



The Plough, taken from the beach at Wells at 7.45 pm, 10 minutes exposure, RNHS Norfolk weekend. D Cotter.

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This has been a busy time for us – the wonderful bat evening with Jenny Harris, fascinating lichens with Ivan Pedley, and the Society's Norfolk weekend. The weather was kind to us on each occasion, and we have seen some great species and had lovely experiences. It was good to share these occasions with members.

The photographic evening was also a successful and enjoyable one (after technical problems at the beginning!) with superb photos and presentations from members, and most of the calendars produced have been sold. If you do not already have one, please make sure you bring money (£8) to the December indoor meeting.

At the moment I am putting the finishing touches to the programme for 2018, and again we have a full and varied programme of events. Each of these takes organisation and planning, and I feel that with a Society as large as ours there should be others willing and able to be involved with this. We still need a Society Secretary and a Programme Secretary. I have now done both of these roles myself for over a year, and will not be able to continue indefinitely. Neither of these positions is too demanding on its own, but activities will have to be curtailed if no-one comes forward.

We are fortunate to have an active and reliable Committee, and our officers do an amazing job, looking after finances and membership, producing *Fieldfare* for your information and enjoyment every other month, and the *Annual Report* for a summary and analysis, so I thank them on your behalf. In particular, we wish Peter Scott a swift and full recovery and appreciate all he does for the Society.

Meantime, our band of Recorders continue their sterling work of documenting the wildlife of Rutland, backed up by the Committee.

I look forward to the December and January meetings, and wish you all an early Christmas seasonal greeting – next Fieldfare will be in January 2018 – time flies!

Remembering Mark Branston

Mark, who has died after a long illness, was a stalwart of the Society. He delivered *Fieldfares* over many years, and always counted how many people came to indoor meetings. He was a keen naturalist who enjoyed the outdoor meetings in and around Rutland, recorded the flowers on the protected verges, and also recorded mammals he saw on his way home at night from Barrowden to Harringworth. Without his and Graham's reports, the mammal notes are less comprehensive.

Linda Biddle, RNHS Chairman

Membership subscription

Subscriptions for 2018 are now due. The current rates are £12.50 for an individual, £25.00 for 2 adults living at the same address. A form is enclosed with details of how you can pay. There is a form on the back that can be used if you wish to set up a standing order so that your subscription is automatically renewed each year.

You may have heard of new data protection regulations that come into force next year. This is to let you know that the Society keeps your basic personal details on our database solely for the purposes required to manage your membership in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. We will never share your details with any other organisation or person unless there is a legal requirement to do so.

If we hold your email address, we may occasionally send you information about forthcoming meetings or matters of concern to the Society. If you do not wish to receive these emails, please let me know.

Margaret Conner, Treasurer/Membership

DIARY DATES

RNHS FIELD TRIPS

Full details of all these events appear on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk. If the weather is bad, check the website or call the 'Queries' phone number for changes.

Sunday January 14, 10 am

Clipsham Park Wood and Yew Tree Avenue

Linda Biddle leads the first walk of the year. Meet in the Yew Tree Avenue car park, could be very muddy in wood.

Queries: Linda Biddle 01780 762 108

RNHS EVENING MEETINGS

Indoor meetings are held at Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham LE15 6RB. Tea and coffee, free. Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.

Tuesday December 5, 7.30 pm

The Allerton Project

Jim Egan and Amelia Woodford will update us on the work of the GWCT (Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust). Very interesting research. Also, mince pies, etc. are on offer as this is our last meeting before Christmas.

Tuesday January 9, 7.30 pm

In at the deep end - my first year at Rutland Water

Dr Mat Cottam is the new Reserve Manager at Rutland Water Nature Reserve. He replaces Tim Appleton who has retired after 42 years in the role. Don't miss!

Tuesday February 6, 7.30 pm

Back from the Brink Project

By Susannah O'Riordan, who is the 'Back from the Brink' Rockingham Forest Project Officer. This project, part of a nationwide project, aims to improve the woodlands for special species such as Barbastelle Bat, Adder, Willow Tit, Fly Orchid and the Concolorous moth. However, the headline species is the Chequered Skipper butterfly. Should be fascinating.

LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST, RUTLAND GROUP

For events in Leicestershire and Rutland see www.lrwt.org.uk or phone 0116 262 9968. Rutland group meetings are held at the Volunteer Training Centre (VTC), Hambleton Road, LE15 8AD. Entry £1.

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST, BOURNE GROUP

For details of LWT events, see www.lincstrust.org.uk, or phone 01507 526677 in office hours. Bourne group indoor meetings are held at the Methodist Church Hall, Bourne. Refreshments available. A donation of £1.50 is requested, children free.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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September 2017

Atmospheric pressure and wind Winds were generally SW-NW during the month except for the period the 24th to 27th inclusive, when the eastern half of the country was under the influence of a high pressure over the Baltic. This gave us winds E-SE and also high pressure and low wind speeds. In contrast was Storm Aileen, 11th-14th inclusive in which period we saw the lowest pressure of the month, 988 mb, on the 11th also high wind speeds. At 9.00 on the 13th, I registered gusts up to 23 mph.

Temperature An unexceptional month for temperature, 6th in the decade 2008-2017; the mean minimum was 9.5 °C and the mean maximum 19.24 °C. The lowest night-time minimum was 5.0 °C on 20th-21st, and the highest daytime maximum was 23.0 °C on the 2nd.

Rain The total measured here was 56.5 mm (2.2 inches) and this equates to 113% of the long-term mean (27 years). There were 9 days on which no rain was measured, and the largest amount on any day was 12.0 mm on the 27th. This was just over 21% of the month's total.

October 2017

Atmospheric pressure and wind The lowest pressure of the month was 1000 mb recorded at 09.00 on both the 21st and 22nd, and the highest was 1032 mb at the same time on the 27th. This latter occurred during a high-pressure period in the last six days of the month, in which winds were W-N and temperatures markedly lower. The tail of tropical storm Ophelia gave us blustery conditions; at 18.15 on the 16th I measured gusts to 25 mph, but we were spared the full effect, felt in the western half of the country. Storm Brian on the 20th-22nd was a different story and at 16.45 on the 21st I recorded gusts to 34 mph.

