

# Loughborough Naturalists' Club



Common Spotted Orchid, *Cicindela campestris*, *Xanthogramma pedissequum* and Forest Bug © Stephen Woodward



## Annual Report 2011

# LOUGHBOROUGH NATURALISTS' CLUB

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2011

**President** Mr P H Gamble

### COMMITTEE

Chairman	Mr E Webster
Immediate Past Chairman	Mrs M Dimitrov
Hon. Secretary	Mrs J Johnson
Hon. Treasurer	Mr J Ward
Meetings Secretary	Mrs D Webster
Membership Secretary	Mr L Hall

Members	Mr J Graham
	Mrs M Hall
	Mr P Wilkinson
	Miss H Ikin (Co-opted)
	Mrs K Ward (Co-opted)

### OTHER OFFICERS

Heritage Editorial Panel	Miss H Ikin
	Mr J Graham
	Mr S Woodward
Librarian	Miss H Ikin
Charnwood Forest Survey Organiser	Miss H Ikin
Press Liaison Officer	Mrs J Killingback
Hon. Auditor	Ms P Hardy

### Club Representatives

Peter Gamble represents the Club on the Loughborough University Holywell and Burleigh Woods Management Group and on the Friends of Charnwood Museum.

Michael Stanley is the Club's representative on the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG).

Peter Wilkinson represented the Club on the Partnership for Environmental Protection.

### Affiliations

The Club is affiliated to the following organisations:

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, The National Federation of Biological Recording and Charnwood Museum.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It has been many years since I was last chairman, so long in fact I cannot remember the last time. I must confirm that I have not been a very active member in the Club during the last few years so when the vacancy for Vice-Chairman came up I thought it was time I did something about it. I must admit I picked a very busy time to join in again as preparations for the 50th Anniversary were under way but with a committee who obviously knew what to do it was not a very onerous task.

The past year has been straightforward with the club continuing its work of recording, with help from members. I was also fortunate that Doreen decided she would become Meetings Secretary at the same time so we share a lot of the work which makes it easier. I would like to thank Peter Wilkinson for stepping into the breach on one or two occasions during the year, once when I was ill and secondly when I was busy with the Alpine Garden Society Show which Doreen and I organise. Peter is Vice-Chairman which means when I finish my chairmanship we will have a Chairman.

The publication of the 50th Anniversary of Heritage is getting closer, it has been a difficult job for those concerned and I must thank the Editorial Committee for all their hard work in putting it together and coping with tardy contributors of which I admit I am one.

On a more sober note I am sorry we have lost three members this year. First was Barbara Bowler who was Secretary in the early days of the club when her name was Barbara Booton, she then married George Bowler, another stalwart of the club. Between them they did a great deal of work, particularly with Sheet Hedges Wood and Bradgate. Secondly, we lost Eva Penn-Smith whose greatest interests were plants and travelling. She also shared the writing of the botanical report for a time until she became too ill to carry on. Thirdly, Derek Lott died which was a shock and an equally terrible loss to the natural history recording in the County. Derek was a nationally if not internationally respected coleopterist and as the author of several publications we owe him a debt for advancing our knowledge of beetles throughout the county.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who contributes to the wellbeing of the Club in whatever capacity. Help with the smallest job is as important as the largest ones so please continue to support our aims and objectives in whatever way you can and continue to keep us going as a thriving group of people with one main aim in life to ensure the natural world stays natural.

As a final comment I noticed in the 2007 Annual report there is a remark that John Ward would like to relinquish the post of Treasurer, I note, five years later he is still doing the same efficient job. Thank you, John!

**Eric Webster**

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

At the AGM, Eric Webster took over as Chairman from Megan Dimitrov who had completed two years in this post. Maira Hall was elected to the committee after serving as a co-opted member. There were no other changes.

On behalf of all members, I would like to thank everyone who helps in the running of the Club. There are many aspects to cover, from organising meetings and refreshments to controlling finances – so many that it is difficult to choose any for special mention. Our editorial panel continue to produce Heritage and the Annual Report to an exceptionally high standard, while Peter Gamble takes responsibility for the Wednesday walks. Many members contribute to Heritage including Phil Morrish who, though not a member, provides the weather report.

Katherin Ward resigned from her post as Exhibitions Secretary which she has held for very many years, during which she has made an outstanding contribution to the Club.

Sadly, we lost two long-standing members in 2011. Barbara Bowler served as Secretary and did much work on the Sheet Hedges Wood Unit Survey and Eva Penn-Smith whose expertise was greatly valued.

The Club has now passed its 50th year and is still thriving. May it continue to do so for many years to come!

**Judy Johnson**

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## **TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2011**

For the year ended 30 November 2011 the Club's expenditure exceeded income by £194.29.

