

I trust this newsletter finds you all safe and well and that you are managing to find projects to occupy you in this latest lock down.

Some members have managed to join our ZOOM presentations which have been organised by Linda Biddle. A huge thanks and pat on the back must go to Linda for all her hard work in organising, understanding and mastering the technology to enable us all to attend these talks. Anthony Biddle, I know, has been on hand to help those less able to 'click' with as much abandon as is required to get connected, so, a big thank you to Anthony as well.

Ben Devine gave the first talk of the 'season' on fungi, which was first class and very interesting. The November presentation was scheduled to be by Jack Perkes about Birds of the water, but he had to cancel as he was hoping to get married, a very good reason we all thought, so Linda Biddle stepped in and gave her wonderful talk and update about water voles. This means that Jack will now do his talk in March 2021.

Please consider viewing the next Zoom presentation which will be the Members Meeting on December 1st 7pm for 7. 30pm Linda Biddle will send you an invitation before the event. Please let any member of the committee know if you need help in joining.

We have had to cancel the outdoor walks for the time being and will rearrange them as soon as we know, like the rest of the population, what the state of play is in December.

Meanwhile anybody who would like to go out for a walk and a chat on a one to one and very informal basis can contact either myself or Linda Biddle and we will arrange something - all ages and abilities catered for.

I know I'm preaching to the converted but a spell in the countryside and fresh air no matter what the weather is so good for everyone's well being.

Stay safe one and all and please stay connected.

Linda Clark. (Secretary)



Pipe Club (tbe) Wing. L.Clark

Subscriptions Due.

Margaret our trusty treasurer would like to remind everyone that their subscriptions are now due for 2021.

I know that this year has been very difficult for everyone but we would hate to lose even one member.

Your committee has tried very hard to continue producing Fieldfare and organise online meetings. The Recorders have continued their work as much as they have been able to 'Virus' permitting.

This month I have managed to persuade Carolyn Baxter, our Fieldfare editor, to put fingers to keyboard and write a little piece about herself. I know you will all enjoy the following, it is absolutely beautifully written. Thank you Carolyn and thank you for taking on the editorship of our magazine. I can't wait to meet your fabulous dog.

I think the most vivid images in your life, end up being the ones that imprint on your earliest memories; those of the people and places surrounding your tiny little world. For me, the people were my mother and grandmother, both grew up in the beautiful Berkshire countryside. I clearly remember the country verges where the cow parsley was taller than I was and where my mother taught my sister and I the common names of the wayside flowers - Heart's-ease, Lady's smock, Foxgloves, Columbine. The names were enchanting, conjuring up a world of fairies and elves. And then the places. As a little girl, I lived in a Chateau just in front of Fontainebleau forest and just behind the river Seine. I remember an endless garden of trees and bluebells. I have loved the magic of the woods ever since.

My first Chemistry lesson at secondary school was a huge eureka moment for me. Invisible electrons spinning around protons and neutrons in their own invisible orbits? Oh wow! There is another universe to explore out there! Biology. What do you mean "We eat chicken and cows' muscles"? Physics. "I know gravity is like glue, but if a fly can fly off a tennis ball, why can't birds fly off the Earth and into space?" Life suddenly became so much more complicated and exciting. There were so many questions that needed answering. I was totally hooked.

Life after school was not quite so promising though. Three years working in the pharmacy department at Huntingdon Research Centre (now Huntingdon Life Sciences), making up the LD 50's (the amount of substance needed to kill half the number of animals in an experiment) was not the kind of place I wanted to be. Monks Wood was just up the road but there were no places available at the time, so I left HRC and joined a Government research establishment near St. Ives, working in the electron microscopy unit until I had to leave to start a family.

I can't say who, or what has continued to fuel my interest in natural history really, but there is never a truer saying - "The more you learn - the less you know - and the more you ask - the deeper you go". Whenever I am out in the country, away from cars and concrete, the natural world seems always to put you back in your place. The feeling, almost of fear when

you look up and encounter the power of some brooding Scottish mountain somewhere in the highlands, or look down and spot a tiny exquisitely made field pansy at the edge of a ploughed field. Well, I'll sing along with Louis Armstrong - What a wonderful world!



After a chance meeting between Tony Clarke and Phil Rudkin at Rutland Water Nature Reserve Tony was persuaded by Phil to e mail myself the following information for the bulletin.

