

## SPRING PROGRAMME 2025

Most meetings are held at the Cruck Barn, on Tuesdays at 7.30pm for 8.00pm. Visitors are very welcome. Please note that clause 7 of the Society's constitution reads: "the Society will exercise due care when arranging its meetings and activities for the benefit of members. Members taking part in any meeting or activity do so at their own risk."

Tea/coffee and biscuits will be served free of charge. Cups are provided, but you are encouraged to bring your own if you can.

### JANUARY

- 7 **THE WORK OF RSPB INVESTIGATIONS TEAM – (Zoom Meeting)**  
Mark Thomas heads the RSPB Investigations Team based at Sandy, Beds. Mark will talk to us about the important work his team does in protecting our birds not least in investigating raptor persecution across the UK.
- 12 **SUNDAY WALK: Summer Leys Nature Reserve – Leader Joe Clinch.**  
Summer Leys is a BCN Wildlife Trust site, very good for waders, ducks and even hedgerow birds. **Meet at 10.15 a.m. at the Pay and Display car park, Summer Leys, Hardwater Road, near Wollaston, Northants NN29 7TD – SP 886 634 – prettiest.hardening.quits. Car share if you can**
- 14 **EMBERTON COUNTRY PARK**  
Emberton Country Park is a site well known to many of us from Society walks. Tonight, park manager **Samuel Flowers** will give us an introduction to the site including its history, biodiversity and habitat management.
- 21 **METAMORPHOSIS – HOW FLIES ARE SAVING THE WORLD**  
Flies are beginning to get the recognition they deserve! We welcome back their Champion, **Erica McAlister** of Natural History Museum, London. She will again discuss the wonder of flies and explore how the study of these species has led to great discoveries in everything from space travel to forensics, transforming our understanding of agriculture, medicine, AI, biodiversity and ourselves.
- 28 **SUMMER PLANNING**  
Time to plan our summer excursions. Do please come along with suggestions of walks and offer to lead them.

### FEBRUARY

- 4 **MEMBERS' NIGHT**  
Offers of 10-20 minute items to Martin Kincaid or Di Parsons.

- 11 **AMAZING BUTTERFLIES – THE JOHN WICKHAM LECTURE (ZOOM MEETING)**  
**Dr Martin Warren** is former Chief Executive of Butterfly Conservation and one of the UK's foremost butterfly ecologists. We are delighted that he is able to speak to us on his favourite subject from his Dorset home. An evening in memory of our late member and Vice President John Wickham.
- 16 **SUNDAY WALK: Stockgrove Country Park**  
Leaders: **Rob Andrews and Julie Cuthbert**  
A late winter visit to a site we usually visit in the summer months. Often a good time to see birds around the lake and perhaps early flowers and fungi. **Meet at 10.15 a.m. in the car park off Brickhill Road, Heath and Reach. Nearest postcode: LU7 0BA– SP 919294 – length.dined.tuck Parking charges apply. Car share if you can**
- 18 **STRANGE RELATIONS – UNTANGLING THE EVOLUTIONARY FAMILY TREE**  
If you have 3 pets: a dog, a cat and a guinea-pig, plus a pony in the stable, to which are you most closely related? Drawing on the latest findings of molecular phylogenetics, long-term Society member **Steve Brady** will answer this question and cast light on the often-unexpected ways in which evolution acting on the family trees of life has produced the natural world around us.
- 25 **PHOTO COMPETITION - RESULTS**  
You will have been asked to vote online for your favourite members' photos over the past month. Tonight we reveal the overall winner and runners-up.

### MARCH

- 4 **TWO VICTORIAN WOMEN FOSSIL COLLECTORS**  
Most of us have heard of Mary Anning, the pioneering fossil collector from 19<sup>th</sup> Century Lyme Regis – but what about her near contemporary, Anne Baker, of Northampton? **Bob Purser** of Northants Natural History Society will draw comparisons between the lives of these two Victorian fossil collectors and discuss their contributions to our understanding of geology.
- 11 **THE FARM CLUSTERS PROJECT IN THE CHILTERN**  
**Nick Marriner** of Chiltern AONB coordinates this project which aims to monitor bird populations across farms in Buckinghamshire. This talk was originally planned for April 2024 and we are delighted that Nick can now come and give us an update on his work, this time focusing on farmland birds in the Chilterns.

**18 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

A review of the Society’s activities over the past year and the election of our officers and committee.

**25 CALVING AND EARLY LIFE IN RED DEER**

**Marion Hall** is a Milton Keynes resident and an Honoray Associate of the Open University who has previously spoken to us about the mating behaviour of bush-crickets. This evening she will talk to us about her research into red deer which was carried out on the Isle of Rum in the 1970s and published in British Wildlife magazine in 2023.

**APRIL**

**1 TO BE CONFIRMED**

**8 THE OUZEL VALLEY**

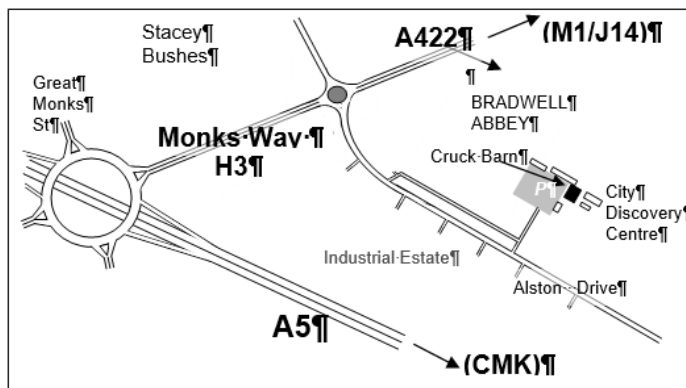
The River Ouzel rises in the Chilterns and passes through Greensand Trust country before reaching Milton Keynes, and joining the River Ouse. We will learn more from **Jon Balaam**, the Trust’s Director of Development.

**15 SPRING FLOWERING TREES – PRACTICAL SESSION**

In April, many of our native (and non-native) trees are in full flower. Our **What’s That Plant group** will help is to look closely at these flowers, whose beauty is often overlooked, and to learn how they can be used in tree identification.

**22 EASTER BREAK – No Meeting**

**29 FIRST OUTDOOR MEETING of the Summer Programme**



**PROGRAMME**

**JANUARY - APRIL 2025**

**President:** *Vacancy*  
**Vice Presidents:** *Vacancy*

**Chairman:** Matt Andrews  
**Secretary:** Mervyn Dobbin  
**Treasurer:** Linda Murphy

**Address:** City Discovery Centre, Alston Drive,  
Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes, MK13 9AP

**Website:** [www.mknhs.org.uk](http://www.mknhs.org.uk)

**Contact Us:** [info@mknhs.org.uk](mailto:info@mknhs.org.uk)

**The Society meets every Tuesday:**

**September – April** Usually in the Cruck Barn, City Discovery Centre (see map over), but occasionally some are held on Zoom. Commencing at 7.30pm, with tea/coffee, for **8.00pm** start.

**April – August**

At sites of local or regional natural history interest in the company of experienced naturalists. **7.00pm** start.