Income for the year amounted to £1642.02. Subscriptions totalled £978, entrance charges to indoor meetings were £252.00, the sale of publications raised £222.90 and the tax refund on gift-aided subscriptions amounted to £155.62.

Expenditure for the year amounted to £1836.31.

The main items of expenditure were:

Printing Heritage	£232.50
Postage Heritage	£195.81
Public Liability Insurance	£216.09
Speakers' Fees	£215.00
Hire of room for meetings	£216.00

The Club made a donation of £100.00 to Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust towards the purchase of Loughborough Big Meadow.

As at 30 November 2011 the balance available on the General and Reserve accounts was £2639.79 and the balance of the Publications Fund was £8097.68.

Once again I would like to thank Patricia Hardy for auditing the Club's accounts.

**Signed: John Ward, Treasurer**

**27 January 2012**

## Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 30 November 2011

	2011	2010
<b><u>General Fund Income</u></b>		
Subscriptions	£978.00	£1,002.00
Sale of Publications	£222.90	£353.40
Gift Aid Tax Rebate	£155.62	£162.18
Donations	£1.50	£2,101.50
Entrance Charges	£252.00	£142.40
Sale of Jam at Meeting	£32.00	
Anniversary Meal		£147.10
	£1,642.02	£3,908.58
 <b><u>General Fund Expenditure</u></b>		
Affiliations & Subscriptions	£116.50	£88.50
Printing Annual Report	£72.85	£57.70
Postage Annual Report	£91.90	£82.38
Printing Heritage	£232.50	£230.30
Postage Heritage	£195.81	£271.72
Printing Miscellaneous	£68.44	£43.50
Public Liability Insurance	£216.09	£158.85
Speakers' Fees	£215.00	£80.00
Hire of Room, Meetings	£216.00	£162.00
Postage Miscellaneous	£21.98	£110.26
Donations	£100.00	£50.00
Domain Name		£29.38
Photocopying		£15.51
Display Material		£290.66
Testing Electrics	£18.50	£41.50
Mount Card Exhibition Photos		£30.49
Software & Guides		£127.85
Cable Protector		£35.94
Cashbook for Treasurer		£5.79
Publications		£145.00
Computer Items	£83.41	£94.66
Microscope		£700.01
Ring Binder		£4.25
Card for Peter Jones		£2.29
Anniversary Celebrations	£141.33	
PH Meter	£46.00	
	£1,836.31	£2,858.54
Deficiency	-£194.29	Surplus
		£1,050.04

## **Balance Sheet as at 30 November 2011**

	<u>2011</u>		<u>2010</u>
<u>General Fund</u>			
Cash at Bank	£982.47		£1,176.76
National Savings Investment Account	<u>£1,657.32</u>		<u>£1,653.05</u>
		£2,639.79	£2,829.81
<u>Publications Fund</u>			
Cash at Bank	£98.78		£98.78
National Savings Investment Account	<u>£7,998.90</u>		<u>£7,983.90</u>
		£8,097.68	£8,082.68
		<u><u>£10,737.47</u></u>	<u><u>£10,912.49</u></u>
 <u>General Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1st December 2010	£1,176.76		£126.72
Deficiency for year	<u>-£194.29</u>		<u>£1,050.04</u>
		£982.47	Surplus £1,176.76
<u>Reserve Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1st December 2010	£1,653.05		£1,646.35
Add net interest for year	<u>£4.27</u>		<u>£6.70</u>
		£1,657.32	£1,653.05
<u>Publications Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1st December 2010	£8,082.68		£8,057.68
Add Net Interest for year	<u>£15.00</u>		<u>£25.00</u>
		£8,097.68	£8,082.68
		<u><u>£10,737.47</u></u>	<u><u>£10,912.49</u></u>
 <u>Reserve Fund Income</u>			
Interest on National Savings Account	<u>£4.27</u>		£6.70
<u>Publications Fund Income</u>			
Interest on National Savings Account	£15.00		£25.00

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

### LOUGHBOROUGH NATURALISTS CLUB

(Registered Charity No. 510799)

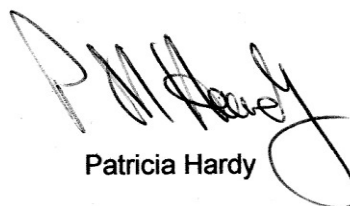
#### Auditors Report

I have audited the accounts on the foregoing pages in accordance with approved Auditing standards.

The club, in common with others, derives it's income from sources which cannot be fully controlled or verified until they are entered in the accounting records.

Subject thereto, in my opinion, the accounts with the above note give a true and fair view of the Club's financial affairs at 30th November 2011 and of the results of the year then ended.

