

Loughborough Naturalists' Club



Peacock, *Leucozona glaucia* and Common Lizard © Steve Woodward; Lesser Redpoll © Jim Graham.



Annual Report 2013

LOUGHBOROUGH NATURALISTS' CLUB

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2013

President Mr P H Gamble

COMMITTEE

Chairman Mr P Wilkinson
Vice-chairman Mr S Woodward
Immediate Past Chairman Mr E Webster
Honorary Secretary Mrs J Johnson
Honorary Treasurer Mr J Ward
Meetings Secretary Mrs D Webster
Membership Secretary Mr G Fisher

Members Mr J Graham
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
Honorary Auditor Mr K North

Club Representative

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

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

My first year as Chairman seems to have passed very quickly. I have very much enjoyed chairing the meetings and I should like to thank our Vice-chairman Steve Woodward for taking over so ably when I have been unable to attend. As usual we have had an excellent set of speakers throughout the year and thanks are due to Doreen Webster for her hard work in finding and booking them. The committee has been made aware that some members have difficulty on occasions in hearing all of what the speaker is saying. One solution which has been considered is to purchase a loudspeaker system. However some speakers do not like to use a microphone and these are often the very people who speak "sotto voce". We have adopted a new seating plan which groups the audience in an arc around the speaker. This appears to have helped greatly but I should be interested to hear from members who are still having problems.

The primary aim of the Club is recording and this has been furthered in splendid fashion by the Grace Dieu survey carried out by Helen Ikin and Steve Woodward. The writing up is proving to be a mammoth task. For example the latest completed chapter on Vascular Plants deals with 612 species. Also the eagerly awaited 50th Anniversary Publication should be available soon.

Our grateful thanks are also due to all the members of the committee without whose continued work the Club could not survive. We are very fortunate in having a new committee member, Graham Fisher, who has taken on the role of Membership Secretary. The Club's sincere thanks are due to Les Hall who has filled this post so efficiently for more than 20 years. I would also like to thank Judy Johnson who has done a sterling job as Secretary over the years but will be retiring at the AGM.

The past year has been an interesting one in terms of record breaking weather and we are fortunate in being able to publish a detailed account using Phil Morrish's excellent records. As he told us last summer at last gave us a season of some warmth and sunshine. This now seems a distant memory after our current winter of wind and rain but so far hardly any snow. Our job of recording the wildlife of the local area becomes even more interesting and important in these changing times.

Finally, I should like to thank all members for their help and support over the past year. I have always found the 'Nats' to be a very friendly club with people willing to give a helping hand when it is needed. This positive spirit will hopefully allow us to continue to prosper in 2014.

Peter Wilkinson

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

For the Year Ending 31 December 2013

Although a significant number of members resigned or failed to renew their membership last year, the Club still has a total of 114 members, boosted by a further six new members in the last 12 months. Over half of our members have now 'Gift Aided' their subscription, which brings a welcome addition to our income and helps keep subscription rates down. If you require a Gift Aid form, please contact the Membership Secretary for details.

Graham Fisher

SECRETARY'S REPORT

This has been a steady year for the Club, with quite good attendances at meetings and on walks. With Peter Wilkinson as Chairman, Steve Woodward as Vice-chairman and Graham as our new membership Secretary, together with other unchanged members of the committee, we have had a strong team to run our affairs. I must mention the Editorial Panel who work to a professional standard in their production of Heritage and the Annual Report. A great deal of work is involved in this, both in the actual creation of the bulletins and in their distribution, which Jim Graham has undertaken to do.

Thanks as always to all who help in any way to keep the Club meetings running smoothly.

It was pleasing this year to see that several members had come forward and offered to lead Wednesday walks. I hope that they and others will make similar offers in the coming year. This is very much appreciated.

I am retiring as Secretary at the AGM and Sue Graham has kindly offered to take over from me. I have enjoyed my time in this post and value the friends and close acquaintances that I have made, I send my best wishes to Sue in her new role.

Judy Johnson

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2013

For the year ended 30 November 2013 the Club's income exceeded expenditure by £290.05.

Income for the year amounted to £1,747.19. Subscriptions totalled £1,169, entrance charges to indoor meetings provided £195.50, the sale of publications raised £194.44 and the tax refund on gift-aided subscriptions amounted to £185.25.

Expenditure for the year amounted to £1,457.14.

The main items of expenditure were:

Printing Heritage	£346.10
Public Liability Insurance	£218.55
Speakers' Fees	£165.00
Hire of room for meetings	£240.00

However, the cost of posting Heritage and the Annual Report is shown as only £48.30, whereas a further £354.77 was paid in February 2014 as the receipts for the bulk of the cost of postage were not submitted until that month. If they had been paid before the end of the financial year the surplus of £290.05 would have been turned into a deficiency of £64.72.

