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1 April – 30 June 2010

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## RECORDS OF RARE OR UNUSUAL SPECIES

If a species has not been found in the county before or is rare in the county, the sighting usually needs to be confirmed by a second person, ideally someone familiar with that species. A good photograph may be acceptable as conclusive evidence if it shows the distinguishing features of the species. The

verification panel may not be able to accept the record if there is no actual evidence or corroboration of the sighting.

Each group of organisms, such as Woodlice, Fungi or Craneflies, has a County Recorder who is keen to help with identification and verification or can suggest someone nearer who can help. Several County Recorders are LNC members.

Unusual species should be reported as soon as possible to the relevant County Recorder so that there is a good chance of the organism still being at the site. In groups, such as insects, where it is possible to collect a specimen, the actual insect may be shown to the County Recorder. It may be possible to confirm the sighting without killing the insect and it can then be returned to the site.

To find the County Recorder for a group, or someone else who can confirm the record, contact one of the Heritage editors or Gareth Price, the Community Ecologist at the Leics. & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) which is housed, at present, at Holly Hayes in Birstall.

This quarter we have an instance of the sighting of a dragonfly that has not been recorded for the county - the Scarce Chaser *Libellula fulva*. As only one observer saw the insect, we cannot use the record but keep a look-out for this species on rivers and gravel pits in the county next year as it is extending its range and is sure to be with us again soon.

Helen Ikin

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## CLASSIFIED RECORDS

### MAMMALS

In the latest Mammal Society *Handbook of Mammals* some of the common names of species have been changed, so this quarter the scientific names are used as well as the new common names.

#### **Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus***

Dead Hedgehogs were reported from Park Road in Loughborough, East Park Road in Leicester, the A46 near Anstey and near Desford Station. Live specimens were seen in Mill Close at Birstall, Mountsorrel, Frisby on the Wreaks, visiting GF's Scraftoft terrace occasionally each month and at least two coming nightly to HBH's Loughborough garden to take peanuts.

#### **Mole *Talpa europaea***

Molehills were noted at Pignut Spinney in Loughborough, Kirkby Mallory, Wymeswold, Meadow NR, Manor Park at Twycross, Swithland and Watermead CP.

Allotment holders in Birstall trapped one, which was burrowing under potatoes.

Bats were noted over gardens in Eaton, two areas of Loughborough, Quorn and Scraftoft. SFW has sent in some more specific bat records from Ulverscroft NR where RS using her "Anabat" detector was able to record and analyze the calls of **Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*** (55 kHz) and **Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*** (45 kHz).

The calls of the same two species were picked up in Birstall by GP with her Bat Box 3 detector and **Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii*** was also heard near White Horse Bridge in Birstall. GP has checked with Jenny Harris that these records were feasible.

HBH sees four or more bats regularly in his Loughborough garden and they are roosting behind the wall tiles on the house.

The Club bat detector is still available for members to borrow.

**Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*** are as plentiful as ever and were reported from Scraftoft – 14 or more, Rothley, Buddon Brook Meadows in Quorn, Dishley, East Goscote,

Barkby Thorpe, Kirkby Mallory, Ulverscroft NR, Manor Park at Twycross, Dishley, Eaton, Swithland, Aylestone Meadows and Knighton Tunnel. JMS has seen none, in the Eaton area, with myxomatosis this quarter.



Rabbit © Jim Graham

#### **Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus***

HB has only seen two hares this quarter at Little Stretton and Quenby. He comments on their rapid decline in the last decade. A letter in *The Times* suggested that the increase in Buzzards may be a cause but it is probably due to a number of factors as Hares were in decline before the Buzzard population explosion. Hares were noted at Stathern, near Garthorpe - a half grown leveret, in a field near Burrough Hill on the Wednesday morning walk in April and two at Woodhouse where they have not been seen for some time.

The **Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*** is certainly not in decline and has been recorded from Great Bowden, Tur Langton, Birstall, Ulverscroft NR, Grace Dieu Wood, a Loughborough garden, Scraftoft and Quorn - eating the flowers of a Himalayan Musk Rose.

A vole was seen scuttling across a road at Garthorpe by JMS - moving too fast to be sure of species.

A **Common Rat *Rattus norvegicus*** was taking advantage of bird feeding stations in a garden in Newbold Verdon.

GF has had a **Wood Mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus*** visiting his Scraftoft terrace during April and June and found a decapitated corpse on a nearby lawn – the head was nearby! PHG had a dead one in his Quorn garden and two

corpses were found in Grace Dieu Wood on 15 April.

The only **House Mouse *Mus domesticus*** record was from HB's house in Leicester where one was helping itself to birdseed in the shed and two were seen around the bird feeder. Sightings have ceased since the resident cat took an interest.

**Fox *Vulpes vulpes*** (apparently no longer called *Red Fox* which always seemed a lovely descriptive name, although this name is used in the caption of a picture in the Handbook). JH has Foxes regularly visiting his Loughborough garden, including one that is nearly black. Also in Loughborough several have been seen around the Roydale Close area. Birstall foxes were noted on two evenings and we have had sightings in Swithland and Ulverscroft NR. There have been droppings or strong, distinctive smell of fox at Watermead and Sheet Hedges Wood and Kirkby Mallory

We have a single record of **Stoat *Mustela erminea*** – one seen by JMS on the verge of the Branston to Knipton Road.

**Weasels *Mustela nivalis*** were seen crossing roads near Burrough Court on 7 April, at Garthorpe on 26 April, and on Piper Drive in Long Whatton on 8 June.

### **Badger *Meles meles***

Dead Badgers were noted on Joe Moore's Lane in Woodhouse parish, Stathern Hill and Waltham on the Wolds. Live ones were leaving signs of activity in Swithland, Burrough Hill, and Ulverscroft NR and one was spotted foraging in Mill Close, Birstall on two occasions.

A **Fallow Deer *Dama dama*** was spotted in Swithland Wood – a large buck, which had probably escaped from Bradgate Park.

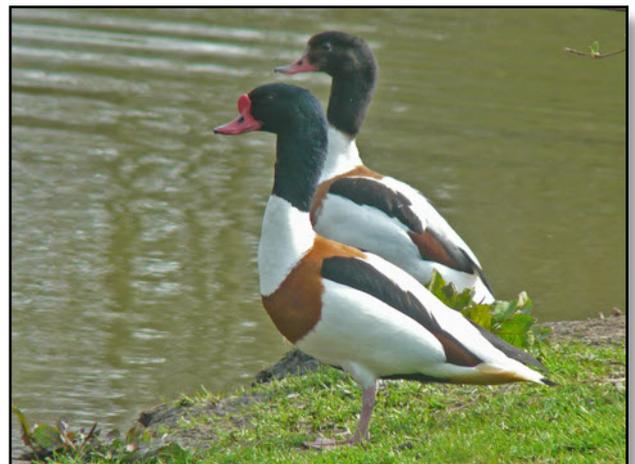
Helen Ikin

## **BIRDS**

Almost all the records of **Mute Swan** were of nesting birds or pairs with young cygnets. The largest number of adults together was 15 at Syston and most suitable stretches of water appeared to have at least one nest mostly hatching six to eight young.

Surprisingly, there were only four separate pairs of **Greylag Geese** mentioned and only one with young, this being at Cossington Meadows where there were five goslings on 19 June. By contrast there were around a dozen **Canada Geese** nests noted, some producing up to eight young. The majority of the nests were in the north west of the county. On 5 May a **Barnacle Goose** was found at Thornton Reservoir with six white farmyard geese!

What were probably the same two **Shelduck** were seen at Wanlip and Lockington throughout April but there were no reports of breeding.



Shelduck © Jim Graham

Of the numerous sightings of **Mandarin Ducks** the majority were at Cropston Reservoir where there was a maximum of seven on 14 April. Others, usually in twos, were at Bradgate Park, Swithland, Charnwood Lodge and Ulverscroft. Individual **Wigeon** were still around the area in April and May although there were 70 at Cossington Meadows on 8 April. The last reported was a pair at Cropston Reservoir on 17 May although a "dodgy" male was with a female Mallard there well into June. Although there were lots of double-figure counts of **Gadwall** at suitable sites along the Soar Valley, the maximum being 19 pairs at Cropston Reservoir, the only breeding success seems to have been at Cossington Meadows where there were four females with 11 young on 19 June. Wanlip and Cossington had well into double figure counts of **Teal** during April with 60 at Wanlip on 11th. The last two birds were seen at Kelham Bridge on 27 April but there was a record of two at Cossington Meadows on 19 June. There were only a few double-figure counts of **Mallard**, almost all of these were at Cropston Reservoir where 79 was the highest number recorded.

However pairs were noted at all suitable sites and around a hundred separate ducklings fledged. **Shoveler** were only found at Wanlip and Cossington Meadows with 21 at Wanlip on 12 April. At Cossington, on 19 June, a female with one small duckling was seen. A pair of **Red-crested Pochard** was found at Watermead Park on 29 April and a female was there on 16 June. Trent Valley Pit held a male **Pochard** in mid April and there were two males at Swithland Reservoir on the last day of the quarter.

**Tufted Duck** were by far the most numerous of the duck species with 185 at Swithland Reservoir on 3 April. There were still 126 there on 28 June. Ducklings were noted at the end of the quarter at a few sites including a garden at Swithland. A male **Scaup** remained at Swithland Reservoir for the first three weeks of April. All but one of the **Goldeneye** sightings were at Swithland Reservoir with 56 on 3 April being the maximum count. The numbers tailed off until the last pair was seen on 2 May. A male **Smew** was at the same site on 1 April. Another record from Swithland Reservoir was a female **Red-breasted Merganser** which stayed for three days in mid April.

There was a big reduction of **Red-legged Partridge** records. Single birds were seen at Syston and Charnwood Lodge, there were two pairs at Ives Head and a pair at Cattows Farm, Heather. Even worse were records of **Grey Partridge**, two were seen at Lockington G P and another two at Sproxton both in mid June. **Pheasants**, as usual, were widespread and probably under recorded.

**Little Grebe** were found at ten sites with "trilling" birds heard early in the quarter. Although breeding probably occurred at all the sites, young birds were only noted at Cropston Reservoir and Kelham Bridge. **Great Crested Grebe** were well established on the larger stretches of water, 25 birds were seen at Thornton Reservoir and 24 at Cropston Reservoir. Later in the quarter young were noted at Cossington Meadows, Swithland Reservoir, East Goscote and Albert Village Lake. A summer plumaged **Red-necked Grebe** appeared at Thornton Reservoir on 4 April.

After the last quarter's large **Cormorant** counts, numbers were drastically reduced. The

only records being one at Watermead Park, two over Swithland village, one at East Goscote and six at Cropston Reservoir on 16 May. No nests were mentioned. All **Little Egret** sightings were of single birds and were all at Cropston Reservoir, apart from one at East Goscote. Nine **Grey Herons** were seen at East Goscote and on 3 May young were heard in a nest there. All other observations were of single birds apart from Cropston Reservoir where eight were seen on two occasions in May.

Of the seven **Red Kite** reports all were in Rutland or the east of the county, apart from one. The remaining one was over the Outwoods on 25 May. Most of the **Sparrowhawk** observations were of single birds passing through gardens. A displaying pair over Benscliffe was interrupted by an intruder and a young bird at Misterton Marsh was seen begging for food from a parent. By far the most reported raptor was the **Buzzard** with 58 individual reports from all around the area. Although most would be actually breeding no one reported young birds out of the nest. The area around Swithland Reservoir was a hot spot for the species with lots of double-figure counts and a maximum of 14 on 3 April. **Kestrels** were as widespread as the previous species but with only half the observations. Again no young birds were seen but nests were noted in boxes in various places. **Hobbies** were noted on nine occasions with two together at Swithland Reservoir. The only record in the east was from Eaton in the vale of Belvoir, all the others were in Charnwood or the northwest. **Peregrines** were found at suitable nesting sites and also around Albert Village. Other records were of birds observed passing overhead.

