

# Brentwood & Billericay Local Group

## Newsletter November 2018



### **You're Local Group Committee:**

#### **Chairman:**

Bob Dawson  
01277 262011

#### **Vice Chairman:**

Nancy Rhodes  
01277 353740

#### **Secretary:**

Mick Hedges  
01277 231367

#### **Treasurer:**

Mike Cousins  
01277 222634

#### **Fundraising Events:**

John Allen  
01277 231305  
John McLaughlin  
01245 420188

#### **Membership:**

Warren Hawkings  
01277 214612

#### **Local Planning Issues:**

Graham Clegg  
01277 230272

#### **Guest Speaker**

##### **Organiser:**

John McLaughlin  
01245 420188

#### **Publicity:**

Bob Dawson  
01277 262011

#### **Newsletter editor:**

Mick Hedges  
01277 231367

#### **100 Club:**

Sue Newth-Gibbs

#### **Committee Members:**

Shirley Jonas  
Ailsa Roberts



Common Pipistrelle Bat

### **Chairman's Report**

Unfortunately, I must inform you that Mike Cousins has decided to stand down as Treasurer of the Local Group - a position he has held for nearly 18 years. I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my thanks for his long service and for taking care of our finances so diligently. If anyone with basic book keeping skills would like to take on this role then please contact me. A couple of months ago Barbara Beckett resigned from the Local Group Committee and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her help over recent years, especially for organising the speakers for our evening meetings.

We had a very successful evening with a performance by Song Cycle at our concert in October. There have also been several wildlife walks over recent months and my thanks go to Paul Hudson for organising and leading them so efficiently.

You should find a copy of next year's programme of Events and Activities with this Newsletter and here are some of the highlights. Firstly our Quiz Evening will be held in February, which is slightly earlier than previously. The quiz will be hosted by one of our committee members, John McLaughlin, so you can probably expect a few questions on wildlife. Then, in June we are holding a Barn Dance in the Courage Hall at Brentwood School Sports Centre, so look out for more details in the New Year. Our annual music concert will again take place in October and we are looking forward to welcoming back Bra-vissima, the local ladies choir, which was so well received in 2015.

**Bob Dawson**

### **Treasurer wanted**

This successful Local Group will need to replace its long standing volunteer Treasurer next year. If you have numerical skills you can help make a bigger difference to Essex's wildlife by managing our cash account. As a committee member, you will also have a voice in how the Local Group moves forward in line with EWT's Strategy.



Please visit our Facebook page on [www.facebook.com/EWTBrentBillG/](https://www.facebook.com/EWTBrentBillG/)



### Bat Party

Essex Bat Group contacted Mick Hedges this year about carrying out a Bat Activity survey at Warley Place. In July, we had an introductory meeting and walk around the site with Mick to assess its potential. Needless to say it was very impressive.

Fellow bat worker Jennifer Wrayton and I returned in September to put up 2 static bat detectors. These are deployed in trees and are auto triggered to record the bat's echolocation calls when it flies passed. They can record bat activity for up to a week. We had one located at the North Pond and one at the cellar ruins near the conservatory. We recorded a few thousand calls over the week so as you can imagine it can take a while to separate out the different species. However, initial assessment of some of the calls has confirmed 8 species visiting Warley Place. These were Common and Soprano Pipistrelle, Natterer's, Daubenton's, Serotine, Noctule, Leisler's and Brown Long Eared Bats. These detectors are not able to confirm if these species are roosting at Warley Place but there are so many roost opportunities it would not be a surprise if some of the bats have made their home here. We have been talking with Mick about the potential of the subterranean features to support bats and we hope to inspect these in future.

Brown Long-eared Bat



In September, we also had an evening bat walk with Mick and the other volunteers. It started off quietly with only the occasional bat but ended with a full on bat frenzy of activity over the field by the car park just as we were finishing. This was a very special moment for all of us. I would like to thank Mick and the other volunteers for being so welcoming this year and supporting our bat work. It's been a privilege and a pleasure to survey at such a beautiful location and we look forward to returning to do more there in future.

