



Warwickshire Amphibian & Reptile Team

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Affiliated to the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (Registered Charity Number 209200)
and Herpetofauna Groups of Britain & Ireland.

www.wartsoc.co.uk

WART NEWSLETTER: ISSUE No. 42 SPRING 2006

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EDITORIAL

I would like to introduce myself as the new newsletter editor for WART. I have been a member of WART since it was formed 1993 and decided that now I have moved back to the area to get involved with WART in a more proactive way. I work as a full time ecological consultant specialising in Herpetology, so my work truly is a Busman's Holiday. I hope that I can continue the high standard already set in the production of the newsletter and invite any members of WART to submit articles or pictures of the Herping sort when they are feeling creative!!

This newsletter has turned out to be a bit of a bumper edition. There are quite a few forthcoming events for WART this Spring, so I hope that people can attend. I have also included a short summary of the ARG UK Herpetofauna Workers Meeting held at the beginning of February 2006. I would like to take this chance to thank Jan for all her hard work and dedication to get the event up and running!!

Lucy Cash
February 2006

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 26th January 2006

The WART Annual General Meeting, was held on Thursday 26th January 2006 at 7.30pm in the Brandon Marsh Nature Centre. Natalie Walker was made our new secretary and is doing a great job and I was made Newsletter editor. The following list shows the current proposed committee:

Chair	Jan Clemons
Vice-Chair	Jon Easton
Secretary	Natalie Walker
Membership Secretary/Database Manager	Nigel Clemons
Treasurer	Howard Eccles
Newsletter Editor	Lucy Cash
Insurance & Training Officer	Vacant
Ordinary members	Jane O'Dell, Serena Eccles, David Cole, Ian Tanner.

A summary of issues discussed is as follows:

- The annual membership to WART is being raised to £5.00 this year. This increase is due to the changes in insurance for the group because Froglife have now withdrawn their insurance. WART have opted for the BTCV insurance at a premium cost of £185.63 for one year (2006 price) which is slightly more expensive and to accommodate this the membership fee to WART has increased to take immediate effect. It is noted that people have to be WART members to be covered.
- The Chairmans, Treasurers and Membership Secretary's report are found in sections 4-8 of the newsletter

Forthcoming Events

Dunchurch Toads

Late February early March 2006



If anyone would like to assist in this regular survey, please contact Jan Clemons. Trying to pin down toads to specific nights for breeding is impossible. I have done this survey numerous times starting at the age of thirteen when I was an innocent student of Jan's. I undertook some dates for the survey last year and the numbers appear to be on the increase again after an all time low. It certainly is an experience and gives you something to talk about down the pub!!

(Dates to be confirmed.) Stop Press – any day now

Great Crested Newt Training Day and Warwickshire Great Crested Newt Hunt Sunday 30th April 2006

WART are planning a Great Crested Newt survey of over 200 ponds in the county starting next year. **WE NEED YOUR HELP.** We will supply training if you promise to survey some ponds!! A training day has been arranged for 30th April 2006 at Brandon Marsh Centre. Jan, Natalie Walker and myself will be undertaking the training.

Contact Jon Eastern if you like to attend, at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust HQ

Amphibian Survey at Whitley Pond, Coventry

May 6th -7th 2006

A survey is to be undertaken at this pond and we are calling for offers of help again. If any WART members are interested please contact Jan.

Sutton Park Adder Survey 2006



As I am sure that you are aware WART are trying to survey a number of sites this year for Adder. The Adder is a species in decline throughout the country. A national scheme has been set up called "Make the Adder Count". For more details of this visit www.adder.org.uk.

The tins have been laid at Sutton Park this month and surveys will commence as soon as possible. The first sightings of Adder this year in Essex were on Valentines Day, so they are starting to wake up and become active. If anyone would like to help with this survey and see such a spectacular snake in the wild then please contact Natalie Walker.

The ARG UK Herpetofauna Workers Meeting, Coventry-4th 5th Feb 2006.

After a ten hour delayed flight from Cuba and slight jet-lag, I arrived at the Technocentre in Coventry to a warm welcome from Howard on the registration desk. My first thoughts; overwhelmed by the amount of people from both professional and voluntary backgrounds mingling in a room together, eating an orderly lunch and discussing Herps. What more could you ask for!! The talks on the Saturday morning had all run smoothly and given people a taster of the current projects and research running throughout the country. The afternoon session was full of more Herps from pool frogs to leather-back turtles! I don't think I saw one unattentive person, but by late afternoon I was struggling and was hoping that I wouldn't fall asleep on John Bakers' shoulder!

Mark O-Shea gave a talk on the Saturday evening about Sea snakes. I was asleep by this point and missed out by all accounts. I heard there were many refreshments drunk and everyone had a brilliant evening which explains the jaded people on Sunday morning. Workshops were undertaken and I attended NAARS and Reptile survey design. These workshops gave people the chance to air their views on certain subjects. This will hopefully help to constructively redesign and standardise methods, protocols and data collection for Herp Workers in the future.

