



No. 224

1 October - 31 December 2016

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CLASSIFIED RECORDS

Records submitted for *Heritage* have been checked as far as possible by the writers of the various sections. They have not all been formally validated by County Recorders (as this is not practical on a quarterly basis).

The original records from which *Heritage* is compiled are archived. The paper records are temporarily in the care of various members, but a more secure location for them has been found – details will appear in the next edition of *Heritage*. Electronic records are held by Helen Ikin.

MAMMALS

PJD has been putting out food for **Hedgehogs** in her Quorn garden this quarter and one was seen feeding on 11 December, which is unusually late, and food was disappearing up to 31 December. A live Hedgehog was meandering in the road in Groby on 14 November. Four separate Hedgehog nests were discovered in JGr's Holwell garden.

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Mole hills were noted at Swithland, Cropston, Castle Hill Park, Thorpe Satchville, Nailstone, Marefield, north of Lount, Twyford, Burton Overy, Dadlington and Newbold Heath.

There was one record of **Brown Hare** – a single seen by EPT in a paddock in Grimston on 10 October.

Rabbit burrows were seen at Thorpe Satchville, Twyford, Great Glen, and Newbold Verdon and Rabbits were active in DAP's Swithland garden throughout the quarter.

Grey Squirrels were eating bird food in JG's Cropston garden and were also noted at Castle Hill Park, Cropston Reservoir, Cropston Top, Marefield, Stoke Golding and along the GU Canal near Market Harborough.

Wood Mice were feeding below JGr's Holwell bird table on two occasions in early December. A **Bank Vole** was helping itself to bird food in JG's Cropston garden in mid-December. Two dead Wood Mice were left by a cat in a garden in Barrow Road, Quorn on 4 and 23 October and SFW's cat, Queenie, brought one home to Groby on 2

BIRDS

October. A dead **Brown Rat** was seen in the same Quorn garden on 5 October.

Live **Red Foxes** were seen at Peckleton, Brand Lane and in DAP's Swithland garden – three different individuals: a dog fox, a large but immature cub, and a confident vixen marking her territory. Droppings were seen on a molehill near Twyford and burrows and a strong fox smell were noted along a green lane at Newbold Verdon. Two road kills were recorded one on the A6 near Rothley and one at Swithland.

An interesting August record comes from Quorn where KH watched a **Weasel** being chased by crows in her garden.

EPT's lawn has been spared the attention of **Badgers** this quarter and is beginning to recover. HS has not been so lucky and is repairing her lawn for the 7th time. A wasp nest was also dug out under the hedge. Her front lawn has remained intact but neighbouring lawns have been dug up. DAP's Swithland lawn has also suffered extensive damage including latrine pits. Signs of Badger were seen near Great Glen. Road kills were noted at Swithland and Joe Moores Lane and a live one was crossing a Cropston road about 7 pm on 4 October. Badger disturbed turf has been seen more often than usual in Bradgate Park – there are never any claw marks so I assume they are using their noses to push up the turf while sniffing for juicy morsels.

Slots of **Muntjac** were seen at Thorpe Trussels, Bardon and Great Glen and live ones were seen on two occasions on the road side near Groby Rifle Range. DAP saw an adult with an immature youngster between Cropston and Swithland in late November.



Red Deer © Steve Woodward

A **Red Deer**, probably with a youngster, escaped from Bradgate Park in mid-October.

Helen Ikin

The highest number of **Mute Swans** was 116 at Watermead Park on 13 November, although Swithland Reservoir had 50 on 11 October. The only **Whooper Swans** of the quarter were five adjacent to Sence Valley Forest Park from mid-December until the end of the year.

Canada Geese were only reported from Watermead Park with a maximum of 31 on 18 December. The most **Greylag Geese** seen together was on 13 November when 42 were present at Cropston Reservoir.

