



Website: www.keswicknathistsoc.co.uk

NEWSLETTER September 2026

Welcome to our newsletter revealing the programme for the coming season and a summary of the last year.

Details about how to join or renew your membership are at the end of the newsletter.

Please contact Tony Marsh with any comments or ideas for the Society either at a meeting or via e-mail: marshlambl@aol.com.

Indoor Lecture Programme 2026/27

All meetings are held in The Crosthwaite Parish Room, Keswick on a Thursday evening, commencing at 7.30 pm. Free to members but non-members are very welcome with a £5 entry fee.

We would like to reintroduce the reporting of interesting nature sightings at the start of each meeting. If you have observed something noteworthy, or perhaps the first sighting of the year, e-mail Tony Marsh, (see above), and we can let the membership know.

2026

15th October **Sally Heesom**

Cumbria Badger Vaccination Project

Learn about this fascinating local, volunteer run, project providing a non-lethal alternative to badger culling, in the fight against bovine TB.

29th October **Jess Steven**

The Return of the Sweet Mart

Hear about the work of the South Cumbria pine marten recovery project, how pine martens co-exist with people and their importance in our woodland eco-system.

12th November

John Callion

The Cumbrian Dotterel

An experienced birder and BTO accredited bird ringer, John, will tell us about his experiences finding and documenting the elusive Cumbrian Dotterel in the high fells.

26th November

Pete Martin

The Lichens of Borrowdale, Keswick and Cumbria

Learn how lichens work, how to tell them apart and what stories they can tell us. Then hear about species that can be found in our local area.

10th December

Tanya St.Pierre

How to help Hedgehogs

Tanya runs Melbreak Wildlife Group's recovery project and works with North Lakes Hedgehog Rescue to rehabilitate hedgehogs. Find out the best ways of helping these iconic creatures.

2027

8th January

Aimee Campbell

Cumbria Harvest Mice Project

Learn how local volunteer 'Mouseketeers' are breeding and releasing this fascinating red- listed mammal back into their home environment.

21st January

Tanya St.Pierre

Cumbrian Hay Meadow Restoration

Hear about Tanya's work with CWT and local farmers and landowners to restore grassland habitat and its positive effect on protecting bees, butterflies and rare wildflower species.

4th February

Martin Harris

Making your Wildlife Observations Count

Martin from Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre will explain why recording your wildlife sightings is so important and how we can all get involved.

19th February

Josh Adams

Red Squirrel Recovery Project

Josh is project officer for the red squirrel recovery network and will tell us about his work both locally and with other organisations across north England and south Scotland.

4th March

AGM

All welcome at the AGM

To be followed by an entertaining talk by **Peter MacQueen** on the **Wonders of Cumbrian Moths**.

Field trips 2025-26

The programme of outings is not currently finalised but will include our traditional visits to a Wetland and Wildfowl Trust reserve, probably Caerlaverock, in the late Autumn, as well as RSPB Leighton Moss

Outings will be notified via the website and e-mail to members at least two weeks before the event.

Tony Marsh is the contact for all outings. Please get in touch by email at marshlambl@aol.com (or if you're not on email tel. 72137 or 07974 909522) with him by two days before the outing so that he can organise car sharing. We recommend drivers are reimbursed on the following basis:-

0 – 20 miles: £3 per passenger
21 – 40 miles: £4
41 – 60 miles: £5
61 – 80 miles: £6
Over 80 miles: £7

(It might be prudent for drivers to check with your insurance company that this payment of expenses will not interfere with their insurance cover)

Guests are welcome but we regret no dogs.

Reports for Field Trips 2025-26

October 25

Fungal Foray Great Wood

A productive morning guided by fungus expert Liz Holden, who had given us a talk the day before. Over 40 separate species identified by Liz.



Honey Fungus



Dead Man's Fingers



Amethyst Deceiver



Yellow Stagshorn

May 26

Hay Bridge Nature reserve

The trip to Hay Bridge Nature Reserve in the Rusland Valley went well with sunny, but not blisteringly hot conditions all day. Highlights were Grass Snakes, some rare moths identified by our resident expert Peter Macqueen and excellent views of a singing Wood Warbler

Hay Bridge is a wonderful place to be, it requires membership of the John Strutt Conservation Foundation to park there, (<https://jscf.org.uk/>), but membership is only £15 per year, (£20 for a family), and I would strongly recommend it.



