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## OUR THANKS GO TO RETIRING *HERITAGE* WRITERS

After this edition of *Heritage*, two of our writers feel that it is time to step down – **Peter Gamble** on Butterflies and **Howard Bradshaw** on Other Insects. We are very grateful to them both for their expertise over many years and their willingness to share their considerable knowledge with the rest of us.

In future, Helen Shacklock will be writing up the Butterfly records and Steve Woodward and Helen Ikin will attempt to summarise the Other Insects. Tony Onions, Hazel Graves, Graham and Anona Finch, Jim Graham and Bas Forgham will continue to apply themselves to the write-ups and the Plant report will appear at intervals. We would like to have reports on Fungi, River Flies, Molluscs and Bryophytes if anyone feels like volunteering to write them!

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Please give our dedicated scribes something to write about by sending in your records each quarter – deadline dates are 15th day of April, July, October and January.

The essential facts are the four Ws – What species; Where it was; When it was seen and Who saw it. Plus an idea of the quantity seen.

Other interesting details help to make the reports more readable. In past issues there was a continuing saga about the exploits of a Water Vole named Arthur!

Records can be sent in by three methods,

1. on recording sheets - paper ones available at indoor meetings or from Helen Ikin and digital recording sheets by email.
2. on spreadsheets – either on paper or by email.
3. hand written on sheets of paper.

Bear in mind that the records go to different writers so it is appreciated if the different sections are on separate sheets of paper.

If digital spreadsheets are used, everything can be on the same one as the records can be sorted into sections on the computer.

## CLASSIFIED RECORDS

### MAMMALS

**Hedgehogs** were being fed in gardens in Cropston and Barrow upon Soar and have been seen in two gardens in Quorn where PJD has up to three individuals recorded on her trail camera. Squashed Hedgehogs were noted on roads in Groby, Quorn, Shepshed, Ryhall and at Markfield where JW noted a road casualty as late as 24th November.

**Molehills** were recorded at Swithland, Barrowden, Sheepy, Sutton Cheney (along the Ashby Canal), Rothley Station, Woodhouse, Wykin, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Cropston, Wartnaby and Swinford. DAP noted that the Mole activity was near the stream at Swithland during the dry weather of the third quarter.

DAP reported Pipistrelles **Bats** in his Swithland garden and hunting around the Alders as late as mid-November and ATO and JG had unidentified bats over their gardens in Loughborough and Holwell.

DAP got as close as three feet from a **Brown Hare** near Swithland and it did not move away. Hares were also noted at Knossington, Bradgate Park, Sutton Cheney and Grimston. Live **Rabbit** were noted at Horninghold, Rothley, Bradgate Park, Wartnaby, Ratcliffe Culey, Barnsdale Hall Hotel gardens (a rabbit paradise) and at Swithland. Road casualties were seen at Cossington and on the A60 in Loughborough. Signs of Rabbits, holes or droppings, were recorded at Thurcaston, Croxton Kerrial, Wykin, Swinford and Seaton.

**Grey Squirrel** were seen at Twycross, Rothley, Barrowden, Wartnaby and Horninghold, and on several occasions in ATO's Loughborough garden, sometimes vandalising the bird feeder.

ATO's cat brought in a live **Wood Mouse** on 11 August and as it appeared unharmed, the cat was persuaded to release it. Another one was not so lucky and was consumed by the cat on 14 September and later regurgitated! PJD's Quorn Wood Mouse was caught on the trail camera coming out of the Hedgehog feeding box on several occasions.

The only record of **Brown Rat** is of one squashed on the road at Sheepy Magna on 11 July.

**Red Foxes** were found dead on a road near Melton Mowbray, on the A47 near Uppingham and on the Rothley bypass. There was a strong smell of Fox near Bescaby. Live animals were seen at Horninghold and The Brand and two were heard whimpering in a Groby garden in late September. One fine specimen was hunting on the road verge at Tilton on the Hill on 22 September. Two Foxes were caught on the camera trap visiting two separate gardens in Quorn.

Holes have been found in Maple Road and Willow Road in Loughborough that look like the work of a **Badger**. In Swithland, Badgers were digging on lawns to find worms in the dry spell and the contents of dung pits showed that they were eating mainly cereals. In PJD's Quorn garden Badgers were seen on the camera trap during July and August but not in September. In early August three Badgers were seen on the nature reserve at Holwell, one adult and two younger ones. Two cubs were seen on roads near Waltham on the Wolds in mid-September, dung pits were seen near Uppingham and in Bradgate Park and a road casualty was reported from Bringhurst. There were excavations at Ryhall on a roadside bank with the large earth piles characteristic of Badgers.

Near Cropston Leys in October, DAP noticed a Kestrel hovering over a **Stoat** which was chasing a Rabbit in a circle – it eventually caught the Rabbit and the Kestrel flew away.

**Muntjac** were seen near Swithland Reservoir by PHG on 29 September and on two dates by DAP at Swithland Triangle where they seemed unconcerned by the traffic. Male Muntjac in



*Muntjac Deer © Steve Woodward*

particular are very confident and may not back down to traffic and seem more likely than females to be hit by cars.

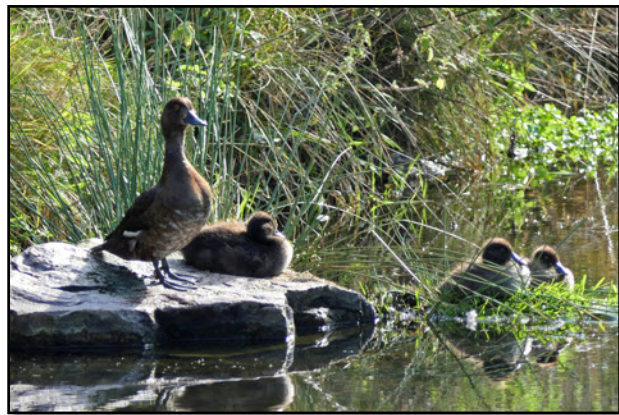
Helen Ikin

## BIRDS

### July to September

Small numbers of **Mute Swans** were at most local waters but the only post-breeding flocks noted were at Swithland Reservoir with maxima of 119 on 31 August.

Cropston Reservoir held the largest numbers of **Greylag Goose** with maximum of 267 on 9 September. The only other site with a three-figure count was Swithland Reservoir with 162 on 10 August. Double-figure counts of **Canada Goose** occurred at five waters with the highest coming from Cropston Reservoir with 209 noted on 9 September. The best count elsewhere was 154 at Swithland Reservoir on the 18th. **Egyptian Goose** were reported from two sites; a pair was at Cropston Reservoir on both 28 July and 4 August, and a pair with five young was at Barrow upon Soar Gravel Pits on 12 July. Records of **Mandarin Duck** in the quarter came from five locations but the highest counts came from Cropston Reservoir peaking at 89 on 26 August. The first returning **Wigeon** was a single female that appeared at Watermead CP South on 6 July. A minimum of 50 were at Swithland Reservoir on 29 September. **Gadwall** was reported from four sites. Post-breeding flocks did not begin to build up until September. The highest count of the quarter was 79 at Watermead CP North on 7 September. The first returning **Teal** was a group of three at Cropston Reservoir on 5 August rising to 15 on the 20th. The highest count for the period was 52 at Swithland Reservoir on 18 September. Double-figure counts of **Mallard** came from seven sites with the highest being: 130 at Watermead CP North on 7 September, 81 on the River Lin at Bradgate Park on 14 August and 31 at both Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs on 9 July and 18 September respectively. Up to four female **Pintail** were at Swithland Reservoir in September. An eclipse drake **Garganey** was found at Kelham Bridge on 23 September. Small numbers of Shoveler were at three sites in September. After a single **Pochard** at Swithland



*Tufted Ducks © Jim Graham*

Reservoir on 10 August, four were at Groby Pool on the 27th. Records of female **Tufted Duck** with ducklings came from three sites. The largest post-breeding flock was 87 at Swithland Reservoir on 10 August. A single Common Scoter was at the same site on 3 August whilst a single Goldeneye managed to sneak into this period's accounts with a female noted at Groby Pool on 29 September.

Records of **Red-legged Partridge** came from just two locations and **Grey Partridge** at just one whilst there were no records of **Pheasant**.

The only records of **Cormorants** came from two sites, Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs, with the maxima both occurring in August; 58 on the 31st at the former and 47 on the 29th at the latter. Counts of **Little Egrets** came from ten sites, most frequently at Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs. Double-figure counts came from five locations with maxima of: at least 30 at Cossington Meadows on 5 July; 20 at Thornton Res on the 12th; 18 at Watermead CP South on 15 September; 17 at Cropston Reservoir on 3 August, and 12 at Swithland Reservoir on the 21st. Up to three Great White Egret were very mobile in the area and noted throughout the quarter. There were two double-figure counts of **Grey Heron** with peaks of 13 at Watermead CP North on 18 September and 11 at Swithland Reservoir on the 18th.

**Little Grebe** was at five sites with breeding confirmed at two. Eight adults were at Thornton Reservoir on 7 August and six were at Watermead CP North on 7 September. A pair was seen with four juveniles at Swithland Reservoir on the 18th. The highest counts of **Great Crested Grebe** came from Cropston Reservoir peaking at 36 on two dates in August.

A juvenile **Black-necked Grebe** was at Thornton Reservoir on 19 July.

Records of **Red Kite** came from eight locations, mainly of one or two with three at Burton Lazars on 3 September. **Sparrowhawk** was recorded from nine widespread sites. A male and female were daily visitors to JG's Cropston garden. Nearby, a pair was seen to be taking prey items into a wooded area at Cropston Reservoir with another pair regular in ATO's Loughborough garden. Records of **Buzzard** were widespread and came from 12 locations. A juvenile begging was noted at Cropston Reservoir and display was seen over a Bradgate Park spinney. A single Osprey was drifting east over Cropston Reservoir on 17 July. **Kestrel** was reported from 14 locations, mostly of singles with a pair and two juveniles noted at Cossington Meadows on 18 July and a family party of three at Bradgate Park on 27 September. **Hobby** was reported from eight sites with birds hawking insects and chasing hirundines being regular noted. The only juvenile was noted at Swithland Reservoir on 18 September. The resident pair of **Peregrine** at Leicester Cathedral managed to fledge two juveniles and the family party was seen regularly through the quarter. Sightings were widespread in Charnwood.



*Juvenile Peregrine © Jim Graham*

A juvenile **Water Rail** was seen at Cossington Meadows on 19 July and two adults at Watermead CP North on 7 September.

Records of **Moorhen** came from eight waters. The highest count was 46 at Watermead CP North on 7 September. The only three-figure counts of **Coot** came from Swithland Reservoir peaking at 196 on 27 August. A passage juvenile **Little Ringed Plover** was at Cropston Reservoir

on 31 August with up to two **Ringed Plover** at the same site between the 23rd and 25th. Another was there on 22 September. On the same day, four **Golden Plover** headed south over Bradgate Park memorial during a migration watch. Post-breeding flocks of **Lapwing** started to build during September with the best total being 158 at Hicks Lodge on the 29th. A single **Dunlin** was at Cropston Reservoir on 12 August, with four there on the 27th whilst another was at Thornton reservoir on the 31st. The first returning **Snipe** was at Birstall Meadows on 18 July with records from four other sites in the period peaking at just nine at Cropston reservoir on 9 September. The only **Black-tailed Godwit** record was of four at Cossington Meadows on 5 July. **Common Sandpiper** were at five sites, mainly of one or two but four were at Cropston Reservoir on 5 August. The first returning **Green Sandpiper** were two at Birstall Meadows on 6 July increasing to five on 9 August. Up to four were at Cropston Reservoir between 12 August and the end of the month. A single was there on 22 September with one at Kelham Bridge the following day. All **Greenshank** records came from Cropston Reservoir during August starting with two on the 9th. Three were seen on two dates, the 13th and 23rd. The last was one on the 26th. A Wood Sandpiper was at Cossington Meadows on 9 August. The only **Redshank** records for the quarter came from Cropston Reservoir with singles on 10 July and between 23 September and the 25th.

Few gull records were received the only three-figure counts of **Black-headed Gull** came from Cropston Reservoir with maxima of 350 on 14 July. Two individuals were noted by their rings. The first on 14 July was a 12-year-old bird originally ringed in Poland in 2006. The other was identified as a 14-year-old bird first seen at the same site on 8 August, also seen a few days later in Bradgate Park, was originally ringed in Norway. An adult **Mediterranean Gull** was located at Cropston Reservoir on 14 July whilst a juvenile was found at Watermead CP South on 29 August. The only report of **Common Gull** was of two at Thornton Reservoir on 3 September. Counts of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** came from four sites with the highest count being 109 at Cropston Reservoir on 30 September. The only counts of **Herring Gull** came from the same location peaking at 30 on 14 July. Third-winter

plumage **Caspian Gulls** were seen in August, at Watermead CP South on the 3rd and Cropston Reservoir on the 20th.

Most tern records came from Cropston Reservoir including a juvenile **Black Tern** on 26 August. An adult Sandwich Tern found on the railings at the same location on 20 July was also seen the following day. Counts of **Common Tern** peaked at Cropston Reservoir with a minimum of 50 on 12 August. A number were colour-ringed juveniles from the LROS Tern project at Watermead CP Birstall. Two **Arctic Terns** were at Cropston Reservoir on 22 August.

The only **Stock Dove** records came from Bradgate Park with four being the best count. The highest count of **Wood Pigeon** was over 200 at Cropston Reservoir on 12 August and the largest count of **Collared Dove** was just seven at Holwell on 14 July.

There were no reports of **Barn Owl** and most **Little Owl** records were from Bradgate Park as were **Tawny Owl**.

**Swift** was recorded from 13 locations in the quarter, the highest count being a party of just 21 going over Groby Pool on 4 July. The last report was of three over the same local on 9 September.

One or two **Kingfisher** were reported from six sites. **Green Woodpecker** was noted at ten locations, with juveniles at two, whilst records of **Great Spotted Woodpecker** came from eight.

As usual, only small numbers of **Magpie** and **Jay** were noted. The highest count of **Jackdaw** was 50 at Bradgate Park on 20 August whilst there were 53 **Rook** at Kegworth on the 1st. **Carrion Crow** was recorded at just four sites. **Raven** was the most widely reported seen in 12 locations with five, probably a family party, over Swithland Reservoir on 25 September the highest count.

**Goldcrest** were reported from three sites, whilst small numbers of **Blue, Great, and Coal Tits** were widespread. **Marsh Tit** were noted at Groby Pool and Cloud Wood. The only **Willow Tit** was seen at Oakthorpe Flashes on 29 September.

Small numbers of **Skylark** were recorded in small numbers with no count reaching double figures. Over 100 **Sand Martin** seen were at

Cropston Reservoir on 12 August, with double-figure counts from three other sites in the month. Active **House Martin** nests were still being noted during July and August and the best count was of 100 at Cropston Reservoir on 12 August brought down by a storm with over 500 **Swallow** on the same day. Birds were noted at ten other sites with post breeding flocks of 30 or more at four.

Small flocks or family parties of **Long-tailed Tit** were widely reported, the highest counts being 39 at Bradgate Park on 13 August and 35 at Groby Pool on the 29th.

