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**Belated Acknowledgement**  
The image of Thena Clough used in our previous issue was printed by kind permission of Newnham College, Cambridge. We regret that this did not appear with the article itself.

**Note**  
Unattributed photographs within articles were supplied with the text and are understood to have been taken by the author or to have been submitted with the photographer’s permission. Other photo credits are given in *italics*.

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**Cover picture**  
Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*) on the heath at Shatterford.  
*photo: Graham Long*
THE EDITOR’S PAGE

We were recently standing on the footpath surrounding a small ornamental pond in Mount Usher, in County Wicklow, in the middle of which there is a dense bed of bulrush, reeds, etc. While I was taking some pictures of the flowering rush, there was a startled cry from the interior and a moorhen broke cover immediately in front of us. It turned sharp to its left and headed across the lily pads for some six feet when it was grabbed from beneath. Flapping wildly it disappeared, leaving only a scattering of down on the surface of the pond. Only the movement in the reed bed showed where it was being taken. The whole incident was over in 30 seconds and we never saw the assassin.

As the attack started in the middle of the vegetation, it was unlikely to be a pike, most likely a mink. What we had was an eye-witness experience of the law of unintended consequences. Substantial numbers of mink have been released into the wild in Ireland by animal rights activists. In fairness, some have also escaped through careless management. The moorhen lost its life as a direct result of such actions, though such a consequence had not been intended when the mink were set free.

Human decision-making is fraught with this factor, not least where landscape preservation and wildlife conservation are concerned. It’s good to report that the three volunteers we were seeking in our last issue have now come forward. Do look at those we are seeking in this issue (page 7), especially the GIS Specialist and the Statistician, though that in no way downplays the importance of appointing a new auditor. Both roles will greatly assist assessment of consequences and could make a significant contribution to reducing the ‘unintended’.

As has been made known widely, I need to relinquish the Editor’s Chair after the Winter issue to concentrate on other responsibilities. If you feel you could take over as Editor, do please talk with me. There are already articles for next year in the pipeline, and it will be good to make the transfer as easy as possible.

Graham Long
A MEMORABLE PACKAGED-TOUR THROUGH THE FOREST’S HISTORY

To walk through Sloden Inclosure at any time is a pleasure but on a sunlit May evening with bluebells carpeting the woodland floor, the hollies heavily laden with tiny white flowers, and the evening air filled with birdsong, there could only be delight. So the 13 members and friends who joined the walk through just a portion of Sloden led by Anthony Pasmore were unlikely to be disappointed.

We had not walked more than a short distance when we passed the site of a 2nd World War saw mill buried in the undergrowth, looked back to note a double embankment dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, and paused to consider what we could see. Various suggestions were forthcoming but none identified the depression that was a 19th century, possibly even earlier, charcoal burning pit on the brink of which we were standing. Preparing charcoal in the ground long preceded the modern bin technique, with the pits constantly enlarging. There are a number of examples of this older approach in the Forest but the now nearly obscured pit in Sloden is among the largest.

As a coppice enclosure, Sloden Copse dates from 1609. As we moved through the woodland, we stopped to look at a pollarded beech. Nothing unusual there, one might think, except for the strange design engraved long ago into the bark, which is also found on another tree in the south of the Forest. On we went, along the eastern edge to an area
where there are the remains of a neolithic boiling pit with calcined flints, heat-transformed stones, still scattered on the surface. Close by is a small pond, evidence of the night in March 1941 when a passing German aircraft unloaded four bombs to the alarm of the residents of Holly Hatch – and any ponies grazing in the area. The verderers did check the following morning that no animals had been injured! Up the slope we climbed, and on to a clearing where in 1358 a royal hunting lodge had stood. The locations of the other lodges in the Forest are marked by a scattering of roof slates but here there are none, which suggests that this lodge was probably thatched.

Heading back, we stopped at a second place where a Roman pottery had been located. With minimal disturbance, on both occasions Anthony was able to produce a decorated fragment for us to handle – and replace.

Sloden’s paths are well trodden. In the course of ninety minutes we travelled through several thousand years and experienced the impact of human societies on the Forest’s landscape.

How many of those that traverse these footpaths walk with the understanding that this group now enjoys? Probably not nearly enough, for an interpreted walk through Sloden is a memorable packaged-tour through the history of the New Forest!

