

# Introduction

Dr Alison McDonald restarted Fritillary in 2000 with Volume 2 and since then seven volumes have been published. This is the eighth volume and the fifth on-line, dealing with the study of the natural world in the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

In this volume we look back to the life of that extraordinary botanist George Claridge Druce (1850-1932) with Bob Evans; and the links between plants today and past writings with an account of Birthwort at Godstow by Sheila Ottway. Richard Forzey celebrates the diversity of beetles that can be found in just a small patch of woodland in the Chilterns, but this depends on people being able to identify such species. To improve recording Steve Gregory's paper provides a guide to another group of organisms – the woodlice – across the three counties. The final two papers look more to the future: Susan Erskine asks us to look more closely at the plant diversity found in road verges, while in Wytham Woods the future composition of the canopy layer is under threat from ash dieback.

We are entering very uncertain times with the fall-out from the COVID-19 pandemic and the UK exit from the European Union. National development projects such as the HS2 rail-line and the Oxford-Cambridge link have major implications for wildlife in the three counties, as will many other more local proposals. In this context we believe that Fritillary provides an important avenue for papers that provide the background for assessing how our local environment has altered over the years and will continue to change in future in the face of ongoing human and natural threats. We welcome submission on any relevant aspect of the natural world in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

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