



One of many fine photographs taken by our treasurer Gerry Duggan on the BNSS botany field trip to Elkhams Grave, on July 27th, 2017.



## Introduction

*by President and Chair of Entomology, Mark Spencer*

The Earth moves on and we are fast approaching the autumn season once again.

Our summer, mini-open days, are not exactly getting a rush of visitors, but we are getting quite a few and all those that visit, both young and old are certainly very interested in the wonders that our museum has to offer.

We have certainly had some hot weather this summer (though you may have blinked and missed it!) as well as our usual cool, wet and windy periods.

Martin Down Nature reserve, has come up trumps once again, with the recent field meeting viewing 19 species

of butterflies and many other creatures of interest.

We will soon be involved in an exhibition at Durlleston Country Park, with a strong Madagascan connection.

Make sure that you remember that we have our big open weekend coming soon, on the 14th and 15th of October, so please think how you could do your bit to help with this: if you can set up exhibits, make cakes for sale, or assist with any kind of stewarding duties, all would be welcome, to help us make a big success of this event.

To all members, have an enjoyable autumn, spot the late wild flowers and butterflies, the fascinating varieties of fungi, the migrating birds and the glorious leaf changes as the season progresses.

## IN THIS ISSUE...

page

- 2 "We're all going on a... summer coach trip!"
- 3 Investigating an Ichthyosaur's history
- 4 An exclusive invitation for BNSS members
- 5 Autumn lectures not to be missed
- 6 An unforgettable summer for our Young Explorers

[bnss.org.uk](http://bnss.org.uk)

Registered Charity no: 1165951.

## “We’re all going on a... summer coach trip!”



Petersfield Museum

### *The 2017 BNSS annual coach outing – by Margaret Evelyn*

On 7th June, in the safe hands of Steve, our Sea View driver, we arrived at the fascinating Petersfield Museum.

Simple but long-forgotten utensils that were once part of local life were explained by our guides, Rosalind and Vaughan. Shepherds’ smocks were highlighted, along with other implements connected with local agriculture.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Victorian police cells and the Flora Twort Art Gallery.

A glimpsed splash of yellow woad indicated our arrival in the Physic Garden. Jenny Hill talked us through



this beautifully maintained collection of herbs, once the only cure for many ills. Or perhaps not!

Hyssop, lungwort, marshmallow and horehound were there, as well as the immaculate topiary walk.

The afternoon was spent at Butser Ancient Technology Centre.

David was our guide, and he gave us a wonderful picture of prehistoric life, culminating in the Roman period. We drifted happily between the thatching, the four-horned sheep, the demonstrations of weaving and the brindled Iron Age pigs.

A delicious tea and a smooth journey home completed a pleasant and fascinating day.

# Investigating an Ichthyosaur's History

by Ray Chapman – Chair of Geology

You may have seen the Ichthyosaur pictured right hanging on our geology room wall. A copy of the label shows what we believed was the provenance.

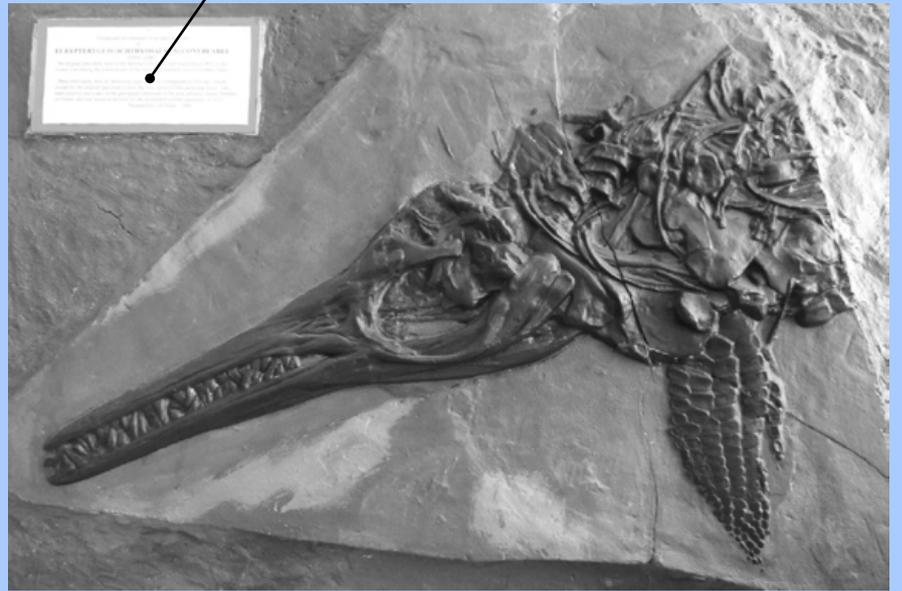
Towards the end of last year a blog appeared in the Scientific American website containing a picture of the Ichthyosaur, it had been put there by one of our lecturers Darren Naish, a palaeontologist. A few weeks later we had an e-mail from a researcher at Leicester University, a Dr Taylor. He asked if I could send him details of the Ichthyosaur as he and a colleague were researching lost collections.

