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THE SELBORNE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES.

I am writing this on the last day of September – a day promised with rain but which stayed dry with autumn sunshine. I like to pull down poetry books from my overcrowded shelves and in one I came across 'The Coming of the Cold' by Theodore Roethke. A few lines:

*All things are brought to barn and fold.
The oak leaves strain to be unbound,
The sky turns dark, the year grows old,
The buds draw in before the cold.*

This year – apart from March when drought was forecast – seems almost a never-ending story of wind and rain, dull days, with hard to remember sunny days between. The Reserve, like our gardens, has had to cope with these conditions and only time will tell what effects will be seen in future. A highlight this year was the coach trip to College Lake and its wonderful reserve – very nice facilities too and something for us to think about as we plan our new building. I hope you will all contribute ideas as we seek to include as many people as possible during the planning process. I am particularly keen on access for those of us with disabilities!

I would like to finish by drawing your attention to a major change in the dates for Junior meetings. Apart from January 2013, which remains on the third Saturday, all the remaining months of 2013 will see the Junior meetings move to the second Saturday of each month. Why? – to avoid as far as possible school holidays as numbers dwindle at such times! My thanks to one and all for the commitment given to the work needed to keep our reserve and its activities flourishing.

Tom Berry, Chairman

NEST BOX SCHEME 2012

This year the nest boxes of Perivale Wood fledged 152 Blue Tit chicks and 68 Great Tit chicks. In 2011, 400 chicks fledged. This year's poor fledge rate is because of two factors. Firstly, the dry winter and wet summer of 2012 have created very poor conditions for invertebrates, particularly the defoliator moth caterpillars which are an essential food source for small woodland birds. The reduced abundance of caterpillars has resulted in smaller brood sizes within the boxes.

Secondly, and more worryingly, the nest boxes have been damaged by Ring-necked Parakeets. These birds, in ecological terms, are classified as an invasive species. They have only recently taken up residence in the Reserve and, during the last nesting season, have chewed holes in the boxes to modify them for their own nesting purposes. This is classic invasive species behaviour when it takes advantage of an unoccupied niche and then changes it. In Perivale Wood, the unoccupied niche is the growing buds on the oak trees that provide the parakeets with food and it is the nest sites which are being modified.

Forty per cent of the boxes have had large holes chewed in them. I have fortified the boxes with hardened plastic and we will see what happens next year.

Charles Hurford

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NOTES AND LETTERS

RESERVE KEYS

Did you know that Society members may borrow a key to the gate of the Reserve from Perivale Library by leaving their membership card with its staff? You should note, however, that Ealing Council has recently announced changes to the Library's opening hours, as detailed on the Ealing Council website (shortcut web link below)

<http://snipr.com/ssoc006>

Security of access to the Reserve is very important, and we would ask you all, when visiting Perivale Wood, to lock the gates after entering, as well as when you leave. Borrowed keys should be returned promptly to the Library upon leaving the Reserve so that other members are not inconvenienced.

Finally, just a reminder that the area around the Reserve is a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) from Monday to Friday. To avoid a hefty fine, only park there during the allowed hours. Up-to-date information on this CPZ is available on the Ealing Council website:

<http://snipr.com/ssoc007>

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscribers are reminded that your subscriptions were due on 2nd January. Rates remain unchanged:

Adult subscription	£4 (minimum)
Couple at same address	£6 (<i>ditto</i>)
Juniors	£1

Make out cheques to "Selborne Society" and send them to the Membership Secretary at:

89 Daryngton Drive, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 8BH.

Please include a SAE if you would like your membership card to be sent to you directly. Otherwise, it will be enclosed with your copy of the next newsletter.

A READER'S LETTER

Pre-War Memories - *Aubrey Jacobus writes:*

I wonder how many of your members visited Perivale Wood before the Hoover Building existed? As a poor family from Notting Hill, our biggest treat was a Sunday trip to Perivale with a picnic meal. How we got there I do not recall - it was not by the Underground.

One of my clearest childhood memories - I was born in 1926 - was walking past the site of the Hoover Building foundations and chatting with the friendly

night-watchmen who offered us tea. The estate houses were being offered newly built for £600.

The happiest hours of my childhood were spent in the open space at Perivale - a relief from the tenement in which we lived.

