

# Loughborough Naturalists' Club



[www.loughboroughnats.org](http://www.loughboroughnats.org)

Carabus granulatus © Graham Finch; Badger © Jim Graham; Grizzled Skipper © Steve Woodward.



## Annual Report 2021

# LOUGHBOROUGH NATURALISTS' CLUB

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

as at 30 November 2021

President	Ms H Ikin
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	
Chair	Mrs H Graves
Vice-chair	Vacant
Honorary Secretary	Mrs S Graham
Honorary Treasurer	Miss ML McLoughlin
Membership Secretary	Mr G Fisher
Indoor Meetings Co-ordinator	Mrs P Darby
Outdoor Meetings Co-ordinator	Mr P Proudlove
Members	Mr M Buckley Mr J Graham Mr P Wilkinson Mr S Woodward
<b>OTHER OFFICERS</b>	
<i>Heritage</i> Editorial Panel	Ms H Ikin Mr J Graham Mr S Woodward
Librarian	Ms H Ikin
Records Co-ordinator	Ms H Ikin

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2021

2021, like 2020, was a year in which the Club's activities were again shaped by the Covid pandemic. Luckily we had made the decision in the middle of 2020 that the winter season of talks 2020/2021 would again be held by Zoom. We realise that this does not suit all our Members. If there are still Members who would like to join us on Zoom but need help to get started please get in touch. For some Members the Zoom talks work very well and for some, the ability to re-watch many of the talks later is an added bonus. Many of our talks reached almost as large an audience on YouTube as did the live event. Planning talks is more difficult when the future of the location i.e. Zoom or at our usual venue is still in doubt, and Pam Darby is to be commended for putting together a highly successful year of talks, with excellent speakers covering a wide range of subjects, under these circumstances. Many thanks, Pam. I have certainly enjoyed the pre-lecture chats when some of our long-term Members, who haven't made it to the Hall or on the walks in recent years, due to a variety of reasons, have caught up and reminisced.

We commenced our Winter "Indoor" Meetings in January with a talk by Adrian Lane, "Invasive Species – Leicestershire's Riversides". Adrian discussed legislation and then highlighted some of the invasive plants and animals, with discussion about the need for balance; some invasive species can be helpful in supporting our own native wildlife whereas others are extremely detrimental to our native species. Peter Williams gave the February talk, "The Leicestershire & Rutland Swift Project". Peter covered interesting biology of swifts, the problems that they experience and what we can do to help. Our March event was "Mustelids" presented by Derek Crawley. Derek is deeply involved with mammal recording and publishing both nationally and in the Midlands. We enjoyed a superb talk with many questions following. Unfortunately, this talk was marred by problems with Zoom stability, but it was possible to get help to piece together a very watchable video. Considering how new the Zoom technology is to most of us, I think we have done remarkably well in that this was the only occasion we really have had any problems.

The AGM in April was followed by a Members' Evening, another successful event with extremely interesting talks by the following Members: Dave Robinson – "A Nose Dive into Pheromones", Mike & Paula Webster – "Marmalade, Marmite and Mandarins – the View From our Breakfast Bar", Steve Woodward – "Definitely Not Extinct, Wall Whitlowgrass in VC55", and Annie Smith – "A Feast of Caterpillars or How to Avoid Becoming a Meal".

The Covid pandemic restrictions continued, so again, as in 2020, we held summer Members' Zoom Meetings, where we shared our wildlife experiences. In May 2021 we enjoyed short talks by the following Members: Dave Robinson "Butterfly Transects, and Tree and Meadow Pipits Identification", Graham Smith: "Local Observations", Steve Woodward "I Love Wasps", Margaret McLoughlin "Local Observations", Janet Killingback "Garden Observations", and Peter Proudlove "Bat Records from some Members' Gardens". In July we heard Dave Robinson talk about the Farne Islands, Sue Graham shared her trip to the Dee Estuary and North Wales, Ed Darby and Elspeth Cranston focussed on the discovery of the digger wasp *Ectemnius cephalotes* in their garden, and Steve Woodward detailed the wildlife found on the trip he made with Helen Ikin to Scotland.

