

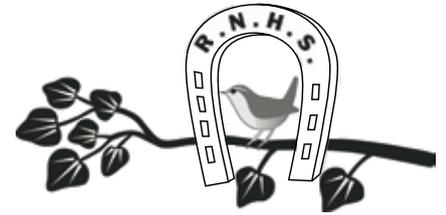
Journal of the
RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity Number 514693

www.rnhs.org.uk

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January 2010



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NOTICEBOARD

RNHS Annual Report

You will all by now have had a while to mull over your copy of the 2008 *Annual Report*. I hope you will agree with me that this is once again a very fine publication, put together with great skill by our editor Hendrina Ellis. On behalf of the Society I should like to express our thanks to Hendrina, to all contributors to the Report, to Chris Park for his beautiful line drawing for the cover, and to the Society's army of deliverers, who got copies out to people in record time!

Ann Tomlinson

Membership renewal for 2010

Many thanks to everyone who has already renewed by cheque or Standing Order. I realise a number of people might have rejoined at the January indoor meeting which had to be cancelled, so I hope they will get in touch with me very quickly now, and save us from any problems. There's a slip (foot of page) only for those who renew annually by personal payment, cheques to RNHS please.

If you should wish to change to a Standing Order, please speak to me. **Unless you renew very promptly this Fieldfare will be your last and you will not receive a new programme or Permit in March!**

Graham Worrall

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL FOR 2010 NOT USING STANDING ORDER

To G R Worrall, 6 Redland Close, Barrowden LE15 8ES

I/We wish to renew membership and enclose cheque for £
£10 for each adult, 50p for 16s or under

Name/s _____
Address _____
_____ Post code _____

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Richard Revels on 'The Fantastic Falklands', Thursday March 4

Richard Revels, who gave the excellent illustrated talk on butterflies to the RNHS in December, is giving a talk on the Falklands at Edith Weston village hall, Thursday 4 March at 7.30 pm. Tickets £3 each, including refreshments, are available beforehand from Vic Arnold on 01780 722088, or at the door.

Gorsefield Tree-Planting Day, Saturday March 13

The January date for the Woodland Trust tree-planting at Gorsefield (near Oakham) was cancelled. The new date is March 13, 11.00 am to 1.00 pm. Meet in the car park at Brooke Hill Primary School, Brooke Hill Road, Oakham, wear suitable clothing and footwear, and bring a spade if possible – there will be some available. More details from 0845 293 5753.

Annual General Meeting, Tuesday March 2

If you would like to be nominated to join the Committee, or propose someone else, or raise any matter under 'Any Other Business', please speak to the Chairman or Secretary as soon as possible. The minutes of last year's AGM are on page 15.

Planning ahead for Wildlife Workshops, courses, etc.

There are many enjoyable ways to learn about local wildlife and thus contribute more to its recording and conservation, starting with our own RNHS evening meetings and outdoor events.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, Rutland group, is the next obvious place to look. Rutland Group events – evening talks and guided walks – are listed opposite.

For events at Rutland Water – from hedge-laying to digital photography – go to www.rutlandwater.org.uk, or contact Julia on 01572 770 651.

Leicestershire

However Leicestershire is close, so go to the website www.lrw.org.uk, or phone 0116 272 0444 for the full list of all Leicestershire (and Rutland) events.

Northamptonshire

The BCNP Wildlife Trust (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough) has a large programme of Wildlife Training Workshops. Some of these are run at their Old Sulehay centre in Northamptonshire, easy to reach from Rutland, others are further afield.

The programme ranges from a series of 'Beginning with...' training workshops, which include birds, and bats (at Burghley Park), to workshops on, for example, 'Wildflowers and woodland' at Bedford Purlieus, 'Dragonfly larvae identification' (Wicken Fen), 'Bumblebee identification' (Old Sulehay), 'Birdsong identification' (Henry Stanier and Phil Rudkin at Old Sulehay) and hedge-laying, drystone walling and coppicing – and much more.

For information on Wildlife Training Workshops, visit the 'Events' page at www.wildlifebcnp.org. To check availability of spaces on the Workshops before sending the booking form, please contact Juliette Butler on 01604 405285 or e-mail trainingworkshops@wildlifebcnp.org.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust runs guided walks, reserve open days, starnights (with astronomer Paul Mondy), wildlife workshops, throughout Lincolnshire. Our nearest local group is at Bourne. Details can be found at www.lincstrust.org.uk, or phone 01507 526 677.

Dorset

Well out of the area but highly recommended, the Kingcombe Environmental Studies Centre in Dorset runs a wide range of residential courses from their base at Toller Porcorum. Go to www.kingcombe.org or phone 01300 320 684.

If you have recommendations for other workshops, courses, etc., please contact me at hendrina@efgh.demon.co.uk, or phone 01780 482048, so that they can be included in later Fieldfares.

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

Sunday February 7 DEEPING LAKES 10.00 am

See winter wildfowl at this Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve, walk to be led by Peter Scott (RNHS). Meet at Main Car Park, OS Explorer 235, TF187083.

Sunday March 21 BURLEY WOOD 9.30 am

Terry Mitcham will lead us. Remember to bring your permit! Meet at OS Explorer 234, SK892093.

Sunday April 18 LAUNDE PARK WOOD 10.00 am

A joint walk with the Leicester and Rutland Wildlife Trust led by Trust Conservation Officer and RNHS Committee member Andy Lear. Meet at OS Explorer 234, SK800033.

INDOOR MEETINGS

Indoor meetings are held at the Burley Road School, Oakham: charge of 40p for tea/coffee/biscuits.

Tuesday February 2 MUSTELIDS 7.30 pm

Given by Val Williams of the Leicestershire Badger Group.

**Tuesday March 2 AGM FOLLOWED BY A PRESENTATION OF
PHIL RUDKIN'S SOUND RECORDINGS 7.30 pm**

Phil Rudkin (RNHS) presents his award-winning sound recordings.

Tuesday March 30 CROFT QUARRY 7.30 pm

Carl Baggott's illustrated talk will take us on a journey around the many different habitats that are found at this interesting hill and quarry complex.

LEICESTER AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST Rutland Group events

Indoor events are held at the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Egleton, admission £1 includes tea/coffee/biscuits. See www.lrwot.org.uk for other events in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Monday February 15 NEIGHBOURHOOD BATS 7.30 pm

An illustrated talk by Jenny Harris, Trust Senior Conservation Officer.