Aubrey Jacobus



ON LOCATION IN PERIVALE WOOD

The fresh Autumnal wind brought a film crew and a bit of Tinseltown to our Reserve. Director, camera and soundmen and actors entered into the realms of 'The Call', an upcoming eco-thriller that entwines two hostage plots, linked by the repercussions of oil pollution in the Niger Delta.

September saw the crew shoot and compile a promo trailer which is now online on Indiegogo, a fundraising website, where a campaign for £16,600 to shoot the final feature has begun.

As well as the excitement of having a film production taking place in the Wood, the Selborne Society will benefit further. When the raised funds reach £10,000, the construction of a 'tree house', which features in the film, will commence, leaving for all us nature lovers a new hide and observation platform in the tree canopy. Some of you will remember that the Reserve has once before been home to a treetop hide offering a canopy view.

If you would like to get involved and help raise funds for this exciting project, visit the link below where you can watch the trailer for the film.

www.indiegogo.com/thecall2012

Sheetal Sanghani

HALLOWE'EN EVENT

The Selborne Society would like to welcome all Juniors to the Perivale Wood Reserve on 31st October to celebrate Hallowe'en - the Eve before 'end of harvest'.

Never mind Trick or Treating. Be dressed inspired by Nature and Dark and come meet The Good Witch and her Friends who settle in these woods for one night only!

- ◆ Bring your courage, your imagination and your wit.
- ◆ Adults must be accompanied by a child.
- ◆ This is a free event.

For more information, please contact Sheetal Sanghani at:

Mobile: 07922 543246

Email: visits@selbornesociety.org.uk

A MESSAGE OF THANKS TO SELBORNE SOCIETY MEMBERS

Over the past 2 years, I have had several campaigns regarding destruction of ecology in New Zealand (NZ). Many members have been very supportive by signing my petitions and writing letters to the NZ Government. This article is to let you know what has happened since you supported my campaigns.

My first petition was to stop the NZ Government's shocking proposal to mine NZ's National parks. With your help and that of likeminded individuals around the world, the government backed down and withdrew its proposal. This was a great victory for conservation and I thank you all for your support.

The second campaign was to protect NZ's semi-arid, high-altitude tussock grasslands from being converted into industrial dairy farms. These grasslands are a unique ecology only found in the dry rain shadow of the central South Island. A large proportion of the grasslands have now been protected from development and hopefully will never be destroyed.

Our next petition was to save the Mokihinui River, one of the last truly wild rivers left in New Zealand. It supports an ancient temperate rainforest ecosystem. State-owned power company *Meridian Energy* proposed to dam this river for a hydroelectric scheme and in doing so would have drowned 300 hectares of rainforest and destroy the river and all the biodiversity that it supported. A month ago, Meridian withdrew the proposal to dam this river following letters and petitions from conservationists like yourselves who demanded that this river be saved.

My latest campaign, for which I was collecting signatures at the last Open Day, is to save the Denniston Plateau which is the site of the only miniaturised rain forest **in the world**. It is situated on the west coast of the South Island and to its detriment, the plateau is on top of 180 million tons of coal. The government has given consent for an Australian mining company to open-cast mine this ancient land. NZ Conservation organisation, *Forest and Bird*, has taken the case to the Environment Court to try and stop this from happening. The David and Goliath battle will commence in October.

Many people ask me what does environmental destruction in far away New Zealand have to do with us here in the UK. My reasoning as to why we must support conservation in NZ is as follows:

- the loss of biodiversity anywhere in the world is a disaster for us all and we must try to stop it.
- Secondly, British tourism and emigration are key drivers of development and loss of habitat. Emigration from the UK to NZ runs at 13,000 annually and, with over 200,000 Brits living in NZ, they are the largest immigrant group. Each year 280,000 UK tourists visit NZ to marvel at her remaining fragments of natural splendour and most of them are not aware of NZ's terrible environmental problems.
- Finally, Britain imports a huge amount of agricultural produce from NZ. British people therefore have a right to know that that the NZ agribusiness, which they support, is sustainable.



I have outlined several significant conservation victories in NZ but the war to save its environment is far from won. There are 3000 species classed as vulnerable and only 200 of them are actively managed. 56% of indigenous bird species are extinct. A staggering 14 million birds are eaten alive each year by non-native predators. There are 66 million Australian brushtail possums in NZ's native forests, eating the trees and attacking birds' nests. The Maui's Dolphin is on the brink of extinction with a total population of just 54 individuals, while the fur seal is predicted to be extinct by 2050. The giant carnivorous land snail is threatened and whole ecologies are disappearing due to the onslaught of modern industrial farming methods.