As at 30th November 2013, the balance available on the General and Reserve Accounts was £2,752.38 and the balance of the Publications Fund was £8,152.68.

I would like to thank Kevin North, who has taken over from Patricia Hardy, for auditing the Club's Accounts.

Signed: John Ward, Treasurer,

14 February 2014.

Income & Expenditure Account for the Year ended 30 November 2013

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
<u>General Fund Income</u>		
Subscriptions	£1,169.00	£968.00
Sale of Publications	£194.44	£202.10
Gift Aid Tax Rebate	£185.25	£131.00
Donations	£1.50	£1.50
Entrance Charges	£195.5	£188.90
Sale of Vegetables	£1.50	
Proceeds of External Talk		£10.00
	<u>£1,747.19</u>	<u>£1,501.50</u>
<u>General Fund Expenditure</u>		
Affiliations & Subscriptions	£58.50	£78.45
Printing Annual Report	£87.01	£52.60
Postage Annual Report		£63.99
Printing Heritage	£346.10	£288.30
Postage Heritage	£48.30	£368.12
Printing Miscellaneous	£61.92	£31.46
Postage Miscellaneous	£36.00	£43.07
Insurance	£218.55	£246.37
Speakers' Fees	£165.00	£170.00
Donations	£60.00	£50.00
Hire of Room, Meetings	£240.00	£237.00
Equipment	£85.76	£46.98
Anniversary Expenditure	£50.00	£12.00
Testing Electrics		£7.00
	<u>£1,457.14</u>	<u>£1,695.34</u>
	Surplus £290.05	Deficiency £193.84

Balance Sheet as at 30 November 2013

	<u>2013</u>		<u>2012</u>
<u>General Fund</u>			
Cash at Bank	£1,078.68		£788.63
National Savings Investment Acc	<u>£1,673.70</u>		<u>£1,661.63</u>
	£2,752.38		£2,450.26
<u>Publications Fund</u>			
Cash at Bank	£98.78		£98.78
National Savings Investment Acc	<u>£8,053.90</u>		<u>£8,013.90</u>
	£8,152.68		£8,112.68
	<u>£10,905.06</u>		<u>£10,562.94</u>

<u>General Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1 December 2012	£788.63		£982.47
Surplus for year	<u>£290.05</u>		<u>£193.84</u> Deficiency
	£1,078.68		£788.63
<u>Reserve Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1st December 2012	£1,661.63		£1,657.32
Add net interest for year	<u>£12.07</u>		<u>£4.31</u>
	£1,673.70		£1,661.63
<u>Publications Fund</u>			
Balance as at 1 December 2012	£8,112.68		£8,097.68
Add Net Interest for year	<u>£40.00</u>		<u>£15.00</u>
	£8,152.68		£8,112.68
	<u>£10,905.06</u>		<u>£10,562.94</u>

	<u>2013</u>		<u>2012</u>
<u>Reserve Fund Income</u>			
Interest on National Savings Acc	£12.07		£4.31
<u>Publications Fund Income</u>			
Interest on National Savings Acc	£40.00		£15.00

AUDITOR'S REPORT

Loughborough Naturalists Club

(Registered Charity No. 510799)

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 to the above note the Accounts, in my opinion, give a true and fair view of the Club's financial affairs for the year ended 30th November 2013.



Kevin J North
Honorary Treasurer
L&RWT Charnwood Group

20th January 2014

CLUB ACTIVITIES DIARY

INDOOR MEETINGS

January 12th	Pioneers of the Coast, presented by Eric Webster
February 9th	Madagascar, presented by Mike Webster
March 9th	Scottish Wildlife, presented by David Goddard
April 13th	AGM and Members' Evening
September 14th	Three Short Talks and Members' Evening A Club Holiday by Peter Gamble Bradgate Park by Steve Woodward A Video of Trinidad by Jeremy Haynes
October 12th	City of Bees, presented by Sandra Hart
November 9th	The Magic of Mushrooms, presented by Patrick Harding
December 14th	A Journey to Antarctica, presented by Pam Darby

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

Wednesday Morning Walks

January 2nd	Charnwood Lodge National Nature Reserve
February 6th	Bradgate Country Park Southern Section
March 6th	Beacon Hill Summit Area
April 3rd	Mountsorrel Common, including Castle Hill and Broad Hill
May 1st	Piper Wood SSSI, Shepshed, led by Peter Hipkin
June 5th	Holly Hayes Wood, Whitwick and Coalville Meadows SSSI, led by Helen Ikin
July 3rd	Bradgate Country Park
August 7th	Swithland Wood and Puddledyke
September 4th	Albert Village, Lake and Environs, led by Peter Wilkinson
October 2nd	Windmill Hill and Broombriggs Farm, led by John McNab
November 8th	The Outwoods SSSI
December 4th	Watermead Country Park North and Reedbed Nature Reserve

Wednesday Morning walks were led by Peter Gamble except where stated.