156 Leicester Road  
Markfield  
Leicester



Patricia Hardy  
Financial Accountant  
02.12.12

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## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

For the Year Ending 31 December 2011

This year the Club has had an increase in numbers to 126 members. We have had four new members who have joined. They are:

Mr M Jeeves; Mr D Perry; Mr L Purnell and Mr G Stocks.

May I once again ask all members to consider Gift Aid, as it affords a very useful source of income from the tax-man at no cost to the member.

**Leslie Hall**

**JOHN BLUNT, BARBARA BOWLER, DEREK LOTT**  
**and EVA PENN-SMITH**  
**AN APPRECIATION**

This has been a very sad time for the Club recently as we have lost four members who were very familiar to all of us.

**John Blunt**

John Blunt, with his wife Val, were members of the Club in the 1970s and John served on the committee during 1975 and '76. John's main interest, apart from deeply held concerns about the environment, was in the study of fungi, particularly the *Ascomycetes*, or so-called fungi and their allies. Locally, he made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of fungi in Charnwood and in 1978/79 I accompanied him on frequent visits to search for fungi on Buddon Wood, which produced a wealth of interesting species.

In 1980 John and Val left Leicestershire to live in Nedd, a small village on the west coast of Sutherland, where they bought a small cottage which they had to make habitable by their own efforts. John continued his mycological studies there until health problems made this difficult. Fortunately, Ian and Pat Evans also live in Nedd and were able to keep an eye on him. John's records of fungi in Charnwood remain an admirable reminder of his work.

**Peter Gamble**

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**Barbara Bowler**

Barbara Bowler joined the Club in 1962, so was almost a founder member. She served in many ways, being secretary from 1969 to 1973 and a committee member in 1967 and 1968. Barbara was also instrumental in organising survey work at Sheet Hedges Wood for the Club's Unit Survey publication. Barbara's husband, George, who died some years ago, was a past Chairman.

Barbara had been in poor health for some time but, thanks to friends in Newtown Linford, was able to attend some meetings, and also the 50th Anniversary Exhibition at Snibston last November - an event which she thoroughly enjoyed.

**Judy Johnson**

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**Derek Lott**

Derek Lott joined the Club in 1980 and became Chairman in 1985.

Derek had a wide knowledge of the invertebrate groups and wrote up the records in Heritage for the *Hemiptera* and *Diptera* groups as well as those for his speciality, *Coleoptera*. His fieldwork contributed greatly to the Unit Surveys. He also led various walks together with other activities and outings. Throughout his membership, Derek was always a willing participant in helping with displays at our exhibitions.

Derek amassed huge numbers of biological records for the Leicestershire Museums Services and other organisations and in 1985 he became a Fellow of the Royal

Entomological Society. The Derek Lott Dataset is now part of the National Biodiversity Network. In 1984 he was promoted within the Leicestershire Museums Service until finally he became Curator of Natural Life. His personal beetle collection is to be housed at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington.

Derek's written works include 'The Leicestershire Coleopterists: 200 Years of Beetle Hunting', published in 2009 by the Loughborough Naturalists' Club. The coleopterists of past years would have shared Derek's passion for his subject and his name will stand alongside theirs as one of the foremost coleopterists of our time.

**Katherin Ward**

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### **Eva Penn-Smith**

Eva Penn-Smith joined the Club in 1986 and was best known as an excellent botanist who alternated with Eric Webster in writing the plant reports in Heritage. Her extensive garden was testimony to her interest in wild plants and some members may remember a barbeque hosted by Eva some years ago when we were able to appreciate the wealth of wild flowers on view.

Eva served as Chairman from 1991 to 1993 - I think she was the first Chairman to hold this post for two years. She was very active in the RSPB and was a keen member of Butterfly Conservation, for which she collected stamps to raise funds.

Eva was a linguist too, being fluent in French and Spanish and was instrumental in organising the French exchange visits which members enjoyed a few years ago and she was also botanical consultant for groups on wildlife holidays abroad.

So much expertise will be sadly missed.

