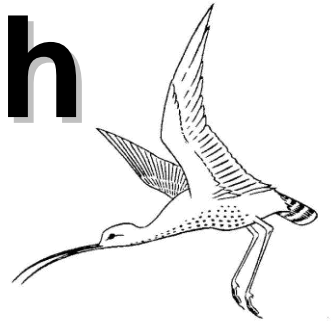


Loughborough Naturalists' Club



Siskin and Frogs © Jim Graham; *Chrysis impressa* © Stephen Woodward; Early Thorn © Graham Finch.



Annual Report 2012

LOUGHBOROUGH NATURALISTS' CLUB

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2012

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
Ms H Ikin (Co-opted)
Mrs K Ward (Co-opted)

OTHER OFFICERS

Heritage Editorial Panel Ms H Ikin
Mr J Graham
Mr S Woodward
Librarian Ms H Ikin
Records Co-ordinator Ms H Ikin
Press Liaison Officer Mrs J Killingback
Hon. Auditor Ms P Hardy

Club Representative

Peter Gamble represents the Club on the Loughborough University Holywell and Burleigh Woods Management Group.

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 doesn't seem like two years since I took over as Chairman. I am sure as you get older the time passes more quickly. Admittedly, due to having broken my leg I missed several meetings and I sincerely thank Peter Wilkinson for carrying out my duties for me whilst I was away.

This past year was a dismal one with so much rain and so little sun. Plant life benefited with some very lush growth I have never seen dandelions two feet high before but invertebrates really suffered. Hopefully, the coming year will be better and there will be some recovery.

I would like to thank the Recorders for their work in collecting the information received from members as this I think is the most important aspect of our club. The publishing of a disc which contains all the previous records made by members is a very important addition to our archives as well as being extremely interesting to individual members. Thanks go to the team who provided it.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their support and expert advice on the occasional problems we come across, in particular thanks must go to Judy Johnson, our Secretary who has helped me out in several instances.

The 50th Anniversary Publication is in its final stage of preparation and it will probably be available soon. This should be a very nice companion to the 25th Anniversary Publication.

Thanks also to my daughter Lesley Newton for putting the Club and its programme on no less than three websites throughout the area. Doreen and I have plans to put up posters advertising the club throughout the local area. If all that doesn't work to bring in new members I don't know what will.

I have enjoyed my two years as Chairman and I would like to thank everyone for their support, either doing specific tasks or for just turning up at meetings and making the evenings so enjoyable and friendly for everyone.

Eric Webster

SECRETARY'S REPORT

We have enjoyed an interesting year with a varied programme of talks and presentations, thanks to our Meetings Secretary, Doreen Webster. Attendance at meetings has sometimes been disappointing but the Wednesday walks continue to attract a good number of members. Thanks to Peter Gamble who organises them.

There were very few changes in the Committee and list of Officers of the Club. Eric Webster began his second year as Chairman. Maira Hall resigned from the Committee during the year, due to home pressures. Maira served several years both as Chairman and as a Committee member and her work has been greatly appreciated.

We have a core of very active members who have done splendid work during the year. Helen Ikin and Steve Woodward completed their survey of Grace Dieu and we await the publication of their results. Graham and Anona Finch continue their study of moths and make a valuable contribution to Heritage. These members have very high standards and a professional approach. I must also mention Jim Graham who produces Heritage to a high standard which is important because, as you will be aware, Heritage is sent not only to members but to several national institutions and its appearance helps to maintain the high profile of the Club.

The production of Heritage involves an incredible amount of time-consuming work, from the sorting of records to the writing of the quarterly articles and the production of the actual bulletin. Our thanks to all contributors. Thanks also to members who help at meetings, placing chairs and providing refreshments so efficiently.

Altogether I feel that the Club had had a lively and successful year.

Judy Johnson

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2012

For the year ended 30 November 2012 the Club's expenditure exceeded income by £193.84.

Income for the year amounted to £1501.50. Subscriptions totalled £968, entrance monies to indoor meetings were £188.90, the sale of publications raised £202.10 and the tax refund on gift-aided subscriptions amounted to £131.

Expenditure for the year amounted to £1695.34.

The main items of expenditure were:

Printing Heritage	£288.30
Postage Heritage	£368.12
Public Liability Insurance	£246.37
Speakers' Fees	£170.00
Hire of room for meetings	£237.00

As at 30 November 2012 the balance available on the General and Reserve accounts was £2450.26 and the balance of the Publications Fund was £8112.68.

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

Signed: John Ward, Treasurer

13 January 2013

Income & Expenditure Account for the Year ended 30 November 2012

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
<u>General Fund Income</u>		
Subscriptions	£968.00	£978.00
Sale of Publications	£202.10	£222.90
Gift Aid Tax Rebate	£131.00	£155.62
Donations	£1.50	£1.50
Entrance Charges	£188.90	£252.00
Sale of Jam at Meeting		£32.00
Proceeds of External Talk	£10.00	
	<u>£1,501.50</u>	<u>£1,642.02</u>
<u>General Fund Expenditure</u>		
Affiliations & Subscriptions	£78.45	£116.50
Printing Annual Report	£52.60	£72.85
Postage Annual Report	£63.99	£91.90
Printing Heritage	£288.30	£232.50
Postage Heritage	£368.12	£195.81
Printing Miscellaneous	£31.46	£68.44
Insurance	£246.37	£216.09
Speakers' Fees	£170.00	£215.00
Hire of Room, Meetings	£237.00	£216.00
Postage Miscellaneous	£43.07	£21.98
Donations	£50.00	£100.00
Equipment	£46.98	£83.41
Anniversary Expenditure	£12.00	£141.33
P H Meter		£46.00
Testing Electrics	£7.00	£18.50
	<u>£1,695.34</u>	<u>£1,836.31</u>
Deficiency	£193.84	Deficiency £194.29

