

Introduction

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Dr Alison McDonald restarted Fritillary in 2000 with Volume 2 and since then six volumes have been published. This is the seventh volume and the fourth on line. It is clear that it fills an important niche in the study of the natural world in the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire areas.

This volume has a definite historical slant with Andrew Sanders on the history of the recording of bog mosses (*Sphagnum*) in Berkshire. Keith Kirby's fascinating commentary on the diaries of Charles Elton gives a really valuable insight into how conservation worked in the 1940s, 50s and 60s; I kept thinking of the phrase, "the past is another country" as I read this. John Killick looks back on 30 odd years as vascular plant recorder for Oxfordshire (vc 23). Megan Price continues the historical theme with her study of the history of the Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire, a most interesting revelation of how natural history was done in the past.

Returning to the present we have two studies of important Oxford sites, Stephen Pickles on the subject of reptiles in the Lye Valley and Tim King on the ecology of Hinksey Meadow. This last is a timely study, bearing in mind the planned Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.

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