Mandarin Ducks were noted at Cropston Reservoir and Swithland Reservoir where there were 20 on 18 December. **Wigeon** was reported from half a dozen stretches of water with 140 at Longmoor Lake in December but the highest number was at Watermead Park with 356 on 13 November. The same site also held the greatest number of **Gadwall, Teal** and **Mallard** with 164 Gadwall, 147 Teal and 165 Mallard all on 18 December. There were three **Pintail** at Cossington Meadows on 1 November and one at Swithland Reservoir on 3 October and 6 November, Swithland Reservoir also had ten **Shoveler** on 4 November but Watermead Park had 30 ten days later. **Pochards** were only seen at Albert Village Lake with nine on 15 October and Watermead Park with two on 13 November. The same two sites together with Longmoor Lake were the only ones where **Tufted Ducks** were found with 36 at Albert Village, 30 at Longmoor and 214 at Watermead Park on 18 December. That date was memorable at Watermead Park as there were 16 **Goosanders** reported which meant that all the maximum counts of duck were at the same site on the same day!

Red-legged Partridge were found at five sites with three at Cropston Reservoir on 19 October, the only Charnwood record. The only sighting of **Grey Partridge** was of two adjacent to Bradgate Park on 27 December. GCP had around 50 **Pheasant** records, many in the Harborough area, there were 11 counts in double-figures and 118 at Crackbottle Lodge, Keythorpe on 2 October.

There were five double-figure counts of **Cormorants**, with 51 at Watermead Park on 13

November and 70 at Swithland Reservoir on 18 November. **Little Egrets** seem to be continuing their expansion with 16 widespread sightings across the north of the county. Swithland Reservoir regularly held the most with a maximum of 18 on 25 November. **Grey Herons** were less in evidence and only on Charnwood with ten at Watermead Park on 13 November the most seen together. A **Glossy Ibis** stayed around the Cossington Meadows area from at least 14 October until at least 1 December.

Little Grebes were still to be found on the local waters throughout the quarter with 18 at Albert Village Lake on 15 October being the most seen. All double-figure counts of **Great Crested Grebes** were at Cropston Reservoir with 38 on 30 October.



Kestrel & Carrion Crow © Steve Woodward

There were around 30 **Red Kite** sightings, mostly in the south of the county, with ten at Stockerston on 27 November the highest number. **Sparrowhawks** were widespread but there were fewer garden visits this quarter, all records were of single birds. **Buzzards** were even more widespread with reports from all areas; no record was for more than two birds apart from eight at Keythorpe on 15 October. Surprisingly, there were almost as many **Kestrel** reports as Buzzards - all were single birds mostly hovering close to roads. Apart from the regular **Peregrine** at Buddon Wood in December, all others were noted on or around Leicester Cathedral with a pair throughout the quarter.

Water Rail were seen or heard at Swithland, Cropston and Thornton Reservoirs as well as Groby Pool and Watermead Park where four were noted on 18 December. **Moorhen** and **Coot** appear to have been under reported with Albert Village Lake holding the most of both with 26 Moorhen and 84 Coot on 15 October.

It seems to have been a quiet year for **Golden Plover**, the only record was of 17 flying over Swithland Reservoir on 30 October. There were more **Lapwing** with 64 at Birstall Meadows and 121 at Cropston Reservoir but the biggest flock was at Watermead Park with 475 on 18 December. A single **Knot** and two **Dunlin** were found in close proximity at Swithland Reservoir on 9 November. **Snipe** were noted at four sites with the only double-figure count at Birstall Marshes where there were 26 on 13 October. A **Woodcock** was flushed at Great Bowden Hall on 13 November. A **Common Sandpiper** was at Cropston Reservoir on 2 October and the same site was the only place where **Green Sandpipers** were recorded with one or two birds noted throughout the quarter.

Most maximum numbers of gull species were found at Albert Village Lake on 13 November although there were 374 **Black-headed Gulls** at Cropston Reservoir on 16 October. The maximum numbers at Albert Village were 367 Black-headed Gulls, six **Common Gulls**, 187 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, 46 **Herring Gulls**, three **Yellow-legged Gulls**, one **Caspian Gull** and 19 **Greater Black-backed Gulls** (27 on 15 Oct). There were few other gull records.

