

Conversazione

***96th Annual Exhibition: showcasing
the environment and wildlife***

2015



Directory of exhibitors 50p

***Cambridge Natural History Society
(1857 – 2015)***



Friday 12th June
1:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Saturday 13th June
10:00 am - 5:00 pm

www.cnhs.org.uk



Welcome to the 96th 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 on the back of this programme, and 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>

Contact: Dick Newell

Email: actionforswifts@gmail.com

Old Beach Farm, 91 Green End, Landbeach, Cambridge, CB25 9FD

Telephone: (day/evening) 01223 860400 Mobile: 0796842878

Action for Swifts is a group of individuals who:

- Implement nest boxing projects for Swifts in the Cambridge Area.
- Provide free advice nationally on preserving existing and creating new nest sites.
- Our members include people who rehabilitate grounded Swifts.
- We document our projects, ideas and case studies on actionforswifts.blogspot.com

Action for Swifts

Display boards with information about Swifts, the problems they face and ideas of what to do about it. Exhibits include nest boxes and attraction call equipment. Live pictures of webcams in Swift nest boxes will be shown.

Anglia Ruskin University

<http://web.anglia.ac.uk/estates/environment/biodiversity/index.php>

Contact: Hilary Conlan

Hilary.conlan@anglia.ac.uk

Improving biodiversity in an urban campus

Poster showing how Anglia Ruskin University is working at improving biodiversity within the small concrete campus. The aim is to achieve a Biodiversity Benchmark Award – the first for a UK university. A variety of local conservation minded groups are helping by making suggestions and performing expert surveys.

Clarke Brunt

<http://www.viridis.net>

Email: 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, to hedgehogs and toads. I'm showing photos I have taken, and maybe live video of the swifts.

Butterfly Conservation Cambridgeshire & Essex branch

www.cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk

Butterfly and moth conservation in Cambridgeshire

Cambridge Astronomical Association

www.caa-cya.org

Contact: Brian Lister

Exhibitor: Paul Mardon

Email: bt121@cam.ac.uk

Telephone (evening) 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 Bryophyte Excursions

Mark Hill

email: moh@ceh.ac.uk

11 Chaucer Road, Cambridge CB2 7EB

Telephone (day) 01223-571574 (evening) 01223-571574 (mobile)
0777-975-9657

Aims and activities: To record bryophytes in Cambridgeshire, including Huntingdonshire, with fortnightly excursions from autumn to spring.

Cambridge Bryophyte Excursions

Cambridge Bryophyte Excursions continued over the 2014-2015 season from October to March, with 7 visits to 'old' Cambridgeshire, 3 to

Huntingdonshire (VC 31), 1 to Norfolk and 1 to Northampton-shire.
Some living bryophytes are exhibited – very much ‘out of season’.

Cambridge Conservation Volunteers

www.ccv.org.uk

Our work, and the launch of National Coppice Day

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.

The Cambridge Natural History Society a century ago

The Conversazione: a brief history

CNHS West Cambridge Field Study 2014

CNHS field studies in previous years

A Natural History of Cambridge

Cambridge Past Present and Future

www.cambridgeppf.org

Contact: Philip Robson/Frances Cooper

Email: Properties@cambridgeppf.org

Wandlebury Country Park, Babraham, Cambridge CB22 3AE

Telephone (day) 01223 243830 Mobile: 07847162709

The work of the charity

Find out about the work of Cambridge PPF and the sites managed by the charity across Cambridgeshire.

Cambridgeshire Bird Club

www.cambridgeshirebirdclub.org.uk

The Club's activities across Cambridgeshire

The boards show our activities in general, and also highlight nest recording, with a display of some of the fantastic nests birds make.

Meg Clarke and Monica Frisch

Email: mfrisch@phonecoop.coop

Mapping plants in Hayley Wood

The plants and vegetation of Hayley Wood have been much studied. We are continuing this tradition and our display will feature some of the plants which are not widespread in the wood and the areas where they are found.

Hilary Conlan

Captive breed harvest mice

These harvest mice are captive breed. There are three females. Harvest mice are our smallest rodent and have prehensile tails.

Ely Wildspace

www.elywildspace.org.uk/

Contact: Mark Welch

Email 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 first Ely Bioblitz in July 2015.

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

“From clay pits to SSSI” – the natural and cultural history of Ely Wildspace

Bird sound - locally: what it is and what we make of it (sonograms + audio)

Surveying hoverflies around Ely for the long-running National Hoverfly Recording Scheme. This item will include a display of live Ely-based hoverflies!

Fen Edge Archaeology Group

www.feag.co.uk

feaginfo@gmail.com

Contact: Vicki Harley

The Fen Edge Archaeology Group is a group of amateur archaeologists. Our aim is to promote understanding of the archaeology of the Fen Edge area covering the parishes of Willingham, Rampton, Cottenham, Landbeach and Waterbeach. Our members come from all over Cambridgeshire and beyond.

