

Conversazione

91st Annual Public Exhibition of Natural History



*Cambridge Natural History Society
(1857 – 2010)*



www.cnhs.org.uk

*Saturday 12th &
Sunday 13th June 2010
11:00 am - 4:00 pm*

supported by



Welcome to the 91st 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 the environmental sciences.

'*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, which is near the Museum entrance to the lab.

Professor Inigo Everson, President, Cambridge Natural History Society

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

Before you leave, please sign the visitors' book...

Numbers correspond to the floor plan on the last page.

- Foyer AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CONVERSAZIONE**
Jon Shanklin, CNHS. A poster advertising the exhibition.
- Foyer INTRODUCTION TO THE CNHS**
CNHS. An introduction to the activities of the CNHS.
- Foyer A HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY AND CONVERSAZIONE**
CNHS. An illustrated text describing the origins and history of the Society and the Conversazione.
- 1 THE SOCIETY'S 91st CONSECUTIVE CONVERSAZIONE**
Henry Tribe, CNHS. Ten programmes are set out to show similarities and changes over the years. The prime ministers give a sense of history. Dated 1920/21 (Lloyd George), 1932 (Ramsey MacDonald), 1940 (Winston Churchill), 1957 (Harold Macmillan), 1976 (James Callaghan), 1990 (Margaret Thatcher) 2002 (Tony Blair), 2007 (Tony Blair) and 2010 (David Cameron).
- 2a FOUR NEW FUNGUS MODELS**
Henry Tribe, CNHS. Fruiting bodies of the larger fungi are difficult to preserve in good condition in their true colours. For exhibitions good models are the answer. These models, made by Shirley Talboys, are shown in their natural habitats.
- 2b THE PLASTIC BAG DECOMPOSITION PROBLEM: ATTEMPTS TO HELP SOLVE IT**
Henry Tribe, CNHS. A presentation of the results of soil burial tests on supposedly decomposable plastic bags.
- 3 FLOWERS ON THE ZOOLOGY LAWN**
Jon Shanklin, CNHS. There is a surprising variety of wild flowers to be found just outside the museum. How many of those shown here can you find?
- 4 THE FLORA OF THE CHERRY HINTON CHALK PITS**
Jon Shanklin, CNHS. A poster describing the results of the CNHS survey for 2009, concentrating on the flora of the chalk pits.
- 5 NATURAL HISTORY IN TEA CARDS**
Jon Shanklin, CNHS. Brooke Bond used to include small cards with their tea, for children to collect. Many of these had a natural history theme. On display will be some that I collected as a child.
- 6 THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE OZONE HOLE**
Jon Shanklin, British Antarctic Survey. The paper announcing the discovery of the ozone hole appeared in Nature in May 1985. There are many lessons to be learned from how policy changed as a consequence, but are they being applied to the environmental issues that affect us today?
- 7-9 ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY WILDLIFE SOCIETY**
Anglia Ruskin University Wildlife Society. A poster exhibition of research projects undertaken by the 1st year Life Science students. *Saturday only.*

- 10 TO HEAR THE WILD WOLVES HOWL**
Catherine Matthews, University of Cambridge. From wild horses to sea eagles, many species have disappeared from the British Isles - and yet some are being reintroduced. But is this always a good thing? And could wolves really find a place with us once more?
- 11-12 THE WORK OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE MAMMAL GROUP**
The Cambridgeshire Mammal Group. A poster display showing the improvement in the otter population of Cambridgeshire over the last 20 years including a life-sized otter. Plus a model badger sett complete with a life-sized badger. Plus life-sized fox and mink. *Saturday only.*
- 13 ANTARCTIC BRYOPHYTES RESPOND TO STRATOSPHERIC OZONE**
Kevin Newsham, British Antarctic Survey. This poster looks at how some Antarctic bryophytes respond to the changes in UV associated with the Antarctic ozone hole.
- 14 GRADIENTS IN ANTARCTICA**
Pete Convey, British Antarctic Survey. Natural gradients are a useful and unique tool when addressing diverse biological research. This poster looks at some of those found in Antarctica.
- 15 THE BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY**
British Antarctic Survey. A selection of information pamphlets describing the work of the British Antarctic Survey.
- 16 ACRES OF ANTARCTIC ROCK: A UNIQUE RESOURCE FOR THE FUTURE**
Hilary Blagbrough, British Antarctic Survey. The poster describes the collection of Antarctic fossils, rocks and mineral specimens held by the British Antarctic Survey.
- 17-20 LIVING INVERTEBRATES AND NEW CAGES**
Small-Life Supplies. Get your own Giant African Land Snails Kit, Stick Insects Kit and British Caterpillar Kits here! We breed all these creatures and have designed and manufactured the special cages to house them properly. You can buy the accessories too; including Liners, bottles of Snail Centre Cleaner and our chemical-free potted Eucalyptus plants.
For more information, email emma@small-life.co.uk, phone 01949 842446 or write to Small-Life Supplies, Station Buildings, Station Road, Bottesford, Nottinghamshire NG13 0EB.
- 21 BYRON'S POOL FISH PASS**
Ellis Selway, Cambridge City Council. A new fish pass is due to be installed at Byron's Pool Local Nature Reserve as part of Phase 2 of the SW Cambridge Habitats and Access Project. Learn how it will work and what it hopes to achieve.
- 22 BATS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE**
The Cambridgeshire Bat Group. Displays about the bats of Cambridgeshire and information about the work of the Cambridgeshire Bat Group.
- 23 BIODIVERSITY ACTION IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH**
Fabiola Blum, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership. Information about the International Year of Biodiversity, and examples of local Biodiversity Action work in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

