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The Selborne Society Bulletin

March, 2014

Whats on, whats happening, and what has happened
...with the Selborne Society and at the Perivale Wood
Local Nature Reserve.

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Members Mailing on its way ...

The Society's spring mailing is on its way ... included are

- [The Newsletter, - a bumper edition, 12 pages!](#)
- [Our Diary,](#)
- [A reminder about the AGM and an Invitations to sponsor the Nest Box Scheme](#)
- A poster for Open Day ([A5x2](#), or [A4x1](#)) see below
- [Junior Hawkeye, for our junior members only, and](#)
- [a flier about the next coach outing, to Selborne Village in Hampshire, on the 11th June 2014.](#)

You can download the various documents by clicking the hyperlinks above.

New Education Centre --- an update

Things are now moving fast, which is great!

The great news is that the Planning Consent is through – we are ok to build the straw bale building that we've applied for. The consent came through a few weeks before Christmas, and Strawworks are now beavering away on producing the technical drawings and specification that we need to get accurate prices and Building Control approval. I'm told that that is close to being ready for submission to Building Control.

The Society's Governing Body, "Council" agreed that there is a budget of £117000 available for the project, made up of the £60K already set aside for a new building, the Anonymous donation of £60K that we received in September, and the other donations that we've received, which come in at about £5000, less our expenditure to date – planning and architects fees, and so on. Several people have made donations, for which many thanks,

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and we'll be fundraising, and seeking volunteers for the community aspects of the build, at Open Day. Or you can register by emailing contact@selbornesociety.org.uk if you'd like to volunteer.

Because we were not able to reliably find money for a “biodiverse” roof, the Planning Approval is for a cedar shingle roof – still sustainable, but less expensive as it weighs so much less!

The total costs for the whole project are currently estimated at about £180,000 all in, so we have a bit of fundraising yet to do. We had applied for grants under the Landfill Tax scheme, but alas the project as is at the moment does not meet the criteria (it would need to be accessible to the public on 104 days per annum); we're looking for other grant sources, and a couple - British Airports Authority Community Grant Scheme, and John Lyons seem promising The BAA one has been applied for, and the John Lyons one is a work in progress.

Until Funding is complete, Council wanted reassurance that before the build commences, the fundamental objectives of the scheme will be met; these include an accessible toilet, complete with mains drainage, and a high quality meeting room. The accessible toilet was a particular challenge as, while the Education Centre will include toilets, the plan is that it will be locked when not in use, and so the toilets would not be accessible.

John Morrell came up with a solution ... in the creation of a purpose built structure between the new building and the old hut; this is an alternative to the proposed a steel cabinet there as a tool store, but there were concerns that this would be ugly, so the purpose built structure is a good alternative - it would include a canopied area, the toilet, and cycle stands at the rear.

The old hut did not really have a use in the new scheme we had proposed forming an open canopied area from it, but it could now include the tool store, a bit of a workshop and a “mess room” for working parties, conservation management, and the like at the wood, so that the Education Centre can be kept clean and tidy! John's rough plans can be seen linked from the Blog (<http://selbornesociety.wordpress.com/>) and we've asked Strawworks to work up design and the necessary consents for this. Usefully this makes a discrete subproject, which lends itself to a grant application, so the cost – about £57K including VAT and the drain connection – may well be partly funded from Grants.

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Some preparatory work has been commenced on site – repositioning fences and so on, but there's a heap of stuff to do before we get to construct the actual straw bale building – this includes jobs such as pipes and cables below ground, clearing the garage, currently our tool store, and forming a new structure inside the old hut, which itself will need to be cleared and fitted out as a mess room; we are working on a complete list, which we'll also link from the blog, and its going to take some time and effort! Given that the BAA money will also take time, and other grants, and that a critical date for a “straw” build is mid September – lime render has to be applied when the temperature is reliably above 5 Celcius, as it has to “carbonate” and the necessary chemistry does not happen below this temperature. It is critical that it is not exposed to frost before fully carbonised, as otherwise it spalls (falls off!).

So the clock is against completing this year; the present proposal is to start the project in May 2014, and using the next year to get everything ready, so that by May 2015, foundations are complete, drainage etc. is in, the toilet is erected, the tool storage & mess room is completed, and we can get cracking on the straw bale build with the summer of 2015 ahead of us, aiming to complete by September 2015. This gives us sufficient time to prepare, and find additional funding

Whats on

The Society's activities for the next couple of months

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1 Mar (Sat) | Field Meeting at the Reserve, 1:30 pm Charles Hurford, who heads up the Reserve's nest box scheme, will lead, introducing the scheme and the results, and also speaking about the small mammals survey work that he does at the Reserve |
| 4 Mar (Tue) | Henry Johnson, the Hedgehog Officer of the People's Trust for Endangered Species (www.ptes.org) will speak to us about Hedgehogs ... Henry will tell us about these wonderful, evocative creatures and what we can do in our Gardens and elsewhere to encourage them. |
| 8 Mar (Sat) | Junior Section 2.00 pm at the Reserve ; Minibeast safari – chase beetles in the wood. |

