

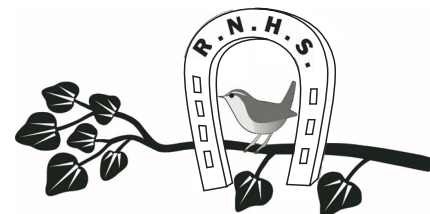
Journal of the RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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March 2009



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NOTICEBOARD

Your Summer Programme and Permit Card

Starts with May's Outdoor meeting, so don't forget the April one on your existing pink card! Please sign your new card NOW (juniors should sign on each parent's card) and carry it when visiting Eyebrook or Burley Wood, or buying books at Uppingham Sports and Books. Your next card, with Indoor and Outdoor meetings through the winter, will come with September *Fieldfare*. Enjoy these summer events!

Annual General Meeting

With 82 present and our President in the Chair, the following were elected for the year: 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.

The Society's finances are in good shape. Gift Aid has helped, and we would be delighted if any taxpayer not doing so at present would consider joining the scheme. We have also received some legacies, which are greatly appreciated. Membership holds steady at around 300.

In her Chairman's Report, Ann Tomlinson noted that meetings continue to be well attended and thanked the many people involved in all the Society's various activities, including the recording of wildlife. In changing times, a new value system could arise in which the natural world would be a cornerstone.

Linda Worrall, RNHS Secretary

Our new Weather Recorder

We're very happy to say that Roy Lemmon has agreed to become RNHS Weather Recorder, taking over from the longstanding John Hollands whose last report appeared in November's *Fieldfare*. Roy explains the background to his weather recording on page 3, together with his first weather report.

The Wash Birdwatching Cruises

These South Lincs RSPB cruises, starting from Boston, last about 5 hours and go into the Wash, up the Welland for a mile or so and back, giving a unique view of the Wash and its wildlife. Well-equipped boat, refreshments, toilet. Places on June 14, July 14, August 27, leaving 8.15-9.00, phone 01205 280 057 for details and to book.

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RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY events

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**

Led by the beat forester. This historic ancient woodland in the Soke of Peterborough was declared a National Nature Reserve in 2000 in recognition of its importance as a species-rich semi-natural native woodland, home to more plant and insect species than most other woods in this country. Access only from the A47, turn into lane marked Cross Leys Farm. Meet at TF040004.

Sunday May 10 **CROFT PASTURE** **10 am**

The reserve lies on both banks of the River Soar on the northern edge of Croft village, about 12 km south west of Leicester. Park on the minor road next to the church and the Heathcoat Arms public house (SP 511960). Walk up Station Road towards the railway bridge; the entrance track to the reserve is on the right (SP511958). The reserve has wild clary, which is a spectacular member of the sage family, and Croft may now be the only site in Leicestershire where it can be found.

Weekend June 13/14 **NORFOLK/SUFFOLK BORDER**

This is now fully booked. Information will be sent out to participants in May.

INDOOR MEETINGS

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

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. This is the last indoor meeting until the autumn season.

LEICESTER AND RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST events

Sunday 31 May **SEATON MEADOWS RESERVE** **2.00 pm**

This SSSI is one of the last surviving remnants of unimproved flood meadow in Rutland. Led by Graham Worrall, we hope to find Cuckooflower, Ragged Robin, Pignut, Yellow Rattle, Common Meadow-rue and Oxeye Daisy amongst others. Advisable to wear wellies. Location: near Harringworth on B672, map reference SP915979, limited parking under the Viaduct.

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 BST.

April			May		
Sunday	5	16.00	Sunday	3	14.10
	12	21.06		10	20.10
	19	14.34		17	12.23
	26	20.06		24	19.05
				31	12.29



WEATHER SUMMARY Roy Lemmon

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



I have been recording the weather since October 1993 and have gradually upgraded the equipment until today I have the following instruments: an aneroid barometer which I occasionally check for accuracy with RAF Wittering although I don't believe you can ring them any more; a standard rain gauge in copper which reads to 0.1 mm of rainfall; a hand-held anemometer which is only used once a day (on the playing field opposite my home) at 9 am when I do all my readings; a wooden screen in the back garden which contains a spirit-in-glass minimum reading thermometer and a mercury-in-glass maximum recording one. They are of a reasonable quality, and in addition there is a wet and dry bulb hygrometer to measure relative humidity.

The sunshine records are taken from Philip Eden's monthly report in the Daily Telegraph and are an average across the country.

If other members are also recording details of the weather, it would be interesting to note if they ever find significant differences between my records in Stamford and theirs in parts of Rutland, in the same way that John Hollands sometimes noted differences in rainfall between Wittering and Cottesmore.

January 2009

Barometric pressure and winds Pressure started high, 1029.5 mb at the beginning of the month and remained so until the 17th when it dropped as depressions arrived and it fell to a low of 974 mb on 22nd. Winds were generally northerly until 9th and then generally SE-SW until the end of the month.

Temperatures The first 10 days were generally cold with a night minimum of -5.5°C on 5th and corresponding day time highs between 1.2 – 5.1°C , the rest of the month being generally warmer with only 5 nights below zero and a day time maximum of 9.1°C on 22nd. The mean minimum for the month was 0.26°C , considerably colder than January 2008 (3.5°C) and January 2007 (4.1°C). Nationally it was coldest for 12 years. The mean maximum at 5.8°C was significantly lower than in January 2008 (9.7°C) and January 2007 (10.1°C).

