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CLASSIFIED RECORDS

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MAMMALS

A dead **Hedgehog** was spotted by ATO on the pavement between Barrow-upon-Soar and Sileby, a possible road casualty. Two more corpses were found – near the Brand and in Newtown Linford and PJD had at least one visiting her Quorn garden in May and June leaving droppings. Another regularly visits a Loughborough garden to eat the cat's food. More dead hedgehogs were seen in Groby (two) and one in Cossington. In Empingham churchyard in May SFW & HI found a tame half-grown Hedgehog which came and sniffed our boots before trundling off. The churchwarden seemed to know nothing about it – as it was so tame, we wondered if someone had kept it and fed it over winter and then released it in the churchyard.



Hedgehog © Helen Ikin

Mole activity has been seen in Swithland throughout the quarter and molehills were noted at: Ashby Magna, Thorn Wood in Bradgate Park, Barrowden, Brook Spinney at Shenton, Great Dalby, Great Stretton, Goadby Marwood village and around the Hall grounds and lakes, Groby, Ibstock, Newton Burgoland Marshes SSSI, Snarestone, The Outwoods and

Wellsborough. Molehills were also located at a number of churchyards including: Allexton, Arnesby, Ayston, Broughton Astley, Chilcote, Freeby, Glooston, Heather (and village), Lockington, Netherseal (and village), Peatling Parva, Thrussington, Tixover, Wistow and Wyfordby. It might be easier to list where we didn't see them!

Common Shrews were found dead in Thornton and Quorn.

Small **bats** were seen flying over a garden in Shelthorpe and small and medium species in Quorn. ST found bat droppings on South Kilworth and Bitteswell churches. JG was out with his bat detector through the period and was able to identify four species. **Noctule**, one of the earliest to leave their roost and often seen early in the evening was noted at seven sites: Blakeshay Wood, Cropston village and Reservoir, Thornton village and Reservoir, Thurcaston and Woodhouse Eaves. **Common Pipistrelle** was at all of the aforementioned sites plus Anstey, Benscliffe Wood, Kirby Muxloe, and Swithland Wood north section. Its near-relative, Soprano Pipistrelle was confirmed at six sites. The final species to be positively identified, **Brown Long-eared**, was found at three sites, Cropston, Bradgate Park Hallgates entrance and Blakeshay Wood. In addition, unidentified *Myotis* species were heard at four sites.

PJD found a dead **Brown Hare** near Empingham and there were two near Shenton in mid-April and up to three in three sections of Bradgate Park. A single was also seen at Cropston Reservoir.



Brown Hare © Steve Woodward

Rabbits were noted around Swithland Reservoir Waterworks, seen commonly in Swithland throughout the quarter and a juvenile

was seen in Kinchley Lane, Rothley in mid-May. Only one was spotted on Buddon Wood South Mound but there was plenty of evidence of more. At least five were at Altar Stones with others at Charnwood Lodge NR, Lockington Pits, and Bradgate Park. Signs were seen on the Shenton Estate and in churchyards at Loddington, Ayston and South Luffenham and there were plenty of burrows around Ashby Magna.

Grey Squirrels were reported from North Luffenham and Quorn churchyards, throughout Bradgate Park, Charnwood Lodge NR, Swithland and Launde Big Woods. However, I am sure they are in all villages and parks.

A dead **Field Vole** was found in PJD's Quorn garden – probably brought in by the neighbour's cat.

A dead **Red Fox** cub was found in the middle of Priory Lane at Ulverscroft and removed to the verge. **DAP** had a fox territory marking in his Swithland garden in mid-April and a fox earth was seen at Newton Burgoland with pheasant feathers and debris around it. Two were noted walking around Hobley Lake at Cossington Meadows on 4 May with a single at the same site on 16 June.



Fox © Jim Graham

The only **Stoats** reported was one working the borders in DAP's Swithland garden about 8 o'clock one morning in early May and another seen crossing the road from the water works at Cropston Reservoir and jumping into the reservoir grounds on 17 April and again at the same location on 3 May.

A **Badger** visited DAP's garden and destroyed a pheasant's nest with 15 eggs due to hatch and he surprised young Badgers above ground at about 5:30 one May afternoon near



Stoat © Jim Graham

a sett. Road casualties were noted in Joe Moore's Lane and Brand Lane in Woodhouse, The Ridings in Swithland, the A47 near Belton in Rutland, on the motorway in Leicester, on the A50 near Field Head and at Woodhouse. Badgers were seen in gardens in Loughborough in late May and June. There was a used latrine pit near Newton Burgoland and evidence of Badgers at Goadby Marwood – hair on barbed wire and diggings for Pignuts. In St Peter's churchyard at Netherseal, it was also evident that Badgers had been digging for Pignuts – a favourite food. Owing to boundary changes Netherseal is now in Derbyshire but it still comes into Vice County 55 – Leicestershire and Rutland, as it was in Leicestershire at the time the Vice County boundaries were set.

Muntjac were seen in Buddon Brook Meadows and around Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs and in woodland at Ulverscroft.

Numbers of **Roe Deer** are still being seen around a farm at Quorn.

Helen Ikin

BIRDS

Most of the suitable local waters had a **Mute Swan** nest, with something like 40 young fledging, most survived but as usual some were predated. Two first-summer **Whooper Swans** were at Groby Pool on 29 May. They showed no rings or damage.

There were three **Pink-footed Geese** at Wanlip North Lakes on 27 April and one at Swithland Reservoir on 1 May. **Greylag Geese** bred at Cropston Reservoir and Groby Pool raising a total of around 25 goslings. **Canada Geese** bred at Birstall, Cossington Meadows and Kelham Bridge with a similar number of goslings raised as the Greylags. There was 43 noted at a

small pond at Oaks in Charnwood on 3 April. What was probably the same **Egyptian Goose** was seen around the Wanlip Meadows area on 27 April and 6 May.

A lone **Shelduck** was at Fort Henry Ponds on 2 June.

There were 42 different reports of **Mandarin Duck**, mainly from the Cropston/Bradgate Park area but also from Swithland Reservoir, Groby Pool, Ives Head, Loughborough Wood Brook and a Loughborough garden. Breeding was confirmed at Groby Pool, the Wood Brook and Cropston Reservoir.

A maximum of three **Wigeon** were around the Soar Valley waters until 30 May. The usual resident individual was seen in Bradgate Park. **Gadwall** were seen at seven sites with a maximum of 32 at Watermead Park on 4 June. Breeding was confirmed at Cropston Reservoir and Kelham Bridge. The last of the **Teal** observations of the winter was a flock of 52 at Birstall Meadows on 7 April. The maximum number of **Mallard** noted was 48 at Cropston Reservoir on 3 May. Young birds were noted at most of the suitable stretches of water. A **Garganey** was at Swithland Reservoir on 9 April and a pair was found at Brascote Pits on 14 April. Up to eight **Shoveler** were at Birstall Meadows and odd ones at Groby Pool and Cropston Reservoir, all in April.



Wigeon in tree © Steve Woodward

Three **Red-crested Pochard** were found at Watermead Country Park on 1 April. Pairs of **Tufted Ducks** were present at most of the local waters many suspected of breeding. As this species is later breeding, the results will not be known until the next quarter. Three **Common Scoter** were noted at Cropston Reservoir on 16 April. Nine **Goldeneye** were at Swithland

Reservoir on 8 April and odd ones, mainly drakes, remained until 27 May. One or two **Goosander** were around the Cossington-Swithland area during April and one remained on the River Soar at Quorn until the end of the quarter.

Red-legged Partridge were only found in half a dozen areas on Charnwood and one at Acresford, no records were more than four birds. There was only one record of **Grey Partridge**, this being a calling bird at Kelham Bridge on 6 May. There were numerous **Pheasant** reports from all locations; the maximum number seen at any site was six. The male **Reeves Pheasant** reported in the last quarter was followed by a female into JG's garden at Cropston on 18 April.

A **Gannet**, as far away from the sea as possible, flew over Ibstock on 10 May. Up to eight **Cormorant** were around Cropston Reservoir during May and June and at least three nests containing young were noted at Groby Pool. **Little Egret** were found mainly in the Bradgate Park/Cropston Reservoir area with a maximum of four birds. Cossington Meadows however had eight on 16 June. There were only 2/3rds the number of **Heron** records compared with Little Egrets. As with the previous species records came mainly from Cropston Reservoir where there was a maximum of eight. Breeding was confirmed at Groby Pool where there were at least four nests producing nine young.

Pairs of **Little Grebe**, all on nests or in suitable habitats, were found at seven sites but no young had been seen by the end of the quarter. **Great Crested Grebe** bred much earlier and young birds were seen at Thornton Reservoir, Cropston Reservoir and Cossington Meadows. The maximum number seen was 38 at Cropston Reservoir on 3 May. A **Slavonian Grebe** stayed at Swithland Reservoir from 8 to 10 April and a **Black-necked Grebe** put in an appearance at Thornton Reservoir on 13 June.

Each year sees an increase in the number of **Red Kite** observations. This quarter they were seen at around 15 different sites, although still mainly towards the east. They were usually seen in ones or twos but there were six over Buckminster on 13 May. Around 20 **Sparrowhawk** sightings were reported from all



Red Kite © Jim Graham

areas. None were recorded actually in gardens, unlike the winter records where the birds have easier pickings. **Buzzard** now probably go unreported but there were still around 70 different observations with a number presumed breeding in the area. Eight were seen over Bradgate Park on 6 April and there were seven over Leicester on 7 May. In late April one was seen carrying a snake at Bradgate Park. **Kestrel** were noted in more than 20 different places, very widespread. They were usually as singles but occasionally pairs were seen. **Hobby** sightings were up on last year and were seen in ten different areas. Two were over Bradgate Park on 17 June. **Peregrine** were seen throughout the quarter in Leicester where a pair nested. They were also seen regularly around Swithland Reservoir and in the Groby area.

The only **Water Rail** noted was one calling on two occasions at Kelham Bridge in May, suggesting probable breeding. **Moorhen** appeared to be at all possible breeding sites but only a few had young by the end of the quarter. **Coot** breed earlier than Moorhen and young or sitting birds were noted at half a dozen sites. The most seen together was 29 at Nature Alive in Coalville on 27 June there were also 15 young present.

Oystercatchers probably bred at Watermead Park and Cossington Meadows and others usually in twos were seen at Swithland Reservoir, Wanlip, Birstall Meadows and Lockington. **Little Ringed Plover** were at Fosse Way Quarry in May and at least ten were at

Cropston Reservoir in June with a lone **Ringed Plover** there on the 14th. **Lapwing** bred at Fosse Way Quarry and appeared to be nesting at a few other sites. The largest flock noted was 64 at Cossington Meadows on 16 June. A summer-plumaged **Dunlin** was at Cossington Meadows on 28 April and two in similar condition were at Cropston Reservoir on 14 June. Two or three **Snipe** were still at Wanlip Meadows and Cropston Reservoir until 27 April. A roding **Woodcock** was seen in Benscliffe Wood on 4 June. A pair of **Curlew** frequented the usual field at Black Hill but no one confirmed breeding. From 11 April until 27 May there seemed to be at least one **Common Sandpiper** around the Soar Valley gravel pits and reservoirs. There were 22 different reports but unfortunately no one suggested attempted breeding. The only **Green Sandpiper** record was of one at Wanlip Meadows in mid-April. A pair of **Redshank** was seen displaying at Fosse Way Quarry and Wanlip Meadows in April but although others were seen at Brascote Pits and Cossington Meadows breeding was not noted.