OTHER EVENTS

Several members attended the Bioblitz event held at Woodhouse Eaves on the 14th and 15th June.

FIELDWORK REPORT

Recording at Beacon Hill, Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood:

The club has responded to requests from the owners of these sites to update wildlife records. At **Beacon Hill**, Mick Moffatt was interested in records for the restored grass/heathland. Some members undertook fieldwork there in 2013. SFW and HI made a detailed study of the grassland vegetation, using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) recording method. A report on these surveys was compiled by SFW in Jan 2014. An electronic copy has been lodged at the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) and is available to members upon request.

As he explained at the Recorders' Conference on 22 February, Peter Tyldesley at the Bradgate Park Trust is keen for the club to be involved in biological surveys. SFW and HI have been monitoring bees, wasps and other invertebrates in **Bradgate Park**. They have also begun to investigate the ponds, streams and ditches for aquatic life and ran a public stream dipping session in Bradgate in the summer of 2013. They were helped by Jools Partridge who has a crayfish handling licence. GLF & MAF did some moth trapping in the park in 2013 and have arranged for a moth trap to be run, more-or-less regularly, at the Deer Barn. Graham is also sampling the beetle fauna of the park.

Once again, public events led by LNC members have been scheduled in the BPT programme of walks for 2014.

Steve Woodward

CLUB ARCHIVE

The Club has accumulated a substantial volume of paper records, surveys and reports over the years. Most of this is securely housed at the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) at County Hall.

As reported in *Heritage* **205**, the bulk of the paper records are digitised and available on a disc (DVD). Using the facilities kindly provided by LRERC, Steve Woodward and Helen Ikin have now digitised all editions of *Heritage* and *Annual Reports*. They have also scanned the Survey Unit folders and published Survey Reports:

Survey Unit Folders:

Bardon Hill
Beacon
Benscliffe
Blackbrook Reservoir
Bradgate Park
Brand
Buddon Wood
Grace Dieu
Groby Pool
High Sharpley
Ives Head
Longcliffe, etc
Maps
Puddledyke
Sheet Hedges Wood
Soar Valley

Swithland Wood
Ulverscroft Valley Lea Wood
Ulverscroft

Published Survey Reports:

Badger Notes 1963
Beacon 1998
Benscliffe & Blakeshay 1990
Bradgate 1962
Buddon Wood 1975
Grace Dieu Interim c1974
Grace Dieu Preliminary 1976
Groby Pool 1987
Loughborough Canal 1968
Swithland Wood 1970
Ulverscroft 1979

They are all now safely archived on the County Council's computer system and available to members on a disc (DVD).

Steve 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

Thanks to the members and friends who have reported on 18 mammal species this year.

As our sightings are random rather than structured it is not possible to use them to reliably detect trends in species populations but all sightings are passed on to the local record centre where, together with other records from the rest of the county and city, they can be used to give a better picture of mammals in VC55 – Leicestershire and Rutland. Those of you who attended the Recorders' Conference will have seen the display by our county recorder for mammals, Helen O'Brien.

Most of our sightings are from Charnwood but we are always happy to have records from other parts of the county. We can expect, sooner or later, to have Leicestershire records of Polecat, Pine Marten, Wild Boar and, possibly, Beaver. Do keep your eyes open!

Helen Ikin

BIRDS

The only "wild" Swans of the year were 13 **Whoopers** that dropped on to Swithland Reservoir in a blizzard on 11 March.

A single **Pink-footed Goose** was at Cropston Reservoir on 13 October. A pair of **Egyptian Geese** reared one juvenile around the Bradgate/Cropston area and a pair was still present in October. The maximum count of **Canada Geese** during the year was 372 at Cropston Reservoir in September and **Greylag Geese** maximum was 210 at the same site in October.

Mandarin Ducks appear to be on the increase with regular sightings at Cropston Reservoir. There were nine pairs there in March (producing 20 young) and ten individuals there in October. The only **Garganey** reported was an eclipse bird at Kelham Bridge in mid-September. There were six **Scaup** at Swithland Reservoir in the last half of December. At the same site there were two **Velvet Scoters** until 13 January and then one until mid-March.

The numbers of **Grey Partridges** still seem to be spiraling downwards with only occasional sightings in the Soar Valley and a pair at Stoughton early in the year and a pair at Sileby in April.

A **Black-throated Diver**, the rarest of the divers to visit the county, was at Swithland Reservoir from Christmas Day until the end of the year.

Little Egrets are becoming much more common with widespread sightings throughout the year. One of the birds of the year must have been the juvenile **Night Heron** that stayed at Thornton Reservoir from 27 July until 11 Aug which was seen by many observers.