Graham Long
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
Events and Activities in 2015

Thursday 16 July  Frohawk Walk led by Dr June Chatfield
Hopefully we shall see Silver-washed Fritillaries, including the variety after
which the great entomologist named his daughter Valezina. 16 July was his
birthday and this walk is to be led by his biographer and well known
Hampshire naturalist. Meet at Standing Hat car park at 11.30 a.m. Grid ref.
SU314036. Approx. 2 hours. As this walk will be weather dependent, please
notify Graham Long (details on back cover) if you plan to join the party.

Sunday 4 October  NFA Barbecue
Forestry Commission barbecue site at Anderwood. The site lies off Lyndhurst
Road which runs between Burley village and the A35 in the direction of
Lyndhurst at Grid ref. SU249058. Join us for a guided walk at 11.00 a.m.
before the barbecue starts at 1.00 p.m. Bring your own barbecue food and
drink. Visitors welcome. Contact: geoff.barnes56@googlemail.com or
secretary@newforestassociation.co.uk

Mid-week in October  A Fungus Foray led by Sarah Cadbury. The exact date
and location will be published on the website and via email nearer the time
when the season and weather which so much affect the development of
fungi can be better assessed.

NFA will lead five walks as part of the
National Park Authority’s 2015 Walking Festival

Monday 19 October  – Rights of Common
Tuesday 20 October  – Boats, Trains and Buses
Friday 23 October  – Solent 50 birds
Wednesday 28 October  – Pylewell Estate
Friday 30 October  – Avon Valley Villages

Details will appear on

http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20175/walking_festival

and on our website www.newforestassociation.org
Annual Shows

We shall again have a stand at shows during the summer season. We do need volunteers for these. If you can help, please contact Michael Chilcott on 02380 282532. The Shows we shall attend are as follows:

**The New Forest Show**
Tuesday, 28 July, Wednesday 29 July, Thursday 30 July

**Frogham Fair**
Saturday 29 August

**Romsey Show**
Saturday 12 September

For up-to-date details, or late alterations to any of the arrangements given above, please consult our website www.newforestassociation.org

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**PEOPLE WE NEED**

The NFA currently is seeking the following key appointments –

- **Honorary Secretary**
- **Chairman of the Membership & Marketing Committee**
  and also an **Editor for the Newsletter** (could be a job-share).

In addition, the following volunteers are needed to undertake practical research for us –

- **GIS Specialist** If the expression *ESRI shapefiles* means anything to you, the NFA would like your help. Tranquillity maps of the Forest have been completed; these need to be used to see how changes to the infrastructure, etc., will enhance the tranquillity and wilderness aspects of the National Park. If maps are your thing and if you are experienced with or willing to learn GIS systems, we would like your help. **Full details from Graham Baker.**

- **Auditor** We are seeking a new auditor. Annual turnover is four figures but the charity has significant reserves. The work entails a few hours each year, beginning in 2016 and a professional accountant would be ideal. **Full details from Brandy Gill.**

- **Statistician** to analyse data covering the Forest’s tranquillity and evaluate the results. **Full details from Graham Baker.**

Details of the **key appointments** can be obtained from John Ward, and those for the **volunteers** from Graham Baker and Brandy Gill. The contact information for them is on page 19.
The Forest remains a recognisable remnant of medieval England. The climate is mild, particularly in winter along the coastal fringe. Its extensive heathlands, mires and pasture woods are on a scale now unique in Europe, thus offering realistic opportunity for long-term survival of characteristic plant, insect and bird populations, fragmented or extinct elsewhere in Britain. The west Solent and the Avon valley have escaped industrialisation of other Hampshire estuaries and wetlands and offer sanctuary to a wide range of waterfowl. Clive Chatters (NFA Newsletter–Spring 2014) observed that world-wide visitors appreciate not only ‘the Forest’s natural beauty and diversity’ but also ‘the depth of recorded history combined with the survival of a working commoning economy’ – a key element in perpetuating its wildlife habitats.

The New Forest ticks 6 out of 7 of the outstanding ‘birding’ features offered by the County of Hampshire.

Tubbs (Birds of Hampshire, 1993) identified seven Hampshire features of outstanding ornithological importance, of which significant components of six features occur within the New Forest.

