



## Happy New Year to all of our FoSL Members!

### CHAIRMAN'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

*Nigel Daley*

I trust that 2019 will prove to be a good year for you and yours. On the Reserve, over the next twelve months, we have much to look forward to: the cattle meadow project will finally be coming to fruition over the forthcoming weeks on the land to the north of Stocker's Lake, the CCTV project on the Heronry is progressing well and we are hoping for some live action on the nests this spring.

We have enjoyed two very successful recruitment days on the lake with over eighty new members joining. We also have a number of wildlife and nature walks organised for the next twelve months which are being advertised in the Events Calendar. Sunday morning work parties continue to be extremely well attended by our members, many thanks to all for your continued support. We have now moved our tool and equipment store into the fishermen's shed.

On a slightly more concerning note, we all need to be aware of the Three Rivers District Councils planning consultation and Hillingdon Council's planning proposals for various sites around the edge of the Reserve. There will, without any shadow of doubt be serious implications for the wildlife and Flora around our Nature Reserve. Please watch this issue carefully over the coming months/years as I do not believe it will just go away!

Finally, in order for FoSL to be a politically strong and organised body we need to have both an active and proactive membership. A healthy membership is important to us and whilst new members are important for fresh ideas it is just as important for us to keep existing members and as it is coming round to membership renewal, could I please ask you to renew your membership. If you like what we do at Stockers, it would really help our membership renewal process if you would consider taking out a Standing Order starting from this membership year. On a similar note, please may I ask all members to return this year's membership renewal form in order that the data held by FoSL is fully compliant with the new Data Protection legislation.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS - *Dick Beeden*

It's that time of year again. But this year I want to make a special appeal for every member to renew. Of course, your £5 sub (plus any donation) enable us to do more good work on the reserve, particularly when outside contractors are involved as they will be quite a lot in 2019.



But that is not the only benefit of renewing. The bigger we are the more influential we can be. Government, local and National, tends not to heed one person speaking for him or herself. But if that person is speaking for hundreds, governments tends to be more receptive. Stocker's is

always under pressure; 40 years ago, it was the M25; now it is HS2, the need for cycle paths, and both Three Rivers and Hillingdon have to find more land for houses. Already 3 large pieces of land bordering our reserve have been identified as possible sites for housing. We will of course voice our objections as strongly as possible. We would like to think that all of you are behind us.

So, please, everyone, make a special effort to renew and help make our voice heard and heeded.

And while you are at it, why not encourage a friend or other family member to join?

### WORK ON THE RESERVE

#### Work Party Sunday November 4th - *Ian Watson*

Another jolly good turnout to continue the job we started in October, namely clearing the south-western shore of the lake and allow vegetation to develop and flower. This was a good place to talk to passers-by to give them the message about Stocker's Lake and if possible, to recruit some new members.



Everybody got stuck in and I reckon one or two new members are a real possibility. Very importantly the biscuits returned to the standard we've come to expect at a Friends' Work party.

Thanks again to Josh Kalms from the Trust for joining the party and for giving us the benefit of his knowledge and thanks for our members who worked hard:

*Russell Bell, Emma Brading, Steve Cohen, Nigel Daley, Ken Davies, Peter Ewer, Evelyn Fox, Mike Lansdowne, Tony and Sheila Lee, Chris Martin, and Ian Watson.!*

#### Work Party Sunday 2nd December - *Ian Watson*

It started dry but it gradually got wetter but didn't prevent more good clearance work to remove shade on the lake edge at the Springwell Lane end of the reserve, including a nice bit of dead hedging. Jack and Ray also piled logs to ensure that people use the gate rather than going round the side at the footpath entrance.

The mince pies went down well – home made by John May's independent grocery shop in Chorleywood.

*Munching and working were:*

*Emma Brading, Phillip and Julia Davies, Peter Ewer, Ray Kristofiak, Mike Lansdowne, Tony and Sheila Lee, Alison Marriott, Bob Sherrin (Thanks for the chocolate biscuits which we'll have at the next work party), Ian Watson and Jack Westbrook.*

## EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

### Mink & Water Voles – Ian Watson

Some of us will remember sighting the delightful water voles on the River Colne by Stocker's Lake. Then in the 1990's came the mink and that was the end of the water voles. Richard Drew, our much-loved warden, combatted the mink with some success but the voles did not return, although they are found in the Misbourne River and also in the River Chess quite near Rickmansworth.

We and the Trust would like to see the return of the voles and as a preliminary the Trust wish to place a couple of mink rafts on the reserve to record the presence or otherwise of mink and water voles. The rafts have a clay patch which will record the footprints of any small creature using the raft. It needs checking, ideally every fortnight, to record and identify the footprints, either by referring to a footprint chart (which will be supplied) or by taking a mobile phone photograph and then reporting to Martin Ketcher at the Trust.

Ideally, this would be done by a small team of like-minded people, rather like Barbara James' team who do the annual April-September Butterfly survey. Mink tend to be most active in March/April and Aug/Sep/Oct.

Anybody interested? It's really worthwhile. Contact: Ian Watson, tel: 01923 282136 or email: [ikwatson364@icloud.com](mailto:ikwatson364@icloud.com) or speak to Martin Ketcher at the Trust, tel: 017278 858901.

### Heron Nest Camera Project Update-Dick Beeden

You will recall last year we installed cameras on two heron nests on the island in the lake. All did not go to plan because unhelpfully the herons chose not to use the nests in the cameras' fields of view.