Balance Sheet as at 30 November 2012

	<u>2012</u>		<u>2011</u>
<u>General Fund</u>			
Cash at Bank	£788.63		£982.47
National Savings Investment Acc	<u>£1,661.63</u>		<u>£1,657.32</u>
	£2,450.26		£2,639.79
 <u>Publications Fund</u>			
Cash at Bank	£98.78		£98.78
National Savings Investment Acc	<u>£8,013.90</u>		<u>£7,998.90</u>
	£8,112.68		£8,097.68
	<u>£10,562.94</u>		<u>£10,737.47</u>

<u>General Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1 December 2011	£982.47		£1,176.76
Deficiency for year	<u>£193.84</u>	£788.63	Deficiency <u>£194.29</u>
			£982.47

<u>Reserve Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1st December 2011	£1,657.32		£1,653.05
Add net interest for year	<u>£4.31</u>		<u>£4.27</u>
	£1,661.63		£1,657.32
<u>Publications Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1 December 2011	£8,097.68		£8,082.68
Add Net Interest for year	<u>£15.00</u>		<u>£15.00</u>
	£8,112.68		£8,097.68
	<u>£10,562.94</u>		<u>£10,737.47</u>

	<u>2012</u>		<u>2011</u>
<u>Reserve Fund Income</u>			
Interest on National Savings Acc	£4.31		£4.27
<u>Publications Fund Income</u>			
Interest on National Savings Acc	£15.00		£15.00

AUDITOR'S REPORT

LOUGHBOROUGH NATURALISTS CLUB

(Registered Charity No. 510799)

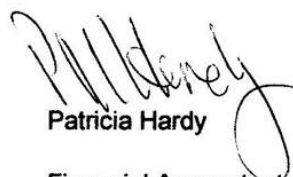
Auditors Report

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

The club, in common with others, derives its 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 2012 and of the results of the year then ended.

156 Leicester Road
Markfield
Leicester


Patricia Hardy
Financial Accountant
20.01.13

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

For the Year Ending 31 December 2012

This year the Club has a total of 91 members, including four new members who have joined in the year.

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

CLUB ACTIVITIES DIARY

INDOOR MEETINGS

January 14th	British Mammals, presented by Derek Warren
February 11th	Amphibians and Reptiles, presented by Chris Monk
March 10th	A Spring Visit to Corsica, presented by Ian Gamble
April 14th	AGM and Members' Evening
September 8th	Three Short Talks and Members' Evening Moths and Wildlife in Southern Ireland – Graham Finch A Video of Insects and other Wildlife – Jeremy Haynes Garden Butterflies – Peter Gamble
October 13th	More Than Meets the Eye – the Wildlife of Grace Dieu, presented by Steve Woodward
November 10th	Life in the Darkness, presented by John Jones
December 8th	Japan: Birding in the Land of the Rising Sun, presented by Neil Gartshore

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

Wednesday Morning Walks

January 4th	Cossington Meadows Nature Reserve
February 1st	Sence Valley Forest Park – led by Bas Forgham
March 7th	Plantations off Benscliffe Road, Newtown Linford
April 4th	Bradgate Country Park – southern section
May 2nd	Cademan Wood and Moor
June 6th	Beacon Hill Country Park
July 4th	Stonebow Washlands Nature Reserve
August 1st	River Soar and Grand Union Canal at Quorn/Barrow
September 5th	Cossington Meadows Nature Reserve
October 3rd	Swithland Reservoir and Environs
November 7th	Beacon Hill Country Park – survey work
December 5th	Watermead Country Park North and Reedbed Nature Reserve

EXHIBITIONS

Although this year we did not attend the Wood Fair or Rempstone Steam Fair (which was cancelled due to excess water!) we did have a stand at the DANES (Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Entomological Society) Exhibition at Brackenhurst College and at the Leicestershire Recorders' Conference run very successfully, for the first time, by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT) at the Rothley Centre. We also had a table and digital display at the Dipterists' Forum Day at Manchester Museum.

Steve Woodward has given his presentation about the Grace Dieu survey a number of times – to Birstall Birdwatching Club, the Charnwood branch of the LRWT, Charnwood Forest Regional Park Landscape Partnership Bid Stakeholder Group Meeting

and two talks in Thringstone, one at the Community Centre and one for the Friends of Grace Dieu Priory Trust. He also did a presentation to launch our DVD of 50 years of LNC records at the Recorders' Conference.

Thanks go to Steve for his superb presentations and his meticulous work and dedication to the record scanning project.

