

Binfield Badger Group

Protecting badgers across Berkshire

Charity Number: 1075886



Newsletter No. 140

March 2025



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GROUP NEWS AND OUR NEXT PUBLIC MEETING & AGM – 17th APRIL

An illustrated talk by
An illustrated talk by
Dave Hammant

**‘THE TRIALS OF NIGHT TIME
PHOTOGRAPHY’**

17th April 2025

All are welcome to our meeting and
AGM at
**Farley Wood Centre, Turnpike Rd
RG42 1FW**

**FREE - for all the family – doors open
at 7:00pm**
**Refreshments available, raffle and
sales stall**

We are looking forward to welcoming you to our **Public Meeting and AGM on Thursday, 17th April**. The meeting will start with an ‘illuminating’ talk by one of our long-standing BBG members, **Dave Hammant**. He’ll highlight the trials and tribulations of the nocturnal photographer and videographer, which have led to his passion for badgers and the wildlife he’s found as he walks their night time territories. Based on badger setts local to the West Berkshire area where, over the past ten or so years, the techniques and understanding of badgers has helped develop an insight into their behaviour - sometimes at odds with the accepted thinking!



Following a short break for refreshments, we will hold our short **AGM** - a chance for members to hear about what the Group has been up to over the past year and contribute any views/suggestions!



TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP



Another year has flown by and, **if your membership is due for renewal, you will find a form included with this newsletter.**
There is more information on how to renew on Page 4.

Please continue to support our activities. The ongoing bovine TB debate and cruel Cull, habitat loss due to the demand for more housebuilding and the fight against wildlife crime, mean your support is again vital, so we all stand together.



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SHARE YOUR BADGER PHOTOS WITH US!



The beautiful photo on our cover was taken from a hide in the Cairngorms by one of our lucky members! Have you been lucky enough to capture a shot of a badger in your garden, out in the countryside or at a hide? Or grabbed a great screen shot from your video footage? If you have and would like to share with other badger lovers, we have created a new page on our website to showcase member photos of our lovely brocks.

Please email any photos you would like us to feature on the website to badgers@binfieldbadgers.org.uk and let us know if you would like your name and a description shown. **Take a look at the new page here:** <https://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/members-photos> under the 'What you can do' section.

We would also like to show some member photos **at our next Public Meeting and AGM on Thursday, 17th April**, when one of our BBG members, Dave Hammant will be talking about his experiences photographing wildlife, especially at night – he'll be sure to be giving out tips and advice from his long experience behind the camera!

HALF TERM FUN WITH BERTIE BADGER AT READING MUSEUM!

- Judith



During the February half term, the Group were thrilled to be invited to take part in a '**Bertie Badger day**' at Reading Museum. Much fun was had by all as the children painted badger pebbles, coloured badger masks and

learnt lots of badger facts from our Binfield brocks, starring in the 'Secret Life of Badgers' video playing in the background!



We were intrigued to learn how 'Bertie Badger' had been chosen to 'front' children's events at the Museum. We were told: *"Bertie Badger is a popular piece of taxidermy at Reading Museum – initially thought to be male, Bertie is a*



female badger – although we have kept her original name! She was sadly killed by a car on the road near Emmer Green, just north of Reading, in 1973. When we opened the doors after lockdown, a trail was created featuring Bertie to safely guide visitors around the one way route throughout the Museum. She now also appears on our stickers which we give out to families during our busy holiday periods."

Long may one of Berkshire's precious brocks be 'the face' of enlightening the Museum's visitors – young and old!



We are planning to be at the following events - Look out for the BBG stall: -

GreenFest (St Bart's School, Newbury RG14 6JP)
VE Day Event (Farley Wood, Binfield RG42 1FW)

5 April
4 May



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Another year has flown by and the time has arrived again for membership renewals. The ongoing bovine TB debate and cruel cull, habitat loss due to housebuilding and the fight against wildlife crime, mean your support is again vital.



