



Meadow grasshopper nymph.
Merrys meadow

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Welcome

Do you have your own idea what paradise looks like? I recently experienced something that made me think that perhaps this was it for me! On our usual morning walk we chose to visit a pathway that we hadn't been to this year, and obviously few others had also done so. It was a farm track with Knapweed, Scabious and a little Wild carrot on each verge and also in the central strip. As we wandered through the abundant floral growth, a fluttering cloud of butterflies, many skippers and a few Ringlet, flew around us in the sunshine, and it continued for several hundred yards! It made us very happy that this kind of wildlife can still be found in this area, in spite of all the problems with urban sprawl and development.

If you have had similar lovely experiences do let us know. It is always good to share!

The difference between what we have, and losing what we have is very small. It is organisations like the RNHS that occupy this space and fight for what we have, by identifying and protecting the environment.

I have to remind you all that both Peter Scott, our hardworking vice-chairman, Treasurer and information handler, and myself are **planning to retire at the next AGM – in March 2024, which is rapidly approaching, after our many years active on your committee!** We need to give you all warning that if we don't have any nominations or volunteers for these posts, the future of our society is insecure. At the March 2024 meeting we shall need to give notice of the possibility that we may have to wind up our society in March 2025!! Of course, none of us want that to happen, but we have to inform you of the situation, and hopefully some of you will be willing to become involved for the future of our very special society!

Linda Biddle (Chair)

RNHS DIARY DATES



RNHS Outdoor meetings.

The following events are correct at time of publication but may be changed at short notice, so it is important to book your place with Jeff Wilcox-Smith. Details. Mob: 07946733931 or wilcoxsmith@btinternet.com. Full details of all these events appear on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk. Please make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing for the outdoor meetings and if the weather is bad on the day, give Jeff a ring beforehand in case it needs to be cancelled. Jeff may also help with any queries if you are unsure about directions.

Friday 8th September 7.30pm. Ketton Bat walk with Jenny Harris, bat care co-ordinator with Leicestershire and Rutland Bat group. Bats make up about a quarter of our mammal species in the UK, and the chances are, that we have seen these little night-time creatures flitting over our heads on a warm summers evening. If you want to know more, join Jenny and get to know some of our least familiar mammals in the county. Meet: At Aldgate (Map ref: SK983 042) and park on either side of the road without blocking gateways. Postcode PE9 3TD.

Sunday 29th October. 10.00am. Fungi walk around Barnsdale woods with Tim Sexton, Species and Recording Officer for Rutland Water Nature reserves. This

time of year can sometimes find us lamenting the decline of summer in the countryside. But even fungi are exciting, as Tim, with his knowledge and enthusiasm will be keen show. Meet: Barnsdale car park. Grid ref: SK904 088. Postcode LE15 8AB. A car parking fee is payable.

RNHS Indoor evening meetings.

7.70pm – 9.30pm on First Tuesday of every month from October through to March at Volunteer Training Centre (VTC). LE15 8AD. Ref: SK883 083.

Please book your place as detailed above with Jeff Wilcox-smith as places may be limited. Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.00

Tuesday 3rd October 7.30pm. The Biking Birder – Adventures of a green birder. An evening with Gary Prescott, a retired schoolteacher with a passion for nature. Prepare to be entertained!

Tuesday 7th November. 7.30pm. Bird ringing and research with former LRWT reserve officer Luke Nelson. Luke will be returning to present a talk on his two specialist subjects – bird ringing and Long-tailed tits. This evening will be a chance to hear first-hand about his fascinating and important long-term study at the University of Sheffield.

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

The Rutland Group have the following events between September and December:

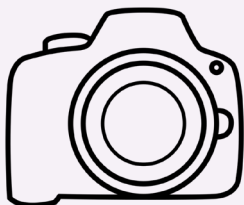
Monday October 16th at 7.30 pm. Jenny Harris, Volunteer Bat Care Co-ordinator for the Leicestershire and Rutland bat group will talk about 'Bats of the World'. The meeting will be held at the Volunteer Training Centre Hambleton Road, Oakham.

Monday November 20th at 7.30 pm. Mat Carter, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust CEO, will give a talk called 'My life in conservation'. Mat has an extensive background in conservation and has previously worked for

the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust, the National Trust (Wales) and Natural England. The meeting will be held at the Volunteer Training Centre Hambleton Road, Oakham.

