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WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR RECORD SHEETS?

Up to now, all the record sheets sent in to the Club have been photocopied and the copies retained by us while the originals have been stored at the Leics. & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) at Holly Hayes in Birstall. Holly Hayes is closing in the spring and the staff moving to County Hall, where there will be no room for the storage of paper records. So we have had to rethink our procedures.

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All the old records are being scanned and will be available digitally and, starting with the next quarter, we propose to scan, rather than photocopy, the record sheets so it will be the originals that are sent out to our writers. We hope that the Record Centre will archive the scans and we shall, probably, store our scans on a portable hard disc along with digital copies of the records that are sent to us as spreadsheets and emails. The original records will still be retained but we are not yet sure where they will be.

Ideally, we would like to receive all records on spreadsheets but we realise that this is not possible for many people. Some national recording schemes will now only accept digital records.

Paper records are not immediately accessible – one may have to search through a sheaf of papers for each year to find a particular species. Each quarter we receive two thousand, or more, records.

To make records easily accessible, they need to be manually (and carefully) entered onto a database and this requires a great amount of time. Ken Goodrich spends many hours doing this with the bird records for LROS. Unfortunately, the job of entering all new Club records on to a database is probably too onerous a task for any member to take on.

As the County Council is having to make severe financial cuts, the future of LRERC is uncertain. We are working with the County Recorder network, the Leics. & Rutland Wildlife Trust and other natural history and specialist societies to try and retain it in its present form. We will let you know what happens.

Helen Ikin

CLASSIFIED RECORDS

MAMMALS

Records are rather sparse this quarter, for most groups, not just mammals.

More records of **Hedgehogs** were sent in than for any other mammal and we have some interesting behaviour notes.

Dead ones were noted in Beaumont Road in Loughborough, Station Road in Desford and Ethel Road and Thurnby Lodge in Leicester.

GF had the usual regular visitors to his Scraftoft garden; two individuals were seen and frequently fed in close contact on the nuts, seeds, raisins and dog food that is put out for them. Although this mixture also attracts slugs and snails, the Hedgehogs have never been seen to eat either of these molluscs. The Hedgehogs tend to go to a nearby puddle in a drain cover to drink. ATO had a fairly small young hedgehog in his Loughborough garden and excrement was also found.

In early September, PMH had a weak, small hedgehog in her Markfield garden in daylight hours. She fed it on crushed snails and cat food for five days until it eventually only came at night for the food, which she continued to provide until the end of the quarter. The hedgehog was then walking properly and seemed much stronger and could be seen feeding at about 7pm.

Molehills were noted in two areas at Grace Dieu, in DAP's Swithland garden and paddock along the stream and in Buddon Brook Meadows at Quorn, where PHG saw the larger "nursery hills". A dead mole was seen at Ulverscroft NR in early August.

We have two records of dead shrews, both **Common Shrews**, in Watermead Park and at Grace Dieu.

On five occasions DAP has seen what appeared to be a **Water Shrew** going in and out of the Skunk Cabbage growing in the stream at Swithland. This species is probably commoner than we think but is not easy to see.

Bats were seen in Quorn – some medium sized, around Staunton Harold Hall – medium sized bats, in Swithland – Pipistrelles and, on

several occasions, in Birstall where GP identified Common Pipistrelles.

Rabbits were seen at Grace Dieu, Jubilee Walk at Leire, in Swithland where they were plentiful and in Quorn Fields, Buddon Brook Meadows and Watermead Park.

HB recorded **Brown Hares** at Barkby Holt Lane - one, Hamilton Pools – two, Barkby Thorpe - one and a road casualty in Gaulby Lane, Stoughton. Other sightings came from Staunton Harold, Ratby and near Congerstone.

Grey Squirrels were seen in Quorn – feeding on Hawthorn berries, in Scraftoft – dropping fragments from the nut feeders for the waiting Magpies and sparrows, in Welham and in gardens in Birstall.

A **Wood Mouse** was another visitor to the feeders in GF's Scraftoft garden.

Our only **Brown Rat** record was three seen by the canal in Abbey Park, Leicester on 30 September.

All the **Red Fox** sightings were live animals for a change – one at Washbrook NR in Oadby, one in Birstall at Meadow Lane Allotments, one visiting a terrace in Scraftoft and regular visitors to a Swithland garden.

SFW was lucky enough to watch a **Stoat** at Egleton NR on 20 September. He had a good view for half a minute while it jumped around in the long grass and then crossed the path in front of him.

Signs of **Badgers** were seen in the Grace Dieu area and extensive worming activity went on at Swithland throughout the quarter as well as Cherry Plums proving particularly attractive. GP noted Badgers at Langham and Kibworth as well as several sightings in Birstall. The only road casualty reported was a large animal on The Ridings at Rothley.

Helen Ikin

BIRDS

Mute Swans were widespread through the quarter with most of the larger waters having proven breeding with varying degrees of success. A pair at Swithland Reservoir managed to rear five cygnets but there were no young remaining by the middle of July at Cropston Reservoir. As usual, the largest count was at Watermead Country Park South when over 150 were noted throughout the quarter.

A migrating flock of 160 **Pink-footed Geese** was seen flying SE from both Deans Lane and Watermead Country Park on 26 September. Three-figure counts of **Canada Geese** were reported from just three sites the highest being 395 on 4 July at Swithland Reservoir. This site also produced the only count over 100 **Greylag Geese** when 325 were there on 7 August in association with 20 farmyard-style geese.



Mandarin Duck © Jim Graham

Records of **Mandarin Duck** came from the main Charnwood waters with successful breeding noted at Swithland, Cropston and Blackbrook Reservoirs. The latter site held 79 fully-grown birds and an unfledged young on 29 July, which represents a new county record for this species. Apart from the over-summering male in the Cropston Reservoir/Bradgate Park area, the only other **Wigeon** noted in July were two at Swithland Reservoir on the 14th and 18th. The first of the autumn were at the latter site on 11 August followed soon by records from Birstall and Cossington Meadows. Numbers gradually increased during September and by the end of the month 171 were at Swithland Reservoir. **Gadwall** were reported from just five sites with successful breeding being noted at Cossington Meadows and Cropston Reservoir in

July. Although there were no records of breeding at Swithland Reservoir, this site held the largest count for the quarter with 95 there on 26 September. The first returning **Teal** were two at Swithland Reservoir on 14 July with Birstall Meadows and Cropston Reservoir also having birds by the month's end and by the end of the quarter, records were received from a further four sites. The highest count of the period was 253 at Swithland Reservoir on 26 September with the only other three-figure count being 100 at Watermead Country Park three days later. Counts of **Mallard** in excess of 100 came from just three sites whilst young were noted at just seven. An eclipse male **Pintail** was at Wanlip Meadows on 28 August and presumably the same bird was on Birstall Meadows on 9 September. After an eclipse male **Garganey** was at Cropston Reservoir inflow on 15 August, one or two birds were seen at Swithland Reservoir on and off between 26 August and 6 September. Five **Shoveler** at Swithland Reservoir on 4 August were the first of the autumn arrivals and by the end of the quarter birds were at eight other waters with the highest counts being 72 at Swithland Reservoir followed by 20 at Cossington Meadows both in September. Swithland Reservoir was the site for **Red-crested Pochard**, with at least two juvenile/female-type there between 4 & 18 August. Two males arrived on 23rd, reducing to just one by 4 September staying until the 25th. A female was then noted for the next two days. The first **Pochard** record of the quarter was of three at Swithland Reservoir on 14 July. Numbers gradually increased there to a high of 25 in August. However, the highest count of the period came from Groby Pool with 75 on 11 September. Records of **Tufted Duck** came from 16 widespread sites with 12 of these having broods of ducklings. Three-figure counts came from three waters where maxima were: 733 at Swithland Reservoir (beating last year's site record), 248 at Groby Pool and 106 at Watermead Country Park. A male **Ruddy Duck** at Watermead Country Park on 2 August may have relocated to Swithland Reservoir from 11 August until the end of the month when it was replaced by a female through to the end of the quarter.

Sightings of **Red-legged Partridge** came from eight well-spread sites and included 17 at Blackbrook Reservoir on the last day of the quarter. There was a distinct and worrying lack of **Grey Partridge** records but there was a good set of autumn **Quail** records for the region with four calling birds at Appleby Magna on 10 July and one close to the Ashby Canal near Congerstone eight days later. **Pheasant** was only noted at nine sites with a female and six young by the reedbed at Cossington Meadows constituting the highest count.

Little Grebe were widespread and young were noted at ten sites. The only double-figure counts came from Groby Pool and Albert Village Lake with maxima being 14 and ten respectively. Records of **Great Crested Grebe** came from 19 sites, 13 of which mentioned successful breeding. The highest counts of adult birds came from Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs with c40 during August and September at both sites. The only other waters with double-figure counts were Blackbrook Reservoir and Watermead Country Park.

Cormorant records were received from six sites, with double-figure counts from four of these. Counts in excess of 50 came from Watermead Country Park and Swithland Reservoir where maxima were 60 and 120 respectively both during September. None of the records received mentioned breeding activity or juveniles. **Grey Heron** was recorded from 17 widespread sites but just Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs had double-figure counts being 18 and 20 during August and September respectively. Records of **Little Egret** came from ten sites usually in one or twos, with up to four at both Cossington Meadows and Watermead Country Park. However, 12 at Lockington Gravel Pits was exceptional.

Single passage **Honey Buzzard** were noted at Wanlip North Lakes and Groby Pool during September. Surprisingly, contrary to recent trends, there were no records of **Red Kite** in Charnwood Forest, the only sightings in the quarter being in the Belvoir area. A female/juvenile **Marsh Harrier** was in the Cossington Meadows and Watermead Country Park area during September. **Sparrowhawk** were widespread including in a number of gardens taking various prey species. Juveniles

were noted at just two sites, Benscliffe Wood and Coppice Wood in Bradgate Park. As is now the case, **Buzzard** were widespread and juveniles were noted at seven sites. Single **Osprey** were seen sporadically through August and September including an adult over Groby Pool. **Kestrels** were also widely reported but confirmed breeding only came from Mountsorrel and Peckleton. **Hobby** was well recorded with juveniles being noted in three areas: Watermead Country Park, Groby Pool and Oakthorpe. Most **Peregrine** records were from around Swithland Reservoir but one was noted "terrifying gulls" at Albert Village Lake on 7 July.

Three reed beds held calling **Water Rail** during the quarter including Cossington Meadows where a juvenile or first-winter **Spotted Crake** was found on 27 August. There were records of **Moorhen** from most of the regions waters and juveniles were noted at seven sites. Double-figure counts came from six sites but only Swithland Reservoir held more than 50, with the highest count for the period being 89 on 4 September. There were fewer records of **Coot** with only five sites recording successful breeding. Ten sites held counts in excess of ten but just Swithland Reservoir with 430 in August and Groby Pool with 183 in September had three-figure counts.



