

Hertfordshire Branch BNA: 70th anniversary

The Herts Branch of BNA reached its 70th anniversary this year, 2016. The event was celebrated by a special meeting on 17th September, held at the Bayfordbury campus of the University of Hertfordshire, courtesy of their Biological and Environmental Sciences Department, which has its base there. Some 18 of us spent much of the afternoon examining some of the autumn flora and fauna around the science block, with its species-rich grounds, and beyond to Rough Hills, a series of old grassland glades and both ancient and secondary woodland. This was followed by a social gathering and buffet supper in the science block itself.

The Hertfordshire Branch of BNA started life in 1946 as the North Middlesex Branch, founded in the Barnet/Enfield area by then young enthusiasts and a few old-timers, just after the second world war. Over the years, more and more of its fortnightly field meetings and members were in Hertfordshire, so it became the Hertfordshire & North Middlesex Branch in the 1960s, finally migrating to become the Hertfordshire Branch in the 1980s! For its first few years records are sparse, but from 1950 onwards the Branch has published a regular 'Bulletin' – a record of its meetings along with other snippets contributed by members. This has now reached no. 133. Over the years that too has evolved – from a single copy circulated among members, to a fine, half-colour journal sent to all members around twice a year.

The Branch remains a relatively small, field-based organisation, whose aim is to enthuse anybody and everybody with a personal interest in finding out about wildlife. Expertise is not required, nor any specific focus, although both are encouraged, and members helped to get involved with whatever specialisms they become absorbed by. In this, we work alongside other local and national natural history organisations. Central to it all though is our aim to show people the enjoyment that can be got from a lifetime of wildlife study.