



Ruddy Darter. Photo D Cotter

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Looking back at previous years' *Fieldfare* preambles, I see that I have usually noted the importance of the weather. It always has the power to surprise and confuse – who would have thought that after that long cold most miserable winter we would have one of the hottest and driest Junes on record. (See page 3.)

The late spring caught up, and butterflies and summer flowers have come early. The problem now is shortage of water. Many plants are just drying up and if the rain doesn't arrive soon that will cause problems to much of our wildlife.

Our spring meetings have been well supported, Cribb's Meadow and Seaton Meadows were as always a delight for their spring flowers, including orchids, and the Allerton Project a fascinating glimpse into the world of modern farming. Roberts' Field was really beautiful, and needed a full morning to do it justice. We were lucky that Dave Vandome of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust was able to give us a short introduction to the history of this field. Summer started at Woodwalton Fen in early July – another historic reserve. And now there is Ketton Quarry in August, led by our RNHS Recorders, Richard Brown and Gill Chiverton – and in early September, Plant Galls at Stretton Wood with Recorder Roy Lemmon and the British Plant Gall Society.

In the absence of a Programme Secretary, your Committee is jointly trying to put together a programme for 2019, so if you have ideas that you would like included then let one of us know, and we will try to oblige!

Do come and join us. Outdoor meetings are a good way of learning about the real world of natural history!

Linda Biddle *RNHS Chair*

New *Fieldfare* Editor needed!



Photo, D Cotter

Your *Fieldfare* Editor is feeling her age! I've been editor of *Fieldfare* for 11 years now and have greatly enjoyed it, but it is starting to become a chore and I badly need a break. It's a fun job if you have the energy, a great way to learn a lot more about natural history, an insight into the machinations of the conservation world, and a joy to choose the wonderful photos from our wildlife photographers.

Here's your chance to influence a new-look *Fieldfare*! Everything (nearly) comes in from people digitally, and you choose how to put it together, with the bonus that yours is the last word ... Lots of people put together 'publications' of one sort or another nowadays, this is your chance.

Contact me, Hendrina Ellis (see back page) and/or Linda Biddle (Chair) for more information about the job of *Fieldfare* editor. I'm very happy to go into details of the process and to continue to help for the first few months if you would like.

Hendrina Ellis *Fieldfare* editor

DIARY DATES

RNHS FIELD TRIPS

Full details of all these events appear on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk. If the weather is bad, check the website or call the 'Queries' phone number for changes.

Sunday 12 August, 10.30 am

Insects at Ketton Quarry



Photo, D Cotter

With RNHS Butterfly Recorder Richard Brown and RNHS Insect Recorder Gill Chiverton. Ketton Quarry is a SSSI and one of the most important sites for butterflies in Rutland. It *may* be raining by the time of this meeting (this is written on one of the hottest days of this year's heatwave). It will be very interesting to see what is found after such a period of prolonged heat.

Ketton Quarry is located in eastern Rutland. From the A47 take the A6121 towards Stamford. This road passes through Ketton, but just before leaving the village turn left into Pit Lane. The entrance to the reserve is on the left about 400 m further on just after the roundabout. Parking available. OS map ref: SK 979053 (Sheet 141). Nearest post code PE9 3SZ.

Queries: Gill Chiverton, 01780 753820, Richard Brown, 01780 590707

Sunday 2 September, 10.30 am

Plant Galls at Stretton Wood

With Roy Lemmon, RNHS Plant Gall Recorder, and members of the British Plant Gall Society. This RNHS annual event, at different venues, with the British Plant Gall Society is always an eye-opener. In Stretton, take a turn marked to HMP Stretton. After about three quarters of a mile, the wood is accessed by a short footpath on the right. Grid ref: SK 951170.

Queries: Roy Lemmon, 01780 762051.

Saturday 6 October, 10.30 am

Fungal foray at Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue

Dr Tom Hering of the Leicestershire Fungi Study Group will lead this fungal foray at Yew Tree Avenue, which consists of a collection of Yew trees about 200 years old lining the carriageway to Clipsham Hall (seen in the distance). The Forestry Commission have a very long lease on these woods and avenue; Clipsham Hall is privately owned. The Yew Tree Avenue car park is one mile north-east of Clipsham village (3 miles east of the A1 at Stretton). Grid Ref: 980169.

Queries: Linda Biddle, 01780 762108

And if you haven't signed up yet, check this one out:

20 November, 11.00 am

Natural History Museum

Behind-the-scenes tour at 11.30 am (£10), with the rest of the day free. (See May *Fieldfare* pages 1 and 2 for more details). Needs booking beforehand, contact Linda Biddle, 01780 762108; abiddle21@talktalk.net

RNHS EVENING MEETINGS

Indoor meetings are held at Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR), Lands End Way, Oakham LE15 6RB. Tea and coffee, free. Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.

Tuesday 2 October, 7.30 pm **A season with Woodpeckers**

Talk by Phil Rudkin, photos by Dave Needham - a uniquely RNHS double act!

LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST, RUTLAND GROUP

For events in Leicestershire and Rutland see www.lrwt.org.uk or phone 0116 262 9968. Rutland group meetings are held at the Volunteer Training Centre (VTC), Hambleton Road, LE15 8AD. Entry £1.

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST, BOURNE GROUP

For details of all LWT events, see www.lincstrust.org.uk, or phone 01507 526677 in office hours. Bourne group indoor meetings are held at the Methodist Church Hall, Bourne. Refreshments available. A donation of £1.50 is requested, children free.

WEATHER

RECORDER **Roy Lemmon**

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May 2018

Atmospheric pressure and wind The lowest pressure, 1001.5 mb, occurred on the 2nd; and after that it was a relatively high pressure month, the highest being 1028 mb on the 17th. Winds for the month fell neatly into two periods, 1st to 14th and 15th to 31st. In the first period winds were S–W, and after that mainly N–NE. In this latter period winds were often of low velocity.

Temperature A warm May, the overall mean temperature, 14.62 °C, was the highest in the decade 2009–2018. May 2017 was 14.14 °C. The mean minimum, 8.10 °C, was second to 2017 (which was 8.34 °C); and the mean maximum 21.13 °C was first, some 1.2 °C ahead of 2017.

Rain The total here was 51.3 mm (2.02 inches) which is 102% of my long-term mean of 28 years.

June 2018

Atmospheric pressure and wind Essentially a high pressure month, there was one blip when at 09.00 on the 14th, I recorded 1005.5 mb due to Storm Hector. But this was the exception and all other pressures were 1014 mb and above, mostly well above. Winds were predominantly NW–NE and of low velocity. An exception was the 20th when there was a variable wind, SW–W, up to 16 mph at 09.00.

Temperature This was a warm June, the overall mean temperature was 17.29 °C, second in the 2009–2018 decade after June 2017, which was 17.51 °C. The mean maximum however was first in the decade, 23.43 °C (with 2017 at 22.88 °C). The lowest minimum was 7.1 °C on the 4th to 5th, and the highest maximum was 30.0 °C on the 25th.

