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CLASSIFIED RECORDS

MAMMALS

The first record of **Hedgehog** was of a deceased individual near Bull in the Hollow, Loughborough on 26 January and may have emerged from hibernation too early. Live singletons were seen in churchyards in Great Dalby in February and Thringstone in March. PJD has had one in her Quorn garden between 3 March and the end of the month.

SFW & HI appeared to be on a **Molehill** hunt during the period and managed to locate ten in widespread locations.

The only **Bat** records of the quarter came from JG's garden where 27 passes of Common Pipistrelle were noted in a 50 minute spell on the evening of 8 March.

The best count of **Brown Hare** was six by SFW & HI at Grimston on 26 March. They also had three at Bisbrooke on New Year's Day. The only other sighting was by JGr & CG at Holwell on the last day of the quarter.

A group of nine **Rabbit** was feeding in a horse paddock near Rothley on 3 February, whilst one or two were noted at four further locations.

Grey Squirrel are always under-recorded and were noted at just eight sites. All counts were of single figures with four at Swithland Wood on 22 February the best. Both MM and JG had up to three in their respective Whitwick and Cropston gardens throughout the quarter.

There is just one record of **Bank Vole** – a single seen by JG & SCG near the bird feeder in the south car park at Swithland Wood on 15 February. A **Brown Rat** was seen close-by a week later.

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Grey Squirrel © Jim Graham

All **Red Fox** sightings were of singles and occurred in January: close to the junction of the A512 and M1 near Shepshed on the 8th; foraging in an arable field near Long Whatton on the 20th, and skulking through ploughed fields adjacent to Bradgate Park on the 22nd.

PJD found two dead **Badger** during the period. The first on the Shepshed Road near Beacon Hill on 6 January, and the second on the A6 near Rothley on 25 February. SFW & HI found two small setts near Preston on 21 March.

The only **Muntjac** spotted was by MM at Charnwood Lodge on 6 February.

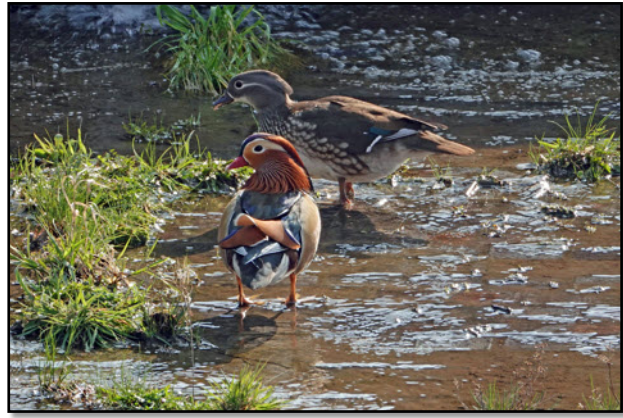
Jim Graham

BIRDS

Mute Swan was recorded from the ten main waters but just two had double-figure counts with maxima of 23 at Groby Pool and 12 Albert Village Lake. A pair was already on a nest in March at Cossington Meadows. Two adult Bewick's Swans were noted at Swithland Reservoir on 16 January.

A single **Pink-footed Goose** was seen near Syston on 4 January. The best count of **Greylag Goose** was over 100 at Thornton Reservoir on 10 January with a similar count of **Canada Goose** at the same site on the same date, the only flock of note. A pair at Albert Village Lake already had six eggs in a nest by 2 February. The usual feral **Barnacle Goose** was moving around Charnwood during January. A single **Egyptian Goose** was at Albert Village Lake on 3 January and four were at Oakthorpe on 26 February.

A **Ruddy Shelduck** was seen at Cossington South Lakes on 28 February whilst a pair of **Shelduck** was noted at nearby Cossington



Mandarins © Jim Graham

Meadows on 30 March. **Mandarin Duck** records came from just four locations with two pairs at Cropston Reservoir during March the highest count. A drake at Thornton Reservoir on 3 March appeared to be paired with a female Mallard. The only double-figure counts of **Wigeon** reported came from two sites with maxima of 15 at Cropston Reservoir on 6 February and ten at Oakthorpe on 26 February.

Double-figure counts of **Gadwall** came from just two sites with maxima of 20 at Cossington Meadows during March and at Cropston Reservoir in January. Pairs indicative of breeding were noted at six locations. The highest counts of **Teal** from seven sites were 20 at Cossington Meadows on 30 March and 14 at Groby Pool on 18 February. Numbers of Mallard continue to be worryingly low with no three-figure counts during this winter period. This highest count was only 46 on the River Lin at Bradgate Park on 13 January. Nearby, 23 were at Cropston Reservoir on 6 March. An amazing count of seven **Garganey** was noted at Groby Pool on 16 March. Possibly from the same party, up to five were at Cossington Meadows in the last week of March. Records of **Shoveler** came from four sites with two double-figure counts with maxima of 27 at Cossington Meadows on 30 March and 14 at Groby Pool on the 27th. **Pochard** was recorded at two localities the highest counts being 23 at Groby Pool on 18 February and ten at Thornton Res on 10 January. By far the best count of **Tufted Duck** came from Swithland Reservoir with 75 on 26 March. A long-staying female Scaup was frequently seen at Swithland Reservoir during the quarter and what may have been the same individual was noted at Groby Pool on 22 February. The only record of **Goldeneye** was of two at Swithland Reservoir on 26 March.

Small numbers of **Goosander** were at four locations, six at Watermead CP Birstall on 2 January being the best count. A female **Ruddy Duck** seen at Albert Village Lake on 3 January was later shot by DEFRA – their eradication scheme is obviously still ongoing.

There were few records received for **Red-legged Partridge**, a count of 11 at Long Whatton in January the highest. The only record of **Grey Partridge** was of a single heard calling from sunflower field at Barton in the Beans on 3 January. One or two **Pheasants** were seen or heard from just nine locations. By far the best counts of **Cormorant** came from Groby Pool peaking at 72 on 3 January.

One or two **Little Egret** were noted throughout the quarter from 11 sites with 12 at Oaks in Charnwood on 3 March was the best count. One or two **Great White Egret** were seen at three sites in the first five weeks of the period. The highest count of **Grey Heron** was nine at Cropston Reservoir on 3 January.



