



No. 227

1 July - 30 September 2017

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## FINAL CONTRIBUTIONS to CLUB RECORDS

For the last few years we have spent much time in churchyards and cemeteries, to record the wildlife. The purpose of three recent visits, however, has been to say farewell to members who have, sadly, passed away. Having known the members concerned, we thought they would expect us not to waste a recording opportunity and go searching for flora and fauna after the formalities!

Derek Lott was enthusiastic about beetles, so at the Prestwold Hall reception on 28 June 2011, we made a point of finding one - a Seven-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*.

Leslie Purnell's passion was butterflies. After celebrating his life at Rothley Church on 17 August 2017, we explored the churchyard and found three Large Whites *Pieris brassicae*.

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Leslie Hall was keen on mosses and flowering plants, so after his burial on 3 November 2017 we thought it appropriate to make a list for South Croxton Natural Burial Ground:



*Bryum capillare* © Steve Woodward

#### Mosses:

*Hypnum cupressiforme* s. l., *Bryum capillare*, *Bryum argenteum*, *Orthotrichum diaphanum*, *Amblystegium serpens* var. *serpens*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Brachythecium rutabulum*.

#### Flowering plants:

*Rosa rugosa* Japanese Rose (planted), *Festuca rubra* Red Fescue, *Sorbus aria* agg. Common Whitebeam (planted), *Corylus colurna* Turkish Hazel (planted), *Thuja plicata* Western Red-cedar (planted), *Medicago lupulina* Black Medick, *Euphorbia peplus* Petty Spurge, *Geranium lucidum* Shining Crane's-bill, *Malva moschata* Musk-mallow, *Prunus spinosa* Blackthorn, *Sorbus aucuparia*

## MAMMALS

PJD had **Hedgehogs** coming to feed regularly in her Quorn garden but in mid-August the feeding station was being “vandalised” by something bigger so Pam set up the camera trap and found that it was a Badger coming to eat the food. The feeding station was changed to make it accessible only to Hedgehogs but none has been seen or have left any droppings since 7 September and it seems likely that the Badgers have eaten the Hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are often scarce or absent in areas with a good population of Badgers. One hedgehog was seen scuttling across a Woodhouse lawn in a badger-proof garden on 27 July.

**Moles** have been active in a Swithland garden throughout the quarter and molehills have been noted at Swannington, M1 junction 23a, Saxelbye, Hathern, Bradgate Park, Frisby Grange, Gaddesby, Loughborough, Barleythorpe, Rutland Water, Castle Donington, Loddington and Nanpantan Reservoir.

A dead **Common Shrew** was found in PHG’s Quorn garden – probably a cat victim. They kill them but then do not eat them as they taste horrid.

JGr had a **Pygmy Shrew** in her Holwell garden on two dates - 23 August and 3 September.

The only bat record we have are **Common Pipistrelles** feeding around the Alders in DAP’s Swithland garden on warm evenings in July.

SFW spotted a **Brown Hare** on the roadside in Brand Lane, Woodhouse on 25 August and there was one on a track at Ullesthorpe on 4 July. **Rabbits** were seen near Junction 23a of the M1- 2, King Street Lane near Stonesby, Overseal



Rabbit © Steve Woodward

Rowan (planted), *Crataegus monogyna* Hawthorn, *Prunus avium* Wild Cherry (planted), *Rosa canina* Dog-rose, *Malus sylvestris* Crab Apple (planted), *Rubus fruticosus* agg. Bramble, *Hedera helix* Ivy, *Rumex obtusifolius* Broad-leaved Dock, *Ranunculus repens* Creeping Buttercup, *Ranunculus acris* Meadow Buttercup, *Geranium robertianum* Herb-Robert, *Acer campestre* Field Maple (planted), *Trifolium repens* White Clover, *Cerastium fontanum* ssp. *vulgare* Common Mouse-ear, *Geranium molle* Dove's-foot Crane's-bill, *Dactylis glomerata* Cock's-foot, *Lolium perenne* Perennial Rye-grass, *Holcus lanatus* Yorkshire-fog, *Phleum pratense* Timothy, *Agrostis capillaris* Common Bent, *Betula pendula* Silver Birch (planted), *Carpinus betulus* Hornbeam (planted), *Urtica dioica* Common Nettle, *Quercus robur* Pedunculate Oak, *Fagus sylvatica* Beech (planted), *Fraxinus excelsior* Ash, *Plantago major* Greater Plantain, *Bellis perennis* Daisy, *Achillea millefolium* Yarrow, *Senecio jacobaea* Common Ragwort, *Cirsium vulgare* Spear Thistle, *Viburnum opulus* Guelder-rose (planted), *Leucanthemum vulgare* Oxeye Daisy (planted), *Galium aparine* Cleavers, *Taraxacum* agg. Dandelion.

Steve Woodward & Helen Ikin

## 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 Recordors (as this is not practical on a quarterly basis). Full details of the records are submitted to Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre LRERC, County Hall, Glenfield, Leics. LE3 8RA, either as spreadsheets or as scans of paper records. Once validated, selected records will be added to the LRERC database and made accessible to the public.

The original records are archived. All of the older paper records have been deposited at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, Long Street, Wigston Magna, Leics. LE18 2AH, accession number DE9392. Most pre-2011 paper records are also available on a disc (see *Heritage* 205). Recent paper records will reside with Helen Ikin, until a batch is ready to go to the Record Office.

- 2, Plungar - 3, Welby, Hathern - 4, Gaddesby Lane near Frisby – one baby and singles at Cold Overton Park Wood, Cossington Meadows and Loddington. Signs of rabbits – burrows or droppings, were at Snake Hill near Groby, Frisby Grange, Ridlington, Bardon Hill, Stretton Wood in Rutland and along the Charnwood Forest canal near Nanpantan.

**Grey Squirrels** were noted near Bradgate House at Groby, Loddington, Cossington Meadows, Humberstone Park, Longcliffe Golf Course, Gaddesby and Bittesby Wood. JGr had one in her Holwell garden – an unusual occurrence as it is only the second one they have had there in ten years.

**Wood Mice** were feeding under DAP's Swithland bird table throughout the quarter. A dead **Brown Rat** was found on a footpath near Gaddesby on 29 July.

**Red Fox** JGr had one feeding at bottom of garden in mid-July, DAP regular visitor throughout the quarter, PJD – seen often on the camera trap in garden.

A **Stoat** was crossing the road in Swithland at 9 am on 24 July – spotted by DAP.

**Badger** roadkills were noted at Birstall and South Croxton and signs of Badger seen at Plungar, Stretton in Rutland, Newtown Linford and Loddington. Live ones were at Quorn as mentioned in the Hedgehog section.

**Muntjac** were seen at on the old railway at Loddington, Somerby and on the edge of Warren Hill at Newtown Linford.

Helen Ikin

## BIRDS

**Mute Swans** were at most local waters with successful breeding at five. The only post-breeding flock noted was around 40 at Swithland Reservoir on 3 July.

Counts of **Canada Goose** in excess of 20 occurred at five waters with by far the highest coming from Albert Village Lake where 281 were noted on 10 September. The only three-figure counts of **Greylag Goose** came from Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs maxima of 340 at the former on 22 September and 160 at the latter

on the 1st. Just one **Egyptian Goose** was reported, a single at Cossington Meadows on the last day of the quarter.

A single juvenile **Shelduck** was at Cossington Meadows on 30 September. The only records of **Mandarin Duck** in the quarter came from Cropston Reservoir with the highest count being 27 on 24 July. Small numbers of **Wigeon** started to appear towards the end of August with ten at Kelham Bridge on 26 September the highest count. **Gadwall** was reported from just three sites. Post-breeding flocks did not begin to build up until the last week of September with the highest counts being 30 at Kelham Bridge on the 27th and 99 at Cossington Meadows on the 30th. Other than two female/juvenile-types at Cropston Reservoir on 9 July, the first returning **Teal** were a group of seven at Kelham Bridge on 28 August - at least two weeks later than the site average. The highest count for the period was 35 at Cossington meadows on 30 September. Double-figure counts of **Mallard** came from just three sites with maxima of 22 at both Albert Village Lake and Cossington Meadows on 10 and 30 September respectively and 66 on the River Lin in Bradgate Park on the 19th. An eclipse drake Garganey found at Cossington Meadows on 10 August was joined by a second on the 20th. The same site held the largest count of Shoveler, 24 on 30 September. A single drake **Pochard** was at Groby Pool on 7 July, the only record for the period. Records of **Tufted Duck** came from just four widespread sites all with single-figures. **Goldeneye** managed to sneak into this period's accounts with a female at Cossington Meadows on 30 September.

Records of **Red-legged Partridge** came from just two locations and **Grey Partridge** at just one and the only record of **Pheasant** was a single at Breedon Hill on 5 July.

There were only two double-figure counts of **Cormorants** both in September; 23 at Cossington Meadows on the 30th and 16 at Cropston Reservoir on the 22nd. Counts of **Little Egrets** came from four sites, most frequently at Cropston Reservoir, with seven on 7 July, 12 on 23 August and nine on both 1 and 27 September the monthly maxima. The same site held the highest counts of **Grey Heron** peaking at 11 on 27 September.



Grey Heron © Jim Graham

**Little Grebe** was at five sites with breeding confirmed at two. Eight at both Thornton Reservoir and Albert Village Lake on 4 August and 10 September respectively was the highest count. The only double-figure counts of **Great Crested Grebe** were from Cropston Reservoirs peaking at 32 on three dates in September.

The only records of **Red Kite** came from the Rutland area in August and September. A female **Marsh Harrier** was noted hunting over fields next to Cropston Reservoir on 27 July and another was seen quartering the reedbed at Groby Pool on 31 August. **Sparrowhawk** was recorded from ten widespread sites including four gardens mainly singles. A male and female were daily visitors to JG's Cropston garden. Nearby, a pair was seen to be taking prey items into a spinney at Bradgate Park indicative a successful breeding. Records of **Buzzard** were widespread and came from 11 locations. Food carrying and juvenile begging was noted in a Bradgate Park spinney. **Kestrel** was reported from 12 locations, mostly of singles with a pair of juveniles hunting the same area at Cossington Meadows on 30 September. A single **Merlin**, a juvenile, was seen at Charnwood Lodge on 2 September. **Hobby** was reported from seven sites with birds hawking insects chasing hirundines being regular noted. Juveniles were noted at Cossington Meadows and Wanlip. The resident pair of **Peregrine** in Leicester city centre unfortunately failed to rear any young despite laying two full clutches. Adult and female juveniles were noted over Groby on two occasions in late July.

A **Water Rail** was heard calling from the Groby Pool reedbed on the evening of 31

August. An adult **Spotted Crake** was on Wanlip Meadows on 20 August. Records of **Moorhen** came from ten waters with juveniles noted at most. The highest count was just 24 at Kelham Bridge on 26 September. There were two double-figure counts of **Coot**, 94 at Albert Village Lake on 10 September and 18 at Cossington Meadows on the 30th.