**Chiffchaff** were common, widespread and still singing through the quarter, with the highest count being six at three sites. Most records of **Willow Warbler** were of single but three were noted at Cropston Reservoir during August. **Blackcap** were located at just two sites with a family party of five in Bradgate Park on 14 August the best count. Single **Lesser Whitethroat** were found at Bradgate Park and Groby Pool whilst one or two **Common Whitethroat** at the former site plus Anstey, Newton Burgoland and Thornton Reservoir. No **Grasshopper** or **Sedge or Cetti's Warbler** were recorded whilst **Reed Warbler** was found at just two sites, Bishop Meadow and Thornton Reservoir.

There were few records of **Nuthatch** but four were noted calling at Bradgate Park on 14 August. The only **Treecreeper** reported was one at Thornton Reservoir on 3 September. The best count of **Wren** was three at Bradgate Park, Kegworth and Oakthorpe Flashes.

Small flocks of **Starling** were starting to form during July but the largest group was just 18 at Holwell on 28 August.

There were few notable records of thrushes and five **Blackbird** was the best count. **Song Thrush** was only reported from Thornton Reservoir whilst **Mistle Thrush** was noted at Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir. There were no reports of the winter thrushes, **Fieldfare** and **Redwing**.

One or two **Spotted Flycatcher** were noted at just three sites during the quarter, successful breeding being confirmed by a family party of four at Bradgate Park on 14 August.



Redstart © Jim Graham

Small numbers of **Robin** were reported, six at Cropston Reservoir on 30 September was the highest count. Bradgate Park must be the most reliable site for autumn passage **Redstart** and true to form, a juvenile male was near the Anstey gate between 12 and 23 August. A female Stonechat was located at Woodhouse on 4 September but there were no **Whinchat** or **Wheatear** reported in the period.

A few **Duncock** were noted in small numbers, all from gardens, whilst the only double-figure counts of **House Sparrow** also came from gardens with maxima of 20 at both Holwell and Loughborough. There was a record of a single **Tree Sparrow** at Sproxton on 19 July.

Single **Yellow Wagtail** were noted at Cropston Reservoir, Cossington Meadows and Sproxton whilst **Grey Wagtail** was found at six sites with six at Swithland Reservoir on 21 September the best count. The only count of note for **Pied Wagtail** was seven at Cropston Reservoir on 20 August.

All **Meadow Pipit** records were reported in September including migrating flocks totalling 703 over Bradgate Park on the 22nd. A single **Tree Pipit** was at the same site on 5 July.

There were few **Chaffinch** records with 12 the highest count at Bradgate Park and the only reports of **Greenfinch** came from gardens in small numbers. The largest counts of **Goldfinch** were 20 at Holwell on 11 September and 18 at Bradgate Park on 20 August. **Linnet** records came from four locations with a minimum of 50 at Kegworth on 1 August the best count. A flock of 17 returning autumn **Siskin** was recorded at Bradgate Park on 22 September but there were no records of **Lesser Redpoll**. One or two **Bullfinch** were at three locations whilst the best

count of **Yellowhammer** was six at Bradgate Park on 20 August, some still in song. Records of single **Reed Bunting** came from four locations during the period.

Jim Graham

## October to December

The most **Mute Swan** seen together was 112 at Watermead Park on 14 November but Swithland Reservoir held 87 on 17 December. On 27 and 28 October small groups of **Pink-footed Geese** were noted flying over Bradgate Park. The groups totalled 35 birds. The only site with double-figure counts of **Greylag Geese** was Albert Village Lake where there were 27 on 11 November. There were slightly more **Canada Geese** around, mostly just into double figures, but there were 140 at Queen Elizabeth Wood, Nornanton-le-Heath on 26 November. An unusual record was of ten **Brent Geese** flying over Bradgate Park on 28 October – a scarce winter and passage visitor to the county.

On 9 November two **Ruddy Shelduck** were seen at Swithland Reservoir, however one was probably a **Ruddy Shelduck** x **Cape Shelduck** hybrid. Two **Shelduck** were regularly noted at Cropston Reservoir in late October and early November and on 17 November three were at Watermead CP South. A few **Mandarin** were seen throughout the quarter at Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs with a maximum count of five on 22 October at the latter.

Only two sites had large numbers of **Wigeon** these being Longmoor Lake with 140 on 26 November and Watermead CP North where there were 88 on 14 November. Most **Gadwall** reported were singles but Watermead CP North had 137 on 18 October and 190 on 14 November. It was a poor winter for **Teal** with only three records in double figures, 12 at Albert Village, 19 at Watermead Park and 23 at Kelham Bridge. The only **Mallard** numbers of any significance were from Watermead CP North where there were 123 on 18 October and 117 on 14 November. Up to three **Pintail**, including a drake, were seen in late October and early November at Swithland Reservoir and Cossington Meadows. **Shoveler** were only reported from Longmoor Lake and Watermead CP North where there were 17 on 14 November.

There were two **Red-crested Pochard** at Albert Village on 11 November and a pale female was on the river in Bradgate Park during November. The only double-figure counts of **Pochard** were ten at Groby Pool on 15 December and 13 at Albert Village on 9 December and 22 on 11 November. By far the biggest concentrations of **Tufted Duck** were at Watermead CP North where the maximum count was 132 on 14 November. What could have been the same female **Goldeneye** was seen at Groby Pool, Thornton Reservoir and Cropston Reservoir sporadically throughout the quarter. Three **Goosander** were at Watermead CP North on 21 November. A female **Ruddy Duck**, now a rarity after the national cull, was at Albert Village on 9 December.

The only records in the game bird section are a **Red Legged Partridge** at Longmoor Lake and six **Pheasants** at Cropston Reservoir.

A juvenile **Gannet** flew over Ibstock on 2 October. There were 69 **Cormorants** at Watermead CP North on 14 November, a week later the numbers had built up to 134 at Cropston Reservoir. One or two **Little Egret** were noted at around a dozen sites but there were 11 at Swithland Reservoir on 16 October. **Great White Egret** were to be found regularly at Swithland Reservoir throughout the quarter with three there on 16 October. Others were occasionally seen at Groby Pool and one over Bradgate Park. It is a sign of the times that **Grey Heron** were the least reported of the egrets with only six observations, Watermead CP North having the highest number with nine on 14 November. A **Glossy Ibis** spent some time at Donisthorpe during early October.

**Little Grebes** were present at most suitable waters with ten at Albert Village on 9 December. Cropston Reservoir held by far the majority of **Great Crested Grebe**, numbers peaked there at 45 on 5 November.

**Red Kite** were only reported from Rutland and the Melton area with no more than two together. A **Marsh Harrier** flew north over Bradgate Park on 28 October. There were fewer **Sparrowhawk** records than usual, only three of which were not in member's gardens. As usual **Buzzard** were widespread across the area with a maximum of five over Watermead CP North

on 18 October. There were slightly more **Kestrel** reports than Buzzard but no more than two birds together. A late **Hobby** flew over Ibstock on 11 October. **Peregrine** were seen over Bradgate Park and Leicester where a pair and a juvenile were around the Leicester Cathedral on 24 October.

**Water Rail** were found at Thornton Reservoir, Groby Pool, Watermead Park, Cossington Meadows where there were three on 21 November, and Kelham Bridge where up to three could be seen throughout the quarter. There were fewer **Moorhen** noted than the previous species but in greater numbers, Watermead CP North holding 64 on 18 October. These numbers were eclipsed by **Coot** at Albert Village with counts of 172 on 9 December and 196 on 11 November.

The only mention of **Golden Plover** was of four birds over Bradgate Park on 7 October. It was a poor period for **Lapwing** with the maximum counts being 46 at Cropston Reservoir on 5 November and 48 at Watermead CP North a week later. A lone **Dunlin** was at Cossington Meadows on 22 October. **Snipe** were only found at Kelham Bridge, Thornton Reservoir and Groby Pool where there were seven on 30 December, the highest number reported. A **Woodcock** was flushed at Charnwood Lodge on 31 December. Three **Curlew** were heard calling at Cropston Reservoir before flying off on 28 October. The same site had the only **Green Sandpiper** sightings of the quarter with a maximum of three on 9 December. A **Greenshank** was found at Thornton Reservoir on 12 October.

Albert Village Lake appeared to have the larger numbers of the gull species. Cropston Reservoir had 121 **Black Headed Gull** on 11 November but Albert Village had 123 on 9 December. On the same day there were nine **Common Gull** there. There were 280 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** on 11 November and 310 on 9 December. Also on 11 November there were 15 **Greater Black-backed Gull**. The only **Yellow Legged Gull** identified was one at Cossington Meadows on 30 November.

There was just one report of **Stock Dove**, four at Dean's Lane on 21 October, surprisingly this equals the number in my garden at the end

of the year. **Woodpigeon** peaked at 542, noted flying over Bradgate Park on 21 October. **Collared Dove** were probably under reported as three in a garden at Loughborough was the highest total.

There was only one **Barn Owl** report, a single at Cossington Meadows on 9 November. Two **Little Owl** were calling in Bradgate Park on 24 October and another was calling regularly throughout December at Cropston. The same village also had a **Tawny Owl** calling in December. A **Short-eared Owl** and sometimes two were well watched at Longmoor Wood from November into the New Year.

**Kingfishers** were to be found at Thornton Reservoir, Groby Pool, Watermead Park, Cropston Reservoir and Kelham Bridge where due to the close views of perching birds photographers from throughout the midlands have been visiting!

Four **Green Woodpecker** were noted in Bradgate Park on 17 October with singles seen or heard at Cropston Reservoir, Groby Pool, Longmoor Wood and Waltham on the Wolds. **Great Spotted Woodpecker** were found in similar areas but also at garden feeding station visitors.

The only corvid records of note were five **Jay** in Bradgate Park on 2 October. There was a group of 89 **Carrion Crow** feeding on Swan Mussels by the shore at Cropston Reservoir on 16 October. **Ravens** were noted in nine different areas, but never more than two together. Two were seen over Thurmaston shopping Centre on 26 October. Surprisingly no one mentioned **Rooks**.

**Goldcrest** were to be found at six different sites with six in The Outwoods on 21 October being the maximum count. Apart from garden sightings, **Blue Tit** and **Great Tit** were widespread with 11 of the former at Beacon Hill on 21 October and up to ten of the latter on the feeders at Kelham Bridge throughout the quarter. Most **Coal Tit** observations were of garden birds but there were five in Bradgate Park on 26 October. Unfortunately, the only place where **Willow Tits** were reported was Kelham Bridge where one or two were seen spasmodically throughout the quarter. **Marsh Tit** were noted slightly more with birds at Groby

Pool, The Outwoods and Beacon Hill.

One, possibly two, **Woodlark** flew over Bradgate Park on 7 October. Ten days later, 105 **Skylarks** were noted migrating over the same area. Other sightings of Skylarks were limited to single-figure counts at Groby and Cropston.

Seven **Swallow** passed over Bradgate Park on the same day as the Woodlark. Eight **House Martin** were over Bradgate Park on 2 October, one was seen at Quorn on the 5th but the last ones were seen over Swithland Reservoir on the 16th when there were three.

The most **Long-tailed Tits** together were 12 at Cropston Reservoir on 17 November. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was at Groby Pool on 17 October and another was at Watermead CP South on 21 and 22 October. On the same day there was a **Chiffchaff** at the latter site. This could have been a late summer visitor but a single winter bird was at Cropston Reservoir on 17 November and two were at Quorn and Barrow Sewage Works on 31 December.

**Nuthatches** were seen at a dozen sites with one or two regularly at Groby Pool in November and December. **Treecreeper** were only noted at four sites with five in Jubilee Wood, the Outwoods on 21 October. The most **Wren** together were six in Bradgate Park on 26 October. Around 200 **Starling** were on the roof tops in the Barrow upon Soar area on 2 October. Up to 800 were at Cossington Meadows at the end of November and 1561 passed over Bradgate Park on 28 October.

Single male **Ring Ouzel** were seen at Bradgate Park on 7 and 21 October. Twelve **Blackbirds** were in a Cropston garden on 27 December. Around 2300 passed over Bradgate Park in October with 849 on the 7th. During the same period around 1600 **Redwings** passed over.

There was only one mention of **Song Thrush** and **Mistle Thrush** only totalled eight birds. A **Stonechat** was at Kelham Bridge on 10 October and two were seen at Cossington Meadows during October and November. A pair were near the ruins in Bradgate Park on 28 October.

The most **House Sparrow** seen together were 20 in a garden at Loughborough in November.



**June to December**

We have only a few sightings for this report but, very reassuringly, they come from different areas of the county.

**Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*:** in the River Gwash at Ryhall in Rutland HI & SFW recorded one swimming on 8 August. The Gwash is a tributary of the River Welland and was probably, in the past, a larger river than it is now. The upper reaches near Oakham were captured by the construction of Rutland Water. Nevertheless it is a faster river with more sparkle than the rather sluggish Welland and provides a home for the Brown Trout *Salmo fario* and the Grayling *Thymallus thymallus*. On 15 August the same two recorders found another Grass Snake swimming in the Ashby Canal near Shackerstone. Finally HI collected the sloughed skin of a Grass Snake from the churchyard at Wartnaby. The skin was in the exact spot where a live individual was seen in 2015.

**Common Toad *Bufo bufo*:** sadly, we have only one sighting for this amphibian, HI & SFW found one by the GU Canal at Loughborough.

**Common Frog *Rana temporaria*:** SFW & HI record finding a one at Thurcaston on 18 July and SFW & GH found another at Cossington Meadows on 4 August. At North Farm on the Shenton Estate, HI & SFW found several specimens by a pond on 13 August. On 6 July, ATO reports finding a medium-sized frog on the back wall of his house in Loughborough. It turned out that there were actually two specimens in residence – a large one about 8 cm in length and a smaller one of 5 or 6 cm. These two frogs were living in a tangle of briars and Ivy near the back of the house and were using an old saucepan full of water as a swimming pool when they became active in the evenings. These two frogs were seen until mid-November when one of them died and the other seems to have gone into hibernation.

**Tony Onions**

A late **Yellow Wagtail** was over Bradgate Park on 7 October. Single **Grey Wagtails** were noted at Grace Dieu, Groby Pool, Kelham Bridge, Quorn and my own Hugglescote garden and two were in Bradgate Park on 3 November. At least 50 **Pied Wagtail** were at Quorn and Barrow upon Soar Sewage Farm on the last day of the quarter. A few **Meadow Pipit** were around Cropston Reservoir and Groby Pool but just over a hundred birds were over Bradgate Park on 7 October.



Goldfinch © Jim Graham

Approximately 300 **Chaffinch** were over Bradgate Park in a few days in mid-October. Two **Brambling** were seen at Seagrave on 25 November. There was only one **Greenfinch** record which was eight birds in Bradgate Park on 26 October, which means seven in my own Hugglescote garden on 14 October was a relevant record. Thirty **Goldfinch** were regularly in a Cropston garden during December. A few **Siskin** were around but migrants over Bradgate Park numbered around 40 in October. In amongst this flock were 88 **Linnets** and seven others were at Cropston Reservoir on 11 November. A flock of 280 **Lesser Redpoll** were in the area of Bradgate Park alongside the Reservoir on 22 December. There were 12 at Seagrave on 4 November. Two **Common Crossbill** were noted at Burrough on the Hill on 24 October. A total of 11 were over Bradgate Park on 7 October. There were three records of **Bullfinch** with a maximum of four at Groby Pool.

Thirty **Yellowhammers** were seen at Cropston Reservoir on 26 October and eight were at Twycross on Christmas Eve. A single **Reed Bunting** was at Groby Pool on 16 November.