The highest number of **Stock Doves**, with very few records, was five at Rabbits Bridge on 28 October. **Woodpigeons** were widespread but no numbers came anywhere near the 3511 seen flying over Bradgate Park in two and a half hours on 6 November. All **Collared Dove** sightings were in gardens with 17 in one tree at Holwell on 24 November.

The only **Barn Owls** were noted at Cropston Reservoir and South Croxton. **Little Owls** were only seen in Bradgate Park with three on 9 December. **Tawny Owls** were only marginally more common with sightings at Cropston, Birstall and Swithland Reservoir. A **Short-eared Owl** was quartering Cossington Meadows on 29 November.

There were 21 observations of **Kingfisher** from 15 different sites with two birds seen at both Watermead Park and Market Harborough.

There were few **Green Woodpecker** records, most of which came from the Cropston area with others seen at Barrow upon Soar and



Green Woodpecker © Steve Woodward

Bradgate Park. **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** were much more in evidence with lots of sightings around Cropston and Holwell, others were noted around Charnwood. Again there were no **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** mentioned and is now regarded as scarce in the county.

Magpies were ubiquitous with some double-figure counts including 26 in a small area of Watermead Park. **Jays** were less in evidence but there were four in Bradgate Park on 28 October and three around Cropston Reservoir on 30 October. One hundred **Jackdaws** were at Cropston Reservoir on 16 October and the only record of **Carrion Crow** of interest was 153 at Rabbits Bridge on 28 October. There is an unusual record of a **Hooded Crow** there on the same day what was probably the same bird was at Swithland Reservoir two days later. **Ravens** were less obvious this quarter with 11 records, all but two from Charnwood, these were at Harborough and Coalville.

Although there were few **Goldcrest** records most were in double-figures with 12 at Cropston Reservoir on 30 October. The highest number of the many **Blue Tit** records was ten at Rothley Brook on 23 October. There was a similar number of **Great Tit** sightings with eight at the same site on the same day. **Coal Tits** were only reported from Cropston, Swithland Reservoir, Holwell and Charnwood Lodge. As usual Kelham Bridge provided regular **Willow Tits**, however three were found at Sence Valley Forest Park, over the road from Kelham Bridge on 10 October. Apart from two **Marsh Tits** at Charnwood Lodge on 27 December the others were in gardens at Loughborough and Holwell.

Skylarks were only noted in the Cropston/Bradgate area with 24 flying over Bradgate Park on 23 October.

The only hirundine noted during the quarter was a **House Martin** at Hoton on 13 October.

Watermead Park had the usual **Cetti's Warbler** with two on 25 November. Other singles were at Cossington and Birstall Meadows. The largest count of **Long-tailed Tits** was 20 at Swithland Reservoir on 14 December. There were many other records. It was a remarkable year for **Yellow-browed Warblers** but the only local record was one reported from Sence Valley Forest Park on 3 and 4 October. Late or overwintering **Chiffchaffs** were seen at Cropston, Swithland Reservoir and Watermead Park where one was seen on 18 December. A female **Blackcap** was in a Quorn garden on 30 November.

It was a good **Waxwing** winter with locals at Loughborough with 16 on 31 December and Mountsorrel with 20 on 15 November.

Nuthatches were only noted at Charnwood Lodge with three, Swithland Reservoir with two and a Loughborough garden. **Treecreepers** were more in evidence with sightings at eight sites.

A flock of 300 **Starlings** was in and around CG's garden at Holwell during November but the most seen was 594 over Bradgate Park on 23 October.

