

Editorial

F. Watkins and D. Lewis

The Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire continues its work with the publication of Volume 8 of *Fritillary* which is again a joint venture between the Society (ANHSO) and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). *Fritillary* forms part of the educational work of both organisations. Volume 9 is being published on-line and can be found on www.fritillary.org.uk. Publication on the web allows us to bring articles to public notice as they are completed but those who prefer a paper copy can obtain one, bound and in A4 format from orders@fritillary.org.uk or by ringing 01865 863660.

We are always on the lookout for possible papers or data resulting from research carried out locally so should you have been studying something which is worth publicising please get in touch with submissions@fritillary.org.uk.

Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire Activities

The Society now has four sub-groups; the Verge Survey Group has been doing its work for nearly 30 years. The Education Group would be in its 18th year were it not that COVID-19 has stopped play. The Rare Plants Group became the Oxfordshire Flora Group in 2013 after having been going for 19 years and still flourishes. The Flood-plain Meadows Group is relatively new.

Indeed, COVID-19 has affected all our activities in 2020 but work has gone on where it can follow government guidelines. Much field work has been able to take place, committees have been able to continue their work using Zoom and indeed it is now hoped that some lectures can restart using the same medium. Work on this journal has, if anything, benefitted as people confined to their homes have found time for writing.

The Oxfordshire Flora Group is now monitoring *Apium graveolens*, *Aristolochia clematitis*, *Blysmus compressus*, *Carex filiformis*, *Carex vulpina*, *Cynoglossum germanicum*, *Fallopia dumetorum*, *Filago pyramidata*, *Galium tricornutum*, *Gentianella anglica*, *Heliosciadium repens* (which used to be *Apium repens*) *Himantoglossum hircnium*, *Hypopytis monotropa*, *Lythrum hyssopifolium*, *Microthlaspi perfoliatum*, *Neotinea ustulata*, *Oenanthe silaifolia*, *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, *Salvia pratensis*, *Sium latifolium*, *Tephrosieris integrifolia*, *Veronica praecox*, *Viola persicifolia*, arable flowers at Wytham and plants and habitats at Frilford Golf Course. The Oxfordshire Rare Plants Register which has been created with the help of the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre was published in 2018.

The Education Group's plant identification courses begun in 2002 continue to go from strength to strength. The basic course has taken place each year and more advanced specialist courses have also been very successful.

The Verge Group continues its work. The valuable data collected by the verge group is passed on to the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.

The Society is involved in a large variety of work and much of this is done in collaboration with or with help from other organisations. Without their help some of our activities would not be possible:

- Natural England assists the Oxfordshire Flora Group.

- We work closely with the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre in various ways.
- We work closely with BBOWT, the local wildlife trust, on this journal and also on our annual Warburg memorial lecture as well as in other ways.
- The Bernard Tucker lecture, in November each year, is held in partnership with the Oxford Ornithological Society.

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Activities

Our Vision

An environment rich in wildlife, valued by all.

Our Mission

To create a Living Landscape across our towns, cities and countryside and inspire our communities to act for nature.

Our Aim

To lead the way for nature's recovery and connect people with nature, so that:

- Our soil and water resources are managed to create functioning ecosystems and wildlife-rich places.
- Local communities, decision-makers, landowners and businesses work with and for nature.
- People recognise their dependence upon nature and its value to their mental and physical wellbeing

BBOWT supports a wide variety of projects which promote wildlife conservation across the three counties. BBOWT aims to undertake and promote the conservation of wildlife species and their habitats including the restoration and creation of such habitats; to promote public understanding of, and support for, the natural world.

The Trust is engaged in several 'living landscape projects' which seek to increase biodiversity on privately owned land, by encouraging farmers to sign up to government agri-environment grant schemes, by giving management advice and carrying out practical conservation management. This work is focused in 'biodiversity opportunity areas' which have been regionally identified as being significantly important for wildlife. BBOWT also co-hosts the Oxfordshire Wildlife Sites Project, which gives Wildlife Site landowners management advice on how to maintain and improve these areas for wildlife.

While the Trust recognises the importance of biodiversity benefits within the wider countryside, our reserves still play a very important role in preserving and enhancing biodiversity. Monitoring the effects our management and environmental factors such as climate change, are having on biodiversity is pivotal to our reserve management strategy. A large team of volunteers carries out survey work on reserves to help collect species and habitat data to show whether sites are in good condition.

Finally, BBOWT recognises that the next generation need to be inspired to care about wildlife. We have three education centres across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire which run activities for school groups and Nature Tot sessions for pre-school aged children. Older generations are also included, through our many and varied events and community engagement programmes.

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