**Bas Forgham**

## FISH (including CRAYFISH)

**White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*:** DAP reports that on 8 September, while carrying out routine autumn maintenance on the stream which runs through his garden in Swithland, he disturbed several of this species. It is reassuring to know that there is a reasonable population of these native crustaceans in this stream and that they survived the heatwave of the summer. They seem to have disappeared from the nearby River Lin in Bradgate Park, possibly as a result of crayfish plague brought in on fishing nets as there is no sign of the plague-carrying Signal Crayfish here, as yet.

**Eurasian or Northern Pike *Esox lucius*:** HI & SFW report finding the head of a Pike on the shoreline of Rutland Water near the grounds of Barnsdale Hall Hotel on 4 July. They remarked that the mouth was open showing rows of teeth reminding them of *Tyrannosaurus rex*! Certainly, the mouth of a Pike is fearsome – consisting of bone with a thin layer of skin and, not one, but several rows of teeth in both the upper and lower jaws. There are even more teeth on the tongue! Actually, the Pike is not alone in this feature – this is equally true of Salmonid fish like the Brown and Rainbow Trout. The recorders did not speculate on how the head came to be there; perhaps the victim of a predator, possibly one of the famous Rutland Water Ospreys.



Pike head © Steve Woodward

**Diamondback Sturgeon *Acipenser gueldenstaedti*:** there was a report in the “Angler’s Mail” of 7 August exploring how, during a fishing competition held on the Sutton Bonington stretch of the River Soar, an angler,

Adey Reynolds, hooked and landed a Sturgeon of 30 lbs. This gave his catch a total weight of over 40 lbs and consequently he won the competition. I do not have the precise date of the competition but likely to have been a Sunday towards the end of July. The fish would have been returned alive to the river. As a result of local enquiries, it seems that this fish first turned up in the river about four years ago and at that time it weighed about 23 lbs. No one knows where it came from but possibly it grew too big for a garden pond and was dumped by the owner or it may have been transferred (illegally) from a commercial fishery. In either case, it appears to have found its new home to its liking. Originally it would almost certainly have first seen the light of day in a fish farm in Eastern Europe where two species of Sturgeon, the Sterlet and the Diamondback, are commonly farmed. Neither species occurs naturally in the British Isles. The Diamondback grows to a length of over two metres and supposedly grows more rapidly than some other species: hence its popularity with commercial fish farmers who are rearing fish for the table. Generally speaking, Sturgeon do not have scales but they do have five rows of bony plates, known as scutes, running the length of the body. In the Diamondback these scutes are noticeably diamond shaped – hence the name.

In my view this is an important sighting. The Sturgeon family are a small but significant family of fish which are economically important as the source of caviar and taxonomically important as a “link” between the so-called Primitive Fish – the Sharks and Rays, and the bony fish such as Cod, Trout and Carp. Many species of Sturgeon are in difficulty and their survival is far from guaranteed. There is a lot more to be said about these strange and fascinating fish which have been around, virtually unchanged, since before the days of the dinosaurs. I plan to write a longer piece about these fish which I hope will be of interest to our members.

Tony Onions

## DRAGONFLIES and DAMSELFLIES

A full report for 2018 will appear in the next edition.

## July to September

We were right about the heatwave; it certainly continued well into this quarter and delivered a few noteworthy results. With just seven recorders we managed to push the total of moths recorded to over 6,600 individuals of 403 species, and one of the few times that species of micro moths outnumbered the macros at 214 to 179! The main difference in the weather from the last quarter was that there were more evenings where the temperature stayed muggy all night, hence more nights with over 100 species. With so many species, only a summary can be dealt with in this report. Starting with **Orange Swift *Trodia sylvina*** a single was caught at Groby and 45 (with many more scattered in the herbage) at Charnwood Lodge in August. Getting to the end of its flight period, **Map-winged Swift *Korscheltellus fusconebulosa*** was only seen at Charnwood Lodge in mid-August. The only other Swift species seen was **Ghost Moth *Hepialus humuli*** from Staunton Harold and Browns Hay both at the beginning of July.

September is generally recognised as the best month to search for the leaf mines of many species of micro moths a lot of which would prove difficult to identify if relying on the external characters of the adults. Altogether, a targeted effort produced 46 species that are easier to identify by their early feeding signs of leaf mines, leaf folds and leaf cones. Grange Wood provided a nice selection including ***Stigmella tiliae*** on Lime, ***S. microtheriella***, ***S. floslactella*** on Hazel, ***S. ulmivora*** on Elm, ***S. plagicolella*** on Blackthorn and ***S. lemniscella*** again on Elm, bringing the total to 14 species of *Stigmella*. Also four species of *Ectoedemia* came from Grange Wood ***E. argyropeza*** on Aspen, ***E. albifasciella*** and ***E. subbimaculella*** both on Oak and ***E. occultella*** on Birch, none of the above were confined to Grange Wood, but most were generally widespread. Adults of ***Morophaga choragella*** were attracted to light in Cloud Wood early in September and **Cork Moth *Nemapogon cloacella*** the same at Browns Hay in early June, both species early stages feed mainly in bracket fungi. Still in the same family, the *Tineidae*, but these species are more reliant

on animal material, fur, nests etc., as the larval host. Singles of ***Tinea trinotella*** were at Staunton Harold in early July, ***Monopis laevigella*** at Lount NR in early August and ***M. weaverella*** at Cloud Wood in early September, all to MV light. Back to the early feeding, signs of ***Bucculatrix thoracella*** on Lime, ***B. ulmella*** on Oak, both making very small, neat mines on their respective food plants, then by contrast the large brown untidy blotches of ***Gracillaria stigmatella*** on Ash. To identify any of the adult *Parornix* species dissection is necessary, yet relatively straightforward once the cones/folds are found on their preferred food plant. A total of four species of *Parornix* were found ***P. betulae*** on Birch, ***P. fagivora*** on Beech, ***P. anglicella*** on Hawthorn and ***P. devoniella*** on Hazel. With over 50 species of *Phyllonorycter* and 39 recorded in VC55 (most of them extremely difficult to identify by adult external characters alone) finding their feeding blotches on their preferred food plant is a much more enjoyable way to add them to site lists. A total of 15 species of *Phyllonorycter* was recorded this way, here are just a few: ***P. messaniella*** on Beech, ***P. cerasicolella*** on Cherry, ***P. corylifoliella*** on Hawthorn, ***P. maestingella*** on Beech, ***P. coryli*** on Hazel, ***P. esperella*** on Hornbeam, ***P. rajella*** and ***P. stettinensis*** on Alder. A high proportion of the “leaf miners” are really quite common and widespread, but rarely recorded due to similarities and variations of the adults, searching for the early feeding signs is a most gratifying way to spend autumn days. The **Horse-chestnut Leaf Miner *Cameraria ohridella*** was the most recorded micro moth and all from the distinctive circular brown blotches on our Horse-chestnut trees, some of which are almost completely brown with so many blotches. **Honeysuckle Moth *Ypsolopha dentella*** were seen in early August and then none thereafter. ***Y. scabrella***, ***Y. parenthasella***. ***Y. sequella*** and ***Y. vitella*** were mainly seen on the Charnwood Forest. The latter has only six previous records so this Cloud Wood record is quite significant.

Recorded from numerous sites **Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella*** seemed to be abundant with numbers into the 30's on several nights. A single ***Acrolepia autumnitella*** was at light in Cloud Wood early in September and both ***Argyresthia brockeella*** and ***A. goedartella*** were well recorded. Other *Argyresthia* species were

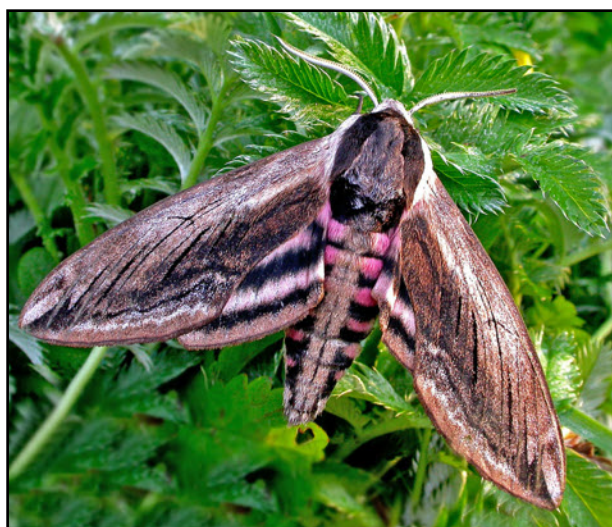
**A. pygmaeella** at Browns Hay, **A. retinella** at Staunton Harold and Charnwood Lodge, **Apple Fruit Moth A. conjugella** at Staunton Harold and Browns Hay and **A. albistria** from Cloud Wood, all at MV light. The **Pear Leaf Blister Moth *Leucoptera malifoliella*** was found at Long Whatton, Grange Wood and Charnwood Lodge on Apple and Hawthorn and ***Agonopterix nervosa*** was found at Lount NR and Charnwood Lodge, both early in August. The *Anacampsis* species are notoriously difficult to identify as adults, so a few individuals were taken from several sites for dissection and all turned out to be ***Anacampsis blattariella***. With just two previous records, ***Monochroa cytisella*** was found at Charnwood Lodge, where it seems well established and also at Staunton Harold, being one of few species that have Bracken as a food plant. An *Elachista* species attracted to light in Cloud Wood early in September was taken home and later identified as ***Elachista bisulcella***, this is another species with just six previous records. The only Plume moth recorded was a single **White Plume *Pterophorus pentadactyla*** at Staunton Harold in early July.

The *Tortricidae* is a large family of almost 400 species and 60 species were recorded this quarter, so getting to grips with this family is crucial. This can prove challenging as not all are as straightforward as the illustrations in the field guides would have you believe. Some of the trickier ones are the *Cnephasia* species and an assortment of these were retained for dissection, they turned out to be ***Eana incanana*** from Staunton Harold and Browns Hay, **Light Grey Tortrix *Cnephasia incertana*** also at Browns Hay and **Light Grey Tortrix *C. asseclana*** from Loddington. A single Pine-feeding ***Rhyacionia pinicolana*** was found at Charnwood Lodge towards the end of July.



*Rhyacionia pinicolana* © Graham Finch

Another large family with almost 200 species is the Pyraloidea, a total of 38 species were recorded this quarter and a few are mentioned here, **Lesser Wax Moth *Aphomia grisella*** a singleton from Staunton Harold in early July. Although recorded at other sites, Charnwood Lodge and Staunton Harold had the lion's share of records for ***Phycita roberella***, ***Acrobasis repandana***, ***A. advenella***, ***A. consociella*** and ***Euzophora pinguis***. Most of the regular Crambids, or Grass Moths did well plus **Brown China-mark *Elophila nymphaeata*** and **Water Veneer *Acentria ephemerella*** were both widespread, **Small China-mark *Cataclysta lemnata*** and **Ringed China-mark *Parapoynx stratiotata*** the same.



Privet Hawk-moth © Graham Finch

On to the macro moths, with 17 **Common Lutestring *Ochropacha duplaris*** found only at Charnwood Lodge in late July. Quite a surprise was a solitary **Oak Eggar *Lasiocampa quercus*** at Staunton Harold in early July. Out of the Hawk-moths, **Poplar Hawk-moth *Laothoe populi*** was the most reported and a single **Privet Hawk-moth *Sphinx ligustri*** was in the trap at Loddington in mid-July. **Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum*** was only seen in Quorn and several records of **Elephant Hawk-moth *Deilephila elpenor*** were scattered throughout. One of the most abundant moths seen was **Riband Wave *Idea aversata*** which comes in two forms, either with the central two bands filled in forming a solid dark central band or with just plain cross lines *f. remutata*. Adrian Russell our Lepidoptera County Recorder has asked us to try and record each form separately, and almost without exception *f. remutata* (plain cross lines) continues to be the more common.

The results for this quarter back this up quite nicely, with *f. remutata* having 58 and the banded form 28 records.

Despite operating moth traps in suitable habitat, particularly on the Charnwood Forest for **Clay Triple-lines** *Cyclophora linearia* none was seen, it has never been a common species but there are usually a few sightings. The only report of **Northern Spinach** *Eulithis populata* was of 31 individuals to light at Charnwood Lodge in late July. The Charnwood Forest is definitely the main stronghold for this species and last year it seemed to do quite well being seen on multiple nights and mostly well into double figures. I wonder if it is possible this species suffered from the hot, dry conditions as it pupates on the food plant, which is Bilberry, or at the base in litter. The pupae may well have just dried out, and it is very likely this has happened to many species, we shall see how it fares next year. Although there were less species of Pug moths, recorded ten opposed to 15 last quarter, the list included three that were missing from the last quarter. Several sightings of **Slender Pug** *Eupithecia tenuiata*, and singles of **Lime-speck Pug** *E. centaureata* and **Freyer's Pug** *E. intricata* came from Groby and Loddington respectively.



Lime-speck Pug © Graham Finch

Apart from June's records from Charnwood Lodge, **Tawny-barred Angle** *Macaria liturata* was only seen once more as a singleton at Browns Hay in early July, if this was the end of the first brood then there does not seem to have been a second brood for this year. The first **Dusky Thorn** *Ennomos fuscantaria* to show were at Lount NR in early August and the last in early September at Charnwood Lodge, so a shortened flight period for this species. It was

nice to see **Satin Beauty** *Deileptenia ribeata* at two sites, Browns Hay and Charnwood Lodge early July, right in the middle of its flight period. The same two sites produced the only records of another Pine feeder **Barred Red** *Hylaea fascaria*. Lount NR had the only records of **Sallow Kitten** *Furcula furcula* with nine and a single **Chocolate-tip** *Clostera curtula* both in early August. **Straw Dot** *Rivula sericealis* was extremely widely reported. Singles of **White Satin** *Leucoma salicis* were at Loddington and Staunton Harold, and **Black Arches** *Lymantria monacha* continues to march on, at most sites on the Charnwood Forest, plus Lount NR and a total of 13 at Staunton Harold. The only **Vapourer** *Orygia antiqua* was of a daytime sighting at Cotes in mid-August and **Cinnabar** *Tyria jacobaeae* seemed quite scarce with very few records.



Gold Spot © Steve Woodward

An easily overlooked moth, **Pinion-streaked Snout** *Schranksia costaestrigalis* had singles at Charnwood Lodge and Cloud Wood which were the first reported since 2011. The most recorded species this year has been **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma* all in single figures and mainly as singletons, but extremely widespread and has been all summer. Also fairly widespread was **Gold Spot** *Plusia festucae* and **Marbled White Spot** *Deltote pygarga* was restricted to Browns Hay and Staunton Harold, **Sycamore** *Acrionicta aceris* came from Staunton Harold and Groby and **Miller** *Acrionicta leporina* only from Lount NR. Browns Hay produced the only records of **Dusky Brocade** *Apamea remissa* and **Clouded Brindle** *A. epomidion*. **Slender Brindle** *A. scolopacina* was fairly widely reported and **Light Arches** *A. lithoxylaea* and **Double Lobed** *Lateroligia ophiogramma* were only at Staunton Harold all only recorded in July. A real



Olive © Graham Finch

surprise at Lount early in August was a single **Twin-spotted Wainscot** *Lenisa geminipuncta* **Angle-striped Sallow** *Enargia paleacea* was well recorded with 24 individuals at Lount NR early in August. The same site and date also had the only **Olive** *Ipimorpha subtusa*. The first **Centre-barred Sallow** *Atethmia centrago*, **Brindled Green** *Dryobotodes eremita*, **Hedge Rustic** *Tholera cespitis* and **Feathered Gothic** *T. decimalis* all appeared in early September. August through September at Charnwood Lodge produced the highest totals of **Antler Moth** *Cerapteryx graminis* totals of 40 and 76 the best nights. All the usual "Yellow Underwing" species were well recorded except for **Least Yellow Underwing** *Noctua interjecta* which was only seen at Lount NR in early August. Early August gave us the first **Dotted Clay** *Xestia baja*, **Six-striped Rustic** *X. sexstrigata* and **Autumnal Rustic** *Eugnorisma glareosa*. Finally, with all the recent taxonomic alterations, a species which really does seem to be out of place at almost the end of the checklist is **Short-cloaked Moth** *Nola cucullatella* where four were at light at Staunton Harold in early July.