Little Egret © Jim Graham

Little Grebes were noted at just five sites in small numbers but Thornton Reservoir held up to 24 during January. All double-figure counts of **Great Crested Grebe** came from Cropston Reservoir peaking at 32 on 16 January. Up to six were at five other locations.

One or two **Red Kite** were noted in 12 widespread locations through the quarter, with three at Groby Pool on 9 March and five at Bradgate Park on 17 February. **Sparrowhawk** records came from ten locations including four gardens with display noted at Groby during March. **Buzzard** records came from 25 widespread locations, with pairs displaying at a minimum of five sites. The best count was nine

over Desford on 26 March. **Kestrel** was recorded at 14 locations with pairs noted at four. A single female **Merlin** was seen at Swithland Reservoir on 23 January. One or two **Peregrine** were at their usual sites but again the majority of records came from Leicester city centre where a pair were regularly located on the Leicester Cathedral nesting platform through the quarter. The live webcams showed that the pair laid four eggs during March.



Moorhen © Jim Graham

One or two **Water Rail** were reported from five sites during the quarter. Small numbers of **Moorhen** came from ten sites with no double-figure counts, the highest being nine on the canal at Mountsorrel on 30 March. Numbers of wintering **Coot** were low with no three-figure counts, the largest being just 85 at Albert Village Lake on 2 February.

Oystercatcher were noted at four sites, mainly one or two but four were at Cossington Meadows on 30 March. A single and early migrant, **Little Ringed Plover** was at Brascote Pit on 26 March. The largest flock of **Lapwing** from just three sites, was 32 at Cropston Reservoir on both 9 and 16 January. A wet area of Sence Valley FP was the only location for **Jack Snipe** with one on 9 January and two on the 30th. The same location held the largest count of **Snipe** with 16 there the same day. One or two were at three other sites. There were two records of single **Woodcock**, at Ibstock on 24 January and Cloud Wood on 25 February. A single **Curlew** was heard calling at Lubenham on 29 March.

Four locations held **Black-headed Gull** with the largest count being 387 roosting at Cropston Reservoir on 6 February. A first-winter Mediterranean Gull was at Watermead CP South on 2 January. There were no double-figure counts of **Common Gull**, the largest being just

eight at Cropston Reservoir on 6 March. The same site had the largest count of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** with just seven on 16 January. In contrast, 34 **Herring Gull** were at Groby Pool on 1 January with 23 at Swithland Reservoir on 26 March and 22 at Cropston Reservoir on 6 February the only others with double figures.

There were records of **Stock Dove** from 14 locations most of eight or fewer but 59 in fields near Thrussington on 30 March was good count, whilst 16 were at Groby Pool on the 11th. The highest count of **Woodpigeon** was 520 in fields around Cossington village the same day.

As usual, most **Collared Dove** records came from Members' gardens with just four at Holwell in March surprisingly the best count.

Two **Ring-necked Parakeet** were in Evington, a well-known area of the city for records of this species.

Single **Barn Owl** were noted at Cossington Meadows on 17 January and Holwell on 25 February, whilst most records of **Little Owl** came from Bradgate Park. Calling **Tawny Owl** were heard from seven sites through the quarter.

Kingfisher records came from seven sites, all singles other than a pair courtship feeding on the River Lin in Bradgate Park on 19 March. Records of **Green Woodpeckers** came from 11 locations, mainly of one or two, but at least seven were in Bradgate Park on 5 March. **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** were at 14, with pairs or drumming noted at seven of these.

Magpie were reported from 16 locations in small numbers but at least 12 were at Albert Village Lake on 2 February. One or two **Jay** were reported from 11 localities but a squabbling group of four were among six found at Beacon Hill on 29 March. Flocks of **Jackdaw** were low and none in excess of 200, the maxima at Bradgate Park in February. The only other three-figure counts were 150 at Cossington and 140 at Thrussington both on 30 March. Four **Rookeries** were found with a total of 137 nests, 57 at Hoby being the largest. The highest count of **Carrion Crows** from 18 sites was 500 in fields at Holwell on 3 February. One or two **Raven** were reported from 12 widespread sites with display at five.

Small numbers of **Goldcrests** were reported from ten locations, with the highest count of six at both Bradgate Park in January and Swithland Wood on in March.

The largest counts of **Blue Tit** came from Swithland Wood with maxima of 48 on 8 March. A total of 40 at Charnwood Lodge were trapped during a ringing session in January and included 11 re-traps. Numbers of **Great Tit** were not as high but Swithland Wood held the highest count where 19 were recorded on 29 March. Double-figure counts also came from Bradgate Park and Swithland Reservoir. **Coal Tit** was noted at a respectable 16 sites with double-figure counts at two with maxima of 11 at Swithland Wood on 29 March and ten at Bradgate Park on two dates in January. There were no **Willow Tit** noted at the usual Kelham Bridge stronghold, whilst one or two **Marsh Tit** were found at just three sites including Charnwood Lodge where one was re-trapped during two ringing sessions in February.

Most **Skylark** records were of single figures from 14 sites, but 41 were in fields at Sence Valley FP on 9 January. Eleven at Bradgate Park on 19 March included seven singing.

A single **Sand Martin** passed through Groby Pool on 16 March but there were no further records until small numbers on 30 March at both Cossington Meadows and Mountsorrel. No **House Martin** were seen by Members during the period.

Records of **Long-tailed Tit** came from 17 widespread sites with double-figure counts at four, the highest being a flock of 30 at Swithland Reservoir on 27 January. Eight caught in a ringing session at Charnwood Lodge included seven new and one re-trap. Pairs were noted at seven sites during the breeding season and nests were found at both Swithland Wood and Swithland Reservoir during March.

One or two **Cetti's Warbler** were seen or heard at seven usual haunts, but at least six were in full voice at Cossington Meadows on 30 March. The only overwintering **Chiffchaff** was seen at Ibstock on 24 January. There were no February records and one singing at Thornton Reservoir on 4 March was the first from 21 locations during the month. There were four overwintering **Blackcaps** reported. The first

mention of singing was on 24 March at The Outwoods with a total of six more from three other locations by the end of the month.