**Judy Johnson**

## CLUB ACTIVITIES DIARY

### INDOOR MEETINGS

January 8th	The Mineral Treasures of Leicestershire and Rutland, presented by Frank Ince
February 12th	Oak Decline, Acute Oak Decline and Sudden Oak Death, presented by Mark Graham
March 12th	The Stockholm Experience, presented by John Jones
April 9th	AGM and Members' Evening
September 10th	Three Short Talks and Members' Evening Some Interesting Coloured Moths presented by Graham Finch Autumn Wild Fruits presented by Peter Gamble Swatting up on Flies presented by Stephen Woodward A Short Video presented by Jeremy Haynes
October 8th	British Butterflies, presented by Tim Newton
November 12th	A Woodland Walk, presented by Gerald Hall
December 10th	Pondlife, presented by David Gibbins

### OUTDOOR MEETINGS

#### **Wednesday Morning Walks**

January 5th	Cossington Meadows Nature Reserve
February 2nd	Mountsorrel Common and Castle Hill
March 2nd	Watermead Country Park Nature Reserve Birstall
April 6th	Thornton Reservoir
May 4th	Charnwood Lodge National Nature Reserve
June 1st	Cademan Wood and Moor
July 6th	Bradgate Park
August 3rd	Kelham Bridge – led by Bas Forgham
September 7th	Melton Country Park – led by Michael Stanley
October 5th	River Soar and Grand Union Canal – Quorn/Barrow
November 2nd	Beacon Hill Country Park
December 7th	Dishley Pool and River Soar - Loughborough

### EXHIBITIONS

August 29th	The Club had a stand at the Wood Fair, Beacon Hill
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## **HERITAGE EDITOR'S REPORT**

Thanks to our editorial team and our stalwart team of writers, Heritage continues to reflect our activities through the year. It is quite a task to sort and summarise the bundle of records four times a year and we are grateful for all the hard work that goes into producing Heritage.

For various reasons, some of our recorders have been unable to contribute their usual numbers of records this year and poor weather in the latter part of the year did not help.

We are still not satisfied with the reproduction of the photographs in Heritage and other possibilities are being explored.

Now that the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre has completed its move to County Hall we shall be able to continue scanning the records sheets each quarter, which allows them to be stored digitally and searched more easily. We are grateful to the members who already send in their records digitally.

Without your records, there will be no Heritage so please continue to send in your sightings every quarter.

**Helen Ikin**

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## **GRACE DIEU UNIT SURVEY**

Recording has continued at Grace Dieu throughout 2011 and we are grateful to the local experts who have accompanied us on our field trips and added to the impressive species list of 3221. Thanks also to the many experts, locally and nationally, who have helped us with identifications.

794 recording hours were spent at Grace Dieu during the year – not counting the time spent in Ruby's chip shop and the excellent Community Café in Whitwick!

We have been trawling through the literature and have come up with some surprising records – who would have thought that Red-throated Diver and Little Auk would turn up at Grace Dieu?

There has been no more tree felling in either Grace Dieu Wood or Cademan Moor this year because of problems with planning permission for turning areas for the timber lorries. We hope that this will be sorted out before autumn 2012.

**Helen Ikin and Stephen Woodward**

## CLASSIFIED RECORDS

It is not intended to reproduce a full and comprehensive account of submitted records for the year here but simply a brief overview and account of the highlights or the general state of the species and any unusual activity that may have been noted.

### MAMMALS

Thank you to all the members and friends who contributed records of mammal species this year. We are very pleased to have received these and would encourage all members to submit their sightings.

Helen Ikin

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### BIRDS

A **Bewick's Swan** was at Watermead Park on 21 April and two at Swithland Reservoir during November. A single **Pink-footed Goose** was at Wanlip in mid January and one at Swithland Reservoir in August. Also in mid January there was a **White-fronted Goose** at Swithland Reservoir. On 17 November two **Bean Geese**, a **Pink-footed Goose** and a **White-fronted Goose** were found at Beaumont Leys in Leicester. There were far more **Greylag Geese** in the area than usual with 246 at Syston in March and 610 at Swithland Reservoir in November. A **Snow Goose** of unknown origin was intermittently around the area throughout the year. **Canada Geese** were not as numerous as Greylags with a maximum number of 280 at Lockington on 16 March. Another goose with dubious pedigree was a **Barnacle** at Thornton Reservoir in early April. **Egyptian Geese** are now gradually moving into our area with observations during the year at Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs and Wanlip Meadows.

A pair of **Shelduck** reared eight young at Cropston Reservoir in the spring and **Mandarins** bred at the same site as well as Swithland Reservoir. There were up to 27 Mandarins at Blackbrook Reservoir in the last quarter. Probably the same male **Garganey** was noted at Cossington Meadows, Watermead and Wanlip during April and May. A pair of **Pintail** was at Birstall Meadows in January and a single at Lockington in late July. A **Shoveler** with three young was found at Cossington Meadows on 4 July. **Red-crested Pochard** are becoming more regular with sightings at Thornton Reservoir, Sence Valley, Watermead Country Park and Swithland Reservoir where there were seven in January. A female **Scaup** was on the River Soar on the first day of the year. Four **Smew** were regularly at Swithland Reservoir during the first quarter of the year.