If the forces of destruction were to be left unchecked, there would be a real possibility that NZ could become a sterile ecological wasteland, but those of us who cherish Nature won't let this happen. It is with the support of organizations such as the Selborne Society and her conservation-minded members, that we can push so hard for the sustainable management of New Zealand's ecology. I thank you all for your support and encourage you to continue to stand up for Nature.

Charles Hurford

NEWS FROM THE RESERVE

ELUSIVE 'PRIMITIVE FERN' REFOUND

The Adder's Tongue Fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) is one of our reserve's rarest native plants, and incidentally a good indicator of old permanent grasslands in the UK. First discovered in the late 1960s and, up to the early 90s, commonly seen in much of our pasture land in Little Elms Meadow and Willow Mead (what's in a name?, as these are grazed they are and have long been, pastures!). Last year all we* could find in the whole of The Reserve were two leaves just to the east of LEM Pond (miraculously these were not trodden on by the many children and adults enjoying themselves at the 'Open Day field shelter' set up adjacent. Some were also known from the mid east side of The Paddock, and at its far NE corner, but rarely recorded after the initial finding.

As you are suspecting, this is a difficult species to find, it is usually in leaf from March to June only, and, undoubtedly, 'individuals' do not appear above ground every year. Quite what constitutes an individual is a moot point, as what appear to be 'individual plants' above ground are linked for long distances underground by a fleshy root-like rhizome, as I discovered in the early 80's when examining the LEM colony. Then the underground parts had been thoughtfully exposed in places by the hooves of quarrelling high-spirited horses. I will happily send a copy of my discoveries then to anyone who requests it, published in 'The Fern Gazette' (no, it's not the gazette for Fern, Scotland!, but one of the Journals of The British Pteridological Society).

Anyway, while examining the complex communities of plants in the far north of The Paddock (and worrying again about why there is so much dense and consolidated and increasing bramble and blackthorn there, despite strimming) I was really pleased to 'stumble' across a large patch of this odd plant, and at about 2 m across and about 200 leaves probably the largest single colony

of this plant this on the west side of the County of London. Both John Wells and myself have established that the usually large colony in Well Meadow, SE Hanwell (a lovely spot), only discovered about 10 years ago by another local botanist, is not to be seen above ground this year, although it was obvious last year.

I have long suspected that this species is saprophytic and like some orchids 'only' exists below ground for a number of years. Quite honestly this is an ideal plant for us to study over a period of years and come up with some more systematic and ultimately satisfying and perhaps new-to-science facts about its life, like why it is so illusive, such an odd shade of yellowish green, and so on. It's a good excuse to quietly be on ones hands and knees in a beautiful setting too. We really should be recording more systematically for much more of our wildlife. David Howdon and Andy Culshaw have put so much effort into moth and butterfly recording in PWLNR, they have set an excellent example more of us should follow.

Postscript: having thus 'got my eye in' again for this species this year, I was determined to see if I could find some in that part of our neighbour Horsenden Hill that would have been contiguous with The Paddock before the canal was dug, just over 200 years ago. I detoured off of my usual running route on the hill and went for a similar looking area of vegetation as I had discovered it in The Paddock, and there it was! A similar expanse but fewer leaves. A good find for this superb area of conserved and well-managed for wildlife area of public land. I will be sending the details to The LBE Rangers, and the LNHS botanical recorder.

Peter Edwards



NEWS FROM THE RESERVE

RAINFALL RECORDS AND OUR PONDS

Our first rainfall records for the reserve have been made possible by the installation, in November 2011, of a rain gauge in a suitable open part of our reserve. From 1 January to 22 September, the total has amounted to 19.30 inches (490 mm). As you may have appreciated, the timing of the precipitation has been rather unusual, with just 3.66" (93mm) from 1 Jan to 31 March, and only 1.24" (31.5mm) between 1 August and 22 September. However 1 April to 23 July saw 14.40" (366mm) fall, giving us the wettest late spring/early summer for 100 years (although outside the historically low rainfall South-East and East Anglia, totals then were MUCH higher, - note that the 30 year average for central London is only 24").