## October to December

Well, it was quite a contrast from the dizzy numbers of the previous quarter where we recorded over 6,000 individuals of 403 species, a sudden drop down to earth with a meagre 384 individuals of 93 species. The 93 species were made up as follows, 64 micros and 29 macros, out of the 64 micro moth species recorded, 45

species were only recorded by their early feeding stages; mainly leaf mines. The importance of finding the leaf mines for so many of the micro moths cannot be overstated. Apart from this being the easiest way to identify the majority of them to species level, most are not attracted to light and out of those that are, most will be very difficult to identify from the adult external characters, thus requiring dissection. September and October are classed as the optimum months to look for leaf mines, it is a superb way to add many species to a site list that may otherwise be missed, plus they represent breeding records as opposed to sight records, therefore adding more integrity to the record and site. This leaves just 29 species of macro moths with most of the autumnal species coming to the end of their flight period and the true winter species starting theirs. On to the summary, two sites were concentrated on for this quarter, Forest Rock Wood (from now on FRW) on the outskirts of Whitwick and Loddington.

As most of the leaf mining micros were mentioned last quarter, I will just cover a few that were new to this quarter: *Stigmella oxycanthella* on Hawthorn, *S. tityrella* on Beech and *S. salicis* on Willow all at FRW, *S. aurella* on Bramble, *S. hemargyrella* on Beech, *Heliozella sericiella* and *Tischeria ekebladella* both on Oak at both sites. *Caloptilia elongella* on Alder and *C. rufipennella* on Sycamore only at Loddington, but *Gracillaria syringella* was found on Ash and Beech at both sites. A total of 12 different species of *Phyllonorycter* was found this quarter: *Phyllonorycter platani* on Norway Maple, *P. oxyacanthae* on Hawthorn, *P. sorbi* on Rowan, *P. strigulatella* on Grey Alder, *P. schreiberella* on Elm and *P. tristrigella* on Elm, *P. froelichiellai* on Alder, *P. nicellii* on Hazel, *P. kleemannella* on Alder, *P. acerifoliella* on Field Maple, *P. joannisi* on Norway Maple and *P. geniculella* on Sycamore, all from FRW. If the above species were to be added to the leaf mining species from the previous quarter it creates quite a significant list of micro moth species that very rarely get recorded.

The first *Ypsolopha ustella* were three at Ulverscroft and six at Lount, both early in October, with the only **Diamond-back** *Plutella xylostella* on the same night. Mines of *Lyonetia*



*Acleris sparsana* © Graham Finch

*clerkella* were widespread on Cherry and Apple, and Lount produced the only *Carcina quercana* and *Agonopterix arenella*. Larvae of *Metzneria metzneriella* were found in Knapweed heads at Loddington. *Blastobasis adustella* was fairly well recorded but *B. lacticolella* was only at Lount. A single **Green Oak Tortrix** *Tortrix viridana* was at Ulverscroft in early October; it has been a few years now since we saw this species in the huge numbers it used to be. *Acleris sparsana* was fairly widespread. **Rhomboid Tortrix** *Acleris rhomboidella* and *A. emagana* were only found at Lount and larvae of *Endothenia gentianaeanana* were found on Teasel and the mines of *Gypsonoma dealbana* were found on Oak at FRW in mid-October. The only Pyralid moth recorded was a single *Eudonia angustea* at light from Ulverscroft.

On to the macro moths, with **December Moth** *Poecilocampa populi* well recorded at most sites with a total of 56 to light in early November at Charnwood Lodge. A single **Riband Wave** *Idaea aversata* was at Ulverscroft. **Spruce Carpet** *Thera britannica* and **Red-Green Carpet** *Chloroclysta siterata* were both widespread, but **Grey Carpet** *Thera obeliscata* was only recorded at Ulverscroft. The first confirmed sightings of **Winter Moth** *Operophtera brumata* were not until mid-November, although there were several reports of what may have been this species picked up in car headlights from mid-October. A species that seemed to have had quite a prolific, if short, flight period was **Feathered Thorn** *Colotois pennaria* which was also reported from quite a few gardens. Although only a singleton of **Mottled Umber** *Erannis defoliaria* was reported from members, it was widely recorded from gardens throughout both counties from other sources. A single

second generation **Straw Dot** *Rivula sericealis* was at Lount in mid-October. Coming to the end of its flight period, the last of the **Snout** *Hypena proboscidalis* was found at Ulverscroft and Lount. The last reported **Rosy Rustic** *Hydraecia micacea* was from Lount in mid-October. The first **Barred Sallow** *Tiliacea aurago*, **Beaded Chestnut** *Agrochola lychnidis*, **Flounced Chestnut** *Agrochola helvola* and **Yellow-line Quaker** *Agrochola macilenta* were all at Ulverscroft in early October.



*Merveille du Jour* © Graham Finch

Other classic autumnal species were **Brick** *Agrochola circellaris*, **Chestnut** *Conistra vaccinii*, **Dark Chestnut** *Conistra ligula* and **Satellite** *Eupsilia transversa*, almost restricted to sightings on the Charnwood Forest. The only **Blair's Shoulder-knot** *Lithophane leautieri* was from Lount in mid-October and the stunning **Merveille du Jour** *Griposia aprilina* began showing from early October. Almost at the end of its complicated flight period, which can be from March to end of October, the last report of **Shuttle-shaped Dart** *Agrotis puta* was in mid-October from Lount. A single **Dark Sword-grass** *Agrotis ipsolon* was a welcome visitor to the trap at Staunton Harold in mid-November and **Large Yellow Underwing** *Noctua pronuba* continued until mid-October. Finally, a single **Oak Nycteoline** *Nycteola revayana* came to light at Charnwood Lodge in early November.

Many thanks to those members who sent in their records.

Graham and Anona Finch

## July to September

We shall long remember the summer of 2018 for its prolonged hot days and lack of rain but we must wait until next summer to find out whether its effect on the butterfly fauna was good or bad.

A few species such as the **Brown Argus** were recorded in greater numbers than in most recent years but it is sad that the **Peacock** numbers showed no sign of a recovery.

Historically, the woods of Charnwood Forest have not been known to support colonies of the larger fritillaries such as the Silver-washed and therefore the sighting of one at Swithland Wood during the Club's Wednesday morning walk on 4 July was exciting. However, the current tendency of this species to wander is demonstrated by a male which visited RG's garden in Sibleby to nectar briefly on his Buddleia on 7 July.

Numbers of **Red Admiral** remained low and this handsome butterfly, usually such a feature at Ivy blossom in the late summer and autumn, was particularly scarce this year.

### Hesperiidae

The **Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*** was only reported seen in five localities during the quarter, including two members' gardens and with the last sighting on 5 August. Eighteen were present at Evington Golf Course on 3 July and 56 in Buddon Brook Meadows at Quorn on the 11th. HB also found it to be locally common at Aylestone Meadows on the 10th.

The only **Essex Skipper *Thymelicus lineola*** reported were two seen at Sheepy by HI & SFW on 11 July.

The **Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus*** which remained active until 11 July was noted in only four localities with about ten at Evington Golf Course on 3 July.

### Pieridae

What were probably new generation male **Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*** were noted first at Quorn with one in HS's Chaveney Road garden on 2nd and another nearby in our Meeting Street garden on 4th; these were

quickly followed by others including the females during the next two days. During the quarter this distinctive species was only reported seen in seven widely spread localities with the last sightings on 26 September at Quorn and Wartnaby.

The **Large White *Pieris brassicae*** was frequent in gardens and countryside throughout the summer and some remained active towards the end of September and, as usual, the **Small White *Pieris rapae*** was more plentiful and these two species were often active in hot weather when few other species could be seen.

The **Green-veined White *Pieris napi***, though less common than either in built up areas, was not uncommon in some gardens and HS recorded it on 16 days between 3 July and 4 August in her Quorn garden and HB found it in a number of green areas within Leicester city.

### Lycaenidae

The **Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus*** was active on oak trees near Wood Lane on the Rothley Common side of the road and also on the Mountsorrel Common side of the road on 2 and 3 July and some nine individuals were noted. On 19 July one was found at rest in shade in our Meeting Street garden and on 26th of the month one was observed nectaring on flowers in the field near Rabbit's Bridge; an unusual occurrence for this species which usually feeds on honeydew in the canopy of trees. The final sighting reported was of one at New Lount Pit Yard on 4 August.

During July DBF came across a **White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrrium c-album*** on the Green at Granby Bowls Club in Loughborough on the 10th and on the 14th one was found nectaring on the flower head of Hemp Agrimony in our Quorn garden and on 17th four were noted at Cloud Wood NR during a visit by an East Midlands group from Butterfly Conservation. DBF's sighting in Loughborough may seem a strange place to come across this local hairstreak but some town parks in southern England support frequent populations of this species.

The **Small Copper *Lycaena phloea*** was widely reported at some 20 localities including several in gardens. Numbers, however, were low with a maximum of nine at Charnwood Lodge and eight at Swithland Reservoir on 29



September. The latter were nectaring on Oxford Ragwort along the dam and in good condition and this late in the season, most likely third generation butterflies.

The **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** has been rather uncommon during recent years so it was good to get it recorded in some ten well spread localities, including two members' gardens. In July four were found in Ellis Meadow in Leicester on 16th and three at Evington Golf Course on 31st and during August eight were found in Buddon Brook Meadows on the 4th and it was described as locally frequent at North Farm on the Shenton Estate on the 13th. Apparently, according to HB, Ellis Meadow is a relinquished sports field and now has a pool and interesting flower-rich grassy areas supporting Common Blue and Brown Argus butterflies.

At most of their favoured sites the **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** populations have remained low during recent years. This year numbers were an improvement with double figures recorded during July and at Ellis Meadow about 12 on the 16th, Asfordby Hill – ten on the 29th, Buddon Brook Meadows – 15 on the 20th, Broad Hill – 17 on the 24th and Evington Golf Course – 11 on the 31st and in August 25 at New Lount Pit Yard and 23 at Buddon Brook Meadows on the 4th. In all the Common Blue was recorded at 15 separate localities.

The garden-frequenting **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*** second generation butterflies appeared first on 3 July at Quorn and were active until late August when one was noted at Horninghold on the 15th and another at Nunckley Quarry café site at Rothley on the 31st.

### **Nymphalidae**

Although noted widely in some 14 well spread localities the **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** numbers remained low and only two sites produced as many as three individuals and there was no large build-up of numbers at Ivy blossom time as is often the case.

Also this was a poor summer for the **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*** – only reported seen in July in Bringhurst parish on the 15th and at Freeman's Lock in Leicester on the 20th and at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel with two on the 24th. In August others were seen in Spinney Drive, Quorn and Lockington/Hemington parish on the

1st, at HS's Quorn garden from the 3rd to 14th, at Loughborough GU canal on the 10th and at North Farm, Shenton on the 13th.

The **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** was well reported during the quarter being seen in 22 widely scattered localities including, as usual, members' gardens. No really large gatherings were reported and only in two sites were as many as ten reported, both in July with ten in Sheepy parish on the 11th and the same number visiting lavender blossom at Quorn Baptist Church on the 24th.

The colourful **Peacock *Inachis io***, usually one of our most abundant butterflies, has suffered a catastrophic decline in numbers. Thinking back some years, some gardens with several Buddleias attracted over 100 Peacocks but this year HS's visit on 24 July to Broad Hill in Mountsorrel with its dozens, if not hundreds of buddleias, only produced three Peacocks. The new generation appears to have emerged around the second and third week in July and probably went into hibernation fairly soon and of the ten sightings reported all were in July and mostly singletons.

The richly-coloured **Comma *Polygonia c-album*** was well reported and noted in 27 widely spread localities, mostly in July and early August and the seven sightings later in August and into September probably represented those destined to become the overwintering generation. Most sightings were of singletons but with two at several sites and four at Sence Valley FP on 8 July.



*Comma* © Jim Graham

The only **Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*** reported was one seen at Bloody Oaks Quarry NR by RJ on 8 August and two **Silver-washed Fritillaries *Argynnis paphia*** were

observed at Cloud Wood NR by DBF on 1 July and five later on 17 July. The male seen on buddleia in RL's Sibley garden on 7 July was one of several seen in gardens during recent years and interestingly RL had a large fritillary, most probably this species or the Dark Green, last year on 8 July but was unable to make a positive identification.

## Satyridae

The **Speckled Wood *Parage aegeria***, the butterfly of dappled shade, must have found life difficult during the hot summer but nevertheless was well reported being noted widely from 11 July when three were present in Buddon Brook Meadows and where, on the 26th, 21 were counted, doubtless finding the shade along the brook to their liking. Altogether it was reported seen in some 27 widely spread localities and thanks to HI & SFW for recording it in many sites little visited by members. The largest single site count was 36 at Sence Valley FP on 22 August.

The **Wall *Lasiommata megera***, a sun loving species, now largely restricted to high ground, seems to have done well at Bardon Hill this summer where DBF recorded six on 21 July.

No **Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*** were reported this summer making me realise how much we miss Les Purnell these days!

The attractive **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*** was well reported and widely seen in 27 localities between 1 July when it was first noted at Quorn and 11 August when it was last observed at Quorn and Loughborough. In July some large counts were about 20 at Sence Valley FP on the 8th, around 37 at the City General grounds and Evington Park embankment on the 18th and 18 at Broad Hill, Mountsorrel on the 24th. This formerly (pre-1976) uncommon butterfly is now frequent in many local gardens.

The **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*** has a long flight season and was widespread in suitable habitats throughout July and was last noted on 8 August at Egleton. The much less widespread **Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*** was recorded at Bardon Hill on 21 July and during August ten were seen at Charnwood Lodge NR on the 6th and others at North Farm, Shenton on 13th and Clipsham on

31st. Finally several were seen on the Warren Hills on 1 September.

During July the **Ringlet *Aphantos hyperantus*** was observed in 16 localities between the 1st and 26th with about 509 on the 3rd at Evington Golf Course, 50 at Buddon Brook Meadows on the 11th and 20 at Bardon Hill on the 21st. It is good to have this once very local species now visiting and perhaps breeding in our gardens!

## October to December

Small numbers of seven species remained active in this final quarter of the year but only two species were reported into November.

During October a **Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*** was seen at Kelham Bridge on the 4th and a **Large White *Pieris brassicae*** was present in HS's Quorn garden on the 9th where single **Small White *Pieris rapae*** were present on the 13th and 21st.

The **Small Copper *Lycaena phloea***s was also seen in this garden between the 1st and the 21st with three on the 1st and two on the 2nd and 9th. Others were reported seen in Loughborough on the 5th, Bradgate Park with two sightings on the 9th and one at Kelham Bridge on the 17th.

