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NOTICEBOARD

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2009

Many members renewed in good time, thank you, but we are still missing some. There is a form (see insert) for those who renew annually by personal payment (cheques payable to RNHS please) and haven't yet done so. Unless you renew promptly, this will be your last *Fieldfare* and you will not receive a current Permit! Any queries to Graham on 01572 747302.

The form on the insert is only for those who want to continue to renew annually by personal payment. We have some forms if you would like to change to Standing Order, please phone Graham (as above).

Note: If you've only just joined this autumn, you are not due to renew your membership until 1st January 2010.

MAKE A DATE NOW! NORKOLK/SUFFOLK WEEKEND JUNE 09

As part of the summer programme organised for members, we are planning a weekend visit to the Norfolk/Suffolk border. The itinerary is outlined below, although it may be subject to change. The initial motivation for this outing was the excellent talk on Nightjars by Phil Palmer on 6 January, hence the Thetford Chase visit.

Saturday 13th June

2.00 pm Assemble at RSPB Lakenheath Reserve, near Brandon, Suffolk. This is a new reserve, converted by the RSPB from arable land into a wetland reserve. At this time of year we may see Hobbies, Golden Orioles and Cranes. Free access, so no charges.

6-6.30 pm (or before) Check into Bridge House Hotel/Riverside Lodge (all one hotel), Brandon.

7.00 pm Evening meal at hotel.

9.30 pm Meet at Thetford Chase (exact site to be confirmed) to listen to and hopefully see Nightjars. Bats will also be around!

Return to hotel for overnight stay.

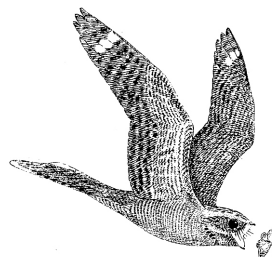
Sunday 14th June

10.00 am Meet at Cranwich Heath reserve (a Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve), for orchids and varied grassland/heathland flora.

Lunch - no special arrangements.

Optional afternoon visit to Weeting Heath, Breckland reserve (Norfolk Naturalists' Trust) possibly to see Stone Curlews.

(see over)



Fieldfare

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Costs for the June outing

The hotel charges £50 per room for bed and breakfast. Singles can have double rooms at £40. All rooms have ensuite bathroom, and twin or double beds. Meals: evening meal available at hotel (cost £16, set menu, vegetarian options available). Sunday lunch: could return to hotel, or find local local pub lunch, or bring a picnic.

There may be charges for entrance to the reserves and/or guides.

If you are interested in this visit please fill in and return the booking form (see insert). Deadline for booking and deposit (£20 per person) is March 15th. Numbers are limited to 20.

DON'T MISS REVELS ON 'WILD BRITAIN'

Richard Revels, the outstanding wildlife photographer whose work often appears in *British Wildlife*, is giving an illustrated talk on 'Wild Britain' at Edith Weston village hall: Thursday 26th Feb, 7.30 to 9.30. Tickets are £3 each, including refreshments, and are available from the village shop, or from Vic Arnold on 01780 722088.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

If you would like to be nominated to join the Committee, or would like to propose anything raised under 'Any Other Business', please have a word with the Chairman or Secretary as soon as possible. The Minutes of last year's AGM are on page 12.

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

Sunday 22 February **FINESHADE WOODLAND WILDLIFE** **10 am**

Led by Chris Andrews RSPB, who is giving the indoor talk on 3 February (see below). Charge of £2 per person, parking free if member of RSPB. Meet at Top Lodge RSPB shop, SP979983.

Sunday 29 March **DAWN'S Paddock** **10 am**

Led by Dawn Whitefield, RNHS Programme Secretary and owner of this interesting paddock, which adjoins The Seek. Meet at layby between Oakham and Braunston, SK840074. Ample free parking.

Sunday 26 April **BEDFORD PURLIEUS** **10 am**

An RNHS-led outing to this important ancient woodland. Meet at TF040004.

INDOOR MEETINGS

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

Tuesday 3 February **WILDLIFE OF FINESHADE WOOD** **7.30 pm**

Chris Andrews RSPB from the Fineshade Visitor Centre will talk about Red Kites and other wildlife in Fineshade (he is also leading the RNHS walk there on 22 February).

Tuesday 3 March **AGM FOLLOWED BY BATS OF THE WORLD** **7.30 pm**

A short AGM followed by a talk from Jenny Harris, RNHS Bat Recorder, on bats worldwide.

Tuesday 31 March **FROM JOHN O'GROATS TO LANDS END** **7.30 pm**

This meeting replaces the usual 'first Tuesday in the month' meeting (7 April) because the school is closed. Chris Ward will talk about the birds, wildlife and scenery of the British coastline.

LEICESTER AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST events

Details of the LRWT Rutland Group's meetings are given opposite. They are held at the Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, Egleton, admission £1, includes tea/coffee/biscuits. See www.lrwt.org.uk for information about other LRWT events.