Rainfall A total of 48.2 mm (1.9 inches) was measured which is 99% of the Long Term Mean (LTM) which in my case is calculated over 15 years of observations. In the first 10 days, as one would expect under the above mentioned high pressure systems, there was rain on only two days, a total of 4.0 mm, 2.2 mm of which fell on 4th as snow, but was measured as liquid, of course. From the 11th there were only six days on which rain was not detected, exactly what one would expect under low pressure conditions. Both January 2007 and January 2008 were much wetter with 141% and 168% of LTM respectively.

Sunshine I am unable to measure this, few amateurs are, but nationally the average was 66 hours, 120% of the 1971–2000 LTM and the highest in January for six years.

February 2009

Barometric pressure and winds Generally in the first 10 days the pressure was low and this corresponded nicely with a considerable amount of snow fall. From the 11th until the end of the month it was raised and generally maintained at this high level during which time there was little precipitation. Winds generally were light and, apart from the first 5 days, were N-NW.

Temperatures Up to and including the 14th, minimum temperatures ranged from 0.3°C to -6.5°C , the latter on 5th/6th, and after this they ranged from 1.0°C to 7.5°C on 22nd–23rd. The maximum that day was only slightly higher at 10.7°C . The warmest day of all was 27th at 13.0°C . The mean minimum for the month was 0.96°C , a little warmer than February 2008 (0.69°C) but much lower than February 2007 which was 2.7°C . The mean maximum was 7.2°C , significantly lower than February last year (9.7°C) and also February 2007 at 9.5°C .

Rainfall Normally February is the fifth wettest month of the year and the Long Term Mean (LTM) based on my records is 37.5 mm (1.5 inches); this month's total however was 67.1 mm (2.6 inches) or 179% of LTM, and the great majority fell as snow in the first 12 days. Snow depth is a very variable parameter depending on many factors: the deepest here was on 3rd–4th when I recorded 220 mm or about 9 inches. Rainfall average for England and Wales was only 81% of the LTM, which emphasises the fact that there were marked regional variations and the South-East was very wet.

Sunshine Averaged over England and Wales this was 64 hours or 83% of the 1971 to 2000 mean, the lowest in February since 1994.

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

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



November/December 2008

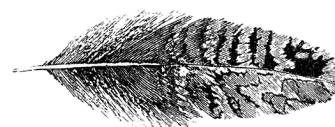
There is very little to report on the herpetological front for these months. However in Barrowden the Worralls' frogs continued to be active in November with two heard croaking on the 10th. On the 27th a frog was found in their garden with both forelegs neatly amputated. Its leaping ability was unimpaired.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



January/February 2009

The snowy weather focused attention on garden bird watching, which provided some interesting records – Waxwing, winter thrushes, Blackcap and Reed Bunting – but the reservoirs held on to some good birds, and woodlands also proved rewarding for Woodcock and woodpeckers. A highlight for some was an obliging Bittern at Eyebrook, whilst a Hawfinch on the Lyndon reserve provided the opportunity for many to catch up with what is now a very scarce bird in the county.

My thanks to the following for their records: V Arnold, A J & L Biddle, P & C Brown, R Brewster, T Caldicott, A Carling, A & J Comber, Dr C Gallimore, N E Gordon, M & G Griffin, J Harris, Mrs Hibbet, J Hutton, A Lawrence, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, I Misselbrook, E Northen, J W Nourish, G Panter, D J & B Parker, D Perril, K Potterton, D Reeve, P Rudkin, Jill Stapleton, A R & M A Thorp, M Tyler, D Whitehead, M Winslow, L & G Worrall.

Greylag Goose. Nos at Exton Park/Fort Henry peaked at 103 on 19.02.

Brent Goose. A dark-bellied bird was at RW(Normanton) on 11 and 18.01.

Mandarin. A pair were at Leighfield Fishponds on 24.01.

Shelduck. Up to three were at FHP between 06.01 and 28.02. Pairs were at EBR on 10.01 and Leighfield Fishponds on 22.02.

Ruddy Shelduck. One was reported from the RW(Lyndon) reserve on 03.02.

Gadwall. There were good nos at FHP with 183 counted on 06.01, declining to 131 on 28.02.

Green-winged Teal. A drake was at EBR from 31.01 to the end of Feb – presumably the same bird which has re-appeared here each year since 2006.

Red-crested Pochard. There were good nos at RW in Jan (see counts). A drake was at FHP on 11.02.

Scaup. At RW(Dam) there were three (two males and a female) on 21.01 and five (three males and two females) on 27.02.

Common Scoter. Two females were at RW(Lyndon) on 13.01.

Smew. Noted at both reservoirs in both months.

At EBR there were seven (six males) on 11.01 but only one female on 31.01. Up to twelve were at RW throughout the month.

Goosander. A female was at EBR on 10.01.

Ruddy Duck. There were thirteen in RW(South Arm) on 17.01 and four at RW(Dickenson's Bay) on 19.02.