The upshot of this odd pattern was fully saturated pastures ('at field capacity' in soil scientists' language) enabling clean rainwater to flow over the clean pasture catchment uphill and fill two of our small ponds/pools (NB: filling via groundwater is impossible on heavy clay like ours, without coarser inclusions, as any water is fully bound to, and can barely move from, the tiny clay particles). These little water bodies have consistently given low conductivity (very low level of dissolved ions) readings, often similar to or not much higher than the usual rainwater readings of 21-90 microsiemens taken at the rain gauge (distilled water measures zero, of course).

Such clean water is just what J. Biggs et al., of the charity Pond Conservation, emphasise 'all' newly created ponds should have, indeed it is the main thrust of their *Million Ponds Project*. Water quality, not quantity, is what is important for the many animals and plants that can only live in clean water, so the fact that the two bodies are small and usually seasonal is unimportant. Following Pond Conservation's very informed guidance, it seems the 1967-created one can be gradually and carefully re-engineered in future to take more clean surface water, but the pool (which is probably around 250 years old!) must not be changed. This year this usually overlooked pool had at least 3 species of copepods and three species of flies breeding, two kinds of water-starworts, several water beetles, plus a smooth newt feeding.

Twelve months of monitoring all of our ponds, ditches and stream, plus test holes is nearly completed. Patterns are emerging; the key one for the Big Pond in the Pond

Field is that suspect unnatural substances are getting in from what should be a clear water source, - this we will certainly be addressing! Nevertheless a larva of The Ruddy Darter dragonfly was discovered there last Autumn; this is a specialist of shadier ponds with lots of emergent vegetation.

The Upper Woodland Pond system is upstream of, and largely unconnected to, that downstream system. The high conductivity readings of U.W. Pond are largely due to natural chemicals derived from humus for a part of the year, joined by water flowing from the north, the origins of which are now not obvious! The specialised flora and fauna it has is gradually being investigated, starting with a visit in spring by one of Europe's top diptera (flies) specialists. Pond Conservation have clearly demonstrated that ponds, important for rare organisms, often don't look like most folk's 'ideal pond'. Perhaps U.W. Pond contains rare flies.

The little 'draw-down zone' of Little Elms Meadow Pond proves to be the richest part of the pond for plants, with 37 kinds recorded there last autumn, including local rarities, like Water-chickweed (*Myosoton aquaticum*). There are possibilities for enlarging this zone to take far more clean surface water into LEM Pond, and even taking this pond off-stream/ditch in future so that rich sediments and solutes do not reach it. Being off stream/ditch is strongly advised by Pond Conservation's scientists. I highly recommend anyone who is genuinely interested in ponds to see and understand everything in 'The Pond Book' (Williams, Biggs et al, 2010), available at about £18 from the charity at c/o Oxford Brookes University, Gypsy lane, Headington, Oxford, OX3 0BP. They also have an excellent web site. Be prepared to be disabused of many myths and misconceptions, such as 'the bigger the pond, the better', 'drying out is disastrous for pond wildlife', and 'ponds must have oxygenating plants'.

Peter Edwards



NATIONAL MOTH EVENING & BAT WALK (22 JUNE 2012)

Members joined mothing regulars down at the reserve on 22nd June for this year's national moth night event.

Andrew Culshaw and I had set up several different traps types and prepared 'sugar' runs along several of the paths in the reserve, hoping to attract some interesting moths. The main activity focused around a sheet trap – a bright white light next to a vertical white sheet. Moths are attracted to the light and are then observed on the sheet. Other traps were operated as well and opened up during the night to reveal what was caught.

The most interesting find of the evening was a Beautiful Hook-tip, a species which has only occurred twice before on the Reserve. A total of six were taken, one on the wing and five at light.

Also of interest was the relatively low number of Green Oak Tortrix moths taken. The larvae of this species feeds on the leaves of oak trees and numbers seem to have been down in 2012. I speculate that this may be because the dry early start to the year reduced the quality of the early oak leaves and so made the caterpillars less likely to survive to adulthood. Another species, Winter Moth, that depends on early oak leaves flies later in the year and I will be looking out to see if it is similarly reduced in number.

Members interested in the moths of the Reserve will be please to know that I have now completed "The Lepidoptera of Perivale Wood", an account of all the moth and butterfly recording in the Reserve since the mid 1960s. Copies are available for £3.50 plus p&p from the Society's secretary.

A full list of the species observed is in Table 1.

In addition to mothing, we were joined by Keith Barker and Wendy Knight from the Hertfordshire and Middlesex bat group who used their bat detectors to help us find some of the bats of the reserve. My recollection is that two species of Pipistrelle were recorded.