Reservoirs and suitable small ponds all had young **Moorhens**; by the end of the quarter the maximum number seen was 22 at Swithland Reservoir, which included twelve juveniles. The same could be said of **Coots** with young birds about earlier in the quarter. The maximum seen was at Cropston Reservoir where 38 were counted.

Another bird that is gradually spreading, Buzzard-like, is the **Oystercatcher**; nesting pairs were found at Cossington, Lockington, Albert Village, Hicks Lodge and Brascote and others were noted at suitable sites like Watermead and

the reservoirs. Similar habitat is required for **Little Ringed Plovers** and they were found at generally the same sites. The only young bird was seen at Fosse Meadows at the end of May. The occasional **Ringed Plover** was seen at Cossington and Wanlip in April and May. There were more regularly noted at Lockington and a pair with one small chick was found on 17 June. Breeding **Lapwing** were found at five sites. Seven pairs were noted at Cossington Meadows, six pairs at Hicks Lodge and two pairs at Mountsorrel, Syston and Albert Village Lake. Young birds were seen at some of these sites during May.

Two passage **Dunlin** were at Wanlip Meadows on 25 April and another at Cossington Meadows on 10 May. The only **Snipe** report of the quarter came from Wanlip Meadows where there was one on 11 April. Similarly Benscliffe was the only site for **Woodcock**; one was roding there on 7 April. A **Whimbrel** flew north over Albert Village on 29 April and a pair of **Curlew** was present at Ulverscroft on a couple of occasions in early April. **Redshank** appeared to be breeding at Cossington Meadows, Hicks Lodge, Albert Village and possibly Wanlip Meadows but there were no records of fledged birds. Passage **Greenshank** were noted at Wanlip Meadows, where there were three on 10 May and Cossington Meadows. This site also had a **Green Sandpiper** on two occasions in June. In mid May single **Wood Sandpipers** were found at Wanlip Meadows on 10th and Cropston Reservoir a week later. **Common Sandpipers** were more in evidence at the usual sites, the last one being seen at Cropston Reservoir on 23 May.

A lone **Mediterranean Gull** was at Albert Village Lake on 19 May and apart from a few **Black-headed Gulls** around the Charnwood Reservoirs the largest number by far was at an adjacent site; the Albert Village Tip. On 19 May, 400 were counted and on 17 June, 600 were at the same site. Twenty-four **Common Gulls** dropped onto Swithland Reservoir for a short period on 8 April. The only other record is a late one for last March and is of a bird regularly seen at Albert Village, which resembled "*heinei*". All other notable gull observations were also at Albert Village and were as follows: **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, hundreds throughout the quarter

with 1150 on 17 June; **Herring Gulls**, small numbers with ten on 1 April; **Yellow-legged Gull**, one on 19 May and three on 17 June; **Greater Black-backed Gull**, small numbers throughout with five on 1 April.

**Common Terns** were regularly seen at all the suitable waters in the Soar Valley and the aforementioned Hicks Lodge and Albert Village. The most regular and numerous were at Cossington Meadows where there were 24 on 30 June which included 16 unfledged young. There were no other young noted. On 8 May 23 **Arctic Terns** at Cropston Reservoir were joined by ten more during the day as they all migrated north.

**Stock Doves** were reported in a dozen locations, which included garden visits. Three pairs were found in Bradgate Park and young birds were present at the end of June. There can be no bird more widespread than the **Woodpigeon**. Records came from all over the area but surprisingly not in large numbers, the one exception was 220 at Swithland Reservoir on 24 April. With the enormous amount of records this quarter it is amazing to find that the only **Collared Doves** mentioned were at Bradgate Park, East Goscote, Ellistown and Swithland Village with the maximum seen together just two. A gross case of under recording. Sadly the only **Turtle Doves** noted was one calling at Plungar on 26 April and two together at the same location on 21 June.

Of the forty or so **Cuckoo** records, a good sign for a species gradually reducing in numbers, only nine were in April. The first was heard on 17th at both Bradgate Park and Charnwood Lodge and the only other April records came from Bardon Hill (19th) and Eaton (21st).

A pair of **Barn Owls** with young was found at Eaton, two pairs were using nest boxes at Moira and others were seen at Billesdon Coplow, Shoby and Ulverscroft. **Little Owls**, probably breeding but with no proof, were found at Bradgate Park, Swithland, Watermead, Coleorton and Hugglescote. **Tawny Owls** were present at nine different locations with three together at Bradgate Park and one in a Cropston garden.

As usual most members' first **Swift** sighting came in the first week of May. The first however

was noted at Cropston Reservoir on 18 April followed by three at Watermead Park the following day. On 10 June, 350 were feeding over Swithland Reservoir.

The severe winter seems to have had an effect on **Kingfishers**. One was found dead at Melton Mowbray in June and all other sightings only concerned six sites.

We had around fifty **Green Woodpecker** records, the vast majority being around the Charnwood area. Most were of single birds but there were four in Bradgate Park on 19 April and a young bird noted at Hamilton on 29 June. There were even more records of **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, mainly of birds drumming, feeding young or feeding on garden bird feeders. Unfortunately the **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was not so widespread with observations in only two sites. One was feeding high in a tree at Ulverscroft on 16 April and calling birds were heard with some regularity around Swithland Reservoir.

A few **Skylarks** were singing in Bradgate Park throughout April but surprisingly the most records came from the far north west of the county with eight heard at Measham and six at Moira.

Three hundred **Sand Martins** fed over Swithland Reservoir on 19 April and the largest colonies reported were at Cliff Hill Quarry where thirty holes were counted and at the opencast coal workings at Ravenstone where, I am told, there were 35 holes in suitable strata that was uncovered. As the workings ended the reinstatement in that area was left until all the birds had flown. Around 200 **Swallows** were feeding over Swithland Reservoir on 10 May. Few nests were found but there were 11 at Grace Dieu Manor Farm. Generally **House Martins** arrived late, a pair at Nailstone successfully fledged having arrived in late June! Consequently not many nests were recorded and the 150 over Swithland Reservoir on 10 June could well have been late arrivals.

The first **Tree Pipits** of the year were at Benscliffe and Lea Wood on 7 April followed by four at Beacon Hill the following day. There were also four at Bardon Hill on 12 April and others seen or heard at Blakeshay, Bradgate Park and Ulverscroft. **Meadow Pipits** were heard at

suitable areas at Loddington, Stanton under Bardon, Ulverscroft, and Bradgate Park. Ten were singing at Lockington and Charnwood Lodge in mid April.

Unfortunately it is a sign of the times that **Yellow Wagtails** were only noted at Cropston, Lockington, Hicks Lodge, Thornton Reservoir and Sence Valley Forest Park where the maximum number, just three, were seen on 1 May. Two pairs of **Grey Wagtails** were noted at Swithland Reservoir on 10 April and others were observed at suitable nesting habitats at six sites. Most **Pied Wagtail** observations were of single birds but there were 20 on the dam at Swithland Reservoir on 10 April. A **White Wagtail** was at Thornton Reservoir on 5 April.

Any worries about the harsh winter may have been unfounded as a visit to Moira on 17 May produced 24 **Wrens**, eleven **Dunnocks** and 29 **Robins**. There were another 68 records of Wrens and 56 of Robins!



*Wren © Jim Graham*

There was one solitary **Redstart** record; a well watched one at Thornton Reservoir in mid April. Similarly there was only one **Whinchat** record a very late one at Syston on 12 June. There were a few Passage **Wheatears** but the majority of the sightings were of the **Greenland race**, six were at Branston cross roads, four at Bardon Hill and nine at Warren Hills all in late April on early May. It was a poor year for passage **Ring Ouzels** with only three records. Four were found at Beacon Hill on 8 April, one two days later and there were two at Bardon Hill on 19 April. **Blackbirds** as usual were very common, 47 were seen at Moira on 17 May and there were 31 in Martinshaw Wood, including birds feeding young on 28 May. The last of the **Fieldfares** left on 12 April when there were six

at Loddington. On 3 April, 224 were still feeding at Ulverscroft. **Song Thrushes** were well reported usually singing birds, the maximum count was four but some were noted feeding young. The only, and consequently the last, **Redwing** was a single bird at Ulverscroft on 3 April. The highest count of **Mistle Thrushes** was five, a family party at Cropston Reservoir on 3 April. Four nestlings were being fed in the Outwoods on 16 April.

A lone **Cetti's Warbler** was heard singing at Watermead Park on 10 May. **Grasshopper Warblers** were heard at ten sites with two heard in the same area at some locations. The earliest was at Sibley on 18 April and there were probably three singing birds at Kelham Bridge. Two **Sedge Warblers** were present at Cossington Meadows on 18 April and other reports came from around 15 sites. Eighteen were heard along the canal at Barketstone-le-Vale on 15 May. The first **Reed Warbler** was heard along with the Sedge on 18 April and most were heard in similar areas to the Sedges, and 27 were heard along 3 km of canal at Plungar on 21 June. The first **Lesser Whitethroat** was heard at Eaton on 20 April and the following day there were five at Loddington. Others were at 15 sites including a garden at Scruptoft. Its cousin the **Common Whitethroat** arrived two days earlier, at Cossington Meadows and was later found at 30 different sites including Moira where there were 15, and at Loddington 11. **Garden Warblers** also arrived first at Cossington Meadows, three were singing on 28 April and nine were heard at Bardon Hill on 6 May. Of the 87 different records of **Blackcap**, Loddington produced the most with 22 singing birds and Swithland and Martinshaw Wood had 11 each. A single **Wood Warbler** stayed at Beacon Hill for two days from 16 May. There were a similar number of **Chiffchaffs** as Blackcaps reported with nine being heard at Moira, Martinshaw Wood, Loddington and Misterton. There were slightly less observations of **Willow Warblers** than Chiffchaffs, (there has been a decline in numbers in recent years), there were few double-figure counts but 18 were heard at Moira and some fledged young were noted.

**Goldcrests** were well reported with some being seen in gardens. Pairs were seen in various areas of Bradgate Park and, in the Outwoods,

adults were feeding young in early June. On 23 and 24 June single **Firecrests** were recorded at Dean's Lane, Swithland Woods and the Outwoods. It would be remarkable if these reports were of the same bird so a minor "fall" could have taken place. **Spotted Flycatchers** are now becoming a rarity in the county so it was pleasing to have records from Bradgate Park, three pairs on 13 June, Swithland Woods, four pairs on 24 May and also two birds in the Outwoods in late June and a singleton on Bardon Hill in mid May.

**Long-tailed Tits** were found at around 30 sites with family parties seen from early May. There were just over 250 records of the various members of the Tit family proving that **Blue Tits** and **Great Tits** were abundant, and **Coal Tits** not far behind in numbers. **Willow Tits** were only seen at Quenby, Misterton and Loddington, (all in Harborough district) and Billa Barra and Kelham Bridge. **Marsh Tits** didn't fare much better, only being seen in six sites but there were three pairs and young in the Outwoods on 5 June.

The majority of **Nuthatches** and **Treecreepers** were to be found in the various woodlands in Bradgate Park. Four family parties of Nuthatch were in Warren Hill Wood. They were found in a dozen other areas including nine in Swithland Woods and gardens at Scruptoft and Woodhouse Eaves. Treecreepers followed the same pattern with family parties in Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods and seen in another dozen sites.

**Jays** were also well distributed with eight in Warren Hill Wood, Bradgate Park on 17 April. Only a few **Magpie** records were received with a maximum of only four at East Goscote. **Jackdaw** numbers reached 116 at Walcote, 85 at Cloud Quarry and 80 at East Goscote. Similarly **Rooks** numbered 95 at Measham, 55 at Woodhouse Eaves and 35 at East Goscote. Albert Village produced the most **Crows** with 160 on 19 May. It is another sign of the times that **Raven** reports almost outnumbered Rooks and Magpies. They were observed in nine different areas some in suitable breeding habitats. The most seen together were three over Buddon Wood on 22 May.

