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Ian and Pat Evans win National Award

The National Biodiversity Network (<http://nbn.org.uk/>) has recently inaugurated awards for services to biological recording. The first Gilbert White Adult Award for Terrestrial and Freshwater Wildlife has been awarded to Ian Evans and the late Pat Evans, whom we remember with affection from their days in Leicestershire.

Gilbert White (1720-1793) is remembered in these awards because his name is synonymous with biological recording. He was one of the first English naturalists to make careful observations of his surroundings and record these observations in a systematic way. He transformed the way we look at the natural world and is recognised as one of the fathers of ecology.

From the NBN website:

“Pat and Ian, a husband and wife team have been tireless exponents of and ambassadors for biological recording for many years. They have submitted 14,295 records to the Highland Biological Recording Group database in multiple taxonomic groups including butterflies and moths, mammals, fungi, lichens, dragonflies, vascular plants, annelids, molluscs, arachnids, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and many different insect groups. Pat Evans co-authored the ‘Flora of Leicestershire’ and the ‘Flora of Assynt’, while Ian Evans held many Committee positions of the Highland Biological Recording Group and was involved in the publication of ‘Wildlife of Scourie’

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Ian & Pat Evans in the field © Gordon Rothero

in 2006 and 'Wildlife of Rogart' in 2007. The couple were instrumental in founding the Assynt Field Club in 1986, a local club devoted to natural history and biological recording, which is still thriving today."

Ian was Keeper of Biology at Leicester Museums Service from 1959 to 1972 and then became Assistant Director (Natural Sciences) and County Ecologist. He retired as Deputy Director in 1991. He was also Hon. Sec. (1960-1970) and President (1970-1991) of the Natural History Section of the Leicester Literary & Philosophical Society, Scientific Officer 1963-1976 to Leicestershire & Rutland Trust for Nature Conservation and is still is a Loughborough Naturalists' Club member and past Chairman. It was Ian's enthusiasm and encouragement that inspired several of us to devote our time to recording wildlife.

Pat, who sadly died earlier this year, was a Founder Member of the Loughborough Naturalists' Club and former Hon. Secretary 1964-1968 and Editor of *Heritage* 1968-1985. We strive to live up to her high standards.

CLASSIFIED RECORDS

The original records from which *Heritage* is compiled are archived at the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre, County Hall. They are freely available to members wishing to view record details. Non-members should apply to the Club Secretary for permission to consult them.

MAMMALS

Squashed **Hedgehogs** were noted in Groby, Ratby, Quorn, Barrow upon Soar and Kibworth. A live one was crossing Station Road in Cropston in August and another recorded on a trail camera visiting a Quorn garden. This garden has a Hedgehog house so it may well spend the winter here. PJD's friends are keeping her supplied with Hedgehog sightings from Loughborough and Ellistown gardens and droppings were noted in Quorn and Ellistown gardens. A baby Hedgehog was spotted on the verge of Brown's Lane in Loughborough in early August and taken to Hedgehog Rescue by PJD but, sadly, later died. Ideally, Hedgehogs need

to reach a weight of about 500 g or more before hibernation in order to have enough fat resources to last the winter. Hedgehogs were seen several times in JG & CG's Holwell garden in July and August.

Moles were active throughout the quarter in DAP's Swithland garden and molehills were noted at Snarestone, Burbage, Thurstaston, Shawell, Barkby, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Ab Kettleby, Braunston in Rutland and Oakham. Moles seem to be thriving all over the two counties.

We have no shrew records this quarter.

Bats were seen in gardens in Quorn, Shelthorpe and Swithland and there were many bat droppings in the church at Braunston in Rutland. **Brown Long-eared Bat** was recorded in Bradgate Park during July and five **Noctule** were seen emerging from an Oak tree roost there. Others were heard in JG's garden in July and August. The same two sites also had both **Soprano** and **Common Pipistrelle** with the later species also recorded at Blakeshay Wood.

A **Brown Hare** was killed on the road in Swithland in mid-August and live ones were seen at Whatton House, Woodhouse, Cropston Reservoir and in Bradgate Park – two on 29 July and one on 27 July which allowed us to approach fairly closely before running away. Three more were seen in stubble fields near Newtown Linford. Two sightings of Brown Hares at Holwell were made in mid-August and early September.

Rabbits were seen commonly in Swithland throughout the quarter and they were abundant at the Reedbed NR at Watermead CP. One Rabbit was seen in fields bordering King's Lane in South Croxton and another at Odstone. There were many in the pastures and hedgerows east of Barrow upon Soar. Signs were seen in Shawell churchyard.

A **Grey Squirrel** was feeding on Yew berries near Kaye's Plantation in Quorn and others were noted in Cropston Reservoir, Bradgate Park, Barkby churchyard, Ratcliffe on the Wreake and Woodhouse. There have been a number of squashed Grey Squirrels on the roads around Charnwood this quarter.

PJD has been spotting **Water Voles** – one swimming in the Ashby Canal between King's



Bank Vole © Jim Graham

Bridge and Carlton Bridge and clear views of two in the same canal near Market Bosworth on 28 August - very good news. Fishermen and boat owners have said that they have been seeing one here for a couple of years. A **Bank Vole** was feeding on green leaves in the French drain in JG's Cropston garden.

SFW's cat, Queenie, caught a **Wood Mouse** in his Groby garden.

Squashed **Brown Rats** were seen on roads near Queniborough and in Woodhouse.

Live **Red Foxes** were seen near the LRWT offices in Leicester on 28 September, near Beacon Crossroads early one August morning and in DAP's Swithland garden in July and in September where it left the remains of its pheasant dinner. A dead one was noted on the A47 near Tugby in September. Three bantams in a Quorn garden were killed in daylight in late September, two were left dead and one taken and two more survived – foxes are suspected. Two days later a young fox was sitting on the lawn near the pond. Two foxes were seen in a Loughborough garden in the early hours of a July morning and again in early August and an adult with a young one were seen in the same garden. Foxes were visiting a Holwell garden regularly throughout the summer – see photo!



Fox on bird table © Jackie Green

DAP's resident **Stoat** was working the borders again in his Swithland garden on 6 September.

A **Weasel** was crossing the main street in King's Newton (Derbyshire) at 2 pm on 2 September and one crossed the A60 in front of EPT's car north of Cotes on 28 July.

Badger latrines in DAP's Swithland garden have been used throughout the quarter and one Badger was seen eating plums in the garden. Latrine pits in Stocking Wood were being used and other signs were seen in Bradgate Park and near Heather. EPT has not actually seen Badgers in his Loughborough garden but they have made their presence felt by digging up his lawn and collecting plants from his borders for bedding! Five Badger cubs have been coming regularly to Holwell for food.

Muntjac were seen crossing roads in Long Whatton and Woodhouse, PHG has heard them calling in Kaye's Plantation at the bottom of his garden in Quorn and one was barking loudly in Swithland Wood on 10 September.

PHG was told of **Roe Deer** being seen several times in the waterworks grounds at Swithland.

Helen Ikin

BIRDS

Mute Swans were at the larger waters with successful breeding at most. Post-breeding flocks were evident from early July although the only the double-figure counts came from Swithland Reservoir with the largest being 58 on 31 August. A pair with two well-grown juveniles (over eight weeks old) at Cropston Reservoir had surprisingly lost both young by early August.

Counts of **Canada Goose** in excess of 30 occurred at four waters with the highest coming from Albert Village Lake where 154 were noted on 13 September. What was presumably the same flock of **Greylag Goose** moved between Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs and the Soar Valley, with the largest count being 478 at Cropston Reservoir on 2 August. A non-breeding pair of **Egyptian Goose** was at the same site on 10 July remaining until 16 August.

Two juvenile **Shelduck** (not local bred) arrived at Cropston Reservoir on 2 August with

one remaining until 26 September at least. Up to 17 **Mandarin Duck** were at Cropston Reservoir throughout the quarter including females with broods in tow. Smaller numbers were at Swithland Reservoir with juveniles also noted at this site. The usual summering male **Wigeon** was in Bradgate Park or on Cropston Reservoir throughout the period but the first returning birds were seen at Kelham Bridge on 28 August with three there. Numbers gradually increased through the area with a minimum of 100 at Swithland Reservoir on 23 September the highest count. **Gadwall** was reported from five sites with successful breeding being noted at both Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs. Post-breeding flocks began to build up during the last week of August with the highest count being 55 at the later site on the 31st. An eclipse male **Teal** with two juvenile/female-types at Cropston Reservoir on 5 July, may have bred at the site. Two were also noted at Birstall Meadows on the 4th. The first autumn returning birds were five at Kelham Bridge on 13 August with numbers rising to 19 by the middle of September. Other double-figure counts came from three sites with the largest being 50 on the Wanlip Meadows scrape on the 9th. Counts of **Mallard** in excess of 20 came from five sites where maxima were: 171 at Cropston Reservoir on the 31 August; 167 at Swithland Reservoir on the 7th; 69 at Kelham Bridge on 4 September; 37 at Cossington Meadows on the 2nd, and 29 at Albert Village Lake on the 13th. Young were still being seen at most sites. Four **Shoveler** on the scrape at Birstall Meadows on 4 July, were very early returning birds. Three seen at Groby Pool on 20 August and 15 at Swithland Reservoir on the 31st were more normal dates. A drake **Pochard** at Kelham Bridge on 30 August was a welcome, if belated, addition to the site's species list being the first seen here in over 50 years of recording! What may have been the same roaming bird was also noted at Groby Pool on 9 July – presumably a non-breeding, early-returning bird and was noted at three other local sites. Records of **Tufted Duck** came from just five widespread sites with ducklings noted at most locations. By far the highest count was 99 at Swithland Reservoir on 31 August, the finder unable to locate an additional one to make the hundred! An eclipse male **Goldeneye** with a damaged wing remained at Swithland Reservoir during

the quarter, its wing being fully recovered by the middle of August.

Records of **Red-legged Partridge** came from seven locations, usually in single figures, however 24 seen at night on the road near Branston in Belvoir on 23 August were obviously released. I wonder how many managed to survive the dangers of the traffic to be finally shot? The only **Grey Partridge** record was of one calling from a large field of wheat beside Bradgate Park on 15 July. Late summer is often a good time for **Quail** in the county and four calling in fields near Orton-on-the-Hill on 28 July was a good find. Twenty-six **Pheasant** at Cropston Reservoir on 26 September were another obvious release.

Cormorants were under-recorded with records only received from Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs with a maximum of 18 at the former on 2 August and 50 at the latter on 9 September. Records of **Little Egrets** came from five sites, usually in single figures, however ten at Swithland Reservoir on 9 September suddenly increased to 31 three days later and a then maximum count of 36 on the 25th on the north side. The highest counts of **Grey Heron** all came from Cropston Reservoir with a maximum of 12 on both 9 and 16 August.

Little Grebe was at eight sites with breeding confirmed at two. Rarely thought of as a migrant bird, 16 noted at Albert Village Lake on 13 September emphasised this species ability to move into the county for the winter. The only double-figure counts of **Great Crested Grebe** were from Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs with a maximum of 35 at the former on 31 August and 36 at the latter on 26 September. Adults with juveniles were found at Watermead CP Birstall on 4 July.