Monday March 15 AGM AND BROWN'S HILL QUARRY 7.30 pm

A talk about this delightful Trust reserve by Ralph Johnson, volunteer warden for more than 30 years.

Sunday April 18 LAUNDE PARK WOOD 10.00 am

A joint walk with the RNHS led by Trust Conservation Officer and RNHS Committee member Andy Lear. Meet at OS Explorer 234, SK800033.

HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK Nola Thurlow

High tides for Snettisham; for Titchwell add 5 minutes. Times in GMT.

	February			March		
Sunday	7	–	12.21	Sunday	7	10.38 23.13
	14	06.50	18.48		14	05.54 17.51
	21	10.17	22.35		21	09.15 21.34
	28	06.07	18.10		28	06.01 18.04 (BST)

WEATHER SUMMARY Roy Lemmon

87 Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SU. Telephone: 01780 762051



November 2009

Atmospheric pressure and winds This was a markedly 'cyclonic' month in that, except for a brief spell, the 9th to 11th, when the pressure was between 1008 and 1020.5 mb, pressures were between 982 and 1005 mb with the majority being in the lower part of this range. Winds were predominantly SE-SW except for the 8th and 9th when they were N-NE and also the last day of the month when the wind veered to N. Wind speeds were generally moderate with a few mornings when there was no measurable wind, but on 18th and 19th at 0900 hours I registered 28 and 23 knots respectively.

Temperatures This was a warmer month than the corresponding months in 2007 and 2008. The mean minimum for the month was 5.2 °C, higher than both 2008 (4.2 °C) and 2007 (3.5 °C) and the mean maximum was also higher at 11.5 °C (9.9 °C and 10.9 °C respectively). The lowest minimum

I recorded was on the last morning of the month at -1.6 °C and the highest minima were on the 18th (11.8 °C) and 19th (11.7 °C). The highest daily maximum was on the 1st at 16.1 °C and the lowest was on the 30th at 6.2 °C. The Central England Temperature reading at 8.5 °C was 1.6 °C above the 1971-2000 mean and the highest since 1994.

Rain A total of 82.2 mm (3.24 inches) was recorded, which was 138% of my long-term mean; but this of course pales into insignificance with the 24.5 inches recorded at Shap and the three Environment Agency gauges in Cumbria which substantially exceeded the 40 inch threshold. On the other hand only 2.56 inches was recorded at Berwick on Tweed in this month. There were only seven days on which I recorded no rain.

Sunshine Averaged over England and Wales this amounted to 74.7 hours or 112% of the 1971-2000 mean.

December 2009

Atmospheric pressure and winds Pressure dropped on 2nd and remained low until the 9th during which period winds were generally S-W. Pressure was then high until the 20th with winds N-NE, and after that date the pressure dropped again until the end of the month. During this latter period winds were SW-NW, except for the last three days of the month when they were NE and brisk, up to 11 knots at 0900 hours on 30th and 31st.

Temperatures A colder than average month, with a particularly cold period between 17th and 25th when snow fell. The mean minimum for the month was 0.28 °C, lower than both 2007 and 2008 (0.91 °C and 1.89 °C respectively) and the mean maximum of 5.42 °C was also lower than those two years which were 6.12 °C and 7.7 °C. The lowest night time minima recorded were -6.4 °C and -6.5 °C on the nights of 19th and 20th and the lowest day time maximum of 0.2 °C occurred two days later on 22nd. The latter part of the month continued this cold pattern, although temperatures were not as extreme. Averaged over England and Wales, this was the coldest December for 13 years.

Rain A wetter than average month, the total rainfall recorded was 64.3 mm or 142% of my LTM and roughly 20% of this fell as snow. Snow is a variable entity and therefore to measure 'depth of snow' is only of passing interest and it has to be melted and measured as liquid to be comparable with other occasions. Looking back over the last 10 years I have recorded snow in December on three other occasions, in 2001, 2005 and 2008 although it has to be said that amounts were small and generally it didn't last long.

Annual rainfall For 2009 this amounted to a total of 582.5 mm (22.9 inches), the fourth driest in the ten years 2000-09 and the seventh driest since I started recording in 1991. The mean for those eighteen years is 602.6 mm, so this has been a drier than expected year, the three dry months of March, April and May having contributed considerably to this result.

Sunshine Averaged over England and Wales this amounted to 73 hours or 153% of the 1971-2000 mean, about the same as for December 2008.

AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE REPORT compiled by Dr C. H. Gallimore

The Stone House, Reeves Lane, Wing LE15 8SD. Telephone: 01572 737343

November/December 2009

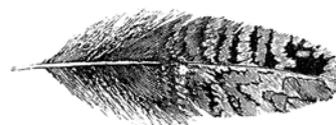
Perhaps not surprisingly there is little to report for these two months. However, on 13th November, two amphibian road casualties were noted. A dead Great Crested Newt was seen on the road

near the Sailing Club at Edith Weston and a large dead Common Toad was found on the road in Wing. The only other sighting was a female Great Crested Newt on 12th December in the bottom of one of my ponds which had sprung a leak.

My thanks to Vic Arnold for his record.

BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

30 Sutherland Way, Stamford PE9 2TB. Telephone: 01780 751268



November/December 2009

The year drew to a close with plenty of interest at the reservoirs – wildfowl, divers and Bitterns – and with some interesting garden records, particularly following the snow before Christmas. Woodcock were well reported and good numbers of winter thrushes thronged the hedgerows. Up to three Long-eared Owls were a popular attraction at Egleton. Three Black Redstarts appeared in November, with one staying to the end of the year.

My thanks to the following for their records and a special thanks to everyone who has submitted records in 2009 and my best wishes for good birding in 2010: V Arnold, A Biddle, E Clayton, J Crosby, R E Davis, Dr C H Gallimore, M & G Griffin, P Langston, A L Lawrence, LROS, R Lemmon, P Mann, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, B & L Nicholls, J W Nourish, G Panter, K Potterton, P Rudkin, P Stammers, J Stapleton, A R & M A Thorp, L & G Worrall.

Whooper Swan. Present at RW to at least 22.11, with a max. of 11 on 9.11.

Pink-footed Goose. c.75 flew west over Stretton on 13.12, and 150–200 flew west of HMP Stocken on 16.12.

Greylag Goose. The flock in Exton Park peaked at 202 on 5.12.