The demise of the **Common Partridge** continued. They were noted in only five sites in odd ones but two adults and eight young were seen at Stoughton Airfield in August. At least two **Quail** were calling near Normanton-le-Heath in June.

In the cold spell early in the year there were three **Bitterns** at Watermead Country Park and one at Swithland Reservoir. **Cormorants** produced young during the year at Watermead Country Park and Groby Pool. The cold spell probably reduced the number of **Little Egret** sightings. In the first quarter they were seen at seven different sites, a young bird was noted at Cropston Reservoir in late June but after that the only reports were of one at Groby Pool in late November and Swithland Reservoir on the last day of the year.

The majority of **Red Kite** sightings were in the east of the county but they did make occasional sorties to the west. Single birds were noted at Bradgate Park in April and October, Six Hills in May and Burrough Hill in October. In November ten were noted at Branston. A female **Marsh Harrier** flew over Halstead on 18 May and a **Hen Harrier** flew over Eaton on 5 March with another over Nanpanton on the last day of September. A **Goshawk** was observed at Normanton-le-Heath on 23 April and the following day what was probably the same bird was seen at Charnwood Lodge. An **Osprey** passed over Cossington Meadows on 28 March and one was seen fishing unsuccessfully at Cropston

Reservoir on 27 June. Although **Hobbies** were noted at probably a dozen sites most observations were from around Swithland Reservoir with four seen together there in May. **Peregrines** were located intermittently around the area but most reports came from the Buddon Wood and Albert Village areas.

Three **Water Rails** were found at Watermead Country Park in the cold weather of January and one was seen regularly at Kelham Bridge. In March singles were at Cossington Meadows and Dishley Pool. One at Cossington Meadows in October and one at Dishley Pool in December were the only records later in the year.

Not many **Golden Plover** flocks were seen at either ends of the year, the only one of note being 700 at Branston on 28 October. **Lapwings** nested at probably ten sites but like the previous species not many large flocks were noted. Cossington Meadows had the biggest number with 200 on 30 November.

A **Temminck's Stint** was found at Wanlip Meadows in early May and there was one at Swithland Reservoir on Christmas Eve. There was a **Black-tailed Godwit** at Cossington Meadows in late March and another at Cropston Reservoir in July. In April and May what were probably the same two **Wood Sandpipers** appeared at most of the Soar Valley gravel pits. Another was at Swithland Reservoir in late September. A **Grey Phalarope**, a rare visitor to Leicestershire was found at Swithland Reservoir on 23 October.

A **Mediterranean Gull** was at Cropston Reservoir in February and Albert Village lake held three in March, four in June and one in November. Cropston Reservoir also had the only **Little Gull** of the year on 13 November. Albert Village Lake provided most of the high gull numbers. There were 2200 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** on 17 November and up to twenty **Yellow-legged Gulls** in August. There was a first-winter **Iceland Gull** throughout March and a **Glaucous Gull** early in the year and singles occasionally in the last quarter. Cropston Reservoir recorded the highest number of gulls with 5000 **Black-headed** on 30 January.

Three **Black Terns** were over Cropston Reservoir on 5 May and eleven briefly at Swithland Reservoir on 25 September. Cropston Reservoir recorded the only **Arctic Terns** with twelve on 27 April and two on 27 July.

There were around 2200 **Wood Pigeons** in the Swithland Reservoir area early in the year but unfortunately there was only one **Turtle Dove** record, a single at Holwell on 30 May.

Bradgate Park provided the most records of **Barn Owls** especially in the early part of the year. Later in the year they were found at Old Dalby, Bottesford, Wanlip, Leesthorpe and Stathern. There were more reports of **Little Owls**, with sightings at eight different sites which also included Bradgate Park. In the latter months of the year two or three **Short-eared Owls** took up at Cossington Meadows and Hicks Lodge and at least one at Longmoor.

The bad weather in the early months of the year seems to have affected the **Kingfisher** population. There was only one observation in the first quarter, at Dishley Pool. They were only noted at six sites in each of the next three quarters.

In March **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were found at Groby Pool, Buddon Brook Meadows, Swithland Reservoir and Woods. One was heard at Swithland Reservoir in April but none were mentioned after that.

In the spring **Tree Pipits** were at their regular breeding sites at Benscliffe, Lea Wood and Ulverscroft. A **Rock Pipit** put in an appearance at Swithland Reservoir in early March. Three pairs of **Yellow Wagtails** bred successfully at Cropston Reservoir and at another four sites. They were also reported from eleven other areas. The winter seems to have an effect on the **Grey Wagtails** with far less records than usual. In the fourth quarter there were only two records, at Cropston Reservoir and Eaton.

The 2010/2011 winter was one of the best ever for **Waxwings** and there were still double figure counts around the county in the early months of the year.