Records of single **Red Kite** came from Buckminster, Nanpantan and Seagrave during the quarter. **Sparrowhawk** was recorded from ten widespread sites including three gardens mainly singles. A male and female were daily visitors to JG's Cropston garden. On two occasions the male was seen sitting (hiding?) behind the patio planters watching the feeders before pouncing on unsuspecting Goldfinches whilst the female tried unsuccessfully to take a Green Woodpecker from off the lawn. Breeding



Kestrel © Jim Graham

was suspected in Bradgate Park. Records of **Buzzard** were widespread and came from 21 locations with confirmed breeding at three. Five were soaring south over the dam at Swithland Reservoir on 17 August and seven were high over Cropston on 11 September. **Kestrel** was reported from a very respectable 22 locations, mostly of one or two. Breeding was confirmed in Bradgate Park, a pair with two fledged juveniles on 19 September, whilst three birds calling at Thurstaston on 23 July were probably a family party. **Hobby** was reported from seven sites with birds chasing hirundines being a regular activity. A group of 30 Swallow was mobbing two birds at Kilworth House on 4 September. Interesting to note that one seen at Swithland Reservoir around dusk on 22 September was suspected of preying on bats. Surprisingly, **Peregrine** was only recorded at two sites, Leicester city centre and Cropston Reservoir. It is noticeable how few records now come from the 'usual tree' around Swithland Reservoir.

The very secretive **Water Rail** was located at two sites. A juvenile was found at Hicks Lodge on 20 August where calling was noted earlier in the year and indicated successful breeding, and one was heard at Groby Pool on 27 September. Records of **Moorhen** came from five waters with juveniles noted at most. The highest count was 27 at Swithland Reservoir on 31 August. There were few records of **Coot** but two sites had triple-figure counts with maxima of 108 at Albert Village Lake on 13 September and 152 at Swithland Reservoir on 31 August.

Two pairs of **Oystercatcher** were seen at Hicks Lodge on 1 July but no young were located. Three birds were found at Birstall Meadows on the 4th whilst a single was at Cropston Reservoir between the 16th and 19th and one at

Swithland Reservoir on 31 August. The low water levels at Cropston Reservoir during July made it good habitat for **Little Ringed Plover** and at least five territories were located through the month. Two adults were at Cossington Meadows on the 4th with three at Wanlip Meadows on the 8th. A single was at Swithland Reservoir on 17 August. **Ringed Plover** was noted at Hicks Lodge on 1 July and at Cropston Reservoir on 16 and 31 August at least. A single **Golden Plover** was seen flying south over Bradgate Park on 27 September whilst a **Grey Plover** was noted heading west over Cropston Reservoir on 16 August, both welcome if uncommon species in the Charnwood region. Post-breeding flocks of **Lapwing** started to build during August with double-figure counts at four sites but the best total was 310 at Wanlip Meadows on 9 September. Up to three summer-plumaged **Dunlin** were at Cropston Reservoir on 25 and 26 July. A moulting male **Ruff** was present on the north side of Swithland Reservoir on 17 August. The first returning **Snipe** was one at Cropston Reservoir on 25 July with two Kelham Bridge on 7 September rising to four by the end of the month. A single **Black-tailed Godwit** was at Cropston Reservoir 23 July, no



Common Sandpiper © Jim Graham

doubt also drawn by the low water levels. This site was also attracting **Common Sandpiper** which was present throughout the quarter in various numbers reaching a peak of nine on 27 August. In addition, five were located at Cossington Meadows on 2 September and two at Swithland Reservoir throughout August. The first returning **Green Sandpiper** were at Cossington Meadows on 4 July and Kelham Bridge on the 17th with up to three regular at this site by the end of the quarter. Three were also at Cropston Reservoir from 9 August

through to the end of the period with four noted on 26th and 30th. Meanwhile, two were at Swithland Reservoir on the 14th also peaking at four on the 17th but there were no September records for this site. A single **Greenshank** was at Cropston Reservoir on 13 August and the following day four were at Swithland Reservoir with one remaining until the 28th. An excellent autumn passage find was an adult **Turnstone** on the dam at Cropston Reservoir on 27 August – unfortunately it did not linger. There were no **Redshank** records during the period.



Turnstone © Jim Graham

Few gull records were received but **Black-headed Gull** numbers began to increase from late July with the highest count noted being 455 at Cropston Reservoir on 9 August. The only other counts in excess of 100 were 171 at Cossington Meadows on 2 September and 114 at Groby Pool on the 27th. One, sporting a coloured ring at Cropston Reservoir on 23 July, was identified as being ringed as a *pulli* at Lake Mietkowski near Wroclow in Poland some 1,234 kilometres away just 46 days earlier. A juvenile **Mediterranean Gull** was located at Groby Pool on 16 July. Albert Village Lake held 203 **Lesser Black-backed Gull** on 13 September but the next best count was 84 at Cropston Reservoir on 9 August. A maximum of five **Herring Gull** were at the same site during August and September. An adult **Yellow-legged Gull** was there at the inflow from 17 July until the 25th and a first-year juvenile on 12 September. A juvenile was also located at Groby Pool on 20 August whilst three birds were at Albert Village Lake on 13 September.

One of the highlights of the period was five **Little Tern** migrating through Cropston Reservoir on 14 August: arriving about mid-day, they had departed by 8 pm. Vying for the

highlight spot, a single juvenile **Sandwich Tern** was very briefly at the same site on the 31st heading east. The artificial rafts for **Common Tern** at Watermead Country Park Birstall once again supported about 15 pairs with at least 28 young fledging most of which have been colour-ringed again this year to try and determine site faithfulness and dispersal trends. Please look out for colour-ringed terns in 2016 as the first returning birds of 2014 from this site should be back then. The highest count of adults noted here was 36 on 4 July, the only other site with double-figure was Cropston Reservoir with 41 on 14 August. Most of the birds here are actually the Watermead adults fishing for their young and it is noticeable that after a successful catch they immediately head off in the direction of the Park. A juvenile **Arctic Tern** was at Swithland Reservoir between 14 and 16 August at least, stopping off to feed up on its first long trip south.

Small numbers of **Stock Dove** came from just five locations. The highest count of **Wood Pigeon** was 39 at Cropston Reservoir on 5 July, whilst a pair was noted in J&CG's Holwell garden in August breaking off branches from a Sweet Chestnut and building a nest in a conifer. The same garden hosted the largest count of **Collared Dove** with eight there on 22 August. The only noteworthy Feral Pigeon count was a minimum of 200 at Frog Island, Leicester on 31 July.

There were two records of **Cuckoo** both in September and both involving juveniles, at Ibstock on the 21st and Orton-on-the-Hill on the 28th. Reports of **Barn Owl** came from Bradgate Park and Cold Overton in August whilst **Little Owl** was only noted at Bradgate Park, Cropston and Somerby during the quarter. As usual **Tawny Owl** was very vociferous and noted particularly from members' gardens.

Swift was recorded from ten locations although no mention was made screaming parties. PHG comments that he has seen a huge decline in numbers breeding in Quorn village in recent years. Most had departed by the last week of August however, one was seen heading towards Anstey from Bradgate Park on 13 September. It was pleasing to see **Kingfisher** reported from ten sites including an adult feeding a juvenile in Quorn. **Green Woodpecker** was noted at 17 widespread locations and

juveniles were confirmed at two of these. Unfortunately, the predated remains of a juvenile was found at Bradgate Park and JG noted one escaping the attentions of a female Sparrowhawk whilst it feed on his Cropston lawn in August. The sight of one walking along the pavement in Swithland village was rather incongruous. Surprisingly, records of **Great Spotted Woodpecker** came from just nine locations with no juveniles noted.

Only small numbers of **Magpie** and **Jay** were noted. However, at least 200 **Jackdaw** were reported in the Cropston Reservoir/Bradgate Park area on 9 August with the only double-figure count of **Carrion Crow** coming from the same area. **Rook** was completely over-looked but one or two **Raven** were seen in five locations with three at Swithland Reservoir on 23 July.

Small numbers of **Goldcrest** records came from 11 sites with a family party noted at Bradgate Park in August.

Most records of **Blue Tit** included juveniles but party numbers were low with none exceeding nine, whilst **Great Tit** numbers were of five or fewer and the highest count of **Coal Tit** was just three. The only record of **Willow Tit** came from their 'stronghold' at Kelham Bridge where an adult and juvenile were noted on 24 July. It is good to note that breeding was once again successful there. **Marsh Tit** was reported from Swithland Reservoir and along the nearby footpath towards Quorn.

Skylark was still singing at Hicks Lodge in July and a small flock of ten was at Groby in August.

There appeared to be a very meagre passage of returning **Sand Martin** this year with the only counts of note being 50 and 60 at Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs respectively on 31 August, and just 20 at Thornton Reservoir on the 13th. At least 500 and 700 **Swallow** were at the two former reservoirs on the same day as the Sand Martins, no doubt the stormy weather bringing both species down to feed low over the waters. Over 200 **House Martin** were also present and most birds headed off soon after the rain had subsided. A mixed flock of Swallow and House Martin totalling over 1,000 birds was at Swithland Reservoir on 26 August. It would appear to be a better year for breeding House Martin with nesting noted at: Cropston, Groby,

Rothley and Quorn. After two vacant years, birds breed at JG's house using both artificial and natural nests and a nest found by MV on the Rothley Village Hall was a new site for the village.

Small flocks or family parties of **Long-tailed Tit** were widely recorded, the highest counts being 30 at Bardon Hill on 17 August, 16 at Cropston Reservoir on the 9th and 12 at Buddon Wood on 25 September.

Chiffchaff was common, widespread and still singing through the quarter, with ten, including a number of juveniles, at Cropston Reservoir the best count. By contrast, there were rather fewer **Willow Warbler** records with just six sites noted and four at Hicks Lodge in July the highest count. **Blackcap** was recorded from nine locations with juveniles noted at four. Six were in song at Cropston Reservoir on 5 July. As is usual for this species, migrant birds were noted during late-August and there were no records received after 19 July. The only record of **Garden Warbler** was one singing at Cropston Reservoir on 5 July. This species does seem to stop singing quite early in the season and therefore easily overlooked. The only site with **Lesser Whitethroat** was Brascote Pits with a single there on 16 August, whereas **Common Whitethroat** was noted at six with family parties seen in the Bradgate Park/Cropston Reservoir area. A single **Grasshopper Warbler** was reeling at Wanlip Meadows on 16 July. This was also the location for singing **Sedge Warbler** with others located at nearby Watermead CP North and Cropston Reservoir – all in July. Records of singing **Reed Warbler** during the quarter came from Brascote Pits, Hicks Lodge and Swithland Reservoir. One bird that seems to be expanding its range is **Cetti's Warbler** with records throughout the Soar Valley complex and a new site record for Brascote Pits, although rather skulking, the loud, explosive and distinctive call gives its presence away.

Records of **Nuthatch** were widespread coming from 15 locations mostly in small numbers but six by the Anstey gate in Bradgate Park were presumed to be a family party. An adult **Treecreeper** with three juveniles were seen in the Park near the Newtown Linford entrance and small numbers were found at eight other locations. A family party of **Wren** was located in the Warren Hill section of the Park in

July and eight were counted at Cropston Reservoir on 13 September. The aggressive nature of one of our smallest passerines was evident when one was seen “scolding a cat” in ATO’s garden in August. Strangely two of the largest counts of **Starling** came from gardens with 34 in Holwell and 80 feeding in an Elderberry bush in Loughborough. Over 120 were in Bradgate Park in early September.

There were few notable records of thrushes and five **Blackbird** at both Hicks Lodge and Cossington Meadows in July and September respectively was the highest count. **Song Thrush** was reported from just three sites whilst the only location for **Mistle Thrush** was Bradgate Park where a group of seven, probably a family party, were seen throughout September.



Spotted Flycatcher © Jim Graham

Spotted Flycatcher was noted at five sites during the quarter, successful breeding being confirmed at Bradgate Park where numerous juveniles were seen in a group of at least ten individuals. Small numbers of **Robin** were reported and included four gardens, ten at Cropston Reservoir on 3 September was the highest count. The annual passage of **Redstart** was evident at Bradgate Park with the first, a male, there on 9 August joined by a female the following day staying in the area until the end of the month. At least three birds were in the Park Hill Golf Club, Seagrave area during the quarter. This is at least the fourth year in succession they have visited the area but the only spring record was in late April 2013. One was at Ibstock on 19 September and two were noted at QE2 Wood, Ravenstone on the 13th along with a single **Stonechat**. The same site had the best collection of passage **Whinchat** with five there the same day. One was in horse paddocks in the Hallgates area opposite Bradgate Park between the 11th and 13th whilst

another was at Kelham Bridge from the 6th to 17th at least. A single **Wheatear** was in fields in Cropston on 9 September and this or most probably another was in Bradgate Park on the 27th.

