



BRITISH NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION

The national body for naturalists

National Encaenia and Natural History Day

12th September 2026

Held at the Natural History Museum, London

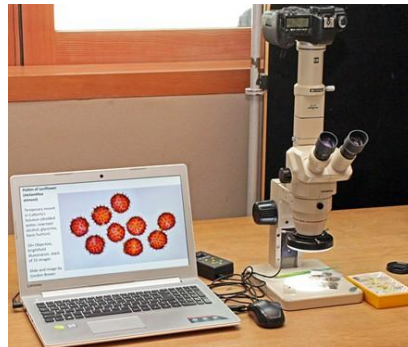


Photo: R. Fincham

BNA days are a great way to meet up with old friends and make new ones, join in with tours and activities led by BNA experts, and take part in the award ceremony for graded members.

The day began with coffee in the Nature Activity Centre (NAC) before Honorary Chairman Steven Rutherford and organisers Stephanie Holt and Andrew Taylor welcomed everyone and gave a brief outline of the day.

We were lucky enough to have guests from the Linnean Society, Quekett Microscopy Club and the Society for Natural History, who provided stalls for members to peruse whilst having coffee in the NAC. They were joined by Mark Dudley MBNA and his hoverfly stand.



Members from Quekett and their digital microscope and slide show and the Society of Natural History members

Photos: Quekett



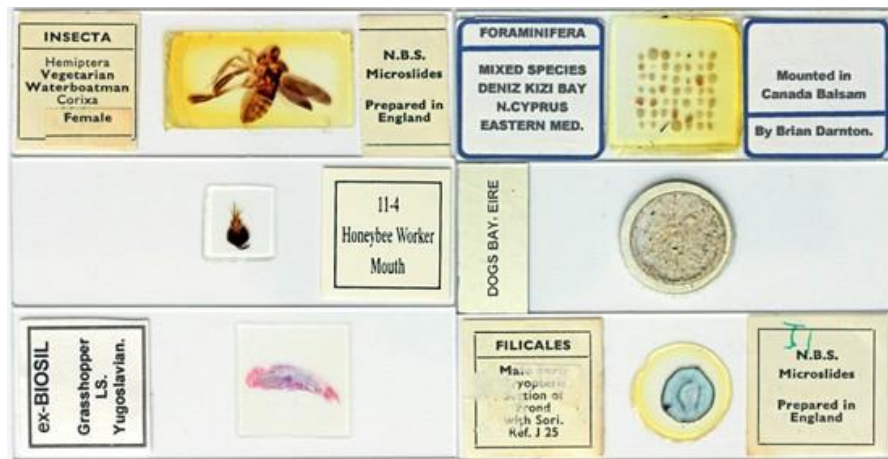
Linnean Society stand. Photo: Quekett. Hoverfly stand. Photo: K. Hinchcliffe

Activities, exhibitions and tours based in the Darwin Centre and NAC

1. Deep sea oceanography lab (leader - Andy Taylor)
2. Microscope workshop (leader - Roy Stewart)
3. History of the Natural History Museum (leader - Steph Holt)
4. UK & world beetles (leader - Katy Potts)
5. Hidden treasures of the Nature Activity Garden plant galls (leader - Steve Rutherford)
6. Hoverflies of the Nature Activity Garden (leader - Mark Dudley)