One or two **Nuthatch** were seen or heard in ten locations but 17, including nine in song, at Swithland Wood on 29 March. **Treecreeper** was noted at ten localities with pairs or song noted at most from 14 January onwards. Four distinct pairs were seen at Swithland Wood on 15 March and the same site held the largest count, 11 on 10 February. **Wren** records came from 21 widespread sites, with song noted from 22 February. The highest count was 21 at Bradgate Park in January, with 16 at Mountsorrel and 11 at Swithland Wood both during March the only other double-figure counts.

The only three-figure counts of **Starling** were from Bradgate Park with maximum of 250 on 5 February. Double-figure counts came from three other sites.

Records of **Blackbird** came from 24 locations but, surprisingly, only four gardens. Most counts were of single figures but 16, including eight singing, were noted at Swithland Wood on 29 March and 12 at Thornton Reservoir on 17 February. It was another poor year for flocks of wintering thrushes. The best count of **Fieldfare** was just 100 in fields near Rearsby Mill on 30 March and 200 **Redwing** at Cropston on 9 January. **Song Thrush** was noted at 18 locations with singing at 15. The highest count was six at Beacon Hill on 8 February. Records of **Mistle Thrush** came from eleven sites with a minimum of four at Bradgate Park.

Robin was recorded at 19 locations. The most significant counts came from Swithland Wood with a high of 46 on 8 March which included 25 in song. **Dunnock** was found at 14



Dunnock © Jim Graham

locations, mostly in ones or twos with seven at Mountsorrel on 30 March. Singing was first noted on 2 February. Wintering **Stonechat** were recorded at three locations in January and February with possibly three pairs around Bradgate Park.



House Sparrow © Jim Graham

There were few records for **House Sparrow** from just eight sites, all of single figures other than 14 at Cossington on 30 March. There were no records of **Tree Sparrow** in the period.

Most of the ten **Grey Wagtail** locations involved water, pairs were noted at four. There was no indication of any wintering roosts of **Pied Wagtail** from any of the usual sites during the period with 15 at Cropston on 3 January the best count.

The only notable flocks of **Meadow Pipit** came from Bradgate Park with a maximum of 27 on 5 February. At least seven were in song at the same location on 26 March.

Counts of **Chaffinch** in excess of ten came from five sites, the highest of which was a flock of 145 at Bradgate Park on 19 February. The next best was just 25 at nearby Cropston Reservoir on two dates in January. Song was first noted at the same location on 26 February.

It was a reasonable **Brambling** winter with sightings from 11 widespread locations. Most counts were in single figures, but long-staying flocks of around 300 were noted at both Barton in the Beans in January and the Cossington Meadows area in February. Likewise, most **Greenfinch** records were of 14 or fewer but 200 were at Barton in the Beans on 3 January associating with the Brambling. **Goldfinch** records came from 16 sites with most flocks of 50 or fewer, however 145 were in a Holwell

garden on 30 January, 58 at Ratcliffe on the Wreake and 56 at Bradgate Park on 19 February. The first in song was noted on 19 March. Wintering flocks of **Siskin** came from 12 locations with counts of 50 or more from just two, 150 at Sence Valley FP on 24 January and 50 at Great Casterton on 5 March. Males in song were heard at two locations in February. There were few records of **Linnet**, mostly single figures, with 106 at Ratcliffe on the Wreake on 30 March and 25 at Kelham Bridge the best counts. All counts of **Lesser Redpoll** were in single figures with nine at Kelham Bridge on 24 January and seven at Swithland Wood on 22 February the best. A flock of ten **Crossbill** were seen flying between Sliding Stone Spinney and Coppice Wood at Bradgate Park on 5 March. Small numbers of **Bullfinch** were noted at just three sites.

Yellowhammer records came from six sites with three having double-figure counts, 20 at Newtown Linford, 16 at nearby Bradgate Park and ten at Long Lane GP, Kegworth. One or two **Reed Bunting** were at seven locations with ten at Mountsorrel in March.

Jim Graham

BUTTERFLIES

The earliest butterfly record this year was a **Small Tortoiseshell** *Aglais urticae* on 26 February at Donisthorpe (SFW & HI). This species was seen regularly in this quarter in 15 different locations until the 28 March. I saw 14 at Charnwood Lodge, on 19 March and ten were noted by SFW on 19 March at Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood, Normanton-le-Heath and ten were also observed at Nanpantan by HG on the 22nd.



Small Tortoiseshell © Jim Graham

A sighting of another of the hibernating butterflies, **Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta* was made by MM at Charnwood Lodge on the Laundry Cottage lawn on 27 February. That was the only observation of this species in this quarter.

Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni* was seen in ten different places from 10 March to the end of the month. The **Comma** *Polygonia c-album* was noted from 15 March in ones and twos at four sites.



Peacock © Jim Graham

There were a few sightings of **Peacock** *Aglais io* from 19 March in six locations. I saw four at Charnwood Lodge on that date. The rest of the observations were of singletons.

Thank you to those who sent in their records.

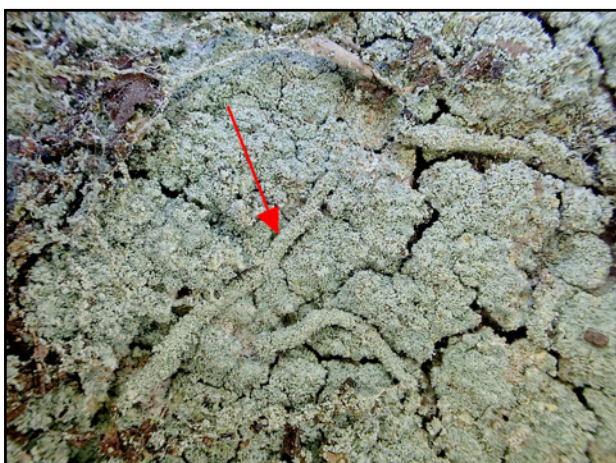
Helen Shacklock

MOTHS

With a few extra recorders, we seem to have made the best of a dry and with a few relatively warm nights for the first three months. We have ended up with 11 of us recording 1764 individuals of 66 species, so that is not too bad at all for our first quarter. It is really interesting now the increased number of micro moth species that are continually being recorded on almost every set of data that comes in. I guess this is in no small way due to the amazing Field Guide to the Micro-Moths of Great Britain and Ireland by Sterling, Parsons and Lewington. This quarter we had 30 species, several of which will have overwintered as adults.