Oystercatcher © Jim Graham

Oystercatcher were at six sites during July and August with juveniles noted at two. No records were received for September. There were just four site records of **Little Ringed Plover** all in July, two of which mentioned juvenile birds. The only site records of **Ringed Plover** were at Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs during August and September where up to four (including three juveniles) were at the

former with two at the latter. Two migration watches at Watermead Country Park produced **Golden Plover** passage of 500 and 153 in August and September respectively. **Lapwing** records came from eight sites, four of which held three-figure counts, all in the Soar Valley suggesting a movement of birds in the area. The site maxima were: 260 at Cossington Meadows in July, 200 at both Birstall Meadows in August and Watermead Country Park in September, and 150 at Wanlip Meadows also in September. A **Little Stint** at Lockington Gravel Pits was a good find. After two at Cossington Meadows on 18 July, up to three **Dunlin**, including two in summer plumage, were at Cropston Reservoir by the end of the month with two there on 23 August. Records also came from Lockington Gravel Pits, Watermead Country Park and Groby Pool. The **Ruff** noted were singles at both Cossington Meadows on 16 August and Swithland Reservoir on 30 September. All records of **Black-tailed Godwit** were in July when up to 11 were at Cossington Meadows, three at Birstall Meadows and one at Cropston Reservoir. Small numbers of **Snipe** were at six sites with the highest count being nine that flew over Swithland Reservoir on 26 September and a juvenile **Curlew** was feeding there on 18 August. **Redshank** were seen at three sites: Birstall Meadows, Cossington Meadows and Cropston Reservoir where there were two on 31 July. A juvenile **Spotted Redshank** was present at Cossington Meadows on 9 September. The first **Greenshank** passing through the area were three on 9 August at both Cossington Meadows and Cropston Reservoir - rising to eight at the latter site by the 15th. Five were at Swithland Reservoir during September and three other sites held birds by the end of the quarter. **Green Sandpiper** were recorded in small numbers at 12 sites with Cossington Meadows having the highest count of 12 on 26 July. Kelham Bridge held seven on 4 September and five were at Birstall Meadows on 8 August. Seven areas had **Common Sandpiper** during the quarter usually in ones and twos, however on 18 July there were at least seven at Cropston Reservoir and up to five at Cossington Meadows - the latter site also hosting a single **Wood Sandpiper** the following day.

An **Arctic Skua** passed through Cropston Reservoir quickly on 26 September. The number

of gulls began to increase through the period and **Black-headed Gull** counts in excess of 300 came from two sites, maxima at Albert Village Lake with 800 and Cropston Reservoir with 335. Two other sites had had three-figure counts, Birstall Meadows with 122 and Cossington Meadows with 160. An adult **Little Gull** was with Black-headed Gulls in fields at Wanlip on 11 July. Single **Mediterranean Gull** were at Albert Village Lake, Cossington Meadows and Thornton Reservoir whilst **Common Gull** were noted at just two sites with 15 in a roost at Swithland Reservoir the highest count. Small numbers of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** were at seven waters although there were 900 around Albert Village Lake during July and September and 950 at Swithland Reservoir on 27 September. The only significant count of **Herring Gull** was 50 at Albert Village Lake on the last day of the quarter and up to five **Yellow-legged Gull** were visiting the same site during the quarter whilst a single adult was at Lockington Gravel Pits on 29 July. The only two site records of **Great Black-backed Gull** came in the last week of the period when four were noted at both Watermead Country Park and Albert Village Lake.

Cossington Meadows was the primary site in the region for **Common Tern** with up to 49 there, including 24 fledged young plus three unfledged in July. The only other sites with double-figure counts were Cropston Reservoir and Groby Pool with 12 and 11 respectively. A juvenile **Arctic Tern** was at Watermead Country Park on 26 August followed by an adult on 8 September and a different juvenile between the 20th and 29th; whilst at Thornton Reservoir another juvenile was present on the 26th. September was the optimum period for **Black Tern** with six (five juveniles) at Swithland Reservoir on 4 September and one there on the 8th. At Thornton Reservoir one was present between the 7th and 9th, whilst at Watermead Country Park there was an adult on the 8th and a juvenile between the 16th and 22nd.

Small numbers of **Stock Dove** came from ten locations including four gardens. **Woodpigeon** records were more widespread but the only three-figure count was of 150 around Cropston Reservoir on 26 September. There were few records of **Collared Dove** and the only count in excess of ten was 11 in Loughborough in August.

A Single **Turtle Dove** was noted at Watermead Country Park on 29 August.

There were no records of **Cuckoo** in the area throughout the quarter: most adults invariably having stopped calling and started their return migration during the period. **Barn Owl** were noted at just two sites, Kelham Bridge and Shepshed. An adult and two juvenile **Little Owl** were in the grounds of the ruins at Bradgate Park in the quarter and calling was also noted from The Pheasantry and Bowling Green Spinney suggesting multiple territories. Four were in the Moira area including two adults and a juvenile at Cheadle's Barn. **Tawny Owl** were very vociferous in the period and heard calling widely including from a number of gardens in the region.

Small numbers of **Swift** were recorded throughout the quarter with the final record of two on the 22 September at Coalville. There were just two significant counts - both in July: 150 at both Coalville and Oakthorpe. **Kingfisher** were well reported with records coming from 18 sites with regular sightings at Blackbrook Reservoir, Bradgate Park, Groby Pool, Kelham Bridge, and various areas of Watermead Country Park plus a garden stream in Swithland. **Green Woodpecker** were noted at over 20 widespread sites with juveniles confirmed at ten of these. The highest site counts were both in July of eight around Moira (which included a number of juveniles) and a family party of four at Bradgate Park. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were widespread in ones and twos with three at Groby Pool and a Swithland garden peanut feeder, and five at Deans Lane on 4 September. Juveniles were noted at a number of sites including at least three gardens. Sightings of **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** continue to be dire and despite Charnwood being one of the better areas in the county the only record for the quarter was of one at Swithland Reservoir in late September.

A rare passage visitor, two **Woodlark** were seen migrating at Deans Lane on 30 September. Records for **Skylark** came from ten sites in small numbers and the highest counts were just 12 at Thruslington and ten at Deans Lane during a visible migration watch at the end of September. There was no mention of the use of artificial banks for **Sand Martin** at Sence Valley Forest

Park or Watermead Country Park during the period. There were just three counts of 100 birds or more: Watermead Country Park had 100 in both July and September whilst 300 were at Swithland Reservoir in the rain in August. Reports of nesting or juvenile **Swallow** came from nine sites and although 30 birds were noted at Bradgate Park Deer Barn, only four of the 15 nests seen were confirmed as in use – very worrying. Flocks began to build as birds prepared for their long trek back to Africa and in September three-figure counts came from four sites with maxima: 100 at both Birstall and Watermead Country Park and 280 at Deans Lane in visible migration. However, an exceptional 600 was recorded at Swithland Reservoir on 26 August. This same site also held the largest count of **House Martin** with 300 there on 14 August whilst the only other sites with three-figure counts were Watermead Country Park with 250 in September and Deans Lane with 140 in August.

Apart from one at Charnwood Lodge and two in song at Beacon Hill, other **Tree Pipit** records were part of the visible migration watch at Deans Lane when a total of seven were counted over six days between 19 August and 2 September. This site also had a total of 395 migrating **Meadow Pipit** from three days worth of counts in September. Away from here the only other significant counts were of 100 at Bradgate Park and 50 at Charnwood Lodge both towards the end of September. A scarce autumn migrant, two **Rock Pipit** were at Lockington Gravel Pits on 22 September.

One or two **Yellow Wagtail** were noted at ten sites with a maximum of five migrating through Deans Lane in August. Records of juvenile **Grey Wagtail** came from Bradgate Park, Cropston Reservoir, Groby Pool and along the brook in Swithland Wood although the highest count was of six birds at Thornton Reservoir in September. Just five sites held **Pied Wagtail** with double-figure counts at two, 23 at Cropston Reservoir inflow in July and 11 in the ruins grounds of Bradgate Park in September. The only notification of juveniles was from Cropston Reservoir.

Wren, Dunnock and Robin were common and widespread with highest counts being: 22 of the former at Measham, six Dunnock in a

Whitwick garden and ten of the latter in the north section of Swithland Wood all in July.

Up to three **Common Redstart** were around the Anstey gate of Bradgate Park between 18 and 23 August whilst a female was at Buddon Brook Meadow between 6 and 8 August at least. The only records of passage **Whinchat** were two found at the Blackbrook on 2 September and two others noted at Charnwood Lodge on the 8th and 9th. Pairs of **Stonechat** were at both Dishley Pool and Charnwood Lodge on 30 July and 30 September respectively whilst single returning **Wheatear** were noted at Charnwood Lodge on 31 July and 4 September, and Cossington Meadows on 8 August.

There were few notable records received of thrushes but parties of ten or more **Mistle Thrush** were at Charley Woods, Charnwood Lodge, Deans Lane and Queniborough. The first returning **Redwing** were noted at both Deans Lane and Watermead Country Park on 26 September with one at Kelham Bridge two days later.

Up to two **Cetti's Warbler** were heard around Watermead Country Park during August and September, whilst single **Grasshopper Warbler** were at Cossington Meadows, Cotes and Measham in July. Four **Sedge Warbler** at Thornton Reservoir and Watermead Country Park were the best counts from eight sites, whilst nine **Reed Warbler** from the latter site and seven at Groby Pool were the best from ten sites.

Blackcap were widespread and recorded in all three months mainly ones and twos, with five at Deans Lane the best count and four at three other sites whilst juveniles were noted at six. **Garden Warbler** were not quite as common or widespread but families of four were at Measham in July and Cossington Meadows in August. One or two **Lesser Whitethroat** were at six sites with juveniles noted at two of these and although **Common Whitethroat** were slightly more abundant and widespread, a dozen birds at Charnwood Lodge in August was by far the highest count.

Chiffchaff were common and widespread usually in ones or twos however, double-figure counts came from three sites: Watermead Country Park with 27 in September, Moira with

13 in July and Groby Pool with ten in September. There were rather fewer **Willow Warbler** with up to three at 16 sites and eight at Groby Pool on 21 August.

Goldcrests records came from nine sites with Cropston Reservoir and Bradgate Park having the highest counts of 16 in three parties on 26 September and 11 in two groups on 29 July respectively. Family parties of **Spotted Flycatcher** totalling 19 were in various Bradgate Park woodlands during the quarter whilst four family parties totalling 15 were present in Swithland Wood. Another family party of six were at Charnwood Lodge in July, with one or two birds at a further 11 sites. Scarce in autumn, a female **Pied Flycatcher** at Groby Pool on 8 August was a good find: unfortunately, it didn't stay.