Egyptian Goose. Three flew over Leighfield Fishponds on 8.11, and there were c.40 near Egleton village the following day.

Green-winged Teal. One was at RW on 7/8.11 with presumably the same bird at EBR from 15.11 to the end of the year.

Pintail. Three were at FHP on 15.11.

Red-crested Pochard. Present at RW throughout both months with 15 noted on 9.11.

Scaup. A male was at RW from at least 12.11.

Common Scoter. Five were at RW on 2.11, with four the following day.

Smew. Three (two redheads) were at RW on 25.12.

Grey Partridge. Singles were calling at Leighfield on 4.12 and 15.12, and near Barleythorpe on 20.12.

Pheasant. c.40 were flushed near Wing Fishing Lakes on 19.11.

Red-throated Diver. One was at RW(Main Water) from 2.11, with two noted intermittently from 6.11 to the end of Dec.

Great Northern Diver. One was at RW(Whitwell) from 15.11 with two present from 24.11 to the end of the year.

Slavonian Grebe. One was at RW(South Arm) from 3.11.

Black-necked Grebe. A max. of five were at RW from 4.11 to the end of Dec.

Bittern. The cold weather produced records at both reservoirs. One was at RW (Egleton) on 19.12, with two noted from 28.12. At EBR one was at the inflow from 27–30.12.

Little Egret. One was at EBR on 15.11, with one at RW(North Arm) on 21.11, and two on 22.11. A single was at Burley Fishponds on 19.12, and four flew over Oakham on 20.12.

- Red Kite.** Regularly noted over Barrowden with other records from Exton/Fort Henry, EBR, South Luffenham, Stamford and HMP Stocken, where four were seen on 17.12.
- Marsh Harrier.** A female was at RW between 7.12 and at least 19.12.
- Hen Harrier.** A male was reported over lagoon one at Egleton on 20.12.
- Sparrowhawk.** There were several garden records with birds reported from Langham, Oakham, Edith Weston and Barrowden and from HMP Stocken.
- Buzzard.** Singles and pairs were noted at Exton Park/Fort Henry, HMP Stocken, EBR and near Whissendine.
- Kestrel.** Reported from HMP Stocken, FHP, North and South Luffenham, Edith Weston and RW.
- Peregrine.** Records were received for both months with birds at RW(Barnsdale, South Arm and Egleton), Oakham, Leighfield Fishponds and Ketton.
- Water Rail.** There were two at FHP on 20.11, with one on 4.12. There were ten at RW on 22.11.
- Golden Plover.** At RW there were 895 on 22.11, and 625 on 20.12. 27 flew south at FHP on 28.11.
- Lapwing.** There were 1654 at RW on 22.11, with 893 present on 20.12 as birds moved away following the snow. 76 were at HMP Stocken on 17.12, with two remaining on 27.12.
- Dunlin.** The max. count at EBR was 34 on 15.11. At RW there were 91 on 22.11 and 30 on 20.12.
- Ruff.** There were two at RW on 22.11 with a single seen on 19.12.
- Jack Snipe.** A single was at RW(South Arm) on 12.12.
- Snipe.** At RW none were counted on 22.11, but one was on lagoon one at Egleton on 27.11. On 20.12, 79 were counted, mainly on the unfrozen tertiary treatment sewage works.
- Woodcock.** One or two were noted from 5.11 at Priors Coppice,, Tunneley Wood, Clipsham Park Wood, Morkery Wood, RW and HMP Stocken. There were four at Brooke on 6.12, and three at Little Haw Wood on 11.12. The highest count was of twelve flushed during a game shoot at Stoke Dry Wood on 6.12 – none were shot as they are not a target species there.
- Black-tailed Godwit.** Up to four were at RW to 29.11, with singles on 29.12 and 31.12.
- Curlew.** At RW there were four on 22.11 and six on 20.12.
- Redshank.** 49 were at RW on 22.11, with 34 still present on 20.12. One was at EBR on 17.12.
- Green Sandpiper.** Records were all before 15.12 with up to four at RW (8.11), two at EBR (17.11) and singles at FHP (20.11– 4.12) and Leighfield Fishponds (1.12).
- Mediterranean Gull.** Singles were at EBR on 15 and 17.11, with one at RW on 24.11.
- Yellow-legged Gull.** There were three at EBR on 2.11, with one on 19.11. At RW one was present on 22.11, with four present on 24.11.
- Caspian Gull.** Singles were at EBR on 2 and 6.11, and at RW on 12 and 24.11.
- Barn Owl.** Records were received from Leighfield, Exton Park and near Seaton. One near Wing on 16.11. One found dead between Ridlington and Brooke on 16.12 had been ringed at RW.
- Little Owl.** Noted at FHP (20.11), Barrowden (27.11) and near Greetham (13.12.)
- Tawny Owl.** Calling birds were reported from Tunneley Wood, Normanton, HMP Stocken (two) and Edith Weston between 15.11 and the end of Dec.
- Long-eared Owl.** One was roosting at RW(Egleton) on 21.11, increasing to three early Dec, with these remaining to the end of the year.
- Short-eared Owl.** One was at RW(Egleton) from 12.12 to at least 20.12.
- Kingfisher.** November records came from Tinwell Pumping Station (two), Wakerley Bridge and RW.
- Green Woodpecker.** Regular reports came from Williamson Cliffe Quarry Site, FHP and Exton Park and Normanton, with others noted at Pickworth Wood, RW(Lyndon), Wing Fishing Lakes, Tinwell Meadows, Edith Weston and Stamford Recreation Ground (mid-Dec.).
- Great Spotted Woodpecker.** A juvenile in a Stamford garden on 5 and 8.11 was a first for the site. Up to three frequented Tunneley Wood feeders in Dec. and drumming was heard there on 5.12, and at RW (Hambleton Road) on 21.12. Other garden birds were at Edith Weston and Oakham.
- Meadow Pipit.** Eight were at RW(Edith Weston) on 4.11 and 15 at RW(Egleton) on 17.12.
- Yellow Wagtail.** A very late bird was at RW(North Arm) on 3.11.
- Grey Wagtail.** Singles were at FHP, Tinwell Pumping Station and Wakerley Bridge in Nov., and in Stamford town centre and RW(Edith Weston and tertiary treatment works) in Dec.
- Waxwing.** Six were reported from a Stretton garden on 19.12, feeding on rowan berries.