Most gardens probably had at least one **Blackbird** but the highest count was 14 in my Hugglescote garden at the end of the year and nine at Castle Hill Park on 23 October. On the same day 672 **Fieldfares** were counted flying over Bradgate Park. There were few other reports of Fieldfare but 100 were seen in the south of the county at Stonton Wyville in November and Blaston in October. Gardens at Loughborough and Quorn provided the only **Song Thrush** observations and the only **Redwing** record of note was a flock of 200 at Lowesby Park, Harborough on 14 December. A lone **Mistle Thrush** in Bradgate Park on 19 October was the only record of this species. Ten **Robins** were noted around Cropston Reservoir on 16 October.

Throughout October **Stonechats** could be found in Bradgate Park with regular counts of two birds but on 19 October there were six and possibly eight birds present. A single **Wheatear** was on Beacon Hill on 13 October.



Stonechat © Jim Graham

Dunnocks were mainly reported from gardens with six present in some. It is good to see that gardens still attract **House Sparrows** and providing most of the observations. There were lots of double-figure counts with 50 being the maximum at Holwell. **Tree Sparrows** were less common, 14 at Stonton Wyville on 26 November and one in my garden at Hugglescote on 9 October being the only records.

The area around Cropston Reservoir provided most of the **Grey Wagtail** records but one was seen adjacent to Staunton Harold Reservoir on 11 November. **Pied Wagtails** in ones and twos were regular but there were seven together at Tur Langton on 18 November. Apart from 20 **Meadow Pipits** at Tilton on the Hill in December all others were noted in Bradgate Park with a maximum count of 52 on 28 October.

Bradgate Park also provided the largest group of **Chaffinches** but this was only 17, although 72 were counted flying over on 30 October. In a poor **Brambling** year the same site provided the only sightings with three flyovers on 23 October. Surprisingly all **Greenfinch** counts were from gardens with a maximum of three. I realise my garden must be good for this species as they were seen daily but only with a maximum of five in October. Gardens also provided most of the **Goldfinch** records with a maximum count of 25 at Holwell. Away from gardens there were 60 at Blaston and Groby and 50 at Longmoor Lake. There were **Siskins** in single figures around the area but 100 were in Bradgate Park on 26 November at the same time as 20 **Lesser Redpolls**. **Bullfinches** were seen at half a dozen sites with four together at Castle Hill Park in October.

A **Lapland Bunting** was seen around the memorial in Bradgate Park on 9 October but then flew off south. There were only three sites where **Yellowhammers** were noted with a maximum of four birds and only two sites for **Reed Bunting** with a maximum of three.

Baz Forgham

REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS and FISH

As we have only two records this quarter, the report will be combined with the next quarter in Heritage 225 – but only if you send in your records! Check your pond for frog spawn.

DRAGONFLIES and DAMSELFLIES

There were just four records of three species in a disappointing quarter.

A single **Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*** was noted in PHG's Quorn garden on 15 October whilst two male **Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum*** were at Cropston Reservoir the following day. Three female and one male **Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*** were flying around and settling on a large dry grass and sedge heap at Watermead Park on the 19th but the final record of the year was of a pair and a single male at Cropston Reservoir on 22 November.

Jim Graham

BUTTERFLIES

Only five species were reported seen during the quarter. During October a late **Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*** was noted flying across the war memorial garden in the centre of Quorn on the 19th and on the 2nd a **Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*** was observed in Bradgate Park. During the month the **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** was widely reported and seen in some 13 localities, often when attracted to Ivy blossom. Most sightings were of ones and twos but three were present at two localities. Three were also present in EPT's Loughborough garden on 7 November. The only other butterfly sighting in November was a late **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** sunning itself on FTS's house wall at Barlestone on 24 November.

Finally, late **Speckled Wood *Parage aegeria*** were noted during October in Bradgate Park on the 2nd and at Cropston Reservoir on the 16th.

On behalf of the LNC, I wish to thank the twenty or so members and friends who kindly submitted butterfly records during the year.

Peter Gamble

MOTHS

We have quite a meagre end to the year with just 93 moths of 24 species recorded by four observers, I'll just get straight into the summary of what has been recorded.

