

Brentwood & Billericay Local Group

Newsletter April 2019



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01277 262011

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Vacancy

Secretary:

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100 Club:

Sue Newth-Gibbs

Committee Members:

Ailsa Roberts

Chairman's Report

I am pleased to report that 2018 was another successful year. We made a gross profit of nearly £10,500, despite a few setbacks, namely the cancellation of the Quiz Night last March due to lack of support and also we were unable to hold open days at Warley Place on several occasions due to very bad weather. This enabled us to finance the purchase of a new strimmer at Warley Place and the creation of new boardwalks at the Roman River reserve as well as transfer £8,000 to the 'core fund' at Head Office. In order to enable us to support the Trust in these ways it is essential that all our fund raising events are well supported.

This year we have already had a very successful Quiz Night, when we sold over 90 tickets and raised over £730. Also visitor numbers at Warley Place are looking very promising, but, sadly, the bad weather in March meant we had to cancel some of our open days. We have many other fund raising events planned for this year: our annual Plant Sale from 4th to 6th May; our first ever Barn Dance in June and later in the year there will be a music concert by Bra-vissima (please note the change of date to 19th October). We also have many exciting walks and talks throughout 2019.

Sadly I have to report that Shirley Jonas, previously our Membership Secretary; Mike Cousins, Treasurer and Nancy Rhodes, former Chairman and Vice Chairman have decided to resign from the committee after many years service. If anyone else would like to become a member of the Local Group Committee then please contact me. (bob.dawson@hotmail.co.uk)

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Graham Clegg and Paul Hudson who deal with local planning issues, and are extremely diligent in going through pages of reports every month to identify those applications that may have an adverse affect on habitats and wildlife. In addition they have monitored the draft Local Plan which is now in its final stages of approval and have liaised with Head Office to make appropriate representations.

Bob Dawson

Craft Sale Success

Olive and Thelma's craft sale at the Thorndon Countryside Centre in November raised nearly £830. We would like to thank Ailsa Roberts and her staff and volunteers for their friendly help on Friday afternoon and throughout the weekend, and also everyone who came and bought things. This year our stall is booked to be at Thorndon Country Park for the second weekend in November.
Olive Baldwin & Thelma Wilson



Please visit our Facebook page on www.facebook.com/EWTBrentBillG/



Ellen Willmott's Archives

There is a lot of history attached to Warley Place. The plants she grew; the ruins of the house and gardens; the photographs she took and the records she kept. It is those last items that have kept a small group of researchers busy over the past few years, and will do so for some time to come.

When Ellen Willmott died all her records went to Spetchley Park, near Worcester. This is the home of the Berkeley family, into which Ellen's sister Rose married.

The Berkeley family has a long and notable history, so the Willmott story was not apparently thought to be of any great consequence and the documentation was stored in a rather damp cellar. However, after many years they realised how important her work was, and the documents were moved to safer storage.

We were eventually granted permission to view and to photograph the documents, and a number of trips were made to do just that. We quickly realised that there were so many items that even just photographing them would take a number of years. We embarked on this task though, and some of the results can be seen in the Warley Place information room, where the black-and-white photographs have been taken from glass plate negatives found in the archives.



From the left John Cannell, Ailsa Wildig and Jill Plater at Spetchley Park reviewing Ellen Willmott's archives.

Unfortunately we were part of the way through this process when the archives were moved to Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire to be properly catalogued by the family's archivist, a task which is now almost complete. We hope to start on our quest again in 2019, but for a couple of years we have had to sit on our hands and wait.

John Cannell



BARN DANCE

Friday 7th June, 7.30pm

At Courage Hall, Brentwood School Sports Centre, Middleton Hall Lane. CM15 8EE

Return to your rural heritage and dance the night away to the music of leading Essex folk band 'Bushes and Briars'

Expert tuition provided as required.

Wallflowers also welcome.

This fund raising event promises to be a real fun night, so get your tickets early.

Tickets £15 included a jacket potato supper.

Available from John Allen on 01277 231305

Did you know this about Recycling



If all cans in the UK were recycled, we would need 14 million fewer dustbins.



Glass is 100% recyclable and can be used again and again.



Recycled paper produces 73% less air pollution than if it was made from raw materials.



Most families throw away about 40kg of plastic per year, which could otherwise be recycled.



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A day out with your Local Group

The second week of January had a bright and frosty start at Amwell, Hertfordshire Wildlife Trust's reserve near Ware. The old gravel pit lake was abuzz with wildlife, mainly geese and an assortment of ducks. Today's guide Paul was keen to sort them out and it wasn't long before something unusual was spotted, a Red-crested Pochard. These ducks can be found in numbers of up to 20 at Hanningfield Reservoir in the summer, although this is an unusually high number. They are not so often seen elsewhere. A little further on at one of the smaller pools there is a flash of iridescent blue. There's no mistaking a kingfisher, which is always a treat to see. Walking through a wooded area Paul points out the alder trees and remarks that siskin, a winter visitor, like to feed on their seeds. Suddenly, as if by magic, there is a flock of about 20 siskin feeding above our heads.