- 24-25 GO WILD WITH THE WILDLIFE TRUST**
The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough. Discover how your local Wildlife Trust is helping Cambridge's environment. Learn about opportunities for volunteering and sign up to our new survey - Garden Watch.
- 26 THE COUNTY RESOURCE FOR NATURAL HISTORY INFORMATION**
The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biological Records Centre. Our previous work on public surveys, our current recording projects and general information on how to study and record wildlife.
- 27 NATURE IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE**
Nature in Cambridgeshire. Nature in Cambridgeshire is an annual publication covering all aspects of natural history. Each year articles are published on a wide range of subjects. At the Conversazione you have the opportunity to buy the latest issue and buy or order back issues.
- 28 FINDING AND MONITORING NESTS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE**
Cambridge Nesters. We will show a selection of seldom-seen nests of birds such as Skylark, Corn Bunting and Meadow Pipit (collected after the birds had finished with them). Also, photos and information showing how we find and monitor birds' nests without disturbance to provide data for the BTO "Nest Record Scheme".
- 29 BRINGING WILDLIFE BACK TO A CAMBRIDGESHIRE FARM**
The Countryside Restoration Trust. Texts, charts, and photographs illustrating the wildlife that has benefitted from the CRT's approach to farming, which includes diversity of cropping, with wide range of spring- and winter-sown arable crops and newly created hay meadows. Wildlife successes include Skylarks, Barn Owls, Brown Hares, Pipistrelle Bats, and arable weeds.
- 30 CAMBRIDGE BIRD CLUB**
Cambridge Bird Club. The Cambridgeshire Bird Club organises a programme of indoor and outdoor meetings for everyone interested in birds in Cambridgeshire and beyond. The Club collects and publishes information on the birds of Cambridgeshire. In addition to a copy of the Annual Report, members are entitled to attend all meetings of the Club and receive a bi-monthly bulletin which includes articles and information on recent sightings of birds within the county.
- 31-32 CACTI AND OTHER SUCCULENT PLANTS**
The British Cactus and Succulent Society. A display of cacti and succulent plants showing the diversity of forms from plants adapted to grow in arid places.
- 33 EXCEPTIONAL TARDIGRADE DOMINATED ECOSYSTEMS IN ELLSWORTH LAND, ANTARCTICA**
Sandra McInnes, British Antarctic Survey. Studies of some isolated Antarctic nunataks show a simple terrestrial faunal community that is dominated by tardigrades.
- 34 TARDIGRADE FAUNA OF THE SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS**
Sandra McInnes, British Antarctic Survey. The poster describes the results of a survey of the tardigrade fauna of the South Sandwich Islands.