An adult **Kittiwake** spent a short time at Cropston Reservoir on 4 May. **Little Gull** maximum counts outnumbered **Black-headed Gull** this quarter. The most Black-headed seen together was 11 at Cropston Reservoir on 5 April but there were 13 Little Gulls there on 26 April. The greatest number of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was 55 feeding in fields at Beacon Hill on 20 June. **Herring Gull** never reached more than four. The only other gull reports were a **Yellow-legged Gull** at Groby Pool on 10 May and a **Caspian Gull** at Albert Village on 6 May.

Common Tern were mainly reported at Cropston Reservoir and Cossington Meadows where young were noted on 16 June. One colour-ringed bird at Cropston Reservoir had been seen there in the two previous years. Three **Arctic Tern** were at Cropston Reservoir in mid-April.

Stock Dove seem to be doing well at the moment with observations all around the area including feeding in gardens. The maximum number recorded was eight in Bradgate Park on 21 April. **Woodpigeon** are obviously under-recorded in spite of the numerous reports. Surprisingly, the largest number seen was just 23 on 8 May at Kelham Bridge. Sixty **Feral Pigeon**

were around Broombriggs Farm on 11 April. Although **Collared Dove** are probably not as common as they were, I would suggest that a total of 14 throughout the area is under-recording!

The first **Cuckoo** of the year was reported from Warren Hills, Charnwood Lodge NR on 18 April. After that there were many reports but probably some would be of the same birds in the Cropston/ Bradgate Park area. Others, usually heard, were at Odstone, Cossington Meadows, Watermead Park, Ulverscroft and Kelham Bridge. On the whole I imagine, not a good year.



Cuckoo © Jim Graham

A **Barn Owl** was noted at Cossington Meadows on 5 April and two were hunting the margins of Cropston Reservoir on 21 April. On 20 June one was hunting near Cropston village. Single **Little Owl** were only found at Brascote Pits, Bradgate Park and JG's garden at Cropston in May and June. The same garden had the occasional **Tawny Owl** as did DP's garden at Swithland. Others were heard in Bradgate Park, Lingdale, and Loughborough.

Three **Swifts** at Watermead Park on 22 April were the first of the year and no others were seen until 3 May when 50 were over Swithland Reservoir. After that they were widespread with 250 over Groby Pool being on 10 May the maximum count. Probably fewer in number this year.

Kingfisher seem to have been rarer this spring with observations only coming from eight sites but breeding was confirmed on the river Lin in Bradgate Park. The other sites were all in suitable breeding areas.

There were numerous reports of **Green Woodpecker** coming from all suitable locations.

Two juveniles were seen in Bradgate Park by the Newtown Linford gate. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were even more noticeable with around 60 observations. Juveniles were noted in quite a few places by late May. Unfortunately there was no mention of **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**.

Understandably, there were only a few **Magpie** records but **Jay** were well documented. They were seen at around 15 sites including gardens, with a maximum number of four in Swithland Wood. It was estimated that there were a thousand **Jackdaw** in the roost at Watermead Park on 9 June. Five **Rookeries** were noted, surprisingly none on Charnwood, the two at Rothley Court not being counted. Two were in the Melton area and three in the Sence Valley around the Shenton area, one with 27 nests. Of the 12 **Raven** records all but one, at Heather, were over Charnwood. No more than two birds were seen and no breeding reported.



Rook © Steve Woodward

Fifty separate records of **Goldcrest** suggest a healthy population, breeding was noted in a few places and there were also regular garden visits. As usual **Blue, Great** and **Coal Tits** were widespread with numerous young around. **Willow Tit** were again regular at Kelham Bridge but there were also sightings in Dimmingsdale Spinney at Cropston and a garden at Holwell. **Marsh Tit** bred in Swithland Wood and Booth Wood and were seen in another half dozen locations.

Skylark were found in a dozen likely breeding areas but was only confirmed in Bradgate Park. Nine were singing off Causeway Lane, Cropston on 3 April.

Two hundred **Sand Martins** were feeding over Cropston Reservoir on 25 April and double-

figure counts were noted at Lockington and Swithland Reservoir. Few nesting birds were mentioned and the artificial walls at Sence Valley and Kelham Bridge had fewer nests than usual. The first **Swallow** of the year was reported from Cropston Reservoir on 3 April and others arrived in the week after that. Two hundred were over Groby Pool on 8 May. Active **House Martin** nests were found in Quorn, Leicester and Cropston and there was a huge flock estimated at around a thousand birds at Swithland Reservoir on 20 May.

Singing **Cetti's Warbler** were heard throughout most of the quarter at Cossington Meadows/Watermead Park and Raynsway Lake, Syston.

Long Tailed Tit appear to have recovered a little from the first quarter with family parties (max 23 birds) seen in half a dozen areas and pairs or nest building noted at numerous other sites.

There were at least 70 different reports of **Chiffchaff**, most in suitable nesting areas, with 16 singing in Launde Big Wood on 22 May and 11 in Swithland Wood on the 19th. **Willow Warbler** reports were only half the total of Chiffchaff and again most of the singing birds were in suitable breeding locations. Twelve were singing at Charnwood Lodge NR on 9 May. **Blackcap** were even more widespread than the above with singing heard all over the area. Fifteen were heard in Launde Big Wood and there were double-figure counts at three other sites. By contrast **Garden Warbler** were only noted at ten sites, all around Charnwood apart from two in Humberstone Park in Leicester where they were heard regularly throughout May. **Lesser Whitethroat** were even scarcer with singles singing at six different sites and two at Watermead Park on 22 April. As expected **Common Whitethroat** were as their name suggests, more common. The highest density appeared to be around Cropston Reservoir and Kelham Bridge - young were noted at both sites.

Grasshopper Warbler were heard in only two places, Cossington Meadows and Thurmaston Flood Plain. Others may go undetected due to ageing ears! **Sedge Warbler** were heard in only six locations all in probable breeding areas. The same comment applies to

Reed Warbler, only seven or eight sites but all in suitable areas.

Swithland Wood would appear to be the place to see **Nuthatch** with 16, including young birds, seen there on 15 June. All the wooded areas in Bradgate Park seem to have held at least one pair whilst others were noted across Charnwood including a regular garden visitor in Loughborough. Unusually, **Treecreeper** were more noticeable than Nuthatches with double-figure counts at Thornton Reservoir, Bradgate Park, Swithland North and South Woods where there were 20 on 12 June. Others were in similar woods to the Nuthatches. Amongst the 70 records of **Wren**, Swithland North and South Woods totalled 48 singing birds! Young birds were noted throughout the area.

The most **Starling** reported were 25 in a garden at Holwell on 20 June.

There were probably record-breaking numbers of passage **Ring Ouzel** this spring. Individuals were at Brascote Pits, Black Hill, Ulverscroft, Park Hill Golf Club at Seagrave and more numbers than usual at the regular stopping off site at Warren Hills. At least 14 were counted there on 16 April. **Blackbird** were in good numbers throughout the area with fledglings in gardens. Once again, Swithland Woods held the maximum numbers with 25 on 19 May. The last **Fieldfare** of the winter were at Black Hill when there were 17 on 18 April. The previous week there were 48 and 30 seen at Thringstone on 2 April. **Song Thrush** were as widespread as Blackbird but in far fewer numbers and only a few fledglings were noted. Swithland Woods again had the most birds but only six, on 15 June. **Mistle Thrush** were only found at half a dozen sites with six birds in Bradgate Park on 19 June being the most recorded.



Spotted Flycatcher © Jim Graham

It is pleasing to note that there were more **Spotted Flycatcher** in the observations this quarter. They were seen in three different woods in Bradgate Park, and breeding was confirmed in two of them. Eight were noted in Swithland South Wood on 12 June and a pair bred at Thornton Reservoir.

Robin were everywhere including everyone's gardens the total in Swithland Wood on 19 May was 53! Between 10 April and 15 May a **Black Redstart** could be heard singing around the Phoenix Square area, Leicester. There was only one **Common Redstart** seen this spring, a male at Sence Valley Forest Park on 20 April. Likewise there was only one **Whinchat**, a single at Queen Elizabeth II Wood at Ravenstone on 2 May. **Wheatear** were more common with 11 at Timberwood Hill on 15 April and ten in Bradgate Park the following day. Others in smaller numbers were at Park Hill Golf Club and Warren Hills.

Numbers of **Dunnock** reached five in various places and most **House Sparrow** were recorded from gardens with 50 regularly in one at Loughborough. Two **Tree Sparrow** were in a Holwell garden twice in late April but the only others were at Easthorpe Bridge in the Vale of Belvoir with one on 4 May and Saltby where there were five on 28 April.

Unfortunately none of the **Yellow Wagtail** sightings suggested breeding, although a male was seen in late May and mid-June at Cropston Reservoir. Six Hills and Muston Meadows also had males in May but all others seem to be passage birds, all singles apart from one group of three. **Grey Wagtail** bred at Groby Pool, Croft Pasture and Cropston Reservoir and were seen at half a dozen other sites all with habitat suitable for nesting. The only urban location that **Pied Wagtails** were found was Loughborough. All others were at Cropston/Bradgate Park, Birstall Meadows and Fosse Way Quarry.

Tree Pipit were only to be found in Bradgate Park and Warren Hills with a maximum of two at either site. **Meadow Pipit** were in similar locations with the addition of Black Hill and Cropston Reservoir where there were 11 on 9 April.

Chaffinch were numerous throughout the area with a dozen together noted in a few

locations. **Greenfinch** were very scarce with nine in a Cropston garden being the largest total but this did include juveniles. The new garden bird appears to be the **Goldfinch** as nearly all the records came from members' gardens. There was only one count in the teens but garden numbers should increase in the next quarter. A flock of 85 **Linnet** at Muston Meadows on 16 May was the only double-figure count. They were seen at another dozen sites but no young were seen. Eight **Lesser Redpoll** visited feeders at Bishops Meadow in Loughborough on 1 April and the same number of **Crossbill** flew over Bowling Green Wood, Bradgate Park on 19 June. Amongst the 15 locations that **Bullfinch** were found a few were gardens. Three was the maximum number seen and no juveniles were mentioned.

Yellowhammer were to be found in almost all areas of Bradgate Park with 17 seen there on 16 June. Others in numbers up to five were spread widely but thinly. Most of the wetlands held at least one pair of **Reed Bunting** but 17 were counted on 16 June at Cossington Meadows where breeding was also confirmed. The good news of a **Corn Bunting** sighting at Measham on 6 May was tempered by the fact that it was of only one bird!

Bas Forgham

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Once again we appear to have had very few sightings for this quarter, although this may be attributable in part to the unseasonably cold weather which we experienced for most of the quarter.

Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*: We have several sightings from different localities for this reptile, beginning with a number of sightings from the Barrow Road area in Quorn. PJD reports finding two specimens in a neighbour's compost bin on the 6 April. On the next day she found three specimens in the same bin and one other under a bush in her own garden. On the 9 April, DAP reports finding a specimen in Bradgate Park. This specimen was approximately 23 cm long and was found by the perimeter wall at the Newtown Linford end of the Park. Later in the month, on the 18 April, PJD found four

specimens in one compost bin, and one specimen in a second bin. The following month, on the 8 May, HI and SFW found another specimen in Bradgate Park. This time the specimen was found under a stone, near the north wall. Towards the end of the month, on the 20 May, PJD found two specimens in her garden while weeding; and on the following day, again while weeding, she found a single specimen – and part of a tail, which some unfortunate specimen had obviously mislaid!

Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*: On 8 May, near the north wall of Bradgate Park, HI and SFW found a single specimen under a stone. On 12 May, also in Bradgate Park, JG found a single specimen in the Hallgate Spinney area. Later in the month, on the 26 May, JG found another specimen in the Bowling Green Spinney area. This specimen was a juvenile one: approximately 15 to 20 cm long. (Given the cold weather this spring, it is perhaps not surprising that sightings of this reptile and the Adder were few and far between.)



Grass Snake © Jim Graham

Adder *Vipera berus*: We have two sightings for this reptile, both from Bradgate Park, and both from SFW. On the 13 May SFW found two specimens: a fat, brown one at the base of the north wall, which he presumed was a female, and a slender, blue-grey specimen which he assumed was a male. A month later, on 21 June, SFW found another fat, brown specimen, which again he assumed was a female – this time in a wet, tussocky, grassy area, in the valley below the covered reservoir.

Smooth or Common Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*: We have three sightings for this amphibian; and interestingly, all three are from suburban gardens. On the 21 April, PJD found a specimen while moving some bricks in her garden. The

following month, on the 15 May, ATO recorded three specimens in a small garden pond belonging to some friends, in Park Road, Loughborough, not far from the Shelthorpe Road junction. Finally, on 24 June, PJD found a specimen in her neighbour's new garden pond in Quorn.



Toad © Jim Graham

Common Toad *Bufo bufo*: We have only two sightings for this amphibian, from PJD, who found one in her garden in Quorn on the 6 June and JG, who noted a mating pair at Cropston Reservoir on 5 April.

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*: As might be expected we have a few more sightings for this amphibian! HI reports that croaking could be heard from a dry pond at Woodhouse on the 6 April. She also reports that a week later, on the 14 April, at Bradgate Park, she found 11 clumps of spawn in two ponds, behind the Pheasantry. On the same day, she also found another five or six clumps of spawn and three small tadpoles in a pond below Tyburn, also in Bradgate Park. Finally, PJD reports that there were numerous adults and hundreds of tadpoles in her own garden pond and that of a neighbour all through the months of May and June!

In conclusion, it seems that Bradgate Park is something of a happy hunting ground for reptiles in spite of the numerous visitors and their dogs! It is also reassuring to find that amphibians are happy to move into suburban surroundings – especially when given a little encouragement in the form of a garden pond!

Tony Onions

FISH (including CRAYFISH)

Sadly, we have no sightings in our local waters to report on for this quarter; however, I hope to have more to report on during the coming months.

Nevertheless, it so happens that for those who found the report on the **Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)** in the last bulletin of interest, we have another instalment in the ongoing saga of this species here in UK waters! On the 4 May of this year, an angler by the name of Dave Green caught a 22 pound cock salmon from the River Trent, somewhere between Newark and Collingham, where the River becomes tidal. This event was reported in the magazine *Trout and Salmon*, with a photograph, and provides additional proof that Salmon are indeed returning to the Trent. *Ref.1.*

Salmon migration is not quite as simple and straightforward as one might imagine. Salmon spawn in December, at the turn of the year, and generally speaking they start to return to freshwater from late summer (August) onwards, with most of the fish arriving in September and October, depending on weather conditions. In the event of drought conditions, the fish may be held up in the estuary or the lower pools of the river for some time waiting for rain and higher water levels to give them the impetus to move upstream. The fish can often afford to wait: many of our rivers in the British Isles, especially those on our western and northern coasts, are comparatively short: and, given reasonable water levels, a salmon can travel from the estuary to the spawning grounds, in the headwaters of the river, in the space of a few hours! However, in the case of our larger rivers, the situation becomes more complicated. Historically speaking, larger rivers like the Tay or the Tweed in Scotland, and the Wye and Severn on the English/Welsh border have enjoyed a spring run of fish in addition to the autumn run. (We can safely assume that this would also have been true of the Trent in pre-industrial times.) These so-called 'springers' are often larger than autumn fish, and often enter the river as early as February or March. This means that they may remain in the river – without feeding for several months until the end of the year. Although they do not feed in

freshwater, returning salmon which are 'fresh-run' from the sea will often take a bait or lure. As time goes on, these springers become 'stale' or 'potted', and less and less likely to take an angler's bait or fly. Unlike their Pacific cousins, some Atlantic Salmon do survive to spawn a second or even a third time: these spawned-out fish are known as 'kelts', and anglers who fish for springers in the early months of the year sometimes find it all too easy to catch these kelts – which *will* feed – as they drop back downstream towards the estuary.

Sadly, during the second half of the twentieth century there has been a steady decline in the numbers of wild Salmon both here in the UK and elsewhere, and in particular there has been a marked decline in the numbers of 'springers', with some rivers in some years having virtually no spring run. Of course, numbers do fluctuate from year to year, but the underlying trend has been ever downwards. In particular, as reported in the last bulletin, 2014 was a very bad year. To quote from *Trout and Salmon*:

"Sixty Year Low"

"...(the) Scottish Government has confirmed that the number of salmon caught by rods in 2014 was the lowest since records began in 1952. Some 45,175 salmon were caught by anglers, of which 8,035 (18 per cent) were killed. Netsmen killed 17,778 fish. The low compares to the five-year average rod catch of 85,000. In 2013, 67,500 fish were caught by rods..."

So why has there been this inexorable decline? Unfortunately, there is no simple answer. (It is not simply a question of overfishing, although this has almost certainly been a factor!) The factors involved are multiple and complex: and there is simply not enough space here to discuss these in detail. In an article in the magazine *The Field*, published in May of this year, Tony Andrews, the Executive director of the Atlantic Salmon Trust, lists the known problems, and some possible potential problems. For example, as Andrews points out, the Atlantic Salmon is a coldwater fish: a fish of the temperate and sub-Arctic zones. Historically, its range has extended as far south as the northern coasts of Spain and Portugal. However, there is a suggestion that the seas in that area

are becoming warmer as a result of climate change, and that there is consequently a danger that the rivers draining into the Bay of Biscay may lose their salmon runs in the not-too-distant future. The one thing that people are agreed upon is that action - both nationally and internationally - is needed urgently. In this regard, I would like to leave the reader with the concluding remarks from Andrews' article:

"As food, driver of rural tourism, angler's quarry or cultural icon, the existence and value of the wild Atlantic Salmon has never been fully appreciated. To allow its demise would be a human catastrophe. Continuing as we are is not an option." *Ref. 2.*

Tony Onions

References:

1: "Trout and Salmon" – July 2015 Edition – "News Reel" – Page 50.

2: Andrews Tony: "Act to Save Wild Salmon": Article in "The Field", May 2015 Edition, Pages 36 – 39.

DRAGONFLIES and DAMSELFLIES

The report for Q2 will appear in Heritage 219.

BUTTERFLIES

Sadly this was not a good spring for many of our butterfly species: the lack of any decent prolonged periods of warm, sunny weather must have been particularly harmful for many short-lived species given only a few suitable days to mate and lay eggs and species such as the Green Hairstreak, Small Copper and Common Blue must surely have suffered as a result. Let's hope that the Small Copper and Common Blue second generations experience better weather!

Thankfully, the Holly Blue showed welcome signs of having recovered from its marked decline of last year. Yet again, this was a poor quarter for migrants, few Red Admiral and Painted Lady being reported and no Clouded Yellow.

Hesperiidae

No **Small Skipper** *Thymelicus sylvestris* were specifically identified but an **Essex Skipper** *Thymelicus lineola* was observed at Buddon

Wood south mound by HS on 30 June. The **Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus*** was widely noted in 15 localities during June and was first seen on the 16th by HB at Bede Island in Leicester, followed by two in Bradgate Park the next day. Most reports were of one to five but about 14 were present at Humberstone Heights and at Appleton Park in Leicester on the 24th and 27th.



Large Skipper © Jim Graham

Once again we have LWP to thank for our records of the **Dingy Skipper *Erynnis tages***. On 13 May he noted eight at Asfordby Hill and six on 4 June. He also reported 11 at Brown's Hill Quarry NR on 13 May and three **Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*** at Ketton Quarry on 4 June.

Pieridae

The handsome **Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*** was reported from a total of 37 well spread localities, 24 in April, 19 in May and six in June. Most reports were of singletons but up to seven were noted at some large localities and ten were counted at Ketton Quarry on 24 June.

The first **Large White *Pieris brassicae*** reported was at Rothley on 14 April and on the 24th several were seen in and around Leicester. The species continued to be seen throughout the quarter but only in small numbers.

The **Small White *Pieris rapae*** seemed more plentiful and widespread, though less frequent in our gardens than during some recent years. A close view is usually necessary to distinguish the **Green-veined White *Pieris napi***, particularly as one gets older, though close focussing binoculars can be a great help. This species was seen in 14 well scattered localities, sometimes in member's gardens.

It is always good to see the first **Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*** and a male was present in EPT's Loughborough garden on 6 April

- two days later one was present in our Quorn garden. During the quarter the Orange-tip was seen in 33 widely spread localities but it was noticeably less plentiful than during some recent years. Eighteen were counted in Sence Valley FP on 20 April and 25 males and several females were observed at Buddon Brook Meadows the following day. It was last observed on 7 June at Quorn.

Lycaenidae

Apart from a singleton at Asfordby on 4 June, Charnwood Lodge NR provided our only other sightings of the **Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*** with seven at Timberwood Hill on 21 April and eight on 15 May; three were also noted at Warren Hills on 13 May.

This was a dreadful spring for the **Small Copper *Lycaeus phlaeus*** and it was only noted in five localities: singletons in Bradgate Park on 13th May and at Croft Pasture NR on the 15th; two were present at Puddledyke the same day; one was noted at Muston Meadows, Belvoir on the 16th, and finally one was seen at Rothley on 3 June. In other favoured localities it was searched for in vain.

No **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** were recorded this spring.

The **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** was noted more widely at 16 localities, but only Asfordby Hill with 42 on 4 June and Ketton Quarry with 13 on 24 June produced double-figures.



Common Blue © Steve Woodward

After last year's poor showing, the garden-frequenting **Holly Blue *Celastrina argeolus*** showed a welcome increase with sightings reported for 27 well spread localities, often in parks, gardens and churchyards and several active at the same time in some places. It was



Holly Blue © Steve Woodward

first noted on 9 April at Quorn and last seen on 27 June at New Lount NR and in Appleton Park.

Nymphalidae

It is many years now since we had a good spring for the **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** and this year this attractive butterfly was only reported from nine localities, all lone individuals apart from two in Bradgate Park and all in June.