**Graham Hart - Vice Chair and Projects Officer,  
Essex Bat Group**

### Why not Volunteer for next year's 'Spring Bulb Spectacular' at Warley Place.

Can you please help - we are looking for some additional volunteers to help out at weekends during next year's Spring Bulb Spectacular, 23<sup>rd</sup> February - 7<sup>th</sup> April. No experience necessary.

If you would like to help please contact: Mick Hedges 01277 231367, or, [mick.hedges1@btinternet.com](mailto:mick.hedges1@btinternet.com)

### Warley Place Heritage Weekend 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> September

A TV feature from Warley Place broadcast on BBC Look East brought many visitors who hadn't been to the reserve before. There were three guided walks each day and just a few items for sale relating to Ellen Willmott. Including donations, the event raised just over £333 for EWT funds.

**Mick Hedges**

### SongCycle Fund Raiser



A full house was treated to a unique blend of, up to six, male voices at our Local Group annual music event at Shenfield Parish Hall on 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.

"SongCycle", a local group of vocalists, without instrumental accompaniment, performed numbers from the Beatles to Bach in their own inimitable style with the odd joke thrown in for good measure - quite good ones too!

The assembled multitude was treated to a fish/chicken supper which did arrive a bit late and forced a slight change to the schedule, but was served with commendable efficiency by Barbara and Jim, long serving volunteers at these events.

The evening raised £611, including a well supported raffle, towards our local fundraising. Many thanks to all the helpers on the night.

Please do support these local events, they are really very good and worth the effort.

**John Allen**



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## Norsey Wood Local Nature Reserve, Billericay.

**An Ancient Woodland Nature Reserve** - Norsey Wood, a SSSI, lies east of Billericay, surrounded on three sides by the town. It comprises mostly of sweet chestnut and hornbeam coppice with oak standards, on a plateau of Bagshot Sand and Pebbles. There is a valley system, draining into the infant River Crouch, which has some impressive alders. To the SW of the site is Norsey Meadow, now largely secondary woodland with limited grassland at the western end. The Wood was bought by Basildon Council in 1976 to protect it from development and has since been managed as a Nature Reserve and area for quiet recreation for the town.

There is a car-park off Outwood Common Road (CM11 1HA) and a number of pedestrian entrances. Also a Visitor Centre with toilets, the Ranger's office and an Information Room (but no refreshment facilities) two picnic areas and a cycle rack. A Woodyard is let to Norsey Woodland Crafts who make a variety of products, including barbecue charcoal.

There is a hard-surfaced Easy Access Trail. The longer Norsey Trail, for which an information leaflet is available, leads walkers to many of the key features of the Wood. These include areas of historical interest - details are in a booklet, which is available from the Ranger.

**Wildlife** - The Wood is best known for its bluebells, which are preceded by wood anemones. Yellow archangel and wood sorrel also thrive. Some common spotted orchids were transplanted from the Queen's Park area when this was developed and these have flourished.

Great spotted woodpeckers are always heard drumming in spring and lesser spotted woodpecker and nuthatch are recorded most years. Summer visitors include plentiful blackcaps and whitethroats. Cuckoos are now rarely heard but buzzards appear on a regular basis. Winter usually brings small numbers of redwings, siskins and redpolls.



Photo: Lynn Smith

A good variety of butterflies are seen with regular white admirals and, in recent years, a few records of purple emperors, silver-washed fritillaries, white-letter hairstreaks and, in Norsey Meadow, marbled whites.

There is a small dormouse population which has been subject to regular monitoring over several years. Numbers detected are variable but broadly stable. A few muntjac deer appear.

**Management** - Rotational coppicing has now been re-established but areas affected by the 1987 hurricane have been left to develop naturally. Efforts are being made to create a greater variety of habitats within the Wood and some selective path-widening is being carried out to encourage more flowers and insects.