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9 Mar (Sun)		Conservation Management at the Reserve. 10.00 am (see note at foot of page 2)	
29 Mar (Sat)		<p>8:30 pm – Earth Hour At the Reserve http://www.earthhour.org/ - The event encourages individuals, households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights for one hour as a symbol of their commitment to the planet.</p> <p>We will Join this event by assembling at Perivale woods and sitting around a camp fire, a source of natural light, in the spirit of times past when the earth's natural resources were often shared by communities. In doing so, we will be contributing to the Earth Hour movement simply by being away from our homes and not using electrical power.</p> <p>Bring a lantern or torch, something to drink (alcoholic beverages permitted) and a fold-up chair if you have one. Snacks to be passed around are welcome but it is not a food event per se. If you would like to bring an instrument to play, all the better.</p> <p>We look forward to seeing you there in a communal spirit of environmental awareness</p>	
1 Apr (Tue)		<p>Our annual General Meeting 7:45 followed by Refreshments and a talk. At Greenford Community Centre.The AGM is a vital moment in any organisation's life – a moment when you, the members, can comment on the Society and it's activities, vote for Members of Council – stand for election yourself if you wish – review the accounts. It usually only lasts about 45 minutes, but it really is important! Followed by a talk about the new building project, progress and timescale</p> <p>Please come if you can.</p>	
5 Apr (Sat)		Field meeting at Perivale Wood Local Nature Reserve: 2pm; Nic. Ferriday will lead on “wildflowers”.	
12 Apr (Sat)		Junior Section 2.00 pm at the Reserve - Look deep into a pond - come pond dipping with the water boatman.	
13 Apr (Sun)		Conservation Management at the Reserve. 10.00 am (see note at foot of page 2)	

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A reminder that we have Henry Johnson, the Hedgehog Officer for the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species, who will tell us about hedgehogs - wonderful creatures that were so common but I've not seen locally for ages. He'll tell us what we can do to encourage them, in our gardens, allotments and open spaces, and how healthy their populations are locally. 4th March (Tuesday); 7:45pm, Greenford Community Centre, room 9.

Open Day

Approaches - the 27th April ... you can download a poster - [A4](#) or [2x A5](#) to print, display, hand out to friends and colleagues, at school ... wherever! We're hoping to have the usual selection of like minded organisations - RSPB, FoE, Ramblers and so on - if you are a member of a group who would like to have a stall, do please get in touch - contact@selbornesociety.org.uk.

And of course we always need volunteers for the day - if you can help, please contact Tom Berry on 020 8422 3284 to ask how you can help ... or just come along on the morning of Saturday, 26th April - around 11am - and - help will be needed on the day itself!

Free Lectures:

In a crowded island how do we make space for a diverse wildlife? Until recently, the management of wildlife habitat was by mimicking traditional economic management, in an attempt to preserve rich remnants of the past and deter alien invaders. Dissenting voices, however, argue that we can create large blocks of wilderness, where natural processes allow native species to manage themselves with minimal intervention by us. Another view is that tradition is too focussed on birds, bees and wild flowers, ignoring most other biodiversity. Yet others find value in mixtures of both native and established exotic species and argue that it's difficult and unnecessary to strive purely for natives. This series asks whether our traditional management prescriptions need an update?

Friday evenings at 18:30. Lecture theatre B33, Birkbeck College, Torrington Square, London.

7 Mar Pond restoration to conserve biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. Dr Carl Sayer, Geography Department, UCL.

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14 Mar Conservation grazing, a universal panacea. Clive Charters, Head of Conservation (Policy and Evidence), Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.
21 Mar River and wetland management – unleashing nature. Dave Webb, Environment Agency.

more information: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/environment/news/lectures>



Slimbridge

our outing to the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust centre at Slimbridge in Gloucestershire was a great success; the coach was full, and they day turned out fine and bright - the best day for ages. More information in the newsletter, and photos ... see link above!

Fencing Complete:

Thanks to Volunteers Steve, John, Conor and Jonathan - and a number of others, the boundary fence to north east of the Reserve has been fully repaired.

The fence here was a mish mash of mesh, chain link and was a bit of a mess; there were several weak points, and places where, very obviously, people had got through or over into the Reserve. And we ve know of odd incursions; we've had someone sleeping rough in the reserve and a tent appeared one summer; dogs have got in, and been followed by their owners. and those are the ones we know about!

Scientific Officer Peter Edwards

A couple of pleas for help!

1. Storage ... to store about 10 small boxes of books for the book stall. So if you have a spare bit of dry space, please get in touch on (020) 8422 3284.

2. Jars ... Clare Vernon and Elsa Pawley are in search of good, clean jam and similar jars for the jam stall on Open Day. Metal lids if possible, and nothing thats had eg pickles in ... the smell lingers!

Species Monitoring and Online Recording Questionnaire.

Greenspace Information for Greater

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identified a mesh that was suitable and a supplier, got a price, and we were given a £1000 Grant from the BA Heathrow Community Fund towards the work; all in the materials have cost about £2500, but the boundary is now much more secure. Many thanks to all who have helped. It proved to be quite a job - there were 46 large sheets of mesh to haul into place, and it it the best part of 400 metres from the gate to the north corner of the reserve, vegetation had to be cut back so the mesh could be put in place, and then it was fixed to existng, but very sound, concrete posts.

A great job, thanks to all who helped. In the fullness of time we'll lay the hedge in front of it - a fun thing to do, skill to learn, will further strengthen the boundary, and form a great habitat!.

LONDON (GIGL) are keen to encourage more people to get involved in biological recording and to support existing recorders to carry out surveys and share records with them. They welcome enthusiasts of all kinds. They have created a Species Monitoring and Online Recording Questionnaire - it will be available via the following link until Friday 7th

March:

<http://www.gigl.org.uk/online/species-monitoring.aspx>

Please fill in (if relevant). Deadline 07/03/2014

Free Wildflower Seeds

Sponsored by the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, and the National Lottery, free, native wildflower seeds are available to groups - and a whole host more besides ... more information from

<https://www.growwilduk.com/community-kit>



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