Despite the success of the Covid vaccination programme, the autumn lectures needed to continue on Zoom. Our first meeting was in September - Slugs & Snails by Brian Eversham, a delightful and informative evening but unfortunately we were not for copyright reasons, given permission to record for Members unable to attend. This was followed in October by Henry Richards of Derbyshire Wildlife giving us a fascinating talk "Beaver Reintroduction Project at

Willington Wetlands Nature Reserve.” In November we experienced the highly unusual talk by Geoff Blincow – “Rockpooling” – we were all fascinated to know how he managed to obtain such excellent photographs of under-seawater life forms. The final event of 2021 was a pre-Christmas Members’ Zoom evening, sadly with no shared mince-pies, but a very entertaining series of talks: Anne Brown described natural history of her wildlife friendly riverside garden in Quorn, Dave Robinson discussed a range of local wildlife found in the second half of 2021, and I shared my growing interest in “Flies”.

Detailed reports of all these Zoom Meetings can be found in the Club’s regular Newsletters, many thanks to our Secretary Sue Graham for writing these reports.

The Committee will once again have to consider our winter meetings programme. Should 2022/23 be at Quorn Church Hall, or be by Zoom, or a mixture of both, e.g. have the darkest, coldest, evenings, January and February by Zoom and the rest in the Hall? Some Clubs are experimenting with a hybrid system of inviting members to indoor meetings and filming and transmitting by Zoom to those reluctant to attend, but the size of the Club’s Membership and average attendance at Meetings would make that an unrealistic objective. The Club is also aware that some Members find Saturday meetings impossible, and some have Wednesday evening commitments. We have experimented with a mixture of both and will need to discuss the future of that experiment. Comments from all our Members would be welcome.

Relaxation of regulations and increasing confidence amongst our Members allowed the re-start of our Wednesday Morning Walks. These are planned for the first Wednesday of each month and numbers are limited to 12 Members so that we all feel confident not to be crowded until the Covid pandemic is even more under control. Peter Proudlove has kindly stepped in to be the Club’s Outdoor Meetings Convenor, and Members need to book places with Peter beforehand. This also means that Members can be contacted in case there is a need to cancel. The first outing was to Bagworth Heath Woods in September which I led, followed by an exploration of Queen Elizabeth 2 Woods led by Margaret McLoughlin in October, then we explored Bradgate Park in November with Steve Woodward, and finally a visit was made to Thornton Reservoir in December under Peter Proudlove’s guidance. All of these walks turned up a wealth of wildlife records, which will have been supplied to the Club for use in *Heritage* and eventually be part of Leicestershire’s’ archived records. Reports of these walks are found in the Newsletter; many thanks to the reporters, especially Sue Graham and Margaret McLoughlin. Loughborough Naturalists’ Club is a recording Club so we are trying to encourage as much recording as possible during our outings.

On the 5 October a combined *Heritage* for all of 2020 was published. The usual quarterly publication of *Heritage* has been stalled recently but we now do have firm plans to catch up and get *Heritage* back on a regular footing. Please remember that *Heritage* relies on records from Members. The more you send in the more interesting *Heritage* becomes. Please send records to the Records Co-ordinator, or post them on NatureSpot under the Loughborough Nats Project tab, where they can be down-loaded by the Records Co-ordinator. Thanks are due to the Club’s Editorial Panel, Helen Ikin, Steve Woodward and Jim Graham, for producing an excellent edition under difficult circumstances, and also thanks to the writers of the various groups. Thanks to those Members who do supply records to our Club.