Dunnoek. Three members have commented on how much bolder Dunnocks have become in their gardens – feeding regularly out in the open and even disputing the food provided with other species.

Black Redstart. Singles were noted at Oakham on 3.11, and at Home Farm, Exton, from 22.11 to the end of Dec. The latter bird, a striking male, attracted many admirers.

Stonechat. A pair remained at FHP to 15.11; and a pair were at RW(Eggleton) from 21.11 to at least 12.12.

Fieldfare. Larger flocks included 100 near Wakerley Bridge on 15.11 and 120 in North Brook valley at FHP, taking haws. Flocks of 50/100 were noted at WCQ Site on 4.11, and HMP Stocken on 16 and 27.12. Eight visited a Barrowden garden on 19.12, and one took apples in a Stamford garden from 19.12 to the end of the year.

Song Thrush. c.18 were counted in the Harrier hide/Lax Hill area at RW on 13.11.

Redwing. Well distributed in small flocks of up to 20 in Nov., there were c.70 at Greetham on 1.12, and c.40 over HMP Stocken on 27.12. Following snow in mid-Dec., c.30 were in the hedgerow by Casterton Filling Station and four were in a Barrowden garden. c.30 took holly berries in a Stamford garden on 18/20.12.

Mistle Thrush. Up to eight were at Park House, Normanton in Nov. Song was heard at Barrowden from 15.11.

Cetti's Warbler. One was heard at RW(Eggleton) on 5.11.

Blackcap. A male was in an Edith Weston garden on 28.11. A female was in an Oakham garden on 4.12, with a pair there on 6 and 16.12.

Chiffchaff. One was in an Oakham garden on 26.11. At RW, one was seen on 17.11, three were recorded on 12.12, with one on 19.12. Two were at Leighfield Fishponds on 13.12.

Long-tailed Tit. c.30 passed through an Oakham garden on 2.11, and eight frequented another Oakham garden between 8.11 and 18.12.

Willow Tit. One or two were noted at Gorsefield Wood, Leighfield and RW between 4.11 and 31.12.

Marsh Tit. One fed regularly at Tunneley Wood feeders in both months. Two were in Stretton Wood on 8.11, and a pair were at RW(Hambleton Road) on 12 and 19.12.

Nuthatch. Fed regularly at Tunneley Wood feeders throughout both months. Noted also at Pickworth Wood on 22.11.

Jay. One was near Ketton Quarry reserve on 26.11.

Rook. c.700 were estimated to have passed north over HMP Stocken on 25.12.

Raven. Pairs were noted at Gorsefield Wood (6.11), Leighfield (15.11) and RW (Eggleton) (21.11), and one was over Lady Wood/HMP Stocken on 17.12.

House Sparrow. c.25 were noted at the bird table at HMP Stocken on 21.11.

Tree Sparrow. Four were at WCQ Site on 4.11, and one or two were occasional visitors to feeders at Park House, Normanton in Nov.

Greenfinch. c.150 were at Leighfield on 4.11.

Siskin. c.30 were at RW(Eggleton) on 10.12, with 20 noted in North Arm on 25.12.

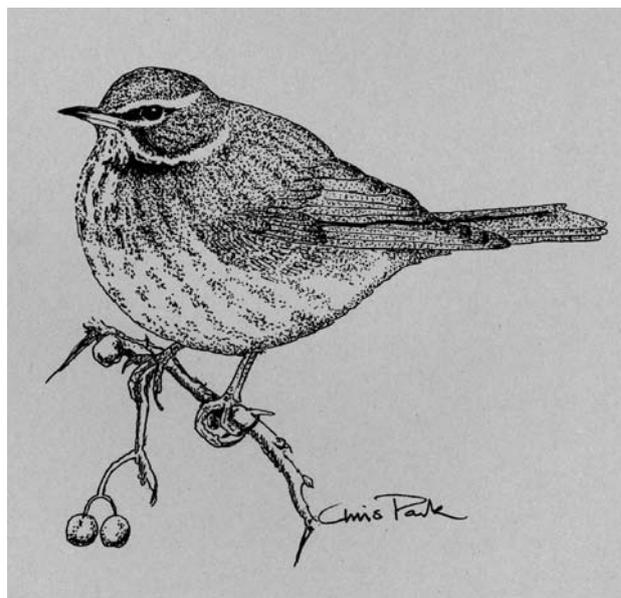
Linnet. 37 were at Leighfield on 1.12.

Lesser Redpoll. Two were at RW(Whitwell) on 26.11.

Bullfinch. Sixteen were at Gorsefield Wood on 6.11. Three or four were at Wing Fishing Lakes on 19.11 and near Pickworth Wood on 22.11. Singles visited a Barrowden garden on 17 and 21.12, and a pair were at RW(Eggleton) on 17.12.

Snow Bunting. One called over RW(Eggleton) on 7.12.

Yellowhammer. Twenty at Gorsefield Wood on 6.11. A flock of about 65 near Ridlington on 17.11.



By Chris Park: from the cover of RNHS Annual Report for 1987

Wildfowl counts November/December 2009

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park		Holywell Lake	
	22.11.	20.12.	22.11.	20.12.	20.11.	27.12.	15.11.	No count
Mute Swan	555	415	144	78	9	7	3	
Whooper Swan	4							
Greylag Goose	231	164	207	91	41	76	2	
Canada Goose	774	838	108	252			102	
Barnacle Goose	13	12						
Egyptian Goose	21	36						
Shelduck	12	12	2	7		2		
Wigeon	4783	3027	192	490		4		
Gadwall	2121	2020	58	72	61	81	27	
Teal	935	823	260	210	40	10	27	
Green-winged Teal			1					
Mallard	1229	1020	108	171	115	86	146	
Pintail	111	7			2			
Shoveler	217	73	4	1	13	13	10	
Red-crested Pochard	18	10						
Pochard	147	253	128	24	12	1		
Tufted Duck	2567	3453	315	162	22	6	11	
Scaup	1	1						
Goldeneye	233	303	18	22				
Smew		3		5				
Goosander	1	16		8				
Ruddy Duck	7	4						
Red-throated Diver	2							
Great Northern Diver	1							
Little Grebe	115	122	9	10	4	8	6	
Great Crested Grebe	358	691	28	21				
Slavonian Grebe	1	2						
Black-necked Grebe	5	5						
Cormorant	173	200	41	81	1			
Bittern		1						
Little Egret	2	4	1					
Grey Heron	30	17	2	3				
Water Rail	10				2			
Moorhen	205	151	4		52	10	27	
Coot	6277	4345	84	72	67	56	22	
Kingfisher	1						1	

BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

6 Redland Close, Barrowden LE15 8ES. Telephone: 01572 747302

November/December 2009

November carried on the slow drift towards winter with a few summer flowers still found. **Yellow-wort** was in flower on the 26th in Ketton Quarry and **Red Campion** near Brooke. Other species seen were **Water Forget-me-not** at Burley Fishponds, **Water Chickweed** at Barnsdale Wood Reservoir Beach whilst Barnsdale Wood itself had **White Dead-nettle**, **Herb Robert** and **Groundsel**.