Monday 16 February

FABULOUS FLORA

7.30 pm

Trust Senior Conservation Officer Neill Talbot's illustrated talk covers some of the weird and wonderful plants in Leicestershire and Rutland, including species found on grassland, wetlands and woodlands.

Monday 16 March

AGM FOLLOWED BY BADGERS

7.30 pm

The formal business will be followed by a talk on badgers by Dr Pam Mynott of the Leicester Badger Group.

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

See www.lincstrust.org.uk or phone 01507 526 677 in office hours, for details of the LWT Bourne Group's events and other Lincstrust events in Lincolnshire.

HIGH TIDES IN NORTH NORFOLK

Nola Thurlow

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

February			March		
Sunday	1	09.52 21.56	Sunday	1	08.51 20.58
	8	05.18 17.32		8	04.13 16.26
	15	09.59 22.09		15	08.50 21.04
	22	05.08 17.09		22	03.46 15.46
				29 (BST)	08.54 21.04



AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE REPORT

compiled by Dr C. H. Gallimore

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



November/December 2008

There is very little to report on the herpetological front for these months. However in Barrowden the Worralls' frogs continued to be active in November with two heard croaking on the 10th. On the 27th a frog was found in their garden with both forelegs neatly amputated. Its leaping ability was unimpaired. The cause of bilateral amputation after the end of the mowing season is something of a mystery.

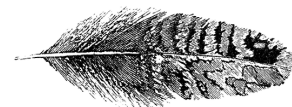
The only other amphibian sighting was of a toad on the road in Wing on 22nd December, which was one of the few warm nights of the winter.

My thanks to L & G Worrall for their record.

BIRD REPORT

compiled by T. Mitcham

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



A variety of interesting birds brought an excellent year to a conclusion. Red-throated Divers were at both reservoirs with the Great Northern Divers remaining at Rutland Water, where all five grebes were reported. Iceland and Glaucous Gulls roosted at Eyebrook Reservoir and three Smew were also present there.

Blackcaps visited several gardens and Chiffchaffs were noted at several sites. There were reports of Ravens from widely spread sites.

My thanks to everyone who has submitted records this year and best wishes for good bird-watching in 2009. Records for these notes were received from:

V Arnold, T Caldicott, B Clark, A & J Comber, Dr C Gallimore, M & G Griffin, J Harris, C Jones, P Killips, P Langston, R Lemmon, S Lister, J M & C P Mallett, E & P Mann, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, D J & B Parker, D Perril, P Rudkin, P Scott, Jill Stapleton, A R & M A Thorpe, D Whitefield, M Winslow, G & L Worrall.

Whooper Swan. Seven were at RW(Dam) and later at Ketton Quarry on 12.11.

Egyptian Goose. A pair was by the R.Gwash near Brooke on 16.11 and a pair was at Leighfield Fishponds from at least 18.11 to 19.12.

Gadwall. Nos. at FHP increased during December with 115 on 6.12 and 164 counted on 12.12.

Red-crested Pochard. Five at RW(North Arm) on 9.11 comprised three males and two females.

Scaup. There was a pair at the RW Dam on 15.11 and a male there on 1.12.

Smew. A male was at RW(Eggleton) from 28.11 and there were two males and a female at EBR on 21.12.

Goosander. Noted at Leighfield Fishponds from 3.11 to at least 25.12, with four present on 16.11 and 26.11.

Red-legged Partridge. The Lyndon area produced coveys of 22, 17 and six between 16.11 and 21.11. Nine were noted at Crossroads Farm, Empingham on 10.12 and many remain at large in Exton Park, despite several shoots !

Grey Partridge. There was a welcome record of a covey of twelve near Lyndon on 21.11. This species now seems to have a tenuous hold on farmland and should be looked for whenever we are in the countryside.

Red-throated Diver. One was at EBR between 26.12 and 28.12 and at RW from 28.12 to the end of the year.

Great Northern Diver. One or two were reported from RW(Whitwell Creek) from at least 15.11 to the end of the year.

Red-necked Grebe. One was at RW(Whitwell Creek) from 30.11 to 13.12.

Slavonian Grebe. One was at RW(South Arm) from at least 15.11 to 19.12.

Black-necked Grebe. Three were in North Arm at RW from 28.11 to the end of the year.

Cormorant. There were two at Leighfield Fishponds on 21.11.

Grey Heron. One took a goldfish from a garden pond in Stamford on 13.12.

Red Kite. Singles and pairs were noted from Wing, Morcott, Empingham, RW, near Burley House and Exton. Three were over Barrowden on 8.11 and seven over another wood on 24.11. One or two were regular over Stamford in late December – excellent garden ticks!

Sparrowhawk. Garden records were received from Edith Weston and Oakham, where Goldfinches were regular prey.

Buzzard. All records were of singles with birds noted at Tickencote, Woodhead, Exton,

Empingham and Wing, where one perched over a vegetable patch for fifteen minutes but ignored the Rabbits disporting there.