## FISH (including CRAYFISH)

HB reported that there were few **Starlings** nesting in his area of Leicester. This may have been true elsewhere as again there were fewer records than Ravens!

**House Sparrows** were scattered around the villages and 50 were seen together at Scraftoft. Four **Tree Sparrows** regularly visited a feeder at Sibley throughout the quarter. A pair nested in a box at Watermead Park and nine were noted at Walcote on 21 May.

There were a dozen double-figure counts of **Chaffinch** with 39 being counted at Walcote and Measham both in late May. Far fewer **Greenfinches** were seen with a maximum of only seven at East Goscote. Young **Goldfinches** were encouraged to various gardens by niger seed feeders and 15 birds were regularly in a garden at Eaton. Twenty-three **Siskins** were feeding at Charnwood Lodge on 9 April and single ones (or twos) were feeding in a Cropston garden for a few days in early May. Other singles were seen at Coalville and Cropston water treatment works. Three double-figure counts of **Linnets** were reported. On 15 April there were 40 at Lockington and around the same time 17 at Ulverscroft and a dozen at Loddington. On 19 April there were 210 **Lesser Redpolls** at Bardon Hill and on 16 June a **Crossbill** flew over Dean's Lane. **Bullfinches** were reported from 20 sites usually in ones or twos but there were six at Misterton on 12 May.

Double-figure counts of **Yellowhammers** were at Bradgate Park where there were 18, Walcote with 12 and Moira with ten. **Reed Buntings** were noted in most suitable wetland areas but never into double figures.

**Bas Forgham**

Thanks to Ken Goodrich for compiling and sending us the LNC Members' bird records from the LROS database.

After the dearth of sightings in the first quarter of the year, it is refreshing to have some records to discuss for this second quarter!

### **Brown Trout – *Salmo fario/trutta***

DAP reports that the Brown Trout in the stream running through his garden are alive and well. He reports six specimens up to 15 cm long.

### **Roach – *Rutilus rutilus***

On 14 April ATO went to Stonebow Pond, on the outskirts of Loughborough, in the hope of finding some duck-eating monsters! He failed to find any monsters, but he did find a couple of children fishing, and while he was there one of them caught a fine specimen of a Roach, approximately 15 cm long. GP reports that on 26 June she spoke to two anglers, who were fishing on the River Soar at White Horse Lane in Birstall, and who had caught five Roach. (One of them had also caught four Perch: please see below.) GP also reports that the following day at Watermead Country Park she came across a large shoal of Roach (100 – 200? fish), basking in the shallows below a weir in the River. None of the fish were over 20 cm in length. Also in late June, HB reports finding a shoal of Roach in shallow water in the River Soar near the Pack Horse Bridge at Aylestone Meadows.

### **Gudgeon – *Gobio gobio***

HB reports finding a shoal of these fish in the Soar, near the Pack Horse Bridge at Aylestone Meadows in late June.

### **Chub – *Leuciscus cephalus***

The shoal of Chub, which had taken up residence in the Wood Brook, next to Ingle Pingle House, seemed to have disappeared in the early months of this year. Finally, ATO saw one fish there, a fish of approximately 23 centimetres, on the 21 April. Two days later, on 23 April, while travelling through Queen's Park in Loughborough, ATO was surprised to see two Chub, one of approximately 23 to 25 cm, and a smaller one of about 17 to 19 cm in one of the ponds in the Park! How these two fish could have ended up in the Top Pond in the park remains a mystery. For those not familiar with the layout of Queen's Park in Loughborough, there are two fairly shallow ponds in the park. The first one, which

we will call the “Top Pond”, is the larger of the two, and lies on the south side of the Park, near the children's play area, and the main gate. The Wood Brook runs along the south side of the Park, in a open culvert, from Brown's Lane down to Granby Street. The Top Pond is at a higher level than the Wood Brook and water is actually pumped up from the stream at the back of John Storer House to feed the Top Pond. This water then drains down over an outflow to feed the second, smaller Pond, which is over near the museum, across the road from the public library. At the road end of this “Lower Pond”, there is another outflow, which takes the water under the buildings and back to the Wood Brook. Apparently, there is a high drop where the outflow drains out of the Lower Pond. The upshot of all this is that it seems well nigh impossible for the Chub to have made their way into the Top Pond under their own steam. It seems that the most likely explanation for their presence in the pond is that they were planted there by human agency, possibly having been taken from the Wood Brook. During May ATO continued to see the odd Chub in the Wood Brook by Ingle Pingle House, but these sightings were only of ones or twos. During June there were no further sightings; but, by this time, the flow of the Wood Brook had dwindled to a mere shrunken trickle. It seems highly likely that any larger fish would probably have dropped back downstream in search of deeper water.

### **Perch – *Perca fluviatilis***

GP reports that on 26 June, she watched an angler catch four Perch from the River Soar, near White Horse Lane Bridge, at Birstall.

### **Bullhead – *Cottus gobio***

DAP reports the presence of several Bullheads in the stream, which runs through his garden at Swithland. (Bullheads seem to be quite common locally; however, they tend to shun daylight, and feed more actively at night, and consequently are not usually very visible.)

Finally, if I may crave the reader's indulgence for a minute or two, I would like to stop pretending to be a biologist for a minute and pretend to be a television critic instead! During the last few months there have been two series of television programmes which – in my view – have been worthy of note. The first of these is

one, which I am sure we are all familiar with, namely “Springwatch”. In my own view, what made this year's “Springwatch” particularly memorable was that it broke new ground in showing footage of the different species of fish, which can be found in the River Wensum, including the Barbel (*Barbus barbus*), and our ubiquitous old friend, the Chub (*Leuciscus cephalus*). However, there was another series of programmes which people may perhaps have missed, entitled “Wild Wales”. There were three programmes in this series, presented by a gentleman by the name of Iolo Williams, and I particularly enjoyed his no-nonsense presentation. Some of the footage was, I thought, superb, especially that of the Hen Harriers, demonstrating their aerial mastery. The third programme was entitled “The Rugged North”, and once again broke new ground by featuring a species of fish which most people - including most of Britain's anglers – will not have heard of, much less seen in the flesh. The fish in question is the “Torgoch”, otherwise known as the Welsh Char, a fish found only in the deep, glacial lakes of North Wales, specifically Llyn Padarn. The name “Torgoch” is derived from two Welsh words: *tor*, meaning “belly”, and *coch*, meaning “red”. This is a reference to the bright vermilion colour of the belly of the male fish during the breeding season, when the char move up from the depths into shallower water, in order to spawn.

So what exactly is a “Torgoch”? Well, in a nutshell, the Torgoch or Welsh Char (*Salvelinus alpinus perisii*) can probably best be viewed as a landlocked subspecies of the Arctic Char (or Charr – either spelling is acceptable!). The Chars are a family of fish, which are closely related to the Trouts and Salmons (both the Old World and New World species). The Arctic Char (*Salvelinus alpinus*) is - like the Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) – an anadromous species: in other words, one that spawns in rivers, but spends much of its life in the sea. However, the essential difference between these two species is that the Arctic Char, as its name implies, is even more of a stenotherm - that is to say, a coldwater fish – than the Salmon. During the last Ice Age, it seems that both species were found much further South, but when the seas around the European coasts began to warm up, around ten thousand years ago, the Char retreated

northwards, leaving relic populations isolated in the cold depths of the glacial lakes of the North and West of these islands, and similar lakes in Central Europe – hence the name “alpinus”. Incidentally, the Chars were, and are, not alone in this. There is another family of Salmonids which have also survived as relic populations in our glacial lakes, and these are the so-called Whitefishes (*Coregonus*), so named because, unlike the more colourful Trout and Char, they have large scales and an overall silvery appearance. Although neither family are present in Leicestershire's waters, they are nevertheless fascinating fish from a biological point of view, and of considerable importance from both a sporting and commercial point of view. As such they probably deserve to be discussed in much greater detail!

Lastly, may I once again take the opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who have taken the trouble to submit reports? Thank you for your trouble – please keep sending them in!

**Tony Onions**

## REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

As so often seems to be the case these days, spring seems to have been slow in coming. However, with the eventual arrival of warmer weather, our cold-blooded friends began to venture abroad, and so we have a number of reports.

### **Slow Worm – *Anguis fragilis***

SFW reports finding a specimen, with its tail broken off, at Ulverscroft Nature Reserve on 12 April. PHG reports that one of our members, CD, found two specimens at Cossington Meadows on the 25 April.

### **Grass Snake – *Natrix natrix helvetica***

There seem to have been quite a number of sightings of Grass Snakes, during the quarter, at a variety of locations! SFW found two basking in a ditch at Manor Park, near Twycross, on 24 April. On the same day, DAP photographed three specimens at the J & S Fishing Lake near Rearsby. At the end of May, SFW also found two at Watermead Country Park, and towards the end of June HBH found one crossing the road at Watermead. GP also reports a number of sightings of this reptile from a number of

locations. She found two on a compost heap at the Meadow Lane allotments in Birstall towards the end of May, and these sightings continued throughout June, with specimens being seen either singly or in pairs. Sadly, GP also reports that Grass Snakes seem to have a problem with plastic netting, in which they tend to become entangled: on one occasion she was able to rescue one, but on another occasion one was found dead. GP also reports seeing a specimen swimming in the River Soar at the end of White Horse Lane in Birstall, on 21 June, and a pair in a compost heap in a garden on Station Road in Cropston on 16 June. Finally, JMS reports one from a garden at Asfordby on 25 June.

### **Common Lizard – *Zootoca vivipara***

We have only three sightings of this reptile for the quarter: three specimens which were seen on the same day by SFW at Bradgate Park on 8 April. (Two of these specimens were very much alive; one, however, was found dead on the path.)

### **Smooth/Common Newt – *Triturus vulgaris***

GF reports finding several specimens, of both sexes, in his garden ponds at Scraftoft, during April and May. SFW reports finding a “torpid” specimen “under loose bark” at the Ulverscroft Nature Reserve on 13 April. SFW also reports finding another specimen at Grace Dieu Wood on 16 May.

### **Common Toad – *Bufo bufo***

In contrast to the apparent scarcity of the Common Newt, the Common Toad seems to be quite abundant with no shortage of records. The earliest sighting for the quarter comes from PHG, who found a mating pair in his garden at Meeting Street in Quorn, on 9 April. JMS reports one from Cranmere Road in Melton, on 12 April and SFW found one crossing a track in Bradgate Park on 26 April. From the end of May onwards, sightings become much more numerous. On 29 May GP found an immature adult – still with its tail – at the Meadow Lane Allotments in Birstall. GP continued to report toads on a regular basis throughout June both at the Meadow Lane Allotments, and also in Nether Hall Lane in Birstall, sometimes singly, but sometimes two or three at the same site. In other parts of the County, SFW records one from Watermead Country Park on 31 May and JMS records finding

a dead specimen at the Village Hall in Eaton, on 30 June.

### **Common Frog – *Rana temporaria***

The Common Frog also seems to live up to its name, with no shortage of sightings during the quarter! The earliest sighting for the quarter appears to be two small frogs which ATO found in his front garden on 8 April. GF reports finding a small batch of spawn in his garden pond on 9 April. Another batch of spawn appeared in the pond on 12 April, and a further batch of spawn on 16 April. GF also records adult frogs visiting the ponds at intervals during May and June. GP also reports sightings of frogs in gardens in Mill Close and Nether Hall Lane in Birstall from the middle of May onwards. GP also reports finding five “froglets” at Watermead Country Park on 15 June. SFW found a specimen at Grace Dieu on 21 May, and found tadpoles there on 23 May. He also records finding a young Frog at Watermead country Park on 30 May. DAP reports that on 30 June, there were hundreds of tadpoles in his garden pond.