A few **Dunnock** were noted in small numbers and all **House Sparrow** were found in gardens including up to 48 through the quarter in ACR’s in Loughborough. The only **Tree Sparrow** record was ten in a hedgerow at Belton on 30 August.

Single **Yellow Wagtail** were at Orton-on-the-Hill on 28 July, Thornton Reservoir on 30 August and in JG & CG’s Holwell garden on the 23rd. The only family party of **Grey Wagtail** was at Swithland Reservoirs during August. However, pairs were also seen at Cropston and Thornton Reservoirs, Bradgate Park and Groby Pool. At least 38 **Pied Wagtail** were at the inflow of Cropston Reservoir during July and included many juveniles. Young were also noted at Hicks Lodge.

At least 12 **Meadow Pipit** were in Bradgate Park with five at Beacon Hill during September.

There were few finches reported with just three **Chaffinch** and two **Greenfinch** records, including 16 in DBF’s Hugglescote garden on 29 September. **Goldfinch** was better represented with the largest count being 80 at Bradgate Park on 9 September including many juveniles. **Siskin** returned early with singles reported from a Groby garden and Groby Pool on 9 July. Records came from a further six sites by the end of the quarter and included a total of 54 in small parties at Bradgate Park on 13 September. The same site held at least 20 **Linnet** on 30 July and a family party in August, whilst counts of five or fewer were at four other locations. The only record of **Lesser Redpoll** was two at Cropston Reservoir on 26 September. Two **Crossbill** were at Ashby-de-la-Zouch on 10 July and one was going north over Bradgate Park on 27 September. **Bullfinch** was mainly seen in small numbers, usually pairs, from nine well-spread locations.

The best count of **Yellowhammer** was just eight and came from Cropston but the only juveniles noted were at Hicks Lodge in July. This site also had the best count of **Reed Bunting** with five there on 1 July.

Jim Graham

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*: we have only one sighting for this widespread reptile during this quarter. On 17 September HI and SFW visited the churchyard of St. Michael and All Saints' Church at Wartnaby, where they found a single specimen behind stacked tiles (photo). This is only the sighting of any reptile for this quarter.



Grass Snake © Steve Woodward

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*: we have a number of sightings for this relatively common and widespread amphibian. On 2 July HI and SFW found a group of 20 or more tadpoles in Bradgate Park. A day or two later on 14 July ATO found two froglets in the grounds of the ruined church at Dishley Grange, a few yards from a farm duck pond. A few days earlier, on 4 July, following rain, ATO disturbed a medium-sized specimen in his back garden in Loughborough. Finally, on 9 August, HS found a single, small specimen at a site where they have often been observed in the past: namely, the Buddon Brook Meadows, near Quorn.

Tony Onions

FISH (including CRAYFISH)

For this quarter we have sightings from two sites, the first of which is the River Lin in Bradgate Park. On 10 July, HI and SFW observed a 'pod' of four **Chub *Squalius cephalus*** in a pool in the river. On the same day, they also saw a single specimen of the **European Perch *Perca fluviatilis***.

The second site is an interesting one because it happens to be a recently excavated pond: one which is variously known as the 'Woodthorpe Pond' or the 'Shelthorpe Top Pond'. It lies next

to the roundabout on Epinal Way where the roads branch off to the old village of Woodthorpe and the new housing estates at the back of Shelthorpe. This pond was dug out at the same time as the new road and the roundabout were constructed: in other words, in comparatively recent years. As such it provides an object lesson in how quickly such ponds become a 'naturalised' part of the landscape: an excellent example of the truth of the old adage that "Nature abhors a vacuum"! Earlier in the year ATO had observed people fishing at the pond and had enquired "What species of fish they expected to catch there". He was told that there were Rudd and Perch in the pond, as well as some exotic species - including Koi Carp and Goldfish - which had been dumped in the pond by their owners from the estate who, for whatever reason, no longer wanted to keep them. ATO decided to return at a later date, while water temperatures remained at a relatively high level, to try to assess the pond for himself. Accordingly, he returned to the pond on the afternoon of 29 September. During this visit he obtained three specimens of the **European Perch**, ranging in length from 12 to 16 cm, a spectacularly colourful specimen of the **Rudd *Scardinius erythrophthalmus***, approximately 18 cm long and, last but not least, a Mirror Carp. The 'Mirror Carp' is a domesticated, faster-growing version of the **Common Carp *Cyprinus carpio***, and this particular specimen was approximately 50 cm in length and weighed in excess of 3 kg. Some days later, in October, ATO returned to the pond to see if he could obtain further specimens, and this visit turned out to be equally interesting. However, details of this second visit will be held over to the next bulletin!

We also have an interesting sighting of a crayfish to report for this quarter. On 5 September HB observed a very large crayfish in the River Soar at Aylestone Meadows. For those not familiar with this section of the River Soar (and that includes the writer!), where the Soar enters the south side of Leicester it is divided into two separate channels - an eastern arm and a western arm. At one point these two arms are linked by a short stretch of water known as the 'Biam'. There is a bridge across this stretch of water and it was here that HB observed a very large crayfish with a reddish-brown exoskeleton.

One unusual feature of this specimen was the presence of yellowish-green stripes across the pincers. HB was not sure what species of crayfish this might be, and wondered if perhaps it was an exotic species which had been released into the wild by its owner. Not being familiar with this section of the River Soar, I decided to contact Jools Partridge, the County Recorder for Crayfish, to seek his opinion. Jools is familiar with this section of the river and has seen large specimens of the Signal Crayfish there in the past. And so, in a nutshell, it seems most likely that this specimen was in fact a **Signal Crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus***. But what of the yellowish-green stripes? Well, it appears that as crayfish absorb chemicals and minerals from their food and the surrounding water, the build-up of these substances can in some instances lead to colour changes in the exoskeleton. (Incidentally, the Signal Crayfish is capable of surviving in much higher levels of pollutants than our native White-clawed Crayfish.) This would seem to be the most likely answer to the question of the stripes!

That concludes our sightings for this quarter, and as usual I hope that people will keep their eyes open when they are out and about!

I would like to express my thanks to Jools Partridge, the County Recorder for Crayfish, for his kind assistance in helping to identify Howard Bradshaw's crayfish.

Tony Onions

DRAGONFLIES and DAMSELFLIES

Q2 April - June

There were no April records, the first for the year not being noticed until 1 May when a **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula*** was found at Odstone with another at Heather the following day. The next sighting was not until 15 May when a pair and teneral were seen at Puddledyke. It was noted at a further seven site by the end of the quarter.

The first **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** was found at St Michael's churchyard Thurmaston on 26 May. Recorded from nine widespread sites, the best counts were 14 at Cossington Meadows 26 May and 17 on the river at Stanford on Avon on 30 June.



Large Red Damselfly © Jim Graham

Counts in excess of 20 **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** were found at Dishley Pool on 20 June and Nature Alive on the 27th. Small numbers were noted at eight other sites. **Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*** was first recorded on 22 May at Launde Big Wood and then another ten locations by the end of the period. The best site was at Puddledyke with good numbers present during May and June peaking at over 30 on the 27th. There was at least 30 **Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*** at the same time, with 20 at both Nature Alive the same day, and Dishley Pool on the 20th. There were no records of **Variable Damselfly *Coenagrion pulchellum***.

The only record of **Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*** was an excellent total of 40 observed at Puddledyke on 27 June.

Several **White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes*** were found in St. Luke's churchyard Tixover on 18 June, with the only other being a singleton at Stanford on Avon on the 30th.

All **Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*** were recorded in June from eight sites, mainly of one or two with a maximum of three at Cropston Reservoir on the 7th. Likewise, all records of **Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*** were in the final month of the period with six at Puddledyke on the 27th the best count, with two at a further three sites.

There were no records in the quarter of darters or hawkers. Male **Black-tailed Skimmers *Orthetrum cancellatum*** were found at Cossington Meadows and Nature Alive on 16 and 27 June respectively and all **Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*** records came on the 27th with up to three at Puddledyke, Nature Alive and New Lount.

Q3 July - September

Records of **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** came from 11 sites mainly in small numbers during July, however, an exceptional 200 was found on the River Sence at Harris Bridge just south of Twycross on the 5th. Most sites had both males and females present.

A single **Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa*** was found at Old John Watering in Bradgate Park on 15 July and two **White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes*** were on the Sence near Wellsborough on the 5th.

Small numbers **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula*** were at four locations between 1 and 15 July.

Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans* were recorded in small numbers from eight sites in July and August but the only comments regarding ovipositing activity came from Cropston Reservoir.

Recorded in all three months during the period, **Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*** was much more widespread with records from 12 sites mostly in single figures with breeding noted at Wileman's Pool, Beacon Hill on 15 July. By contrast, **Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*** was seen at just five sites in small numbers the last being two at Cropston on 8 August. There were no records for **Small Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma viridulum*** or **Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas***.

Found in all three months of the quarter, **Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis*** was observed in 17 diverse locations in small numbers, the best count being four at Cropston Reservoir on 9 August. No comments were made concerning breeding activity. **Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea*** was also noted throughout the quarter



Southern Hawker © Jim Graham



Broad-bodied Chaser © Jim Graham

from a resectable 19 sites in small numbers. At least 17 exuvia were spotted in EPT's Loughborough garden in July and 45 from a Markfield garden in August. The first **Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*** was at Cropston Reservoir on 19 July and by the end of the period records of up to three came from 12 sites, including four gardens, but six were at the aforementioned site on 6 September.

Single **Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*** were at five sites, all in July, plus two at Wileman's Pond, Beacon Hill on the 15th.

All **Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*** were noted in July and came from six locations the last record being a female at Cropston Reservoir on the 19th. There were just two records of **Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*** both singles, at Old John Watering, Bradgate Park and Wileman's Pond, Beacon Hill both on 15 July. **Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*** was recorded in all three months in small numbers from four sites.

Small numbers of **Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*** were noted at 12 widespread sites throughout the quarter, mainly singles with three at three. Their fondness of warm stone resting places was demonstrated by individuals noted on the gravestones in Cossington churchyard and on the brickwork in Quorn Memorial Gardens. The only records of **Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum*** during the quarter came from Cropston Reservoir and a small pond in Shelthorpe.

Jim Graham

GRASSHOPPERS and BUSHCRICKETS

The report for 2015 will appear in Heritage 220

BUTTERFLIES

This was a disappointing summer as far as our butterfly populations were concerned, the hoped-for decent, settled sunny periods failed to materialise, as in the spring, producing far from ideal conditions for many of these sun-loving creatures and numbers of some species, such as the Small Tortoiseshell and the Peacock, which showed a welcome increase last summer, have fallen back again.

Hesperiidae

The **Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*** was widely reported from some 16 localities and was first noted on 3 July at Bede Island in Leicester and last observed on 21 August at Bloody Oaks Quarry in Rutland. During July some large counts were – about 40 in the City General Hospital Grounds on 15th, 20 at Odstone on 21st and 29 at Sence Valley Forest Park on 30th. The closely related **Essex Skipper *Thymelicus lineola*** was identified at only four sites during July and August with a maximum count of about 23 at Humberstone Heights on 21 July. It was last reported on 17 August from Cossington Meadows NR.



