

Conversazione

***97th Annual Exhibition:
celebrating citizen science***

2016



Directory of exhibitors 50p

***Cambridge Natural History Society
(1857 – 2016)***



Welcome to the 97th Annual Conversazione

The Conversazione is the annual exhibition of the Cambridge Natural History Society. This is the largest exhibition of its kind in Cambridge, and covers all traditional aspects of natural history as well as modern biology and conservation.

‘Conversazione’ is an Italian word, roughly translated as ‘at home’. It usually means a social event expressed as an exhibition by members of a society. The CNHS Conversazione evolved out of the meetings of the Society, which at the beginning of the 20th century consisted of lectures, preceded by displays of specimens shown by members and discussed by the audience. The first Conversazione was held in 1913 but no meetings were held during the First World War. On the 12th May 1921 it was held in the Zoology Department and this tradition has continued every year to the present day.

Exhibitors are as varied as their exhibits: local naturalists, artists, conservation groups, members of the University and many others. Everyone is welcome!

We hope you enjoy the Society’s annual ‘at home’, and invite you to come again next year. If you are interested in joining the Society, you will find more information at the Society’s display.

Dr Mark Hill, President, Cambridge Natural History Society

Small donations towards the costs of staging
the Conversazione are gratefully received.

Directory of Exhibitors

Exhibitors are listed alphabetically with information about their activities as well as about their displays. We hope this is useful.

Action for Swifts

<http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com>

Dick Newell

actionforswifts@gmail.com

Old Beach Farm, 91 Green End, Landbeach, Cambridge, CB25 9FD
Telephone: 01223 860400 Mobile: 07968 428781

Our aim is to generate and collect ideas on how to help Swifts which we disseminate via our website. We have implemented many nest-boxing projects in and around Cambridge.

Action for Swifts

We will be showcasing Swifts, highlighting the challenges they face, including their spectacular migrations to Africa, and providing information to help end their decline. Attraction call equipment, nest boxes and videos will be on display. Discuss with us what you can do in your home, church or school to help Swifts!

David R Bain

david.r.bain@gmail.com

366 Harwich Road, Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex
Telephone: 01255 861342

The Rise of Corky-fruited Water Dropwort in NE Essex

The somewhat tongue-tying Corky-fruited Water Dropwort [*Oenanthe pimpinelloides*] is a previously very scarce umbelliferous plant that has spread dramatically in past 15-20 years in NE Essex, previously mainly known in more southern counties. This is partly through the agency of grasscutting equipment but some adaptive, climatic factors may be involved in this marked change in status.

Wasp Nests & Some Insect Sub-Tenants

The beetle: *Metoecus paradoxus* was discovered last autumn by serendipity, sweeping insect debris from a church window sill at Thorpe-le-Soken, NE Essex. Some 50 Common Wasps [*Vespula vulg.*] were found with four of these unusual looking beetles, which have both moth & fly-like features. Two hoverflies *Volucella* sp. were

found also associated with wasps in their life-cycle. They all derived from an unseen wasp nest above in the church building. The beetle's opportunistic life-style reliant on infiltrating wasp nests is remarkable and worthy of notice.

Henry Berman

bermanhj@gmail.com

“Large Copper Butterfly”, 104 Ramsey Road, St Ives PE27 3XW
Telephone (day): 01480 462958

Social wasps – nature's friend

How to identify the ten species of British Social Wasps: a case for a kinder attitude – leaflets and specimens.

To make people aware of how social wasps benefit the countryside and to make them aware of the various species.

Clarke Brunt

<http://www.viridis.net>
clarke.brunt@viridis.net

Wildlife in my garden

As well as the cacti, succulents, carnivorous plants etc. often exhibited in past years, my garden is home to all kinds of wildlife, from nesting swifts, other birds, and honeybees, to hedgehogs, frogs and toads. I'm showing photos I have taken, and maybe live video of the swifts, which should have young ones by the time of the exhibition.

Cam Valley Forum

Richard Wells, 1 Barrow Close, Cambridge CB2 8AT

Caring for the Cam catchment

Six panels illustrating the work of the Cam Valley Forum.

The Cam Valley Forum monitors the River Cam and its catchment area – it seeks to encourage its conservation and be alert to adverse trends.