Long-tailed Tit © Jim Graham

Long-tailed Tit were widely recorded with double-figure counts at ten of the 19 sites, the highest count being 41 near the Bradgate Park ruins on 23 July. Five gardens were visited with 19 being recorded in Cropston. Seven sites had double-figure counts of **Blue Tit** the largest being: 45 in a mixed flock at Blackbrook Reservoir on 30 September, 31 at Swithland Wood on 20 July and 25 at Moira on 29 July. The last two sites also held double-figure counts of **Great Tit** with 26 at the former on 20 July and ten at the latter on 29 July. In addition, at least 21 were in various Bradgate Park woodlands on 26 July. Of the ten sites recording **Coal Tit**, four were gardens but the highest and only double-figure count was of 14 at The Outwoods on 25 September. A species that is of great concern due to recent serious national decline, one or two **Willow Tit** were at nine sites whilst **Marsh Tit** was recorded at eight sites and included

three pairs in Swithland Wood on 20 July, a pair with three juveniles at The Outwoods on 9 July and four at Cloud Wood on 11 August.

One or two **Nuthatch** were found at a number of Charnwood woodlands plus five gardens but 25 were found in six family parties in Swithland Wood on 20 July. Family parties of **Treecreeper** were noted at four sites with totals of at least 18 at both Bradgate Park on 14 July and Swithland Wood on 20 July the highest counts.

Small numbers of **Jay** and **Magpie** were noted throughout the region with six of the former at Newtown Linford and 12 of the later at Measham the highest species counts. The only significant counts of **Jackdaw** in the area were 177 at Moira and 127 at Bradgate Park both in July. Moira was also the place for **Rook** when 64, including some juveniles, were recorded there also in July. A Rothley garden was home to 15 birds, which must have made a Clamour! Just five sites held counts in excess of ten **Carrion Crow** with 186 at Moira on 29 July the only significant count. Making a strong foothold in Charnwood and North West Leicestershire in recent years, one or two **Raven** were at 14 sites during the quarter with five around Buddon Wood on 26 September. Few records were received for **Starling** but three-figure counts came from Deans Lane with 126 migrating through there on 30 September, and Measham and Watermead Country Park having 100 each on 10 July and 25 September respectively.

House Sparrow records were widespread but surprisingly included just nine gardens. Counts of 50 or more came from: Moira with 61 on 29 July, Rushey Fields Farm with 60 on 5 September, Measham with 54 on 28 July and Groby with 50 the following day. A group of 30 **Tree Sparrow** were noted at Low Wood Farm, Shepshed on 1 July, with up to 5 in the Queniborough area and a pair at Appleby Magna being the only other sites recorded.

There were no significant records of **Chaffinch** and the only double-figure counts came from a Birstall garden where the maximum was 23 in July. The situation was much the same for **Greenfinch** as there was just one double-figure count: 25 at Watermead

Country Park at the end of August. However, **Goldfinch** were much more common and widespread with counts of 100 coming from two sites, Beedles Lake Golf Course on 2 August, where birds were feeding on teasels and thistles, and Birstall Meadows on the 18th. A further four sites had counts in excess of 50.

All **Siskin** records came in the last five days of September with small numbers from four sites. However, 34 were seen migrating at Deans Lane on the last day of the quarter. Variable numbers of **Linnet** came from 13 sites, eight of which held ten or more birds, with three-figure counts coming from: Loughborough with 160 and Cropston Reservoir shoreline with 150 both in September. The only record of **Lesser Redpoll** was of one at Deans Lane on 26 September.

Sightings of **Crossbill** were reported in all three months of the period with records from six sites. The only double-figure count was at Bradgate Park, with 13 there on 19 July.

Bullfinch came in small numbers from 20 well-spread sites including four gardens of which one in Shepshed held seven individuals during September. The only double-figure count of **Yellowhammer** was ten singing males at Moira on 29 July. Small numbers of **Reed Bunting** were at 12 sites with ten at Trent Farm Pool on 15 August the best count. The only records of **Corn Bunting** in the region came from Appleby Magna and Oakthorpe in July with eight and two birds respectively.

Jim Graham

Our thanks to Ken Goodrich and LROS who co-ordinated the bird records for this period.

FISH (including CRAYFISH)

Although our fish sightings for this quarter have been comparatively few in number, they have been interesting ones, in that they reflect the comparatively healthy state of our local watercourses, with the commoner species well represented.

Of course, as has been remarked before in these columns, fish are not necessarily readily observable. One very simple way round this problem is to adopt the simple expedient of

finding someone who is fishing, and asking him (or sometimes her) whether he or she has caught anything! Generally speaking, anglers are happy to brag about their catches, and if they have retained their catch in what is called a "keep net", they will probably be happy to show you the catch. However, there are one or two hints and tips, which should be borne in mind. Firstly, in some places "keep nets" are banned. Secondly, if anglers are involved in a fishing competition, where they are trying to catch as much as they can in a limited time, they may not appreciate being disturbed or interrupted. When approaching anglers, on the banks of rivers particularly, try to keep well back from the water's edge, to avoid disturbing the fish. The other main problem is that of identification. Although anglers are well known for exaggerating the size of the fish they catch, they will usually try to be accurate about which species they have been catching! However, in one or two cases it is quite easy to misidentify fish. And so, I thought it might be helpful to mention one or two species, or pairs of species, which are often confused.

The first two are the Gudgeon *Gobio gobio* and the Barbel *Barbus barbus*. Gudgeon and juvenile barbel are very similar in appearance; however, the Gudgeon is a small species: anything over about 15 cm will almost certainly be a Barbel (which can grow to approximately one metre in length). Generally speaking, within fish families, the smaller species within the family tend to be more brightly coloured than the larger species. This holds true for the Gudgeon, which is peppered with small black spots, and may also have dark blotches along the flanks, rather like a juvenile trout. Of course, the colouring in fish can be quite variable, because some species have a limited ability to adapt their colouring to their surroundings, which means that colouring is not necessarily an infallible guide to identification. However, in the case of the Gudgeon and the Barbel, there is one simple, foolproof way to tell them apart. The Gudgeon has only two barbules at the corners of the mouth, whereas the Barbel has *four*, like its relative the Common Carp *Cyprinus carpio*. (You would be very unlikely to confuse a Barbel with a Common Carp, because the shape of the body is very different.)

The second pair which are often confused are the Chub *Leuciscus cephalus* and its close relative the Dace *Leuciscus leuciscus*. Dace are, once again, a small species, rarely reaching more than 25 cm, and a maximum weight of 450 g. The Dace tends to be confined to fairly fast water, and although similar in shape to a Chub, is rather more graceful and delicate in appearance, with a smaller head and mouth, and paler fins. The Chub, on the other hand, grows to much larger sizes, and rather lives up to its name: in that it is a powerful looking fish with very large scales and a bullet-shaped head. The dorsal and tail fins are usually dark grey, but the lower fins are quite a bright red. However, there is one distinguishing feature which is readily apparent, even in small fish, and that is that the rear edge of the dorsal and anal fins of the Dace are *concave*, whereas the rear edge of the dorsal and anal fins of the Chub are *convex*.

Just to complicate the picture, another fish, which might add to the confusion, is the Roach *Rutilus rutilus*. Roach are supposed to be a fish of slow flowing or still waters: but sometimes they turn up in surprisingly fast water! The Roach is very different in shape from the preceding two species, being deeper in the body, with a relatively small head. It also tends to be more brightly coloured: in addition to having red lower fins, the caudal (tail) fin is also sometimes reddish. However, perhaps the most striking feature of the Roach is its eyes - the irises are also a bright red. The fish, which is most likely to be confused with the Roach, is its close relative the Rudd *Scardinius erythrophthalmus*, which is found only in still waters. It sounds complicated, but once you have seen a few specimens of each species, you are unlikely to have problems identifying them.

The final pair of species which can be readily confused are juvenile Brown Trout *Salmo trutta fario* and juvenile Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar*, although this is not a problem which concerns us here in Leicestershire - at least, not at the moment! Juvenile Trout, Salmon and Char, which typically mature at two to three years of age, are known as "parr", and can be distinguished by a row of blotches along the flanks. These blotches are known as "parr marks" and disappear with maturity. They are

one feature that seems to be common to the entire family.

I hope that these brief notes will be of help! Of course, there is no substitute for a good, well illustrated book, and unfortunately, I have to admit that I have no knowledge of what is currently available: most of my own textbooks are now a good few years old.

(There is a useful website at:
www.ifm.org.uk/publications/resource/FishID_v2.pdf
Ed.)

And with that, let us now move on to this quarter's records!

Barbel *Barbus barbus*

GP reports that an angler fishing near the White Horse Bridge, at Birstall, on 16 July, caught six small Barbel, approximately 10 to 15 cm in length.

Chub *Leuciscus cephalus*

As usual, we have quite a few records for the Chub! It seems that the Chub has really taken advantage of the cleaner conditions in our watercourses in recent years to thrive and multiply! ATO visited the Buddon Brook, in the centre of Quorn, on 9 July. In the long, comparatively still pool alongside the Memorial Gardens at Quorn Cross, he found two shoals of chub, presumably from two different year classes. Towards the head of the pool, there was a shoal of larger fish, up to approximately 30 cm in size. Further down the pool, towards the A6 bridge, there was a second shoal, roughly the same size, of smaller fish, roughly 15 to 20 cm in size. Swimming with this shoal there was a solitary Perch! (Please see below.) On the same day, ATO also spotted a Chub in the tiny stream which rises to the North-West of Woodhouse and flows in a north-easterly direction, parallel to the B591, past the Grammar School playing fields, before turning abruptly to the south-east, and paralleling the A6, before joining the Buddon Brook, near Quorn Cross. ATO refers to this brook as the "Woodhouse Brook", although I believe PHG, who lives locally, refers to it by another name! On the day in question, ATO spotted a Chub of approximately 17 or 18 cm just upstream of the B591 road bridge. It is not the first time that ATO has seen small Chub in

this stream. The following day, on 10 July, GP reports seeing a group of nine Chub in the Soar, at Watermead, between Birstall Lock and the Weir. These were comparatively large fish, approximately 40 to 45 cm in length, and were, apparently, basking. GP also reports that on 23 July, at the same place, she came across an angler who had caught six Chub in a backwater between the Birstall Lock and the Weir. These fish were approximately 15 cm in length. Finally, GP records another four Chub at the same spot, at the end of the month, on 31 July.