If your membership is due for renewal, your form is enclosed.
However, if you have asked for this newsletter to be emailed to you, a blank form has also been attached for you to complete please.

- **Please check that your details are correct**, particularly post codes and phone numbers, and add any changes in the box next to the entry.
- **Email addresses are very helpful** so we can let you know what is going on; *no personal details are shared with anyone else.*
- **Core Group Communications** – please *carefully* read the ‘Opt In’/‘Opt Out’ statements, just above your signature on the form *and tick the appropriate box.* (We hope you will choose to continue hearing from us regarding badgers and other wildlife-related issues, including our newsletters.)
- **Newsletter options-** you can now indicate on the form if you would prefer to receive your quarterly newsletter **by email**, by ticking the appropriate box.
(Of course, this will greatly save on the ever increasing cost of printing and postage!)
- **Membership rates** - the annual Membership rates continue to be £6 per adult and £2 per child (under 18). Please remember that from this fee we pay a levy of £2 per head to the Badger Trust to support its valuable work. The membership fee doesn’t cover our costs, so we (and the badgers!) continue to be very grateful to those able to add a donation to their fees. *Please indicate where you are able to Gift Aid any donation to the Group by ticking the box.*
- **How can you help?** - You will also see a section asking for details of how you can help - you are sure to find something that interests you, but more ideas are always welcome! Please get in touch today with your ideas, or comments on current issues – contact details are all listed on the back page of this newsletter.

Please then return your form to us as soon as possible, *preferably scanned and emailed to: membership@binfieldbadgers.org.uk* or by post to the address on the form.

- **Payments** - there are 3 ways to pay. **(1) pay by BACS** - our bank details are: Name: Binfield Badger Group / Sort code: 40-47-39 / Account number: 71496212; **(2) pay via Paypal** - please use the ‘*Donate*’ button in the ‘Join Us’ section on the website; **(3) return a cheque** (made payable to ‘Binfield Badger Group’) along with your membership form - our address is given on the form.
(We are charged fees for every cheque banked and for every Paypal transaction so more of your money goes to badgers if you are able to pay via BACS.)

(If paying by BACS or Paypal, please mark the form “paid via BACS” or “paid via website” when you return the form to us.)

If you know of anyone who would like to become a member, they can go to the ‘Join Us’ page on our web site: <http://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/join-us>, where the whole application process can be done quickly and securely.



QUIZ PAGE

Spring pic bits

Can you guess the pic from these bits?



learning through the seasons

www.naturedetectives.org.uk

Woodland Trust

Woodland Trust
naturedetectives

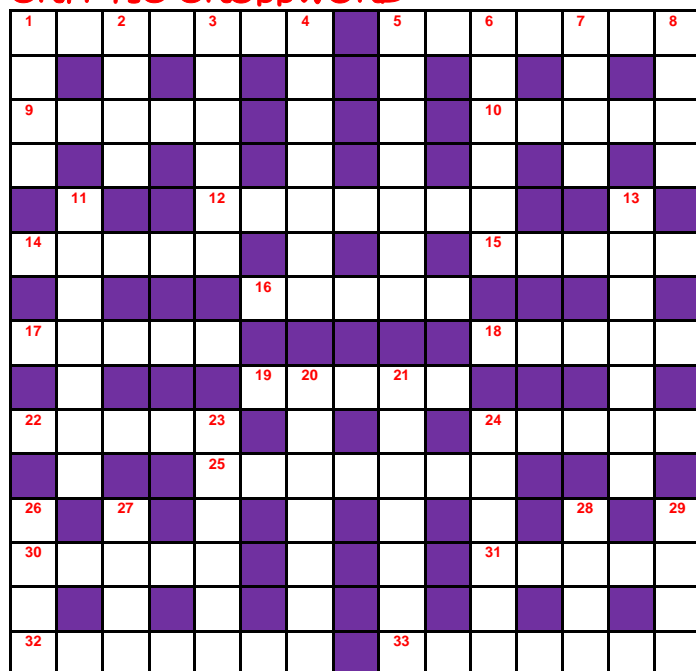
Kids' Springtime Detective Puzzle!

