

heritage

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Loughborough Naturalists' Club



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Editorial Panel: Helen Ikin, Steve Woodward, Jim Graham.

Hon. Sec. Sue Graham, 5 Lychgate Close, Cropston, Leics. LE7 7HU Tel: 0116-2366474

LOCKDOWN SPECIAL

EDITORIAL

Apologies to readers and contributors for the delays in Heritage - to help catch up, we have put all four quarters of 2020 into one edition. The contributors have pulled out all the stops to round up a whole year's worth of records – we thank, in particular, Graham Finch for his monumental effort on moths and beetles.

MAMMALS

Hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus* were seen at East Langton, Packington and Groby, droppings found at Holwell, in cemeteries at Groby, Stoke Golding and on a road verge and nearby meadow at Burton on the Wolds. SFW had live ones in his Groby garden in daylight in February and July.

A dead **Mole *Talpa europaea*** was found in Launde Park Wood NR and molehills were seen at Beeby, Thornton Reservoir, Little Dalby, Fenny Drayton, Smeeton Westerby churchyard, Ashby Canal, Newtown Linford, Markfield, Barlestone, Coleorton St. Mary's churchyard, Barton in the Beans, Misterton St. Leonard's churchyard, Stoke Golding, Congerstone, Stapleton, Uppingham, Ab Kettleby, Cold Newton, Hungarton, Tinwell, Oakham, Shepshed, Whissendine cemetery, Shepshed, Ibstock, Lubcloud Farm and Cadeby.

SFW and HI were lucky enough to see a **Water Shrew *Neomys fodiens*** swimming in the Grace Dieu Brook on 12 June.

A lady looking after the church at Smeeton Westerby told us of **Brown Long-eared Bats *Plecotus auritus*** resident in the church. She said that they were identified by DNA. Unidentified bat droppings were seen in Wymondham church. Most churches are likely to have bats – but not welcomed by the parishioners when they make a mess!

A dead **Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus*** was found at Burton on the Wolds and live ones were seen at Seagrave, Oakham and Harston.

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Live **Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*** were at Twycross Zoo – in with the giraffes, and at Wanlip – about ten on a pasture with Highland Cattle, singles at Beeby, Carlton, Church Town (Coleorton) and Seagrave, two at Ashby Parva and droppings at Markfield, Burton on the Wolds, Oakham, Frisby, Beaumont Chase and Ibstock. There were several burrows at Shackerstone and a dead rabbit with many fresh burrows at Shepshed.



Grey Squirrel © Jim Graham

Grey Squirrels *Sciurus carolinensis* were noted at East Langton, Bradgate Park, Charnwood Water, Ratby, Donisthorpe, Leicester Gilroes Cemetery, Seagrave, Grace Dieu Wood and St Mary's churchyard Hinckley, where the squirrels must be used to being fed as they followed us around looking hopeful!

A single **Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*** was seen running across the road at Ayston at the end of July.

A dead **Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*** was noted by a road in Groby and records from Cademan Wood and Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Wood at Normanton-le-Heath.

Dungpits of **Badger *Meles meles*** were noted at Shackerstone, Ab Kettleby and Carlton, setts at Lea Meadows NR, Martinshaw Wood, Peckleton and Knossington and a live Badger near Newtown Linford in March was crossing the road at about 10 pm.

Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* slots were noted at Little Dalby, Grand Union Canal – on a muddy towpath, another muddy path near Sheet Hedges Wood and at Stanton under Bardon, Stonesby Quarry, Burrough on the Hill and by the road near Groby Pool. Live ones were

glimpsed at Lady Hay Wood and near Sheet Hedges.



Red Deer © Jim Graham

As usual, **Red Deer *Cervus elephus*** were noted in Bradgate Park with young.

Helen Ikin

BIRDS

All large **Canada Goose** numbers were at Cropston Reservoir in autumn and peaked at 192 in late September. There were few breeding records but young were seen in Bradgate Park and at Groby Pool. A **Barnacle Goose** was in fields near the Gate Hangs Well at Syston on 23 January. **Greylag Geese** were not generally seen in large numbers but Cropston Reservoir held 305 on 17 October. In January there were 156 at Branston crossroads but there was no record of breeding. **Pink-footed Geese** were noted at Ives Head where 52 flew over on 29 September, and Thurmaston, 500 passed over on 20 November. A juvenile **White-fronted Goose** was with Greylags at Ulverscroft on 15 December and five at Longmoor Lake four days later.

Mute Swan young were seen at Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs and Groby Pool, 103 were at Watermead Park on 23 October and there were 65 at Swithland reservoir on 1 October. In late January and early February there were five **Whooper Swans** at Groby Pool and on 21 March and 27 overflew Swithland Reservoir flying north-west. The only **Egyptian Geese** noted during the year were two at Shawell on 25 February and two at Cossington Meadows on 17 October.

A pair of **Shelduck** with four well-grown young was found at Brascote Pits on 4 July. Later in the year there were two at Swithland



Gadwall © Steve Woodward

Reservoir in October, one at Cossington Meadows in August and one at Groby Pool in December. Most **Mandarins** were observed in the spring around the Charnwood reservoirs and six juveniles were seen at Cropston Reservoir on 1 April. The only double-figure counts were 14 at that site on 23 August and 11 at Swithland Reservoir on 17 October. Watermead Park held the highest **Shoveler** numbers with counts of 49 in October, 39 in November and 36 in December. Cossington Meadows had two double-figure counts, 24 in January and 38 in September. All **Gadwall** counts of over 50 were at Watermead Park with a maximum of 58 in February and 63 in October but there were 46 at Groby Pool on 17 October. The highest **Wigeon** numbers were later in the year with a maximum of 303 at Swithland Reservoir on 17 October, on the same day there were 113 at Groby Pool. In January there were 91 at Cossington Meadows.



Mallard © Jim Graham

In the spring young **Mallard** were seen at most of the local waters with Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir the most prolific. Later in the year the only site with more than 100 birds was Watermead Park with 109 on 15 December. The only **Pintail** of the year were four at Cossington Meadows on 4 January, one at

Cropston Reservoir on 12 January and two at Swithland Reservoir on 17 October. **Teal** numbers seem to be down on recent years, there was only one record of more than 50 in the early part of the year, a count of 64 at Cossington Meadows on 4 January. The only numbers over 50 later in the year were 78 at Swithland Reservoir on 17 October and 92 at Watermead Park four days later.

Single **Red-crested Pochard** were at Groby Pool on 1 January, Bradgate Park in mid-November and Watermead Park on 15 December. For some reason Groby Pool was the favourite site for **Pochards** with double-figure counts at both ends of the year with a maximum of 65 on 20 February. Elsewhere, the largest count of the year was 12 at Watermead Park on 14 February. Surprisingly, although lots of **Tufted Duck** pairs were noted, breeding was only confirmed at Cossington Meadows and Cropston Reservoir. Generally numbers were not high but there were 75 at Swithland Reservoir on 17 October and Watermead Park had 188 in December and a February count of 217. A drake **Scaup** was at Swithland Reservoir on 2 and 3 November. Twenty **Goldeneye** were at Swithland Reservoir on 17 February but only two singles were noted in the autumn, at Groby Pool and Swithland Reservoir. A red-head **Smew** was at Swithland Reservoir in late November and early December. Two **Goosanders** were at Watermead Park on 14 February and there were singles at Cropston Reservoir and Swithland Reservoir in February and March. Later in the year other singles were at Groby Pool and Cropston Reservoir and three at Watermead Park on 15 December.

There were only seven reports of **Red-legged Partridge** with counts of no more than four. These were at Markfield, Cropston, Beacon Hill, Copt Oak and Seagrave. A field adjacent to a house at Holwell had 15 on 11 October. There were even less **Grey Partridge** mentioned with only five records - all in the Bradgate Park area; only two birds were seen in the breeding season. Later in the year the most seen together was four in the Bradgate Park in September. **Pheasants** were widespread across the area but no young were mentioned. The maximum number seen together was six and that was in a garden at Holwell on 16 November.

In spite of the many **Little Grebe** reports, only one pair was reported to have young. This was at Thornton Reservoir in August. There were only two double-figure numbers noted, these were at Albert Village with ten on 12 January and Groby Pool with 11 on 25 September. Like the previous species, from numerous records the only young **Great Crested Grebes** were found at Cropston Reservoir where three pairs produced seven young. Although birds were seen at all the local suitable waters the most together was regularly at the same site with a maximum of 42 on 16 October. On 20 March a **Black-necked Grebe**, almost in summer plumage, was at Swithland Reservoir.

A **Bittern** was noted on 12 July at Cossington Meadows but was not seen again. A pair of **Grey Heron** raised "several" young at Groby Pool in April. They were well spread throughout the year with maximum numbers of 16 at Cropston Reservoir in September and 18 at Swithland Reservoir on 17 October.



Great White Egret with Little Egrets © Jim Graham

A **Great White Egret** was seen at Swithland Reservoir in March and all other records were from September onwards, all around the Charnwood reservoirs. There were 25 sightings in this period but never more than two which could have been the same two birds. There was over a hundred sightings of **Little Egret** again mostly around the Charnwood reservoirs. Most sightings could well have been the same birds as the maximum numbers all year were usually below ten but there were 18 at Cropston Reservoir on 18 October and 24 at Watermead Park a week before. The usual number of **Cormorants** around the area was two or three but Watermead Park had 65 in February and 58 in December. A total of 101 at Cropston

Reservoir in late September increased to 181 by 18 October.

Presumably the same **Osprey** was observed around Cropston Reservoir and Groby Pool from 7 June until 3 July and one drifted over Cossington Meadows on 11 August. **Sparrowhawks** were widespread throughout the year with various sightings; chasing Starlings, mobbing Buzzards, attacking Kestrels, or just passing through gardens. A **Goshawk** flew south-west over Ibstock on 17 June and a **Marsh Harrier** flew north-east over Groby on 9 April. It can be said that the **Red Kite** is now here to stay with sightings regularly throughout the year. There was also a possibility of breeding in one of the local woods but no proof. Usually the records were of single birds but there were four together in the Vale of Belvoir in January and five over Shawell in February. A few years ago the **Buzzard** was just arriving in the county, this year we had around 150 sightings. Juveniles were seen in Bradgate Park. Four and five birds together was not unusual but eight over Groby on 16 April was the most seen together. **Kestrels** reared young in Bradgate Park and Sheet Hedges Wood and others were noted throughout the area and throughout the year usually one and never more than two. An immature **Merlin** was hunting around Ives Head on 29 September. The first **Hobby** was reported on 24 April at Cossington Meadows and although breeding was suspected near Swithland Reservoir there were only a dozen sightings in the area during the summer. It would appear that **Peregrines** at least tried to breed in the Charnwood quarries as well as the pair at Leicester Cathedral although an intruding female in April took over the territory and the clutch laid by the previous female was abandoned and failed. Out of the breeding season sightings around the area were quite common throughout the year.

Single **Water Rail** were seen at Groby Pool in the breeding season, others were seen at Cropston Reservoir, Cossington Meadows, Thornton Reservoir and Kelham Bridge and at Watermead Park where five were noted on 23 October. **Moorhens** were virtually on every stretch of water with lots of high double-figure counts with 33 and 34 at Groby Pool and Watermead Park late in the year. **Coots** were

noted at similar sites with even bigger numbers. Watermead Park regularly held high numbers with a maximum of 74 on 17 November.

Early in the year small numbers of **Oystercatchers** were at Watermead Park and Cossington Meadows but there were no reports of breeding. A single **Avocet** was at Wanlip Meadows on 26 April and there were two at Brascote Pits on 13 June.



Lapwing © Steve Woodward

Displaying **Lapwings** were at Groby and Puddledyke in the spring but all other records were of winter or autumn flocks. The only site with three-figure counts was Watermead Park where there were 137 on 15 December. Twenty **Golden Plover** flew over Ives Head on 25 October and seven **Grey Plover** at the same site on 20 September. In mid-summer up to six **Little Ringed Plovers** were seen regularly at Cossington Meadows and two were at Brascote Pits on 4 July.

A **Whimbrel** was sound recorded overnight flying over Ibstock on 6 September and one was heard over Glenfield Hospital the following day. A **Curlew** was heard calling around Bradgate Park in April, with two on the 28th and on 30 August one flew over Groby Pool. A **Black-tailed Godwit** was at Wanlip Meadows and up to three were at Cossington Meadows during July. A **Knot** was at Swithland Reservoir on 17 October and a **Ruff** at Cropston Reservoir on 20 September. The same site had a **Dunlin** on 21 January.

Most **Snipe** reports were from Cossington Meadows and Groby Pool usually in odd ones but there were 20 at Kelham Bridge on 14 October and 25 at Groby Pool on 15 December. An adult male **Red-necked Phalarope** was seen at Watermead Park on 11 June. The majority of



Common Sandpiper © Jim Graham

Common Sandpiper sightings were in the autumn with a maximum of six at Cropston Reservoir on 23 August. There were two winter records of **Green Sandpipers**, at Watermead Park and Kelham Bridge, and the most seen together in autumn was seven at Cossington Meadows on 23 July. A **Wood Sandpiper** was at Lockington Borrow Pits on 24 November. Single **Redshanks** were noted at Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs in August and September and four **Greenshanks** were at Swithland Reservoir on 7 September.

The maximum numbers at gull roosts throughout the year were as follows: 265 **Black-headed Gull** at Thornton Reservoir on 22 February was easily surpassed by 2000 at Cropston Reservoir on 29 December. Also at Cropston Reservoir were 42 **Herring Gull** on 18 October and 136 **Lesser Black-backed Gull** on 22 September.

Other gulls noted were **Little Gull** at Swithland Reservoir on 17 October; two **Mediterranean Gull** over Ibstock on 9 June and 12 **Common Gull** at Albert Village Lake on 8 February. Also there on 12 January were two **Greater Black-backed Gulls**. Single **Iceland Gulls** were at Cotesbach Landfill on 25 February and Watermead Park on 31 December. Three **Yellow-legged Gulls** were at Shawell on 25 February and singles were seen at Watermead Park and Groby Pool late in the year.

Cropston Reservoir had the majority of **Common Tern** sightings with a maximum of 38 on 3 July. Juveniles were noted at Cossington Meadows on 21 August. A **Black Tern** was reported from Cropston Reservoir on 10 May.

Stock Doves were mainly seen around Charnwood and usually of one or two however,

there were 32 in fields at Cropston on 7 September. Over 200 **Woodpigeons** were recorded, twice in the same area in April and May, 492 passed over Ives Head on 15 October and 550 were seen in Bradgate Park on 21 December. The most **Collared Doves** together was in a Holwell garden where there were 12 on 31 October.

There were only ten records of **Cuckoos** all but one were from Bradgate Park, the other at Blakeshay Wood.

Of the eight **Barn Owl** records, one was dead by the roadside at Heather. All others were mainly in Bradgate Park but one was at Cossington Meadows and one at Peckleton. There were numerous **Tawny Owl** sightings, or calling birds, some in gardens. Juveniles were seen in Swithland Wood in late June. Apart from two **Little Owls** at Cossington Meadows in mid-October all others were in Bradgate Park or the surrounds and were noted in most months of the year. A **Short-eared Owl** was hunting at Cossington Meadows on 9 November.

The first **Swifts** of the year were 12 over Goby Pool on 29 April and all three-figure counts came from the same site with the highest being 200 on 27 June.

Kingfishers were noted at around a dozen sites, always single birds, but a juvenile was seen at Groby Pool on 3 June.

An elusive **Wryneck** was found at Brascote Pits on 5 September but not seen again. There were over 100 **Great Spotted Woodpecker** reports from numerous habitats including gardens. Breeding was proven in Swithland Wood and Bradgate Park. Even more **Green Woodpeckers** were recorded but only from a dozen sites; again Bradgate Park had sightings



Green Woodpecker © Jim Graham

in all months of the year. Unfortunately there were no Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers noted.

Jays, usually in ones or twos, were found mostly in the Charnwood woods but six were seen in Swithland Woods on 17 April. **Magpies** were ubiquitous the biggest group seen was 40 in Western Park on 20 November. There were lots of double-figure counts of **Jackdaws** and a dozen three-figure counts, the largest being 400 heading south-east over Cropston on 25 February. Small **Rookeries** were active at Stanton-under-Bardon, Rothley and Swithland and 24 birds were seen at Rothley on 5 April. Cropston was also the site for the biggest **Carrion Crow** numbers with 330 feeding in fields on 3 September. **Ravens** are now firmly established in the county with numerous sightings from all around the area. A pair nested on a pylon at Mountsorrel and a few juveniles were seen at other sites. They were generally seen in ones and twos but 16 flew high over Ives Head on 28 September.

Apart from **Willow Tit**, which was only seen at Kelham Bridge in spring and Burrough Hill in October, all the other tit species were abundant across the area. The maximum counts for each being: **Coal Tit** 12 at Cropston Reservoir on 24 June; **Marsh Tit** five at Swithland Wood on 7 June; **Blue Tit** 45 in Swithland Wood on 17 April and **Great Tit** 21 at the same site on 1 June.

Two **Woodlarks** flew over Ives Head on 29 September and one on 15 October. Singing **Skylarks** were heard in around 20 different locations with ten singing at Cropston on 21 June. Migrants were noted in Bradgate Park with 26 on 17 October, and 47 passed over Ives Head on 28 September.

The first **Sand Martin** was seen over Cropston Reservoir on 21 March and the



Skylark © Jim Graham

following week 50 were over the water there. There was a nesting bank at Cadeby Quarry where 75 nest holes were active. The first **Swallow** was also at Cropston Reservoir on 28 March, with 120 there on 18 April. Nests were found in the deer barn in Bradgate Park. Groby Pool had the first **House Martin** with one on 11 April and around 150 were over Bradgate Park on 28 September.

Cetti's Warblers are now well established in the area but were only noted at four sites: Watermead Park, Cossington Meadows, Groby Pool and Kelham Bridge. They were heard in all months with eight at Watermead Park being heard on 13 April.

The most **Long-tailed Tits** seen together was 20 at Brascote Pits on 13 June and 21 in Bradgate Park on 14 November.

Singing **Willow Warblers** were heard at Cropston Reservoir on 6 April, they were widespread in the Charnwood area after that with 11 at the same site on 2 May. The last song was heard on 13 September. **Chiffchaffs** are now an all the year round species so were seen in winter as well as summer. Sixteen were heard in Swithland Wood on 15 April and 15 at Groby Pool on 6 September. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was discovered at Watermead Park on 11 October and there was one at Burrough Hill the following day. Surprisingly, there were only two sites for **Sedge Warblers**, Cossington Meadows and Stretton-en-le Field. Cossington Meadows and Groby Pool were the only places where **Reed Warblers** were mentioned. **Grasshopper Warblers** could be heard (by those with good hearing) at Cossington Meadows, Watermead Park and Newtown Linford. **Blackcaps** were seen in the winter months and were widespread in summer with 23 singing at Swithland Wood on 17 April. As usual, they outnumbered **Garden Warblers** and three was the most heard together, at Cropston Reservoir on 2 May. Of the dozen **Lesser Whitethroat** records, there were eight different locations all in Charnwood but never more than one bird. There were four times the number of **Whitethroat** observations, first heard on 6 April and last seen on 21 September. Five were heard in Bradgate Park and also at Cropston Reservoir.

There were numerous reports of **Goldcrests**,



Whitethroat © Jim Graham

probably a small proportion of the real number as most older ears can't hear them. Most counts were around four or five but 13 were heard at Bardon Hill on 17 October. **Wrens** were abundant with many double figure-records. Swithland Woods regularly produced big numbers with 18 on 25 June being the most daily count. The same site also had the majority of the many **Nuthatch** sightings with 12 on 17 April. **Treecreepers** are normally seen rather than heard so consequently the numbers were lower. There were still numerous sightings with the maximum of nine again in Swithland Woods on 7 June.

In spite of reduced **Starling** numbers there are still lots around the area and "murmurations" of 2,000 were seen at Holwell on 21 November and 3,000 at Cossington Meadows on 27 December.