Pheasant. Singles fed in gardens at Barrowden on 01.01 and Oakham on 12.02.

Red-throated Diver. One remained at RW(Main Water) until 06.01.

Great Northern Diver. One or two were reported intermittently at RW, between Whitwell and the Dam throughout both months.

Little Grebe. Two were at EBR on 10.01 and there was a maximum of six at FHP on 11.02.

Slavonian Grebe. One was in RW(North Arm) from at least 17.02 to the end of the month.

Black-necked Grebe. Three were in RW (Dickenson's Bay) throughout both months.

Bittern. One provided excellent views at EBR between 11.01 and 15.01 and one was seen irregularly on Lagoon three at Eggleton between 18.01 and 27.02.

Little Egret. Singles were noted as follows:

EBR on 22.01, FHP on 11.02 and RW(Burley Fishponds) on 24.02.

Grey Heron. Singles visited garden ponds in Stamford between 06.01 and 19.01 and Barrowden on 13.03. All fish remained secure beneath the ice! There were c.20 at RW(Burley Fishponds) on 24.02.

Red Kite. This species seems to be regaining its urban status, with birds seen regularly over Stamford (four on 17.02) and Oakham, where there were two on 22.02. Other records were from the Barrowden area, Horn Mill/FHP, Wing, Lyndon and EBR.

Sparrowhawk. Most records were of garden birds, e.g. Oakham, Stamford, Wing, Lyndon and Barrowden, mostly singles, but pairs were noted at Edith Weston on 04.02 and Normanton, also in Feb.

Buzzard. Singles and pairs were widely reported. There were five at FHP on 17.01 and eleven over Exton Park on 19.02. A pair were displaying over the A1 at Tickencote, with some spectacular dives noted.

Kestrel. Regularly seen around Edith Weston and at FHP but elsewhere noted only at EBR on 10.01 and near Little Casterton on 08.02. All records for this species would be appreciated.

Peregrine. An adult was at RW(Dickenson's Bay) on 06.01.

Oystercatcher. On 27.02 there was one at RW(Eggleton) and two at RW(Edith Weston).

Golden Plover. There were low counts during these months with 72 at RW on 18.01 and 83 on 22.02. At FHP c.60 flew west on 28.02 and there were 135 on winter cereals at Mounts Lodge on the same day.

Lapwing. c.300 were estimated over FHP on 25.01. RW counts were 1379 on 18.01 and 406 on 22.02, many birds having moved away in the snowy weather.

Dunlin. Fourteen were at EBR on 31.01. There were 85 at RW on 18.01 but only four on 22.02.

Ruff. Two were reported from RW(Manton Bay) between 08.01 and 21.01.

Snipe. RW had six on 18.01 and 22.02. One or two were present at FHP, Horn Mill, Little Casterton, Lyndon and Toleshorpe between 06.01 and 28.02. and there were ten at Leighfield Fishponds on 11.02.

Jack Snipe. One was reported from EBR on 10.01.

Woodcock. Singles were widely reported with records from the ice on the canal at Oakham, Morkery, Pickworth, Little Haw, Clipsham Park

and Tunneley Woods with others near Lyndon and at RW(Eggleton). Three were in Tunneley Wood on 24.01 and 11.02.

Curlew. Between five and seven were at RW between 13.01 and 26.02.

Redshank. One was at EBR on 31.01. At RW there were 17 on 18.01 and 14 on 22.02.

Green Sandpiper. One was at Oakham sewage works on 21.02 and what may have been the same bird was at RW later that day and up to 27.02.

Yellow-legged Gull. An adult was at RW(Eggleton) on 17.01.

Iceland Gull. A first winter bird roosted at EBR at the end of Jan and also at RW(Eggleton) 21.01 and 23.01.

Woodpigeon. 708 were counted in two flocks along Ashwell Road, Oakham, on 27.01.

Barn Owl. Reported regularly during both months from the Barrowden/Seaton area. One was freshly dead by the A1 at Tickencote on 06.01 and others were recorded near Uppingham, Beaumont Chase Farm and RW(Eggleton).

Little Owl. The only record was of one near Uppingham on 20.01.

Tawny Owl. Jan records were from Barrowden, Pickworth and Little Haw Woods. One was calling at Tunneley Wood on 19.02.

Kingfisher. One was at FHP on 17.01.

Green Woodpecker. Seen and heard regularly at Edith Weston, FHP and Normanton. Also noted in suburban Stamford on 13.01 at Ketton Quarry, Quarry Wood Little Casterton and Flitteris Park Farm.

Great Spotted Woodpecker. A garden visitor at Barleythorpe, Oakham, Edith Weston, Normanton and Uppingham, where fat and peanuts were the attraction. Visited rural feeding stations at Braunston, EBR and Tunneley Wood (two on 19.01) Drumming noted at Hambleton from 03.01 and in Westland Wood on 19.02.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. A male visited a peanut feeder in Tunneley Wood on 06.01.

Skylark. There were twenty feeding on oilseed rape stubble at Tinwell on 07.02. Three sang over pasture at Barleythorpe on 20.02.

Meadow Pipit. On 10.01 there were c.20 at FHP and eleven at EBR.