So I sent him the information on our label and a couple of weeks ago he sent me the draft of an article for the *Geological Curator* journal as shown below...

## 1. "Ichthyosaurus latimanus", Banwell, Somerset

Original BRSMG Cb2464, type specimen of *Ichthyosaurus latimanus* Owen, 1840, presumed destroyed 1940. Known casts: ANSP 17426; NHMUK PV OR 1064, not located; OUMNH J.10343/p (Figure 1A); possibly also collection of Purnell B. Purnell (1791-1866) of Stancombe Park, Gloucestershire (now dispersed). A variant cast shows only the anterior portion (including head and forelimb). Only one copy of this variant is known to exist: BNSS 30489 (Figure 1B), originally held by the Frome Literary and Scientific Institution; other copies are believed to have gone to the Institutions at Ludlow and Swansea, but cannot be located.

Plaster cast of a forepart of an adult skeleton  
of  
**EURYPTERYGUIS (ICHTHYOSAURUS) CONYBEAREI.**  
BNSS 30489  
The original specimen, now in the national collection, was found about 1850 in the Lower Lias during the construction of the railway at Saltford, near Keynsham, Bath.  
Three other casts, now all destroyed, were made as companions to this one, which, except for the original specimen, is now the only record of this particular fossil. For many years it was a part of the geological collection of the now defunct Literary Institute in Frome, and was saved at the time of the dissolution of that repository in 1973.  
Presented by J.B.Delair : 1994.



**Figure 1.** "Ichthyosaurus latimanus" as originally labelled, Banwell, Somerset. (A) Cast, OUMNH J.10343/p, 149cm long within inside edges of wooden frame. © Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

(B) Variant cast showing only the anterior portion, BNSS 30489.  
© Ray Chapman, Bournemouth Natural Science Society.

*This just goes to show how difficult it is to trace the old dispersed collections and record or even put them back together!  
If anyone would like to read the rest of this article, which is about other Ichthyosaurs, please let me know...*

## A Private View Invitation to all BNSS members

**A** child friendly book to learn and discover the alphabet as well as English idioms and phrases. Each letter is illustrated with an object from the Bournemouth Natural Science Museum, promoting interest and enjoyment in the Natural Sciences.



## My Alphabet



The letters of a language in their customary order.

Dorine Bessière, an MA Commercial Photography student at the Arts University Bournemouth recently popped in to show us her book, called *My Alphabet*, which was inspired by our very own BNSS Museum collections!

She has submitted her project to *Maverick Childrens Books* and *The Natural History Museum* and is presently seeking a local publisher who might be able to help produce printed versions.

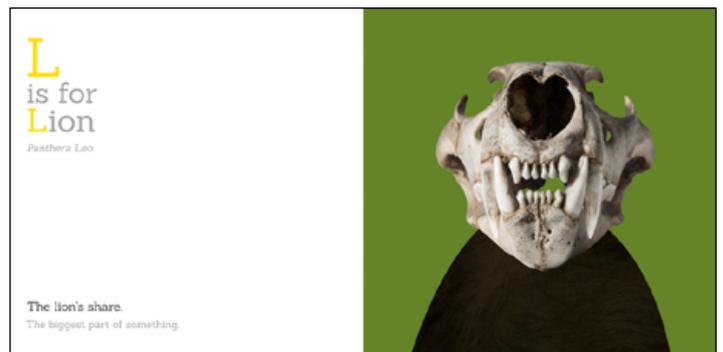
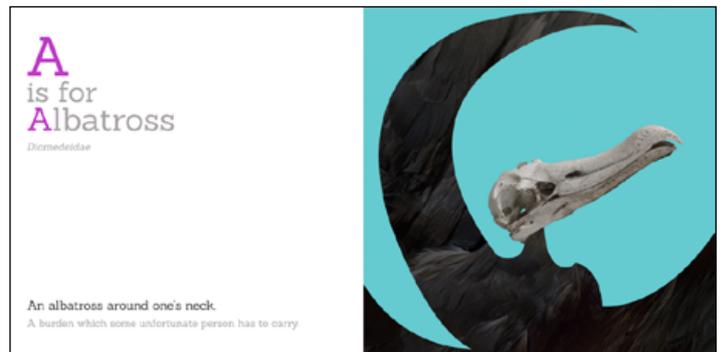
Dorine has kindly extended an invitation to all BNSS members to come to see her end of year exhibition (MA Show) at: Northlight Studios, Arts University Bournemouth, Wallisdown, Poole BH12 5HH where her book project will be exhibited:

**Private View:** Thursday 7th September, 6pm – 9pm.

**Open to the Public:** September 8th – 14th, 9am – 5pm daily;

Saturday 9th, 10am – 3pm and Sunday CLOSED.