Up to three **Oystercatcher** were at Cropston Reservoir from 7 to 25 July with one at Swithland Reservoir on the 10th. Four **Little Ringed Plover** at Cropston Reservoir on 3 July increased to five by the 7th remaining until the 13th. A single **Ringed Plover** was at the same site on 13 July with another there on 6 August. Post-breeding flocks of **Lapwing** started to build during September with the best total being 133 at Cossington Meadows on the 30th. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** found at Cropston Reservoir on 13 August remained until the 16th; and one, what may have been the same bird, was located at Wanlip Meadows on the 19th and last seen on the 23rd. A single **Dunlin** was at Cropston Reservoir on 6 August and three **Ruff** were at the same site on 30 September. The first returning **Snipe** was one at Cossington Meadows on the same date. All **Black-tailed Godwit** records came from at Cropston Reservoir starting with one on 7 July rising to three on the 9th and seven on the 13th. At least three remained until the 24th. A single **Whimbrel** was at Cropston reservoir on 3 July with two there on 24 August. Up to five **Common Sandpiper** were at Cropston Reservoir between 3 July and 18 September. Two were on Wanlip Meadows scrape on 19 August. The first returning **Green Sandpiper** was at Kelham Bridge on 20 July with up to two regular there through the quarter. One or two were seen at Cropston Reservoir during August and four were noted at Wanlip Meadows on the 19th. Three **Greenshank** were at Cropston Reservoir on 20 August, with two remaining until the 23rd and one was at Wanlip Meadows on the former date. Singles were at two sites in September, calling over Watermead CP North on the 2nd and again at Cropston Reservoir on the 18th. Cropston Reservoir water levels were favourable for passage waders this year and the only **Redshank** of the quarter came from this site on 23 August.

Few gull records were received but three-figure counts of **Black-headed Gull** came from two sites with maxima of 272 at Cropston Reservoir on 10 September and 114 at Cossington Meadows on the 30th. A juvenile **Mediterranean Gull** roosting on the scrape at Wanlip Meadows on 19 August was probably the same bird located at Cropston Reservoir the following day. There were no reports of **Common Gull** during the quarter. Double-figure counts of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** came from three sites with maxima of: 141 at Cropston Reservoir on 9 July, 66 at Albert Village Lake on 10 September and ten at Groby Pool on 7 July, whilst the only count of **Herring Gull** in excess of ten came from Cropston Reservoir with 19 on 9 July. A single Yellow-legged Gull was at the same site on 10 September and a **Caspian Gull** was at Albert Village Lake the same day when two Great Black-backed Gull were also present; the only record for this species.

Most tern records came from Cropston Reservoir including two adult **Little Tern** on 6 July and 11 **Black Tern** on 5 September with four remaining until the 9th. Records of **Common Tern** came from ten widespread sites with 16 at Cropston Reservoir on 3 July the highest count. The artificial rafts at Watermead Country Park Birstall were once again successful and have now produced over 100 young in the last three years.

**Stock Dove** records came from just two locations with four at each. The highest count of **Wood Pigeon** was 220 near Cossington on 24 September and the largest count of **Collared Dove** was 12 at Holwell on 14 July.

The only report of **Barn Owl** was of one flying across Greengate Lane, Birstall at 23:30 on 31 July and the only **Little Owl** records were from Bradgate Park with **Tawny Owl** being vocal in Cropston and Shepshed. **Swift** was recorded from ten locations in the quarter, the highest count being a party of 54 going through New Parks, Leicester on 12 July. The last report was of one over Bradgate Park on 7 September.

One or two **Kingfisher** were reported from seven sites, with three at Kelham Bridge on 7 August the best count. For many, the next species is probably bird of the year! A group of seven **Bee-eater**, originally attempting to breed



*Bee-eater © Ben Croxtall*

in Nottinghamshire, relocated to Ulverscroft on 7 August remaining until the 15th. Although difficult to see at times, this is only the fourth ever record for the county, last seen in 1992 and made a lot of birders very happy. A single **Hoopoe** was very obliging remaining around gardens in Loughborough from 23 August until the 27th. **Green Woodpecker** was noted at just five locations whilst records of **Great Spotted Woodpecker** came from just four.



*Hoopoe © Dave Gray*

As usual, only small numbers of **Magpie** and **Jay** were noted. The highest corvid counts were: 60 **Jackdaw** and 36 **Carrion Crow** near Cossington on 24 September, and 28 **Rook** feeding in a field at Holwell on 14 August. **Raven** was the most widely reported seen in ten locations with 14 over Ridlington on 11 August by far the highest count.

Strangely, no **Goldcrest** were reported whilst small numbers of **Blue**, **Great**, and **Coal Tits** were widespread. **Marsh Tit** were noted at Groby Pool and Loddington.

Small numbers of **Skylark** were recorded at six sites with 18 migrating south through Bradgate Park on 30 September the highest

count. The latest **Sand Martin** seen were two at Cropston Reservoir on the 10th. Active **House Martin** nests were still being noted during July and August with one nest on JG's Cropston house still being occupied on 17 September. Double-figure counts of migrants were common through September reaching a peak of 100 at Cropston Reservoir on the 7th. Passage **Swallow** were well recorded this autumn and double-figure counts coming from four sites with 200 regular at Cropston Reservoir in late August and 100 at Shenton on 19 September.

Small flocks of **Long-tailed Tit** were widely reported, the highest counts being 12 at Cossington Meadows on 30 September.



*Long-tailed Tit © Jim Graham*

**Chiffchaff** were common, widespread and still singing through the quarter, with eight at Bradgate park on 13 August the best count, whilst single **Willow Warbler** were noted at just three sites, the last at Thornton Reservoir on 12 July. One or two **Blackcap** were still holding on at six locations with four noted at Cropston Reservoir on 9 July, the last for the period recorded at the same site on 19 September. Single **Lesser Whitethroat** were found at three sites whilst one or two **Common Whitethroat** were located at five sites with the last recorded on 4 September. No **Grasshopper** or **Sedge Warbler** were recorded whilst **Reed Warbler** was found at just two sites in July. All **Cetti's Warbler** were recorded in the Soar Valley with at least four calling around Watermead CP Birstall in August.

There were few records of **Nuthatch** but five were noted calling at Bradgate Park on 19 September, the only **Treecreeper** being found at the same location on 13 August and the best count of **Wren** was four at Breedon Hill on 5 July.

Small flocks of **Starling** were starting to form during July but the largest group was just 40 at Hathern on the 25th.

There were few notable records of thrushes and seven **Blackbird** was the best count. The only **Fieldfare** to make it into the quarter was one over Cossington Meadows on 30 September with two **Redwing** over Bradgate Park the same day. **Song Thrush** were reported from just two sites whilst no **Mistle Thrush** were seen.

One or two **Spotted Flycatcher** were noted at six sites during the quarter, successful breeding being confirmed by a family party of five at Bradgate Park on 6 September. Small numbers of **Robin** were reported, seven at Bradgate Park on 119 September was the highest count. Two passage **Redstart** were reported from Bradgate Park on 20 August with one at Groby Pool on 2 September. There were no **Whinchat** or **Wheatear** reported.

A few **Dunnock** were noted in small numbers whilst double-figure counts of **House Sparrow** were at four sites the highest count being 30 near Cossington on 24 September. There were no records of **Tree Sparrow**.

**Grey Wagtail** was found at five sites with three at both Thornton and Cropston Reservoirs on 24 August and 10 September respectively. Double-figure counts of the more common **Pied Wagtail** were reported from three locations with maxima of: 20 in Morrison's car park in Coalville on 5 August, 14 at Cropston Reservoir on the 5th and ten at Swithland Reservoir on 3 July.

All **Meadow Pipit** records were reported in September including a migrating flock of 359 over Bradgate Park on the 30th.

There were few **Chaffinch** records but 30 were counted at Bradgate Park. There were fewer **Greenfinch** with a maximum of five in a Holwell garden the largest count and 17 **Goldfinch** in the same garden on 26 September the best reported. **Linnet** records came from five locations with 29 near Cossington the best count. A single **Lesser Redpoll** was over Bradgate Park on the last day of the quarter but returning autumn **Siskin** failed to make an appearance.

Up to four **Bullfinch** were regular visitors in DBF's Hugglescote garden through the period with pairs at a further four sites. Five **Yellowhammer** were still singing in Bradgate Park during July whilst the only records of **Reed Bunting** came from three locations during the month.

Jim Graham

## REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

**Common or Viviparous Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*:** The first sighting was on 12 July when SFW & HI report finding a specimen crossing a path near Overseal which is now in Derbyshire but is part of VC55. There were no further sightings until September when SFW & HI found a number of specimens in Bradgate Park. On 5 September they observed a small reddish lizard on a fallen tree trunk at the same spot where one was seen in 2013. On 13 September they found three specimens along the north wall of the park. Finally in Stretton Wood in Rutland they observed a single specimen on the edge of a woodland ride on 24 September.



Common Lizard © Steve Woodward

**Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*:** We have three sightings of this reptile; one from Bradgate Park and two from Quorn. On 15 July SFW found a single specimen in Bradgate Park which he describes as being quite large and not at all slow! On 3 August PJD disturbed a large specimen while clearing an area of her garden in Quorn. On 6 September she reports finding another smaller specimen while, once again, clearing her garden. As we have seen in the past, this area on the Barrow side of Quorn seems to be a "hot spot" for this reptile.

**Common or Smooth Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*:** We have just one sighting of this amphibian, again from PJD's Quorn garden in a pile of bricks. I suspect that Smooth Newts are more common than our few records would suggest, especially in small garden ponds where there are no fish to eat the eggs or young.

**Common Toad *Bufo bufo*:** HI & SFW report finding one squashed on the road near Nanpantan on 28 September and PJD reports seeing a couple of specimens during the same month in her garden. As we have remarked previously, the Common Toad does not appear to be particularly common.

**Common Frog *Rana temporaria*:** The same cannot be said for the Common Frog! As usual we have quite a number of sightings from a variety of sites across the county. PJD had number of this amphibian in her Quorn garden throughout the quarter. ATO disturbed a medium sized specimen while tidying his Shelthorpe garden on 4 July and HI & SFW report finding a froglet at Overseal on 12 July and another one at a pond near Measham on 17 July. On 23 July they came across another on the edge of a field near Shepshed and on 12 August SFW had a young one at Kelham Bridge NR near Ibstock. On 15 August SFW & HI found a froglet in a reedbed near Buckingham Drive in Loughborough. ATO reports a single specimen about 5 or 6 cm long lurking in a pile of water filled saucepans near his back door on 17 August and on the following day it had been joined by a second frog of similar size. They remained with him for a day or two before disappearing. The following day after a very wet night ATO encountered a medium sized frog, about 7 cm, by his back door. Two nights later, in the early hours of the morning, (don't ask!) there was a small one 4 – 5 cm long in the same place. He is mystified as to why they should like this part of his garden. On 2 September, SFW & HI found one frog at Nailstone.