December: At Eyebrook near the dam wall on the 10th were **Common Whitlowgrass**, **Shepherd's Purse**, **Small Toadflax**, **Groundsel** and of course **Annual Meadow-grass**. The first sign of Spring was spotted on 6th December at the verge south of Seaton Churchyard – one flower fully out of **Lesser Celandine**, always the first of the season.

Thanks for records: R Lemmon, T Caldicott, G Worrall.

Thank you for **Verge Reports** received – I still await some – please send in as soon as possible.

LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

4 Clarksdale, Great Easton, Market Harborough LE16 8SP. Telephone: 01536 770259



November/December 2009

BUTTERFLIES

Having had several records for late flying Painted Ladies in October, another was observed in a garden in Langham on both the 4th and 10th of November.

Red Admirals have been fairly few and far between this year but in November they were the most frequently seen butterfly. Ones and twos were seen in Barrowden on five occasions, three observations came from Edith Weston and other reports were from the Williamson Cliff Quarry site, Langham and finally from Barleythorpe on the 25th.

In December, the only species recorded was a Peacock seen on the 10th by two members near Ashwell as they completed a bird survey; another was seen in Edith Weston on the 12th.

As I write, the snow and ice are widespread and one wonders how the hibernating species are faring. Let us hope that the majority have found some secluded spot in or near buildings.

MOTHS

The permanent trap in the reed beds at Rutland Water was operated weekly and attracted a few species, but it was empty on two occasions. The moths seen included November and December Moths, Winter Moth, the Sprawler and a late flying Large Wainscot.

In November a Firethorn Leaf Miner was reported from Edith Weston.

We wish all recorders a happy new year and thank all contributors for their efforts during 2009.

Thanks go to the following for the information above: V Arnold, R Follows, A Lawrence, A Malcolm, P Mann, T Mitcham, D Perril and G & L Worrall

PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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November 2009

This is of course a quiet time for plant galls, many plants are losing or have already shed their leaves and this means that one of the sites for galls is not longer available. Some plants however do retain their leaves and it is here that opportunities for galls remain. The only two records for this month fall into that category and both are caused by fungi, one a smut and the other a rust. The smut causes silvery blisters on the upper surfaces of leaves of Creeping Buttercup and these blisters eventually burst, allowing the smut spores to disperse. Even before this blisters contain the spores but have to be slit open to check the spores inside. The rust is a common one on Ground Ivy

and appears in the autumn and continues into the winter. Some rusts lead complicated lives with up to five different stages but this species has only one stage which appears as circular brown processes on the underside of the leaves. Both of these galls were reported on the 5th of the month in Priors Coppice.

December 2009

Just one report this month – a galling rust on Groundsel seen at Eyebrook on the 10th. This again is a gall which can be found at almost any time of the year.

Records from R. Lemmon

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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Many of the records I received this time arrived with seasonal greetings – many thanks for those and a Happy and Successful Bug Hunting Year 2010 to all.

Unsurprisingly there are not many records for this report. Firstly, though, a report that last summer a hornet's nest was noticed at Wylde Lodge, Shacklewell Hollow.

November 2009

Hemiptera For this month an interesting record of two **Hawthorn Shield Bugs** *Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale* found on spinach leaves in a vegetable patch in Wing.

Hymenoptera Two bumble bee records – three **Buff-tailed Bumble Bees** *Bombus terrestris* were noted at Barleythorpe. At Barrowden a 'good-sized' bumble bee was out at noon on a cold day at the end of the month, but didn't stop long enough to be identified.

Gastropoda Empty shells of the Great Pond Snail *Lymnaea stagnalis* were seen on the draw down zone of Rutland Water near Barnsdale Wood.

December 2009

Coleoptera Two swarms of hibernating **Harlequin Ladybirds** were reported from a loft in Uppingham. Each swarm consisting of approximately 100 individuals. They included

many of the different colour pattern varieties found in harlequin ladybirds.

Lastly two records of the **7-spot Ladybird** *Coccinella 7-punctata*. One ladybird and approximately 6 pupae were noted at Gunthorpe, and a single ladybird was seen on Verge 8.



Longhorn Beetle *Arihopalus rusticus* (see November Fieldfare page 11).

Many thanks to T Caldicott, G Chiverton, C H Gallimore, C R Jones, R Lemmon, D Perril and L Worrall.

GLOW-WORM NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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Barrowden Back Road

Bizarrely, the developer of the recent Drift Close development of 7 'affordable' houses in the field within a few metres of a glow-worm colony has won the George Phillips Design Award. The award is organised by Rutland Local History Society (RLHS), supported by Rutland County Council, and given annually to a new project which is 'considered to have contributed to conserve the character of the built environment in Rutland'. The scheme, overseen by Barrowden Parish Council and the county council, also received the support of the Homes and Communities Agency with a grant investment of £185,000. The chairman of Barrowden Parish Council writes in the January Parish Magazine that it was 'a long difficult struggle for the parish council to pursue the project', and that it has been recognised as a significant contribution to conserving the built environment of Rutland.

This emphasis on 'the built environment' is telling. I doubt George Phillips would be pleased. According to an extract from his biography in a publication by RLHS, Phillips founded the prize for 'the building or group of buildings which is considered to have made the greatest contribution to conserving the essential character of Rutland', not just Rutland's built environment. Apart from compiling the magnificent 'Rutland and the Great War' and giving a copy to each bereaved family, nearly bankrupting himself, he inaugurated and edited the Rutland Magazine which ran from 1903 to 1912. He believed it was a good time to do this, as the Rutland Archaeological and Natural History Society was so successful. His introduction to the first issue shows his desire to bring together 'the scattered

fragments of antiquarian lore and tabulate and localize them before they pass down the stream of time into the ocean of oblivion' and that 'the natural surroundings, the flora and fauna, to lovers of nature in all its moods, are objects of never ending interest'. To him the 'essential character of Rutland' doubtless included its wild aspects. Maybe the holder of RCC's housing portfolio had an inkling of this when, according to the Stamford Mercury, he said: 'The award to the Drift Close scheme demonstrates how affordable housing can capture the look and feel of its surroundings as well as meeting the housing needs of local people'.