Monday 11th December at 7.30 pm. Dr Silviu Petrovan will give a talk about citizen science in conservation. Dr Petrovan is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Conservation Science Group in the Department of Zoology at the University of Cambridge, and spent 5 years with Froglife as their Conservation Coordinator. The meeting will be held at the Volunteer Training Centre Hambleton Road, Oakham.

Rutland Natural History Society 2024 Photographic competition



By the time you receive this August newsletter, the photographic competition will be almost over again for another year. If you have forgotten the deadline (end of August) or just not sure if your photos are suitable, be assured that the quality of those mobile pics. you took yesterday, compare and can even outclass the camera market today. So here is a reminder for you to look back to your June edition for the competition rules, or email Peter Scott at: peter.scott27@btopenworld.com and send in your entries before it closes. It's fun and very uplifting to see your own entry printed on one of our calendars or cards for friends and family to see – for a WHOLE year!

Leicestershire and Rutland Recorders meeting.

Sunday 29th October - 10am - 1pm

For the past few months the Trustees of NatureSpot have been working in partnership with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and we have organized an online Leicestershire & Rutland Recorders Meeting via Zoom on Sunday 29.10.2023. This is a great way of bringing people up-to-date with what has happened since the last conference - it's been a busy time - and it is not a substitute for the face to face conference which we are working to organize in 2024. Don't let another year go by - book a place to meet fellow recorders on-line. The full programme for the event is below and there is no charge for this online event. If you would like to join us online via Zoom at 10.00am on Sunday 29.10.2023, register here: <https://forms.gle/WigNvXN12vGXo8kS8>
We will send details of how to join this session to your email address before the meeting.

Programme for Leicestershire & Rutland Recorders Meeting on Zoom

Sunday 29.10.2023

10am: Introduction and future plans

10.05: Mat Carter, CEO Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust: "The Rocky Road to Nature Recovery - The Trust's Vision for Leicestershire & Rutland"
Mat Carter will give an overview of how the Trust will implement its Strategy and work towards a bigger, better and more connected landscape. Drawing on examples of how the Trust has approached this in the past, Mat will also provide examples of local projects being delivered across nature reserves, private landowners and with partnerships - providing a robust foundation for the Trust to achieve its vision for the future.

10.20: Mark Skevington, The VC55 Moth Team: "VC55 Moth Review"

10.35: Geoffrey Hall, VC55 County Recorder for Flowering Plants and Ferns: "The BSBI Atlas 2020: national trends on a local scale"
In this talk Geoffrey will summarise the work done for the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's (BSBI) Plant Atlas 2020 and give its main conclusions, then show how what is happening on a national scale is also happening in Leicestershire & Rutland.

10.50: Discussion and questions for preceding speakers.

11.10: 10 minute break - grab yourself a coffee or chat online.

11.20: Dave Wright, British Trust for Ornithology Regional Representative for Leicestershire and Rutland, "Thirty years of the Breeding Birds Survey in Leicestershire & Rutland" How the BBS was born, an overview of the methodology, and the trends for a variety of different species. The talk will finish with what skills are required and how to get involved.

11.35: Kirsty Gamble, Senior Records Officer, Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre: "An update from LRERC".
An update on current progress and projects from Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre.

11.50: Tim Sexton, Species and Recording Officer, Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust: "Species Recording at Rutland Water - recent highlights"
Rutland Water is perhaps best known for its bird life. With over 20,000 waterfowl visiting the site in the winter it is an internationally important wetland. Coupled with the success of the Osprey and Water Vole reintroduction projects, the reserve has gone from strength to strength in the last 45 years. As the wetland habitats across the Reserve have matured, the species associated with these habitats has increased. As a result many scarce species are now being discovered at Rutland. Tim Sexton (Senior Species and Recording Officer at the Reserve) will talk through some of the highlights of recent surveys.

12.05: Helen O'Brien, VC55 County Mammal Recorder and Chair of Leicestershire & Rutland Mammal Group: "New technology and its contribution to understanding mammal distribution across Leicestershire & Rutland"
This talk will consider historic data and use of skills and experience in mammal recording versus new technology and in doing so, if this has detracted from our sheer enjoyment of being a mammal detective.

12.20: Discussion and questions for preceding speakers.

