Report of
Loughborough Naturalists' Club
visit to Garendon Park
8 April 2026

Loughborough Naturalists © Megan Hall

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Garendon Park lies just to the west of Loughborough, and for many centuries has been under private ownership with little or no public access. It is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, created in the 18th Century. The site was originally a Cistercian Abbey on which a Palladian mansion was built. Both were destroyed but the plans for the landscape and monuments remains. The area is very "under-recorded" from a wildlife perspective. In recent years, almost the whole historic estate has been bought by British housebuilding company Persimmon plc with plans to build more than 3000 houses on two thirds of the Park in the northern section. The remaining southern part of the estate will be maintained as a "Registered Park" with public access and (hopefully!) will be a sanctuary for wildlife.

Dave Robinson arranged our visit, a Loughborough Naturalist and a member of the Friends of Garendon Park (FoGP), a group set up to ensure the Park is restored to a high quality and meets all the planning obligations. This visit was seen as a great opportunity to survey for wildlife before development starts; to set a baseline against which the effects of adjacent building activities can be assessed. The Friends are keen to record as much wildlife as possible. The area explored was the area around the lake, around the remains of the abbey and the overgrown gardens. Since 2025 Butterfly and Bird Transect Surveys have been established, moth trapping has occurred and bats have been monitored. Other wildlife such as plants, insects, other than lepidoptera, including beetles, bugs and flies, and fungi etc. have been very little recorded so far.

This report has a dual purpose: the first is to give the regular Field Trip Report for Loughborough Nats members, both those who visited and those who didn't, whilst the second is to provide FoGP with as much information as possible about the species in their area.

History of the Estate

- 1133 – Cistercian Abbey ("daughter" Abbey of Waverley in Surrey) was founded along with fishponds which are now the lake. The Chapter House has been excavated which gives an indication of the size of the Abbey. Numerous photos and recreation illustrations are available on-line.
- Following the dissolution by Henry VIII in 1536 the estate was given to Thomas Manners, 1st Earl of Rutland, who built the first home, Garendon House.
- In 1632, it was given as part of a dowry for the marriage of Lady Katherine Manners (daughter of the 6th Earl of Rutland) to George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham.
- It was sold in 1684 by George Villiers the 2nd Duke of Buckingham to Sir Ambrose Phillips, a wealthy Lawyer and Judge.

- Sir Ambrose also then acquired the Gracedieu Estate in 1690.
- The estate passed into the hands of his son William and then two grandsons Ambrose and Samuel Phillips, also Earls of Rutland. The grandson Ambrose, an accomplished gentleman architect, travelled widely on the traditional European Grand Tour gaining inspiration for construction of the Palladian follies on the estate beginning in 1734 and stated to landscape the grounds. He also started to redesign, extend and rebuild Garendon House in the Palladian style, developing it into what would be known as Garendon Hall. However, the work remained unfinished in 1737 when Ambrose died childless; it was completed by his brother Samuel, who inherited the estate (but who also died childless).
- It was then inherited by a cousin, a son of the daughter of the first Sir Ambrose who had married Edward Lisle and had 20 children bearing the name De Lisle.
- The estate then eventually passed down to Ambrose Charles Lisle March Phillipps De Lisle (1809–1878). Ambrose was an enthusiast for the Gothic Revival and planned to demolish the original hall, commissioning Augustus Pugin (famous for his work on the Houses of Parliament) to design a replacement. Ambrose's finances were in decline, however, and the work could not be undertaken. Following Ambrose's death, the family were left with a difficult financial situation and needed to retrench. In 1885 they moved out of Garendon and into Grace Dieu Manor. A revival in their fortunes in the early 20th century permitted a return to Garendon in 1907.
- The family were again forced out of the house during the Second World War, when it was used, and heavily damaged, by the army.
- On their return, the ever-increasing cost of running and maintaining the building, their own failing finances and crippling inheritance taxes, and threats to the house's parkland from the urban sprawl of Loughborough and the construction of the M1 motorway which would cut directly through the park, all contributed to the decision to demolish Garendon.
- In June 1964 the house was deliberately set on fire to provide practice and training for the local fire brigade.
- It was then reduced to rubble which was used in the construction of the M1 motorway.