Most sightings of **Red Kites** were still in the east of the county with only the occasional report elsewhere. A **Marsh Harrier** at Kelham Bridge on 1 May stayed long enough to be seen by the regular visitors there. An **Osprey** was noted at Cropston Reservoir on 7 June and on 13 September one was seen to catch a fish at Swithland Reservoir. **Hobbies** were few and far between with the only observations coming from Dishley Pool, Long Whatton, Cropston and Kelham Bridge. **Peregrines** were noted in the

Buddon Wood area but not as regular as in recent years. Albert Village provided the most regular sightings.

Water Rails were only seen at four locations during the year.

Golden Plovers were only noted in the last quarter when the three-figure count was 150 at the A6/A46 roundabout on 8 December. There were 215 **Lapwings** in the Cossington area in late February and 300 at Wanlip Meadows on 4 December. Breeding was proved at Sileby, Hicks Lodge and Cossington Meadows. A **Sanderling** was at Cropston Reservoir on 28 May. The only **Jack Snipe** of the year was at Kelham Bridge on 20 November and the highest count of **Snipe** was 37 at Stoughton on 11 January. It was a poor year for **Woodcock** records; one in Bradgate Park in January being the only mention. Two **Curlews** were around the Black Hill/Woodhouse area in mid-June. A single **Black-tailed Godwit** was present at Cropston Reservoir on 7 September. A **Wood Sandpiper** was at Cossington Meadows on 8 May and another stayed at Cropston Reservoir for three days in October. Two **Spotted Redshanks** in breeding plumage were at Cossington Meadows for two days in early May and another at Wanlip Meadows in mid-July.

Maximum counts of gulls throughout the year were as follows: **Black-headed Gull**, 1,700 at Cropston Reservoir in October, **Common Gull**, 650 at Somerby in March, **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, 550 at Albert Village in October. **Herring Gulls** were never seen in double-figures and **Great Black-backed Gulls** were not mentioned.

There were two **Black Terns** at Cropston Reservoir on 6 May and a juvenile there for two days in mid-July. The same site had 11 **Arctic Terns** on 15 May.

Cuckoos were widespread in small numbers but at least there were more reports than in previous year.

Barn Owls suffered the effects of last winter and were only noted at seven sites, two of which were on Charnwood. Apart from the Bradgate/Cropston area, **Little Owls** were seen in five other locations. No winter influx of **Short-eared Owls** was reported, the only record being from a garden in Swithland in February and March.

Not many **Kingfishers** were recorded but they were seen at a dozen different sites.

Throughout the year **Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers** were only mentioned three times, at Buddon Brook Meadows where young birds were seen: Swithland, where a nest box was being looked at and Spring Wood, Staunton Harold in September.

Ravens are becoming much more common in the area with 27 separate records with numbers up to five birds. Young were noted at Bardon Hill.

All **Willow Tit** records, apart from birds at Holwell, Cropston and Hugglescote, came from Kelham Bridge where birds were present throughout the year.

Different sites within the Watermead Park complex provided the only **Cetti's Warbler** records. They were seen or heard spasmodically throughout the year.

A **Wood Warbler** was singing at Watermead Park in April and one in Swithland Woods in May. A **Grasshopper Warbler** was "reeling" at Watermead Park on 29 April and one was ringed at Kelham Bridge in May.

During January there were still some **Waxwings** around with odd birds at Loughborough and Rothley but there were 20 at Markfield and 50 at Birstall.

Two female **Ring Ouzel** were at Cossington Meadows on 29 April. It was a poor year for **Fieldfares** with 200 at Rothley on 9 January being the maximum count. It was a similar story for **Redwings** with 120 at Puddledyke on the same day the only three-figure count.

Spotted Flycatchers were found in half a dozen places. There were at least two pairs in Swithland Woods and a pair was seen carrying food in Bradgate Park.

The only spring migrant **Redstart** was noted at Parkhill Golf Club and a male was present there at the end of August at a similar time to a female at Groby Pool. Single **Whinchat** were at Cropston and Kelham Bridge in mid-September. It was a poor year for **Stonechat**, none were seen after two in Bradgate Park in January. **Wheatear** were only found on autumn passage, the maximum number in a small number of sightings, was five at Cropston on 9 September.

A female **Pied Flycatcher** was noted in Bradgate Park on 7 September.

Tree Sparrows were few and far between with only three sites mentioned, Far Coton, Sileby and Low Woods where there were 11, the highest count in late August.

A **Yellow Wagtail** was carrying food at Cropston in July. Few spring passage birds were found with eight at Thornton Reservoir being the highest count. Singing or displaying **Tree Pipits** were at Charnwood Lodge, Ulverscroft NR, Beacon Hill and Bardon Hill.