Rain The month started wet with 8.9 mm, over one third of an inch, on the first; but there was only 3.4 mm more in the whole of the month, to give a total of 12.4 mm (0.48 inches). This is 25.1% of my long-term mean of 28 years. Looking back, June is a very variable month for rainfall, 2012 saw 259% of LTM, 2016 180%, 2015 35% and this year is the 3rd driest since my records began in 1991.

Sunshine I have no records for this but the month has been notable for many days of prolonged sunshine, and I would expect it to be above average.

The weather journals of a Rutland squire

Mar. 26.839	2
Apr. 31.929	5
May 27.508	3
June 40.388	11
July 50.325	12
Aug. 36.027	10
Sept. 34.738	0
Oct. 32.066	6
Nov. 33.960	7
Dec. 34.925	9
Jan 30.455	4
Feb 19.884	1
<hr/>	
39.9036	

It's interesting to consider our predecessors! A Rutland squire in the eighteenth century had a strong family link with the famous Gilbert White of Selborne.

The man in question was Thomas Barker, 1722–1809, who lived in Lyndon Hall. The family has lived there since the time of Henry VIII, and on the death of his father Samuel in 1759, Thomas, the only son and heir, succeeded to the estate and became the squire of Lyndon Hall. He had married Gilbert White's sister Anne in 1751 and they had four daughters and a son, Samuel, b. 1757, who would on his father's death become the head of the family. Like his father, he was also a naturalist.

Thomas Barker appears to have had a somewhat obsessive nature and he recorded much to do with farming and the countryside, such as seed times, harvests, crops, livestock, farm prices, growth of trees and bee-keeping, as well as astronomy and natural history in general. Arguably the most important of his recordings from a historical point of view are those he made of the local weather. He recorded atmospheric pressure, temperature, cloud, wind and rainfall. His temperature readings, along with those of other historical recorders, contribute to the Central England Temperature series published by Professor Gordon Manley in 1953 and subsequently extended and updated in 1974. (A sample of his monthly rainfall records from the 1750s is given on the left, taken from Kington (1988).)

The Stevenson Screen

One series of Thomas Barker's temperature readings was taken using a thermometer housed in an unheated room – this was normal at the time but of doubtful value. This method was succeeded in 1864 by the invention of the Stevenson screen by Thomas Stevenson, who was the father of Robert Louis Stevenson. The Stevenson screen has now become universal for the housing of meteorological instruments and means that observations can be reliably compared wherever they are taken.

References

White, Gilbert (1788) *The natural history and antiquities of Selborne*.

Kington, John (ed) (1988) *The weather journals of a Rutland Squire*. Rutland Local History and Record Society.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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Your recorder is away. September Fieldfare will carry the reports for May and June as well as July and August. Please continue sending in your records.

BIRDS

RECORDER Terry Mitcham

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May/June 2018

Highlights of these months were a **Crane** and a **Black-winged Stilt** at Rutland Water and **White-winged Black Terns** at Eyebrook, whilst a **Turtle Dove** at Egleton was a very welcome record. Wader passage was mainly at Rutland Water and produced a good variety of species including **Little Stint**, **Curlew Sandpiper** and **Wood Sandpiper**. **Great Northern Divers** remained into June with scarcer wildfowl at Rutland Water including **Garganey**, **Red-crested Pochard** and **Common Scoter**. **Cuckoos** and **Spotted Flycatchers** remained very local and the effects of cold weather last winter were evident in CBC results from Beaumont Chase Farm. It was good to get a number of records from Ketton Working Quarry and Quarry Farm – both 'black holes' in our recording network.

My thanks to the following for their records: D & J Ball, T Caldicott, A H J Harrop, Dr C R Jones, T Land, P Langston, LROS, S Lister, T Mitcham, B Moore, M Nourish, D Needham, L Park, P J Robinson, J S & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, RWNR, L Worrall

(See also Wildfowl Counts.)

Mute Swan	Breeding records came from both reservoirs, FHP (two pairs), Ext Park and Banthorpe GP.
Greylag Goose	Many pairs bred at RWEg with single pairs at Banthorpe GP and FHP, plus a pair present at KQ on 15.05.
Canada Goose	Bred at FHP and KQ – four pairs there 05.05, one with goslings.
Shelduck	One was at KQ on 15.05. Bred at FHP with two ducklings on 04.06, both subsequently predated.
Mandarin Duck	A pair were at FHP on 10.05. Regular at RWNorm throughout and a female at LFP on 30.06.
Gadwall	Two broods at FHP on 04 and 30.06, and one on Rygate Lake in Ext Park on 16.06.
Pintail	Single males were at RWEg3 on 22.06 and FHP on 30.06.
Garganey	Present at RWEg from at least 06.05 to 28.06, with a pair noted between 28.05 and 12.06.
Common Scoter	Six were in SA3 at RW on 13.05.
Grey Partridge	A pair were in Ext Park on 12.05, with one at Pick on 06.06.
Great Northern Diver	Present at RWSA to at least 11.06, with two seen up to 08.05, and between 28.05–03.06.
Little Grebe	Six were on a large pond at KQ on 15.05 – a new site for us.
Bittern	One was at RWEg on 29.06.
Spoonbill	One was briefly at RWEg4 on 04.05.
Red Kite	Breeding activity was noted at three sites but only one nest was reported.
Marsh Harrier	One flew north at Leigh on 03.05, and one was at RWEg3 on 19.05.
Crane	One flew over Oak and RW on 03.05.
Black-winged Stilt	One, touring several local reserves, visited RWEg on 05–06.05, 18–19.05 and 27.05.
Avocet	Regular at RWEg throughout both months with a max of five on 25–27.05.
Oystercatcher	At RW there were 18 on 15.05 and 28 on 12.06. Adults with young were seen on 18.05 and 22.06.
Grey Plover	Noted at RWEg on ten dates between 11.05 and 07.06, with four on 26.05. One flew over Leigh on 28.05.
Lapwing	Breeding was confirmed at RWEg and KQ (four pairs on 15.05). Pairs were also present near Mounts Lodge on 03.05 and Banthorpe GP throughout both months. 46 were at RW on 15.05 and 51 on 12.06. Three were at EBR on 20.05.
Little Ringed Plover	Noted at RWEg from 12.05, with two on 12.06 and six on 22.06.
Ringed Plover	Present at RWEg in both months with spring passage of northern 'tundrae' birds from 11.05 to 06.06. Peak counts were 30+ on 25.05, with 37 on 27.05 and 30+ on 03.06. One was over Leigh on 27.06.
Whimbrel	Five were at RWEg on 05.05 with two on 10.05. Singles were over BW on 15.05, Leigh on 17.05, and Ashwell on 27.05. Singles over Leigh on 08.06 and 24.06, and RWEg on 30.06, may have been returning migrants.
Curlew	Display was heard near Leigh on 04.05 and calling birds were over BW on 12, Gunthorpe on 18 and RW on 23.05. There were further regular records from the Leigh/Brooke area in June with four over Man on 07.06. Ten were at RW on 12.06 and two on 22.06.
Black-tailed Godwit	A spring bird was at RWEg on 12.05. Return migration there began with five on 19.06, with 21 over on 21.06, ten on 28.06 and one on 29.06.
Bar-tailed Godwit	Four were at RWEg on 24.05.