The **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*** was likewise thinly spread and noted in only five localities, again all in June, including three in three member's gardens and two on the margins of Cropston Reservoir.



Painted Lady © Jim Graham

The colourful **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** was widely seen in 46 localities and was active throughout the quarter. Some large counts were: 28 at Cossington Meadows NR on 6 April, 22 at Watermead CP on 9 April and 33 in LWP's Rothley garden and environs on 18 April. Twelve or more new generation butterflies were active at Appleton Park in Leicester on June 29th.

After last summer's bumper year the **Peacock *Inachis io*** post overwintering population was high and it was recorded in 61 widely spread localities, a few remained active

into early June and the last was noted on the 24th at Hugglescote.

The **Comma *Polygonia c-album*** overwintered population was low and it was only noted during April and May at some nine localities and a new generation individual was observed at Quorn on 30 June.

A **Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*** was observed at Bloody Oaks Quarry NR in Rutland by LWP on 24 June. During recent years this fine butterfly has become well established at several sites in Rutland.

Satyridae

Numbers of **Speckled Wood *Parage aegeria*** were on the low side this quarter and although it was noted at 29 localities it was missing at some of its usual sites. It was found at five sites in April, 11 in May and 16 sites in June and a maximum of five was noted at three separate localities.

No **Wall *Lasiomamata megera*** were reported this quarter.

The **Marbled White *Melanargia galathea***, a species largely restricted to limestone grassland, was only reported seen at Bloody Oaks Quarry NR on 24 June, when three were present.

The widely spread **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*** was first seen on 16 June and between then and the end of the month at 24 separate localities. Some large counts were: 15 at North Quarry, Holwell on the 24th; about 20 at Twenty Acre Common, Six Hills; about 30 at British Gypsum road verge near Barrow-upon-Soar, and 24 at Puddledyke, all on the 27th.

During June, the now local **Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*** was observed in six localities: Asfordby Hill (three) and Ketton Quarry (13) on the 4th; Bradgate Park (five) on the 29th; at Buddon Wood south mound (one), Charnwood Lodge NR (five) and Kelham Bridge (two), all on the 30th.

Lastly, the now widespread **Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*** was recorded in 13 localities during June, with the first sighting on the 21st at Cropston Reservoir and a maximum of 11 at Puddledyke on the 27th.

Peter Gamble

MOTHS

This quarter's results fall a long way short for the same quarter for last year, which reflects on the evening conditions we have had and, all in all, not that much of an improvement on this year's January to March quarter. It took eight of us to record 978 moths of 157 species, and believe it or not, **Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba*** was recorded just the once with two individuals at light in Swithland Wood end of June. The most widely recorded and most numerous species was **Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamationis*** and was one of the 13 species that actually made it into double figures. Almost a third of the total were micro moths, so if we took these out we would have only just made around 100 species.

The Swifts are honorary micros and **Gold Swift *Hepialus hecta***, **Common Swift *Hepialus lupulinus*** and **Map-winged Swift *Hepialus fusconebulosa*** were recorded mainly on the Charnwood Forest. A solitary ***Nemophora degeerella*** was seen at Shawell, but over 50 were watched "dancing in sunlight" at Bradgate Park both mid-June.

The Hallgates area of Bradgate Park produced the only **Forester *Adscita statices*** record with two there towards the end of June. Almost on its northern limit is ***Morophaga chloragella*** a single of which was at light in Swithland Wood end of June, it is associated with bracket fungi and dead wood. A single **Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella*** was at light at Charnwood Lodge NR in early June, and several of the white cases of **Larch Case-bearer *Coleophora laricella*** were found on the same night.

Brown House Moth *Hoffmanophila pseudospretella* and **White-shouldered House Moth *Endrosis sarcitrella*** were doing the rounds getting found indoors and at light from mid-May to end of June, often associated with old bird's nests. Another dead wood associate ***Esperia sulphurella*** an attractive little moth was attracted to light in Rothley in mid-May.

The Heather feeding ***Neofaculta ericetella*** was at its usual haunts of Stoneywell and Newfields Colliery, but interestingly also at a garden in Rothley, so it is worth keeping a sharp

lookout for this species if you have Heather in the garden or nearby. A singleton of the stunning micro moth ***Chrysoclista lathamella*** was swept from the lower area of a marshy field at Brown's Hay. This is stated as a rare moth in Britain, less than a dozen dots on the NBN maps and mainly occurring in the south and east. Often found where White Willow is present, the larvae burrow into the bark but other than that, little is known of their biology and this record constitutes only the fourth for VC55. As we seemingly have abundant suitable habitat I'm sure a concerted effort would find this moth elsewhere.

Although over 80 **Green Oak Tortrix *Tortrix viridana*** were at light in Swithland Wood in late June this was the only record received of what is usually a very abundant moth. The only records of ***Pyrausta aurata*** came from gardens, as did records of **Small Magpie *Eurrhynx hortulata***. The **Bee Moth *Aphomia sociella*** was well recorded being attracted to various light sources throughout the quarter. A single **Barred Hook-tip *Watsonalla cultraria*** turned up at light at Stoneywell in early May, this continues to be a Charnwood speciality wherever Beech grows.

All the records for **Yellow Shell *Camptogramma biliniata*** were from daytime sightings. Recently out of hibernation, a solitary **Red-green Carpet *Chloroclysta siterata*** was attracted to light at Rothley in late April. An unconfirmed record of **Grass Rivulet *Perizoma albulata*** came from the meadow in Swithland Wood in late June. Several were seen settling on its food plant Yellow Rattle, very few records of this species are outside of Rutland. Fingers crossed this gets substantiated in the not too distant future.

Seven species of the challenging 'Pug' group were recorded - all from light sources and all from the Charnwood Forest. The **Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata*** seems to be doing well with records widespread and some in considerable numbers. **Seraphim *Lobophora halterata*** and **Early Tooth-striped *Trichopteryx carpinata*** were at light in Stoneywell in early April.

All the records for **Brown Silver-line *Petrophora chlorosata*** were off the Forest both during the day and at light, this has been

another species that has been reported in large quantities. At the beginning of its flight period, 11 April must have been optimum conditions for **Waved Umber** *Menophora abruptaria* as this was the only date this was recorded on at several sites.

The huge and spectacular **Privet Hawk-moth** *Sphinx ligustri* was a nice find in the trap at Rothley in late June. **Lime Hawk-moth** *Mimas tiliae* was at light in Swithland Wood around the same time whilst several records of **Poplar Hawk-moth** *Laothoe populi* were all in early June. Apart from a single at Rothley, all other **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellatum* records came from a garden in Barlestone, all throughout June.

Always nice to see, a single **Puss Moth** *Cerua vinula* was at light in Rothley in early June.

All the Prominents were recorded, throughout May and June, but all in low numbers. **Orange Footman** *Eilema sorocula* was the only member of the Footman group recorded with just the two sightings, from Stoneywell and Charnwood Lodge NR in early May and early June respectively.

A solitary **Turnip Moth** *Agrotis segetum* made a pleasant change to the ever present **Hebrew Character** *Agrotis exclamationis* at Rothley. A contender for the most widely recorded species was **Flame Shoulder** *Ochropleura plecta* which started to show from early May and continued throughout June. **Ingrailed Clay** *Diarsia mendica*, **Small Square-spot** *Diarsia rubi* and **Setaceous Hebrew Character** *Xestia c-nigrum* were all widespread throughout the whole of June. The first **Double Square-spot** *Xestia triangulum* appeared at the end of June in Rothley, and the **Shears** *Hada plebeja* and **Pale-shouldered Brocade** *Lacanobia oleracea* were out from early June at Charnwood Lodge NR. The only reports of **Varied Coronet** *Hadena compta* and **Pine Beauty** *Panolis flammea* were from Rothley, two very different but equally pretty moths.

All the Orthosia species were well represented but began to disappear towards the end of April, with **Clouded Drab** *Orthosia incerta* hanging on until 17 May. A larva of **Mullein Moth** *Cucullia verbasci* was found in the garden at Quorn on Buddleia at the end of June.



Gold Spot © Steve Woodward

Marbled White Spot *Protodeltote pygarga* seems to be getting recorded more frequently and the six in Swithland Wood were quite a nice record. Despite the food plant being Nettle (although not restricted to this), we had just the one report of **Burnished Brass** *Diachrysia chrysitis* from Swithland Wood at the end of June. Usually associated with damp habitats **Gold Spot** *Plusia festucae* was recorded in a Rothley garden also at the end of June. All reports of **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma* were form widespread daytime sightings and **Spectacle** *Abrostola tripartita* from light traps at Rothley and Charnwood Lodge NR on 4 and 5 June respectively.



Burnished Brass © Steve Woodward

The two **Burnet Companion** *Euclidia glyphica* records were restricted to Buddon Wood and Barrow-upon-Soar in late June. To finish off with the first generation of **Straw Dot** *Rivula sericealis* were widespread being seen during the daytime, at Actinic and MV light.

Many thanks to members who sent in their records

Graham & Anona Finch

BEETLES

There were three events that took place this quarter that I feel ought to have a special mention. The first was on 22 April when on a pre-arranged date, I was able to spend the most incredible day with Darren Mann and Steve Lane in the Deer Sanctuary at Bradgate Park. Their main objective was to search for beetles associated with dung and/or carrion. The targets for the day were *Aphodius borealis*, *coenosus*, *fasciatus*, *merdarius* and *zenkeri* plus *Trox sabulosus* and *Trypocopris vernalis*. Although there are records (some historical) for all species mentioned, realistically some were going to be long-shots at best and it was not the ideal time of year for a couple of others. Not swayed by these odds, we crossed the River Lin about mid-morning and headed up the slope sampling deer dung on the way to start the list off. I was a little concerned that I would not be able to find a deer carcass that the rangers had shown me several days previous, but there was no need to worry. Blessed with a scorching hot sunny day, we were greeted with the 'aroma' of rotting flesh at least 300 yards away, all we had to do was follow our noses.

I won't go into too much detail but after several hours of poking, prodding and beating and bashing of various body parts (the deer's, not ours) with a gardening trowel over a white sheet we produced more beetles than I had ever seen in such a small area in such a short time. The two of them were soon in there picking out burying beetles, dung beetles, rove beetles, ground beetles and even a few click beetles amongst others. A couple of hours later we all had tubes full of beetles of all shapes and sizes. Several other carcasses were given the same treatment, even I added a few to the list. Approaching midday, having worked up an appetite, we headed down to the Deer Barns café for refreshment but not before a good scrub in the toilets.

Suitably refreshed we made our way to the car park at Newtown Linford but, on the way back more dung was pulled apart, heaps of grass were sieved from ditches and piles of wet leaves were given a thorough going over, adding more species as we went. All in all, a superb day with a total of 90 species, two new for the county and

several species that had not been seen for 100 plus years. The added bonus was, I had a master class in the noble art of 'corpse bashing' by two of the best coleopterists in Britain and all I had to do was buy them a cup of tea at the café..... you see there is still value for money out there! As there are far too many species to state here I will mention some of the highlights in the section write up. I seem to remember saying some time ago if you want to find different species, you need to employ different tactics well this, was certainly different!