- The Solent’s seabird colonies.
- The breeding waders of the coastal saltmarshes and grazing marshes.
- The breeding bird community of Hampshire heathlands.
- The breeding bird community of the New Forest pasture woodlands.
- The migratory and wintering waders and wildfowl occurring in the estuaries and harbours of the Solent.
- The over–wintering populations of wildfowl inhabiting the Avon Valley.
Highly Protected Sites

These bird populations are protected under three Ramsar sites and three Special Protection Areas. The Hurst Castle/Lymington River Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), together with the Beaulieu Estuary SSSI (also a National Nature Reserve), are components of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and Special Protection Area, supporting, in any one season, a significant quota of the wetland birds for which it is so designated. These include breeding Mediterranean Gulls, Sandwich, Common, Little and Roseate Terns, biographic populations of migratory Dark–bellied Brent Goose, Teal, Ringed Plover and the Icelandic race of the Black–tailed Godwit, and an outstanding array of other wintering and passage birds, dependant upon wetland habitats within the site and regular use by over 20,000 waterfowl (as defined by the Ramsar Convention). The Open Forest and timber inclosures Ramsar/SPAs support significant populations of Dartford Warbler, Honey–buzzard, Nightjar and Woodlark in the breeding season and Hen Harriers in winter. The Avon valley Ramsar/SPA supports internationally important numbers of Gadwall and significant populations of other wintering wildfowl.

The breeding–bird communities are of great importance and interest. As well as those species for which the SPA is designated, characteristic heathland species include substantial numbers of Meadow Pipit, Skylark, Linnet and Stonechat, and waders such as Lapwing, Snipe, and Curlew. Of the birds–of–prey, the Hobby is also associated, though not exclusively so, with heathlands. The New Forest pasture woodlands are rich in species which nest in holes and crevices, including Nuthatch, all three British woodpeckers, Treecreeper, Redstart and Spotted Flycatcher; and others such as Hawfinch and Wood Warbler. The latter is a denizen of closed–canopy woodland and

Curlew (Numenius arquata) feeding on Vales Moor
Photo: Graham Long
commonest in western Britain, though it now exhibits a marked range contraction, particularly in southern England.

John Wise listed the occurrence of 230 bird species in his ‘New Forest’, which extended from Southampton Water to the River Avon. Omitting records deemed unacceptable by later authors, including the Black Woodpecker account, and those procured around Christchurch and Heron Court, now in Dorset, some 210 species remain. With an upsurge in the popularity of birdwatching, knowledge and much improved optical aids, the current ‘New Forest’ list now stands at about 340 species; the county total is around 375.

Outstanding ornithologists


Bird conservation history made here

Walks from Stoney Cross to Brockenhurst, undertaken in 1910 by ornithologists Edward Lord Grey of Fallodon (1862–1933), who was Britain’s Foreign Secretary from 1905—1916 and Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) and in 1920 by Lord Grey and prominent American ornithologist Frank Chapman (1864–1945), are enshrined in the Forest’s ornithological history. The original event led to the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 1916 and a commemorative display of 51 typical New Forest bird species, depicted at a site selected by Grey in 1932 are housed in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.
York. To celebrate its 50th anniversary, a section of the original walk was retraced in 1960 by Presidents of the Audubon Societies of the USA and Canada, together with W. A. Cadman (the Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest), Edwin Cohen (Chairman of the Ornithological Section of the Hampshire Field Club), Colin Tubbs and other notable British ornithologists.

In June 2010, Hampshire Ornithological Society organised a re-enactment of the original walk, which in 1910, included a section of the Itchen Valley from Tichborne to Martyr Worthy. Guests in 2010 included descendants of Grey and Roosevelt and senior representatives of the Edward Grey Institute, the British Trust for Ornithology and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, as well as other national and county organisations. The HOS group recorded 82 species, exactly double those listed by Grey, though Lapwing, Turtle Dove, Grey Partridge and Red-backed Shrike (which ceased to breed in Hampshire in 1984) and which were included in Grey’s total, were not seen.

From The Times, June 11th 1910

Each time a bird was heard, Mr Roosevelt asked to be told about it, and produced a paper and pencil so that Sir Edward Grey might write down its name. A considerable list was made … lark, blackbird, thrush, wren, nightjar, robin, chiffchaff, hedge sparrow, willow-wren, creeper, golden-crested wren, rook, starling, jackdaw, blackcap, garden warbler, coot, moorhen, tufted duck, swallow, martin, and swift.

The two ornithologists had a charming country walk, which was all the more appreciated by Mr. Roosevelt, inasmuch as he had been feeling thoroughly worn out in consequence of his more serious engagements earlier in the week.

They were caught in a severe thunder storm, and arrived at the Forest Park Hotel, Brockenhurst, their clothes wet through and soiled with mud, but themselves in high spirits.

This New Forest experience (Mr. Roosevelt) described in conversation with the Mayor of Southampton as “the crowning joy” of his visit to Europe, and later he declared emphatically: “I have just finished about the most pleasant 24 hours I have had in all my trip. I have had a delightful time among your English birds.”
THE BLACK WOODPECKER

As many readers will be unfamiliar with the story behind the reference to the Black Woodpecker in the previous item, we reprint it here as told by John R. Wise in his volume *The New Forest: its History and its Scenery* first published in 1883. The account is to be found in Chapter 22 headed ‘The Ornithology’.