There were no spring records of **Ring Ouzels** but there was one at Ives Head on 28 September. **Blackbirds** were ubiquitous with over 150 observations; all double-figure counts again came from Swithland Woods. In a poor **Fieldfare** year, the only three-figure flock was 270 in Bradgate Park on 31 October. The only **Redwing** flock of note was at Thornton Reservoir where there were 150 on 5 February, although 1,012 passed over Ives Head on 15 October. Most of the **Song Thrush** reports were of singing birds with a maximum of seven at both Thornton Reservoir and Swithland Woods. **Mistle Thrush** are now much rarer than Song Thrush so it was good to have plentiful records. Bradgate Park regularly had up to six singing birds and 12 were seen together at Newtown Linford on 9 September.

Unfortunately **Spotted Flycatchers** were found at only four sites; Cropston, Bradgate

Park, Groby Pool and Swithland Woods, where a family party of five was seen on 17 July. Two immature or female-type **Pied Flycatchers** were found in Bradgate Park on 23 August. **Robins** seemed to be everywhere with numerous counts in the 20s in Swithland Woods and 38 at Beacon Hill on 4 October. Apart from a male in Sheet Hedges Wood on 11 July and two at Ives Head, all **Redstart** observations were from Bradgate Park with up to two birds throughout July and August. There were two **Whinchat** in both Bradgate Park and Sence Valley and one at Cossington Meadows in late August and early September. **Stonechats** bred in Bradgate Park and a big number of at least 20 migrants were in the Park on 18 September. Others were seen at Groby Pool, Longmoor, Charnwood Lodge and Ives Head, mostly in autumn. Bradgate Park also had the most **Wheatear**, with one or two from 11 April until late July. One was at Beacon Hill in late September.



Wheatear © Jim Graham

The most **House Sparrow** together were 12. Many more **Dunnock** were noted mostly in gardens but never more than four.

Yellow Wagtails were only seen in five places in ones and twos but three were at Brascote Pits on 27 August. **Grey Wagtails** seem to have been at every suitable water body and also noted in a Coalville garden and at Leicester Cathedral. **Pied Wagtails** were to be found in all habitats from reservoirs to town gardens. On 1 October, 32 were counted on the dam wall at Cropston Reservoir. Virtually all **Meadow Pipits** were found in Bradgate Park with a few at Beacon Hill. On 5 December 58 were in the Park but the maximum flying over Ives Head was 313 on 18 September. Eleven **Tree Pipits** were sound recorded overnight passing over Ibstock on 26 August.

Of the 150 **Chaffinch** records the most seen together was 50 at Swithland Reservoir on 21 March although one of the migration counts at Ives Head produced 205 birds on 23 October. A male **Brambling** was regularly in a Holwell garden at the end of the year and one was at Groby Pool on 13 February. A **Hawfinch** was at the same site on 7 December. A lot of **Bullfinch** reports were from gardens but the most seen together was four at Cropston Reservoir on 6 September. There were two double-figure counts of **Greenfinch**, ten in a Coalville garden and 12 in a Cropston garden. However, a roost at Fosse Park in January contained around 200. Most **Linnet** counts were less than ten, mostly in Bradgate Park, but there were two big counts, 60 at King Lud's Entrenchments on 5 January and 43 at Charnwood Lodge on 27 November. The best counts of **Lesser Redpoll** were 56 at Charnwood Lodge, 70 in Bradgate Park and 100 at Beacon Hill, all late in the year. Small numbers of **Crossbills** were feeding at Charnwood Lodge and Bradgate Park but most were flyovers, 19 over Bradgate in December and 12 over Ibstock in September. **Goldfinches** are now the bird of gardens and the greatest number was from a Holwell garden with 67 on 31 October. Large flocks of **Siskins** were around the Charnwood woodlands with lots of double-figure counts. There were 80 in gardens at Cropston in November, 100 in Benscliffe Wood in March and 200 at Groby Pool on 7 January.

Yellowhammers were mostly and regularly seen in Bradgate Park and Causeway Lane, Cropston with 42 at the latter site the largest count. Most **Reed Buntings** were noted at Groby Pool, Cropston Reservoir and Bradgate Park where a dozen singing males were heard on a few occasions.

Bas Forgham



Yellowhammer © Jim Graham

BUTTERFLIES

Q1 January to March

Lockdown due to the Coronavirus Pandemic started on 23 March so members had to limit their recording at first to their own gardens or while on a short “exercise” walk from home.

Nymphalidae



Red Admiral © Steve Woodward

A **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** was seen out of hibernation at Bradgate Park on 21 January but there was no repeat of the warm spell of weather in February 2019 when butterflies were seen from 14 February. A **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** was seen nectaring on winter flowering heather in Quorn on 6 March (HS). Over a fortnight later on 23rd, **Small Tortoiseshell**, **Peacock *Aglais io*** and **Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*** were all noted. Four **Small Tortoiseshells** were seen in Quorn on 24 March, three on 25th and 26th (HS). They were also recorded by SFW at Ulverscroft on 23 March (2) and 27th (1). Single **Peacocks** were noted by SFW at Ulverscroft on 23 and 27 March, and at Groby on 24 March. Peacocks were recorded at Quorn on 23 March (1), also 24th (1) 25th (1) and 26th (2). Three were seen at Buddon Brook Meadows on 25 March. **Comma *Polygonia c-album*** was noted at my Quorn garden and Buddon Brook Meadows on 25 March (one each time). SFW saw singletons on 26 March at Groby and 27 March at Newtown Linford.

Pieridae

Brimstone was recorded on 24 March by SFW at Groby. Single male Brimstones were seen in Quorn on 23-25 March with four males noted at Buddon Brook Meadows on 25th (HS).

Q2 April to June

Nb: Coronavirus restrictions were still in place during this quarter with travel limited to short distances.

Pieridae

Orange Tip *Anthocharis cardamines* 62 butterflies, mainly males, were recorded between 5 April and 31 May. Females were noted in my Quorn garden on 12, 14, 15 & 24 April and on 7 & 8 May. Seven females and one male were seen at Buddon Brook Meadows on 7 May. Fourteen **Small White *Pieris rapae***, mainly singletons, were recorded between 5 April and 30 June at Quorn, Barlestone and Desford. Eight single **Green-veined White *Pieris napi*** were seen between 24 April and 16 May at Quorn and Barlestone. There was only one record of a **Large White *Pieris brassicae*** on 21 May at Burbage. A total of 19 **Brimstone** from eight different locations were seen between 5 April and 31 May. All were male except one female on 11 May at Quorn (HS).

Nymphalidae



Small Tortoiseshell © Jim Graham

Small Tortoiseshell were seen throughout the quarter from 4 April to 30 June. At least 137 were counted by members from 30 widespread locations. Nine were seen in Buddon Brook Meadows, Quorn on 15 June, 30 at Westrill and Starmore parish by SFW and GH, 25 at Sheepy by HI and SFW on 20 June. **Peacock** were also seen throughout the quarter from 4 April to 21 June. 53 individuals were recorded in 18 widespread locations. Four were noted at Buddon Brook Meadows on 5 April and six at the same site on 24 April. Many were seen by SFW and GH at Swinford on 15 June. The larval foodplant of this butterfly is the Common Nettle. On 15 June at Buddon Brook Meadows,

HS saw four nettles with Peacock eggs or eggs and caterpillars. Many larvae were also noted by SFW and HI at Barrow upon Soar on 21 June. Only six **Comma** were noted in this quarter, all individuals in five different locations. Four **Red Admiral** were seen in this quarter at Bagworth and Buddon Brook Meadows, on 14, 15 and 23 June.



Speckled Wood © Jim Graham

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria* were seen between 15 April and 26 June. A total of 34 were counted from 17 locations. Three were noted at Buddon Brook Meadows on 24 April, four on 1 June and three on 23 June at the same site. Four were seen at Swinford on 15 June by SFW and GH. The first **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*** recorded on 14 June and a total of 143 were seen from 11 locations particularly in the hot weather from 21 to 25 June when 61 were noted at Buddon Brook Meadows on the 23rd. A total of 13 **Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*** were counted right at the end of the quarter on 25 June with seven seen at Sutton Cheney by HI & SFW. **Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*** were recorded in five different locations between 20 May and 22 June totalling 41. Nine were seen at Warren Hills on 20 May, seven at Buddon South Mound on the 27th (HS) and seven at Bradgate Park on 22 June (HI & SFW).

Lycaenidae

The first **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*** of the year were recorded between 11 April and 25 May with five noted in Groby and Quorn. Four singleton **Small Copper *Lycaena phlaea*** were noted between 6 May and the 26th, all from different sites. Charnwood Lodge, the most recognised site for **Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi***, was closed in the early part of the year during lockdown, so just one was recorded late in the season nearby on Bilberry, a larval

foodplant, at Warren Hills on 21 May. Two were noted at Buddon South Mound on Hawthorn on the 22nd. Nine male **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** were recorded between 20 May and 2 June were counted at five different sites, including three at Buddon South Mound on 21 May. Two singleton **Brown Argus *Aricia agestis*** were recorded in different parts of Quorn on 9 and 25 May.

Hesperiidae

A total of 22 **Large Skipper *Ochlodes venata*** were counted from Cossington and Quorn between 28 May and 23 June. Seven were seen in Buddon Brook Meadows, Quorn on 15 and 23 June. Just one **Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris*** was recorded, in Quorn on 23 June.

Q3 July to September

Although restrictions were gradually being lifted, fewer records were received this quarter compared with other years.

Between 12 July and 12 September, 110 **Peacock** were noted. I saw 12 on Broad Hill, Mountsorrel on 17 July and 12 were counted by SFW at Earl Shilton on 22 July. On the 23rd there were 13 in my garden, all on Buddleia. **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*** were nothing like as widespread as 2019 when Members recorded 173 sightings during Q3. SFW saw one in Groby on 12 July and I saw one on Buddon South Mound on 20 August. It was a good summer for **Small Tortoiseshell** with 206 noted between 1 July and 1 September; more than in 2019. It was recorded in large numbers between 11 and 20 August. There were 20 on the Buddleia in my garden on 11 and 14 August. There were 17 at Broad Hill on 20 August and ten were recorded at Ab Kettleby by HI & SFW on the 14th. In contrast to Small Tortoiseshell, **Red Admiral** had a poor summer. Just 31 were recorded between 5 July and 14 September, fewer than the same quarter in 2019. Most were one and two but four were seen at Buddon South Mound on 13 September. **Comma** was noted 18 times in ten different locations between 10 July and 24 September. It was mainly in ones or twos but three were seen at Mountsorrel, Broad Hill on 17 July (HS). There was just one record of **Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera*** a singleton seen on 8 August at Charnwood Lodge (HS).



Comma © Jim Graham

There were no sightings of **Silver Washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia***, **Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*** or **Purple Emperor *Apatura iris*** in Leicestershire by Members this year.

A total of 58 **Speckled Wood** was counted between 11 July and 29 September from 20 different locations. HI & SFW saw four at Markfield on 20 September and four were seen at both Charnwood Lodge on 8 August and Buddon Brook Meadows on the 24th. Five were noted at Buddon Brook Meadows on the 9th and six at Charnwood Lodge on 14 September. **Meadow Brown** were seen quite widely with 111 noted between 2 July and 10 August. HI & SFW saw ten at Burton on the Wolds on 12 July and there were 43 at Buddon Brook Meadows on the 6th with 19 at the same site on the 21st. Counts of **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*** came from 23 sites between 11 July and 24 August when 246 were counted with 26 recorded at Buddon Brook Meadows on 2 August and 22 at Charnwood Lodge on 8 August. 'Dozens' were seen by PJD at Dishley Pool on 17 July and again on 30 July. A total of 42 **Ringlet** were noted from ten locations between 4 July and 8 August, the largest count being 14 at Buddon Brook Meadows on 6 July. This was far fewer than Members recorded last year. Eleven **Small Heath** were recorded between 8 and 24 August. Four were seen at Charnwood Lodge on 2 August and five at the same site on the 24th (HS). Unlike in 2019, there were no records of **Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*** received.

Pieridae

RS and SFW were lucky enough to see two **Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus*** at Shenton on 13 August. RS had previously seen four there. There were no other 2020 records of this migrant butterfly. Six **Brimstone** were noted between 26

July and 13 September, mainly single adult males. **Small White** was regularly noted between 2 July and 28 September with 116 counted from 18 different places mainly of one or two. There were counts of five in my garden on 30 August, 2 and 11 September, six at Bilstone on 28 Jul (HI & SFW) and seven at Buddon Brook Meadows on 24 August. **Large White** was not as widespread as Small White and 12 were recorded from just six locations between 6 July and 31 August. Two were in Buddon Brook Meadows on 9 August. A total of 41 **Green-veined White** were seen between 5 July and 13 September. Two were seen mating on 18 July at Hoby (HI & SFW) and eight were recorded at Buddon Brook Meadows on 21 July. Three were at Charnwood Lodge on 8 August and three at Buddon Brook Meadows on both 9 August and 12 September.

Lycaenidae

Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus* were recorded between 17 July and 20 August. Of the 18 counted, seven were seen on Rothley Common on 17 July (HS). Records of **Holly Blue** were seen in five different places between 6 July and 2 August. Seven sites held **Common Blue** with 17 noted between 21 July and 24 August. Most were of one and two, but six were recorded at Charnwood Lodge on 8 August. This compares to 78 recorded by Members in the same period last year. There were two single records of **Brown Argus** from the same Quorn location on 2 August and the 24th. This compares with 25 seen in the same period last year. **Small Copper** were seen in nine places between 6 July and 25 September. The total of 31 was mainly in ones and twos but six were recorded at Buddon Brook Meadows, on 12 September (HS).



Small Copper © Jim Graham

Hesperiidae

Noted at three sites between 5 July and 2 August, 56 **Small Skipper** were recorded. The largest count was 33 at Buddon Brook Meadows on 21 July (HS). Eight **Essex Skipper *Thymelicus lineola*** were recorded from six sites mainly in ones and twos between 16 July and 2 August (HI & SFW).

Q4 October to December

Very few butterflies were recorded for this quarter.

HI & SFW saw a **Peacock** at Ibstock on 22 October sunning itself on a rock and there was one in my Quorn garden on 13 October sunning itself on the white garden table. There was a **Red Admiral** on Buddleia in my garden on 25 October and HI & SFW saw one on 22 November at Cold Overton.

Helen Shacklock

MOTHS

Q1 January to March

All the moth records for this quarter come from just two sites, a Whitwick garden and various sub-sites on Charnwood Lodge. The numbers are 224 records for 25 species, of which only four were micromoths. The Charnwood Lodge records all refer to various light traps operated on 10 March plus a few found nectaring on the same evening. This has to be the hardest quarter to record moths, so “hats off” to those who made the effort.

Singles of ***Diurnea fagella*** at Whitwick and ***Agonopterix heracliana*** at both sites, with



Tortricodes alternalla © Graham Finch

Tortricodes alternalla and a single ***Lodgeeris laterana*** only found at Charnwood Lodge. Good numbers of **Yellow Horned *Achyla flavicornis*** were recorded at Charnwood Lodge. This really is a stunning moth feeding on both Downy and Silver Birch. Out of hibernation the first **Red-green Carpet *Chloroista siterata*** and a single of the delicate looking **Mottled Grey *Colostygia multistrigaria*** was at Charnwood Lodge. Always the first of the Pug species to appear were six **Brindled Pug *Eupithecia abbreviata*** and a single **Oak-tree Pug *Eupithecia dodoneata*** again all at Charnwood Lodge. Usually out in March, a single **March Moth *Alsophila aescularia*** put in an early appearance on 20 February at Whitwick, others followed in March. Braving the weather, a single **Pale Brindled Beauty** showed up on 24 January then another on 24 February at Whitwick. The first **Brindled Beauty *Lycia hirtaria*** was at Charnwood Lodge, and the first Oak Beauty ***Biston strataria*** showed up on 10 March at Whitwick; the last species was the most recorded species of this quarter. **Spring Usher *Agriopsis leucophaearia*** were around from the end of January and **Dotted Border *Agriopsis marginaria*** started in March. **Engrailed *Ectropis crepuscularia***, **Chestnut *Conistra vaccinii***, **Satelite *Eupsilia transversa*** and **Clouded Drab *Orthosia incerta***, were only recorded from Charnwood Lodge. Other *Orthosia* species recorded were **Common Quaker *Orthosia cerasi***, **Small Quaker *O. cruda*** and **Hebrew Character *O. gothica*** were all fairly well recorded with **Twin-spotted Quaker *Anorthoa munda*** only at Charnwood Lodge during March.



Twin-spotted Quaker © Graham Finch

Q2 April to June



Tinea trinotella © Graham Finch

Very few recorders for this quarter, but a huge difference in numbers; 1491 individuals for 224 species from 709 records, the total of micro moths was 72 with 124 macro moths making up the rest. A daytime sighting of *Micropterix calthella* at Charnwood Lodge, several *Dyseriocrania subpurpurella* at Whitwick and *Adela reaumurella* at both plus singles of *Tinea trinotella* and *Gracillaria syringella* were at Whitwick. The only records of **Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner** *Cameraria ohridella* came from leaf mines scattered around the county and several **Diamond-back Moth** *Plutella xylostella* were recorded at Whitwick towards end of June. Five species of *Argyresthia* were recorded from end of May throughout June, three *Argyresthia trifasciata*, two **Cypress Tip Moth** *A. cupressella*, singles of *A. curvella*, **Apple Fruit Moth**, *A. conjugella* and *A. bonettella*. A pretty little moth that seems to have colonised recently is *Tacystola acroxantha* and was recorded at Whitwick through May and June. A Charnwood speciality *Neofaculta ericetella* was found at Charnwood Lodge on 10 May. Four species of plume moth were recorded but all as singletons **Many-plumed Moth** *Alucita hexadactyla*, **Beautiful Plume** *Amblaptilia acanthadactyla*, **Brown Plume** *Stenoptilia pterodactyla* and **Common Plume** *Emmelina monodactyla* all from Whitwick.

A total of 25 species of tortrix moths were recorded, **Light Brown Apple Moth** *Epiphyas postvittana* was the most frequently recorded, **Green Oak Tortrix** *Tortrix viridana* is still only being reported in very low numbers. The only record of *Pseudogyrotoza conwagana* was from a WEM light trap at Groby, and singles of *Ancylis achatina*, *Epinotia abbreviana* and *Epinotia demarniana* were found at Whitwick. Still not a particularly common moth in VC55 *Grapholita*

internana a singleton was seen at Charnwood Lodge in mid-May. As this is a Gorse feeder, Charnwood Forest ought to be the best place to look for it, a single **Forester Moth** *Adscita statices* was also seen at Charnwood Lodge in early June. **Bee Moth** *Aphomia sociella* were well recorded throughout May and June. Singles of *Dioryctria abietella*, *Acrobasis rependana* and *A. advenella* plus *Euzophora pinguis* was seen on a couple of occasions, all at Whitwick in June. I think the easiest way forward with these records is to assume all are from an MV light trap in a Whitwick garden, unless otherwise stated. A single **Gold Triangle** *Hypsopygia costalis* was the only record of this species. It was nice to see records of **Small Magpie** *Anania hortulata* and **Garden Grass-veneer** *Chrysoteuchia culmella* widely reported and in some reasonable numbers!

A summary of the 124 species of macro moths, it is interesting that out of the 124 species recorded only ten managed to get recorded into double figures. A nice suite of species was recorded in May and June at Whitwick: **Oak Hook-tip** *Watsonella binaria*, **Pebble Hook-tip** *Drepana falcataria*, **Peach Blossom** *Thyatira batis*, **Figure of Eighty** *Tethea ocellaris* and not sure how many gardens can boast a **Yellow Horned** *Achyla flavicornis*. The only record of **Drinker** *Euthrix putatoria* came from a WEM light at Groby. Four species of Hawk-moths were recorded, **Lime Hawk-moth** *Mimas tiliae* was as usual the first to appear in early May, followed by **Poplar Hawk-moth** *Laothoe populi* and **Elephant Hawk-moth** *Deilphila elpenor* mid-May onwards then **Eyed Hawk-moth** *Smerinthus ocellata* showed early June. **Riband Wave** *Idaea aversata* was well reported including 11 at Groby on 25 June. **Small**



Elephant Hawk-moth © Steve Woodward

Blood-vein *Scopula imitaria*, Blood-Vein *Timandra comae* and Maidens Blush *Cyclophora punctaria* were on the wing throughout June. Singles of Streamer *Anticlea badiata* from Whitwick and Beautiful Carpet *Mesoleuca albicillata* from Charnwood Lodge. Records for Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata* came from Narborough, Groby, Grace Dieu and Desford.