Temperature A warm October, overall first equal with 2011 in the decade 2008-2017, with a mean temperature of 12.77 °C. The mean minimum, 9.09 °C, was first in the decade, and the maximum 16.44 °C, was second to 2014. The lowest night-time minimum was 2.0 °C on 28th-29th and the highest was 15.0 °C on the 12th-13th. The daytime maxima on the 13th (21.6 °C) and the 14th (21.3 °C) were worthy of note.

Rain A very dry month, a total of 14.2 mm (0.56 inches) was recorded here which represents 23% of my long-term mean of 27 years. There were 15 days on which no rain was recorded and a further 7 when an unmeasurable 'trace' fell. This is the lowest October rainfall in all the years I have been recording, i.e. since 1990.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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September/October 2017

As usual at this time of year, there are relatively few records for this report. There were no reported sightings of Common Frogs in the two months, although **Common Toads** were seen quite frequently in Wing – both alive and dead.

Between 29th September and 19th October, 5 dead toads were found on the roads of Wing. Reassuringly 3 live toads of varying sizes were also seen in my garden.

A **Smooth Newt** was disturbed from under a plank in my garden on October 10; and a male and a female **Great Crested Newt** were present in my cellar on October 14 and 17; a male was a road casualty on 1st October in Wing.

A **Viviparous Lizard** at Bloody Oaks on September 23 was the sole reptile record.

My thanks to R Lemmon for this last record.

BIRDS

RECORDER Terry Mitcham

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September/October 2017

Rare visitors during these months included **Gannet**, **American Wigeon**, **Cattle Egret** and **Spotted Crake** – all at Rutland Water – with a **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Manton. By the end of October, **Great White Egrets** at Rutland Water numbered ten, a remarkable achievement as the species becomes firmly established in Britain. A good variety of waders took advantage of falling reservoir levels but no rarities were reported. Wildfowl arrived in good numbers with passing **Whooper Swans** and **Pink-footed Geese** also noted. **Hawfinches**, part of a national influx, were recorded and a **Ring-necked Parakeet** was an unusual and colourful addition to the birds of a Barleythorpe garden.

My thanks to the following for their records: D & J Ball, C Baxter, P Bennett, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, A & J Comber, Dr C H Gallimore, M & G Griffin, M Grimes, T Land, LROS, P Langston, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, I Misselbrook, B Moore, D Needham, J W Nourish, C Park, P Rudkin, RWNR, L & B Smith

(See also *Wildfowl Counts*.)

Whooper Swan	12 were at EBR on 22.10. On 30.10, there were three in RWNA, six over Pick and two over Leigh.
Pink-footed Goose	c.130 flew over Leigh on 06.10, and 30 were over Greet GC on 23.10.
White-fronted Goose	One was at RWEg4 on 06.10.
Mandarin Duck	There was a pair at FHP on 24.09. Five flew over Pilt on 02.10, and one over Leigh on 09.10.
American Wigeon	One remained at RWEg2 throughout both months. A second male was on Lag 4 on 29.09 and was reported up to 08.10.
Garganey	One was at EBR on 01.09. At RWNA one was present to 10.09, with one at RWEg3 on 03.10. One was at FHP on 06 and 28.09.
Red-crested Pochard	Two were in RWNA on 22.10 and five at RWEg3 on 30.10.
Scaup	A female was in RWSA on 22.10.
Goosander	Single females flew over Leigh on 23.10 and LFP on 29.10.
Red-legged Partridge	A covey of 37 were on the road near Lynd on 08.10 – how brave!
Grey Partridge	c.20 were in Ext Park on 06.09.
Gannet	Two juveniles flew along RWNA on 09.09.
Bittern	Present throughout both months at RWEg3, with three reported on 06.10.
Cattle Egret	One was at RWEg2/NA between 09 and 12.10.
Little Egret	Away from the reservoirs, three were at Banthorpe GP on 26.09 and one was at FHP on 15.10.
Great White Egret	One was at EBR on 08–09.09. Present at RW in both months, with ten present from 29.10.
Red-necked Grebe	The RWNA bird was reported to 03.10.
Black-necked Grebe	Two were in RWNA on 07.09, with one present to 19.09.