“The presence of the great black woodpecker (*Picus martius*) has long been suspected, especially since a specimen has been killed in the Isle of Wight, and a pair has been seen near Christchurch.* [Yarrell, vol.ii. p.139] Mr. Farren, in 1862, was fortunate enough not only to see the bird, but to discover its nest. On the ninth of June, whilst in Pignel Wood, near Brockenhurst, he observed the hen bird fly out of a hole placed about six feet high in a small oak, from which he had earlier in the season taken a green woodpecker’s nest. Hiding himself in the bush-wood, he saw, after waiting half an hour, the hen return, and had no doubts as to its identity. An endeavour, however, to secure her in the hole, with the butterfly-net which he had with him, was unsuccessful. He was afraid to leave the eggs, as some woodmen were working close by, and so lost any other opportunity of making the capture. The eggs, now in my collection, were four in number, one being slightly addled, and are the only specimens ever taken in England. They were laid on the bare rotten wood, the bird finding the hole sufficiently large, as Mr. Farren had widened it when taking the previous eggs. It is, however, remarkable that such a shy bird should have built in such a scattered and thin wood as Pignel, close to a public thoroughfare, and where the woodmen had for some time past been constantly felling timber.”
RED DEER
by John K Fawcett

It is frequently repeated that red deer became extinct in the New Forest around the 17th Century but there is intermittent evidence of their presence, following at least one major re-introduction, until the Deer Removal Act 1851. Releases of small numbers continued, including a stag and two hinds by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu in 1908, but none led to re-establishing genetic continuity until the 1960s, or to a population comparable with the over one hundred present now.

The paddocked red deer I visited over fifty years ago at Sir Dudley Forwood’s secluded 'Old House' had been transported from Warnham Park but soon afterwards they roamed the woodlands northeast of Burley. This was during Arthur Cadman’s reign as Deputy Surveyor and it is now generally accepted that the stag, five hinds and three calves did not contrive their own escape. The Burley stock became the foundation of the Forest’s current red deer, although there was a smaller introduction around that time south of Denny Lodge.

Red and roe are Britain's only native deer. Though in appearance indistinguishable from pure-bred, the red deer introduced to the New Forest already shared the fate of many throughout Britain: hybridisation with both sika, a species described in a future article, and wapiti, larger than red deer and deliberately interbred to 'improve' the size of antlers and quantity of venison, as seen at Warnham. Red deer often wander in a wide area centred around Ober Heath; on Crown Land, they are conserved within a band south of the A31 and north of the railway that crosses the southern Forest. Sika are restricted southeast of it, to prevent further hybridisation, a commendable Forestry Commission policy successful in recent years.
Red deer are Britain’s largest wild land animals, although much smaller than domestic species like ponies and cattle. They are almost uniform in colour similar to roe deer but individually around four times their mass. Red stags are up to 50% heavier than hinds, as in other herd species in which few males compete to mate with many females. This contrasts with the negligible sexual dimorphism of roe and muntjac deer, described frequently as monogamous, but more accurately as promiscuous.

Red deer, especially stags, roam even more widely than fallow, particularly to private land southwest of the Forest where they are sometimes perceived as causing agricultural damage – as well as having attractive trophy antlers. Numbers shot there are not readily disclosed but are thought biased towards mature stags with the most magnificent heads. So the Forestry Commission seeks official agreement on control of numbers, and conserving the best potential sires.

**Annual Cycles**

While many mature stags spend much of the year outside the Forest, they return for the rut, centred around October. Except between September and December, it is hinds and immature red deer that are most frequently seen on Crown Land. The predominantly female herds vary greatly in size, with dispersal and coalescence often caused by human disturbance.

Each hind, however, usually seeks isolation to drop her calf, delivered standing more often than lying. The peak of red deer births is in the last week of May and first two weeks of June, a little later than that of roe and earlier than that of fallow. Spotted for camouflage like other
young deer, the calf can stand within thirty minutes and follow its mother within an hour, but mostly lies hidden during its first few days. The mother forages at a distance usually within earshot, returning infrequently for a brief suckle.

At a month old, the calf often follows its mother as she rejoins other hinds with their own calves. Suckling decreases over some six months but juveniles in the matriarchal groups doubtless learn much about the environment and intraspecific social behaviour. This pattern is similar to that for fallow fawns, but different from that for roe kids, which hide for longer and whose mothers are not gregarious.