Bramblings were found in the early and late part of the year with 50 at Beacon Hill on 26 Nov being the only count above two. There were numerous **Siskin** records especially in the early part of the year. Many counts were over a hundred with 182 in a Cropston garden the highest count. Most of the numerous **Linnet** records were of single numbers but there were a hundred at Great Easton in January and 170 at Seagrave in November. **Lesser Redpolls** were similarly reported in small numbers with the highest count coming from Swithland, 35 in February. Cloud Wood, Bradgate Park, Broombriggs and Beacon Hill provided the only sites for **Crossbills** with a maximum of five birds.

There was no mention of **Tree Sparrow** or **Corn Bunting** throughout the year!

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 go again to Ken Goodrich and LROS for co-ordinating the records.

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

The cold, wet spring played havoc with our emerging dragonflies and it was not until improvements in June that they were seen in any numbers.

The first **Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*** were noted at Bradgate Park on the rather late day of 6 June. It was then seen at a further eight sites during the season in small numbers until the final record at Aylestone Meadows on 3 August.

Emerald Damselfly *Lestes sponsa* occurred at seven localities in July and August with ten at Old John Watering in Bradgate Park on 29 July the best count.

There were no records of **White-legged Damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes*** most probably because the regular, known sites were not visited.

The only **Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula*** noted were both in July, at Old John Watering in Bradgate Park on the 3rd and Lax Hill, Rutland Water on the 7th.

Numbers of **Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans*** were poor and six at Hicks Lodge on 19 June was the 'best' count from ten sites. The highest count of **Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum*** from 19 widespread sites was a minimum of 50 at Cropston Reservoir on 7 July, but no other count managed double-figures. There were no double-figure counts of **Azure Damselfly *Coenagrion puella*** from eight sites in June and July and the only record of **Variable Damselfly *Coenagrion pulchellum*** was from the only regular known site along the Grantham Canal on 26 June.

Rather strangely, no records were received of either **Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma najas*** or **Small Red-eyed Damselfly *Erythromma viridulum***, I assume this is due to the lack of recorder coverage rather than a downturn in their fortunes.

Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis* was first seen in Bradgate Park on 3 July and subsequently noted at 16 other sites during the season, mainly one or two but five were ovipositing at Puddledyke on 7 August. The final record was one at Woodthorpe on 4 September. Exuvia of **Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea*** was noted in a Woodhouse Eaves garden pond on 15 June but the first adult was not recorded until 7 July when a male was found at Rutland Water and subsequently from 13 other locations until the final one at New Lount NR on 1 October. The last date was slightly earlier than would be expected but given the inclement weather during the month, perhaps not surprising. **Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*** was recorded at 15 sites from 9 August until 12 October. There was just one double-figure count, a minimum of 20 at Swithland Reservoir on 14 August.

The only **Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*** were recorded at either Cropston Reservoir or two sites within Bradgate Park between 7 July and 7 August. Other than one in HS's Quorn garden, all other **Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa*** records came from the same two sites with the final one noted at Old John Watering in Bradgate Park on 29 July. Single **Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*** were at four sites between 1 June, when one was at Launde Park Wood, and 29 July.

Small numbers of **Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*** were found at four sites between 12 July and 3 August.

The first **Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*** were noted at Quorn on 28 July and subsequently at 17 sites in small numbers with the final record being two at Watermead CP Reedbed Reserve on 9 October. **Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum*** were not so commonly found with records received from just three sites between 18 and 28 August – all singletons.

A special thank you goes to all those members who took the time to look for and report dragonflies during 2013.

Jim Graham

BUTTERFLIES

After last year's dreadful butterfly summer, this year pleasantly surprised us all in being much better than we dared to hope. The prolonged cold spring had a marked effect and on the whole many species emerged later than in most recent years but with the better, more settled weather from June onwards a marked improvement took place and it would seem that the hard winter and late spring had proved beneficial to the over-wintering stages of some species.

Particularly gratifying were the large numbers of **Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*** and **Peacock *Aglais io*** which once again graced our garden flowers and the increased number of sightings of **Wall Butterfly *Lasiommata megera*** in our countryside.

Numbers of **Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus***, which have been worryingly low for some years also showed signs of improved numbers.

The intriguing report of a new colony of the **Chalkhill Blue *Polyommatus coridon*** at Bloody Oaks Quarry in Rutland gives us grounds to hope that other species might eventually establish themselves where suitable habitat still exists and, in this connection, the more frequent local sightings of the **Dark Green *Argynnis aglaja*** and **Silver-washed Fritillaries *Argynnis paphia*** give grounds for hope.

Only small numbers of the migrant **Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*** were seen this year and **Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*** numbers were on the low side compared with some years but showed a distinct improvement when the new generation appeared in the late summer. Two sightings of **Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus*** at Mountsorrel and Barlestone in August occurred at a time when large numbers were present in some coastal counties.

During the autumn a few individuals of some nine species remained active during the relatively mild weather of October and single specimens of four species into November.