At more or less the same time, on 19 July, ATO came across a group of four Chub, basking, in the Upper Pond in the Queen's Park in Loughborough. The following day he saw one large Chub (approximately 30 cm) in this Pond. It seems that at that time, the pump, which lifts water up from the Woodbrook to the Upper Pond, had broken down, and this situation, with no fresh water coming into the pond, lasted for several days before the pump was fixed. However, the fish, when ATO saw them, appeared to be perfectly healthy. There then followed a period with no sightings, until 21 September, when ATO saw two Chub, of approximately 30 cm, in the Upper Pond. Both appeared to be perfectly healthy.

Perch *Perca fluviatilis*

We only have a couple of sightings for this fish, although it is a very common species locally. One sighting comes from GP who reports one caught by an angler fishing the Soar, at Watermead, in the backwater between Birstall Lock and the Weir. The second sighting is one from ATO: this fish is the one mentioned in the section on the Chub. What was interesting about this particular sighting is that you would not expect to see a Perch swimming with a shoal of Chub. Perch, as young fish, are very much shoal fish, as are many other species, and therefore it does not come as a surprise that a small Perch (this one was about 15 cm long) would seek to join a shoal of fish, even of another species. However, the surprise, for me, is that the Chub had no objection to the Perch joining them! Incidentally, the Perch is quite readily identifiable in open water, because it has a series of dark, vertical bars along the flanks, which show up quite clearly. This, together with its slightly hump-backed shape, makes the Perch quite distinctive: you are not likely to confuse it with any other of the common species of fish.

Tony Onions

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Sadly, reports of Reptiles are very scarce for this quarter, but we do have one or two. (Well, two actually!)

Grass Snake *Natrix natrix helvetica*

Our only record of a Grass Snake for this quarter was provided by the ever-reliable GP! She reports one found alive on the road in Nether Hall Lane, in Birstall, in the late afternoon, on 20 September. This specimen was a young one, rather thin, about 12 cm long.

Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*



Common Lizard © Steve Woodward

The Grace Dieu site appears to be a good one for the Common Lizard! SFW found three specimens near the Priory Ruins on 22 August. On 30 September, he found two specimens on Cademan Moor and two more along Warren Lane.

Smooth Newt *Triturus vulgaris*

PMH reports having young newts and tadpoles in the pond in her garden, in Leicester Road, Markfield, on 20 August.

Common Toad *Bufo bufo*

There is absolutely no shortage of records of this amphibian for this quarter! Our first sighting appears to be one from GP, who found a young one at Church Hill in Birstall on the evening of 5 July. Two days later, on 7 July, SFW records finding numbers of toadlets on the shore of the Lake at Albert Village. (I believe that this was during Wednesday morning walk at the site.) HI and SFW found an adult at Misterton Marshes on 9 July. SFW also found several more toadlets the following month, on 10 August, at Grace Dieu Manor Farm. HI and SFW also found

another specimen at Grace Dieu on 27 August. GP reports finding toads of varying sizes all through the month of July, at various locations around Birstall. On the night of 19 July she found specimens at Church Hill and Nether Hall Lane. On 24 July she reports a small adult from Nether Hall Lane, and for the following day two more small adults, one from the Meadow Lane Allotments and one from St James' Churchyard. Finally, she reports a large adult from the Meadow Lane Allotments, on the evening of 28 July.

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*

Similarly, there does not appear to be any shortage of the Common Frog in Leicestershire, with sightings coming from a variety of locations! (Interestingly, this includes a number of sightings from people's gardens.) The first sighting, on 2 July, comes from SFW, who found one at Aylestone Meadows. He also reports specimens from Jubilee Walk at Leire, on 31 July, and from New Lount Nature Reserve, on 21 August; while on 23 July he found large numbers of froglets on the Ulverscroft Nature Reserve. ATO also reports finding large numbers of froglets in the mown grass at Dishley Pool on 16 July. GP reports an adult from a back garden in Mill Close in Birstall, on 18 July, and on 20 July found three small froglets, while weeding at the Meadow Lane Allotments. The following day, at Mill Close, GP came across an adult in the back garden while watering. On the morning of 24 August, in his back garden, ATO rescued a medium sized frog (5 cm approx.) from his cat! During the following month, on 6 September, ATO found another, smaller frog in the back garden, and saw what was almost certainly the same specimen again on 9 September. He also found a larger specimen while doing some tidying up in the front garden on 19 September. Finally, HI reports a specimen from the Grantham Canal on 12 September, while on a visit to the site with the Leicester Lit. & Phil. Society NH Section.

Generally speaking, it seems that our commoner Reptiles and Amphibians are thriving - however, it would be interesting to receive reports of some of the less common ones!

Tony Onions

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

The poor season for Odonata continued in the third quarter where the second left off. We received just over 140 records from members and friends for the period.

A common and widely distributed species in the region showing a preference for slow-flowing streams, rivers and canals, records of **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** came from just six sites. The River Soar at Quorn held the highest count with at least 100 there on 1 July. There were no comments on mating or ovipositing.

Easily overlooked but characterised by the way it holds its wings at 45 degrees when at rest, adult **Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa*** were found at Dadlington and New Lount NR both in August.

Another species easily overlooked despite its recent range expansion in the area, especially around the Ashby Canal, is **White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes***. There were no records received for the quarter.

Much more common and widespread and recorded in small numbers from ten sites, the highest count of **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** was 20 at Pilling's Lock on 1 July. There were no records received after 9 August.

By far the largest count of **Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*** was 50 at Puddledyke near Cropston on 21 July. Records came in all three months of the quarter and from eight sites.

In contrast, the similar looking **Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*** was seen at just two sites: PHG's garden in Quorn on 3 July and along a stretch of the River Soar a week later.

Another stretch of the River Soar, this time at Quorn, was home to the largest count of **Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas***. This species was found at a further four sites in the period with the final sighting at Grace Dieu on 10 August.

Found in all three months of the quarter, **Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis*** was observed in 19 diverse habitats in small numbers with the highest count being four at both Puddledyke and

Watermead Country Park during July. There was no indication of breeding at any of the sites.



Southern Hawker female © Jim Graham

Found in all three months, one or two **Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea*** were noted from nine sites but the 14 emerging from PMH's pond in Markfield on the first day of the quarter confirmed this species' penchant for utilising gardens for breeding. A teneral insect was also located in PHG's Quorn garden on 19 July.

As with the previous species, **Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*** was recorded throughout the quarter being noted from ten sites - only three of which were shared with its cousin. The highest count was of six at Bradgate Park on 15 August with four at three other sites. The final record of the quarter for both species was on 29 September at Watermead Country Park.

Records of single **Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*** came from five well-spread sites with 'several' being noted at Lakeside Court, Thurnby on 24 July. There was no indication of breeding at any site.

Despite residing in a wide variety of habitats and having a flight period that extends well into August, no records of **Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*** were received.

Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa* was recorded at three sites within Grace Dieu during July and August, whilst ovipositing was seen at Bradgate Park on 4 July when a pair was there.

Frequently found basking in the sun on bare patches of ground near open water, records of **Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*** came from six sites all in July. It was last seen at Bradgate Park on the 21st.

The first record of **Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum* was a male at PHG's garden in Quorn on 3 July. Thereafter it was noted at a further 12 sites and in all months of the quarter. Ovipositing was observed at Old John Watering in Bradgate Park on 15 August and at Grace Dieu three days later. Mating was also seen at Watermead Country Park when eight insects were there on 1 September.

Although recorded in all three months, **Ruddy Darter** *Sympetrum sanguineum* was noted at just two sites: New Lount NR and two sections of the Grantham Canal.

Last but certainly not least, is the highlight of the quarter (and probably the Odonata year!), a male **Black Darter** *Sympetrum danae* was found by SFW, Steve Smith and HI) at a pool in Grace Dieu Wood on 15 August. First confirmed in the County in 1965 at Charnwood Lodge, there have been less than ten positive records since then. It is generally restricted to acidic heathlands and the closest breeding sites are in the Peak District.

Jim Graham

BUTTERFLIES

As in the spring, the summer months continued to disappoint and populations of many species remained at low levels. This was particularly so with regard to some of the common nymphalids and many Buddleia bushes went through their flowering period with few, if any, of these butterflies in attendance. This was accentuated by the dearth of migrant Red Admiral and Painted Lady butterflies.

Thankfully some species did better and it was good to receive an increase of reports for the Brown Argus.

Hesperiidae

The **Small Skipper** *Thymelicus sylvestris* was active throughout July and last noted on 8 August at Little Stretton. Generally noted in single figures it was reported seen in 17 well spread localities with maxima of c18 at Cotterill Larch Spinney near Little Stretton on 6 July and c27 at Scraftoft Golf Course on 24 July. The closely related **Essex Skipper** *T. lineola* was only reported seen in four localities this summer and again no large colonies were noted. During July

it was seen at Buddon Brook Meadows, Quorn, on the 19th and at Belgrave Meadows on the 23rd, and in August it was observed at Little Stretton on the 8th and Stoughton Airfield on the 19th.

The **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes venata*, active throughout June, continued to be active during July when it was last noted on the 23rd, at Belgrave Meadows. Altogether it was reported seen in nine well spread localities and only in single figures.

Pieridae

The **Brimstone** *Gonepteryx rhamni* which was widely reported last quarter was only seen in 11 localities this quarter, with sightings in five localities in July, seven in August and only two in September.

Numbers of **Large White** *Pieris brassicae* and **Small White** *P. rapae* were well down on last summer and although widely reported from the second week of July onwards numbers remained on the low side throughout the rest of the quarter. The new generation of **Green-veined White** *P. napi* also appeared around the second week in July and between then and early September was reported seen in 26 well spread localities, the same number as last summer.

Lycaenidae

The only **Purple Hairstreak** *Quercusia quercus* reported this summer were several noted on the western edge of Buddon Wood on the 10th July, and during August, one visiting Ragwort flowers at Grace Dieu Wood on the 15th and two on small oak trees at Cademan Wood on the 16th. However, others were seen at Burbage Wood during a visit by members of the East Midlands Branch of Butterfly Conservation on 31 July.



White-letter Hairstreak © Steve Woodward

The **White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrium w-album***, first reported last quarter at Cloud Wood Nature Reserve on 26 June, was observed again there on 10 July when eight or more were noted. The only other sighting reported was of one nectaring on bramble blossom at Scraftoft Gorse on 24 July.

Numbers of the **Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*** continue on the low side and no double figure counts were reported. Altogether it was noted in 21 widely scattered localities, mostly during July and August but with a few during late September, probably third generation butterflies, at Hamilton Pools, Washbrook NR and Buddon Brook Meadows, all nectaring on Devil's-bit Scabious or Ragwort.

Second generation **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** appear to have done well this summer being reported seen in 11 well spread localities. A large colony was observed by FP, who lives at Bushby, in a field of Borage at Houghton-on-the-Hill on 25 July and, on the 28th, about 30 newly emerged adults were noted by HB at a new site along the broad verge of Barkby Holt Lane. During August others were found at Dadlington North Farm and Little Stretton on the 8th, on waste ground at Hamilton and Dishley Pool margins, Loughborough on the 11th; at Willow Brook Park Nature Area, Leicester on the 15th; at Stoughton Airfield on the 19th; at Bede Island, Leicester, on the 22nd; on field margins off Gaulby Lane on the 29th and at Quorn Fields Farm on the 31st.