All in all, an interesting set of records. Personally, I find it reassuring to learn that the Grass Snake appears to be doing well, even on the edges of relatively densely populated areas. Finally, it only remains to thank all those who have submitted records – please keep them coming!

**Tony Onions**

## **DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES**

Whilst the cool, damp weather in the early part of the quarter was hampering dragonfly emergence, two intrepid members were identifying nymphs. Two **Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea*** were found in GF’s garden pond in Scraftoft on 1 April (the only record of this species in the quarter), whilst a single **Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*** was identified at Swannymote Wood, north of Whitwick, three days later. The first adult specimens of the year were two **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** at Loughborough Big Meadow on 14 May.

After the first Banded Demoiselle, mentioned above, records came from a further six sites, mainly in single figures. However, an

excellent 200 were on the Grand Union Canal at Quorn on 16 June when copulating pairs and ovipositing females were also noted.

The first sighting of **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula*** was of a single on 16 May at Grace Dieu. Small quantities were noted at a further eight sites which is just half the number recorded in the same period in 2009. The only double-figure count was of ten at Kaye’s Plantation Lake in Quorn where ovipositing was also observed. Mating was recorded at three other sites.

The only count of any note for **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** was 18 at Aylestone Meadows on 2 June. It was then recorded at six other sites.

**Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*** was first recorded on 21 May in Grace Dieu and then at a further nine sites. Double-figure counts came from Kaye’s Plantation Lake with 30 on 24 May rising to 50 on 22 June and Aylestone Meadows with 40 at on 2 June. Ovipositing was noted at both locations.

Records of **Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*** came from just seven sites and as with Large Red, this is half the number noted in 2009. This highest count was a paltry four at Nature Alive on 22 May, whilst a mating pair was at Wileman’s Pond, Beacon Country Park the previous day.

First seen as a teneral on 19 May at Watermead CP, **Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*** was recorded from just four locations in the quarter. HBH commented on a noticeable increase in numbers at Dishley Pool this year, whilst the Grand Union Canal at Quorn held 130 on 16 June including ovipositing females.

The six sites where **Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*** was noted held a grand total of just ten insects. This included a male on temporary pools created by forestry machinery at Grace Dieu. Pairs were found at Wileman’s Pond in Beacon CP and Kaye’s Plantation Lake in Quorn.

Records of **Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*** did not appear until the latter part of June when they were found at Dishley Pool, Stonebow Lake near Garendon Park and Groby Pool.



Broad-bodied Chaser © Jim Graham

All **Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa* adults were recorded in June from nine sites. The maximum seen (and the only double-figure count) was 12 at Old John Watering in Bradgate Park on 13 June. Evidence of breeding was noted at Wileman's Pond in Beacon CP and Aylestone Meadows.

There was just one record of **Four-spotted Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata*: two were on temporary pools created by forestry machinery at Grace Dieu on 12 June.

Single **Brown Hawkers** *Aeshna grandis* were located in the last week of the period at Ulverscroft, PHG's garden in Quorn and Watermead CP.

Jim Graham

## BUTTERFLIES

Considering the fine spring weather this quarter proved to be a rather disappointing one for butterfly numbers for, although most species were recorded in a similar number of localities to last spring, numbers remained low and few migrants were reported.

### Hesperiidae

The first **Small Skipper** *Thymelicus sylvestris* reported was noted on 9 June in GF's Scraftoft garden and between then and the end of the month singletons were reported seen in a further six scattered localities.

An early **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes venata* was seen by DBF at Sence Valley Park on 3 June and up until the end of June it was reported seen in 16 widely spread localities with a maximum of about 20 seen by HB at Syston Meadow on the 12th.

The only **Dingy Skipper** *Erynnis tages* reported, all during May, were one at the old colliery bank at Donisthorpe on the 15th; three at New Lount Nature Reserve on the 18th, 12 or more at Holwell NR on the 20th and two at Asfordby Hill on the 23rd.

No **Grizzled Skipper** *Pyrgus malvae* were reported to the LNC though I understand several were seen, as usual, at Asfordby Hill during May. In the past I have seen it occasionally at the Loughborough Meadows near the railway embankment of the old Great Central line and it is possible that a colony may still exist in this area.

### Pieridae

The **Brimstone** *Gonepteryx rhamni*, first noted last quarter on the 16 March, continued to be seen into June when it was last noted on the 12 by JMS at Chadwell. Altogether this lovely butterfly was reported seen in 44 widely scattered localities: 31 in April, 13 in May and four in June.

Both the **Large White** *Pieris brassicae* and **Small White** *P. rapae* were noted widely though in numbers lower than last year and both were on the wing throughout much of the quarter.

The **Green-veined White** *P. napi*, often not easy to separate from the **Small White**, especially when in flight, was reported seen in some 20 localities with small numbers noted in April and June and more during May, with a maximum of about 15 at Buddon Brook Meadows, Quorn, on the 20th.

This was another good spring for **Orange-tip** *Anthocharis cardamines*, though reported seen in fewer places than last year, 40 as against 53. It was first noted on 16 April at Ulverscroft NR by SFW and on the following day at five additional localities. Double-figure counts were recorded during May at Great Central Way in Leicester; Watermead North, Wanlip and Buddon Brook Meadows. A late male, still in good condition, was present in our Quorn garden on 22 June.

### Lycaenidae

During a visit to the Warren Hills, Charnwood Lodge National NR, on 26 April, HBH found the **Green Hairstreak** *Callophrys rubi* to be plentiful. The only other reported butterfly was of one at

Asfordby Hill on 23 May. Two early **White-letter Hairstreak** *Satyrion w-album* were noted at Cloud Wood NR, Breedon, on 26 June.

The first **Small Copper** *Lycaena phlaeas* reported was one at Old John, Bradgate Country Park on 16 May and the species was last seen on 21 June at Eaton. All reports consisted of single figure counts and in total it was recorded at 13 localities, the same as last year.

A freshly emerged **Brown Argus** *Aricia agestis* with one seemingly congenitally damaged wing was found in our Quorn garden on 22 May. As it was unable to fly it must have resulted from an egg laid in the garden last summer. The only other report of this species was of three found in a meadow at Chadwell by WS and JMS on 12 June.

The first **Common Blue** *Polyommatus icarus* reports were of two at Buddon Brook Meadows and ten at Bede Island, Leicester on the 22 May and this attractive species continued to be reported up until the end of June. In total it was reported seen at 23 localities and mostly in single figures but with maxima counts of around 32 at Hamilton Park environs on 28 May and about 15 at Quenby on 17 June.

Although it was noted in 15 localities as against 11 last year numbers of **Holly Blue** *Celastrina argiolus* continued on the low side. It was observed first on 17 April in JMS's Eaton garden and on 21 April in our Quorn garden and continued to be seen until the 3 June, reaching a peak in the second half of May. As this species requires areas with both Holly and Ivy, the first and second generation larval food plants, there will always be some localities where one is unlikely to see this attractive species.

### Nymphalidae

For the third successive spring numbers of **Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta*, were few and far between. It was first observed on Charnwood at Cademan on 28 May and during June at Aylestone Meadows on 11th, in ATO's Shelthorpe garden on the 12th; at GP's Meadow Lane, Birstall Allotments on 20th, at Birstall village on 23rd; at Bagworth on 28th, at 20 Acre Piece, Six Hills, on 29th and finally in PH's Shepshed garden and Mrs Jean Buckby's Melton Mowbray garden on 30th. All sightings were of single individuals.

This was a poor spring for the **Painted Lady** *Cynthia cardui*, especially when compared with their abundance last year, and it was only reported seen in four localities and all during July: at Aylestone Meadows on 2nd; Ulverscroft NR on 11th; JMS's Eaton garden on 27th and Bagworth, where two were seen on 28th.

The **Small Tortoiseshell** *Aglais urticae* was reported seen in 35 widely spread localities, the same numbers as last year, and double figures were present in a few localities. It was noted throughout much of the quarter with the new generation appearing during the second half of June. Larvae were noted on Stinging Nettles at Birstall on 5 June.

The over-wintered generation of the **Peacock** *Inachis io*, remained active during April and May with two sightings into June and was widely reported from some 42 localities. Ten or more were noted at Beacon Hill Country Park on 8 & 11 April and at Barkby Holt also during April.

The **Comma** *Polygonia c-album*, another overwintering species, first noted last quarter on 25 March continued to be seen through April and into May with the new generation appearing towards the end of June. Altogether it was reported seen in 16 well scattered localities.

### Satyridae

The **Speckled Wood** *Pararge aegeria*, was first noted on 18 April, at the Meadow Lane Allotments at Birstall, the same date as the first sighting last year, and between then and the end of June it was reported seen in 34 widely spread localities. However, although a few large sites produced double figures, on the whole numbers remained low.



Speckled Wood © Steve Woodward

No **Wall Brown** *Lasiommata megera*, were reported this quarter.

The first **Meadow Brown** *Maniola jurtina* was seen on 11 June, at Aylestone Meadows and later in the month about 40 were noted at Buddon Brook Meadows on 25th and at Eaton Cemetery on 28th, and it was describe as numerous at Brown's Hill Quarry NR, Holwell and at Hamilton. By the end of the month it had been noted in 20 localities.

A **Small Heath** *Coenonympha pamphilus*, was seen in PH's Shepshed garden on 30 May, and on 2 June, during an overcast morning four were observed at Bradgate Park;

The only other ones noted in June were one at Heather on 16th, and several at Bagworth on 28th. Numbers of this once common species shows no sign of increasing and HB reported that he failed to find any at its usual sites on Soar Valley Way in Leicester or at East Goscote and Barkby Thorpe.

In contrast, the once local and uncommon **Ringlet** *Aphantopus hyperantus*, continues to do well and following a first sighting at Stonebow Lakes, Garendon on 19 June was noted in varying numbers at a further 12 widely spread localities, including several members' gardens by the month's end.

Peter Gamble

## MOTHS

After an initial cool start to April although we were blessed with hot sunny days the nights were clear and cool with even a few ground frosts, not the best conditions for moth trapping. May 15 was National Moth Night, where moth trappers throughout the country make an extra effort on a designated night to operate lights and send in their records to the Moths Count team. The date for N.M.N. is set the previous year, leaving us all at the mercy of the weather. This year will probably go down in history as the coldest night since the scheme started in 1999. For us, it took eight light traps to record just 18 species at Market Bosworth Park Arboretum in temperatures plummeting down to 3°C. The only consolation being the cold weather was nationwide except for the Moths Ireland crew basking in a balmy 8°C and actually

caught a respectable number of moths. Most evenings up until early June were only average, but 4 June turned out to be a spectacular night at Cloud Wood. Apart from a humid, thundery and stormy night on 5 June, most days returned to being cool and breezy, therefore not at all tempting for anyone to put on the light traps. Fortunately the weather in the latter half of June was much more rewarding.

## Members' Sightings

Casual and mainly daytime records first, followed by members, light trapping results.

HB has sent in an assortment of day flying moth records from his usual haunts including Bede Island and Humberstone Heights in Leicester, Syston Meadows and Barkby Thorpe. Several **Straw Dot** *Rivula sericealis* were found at Aylestone Meadows on 16 June. He commented on only finding a single adult **Mother Shipton** *Calistege mi* on Soar Valley Way, although not over surprised as he found very few larvae here last year. While searching for bees and hoverflies on Bramble flowers, along the margins of Syston Fishing Lake on 24 June, he noticed a suspicious looking insect with an orange tail. With a brief but clear view he was able to confirm this as **Orange-tailed Clearwing** *Synanthedon andrenaeformis*. The occurrence of Wayfaring Tree in this locality is unlikely, but Guelder Rose, which is an occasional secondary food plant is a possibility. Please note this is a private site owned by Jelson Private Angling Club, and permission is necessary for access.

ATO noted a single, very weak **Ruby Tiger** *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* in his Loughborough front garden.