12.40: End.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

87 Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SU.
Telephone 01780 762051 E-mail: roy.lemmon@yahoo.co.uk

June 2023

Atmospheric pressure and wind. The atmospheric pressure ranged from 1009 mb on the 20th to 1028.5 mb on the 1st, and thus there were no particular highs or lows. There were 3 marked thunderstorms on the 12th, 18th and

22nd and there was considerable thunder and lightning as well as torrential rain, especially on the 12th. Winds were NE-E from the 1st to the 20th, then mostly W to the end of the month.

Temperature. A warm June with a mean temperature of 17.86 °C, which was first in the decade 2014-2023, with June 2017 second at 17.51 °C.

Precipitation. A total of 57.8 mm (2.3 inches) was recorded at this site, which equates to 111% of the long-term mean of 33 years. The thunderstorms referred to above, accounted for 75% of the month's total and the one on the 12th, despite not being the most productive of the three, was noteworthy for the speed with which the rain fell and also because there was hail included.

July 2023

Atmospheric pressure and wind. A low pressure month

and therefore unsettled weather, the barometer varying between 1004 mb on the 23rd and 1021 mb on the 10th. The reason for this is due to the Jet Stream being to the south of us, giving very high temperatures in Southern Europe and cool stormy conditions in the UK. Winds were mostly S-W except for 8 days when they were NW-N, these were often gusty and there were a few thunderstorms.

Temperature. The mean for the month was 16.76 °C, which makes July 2023 10th, i.e., coolest, in the decade 2014-2023.

Precipitation. The total recorded here was 83.4 mm (3.28 inches) which is 152% of my long-term mean of 33 years. Only July 2019, at 92.0 mm, was wetter in the aforementioned decade.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

Waterdown, Brooke Road, Braunston, Rutland LE15 8UJ.

E-mail: chasgall@hotmail.com

JUNE AND JULY 2023

There was a good spread of records in these two months and most species were recorded. The discovery of a very healthy population of Slow Worms in Burley Wood was, for me, the highlight. Sixteen refugia had been laid in four different sections of the wood and Slow Worms were found in each section.

Common Frogs were reported in July from Oakham where there were many froglets, and also from Ridlington. A **Common Toad** was observed on a compost heap in Wing in June and **toadlets** were seen in Wardley Wood in Early July, which was a new site. One was also seen in Manton.

The only records of **Smooth Newts** were from the recorder's new pond in Braunston where a female was seen in June and two very small newts were seen in July. A **Great Crested Newt** was found as a road casualty near Wing in July.

The only record of **Viviparous Lizards** was of two at Bloody Oaks on 30 July. **Slow Worms** did rather better. On June 8 Tim Appleton and your recorder inspected the sixteen reptile sheets that we had laid last year and were pleased to find Slow Worms under three of the sheets, one of which had three reptiles under it (and another was sharing the shelter with a Grass Snake). A total of five was very satisfactory. Although not strictly in this reporting

period, we carried out a further inspection on 1 August and found eight Slow Worms.

Grass Snakes were recorded in Burley Wood, Wing (dead) and Barrow in June. In July they were seen in Braunston (two), Rutland Water Nature Reserve (two) and Leighfield (three).

My thanks to the following who provided records:- T Appleton, D & J Ball, C Baxter, T Caldicott, R Edwards, A Hill, D Masters, J Morrell and T Sexton.

Below: Toadlets crossing muddy path towards Eyebrook river. Wardley.



BATS

RECORDER Jenny Harris

41 Woodland View, Oakham LE15 6EJ.

Telephone: 01572 755274 E-mail: jennyharris221@gmail.com

June/July 23

The Bats are needing Jenny's full attention for now. A full report will appear in October issue.

June 2023.

Highlights. Rutland Water had three Cattle Egrets (18th), a Temminck's Stint (1st) and five Wood Sandpipers (22nd) with a Sandwich Tern (17th-18th) and a Little Tern (3rd). Peregrines fledged three young from a crow nest at a rural site.

Rutland Water. See also monthly wildfowl count.

Shelduck and Pochard bred and there was a Garganey (1st). A Marsh Harrier was seen (24th). Some wader counts included 22 Ringed Plovers (22nd), eight Little Ringed Plovers (9th), a Grey Plover (5th, 9th), six Curlew (24th), a Turnstone (2nd), two Sanderling (5th) and a Green Sandpiper (23rd). There were two Greenshanks (5th). A Yellow-legged Gull was regular from (21st). There were 74 Common Terns (20th) and Black Terns were seen (1st, 3rd and 5th). Hobbies were seen on (23rd, 26th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. See also monthly wildfowl count.