Grey Wagtail. Two were at Geeston sewage works on 11.01 and singles were at a Stamford garden pond on 26.01, in Uppingham on 29.01 and in an Oakham garden on 04.01 and 12.02.

Waxwing. One fed on white rowan berries in Empingham on 02/03.01 whilst guelder rose berries attracted one to a Stamford garden on 04/05.01.

Stonechat. At FHP there was a pair until at least 04.02 with a male to 11.02. One was noted at EBR on 16.01 with a pair the following day.

Fieldfare. Flocks reported before the snow included 86 in Tickencote Park (21.01), 500 at Normanton (22.01) and 300 at Leighfield (31.01). Birds were found in gardens at Barrowden, Stamford and Edith Weston from 03.02, where they fed on apples and rose hips. c.30 were at Barrowden on 05.02.

Song Thrush. Noted in gardens at Barrowden (very loud song!) and Oakham.

Redwing. The largest flocks reported were thirty at FHP on 16.01 and c.40 at Normanton throughout Jan. There were five in a Stamford garden on 28.01; and one in an Empingham garden on 08.02 was a first record there.

Blackcap. Birds were reported from three Oakham gardens, single birds except for three in one garden on 03.01 and two Stamford gardens in Jan. In Feb there were records from two Oakham gardens, involving a male and a female with a male feeding on apple at Stamford to 07.02.

Goldcrest. One fed on fat and peanuts in a Stamford garden between 01.01 and 05.02 and one was in an Oakham garden on 04 and 09.02.

Long-tailed Tit. Another regular visitor to fat and peanuts in gardens at Barleythorpe, Oakham and Stamford, with a max of seven in Stamford on 06.01. Twelve were at the EBR feeders on 17.01, and they were also noted at Braunston and Tunneley feeders.

Marsh Tit. There were records from Exton Park, Prior's Coppice, the RW Lyndon reserve, and Tunneley Wood where song and display were noted on 24.01.

Willow Tit. One was on feeders at RW(Lyndon) on 13.01. Up to four were noted at Brooke, RW(Burley Fishponds) and Gorsefield Wood in Feb.

Coal Tit. Noted at garden feeders in Empingham (three birds), Stamford and Oakham and also at EBR.

Nuthatch. A regular visitor to feeders in Tunneley Wood in both months. Also noted in Exton Park, Armley Wood, Gunthorpe, Oakham and Hambleton Wood.

Treecreeper. Birds visited gardens at Empingham, Barleythorpe, Braunston and Uppingham.

Jay. Two fed regularly in a Barleythorpe garden throughout Jan.

Rook. c.100 flew north at Leighfield on 31.01.

Starling. There were interesting reports of two small urban roosts in tall conifers in Stamford gardens from mid-Feb. One attracted up to fifteen hundred birds (a guestimate) with a Sparrowhawk apparently successful in obtaining a meal. The second roost was much smaller, attracting c.150 birds to a row of large Leylandii.

Tree Sparrow. One or two were regular feeders at Park House, Normanton during both months. Several were noted at Mounts Lodge in Jan.

Goldfinch. With many gardens now sporting nyger feeders, smaller numbers seem to be the norm at most feeding stations, but thirty were in a Barrowden garden on 12.01, an impressive 120 were at Leighfield on 18.01 and forty were at RW(Lyndon) on 26.01.

Siskin. Sixty at RW(Lyndon) on 16.01 was the largest flock reported with up to twenty noted at Beaumont Chase Farm, Exton Park, Barrowden and RW(Egleton) between 18.01 and 26.02.

Linnet. At Mounts Lodge 22 fed on stubble on 13.01 and there were 63 on newly ploughed land near Tinwell Lodge Farm on 25.02.

Lesser Redpoll. Four were in a Stamford garden on 04.01 and up to four fed on nyger in another Stamford garden between 01.01 and 24.02. Up to three were noted at Brooke, Leighfield and RW(Lyndon) between 24.01 and 12.02.

Hawfinch. A female was a frequent visitor to the feeders at the RW(Lyndon) Centre between 04.01 and 14.01 and again on 31.01.

Yellowhammer. One visited an Edith Weston garden on 17.01.

Reed Bunting. One Oakham garden attracted up to three birds throughout Jan and between five and eleven in Feb, with eight males present on 17.02. Another Oakham garden attracted one bird, and two Stamford gardens had one or two during Feb. There was a flock of seventeen near Great Casterton on 13.01.

Corn Bunting. Visits to the Mounts Lodge area between 13.01 and 10.02 produced a peak count of just eleven birds on the latter date.