Eleven species of Pug moths were recorded all from Whitwick Double-striped Pug *Gymnoscelis rufifasciata*, V-Pug *Chloroclystis v-ata*, Green Pug *Pasiphila rectangularata*, Foxglove Pug *Eupithecia pulchellata*, Brindled Pug *E. abbreviata*, White-spotted Pug *E. tripunctaria*, Dwarf Pug *E. tantillaria*, Ochreous Pug *E. indigata*, Freyers Pug *E. intricata*, Common Pug *E. vulgata* and finally Mottled Pug *E. exiguata*, quite a nice list for a Whitwick garden. Singles of each Treble-bar *Aplocera plagiata*, a St. John's-wort feeder, plus Seraphim *Lobophora halterata* an Aspen or Black Poplar feeder recorded at Whitwick, both interesting due to their specific food plant requirements. A solitary Latticed Heath *Chiasmia clathrata* was at Charnwood Lodge in mid-June, and I still think when fresh, Scorched Wing *Plagodis dolabraria* is one of the prettiest moths we have, several at Whitwick in May and June. With 15 sightings, Brimstone Moth *Opisthograptis luteolata* was the most frequently recorded species. Another beautiful moth is Lilac Beauty *Apeira syringaria* a single at Whitwick was a treat as this is still far from being a common moth in VC55.

The first Early Thorn *Selenia dentaria* was on 1 April, followed by Purple Thorn *Selenia tetralunaria* a week later, on the 8th. Just two Engrailed *Ectropis crepuscularia* on 8 April was the only record received. Lunar Marbled Brown *Drymonia ruficornis* appeared 10 April, then Marbled Brown *D. dodonea* almost at the end of May. All the Prominents were recorded with a single Chocolate-tip *Clostera curtula* to round them off. The plain but still spectacular White Satin Moth *Leucoma salicis* was recorded at Groby and Whitwick and Ruby Tiger *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* only at Charnwood Lodge. All the regular Footman moths were reported with Orange Footman *Eilema complana* having the most sightings. Beautiful



Orange Footman © Graham Finch

Hook-tip *Laspeyria flexula* was at Groby and Charnwood Lodge, and Groby provided the only record for Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica*.

All the records for Silver Y *Autographa gamma* were in June, from Groby, Whitwick and Charnwood Lodge, the earliest being on the 13th at Charnwood Lodge. A slightly early Coronet *Craniophora ligustri* at Whitwick on 25 May was followed by a bunch of records for June, including one at Groby. Not everyone's favourites Uncertain *Hoplodrina octogenarian* and The Rustic *H. blanda* started appearing in mid-June. A single Bird's Wing *Dypterygia scabriuscula* was at Whitwick on 23 June and singles of Old Lady *Mormo maura* were at Whitwick and Groby - both turned up on the same night, 25 June. A single Light Arches *Apamea lithoxylaea* at Whitwick, Marbled Minor agg. *Oligia strigilis* agg. were only at Groby and Middle-barred Minor *Oligia fasciuncula* were at Whitwick and Groby. All the usual *Orthosia* species were recorded fairly frequently at Whitwick from 1 April to 30 May, none after. Two Grey Arches *Polia nebulosa*



Green Silver-lines © Graham Finch

were in the trap at Whitwick on 30 June, the first **Purple Clay *Diarsia brunnea*** showed up on the 23rd followed by a **Green Arches** on the 25th. The only **Double Square-spot *Xestia triangulum*** was at Groby where two individuals were in the WEM light trap on 25 June and lastly **Green Silver-lines *Pseudoips prasinana*** were in June.

Q3 July to September

Quite a bumper list this quarter. The majority of the records are from three sites, Whitwick, The Drift near Pickworth (all The Drift records are for 31 July where 154 species were recorded on that night) and various sub-sites of Charnwood Lodge. The total number of records doubled with 1619, total number of species 355, individuals 4738, so a huge increase all round. The Micro moths hit a respectable 153 and Macros 202 species. With such a large set of records it is only possible to summarise as best I can, so here goes. The first **Orange Swift *Triodia sylvina*** turned up on 9 August and continued for about eight days then none after the 18th. **Map-winged Swift *Korscheltellus fusconebulosa*** at Charnwood Lodge on 11 August was the only record of this species and the only record of **Ghost Moth *Hepialus humuli*** turned up on the same day. Attracted to MV light at Charnwood Lodge were the Tineidae moths ***Morophaga choragella*** most probably from bracket fungi or possibly dead wood, and ***Monopis weaverella*** off animal droppings or animal remains. A couple of nice species from The Drift near Pickworth on 31 July, two ***Bucculatrix nigrocomella*** and one ***Parectopa ononodis***. For this last species there is just a single record on the 2018 VC55 Micro Guide, but I suspect there have been one or two since. At the same site three ***Aspilapteryx tringipennella***, and singles of ***Euspilapteryx aurogutella f. quadrupella*** and ***Calybites phasianipennella***. The **Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner *Cameraria ohridella*** was widely reported as leaf mines including at Sileby, Walton on the Wolds, Uppingham, Ratby, Groby, Wymeswold and Shepshed and also as adults to MV at Whitwick.

A small moth with a big name ***Paraswammerdamia nebulella*** was found at both Charnwood Lodge and Whitwick with ***Cedestis gysselella*** at Whitwick. The showy

black and white ***Ypsolopha sequella*** was at Groby, Whitwick and Charnwood Lodge. The **Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella*** was again in quite good numbers recorded at Whitwick, The Drift and various sub-sites at Charnwood Lodge, with 13 on 11 August. The first of 11 sightings of the colourful ***Carcina quercana*** was on 18 July and the last on 11 August with none seen after this. The Bulrush feeding ***Limnaecia phragmitella*** was at Whitwick on 31 August, plus a single ***Caryocolum proxima*** from The Drift, this looks to be a new record for VC55. Only two species of Coleophora were recorded, singles of ***Coleophora albitarsella*** at The Drift and ***Coleophora lineola*** at Whitwick. Both were critically examined for confirmation for this difficult group. The most frequently recorded micro moth was ***Blastobasis adustella*** with 30 sightings and its cousin ***B. lacticolella*** with just four records.

A total of 36 species of Tortrix moths were recorded this quarter, a very brief account follows: a common moth but always nice to see **Red-barred Tortrix *Ditula angustiorana*** was fairly widely reported, as was the spectacular bell-shaped **Large Fruit-tree Tortrix *Archips***. Records of **Light Brown Apple Moth *Epiphyas postvittana*** built up and was reported from all sites, three ***Cnephasia longana*** were at The Drift, a single **Rhomboid Tortrix *Acleris rhomboidana*** and two ***Acleris emargana*** were at Charnwood Lodge on 22 September. Another stunning little moth a single ***Acleris literana*** from Charnwood Lodge this is a very variable patterned moth but always with green the base colour. We have a nice bunch of moths which are charmingly referred to as "bird dropping" Tortrix moths. They are mainly blackish with variable mottled markings of white, blue/grey and some with indistinct patches of pale ochre. Making them look remarkably similar to bird dropping when at rest, a kind of camouflage system that helps them avoid detection by predators. Most are quite common but can be tricky to identify, ***Eudemis profundana***, ***Apotomis turbidana*** and ***A. betuletana*** were all frequently recorded at Charnwood Lodge and Whitwick, but **Marbled Orchard Tortrix *Hedya nubiferana*** and **Plum Tortrix *H. pruniana*** were only at Whitwick. The Drift produced four ***Endothenia oblongana*** of which there are very

few VC55 records. A species that seems to be spreading in recent years is the beautifully marked **Cherry Bark Moth *Enarmonia formosana*** a single was at Whitwick on 10 September.

Both are mainly Scots Pine feeders; **Pine Shoot Moth *Rhyacionia bouliana*** and ***R. pinivorana*** were recorded at various sub-sites at Charnwood Lodge all in early August. Singles of **Plum Fruit Tortrix *Grapholita funebrana*** and ***G. janthinana*** were at The Drift. The taxonomists, *bless them*, have decided that **Leopard Moth *Zeuzera pyrina***, **Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae*** and **Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet *Z. lonicerae*** (amongst a whole bunch of others) are more closely related to micros than macros, all were recorded at Charnwood Lodge and Ketton. Another Scots Pine feeder ***Dioryctria sylvestrella***, a single was recorded at Whitwick and is not a commonly recorded species in VC55. The **Gold Triangle *Hypsopygia costalis*** was recorded far more frequently than last quarter, but ***H. glaucinalis*** was only at Whitwick, **Small Magpie *Anania hortulata*** was fairly widespread, but the only record of **Rusty-dot Pearl *Udea ferrugalis*** came from Whitwick on 1 September and the only **Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella*** from Charnwood Lodge on 14 August. The Drift produced three **Garden Pebble *Evergestis forficalis***; we seem to be getting very few records of this over the last few years. It was pleasing to get lots of records for the Crambidae, little non-descript moths we often kick out of the grass on our various walks, just about all of the regular species were reported widely. Just a few more to finish the micros, **Brown China-**



Rusty-dot Pearl © Graham Finch

mark ***Elophila nymphyata***, **Water Veneer *Acentria ephemerella*** were well recorded but **Small China-mark *Cataclysta lemnata*** was only at Charnwood Lodge.

On with the macro moths. A little flurry of four **Common Lutestring *Ochropacha duplaris*** on 11 August at Charnwood Lodge and a single **Pale Eggar *Trichiura crataegi*** from Whitwick. A couple of extra Hawk-moth species this quarter **Pine Hawk-moth *Sphinx pinastri*** at Whitwick and Charnwood Lodge, plus the first **Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum*** and **Small Elephant Hawk-moth *Deilephila porcellus*** from Charnwood Lodge again on 11 August. The only record for **Least Carpet *Idaea rustica*** was from The Drift where three were recorded, plus a single **Small Scallop *I. emarginata***. **Small Blood-vein *Scopula imitaria*** were at Charnwood Lodge, The Drift and Whitwick, and a nice **Clay Triple-lines *Cyclophora linearia*** at Charnwood Lodge. Amazingly the only records of nine individuals of **July Highflier *Hydriomena furcata*** were from The Drift.



July Highflier © Graham Finch

Fourth of August produced singles of the first and only records for **Phoenix *Eulithis prunata*** and **Northern Spinach *E. populata***, and **Small Phoenix *Ecliptopera silaceata*** was widely reported. The first **Green Carpet *Colostygia pectinataria*** was reported quite early for this species (6 April last quarter) was widely reported and still on the wing in late September. More likely to be recorded in Rutland than anywhere else, three **Barred Rivulet *Perizoma bifasciata*** were at The Drift. Similar numbers of



Lime-speck Pug© Graham Finch

species of Pug moths were recorded, ten this quarter opposed to 11 in the last quarter. We had four additional species, a single **Narrow-winged Pug *Eupithecia nanata***, six **Lime-speck Pug *E. centaureata***, a single **Tawny Speckled Pug *E. icterata*** and two **Grey Pug *E. subfuscata*** were added to the list. The first **Canary-shouldered Thorn *Ennomos alniaria*** showed up on 31 July and continued throughout the quarter, the first **Dusky Thorn *E. fuscantaria*** on 6 August and **September Thorn *E. erosaria*** on 11 August. Always a joy to see, **Sallow Kitten *Furcula furcula*** were at Charnwood Lodge and Whitwick and **Poplar Kitten *F. bifida*** at Whitwick all in August. A single **Herald *Scoliopteryx libatrix*** graced the light at Charnwood Lodge on 11 August. Charnwood Lodge held nine out of ten records of **Black Arches *Lymantria monarcha*** the other at Whitwick.

Records of **Ruby Tiger *Phragmatobia fuliginosa*** increased substantially this quarter and **Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae*** from Oakham, Ayston and Sileby only. Again, most of the Footman species were recorded including a single **Muslin Footman *Nudaria mundana*** at Charnwood Lodge but there were no records of **Orange Footman *Eilema complana*** this quarter. The only **Red Underwing *Catocola nupta*** were in early September and a stunning **Golden Plusia *Polychrysis moneta*** turned up at Whitwick on 12 July. A total of 25 records of **Silver Y *Autographa gamma*** came from far and wide, including quite a few daytime sightings. The main highlight for us at The Drift was recording the astounding number of 32 **Four-spotted *Tyta luctuosa***, this is an exceptionally high number to light on a single night for anywhere in the UK, let alone VC55. Records for **Gold Spot Plusia *festucae*** came from Charnwood Lodge and



Coronet © Steve Woodward

Whitwick, all **Coronet *Craniophora ligustri*** were from gardens at Whitwick and Groby. The first **Green-brindled Crescent *Allophyas oxyacanthae*** to appear was at Whitwick on 29 September, **Marbled Beauty *Bryophila domestica*** were recorded in all three months, **Pale Mottled Willow *Caradrina clavipalpis*** at Charnwood Lodge, Whitwick and Groby plus numerous records of **Vine's Rustic *Hoplodrina ambigua*** from Charnwood Lodge, The Drift and Whitwick. The **Old Lady *Mormo maura*** were at Whitwick and Groby and **Small Angle Shades *Euplexia lucipera*** Charnwood Lodge and Whitwick. Mid-September saw the arrival of **Frosted Orange *Gortyna flavago***, with **Rosy Rustic *Hydraecia micacea*** and **Flounced Rustic *Luperina testacea*** a month earlier.

The only records for **Small Rufous *Coenobia*** and **Small Wainscot *Denticucullus pygmina*** came from Whitwick, all on 11 August and a single **Clouded-bordered Brindle *Apamea crenata*** was at Whitwick on 6 July with singles of **Slender Brindle *A. scolopacina*** from Charnwood Lodge on 4 August. A solitary **Flounced Chestnut *Agrochola helvola*** was at Charnwood Lodge on 22 September. The only **Red-line Quaker** was at Whitwick on 29 September and **Lunar Underwing *Omphaloscelis lunosa*** was recorded from all sites at Charnwood Lodge. Good numbers of **Angle-striped Sallow *Enargia paleacea*** were at Charnwood Lodge. Throughout August into September and the first **Centre-barred Sallow *Atethmia centrago*** arrived on 18 August at Whitwick. The only **Brindled Green *Dryobotodes*** was at Charnwood Lodge on 8 September but **Black Rustic *Aprophyla nigra*** was reported widely. Charnwood Lodge had the monopoly on **Hedge Rustic *Tholera cespitis***, **Feathered Gothic**



Centre-barred Sallow © Steve Woodward

T. decimalis, Antler Moth **Cerapteryx graminis** and Grey Arches **Polia nebulosa**. There were some impressive numbers of Antler Moth 120+ on 11 August and 83 on 26 September. The first Common Wainscot **Mythimna pallens** arrived on 11 August and the first Smoky Wainscot **M. impura** on 15 July. The first Clay **M. farrago** was on 6 July, plus a single Dark Sword-grass **Agrotis ipsolon** at Whitwick on 26 August. The first Large Yellow Underwing **Noctua pronuba** arrived on 2 July and was well recorded in every month, Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing **N. fimbriata**, although never recorded in any numbers, was at all sites as were all the other usual Yellow Underwing species. The only record of Green Arches **Anaplectoides prasina** came from Whitwick on 6 July. Autumnal Rustic **Eugnorisma glareosa** only came from Charnwood Lodge and to finish off, Oak Nycteoline **Nycteola revayana** was at Whitwick several times in July and once on 11 August at Charnwood Lodge and Whitwick.

Q4 October to December

A shock to the system as we wind down from the dizzy heights of the last two quarters with 216 records of 1095 individuals of 102 species, with 53 micro moths and 49 macro moths. The majority of records in all of the moth the sections, are the results of individuals attracted to various light traps, namely Mercury Vapour, Actinic, WEM and LED light sources, plus occasional daytime observations. All are the most wonderful way to get familiarised with a large number of species in a relatively short length of time. By recording this way, we get a pretty good idea of what species we have in VC55 and to some degree an idea on their wider distribution. However, these records by their

nature are somewhat selective and more or less restricted to species that are regularly “attracted” to these light sources, as certain species are more likely to be found at light than others. Regarding their distribution it depends on where exactly you place your light trap, if it is fairly central in a large woodland or well away from neighbouring sites, as in the middle of Charnwood Lodge you can be reasonably sure your moths are indeed from these sites. If you are on the edges of any site, then the moths can be attracted from additional nearby sites that have nothing to do with the site you are on; a good example of this is moth trapping in your garden. If, at the end of the year, you total up all your moth records from your garden, you will have a very respectable tally, but it might be surprising just how few are truly associated with your garden. Species will be attracted from neighbours’ gardens and whatever habitat is bordering your plot, or maybe even further afield, this can make pinpointing specific distribution difficult at best, thus rendering it challenging for managers of nature reserves and/or wildlife sites when drawing up management plans.

Where am I going with this? Well, this is where searching for the early stages, in particular micro moths really comes into its own, as each mine, spinning or case will represent a breeding record, arguably far more important than a sight record. There are a whole bunch of micro moths that are, really rather “user friendly” and lend themselves to this form of detective work of searching a whole range of possible sites mainly by the close scrutiny of the leaves of trees, shrubs and other known food plants. These little moths also make it even more convenient for us by undertaking most of this activity during September, October and November, although there is a little spillage either side. Consequently, a rewarding half-day search for leaf mines at Burbage Common and Woods on 4 November produced a total of 40 species of micro moth in their early feeding stages, most of these will be the only records for that 40 species for the whole of 2020, and I would not be surprised if no-one in VC55 has ever seen them as adults. Once these stages are found and identified, precise grid references can be given as to their exact location, which should allow site managers to isolate any areas that hold

host plants for some of our rarer species and hopefully safeguard their existence.

In checklist order, starting with some of the more interesting leaf mine species with their host plant found at Burbage Common and Woods; *Stigmella tiliae* on Lime, *S. cathartice* on Buckthorn, *S. floslactella* on Hazel, *S. tityrella* on Beech, *S. salicis* on Willow, *S. obliquella* on Sallow, *Ectoedemia septembrella* on St John's-wort, *E. subimaculella* on Oak, *E. oculatella* on Birch, *Bucculatrix thoracella* on Lime, *B. ulmella* on Oak, *Parornix anglicella* on Hawthorn, *P. devoniella* on Hazel, *Phyllonorycter platani* on London Plane, *P. cerasicolella* on Cherry, *P. strigulatella* on Grey Alder, *P. rajella* on Alder, *P. froelichella* on Alder, *P. acerifoliella* on Maple, *P. geniculella* on Sycamore and *Phyllocnistis saligna* on Willow. I hope you will agree this is a necessary area of field work that needs to be undertaken if we want to further our knowledge and help to protect our micro moth species.

Moving on, a single *Caloptilia rufipennella* came from Whitwick on 8 November. Many mines of the now well recognised **Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner** *Cameraria ohridella* were recorded from Willoughby Waterleys on 1 October, singles of *Ypsolopha ustella* on 19 Oct from Loughborough and *Tachystola acroxantha* from Whitwick on 8 November. A solitary *Agonopterix arenella* from Charnwood Lodge on 21 December, was the only moth recorded in December. Singles of **Many-plumed** *Alucita hexadactyla* were trapped at Loughborough and **Common Plume** *Emmelina monodactyla* from Charnwood Lodge and Whitwick. Widely recorded **Light Brown Apple Moth** *Epiphyas postvittana* from most sites, *Acleris sparsana* recorded from Whitwick, and **Garden Rose Tortrix** *A. variegana* and *A. literana* only from Loughborough. A late, single **Pebble Hook-tip** *Drepana falcata* managed to continue to fly up to 8 October and **December Moth** *Poecilocampa populi* first appeared on 7 and 8 November at Loughborough and Whitwick respectively. **Spruce Carpet** *Thera britannica* were well reported throughout October and into November. A single **Grey Pine Carpet** *T. obeliscata* was found at Charnwood Lodge on 13 October and **Juniper Carpet** *T. juniperata* were at Loughborough and Whitwick in early November.