Large Skipper © Steve Woodward

The **Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus***, first noted last quarter on 16 June, continued to be active throughout July and was last noted on the 31st at Scraftoft Gorse. It was reported from 13 widely scattered localities and the maximum count was of eight at Willowbrook Park in Leicester on 6 July.

Pieridae

Only one **Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus*** was positively identified and this at Bloody Oaks Quarry by LWP on 21 August but another probable individual flew by HBH and myself on Swithland Reservoir dam on 23 September but did not settle and allow a close view to make positive identification.

Numbers of the **Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*** were well down this summer and this attractive species was reported seen in only 14 localities as against 37 localities during the spring quarter. It is likely that those noted from late July onwards were new generation butterflies and it would seem probable that breeding success was low. Most sightings were of single individuals but up to three were present at several localities. In our Quorn garden we usually have several at a time visiting the flowers of Broad-leaved Everlasting Pea *Lathyrus latifolius* but this year only one visited these flowers. The species was last noted on 18 September at Market Bosworth.

Although the **Large White *Pieris brassicae*** was reported seen in only 17 separate localities, in all probability it visited most of our gardens but compared with some recent years its numbers were low. It was active on and off throughout the quarter.

The **Small White *Pieris rapae*** was reported seen in 19 widely spread localities and was more plentiful than the previous species but less numerous than usual. Last year a large lavender plant in our garden attracted up to 20 at a time but this year only ones and twos. Although a common grassland species the **Green-veined White *Pieris napi*** is often common along woodland rides. This summer it was reported seen at some 20 localities and some large counts were reported for woodland: 21 at Cloud Wood NR on 31 July and during August, 15 at Owston Wood on 7th, 16 at Launde Park Wood and 31 at Launde Big Wood on 11th. Other sightings were 21 at Cossington Meadows NR on 31 July and 17 at Watermead CP on 12 August.

Lycaenidae

Few **White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrium w-album*** were reported this year. At Cloud Wood NR, one of its main sites, two were seen nectaring on Marjoram flowers on 31 July and



Purple Hairstreak © Jim Graham

another in the canopy on 6 August. On 2 August two were also found nectaring on Marjoram in Castle Gardens by HB, presumably a first for this city site. Only a few sightings of **Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus*** were reported. In July several were observed flying around an oak on Mountsorrel Common on the 29th and during August six were seen in Swithland Wood on the 6th with one on the 26th and “a rather tatty individual” at Cropston Reservoir on the 9th.

The **Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeus*** second generation butterflies were noted more widely than the earlier generation in the spring. Fifteen localities as against only five but no double-figure counts were reported, maximum site numbers being four noted at Bede Island on 15 August, at Bradgate Park on 22nd and at Ulverscroft NR on 23rd. It was last noted on 11 September at Evington Park. After going unreported in the spring, August produced sightings of the **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** in eight localities with five at Ketton Quarry on 7th and three at Bede Island on 15th. It was last noted on 29th in Quorn.



Common Blue female © Steve Woodward

The **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** was reported seen at some 20 widely scattered localities between early July and 29 September,

when it was last seen at Kelham Bridge. Maximum counts were 17 at Ketton Quarry on 7 August, 80 (40 at each of two sites) at Bardon Hill and 19 at Cossington Meadows NR on 17th.

Second generation **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*** were well reported and noted at 22 localities, mostly in gardens and parks. Four females were observed ovipositing on Ivy below Castle Hill at Mountsorrel on 11 August. This attractive species was locally frequent during late July and August and was seen on the wing between 13 July and 12 September.

Nymphalidae

The **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** was reported from 26 localities across VC55 but at most sites only in ones and twos and no large gatherings were seen around Ivy blossom in late August and September as in some years. In September several were attracted to ripe plums in PJD’s Quorn garden and three to Ivy blossom in ACR’s Loughborough garden on 27th. The same number was also present at Ivy blossom at Swithland Reservoir on 30th. It is quite a good number of years now since this lovely butterfly was really plentiful hereabouts.



Painted Lady © Jim Graham

The **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui***, another handsome migrant, visited several of our gardens in August and September but apart from three in FTS’s Barlestone garden on 28 August and two in EPT’s Loughborough garden on 26 September all visits were of lone individuals. Altogether this fine species was reported seen in 20 widely spread localities. On the continent some really large gatherings were present this summer but sadly only a tiny proportion managed to make it over here! It was last seen on 27 September at Barlestone.

The **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** appeared rather less common than last summer and was reported seen in 35 localities compared with 44 last summer. It was active throughout the quarter with most being recorded in July and September and some large counts were 13 in LWP's Rothley garden and environs on 13 July, 19 at Cossington Meadows NR on 15th and 13 at Asfordby Sports Club car park on 6 August. Sadly the welcome increase in the **Peacock *Inachis io*** population of last year was not maintained this year and many gardens which were graced by large numbers of new generation butterflies during July and August last year supported few this year. The first new generation butterflies reported were two at Cossington Meadows NR on 15 July followed by one at Quorn on 19th. On 11 August LWP counted 14 in Launde Big Wood and the same number in Launde Park Wood. Other good counts were 20 on Buddleia at Asfordby Hill and 16 at Watermead CP on 12 August. Altogether this colourful, large species was reported seen in 23 well spread localities. A good scattering of **Comma *Polygonia c-album*** were observed in some 32 localities during the summer with most noted during July and August and with a few in late September. Seven were present at Sence Valley FP on 30 July, five at Launde Park Wood on 11 August and four at Leicester Arboretum on 26 September but most reports were of ones and twos.

A **Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*** was watched at Ketton Quarry on 7 August and this strong flying, wide ranging butterfly, which used to occur in good numbers at places like Bradgate Park and occurs at many sites in Derbyshire, is well worth looking out for on visits to places like thistle fields in July and August. The **Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia*** which has recently colonised Cloud Wood NR at Breedon was seen there by Club members in July on 19th and 31st, with eight noted on the later date and I understand double-figure counts were made in mid-July. Others were also seen here in early August when LWP also saw three at Bloody Oaks Quarry on 7th and, later on, two at Ketton Working Quarry on 19th. It is good that we have several places in VC55 where one can now see this splendid large fritillary. Let us hope that it continues to spread and colonise other local woodlands.

Satyridae

The **Speckled Wood *Parage aegeria*** was recorded widely in 40 localities but generally its numbers were on the low side and it was less plentiful in our gardens than usual during recent years. It was noted throughout the quarter in what was, presumably, two generations. Some large sites produced double figures: 14 at Cossington Meadows NR and 20 at Sence Valley FP on 6 September. On 20 September, six were noted at Leicester Arboretum. This was not a good year for the sun loving **Wall *Lasiomamata megera*** and our only sightings were one settling on rocks at Bardon Hill by HI and SFW on 17 August and one at Bradgate Park by SFW on 22nd.



Speckled Wood © Steve Woodward

The only **Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*** were seen by LWP – single individuals at Bloody Oaks Quarry NR and Ketton Quarry on 7 August, towards the end of their flight season.

As usual of recent years, the **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*** was widely reported and seen in 41 localities with first sightings at Quorn and Rothley on 13 July and the last sighting on 6 September at Great Dalby. Some large counts in July were 60 or more in Soar Valley Way meadow on 23rd and 80 at Sence Valley FP on 30th. Around 20 were counted at four localities during July and August.

The **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina***, first noted last quarter on 16 June, continued to be seen until 19 August when it was seen at Whatton House Gardens and Ketton Quarry. Double-figure counts were made at several sites with a maximum of 38 at Cossington Meadows NR on 15 July. Altogether it was reported seen in 26 well spread localities.

This was a dreadful year for the **Small Heath** *Coenonympha pampilus* and the only sightings reported were lone individuals at Bradgate Park on 15 July and at Bloody Oaks Quarry NR on 21 August and several at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel on 12 September.

The **Ringlet** *Aphantopus hyperantus* seems better able to cope with reduced levels of sunshine than most of our other butterfly species and can sometimes even be seen flying during overcast periods in light rain and consequently was not too badly affected by the lack of sunshine this summer. This quarter it was reported from 34 widely spread localities and was first noted last quarter on 21 June and last seen on 11 August at Launde Big Wood. The maximum site count reported was 99 at Sence Valley FP (only half the site covered) on 5 July and double-figure counts were reported for several other sites.

Peter Gamble

MOTHS

It took ten of us visiting 49 sites to produce a total of 347 species, which is a marked improvement on the last quarter of 157 species. With such a high number of species the total number of individuals was 3,129, over three times that of the previous quarter. July produced most of the “good” nights, then evening conditions and temperatures became quite variable in August and September. Although we had some lovely hot and sunny days, the following nights turned out to be clear and very cool. As a result only five nights were managed out in the field with the generator and traps and all produced either just under or just over 100 species each. The sites were very different from each other being Ketton Quarry, Old Park Wood (Vale of Belvoir), Bradgate Park and Misterton Marshes, all in July and the last, Kelham Bridge, in late August.

The most exceptional night was at Ketton Quarry on the 1 July when myself, Adrian Russell and Ron Follows deployed ten traps throughout the nature reserve and stayed the whole night. The following morning my personal list finished at 135 species of 828 individuals, but the actual combined list was a staggering 247 species of



Graham Finch in action © Steve Woodward

3,247 individuals. This actually ranks it as third in the all time “top nights”, the other two were 276 species at Luffenham Heath Golf Course in 2006 and 254 species from Clipsham Quarry in 2005, bearing in mind that both these nights involved 20 or more light traps. The conditions were perfect and the site superb, so it was no great surprise that we did so well.

What we did not bargain for was the number of true specials we recorded, there are far too many to mention in any detail, so all I can do is pick out a couple of the real surprises. **Festoon** *Apoda limacodes* the highest count, three were recorded and this is only the second time this species has been taken in the county, both occasions at this same site. The two individuals of **Ruddy Carpet** *Catarhoe rubidata* share a similar situation, food plant is Bedstraw, no shortage of that here so we can hope that this becomes a more frequent sight in the future, but the real shock of the night was a single **Buttoned Snout** *Hypena rostralis*. The food plant is Hop so if anywhere we might have expected it to occur along the Soar Valley, but for it to turn up at Ketton! The closest dot on a map looks like Northamptonshire, and it is scarce even there, the most recent adult being from Bedford Purlieus 1969. Is this another wanderer from afar or do we have it established but at low density, what is the real status? It is a species that is more easily found by beating for larva and is well known for not being particularly attracted to light. We have a handful of “classic” sites in the county and you can’t be at all of them on the same perfect night, but it really does make you wonder just what we could turn up if we could. The “mob handed” approach with multiple traps during optimum conditions at a good site certainly gets the



Leopard Moth © Steve Woodward

adrenalin flowing as obviously anything can, and often does, appear: you just do not know what they will be.

On to the rest in checklist order, the only Swift missing was **Gold Swift *Phymatopus hecta*** all the others were fairly well recorded including the spectacular **Leopard Moth *Zeuzera pyrina*** which was widely spread as singletons.

The only Clearwing reported was **Six-belted Clearwing *Bembecia ichneumoniformis*** at Bardon Hill in mid-August. An impressive variety of micro moths were recorded including the stunning black and white ***Ypsolopha sequella*** and the first few days of July proved good for **Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella***.

A group of moths that are often overlooked are the Momphidae, they may be small but the colours and patterns really need to be seen, several show almost metallic bright reds, oranges and or blues, some even show what look like tiny raised blobs of silver or white along the wings and most have a rough appearance some with dorsal tufts. The species recorded were ***Mompha rasckiella*, *M. conturbatella*, *M. ochraciella* and *M. propinquella***. All these feed on willowherb, so they should be much more widely recorded than they are.