The Palladian Monuments

- The Triumphal arch has engravings of the Greek Gods Artemis and Actaeon, Artemis being the goddess of hunting, wilderness, wild animals, transitions, nature, vegetation, childbirth, care of children, and chastity. She was often said to roam the forests and mountains, attended by an entourage of nymphs. Actaeon was a Theban hero and hunter who, after accidentally seeing the

goddess Artemis bathing, was transformed into a stag and killed by his own hounds.

- The Obelisk, constructed in the 1730s is of red brick, rendered, on a thick iron plate on four ball feet, and standing on a stone pedestal with cornice and base moulding.
- The Temple of Venus is built of ashlar, with carved oak entablature and copper dome. Its circular plan is loosely based on the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli. It is raised on four steps, with a peristyle of Ionic columns, the entablature painted white, with the frieze of ox skulls and small bays with swags between. There are also carvings of lions' heads. The interior originally contained a statue of Venus, now lost, perhaps destroyed by Luddite rioters in 1811.
- Both the Arch and the Temple are on the Heritage at Risk Register. As part of the housing development, Persimmon plc intends to undertake restoration of the main structures.

Results of Loughborough Nats Survey and Species List

The Lake © Jeremy Haines

There were about twenty Loughborough Naturalists attending this event; mostly generalists, but also Graham Finch County Beetle Recorder and Steve Woodward County Plant Recorder, both of whom made lists of their specialities. Several members were expert ornithologists, so we were able to collect a good bird list. The generalists pooled information to obtain many other species. Good grid references were difficult to compile as we spent our time in the area of four different 6-figure grid squares i.e. 100 metres by 100 metres. Steve's records were also intended for the BSBI (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland) database which records at monad level, i.e. 1 km by 1 km except for anything exceptional. Graham's records gave grid records for the rare species. Grid references can be seen in the Excel sheets forwarded to Dave Robinson.

The Garden © Hazel Graves

The Chapter House © Megan Hall

Vascular plants: flowering plants and ferns

123 species were identified. Some of these, for example the three cedars, have been noted in Steve's list as planted. A large swathe of Red Dead-nettle near the lake was impressive. This seems to be a very common plant again this year as it was a few years ago. It would be interesting to know why – weather patterns at critical times of the year, changes in pollution?

Red Dead-nettle © Hazel Graves

Abies alba	European Silver-fir
Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow
Aegopodium podagraria	Ground-elder
Alisma plantago-aquatica	Water-plantain
Alliaria petiolata	Garlic Mustard
Alnus glutinosa	Alder
Alopecurus pratensis	Meadow Foxtail
Angelica sylvestris	Wild Angelica
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow Parsley
Aphanes arvensis	Parsley-piert
Arabidopsis thaliana	Thale Cress
Arctium minus agg.	Lesser Burdock
Arum maculatum	Lords-and-Ladies/Cuckoo Pint
Bellis perennis	Daisy
Betula pendula	Silver Birch
Cardamine hirsuta	Hairy Bitter-cress
Cardamine pratensis	Cuckooflower
Carex hirta	Hairy Sedge
Carex pendula	Pendulous Sedge
Carex remota	Remote Sedge
Carex riparia	Greater Pond-sedge
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam
Cedrus atlantica	Atlas Cedar
Cedrus deodara	Deodar
Cedrus libani	Cedar-of-Lebanon
Centaurea nigra agg.	Knapweed

Cerastium glomeratum	Sticky Mouse-ear
Cirsium arvense	Creeping Thistle
Cirsium vulgare	Spear Thistle
Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora	Montbretia
Cupressus lawsoniana	Lawson's Cypress
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted Hair-grass
Dipsacus fullonum	Wild Teasel
Elymus repens	Common Couch
Epilobium hirsutum	Great Willowherb
Erodium cicutarium	Common Stork's-bill
Erophila verna s.s.	Common Whitlowgrass
Euphorbia peplus	Petty Spurge
Fagus sylvatica	Beech
Ficaria verna	Lesser Celandine
Filipendula ulmaria	Meadowsweet
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash
Galanthus nivalis	Snowdrop
Galium aparine	Cleavers
Galium verum	Lady's Bedstraw
Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill
Geranium molle	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill
Geranium robertianum	Herb Robert
Geum urbanum	Wood Avens/Herb Bennet
Glechoma hederacea	Ground-ivy
Hedera helix	Ivy

