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Editorial Panel: Helen Ikin, Steve Woodward, Jim Graham.

Hon. Sec. Judy Johnson, 27 Sandalwood Road, Loughborough, Leics. LE11 3PR (01509-214711)

IVY *Hedera helix* - A PLANT FOR ALL SEASONS

Ivy, our only evergreen native climbing plant, is well known to butterfly enthusiasts as being the second generation food plant of the Holly Blue larvae but I suspect far fewer appreciate its importance to large numbers of moth species such as The Chestnut, Dark Chestnut, Dark Sword-grass, Tawny Pinion, Green-brindled Crescent, The Satellite and Red-line Quaker. It is also one of two main larval food plants of an attractive little geometer moth, the Yellow-barred Brindle, whose other main food plant is the Holly - like the Holly Blue!

Ivy also provides important winter hibernating cover for The Brimstone, The Peacock and numerous other insect species. It gives protection to hibernating insects and roosting birds in the worst of the winter's weather when the countryside becomes a wind-swept, hostile place to all living organisms and when decent shelter can make all the difference between life and death to creatures fighting to stay alive and doing their best to avoid being blown into oblivion!

Like many another conservation-minded person, I guess, I went through a phase in my life when I thought that Ivy growing on trees was a bad thing and should therefore be prevented by cutting

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Ivy © Stephen Woodward

through the stems - how dangerous a little knowledge can be! With the passage of time and more knowledge, I now realise that Ivy is ecologically one of our most important native plant species and often more important than some of the tree species up which it climbs for support. Further, there is little or no evidence that Ivy damages the host tree.

Ivy can grow to a height of 40-50 feet and at its best can form a spectacular sight as it climbs up

CLASSIFIED RECORDS

MAMMALS

HBH had **Hedgehogs** in his Loughborough garden on two dates in late August - two different individuals, one small and one larger. Two road casualties were noted – in Newtown Linford and near Evington church. Some of us were lucky enough to be at the Leicester Lit. and Phil. Natural History Section meeting when ‘Mr Hedgehog’ – Pat Morris - gave a talk. It was a very entertaining evening and we heard fascinating new facts about the habits of Hedgehogs.

Mole hills were recorded from churchyards in Lubenham, Illston on the Hill, Kirkby Mallory, Sileby, Enderby, Eastwell, Congerstone, Barwell, Bardon Park, Markfield, North Kilworth, Hoton, Ab Kettleby, Evington, Pickwell, Ibstock and Uppingham and from the villages of Swithland, Goadby Marwood, Twycross, Osgathorpe, the walled garden of Launde Abbey and at Charnwood Lodge NR.

The two shrew records were both dead ones in Quorn – PHG found a dead **Common Shrew** on his garden path and HS had one on her terrace just up the road.

The only **Bat** sighting reported is a medium sized one over PHG’s garden on 20 August.

SFW reports one **Brown Hare** on the Shenton Estate on 26 July.

Rabbits were noted on Broad Hill at Mountsorrel, Kinchley Lane in Rothley and Park Hill Golf Course. HBH reports that the group at Barclay’s Bank near the A6 in Loughborough remains constant at about 12 individuals. Rabbits have been as common as usual in DAP’s Swithland garden and burrows and droppings were seen in Desford and Thurnby and droppings in Billesdon churchyard. At least 12 rabbits of all sizes were grazing in a field near the canal at Wigston on 2 August.

There were **Grey Squirrels** in the deer sanctuary on Bradgate but there have been fewer than usual visiting hazel nuts in Swithland. One was seen stealing food from a bird feeder in Groby and another being chased up a tree by a dog in a Hinckley churchyard.



Ivy Tree-top © Stephen Woodward

buildings or trees billowing out at the top to form a huge rounded mass where its flowers can be fully exposed to the sun and where its nectar rich blossom, which has a beauty all its own, can attract hosts of insects: hymenopterans, dipterans and butterflies such as Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and The Comma, whilst from dusk onwards a great variety of moth species will home in on the nectar rich flowers.

To a wealth of insect life it provides the last grand feast of nectar before winter sets in. It is as vital and indispensable to hibernating insects, prior to them going into hibernation, as are the various early flowering sallow species to such insects after having emerged from their winter sleep.

Further, as its berries ripen in late winter/early spring, it provides an important food source for birds such as Blackbird, Mistle and Song Thrush and Blackcap at a time when food is often particularly scarce. It is an excellent plant for draping a garden wall where it provides good cover through spring and summer for nesting birds and few if any other plant species gives such year round interest.

Peter Gamble



Ivy Everywhere © Stephen Woodward

PJD saw a **Wood Mouse** in her neighbour's hen run in Barrow Road, Quorn – attracted by the poultry food no doubt and there was a squashed one on the road at Peckleton on 24 July.

A **Red Fox** was seen crossing Woodhouse Road in Quorn at about 10pm on 11 September and other sightings came from Swithland Reservoir, Woodhouse and Mountsorrel where a white adult was seen, possibly an albino, during the daytime in late August. HBH had sizeable holes dug in his garden – the culprit being either Fox or Badger. SFW had a fox in his Groby garden at the end of July – it was ignoring his cat's noisy attempts to scare it off and two foxes were relaxing in the same garden on the night of 2 September.

ACR was lucky enough, on 3 September, to see a **Stoat** running along Long Lane near Lockington Gravel Pits before it disappeared into the hedge.

DAP has had extensive **Badger** damage on his Swithland lawn during the dry weeks of the quarter as they dug deeper for worms. One was even foraging as late as 11am - the latest time that they have been seen here. A Badger was running in front of PJD's car along Priory Lane, Ulverscroft one evening about 10:30 and there was a road casualty at Charley near Mount St Bernard's Abbey on 14 July. Badger footprints were seen along Toft's Lane at Eaton and a freshly used latrine was found near Owston.

As you may know, the LRWT have been vaccinating the Badgers on their reserves against TB which has to be a better way than culling them. They have a fund-raising effort to support the vaccination programme which has to be done by specialist teams experienced in handling annoyed badgers!

Details can be found on their website or 'phone 0116-2629968 or send a cheque made payable to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust Badger Appeal and post to Freepost RTGZ-LRTC-CJYE, LRWT, The Old Mill, 9 Soar Lane, Leicester, LE3 5DE.

Another lucky person, BH had good views of an **Otter** in Quorn Brook near the War Memorial just before dusk one evening in early August.



Fallow Buck & Red Deer Stag © Stephen Woodward

Two **Muntjac** were seen in a Quorn garden near Tom Long's Meadow on 6 September. One was dead on a road near Holwell in early July and one approached SFW as he stood motionless on Bardon Hill at about 10:30 one morning in July.

A **Fallow** buck was seen in Swithland Wood by DAP on 27 September – a probable escapee from Bradgate. The mature Fallow bucks in Bradgate had lost their velvet on 28 August but the younger bucks were still losing theirs and looking a bit tatty. The younger **Red Deer** stags were also still in the process of shedding their velvet

Helen Ikin

BIRDS

Mute Swans were at the larger waters with successful breeding at most. Post-breeding flocks were slow in building and only Swithland Reservoir managed to record a double-figure count with a high of 31 there on 28 August.

The wandering **Snow Goose** was seen at Cropston Reservoir on a number of occasions during August, usually in the presence of Greylag Geese. The low water level at this site was obviously favourable to geese as 205 **Greylag Geese** and 372 **Canada Geese** were here on 6 September, the highest counts of both these species here for quite a number of years. A pair of **Egyptian Geese** was also at Cropston Reservoir during the quarter with their one well-grown young. However, the juvenile had disappeared by late September.

Good numbers of **Mandarin Duck** were at Cropston Reservoir throughout the quarter with a maximum of 23 there on 13 August. The usual summering male **Wigeon** was in Bradgate Park



Gadwall © Jim Graham

throughout the period but the first returning birds were noted at Cossington Meadows with three there on 26 August and 12 at Kelham Bridge on 12 September. **Gadwall** were reported from four sites with successful breeding being noted at both Cropston Reservoir and Kelham Bridge. Post-breeding flocks began to build with a maximum of 46 noted at Cossington Meadows on 13 August. The first returning **Teal** was one at Cropston Reservoir on 12 July with numbers building to 35 by 25 August. Double-figure counts also came from Birstall Meadows with 22 on 26 August and Kelham Bridge with 32 on 16 September. As noted last year, the largest numbers of **Mallard** found were along the River Lin in Bradgate Park peaking at 111 on 7 September. A single **Garganey** was located at Kelham Bridge on 12 September remaining until the 16th at least. The first autumn arrivals of **Shoveler** were 18 at Birstall Meadows on 26 August whilst four male **Pochard** at Cropston Reservoir on the 30th were the first of the quarter. Records of **Tufted Duck** came from just four widespread sites with ducklings noted at all sites but the only significant count was at Cropston Reservoir with 37 on 30 August. The same location held the only **Goldeneye** when one was there on 22 September.

Sightings of **Red-legged Partridge** were few and far between but one sitting on the top of ATO's garden shed on 6 September must have been an incongruous sight. There were no records of **Grey Partridge**.

Cormorant were under-recorded with records only received from Cropston Reservoir. Probably the best (and most observed) bird of the quarter was a first-summer **Night Heron** initially found at Thornton Reservoir 27 July.

Relocated three days later it remained until 11 August giving excellent views to a procession of county bird watchers. Records of **Little Egrets** came from six sites, most notably Cropston Reservoir where there was a presence throughout the quarter and a maximum of eight on 4 September. The only count in excess was nine at Cossington Meadows on 26 August. The highest count of **Grey Heron** was 12 at Cropston Reservoir on 25 August.

Little Grebe were at four sites with breeding confirmed at three: Cropston Reservoir; Kelham Bridge and Longmoor Lake, Ravenstone. Up to 28 **Great Crested Grebe** were at Cropston Reservoir, including a pair on a nest which failed a few days later. The only confirmation of successful breeding came from Cossington South Lakes where young were seen on 5 August.

