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NOTICEBOARD

We thought it would be useful for your planning to list all our summer outdoor events in this March issue, hence the longer list than usual. Watch out for an announcement for a summer visit to Dawn's Paddock, as the original March 23rd date was cancelled due to bad weather.

And don't miss the fascinating article on page 13, by Ivan Pedley, about the lichens that we are seeing in increasing abundance in the countryside.

Membership, Programme and Permit Card

This comes with your Fieldfare – please sign it NOW – family member/s under 18 should sign on your card/s – and carry the card when visiting Eyebrook or Burley Wood or if buying books at Uppingham Sports and Books. We very much hope you will join in and enjoy your outdoor visits this summer.

A message from Ann Tomlinson

At the March AGM, I stepped down as Chairman of the Society. It has been an honour to hold the post and a very interesting ten years, but it is time for someone else to guide the Society. In all organisations, a new person 'at the top' brings new ideas and a fresh approach, so a change is very much a good thing.

I am succeeded by Linda Biddle, who was voted in at the meeting. She is currently our Honorary Secretary and, of course, Mammal Recorder. She is a fine naturalist and knows the Society inside and out. I know she will make a wonderful Chairman, and I am sure you will all be giving her your full support.

We've done a number of things over the past ten years. A couple of projects remain incomplete, however, notwithstanding the amount of work the Committee has put in during my tenure. These involve moving the Society's recording activity towards digital media, and also encouraging more new members. I say more about this in my final report, which will form part of the *Annual Report* published later this year. But members will of course hear about developments via *Fieldfare* in the interim.

Right now, I'd like to draw your attention to the questionnaire on the next page of this edition of *Fieldfare*. Over the past couple of years we've started to notice a downward trend in membership numbers, coupled with lower figures attending

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both indoor and outdoor meetings. If we are doing something wrong, and it's discouraging members from re-joining, or attending events, we'd really like to know.

So have a look at the questionnaire and see if you have any thoughts you would like to raise with the Committee. They'd be very grateful for all feedback. You can comment via the website rnhscontact@btinternet.com, or bend the ear of a Committee member, via post, phone or just by ambushing them in the street!

One issue we thought might be causing people problems is the move to the new school hall. There were teething problems, certainly, but the Committee has done its best to tackle things like the seating configuration, keeping the heating on, and microphone systems. Also the car parking is far better, now. Although there are other events going on at the school all the time, you should be

able to find a space by 7.30pm. **But please note the deadly stinger device now in place at the far end of the car park. This is now the designated EXIT, so please don't wreck your tyres by coming in that way!**

So we hope our accommodation is better suited to us now, and if you had been put off attending because of the move, please do reconsider. Or let us know about any other problems.

Finally, thanks to the Committee, past and present, the Recorders, all the Society's many helpers, and to you, the membership, for your great support, both to me as Chairman, and to the Society generally, over the last ten years. It's been a fun ride! I look forward to seeing RNHS continue to play a significant part in the life of the county for years to come.

Best wishes to you all,

Ann Tomlinson

LET US HAVE YOUR FEEDBACK!

There has been a significant reduction in the number of members attending meetings. We would like to find out possible reasons for this. Have a think about these questions and let the Committee know your views, or anything else that you feel is relevant.

You can email the Society: rnhscontact@btinternet.com

Or write or phone to any of the Committee.

Thank you.

Indoor meetings

Do you consider the venue suitable for RNHS meetings? Yes/No

Is the screen visible to members? Yes/No

Can you hear the speaker when the sound system is being used? Yes/No

Is the room sufficiently warm? Yes/No

Is the subject matter appropriate to RNHS? Yes/No

Outdoor meetings

Is the number of outdoor meetings appropriate?

Winter

Too many/Too few/About right

Summer

Too many/Too few/About right

Is the subject matter appropriate and appealing enough? Yes/No

Is there a suitable mix of near and distant meetings? Yes/No

Generally

Do you know of people who have given up their membership? If so, do you know the reason why?

Do you have any suggestions for improving outdoor or indoor events?