



# SCIENCE IN THE NEWS

## October 2019 – Monthly Report

### Recent Meetings:

At many of our meetings we have presentations given by members of the group or invited speakers. These presentations span the full range of our science interests. A selection of these are available by following the relevant #LINK# item on our group web page. If you would like further details of the subject matter, please contact our Group Convenor who will pass you the relevant contact details.

### Monthly Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019:

This month we held a very successful meeting with over 20 members present.

The session was kicked off by Bob Howitt who gave us an overview of the **Sizewell Nuclear** power generation facility we are scheduled to visit in November. This was a very valuable heads up on what goes on there, particularly as it seems that many areas of the site are very much kept under wraps, away from prying eyes (and that will include ours).

This was followed by Alec Hillier, who described a **Bat survey** project which has been running in Suffolk and Norfolk and in which Alec has taken an active role. The project includes the field placement of remote sites of sensors which are able to count passing bats and not only count them but analyse their calls to broadly identify the various sub-species. This is being done at many sites throughout the area and the results are being collated centrally. Take a look at the following for more information or else contact Alec direct.:

<https://www.batsurvey.org>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSol-db8ffQ&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOIRBkc-xK8&feature=youtu.be>

Following this, the final subject covered was that of a curious medical case, described by Dr Mike Lloyd an ex GP and also member of our group. This is a rare condition known as “**Auto Brewery Syndrome**”, that can occur where a patient with the condition can give all the symptoms of being heavily intoxicated without having ingested any alcohol. It is caused by a complex process resulting following the ingestion of carbohydrates from which the system produces very high blood-alcohol, by what is known as an endogenous fermentation. A patient in the USA was stopped by police for bad driving, and because he refused a breathalyser he was subjected to a blood test. This showed an alcohol level greater than 200 (UK limit is 80), when he had not consumed any alcohol for some considerable time. A web search produces clear evidence that although very rare, isolated cases have been reported in many places around the globe. Take a look at

<https://www.alcohol.org › co-occurring-disorder › auto-brewery-syndrome>

So overall a really varied and interesting afternoon session demonstrating the wide range of expertise existing within our member group. A big thankyou to the contributors.

### Diary of future activities:



The **7th November** meeting will be replaced by the visit to the Sizewell "B" facility which includes a guided tour of the site followed by a presentation in the visitors centre on current plans and progress with the "C" site/facility. We have circulated all members of our group full details of the visit.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The entry list is now closed. Anyone who has missed it can either of course wait until we have another visit or one can contact them directly and join a general visit.

As mentioned at the last meeting, our **December 5<sup>th</sup>** meeting will be a completely different social get together for members to get into the festive spirit of the month. We plan to hold two fun quiz sessions, John Humphreys will hold a broadly science and perhaps fun based **20 questions**. We will divide the group into four "teams" for this and will make every effort to spread the science talent around so nobody need fear of being exposed. And Jon Roots is organising a **"Bring a mystery object"** quiz - let's have everybody bring along some item which might be unrecognisable to most, if not all, of the group. Just let Jon know what you will contribute either before the meeting or as you enter. Remember, it can be anything which will fit through the doorway of The Undercroft, so get digging in the farthest reaches of the kitchen drawers, the loft and garage/tool shed etc. We need volunteers to provide a range of "refreshments", including some snacks, perhaps mince pies, sausage rolls or whatever. Please, anyone happy to join in and make this a fun day, give me a call or drop me an email.

Our first meeting in 2020 will not be held on the usual first Thursday but on the second Thursday i.e. **9th January 2020** - St Michael's Undercroft at 2pm. This to relieve the time pressures around Christmas/New Year celebrations. We would like this to be an open session with your own news items but making these fit the single theme, **plastics disposal and recycling**. This will be kicked-off by **Rod Parker** our in-house chemist/plastics expert, so put your thinking caps on, start searching and bring along your news items under these themes.

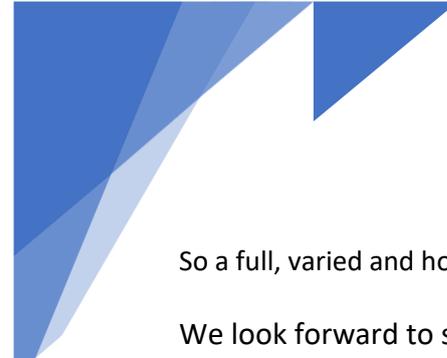
On **February 6th** we focus on the subject of **#dendrology#** - Trees. This will be presented by John Loftus (a member of the group and qualified botanist) - should be very interesting.

**March 2020** will be focused on a talk presented by **Dr Helen Bynum**, a well known expert on the **history of medicine** and medical science. ([www.bynumauthors.com/helen](http://www.bynumauthors.com/helen)).

In **April** we are lucky to have a visit from **Dr Mark Collins**, ex-Chairman of **The Galapagos Conservation Trust** (<https://galapagosconservation.org.uk>). The details of his talk have yet to be finalised but The Galapagos and his interest in specific species of butterflies will I am sure provide the backdrop for an interesting and informative session.

### Summary of Future Dates/Meetings:

7th November 2019	Visit to Sizewell – 0945 at the entrance.
5 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	1400hrs - Christmas Social meeting Including a Science quiz in teams and a Mystery Objects quiz.
9 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	Open Science in the News items as far as possible focused upon Plastics and their recycling/disposal
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	Dendrology
5 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	Dr Helen Bynum – History of Medical Science
2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2010	Dr Mark Collins – The Galapagos Conservation Trust



So a full, varied and hopefully interesting next few months.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible and please do bring along your own science news bites. We try to fit in everyone but sometimes the clock beats us as we must vacate the room by 4pm. However, do not let this deter you and try again at the next meeting. Even when we have a speaker, if there is time please raise your own topic for our general discussion.

I should also remind you that all our newsletters are available on our U3A Group web page. Just access Beccles U3A and follow the link to **Science in the News/ LINKS/Past Newsletters** and then select the month you would like to access.

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