The Brown Argus was not recorded in recent times in Leicestershire until the year 2000 since when small populations have established themselves in various localities usually in warm places with short turf with small species of geranium such as the Dove's-foot Cranesbill *Geranium molle*, a new larval food plant. Where the species occurs in arable areas the larvae are likely to be associated with the Cut-leaved Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*.

The attractive **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** was less widely reported than last summer being noted in only 18 localities as against 33. Two late first generation butterflies were noted at Bede Island on the 3 July and the first second generation appeared on 16th July in our Quorn garden with two males nectaring

on the flowers of Meadow Pea *Lathyrus pratensis* and the last sighting reported was on 31 August at Whitwick. Seven double figure counts were reported with maxima of c25 at Hamilton on the 11 August and c41 at Willow Brook Park on 15 August.

Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus* were noted in 13 separate localities as against 15 localities of first generation butterflies in the spring and numbers continued on the low side. The new second generation butterflies appeared first on 6 July at Victoria Park, Leicester and at Quorn and numbers reached a peak around the 20th July. The last sighting reported was on the 1st September.

Nymphalidae

Although the handsome **White Admiral *Ladoga camilla*** had a good summer in many counties, even extending its range, no reports were received from Club members and we need to visit likely woodland in VC55 during late June/July next year to see what the position is locally.

Following its poor spring showing the **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** remained few and far between throughout the summer months. It was reported seen in 15 scattered localities but most reports referred to only single individuals a few of which were still active, visiting Ivy blossom at the end of September.

The **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*** was likewise sparse this summer and only noted in five localities with one at Thurnby on the 3 July and during August singletons at Barlestone, Scraftoft, Wanlip and Loughborough. The last sighting was in FTS's Barlestone garden on 20th September.

Although it was reported seen in about 30 localities the **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** still remains scarce in many localities where it was formerly common and it is some years now since it was an abundant, widely spread butterfly. The maximum count recorded was c30 at the Larch Spinney near Little Stretton on 6th July. However, all but two counts consisted of single figures.

Numbers of the **Peacock *Inachis io*** were also disappointingly low this summer and reports were received for only 18 localities with first

sightings of the new generation at Scraftoft on the 8th and at Watermead North, Wanlip on the 14th. Only one count reported consisted of double figures and this was of c.52 on a colony of the thistles at Little Stretton recorded by HB on the 8th August.

The **Comma *Polygonia c-album*** whilst never normally occurring in large colonies like the Peacock, enjoyed a better summer and was widely reported seen in some 35 localities with one generation active in July and August followed by a new generation from 11 September onwards. Several reports mentioned 6 – 9 individuals noted at single localities.

Local butterfly recorders should be alerted to the fact that the **Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia*** is currently extending its range in eastern England and re-colonising woods after an absence of several decades. It would be wonderful if this splendid butterfly returned to some of our Leicestershire and Rutland woods where it used to occur and those on the eastern side of VC55, nearest to the Rockingham Forest, are probably well worth searching next July and August.

Satyridae

Numbers of **Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*** remained on the low side this summer and no double figure counts were reported. In total it was recorded in 25 separate localities and those noted in early July were probably second generation butterflies whilst those in late July/August presumably represented third generation butterflies and those in the latter half of September fourth generation. A late mating pair was present in our Quorn garden on 22 September.

After the report of the **Wall Brown *Lasioommata megera*** seen in FTS's Barlestone garden last summer it was exciting to get MV's report of one found resting on her gravel drive in Templar Way, Rothley, on 7 August. It would be good if these two reports, after a long absence, heralded a return of this formerly common species to our local gardens!

The now widely spread **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*** had a good summer and was noted in some 35 localities. It was seen first on 7 July at Albert Village Lake environs and was last reported seen on 22nd August, a mating, pair at

Bede Island, Leicester. Double figure counts were widely reported and many members had numbers visiting their gardens.

The **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*** which appeared first locally on 11 June had a long season and was last seen on 15 August, at Grace Dieu. As usual it was common and widespread in suitable grassy places.

Worryingly the **Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*** was only reported seen in three localities this quarter. Thirty or more were noted around Albert Village Lake on 7 July. However such a large area of suitable habitat occurs here that, in all probability, hundreds would have been present. The next reported sighting was of two seen along the bank of the mill stream at the end of White Horse Lane, Birstall, on 25th July. Finally several were noted at Cademan Moor on 16 August.



Ringlet © Jim Graham

Reported seen in 25 widely scattered localities the **Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*** enjoyed another successful summer. First recorded last quarter on 19 June this distinctive dark butterfly, a little smaller than the Meadow Brown with which it often flies, remained active until 15 August when it was last noted at Grace Dieu.

Peter Gamble

MOTHS

The conditions for the first few weeks into July were just about as good as we are likely to get, temperature staying in double figures all night long. The few who take traps out into the field were reporting anything less than 100 species as disappointing and most who trapped in their gardens were having some of the highest totals ever. There was even more than a suggestion of a decent migration during the middle of this month. I recorded a single of each **Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella*** and **Silver Y *Autographa gamma*** at Shenton on 17 July. Over the course of the next few days, records of **Rusty-dot Pearl *Udea ferrugalis***, more **Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella***, **Hummingbird Hawkmoth *Macroglossum stellatarum***, **Dark Swordgrass *Agrotis ipsolon***, plus more **Silver Y *Autographa gamma*** were reported from Somerset, Sussex and Kent. Yet again, here, virtually in the centre of the country we pick up migrants almost immediately as they arrive, incredible.

Pretty well the whole of August was a disappointment with very few nights holding decent temperatures and consequently numbers of species dropped dramatically. Heavy periods of rain throughout the month helped to keep daytime fieldwork down too, just when there are many early autumn leaf miners to look for. September started off sunny during the day, but clear skies in the evenings followed by a mixed bag of weather throughout the rest of the month, making hard work for us lepidopterists, although we did finish up with a couple of fairly mild nights.

At least five sightings, of **Hummingbird Hawk Moth *Macroglossum stellatarum*** adults were reported this quarter. The first on 7 July visiting Lavender by PHG at Meeting Street in Quorn, next MV saw a singleton at Cossington on 20 July. Back in Quorn, BH & JH reported one visiting Phlox in their garden on 21 July. On Main Street, Swithland, DAP was fortunate to have two visiting Phlox in his garden, both staying around for several days from 24 July. A little later FTS saw a singleton feeding on Verbena in his Barlestone garden on 8 August. ATO reports the finding of a larva on his garden path in Loughborough on 25 September matching the description of this species, possibly having been

disturbed from earlier work in the garden. This species is known for its rapid development, and probably was the result of a fertile female laying eggs in the summer.

Members' Sightings

Starting off with casual and mainly daytime observations, followed by light trapping records.

GP found a single **Beautiful China-mark *Cataclysta lemnata*** sitting on a nettle plant along the River Soar. At Birstall Allotments she recorded a **Small Magpie *Eurrhynx hortulata***, a **Muslin Moth *Diaphora mendica*** larva and a couple of **Silver Y *Autographa gamma*** adults all in July.

Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner *Cameraria ohridella* made it into the limelight with a Radio Leicester interview and even a slot with Anona on BBC East Midlands television.

SFW recorded this species at six widely scattered locations, as have several other members. He also found the beautiful micro moth ***Pammene regiana*** on Sycamore at the records centre at Holly Hayes on 6 July. A deep chocolate brown moth with a bright, orange patch on each wing, when the wings are closed the patches merge, to form a single large area. This gorgeous little moth is totally dependent on various *Acers* for survival, a good enough reason alone to 'go easy' on Sycamores. **Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae***, were found at five different locations, all in July.

PHG reports "hundreds" of **Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae*** adult moths at Albert Village Lake, 17 July amid extensive areas of its food plant Bird's-foot Trefoil. He also had single **Vapourer Moth *Orgyia antiqua*** sightings on 23 July and 11 September in his Quorn garden.

Light trap Results

In his Groby garden, SFW operated his Actinic light trap on nine occasions, five in July, two in August and two in September with just under 300 moths of 55 species. Highest single night count for a single species was 58 **Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba*** on 21 August followed by 23 **Water Veneer *Acentria ephemerella*** on 8 August. Amazingly, the only other two species to reach double figures were 12 **Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamatoris*** and 10

Mottled Rustic *Caradrina morpheus* both on 7 July. The Pyralid moth ***Phlyctaenia coronata*** was caught on two occasions both in July, quite an unusual species to record for most gardens as the larvae feed on Elder. Not really a common garden plant, but often abundant in hedgerows. A single ***Trachycera advenella*** on 27 July, also often associated with hedgerows, some individuals can be a quite rich maroon with mottled silvery areas, a very nice little moth. A solitary **Small Rivulet *Perizoma alchemillata*** turned up on 8 August with 16 other species including a single **Mouse Moth *Amphipyra tragopogonis***.

At Loughborough, SML trapped ten nights in July with 1378 moths of 106 species, ten nights in August with 1163 moths of 76 species and two nights in September, 352 moths of 25 species, producing a total of 16 new species for the garden. A few of the new species for July were singles of ***Cochylis atricapitana***, larvae feed on Ragwort, and ***Gypsonoma dealbana***, which feed on a variety of deciduous trees and the larvae live in a frass covered silken tube and can be easily found on the underside of Oak leaves in the autumn. **Clay Triple-lines *Cyclophora linearia***, **Nutmeg *Discestra trifolii***, and what must be a long overdue **Coronet *Craniophora ligustri***. A solitary **Pinion-streaked Snout *Shrankia costaestrigalis***, this is another species whose food plant is not known in the wild, usually associated with damp places, but little is known of its lifestyle. New species for August were a single smart ***Ypsolopha sequella***, larval food plants being various Acer species, the variable ***Celypha lacunana***, plus the plume moth ***Amblyptilia acanthadactyla***. A single **Tissue *Triphosa dubitata***, we do not seem to get many records of this Buckthorn feeder. It would be interesting to know just where the Buckthorn is, as there are a couple of interesting micro moths restricted to this and Alder Buckthorn. He had a real treat in September with 23 ***Epiphyas postvittana***, and 147 **Large yellow Underwings *Noctua pronuba***, the latter have been conspicuously absent for most of the summer. A single **Dark Sword Grass *Agrotis ipsolon*** on 6 July but a good total of 35 **Silver Y *Autographa gamma*** for the quarter.

