

**Birmingham
Natural History
Society**

Founded 1858

Registered Charity No 500819

President: Ms Kat Clifford

Internet address: <http://bnhsoc.org.uk>

NEWSLETTER No 111 – July 2017

Annual General Meeting: 2017

This year's AGM was held on 21 April, with 17 members attending. Officers and Members of Council, Auditors and Nominee Trustees were all elected as proposed on the Calling Notice. Copies of the 2016 AGM minutes and of the accounts can be sent to members who were unable to attend, by request to the Hon Secretary. The AGM was followed by a talk by the President, Ms Kat Clifford, on 'Lemurs'.

The Society's Library and Meetings

The floor of the Meeting Room has needed replacement, the work being undertaken during July and August. This has necessitated removal of the book cases containing the library collection, and the books and journals themselves placed in temporary storage. It is anticipated that everything will be back in place by September, and borrowing can resume, either at meetings or by arrangement with the Hon Librarian or one of the Assistant Librarians.

The full lecture programme will be included in the next Newsletter, but members might like to note that the first talk will be on 20 October, when Dr Peter Coxhead will follow last year's well-received presentation on the plants and wildlife of the Galapagos Islands with a sequel, 'Darwin and the Galapagos'.

BTO's 'The state of the UK's birds 2016' ...

The state of the UK's birds 2016 (SUKB) is the 17th edition of this annual report. It provides a one-stop shop for all the latest results from annual, periodic and one-off surveys and monitoring programmes. It's available as a pdf at: <https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/publications/state-of-uk-birds-2016.pdf>

There's a traffic-light system which makes it easy to see which bird species are thriving (Green), those that are under threat (Amber) and those that are in most danger (Red). More than a quarter of the UK's bird species are now on the Red list.

... and BTO's Garden BirdWatch 2016

Blackbirds were the most commonly seen bird in gardens during 2016, recorded on average in 90% of gardens throughout the year. The winter was good for thrushes, with song thrush, mistle thrush and redwing all seen in good numbers. It was also a bumper year for siskins, which were reported in 27% of gardens in March, compared to an average (of all previous years) of only 18%. However, there were the lowest ever counts of greenfinches, argued to be a consequence of disease (trichomonosis). See: <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/gbw/results/annual-results>

Comb-over caterpillars

New photos have revealed a bizarre, big-haired beast lurking in the Peruvian Amazon, scientists noticing that the creature bears a resemblance to a certain US President's infamous comb-over. The caterpillar of the flannel moth (*Megalopyge opercularis*) sports fluffy, orange tufts that look similar to Donald Trump's hair. As such, the researchers who encountered this creature have dubbed it the "Trumpapillar". Contact with the Trumpapillar can be extremely irritating and even painful. That's because it's covered with so-called urticating hairs. The English name, southern flannel moth, is perhaps also apposite.



Megalopyge opercularis
© Mississippi State University



Similarly a new species of tiny moth, *Neopalpa donaldtrumpi*, has been named after the President due to the resemblance between the moth's yellow and white scales and Trump's hair. The centimeter-wide moth was found in southern California, but is present as far south as Baja California, Mexico. The study also showed that *Neopalpa donaldtrumpi* has 'comparatively smaller' male genitalia than its relative, *Neopalpa neonata*. This is, again appropriately, a twirler moth, so-called because of its propensity to spin in circles, again somewhat like its namesake.

Neopalpa donaldtrumpi
© NBC News



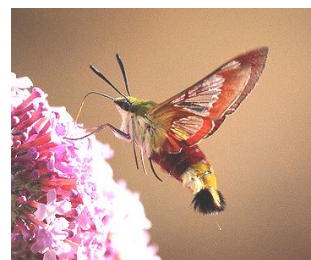
Web pages

Thanks to Clare Hinchliffe who has redesigned the Society's web pages – just as informative but visually a great improvement. Have a look!

Best summer ever for hummingbird hawk-moths?

Reports of hummingbird hawk-moths in gardens are at a record high this year (seen in 2.3% gardens in June compared to an average of 0.5%) according to the BTO's Garden BirdWatch survey. These distinctive day-flying moths migrate to the UK from southern Europe and North Africa and are mainly recorded in gardens between June and September, where they hover like a small hummingbird over flowering plants to feed on nectar.

Numbers vary considerably from year to year, influenced by temperature and wind direction. It's been particularly warm this June, and warm air drawn up from the south in mid-June may have helped to carry them to our shores.



