue to receive our regular newsletter "Oxford Wildlife News", when published, as well as details of forthcoming events. The Nature Park will be closed for renovation work this summer associated with our renewal of the lease in 2019.

However for a modest returnable deposit, members can have a key which allows you access to Boundary Brook Nature Park via the locked entrance gate at any time of day. This fox was just one of the inhabitants caught by surprise in the early morning.

Subscription rate:

Individual £5; Joint/Family £8 per annum

If possible could you please pay your subscription by internet banking or standing order:

Sort code: **30-80-45**

Bank account number: **23101668**

Reference: **Your Name**



Alternatively, if you are unable to use internet banking, please send a cheque made payable to **OXFORD URBAN WILDLIFE GROUP** to:

Jon Willis
OUWG Membership Renewal
2 Maywood Rd
OXFORD
OX4 4EE

To enable us to keep our information up-to-date please could you please send me an email at jtwillis@gmail.com indicating whether or not you currently have a key to the entrance gate to Boundary Brook, and if you have any interests or skills that you feel might be useful to the group, and would like to get more involved with the organisation.

Regards
Jon Willis