The second event was being invited to join Uta Hamzaoui and her BSBI team on 17 June at Sand Hills Lodge (Brown's Hay) near Newtown Linford, where they were carrying out a botanical survey of this stunning area of the Ulverscroft Valley. Anona and I restricted our search to just a single marshy field. Simple standard methods were used, hand searching foliage, grubbing along the ground, sweeping and of course we did not ignore the horse dung - well if the two horses were good enough to provide it, it's only polite we should inspect it. Over 40 species were found in just a couple of hours, none of them were particularly rare but we had a wide selection of families and a very pleasant few hours. This area has been privately purchased and the owners are incredibly keen to look after the whole area as a nature reserve, which is a very refreshing outcome nowadays and credit to the new owners. As the above section states, highlights will be mentioned in the section write up. Anona also netted the micro moth *Chrysoclista lathamella* of which there are only three previous records but this being the first from the Charnwood Forest.

The third event was being granted permission to proceed with a series of survey methods in Bradgate Park. Three small 2½ litre plastic buckets to be used as pitfall traps were placed in fenced off areas, to prevent interference from deer in the 'deer sanctuary' but out of bounds to the general public. They are dry traps and not laced with any preservative, so have to be checked regularly. The traps are placed close to the dead deer carcasses in the hope of catching additional dung/carrion species, but this has not come to fruition....yet. There has however, not unexpectedly, been an abundance of Carabids

with *Abax parallelepipedus*, *Pterostichus niger* and *P. madidus* the most frequently recorded, apart from a few Amara, several Staphylinidae and the odd Geotrupes, all of which have been infrequent regulars but only as singletons. This is an ongoing project and will be interesting to monitor the results also other trapping methods are anticipated to be employed soon.

As expected this has been an bumper quarter not just for species but also sheer numbers of individuals, which has added several new county records and a few that have not been seen for a long, long time. To give an idea of what has been involved, 13 recorders amassed the grand total of 4,735 individuals (well over four times that for the same quarter for 2014) of 260 species (nearly double that for the same quarter for 2014). Keep in mind that numbers of individuals are the minimum counted as some species were in such large quantities they could not be calculated precisely. As there are so many species for this section I will just summarise how many from each family and try to 'cherry pick' certain ones to mention.

Here we go then, just four species of 'water beetles' were encountered with *Laccophilus minutus*, *Agabus bipustulatus*, and *Hydrobius fuscipes* all from Bradgate Park, although the last mentioned was also at Cloud Wood and Melton. A single *Enochrus melanocephalus* was attracted to MV light at Ketton Quarry.

The Carabids did exceptionally well with 48 species recorded. The only three records of *Cicindela campestris* were from Bradgate Park, and the only *Elaphrus cupraeus* was found in a marshy field at Brown's Hay on 19 June. *Bembidion* species were found with some in reasonable numbers 30 *Bembidion biguttatum* were at Melton, 20 *Bembidion lunatum* at Bradgate Park and over 80 *Bembidion articulatum* again at Melton. The bright metallic green *Poecilus cupreus* were found at Cloud Wood and Misterton with the similar *Poecilus versicolor* at Bradgate Park. The usual *Pterostichus* species were out in force with *Pterostichus madidus*, *P. niger* and *Abax parallelepipedus* particularly plentiful in pitfall traps set in Bradgate Park. The following *Calathus rotundicollis*, *Calathus melanocephalus*, *Paranchus albipes* and

Oxypselaphus obscurus were recorded all in fairly low numbers. Agonum were represented by four species all fairly common, as were the four species of Amara. A single *Curtonotus aulicus* was at Bradgate Park. *Harpalus affinis* were widespread, *Trichocellus placidus* were recorded at Misterton Marsh and Rutland Water in April and May respectively and added a little variety in the form of shape and size.

The three common Sphaeridium species *bipustulatum*, *lunatum* and *scarabaeoides* were well represented in dung and in pitfall traps as were *Cercyon haemorrhoidalis*, *impressus*, *lateralis*, *melanocephalus* and *obsoletus* and the similar looking *Cryptopleurum minutum* was in cow dung at Ulverscroft in early May. The flattish and shiny Histerid beetle *Margarinotus brunneus* was in a pitfall trap in Bradgate Park and a close cousin *Hister unicolor* was in cow dung at Ulverscroft, both in May. The strange *Thanatophilus rugosus* proved to be regular in Bradgate Park either in deer dung or at dead deer corpses, being seen throughout the quarter but the very similar *Silpha atrata* early April was only recorded from Charnwood Lodge NR.

It's not surprising with close on 1,000 species within the family that the Staphylinidae cannot be ignored, so the 51 species recorded this quarter go a long way to boost the numbers. The only record of a single *Olophrum piceum* came from sieved leaf litter in Wardley Wood in April. The subfamily Tachyporinae, are a nice group to get into and some are even 'user friendly' especially the genus *Lordithon*; a solitary *Lordithon lunulatus* was swept at Ketton Quarry in May. *Tachyporus hypnorum*, *nitidulus*, *obtusus*, *pallidus* and *pusillus* plus *Tachinus laticollis*, *marginellus* and *rufipes* were all recorded from widespread sites although in very low numbers. We have Steve Lane to thank for the only member of the Aleocharinae subfamily *Aleochara intricata* recorded when he found a single at Bradgate Park in April.

Horse, cow and deer dung, plus sieving flood refuse produced members of another nice subfamily the Oxytelinae, with *Oxytelus laqueatus*, *Anotylus mutator*, *rugosus* and *tetracarinatus* mainly from Bradgate Park but also from Kelham Bridge, Croft Pastures and Ulverscroft NR. The Stenus are another pleasant genus with their bulging eyes. The five species

recorded were *Stenus clavicornis*, *impressus*, *juno*, *providus* and *nitidusculus* again mainly from the Charnwood Forest. The large black typical Staphs were well recorded with 16 species of *Philonthus*, including a new county record, *Philonthus spinipes* from Bradgate Park, but only three species of *Quedius* were recorded, all fairly widespread. Several interesting species were 'obtained' from the deer carcasses at Bradgate Park *Ontholestes murinus* and the spectacular *Creophilus maxillosus*, the former also in pitfall traps close by during April and May.

The only records of **Minotaur Beetle** *Typhaeus typhoeus* were from Bradgate Park on four occasions in all three months. The *Aphodius* species were very well represented with 14 species recorded, making the extra effort of sampling dung of various origins pay off quite significantly. *Aphodius depressus* has been quite an elusive species in the county but with the ten recent records from Bradgate Park we can say it is well established there at least. *Aphodius luridus* was last recorded in 1992 at The Drift, so again the record from Bradgate Park in late April was encouraging. *Aphodius rufipes*, *A. ater* and *A. rufus* are all common species, the former particularly so at moth lights, were all present throughout the quarter. Bradgate Park produced the only *Aphodius granarius* (just eight previous records) but *A. prodromus* and *A. sphaelatus* were abundant from many sites. The small but perfectly formed *A. haemorrhoidalis* was recorded at Bradgate Park in late June - last recorded by Derek Lott in 1985. Darren Mann found a solitary *A. borealis* in deer dung in April, there were previously only six records and Bradgate Park is the sole location for this species. There is no doubt that putting the extra effort into searching for this genus never fails to turn up a few surprises, but due to the nature of the preferred habitat I guess records will always remain few.

The **Common Cockchafer** *Melolontha melolontha*, usually frequent, was reported just once at moth lights from Swithland Wood at the end of June. A specimen of a Buprestid beetle sent to me from a Leicester garden in June was tentatively keyed out to be *Agrilus cyanescens*, as this would constitute a new county record, validation was needed and was sent off

appropriately and it was indeed confirmed to be this species. I am speculating this native of Western Europe to East Asia, was an accidental introduction, possibly from a neighbour's newly arrived garden shed ready to be erected. Doing exactly what it is supposed to do by running around in bright sunshine on mud in damp situations, a single *Heterocerous fenestratus* was found at the edge of a pond near Melton at end of May.

Always around, but difficult to identify to species level, are the Click beetles, there is still no convenient key to use for this family. However, seven species were identified, from the tiny *Kibunea minuta* to the large and familiar *Athous haemorrhoidalis*.

The Soldier Beetles share the same predicament, no usable comprehensive key, but between us we managed to identify 11 species, all common and widespread.

The oval, black with two white cross lines, Dermestid beetle *Megatoma undata* was taken from the Rothamstead Light Trap at Rutland Water in early May. After being shown the bright shiny metallic blue with matching legs *Necrobia violacea* by Steve Lane in April, persistent 'searching' of the deer carcasses at Bradgate Park produced a similar looking beetle, only this was a little larger but with distinctive yellow legs. Several specimens were retained and keyed out at home, they proved to be *Necrobia rufipes*. The former species *violacea* had only been recorded on ten occasions, but *rufipes* on only two; the first by Frank Bouskell in Owston Wood in 1895 and the second from Burley Wood by an unknown recorder in 1907. Despite the paucity of records (due to habits and habitat) both species have been in good numbers on continued visits to the site. Both of these species could be found under any carcass, including old-ish road kill, a peg for the nose is advised! The Notable-B *Dasytes plumbeus* was swept from low vegetation at Brown's Hay, plus several records for the **Malachite Beetle** *Malachius bipustulatus* including from the city parks early to mid-June. There had only been two records of the extremely similar *Cordylepherus viridis* up to 1960, then it was found at Ketton Quarry in 2013. The latest records are from Ketton Quarry in May 2015 and off the public footpath along the side of Groby

Pool in June 2015 - no doubt a species worth looking for.

A large heap, about a metre high and in diameter, of what looked like used bedding from Hamsters or Guinea Pigs had been dumped beside a track near the sewage farm on the outskirts of Melton. A few trowels full sieved into a white tray produced dozens (approx. 50 were counted) of *Cryptolestes ferrugineus* at the end of May. Although quite a smart bright amber-coloured beetle, it can be a real pest of stored grain. As there are only eight previous records for this little beetle, it was another welcome addition.

A total of five of the Ladybird-like fungus beetle *Tritoma bipustulata* were beaten from a *Trametes* infested dead tree stump at Ketton Quarry in late April. This is a Notable-A species which indicates it is scarce and thought to occur in fewer than 30 10km squares of the National Grid, or for the less well-recorded groups within seven or fewer Vice-counties. It is small, black and shiny, with two large red patches on apex of elytra and very much like a ladybird.

Which brings us neatly on to the Ladybirds, a total of nine species was recorded. Starting with two, quite un-ladybird like species; *Rhyzobius litura* a small brownish beetle with an indistinct dark horseshoe-shape on the wing cases was swept from a meadow in Long Whatton in mid-June and *Coccidula rufa* where over 20 adults were sieved from flood refuse at Croft Pastures in early April. A single **Kidney-spot Ladybird** *Chilocorus renipustulatus* was beaten from conifers at Melton, all the usual species were well recorded with just the one record of **Water Ladybird** *Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata* at Melton but **24-spot Ladybird** *Subcoccinella vigintiquattuor-punctata* were recorded far and wide from sites in Leicester to Melton and Rutland Water.