Amazing to think that **Red-green Carpet** *Chloroclysta siterata* was once considered quite a scarce species in VC55, it was one of the most widely recorded species this quarter. A single **Winter Moth** *Operophtera brumata* was at Charnwood Lodge on 5 November, the first **November Moth** *agg. Epirrita agg.* were only recorded from Loughborough on three occasions from mid-October to the 25th. The similar looking **Autumnal Moth** *E. autumnata* came from Charnwood Lodge 13 October. The first **Feathered Thorn** *Colotois pennaria* was a single on 13 November and then 8 on 8 November all at Whitwick. The only records of **Mottled Umber** *Erannis defolaria* came from Loughborough on 12 November, **Herald** *Soliopteryx libatrix* on 8 October from Coalville, **Snout** *Hypena proboscidalis* and **Straw Dot** *Rivula sericealis* at Loughborough the 5th, **Pale Tussock** *Calliteara pudibunda* at Coalville on the 8th, **Vapourer** *Orgyia antiqua* on the 22nd at Charnwood Lodge and **Red Underwing** *Catocala nupta* on the 4th from Loughborough; all species were seen as singletons.



Herald © Graham Finch

Lingering on until late October **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma* sightings came from Loughborough and Ibstock and the last of the **Green-brindled Crescent** *Allophyas oxyacanthae* were in mid-October at Loughborough and Charnwood Lodge. The only record of **Beaded Chestnut** *Agrochola lychnidis* was from Charnwood Lodge on 13 October, **Flounced Chestnut** *A. helvola* was at Charnwood Lodge the same day and Whitwick on 8 November. The Autumnal species continue with **Red-line Quaker** *Agrochola lota*, **Yellow-line Quaker** *A. macilentata* and **Brick** *A. circellaris*, all widely recorded. **Lunar Underwing**

Omphaloscelis lunosa only at Loughborough and **Chestnut *Conistra vacinii*** at Charnwood Lodge and Whitwick with **Dark Chestnut *C. ligula*** only at Charnwood Lodge; all of the last six species were recorded from 4 October to 8 November. **Grey Shoulder-knot *Lithophane ornitopus*** and **Blair's Shoulder-knot *L. leauteri*** were at both Loughborough and Whitwick, and **Satellite *Eupsilia transversa*** at Charnwood Lodge and Whitwick. One of the most awaited moths of this period must be the beautiful **Merveille du Jour *Griposia aprilina*** which was a regular visitor, especially in gardens, throughout October.



Black Rustic © Steve Woodward

The only records for **Black Rustic *Aporophyla nigra*** were from Loughborough and **Broom Moth *Ceramica pisi*** only from Charnwood Lodge, again all in October. Quite a regular in a Loughborough garden was **Dark Swordgrass *Agrotis ipsolon*** which was recorded twice in October and twice in November. To finish up with, **Oak Nycteoline *Nycteola revyana*** a singleton was attracted to light in Whitwick on 8 November.

Many thanks for all your records for this year.

Graham and Anona Finch

BETLES

By making a little effort, it's relatively easy to record a reasonable number of beetle species throughout the winter, so 431 records of 171 species are not bad at all. Coupled with this, the total number of individuals is somewhere around a staggering 12,127. Staggering indeed, but (and there's often a but) an estimated 10,000 **Saw-toothed Grain Beetle *Oryzaephilus***



Oryzaephilus surinamensis © Graham Finch

surinamensis plus 1,000 ***Cryptolestes ferrugineus*** and over 100 **Lesser Rice Weevil *Sitophilus oryzae*** were found infesting a huge store of grain in a barn near Blaby. These had to be very rough estimates and the actual numbers involved could well be several hundred thousands of individuals. So, although that brings the actual total down with a bump, it is still leaves a respectable number for this hard quarter. As would be expected, more species of Carabids were reported than any other family with 47 species, next were the Staphylinidae with 43 species, a huge drop to 21 species of Weevils and then 17 species of Ladybirds.

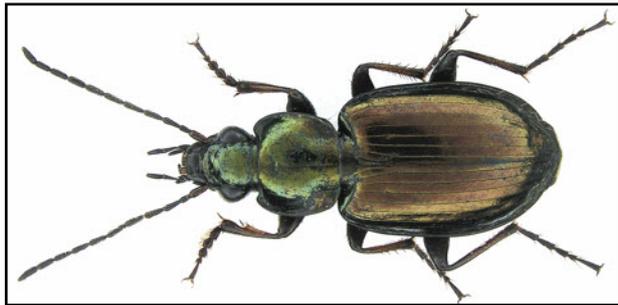
Q1 January to March

On with the records in checklist order:

A single ***Cychrus caraboides*** was found at Charnwood Lodge, the metallic blue ***Leistus spinibarbis*** were quite widespread, and a solitary pale brown ***Leistus ferrugineus*** was at Sawley Marina. ***Nebria brevicollis***, ***Notiophilus biguttatus*** and ***Loricera pilicornis*** were all widely reported and eight species of ***Bembidion*** were recorded, the best of the bunch being ***Bembidion assimile*** and ***B. obtusum*** both by sieving flood debris at Sawley Marina. Members of the ***Pterostichus*** genus are the typical black beetles everyone encounters, especially when gardening. They are black, or at least usually dark, and often cause confusion because of their similarity, but because they are frequently found, they need learning.

The main obvious differences are their size, and can be broken down roughly into three main groups, small up to about 7 mm, medium 7 mm up to about 11 mm and large over 11 mm up to about 21 mm.

Once you have got this, identification becomes much easier. Seven species of *Pterostichus* were recorded this quarter *P. madidus*, *P. niger*, *P. melanarius* and *P. nigrita* were widely recorded, *P. vernalis*, *P. diligens* and *P. strenuus* were almost exclusively found by sieving grass tussocks beside or near to water. Other noteworthy carabids were *Oxypselaphus obscurus* only reported from Sawley Marina, *Agonum thoreyi* from Narborough Bog and *A. muelleri* at Sawley Marina and Charnwood Lodge.



Agonum muelleri © Graham Finch

The rough grazing fields near to Sawley Marina proved to be very productive over January and February mainly by sieving grass tussocks and flood debris and were the main source of records for *Stenolophus mixtus* and *Bradycellus verbasci*. This next species has its stronghold in the east of VC55, so the two *Microlestes maurus* in a vacuum sample at Holwell Reserve was a nice find. Water beetles were thin on the ground, with only three species recorded, *Helophorus brevipalpus* from a water filled ditch at Queen Elizabeth Wood near Heather and *H. obscurus* from Charnwood Lodge and *Enochrus testaceus* from Narborough Bog, all as singletons.

On to the Staphs, the not so typical looking *Sepedophilus nigripennis* and *S. pedicularis* were found near Sawley and at Charnwood Lodge. Belonging to the same Sub-family Tachyporini as the last two species *Tachyporus hypnorum* and *T. obtusum* and *Tachinus rufipes* were widespread. There are not many, but at least *Drusilla canaliculata* is one of the few of the Aleocharinae that are straightforward to identify, several were found at Hicks Lodge and Holwell Reserve. The *Stenus* are a particularly nice genus to work with and 13 species were recorded. *Stenus bimaculatus*, with a red spot on each elytron were among the most recorded,

S. clavicornis, *S. juno*, *S. providus*, *S. carbonarius*, *S. cicindeloides*, *S. picipes*, *S. pubescens*, *S. impressus* and *S. ossium* were among the others, all found in single figures. Several records of the colourful *Sunius propinquus* and *Lathrobium brunnipes* were fairly well distributed, but just a single record of *L. fulvipenne* from Staunton Harold and a single *Ochtheophilum fracticorne* from Lea Meadow. No *Quedius* species were recorded, but the usual set of *Philonthus* did okay, with singles of *Philonthus laminatus* from Warren Hills, *P. sanguinolentus* at Charnwood Lodge and *P. tenuicornis* from Charnwood Lodge near Sawley Marina. Only two records of Devil's Coach-horse *Ocyopus olens* a usually very frequently recorded species. Another colourful species *Atrechus affinis* was found at Ketton Quarry, and very similar to the *Lathrobium* species, *Xantholinus linearis* and *X. longiventris* were easily found by sieving grass tussocks and flood debris.

Only two species of *Aphodius* dung beetles were recorded all as singletons, *Aphodius prodromus* from Bradgate Park and *A. sphacelatus* from Sawley Marina and Bradgate Park. Out of the Click-beetles, Staunton Harold produced the only *Agriotes acuminatus* while *A. sputator* was also found fairly widespread. The smart black and white, Notable B, *Megatoma undata* was found inside a rotten Oak in a hedgerow near Kegworth. Rarely seen as an adult, six fully grown larvae of Cobweb Beetle *Ctesias cerra* were found under bark on the Club's outing to Thornton Reservoir. A total of five *Ptinus sexpunctatus* were found in a Cropston garden, superficially similar to *Megatoma* but with obviously much longer antennae. A quick inspection of the "bone yard" in Bradgate Park produced ten individuals of *Necrobia violaceus* and two *Omosita discoidea*. This site is still the most reliable site for the *Necrobia*. It's difficult to pass dead *Typha* stems without a close inspection to see if anything is hiding under the dead leaf sheaths, several sites produced numerous individuals of *Telmatophilus typhae*.

The Ladybird mimic *Endomychus coccineus* was only found at Charnwood Lodge. A single *Rhyzobius chrysomeloides* was at Hicks Lodge but *R. litura* seemed to be everywhere, as was *Coccidula rufa* but *C. scutellate* was only found



Nephus quadrimaculatus © Graham Finch

at Queen Elizabeth Wood, again on the Club outing there. New to VC55 was ***Nephus quadrimaculatus***, one of the very small inconspicuous Ladybirds, two individuals were found in Ivy at Knighton, a very nice find. Only a single record of **Kidney Ladybird *Chilocorus renipustulatus*** was found in Wymeswold, but **Pine Ladybird *Exochomus quadripustulatus*** was recorded throughout the quarter with most records in March. Sieving grass tussocks produced the most records for **22-spot Ladybird *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata*** with the highest number of over 30 at Sawley Marina. Just three records of **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis***. A total of 34 sightings of **7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*** made this the most widespread and recorded of the family. To finish the Ladybirds, **Water Ladybird *Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata*** and **16-spot Ladybird *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata*** were easily found in dead Typha stems.

A solitary **Hairy Fungus Beetle *Tetratoma fungorum*** was found amongst the barn infestation near Blaby. A few Chrysomelid beetles were out and about and a few of the more notable were four ***Phaedon armoraciae*** in dead Typha stems at Thornton, and six ***P. tumidulus*** found in a vacuum sample at Holwell Reserve, a single ***Plagioderma versicolora*** was in the same sample. A speciose and quite difficult group to work with are the ***Longitarsus***, fortunately ***Longitarsus dorsalis*** is one of the few easy ones to identify and was found fairly widespread. The same can be said about the genus ***Psylliodes***, and thankfully ***P.***

chrysocephala is a straightforward species to identify, again fairly widely reported.

Finishing off with what must be one of the most enigmatic groups, the Weevils. **Cramp-ball Fungus Weevil *Platyrhinus resinosus*** used to be thought of as quite a rare species but this has now been recorded quite regularly over the last four or five years, nevertheless, it is still a pleasure to see it. The **Gorse Weevil *Exapion ulicis*** can probably be found on every single Gorse bush on the Charnwood Forest, making it one of the most abundant weevils we have, so it was nice to receive a record away from its stronghold from Huncote. It is an easy species to recognise and often when found is usually in considerable numbers, so more records outside the Charnwood Forest would be welcomed. Many of the Apionidae species are very similar and can be a challenge to identify, knowing the host/food plant can be a great help, but not conclusive, a single ***Eutrichapion ervi*** was found in a vacuum sample from Holwell. A solitary bulging-eyed ***Neliocarus nebulosus*** was in sieved moss from Warren Hills. ***Sitona lineatus*** was not surprisingly the most recorded weevil of the quarter. Another species associated with Gorse, and sometimes found on Broom, ***Andrion regenteinensis*** with very long spidery legs can be quite easily identified. Singles of the quite distinctive ***Hypera nigrirostris*** were found at Holwell Reserve, ***Leiosoma deflexum*** also found at Holwell plus Lea Meadows, habitats which hold Wood Anemone, Marsh Marigold and Buttercups are good places to look for this. ***Euophyrum confine*** is a small parallel-sided weevil usually found in wet rotten wood and the only record this quarter was from Charnwood Lodge where 11 individuals recorded. ***Trichosirocalus barnevillei*** is generally a scarce beetle throughout the UK, we now have six records including the latest from a vacuum sample from Holwell Reserve. The host plant is Yarrow, of which there is no shortage, but the beetle is rarely found. The extremely common **Small Nettle Weevil *Nedyus quadrimaculatus*** was only recorded from Holwell and Brown's Hill Quarry. Finally ***Mecinus pascuorum*** continues to be found on its host Ribwort Plantain.

Q2 April to June

This quarter is always going to be the one with the most records, so we have 1393 records with 4195 individuals of 357 species, which is close to three times that of the previous quarter. The top three families with the most species recorded are Weevils with 67 species, Carabids with 49 and Chrysomelids with 44. Interestingly, the Carabids lead last quarter by a mere two extra species. With so many records, it's probably best to summarize rather than try and cover the whole lot, so out of the 28 species of water beetles recorded only a single *Haliphus lineolatus* was found, this was at Saddington Reservoir. *Noterus clavicornis* was fairly widespread, three *Hyphydrus ovatus* were netted from a pond at Launde whilst *Hygrotus inaequalis* and *Hydroporus memnonius* were almost exclusively found on the Charnwood Forest. A small wet flush with barely any free water near Charnwood Lodge held two *Hydroporus pubescens* and four *Platambus maculatus*. The only *Agabus* species recorded was *Agabus bipustulatus* which was widespread, but five species of *Ilybius* were recorded, including *Ilybius chalconatus* from Ulverscroft, *I. ater* from Saddington, and *I. quadriguttatus* from Saddington, Launde and Seaton Meadow. The large Great Diving Beetle *Dytiscus marginalis* was found at Bagworth and Saddington. The two large and very similar *Helophorus aequalis* and *H. grandis* plus the much smaller *H. brevipalpis* were widely reported but just a single *H. obscurus* was found at Launde. A single *Hydrobius fuscipes* was only at Charnwood Lodge, one *Anacaena bipustulata* at Launde and two *A. limbata* were netted from a stream at Saddington also from the same site a single *Laccobius bipunctatus*. Singles of *Helochares lividus* on the Charnwood Forest and *Enochrus testaceus* from a well vegetated roadside pond at Launde. A brief run through the Carabids gives us six *Carabus nemoralis* from pitfall traps in Bradgate Park, which still remains the stronghold for this species, also from this site were two *Notiophilus palustris*.

The only record for Green Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris* was of a singleton from Ketton Quarry. *Elaphrus cupreus* was found at Dimmingsdale and Lea Meadows. There were no species of *Bembidion* and *Pterostichus* to add to

what was found in the last quarter. The large *Abax parallelepipedus* was widely reported, *Paranchus albipes* came from Loughborough Big Meadows and Wymeswold Meadows with *Oxypselaphus obscurus* found only at Wymondham Rough. Four species of *Agonum*, four of *Amara*, and two species *Harpalus* were more in evidence. *Ophonus puncticeps* was found at Staunton Harold and Shenton Estates, this brings the total number of records for this species up to nine, so it's still quite a scarce beetle in VC55. Vacuum sampling provided records for the smaller Carabids *Stenolophus mixtus*, *Acupalpus dubius*, *A. meridianus*, and *Anthracus consputus*. The amazing find of *Panageus cruxmajor* wandering amongst the dead vegetation on the edge of a garden pond at Long Clawson, is a first record for VC55. The closest records of this species to us would be a small population along the River Trent in Nottinghamshire, a truly remarkable find. Out of 18 records for *Nicrophorus humator* half were from various moth trap lights.

The Staphylinidae more or less always do well for records, there's that many of them and they are just about found anywhere at any time and 32 species were found this quarter. Vacuum sampling is incredibly effective for finding small Staphs; *Lesteva longoelytra* was at Coombs Meadow, the very strange looking *Rybaxis longicornis* at Wymondham, numerous *Tachyporus* and *Tachinus* species, and the really tiny *Cypha longicornis*. A total of 14 species of *Stenus* were recorded, including *Stenus bimaculatus*, *S. clavicornis*, *S. junco*, *S. cicindeloides*, *S. fulvicornis*, *S. similis* and *S. flavipes* were all found by vacuum sampling and *S. bifoveolatus* was sieved from a grass tussock at Heather. We do well for Lesser Stag Beetle *Dorcus parallelepipedus* with ten widely scattered records, all of singletons, but just one record of a single Minotaur Beetle *Typhaeus typhoeus* and that was at probably the best site to find it in Bradgate Park where it can be fairly common.

An incredible day out on a late afternoon in June with Darren Mann and Steve Lane searching mainly for "Scarabs". I think this was an important visit by two of the most experienced coleopterists in Britain, therefore I will list in full what we found. *Amphimallon*

solstitiale four in flight in the garden of Holywell Lodge, *Aphodius ater* one at Quarry Farm field, *Aphodius erraticus* two at Tinwell, *A. fimetarius* one at Tinwell, *A. foetidus* four at Tinwell, *A. fossor* three at Tinwell plus 12 at Quarry Farm field, *A. granarius* one at Tinwell plus six at Quarry Farm field, *A. haemorrhoidalis* three at Tinwell plus one at Quarry Farm field, *A. pedellus* one at Quarry Farm field, *A. pusillus* two at Tinwell, *A. rufipes* two each at Tinwell and Quarry Farm field, *A. rufus* six at Tinwell plus three at Quarry Farm field, *A. sticticus* one at Tinwell plus two at Pickworth Great Wood, *A. zenkeri* one at Pickworth Great Wood, *Dorcus parallelipipedus* one at Quarry Farm copse, *Onthophagus joannae* two at Pickworth Great Wood plus four at Quarry Farm field, *Oxyomus sylvestris* two at Tinwell and finally *Synodendron cylindricum* two at Pickworth Great Wood.



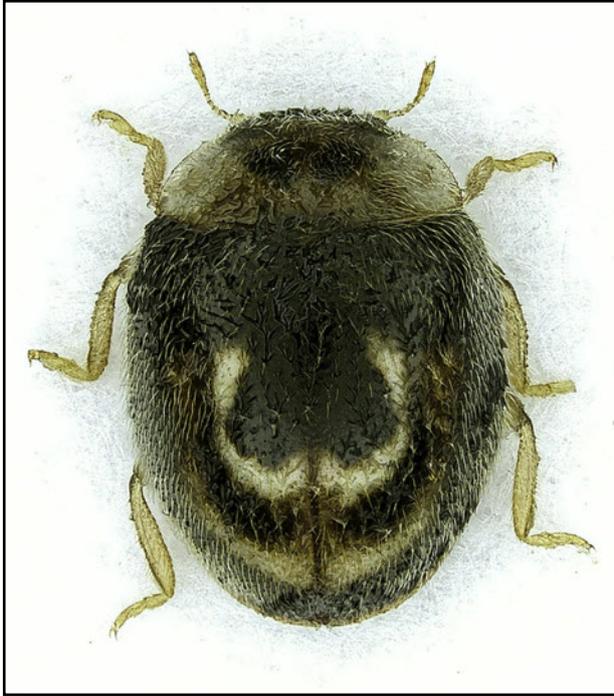
Oxyomus sylvestris © Graham Finch

An even split of the 20 **Common Cockchafer** *Melolontha melolontha* records, with ten found at various moth light traps and ten through daytime observation. Just nine species of Click-beetles were recorded including a single stunning *Ctenocera cuprea*, *Athous haemorrhoidalis* as usual, was the most recorded species and a solitary *Dalopius marginatus* was found in Burrow Wood on Hawthorn blossom. The most interesting was a single striking *Oedostethus quadripustulatus* which had made its way into a pitfall trap on Shenton Estates. Quite small, about 4 mm, almost black with two fairly large yellowish spots on each elytron and given "local" in its national distribution. All the usual Cantharids were recorded but only a single *Malthodes marginatus* which was also on Hawthorn blossom in Burrow Wood. Singles of each of **Bacon Beetle** *Dermestes lardarius* and **Two-**

spotted Carpet Beetle *Attagenus pello* were found during the day at Whitwick, plus another of the latter at Cropston. The unwelcome visitor **Varied Carpet Beetle** *Anthrenus verbasci* was especially widespread with records in all three months and *Ptinus sexpunctatus* and **Ant Beetle** *Thanasimus formicarius* putting in an appearance mid-May in a Cropston garden. Several records for **Malachite Beetle** *Malachius bipustulatus* and *Anthocomus fasciatus* so it seems they were having quite a good season.