Tony Onions

## FISH (including CRAYFISH)

There are as usual few sightings for this group. Perhaps members should invest in Jack Perks' new book on the Freshwater Fish of Britain, complete with his superb underwater photographs. Available from Amazon or signed copies from Jack himself. [Do look at his website - [www.jackperksphotography.com/](http://www.jackperksphotography.com/) - for videos of spawning fish, among other things. (Ed.)]



Goldfish © Helen Ikin

On the Loddington Estate, SFW & HI made a strange discovery of five **Goldfish** *Carassius auratus* in a cattle drinking trough. They speculated that they might be discarded pets from nearby houses. Sadly, they seem unlikely to survive here and sooner or later may provide a passing heron with a snack. This was on 1 September when the weather was still comparatively warm and this prompted ATO to revisit the Woodthorpe Pond (or Shelthorpe Top Pond). This small comparatively shallow pond at the Woodthorpe roundabout has been a very popular venue for anglers, both young and old from the nearby housing estates, during the summer. On 6 September, after the end of the school holidays and before the cold weather set in, he was rewarded for his efforts by sight of eight **Rudd** *Sardinus erythrophthalmus* and seven **Perch** *Perca fluviatilis*. None of these fish were particularly large – max. 17 cm. ATO had been informed that there are other species in this pond so was disappointed not to encounter them on this visit. Watch this space!

As usual, I would urge members to make a note of their sightings and send them in, even if they seem relatively commonplace.

**Tony Onions**

## DRAGONFLIES and DAMSELFLIES

The full report will appear in Heritage 228.

## BUTTERFLIES

Sadly this proved to be another disappointing year for many of our butterfly species, the lack of any long spells of settled sunny weather being of no help to many species with low populations and it seems a good many years since our Buddleia bushes were full of butterflies in mid-summer.

### Hesperiidae

The **Small Skipper** *Thymelicus sylvestris* was active throughout July and early August and a late one was noted on 27 August at Humberstone Heights. During July notable counts were: 14 in the grounds of the City General Hospital on the 2nd, 30 at Sence Valley FP on the 16th and 13 in Buddon Brook Meadows at Quorn on the 18th. However, the species was only reported seen in nine localities. Few **Essex Skipper** *Thymelicus lineola* were identified during July, two at Sence Valley FP and one along the Grantham Canal at Plungar on 16th and one in a potato field at Hathern on 26th. The **Large Skipper** *Ochlodes sylvanus*, mostly active last quarter, was noted in five localities in early July with a last sighting on the 8th at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel.



Large Skipper © Jim Graham

### Pieridae

This was a disappointing summer for the lovely **Brimstone** *Gonepteryx rhamni* and it was only reported seen in seven localities. One, presumably of the over-wintering generation was seen in Abney Street, Leicester on 4 and 17

July. A new generation male was present in our Quorn garden, staying on during the following two days and another was seen in Buddon Brook Meadows on the 18th. During August three males were seen at Broad Hill and three females in our Quorn garden on the 15th and the same day a female was seen nectaring on Purple Loosestrife in a ditch at Loughborough. Others of both sexes were seen during August in two Quorn gardens and at Ridlington on the 11th; last reported on the 24th in our Quorn garden.

**Large White *Pieris brassica*** and **Small White *Pieris rapae*** were both widely reported and were active in gardens and the countryside throughout much of the quarter although their numbers were on the low side compared with some recent summers. **Green-veined White *Pieris napi***, as usual less common in our gardens, was reported seen in 21 localities, mostly including parks and gardens though its favourite sites are often old grassland and woodland edges and rides. It was reported seen throughout much of the quarter with the last sighting on 20 September at Quorn.

#### **Lycaenidae**

No **Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus*** were reported by our members this quarter. This attractive species has been proved to be widespread and often common in Leicestershire and any old stands of oak are worth spending some time searching, especially if one has binoculars, from mid-July through August. Colonies often seem to favour individual trees, Ash as well as Oak and presumably those with the best honeydew secretions. Only two reports of the **White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrion c-album*** were received. On 5 July one was found caught up in a spider's web in the flowerheads of Marjoram in our Quorn garden. It was a fresh individual and on being released flew over the garden wall into our neighbour's garden. The second report was of one found on Ragwort on a track at Stonesby Lodge on 8 July. Nowadays this species seems to favour Wych Elm as the larval food plant and it seems likely that many colonies await discovery. This elm can be easily overlooked and the best time to locate trees in the hedgerow and woods is when it has flowered in the early spring when the large pale yellowish seeds stand out even at a distance.

The **Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*** is a good example of a species which is suffering more than most and this summer single individuals were noted in only four localities: during the quarter in HS's Quorn garden on four dates between 16 July and 5 September, at Humberstone Heights on 25 July and during August at Buddon Brook Meadows on 6th & 14th and at Bradgate Park on 24th.

During July the **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** was noted at: Buddon Brook Meadows, two on the 18th; at Bede Island in Leicester, two on the 29th, and Quorn Baptist Church graveyard on 31st. During August it was observed in two Quorn gardens on the 6th and at Broad Hill, where two were present on the 15th.

The **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus***, another species causing concern at the moment, was noted during July at: Evington Park, two on the 18th; Humberstone Heights, about ten; Buddon Brook Meadows on the 25th, and Bede Island, seven on the 29th. In August two were present at Willowbrook Park on the 11th, several of both sexes, Bardon Hill on 15th and eight (six males and two females) at Broad Hill on the 15th. The **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*** second generation butterflies were first noted on 13 July at Quorn and between then and the last sightings on 27 August at Desford and Quorn it was reported seen in some ten widely spaced localities.

#### **Nymphalidae**

Thankfully the handsome **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** was noted more widely than in some recent years and was reported seen in 27 widely scattered localities and often, towards the end of August, visiting Ivy blossom, usually in small numbers (1-3) but up to seven in a few places.

The **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*** first noted on 31 July at Rally Bank Park in Leicester and at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel, continued to be seen until 27 August when it was last seen in Conduit Street in Leicester. Altogether it was noted in eight well spread localities.

Numbers of **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** were disappointingly low this summer with sightings reported in only eight scattered localities and only one double-figure count reported – about ten on the edge of a cereal

field at Highfield Farm between Quorn and Woodhouse on 3 July, a date when seven were seen visiting thistle flowers at the Nunckley Quarry site. The other widely spread sightings were of only one to three individuals.

This summer seems to have been of little help to the **Peacock *Inachis io*** whose numbers sank so low with the new generation around 25 July last year and this year arriving earlier – around 13 July. It showed little or no improvement with sightings reported for only seven localities and seven individuals at Broad Hill on 15 August being the highest total reported. Thankfully the **Comma *Polygonia c-album*** fared a good deal better being reported from 17 widely spread localities in July, four in August and four in September – presumably destined to be the over-wintering generation. They were mostly present in ones and twos with three noted at Sence Valley FP on 16 July.

The only **Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia*** reported this quarter was one seen flying through our Quorn garden on 2 July.

#### Satyridae

The **Speckled Wood *Parage aegeria*** was reported seen in some 19 widely spread localities compared with the 39 during the same period last year. This interesting woodland species tends to have overlapping generations which makes it difficult some years to know whether this is three or four. This summer it was recorded in nine localities in July, five in August and six in September. The maximum site count was ten recorded by HB at Spinney Hill Park in Leicester on 28 August.

No **Wall *Lasiommata megera*** were recorded by members this summer.



Marbled White © Jim Graham

The only **Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*** reported was one seen at Bittesby Wood, Ullesthorpe on 4 July. However a group of East Midlands Butterfly Conservation members led by Mr Eliot Taylor recorded seven at Bagworth Heath Woods, partly an old mining site, on 18 July. This appears to be a new site for this distinctive species which usually favours calcareous grassland.

The **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonas*** appeared early with four seen at Rally Bank Park on 5 July and several at Humberstone Park on 6th. Altogether it was seen in 20 widely spread localities including several member's gardens. 65 were counted at Sence Valley FP on 16 July and 21 at Buddon Brook Meadows on 18th. It was last seen on 22 August in ATO's Shelthorpe garden.

The **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*** which as usual first appeared in June, continued on the wing throughout July, often frequenting gardens and present in double-figures in grassy areas. It was last noted on 15 August at Broad Hill.

No **Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*** were reported.



Ringlet © Jim Graham

As usual the **Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*** was active throughout July after having been seen earlier this year on 13 June, and noted in 16 widely spaced localities including several members' gardens. A total of 42 were seen at Sence Valley FP on 16th and it was last seen at Gaddesby Lane on 29th.

Peter Gamble

## MOTHS

Thirteen recorders made 1622 records, visited approximately 68 sites and recorded a staggering 8286 individuals of 397 species, 177 of which were micro moths. It is a shame I still get records with no numbers, stating just a few, many, several, common, lots, as the true figures would be so much more meaningful and I am sure would surprise us all. The species with the highest count was *Agriphila straminella* at Charnwood Lodge, which managed 300 individuals to four MV lights on 25 July. Next was another micro, *Blastobasis adustella* with 250 recorded on the same night. With numbers like this you would have thought this was the best night of the quarter but it was nowhere near. A meagre 105 species were recorded for this night compared to 176 species a few weeks earlier at Hicks Lodge on 7 July where the moth with the highest count was 45 **Small Fan-footed Wave** *Idaea biselata*. In fact, July turned out to be the best month for species and numbers and most nights throughout this month produced 100+ species. August and September went downhill rapidly hardly making 50 species a night, we had been spoilt.

Again, it is only possible to give a summary of the month's results, so here goes: The only record of **Orange Swift** *Triodia sylvina* was from Charnwood Lodge in late July, **Map-winged Swift** *Korscheltellus fusconebulosa*, **Gold Swift** *Phymatopus hecta* and **Ghost Moth** *Hepialus humuli* were all recorded from Charnwood Lodge plus a single of the latter from Barkestone Wood in early July. An opportunity to do a little leaf mining while visiting the Bee-eaters at Ulverscroft Priory in mid-August was too much to miss, and the mines of *Stigmella tiliae* were found on Lime, *S. nylandriella* on Rowan, *S. trimaculella* on Poplar and *S. speciosa* on Sycamore. A single of the Tineid *Nemapogon cloacella* was at light in late August. The find of the year has to go to another Tineid, the little known *Triaxomasia caprimulgella* where two individuals were found on one of the ancient oaks in Bradgate Park during the daytime. Quite similar to several other Tineids, the biology remains vague, to say the least, stated as favouring dark shady places in hollow trees, with the larvae feeding on rotten wood or perhaps dead insects in spiders webs. Needless to say, a

new species for VC55 and probably the most recent record for the whole of the British Isles, so a good result. Several days were spent searching tree trunks in Bradgate Park but to no avail, they are obviously not alone, surely there must be a small colony present here. Maybe a number of small LED battery-operated light traps placed in hollow trees might help produce more records of this species, a high on the "to do" list for 2018.



