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NOTICEBOARD

Membership Card with Summer Programme

Your Membership Card comes with this *Fieldfare*, one for each member. Please sign it straight away (juniors should sign the card/s of their parent/s) and **always carry it if you visit Eyebrook (see below) or Burley Wood and take it with you when buying or ordering books from Uppingham Sports & Books.** Please destroy your old card. Enjoy an outdoor summer!

In September you will receive another card with the winter programme through to next April, then the next will come in March 2008. This means you will know about events in advance and helps with administration, but renewals of membership for 2008 must still be made promptly on or before 1 January 2008, by Standing Order or personal payment.

Eyebrook Reservoir

Access to Eyebrook Reservoir is still via the fishing lodge, which from the 1st April is open at weekends as well as weekdays from 8 am until 1 hour after sunset. Please be sure to book in at the fishing lodge and if possible to sign out so Andy Miller the warden knows that you have left safely.

Rutland Glow-worms in imminent danger

A planning application for affordable housing is due to be heard very shortly by Rutland CC's Planning Committee. The site is in a field on Back Road, Barrowden, directly behind Rutland Roadside Verge Nature Reserve 17, designated a wild-life site because it holds a small colony of Glow-worms, as does the field itself. Any development would, in my informed experience, make the colony's survival highly unlikely. Our Society has objected. If you care that Rutland should keep its characteristic biodiversity into the future, it might help to write to the Planning Officer, Rutland County Council, Catmose, Oakham LE15 6HP, re Planning Application no. FUL/2007/0152; or email enquires@rutland.gov.uk.

Linda Worrall, Glow-worm Recorder

▶▶▶▶ **Derbyshire Orchid trip – book now – see pages 2, 4.**

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Collyweston Great Wood

Those of you who joined us last year to walk through Collyweston Great Wood will remember what a wonderful display of spring flowers we saw. It is possible to obtain a permit from Natural England (ex English Nature) to allow access to the wood at any time. If you don't already have a permit and wish to do so please give your name and address to me, Mary Nourish, by phone 01572 823677 or by email: beaumontchase@farming.co.uk or you can apply to Natural England direct: gillian.gilbert@naturalengland.org.uk

Mary Nourish, Programme Secretary

Sunday June 24 Orchids at Bonsall Moor and Buxton Country Park

We need to count heads for the coach! Please book as soon as possible, and at the latest by 30th April, for this full-day trip to see orchids in Derbyshire. Details in January *Fieldfare*. Please send slip on page 20 + cheque, made out to Rutland Natural History Society, for £12.50 (for each person), to me.

Ann Tomlinson, RNHS Chairman

Annual General Meeting, 6 March 2007

63 members attended and Sir Clifford Boulton, our President, took the Chair. Unfortunately Ann Tomlinson was ill, but her report for 2006 was read by the President. This concluded: *'The Society has a healthy membership of over 300, finances are robust and we aim to continue to use our influence to help safeguard our natural heritage. All members are vital in this. Through your reports you are able to spot the problems, trends and developments so that the Society can act – we need to keep on being eagle-eyed!'* Indoor and Outdoor Meetings had been well attended, and thanks were given to everyone involved in all aspects of the Society. Elected for 2007 were: President: Sir Clifford Boulton; Chairman: Ann Tomlinson; Secretary: Linda Worrall; Treasurer: Derek Lee; Membership Secretary: Graham Worrall; Programme Secretary: Mary Nourish; *Fieldfare* Editor: Hendrina Ellis; other Committee Members: Linda Biddle, Gill Chiverton, Jenny Harris, Andrew Lear, Frances Lee, Joe Nourish. Badges were given to

Committee newcomers Hendrina Ellis and Gill Chiverton; Gill, Phil Rudkin and Roy Lemmon also received badges as new Recorders and Joy Paterson and Linda Worrall were surprised and delighted when presented with bouquets on relinquishing their long-held posts of Publicity Secretary and *Fieldfare* Editor. We then watched an RSPB video of birds on Orkney, where even Blackbirds nest on the ground as there are no trees on these windswept islands!

Speakers and venues

I am still interested in getting suggestions from Members for speakers that they have heard and would like to recommend or places they have visited that may have been overlooked. I can be contacted by phone or e-mail, details as before.

Mary Nourish, Programme Secretary

<http://www.fungi4schools.org/>

This is a new educational website by the British Mycological Society. It addresses the problem: *'The national curriculum appears not to know that fungi exist'*. David Moore, in the latest issue of *Mycologist*, says *'fungi form what is arguably the largest kingdom of higher organisms on the planet and we are surrounded by them and dependent on them, every hour of every day or our lives'*, yet the word *Fungus* just does not appear in the Programme of Study for Science! The new website is intended to help fungi to be used for teaching many areas of the current curriculum and in cross-curricular activities. It is free to download. There are also links to other fungus-related resources, such as Roger Phillips' field guide *Mushrooms*. Even if you are not a teacher but are online and interested in fungi, it could prove useful to have a look. Please let me know what you think of it?

Linda Worrall, Mycology Recorder

Photographs and drawings

Please feel free to send in photographs and drawings for possible reproduction in *Fieldfare*. In this issue, TB = Terry Barnett, GC = Gill Chilverton, to whom many thanks.

Hendrina Ellis, Fieldfare editor
email: hendrina@efgh.demon.co.uk

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

Indoor meetings are held at Burley Road School, Oakham. There is a charge of 40p for tea/coffee/biscuits. Directions to outdoor meetings are given below.

Sunday March 25, FORT HENRY PONDS

10.30 am

Our bird recorder Terry Mitcham will lead this walk around what is part of his familiar birding territory to see wildfowl and, who knows, an early chiffchaff!

Meet at the Lakes, SK 950120.

Tuesday April 3, BIRD MIGRATION

7.30 pm, Burley Road School

Mysteries and marvels of migration, one of the wonders of the natural world.

Peter Holden of the RSPB will be telling us stories not only about bird migration, but also about mammals, insects and amphibians!

Sunday April 15, BURLEY WOOD

10.30 am

A woodland walk looking for birds led by enthusiast Phil Rudkin. Possibly seeing or hearing some of the woodpeckers, the subject of his earlier talk, and hopefully some of our earlier migrants.

Meet at SK 892093, on the A606 between Oakham and Barnsdale Hill; park on the verge near the entrance gate to the wood.

Thursday April 26, FOX COVERT, BARROWDEN

6.30 pm

A new venue for the RNHS to look for spring flowers as we take a gentle stroll around this small woodland owned by the Burghley estate with expert botanist Graham Worrall.

On Explorer 234 at SK 970026 you will see Barrowden Road. You should park along this unmade road and walk to the assembly point at the Oilpipe service area at SK 968023.

Wednesday May 2, GLAPTHORNE COW PASTURES

7.30 pm

Take a walk around this mature woodland in the company of experienced volunteer warden Dick Smith as you listen to warblers, nightingales and other bird song. The reserve is a nesting site for nightingales and three or four pairs usually breed here.

Meet at the reserve entrance TL 005093. Park at an angle on the wide verge on the farm track opposite the reserve. A possible route from Oakham: Take the A6003 to the A47, turn left towards Peterborough. Take the A43 from Duddington roundabout towards Kettering, turning off at Little Weldon onto the A427 towards Oundle. In Upper Benefield turn left onto minor road to Glapthorne. The reserve is on the left of this road.

Sunday May 20, SAUVEY CASTLE, NR WITHCOTE

10.30 am

Dr Clive Jones will lead us around this substantial earthwork in the upper reaches of the Chater Valley. The site of a motte and bailey castle abandoned soon after 1327. It lies in delightful partially wooded countryside where the Chater and its feeder tributaries cut deeply into the Middle Lias clays. The area is of botanical and ornithological interest, until recently the site of breeding redstarts.