Marsh Harrier	One or two were at RWEg throughout both months. A female/juvenile flew over Leigh on 19.09.
Sparrowhawk	There were garden records from Oak, Barrow and Norm, where a Blue Tit was prey at the feeding station.
Buzzard	Three at BarnsG on 08.10 was the peak count.
Osprey	One flew south at Leigh on 07.09.
Spotted Crake	A juvenile was at RWEg3 on 29.09.
Golden Plover	Two flew over RW on 10.09 and numbers there increased from c.50 on 08.10 to 100 on 16.10. 26 flew east at QF on 16.10.
Lapwing	At RW there were 750 on 10.09, and 543 on 08.10. 203 were at EBR on 08.10.
Little Ringed Plover	At EBR there were three on 01 and one on 05.09.
Ringed Plover	Regular at RW throughout both months to 26.10, with a maximum of 18 on 21.09. Present at EBR between 03 and 20.09 with six on 08.09. Singles flew over Leigh on 15 and 24.09.
Whimbrel	One was noted on several dates at RW between 01.09 and 08.10. It was of uncertain origin, carrying a copper ring.
Curlew	One flew over Leigh on 16.09. There were four at RW on 08.10, and one on Eg4 on 20.10.
Black-tailed Godwit	At EBR there were up to three between 01 and 12.09, with one on 30.10. RW had singles between 06 and 08.10, and three on 30.10.
Knot	Two were at RWEg4 on 16.09.
Ruff	A good passage at EBR saw birds throughout both months with a peak of 17 on 29.09. At RW up to nine (10.10) were present between 01.09 and 21.10.
Curlew Sandpiper	One was in RWNA on 19.09.
Dunlin	Present at EBR throughout both months but with a maximum of only ten on 31.10. RW could only manage a maximum of eight on 24.09, but birds were present throughout both months.
Little Stint	One was at EBR on 08, 09 and 16.09. RW had birds from 16.09 to at least 17.10, with a maximum of five on 17.09.
Common Sandpiper	Two were at EBR on 03 and 12.09, with one there on 08.10. One was at RWE3 on 06.09, with five there on 10.09.
Green Sandpiper	Occurred at several sites away from the reservoirs. Two were at Banthorpe GP on 01.09 with two at FHP next day, three there on 03.09 and one on 24.09. One was by Ext Park lake on 06.09. Present at RW throughout Sept and to 28.10, with a maximum of five on 10.09. EBR had birds from 03.09 to 11.10, with two on 19.09.
Spotted Redshank	One was at RWEg 4 on 02 and 03.09. One called over LFP on 02.09.
Greenshank	Present at RW from 01.09 to 12.10 with a maximum of four on 06 and 10.09. At EBR there were records from 01.09 to 11.10, with a peak of five on 09.09. Singles flew over Leigh/LFP on 02.09 and 03.10.
Wood Sandpiper	One was at EBR on 01.09.
Woodcock	The first autumn birds were singles at Pilt on 28 and Lynd Wood on 31.10.
Jack Snipe	One was at RWEg3 on 17.09.
Snipe	A poor autumn passage with eight at RW on 10.09 and four on 08.10, and just one at EBR on the latter date.
Black Tern	All records were from RW between 05 and 21.09, with a maximum of four on 14.09, plus a single on 25.10.
Common Tern	Three were at RW on 10.09 and two on 08.10.
Arctic Tern	One was at EBR on 14.09.
Little Gull	One was at RW between 10 and 30.09.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	124 were roosting on stubble in Ext Park on 28.09.
Mediterranean Gull	Singles were at RW on 10.09 and 28.10, and at RW on 12 and 14.10.
Yellow-legged Gull	Two were at RW on 08.10.

Woodpigeon	Passage was noted from 23.10 at Leigh with 860 south on 25.10 and 370 next day. On 30.10 c.3400 were estimated flying south here.
Cuckoo	A late juvenile was at RWLynd from 05 to 12.09.
Barn Owl	Singles were reported from FHP, Pilt, Rid, Man, LFP and near Stoke Dry.
Little Owl	Regular around Barrow throughout both months with two or three calling on 19.09.
Tawny Owl	Calling birds were at FHP, Barrow and Pilt – five on 02.10.
Swift	In September there were three at RW on 05 with singles on 10 and 16.
Kingfisher	Noted at several sites around RW with five on 26.09. One was along the R. Welland on Tin Meadows on 17.09.
Green Woodpecker	Noted at regular sites at QF and FHP and also at Barrow and Braun – two feeding on the churchyard lawn.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Records of birds at garden feeders came from BarnsG, Barrow and Upp.
Kestrel	The request for records has borne fruit, with birds noted at many sites, mainly in October – Burl, Stam, FHP, Ext Park, Pick, QF, KQ, Mor, Lynd, Borderville, Barrow and Cow Close Farm. These will be forwarded to LROS but please continue to report birds at other sites.
Hobby	One flew over Ext Park on 03.09, and one over Stam on 14.09. There were five at RWEg in early Sept. with three on 06 and 10.09. A juvenile was still present on 30.09. One flew over Rid on 28.09.
Peregrine	A juvenile was in Ext Park on 09.09. Other records were from LFP on 08 and 20.10, Martinthorpe on 21.10 and Man the next day.
Ring-necked Parakeet	A female frequented a Barleythorpe garden from 25.10 to the end of the month.
Jay	Ones and twos were widely reported as they foraged for acorns. c.17 were around Leigh on 27.10, with eight there on 12.10, and two flying over.
Raven	One or two were noted over QF, BarnsG and Lynd, with nine at EBR on 15.09.
Willow Tit	Noted only at Leigh/LFP with four on 01.09, and one or two in Oct.
Marsh Tit	There were Oct. records from Hamb, BarnsG, PGW and TunnW.
Skylark	Passage over Leigh/Martinthorpe was noted between 03.09 and 26.10, with double figure flocks on nine dates, and a maximum of 114 on 06.10. 31 flew south over Stam on 12.10.
Sand Martin	Our last record was from RW on 10.09.
Swallow	120 flew over Leigh on 07.09, with 200 on 22.09. Our last birds were 30 south at FHP on 28.09.
House Martin	There was a heavy passage at RW on 10.09 involving several thousand birds. Three were over Stam on 11.10, and one was over Man on 17.10.
Long-tailed Tit	Small numbers noted at BarnsG and in an Oak garden.
Yellow-browed Warbler	One called in a Man garden on 19.09.
Chiffchaff	One was in an Oak garden on 20.09. 21 were around Leigh on 27.09, with 38 on 28.09. In Oct there were singles at Banthorpe GP on 09, Hall Farm Ext, on 10 and Barrow on 17.
Willow Warbler	The last birds were at Leigh and QF on 12.09.
Blackcap	One was at FHP on 28.09, with singles at Leigh/LFP on 23 and 29.10.
Lesser Whitethroat	There were Sept. birds at FHP and Leigh, with three there on 27 and one next day.
Whitethroat	Two were in Ext Park on 09.09 and one at Leigh on 24.09.
Sedge Warbler	One was at LFP from 10 to 30.09.
Nuthatch	One visited an Oak garden feeder on 18.09.
Starling	A total of 8310 were noted on passage west on eight dates between 21 and 31.10 over Martinthorpe, Leigh, Pilt, with the highest total of 3080 on the last date.
Blackbird	c.50 were around Leigh on 12.10.
Fieldfare	The first birds were noted on 27.10, with 136 over Martinthorpe. Next day there were 492 over Pilt, c.80 at RWLynd and 30 at Wg. 490 flew west at QF on 30.10 and 800 at Pilt on 31.10.