The **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta***, whose numbers were low this year, was only reported seen in our Quorn Garden on 3, 4 & 9 October and at Kelham Bridge on the 4th. One was, however, still active in HS's Quorn garden on 2 November visiting fuchsia by a south facing wall.

The only active **Peacock *Inachis io*** reported was one at Kelham Bridge on 17 November and one in MF's kitchen in Chapel Lane, Knighton on 19 November.

During October the **Speckled Wood *Parage aegeria*** was noted in our Quorn garden on the 9th, Woodthorpe on the 5th, three at Humberstone Park on the 9th, one in Evington Park and two at Buddon Brook Meadows on the 10th and one at Melton Mowbray and at Spinney Hill Park in Leicester on the 19th.

On behalf of the Club I wish to thank the few dedicated members and friends who submitted butterfly records during 2018 and who we rely on so much for our butterfly report.

Peter Gamble

## June to September

Well the hot weather of 2018 certainly continued but I think it was eventually beginning to take its toll on all of us, especially those involved with fieldwork. With just five recorders we managed 1,225 individuals of 114 species, so we were a little down on the previous quarter. Noticeable was the greater assortment of species than usual attracted to moth traps. I guess the high temperatures were responsible for keeping them active. Two very different areas produced most of the water beetle records, a small and very overgrown field pond at Charnwood Lodge and a series of much larger and well-vegetated ponds at Staunton Harold, plus a few extra species attracted to moth traps.

On with the summary; a single *Gyrinus substriatus* was attracted to MV light in Cloud Wood in early September, six *Haliplus confinis*, five **Cherry-stone Beetle** *Hyphydrus ovatus* and three *Laccophilus hyalinus* were netted from some really nice vegetated ponds at Staunton Harold in late July. Two *Laccophilus minutus* were at Charnwood Lodge at the end of July and a single *Hydroglyphus geminus* at Lount NR, all to MV light. The small overgrown field pond at Charnwood Lodge held hardly any open water and what was there was only about three inches deep, nevertheless it produced quite a nice list with 20 *Hydroporus memnonius*, eight *Agabus bipustulatus*, one *Agabus sturmii* and two *Ilybius ater*, also singles of *Ilybius fenestratus*. Two *I. fuliginosus* were netted from Staunton Harold plus a solitary *Elaphrus cupreus* found running around on the exposed mud here. A single *Trechus quadristriatus* was in the samples from the permanent Rothamsted moth trap at Loddington. A total of five *Bembidion* species were recorded this quarter, mainly by grubbing on the exposed mud at the water's edge, 16 *Bembidion lunulatum*, eight *B. dentellum*, three *B. tetracolu*, two *B. illigeri* and ten *B. quadrimaculatum* all at Staunton Harold. Approximately 200 of *B. lunulatum* were attracted to the moth traps at Staunton Harold in early July. *Pterostichus madidus*, *P. niger* and *A. parallelepipedus* were well represented including records of all three species at moth traps. The only other *Pterostichus* found was a

single *P. melanarius* under a pile of house bricks at Sutton Cheney. Singles of *Agonum thoreyi*, *Platynus assimilis*, *Amara apricaria* and *Harpalus rufipes* were mainly from the Charnwood Forest reserves, but 12 of the last species were sharing that pile of house bricks at Sutton Cheney. Two *Stenolophus mixtus* were found along the water's edge at Staunton Harold and the most recorded Carabid of the quarter *Bradycellus verbasci* was recorded from Lount NR, Cloud Wood and Loddington and all only from moth traps. This brought the total of Carabids up to 18 species.

The water beetles cannot be classified as a single straightforward group, the predaceous water beetles, the Hydradephaga, which include amongst others the Gyrinus, Agabus and Ilybius are placed before the Carabids. Then the Polyphaga, which include Helophorus, Laccobius, Cercyon and Sphaeridium species plus others are placed after. The following species belong in the group after the Carabids, so it can be a little confusing to read about one lot of water beetles, then the Carabids and then another batch of water beetles, but such is taxonomy. So eight *Helophorus brevipalpis* were attracted to MV light at Staunton Harold at the beginning of July and *Hydrobius fuscipes* netted at several sites but also to MV light at Charnwood Lodge, and Lount NR at the end of July. Easy to recognise as a genus but can be a little awkward to get to species level and many are best decided on by dissection, are the Sphaeridinae. More often found in dung, two *Sphaeridium bipustulatum* were found at Bitteswell at the end of September, four *S. lunatum* and two *S. scarabaeoides* were at Staunton Harold. Two *Cercyon melanocephalus* were in sheep dung at Bitteswell. Singles of *C. quisquilius*, and *C. unipunctus* were attracted to light traps at several sites.

Leaving the water beetles a single *Ptenidium pusillum* was in the samples from the Loddington Rothamsted in August. Just two *Phosphuga atrata* (we knew it as *Silpha atrata* up until the beginning of this year - the taxonomists strike again) found by sieving a grass tussock at Charnwood Lodge at the end of September. Although fairly widely reported, all the *Nicrophorus humator* were only seen at light traps.



*Acrolocha sulcula* © Graham Finch

Now on to the Staphylinidae of which there were 14 species recorded. A single and very small ***Acrolocha sulcula*** was sieved from deer dung in Bradgate Park at the end of September and, of similar size, ***Xylodromus depressus*** was found on our back door at Ibstock. Recorded at Bitteswell and Tonge and given its favourite habitat of dung, ***Oxytelus laqueatus*** seems to be always found in an immaculate state with almost bright golden coloured elytra. Two *Anotylus* species ***Anotylus rugosus*** and ***A. sculpturatus*** were fairly widespread in sheep and cow dung. Netted from pond-side vegetation in late July at Staunton Harold were two ***Stenus picipes*** and a single ***S. pallipes*** was sieved from reed litter at Charnwood Lodge in late September. With only six previous records, a single ***Philonthus debilis*** was found at Bitteswell, only two other *Philonthus* species were recorded ***Philonthus marginatus*** from sweeping low vegetation and ***P. splendens*** from sheep dung both at Staunton Harold. The only record of Lesser Stag Beetle ***Dorcus parallelipipedus*** was of a singleton at Barrow upon Soar in mid-June, singles of ***Geotrupes spiniger*** from cow dung at Staunton Harold also in mid-June, with ***G. stercoarius*** attracted to MV light at Lount NR in early August. A grand total of eight species of *Aphodius* dung beetles were noted throughout the quarter. ***Aphodius rufipes*** was by far the most numerous and widespread with most sightings from moth traps with singles of ***A. rufus*** and ***A. foetens*** amongst the samples from the Loddington Rothamsted light trap. Just one ***A. pedellus*** from cow dung at Staunton Harold and, as expected, ***A. prodromus*** and ***A. contaminatus*** were abundant, with over 100 individuals at the bone yard in Bradgate Park at the end of September. The best find was ***A. borealis*** extracted from deer dung in Bradgate Park at the end of September. There are only eight previous records for this species and every one is from Bradgate Park, with the very first



*Aphodius borealis* © Graham Finch

being 1891-1895 by C B Headly. Lastly, singles of ***A. sticticus*** were reported from several sites, all in September.

The **Brown Chafer *Serica brunnea*** is normally quite a regular visitor to moth traps, but the only report is of three to MV light at Charnwood Lodge at the end of July. The Loddington moth trap produced the only records of two ***Elodes minuta*** and one ***Heterocerus fenestratus***. Lount NR produced the only records of ***Trixagus dermestoides*** closely related to the Click Beetles and the true Click Beetle ***Stenagostus rhombeus*** in early August, the latter is a rich orange/brown with two dark fascia on the elytra, so it is quite a distinctive species and often recorded from moth traps.



*Trixagus dermestoides* © Graham Finch

The Cantharidae or Soldier Beetles did not seem to fare so well throughout the hot weather with only three species recorded, ***Cantharis nigra*** was at Loddington in mid-August, ***Rhagonycha fulva*** was fairly widely recorded but just a single ***Malthoides guttifer***, from the Loddington moth trap. This latter record is of particular interest as it may well be the second VC55 record; the other two records are from Thornton Reservoir in July 1860 by J A Power and "Markfield" in 1860, again by J A Power. I am assuming these two J A Power records are

in fact just a single record that has been added to the database in two different formats! A total of eight *Stilbus testaceus* were swept from low vegetation at Shenton in early August, and a bracket fungus at Staunton Harold held two *Triplax aeneus* in early September.

A total of nine species of Ladybirds were recorded, with the only reports of **Kidney-spot Ladybird** *Chilocorus renipustulatus* and **Pine Ladybird** *Exochomus quadripustulatus* from the city in late August and early September. Although fairly widespread, the majority of **Orange Ladybird** *Halyzia sedecimguttata* reports were from moth traps with **22-spot Ladybird** *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata* sparingly throughout the quarter and **14-spot Ladybird** *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata* from just two sites. Sightings of **Harlequin Ladybird** *Harmonia axyridis* were very widespread but all in single figures, except for ten at MV light at Lount NR. A single record of **10-spot Ladybird** *Adalia decempunctata* came from Sutton Cheney in mid-July and vying with Harlequin Ladybird for the most recorded species was **7-spot Ladybird** *Coccinella septempunctata*, again all in single figures. Lastly, the only **Larch Ladybird** *Aphidecta obliterata* was of a singleton at Sutton Cheney in mid-July.

The saproxylic *Conopalpus testaceus* was recorded twice in July and both at MV light. This species is more frequently recorded at moth traps and although there have been 17 previous records very few state how it had been found; it would have been interesting to know. Another regular moth trap visitor is *Lagria hirta* and all but one of six records, were from this source. Also to be looked for at moth traps is *Prionychus ater*, there are only six previous records and the last two are from moth traps, this latest is from Lount NR in early August. A total of 20 of the saproxylic species *Eledona agricola* were beaten out of a bracket fungus inside a hollow tree at Staunton Harold in mid-July.

Just two species of Longhorn Beetles were reported, *Arhoplas rusticus* to MV light at Charnwood Lodge at the end of July and *Agapanthia villoviridescens* near Barrowdon during the day in early July. On to the *Chrysomelidae*, two *Donacia simplex* were swept from waterside vegetation at Staunton

Harold in early July and two *D. vulgaris* were found between dead Reed Mace stems at Charnwood Lodge in late September. A quite late record of two **Green Dock Beetle** *Gastrophysa viridula* swept from low vegetation at Staunton Harold. The same site and method produced the only records of six *Phaedon armoraciae*, *P. cochleariae*, *Plagioderma versicolora*, the latter two species on several visits, plus *Altica lythri* which was also recorded at Cloud Wood. The Rothamsted moth trap at Loddington produced the only records of *Psylliodes chrysocephala*.



*Poophagus sysimbrii* © Graham Finch

Finishing off this report with a few Weevils; starting with two **Raspberry Weevil** *Otiorhynchus singularis* at Sutton Cheney. Remarkably, just a single *Sitona lineatus* from Cloud Wood, this is normally one of the most regularly found species. The only three previous records of *Drupenatus nasturtii* are all from Burbage in 2000 and 2007, so the impressive total of 20 plus specimens from Staunton Harold in mid-July were very well received. A single of the pretty light blue/grey *Poophagus sysimbrii* was found in company with the last species. Both of these species were swept from their host plant Watercress; anyone finding beds of Watercress stands a chance of easily adding more records for both species. Finally added to the VC55 list in 2014, *Isochnus sequensi* continues to be steadily discovered around the county. The latest sightings are from Long Whatton and Grange Wood in mid-September. The host plants are “long-leaved Willow” and are easily located by finding their characteristic rough circular brown blotch mines on the leaves, often many mines per leaf.

## October to December

It is generally acknowledged that the two winter quarters are going to be somewhat sparse regarding records of most of the orders that are observed and reported by members. I guess with the beetles we are fortunate that there are usually plenty out and about during even the harshest weather conditions, it's up to us to get out there and find them. All three months were a bit of a mixed bag weather-wise, mainly dry and relatively quite mild, although there were a couple of short, very cold periods. The total number of individuals recorded for this quarter are exceptionally high at 2,928, not too far short of three times the total for the July, August, September 2018 quarter which yielded 1,225 individuals, but with the number of species less than half at 50 (114 for 2018). The numbers are slightly misleading as huge numbers, over 2,500 of the scarce *Isochnus sequensi* were found as both mines and adults on "long-leaved" willows at the Loddington Research Project in October. Two other species that were found in high numbers, **Harlequin Ladybird** *Harmonia axyridis* with over 160 individuals at several sites and all in October, plus **16-spot Ladybird** *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata* with over 100 individuals found by beating an old hedgerow overgrown with Ivy along Slash Lane, Barrow upon Soar. So just these three species have sent the individual totals soaring, giving a skewed account of numbers.

On with the summary, despite being quite late in the season, a visit to a series of small ponds at Nailstone in early November produced a short but encouraging list of water beetles which included four of the **Cherrystone Beetle** *Hyphydrus ovatus*, and singles of *Hygrotus inaequalis*, *Agabus bipustulatus* and *A. nebulosus*. This site looks very promising, not just for water beetles but there are plenty of rough grassy areas, dead wood on the ground, scrub and hedgerows, so it is high on the "must visit" list for 2019.

Not surprisingly, there were more species of Carabids recorded than any other family, 15 in total and almost all sieved from grass tussocks including a single *Trechus quadristriatus* at Loddington. A total of six *Bembidion* species were found, 20 *Bembidion biguttatum* at

Loughborough Big Meadows (LBM), a single *B. guttula* at Slash Lane but 11 were at LBM. Also at LBM, three *B. lunulatum*, two *B. mannerheimi* a single *B. lampros*, plus five *B. gilvipes*, two each of *Oxypselaphus obscurus* and *Agonum fuliginosum*. The only *Amara* species found were two *Amara similata* at Loddington, singles of *Trichocellus placidus* and *Badister bullatus* were at LBM and Loddington respectively, and three *Demetrias atricapillus* and five *Paradromius linearis* were at LBM. The last of the Carabids were three *Philorhizus melanocephalus* sieved from ground litter in a marshy area along Slash Lane. The only report of *Silpha atrata* was of a singleton sieved from grass tussock in South Wood, usually come across this species quite regularly in rotten wood or under moss while looking for other species.



*Stenus similis* © Graham Finch

Only five Staphylinid species found. They were of five *Tachyporus dispar* at LBM, two of the red-spotted *Stenus bimaculatus* in Slash Lane, 12 *S. cicindeloides* on the Club's Wednesday walk at Thornton Reservoir, a single *S. fulvicornis* and 12 *S. similis* from LBM. A spectacular but solitary **Minotaur Beetle** *Typhaeus typhoeus* was in Bradgate Park in early October. The Rothamsted light trap at Loddington produced the only records of *Aphodius rufipes* and *A. prodromus* both as singletons. Although not designated as threatened, *Phloiophilus edwardsii* is however noted as Nationally Scarce, so the solitary adult, beaten from dead branches of a standing tree in Forest Rock Wood in late October, was very pleasing. It is a species that is active throughout the colder months of the year, but despite spending a considerable amount of time beating similar dead branches at numerous sites in VC55 no other individuals were found. Two *Rhizophagus dispar* were found in bracket fungi in early November at Charnwood Lodge. A single of the tiny (2 mm) and shiny brassy *Olibrus*

*aeneus* was found at Forest Rock Wood. Charnwood Lodge produced the only records of ***Triplax aenea*** with a single from Birch Polypore in early November and ten from a large Oyster Fungus on a tree along the main access road.