Directions: Proceed for 6 miles from Oakham railway crossing along the Leicester road through Braunston. Half a mile beyond Withcote Hall on the lefthand side, look out for Bridleway sign on the lefthand side at the bottom of the dip. Park just before this on the wide verges on either side of the road. Be careful as this road can be busy with fast-moving traffic. Meet at Explorer 233 MR 787056.

Tuesday June 12, CHESTNUT FARM, TEIGH

7 pm

Enjoy an evening walk around George Morley's farm with Terry Mitcham as leader. Barn owls have nested here in the past and are often still seen, as are Red Kite and many other birds. Park in the paddock near Sycamore House where George Morley lives. As you enter Teigh from the Ashwell direction take the first turn on the left and the house is first one on the left. Refreshments will be served in the garden at the end of the evening.

Sunday June 24, BONSALL MOOR AND BUXTON COUNTRY PARK **all-day meeting**

Please book as soon as possible, and at the latest by 30th April, for this full-day trip to see orchids in Derbyshire. Details in January Fieldfare. Please send slip on page 20 + cheque, made out to Rutland Natural History Society, for £12.50 (for each person), to Ann Tomlinson.

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust: Rutland group

See www.lwrt.org.uk or phone 0116 272 0444 in office hours, for other events in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Sunday May 20, WALK AT LAUNDE BIG WOOD **2.00 pm**

Join Trust conservation officer Dr Andy Lear on a guided walk through this ancient woodland with its rich ground flora.

Please park on the verge at the brow of the hill on the road between Loddington and Launde Abbey (SK 795035). There is then a ten-minute walk to reach the reserve which may involve potentially difficult and muddy terrain.

Sunday June 10, WALK AT MERRY'S MEADOWS **2.00 pm**

Join senior conservation officer Jenny Harris for a guided walk at this neutral grassland site. The reserve has a rich diversity of flora which includes a good display of green-winged orchids. The reserve is 1.5 km north of Greetham (SK 938157). Please park near the T-junction directly opposite Great Lane (part of the Viking Way) then follow the track 400 metres to the entrance.

Sunday July 1 BLOODY OAKS **2.00 pm**

Join Dr Anthony Biddle for a guided walk through this SSSI site where the principal habitat is the wildlife-rich limestone grassland (SK 970108).

Please park on the verge opposite the reserve entrance which is on the minor road which leaves the A606 and passes through Empingham.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust: Bourne group

See www.lincstrust.org.uk or phone 01507 526 677 in office hours, for more details and other events in Lincolnshire.

Sunday April 29, DOLE WOOD OPEN DAY **10.30 am–4.30 pm**

Bluebells, butterflies and bird song – experience an ancient woodland in spring. South west of Thurlby, 4 km south of Bourne (TF 094161).

Sunday April 29, TORTOISESHELL WOOD OPEN DAY **2.00 pm**

Guided walks from 2.45 pm. East of the A1 towards Castle Bytham (SK 963197).

Saturday May 19, WILDLIFE OF LAWN WOOD NATURE RESERVE **2.00 pm**

Near Castle Bytham. Park by the reserve entrance, off Couthorpe Lane (SK 993193). We will be looking round the wood and the two meadows, recording what we see and updating the species list.

Saturday June 16, WILDLIFE OF SWINSTEAD VALLEY **2.00 pm**

Meet in Swinstead village (TF 010214). Park cars on the main road in the village, somewhere towards the western end.

Sunday June 17, BASTON FEN OPEN DAY **10.30am – 4.30 pm**

Wildlife-rich fenland landscape that has all but disappeared. Baston Fen entrance 1 km south-west of the junction of the Baston–Pode Hole and Bourne–Tongue End roads (TF 145176).

WEATHER SUMMARY John P Hollands, Wittering met.

I have chosen to extend the detail covering sunshine. The duration of sunshine has a bearing on maximum temperature as well as being an indication of cloud cover. The added information will aid in determining whether a year was 'good bad or indifferent'. It is possible to experience a cold month, but despite that, and depending on different factors including airmass, it could have been sunnier than the norm.

January 2007

Surface wind January 2007 began with a mainly West to South Westerly moderate to strong surface wind with occasional gusts to gale or near gale. Overnight 1st/2nd the surface wind moderated to become mainly Westerly, gentle to moderate with gusts to strong. This run of wind persisted until the 7th when it backed and freshened to become mainly South Westerly fresh to strong with gusts to gale force. This wind regime was the predominate type for the rest of the month but I will note two particularly windy days. During the 11th the surface wind freshened to become mainly gale force at 0300A, this wind regime persisted until late evening. The windiest hour was 1200A-1300A with a mean speed through the hour of 31 KT (35 mph) and a gust of 57 KT (65 mph). The 18th was even windier. The mainly South Westerly surface wind increased to gale force at 0400Z and persisted until 1900Z. The windiest hour was 1400-1500A with a mean speed through the hour of 43 KT (49 mph) and a gust to 67 KT (77 mph). The highest hourly gusts exceed 50 KT (57 mph) between 1400A and 1800A. The highest gust recorded at Wittering was in January 1976 when a gust of 94 KT (107 mph) was recorded.

Temperature January 2007 was a mild month with an average day maximum temperature of 9.2 °C, significantly warmer than the long-term mean of 6.0 °C. This made January 2007 the warmest on record at Wittering. The warmest day was the 12th with an afternoon maximum of 13.7 °C, just short of the absolute maximum for January of 14.0 °C recorded in 1975. By way of a contrast, during the coldest day, the 23rd, the temperature rose to only 2.5 °C.

The average night minimum during January 2007 was 4.4 °C, well above the long-term mean of 1.3 °C. The coldest night was 25th/26th with a low of -2.3 °C, thankfully considerably warmer than the absolute minimum for January of -14.4 °C recorded in 1982.

There were 74.0 hours of bright sunshine which makes January 2007 a sunny month, as the average is 52.8 hours. The sunniest January on record was 2002 with 102.0 hours.

Rainfall January 2007 was a comparatively wet month with 61.0 mm (2.40 ins) of precipitation as compared to the long-term mean of 48.5 mm (1.91 ins). The wettest day was the 9th with 24.4 mm (0.96 ins). I used the term 'precipitation' as there were 4 days when snowfall was recorded, two of which had snow lying.

► *During January 2006 the average day maximum was 6.1 °C, the average night minimum 2.2 °C and the rainfall 17.2 mm (0.68 ins). There were 47.8 hours of bright sunshine.*

February 2007

Surface wind February 2007 began with a predominately Westerly light surface wind. This run of wind persisted until the 7th when it backed to become predominately East to South Easterly, light to moderate. This run of wind persisted until the 21st when the surface wind veered to become predominately South to South West light to moderate. Later, during the late evening of the 27th, the surface wind freshened from the South West to become mainly fresh to strong with gusts to gale force. This blustery flow persisted until the end of

the month. The highest gust recorded during February 2007 was 42 KT (48 mph) at 1631 Z on the 28th.

Temperature February 2007 was another month when the monthly average temperature was significantly above the mean. During February the average day maximum temperature was 8.8 °C, demonstrably warmer than the mean of 6.4 °C. This was despite the fact that the maximum day temperatures didn't exceed 5.5 °C between the 5th and 10th. Indeed, the

afternoon temperature struggled to only 0.5 °C on the 8th. The warmest day was the 1st with a maximum of 12.4 °C, rather cooler than the absolute maximum for February of 18.5 °C recorded in 1990.

The average night minimum temperature was 2.8 °C, much warmer than the long-term mean of 1.0 °C. The coldest night was 6th/7th when the temperature dropped to -6.9 °C, thankfully 'warmer' than the absolute minimum for February of -12.8 °C recorded in 1956. The warmest night in February 2007 was 23rd/24th

when a minimum of 7.5 °C was recorded, that was PLUS 7.5 °C.

73.8 hours of bright sunshine was recorded in February 2007, close to the mean of 71.1 hours. The sunniest February on record was in 1998 when 123.3 hours of bright sunshine was recorded at Wittering.