Starting with the micros, a single **Eriocrania sangii** was attracted to light and

identification was by dissection. *Stigmella aurella* was easily the most abundantly recorded species all as leaf mines occur on Bramble. The other species of leaf miner on Bramble is *Coptotriche marginea* which had just a few records. The Psychidae are an interesting family of moths with equally interesting lifestyles as they all make portable cases out of tiny pieces of vegetation, insect remains and other debris. Three species were recorded and these were *Luffia ferchaultella* which in itself is a bit of a puzzle, not only is it parthenogenetic (egg can develop without being fertilized by a sperm) and wingless, but also it is now thought it may be a parthogenetic form of *Luffia lapidella*. The wingless female moves around mainly with a case made of and feeds on lichens and algae. Another family member *Psyche casta* constructs a case of fine and short pieces of grass stems. These cases are often found on tree trunks and also on the dry-stone walls over the Charnwood Forest. Both species were found at Nanpantan during February. Apart from a possible 1907 record of *Infurcitinea argentimaculella* it's only within the last two or three years that it has been re-found, and as far as I know all recent records are from lichen covered dry-stone walls again on the Charnwood Forest, with the latest record from Charnwood Lodge. This species constructs a fairly long, sinuate lichen-covered tube fixed to the lichen and algae-covered stones.



Infurcitinea argentimaculella © Graham Finch

Mid-March produced the only records of *Ypsolopha ustella* at Charnwood Lodge and a single **Leek Moth** *Acrolepiopsis assectella* was attracted to the light trap in a Loughborough garden a week later, also a single *Acrolepia autumnitella* was found during the day at Great

Merrible Wood. Sightings of *Diurnea fagella* were widespread and started from the middle of March, this is another species where the females have reduced wings and are only capable of crawling. A total of four species of *Agonopterix* were recorded, singles of *A. subpropinquella* at Charnwood Lodge and *A. arenella* in a Loughborough garden. Widespread *A. heracliana* seemed to pop up everywhere and larvae of *A. assimilella* were found at Loughborough and in the Outwoods. The only record of *Scrobipalpa costella* was of a singleton from Nanpantan in mid-March. A nice find of a tenanted *Coleophora ibipennella* case on an oak leaf on the ground during a moth trapping night at Nanpantan was a surprise, plus the leaf mines of *Elachista regificella* on Great Woodrush were recorded from Jubilee Woods and Kinchley Lane. A Loughborough garden held the monopoly on all the Plume Moths recorded this quarter with, two **Twenty-plumed Moth** *Alucita hexadactyla*, plus singles of **Beautiful Plume** *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* and **Common Plume** *Emmelina monodactyla*. A single *Acleris cristana* was found at Nanpantan and was the sole record for this species. More records for *Pammene giganteana* came from Nanpantan and Ulverscroft and sightings of this species really do seem to be getting a little more frequent. The cocoons of the beautiful *Pammene regiana* were found in abundance and widespread on the Charnwood Forest, and also at Rutland Water under the flaking bark of mature Sycamore trees.

Moving on from the micros, a moth that is always a pleasure to see is **Yellow Horned** *Achyla flavicornis*. Apart from being a lovely moth, it has such a short flight period that it can easily be missed if the weather is not favourable. All nights when a light trap was operated from late February through to the end of March attracted good numbers, although not quite reaching double figures on any one night. The Rose-feeding **Shoulder Stripe** *Earophila badiata* was at various Charnwood locations mid- to late March, and **Red-Green Carpet** *Chloroclysta siterata* was still widespread at the end of March. It was nice to see **Mottled Grey** *Colostygia multistrigaria* reported from several sites in mid-March. Everyone's favourites, the Pugs, **Double-striped Pug** *Gymnoscelis rufifasciata* and **Brindled Pug** *Eupithecia*



Oak Beauty © Graham Finch

abbreviata were both widely reported and the first **Early Thorn *Selenia dentaria*** started to appear from mid-March. The most widely-reported macro moth was **March Moth *Alsophila aescularia*** appearing in early February through to the end of March. All the regular species that start to appear from early February, if not a little bit earlier, were on time: **Pale Brindled Beauty *Phigalia pilosaria***, **Oak Beauty *Biston strataria***, **Spring Usher *Agriopsis leucophaearia***, **Dotted Border *Agriopsis marginaria*** and **Engrailed *Ectropis crepuscularia*** all seen in good numbers and widespread. Sandhills Lodge produced the first **Early Moth *Theria primaria*** and **Muslin Footman *Nudaria mundana*** larvae were found on the dry-stone walls at Nanpantan. Egg batches of **Vapourer *Orgyia antiqua*** were found on a couple of occasions at Nanpantan. The first



Oak Nycteoline © Graham Finch

Early Grey *Xylocampa areola* were on the wing mid-March. The ever present **Chestnut *Conistra vaccinii*** continued to the end of March but the only records of **Pale Pinion *Lithophane socia*** were from gardens in Loughborough and Whitwick. All the usual Orthosias were out including an impressive 125 individuals at Nanpantan mid-March, although the one report of **Powdered Quaker *Orthosia gracilis*** was from a Whitwick garden. Finishing up with **Oak Nycteoline *Nycteola revayana*** but this time from several sites, including five individuals at Charnwood Lodge mid-March.

Many thanks to our contributors for a fine effort at what can be a lean, but exciting time of the year.

Graham and Anona Finch

BEETLES

This particular first quarter has been better than most, as again we had the pleasure of having Steve Lane with us on our now well-planned regular visits to Rutland Water. We had originally planned these visits to be on a monthly basis, but it is not quite going to work out that way, so we decided to keep an eye on the weather and choose the best-looking day every 6-8 weeks or so. Altogether for this quarter we had nine recorders, we managed 344 records for 863 individual beetles of 176 species, so a little down on last quarter, but still excellent for this time of year. No deliberate effort was made to look for water beetles and the few records we have are from pitfall traps or the occasional visitor to the moth traps. Carabids and Staphs 32 and 60 species respectively, are always going to make up the bulk of records. Added to these are 11 species of Ladybirds, 13 Chrysomelids and 19 Weevils. It was pleasing to see records from a wider area and not relying mainly on the few regular sites that get visited.