Cambridge & Peterborough Amphibian & Reptile Group (CPARG)

candparg@gmail.com

www.groups.arguk.org/cparg

Steve Allain, Mark Goodman, Terry Moore, Helen Moore

CPARG aims to address the conservation of reptiles and amphibians in Cambridgeshire. As a volunteer-run group we also arrange a number of events and training opportunities for our members.

An introduction to the herpetofauna of Cambridgeshire

An introduction to the reptiles and amphibians that call Cambridgeshire their home, as well as surveying and monitoring techniques.

Cambridge Astronomical Association

www.caa-cya.org

Brian Lister

Paul Mardon & others

btlister@btinternet.com

Telephone (day) 01223 420954

Institute of Astronomy, Madingley Road, Cambridge

Cambridge Astronomical Association

Cambridge Astronomical Association (CAA) & Cambridge Young Astronomers (CYA) cater for all levels of interest in astronomy from absolute beginners to experts, young and old. We aim to make astronomy interesting and fun with Monthly Speakers, Public Observing Sessions, Loan Telescopes, Newsletters, Library, Courses, and more.

Cambridge Conservation Volunteers

www.ccv.org.uk

Volunteering for our wildlife for over 50 years

Cambridge Local Group of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust

http://www/wildlifebcn.org/localgroups_cambridge

cambridge.lgwt@yahoo.co.uk

Forthcoming activities

The Cambridge Local Group organises talks and walks, usually on

the last Wednesday of each month. The group covers the City of Cambridge and nearby villages but welcomes anyone interested to its events.

Cambridge Natural History Society

www.cnhs.org.uk

Cambridge Natural History Society is open to everyone interested in Natural History - including zoology, botany, ecology, entomology, palaeontology, conservation and the environment. Talks cover a wide variety of topics, and there are exhibitions, excursions and field studies, and an annual dinner. Joining the Society gives you opportunities to meet people with shared interests and access to local experts.

Welcome to Cambridge Natural History Society

The Cambridge Natural History Society a century ago

The Conversazione: a brief history

CNHS Coe Fen Field Study 2015

CNHS field studies in previous years

Cambridge Past Present and Future

www.cambridgeppf.org

Philip Robson/Frances Cooper

properties@cambridgeppf.org

Telephone (day) 01223 243830

A charity working to keep Cambridge and its surroundings special by positively influencing planning developments, delivering environmental education and managing the green spaces and historic buildings in its care for the benefit of all.

The history and archaeology of the sites

The Leper Chapel and Wandlebury Country Park exhibit a wealthy of historical and archaeological interest. Call by to find out more!

Cambridgeshire Bird Club

www.cambridgeshirebirdclub.org.uk

The Club's activities across Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire Geological Society

Chris Donnelly

www.cambridgeshiregeologyclub.org

info@cambridgeshiregeologyclub.org

Promoting knowledge and understanding of geology including its links with ecology, landscape, culture and history. Working throughout the county to identify and protect interesting geological sites and working in partnership with community groups to assist them to explore their local landscape. Talks on local and worldwide geology open to CGS members and the public, with the opportunity to join occasional site visits and field work.

Cambridgeshire's Geology and Landscapes

From the fenland to the chalk hills, from the Jurassic to the Ice Ages, find out how our landscapes are formed by the local geology and where you can go to explore the history of the earth.

Cambridgeshire Mammal Group www.cambsmammalgroup.co.uk

Peter Pilbeam

07745 382591

This friendly group welcomes all who are interested in mammals. We aim to educate, carry out surveys of mammals in Cambridgeshire and hold events/visits to see mammals.

British mammals

British mammals and their distribution in Cambridgeshire. A chance to examine stuffed specimens, discuss the likely places to see mammals and surveying techniques.

Captive breed harvest mouse

This harvest mouse is make and captive breed. Harvest mice are our smallest rodent and have prehensile tails.

Department of Zoology

<http://www.zoo.cam.ac.uk/>

Elementary Laboratory, Downing St, Cambridge CB2 3EJ

Dan Green

Look through a microscope

Giant cockroaches

Ely Wildspace

www.elywildspace.org.uk/

Mark Welch

mdw@nhm.ac.uk

32 Tennyson Place, Ely CB6 3WE

Telephone (day) 0207 9425111 (evening) 01353 614192
(mobile) 07941323021

Ely Wildspace promotes public awareness and involvement in natural history through volunteer-based activities, which are publicised on www.elywildspace.org.uk/ . In collaboration with BCN Wildlife Trust, it is running the 2nd Ely Bioblitz in July 2015.

