

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In future Journals this space will be reserved for 'Letters to the Editor'. All the usual conditions will apply as in the small type in the Press which nobody reads. I am looking forward to not having to fill the gaps.

Eric Godley may have retired from the Botany Division but he has not retired from the Society. However, we think it fitting to acknowledge our debt to him over the last few years in dealing with the various problems that arise in editing your Journal and for his willingness to write the present guest editorial. We hope that with retirement he does not become too busy to continue his support and help to the Society.

A decision that is often faced by the Society is what stand to take over commercial development of our surroundings. Should the Society as a whole be involved or should it be left to the individual. To take a particular case; jet boats on the River Avon. The pertinent question to ask is does it effect the vegetation? Personally, I think that it does not, and therefore it is a matter for the individual. The A.G.M. agreed with this decision, perhaps, not for the same reasons.

Another case, that of trail bikes, has been brought to my attention by Stan Reid's article in this Journal and also my wife's experience on one of the days when the Mt. Vernon estate was exposed to public viewing. She was walking down the Rapaki Track when one of three trail bike riders also on the track, revved up his motor and ploughed through a large muddy puddle, showering my wife with a good covering of rather smelly slush. It is easy to decide that the inconsiderate behaviour of the rider above is not for Society action but for individual protest. The question of damage to the environment does arise, as it does in the Bert Brehm epic. All Bert's story points to the fact that the tracks were really getting a pounding. Under such treatment any incipient depression quickly becomes a large water-retaining puddle - great fun to plough through. The time comes however when the bikes have to circumnavigate a large pond. The greatest danger to the vegetation is that on an area like the top of the Old Man there is nothing to stop the bikes from leaving the tracks and riding for miles over fairly smooth terrain, especially along the bottom of the apparent furrows. The very low growing vegetation which has probably taken many hundreds of years to establish, is extremely vulnerable, and could easily be totally destroyed. A case for the Society?

Your obedient servant,  
the Editor.