The Nitidulidae are an interesting group and include the Pollen Beetles in the genus *Meligethes* with over 30 species and most of them looking extremely similar they present quite a challenge. The adults are mostly polyphagous and can be found on a wide range of flowers, although several species are likely to be found usually in close proximity to their larval host plant. Knowing the host plants can help point you in the right direction for identification, it does tend to narrow down the number of candidates, but dissection is recommended for a true verification. The most widely recorded was **Common Pollen Beetle** *Meligethes aenea* and will be found in huge numbers on just about every yellow flowering Brassicaceae. Checking flowering Rose in Cloud Wood produced *M. atratus*, while *M. morosus* was swept off patches of White Dead-nettle at Kelham Bridge and Coombs Meadow. *M. nigrescens* was found by vacuum sampling patches of White Clover at Coombs Meadow and *M. planiusculus* was vacuumed off Vipers Bugloss at Ketton Quarry.

Quite an impressive list of 22 Ladybird species for this quarter, including a new species for VC55. The two similar species *Rhyzobius chrysomeloides* with six records and *R. litura* 21 records, if they are typically patterned adults, they are not too bad to separate, but often their weak markings can be somewhat variable and are best sorted using the underside character of the prosternal keel, also about roughly the same size about 3 mm. With obvious parallel sides *Coccidula rufa* was recorded at three sites. After being added to the VC55 list in March, **Four-spotted Ladybird** *Nephus quadrimaculatus* were found at an additional seven sightings all in April, and interestingly all records are from built-up areas. Even smaller than the previous species at 1.5 mm **Horseshoe Ladybird**



Clitostethus arcuatus © Graham Finch

Clitostethus arcuatus was first recorded in 1872 at Shenton and we then had to wait almost 150 years for the next, from Sapcote when a singleton was beaten from an Ivy-covered wall in April. Then, just over a week later, a second was beaten from Ivy at Kelham Bridge. This is another predatory species which feeds on whitefly, the national distribution map is very patchy although this could be due to its very small size, making it difficult to locate. The next of the “inconspicuous” Ladybirds **Red-flanked Scymnus *Scymnus interruptus*** when a singleton was found in a garden at Broughton Astley this was a first for VC55, five days later another was found in Braunstone, a few days later another three individuals from the same Braunstone garden. Vacuum sampling at Twenty Acre Piece on 14 May produced a solitary **Red-rumped Ladybird *Scymnus haemorrhoidalis*** not as scarce as the previous species with 15 records but had not been recorded since 1997. The following day the same method located three individuals at Bloody Oaks Quarry. The final of these small Ladybirds **Pine Scymnus *Scymnus suturalis*** five individuals were beaten from Scots Pine branches covered in mould near Ibstock. Several records for these unobtrusive Ladybirds were from gardens, so was it the lockdown that forced people to scrutinise the back yard more than usual? Still with Ladybirds but with the more familiar species, two records for **Kidney-spot Ladybird *Chilocorus renipustulatus***, an

amazing 41 records came in for **Pine Ladybird *Exochomus quadripustulatus*** so as you may guess this was very widespread. More often found at moth traps **Orange Ladybird *Halyzia sedecimguttata*** out of the seven records only two were from light traps, interesting to see if this changes later in the year when more of us are operating moth traps.

Just a quick summary of the next few species, 18 records for **22-spot Ladybird *Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata***, nine records for **Cream-spot Ladybird *Calvia quattuordecimguttata***, 35 for **14-spot Ladybird *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata***, 45 for **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis***, 16 for **2-spot Ladybird *Adalia bipunctata***, 15 for **10-spot Ladybird *Adalia decempunctata***, 109 for **7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata***, just two for **Larch Ladybird *Aphidecta oblitterata***, four for **Water Ladybird *Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata***, 12 for **16-spot Ladybird *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata*** and finally eight records for **24-spot Ladybird *Subcoccinella vigintiquatuorpunctata***. That is more or less the complete record set for Ladybirds for this quarter, already this has to be amongst the best years we have had for Ladybird species and records, let's see what happens next quarter.

There were only two members of the Tenebrionidae recorded, both as singletons ***Isomira murina*** vacuumed from grassland at Bloody Oaks Quarry and at twice the size at 12 mm ***Pseudocistella ceramboides*** where it was attracted to a moth light in Cropston. The distinctive **Swollen-thighed Beetle *Oedemera nobilis*** caught everyone's attention with regular counts well into double figures and a minimum count of 200 at Ketton Quarry, while its close relation ***Oedemera lurida*** although again widespread, but a total of eight was the highest number counted in one day. A very nice record of **Black-headed Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa coccinea*** came from Charnwood Lodge end of May, bringing the VC55 total up to just six records, whereas **Common Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa serraticornis*** was very widespread with a minimum count of 20 at Ketton Quarry. With ten out of the 13 species of *Anaspis* recorded in VC55, just three were reported this quarter; they are almost exclusively beaten from blossom, particularly Rosaceae and from

Umbellifers. Even with the 2009 R.E.S. Handbook keys, these are not an easy genus, and this reflects in the number of records received with just the three species recorded, four records for *Anaspis frontalis*, 12 for *A. macualta* which is by far the easiest to identify and four records for *A. regimbarti*.

A total of ten species of Longhorn beetles were recorded, a single *Rhagium mordax* from Whitwick was the only record for this species, *Stenocorus meridianus* was only found in Pickworth Great Wood, records for *Grammoptera ruficornis* and *Rutpela maculata* were widespread, *Stenurella melanura* was reported on three occasions and *Phymatodes testaceus* was continually present throughout May and June in a Cropston garden. There were plenty of sightings of the Wasp Beetle *Clytus arietus*, just two sightings of *Anaglyptus mysticus*, three of *Agapanthia villosoviridescens* and finally a solitary *Tetrops praeustus* found on an apple tree at Bagworth.

As expected, the Chrysomelidae fared well with 44 species recorded just a summary here. *Donacia simplex* and *D. vulgaris* were found at Saddington, much to gardener's delight. Lily Beetle *Lilioceris lili* was reported widely but Asparagus Beetle *Crioceris asparagi* was only reported from an allotment in Leicester. The Tortoise beetles are always eye-catchers, two species were found *Cassida rubiginosa* and *C. vibex* were both well represented. Despite growing Lavender and Rosemary in our garden, I am still yet to see Rosemary Beetle *Chrysolina americana* reported widely, mainly throughout June. Vacuum sampling produced the fifth VC55 record of *Chrysolina brunsvicensis* from Coombs Meadow. The Dead-nettle Leaf Beetle *C. fastuosa* was found widely at Kelham Bridge. At Coombs Meadow a single *C. staphylaea* was found on 15 May and the same day at Bloody Oaks Quarry a single *C. sturmi* brought the VC55 total up to just three, again through vacuum sampling. Surprisingly the only records for Alder Leaf Beetle *Agelastica alni* came from Moira, no other records of this species were received. A total of 12 individuals of *Epitrix atropae* were counted on the large patch of Deadly Nightshade at Ketton Quarry.

There were more species of weevil found this quarter than any other family, 67 in total so



Chrysolina sturmi © Graham Finch

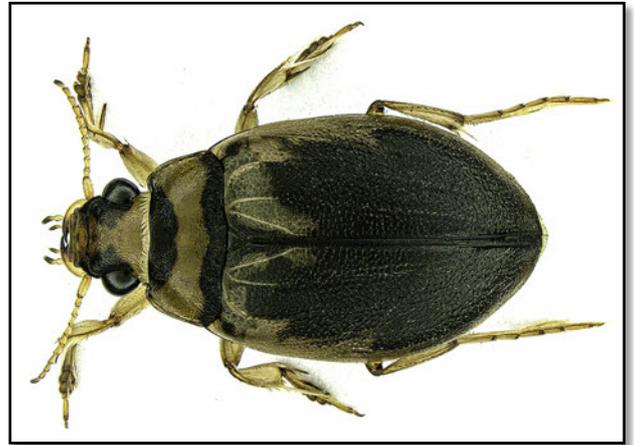
again just a summary here. Records for **Cramp-ball Fungus Weevil** *Platyrhinus resinosus* continue to increase and seem to be getting slightly more widespread and often away from old woodland, being found in hedgerows with old Ash trees. As soon as the Hawthorn blossom is out in May, **Apple Fruit Rhynchites** *Tatianaerhynchites aequatus* can be found with relative ease by tapping the blossom over a tray and good numbers were found throughout May. The Apionidae are a large family with 34 genera of 81 species and about 56 species have been recorded in VC55. When odd individuals are casually found they can cause identification problems, but as many have an association with certain plants, knowing those host plants can help, although this must not be taken to the letter. I will cherry pick a few out of the 17 species that have been recorded for this quarter. Four individuals of *Aspidapion aeneum* were vacuum sampled from Twenty Acre Piece in mid-May, this species can be regularly found on Mallow spp. The last time this species was seen was 1985, so the May record was the fourth for VC55. The most widespread of our four red Apion species is *Apion frumentarium* and the record of a single adult from Wymondham was the only species reported. A single *Oxystoma cerdo* from Sapcote brings the records up to seven for VC55, quite a scarce species in VC55 for saying the host plants are various Vetches. Usually found on Meadow Vetchling, the only record for *Eutrichapion ervi* came from a flower-filled meadow at Loddington. The **Vine Weevil** *Otiorhynchus sulcatus* was widely recorded. Although probably polyphagous, a single *Caenopsis waltoni* usually prefers to be on acid soils, so the heathy

habitat of Bradgate Park obviously suits it. Single specimens of **Strawberry Fruit Weevil** *Barypeithes araneiformes* were found at Bloody Oaks Quarry and **Strawberry Root Weevil** *Sciaphilus asperatus* was found at Loddington, both late in May. Another species that has gone from odd single records to being widely found throughout is *Rhinocyllus conicus* with 12 records in this quarter. The dark shiny weevil *Leiosoma deflexum* is usually found on Wood Anemone and Marsh Marigold but can be difficult to locate due to its 3 mm size and is normally down at root level, but vacuum sampling gave us records from four sites: Ibstock, Saddington, Wymondham and Staunton Harold. By vacuuming the dry edges of Watercress at Wymeswold Meadow in mid-May a single *Drupenatus nasturtii* was found; this now being the fifth for VC55. Vacuum sampling the Water Mint on a stream at Saddington produced a single *Datonychus melanosticus* bringing us up to five records for VC55. The same method on Viper's Bugloss found five adults of *Mogulones geographicus* at its stronghold at Ketton Quarry. Vacuuming the Brooklime at Saddington found two adults of *Gymnetron veronicae*. The leaf mines of *Orchestes quercus* were found on Oak at Bagworth and finally a single *Xyleborinus saxesenii* was found in the garden at Whetstone.

Q3 July to September

The numbers of records 1092, individuals 4946 and species 325 are not too dissimilar to those from the last quarter, with a slight but noticeable drop off with some families. There was an increase in numbers of species for Carabids 61 and Staphs 53 but a slight decrease in all the others. The top three families with the most species recorded are Carabids with 61, Staphs 53 and Weevils 51 and these three families account for just over half the total number of species recorded for this quarter.

Starting with the water beetles, although there is one fewer species recorded from last quarter, 27 as opposed to 28, the variety of the list is quite different. *Haliplus immaculatus* and *H. ruficollis* were found at Lockington and Cossington. Five adults of Screech Beetle *Hygrobia hermanni* and two *Laccophilus*



Hygrobia hermanni © Graham Finch

minutus were at Cossington, and a field pond at Loddington produced a single *Hygrotus impressopunctatus*. Members of the genus *Hydroporus* can be awkward to key out, and even Garth Foster, lead writer for both Royal Entomological Society keys recommends dissecting to confirm identification. A selection of *Hydroporus* were found at Cossington and Lockington, *Hydroporus angustatus*, *H. incognitus*, *H. palustris* and *H. pubescens* plus *Rhantus suturalis* and *Colymbetes fuscus* from both sites. A single *Anacaena globulus* was vacuumed from the edge of a very dry pond at Cribb's Meadow and a solitary *Laccobius striatulus* from Lockington.

With a very respectable 61 species of Carabids recorded, I'll summarize as best I can. *Trechus quadristriatus* was recorded fairly widely including three adults at MV light at The Drift in late July. Most of the usual *Bembidion* species were found this quarter, ten in total, probably the best being *Bembidion mannerheimii* from a pitfall trap in Bradgate Park. Pitfall traps at Shenton Estates produced most of the common *Pterostichus* plus *Calathus rotundicollis*, *C. fuscipes*, and *Anchomenus dorsalis*. The only *Paranchus albipes* and *Agonum micans* were found at Ratcliffe Lock along the River Soar and two adults of *Amara bifrons* were vacuumed from The Drift. Both *Harpalus rubripes* and *H. rufipes* were extremely common in pitfall traps on Shenton Estates. *Ophonus ardosiacus* and *O. puncticeps* were attracted to MV light at The Drift plus *O. rufibarbis*, *Stenolophus mixtus* and *Bradycellus verbasci* became regular in the pitfalls on Shenton Estates. The Carabid highlight of the quarter was finding a single *Perigona nigriceps* in a subterranean pitfall trap set in a large pile



Perigona nigriceps © Graham Finch

of wood chippings on Shenton Estates in mid-August. **This constitutes the first record for this species in VC55.** Its status is given as widespread but sporadic and local in England as far north as Yorkshire, and habitat is compost and grass heaps, so the pile of wood chipping just about fits the bill. *Cercyon quisquilius* was found on Shenton Estates and *C. analis* was attracted to MV light at The Drift, these were the only species in this genus reported.

Examining cow dung on Shenton Estate produced a nice suite of species. *Cryptopleurum minutum*, *Margarinotus merdarius* - this was only the sixth record for VC55, *M. striola* and *M. marginatus* - only the third record for VC55 plus *Atholus duodecimstriatus*. The pitfall traps at this site produced several *Nargus velox*, and a flight interceptor trap caught two *Sciodrepoides watsoni* and a single *Catops coracinus*.

The Staphs did really well, with 53 species recorded as opposed to 32 for the last quarter, looking more like a tiny blackish seed than a beetle, ten *Proteinus brachypterus* were found in Chicken of the Woods fungus on a standing dead Beech tree at Charnwood Lodge. Vacuuming at Ketton Quarry produced a very small (less than 2 mm) and strange looking Staph, a single *Pselaphus heisei*, and a solitary *Cypha longicornis* was in a pitfall trap at Shenton Estates. Another that could be mistaken for a small seed is *Scaphisoma agaricinum* one was in a flight interception trap at Shenton Estates, the habitat is fungus infested rotting wood. Also at Shenton was a single *Platystethus arenarius* on cow dung and attracted to cow dung at the same site were over 100 *Oxytellus laqueatus* and easily the same number of *O. sculptus*. A similar set of

Stenus as last quarter but with the added species *Stenus lustrator*, *S. latifrons*, *S. tarsalis* and *S. ossium* all taken by vacuum sampling. The best out of a bunch of *Philonthus* species were *Philonthus discoideus*, with nine previous records, *P. longicornis* just six previous records and *P. spinipes* only four previous records of this. The brutish Devil's Coach-horse *Ocypus olens* was widely reported but *O. brunripes* was only found at two sites and *O. aeneocephalus* was at a single site. Singles of *Quedius lateralis* and *Q. curtipennis* were found at Charnwood Lodge and *Q. fuliginosus* and *Q. levicollis* were at Shenton. Finishing the Staphs with two *Gyrophypus fracticornis* found in a manure heap in a field at Shenton.

Only one species of *Aphodius* was recorded this quarter *Aphodius rufipes* attracted to moth trap lights in Loughborough and The Drift. This next species *Serica brunnea* can often be abundant at moth traps, but we have just one record of two individuals in a pitfall trap at Bradgate Park. A single *Cantharis nigricans* was found at Shenton, but *Rhagonycha fulva* was the most widespread with 59 records and just a single record of *Malthinus flaveolus* from Charnwood Lodge. Designated as being "local in C and SE England" a single *Dorcatoma chrysomelina* was sieved from grass cuttings at Cossington Meadows. Singles of *Soronina grisea*, one of the "sap beetles", was found at Bagworth in a light trap and Shenton in a flight interceptor trap. Three different *Rhizophagus* species were found this quarter, all from subterranean pitfall traps in Bradgate Park: two adults of *Rhizophagus dispar*, two *R. parallelocollis* and three *R. perforatus*.

The Ladybirds were given detailed coverage last quarter so I'll only mention the remarkable find of another **Horseshoe Ladybird** *Clitostethus arcuatus* on Shenton Estates in late July. It is remarkable in the fact that the very first record for this species came from Shenton Hall in 1872 by Thomas Vernon Wollaston a mere couple of hundred metres away from our latest record. National status is described as "very local" and tends to have more of a southerly distribution and the species is becoming more abundant with climate warming. So the first record was way back in 1872 and then we get three records just over three months apart in 2020, it is

predatory, feeding on whitefly, will we be seeing more of this small enigmatic species?

The subterranean pitfall trap buried in wood chippings on Shenton Estates produced six *Litargus connexus* and three *Mycetophagus atomarius*; there had only been 11 previous records for the latter, so it was worth all the effort to install it. Another species described as “local in central and southern England” *Variimorda villosa* one of the “tumbling flower beetles”, all seven of our records for this species come from Ketton Quarry, including the latest three sightings from July and August. The next species *Metoecus paradoxus*, apart from its unusual looks, has an extraordinary life style where the female lays her eggs in crevices in the wood used by social wasps to make paper for their nests, on emergence the larvae attach themselves to a visiting wasp and then are transported back to the nest. Here the beetle larva feed on fourth or fifth instar wasp larva, the adults emerging in late summer.

New to the county in 2012, the latest record for *Corticeus unicolor* comes from Charnwood Lodge in late August. This brings our total to just six records of this local and often rare species, all our records are from North West Leicestershire. Although the species count was down to eight (ten for the last quarter). We had four additional species *Paracarymbia fulva* new to the county list in 2009, then five records in 2011, a single record in 2013, 2016 and 2019 we have another five records for 2020 and it looks to be showing an expansion of its range. All of the previous records centre around the Blaby district, Sapcote, Croft and Stoney Stanton and now we have several sightings from Melton. The two sightings of *Arhopalus rusticus* from Queniborough and Whetstone push the total of VC55 records up to seven. Bird dropping mimics **Greater Thorn-tipped Beetle** *Pogonocherus hispidulus* was found at Leicester Forest East, Braunstone and Long Clawson, while **Lesser Thorn-tipped Beetle** *Pogonocherus hispidus* was found at Ibstock and Huncote. Fewer Chrysomelids were seen this quarter (31 as opposed to 44 in the last quarter) but with a few extra ones for the year **Rosemary Beetle** *Chrysolina americana* continued to get reported from gardens and allotments and two individuals of *C. herbacea* were found at its

stronghold on Charnwood Lodge. All seven records for **Alder Leaf Beetle** *Agelastica alni* came from North West Leicestershire, namely Moira, Albert Village, Donisthorpe, Heather and Coalville. Finishing off the Chrysomelids, Ketton Quarry produced the only sighting for *Epitrix atropae*, while Pillings Lock and Lockington held small colonies of *Epitrix pubescens*. This latter species is worth looking for on Bittersweet where often the leaves are peppered with tiny holes, alerting us to its presence.

The number of weevil species dropped slightly from 67 to 51 species in this quarter. A targeted search of Purple Loosestrife for **Loosestrife Weevil** *Nanopheys marmoratus* proved successful, being found on an extra five sites with the highest total of 18 individuals on a spindly stand of the plant at Cossington Meadows. Pillings Lock produced singles of *Notaris acridulus* and *Notaris scirpi* in late August; both species associated with waterside plants. Also found in wetland habitats is the distinctive *Grypus equiseti* whose host plants are Horsetails. Usually found at the roots of a variety of herbaceous plants which can make it awkward to find, 12 individuals of *Strophosoma nebulosum* were swept from low vegetation on Bardon Hill in mid-June.