Turnstone	Noted at RW on eight dates between 11 and 25.05, with three on 17.05. One was at EBR on the latter date.
Knot	One was at RWEg4 on 29.06.
Curlew Sandpiper	Three at RWEg on 08.05 were the first of a good run of records with singles on seven dates from 11.05 to 03.06.
Sanderling	Noted at RWEg between 07.05 and 14.06, with 15 on 26.05 and 11 on 02.06. One was at EBR on 26.05 with four there next day.
Dunlin	Regular in small numbers at RWEg from 03.05 to 22.06, with max counts of 12 on 12.05 and 15 on 02.06. One was at EBR on 26.05.
Little Stint	One was at RWEg on 25–27.05.
Green Sandpiper	Singles were at EBR on 06.06 and 13.06, and at LFP and nearby on 24.06. Four were at RWEg on 28.06.
Greenshank	Singles were at RWEg on 18.05 and 26–27.05, with one at EBR on 22.05. Three returning birds were at RWEg on 30.06.
Wood Sandpiper	Seven were at RWEg on 05.05 with four next day and one on 26.05. One flew over Leigh on 20.05 and one was at EBR on 25.05.
Redshank	At RW, where breeding occurred, there were eight on 15.05 and six on 12.06. Two were at EBR on 24.05.
Woodcock	A roding bird was again in BW on 05.05. One flew past the RWLynd Centre on 30.06.
Little Tern	An excellent series of records at RWEg saw birds on eleven dates between 07.05 and 14.06, with two on 12 and 26.05 and 14.06, and three on 25.05.
Black Tern	Fairly regular at RW between 08.05 and 07.06, with 12 on 21.05. Four passed through on 30.06. One was at EBR on 13.05 with eight on 24.05.
White-winged Black Tern	One was at EBR on 20.05, with two on 21–22.05.
Common Tern	Breeding at both reservoirs. There were 58 at RW on 15.05 and 82 on 12.06. 41 were at EBR on 20.05, with 13 there on 17.06.
Arctic Tern	Spring passage, between 01.05 and 27.05, produced one or two on seven dates; but there was a large movement on 02.05, when there were 50 in RWSA and 34 in NA.
Mediterranean Gull	Two adults were in RWNA on 19.05, and a 2nd summer there on 25.05.
Caspian Gull	The colour-ringed Polish bird seen at RW last November was present at Eg from at least 22.06.
Turtle Dove	One was around RWEg1 on 29.06 – chased (unsuccessfully) by a Hobby.
Cuckoo	Singing birds were heard to 11.06 at just nine sites, mainly in the west of the county. Three males were noted at Leigh on 20.05.
Barn Owl	Birds were reported from RW, Leigh, LFP, Gun and SM.
Little Owl	One was at BCF on 24.05 and 03.06. A calling bird was at Barrow on 11–12.06.
Tawny Owl	Two young were ringed at a nest box near FHP on 22.05.
Swift	First dates over breeding sites were 08.05 at Oak and 11.05 at Bden. Numbers seem low this year with few over Stam and screaming parties noted only at Upp (in reduced numbers) in June. 26 were moving north at Gun on 07.06, with 36 west there on 19.06.
Green Woodpecker	Adults and fledged young were seen at Upp, Greet GC (two pairs, each with two young), Geest, and QF. Regularly seen at Barrow and FHP.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	A nest containing noisy young was in TunnW on 19.05, our only breeding record. Visited garden feeders at Barrow, GCast and Oak.
Kestrel	Records came from QF, Shacklewell, FHP and GHW. Three young were ringed at a nest box in Ext Park in late June.
Merlin	A late bird flew NW at RWEg on 01.05.
Hobby	Up to five (15.05) were at RW from 01.05. One was over Man on 20.05, and one at FHP on 25.05, with another over Man on 21.06.
Golden Oriole	A singing male was reported from Burley Bushes on 07.05, presumably attracted by the poplars nearby.

Raven	Fledged young were noted at two sites, with birds active at a third.
Firecrest	A singing male was heard on four occasions in BW between 07 and 31.05.
Willow Tit	Noted only at Leigh in both months, with four on 23.06.
Marsh Tit	Nine noted in BW on 25.06 and seven at Leigh on 28.06.
Sand Martin	Away from RW, six were at KQ on 15.05 and three at QF on 03.06.
House Martin	Numbers low this year. First noted at a regular Bden nest site on 04.05.
Willow Warbler	Singing males reported as follows: Leigh 19 on 05.05 and 25 on 12.06, QF two, Pit Lane Ketton two and five at QF on 03.06.
Blackcap	Ten territories at BCF this year and three singing at QF on 28.06.
Garden Warbler	A good year for this species. Ten were in song in BW on 09.05 and three were singing near EG village on 20.05.
Lesser Whitethroat	At Leigh there were six in song on 03.05, five on 08.06 and three on 18.06. Three were singing at QF on 11.06.
Whitethroat	Territories at BCF were down to six this year, compared to 11 in 2017. Still widespread, though, with up to four singing at KQ, QF, Eg village, Wg, SM and Kett Gorse. 16 sang at Leigh on 05.05 with 15 on 12.06.
Grasshopper Warbler	One or two were singing at Leigh/Bushy Wood from 05.05 to 27.06.
Sedge Warbler	Away from RW, one or two sang at EBR, KQ and Gun.
Reed Warbler	Two were singing by the ponds at QF on 03.06. Present by a lake at Geest throughout both months.
Nuthatch	Reported from FHP, TunnW, CottW and BW, where 12 were noted on 25.06.
Treecreeper	14 were counted in the northern part of BW on 31.05, with eight in song.
Wren	Only 8 held territory at BCF, compared to 23 last year – effects of the cold winter.
Blackbird	Occupied territories at BCF were halved this year from 28 to 14.
Spotted Flycatcher	Continues to decline with birds absent from formerly traditional sites. Two at Berrybutts Spinney on 11.05 were the first, with subsequent records from Exton, Leigh, LFP, BW, RWEg, Wg Grange and Upp, where a breeding pair returned on 15.06.
Robin	There were ten territories on the BCF CBC plot, compared to 33 last year.
Redstart	A male was at Leigh on 03.06.
Whinchat	The only record was of a male at Cott Airfield on 03.05.
Wheatear	Singles were at Cott Airfield on 03.05 and Leigh on 06.05. Two were at Luff Airfield and one at RWEg on 12.05.
Yellow Wagtail	Presumed migrants were over Leigh on 06 and BW on 09.05. Breeding birds were noted at Exton (three pairs), Gun (two pairs) and BCF (singing male). Field beans seem to be the preferred crops. Singles over Leigh on 22 and 24.06 were probably migrants.
Grey Wagtail	A pair were at LFP throughout May.
Meadow Pipit	Breeding activity – display and song – was seen at SM, GHW and Cott and Luff Airfields.
Hawfinch	One fed briefly at a garden feeder in Stam on 02.05 – an unexpected visitor. One was over Leigh on 20.05.
Linnnet	c.100 were in the Leigh area on 03.05. Six were in song at QF on 11.06, and five held territory at BCF, up one on last year. The species is having a better year.
Lesser Redpoll	Singles were heard over LFP on 04.05 and BW on 09.05.
Crossbill	One or two were noted over BW between 09 and 15.05. Seven flew over Leigh on 12.06 and there were five at KQ on 15.06.
Siskin	Singles were over BW on 07.05 and Leigh 08.06.
Yellowhammer	The decline at BCF continues with seven territories this year (nine last year). Six were singing at QF on 11.06.
Reed Bunting	Singing males were reported as follows: QF seven on 03.06, SM four on 08.06 and FHP six throughout June.