On 9 April a male **Black Redstart** was found at Charnwood Lodge. For the first time for a few years **Redstarts** were proved to breed in the county. Surprisingly not on Charnwood but close to Ashby de la Zouch! No one saw a **Whinchat** in the spring and the only record later was at Kelham Bridge on 23 August. There was a similar situation with **Stonechats** with only one observation in the year, one at Cropston Reservoir on 9 October. The first **Wheatear** of the year was noted in Bradgate Park on 25 March and good numbers were in the Charnwood Lodge/Charley area during the autumn passage.

At least one **Cetti's Warbler** was regularly seen or heard at Watermead Country Park during the first three quarters of the year. One was also heard at Trent Valley Pit. **Grasshopper Warblers** were found at five sites in the second quarter and four sites in the third quarter. Wintering **Blackcaps** were noted at six sites.

Family parties of **Spotted Flycatchers** were found at Bradgate Park and Lount with singles at Deans Lane, Hicks Lodge and Measham.

The five **Bearded Tits** that were at Cossington Meadows at the end of 2010 remained on site until February when they were reduced to one by the 24th.

The increase in **Ravens** in the county continued with numerous sightings especially in the north of the county.

Double-figure counts of **Tree Sparrows** were noted at Normanton le Heath with 42 in July and Shackerstone with 20 in January. They were also found in eight other sites.

Not many **Bramblings** were in the area in the winter months but they were noted at seven sites with seven in Lea Wood at the end of January. There were 156 **Goldfinches** at Swebstone on 12 February and 80 **Siskin** in Bradgate Park on 17 January with 267 counted passing over Deans Lane in September. In January a flock of **Linnets** at Edmondthorpe numbered 250 but this increased to 550 by the end of the month. In October 104 were in a flock at Cropston Reservoir. **Lesser Redpoll** records came from Cropston Reservoir with 72 feeding in leaf litter on 13 February and 24 there in November. During October a total of around 200 passed over Dean's Lane. **Common Redpolls** were found at Albert Village when there were three on 2 February and one in a Cropston garden on 15 March. Most **Crossbill** reports came from Benscliffe with a maximum of 24 in July. There were also 37 in Lea Wood and 12 at Lount.

Two **Snow Buntings** were at Longmoor and another at Albert Village in early November. The greatest number of **Yellowhammers** seen was 150 at Granoe on 22 January.

**Bas Forgham**

**NB.** These records are taken from Heritage reports and do not purport to be a full county record. Jim Graham and myself thank all members for their records over the last year and ask for your continued support in the future. Our thanks also go to Ken Goodrich and LROS for co-ordinating the records.

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## **AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES**

Thank you to all the members and friends who contributed records of amphibians and reptiles this year. Why not have a closer look at the wildlife in your garden pond and let us have your findings.

**Helen Ikin**

## **FISH AND CRAYFISH**

Our thanks go to Tony Onions for producing a thorough round up of this group in Heritage during the year. We will be pleased to receive all your records to ensure that this information is as comprehensive as possible.

**Helen Ikin**

## **DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES**

As mentioned in 2010's report, records were down by about 20% on 2009 mainly due to the poor weather. Well, the reduction in 2011 was even greater; a further 40% fewer records. There was just one less recorder than in 2010 so this would seem to indicate just how badly Odonata, and the invertebrate populations in general, have declined. Although fewer sites were visited, all 16 of the county's most common species were recorded.

The first of the year was a newly emerged **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*** from a garden pond in Cropston on 27 April. This was followed by **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** and **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** at separate sites by the end of the month.

After two **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** were noted at Kayes Plantation on 28 April, this distinctive 'Jewelwing' was found at 11 further sites generally favouring slow-flowing waters. The Grand Union Canal held the largest numbers with 30 at Pillings Lock on 3 May and 25 in Loughborough on 2 June compare this to over 200 being recorded at one site on the Grand Union Canal in 2010.

There was just one record of **Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa*** which occurred at New Lount Nature Reserve on 26 June; a regular site for this species.

Invariably the first to emerge in the year, small numbers of **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*** were on the wing at 11 sites between 27 April and 16 June. Three were ovipositing in a Loughborough garden on 4 May, with the recorder commenting that there were "poor numbers compared to last year." Generally, counts were much higher in 2010 with 160 recorded on the Grand Union Canal.

The highest count of **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** was just four on the Grand Union Canal at Millers Bridge on 2 June. One or two were at a further 13 locations, the final one on 22 July. Last year observers were remarking about increases in the numbers of **Common Blue *Enallagma cyathigerum*** with a high of 50 at Puddedyke. However, this year the largest count was just one tenth of that total; five at Cropston Res on 26 June being the best from 15 sites. The only double-figure count of **Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*** came from Little Stretton when 20 were there on 2 June. All other counts were singles at eight sites between 4 May and 20 June. Millers Bridge also held the largest number of **Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*** with 40 there on 2 June.

**Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis*** was first seen at Watermead Country Park on the 26 June and subsequently noted at just 12 sites during the season; half the total of 2010. Single **Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea*** were noted at four sites from 26 July whilst **Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*** were recorded at six from 2 June the highest count being six at Dishley Pool on 28 September.

The first **Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*** was found at Millers Bridge on 2 June with up to two at four other sites until the final one on 4 July.

A Quorn garden held the first **Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa***, a female there on 2 May with up to four at a further seven locations. Ovipositing was noted at three. Single **Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*** were at three sites with two at Little Stretton on 2 June.

There were just three records of **Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum***. Four were noted at Cropston Res on 26 June with two at Dishley Pool on the same day. One was at Groby Pool on 11 July.

The first **Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*** was noted on 2 June at Dishley Pool and subsequently seen at a further six sites - this compares to 18 in 2010. The only record of **Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum*** was a pair mating and ovipositing in a Quorn garden on 15 October which also proved to be the final dragonfly of the season.

A special thank you to all members who took the time to look for and report dragonflies during 2011, and let's hope that the 2012 season is a little better.

**Jim Graham**

## **BUTTERFLIES**

Once again this turned out to be a disappointing year for many of our garden frequenting butterflies and many favourite butterfly plants went largely unattended by those species which in good years can be plentiful.

The consistently cold weather during the winter months resulted in little activity until the middle of March when several warm, sunny days resulted in a surge of activity amongst several hibernating species, **Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni***, **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae***, **Peacock *Inachis io*** and **Comma *Polygonia c-album*** and on 25 March a male **Orange-tip *Anthocharis cordamines*** at Market Bosworth and a **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*** at Quorn were exceptionally early appearances.

During the spring the **Brimstone** went on to be widely reported but sadly numbers of the new generation during the summer seemed few and far between.

Good numbers of **Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*** were noted at Charnwood Lodge National Nature Reserve during May and the **Purple Hairstreak *Neozephyrus quercus*** and **White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrion w-album*** were also present in satisfactory numbers at some favourite woodland haunts during July and August.

Other species noted in reasonable numbers during the spring and summer included the **Orange-tip**, **Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus***, **Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria***, **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus***, **Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*** and **Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*** but numbers of other species such as the **Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris***, **Essex Skipper *T. lineola***, **Large Skipper *Ochlodes venata***, **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus***, **Small Tortoiseshell**, **Peacock** and **Comma** appeared on the low side.

This was a poor year in VC55 for migrant butterflies with only a single **Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus*** reported and few **Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*** and relatively low numbers of **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta***.

The **Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia*** noted at Cloud Wood Nature Reserve at Breedon in July was an exciting record and follows a similar sighting at this locality in August 2006. The wide flowery rides here, with plenty of violets (the species larval food plants), would seem to make this woodland ideal for colonisation by this and several other fritillary species: a pleasant thought at this time when many of our butterfly species suffer from depleted populations.

May I take this opportunity to thank those twenty or so members and friends who contributed records during the year.

**Peter Gamble**

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## **MOTHS**

January and February started the year off giving us all very few opportunities dotted between freezing and blustery nights to record many moths, even so the hardy species picked their nights and were on the wing. Conditions from March onwards really picked up, particularly during the daytime and many species started putting in an early appearance. With a little careful planning and a lot of luck it was possible to see almost all of the species that are likely to be on the wing at this time of year. Several overwintering micro moths ***Agonopterix heracliana***, ***alstromeriana*** and ***ocellana*** plus ***Acleris cristana*** and ***Acleris hastiana***, were out and about. The latter two species have never been that common in the county, but recently seem to be getting recorded more frequently. The mildest nights coaxed a few bats species out of hibernation and they must have been spoilt for choice with the huge numbers of ***Tortricodes alternella*** and ridiculous numbers of the ***Orthosia*** group to choose from during March and April. Record breaking high temperatures throughout April and the first half of May resulted in many species producing their earliest emergence times ever.

Members reported garden traps were not doing as good as expected and this has been a general comment throughout the country. Although here in VC55 we barely witnessed much evidence ourselves, there was considerable spring migration activity along the south coast to the Scilly Isles with **Dark Swordgrass** *Agrotis ipsolon* being particularly abundant. Odd and unseasonal migration continued throughout the rest of year, peaking as expected through the autumn and lasted even into December. Most notable was the appearance of **Black-spotted Chestnut** *Conistra rubiginosa* in November in Kent, constituting a new record for the UK; a fairly widespread species in Mediterranean Europe where it has been spreading at a pace. In less than a decade it has raced from just a few records from the SE Netherlands throughout the country to the NW, and it looks like it has now made the leap across the Channel. If it does manage to take hold it will be interesting to watch any further colonisation.