PUBLICATIONS

50 Years of LNC records on one DVD

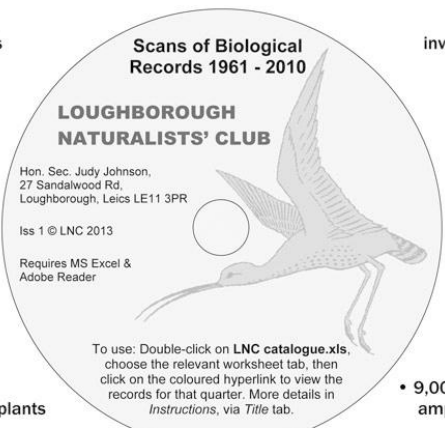
This is a unique archive of the work of dedicated club members over the last 50 years. It is probable that nothing like this has been done before.

Most of the record sheets that have been sent in by members in the last 50 years have been scanned onto a disc (DVD). A spreadsheet catalogue with hyperlinks allows them to be retrieved quickly and displayed on the computer screen. Rocio Rodriguez from the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre scanned 12,110 record sheets which were carefully numbered by a team from the Club, including Katherin and John Ward. Rocio then produced a catalogue detailing the recorders and what and where they recorded in each quarter of each year. Each quarter is divided into sections within the catalogue, corresponding with the groups listed on the paper record sheets – mammals, flowering plants, etc. Steve Woodward and Helen Ikin then spent many days checking the whole catalogue and making a gazetteer of sites.

NEW DVD FROM LOUGHBOROUGH NATURALISTS' CLUB

• 12,000
mammals

Scans of Biological
Records 1961 - 2010



LOUGHBOROUGH
NATURALISTS' CLUB

Hon. Sec. Judy Johnson,
27 Sandalwood Rd,
Loughborough, Leics LE11 3PR

Iss 1 © LNC 2013

Requires MS Excel &
Adobe Reader

To use: Double-click on **LNC catalogue.xls**,
choose the relevant worksheet tab, then
click on the coloured hyperlink to view the
records for that quarter. More details in
Instructions, via *Title* tab.

• 20,000
invertebrates

• 13,000
flowering plants
& ferns

• 9,000 reptiles,
amphibians &
fish

- **12,110 scanned images of biological records*** submitted by "Loughborough Nats" from 1961 - 2010
- **Spreadsheet catalogue to find pages of interest**
- **Three editions of the quarterly bulletin *Heritage***
- **Index to *Heritage* 1 - 100 (1961 - 1985) including all species and localities**

* Excludes most Bird, Lepidoptera, Odonata records, as they are available elsewhere

£5 to members, £10 to non-members.

Purchasers to sign agreement on conditions of use.

HERITAGE EDITORS' REPORT

Heritage has often been late coming out this year but we hope it was worth waiting for. We have finally managed to get the photos in Heritage to look good – thanks to all the time that Jim Graham has spent at the printers.

We are short of leading articles – articles on almost any aspect of Natural History would be most welcome.

Thank you to all the writers, most of whom send in copy well before the deadline. We are pleased that Graham Finch has taken over the Coleoptera write-up, thus taking a bit more pressure off Howard. Graham is now County Coordinator for Coleoptera. We would also like to thank Phil Moorish for his detailed and comprehensive weather reports.

We ask members to send in their records by 15th of the month following the end of the quarter. A recording spreadsheet is available so that records can be emailed. One advantage of this is that records do not need to be segregated on to separate sheets but can be lumped together and easily sorted out into sections at this end. Thanks to the County Council for the use of the scanner at LRERC each quarter.

Heritage is only as good as you make it. So, please keep sending in your records of everything. With luck, we can get out more this summer. The weather in 2013 could not be worse than 2012 – could it?

Helen Ikin, Jim Graham, Steve Woodward

GRACE DIEU UNIT SURVEY

Recording officially ended at Grace Dieu on 31 December 2012 and on that day, with the help of the Leicestershire Fungi Study Group, we added nine species to the survey list, including three first county records! We finally caught up with the elusive Reed Bunting. The species totalizer currently (19 March) stands at 3525. A number of specimens have yet to be identified or verified so this total may change slightly.

Work is proceeding on the report. With 14,889 records and 2,342 fieldwork hours to account for, this is going to take a while!

Helen Ikin and Steve Woodward

OBITUARY

William Stewart Moffat

(affectionally known to us as **Bill**).

Passed away on 23rd February 2013

Bill was a well respected geologist. He studied at King's College, Newcastle, then part of Durham University. He gained a BSc and after two years research in the Lake District he gained his MSc.

As an active member of the Loughborough Naturalists' Club, Bill gave talks and led geological walks on Charnwood Forest. His walk around Beacon Hill in very inclement weather as part of the Club's 25th Anniversary celebrations in 1985 was much appreciated. Bill also held workshops on geology at John Storer House and became the Chairman of the Club in 1984.

Katherin Ward

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

Thanks to the members and friends who braved the horrible weather this year – or looked out through car and house windows and sent in their mammal sightings.

Records have been sparser than usual but we recorded 19 species and although we concentrate on the Charnwood area we have had records from all over the county.

It is not easy to generalise about the status of various species but **Rabbits**, **Grey Squirrels**, **Muntjac**, **Moles**, **Badgers** and **Red Foxes** seem to be thriving. **Brown Rats**, **Field** and **Bank Voles**, **Harvest Mice** and **Woodmice** are probably doing well too. I suspect that **Shrew** populations are not quite so good. They need a nice warm summer with lots of insects – don't we all!