Song Thrush	18 were around Leigh on 08.10.
Redwing	910 west at Luff Airfield and 277 at Leigh on 08.10 were the first returnees. Next day there were 77 over Banthorpe GP and 450 at Leigh, with passage noted at the latter site to the end of the month, involving 1788 birds.
Spotted Flycatcher	One or two were at LFP to 24.09.
Robin	c.115 were around Leigh on 27.09, with 83 in song. c.50 were counted around the southern side of RWEg with 32 singing.
Redstart	Six were in the Leigh area on 01.09. Singles were present between 03 and 26.09.
Whinchat	In Sept. one was at Leigh on 01, with one at EBR on 03 and three at Luff Airfield on 08, with one there on 12. Another was at Leigh on 10 and the last at QF on 25.
Stonechat	A good autumn passage began with a pair at QF on 25.09, and one at Leigh next day. One was at Gun on 07.10 with a pair at FHP from 9.10 to 15.10, and pairs at EBR and RWEg from 10.10 onwards. Males were in Ext Park on 15.10 and at Gun on 18.10.
Wheatear	Five were at Luff Airfield on 09.09.
Tree Sparrow	Seven were at RWLynd on 22.09, and one was with a finch/bunting flock at QF on 16.10. At Leigh in October two flew south on 03, 20 on 23, and 25 on 26.
Yellow Wagtail	12 flew over RWGgorse on 09.09, there were nine at Leigh on 10.09, four near Pres on 19.09, and 13 at RWDam on 26.09.
Grey Wagtail	Singles were at FHP on 24.09 and 09.10, with two south on 28.09. One was at Banthorpe GP on 09.10.
Pied Wagtail	South-west passage at Leigh saw 75 on 15.09, 25 on 26.09 and 47 on 08.10.
White Wagtail	Two were in a paddock at Man on 01.10.
Tree Pipit	At Leigh one called on 07.09, with four noted on 10.09 and one on 16.10.
Meadow Pipit	Passage at Leigh, between 09.09 and 04.10, involved 1878 birds on nine dates with a peak of 370 on 26.09. Grounded flocks were 20 at FHP on 24.09 and ten at QF on 04.10.
Rock Pipit	Two were at EBR on 15.10 and one flew over Leigh on 26.10.
Chaffinch	Autumn passage at Leigh, on four dates between 16 and 26, involved 782 birds with a peak of 212 on 23.
Brambling	One over Leigh on 27.09 was the first arrival. Between 12 and 31.10, small numbers, maximum 12, passed through at Leigh. Two were at Norm feeders on 15.10, one was in a Man garden on 17.10 and 14 flew west at Pilt on 31.10.
Common Crossbill	Singles were heard over Leigh on 10.09 and LFP on 15.09.
Goldfinch	c.175 were on game crops at Leigh on 03.09. At QF c.40 were present throughout both months, feeding on the abundant teasel.
Siskin	42 flew west at LFP on 20.10.
Linnet	Some large flocks included 120 on rape stubble in Ext Park on 06.09, up to 350 at Leigh between 07.09 and 26.10, 60 at RWEg on 16.10 and a similar number near Pick on 28.10.
Lesser Redpoll	15 flew west at LFP on 04.10, and 38 fed on a weedy patch there on 17.10.
Common (Mealy) Redpoll	One was ringed at Luff Airfield on 27.10.
Hawfinch	One of the features of this autumn has been a country-wide influx of Hawfinches, with mostly ones and twos flying west. In Rutland birds were recorded from 13.10 to the end of the month mainly at LFP and Pilt. One remained at LFP for 20 minutes on 17 and six flew west at Pilt on 28. In all 15 birds were noted. If some decide to stay on it would be worth checking local hornbeams at Clips, TunnW and Ext Park.
Bullfinch	Peak October counts at Leigh were 19 on 12 and 38 on 26.
Yellowhammer	37 were at Leigh on 12.10, and 35 in Ext Park on 29.10.

Wildfowl Counts for September and October (no September count at EBR)

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir	Fort Henry Ponds /Exton Park		Holywell Lake		Banthorpe Gravel Pit	
	10.09	08.10		08.10	09.09	09.10	11.09	17.10	08.09
Mute Swan	472	313	80	22	22		4	2	2
Greylag Goose	722	1082	476	4		14	29		
Canada Goose	461	442	286			1	28		
Barnacle Goose		1							
Egyptian Goose	107	85							
Shelduck	2		5						
Mandarin Duck			1		8				
Wigeon	97	1818	215		40				
American Wigeon	1	2							
Gadwall	827	582	84	66	96	2	8		
Teal	269	627	160	11	36			3	24
Mallard	878	627	356	237	191	88	119	5	42
Pintail	16	101	16						
Garganey	1								
Shoveler	166	130	29	37	63				
Red-crested Pochard		5							
Pochard	45	62	13						
Tufted Duck	3834	3139	40	14	27	3			3
Scaup	4								
Goldeneye		1							
Cormorant	604	387			1				
Bittern	1	1							
Little Egret	54	59	3	1			2	1	
Great White Egret	6	9							
Grey Heron	18	19	3	1	1			3	1
Little Grebe	147	123	4	2	2	10	18		
Great Crested Grebe	572	566	52						
Red-necked Grebe	1								
Black-necked Grebe	2								
Water Rail	12	6							
Moorhen	170	188	3	59	61	13	9		
Coot	2817	2383	468	90	109	8	2		1
Kingfisher	4	2		1	1				
TOTAL	12310	12478	2294	545	657	140	220	14	73

BOTANY

RECORDER John Rodgers

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Lots of colour in the countryside as leaves turn and as fruits appear where before there were flowers. Not all have disappeared; there are still flowers like **Hogweed**, **Yarrow**, **Dandelion**, **Bristly Ox-tongue**, **Red Clover** and the two **Deadnettles** but most have now faded away. It won't be long until some appear again. It isn't

uncommon to have **Daisies**, **Primroses** and **Coltsfoot** in flower by the turn of the year. We can look forward.

Not many records have come in since the end of August. The most unusual flower was **Annual Mercury**, found by Martin Grimes on Sykes Lane beach. It doesn't seem to have been recorded since 1954, and before that 1914 (Messenger). Could it have been introduced with the material for the beach? We've also had **Ploughman's Spikenard** from at least two different places on Ketton Reserve. **Canadian Goldenrod** and **Nodding Bur-marigold** were reported at Ketton Aldgate and from the RW reserve at Egleton, neither of which are very common.