However, it took your Society a long time and much effort to try to convince parish and county councils that there was any need to consider 'nature', e.g. glow-worms, in their scheme. There appear to have been insurmountable reasons why the building would not be moved further away from the colony, and although some concession was eventually made to restrict light emissions and prevent male glow-worms trying to mate with electric lights instead of their females, close proximity is such an obvious and ongoing danger the site should have been ruled out from the start.

Historically, wildlife has been of minor or trivial concern compared to the supposed needs of people, but we now find contact with wildlife is very important to the happiness and wellbeing of mankind, that biodiversity is the way life works, its loss is involved with change to the climate, and that we and our own monocultures are vulnerable. The difficulty of coming to terms with this was illustrated at Copenhagen and in the George Phillips Award. Sorry, George.

MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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November/December 2009

After a dry, warm start there was some heavy rain from mid-November but December ended cold and snowy. Macrofungi have been generally scant for months, but our hunters took full advantage of rainfall to discover an interesting if brief flurry of fruiting. Silky Pinkgills were stars,

appearing in Barnsdale Wood, Ketton Quarry and an Uppingham field; Goblets returned to Yew Tree Avenue, Grey Knights and Sheathed Woodtuft were at Eyebrook, Garland Roundheads in Barrowden and Stubble Rosegills near Uppingham. But no waxcaps and few Lawyers'

Wigs. Velvet Shanks in our garden are currently snowed under, but could survive to spore as soon as climate allows. Happy New Year to them, as well as fungus hunters and readers!

RESERVES

Prior's Coppice SK831052 5.11: Fresh King Alfred's Cakes on felled ash trunk, several apothecia of discomycete *Dasyscyphus virgineus* on decaying wood, teliomorph state of powdery mildew *Erysiphe heraclei* on Hogweed, fresh Candlesnuff Fungus on decaying log; Turkeytail fresh and growing, Hazel Woodwart *Hypoxylon fuscum* fresh on hazel; a few Iodine Bonnets *Mycena filopes* on soil/ debris in cleared area, 15–20 Milking Bonnets *Mycena galopus* on leaf litter; rusts *Phragmidium bulbosum* on Bramble, *Puccinia cnici-oleracei* on Marsh Thistle, *P. glechomatis* on Ground Ivy; smut (a galler) *Urocystis ranunculi* on Creeping Buttercup.

Rutland Water Lyndon Centre SK895056 12.11: Teliomorph state of powdery mildews *Microsphaera tortilis* on dogwood and *Phyllactinia mali* on Hawthorn, Candlesnuff Fungus on log; good numbers of fresh and growing Flat Oysterling *Crepidotus applanatus* on twigs, several clumps of Sulphur Tuft *Hypholoma fasciculare* in wood, 2 very fresh Common Cavaliers *Melanoleuca polioleuca* and 2 Drab Bonnets *Mycena aetites* on a moss-covered hawthorn log.

RW Gibbet Gorse SK901058 12.11: Fresh and growing Turkeytail; 25–30 Trooping Funnels *Clitocybe geotropa* in leaf litter, several clumps of Sulphur Tuft and two large groups of *Mycena metata* (c.60 and c.40) on fallen logs parasitised on their gills by phycomycete *Spinellus fusiger*.

RW Barnsdale Wood SK912089 19.11: Ascoc Common Tarcrust *Diatrype stigma* on fallen hazel wood, *Hormotheca robertiani* on overwintering leaves of Herb Robert and Sycamore Tarspot *Rhytisma acerinum* on fallen Sycamore leaves; teleomorph states of powdery mildews *Erysiphe aquilegiae* var *ranunculi* on Creeping Buttercup (one cleistothecium only seen) and *Erysiphe artemisiae* on Mugwort leaves; anamorph states of powdery mildews *Erysiphe galeopsidis* on White Dead-nettle, *E. urticae* on Nettle and *Sphaerotheca aphanis* on leaves of Wood Avens; Hazel Woodwart *Hypoxylon fuscum* on hazel, White Brain *Exidia thuretiana* on fallen wood; 25+ Sulphur Tuft at base of oak, 20 Drab Bonnets on plant debris, 15–20 Common Bonnets on felled ash log, one small but mature Pleated Inkcap *Coprinus plicatilis* on grass near carpark where there was also a nice find of 8 Silky Pinkgills *Entoloma sericeum*;

good quantities of the blue-green alga *Nostoc sp* were in the carpark area too.

RW Barnsdale Wood Draw-down Zone SK914087 19.11: Anamorph state of powdery mildews *Erysiphe polygoni* on Knotgrass and *E. sordida* on Hoary Plantain; rust *Puccinia lagenophorae* on leaves and stems of Groundsel.

RW Whitwell to Barnsdale Wood Track SK 922084-913087 8.11. Sunny. In order of finding, in mixed conifer, beech, other broadleaves: large group of Sulphur Tuft, Bleeding Oak Crust *Stereum gausapatum*, Common Inkcap *Coprinus atramentarius*, Common Bonnet *Mycena galericulata*, Grooved Bonnet *M. polygramma*, Milking Bonnet *M. galopus*, Lilac Bonnet *M. pura*, abundant Fairy Inkcaps *Coprinus disseminatus*, small group of Butter Caps *Collybia butyracea*, several lots of Clouded Funnel *Clitocybe nebularis* and Tawny Funnel *Lepista flaccida*, Bitter Bracket *Postia stipticus* on dead conifer log, Candlesnuff Fungus, *Hypoxylon nummularium*, Beech Woodwart *Hypoxylon fragiforme*, Tripe Fungus *Auricularia mesenterica*, Turkeytail, Beech Barkspot *Diatrype disciformis*, King Alfred's Cakes and a nice find of 1 full size and 2 small Deer Shields *Pluteus cervinus* appearing to emerge from ground but actually on buried rotting wood.

