

Lecture Programme for 2017 – 2018

Indoor meetings are at 7.30pm in Crosthwaite Parish Rooms

2017

Oct 5th Spain – Where Griffons Soar
Keith Offord

From the orchids and snow-covered spires of the Pyrenees to the rolling plains and woodlands of Extremadura, Spain is arguably one of the finest wildlife destinations in Europe. It is also a major migration route to Africa. We are fortunate to have been able to book Keith Offord once again whilst he is in Cumbria and, like his many other talks to our society over the years, he will undoubtedly captivate with his knowledge, enthusiasm, clarity and wonderful photography.

Oct 19th Ring Ouzels
Chris Rollie

Chris is of course another of our favourite speakers. He will be again making the trip from Dumfries and Galloway where he is the RSPB's Area Manager. Longstanding members may recall that Chris talked to us about ring ouzels 20 years ago and this is an opportunity to discover the latest about this fascinating bird. Chris last spoke to us about ospreys and before that golden eagles and we are assured of another excellent talk from him.

Nov 2nd Freshwater Pearl Mussels
Roger Sweeting

Although the freshwater pearl mussel's distribution ranges across parts of Britain, the rest of Europe as well as North America, it is very much an endangered species. Roger is an Honorary Research Fellow at the Freshwater Biological Association and is involved in a restoration programme for the pearl mussel. He has in the past worked for Thames Water, the National Rivers Authority and the Environment Agency and is also Chairman of South Cumbria Rivers Trust. In this talk he will share his expert knowledge of the lifestyle and current status of this intriguing species.

Nov 16th The Wonderful World of Ferns
Trevor Pearce

Trevor will define what is, and what is not, a fern, and go on to consider the great variety of ferns that we find in this country and overseas, fern natural history and folklore, and the Victorian craze for ferns that has left a legacy that includes many fern books, fernware (pottery, glassware etc. decorated with fern designs) and the British Pteridological Society which began in the Lake District and celebrated its 125th anniversary last year.

Nov 30th Cumbria's Wildlife – Past, Present and Future
David Harpley

David is Conservation Manager at Cumbria Wildlife Trust, responsible for a conservation team of about 25 staff. Focussing mainly on Mammals and Birds, his talk will discuss some of the species that no longer live in the county, look at the reasons for their extinction and look at some of the returning species. He will also look at some invasive species and have a peek into some possible future species.

2018

Jan 11th Vancouver Island
Roy Atkins

Vancouver Island, off Canada's rugged west coast, is extremely rich in wildlife, including bears, whales and a wealth of birds. Roy has visited us twice before, giving us excellent talks on Scottish wildlife and before that Antarctica. He runs many wildlife tours for Speyside Wildlife Holidays, travelling to many far flung places and has visited Vancouver Island several times.

Jan 25th UK Butterflies not (yet!) in Cumbria
Steve Doyle

Steve last spoke to us 3 years ago, his subject then being Cumbrian Butterflies; before that he also described the reintroduction of the Marsh Fritillary into Cumbria. The distribution of butterflies in Britain is changing rapidly with climate change and it seems appropriate to hear about the country's butterflies which we do not at present see in Cumbria as in some cases it may only be a matter of time. Either way, Steve has some spectacular shots of species such as Swallowtail, Purple Emperor etc. and he can give information on where to see such species and when.

Feb 8th Recent Studies on Cumbrian Insects
Steve Hewitt

Steve was formerly Keeper of Natural Sciences at Tullie House Museum and spoke to us in 2013 about the range of insects (one of his areas of expertise) which can be found in Cumbria. Latterly he has been Research Fellow in Entomology at the National Museums of Scotland. Cumbria has a rich insect fauna with many specialist species occurring in the diverse habitats of the county. Steve will talk about his recent investigations into some of the fascinating insects of Cumbria, from montane species on the summit of Skiddaw to tiger beetles among the sand dunes of Ravenglass. With climate change, the insect world is changing rapidly and Steve will describe some of the changes we are seeing in Cumbria in his talk.

Feb 22nd Bringing Cumbria's Bogs back to Life
Keeley Spate

Natural England are running a project (called “BogLIFE”) restoring lowland raised bog sites in Cumbria. Lowland raised bog is one of Western Europe’s rarest and most threatened habitats with 94% of it having been destroyed or damaged in the UK through commercial peat extraction and drainage. Cumbria has almost half of what remains in England. Cumbria BogLIFE is a five year EU funded project being run by Natural England, which will restore over 500ha of this threatened habitat across the county. Keeley will talk about exactly what lowland raised bogs are and why it is so important to conserve them. We will hear about the techniques Natural England are using to restore the bogs, as well as learn about the unique wildlife that makes its home on the peat bog.

Mar 8th AGM followed by an illustrated talk by Carol Minks