Waxwing by Brenda White

Paul mentioned that the word on the grapevine was that a flock of waxwing (also winter visitors from Scandinavia) had made a temporary home in a car park in Hertford. On cue there they were showing off to the gathering of the birding paparazzi.

We had lunch at RSPB's Rye Meads reserve, a short drive away and then, wrapped up against the chill, a wander around the wetland area. Here there were more of the usual suspects, although a single water rail was seen feeding in a small opening of a reedbed.

Because it was on the way home Paul gave the car drivers a post code which would take us to a playing field in the middle a housing estate in Chesthunt. If we were lucky there would be a rare treat for us. Sure enough a pair of cattle egret were strutting about and not at all put off by a small gaggle of overdressed humans peering at them and the obvious disturbance from the surrounding houses. 48 different bird species recorded for the day.

If you would like to come along on another of our walks, see the back page for our programme of wildlife walks.

Warley Place

At the time of writing the Spring Bulb Spectacular fund raising event has got off to an unpredictable start, not surprisingly, due to the weather. The last weekend in February was suprisingly warm and it was the best opening we have ever had, However, due to high winds two Sundays were lost in March. Those who have visited in spring will appreciate why hundreds of people flock to the reserve at this time of year. This includes organised groups who have requested guided mid-week walks. This year twelve were booked in, with group sizes from 10 - 50, at £4 a head donation, this goes a long way to raising funds for EWT.

Much of the volunteers time has been used uncovering the old stable area so that we can recover as many whole bricks as possible. These will be used to repair the dilapidated structures that have fallen into decline since Ellen Willmott died in 1934.

Mick Hedges



Robin photo taken by Brenda White during the Local Group's walk at RSPB's Rainham Marshes.



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PLANT SALE

Plant Sale at The Thorndon Countryside Centre,
4th, 5th and 6th of May (9.00am. to 5.00pm.)



Gardens are not made by singing "Oh, how beautiful and sitting in the shade", (Rudyard Kipling), so the obvious thing to do is visit our famous annual - or should I say perennial Plant Sale - We usually have something for everybody, beginners to enthusiasts, and our friendly volunteers are there to help - we don't know it all, but we do have considerable experience between us

The Sale is a good fund raiser and all profits go to the Trust so please do spread news of the event as much as you can and pay a visit.

Any donations you can make in kind are vital - pure EWT funding. These can include plants of any description and also garden sundries, books, pots (especially ceramic), but others as well and etc. Please do not hesitate to contact John Allen on 01277 231305 or email bo@biturbo.plus.com for help or information and do remember "Never go to a doctor whose plants have died" (Emma Bombeck).

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 or phone on 01277 822183 or write to Sue Newth-Gibbs at 29 Peartree Lane, Doddinghurst, Brentwood CM15 ORR.

100 CLUB - February 2019 Winners

£100 Mrs C. Vidler, £ 50 Mr R. Williams,
£ 25 Mrs J. Cowan, £10 Mrs S. Hogg,
£10 Mr F. Garbutt.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Non-members are welcome to all our events

Wildlife Walks:

Wednesday, 24th April, Half or All Day Walk (PH)
Ingrebourne Valley and Berwick Woods: Meet at 10.00am at EWT Visitor Centre, Squadrons Approach, off Suttons Lane, Hornchurch RM12 6DF GR535848

Sunday 12th May. All Day Walk (PH)
RSPB's Wallasea Island: Meet at 10.30 in the car park beyond Grapnells at the end of the approach road from Canewdon. Postcode SS4 2HD. GR 9549470 No facilities on-site.

Wednesday 12th June. All Day Walk (JM)
Cornmill Meadows & Fishers Green Meet at 10.00 in Cornmill Meadows car park, off Crooked Mile (B194) Waltham Abbey. EN9 2ES GR380013. Parking charges now apply.

Wednesday 17th July. Half or All Day Walk (JM).
Oare Marshes/Conyer Meet at 10.30 in the KWT reserve car park at end of Church Rd. Oare, Faversham. Post Code ME13 0QA. GR 011645. No facilities on-site.

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, 18th April. Illustrated Talk
Hornchurch Country Park: Graham Perry will explain EWT's development of the Ingrebourne Valley.

Thursday 16th May Illustrated Talk
Lovely Lepidoptera: Dougal Urquhart will deliver a fascinating talk on the lifestyles of butterflies and moths and how to attract them to your garden.

Thursday 20th June Illustrated Talk
The Secret life of the Dormouse: Karen & Sue from the Southend Dormouse Group will take us to the hidden world of the hazel dormouse.

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



This Newsletter has been produced using paper endorsed by the Forest Stewardship Council.



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