Hedgehogs are less common than they used to be, as are **Brown Hares** – at least on this side of the county. The **House Mouse** seems to be a rare species and may be almost confined to warehouses and grain stores? We have had no **Mink** records this year and only one **Water Shrew**. We can say nothing definite about the elusive **Stoats** and **Weasels**. **Bats** are commonly seen but telling which species you are watching is sometimes problematic even with sophisticated equipment.

It has been good to report **Roe Deer** in the district again. Perhaps, one day, we shall have them setting up territories in the area. **Fallow Deer** do escape from Bradgate and can sometimes be seen elsewhere.

The **Water Vole** reintroduction project at Rutland Water is interesting. With luck, they will spread out from there over the county.

I await the first Wild Boar sighting.

Helen Ikin

BIRDS

The only "Wild Swans" of the year were two **Whoopers** that flew low over Swithland Reservoir but did not land on 1 December. The maximum number of **Greyag Geese** was only 34 at Cropston Reservoir on 6 August and the only double-figure counts of **Canada Geese** were 200 at Cossington South Lakes on 14 November and 46 at Birstall on 5 December. A pair of **Egyptian Geese** was noted around Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir until October; they produced nine young in July but it was not known if many survived.

Two pairs of **Shelduck** were present at Cropston Reservoir on 6 March but no breeding was confirmed. **Mandarins** bred in a garden at Swithland and at Cropston Reservoir. The maximum number of **Wigeon** in the early part of the year was 482 at Swithland Reservoir on 12 February and 100 at Watermead Park at the end of the year. There were 267 **Teal** together with the above Wigeon at Swithland Reservoir. Two **Garganey** were at Easthorpe Bridge, Belvoir in the last week of March and there were three at Cossington Meadows at the end of August and into September. A **Common Scoter** was found at Groby Pool, moving to Swithland Reservoir at the end of November into early December. Three **Velvet Scoters** stayed at Swithland Reservoir throughout December. A male **Red-breasted Merganser** was on the river at Birstall on 2 December.

Red-legged Partridges were noted in all quarters with numbers reduced by the end of the year. Unfortunately, the highest count was only 11 birds at Braunston-in-

Rutland in March. The plight of the **Grey Partridge** was evident as there were only two records during the year, in March and April, involving a total of three birds.

Cormorants were seen throughout the year, peaking at 50 birds at Cropston Reservoir on 10 January; nesting was observed at Swithland Reservoir and fledglings at Groby Pool. A **Cattle Egret** at Kelham Bridge in September was unfortunately proved to be an escapee from Twycross Zoo! **Little Egrets** were present throughout most of the year with seven at Birstall Meadows in August. **Grey Herons** were proved to breed at Groby Pool in March.

Great Crested Grebe numbers peaked at 55 at Cropston Reservoir in October and there was a **Black-necked Grebe** at Swithland Reservoir on 7 April and another on 25 August.

Red Kites are still mainly confined to the east of the county with observations in the Melton and Belvoir area. **Sparrowhawks** were still regular in members' gardens and **Buzzards** continue to be widespread in all months. A single **Osprey** flew north over Watermead Park on 5 April and one caught a fish at Cropston Reservoir on 14 April. **Kestrels** were widespread and well reported in all months. The few **Hobby** records only came from Breedon, Wanlip, Groby, Cropston and Watermead Park. Most reports of **Peregrines** were from the usual sites of Buddon Wood and Albert Village.

Unusually, there were only two **Water Rails** noted throughout the year, both at Watermead Park, one in April and the other in December. A juvenile **Spotted Crake** put in a rare appearance at Birstall Meadows on 21 August and surprisingly was joined by another on 25th, neither to be seen again.

Pairs of **Oystercatchers** were around the Soar Valley and Hicks Lodge but no young were noted. There was a similar situation with **Little Ringed Plovers** with pairs at Hicks Lodge, Albert Village and Cossington Meadows but no sign of young. The largest flock of **Golden Plovers** was just 65 at Sileby in late April. **Lapwing** were more prominent with 400 at Cossington Meadows on New Year's Day and 500 at Lodge Farm, Quorn in December. Young were found at Heather and Lockington. **Woodcock** were flushed at Grace Dieu in January and one or two were roding at Benscliffe in July. A pair of **Curlew** was in the Bawdon Hill area in April.

There were no big counts of the larger gulls but 686 **Black-headed Gulls** were at Cropston Reservoir on 14 August and five **Little Gulls** were there on 27 March. **Common Terns** bred at Hicks Lodge and Watermead Park and there were six **Arctic Terns** at Cropston Reservoir on 27 April.

No **Turtle Doves** were located in our area, the only one mentioned was at Rutland Water on 28 April. **Cuckoos** were thin on the ground with calling birds only reported from 15 separate sites.

Barn Owls were noted in only six areas including Bradgate Park where two were found close together dead in suspicious circumstances. Apart from single observations at Cropston and Hugglescote all **Little Owl** records came from Bradgate Park where they were seen in small numbers throughout the year. **Tawny Owls** were well spread but there were only two reports in the last quarter. It was a good winter for **Short-eared Owls** with sightings at suitable sites such as Hicks Lodge, with five regularly flying together and Cossington Meadows with up to three birds.