There were no records of **Red Kite** in the Charnwood Forest area this quarter but singles were noted at Kings Norton and Ragdale. **Sparrowhawk** were poorly recorded, noted from just eight widespread sites including a number of gardens. The male of a regular pair in ATO's garden was seen feeding on a small passerine (probably a House Sparrow) whilst the female was taking larger prey items in the form of Wood Pigeons. The same prey was targeted (and secured) by a female in the writer's garden as was an adult male Green Woodpecker feeding on the lawn. The woodpecker fought back and managed to escape, celebrating noisily. Records of **Buzzard** were widespread and included three confirmed breeding sites including two recently fledged juveniles standing on the path of MV's Rothley garden! A migrating **Osprey** stopped off at Swithland Reservoir on 13 September and was seen catching a fish before landing in a nearby tree to feed on it. **Kestrels** were widely reported with a noisy family party found at Gaulby. **Hobby** were reported from seven sites but none mentioned juveniles although the number of records from the Cropston/Bradgate Park area would seem to suggest that birds were breeding in the vicinity. Surprisingly, **Peregrine** were only noted from Thurcaston, Coleorton and Dimmingsdale NR.

Records of **Moorhen** came from seven waters with juveniles noted at five. The highest count was 33 at Kelham Bridge on 19

September. There were few records of **Coot** but three sites had double-figure counts with maxima of 54 at Cossington Meadows on 13 August, 16 at Longmoor Lake on the 3rd and 28 at Kelham Bridge on the last day of the quarter.

A single **Oystercatcher** was at Wanlip Meadows on 10 July whilst four were at Cropston Reservoir four days later with one remaining until the 16th. The same two sites produced the only records of **Little Ringed Plover**, with two at the former on 10 July and up to seven at the latter throughout July with two **Ringed Plover** also present between 16 and 22 July. Post-breeding flocks of **Lapwing** started to build with three sites having counts in excess of 100: 195 at Cossington Meadows on 13 August, a minimum of 250 at Stockerston on the 31st and 110 at Lockington Gravel Pits the following day. Up to five separate **Dunlin** passed through Cropston Reservoir during the period whilst one was at Lockington Gravel Pits on 3 September. The first returning **Snipe** was one at Cossington Meadows on 13 August with records from a further three sites. The best count was seven at Kelham Bridge on 23 September. A single **Black-tailed Godwit** was at the inflow in Cropston Reservoir on 7 September with three at Cossington Meadows on the 21st. Up to three **Common Sandpiper** were at Cropston Reservoir throughout the quarter, and singles noted at both Birstall Meadows and Swithland Reservoir on 26 August and 14 September respectively. **Green Sandpiper** were found at five sites with three at both Cropston Reservoir and Kelham Bridge whilst a summer-plumaged **Spotted Redshank** was at Wanlip Meadows on 10 July. **Greenshank** were located at six sites with two at Wanlip Meadows, Cropston Reservoir and on the River Lin in Bradgate Park. The only record of **Redshank** was one at Cropston Reservoir on 4 July and 8 August.

Gull numbers began to increase through the period and the main **Black-headed Gull** counts came from Cropston Reservoir with 1,334 on 27 August. There were few other gulls reported.

A juvenile **Black Tern** was at Cropston Reservoir on 9 and 10 July, whilst eight pairs of **Common Tern** were reported at Watermead Country Park Birstall: the artificial rafts first installed in 2011 proved to be successful again producing about 30 young. Thankfully, after two

second successive years when the colony at Cossington Meadows was abandoned, adults with young were noted in July and August.

Small numbers of **Stock Dove** came from five locations, whilst **Wood Pigeon** and **Collared Dove** were recorded at even fewer.

There were reports of **Barn Owl** at Bradgate Park, Cropston and Swithland during the quarter. At least three **Little Owl** were also in Bradgate Park with others calling in gardens in Cropston and Loughborough and as usual, **Tawny Owl** were vociferous and widespread and noted particularly in members' gardens.

There were few records of **Swift** but it was good to note that breeding was again confirmed in domestic roofs in Rothley. **Kingfisher** were only reported from six sites but no breeding was noted, although two were on Laundry Pool at Dimminsdale NR. **Green Woodpecker** were noted at ten widespread sites and juveniles were confirmed at three of these. Records of **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were well down compared to 2012 and came from just nine sites (17 last year) and the only juvenile noted was one regularly feeding on peanuts in a Cropston garden. There was just one report of **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** when one was seen at Spring Wood at Staunton Harold Reservoir.

Small numbers of **Magpie** were noted, eight at Cropston Reservoir on 30 August the highest count. Likewise, there were just a few **Jay** reported. At least 100 **Jackdaw** were heading southeast over Cropston going to roost on 24 July and 140 **Carrion Crow** were at Lockington Gravel Pits on 1 September but there were no records at all for **Rook** in the quarter. Most sightings of **Raven** were of two or less from nine locations but five were seen together over Hugglescote on 28 August.



Jackdaw © Stephen Woodward

Small numbers of **Goldcrests** records came from just four sites but song was still noted at Bradgate Park. The only double-figure count of **Blue Tit** was 25 at Cropston Reservoir on 20 September with ten **Great Tit** there on the same day, along with six **Coal Tit** including three young - juveniles were also reported from Groby Pool. There were no records received for **Marsh Tit** and the only **Willow Tit** noted was in a feeding flock of mixed tits at Cropston Reservoir.



Sky Lark © Jim Graham

Sky Lark were still singing at both Hicks Lodge in July and Longmoor Lake in August although the latter song was noted as being rather “weak”. Double-figure counts of **Sand Martin** came from Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs with 30 at the former on 31 August and 35 at the latter on 19 September. Nesting **Swallow** were still in evidence including a pair with a newly-built nest in the cemetery chapel at Rothley on 14 August. Post-breeding flocks were in evidence later in the quarter especially at Cropston Reservoir where 250 were feeding up over the water on 31 August and 200 there in the last week of the period. A small flock of 50 resting up on wires at Bradgate Park on 7 September were noted as being “mainly juveniles” and also incorporated at least 150 **House Martin** also making their maiden migration flight. A feeding flock of 200 was amongst hirundines at Cropston Reservoir on 20 September whilst nests were still active at Rothley and Beeby during the period.

Long-tailed Tit were widely recorded, the highest count being a rather modest total of 20 in the mixed tit flock at Cropston Reservoir on 20 July.

Surprisingly, there were no reports of **Cetti's Warbler** at either Watermead Country Park or

in the Soar Valley. **Chiffchaff** were common and widespread, usually in ones or twos, from 16 sites with 11 at Cropston Reservoir and eight at Parkhill Golf Club, Seagrave the highest counts: most birds were still singing. By contrast, there were rather fewer **Willow Warbler** records with just six sites noted, mainly singles. **Blackcap** were recorded from eight locations with juveniles noted at just two: Cropston Reservoir and Parkfield Golf Course, Seagrave. Song was not noted after 21 July and as in 2012, there were no records of birds in September. The only record of **Garden Warbler** was one still in song at Peckleton on 24 July. Likewise, a single **Lesser Whitethroat** at Parkhill Golf Club, Seagrave on 26 August was the only one in the period. Just four sites had **Common Whitethroat** and the only family party was at Cropston Reservoir during July. The same site also held a pair of **Sedge Warbler** (seen carrying food early in July) and one of only two records of **Reed Warbler**, the other being two in song at Wanlip Meadows.

Small numbers of **Nuthatch** were found at six locations with seven in Bradgate Park on 7 September the highest count but no family parties were noted. However in August, family parties of **Treecreeper** were at Bradgate Park, Cossington South Lakes and Cropston Reservoir. In July, fledged juvenile **Wren** were found at the latter site and a family party was seen in PJD's garden. Two triple-figure counts of **Starling** were received: 280 bathing in shallow water at Lockington Gravel Pits on 1 September and a flock of over 100, a mix of adults and young, in the grounds of the Ruins at Bradgate Park on 8 August.

Once again, there were few notable records received of thrushes and 16 **Blackbird** at Cropston Reservoir in July was the highest count. There was just one report of **Song Thrush** whilst one of the two **Mistle Thrush** records was of an adult feeding a juvenile at Bradgate Park on 4 July.

A pair of **Spotted Flycatcher** carrying food were near Hallgates in Bradgate Park on 3 July whilst four were at Parkhill Golf Club, Seagrave on 11 September.

Small numbers of **Robin** were reported. Single adult and first-winter male **Redstarts** were at Parkhill Golf Club, Seagrave between 29

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

August and 2 September at least, whilst one or more females were at Groby Pool in the quarter.

The only records of passage **Whinchat** were one at Kelham Bridge on 19 September and two in the hedgerow along Causeway Lane in Cropston on the 10th which were accompanied by up to five **Wheatear**. Another Wheatear was located at Stoughton on 29 August.

A few singing **Dunnock** were noted. All **House Sparrow** records came from member's gardens with double-figure counts from two: 45 in ACRR's in Loughborough and ten in PD's in Quorn. The only **Tree Sparrow** record received was 11 at Belton on 28 August.

A male **Yellow Wagtail** carrying food at Cropston Reservoir in July suggested successful breeding there with birds also seen at Stoughton and Stonebow Washlands. Single **Grey Wagtail** were in Bradgate Park, Lockington Gravel Pits and Loughborough whilst at least 33 **Pied Wagtails** were at the inflow of Cropston Reservoir.

It is always difficult to locate **Tree Pipit** once they have stopped singing so it is little surprise that no records were received. There was just one post-breeding flock of **Meadow Pipit**; 25 were recorded at Lockington Gravel Pits on 16 September.

There were few finches reported and included just a single **Greenfinch** whilst the largest number of **Linnet** was a flock of 45 feeding on seed heads at Lockington Gravel Pits in September. There were no records of either **Lesser Redpoll** or **Crossbill** in the period. **Bullfinch** were seen in small numbers from six well-spread sites whilst records of **Yellowhammer** came from just four with six singing at Longmoor Lake on 3 August the highest count. Small numbers **Reed Bunting**, most of which were males still in song, came from six sites in the quarter.

Jim Graham

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

Although our sightings for this quarter are not numerous, we do have several records for this group:

Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*: We have three sightings of this reptile for this quarter. SFW reports one on a fallen trunk in Bradgate Park on 15 July. On 7 August, HI and SFW recorded three young specimens – one with a missing tail – on a log in Bradgate Park. Finally, HI and SFW report a single specimen at Rough Hill, near Newtown Linford, on 28 August.

Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*: HI and SFW report finding a sloughed skin of a Grass Snake at Newfield Colliery on the 12 July.

Smooth or Common Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*: PJD had a large adult specimen in her garden in Quorn on 26 September, while clearing an overgrown area of the garden.