The leaf mines of ***Stigmella aurella*** and **Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner *Cameraria ochridella*** were quite widely recorded. A nice selection of Tortrix moths were recorded from Rothley, ***Clepsis consimilana***, **Light Brown Apple Moth *Epiphyas postvittana*** and **Rhomboid Tortrix *Acleris rhombana*** were the only adult micro moths found.

All of the following records are from LWP's garden moth trap at Rothley, unless otherwise stated. Starting the macros off is three **December Moth *Poecilocampa populi*** and before going into hibernation **Red-green Carpet *Chlorochlysta siterata*** were regulars throughout October. **Common Marbled Carpet *Chloroclysta truncata*** and **Spruce Carpet *Thera britannica*** were the only other Carpet species out and about all in October. Good numbers of **November Moth agg. *Epirrita dilutata* agg.** were well active up until mid-November. **Feathered Thorn *Colotois pennaria*** appeared from late October until mid-November and **Mottled Umber *Erannis defoliaria*** was restricted to December, in fact this species was the only species seen in December.



Feathered Thorn © Graham Finch

Still at Rothley a single **Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum*** was out in mid-October and also a single at Barlestone a little earlier. Right at the end of a prolonged flight season a solitary **Shuttle-shaped Dart *Agrotis puta*** was out in early October. **Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba*** were still on the wing on 30 October and **Lesser Yellow Underwing *Noctua comes*** on 26 October.

Early October saw the last of **Setaceous Hebrew Character *Xestia c-nigrum*** and **Black Rustic *Aporophyla nigra*** but saw the start of **Green-brindled Crescent *Allophyes oxycanthae*** which carried on for the rest of the month.



Pink-barred Sallow © Graham Finch

Other species at Rothley were **Red-lined Quaker *Agrochola lota***, **Beaded Chestnut *Agrochola lychnidis***, **Lunar Underwing *Omphaloscelis lunosa***, **Barred sallow *Xanthia aurago*** and finally **Pink-barred sallow *Xanthia togata***.

Many thanks to everyone for this sterling effort.

Graham and Anona Finch

BEETLES

Let's get the usual figures dealt with first, not surprisingly numbers are fairly low, but not too disappointing. It took five of us visiting 15 sites to record 552 individuals of 51 species, so that's not a bad result by any means. Taking that extra bit of time to count up the individuals makes any report much more meaningful and interesting, many thanks for doing just that. The only family

that made it into double-figures was the Staphylinidae with 19 species, proving no matter how hard you try, you just can't ignore the Staphs, as they won't let you. Only nine species of Carabid and just four Ladybird species were found.

On with the summary, *Carabus nemoralis* continued to turn up in the pitfall traps in Bradgate Park up until the end of October. In fact the end of October seemed to be the cut off date as the pitfalls did not produce another single beetle for the rest of the year and no species at all were recorded in December. It became very noticeable that numbers of Carabids were really thinning out, just two sightings of *Nebria brevicollis*, single *Bembidion biguttatus* two *Pterostichus madidus*, single *Agonum emarginatum*. A solitary *Agonum mulleri* was sieved from wet moss at Charnwood Lodge, and although only recorded from two sites *Platynus assimilis* was the most abundant when found. The most interesting Carabid was a single specimen of *Syntomus foveatus* found under a dead fox in Bradgate Park. This specimen caused a bit of an identification problem by not having the small but distinctive punctures on the elytra. After quite an effort and help from Steve Lane, it was eventually identified as *Syntomus foveatus* and although the commonest of the three *Syntomus* species, this latest record brought the VC55 total up to just 11 records. *Amara plebeja* was the only other Carabid found. Sieving horse and cow dung is always beneficial and produced a nice selection of species *Sphaeridium lunatum*, *Cercyon haemorrhoidalis*, *C. impressus*, *C. melanocephalus* and *C. pygmaeus* were all found, some in reasonable numbers, but the best find was a single *Cryptopleurum subtile* from horse dung at Oaks in Charnwood. First found by Tony Cook and Frank Clark at Priory Water 2014, this latest represents the second VC55 record for this species. The dead fox in Bradgate Park in late October produced two *Margarinotus brunneus*, 20 *Catops tristis* and a single *Nicrophorus vespilloides*.