Helminthotheca echioides	Bristly Oxtongue
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire-fog
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell
Ilex aquifolium	Holly
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Iris
Jacobaea vulgaris	Common Ragwort
Juncus effusus	Soft-rush
Juncus inflexus	Hard Rush
Lamium album	White Dead-nettle
Lamium purpureum	Red Dead-nettle
Lolium perenne	Perennial Rye-grass
Lotus corniculatus	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil
Luzula campestris	Field Wood-rush
Lycopus europaeus	Gipsywort
Melissa officinalis	Balm
Mercurialis perennis	Dog's Mercury
Myosotis sylvatica	Wood Forget-me-not
Narcissus	Daffodil
Oxalis corniculata	Procumbent Yellow Sorrel
Pentaglottis sempervirens	Green Alkanet
Phalaris arundinacea	Reed Canary-grass
Phragmites australis	Common Reed
Pinus nigra	Pine
Pinus sylvestris	Scots Pine
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain
Platanus x hispanica	London Plane
Poa annua	Annual Meadow-grass
Potentilla anserina	Silverweed
Prunella vulgaris	Selfheal
Prunus avium	Wild Cherry
Prunus lusitanica	Portugal Laurel
Quercus cerris	Turkey Oak
Quercus ilex	Evergreen Oak
Quercus rubra	Red Oak
Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup
Rubus fruticosus agg.	Bramble agg.
Rumex acetosa	Common Sorrel
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved Dock
Rumex sanguineus	Wood Dock
Sagina procumbens	Procumbent Pearlwort
Salix alba x babylonica = Salix x sepulcralis agg.	Weeping Willow
Salix x fragilis	Hybrid Crack-willow
Salix x sepulcralis	Weeping Willow
Sambucus nigra	Elder
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel
Sequoiadendron giganteum	Wellingtonia
Silene dioica	Red Campion
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan
Stachys sylvatica	Hedge Woundwort
Stellaria media	Common Chickweed
Symphytum grandiflorum	Creeping Comfrey
Taraxacum agg.	Dandelion agg.
Taxus baccata	Yew
Trifolium repens	White Clover
Typha latifolia	Bulrush
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle
Veronica arvensis	Wall Speedwell
Veronica chamaedrys	Germander Speedwell
Veronica hederifolia	Ivy-leaved Speedwell
Veronica persica	Common Field-speedwell
Vicia sativa	Common Vetch
Viscum album	Mistletoe

Hornbeam © Hazel Graves

Dove's-foot Crane's-bill © Jeremy Haines

Bryophytes: mosses and liverworts

Only two were recorded during the limited time we spent there. A more specialised visit to record bryophytes would be useful

Kindbergia praelonga	Common Feather-moss	Present	SK5019	Steve Woodward
Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus	Springy Turf-moss	Present	SK4920	Steve Woodward

Fungi

A limited number were found – a longer repeat visit in Autumn would no doubt yield many more.

Daldinia concentrica	King Alfred's Cakes	
Hypoxylon fragiforme	Beech Woodwart	
Marasmius oreade	Fairy ring champignon	Early grassland fungus
Melampsora euphorbiae	Spurge Rust	
Puccinia sessilis	Arum Rust	
Puccinia urticata	Nettle Rust	

Puccinia urticata
Nettle Rust
© Hazel Graves

Lichens

Note that these species have not yet been verified. Those marked with asterisks * are considered neutrophiles, lichens that like nitrogen (especially ammonia) and are becoming more common due to changes in air composition in recent years. Nitrogen in the form of basic ammonia emanates from silage and animal husbandry, while acidic nitrogen oxides come from motor vehicle exhausts.