PHG operated his moth trap in Meeting Street, Quorn on six occasions, three in July and

three in September, resulting in a total of just over 650 individuals of about 140 species. Just a few of the highlights are, 2 July a single **Barred Yellow *Cidaria fulvata*** which is a nice species to record in the garden, the larval food plant being Rock-rose. The same evening a solitary but very smart **Short-cloaked Moth *Nola cucullatella*** was recorded. Although a regular in moth traps, and the larval food plant being Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Apple, it rarely appears in numbers. A **Ghost Moth *Hepialus humuli*** put in an appearance on 9 July as did a single **Pine Hawk-moth *Hyloicus pinastri*** both species being very pleasing in the garden. The only report of **Juniper Webber *Dichomeris marginella*** was from PHG who had seven on the 9 July. A single **Rush Veneer *Nomophora noctuella*** was in the trap on 24 July, which ties in nicely with that little influx of migrants around the middle of the month. Both numbers of moths and species dropped dramatically during September with just 30 species in total. The uncommon **Juniper Pug *Eupithecia pusillata*** was a particularly nice record, another species just as likely to be found in gardens on cultivated Juniper species. Singles of **Old Lady *Mormo maura*** on 2 September and **Red Underwing *Catocala nuota*** on 21 September are two species normally associated with sugar but both are becoming regular at light, albeit in low numbers. PHG's **Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba*** total for the quarter was 95, with 47 of these on 2 September. It also looks as if **Light-brown Apple Moth *Epiphyas postvittana*** seems to be having a poor year with numbers well down everywhere in the country.

Charnwood Forest Survey

The Outwoods

A welcome return to the Outwoods on a very warm 2 July produced 761 moths of 114 species, including 40 species of micro moths. 100 **Green Oak *Tortrix viridana*** was the highest count of this species I have seen for a few years. The total of 29 **Peach Blossom *Thyatira batis*** was a particular high number. Two **Lilac Beauty *Apeira syringaria*** is a species we see very rarely nowadays and four **Marbled White Spot *Protodeltote pygarga***, which seems to be another moth that is spreading. We look forward to further trips to this superb area. I am

sure the Outwoods would be quite a rewarding site to have a mini moth trapping blitz next summer, if anyone fancies that, let me know and we can try and sort out a date, the same would apply to Beacon Hill. These are both superb sites and could turn up several interesting species, weather permitting.

Brown's Hay

Brown's Hay on 10 July returned a bumper count of just under 2000 moths of 162 species, this time with 55 species of micro moths. With such a long list it is difficult to pick a few out of the many highlights. Just a single of the scarce but ever increasing *Calamotropha paludella*, the larva are miners in the leaves of Reedmace and Lesser Reedmace. Goater states the distribution as very local in large wet fens and marshes etc and mainly in the east and south of the country. The higher areas on the Charnwood Forest, hardly seems fitting habitat for this species. A couple of surprises for the night were four **Scallop Shell** *Rheumaptera undulata* and a fantastic 19 **Round-winged Muslin** *Thumatha senex*, both being very local moths.



Scallop Shell © Graham Finch

Bardon Hill

A reasonably favourable night at the summit on 23 July returned over 1080 moths of 126 species, which included 82 **Dotted Clay** *Xestia baja*. Apart from having quite a good selection of families and species, a couple of things made for an interesting session. The first was the fluctuation in temperature throughout the night, starting out at 14°C at 21.50 and rapidly dropping to 9°C about 23.00. Up until this time the moths were only appearing in very low numbers and I was thinking of calling it a night.

However, the cloud rolled in and hid the full moon, resulting in the temperature dramatically rising to 13°C. Over the following couple of hours it was as if someone had released hundreds of moths, they were everywhere, and very rewarding to see "plumes" of moths spiralling above the traps. By approximately 02.00 the full moon reappeared as the cloud dispersed, temperature rocketed down to 8°C and virtually all movement of moths had stopped. Secondly there was a small patch of Ragwort close by and this had an assortment of moths feeding on the flowers throughout the night. This feeding flock consisted of two *Udea lutealis*, about five **Small Fan-footed Wave** *Idaea biselata*, two **Riband Wave** *Idaea aversata*, several **Brimstone** *Opisthoptis luteolata*, a variety of Footman species, 20 **Dotted Clay** *Xestia baja* plus variable numbers of Minors and Rustics. I had a similar experience at Brown's Hay a few weeks ago, this time it was over a large area of nettle, thistle and willowherb, hundreds of insects, not just moths were visiting all night. It is a little ironic that ragwort, nettle, thistle and willowherb are at the top of a list of high priorities to wage war on to get rid of them, even though they are such an important food source to so many of our insects.

A return visit to Bardon Hill on 21 September, this time on the lower slopes near the access road, 159 moths of 33 species. A couple of leaf mining species started the night off, *Stigmella speciosa* and *Phyllonorycter geniculella*. Both species are solely restricted to Sycamore, the former make a gallery the latter a blotch. A good number of 14 **Black Ructic** *Aporophyla nigra* and two **Merveille du Jour** *Dichonia aprilina*. Singles of **Flounced Chestnut** *Agrochola helvola* which seems to get very infrequently recorded and a stunning **Pink-barred Sallow** *Xanthia togata*.

Around the county

Shenton Estates Trout Ponds

17 July was not a particularly warm night, in fact quite cool, following a few days of heavy showers and blustery winds. Even so we managed to record 450 moths of 82 species,

apart from the migrants already mentioned, this area is proving to be a reliable site for **Brown Scallop *Philereme vetulata*** which still remains quite a scarce and local species for VC55. It is a species that overwinters in the egg stage on the food plant Buckthorn. The larvae, hatch out beginning of May, or earlier depending on the weather, to start feeding on the new leaf growth. Several well known, hedgerows with Buckthorn, have been almost totally grubbed out, other hedgerows have been flailed to such a state that it would be difficult for larvae of any kind to survive. A few other highlights were the impressive numbers of 17 **Dingy Footman *Eilema griseola***, 13 **Buff Footman *Eilema depressa*** and 41 **Common Footman *Eilema lurideola***.

Cloud Wood

2 August, KT and I spent three hours here and struggled to record 139 moths of 77 species. Temperatures hovered around 12°C but numbers of moths were incredibly low. A single ***Orthopygia glaucinalis*** quite a smart little Pyralid, more often associated wherever thatch is close by, but the larvae are also found in old bird's nests, was nice and records seem to be slightly on the increase. The two targets were **Barred Rivulet *Perizoma bifasciata*** and **Maple Pug *Eupithecia inturbata***. Cloud Wood used to be a reliable site for the first species, but since considerable clearance involving heavy vehicles at the site where it occurred, this species has not been seen since. Whether this disturbance has caused the disappearance, is not known for sure. The larval food source Red Bartsia has managed to make a comeback, but as yet no **Barred Rivulets**. As for **Maple Pug** we had a single specimen in excellent condition and half a dozen more (all in a very worn state), which looked good for this species.

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

Graham and Anona Finch

OTHER INSECTS

Another packed quarter of insect records sent in by members, so some species may not get a mention. It does get increasingly difficult for me as I am not an expert by any means and my object when I took over this section eight years ago, was to instill in members to record some of the species they may see in their gardens and elsewhere, but now am feeling it harder to keep up, especially as there are some species of which I have little knowledge. Nomenclature changes in some species are also a problem; ladybirds are a good instance of this.

Heteroptera

Some interesting records for this group this quarter;

Green Shieldbugs *Palomena prasina* were as usual widely recorded this quarter, with records from Scraftoft, Loughborough, Dadlington, Quorn, Birstall, Grace Dieu and Aylestone Meadows.

Hawthorn Shieldbugs *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale* were noted at Birstall, at West Bridge in Leicester - several early instar nymphs and at Washbrook NR where ten adults were counted in late September.

Several **Forest Bugs *Pentatoma rufipes***, adults, mostly singles, from Grace Dieu, New Lount NR, Quorn on light trap, Appleton Park, Hamilton, Dadlington and Misterton Marshes.

Birch Shieldbugs *Elasmotherus interstinctus* had numerous nymphs at Bede Island in late August, noted elsewhere at Quorn, Aylestone Meadows, Cademan and Washbrook NR. A dozen nymphs of the **Parent Bug *Elasmucha grisea*** were on Italian Alders at the canal side in Abbey Park in late August, adults also at Washbrook NR and Birstall, St. James Church in hibernation colours. **Sloe Bugs *Dolycoris baccarum*** were also widely recorded this quarter, from Humberstone Heights, Great Central Way, Washbrook NR, Swannymote Wood, Grace Dieu, Quorn and Dadlington, North Farm.

I have been expecting SFW and HI to find the predatory bug ***Picromerus bidens*** for some time and single individuals were recorded from three sites at Grace Dieu in August and September. In Leicestershire I believe this spe-

cies mainly inhabits wet meadows and over several years I have only managed to record it on two occasions in SK60 from such sites, probably quite local, I would have thought.

The above recorders also found the **Blue Shieldbug *Zicrona caerulea*** at three sites on the Shenton Estate on August 8th, one feeding on a ladybird on a pond margin. The only records of **Woundwort Shieldbug *Eysarcoris venustissimus*** were of two swept from hedge on 22 September at Grace Dieu. For the first time in many years I have failed to record this species.

The only **Bishop's Mitre *Aelia acuminata*** recorded, were of single individuals at Bede Island on 3 July, Great Central Way on 9 Sept and one resting on washing in PHG's garden at Quorn on 15 September.

Tree Damsel Bugs *Himacerus apterus* were recorded from Shenton, Grace Dieu, Cademan and Washbrook NR. A single **Broad Damsel Bug *Nabis flavomarginatus*** swept from foliage Monks Rest, Leicester and the **Marsh Damsel Bug *Dolichonabis limbatus*** at Aylestone, where it was common in a marshy area on 22 August.

Rhopalidae

The most interesting record from this group is of ***Corizus hyoscyami*** a spectacular little red and black bug found on a Marsh Thistle by SFW at Ulverscroft NR on 11 August, which constitutes a first for the county. It is predominantly a species of southern heaths but is now moving north like several species in this genre.



Corizus hyoscyami © Steve Woodward

Several ***Chorosoma schillingi*** were still present on grassy field margins at Stoughton Airfield on 19 August, with several mating pairs.

Rhopalus subrufus was recorded at Grace Dieu in August and again on 22 September and finally single specimens of ***Stictopleurus abutilen*** and ***Stictopleurus punctatonervosus*** were recorded at Aylestone Meadows on respectively 22 August and 9 July.

Coreidae

The only member of this group recorded was the **Dock Bug *Coreus marginatus*** at Birstall Allotments, Shenton Estate, Washbrook NR and Great Central Way in Leicester, where 98, mostly nymphs, were counted on dock leaves on 27 August.