Starting the Staphs off with two not particularly Staph-like looking species, *Olophrum piceum* beaten from low vegetation at Shenton Estates and *Megarthus prosseni* sieved from horse dung at Oaks in Charnwood,



Syntomus foveatus © Graham Finch

this last species brings the total VC55 records to 21. The Tachyporinae featured quite well with five species, *Tachyporus chrysomelinus*, *T. obtusus*, *Tachinus humeralis*, *T. marginellus* and *T. rufipes*. Other Staphs noted were *Platystethus arenarius*, *Oxytellus laqueatus*, this last species was fairly well recorded being found at Shenton Estates, Bradgate Park and Oaks in Charnwood, all from deer, horse or cow dung, including 50 individuals from cow dung at Shenton. A single and quite smart *Anotylus sculpturatus* was sieved from deer dung at Bradgate Park, and an assortment of habitats produced an assortment of *Stenus* species. *Stenus similis* from grass tussock near Cotes Mill and also beaten from low vegetation at Beacon Hill, *Stenus solutus* was sieved from leaf litter at Shenton, *Stenus impressus* sieved from deer dung at Bradgate Park and finally *Stenus pallipes* sieved from a grass tussock and wet moss at several sites. *Philonthus* species fared similar with 11 *Philonthus carbonarius* sieved from wet moss at Charnwood Lodge, *P. cognatus* similar habitat on the Charnwood Forest. *P. laminatus* was found wandering along one of the pathways in Bradgate Park, *P. splendens* sieved from cow dung at Shenton and *P. varians* sieved from wet moss at Charnwood Lodge. The last Staph to mention is *Bisnius fimetarius* - three were found under that same dead fox in Bradgate Park.

The only record of a **Minotaur Beetle** *Typhaeus typhoeus* was a singleton crossing a footpath in Bradgate Park. Aphodines did well for abundance but only three species were recorded, a single *Aphodius rufipes* was found at Shenton, both *A. prodromus* and *A. contaminatus* were found at eight sites, the former managed 123 individuals with 50 plus from cow dung at Shenton, the latter made 83 individuals and the highest total of 30 from sheep dung at Baggrave. The last two species



Necrobia violacea © Graham Finch

from under that extremely productive dead fox in Bradgate Park were two ***Necrobia violacea*** and two ***Omosita discoidea***. It's interesting that *Necrobia* has a total of 22 records; the last 12 records start from 2015 and all come from Bradgate Park. *Omosita* has a total of 12 records, with most recent records from Bradgate Park. Both being carrion feeders, they can be found even on dry bleached white bones.

The four species of Ladybirds begin with a single **Pine Ladybird *Exochomus quadripustulatus*** from Market Harborough, **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*** seemed well spread with a count of 105 individuals in Quorn. Only two sightings of **7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*** and a single **16-spot Ladybird *Tythaspis sedecimpunctata*** was beaten from a conifer at Shenton. Six of the delicate and very ant-like ***Omanadus floralis*** were beaten from the side of a circular hay bale on Beacon Hill.



Omanadus floralis © Graham Finch

The only Chrysomelid found were seven ***Altica lythri*** sieved from a grass tussock at Shenton.

Found at three sites, ***Sitona lineatus*** was the only Weevil recorded, all singles, from Beacon Hill, Charnwood Lodge and Ibstock.

Many thanks to the members who not only sent in records, but took the time to count the individuals up, too.

Graham Finch

OTHER INSECTS

This will be a very short report for this quarter.

Hemiptera

A **Hawthorn Shieldbug *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*** was found dead in the Groby house of SFW on 1 Dec - our only record.