There was a Common Scoter (1st). Waders included two Avocets (4th), a Little Ringed Plover (18th), a Curlew Sandpiper (5th), a Wood Sandpiper (9th), three Green Sandpipers (17th) and a Greenshank (5th). There were 30 Common Terns (18th) and Five Black Terns (1st).

Other Sites. At Fort Henry Ponds there was a second Shoveler brood and five broods of Gadwall (16th), when there were 47 Gadwall. A Curlew flew south there (24th). Little Owls were at Belmesthorpe and Normanton (bred). Three pairs of Kestrels and one of Barn Owls bred at Exton. Marsh Tits were in Westland and Cottesmore Woods and the Tunneley Wood Redstart sang to (11th). A pair of Spotted Flycatchers were at Ridlington from (3rd).

July 2023.

Highlights. A Quail called in Exton Park (8th). There was a Cattle Egret at Rutland Water (18th) with a Caspian Gull (7th – 25th). An early Wheatear was at Luffenham Airfield (29th).

Rutland Water. See also monthly wildfowl count.

A Ruddy Shelduck was at Lyndon (2nd – 24th) with a Garganey at Egleton (18th). Some wader counts included six Oystercatchers (11th), eight Little Ringed Plovers (7th), two Whimbrels (15th), four Curlews (7th), 13 Black-tailed Godwits (11th), four Common Sandpipers (11th) and nine Green Sandpipers (11th). There were two Yellow-legged Gulls (18th) and 92 Common Terns (11th). Two Hobbies were at Egleton. A Spotted Flycatcher was at Egleton (7th) with two Whinchats (29th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. See also monthly wildfowl count.

A Water Rail was seen (1st). Some wader counts were seven Black-tailed Godwits (15th), a single Dunlin and Snipe (22nd) and eight Green Sandpipers (12th). A Yellow-legged Gull was present (30th). There were two Spotted Flycatchers at the inflow (2nd) and a Whinchat (12th).

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had 23 Gadwall (18th), seven Shoveler (22nd) and 28 Tufted Ducks (1st), which bred, as did Little Grebe. (See also monthly wildfowl count). There were six Buzzards over Braunston (5th). A Marsh Harrier was seen (22nd) and a Barn Owl (16th). Tawny Owls bred at Barrow. An Osprey flew over Quarry Farm (21st) and a Hobby was over Rutland Showground (13th). Grey Wagtails were at Braunston (5th) and a Whinchat was at Luffenham Airfield (29th).

Thanks to the following for their records:- T.P.Appleton, R.F.Baker, D&J.Ball, T.Collins, Dr.C.H.Gallimore, P.Langston, LROS, S.Lister, D.Masters, K.Mather, T.Mitcham, B.Moore, J.Morrell, C.I.Park, RWNr, D.Scott, T.Sexton,

Wildfowl counts June/July 2023

	FHP and Exton Park 16.06.	FHP and Exton Park 09.07.	Banthorpe GP 15.06.	Banthorpe GP 08.07.
Greylag Goose	12	13		
Mute Swan	7	7	2	2
Shoveler	1	2		
Gadwall	57	29		
Mallard	54	100		1
Tufted Duck	25	19		
Little Grebe		3		
Grey Heron	1	1	1	1
Cormorant	1			
Moorhen	7	11	1	
Coot	31	48	4	2
Kingfisher		1		
TOTAL	196	235	8	6

Wildfowl counts June/July cont.

	RW 20.06.	RW 11.07.	EBR 18.06.	EBR 09.07.
Canada Goose	1501	1008	95	48
Greylag Goose	1060	1237	140	166
Mute Swan	233	439	87	101
Egyptian Goose	41	36		8
Shelduck	3	2		
Mandarin Duck	3	6		
Shoveler	14	8	3	
Gadwall	726	1179	28	2
Wigeon	3	6		
Mallard	533	510	108	141
Teal	25	58	7	
Pochard	6	6		
Tufted Duck	216	772		8
Little Grebe	6	15		
Great Crested Grebe	176	220	31	46
Grey Heron	11	9		2
Great White Egret	6	6		
Little Egret	46	59	1	5
Cormorant	218	379	9	4
Water Rail				1
Moorhen	10	21	1	
Coot	213	366	31	51
Kingfisher			1	
TOTAL	5050	6342	542	583