Lecanora chlarotera s. lat.	Brown rim-lichen
Lecidella elaeochroma	Grey-green disc lichen
Phaeophyscia orbicularis	An indicator of nitrogen enrichment.*
Physcia adscendens	Pale grey foliose lichen composed of narrow, flattened branches where the lobe ends become inflated and hood-shaped. *
Physcia tenella	Very similar to *P. adscendens* and grows in similar places but this species has lobe ends that split and turn back to reveal coarse cream-coloured soredia.*
Xanthoria parietina	Common Orange Lichen *

Xanthoria parietina
Common Orange Lichen
© Hazel Graves

Lecidella elaeochroma
Grey-green disc lichen
© Hazel Graves

Mammals

Badger	digging signs
Grey squirrel	1 alive, 1 dead in lake
Muntjac	

Birds

35 species of birds were recorded, some visually and some by sound and several of them by more than one observer.

Blackbird
Blackcap
Blue Tit
Buzzard
Canada Goose
Carrion Crow
Chiffchaff
Coot
Cormorant
Goldcrest
Goldfinch
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Great Tit
Green Woodpecker
Greenfinch
Grey Heron
Grey Wagtail
Greylag Goose
Jackdaw
Jay
Little Grebe
Magpie
Mallard
Red Kite
Robin
Sand Martin
Skylark
Song Thrush
Sparrowhawk
Stock Dove
Swallow
Treecreeper
Wood Pigeon
Wren

Cormorants © Jeremy Haines

Fish and Amphibians

Three fish were found, all dead by the side of the small pond. Expert fishermen were amongst the group who could recognise them as Common Bream and Roach as below, differences depended on the appearance of the scales and the fact that the roach were very narrow in profile from above. It was suggested that they had been caught by the cormorants but left uneaten. All the fish were small, about 4-6 inches long.

Common Bream and Roach
© Megan Dimitrov

Abramis brama	Common Bream	1	SK500200
Rutilus rutilus	Roach	2	SK500200

Just one toad was found under a log. Surprisingly no frog or toad spawn was noticed.

Orthoptera: Grasshoppers and allies and earwigs.

Just one species was found: *Tetrix subulata* - Slender Ground-hopper. Several individuals were seen jumping around in long grass at the base of a tree near the lake. One was captured to identify and photograph. Sometimes grasshoppers will keep still on the hand after removing from a pot but this one wouldn't so the photographs are of poor quality through the pot.

Tetrix subulata
Slender Ground-hopper.
© Hazel Graves

Bugs: Hemiptera

Four species of bugs were found, it being too early in the season for many species. It would be good to visit again in the summer to search for a greater variety of species.

Scientific Name	**Common Name**	**Number of Records on NatureSpot**	**First Record on NatureSpot**	**Comments**
Coreus marginatus	Dock Bug	1184	2008	Common and widespread in southern Britain and Common in Leicestershire and Rutland.
Corizus hyoscyami	Cinnamon Bug	269	2012	Formerly a southern coastal species now extending its range northwards.
Eremocoris podagricus	a ground bug	15	2015	Regarded as uncommon but may be under-recorded as needs detailed microscopic examination
Stenodema laevigata	a mirid elongate grass bug	140	2008	Several people found several individuals in long grass

Stenodema laevigata
© Hazel Graves

Eremocoris podagricus
© Hazel Graves

Dock Bug © Jeremy Haines

Coleoptera: Beetles

The list compiled by our generalist naturalists is shown first. Graham's list is shown next and also attached as an Excel file. Numerous numbers and types of Ladybirds were found by many members, presumably because many of them can be easily spotted and identified in the field. Graham found some of his species by intensive searching of shrubs etc by beating into a white tray. It is probable that many of the species found by Graham needed detailed examination.