Hypera nigrirostris © Graham Finch

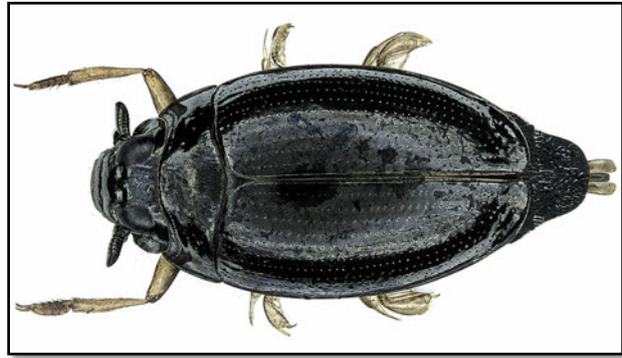
Singles of the lovely black with green scales *Hypera nigrirostris*, probably the easiest of this genus to identify, were found at Launde Park Wood, **Clover Leaf Weevil** *H. postica* was found at Stonesby and Launde plus *H. rumicis* was at Heather. Singles of *Euophyrum confine* were found at Bardon Hill by sweeping low vegetation and at Bradgate Park in a subterranean pitfall trap sunk into a standing old Oak with a rotten interior. *Rhinoncus pericarpus* was found in several areas along the Soar valley, a widespread species associated with Docks. **R.**

perpendicularis was at the same sites, but this is associated with Amphibious Bistort. Another concentrated search, this time for **Cranesbill Weevil *Zacladus geranii*** was found in good numbers with six individuals at Stonesby Quarry and eight on a roadside near Ulverscroft NR. Targeting Ribwort Plantain produced ***Trichosirocalus troglodytes*** found at six widespread sites, along with ***Mecinus pascuorum*** at three sites, Stonesby Quarry, Cribb's Meadow and The Drift. Surprisingly, despite trying various methods, only a single individual of **Small Nettle Weevil *Nedyus quadrimaculatus*** was found and that was at Cossington Meadow. A total of five adults of **Strawberry Blossom Weevil *Anthonomus rubi*** were vacuumed from Cribb's Meadow in mid-July and singles of **Acorn Weevil *Curculio glandium*** were found at Bagworth in August. Another Oak feeder ***Archarius pyrrhoceras*** was found at Bardon Hill. Two tiny weevils ***Tycheus junceus*** on various clovers and ***T. meliloti*** on various melilots were vacuumed at Ketton Quarry in early September. Also vacuumed from a roadside at Belton in Rutland ***T. picirostris*** was found mainly on White Clover. A small area of Common Toadflax was searched at Stonesby Quarry and several ***Rhinusa antirrhini*** were found. The leaf mines of both ***Orchestes rusci*** were found at Bagworth on Birch in late July and ***Isochnus sequensi*** at Hemington on Crack Willow mid-July. A single ***Rhamphus oxyacanthae*** was beaten from Ivy at Stonesby Quarry, mainly found on Hawthorn but occasionally on Rowan. Finally, three adults of the Scolytid ***Dryocoetes villosus*** were found in a subterranean pitfall trap in Bradgate Park.

Q4 October to December

A huge drop in records, with a meagre 244 of 1582 individuals and 108 species. The families with the most species recorded were Carabids with 27 and Staphs with 21 followed by Ladybirds with 12. All records are from October and November, no records were received from December.

Just a few different species of water beetles were recorded this quarter. Five adult ***Gyrinus substriatus*** were caught from the River Sence at Hugglescote, two ***Hydroporus discretus*** were



Gyrinus substriatus © Graham Finch

netted at Charnwood Lodge, ***Helophorus aequalis*** from Sibley Marina and Charnwood Lodge, also from Charnwood Lodge ***H. grandis*** and ***H. brevipalpus***. Several ***Megasternum concinnum*** was found by sieving grass cuttings and in a pitfall trap on Shenton Estates. The only ***Carabus problematicus*** came from Bradgate Park and the only **Violet Ground Beetle *C. violaceus*** was at Ulverscroft, both from pitfall traps. Shenton Estates produced the only ***Loricera pilicornis*** and ***Clivina fossor***. Very few ***Bembidion*** and ***Pterostichus*** were recorded anywhere, two ***Ocys harpaloides*** were found at Burley Fishponds. Singles of ***Agonum emarginatum*** and ***A. muelleri*** and three ***Bradycellus sharpi*** were sieved from grass tussocks at Charnwood Lodge.

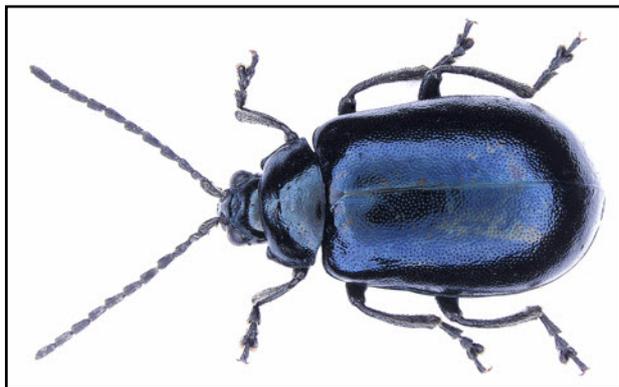
Pitfall traps produced a few members of the family Leiodidae. Most are quite similar looking and are best located using this method, a single ***Ptomaphagus subvillosus***, seven ***Nargus velox*** from Shenton, plus two ***Choleva jeanneli***, at least 20 ***Catops fuliginosus*** and over 30 ***C. nigricans*** all from subterranean pitfall traps in Bradgate Park. The Staphylinidae are a huge family and several genera look nothing like a typical Staph such as ***Anthoboium unicolor*** with a single from a subterranean pitfall trap at Bradgate Park. Three ***Omalius rivulare*** came



Helophorus grandis © Graham Finch

from Chicken of the Woods fungus at Charnwood Lodge. *Proteinus brachypterus* were found at several sites and *Reichenbachia juncorum* by sieving a grass tussock at Bradgate Park. Sieving grass tussocks also produced two *Rugilus erichsonii* from Lea Meadows. Singles of *R. orbiculatus* were at Rutland Water Visitor Centre and Shenton Estates and from the last site also *R. rufipes*. *Tasgius melanarius* and *Atrechus affinis* were in the subterranean pitfall traps at Bradgate Park and singles of *Xantholinus linearis* were found at Lea Meadows and *X. longiventris* from Shenton Estates, both from sieving grass tussocks. Kick sampling in the River Sence at Hugglescote produced five of the ridiculously long-legged Riffle Beetle *Elmis aenea*. These are more likely to be found under stones in rivers or streams, so unlikely to be taken by normal pond netting. There were two fewer species of Ladybirds recorded this quarter with the only addition being a single **Eyed Ladybird** *Anatis ocellata* from Abbey Park. A total of six adults of *Mycetophagus multipunctatus* and 25 *Eledona agricola* were found in an old Chicken of the Woods fungus at Burley Fishponds in mid-October.

With the Chrysomelids, **Rosemary Beetle** *Chrysolina americana* was still out and about up to the middle of October.



Agelastica alni © Graham Finch

The only record for **Alder Leaf Beetle** *Agelastica alni* came from Albert Village Lake, this species does seem to be struggling to expand its range at the moment and nearly all records are from North West Leicestershire. Searching Mallow at Rutland Water Visitor centre early in October produced the only records of the weevils *Aspidapion radiolus* and *A. aeneum* both as singletons. The **Nut Leaf**

Weevil *Strophosoma melanogrammum* spends most of its time at the roots of trees and shrubs, so it should not have been a surprise to find one in the subterranean trap at Bradgate Park. Finishing of this quarter, with three weevils that were recorded by finding the mines that their larvae had made, turning them into breeding records as opposed to just sight records. The first were *Isochnus sequensi* at three sites, on various long-leaved Willow and also a hybrid Black Poplar, 19 records for *Rahmplus oxyacanthae* two were from Cherry but the rest were all on Hawthorn, in fact it became almost impossible to find Hawthorn bushes without any mines, some sections of Hawthorn hedgerows had tens of thousands of mines. Finally, there were ten sightings of *Rhamphus pulicarius* on various trees including Birch, Grey Willow, Lombardy Poplar and Sallow.

It will be impossible not to have noticed that for the second and third quarter a vacuum sampler was used quite regularly. This opens up a whole set of species that would be difficult and some, probably impossible to locate any other way. The one I use is a petrol-driven Husqvarna, set to vacuum with a fine mesh bag over the suction tube entrance, which holds anything being sucked up. It is a bit awkward to carry for any distance, a little noisy but not too heavy - the negatives are far outweighed by the positives. Even unpromising looking sites usually turn up a few surprises after just 15 minutes or so of vacuuming. Grasslands are usually the optimum sites but I also poke it at the lower branches of trees, in and amongst scrub and hedgerows plus dry edges of waterside or pondside vegetation; every entomologist should have one!

I have just been informed (26 April 2021) that MapMate will be updating their beetle checklist to the 2018 Duff version. This is great news as we will now be right up to date, so the keen-eyed amongst you might notice a slight difference in the order future sections are written.

Many thanks to members who continue to send in their records.

Graham Finch

FLOWERING PLANTS and FERNS

The only plant records received were from SFW and HI (and their companions). Are we the only Loughborough Nats. interested in plants? I would love to include the records from others next time, so please do send them in.

All of these have been accepted by the County Recorder and the details are now in the database of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland. Once again, our fieldwork was directed towards improving coverage across Leicestershire and Rutland, which means that we avoided the botanical hotspots and explored the under-worked areas. We usually took with us a list of previous records so that we could restrict our lists to those species that needed to be refreshed or added. Hence, there is some bias in our records; they will lack the rarities that are confined to well-worked sites such as nature reserves, and they under-represent very common and widespread species that had already been found since 2000. I will mention just a small selection, including the unusual finds.

Q1 January to March

We made 2516 records during the quarter.

On winter botany excursions, old walls can be relied on to get the species list going as several ferns in the genus *Asplenium* regularly grow there: **Hart's-tongue** *A. scolopendrium*, **Black Spleenwort** *A. adiantum-nigrum*, **Maidenhair Spleenwort** *A. trichomanes* and **Wall-rue** *A. ruta-muraria*. These were all found in various places during the quarter. A good range of ferns can be found on a tall wall beside the road near St Joseph's Tea Room at Oaks in



Fern wall at Oaks in Charnwood © Steve Woodward

Charnwood at SK465163. **Hard-fern** *Blechnum spicant* is one of the less common ferns, seen mostly on shady, humid banks in Charnwood Forest. It was found in Bradgate Park on 4 March and Polly Botts Lane, Ulverscroft, on the 27th.

When it comes to conifers, we are unimpressed by any of the tree identification books. We are not the only ones who find them difficult – a residential property at Fenny Drayton called “The Firs” was dominated not by Fir *Abies* but by a large tree with a remarkable resemblance to **Blue Atlas Cedar** *Cedrus atlantica* ‘**Glauca**’. We confidently identified a large pine near Glaston church (Rutland) as **Macedonian Pine** *Pinus peuce*, on 14 March. On the Club walk to Thornton Reservoir on 5 February, we noted a **Coastal Redwood** *Sequoia sempervirens*, not far from the car park. This is the tallest tree species in the world (in its native Oregon and California) but my guess is that lightning will strike the Thornton tree before it becomes a champion.



Thick-leaved Stonecrop © Steve Woodward

In the Gazetteer of the *Flora of Rutland* (1971), Guy Messenger states that the limestone walls around Glaston village are the richest in the county for flowers and that **Thick-leaved Stonecrop** *Sedum dasyphyllum* occurs. It was still there in good quantity on 14 March. It has a purplish tinge to its egg-shaped leaves. As I write this on 11 Apr 2021, a plan is afoot to have a closer look at the Glaston walls, where we suspect other goodies may await re-discovery.

Our tally of **Broad Bean** *Vicia faba* records, usually on roadside verges, continues to grow. We added Barrow upon Soar on 18 February, Oakham Cricket Lawns on 25 February and Ashwell on the same date. As a dubiously “wild” plant it was inconsistently recorded for the 1988

Flora so comparisons between current and former distributions will be difficult. My impression is that it is increasing, as an escape from cultivation.



Spotted Medick © Steve Woodward

Spotted Medick *Medicago arabica* is a creeping, clover-like plant with deep yellow flowers. It seems to be spreading in Leicestershire & Rutland and was seen on 18 February at Barrow upon Soar, both in the cemetery and nearby road verges. The English name refers to the dark purple spots in the centre of each of the three leaflets. Another yellow flower in the same family is **Slender Trefoil *Trifolium micranthum***. It is similar to the very common **Lesser Trefoil *T. dubium*** (and grows with it), but is generally smaller and the stalks of the three leaflets are all of the same length – the middle leaflet of *dubium* has a little extension to its stalk [both shown on photo]. Geoffrey Hall and myself found *micranthum* on 20 March at Carlton. I suspect it has been overlooked in the past.



Slender Trefoil and Lesser Trefoil © Steve Woodward

Large Bitter-cress *Cardamine amara* was recorded at the edge of the brook on Polly Botts Lane, Ulverscroft, on 27 March. It resembles

Cuckooflower *C. pratensis* but the flowers are never pink (always white), anthers are dark violet (rather than yellow) and it seems to prefer wetter sites. The leaflets have an angular look about them.

It is a lucky naturalist who finds any heather on Bradgate Park, as it is reduced to a few fragments. ***Calluna vulgaris*** is most easily seen in the small enclosure at SK53111081 (where it is doing well), set up to protect it from deer grazing but *Calluna* is hard to find elsewhere. Another species, **Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*** is thinly scattered among the **Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*** in wet places, for example at SK53571133. It is perhaps most visible in March, although not flowering of course, before the fresh growth of *Molinia* hides it.



Wood Speedwell © Steve Woodward

A plant that is fussy about where it grows is **Wood Speedwell *Veronica montana***. It grows only in ancient woods such as Launde Park Wood on 29 Feb (found by GH) and Stinking Wood, Newtown Linford, on 27 March. Two other Veronicas seem to be under-recorded, as few people go looking in weedy places so early in the season! **Green Field-speedwell *V. agrestis*** and **Grey Field-speedwell *V. polita*** have pale-blue and dark-blue flowers, respectively, but they need to be confirmed by checking the hairs on the fruits using a hand lens.

Henbit Dead-nettle *Lamium amplexicaule* is similar to the more familiar **Red Dead-nettle *L. purpureum***, but the upper leaves are stalkless and give the flowering head a different appearance. It turned up at Oakham Cricket Lawns on 25 February and on a suburban verge at Groby on 30 March.



Ploughman's Spikenard © Steve Woodward

A reliable place to find **Ploughman's Spikenard *Inula conyzae*** is the water mill site at Bradgate ruins at SK53541016, but on 21 January we found a plant in a new spot, by the Park's north wall at SK535114.

Q2 April to June

We made 5308 records during the quarter.



Barberry © Steve Woodward

An unusual find at Fenn Lanes, Witherley on 30 May was a bush of **Barberry *Berberis vulgaris***, in a roadside hedge north side at SP371977, [photo of a fruiting plant at Loddington] a spot that we imagine few naturalists visit – however when we checked old records, Barberry had indeed been seen in this Tetrads previously and reported in the 1988 *Flora*. Barberry was eradicated from many hedgerows when it was discovered to be a host of a rust fungus that damages wheat crops. There are several cultivated barberries, of course.

Covid-19 Lockdown forced us to concentrate on our local patch, so at Groby on 26 April I added a plant to my local list, **Traveller's-joy**

Clematis vitalba. It is a common scrambler in areas with limy soil, but is more restricted in west Leicestershire. It was at the site of an old quarry, now filled in as a playing field.

Goldilocks Buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus* seems to like churchyards, as a previous article (Heritage 229) mentioned. On 19 May we added another to its distribution, Sibson churchyard. Once its distinctive basal leaves are recognised, it can be detected as early as March.

Hop Trefoil *Trifolium campestre* has straw-yellow heads that resemble little hop fruits. It grows among short vegetation in dry ground, such as is often found in quarries. On 8 June we found it at Barrow Hill Quarry at Earl Shilton, but nowhere else during the quarter. Speaking of **Hop *Humulus lupulus***, we made the first Tetrads record (i.e. a 2 x 2 km square of the OS map) in a hedge at Farm Town, Coleorton on 18 May.

Regeneration of oak trees inside woods is generally sparse, as the seedlings need plenty of light, but we were struck by a patch of saplings beside a ride in Martinshaw Wood on 1 May. Judging by the shape of the leaf, they were **Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea***, one of the species known to have been planted here by the Forestry Commission.

Dog's Mercury is a familiar plant of old woods, but **Annual Mercury *M. annua*** is a weed that we only occasionally find, usually in urban sites. Its spikes of small, green flowers are nettle-like, but the leaves are narrower. On 23 June we found it in the churchyard at Oadby.

Willows are notoriously difficult to name accurately, as they hybridise freely, but at a couple of sites we identified **Purple Willow *Salix purpurea***. The leaves are almost parallel-sided for much of their length, up to 8 cm long, and often arranged in opposite pairs along the twigs. It was found at Ratby on 15 April and Sheepy parish on 20 June.

Another new find for my home patch was **Hairy St John's-wort *Hypericum hirsutum***, which turned up on the verge of the A50 slip road on 19 April. Despite the thorough fieldwork in Groby done by Edith Hesselgreaves in the 1960s and 70s, this plant had not been seen previously in the Tetrads. It does occur close by, however, in Sheet Hedges Wood.

During the quarter we found four species of crucifer in the genus *Lepidium*. Crucifers belong to the Brassicaceae family and have four-petalled (cruciform) flowers which, in *Lepidium*, are quite small. The fruits of all Brassicaceae are extremely helpful for identification. We used the BSBI Handbook *Crucifers of Great Britain and Ireland* by Rich (1991). **Narrow-leaved Pepperwort** *L. ruderale* makes stiff, little bushy plants that are nearly always found on kerbsides, which is where it was at Merry Lees on 14 June. **Dittander** *L. latifolium* is much taller than the others and has distinctive, broad basal leaves. It was formerly cultivated and used as pepper. It is most at home in saline conditions near the coast, but it was locally frequent on a roadside verge near Bagworth on 14 June. **Hoary Cress** *L. draba* is yet another plant that colonises verges, often in dense patches on disturbed ground. We found a large colony at Burton on the Wolds, by the A676. Finally, **Swine-cress** *L. coronopus* grows in flattened rosettes in field gateways, where it seems to enjoy being trampled. We recorded it from six locations.

Common Comfrey *Symphytum officinale* is not actually the commonest one locally, and is perhaps over-recorded. The commonest is a hybrid, **Russian Comfrey** *S. x uplandicum* (found at seven sites) but we found *S. officinale* at Burton on the Wolds, by the A676. The flowers of our specimen were purple, but the species is variable in colour and we got GH to confirm the identification.

In my presentation to the 2021 *Recorders Conference*, I explained that the hay-meadow herb **Betony** *Betonica officinalis* had declined enormously. We found it in only three places: Merrylees Road, Desford on 14 June; the meadow behind Newton Linford Cricket Club on 22 June, and Chadwell churchyard on 30 June.

On one of my local “exercise” rambles I discovered a suburban cul-de-sac in Groby called Beaumont Green at SK52830683, which had a parched “grass verge” with hardly any grass on it. No doubt the local gardeners regard it with contempt but it produced some interesting wild flowers on 16 April and 23 May. First, **Blue Fleabane** *Erigeron acris* a plant I expect to see in quarries – it is a first Tetrad record. Second, **Slender Trefoil** *Trifolium micranthum* which was referred to in the first quarter’s records;

thirdly **Mouse-ear-hawkweed** *Pilosella officinarum*, which seemed to be the most abundant plant here, with hairy leaves that are white below; fourthly **White Stonecrop** *Sedum album* (another plant common in quarries) and finally **Bee Orchid** *Ophrys apifera* represented by 12 rosettes. Needless to say, the shoots of one of our most intriguing wild flowers were destroyed by mowing shortly afterwards.

The common **Ivy** is *Hedera helix* (recorded at 60 sites) but there are a few other species that escape from gardens. At Kegworth churchyard on 24 May we found a population of **Algerian Ivy** *H. algeriensis* (confirmed by GH), with big, glossy leaves and brown stellate (star-shaped) hairs which need a microscope to appreciate.

