

20 Years on ... and another 5... and another 5

Then = 1981, Now = 2001, And since = 2006 with occasional later comments...

Then Barbara Luke reports that anyone interested in the new club could write their name and address on one of a pile of envelopes provided and add an 8p stamp and they would be sent a programme in due course.

Now At the final meetings of the season, May & June, we are still offered envelopes to prepare for the following year's programme. But it's now 20p for a stamp.

And since Cost of stamps has gone up again... and again! ... 50p in July 2013.

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Then Mary Lyth sent out posters each month listing the next indoor meeting, local outing and coach outing. She would type the text onto a template she had drawn, photocopy the posters and distribute to Libraries, Colleges and Community Centres.

Now Marion Hill still sends out monthly posters to a mailing list based on Mary's. The posters are very similar in content but Marion now uses a computer and inserts a scanned woodpecker logo.

And since Posters are still posted to a number of libraries, colleges & community centres but we will have to reconsider the format in view of the higher cost of bigger envelopes introduced 8/06. Posters are already sent by email to Camden Libraries and to local press and bird/wildlife organisations.

And by 2011 no printed posters sent out. At the start of the 30th Anniversary Season, a programme was sent to each Camden library using their internal mail system. Some have preferred to post this on their noticeboards along with a small "contact" flyer rather than print out an A4 poster each month. Marion continues, however, to send a monthly poster by email not only to Camden Libraries and to local press and bird/wildlife organisations but to all MBS members and friends along with an "e-newsletter".

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Then The final indoor meeting of the season in June was traditionally a Bring and Buy Sale to raise extra income some of which was donated to a good wildlife or conservation cause.

Now In June 1997 we experimented with a Friday evening stroll on Hampstead Heath. We didn't see many birds but it was a pleasant walk and it did attract some newcomers. It's been on our programme ever since.

And since The summer evening Heath Walk continues to be popular. In 2003 we were joined by a Ham & High photographer.

2011 Light being a problem for viewing slides in May as well as June, in our 30th Anniversary Season we arranged to go to Camley Street Natural Park for a walk and talk in May and we had an evening walk in Regent's Park in 2013.

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Then The December indoor meeting was always a Christmas Party with bird-related games and festive refreshments.

Now Since our move to the Methodist Hall we have not had an indoor meeting in December but we do have a pre-Christmas stroll in Regents Park on the Saturday morning.

2011 We had an additional Local Outing early December though this wasn't repeated.

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Then Smoking was confined to the rear of the coach.

Now And in fact by the start of the 2nd season, there is no smoking on the coach.

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Then There was always a "coffee stop" on the outward journey of our coach outings. Cafes were often judged by the quality of their toasted bacon sandwiches.

Now With improved facilities at many of the reserves we visit and especially now that we no longer go to the more distant Norfolk reserves, we sometimes have no more than a brief "loo stop" so that those who wish can start their birding sooner. But even the keenest birdwatcher enjoys an occasional 2nd breakfast and certainly tea and cake before the journey home.

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Some things never change ...

The MBS coach outings have always been on a Saturday.

Unlike Kate Springett's earlier coach outings and those of other London groups which leave from the Embankment, the MBS coach trips have 4 pick-up points in Baker Street, Swiss Cottage, Belsize Park and Parliament Hill Fields. It was Esther Wells who introduced this right from the start of the MBS along with the allocation of numbered seats at the time of booking so as to be fair to those at the last stop.

A "tick list" is passed round the coach during the return journey so that we can note what we've seen and get a group total of bird species seen on each trip. Most of us are left wondering about the ones we missed ...

MH updated 8/7/13