Ely Wildspace and its environs: surveying, monitoring and promoting nature on our door

The Ely Wildspace environment and its conservation

Bees of Ely: cuckoo bees and their hosts

Bird sound - locally

What it is and what we make of it (sonograms + audio)

Surveying hoverflies around Ely

We do this as part of the long-running National Hoverfly Recording Scheme. This will include a display of live Ely-based hoverflies!

Fenland Flora

Owen Mountford & Jon Graham

<http://bsbi.org/fenland>

A Fenland Flora

Most flora projects focus on a county, but the Fenland Flora aims to provide a definitive account of the wild plants of the whole Fenland basin, a region with distinctive landscape, soils, history and vegetation. The poster describes our approach and progress up to spring 2016, as well as how other botanists can contribute.

Leah Fitzpatrick

naturalfitztory@outlook.com

naturalfitztory.tumblr.com

TEETH!

STUDENT DISPLAY

With a variety of skulls, real teeth and fossils for you to handle, come

along and learn about one of the most diverse structures in the Animal Kingdom!

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

general-secretary@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Activities: Maintaining and improving the appearance of the Brook; raising public awareness about the importance of the Brook for wildlife; improving the Brook as a home for wildlife: observing and monitoring the wildlife of the area: working with other organisations of similar interest.

Cherry Hinton Brook – a wildlife haven

Keeping the Brook a good habitat for flora and fauna requires maintenance. This year much work has been done by FCHB, the city council and Natural England to improve the water flow and allow light into the water course.

Huntingdonshire Fauna and Flora Society

www.hffs.org.uk

Huntingdonshire Fauna and Flora

Bob Jarman

bobjarman99@btinternet.com

The Arbury Estates – from Grizzled Skippers to Short-eared Owls

The Arbury Estates in the north of Cambridge are high density housing developments. Building began in the 1950's until the 1990's on farmland and orchards. There are no local nature reserves - just one small protected archaeological site. Despite this there is a legacy, from the 1950's until the present day, of wild life interest and exciting observations.

Dr Gwenda Kyd

Aesculus hippocastanum: Recent research & some old chestnuts

This exhibit will highlight some aspects of horse chestnut trees and their uses – from the origin of the trees and their name, to their

medicinal uses and how to treat a disease threatening them. It will also include some associated folklore, including the effect of conkers on spiders!

Magog Trust

www.magogtrust.org.uk

Lucy Evans

admin@magogtrust.org.uk

Vergers Cottage, 1 Gog Magog Way, Stapleford, Cambridgeshire
CB22 5BQ Telephone (mobile) 07774 084595

The Magog Down is an area of restoration conservation and informal recreation on the Gog Magog Hills south of the City of Cambridge.

Restoration of chalk grassland

Gill Mallett

Ornamental fossils and a few Natural History curios

Fossils are used in ornaments and jewellery for their decorative qualities – from stromatolites and ammonites to insects in amber. I can also show some curios of interest given me as a child by a Victorian Norwich naturalist.

NatHistCam

www.NatHistCam.org.uk

NatHistCam@gmail.com

Mark Hill, 11 Chaucer Road, Cambridge CB2 7EB

Telephone (day and evening) 01223-571574 (mobile) 07496-279664

A Natural History of Cambridge

The exhibit introduces a new project to document the natural history of Cambridge. There are activities for specialists and for the general public, concentrating on an 8 km square that includes central Cambridge, Cherry Hinton, Grantchester, Girton College and Fen Ditton. We shall study gardens spread across the city, as well as wildlife sites, city streets and the river.

The project, running from June 2016 to December 2019 will create a snapshot of the fauna and flora of Cambridge. In the process, we will increase public awareness of the diversity of plants, animals and fungi

in the city. Outputs will be videos of Cambridge wildlife, two books and supporting internet resources.

Nature in Cambridgeshire <http://www.natureincambridgeshire.org.uk>

Nature in Cambridgeshire

Our annual journal now ready for your delight and education. The independent natural history publication for Cambridgeshire.

NIAB

www.niab.com

NIAB, Huntingdon Road Cambridge CB3 0LE

Sandra Chapman & Pam Butler

Pambutler27@hotmail.com

The mission of NIAB is to provide independent science-based research and information to support, develop and promote agriculture and horticulture, helping the industry to fulfil its potential in supplying food and renewable resources, while respecting the natural environment.