*Ypsolopha scabrella* © Steve Woodward

The most abundant micro moth was **Cameraria ohridella** with over 20 sightings and all as leaf mines. The "snail trail" feeding signs of *Phyllocnistis unipunctella* were found on Poplar at Ulverscroft Priory. We had just two records of **Honeysuckle Moth** *Ypsolopha dentella* from Cloud Wood and Barkestone Wood, also from Cloud Wood were three *Ypsolopha scabrella*. The most widely recorded of this group was *Ypsolopha parenthesesella*, a single record of *Ypsolopha ustella*, the rather spectacular *Ypsolopha sequella* and the closely related **Diamond-back Moth** *Plutella xylostella* being seen at Charnwood Lodge. Another widespread moth was **Carcina quercana** often seen in numbers, a colourful moth with distinctive long antennae. As a family the Oecophoridae are fairly easily recognised, but the Agonopterix and Depressaria are very similar and need care to separate them. No Depressaria were found but five species of Agonopterix were and they were: five of the rather smart, purplish and buff *Agonopterix liturosa* from Barkstone Wood, *A. arenella* from several sites, *A. heracliata* probably the most abundant and widespread of the genus, three of the attractively marked *A. alstromeriana* and a solitary *A. anglicella*. Charnwood Lodge, Cloud Wood and Barkestone Wood did particularly well for these species. A single *Aristotelia*

*ericinella* was attracted to light at Hicks Lodge early in July, a true heathland species so Hicks Lodge is ideal for it. A distinct reddish brown species with broad silver/white cross bands, host plant is Heather, so not often found away from the Charnwood Forest, where even here it is recorded infrequently. Another rarely recorded moth is *Monochroa cytisella*, recorded on several occasions at Charnwood Lodge in July. One of a select group of moths that have Bracken as a food plant, again the Charnwood Forest is especially suiting this species. There are not that many records for this rather plain looking species, with a taste for Bracken you would think this would be all over the Forest, maybe it is but for some reason is rarely seen. I'm not sure on the status of this next species *Psoricoptera gibbosella* it really has a southern half of England distribution and we look to be more or less on the extreme northern edge of its range. Barkestone Wood produced a singleton in late August, a species of mature woodland, so perhaps more trapping in this habitat may locate other sites. At least six individuals of the remarkable looking *Stathmopoda pedella* were beaten from the under sides of Alder leaves along the stream at the edge of Lea Meadows in early July. Only recorded occasionally and more often than not in singletons, finding this number in one area was quite a sight. Overall brownish with distinguishing yellowish patches on the wings, head and legs and resting in a quite unique position, with wings tight to the body and front legs stretched out to the sides forming a "T" shape. The latter species could be at first mistaken for a small Plume moth, but on close inspection is soon disregarded as such, in fact the only Plume recorded was a single **Common Plume** *Emmelina monodactyla* from Hicks Lodge early July.

**Green Oak Tortrix** *Tortrix viridana* seemed to fizzle out quite quickly at the beginning of July with the last date being 8 July at Charnwood Lodge. Quite variable and looking superficially similar to many other narrow Tortrices, 13 of the **Holly Tortrix** *Rhopobota naevana* was found in good numbers at Cloud Wood in mid-July. Both **Six-spot Burnet** *Zygaena filipendula* and **Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet** *Zygaena lonicerae* were well reported from the city and fairly widespread in the countryside. Starting the

Pyrilidae off with **Gold Triangle** *Hypsopygia costalis* despite its long flight period was only recorded on two occasions in early July. Usually quite numerous when seen **Small Magpie** *Anania hortulata* although widely reported was only seen in very low numbers. Typically "kicked up" when walking through grassy areas are the group of moths we call "grass moths", and often attract little attention. Well it seems like a little extra effort was made his quarter as most of the species likely to be found, were and some in reasonably large numbers, most nights produced totals in excess of 30 individuals of most species, possibly the prettiest of this group is *Catoptria pinella* a buffy, golden colour with two large pure white patches on the forewings. On to the macro moths with **Common Lutestring** *Ochropacha duplaris* not the most striking moth being a leaden grey/brown with a couple of tiny black dots on the forewings. For some strange reason it's always a welcome sight when they start to arrive, maybe it's the odd resting shape or the fact they often appear in decent quantities, surprisingly all the sightings for this species came from Charnwood Lodge. **Poplar Hawk-moth** *Laothoe populi* was the most reported species of Hawk-moth, just a single **Pine Hawk-moth** *Hyloicus pinastri* was found in Bradgate Park, just two reports of **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellatarum* Quorn and Loughborough, lastly **Elephant Hawk-moth** *Deilephila elpenor* was found on a few occasions including 16 to light in Bradgate Park in early July. The only record for **Small Dusty Wave** *Idaea seriata* came from Cloud Wood in mid-July and singles of the **Vapourer** *Orgyia antiqua* were seen mainly in the city.

What really is a beautiful moth **Beautiful Carpet** *Mesoleuca albicilata* was seen in singles



Beautiful Carpet © Graham Finch

at Cloud Wood and Charnwood Lodge. Normally found at sugar **Red Underwing *Catocola nupta*** was at light from late July throughout September, plus a single found in daytime in a Quorn garden in July. Charnwood Lodge produced two **Scallop Shell *Hydria undulata*** but two nights at Hicks Lodge produced a notable, 11 and 12 individuals, all three sightings were for early July. All the usual “Pug” moth species were recorded throughout July and August, 11 species in all with the highest totals of 16 **V-pug *Chloroclystis v-ata*** at Hicks Lodge and 22 **Narrow-winged Pug *Eupithecia nanata*** at Charnwood Lodge. The only report of **Tawny-barred Angle *Macaria liturata*** were two at light in Bradgate Park in late August and just two sightings of **Latticed Heath *Chiasmia clathrata*** one at light Hicks Lodge and the other during the day in the city.



*Bordered Beauty* © Graham Finch

Feeding on Sallows, Willows, Alder and Hazel, singletons of the attractive **Bordered Beauty *Epione repandaria*** visited the light traps at Hicks Lodge and Cloud Wood, both in the first half of July. Members of the Ennominae (Thorns) **Canary-shouldered Thorn *Ennomos alniaria***, **Dusky Thorn *E. fuscantaria***, **September Thorn *E. erosaria*** and **Early Thorn *Selenia dentaria*** were really on form and reported from far and wide throughout, although all in single figures, surprisingly there were no records for **Purple Thorn *Selenia tetralunaria*** this quarter.

A single **Sallow Kitten *Furcula furcula*** at light in Bradgate Park in mid-August was the only record and just one **White Satin *Leucoma salicis*** was at Hicks Lodge in early July. How times change, **Black Arches *Lymantria monarcha*** previously only regularly known from Pickworth Great Wood, is now a regular sight and particularly on the Charnwood Forest. Bradgate Park did well for this species but it was also recorded from Barkestone Wood in Melton



*Sallow Kitten* © Graham Finch

district, plus Cloud Wood in the north-west, how long before it becomes a regular garden moth? Early July at Charnwood Lodge produced the only records of **Muslin Footman *Nudaria mundana***, after overwintering the larvae were found in dozens feeding on the lichen on the dry stone walls at this reserve. All the other Footman species were well recorded except **Red-necked Footman *Atolmis rubricollis*** although we were at the end of the normal flight period for this moth and the weather had been good! The moth traps at Hicks Lodge added the only record of five **Blackneck *Lygephila pastinum*** for the quarter, and the only report of **Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica*** came during the day from a verge on the A50 at Groby, both records in early July. Both **Burnished Brass *Diachrysis chrysitis*** and **Silver Y *Autographa gamma*** were widely reported, but **Beautiful Golden Y *Autographa pulchrina*** had just a single at Bradgate Park and **Plain Golden Y *Autographa jota*** were in good numbers at Hicks Lodge and Charnwood Lodge with all of these records in early July. **Gold Spot *Plusia festucae*** must have had a good year as it was well reported from all over the Forest and **Marbled White Spot *Deltote pygarga*** was at Hicks Lodge and Charnwood Lodge again all in early July. The only **Bird's Wing *Dypterygia scabriuscula*** was at sugar on the edge of Charnwood Lodge and two **Old Lady *Mormo mura*** were at light in Bradgate Park. Although recorded on several occasions in August and September. **The Crescent *Helotropha leucostigma*** was only found in Bradgate Park and **Frosted Orange *Gortyna flavago*** was found at Charnwood Lodge mid- to end of September. Quite a decent

## BEETLES

record of **Brown-veined Wainscot** *Archanara dissoluta* came from Hicks Lodge and 14 **Small Rufous** *Coenobia rufa* from Charnwood Lodge. All the records of the various "Sallow" moths came from sites on the Charnwood Forest continuing to the end of September, with a very early record of **The Sallow** *Cirrhia icteritia* from mid-July.



Flounced Chestnut © Graham Finch

You know that early autumn is well under way when **Beaded Chestnut** *Agrochola lychnidis*, **Flounced Chestnut** *A. helvola*, **Yellow-line Quaker** *A. macilenta* and **Lunar Underwing** *Omphaloscelis lunosa* start to appear, all were widespread and all records from the "Forest". Singles of **Angle-striped Sallow** *Enargia paleacea* were well, spaced on 7 July and 19 September respectively, from Hicks Lodge and Charnwood Lodge. These next three species should be really common but all were only recorded the once. One **Cabbage Moth** *Mamestra brassicae* in Bradgate Park, three **Dot Moth** *Melanchra persicariae* and 27 **Brown-line Bright-eye** *Mythimna conigera* the latter two species from Hicks Lodge and all in early July.

Easily the most abundant and widely recorded species was **Large Yellow Underwing** *Noctua pronuba* followed by **Setaceous Hebrew Character** *Xestia c-nigrum*. As stated this is only a brief summary of what was a very "mothy" quarter, let us hope it continues.

Many thanks to all the contributors, especially Joy and Mick Braker for their continued enthusiasm in collating all the records from the static moth trap in Bradgate Park.

Graham and Anona Finch

All in all, the numbers were similar to the last quarter with eight recorders, making 372 records of 3617 individuals for 187 species, so just the total of species was slightly down, but an excellent result all the same. Carabids went into the lead with 49 species recorded followed by Staphs 33 species, Water Beetles 14 species, Weevils 16, and Ladybirds ten species.

Richard Wilson's arachnid survey at Charnwood Lodge came to an end and the last batch of samples to identify arrived early winter. The final totals from this survey are as follows; total number of individual beetles 899 and the species list finished at 129. The last batch contained several noteworthy species, which will be mentioned later. Richard is hoping to get a full report out in the New Year, concentrating mainly on the arachnids, but will include a summary of other orders too.