The **Swollen-thighed Beetle** *Oedemera nobilis* continues to be found widespread and was one of the most frequently recorded species, but just two reports of one of the cardinal beetles *Pyrochroa serraticornis* from Nunckley Hill in early June and Shawell in mid-June. The same pile of bedding as the *Cryptolestes* at Melton produced a single of one of the ant-like flower beetles *Omanadus floralis*

and beating various blossom, particularly Hawthorn during May, gave ample supplies of *Anaspis frontalis*, *humeralis* and *maculata*.

Just five species of Longhorn beetles were reported, a single *Rhagium mordax* from Greetham Far Wood in late April, *Grammoptera ruficornis* numbers were starting to increase. There were just two records of *Clytus arietus* and singletons of *Anaglyptus mysticus* and *Tetrops praeustus*. The Chrysomelidae are a large family and 14 species were recorded including **Pale Tortoise Beetle** *Cassida flaveola* at Brown's Hay in mid-June and **Hawthorn Leaf Beetle** *Lochmaea crataegi* recorded from many sites in Rutland and Leicestershire, all from beating Hawthorn throughout May. *Crepidodera aurata* and *fulvicornis* were beat from Willow and *C. aurea* from Aspen, all numerous from mid-May to mid-June. Another species with very few records is *Epitrix atropae* with only nine records including these latest, it was found at two sites in Rutland, at Ketton Quarry and Bloody Oaks Quarry both from Deadly Nightshade.

The weevils are another huge family with 27 species recorded this quarter including the delightfully named and Notable-B **Cramp-ball Fungus Weevil** *Platyrhinus resinosus* a single of which was found at Bloody Oaks Quarry under the bark of dead wood in late April. Not at all looking like a weevil the Notable-A, *Anthribus fasciatus* amazingly was found in an Ibstock garden in late May; a species of woodland and pasture woodland with a liking for Hawthorn, it is always worth looking closely at garden visitors. A welcome guest as the larvae are predatory on a variety of scale insects, quite a smart beast, being overall reddish with a black and white checkerboard pattern. Although not a favourite of fruit growers, **Apple Fruit Rhynchites** *Tatianaerhynchites aequatus* is a rather impressive weevil with a long snout, dark coppery/bronze head plus pronotum and brick reddish elytra, it looks quite tropical. It was found at Hick's Lodge, Lea Meadows and Bradgate Park from mid-May to mid-June. Always super abundant on the Charnwood Forest, the **Gorse Weevil** *Exapion ulicis* was also found well away from here at Hick's Lodge and Newfield Colliery, and probably on almost every other Gorse bush in the county. One of the many

blue/black Apion species *Protapion apricans* (this has the yellow femur and dark tibia) and can be a pest on Red Clover, was swept in abundance at Brown's Hay. The **White Clover Seed Weevil** *Protapion fulvipes* is very similar but only the tarsi are blackish, was found in the garden at Ibstock and *Protapion nigritarse* almost identical to the last species, seven were swept from a meadow in Long Whatton mid-June. Extremely common and most likely to be found on Docks and other species of Rumex, *Perapion violaceum* was found with one of the five species of small reddish Apions, *Apion haematodes* both swept from grassland at Rutland Water in mid-May. A small and completely blackish weevil with a wedge shaped rostrum and bulging eyes belonging to the Oxystoma genus *Oxystoma cerdo* keys out quite easily as there are only the four species involved; just a single adult was swept from grassland at Martin's Wood off Dean's Lane at the end of June. Another small, blackish weevil but with the first three segments of the antenna yellowish-red is *Eutrichapion cerdo*, swept from a meadow at Long Whatton mid-June. A totally different looking weevil is **Clay-coloured Weevil** *Otiorhynchus singularis* these can cause substantial damage to Raspberry buds in the spring; two were attracted to MV light at Stoneywell Cottage in early May. There is a small group of green weevils often swept off nettles that can cause problems with identification. Consequently very few confidently identified records are received. *Pachyrhinus lethierryi* belongs to this group and is a species that was first recorded in Britain around 2003 being fairly distinctive and spreading north fast. It is associated with *Leylandii* and is liable to be frequent in gardens as much as anywhere. At present the only site recorded is a garden in Sapcote where it was first recorded in the county in 2012 and has been recorded there each year since. The **Hairy Spider Weevil** *Barypeithes pellucidus* was recorded on several occasions in the garden at Ibstock. Another pest, this time on Strawberry, the **Strawberry Root Weevil** *Sciaphilus asperatus* a single was swept at Bloody Oaks Quarry in late April. Beating various Sallows produced *Dorytomus taeniatus* from Misterton Marsh and Groby Pool. Two species associated with Oak, **Acorn Weevil** *Curculio glandium* and *Curculio venosa*, were

attracted to MV light at Stoneywell Cottage in mid-May.

Finally another Clover-frequenting species, specimens of *Tychius picirostris* were swept from meadows at Long Whatton and Brown's Hay, both mid-June.

Many thanks to the all our recorders for this quarter.

Graham Finch

OTHER INSECTS

A lot of records, as usual for this quarter, so they will have to be compressed somewhat. I think most naturalists locally will agree that, in general, it was not a very exciting quarter, with many species not present in their usual numbers or not present at all!

Hemiptera

Green Shieldbug *Palomena prasina*, a single in Spinney Hill Park and a mating pair on the Ethel Road hedgebank were noted in April, with two at Quorn in June.

Just two **Hawthorn Shieldbugs** *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale* were out of hibernation in May, one in a hedgebank at Ethel Road and one at Meeting Street in Quorn. Several **Sloe Bugs** *Dolycoris baccarum* were recorded with seven adults at Great Central Way on 21 May, singles at Meeting Street, Quorn on Dames Violet on the 25th and others at Humberstone Heights, Hamilton Park and Quorn all in late June.

A single **Bishops Mitre** *Aelia acuminata* was at Barkby Thorpe on 9 June and four on the flowery embankment of Evington Park on the same date. As usual the **Dock Bug** *Coreus marginatus* was widely recorded this quarter with records from Ethel Road - several pairs mating on 13 May and over 20 in a hedgebank at Monk's Rest, Scraftoft on 16 May. Other records came from Meeting Street in Quorn and two at Puddledyeke both in late May and finally two mating and three close by in Loughborough on 20 May. The only other record for this group was a single **Hairy Bug** *Coriomeris denticularis* at Barkby Thorpe on a meadow margin on 8 June.

Rhopalidae

The rather attractive bug *Corizus hysoscyami* which has recently spread eastwards, one was seen on the embankment at Great Central Way on 21 May and singles were in PHG's Quorn garden on 21 May and 25 June. The only other record for this group was also at Quorn *Rhopalus subrufus* - one on 21 May.

Diptera

Hoverflies

Melanostoma scalare was recorded in early spring, several around tree trunks in Spinney Hill Park and common on rides in Aylestone Holt, both records for this common species in late April but none after that. Many of our more common Syrphids had a somewhat patchy distribution this quarter, *Syrphus ribesii* was noted as common on Humberstone Park nature area and also in a hedgebank at Belgrave Lock both in late April but for the rest of the quarter were hardly recorded anywhere and a similar picture with *Syrphus vitripennis*, odd ones at Evington Park and Aylestone Holt in late April and common at Humberstone Park on the 24th but not seen after. *Eupeodes luniger* did quite well locally with two on Humberstone Park, Abbey Park and Ethel Road, with several at Belgrave Lock on 27 April and Bede Island on 1 May, also noted at Quorn on 18 and 27 May. At 19 Abney Street this common hoverfly never fails, in the last 12 years of recording in has never failed to turn up, mostly several times throughout the season.

Everyone's favourite and the one most photographed, the **Marmalade Hoverfly** *Episyrphus balteatus* was very thin on the ground this quarter and was first recorded Spinney Hill Park on 20 April - probably out of hibernation. Other records were for singles at Caldecott on 18 June and Ashby Magna on 23 June. Numbers of this common migratory species began to build the following quarter.

Numbers of the usual spring harbinger, *Epistrophe eligans* were again disappointing, with the only record from Humberstone Park - four on 20 April. *Leucozona lucorum* is another spring species I am having difficulty finding in recent years, PHG had it in his Quorn garden on 13 May and on other dates; one was in the

hedgebank at Ethel Road on 13 May and another in a hedgerow ditch at Barkby Thorpe on 8 June.

Other hoverflies noted were a single *Xanthogramma pedissequum* at Aylestone Meadows on 23 June and a single *Chrysotoxum festivum* picked up on a road at Barrowden on 12 June by SFW and HI.

Cheilosini

A female *Cheilosa pagana* was noted on a buttercup in Ethel Road on 13 May. *Cheilosa variabilis* must be under-recorded, the males at rest are distinctive as they rest with wings slightly open giving it a rather delta-winged appearance. The following were noted: one on low vegetation at Watermead on 11 May, one at St Mary's Mills on 21 May, one by the brook at Spinney Hill Park on 22 May and three males in Willowbrook Park on 27 May. Several female *Cheilosa albitarsis* were on buttercups in a roadside verge in Ethel Road on 13 May. The bee mimic *Cheilosa illustrata*, a Hogweed specialist, was recorded but only singles at: City General grounds on 18 June, St Mary's Mills on 23 June, Hamilton Park on 24 June and Appleton Park on 27 June.



Myathropa florea © Steve Woodward

Rhingia campestris was only reported from Meeting Street Quorn, with several visiting flowers on 7 May and 8 June and other dates. Single *Melanogaster hirtella* were seen at Belgrave Lock on 27 April, Monks Rest, Scraftoft on 15 May and Spinney Hill Park brookside on 16 May. *Myathropa florea* was recorded from Humberstone Park, three in the nature area on 24 April, two at Spinney Hill Park on 16 May and at Quorn on 10 and 18 June. *Anasimyia contracta* one in a ditchside at Barkby Thorpe on 8 June, a rather scarce and elusive species which I have only encountered three times in many years, locally.

Several *Helophilus pendulus* were noted at Six Hills on 27 June. A single male *Parhelophilus frutetorum* was seen at St Mary's Mills on 21 May and 23 June. Only two records of the **Narcissus Fly** *Merodon equestris* were submitted; at Arnesby on 10 May and Castle Gardens on 12 June.



Criorhina ranunculi © Steve Woodward

The only record of the **Pied Hoverfly** *Volucella pellucens* reported was of several sightings in PHG's Quorn garden in June. The bee mimic *Volucella bombylans* was recorded from Bede Island - one on 16 June, five in the nature area at Appleton Park on 27 June and two in Evington Park on 29 June. Another interesting bee mimic *Criorhina ranunculi* was found at Stocking Wood by SFW on 25 April.

Other Diptera

As expected the **Dark-edged Bee-fly** *Bombylius major* was widely reported during April, at Quorn several were noted visiting Primrose and Great Periwinkle and at Loughborough Big Meadow visiting Ground Ivy, noted foraging Dames Violet in Evington Churchyard and Blackthorn in Leicester Arboretum, other records came from Castle Gardens, Appleton Park, Humberstone Park, North Luffenham, Woodhouse, Cropston, Swithland Wood, Bradgate Park, Allextion, Wellsborough and Shearsby. Clearly on the increase in recent years.