Wildfowl counts – January/February 2009

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry/ Exton Park		Holywell Lake	
	18.01	22.02	18.01	22.02	16.01	19.02	18.01	21.02
Mute Swan	189	97	114	56	13	6	4	
Pink-footed Goose								1
Greylag Goose	159	62	220	20	14	112	136	36
Canada Goose	850	188	136	76		8	84	55
Barnacle Goose	12	12						
Brent Goose	1							
Egyptian Goose	51	36						
Shelduck	10	34	1	8	3			
Wigeon	2117	3052	195	335	36	50		
Gadwall	658	426	38	40	171	145	18	9
Teal	614	653	510	230	14	5	24	13
Green-winged Teal				1				
Mallard	534	478	88	36	43	30	58	61
Pintail	12							
Shoveler	14	34	4					
Pochard	352	131	36	26		4		
Red-crested Pochard	13							
Tufted Duck	1544	722	420	131	75	106	12	8
Scaup	4							
Common Scoter		2						
Goldeneye	314	442	28	41				
Smew	12	10	7					
Goosander	41	42						
Ruddy Duck		10						
Little Grebe	62	49	10	8	4	2	5	3
Great Crested Grebe	397	151	19	10				
Slavonian Grebe		1						
Black-necked Grebe		3						
Cormorant	120	55	24		1	5		
Little Egret	2	1						
Grey Heron	28	26	5	4				
Moorhen	83	94	4	5	20	20	25	21
Coot	2585	1224	253	51	51	56	20	21

BOTANY NOTES compiled by Graham Worrall

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

January/February 2009

The earliest records this **January** were from R Lemmon at the base of the dam at Eyebrook Reservoir, on the 8th. Roy saw **Groundsel, Daisy, Shepherd's Purse, Common Chickweed, Hairy**

Bittercress, Common Whitlowgrass and Annual Meadow-grass, all in flower.

The first **Lesser Celandine** was flowering in Dawn Whitefield's paddock on 17th January; the next were seen by Graham Worrall at Seaton Parish Church on the 30th.

Hazel catkins were seen by Graham on Manton Hill on 3 bushes on the 22nd. Clive Jones spotted a number of **Spurge Laurels** along the road near Bloody Oaks Reserve and Dawn reported the first **Snowdrops** in her paddock on the 15th.

No records were received for flowering plants in the first two weeks of **February**, frost and snow being the cause, then the 17th to 20th produced **Black Spleenwort**, **Wall Rue** and **Hart's-tongue**

from the wall of Uppingham School, seen by Clive Jones. **Golden Saxifrage** and **Hazel** were reported from Prior's Coppice by Roy Lemmon, and **Hazel** by Phil Rudkin and Alistair Lawrence from Flitteris Park Farm, Belton-in-Rutland.

Frost intervened again between 21st and 26th, when Roy Lemmon found **Alder**, **Dog's Mercury**, **Snowdrops** and **Hazel** in Barnsdale Lodge Wood.

Thank you for these records to: R Lemmon, G Worrall, D Whitefield, P Rudkin, A Lawrence and C Jones.

Roadside Nature Reserves

I have had one new volunteer and a number of members agreeing to do 2009, but I still would like previous volunteers to say 'Yes' again, and we obviously need more new ones if we are to maintain our watching brief.

PLEASE HURRY – THE FLOWERS ARE COMING OUT FAST!

Graham Worrall, Telephone 01572 747302

LEPIDOPTERA NOTES compiled by Jean Harvey

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January/February 2009

BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Only three records for butterflies have been received. After the prolonged cold period with snow, one **Brimstone** flew by a house in Barrowden on February 19th in the afternoon sunshine, two days later one was seen in a garden at Uppingham and one was in Edith Weston on the 27th.

As we had heard that **Spring Ushers** were on the wing in neighbouring areas, we operated our moth traps at Eyebrook Reservoir (somewhat earlier than has been usual for us) on February 26th with the hope of adding a new species to that site list. Sadly we were not successful in finding this moth amongst our small catch of 2 micro- and 3 macro-species that night, but were pleased to discover later that single males had been trapped at Lyddington on February 17th and 18th. The females of this species are wingless and can in some areas be found on the trunks of oak trees.

Other records from Lyddington included 2 micro- and 4 macro-species during January when trapping was carried out on four nights between the 12th and 26th. During February, trapping took place on seven nights between the 15th and

28th, and totals for the month were 7 micro- and 9 macro-species. The numbers of **Pale Brindled Beauty** caught (another species with a wingless female) were exceptionally high, with fifteen on the 17th and a massive twenty-four on the 18th. Another species worthy of a special mention was the **Satellite** which over-winters as an adult from September to April. Several of these were in the traps on five nights with a maximum of six on the 28th. One Pale Brindled Beauty was seen at Edith Weston on February 21st and four species were found in Barnsdale during the month.

Members will remember that Horse Chestnut Leaf Miners have been monitored in Rutland since 2005 and during this time evidence of their presence has spread to a very large number of our villages. I recently read an article in the national press that stated that the caterpillars of this species have been the fastest growing garden pest, causing trees to lose their leaves prematurely. These leaf miner larvae came to this country from Greece and apparently have no natural predators here. They were first noted in 2002 in the London area and since that time have spread through England and Wales. Thus we see that while some of our desirable local species are in decline, others that we would prefer not to have are on the increase. Such is life!!

My thanks go to the following: V Arnold, R Follows, C R Jones, D & F Lee and L Worrall

ORTHOPTERA REPORT compiled by Phil Rudkin

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January/February 2009

No records were submitted for these months.