*Rhyzobius chrysomeloides* © Graham Finch

The Ladybirds were the second most recorded family with a total of nine species. Starting with ***Rhyzobius chrysomeloides***, first recognised as a British species in 1996 from a single specimen beaten from a young pine near the M23 motorway in Surrey. So, with the majority of the records from southern England, it was quite unexpected to beat 30 plus individuals from an old hedgerow well overgrown with Ivy along Slash Lane on 31 December. There has only been just the one previous record for this species when Mark Telfer found two at Barkby Thorpe in 2010. Beating Ivy in several similar situations subsequently has not produced any more specimens. Maybe with the weather turning much colder they had retreated deeper into the Ivy growth and become slightly more challenging to dislodge. With the sheer numbers found along Slash Lane, plus the Barkby Thorpe records almost ten years previous, you have to think that this species ought to be more widespread in VC55 than originally assumed. Singles of **Pine Ladybird *Exochomus quadripustulatus*** were reported from Slash Lane and Humberstone Park in the city, **22-spot Ladybird *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata*** at LBM and several sites in the city. Usually quite abundant, just a single **14-spot Ladybird *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata*** was taken out of a sample from the Rothamsted trap at Loddington. Since its arrival in 2004, the **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*** has become one of our most frequently recorded

ladybird species and usually with the highest totals, often found in congregations of well over 100 individuals. The highest count this quarter was the 120 at Quorn in early October. The species never recorded in such huge numbers but always from many more sites is **7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*** the highest count being 24 at Humberstone Park again in early October. LBM produced the only records of two **Water Ladybird *Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata*** by peeling back the dead outer sheaths of *Typha*, beside the 100 plus from Slash Lane, two **16-spot Ladybird *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata*** were found at LBM at the end December. I am not sure whether this next species qualifies as having the longest scientific name of all British beetles, but surely it has to be close, **24-spot Ladybird *Subcoccinella vigintiquattuor punctata*** were only found in the city at Evington Park and Evington Golf Course in mid- to late October.

The next two species belong to the same family, same genus and same colours but completely different markings; five ***Mycetophagus multipunctatus*** were found in Birch Polypore at Charnwood Lodge in early November and a single ***M. quadripustulatus*** at South Wood from a drying out Chicken of the Wood fungus in early December. Seven of the small and strange looking ***Cis bilamellatus*** were knocked out of a bracket fungus at Charnwood Lodge in early November and the only record of ***Lagria hirta*** was of four taken out of the sample from the Loddington Rothamsted Trap during October. The same Chicken of the Wood fungus mentioned earlier also produced over 50 of the small, frosty looking Notable B ***Eledona agricola***. Just a single species of Chrysomelidae was reported, ***Psylliodes chrysocephala*** on two occasions and both at Loddington in October. Only three species of Weevil were recorded with 20 **Gorse Weevil *Exapion ulicis***, plus this next species regularly found alongside the latter, two ***Andrion regensteinense*** were beaten from Gorse at Charnwood Lodge in late December; it will be worth making more of an effort to beat Gorse away from the Charnwood Forest in 2019.

Finally, as already mentioned at the start of this report, ***Isochnus sequensi*** has now been found widespread throughout the two counties since 2014 when it was first discovered, this

supports the national trend of this species. The numbers counted at Loddington were the result of a "half-count/half estimate" as only a small proportion of the affected trees were accessible to check. Actual numbers involved must run into tens of thousands, many leaves having up to 20 individual mines and not far short the same for adults. Interestingly, most of the adults were found on the undersides of the leaves.

Many thanks to the members who took the time to send in their records for this report.

**Graham L Finch**

We are grateful for the interest and cooperation of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and their enthusiastic Charnwood Lodge Recording Group and John Szczur, the entomologist with The Allerton Project which runs the Rothamsted trap at Loddington.

## OTHER INSECTS

### July to September

It has been somewhat difficult for some of our more elderly members to record invertebrate life in the intense heat that persisted this summer, nevertheless some of us managed to still record a number of species.

#### Hemiptera

**Green Shieldbug *Palomina prasina*:** about 17 late nymphs were beaten from Hawthorn in Humberstone Park on 17 August, with two adults and two nymphs on Hawthorn in Aylestone Meadows on 14 August. Other records were a single at Packington on 27 August and a final instar nymph at Quorn on 25 August and probably the two reported from Loughborough on 25 September were this species turning into their hibernating colours at this stage.

**Birch Shieldbug *Elasmostethus interstinctus*:** about 50 of all stages were beaten from a young fruiting Birch at Spinney Hill Park on 4 August, seven were noted at Bardon Hill on 30 July, with three adults on Evington Golf Course in the tree layer on 5 September.

**Hawthorn Shieldbug *Acanthosoma haemorroidale*:** not many records of this species, just an adult and early nymph on Hawthorn in Humberstone Park on 9 August

and in Ethel Road two nymphs on 30 August, with a single at Leicester Arboretum on 5 September.

**Parent Bug *Elasmucha grisea*:** again not many records - an early nymph on birch in Spinney Hill Park on 4 August, with two adults and four nymphs at Leicester Arboretum on Alder on 4 September.

**Sloe Bug *Dolichoris baccarum*:** records came from Aylestone Meadows, and adult and five nymphs on 14 August, Ethel Road three adults on 20 August and Appleton Park three adults and three nymphs on 3 September. This pretty little bug is usually found on White Dead-nettle in the spring when out of hibernation, but I have always found this shieldbug only in grassland in the summer months so it must feed on several plants in such situations.

**Forest Bug *Pentatoma rufipes*:** single adults were recorded from Ashby-de-la-Zouch on 27 August and in a Clipsham pub garden on the 31 August. At Humberstone Park on the 9 August, six adults were recorded, with one mating pair on a Damson Tree.

**Juniper Shieldbug *Cyphostethus tristriatus*:** 20 or so of all stages were noted on Lawson's Cypress in Spinney Hill Park on 4 August.

**Bishops Mitre *Aelia acuminata*:** four adults found on a grassy verge in Ethel Road on 11 August, two adults & five nymphs in Aylestone Meadows on 14 August, and around 22 of all stages in Appleton Park on 3 September.

**Eurogaster *testudinalia*:** three adults and two nymphs were found on Ethel Road, Evington on a grassy verge, on 11 August. This may be another species moving north in suitable habitats, probably a first breeding record for the county, although I do remember SFW recording this species a couple of years back.

**Dock Bug *Coreus marginatus*:** this distinctive bug was widely recorded. PHG had about 150 at Tom Long's Meadow in Quorn on 16 August. It was also noted at Nunckley Quarry in numbers on 31 August and common at Evington Golf Course on 8 August. Other records came from Clipsham, Newtown Linford and Hinckley.

**Box Bug *Gondcerus acuteangulatus*:** an adult was swept from Hawthorn at Humberstone Park Nature area on 9 August.



***Corizus hyoscami***: this pretty little bug was recorded from two sites this quarter, from Quorn on 19 July and Groby on 7 August.

**Ant Damsel Bug *Aptus mirmicoides***: a nymph was in Appleton Park on 3 September.

**Pine Cone Bug *Gastrodes grossipes***: two were noted in Ethel Road on 30 August,

***Pantillius tunicatus***: a single of this mirid bug was seen on Alder at Leicester Arboretum on 5 September.

### Leaf Hoppers

***lassius lanio***: one was on a young oak at Evington Golf Course and reported from Aylestone Meadows on 14 August.

***Cicadella viridis***: many were recorded on Bardon Hill on 30 July.

**Reedmace Bug *Chilacis typhae***: many adults were mating by the Ashby Canal, Snarestone, on 18 August.

### Diptera

Another poor year for many species.

#### Hoverflies

**Marmalade Hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus***: migrant numbers appeared to be much lower this year and although widespread, often occurring in single numbers. Records came from Barnsdale, Quorn, Sheepy Magna, Sibson and Pickworth. Similar in my area, the most recorded was about 20 on Ragwort in Ethel Road on 18 July, with just two at Castle Gardens on the 26 September.

***Syrphus vitripennis***: the only sighting was of just two at Evington Golf Course on 31 July.

***Scaeva pyrastris***: just two sightings of this species, at Quorn on 12 July and in my Leicester garden briefly on 25 August.

***Eupeodes luniger***: singles were recorded each month this quarter in my garden in Abney Street, a regular. The only other sighting was a single at St Mary's Mills on 2 September.

***Sphaerophoria scripta***: just a single sighting on the Shenton Estate on 13 August; only a single record was submitted for this species in 2017.

***Xanthogramma pedisequum***: a single sighting at Castle Gardens on the rockery on 5 August.

***Eristalis tenax***: the only records received were of a single at Clipsham on 31 August and odd specimens on Ivy in Humberstone Park in late September.

***Eristalis pertinax***: a few females were foraging on Hebe in Spinney Hill Park on 13 July and a male was along Ethel Road on 18 July.

***Eristalis nemorum***: again a few were foraging on Hebe in Spinney Hill Park on 13 July and five were foraging thistles at Evington Golf Course on 31 July.

***Helophilus pendulus***: singles were recorded from Castle Gardens, Leicester Arboretum, Loughborough, Shenton Estate and Quorn in August, with a single in Victoria Park on 28 September.

***Myathropa florea***: one was in Humberstone Park on 4 July and two canal side in Leicester on 5 August.

***Volucella inanis***: singles came from Spinney Hill Park (on Hebe), Quorn, Leicester Arboretum, Willow Brook Park (foraging Creeping Thistle), Castle Gardens, Evington Park and Ethel Road.

***Volucella zonaria***: there were fewer sightings this year; recorded on thistle bed in Humberstone Park, foraging Globe flower in Castle Gardens and foraging thistle in Evington Golf Course.

***Volucella pellucens***: a single in PHG's Quorn garden on 8 July.

### Conopidae

***Conops quadifasciata***: just two sightings, one Willow Brook Park and Leicester Arboretum both early August and both foraging Creeping Thistle.

***Phyocephala rufipes***: one was brookside foraging Creeping Thistle at Evington Golf Course at the end of July.

***Larvaevora (Tachina) fera***: PHG had about ten visiting flowers of Hemp Agrimony in his Quorn garden on 7 August - this species is a parasite of moth larvae.

***Eriothrix rufonaculata***: five were noted foraging Ragwort, a plant much favoured by this species in late summer, in City General Grounds.

As the very hot summer continued into July, many plants of meadows etc. became parched and numbers of some flying insects disappeared. It was noticeable how many became reliant on species such as Creeping Thistle which still had a few blossoms present and became the only nectaring source in many instances.

## Hymenoptera

### Social Bees

**Buff-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*:** young queens were noted at Freemans Lock on 30 July, Spinney Hill Park on 4 August, and males were noted widely in July. A worker with full pollen in Spinney Hill Park on 31 August would seem to indicate a probable second brood.

**Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius*:** generally a good year for this species locally, with numbers foraging at Ellis Meadow, Belgrave on Birds-foot Trefoil on 17 July, common at City General grounds 18 July, over 150 were foraging on Knapweed at Freemans Lock with a young queen present and odd males on 20 July, a single worker was foraging in my garden for over two weeks in July; very unusual for my city garden and not recorded for a decade. A young queen was also noted at Evington Golf Course on 31 July. SFW & HI recorded this species from a further 13 sites over a wide area, mostly singles.

**Early-nesting Bumblebee *Bombus pratorum*:** just two records were submitted this quarter, a male at Evington Golf Course on 2 July and one at Scalford on 3 July.

**Tree Bumblebee *Bombus hypnorum*:** most of this species have finished nesting this quarter, the last worker noted with full pollen was seen at the Botanic Gardens on 15 July and apart from a young queen at Spinney Hill Park on 13 July, other records all of singles in July, were seen at Wycomb, Barnsdale, Stonesby, Quorn, Sheepy Parva and Bradgate Road, Anstey.

**White-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lucorum* agg.:** a few were recorded from Quorn, Sheepy Parva, Barrow upon Soar, Desford, Bardon Hill, Groby, Egleton, Horninghold, Packington and Clipsham during July and August. Others noted were a male at Botanic Gardens on 15 July, and

young queens at Spinney Hill Park, foraging Hebe on 13 July, and Humberstone Park on 9 August.

**Common Carder Bee *Bombus pascuorum*:** this common bumblebee comes in to its own this quarter, and was widely reported, usually in small numbers. Workers were noted in my garden, workers with full pollen *scopa* until the end of the quarter. PHG reports several still active in his Quorn garden until 12 September. On Victoria Park, several were foraging Water Mint and on 28 August, a young queen was also present. Workers also noted at the Botanic Gardens on 15 July and SFW & HI added further records from 13 localities around the county this quarter.

**Garden Bumblebee *Bombus hortorum*:** appears to be declining rapidly if records from this quarter are a true indication. Just two records, a single worker at Castle Gardens on 3 July, and a melanic male in my garden on 8 July.

The following records of parasitic bees, were given to me from Maggie Frankum from her survey work at the Botanic Gardens, with thanks, as no other records from this group were submitted this quarter: ***Bombus vestalis*** three males on 15 July, ***Bombus campestris*** two males in July, and ***Bombus rupestris*** two males on 15 July.

***Bombus sylvestris*:** one male was in Chapel Lane, Knighton on 11 July.

**Hive Bees *Apis mellifera*:** just odd specimens this quarter from my area, only found common in numbers on Buddlejia at West Bridge, Leicester on 5 August, with others from Quorn, Sheepy Parva and Loughborough with a maximum of seven individuals at Cropston on 24 September.

### Solitary Bees

Very few to add from the last quarter, with only a single ***Andrena labiata*** noted on the margins of Evans Weir on 1 July; this species having a very marked red abdominal band. In my garden two female **Blue Osmias *Osmia caerolenscens*** were observed foraging *Teucrium* on 10 July, with two female **Orange-vented Mason Bees *Osmia leaiana*** foraging the same plant on 6 July and one released from a spiders web on 4 July. Just a single leaf-cutter bee ***Megachile***

*centuncularis* was in my garden in July, with three female *Megachile willoughbiella* foraging Bellflower on 10 July, but none after that. Just a single *Megachile ligniseca* was noted at Evans Weir on the 17 July.

## Vespidae

**Common Wasp *Vespa vulgaris*:** was widely recorded this quarter, with numbers building up on Ivy in late September from Quorn, Spinney Hill Park, Humberstone Park and elsewhere.

**German Wasps *Vespula germanica*:** were reported from Egleton, Ryhall, Horninghold, Bradgate Park, Kirby Muxloe, Cropston and Seaton in August and September.

**Tree Wasp *Dolichovespula sylvestris*:** SFW & HI recorded this species from Coalville on 30 July and Shenton Estate on 13 August.

**Hornet *Vespa crabro*:** a much better quarter for this species than previous year or so. Two adults were recorded from Cossington on 4 August, two at Horninghold on 25 August, many at Gaddesby Brook on 28 August, one adult at Clipsham on 31 August, and a single by Rothley Brook at Thurcaston on 24 September. Others were noted in PHG's Quorn garden, two adults on 22 July with small numbers visiting Marjoram and Ivy blossom 2nd to 30 September.

## October to December

### Heteroptera

**Woundwort Bug *Eysarcoris venustissimus*:** one final instar nymph was in the tree layer at Evington Golf Course on 22 October.