So in checklist order, starting with the water beetles, just singles of *Notaris clavicornis* from Loddington *Laccophilus hyalinus* from Launde, *Hyphydrus ovatus* from Loddington and *Hydroglyphus geminus* at Shenton Estates. Three *Hydroporus memnonius* were found at Launde, then, Cossington and Loddington produced several *H. palustris*. An almost dried up stream at Loddington held three of the well-marked *Platambus maculatus* and a single *Agabus paludosus* was found at Cossington. A short session of pond netting at Launde found two *Agabus sturmii* and *Agabus fuliginosus* was found at two sites on the Loddington Estate. All the water beetle records were from late August to mid-September. Quite an assortment of Carabids was recorded this quarter, with the pitfall traps at Bradgate Park still the only site producing *Carabus nemoralis*. Though, these have now been taken up, I'll scout around for another location for them early spring. *Notiophilus biguttatus* was widespread but Loddington and Nailstone produced the only records for *N. germinyi* and *N. palustris*. The edge of an arable field at Ulverscroft held four *Trechus secalis* mid-August and one *T. quadristriatus*, the latter also found at Market Bosworth and Tixover in all three months. A solitary *Asaphidion curtum* was in the same field at Ulverscroft in mid-August. Eleven species of

Bembidion were recorded from 1 July but no more after 17 September. Two *Bembidion aeneum* at Nailstone, *B. biguttatum* at Tixover and at Market Bosworth, *B. lunulatum* was widespread, being the most frequently recorded species, two *B. mannerheimii* were found in the Ulverscroft field. *Bembidion lampros* was well recorded, *B. properans* only from Loddington in late August, seven *B. lunatum* were found on exposed mud at the edge of a puddle at Gopsal Wharf with Market Bosworth and Loddington producing *B. tetracolum*: seven and two respectively. The remaining Bembidions were *B. quadrimaculatum* and *B. obtusum* from Market Bosworth and Loddington. All the records for the Bembidions were from grubbing on the ground at the various sites. Just four species of Pterostichus were found, they were *Pterostichus madidus*, *P. niger* and *P. melanarius* which was easily the most abundant and widespread. Singles of *Pterostichus vernalis* from Gopsal and Loddington and *P. strenuus* from pitfall traps at Nailstone.

Singles of *Calathus rotundicollis* and *C. fuscipes* were found at Ulverscroft and Market Bosworth respectively. The colourful *Anchomenus dorsalis* were at Nailstone and Market Bosworth, only three species of Amara were reported, *Amara plebeja* at Shenton and Market Bosworth with *A. aenea* from a very nice area behind the services at the M1 junction 23A and *A. eurynota* from Nailstone and Ulverscroft. *Curtonotus aulicus* was found at five sites, singles of *Acupalpus dubius* at Shenton Estates, *Badister billatus* at Tixover and a very smart bright metallic green *Chlaenius vestitus* at Magna Park. Three *Helophorus brevipalpus* were found in a well vegetated pond near Launde Abbey. A single *Berosus affinis* in a partly dried out small pond at Magna Park, a single *Hydrobius fuscipes* at Loddington and three of the domed and very shiny *Coelostoma orbiculare* at Shenton Estates.

The next five species were all from Loddington, three *Cryptopleurum minutum* sieved from cow dung, *Carcinops pumilio* from a large pile of horse manure stacked in the corner of a field, a single *Hister unicolor* from cow dung, the very smart red and black *Atholus bimaculatus* in the same horse manure heap and the equally smart looking *Anisotoma*



*Atholus bimaculatus* © Graham Finch

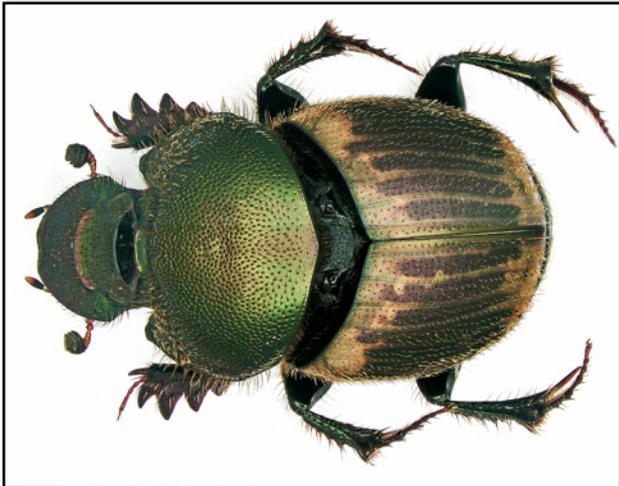
*humeralis* from fungi growing under a Beech tree. The Charnwood Lodge arachnid survey produced two *Nargus velox*, fortunately a distinctive member of the Leiodidae, notorious for being a very difficult group to deal with. A quick look under a dead deer carcass at Bradgate Park held five of the seldom seen carrion beetles *Thanatophilus rugosus*.



*Anisotoma humeralis* © Graham Finch

Now on to the Staphylinids, of which a very assorted 33 species were recorded, true to form *Cilea silphoides* was found in horse manure at Loddington, probably the easiest of the Aleocharine Staphs to identify *Drusilla canaliculata* was at Charnwood Lodge where the pitfall traps picked up 11 individuals and just the one from a Market Bosworth garden. Newly added to the VC55 list a couple of years ago from Bradgate Park a single *Philonthus splendens* was sieved from the horse manure at Loddington. A single distinctive large with reddish orange elytra and black abdomen with two rows of yellowish patches running down the sides *Platydrachus stercorarius* was in the pitfall sample from Charnwood Lodge and another large species *Tasgius winkleri* was found by

grubbing in a field at Ulverscroft. Reaching 22 mm and with distinctive black and greyish/white patterning and formidable jaws, *Creophilus maxilosus* must be a terrifying site for any unsuspecting Dipterous larvae on which it predominantly feeds. Several were found under the offal bins in the compound at Bradgate Park early July. The only record of Lesser Stag Beetle *Dorcus parallelipedus* was a singleton found in a pile of dead wood stacked up around a standing dead tree on Shenton Estates early August.



*Onthophagus coenobita* © Graham Finch

For me the find of the quarter, maybe even the year has to go to the impressive Scarab beetle *Onthophagus coenobita* when over a couple of days three were found at Loddington in cow dung. There are only five previous records for this species, three of these refer to the mid 1800's by H.W. and F. Bates, the fourth record is from Gumley in 1934 by K.J.B. Clark, but the fifth was made by Don Tozer in 1943. The remarkable thing about this record is that Don found it at East Norton, our latest Loddington records were all found in a field beside East Norton Road, the same area but 74 years on! Surely this means that *O. coenobita* is firmly established here, one of the questions it raises is just how wide a range is it occupying, is it very local or will most of the fields with grazing animals hold this species? This is definitely a project worth spending some time on for next year. It is stated that April and May are probably the best times to find it, and only occasionally from August to September, so as our records are from the later period where they are least abundant, there's no prizes for guessing where I will be in the Spring.

While we are on the subject of dung, seven species of Aphodius were reported with *Aphodius rufipes* the commonest found in dung and at MV light. Less widespread species were *Aphodius ater* from Charnwood Lodge and Barkestone Wood. *A. fimetarius* from Loddington and Charnwood Forest, with *A. prodromus*, *A. sphecalatus*, *A. fossor* and *A. sticticus* were all only found at Loddington. Quite surprisingly, only a single Brown Chafer *Serica brunnea* was recorded just the once at MV light at Charnwood Lodge despite many nights moth trapping, along with *A. rufipes* this is usually one of the most frequent visitors to moth traps. At least seven *Scirtes hemisphaericus* were found on Greater Water Dock at Gopsal Wharf at the beginning of July. Favouring old established woodland, a single *Stenagostus rhombeus* was attracted to MV light in Barkestone Wood late August. Fairly well patterned for a click beetle, overall brown with paler cross bands on the elytra. The latter and a single *Athous haemorrhoidalis* from Market Bosworth were the only clicks recorded. A meagre four species of Cantharidae were reported, but they were in good numbers with over 100 *Rhagonycha fulva* along a roadside verge at Market Bosworth.

I guess due to their secretive nature very few of the wood boring species get recorded, so it was very pleasing to find seven *Anobium fulvicorne* all beaten from Oak branches in Bradgate Park and three of the showy Fan-bearing Wood-borer *Ptilinus pectinicornis* on a standing dead (possible Ash tree) in Cloud Wood both in early July. Repeated visits to the "bone yard" in Bradgate Park continued to find *Necrobia violacea* under the remains of deer carcasses. It was nice to actually find something



Fan-bearing Wood-borer © Graham Finch

other than **Common pollen Beetle *Meligethes aeneus***, which was everywhere, ***M. atratus*** was swept from a grassy field on Shenton Estates early August, the same site and day also produced several ***Olibrus aeneus***, this last species was also found at Magna Park, mainly off Ragwort on both occasions. A total of ten species of Ladybirds were recorded, several ***Coccidula rufa*** were swept from waterside vegetation at Cossington early September and all four records of the **Orange Ladybird *Halyzia sedecimguttata*** were from MV lights. Loddington and Ridlington provided the only records of **22-spot Ladybird *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata*** just two reports of **14-spot Ladybird *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata***. Although recorded just about everywhere, **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*** were all in single figures except for the 20 from a Quorn garden, a solitary **2-spot Ladybird *Adalis bipunctata*** was swept at Gopsal Wharf and **7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*** was widespread but again in just single figures. Over 12 **Water Ladybird *Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata*** were swept from waterside vegetation at Cossington, sweeping low vegetation at Ernie Hill at Loddington produced double figures of **16-spot Ladybird *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata*** and finally sieving cut hay in a field at Loddington produced the only **24-spot Ladybird *Subcoccinella vigintiquatuor punctata***.

That pile of dead wood placed around a standing dead tree at Shenton Estates produced, on 6 August, ten of the shiny black and orange chequerboard patterned ***Litargus conexus***, also over 30 ***Bitoma crenata*** a small distinctive black and red beetle with obvious long ridges on the elytra, both species associated with dead and/or dying wood. A regular at MV light is ***Lagria hirta*** and apart from over 40 individuals swept from low vegetation at Gopsal Wharf, all the other reports were from those that visited moth traps. A roadside oak beside the A447 near Osbaston held a huge Chicken of the Woods fungus - a close inspection found over 30 of the small brown Tenebrionid ***Eledona agricola*** in early July. A lucky find in the sweep net at Shenton Estates was a single black and red Ant-like flower beetle ***Anthicus antherinus***, with only six previous records and the last being 2007 by Derek Lott. Gopsal Wharf produced singles of

two leaf beetles, ***Plateumaris sericea*** and ***Donacia simplex***, both species can be found in quite a variety of metallic colours. A couple of small straggly plants of Common Mallow beside the boundary wall at Tixover Church held several of the conspicuous blue and reddish ***Podagrica fuscipes***. Despite still being in season no Longhorn beetles were reported this quarter, it seems a sudden drop from the seven species recorded last quarter I wonder why, was it too hot for them or did we just genuinely miss them?