Diptera

A few Hoverflies were recorded in October - a smattering of Syrphids: **Marmalade Hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus*** three noted on Dandelion in Ethel Road on 14 October with two on Ivy at Beatty Avenue ***Eupeodes luniger*** also two at Beatty Avenue the 14th. ***Syrphus vitripennis*** one on Beatty Avenue 6 October and Gartree Road on the 17th, both female. ***Syrphus ribesii*** - one at Leicester Arboretum on the 17th with just a few others noted - ***Helophilus pendulus*** on Great Central Way on 4 October and along Beatty Avenue on the 14th both present on Ivy. A single ***Myathropa florea*** ditchside at Humberstone Park on 14 October. A few more **Drone Flies *Eristalis tenax*** noted, common on Beatty Avenue and Leicester Arboretum during the month with the last record of few still present along Ethel Road on 2 November. The only other record was of the common fly ***Mesembrina meridiana*** singles at Humberstone Park and Spinney Hill Park on 14 and 16 October. No records were received from elsewhere – probably overlooked.

This has been a desperately poor year for many invertebrates. Many species such as Soldier Flies, Robber Flies, Snipe Flies, Conopids, etc., appear to be recorded in declining numbers even from our more active field workers and it is hoped that this is not a permanent downward trend.

Hymenoptera

Bees

Very few bumblebee records this quarter **Buff-tailed Bumblebees *Bombus terrestris*** were only seen at Barlestone with single queens on 3 and

10 October nectaring on Verbena. The only other sighting was of several, including a queen, at Quorn on 3 October. The only record of the **Tree Bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum*** submitted was of two queens at Barlestone on 3 October with a rather late queen of the **Garden Bumblebee *Bombus hortorum*** at the same site on the 17th. The **Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascuorum*** was recorded as several from Quorn with the last one seen at Barlestone on 31 October.

Wasps

The **Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris*** was common on Ivy at Beatty Avenue and Gartree Road to the middle of the month with the last one recorded at Ethel Road on 2 November, fewer than most years. **German Wasp *Vespula germanica*** singles were noted at Cropston on the 16th and Thorpe Trussels bridge on the 21st. **Hornets *Vespa crabro*** were noted at Cropston Reservoir with a large active nest in a Crack Willow tree, also noted in PHG's Quorn garden throughout October visiting Ivy blossom with several still present until the 26th of the month.

I will close this quarter with a few insect gall records submitted by our intrepid recorders HI and SFW.

Dasineura crategi midge on Hawthorn shoot; ***Hartigiola annulipes*** on Beech at Hallgates Spinney and Cropston in October. ***Rondaniola bursaria*** lighthouse galls on Ground Ivy at Thorpe Trussels and Market Harborough with the **Thistle Gall *Urophora cardui*** at Nailstone near Worthington and Glen South with the **Holly Leaf Miner *Phytomyza ilicis*** at Cropston, Nailstone and Newbold Verdon.

Howard Bradshaw

FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

The report for this quarter will appear in Heritage 225.

OTHER RECORDS

Records have also been received for:

Slugs and snails, galls, woodlice, mosses, lichens, liverworts and fungi.

WEATHER

October was an extremely dry month as high pressure dominated for most of the time. This had the effect of deflecting low pressure systems and their attendant rain both north and south of the British Isles while we experienced mostly quiet and settled conditions. Just 25 mm fell at Barrow upon Soar during the entire month and I recorded just 28 mm at Mountsorrel. Both of these figures were only around 40% of our usual total and this made it the driest October locally since 1978. Temperatures were very close to average with day temperatures being logged at 14.3°C and night temperatures at 7.6°C. The overall mean was therefore 11°C, very close to the long term average for October. Sunshine totals of 118 hours were also close to normal.