We have not given up. At least we know the solar power system, cameras and transmitter out on the island work unattended. Since then we have moved one camera and replaced the other with one that can be remotely controlled from the shore. So, if again the herons chose the wrong nest sites (from our point of view) we should be able to realign at least one of the cameras and capture what is going on.

Also, to make using the system easier Affinity Water have agreed that we can run power to Kingfisher Hide from the pumping station. That means that we will no longer have to lug heavy batteries to the hide where we receive the signal from the island in order to power up the shore-based hardware.

At the time of writing for this newsletter both these elements are still works in progress but we expect to have the system up and running for the next nesting season in a few weeks time.

## Survey of Butterflies at Stocker's Lake 2018

### The recording scheme



Once again, a dedicated band of enthusiasts under the leadership of Barbara James recorded the number of butterflies seen in 12 transects around the lake each week between April and September. Entering their results directly onto the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme.

### Total butterflies counted by year

Butterfly counts at Stocker's Lake are now available for 10 years in 2 periods, 1997-1999 and 2012-2018, so we are increasingly able to compare numbers counted and ascertain trends.

2018 was a record year around the lake with 1,113 butterflies counted, 36% up on 2017, and 3% higher than the previous record in 1997. The distribution of sightings over the recording period confirms that this was once again heavily influenced by the weather. The hot dry spell from the end of June to mid-August when the maximum temperature regularly exceeded 30 degrees helped to make the summer of 2018 the joint hottest on record.

### The National Picture

The report on Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count held each summer states that the hot dry weather should have benefited most butterflies but several species still experienced a slump. Numbers of Red Admiral, Comma and Small Tortoiseshell decreased by 73%, 40% and 12% respectively compared to 2017, which was also a bad year for them. By contrast, the Whites had a bumper year with increases of 161%, 104% and 78% respectively for Small, Large and Green-veined Whites, making up more than half of the total sightings

A chart showing the top 10 butterfly species counted at Stocker's Lake in 2018 and how their ranking has changed since 2012, can be seen with other charts on the FoSL Web Page.

### Cattle – Ian Watson

As you know our plans to introduce cattle have been frustratingly delayed by the bodies involved with the Colne Valley and who are part-funding our project. Recent events are more hopeful and I hope to start cattle fencing on our meadows on 7 January. Fingers crossed!

## OTHER FoSL NEWS

### Quiz Night 17<sup>th</sup> November - Simon Jones

A team representing FoSL raised £395 for the cause by competing in a charities quiz night at Chorleywood Memorial Hall in November. The

event is organised annually by Chorleywood Parish Council and it raised in total more than £8,000 which was then distributed to 22 participating local charities. Your FoSL team of 8 included three committee members - Chairman Nigel Daly, Vice Chairman Ian Watson and Webmaster Simon Jones. Well done and thank you to all of our team. We didn't win but we didn't disgrace ourselves either by finishing in the top half!

FoSL is always looking for new sources of funds. So, if you have any ideas for other fundraising initiatives in the future do please suggest these to one of our committee. Also, if you like quizzes and would like to represent FoSL on another occasion then please let Simon Jones know.

### Newsletter Editor Wanted!

After nearly 20 years very skilfully editing our Newsletter, Trish Jeneid would like to retire. However, she does not want to leave us in the lurch and would be happy to train up her replacement. Layout and computer skills would be needed and ideally a knowledge of computer publishing programmes. Trish is a hard act to follow but is very nice to work with. Interested? Either give Trish a call on 01923 770221 or email her at: [trishles@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:trishles@tiscali.co.uk) or phone Ian Watson on 01923 282136

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### Working Parties for 2019



We welcome any members who would like to get more involved in practical conservation work. The work parties last about 2½ hours. Please bring wellies/boots and strong gloves also rakes and garden cutters if you can.

### Working Parties 2019

- Sunday January 6th 2019
  - Sunday February 3rd 2019
  - Sunday March 3rd 2019
  - Sunday April 7th 2019
  - Sunday September 1st 2019
  - Sunday October 6th 2019
  - Sunday November 3rd 2019
  - Sunday December 1st 2019
- All start at 09.55am**

**Meet:** usually at the Fisherman's car park (next to the wooden bridge from Inns Lake) but it is a good idea to check with Emma (01923 779008) before the date just in case we have changed the meeting place.

## 2019 AGM

The AGM will take place at 7.30pm on Thursday April 18th 2019

Baptist Church, Field Way,  
Rickmansworth WD3 7EL

**Speaker: Paul Barritt (Permanent Guest Leader of the Hallé Orchestra)**

**Subject: Birds and Music**

## Wildfowl Walks

Sunday January 13th 2019

And

Sunday February 10th 2019

Guided walks to look at wintering wildfowl on the Lake.

**Meet:** 10am on the Causeway between Stocker's Lake and Bury Lake

## Heron & Egret Watch

Sunday March 24th 2019

1pm - 4pm

Our annual look at herons, egrets and their young

**Meet:** on the Causeway between Stocker's Lake and Bury Lake



## COMMITTEE

Nigel Daley (Chairman)	01923 282844
Ian Watson (Vice chair & secretary)	01923 282136
Dick Beeden (Treasurer & membership)	0208 4219958
Larry Hurst (fundraiser, publicity)	01923 848440
Simon Jones (Web Site)	01923 285763
Linda Ascroft (Events organiser)	01923 772170
Trish Jeneid (Newsletter editor, posters)	01923 770221
Russell Ball (Membership recruitment)	07884426671
Emma Brading (Volunteers organiser)	07428 790460
Steve Carter (Wildlife recorder)	07917 796976
	<b>Text preferred</b>