At least 700 **Swifts** were feeding over Cropston Reservoir on 16 June and although **Kingfishers** must have had a bad time breeding this year with high water levels, they were well reported in the last quarter. A **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was seen twice near the dam at Swithland Reservoir in early December.

The bird of the year must be the **Golden Oriole** that was heard and seen at Swithland Reservoir on three occasions in May. Another contender for bird of the year was a **Great Grey Shrike** in the Plungar area in March.

Ravens were seen in around 20 locations throughout the year and probably bred in Charnwood.

Kelham Bridge appeared to be the only reliable site for **Willow Tits** with regular sightings early and late in the year.

Singing **Sky Larks** were heard in around 15 areas across the north of the county with probable breeding in most of them.

Maximum (approximate) counts of hirundines, all in the Cropston Reservoir/Bradgate Park area, were 100 **Sand Martins** on 14 April, 700 **Swallows** on 15 May and 250 **House Martins** on 29 September.

A **Cetti's Warbler** was heard at Watermead Park throughout the first half of December. Most of the warblers were well represented but **Lesser Whitethroats** were only heard at Mountsorrel and Moira, and the only **Grasshopper Warbler** record came from Kelham Bridge.

It was a good **Waxwing** winter with regular invasions around the Loughborough/Quorn area. There were 250 in Loughborough and 150 in Quorn in early December.

The maximum number of **Fieldfares** was 421 in February and 100 in the autumn and the largest **Redwing** flock was only 57 in all the year.

Spotted Flycatchers were found at Wanlip North Lakes; Parkhill Golf Club, Seagrave; Watermead Park and Bradgate Park where there were 11 on 8 August.

No **Redstarts** were found on spring passage but up to three were around Parkhill Golf Club throughout August. A **Whinchat** at Sileby in April was the only spring migrant and one was at Cossington Meadows in August. It was a bad year for **Stonechats** with two in Bradgate Park in December the only record. **Wheatears** were more reliable in the spring but only one, at Cropston, was seen in the autumn.

There were 20 **Tree Sparrows** at Staunton Harold in January and 47 at Braunston in Rutland in March. Not many **Yellow Wagtails** were seen but they did breed successfully at Austrey and Little Orton. **Grey Wagtails** were slightly more common and probably bred at Cropston Reservoir. A few **Tree Pipits** were found at the usual sites of Ulverscroft, Beacon Hill, Bradgate Park and Charnwood Lodge.

Twenty **Bramblings** were at Beacon Hill in January and the only other records were of two in a garden at Cropston in early May and one in a garden at Birstall in early December. **Siskins** in small numbers, apart from 120 at both Ulverscroft and Bradgate Park, were reported in all seasons with breeding proved in the Cropston area. **Linnets** and **Lesser Redpolls** were well spread but only in small numbers. In January two **Common Crossbills** were seen at Benscliffe and six were noted at Shepshed in March.

Bas Forgham

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

FISH, REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

To misquote Charles Dickens: "It was the best of years, and the worst of years". 2012 will go down in our memories as a year of extremes! We began with a drought, and then it started to rain, and having once started, it failed to stop. As a result it seems to me that we spent 2012 waiting for a summer which never materialised! Quite what effect this will have had on the forms of wildlife with which we are concerned here, it is difficult to say.

However, we can be fairly certain that those species which require warmth, ie the Reptiles, will have had a difficult year - and this is probably reflected, to a certain extent, in our grounds to be cautiously optimistic about our Amphibians: it seems that they are still present in some of their traditional sites, if people are prepared to go and look for them. We can also assume that the various fish species which frequent our Leicestershire

waters are still there - although in all honesty it is impossible to spot fish in rivers which are in continuous spate! The species of fish which prefer lower temperatures, such as the Salmonids, will have enjoyed the low summer temperatures of 2012. However, the species which prefer higher temperatures, such as the **Common Carp *Cyprinus carpio*** may have failed to breed in 2012.

When we look at a river in flood, we may be inclined to wonder how any fish can survive in these conditions - but survive they do. If there is a problem it tends to be with newly hatched fry in late May or early June. Adult fish can usually get down on to the bottom of the river, and sit things out. (Fish are, of course, cold-blooded, and like many other cold-blooded creatures can go for long periods without feeding.) However, the newly hatched fry tend to shoal up in comparatively shallow, slack water, where they are less subject to predation. This is all well and good until there is a sudden flash flood at the wrong time! In the past, I have found whole shoals of fry left high and dry in the fields several yards from the river. Conversely, there are migratory fish, like the **Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar***, which *may* find a spate helpful: they are sometimes obliged to wait for high water levels to help them surmount steep weirs.

Finally, this brings me to an optimistic note to end on! I have been told that increasing numbers of Atlantic Salmon are returning to the Trent, with fish being seen resting up below the weirs, and some fish being caught accidentally by anglers fishing for the Trent's famous large **Barbel *Barbus barbus***. I must stress that this information is purely anecdotal: where fish and anglers are concerned, I tend to be rather sceptical!

Nevertheless, it seems likely that, to coin a phrase, there's no smoke without fire....