The Tortricidae were well represented with 49 species recorded. Four of the delicate looking ***Aethes beatricella*** were at Misterton Marshes in mid-July, the larvae feed on Hemlock, and six of the equally stunning ***Cochylis hybridella*** were at Ketton at the beginning of July, the larvae feed within the seedheads of Ox-tongue and Hawks-beard. **Light Brown Apple Moth *Epiphyas postvittana*** did not seem to be faring so well but it did occur in all three months albeit in single figures. Similarly **Green Oak Tortrix**

Tortrix viridana only showed on two sites, 30 at Bradgate Park and 50 at Old Park Wood all in early July. Recorded in low numbers at all the sites worked with a generator, was **Bramble Shoot Moth *Epiblema uddmanniana*** but it was apparently absent from everyone's gardens. The **Codling Moth *Cydia pomonella*** was only reported from a Rothley garden and ***Dicrorampha alpinana*** from the same garden plus singles at an Ibstock garden, the latter on Ox-eye Daisy.

A total of 42 species of Pyralidae were recorded, the two wetland species ***Chilo phragmitella*** and ***Calamotropha paludella*** were attracted to light at Kelham Bridge on 21 August. Typically in high numbers, 100 **Water Veneer *Acentria ephemerella*** at Bradgate Park was the only record received for this species. The **Mint Moth *Pyrausta aurata*** was fairly widespread, again in low numbers with the highest count being four found during the daytime at Abney Street, Leicester. The first **Rush Veneer *Nomophora noctuella*** appeared at Bradgate Park on 10 July, then the only other records during all three months were from a Rothley garden. A single **Wax Moth *Galleria mellonella*** was at Rothley on 13 July and **Bee Moth *Aphomia sociella*** seemed to be quite widespread.

Four species of Plume moths were recorded ***Amblyptilia acanthadactyla*** from Rothley, ***Platyptilia gonodactyla*** from Abney Street, Leicester, ***Stenoptilia pterodactyla*** at Ketton Quarry and **White Plume Moth *Pterophorus pentodactyla*** at Rothley and Ketton Quarry. Usually recorded from the Rutland sites, seven individual **Treble Brown Spot *Idea trigeminata*** were attracted to light at Ketton Quarry but interestingly a singleton was at light in a Rothley garden, both records in July.

The only records of **Silver Ground Carpet *Xanthorhoe montana*** were nine individuals from Ketton Quarry, the striking **Phoenix *Eulithis prunata*** was at Misterton, Rothley and Old Park Wood, all as singletons.

The second most recorded species was **Willow Beauty *Peribatodes rhomboidaria*** widespread but always in single figures and a single, scarcely seen, **Satin Beauty *Deilepteia ribeata*** was at Old Park Wood on 4 July, with



Pine Hawk-moth © Steve Woodward



Lime Hawk-moth © Steve Woodward



Small Elephant Hawk-moth © Steve Woodward

two Privet Hawk-moth *Sphinx ligustri* on the same night. The two records of Pine Hawk-moth *Hyloicus pinastri* were restricted to Bradgate Park as was the only record of Lime Hawk-moth *Mimas tiliae*, all in mid-July. Poplar Hawk-moth *Laothoe populi* was well recorded and the six records of Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* were all from Barlestone except for the Long Whatton record at the end of September. Elephant Hawk-moth *Deilephila elpenor* was widespread, but just a single individual Small Elephant Hawk-moth *Deilephila porcellus* from Bradgate Park.

Six Red-necked Footman *Atolmis rubricollis* and five Four-dotted Footman *Cybosia mesomella* were attracted to light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July, always nice to see these two species. Fast becoming something of a rarity is Heart and Club *Agrotis clavis* so it was good to record 19 individuals at Ketton Quarry on 1 July.

No surprise to see Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba* was the most recorded species on 31 occasions with an increase in numbers up to over 150 on one night at Rothley. All the other "Yellow Underwings" were well represented except for just a single Least Yellow Underwing *Noctua interjecta* at Kelham Bridge 21 August. A recent colonist and slowly spreading, a single Small Ranunculus *Hecatera dysodea* was at Rothley in mid-August and Black Rustic *Aporophyla nigra* at the same site in September.

The autumnal moths started to appear from mid-August with Centre-barred Sallow *Atethmia centrago*, Lunar Underwing *Omphaloscelis lunosa*, Brown-spot Pinion *Agrochola litura*, Pink-barred Sallow *Xanthia togata* and Sallow *Xanthia ictorita* all on the wing throughout September. Two really nice species to find in the moth trap were Old Lady *Mormo maura* and Bird's Wing *Dypterygia scabriuscula* both at Rothley in July and August respectively. The delicately-marked Olive *Ipimorpha subtusa* was at Bradgate Park on 10 July and a single Frosted Orange *Gortyna flavago* at Rothley in early September. Amongst a superb "Wainscot fest" 19 Brown-veined Wainscot *Archanara dissoluta* were at Kelham Bridge towards the end of August. Almost always only taken in small numbers, singles of Fen Wainscot *Arenostola phragmitidis* were recorded at Misterton Marsh and Old Park Wood and three of the closely related Small Rufous *Coenobia rufa* plus two Silky Wainscot *Chilodes maritimus* and Gold Spot *Plusia festucae* at Kelham Bridge on 21 August.

All in all, mid-July to mid-August proved a particularly good period for many of our reedbed species.

Many thanks to all our moth recorders for their records.

Graham and Anona Finch

BEETLES

This quarter shows a dramatic drop in numbers of both species and individuals, whether that reflects a drop in effort put into looking for them or beetles were in fact a little scarcer or harder to find, I certainly seem to have had to work a bit harder to find them. Actual casual sightings of beetles sitting out on flower heads or just generally out in the open have been few and far between and judging by the results of members' sightings, that appears to have been the case for everyone else too. Having said that, sweeping, beating and other direct searching methods have produced plenty of specimens. Eight of us managed to record 1,793 individuals of 46 species and out of the 308 records received 130 relate to the Charnwood Forest and 63 to Rutland, so almost two thirds came from these two broad areas, with 43 records from the north-west. This only leaves just over 70 records from the rest of the county, which really is not a great amount to be shared out over such a large area. We all have our favourite areas and it is great to keep a continuation of records coming in from these, a kind of long term monitoring scheme. Over the winter, however, I need to sit down and work out a plan to see where I can boost the records by concentrating more fieldwork in the 10 km squares that have fewer records. One of the most spectacular beetle happenings of the quarter was on 1 July during a moth trapping session at Ketton Quarry, where a series of light traps not only attracted a staggering array of moths but beetles too. On this night five individuals of **Summer Chafer *Amphimalon solstitiale*** which had not been recorded in the county for over 100 years, two adults of the Notable-B ***Tilus elongatus*** an ancient woodland indicator plus three adults of ***Pseudocistela ceramboides*** another Notable-B and a species which was new to the county in 2014. Then, just due to the sheer numbers in and around every trap, ***Harpalus rufipes*** with well over 300 individuals counted, but dozens more were scattered over the ground and surrounding vegetation furthermore, on top of that, add another 25 species attracted to the light, some in considerable numbers made for a remarkable evening.

The list begins with a couple of Water Beetles and they were singles of ***Ilybius ater*** and ***Ilybius fuliginosus*** attracted to light in early July. Not surprisingly there were more species of Carabids recorded than any other family, 27 in all, but only two **Violet Ground Beetle *Carabus violaceus*** in late July and mid-August. The next species can sometimes be a little awkward to key out, just a single specimen of ***Patrobus atrorufus*** in mid-August: all the above from Bradgate Park. Bembidions were a little thin with just five species recorded and most by grubbing on the ground, Seven ***Bembidion lunulatum*** were at Hicks Lodge in early July, ***B. lampros*** at the end of September at Newfield Colliery, ***B. lunatum*** in early July at Old Park Wood: all singletons. The dry shoreline and a field edge provided six ***B. fumigatum*** at Saddington Reservoir in mid-August plus a single ***B. quadrimaculatum*** at light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July. ***Pterostichus madidus***, ***P. niger*** and ***Abax parallelepipedus*** were the most widespread and abundant of the family, especially in the pitfall traps at Bradgate Park where all three species reached well into double-figures at most inspections throughout the quarter. The pitfall traps at Bradgate Park produced the only two ***Calathus rotundicollis*** reported on 24 August. Singles of ***Calathus fuscipes*** and ***C. melanocephalus*** were found under stones at Asfordby Hill Iron Works in mid-August. A solitary ***Oxypselaphus obscurus*** was found along the shoreline at Saddington Reservoir towards the end of August, but six were attracted to light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July. Two species of *Amara* were found under stones at Asfordby Hill Iron Works on 12 August, ***Amara tibialis*** and ***Amara bifrons***, both as singletons and ***Amara apricaria*** was attracted to light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July. Also attracted to light, this time at Bradgate Park, were two ***Curtonotus aulicus*** and one ***Harpalus affinis*** on 10 July and apart from the huge numbers of ***Harpalus rufipes*** at Ketton on 1 July, this species was at Old Park Wood on 4 July and Bradgate Park on 10 July, all attracted to MV light and eight ***Stenolopus mixtus*** were among those coming to light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July. Just to finish the Carabids off, ***Paradromius linearis*** was swept from low vegetation at Puddledyke on 24 August, ***Dromius quadrimaculatus*** and

Calodromius spilotus were beaten from dead aerial branches in Bradgate Park on 31 July.

The usual species associated with various dung samples were well in evidence, *Spaeridium bipustulatum*, *S. lunatum* and *S. scaraboides* were only found in sheep dung, all in August, *Cercyon melanocephalus* and *C. quisquilius* in sheep and deer dung but *Margarinotus ventralis* favoured sheep, I was tempted to say there's no accounting for taste, but obviously there is! The odd looking carrion feeder *Thanatophilus sinuatus* was regularly found in Bradgate Park throughout and the burying beetles *Necrophorus humator* and *N. vespillo* were only recorded at various moth traps all July and August. The grand total of 17 species of Staphylinidae were recorded from a real variety of "habitats" the Rothamsted Insect Trap at Rutland Water produced the only *Bledius gallicus* on 1 July and *Anotylus rugosus* and the closely-related *Anotylus tetracarinatus*, was in deer dung at Bradgate Park both in early July. Just a single *Stenus clavicornis* was found along a field edge near Saddington Reservoir on 20 August and was the only member of this genus recorded. Seven species of Philonthus were recorded from pitfall traps, various dung samples, rescued from a water filled, horse trough, and even found visiting washing that had just been hung out to dry. Was it the glistening white sheets or the "fragrant lily" Surf washing powder aroma that they could not resist, we will never know. The distinctive but ferocious looking *Ontholestes murinus* was found in cow dung at Charnwood Lodge on 7 July and the equally fearsome *Ocypus aeneocephalus* was inhabiting a dead deer carcass at Bradgate Park in late August, both in singles. Very few records of Lesser Stag Beetle *Dorcus parallelipedus* have been received recently so it was nice to find an adult male under tree roots in Bradgate Park in early July. The Aphodius genus did quite well with 13 species recorded, most either from dung or attracted to light traps, except for *Aphodius contaminatus* taken off the washing line at Ibstock on 16 September and *A. sticticus* on 24 August from the water trough mentioned above.

I know it is at the end of the flight season but it seems incredible that we only have the one record of **Common Cockchafer** *Melolontha*

melolontha this quarter from MV light at Old Park Wood on 4 July. Three members of the Scirtidae recorded were *Elodes minuta* attracted to light at Misterton Marsh on 18 July, *Prionocyphon serricornis* to light in Old Parks Wood on 17 August and *Scirtes hemisphaericus* to light in Bradgate Park on 10 July but also swept from low vegetation at Hick's Lodge on 9 July. *Dascillus cervinus* only has eight previous records so the three individuals attracted to light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July were a nice surprise and, last recorded in 2006, two *Agrius laticornis* were swept from low vegetation under a sickly Oak at Bardon Hill on 3 August. No doubt due to the lack of an easy key, only five species of Click beetles were reported, one *Denticollis linearis* to light at Ketton Quarry on 6 July, *Stenagostus rhomboideus* - one at Bradgate Park on 10 July and four at Old Park Wood on 7 July, both to light; *Agriotes pallidulus*, again to light, in Old Park Wood on 4 July; a stunning red and black *Ampedus balteatus* at Bradgate Park on 17 July, off low vegetation below an ancient Oak and two *Melanotus villosus* (confirmed by dissection) to light in Bradgate Park on 10 July. Only two **Glow-worm** *Lampyris noctiluca* were reported and both to light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July.