Green Dock Beetle © Graham Finch

Some of the generally common Chrysomelids were only reported in singletons from one site only **Thistle Tortoise Beetle *Cassida rubiginosa*** from a garden in Dadlington, ***Chrysolina polita*** at Cossington Meadows and **Green Dock Beetle *Gastrophysa viridula*** in Market Bosworth Country Park. I am not convinced we are just missing these species as we keep finding more of the less reported species, so are we not bothering to note down the common stuff? One species that has had a lot of attention this year has been ***Psylliodes chrysocephala***, we have never had so many records for it, recorded throughout VC55 including a total of 51 swept from along a roadside verge at Market Bosworth. A single **Strawberry Weevil *Barypeithes araneiformis*** was found at Gopsal Wharf and a single of the close relative **Hairy Spider Weevil *Barypeithes pellucidus*** was found on a garden Bioblitz at Market Bosworth. The Thistle feeding ***Rhinocyllus conicus*** continues to spread, being found at Market Bosworth and Ulverscroft and three ***Rhinoncus pericarpus*** were found by grubbing in a field at Loddington. Searching

Meadow Cranesbill along a roadside at Market Bosworth produced 11 *Zacludus geranii*, previously very few records of this species, it is an easy one to find by targeting the host plant. Beating nettles at Tixover gave two *Parethelcus pollinarius*, while sweeping Water Mint at Launde with a pond net found a single *Datonychus melanostictus* and to finish up with several of the intricately marked *Mogulones geographicus* were found at Clipsham Quarry in mid-July. This is quite a considerable record as it is away from its only known previous site at Ketton Quarry, so offers some optimism for further sites in Rutland.

Many thanks for everyone's contributions.

Graham Finch

## OTHER INSECTS

### Hemiptera

A few records of the **Green Shieldbug**, *Palomina prasina* were submitted, mostly nymphs, singles from Isley cum Langley, Newtown Linford, Ibstock and Cossington Meadows this quarter with further records from Quorn, two nymphs at Humberstone Park and five adults on Alder at Leicester Arboretum on 24 September. Just two records of the **Hawthorn Shieldbug** *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale* were submitted, with 14 nymphs at Victoria Park on Dogwood on 18 August, and three at Spinney Hill Park on the 25th.

Just two records of the **Forest Bug** *Pentatoma rufipes*, single adults at Victoria Park on 18 August and at Glenfield on 10 August.

Just a single **Birch Shieldbug** *Elasmotherus interstinctus* from Cossington Meadows on 6 September, one of our most common species usually on birch in local parks, etc. I failed to see any. A nymph of the **Gorse Shielbug** *Piezodorus lituratus* was seen at Melton Mowbray in July. PHG came up with the only **Sloe Bug** *Dolycoris baccorum* records this quarter with one on 12 August and two found on cuttings in the "brown bin" on 11 September. As with many species, I failed, for the first time, to see any.

**Parent Bug** *Elasmucha grisea* was recorded, with six adults and three nymphs at Leicester

Arboretum on Alder on 22 August, with a single adult at Spinney Hill Park on 25 August.

The **Woundwort Shieldbug** *Eysarcoris venustissimus* was seen at Halstead, with several on *Stachys byzantina* on 23 August and, as usual, common on Hedge Woundwort in Spinney Hill Park in September.

Six adult **Bishops Mitre** *Aelia acuminata* were found on Lewisher Road on 22 August. The Coreid bug *Gonocerus acuteangulatus* appears to be spreading in the county but was not reported by any members.

The **Dock Bug** *Coreus marginatus* was recorded as singles at Loddington and Nanpantan with ten early nymphs at Humberstone Park on 15 July and was common at Leicester Arboretum on 22 September.

Rhopalid species were *Stictopleurus punctatonervosus* – an adult on Lewisher Road on 22 August and *Stictopleurus butilon*, brookside at Spinney Hill Park on 22 September.

Other species submitted for this group were **Reedmace Bug** *Chilacis typhae* on *Typha* heads, a single at Loughborough, Epinal Way on 4 August and five on a Loughborough pond in mid-August. The plant bug *Liocoris tripustulatus* was common on nettles at Market Bosworth on 15 July.

The Mirid *Deraeocoris flavilinea* was just a single at Market Bosworth on 15 July, *Photocoris varipes* was common at Humberstone Heights on 25 July.

**Water Scorpion** *Nepa cinerea* was in a ditch in sheep pasture on the Loddington Estate on 25 August. Froghopper *Philaenus spumarius* was at Spinney Hill and in a garden at Market Bosworth on 12 July. Leafhoppers *Cicendella viridis* there were many at Stretton Wood in Rutland on 24 July, both *lassus lanio* and *Eupteryx urticae* - many at moth trap at Market Bosworth on 15 July.

### Diptera

#### Hoverflies

It is noticeable the last few years how few species of the genus *Platycheirus* are sent in by members. I had *Platycheirus albimanus* in my

small garden for many years, but have not recorded it at all recently.

An interesting comment was published in the press recently, that in Germany they have recorded a 75% drop in flying insects over the last 25 years. I know some of our local naturalists would not dispute this fact.

### Syrphids

The **Marmalade Hoverfly** *Episyrphus balteatus* was widely recorded over a wide area of the county from 22 sites, mainly in July, and probably peaking in the third week of that month. Unlike this species, a number of hoverflies were in short supply, *Scaeva pyrastris* only had singles at Evington Park and in the grounds of the City General Hospital on 2 July and one at Hallgates, Bradgate Park on 9 July. *Epistrophe corollea* had a single male in my garden on 14 July with just two on the Spinney Hill Park on the 16th. A male *Eupeodes latifasciatus* was found there, by the brookside on 23 July.

*Eupeodes luniger*, all singles, were noted in my garden every moth this quarter, others were recorded from Thurnby Lodge, Leicester Arboretum, Belgrave Lock and Loddington Village. *Dasyrphus albostrigatus* had a single on Ragwort at Spinney Hill Park on the 16 July. *Chrysotoxum bicinctum*, just two were reported, one from a wheat field at Merry Lees and one from Swannington early July.

The only record of *Sphaerophoria scripta* seen was of a single in a potato field in Hathern on 25 July. I did not record any, I did however find a specimen of probably *S. interrupta* on Spinney Hill Park, sadly a female - most of this group can only be confirmed by the males.

Just two Cheilosini records, two *Cheilosia illustrata* in Humberstone Park on 6 July and a single *Rhingia campestris* at the Loddington Estate on 23 August.

### Eristalini

The most commonly found species in this group is *Myathropa florea*, reported from Evington, Victoria Park, Leicester Arboretum, Quorn, Loughborough, Loddington, Battram village and Bradgate Park. The **Sun Fly** *Helophilus pendulus*, from Quorn, Cossington Meadows and Leicester Arboretum. The

**Common Drone Fly** *Eristalis tenax*, was found common on Ivy on 29 September, but very few from elsewhere with *Eristalis pertinax*, just two at Bede Island and Spinney Hill Park in July, three *Eristalis intricarius* females were in a border at Castle Gardens on 5 July.

Two *Sericomyia silentis* were at Bradgate Park and Lea Meadows early September.

### Volucella

This species did rather better than most with the **Great Pied Hoverfly** *Volucella pellucens* had singles visiting PHG's Quorn garden throughout July, with others from Hamilton and Loddington in August and September. The wasp mimic *Volucella inanis* did rather well with singles from Melton, Gaddesby, Blackbrook, Loddington Estate; frequent at Quorn in July/August, Abney Street, Monks Rest two foraging on thistle; Bede Island, Castle Gardens and Humberstone Park. The impressive **Hornet Hoverfly** *Volucella zonaria* continues to increase its range, visiting PHG's Quorn garden throughout July and August, visiting various flowers, also noted from Loughborough and Monks Rest, Bede island, Castle Gardens, Humberstone Park, Evington Park and Spinney Hill Park.

Finally for this group, *Syrirta pipiens*, with a maximum of four in my garden on 6 August, odd specimens in Rally Bank Park, with one at Lea Meadows on 7 September.

### Conopidae: Thick-headed Flies

These species appear to be less common than recent years. We have only records of single *Conops quadrifasciata* at Evington Park and City General Hospital grounds on 2 July and at pondside in Victoria Park on 18 August. Singles of *Conops flavipes* were also noted by SFW & HI at Stonesby Lodge on 8 July.

### Soldier Flies

The only records for this group were submitted by SFW & HI. **Broad Centurian** *Chloromyia formosa*, at Stonesby Lodge on 8 July and at Belton on 23 July, just singles. SFW must have been pleasantly surprised when he spotted a female **Banded General** *Stratiomys potamida* at Groby on garden flowers on 8 July. This is an impressive soldier fly. I have rarely, if ever, recorded this species on anything other than Hogweed.



*Banded General* © Steve Woodward

The only recorded Tabanid was of the **Bright Horse-fly, *Hybomitra distinguenda***, a single female at the Bradgate Park, in the Deer Barn cafe on 3 July.

PHG had the parasitic fly ***Tachina fera*** on 8 August and several dates after in his Quorn garden.

A few miscellaneous records were also received including ***Mesembrina meridiana***, one at Thurnby Lodge on 11 August, two at Hamilton Ponds on 13 August. ***Eriothrix rufomaculata*** was at Rally Bank Park - a single, and two at Hamilton Ponds on 13 August. Some years it is commonly found on Ragwort.

SFW & HI recorded the larva of the one of the **Ragwort Seed-flies *Botanophila*** species making their characteristic "marsh-mallows" on the flowering heads of Ragwort at Bardon Hill on 13 August and at Groby on 3 July. It has not been as widespread as usual this year.

I will close this rather disappointing Diptera section with a few records of the **Holly leaf-miner *Phytomyza ilicis*** at Isley cum Langley, Gaddesby and Nanpantan during this quarter.

## Hymenoptera

### Social Bees

Before starting this section, I would like to comment on Mr Fred Smith of Barlestone and his sad passing. His garden was truly exceptional and his records of bumblebees in his garden were full of interest for every quarter. He will be sadly missed.

This just means we receive less records of bumblebees than ever, from gardens in particular, and they are very important for our

remaining bee fauna. My own city plot is very poor and only the recent sightings of the Tree Bumblebee ***Bombus hypnorum*** have improved things a little.

However, I have managed to increase my solitary bee visits by four extra species over the last three or so years.

Rather fewer records of **Buff-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*** this quarter, two workers with pollen in my garden 1 July, with queens noted at Humberstone Heights, Humberstone Park and Conduit Street on 27 August with just a single male at Belton on 23 July.