Miridae

A few selected from this large group;

Deraeocoris ruber was recorded from Grace Dieu and Ethel Road in Leicester. ***Pantilius tunicatus*** at Grace Dieu in late September. I occasionally record this bug, mostly on birch, but not commonly. The **Spear Thistle Lacebug *Tingis cardui*** was noted at Grace Dieu and Ulverscroft NR, (a first for this site) and ***Capsis ater*** at Willow Brook Park in July.

Leafhoppers include ***Graphocephala fennahi*** at Grace Dieu, now becoming established on rhododendrons, ***Lassus lanio*** – ten were attracted to PHG's Quorn light trap in July, it was found at Swannymote Wood in August and at Hamilton in September on oak and ***Cicadella viridis*** was noted at Willow Brook Park in September.

Hemiptera: update

A number of bugs collected by SFW in 2010 have been determined by county recorder Dave Budworth, but too late to be incorporated into the main Hemiptera account. They include:

Cixius nervosus, a froghopper swept from heathy grassland at Cademan Moor on 29 August.

Hesperocorixa sahlbergi, a lesser water boatman, recorded from Grace Dieu Wood on 22 August and Ulverscroft NR on 24 August.

Saldula saltatoria, the Common Shorebug, a tiny insect that jumps around on mud beside ponds and rivers. It was found in a dried-out pond by Swannymote Wood on 28 March; also

on a bonfire site at Ulverscroft NR on 12 April (first reserve record).

Gerris lacustris, Common Pond Skater, one of several similar species. Found on the top pond at Ulverscroft NR on 24 August.

Gerris gibbifer, another pond skater, found by SFW and HI in a pond at Cademan Moor, 15 April.

Harpocera thoracica, a bug found by SFW and HI in the heathy grassland at Ulverscroft NR on 24 May (first reserve record).

Diptera

Another large group with some interesting records many from the ongoing work at Grace Dieu by HI and SFW. I will start with the hoverflies because many of our members encounter them in their gardens. To be honest though, for much of the time, gardens have been devoid of hoverflies until the invasion of ***Episyrphus balteatus*** at the end of July, bringing with it ***Syrphus ribesii***, ***Syrphus vitripennis***, ***Sphaerophoria scripta*** etc. I doubt that there was a single kilometre in the county where these species were absent during that time.

The most interesting, though, was the numbers of ***Scaeva pyrastris*** present, one even turned up in my garden so they must have been common. They were recorded from a wide area, including Dadlington, Rough Hill, Woodhouse, Grace Dieu, Ulverscroft, Shenton Estate, Great Central Way, Barkby Holt, Bede Island and Humberstone Heights, where they were common on 30 July. Of the *Volucellas*, ***Volucella pellucens*** was recorded quite widely this quarter from Grace Dieu, Ulverscroft NR, Woodhouse, Little Stretton, Ethel Road and Belgrave. Several ***Volucella bombylans*** were seen along the towpath at Pilling's Lock on 1 July. ***Volucella inanis*** was recorded from Woodhouse, Belgrave (2), Humberstone Heights and Humberstone Park (4) on 7 August, all nectaring on creeping thistle, also noted from Quorn in PHG's garden from the 15 to 23 July.

The impressive ***Volucella zonaria*** was seen at East Langton on 23 July and two on thistle beds in Victoria Park, Leicester on 16 July with one at the same site on 9 August.

Other members from this group worth a mention include the bright Syrphid

Xanthogramma pedissequum at Grace Dieu on 15 August, ***Dasysyrphus tricinctus***, a distinctive wood edge species, at Grace Dieu on 22 September, ***Helophilus trivittatus*** at Aylestone Meadows on 30 August and Appleton Park on 4 September and ***Eristalis similis*** at Grace Dieu on 27 August, ***Eristalis horticola*** at Rough Hill on 9 August and, closing this particular group, ***Eristalis intricatus*** at Humberstone Park and Aylestone Meadows, both in August.

Moving on, the **Kite-tailed Robberfly *Machimus atricapillus*** was recorded on several occasions during August from Grace Dieu, with several on the 15th, another was recorded from Ulverscroft NR, swept from grassland, a first for this reserve, on 5 August. Another interesting find, was the **Small Yellow-legged Robberfly *Dioctria linearis*** swept from nettles under fir trees at Misterton Marshes on 9 July.

The **Small Fleck-winged Snipe fly *Rhagio lineola*** was swept from oak at Grace Dieu in August and the **Marsh Snipefly *Rhagio tringarius*** was also at Grace Dieu in August.

Conops quadrifasciatus a parasite of bumblebees was recorded at Grace Dieu in July.

The Tachnid fly ***Tachina fera*** was widely recorded from several members this quarter. SFW also recorded the Tachnid ***Phasia hemiptera*** from Ulverscroft NR and Grace Dieu in August. This is a parasite of the Shieldbug ***Palomina prasina***.

The Noon Fly ***Mesembrina meridiana*** was seen egg laying on fresh cattle dung in Aylestone Meadows on 31 August and several were noted sunning themselves on a tree trunk in Buddon Wood on 30 September.

Soldier Flies

Two of the impressive ***Stratiomys potamida*** were in a small marshy area of Willow Brook Park among long grass on 7 July, this is the first time I have recorded more than a single specimen and the first time recorded, not sitting on an umbellifer, usually hogweed. ***Chloromyia formosa*** was at Houghton Lodge where two were foraging in a bee friendly field on 10 July. ***Sargus flavipes*** was swept from foliage Washbrook NR on 21 September and, finally, ***Sargus bipunctatus*** was recorded from Cademan on 17 September.

Hymenoptera

Symphyta

Tenthredo scrophularia was recorded at Rough Hill on 9 August and the larvae of the **Rose Sawfly** *Arge ochropus* were frequent on roses in Quorn Baptist Churchyard in September and galls caused by the sawfly *Pontania viminalis* were noted on willows by the canal at Glen Parva.

Ichneumonidae

SFW again managed to see a specimen of the impressive ichneumon *Rhyssa persuasoria* at Ulverscroft NR on 31 August.

Vespiniae

Among the social wasps the **Median Wasp** *Dolichovespula media* was recorded in dozens round a thistle bed at Belgrave on 23 July and from Dadlington on 8 August. One **Tree Wasp** *Dolichovespula sylvestris* was on a thistle head Grace Dieu on 17 July and *Dolichovespula saxonica* at Grace Dieu on 24 July, identification awaiting confirmation.

The **Hornet** *Vespa crabro* was recorded from Grace Dieu, Scraftoft Gorse, Barkby Holt, Quorn Fields, Buddon Brook Meadows and attracted to a light trap in Quorn during September.

GF disturbed a nest of wasps in his garden at Scraftoft and was stung several times in the process. The pest controller was later called out and he identified them as the **German Wasp** *Vespula germanica*.

Sphecidae

The Digger Wasp *Mellinus arvensis* was recorded at Ulverscroft NR where several were ambushing flies on heather on 31 Aug. Solitary specimens were seen at Grace Dieu on the on 17 & 22 September.

HI has recorded a few solitary wasps including *Ectemnius cephalotes* from Dadlington on 8 Aug, *Ectemnius continuus* from Woodhouse on 16 Aug and Grace Dieu on 17 September, *Crabro cribarius* at Grace Dieu on 22 September and *Crossocerus ovalis* from Grace Dieu on 17 September (awaiting confirmation). These wasps nest in sand, usually stocking their nests with flies.

Apidae

Few members have submitted records of our commoner bumblebees, so it is difficult to draw any conclusion on some species, except to say that the **Common Carder Bee** *Bombus pascourum* was widespread throughout the quarter. **Buff-tailed Bumblebees** *Bombus terrestris* were again widespread; a number of queens were seen at Barlestone during July and August and odd ones till 25 September. A young queen with a full pollen basket was at Bede Island on 22 August and numbers of *Bombus terrestris/lucorum* workers were recorded from various habitats. The separation of these two species is rather difficult, so the aggregate is generally used.

The **Garden Bumblebee** *Bombus hortorum* was frequent in PHG's Quorn garden in July/August and also at Barlestone where FTS comments on one or two very dark workers on his runner beans,

The only report I have of the **Red-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus lapidarius* is from Barlestone, where it was frequent during July with a maximum of 14, and single queens on the 14th, 15th, and 23rd and again frequent in early August with several queens seen till the 30th of the month, surely under-recorded elsewhere.

As to be expected there were fewer records of the **Early-nesting Bumblebee** *Bombus pratorum*. A worker in my garden may have been from a partial second brood in July, as was the small number of singles seen at Barlestone during the month, the last one being seen on 22 August.

The **Tree Bumblebee** *Bombus hypnorum* continues to spread in the county and is a most welcome addition to our bumblebee fauna. PHG has been writing up extensive notes on this species in his Quorn garden, recording it visiting various flowers such as *Campanula latifolia*, *C alliarifolia*, *Malva moschata*, *Origanum vulgare* and *Frangula alnus* during July. He also records several flying around an old post, a likely nest site, at Pilling's Lock and several others visiting Teasel flowers in the Reed-bed Nature Reserve at Wanlip also in July. Others were seen at Barlestone - a young queen on 1 September, a first for this site and a young queen in Victoria Park on 27 July was visiting Creeping Thistle.

The few cuckoo bumblebees recorded include the most widespread recorded species ***Bombus vestalis*** which was common at Barlestone, with up to six males in July, occasional ones in early August and a queen on 5th and 8th. Another queen was at Belgrave on 5 July. There were two males of ***Bombus sylvestris*** at Barlestone in July and a female at Bede Island on 3 July. Two males of ***Bombus rupestris*** were at Barlestone in July and at Barkby Holt, two were at Barlestone in August and a young female in Humberstone Park on August 5th. Only one ***Bombus campestris*** was recorded, a male at Barkby Holt on 31 August.

A male ***Bombus barbutellus*** was found at the same site on 28 July - this is my first record of this species and apart from a provisional record from Barlestone in 2007 we have no other reports. It may be quite local as its host is ***Bombus hortorum*** which only has small colonies and this may determine its success rate.

Turning to the solitary bees we have a few records mainly of the genus *Andrena* and *Lasioglossum* species have been held back for the identifications to be verified.

One Leaf-cutter bee ***Megachile centuncularis*** was on a thistle bed in Belgrave on 23 July. The larger ***Megachile ligniseca*** was recorded from a Teasel head off Ethel Road in Leicester on 19 July, also from Great Central Way on Spear Thistle on 21 July and one, again on Spear Thistle, in Abbey Meadows on 23 July. This species has a strong liking for foraging on such flower heads, where the female appears to derive her main supplies.

The little ***Hylaeus communis*** turned up in my Leicester garden, after an absence of the last year or two, foraging on Globe Thistle during late July, probably nesting in a neglected Raspberry bush two doors away.