Wildfowl Counts for May and June

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook Reservoir		Fort Henry Ponds /Exton Park		Banthorpe Gravel Pit	
	15.05	12.06	20.05	17.06	19.05	16.06	20.05	15.06
Mute Swan	163	311	53	94	10	6	2	2
Greylag Goose	268	798	45	125	21	6	22	4
Canada Goose	81	857	2	205				
Barnacle Goose	1	2						
Egyptian Goose	23	31						
Shelduck	18	16			3	2		
Mandarin Duck	3	5						
Wigeon	2	2						
Gadwall	98	544	26	18	17	18		
Teal		20		13				
Mallard	298	551	72	106	58	60	2	
Garganey		2						
Shoveler	8	26		4	1	3		
Pochard	9	19						
Tufted Duck	243	310	5	29	21	43		
Goldeneye	1							
Ruddy Duck	1							
Great Northern Diver	1	1						
Cormorant	134	154	9	10		1		
Little Egret	13	14	3	1				
Grey Heron	10	7	1	2	1	1	1	4
Little Grebe	2	9						
Great Crested Grebe	112	167	44	25				
Water Rail	8	12						
Moorhen	25	39		1	4	4		
Coot	129	292	3	58	22	32		2

BOTANY



Man orchid. Photo, J Rodgers

RECORDER John Rodgers

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May/June 2018

The prolonged dry weather has certainly made a difference to the countryside. There are still flowers around, the ragworts, thistles, willowherbs, wild carrot and other *Apiaceae*, but many are now in seed. This gives an opportunity to verify the identification of several species which are best differentiated by their fruits. Look at thistle heads, for example.

Amongst the records submitted this time are the expected flowerings, like **Chalk Milkwort** at Bloody Oaks Quarry, **Bee Orchids**, **Pyramidal Orchids**, **Common**



Photo. P Scott

Twayblade and **Yellow Birdsnest** at Ketton Quarry, whilst **Meadow Cranesbill** provided colour to many verges, especially around the Exton area. Three more unusual flowers were found at Ryhall Heath, **Weld**, **Rock Stonewort**, and an even more unusual Cranesbill, **Druce's Cranesbill**, which has only been reported two or three times before in Rutland. These last were Martin Grimes' findings.

It is heart-warming to have some new recorders who are going to do verge recording, and have already submitted records. I thank Jane and Duncan Ball, and Carolyn Baxter for their enthusiasm. Other records were received from Roy Lemmon, Dave Needham, Roy Edwards Tim Caldecott, and J S and J Rodgers.

BUTTERFLIES

RECORDER Richard Brown

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May/June 2018

The table shows all the 30 species reported in Rutland to the end of June 2018, along with their first dates of observation. The total of 30 species compares to 28 by the same date in 2017.

RNHS records to end June 2018

		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1	Brimstone	16th	X	X	X	
2	Comma	16th	X	X		
3	Small Tortoiseshell	16th	X	X	X	
4	Peacock	21st	X	X		
5	Large White		14th	X	X	
6	Green-Veined White		14th	X	X	
7	Holly Blue		19th	X		
8	Orange Tip		19th	X	X	
9	Red Admiral		19th	X	X	
10	Small White			1st	X	
11	Speckled Wood			3rd	X	
12	Green Hairstreak			5th		
13	Grizzled Skipper			6th	X	
14	Common Blue			8th	X	
15	Dingy Skipper			9th	X	
16	Small Heath			14th	X	
17	Small Copper			18th	X	
18	Brown Argus			21st	X	
19	Large Skipper			29th	X	
20	Small Skipper				7th	
21	Painted Lady				8th	
22	Meadow Brown				10th	
23	Dark Green Fritillary				14th	
24	Black Hairstreak				14th	
25	Marbled White				16th	
26	Ringlet				19th	
27	Silver Washed Fritillary				25th	
28	Purple Hairstreak				25th	
29	Gatekeeper				30th	
30	White Admiral					1st

The table shows first the record date for each species, and X indicates subsequent months in which recorded.

- 1 **Hairstreaks** A good year. You will note that so far we have observations of three Hairstreak species, the Green, Purple and Black. Green Hairstreaks have been seen on nine occasions, from three different sites, namely Clipsham Quarry, Ryhall Heath and Ketton Quarry. This is not out of the ordinary for this species, as Ketton and Clipsham provide regular annual reports. Two Purple Hairstreaks were seen on 25 June in Burley Wood. None has been reported to RNHS since 2014, though they are widely recorded in Harrop. They are notoriously difficult to see as they spend much time in the canopy of oaks. And a Black Hairstreak was recorded from Ketton Quarry on 14th June, a delightfully rare finding for Rutland, and an unexpected site.
- 2 **White Admiral?** Uncommon. In your kitchen?! Very uncommon. But it is true – one was observed in Barrowden on 1st July. Strictly not in date for this report, but too good to pass over!
- 3 **Fritillaries** Late June has yielded a good sequence of Fritillary observations, with as many as 20 Dark Greens seen at Clipsham Quarry on 30 June. Silver Washed have been seen in lesser numbers, but their time will come.
- 4 **Similarly, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers** are having a good year. Dingy Skippers have been reported from two sites, with up to 35 at Clipsham Quarry and 7 at Ketton. Grizzled Skippers have been reported from three sites with maxima of 12 at Clipsham and 10 at Ketton.
- 5 Less good news about **Painted Ladies**, with only a few singletons so far. And no records at all of **Essex Skipper**, **White Letter Hairstreak** or **Chalkhill Blue**. And I am still day-dreaming for our first **Purple Emperor** sighting of the year?



Dark Green Fritillary.