I had hoped by the time this Report was written that we would be able to share progress on the proposed new Loughborough Nats Project – Wildlife Survey of Home Farm at Nanpantan. Efforts had been made to acquire the permission of the farmer at the venue, which we had thought successful, but it was decided that our presence would conflict with the welfare of the pheasants being reared in the woodland for the shoot. Finally after some further discussion the decision was made late autumn that we could access the farmland and woodlands, but

between mid-July and January we would need to avoid the woodlands. We agreed that this would give us enough opportunity to carry out the study and detailed plans have been made for visiting and recording so that we have little impact on the life of the farm. Plans are in place for the commencement of the project in February 2022.

Another of Loughborough Nats activities during 2021 was the intensive drive by Steve Woodward to complete the writing for the Grace Dieu Report, a mammoth achievement, helped by several Members with proof-reading. This promises to be a beautiful, interesting and informative book, which will most definitely enhance the reputation of the Club. Many thanks to Steve Woodward and Helen Ikin for producing this and to all Loughborough Nats past and present who have been involved in its production.

Four Loughborough Nats undertook surveys at Jewels Hill, Beacon Hill Country Park, during the summer, at the request of the Ranger, to examine possible changes occurring as a result of the reduction in foot-fall during the pandemic when that part of the Park was closed. The Rangers are looking at future management plans for Jewels Hill.

In June, Loughborough Nats Members were invited to take part in, and to provide some extra help and guidance for, a wildlife survey to be carried out at Quorn Churchyard, part of a national initiative which the Church was now becoming involved in. Several of our Members took part and a letter of thanks was received in appreciation of the Club's efforts.

We have received a request from Quorn Parish Manager, to survey their park, Stafford Orchard, in Quorn. Plans will be drawn up to help with this in spring/summer 2022.

Once again, Loughborough Naturalists' 'Club has had an interesting and fruitful year, despite all the Covid restrictions and fears. I get many compliments from Members regarding our walks and talks programme, but also comments regarding the Members' Evenings about how knowledgeable our Membership is. I look forward with optimism to the future.

We do have vacancies on the Committee for Vice-Chairman and some ordinary Committee Members. Someone as Vice-Chairman to share hosting of Zoom meetings, especially in case I am unavailable, would be particularly welcome. Please feel free to have an informal chat with one of the existing Committee if you would like to volunteer.

Finally, thanks to our Secretary Sue Graham for producing the Newsletter, minutes and agendas for Committee Meetings and AGMs and all the other work she does. Thanks to Margaret McLoughlin for looking after our financial affairs in such a meticulous way. Thanks to Graham Fisher for keeping our Memberships up-to-date and signing up and welcoming new Members. Thanks to Pam Darby for organising such a wide-ranging and interesting series of lectures. Thanks to the Editorial panel, Helen Ikin, Steve Woodward and Jim Graham for their work on *Heritage* and other publications. Thanks to Peter Proudlove for organising the Wednesday morning wildlife walks. Thanks also to our Committee Members, Mike Buckley and Peter Wilkinson, for contributing helpful discussion and advice at Committee meetings.

**Hazel Graves**  
Chairman

## TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2021

It is again my pleasure to present this year's financial report to the AGM. The simplified report below is an overview of the full account but without reducing its content. The Committee have been presented with the complete breakdown (copies are available should anyone wish to see them), and a full copy will be lodged with the AGM documents.

New Memberships have helped the subscription income and being able to back claim on some previous years for Gift Aid has been positive, even though this will drop next year. Thus I can report a relatively healthy overall income.

You will see that expenditure has increased. Excellent work by Pam for guest speakers has come at a financial cost which can be weighed against the excellent quality and range of topics. Two Zoom licence contributions unfortunately fell in the same financial year. Where the club is 'winning' is the reduction in printing and postage costs.

Overall we have achieved a small surplus. Knowing what is coming in this year (income reductions and expenditure costs) I need to continue to recommend that Members only accept electronic copies of the Newsletter and *Heritage*. This is the only offer to new Members since the start of 2021. If not, a keener eye will need to be applied to the possibility of our Membership subscription fee level.