Again, on behalf of the Club, thanks to all those 15 or so members and friends who submitted records of sightings during the year.

Peter Gamble

MOTHS

The jet stream (bless it!) continued to lie further south than we would have liked it to and subsequently we had more of the same with 2013 starting as 2012 had finished. Trying to arrange suitable evenings to go out was getting frustrating and annoying at best, and this continued unbelievably for almost the next five months. Then amazingly the weather did an almost complete turnaround where June, July, August and September gave us something resembling a proper summer, even continuing into early October.

Aside from the weather, it has still been quite an eventful year, most of us look forward to the VC55 annual moth recorders meeting, this year taking place in Abbey Park in April. Adrian delivered his usual high standard presentation on the state of some of our moths and it's also a good opportunity to find out what everyone's plans are for the coming season. We were able to secure permission to record in Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood, and we are very grateful to Peter Tyldesley for allowing us to do so, needless to say we have an exciting year ahead.

A new updated National Macro Moth Atlas has been predicted for 2018, an incentive for us to keep on recording and forward records to Adrian Russell our county recorder. Anticipation was high as the new modified and restructured 2013 Checklist of the Lepidoptera of the British Isles, Agassiz, *et.al.* was finally published and what a checklist it is. Incorporating quite a few scientific name changes plus certain families have been shuffled around according to their evolution, i.e. the most primitive families first to the most developed last, as taxonomic changes have been recognised. The new checklist also features a new numbering system, which at first seems a little daunting but once over the initial shock, it's not really too bad. Fortunately though, the familiar Bradley numbers are to be retained, at least for the time being so all of us used to these will be able to carry on as normal. I'll stay with the Bradley 2000 system, at least until MapMate gets around to adopting the new one. So fear not, no one will have to submit records in any other way they are already doing so.

OK, on to the moths, we know things started slow, and a great deal of effort and determination was needed to get out and do any recording. It's not always about the temperature on the night but what has happened previously and I think this was reflected in the first half of the year's results. ***Tortricodes alternella***, **Pale Brindled Beauty *Phigalia pilosaria*** and **Spring Usher *Agriopis leucophaearia***, **Dotted Border *Agriopis marginaria***, **Mottled Umber *Erannis defoliaria*** and **Chestnut *Conistra vaccinii*** were there, but not in numbers. The snow in early April seemed to finish off most of the above making way for a smattering of ***Emmelina monodactyla***, **Early Thorn *Selenia dentaria*** and **Early Grey *Xylocampa areola*** the latter actually being quite numerous. Despite the atrocious conditions of May, it seems strange that it was the flimsier-looking geometers that dominated the month. **Garden Carpet *Xanthorhoe fluctuata***, **Galium Carpet *Epirrhoe galiata***, **Chimney Sweeper *Odezia atrata***, **Yellow-barred Brindle *Acasis viretata***, **Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae*** plus several others, we obviously don't give them the credit they deserve. June really did begin to deliver our prizes, with members recording more species in this month than any other. Micro moth species were well down with ***Micropterix calthella***, ***Adela reaumurella***, the case bearing Psychids ***Luffia ferchaultella*** and ***Psyche casta*** and **Light Brown Apple Moth *Epiphyas postvittana*** being the most noted. Ironically it was, at least that's how we think of them, the harder looking noctuids this time that relished the rising temperatures. The Charnwood Forest remains the stronghold for **Map-winged Swift *Hepialus fusconebulosa*** and again

produced impressive numbers including many of the form **gallicus**. Most of our regular Hawk-moths were noted, again mainly on the Forest, as were members of the Prominents. Footman species were well down with just single sightings of a few species.

Considerable numbers of overwintering **Muslin Footman *Nudaria mundana*** larvae were found, hopefully that puts them in good stead for the 2014 summer. New species appearing weekly were **Buff Ermine *Spilosoma luteum***, **Ruby Tiger *Phragmatobia fuliginosa***, **Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamationis***, **Ingrailed Clay *Diarsia mendica***, **Early Grey *Xylocampa areola***, **The Miller *Acronicta leporina***, **Alder Moth *Acronicta alni*** and **Knotgrass *Acronicta rumicis***. Other newcomers included **Bird's Wing *Dypterygia scabriuscula*** still not at all common, the *Plusias* comprised of **Burnished Brass *Diachrysia chrysitis***, **Gold Spot *Plusia festucae***, **Silver Y *Autographa gamma***, **Beautiful Golden Y *Autographa pulchrina*** and **The Spectacle *Abrostola tripartita***.

The third quarter really was the month for micro moths and a bumper number of species were recorded, this includes adults and the various early feeding stages i.e. leaf mines, larvae and the case bearing species. ***Phyllonorycter comparella***, if accepted, will be new to the county closely followed by other records of mines of this species on White Poplar, so it is around, it just needs to be looked for. It's interesting to note the variety of micro moth species we have all been getting more confident with over the last few years. Proving that we are not just buying these books, we are reading them too!