(If you can't visit on the night, you'll find some more of her fine photography work at: <http://dorine-bessiere.com>)



## Become a volunteer today!

We urgently seek someone to help edit and develop our **website** and **social networking**, a new **treasurer** and someone to Chair sections, such as **general** and **ornithology**. You don't have to be a genius! If you're able and would like to **give some time** on a regular basis, PLEASE email: [contact@bnss.org.uk](mailto:contact@bnss.org.uk) and let us know what skills you may be able to provide... be that 'washer upperer' or section head!

## Les Thomas 1933 – 2017

Older members may recall the genial Les, who was a member of BNSS from 1995-2007. Like many of our members, he was active with other groups but he still found time to be treasurer for us between 2000 and 2005, a role for which we will be always grateful.

He died peacefully on 13th June at his home in Poole.

## Three of our 'quarter four' talks not to be missed

**Tuesday October 3rd at 7.30pm. Speaker: Richard Hesketh**

Richard Hesketh was awarded the BNSS President's award in 2016 for sharing his enthusiasm and passion for science. He works for Bournemouth Parks and is well-known for his guided walks and knowledge of birds. He will speak on the topic of 'Birds & Poetry'.

**Saturday November 11th at 2.30pm. Speaker: Keith Betton**

Keith is deputy head of the British Trust for Ornithology was head of the London Bird Club at age 23, is a professional speaker, head of the 1,600 member Hampshire Ornithological Society, recorder for Hampshire and has just passed the 8,000 species seen worldwide, but his real passion are the local birds that we can all enjoy on our doorstep. He will speak on "Dorset and Hampshire's Special Birds'.

*The common nightingale – an important symbol for poets from a variety of ages.*



*Common tern – photograph by Ian Julian*



**Tuesday December 5th at 7.30pm: BNSS Science Chair, Grenham Ireland**

The last talk of the year will describe the lives and behaviour of organisms that can only really be studied under the microscope. This

will include the multicellular alga Volvox, the hardy tardigrade and planktonic larval worms. The talk is entitled "My favourite microscope specimens: the 'fierce roller', 'water bears' and polychaete worm larvae".



*Polychaete worm larvae: image by Grenham Ireland*

# Did YOU have a wonderful summer to remember? Our Young Explorers certainly did!

## *Young Explorers update – by Anna Cuccia*

Young Explorers had a bumper summer this year. We had a fantastic session in July based on patterns from history. The children got to explore and touch lots of artifacts and pots and we looked at how mosaics are made and where they are found. We used foam, salt dough and tiles to create our own patterns and mosaics replicating real ones. Even the grown-ups joined in and had a go! Our explorers took part in an interactive lecture and found out about where they can see mosaics locally and enjoyed lots of craftwork set up by Anna Cuccia.

Lots of information was shared thanks to our resident expert Bryan Popple, Head of the Archaeology section.

This summer we trialled adding two additional

Young Explorer style sessions to try to raise some more money for the museum. These cost £6 per child and included lots of hands on activities. They proved to be very popular. For our first session we were lucky enough to be able to use the skills of Helen Kennedy from St Katharine's Primary who joined Anna Cuccia, a teacher trainer. Helen led a wonderful session based on egyptology and our own special mummy Tahemaa. We took part in a tabletop archaeological dig to unearth artefacts and see how Egyptian remains were excavated. Then our explorers learnt how mummification worked and made and mummified their own corpses! Yuck! They even



*Chloe's masterpieces*

mummified each other! The children were particularly interested to find out how our mummy is different from most – Tahemaa still has her brain in. It was gruesome, but educational and we are very grateful to Helen for

agreeing to run such a successful morning. Watch this space as Helen and Anna may well run some spooky sessions during the October half-term and we hope Steve will do another Night at the Museum for Halloween.



*Patterns and mosaics with our ever-popular Head of Archaeology, Bryan Popple.*



*Nidhi gets mummified by... her mummy!*



Isla's bug with amazing compound eyes!



Max records woodlouse turning behaviour.



Pond dipping: Grenham and Francisco go hi-tech.



Coffee and cake fundraising activities.