Excitement reached a peak in our own county with a flurry of migrants in November with scattered records of **Diamond-back Moth** *Plutella xylostella*, **Rusty-dot Pearl** *Udea ferrugalis*, **Palpita vitrealis**, **Delicate** *Mythymna vitellina* and **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma*. Interestingly *Palpita vitrealis* was recorded in Adrian Russell's garden on the outskirts of Leicester, just rewards for not packing traps away yet. Although we again have had another year of low numbers for individual species, and this has been particularly noticeable with species we come to regard as common, it has certainly been an interesting one. The warm spring brought species out much earlier than usual and many members commented on the swarms of **Adela reaumurella** on those lovely early sunny days. Little **Bedallia somnulentella** was put firmly on the map, leaping from a previous single record to suddenly appearing all over the county. **Orange Footman** *Eilema sorocula* still seems to be doing well with quite widely scattered records and **Chocolate-tip** *Clostera curtula* was a pleasing addition to several members garden lists.

A few species were noticeably scarce such as **Light Brown Apple Moth** *Epiphyas postvittana*, **Juniper Webber** *Dichomeris marginella* and **Small Dusty Wave** *Idea seriata* this last three, all of which in previous years seemed to have been building up their numbers, but then this year they quite dramatically crashed - let's see if there is any change in 2012.

As an experiment for this year, I have input all the 2011 LNC moth records on to MapMate, a wildlife sightings recording database. This gave me the opportunity to track and extract various snippets of information. Believe it or not between us we visited over 100 sites and have recorded 38400 individual moths of 579 species, with just over 400 species recorded from the Charnwood Forest alone. It's too easy to think that individually a few records from our gardens, allotments or weekend walks don't seem to amount to much, but once they are combined it shows quite an impressive coverage. It's up to us as naturalists and recorders to continue to document our findings and to keep publishing the results, besides the scientific value hopefully it makes for interesting reading.

**Graham and Anona Finch**

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## **OTHER INSECTS**

After a warm spring, this has been a disappointing year for the other insect Orders except, perhaps, the aculeate Hymenoptera. The **Tree Bumblebee** has continued to spread and a good number of solitary bee and wasp species have been recorded, some of them new for the county. We have been fortunate enough to have Michael Archer verifying our specimens.

Some individual species have had a good year such as the **Marmalade Hoverfly**, but other hoverflies, which we are used to seeing regularly, have been almost absent. **Volucella inflata** is a new hoverfly for the county and has been seen in two sites.

It has been a remarkable year for the **Dark-edged Bee-fly**, which seemed to be everywhere in the early summer.

The **Seven-spot Ladybird** has also had a bumper year.

All our species of Bush-crickets and Grasshoppers have been around but not in the numbers that we usually have.

Thanks to all the members who sent in records. Keep up the good work for 2012.

**Howard Bradshaw & Helen Ikin**

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### **FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS**

A very quiet year on the botanical front. One or two records, the best of which is the record of **Mudwort *Limosella aquatica*** from Rutland Water.

The weather this year has been very strange after a very cold spell in the previous autumn. Plants had a difficult start not really getting going until late March. Following this the very dry weather spoilt the flowering of many plants throughout the summer.

Some of the plants of interest reported throughout the year include **Upright Chickweed *Moenchia erecta*** from Croft Pasture Nature Reserve, **Hoary Cinquefoil *Potentilla argentea*** from Mountsorrel Common, **Fragrant agrimony *Agrimonia procera*** from Ulverscroft Nature Reserve, **Petty Whin** and ***Genista anglica*** still present at Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve. Hundreds of **Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*** a plant which is becoming quite uncommon throughout the county, have been recorded at Grace Dieu. The record of **Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*** from Grace Dieu was supplemented by a record from Sheet Hedges Wood.

The highlights of the year were the records of the rare **Mudwort *Limosella aquatica*** from Rutland Water, and **Marsh Dock *Rumex palustris*** from Rutland Water and Eyebrook Reservoir.

The presence of these plants in our area really leads us to keep our eyes open and make sure we do not miss anything of interest.

In conclusion I would like to thank all of those who made records to enable the flora of our area to be successfully recorded.

**Eric Webster**

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### **OTHER GROUPS**

We are always pleased to have records for groups such as Fungi, Galls, Algae, Stoneworts, Lichens, Bryophytes, the smaller insect orders and other invertebrates. Although we do not have writers for these sections we do try, briefly, to list the records that we receive.

**Helen Ikin**