Kestrel. Frequently seen at FHP and Edith Weston. Also noted at North Luffenham, Empingham and Leighfield Fishponds.

Peregrine. One was at Leighfield Fishponds on 3.12 and one at RW(North Arm) on 7.12 and Lax Hill on 14.12.

Water Rail. Four were present on pools at/by the R.Welland at Geeston throughout November. Two were at RW(Eggleton) on 28.11.

Golden Plover. Counts included 90 at EBR and 4850 at RW on 16.11 and 1050 at RW on 14.12. There were c.300 near Fort Henry on 17.12.

Lapwing. Some large flocks were present, especially in November. There were 320 at EBR on 8.11 with 250 there on 16.11. At RW there were 3333 on 16.11 and 845 on 14.12. On 8.12 there were 300 near Edith Weston and 200 near Caldecott.

Little Stint. One was at RW on 14./16.11 with two on 21.11 and two or three on 28.11.

Dunlin. On 16.11 there were fifteen at EBR and 43 at RW. 95 were at RW on 14.12 and there were 82 at EBR on 21.12.

Ruff. A single bird was at RW(Eggleton) on 15.11 and 14.12.

Jack Snipe. One was at RW on 16.11.

Snipe. A poor showing with 52 at RW on 16.11 the only sizeable count. One was flushed near Fort Henry on 30.12.

Woodcock. Singles were noted between 19.11 and 25.12 at RW(Eggleton), Brooke, Leighfield and Tunneley Wood. Four were flushed during a walk at Clipsham Park Wood on 26.11.

Curlew. Five were at RW(Eggleton) on 15.11 with four the following day and on 14.12.

Redshank. Nineteen were at RW on 16.11 and seventeen on 14.12. There were three at EBR on 30.11 and one on 21.12.

Green Sandpiper. There were two at RW(Burley Fishponds) on 4.11, one at the Dam on 14.11 and two on the count on 16.11.

Common Gull. Passage at Leighfield produced counts of 800 on 6.11 and 900 on 16.11, all moving west. c.600 were in the Leighfield area on 6.12.

Iceland Gull. A first-winter bird roosted regularly at EBR from 16.11 to the end of Dec.

Glaucous Gull. One roosted at EBR on 21./22.12.

Yellow-legged Gull. One was at RW(Eggleton) on various dates between 23.11 and 6.12.

Stock Dove. Five fed on winter cereals near Turnpole Wood on 28.12.

Woodpigeon. c.500 fed on arable land near Westland Wood, Exton Park on 18.12.

Collared Dove. Twenty-three were at Mounts Lodge Farm on 19.11. Double figure counts of this species are rarely received now and would be very welcome.

Barn Owl. Heard calling in Barrowden on 10.11 and one was found dead on the road near Braunston on 13.11.

Tawny Owl. Noted in Barrowden in November and Little Haw Wood on 28.11.

Kingfisher. Singles were noted at RW(Eggleton) on 28.11, FHP on 12.12 and the R.Welland at Tinwell on 26.12.

Green Woodpecker. Regularly reported from Fort Henry and Edith Weston during both months with one at Wing Plantation, Empingham on 10.12.

Great Spotted Woodpecker. Well reported with birds noted at Normanton (two), Edith Weston, Exton, Wing, Barleythorpe and EBR (four on 22.12).

Skylark. The only flock reported was of twenty in Exton Park on 17.12.

Water Pipit. One was at RW(Eggleton) on 16/17.12.

Grey Wagtail. Records covered the period 12.11 to 29.12. Singles were noted at a garden pond in Stamford, a Barleythorpe garden and Holywell lake. At EBR there were four on 16.11 and one on 2.12.

Stonechat. At Fort Henry a male was noted on several dates between 3.11 and 7.12 with a pair present on 29.11. A pair was noted at RW(Eggleton) between 23.11 and 19.12.

Blackbird. At Brooke thirty were counted on 20.11 with 58 noted on 11.12. Counts on the Eggleton reserve produced 55 in late Nov and 52 on 30.12.

Fieldfare. On 3.11, 650 flew west at Leighfield and one hundred east at Tunneley Wood. There were fifty near Belton-in-Rutland on 21.11 and 150 in Exton Park on 18.12. Colder weather at the end of the year brought fifteen to a Barrowden garden on 12.12 and thirty to berry bushes in the village on 24.12.

Redwing. Few records were received: twenty in Exton Park on 18.12 was the highest count.

Blackcap. A male at Oakham on 29.11 was the first winter record with one or two noted in two Oakham gardens to 31.12. A male fed on fat ball in a Stamford garden on 4.12.

Chiffchaff. Singles were noted at RW on 4.11 and 19.11 and at Leighfield on 12.11. One was at Water Furlong, Stamford on 26.12.

Long-tailed Tit. Garden flocks were well reported with fifteen near Braunston (22.11), ten at Langham (25/26.11), five in Stamford (28.11), six in Oakham (29.12.) and eighteen in Wing (31.12.).

Willow Tit. Two were at Leighfield on 3.11 and there were two or three at Brooke between 14.11 and 11.12. Regularly at feeders near Braunston in both months.