In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and found both days interesting and informative. I met people who are genuinely dedicated to Herpetology, which impressed me, the herpetologist is not a threatened species! I find it encouraging that there are others out there who give up their spare time to go and look in ponds on dark evenings in spring, or get up at dawn with that urge to go and find reptiles on a site.

The venue was easy to find, new and spacious with good conference facilities. The food was of a high quality and the speakers were excellent. Who do we have to thank for this successful event??? Our very own Jan Clemons the new chairperson of ARG UK.

So on that note, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jan and Chris Gleed-Owen and whomever else was involved in the organization of the weekend. Onwards and upwards.....

Lucy Cash
Feb 2006

WARWICKSHIRE AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE TEAM REVIEW 2005

WART was established in 1993 and presently we have 40 members who pay £3.50 annual membership which has increased to £5.00 in 2006. Each year we receive donations from the membership and a recent 'tin appeal' raised £400 to buy reptile refugia. WART has its own constitution and bank account and 8 members sit on the WART committee which meets three times a year.

Activities this year included the Warks Adder Hunt now entering its third year as part of the Adder SAP for Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull BAP. Out of the original 18 sites where adders had been recorded we are now concentrating on just 2 sites that may just support this species. Our worst fear is that the adder may be so in decline in the county that it is now longer present. One of the targets on the BAP is to plan at least two population restoration projects by 2010 but we would need help and advice from others in the herpetological community.

Good news is that a 'new' site supporting a healthy population of common lizards was found in June 2005 in the far north of the county, following a phone call off a local resident. Seeing reptiles (especially lizards) in Warwickshire is a real treat.

After a five year gap WART resumed our Dunchurch toad survey and population numbers have gone up from an all time low (linked to sewage pollution) after 10 years of previous survey showed a consistent decline from thousands to just under fifty individuals. Long term surveys are vital in studying the dynamics of amphibian populations and WART will continue to monitor this toad population.

WART's strength is that after 12 years we have a very good knowledge about local amphibian & reptile distribution coupled with a few key members who are experienced herpetologists with excellent surveying skills. Any key issue, such as threats to sites we are immediately informed about by English Nature, County Ecologists and Local Authorities. We have close links with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and as part of the great crested newt SAP we plan to start surveying 200 ponds with records more than ten years old this coming season.

The bad news is that over the past year we have had no newsletter editor or secretary and the WART Chair is now ARG UK Chair. The good news is that three new members are joining the committee and at the time of writing it is hoped that these vacancies can be filled and take a lot of the work off my shoulders.

Jan Clemons
WART Chair
Dec 2005

Membership report 2005

The membership has now stands at 41, an increase of 1. This is not strictly true, as we have lost 3 members and 4 new members have joined.

If you have not yet paid your 2006 WART subscription, its now time to do so and remember it's now £5.00 pa. We very much hope that all existing members will renew - the success and health of the group depends on an adequate membership base. WART subscription rates have been held unchanged for some years and we think they represent pretty good value for money. If you're interested in conserving Warwickshire's native herpetofauna - please continue your membership to WART. If you can introduce any new potential members to the group, all the better!

Thank you to all members for your continuing support of the group.

Nigel Clemons 2005

Database report 2005

This on going project keeps ticking along nicely. But the amount of records received keeps falling. I have only received a total of 20 records from members this year and again half of them are from Jan and myself. But the bulk has always been from ourselves anyway. Also the adder hunt has not been positive to date, unless one of the team has not sent his/her records in yet. Jan and I have turned up Af, Lv, Nn or N/A, on the sites we are looking after. But no Vb to date.

And it's nice to know we are still the only ARG that sends its records to the local county records office via email, so they can import the information straight into their county database, without introducing errors via re-typing. Big thanks to the staff at Warwick Museum. Now ARG-UK and NARRAS are coming online this may change in the future. All for the better.

Members Records – Total 20 records

<i>Full Name</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Grid Reference</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Species</i>
Richard Lamb	26/04/2005	SP205563	Clopton	Nn
Richard Lamb	2005	SP205545	Stratford Butterfly Farm	Rt
Richard Lamb	2005	SP205545	Stratford Butterfly Farm	Rt
Richard Lamb	2005	SP205545	Stratford Butterfly Farm	Rt
Richard Lamb	2005	SP205545	Stratford Butterfly Farm	Tv
Richard Lamb	2005	SP205545	Stratford Butterfly Farm	Tv
Richard Lamb	2005	SP205545	Stratford Butterfly Farm	Tv
Richard Lamb	2005	SP205545	Stratford Butterfly Farm	Tv
Richard Lamb	05/06/2005	SP206556	Stratford-Upon-Avon	Lv
Lucy Cash	17/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Rt
Lucy Cash	18/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	19/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	18/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	17/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	19/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	21/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	17/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	22/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	22/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb
Lucy Cash	21/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	Bb