Stags cast their antlers annually around March, growth of replacements starting immediately under a skin covering, appropriately designated 'velvet', which is cleaned off in August. Both of these periods are slightly before those for fallow. Dates are earlier for older stags, whereas male calves' first antlers, usually starting growth also about March, are not cleaned of velvet until early September.

**Guessing Age**

Contrary to popular belief, the size of antlers, or number of 'points', is a poor guide to age of stags although judgement can improve with experience, taking account of other criteria. But estimating ages of live deer depends on identifying them soon after birth, usually by ear-tagging. Otherwise guesswork is reckless, as we have demonstrated also for fallow and roe deer.
So generalisations require caution but usually, as with fallow, the first antlers are simple spikes growing from little bumps (pedicles) on the heads of male calves around nine months old until complete at about fifteen months. The next year the antlers may branch to several points on each side but are still light-weight. Mature stags, in their prime at seven to nine years, may have a dozen or more points.

During the rut the majestic stags provide dramatic displays of roaring and occasionally fighting or mating. This, regrettably, attracts much harmful disturbance by the public, including photographers many of whom are intent on closer approaches while breaking the basic rules in all wildlife photography: put the welfare of your subject first; do not impinge on natural activities.

New Forest red deer have problems: they are harassed in the Forest and shot outside it less methodically than the Forestry Commission culls them inside; they need to be segregated from sika to protect pedigrees already sullied by past human meddling.

So the Forestry Commission reasonably seeks to stabilise the total population close to 100, representing a biomass similar to 400 roe. Management requires reliable census and mortality records, with nearby landowners not acting as if in isolation but participating fully in the Deer Management Groups, contributing reliable data and implementing agreed policy.
BOOK REVIEW

A Comprehensive Guide
to Insects of Britain and Ireland
By Paul D. Brock

Four years ago, local entomologist Paul Brock, gave us A Photographic Guide to the Insects of the New Forest and Surrounding Area. This was a very useful foretaste of this new guide, much wider in scope, that he has now delivered. Described by the eminent Oxford entomologist Dr George McGavin as ‘magnificent … a tour de force.’ It is impossible not to agree.

The book does what the cover claims. It offers 2,700 photographs, very many of them taken by Paul himself, ranging over 2,100 species of insect, and includes 2,000 distribution maps. Alongside each, is a short description giving wing span or body length, additional colouration details, habitat and distribution information, and a season note to help readers know when each species will be out and about.

Because it is comprehensive, it offers a number of surprises. Where else can you find the comforting fact that there are only 62 species of flea to be caught, with a picture of what you may collect with your hedgehog (though don’t let that stop you being kind to hedgehogs; they need all the support they can get). Did you know that there are eight species of stick insect living in the UK, one of which has been found in Hampshire? Arachnaphobes can buy this volume without fear. Though some people have complained that it doesn’t have a section on spiders, these are not insects and are not included.
It covers most groups in considerable detail but in the case of the larger families within them, for instance the pug moths, a selection has had to be made with the geographical spread of the work in mind. Of the over 50 species of pug moth found in Britain and Ireland the nine illustrated show well the characteristics of the family. The distribution maps illustrate how variable their spread actually is.

As was noted in the review of the earlier volume, it is necessary to use the text in association with the photographs when seeking to identify insects. (This is, of course, true with all wildlife ID guides.) For instance, in the section on hoverflies there are excellent pictures of five species all with yellow stripes down the thorax and broad yellow bands across the central part of the abdomen. These are easily confused but the text offers extra clues that will help the observer to make the correct identification.

If there is one criticism, it is about weight. As the ‘most complete guide ever published’, this is a heavy book (852 gms/1lb 14oz) and, if carried in the field, is likely to be packed to the exclusion of other useful ID guides. Its weight is probably inevitable, given the coverage it offers, but it is somewhat of a disincentive to haul it around the Forest. However, it is a volume that must surely have a place on the bookshelf. Even though insects are diminishing by the year something new finds its way into the garden or into the house and its great to be able to track down what it is.

Peter Marren, author of many wildlife books and prolific book-reviewer ended his review in *British Wildlife* with this appreciation. ‘Amassing nearly 3,000 sharp and well-lit images of often scarce and elusive insects is a feat in itself. When they are arranged in a skilfully organised text conveying almost the full diversity of insect life in Britain and Ireland, the result is a quiet masterpiece. I doubt whether any of the big publishers could have brought it off. If you want to identify as many insects as possible without killing them, this book is now the obvious starting place. It is an incredible achievement.’

*Graham Long*
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