Use your detective skills to identify these mysterious photos – they are all of things you might find when you're out and about this Springtime.



Don't cheat – all will be revealed later in the newsletter!

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



- Across:**
- One who surfs or skims? (7)
 - Our favourite animals(7)
 - Almost green light for gems (5)
 - Sedges in the garden borders? (5)
 - Peg boat makes a good medium for preserving? (4,3)
 - Pure? Or just without colour? (5)
 - Grounded part of the hearth (5)
 - Stimulant from P-Peru (5)
 - Sounds like a legal term that could be sharp (5)
 - One of the 5's favourite treats? (5)

- Initially part of National Defence System (5)
- Reason for hunger – or cure for it? (5)
- 5's have a good sense of it (5)
- 22 do this (7)
- Colder – in Arctic I erased the memory (5)
- Short French farewell (5)
- Rivers of colour in the garden? (7)
- Dangers in growing revolt. (7)
- Male sounds like a tedious person (4)
- Spheres initially Owls retire before sunrise(4)
- In trouble, maybe not if you are a young ostrich (6)
- Vespula Rufa – coloured stinger (3,4)
- Blackberry or Loganberry (7)
- In old red gems – to clear the river (6)
- Easter ones will not hatch (4)
- Call for help, oh, ok (4)
- Sounds like Tennyson's lady, may make you cry (7)
- Type of chase started between churches(7)
- Beginnings for Darwin (7)
- Appreciating what 5's do a lot of (7)
- We revs turn suddenly to avoid something (6)
- Not likely in Berkshire –not even at Coppid Beech (sic) (6)
- Starts two in frivolous fight for lovers? (4)
- Type of management – no crossover here (4)
- Eight bits – worse than a bark certainly (4)
- Not old enough to scout? (4)

Answers near the back – no cheating!



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In the last edition, we reviewed how badgers can be protected during the construction phase. Naturally, this can't be the end of the story if planning permission has been given. If badgers are to have any chance of remaining in an area, they will need protection when buildings are occupied and in use.

Our first concern on a new development is, where possible, to protect any badger sett which is in use, seeking to ensure that a suitable distance is maintained between setts and the final buildings and areas of public access. This can be achieved by developers creating a barrier through a combination of fencing and scrub planting, thus hopefully providing a space free from dogs, litter, artificial light, human noise and all the other disturbance that comes with modern society.

We also consider badgers' need to feed. As we know, badgers are nocturnal, emerging between dawn and dusk to forage. One of our major concerns therefore is that lighting schemes be compatible with their needs, as well as human requirements, allowing badgers to move freely across a site with some sense of safety and security. We also try to ensure that they can access food, both by providing bountiful planting on site and through the development of wildlife corridors which allow badgers to traverse a site and access foraging beyond. Although badgers like pasture, our garden lawns are a poor substitute for lost field space, so continuing access to any available large grassed areas is vital. We might also ask that tunnels under roads or traffic calming measures be included at known road crossing points. With some 50,000 badgers killed on the roads each year, providing safe crossing points is a priority.

You might think that with these accommodations, badgers can continue to live happily in their setts whilst the land around them is used for housing and new industry. Sadly, the picture is rather more bleak. Yes, we know of setts that have survived, including the one that gave rise to our very own Berkshire group back in the 1990's. However, too often the story is one of mitigations not succeeding and of clans leaving setts that have been occupied for decades – or longer. For all their brute strength, badgers are shy creatures and prefer areas free from disturbance. Over time, new estates acquire security lighting put up by homeowners; areas reserved for wildlife become used for impromptu barbecues and gatherings; dogs off leads are attracted to wildlife areas by the interesting smells and sounds they offer and traffic mitigations are poorly sited or simply not used by the local badgers.