Chequered Skippers – ‘Back from the Brink’ news

Several dozen **Chequered Skippers**, mostly female (to lay eggs), have been released at a ‘secret’ site in Rockingham Forest. They were sourced from Belgium rather than Scotland, as the Scottish variety larvae use a food-plant not found in England, but plentiful in Belgium. It is planned to release more adults into a second site next year, and the project has an overall four-year time span.

Thanks to the following for submitting their observations: J and D Ball, C Baxter, P Bennett, T Caldicott, D Cotter, M Grimes, R Lemmon, D Needham, J Pearce, M Rumbelow, C and N Webb and L Worrall.

MOTHS

RECORDER Paul Bennett

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May/June 2018

A very productive 2 months! After a slow start the recent long spell of warm weather has completely changed things, and moths have been seen and reported in larger numbers than in recent years. Emergence times have been quite early although no more so than last year, which also experienced a period of warm late spring weather but not as prolonged as this year. Apart from the greater overall numbers, one noticeable feature this year has been the high counts of micro moths seen in traps, both in terms of totals and range of species. At Lyndon 29 species have been recorded so far this year compared to only 21 for the whole of last year. What has also been encouraging is the number of day-flying moths and larvae being reported by observers.

Following on from my previous report, up to 15 adult **Scarlet Tigers** have been around the vicinity of Edith Weston church, with 6 larvae also being seen near Ketton. Other day-flying records of note were 25 **Brown Silver-line** in Burley Wood along with 2 **Orange Footman**. 6 **Beautiful China-mark** micro moths were in reeds by Leighfield fishponds. **Chimney Sweeper** was seen in 3 locations; the usual spot of Egleton meadow had over 100 seen on one occasion. **Yellow Shell** were seen near Lyndon Centre, and amongst the common species **Silver Y** have enjoyed a much better year, being seen by a number of observers and also regularly in traps. **Buff Ermine** and a **Common Swift** were in a Whissendine

garden and a **Brimstone Moth** appeared in an Oakham garden.

The meadow at the back of Lyndon centre was trapped on 7 occasions, with a battery-operated 20 watt MV trap on hire from the county recorder used on 2 of them, in the wooded area towards Gibbet's Gorse. By June species numbers were regularly exceeding 50 in one trap with 67 on both nights that the extra trap was used. The only disappointing aspect is that only 4 new species appear to have been added to the overall site list, these being the micro moth *Agapeta zoegana*, **Pale Oak Beauty**, **Great Oak Beauty** and **Chocolate-tip**. The latter's local rarity status is surprising given its preference for Poplars and Willows which are common nearby. Species whose appearance has been much greater this year include **Burnished Brass** (up to 9 in traps), **Scorched Wing** (up to 5 – first records for 4 years), **Small Angle Shades** and various species of Pug moths, especially **Green Pug**, although unusually no record of first generation Angle Shades. **Elephant** and **Poplar Hawk-moths** have had a good season, with 9 of the former in one trap. The battery trap was also used for the first time at Bloody Oaks but yielded only modest totals on 2 occasions, the highlight being 13 **Lackey** on 24th June.

Larvae reports were high and it seems that many members are better than the Recorder at both finding and identifying them! Over 50 **Bird-cherry Ermine** were on hedgerows near Leighfield in June, with 6 **Lackey** and over 20 **Yellow-tail** seen in the same area in May. The latter were also seen by a lane near Pickworth. A **Drinker** was recorded in Uppingham and **Spindle Ermine** caterpillars were in a large silken tent by a Hawthorn hedge near Barrowden, which attracted local interest.

With the hot weather set to continue it looks like being a long overdue good summer for local moths.

Thanks to the following for submitting their records: V Arnold, C Baxter, P Bennett, T Caldicott, R Edwards, M Grimes, J Pearce, L Worrall

PLANT GALLS

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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May 2018

After what seemed like a slow cold start, the gall season is now getting under way, with reports from six sites. In the earlier part of the month the accent was on galls caused by rusts and mites, and while this continued, later in the month they were joined by those caused by midges and gall wasps. These wasp galls at this time of year are mostly caused by the sexual state of the insect whereas later they will be caused by the asexual or agamic state. Examples of these will be the **Spangle** and **Knopper** galls.

The final report on the 31st was of a walk from the Egleton Centre Rutland Water to the Osprey Hide area. This is a prolific area for galls and produced a total of 26, including two that we haven't had reported before. One was a mite gall on Birch leaves and the other was a midge gall on the leaf stalk of Aspen leaves. It's nice to find something new from time to time!

Results from 7 sites this month; included in these was a midge gall on Black Medick which hasn't been reported since 2014, then from Ketton Quarry, now from Horn Mill. Another that doesn't appear every year, Choke on grass, was reported from Yew Tree Avenue, Clipsham, on the 14th.

The **Robin's Pincushion** gall on Wild Rose has now appeared; there were reports of it from Bloody Oaks Quarry on the 16th, Lyndon on the 21st and Braunstone on the 28th. What has not yet put in an appearance is the swollen stem gall on Creeping Thistle, plenty of thistles – no galls. Any reports of this from members would be most welcome.

Thanks to M Grimes, R Lemmon, for their reports.



Robin's Pincushion. Photo, Roy Edwards

ORTHOPTERA

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May/June 2018

'The Beast from the East' is the clue to the slow development of the Rutland orthopteran species! May produced sightings only of nymphs (very small ones), first noted on the 5th May. June started the ball rolling (still with a few nymphs), but with the first adults stridulating on the 25 June. The June heatwave will undoubtedly be productive for all our invertebrates.

I was delighted to receive a sighting from Carolyn Baxter (complete with photograph), of a Roesel's Bush Cricket male nymph. I would encourage sightings from more members this season, and I have been promised more from Carolyn: Quote 'I will keep looking under grasses and vegetation this summer'. If any member is unsure of a species found, I am more than happy to try and identify a photograph of the orthopteran!

Bush Crickets

Dark Bush Cricket, *Pholidoptera griseoptera*

20 plus nymphs noted, in herbage on the east side of Burley Woods, 24th May. Two nymphs, observed in herbage, Ryhall Heath, on 6 June, a new site: TF 023127. Photograph received.

Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*

One nymph, located in grasses, at Leighfields Fishponds, and two in scrub, near Gunthorpe, on 21 and 26 May. One male large nymph, in grasses, along Gypsy Lane, Uppingham, on 10 June, new site: SP 860998. (Photograph supplied.) Two large nymphs, observed in rough grassland, on the Egleton reserve, 19 June, SK 879074.

First stridulating from this species: five males, heard in wildflower meadow, Quarry Farm, Stamford, on 28 June (TF 009084.)

Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima*

One nymph, near the old railway bridge, Pilton, on 29 May. One nymph, found in ride, next to the Eight Riding Tree, Burley Woods, on 15 May. One nymph, near Leighfield fish ponds, on 22 May.