Deep Sea lab tour. Photos: K Hinchcliffe

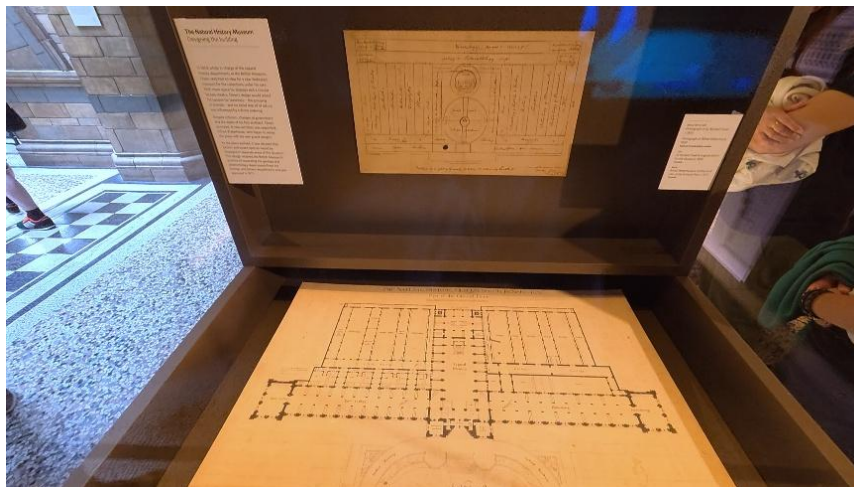


Some of the slides from the NHM collection Roy Stewart showed under microscopes.



Underwing of Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*) Underwing of Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*)

Photos: Quekett



Tour of the Natural History Museum. Photos: K. Hinchcliffe



NHM Beetle Collection presented by Katy Potts. Photos: Dr. C. Gibson



More beetles. Photo: Dr. C. Gibson



Outdoor activities took place around the NAC with Steve Rutherford doing Plant Galls and Mark Dudley doing Hoverflies
Photos: R. Fincham and E. Beer

Encaenia



Photo: R. Hinchcliffe

The award ceremony took place in the Neil Chalmers Seminar Room and was presented by Honorary Chairman Steve Rutherford, Honorary President Roger Tabor and organisers Stephanie Holt and Andrew Taylor.

The Talks

This year's Encaenia included PowerPoint talks from Stephanie Holt "The History of the Natural History Museum", Steven Rutherford "Secondary Woodlands" and a short obituary from Roger Tabor on the late Bill Oddie.



Stephanie Holt, Steven Rutherford and Roger Tabor

The Ceremony

Photos L. Artindale



Procession of graded members



Hon. Chairman Steve Rutherford, Hon. President Roger Tabor
Hon. Fellows – Stephanie Holt, Tim Gardiner and Neil Garrick Maidment



Kevin Hinchcliffe and Mark Dudley, Denis Vickers and Nic Wilson. Neil Garrick Maidment and Roger Tabor

Grade Recognition



ABNA awarded to Samantha Eastwood and Maria Andrade



MBNA awarded to Paul Guymer



FBNA awarded to Denis Vickers and Nic Wilson

Awards

Chairman's Award was introduced by Honorary Chairman Steven Rutherford in 2020, for either BNA members or non-members who may or may not be classed as naturalists' but have given unprecedented service to Natural History.



Presented to Neil Fairley

Neil and Chairman Steve Rutherford met as teenagers growing up in the Northeast with a joint interest in music.

But his future path lay not in music but in academia with qualifications that include a PhD in human reasoning, and Higher Education employment including spells as a research fellow at the University of Wolverhampton and as a lecturer at the Universities of Gloucester and Leicester. In 2023 Neil started volunteering as the BNA Sub-Editor and Proof-reader of the Country-Side magazine.

Roger Tabor Award is presented to a person who has achieved recognition as Associate Member of the BNA (ABNA) and is continuing to develop their skills as a Naturalist and promoting the study of nature.



Presented to Samantha Eastwood

Samantha has had an interest in rocks and dinosaurs since a young age and became active in fossil hunting in 2020 and now has a growing collection of fossil specimens. She is currently doing a course in advanced palaeontology, after previously completing a basic course on the same subject and a geology diploma.

During a recent fossil hunting holiday in March 2026, she found a vertebra from an Ichthyosaur at Saltwick Bay near Whitby in Yorkshire. Her other pastimes include Mud Larking and searching the strandline of the Yorkshire coast, building her understanding and collection of seashells which helps develop her identification skills.