Rainfall February was relatively wet with 54.1 mm (2.13 ins) of precipitation as compared to the long-term mean of 36.8 mm (1.45 ins). The wettest day was the 9th with 15.0 mm (0.59 ins). Lying snow was recorded on the 8th and 9th with a maximum depth of 3 cm.

- *During February 2006 the average day maximum was 6.2 °C, the average night minimum was 1.5 °C, there were 62.7 hours of bright sunshine and the rainfall was 35.0 mm (1.38 ins). It might be of interest to note that, statistically, February is the driest month of the year and September is the wettest.*

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

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



January/February 2007

January was pretty quiet herpetologically but the middle of February saw an increase in activity of all four species of Rutland's amphibians.

The first record of **Frogs** was from the Worralls' pond in Barrowden where they were croaking on February 10th and continued to do so through the rest of the month – pairing on 25th. Frogs were also reported from Barrow and Wing in the following fortnight. The first spawn was reported from ponds in Barrowden and Cottesmore on 25th and 26th February. A single **Toad** was seen in Ketton on about 12th February.

The first **Great Crested Newt** was a road casualty in Edith Weston on 27th January and one that was disturbed in Lyddington when a pond was cleaned. One was seen in my garden pond in Wing on 1st February and more were seen in Lyddington on 25th. **Smooth Newts** were first seen in Wing on 1st February in my garden pond and were also seen in Lyddington on 25th. A single very small one was found sheltering in a rabbit scrape in my garden on 28th.

My thanks to the following who provided records: V Arnold, M & S Iannantuoni, F & D Lee, J Ostler, A Tomlinson and L & G Worrall.

BIRD REPORT compiled by T. Mitcham

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



January/February 2007

The year began well with the remarkable flock of Great Northern Divers still present at Rutland Water and a Black-necked Grebe found early in January. Little Egrets lingered there and Smew appeared at both reservoirs. Waders' numbers held up well until higher water levels triggered a move. Scarce visitors included Short-eared Owl, Raven and Hawfinch, with Stonechats and Blackcaps well distributed. Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers were noted; but no Siskins and few Lesser Redpolls were reported.

My thanks to the following for their records: T Appleton, T Caldicott, A Chiverton, G Chiverton, Dr C Gallimore, J Harris, J Kendrick, A L Lawrence, F & D Lee, B Lynch, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, L Nicholls, J W Nourish, D & B Parker, K Potterton, J S & J Rogers, P Rudkin, W J Stevenson, A R & M A Thorpe, D Whitehead, D Willett, G & L Worrall.

Whooper Swan. Fourteen flew through at RW (Egleton) on 25.01.

Egyptian Goose. Apparently starting to spread with a pair near Brooke on 08.01 and in February and a pair near Leighfield Fishponds on 14.01 and 04.02.

Shelduck. One or two were at Fort Henry Ponds (FHP) from 02.01. Three were at EBR on 10.02 and one was at Leighfield Fishponds on 17.02.

Gadwall. Good numbers at FHP peaked at 88 on 10.02.

Teal. A maximum of 26 (10.02) were at FHP during January and February.

Pintail. A pair noted at Leighfield Fishponds on 11.02.

Shoveler. Ten were at FHP on 02.01.

Smew. Up to four males were at EBR from 01.01 to the end of February. A redhead was at RW (Egleton) on 20.01 and 24.01.

Goosander. Five were at RW (Egleton) on 24.01, with thirteen there on 15.02. A brown-headed bird was at EBR on 15.02 but the best counts were from Leighfield Fishponds, with nineteen on 04.02 and thirteen on 17.02.

Ruddy Duck. Very low numbers are now recorded, with a female at RW (South Arm) on 16.02 but none found on the count on 18.02.

Red-legged Partridge. Coveys of sixteen and thirty were reported from EBR (31.01) and Leighfield Fishponds (11.02).

Great Northern Diver. A flock of up to seven frequented the main water area of RW during both months. They were best seen as they gathered to roost in the late afternoon.

Black-necked Grebe. One was found at RW on 02.01 and remained to at least mid-February.

Little Egret. One or two remained at RW until at least 26.01 and singles were at Leighfield Fishponds on 04.02 and 25.02.

Red Kite. Very well reported, with singles or pairs at Exton, RW, Geeston, Pickworth, Wing and Morcott. Although often difficult to see, records of tagged birds are of great interest to the Fineshade team – please note the colour and any letters or numbers visible.

Sparrowhawk. Gardens were visited in Stamford, Wing, Lyddington and Oakham. Display was noted over Pickworth Wood and Wardley Wood from 21.01.

Buzzard. Good numbers of displaying birds were recorded, with three over Horn Mill on 19.01 and five over Egleton on 02.02. Single birds were widespread over woodland and farmland.

Peregrine. One was seen in flight between Wing and Morcott on 15.01.

Oystercatcher. One was at RW (Egleton) on 15.02, with two noted on 18.02.

Golden Plover. At EBR there were twelve on 07.01 and 22 on 28.01. RW had 150 on 21.01, 600+ on 20.02 and 67 on 18.02. Seven were noted near Mounts Lodge on 11.02.

Lapwing. Significant flocks included 1356 at RW on 21.01 and 1605 on 18.02. There were 200 near Barrowden on 28.01 and eighty near Mounts Lodge on 11.02.

Little Stint. One remained at RW until at least 29.01, with two reported on the latter date.

Dunlin. Present at both reservoirs throughout both months with max. counts of 98 at EBR on 28.01 and fifty at RW on 13.01.

Ruff. Six were at RW on 02.01, but numbers declined with only two noted by 21.02.

Snipe. Despite the abundant soggy habitat only one was noted away from RW; at Manton on 04.02. RW counts were two on 21.01 and 42 on 18.02.

Woodcock. One or two were flushed in Tunneley Wood, Priors Coppice and near Brooke between 02.01 and 09.02.

Black-tailed Godwit. One was at RW (Egleton) between 12.01 and 24.01.

Curlew. Five remained at RW throughout both months. Breeding calls were heard on 15.02.

Redshank. Good numbers remained at RW with 34 on 21.01 and 27 on 18.02. Several often tried to roost together on tiny islands in the lagoons.

Green Sandpiper. The only record was of one at Beaumont Chase Farm in late Feb.