Soldier Flies; a few **Broad Centurian** *Chloromyia formosa* records were submitted: City General grounds, three on 18 June; Hamilton Parks one and Bradgate Park both on 21 June; Spinney Hill Park a single on 25 June, and three at Appleton Park on 27 June. **Black-horned Gem** *Microchrysa polita*, two were on the margins of an embankment at Evington Park on 18 June.



Downlooker Snipe Fly © Steve Woodward

Downlooker Snipe Fly *Rhagio scolopacea* records submitted were, a few at Newton Burgoland Marshes on 21 May and many there on 4 June and a single in a meadow at Barkby Thorpe on 8 June. **Black Snipe Fly** *Chrysopilus cristatus* were common in a wet meadow at Aylestone on 23 June. Just one Robber-fly record, *Leptogaster cylindrica* - two at Hamilton Park on 27 June.

Several **St Mark's Fly** *Bibio marci* were at Warren Hills on 13 May and odd ones in Hamilton Park on 15 May. A single **Tachina fera** was noted at Quorn on 13 May. **Notched - horned Cleg** *Haematopota pluvialis* were at Bradgate Park, Ashby Magna and several at Newton Burgoland Marshes, all in late June.

And finally, SFW and HI have recorded the **Holly Leaf Miner** *Phytomyza ilicis* widely over the county.

A disappointing quarter for many species as a whole.

Hymenoptera

Social Bees

Always a difficult subject to write about, for despite a decline, mentioned in the press, there would seem to be an awful lot of them still about.

Buff-tailed Bumblebee, *Bombus terrestris* are usually some of the earliest about, HI and SFW recorded queens from 20 sites over a wide area of the county, mostly during April and May. Individual records came from Barlestone with queens common in April, scarce during May, occasional in June and males from the 7th of the month. PHG at Quorn records good numbers visiting flowers of Cotoneaster.

I noticed a worker on 1 May at Freemans Lock and two also foraging White-dead Nettle at Appleton Park on the 20 May; one cannot underestimate the importance of this plant for foraging early bumblebees, particularly in rural habitats where nectar-bearing flowers are in short supply. Queens of **Early-nesting Bumblebee *Bombus pratorum*** were recorded at Coles Nursery on 6 April and at Hamilton Park, foraging Sallow, on 9 June. Cotoneaster was used commonly at PHG's Quorn garden in June. Several workers were on Comfrey at St Mary's Mills in June and common at Castle Gardens, with males noted at Spinney Hill Park and Barkby Thorpe in early June. At Barlestone this species was described as frequent during April, occasional in May, occasional during June becoming frequent towards the end of the month especially males. In my small patch I only managed three workers, most of the workers in my garden lack the yellow abdominal band, which is quite common in this species. SFW and HI recorded **Red-tailed bumblebee, *Bombus lapidarius*** at over 30 sites throughout the county, the majority of which were queens. Other queens were noted at Appleton Park and Humberstone Park in April and of course from Barlestone. At Quorn a queen was seen entering a hole in ground of a rockery on 11 May. At Barlestone in June occasional workers were seen most of the month, more frequent towards the end of the month. I too found workers on the low side, but building at a few sites later, with 15 foraging Clover and Hieracium at Bede Island on the 16th and similar numbers on Evington Park on the 18th of the month. **White-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lucorum*** were reported from fewer sites than either *B. terrestris* or *B. lapidarius* and queens were seen at Heather, Chilcote churchyard, Allextion churchyard, Snarestone, and Congerstone in April, with records in May from Barrow-upon-Soar, Thrussington, Isley Walton and Goadby Marwood. Records from Barlestone were a maximum of four queens, three with pollen on the 15 May, with queens on the 19th, workers with pollen from the 26 May and frequent in June on Aquilegia, Cerinthe, and Foxglove. **Tree Bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum*** are now widespread in many areas of the county and one of the few bumblebees that regularly visit

my garden, queens locally noted at Monks Rest, Humberstone Park, and Appleton Park in May, numbers foraging Sweet Briar at Willowbrook Park on May 23rd, in June common in borders at Spinney Hill Park, Castle Gardens, Evington Park and elsewhere. JG records them nesting above a void in his kitchen, using the same entrance that wasps used the previous year. A very versatile bee when it comes to nesting sites and a welcome addition to our depleted bee fauna.

The **Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascuorum*** was commonly recorded over the county and, being usually a later starter than some, has a long season and keeps going when several others have stopped. Queens were seen at Appleton and Evington Parks on 9 April. This is another bee that favours White Dead-nettle, several were foraging this in Leicester Arboretum on 15 April. It was a frequent visitor to Quorn where it was feeding on flowers of Bitter Vetch and later Bush Vetch on 3 May, proving that some bees at least favour our wild flowers to cultivated specimens.

The **Garden Bumblebee *Bombus hortorum*** appears to be in some trouble from records received this quarter. A worker with a full pollen basket was in my garden on 2 June was my only record. EPT also recorded one in a Loughborough garden foraging Foxgloves on 5 June. Significantly SFW and HI, who have been recording in county churchyards over a very wide area, failed to record any. However, in FTS's garden at Barlestone we have a very different picture, he reports as follows "A few queens found during early April, more frequent to end of month, good days were the 15th, four queens found, three with pollen. During May, workers with pollen from the 26th, frequent during June on Aquilegia, Cerinthe and Foxglove." Completely knocking the previous statement on the head and shows how hard it is to jump to conclusions, it may well be, things are different in the north-west of the county, but FTS has an excellent garden for bees and other invertebrates and 'hats off' to him.

Of the Cuckoo Bees, only ***Bombus vestalis*** was seen in any numbers: from Barlestone females in May, with males from 15 June, locally from Humberstone Park three males on thrift on 4 June, with further males at Bede

Island and Spinney Hill Park and Castle Gardens where it was common on borders mainly foraging perennial sage in late June. The only other record was of a single *Bombus rupestris* at Barlestone in May.

Hive Bee *Apis mellifera* were recorded from a few sites, mostly in small numbers: Bradgate Park ruins, several on 20 May; Belgrave Gardens, several on 26 May; Exton, several on Cotoneaster on 2 June; Coles Nursery, common on Skimmia on 6 April; Willowbrook Park, common on Sallow on 8 April, and generally odd ones elsewhere.

Vespula

A few **Hornet *Vespa crabro*** were recorded from the Charnwood area all singles, at Cropston Reservoir on 24 May, at Nunckley Hill a queen collecting wood from old tree stump on 3 June, and a queen exploring a garden shed at Quorn on 30 June.

Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris* queens were common in May, recorded from Spinney Hill Park, Newtown Linford, South Kilworth and Thurmaston with several noted in a Quorn garden and most probably elsewhere.



Vespula vulgaris © Steve Woodward

ATO added a humorous touch by having one in his kitchen on 15 April, in his spare bedroom on 17 April, inside the house on 21st, in the kitchen on 24th and on his cycle cover on 23 May - clearly looking for a 'Des. Res'.

Ichneumon

Ichneumon stramentor, one was noted in a Quorn garden on 4 April and at Nunckley Hill Quarry on 3 June.

Thanks to the six members for helping to complete these records.

Howard Bradshaw



Mud Wall at Ashby Magna used by *Anthophora plumipes* © Steve Woodward

Solitary Bee Diaries

This spring got off to a slow start. The first Solitary Bee of the season was a female ***Anthophora plumipes*** in HB's Abney Street garden on 20 March which he says is later than some years. ***Osmia bicornis*** was first seen in PHG's Quorn garden on 9 April and in HB's garden the following day. Nomadas started to appear on 11 April and by mid-April we were seeing ***Andrena fulva*** and ***A. cineraria*** at Ashby Magna and ***Lasioglossum smeathmanellum*** at Tixover, Barowden and Abney Street. ***Andrena chrysoseles*** and ***A. haemorrhhoa*** were around with ***Halictus tumulorum*** and ***H. confusus***. The first ***Andrena bicolor*** was at Seaton on 15 April and the first ***A. nigroaenea*** at Glaston on the same day. ***A. carantonica*** was not recorded until 26 April at Wellsborough and we found the little red ***Nomada fabriciana*** by the River Sence at Wellsborough. ***N. goodeniana*** became the commonest Cuckoo Bee – it seemed to be everywhere and more numerous than its host – ***Andrena nigroaenea***. There were plenty of ***A. fulva*** holes on the 'Little Matlock' ridge at Bradgate but the weather was mixed and some must have succumbed to the cold and wet.



Andrena haemorrhhoa © Steve Woodward

A stylised *Halictus tumulorum* was found at Acresford – unusual as it is normally Andrenas that are attacked by the Stylops parasite. *Andrena subopaca* was not seen much, Acresford sandpit and Croft church, but *Lasioglossum morio* began to figure in the records in early May, but quite scarce compared with some years. *Nomada lathburiana*, *N. flava* and *N. panzeri* were all recorded in Bradgate and *N. marshamella* at Bitteswell with the first *Halictus rubicundus* – one of the species that can be identified in the field – lovely golden pollen hairs on the hind tibiae.

Quorn church produced the first highlight of the season – a male *Andrena labiata* - a species with red on the abdomen in both sexes. *Lasioglossum leucopus* made an appearance on 20 May in Bradgate and *Andrena nitida* at Newton Burgoland the following day. *Nomada flavoguttata* was at Wistow church on 22 May too. An Open Garden day at Goadby Marwood Hall produced another *Andrena subopaca* record as well as *Andrena cineraria* and its cuckoo *Nomada lathburiana*. The black & grey *Andrena cineraria* was found at over 20 sites and has a longer season than most species. It is also readily identifiable in the field, which helps.

Andrena nitida was at Bede Island on 16 June – the only record we have of this species. *Hylaeus communis* was on Angelica in Spinney Hill Park on 25 June and one in Thurmaston churchyard but the *Hylaeus* species were in short supply this quarter. *Osmia leaiana* was at Caldecott churchyard with a male *Megachile* which we did not collect as they seemed to be scarce, so it was not identified to species. HB had Leaf-cutter Bees in several sites in Leicester from early June. *Lasioglossum cupromicans* was found at Tixover and during tea at the excellent Barrowden teashop (can highly recommend the Lemon Drizzle cake) we came across a *Melecta albifrons* but did not see its host – *Anthophora plumipes*. However, we have seen it at about 20 other sites but not at the Desford bank where it used to nest every year. In Bradgate we had *Lasioglossum villosulum* and *Andrena humilis* – a good find. The little *Chelostoma campanularum* was only found at Barrowden and its larger relative *C. florisomne* at its usual tree in Bradgate. These two have the pollen collecting hairs underneath the gaster.

On the whole not a bumper year and we had to work quite hard to find bees.

Helen Ikin

FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

A very hot and dry period this quarter but this did not appear to affect the flora to a great extent. The grass verges and lawns looked pretty desperate but everything else seemed to cope well with the dry weather. The warm spring, which encouraged some magnificent displays of blossom, will I hope bring an equally good harvest of fruit and vegetables.

One thing I noticed this year was the phenomenal spread of the **Danish Scurvygrass** *Cochlearia danica* which, after colonising the motorways and major roads, is now spreading extensively along more rural roads and even grass verges in towns.