Common Toad *Bufo bufo*: In contrast to the Common Frog, we have comparatively few sightings for this amphibian during this quarter. SFW reports a large number of toadlets on slate spoil at Swithland Woods on 7 August. SFW and HI had two further sightings of toadlets, one at the churchyard at Ragdale on 22 August and a second at Ulverscroft NR on 3 September.



Common Toad © Stephen Woodward

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*: We have quite a few sightings for the Common Frog during this quarter. ATO reports finding a small specimen in his front garden in Loughborough on the morning of 3 July, and another sighting, possibly of the same specimen, on 27 July. ATO also reports finding a froglet in his front garden on the 5 August: obviously one of this year's young and presumably hatched in a pond in a neighbouring garden. Later in the month, on the

29 August, he came across a large specimen while tidying up in the front garden. PJD also reports a number of specimens – both large and small – found while tidying up an overgrown area of her garden on the 26 September. HI and SFW (who appear to have been spending quite a lot of time in churchyards in recent months!) report several sightings during this quarter from locations all around the county. On 3 August, HI reports finding a specimen at Aylestone Meadows in Leicester. HI and SFW found a single specimen in a churchyard at Market Bosworth on 27 July and another specimen in a churchyard at Ragdale on 22 August. SFW and GH found a specimen at Thurnby on 10 September. On 12 September SFW and HI found two specimens in a churchyard at Thornton, and a single specimen in a churchyard at Ibstock. Finally, they also found a single specimen on 22 September, at Charnwood Lodge NR. Lastly, HS reports finding a specimen or specimens in Buddon Brook Meadows at Quorn on the 29 August. She also reports finding specimens in the Chaveney Road area of Quorn, on 6 and 13 September.

And that concludes our sightings for this group. As always we urge people to make a note of their sightings and pass them on to us.

Tony Onions

FISH (including CRAYFISH)

Again, our sightings for this quarter are not very numerous.

Common or Mirror Carp *Cyprinus carpio*: ATO reports seeing anglers land two specimens of this species at Nanpantan Reservoir, on 26 August and 30 August. Both specimens were taken at dusk, from the south side of the reservoir, and weighed 5+kg and 8+kg, respectively (ATO's estimates). These two specimens were both 'mirror' carp, a domestic strain of this species. They are so-called because they are not fully scaled – instead of having rows of small scales they are largely naked with lines or patches of large, plate-like scales. The distribution of these scales can be virtually unique to the individual fish, which means that these fish can be readily identified. Fish may be caught several times during the course of the year, and a particularly large specimen will often

be given a name by those who frequent the fishery on a regular basis; although I am not aware that this applies to any of the fish in Nanpantan Reservoir.

Stone Loach *Noemacheilus barbatulus*: HI and SFW report finding a specimen of this species in the River Lin at Bradgate Park on 5 September. A few days later, on 14 September, they found two more specimens in the same area. Superficially, these fish resemble the Bullhead, in that they are well camouflaged, bottom-dwelling fish. Like the Bullhead they tend to be nocturnal; and in any case, their eyesight is poor, so that they rely largely on their powers of smell and taste to find food. Compared with the Bullhead, they have a small, slim head, and - like some species of Catfish - they are equipped with six very sensitive barbels around the mouth. Although they have a passing resemblance to the "naked" Catfishes (Siluridae), the Loaches are more closely related to the Carp family (Cyprinidae), and have been placed in a family of their own: the Cobitidae. In addition to the Stone Loach, there are only two other species found in Europe: the Pond Loach *Misgurnus fossilis* - which does not occur naturally in the UK - and the Spined Loach *Cobitis taenia*, which does occur in the UK, and can be found in the River Mease in the west of the county. One interesting fact about these fish is that, although we associate them with fast flowing streams, they have the ability to swallow air from the surface and absorb oxygen through the walls of the intestine: enabling them to survive if they find themselves in oxygen-depleted waters.

Bullhead *Cottus gobio*: SFW and HI report finding many specimens of this species in the River Lin in Bradgate Park, at night, on 9 July. Like the Stone Loach, these fish tend to venture abroad under the cover of darkness, when they



Bullhead © Stephen Woodward

feel safer from the risk of predation, particularly from birds. Incidentally, where Brown Trout occur alongside this species, the trout, which are also active by night, especially during the summer months, will happily prey upon the Bullheads!

In passing, I would like to mention that I recently came across a soft-cover book entitled *The Pocket Guide to the Freshwater Fish of Britain and Europe*, written by Malcolm Greenhalgh, and published by Mitchell Beazley, part of the Octopus Publishing Group (ISBN 978-0-753719-55-8). The reason that I mention this is that this book is quite informative, relatively well illustrated, and as its name suggests, small enough to fit into a pocket. Furthermore, as books go these days, it has the additional merit of being relatively inexpensive! (I managed to pick a discounted copy from the GoOutdoors shop in Loughborough). So, if anyone is looking for a good, cheap, beginners' guide to freshwater fish, then I would recommend this book! Finally, although I do appreciate that because of health and other pressures it is not always easy to do so, I would like to urge our members – as usual - to get out and about if possible, make a note of their sightings, and pass them on to us!

Tony Onions

DRAGONFLIES and DAMSELFLIES

The Dragonfly report will be in the next *Heritage*.

BUTTERFLIES

After the rather cold spring and late start to the butterfly season, the improving weather of the summer came as a great relief, especially after a succession of several poor summers. It was good once again to see our favourite butterfly plants attracting plenty of butterflies such as the Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock whose populations have been worryingly low during recent summers, and it demonstrated how quickly such insects can recover given favourable conditions.

In the countryside some counts of Common Blue and Small Copper were welcome after

several poor years and the Small Copper maybe benefiting at Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill from the management policy to suppress some of the Bracken allowing a big increase in Sheep's Sorrel, a larval food plant of this attractive small species. Several sightings of the Wall were also welcome and may herald a return of this once common species as an increase in sightings was also noted in other inland counties where it had been scarce or absent during recent years. A succession of good summers would help to bring this about.

Hesperiidae

The **Small Skipper** *Thymelicus sylvestris*, first reported seen on 26 June, continued to be seen until 21 August, when it was last noted, at Buddon Brook Meadows. Altogether it was reported seen in 20 widely spread localities often present in double-figures and with maxima reported being 38 at Humberstone Heights and 26 at Sence Valley FP on 15 and 26 July.

The closely related **Essex Skipper**, *T. lineola* was first noted on 27 July, at Buddon Brook Meadows and was last located on 19 August at Cossington Meadows NR where the maximum count of 24 was made on 1 August. Ten were also identified at Thurnby Lodge on 7 August and altogether this species was found in six localities.

The **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes sylvanus* was reported from 14 well-scattered localities, including our Quorn garden where a female was observed ovipositing on grasses. Colonies, however, were generally on the low side with single figure counts but it was described as plentiful at Twenty-acre Common at Six Hills on 6 July. It was last noted on 26 July at Twycross Churchyard and on the Shenton Estate.

Pieridae

The migrant **Clouded Yellow** *Colias croceus* is an uncommon and sporadic visitor to VC55 and this summer, although frequent enough in some coastal counties, the only local sightings reported were two seen at close range at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel, on 21 August and one seen the following day nectaring on the flowers of *Verbena bonariensis* in FTS's Barlestone garden. The overwintering generation of the **Brimstone** *Gonepteryx rhamni* continued to be seen until early July and the new generation appeared first

on 25 July, at Rothley followed by one at North Farm, Shenton, on the 27th. In total this lovely species was reported seen in 17 localities, less than the 27 reported for the spring quarter but more than the ten reported for the summer quarter last year. Four were noted at Cossington Meadows NR, a good locality with plenty of the larval food plant, Purging Buckthorn. On 1 August two males and a female were present in our Quorn garden for several days in late August. It was last noted on 28 September, at Quorn.

This was a good summer for our three 'White' butterfly species and many gardens were subject to constant comings and goings, especially where favourite plants such as lavenders were present.

The **Large White *Pieris brassicae*** was active from the second week of July to the end of September and was most plentiful during late July and August when 30 or more were reported from several localities. It was recorded in a total of 35 localities. The **Small White *Pieris rapae*** was, as usual, even more plentiful and was seen in 42 widely spread localities during the period from mid-July to late September and was particularly numerous in farmland and open countryside and gardens with nectar-rich plants.

Green-veined White *P. napi* was also widely reported and noted in 30 localities, including many of our gardens. 38 were noted at Sence Valley FP on 26 July and 40 or more at Cossington Meadows NR on 1 August.

Lycaenidae

On 18 July four **Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus*** were observed near the quarry in the southern section of Swithland Wood and on 7 August two females were watched egg-laying on a small stunted oak at the same locality. On this latter date a dead Purple Hairstreak was found on the ground in nearby Bradgate Park. In August several Purple Hairstreak were seen at Buddon Wood on the 2nd and on the 14th five were noted on trees on the margins of Swithland Reservoir, adjacent to Buddon Wood. Finally a late individual was seen at Rothley on the 27th.

Few **White Letter Hairstreak *Satyrion w-album*** were reported: at Cloud Wood NR three were observed on 12 July and the same number

on the 19th. The only other sighting reported was one in our Quorn garden, nectaring on Hemp Agrimony, on 7 August.

Second generation **Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*** were well-reported, being seen in 24 widely spread localities as against ten of the first generation during the spring quarter and 19 of last summer's second generation. A count of 28 at Beacon Hill on the 12 August by LP and 20 by HI and SFW at the same locality the same day was the maximum noted at any one locality. The **Small Copper** was noted in five localities in July, 22 in August and three in September.

Second generation **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** showed an improvement on the single sighting in the spring and on the 19 August HB observed eight at Stoughton Airfield and the same number on a nearby field margin. Singletons were also reported seen at Humberstone Heights on 20 August, at Quorn on four dates from 25-30 August and at Belgrave on the 31st.

After last year's dismal showing it was good to receive reports of many more sightings of the **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** this summer although most reports were of single figure counts. During August, 30 or more were noted at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel on the 14th, around 17 at Belgrave the same day and about 24 at Humberstone Heights on the 20th. At Broad Hill the butterflies counted were along the path side on the western edge of the hill and much suitable ground with lots of Bird's-foot-trefoil occupied the greater part of the hill which was out of bounds suggesting that the total of **Common Blue** present must have been in hundreds if not thousands! Altogether this lovely butterfly was reported from 28 widely scattered localities and the last sighting was at Watermead CP on 4 September.