- Collared Dove.** 24 were counted in a Lyddington garden on 07.01. Numbers in many areas seem to be declining – they are a favourite prey of Sparrowhawks.
- Barn Owl.** Singles were noted near Wireless Hill (South Luffenham) on 08.01, Barrowden on 09.01 and Steadfold Lane on 24.02.
- Little Owl.** Two were calling at Barrowden on 29.01 and one was at EBR on 13.02.
- Tawny Owl.** Regularly heard calling in Tunneley Wood in daytime during both months and one also heard calling in Clipsham Park Wood at lunchtime on 11.02.
- Short-eared Owl.** One was watched hunting near Leigh Lodge on 24.01.
- Green Woodpecker.** Seen regularly at FHP and Exton Park in both months with other records from Lyddington and Clipsham Quarries.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker.** Still a popular visitor to gardens with reports from Oakham, Wing, Pickworth (three birds!) and Barrowden. Visited feeders in Tunneley Wood, where drumming was heard from 27.01. Up to three were noted in chases around Hambleton Wood on 14.01, with display also noted on this date by a pair in Clipsham Park Wood.
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.** One, possibly two, were heard calling near Hambleton Wood on 04.02. At Tunneley Wood one was watched and heard drumming on 11.02 and heard nearby on 16.02.
- Sky Lark.** Seven were in song over winter cereals on 16.02.
- Sand Martin.** By far the earliest bird we have reported was over the lagoons at RW on 23.02.
- Meadow Pipit.** Twelve were noted on setaside in Exton Park on 16.02.
- Grey Wagtail.** The only record was a single at Geeston Sewage Works on 07.01.
- Stonechat.** One or two were regular at RW (Egleton) throughout both months, with two pairs reported on 01.01. A female was at FHP on 02.02, with a pair at EBR on 24.01 and a female there on 13.02.
- Blackbird.** Full song was noted from many Stamford birds on 04.02. Fifty-four were counted on the Egleton reserve on 13.02, double the observer's usual count.
- Fieldfare.** Some large flocks were reported in January but numbers declined in February. January flocks included 300 at Wakerley Bridge (01.01), 150 on cereals at Wytchley Warren (07.01) and 150 near Barrowden (28.01). The largest February flock was of 200 in Exton Park on 04.02. About 60 visited Barrowden gardens during the brief snowy period on 09.02. Numbers began to increase again at the end of February with c100 near Barrowden.
- Song Thrush.** An encouraging twenty-two were on the Egleton reserve on 29.01, with many in song.
- Redwing.** Noted in smaller numbers than Fieldfare, with flocks of up to fifty reported from Wakerley Bridge, Clipsham Hall, Medwell's Quarry, Normanton Lodge and Barrowden gardens up to 01.02. The largest flock was 110 near Manton on 04.02 and there were c40 at RW (Egleton) on 16.02.
- Blackcap.** Single males were noted in four Oakham gardens from 10.01, with females in two gardens (one as part of a pair). A male was in a Lyddington garden from 24.01 to 31.01 and a male fed in Stamford garden on 11.02 and 14.02. There was an interesting report of song from another Stamford garden on 16.02 – presumably a continental bird 'tuning-up' before migrating back to central Europe.
- Chiffchaff.** Noted at RW (Egleton) on 02.01 and 21.02, Braunston on 31.01 and Leighfield Fishponds on 25.02.
- Long-tailed Tit.** A flock of twelve were at RW (Lax Hill).
- Marsh Tit.** Regular at feeders near Braunston, in Tunneley Wood and at RW (Lax Hill). Noted also in Clipsham Park Wood and Priors Coppice, where there were eight noted on 03.02.
- Willow Tit.** An excellent spread of mainly pairs from RW (Egleton), Braunston, Brooke and Leighfield Fishponds.
- Nuthatch.** One or two were frequent at Tunneley Wood feeders throughout both months. Noted at other regular sites at Hambleton, Exton Park, Clipsham Park Wood and Yew Tree Avenue.
- Treecreeper.** Full song was heard near Wing Fishing Lakes on 01.02.
- Jay.** Several noted at Ketton Quarry Reserve on 02.02.
- Raven.** A noisy pair flew over Priors Coppice on 26.02.

House Sparrow. An impressive 30–40 were present in an Oakham garden throughout both months.

Tree Sparrow. About 20 noted at the EBR feeder in mid-Jan. One inspected a nestbox at Wing on 01.02. and a pair were noted near Brooke on 09.02.

Brambling. Five were noted along Barnsdale Avenue on 05.01.

Goldfinch. Numbers visiting gardens seemed generally low but 24 roosted in a Lyddington garden in February.

Lesser Redpoll. Four were seen near Brooke on 14.01, one fed on nyger seed in a Stamford garden on 06.02 and four or five were in alders at RW (Eggleton) on 16.02.

Bullfinch. Well reported from Pickworth and Clipsham Park Woods, with sixteen noted at the latter site on 11.02. Other records came from a Barrowden garden (one female), Braunston and Tunneley Wood.

Hawfinch. A fortunate member watched one feeding at a rural feeding station near Braunston on 25.02.

Yellowhammer. Flocks of c20 were noted at Wakerley on 30.01 and near Priors Coppice on 26.02.

Reed Bunting. A male fed with House Sparrows on a Stamford bird table on 14.02.

National Waterfowl Counts January/February 2007

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park		Holywell Lake	
	21 Jan.	18 Feb.	21 Jan.	18 Feb.	19 Jan.	16 Feb.	13 Feb.	–
Mute Swan	55	40	42	30	7	10	2	
Pink-footed Goose							1	
Greylag Goose	114	158	62	22	56	43	79	
Canada Goose	665	374	88	83	7	5	99	
Barnacle Goose	12	12						
Egyptian Goose	25	17						
Shelduck	14	10		2	2	1		
Mandarin		2					1	
Wigeon	2182	2278	136	190	46	95		
Gadwall	163	129	28	16	65	79	28	
Teal	702	321	76	140	21	23	34	
Mallard	954	639	122	28	76	60	156	
Pintail	7	8						
Shoveler	38	95			3		1	
Pochard	78	118	37	16	3	17		
Tufted Duck	1121	654	184	188	87	55	20	
Scaup		1						
Goldeneye	273	356	45	61				
Smew	2	5	4	4				
Goosander	34	20	1	1				
Ruddy Duck	10							
Moorhen	84	89	2	3	19	22	21	
Coot	1885	936	42	38	72	63	13	

BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

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January/February 2007

January records started with **Lesser Celandine** seen at the rear gate of Seaton Church. This is always the first site for these flowers, showing that phenology is influenced by plant genes as well as 'global warming'. Two records of flowering **Spurge Laurel** were received for Verges 7 (Great Casterton) and 8 (Tolethorpe).

The most notable record was from near Belton where P Rudkin, C Jones and A Lawrence saw a **Sloe** bush in flower, but with last year's fruit still attached to the same twigs on the 24th!

Snowdrops occurred in the spinney at Cottesmore on the 11th, followed by **Winter Aconites** the next day at the same site.

February started on the 1st with **Spurge Laurel** at the roadside opposite Bloody Oaks Reserve and the next day six **Dandelions** were spotted in Burley Road, Oakham, near the bypass. Records of the plum family came thick and fast during the month but on the 25th the first **Coltsfoot** flowers were found in Wing Burrows.

Thanks to: P Ennis, C Jones, H Ellis, A Lawrence, G Worrall, J Harris, R Lemmon, G Chiverton, P Rudkin, M & S Iannantuoni.

LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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January/February 2007

Butterflies

At mid-day on January 12th, a **Red Admiral** was flying around a garden in Langham

On February 1st, one **Brimstone** and one **Peacock** were seen in Edith Weston and the following day one Red Admiral was added to that garden list. Also on February 1st two Peacocks were observed in Ketton Quarry where they were active in the sunshine.

Moths

During January, three species of moths were caught in Lyddington and the larvae of **Large Yellow Underwing** were found on forget-me-not. During February, the total number of moth species trapped rose to 16, with four **Spring Ushers** which were new for this garden. On the 25th the trap held 28 **Common Quakers**!

In Barrowden the usual trap was only operated on a couple of nights and caught five species. Temperatures vary greatly at night, even within a limited area, as was proved when an attempt was made to trap at Beaumont Chase Farm and there was a nil catch.

Two members of the Leicestershire Recording Group visited Rutland on February 17th during the early evening and caught nine species in Pickworth Great Wood, four species in Clipsham Park Wood and three species in Addah Wood.

Evidence of the presence of **Firethorn Leaf Miners** (i.e. blisters on the foodplant) was discovered at both Exton and Uppingham in late January.

A winter encounter

Angle Shades is a moth that can be found in any month of the year. Their larvae over-winter and feed in mild weather before pupating in a cocoon just under the soil but can use soft mortar in a wall if suitable ground is not readily available.

The following observations of one of these caterpillars came from Linda Worrall.

Jan. 28th A larva was found curled around the stamens of a Japanese Quince flower, the bush being situated next to the house wall. The temperature was 12 °C at mid-day. By 7 pm it was moving and appeared to eat pollen before nibbling the petals. It was observed periodically until 11.30 pm.

Jan. 29th It was found curled up in an adjacent flower having consumed one and a half petals. It was still mild at 13 °C and was seen still feeding at 6.10 pm.

Jan. 30th It was found in a different adjacent flower and several petals appeared to have been eaten. By 9 pm the temperature was only 3 °C and the caterpillar was hardly moving.