My favourite amongst the records is **Fox and Cubs**, found in many places, because of its deep orangey brown colour. Its name comes from the colour and because the main flower head is surrounded by smaller buds which as they open look just like a fox with its cubs. Alternative names are Devil's Paintbrush and Grim the Collier. The latter perhaps comes from the title of a 17th century play about a collier in Croydon but more likely is linked to the small black hairs that cover the stems and young flower buds, similar to the blackened hairs of a collier when he's finished work. It is a very invasive plant, which apparently came here from Southern Europe, and has obviously been taken elsewhere because it is a serious pest in parts of North America and Australia and is banned in Tasmania and New Zealand.

Records were received from M Grimes, R Lemmon, J Mallet, J S and J Rodgers

BUTTERFLIES

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September/October 2017

Annual summary to end October 2017

No new species were observed during September and October, so the 2017 species count remains at 30.

Highlight

Purple Emperor

Again! Yes! A third report for 2017! This one was seen by A and L Biddle at Pickworth on 10 July (regrettably omitted by me from the July/August Fieldfare report). Note once again that the sighting is from the north-east of the county, where most of the best habitat – oak plus willow – for this species is found.

Other positive county reports, notably from Nottinghamshire, suggest that our flurry of 2017 sightings does represent a genuine increase in the species. But always remember the caveat about how much patience and luck is needed to spot a species that spends much time in the tops of trees – could it have been with us all along?

Other records from September/October 2017

Brimstone	1 site, 1 individual
Large White	1 site, 1 individual
Small White	3 sites, 1 + 1 + 9 individuals
Green-veined White	1 site, 1 individual
	These low figures for the 'three common whites' corresponds with the one third reduction in their 2017 count compared to that in the 2016 Big Butterfly Count.
Small Copper	1 site, 1 individual
Brown Argus	1 site, 2 + 1 individuals on different days
Common Blue	1 site, 4 individuals
Holly Blue	1 site, 1 individual
Red Admiral	8 sites, varying 1 to 10 plus individuals at these sites. In the 2017 Big Butterfly count the Red Admiral counts were up by 75% compared to 2016
Small Tortoiseshell	1 site, 1 individual on two occasions

(continued)

Peacock	1 site, 2 individuals
Comma	1 site, 1 individual
Speckled Wood	1 site, 5 + 1 + 1 + 1 individuals on 4 occasions
Small Heath	1 site (Ketton Quarry), 8 individuals on 1 September 2017

Many thanks to the following: P Bennett, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, M Grimes, R Lemmon, M Markham and D Needham

MOTHS

RECORDER Paul Bennett

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September/October 2017

Late summer and early autumn is usually a time of reduced activity with fewer species on the wing. This year's weather, particularly in September, has been less settled than in previous years and so it has been more difficult to pick potentially productive nights for trapping.

An example of this was our first trap of the reporting period on 6th September at Lyndon Centre, which coincided with the Society's Bat Walk from the same location. The humid early evening conditions brought out good numbers of bats and insects, so it was a little disappointing in the morning to find only 29 moths of 10 species in the trap. Were the bats responsible for this modest total by availing themselves of this opportunity for a sumptuous feast? In the early part of the evening this may have been the case but as the temperature cooled and the skies cleared later to reveal a full moon this was the most likely explanation for the low numbers. The highlight of the catch in fact was seeing four **Red Underwings** basking in the sun on the wall of the Visitor Centre the next day!

The trap set out on 26th September was more successful with 101 moths of 24 species (plus 5 hornets and a burying beetle). One of the pleasures of autumn is seeing the number of seasonal specialists, which are often more neatly patterned and easier to identify than many summer species. 8 of the species in the trap were of this type, including 3 species of **Sallow** moths (**Sallow**, **Barred Sallow** and **Pink-barred Sallow**), **Lunar Underwing** and **Frosted Orange**.

Our only October trap was on the 13th and coincided with Butterfly Conservation's National Moth Week-end. This drew in 5 more autumnal moths including **Yellow-line Quaker**, **Green-brindled Crescent** and **Red-green Carpet**, with the latter also reported from a garden trap in Edith Weston.

The species total for the year at Lyndon stands at 183 from early May onwards and it is hoped to run one more trap before the year's end.

Day-flying moth records were few but included **Hummingbird Hawkmoths** regularly seen in a Manton garden in September, a **Treble Bar** near Ketton Quarry, an **Angle Shades** in Wing and a **Grey Dagger** caterpillar near Pickworth. **Silver Y** sightings seem to have been rare locally and only one has been reported.

Many thanks to the following for submitting their records: V Arnold, P Bennett, T Caldicott, Dr C Gallimore and M Grimes.

PLANT GALLS

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September/October 2017

The plant gall season is now its usual autumnal decline, but despite this there have been some good reports and one or two new species have come to light. George Henry Wood on 14.09, despite its young age, came up with 17 records which included 7 on Oak; and Stretton Wood on the same date produced 23, just 6 on Oak. This difference in total numbers is a nice indication of the age of the 2 woods.

A midge gall on Red Clover appeared no less than 3 times in three different sites, and a new mite gall on Water Mint was among a total of 23 reports from Rutland Water, Lagoon 2, on 28.09. The lighthouse gall on Ground Ivy, caused by a midge and which occurs later in the season, was at both Horn Mill on 30.09 and also at the RNHS lichen meeting at Braunston-in-Rutland churchyard on 14.10.

Among other October results, Barnsdale Wood on the 12th had 19 records including a midge gall on Beech, which is the only time it has been recorded this year. A visit to The Seek on the 26th produced 18 results including 8 on Oak.

Thanks to M Grimes and R Lemmon for their results.