Marbled White Spot Moth Pied Flycatcher, (female)

Grass Snake

Wood Warbler

Jan 26

WWT Martin Mere

The trip to RSPB Marshside, (just next to Southport), and WWT Martin Mere was undertaken in overcast, windy and dull conditions, but fortunately without any rain.

Marshside held large numbers of Lapwings, (many hundreds if not thousands), with slightly fewer numbers of Black-tailed Godwits. Ducks included Pintails, Wigeons, Teals, Gadwalls, Shovellers and Tufted Ducks.

Martin Mere delivered excellent close views of a number of Ruffs and Black-tailed Godwits as well as different species of ducks that were attracted along with the visiting Whooper Swans to the afternoon distribution of grain. This is a wildlife spectacle everybody should see at least once.

The bird of the day was a fabulous drake Ring-necked Duck, an north American species that rarely visits the UK



Black-tailed Godwits

Drake Ring-necked Duck

Male Ruff

Whooper Swan

Mar 26

Great Crested Newts Watch

Monday night's visit to the Penrith garden of reptile and amphibian expert, Paul Hudson, was rewarding. We had excellent views of Palmate, Smooth and Great Crested Newts, the latter being particularly striking.

Using torchlight, we were able to witness the Great Crested Newt males displaying and even a bit of argy-bargy between two of them. The females lay single eggs and sticks them to the end of a leaf of a water plant, (usually Water Forget-me-not in Paul's ponds), which they then fold over to hide them. This leaves a characteristic appearance as the folded over leaf tips similar to if they have been cut off. The Great Crested Newts are quite a size, up to 17 cms in length, the

Smooth and Palmate much smaller and very difficult to tell apart, but the slightly smaller Palmate Newts lack spots on the throat and the males have a strange thin filament at the end of the tale.

There was a wealth of other life in the ponds with a lot of frogs and frogspawn and insects. I photographed a Backswimmer and only noticed the water beetle in its grasp, (being eaten!), when I viewed it on the computer; experts have identified it as *Helophorus aequalis*.

Please note that Paul is specially licensed to be able to handle these creatures.



Great Crested Newt



Egg laying



Backswimmer with prey

Jun 26

Sand Lizard Breeding Programme

Seven members responded to the very short notice to go to Penrith on Tuesday and see the breeding colony of Sand Lizards that Paul Hudson has in specially built cages in his back garden. Although the males were slightly past their peak breeding colours and the weather meant that they didn't have to bask in the sun to keep warm, we did get reasonable views of both males and females and were both entertained and educated by Paul's vast knowledge.



Male



Sand Lizards

Female

July 26

Moth Trapping at Brackenrigg

Around a dozen members assembled in the morning in the Naddle Valley to be informed and entertained by moth expert Peter Macqueen.



Elephant Hawkmoth



The Reveal



Large Emerald Moth



Peter Macqueen

Membership Renewal for 2026/27

There are 3 possible ways of renewing your membership this year:

1. Make a bank transfer to the Society's account (£15 per person, Students and Juniors £5) – Account No. 34055789, Sort Code 01-04-69.

Most importantly please enter your Surname as Reference and let Jean Gilbert know you have done so via e-mail on keswickvets@aol.com so that we can subsequently contact you.

2. Fill in the Renewal Slip at the end of this newsletter and send a cheque by post to Jean Gilbert (Treasurer) 40 Oaktree Crescent, Cockermouth, CA13 9HP.
3. Come to a meeting and pay then, by cash, cheque or card: **we now have a portable card reader for you to pay with at a meeting if you wish.**

KESWICK NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY Membership & Renewal Slip 2026/27

NAME(S)

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Email Address (please supply even if we have this already as this will confirm your permission for us to contact you for Data Protection purposes)

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Amount Enclosed: Cash..... Cheque (payable to Keswick Natural History Society)