Jan. 31st The morning was cold and no further feeding had taken place over-night. At 8.15 pm the larva was discovered along a twig and was found to be 2.5 cm when extended. Between 9.30 and 10.30 pm it consumed a half petal.

Feb. 1st After a search was made the caterpillar was eventually spotted several inches away, it was tightly curled and well concealed from both people and birds of course.

Feb. 2nd A last sighting.

It will now be interesting to hear of any appearance of an imago nearby later in the spring!

Thanks to: V Arnold, R Follows, D & F Lee, R Lemmon, J Levisohn, A Russell and L Worrall.

ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

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This is my first piece for Fieldfare as the new Recorder for Orthoptera for the Society. In 2001, the Rutland Water Nature Reserve created a new recording group, covering different taxa. I was appointed the Recorder for Orthoptera for both reserves (Lyndon and Egleton), and I have amassed data for the last 6 years. I agreed to do the job if the Society could also have the records and this was accepted. Therefore, RNHS's own records, allied to the reserve records, give a good picture of the status of Grasshoppers and Crickets in Rutland.

This section is seasonal, so I am taking this opportunity to introduce members to the delights of the sight and sounds of these summer and autumn insects. To start, here is an account of all the species recorded so far in Rutland from the Society's inception in 1965. It has been forwarded (on request) to the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust for Vice County 55 (Leics and Rutland).

Introduction

Species that have always been recorded are:

Grasshoppers:

Field Grasshopper

Meadow Grasshopper

Common Green Grasshopper

Slender Groundhopper

Common Groundhopper

Crickets and Bush Crickets:

Dark Bush Cricket

Oak Bush Cricket

Speckled Bush Cricket

House Cricket

Newcomers to the area are:

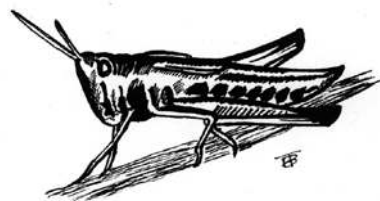
Grasshoppers:

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper

Bush Crickets:

Long-winged Conehead

Roesel's Bush Cricket



How do we identify Orthoptera?

Firstly, finding *Grasshoppers* is relatively easy, as they jump and fly out of your way as you tread through the grass in search. Identification by sight is not easy! Grasshoppers are generally the same shape as each other, and always have short antennae (feelers). They have many colour variations, which is confusing. The most essential diagnostic feature is the shape and colour of the *pronotum* (the shield on the back of the head), as shown in Field guides and the Field Studies Council plastic sheet guides. A small hand lens is ideal for close inspection, and I am always armed with catching bottles, which have a magnified lid with air holes, and can be bought from nature reserves shops for about £3.50. Getting to recognise their habitats is another aid to identification, and I have listed the favoured ones for each species. This is not a hard and fast rule, but it is generally correct.

The *Crickets* are reasonably easy to identify, because most are so different to each other, and are individually shaped. To my eyes they are very handsome creatures. There are some excellent drawings and photographs in various publications. No need for a pronotum check, just the shape of the body. The feelers are always very long, often longer than the body. Habitat recognition is again a good guide.

However, the surest way to identify Crickets and Grasshoppers is by their *stridulations* (songs). The fascinating thing is that they can be identified just the same way as birds can by their songs.

However, members of my age (70 years), and often much younger, tend to lose their

high frequency recognition, and cannot hear the sounds. I am still OK with high-pitched birdsong, but the Orthoptera songs have just about gone. But never despair, because help is at hand! Ron and Jean Harvey, Henry Stanier and myself attended two Orthoptera day courses, Epping Forest, 1998, and Grafham Water, 1999. It was at these events that we learned about an essential piece of equipment, the *bat detector*; indispensable to the survey worker, and indeed to anyone who wants to locate the species by their songs. The course instructors urged the use of the detectors. I have never been without one since. They are my second pair of ears.

The most popular one is the *Stag Electronics Bat Box 111*. It is easy to operate and cheap to run, a PP3 battery lasts a long time. All the orthoptera workers that I know of (professional and amateur alike) use them all the season. There are other newer models, but this one is the best. They are holding their price well, at about £123.00, but can be purchased on websites at £90.00. Rutland Natural History Society have three, which are available to members on loan. Jenny Harris, our Bat Recorder, holds them. Any unusual or rare sighting would require a specimen, or a photograph, for clarification, please.

I hope these notes will help to introduce you to a summer and autumn activity that is both very satisfying, and at the same time assists the Society to plot grasshoppers and crickets in Rutland for future research and history.

Rutland Grasshoppers and Crickets, to end of season, October 2006

GRASSHOPPERS AND GROUNDHOPPERS Lesser Marsh Grasshopper *Chorthippus albomarginatus*

This species is a colonist from the South coast, which has been spreading everywhere for about the last thirty years. The first appearance in Rutland was on September 7 1997, found by me at Gorsefield, Oakham, and sent to Jean and Ron Harvey, who confirmed the id, took slides, and sent these slides to Helen Iken at Loughborough for further confirmation.

Since then this very successful species has

spread rapidly into all parts of Rutland, and occurs in large numbers in suitable habitats, which in our area is long rank grasses in meadows and pasture, and marshy margins.

The male has a distinctive courtship song, and in this way pairs can be fairly estimated for survey work.

Field Grasshopper *Chorthippus brunneus*

Under recorded, I think for two reasons, mainly through lack of observers, and the fact that they are most often found in small loose colonies on patches of bare earth and amongst

short vegetation. They do not like the tall rank grasses that are favoured by many other grasshoppers and crickets. Moreover, their stridulations are not very attractive, with short bursts, and are liable to get missed. However they do have a very interesting variation in colour forms, which are developed to match their surroundings. Few records for Rutland.

Meadow Grasshopper *Chorthippus parallelus*

This is the classic 'grasshopper' example – the one that we hear on radio and TV programmes. Their songs of short bursts, repeated regularly, are familiar to everyone in the countryside in summer. Widespread and abundant, and found in long rank grasses, in meadows and rough herbage on banks and on verges. After the hay has been cut, they can be found at the edges of the field, in the long grasses that are left next to the fences. This is another species that can have various colour forms, if found away from their grasses.

Common Green Grasshopper *Chorthippus viridulus*

Not as common as it was. Some authorities have suggested that it has declined in recent years due to the impact of the amazing spread and large colonies of the Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, with which it shares similar habitats. In 2005 and 2006, the Common Green made a welcome comeback at the Egleton Reserve, Rutland Water, but elsewhere in the county this species is now hard to find.

The stridulation is distinctive, with a reeling song lasting for 15 seconds, starting softly and building up to a loud climax, and ending abruptly. It is one of the earliest grasshoppers to mature, and the song can be sometimes be heard as early as late May.

Slender Groundhopper *Tetrix subulata*

Tiny, does not stridulate, occurs on bare mud in wet or damp places, such as ditches, pond margins and wet rushy fields. This probably explains the lack of sightings. I have observed an individual walking on the surface of a pond, which is in a private reserve in Rutland. Later, I discovered that this habit is well documented. This species overwinters as an adult or a nymph, and can occasionally be found active on warm winter days. Can fly well. Very few records for Rutland.

Common Groundhopper *Tetrix undulata*

This groundhopper does not fly, is tiny, and does not stridulate. It occurs on bare soil in woodland rides and clearings. Overwinters as adult or nymph, and can be found in most months of the year (like the Slender Groundhopper). Few records for Rutland.

Comment: both of these groundhoppers have cryptic colouring to match the bare earth on which they are usually found. Thus they are hard to find. Another reason for lack of records!

CRICKETS

Long-winged Conehead *Conocephalus discolor*

Common in Rutland! This is an amazing statement considering the following: the first record for Rutland was on 15 August 2003, a pair found by Roy Frost (Orthoptera recorder for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire), in rank grasses and thistles, along the path towards Fieldfare Hide, at the Egleton reserve, Rutland Water.