It was exciting to learn that during August a small colony of the **Chalk Hill Blue *Lysandra coridon*** including males and females, had become established at Bloody Oaks Quarry in Rutland where its larval food plant, Horseshoe Vetch still survives. Last summer this large distinctive 'Blue' was particularly abundant in Southern England, as I personally witnessed on the Isle of Wight, and it seems likely that this case represents a natural colonisation.

New, second generation **Holly Blue** *Celastrina argiolus* appeared first on 25 July when they were seen at Mountsorrel and Rothley and the last sighting reported was on 3 September. Numbers this summer were lower than usual and this garden-frequenting species was reported seen in only 11 localities as against 22 last summer.

Nymphalidae

The only record of the **White Admiral** *Ladoga camilla* for VC55 this summer that I am aware of is of one seen at Ketton Quarry on 3 August.

It is some years now since we had a good **Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta* year and although we received reports of sightings in 21 well spread localities most sightings referred to lone individuals. It was noted in four localities in July, 14 in August and nine in September. Ivy blossom time, in late September into October, is often the best time to see Red Admiral, not only because they gather at this late feast of nectar but because the dark glossy leaves show the insects off to perfection.



Red Admiral © Stephen Woodward

The migrant **Painted Lady** *Cynthia cardui*, always good to see, put in a sparse appearance this summer. In July one was seen at Bushby on the 13th and another at Bardon Hill on the 16th and in August it was found in nine localities with three individuals at Belgrave on the 14th, at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel on the 21st and at Barlestone on the 23rd. None were noted in September.

The colourful **Small Tortoiseshell** *Aglais urticae* delighted us with its marked improvement in numbers this summer and double-figure counts were recorded in several gardens with a maximum of 22 on Buddleia in

DBF's Hugglescote garden and, in the countryside, about 45 were counted by HB at Aylestone Meadows. In total it was reported from 61 well scattered localities on dates between 14 July and the end of September.

The **Peacock** *Inachis io* also showed a marked improvement in numbers with many garden Buddleias hosting double-figures during August. Large counts reported included 30 in HBH's Loughborough garden on 16 August and 20 or more in several gardens during the month. Over 50 were noted at Cossington Meadows NR on the 1st and around 32 at Hamilton Pools on the 3rd. New generation butterflies appeared first on 22 July and the species remained active until the 3rd week in August with odd sightings continuing until the end of September. Sightings were reported for 49 widely spread localities.

The richly coloured **Comma** *Polygonia c-album* was widely reported seen in 36 localities, as compared with 21 last summer and the new generation appeared on the 16 July quickly followed by others at Swithland Reservoir and Quorn village the next day. It was noted in 12 sites in September and these were presumably of the new generation. Up to three were present at several sites and eight were noted by HB at Thurnby Lodge on 7 August, and five at Cossington Meadows on 22 September.

What appeared to be a **Dark Green Fritillary** *Argynnis aglaja*, rather than the **Silver-washed**, was noted briefly on Buddleia in LP's Rothley garden on 25th July and according to *Fieldfare*, the Rutland Natural History Society September newsletter, this species was present at three sites in Rutland during July and August with 40 at Clipsham Quarry on 9 July. Once again the **Silver-washed Fritillary** *Argynnis paphia* was noted at Cloud NR near Breedon where two were seen in early August. This wood with its wide rides and abundance of violets looks ideal for colonisation by this large, handsome species. A female Silver-washed Fritillary was also seen and photographed in Bill and Jane Hollingworth's garden in Warwick Avenue, Quorn, during the period 24-26 August.

Satyridae

Although it was reported seen in some 44 widely spread localities, numbers of **Speckled Wood** *Pararge aegeria* were rather on the low

side compared with some recent years and no double-figure counts were reported even for larger sites.

The now scarce and local **Wall** *Lasiommata megera* showed some welcome signs of an improvement during August with three seen at Bardon Hill by HI and SFW on the 10th - and I understand on other dates also; one was noted by the same observers in Thringstone village on the 18th; one noted by HBH and myself at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel on the 21st and finally two were observed by HS at Charnwood Lodge NR on 28th.



Wall © Stephen Woodward

All reports of **Marbled White** *Melanargia galathea* this summer came from Rutland where several were present at Clipsham Quarry and Pickworth Wood in July and 100 or more noted at Ketton Quarry on the 19th of the month. The **Gatekeeper** *Pyronia tithonus* is now so well established in our local countryside, towns and villages that it is easy to take this attractive small species for granted forgetting perhaps, that it was rare and local hereabouts until about three decades ago. This summer it was first noted on 10th July, at Dishley Pool soon followed by other sightings on the 13th at Cossington Meadows NR. It remained active until 31 August when it was last noted, at Quorn. It was well reported, being seen in 45 separate localities and noted in double-figures at many sites with a maximum count of 85 by DBF at Sence Valley FP on 26 July.

The **Meadow Brown** *Maniola jurtina* appeared first during the previous quarter on 18th June and this species remained active throughout July and part of August, and was last noted on 28th August, at Bradgate Park and Charnwood Lodge NR. Prior to 1940 when much of VC55 consisted of permanent grassland this

was a particularly widespread and abundant species. Nowadays outside our river valleys, it is now much more restricted and localised but often abundant where suitable habitat still exists and, on 17 July, hundreds were active in the small meadow in Swithland Wood. Plenty were also reported seen in other good grassland sites.

The **Small Heath** *Coenonympha pamphilus* was also formerly common and widespread but, sadly, now particularly local. During this summer it was reported seen in only five localities: at Bradgate Park five were noted on 3 July and the same number on 28 August; others were noted at Bardon Hill on 16 July and 10 August; at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel on 21 August and lastly in Buddon Brook Meadows on 4 September. This last sighting was of one nectaring on Ragwort – a first at this site for many years.



Small Heath © Stephen Woodward

This was another good year for the **Ringlet** *Aphantopus hyperantus*, first noted on 30 June at Cropston Reservoir, it continued on the wing until 10 August when it was last noted, at Bardon Hill. It was reported from 34 localities through much of Leicestershire and has become a frequent butterfly in many gardens. DBF reported two impressive counts during July: 98 at Cloud Wood NR on the 19th and 87 at Sence Valley FP on the 26th. Although not a colourful butterfly this species has a demure beauty all its own and often remains active in overcast, showery weather when few if any other species venture abroad.

Peter Gamble

MOTHS

The “mini heat wave” may not have given us extreme temperatures but it was constant, and lasted for most of this quarter, and was a very welcome contrast to the cool and wet conditions comparable to this period last year. Judging by the sheer amount of records received (just short of 1,500) everyone was ready for it. The **Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner *Cameraria ohridella*** numbers were well up on previous reports, even **Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba*** numbers increased but thankfully stayed manageable. The most numerous and widely recorded moth was **Silver Y *Autographa gamma*** with an extensive 49 reports and a minimum of 140 individuals counted plus accounts of “many, abundant, common, several and frequent”. With just a smattering of sightings from last quarter, the build up started in July and peaked in August and then dropped dramatically in September. Interestingly, this mirrors the nationwide trend for this species when overnight catches dwindled from spectacular totals to mainly single figure totals, barely making it into double figures after the beginning of September. **Ghost Moth *Hepialus humuli*** were at Fosse Meadows in July also at Beacon Hill and Cloud Wood NR in August and the only mention of **Common Swift *Hepialus lupulinus*** was from Mountsorrel in July. **Orange Swift *Hepialus sylvina***, **Gold Swift *Hepialus hecta*** and **Map-winged Swift *Hepialus fusconebulosa*** were well noted. Singles of **Leopard Moth *Zeuzera pyrina*** were at Quorn and Fosse Meadows in July. A superb 140 species of Micro-moths were recorded between us: some of the highlights were the habited larval cases of ***Luffia ferchaultella*** in Groby and Kirby Muxloe in July. Mines of ***Bedellia somnulentella*** were found on Bindweed and ***Bucculatrix thoracella*** on lime at Aylestone Meadows in September. On the same day, the blotch mines of ***Phyllonorycter comparella*** were found on White Poplar, this will probably be a new species for VC55, and incentive to search for more next year. The **Nettle-tap *Anthophila fabriciana*** was reported from a wide variety of sites and in all three months. **Apple Ermine *Yponomeuta mallinellus*** and **Willow Ermine *Yponomeuta rorrella*** were attracted to an Actinic trap in a Groby garden. Good numbers

of **Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella*** were recorded mainly on the Charnwood Forest with 100 individuals counted at four sites. Singles of ***Athrips mouffetella*** were at Cloud Wood NR and a Rothley garden, a lovely pale silver grey with a few very black dots, with the larvae feeding on Honeysuckle. **Light Brown Apple Moth *Epiphyas postvittana*** continues to be almost absent, the only records were from Quorn and Rothley and all in single figures. **Green Oak Tortrix *Tortrix viridana*** only reported from five sites all on the Charnwood Forest with the highest number of 70 to MV at Charnwood Lodge in mid-July. Three species of Plume moths were recorded starting with **Beautiful Plume *Amblaptilia acanthadactyla*** and **Brindled Plume *Amblaptilia punctidactyla*** both from Quorn plus **White Plume *Pterophorus pentadactyla*** at Beacon Hill and Fosse Meadows.