Plants of Interest This Quarter

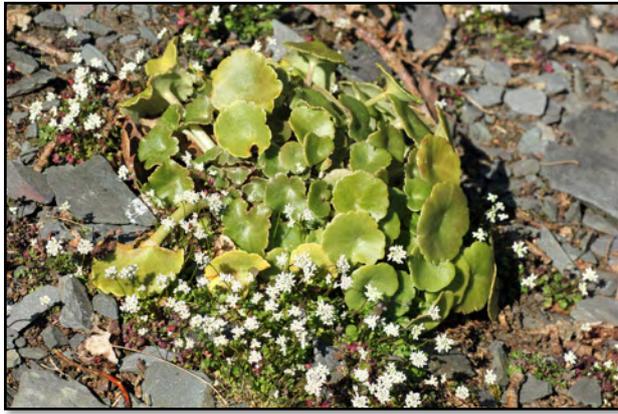
Goldilocks *Ranunculus auricomus*: An interesting buttercup which usually has a variable number of petals, even on the same plant. The number can vary between zero and five, was seen at various locations.

Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris*: Plenty were still present on the quarry face at Nunckley Hill Old Quarry Site, Rothley with odd plants on the quarry floor.

Knotted Clover *Trifolium striatum*: Found at Croft Pasture NR and near the ruins at Bradgate Park.

Subterranean Clover *Trifolium subterraneum*: Also located at Croft Pasture NR. Both these interesting little plants are still present at this well-known location. The area where the clover was found at Cotes was not able to be explored fully due to most of it now being fenced off. This is a pity as it is a location for other interesting plants.

Slender St John's-wort *Hypericum pulchrum*: The Outwoods and its neighbour Jubilee Wood have been a very good location to see this beautiful plant for many years. When Jubilee Wood was felled in part, the disturbed ground was covered with thousands of plants of it so the seeds must remain viable in the ground for a considerable time.



Teesdalia nudicaulis with *Umbilicus rupestris*
© Steve Woodward

Eastern Rocket *Sisymbrium orientale*: A colony of this unusual plant was growing in the pavements of Church Gate and Baxter Gate, Loughborough. The population in Baxter Gate has been there for a long time and I think originated at the back of the old Monitor Office where it grew in company with Deadly Nightshade.

Spurge Laurel *Daphne laureola*: One plant was found in the hedge on Gilmorton Lane, Ashby Magna.

Shepherd's Cress *Teesdalia nudicaulis*: An interesting location for this very unusual little crucifer is Swithland Quarry. It has been recorded from this location for at least 200 years.

Field Pennycress *Thlaspi arvense*: A weed of cultivated ground, but not as common as it used to be, it was located at Shawell. It can be quite plentiful where it does occur but unfortunately when growing in areas where stock is grazing, it can taint the cow's milk. Never-the-less it has been used as a salad ingredient.

Upright Chickweed *Moenchia erecta*: Probably the best place to see this interesting little flower, which is very uncommon in Leicestershire, is The Knoll at Croft Pasture NR.

Annual Knawel *Scleranthus annuus*: Another small but undistinguished plant which is uncommon in the county was also located at The Knoll, Croft Pasture NR.

Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*: Abundant on a dry bank at Hamilton Park, Leicester. It has not been noticed prior to this year.

Buck's-horn Plantain *Plantago coronopus*: A single plant was by roadside near Ashby Magna.

This is a plant mainly associated with coastal habitats where it is very common but it is also found quite frequently inland, on sandy or gravelly soil. I have even found it in my drive after a holiday at the coast.

Meadow Thistle *Cirsium dissectum*: Plenty were in flower at Six Hills but the colony was much reduced compared with 50 years ago.

Common Cornsalad *Valerianella locusta*: Many plants were in flower in front of cottages at Hall Leys, Quorn. It was also common in the pavement and at the base of trees in the area around the Post Office on Forest Road, Loughborough.

Balm *Melissa officinalis*: A lemon-scented herb frequently found as a throw out from gardens or self-seeded is often found in very unusual places and was noted on the roadside verge on Brickyard Lane verge, south of the M1 Bridge at Ashby Magna.

Wild Clary *Salvia verbenacea*: Found at Croft Pasture NR - one of only three locations for this uncommon plant in Leicestershire.



Wild Clary © Steve Woodward

Herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia*: Five large colonies were in flower in an area of thinned woodland

cleared of undergrowth during the winter at Cloud Wood NR.

Heath Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza maculata*:

Thousands of flower spikes were in extensive colonies in Swithland Wood Meadow, this is far more than in any of the past 50 years.

Southern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza*

***praetermissa*:** A single spike was a in meadow near the lower car park Beacon Hill CP.

Ferns

Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*:

Hundreds were in one area at Bradgate Park, some without tongues. In another area hundreds were mostly small and without tongues but some larger ones with tongues. Also present at Ulverscroft NR.

Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*:

Two plants were in a field ditch near Newton Burgoland, whilst one plant was in a ditch near Ashby Magna.

Hard Shield-fern *Polystichum aculeatum*:

Several large plants were visible from the road verge at Botany Spinney, Wellsborough.

Eric Webster

OTHER RECORDS

Records were also received for:

Bacteria, Fungi, Bryophytes, Lichens, Slugs & Snails, Woodlice, Millipedes, Spiders, Aphids, Psyllids, Ants, Galls, Alderflies, Mayflies, Scorpionflies, Grasshoppers.

WEATHER

April was another warm, dry and very sunny month. It was the second sunniest April ever recorded with 226 hours of sunshine more than 50% higher than our usual total of 143 hours. Only in April 2011 was there fractionally more sunshine with 228 hours logged. The Leicestershire sunshine record stretches back right to 1896. It was also a warmer month than usual, not as warm as the record breaker in 2011 but it was still the third warm and sunny April month in recent years after 2011 and 2007. Afternoon maximums averaged 14.7°C which is 1.7°C above normal under the largely clear skies but the long cloudless nights resulted in the

night time temperatures being lower at 4.7°C just 0.7°C above the average. The mean temperature of 9.7°C was 1.3°C above the usual figure. It was also a very dry month and the driest April since 2007 with just 20.4 mm falling at Mountsorrel which is only 38% of the usual total. The month was dominated by high pressure. Sometimes this was centred just to east of the country and consequently drew up warm air masses from the Mediterranean and resulted warm sunny weather but on other occasions the high retreated to the west, giving us cooler conditions with the wind from the east.

The first week did see some rain with the opening three days producing most of the entire month's rainfall. The wettest day was the 3rd with 8 mm being recorded. After this, high pressure took control for most of the month. The warmest days saw the temperature rise to 20°C on both the 10th and 14th and there was over 13.5 hours of sunshine logged on the 18th. Saharan dust was observed to have fallen on the 10th as a heavy shower brought the dust and pollution down - it had travelled up through Europe and air quality was poor for a time before fresher air blew in from the west. The weather cooled a little after this but it still remained mainly dry for the remainder of the month. So our 'sunnier than usual' months now reach five in a row but a warm and sunny April does not necessarily mean a good summer. Indeed both 2007 and 2011 had very wet May to July periods after the fine April conditions.

May was cooler, wetter and duller than normal and ended up a complete contrast to the warmer and drier April we enjoyed. Afternoon temperatures averaged 15.3°C which was 1.3°C below normal while night time temperatures were logged at 7.6°C slightly higher than the normal figure. This gave us an overall mean of 11.5°C which is 0.3°C below the May average. Much more cloud than usual resulted in cooler days but cloudy nights actually kept the temperature up. The sunshine total of 164 hours was 8% below the usual figure, making this the first month of this year with a deficit of sunshine. Low pressure dominated for much of the month with frequent periods of rain and very little settled weather which was a complete contrast to April. Winds were frequently quite strong and blew from the west or southwest for

most of the month. The maximum gusts were recorded on the 5th when winds at East Midlands Airport reached 50 mph and I recorded a gust in Mountsorrel of 42 mph. The most significant feature of May's weather was the amount of rainfall. I recorded 73 mm at Mountsorrel while Jim Lofts at Nanpantan logged 80 mm for the month. Both of these figures were 30% above normal.

The first week of the month was especially wet with 35 mm falling in the first eight days. The wettest day of the month in Loughborough was on the 2nd when 16 mm fell on the town. It was also cool with the month's only air frost being recorded in Nanpantan on the 1st when temperatures dropped to -0.5°C. Gale force winds also blew during this period making the beginning of the month feel more like February. The second week was a little drier and warmer and temperatures peaked, reaching 21°C for the first time this year on the 11th. Rain then returned in mid-month with my maximum daily total of rain in Mountsorrel of 17.2 mm being logged on the 17th. The sunniest day of the month was on the 21st with 12 hours of sunshine, with temperatures once again peaking at 21°C. Rain returned at the month's end and May ended in the same unsettled fashion as it began.

June was a mostly dry month with rainfall below the average while sunshine figures were above the usual. Rain fell significantly on just five days in the month. The total rainfall in June was 52 mm at Mountsorrel and 56 mm was recorded in Nanpantan, both of these are 20% below normal. However 40 mm of this figure fell on just two days – the 12th and 13th, after a very active and slow moving weather front ground to a halt over us for 48 hours and gave us a miserable weekend! Apart from this episode the rest of the month was mostly dry. June was, in fact, the driest in Leicestershire since 2008. High pressure anchored itself to the SW of the British Isles and this put us in a relatively cool north westerly air flow for much of the time. Afternoon temperatures averaged 19.5°C while night time figures were logged at 10°C. Both of these were very close to the long term average. The mean temp of 14.8°C was therefore also close to normal. Sunshine totals, as with many other months this year, were

above normal as Atlantic low pressure with their attendant rain systems mostly stayed away. 223 hours of sunshine were recorded in June which is 20% above the usual total.

The first week of the month did start in an unsettled fashion with the month's coolest day being on the 1st with just a max of 13.7°C. Unusually high winds were recorded on the 2nd with East Midlands Airport recording a maximum gust of 58 mph, which is storm force 10 on the Beaufort scale. The next ten days were mainly dry with mostly average temperatures. The coolest night was recorded on the 10th by Jim when the temperature dropped to just 3°C. It did warm up, however, on the 11th with our first 21°C reading of the summer and on this day our maximum sunshine total of 16 hours was recorded. The next day however saw the low pressure arrive bringing with it all the rain. There was a short warm spell during the third week but it was not until the month was coming to a close that really hot air arrived with 30°C being recorded on the 30th by Jim as Saharan air arrived. So, all in all, a fair first summer month of the year with plenty of sun for us to enjoy with some summer warmth arriving at the very end of the month!

Phil Morrish

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H Bradshaw, B Croxtall, R Dandy, P J Darby, M A Finch, G L Finch, D B Forgham, P H Gamble, J Graham, S C Graham, D Gray, J Green, C Green, H Ikin, R G Lockwood, A T Onions, D A Perry, L W Purnell, A C Rose, H Shacklock, F T Smith, S Timms, E P Tromans, E Webster, S F Woodward.

We are grateful to them all.

Records for the third quarter of 2015 should be sent by 15 October 2015 to:

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