University of Sheffield, published in the Lost Nature report December 2024, shows that approximately half of all wildlife mitigations simply do not happen; some developers are conscientious and aware of environmental issues, others are definitely not. The mitigations we request should not, therefore, be seen as a silver bullet allowing developers to build what they like, where they like, with local badgers co-existing happily with the new environment. Instead, they are a highly imperfect tool but the best, at the moment, we can offer.

I expect we all support the principal that there should be homes for everyone. It would be perverse to argue otherwise. However, I do not think it NIMBYism to seek to protect wildlife, nor do I think it wrong to challenge the views of those we elect. Perhaps the best protection for badgers is for us to ask of our local and national politicians:

- *What derelict housing do we have locally that could be renovated?*
- *What brown field and urban housing options do we have?*
- *What creative solutions are there to allow the provision of homes and the maintenance of green space, such as the conversion of unused office space?*

**Perhaps using these spaces first would give rise to a different type of NIMBYism –
Nature In My Back Yard!**



MAIDENHEAD GOLF COURSE GIVEN GO-AHEAD FOR 1,500 HOMES



Campaigners were dealt a devastating blow when controversial outline plans to build 1,500 homes on Maidenhead Golf Course were given the green light following a four hour council meeting on Thursday, 13th February. This is despite the Maidenhead Great Park (MGP) campaign group and countless others providing a range of good reasons why this development should not proceed. The impact of the development on wildlife (some with protected status), air pollution, increased traffic and flooding are some of the long-standing concerns raised by the MGP group. Tina Quadrino, member of the MGP campaign group, spoke on the environmental damage of the application, especially loss of ancient woodland.

Seemingly, a number of councillors with pre-determined views against the scheme were not permitted to participate, and the remaining councillors voted unanimously in favour of the application. Sadly, despite all the efforts of MGP and others, a 2,000 signature petition and hundreds of objection letters opposing the development, it appears Maidenhead will lose its Golf Course.

With the cumulative effects of the significant amount of development taking place already around Harvest Hill and Spring Lane, if the golf course development goes ahead, a sizeable area in the south-west of Maidenhead will be an urban sprawl. This will make it very difficult for wildlife to traverse the area to access suitable foraging.

The MGP group will not give up fighting, despite this disappointment. Efforts are being made to protect as much of the woodland as possible and to provide a buffer zone around the ancient woodland at Rushington Copse in an effort to mitigate the detrimental effects on protected species.

<https://maidenheadgreatpark.co.uk>

It is very sad news for badgers too. They have lived on Maidenhead Golf Course for many years.

Their success has been due to the relative peace and quiet with limited public access on the golf course. The effects of the proposed development will pose a serious threat to the badgers and we believe it will risk their survival.



Binfield Badger Group sent a detailed letter to the Planning Department a year ago, objecting to the application and raising concerns about loss of most of the badgers' foraging areas, closure of several setts and the high risk of disturbance from people, dogs, lights and noise. And that's assuming the badgers survive the noise and hazards during construction work which will go on for many years. These badgers haven't been used to much noise, so it will create a real challenge for them. Unfortunately, our objections did not hold sway in terms of this outline decision and we were sad to see the planning officers recommend approval. But we've been advised our suggested mitigations will be considered in the detailed planning phase and it's now up to us to ensure the best possible outcome for badgers on the Golf Course in the years ahead.

Just recently we found a dead badger on the A404M, which is adjacent to the Spring Lane development and next to MGC. This poor animal was probably displaced due to all the construction work taking place. Sadly this will be more common if the golf course is developed as badgers will find it very difficult to navigate around huge developments.





The Badger Trust has appointed Nigel Palmer as its new Chief Executive following the retirement of Peter Hambly.

Nigel has extensive experience in the wildlife and nature sector, particularly his ten years with the Save Me Trust, which advocates for wildlife and actively campaigns against the badger

cull. For many years, he has cared for a badger sett near his home, and he aims to use his passion for badgers and wildlife to support Badger Trust in the future.