BOTANY

RECORDER John Rodgers

8 Summerfield, Oakham LE15 6PZ. Telephone: 01572 757278

E-mail: rnhsbotanyrecord@gmail.com

June/July 2023

Lots of records this time as more plants come into flower, though the weather hasn't been all that kind for botanical forays. Dave Needham found **Yellow Birdsnest** in its usual place in Ketton Quarry and also **Bee Orchids** amongst **Common Restharrow**, in the narrow verge on Pitt Lane

opposite the Quarry car park. It's also the site where Hornet Clearwing Moth has been found over the years on the trees. **Common Spotted Orchids** were present also at Ketton but not many **Pyramidal Orchids** there. Bee Orchids were also found by Marian Markham on the

Oakham bypass but before I could see them they had been mown by County Council contractors! Marian also reported Common spotted and **Southern Marsh Orchid** from Hebe's wood and these were unmolested. At Stockerston, in a field margin Carolyn Baxter found **Crimson Clover**. This is a pretty flower but an alien species which was possibly introduced in a "set-aside" seed mix. The **Wild Clary** mentioned in the last Fieldfare has done well, but the species has also popped up elsewhere. Martin Grimes and Roy Lemmon found the plant much nearer home, at Great Casterton, where it had also been seen by Steve Woodward. Like London buses ? Other less common plants reported include **Grass Vetchling** at Quarry Farm, **Knotted Hedge Parsley** and **Nettle-leaved Bellflower** at Barrowden and **Wild Liquorice** on verge 5, Essendine. The latter is a member of the legume family but is not to be confused with its cousin the cultivated plant which used to be grown commercially around Pontefract, hence the cakes. **Goldilocks Buttercup** with its malformed petals was growing at Ketton Quarry. This is not a very common plant, but there are various sites where it can usually be found.



Goldilocks buttercup.
Alongside a RVNR verge at Ketton.

Crimson clover.
Edge of field opposite Stoke woods.
Possibly seeded from old set-aside.



I've just finished a book by Mike Dilger, called "One Thousand Shades of Green". It is the story of his attempt to see 1000 plants during 2021. The idea came from walks with his son, during the 2020 lockdown, and it grew into a challenge he set himself. Helped by many botanist friends, he visited well known botany areas, such as the Lizard, Bristol Gorge, the Cotswolds, Teesdale, the Breckland and the Cairngorms and he managed to find his 1000. It's a shame that more of his photographs weren't published – the size of the book prohibited that- but there are some fine pictures. The One-flowered Wintergreen (*Monesis uniflora*) would be my life-time target but I don't suppose I'm likely to go wandering around the pine forests of the Cairngorms.

Records were received from D & J Ball, C Baxter, L & A Biddle, M Grimes, J Harris, R Lemmon, M Markham, T Mitcham, D Needham and S Woodward. Many thanks to all of them.

Flora of Rutland. Messenger's suppliment by Geoffrey Hall



Guy Messenger did not complete his Supplement to the Flora of Rutland, 1990 when he died in 1993, leaving 24 pages of unfinished typescript, and an annotated version of his Flora of Rutland that contains new records of plants. These works form the basis of this Supplement that has been updated to include relevant records from his original recording cards. It contains copies of his 840 updated maps of the Rutland Flora, 19 new maps of roses and 8 maps of first Rutland records. Supplementary notes provide details of 1,099 records up to 1990: 861 field records (365 of which are of elms) and 238 records from herbarium specimens. There are 45 updated first records for Rutland that result from his discovery of a large 'scrap book' containing specimens dating from 1822 to 1824 at the Manchester Museum of Science and Technology. A summary of changes to the flora of Rutland and updates to the Gazetteer of places has been included, along with his obituary and some photographs of him. It is a fascinating snapshot written at a time of great ecological change by a skilled and dedicated naturalist who knew and loved Rutland's plants and wanted to share his knowledge with all. Copies can be obtained from the author by emailing geoffrey.hall@ntlworld.com. Price is £13 plus p&p £3.50 (second class), £4.00 (first class).