So, in checklist order. One of the only true water beetles reported was ***Illybius fenestratus*** where several individuals were attracted to moth traps at Nanpantan. We are then straight into the Carabids, nine species of ***Bembidion*** were found, all relatively common, as were the rest of the Carabids. The other two water beetles recorded were ***Anacaena globosus*** from

Rutland Water in late February and *A. limbata* from Shenton Estates in late March. Both the *Anacaena* species are tiny and belong in the sub-family Hydrophilinae, all the species in this sub-family are aquatic but several live along the margins of various water bodies.

The Staphs tend to get short shrift and are not as popular as they ought to be. It is true many are very difficult to seemingly impossible, but there is also a huge number that are no more difficult than any of the other families. You also have the “convenient” fact that they can be found just about everywhere and it is almost impossible to go out and not find a couple of species any time of the year. Therefore, it is no surprise that this family always have the highest number of species found in any quarter. It is also the family, with a bit of effort, that you are most likely to find something special. With that in mind, I would like to highlight a few of the more noteworthy members of this family: a single *Tychius niger* found at Rutland Water (RW from now on), last seen in VC55 in 2009; two *Tachyporus atriceps* at RW, last seen in 1995; *Cypha pulicaria* just a single previous record in 1994 from Croxton Park; *Myllaena infuscata* at RW, last seen in 2004; *Leptusa ruficollis* at both RW and Nanpantan, last seen in 1997 from Launde Wood; *Atheta ravilla* at RW, last seen in 2001; *Badura cauta* at RW, only four previous records and last seen in 1996; *Falagria sulcata* at RW, last seen in 1994, and finally for the Staphs *Stenus formicetorum* at RW, just ten previous records last seen in 2004.

This next species has a really interesting history in VC55. There are three records of *Phloiophilus edwardsii* from the mid-1800s, and then nothing until Tony Drane found it at Stanford Park in 2001. Then again nothing until a singleton was beaten from fungi-covered branches of an old oak at Spring Hill near Whitwick in 2008. A concentrated effort was made in the winter of 2021 when singles were found on fungi-covered branches at Shenton Estates, Grace Dieu Wood and in numbers, about 15 individuals, in Cherry Wood at RW. This quarter we have found it at Nanpantan and Hambleton Wood at RW. The adults and larvae are mycophagous and favour the fungus *Peniophora quercina* usually found on the underside of dead branches of oak trees, it has

also been found on *Phlebia radiata*. It is stated to be a ‘Notable B’ rare saproxylic beetle, but when found can sometimes be abundant. Although it can be found in any month of the year, September to March seem to be the most likely months to see this species and as all our records are from September to February, this seems to hold true. It is definitely a species worth spending some time looking for in all of our deciduous woodland.



Biphyllus lunatus © Graham Finch

Continuing with the saproxylic theme, singletons of *Biphyllus lunatus* plus *Rhizophagus dispar* were found at RW, *R. ferrugineus* at Bradgate Park, and the **Graveyard Beetle** *R. parallelcollis* was found in a subterranean pitfall trap at Bradgate Park. As mentioned, 11 species of Ladybirds were reported including all the usual ones, but nice to have records of **Pine Ladybird** *Exochomus quadripustulatus* from Grange Wood and QE Jubilee Woods mid-March. Another group of small beetles associated with fungi are the Ciidae, all are small to minute and some can be a challenge to get down to species level. We had five species recorded this quarter all from either RW or Nanpantan. *Cis bilamellatus* is probably the easiest to recognise having a broad forward pointing plate on the pronotum and one at the front of the head. On the other hand *C. boleti* is very plain looking with no obvious identifying characters. *C. festivus* adults were beaten from dead branches. Close relative *Ennearthron cornutum* has only three previous records: 1895 from Bradgate Park, 1984 from Park Wood and 2021 from RW, so the records of singletons at Nanpantan and RW were very welcome. Not seen since 1999, a single *Octotemnus glabriculus* from Hambleton Wood was a good record for us. With 12 previous records, *Orthocis alni* was found at two different sites at RW in late February. The next species *Synchita*



Synchita undata © Graham Finch

undata was added to the VC55 list in March 2014 when an adult was found at Croft Hill. A flurry of records followed in February of this year comprising 12 adults from Nanpantan, two from Armley Wood RW and three from Hambleton Wood. This species is usually found under the bark of Sycamore which has been infected by the fungus *Biscogniauxia corticalis*.



Omonadus bifasciatus © Graham Finch

A short rummage in a dung heap at Nanpantan turned up one of the ant-like flower beetles **Omonadus bifasciatus** in early March, with six previous records and last seen in 1987, given nationally as “very local in C & S England”. A quite early **Anaspis maculata** was beaten from branches in Hambleton Wood late February. For us, these normally start showing from mid-March onwards. The only Longhorn beetle found was a single **Pogonocherus hispidulus** from Hambleton Wood in late February.

The Chrysomelidae did reasonably okay and the following species was noticeably everywhere last quarter and was no different this quarter. **Aphthona euphorbiae**, a small bluish Flea Beetle with yellowish legs, apart from being everywhere, hundreds of individuals were counted covering the whole three months of this first quarter. The last species seems to have taken over from **Psylliodes chrysocephala** which

is normally the most frequently recorded Chrysomelid, but only a singleton was found at RW in late February.

This now leaves us with the Weevils and I will finish by picking out a few of the more notable species. Singletons of **Cramp-ball Fungus Weevil *Platyrhinus resinosus*** at Nanpantan and its close relative ***Platystomos albinus*** from Hambleton Wood both in late February. The latter whose larvae feed in galleries in dead often fungoid wood is still quite a rare beetle in VC55 with just seven previous records and first added to the county list 2011. Another species with few records, five in total, ***Eutrichapion vorax*** one of many of the Apionidae whose larvae feed on various Vetches and Vetchlings, several individuals were found in Armley Wood at RW. Sieving *Deschampsia* tussocks at the water’s edge at Barn Hill at RW produced two individuals of ***Thryogenes nereis*** a true wetland species associated with Common Spike-rush. A solitary adult of ***Microplontus melanostigma*** was swept from low vegetation at Nanpantan. Associated with Mayweeds, it should not be a scarce as it seems to be with just 12 previous records and last seen in 1999. Another wetland species ***Pelenomus canaliculatus*** associated with Water-milfoils, a singleton was sieved from *Deschampsia* tussock at RW late February. There are only two previous records for this species, the latest being in 1935 from Swithland Reservoir.