HBH noted **Chimney Sweeper** *Odezia atrata* at Swithland Reservoir on 15 June and the following day over eight **Burnet Companion** *Euclidia glyphica* at Dishley.

GP sent in many records, mainly from Birstall Meadow Lane Allotments, where she rescued a single **White-shouldered House Moth** *Endrosis sarcitrella* from a watering can. **Small Magpie** *Eurrhyncha hortulata* and **Cinnabar** *Tyria jacobaeae* are well established on the allotments, credit to the gardeners there for not getting rid of all the Nettle and Ragwort! Despite her valiant efforts GP failed to rescue a **Large**

**Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba*** from the number 70B bus on the Leicester to Birstall run. Just about any other species than this and there might have been a little sympathy for it!

PHG still has a healthy colony of **Mint Moth *Pyrasta aurata*** in the garden at Quorn, seeing them through the latter half of May and most of June. Two female **Ghost Swift *Hepialus humuli*** flying in the garden were a nice sight. He also remarks that **Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata*** numbers at Buddon Brook Meadows were down on previous years. Also scarce this quarter were sightings of **Silver Y *Autographa gamma***, down to only a single specimen visiting flowers in the garden and many members have commented on the scarcity of this species for this year up to now.

### Light trap Results

In MD's Loughborough garden the trap was operated on 16 nights and recorded over 500 moths of around 100 species. A single **Chocolate-tip *Clostera curtula*** turned up on 20 May. Other interesting species were **Ghost Moth *Hepialus humuli*** on 23 June, **Diamond-back Moth *plutella xylostella*** on 8 June and ***Epiblema cynosbatella*** in May and June. This is one of the many black and white "bird dropping" mimics. Fortunately this species can be easily identified because it has a sulphury yellow head, feeding on all types of Rose spp. plus the **Bee Moth *Aphomia sociella***, which was recorded on seven nights. **Barred Straw *Eulithis mellinata*** on 26 June and **Dog's Tooth *Laconobia suasa*** on 11 May; the latter is a remarkable record for a garden.

A moth trap was also operated in MH's garden in Woodhouse Eaves for 14 nights recorded over 1000 moths of 62 species. Two



Ghost Moth © Graham Finch

**Buff Arches *Habrosyne pyritoides*** on 30 June, a widespread species but rarely seems to be in any numbers, even though it is a Bramble feeder. **Waved Umber *Menophra abruptaria*** turned up on three occasions from end of May to mid June. This should be a common garden species, feeding on Wild Privet, Lilac and various garden jasmines. **Barred Red *Hylaea farsariai*** put in an appearance towards the end of June, and on 24 May two **Chocolate-tip *Clostera curtula*** found their way into the trap. Anyone who has not had this in the garden yet ought to be very jealous, because it's a real little stunner. Five records of **Orange Footman *Eilema sororcula*** were nice finds for the quarter plus a single **Broom *Melanchnra pisi*** on 4 June. Anything but true to its name, **Alder Moth *Acronicta alni*** was recorded twice during this period, larvae feeding on most broadleaved trees, not at all restricted to Alder.

PHG operated the moth trap in his Meeting Street, Quorn, garden on five occasions in April, four in May and four in June, recorded around 500 moths of close on 150 species. During April amongst the usual contingent of *Orthosias* a few notable species were a single **Early Thorn *Silenia dentaria*** on 9 April, with **Waved Umber *Menophra abruptaria*** on 27 and 28 April. **Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamtionis*** was the only species to make it into double figures for a single night, with 15 on 20 June and 12 on 27 June. A solitary **Grey Shoulder-knot *Lithophane ornitopus*** on 6 April is a species that is always a nice addition to the trap contents. Out of the four nights in May, the 19th was a particularly good one with 32 species recorded. PHG recorded seven species of Pug, including **Freyer's Pug *Eupithecia intricata*** and **Dwarf Pug *Eupithecia tantillaria***. The larvae of both species feed on a variety of coniferous trees many of which are found in gardens. They are both down as Fairly Uncommon, on our VC55 list, but I suspect this is as much to do with the fact they are 'Pugs' and unless they are of the half dozen distinctively marked species they tend to get under recorded. Over 80 of PHG's 150 recorded species were caught on four nights in June and numbers of individuals are increasing too. Only a few members have reported **Light-brown Apple-moth *Epiphyas postvittana***, PHG recorded this in all three months for this quarter, with around 20 individuals in total. This

is the start of the first brood, and it will be interesting to see if the dry weather conditions are to its liking or not. It is supposed to have two broods, May and October but I have records from early May to mid December, now with Peter's late April record we need records for January, February and March. A couple of other species from June are the uncommon **Clay Triple-lines** *Cyclophora lineariai* the Beech feeder and Charnwood Forest speciality plus **Varied Coronet** *Hadena compta*, this last species is well and truly established in gardens with Sweet Williams.

SML trapped four nights in May and eight nights in June for a total of 829 moths of 88 species 19 of micro moths and 67 species of macro moths. Highest catch was 178 of 46 species on 30 June, a record for the site. This compares with a total of 604 moths on 16 nights in the same period last year. The two commonest species were 143 **Heart and Dart** *Agrotis exclamatoris* with maximum of 30 on 28 June, and 131 **Dark Arches** *Apamea monoglypha* with maximum of 34 on the same date. Steve also managed seven new species for the site including a single **Pine Hawkmoth** *Hyloicus pinastri* on 30 June, plus a single **Varied Coronet** *Hadena compta* on 22 June. Migrants have been scarce everywhere up to now but Steve had a **Dark Sword-grass** *Agrotis ipsolon* on 22 June, plus a total count of eight **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma* for both months. **Dwarf Cream Wave** *Idea fuscovenosa* on 30 June was particularly good, as there are very few records of this species in gardens, another species where the food plant in the wild is not known for sure.

SFW operated an Actinic light trap in his Groby garden on seven nights in April, four nights in May and three in June, for a total of 139 moths of 36 species, the only species to make it into double figures was 14 **Heart and Dart** *Agrotis exclamatoris* on 5 June. Only a single specimen of **Light-brown Apple-moth** *Epiphyas postvittana*, was recorded here for this quarter. The usual *Orthosia* species were around throughout April and May, but a solitary **Pale Pinion** *Lithophane hepatica* was a nice find on 17 April. A single and local **Sycamore** *Acrionicta aceris* was in the trap on 5 June, larvae feeding not only on Sycamore but Maple,

including cultivated varieties and Horse Chestnut, which makes it surprising that the moth is so scarce.

## Charnwood Forest Survey

SFW sent in a variety of daytime records from many sites throughout the Charnwood Forest, with several of the beautiful little micro moth **Micropteryx aruncella** at Ulverscroft Nature Reserve on 7 June. On a visit to Swithland Churchyard he found several **Luffia ferchaultella**, a member of the unusual *Psychidae* family. We have seven species of *Psychidae* recorded for VC55, and amazingly six species can be found on the walls around Swithland Reservoir especially those close to the dam and overflow at Kinchley Lane, the pillars and copingstones being particularly good.

## Grace Dieu Wood

Continuing the survey here, this time more towards the south eastern area 6 April gave us 329 moths of 20 species including the first little **Eriocrania subpurpurella** of the year, 113 **Diurnea fagella** and surprisingly only a single **Yellow Horned** *Achlya flavicornis*. Also two **Red Chestnuts** *Conistra rubricosa* plus one **Pine Beauty** *Panolis flammea* both of which very rarely appear in any numbers. Two **Oak Nycteoline** *Nycteola revayana* this is another species with a long flight period, and can be found as an adult in virtually any month, another very variable species, which is being recorded far more frequently than ever before.

## Bardon Hill

Although the temperature dropped dramatically from 10°C to 5°C in just a couple of hours on 23 April, the four lights operated on the lower southern slope attracted 156 moths of 19 species. It was nice to see both **Eriocrania subpurpurella** and **semipurpurella** together with the usual Quakers and Drabs. Other species of note were one **Mottled Grey** *Colostygia multistrigaria* always seems to be in low numbers, a single **Early Tooth-striped** *Trichopteryx carpinata* plus a single **Pine Beauty** *Panolis flammea*.

## Around the county

### Cloud Wood

Never need much of an excuse to visit Cloud Wood and as 18 April was looking promising, a couple of hours here were well spent. With 200 moths of 26 species it proved to be a busy night. A few of the more notable species were *Eriocrania semipurpurella*, which really is a lovely little moth. Glistening gold with dazzling bright metallic purple speckling, plus 55 *Diurnea flagella* and a single *Acleris cristana* completed the trio of micro moths. A single, **Red-green Carpet** *Chloroclysta siterata* and eight **Early Tooth-striped** *Trichopteryx carpinata*. This latter species is another one that seems to have a very short flight period during April and May. An immaculate **Lime Hawk-moth** *Mimas tilae* put in an early appearance with a good number 13 **Lunar Marbled Brown** *Drymonia ruficornis*. Also most of the *Orthosia* species including a single **Lead-coloured drab** *Orthosia populeti* whose main food plant is Aspen.

A return trip here on 19 May, when the temperature was still 12°C at 01:00 hours, needless to say all the traps were extremely busy. Just under 400 moths of 75 species. A few of the highlights were 22 *Caloptilia syringella*, a Privet/Lilac feeder, 37 **Broken-barred Carpet** *Electrophaes corylata*, the high numbers of these two suggest a recent emergence. Twenty-seven **White-pinion Spotted** *Lomographa bimaculata* which 15 years ago was quite a rarity throughout the county. A single **Alder Kitten** *Furcula bicuspis* was especially nice, and interestingly this is the first record for this species since May 2006 from Cloud. A single **Chocolate-tip** *Clostera curtula* put in an appearance, as did four **Orange Footman** *Eilema sorocula*.

The most productive night yet, back at Cloud Wood on 4 June with the temperature still at 11°C at 02:30 hours, over 900 moths of 111 species. It was nice for the micro moths to reach 27 species, lots of new ones for the year including 12 *Ancylis laetana* a beautiful Aspen feeding *Tortrix*. Far too many macros to list but another single and still quite scarce **Alder Kitten** *Furcula bicuspis*, together with a single **Chocolate-tip** *Clostera curtula*. The appearance of a solitary **Red-necked Footman** *Atolmis*

*rubricolis* was a welcome surprise, plus a grand total of eight **Orange Footman** *Eilema sorocula*.

### Manor Park, Twycross

An invitation to spend a morning at the privately owned Manor Park, Twycross on 24 April was an opportunity not to be missed. A blazing hot sunny morning had everyone in short sleeves and lightweight summer attire and returned a long list of species from a wide assortment of orders. Of the ten species on the moth front, we had a mixture of adults, larvae, pupae and mines. The highlights were at least 30 blotch mines of *Phyllonorycter messaniella* on just two Holm Oaks, this species is more often found on Beech. A search of the stems of Cocksfoot grass produced dozens of tiny perfectly circular holes, and after splitting a few stems several cocoons of *Glyphipterix simplicella* were found. A single *Lobesia abscisana* was swept from rough grass, it is normally on the wing in May, so this one was slightly early with another flight period in July and August. Thank you to Microsoft for allowing us onto this rarely visited site, and we look forward to a return visit.

### Shenton Estates North Farm

In less than ideal conditions on 23 May three traps were left over night to record just under, 200 moths of 62 species. The main highlight of the night was the beautiful micro moth *Callisto denticulella*, being restricted to Apple as a food plant. There have been only ten previous records for this species in the county, eight of which have been from gardens. It's a species worth looking out for if you have apple trees, particularly established ones, have a look at the photos on UK Moths to get familiar with it. A couple of days later MS took a singleton at Narborough Bog, so it's around, albeit at low density. Other species of note were *Seraphim Lobophora halterata*, which can be easily missed among other Carpet moths plus a single **Puss Moth** *Cerura vinula*.