PLANT GALLS REPORT compiled by Roy Lemmon

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January 2009

I have in previous reports, usually at about this time of the year, written of galls which persist in what must seem unlikely weather conditions. In the first place these must be on plants which are not generally cut down by frosts and this month has produced two records of exactly this sort from Eyebrook reservoir on the 8th. Both were rusts, one on Groundsel and the other on Ground Ivy

and in both cases they bring about modification of the plant's normal tissue, i.e. they induce galls. Not all rusts do this, some simply parasitise the plant without producing actual modification of its tissues, so it is necessary, if like me you have a poor memory, to have the book handy.

February 2009

There were no records this month.

INSECTS AND OTHERS compiled by Gill Chiverton

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January/February 2009

It is no surprise that 'Insects and Others' were keeping a very low profile in January and I received no records for that month. Happily there were some records, mostly towards the end of the month, for February.

From 10th–25th February a total of 74 ladybirds were removed from a bedroom in Wing. Perhaps not unexpectedly they were mainly Harlequin ladybirds. The actual count was as follows:

2 Two-spot ladybirds *Adalia 2-punctata*
2 Eyed ladybirds *Anatis ocellata*
70 Harlequin ladybirds *Harmonia axyridis* -
50 *H.a.succinea*
19 *H.a.conspicua*
1 *H.a.spectabilis*

A slug *Arion subfuscus* was recorded on lichens on a fallen branch at Priors Coppice.

The first Honey Bee *Apis mellifera* record came from Brooke on 19th February. Then a week later Bumble Bees *Bombus lapidarius* were enjoying the sunshine in Barrowden and also 2 'Wild Honey

Bees' were noted. With a cold wind the next day a female Bumble Bee *Bombus lucorum* was found grounded and re-located to a sheltered place. The following day no sign of the grounded bee so hopefully she flew off. Also on that day two Bumble Bees (*Bombus lucorum*) were noted feeding on winter honeysuckle.

News on the National Worm Survey mentioned in the last edition of *Fieldfare*

I have been lucky enough to obtain a 'worm survey pack' by post, but with this came a letter explaining that all postal worm survey packs had been allocated. However, there is a website www.OPALexplorenature.org and it is possible to download all the information needed (include identification of all the different worms) to take part in the survey. If you are not online, Hendrina Ellis (tel: 01780 482048) or Peter Scott (tel: 01780 720724) will be happy to go online and download the survey details for you. It would be interesting to find out what types of earthworm inhabit Rutland.

Many thanks for records go to T Caldicott, C H Gallimore, R Lemmon, and L & G Worrall.

MYCOLOGY NOTES compiled by Linda Worrall

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January/February 2009

Special thanks this time to Derek Lee and collaborator Mike Sutcliffe of the British Lichen Society for the Lyddington Lichens, Roy Lemmon for all his microfungi, waterborne fungi and algae, and Tim Caldicott for the Giant Puffball at Burley Fishponds. Amazing what people get up to in such wintry weather, with ice, snow, thaw, rain, cold, re-freeze etc.

RESERVES

Ketton Quarry Woodland: 15.1: Fresh fruiting King Alfred's Cakes *Daldinia concentrica* on fallen / felled Ash, Beech Woodwort *Hypoxylon fragiforme* on fallen Beech branch, Candlesnuff Fungus *Xylaria hypoxylon* on fallen Hawthorn; good numbers of mostly fresh Turkeytail *Coriolus versicolor* on various hardwood logs on the ground; small numbers of fresh Flat Oysterlings in various parts of the wood and two groups of Velvet Shanks *Flammulina velutipes*, one of about 20 emerging on (?)Hawthorn, the other of 50 older but still growing, on Ash.

Ketton Quarry West Glade: 15.1: In a small permanent pond three species of Alga: *Diobryon* sp (colonies of around 35 cells looking like a bunch of flowers), *Oedogonium* sp (very long unbranched filament) and *Spirogyra* sp, *Inflata* group.

Prior's Coppice: 19.2: King Alfred's Cakes fresh and old on felled Ash logs, Common Tarcrust *Diatrype stigma* fresh on fallen deciduous logs, fresh but frosted Candlesnuff Fungus on Ash and Turkeytail on fallen Ash log; fresh, very small Jelly Ears *Auricularia auricula-judae* on fallen Ash twig; 4 fresh Scurfy Twiglets in woody debris in carpark edge; and 3 Aquatic Hyphomycetes from foam in a rivulet in the wood: *Flagellospora curvula*, *Tetracladium maxilliforme* and *Tricladium splendens*, which would be decomposing leaves and liberating nutrients for small water creatures.

Barnsdale Wood: A few old Blushing Brackets on a felled log (?Willow) and 10-15 fresh Birch Brackets on dead standing Birch tree and a fallen one nearby.

Barnsdale Carpark: Terrestrial Alga *Nostoc* sp on rather stony substrate, not fresh.

Barnsdale Lodge Wood: King Alfred's Cakes on fallen Ash and Hazel Woodwort *Hypoxylon fuscum* on Hazel, fresh and old in both cases, a light infestation of Sycamore Tarspot on fallen Sycamore leaves and two filamentous green Algae taken from a rain puddle: *Mougeotia* sp and *Ulothrix* sp.

Burley Fishponds: 21.2: Giant Puffball *Calvatia gigantea* in brown flaky late stage, 7 in across, 4 in tall. It could have been dispersing spores for months; excellent!