For saying how far inland we are, migrants were reasonably well recorded with **Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella***, **Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella***, **Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria***, **Gem *Orthonama obstipata***, **Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum***, **Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra***, **Dark Swordgrass *Agrotis ipsolon*** and **Silver Y *Autographa gamma*** being the most obvious species involved. Those continuing to operate light traps well into the autumn got their just reward with species like **Black Rustic *Aporophyla nigra***, **Lunar Underwing *Omphaloscelis lunosa*** and **Orange Sallow *Xanthia citrigo***, plus **Red Underwing *Catocala nupta***, **Blackneck *Lygephila pastinum*** and **Herald *Scoliopteryx libatrix***.

Graham and Anona Finch

BEETLES

There is no getting away from it, the state of our weather plays a huge part in our recording, either accounting for what species are likely to be found or if, in fact we can actually get out and do it. The latter will depend on how hardy (or should that say determined or even desperate!) we are personally. While the former is true, the more unfavourable the conditions are, the less species/individuals we are likely to find. Fortunately with our beetles, if you are willing to put in a bit of extra effort there's always plenty to find and endless tactics to employ.

Looking back on this year I think between us we have given most things a try and produced a species list of around 170 species and over 2,000 individuals. Not just quantity but quality, several Nb. (Nationally Notable) species were recorded a few of which were the *Carabids* ***Bembidion gilvipes*** and ***Bembidion clarkii***, ***Platyderus depressus*** and ***Batenus livens***. The dung beetle ***Aphodius sordidus*** the **Oak Jewel Beetle *Agrilus bigutatus*** and the small but striking ***Ptinus sexpunctatus***. Others included the dead wood specialists ***Scaphidema metallicum*** and ***Eledona agricola***, the large and colourful leaf beetle ***Chrysolina violacea*** and last but not least ***Cossonus linearis***. The most abundant beetle recorded was ***Rhagonycha fulva*** with a count of just over 170, followed by **Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*** with 167 individuals. The Longhorn cattle on the LRWT reserves are producing good quality dwelling medium according to the amount of dung beetles and particularly ***Sphaeridium scarabaeoides*** as 80 plus were found in a few hours searching over a couple of days at Charnwood Lodge. Numbers of the familiar **Maybug** or **Cockchafer *Melolontha melolontha*** were way down with only ten individuals

counted, plus less than ten reports of *Nicrophorus humator* thus reflecting on the little amount of moth recording carried out over the year. Out of the 170 species recorded, interestingly, approximately 100 were only counted as singletons. Of course these numbers can only act as a guide, as unfortunately not everyone takes the time to count what they see. This is a shame because having an accurate count gets us closer to the truth of what is actually happening out there. I'll give a brief break down of how many records came in for each quarter: Jan/Feb/March just over 100, April/May/June around 400, July/Aug/Sept around 300 and Oct/Nov/Dec about 120. It was great to see such a high number of 15 *Carabus granulatus* at Slash Lane in flood debris in December, also the sheer number of species and individuals particularly *Carabids* that are involved when these areas are in flood. A cheap garden sieve and a piece of white plastic sheeting about a metre square is all that's needed to have a go and any time of year works.

We all know how daunting identifying the Rove beetles can be, but we only had two records of *Devils Coach-horse Ocyopus olens* for the whole year, is this species really absent from gardens? I doubt it, come on you gardeners. Our more spectacular species are *Rhinoceros Beetle Sinodendron cylindricum* from Martinshaw Wood, *Minotaur Beetle Typhaeus typhoeus* at Beacon Hill and *Dor Beetle Geotrupes stercorarius* at Bradgate Park and Charnwood Lodge. Only two specimens of *Brown Chafer Serica brunnea* turned up at an MV light in Bradgate Park - this is normally almost as abundant as Maybugs in the late spring and summer. The similar looking *Welsh Chafer Hoplia philanthus* was found in Bradgate Park in mid-summer and the same site produced the *Oak Jewel Beetle Agrilus bigutatus*, both are superb finds. Ten species of Click Beetles were recorded - the large metallic green *Ctenicera pectinicornis* was at Bradgate Park in May. *Athous haemorrhoidalis* was the most frequently recorded species and both records of the stunning black and red *Ampedus balteatus* were from Bradgate Park in May and June. The *Cantharids* made a slight comeback during the summer with 11 species recorded, most records came from daytime observations but good numbers were turning up in MV light traps from mid-July onwards. Autumn brought a few species associated with fungi: both *Rhizophagus bipustulatus* and *dispar* plus *Dacne bipustulata* also *Tetratoma fungorum* and *Triplex aenea*, and *Mycetophagus multipunctatus* and *M. quadripustulatus* plus several others were noted.