RW Hambleton Road SK892080 31.12: Fresh looking patch of Orange Cup *Melastiza chateri* (*cornubiensis*) on gravelly soil next to the cycle path.

Bloody Oaks Quarry SK971108 14.11: 6 fresh Jelly Ears *Auricularia auricula-judae* on living elder; 90 fresh Common Inkcap *Coprinus atramentarius* on two decaying hawthorn stumps, 5 fresh Stinking Dapperlings *Lepiota cristata* emerging on soil, two groups of 15–20 each of fresh Common Bonnet *Mycena galericulata* and 10 Egghead Mottlegills *Panaeolus semiovatus* scattered on northern scraped area, presumably on sheep dung from last season.

Ketton Quarry Woodland SK974055 26.11: Lemon Disco on decaying beech branch partially buried in leaf litter, anamorph of powdery mildew *Microsphaera alphitoides*; 15–18 fresh Jelly Ears, some large on lying branch and White Brain on a beech branch buried in leaf litter; two groups of 25+ and 50+ Common Inkcaps on woody debris, literally hundreds of Fairy Inkcaps on a stump and woody debris, 15–20 Flat Oysterlings on fallen twigs, 7 fresh Common Bonnets on fallen beech log, 25 fresh *Mycena stipata* (*alcalina*) smelling strongly alkaline on fallen unidentified trunk and a welcome find of 50+ Sheathed Woodtuft *Kuehneromyces mutabilis*

on woody debris, strongly hygrophorous and showing rings on their stalks (we don't often see this 'common' species).

KQ Valley SK976050 26.11: Candlesnuff Fungus on unknown wood; Turkeytail; 2 groups of Sulphur Tuft on felled logs and 2 Silky Pinkgills on grass.

KQ North Glade SK975056 26.11: 1 Silky Pinkgill on fairly bare soil.

WOODS

Clipsham Park Wood Yew Tree Avenue SK980169 22.11: Mixed weather; in order of finding, from carpark side to end of Avenue and return on opposite side, between yews and wood edges. Several *Stropharia aeruginosa* in grass, several Shaggy Parasol *Macrolepiota rhacodes* var *hortensis* in wood edge, abundant Russet Toughshank *Collybia dryophila*, Spindle Toughshank *C fusipes* and Butter Caps *C butyracea*, one Trooping Funnel *Clitocybe geotropa*, abundant Tawny Funnels *Lepista flaccida*, a few Clouded Funnels *Clitocybe nebularis*, one False Chanterelle *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca* (nice find!), fresh dark groups of Goblets *Pseudoclitocybe cyathiformis* returned to their former place at the foot of yews on top of bank (half way along return side), Grooved Bonnet *Mycena polygramma*, Black Milking Bonnet *M galopus* var *nigra*, the odd Lawyer's Wig, Fairy's Bonnet *Coprinus disseminatus*, Glistening Inkcap *C micaceus*, Honey Fungus *Armillaria mellea*; in carpark area Orange Peel Fungus *Aleuria aurantia*, Birch Polypore *Piptoporus betulinus*, Candlesnuff Fungus and several groups of Sulphur Tuft. BP noted that fungi seem late, also that much clearance of conifers has occurred in 2009 and it will be interesting to see how fungi react.

Eyebrook Reservoir SP856945 10.12: Black Bulgar *Bulgaria inquinans* on fallen oak branch in mixed woodland, Sycamore Tarspot *Rhytisma acerinum* on fallen Sycamore leaves; White Brain *Exidia thuretiana* on fallen broadleaf branch; 10 Flat Oysterlings *Crepidotus applanatus* on fallen decaying log in mixed woodland, 3 Shaggy Parasols *Macrolepiota rhacodes* emerging in mixed woodland, two fresh Drab Bonnets *Mycena aetites* under conifers (faint smell of radishes), two fresh *Mycena metata* under conifers, 5 Lawyers' Wigs

in mixed woodland (one deliquescing, the others not yet), on grass 30–40 Deceivers *Laccaria laccata* looking a bit molested by slugs or frost, a lovely find of 20–25 Grey Knights *Tricholoma terreum* on grass under their conifers; rust *Puccinia lagenophorae* on Groundsel.

GARDENS, FIELDS, VERGES

Elaine's Field Lyddington SP869981 20.11: Several Field Blewits *Lepista saeva* in sheep pasture.

Humpheries Field Uppingham SK863016 1.12: Stubble field with emerging winter wheat on sandstone/ironstone just north of A47 at junction with Leicester Rd Uppingham. Many Stubble Rosegills *Volvariella gloiocephala* widely dispersed, Silky Pinkgill *Entoloma sericeum* fairly common in groups, and appreciable numbers of the small cup *Tarzetta catinus*. This is a remarkable assembly!

Barrowden SK945002 19.11: After recent rain and wind following a long dry spell with no B'den fungi seen, next to new village shop where small trees had recently been dug up, several Pale Brittlestems *Psathyrella candolleana* and Pleated Inkcaps *Coprinus plicatilis*. Nearby on north verge Wakerley Rd, an old grass bank beneath hedge near yew: One ?*Agaricus praeclaresquamosus* (*placomycetes*) with grey adpressed scales on cap and inky smell, although when cut quickly going light brown rather than the yellow described with this unusual species related to the Yellow Stainer *A xanthoderma*; a few yards away, two rich golden Garland Roundheads *Stropharia coronilla*. Thanks to villager Ivy Price (94) for reporting the shop site.

Our garden **SK948002 19.11:** Flurry of Hairy Brackets *Trametes hirsuta* on sheltered old Field Maple stump and tiny Velvet Shanks *Flammulina velutipes* on stump nearby. **9.12:** Cold after wet period following mild dry weather to mid November, on our log pile a few Snapping Bonnets *Mycena vitilis* and Grooved Bonnets *M polygramma*, the first time in many years that any *Mycena* has emerged on these small rotting logs. **31.12:** All 4 sp still extant after cold snowy period. **9.12:** On village green nearby, just one Lawyer's Wig *Coprinus comatus* deliquesced with thick white ring left on conical stipe.

Thanks very much indeed to all who looked. Records from T Caldicott, C R Jones, R Lemmon, P and E Mann, J Myers, E Northen, D and B Parker, L Worrall.

MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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November/December 2009

A happy new year to everyone, and thank you for continuing to send me your reports of Rutland wildlife.