Adalia bipunctata	2-spot Ladybird	individuals
Coccinella septempunctata	7-spot Ladybird	individuals
Propylea quattuordecimpunctata	14-spot Ladybird	individuals
Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata	16-spot Ladybird	Individuals and a group of 20 overwintering
Subcoccinella vigintiquattuorpunctata	24-spot Ladybird	individuals
Harmonia axyridis	Harlequin Ladybird	Individuals and a group of 46 hibernating on building wall
Exochomus quadripustulatus	Pine Ladybird	individuals
Agelastica alni	Alder Leaf Beetle	Found by 2 members

Harlequin Ladybird © Hazel Graves

24-spot Ladybird © Jenny Brown

16-spot Ladybird © Wendy Lee

Taxon	**Vernacular**	**National Status**	**VC55 records**
Bembidion quadrimaculatum			
Pterostichus madidus			
Paradromius linearis			
Metopsia clypeata			**45**
Bolitochara obliqua			**20**
Philonthus tenuicornis			**32**
Odeles marginata			**14**
Agriotes acuminatus			
Agriotes sputator			
Diplocoelus fagi		**Nb**	**3**
Stilbus testaceus			
Meligethes ovatus			**1**
Coccidula rufa			
Coccidula scutellata			
Rhyzobius litura			
Rhyzobius lophanthae			**9**
Scymnus haemorrhoidalis			**24**
Stethorus pusillus			**9**
Exochomus quadripustulatus	Pine Ladybird		
Adalia bipunctata	2-spot Ladybird		
Coccinella septempunctata	7-spot Ladybird		
Harmonia axyridis	Harlequin Ladybird		
Propylea quattuordecimpunctata	14-spot Ladybird		
Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata	16-spot Ladybird		
Subcoccinella vigintiquattuorpunctata	24-spot Ladybird		
Orchesia minor		**Nb**	**23**
Phaedon tumidulus	Celery Leaf Beetle		
Agelastica alni		**RDBK**	
Crepidodera aurata			
Crepidodera aurea			
Platyrhinus resinosus	Cramp-ball Fungus Weevil	**Nb**	
Isochnus sequensi		**RDBK**	
Ceutorhynchus pallidactylus	Cabbage Stem Weevil		
Nedyus quadrimaculatus	Small Nettle Weevil		
Phyllobius argentatus	Silver-green Leaf Weevil		

Alder Leaf Beetle © Hazel Graves

Cramp-ball Fungus Weevil © Jenny Brown

Diptera: flies

Bibio marci	St Mark's Fly	Sara Botterell, Kate Moore	A large hairy black fly, more than 1 cm long, which flies slowly with long dangling legs
Bombylius major	Dark-edged Bee-fly	Many seen and photographed by several members	The female lays her eggs near the nests of usually solitary bees, and the parasitic larvae then invade the nests to feed on the bee larvae
Musca autumnalis	Face Fly	Mike Higgott and Hazel Graves	About 20 seen on white car top. A Muscid or House Fly. Called a Fae Fly because they often land on the faces of cattle, and feed on tears, sweat and blood from the bites of other flies. They also feed on nectar on flowers and can be found simply sunning themselves as is the case here.
Phytomyza ilicis	Holly Leaf Fly Miner	Hazel Graves & Mike Higgott	Leaf mine on Holly. Very common
Platycheirus albimanus	White-footed Hoverfly	Mike Higgott	
Pollenia sp.	A Calliphorid or a Blow-fly	Mike Higgott	Adults are commonly shiny with metallic colouring, often with blue, green, or black. Many species lay eggs on meat or carrion and they get their old English name from meat being 'blown' with maggots.
Syrphus sp.	a hoverfly	Mike Higgott	
Taxomyia taxi	a gall midge	Mike Higgott	Gall on Yew
Urophora cardui	Thistle Gall Fly	Hazel Graves	Gall on Creeping Thistle

Dark-edged Bee-fly © Jeremy Haines

Face Fly
© Hazel Graves

Urophora cardui
© Hazel Graves

Holly Leaf Fly Miner © Hazel Graves

Hymenoptera Bees and Ants

5 species of Bees as shown. Again, further visits later in the year would be beneficial.