Since that historic date, this attractive bush cricket has spread rapidly on both reserves, and in the Rutland countryside. It has a single-year egg cycle, enabling it to colonise quickly. Long rank grasses with thistles, wet ditches with herbage, are its favoured haunts. The stridulation is very high pitched and sounds like a tractor revving up, and can be picked up with the bat-detector, at 30 kHz.

Roesel's Bush Cricket *Metriopectera roeselii*

Common in Rutland! Yet again, an amazing statement. The following will explain:

Roesel's arrived before the Long-winged Conehead. The first record for Rutland was on 1 August 2001, found by wildlife artist and warden, John Wright. John located it in the rank grasses and thistles along the path towards Fieldfare Hide, which was destined to become the home of the large colonies of both of the bush crickets. However, the Roesel's did not appear in 2002. But in 2003, small numbers were there, and at Lyndon, with a small colony at Eye Brook Reservoir. This species has a two-year egg cycle, therefore, taking a little longer to build up new colonies. It favours the same habitat as the Long-winged Conehead, and has also now spread rapidly on the reserves and into the Rutland countryside.

The stridulation is similar to a high pitched electricity line, a continuous buzzing, it can be

heard by younger ears, but is easily picked up by the bat-detector.

Comment: Although both species first appeared at Rutland Water, this does not mean that the colonies found at other sites in Rutland are necessarily from the Rutland Water crickets. It is more likely that they have entered the county on a broad front, and have colonised areas in this way.

Dark Bush Cricket *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*

Very common in Rutland, recorded from the early days of Rutland Natural History Society. Found in all types of habitat, woodland rides, roadside verges, bramble thickets, hedgerows and ancient hedgerows, ditches and the edge of streams. Large colonies exist in these habitats, and have probably been there traditionally, because this species does not fly. Proof of this is that there are no Dark Bush Crickets found on the Rutland Water nature reserves. Yet they are abundant at Burley Woods nearby, and in other locations just outside of the reserves.

This bush cricket is easy to see by day, as they sun themselves on bramble and nettle leaves, and by night their song, a brisk, short chirp (especially in chorus), can be heard well.

Oak Bush Cricket *Meconema thalassinum*

Definitely under-recorded, due to the fact that this beautiful green bush cricket does not stridulate, and spends most of its time in the foliage of trees of many species (entirely arboreal). It has long wings and is a good flyer, often coming into lighted windows of houses, and also into moth traps. It has a curious habit of drumming with its hind legs on the leaves, making a faint pattering sound, hardly audible. They are here, but need to be found, to bolster the few records that exist.

Speckled Bush Cricket *Leptophyes punctatissima*

Very common in Rutland! This cricket is possibly the most numerous orthopteran in Rutland, which rivals the Dark Bush Cricket for numbers. The Speckled Bush Cricket does not fly, therefore inhabits traditional sites. Until bat-detectors were used for survey work (from 3 October 1999), this species was considered uncommon in the county. From the above date, the Speckled has been recorded in enormous numbers all over Rutland. They are often found high in trees, particularly Ash and Oak, and also can be seen sunning themselves on bramble leaves. When seen, they are delightful creatures, covered in small brownish spots.

The hindwings are absent, and the forewings are vestigial, therefore, as bush crickets rub their wings together to produce the stridulation, the tiny wings of this insect make an ultrasonic chirp, which sounds like a short hard click on the bat-detector. This is picked up at 35 to 40 kHz.

House Cricket *Acheta domestica*

An enigmatic species! They feature only spasmodically in the Society's records in recent years, i.e. they have turned up in member's light traps during moth-trapping evenings. During the hot, dry summers of 1975/1976, they were recorded everywhere. Mike Iannantuoni and I sound-recorded this cricket in a manure heap, outside a barn, at the Pickworth Road, Great Casterton, 16 July 1983. However, they have been scarce since then. I have found them in mounds of festering pheasant feeds, and these, along with the manure heaps, are probably the best places to look and listen for them. Hopefully, more can be located in the future, especially with our drier summers.

PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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As you probably know, Jean and Ron Harvey are wanting, not surprisingly, to reduce some of the responsibilities that they have as recorders, and to this end I have offered to act as plant gall recorder.

The Society has been recording plant galls since 1995 but suffered a blow, in more ways than one, when Phyllis Cook died; among her many

interests was the study and recording of plant galls. This will be the first time we have had a recorder dedicated to this group of organisms and it is hoped that this will encourage more members to study and record them.

What are they? The simple answer is 'lumps and bumps' on plants, but to be a little more technical they are plants' responses to attacks



by parasites, which stimulate them to grow in an abnormal way. The parasites are sometimes fungi and related organisms, but in the majority of cases are invertebrates, especially mites and insects such as gall midges and gall wasps. It is probably beginning to sound complicated but the good news is that they are **host specific**, which means that if you can identify the plant and you have got the book, then you can identify the cause organism. The best and newest book is in the Field Studies Council (FSC) AIDGAP series, enterprisingly entitled *British Plant Galls* by Margaret Fedfern and Peter Shirley, current price £18.00 plus £3.00 p&p. There is also an FSC chart available showing 69 of the commonest galls, priced at

£3.50 plus £1.00 p&p. The latter is not suitable for use in the field, but if like me you take a leaf or whatever from the plant and identify the gall and its cause at home, the chart would be a useful start for a beginner.

I would hasten to add that it isn't essential to buy the new book, as you may already have the Blandford book or Stubbs *Provisional keys to plant galls*. Don't be too hesitant if you only have one record to send in, even obvious ones such as Oak Apple Gall or Robin's Pincushion on wild rose will help to give us a better picture of the state of affairs in Rutland

Address: FSC Publications, Preston Montford, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 1HW. Telephone: 01743 852140.

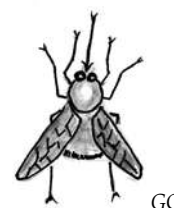
January/February 2007

Surprisingly there was one record, of Robins' Pincushion, or Bedeguar Gall, on a road verge near Lyddington. The great majority of galls are ephemeral, they disappear at leaf fall, but some such as these persist. The gall wasps whose nursery it was are long gone but the gall lingers.

My thanks to F & D Lee.

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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January/February 2007

January was a notable month in respect of ladybird sightings. First, the second recorded sighting in Rutland for the **Harlequin Ladybird** *Harmonia axyridis* – two were found in a sleepy state in an attic in South Luffenham. Secondly, modern technology, in the guise of a digital camera, made the counting of hibernating ladybirds much easier. Large numbers of **Orange Ladybirds** – 230 individuals – were observed hibernating on young ash trees near Leighfield Fishponds. Also observed in the same area were a total of 875 **14-spot Ladybirds**, hibernating in small groups. There were also records of hibernating **2-spot** and **7-spot Ladybirds**. At the end of the month two Ichneumon flies *Ophion luteus* were observed at a moth trap in Lyddington. Finally there were detailed sightings over the last five days of January of **Bumble Bees** *Bombus terrestris* in a Barrowden garden. Flowering Japanese quince and winter honeysuckle were a source of pollen. One bee was obviously very thin and

needing help to reach the flowers. Two other bees were actively flying and taking pollen. The month ended on a positive note with one bee still actively taking pollen.

February started with more bees on the wing. The second of February was a warm day and **Honey Bees** were visiting aconites in Ketton and were busy in a garden in Lyddington. Hellebores in Lyddington also attracted a **White-tailed Bumble Bee** *Bombus lucorum* on more than one occasion. 7-spot Ladybirds were observed at Ketton Quarry and Lyddington early in the month. The ladybirds previously reported at Leighfield Fishponds were still present in about the same numbers all month. It will be interesting to see when they finally disperse. Lastly, there were two sightings of shield bugs in Lyddington on 21/22. A **Green Shield Bug** – a species which hibernates – was awake early on a privet bush. Also a **Hawthorn Shield Bug** was attracted to a moth trap.