- 35, 56 RUTLAND WATER OSPREYS**
The Rutland Osprey Project. A display introducing the work of the Rutland Osprey project - bringing Ospreys back to Rutland Water.
- 36 WASPS, THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND**
Henry Berman. An exhibit focussing on the relationship between wasps and humans.
- 37 SOME BOTANICAL PROJECTS**
Monica Frisch. As a keen amateur botanist I decided this year to focus my efforts on some specific projects. My exhibit will describe and illustrate them, with preliminary results of surveys where appropriate.
- 38 CARNIVOROUS PLANTS AND OTHER BIZARRE ADAPTATIONS IN THE PLANT WORLD**
Clarke Brunt. Plants have evolved to grow in many difficult situations. Carnivorous plants grow in areas short of nutrients, and supplement their diet by trapping insects.
- 39-42 THE MAGOG DOWN: ARABLE FIELDS TO MEADOWS AND WOODS**
The Magog Trust. A pictorial display of 20 years of restoration work.
- 43a DOG WALK DIARIES, PARADISE AND BEYOND**
Anita Joysey, CNHS. A photographic diary of everyday encounters with nature, mostly made whilst walking the dog.
- 43b TOADS OF THE GUIDED BUSWAY**
Anita Joysey, CNHS. Information about the problems the new Guided Busway has caused for migrating toads.
- 44a ANIMAL EXHIBIT: LEOPARD GECKO**
Anita Joysey, CNHS. Prior to his rescue, Tom the Leopard Gecko lost his tail due to infection and dehydration. He is now a much cherished pet.
- 44b ANIMAL EXHIBIT: GIANT AFRICAN LAND SNAILS**
Anita Joysey, CNHS. Come and meet Charlie & Lola, Giant African land snails, and some of their babies!
- 45 THE WILDLIFE TRUST - CAMBRIDGE LOCAL GROUP**
Anita Joysey, The Wildlife Trust CLG. An exhibit giving examples of our talks and highlighting the outdoor activities taking place over the summer with Cambridge Local Group of the Wildlife Trust.
- 46-48 THE NATURAL HISTORY OF FERNS**
David Barden, CNHS. Covering all aspects of these fascinating plants, including identification (pressed specimens are on display), habitat and distribution, and their curious life-cycle.
- 49 TIME-LAPSE UNDERWATER**
Inigo Everson, CNHS. Underwater photographs at one minute intervals demonstrate movement in marine animals. Watch an urchin move along on its tube feet and a squat lobster eat some food.

- 50 HOW DEEP IS YOUR RIVER?**
Inigo Everson, CNHS. A radio controlled echosounder boat is used to survey small sections of river. Come and see the detail in a small section around Bait's Bite Lock.
- 51 THE DARWIN CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT**
The Darwin Correspondence Project. The Darwin Correspondence Project, which includes amongst its sponsors the British Ecological Society, is dedicated to publishing the definitive edition of letters to and from Charles Darwin (1809-1882). Begun in 1974 by Frederick Burkhardt and Sydney Smith, it has to date produced seventeen out of thirty projected volumes.
- 52 SCIENCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION**
The University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education. Come along and find out more about the science courses which the Institute of Continuing Education runs for adult learners to study at University level on a part-time basis.
- 53 ABERRANT SCUTTLE FLIES THAT LIVE IN TERMITE NESTS**
Dr Henry Disney. The aberrant females of many scuttle flies (Diptera: Phoridae) live in termite nests. The most bizarre belong to the subfamily Termitoxeniinae. Recent pictures of specimens from the Nansei Archipelago in Japan are exhibited.
- 54 THE ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH GEORGIA BLUE-EYED SHAGS**
Claire O'Sullivan, BAS. A consideration of the ecological importance of South Georgia Blue-Eyed Shags, including relevant data from temperature depth recorders and GPS data.
- 55 THE FEASIBILITY OF USING STATIC PHOTOGRAPHY TO MONITOR BREEDING COLONIES OF BIRDS**
Claire O'Sullivan, BAS. An assessment of the feasibility of using this technique to monitor breeding colonies, with Macaroni Penguins as an example.
- 35, 56 RUTLAND WATER OSPREYS**
The Rutland Osprey Project. A display introducing the work of the Rutland Osprey project - bringing Ospreys back to Rutland Water.
- 57 THE ART OF JENNIFER BERRY**
Jennifer Berry. A presentation of wildlife-inspired artwork, with a chance to buy or commission original pieces.
- 58 RIVER ACTION BY A SMALL VILLAGE RIVER CONSERVATION GROUP**
Friends of the River Shep. Information board and 10th Year anniversary booklets for sale.
- 59-60 THE SECRET WORLD OF SLIME**
John Holden. An introduction to the Natural history of the Myxomycetes, or Slime Moulds. These fascinating organisms are neither animals nor fungi. They have a way of life all of their own, largely unseen, but play a vital role in the cycling of nutrients and the economy of the soil.