BUTTERFLIES

RECORDER Martin Quinlan

4 Bayley Close, Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9TG

Telephone: 01572 820337

June/July 2023

June 2023 was the hottest June on record for the UK while July 2023 was the sixth wettest ever. Certainly, a butterfly summer to remember for many reasons. It will take time to assess the national impact of last year's record 40-degree temperatures on our nation's butterflies and I will be reporting about that in due course.

The final records of **DINGY SKIPPER** were 6 at Ketton Quarry (KQ) on June 3rd followed by singles at KQ on 10th and Quarry Farm (QF) on 11th.

GRIZZLED SKIPPER was seen at KQ on 3rd and 10th June with the last at Bloody Oaks Quarry (BOQ) on June 24th.

There was a welcome increase in records of **ESSEX SKIPPER** some of which were photographed. The first was a single at KQ on June 27th followed a run of records in early July. There were "many" at Eyebrook (EY) and Exton (EX) on both the 9th and 10th with the final record from Empingham (EM) on July 13th.

SMALL SKIPPER was widely recorded with 9 at KQ and 1 at Manton (MAN) both on June 23rd and 1 at Panters Orchard (PO) on June 27th. July saw many records with "several" at Pickworth (PIC) on 8th, "many" at both EX and EY and Uppingham (UPP) on 9th, 8 at Merry's Meadows (MM) on 10th, a fantastic count of 90+ at Rutland Water's Gibbets Gorse Meadows (GGM) on 12th, 1 at Egleton (EG) on 17th, 4 at KQ on 20th and the last one a single at UPP on July 21st.

LARGE SKIPPER was also widely recorded with singles at many locations after the first at KQ on June 10th and the last there on July 20th. The maximum was 10 at (EY) on July 8th.



**Essex skipper.
Eyebrook field.
Photo C Baxter**

LARGE WHITE AND SMALL WHITE were widely recorded in good numbers with the maximum of 22 Large White in UPP on July 26th and 14 Small White at EG also on July 26th.

GREEN-VEINED WHITE had 5 records all in July – PIC on 10th and 17th, KQ on 20th, EG on 26th and 3 in UPP also on 26th.

CLOUDED YELLOW is always a great find and 2 seen by David Needham at KQ on June 26th was the only record.

Only 2 records of first-brood **BRIMSTONE** came from June, both from KQ with 2 on 2nd and 5 on 10th. Then there was a long gap of exactly 4 weeks until the second brood started appearing on July 8th with many widely

**Clouded yellow
at Ketton
Quarry.
Photo Dave
Needham.**



reported records to the end of the month including a maximum of 7 at EG on July 26th and the last at Barrow (BAR) on July 29th.

A fine record of **WALL** or **WALL BROWN** came from PIC on June 15th with 3 seen by Anthony and Linda Biddle. This comprised 2 together then a single on Walk Farm Path.

SPECKLED WOOD was seen throughout both months at many locations with the first being 2 at KQ on June 2nd and the last being 3 at BAR on July 29th. The maximum was 10 at EY on July 10th.

SMALL HEATH was first seen at KQ with 4 there on June 10th then at PIC, KQ, QF, EY and EX. The maxima were "many" at EY on July 9th and "lots" at EX on July 10th which was also the last record of the period.

RINGLET is a common sight in July and after the first records in the final 3 days of June it was seen up until July 31st with maxima of 40+ at Langham (LA) on July 13th.

MEADOW BROWN first appeared at EG on June 8th and was seen in good numbers up to July 31st. Maxima were 50+ at Cribbs Meadows (CM) and Pilton (PIL) on June 29th, 48 at EG on July 6th, 60+ at MM on July 10th and a magnificent 162 recorded by Tim Caldicott on July 13th on the tracks to the north-west of Leighfield (LE).

GATEKEEPER was first seen on June 29th with 2 at PIL then seen widely throughout the whole of July with the last one on 31st at UPP. The maximum was 65 near LE on July 13th.

MARBLED WHITE continues to spread with the welcome discovery of 2 new colonies at EX and EY. First seen at KQ on June 10th further records came from QF, MAN, PO, CM, EG, PIC, GGM, EMP and BOQ. Maxima were 20+ at the new colony in EX on July 9th and 12 at GGM on July 12th.

SILVER-WASHED FRITILLARY was seen at only two locations in July with 1 at KQ on 17th, 6 there on 20th and finally 2 at BOQ on 27th.

DARK GREEN FRITILLARY was also only seen at the same two quarries with 12 at KQ on June 23rd and 3 at BOQ on July 27th.