Marsh Tit. A pair visited a feeder in a Langham garden between 30.11 and 2.12, with birds also noted at feeders in Tunneley Wood and Braunston.

Treecreeper. One was in a Stamford garden on 21.12.

Jay. Regularly heard in Exton woodlands during both months and also seen at Wing Plantation on 10.12.

Raven. An excellent series of records starting with a pair over Stamford on 3.11 and one at Wakerley/Barrowden on 4.11. A pair was in Exton Park on 9.11 with one there on 16.11. Other records were from Priors Coppice (18.11), Leighfield (26.11 and 19.12) and RW(Lax Hill) on 5.12.

Starling. At Leighfield 1660 flew west on 3.11 and 660 passed west on 6.11.

Tree Sparrow. Six were with other finches near Fort Henry on 4.11 and two or three fed at Park House, Normanton in Nov.

Chaffinch. The only flock reported was of sixty near Brooke on 6.12.

Brambling. Few were reported – singles at Leighfield, Brooke and RW(Eggleton) between 3.11 and 23.11, and three near Lyndon on 21.11.

Greenfinch. c.120 were on fields between Brooke and Braunston on 27.12.

Goldfinch. c.120 were at Leighfield between 6.11 and 19.12. Thirty fed on ash fruits in Tunneley Wood on 3.11.

Siskin. Twenty were at RW(Eggleton) on 16.11 and 28.11 and twelve were at Holywell lake on 22.11.

Lesser Redpoll. c.15 were at Fort Henry(North Brook) on 3.11. One or two took nyger in a Stamford garden on 21–24.11.

Bullfinch. Around Brooke there were eighteen on 20.11 and 22 on 6.12. At RW(Eggleton) there were sixteen on 20.11 and eighteen on 5.12. Also noted near Belton-in-Rutland.

Reed Bunting. A pair fed in an Oakham garden on 30/31.12.

Wildfowl counts – November/December 2008

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry/ Exton Park		Holywell Lake	
	16.11	14.12	16.11	14.12	16.11	12.12	22.11	24.12
Mute Swan	474	225	95	135	11	13	3	2
Greylag Goose	207	21	224	255			65	106
Canada Goose	975	818	230	232			133	142
Barnacle Goose	13	21						
Egyptian Goose	77	26						
Shelduck	8	5						
Mandarin	3	1						
Wigeon	3414	2724	170	190		18		
Gadwall	1407	709	18	35	26	164	22	24
Teal	752	1097	230	278	6	15	23	34
Mallard	820	809	122	51	92	72	98	75
Pintail	17	8			1			
Shoveler	102	40	7	4	14	6	10	4
Pochard	56	286	266	18				
Red-crested Pochard		2						
Tufted Duck	1599	1807	436	321	48	54	9	11
Scaup	3	1		1				
Common Scoter	2		2					
Goldeneye	294	321	29	32				
Smew		1		1				
Goosander	9	36	4					
Ruddy Duck	2	11	4					
Great Northern Diver	1	2						
Black-throated Diver	1							
Little Grebe	92	55	14	12	2	4	6	6
Great Crested Grebe	432	456	12	11				
Slavonian Grebe	1	1						
Black-necked Grebe		3						
Cormorant	91	115	27	7	1			
Little Egret	2	1						
Grey Heron	21	30	4	5				
Water Rail	5	1						
Moorhen	115	116		3	47	20	9	26
Coot	3314	4792	232	140	47	48	14	12

BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

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

November/December 2008

For the first time since I became Recorder in 1992, no records were submitted for November and December – the result of two cool or cold months.

Roadside Nature Reserves – volunteers needed

- 1 I am still after a few reports for 2008. Please send them in before the end of February.
- 2 Recording on verges for 2009: please let me know if you intend to carry on for the verge reports.
- 3 We do NEED SOME NEW BLOOD. A small number of people can make a big difference. We require three visits between March and August recording all things seen, botany, insects, birds and fungi and anything more you can recognise.

Please volunteer by contacting me on 01572 747302. *Graham Worrall*

LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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



November/December 2008

BUTTERFLIES

Weather conditions this year have been so variable and sometimes unseasonable, so true to form, 2008 ended rather colder than in the past few years thus limiting the number of records received for these two months

Red Admirals were seen at Stretton on November 12th and 14th and the only other species recorded was **Peacock**. One of these was observed in flight and then sunning itself on the ground at Leighfield Fishponds on the 12th; and a possible sighting of another was at Edith Weston where the butterfly moved too quickly for a positive identification to be made.

MOTHS

During November the garden trap at Lyddington was operated on eight nights resulting in 3 micro and 17 macro-species being caught and

of course released. The most rewarding nights were November 2nd with 22 moths of 11 species, November 4th with 34 moths of 10 species (these included 18 **Feathered Thorns**) and November 6th with 24 moths of 12 species. Two nights trapping here in December caught only **Dark Chestnut** and **Winter Moths**.