- 61-62 INVASIVE PESTS OF THE CAM VALLEY**
The Cam Valley Forum. Since 1848, when Canadian Pondweed *Elodea canadensis* escaped from the Botanic Garden into the River Cam, invasive species of plants and animals have been colonising the banks and water courses of the river and its tributaries. Mostly these have been introduced accidentally or deliberately by human action. Some species have little impact but many are aggressive and are disruptive to ecosystems of native plants and animals. A range of species are displayed here with comments on possibilities of local control or eradication – now a matter of national concern and campaign.
- 63-64 THE FRIENDS OF CHERRY HINTON BROOK**
The Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook. Information about Cherry Hinton Brook and the role of the Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook in keeping it clean and pleasant.
- 65 THE FRIENDS OF THE ROMAN ROAD AND FLEAM DYKE**
The Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke. The Friends of the Roman Road and Fleam Dyke are a voluntary group set up in 2001 to help look after and promote these ancient sites to the South East of Cambridge. Come and find out about the special species of chalk grassland that can be found here.
- 66-67 PATTERNED GROUND – THE REMARKABLE LEGACY OF THE ICE AGE**
David Barden, CNHS. In parts of East Anglia, the last ice-age left behind mysterious soil patterns, known as “stripes and polygons”. Find out how these patterns formed, the influence they have on what grows on them, and how they are still visible today with the aid of aerial photography.
- 68-70 AREN'T INSECTS WONDERFUL?**
Roger Northfield and Neal Maskell. Insect photographs and whatever spectacular insects are available at the moment.
- 71 DASYUROMORPHS: THE FORGOTTEN CARNIVORES**
Jessica Hatchett. Everyone has heard of wolves, tigers and ferrets. This exhibit introduces their marsupial equivalents, including the quolls, dunnarts, and Thylacine; the members of the order Dasyuromorphia. Come and learn more about this mysterious order of animals, what makes them so special, and why many of them are heading so rapidly towards extinction.
- 72-74 GRAZING AT WANDLEBURY TO MANAGE THE CHALK GRASSLANDS**
Cambridge Past, Present and Future. A static display showing the management of chalk grassland at Wandlebury by mowing and grazing using Highland cattle and Texal sheep.
- 75 A COLLECTION OF SEEDS**
Sandra Chapman, National Institute of Agricultural Botany. At the official seed testing station within NIAB, many seeds are tested for purity, germination and health. This exhibition demonstrates the range of seeds commonly found in the UK.
- 76 EDIBLE EXOTIC MUSHROOMS**
Sandra Chapman, National Institute of Agricultural Botany. Exotic mushrooms have been valued since time immemorial and are considered a delicacy by the connoisseurs of food. This exhibit highlights the popular fresh, dried and wild edible mushrooms.

- 77 ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOLUTIONS**
Tim Skinner. We are at a crossroads in our choice of energy supply. Decisions made in the next few years could determine our supply for years to come. What are our options, and can we meet our energy needs from just renewable sources?
- 78 SHOULD ANIMALS HAVE RIGHTS?**
Tim Skinner. A consideration of the ethical issues and arguments surrounding the animal rights debate.
- 79-81 A COLLECTION OF ANIMAL SPECIMENS**
Sam Crawley. Sam will show a selection from his impressive collection of animal specimens, which includes sheep skulls, snake and deer skins, shells, invertebrate skins and skeletons and a variety of stick insects, African millipede, and tree frogs.
Sunday only.
- 91 CAMBRIDGESHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**
The Cambridgeshire Beekeepers Association. A display of beekeeping information and equipment, plus live bees in an observation hive.
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NOTES



Would you like to exhibit at next year's Conversazione? If so, then please sign the visitors' book and indicate that you would like details. Information about Conversazione 2011 will be sent out by Christmas.

Contact: exhibition@cnhs.org.uk

Why not visit ...

The University Zoology Museum is open to the public during the exhibition. It is considered to be one of the finest zoological museums in the country, with outstanding displays of specimens from insects to elephants.

The Finback Whale

You can't miss it. Over 21 metres long, and weighing in at 80 tonnes when alive, this is the skeleton of one of the largest creatures alive today.

The *Sophora* Tree

Visit the Society's tree, 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.

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 Malcolm Burrows for allowing us to use the zoology laboratory, Neal Maskell for helping the event to run smoothly, the Department of Life Sciences at Anglia Ruskin University for contributing towards the cost of the event, and Jessica Hatchett for organising the event.

For more information about the Society why not 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:

Dr H.T. Tribe, 198 Gilbert Rd, Cambridge CB4 3PB



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Membership application form

Name (Capitals please)

Full address:

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Telephone

Email

I would like to join Cambridge Natural History Society.

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

1 Year
(£5.00)

3 Years
(£10.00)

Life
(£100)

Signed

Date

The AGM of the Cambridge Natural History Society will be held in the Elementary Laboratory of the Zoology Department at 4.15pm on Saturday the 12th of June. All are welcome to attend.