Moving on to the Macro moths: with a stunning record of **Oak Eggar *Lasiocampa quercus*** by HNB and GM at Fosse Meadows on 12 July, this is still a scarce moth for our county. **Drinker *Euthrix potatoria*** were well represented, mainly from the Charnwood Forest but also at Fosse Meadows and Cloud Wood NR with a total of 37 to MV light at Beacon Hill on 19 June. **Peach Blossom *Thyatira batis*** and **Buff Arches *Habrosyne pyritoides*** are not rare moths at all but take some beating for colour and patterning and usually turn up together, so it's nice to report they were widespread and in good numbers this period. **Figure of Eighty *Tethea ocularis*** is another moth with marvellous wing markings although the only records were of a singleton in a Quorn garden early July and four individuals from Fosse Meadows in mid-July. **Galium Carpet *Epirrhoe alternata*** continues to show in small numbers and really does seem to favour the Forest showing only at Charnwood Lodge NR and Beacon Hill in mid-July. **Yellow Shell *Camptogramma bilineata*** can be often seen during the day but all records for this period came from MV light. **Brown Scallop *Philereme vetulata*** was quite an unusual record for Beacon Hill on 19 July. The larvae feed on Buckthorn ***Rhamnus carthatica*** so there must be some fairly close by. A single **Barred Rivulet *Perizoma alchemillata*** was trapped at Cloud Wood NR the first record of this species in its only known (Leicestershire) breeding site for 12 years. Hopefully a small colony of this species is



Barred Rivulet © Graham Finch

still hanging on in this aggressively managed LRWT reserve. The closely related **Sandy Carpet** *Perizoma flavofasciata* was widely recorded with all records in mid-July. Pugs were well represented as 11 species were identified during this period plus a probable **Wormwood Pug** *Eupithecia absinthiata* at Quorn taking it to 12 species. A total of 15 **Maple Pug** *Eupithecia inturbata* were quite a sight at Cloud Wood NR on 10 August - we still do not get that many records of this despite the abundance of Maple in hedgerows and woodland. The most numerous and widely recorded was **Foxglove Pug** *Eupithecia pulchellata* again all from the Charnwood Forest. No surprise that the Heather feeding **Narrow-winged Pug** *Eupithecia nanata* were all from the Charnwood Forest sites. **Canary Shouldered Thorn** *Ennomos alniaria* was attracted to light in Quorn towards the end of September, many records of **Dusky Thorn** *Ennomos fuscantaria* and **Early Thorn** *Selenia dentaria* but only a singleton of **Scalloped Oak** *Crociallis elinguaris* was noted. Records for **Swallow-tailed Moth** *Ourapteryx sambucaria* were extensive as were **Peppered Moth** *Biston betularia* including several of the melanic *f. carbonaria*. Strangely, we do seem to be seeing a slight increase of sightings of this almost black form. The conifer-feeding **Barred Red** *Hylaea fasciaria* was only noted from Beacon Hill and the only record of **Annulet** *Charissa obscurata* was at Cloud Wood NR. A superb moth, still not seen in any numbers, **Pine Hawk-moth** *Hyloicus pinastri* was from PHG in Quorn. The only reports of **Lime Hawk-moth** *Mimas tiliae* and **Eyed Hawk-moth** *Smerinthus ocellata* were of singletons from Fosse Meadows 12 July. **Poplar Hawk-moth** *Laothoe populi*, **Elephant Hawk-moth** *Deilephila elpenor* and **Small Elephant Hawk-moth** *Deilephila porcellus* were restricted

to records from the Charnwood Forest sites apart from two **Elephant Hawk-moth** *Deilephila elpenor* recorded from Fosse Meadows.

The only **Sallow Kitten** *Furcula furcula* was a singleton at Cloud Wood NR in mid-August. All the regular Prominents were recorded and **White Satin** *Leucoma salicis* was recorded from four sites - Fosse Meadows, Quorn, Beacon Hill and Ulverscroft NR all in July. As with the Prominents, all the usual Footman species were recorded with **Red-necked Footman** *Atolmis rubricollis* putting in an appearance at Charnwood Lodge NR in mid-July and then a week later at Beacon Hill, plus a lingering **Orange Footman** *Eilema sorocula* in Quorn on 8 July. HB remarks that **Cinnabar** *Tyria jacobaeae* was very common this quarter and the many widespread reports certainly back this up with numerous sightings of larvae and adults throughout July and August. We do not seem to get that many records of **Turnip** *Agrotis segetum* so it was nice to see the two records of it at Quorn for August and September and even fewer records of **Double Dart** *Graphiphora augur* which turned up to light at Fosse Meadows in July. PHG's Quorn garden was the only site that recorded **Cabbage** *Mamestra brassicae*, **Campion** *Hadena rivularis* and **Feathered Gothic** *Tholera decimalis* and also the first of the autumn arrivals of **Black Rustic** *Aporophyla nigra*, **Lunar Underwing** *Omphaloscelis lunosa* and **Orange Sallow** *Xanthia citrigo*. There were plenty of records for the Amphipyridae group keeping everyone busy over this period. This whole group of Brindles, Rustics, Minors and others really are "moth-er's moths" as they represent the LBJ's of the moth world - they make us all reach for the books when they start appearing. **Red Underwing** *Catocala nupta* records were restricted to Swithland Reservoir and Quorn, two **Blackneck** *Lygephila pastinum* at Charnwood Lodge NR and the only **Herald** *Scoliopteryx libatrix* at Beacon Hill. Last but not least a nice record of a second brood **Pinion-streaked Snout** *Schranksia costaestrigalis* was at Quorn at the end of September.

Many thanks to all members who have sent in records for this quarter.

Graham and Anona Finch

BEETLES

Continuing with the spell of 'favourable' weather, this quarter has produced a very respectable list indeed, a total of 90 different species, with a few yet to be determined. Even with such a superb effort by our regular half a dozen beetlers, only 11 species made it into double-figures. The highest number of records goes to *Rhagonycha fulva* with just under 200 individuals and the species recorded at the most sites was **7-spot Ladybird** *Coccinella septempunctata* being recorded at 12 sites. Seventeen species of *Carabid* were recorded this quarter starting with **Green Tiger Beetle** *Cicindella campestris* recorded from their only currently known sites of Newfield Colliery NR in the northwest of the county and Bradgate Park on the Charnwood Forest, but only with a solitary specimen at each site and both in July. The only large *Carabus* species noted was a single, and obviously a bit peckish, *Carabus problematicus*, which turned up at sugar intended for moths at Beacon Hill in July. *Cychrus caraboides* was under dead wood in Spring Wood in September. Just a single *Leistus ferrugineus* was found by sieving grass on Aylestone Meadows in September. *Nebria brevicollis* was out in force at Bradgate Park during the evening in July, with at least ten individuals noted running along the many well-worn pathways. Singletons of *Notiophilus biguttatus* were recorded from Bradgate Park and Nailstone churchyard in August and September respectively. *Loricera pilicornis* sightings were well down with just three individuals at three different sites. *Elaphrus riparius* was found at the edge of a muddy pond at Rutland Water in early July. Possessing a formidable pair of front legs and claws, a single *Clivina fossor* was at Aylestone Meadows under a piece of dry turf in September. Sieving a grass tussock near Upper Greenhill Farm produced a single *Trechus obtusus* in mid-August. At the edge of the car park at the Newtown Linford end of Bradgate Park, the River Lin has created a series of small shingle banks/islands and over a dozen *Bembidion lunulatum* were noted mainly under the larger stones on the shingle. Other *Bembidion* species recorded were one *Bembidion lampros* at Cloud Wood NR in September and three *Bembidion obtusum* at

Upper Greenhill Farm in August. The normally abundant *Pterostichus madidus* was only recorded at two sites, Cloud Wood NR and Upper Greenhill Farm both in August. *Platynus assimilis* is normally a very common species but only one record of a singleton in Spring Wood under stones at the water's edge of Staunton Harold Reservoir. Sieving old dried-up flood refuse trapped on a wire fence at Narborough Bog NR produced six *Agonum fuliginosum*. This species keys out to either/or *A. gracile* but the latter always has wings whereas *fuliginosum* very rarely does. So carefully lifting the elytra is a suitably convenient way to separate the two. Three of the strikingly coloured *Agonum marginatum* - green with subtle yellowish side borders to the elytra, were found at Aylestone Meadows in September.

"Reasonable" quantities of cattle dung from Charnwood Lodge NR, Ulverscroft NR and Aylestone Meadows were sampled in August and September. Sampling was very casual and consisted of manually breaking the pats apart and indulging in a bit of poking and prodding with a stick in order to reveal any beetles present. An impressive 19 species were found and identified (over a period of time) with at least another ten species of Staphylinidae which were not taken; I already had enough material to keep me quiet for a week or two! It's quite striking just how much life can be found in such a medium, apart from the beetles, numerous dipterous larvae and several tiny mites were active. On certain pats as soon as the "crust" was removed *Aphodius* species (see below) appearing from nowhere were almost diving in headfirst with dozens of flies queuing up for a paddle. Not all pats were busy, but when you found one that was.....who needs the telly? The most abundant group were the small (about 3 mm) round to oval reddish brown ladybird like *Cercyon*s, most being very shiny, looking like they had just had a fresh coat of varnish. Three species were identified, all common: *Cercyon convexiusculus* was the most abundant with 30 plus identified, next up was eight *Cercyon impressus* and finally just two *Cercyon melanocephalus* plus, even smaller at about 2 mm, dozens of *Cryptopleurum minutum*. We have three out of four of the British *Sphaeridium* species, *Sphaeridium bipustulatum*, *lunatum* and *scarabaeoides* all quite numerous, all were

recorded, one super-pat held individuals of all three of this latter group. Giants at 8 mm were *Hister unicolor* black and shiny and very abundant and even larger was a single **Dor Beetle** *Geotrupes stercorarius*. The only burying beetle recorded was *Nicrophorus humator* at three sites all on the Charnwood Forest and all attracted to MV light on August. Twelve species of Rove Beetles, Staphylinidae were identified starting with one of each *Sepedophilus nigripennis*, *Lordithon lunulatus* and *Lordithon trinotatus* all from Cloud Wood NR on 15 September by sieving crumbling dead wood from the ground. A very non-rove looking species attracted to MV light at Bradgate Park on 21 September, were five *Scaphisoma agaricinum*. There are only three species in this tribe and they are each very different which makes them extremely easy to identify, which is just as well as they barely reach 2 mm. Other species were *Anotylus rugosus* near Upper Greenhill Farm on 14 August, *Stenus bimaculatus* from Narborough Bog NR on 19 September and *Stenus fulvicornis* near Upper Greenhill Farm on 14 August. Singles of *Rugilus rufipes* at Aylestone Meadows and *Lathrobium brunripes* at Narborough Bog NR, a single *Tasgius morsitans* was at Cloud Wood NR and *Atrecus affinis* was found in Spring Wood under stones along the edge of Staunton Harold Reservoir, all in September. Ten out of 42 species of *Aphodius* on the British list were recorded this quarter beginning with a single *Aphodius depressus*, eight *Aphodius rufipes*, one *Aphodius sordidus*, 20 plus *Aphodius fimetarius*, three *Aphodius foetens*, one *Aphodius sphaelatus*, four *Aphodius contaminatus*, one *Aphodius haemorrhoidalis*, 50 plus *Aphodius fossor* and six *Aphodius stictus*, mainly from the LRWT nature reserves on the Charnwood Forest where the Trust use the Longhorn Cattle for grazing. SFW recorded three **Welsh Chafer** *Hoplia philanthus* in Bradgate Park on Bracken on 15 July - we have very few records of this species and interestingly, the last was in 2008 in Bradgate Park, so hopefully we have an established colony here. Late appearances of **Cockchafer** *Melolontha melolontha* were singles at Quorn on 2 July during the day and Bradgate Park to MV light on 9 July plus two **Brown Chafer** *Serica brunnea* the same night. A follow-on from the

records from Swithland Wood last year SFW seems to have the monopoly on the jewel beetle *Agrillus biguttatus* having found another resting on an oak stump in Bradgate Park towards the end of September. The only click beetles recorded this quarter were two *Denticollis linearis* attracted to MV light at Charnwood Lodge NR in mid-July, six *Athous haemorrhoidalis* and three *Adrastus pallens* both during the day at Bradgate Park. Only two species of Soldier beetles were reported, quite different to the previous quarters showing. A solitary sighting of *Cantharis nigra* was noted from an Evington churchyard but *Rhagonycha fulva* was widespread and in quite high numbers over with 100 at Cloud Wood NR in mid-August. Two *Dasytes plumbeus* were swept from low vegetation in Cloud Wood NR again in mid-August also three *Cychramus luteus* belonging to the 'sap and pollen' beetles were found at the same site in mid-September.