Acalles misellus © Graham Finch

I will wind-up this quarter with the rather smart saproxylic ***Acalles misellus***, a species found on dead branches and twigs in woodland, a singleton was beaten from such a habitat in Armley Wood at Rutland Water in late February.

Many thanks to all who sent in records which made this quarter so interesting.

Graham Finch

FUNGI

I am writing this section as an enthusiast but I have reference to some expert help. With record contributions from Hazel Graves (HG), Graham Fisher (GF) and myself, some 25 species have been recorded in this quarter.

Gill Fungi (Agarics)

Velvet Shank *Flammulina velutipes* was observed in three locations: Nanpantan, Thornton and Albert Village. Quite a distinctive gill fungus with a white or cream fruit body with a tough stem, the cap is often slightly slimy to touch after rain. Two Oysterlings were reported, **Bitter Oysterling *Panellus stipticus*** and **Variable Oysterling *Crepidotus variabilis*** at Poultney Wood, Felicity's Wood and Charnwood Lodge. They are from two different groups of fungi but both occur on dead wood or stems and are sessile lacking a long stem.

Wood-inhabiting 'Bracket Fungi'

Birch Polypore *Piptoporus betulinus*, also known as Razor Strop Fungus after its favoured use as a sharpening aid, was reported in many locations across Charnwood Forest as it is very common. **Blushing Bracket *Daedaleopsis confragosa*** was sighted at Charnwood Lodge and Beacon Hill. **Turkeytail *Trametes versicolor*** is another common fungus recorded from Charnwood Lodge, Prestwold, The Outwoods, Watermead and Sandhills Lodge. **Chicken of the Woods *Laetiporus sulphureus*** and **Alder Bracket *Mensularia radiata*** were located at Watermead and Thornton Reservoir respectively. Last in this section is **Tinder Bracket *Fomes fomentarius*** (also known as Hoof Fungus) which was found at Beacon Hill.

Wood-inhabiting 'Resupinate Fungi'

In the large 'Resupinate Fungi' group (a fruiting body consisting of a fertile surface pressed onto the wood without very large brackets) there were three reports. The purple-coloured **Silver Leaf Fungus *Chondrostereum purpureum***, which causes this disease of Plums, was located at Watermead by HG. **Hairy Curtain Crust *Stereum hirsutum*** and **Elder Whitewash *Hyphodontia sambuci*** were found at Beacon Hill, Jubilee Woods and Bardon.

Jelly Fungi

Last of the big groups for this report are the 'Jellies', starting with **Jelly Ear *Auricularia auricula-judae***, possibly the most often recorded, which was found at six different sites always on wood. **Leafy Brain *Tremella foliacea***, a parasitic fungus on Hairy Curtain Crust was at Charnwood Lodge. **Yellow Brain *Tremella mesenterica*** is another parasitic fungus found especially on Gorse and Hazel.

Puffballs and their Allies

This group is found on rotting wood and in soil. HG reported both **Mosaic Puffball *Lycoperdon utriforme*** at Charnwood Lodge on soil and **Stump Puffball *Lycoperdon pyriforme*** near Deans Lane in January. The Mosaic Puffball is stemless or with short stem-like base, and the Stump Puffball has a longer stem with a spiny or warty covering of the pear-shaped leathery spore case. This should not be confused with Common Puffball *Lycoperdon perlatum* which is probably the commonest British Puffball. It has a long stem and a rounded, leathery, tough spore case with brown spines and is found on acidic soils within woodland.

Other Fungi Groups

Species of other groups that fall out of the mainstream reporting include ***Illosporopsis christiansenii*** which was spotted by HG at Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood and Albert Village Lake. This lichenicolous fungus (a fungus which is a parasite on lichens) is readily seen due to its red colour. It is often seen on rocks where bird droppings can be found. ***Puccinia arenariae*** is a rarely-recorded plant-gall causer most often noted on Red Champion. Lastly, **Alder Tongue *Taphrinaalni*** is a fungal plant pathogen which induces distortion of female Alder catkins. It was seen at Albert Village Lake.

Margaret McLoughlin

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FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

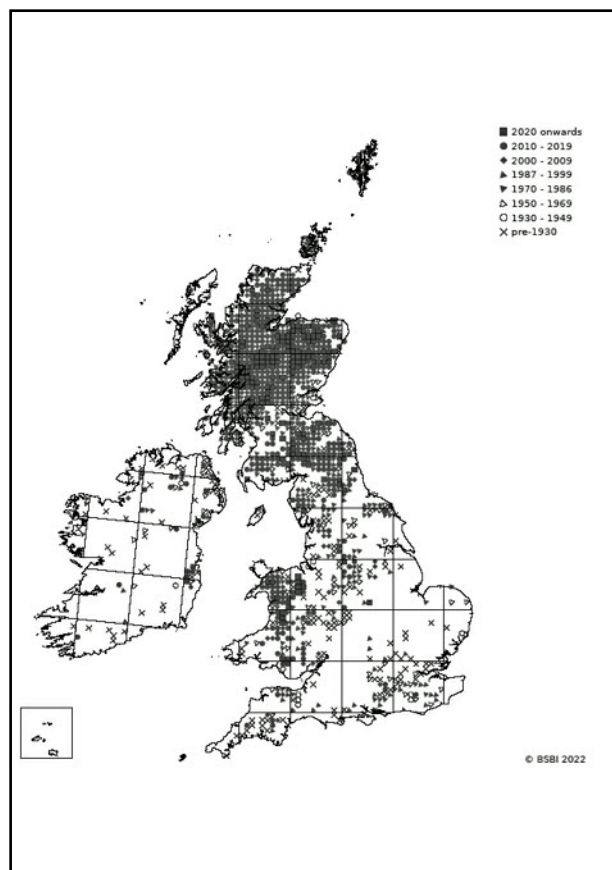
Botanising in the first quarter seems to be a minority interest, as only three members have sent in any records. Rather few records are local because all nearby sites are already well botanised, so SFW and HI have been travelling as far as Rutland to improve VC55 coverage. It would be a mistake to think there is nothing of interest around until spring, as demonstrated by the first and last entries. All record details have been accepted by the Vice-county Recorder Geoffrey Hall and uploaded to the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) database.