Tony says that he saw this immature 4-Spotted Chaser on August 20th at RWNR Tony goes onto report that 'This of course is extremely late in the year for this particular species so I was very surprised to come across it. I put it on Naturespot and it came up as a new record, as it was outside the known flight period for (presumably) VC55.'



Photo. Immature 4 - Spotted Chaser. Tony Clarke.

What is VC 55?

As a newcomer to Rutland I must admit I find the concept of what VC55 is and its boundaries very confusing. I have done some research and have come up with the following information which I hope will be of use to others.

VC55 / Vice County 55 otherwise known as Watsonian Vice county 55 or the Biological Vice County 55.

Hewitt Cottrell Watson developed this system of vice counties when he published his 'Cybele Britannica' in 1852. The vice counties and their boundaries were based on the ancient counties of Britain. Britain has 112/113 VCs. Depending on which site one chooses to believe Wikipedia / BSBI!

The advantage to recorders of natural history is that over the years, despite any political / governmental reorganisation the boundaries of the VCs do not change, which allows the comparison of historical and modern data to be accurately compared.

Leicestershire *and* Rutland was the name of the historic county but is now known as Leicestershire *with* Rutland. VC 55 roughly follows the boundaries of the 2 counties but isn't the

same. A map of the Biological VC 55 can be found on Naturespot under 'Wild Places' I found this incredibly useful when trying to establish if something that I needed to send in to the Recorders was indeed in Rutland i.e. VC55.

After I wrote the above Phil Rudkin alerted me to an article written by Steve Woodward in the Rutland Recorder, What exactly is Vice - County 55? Steve's account is far more detailed and erudite than my own. Steve very kindly has given his permission for me to reproduce his work and if anybody should wish to read it I can send either a digital version or a hard copy. Please e mail me or give me a call on 01572 737300 / 07718381345.

Useful websites from which the above information was taken:

Wikipedia.

Naturespot; www.naturespot.org.uk

Biological Records centre brc.ac.uk

Leicestershire Environmental records centre; LRERC. leicestershire.gov.uk

There will be a ZOOM talk about the work of the LERC on 16.11.20 at 19.30 if you wish to join, one can do so by going to the Naturespot home page scroll down to get to the events/talks and follow the link.

Linda Clark.

The **book** I'm reading at the moment: Entangled by Merlin Sheldrake, about the world of fungi, absolutely riveting and a whole new world. ISBN 978-1-847-92519-0.

The **podcast** I'm catching up on: What planet are we on? Liz Bonin. The first episode didn't really teach me anything but had thought provoking discussions. Subsequent episodes are very interesting with lots of discussions tips and facts. Well worth, I think, a catch up. BBC sounds.

Linda Clark.

FREEBIES.

Rutland Recorder 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017.

Annual Reports. 2009 through and including 2015 (50th anniversary edition)

Donated by Richard and Linda Brown who for many years were active members of the society. They are moving to Devon and we wish them well in their new home.

Copies of The Seek - Alistair Lawrence & Patrick Mann.

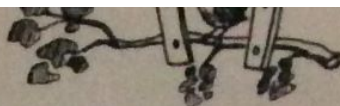
Copies of Rutland Natural History Society 25 years.

Contact: Linda Clark and I will arrange to get them to you.

And Finally.....

My thanks to Peter Scott for sorting file sizes - couldn't do it without you Peter.

Fieldfare



Journal of the

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Joint Secretaries :

Mr. & Mrs. J. R. Stapleton,

17 Alexandra Road,

STAMFORD.

No. 10 (22) November, 1968

Hon. Treasurer :

Mr. J. A. Goddard,

72 Cold Overton Road,

OAKHAM, Rutland.

Last year's Natural History Quiz was so enjoyed by all who attended, that it was decided to hold a similar function this year. It will take place on Tuesday, 3rd December in the W.I. Room, Gaol Street, Oakham, commencing at 7.45 p.m., admission 1/6d. There will be a Bring and Buy for Society funds and free refreshments will be served. Suitable gifts for the Bring and Buy will be welcome from those who are unable to attend, so please let the Secretaries or any member of the Committee have them. Those members who attended last year will recall the quality of the refreshments, and will no doubt this year encourage their friends to partake of an evening with the R.N.H.S.

A Member of the Leicestershire and Rutland Ornithological Society has approached the Secretaries regarding bird sightings. The LROS issue an excellent bird report each year, but do not receive many reports for East Rutland. It has been requested that members submit their sightings to the Hon. Secretaries. As will be appreciated, if sightings of birds in this area of the County were reported, our Society would greatly benefit, as Roy Hunter's ornithological records would also depict a fuller picture of bird population in Rutland.