The Identification of Weeds and Crop Seeds

A collection of weed seeds and crop seeds found within the UK. This exhibition highlights the different characteristics of seeds used for identification purposes.

Roger Northfield

Wonderful Insects

Jonathan Shanklin

The liverworts of Cambridgeshire

Small-Life Supplies

www.small-life.co.uk

Dorothy Floyd

emma@small-life.co.uk

Small-Life Supplies, Bassenhally Road, Whittlesey, Peterborough, Cambs. PE7 1RR

Telephone (day) 01733 203358; (mobile) 07462 588389

Cages for insects

Keeping your insects in our purpose-designed cages ensures that the insects are being housed correctly and makes caring for them much easier. Different insects have different housing needs. These proper cages also look professional and are often recommended by users because they deliver results. All are made in the UK.

South Cambridgeshire Fungi Group

Lucy Evans

littletrees@mac.com

South Cambridgeshire Fungi Group

Recording the diversity of fungal species locally. Records are sent the British Mycological Society at Kew to aid conservation of fungi across the UK.

Henry Tribe

Life at Two Million-Magnification

Revealing the very small in the natural world (molecules). A model showing how glucose is taken apart in our cells and its energy used to charge the cell's batteries. Together with an introduction to the outstanding art of Prof David Goodsell, Scripps Research Institute, La Jolla, California.

The Ermine Moth on Bird-cherry in Jesus Green

Its occurrence over four years, with display of webs and larvae.

University Museum of Zoology

www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk

Downing St, Cambridge, CB2 3EJ

01223 336650

umzc@zoo.cam.ac.uk

The University Museum of Zoology is home to a huge variety of recent and fossil animals. Displays trace the evolution of animal life, and admission is free. The Museum is currently under redevelopment and will reopen in 2017.

U3AC (University of the Third Age, Cambridge) Naturalists Group

Olwen Williams & Mary Wheatear

olwenw@gmail.com

U3A Cambridge is for anyone no longer in full-time employment.

There are more than 400 different activities and classes. The Naturalists Group meets weekly in term time for discussion, fieldwork and expeditions and we are interested in all aspects of natural history.

Colour Variation – Ladybirds and Snails

Banded snails and Harlequin ladybirds both show considerable variation in colour and pattern, which is under genetic control. Spiders webs are also very variable, though fascinating structures. Living examples are shown.

Wildlife Travel

wildlife-travel.co.uk

The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DH. Telephone (day) 01954

Chris Donnelly

wildlife-travel@wildlifebcn.org

Wildlife Travel has been organising holidays for 28 years and donates its profits to conservation. Destinations are worldwide, travel and accommodation is of a good standard, excursions are not strenuous and trips are led by experienced leaders. All flights are carbon balanced through high biodiversity conservation projects.

Wildlife holidays supporting conservation

Details of the holidays run by Wildlife Travel, who support conservation and are based at the WildlifeTrust's office at Cambourne. The holidays are aimed at those with a general interest in natural history or keen naturalists and the focus can include birds, plants, general wildlife, and culture.

The *Sophora* Tree

Visit the Society's tree, illustrated on the cover, a fine specimen of *Sophora japonica* planted in 1957 to mark the Society's centennial year. Leave the laboratory, cross Downing Street, and enter the courtyard opposite the Zoology Department. The *Sophora* tree is on your right in the centre of the lawn.

The University Museum of Zoology has closed for refurbishment but will reopen in 2017 with new galleries and displays.

Acknowledgements

The *Conversazione* is entirely dependent on the goodwill and co-operation of many people and the Society would like to thank everyone who has given their time and effort to the event, whether as a volunteer, or as an exhibitor. In particular, thanks are due to: Professor Michael Akam for allowing us to use the zoology laboratory, Dan Green for helping the event to run smoothly, and Monica Frisch, Paul Mardon and other members of the Society for organising the event.

For more information about the Society visit our website

www.cnhs.org.uk

Cambridge Natural History Society Membership

CNHS membership is open to anyone with an interest in natural history. Both the public and members of the Universities play important roles in the activities of the society. Recent events have included talks on a wide variety of topics, joint meetings with the Wildlife Trust, field trips and surveys as well as the Conversazione, our Annual Exhibition.

For a small membership fee, you will be able to attend all of our activities and will be kept informed of forthcoming events by termly programme cards and regular emails.

Join today at the Society's display

www.cnhs.org.uk