At Barrowden during November, several species which fly at this time of year were recorded, especially during the first week of the month. In December however, despite the fact that Winter Moths were seen flying in the road nearby, none were attracted to the trap. Street-lights and the increase in the use of security lights have certainly had an effect on the numbers of moths in traps in some areas.

On November 15th **The Brick**, **The Sprawler**, **Feathered Thorn** and **Red Green Chestnut** were identified at Barnsdale Gardens at Exton and the latter was also seen at Edith Weston.

It now remains for me to thank all 2008 contributors and to say that I hope that 2009 may bring many interesting sightings.

Recent records came from V Arnold, T Caldicott, G Chiverton, R Follows and D & F Lee.

ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

10 Brooke Avenue, Stamford PE9 2RU. Telephone: 01780 762998



November/December 2008

No records were submitted for these months, as is to be expected.

PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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



November 2008

As one might expect with leaf fall now completed, there have been just six reports this month, paradoxically two of them because leaves have fallen, thus making the galls easier to spot.

Ketton Quarry woodland gave a rust-produced gall on Goat Willow on 6th and at Gibbet Gorse on 20th fallen Oak leaves had Oyster gall and

Common Spangle gall, both caused by parasitic wasps. Also on that same day at the same site there was a leaf gall on Ground Ivy caused by a rust and in the nearby Lyndon Centre a leaf gall on Alder, produced by an Ascomycete. Finally on 27th in Priors Coppice another report of the rust gall on Ground Ivy. This latter plant retains its leaves through the winter and the rust is usually only present later in the year.

December 2008

There were no reports of galls this month and I would take the opportunity to thank those members who have contributed reports during the year – thank you.

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

20 Victoria Road, Stamford PE9 1HB. Telephone: 01780 753820



November/December 2008

I received only three records for the last two months of 2008. Two ladybirds were noted during the second week of November in Barrowden. One very small **10-spot Ladybird** was rescued during nettle clearing. One **Harlequin Ladybird** flew on to a window frame, and despite a damaged wing case managed to fly off again at speed. The third record came from Dawn's Paddock during the third week of December. An unusual sighting of an adult **Bloody-nosed Beetle**, noted around 1 pm on the 15th crawling very slowly over the dead stalks of nettles.

Advance notice of an interesting survey – this I think would come under the 'Others' category of Insects and Others. There is to be a National Worm Survey, to be undertaken between March 23rd and May 10th. Special 'worm packs' will be available at the end of February. More details of these and how to obtain them in the next copy of *Fieldfare*. With the packs will come a chart to help identify 13 of the most common worms. I must admit that I had no idea there were so many

different earthworms in the country. Sounds like it will be very interesting. Scientists at Imperial College and the Natural History Museum will be analysing the data.

Did you realise that Charles Darwin published a book entitled *Darwin on Humus and the Earthworm*? This year marks the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin, so no doubt there will be lots of programmes and articles in newspapers, etc., over the coming months. On February 13th English Heritage re-open Down House, near Orpington, Kent, the family home of Charles Darwin. There are lots of new exhibitions and the gardens have been re-created as they were in Darwin's time.

There is a Darwin exhibition until April 19 at the London Natural History Museum called 'Darwin 200' (www.darwin200.org). Closer to home, from July 9 to December 9, there is an exhibition at the Cambridge University Library. The Library has the world's largest archive of manuscripts, etc., related to Darwin, and the exhibition will be entitled 'A Voyage around the World'.

MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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



November/December 2008

In often unpleasant weather for people and fungi, there were no late flushes. Some gill fungi took advantage of brief milder wetness amid the dry cold, and there were also Green Elfcups and

Orange Cup, strange smells from a *Mycena*, news from a Hornbeam, and aquatic fungi at Lyndon Reserve. But old familiars such as Earthtongues went missing and cold Velvet Shanks dried as they emerged.

RESERVES

Barnsdale Wood: 12 Oct (sorry for delay):

Weather sunny and warm. In order of discovery along the track, fresh Field Blewits *Lepista saeva*, Turkeytail and Russet Toughshank *Collybia dryophila* fresh and common, 5 Ochre Brittlegills *Russula ochroleuca*, vibrant Amethyst Deceivers, several groups of Sulphur Tuft, Bitter Bracket *Postia stipticus* along a dead trunk and 2 Common Earthballs *Scleroderma citrinum* by trackside.

Ketton Quarry Woodland: 6.11: Discomycete *Leptotrochila ranunculi* on heavily blotched leaves of Creeping Buttercup, Green Elfcups *Chlorociboria aeruginascens* with fruiting bodies fresh and quite large on well-rotted piece of ?beech, Beech Woodward *Hypoxylon fragiforme* on beech wood with bark (stromata brick-red), Candlesnuff Fungus on logs on soil (possibly ash and beech); 40 Blushing Brackets on felled beech; Jelly Ears fresh on fallen beech log together with White Brain *Exidia thuretiana*; groups of Flat Oysterlings *Crepidotus applanatus* on fallen twigs, 3 fresh Poisonpies *Hebeloma crustuliniforme* and one Conical Brittlestem *Psathyrella conopilus* in beech litter, Angel's Bonnets *Mycena arcangeliana* on ?ash wood on ground, around 30 Iodine Bonnets *M. filipes* on buried twig; Rusts *Melampsoridium betulinum* on birch and *M. capraearum* on Goat Willow.