### Market Bosworth Park Arboretum

After two trips here last year, 28 April brought us up to three visits and produced 143 moths of 30 species this increased the total number of species for the site to just over 200. The main surprise of the night, not previously having heard of any Lepidopteran migrant activity was a single **Diamond-back Moth** *Plutella xylostella*.

A couple of nights later, records of this and **Dark Swordgrass *Agrotis ipsolon*** were being posted on the internet appearing mainly at coastal sites. So yet again, migrant moths have made it all the way inland, within the very short time they were recorded on the coast. Interestingly, only three species made it into double figures, they were 35 ***Eriocrania subpurpurella***, 12 **Brindled Pug *Eupithecia abbreviata*** and 19 **Common Quaker *Orthosia cerasi***.

### Watermead Country Park

Leicester City and County Councils plus the Groundworks team, organised a 24-hour BioBlitz weekend at Watermead Country Park on 30 May. The idea being to record a total of 500 species (covering all orders) over the period. We were based at the Wanlip (north) section and although the night was quite windy and cool the moth of the night was without doubt **Netted Pug *Eupithecia venosata***. This will be the first record for this species outside of Rutland, where it is very rarely recorded. A total of 251 moths of 50 species finished the night off for us.



Netted Pug © Graham Finch

Adrian Russell, our county Lepidoptera recorder, has been working flat out and managed to send off precisely 239,291 macro moth records to the Moths Count team at Butterfly Conservation. These have been added to the National Moth Recording Scheme database for inclusion into the national distribution maps, viewable on the National Biodiversity Network Gateway website. Here you can view maps through a series of filters down to 100 m, you can also isolate individual counties, the 1 km square records are very interesting.

Early warning, talk of a brand new Pyralid field guide is planned to hit the shelves in the late Autumn or early 2011, due to be published

by Atropos Publications. Having spoken to one of the authors, we are in for a treat, photographs and paintings of all species, many of set specimens plus natural resting positions, with updated biology and distribution. Let's hope it's sooner rather than later.

Many thanks to everyone, who has sent in their moth records for this quarter.

Graham and Anona Finch

## OTHER INSECTS

As is usual for this quarter, a great number of records have been submitted by members, so I shall have to summarise the best I can. If your records are not given a mention, it does not mean that your records are unimportant. All will be sent to Holly Hayes in due course, where hopefully they will be utilised.

### Heteroptera

A few shieldbugs were found out of hibernation this quarter, **Green Shieldbugs *Palomena prasina*** were recorded at Breedon Cloud Wood in May and at Birstall Allotments, Watermead Country Park, Ulverscroft NR, Quorn and Bede Island in May and June.

**Hawthorn Shieldbugs *Acanthosoma haemorroidale*** were at Birstall Allotments on 27 April and others at St James Churchyard in Birstall, Watermead Country Park and Birstall Lock.

**Sloe Bugs *Dolycoris baccarum*** were recorded out of hibernation at Ulverscroft NR and Great Central Way in May and one at Grace Dieu in June.

**Birch Shieldbugs *Elasmotethus interstinctus*** at Birstall, St James Churchyard on three dates during May and one at Ulverscroft NR.

The only **Forest Bug *Pentatoma rufipes*** received was of two nymphs on elm at Grace Dieu on 23 May. GP found a **Juniper Shieldbug *Cyphostethus tristriatus*** at Birstall Churchyard and the pretty **Pied Shieldbug *Tritomegas bicolor*** at Birstall Meadow Lane Allotments, rescued alive from a bath of water on 19 April, one dead in a greenhouse on 23 April and last instar nymphs on 23 June at the same site.

**Woundwort Shieldbugs** *Eysarcoris venustissimus* were swept off Woundwort at Grace Dieu on 23 May and at Groby there were several mating pairs on 14 June.

The only **Bishop's Mitre** *Aelia acuminata* records were singles at Great Central Way and Aylestone Meadows in May. This species has never recovered its numbers since the peak in 2006.

The **Dock Bug** *Coreus marginatus* continues its march and is now becoming one of the most frequently encountered bugs in the county, recorded at Washbrook NR, Great Central Way (c20), Humberstone Park, Grace Dieu and Birstall, all in May.

A mention of some of the lesser lights in this group, Mirid Bugs etc;

*Liocoris tripustulatus* at Birstall and Watermead and *Eupteryx aurata* at Watermead on nettles, *Capsus ater* at Shenton, the **Common Shore Bug** *Saldula saltatoria* at Ulverscroft NR and Grace Dieu and the **Frog Hopper** *Cercopis vulnerata* at Ulverscroft NR. It is well to mention that some species can be difficult to identify.

PHG had another Mirid bug *Harpocera thoracica*, which he states is an oak woodland species, in his garden light trap (60 or more, both male and females) at Quorn on 20 May.

## Neuroptera

### Chrysopidae

*Chrysopa perla* there were dozens at the margin of Cotterill Spinney, Houghton Lodge on 3 June.

### Mecoptera

The **Scorpion Flies** *Panorpa communis* and *P. germanica* were both recorded at the Watermead Country Park Bioblitz in May.

### Trichoptera

PHG had the **Caddis Fly** *Phryganea grandis* attracted to his light trap at Quorn on 20 May, as he states, one of the easier ones to identify.

Nine species of caddis from Wymeswold Meadow NR, Watermead and Grace Dieu were recorded and confirmed by Ian Wallace during the caddis ID course at Preston Montford.

## Diptera

### Syrphidae - Hoverflies

As usual for this quarter, a few interesting hoverfly records were submitted and some of the less commonly recorded were *Cheilosia bergenstammi* one at Great Central Way on 21 May, *Cheilosia lasiopa* a single at Barkby Thorpe Road meadow, on 20 May, det. R. Morris, *Cheilosia pagana* at Grace Dieu on 7 May, *Xanthogramma pedissequum* on waste ground at Hamilton on 29 June, *Eupeodes latifasciatus* at Watermead CP on 30 May, *Parhelophilus frutetorum* at Syston Fishing Lake (locally common) on 12 June, *Parhelophilus versicolor* at Watermead Bioblitz on 31 May and *Pipiza noctiluca* at Ketton Quarry on 28 April.

Among many others, mention might be made of *Helophilus hybridus* a female at Bede Island on 22 May and a male at Aylestone Meadows on 11 June. *Helophilus trivittatus* continues to spread along the Soar valley - recorded at Aylestone Meadows and several at Watermead CP this quarter. *Baccha elongata* was also recorded at Watermead.

HI has recently been recording *Eristalis similis* in the county this quarter, a hoverfly only recorded in this country since 1990. *Platycheirus tarsalis* a male, recorded at Grace Dieu by HI is also worth a mention.

*Leucozona lucorum* has been particularly widespread and was recorded from ten sites. *Epistrophe eligans*, *Merodon equestris*, *Volucella bombylans*, *Ciorhina illustrata* and *Neoascia podagrica* are just a few of many species recorded in this group.

### Other Diptera

Among the myriad of records for this very diverse group, mention might be made of the **Common Awl Robberfly** *Neoitamus cyanurus* at Grace Dieu on 30 June, an inhabitant of ancient woodland and not really common, certainly not in this county where such habitats are at a premium.

The **Dark-edged Bee-fly** *Bombylius major* was recorded in April, mostly singles, from Quorn, Loughborough, Barkby Holt, Ethel Road, Larch Spinney at Little Stretton and Great Central Way in Leicester.

The **Soldier-Fly** *Chloromia formosa* was common in one meadow at Aylestone on umbellifers in June.

Several of the **Crane Fly** *Tipula maxima* were noted at Ulverscroft NR and in a marshy meadow near Buddon Brook. *Tipula varipennis* was also recorded at Grace Dieu in May.

**Downlooker Snipefly** *Rhagio scolopaceus* was at Watermead in May and on the Shenton Estate in June.

The Tachinid *Tachina fera*, a parasitic species of moth larvae, was common in a Quorn garden in June.

Although the **St Marks Fly** *Bibio marci* is widespread in early May, I had the impression that numbers were much lower than former years.

## Hymenoptera

### Sawflies

In GF's Scraftoft garden the Solomon's Seal leaves were eaten by the Solomon's Seal Sawfly *Phymatocera aterrima*.

### Bumblebees

There were a large number of records submitted for this group, so I will have to do what I can. Many queens of the **Buff-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus terrestris* were reported during April over a wide area as usual, and noted as nesting in June in PHG's garden rockery in June, and probably this species nesting near an allotment hedge at Eaton also during June.

**Red-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus lapidarius* queens were also widely reported during April, with records coming from 12 sites, with a maximum of three at Rearsby and up to six at FTS's garden at Barlestone during the month. Small numbers of workers were recorded at Barlestone in June and they were fairly common in meadows at Quenby and Syston in the latter half of the month.

The **Garden Bumblebee** *Bombus hortorum* was much less well recorded, with odd queens recorded and workers frequent at Barlestone in June, nectaring on *Stachys*, Foxglove, *Aquilegia* and *Hosta*. Several workers were recorded in my small garden in June this year, mainly foraging on Comfrey.

**Early Bumblebees** *Bombus pratorum* had small numbers of queens in gardens at Quorn, Barlestone and Abney Street in Leicester during April, with a maximum of four at Barlestone on 9th. Small numbers of workers were recorded during May and June; they seem to always have a smaller number of workers than some other species.

A few queen **White-tailed Bumblebees** *Bombus lucorum* were noted in April and May and as usual the **Common Carder-bee** *Bombus pascuorum* was commonly recorded everywhere. This bee has a great love of White Deadnettle when foraging.

**Tree Bumblebees** *Bombus hypnorum* continue to be encountered, and are steadily spreading across the county. Dead specimens were found at Birstall in April and one noted foraging Hawthorn blossom in May, three were at Syston Meadows in June, foraging bramble, one with a full pollen basket on Dogwood blossom. The most interesting comments on this species come from PHG at his garden in Quorn, which is printed verbatim. "April, Present in garden throughout quarter visiting flowers of *Cotoneaster horizontalis* towards the end of May and *Aquilegia* etc in June. On 30 May up to 50 were gyrating around a Treecreeper nest box, in shade, on a Cornelian Cherry at the top of the garden. On subsequent days this activity continued during the hours of daylight. On 5 June another nest was located in our garden, in a tit nest box on the back of our garden shed. I was attracted to it by loud buzzing from inside the box, whilst up to a dozen bees arranged around the entrance hole, vibrating their wings vigorously, presumably to help keep the temperature inside of the box down, as this nest box is in a full sunny position. By early evening no bees were visible at this box, whereas, at the Tree Creeper box in shade, activity continued towards dusk."

A few *Bombus vestalis* females were observed searching out nest sites in April from Great Central Way, East Goscote, Hamilton, Barkby Thorpe Road, Barlestone.

Most sightings of the **Cuckoo Bumblebee** *Bombus sylvestris* came from Barlestone, all males in June, with up to six on 12th, all apparently nectaring on a Blue Crane's-bill. The

only other sightings were a single at Birstall on 17 May and one at Quenby Meadows on 17 June.

### Solitary Bees

With upwards of 65 species in this group and, so far, inadequate keys published, a few of the more widespread species are mentioned here or those with distinctive features.

The pretty **Tawny Mining Bee *Andrena fulva*** was widely recorded in April from the 7th, with soil mounds from Birstall, St James Church lawn area, also at Quorn and at Barlestone where up to 60 mounds were noted on the 12th.

***Andrena cineraria*** appears to be on the increase, dozens were on the south facing slope of Bradgate Park on 25 April. It was also noted at Groby Pool, Castle Hill Mountsorrel, Grace Dieu, Woodhouse, on ballast at Bede Island, and three females looking for a suitable nest site on the bare margins of a rape field at Little Stretton on 21 April.