Back to the present, I again proposed to the Committee that there is no increase in the Membership fee for this year and thus present this report for your scrutiny and comments. Thank you.

**M.L. McLoughlin – March 2022**

### **Simplified Income and Expenditure for 2021**

<u>Income</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Subscriptions	£962.50	£902.50	Affiliations & Subscriptions	£70.00	£60.00
Miscellaneous Sales	£25.00	£130.00	Speakers' Fees	£315.00	£110.00
Gift Aid Tax Rebate	£262.21	£185.91	Hire of Room, Meetings	£0.00	£90.00
Entrance Fees (Zoom)	£45.00	£124.00	Printing	£143.20	£193.14
Donations	£26.00	£22.00	Postage	£116.41	£218.41
			Insurance	£201.04	£201.04
			Equipment (printer ink)	£60.47	£2.94
			Web Domain	£14.34	£0.00
			Zoom Licence(s)	£100.00	£0.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£1,320.71</b>	<b>£1,364.41</b>		<b>£1,020.46</b>	<b>£875.53</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>+£300.25</b>	<b>+£488.88</b>			

<u>Balances 31 Nov 2021</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Notes:</u>
Cash in Hand	£14.34	£22.26	
NatWest Current Acc	£3,596.92	£3,387.53	
Reserve Fund	£8,436.05	£8,277.67	
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>£12,047.31</b>	<b>£11,687.46</b>	

Produced by: ML McLoughlin 8 March 2022

Checked by: AB Bass 8 March 2022

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2021**

Another year of Covid Restrictions ended rather more optimistically than it started and the Club was finally able to re-organise Wednesday Morning Walks and gain a sense of some normality. Despite the limitations of the pandemic, we were able to forge ahead with an excellent programme of meetings, albeit via Zoom, set up an exciting new project at Home Farm, Nanpantan, and see the completion of the brilliant survey work undertaken by Steve Woodward and Helen Ikin at Grace Dieu which has subsequently resulted in their first-class publication 'More Than Meets the Eye'. Hazel's Chairman's report describes these achievements and much more in some detail, which taken together amounts to another very successful year for the Club.

Above all, I have been both heartened and humbled by the insatiable enthusiasm of our Members for the Natural World and the willingness to share their experience and knowledge in virtual meetings and out in the field. Throughout the considerable difficulties and hardships encountered in 2021, support for our Club has never waned. Armed with having to think 'outside the box' for so long to keep things afloat, I am confident that we will be able to move forward on an even firmer footing in future, whilst retaining our founding principles to study and record the wildlife of Charnwood Forest and the wider area.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow Committee Members for their much-valued support and teamwork over this last year and to all of our Members for continuing to subscribe and champion the Loughborough Naturalists' Club.

**Sue Graham**

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## **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2021**

Like the previous year, 2021 posed many challenges for us all and this was no exception for the Loughborough Naturalists' Club. However, despite this the Club has continued to grow as it did in the previous year and in part this has probably been because of the new ways we have found to work around these challenges, which have enabled us to reach out to a wider audience. In 2021 we gained a further ten new Members to add to the previous year's total of six and unlike some previous years, retention of new Members has also be excellent. This meant that despite the sad but unavoidable loss of four long-standing Members, our ranks grew to their highest since 2016, totalling almost one hundred.

Although we remain a small club, happily we are fortunate to have a surprisingly loyal core of long-standing Members and I think we have a bright future, when so many other membership organisations are struggling.

We have continued to retain Membership subscriptions at the same level for ten years now, even though costs are continually rising. This has been achieved in no small part by more Members agreeing to Gift Aid their subscriptions, which enables us to reclaim an additional 25% of your subscription from the tax man! In addition, savings have been made - both financial and in resources - by emailing our documents to you where we have your details. I am sure you will agree that subscriptions are good value, as they enable us to continue our mission to record the flora and fauna of our locality as well as disseminating such information, whilst hopefully providing interesting and informative talks and excursions.