Roesel's. Photo, P Scott

Groundhoppers

Slender Groundhopper, *Tetrix subulata*

Two nymphs, found on 5 May, in Leighfield, near the river Chater, new site (SK 814042). Two nymphs, at the east side of Burley Woods, 7 May. One, found in a member's back garden, in Manton, on 5 May, new site: SK 880046.

Grasshoppers

Common Green Grasshopper, *Omocestus viridulus*

A pleasing number of sightings for this now uncommon grasshopper, all in June: 6th = 3 nymphs; 18th = 2 nymphs and 2 stridulating adults; 24th = one adult; 28th = 8 stridulating males. All these records were from the Leighfield area, near the river Chater. Three stridulating males, in small field adjoining the east side of Burley Woods, on 25 June (SK 896094).

Field Grasshopper, *Chorthippus brunneus*

One, nymph, located next to the railway bridge, Pilton, on 29 May. New site, SK 907035. Two nymphs, in Clipsham Park Wood rides, 14 June, new site, SK 971170. Photographs supplied.

Meadow Grasshopper, *Chorthippus parallelus*

Four nymphs on the Egleton reserve, in hay field near the Badger Watching Hide, on 19 June, SK 879074. Six stridulating males in BBQ area on 25 June, Ketton Quarries. Eight stridulating males in grasses along The Valley, Ketton Quarries. 20 small nymphs, in Wildflower Meadow, Quarry Farm, Stamford, on 28 June.



Field Grasshopper This species varies in colour (depending where it lives). For example: this one was on bare dried mud habitat. Photo, P Rudkin.

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, *Chorthippus albomarginatus*

Two nymphs in pasture, next to the new railway bridge, Pilton, on 29 May, new site: SK 907035. Thirty plus nymphs, near 'Swintley Lodge', Leighfield area, on 28 May. Two nymphs in hay field on the Egleton Reserve, on 19 June, SK 879074. Six stridulating males in the Wildflower Meadow, Quarry Farm, Stamford, on 28 June.

Thank you to our current small team of reporters for their sightings: C Baxter, T Caldicott, M Grimes, R Lemmon, P Rudkin.

GLOW-WORMS

RECORDER Linda Worrall

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May/June/Early July 2018



Photo, Barrie Galpin

Weather in June and July was very hot by day and a little cooler at night, and almost no rain. Snails appear scarce: they can cover their entrances and aestivate if necessary, which could be dangerous for larvae which need to eat them. Vegetation noted as 'high' in Barrowden, Charnwood Lodge and Ketton Quarry; this makes it difficult to spot glows, and also hinders adult females' display for mates. A full-width verge cut in Barrowden was made early in spring, but growth was subsequently very strong. A small front cut was made around 18th June in Back Road and some of Luffenham Road, I think for 'safety reasons', but thick mats of 'hay' as a result could have prevented adult females getting through if they had pupated underneath. Most sadly, the farmer of Drift Field off Back Road again ploughed half the glow-worm heartland of the old, natural, Stone Close to plant wheat.

On the night of 28th May 2018, after hearing cuckoos, tawny owls and muntjac, watching a pair of woodcocks and a nonchalantly strolling badger in Fineshade, Barrie Galpin found his 'piece de resistance, a glow-worm waiting for me in front of the house.' (See left!) That is an early find.

June 6: 1 on garden wall. 23.6: During a 'Back from the Brink' Bat and Moth walk – 18 glows in part of the wood, plus 3 near Top Lodge. Total so far for 2018 is 27.

Barrowden and Wakerley

Recorders were alert, but it was June 14 before any were seen - in Barrowden, 3, one on north verge by Drift Field entrance on Back Road and one either side of Luffenham Road by the village sign. On 16.6 between 11 pm and midnight, after a little rain in a run of extremely hot weather and by the light of a crescent waxing moon and a planet, there were 2, one in Back Road as before and one on the west verge of Luffenham Road. 19.6: 4 in Back Road near field entrance, 3 together and one single. 24.6: Back Road: 2, one in hedge bottom on north, one opposite on south.

Barnack Hills and Holes, Cambs

June 27, Reserve Manager Tim Starsmore-Sutton led a glow-worm walk of 25 people, and had to disappoint a further 25 who applied. They found about 15 glows on a beautiful night, many photos were taken and they couldn't cover all the reserve. Tim says he's definitely thinking of holding two walks next year.

Charnwood Lodge, Leicestershire SK458155

29.6: One seen during a LRWT Wild Walk. Vegetation high.

Barrowden

July 1: 1 between field entrance and Drift Close on Back Road north verge in long grass, well spotted by a villager's grandchild, who had been excited last year to find one and wanted to try again this year. Also 1 on Luffenham Road east verge, just below village sign.

Ketton Quarry

July 6: On a RLWT Wild Walk, Jenny Harris reports 1 on barbecue site and 3 on large area by geological trail, though grasses were thick. The valley was not explored.

Many thanks to all who have hunted, and congratulations for finding glows: S Cunningham, R & V Fraser, B Galpin, J Harris, T Starsmore-Sutton, S Tebbit, L Worrall. All further sightings, or forays without glows, will be welcome.

OTHER INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES RECORDER Gill Chiverton

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May/June 2018

Odonata DAMSELFLIES

Emerald damselfly <i>Lesetes sponsa</i>	June	Noted in small numbers over the month at Leighfield Fishponds
White-legged damselfly <i>Platycnemis pennipes</i>	May/June	4 noted at month end and 2 noted on June 1st – all at Leighfield Fishponds
Large red damselfly <i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	May	10 noted at Quarry Farm Ketton. One noted and later another 10, all at Leighfield Fishponds
Red-eyed damselfly <i>Erythromma najas</i>	May	2 seen at Leighfield Fishponds
Azure damselfly <i>Coenagrion puella</i>	May	8+ noted at Quarry Farm Ketton
Common blue damselfly <i>Enallagma ajathigerum</i>	May	2 seen at Burley Wood
Blue-tailed damselfly <i>Ischnura elegans</i>	May	2 seen at Leighfield Fishponds

Odonata DRAGONFLIES

Hairy dragonfly <i>Brachytron pratense</i>	May	One noted on two occasions at Leighfield Fishponds
Four-spotted chaser <i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	May June	Seen at Quarry Farm Ketton and Leighfield Fishponds Noted on 3 occasions at Leighfield Fishponds. Also seen at Quarry Farm Ketton and Priors Coppice ponds
Broad-bodied chaser <i>Libellula depressa</i>	May June	Seen at Horn Mill, Burley Wood and Leighfield Fishponds Noted twice at Leighfield Fishponds

Hemiptera BUGS

Green shieldbug <i>Palomena prasina</i>	May	One (large!) specimen noted at Barrowden
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Coleoptera BEETLES

Cockchafer <i>Melolontha melolontha</i>	May	Reports of good numbers of cockchafers (loved the entertaining descriptions) in Barrowden village over the month, with 5 and 4 recorded from a moth trap.
Click beetle <i>Ampedus quericola</i>	May	One noted in Burley Wood
Cream-spot ladybird <i>Calvia 14-guttata</i>	June	One noted near Chater at Leighfield
Orange ladybird <i>Halyzia 16-guttata</i>	June	One seen at Burley Wood
22-spot ladybird <i>Thea 22-punctata</i>	June	One seen at Gunthorpe
Eyed ladybird <i>Anatis ocellata</i>	May	One seen at Leighfield Fishponds
False blister beetle <i>Ischnomera cyanea</i>	June	One noted on verge 8





Photo, C Baxter

the edge of Clive Jones' garden, Gower Lodge, was reoccupied in April and has remained active in May and June, causing some damage to the lawns. One road casualty was reported from Caldicott.