Regarding the Ladybirds although the quantities of individuals were poor the actual numbers of species didn't seem too bad with 12 species recorded. *Coccidula rufa* was noted at several sites, either by beating waterside vegetation or sieving grass tussocks. Most *Orange Ladybird Halzia sedecimguttata* were recorded at MV light traps, *22-spot Ladybird Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata* were widespread as were *14-spot Ladybird Propylea quattuordecimpunctata*. *Harlequins* have already been mentioned, both *2-spot Ladybird Adalia bipunctata* and *10-spot Ladybird Adalia decempunctata* were well noted and *7-spot Ladybird Coccinella septempunctata* seemed to be getting back to their normal abundance. Only one record of a single *Eyed Ladybird Anatis ocellata* was noted from Ulverscroft. Finally, *Water Ladybird* or *19-spot Ladybird Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata* were found by beating dead reed debris at Ashby Canal at Shenton and Kelham Bridge Nature Reserve.

The Longhorns seemed to have suffered a bit, although eight species were recorded most were in single figures. The highest count of *Grammoptera ruficornis* was three at Cloud Wood and Newfield Colliery which is depressingly low, in fact the highest number counted in one day was ten *Rutpela maculata* at Rutland Water in July. The *Wasp Beetle Clytus arietis* was recorded from six sites with a maximum of four at Rutland Water on 7 July. Beating aerial dead Oak branches in Bradgate Park produced *Leiopus nebulosus* and the only records of the showy *Agapanthia villosoviridescens* were a singleton from Lea Meadows in June and two from Piper Wood in July.

The Leaf Beetles or *Chrysomelidae* is a huge and extremely varied family: *Green Dock Beetle Gastrophysa viridula* and *Guelder-rose beetle Pyrrhalta viburni* were fairly widespread, but just singles of *Willow Leaf Beetle Lochmaea caprea* at Browns Hay and the pretty metallic green and orange *Sermylassa halensis* from Bradgate Park. Many of this family are brightly coloured and *Cryptocephalus moraei* is one of them,

shiny black with two large orange spots on each elytra, a single was found on the roadside at Piper Wood.

The Weevils are another large and mixed group and 11 species were recorded starting with **Apple Fruit Weevil *Neocoenorrhinus aquatic*** in the house at Groby in May. ***Notaris acridulus*** was found at Aylestone Meadows in May and the **Raspberry Weevil *Otiorhyncus singularis*** was recorded at Woodhouse Eaves mid-June. ***Polydrusus tereticollis*** was swept at Holywell Wood in mid-May. The **Nut Leaf weevil *Strophosoma melanogrammum*** was recorded from four sites: one each from Holywell Wood and Browns Hay in May, another single at Woodhouse in June and the last from the Altar Stones by beating aerial dead oak branches at the beginning of October. The only **Figwort Weevil *Cionus scrophulariae*** was a single individual from a Cropston garden mid-July. ***Euophryum confine*** was widely recorded, one near Warren Hills in mid-August and 50 plus at Beacon Hill at the end of October. Fairly similar in appearance to the last species, ***Cossonus linearis*** was found in numbers at Bagworth Heath Woods in mid-June, under cut sections of Poplar. **Acorn Weevil *Curculio glandium*** was found at Holywell Wood in May and its cousin **Nut Weevil *Curculio nucum*** was found on the Woodhouse Eaves Bioblitz in mid-June.

Graham Finch

FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS

The cold weather at the beginning of the year led to very few records and a slow start to the plant season. However, by the spring things began to improve and good records were being made. Clipsham Quarry gave the best with **Wild Liquorice *Astragalus glycyphyllos***, **Wood Vetch *Vicia sylvatica***, **Sweetbriar *Rosa rubiginosa*** and **Woolly thistle *Cirsium eriophorum*** all being plants which are good to find. Orchids also did well in the second quarter with the ones at Park Hill Golf Club doing particularly well. The third quarter brought a particularly interesting record in the form of **Common Calamint *Clinopodium ascendens***. This is the first record since 2005. The final quarter of the year brought one or two interesting records, the best one being the discovery of **Grassleaved Orache *Atriplex littoralis*** at the edge of Swithland Reservoir. This plant joins the increasing list of maritime plants arriving inland as a result of the salting of roads in winter.

Beggarticks *Bides frondosa* was a new arrival on the scene when it appeared in Humberstone Park in Leicester on the edge of a tennis court. Another plant which I do not remember noting before was **Intermediate Polypody *Polypody interjectum***, a form differing mainly in the shape of its sori and apparently occurs mainly on walls in the county possibly because it prefers calcareous soil.

I must confess I am disappointed by the fact that we have so few recorders for plant species and I would like to plead for more people to report their findings. The records do not have to be of rare species, just ones which you notice and believe to be particularly interesting even if they are common.

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