Tony Onions

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

The rather strange weather conditions recorded during 2012 had a very significant and detrimental effect on the success of our Odonata, with April being the wettest in the county since records began, the coolest since 2001 and the dullest since 2005. This theme continued into May with the first three weeks being cool and showery and although the final week was warm and sunny this did not last long and substantial, record-breaking rainfall returned in June with storms and flash-floods both locally and nationally. The 'summer' was dull, cool and wet with below average temperatures and significantly increased rainfall – not ideal conditions for the peak dragonfly season. The last week of July and much of August was closer to normal expectations but was interspersed with severe storms. Whilst September started off warm and sunny it became much cooler with occasional storms and although October was milder, the damage for our dragonflies was already done.

Not surprisingly therefore, it was a late start to the season and the first insect was not noted until 5 May, thereafter ten tenacious recorders submitted almost 300 records from 67 widespread locations that included five gardens and indentified 18 species.

After two **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** were noted at St. Mary's Mills on 23 May, this distinctive insect was found at 12 further sites generally favouring slow-flowing waters with five areas of the Grand Union Canal regularly holding specimens. The largest count came from the Barrow-upon-Soar section with at least 21 there on 1 August. The final record was five on the River Lin at Bradgate Park on the 8th.

Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa* occurred at just three localities: singles at Rutland Water and Saddington Reservoir on 1 and 24 July respectively and three at Newfield Colliery on 9 August.

White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes* fared even worse being recorded at just two sites. However, 15 were found at a small fishing lake near Peatling Parva, apparently a new site in VC55 for this species which is usually found along slow-flowing waterways and canals.

The first **Large Red Damselfly** *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* was in a Quorn garden on 5 May. Thereafter, records were received from 13 sites including five gardens. Numbers were low and no count reached double-figures, the largest being eight at Beacon Hill CP on 6 June. The final record was one in a Cropston garden on 11 July.

The highest count of **Blue-tailed Damselfly** *Ischnura elegans* was 30 at a Peatling Parva fishing lake but generally numbers were low from 18 sites, although apparently 'abundant' in the ponds at the end of Staunton Harold Reservoir on 8 August. In 2011, the highest count of **Common Blue Damselfly** *Enallagma cyathigerum* from 15 sites was just five, so it was pleasing to note that in 2012 it was living more up to its name being fairly common and widespread with records from 23 sites, four having three-figure counts: Bescaby with 200 and Fosse Way Quarry, Syston with 150, both on 23 July; the Peatling Parva fishing lake with 200 the following day and Swithland Reservoir with 100 on 25 August. This species had quite an extended flight period being present from 19 June until 2 October. By contrast, the only double-figure counts of **Azure Damselfly** *Coenagrion puella* came from Puddledyke when 20 were there on 27 June and a Quorn garden with 13 on the 10th. All other counts at nine other sites between 23 May and 25 August were in single-figures. **Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma najas* records of ten or less came from five sites but at least 100 were at the Peatling Parva fishing lake on 24 July. This was also the location and date for the only **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma viridulum* record with at least 30 individuals noted including many pairs and ovipositing.

Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis* was first seen in a Quorn garden on 1 July and subsequently noted at 19 other sites during the season, mainly one or two. The first **Southern Hawker** *Aeshna cyanea* was noted four days later in the same Quorn garden and then from 14 locations until the final one at Evington Park on 30 October. Slightly more widespread was **Migrant Hawker** *Aeshna mixta* which was recorded at 18 sites from 1 August until 28 October. There were two double-figure counts both in September, ten at Buddon Brook Meadows on the 1st and 20 at Wanlip Meadows on the 13th.

Surprisingly, **Emperor Dragonfly** *Anax imperator* was only recorded during July where it was found at seven locations between the 12th and 24th. All were singles other than a pair at Fosse Way Quarry, Syston on the 23rd.

A Cropston garden was host to the first **Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa*, a male there on 30 May then one or two at a further five locations. Ovipositing was noted at Swannymote Wood and a pair was at Saddington Reservoir. Single **Four-spotted Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata* were at five sites but double-figure counts came from two others, ten at Puddledyke on 27 June and 11 at Fosse Way Quarry, Syston on 23 July.

Small numbers of **Black-tailed Skimmer** *Orthetrum cancellatum* were noted at six sites, all during July, but 39 (including 27 males) were at a newly created pool near Bescaby on the 23rd.

The first **Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum* were noted at the above Bescaby pool the same day when 15 freshly emerged specimens were found. Subsequently, records came from a further 15 sites including ten at Cossington Meadows on 5 September. The final record was two at Stonepit Field, Donisthorpe on 21 October. **Ruddy Darter** *Sympetrum sanguineum* were not so commonly found with only four records received between 7 July and 10 October with a maximum of three at Puddledyke on the last date.

A special thank you to those members who took the time to look for and report dragonflies during 2012. I know I said this last year but and let's hope that the 2013 season is somewhat better.

Jim Graham

BUTTERFLIES

As one who became interested in butterflies at an early age, over 70 years ago, I cannot remember a worse summer, weather-wise, for these sun-loving organisms than this current year. Not surprisingly this proved particularly bad for some species though other species, although present in reduced numbers, as a result of this and other recent mediocre summers, still managed to appear in reasonable numbers.

Thus, whereas colonies of species such as the **Large Skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus*** and **Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris***, **White-letter *Satyrion w-album*** and **Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus*** and **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*** were low in numbers, or non-existent, those of the **Comma *Polygonia c-album***, **Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*** and **Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*** held up better than might have been expected.