At Groby again, in the meadows near Groby Pool I found one spike of flowers belonging to **Common Spotted-orchid** *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* on 19 June; these had proved to be elusive during Atlas 2020 survey which finished last year! Four spikes of **Southern Marsh-orchid** *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* were seen on the same date and confirmed by GH. The latter species put up 29 spikes in the previous year, in a different part of the meadow. Another orchid worth a mention is the only one that we have found in all the churchyards across Leicestershire & Rutland; the Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* that showed two spikes in Enderby churchyard on 28 May.



Southern Marsh-orchid © Steve Woodward

Hairy Woodrush *Luzula pilosa* is an uncommon grass-like plant of old woods. We found it in Lady Hay Wood, Groby on 10 April and Martinshaw Wood on 2 May. **Wood Meadow-grass** *Poa nemoralis* is another plant that likes some shade. It is not very distinctive, except to those of us who have studied grasses for many years and can pick out “something different”. It was in Groby on 19 June and Newton Harcourt churchyard on 23 June.



Downy Oat-grass © Steve Woodward

A beautiful grass with silvery flowers is **Downy Oat-grass** *Avenula pubescens*. Flowering does not last long – the plant seems to have a very short season and I am unable to recognise it without the flowers. It turned up in Breedon on the Hill Churchyard on 24 May, Worthington Cemetery (Edmund Court’s grave) on 25 May, a meadow in Seagrave on 31 May and another in Groby on 4 June. The final grass that merits a mention is a large population of **Wood Melick** *Melica uniflora* on what appears to be a disused quarry site at Enderby. This is not a typical habitat for this old-woodland plant and this conspicuous species beside a public road was not recorded previously, making me think it may be a recent introduction.

Q3 July to September

We made 3267 records during the quarter.

Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, like several other ferns, has become much more widespread in recent decades. It is usually on the side of a ditch, as at Rough Hill, Newtown Linford on 13 July and Kirby Muxloe on 15 August. This new book is recommended to those interested in ferns: Merryweather, J. 2020. *Britain’s Ferns. A field guide to the clubmosses, quillworts, horsetails and ferns of Great Britain and Ireland*. Princeton.

I rarely encounter **Annual Wall-rocket** *Diploaxis muralis* but it appeared twice this quarter, at Thringstone on 1 September as a weed at the edge of a garden, and at Tinwell (Rutland) on 17 September on a pavement. This is a crucifer with yellow petals and a most unpleasant smell when crushed, but it was the shape of the leaves that drew my attention.

If you thought Japanese Knotweed was threatening, then go and have a look at **Giant Knotweed** *Fallopia sachalinensis* at Congerstone at SK365051. We recorded it on 28 July, but it has occupied this wet site beside the road for some years. It attains 3 or even 4 m in height and its companion here is the equally awesome **Giant Hogweed** *Heracleum mantegazzianum*. Weeding this plot of land is more like a forestry operation!



Marsh Dock © Steve Woodward

The new tiger enclosure at Twycross Zoo failed to produce tigers on 16 July, but it did yield an unexpected plant record; **Marsh Dock** *Rumex palustris*. It was there in some abundance, although the site was not marshy. We doubt that it was planted to please the tigers, presumably this was an accidental introduction, maybe from the wheels of the

construction machinery that had previously worked around the edge of a reservoir.

Soapwort *Saponaria officinalis* is a garden escape that was seen at Froane's Hill, Enderby on 22 August. Also at Enderby, on Harold's Lane on the same date were a few plants of **Small Balsam *Impatiens parviflora***. This alien species has spread steadily since its introduction to Britain in 1823.

Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* is usually found around quarries but at Seagrave Road, Sileby, we saw a few plants around a new balancing pond on 29 September. The leaves of each opposite pair are joined together, a condition known as perfoliate. The plant is bluish-green and its stiffly upright stems bear deep yellow starry flowers.

At a friend's farmhouse in Shenton on 13 August, we were shown a large and striking weed; **Thorn-apple *Datura stramonium***. Despite being poisonous, this plant was formerly cultivated for medicinal purposes but tends to pop up as a "casual" on disturbed ground, perhaps from bird seed.

This next find made it into the pages of *BSBI News*, the national newsletter of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (volume 146, page 45). **Malling Toadflax *Chaenorhinum organifolium*** was found on the outside of a garden wall at Hollow Lane, Frisby on the Wreake on 18 July. We could not be sure of its identity so we sent a sample to Mike Wilcox who named it for us. This is an annual, native to south-west Europe, and a first record for VC55.



Malling Toadflax © Steve Woodward

On 8 August, Russell Parry and Geoffrey Hall joined us for a survey of the North Arm of

Rutland Water, part of the LRWT nature reserve that is not open to the public. In a fen at the reservoir inflow we found what is probably the largest population of **Mare's-tail *Hippuris vulgaris*** in Rutland, an aquatic flowering plant that many people confuse with horsetail *Equisetum*. A report of this survey was sent to the LRWT and LRERC.



Common Calamint © Steve Woodward

Common Calamint *Clinopodium ascendens* has only five recent records for VC55, all in the east, including our record from the junction of the A1 at Tinwell, Rutland. On 17 and 21 September, we braved the HGV traffic to get onto the rough grassland surrounded by the northbound and southbound slip-roads.

Hawkweeds are conspicuous plants with heads resembling dandelions, but attention to details (especially hairs) is needed to sort out the numerous species. Then the identification ought to be checked by an experienced botanist. ***Hieracium salticola*** was identified at Sileby, by the railway on 4 August and ***Hieracium scotostictum*** at Seaton Road, Uppingham on 6 August, both confirmed by GH.

We found **Beggarticks *Bidens frondosa*** beside the Leicester Navigation at Quorn on 31 August. As a composite, this plant has a head of small florets which form fruits called achenes. The spines on the achenes need close examination to be sure which of three *Bidens* species has been found.

Coriander *Coriandrum sativum* is a herb used in Indian cuisine (both the fresh leaves and dried seeds), so it may be no coincidence that a growing plant was found on 29 August in the car park of the popular (and recommended) Indian restaurant Café Mash near Burton on the Wolds. Perhaps some seeds were spilled here. I recall

my previous find of Coriander was also at a car park (Groby Pool) a few years ago, I presume from the remnants of a take-away meal. In the same family (Apiaceae or umbellifers), **Stone Parsley *Sison amomum*** also has scented leaves, but the scent is of petrol, so perhaps not so appealing as a culinary herb. We found a few plants at the A46 junction near Ratcliffe on the Wreake, on 27 September.

Round-fruited Rush *Juncus compressus* was reported in my article about Sileby (*LNC Newsletter* for Summer 2020), being found in a drainage channel on 4 August. **Pale Galingale *Cyperus eragrostis*** is sedge that I am seeing more frequently in recent years. It is an introduction, first reported in Britain in 1790. Another sedge that occurs in some of the heath/grassland sites in Charnwood is **Oval Sedge *Carex leporina***, however we found it in an unexpected habitat in a new 10 km square (Hectad) on 23 August. This was a single plant in a sheep pasture near Asfordby.



Pale Galingale © Steve Woodward

I mentioned in the April – June section that a certain meadow-grass was easily overlooked, well the same could be said of another species **Flattened Meadow-grass *Poa compressa***. With experience, the differences are easier to spot and a population on a disused fragment of Anstey Lane, Groby, caught my eye on 5 July. The flowering heads are denser than the common *Poa* species but when handled, the very flattened stems confirm the identification. The same grass was also re-found at Ratby Churchyard on 12 September.

Q4 October to December

Our travels were strictly local during this quarter, so we only managed 844 records.

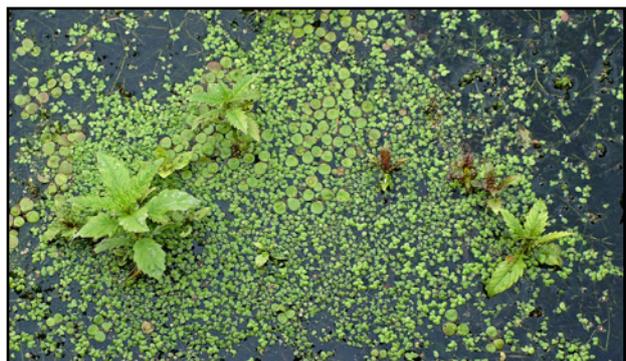
We noticed a **Mistletoe *Viscum album*** in a garden at the top of Hill Rise, Woodhouse Eaves, on 30 December. We could not get a close look at the host tree, it may be a Poplar. It may be a symptom of the “plant blindness” that hampers conservation in this country – but four of the brightest scholars from Cambridge University failed to identify Mistletoe on *University Challenge* (23 Aug 2021)!



Wall Lettuce © Steve Woodward

Wall Lettuce *Mycelis muralis* in Leicestershire tends to be an urban plant but we had not seen it in Markfield before 25 November, as a front garden weed. It resembles Nipplewort but its flower heads are more diffuse and the leaves have distinctly angular lobes.

Another new find in a familiar area was **Greater Duckweed *Spirodela polyrhiza*** at Groby Pool on 17 October. The floating leaves are much bigger than the usual duckweeds (see photo) and, as the scientific name tells us, each one has many roots.



Greater Duckweed © Steve Woodward

Stephen Woodward

PLANT GALLS

Well, 2020 was the strangest year that any of us can remember. Never before has the freedom of the British population been so curtailed by a virus pandemic, both by Government restrictions and by common sense. For a large part of 2020 we were restricted to short walks from home, then allowed to travel slightly further afield, followed by a period in late summer where even more travel was allowed, and then restrictions re-imposed as the winter wave of the pandemic reasserted itself. Consequently, the opportunities to visit places of natural history interest and make records were severely curtailed. Choices had to be made regarding targets.

Plant Gall Records from 2020 were from three main sources. As the recorders had such different levels of expertise, and because their visits were so limited, amalgamating the results into a “typical year” summary seemed inadvisable. I normally report under the headings: Galls on Oak, Galls on Roses, Galls on other Trees and Shrubs, and Galls on Herbaceous Plants, as is the convention of the British Plant Gall Society (BPGS).

There is no County Recorder for plant galls, so the issue of verification and validation for new recorders has cropped up. The records supplied by HG have been accepted onto the County Council database as “unassessed until such a time as we get a County Recorder”, but are accepted as meaningful for reports etc., and they have been accepted onto the British Plant Gall Society database with the proviso that some galls cannot be identified to species without rearing. This is mentioned in the text. It must also be noted that the form of the gall has been used in all cases for identification.

To begin with I shall examine the results of our two highly experienced recorders, HI & SFW, sometimes with GH.

Galls on Oak

Unusually there were only five records on Oak, all caused by cynipid wasps.

Three records were of **Marble Gall**, caused by *Andricus kollari* and

One record of **Silk Button Gall**, caused by *Neuroterus numismalis*.



Gall caused by *Andricus infectorius* © Steve Woodward

Most notable was the record of the gall caused by *Andricus infectorius* on the Leslie Jones Memorial Tree, Ulverscroft Nature Reserve, first found by Chris Leach, a gall new to this country in 2013. This tree is the site of the second VC55 records, the first being at Charnwood Lodge in 2018. An article by Chris Leach in the Leicestershire Entomological Society Newsletter no. 62 details these finds and can be found on the LES page of NatureSpot.

Galls on Rose

SFW & HI recorded one gall on Rose, **Robin's Pincushion** or **Bedeguar Gall**, caused by the cynipid wasp *Diplolepis rosae*.

Gall on Trees and Shrubs

Seven tree or shrub species were found galled.

The bacterium *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* was recorded as causing canker on Horsechestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*.

Taphrini alni, a fungus causing **Alder Tongue Gall**, was found on Alder catkins *Alnus glutinosa*. This used to be rare in the UK but has spread rapidly in recent years and is now quite common. It was noted that there were many galls on one tree, but none seen on many others nearby. BPGS has recently posted limited distribution maps on their website, including one for this, showing increased “dots on the map” since 2000. An interesting one to look out for!

The galls caused by the mite *Aceria erinea* were found on two Walnut trees, one in Upton and one in Barrowden. This is a very conspicuous gall – large pale blisters above, hairy hollows underneath. Many of us will have seen this on the Walnut tree in the garden of Bradgate House, in Bradgate Park.



Gall caused by *Vasates quadripedes* © Steve Woodward

Seven records were made of galls caused by the mite *Vasates quadripedes* on leaves of *Acer saccharinum*, Sugar Maple. This gall causer was fairly recently discovered in Britain. It is possibly more frequent than has been recorded up to now, and possibly more records are being found as more Sugar Maple trees are examined.

One gall caused by the **Currant Blister Aphid** *Cryptomyzus ribis* was found on a Redcurrant bush, *Ribes rubrum* in an Oakham allotment. This aphid alternates between Currant species and Woundworts *Stachys* species. Although leaves are disfigured by the raised coloured blisters, apparently fruit yield is very little affected. Nature lovers are encouraged not to spray but to encourage aphid predators such as ladybirds, lacewings and earwigs onto their vegetable patches.

Aphid *Pemphigus spyrothecae* galls were also found on two Poplar trees, one of which was *Populus nigra italica*. These are fascinating galls which cause the leaf petiole to twist, and if present are easily seen. It is recorded that soldier aphids defend the opening of the galls and the gall colony from predators, a form of social behaviour, not often associated with aphids.

The psyllid *Spanioneura buxi*, causing **Box Gall**, was found just once in Keyham on Box *Buxus*. These galls are found on shoot tips causing the leaves to become thickened and crowded and cabbage like. It is possible to unwrap the galls and discover the green psyllid nymph, along with white waxy deposits,

Galls on Herbaceous Plants

Eight species of herbaceous plants were found galled. The first two in the following list were particularly interesting and noteworthy.



Gall caused by *Barbarea intermedia* © Steve Woodward

A gall where fruit would be expected on *Barbarea intermedia* Medium-flowered Winter-cress was discovered at Stretton-en-le-field parish and later confirmed by Margaret Redfern, the British plant gall expert as being caused by the midge *Dasineura sisymbrii*. There are currently no records of this on NatureSpot so it is potentially a record new to VC55. The gall is globose, green and about 6 mm diameter.

A gall on the leaf margin of *Persicaria amphibia* Amphibious Bistort caused by the midge *Wachtliella persicariae* was also unusual. Although thought to be fairly common there are not many VC55 records. It can be found on various plants of the *Polygonaceae* family including Redshank. Another one to look out for.

Cecidophyes nudus mite gall on Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*, was recorded just the once. This gall could be more frequently recorded by our club members as many of us pursue a relentless war on this “weed” in our gardens, and this gall is common and can be found almost throughout the year.

Cecidophyes rouhollahi mite gall was found on Cleavers *Galium aparine* on six occasions. This is also an easily found gall as Cleavers is such a common wayside plant. The tops of the shoots are distorted and pale.

Trioza centranthi psyllid caused galls on Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber* leaves was found eight times. This gall was until quite recently found mainly in the south, and even there infrequently, but has extended its range and frequency in recent years.

11 records of galls caused by the gall midge **Jaapiella veronicae** were made on *Veronica chamaedrys*, Germander Speedwell. Two terminal leaves of the shoot tip cling together to form a hairy pouch containing many orange larvae.

Lighthouse Galls caused by the midge **Ron-daniola bursaria** were found just the once on *Glechoma hederacea* Ground-ivy. Gall wasps also gall the leaves of this plant, so this plant is one well worth examining for records.

Urophora cardui a fruit fly, the **Thistle Fly**, had caused galls on Thistles, and was seen in January. This fly has been introduced to North America to help control invasive introduced populations of European Thistles in North America.

Results from HG have a rather different emphasis.

After spending several years learning, this was the first year as a beginner plant gall recorder, so the records tend to be of the most obvious, easily seen, often at eye-level and easy to identify species, and species that have been pointed out on the Club Wednesday morning walks. Hopefully subsequent recording years will result in galls being recorded on other species targeted e.g. *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Acer saccharinum*.

Galls on Oak

Twenty-three records were collected of galls on Oak, all found by examining Oak trees on the walks we were allowed in the summer – for

example at Charnwood Lodge, Cossington, Cropston, Markfield, Thornton, and Loughborough. These were all formed by gall wasps.

Oak Apple Galls were found at two sites. Caused by the larvae of the sexual generation of **Biorhiza pallida**, they contain many larvae in each gall.

Silk Button Spangle Galls were found very commonly, with very heavy infestations on the leaves of some trees. Each gall contains a single larva of **Neuroterus numismalis** asexual generation.

Common Spangle Galls caused by the asexual generation of **Neuroterus quercusbaccarum** were also quite common and numerous with four records.

Cherry Galls were less common in that although three records were obtained, there were fewer galls on each tree. These are formed by the asexual generation of **Cynips quercusfolii**.

Similarly for **Artichoke** or **Hop Galls**, two records of asexual generation of **Andricus foecundatrix**, were made, with the galls uncommon on the recorded trees.

Only one record was obtained of the gall formed by the asexual generation of **Andricus grossulariae**. These wasps need Turkey Oak to complete their life cycle with currant like galls of the sexual generation on catkins. Something to look for in future. Similar in appearance to Hedgehog Galls, there is no common name at the moment, possibly because the gall wasp is a newcomer, arriving in Berkshire in 2000. The suggestion is that it is currently spreading north.

Knopper Galls, caused by the asexual generation of **Andricus quercuscalicis** were found four times. This wasp also needs Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris* as its alternate host. It arrived in Britain in the 1960s.

Pea Gall, caused by the asexual generation of **Cynips divisa** was found just once.

It is difficult for a beginner recorder to have a very clear understanding of abundance and distribution of plant galls. Reference books make comments such as common, widely spread, easily found, new and spreading. The network of cecidologists is very active within the British Plant Gall Society (BPGS) which states that the aim is "To encourage and co-ordinate the study of plant galls, with particular reference to the British Isles." However the BPGS Gall Recording Scheme with 93,000 records cannot easily enter its data onto the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) mapping system as their record system is not easily compatible with NBN. Consequently the NBN maps, as easily viewed on NatureSpot, give no indication of distribution and frequency across Britain, and in fact give the impression that most galls are found mainly in VC55. Our local recorders are very active in supplying their records to NatureSpot from where they end up at NBN and onto the maps. The BPGS has now just started putting some maps on their website.

Galls on Rose

Robin's Pincushion caused by the gall wasp *Diplolepis rosae* was recorded twice. This is a very easy gall to see – more records would be easy to obtain by our members.

Sputnik Gall caused by the gall wasp *Diplolepis nervosa* was recorded just once.

As was **Smooth Pea Gall**. This can also be caused by *Diplolepis nervosa* but the galls of *Diplolepis eglanteriae* are identical and can only be told apart by rearing the larvae to adulthood, an activity not yet attempted. How one species of wasp causes two types of gall needs more investigation. There is a suggestion that inquilines (intruders of another insect species) can cause distortion.

Gall on Trees and Shrubs

Galls were found on 17 species in this category.

Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, six records, three species, all mites, none with common names: *Eriophyes laevis* (2), small pimple-like galls on

the leaf surface; *Aceria nalepai* (1), small pouches in the angles between the midrib and main vein of the leaves; *Acalatus brevitarsus* (3), pale, slightly domed blisters on leaf surface.

Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, three records - two species. Psyllid, *Psyllopsis fraxini agg.*, red or purple veined roll on leaf edge (2). Mites, **Cauliflower Gall Mite**, *Aceria fraxinivora* on inflorescence – seen easily in the autumn as a large dark growth amongst the keys (1).

Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, four records of the **Hairy Beech Gall** caused by the midge *Hartigola annulipes*.

Birch *Betula* sp., one record of gall on leaf caused by mite *Acalitus rudis*.

Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, one record of the gall caused by the mite *Eriophyes similis* mainly on leaf edges, and one leaf roll gall caused by the sawfly *Micronematus monogyniae*.

Bramble *Rubus*: The **Blackberry Leaf Midge Gall**, giving crumpled and pleated leaves, caused by *Dasineura plicatrix* was found on three occasions.

Crack Willow *Salix fragilis*, three records were made of the galls caused by *Pontania proxima* **Willow Redgall Sawfly**. These can be found on narrow-leaved willows.

Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, one record of gall caused by the midge, *Iteomyia capreae* and two records of the gall caused by the sawfly *Pontania bridgmanii*, which can also found on other broad-leaved willows (sallows).

Elder *Sambucus nigra*, one record of leaves distorted by the gall caused by the mite *Epitrimerus trilobus*.