The **Fox** however has shown no timidity! In early May a fox wandered in Burley Wood, and another was seen in Gypsy Lane Uppingham. Later in May a 'small slightly scruffy' fox crossed the gravel yard of Park House Normanton. At Leighfield a fox was seen on June 3rd and June 27th. On the camera at Langham a fox appeared almost every other night in both May and June. On one occasion he (or she) was feeding alongside two hedgehogs and momentarily clamped his mouth around one of them, but thinking better of it (perhaps surprised at the prickles) released it, then carried on feeding. On 26th June two different individuals appeared an hour apart, distinguished by the colour of the tail tip, one darker than the other, this one with a thicker neck. This fox returned on the following two evenings. At Ashwell near the level crossing a fox was seen walking along the railway line at 5.50 pm at the end of June.

Hedgehogs are regular visitors to members' gardens, at Whissendine, Oakham and Langham, and are reported often in Barrowden. The first seen at Whissendine was on May 21st at 2.00 am, healthy and a good size. Droppings indicate frequent visits, and in late June two were seen circling in a mating ritual. The camera at Langham has recorded hedgehogs every night in May and June, and on occasions, up to 4 individuals. Sadly a small one was a road casualty south of Langham.

In May in Barrowden, two trail cameras at Wheel and Dovecote Closes both recorded 2 hogs feeding regularly. They are also seen in Chapel Lane, and Redland Close. In Chapel Lane a wandering hedgehog was rescued and taken to the wildlife hospital, where it fed well and recovered. Three days later another was rescued at 11.00 am and taken to the hospital, but sadly died shortly afterwards. In a nearby garden three hedgehogs regularly feed together, and at Redland Close a hog was seen drinking from a garden rill.

Feeding the birds attracts the attention of **Grey Squirrels** and occasionally **Brown Rats**. At Dovecote Close the feeder is a haunt of a grey squirrel. In May a grey squirrel was seen eating peanuts in an Uppingham garden, and in June one was feeding from a bird feeder in Whissendine. At Egleton RWNR a brown rat was observed beneath the feeders at 3.00 pm one afternoon in June. Grey squirrels are seen regularly as daytime visitors to the Langham trailcam, and are also reported from Pickworth and Greetham Valley.

Hares were widely reported this month, from Thorpe-by-Water to Pickworth, Ketton to Great Casterton and other areas. Six hares were seen at RWNR Lax Hill, and 5 at Greetham Valley Golf Course. **Rabbits** were also reported from the golf course, and the warren alongside the field near the river at Tickencote is very active, many holes dug under the new hedge which was laid earlier this year, and rabbits appearing here and there.

A **Common Shrew** was found dead on the track near fishponds at Leighfield. A **Wood Mouse** chewed on sunflower seeds, and others put in appearances on the trailcam at Langham on several occasions in June, and two **Bank Voles**, one larger than the other, were found in the garden shed. **Water Vole** droppings were found on only three of the mink rafts at RWNR in May and June, though plops were heard and ripples seen in the reedbed.

My thanks to: C Baxter, A Biddle, T Caldicott, G & M Griffin, V Hemsley, C Jones, P Langstone, M Manson, M Markham, T Mitcham, J Pearce, L Worrall

BATS

RECORDER Jenny Harris

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May/June 2018

In May, I was invited to take part in a Bioblitz at the village of Allextton, which is just over the county border, on the evening of the 12th. It had been a sporadically wet

day and the bat watch nearly did not take place, but at the last minute the weather cleared. We had a look round the church, where we found not only pipistrelle and long-eared bat droppings, but while looking at features that provide roosts for bats we saw three **Brown Long-eared bats** roosting at the apex of the nave. Outside the church we also recorded as number of foraging **Soprano Pipistrelles** and one or two **Common Pipistrelles**. Not many species to add to their mammal list but very nice for me. During June, counts for the National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP), run by the Bat Conservation Trust, took place at four sites, all churches, with soprano pipistrelle and Natterer's bats being the species counted (see below). There was only one grounded bat in Rutland during the period, but I was called to grounded bats on three occasions in Harringworth, again just over the border. In Brook Street, Langham, single unspecified bats were seen on several occasions during June. However, in the period I recorded no bats in my garden in Oakham.

Whiskered bat A count was made at the roost on Main Street, Seaton, on 23 June. It was disappointing to count only 10 bats emerging from this former maternity roost. The colony had in the past comprised as many as 60 female bats, but work done several years ago to exclude the bats from their preferred section of the roof appears to have affected the bats to the extent that this is no longer a breeding roost. The work was done at the request of the householder under advice from Natural England.

Natterer's bat A count in June was made at Whissendine church and Stoke Dry church. At Stoke Dry the bats were emerging from different points around the church, making it difficult to count them. Ann Tomlinson, Linda and Anthony Biddle, Carolyn Baxter and Ebbs Daly spent several nights tracking down the various emergence points during June and early July.

Soprano Pipistrelle Two roosts were counted for the NBMP. At Egleton church we were initially alarmed to find that only 206 bats emerged, I had been told that a section of the ceiling of the church had collapsed and wondered how this might have affected the bats; however on the count for the second half of June 859 bats were counted. Repairing the fallen ceiling has implications for the colony, so advice will need to be sought from Natural England to ensure the work is done without harm to the bats, while safeguarding the ceiling. At Braunston-in-Rutland work to exclude the soprano pipistrelles from the interior of the church has been carried out under a partnership of Natural England, the Bat Conservation Trust and the Church of England. This aims to retain the important maternity roost while alleviating the problem of droppings, particularly in the south aisle where the bats roost above the ceiling boards. This appears to have worked well, with 568 bats counted on 10 June and 519 on 22 June. This work has been done following extensive survey work by professional ecologists and a considerable grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The congregation are very pleased, and the church warden was interviewed on the BBC Today programme, putting a very balanced view of the issues involved.

A single grounded soprano pipistrelle, an adult male, was found in Edith Weston (SK929054) with a weight of only 3.5 g on 31 May. It had no apparent injuries, gained weight quickly and was released on 14 June.

Several bats were foraging together soon after sunset at Allextion church on 12 May. A number of bats were heard near Stocks Hill, Manton on 31 May.