Richard Fitter Memorial Medal commemorates the life of the renowned British naturalist and author Richard Fitter in the form of a medal awarded to an individual who is a dedicated active field naturalist.



Presented to Kevin Hinchcliffe MBNA

Kevin has an interest in birds, invertebrates and other animals. He has been recording and monitoring pond life, recording Great Crested Newts under license, and slow worms at his local garden centre in Yorkshire. He regularly visits the Abernethy area of Scotland and as a keen photographer for around 26 years, has been using camera traps and thermal imaging cameras to monitor and record the true Scottish Wildcat assessing their status using the pelage scoring before submitting sightings and correspondence to RZSS to confirm the sightings.

David Bellamy Award is given to a naturalist of distinction who shows exceptional dedication, field work, and contributions to natural history, mirroring the legacy of the prominent botanist and broadcaster Professor David Bellamy.



Presented to Andrew Taylor FBNA

Andrew has over the last 40 years collated and curated what is likely to be the largest private collections of natural history in the country.

His commitment to the study of natural history has taken him around the world, and his networks of naturalists, both amateur and professional have enabled him to build a collection which inspires, engages, and educates.

Alongside his collection, he also provided a home for the BNA's shell collection, and most recently the incredible spider collections of Tom Thomas.

His most recent success however takes him far from Britain to the depths of the Pacific Ocean where he is now working at the NHM in the Deep-Sea Oceanography lab.

Fellowship (Honoris Causa) to promote due recognition of excellence in natural history, was, instigated by the British Naturalists' Association and is only bestowed upon a small number of naturalists of outstanding calibre, or on eminent naturalists who meet the same standard of criteria (this latter origin of Fellows is strictly limited to a small number).



Fellowship presented to Stephanie Holt

Steph has been fascinated by the wildlife of the British Isles for as long as she can remember. After working in ecology, 13 years ago she found herself working for the Natural History Museum in London in the Centre for UK Nature. She is passionate about the intersection of ecology and history, and an enthusiastic communicator with experience in writing and broadcasting for peer, student, and public audiences.

She is a Trustee of the British Naturalists Association and previous recipient of the David Bellamy Award. She is a Trustee of the Gilbert White Museum, Associate Editor of Archives of Natural History, (the journal of the Society for the History of Natural History), Fellow and past Council Member of the Linnean Society of London, and member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

Her DPhil at the University of Oxford focuses on natural history in the late 18th Century, and it's influence on networks of naturalists in modern amateur natural history. This follows on from her MSt in Historical Studies, part funded by the British Society for the History of Science.



Fellowship presented to Tim Gardiner

Tim began to study conservation obtaining a PhD in Entomology in 2006. He initiated the Essex Glow-worm Survey in 2001 which is still going after 26 years. He has worked as biodiversity officer and technical specialist at the Environment Agency since 2009, which sees him involved with maintaining and enhancing the ecological interest of rivers and seawalls in Essex. Working with consultant ecologists Tim developed a Seawall Biodiversity Handbook which was published in 2015 and is undertaking a long-term study of the response of bumblebees to seawall mowing. Tim was made a Fellow of the British Naturalists' Association (BNA) in 2007 and was awarded the David Bellamy Award in 2013 by the BNA for his significant contribution to conservation and the study of natural history.

Tim's first book '*Hopping Back to Happiness?*' was published in 2009 dealt with the conservation of our declining farmland grasshoppers, a subsequent book '*Glowing, Glowing, Gone?*' published by the BNA in 2011 reported the results of a 10-year survey of Essex's glow-worms. A further book '*The Natural History of Waveney Forest*' was released by Forrest Text in 2014 and helped document the wildlife of this important Broadland site threatened by development. Tim as published numerous papers in international journals which have been cited over 1700 times in the scientific literature. His recent research has focused on blue-green infrastructure of coastal flood defences such as salt marsh terraces and the mapping and conservation of East Anglia's seagrass populations.



Formal group photo

The BNA would like to thank all those who led these activities and to the NHM for providing the venue.