



Herts and
Middlesex

Mid Herts Local Wildlife Group

News and events: September 2016 - March 2017



Welcome to our Autumn/Winter newsletter and events sheet



Your committee (L-R): Dave Laming (Chair), Helen Harran, Richard Darby, Neale Holme-Smith, Vicky Davies, Ian Cogger, Claudia Harflett and Penny Fanthorpe. Not present: Robin Cole, Ian Flack and Chris Woolston

The following is an extract from David's Chair report, a personal viewpoint not that of the Trust

Sometimes you really don't appreciate how truly lucky you are until you peep over the garden fence! In June this year my wife Sharon and I explored the vast Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe (almost the size of Wales!). Such parks are stunningly beautiful wild places but are poorly managed and financed, despite hefty visitor fees (which sadly seem not to be reinvested into the parks and staff!!!) such entry fees are far beyond the means of the average Zimbabwean who are in any case living from hand to mouth. This of course opens the door to poachers who exploit the disintegrating infrastructure, poverty, lack of resources and government support. Meanwhile the Park Rangers devotion to duty remains second to none as they

continue to risk their lives every time they embark on routine anti-poaching patrols armed only with antique firearms against poachers supplied with machine guns and chainsaws. But the most humbling part of all this is that despite having not been paid now for the past 3 months they continue to risk their lives and give all visitors a very warm welcome, sadly though practically all the rhino have been taken. Smelling before actually seeing the rotting carcass of a poached elephant killed in its prime and sleeping on a campsite which was previously the territory of Cecil, a now famous lion also killed in his prime by the crossbow of a trophy hunter, gave me an enhanced appreciation of how very lucky we are with our Wildlife Trusts and Wildlife Crime Investigation in the UK (having said that our very own National Wildlife Crime Unit only just secured a late reprieve

from closure this year due to lack of Govt will to fund it further! So even here we cannot afford to sit on our laurels!) But even though we have lost vast swathes of wilderness and iconic species what is left is managed extremely well with an infrastructure that allows nature to flourish unhindered. Our reserves are also readily accessible to all walks of life rich and poor. Their future is secured by dedicated, well trained professionals, an army of willing volunteers and vital support from members up and down the country. Although we must never be complacent I believe the reserves and national parks of the U.K. have a bright future as against what could be an imminent total collapse of the National Parks in Zimbabwe. How lucky we are! So let's get out there and show how much we appreciate what we've got!

Mid-Herts Local Wildlife Group Events September 2016 - March 2017

Venue for all indoor evening events: Howlands Baptist Church, The Commons, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 4RS. Adjacent to Commonswood School. Suggested donation £3/5 for members/non-members unless otherwise stated. Families welcome. Please check for pushchair and wheelchair accessibility at outdoor events. Contact: Neale Holmes-Smith 01707 324313 or Penny Fanthorpe 07761712245 penny.fanthorpe@ntlworld.com

Sunday 16th October

Fungal walk, Mardley Heath 10.00am - 12.30pm

Join us for our annual reunion with fungal expert Kerry Robinson to identify our local fungi. Meet in the car park on Heath Road. (TL246182) Booking essential. Contact Vicky Davies 07976759112 victoria.davies481@gmail.com.

Tuesday 25th October

Nature Conservation Progress and Challenges for the National Trust

Stuart Warrington, Wildlife Advisor for National Trust East of England will look at some of the wonderful sites the National Trust cares for in the East region, such as Hatfield Forest, Wicken Fen and Blakeney. He will consider some of the challenges faced for wildlife conservation both now and into the future. What does the National Trust do for nature? Meet 8pm Howlands Baptist Church. No booking required.

Saturday 12th November

Tring Natural History Museum and College Lake Nature Reserve

Meet 10.00am at Tring Museum, Akeman Street, Tring HP23 6AP Free entry. Car park and cafe on site. Leave for College Lake nature reserve 12.00 – 12.30pm. 2 miles away on the B488, ¼ mile north of canal bridge at Bulbourne turn left into signed entrance to 'donate and display' surfaced car park. HP23 5QG. Light lunch available at cafe. Car parking donation of £3. No booking required but for further details contact Neale Holmes-Smith on 01707 324313

Tuesday 22nd November

Traditional Uses of Wild Flowers of Hertfordshire

Julie Wakefield is a medical historian specialising in historic herbalism and folk healing. This talk will look at medicinal uses of our native wild flowers in the past, and their associated folklore. It will include uses dating back to the herbals of the 17th century, as well as traditional home remedies which we can try today. Meet 8pm Howlands Baptist Church, No booking required.

Tuesday 27th December

Birding walk at Tring Reservoirs

Meet at 10.00am at Startops End Car park off B489 by Grand Union Canal, opposite White Lion pub,. Take a gentle walk with lunch at Half Moon pub in Wilstone. Booking essential – phone Neale on 01707 324313. Car share at 9am from Campus West car park, Welwyn Garden City. (parking charge applies).

Sunday 8th January

Mystery bird watch

Herts Bird Club will help us make the most of local birdwatching. Using its sightings database we will decide within a radius of 30 mins by car, where we go today! Meet at Campus West 9.30 am. Booking essential. Contact Penny Fanthorpe 07761712245 penny.fanthorpe@ntlworld.com

Tuesday 24th January

Chalk Streams - What Lies Beneath?

An introduction to the riverfly families of the Beane, Mimram and Upper Lea and how their monitoring is being used to protect, restore and enhance these rare and precious habitats for the future by David Johnson HMWT Living Rivers Officer. Meet 8pm Howlands Baptist Church. No booking required.



Tuesday 28th February

Conservation Overseas

Meet Steve Hughes from A Rocha, a Christian conservation organisation. Hear how A Rocha are implementing community-based projects in Europe, the US and many developing countries. Meet 8pm Howlands Baptist Church, No booking required.

Saturday 11th March

Willow Weaving Workshop 10.00 – 1pm

A practical event with Hertfordshire artist Hazel Godfrey based around making your own traditional and attractive Catalan serving platter, trivet or soap dish. £10 per person. Suitable for adults and children over the age of 13. Children under 16 years must be supervised. Venue: Howland Baptist Church, The Commons, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 4RS. Booking essential. Contact Claudia on 07754 145029.

Tuesday 28th March

Round the County in 90 Hours – Walking the 'Hertfordshire Way'

An illustrated talk by Elizabeth Hamilton from the Council for the protection for Rural England (CPRE). Meet 8pm Howlands Baptist Church, No booking required.