A programme to clear much of the secondary woodland from Norsey Meadow has begun. A volunteer Working Party meets regularly on Thursday mornings.

**Norsey Wood Society** - The Society was established in 1977 to support the Council in managing the Wood and to encourage public interest in nature conservation. Four newsletters are published and four public talks are arranged annually. Further information on the Society and the Wood is available on the Society's new website: [norseywoodsociety.uk](http://norseywoodsociety.uk).

Paul Hudson, Chairman of Norsey Wood



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**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February**

**Shenfield Parish Hall, CM15 8LB. 7 for 7.30pm**

The return of our popular brain workout, but don't take it too seriously; it's not Eggheads. Get your tickets early to join the fun. Please bring your own drink and nibbles.

Tickets are £8 from John Allen: 01277 231305

### **Warley Place Spring Bulb Spectacular.**

**Weekends, 23rd February to Sunday 7th April.**

**10.30am - 4.30pm**

Volunteers will be on hand to answer your questions and give guidance about the reserve and the history of Ellen Willmott's garden.

Guided walks will be on Saturday mornings at 10.30am only. Suggested donation £4 per person. Larger groups please book in advance.

Warley Place Nature Reserve, Great Warley Street, Brentwood, next to Thatchers Arms. CM13 3 HU.

If you would like to help us and volunteer for this event please contact Mick Hedges 01277 231367

### **100 CLUB**

How about joining the 100 Club? Acquire a ping-pong ball number for £12 for 12 months, to keep our finances in balance and have the excitement of participating in the three draws during the year with the chance of winning £100, £50, £25 or £10.

The draw takes place in February, May & October.

So if you are up for joining in please email me at [newthgibbs@btinternet.com](mailto:newthgibbs@btinternet.com) or phone on 01277 822183 or write to Sue Newth-Gibbs at 29 Peartree Lane, Doddinghurst, Brentwood CM15 0RR.

#### **100 CLUB - October 2018 Winners**

£100 - Mrs D Loader. £50 - Mrs G Clifton

£25 - Mr D Spiller, £10 - Mr Skene,

£10 - Mr G Clegg.

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES**

Non-members are welcome to all our events

### **Wildlife Walks:**

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, Half or All Day Walk**  
**Amwell & Rye Meads, (PH)** Meet at 10.30 at Amwell Lane, Great Amwell. Post Code: SG12 9SS GR TL376127

**Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> February. Half or All Day Walk**  
**Rainham Marshes RSPB. (JM)** Meet at 10.00 in the car park of New Tank Hill Rd.. Postcode CO14 8LE. GR 547788.

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March. Half Day Walk**  
**Walthamstow Wetlands, (JM)** Meet at 10.30 in the visitors centre, pay and display car park. Forest Road. Walthamstow. Postcode N17 9NH. GR 535188.

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April. Half or All Day Walk.**  
**Ingrebourne Valley. (PH)** Meet at 10.00 in the EWT visitors centre. Post Code RM12 6DF. GR 535848

For further details of the walks please contact the walk leader: **Paul Hudson (PH) - 01277 656047, or**  
**John McLaughlin (JM) - 01245 420188**

### **Illustrated Talks:**

Evening Illustrated Talks take place at Shenfield Parish Hall and start at 8.00pm. A discretionary donation to EWT of £2.50 is requested; this includes tea or coffee and biscuits.

**Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> January. Illustrated Talk**  
**The Greater World of Little Things:** Ross Gardener will discuss his latest book which seeks to encourage a different view of the supposedly normal.

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February Illustrated Talk**  
**South Essex Wildlife;** Neil Phillips presents a eye-opening survey of some of the more unusual inhabitants of our county.

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 7.30pm AGM & Illustrated Talk**  
Short AGM followed by **Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project:** A walk round Europes largest urban wetland nature reserve.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April Illustrated Talk**  
**Hornchurch Country Park:** Ranger Mick Greenside presents a vivid exploration of the history of this site.

For further details of the talks please contact:  
**John McLaughlin - 01245 420188.**



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