As usual, it is my duty to remind Members that subscriptions are due, as always on 1 January each year, so if you have overlooked this vital task, then please forward you cheque other

payment to me at the usual address found elsewhere in this report. You can also hand your subscription in person to any of the Committee by cheque or in cash. Note that if you joined us during the last three months of the calendar year, this covers the following year's subscription also.

Finally, if you require any assistance regarding Membership or have a query regarding your subscription, please contact the Membership Secretary, Graham Fisher (tel. 01509-890077). Please also be sure to let us know if you change your contact details, especially your email address, so we can keep our records up to date and ensure you continue to receive your regular newsletter and *Heritage* publication by whatever means you prefer and also keep you informed about talks, walks and other items of interest.

**Graham Fisher**

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### **HERITAGE REPORT**

For the second year, quarterly compilations of *Heritage* were problematic for a number of reasons. Eventually, a combined publication of the whole of 2020 was produced. Plans are in place to reorganise how records are compiled and distributed to the species writers but this may take a little more time to come to fruition – please bear with us. We will soon be able to accept records via NatureSpot, a dedicated spreadsheet, or Word document. That being said, we would welcome all and any of your records in whatever format and are aware that some Members still prefer to use pen and paper.

As ever, we welcome leading articles for *Heritage*, and would be pleased to accept short articles on any Natural History subject.

We are extremely grateful to the authors for giving up their time to write the various species sections in 2020: Anona Finch, Graham Finch, Baz Forgham, Jim Graham, Hazel Graves, Helen Ikin, Helen Shacklock and Steve Woodward. Our thanks also to Phil Morrish for the comprehensive weather report.

We are especially thankful to all those Members who send in their records. Without them, there would be no *Heritage* publications.

**The Editorial Team**

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### **PUBLICATIONS**

The long-awaited Grace Dieu publication is nearing completion and by the time this Annual Report is distributed, it is expected that “More Than Meets The Eye” will be printed and available to Members and the wider public.

A full list of publications and downloads are available on the Club’s website:

[www.loughboroughnats.org/publications](http://www.loughboroughnats.org/publications)

## CLUB ACTIVITIES DIARY FOR 2021

Due to Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown, 'in person' Club activities were unfortunately curtailed once again. However, due to demand, we managed to put on additional 'Zoom' talks throughout the year. This helped to keep our Members in touch with each other.

### INDOOR 'ZOOM' MEETINGS

- 9 January Invasive Species – Leicestershire's Riversides, presented by Adrian Lane
- 10 February The Leicestershire Swift Project, presented by Peter Williams
- 10 March Mustelids, presented by Derek Crawley
- 10 April AGM followed by Members' short talks: Dave Robinson – A Nose-dive into Pheromones; Annie Smith – A Feast of Caterpillars; Mike & Paula Webster – Marmalade, Marmite and Mandarins; Steve Woodward – Wall Whitlowgrass – Not Quite Extinct!
- 19 May Members' Evening with short talks by: Dave Robinson – Charnwood Lodge Butterfly Surveys 2018-2020; Graham Smith – Graham's Garden Goldies; Janet Killinback – Birds on my Feeders; Steve Woodward – I Love Wasps and Margaret McLoughlin – Recent Charnwood Lodge Sightings.
- 16 June Members' Evening with short talks by: Steve Woodward – Why Bother with Grasses?; Hazel Graves – Sussex in May 2021; Peter Proudlove – Bats of Charnwood in Members' Gardens; Dave Robinson – Recent Sightings, and Margaret McLoughlin – general sightings.
- 28 July Members' Evening with short talks by: Dave Robinson – A Day on the Farne Islands; Sue Graham – Burton Mere Wetlands, Cleaver Heath and Cors Goch NR; Ed Darby & Elspeth Cranston – *Eustalomyia festiva* and other flies in our garden; Steve Woodward – Reindeer and other Wildlife of Scotland.
- 11 September Slugs and Snails – presented by Brian Eversham
- 13 October Beaver Reintroduction Project, Derbyshire – presented by Henry Richards
- 13 November Rockpooling – presented by Jeff Blincow
- 15 December Members' Evening with short talks by: Ann Brown – Ann's Garden Wildlife; Dave Robinson – Wildlife Highlights; Steve Woodward – preview of the Grace Dieu publication 'More Than Meets The Eye'; Hazel Graves – Hazel's Forays into Flies.

