



## CAMBRIDGE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

### Programme Secretary's Report to AGM 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021

#### Spring 2020 talks

The spring talks went well but it was disappointing that the last two had to be cancelled due to the covid-19 pandemic. Nine talks took place and attendance ranged from 24 to 70, with between 24 and 44 members. The film 'Natura Urbana' shown as part of the Science Festival predictably attracted the largest audience and the highest proportion of non-members. The cancelled talk on Trillion Trees will be rearranged but unfortunately Paul Mylrea is no longer in a position to give a talk about Seasearch.

#### Autumn 2020 talks

It was not clear during the summer whether it would be possible to hold talks in the autumn so only in mid-September was it decided to try presenting talks online via Zoom. A shorter programme of four talks, an AGM and a seasonal 'social' was put together. Although it was the first time that CNHS had offered online talks these went very well, with few technical hitches and attracted good audiences. Many thanks to Jonathan Shanklin for hosting the Zoom talks. We did not charge for admission, nor was any distinction made between members and others attending. The AGM, which included illustrated reviews of the year, of outdoor events and an introduction to the new website, attracted fewest participants: 24 members. Participation in the other talks ranged from 42 to 54.

#### Spring 2021

A programme of eight online talks attracted between 33 participants for the talk on Haiti and 66 for that on the meadow at King's College, with an average of 52.4. Analysis of the Zoom attendance records indicates that not everyone stayed for the whole talk (about 80 minutes usually); those present for less than 10 minutes have been excluded from the statistics. The online talks have all been recorded and CNHS members are sent the link so they can view the recording. Jonathan commented in February that "*the recordings seem to be nearly as popular as viewing them live. The biggest access is the day after the event.*"

#### Attendance figures

Detailed attendance figures must be treated with caution, as they are not very accurate. Even when getting people to sign in there is sometimes a discrepancy between those signed in and actual attendance, as some, particularly late-comers, may be missed. With the online talks no distinction has been made between members and non-members. However, it seems that we are attracting new people as the total list of those who have logged into at least one of the online talks is over 200. There were 17 people (including 7 members of CNHS Council) who attended at least five of the six autumn events, and 19 (including 6 CNHS Council members) attended six or more of the eight spring events.

#### Autumn 2021 programme

A full programme of talks is being planned for the autumn, assuming that they will be online. The suggested dates would be: 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October; 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November; 2<sup>nd</sup> December. One of the November dates will be the launch of the 2021 NatHistFest.

#### Publicising talks

CNHS members and those on Jonathan's mailing lists have continued to receive notice of events and the talks are advertised on our website and Facebook page. While posters have continued to be produced there have been few places to display them. Nor have I been as consistent in sending announcements of talks round the university departments as in the past. More publicity would be beneficial both for the talks and for the Society generally.

*Monica Frisch, Programme Secretary, June 2021*