Bloody Oaks Quarry: 26.11: Phycomycete *Phycomyces blakesleanus* on sheep dung.

Egleton Nature Reserve: 16.11: 6 fine, fresh Oyster Mushrooms on willow, 7 Lawyer's Wigs by side of track, a very large cluster of Orange Cup *Melastiza chateri* along pathway and 2 small pieces of Candlesnuff Fungus near Harrier Hide. Cool and sunny.

Lyndon Centre: 20.11: Delighted about aquatic Ingoldian Hyphomycetes taken from a rill 50 m east of Lyndon Centre! RL found: *Tricladium splendens*, *Lemoniera terrestris*, *Mycocentrospora acerina*, *Articulospora fusarioides*, *Alatospora acuminata*, *Tetracladium marchalianum*, *T. setigerum* and *Flagellospora curvula*. We may therefore presume the water is in good health, as nutrients are being liberated from leaves and made accessible for the food web. Also found were teleomorph states of powdery mildews *Microsphaera hedwigii* on Wayfaring Tree and *Phyllactinia mali* on hawthorn, the gall producing *Taphrina sadebeckii* on alder leaves and some Candlesnuff Fungus.

Gibbet Gorse: 20.11: Jelly Ears on elder, small and not well developed; 4 *Clitocybe dicolor* on oak and beech litter, 25-30 *Mycena stipitata* (*alcalina*)

with strong alkaline smell on fallenlog and Rust *Puccinia glechomatis* on Ground Ivy.

Sykes Lane: A quantity of *Nostoc sp* on gravelly ground. This is actually a blue green alga which looks like a big floppy spread of some jelly fungus. Although we have discovered its true nature, however, we've kept track of it for years in the mycology section.

Prior's Coppice: 27.11: Discomycete *Anthracobia macrocystis* in an old fire site, 3 fruiting Green Elfcups, rather gone over, on well rotted unknown wood, fresh and old King Alfred's Cakes mostly on fallen ash, fresh Common Tarcrust *Diatrype stigma* on fallen ash, ascomycete *Chaetosphaerella phaeostroma* on ash, Candlesnuff Fungus on ash; Bleeding Broadleaf Crust *Stereum rugosum* on hazel bark; 11 fresh Trooping Funnels *Clitocybe geotropa* on soil principally under oaks, 2 *Galerina autumnalis* on decaying wood (nice), c.30 Oyster Mushrooms mostly young and small, on ash; Smut *Urocystis ranunculi* on Creeping Buttercup, a galler, and the blisters had not yet burst; Rusts *Phragmidium bulbosum* on bramble (spores 5 septate) and Violet Bramble Rust *P. violaceum* also on bramble (spores 3 septate), *Puccinia behennis* on Red Campion and *P. glechomatis* on Ground Ivy.

WOODS

Fort Henry Ponds: 11.12: Rust *Phragmidium bulbosum* on bramble.

Tunneley Wood: 19.12: Hornbeam caused interest in 2006 when Honey Fungus occurred on it, and now there are lumpy brackets almost at the base of a trunk, a large group of Common Puffballs *Lycoperdon perlatum* in humus at its foot and a pair of rather frosted Wood Blewits nearby. Hornbeams have very few fungi which can only live on or with them and they share some species with Beech, Oak and Hazel, so the brackets could indeed be Lumpy Brackets *Trametes gibbosa* or perhaps a *Ganoderma*. Hopefully they will reveal themselves further in due course. It is certainly good to have records for Hornbeam.

GARDENS, FIELDS, VERGES

Lyddington: 27.11: Wood Blewits were in Elaine's Field and along the green lane above (SP 869982).

Barrowden: 4.11: Jelly Ears on our old Field Maple stump; weather slightly milder after cold, wet week. 9.11: Weather cold and wet and Jelly Ears all gone. 5.12: In rain and cold, at last, one clump of alga *Nostoc sp* on usual kerbstone in Redland Close. Despite wet weather during

year, it had not appeared. However, it may be relevant that as part of gardening this year, small pieces of limestone were placed on soil behind most of the kerb and the alga only appears on a short piece without stones behind. Equally, for the second year running, the rare black Hairly Earthtongues a few yards away on the small mossy, grassy island in the Close, have not showed. It may be the weather, but disturbance has occurred there too, including encroachment

by trees and the planting of a few daffodil bulbs. 24.12: Surprising groups of small brown hygrophanous umbonate *Conocybe rickeniana* in pot with stump of a tomato plant; weather temporarily mild. 31.12: 3 small clumps of Velvet Shanks as last year on sheltered side of old Field Maple stump but wrinkled and dry in freezing weather. Jelly Ears hard and dry on the less sheltered side of the stump.