Howard Bradshaw

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

We have records of *Gammarus*, *Daphnia*, centipedes, millipedes, Common Earwig, earthworms, mayfly, harvestmen, Water Slater, scorpionfly, lacewing, slugs, snails including ***Lauria cylindracea*** and ***Trichia plebeia*** from Grace Dieu, caddis and spiders.

FLOWERING PLANTS & FERNS

Only a few recorders have sent in this quarter but thanks to SFW there are quite a lot from the Grace Dieu area. The records do contain some interesting casuals such as Corncockle and Dittander. It is always a pleasure to find something entirely unexpected on one's patch and these certainly fit the bill. The Yellow Juiced Poppy ***Papaver dubium* ssp *lecoquii*** is another interesting record which rarely turns up, although it is probably less rare than one would expect, due to the fact that the botanical differences between it and the Long Headed Poppy ***Papaver dubium* ssp *dubium*** are very slight and the only certain way to identify it is to check the colour of the sap which is yellow.

OTHER PLANTS OF INTEREST

Black Spleenwort - *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* - Hundreds of plants on brick bridge over River Biam, Great Central Railway, Leicester.

Soft Shield Fern - *Polystichum setiferum* - Present at Grace Dieu Wood.

Greater Spearwort - *Ranunculus lingua* - Present at Great Central Way, Aylestone.

Yellow Juiced Poppy - *Papaver dubium* ssp *lecoquii* - Ratby Village, roadside verge. This species of the Long Headed Poppy is very difficult to tell apart from the common ***Papaver* ssp *dubium*** the most obvious character being the colour of the latex (yellow) when the stem is broken. In ***Papaver dubium* ssp *dubium*** the latex is white or cream. It is quite rare but widely scattered throughout the UK, except Scotland.

Corncockle - *Agrostemma githago* - Present at Jubilee Walk, Leire. A weed which was formerly common in cornfields, but is now only found as a casual, usually from birdseed. The ones I have seen have been slightly different from the ones I saw in Cambridgeshire where until some years ago a local farmer kept a part of one of his fields which had a population which had survived there since the plant was common.

Dittander - *Lepidium latifolium* - Watermead CP. Several plants at the lakeside. Another casual which is normally a native of damp bare ground near the sea but has been naturalised

for a long time around the coalfields in the NW of the County and occasionally elsewhere.

Imperforate St John's Wort - *Hypericum maculatum* - Grace Dieu Wood. Several plants in flower on edge of wood.

Fragrant Agrimony - *Agrimonia procera* - Ulverscroft NR. Five plants in flower.

Narrow-leaved Birds-foot-trefoil - *Lotus glaber* - Albert Village Lake. Abundant here. SFW reports, probably planted as most of the Birds-foot-trefoil here is not the common one. Also present at Watermead C.P.

Orange Balsam - *Impatiens capensis* - Evans Weir & Freeman's Lock. Small colonies of this attractive waterside plant.

Small Balsam - *Impatiens parviflorum* - Woodbrook, Loughborough. A plant which appeared to be this species viewed at a distance in the channel of the Woodbrook.

Fringed Water Lily - *Nymphoides peltata* - Present at Watermead CP.

Vipers Bugloss - *Echium vulgare* - Present at Jubilee Walk, Leire. Also one plant at Cotterill Spinney, Little Stretton.

Saw-wort - *Serratula tinctoria* - Ulverscroft NR. Several shoots were counted but more were showing.

Greater Duckweed - *Spirodela polyrhiza* - Meadow Pond near the Church Car Park, Cossington. The Pond was completely covered by this species. First recorded here by Rev. A.L. Primavesi in 1967.

Stinking Iris - *Iris foetidissima* - Frequent plants in flower in shady areas Cossington Churchyard.

Violet Helleborine - *Epipactis purpurata* - Sheet Hedges Wood had 12 plants, 25 flowering shoots. Also Two spikes near boundary with Sheet Hedges Wood at Groby Quarry.

Eric Webster

GALLS

A number of galls were recorded from: Misterton Marshes, Ulverscroft NR, Glooston, Grace Dieu and Leire.

FUNGI

The fungi records were mainly from Ulverscroft NR and Grace Dieu, and included ***Scutellinia cejpai*** at Grace Dieu. Identifications of the more unusual species were confirmed by Richard Iliffe and Peter Long.

LICHENS

The lichen ***Evernia prunastri*** was recorded at Grace Dieu and GP sent in a list of lichens from Stonton Wyville, identifications aided by Ivan Pedley.



Evernia prunastri © Steve Woodward

MOSSES AND LIVERWORTS

Mosses were recorded at Grace Dieu, Croft Hill and the Jubilee Walk at Leire.

WEATHER

After a period of nearly six months, the Atlantic westerly and southwesterly winds returned with a vengeance in July. Winds blew from this direction for 27 days and made up for their long period of absence so far this year. Deep areas of low pressure passed between Scotland and Iceland and they gave us the windiest weather of the year so far which is exceptional for July. Winds gusted up to 37 mph at Mountsorrel and up to 45 mph at Cottesmore in the county as the low pressures came up against the high pressure over Europe. With the winds in this direction for so long it brought mainly mild air, but often with a lot of cloud. Daytime temperatures averaged 21.8°C, which is close to normal, but night time

temperatures averaged 13.5°C which is 1.5°C above the normal thanks to the cloudy and mild nights. This gave us an overall mean of 17.6°C for the month or 0.4°C above average. This made it the warmest July since 2006. Rainfall totals varied between the two stations. Once again most of the rain fell in the form of showers rather than organized weather fronts. At Mountsorrel I recorded 43 mm for the month, which is 10% below the normal. Jim however, at his Nanpantan site to the lee of high ground, caught more of the heavy showers than I did in my valley location and Jim's rainfall total was 61 mm or 20% above normal. The SW winds did contain a lot of cloud however and for this reason the sunshine totals were below normal. I recorded just 134 hours of sunshine, which is 20% less than usual. It was the dullest July since 2004 in Leicestershire. Air pressure was lower than usual for July and substantial areas of high pressure stayed to the east of the British Isles.

The first 11 days of the month were warm but windy. The strong sunshine and humid air did cause the temperatures to rise with the maximum of 27°C being recorded at Mountsorrel on the 10th while Jim recorded 28.5°C at his Nanpantan site on this date too. The weather changed on the 12th as a major area of low pressure settled down over the UK. Large showers developed every day between the 12th and 16th and these produced most of the month's rainfall. Jim recorded 15 mm on the 14th during a thunderstorm while my heaviest fall in Mountsorrel occurred on the 16th when 16 mm fell in just 30 minutes. It was falling at rate of 180 mm/hr at times was truly tropical in intensity! The second half of the month was fairly cloudy on the whole with often warm nights with 16°C being recorded as a minimum on the 25th and 27th. Contrast this to the wet days when Jim only recorded 14°C as a maximum on the 14th! So all in all not a bad month weather-wise and a distinct improvement on last few very wet Julys when we recorded over seven inches of rain!

As we all guessed, August was cooler, wetter and duller than average. The most significant factor was the dullness of the month. I only recorded 125 hours of sunshine at Mountsorrel, which was 30% below normal. In the last 100 years only 10 Augusts were duller than this one.

It was also extremely wet, with most of the rain falling in the last fortnight. Jim at Nanpantan recorded 131 mm or more than five inches of rain which is more than double the usual total with myself at Mountsorrel recording 115 mm. It was the wettest August since 2004. In that year we recorded over six inches of rain! Temperatures were lower than usual particularly the afternoon temperatures. These averaged 20°C or about 1.5°C below normal. The almost constant westerly winds however helped to keep the night temperatures closer to average at 11.3°C. Low pressure dominated most of the month and there were no really warm spells except for a solitary day on the 16th and the maximum temperature of 24°C at Nanpantan was the lowest for some years for August. In the last 100 years however 30 Augusts were cooler than this one but some days were extremely cool especially when the heavy rains arrived later in the month. On the 26th the maximum temperature at Mountsorrel was just 13°C a full 8°C below normal. It was the coldest August day in the East Midlands since 1987. The last two days of the month did bring a change in the weather as high pressure established itself for the first time since late June. The 31st gave us 12 hours of sunshine but the arctic air mass did give us a cold morning with a low of 4°C at Nanpantan. There were some very wet days with my highest daily total being 30 mm at Mountsorrel on the 22nd. So, all in all, a disappointing month weather-wise after a very warm and sunny June and a warm but duller July. For the three month summer period at Mountsorrel I received 200 mm of rain which was 17% above normal. I recorded 489 hours of sunshine which was 8% below normal while temperatures averaged 16.4°C about 0.5°C above normal. So all in all a slightly wetter and duller summer but temperatures were slightly above average!

September was a mixed bag weather-wise. It started off on a warm and settled note but became unsettled before the first week was out and this showery mix remained with us for the rest of the month. Afternoon temperatures were around 18.2°C, a fraction higher than usual with nighttime temperatures averaging 10°C, which is the expected figure for this month. The overall average of 14°C was therefore close to normal too. Rainfall did vary once again in the

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Records for the fourth quarter of 2010 should be sent to:

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email: helen@canids.freeserve.co.uk, preferably by 15 January.

showery conditions. Jim at Nanpantan recorded 74 mm of rain for the month, which was 16% above normal while at Mountsorrel I only registered over half this total at 43 mm. This was 20% below normal. Once again the showery nature of the rain meant that the areas close to higher ground to their west meant that they saw far more rain than valley locations like myself in Mountsorrel. In showery situations the unstable air is forced up over the Beacon Hill region and produces showers that invariably fall across the town of Loughborough while locations further south and north escape the worst. Sunshine figures were close to average with 126 hours being recorded at Mountsorrel. The first day of the month was warm and sunny and at Nanpantan Jim recorded the highest temperatures of the month at 22.5°C. Winds that afternoon were almost calm and the dust devils that formed at Nanpantan as discussed last week were formed by the very warm surface being penetrated by cooler air above causing a vortex to form which distributed hay across the village! The weather changed on the 6th with Jim recording 17 mm on this date and rain and showers were then the main feature for the rest of the month but another short warm spell on the 21st saw temperatures briefly climb to 21°C again. The 23rd brought saw very active thunderstorms to the region. These affected Loughborough first at around 5pm before other areas were affected too. The lightning was spectacular and the strokes came at a high frequency. Loughborough received 10.4 mm in these storms with just 4 mm at Mountsorrel. Some arctic air spread south on the 25th and this gave us a very cool night with temperatures dipping to just 3°C at Nanpantan with a hint of ground frost. The 27th-29th were completely sunless and temperatures on the 27th only reached 13°C at both stations. So in most respects, an average month and it was the coolest September in Mountsorrel for about ten years, which is mainly due to very summery recent Septembers rather than anything extreme this time around.

Thanks to Jim Lofts for the Loughborough data!

Phil Morrish