Elm *Ulmus*, one record of the gall caused by the mite *Aceria campestricola*, small red pimples.

Field Maple *Acer campestre*, three records of the mite *Aceria macrochela* which causes solitary galls on the leaf; one record of **Red Pustule Gall**, caused by the mite *Aceria myriadeum*, with numerous red galls on leaves.

Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. The gall caused by the fungus *Gymnosporangium*

clavariiforme or *G. confusum* was seen once. To distinguish the species the aeciospores must be examined. **Hawthorn Button-top Gall** caused by the midge *Dasineura crataegi* was seen twice.

Hazel *Corylus avellana* **Big Bud Gall Mite** *Phytoptus avellanae* one record.

Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* one record of leaf galls caused by the mite *Phyllocoptes sorbeus*.

Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* one record of galls caused by the mite *Aceria cephalona* or *A. macrorhyncha*. The mites need to be examined microscopically to be sure. They are tiny – less than 0.5 mm long.

Walnut *Juglans regia*. The mite *Acaria erinea* was found causing galls on Walnut leaves in Bradgate Park.

Yew *Taxus baccata*, an **Artichoke Gall** caused by the midge *Taxomyia taxi* was found once.

Galls on Herbaceous Plants

All of these galls are easily found by the beginner cecidologist and can often be seen on our Wednesday Walks. It is worth casually checking any patch of these easily identified species for galls.

Chirosia betuleti, a small grey fly resembling a small house fly, forms a mop-head type gall on the tops of *Dryopteris* species, in these three cases Broad Buckler-fern *Dryopteris dilatata*.

Cleavers *Gallium aparine*, was found galled twice by the mite *Cecidophyes rouhollahi*.

The gall caused by the fungus *Puccinia malvacearum* was found once at Broombriggs on Common Mallow *Malva sylvestris*. This could be easily found in Club Members' gardens as it also attacks garden Hollyhocks.

Trioza centranthi, psyllid, was found just once causing leaf roll galls on Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber* on a village wall.

Records from MM are of two gall-causing rusts

Melampsora hypericorum an orange rust fungus on Hairy St John's Wort *Hypericum hirsutum* at Cloud Wood on a Wednesday Morning Club outing.

Xenodochus carbonarius on Great Burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* (8th VC55 record).

There are lots of "easy wins" with plant galls. Some are very conspicuous. The British Plant Gall Society webpage has helpful ID information, including a list of host plants – a good starting point. Their Facebook page also is extremely helpful and immediate. NatureSpot also has many records of plant galls with photos. Please keep looking and sending in your records.

Hazel Graves

WEATHER

It was the warmest **January** locally since 2007 with a mean temperature of 6.7°C. Only 2007 and 1921 have been warmer in the last 100 years! A very strong jet stream for most of the month ensured very mild SW winds pumped up over us. Average daily temperatures registered 9.5°C, nearly 2.5°C above normal and night temperature were logged at just 4°C, again more than 2°C above normal. The warmest day recorded a temperature of 13.3°C and the coldest day had a high of 6.9°C which was the highest coldest day figure I have recorded in 20 years of records. The mildest night had a temperature of 7.4°C, 5°C above normal and only three nights recorded an air frost with the lowest temperature of -2.7°C being recorded on the 19th. Rainfall at 49 mm was below normal by 11 mm with rain falling on just 14 days with the highest fall of 9 mm being recorded on the 9th. The mild, cloudy days also meant the sunshine was below normal too at 56.4 hours which is five hours short of the usual 61 hours. Most of the month was cloudy and mild with the only major change in the weather occurring on the 18-22nd when a very large High developed over the UK with a central pressure of 1050 mb, the highest air pressure in any month since 1957. Most of the month's sunshine was recorded in this period too. So far, winter has been a lamb with just five air frosts in December and January, with no snowfall at all. Mild and

cold winters tend to come in clusters and very little or no snow is far from unusual but we still have most of February to go through first. Next week the jet stream looks like being very strong so high winds and heavy rain could be the main head line makers once again!

February became the wettest month since 1977 in Leicestershire with 144.5 mm falling at my station in Mountsorrel and is quite close to the February record set in Sutton Bonington in 1977 of 175 mm. Rain fell heavily and frequently once again with 23 days of the month recording rainfall with just six dry days. The wettest day was the 16th when 32 mm of rain fell but 25 mm also fell between the 27th and 29th which caused extensive flooding again on the River Soar, as was the case when storm Dennis deposited 39 mm between the 15th and 17th. This caused flash flooding to many local settlements. The almost constant westerly wind meant the month was mild. Afternoon temperatures were logged at 10°C which is 2.5°C above normal and night time temps averaged 3.3°C, 2°C above the norm. The average for the month was 6.7°C, 2.2°C above the long term average. The mildest day of the month logged 13.5°C on the 15th while the coldest day, the 11th, logged 6°C. There were only two air frosts recorded in Mountsorrel with the coldest night temperature only -1.5°C was recorded on the 7th. There were 69.5 hours of sun recorded about 10% below normal. The entire month was dominated by low pressure areas and two of these were named storms that seemed to arrive on most of the weekends in the month! Storm Ciaren gave us winds up to 69 mph at East Midlands Airport on the 9th with storm Dennis on the following weekend bringing us 39 mm of rain.



Grace Dieu - 10 February © Steve Woodward

Winter 2019-20 was very mild. The average temperature of 6.4°C was 2°C above the long term average and this made the winter the 9th mildest ever recorded. Only seven air frosts were recorded throughout the entire winter – my lowest figure ever for the three months. Snow-flakes fell on just four days and all of these were in February but none of the snow settled on low ground. It was certainly one of the wettest winters with 280 mm falling, 63% above normal. The sunshine total of 180 hours was 10% below normal. So a very soggy winter but it did remain very mild with very little for the snow lovers to get excited about this year. So on to spring with hopes for some drier and sunnier weather at last!

March 2020 was finally a drier month than average after all the autumn and winter rains. It rained on just 12 days of the month and most of this was moderate in nature. The rainfall total in Mountsorrel was 37 mm which was 25% less than usual. It was the driest March in Leicestershire since 2012. It was however a sunny month with 122 hours being recorded at my station which was 10% above normal and the sunniest March in Leicestershire since 2014. The second half of the month was particularly sunny and dry. Temperatures were close to normal with afternoon max temps logged at 10.8°C which was 0.5°C above normal with night time temperatures logged at 2.6°C which was 0.5 °C below normal. The mean temperature of the month was 6.7°C exactly what you would expect for this month. Air pressure was low to start the month but generally very high as the month closed.

March began fairly cool in the first week with our coldest day of the month falling on the 5th at 6.7°C with the next night seeing our lowest temperature of March at -1.6°C. This was one of four air frosts during the month. The second week turned much milder but damper with 28 mm of rain falling in this week with the wettest day recorded on the 9th when 7 mm fell. Our warmest night was recorded on the 10th with a min of 9.4°C. The second half of the month was dominated by high pressure close to the British Isles with virtually no rain falling after the 18th. The period from the 22-27th was exceptionally sunny with 67 hours being recorded with the sun shining for 12 hours on both the 25th and



No vapour trails - 25 March © Steve Woodward

26th. Our warmest day of the month was the 24th when I recorded 16.5°C. So March was a month where we managed to avoid extreme weather with plenty of sunshine in the second half and we had very little rain for a change!

April 2020 was the second warmest and sunniest month in my records going back 20 years. Only 2011 was warmer sunnier and drier than this one. Indeed April since the turn of the century has frequently been warm and sunny with 2007, 2011 and 2020 all being substantially better than average. Looking at temperature records for the midlands going back to 1770 (250 years) we find April 2020 ranked fifth warmest in that period with 2011 being warmest and 2007 being in second place. Put another way, three of the last 13 Aprils have been in the top five of the last 250 years. This goes to show how much warmer and sunnier the month has become recently. Afternoon maximum temperatures averaged 16.4 °C or 3.2°C above normal with night time temperatures logged at 6 °C, 1.4°C above normal. The warm sunny days led to relatively cooler nights. The mean temp of 11.2 °C was 2.3°C above normal. It was a very sunny month with 230 hours of sun recorded which was 60% above normal. As one would expect rainfall was much lower than normal with just 24.8 mm for the month or 50% of the usual total.

The month was dominated by high pressure and this brought many clear and sunny days and some were very warm too. Our maximum temperature was 23.7 °C on the 11th which was 8°C warmer than normal for a day on this date. Eleven days recorded more than ten hours of sunshine and on the 21st we recorded 13.6



Empty motorways - 26 April © Steve Woodward

hours which was the maximum possible for this date. There was a thundery breakdown for a short time on the 11th when we received a heavy thunderstorm late afternoon which produced 5 mm in Mountsorrel but substantially more in the Loughborough area at tea time. The weather soon settled down again afterwards however with more warm sunshine. I did not register a frost at all in the month. The last few days did see a change in the weather with 12 mm falling on the 28th being our wettest day as the weather broke and High pressure moved away. A very sombre month in all other respects was made bearable by the sunshine with people able to go out and exercise and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature.

May was the sunniest ever recorded in Leicestershire in records going back to 1860 with 285 hours of sunshine blazing down upon us. High pressure dominated the month's weather and the clear skies gave us 14 days when the sun shone for ten hours or more with the max. being 15.6 hours on the 29th May. Once again, the weather saved the lock down day with people able to spend times in their gardens before being allowed out more widely later in the month. It was also a very dry month with rain falling on just three days in May and the total of just three mm was the lowest ever recorded in figures going back to 1836.

It was also a mild month with afternoon temperatures averaging 19.1°C which is 2.6°C above normal. Night time temperatures were logged at 8°C, just 0.5 °C above normal. The very sunny warm days then gave way to cooler nights under the clear skies. As a result, the cooler nights largely counterbalanced the warm days

so the overall mean temperature of 13.6°C was just 1.5°C above normal making it the warmest since 2018. Our warmest day was the 20th when the temperature climbed to 26.4°C which is nudging 80°F. There were very few cool days but the 11th saw our coldest temp of just 11.4. °C. The warmest night was the 22nd at 13.7 °C with the coldest night being the 12th when 0.4°C with a ground frost.

So a spectacular month's weather but gardeners were getting worried at the end of the month as after a record wet spell between June 19 and February 20 had been replaced with extremely dry weather. The spring rainfall total of just 65mm was only 40% of normal while the spring sunshine figure was at a record high of 672 hours!

So unbelievably we have arrived in summer and as I write this on the 2nd the weather looks set to change to a more unsettled pattern as so often occurs in June. Time to dig out our waterproofs but the gardeners among you will be dancing with delight!

The term flaming **June** is a bit of a misnomer as hot and dry Junes are extremely rare events and this year like most others it was predominately unsettled and wet! Afternoon temperatures averaged 20°C which is close to the expected figure while nights were logged at 11.7 °C, about 1.2 °C above normal due to the large amounts of cloud at times. The mean of 15.9°C was 0.8°C warmer than normal making it the warmest June since 2018. it was predominately cloudy however with just 164 hours being recorded in the county which is 10% below normal. It was also another wet month with 87.6 mm falling at Mountsorrel which is 47% above normal with rain falling on 18 days in the month. Winds were strong at times gusting to 40 mph on the 28th.

The first couple of days of June were warm and sunny as the long, warm and dry spell in March, April and May finally came to an end. It became much cooler and unsettled from the 3rd onwards with the 7th being our coldest day of the month at just 13.4°C and the night of the 6th being our coldest night at 7.4°C. On the 13th, much more humid air arrived from the south but the air pressure remained low. This then sparked off several days of thunderstorms that

began on the 14th with storms daily to the 17th. However, the worst of the storms stayed to the west of the region with a heavy storm finally arriving on Wed 17th. This produced 12 mm of rain in Mountsorrel in just a few minutes and caused some flash flooding. The day after the 18th saw our wettest day with 19 mm falling in a thoroughly miserable day.

The weather changed again with a short heatwave starting on the 22nd to the 26th as a ridge of high pressure built to the east of the UK and some very hot and humid air was drawn northwards. The 25th saw our hottest day with temperatures peaking at 29.7°C with 15.7 hours of sun, our sunniest day of the month. The warmth did not last too long, with some very heavy showers arriving on the 27th. These gave 13 mm of rain in just 15 minutes and the rate of rainfall was 240 mm/hour at one point which is very heavy indeed and more local flash flooding was the result.

So a very mixed summer month, as June usually is, and as we enter July this changeable theme looks like remaining with cooler showery periods being interspersed with some warm sunshine at times!

July 2020 was an unsettled month. It was the coolest July since 2012 and the dullest month since 2000 in our area. Afternoon temperatures registered just 20.3°C, nearly 2°C below normal as cloudy skies and cool winds dominated most of the month. Night time temperatures averaged 12.7 °C which was close to normal as all of the cloud actually kept the temperatures up. The overall mean of 16.5 °C was 0.8°C below normal and it was the coolest July since 2012 in Leicestershire. It was also a very dull month with just 142 hours of sunshine recorded a full 25% below normal making it the dullest July for 20 years. The sunniest day was the 31st when the sun shone for 12 hours. Rainfall totals were very close to normal with 54 mm recorded in Mountsorrel with rain falling on 16 days in the month. The wettest day, the 9th, saw 12 mm fall.

Low pressure tended to dominate the month with winds blowing in from the Atlantic most of the time which brought cool temperatures and often some rain at times although the middle fortnight (11th to the 24th) was predominately dry but temperatures rarely exceeded the

average. The last two days, however, brought a complete turnaround as a sudden burst of heat from Africa moved northwards across the UK. On Thursday 30th we reached 27°C and then on Friday the 31st the mercury climbed to a staggering 34.6°C, 95°F which was the second hottest day Leicestershire has ever recorded after last year's 35.2°C. High temperature records are being broken more frequently than they used to be which is another sign of a warming planet. That night (the 31st) temperatures stayed above 16°C making sleeping very difficult. The national temperature record created at Cambridge last year of 38.7°C was nearly reached again this year with Heathrow just falling 0.9°C short at 37.8°C! The heat quickly disappeared as quickly as it arrived but prospects for August generally look better with some more summery weather to come. So let's hope August delivers some fine weather as both June and July have been somewhat disappointing this year!

After a quiet summer, **August** provided some very dramatic weather. Locally it was the warmest month since 2003 and the wettest since 2004. The first 12 days of the month were very sunny and hot. A very hot and humid airmass from Africa was responsible. After this it became much cooler and an Atlantic wind storm called Francis gave us a very windy spell on the 26th. A sunshine total of just 140 hours was 20% below normal as the clouds arrived after mid month to offset the sunny start.

Afternoon temperatures averaged 22°C, 0.6°C above normal while night time temperatures were logged at 14°C, 1.8°C above normal. The mean temperature of 18.2°C was the warmest since 2003. It was also very wet with 126 mm falling, twice the average amount.



Bradgate Park 17 August © Jim Graham

The first 12 days of the month were very hot with temperatures exceeding 30°C on three days with the 12th at 31.7°C being the hottest day. It was also the hottest night with temperatures not falling below 19.7°C. It was also dry but after the 12th the rain poured down with 30 mm falling on the 16th with 60 mm falling in the 5 day period the 15th to 19th. There were five days with storms too and some of them torrential. Storm Francis brought another 22 mm on the 26th with winds up to 46 mph and the end of the month was cool and damp. So a very contrasting month from heatwaves to storms and gales to finish off a typical British summer!

September 2020 kept the recent tradition since the turn of the century of providing us with a good deal of warm and sunny weather. Max temperatures averaged 19°C +0.6°C and min temps 10.4°C +0.2°C. the overall mean of 14.8°C was 0.4°C above the long term average. It was also a very dry month with just 30 mm falling or only half the usual total. All this rain fell on just six days with 24 days being dry. It was also a very sunny month with 148 hours being recorded in Mountsorrel or 15% above the usual total. The weather was dominated by high pressure which was close by for most of the month with very few unsettled spells. Winds were mainly moderate but they did gust to 35 mph as a max.



Bradgate Park 3 September © Jim Graham

The first days of the month did see some rain but from the 4th onwards it stayed dry until the 23rd a period of 19 days which qualified it as a drought! This period also saw a lot of warm and sunny weather with temperatures peaking at 27.8°C on the 15th with the sunniest day being on the 14th with 11 hours of sunshine. Some of the nights in this period were warm too with a min of 16°C recorded on the 8th. The last week

was cooler and showery with a high of just 13°C on the 26th. 20 mm of rain also fell in the last week. So all in all not a bad month. If I was choosing a time to go on holiday I would choose either mid May or mid September for a British holiday as the weather has been mostly fine in these time periods for the majority of the last 20 years. As I write this in October the autumn rains seem to have arrived with 38 mm having fallen in the first three days of the month but the dry weather in September has meant flooding has been limited!

October was the dullest month in Leicestershire since 1976. Only 57 hours of sunshine were recorded which is only half the usual total. Not surprisingly, it was also a wet month with 121 mm falling at Mountsorrel which is nearly twice the usual figure but October 2019 was even wetter with 143 mm falling last year. Temperatures were not too far from normal with afternoon maximums of 14°C and night time minimums of 8. °C. The overall mean of 11°C was 0.3°C above normal, thanks to the many damp mild nights.



Bradgate Park 1 October © Jim Graham

Low pressure dominated October as mild and damp Atlantic winds blew in from the west most of the time. Rain fell on 24 days in the month and there were no protracted dry spells. It was also windy at times too with my maximum gust of 38 mph being recorded on the 31st.

The first ten days of the month were exceptionally wet with the wettest day on the third seeing 28 mm fall. The middle ten days saw some cooler and drier weather but the rain returned for the final third of the month. Our warmest day of the month saw temperatures rise to 17°C on the 20th in some warm tropical air moving in from the south with our warmest night being the 21st when temperatures stayed

above 13.3. °C Our coldest night only saw temperatures drop to 5°C so there was no air frost once again recorded in October, a regular occurrence these days. Sunshine totals as reported were pitiful as all the cloud meant that our highest individual sunshine total only amounted to five hours and there were nine days with none recorded at all. So a bit disappointing overall, let's hope we see some more sunshine in November!

November was the mildest month locally since since 2015. It was also a very dry month with just 36 mm of rain falling or just over half of the usual total. The mild air also brought large amounts of cloud and I recorded just 50 hours of sun in the entire month which is 25% below average. The month was dominated by mild Atlantic winds which brought lots of cloud but high pressure to the south often prevented large amounts of rainfall. Afternoon temperatures were logged at 11.7°C, 1.7°C above normal with night time temperatures averaging 5.3°C which was 1°C above normal. The warmest day was the first when I logged 17.3°C and the coldest was 7°C on the 27th so at no time was the month ever cold. I only recorded one night frost but several nights came close to freezing. The overall temperature mean for the month was 8.5°C, 1.5°C above normal and the warmest November for five years. It did rain on 17 days but the heaviest fall was just 5 mm on the 3rd. As stated it was very dull with 12 days recording no sunshine and my sunniest day brought just six hours on the 4th. So quite a dull and uninspiring month overall so let's hope for some crisp sunny winter days now December is here!

December was the coolest we have had for eight years in Leicestershire and the wettest for twenty years. Afternoon maximums averaged at 7°C which is close to the usual figure with minimum night temperatures being logged at 3°C which is 1 °C above normal. The mean of 5°C was 0.5°C above normal for the month but was still cooler than recent very mild Decembers. It was also a very wet month with 114 mm being recorded in Mountsorrel which was nearly double the usual total of 60 mm. It is my wettest December since my records began 20 years ago.

Sunshine totals were similar to the usual December average of 50 hours.



Snow at Groby - 29 December © Steve Woodward

The month began in a cold and wet fashion with some heavy snow falling on the 4th. Melton Mowbray was particularly badly affected with up to 10 cm falling causing disruption. The weather then became milder for a while with temperatures peaking at 12.4°C on the 18th. Storm Bella arrived on Boxing Day and brought with it more rain and flooding. Once again there was extensive flooding in prone areas especially in the Soar Valley with many roads impassable for several days. Storm Bella brought in cold Arctic air and these cold temperatures remained for the rest of the month. Our coldest day for the month arrived on the 31st when day temperatures reached just 2°C and night time temperatures in Cosby plunged to -4°C. Forecasts are for it to remain cold with some more noticeable snowfall next week!

Phil Morrish

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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 Helen Ikin, until a batch is ready to go to the Record Office.