Nigel said *"I am delighted to take up this opportunity - I have been a passionate advocate for badgers and wildlife for many years. Badgers face a challenging future. Bovine TB is a pernicious bacteria* that hides within the cattle herd but much of which remains undetected by current standard cattle testing. It's a disease that is overwhelmingly spread from cattle to cattle."*

It's time to remove badgers from the debate and ensure the government delivers on its pledge to end badger culls and support farmers dealing with bovine TB in their herds. We will work to ensure badgers remain protected from the pressure of new development and the resurgence of wildlife crime against them.

I am excited to lead the Badger Trust at this challenging time and thank Peter for his excellent work over the last few years.

I look forward to collaborating with the government, farmers, and other wildlife and nature NGOs and supporting our local groups to deliver a safe and secure future for badgers."

**bTB is caused by mycobacterium bovis, a bacterium*

Rosie Wood, Chair of Badger Trust added,

"We are so pleased Nigel has agreed to join us. He brought wildlife and nature groups together under Team Badger a decade ago and, with his leadership, we look forward to working with governments, charities, scientists, rural communities and the public to end the badger cull, better protect our wildlife and genuinely eradicate bTB in cattle."





Badger Trust urges an end to badger culling, calling for better cattle testing and biosecurity to combat Bovine TB with a science-led approach.

On 28 February, the Badger Trust submitted its recommendations to the Godfray Review 2025, alongside their contributions to Countryside LINK's submission.

"We are calling for an immediate end to badger culling, to be replaced with better cattle testing to identify hidden disease within herds, and stronger farm biosecurity—developed in partnership between farmers and their vets, with support from DEFRA and APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency).

*The science is clear: **culling or vaccinating badgers alone will not eradicate bovine TB in cattle.** We urge Professor Godfray and his committee to stand by the evidence and make firm recommendations to the Government. Ministers must honour their commitment to end culling and implement a cattle-focused strategy that tackles the disease at its source while supporting farmers through this transition."*

[**Read the full article >**](#)

[**Read more in our report: Tackling Bovine TB Together**](#)



SLOW DOWN 🐾 **REPORT** 🐾 **SAVE LIVES** 🐾

- Badger Trust



We are incredibly grateful to every driver who has slowed down, every person who has reported incidents of injured or deceased badgers and everyone who is raising awareness of this urgent issue. Because of you, our message is reaching more people than ever. Your support is saving lives.

But we must keep going!

The Trust's Operations Team has already received over 900** reports of badger-related road traffic incidents this year alone through their [Reporting Centre](#). Every action you take helps protect these incredible animals. **Remember:**

- 🐾 **Slow down** – Be mindful of wildlife on the roads.
- 🐾 **Report** – Let us know if you see an injured or deceased badger.
- 🐾 **Save lives** – Together, we can make roads safer for badgers.

(* the Binfield Badger Group alone have received approx 25 reports of RTAs since the start of the year. Sadly, February is a peak month for badgers being killed on the roads as some of them disperse.)



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QUIZ ANSWERS

Spring pic bits

Answer sheet

Woodland Trust
nature detectives

Kids' Springtime Detective Puzzle!



ash flowers



shield bug



spider web

Ash Flowers; Shield bug; Spider web



frogspawn



bird eggs



ladybird

Frogspawn; Bird's nest; Ladybirds



small tortoiseshell



wasp



snail

Small tortoiseshell; Wasp; Snail

How many did you know?



learning through the seasons

www.naturedetectives.org.uk



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

1	B	R	2	O	W	3	S	E	4	R		5	B	A	6	D	G	7	E	R	8	S
	O			R			C		E				R		R			G			O	
9	A	M	B	E	R			D					A		10	E	D	G	E	S		
	R		S			A		W					M		D			S			O	
		11	S			12	P	E	A	T	B	O	G							13	S	
14	W	H	I	T	E			S			L			15	E	A	R	T	H			
		A					16	U	P	P	E	R						E				
17	C	L	A	W	S									18	H	O	N	E	Y			
		L					19	P	20	O	N	21	D	S					P			
22	W	O	R	M	23	S		R			I			24	S	M	E	L	L			
		T			25	W	R	I	G	G	L	E					E					
26	T		27	S		E		G		G		A			28	B			29	C		
30	I	C	I	E	R			I			I			31	A	D	I	E	U			
	F		L		V		N			N		I				T			B			
32	F	L	O	W	E	R	S			33	G	A	R	D	E	N	S					



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WE CATCH UP WITH OUR FAVOURITE FOOTIE TEAM – THE BASILDON BADGERS!



