

Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire

Lecture Programme, Autumn-Winter 2016

Lectures are held at 7.45pm in The Old School Room, St Peter's Church, First Turn, Wolvercote, Oxford, OX2 8AQ except as otherwise noted.

Tue, September 13th – 1758th meeting, 7.45pm, St Antony's College, Syndicate Rm, OX2 6JF.

Dr Judy Webb - Oxford's Threatened Wildlife

Oxford's varied geology and green areas, both adjacent to river and stream corridors and on drier land make the city far richer in wildlife than large tracts of rural 'green' Oxfordshire. This talk will explore Oxford's wildlife diversity and its future prospects in the face of extreme housing pressure. Judy Webb is a local ecologist who has studied the city's wildlife for more than 30 years. She is a voluntary adviser to the Oxford City Council Countryside Service as well as being heavily involved in the running of two City wildlife groups and advises other Oxfordshire wildlife groups.

Tue, October 4th – 1759th meeting, 7.45pm, The Old School Room, Members: Free, Visitors: £2

Dr Michelle Parks – The Land of Fire and Ice - Volcanoes, hazards and monitoring in Iceland

The interaction between the plate spreading and the Icelandic hotspot makes Iceland one of the most volcanically active regions in the world. This small island contains 35 active volcanoes, each capable of exhibiting a very wide spectrum of volcanic activity.

Michelle is a volcanologist specialising in Icelandic volcanoes. For the last three years, she has been working for the Nordic Volcanological Center, University of Iceland. She holds an MSc in Geophysical Hazards from University College London and a D.Phil. in Earth Sciences from Oxford.

Mon, November 14th – 1760th meeting, 7.45pm, Exeter Hall, Kidlington, OX5 1AB. Admission: £2

Bernard Tucker Memorial Lecture – Joint with OOS

Dr James Pearce-Higgins - Birds and Climate Change

Climate change is a much-discussed topic, but what does the science say? In this talk, the evidence of how climate change is already affecting bird distributions, populations and communities will be reviewed and summarised. The magnitude of future climate change is projected to be much greater than already experienced. The potential impact of these future changes in bird species around the world will be assessed, and used to assess how conservation practice may need to adapt in response. Dr Pearce-Higgins is the British Trust for Ornithology Director of Science

Tue, December 6th – 1761st meeting, 7.45pm, The Old School Room, Members: Free, Visitors: £2

Prof. Robert Evans - George Claridge Druce: botanist, businessman, burgher, and benefactor

Druce was the re-founder of the ANHSO in 1901 and an officer of the Society for half a century. He was not only a pioneering botanist, but also a pharmacist, politician, preservationist and philanthropist. This talk will present his career.

Prof. Evans is Regius Professor of History emeritus at Oxford University.

Tue, February 7th – 1762nd meeting, 7.45pm, Nissan Lecture Theatre, St Antony's College, OX2 6JF.

Warburg Memorial Lecture – Joint with BBOWT. Admission: £2

Professor Simon Hiscock Director of the Oxford Botanic Garden & Harcourt Arboretum

Field Programme, Autumn-Winter 2016

All trips are free for ANHSO members and £2 for non-members. Some sites may be unsuitable or hazardous for the disabled or infirm - please contact the organiser in advance to discuss any special requirements. Any general queries about the field programme can be sent to the ANHSO field secretary Geoff Moxon (fieldsecretary@anhso.org.uk) or for any queries on the day Geoff's mobile number is 07917 163235. Geoff also always welcomes any comments, ideas or requests for future topics or events.

Sun, September 4th, 1.00pm – 4.00pm, **Owen Green – William ‘Strata’ Smith, Churchill**

Owen Green from Oxford University Department of Earth Sciences will be repeating for the ANHSO the highly acclaimed walk he led for Abingdon Naturalists last year on the fascinating life of William Smith (1769-1839), said to be the ‘Father of British Geology’. William Smith is most famous for his 1815 geological map of England, Wales and part of Scotland (which was the subject of Simon Winchester’s *The Map that Changed the World*), and was born the son of a blacksmith in the village of Churchill in the Cotswolds. The first hour will be spent walking around the village visiting key sites in William Smith’s life, before moving on to the Churchill Heritage Centre. Meet at the William Smith monument in Churchill (SP283242, nearest postcode OX7 6NJ).

Wed, November 23rd, 2.20pm – 5.00pm, **David Wilding – Otmoor Bird Walk & Starling Murmurations**

By popular demand following on from his ‘From Wheat to Wetlands’ talk in 2015, RSPB Site Manager for Otmoor David Wilding will lead a late autumn dusk bird watching walk to show us the subject of his talk *in situ*. The walk will take place at the best time of year to see the spectacular starling murmurations that Otmoor is famous for, as they descend to roost in the reedbeds in their thousands. Meet in the Otmoor Reserve car park (SP570126, nearest postcode OX3 9TD) will take you into Otmoor Lane, and the reserve is at the very end of Otmoor Lane – about a mile further on; details directions available on the RSPB Otmoor website:

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/seenature/reserves/guide/o/otmoor/directions.aspx>).

Parking spaces are limited so car sharing is encouraged – please contact the field secretary (fieldsecretary@anhso.org.uk) to offer / request lifts. A donation of £3 to the RSPB will be welcomed on the day for each attendee. Should higher starling numbers be expected earlier or later than the date of this walk, then we may change the date in the hope of getting the best possible experience – any changes will be advertised via e-mail (otherwise you can assume the time and date will stand).

Committee

President: *Christopher Hoskin*; Vice President: *Sally Abbey*; Treasurer: *Sally Abbey*; Programmes: *Christopher Hoskin*; Field: *Geoff Moxon*; Membership: *Sally Abbey*; Lecture Minutes: *rotating*; Publicity: *Sandra Simpson*; Librarian: *Serena Marner*; Editor: *Camilla Lambrick*; Oxfordshire Flora Group: *Frances Watkins*; Verge Surveys: *Caroline Jackson-Houlston*; Education: *Frances Watkins*; Flood Plain Meadows: *Judy Webb*; Committee Minutes: *Margaret Abel*