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To contact the Hon Secretary or to provide copy for the next Newsletter:

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SAVE paper, printing and postage costs: could members let me know if they would be happy to receive the Newsletter by email.
Many thanks to the increasing number of members who have already done this.

WARWICKSHIRE FUNGUS SURVEY Programme for 2017

Sunday 3 September 2017

10.30 a.m. Tile Hill Wood, VC38, Landranger sheet 140, grid reference SP275789. Park in the lay-by on Banner Lane.
Contact: John & Val Roberts. (01926 421544)

Sunday 17 September 2017

10.30 a.m. New Close Wood, Binley Woods, Coventry.
Access from the A428 Brandon Village to Coventry road via the Twelve O'Clock Ride footpath at SP 403773. Parking opposite the site in the school lay-by, or (a couple of places only) in Gossett Lane, on the same side of the A428 on the eastern edge of the wood.
Contact: Kay Reeve. (01926 632400)

Sunday 1 October 2017

10.30 a.m. Alvecote Wood, near Tamworth, VC38, Landranger sheet 139, Explorer 232. Meet at the car park in the wood off Robey's Lane at SK249035. Dogs are not allowed, except guide dogs.
Contact: John Williams. (0121 745 6395)

Sunday 8 October 2017

10.30 a.m. Bubbenhall Wood Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Reserve. Access via Paget's Lane leading south east from the A445 in Bubbenhall Village. Keep right at the Shrub's Lane junction. Park in the Reserve car park (gate code required - but contact will be there from 10.15 a.m. onwards) at SP 371717.
Contact: Kay Reeve. (01926 632400)

Sunday 15 October 2017

10.30a.m. Waverley Wood VC 38 Landranger sheet 140. Park on ride inside recessed gate off A445 (care-fast traffic!) at SP351710.
Contact: John Williams. (0121 745 6395)

Sunday 22 October 2017

10.30a.m. Leam Valley NR VC 38 Landranger sheet 151. Park in the car park off A425 at SP334652.
Contact: John & Val Roberts. (01926 421544)

Sunday 29 October 2017

10.30 a.m. Coffee Pot Wood VC38 Landranger Map 150. In Great Alne take the minor road off the B4089 heading south at a sharp corner and park at the layby just across the bridge at SP117591. The reserve entrance is immediately back over the bridge.
Contact: John & Val Roberts. (01926 421544)

Sunday 5 November 2017

10.30 a.m. Cock Robin Wood NR VC38 Landranger Map 140. Park in car park just within wood on the west side of the Dunchurch Road A426 at SP493724 - this is between two roundabouts to the south of Rugby Sainsburys.
Contact: Dave Champion. (07896 752138)

Sunday 19 November 2017

10.30 a.m. Whichford Wood near Long Compton, VC 38, Landranger sheet 151. Meet and park at the roadside at the entrance to the wood at grid reference SP296343.
Contact: Dave Champion. 07896 752138)

Sunday 26 November 2017

10.30 a.m. Burton Dassett CP VC38 Landranger Map151. Follow minor road off B4100 for nearly a mile, to stop at top of hill where road turns sharp left to collect a parking ticket. Toilets are nearby. Proceed north to large car park at SP395521.
Contact: John Williams. 0121 745 6395)

Sunday 7 January 2018

10.30 a.m. AGM.
Contact: John & Val Roberts. (☐ 01926 421544)

If you want to attend a foray, please inform the contact person a few days beforehand. This will ensure that you do not arrive at a foray that has been cancelled or moved to a different location. The contact person will send a reminder by email to group members two days before a meeting. Please reply stating your intention to attend the meeting or not. If the contact person decides to cancel a meeting, he will notify group members by email.

After a foray, please check *A Fungus Flora of Warwickshire* and the additions to the Flora or the contact person to confirm that any of the less-common species that you have collected have already been recorded for the County. If they have not, PLEASE KEEP DRIED MATERIAL for the herbarium.

Please send lists of species that you have found on the forays in Warwickshire to John Sells, 57 Craven Avenue, Binley Woods, Coventry CV3 2JS or David Antrobus. Where possible, please state the habitat and associated trees and plants for each record. If you find an interesting fruiting of fungi, and think that others would be interested, please ring John Williams at the number below. It may be possible to arrange a foray at short notice. Permission has been obtained from landowners to collect for scientific purposes. In the interests of conservation, please do not collect more specimens than necessary for your personal use. We do not encourage collection for culinary purposes on our forays.

The Warwickshire Fungus Survey is affiliated to the British Mycological Society. Our web address is:
<http://wfs.bnhsoc.org.uk/>

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