David Howdon

Common names	Scientific names
Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix	<i>Pandemis cerasana</i>
Large Fruit-tree Tortrix	<i>Archips podana</i>
Variiegated Golden Tortrix	<i>Archips xylosteana</i>
Brown-barred Tortrix	<i>Epagoge grotiana</i>
Yellow-spot Tortrix	<i>Pseudargyrotoza conwagana</i>
Yellow Oak Button	<i>Aleimma loeflingiana</i>
Green Oak Tortrix	<i>Tortrix viridana</i>
Common Marble	<i>Celypha lacunana</i>
Plum Tortrix	<i>Hedya pruniana</i>
Bramble Shoot Moth	<i>Epiblema uddmanniana</i>
Olive Pearl	<i>Udea olivalis</i>
Buff Arches	<i>Habrosyne pyritoides</i>
Blotched Emerald	<i>Comibaena bajularia</i>
Maiden's Blush	<i>Cyclophora punctaria</i>
Small Fan-footed Wave	<i>Idaea biselata</i>
Silver-ground Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe montanata</i>
Yellow Shell	<i>Camptogramma bilineata</i>
Common Marbled Carpet	<i>Chloroclysta truncata</i>
Barred Yellow	<i>Cidaria fulvata</i>
Blue-bordered Carpet	<i>Plemyria rubiginata</i>
Brimstone Moth	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>
Willow Beauty	<i>Peribatodes rhomboidaria</i>
Mottled Beauty	<i>Alcis repandata</i>
Common White Wave	<i>Cabera pusaria</i>
White Ermine	<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>
Buff Ermine	<i>Spilosoma luteum</i>
Ingrailed Clay	<i>Diarsia mendica</i>
Shoulder-striped Wainscot	<i>Mythimna comma</i>
Middle-barred Minor	<i>Oligia fasciuncula</i>
Beautiful Hook-tip	<i>Laspeyria flexula</i>
Snout	<i>Hypena proboscidalis</i>
Small Fan-foot	<i>Herminia grisealis</i>

Table 1

50 SHADES OF GREEN (AN UPDATE ON THE NEW EDUCATION CENTRE)

You'll remember that the Society wants a new building to replace the present hut at the Reserve.

We want to build a beautiful, inspiring building, one that will enable appropriate use of the Reserve – for education, for research, for our juniors, our adult field meetings, to enable us to accommodate school groups all year round. Initially we explored recycling components from “the Rickyard”, a building in Walpole Park that is to be taken down later in the year.

We want to build a “green” building, and recycling an old building whose carbon footprint had been embedded in the 1970s was consistent with the “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” waste hierarchy, so quite green. We appointed an architect, and plans were produced and a planning application was submitted. So far, so good.

But the architect had been asked to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear ... recycling the components imposed severe constraints, and the resulting building would have been functional, but hardly attractive. It became apparent that there was relatively little that we would actually be able to recycle – a few of the steels from the roof, and the concrete “planks” - the project was becoming a lighter shade of green, and as we'd have had to make a complete new steel “portal” frame. The green-ness of the scheme was fading fast.

Costings came in and, if there was a financial saving to be made by recycling components, it would not have been great. We had hoped that we'd be able to work with the Council's demolition contractors, paying them to remove carefully the components that we wanted, and set them aside for us to arrange to transport. It seemed unlikely that this would be possible, and if we wanted components then we'd need to dismantle the buildings ourselves, which would have incurred very considerable costs.

We were working to a tight timescale – originally the Rickyard buildings were to be taken down in September, so it would have been good to have had foundations down before then – even though there has been slippage on that project, we would still have

needed to be ready by November. The need for a detailed “Tree Survey” had delayed the planning application further and led to it being withdrawn, and although the application could have proceeded, it is unlikely that we 'd have had time to get the foundations laid.

So we took stock, as whilst the building would suit our practical needs, it was financially questionable, and would not have the rich, strong, dark green credentials to which we – the Selborne Society, Pioneers in Conservation, one of the first and oldest conservation societies in the world - aspire.

Withdrawing the planning application gave us time to review the situation, and at its meeting on the 18th September, the Selborne Society Council formally decided to drop the “Rickyard” scheme.