***Andrena haemorrhoea*** at Grace Dieu, Dadlington and Ketton all in May, a usual early species, ***Andrena chrysoceles*** at Watermead in May, ***Andrena scotica (carantonica)*** from Woodhouse and Grace Dieu, also in May and ***Andrena subopaca*** a small black species, preferring woody area, from Cloud Wood, Grace Dieu and Ulverscroft.

***Lasioglossum*** species are another large and difficult group and a small number are recorded here; ***Lasioglossum calceatum***, the most widespread and ubiquitous species in this group had a colony on the bankside at Bluebanks, Glen Parva, noted on 17 April, ***Lasioglossum rufitarse*** was at Ulverscroft NR in May.

We have a number of records for other species of *Andrena* and *Lasioglossum* which are waiting to be checked by experts so we have not included these.

I had more **Red Mason Bees *Osmia rufa*** in my garden this year, both sexes were foraging on various plants from 17 April; last seen was a female on 20 May. One was observed entering a nest in the clay wall at Rearsby Farm on 23 April and the only other records received for this species was a single at Woodhouse in April and another female at Loughborough in May.

More interesting is the record of a male and female ***Osmia bicolor*** recorded at Ketton NR by HI and SFW. This little bee, like ***A. aurulenta*** nests in empty snail shells and is a scarce species confined to southern lime-rich soils, Ketton NR fits these criteria admirably.

On to Leaf-cutter bees, both, ***Megachile centuncularis*** and ***Megachile willughbiella*** were seen in June. The latter, as usual, foraging on *Campanula* and for the first time a male was seen. Two or three were foraging on bramble blossom at Syston Fishing Lakes on 24 June and a single female of the larger ***Megachile ligniseca*** was also present here on the same date.

The largest number of **Hairy-footed Flower Bees *Anthophora plumipes*** recorded was of 200 to 300 nests in the old clay wall at Rearsby Farm on 23 April.

A few parasitic bees might be worth a mention, one or two members are now submitting records for the *Nomada* species, a few mentioned here; ***Nomada flava*** was recorded this quarter from Ketton NR, Woodhouse, Grace Dieu, a number active at an *Andrena* colony at Quorn and also active at pool side Little Stretton in May. ***Nomada marshamella*** - singles at Woodhouse in April, at Hathern in May and one examining a potential nest site at Glen Parva. ***Nomada lathburiana*** was recorded at Market Bosworth and Woodhouse - this is a cleptoparasite of ***Andrena cineraria*** and probably spreading with its host species. ***Nomada flavoguttata*** was at Grace Dieu on 23 May.

On managing this spring, to get a bit closer to the *Anthophora plumipes* colony at Rearsby Farm hoping to see its cleptoparasite ***Melecta albifrons*** I was not to be disappointed, they were everywhere, sitting or entering nest holes. I must have counted 40, probably more, an amazing number for a species usually encountered in singles previously, one was also seen at Woodhouse on 17 April.

The only other parasitic species was ***Sphecodes monilicornis*** was noted at Ketton NR on 28 April, probably a parasite on various species of *Lasioglossum*.

**Honey Bees *Apis mellifera*** were quite widely recorded at Stoughton Airfield on 18 May, they were observed in fair numbers

foraging on Crab Apple blossom and Winter Cress. The feral colony using an Ash tree at Little Stretton, first recorded in 2005, was still present.

### Social Wasps

**Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris*** queens were widely observed during April, several in a Quorn garden by the end of the month and a few Hornets ***Vespa crabro*** were recorded in May from Market Bosworth, Barlestone and Eaton.

### Ichneumonidae

The rather common ***Ichneumon stramentarius*** was observed on umbellifers at Aylestone Meadows and Syston Fishing Lakes in June and of more interest is the detailed observation of SFW at Ulverscroft NR of ***Rhyssa persuasoria*** on 7 June where about four females and six males were around the timber stacks with some females drilling into the logs. Specimens were taken of male and female (after finished drilling) and also a detached ovipositor hanging out of a log. It is a large species, an ectoparasite on Horntail larvae.

### Coleoptera

I will therefore start, which is what I think the most striking, the Longhorns, most of these records submitted by SFW unless otherwise stated; ***Rhagium mordax*** at Grace Dieu under loose bark on 14 April, ***Grammoptera ruficornis*** at Grace Dieu on an umbellifer head, at Ulverscroft NR on shrubs, several on umbellifers along a roadside verge at Grace Dieu and at Bagworth, all in June. The **Wasp Beetle *Clytus arietis*** was at Grace Dieu, Ulverscroft NR and Woodhouse - HI all in June. **Rufous-shouldered Longhorn *Anaglyptus mysticus*** was swept from a hedge at Shenton on 5 June and one ***Rutpela maculata*** in PHG's Quorn garden in June. Finally ***Agapanthia villosoviridescens*** was swept from a ride at Ulverscroft NR on 23 May.

The **Cockchafer *Melolontha melolontha*** was recorded at Quorn in May and 46 were attracted to the garden light trap during three nights in May and two on June 4th. Another one was recorded at Eaton on 24 May.

The only records of burying beetles were ***Nicrophorus humator*** at Quorn on PHG's light

trap from 28 April to 22 May and ***Nicrophorus vespillo*** found on Birstall Allotments by GP, det. D Lott, - this specimen covered in mites which live in carrion and that way, hitch a ride to the next dead body which the *Nicrophorus* finds.

The **Lily Beetle *Liloceris lili*** is still proving a pest in some gardens and was found at Birstall, Meadow Lane Allotments and in two gardens at Quorn in April and May.

Soldier and Cardinal Beetles were, as usual, widely reported during this quarter A few mentioned here, include; ***Cantheris rustica*** at Quorn, a very common species, commonly found in my sweep net. ***Cantharis decipiens*, *C. nigricans*, *C. rustica*, *C. rufa* and *C. livida*** were widely recorded by SFW and HI - thanks to Derek Lott's colour key to the soldier beetles of Leics.

The Flower Beetle ***Malachius bipustulatus*** was recorded at Grace Dieu, Shenton, and Watermead. A few others picked from this extensive list; The Stag Beetle relative, ***Sinodendron cylindricum*** was found at Grace Dieu on 6 April and on the Shenton Estate on 5 June, both by SFW det. D. Lott.



*Sinodendron cylindricum* © Steve Woodward

The wood-boring beetle ***Glischrochilus hortensis*** was found in soil at Birstall Allotments by GP on 14 May det. D. Lott. It develops under bark or in thistle stems.

Five **Click Beetles *Ctenicera cuprea*** were noted in flight and settled in Bradgate Park by PHG on 2 June and ***Byrrhus pilula*** was found in moss and short turf at Ketton by HI

The following records of Carabids and Staphilinids from Birstall Meadow Lane Allotments and Birstall Meadows, mostly in June were submitted by GP and determined by Derek Lott. They are printed with relevant comments, which may be of some interest to those who record this group.

## Carabidae: Ground Beetles

***Agonum muelleri*** Birstall Meadow Allotments, found in disturbed soil. Whilst not common, not exactly rare, 7-9 mm long, brassy elytra and metallic green foreparts.

***Amara communis*** Birstall Allotments, on path, likes open habitats on damp soils.

***Anchomenus dorsalis*** Birstall Meadow Allotments, formerly *Agonum dorsale* - a widespread species, but not among the most common. June.

***Bembidion properans*** Birstall; Meadow Lane Allotments - a small shiny bronze carabid, damp mud edge of floodwater, not uncommon in Charnwood on damp soils, found also whilst weeding.

***Bembidion lunulatum*** Birstall; Birstall Meadows, a small shiny black carabid running over damp mud-edge of floodwater.

***Pterostichus madidus*** Birstall; Meadow Lane Allotments, a large shiny black ground beetle with black legs, running over pavement slabs.

## Staphylinidae: Rove Beetles.

***Quedius mesomelinus*** Birstall, Meadow Lane Allotments, discovered in daylight whilst disturbing soil.

***Tachyporus hypnorum*** Birstall, Meadow Lane Allotments, this species is very small with a sharply pointed abdomen and is common.

***Tasgius ater*** in Birstall; Mill Close.

## Ladybirds

As is expected, **Harlequin Ladybirds *Harmonia axyridis*** and **7-spot Ladybirds *Coccinella 7-punctata*** were the most widely recorded by members, probably the record from Birstall Meadow Lane Allotments by GP on 10 April, where she described a profusion of ladybirds in the sun, with blackcurrant bushes covered with 7-spots, whilst other blackcurrant bushes similarly covered with Harlequins give a general picture.

**2-spot Ladybirds *Adelia 2-punctata*** were much less in evidence and in far fewer numbers,

usually in ones and twos, from Watermead, Shenton Estate, with mating pairs at Watermead Country Park and Birstall.

**14-spot ladybirds *Propylea 14-punctata*** were recorded from Grace Dieu, Shenton Estate, Watermead Country Park and Birstall.

With the comments that no **Orange Ladybirds *Halzia 16-guttata*** records were received from the Charnwood region in 2009, it was pleasing to see singles recorded from Grace Dieu in April, but none elsewhere. This species used to be frequent on PHG's light trap at Quorn but no records from there for some time, hopefully there will be more records next quarter.

**Cream-spot Ladybirds *Calvia 14-guttata*** were recorded from Grace Dieu, Ulverscroft and Woodhouse in May, **10-spots *Adelia 10-punctata*** at Ulverscroft, and Quorn in May. **Pine Ladybird *Exochomus 4-pustulatus*** at Grace Dieu and Birstall in May.

The only **22-spot Ladybird *Psyllobora 22-punctata*** noted was in my garden in June and was the only ladybird I had in my city garden this quarter.

**The Eyed Ladybird *Anatis ocellata*** at Grace Dieu in May and the **Cream-streaked Ladybird *Harmonia 4-punctata*** at Birstall Meadow Lane Allotments in April are also worth a mention.

Thanks to the eight members who sent in records for this section. A special thanks to Derek Lott for helping members with identifying some species of Coleoptera.

Howard Bradshaw

## OTHER INVERTEBRATES

### Molluscs

Ten species of slug and snail were recorded. Of note is the **Worm Slug *Boettgerilla pallens*** found by Monica Walton in the quarry at Grace Dieu. Monica is a mollusc specialist who joined us for a walk around Grace Dieu in May.

Other records include species of mites, spiders, centipedes, millipedes, woodlice, a leech, a *Daphnia* species and an earthworm.

## FLOWERING PLANTS & FERNS

There were many records this quarter despite the hard weather and early drought. Not all good news though. PHG reports that the **Mousetail** *Myosurus minimus* and **Subterranean Clover** *Trifolium subterraneum* have disappeared from their recorded sites. On the other hand many other plants seem to be doing well. The new record for **Toothwort** *Lathraea squamaria* is well worth noting and also the continued presence of **Whorl Grass** *Catabrosa aquatica* at Grace Dieu.

## OTHER PLANTS OF INTEREST

**Greater Chickweed** *Stellaria neglecta* - Buddon Wood Meadows - Several plants flowering alongside a hedgerow where it has been seen in previous years.

**Ragged Robin** *Lychnis flos-cuculi* - J22- M1 - A patch on the right hand side of M1 run off going north. This area was much larger but is now mainly covered in Bramble.

**Blue Anemone** *Anemone appenina* - Bradgate Park - One plant, also two plants below the north wall.

**Goldilocks** *Ranunculus auricomus* - Newtown Linford - A small colony in flower at side of track to Puddledyke near where a colony, just west of here, used to occur but has not been seen for some years.

**Mousetail** *Myosurus minimus* - Quorn/ Loughborough boundary - Despite extensive searching in an area where it has occurred previously, no plants were found even though ground conditions were excellent.

**Greater Celandine** *Chelidonium majus* - Birstall - Large patch as last year near the boundary wall of St James' Church.

**Teesdalia** *Teesdalia nudicalis* - Swithland Wood - On slate spoil heap.

**Lesser Swine Cress** *Coronopus didymus* - Ethel Road, Leicester - Several plants on disturbed ground. A plant which has a southern distribution and seems to appear in our area only on disturbed ground, possibly brought in by machinery.