Common Pipistrelle Ecologists working at Braunston-in-Rutland church heard common pipistrelles there during their surveys but in very small numbers. A small number of bats was heard in Allextion on 12 May. Several bats were foraging at around 10.0 pm in a garden on Main Street, Seaton (SP902983) on 23 June.

Noctule bat Foraging activity was observed over Egleton church and the field to the north on 18 June (SK875075) from around 10.0 pm, with up to two bats seen and others heard on the south side of the church. A noctule was heard briefly passing over Braunston-in-Rutland church on the 22nd and also at Seaton on 23rd.

My thanks to J Harris, M Morland, A Tomlinson for records; and to Ann, Carolyn, Lorna and Ivan Burger, and members of Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group for help with the NBMP counts.

Reports on RNHS events in May and June

May 5, 3.45 am

Dawn Chorus at Burley Wood

Report to come, see website

May 20, 10.30 am

Cribbs Meadow

May is a lovely time to begin visiting our grassland nature reserves, as was proved when 12 RNHS members went to Cribb's Meadow (SSSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR). The main focus of our visit was to see the Green-winged Orchids and other spring flowers. On arrival at the gate of North Meadow, the larger of the two fields, I was initially shocked to see no sign of the orchids but soon realised this was because the meadow grasses, encouraged by the recent warm weather, had put on a sudden surge of growth and it was not long before we found our first **Green-winged Orchids**, then several 'swarms' of them. It is a feature of how these orchids grow in dense groups, no doubt influenced by small differences in soil moisture, nutrients and beneficial fungi. A single pink variant was found which, I am told, has a noticeably stronger fragrance than the darker purple flower-heads. Many of the wildflowers growing at Cribb's Meadow are only found in ancient grasslands that have not been ploughed or fertilized in recent times; these include the strange little fern **Adders-tongue**, and **Bulbous Buttercup**, with its uniquely reflexed sepals, setting it apart from the commoner **Meadow Buttercup**, which we also saw in profusion. **Pignut** was just starting to flower, but we were too early to see the black Chimney Sweeper moths whose caterpillars feed on this dainty relative of Cow Parsley. Other typical plants of ancient lowland hay meadows were **Common Birdsfoot-trefoil**, **Great Burnet**, **Yellow Vetchling**, **Lady's Bedstraw** and **Common Sorrel**, although only the latter was in flower. The leaves of **Common Spotted Orchids** were mostly well-hidden in the grass and will not be flowering for a few weeks yet but an eagle-eyed person spotted a **Twayblade** orchid whose tiny green florets had just begun to open. **Water Avens** and **Cuckooflower**, both of which nearly died out in the dry winters of the early 1990s, were in flower too.

At the ponds in both North and the smaller South Meadow, **Azure** and **Large Red Damselflies** were on the wing, and a powder-blue male **Broad-bodied Chaser** dragonfly was busy living up to the name. A yellow-brown female chaser was also seen. In the well-grown hedgerows we could hear **Blackcaps**, **Chaffinches** and several **Willow Warblers**.

The nature reserve is owned by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, who manage the fields for the meadow community of plants and insects by grazing with cattle and sheep at various times of year, with occasional hay cuts. On Monday 21st May, I helped with the annual count of Green-winged Orchids: the total count was more than 1600 flowering spikes, compared with 962 in May 2017, so the management is obviously working.

Jenny Harris

June 8, 2.00 pm

Seaton Meadows

Seaton Meadows, owned by Plantlife, a national wild plant conservation charity, lies in the floodplain of the River Welland. It was designated a SSSI because it is rich in wildflowers of ancient hay meadows, a rare wildlife habitat these days.

RNHS members visited the meadows, situated below the imposing arches of Harringworth Viaduct, to help Plantlife Conservation Officer, Joe Costley, to monitor the plants. Typical flood-meadow flowers recorded were **Great Burnet**, **Yellow Vetchling**, **Black Knapweed**, **Yellow Rattle**, **Pignut** and **Meadow Rue**. The group were delighted to see a number of **Meadow Pipits** singing as they displayed to one another over the meadow, an unusual sight in Rutland. Other birds heard calling or singing were **Green Woodpecker**, **Whitethroat** and **Yellowhammer**. Butterflies recorded were freshly emerged **Red Admiral** and **Common Blue**, while several tiny, black **Chimney Sweeper** moths braved the dull weather. Joe Costley was an excellent guide to the wildlife of the nature reserve and the Society look forward to next year's visit to this wonderful, unspoilt corner of Rutland.

Jenny Harris

June 12, 6,15 pm

The Allerton Project, Loddington

Report to come, see website

June 24, 10.30 am

Orchids galore at Roberts Field



Photo, L Biddle

On an amazing summer's morning, fourteen members met at the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trusts' reserve known as Roberts Field. The reserve is just over the county boundary between Pickworth and Holywell, north of Stamford. We were met by the reserve manager Dave Vandome who was leading a small work party but took time to welcome us and to give a brief history of the reserve, which consists of two adjacent meadows containing a wealth of limestone flora. It was interesting to hear that the meadows had been relatively recently reclaimed from Forestry Commission conifer plantation and after clear felling, the site was seeded with material from nearby reserves and from the only untouched piece of original meadow on the site.

We spent the rest of the morning in the southern meadow which was full of **Pyramidal Orchids**, together with other typical calcareous species including **Yellow Rattle**, **Kidney Vetch**, **Purging Flax**, **Hedge** and **Ladies Bedstraw**, **Meadow Vetchling**, **Knapweed** and its associated **Broomrape** and small clumps of flowering **Centaury**, to name but a few. The meadows are now famous for the return of the **Dark Green Fritillary** and **Marbled White** and members were not disappointed by a good showing of both butterflies. Together with **Meadow Brown**, **Ringlet**, **Large** and **Small Skipper** and **Small Heath**, they constituted a good list. Day-flying moths were represented by **Cinnabar Moths**. **Long-horned Beetles** were active on the flowering plants and there were several sightings of orthoptera including **Meadow Grasshopper** and **Roesel's Bush Crickets**. At the far end of the southern meadow adjacent to the woodland was a huge area of **Common Spotted Orchids** which were in full bloom and looking spectacular in the sun. Birdsong included **Chaffinch**, **Whitethroat** and **Blackcap** in the surrounding hedges and a **Red Kite** circled over Holywell Wood across the road.

The list of flowering plants on the reserve was huge and members had a superb opportunity to learn the identification of many of them. It was a brilliant morning and a great chance to visit such a rich Lincolnshire reserve so close to Rutland.

Anthony Biddle



Photo, A Biddle



Dave Vandome (of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust) introducing Roberts Field to RNHS members on June 24. Its history is a case study in conservation. Highlights were numerous Dark Green Fritillaries and Marbled Whites, Pyramidal Orchids dotted through the meadow grasses, and a dense area of Common Spotted Orchids. See page 19 for report. Photo, L Biddle.

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