The report of the now scarce **Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera***, noted at Bardon Hill in August, was welcome.

With the return of somewhat better weather in the late summer/autumn numbers of new generation **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** and **Comma**, visiting Ivy blossom into October, helped the would-be butterfly enthusiasts to feel somewhat less depressed! Let's hope for a really good sunny summer in 2013, and many thanks, as usual, to those fifteen or so members who regularly contribute records.

Peter Gamble

MOTHS

It's difficult not to "whinge" on about the weather for 2012, but no matter how hard we try it does have an effect on what we do, where we go and how much time we spend there. Neither is it any consolation that the whole country has been affected, not just us here in VC55 we all had to work harder than normal for our records and indeed we did.

One of the very first moths recorded was a **Dotted Chestnut *Conistra rubiginea*** from a Leicester Forest East garden in March, and then amazingly another was recorded from Charnwood Lodge the following night. It was one of those long-awaited specials all VC55 moth recorders have been hoping for. Several sightings of the butterfly-like **Orange Underwing *Archicaris parthenias***, again in March, were followed by the usual flurry of *Orthosia* species. The numbers may have been reduced, but most of the species likely to be seen this time of year, were seen. You can never get tired of seeing the stunning **Oak Beauty *Biston strataria*** and **Early Grey *Xylocampa areola***.

As the days grew longer, the day-flying species began to appear such as **Cinnabar *Tyra jacobaeae***, **Burnet Companion *Euclidia glyphica*** and **Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata*** and **Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae*** - there was even a sighting of a single **Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum***. Fortunately, **Orange Footman *Eilema sorocula***, **Dingy Footman *Eilema griseola***, and **Scarce Footman *Eilema complana*** still seems to be doing okay with reports from widespread locations. New county records were supplied with the nationally scarce **Parectopa *onidis*** from a Rutland garden plus with what had been considered, at least up until 2012, a scarce migrant ***Cydia amplana*** from a garden in Kibworth. The most remarkable record came from the Outwoods when Becky Faulkner was fortunate enough to record ***Harpella forficella*** which still looks like being only the third record for the UK. **Black Arches *Lymantria monacha*** continues to spread, recorded in good numbers at the Outwoods plus a singleton away from the Charnwood Forest area at Shenton. **Six-belted Clearwing *Bembecia ichneumoniformis*** and **Red-tipped Clearwing *Synanthedon formicaeformis*** were recorded in July, which is a feat in itself, as the whole of this family are incredibly difficult to see without resorting to the use of pheromones. One night at Bagworth Heath, hardly classic ancient habitat, produced a very respectable total of 140 species recorded in July. There were 25 species of micro Lepidoptera recorded from

Shackerstone, highlights of which were reported in last quarter, but another interesting species here was *Buccalatrix thoracella*. The larvae feed on Lime and make the tiniest of galleries. The adult moth is a deep yellow/orange with large brown patches, and well worth looking for in June 2013.

So looking back at what we have recorded between us, we have done more than okay, we are all hoping for improved conditions for 2013, but we'll have to take what we are given and do what we do well, and that's get out there and get on with it.

Many thanks for all your records.

Graham and Anona Finch

BEELES

There are certain groups of beetles that due to their bright colouration or habits of sitting in full view get noticed and recorded by most of us, even on the most casual of walks. Not surprisingly these are the species we have the most records for. Fortunately, it's not at all difficult to find a whole new range of beetles by putting in just the smallest amount of extra effort. Most of us find it hard to resist looking under a log or large stones on our travels, but these usually turn out to be on the same favourite walks year in, year out and result in similar species lists. If the same tactics were to be employed in different situations, such as at the edge of ponds or along the sides of streams, or searching at ground level under the dense patches of Heather and Bilberry or by making several visits to a known patch of Hogweed or other Umbelifers we will be rewarded with numerous new sightings. Even brewing up a batch of lepidopterist's sugar, after all it's only roughly the same quantities of beer (a dark Stout is best) dark brown sugar and some black treacle don't forget to add a tablespoon of Rum, Whisky or Sherry after it cools down. This can be painted in strips on fence posts in the garden and let the beetles and moths come to you.