We've agreed to follow a different path – and the first stage is to survey our members, and like-minded organisations – local organisations with aims and ideals similar to our own: conservation, natural history, heritage – to determine what the building ought to be like – how it should be constructed, from which materials, and what it should contain. Once we've got that information, we'll produce a design brief and put it out to a “design competition” for designers to come up with some ideas. The closing date will be in about April, and we'll decide on the final design – and then resubmit the Planning Application and move it forwards to construction.

We've had £2804.00 in donations specifically for the new building – if you've donated already, a big thanks! And so far, of course, we've spent – to date, £4396, including the tree survey, planning application and architect's fees.

We need to know what you think ... please help us make the building a deep, strong, beautiful green one ... start by filling in the questionnaire that you'll find online here <http://snipurl.com/ssnvcsl>. If we have an email address for you, or you give us one, we'll send you occasional updates, and you'll be able to get news of our progress via the Society's website.

Andy Pedley

HS2 AN UPDATE

There's progress on the proposal to build the new, High-Speed rail link (HS2) from London to Birmingham, and later on to be extended to include much of the north of the UK, and it's right that members have an update. It is of interest to all our Members since the new line as proposed will run along the South Boundary of the Perivale Wood Reserve. There is bound to be an impact, and not a positive one! It is also increasingly of interest to anyone who lives in the Borough of Ealing - or Brent, indeed anyone who lives in West London, for reasons that I will explain.

HS2 Ltd. have set up Community Forums - these are intended to consult with and keep the community informed of progress and developments. They are independently (and very expertly) chaired and attended by a number of HS2's staff and independent consultants. The Selborne Society has been represented at each of the "Northolt Corridor" meetings which extends from Northolt to Park Royal, and they have provided a useful way to receive news and make comments.



The most recent one heard that, in Ealing, virtually **every single bridge** that HS2 passes over or under will need to be replaced if the existing "above ground" alignment is progressed.

So that will be the bridges (I've bracketed non-road bridges and working East/West) at:

- (The footbridge at Park Royal,)
- (Piccadilly Line just north of Park Royal)
- The link between the A40 and the Park Royal Industrial Estate
- Hanger Lane, East,
- Hanger Lane, West

- West Gate,
- (The River Brent),
- Alperton Lane,
- (Over the Thames Water London Ring Main)
- (Pedestrian route, Rydal Crescent)
- Bideford Avenue,
- Horsenden Lane South
- Lyon Way
- Greenford Road
- Oldfield Lane North
- (the Grand Union Canal)
- (the Belvue Road to Carr Road Footbridge)
- Mandeville Road,
- Eastcote Lane

<http://snipurl.com/sshs2bridges> is a Google map showing the bridges that will be affected.

The financial cost will be very considerable (read "enormous") and the less tangible costs - noise, traffic disruption (read "chaos") will be immense - for

those of us who remember the reconstruction of the Piccadilly line bridge at Petts Hill, and the chaos that caused, it will be that "with knobs on" and for a protracted period of time - with Petts Hill it was possible to select an alternative route to avoid the chaos, if these bridges are replaced simultaneously then there will be simultaneous impact on all routes North / South across the Borough.

There is perhaps some light at the end of the tunnel - or to be more precise, the possibility of the "alignment" being changed to a tunnel under the whole of the Borough. This is now being evaluated by engineers.

OBITUARIES

ERIC GROVES (1923-2012)

One of our most respected members, Eric Groves, passed away on 24th June. Eric was part of the London natural history community for over 60 years and, as well as our own organisation, belonged to the South London Botanical Institute, The London Natural History Society and the British Entomological and Natural History Society.

From 1946 until 1983, he worked in the Botany section of the Natural History Museum in South Kensington where his work started with repairing herbarium specimens that had suffered from war damage. At the museum, he became interested in the plant collections made on historic voyages, such as those by Captain James Cook and Captain George Vancouver. His edition of Robert Brown's diary "*Nature's Investigator: The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia, 1801-1805*" led to a Thackray Medal of the Society for the History of Natural History with his co-workers D T Moore and T G Valance in 2002.

His field work focussed on plants and insects. A major contribution by Eric to the Reserve was his survey of flowering plants. This was published as chapter called 'The Vegetation Of The Sanctuary' in the booklet 'Bird Sanctuary' of 1962, edited by Tom Bartlett. The article was an important source of data in Nic Ferriday's 'Flora of Perivale Wood' published in 2008. He was an all-round naturalist, who knew a good deal about plants and insects, and enjoyed the company of fellow naturalists.