The Scottish Field Studies Association has sent details of Courses to be held in Scotland during 1969, with particular reference to natural history courses to be held at the Kindrogan Field Centre in Perthshire. If any members would like further details of this Association's Courses, please contact the Secretaries.

The Field Outing to Cley in September was very successful, despite the appalling weather conditions. Some interesting species were seen, some of the less common included Gannet, Roseate Tern, Shore Lark, Arctic Skua and a possible Richard's Pipit, unfortunately we were not able to get this confirmed.

Approval has been given by the Rutland County Council for the Society to take over a stretch of roadside verge near Luffenham Heath for conservation purposes. It has also been agreed not to spray certain other verges in the County. This new project could be an exciting new challenge for our Society, and a Sub-Committee will shortly be formed. Further details will be issued in the next Fieldfare.

FIELD NOTES: SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

Eye Brook: Uppingham S.F.C. report up to 30 Little Grebe during September. Wigeon had begun to arrive on 15th September and had built up to 30-40 by the 28th September. A Gadwall was seen on 15th September and one Shoveler on 21st. An unusually large number of Snipe: 250plus were present on 21st September. Ruff were observed on 18th. Black Terns were moving through on the return passage throughout the month with some Common/Arctic as well. 2 Sandwich Terns appeared on 21st September. Fieldfares and 15 Bewick Swans were reported on 20th October and on the 6th the Field Meeting, under the leadership of Jack Otter, saw the first of the wintering Goosanders arrive. On 30th September, Miss Cooper was called to view a "Hawk" which was sitting on a member's windowsill. It turned out to be a Kestrel with the left eye missing. As

there were definite signs of a wound, it had obviously been lost in some sort of accident; apart from this, the bird appeared to be all right. The same observer also reports a Greenfinch feeding to young on 6th October! near Martinthorpe - a very late brood this must have been. Dr. Hutton has recently spent a holiday in Yugoslavia. On 10th October on the island of Korcula, she saw Swifts, Swallows, House Martins, Stonechats and Whitethroats, all possibly on their Southward migration. Dr. Hutton also observed numbers of Sombre Tits and Three Rufous Bush Chats.

RARE BUTTERFLIES IN RUTLAND

The Loughborough Naturalists' Club report that two of Britain's rarest butterflies have appeared in Rutland and in appreciable numbers - the Black Hairstreak and the Chequered Skipper. Not content with this, Marbled White, Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Duke of Burgundy Fritillary and Green Hairstreak have also been seen. There must be few places in this country today that could produce such a wealth of butterflies. Let us hope that they might increase in numbers in the coming years, if the site is left undisturbed.

RARE VISITORS TO BRITAIN ON THE INCREASE

1968 has been a remarkable year for the increased numbers of rare birds that have visited these islands, with reports of a Bluethroat nesting for the first time. Unfortunately, the nest was destroyed by predators. Redwings and Fieldfares have been nesting in Scotland and the Snowy Owls have again nested at Fetlar raising three young this year. Five young Ospreys have been reared from two eyries. Savi's Warbler has nested again and there has been an unconfirmed report of this species in Rutland - at South Luffenham! A "huge irruption" of Nutcrackers has been reported and has been reported from many counties with a report of successful nesting at Stroud in Gloucestershire. If this is so, it will be the first time in history that the species has done so. The increase in the numbers of Great Reed Warbler, Cetti's Warbler, Bonelli's Warbler, Sub-alpine Warbler in recent years may lead to these species breeding in this country.

MAN AND INSECTICIDES VERSUS BIRDS

An article in the Sunday Times on the Black Faced Dioch, an African species of the weaver bird family, says that this is the world's most destructive bird and can ravage a field of crops in no time. It is nicknamed the Locust bird because of the great rapidity in which it can devastate crops. When an emergent nation's economy is almost dependent on its crops, we realise that measures of some sort have to be taken, but when one reads of 80 million of these birds being killed in five months in Senegal, and that South Africa has poisoned 400 million by spraying parathion on the crops, and with a total slaughter rate of 100 million per year, we can begin to write another species off the map.

BOOKSHELF

This month sees the publication of a book related to the above subject: The Problems of Birds as Pests, edited by R. K. Murton and E. N. Wright. It is published by the Academic Press which emphasises British bird problems.

