**RNHS Botany Report 2018**.

2018 was a very changeable year as far as the weather was concerned. We didn’t receive many early records so it wasn’t possible to be certain when various spring flowers first appeared. Dog’s Mercury was in flower in February and Primrose in Ketton Quarry on the 10th of the same month. Other records didn’t arrive until mid-March so we can’t make comparisons with earlier years. Later on in the year there was a very warm period when plants began to dry up and it was too hot to be out. Despite this however we had a total of 355 species recorded by 15 recorders.

There were several new plants recorded. One was Dame’s-violet, from the family Brassicaceae, found between Wing and Pilton. This is recorded by Jeeves as being an alien, and rare in Leicestershire and Rutland. Another was Common Amaranth which is related to the garden plant Love-lies-ableeding and originates in North America. It was found in Exton village. A third was Reflexed Stonecrop found on Ryhall Heath. These last two are also said by Jeeves to be rare. Yet another was Druce’s Cranesbill, probably a garden escapee. We had records of Cornflower, which was last seen in 2009, Bifid Hemp Nettle (2010) and Alkanet as well as Green Alkanet. Both these latter are members of the Borage family or Boraginaceae.

There were three field trips in the course of the year which were predominately botanical. The first was a rather cold expedition to Barnack Hills and Holes in April, in the cold. We found a lot of Cowslips, Early-purple Orchids and Pasqueflowers looking a bit sorry for themselves in the cold. There were one or two Fragrant Orchids and Man Orchids too. On all the paths were small yellow flowers of False Fox-sedge, looking just like pats of butter. In May there was a trip to Cribb’s Meadow where there were lots of Green-winged Orchids almost hidden in the grasses. We found, too, Adder’s-tongue, Bulbous and Meadow Buttercups, Pignut and Common Sorrel. In early June there was a visit to Seaton Meadows where there was plenty of Great Burnet, Yellow-rattle, Meadow-rue and Meadow Vetchling. We also went to the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust reserve of Robert’s Field, just across the Rutland border. This was a visit primarily to find butterflies but the meadows were full of flowers too, amongst them Common Spotted-orchids and Pyramidal Orchids, Knapweed Broomrape, Kidney Vetch and Fairy Flax. All were interesting visits.

Records, all from the faithful small band of recorders, were mostly from the usual sites; Ketton and Bloody Oaks Quarries, the various woods, but also from Quarry Farm (now subject to development), Ryhall Heath, the roadside between Wing and Pilton and the footpaths at Crown Bridge between Manton and Wing. Jane and Duncan Ball have been surveying the verge from Greetham to Thistleton Verge 9 and Carolyn Baxter and her colleague Donnie Smalley have done some recording of verges around Bisbrooke.

We are grateful to everybody who sends in records but **we do need more.**

**Reference**

**Jeeves, M**. (2011) *The Flora of Leicestershire and Rutland: Checklist and Rare Plant Register*. Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

The plants in the attached spreadsheet are listed alphabetically under their common name rather than their scientific name, hopefully making it easier for the majority to locate the plant they are looking for.

It is worth noting that there have been some changes in the common names used within this report/spreadsheet to conform with current naming convention.