Thanks to: T Caldicott, G Chiverton, J Harris, K Jukes, F & D Lee, R Lemmon and L & G Worrall

MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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January/February 2007

Mild and very wet with a few icy spells, and we seem to have more fungal activity than usual for the time of year, with jellies and gill fungi noticeable. Fungi on willows feature, from Brooke and Leighfield Fishponds this time, with *Exidia recisa* in both places (thanks, TC).

FIELDS, GARDENS, VERGES

Lyddington: Turkeytail, Candlesnuff and Coral Spot active; 16.1: a large troop of Velvet Shanks on a dead elm; 28.1: Variable Oysterling on dead twig of *Kerria japonica* (a garden shrub native to Japan) and 10 Scurfy Twiglets on soil/debris.

Barrowden: In Redland Close, 35 Hairy Earthtongues in mossy grass all January, surviving frost; by mid-February after at least a week of frost, ice and snow and then rain, 11 extant but floppy, which soon disappeared. 11.1: In our garden, after much rain, on its sheltered side a 1.5 m dead Field Maple stump erupted with many clumps of golden Velvet Shanks and purple-silver Silverleaf Fungus for the first time since cut down 7 years ago, though an adjacent taller Field Maple stump with less bark remained bare; both species shrivelled in mid-month frost but a few Velvet Shanks briefly revived.

Aldgate, Ketton: 7.1: Yellow Brain on Guelder Rose twig, strikingly yellow when wet 'like a Forsythia flower' said AT, orangey when dry but quickly returning to yellow jelly when soaked; it was on a grey Crust (probably *Peniophora lycii*) upon which it is parasitic.

Morcott: 17.1: Alga *Nostoc* splurged from a pavement crack (but not seen in Barrowden).

Brooke (River Gwash area): 8.1: 10 species including on willow a few Blushing Brackets (usually for us on hawthorn), Orange Jelly, Flat Oysterling and (great stuff!) orangey *Exidia recisa* fresh on small branches; Jelly Ears, Candlesnuff, Netted Crust, White Brain and one expiring Milking Bonnet; 15.1: 10 species, many as before, plus on willow Velvet Shank going over; 22.1: 12 species as before plus on willow Glue Crust, with *E. recisa* now dry.

Leighfield Fishponds: 5.1: 16 species including on willow Blushing Bracket and *Exidia recisa* (dry); Jelly Ears (dry), Yellow Brain (dry), Oyster Mushroom (old), White Brain fresh,

and Yellowing Curtain Crust; 14.1: 24 species, some as before, plus Waxy Crust on oak, on willow fresh *E. recisa* and a mysterious species on a dead willow branch by the little stream (rare *Entoleuca mammata* might be a candidate). 11.2: 19 species including on willow Blushing Brackets, fresh *Exidia recisa*, Yellow Brain and Silverleaf Fungus; on hawthorn *Phellinus contiguus* on underside of big branch (causes white rot) and Cinnamon Porecrust; on elder Witches' Butter, Elder Whitewash and Jelly Ears; Turkeytails on ash and Waxy Crust on old oak branch; 25.2: 23 species many as before with on willow Turkeytails (also on ash), 3 large fresh Willow Brackets *Phellinus igniarius* on trunk, Beech Barkspot *Diatrype disciformis* (usually on beech) and Hairy Curtain Crust.

RESERVES

Ketton Quarry: 4.1: White Brain on fallen hawthorn, Beech Woodwart on beech bark, discomycete *Polydesmia pruinosa* on old pyrenomycete stroma, itself on decaying wood of unknown species, good-sized Jelly Ears both fresh and old on fallen ash, huge amounts of young Turkeytail on cut ends of stacked logs mostly ash, and c18 fresh Sulphur Tufts.

Prior's Coppice: 14.1: 31 species including Small Stagshorn, Jelly Ears, Yellow Brain, Leafy Brain on standing hazel (nice find), Hairy Curtain Crust, Bay Polypore on logs, Winter Polypore on ash stump, Variable Oysterling, Winter Twiglet, Splitgill and Oyster Mushroom; 20.1: 33 species, many as earlier plus Meadow Coral, Witches' Butter, Glistening Inkcaps, Velvet Shanks, Clustered Bonnets and (lovely!) on hazel 3 Spring Hazelcups *Encoelia furfuracea* (looking like the knobbly ballflower decoration on church spires). 15.2: 27 species; on ash King Alfred's Cakes, Netted Crust, Winter Polypore and Pipe Club *Macrotiophula fistulosa* (nice!); on oak Waxy Crust and Witches' Butter; on hazel Glue Crust, Cinnamon Porecrust, Bleeding Broadleaf Crust, Leafy Brain fresh in two areas on old hazel, Hazel Woodwort and the

3 Spring Hazelcups; on elder fresh Jelly Ears and Witches' Butter, and Winter Twiglets in mossy ground. 26.2: 24 species with gone over Bay Polypores on old log pile, Splitgill on log pile in newly coppiced area, Turkeytails on ash, Cinnamon Porecrust on hawthorn (usually on hazel), and a rainbow of fresh Yellow Brains, Orange Jellies and Green Elfcup.

Egleton Reserve: 2.1: 25 species including Clustered Bonnet going over, mature Velvet Shanks, Yellow Brain, one Pleated Inkcap, Milking Bonnet, Oyster Mushroom, Cushion Bracket *Phellinus pomaceus* on blackthorn branch; Flat Oysterling, Jelly Ears, Orange Jelly, Netted Crust, Glue Crust; 19.1: 28 species, many there earlier plus Willow Shield *Pluteus salicinus* (on woodland floor), Tripe Fungus, Waxy Crust, Lemon Disco, *Ascocoryne cylichnium* on ash log (gelatinous purple cup on short stem, usually on beech); 29.1: 29 species, many as before plus White Brain. 13.2: 25 species; fresh Smoky Bracket, Jelly Ears, Orange Jelly, Witches' Butter and *Calocera glossoides* on old stump (usually oak); 21.2: 22 species with

Brittle Cinder *Kretzschmaria deusta* on large old stump (usually on beech where it helps cause 'spalting', a pattern of black or brown lines due to melanin produced at the boundaries of different wood-rotting fungi, and much prized by woodworkers for the decorative effect).

Gibbet Gorse: 22.2: Candlesnuff, 25 mature Stump Puffballs and Common Jellyspot.

Bloody Oaks Quarry: 1.2: on hawthorn Turkeytail, Common Jellyspot and Common Tarcrust parasitised by *Nectria epispheeria*; Sycamore Tarspot on leaves (RL notes 'presumably blown in from outside, as I think all sycamores have been felled in the Reserve'), Jelly Ears on fallen living elder, and one leached but not gone over Scurfy Twiglet.

Ketton Quarry Woodland: 1.2: Common Jellyspot, Lemon Disco mature on decaying moss-covered broadleaved branch, c20 Sulphur Tuft on sawn broadleaved stumps (sycamore), rusts *Milesina scolopendrii* on Hart's-tongue and *Phragmidium bulbosum* on bramble.

Please would you specially look out this Spring for Semifree Morels, probably in mossy ground near old hawthorn? Looks like a good sized white pencil stuck in the ground with a small dark honeycomb over the top, the bottom edges of which flare out slightly. Some Springs we have none, other years you can hardly avoid them, even in gardens with old hawthorn hedges. Cute.

Many thanks for all records: T Caldicott, F & D Lee, R Lemmon, A Tomlinson, L Worrall.

MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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January/February 07

The first **Otter** report of 2007 was a very happy one! An otter was seen at noon crossing the road at Coach Bridge on the B672 at Barrowden. It stopped and called and a much smaller one came along, both crossed the road then returned to the brook towards Bisbrooke and Uppingham. Sadly the next otter was less fortunate. A very large and healthy animal was found as a road casualty at Stockerston in mid-January. A total of three **Stoats** were recorded in January, one at Market Overton, another running alongside the road in Brooke, and the third crossed the road at the first bend between Tickencote and Cross Roads farm.



Many **Badger** setts in the area have been active again, signs of latrines close to setts showing that there are young down below, and lots of bedding material and diggings removed and heaped up outside. As usual there have been a number of Badger road casualties; at Seaton and Ayston in January, Stretton, Burley Wood, Glaston Road and A6003 Uppingham, and Braunston road near Oakham in February. One member reports seeing a badger clearing a sett, so we do have one report of a live badger! **Foxes** are also busy, one seen at Clipsham Quarry banks, and another walked in front of Glebe Hide at RW. (A fox was seen in Stamford

early one evening, as it walked along St Peter's Street, near where the old St Peter's Inn was, quite unconcerned as it passed by the observer on the opposite side of the road!) At Ketton Quarry a fox was seen sleeping in the sun on the 1st of February. Other animals crossed roads at Wardley Hill and between Hambleton road and Egleton.

The damp weather has allowed **Moles** to be very busy, and fresh workings were observed at Gibbets Gorse, Bloody Oaks, Fort Henry and Dawn's paddock near Braunston. Healthy **Rabbits** were seen at Ketton Quarry in early February, and numerous **Hares** have been reported, one running down the middle of the B677 Redhill, Barrowden at a speed of 33 mph for 150 yards! Another healthy specimen ran across the road then along the verge and into the field at the South Luffenham roundabout .

Grey squirrels have been seen regularly in local woods and hedgerow trees, a total of 9 reports in all. More **Brown rats** than usual have been reported, two members noting them by the side of the Wing to Morcott road in February.

A **Pygmy Shrew** was found dead by the top lake at Fort Henry in early February, and **Bank Voles** were active in Dr Gallimore's garden in Wing, one running along a gravel path, and two

chasing each other along the wall.

At the end of January a **Long-tailed Field Mouse** was seen at 11.00 pm as he/she took peanuts among flower pots and old logs, in the Worrall's carport, Barrowden, and two days later he returned at a similar time. In mid-February he was seen again, this time at 7.00 pm on a dry mild night. At Braunston Road Oakham, a cat brought in a live field mouse, which fortunately was rescued by the owner and released.

Three **Muntjac** were flushed from Tunnely Wood at the end of January, and one was also seen at Barnsdale car park near the arboretum. Local woods are populated by many **Fallow Deer**, and members have spotted large numbers at Morkery, Clipsham and Pickworth woods, the largest group being 76 at one time. On the 11th of February in parkland in front of Clipsham Hall, a large buck with a full head of antlers was observed for 30 minutes as he periodically rushed away for about 200 yards, rested and then repeated his activity. He did not attempt to mate, but was obviously still maintaining his harem of 36 does. This behaviour was also observed in the winter of 2005.

Thank you all for your reports. I will summarise unpublished records from 2006 in a future Fieldfare edition.

Thanks to J Ansley, A J Biddle, M A Branston. C Gallimore, R Lemmon, B Lynch, T Mitcham, J Ostler, B Parker, P J Rudkin, A R & M A Thorp, D Whitefield, L & G Worrall.

BAT REPORT Compiled by Jenny Harris

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January/February 2007

With temperatures unusually high during most of January and February, even at night, it was hardly surprising that there were records of bats out and about, although these were all from January and the first half of February. It was not uncommon to see the odd moth (bat food) in the car headlights.

The first record was of a **Brown Long-eared** bat, seen by Dr Gallimore on 17.1 at 6.30 pm in Wing, where it fluttered around an outbuilding and landed on a wall. On 19.1, Dave Cole and



Paul Stammers were working at the Lyndon Reserve at 11.00 am, on a mild, sunny day, when they saw a large bat, probably a **Noctule**, fly over the south arm of the reservoir. It seemed to have come from the direction of the Egleton Reserve, but it veered off towards Manton before they lost sight of it. The next day, Phil Langston saw two **small bats** foraging at the entrance to Barnsdale Wood and car parks. It was around 7.30 am, and the bats were flying over the entrance track where the canopy, although devoid of leaves, is quite dense and almost meets overhead.

At more or less the same spot, John Ansley saw a bat flying just below canopy height at 3.00 pm on 1.2. It came quite low several times, and was described as flying straight for about 50 yards, before suddenly turning and flying back again. Daytime flying is unusual for bats, but is sometimes seen in winter, when it is thought to be either because bats have been disturbed for some reason or may be thin or dehydrated. There are more likely to be insects about in the daytime than at night, when the temperature drops. On 12.2, when the weather was mild again after a week of ice and snow, Graham and Linda Worrall noticed probable Brown Long-eared bat droppings on the wheelie bin under their car port in Barrowden. They commented that although the shape was right, they were half the size of 'normal' droppings for that species.

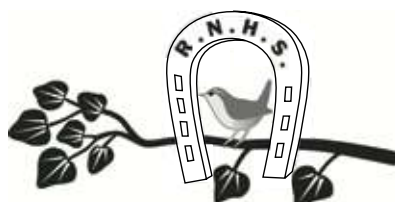
A visit to a local hibernation site (an old railway tunnel) on 14.2 was quite productive: three species of bats were found. Two **Pipistrelles** were deep in a crack in the brickwork, a **Natterer's** and an unidentified **Myotis** (which may also have been Natterer's) were in cracks between bricks, and a second Natterer's was behind 'clinker' on the wall. The most exciting find, again behind 'clinker', and high on the tunnel wall, was a single **Barbastelle** bat, the first ever found in hibernation in Rutland, and the first in the county since two were recorded at Barnsdale Hall stables in September 1986. The Bat Group will again be surveying woodland in Rutland this summer, using the Duet bat detector, mini-disk recorder and Batscan computer software, to see if we can find Barbastelles foraging. Once again, woods around Rutland Water will be the focus of attention.

My thanks to all who sent in records.

HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK Nola Thurlow

High tides for Snettisham, for Titchwell add 5 minutes.

April				May			
Sunday	1	07.00	18.57	Sunday	6	09.20	21.44
	8	10.10	22.28		13	04.10	16.08
	15	05.41	17.40		20	09.27	22.08
	22	10.25	23.06		27	04.17	16.18
	29	05.49	17.49				



LIST OF RECORDERS

Amphibians and reptiles	<i>Dr C Gallimore</i> , The Stone House, Reeves Lane, Wing LE15 8SD	01572 737343
Bats	<i>Jenny Harris</i> , 41 Woodland View, Oakham LE15 6EJ	01572 755274
Birds	<i>Terry Mitcham</i> , 30 Sutherland Way, Stamford PE9 2TB	01780 751268
Botany	<i>Graham Worrall</i> , 6 Redland Close, Barrowden LE15 8ES	01572 747302
Butterflies and moths	<i>Ron and Jean Harvey</i> , 4 Clarkesdale, Great Easton LE16 8SP	01536 770259
Crickets and grasshoppers	<i>Phil Rudkin</i> , 10 Brooke Avenue, Stamford PE9 2RU	01780 762998
Glow-worms	<i>Linda Worrall</i> , 6 Redland Close, Barrowden LE15 8ES	01572 747302
Insects and others	<i>Gill Chiverton</i> , 20 Victoria Road, Stamford PE9 1HB	01780 753820
Mammals	<i>Linda Biddle</i> , 21 Waverley Gardens, Stamford PE9 1BH	01780 762108
Mycology	<i>Linda Worrall</i> , 6 Redland Close, Barrowden LE15 8ES	01572 747302
Plant galls	<i>Roy Lemmon</i> , 87 Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SU	01780 762051
Rooks	<i>A Paterson</i> , 34 Redcot Gardens, Stamford PE9 1DL	01780 766197

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