SFW & HI recorded **Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius*** from a wide area, with 19 specimens, all singles. Other records were a queen at Evington on 7 August, 14 workers at Humberstone Heights on 25 July with six at Rally Bank Park on the 31st. This appears to have been quite a good year for males with one appearing in my garden in July, which is quite rare in recent years. Other records of males were at Rally Bank and Spinney Hill Park. Four of this species were foraging Burdock at Evington, with two or three foraging Ox Tongue in August.

**Tree Bumblebees *Bombus hypnorum*** have usually finished by this quarter, however PHG still had a queen and workers visiting his Quorn garden on Michaelmas Daisy on September 28th. Other records, all singles, were from Ullesthorpe, Isley cum Langley (a queen), Hathern and Loughborough, with further queens noted at Bede Island, Evington and Victoria Park in early August.

HI & SFW again submitted the most records for **White-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lucorum*** s.l. with a number of records from the north and west of the county, from Ridlington, Loddington Estate, Ullesthorpe, Stonesby Lodge, Swannington, Overseal, Cavendish Bridge, Measham, Saxelbye, Belton, Shepshed, St Peters Church, Hathern, (many on Lavender) Hathern, Bradgate House, Charnwood Quarry, Gaddesby Lane, Markfield, Loughborough (several) and Cold Overton Wood, mostly in July. The only other records were a queen at Abney Street with males at Humberstone Heights and Bede Island in July.

There were very few observations of **Garden Bumblebee *Bombus hortorum*** records came from the Botanic Gardens, two workers 2 July; Abney Street one foraging *Teucrium* on 19 August, with several visiting PHG's Quorn garden in July on Marjoram.

The only records of **Early-nesting Bumblebee *Bombus pratorum*** this quarter were single males at Belton and Shepshed on 23 July.

**Common Carder Bumblebee *Bombus pascuorum*** was, as usual, widely recorded this quarter from 21 sites, usually in ones and twos.

### Cuckoo Bees

A few records of ***Bombus vestalis***, the common cuckoo bee of *Bombus terrestris*, were reported this quarter with males from the Botanic Garden, two on 2 July and singles from Spinney Hill Park on 16 July and Humberstone Park on 25 August. A female was noted at Newtown Linford near Warren Hill on 13 July.

Male ***Bombus campestris*** were seen at Evington, two on 7 August, at Hamilton Ponds two on 13 August and Victoria Park on the 18th. As a parasite of *Bombus pascuorum* this species tends to turn up more regularly this quarter.

A single ***Bombus sylvestris*** was found at Stonesby Lodge on 13 July. As a parasite of *Bombus pratorum* it is found more commonly generally in the last quarter. **Hive Bee *Apis mellifera*** were widely reported this quarter, from 18 sites, foraging from Burdock and Ivy late in the quarter.

### Vespidae

#### Social Wasps

PHG had several records of **Hornets *Vespa crabro*** from Quorn with one visiting Hemp Agrimony in his garden with records on 12 and 15 August, with small numbers in September in the latter half visiting Ivy blossom. Singles were also recorded in September from Loddington, Nailstone and Nanpantan Reservoir.

Just a single record of the **German Wasp *Vespula germanica*** from the Deer Barn at Bradgate Park on 24 August.

I found **Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris*** much less common again this year, with only one active nest at Abbey Meadows on the bank

of the canal on 19 September. There are usually several nest sites on Spinney Hill Park, but none was seen this year. A few other records were submitted from SFW & HI, from Hathern, (several on *Scrophularia*), singles from Rutland Water, Ridlington, Loddington Estate, and Loddington Village in August.

Howard Bradshaw

## PLANT GALLS

### Introduction

Many of us show a great deal of interest in plant galls when we are out on our Wednesday morning walks. Two of our members, SFW & HI, sometimes with Anona Finch, Janet Sykes, Geoffrey Hall, and in the company of the Loughborough Naturalists' Club, Market Bosworth & District Natural History Society or the VC55 branch of the BSBI, have provided most of the numerous records for the club each quarter but at the moment there is no regular summary in *Heritage*. It is hoped that writing up these records will encourage more interest in this fascinating area of Natural History and stimulate increased recording from our members. The initial report summarises what has been found in the period May to September 2017. Future reports might enable changes in distribution, frequency and timing to be noted.

The current definition of a plant gall according to the expert Margaret Redfern: "A gall is an abnormal growth produced by a plant under the influence of another organism. It involves enlargement and/or proliferation of the hosts cells or vascular tissue, and provides both protection and nutrition for the gall causer."

Galls are therefore different to leaf miners which simply live in and eat plant tissue without causing swelling. Except for fig wasps which have a symbiotic relationship with fig trees, all invertebrates which cause plant galls are parasitic and many of these gall causers are themselves often parasitized by other invertebrates or have their galls invaded by inquilines (lodgers). Sometimes the parasites are themselves parasitized. Collecting galls formed by wasps e.g. oak apples and hatching them out can lead to a large number of individuals from different species.



Fresh (and large) Oak Apples, Woodhouse  
© Steve Woodward

Plant galls are caused by many different organisms ranging from viruses, bacteria, fungi, other plants (mistletoe causes a gall structure where attached to its host), to a wide range of invertebrates such as gall mites, psyllids, aphids, gall midges, chloropid flies, gall flies and gall or cynipid wasps.

The *Journal of the British Plant Gall Society* summarised its annual report for 2016 under the headings “Galls on Oak”, “Galls on other Trees” and “Galls on Herbaceous Plants” a system that I will use here but with the addition of “Galls on Roses”.

For this initial report I have also included some descriptions of structure and lifestyle.

### Galls on Oak

Fifty-seven records of oak-galls were received. Most oak gall causers are gall wasps (Cynipidae) and in fact all of these records are of cynipid wasps. The life cycle of cynipids involves two generations, an asexual generation and a sexual generation on differing parts of the same tree or on different species of oak. It is the asexual generation that is commonly recorded as is the case here. Eight species of wasp in three genera were recorded.

The most numerous were **Marble Gall *Andricus kollari*** (12 records mostly in north and west of the county) and **Knopper Gall *Andricus quercuscalicis*** (12 records also predominantly north and west), both of which need Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris* for the alternate host. These are not therefore native galls but have either been introduced deliberately or accidentally and are able to survive because of the presence of both



These gall wasps *Biorhiza pallida* emerged from an Oak Apple collected into a poly bag at Bradgate Park during the 2017 Wildlife Weekend © Steve Woodward

our native oaks, especially Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* and the introduced Turkey Oak.

The next most common were **Oak Apple Gall *Biorhiza pallida*** (11 records from across the county, alternate generation in the roots) and **Common Spangle Gall *Neuroterus quercusbaccarum*** (nine records, county-wide whose alternate generation **Currant Gall** is found on the catkins).

There were five records each for **Artichoke Gall *Andricus foecundatrix*** and **Silk-button Gall *Neuroterus numismalis***, two records for **Oyster Gall *Neuroterus anthracinus*** from the Loddington Estate and Stretton Wood and just one for **Cola-nut Gall *Andricus lignicolus*** from Longcliffe Golf Course.



Artichoke Gall on oak caused by *Andricus foecundatrix* © Steve Woodward

### Galls on Roses

Wild roses are galled by a variety of parasites including sawflies, midges and gall wasps. All of the 11 records from HI & SFW from April to September 2017 refer to the familiar **Robin's**



Rose with three Robin's Pin-cushion Galls caused by *Diplolepis rosae* © Steve Woodward

### Pincushion or Bedeguar Gall *Diplolepis rosae*.

These are many-chambered galls developed from many eggs laid in the bud in spring by the Cynipid wasp. This species of Cynipid wasp does not appear to have alternate generations but only 1% of the population is male and the females reproduce mainly by parthenogenesis without males. Lack of females may be due to infection with a *Wolbachia* bacterium. These galls are easy to identify and more records would be welcome.

### Galls on other Trees

Eighteen records, 16 caused by various mite species, one caused by an aphid, and one caused by a midge, were found on ten species of trees. Mites belong to the Arachnida which also includes spiders, harvestmen and scorpions. Gall midges are Diptera i.e. True flies.

The mite genus *Aceria* was well represented. *A. campestricola* was found on one occasion on Elm *Ulmus*, causing multiple small pimples on the leaves. *A. erineae* produced three records on Walnut *Juglans regia*, causing blistering on the upper surface and hollows on the underside where the mites live amongst white or brown hairs, this structure being called an erineum. There were three records of *A. fraxinivora* either on Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* or fallen from Ash. These develop as clumps on Ash keys as the mites lay eggs on the flowers. The galls are individually small but clump together to rusty-coloured masses. *A. myriadeum* was reported just once, on Field Maple *Acer campestre* at Breedon Hill. This mite causes bright red pustules on the leaf surface and often occur in profusion. Finally *A. nalepai* was found twice on

Alder *Alnus glutinosus* leaves. These are pouch galls formed in the angles between the midrib and the primary veins, they may be alternate or paired and are filled with russet hairs often projecting to the underside, amongst which the mites live.

The mite genus *Eriophyes* was represented by two species. *E. laevis* was found just once on the Loddington Estate, another gall of Alder *Alnus glutinosus*. These are small pimple-like galls often, as reported here, with many galls on the leaves. *E. similis* was found twice on Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. This gall typically produces pink pimples around the edges of the leaves.

*Vasates quadripedes*, a mite causing bladder galls on the introduced Silver Maple *Acer saccharinum* is particularly interesting as the first British record was in London in 2002, since when it has been spreading. The galls are often numerous on the surface of the leaves with an opening below and develop in colour from yellow/green through red to black.



Galls on Silver Maple caused by *Vasates quadripedes* © Steve Woodward

The woolly-aphid gall causer *Pemphigus spyrothecae* was found at Bradgate House on Poplar *Populus* leaves. The form this takes is a green to red spiral gall on the leaf petiole with two to three rings. The life cycle consists of two generations. Females hatch in early spring and induce the petiole galls from which the second generation hatches and lay eggs on twigs and bark for overwintering.

The gall midge *Dasineura crategi* was found on Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* at Cossington Meadows NR. This gall causes abnormal growth of the terminal shoots of Hawthorn resulting in untidy rosettes, formed

of distorted and thickened leaves bearing hairs. It typically attacks hedgerow Hawthorns and is apparent in cut hedges as galled shoots of new growth are often taller and thicker.

### Galls on Herbaceous Plants

Thirty-nine records were received of seven species of invertebrate from seven species of herbaceous plants.

The most numerous records (18) were of *Cecidophyes rouhollahi*, a gall mite found county-wide on Cleavers *Galium aparine*. The affected plants appear paler as the mites cause the tissue to thicken and roll in and produce protective hairs amongst which the mites live.

The next most common (11 records) was *Jaapiella veronicae*, a gall midge using Germander Speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys* as host. The midge lays eggs in the shoot tip causing the two terminal pairs of leaves to stick together forming a hairy pouch in which numerous orange larvae live.