WOODS

Eyebrook Reservoir, Rutland Side: 8.1: Powdery mildew *Erysiphe cynoglossi* anamorph on Field Forget-me-not in a sheltered spot, Sycamore Tarspot *Rhytisma acerinum* on fallen Sycamore leaves; huge numbers of mostly fresh Turkeytail on felled Ash logs; Rusts *Phragmidium violaceum* and *P bulbosum* on Bramble, *Puccinia glechomatis* on Ground-ivy, *Plagenophorae* on Groundsel. The ascomycete Birch Woodwort *Hypoxylon multifforme* was found, unusually, on felled Ash wood, and, like tiny brown pom-poms, hyperparasitic upon it was a Hyphomycete *Pleurophragmium acutum*.

GARDENS, FIELDS, VERGES

Lyddington: 12.1: *Coriollus albidus* on damp, dead deciduous branches; Purple Jellydisc *Ascocoryne sarcoides* on Apple stump; a Jelly Ear on Elder stump, dry, hard, pinkish with white dusty covering, Common Jellyspot *Dacrymyces stillatus* on rotten door frame, Yellow Brain Fungus *Tremella mesenterica* on dead Hazel branch and Lichens: *Candelariella vitellina*, *Diploicia canescens*, *Evernia prunastri*, *Lecanora campestris*, *L. chlarotera*, *L. muralis*, *Lecidella elaeochroma*, *Lepraria incana*, *Melanella fuliginosa glabrata*, *Parmelia sulcata*, *Parmeliopsis ambigua*, *Phaeophyscia orbicularis*, *Physcia tenella*, *Verrucaria nigrescens*, also *Xanthoria parietina* on Gooseberry. 16.2: Lemon Disco *Bisporella citrina* on wooden fencepost. 19.2: Following the thaw, Jelly Ear now wet and floppy. 16.2: Lichens *Caloplaca citrina* and *Lecanora dispersa* on garden bench.

Lyddington, Bede House: 14.2: Lichens *Caloplaca flavescens* and *Lecanora albescens*.

Lyddington, Thorpe Rd: 10.2: Lichen *Xanthoria polycarpa* on public bench.

Barrowden: 9.1: Velvet Shanks on our old Field Maple stump sheltered against board fence: 3 clumps small and shrivelled in cold last month

now plumped up after damp, cold weather and Jelly Ears also revived from their dried hard state; Lichen *Xanthoria parietina* on various garden shrubs. 26.1: Velvet Shanks and Jelly Ears revived again after frost and snow. 10.2: After snow, ice, thaw, rain, clump of Velvet Shanks at base of stump growing well, clumps of small ones higher on stump hardly grown, but all glutinous and sporing; more Jelly Ears emerging. Velvet Shanks still functional at month's end. 28.2: Mild after wintry weather, on *Chamaecyparis Lawsoniana* (Lawson's Cypress) stump, a stunning 'rosette' 10 cm across of Smoky Bracket *Bjerkandera adusta*, mostly overlapping 'petals' 7 cm across x 5 cm front to back, grey pores, white flesh with clear demarkation between flesh and tubes, tiny cream

spores. It conforms to Smoky Bracket, but the stump is a conifer and my literature has it on broadleaves, though Buczacki also has it 'rarely on coniferous trees'. There are, apparently, just a very few other grey pored fungi (any suggestions?) There have been small flourishes before, but this was a surprise. Smoky and Blushing Bracket, Turkeytail and other such can be used to make fine paper, the final colour depending on the species.

North Brook - Horn Mill to Fort Henry Ponds: Ingoldian hyphomycetes in a very sparse specimen of foam with few species: *Alatospora acuminata*, *Anguillospora rosea*, *Tetracladium marchalianum*, *T. setigerum*.

Look out for Semi-free Morels Mitrophora semilibera in April and early May, please. They are ascomycetes, shooting their spores rather than dropping them like gill fungi, and look like little blackish brown pointed honeycombs stuck on top of thick white pencils. The bottom edge of the 'cap' doesn't quite meet the stalk, hence 'Semi-free'. If the cap does meet the stalk and they're a lot bigger and chunky, you've probably found a Morel Morchella esculenta. Semi-free Morels are usually found on path sides or mossy banks in damp woods or beneath hedges on damp verges, often in association with old Hawthorn. Morels turn up in drier, flatter places, even in gardens; they like it to have been hot in the previous summer, so look for them where there may have been a bonfire! Other spring fungi are Thimble Morel Verpa conica, honeycomb like an orange thimble on half a pencil on thin soil near Hawthorn, and Bleach Cup Disciotis venosa which is a dark brown saucer deeply ridged and convoluted at the centre, white and scurfy underneath, on a very short thick stalk. We've been keeping tabs on both these ephemeral spring beauties for years and they always provide surprises.

Thanks for records: T Caldicott, D Lee, R Lemmon, L and G Worrall.

MAMMAL REPORT compiled by Linda Biddle

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January/February 09

The first mammal report of 2009 – and happily we can begin with the presence of the **Otter**. Large freshly killed fish were found on 9th and 10th January close to the fishponds at Fort Henry, and on 24th January fresh spraint was found on the stone under the bridge below the lower pond.