**Navelwort** *Umbilicus rupestris* - Swithland - Plentiful on church south wall.

**Rue-leaved saxifrage** *Saxifraga tridactylites* - Grace Dieu - On ancient stone wall. Not recorded in this hectad in 1988 flora.

**Wall Rocket** *Diploxys muralis* - Loughborough - Several plants in flower in cracks in pavement, Baxter Gate. First noted here 30 years ago.

**Hoary Cinquefoil** *Potentilla argentea* - Mountsorrel Common - Several plants in bud on rocky outcrop.

**Bird Cherry** *Prunus padus* - Grace Dieu - Many new shoots from stumps and detached fragments of stem in area cleared of rhododendrons last winter plus three shrubs in flower.

**Tutsan** *Hypericum androsaemum* - Nanpantan - One small shrub still present in Jubilee Wood.

**Subterranean Clover** *Trifolium subterraneum* - Mountsorrel - None found on the former site on Castle Hill. Not seen here for a number of years.

**Marsh Violet** *Viola palustris* - Beacon Hill CP - Several plants in flower in birch woodland near Frank's Pit.

**Skullcap** *Scutellaria galericulata* - Outwoods - Single plant found, a survivor of quite an extensive colony which has been crowded out by Water Pepper and Enchanter's Nightshade.

**Lesser Skullcap** *Scutellaria minor* - Bradgate Park - Many plants not in flower noted at Old John Watering Bog Pool.

**Vipers Bugloss** *Echium vulgare* - Branston - Along hedgerow of field track from Belvoir Road Eaton down to Branston. A plant which is rare in the county and does not seem to be recorded for this area.

**Cut-leaved Deadnettle** *Lamium hybridum* - Leicester - One plant in pavement, St Peter's Rd.

**Henbit Deadnettle** *Lamium amplexicaule* - Leicester - Several plants in disturbed ground, Ethel Road. Also single plants in Scraftoft Lane and Thurnby Lodge, both on disturbed ground. This plant is generally less common than the previous plant.

**Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*** - Grace Dieu  
- Hundreds of plants, now going over.

**Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*** - Grace Dieu Wood - 21 flowering plants between two sycamores and a holly. Thought to be the first site record since the 19th century.

**Hoary Plantain *Plantago media*** - Birstall - Many rosettes in St James' Churchyard. A plant which is not common in the Charnwood area as it prefers basic soils.

**Crow Garlic *Allium vineale*** - Mountsorrel Common - Plenty in the grassy area below rocky outcrops to the north of the church, varies from year to year. Groby - 21 shoots counted on 29 June, below a rocky outcrop on the road verge.

**Solomon's Seal *Polygonatum multiflorum*** - Breedon Cloud Wood - Several plants found in flower in an area of the wood away from the usual site. This is a plant which is considered to be introduced or a garden escape in our area.

**Herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia*** - Breedon Cloud Wood - Good colony in flower in shady woodland.

**Flattened Meadow Grass *Poa compressus*** - Grace Dieu Manor Farm - On top of a wall.

**Whorl Grass *Catabrosa aquatica*** - Grace Dieu Manor Farm - First found in 1997 still doing well in cattle trampled ground. A good record as this grass is only found in a very few places in the south of the county.

**Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*** - Eaton - 40 plants on a fenced off bank in Jubilee Patch. These have increased from one plant. Brown's Hill NR, Holwell - Not as many as last year. Better numbers in North Quarry and Mineral Line Reserves. Eaton - Circa. 500 good flowering spikes. Some 12 cm long. Grace Dieu - Seven flowering spikes.

**Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*** - Syston Fishing Lake - Circa. 24 spikes on 12 June.

**Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*** - Holwell - ten plants. Not a good year due to hard winter.

**Hard Fern *Blechnum spicant*** - Swithland Woods - A strong plant growing on a wooded hillock just south of the meadow. This appears

to be a new site record for this well botanised site.

**Hart's-Tongue *Phyllitis scolopendrium*** - Loughborough - One small plant growing in brickwork in High Street.

**Eric Webster**

As we have no one to write up the records of the final categories the following is a brief summary of the information that we have received. It is not practical to list all the commoner species reported but if the recorder has had something unusual or rare in the county, preferably confirmed by an expert, we do try to mention it. The original records are available to anyone wishing to see details of the species found.

## GALLS

Galls have been recorded on a number of plants in Birstall, Great Easton, Grace Dieu, Ulverscroft NR, Kirkby Mallory, Twycross and Watermead Country Park. Notable are two species of mite causing erineum on birch leaves *Acalitus longisetosus* and *Acalitus rudis* which are both new records for Ulverscroft NR as is a grey waxy aphid causing a gall on Hawthorn - *Dysaphis ranunculi*.

## FUNGI

GP has recorded fungi in Birstall and SFW has sent in a list of fungi from several sites. The highlight is a **Morel *Morchella esculenta v. umbrina*** from Bradgate Park. ID by Peter Long.

## LICHENS

SFW has recorded five species of lichen from Kirkby Mallory, Wymeswold Meadow NR, Twycross and Bradgate Park.

## MOSES AND LIVERWORTS

We have records of six species of liverwort from Wymeswold Meadow NR, Bagworth and Grace Dieu notably *Scapania nemorosa* which was abundant on a large rock in the ravine at Grace

Dieu. The specimen was determined by Sam Bosanquet and has not been recorded in the county since 1943.

SFW made over 60 records of 26 species of moss from 13 sites – plenty of new dots on the distribution maps.

## WEATHER

April 2010 was warmer, drier and sunnier than normal. Afternoon maximum temperatures were 14.5°C, which was 2.5°C above normal. Night-time temperatures averaged 4.2°C, which was close to the long-term average. There was only one air frost recorded which was on the 22nd. Rainfall was significantly below normal. At Mountsorrel I recorded just 31 mm of rain, which was 40% below the normal figure. At Loughborough Jim Lofts recorded 40 mm of rain, which was 30% below normal figure for his station. It was a sunny month however with over 182 hours of sunshine which was 35% above normal.

The month began cold and wet with a very low maximum on the first of just 9°C at both stations. The first week was also unsettled with most of the month's rain falling in the first six days. There then followed 20 mainly dry days with temperatures gradually rising. High pressure controlled the weather during this three-week period, which was mainly centred to our NW, which has been a very common theme so far this year. There were many sunny days with the highest individual figure of 12.9 hours on the 17th. During the final week the winds turned to the SW and much milder air drifted north. The highest temperature of the month was on the 24th when both stations recorded 19.4°C and the final week was mainly dry until the last few days of the month when temperatures fell again and so did the rain.

Nationally April was in the top 25% for warmth during the last 100 years. It was also the fourteenth driest April during this period and for sunshine it was the fifth sunniest. Dry and sunny Aprils are not a good sign of a long hot summer however. Indeed of the ten driest and sunniest Aprils of the last 100 years nine were followed by wet summers. Lets hope we can break the trend, as three wet summers on the trot has been enough for us all!

May was an extremely dry month with temperatures close to the long-term average with sunshine totals the same. At Mountsorrel I recorded just 15 mm of rain, which is only a third of the usual total. This made it my driest May since my records began ten years ago. Jim at Loughborough recorded 28 mm, which was 50% of his usual total. Nationally there have only been 17 drier Mays in the last 100 years. The dry weather was caused by persistent high pressure mainly to our NW. The positioning of the high pressure resulted in NE or N winds for much of the month and this kept temperatures down for the majority of the time. Jim at Loughborough recorded afternoon maximums averaging 16.8°C with minimums at 6.7°C giving us an overall mean of 11.7°C. All of these figures are exactly average for May. Sunshine figures totalled 182 hours, which again is the figure you would expect for this month.

The first fortnight gave us mainly cool NE winds that gave us cool days. The coldest day was the 10th when I only managed a maximum of 9°C at Mountsorrel. The arctic air mass also gave us some night frosts. Two were recorded with the lowest temperature being recorded on the night of the 12th when both stations recorded a minimum of -1°C. Some showers were recorded most days in this period with Jim's wettest day of the month being the 1st when 6.5 mm fell. The third week of the month did see a change as a new area of High pressure established itself over the country. It brought with it some much warmer air and we then experienced five really warm days. Temperatures reached 22°C on the 20th and that night they only dropped to 15°C at Sutton Bonington that night making this the warmest place in the whole country! This warm moist air created high humidity and with temperatures remaining high by both night and day it began to feel very uncomfortable for many of us. Temperatures peaked at 27.5°C at Mountsorrel and 28.5°C at Loughborough on the 23rd. Thirty hours of sunshine were recorded on the weekend of 22nd/23rd. The last week saw the high pressure move back to the NW of the UK and much cooler air spread south again. The last two days gave us a substantial fall of rain at Mountsorrel when I recorded 6 mm on the 29th. Strong winds then followed on the 30th with gusts recorded up to 36 mph at Shepshed

making this one of the windiest days of what has been a fairly calm year so far. The three cooler weeks therefore balanced out against the very warm period to give us average temperatures. Rainfall in Mountsorrel has now been below average in four months out of the last five. At the months end my rainfall total for the year was 30% below normal. I get the feeling the balance is due to be addressed and I predict a fairly damp summer!

June was a warmer and sunnier month than normal and for most of us it was drier than average too. Afternoon maximums were around 21°C, which is around 1.5°C above normal. Night-time minimums averaged 11°C, giving us a monthly mean of 16°C about 1°C above normal. It was also a very sunny month with 236 hours recorded at Mountsorrel which is 25% the usual figure. This made it the sunniest June since 1996. Rainfall varied across our region with Jim at Loughborough recording 85 mm of rain, which is 25% above normal. Mountsorrel just recorded 43 mm or just 66% of the total. The large anomaly between the two stations is down to the nature of this month's rainfall. Most of it fell on just a few days in heavy thunderstorms. Jim at Loughborough recorded several of these storms, as did areas to the north of the town whereas to the south of the town we missed the worst of the showers and remained much drier.

The month opened with a damp day but then the next four days brought us some hot sunshine as an area of high pressure settled over the country. Temperatures reached 25°C on the 5th and we recorded 15 hours of sunshine on the 3rd. Severe storms affected us overnight on the 5th and 6th and gave both stations about 18mm of rain. The next few days of the month were wet with a deep area of low pressure over the country. The unstable air in the hot sunshine quickly set off showers and thunderstorms. The worst of these affected Loughborough and areas to the north of the town on the 9th at around 12:45 pm. This deluge lasted 60 minutes and produced 22 mm at Nanpantan and 18 mm at Sutton Bonington. I looked at the radar traces areas to the north of the town around Cotes in particular and discovered that this area probably received 30 mm in this deluge. Meanwhile in Mountsorrel it remained almost dry and my school children in Birstall were outside in the

sunshine having a picnic! The low pressure moved away on the 10th and another high-pressure area formed near Iceland. This gave us a cool ten days with a biting NE wind but it remained mostly dry. The 19th was an extremely cool day with maximum temperatures of just 14°C and winds up to 26 mph. The weather changed on the 20th as the high pressure began to move in towards the country. This then moved to the east and allowed a warm air mass to arrive. Temperatures began to rise and they reached a peak of 27°C at Mountsorrel and 28.5°C at Loughborough on the 27th. Night-time temperatures remained high in the warm and muggy air mass and rarely dropped below 14°C, which made sleeping quite difficult. So, a summery month, which is not common for June. It was the 10th warmest June nationally in the last 100 years and the warmest since June 1996. Only six Junes were sunnier in the last 100 years and 25 Junes were drier. Lets hope the fine weather continues but night time rainfall would be very welcome as the parks, lawns and gardens remain parched. Thanks to Jim, at Loughborough, for the figures and Philip Eden for the National statistics

**Phil Morrish**

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preferably by 15 October.