### OUTDOOR MEETINGS

**Wednesday Morning Walks** recommenced in September with limited numbers.

- 1 September Bagworth Heath Country Park – Led by Hazel Graves
- 6 October Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Woods, Heather – Led by Margaret McLoughlin
- 3 November Bradgate Park – Led by Steve Woodward
- 1 December Thornton Reservoir – Led by Peter Proudlove

## OBITUARIES

### **MARGARET GAMBLE**

As wife of our former President Peter Gamble, Margaret was also a very an active Member of the Loughborough Naturalists' Club for many years until failing health meant that she could no longer participate in our meetings and outings.

She had a great interest in the Natural World and regularly accompanied Peter on trips both locally and further afield.

Margaret will be remembered as a kind and friendly lady, always smiling and genuinely interested in others. She made many friends within our Club and will be sadly missed. Our sincere condolences go to son Ian, daughter Jane and their families.

**Sue Graham**

### **MONICA GILLHAM**

Monica was a very long-standing and active member of the Loughborough Naturalists' Club from 1970. She was consistently well organised, helpful and reliable, qualities which were reflected in the roles she undertook, including that of Secretary from 1974 to 1979 and Chairman in 1981 as well as serving as a general officer on the Committee. She also organised the Wednesday Morning Walks for a number of years.

In 1986, she took over as Editor of *Heritage* (No. 101 onwards), from Pat Evans (formerly Candlish) and continued in this role for 19 years, a total of 76 issues, until the job was split into two parts to help share the considerable workload involved. She also edited the Club's 1987 Groby Pool Report.

Monica was a writer for the Insects and Invertebrates section of *Heritage*. While she had wide interests, she had a particular expertise in Molluscs and acquired a significant collection of shells.

In later years, Monica was made an Honorary Member, for services to the Club. We are indebted to her considerable efforts which helped to maintain the high standards and expertise of the Loughborough Naturalists. Our sincere condolences go to Monica's family.

**Sue Graham**

### **JUDY JOHNSON**

I have trawled through the Annual Reports, which normally have a list of new Members joining the Club during the year but cannot find when Judy joined. However, in 1990 she took on the post of Secretary which she held until 1994, then again between 1997 and 2011 when Sue Graham took over.

In the Loughborough Naturalists' 50th Anniversary publication, she was described as 'Secretary beyond the call of duty' – a succinct and fitting tribute to her many qualities.

Judy was a very efficient and diplomatic person and we often had Committee meetings at her house – she had plenty of chairs! Although Judy was mainly a botanist, she was always helpful and encouraging to other members, whatever their interests.

We are extremely grateful for the time she devoted to the Club and our thoughts and sincere condolences go to her family at this difficult time.

**Helen Ikin**

## **GERALD FELSTEAD**

Long-standing Member, Gerald Felstead, sadly passed on 13 January 2021 at the age of 93. Gerald was a great friend of Peter Gamble and an excellent naturalist, with wide-ranging interests including birds and butterflies.

He joined the Loughborough Naturalists' Club in 1996 and sent in regular wildlife sightings for *Heritage* from 1996 until 2012. He also collated and wrote the mammal section for *Heritage* from April 2000 until December 2006 with a short break due to ill health from April to December 2005.

A tribute to Gerald, kindly written by Ian Gamble, can be found in the 2020 Annual Report.