



PAISLEY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Newsletter August 2013

It is with a very sad heart that the society announces the death of two of our most valued, long-term members.

Margaret Rose Train (1963 – 2013)

I cannot remember a time when Maggie was not at the University in Paisley, for me she was always there - a part of the fixtures and fittings. I first met Maggie when I was working in the Biology Department in the 1980s. It was an exciting time to be in the department, as there was lots of ecological research going on and as a 1st year student, Maggie thrived in this academic environment quickly veering towards the study of invertebrates. We used to chat long and often during tea breaks, discussing a variety of subjects. She had a lovely smile and a twinkle in her eyes and everyone enjoyed hearing her laugh.



Maggie became a valuable member of the Paisley Natural History Society attending monthly talks, meeting other amateur naturalists and making new friends along the way. She was elated when she applied for a PhD and it didn't surprise me to find that it involved studying invertebrates or more precisely Flour Beetles! Maggie loved her research and teaching students in the Biology Department and I think Maggie would have made a marvellous full time lecturer because she had all the important qualities within her heart and soul - she was kind, thoughtful, and sincere but above all, she really, genuinely cared. Those are wonderful qualities that this society is going to miss.

Tom Byars, Chairman, Paisley Natural History Society

John Stevenson (1925- 2013)

John was a man of many talents and interests. He served his time as a Marine Engineer but when I knew him at first he was working as an inspector in Remington Rand, Hillington where they made razor blades. John failed so many blades that when the place closed down he had enough to last him a lifetime.

He lived over the fence from my mother and her sister in Renfrew, using part of their garden to supplement his own. He was a keen model boat maker, sailing them on the pond in Robertson Park and had a good knowledge of classical, jazz and popular music, attending Renfrew's Record Club regularly.

John started Hillwalking at the tender age of 64 with a group from Strathclyde Buses but when they packed up I suggested he join the Paisley Hillwalking Club. All went well for his first three outings but on the fourth he got terribly lost and Mountain Rescue were called out. He was duly found and returned to Victoria Lodge near Bridge of Orchy where the rest of the club were patiently waiting. One girl was so pleased to see him back she gave him a kiss to which he retorted "I think I'll get lost more often".

John was a life member of Paisley Natural History Society and was best known for his excellent home brew at our Christmas Socials. He was also a member of Renfrewshire Conservation Volunteers and was still doing manual work for them well into his seventies. John is survived by his wife Johanna, three sons and one daughter.

Ewan Douglas, Paisley Natural History Society

[Autumn Outing](#)

Saturday 28th September **Bird Outing to Newshot Island** Contact: Tom Byars 01294 466 393

Departure from the Watermill Hotel car park, Paisley at 9am

On this outing to Newshot Island we will be looking for waders, wildfowl and hopefully Water Rail.

[Autumn Talks Programme](#)

[Paisley Museum](#)

[7.30pm](#)

Thursday 5th September

**Alexander Wilson and the Cape May Warbler: a Tiger's Tale
by Tom Byars**

Alexander Wilson (1766 – 1813), Paisley's famous Ornithologist and Poet, named the Cape May Warbler in 1811. In June 1977, a Cape May Warbler was discovered singing in Glen Park – remarkable but true the story has come full circle.

To commemorate the bicentenary of the death of Alexander Wilson, Tom will provide an insight into this remarkable little bird.

Thursday 3rd October

Plants, the real silent witnesses by Dr Jennifer Miller
(Director of the Dickson Forensic Bio-Archaeology Unit, Northlight Heritage)

Locard's Principle states that every contact leaves a trace. When applied to fingerprints, drops of blood or firearms discharge, this concept is easily understood and recognised. However, plants and soil surround us whenever we step outside our door, ready to adhere to clothing and tools; to shed traces into or grow through a clandestine grave. Forensic Botany now has an accepted role in criminal investigation. This presentation will outline the various ways in which plants contribute to the investigation of serious crime, giving case examples to help illustrate salient points.

Thursday 7th November

**Observations on a colony of Adders, Slow-worms and Common
Lizards on Loch Lomondside by Chris McInerney** (University of
Glasgow).

A colony of reptiles on the east shore of Loch Lomond was monitored intensively during 2012 to understand population numbers, distribution, movements and biology throughout the year. Large numbers of European Adder *Vipera berus*, Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* and Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* were found. This talk will describe these observations and outline an environmental mitigation plan for a proposed hydroelectric scheme for this site.

[Facebook Page](#)

We now have a facebook page - www.facebook.com/PaisleyNaturalHistorySociety.

[Society Website](#)

The address is www.paisleynaturalhistorysociety.org.uk