The Binfield Badger Group are proud to sponsor Basildon Badgers FC's 'Berkshire Badgers Trophy', which is awarded to the young player who has shown special effort and qualities while playing for their team.



This month our winner is Rupert. The club is 10 years old this year and he's now playing at U17 level for other local clubs, but he still helps out coaching the younger players when he can. Over the Christmas holidays he arranged a friendly match between ex Badgers and friends (all stars) verses his current team - a thrilling 7-4 victory for the Badgers 🦡

Well done Rupert!



AND FINALLY ... Wildlife Photographer Of The Year – And The Winner Is.....



.....**British photographer Ian Wood!**

His photo, showing a curious badger glancing up at some rather familiar graffiti in St Leonards-on-Sea, England, beat 25 images nominated for this year's People's Choice Award by the Natural History Museum and an international judging panel.

An ambling Eurasian badger, illuminated by a streetlight, appears to glance up at badger graffiti on a quiet road in England. Residents of St Leonards-on-Sea had been leaving food

scraps on the pavement for foxes, but badgers from a nearby sett were also coming to forage. Ian Wood decided to photograph a badger he spied walking along the pavement by this wall late one night. He set up a small hide on the edge of the road to take this picture.

Ian says *"The outpouring of badger love since my photo was nominated for the People's Choice Award has been beautifully overwhelming. However, there is a darker side to this image. I live in rural Dorset, where a badger cull has decimated their numbers and unless the cull is stopped, we'll only see badgers in urban settings in several parts of England."*

The renowned Wildlife Photographer competition is organized by the Natural History Museum of London. Ian's and the four other winning images will be displayed both online and on the interactive voting screens in the flagship exhibition at the Natural History Museum until 29th June.



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COMMITTEE

Chairpersons: John Fennell and Jill Hoblin
Secretary: Judith Darnell, Woodley
Treasurer: Karen McCoy, Sonning
Membership Secretary: Judith Darnell, Woodley
Group email: Mike Coon, Maidenhead
Talks: John Fennell, Binfield
Copse maintenance: Cathy Holwill, Reading
Newsletter: Judith Darnell, Woodley
Vaccination: Jill Hoblin, Newbury
Sett/RTA Records: Karen McCoy, Sonning
Surveys: Committee members
Planning: Committee members
Rescues: Carol and Trevor Samuel, Maidenhead
Website: Karen McCoy and Cathy Holwill

E-Mail:

badgers@binfieldbadgers.org.uk

Facebook:

fb.me/binfieldbadgers

Website:

www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk

Your MP: www.writetothem.com/



Badger Trust, 95 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 4ST

Phone - 01273 033440

Web - www.badgertrust.org.uk



EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

(cut out and keep)

Binfield Badger Group	0844 804 1146 <i>(Premium Rate)</i>
RSPCA 24 hour <u>emergency</u> call out number	0300 1234 999
Police emergency only (use 101 for non-urgent)	999
Harper Asprey Wildlife Rescue, Camberley	01344 623106
Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue	07549 322464
Leatherhead Wildlife Aid, Surrey	09061 800132
Aylesbury Wildlife Hospital Trust, Haddenham, Bucks	01844 292292

PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO A FRIEND WHO MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT THE GROUP - HELP THE BADGERS BY INTRODUCING A NEW MEMBER – YOU CAN NOW JOIN ONLINE.

A FULL COLOUR VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE.



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