***Corizus hyoscami*:** one was in the leaf litter along the bridle path near Goodwood on 9 October.

**Dock Bug *Coreus marginatus*:** during October, one was recorded from the Goodwood bridle path and another seen at Smisby in Wicket Nook.

***Lassus lanio*:** a single of this leafhopper was swept from a young oak on Evington Park GC on 22 October.

### Diptera

A few lingering hoverflies were recorded, mostly from Ivy.

***Syrphus ribesii*:** two were on Humberstone Park on 9 October and this was two more than were recorded last quarter.

***Syrphus vitripennis*:** singles were in Humberstone Park and Stoughton Road and two in Beatty Avenue in Leicester on 28 October.

**Marmalade Hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus*:** one was in hibernation colours in Castle Gardens, one was in Beatty Avenue on 23 October and two on Mahonia in Spinney Hill Park on 10 November.

***Eristalis tenax*:** singles of this species of Drone fly were noted on Ivy in Stoughton Road and Beatty Avenue plus two on Mahonia in Spinney Hill Park on 9 October.

### Hymenoptera

Just a few records of social bees sent were in this quarter.

***Bombus terrestris* :** a queen was seen briefly on Ivy in Beatty Avenue on 25 October, two males in Evington Park and with a single worker on Helianthus on 10 October. PHG had two workers on winter-flowering Honeysuckle in Quorn on 27 December and a worker visiting Viburnum at Quorn War Memorial gardens on 16 November.

**Carder Bees *Bombus pascuorum*:** a few were about with several nectaring on Helianthus in Evington Park on 3 October, odd ones at Quorn and a single worker on White Dead-nettle on Humberstone Park on 9 October.

**Honey Bees *Apis mellifera*:** the only ones noted were a few on Gartree Road on Ivy on 3 October and several with full pollen baskets on Beatty Avenue on 25 October.

### Social Wasps

**Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris*:** as usual, widespread on Ivy in October being recorded from Beatty Avenue, Gartree Road, Stoughton Road, Woodthorpe and two on Mahonia in Spinney Hill Park on 13 November.

**German Wasp *Vespula germanica*:** just one record from Desford on 2 October.

**Hornet *Vespa crabro*:** PHG had several visiting Ivy in his Quorn garden on 18 October and there was a queen at Beatty Avenue, again on Ivy, on 25 October; an uncommon sighting for this area.

Howard Bradshaw

**Introduction**

This second report of the plant gall records submitted to the Club covers the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018. The records have been obtained mostly by two of our members SFW & HI, sometimes in the presence of GH, RP, the BSBI local group and the Natural History Section of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society. One record was received from JE and LM. All records have been approved by Maggie Frankum, the Gall Co-ordinator for VC55 and forwarded to the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) at County Hall.

This year I have made some comparisons with last year's records. At the moment this will have no scientific value but possibly can give pointers to what we could be looking out for. As we are all well aware, records reflect the recorders' activities as much as species distributions. In 2018, 13 of the records came from churchyards. Years of data are needed to establish trends. For 2018 we received in total 114 records compared to 125 last year.

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 user."

Galls are therefore different to leaf miners which simply live in and eat plant tissue without causing swelling. Plant galls are parasitic but many animals which are plant gall causers are often themselves parasitized by other invertebrates or have their galls invaded by inquiline (lodgers). Sometimes the parasites are themselves parasitized. Collecting galls formed by wasps e.g. oak apples and hatching them out can lead to the emergence of a large number of individuals of different species.

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.

Gall mites are in the class Arachnida which also contains spiders, scorpions and ticks. They are tiny, less than half a millimetre long, maggot-like and slightly wriggly but with two pairs of minute legs at the front. They are small enough to pierce individual cells. They overwinter in tree bark, possibly distributed by the wind.

Psyllids, or jumping plant lice, are sap sucking bugs, Hemipteran insects, which are related to aphids. Some look similar to aphids, others are more flattened. Adults have wings and large rear legs for jumping. Females overwinter to lay eggs in the spring.

**Galls on Oak**

This year we received 40 records compared to last year's 57. Cynipidae (Gall Wasps) are the most common causes of galls on oak and, as in 2017, this is again the case. 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. Eight species of wasp in three genera were recorded.

The most common again were **Marble Gall *Andricus kollari***, 17 compared to 12 last year. The next most common were **Knopper Gall *Andricus quercuscalicis***, also 17 compared to 12 last year, 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 our native oaks, especially Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* and the introduced Turkey Oak. In 1998, The Ministry of Defence ordered the felling of all Turkey Oaks on its UK bases because the larvae in the galls of ***A. quercuscalicis*** were causing so much damage to acorns of native oaks.

There are two records of ***Andricus grossulariae*** from Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris*. One is from the A6 near Whatton House and one is from Edith Weston. Both records were in June. We had no records in 2017. This wasp lives alternatively on the catkins of Turkey Oak in spring, looking like small pointed peas, and on the acorn cups of both Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* and Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea* later in the season. This wasp seems to have no common name, presumably because it only

arrived in Britain in Berkshire in 2000 and is now spreading northwards. It has been previously recorded from Spain, Belgium and Israel. The other five records were singles; however **Oak Apple Gall *Biorhiza pallida*** was recorded as “many” in Queniborough Parish. Last year we had 11 records from across the two Counties.

A single record of **Silk-button Gall *Neuroterus numismalis*** from Woodthorpe compares with five records last year and a single record of **Spangle Gall *Neuroterus quercusbaccarum*** from Swinford parish compares with nine records last year from across the county.

We have a single record of about 25 ***Andricus aries* Ram’s Horn Gall** from a small oak shaded by tall trees at Tugby Wood. Last year we had no records of this but this is something to look out for as it is very distinctive. The gall has a globular base and two green/yellow ‘horns’ about 2-3 cm long (but shorter if attacked by inquilines), becoming woody later in the season. This is also newly arrived (1997) in Britain in Berkshire but expanding its range.

We also have a single record this year, from Tugby Wood, of **Cola-nut Gall *Andricus lignicolus***, whose alternate generation also relies on the non-native Turkey Oak.

We had no records this year of **Artichoke Gall *Andricus foecundatrix***.

### Galls on Roses

This year we had 21 records of galls on roses, all **Robin’s Pincushion Bedeguar Gall *Diplolepis rosae*** caused by the Cynipid wasp. Last year there were records of 11 galls on roses, also all of this type. Distribution seems to be county wide. Other parasites do form galls on roses for example, sawflies, and midges, but these have not been recorded in 2017 or 2018. The Bedeguar galls are many-chambered galls developed from many eggs laid in the bud in spring by the Cynipid wasp. Bedeguar galls can be complex communities containing other cynipid wasps as inquilines, and many other types of wasp as parasites. They are very distinctive and easy to spot. Apparently Bedeguar galls are more common in roses under stress, for example from drought, water-logging or hedge cutting. They are easy to spot and more records would be welcome.

### Galls on other Trees and Shrubs

Eighteen records were reported again, the same as last year. Fourteen were of gall mites. Most numerous were six records of ***Aceria erineae*** on Walnut *Juglans regia*, compared to three last year. These gall mites cause blistering on the upper surface and hollows on the underside of leaves where the mites live amongst white or brown hairs, this structure being called an erineum.

There were four records of ***Aceria fraxinivora*** on Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. 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.

There were three records of another mite, ***Vasates quadripedes***, which causes bladder galls on the introduced Silver Maple *Acer saccharinum*. This 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.

A single record of ‘Big Bud’ on Hazel *Corylus avellana*, caused by the gall mite ***Phytopus avellanae*** was found at Ambion Wood, Sutton Cheney. These are abnormally swollen buds with thickened, hairy leaf scales, containing hundreds of mites which eventually destroy the contents, but remain on the trees until the following spring when they open and release aphids to start the cycle again.

The woolly-aphid gall-causer ***Pemphigus spyrothecae*** was found at Cossington Meadows 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.

Just one record of the gall-midge ***Dasineura crategi*** was found on Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* by the Ashby Canal. 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.

New this year were galls on Box *Buxus sempervirens* at Harston caused by the psyllid *Spanioneura buxi*. Psyllids are tiny sap-sucking bugs related to aphids, which normally cause leaf margins to swell and roll up to create space for both adults and young. On Box it is the leaf shoots which are affected with thickened leaves covered in wax.

Galls on Red currant *Ribes rubrum*, caused by *Cryptomyzus ribis*, a gall-causing aphid, were also new this year. Several were found at Cossington. The aphids cause domed blisters on leaves which turn red with hairy depressions underneath where the aphids live. These aphids need two plant species to complete their lifecycle: Redcurrant in spring and Hedge Woundwort in autumn, before returning to Redcurrant to lay overwintering eggs.

Also new this year was a single record of a gall caused by a fungus. *Taphrinaalni* galls were found on Alder *Alnus glutinosus* catkins at Uppingham. The fungus infects the scales of female catkins and cause them to produce tongue-like bright red growths up to 20 mm long.

2018 saw no records of *Aceria campestricola* on Elm *Ulmus*, *Aceria myriadeum* on Field Maple *Acer campestre*, *Aceria nalepai* on Alder *Alnus glutinosus*, *Eriophyes laevis* on Alder or *Eriophyes similis* on *Prunus*.

### Galls on Herbaceous Plants

We received 35 records in this category in 2018 compared to 39 in 2017, six species of invertebrates on six plant species, slightly less than last year.

The most numerous records (14) (18 in 2017) were of *Cecidophyes rouhollahi*, a gall-causing 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 with eight records, (11 in 2017) was *Jaapiella veronicae*, a gall-midge using Speedwell *Veronica* as host. All records were from Germander Speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*. 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.

Thistle was also found to be galled on five occasions compared to three last year. 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 Enderby and one in Thistleton, 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.

Two records were received of galls caused by the Cynipid wasp *Phanacis hypochoeridis* at Bardon Hill and Beacon Hill on Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*. This compares with just one record from Bradgate Park last year. 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.

New this year was a record of a gall on *Atriplex prostrata* Spear-leaved orache, caused by the gall-causing aphid *Hayhurstia atriplicis*. These galls can be found on both Oraches (Atriplex) and Goosefoots (Chenopodium) species. The record states that the galls were found on the plants on an old manure heap amongst un-galled plants. The aphids cause the leaves or bracteoles to roll, its midrib to bulge, and the petiole to twist. The green waxy aphids are contained in the rolls.

No galls of the gall midge *Dasineura urticae* were found on Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* this year compared to three last year, or of the Psyllid *Livia juncorum*. (Tassel gall) on *Juncus*, one of which was found last year.

More records would be welcome. Many are easy to identify – for instance Robin's Pincushion, a variety of the Oak Galls, Gall on thistle. It would be good to know if some of the galls that are found in our patch are more common than we realise and simply under-recorded.

Hazel Graves

## FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

During the period covered by this report, July to December 2018, records were submitted to the Club only by Helen Ikin and myself (with a handful made by our companions). Once again, we have focused on filling in the gaps in coverage, across Leicestershire and Rutland, for the national project *Atlas 2020*. The gaps, not surprisingly, include areas unattractive to naturalists, often for the good reason that they contain little of interest. Very occasionally something unusual turns up! We have also visited some richer areas that are 'almost well-recorded', to try to push them up into the 'well-recorded' category (for a more detailed explanation, see *Hall, 2019*). As I write this (May 2019) the Loughborough area (see *Woodward, 2017*) is on target for being 'well-recorded' by the end of this year.

As all our records go onto my database, I have all the details to hand and I can report that we made 4,550 records that have been accepted by the County Recorder. I will mention three unusual species, two that are evidently increasing and two that seem to be decreasing (compared to the last County Floras: *Primavesi & Evans, 1988; Messenger, 1971*).

### Unusual plants

A scatter of lovely pink heads of flowers (Fig. 1) was found in an arable field at Sheepy Magna at SK329007 on 11 July. After some head-scratching we realised this was not one of the typical weeds, but most likely a garden escape. County Recorder Geoffrey Hall named it for us as *Phuopsis stylosa*, **Caucasian Crosswort**. It appears to be a first vice-county record as a wild plant (far from a garden).



Fig. 1: *Phuopsis stylosa* © Steve Woodward



Fig. 2: Wild Service-tree © Steve Woodward

A rare native plant is **Wild Service-tree** *Sorbus torminalis* (Fig. 2). It has a triangularly-lobed leaf, vaguely like sycamore, but berries similar to Rowan. As a native tree it is regarded as an indicator of ancient woodland (*Preston et al. 2002, Squires & Jeeves, 1994*). We found a layered tree at the edge of Addah Wood, Clipsham in Rutland at SK961173 on 31 August. As a planted tree, however, it turns up occasionally (presumably we still should call it "wild"). It was reported from Beaumanor Park in the 1988 Flora (although we have failed to re-find it there). There are at least two planted trees in Bradgate Park, one near the River Lin at SK520100. We have also seen Wild Service-trees at Glenfield Hospital, Shenton Estate, the road junction near Ives Head and in the new Heather Wood. It is easily missed and probably under-recorded.

Elms are very common as hedgerow shrubs but proper trees are infrequent, especially those that have been accurately identified. A couple of elm trees were planted, appropriately, in the churchyard at St. Mary in the Elms, Woodhouse. I took a twig along to a meeting of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) to get it identified by an expert and the determination (by John Poland) was **Dutch Elm** *Ulmus x hollandica*. This is also the identity (according to County Recorder Geoffrey Hall) of the very large elm in All Saints churchyard, Cossington.

### Increasing Plants

The fern **Rustyback** *Asplenium ceterach* (Fig. 3) was categorised as 'scarce' meaning present at 4 – 10 sites (*Jeeves, 2011*). Fig. 4 shows its pre-2000 distribution and Fig. 5 the 2000-2018 distribution. There are now about 20 sites with



Fig. 3: Rusty-back Fern © Steve Woodward

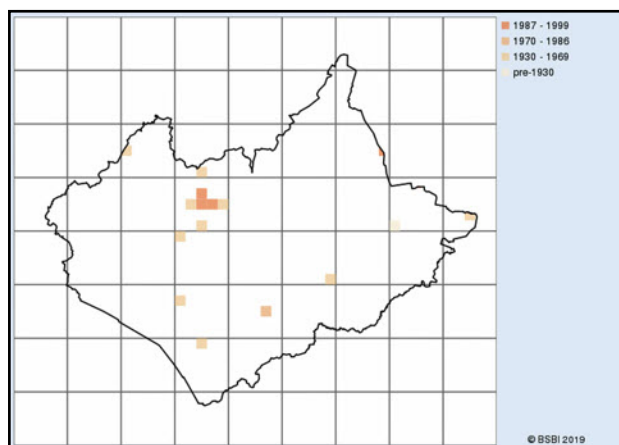


Fig. 4: Rusty-back Fern - pre-2000 distribution

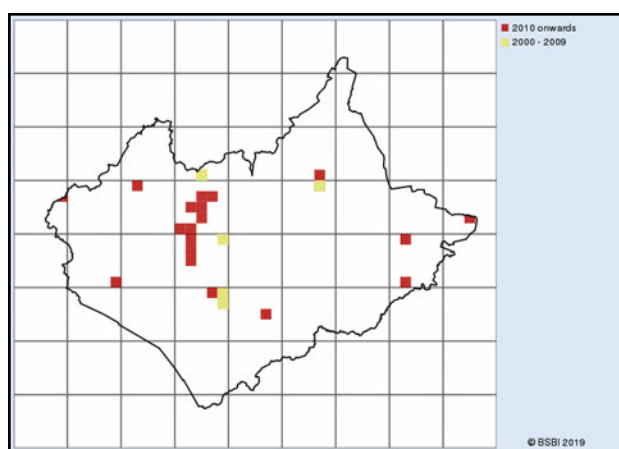


Fig. 5: Rusty-back Fern - 2000-2018 distribution

a recent record of this species, which seems to favour the Charnwood area. Its favoured sites (walls) are easy to search and the plant is straightforward to identify, so I believe the increase is genuine. We found a good population on the boundary wall of the Castle Hotel, Kirby Muxloe at SK522047. Visitors to Bradgate Park from Newtown Linford pass several plants on the bridge that enters the car park at SK522097. It is heartening to learn that at least some native species are doing well.