Badger latrines and scratchings were found just inside Pickworth Wood, on our New Year's Day walk, and much activity around the sett deeper into the wood. At Dawn's Paddock, badgers were also active early in the year, digging out the sett on 4th and 18th January. The severe winter weather we had in February would have been a challenge to some of our mammals, but it gave a wonderful opportunity to see tracks of many of them. Fox, deer and badger tracks were commonly seen clearly outlined in the snow, showing us that badgers do not hibernate, contrary to most commonly held ideas. In February tracks were found in Pickworth Wood,

and along the Walk Farm track off the Pickworth road. A road casualty was found yet again at the bottom of Barnsdale Hill, and another between Oakham and Braunston.

Evidence of badger activity was also found in a spinney near Empingham, and a track crossing the road near Ketton Gorse, with evidence of at least 2 road casualties nearby. Live badgers were seen crossing the road between Barrowden and Wakerley on two occasions during February.

On New Year's Day a **Weasel** was seen as it crossed a footpath near Leighfield Lodge. At the end of February another crossed the track north of Lyndon village and a **Stoat** ran across the Manton–Edith Weston road near Lyndon. **Moles** are active along the Trout Farm footpath at Fort Henry, and also along the Rutland side of Eyebrook Reservoir. They are also busy in Dawn's Paddock, where a few molehills have appeared. Few **Grey squirrels** are noted this month, probably because they are very common,

and members hesitate to send them, but they are frequently seen feeding at bird food stations in Dawn's Paddock, and chasing and chattering among the trees.

A **Fox** was seen in Morkery Wood in early January, and scent markings noted along the bank at Bloody Oaks nature reserve. Two were observed separately in Clipsham Wood, another in Little Haw Wood and one was seen mid-afternoon adjacent to Little Sutie Wood near Pickworth. In a field alongside Loves Lane a **Hare** emerged from an area of wild bird cover, closely followed by a fox. This happened twice until the fox gave up and trotted off down the field out of sight. In February a fox was seen as it stalked a group of rabbits feeding in a snow-covered field at Bunkers Hill near Empingham.

Hares were seen in January in fields to the north of Empingham, 3 and 4 in each field. At Exton one was seen near Tunnely Wood, one by the Trout Farm plantation, and 8 in the large field to the S of the track from the lower lake up to the cross roads in the valley. On February 7th a total of 11 hares played in the field to the right of the Pickworth Wood track from Pickworth. Another single one sat in an arable field SW of Ketton village.

A **Common Shrew** was found dead on a grassy path at the entrance to the Clipsham Avenue car park in January, and another found dead on Dr Gallimore's drive in Wing. Two **Fieldmice** were busy for 10 minutes feeding on peanuts in the Worrall's garden at 11.20 pm one evening

in January. The nuts were placed there for **Hedgehogs**, and one brave and obviously hungry individual left footprints in the frost on 5th January, around the nuts, and the nuts nearer the (hedgehog) nestbox had also been eaten, though the frost had melted here, and there were no telltale prints. In early February, after snow, tracks were found showing that the hogs had wandered round the garden, as well as visiting the nut piles. On 5th February, again after heavy snow, a hedgehog was heard chuntering on the bank next to the nuts, and footprints found in the snow next to the nestbox. Hedgehogs were seen or heard on 16th, 21st and 27th of February, showing that they too will come out for food even in the coldest and snowiest winters.

A **Muntjac** was seen running in Dawn's Paddock in early January; another jumped over the fence at Bloody Oaks nature reserve. Others were seen, one on Seaton Road, Barrowden, and one flushed from undergrowth in Tunnely Wood, Exton.

Fallow Deer have been numerous in Clipsham and Little Haw Woods, and are also seen commonly around Pickworth Wood, in groups of up to 40, throughout January and February. Six were seen in January emerging from Tickencote Laund to feed on winter cereals. In late February following a large dark animal (probably a fox) being seen in the distance close to Pickworth Wood, a group of 5 fallow came galloping straight towards us, ignoring dogs, until they were nearly on us, and then veered off, jumping over the fence and into the wood.

Thank you to all who contributed to these reports: T Caldicott, Dr C Gallimore, J Harris, R Lemmon, T Mitcham, G Panter, P J Rudkin, P Scott, A R & M A Thorp, D Whitefield, G & L Worrall

BAT REPORT compiled by Jenny Harris

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There have been no records for these two months of bats in flight or found grounded; perhaps this is not too surprising, since there was no truly mild weather during the period to bring them out to feed.

One hibernaculum visit was undertaken in January and February for the Bat Conservation Trust's National Bat Monitoring Programme. On 18.1, the external temperature was 6 °C, and the warmest temperature inside the site was 8.4 °C. Two Daubenton's bats were found, one Natterer's,

two pipistrelles (unidentified to species) and one bat that could not be identified, as not enough of it was visible. By contrast the temperature on 8.2 was down to minus 0.2 °C with a maximum internal temperature of 1.4 °C. On that occasion four Natterer's were found, two pipistrelles and a single barbastelle bat. This bat was very high up within the site, in an area where the temperature was only minus 0.5 °C. This is a very rare species, but one was found at this site two years ago during a similarly cold snap.