HB starts the Ladybird sightings off with the only report of **16-spot Ladybird** *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata* (generic name formally *Micraspis*) with a solitary individual in the grounds of the City General Hospital on 5 September. **14-spot Ladybirds** *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata* were still thin on the ground with singles at Lubenham Churchyard in early June, Cloud Wood NR plus St Andrew's Churchyard in Thringstone in mid-August. The only report of **Cream-spot Ladybird** *Calvia quattuordecimgutata* was of five individuals swept from grass in the grounds of the City General in early September. Only four records of **Orange Ladybird** *Halzia sedecimguttata* singletons to MV light at Charnwood Lodge NR, Beacon Hill and Ulverscroft NR in mid-July and another singleton at St. Martin's Churchyard in Leicester City in mid-August. There were just two records of **22-spot Ladybird** *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata* both of singletons at Osgathorpe churchyard in mid-August and Aylestone Meadows in early September. Just one **Eyed Ladybird** *Anatis ocellata* was noted at Ulverscroft NR beaten from Scots Pine late September. **7-spot Ladybird** *Coccinella septempunctata* records from 11 sites, with 25 individuals at Cloud Wood NR, five at Newfield Colliery NR both in mid-August, but all the rest were of singletons. **2-spot Ladybird** *Adalia bipunctata* were almost as widely recorded but



10-spot Ladybird © Stephen Woodward

only three individuals being the highest total found at any one site. Just three reports of **10-spot Ladybird *Adalia decempunctata*** one each at Thurcaston and Pickwell, both in churchyards, and then three from a Sycamore in a hedgerow in Barkby Lane in late September. We are still not seeing the huge numbers of **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*** of past years, but this summer seemed to be a little more to their liking as they were recorded from 17 widely scattered sites, although they remain in quite low numbers, this was the most abundantly reported species.

Autumn is the time to search for beetles associated with fungi, in particular Bracket fungi - not sure about anyone else, but I was finding any fungi hard come by. On the few examples that were found an interesting half a dozen beetle species were recorded. Singles, of ***Mycetophagus piceus*** and ***Mycetophagus quadripustulatus*** from Bradgate Park at the end of September. Although barely reaching 2 mm, ***Cis bilamellatus*** ended up being easy to identify having two broad flat plates at the front. It was first recorded as British in 1884 south of London and not until the mid-1930's it decided to make a break for it and head north. Arriving in Nottinghamshire around 1938 then on to Cheshire 1940, well at 2 mm it has only got little legs! The first records we have for it are from Bradgate Park in 1980 and the latest from Braunstone Park 2005. I have found singles at Charnwood Lodge NR on ***Fomes formentarius*** and Browns Hay on ***Piptoporus betulinus***, the latter also had a single blue and orange ***Tetratoma fungorum***. It is fairly widespread in the county (about 30 records), preferring established woodland or parkland habitat, as Birch Polypore seems to be the favoured host it is well worth looking for. ***Orchesia micans*** looks like a small click beetle and is a National Notable B, so it was rewarding to find a singleton at

Cloud Wood NR in mid-September. Only two reports of ***Lagria hirta*** this quarter both from MV light traps at Beacon Hill and Ulverscroft NR in July. Belonging to the same family Tenebrionidae as the previous species, but not looking in anyway remotely like it. Another National Notable B was ***Eledona agricola*** this from Bradgate Park at the end of September. Just two records of ***Oedemera nobilis*** - Piper Wood at the beginning of July and Desford the end of July. This quarter did fairly well for sightings of Longhorn beetles a total of seven species noted and all but one seen in July, ***Grammoptera ruficornis*** was seen at Rutland Water and Newfield Colliery NR and the only record for ***Alosterna tabacicolor*** was from Rutland Water in July. ***Rutpela maculata*** was noted from five sites including Swithland Wood, Rutland Water and PHG's Quorn garden where this distinctive longhorn was attracted to the flowers of Goat's-beard ***Aruncus dioicus***. PHG also reports on 18 July the excellent record of a single ***Arhopalus rustica***, which was found at home in the bath, presumably having entered the room through an airbrick. It's nice to have this record as we have less than half a dozen records making it still a scarce beetle in the county. It is proving to be regularly attracted to light and according to recent records (two of which have been from gardens) seems to be on a slight increase, a species which could turn up anywhere. Four **Wasp Beetles *Clytus arietus*** were at Rutland Water and two ***Agapanthia villosoviridescens*** at Piper Wood and a single ***Leiopus nebulosus*** at Bradgate Park all in July. Just a few records of Leaf Beetles Chrysomelidae, a solitary ***Cryptocephalus moraei*** from Piper Wood in early July is another valued record, only about five previous records of this striking species, shining black with yellow/orange blotches and found on Hypericum - try and remember to scrutinise all St. John's-wort next summer. A single ***Neocrepidodera transversa*** was swept at Cloud Wood NR in mid-August and well over 30 ***Crepidodera aurata*** beaten from Aspen at Aylestone Meadows in late September. Finally the only Weevil record is a single ***Euophryum confine*** sieved from a grass tussock near Upper Greenhill Farm in mid-August.

Many thanks everyone.

Graham Finch

OTHER INSECTS

As is usual for this quarter many records were submitted, so I shall have to do a rather broad sweep of some species to try and get a better picture overall.

Heteroptera

Not a brilliant quarter for many species. The common **Green Shield Bug** *Palomina prasina*, three adults were recorded from Ethel Road and four from Belgrave in August, then singles from Appleton Park, Ulverscroft NR and Owston village in September and three from Humberstone Park, also in September. Nymphs were found at Quorn on a roadside verge along Ethel Road and in my Abney Street garden which was a first for my small plot.

Very few records of the **Forest Bug**, *Pentatoma rufipes* were noted, singles at Quorn and Stoughton Airfield in August, singles at Groby and Owston in September and five on PHG's Quorn light-trap on 24 September.



Hawthorn Shield Bug © Stephen Woodward

The only records of the **Hawthorn Shield Bug** *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale* was of numerous nymphs on Dogwood in Victoria Park on 21 August and three adults in a hedgerow on Humberstone Park on 20 September. This species is quite attracted to Dogwood on city parks and I suspect they feed on the berries of this shrub.

Only one record of the normally common **Birch Shield Bug** *Elasmotethus interstinctus* was sent in, one on PHG's light trap at Quorn on 22 September. The only **Bronze Bug** *Eysarcoris fabricii* record was of three on Black Horehound on Ethel Road in early September. One *Troilus luridus* was resting on Bramble at Charnwood Lodge NR on 22 September.



Bronze Shield Bug © Stephen Woodward

Fourteen **Bishops Mitre** *Aelia acuminata* were recorded on waste ground at Belgrave on 31 August and a single at Appleton Park in September.

The **Dock Bug** *Coreus marginatus* was also thin on the ground this quarter with records from Humberstone Park, waste ground at Belgrave and about 14 on low herbage by Willow Brook, Thurnby Lodge.

A single Rhopalid bug, *Rhopalus subrufus* was seen on Carlton churchyard on 18 September.

Probably the most interesting bug recorded this quarter was the red and black **Squash Bug** *Corizus hyoscyami*, one at PHG's garden in Quorn on 4 September was present for an hour or so and it was also recorded at Woodhouse and Owston village by SFW and HI. This little bug must be spreading its range locally.

Among other records might be mentioned in this group are the leafhopper *Iassus lanio* two at Groby on 1 August, *Cicadella viridis* at Newfield Colliery Ulverscroft NR and Launde Abbey pond (many) all in August. SFW and HI submitted several records of the **Spear Thistle Lacebug** *Tingis cardui* on their travels from Desford, Blaby, Bradgate, Beacon Hill and North Kilworth during August and the **Reedmace Bug** *Chilacis typhae* on *Typha* heads at Launde Abbey, **Gorse Lacebug** *Dictyonota strichnocera* single at Albert Village Lake and finally **Beech Felt Scale** *Cryptococcus fagisuga* at Sibley churchyard in July.

A few common Mirid bugs will round off this quarter. *Phytocoris varipes*, common on Stoughton Airfield in August, *Phytocoris tiliae*, one in Stoke Golding Churchyard, *Polymerus unifasciatus* in Appleton Park on 12 September

and a single *Heterotoma merioptera* in an Ethel Road hedgerow on 22 August.

The only Damsel Bug report was two **Marsh Damsel Bugs** *Dolichonabis limbatus* at Aylestone Meadows in early September.

Diptera

Again a poor year for many species.

I shall start with Hoverflies. *Episyrphus balteatus*, as usual, was the only common and widespread Syrphid, recorded from 41 localities this quarter, common in some areas and hundreds reported from Eastwell churchyard on 6 August. Migrants normally associated with this species were very scarce indeed; *Eupeodes corollae* was only recorded from two sites, a single from Wardley at the end of August and Beacon Hill in mid-August with only a single sighting of *Scaeva pyrastris* in Abbey Park. In recent years this species has been recorded in good numbers.