Anthophora plumipes	Hairy-footed Flower Bee	Steve Woodward and Mike Higgott
Bombus lapidarius	Red-tailed Bumblebee	Sara Botterell, Kate Moore
Bombus pascuorum	Common Carder Bumblebee	Sara Botterell, Kate Moore
Bombus terrestris	Buff-tailed Bumblebee	Sara Botterell, Kate Moore
Bombus vestalis	Vestal Cuckoo Bumblebee	Mike Higgott

Just one ant record of *Myrmica sp* was made.

Lepidoptera: Butterflies & Moths

We were lucky that the sun was shining, and we saw a good suite of spring butterflies, multiple specimens for some of the species. Eight species were seen,

Brimstone,	Comma,	Green-veined White,	Holly Blue,
Orange Tip,	Peacock,	Small Tortoiseshell,	Speckled Wood.

No adult moths, even day flying moths, were seen. Chances of finding many of the dayflying moths would be better in the summer.

Stigmella aurella	Golden Dot/Golden Pigmy	Mike Higgott & Hazel Graves	leaf mine
Campaea margaritaria	Light Emerald (larva)	Mike Higgott	larva

Stigmella aurella
© Hazel Graves

Lacewings & Scorpionflies including Megaloptera the Alder flies

***Sialis sp*. an Alder Fly** appeared on two individual lists and the joint list. There are three very similar species that can only be determined by examining their rear ends. There are just 3 records for *Sialis fuliginosa* on NatureSpot but 40 records for *Sialis lutaria*. It would be interesting to catch a specimen on a return visit and conform its identity. This can be done in the hand – no need to kill.

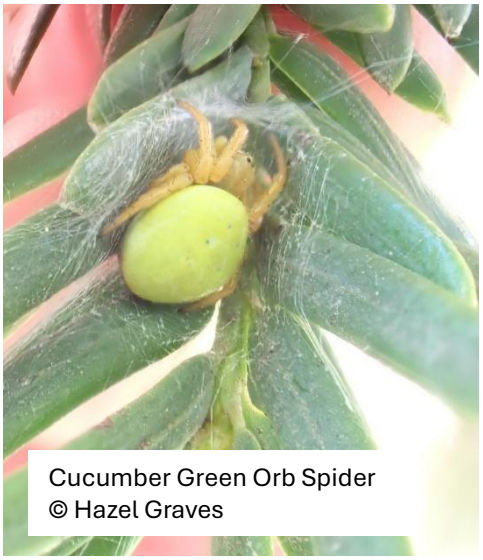
Sialis sp. an Alder Fly © Jenny Brown

Arachnids: Spiders and Mites

Spiders

Araniella cucurbitina sensu lato	A Cucumber Green Orb Spider	Hazel Graves
Larinioides cornutus	Furrow Orbweaver	Mike Higgott
Pisaura mirabilis	Nursery Web Spider	Mike Higgott & Jenny Brown

Nursery Web Spider
© Jenny Brown



Cucumber Green Orb Spider
© Hazel Graves

Mites

Aceria cephalonea agg.	galls on Sycamore	Small red pouch galls on the upper surface of Sycamore leaves. When fully developed in summer, the galls are less than 3 mm high with a rounded apex. In Spring and early Summer, before being fully developed, these galls may be indistinguishable from *Aceria macrorhyncha* galls and should therefore be recorded as the species aggregate *Aceria cephalonea* agg.
Cecidophyopsis psilaspis	galls on Yew	12 records on NatureSpot. Galls form on the buds of Yew, *Taxus baccata*. Mites live within the swollen and distorted leaves inside the bud.

Crustacea: eg Woodlice

Just two species found in the allotted time, but more are likely to be found if searched for.

Oniscus asellus	Common Shiny Woodlouse	Mike Higgott
Porcellio scaber	Common Rough Woodlouse	Mike Higgott

Conclusion

This visit was a great opportunity for Loughborough Naturalists to visit and record at a local area not previously studied as far as we know. We all enjoyed the meeting and would be happy to visit again in the future when convenient.

The above list provides information for Friends of Garendon Park but may also provide them and other visitors with some guidance on where more targeted visits might be useful.

Many thanks to all who provided records, photographs and helped with identification for this report.

Hazel Graves 23 April 2026