First in the systematic order and certainly first in terms of significance is a record made during the LNC walk to Beacon Hill on 2 March. One plant of *Lycopodium clavatum* Stag's-horn Clubmoss was found by SFW on a mossy bank near the summit. This species had not been seen at Beacon Hill since 1902! The 1933 *Flora of Leicestershire & Rutland* (Horwood & Gainsborough) lists eight localities, all in Charnwood Forest, but the last survivor was recorded from Bardon Hill in 1973. Clubmosses do resemble true mosses, but they are more closely related to ferns. They are generally plants of heaths, moors and mountains (see



Stag's-horn Clubmoss © Steve Woodward

map), although they were formerly thinly scattered across the lowlands. Searches were made this year at Beacon Hill and Bardon Hill for more plants, but without success. On the basis of a single plant, it is impossible to know whether a small population has been hanging on, hiding among the *Polytrichum* mosses, or whether a spore has germinated.



Map: *Lycopodium clavatum* Stag's-horn Clubmoss distribution. The Beacon Hill record is the lonely square spot in the midlands. Courtesy of the BSBI.

Many ferns can be identified in winter with the help of the excellent new book *Britain's Ferns* (Merryweather, 2020). Records of 11 species were received, including **Rustyback** *Asplenium ceterach* at South Luffenham. As reported previously, most of the *Aspleniums* were found on village walls.

Conifers too can be recorded in winter, although I struggle to identify some pines (*Pinus*), firs (*Abies*) and those with scale-like leaves (*Cupressus*, etc.) – I blame the inadequate tree identification books! **Wellingtonia** *Sequoiadendron giganteum* is straightforward, whose stature makes this tree distinctive at a distance. One of the biggest is surely the one at Launde Abbey, a perfect, lofty cone that has so far avoided lightning strikes.

The first flowers of **Marsh-marigold** *Caltha palustris* appeared in March (despite its alternative name of Mayblobs). They were seen at Glaston, Great Dalby, Tickencote Mill and Preston. Also in the Buttercup family, **Stinking Hellebore** *Helleborus foetidus* flowers very early and was seen on a roadside verge (as a garden escape) at Barrowden. In the same family is **Lesser Celandine** *Ficaria verna*, whose yellow flowers were prominent this year (reported from 20 localities).

As a keen contributor to atlas data, I monitor what needs to be re-found in my local squares. I was aware that **Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage** *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* had not been recorded in tetrad SK50E for a long while. I was delighted to find it on the banks of the Slate Brook at Grey Lodge, Groby. Less welcome was a sighting of **New Zealand Pigmyweed** *Crassula helmsii*, a very invasive alien in the family Crassulaceae that infests the shallows of ponds. It turned up at Thrussington. While searching walls, various succulent plants in the same family will be encountered, notably the Sedums. With practice, the leaf shapes can be recognised. One of the less common ones that occurs in a few Rutland villages (including Glaston) is **Thick-leaved Stonecrop** *Sedum dasyphyllum*, with rugby-ball-shaped leaves that are grey-green, often with a pink flush.



Thick-leaved Stonecrop © Steve Woodward

During the Lit. and Phil. meeting at Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood on 19 March, I fished out of the lake a specimen of **Spiked Water-milfoil** *Myriophyllum spicatum*. It seems to be common, but likely under-recorded as it hides under the surface. The whorled, pinnate leaves are sufficient for identification.

Spotted Medick *Medicago arabica* can be distinguished from the much commoner Black Medick *Medicago lupulina* by the dark spots on its clover-like leaflets. It seems to be on the increase and during this quarter we located it at Tickencote, by the OK Diner (see below).

Our Beacon Hill excursion (previously mentioned) found a bush of **Firethorn** *Pyracantha coccinea* by a stone wall. Some of the leaves were mined by the moth *Phyllonorycter leucographella*.



Small Nettle © Steve Woodward

The distribution of **Common Nettle** *Urtica dioica* can be used as measure of survey coverage (as it ought to be almost everywhere) and there are records for 21 localities in this quarter. **Small Nettle** *Urtica urens*, however, is far less common but perhaps under-recorded. Indeed, it is usually smaller, but size is not a reliable discriminator. I look at the teeth on the leaf – they are relatively larger and fewer on Small Nettle. Also, its lower leaves have longer stalks and a different shape. Having said this, I sometimes cannot decide whether I am looking at a baby Common Nettle or a Small Nettle (so neither gets recorded). Allotments seem to favour Small Nettle.

The big leathery leaves with pointed lobes belonging to **Red Oak** *Quercus rubra* are slow to rot and can be used to detect this American tree during the winter months. We recorded it at seven localities.

I expected the area around Cadeby Quarry to be well-recorded, so it was a surprise to add some “easy” woodland plants along a public footpath, including **Wood-sorrel** *Oxalis acetosella*. This is a fairly good indicator of ancient woodland, locally.



Sweet Violet var. *subcarnea* © Steve Woodward



Sweet Violet var. *dumetorum* © Steve Woodward

BSBI Handbook No. 17: *Violas of Britain and Ireland* (Porter and Foley, 2017) covers violets in great detail and allows varieties of **Sweet Violet *Viola odorata*** to be named. The usual violet-coloured flower belongs to var. *odorata*, but SFW and HI found two other varieties at Barrow upon Soar: var. *subcarnea* at King George V Recreation Ground and var. *dumetorum* at Holy Trinity churchyard (and seven other sites, see photos). Of the two kinds of Dog-violet, the only records received were for **Early Dog-violet *Viola reichenbachiana***, the one with the dark spur at the back of the flower.

Spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola* is scarcely seen in West Leicestershire and the three records are from Rutland at Tickencote and Great Casterton. It seems to be frequent in this area. The flowers of this small shrub are green and inconspicuous, but the dark green, evergreen leaves can be recognised in woods or hedges.