Our second extra session was based on bugs and organised by Anna Cuccia. First of all the children learnt about the different body parts of insects and their purpose. They were surprised to find that insects breathe through holes in their abdomen! We had a go at making our own bugs, working hard to make compact eyes and using specimens from the museum's collection to help us with our designs. We went on to do some work on British birds and their food sources and how pesticides can cause big problems in the food chain when insects ingest chemicals. We were impressed to find some children who knew the difference between rooks, crows and blackbirds. The final part of our morning saw the group conducting investigations with woodlice. First they build a LEGO maze to observe the turning behaviour of these little creatures and secondly, using Petri dishes and black card, they created a test to see whether woodlice prefer dark or light conditions.

We would like to thank Carol Neal who assisted on these mornings and gave up her time to be an unpaid teaching assistant! Anna Cuccia would also like to thank her children who dedicated much time in preparing materials for the sessions – Giorgia, Maia and Max. These sessions were definitely popular and we raised an extra £168 through them. Giorgia also helped with another initiative and made large quantities of soft serve fluffy slime, a current

craze amongst children. The stretchy slime was sold in great quantities and raised £27. Well done Giorgia!

Our final summer Young Explorers session saw Grenham Ireland (supported by volunteers Marilyn Raisin, Ray Gibbs and Carol Neal) run a pond dipping and aquatic life exploration. It was very well received and it was great to welcome some new explorers to the group.

This year we also completed a survey to ensure that parents felt our Young Explorers classes represented excellent value for money, and also find out if they felt there was any way we might make improvements to the current format.

***Here's what families are saying:***

*"Young Explorer sessions are extremely good"*

*"We love being able to have a go and learn new things."*

*"I cannot see how you can improve it!"*

**The academic year for Young Explorers begins again on Saturday the 9th of September. The focus will be Evolution. Details of the full programme can be found on our website: [www.bnss.org.uk](http://www.bnss.org.uk)**

Due to increasing popularity and to ensure we can resource them fully, we ask that families book their places via:

[youngexplorers@bnss.org.uk](mailto:youngexplorers@bnss.org.uk)

The mornings will continue to run from 10:00 – 12:30 and children need to be accompanied by an adult.

# BNSS arts festival open weekend : grab you diary!

## AUTUMN OPEN DAYS

**BNSS Autumn Open Weekend:  
14th-15th October.**

Our Open weekend will feature two days, Saturday and Sunday, of live insects, fossil displays, childrens' activities, astronomy equipment out on the lawn, (weather permitting) tea and cakes, all available between 10:00-16:00. Wander on down for a chat with the experts and a refreshing cup of tea. Someone somewhere may be doing a plastic sculpture of pieces either with or without help from passers by. Bring your own beach pickings to make your own

funky art, or to add to the BNSS Plastic Man.

***Plastic Beach: Arts Festival by the Sea, 14-21 October.***

***On Wednesday 18th October*** at 2.30pm, Angela Fendley will be delivering an interactive talk based on the successful Transition carbon counting project Count On Me. She will be taking a light-hearted and friendly look at the easy steps we could all take to live a more sustainable lifestyle. What would you pack in your suitcase of sustainability?

There may be an impromptu improvisational classic ensemble playing on Wednesday evening at 7.30pm with their interpretations of plastics invading or upsetting the harmonies and rhythms of the ocean. Watch out for further news either on our website or through BNSS emails.

***On Saturday 21st October*** we are hoping to have one of the all female crew from eXXpedition, a sailing yacht currently circumnavigating the UK making a trawl of plastics in the marine environment. She will be talking about the threat of plastic contamination in the sea and what can we do about it as consumers with a conscience and a voice.

***Please bring some beach plastic – your friends and family too – and support your favourite charity by giving generously!***



**Come along and share our love of science!**

***It costs nothing to pass it on!*** Please help the BNSS by forwarding this newsletter to someone who might be interested in joining our society, guided walks or visiting our fabulous museum this autumn!

To automatically receive updates on BNSS events and news:

1. When next in Facebook, click on "Find Friends"



2. Type into the box "Bournemouth Natural Science Society" (not BNSS)

3. Click on "Follow"

The BNSS Facebook posts tend to be brief, and typically number 2 or 3 times a week. If, at anytime, you change your mind, you can stop BNSS updates going to your Facebook by clicking on "Unfollow". If in doubt, ask a 12 year old!

**"I'd like to support the BNSS!"**

If you are visiting the museum and you enjoyed your visit, please leave a donation in one of our **donation boxes**. You can also **text** your donation to us by sending the message BNSS30 £5 to 70070. Alternatively you can donate via our **website** by using the BT MyDonate button found in the menu panel on the right of the screen. **Thank you!**