**Procumbent Yellow-sorrel *Oxalis corniculata*** (Fig. 6) was found in 34 Leicestershire tetrads (*Primavesi & Evans, 1988*) and in ten Rutland tetrads (*Messenger, 1971*). Recent recording has added many more (Figure 7) – too many to count! Our fieldwork from July to December 2018 found it in 11 tetrads. The apparent increase accords with my own experience of this plant, however it may have previously been under-recorded. Recorders in the late twentieth century were more likely to exclude aliens from their lists and my impression is that urban and suburban sites (where this plant thrives) were less thoroughly recorded in the past.



Fig. 6: Procumbent Yellow-sorrel © Steve Woodward

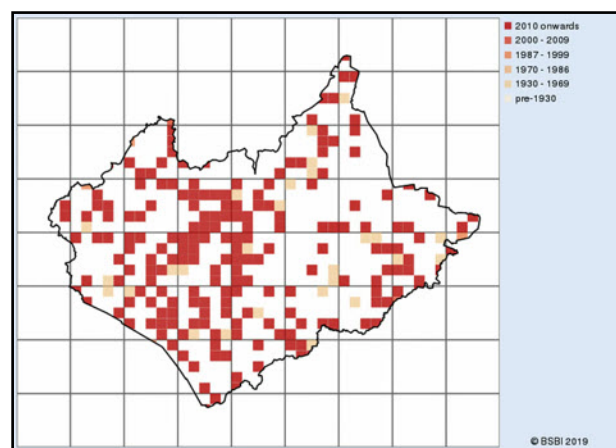


Fig. 7: Procumbent Yellow-sorrel distribution

### Decreasing Plants

Some plants that I previously regarded as common and widespread are becoming hard to find. **Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*** has turned up only twice during the report period, both records being from SSSIs (Bradgate Park and Charnwood Lodge). Looking back through our older records from the wider countryside, we have seen Harebells at Croft and Hoby, and in churchyards at Newtown Linford, Packington, Peckleton, Woodhouse Eaves, Oaks in



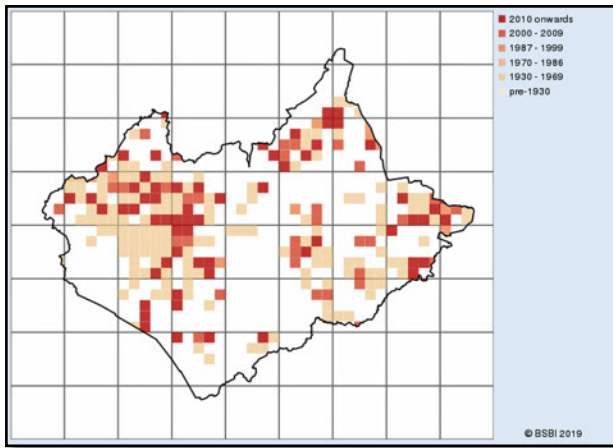


Fig. 8: Harebell distribution

Charnwood and Tixover. Rather a poor showing considering our extensive fieldwork. The latest BSBI map (Fig. 8) shows plenty of pale squares, which signify losses.

Is **Common Figwort *Scrophularia nodosa*** still common? We have found it only three times during the report period, at Smisby (South Wood), Egleton and Groby. The 1988 Flora showed it to be concentrated in west Leicestershire – but this is where we have been looking. Again, the latest BSBI map (Fig. 9) shows pale squares there, meaning no recent record.

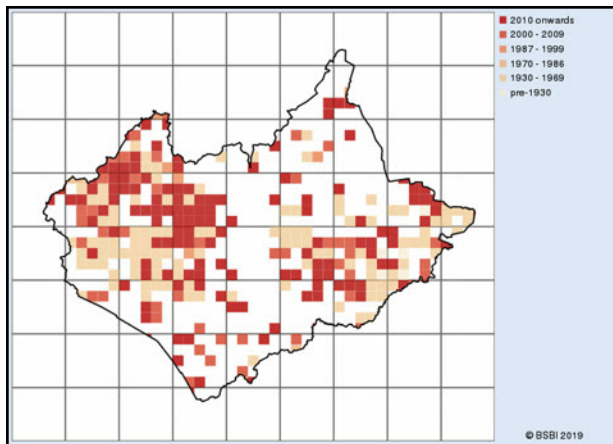


Fig. 9: Common Figwort distribution

There is perhaps some recorder bias here, previous recorders may have had better access to private woodland sites, whereas our fieldwork tends to be in villages and on roadsides – not where this plant prefers to live.

Finally, I need to make correction to my report in *Heritage* 230 – on p. 22 the scientific name of **Marsh Thistle** should be ***Cirsium palustre***. We found this plant only three times during the report period. Our rambles rarely take us through marshy grassland sites.

**Steve Woodward**

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## WEATHER

**July 2018** was the warmest for 12 years, the sunniest for five years and the driest in my Mountsorrel records that go back to 2000. Afternoon temperatures average 25.4°C, a huge 3.4°C above normal. Indeed the temperature on 18 afternoons exceeded 25°C and on 14 of these went it past 27°C. Night time temperatures were also very high averaging 14.3 °C which is 1.7°C above the norm. The average temperature for July was 19.8°C, just a shade below the all-time high in 2006 with a mean of 20.1°C.

It was also a very dry month. At Mountsorrel I recorded just 21.4 mm of rain, only about a third of what is expected. All of this rain fell in the last four days of the month. Before this this was a 39 day drought that lasted from the 17 June right up to the 27 July.

As you would expect sunshine totals were high and I logged 236 hours which was 20% above normal. July 2018 was the third month in succession to exceed 200 hours of sunshine and this has not happened since 1995, our last classic summer. All of this warm and dry weather was caused by persistent high pressure sitting over or very close to the British Isles. This pattern began at the beginning of June and

lasted for seven weeks. The high pressure was able to maintain itself as the jet stream was very weak and much further north than usual and our usual clouds and rain have visited Iceland which has been much wetter than average. The heat was fairly consistent all month long but the hottest day was the 26th when I recorded a value of 32.1°C making it our warmest July day since the 1st in 2015 when we reached the dizzy heights of 33°C. The weather began to change on the 27th when high pressure gave way and much fresher Atlantic winds brought in some rain and much lower temperatures. Much of this rain came in the form of showers and thunderstorms and some locations would have received much more than the 21 mm I did over the last few days of the month. Nevertheless the small rainfall total ensured it was the driest July I have ever recorded in Mountsorrel. The May to July temperatures have been so high that the three months together have been the warmest ever recorded and the combined sunshine total of 750 hours has broken all records. The major down side to the heat has been the effect on the gardens which have proved very difficult to keep green. More seriously local farmers have had to start using winter animal feed as the grass has not grown for weeks and the parched land is now visible from space.

As we enter **August** people are now comparing this summer to the ultimate classic of 1976. So far we have actually been drier than that year but due to high rainfall in the spring water levels in local reservoirs are holding up and we are not likely to face the severe water restrictions that we did in 1976. The previous nine months to the summer of 1976 had also been very dry and we were already in a difficult situation before it began with regards to water supply. It has been hot this summer but not quite as hot as in 1976 when 33°C was exceeded on 17 consecutive days and we have not got near that yet but nevertheless this summer compares favourably to 1995 the last time we had such a warm and dry summer. There has been much talk about global warming being the cause of the summer heat but in my opinion there are a variety of factors at play here not least natural variability that dictates about every 20 years, the jet stream slows down and we can enjoy a summer usually reserved for climates further south than ours. It is beyond

doubt that at the moment our climate seems to be warming and that greenhouse gases are likely to be the cause but long term effects are still difficult to predict. More heat also means more moisture and heavier rainfall. After 2006 there was debate that hotter summers would now be the norm but as it happened we then had six very poor summers between 2007 and 2012 which gave some areas of the country extensive flooding and temperatures much cooler than this one. So let's enjoy the last month of summer. It has already been a classic and one that will live long in the memory.

**September** was the fifth month in a row to be drier than normal. Only 32 mm of rain fell which was only half the usual total. Rain only fell on 12 days in the month and heavily on just two days. Temperatures were fairly close to normal with the average afternoon maximum being recorded at 18.6°C while the night time minimum of 9.6°C was just a fraction below normal. The overall average was therefore 14.1°C which is the expected figure for this month. The sunshine total was a little below normal with 125 hours being recorded at Mountsorrel.

The month started very warm and sunny with the month's warmest temperature of 24.2°C being recorded on the 2nd. This day also saw the most sunshine at 11.5 hours. There then followed two weeks of mainly dry and cloudy weather with average temperatures. The third week saw a change in the weather as three Atlantic wind storms arrived in a few days. Ex hurricane Helene arrived on the 18th and winds gusted to 40 mph. The next day saw the first named Atlantic storm called Ali and this time winds peaked at 48 mph at East Midlands Airport. The next day the second Atlantic storm Bronagh arrived and this brought us winds gusting up to 43 mph once again and a lot of rain. The 20th saw 16 mm fall which was half the monthly total and our wettest day of the month. The wind and rain did cause some minor damage with a few trees down locally and a little flooding but the dry ground from the summer soaked up most of the rain that fell. The stormy third week soon ended and then the weather changed again as high pressure settled over us in the final week. The week beginning the 24th saw 60 hours of sunshine recorded over 6

consecutive days with temperatures peaking at a balmy 23°C. So as usual September brought us a mixed bag of weather but it was not as warm or settled as many recent Septembers have been. There has been much speculation in the national media about the severity of the coming winter but in reality no one can really know yet. There are too many factors in the mix and its far too early to call. However colder winters tend to come in clusters and last winter was our coolest for five years so personally I am expecting a few colder spells and some snow but it will not be consistently cold. Really severe winters are very rare in this country and only come round every 30 years or so. Most of the outlandish claims come from forecasters working directly for newspapers and there is nothing like a good weather story to increase the circulation figures but if you look back barely 5% of the stories hold any truth whatsoever. So we will have to wait and see nearer the time to see what winter brings us this year.

The most notable feature of **October's** weather was again the lack of rainfall and this has been a recent pattern in our weather stretching back to last May. Only 43 mm of rain fell during the month which is only two thirds of the usual figure and half of this total fell in just one day. Rain fell significantly on just five days in the month with 22 days being completely dry. Temperatures were close to normal with afternoon maximums averaging 14.8°C and the night time minimums 6.5°C. I recorded three air frosts in October. The overall mean of 10.7°C was usual for the time of year. 130 hours of sunshine were logged in Leicestershire which is 15% above normal making it the sunniest October since 2011.

The first ten days of the month were mainly fine and mild with just a little rain. On the 12th an ex-hurricane arrived and this brought some very warm temperatures up to 23°C by day and that night the minimum temperature dropped to just 17.2°C making my warmest October night in over 20 years. The 14th was the wettest day of the month with 21 mm falling or half the month's entire total in just one day. The second half of the month was cooler and the weather turned really cold from the 27th onwards. the 27th saw a maximum of just 5.3°C which was my coldest October day in 20 years and there were

three air frosts with the lowest temp of -2°C recorded on the 31st.

**November** was another drier than average month and continues a pattern that began last May. Once again only 38 mm of rain fell throughout the month which is only just over half of the usual total. There were 17 dry days in the month and rain fell significantly on just five days with the 27th seeing our maximum fall of just 11 mm. High pressure around the British Isles was responsible for the drier than average weather and quite often the high pressure would just be to our south bringing us mild west or SW winds. Indeed afternoon temperatures averaged 11°C which was more than 1°C above normal while night time temperatures were logged at 5.2°C, again 1°C above the normal. The maximum temperature for the month was recorded on the 6th when the mercury reached 14.6°C while our coldest day the 22nd brought us a high of just 4.6°C. I only recorded one air frost during the month when temperatures dropped to -2°C on the 22nd. Winds were mainly light but an Atlantic depression on the 29th gave us a maximum gust of 47 mph which did bring down a dozen trees in the county but other than that damage was fairly limited.

As usual at this time of year, there is much interest in the weather during the coming winter. As I have said many times before, accurate forecasts beyond seven days are impossible but having said that all the trends are pointing to a mixed winter with temperatures slightly below average with some cold snowy periods at times but some milder spells too so hopefully there will be some weather that will please everyone.

**December** was once again a very mild month. Indeed it was the second mildest month in my records going back 20 years. Only 2015 was warmer than this December. Afternoon temperatures were logged at 9.3°C with night time values at 4.3°C. The mean temperature of 6.8°C was 2.2°C above normal. There were only five air frosts and no snowfall was reported at all. It was a very wet month too, as mild SW or W winds brought plenty of cloud and rain for the first three weeks with the final week bringing a return to quiet and settled weather and high pressure. 98 mm of rain fell at my Mountsorrel station which was 60% above the usual total of

61 mm. The wettest day was the 21st when 24 mm of rain fell but due to previous months being quite dry flooding was not too much of a problem with just the usual spots suffering a few difficulties. The first three weeks were mild and damp with our mildest day of 13.4°C being recorded on the 2nd. There was a short, cooler spell with temperatures on the 14th only reaching 3.5°C and that night they fell to the month's coldest of -2.2°C. The 14th was probably the only really cold day in the entire month as mild SW winds maintained themselves most of the time. There were quite strong winds at times too and they peaked with a gust of 41 mph on the 20th. Sunshine figures at my station were below normal at just 40 hours of 73% of normal. So all in all a fairly quiet December weather wise but as it reached its end weather patterns in the high atmosphere began to change and the stratosphere began to warm quickly. The effect of this usually is the winds at the surface tend to turn into the east about a fortnight later. Snow and cold is therefore a distinct possibility later in January as winds come in from a cold continent but this not yet a given!

**Phil Morrish**

### **OTHER RECORDS**

**Records have also been received for:**

Mites, barkflies, grasshoppers & bush-crickets, dragonflies, ants, solitary bees and wasps, mosses, lichens, liverworts, plants and fungi.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*Heritage* has been compiled from records submitted by the following members and friends: H Bradshaw (HB), P J Darby, R D Dandy, M A Finch, G L Finch, D B Forgham (DBF), P H Gamble (PHG), J Graham, S Graham, D Gray, J Green (JG), G. Hall (GH), H Ikin (HI), A T Onions (ATO), R Lockwood, D A Perry (DAP), H Shacklock (HS), J Ward (JW), S F Woodward (SFW).

We are grateful to them all.

**Records for the next quarter should be sent to:**

Helen Ikin, 237 Forest Road, Woodhouse, Loughborough, Leics. LE12 8TZ.

email: helen.canids@btinternet.com

Late records may not be included in the quarterly reports.

Please put moth records on a **separate** sheet from butterflies – they go to different writers – thank you.

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