My walk to Slate Brook at Grey Lodge, Groby (previously mentioned) produced another update for one of my squares: **Large Bitter-cress *Cardamine amara***. The white

flowers are larger than the two “weedy” *Cardamine* species (*flexuosa* and *hirsuta*) but not so large as Cuckoo-flower *C. pratensis*. Large Bitter-cress is usually beside water – a good place to admire it is the River Lin at the Newtown Linford entrance to Bradgate Park.

Little Mouse-ear *Cerastium semidecandrum* is a tiny annual with rather feeble, white flowers whose petals are shorter than the sepals. A hand lens is needed to check that the bracts have thin, papery tips. It is important to look at the bracts, not the sepals. The plant grows in places with minimum soil that soon dry out and by spring, it will have vanished. Little Mouse-ear was found near the Bradgate ruins and on the kerbside by the Barrowden bus stop.

Corn Spurrey *Spergula arvensis* is an arable weed, formerly common but no longer, thanks to herbicides. A bit of disturbed land near Cadeby Quarry has a good population. A return visit in May was rewarded by the sight of its flowers, like little white stars.



Abraham-Isaac-Jacob © Steve Woodward

Those who paid attention during Sunday school may be able to explain the English name of **Abraham-Isaac-Jacob *Trachystemon orientalis***. This had escaped from a Lyddington garden and has colonised the bank of a ditch near the playing fields. This appears to be the first record for Rutland. **Cotton Thistle *Onopordum acanthium*** was an unusual find on a roadside verge in Market Harborough. Even without the flowers, the dense, white “cotton” on the stem and leaves allow identification.

One of the earliest yellow composites to flower (i.e. in the family Asteraceae, formerly known as Compositae) is **Colt's-foot *Tussilago***



Colt's-foot © Steve Woodward

farfara. HG reported some from Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood on 13 March. SFW & HI found it at Market Harborough on 17 February, then at six further localities.

Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum* leaves were found by SFW on the verge of the A453 near Diseworth. I guess few passers-by will brush against the plant here, but at other sites this monstrous umbellifer with irritating bristles needs to be kept in check in the interest of public safety, as it can cause horrible blisters. A more benign umbellifer is the wild **Carrot *Daucus carota***, which I found on verges at Market Harborough, Tickencote and M1 Donington Services. At all of these sites I suspected the carrots had originated from a "wild flower mix" as they were among other species that did not quite fit in with local semi-natural vegetation. In the *Flora of Leicestershire* (Primavesi & Evans, 1988), most Carrot records were from railways, but I doubt that this is still the case, since working railways are now sprayed with herbicide and closed railways are mostly scrubbed over.



Bee Orchid rosette © Steve Woodward

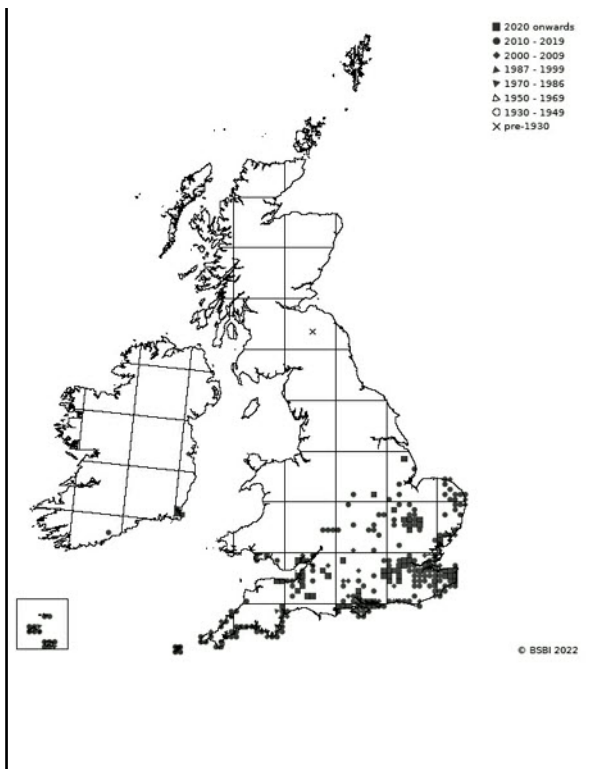
Rosettes of **Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*** were found at Kegworth, Barrowden, East Midlands Airport and the OK Diner at Tickencote. No doubt they will all be mown down before flowering. Incidentally, the OK Diner is a good breakfast stop when travelling to Norfolk and there are other interesting flowers around the car park.

Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis* is capable of spreading from where it was originally planted, and we usually regard it is as a wild plant on road verges, etc. (21 places). But not all snowdrops are this species: we found an expanding colony of **Greater Snowdrop *Galanthus elwesii*** on both sides of the road at Barrowden.



Greater Snowdrop © Steve Woodward

The last family in the systematic list is Poaceae, the grasses. Most species flower in early summer and the list for the first quarter of the year is consequently short. **Crested Dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*** is common in sheep pastures but it appears that sheep avoid eating the flowering shoots, which remain stiffly upright through the winter. The form of the spike is distinctive, so we were able to find it at six sites. **Annual Meadow-grass *Poa annua*** is abundant in disturbed places, particularly along the edges of footpaths. It can be found, often in flower, throughout the year so we have 14 widespread records. It has a look-alike, **Early Meadow-grass *Poa infirma***, which I have recently learned to distinguish. Early Meadow-grass is yellowish rather than bright green. Compared to Annual Meadow-grass, its flowering parts are rather smaller, particularly the anthers (<0.4 mm). The florets are less crowded on each spikelet and the lower



Map: *Poa infirma* Early Meadow-grass distribution. Courtesy of the BSBI.

branches are not reflexed. This grass was locally frequent on the disused runway near Great Dalby and in flower on 25 February. I had my specimen confirmed by Paul Stanley, as this is just the third record for VC55. In the *New Atlas of the British Flora* (Preston, Pearman & Dines, 2002), this grass is mapped only in the Scillies, Channel Isles and a few sites along the English south coast. Since then, its range has expanded north-westwards (see map).

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Steve Woodward

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We are very grateful to them all.

Records for the next quarter should preferably be entered via NatureSpot as soon as possible. Please ensure that you select "Loughboro' Nats" Project and set the padlock. Alternatively email a simple spreadsheet or text document to Margaret McLoughlin at:

loughboroughnaturalists.records@gmail.com

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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.

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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 Margaret McLoughlin, until a batch is ready to go to the Record Office.