Jan and Nigel's Records - Total 25 records

Full Name	Date	Grid Reference	Site Name	Species
Jan Clemons	19/04/2005	SP297730	Kenilworth Common	LV
Jan Clemons	19/04/2005	SP297730	Kenilworth Common	AF
Jan Clemons	19/04/2005	SP297730	Kenilworth Common	AF
Jan Clemons	31/05/2005	SP272983	Baddesley Ensor	LV
Jan Clemons	02/05/2005	SP486712	Springfields	TC
Jan Clemons	02/05/2005	SP486712	Springfields	TC
Jan Clemons	02/05/2005	SP486712	Springfields	TV
Jan Clemons	02/05/2005	SP486712	Springfields	TV
Jan Clemons	10/05/2005	SP297730	Kenilworth Common	AF
Nigel Clemons	30/05/2005	SJ976192	Millford Quarry	N/A
Nigel Clemons	22/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	BB
Nigel Clemons	22/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	BB
Nigel Clemons	21/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	BB
Nigel Clemons	30/05/2005	SJ976192	Millford Quarry	RT
Nigel Clemons	21/03/2005	SP492716	Dunchurch Pond	BB
Nigel Clemons	13/09/2005	SP279674	Myton Hamley Hospice	NN
Nigel Clemons	11/08/2005	SP340771	34 Montalt Road	BB
Nigel Clemons	31/05/2005	SP272983	Baddesley Ensor	LV
Nigel Clemons	31/05/2005	SP272983	Baddesley Ensor	LV
Nigel Clemons	31/05/2005	SP272983	Baddesley Ensor	LV
Nigel Clemons	30/05/2005	SJ976192	Millford Quarry	BB
Nigel Clemons	30/05/2005	SJ976192	Millford Quarry	TC
Nigel Clemons	30/05/2005	SJ976192	Millford Quarry	TC
Nigel Clemons	10/05/2005	SP297730	Kenilworth Common	AF
Nigel Clemons	30/05/2005	SJ976192	Millford Quarry	BB

Although Common toad and Great Crested Newt were recorded Milford Quarry last year there were no sightings of Natter Jack toads. Results indicate that generally amphibians numbers at the site seem to be on the decline.

The Baddesley Ensor site is a hot spot for Lv in the county. And there is another site to the east that needs checking out as a there have been couple of reports of Lv.

We also with Lucy Cash's help paid a visit to Dunchurch Pond, this year and the max count was up slightly from the last time we visited. Good news.

Finally I receive quit a few records from the public each year via Warwick Museum, which have to be verified before entering into the database. The easiest to verify are the ones that send a photograph as well. Like the ones I get that say they have common lizards in their kitchen, when I am looking at their nice photograph of a common newt. Miss-identification is very common.

Nigel Clemons 2005

Web Site report 2005

Nothing new on the web site to report, but there is an annoying bug with the Google search. In that new pages are not being searched. Has anyone else spotted this one? I also changed a picture on a page and now it does not display. I still receive data and requests for other counties. I am going to be nasty now, CAN'T PEOPLE READ? As on the WART home page there is a link entitled, **Find your local amphibian and reptile volunteer group**. This link also appears on other pages throughout the site.

The hit list keeps growing. Over five thousand now, and a fair few still come from far away places around the globe. And being the web monkey I get some odd emails like the one that was supposed to be from someone from the CIA, but did not have the brains to make their email address look anything like it had come from the CIA.

Total visits to date: **20/01/2006** **5246**

Operating Systems **Percent**

Microsoft **94**

Mac **3**

Other **3**

Browsers **Percent**

MSIE **90**

Netscape **4**

Other **1**

As can be seen the bulk of the hits to the site are from visitors using Microsoft OS and IE as their browser, the same as last year.

Nigel Clemons 2005

Treasurers Report

Receipts and Payments Account for Period 01/01/05 to 31/12/05

RECEIPTS	2005(£)	2004(£)	PAYMENTS	2005(£)	2004(£)
Balance			Postage and Stationery		
31.12.04(£)			2004 32.29		
Bank 1447.06			2005 25.51	57.80	65.11
Cash 30.60	1477.66	796.81			
Subscriptions			Printer Cartridge		
2004 10.50			2004 57.99		
2005 83.50	94.00	150.50	2005 54.99	102.98	-
Donations	47.00	64.10	Printing	-	8.64
Sales					
2004 7.10					
2005 0.80	7.90	27.00			
Tins Appeal	-	535.00	Balance@31.12.05		
			Bank 1420.18		
			Cash 35.60	1455.78	1477.66
Totals	1626.56	1573.41		1626.56	1573.41

Howard Eccles 2005

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