Faring a little better for identification material are the Cantharids or Soldier Beetles, but even these do not have a nice easy single identification guide, I seem to need three sets of keys to get anywhere with them. Just five species were confidently identified, 11 *Cantharis nigra* at Hick's Lodge on 9 July, then four *Cantharis rufa* and *Rhagonycha fulva* was the most widespread including over 100 individuals at Bradgate Park. *Malthinus flaveolus* and *Malthinus minimus* were attracted to light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July; the latter species became a familiar sight at MV light throughout July. A short account was mentioned in the last quarter of the finding of the two Necrobia species, and they continue to be found on inspection of their preferred habitat. There is, however, another species *Necrobia ruficollis* and this has been recorded in Bradgate Park between 1848-1895 by Frederick Bates: okay, it was a long time ago, but with any luck this species could still be there. The host medium, dead rabbits, foxes, badgers, birds or deer in

some form, must always have been on the Park since this first record, so optimism is high. It is a stunning beetle: bright metallic blue with the pronotum, shoulders of the elytra and the legs, bright orange. Finding this species on the Park would be a real red-letter day, indeed, and I doubt if there are many other sites nationwide that could boast all three species at the same location. Another genus associated with carrion and in particular, dry bones, are the two *Omosita* species, so finding both at Bradgate Park at the same site together is quite a coup. There are only three records for this first species, *Omosita colon*, with the latest being 1895, the second, *O. discoides*, has a total of eight records the latest from 1988. Both have been found on subsequent visits throughout July and September to the same site as *Necrobia*, usually in low numbers, but they are there all the same.

Twelve species of ladybird were recorded, four specimens of *Rhyzobius litura* and *Coccidula rufa* from Puddledyke on 24 August, all swept from pond edge vegetation. Just a single **Pine Ladybird** *Exochomus quadripustulatus* off Spruce was found in Barkby on 18 August. **Orange Ladybirds** *Halysia sedecimguttata* were widely recorded, mainly from moth traps, with just a couple from daytime observations; only three records of **22-spot Ladybird** *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata* from Cossington on 15 August, Great Dalby on 6 September and Ab Kettleby on 17 September, all singles. The next two species were really widespread, **14-spot Ladybird** *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata* and **Harlequin Ladybird** *Harmonia axyridis* although the latter still in very low numbers. A single **10-spot Ladybird** *Adalia decempunctata* was found at Barkby on Spruce on 10 August but the most abundant and widespread was **7-spot Ladybird** *Coccinella septempunctata* with 18 records, although again none managed to reach into double-figures. Several **Adonis Ladybird** *Hippodamia variegata* were found at Asfordby Hill Iron Works and a singleton in Bradgate Park on 12 and 26 August respectively. **Water Ladybird** *Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata* were at Watermead CP on 4 August and at Puddledyke on 24 August with **16-spot Ladybird** *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata* at Watermead CP and Bradgate Park both in August.

A member of the Melandryidae or False Darkling Beetles *Orchesia undulata* does not get recorded that often with just 11 previous records. Last recorded in 2013, but before that in 1997, a single adult was beaten from a dead aerial branch at Bardon Hill on 3 August. **Lagria hirta** was a widespread and familiar sight at moth traps but also commonly swept from low foliage. Usually found sitting out on various flowers *Oedemera nobilis* was well recorded including several sightings in the city. A single **Salpingus planirostris** was at Bardon Hill on 3 August swept from low vegetation while **Anaspis maculata** fared better with ten individuals beaten from a hedge at Ketton Quarry on 1 July. Five species of Longhorn beetles were recorded *Stenocorus meridianus* attracted to MV light at Ketton Quarry on 1 July, an excellent find of *Stictoleptura rubra* from Bloody Oaks Quarry on 3 August - there are just a handful of records of this, *Rutpela maculata* was the most widely recorded, *Strenurella melanura* from Bloody Oaks Quarry on 7 August and lastly a single **Agapantha villosoviridescens** from Rutland on 9 July. The **Lily Beetle** *Lilioceris lilli* was reported from a Quorn garden on a couple of occasions in July plus Spinney Hill Park on 21 August and Evington Park on 4 July in the city. Swept from low vegetation *Cassida vibex* was found at Asfordby Hill Iron Works 12 August and Puddledyke on 24 August. The large and brassy *Chrysolina hyperici* was found at Oakthorpe Picnic Area and Willesley Wood on 25 July and the closely related *Chrysolina polita* was at Saddington Reservoir on 20 August. The very bright and shiny **Green Dock Beetle** *Gastrophysa viridula*, although only reported once, was very abundant - 100 plus individuals at Watermead CP on 4 August. Another species which rarely gets recorded and there are only ten previous records for this, is the **Horsetail Flea Beetle** *Hippuriphila modeeri* -five adults were swept off pond edge horsetail at Puddledyke late August. Another really nice surprise was finding *Bruchela rufipes* at Asfordby Hill Iron Works on 12 August - there is only the one previous record for this species and that is 1872 in "Leicester" by Plant, making this a particularly significant record. The host plant is Wild Mignonette. These last two species are two excellent candidates to look for wherever the host plants grow and we should be able to

add significantly to the existing records. The last species made up a total of 13 species of weevils, just a few highlights here, eight ***Protapion assimile*** swept off low vegetation with abundant clovers at Asfordby Hill Iron Works on 12 August. With just five previous records for ***Oxystoma subulatum***, six individuals at Bardon Hill on 3 August make for a nice addition. Only a single record of the usually ridiculously common ***Sitona lineatus*** was tapped out of Meadow Cranesbill from Narborough Bog on 5 August. Last recorded in 1984 two ***Sitona striatellus*** were beaten off Broom at Newfield Colliery in late September. One of the small green weevils ***Hypera nigrirostris*** was swept off low vegetation at Asfordby Mineral Works on 12 August, and the **Figwort Weevil *Cionus scrophulariae*** was swept from Water Figwort at Spinney Hill Park on 17 August. ***Ceutorhynchus obstrictus*** and ***Ceutorhynchus pallidactylus*** were both swept from low vegetation at Asfordby Mineral Works plus a single of the latter was rescued from the water butt in an Ibstock garden, all in August. Finishing up with two records of **Acorn Weevil *Curculio glandium***, one attracted to light in Old Park Wood on 4 July and two swept from a young Oak at Spinney Hill Park on 21 July.

Admittedly, a lot of time has been spent in Bradgate Park just lately, but I think it has been justified with the quality of the results we have been getting. There are several specialised habitat niches here and a continued thorough sampling while we have access permission, is a great privilege. It also highlights the Park's incredible value for its invertebrate fauna and it is still capable of producing new species both for the Park and for the county.

Many thanks for everyone's records.

Graham Finch

OTHER INSECTS

Hemiptera

Not a great number of records for this group and I will start with the most widespread species, the **Green Shieldbug *Palomina prasina***. A few nymphs were noted on the Evington Park embankment on 19 August, most adults being



Green Shieldbug nymph © Steve Woodward reported in September from Spinney Hill Park, Bede Island, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Odstone Hill House, Great Dalby, South Croxton, mostly in ones and twos with several nymphs at Great Dalby churchyard on 6 September.

Apart from a few nymphs of **Hawthorn Shieldbug *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*** noted on Victoria Park in September, the only other record was an adult at Loughborough seen by ATO on 13 September.

A few more **Sloe Bug *Dolycoris baccarum*** were reported, with three adults at Bede Island and one adult Barlestone in July. In August four nymphs were on Evington Park embankment on the 19th, with two adults at Rally Bank car park margins on the 8th, and single adults in September from Newton Burgoland and Quorn. In case members are not familiar with Rally Bank at Humberstone – the following is taken from the Leicester City website. “Between 1883 and 1962 thousands of people used this line to travel to Skegness for their summer holidays. Now abandoned, the bank is a haven for wild plants and animals. The adjacent nature reserve was created from a former allotment site and as well as wild plants such as hawthorn and bramble some original allotment species can still be found.”

Single **Forest Bug *Pentatoma rufipes*** were recorded in July from Abbey Park on the 7th, Ethel Road on the 14th, Sibleby on the 9th, Bradgate Park on the 28th, and singles at Snarestone and Odstone Hill House on September 15th.

A **Gorse Shieldbug *Piezorus lituratus*** final nymph was found to be the prey of the wasp, *Astata boops* at Cuffin's Pit Mountsorrel, on 11 August and with two adults at Bardon Hill on the 17th.

Parent Bug *Elasmucha grisea* were found to be common on a single birch tree in Ethel Road, Evington and two were noted in hibernation colours on foliage at Monks Rest on 23 September.

Eight adults of **Bishops Mitre** *Aelia acuminata* were at Bede Island on 3 July, with several adults and nymphs in scrub at Aylestone Meadows on 6 September.



Bronze Shieldbug © Steve Woodward

Single adults of the **Bronze Shieldbug** *Eysarcoris fabricii* were noted at Abbey Park on 10 July and on Black Horehound at Freemans Lock on 17 July. Numerous early instar nymphs were also on Black Horehound in Spinney Hill Park on 12 August.

A single record of the local **Spiked Shieldbug** *Picromerus bidens* was noted at Beacon Hill at the end of August.

An adult *Troilus luridis* was found on Alder in Leicester Arboretum on 26 September and the only **Pied Shieldbug** *Tritomegas bicolor* seen was an adult at Stoughton Airfield on 7 August.

An interesting find was an adult **Small Grass Shieldbug** *Neottiglossa pusilla* swept from grassland at Aylestone Meadows on the 29 September; a local species that appears to feed on various grasses, my only previous record is of one in overgrown allotments at Keyham in 2005.

Fifty or more adults and nymphs of the big **Dock Bug** *Coreus marginatus* were on low foliage in Ethel Road on 7 August and, further afield, singles were noted at South Croxton and Bradgate Park, both nymphs.

Rhopalidae

An adult *Rhopalus subrufus* was in a hedgebank at Belgrave in late September and two *Corizus hyoscyami* on Evington Park embankment on 29 August. *Stictopleurus abutilon*, one adult or final instar nymph was in an Evington Park hedge margin on 1 August.

Mirid Bugs

Heterotoma planicornis, one was at Barlestone Garden Bioblitz on 19 July, a partly predatory species. *Calocoris stysi*, one in the tree layer in Abbey Park, *Deraeocoris olivaceus*, common on Field Maple in Evington Park on 4 July and two in Hamilton Park on 14 July.

Several *Pantilius tunicatus* were in Spinney Hill Park on Birch and three adults were in Leicester Arboretum on Alder. This is a late summer species which feeds on buds and catkins.

Damselbugs

Three nymphs of **Ant Damsel Bug** *Himacerus apterus* were on Evington Park embankment on 29 July.

There were hundreds of **Green Leafhoppers** *Cicadella viridis* at Alton Grange on 25 July.

A few Lace Bugs to close this section: *Physatocheila dumetorum*, one was on the wall of Thurcaston church on 23 July and *Tingis cardui*, which can be very common some years on Spear Thistle, over 100 were in Bradgate Park, mostly nymphs on 15 July and many in the Deer Sanctuary on 20 July.