ORTHOPTERA

RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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September/October 2017

What a good start to September! The evening of the 6th, starting at 7.30 pm, the Rutland Natural History Society held their field meeting at the Lyndon Reserve, Rutland Water: a Bat Walk, led by Jenny Harris. This was the mildest evening so far this month! Eleven members attended, and we set off to the east of the Visitor Centre. On our way towards Gibbet Gorse, about 8.30 pm and dark, with several bat detectors operating, I noticed Martin Grimes leaning on a field gate, listening intently over the pasture field. I joined him: we directed our detectors towards the field, and picked up the stridulating of at least 2 male Roesel's Bush Crickets. The song was slow (normal at this time of the night). Approximately 50 yards further along the path, we located two more Roesel's, heard in the verge.

The final survey at Rutland Water took place on Saturday 16 September, on the Egleton Reserve, with excellent results for: Roesel's Bush Cricket, Long-winged Conehead, and Short-winged Conehead, in all their regular haunts.

Lastly, during the RNHS field meeting 'Looking for lichens', October 14, Braunston-in-Rutland Churchyard, leader Ivan Pedley, I located at least 6 stridulating male Speckled Bush Crickets, in a hedgerow at the far corner of the churchyard.

Last stridulating

29 October for Long-winged Conehead and Speckled Bush Crickets; both heard on the bat detector, at the Lyndon Reserve.

Two new sites

In October: 2.30 pm on the 25th: 2 male Roesel's Bush Crickets stridulating in a small rough patch of herbage, just outside of the Ketton Quarry reserve: Barn Hill, on the southern edge, near Home Farm. I have to thank David Needham for persuading me to go there with him. And Braunston-in-Rutland, October 14.

Bush Crickets

Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*

Special moment: two stridulating males, heard in pasture, in the dark, at 8.30 pm, Lyndon Reserve, east of the Visitor Centre; another 2, along the track in the verge: slow stridulations, 6 September, during the Society's Bat field meeting. Large numbers heard in regular haunts on the Egleton Reserve survey, 16 September.

New site: two stridulating males (slow song), in small rough patch of herbage, in Barn Hill next to Ketton Quarries, 2.30 pm, 25 October. SK977051

Long-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus discolor*

Excellent numbers located in their regular haunts on the Egleton Reserve survey, 16 September. At the top entrance off the Lyndon Road, over the cattle grid, on the left hand side, 4 stridulating males in rough tall herbage. Last stridulation heard at 2.0 pm, 29 October, Lyndon Reserve.

Short-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus dorsalis*

Seven large colonies in their usual habitats, on the Egleton Reserve, Rutland Water, 16 September.

Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima*

During the Society's Bat field meeting, 6 September, stridulating males in trees and hedges, Lyndon Reserve, 7.30 pm to 11.0 pm. Six stridulating males in hedges, near Mallard Hide, Egleton Reserve, 16 September. Last stridulations heard at 2.20 pm, 29 October, in trees at the Lyndon Visitor Centre car park.

New site: six stridulating males, in hedge at the far corner of Braunston-in-Rutland churchyard, 14 October, SK832065.

Regular sites visited: large numbers in trees of Ashwell Garden Centre, and in the hedgerows opposite, on the main road, 19 September. Usual large numbers, in trees and car park hedgerow, Barnsdale Gardens, 8 October.

MAMMALS

RECORDER Linda Biddle

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July/August/September/October 2017

A bumper issue of mammal reports this time, four months for the price of two!

There has been trouble in Barrowden in October – a **Badger** was seen by villagers grubbing up a verge, and lawns have also been dug up. Not only that but either a fox or a badger has been responsible for the deaths of two or three **Hedgehogs** around 24th and 25th of the month. A badger was seen outside the village shop on the 24th at 5.15 am, and the next day one was in the main street at 4.00 am. A **Fox** was also seen on the 24th, setting off security lights in a garden in Back Road. Sadly hedgehogs are vulnerable to attack by hungry predators, but this is the way of nature, and has been happening for thousands of years. Three badgers have been reported as road casualties, at Ketton, near Exton and between Barrow and Market Overton. A badger crossed the road near Half Moon Farm on Hambleton peninsula in August, a latrine was found near the mink raft at Manton Bay, RWNR, and another large one was found near the northeast corner of Ketton Quarry. In October setts near Pickworth were obviously very active, much digging and worn down bare earth surrounding the entrance holes.

Hedgehogs visited Marian Markham's garden in Langham every night in July, sometimes 4 at once, often 2! By October the visits were less regular, on 14 nights out of 31 and down to 1 at a time, but on 11th two juveniles arrived at 7.00 pm, followed by an adult an hour later. The hogs seem to take no notice of the fox who is often there at the same time (see photo page 17 in September's *Fieldfare*) nor does the fox bother the hedgehogs. Hedgehogs regularly also visited the Willows garden at Barrow in July. In Oakham at Barmsted Drive two hedgehogs appeared one night in July, not having been seen there before.

At Langham, the fox is a very regular visitor, being caught on camera on most nights from July to October, sometimes twice or three times a night. Two well-grown cubs were watched by the Banthorpe gravel pit in July. A fox was seen in Clipsham Park Wood in October and another 'beautiful specimen, thick coat and bushy tail, tried to chase some lapwings in front of Shallow Water Hide RWNR'.

Brown hares are reported from Brooke Road, Braunston, Great Casterton, Pickworth, Ashwell Road Langham, Greetham Valley Golf Club, east of the Seek, and Exton, and at RWNR near the centre one was observed sitting in a grassy track. There have been no reports of rabbits this time, but there is still plenty of evidence of their presence, droppings and holes in many areas. It is important to record their presence if seen – even though they are a common animal.

An **Otter** was seen on two occasions in October at Leighfield Fishponds. At Fort Henry Ponds spraint was found on a stone under the bridge below the lakes in September and October. Similarly evidence of the presence of an otter was found at RWNR, prints and spraint on mink rafts at Heron Bay, Manton Bay, near Burley Fishponds, and near Smew and Osprey Hides in August, September and October.

Only two reports of **Stoat** this time: one crossed the road between Market Overton and Cottesmore in August, and another was seen at Leighfield Fish Ponds in October. At Pickworth two **Weasels** were seen in July on a footpath west of the village, and ran into the adjacent ditch. In August in Barrow a weasel was close to the centre of the village, and one crossed the A606 at Barnsdale.