Several species recorded on the Grace Dieu Survey were *Triplax aenea* one of several blue and orange fungus beetles plus the water beetles *Hydroporus palustris* and *incognitus*, these latter two were netted from the pond. The Ground Beetles are a popular group and relatively easy to find, most records come from members looking under stones and pieces of rotten wood and other debris throughout the county. The year started off quite promising with a new site for **Green Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris*** at the Newfield Colliery Reserve. The nearest previous record for this species would be at Acresford where a singleton was recorded in May 1992. There are only 50 records in the VC55 Coleoptera database of *Carabus granulatus*, the earliest from G. Crabbe in 1790 and four from the late 1800s, so the addition of a single specimen from Loughborough Big Meadows was quite encouraging. It's amazing how scarce the sightings are of the large ground beetles species we used to see, such as *Carabus problematicus* and *violaceus*. The most abundant species were *Leistus spinibarbis* found throughout in many habitats; this one is a lovely metallic blue. *Pterostichus madidas* turns up everywhere, and once you have an eye in for its reddish-brown thighs it's easy to identify. Under stones at the edge of water *Paranchus albipes* was very common. Not a single record of the **Lesser Stag Beetle *Dorcus parallelipedus*** was reported and neither were there any *Serica brunnea*, a small reddish-brown Chafer, which is usually abundant at MV light traps. The **Cockchafer *Melolontha melolontha*** was another that was noticeably down in numbers from moth traps. The quite handsome (and hairy) **Garden Chafer *Phyllopertha horticola*** was recorded from a Quorn garden. The jewel beetle *Agrillus biguttatus* found in Swithland Wood may not have the best intentions for the wood itself, but it is a stunning beetle and a very good find. The only record of a **Glow-worm *Lamprys noctiluca*** was a larva at Stonesby Quarry. There were 13 species of Ladybirds noted throughout the year with **7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella septempunctata*** the most abundant but **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*** numbers seem to be on a slight decline. Most of the rest were there, but not in great quantities and **14-spot ladybird *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata*** was probably the next most noted species. On the few warm and sunny days we had during the summer *Lagria hirta* was around in decent quantities,

in the same family **Corticeus unicolor** was a chance find at Cloud Wood, constituting a new record for the county.

The **Swollen-thighed Flower Beetle** *Oedemera nobilis* was well recorded, a species that has been spreading since the mid-1990s.

The Longhorn beetles are another favourite group; large, colourful and usually quite evident sitting out in the sun and 14 species were recorded for the year. **Grammoptera ruficornis** is usually the most abundant, where literally dozens can be found on a single Hogweed flower. **Arhopalus rusticus** has had a good year with records from Ratby and The Outwoods, both in July. This is another species that responds to light and may possibly become a regular at moth traps. Of the Chrysomelidae, the **Willow Flea Beetle** *Crepidodera aurata* was the most reported being found at several sites. I suspect mainly due to the restricted suitable nights for moth trapping the Sexton Beetles or Carrion Beetles were hardly noted. The 2013 recording season has already begun, and although the conditions are far from ideal the initial results are looking promising, and with a little luck will continue to be so.

Many thanks for members hard work in providing records for an awful 2012.

Graham Finch

OTHER INSECTS

2012 proved to be one of the most disappointing years ever weather-wise for many naturalists, particularly those who take an interest for invertebrate life, many gardens had very low numbers of social bees and hoverflies visiting their respective flower beds this summer.

Many ground nesting bees would have suffered badly, and many nests would have perished this last year, few cleptoparasites of the various species were noted in late summer, even **Bombus vestalis** a parasite of **Bombus terrestris** usually common in the summer months were scarce.

Only two records of the **Hornet** *Vespa crabro* were received, one from Grace Dieu and several from Quorn. This species is usually recorded quite widely particularly from the Charnwood area in late summer.

Among the Diptera, few hoverflies fared any better, the usual summer invasion of Syrphids usually headed by the **Marmalade Hoverfly** *Episyrphus balteatus* and many associated species failed to materialize in many areas. A few species however did do well: **Helophilus trivittatus** and the **Sun Fly** *Helophilus pendulus* were seen in improving numbers this summer, as was the wasp scavenger **Volucella inanis**. **Volucella bombylans**, a parasite of social bees, were much less in evidence, usually peaking in June, this year only a few records for later in July and August.

Despite this, many other Dipteran species records were submitted, in no small measure to the tireless efforts of SFW and HI who have been visiting many of our most productive sites in the county during the summer months.

Not a great deal of exciting records for Heteropteran bugs this last year. Like a number of species, many were in significant low numbers compared with previous years, the **Turtle Bug** *Podops inuncta* is worth a mention, recorded among trefoils in a sandy area of Appleton Park in May, the only other record I have is one found in similar circumstances off the Barkby Road a few years ago.

Howard Bradshaw

FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS

2012 was a miserable year for enjoying outdoor activities, botany included! The almost endless rain spoilt most holidays in this country. On the other hand the plants and trees appeared to have enjoyed it. After several dry years the water table must have been getting very low and in the last two years the trees have been looking rather distressed in the hottest weather but I don't think they will in 2013.

There have not been any exceptional records this year but a few welcome records have been made for species which have been missing for a while. Two which come to mind are **Subterranean Clover** *Trifolium subterraneum* on Castle Hill, Mountsorrel and **Bog Pimpernel** *Anagallis tenella* at Groby. Aliens also keep making an appearance, two of note were **Ragweed** *Ambrosia artemesiifolia* and **Fern-leaved Beggarticks** *Bidens ferulifolia*, the first from birdseed and the second a cultivar escape.

Although not such a good year as previous years, we still have a lot of records, admittedly most of them were of the commoner species but these records are in a way just as important as the rarities. Botanists in a hundred years' time might find them of more interest and use than the rarities we get excited about.

Many thanks to everyone who sent in records. Please keep up the good work and if you haven't sent in any records before please 'have a go'. You will find it makes life more interesting.

Eric Webster

OTHER GROUPS

Please continue to send in your records for the groups that are not written up in detail such as Fungi, Galls, Algae, Stoneworts, Lichens, Bryophytes, the smaller insect orders and other invertebrates. The records received will go into the county databases and, where possible, will be sent to the National Recording Schemes.

Helen Ikin