Diptera

As usual, I will start off with the hoverflies. Again, a very disappointing year for some species, especially the Syrphids, the migrant **Marmalade Hoverfly** graced many of our gardens and elsewhere during the summer months, but several associated species were once again very low in numbers.

A single *Platycheirus albimanus* was at Barlestone on 18 July. This common species used to be found in my small garden for many years, but not seen since 2003.

As mentioned above, *Episyrphus balteatus* records were received from 25 localities, peaking in July, common in some areas, Odstone

Hill House, Whatton House Gardens, Evington Park etc., and abundant in PHG's Quorn garden by the 14th of the month. One or two darkened species were noted locally in September at Evington Park on the 10th and last seen here on the 19th. A few members of this species probably hibernate in some years.

A few records of *Eupeodes corollae* came from Bradgate Park Deer Sanctuary, an adult male with three others on 20 July and in Abney Street Leicester, a male on 27 July and a female on 10 August.

Eueodes luniger was present at Barlestone on 18 July, with singles at Quorn on the same date, Rally Bank car park margins on 28 August, and Humberstone Park on 10 September. Two were in Evington Park on 16 September and seen regularly in my garden in Abney Street this quarter with the last record here being a single on 26 September.

A female *Eupeodes latifasciatus* was taken by the brook side in Spinney Hill Park on Ragwort on 5 August. *Britain's Hoverflies* by Roger Morris and Stuart Ball is an invaluable aid with species like this.

There were very few reports of *Sphaerophoria scripta*, singles only from: Asfordby Hill on 6 August, Broad Hill at Mountsorrel on 11 August, Abney Street and Odstone Hill House in early September and the City General Grounds on 19 September. The only location where more than a single was recorded was in Gaulby Lane field margins with a few on 7 August.

There are very few records of *Syrphus ribesii* locally, just odd specimens noted here and there, singles were noted at Barlestone and Bradgate Deer Park in July. PHG, however, had them as common in his Quorn garden on the 18th. A similar picture *Syrphus vitripennis*, with only two records, singles noted at Barlestone garden and Sheepy Magna both in July.

A single *Scaeva pyrastris* was seen briefly in Aylestone Meadows on 16 July and another in my back yard on 21 July and 26 July: the first noted in my garden for five years. No other records were received for this migrant species, which is common in some years: this was not one of them.

A dried out pond margin at Aylestone Meadows contained one *Xanthogramma pedissequum* on 16 July.

Singles of *Chrysotoxum bicinctum* were recorded at Wellsborough on 5 July, Alton Grange on 25 July, and Bradgate Park on 3 August. *Chrysotoxum festivum*, a rather local and southern species, was recorded by SFW and HI at Ketton Quarry 19 August.

Two *Cheilosia illustrata* were record from Willow Brook Park on 7 July.

Just one record of *Rhingia campestris* was received, from Stocking Wood on 10 September.

Of the Eristalini, the **Drone Fly** *Eristalis tenax* was the most widely seen, was common at Spinney Hill Park, Stoughton Airfield, Castle Gardens, and Aylestone Meadows this quarter, but SFW and HI could only muster up singles at Sibson churchyard on 19 July, and Great Dalby churchyard on 6 September. *Eristalis pertinax* was recorded from Bede Island and Quorn during August. Odd specimens of *Eristalis nemorum* were noted at Bede Island and Evington Park during August.

Myathropa florea records came from my Leicester garden, Quorn, Aylestone Meadows, the City General Hospital Grounds, with the last record being two at Leicester Arboretum on 26 September.

Sun Flies *Helophilus pendulus* were recorded from Bede Island, Castle Gardens, Ketton Quarry and were plentiful in a Quorn garden in September until the end of the month.

The **Bulb Fly** *Merodon equestris* was only recorded at Castle Gardens on 3 July. This is usually common locally, but no more were sighted this year.

A female *Pipiza noctiluca* was noted at Whatton House gardens by SFW and HI in August. Few records of this variable and confusing genus have been submitted in recent years.

Only one record was received for *Volucella pellucens*, from Sheepy Magna churchyard on 19 July.

It is a good year for *Volucella inanis* which is a scavenger in social wasp nests. Records came from: Quorn, Spinney Hill Park and Glenfield in

July; Ketton Quarry, Rutland Water, Castle Gardens (two foraging on Marjoram), and my garden on Hebe in August, and a very late specimen at Leicester Arboretum on 26 September. The magnificent hoverfly *Volucella zonaria* graced my small garden, foraging on Hebe for over two hours on 2 August. Another was seen briefly in a hedgebank at Belgrave Lock on 11 August and one on Rally Bank on Buddleia on 28 August.

Tabanids

There was an interesting find of the **Large Marsh Horsefly** *Tabanus autumnalis* by SFW and HI in a Barlestone garden on the 18 July, a female. This is mainly a southern and local species.

Other records

Twin-lobed Deer-fly *Chrysops relictus* was at Bradgate Park on 16 July and two **Splayed Deer-fly** *Chrysops caecutiens* on the church wall at Sibson on the 19th.

Robber Flies

The few records we have from this quarter emanate from the Charnwood region.

A male **Kite-tailed Robber-fly** *Machimus atricapillus* was in Bradgate Park on 20 July and another at this site on 3 August. A **Brown Heath Robber-fly** *Machimus cingulatus*, also male, was recorded from Castle Hill, Mountsorrel on 11 August.

Soldier Flies

A **Black-horned Gem** *Microchrysa polita* was on the roadside verge in Ethel Road on 4 July and a pair in a garden in Barlestone on 18 July. Twenty or more **Broad Centurion** *Chloromyia formosa* were on Wild Carrot in the Cathedral gardens nature area in Peacock Lane on 9 July. Three **Dull Four-spined Legionnaire** *Chorisops tibialis* were in the City General grounds, one pair mating in a hedgerow on 14 July, and on Great Central Way a male was swept from foliage on 16 July. **Dark-winged Black** *Pachygaster atra* was common in an old hedgerow on Ethel Road on 14 July and a male was found in Bradgate Park Deer Sanctuary on 3 August.

Conopids

A mating pair of *Physocephala rufipes* was in the City General grounds almost in the same spot that I recorded one in 2014.

A single *Conops flavipes* was by the brookside on Ragwort in Spinney Hill Park on 5 August. *Conops quadrifasciata* was also on Ragwort at Bede Island on 15 August.

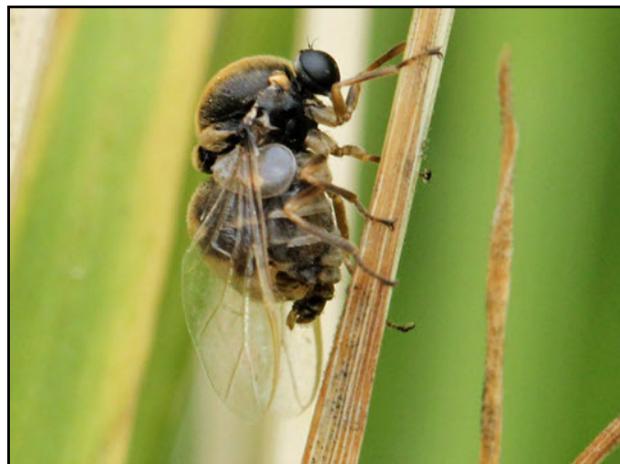
At Aylestone Meadows, *Sicus ferrugineus* sitting on herbage on dried out pond margins was the first record noted at this site.

Recorded hosts of Conopid parasites include wasps, mason wasps, sand wasps and bumblebees,

Miscellaneous Flies

Poecilobothrus nobilitatus, a long-legged fly, many were on a garden pond at Barlestone on 18 July.

A few *Eriothrix rufomaculata* were on Evington Park embankment on Ragwort on 19 August and at Aylestone Meadows, a few were on Ragwort on 16 September. This species is not uncommon late summer on yellow composites.



Hunchback-fly © Steve Woodward

Hunchback-fly *Acrocera orbiculus* came from Charnwood Lodge where one was swept from grassland. These flies are rarely seen and generally only live for a few days. They are very odd flies indeed, having no mouthparts, which reduces their flight period. Despite this they manage to parasitize living spiders - a very unusual life pattern, indeed.

A few Holly leaf miners *Phytomyza ilicis* were recorded at Bradgate Park, Glenfield, Kegworth, churchyard and Seagrave during August.

Hymenoptera

Social Bees and Wasps

Our most widespread species **Buff-tailed bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*** was, as usual, widely reported in this quarter, mostly males and young queens this time, the only workers seen were from Barlestone on the 5th and 21 July. Queens were widely reported, some with pollen, at Barlestone on the 3rd and 19 July, up to three on Phlox on 22 August, with further queens throughout September. Other queens noted were singles at Abbey Park on 10 July, Rally Bank Park, one searching for a nest site on 28 August, the City General Grounds on 19 September and Priors Coppice NR on 20 September.

Both workers and male **Red-tailed bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius*** were recorded from Barlestone in July, males becoming more frequent during August with a few in early September with young queens during August and singles in September on three dates. Other males and workers were recorded from a garden at Scraftoft Lane. Other records came from Evington Park where several workers were foraging Hebe on 14 July, and a young queen at Belgrave on 11 August. July records came from Sheepy Magna, Burbage, Carlton, Whatton House Gardens, Ulverscroft NR, Odstone, and Thurcaston, mostly singles. Several were noted from Stoughton Airfield in August, foraging Ragwort.

FTS reports a few males of **White-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lucorum*** during July and early August and a single queen on Verbena on 18 July in his Barlestone garden. In my Leicester garden on 7 July several workers were foraging on Hebe, this is the first time I have ever had workers of this species, usually I only get a few *Bombus terrestris* males during this period. Other records came from Evington Park where several workers were foraging on Hebe on 14 July and a single queen with a full pollen basket was noted in a hedgerow. Males and workers were noted in a garden at Scraftoft Lane, with many at Packington, Holy Rood Churchyard on the 25th July.

Again, the only significant records of the **Garden Bumblebee *Bombus hortorum*** came from Barlestone, with a few males during July

and early August and a single queen on Verbena on the 18th. The only other record I have is for males and workers on *Lavendula* at a Scraftoft Lane garden.

The **Tree Bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum*** continues to flourish, perhaps with fewer workers this quarter. At Barlestone a few were found in July, with a queen on Verbena on 19 July and three more queens noted during August. A few young queens were noted elsewhere: at Leicester Canal on 17 July, my garden on 28 July, and one foraging Ivy on September 26th. Other records include several nesting in a compost heap at Groby on 1 July, a worker with pollen in my garden on 3 August, with singles at Sibson, Sheepy Magna and Packington during July.

The only record this quarter of the **Early-nesting bumblebee *Bombus pratorum***, was a single worker at Barlestone on 2 August 2, probably from a partial second brood.

The **Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascuorum*** was the most widely recorded bee this quarter as it is active for a much longer period and was recorded from 14 sites with odd specimens to the end of the quarter; a nest was found at Coleorton on 25 July.

Whilst watching *Volucella zonaria* on my Hebe, on 2 August a large black bee, appeared to forage on the same plant, in size, about the size of a queen *Bombus lapidarius*, it had two narrow bands on the thorax and a white tail, a closer examination revealed a long face and tongue, it did not stay overlong but quickly proceeded on its way, I am pretty certain it was not a dark form of *Bombus hortorum* but possibly *Bombus ruderatus*. Strangely enough, in June 2004 an almost identical insect to this came to rest on one of my flower pots, it rested long enough for me to look at it closely before flying off.

An interesting article by Maggie Frankum was published in a 2013 *Newsletter of the Natural History Section of the Leicester Lit. and Phil. Society* on black bumblebees in VC55. Katie Field, while walking a transect at Strawberry Farm, Wymondham in July came upon a black bee foraging on Creeping Thistle which she subsequently took to Maggie where it was confirmed as a male of that species, she also

found another black bee foraging on Teasel at Back Lane Stonesby on August 7th, about five miles from the first spot, this too was a male *Bombus ruderatus*, could there be isolated colonies in this area? It is not an area regularly covered by many naturalists at the present time, so who knows, I must say, in my younger days when I had the energy to cycle over a wide area of east Leicestershire for many years I never once encountered any black bumblebees.