The first day of the month was also our wettest with 13 mm falling. After this rain fell significantly just two more days in the month and 23 days were actually dry. High pressure established itself over Scandinavia for ten days and winds blew in from the NE. Had these charts been replicated in the winter period they would have brought severe cold and snow due to the wind direction so perhaps we should be thankful it was only October. Most days were fairly quiet weather wise with no real warm or cold periods throughout the month. The month's warmest temperature was 19°C recorded on the 4th which also saw our sunniest weather with 11 hours being logged with the coldest day being 11.7°C on the 13th. We remained frost free in October with our lowest night time temperature being recorded on the 25th at 3°C. As the month progressed the high pressure transferred to the SW of the British Isles and it did get a little milder. So October this year was benign but the forecasts for the winter are mixed. We have had three mild winters but conditions look as though they will be mixed this year with frost and snow at times.

November was a cooler than average month with rainfall well above normal due to a small number of very wet days. Overall it was the coldest November since 2010 and the sunniest since 2013. Daytime temperatures averaged 8.7°C which was 0.5°C below the norm with night time temperatures averaging 3°C. The

overall average of 6°C in Mountsorrel was also 0.5°C below normal. I recorded five frosts in Mountsorrel with Ken at Barrow upon Soar recording seven air frosts. 82 mm of rain fell at Mountsorrel which was 28% above normal with Ken recording 72 mm at Barrow upon Soar. Rain fell on just 15 days in the month however leaving some days very sunny indeed. The sun shone for 92 hours in the month which was 23% above normal. Winds mainly blew from the SW with the maximum gust of 40 mph being recorded on the 17th. The month began in a quiet manner with nine hours of sunshine being recorded on the 2nd. It then became very mild in mid-month with the month's highest temp of 14.7°C being recorded at Barrow upon Soar on the 15th. That night saw temperatures stay above 11°C making it the warmest night of the month. The 20th-23rd was exceptionally wet. 14 mm was recorded on the 20th with a staggering 30 mm being recorded on the 21st. This made it the wettest November day in Leicestershire since 1968. This caused extensive river flooding in the Soar Valley with all the usual routes impassable for a while. After the rain came a colder spell and our coldest day of the month being recorded on the 29th at 4°C with temperatures falling the night in Barrow upon Soar down -5.1°C making it the coldest night since November 2010. So November had some stark contrasts but did not provide us with any snow this year.

December was the driest in Leicestershire since 2004. Only 21 mm of rain fell at both Barrow upon Soar and Mountsorrel which is only a third of our usual total. It was also another mild month. Average afternoon temperatures registered 8.5°C with average night time temperatures recorded at 2.4°C. There were seven night frosts recorded but the usual average for December is 11. The overall mean of 5.5°C was 1°C above the expected total. It was also a very sunny month with 77 hours of sunshine recorded, 15% above the usual figure. Winds peaked on the 23rd when storm Barbara brushed by the north of the UK with winds gusting up to 46 mph at East Midlands Airport.

The first week of the month began cold. The coldest day was the 3rd when the temperature only reached 3°C, the coldest of the month.

Night time temperatures were low and Barrow upon Soar recorded -4.2°C in the early hours of the 4th. Winds then changed direction and blew in from the south. Very mild air from the Azores blew in and temperatures rose to 14.5°C on the 8th, double the usual total. The month's warmest night was recorded on the 9th when temperatures only dropped to 9.2°C in the humid airmass. December was mainly dominated by high pressure sitting to the SW of the British Isles and our usual low pressure and rain bands were pushed away to the north and south. Rain fell on just nine days in the month and only once significantly as we recorded 11.4 mm on the 10th which was half the monthly total. Air pressure reached a staggering 1045 mb on the 27th, the highest air pressure recorded here since January 1982. It cooled off as the month closed with a few more frosts but not a single flake of snow fell throughout the month. So another mild winter month, I wonder if January will be so kind.

Phil Morrish

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It would be much appreciated if the records of different species groups are on separate sheets, otherwise they may be missed when sending the records to the writers. Note – Butterflies should be on a different sheet from Moths as they go to two separate people.