June Chatfield & Nic Ferriday

LESLIE EDWARDS

Leslie Edwards, a former Treasurer of the Selborne Society, died on 21st June.

Leslie was born in Dolgellau in North-West Wales in 1920 and his early upbringing in the beautiful hills of Snowdonia clearly gave him a love for Nature and its wild places. Early on in his working life, Leslie took up engineering as a career and, with the outbreak of World War II, he joined the Army, serving with distinction in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Once the war ended, Leslie worked for a while for the Inland



Bearing in mind that, at the first Community Forums, the possibility of a tunnel under Park Royal, Ealing, Perivale, Greenford and Northolt was completely ruled out, the fact that it is now receiving objective assessment is a real achievement for the local Stop HS2 and Nick O'Donnell at Ealing LB.

The ultimate decision will be a political one, made by the Secretary of State for Transport, and Nick encourages us to lobby the Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin and the Transport Minister, Simon Burns. If you write, then use the Department for Transport address, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR

You can find out more information on the Campaign from <http://stophs2.org>, the Stop HS2 website.

More locally, the Selborne Society have now agreed to allow an Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) to take place at the PWLNR - a formal licence has been signed. Whilst we are fully in favour of an EIA, there is great concern that they'd not already done it before deciding on the preferred route. The rationale for agreeing access has been that if we do not, then the impacts can not be understood and "mitigated" (read "minimised" rather than eliminated!). A major concern was that the "Early Access Licence" that we were asked to sign enabled all manner of investigations, many of which seemed to relate to engineering surveys rather than environmental ones. It seems that, for the moment, there are no engineering investigations intended at Perivale Wood

The story is a complicated one and will continue to unfold - much more than can be covered in this newsletter! There is for instance the suggestion of a "Heathrow Hub"

<http://www.heathrowhub.com>

If this raises concerns, then do, please lobby the Department for Transport - if the project is to go ahead, then unless it is in a tunnel, the chaos and disruption that will be caused during its construction will be immense.

Andy Pedley

Hon. Sec., The Selborne Society.

Revenue before realising that his true vocation lay in teaching. He trained in Wandsworth and, in the early 1950s, joined the staff at Perivale Primary School, before going on to become headmaster at three local schools: Drayton, Compton and, finally, the newly built Gurnell Middle School.

Leslie joined the Selborne Society in the early 1960s and served as its Treasurer from 1968 to 1975. In 1970, he also wrote a work-book, *On The Trail*, for visiting teachers and pupils and he was instrumental in popularising the use of the Reserve as an educational resource for schools. He retired from teaching in 1982 and the following year, moved down to Sussex with his wife, Mary, but continued to support the work of the Society. Mary passed away in 1995 but Leslie remained someone who was enthusiastic and could enthuse others with his love of science and the natural world. He will be missed.

John Kane

HUGO (HUGH) BARKER

We also learnt with sadness of the death of a member and former head teacher at Selborne Primary School, Hugo Barker. At the time of going to press, we were attempting to get in touch with some of Hugo's colleagues and contemporaries and we would hope to



include a fuller tribute in our next edition.

Photo: Hugo Barker on a Selborne School boat-trip down the Grand Union Canal, c.1970

EDITOR'S BIT

In the last issue, I wrote about the fact that the Society's calendars (both Juniors and "Seniors") were available online and that you could, if you wished, embed them in your own electronic calendars. I would now like to draw your attention to the fact that, if you felt that "embedding" might be a bit too technical for you, *Green Events Ealing* has gone ahead and published a consolidated online diary for Ealing's green organisations. To quote from their very useful website:

"Green Events Ealing is your one-stop site for events going on in the Borough of Ealing with a green or community theme."

You can find a list of events, including those of the Selborne Society at the following web address:

<http://greeneventsealing.wordpress.com/calendar>

Green Events Ealing have, at the time of writing, decided to colour code Selborne Society events in a nice shade of mauve but we will endeavour to make our events stand out a bit more. Watch that space!

We are also trying out Facebook and Twitter as means to publicise the work of the Society.

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/SelborneSociety

Twitter Feed: <https://twitter.com/SelborneSoc>

They're in their infancy just now but have a look and maybe you could even share the links with your friends. Meanwhile, back to printed media:

NEXT COPY DATE: Mid-January or sooner.

Best wishes,

John Kane

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