A few cuckoo bumblebees were recorded.

Males and two female *Bombus vestalis* were recorded at Barlestone. They were frequent in July and during August to the 28th of the month but fewer elsewhere. One was at Burbage on 16 July, Scraptoft Gorse had two on 31 July and one in Scraptoft Lane. There were just two records *Bombus sylvestris*, on Hebe my garden 11 July and at Scraptoft Lane. *Bombus campestris* males were at Great Central Way on 27 July, Scraptoft Gorse on 31 July and at Freemans Weir foraging *Impatiens glandulifera* on 6 September. Two male *Bombus rupestris* were at Scraptoft Gorse on 31 July.

Numbers of **Honey Bee *Apis mellifera*** were recorded from various sites in the county this quarter: Leicester Canal on bramble; Castle Gardens, common in flower borders; Ketton Quarry; Burbage; Odstone; Seagrave, several on bramble; Gaddesby; Brooke, and Gartree Road on Ivy.

Social Wasps

Singles of **Hornet *Vespa crabro*** were recorded from: Burbage, St Catherine's churchyard on 16 July; Bradgate Park, inside a dead pollard on 27 July; Beacon Hill on 25 August; Park Hill Golf Club, a nest in the cavity at the base of an Ash tree on 27 September, and two on Ivy boundary wall at Buddon Wood on 30 September.

Numbers of **Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris*** were generally well down this year compared to many recent years. Most of the general public will be rather pleased about that. In August it was recorded from: Woodhouse; Seagrave tea shop; at Wing Hall where two visited a sugar bowl, (they know where to go), and Spinney Hill Park, usually several active nests this quarter but just ones and twos this year. They were common on Ivy in Gartree Road on 26



Common Wasp © Steve Woodward

September and in a boundary wall of Buddon Wood on the 30th of that month.

A **German Wasp *Vespula germanica*** was seen at Burbage, St Catherine's churchyard on 16 July and the **Tree Wasp *Dolichovespula sylvestris***, was reported from Bardon Hill on the 17 August.

ATO reports a very large wasp in his Shelthorpe garden on 12 August, which he considered may have been the **Median Wasp *Dolichovespula media***.

Ichneumon

The common Ichneumon ***Amblyteles armatorius***, was seen on a number of occasions in ATO's garden during July and August and one was present in my garden, daily from 20 July to the 3 August.

Thanks to HI, SFW, FTS, PHG and ATO for the records submitted for this report.

Howard Bradshaw

FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

Once again, despite the vagaries of the weather, the plants have come up trumps. Everything seems to have flowered well and it is obviously going to be a good acorn year.

The star of the quarter is the record of the Pale Toadflax *Linaria repens* at Newtown Linford. This is a plant which could be easily overlooked and is most often found on railway ballast in the County.

We very rarely get records of water plants so it is quite unusual to get records of two pond weeds.

Whilst browsing through the flora I realised we have 11 different duckweeds in this country, not counting the Rootless Duckweed *Wolffia arrhiza*. Only four of these are recorded in the Leicestershire Flora so there is a chance for someone to make a name for themselves.

Plants of Interest This Quarter

Rustyback Fern *Asplenium ceterach*: seen on the bridge over the River Lin by Lenthill Farm in Newtown Linford.

Love-in-a-Mist *Nigella damascena*: a garden escape which is an attractive addition to our flora, it was found on disturbed verges near new bridge at Odstone, and at Barrow on Soar.

Common Meadow Rue *Thalictrum flavum*: was present at Sibleby.

Meadow Saxifrage *Saxifraga granulata*: found in All Saints Churchyard at Sheepy Magna.

Lucerne *Medicago sativa*: a relic of cultivation and not grown so much these days it was located at Odstone Hill House and Heather.

Trailing St John's Wort *Hypericum humifusum*: one plant was found at Bradgate Park.

Dittander *Lepidium latifolium*: a coastal plant which has become established in several parts of the county but is not as plentiful as it was, specimens were identified at Asfordby Hill Ironworks.

Black Nightshade *Solanum nigrum*: Several plants were seen in flower in along the hedgerow at Southfields Park, Loughborough.

Pale Toadflax *Linaria repens*: several plants of this locally, very rare plant, were found on the grassy roadside, west verge, south of the drive to Benscliffe Hay Newtown Linford. It is mainly found on railway ballast in the County.

Basil Thyme *Clinopodium acinos*: several plants were in Ketton Working Quarry.

Common Calamint *Calamintha ascendens*: a patch was located in scrub at Aylestone Meadows.

Wall Lettuce *Mycelis muralis*: an uncommon plant in the county, it appears to be most often found in man-made habitats and was seen in Cossington Churchyard.

Blue Fleabane *Erigeron acer*: several large colonies were in flower in Buddon Wood.

Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*: a plant of unusually wet or damp areas, fairly common in the west of the county but less so in the east, specimens were located in Newtown Linford. The word *ptarmica* comes from the Greek word for causing sneezing. It also has various uses in herbal medicine and although its leaves can be eaten raw or cooked, it is poisonous to cattle, sheep and horses. But not to humans!

Tubular Water Dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*: as its name suggests it is found mainly close to water and is not uncommon in the county, approximately 50 flowering heads were recorded at Sibleby.

Small Scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*: origin is questionable and possibly introduced. Found at Bede Island where it was also noted in 2014.

Small Pondweed *Potamogeton berchtoldii*: it is not very often we get records of pondweeds and this is one of the not so common ones so some on the edge of a pond near Hick's Lodge were welcome.

Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*: some fine large flower spikes were noted at Shellbrook Wood near Ashby.

Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*: a site record of 33 spikes on the embankment at Evington Park, were rather late in flower.

Eric Webster

OTHER RECORDS

Records were also received for:

Bacteria, Fungi, Bryophytes, Harvestmen, Lichens, Snails, Woodlice, Millipedes, Spiders, Aphids, Ants, Galls, Grasshoppers, Barkflies, Caddisflies, Centipedes, Earwigs, Scale Insects.

WEATHER

July was a month of great contrasts. It began with a temperature of 34°C and ended with a night-time low of just 4°C. The temperature range for the month was a staggering 30°C. Few months in any season have had temperature contrasts as great as these! Afternoon temperatures averaged 21°C which is 0.6°C below the usual figure and with the mainly mild nights we averaged 12°C the expected figure for July. The overall mean of 16.5°C was 0.5°C below the normal figure for the month making it the coldest July for three years. It was also a wet month. I recorded 68 mm at Mountsorrel with Jim Lofts at Nanpantan logging 78 mm: both of these figures are about 20% above average. The sun shone for 191 hours which was 5% above normal.

The opening day brought exceptional temperatures which peaked at 34°C as a very hot air mass spread north from Africa. These were the highest temperatures recorded in our region since August 2003 when we recorded 35°C on the 9th. The weather remained warm in the first five days and this helped to spark some spectacular thunderstorms in the early hours of the fourth. Jim recorded 21 mm of rain in an intense downpour lasting 90 minutes. With it there was a very active electrical storm with lightning being recorded every ten seconds at one point. The lightning struck five local homes with buildings in Birstall and Quorn being badly damaged. After the first week the heat drained away and we were left in a cooler Atlantic westerly flow with plenty of showers around. The final week saw the coolest and wettest conditions. I recorded 17 mm of rain on the 26th in Mountsorrel and the max temperature that day was just 15°C, some 7°C below normal as the weather machine balanced itself out from the excessive heat in the first week! The final few days were also very cool and showery. Finally on the last day of the month we saw a very low night-time minimum of just 4.8°C in Mountsorrel with almost a ground frost! So in one month we saw weather that would not be out of place in all four seasons and not just summer. Again the position of the jet stream was responsible being over us or to our south for much of the month leaving us in the cool showery conditions while to the south over the

Mediterranean it has been a very hot summer on the warm side of the jet.

August was another cool and damp month with below average sunshine. Indeed, it was the 8th cooler and duller August in the last 11 years. During this period we have had, on average, 30 hours less sunshine, with temperatures more than 1°C cooler than in the ten Augusts between 1994 and 2004. This, although very interesting, is probably just a statistical blip with warmer and sunnier Augusts arriving soon - we hope! Afternoon temperatures averaged 21°C which is 0.5°C below normal and with night-time temperatures registering 12.1°C. The average temp of 16.5°C was 0.5°C below the long term expectation. Rainfall was also above normal with 65 mm falling at Mountsorrel with Jim at Nanpantan registering 80.5 mm: nearly 20% above his usual total. It was also a dull month with 148 hours of sunshine recorded: 15% below normal.

The first half of the month however was comparatively fine with only 2 mm of rain being recorded in the first 12 days. Temperatures peaked between 20°C and 25°C each day, with 14 hours of sunshine being recorded on the 12th. It then became cooler and wetter for a time with the month's night-time low of 6°C being recorded, by Jim, on the 16th. The hottest day of the month was the 22nd when temperatures climbed up to 30°C: the only day in the month that we exceeded the magical 27°C or 81°F mark! The last week was extremely wet with a wash-out bank holiday, with the last day seeing over 20 mm of rain. So August was mainly dominated by indifferent weather once again, with large areas of high pressure absent, hence the cool and cloudy conditions.

The summer as a whole from June to August was also cool with rainfall close to normal but sunshine totals were a fraction higher than expected. The three month period only saw temperatures exceed 27°C on three occasions but July 1st at 34°C was the warmest day since July 2006. There were, however, 50 dry days in the summer out of the 92, with the heavy rain being concentrated to just seven days. Once again, some aspects of the media would have us believe the summer was worse than it actually was! So in conclusion, certainly not a classic but you only have to go back to 2012 to

find a cooler and wetter summer than this one. After a wet start to September there are now signs the weather will start to settle down with this weekend being dry with next week seeing some warmer sunshine!

September was a cool month but sunshine totals were above normal with rainfall slightly below. Afternoon temperatures averaged 17°C which is 1°C below normal, with night-time values logged at 8.1°C more than 1°C below normal. The monthly mean was 12.7°C, 1°C below usual, making this the coolest September in Leicestershire since 1986. Despite being cool, sunshine figures were well up with 170 hours being recorded which is 23% above average for this month. Finally rainfall was logged at 49 mm, 20% below the normal total for the month. Winds were mainly light and the maximum gust as a modest 26 mph on the 24th.

The month began on a wet note with 15 mm of rain falling in the first five days. We then had the first substantial dry spell of the month between the 6th and the 11th when high pressure dominated. The 10th saw the warmest day when temperatures reached 21°C. This is the lowest maximum temperature for September in 15 years. The sunniest day was the 6th when 12.5 hours were logged. The weather then turned unsettled again in mid-month as low pressure moved in, with the heaviest rain of the month being recorded on the 15th at 11 mm. Finally, the last week saw the weather turn again and we enjoyed a sunny and dry final week of the month with the largest high pressure forming over us since last March. Sunshine totals every day exceeded ten hours but the long, cold nights meant that the temperature fell sharply, with the lowest minimum of 3°C being observed on the 26th. So in terms of temperature the month was disappointing and it joined most of the other months of 2015, being cooler than average. September during the last decade has frequently been warm and sunny but the trend has been broken this year. Cooler than normal Atlantic sea water to the northwest of the UK is probably key to this and, if it stays around, the coming winter could be cooler than normal. We have avoided really cold weather over the last two winters so we are due some snowfall this time around! Let us

hope for a little more autumn sunshine, however, before winter arrives.

Phil Morrish

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We are grateful to them all.

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