Syrphus ribesii was recorded in very low numbers from Thurnby Lodge, Humberstone Park, Aylestone Meadows, Belgrave, Abbey Park and Quorn, where it was recorded as common in July. *Syrphus vitripennis* was similar with mostly singles from North Kilworth, Newtown Linford, Newfield Colliery, Humberstone Park, Victoria Park, City General Hospital grounds and Abney Street in Leicester, mostly in August and September.

Single specimens of *Eupeodes luniger* were noted at Abney Street, Thurnby Lodge, Humberstone Park and Newfield Colliery.

Sphaerophora scripta was only reported from Stoughton Airfield where several were noted from here and adjacent field margins on 19 August and two in the City General Hospital grounds on 22 August.

Other members of the Syrphini were *Dasysyrphus tricinctus* a woodland species, one from Ulverscroft NR on 3 September, the distinctive wasp mimic *Chrysotoxum bicinctum* was at Bardon Hill on 10 August and Launde Abbey on the 26th. SFW and HI also managed to find three specimens of *Xanthogramma pedissequum* at Groby in early July, Newfield Colliery and Hoby Churchyard in August.

Another interesting record was of five

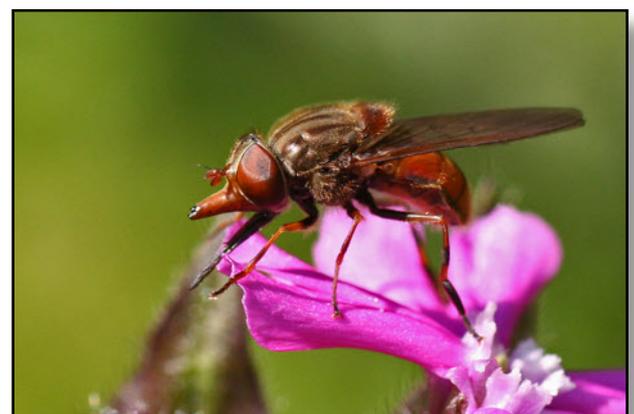
Leucozона glaucia on Angelica heads at Rough Hill, Newtown Linford another which is mainly a western and northern species found in wooded areas. In the spring of 2010 one turned up in my city back yard, I saw it twice in a week, but having never seen it before failed to identify it at the time, but a complete mystery turning up in my garden.



Leucozона glaucia © Stephen Woodward

Another very interesting record was of a single *Myolepta dubia* at Egleton NR Rutland Water on 7 July by SFW and HI, a largely southern species described as rarely seen.

Other species from this group, widely reported were *Rhingia campestris* from six sites. *Syritta pipiens* from eleven sites, (I failed to record any). The usually common bee mimic *Cheilosia illustrata* - singles were found at only two sites, St Marys Mills and Egleton NR and a normally common species, particularly on Hogweed, *Cheilosia bergenstammi* was only seen at Newfield Colliery.



Rhingia campestris © Stephen Woodward

Records of two species of *Xylota* were sent in. *Xylota segnis* at Egleton NR on 7 July and *Xylota sylvarum* at Beacon Hill on 12 August.

Singles of the bee mimic *Volucella bombylans* were seen at Aylestone Meadows and Bede Island both in early July. *Volucella*

pellucens did not fare much better, with singles at Quorn, Bede Island with the last record at Aylestone Meadows on 9 September.

Volucella inanis fared better, mainly in August, a species that seems to thrive in urban habitats. The records are as follows: a single at Quorn visiting Hemp Agrimony on 13 August, at Shenton Estate at the end of July, two at Humberstone Park and five on Creeping Thistle at Victoria Park in early August, and further singles at Spinney Hill Park and Aylestone Meadows with the last record at Castle Gardens mint bed on 1 September. The impressive *Volucella zonaria* was not observed by any members this year.



Sun Fly © Stephen Woodward

Among the many records for this group the **Sun Fly *Helophilus pendulus*** was widely recorded from 13 sites, common in a few areas. *Helophilus trivittatus* less so, recorded at St Mary's Mills, Soar Valley Way five on creeping thistle at the end of August, Victoria Park and Belgrave in August, with the last record at Quorn visiting Goldenrod on 4 September.

Myathropa florea was recorded from 12 sites, last record at Quorn 28 September. *Merodon equestris* came from Bradgate Park, Thurnby Lodge, Bede Island and Belgrave.

Most of the common *Eristalis* species were widely reported, particularly *Eristalis tenax*, *E. pertinax*, *E. nemorum* and *E. arbustorum* and the bumblebee mimic *Eristalis intricarius* was seen at Aylestone Meadows, Belgrave and Rough Hill during August, only singles this year.

Other Diptera

SFW and HI submitted the only records of Robber-flies, where they are much more likely to be found in the Charnwood region than

elsewhere in the county. The **Kite-tailed Robber-fly *Machimus atricapillus***, singles were reported from Bradgate Park Deer Sanctuary in July, Beacon Hill in August, Bradgate Park and Charnwood Lodge NR in September.

The less common and local species, **Brown Heath Robber-fly *Machimus cingulatis*** was seen on a rock in Bradgate Park on 28 August.

A **Stiletto-fly *Thereva nobilitata*** was recorded at Beacon Hill on 5 July. The **Notched Cleg *Haematopota pluvialis*** was recorded widely in the forest region from Newfield Colliery, Bardon Hill, Bradgate Park Deer Sanctuary described here as too many!, Egleton NR, Aylestone Meadows and City General Hospital grounds in July and August and singles of the **Twin-lobed Deer-fly *Chrysops relictus*** from Egleton NR and Albert Village Lake.

Only two Soldierfly species were reported this quarter - the **Broad Centurion *Chloromyia formosa***, several at Egleton NR on 7 July and in Shenton churchyard also in July and a single **Yellow-legged Centurion *Sargus flavipes*** resting on foliage Victoria Park on 6 August.

A single **Black Snipe-fly *Chrysopilus cristatus*** was on the margin of Willow Brook in Humberstone Park on 22 July. A **Marsh Snipe-fly *Rhagio tringarius*** was collected in GLF & MAF's moth trap in Bradgate Park on 7 July.

Singles of the commonest internal parasite of bumblebees, the Conopid fly, *Conops quadrifasciatus* were recorded from Ridlington, Spinney Hill Park, Victoria Park, City General Hospital grounds and Humberstone Park, all records in August. *Tachina fera* a parasite of caterpillars is often found in late Summer and was found at Quorn - frequent in garden, Rough Hill, Newtown Linford several on Angelica, Charley and Warren Hills, Whitwick, all in August and September.

The only Crane-fly was *Nematophora flavescens* at Desford, Shenton Estate, Egleton NR (abundant) and Quorn described as common.

A snail-fly *Coremacera pluvialis* was at Belgrave on 31 August. The small Bibionid fly, *Dilophus febrilis* was reported from seven sites, often in considerable numbers, mostly in September and this completes a broad round up of this vast group.

Lacewings

Many *Chrysopa carnea* were preparing for hibernation in a hedgerow in Appleton Park and a single specimen of *Chrysopa perla* was seen on 12 September.

Hymenoptera

Social Bees

Despite this being a poor year for many invertebrate species, bumble bees in general have done quite well judging by the records received. Some of this may be due to the success of the **Tree Bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum*** in urban habitats and elsewhere. It was widely reported by members from 21 sites. At Barlestone up to four queens were found in July. FTS also reports a nest found in a nearby house wall where the mortar joint was missing, clearly this species is adaptable when it comes to nest sites. At my local park, Spinney Hill, dozens were recorded on 3 July, queens were also seen at Bede Island in July and at Abney Street in August and the last one on the 15 September. SFW and HI recorded this bee from many sites, mainly in singles, many I suspect may have been queens. They report that at Beeby they recorded one and it was the only wild bee seen at that site! PHG again reports this bee occupying his tit box, on hot days many were vibrating their wings around the entrance hole, in July/Aug several largely black workers were observed. In the Leicester Lit. and Phil. Natural History Section Newsletter for Autumn it states SFW and HI found a black and white version of this bee at Grace Dieu in 2011.

Buff-tailed Bumblebees *Bombus terrestris* also had a relatively good quarter by all accounts, with mostly males and queens in the latter months. Queens were reported from Oaks in Charnwood, Belton village, Newfield Colliery, and Ulverscroft NR, all in August. FTS reports them as occasional at Barlestone in early July, frequent in the last two weeks, frequent during August with lots of queens around - a maximum of nine on the 21st with single queens present up to 5 September.

The **Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascuorum*** was, as usual, noted throughout this quarter and was still around when most other species had finished. It was recorded

from 42 localities. A queen was noted on Humberstone Park on 20 September.

Honey Bees *Apis mellifera* were few and far between, recorded from over a dozen sites, mostly in ones and two's, the most I saw was a few foraging on Russian Sage on Spinney Hill Park 10th August. In Beeby Churchyard SFW and HI recorded many swarming around one of the church pinnacles on 19 July which could well indicate a feral colony.

Social Wasps

A small number of **Hornets *Vespa crabro*** were reported with singles at Bradgate Park on 9 July and 7 August and two on 5 September. A nest was located in a cavity on a mature Ash tree, the workers were quite active on 21 August. The only other record for this species was from PHG's garden in Quorn on 16 August when several were flying around Hemp Agrimony flower beds. Several sightings from 5 September, till the 28th on the last two dates visiting Ivy blossom.

The **Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris*** was widely reported from over 23 sites and nests were found at Ulverscroft NR in a rotten tree root on 4 August and at Hoby churchyard on 22 August. Numbers built up feeding on Ivy in late September with records from Groby, Knighton, Newtown Linford, Ethel Road, etc. The probably common, but overlooked, **German Wasp *Vespula germanica*** was recorded over a wide area from North Kilworth, Walton on the Wolds, Woodhouse, Belton, Ayston, Ridlington, Uppingham, Thringstone, Moira, Owston village, Thurnby, Knighton, Newtown Linford and Thurnby, mostly singles.

SFW and HI also managed to record the **Tree Wasp *Dolichovespula sylvestris*** this quarter at Croft Pasture NR, many in a nest in a fallen tree on 11 July and other records in August from



Tree Wasp nest © Stephen Woodward

Bardon Hill, Newfield Colliery and Ragdale Churchyard where many were feeding on Snowberry.