Our reports for November and December begin with **Otters**, evidence of their visits to Fort Henry lakes being dead and part-eaten fish, and spraint found on stones beneath the bridge below the lower lake in the first two weeks of the period. Spraint was also found on the banks of the Welland just south of the A1 in mid November. **Stoats** continue to be regularly seen, one at Leighfield in early November, two at Tunnely Wood chased each other along the north side of the wood, and another was seen near the deer hide. The **Badger** sett near Walk Farm was very active in November, and on the verge of Seaton Road, Barrowden, a small badger was seen regularly at about 10.10 pm on five occasions in November and early December – obviously a creature of habit! A road casualty was recorded, just past Shacklewell Hollow on the Stamford to Empingham road in early December.

A **Fox** was observed in Little Haw Wood in November, and two road casualties found along the Ryhall to Great Casterton verge in December before the snow. In December single foxes were also seen in Little Haw and Clipsham Woods, and one crossed the Oakham bypass, north of the town, just S of the raised section which crosses the railway line. A fox crossed in front of Fieldfare hide at Rutland Water, giving two hen pheasants an interested look!

A large **Hedgehog** was seen climbing into a field from the verge on Morcott Road, Barrowden, at around 6.00 pm on 20th November but none have been seen in the Worrall's garden since late September. **Brown hares** have been reported from Red Hill Barrowden, Lodge Farm Pickworth, and close to Cross Roads Farm near Empingham. Two **Brown rats** were seen feeding under bird feeders at Tree Sparrow Hide Rutland Water on a bitterly cold snowy day in mid-December. The same day a **Grey Squirrel** was seen at Wedlock Wood Rutland Water, and a squirrel was seen on two occasions in November in the Worrall's garden at Barrowden. On November 1st a squirrel was watched as it scurried about, burying nuts at the edge of the plantation near Horn Mill, a Red Kite flying overhead. **Molehills** were much in evidence in November in Barnsdale Wood, around the edges of the car park, and in December on the Rutland edge of Eye Brook reservoir.

A **Roe deer** was flushed in the conifer compartment of Tunnely Wood in mid-December. Single **Muntjac** have been reported from Barleythorpe, Tunnely Wood and from the verge of Seaton Road Barrowden. The mammal reports for this year are rounded off by reports of **Fallow deer** from Clipsham Park, Little Haw, Morkery and Pickworth Woods, in large and small groups, maximum size 34 observed at one time.

I look forward keenly to receiving your reports for early 2010 – lots of tracks in the snow – and have already received one report of a stoat in ermine, so perhaps there may be more!

Thank you for your reports: A Biddle, M A Branston, T Caldicott, G Chiverton, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, G Panter, P J Rudkin, A R & M A Thorp, M Winslow, L & G Worrall

BAT REPORT compiled by Jenny Harris

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There were no records for bats or evidence of bat occupation during these two months, which in itself is quite unusual, as in several previous years there has at least been the odd fresh dropping in a church or two.

A fellow bat-worker from Nottinghamshire reported that she has received a number of grounded bats over the winter, but our bats seem to have disappeared into hibernation and resolutely remained there. This is a good sign, of course, as it should mean that the bats had a good autumn building up their body weight, and will therefore survive the rigours of hibernation all the better.

There was a report on the BBC Winter Watch programme of someone seeing a bat in flight during the very cold spell we have had. This is a very hazardous thing for a bat to do, but there

are a number of reasons why bats might come out of hibernation like this. One is that they may have been caught out roosting in a position which was too exposed when the really cold weather hit, and had to move to a more sheltered site. Or they may have been disturbed by building work of some kind. Bats can become dehydrated during hibernation and have to come out to drink (or sometimes to urinate) and a bat that did not put on enough fat may be forced to seek food, and may even come out in daylight. These latter bats are not likely to survive for obvious reasons.

If anyone sees a bat in flight at any time, or fresh droppings, I would love to hear about it. The Bat Group will also be carrying out hibernation surveys in January and February, and I will let you know the results.

MINUTES OF RNHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009

The Annual General Meeting of the Rutland Natural History Society was held on 3rd March 2009 at the Church of England School Oakham, with 80 members present and the President, Sir Clifford Boulton, in the Chair.

1 APOLOGIES

E and P Mann, B and D Parker, G Kirk, Sir David Davenport Handley.

2 MINUTES OF AGM 2008

Circulated in *Fieldfare* January 2009; proposed J Levisohn, seconded P Rudkin, approved and signed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

Nil.

4 TREASURER'S REPORT

D Lee reported that finances remained in a good position with stable membership of around 300 and reserves at £10,400. Two legacies had been received. Three-quarters of the membership supported Gift Aid, which was most useful. The Treasurer urged anyone who was able and had not already joined the scheme to consider doing so. Insurance costs were rising and bank interest falling. A promised donation to the Woodland Trust towards Gorsefield Appeal had been made. Financial vigilance was continuing. Proposed A Paterson, seconded L Biddle, the Report was adopted and the Treasurer thanked.

5 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Canon R Tovey was thanked for his work. Proposed J Ansley, seconded B Nicholls, Canon Tovey was reappointed.

6 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A Tomlinson thanked members, officers and committee for all their participation, making the Society so welcoming and fascinating. An enjoyable and varied programme of meetings had attracted good numbers. The weather was generally mild but often wet, which wildlife reports reflected. Retiring Weather Recorder John Hollands was warmly thanked for his long service and Roy Lemmon was welcomed to the post. Two families had kindly remembered the Society with legacies. The current credit crunch posed a danger to charities and members were thanked for their continued support. Some signs locally and worldwide suggested that the natural environment might be taken more seriously, a tantalising glimpse of a new value system and more responsible attitude which it was hoped would build in confidence. Proposed C Jones, seconded R Lemmon, the Report was adopted and the Chairman thanked.

7 ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

Proposed P Rudkin, seconded R Bakker, the following were elected en bloc. President: Sir Clifford Boulton; Chairman: Ann Tomlinson; Secretary: Linda Worrall; Treasurer: Derek Lee; Membership Secretary: Graham Worrall; Programme Secretary: Dawn Whitefield; *Fieldfare* Editor: Hendrina Ellis; other Committee members: Linda Biddle, Gill Chiverton, Jenny Harris, Andrew Lear, Frances Lee, Peter Scott.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The President was thanked.

9 DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 2nd March 2010.