My thanks to: R Lemmon, Dr CR Jones, B & D Parker, P & E Mann, E Northen, L Worrall.

MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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November/December 2008

A happy new year to everyone, and thank you for all your reports in 2008! Let's hope that 2009 will be a really good one for mammal recording in our area! Please do send in all your sightings. It is noticeable that we don't have any grey squirrel records this time, but I know there are lots around, so members are either not seeing them, or don't think it's worth sending them to me. I am always interested to find out about what is seen!

The **Otter** seems to have taken up winter residence in the area around Fort Henry, spraint being found under the second bridge on 5 separate occasions in October and November, and 3 large fish (bream) carcasses being found at intervals. **Badgers** have also been around, but no live views this time, only road casualties, in November between Braunston and Stilton, and the A606 by Burley Wood, and in December one between Seaton and Uppingham. At least one local sett is very active, in spite of cold wet weather. In mid November looking down one entrance the sett was full of water, and the badgers had been pulling out lumps of heavy clay from another hole. At the end of December it was drier, and the sett had been actively dug at three holes, latrines nearby brimming with dung!

In one report carried over from October a **Stoat** was seen as it hunted along the stonework of the southern end of Rutland water dam. Another stoat was seen in Dr Gallimore's garden as it hunted by a wall, entering a gap between stones and emerging with a **Bank vole** in its mouth. In mid November one was seen along the southern edge of Woodhead Wood (tautology?). In December a stoat was observed chasing a large **Rabbit** on the hillock at the eastern edge of Bloody Oaks nature reserve. The rabbit zigzagged a few times but the stoat stayed in very close

pursuit for about 3 minutes before disappearing into the long grass. A **Weasel** raced across the road alongside Empingham Old Wood near to Crossroads Farm, successfully dodging the wheels of the car.

Only 3 reports of **Foxes** were received this month. Scent markings were obvious along the Leighfield way footpath, Belton in Rutland, one was seen in Barnsdale wood, and another crossed the A606 below Burley Wood.

The Barrowden **Hedgehog**, resident in the Worralls' garden, was seen eating peanuts at 11.50 pm one November evening and on two subsequent nights had obviously been active, rearranging leaves at the entrance to its nest box. In early December the weather warmed up again slightly, and one was seen eating peanuts near the nest box at 9.45 pm and a few days later one was observed drinking from a saucer. On the 11th one was eating peanuts, but no more were seen before the end of the month, though the leaves around the nest box entrance were disturbed occasionally. In December one **Brown rat** was seen on the road between Morcott and Wing, and another ran across Main Street Morcott, on the edge of the old railway cutting.

Brown hares have been seen less commonly than usual for the winter months. In November, 5 were seen on winter cereals to the west of 'the moat', Exton Park, and another south of Westland wood. In December they were recorded from the track towards Pickworth Wood from Pickworth village, on the public footpath to the west of Christian's Lodge, and in a stubble field to the north of Great Casterton off Pickworth Road. One crossed the road near Crossroads Farm Empingham, and one ran fast over cereal fields east of Empingham Old Wood. 5 were seen together at the end of December at Greetham golf club.

Molehills have been appearing in several areas. At Fort Henry the valley between the Trout Farm and the fishponds has numerous fresh hills, of varying sizes. A small number of fresh workings have been seen near to the toilet block at Sykes Lane car park, Rutland Water and also in various parts of Priors Coppice.

A **Roe deer** ran away into the plantation along the main ride of Pugs Park spinney, Fort Henry in December. **Muntjac** are reported from Ketton

Quarry, where 2 were disturbed, Clipsham Park Wood, and Walk Farm near Pickworth.

Fallow deer have been seen crossing the Cottesmore road from woodland along the western edge of Exton Park (4), one large buck south of Westland wood, large numbers in Pickworth Wood and Little Haw Wood, fewer than usual from Clipsham Park Wood, and Morkery Wood.

Records have been received this month from: A Biddle, C Gallimore, P Langston, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, P J Rudkin, A R & M A Thorp, D Whitefield, Max Winslow, L & G Worrall

BAT REPORT compiled by Jenny Harris

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November/December 2008

Bats begin hibernation in earnest as soon as the weather becomes colder; nevertheless several reports were received of bats seen in flight during the two month period. Francis and Derek Lee, who have been seeing a few bats (probably Pipistrelle sp.) hunting over their Lyddington garden regularly throughout the summer, reported the last sighting on 14.11. Tim Caldicott saw two small bats flying near farm buildings at Shorne Hill, just north east of Prior's Coppice, early in the morning, on 16.11. At Edith Weston, Vic Arnold recorded two small bats in flight at the Normanton Road car park of Rutland Water on 14.11 and a single bat nearby on 26.11. Vic was the only person to see bats in December, two on 18.12 near Normanton Church (RW), singles flying over Normanton Road, Edith Weston on 20.12 and 22.12, and two near Normanton Church on 24.12, which was the last record of the year.