Moles are still very under-reported. Molehills are reported from Exton and near Fort Henry Lakes, and on verges near Barnsdale. **Grey Squirrels** were recorded at RWNR, Langham, Pickworth Wood, and Greetham Valley Golf Club.

Two **Common Shrews** were found dead, one on the track near VTC and another in the road at Bottom Street Wing. A **Pygmy Shrew** was dead on a footpath at RWNR Egleton. Evidence of **Water Shrew** activity was found on a water-vole raft at Oakham Canal in July. **Water Voles** have been active at RWNR in all four months, evidence of droppings and footprints on rafts in all areas has been monitored.

Shooting of **Fallow Deer** has resumed in our local woods. Not surprisingly far fewer deer are reported than for many years, only two reports of fallow seen. In July a single buck was seen at Walk Farm near Pickworth. In early October two does came out of Three Corner Plantation near Bloody Oaks Reserve, and sadly one collided with a car and died. The other ran off unhurt.

For the first time in many years there have been no reports of rutting heard in Pickworth Wood. Happily the number of **Roe Deer** reports is still good – seven reported sightings from Greetham Valley Golf Club, Banthorpe Gravel Pit and Barnsdale. **Muntjac** have been seen at Normanton, Wing, Barrowden, Shallow Water Hide, Barrowden, and Pickworth.

Many thanks to all who send in reports, without you there would be little to describe! D & J Ball, P Bennett, A Biddle, R Birch, T Caldicott, A & J Comber, C Gallimore, G and M Griffin, M Grimes, P Langstone, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, M Markham, D Masters, T Mitcham, D Needham, P Rudkin, L Worrall

BATS

RECORDER Jenny Harris

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September/October 2017

There were only a few casual records from members during September and October, but there was a lot of other bat recording taking place during the period. Two small bats were seen by Carolyn Baxter at the top of Gypsy Lane, Uppingham, near the farm. With a wing span reported to be approximately 10 cm it is likely these were pipistrelles.



On 21 March 2017, seven bat boxes were put up in Burley Wood as part of a joint project between the Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group (LRBG) and the Rutland Natural History Society (see also March *Fieldfare* page 2). Linda Biddle and I were joined by John Wright and Lloyd Park, staff of the Rutland Water Osprey Project (and well used to climbing ladders) who put up the boxes. The aim of this small scheme is to provide roosts, and possibly breeding sites, for the population of Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii* bats that have been recorded in the wood. Our hopes are particularly pinned on a 1FF Schwegler box which had been placed on the deer hide, formerly used by the bats as a breeding roost. The deer hide had suffered damage during winter gales and is no longer available to the roosting bats. The other six boxes were Schwegler 2F-DFP (2F with a double front panel), which other Nathusius' pipistrelle projects have found to be preferred by the species; for instance at Bedfont Lakes in Middlesex from whom we had taken advice.

The key time for checking bat boxes is from late August to mid-October when the bats are active but there are unlikely to be dependent young. This is a time when males and females seek each other out for mating, often occupying tree cavities or bat boxes as mating roosts. On 13 September, a lovely warm, sunny day, the boxes in Burley Wood were checked, with help from Lloyd to climb up and take down the boxes; Joelle Woolley (also Rutland Water Staff) and I handled the bats while Linda recorded the results. The heavy boxes were opened on the ground; after examining the contents (including bats) and cleaning out the boxes as necessary, they were put back on the tree and any bats that had been removed were carefully 'posted' back through the entrance hole. This was then blocked with cloth for a short time to try and deter the bats from flying off.

Results of the box check

Box no.	Bat species	Age	Sex	Forearm length	Weight	Other contents	Tree type	Comments
BW1	Common pip	Juv	M	32.1 mm	4.95 g		Hide	Box type 1FF
BW2	Soprano pip	Ad	F	32.7 mm	7.0 g	9 other bats	Oak	Mating group?
BW3	None found					Dead hornet Bat poo	Ash	Possible pip poo
BW4	None found					Wasp nest, bat poo	Oak	Possible BLE poo
BW5	Soprano pip	Ad	M				Oak	Feisty, not examined
BW6								Unused
BW7	Soprano pip	Ad	M	30.7 mm	5.6 g	Wasp nest	Ash	Breeding condition
BW7	Soprano pip	Ad	F	32.0 mm	5.08 g	Bat poo		Nulliparous, had mites.

Key: Ad – adult, Juv – juvenile, M and F – male and female; nulliparous – had not previously had young.

All but one of the seven boxes contained either bats or evidence of usage in the form of droppings. The cluster of at least 10 soprano pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (those we could definitely see) in Box BW2 was almost certainly a mating group. Only one of these bats was handled, as the others were awake and we feared they would fly out and perhaps come to harm if they were handled. The bat we examined was an adult female, weighing 7.0 g. Two boxes contained the beginnings of wasp nests that appeared to have been abandoned at an early stage and one had a dead hornet but no sign of nest-building. Only one of the boxes showed no sign of having been used by bats (or anything else). This box was near the edge of a wide ride on a mature oak where it possibly receives no sun in summer months. It may need to be moved in future.

The male and female found in BW7 were most likely a mating pair and this box can be considered to be a mating roost. Although none of the bats found was a Nathusius' pipistrelle, the take-up of six out of seven boxes is very encouraging, particularly as two of these boxes appear to be used as mating roosts (BW2 and BW7). It may be possible in future years, with the owner's consent, to expand the scheme in Burley Wood. Many thanks to Lloyd Park and John Wright for their help putting up and checking the boxes, and to Joss Hanbury for allowing RNHS to initiate this scheme and for access to Burley Wood for monitoring.