The remaining records were in smaller numbers. The gall midge *Dasineura urticae* was found on three occasions on Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*. One or more white larvae live in green to purple galls on the leaf surface.

Thistle was also found to be galled on three occasions. These galls are caused by the picture-winged fly *Urophora cardui*. They form on the stem of usually Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, are quite large (10 mm) and become dark and woody as the season progresses.

Two galls, one in Leicester and one in Loughborough were found on Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*. These are caused by the gall mite *Cecidophyes nudus*. Extensive puckering of the upper surface causes hollows on the lower surface where the mites live amongst the erinea or hairs.

One record was received of two galls on one stem of Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata* at Bradgate Park in July. These were caused by the Cynipid wasp *Phanacis hypochoeridis*. This gall is widely recorded in Southern England but not often recorded in VC55. Is it uncommon or under-recorded? We need to keep a look-out.

And finally GH found a gall (**Tassel Gall**) on *Juncus* at Nailstone caused by the Psyllid or

Jumping Plant Louse, (a gall causing bug), *Livia juncorum*. The shoots become shortened and thickened and bunch into a mass including the flowers which become leafy. This also is either uncommon or under recorded in VC55 so another gall to keep a look-out for.

Hazel Graves

## FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

Not a very inspiring summer this year but this did not appear to affect the plant life to any great extent.

Once again a paucity of recorders, it would be greatly appreciated if we could have more records, even records of the more common plants are appreciated. In years to come botanists may wish to investigate the overall flora not just the rare species. All records are kept for future reference.

### Plants of interest this quarter

**Intermediate Polypody *Polypodium interjectum*:** Very similar to Common Polypody *P. vulgare* mainly found on walls, preferring shadier localities than Common Polypody. More common in the south of the country and rare in the north, specimens were found in Loughborough.



Barberry© Steve Woodward

**Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*:** An uncommon shrub usually found as a single isolated bush. The British Flora suggests it may have been introduced. Unfortunately it was found to be an alternate host for wheat stem rust and consequently most plants growing in hedgerows, in cereal crop areas, were destroyed

resulting in its present rarity. Found at Loddington.

**New Zealand Pygmyweed *Crassula helmsii*:** One of the plants introduced for the aquarium trade which has escaped into the waterways. Unfortunately it found our climate to its taste and is rapidly becoming a pest. Noted in a pond in Loughborough.

**Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus tenuis*:** One of the less common trefoils, very similar to the Common Bird's-foot-trefoil but with much narrower leaves and much less common, was identified at Saxelbye.

**Toothed Medick *Medicago polymorpha*:** Quite a rare plant found mainly as a weed inland but is actually a coastal plant. No Leicestershire record in the 1988 Leicestershire Flora since Horwood and Gainsborough (1933) when only nine localities were noted but was found at King's Mills near Castle Donington.

**Trailing St John's-wort *Hypericum humifusum*:** A rather delicate plant which spreads along the ground with its yellow flowers facing upwards. As with all St John's-worts, the leaves, sepals and even the petals have glandular dots. Found on acid soils and, to me, always a pleasure to find. Found in Bradgate Park.

**Treacle Mustard *Erisimum cheiranthoides*:** A rather uncommon crucifer found on waste ground and normally a casual rather than a long-term resident. Quite interesting as the open flowers form a circle on the flowering head of the plant. Noted at Welby.

**Fig-leaved Goosefoot *Chenopodium ficifolium*:** One of the less common goosefoots but easily identified by the shape of the leaves. A specimen was found at Ridlington.

**Phacelia *Phacelia tanacetifolia*:** A plant grown either as an ornamental or as a crop for bees, as was the case at Loddington, otherwise found as a casual.

**Cornflower *Centaurea cyanus*:** A plant once common in cornfields but now very uncommon and found mainly as a garden escape. Noted at Castle Donington and Hathern.

**Elecampane *Inula helenium*:** A large plant, up to 2.5 m, grown originally as a herb but now much less common as it is not grown as a crop.



*Phacelia at Loddington © Steve Woodward*

Often confused with an introduced species *Telekia speciosa* but easily told apart by the basal leaves which are narrowly crenate not like *Telekia* which are deeply cordate. Found near Stretton Wood, Rutland.

**Ragweed *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*:** This is an alien species often present in bird seed mixes. It likes disturbed ground but rarely persists. The pollen is said to be particularly irritating and can exacerbate hay-fever or asthma. First found in the county, in Quorn, by Peter Gamble in 1976, it was found again a Quorn garden.

**Gallant Soldier *Galinsoga quadriradiata*:** One of the roadside weeds that, in my last report, I said had become scarcer but seen in Glenfield, Measham and Loughborough.

**Bullwort *Ammi majus*:** A tall umbellifer (c 1 m), found mainly on waste ground or tips. Scattered throughout the county, noted at Swannington.

**Galingale and Pale Galingale *Cyperus longus* & *Cyperus eragrostis*:** An ornamental sedge, native mainly in the south near the coast but now used as an ornamental. *C. eragrostis* is an introduced species but occasionally escapes and noted at Donington Services on the M1.

**Greater Quaking Grass *Briza maxima*:** A very attractive plant but unfortunately an occasional escape, it was seen at Overseal.

**Small Cat's-tail *Phleum bertoloni*:** An interesting little grass whose taxonomy seems to present a problem to taxonomists as to whether it is a species or a subspecies. Specimens were found at Newtown Linford and Cold Overton Park Wood.

**Eric Webster**

## OTHER RECORDS

### Records have also been received for:

Ants, aphids, barklice, caddisflies, centipedes, harvestmen, molluscs, woodlice, mites, mosses, lichens, liverworts and fungi, lacewings, mayflies, solitary bees & wasps and spiders.

## WEATHER

July 2017 was an extremely contrasting one with the first half being very summery but with the second half more like autumn at times! Average daytime temperatures registered 21.5°C and average night time figures were logged 13.3°C with both of these values being close to long term overall norm of 17.4°C. It also ended up being a very wet month with the final total for the month being 88 mm at Mountsorrel which is 50% above the long term average. July however actually contained 15 completely dry days and most of the rain fell on just six dates. Overall sunshine totals were 15% below normal with just 158 hours of sunshine being logged at Mountsorrel. It was the dullest July since 2010. The month was breezy at times especially in the second half with gusts exceeding 33 mph.

The contrast between the two halves of July could not have been more stark. The first half was a continuation of the very summery June we had experienced. The first 18 days saw the usual average afternoon temperature of 22°C being exceeded on every day except two dates. The hottest day was the 6th when 28°C was recorded with night time temperatures dropping no lower than 16.6°C the month's warmest night. 110 hours of sunshine was recorded in the first 18 days or 70% of the monthly total. The sunniest day saw the sun shine for 14.3 hours, nearly the maximum possible. Only 10 mm of rain were recorded in this period. High pressure to the east helped to pump up very warm air from tropical regions giving us both frequent very warm days and mild humid nights. The last eleven days however gave us very different weather as the jet stream returned southwards over southern England and gave us a very windy, wet and cool second period. Low pressures arrived from the Atlantic with great frequency giving us large amounts of

rainfall and strong westerly winds. Almost the entire month's rainfall of 77 mm fell in the last third of the month. During this period, afternoon temperatures failed to reach average on *any* day! So July brought us a complete reversal in fortunes from summer in the first half to almost autumn in the second.

August once again proved to be a rather disappointing month weather wise being cooler and duller than average and this is a trend that August has set in recent years with August last year 2016 and August 2013 being the only two above average in the last 10 years! Afternoon maximum temperatures were logged at 20.2°C more than 1°C below normal while the night time figure of 12.4°C was a fraction above normal thanks to the many cloudy humid nights. The overall mean of 16.3°C was 0.3°C below the long term average. The rainfall total of 61 mm was close to normal for this month in Mountsorrel but considerably more than this fell in the higher more shower prone parts of our region. Having said this 56 mm of this total fell in just five days and, indeed, 18 days of the month were dry. The sunshine total reached 172 hours which was the expected figure.

The month started on a cool note with lots of heavy rain indeed 40 mm had fallen by the 10th with the wettest day being the 8th with 22 mm recorded. The jet stream settled over us and brought in a string of Atlantic depressions and cool conditions. Winds reached a peak on the 3rd with a gust of 40 mph very close to gale force. After the 10th the weather generally became drier and temperatures began to pick up a little. The third week was the warmest with temperatures peaking at 26.2°C the month's highest figure but the warmth was only temporary and the final day of the month saw a maximum of 14°C and a minimum, the month's coldest, of just 6°C.

The summer (Jun to Aug) as a whole saw 214 mm of rain or 10% above normal at Mountsorrel with 488 hours of sunshine which was 9% below normal. This made it the wettest and dullest summer since 2012. Temperatures for the summer however averaged 16.8°C which was 0.8°C above the norm. Unusually the first half of the summer was warmer and drier than the second. June saw temperatures nearly 2°C above normal with a five day heatwave between

the 17th and 21st of the month being the centrepiece of the heat with temperatures exceeding 27°C each day. The first half of July was also good but the weather changed on the 18th. After this date the jet stream, which was running north of the country leaving us in mild and sunny conditions, slipped south and brought with it cooler and damper conditions for much of the rest of summer. The peak of the school holidays at the beginning of August saw some of the worst of the summer and it was not until the third week that the weather improved again.

September 2017 was the wettest in my 20 years of records and it was also cooler and duller than average. Many recent Septembers have resembled summer months and indeed this was only the seventh occasion since the year 2000 that September has had below average temperature and sunshine figures and above average rainfall. Afternoon temperatures averaged 17.4°C this was 1°C below normal. The month's highest temperature was just 21°C recorded on the 4th and again we have exceeded this figure every year in the last twenty years. The large amounts of cloud and damp weather however did ensure that the nights were mainly mild. Indeed the coldest night I recorded was logged at 5°C on the 22nd but the average figure was 10.6°C slightly above normal. There were no air or ground frosts recorded. The frequency of rainfall was the month's most striking feature with 95.6 mm being logged which was 60% above normal. In addition unlike many previous months the rain was spread over 24 days with just six being completely dry. The wettest day was the 25th when 26.2 mm was logged at Mountsorrel. Unsurprisingly sunshine totals were also very low. Only 115 hours was logged for the month which was 15% below normal. Low pressure dominating was the result of all these disappointing conditions. Storm Aileen was the most significant of these and was the first named storm of the year and arrived on September 12th. It gave gusts of wind up to 55 mph at East Midlands Airport but thankfully we avoided too much damage. High pressure completely passed us by this time around except for temporary ridges that soon got pushed away by the strong jet stream. So a month's weather to forget in many respects. Let's hope we get

some fine and warm spells that October has quite frequently blessed us with in recent years.

**Phil Morrish**

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We are grateful to them all.

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*It is much appreciated if the records of different 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.*