The Twenty Pence Project and Environmental Archaeology

The Twenty Pence Project is Fen Edge Archaeology Group's dig at a Roman rural settlement near Cottenham. This display presents some results from our investigations into the environmental archaeology of the site.

Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook

www.friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Email: general-secretary@friendsofcherryhintonbrook.org.uk

Aims and 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

Roger Horton

Fooled by Babington!

When documenting Cambridge's Professor Babington herbarium sheets at the University Herbarium, or on-line in the BSBI project herbaria@home, his idiosyncratic date style can fool eminent botanists as well as amateurs. Fortunately he left us his Journal from which we can cross-check his botanising exploits.

Huntingdonshire Fauna and Flora Society

www.hffs.org.uk

General information & current projects

Bob Jarman

A House Sparrow survey of Cambridge 2013-2014

House Sparrows have declined by up to 70% since the late 1970's. A survey was conducted in 2013 and 2014 of the breeding House Sparrows in Cambridge. Roof and loft improvements, the removal of ivy and new building techniques have reduced nest sites. House Sparrows must also nest in colonies – the smallest viable colony is 3 active nests in close proximity. Sparrows are virtually absent from west Cambridge - the colleges, their gardens, open spaces such as Jesus Green and the Botanic Gardens and the City centre. They are still common in the close proximity Victorian terraces, older council houses and light industrial estates in the east of the city.

The Birds of Prey of Cambridge (and very nearby!)

In the last 30 years the status of some several birds of prey has changed from complete absence to common. Many can now be seen within or near the City. The Sparrowhawk has gone from extinction to a common sight in gardens, Peregrines have colonised suitable habitats in the City, Buzzards, Red Kites and Hobbys nest regularly just within or outside the City boundary, Marsh Harriers breed within a 30 minute cycle ride of the City centre. What has caused these changes and has this increase in birds of prey caused the decline of our songbirds?

Shirley Lowe

email: shirleylowe@hotmail.com

Fantastic Fables for Families

Storytelling – For centuries stories have been told, often to explain what's happening in the world around us. But are they true? Or are the true stories even more extraordinary than those from the imagination...

Magog Trust

www.magogtrust.org.uk

email: 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

Nature in Cambridgeshire

<http://www.natureincambridgeshire.org.uk>

Email: info@natureincambridgeshire.org.uk

Mark Hill

11 Chaucer Road, Cambridge CB2 7EB Telephone (day) 01223-571574
(evening) 01223-571574 (mobile) 0777-975-9657

Aims: To publish articles on natural history in Cambridgeshire.

Nature in Cambridgeshire

Nature in Cambridgeshire is an annual journal covering all aspects of natural history in the county. Every issue covers a variety of topics and includes articles, short notes and book reviews, and is published to coincide with the *Conversazione*.

NIAB

www.niab.com

Sandra Chapman

email: Sandra.chapman@niab.com

Huntingdon Road Cambridge CB3 0LE

Telephone number (day) 342205 (mobile) 07775577161

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.

Edible Exotic Mushrooms

Edible exotic mushrooms are highly valued by the connoisseurs of food and in Asia a plethora of them are consumed on a daily basis. This exhibit focuses on the most popular exotic mushrooms prized for their taste, texture and nutritional qualities.

A collection of weed and crop seeds and a selection of seed borne diseases

Roger Northfield

Wonderful Insects

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

All we see then are molecules. My model shows how glucose is taken apart in our cells and its energy used to charge the cell's batteries (ADP-ATP). Plus an introduction to the superb molecular art of Prof David Goodsell with access to his public website to make your own copy.

Colds and flu over 57 years!

At the 1991 Conversazione I set out an exhibit on my 33 years of colds and flu. After 24 more years I add a sequel. Why not start your own record? - it gets more interesting as the years pass by!

U3AC (University of the Third Age Cambridge) Naturalists Group

Main contact: Olwen Williams

olwenw@gmail.com

4, Eltisley Ave, CB3 9JG

Telephone number (day) 01223 5212

U3A Cambridge provides educational and social opportunities for people no longer in full-time employment. The Naturalists Group meets weekly in term time.

“Alive, Alive Oh!”

We will show a variety of live organisms and display aspects of their structure, behaviour and life style. We will provide hands-on experience of using a microscope or hand lens, as well as a continuous screened microscopic view of aquatic organisms.

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 Zoology Museum has closed for refurbishment but will reopen in 2016 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, Jacek Zalewski 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.

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, or fill in the form below and send it to:
Cambridge Natural History Society, c/o Department of Zoology, Downing
Street, Cambridge CB2 3EJ

Membership application form

Name (Capitals please)

Full address:

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Telephone

Email

I would like to join Cambridge Natural History Society.

Please ask if you would like a standing order form.

I enclose a cheque (made payable to Cambridge Natural History Society) to cover my subscription for (*please circle*):

1 Year
(£6.00)

3 Years
(£14.00)

Life
(£100)

Signed

Date