Years ago, most people seeing small bats in flight usually assumed they were pipistrelles, since these were known to be the commonest species. Nowadays, with much more information about the species that can be found in Rutland, and with the advent of bat detectors, we are not so quick to make this assumption, since species such as whiskered, Daubenton's, Natterer's, and even brown long-eared are not much bigger than pipistrelles and have all been recorded in Oakham and surrounding villages. The presence of three pipistrelle species locally has also complicated matters. In woodland and other cluttered habitats, bats such as the three *Myotis* species mentioned



above, soprano pipistrelle, long-eared, and Barbastelle, all echo-locate fairly quietly and sound very similar. I have often mistaken soprano pipistrelle foraging among trees for one of the less common species, and gently been put right by one of my Bat Group colleagues.

In spite of these reservations, all bat records are important; the most valuable information to record is an approximate idea of size, the type of activity and where they were doing it (for instance, fluttering close to bushes at about head height), the time of day, and of course location, including a map reference if possible. This information, when followed up, may lead to important finds, such as the *Nathusius pipistrelle* colony.

Noctule bat

Erratum: in November Fieldfare, I stated that no noctule bats had been heard on the 'bats and glow-worms' walk at Ketton on 4.7. In fact, we heard several passes over Stable Field on Station Road, although the bat or bats were not seen.

For a few months yet, there will be very little bat activity. When hibernating, bats go into deep torpor; their temperature may drop to just above freezing, while their heart and other vital functions are barely ticking over, thus saving energy for the long period during which they cannot feed. However, on fine, warm days some bats may emerge to search for insects, or to drink, even in daylight, so please keep a look out and pass on the records.

My thanks to: V Arnold, T Caldicott, F and D Lee; and to G Chiverton, P Langston and A Tomlinson (whom I forgot to mention in November Fieldfare).

RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2008

The AGM of the Society was held on March 4th 2008 at the Church of England School, Oakham with 76 members present and the President in the Chair.

1 **Apologies:** G Chiverton, D and B Parker, P and E Mann, J Hutton, A Biddle.

2 **Minutes of AGM 2007:** Circulated in *Fieldfare* January 2008.

Proposed by L Biddle, seconded M Winslow, approved and signed.

3 **Matters Arising:** Nil.

4 **Treasurer's Report:** D Lee noted surplus of £928 slightly less than in recent past but Reserves were over £10,000. The website had been improved and payment increased for speakers. Printing and postage costs had increased. A promise of £2,000 had been made to the Woodland Trust Gorsefield Appeal. Gift Aid continued to be very useful and any taxpayer not already using it was urged to consider doing so. The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for a sound, very reassuring report.

Proposed by G R Worrall, seconded Dr C R Jones, the Report was adopted.

5 **Appointment of Independent Examiner:** Canon R Tovey was gratefully thanked for his work.

Proposed G R Worrall, seconded Dr C R Jones, Canon Tovey was reappointed.

6 **Chairman's Report:** A Tomlinson said the year had again been full of the pleasant and interesting things for which the Society, maintaining a membership of over 300, was renowned. Wildlife recording continued energetically, building on over 40 years of information. New Recorders, Officers and Committee Members had helped to invigorate existing work, and members who helped in many ways were thanked.

In contrast, although the Society has continued to be active at county and vice-county level in acting as advocate for Rutland's wildlife, outcomes have not been positive. The Society intended to pursue further work with Leicestershire Environmental Records Service to ensure that wildlife records are properly maintained and utilised. The Society had also been active for many years in Rutland County Council's Environment Forum, now the environmental theme group of the Local Strategic Partnership known as the Rutland Environment Group. The involvement failed this year when discussion concerning housing development which prejudiced a designated Wildlife Site was denied within the Group, raising questions about the way in which RCC deals with local democracy and its biodiversity duty. The Society resigned, and hoped to work with the Wildlife Trust and Natural England to see if better controls can be organised. The President was sorry to hear this disappointing news.

Proposed by R Bakker, seconded M Winslow, the Report was adopted.

7 **Election of Officers and Committee:** Standing down were Joe and Mary Nourish, whose work with the Committee and Programme had been so successful for many years, and they were heartily thanked. Proposed by P J Rudkin, seconded T Mitcham and declared elected were: President: Sir Clifford Boulton; Chairman: Ann Tomlinson; Secretary: Linda Worrall; Treasurer: Derek Lee; Membership Secretary: Graham Worrall; Programme Secretary: Dawn Whitefield; *Fieldfare* Editor: Hendrina Ellis; other Committee Members: Linda Biddle, Gill Chiverton, Jenny Harris, Andrew Lear, Frances Lee, Peter Scott. New members Dawn Whitefield (Programme Secretary) and Peter Scott (Website/Publicity) were welcomed.

8 **Any Other Business:** P Rudkin expressed appreciation of work done by committee, especially by those who had recently undertaken increased responsibilities.

9 **Date of Next AGM**

Tuesday 3rd March 2009.