Bat walk at Lyndon Hill nature reserve, 6th September

We met in the car park at Lyndon, on a lovely fine evening, just before sunset and set out eastwards along the hard-core track. It was still quite light so it was not until we reached Gibbet Gorse that we heard the first bat, but Phil Rudkin used his bat detector to find Speckled Bush Crickets to keep us entertained along the way. His detector was set low, at around 20-25 kilohertz (kHz) as opposed to most of the detectors tuned to around 48 kHz to pick up pipistrelles. Phil was therefore able to alert us to the sound of a distant noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, the only one we heard during the evening. However, once we reached the sheltered foraging area near Gibbet Gorse and Field 1, we heard and saw a number of small bats feeding overhead, their echolocation as they closed in on the insects sounding like a zip being sharply pulled. Most were soprano pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, with fewer common pipistrelles, *P. pipistrellus*. Feeding above us, they were often swooping low overhead, silhouetted against the sky. We watched, enchanted, for some time before returning towards the Visitor Centre and Teal Hide at the water's edge. There, many bats were feeding, often very close to the open windows. Soprano and common pipistrelles were there and, at last, Nathusius' pipistrelle, its echolocation signals lower than the other pips, at 38–39 kHz. For the first time we also heard, and in strong torchlight could see, Daubenton's bats *Myotis daubentonii* skimming low over the water further out. And as we left the hide to return home a full moon was rising to the south, a fitting end to a lovely evening.

Rutland Water bat-box checks

Joelle Woolley, who is the Education Officer at Rutland Water, and a member of LRBG, has a bat-box scheme on the Egleton Reserve at Rutland Water, and on Sunday 24 September she led a group of young people to check bat boxes near the Volunteer Training Centre. Roughly a dozen boxes were checked that morning, although there are around 25 in that area. The first bat found was a single male Nathusius' pipistrelle, which was a good start. All the other bats found were soprano pipistrelle, with a male and female in one box, a male and three females in another box and a single female. Other boxes showed signs of use in the form of droppings. Joelle checked the 51 boxes in Barnsdale Wood in September. I do not have full details but one of the bats found was the male soprano pip with the broken finger found during checks in April and May. Those of us who do bat rescue would never have believed he could fly, let alone survive in the wild for so long. Boxes at Barnsdale Wood and Egleton were also checked during the National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project survey (NNPP) on 9 October, when two Nathusius' were found at Egleton, one at Barnsdale, all males.

National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project survey

A survey was held at Rutland Water and Burley Wood on 9 October (see above) with four teams erecting harp traps at Egleton, Hambleton Peninsula, Burley and Barnsdale Woods. A total of 36 bats of six species was handled, including nine Nathusius' pipistrelles. See species accounts below.

Species summary

Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*. The only record for the period was of foraging bats at Teal Hide, Lyndon Hill Nature Reserve on 6.9.

Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*. The Natterer's bat colony at Stoke Dry church was counted in June, with 20 bats emerging on 7.6 and 17 on 19.6. Although the number is substantially lower than it used to be in the late 1990s, this is probably still a maternity roost. Two male Natterer's bats were caught at Egleton during trapping for the NNPP on 9.10. Four males were caught the same evening at Barnsdale Wood.

Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*. During the NNPP survey one male whiskered bat was caught at Egleton on 9.10, one male in Burley Wood and a female was caught in Barnsdale Wood.

Brown Long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*. The only long-eared bats recorded during the period were two females caught in the harp traps at Barnsdale Wood on 9.10.

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Common pipistrelles were heard on a few occasions in my garden in Oakham and there were small numbers foraging at Gibbet Gorse and Teal Hide, Lyndon, on 6.9. One was found in Box BW1 at Burley Wood on 13.9 and a single male was trapped at Egleton on 9.10.

Soprano Pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*. Numerous soprano pipistrelles were at Lyndon on 6.9, 13 bats were in bat boxes in Burley Wood on 13.9 and there were seven in boxes at Egleton on 24.9 including two probable mating pairs. Seventeen bats were caught in the harp traps during the NNPP survey on 9.10 as follows: four males at Egleton, two males and two females at Hambleton peninsula, two males in Burley Wood, five males and two females at Barnsdale Wood.

Nathusius' pipistrelle *P. nathusii*. Two males were caught at Egleton on 9.10 including one caught and ringed during the bat box check there that afternoon. A male and two females were caught at Hambleton peninsula; a male and a female at Burley Wood and a female at Barnsdale. It is interesting to note that from experience so far of recapturing ringed individuals, it appears that the Nathusius' pipistrelles in this area do not move between sites, even from one year to the next, but of course this is only a small number of bats on which to base this conclusion.

Noctule bat *Nyctalus noctula*. The only record for the period was of a distant noctule heard flying over fields on the south side of Lyndon Hill Nature Reserve, near Gibbet Gorse.




Bat rescue: 'This Daubenton is a lovely chap, very calm. Unfortunately, he doesn't seem to be able to fly, and I think his teeth are in a state of decline as he doesn't eat whole mealworms, just chews them enough to extract the 'juice'. For some reason he has very long toe-nails and gets caught up on the carpet when he lands and even on cloth gloves when I handle him, and I am not sure if I trim them whether he will be able to cling on at all. For these reasons he has remained in care.'

RNHS Calendar 2018

A big thank you to everybody who sent in photographs. Let's do it again next year!

WINNERS

OVERALL WINNER, February	Roger Favell	Kingfisher – this lucky shot was taken in the Welland valley between Tinwell and Ketton in February 2016	
January	Alistair Lawrence	Redwing in frost	
March	Linda Biddle	Frogs in garden pond	
April	Dave Needham	Osprey with large trout, Fort Henry	
May	Peter Scott	Small Copper on ragwort at Ketton Quarry	
June	Martin Banham	Meadow scene	
July	David Cotter	Wasp carrying grub. Photo is part of a study of wasps' nest over summer of 2017, involving 5000 photos – one hour per day watching wasps!	
August	Roger Favell	Adder sunbathing at Ketton Quarry March 2016	
September	David Cotter	Fox in grassland	
October	Gay & Mike Griffin	Harlequin Ladybirds emerging from hibernation on plant pot, Normanton	
November	Peter Scott	Great White Egret, Rutland Water, one of two interacting over Lagoon 3, then both flew away to Lagoon 2	
December	Linda Biddle	Fallow deer crossing field South of Pickworth Wood with sprinkling of snow	
Included in calendar, Cover	David Needham	Sunset over Rutland water	



Also judged a winner, but unfortunately not included in calendar because photograph did not reproduce well in calendar format:

Ann Tomlinson Rose sawfly caterpillar on Rose, August 2017

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