Symphyla - Sawflies

The **Rose Sawfly** *Arge pagana*, was swarming on the margins of Castle Gardens on 11 August and one was seen at a Belgrave meadow on the 14th.

Howard Bradshaw

The Solitary Wasps and Bees will be reported in the next *Heritage*.

FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

A few more records this quarter, but still rather short. It has been an unusual year with a cold spring, a hot summer, and a warm autumn, but the results have been quite amazing, all plant life seemed to do well and the trees and bushes have been loaded with fruit and berries.

Walking through the Outwoods, as I do nearly every day, enables me to realise how things change over time and how each year is so different. Plants come and go over time. A colony of **Skullcap** *Scutellaria galericulata* which was over-run and eliminated by Water Pepper has re-appeared, after two years, on the other side of the path and is now a thriving colony. One plant has appeared in the plantation at the side of a path several hundred yards from the above colony.

A plant of **Agrimony** *Agrimonia eupatoria*, a plant not particularly common on Charnwood and a first record for the Outwoods, has also appeared at the side of a path. The **Common Cow Wheat** *Melampyrum pratense* has extended its range from a few plants in 2004 to many large patches, some of which are several yards across, and it is still extending its range. The one plant of **Sanicle** *Sanicula europaea* is now two, so I hope it is here to stay.

The thinning of various parts of the Outwoods has resulted in a large increase in the amount of bramble which is making it difficult to spot fungi as they appear.

The record for **Common Calamint** *Clinopodium ascendens* is interesting. In the 1988 *Leicestershire Flora* it had not been since Horwood's *Flora* in the 1933 edition and in

Mott's *Flora* of 1886 it was recorded for seven localities, none of which was this present recorded locality. The new record is the first since 2005. I'm afraid I haven't any information apart from that, or any other records.

Plants of Interest This Quarter

Climbing Fumitory *Ceratocarpus claviculata*: found on the heath at Bardon Hill.

Hoary Cinquefoil *Potentilla argentea*: located at Croft Pasture NR.

Salad Burnet *Poterium sanguisorba*: located at Desford. This plant is usually found in the east of the county on calcareous ground but not normally found in Charnwood, however a sub-species *ssp muricata* known as the **Fodder Burnet** is found on Loughborough Meadows.

Trailing St. John's-wort *Hypericum humifusum*: A single specimen growing in PHG's Quorn garden in soil on top of a wall pillar was a new plant for his garden!

Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium*: Several plants were on an artificial mound in Southfields Park, Loughborough.

Water Purslane *Lythrum portula*: seen in Bradgate Park, this is a fairly local plant found in Leicestershire only on Charnwood.

Phacelia *Phacelia tanacetifolia*: found on the Shenton Estate. An introduced species used as a garden plant and also as a small scale fodder crop for bees. A plant which is increasing and likely to become more common.

Apple-of-Peru *Nicandra physaloides*: found in Barrow Slabs. Another introduced species, this time, usually from bird seed. Also known, I believe, as the 'Shoo-fly Plant'.

Thorn-apple *Datura stramonium*: also found in Barrow Slabs. Another, perhaps more familiar plant once again probably from birdseed. Better known perhaps as it is a large plant, 1-1.5m tall, very poisonous, and when it occurs is often reported in the local press for that reason.

Dark Mullein *Verbascum nigrum*: at least ten plants were in flower at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel. Another plant associated with calcareous ground and consequently, rare in Leicestershire.

Lesser Skullcap *Scutellaria minor*: located at Old John Watering in Bradgate Park.

Common Calamint *Clinopodium ascendens*: located on the roadside verge near the railway in Eaton Parish. This is the first county record since 2005.

Giant Butterbur *Petasites japonicus*: many plants were on the canal towpath at Far Coton.

Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*: A good year for this species; one plant was on the roadside near Piper Wood and ten spikes were found in Evington Park.

Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*: 31 spikes were found at Evington Park – a record for this site.

Crow Garlic *Allium vineale*: three shoots were found under Corsican Pines at Lubenham.

Velvet Bent *Agrostis canina* agg: was found in the Deer Sanctuary at Bradgate Park. Normally present among acid wetland vegetation, it is a plant often confused with Brown Bent another member of the aggregate.

Eric Webster

OTHER RECORDS

Fungi, mosses and liverworts, woodlice, spiders, harvestmen, mites, millipedes, mayflies, earwigs, psyllids, barklice, ants, galls, scorpion flies, caddisflies, slugs and snails.

WEATHER

July was the warmest and sunniest month since 2006. It was also the third warmest July in the last 100 years after 2006 and 1983. Afternoon maximum temperatures averaged 24.3°C while night time minimums registered 14°C: both figures more than 2°C above normal. This included 10 days where temperatures exceeded 27°C. Sunshine totals were also very high at 256 hours which is 50% above normal. Rainfall totals showed a very interesting pattern. At Mountsorrel I recorded 96 mm and Jim Lofts at Nanpantan recorded 103 mm both figures about 70% above normal but nearly all this rain fell in two spectacular downpours late in the month. Winds were mainly light with a maximum gust of 29 mph on the 28th.

High pressure dominated the month establishing itself on the 5th and continuing until the 25th. This is the first time high pressure has

dominated a summer month since 2006 and after six wet summers most people considered this a very welcome change! Under clear skies temperatures quickly rose. The maximum temperature for the month was reached on the 13th when Jim recorded 31°C and Mountsorrel and the Loughborough University weather station both recorded 30.3°C. Dr Richard Hodgkins, who is head of the University Geography department, is kindly going to provide data from his weather station too, after he completes the upgrade of the station. The hottest week was the 13th-20th when 27°C was exceeded every day. There were also some extremely warm nights with the warmest being on the 23rd after the exceptionally hot day when the temperatures only dropped to 18.4°C. Sleeping proved very difficult on many nights! The high pressure began to decline on the 22nd and the cooler air aloft and lower pressure combined with the heat at ground level to spark 24 hours of remarkable thunderstorms. During the evening of the 22nd Jim recorded 38 mm of rain in a tropical downpour and at Mountsorrel and I recorded 35 mm on the 23rd in at least three violent storms. This was followed on the 27th by another exceptional period of rainfall. A staggering 41 mm of rain fell between 8pm Saturday 27th and 1am Sunday 28th. There was some flash flooding and disruption caused as our drainage systems cannot cope with rain falling at a velocity of eight inches an hour at times. The month did eventually cool down a little but was still warmer than usual. So, a very summery month that most of us enjoyed but the heat did get a bit oppressive at times!!

Summer 2013 has been the warmest in Loughborough since 2006. Indeed since the classic summer of 1976 only three more summers have been warmer than this one namely 2006, 2003 and 1995. August continued the trend of June and July being warmer than average. Afternoon temperatures averaged 21.8°C: nearly 1°C above normal. Night time temperatures averaged 13.4°C, 1.5°C above normal as warm air masses prevented the temperature falling too far on most nights. It was a very dry month. At Mountsorrel I only recorded 31 mm of rain - only half the expected figure with Jim at Nanpantan registering 47 mm, 30% below normal. I recorded 22 dry days in August and only two dates - the 5th and 16th -

saw significant rainfall. Air pressure was generally lower than July but although the heat wave was not as intense most days remained mainly dry and warm with a westerly wind that brought a mixture of broken cloud and sunshine. Individual sunshine totals were not as high as July but it still shone on average for six hours each day reaching an overall total of 180 hours which is slightly above normal.

The month began extremely hot with the month's highest maximum at all stations peaking at 31.5°C at Nanpantan with Mountsorrel reaching 31°C on the 1st. It then began to get a little more unsettled as the hot air mass moved with 17 mm of rain falling on the 5th at Mountsorrel. The other notable rainfall was 16 mm recorded at Loughborough on the 16th. Apart from these most other rain events were slight. The month's warmest night was the 2nd when the temperature failed to drop below 17°C with the coldest night recorded on the 14th with just 8°C logged at Nanpantan.

Taking the summer as a whole there were more than 600 hours of sunshine recorded making it the sunniest summer since 1989. Temperatures for the summer averaged 17°C, 1°C above normal. Rainfall totalled 200 mm which was slightly above average but statistics can be deceptive. Of this total nearly 70% or 140 mm fell on just seven summer days. 64 of the 92 days of summer were actually dry. It is for this reason that most of us will have fond memories of this summer - a season which at last brought us some warmth and sunshine!

September was a warmer and sunnier month than average and was the driest since 2009. It has continued the pattern of generally warmer and drier than average Septembers being recorded since the year 2000. Indeed eight out of the last ten Septembers have been warmer and drier than average. Afternoon temperatures averaged 18.1°C which was 0.6°C above normal while night time temperatures were logged at 10.3°C which is 0.3°C above the normal. The overall mean for the month was therefore 14.2°C about 0.4°C above the long-term average. September 2013 was another much drier month with just 26 mm of rain being recorded in Mountsorrel and 29 mm falling at Jim Loft's station in Nanpantan. These figures are only half the expected totals. Sunshine totals

were logged at 146 hours which was 8% above normal. Winds generally blew in from a westerly direction with the peak gust of the month recorded at East Midlands Airport on the 15th at 42 mph with 37 mph logged at Mountsorrel.

The first five days of the month were very warm and sunny with high pressure and southerly winds. The warmest day of the month was the 4th with 26°C recorded at Mountsorrel with Jim logging 28°C in Loughborough. This day was also the sunniest day with 11 hours being observed. After this there followed a cooler and more unsettled fortnight as low pressure took control. Although rain fell on most days in this period amounts were generally small. My maximum daily rainfall at Mountsorrel was just 5 mm on the 13th with Jim recording just 6 mm on the 11th. There were some colder nights in this period too with a minimum of just 5.8°C on the 15th but both air and ground frost was avoided for the entire month. The last ten days were mainly dry as high pressure established itself again and the lack of rainfall resulted in the gardens starting to go brown despite the lateness of the season! So another good September has been enjoyed by many of us and it is becoming a very reliable month for good weather but that is not a promise for next year!

Phil Morrish

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We are grateful to them all.

Records for the fourth quarter of 2013 should be sent by 15 January 2014 to:

Helen Ikin, 237 Forest Road, Woodhouse, Loughborough, Leics. LE12 8TZ.
email: helen@canids.freeserve.co.uk