PURPLE EMPEROR continues its very slow northward spread. On July 10th 3 were seen by Anthony & Linda Biddle in PIC at Pickworth Great Wood. The next day, July 11th, they found another at Viking Way by Tunnely Wood near EX. On July 19th Tim Caldicott found the remains of one – a wing – on the cycle track in the wood at Berrybut Spinneys on the south side of Rutland Water (RW).

RED ADMIRAL was seen twice in June at PIC on 15th and KQ on 16th. Numbers grew during July and it was then seen at many locations with maxima of 14 at MAN on 17th, 15 at Wing (W) on 26th and finally 30 at Langham (LA) on 29th.

PAINTED LADY was first seen at MAN on June 21st and then singles in July at MM, Martinthorpe (MAR), PIC, MAN, KQ and W. There were 2 at PIC on July 17th.

There were only 4 **PEACOCK** records, all in late July – 7 at KQ on 20th, 8 at EG on 26th, 9 at BOQ on 27th and finally 5 at BAR on 29th.

Records of **SMALL TORTOISESHELL** were all in July – at EY on 9th, PIC on 10th and 17th, MM on 10th, KQ on 20th and finally a maximum of 7 at BAR on 29th.

The **COMMA** was also only seen in July – at EY on 9th,



The pretty
Gatekeeper
butterfly.
Photo
A. Lawrence

PI on 10th, KQ on 17th and 20th, EG on 26th and finally a maximum of 13 at LE on July 13th.

Three records of **SMALL COPPER** were sent in, all singles in late July – at KQ and MAR both on 20th and at EG on 26th.

PURPLE HAIRSTREAK was “very numerous” on July 9th at QF and 1 was at LA on 29th.

The final records of **GREEN HAIRSTREAK** were at KQ in June with 2 there on 2nd and 1 on 10th.

A **BLACK HAIRSTREAK** was found by David Needham at KQ on June 11th. An excellent record.

HOLLY BLUE “bookended” the period with the last of the first brood at KQ on June 2nd and then the first of the second brood seen on July 29th with 2 at BAR.

BROWN ARGUS was seen at KQ on June 3rd and 10th with 7 there on July 20th. The last was a single at MAN on July 26th.

COMMON BLUE records were scattered across both months. June saw 4 at KQ on 2nd, 3 there on 10th, 1 at PIC on 12th, 2 at BOQ on 24th and 1 at CM on 29th. In July there was 1 at PIC on 8th, “several” there on 15th, 2 at KQ on 20th and finally a male at EG on 26th.

A total of **32 Species** were seen in the period.

I would like to thank the following for their records: Alistair Lawrence, David Needham, Roger Favell, Carolyn Baxter, Anthony & Linda Biddle, Diana Masters, Tim Caldicott, and Duncan & Jane Ball.

FUNGI

RECORDER C Baxter

37 Stockerston Cres,
Uppingham LE15 9UA
Mob: 07729298125

June and July 2023

With June ending up being a warm, dry month and not many records coming in from around the County, species recorded seemed to be a continuance of the previous month with the crusts, brackets and jellies dominating the woodlands. **Hairy curtain crust** (*Stereum hirsutum*) and **Turkeytail** (*Trametes versicolor*) were still a common feature in all the woodlands visited, although by now, dry and leathery from lack of water. The little black spots of **Hazel and Beech woodwart**, (*Hypoxylon fuscum* – *Hypoxylon fragiforme*) and **Beech barkspot**, (*Diatrype disciformis*) found on leafless tree branches and old dry broken branches on the woodland floor, guaranteed at least an addition to the list to make the trip out worthwhile. The pretty little **Collared parachute**, (*Marasmius rotula*) the first gilled fungus found on June 22nd, made its appearance lined along the rotting twigs in Priors coppice, and then again in Panter’s orchard. The common names of fungi are sometimes a good clue to identity – from above they look just like tiny parachutes and from below they have a ringed collar near the stipe or stem, surrounding the inside of the gills. One of the inkcaps – **Hare’s-foot inkcap** (*Coprinopsis lagopus*) was found on the edge of Wardley woods, just on the point of deliquescing, where

the edge of the flimsy cap rolls up all round to reveal fine black lines radiating towards the stipe. If you walk past the site a couple of hours later, it will probably be gone. A nice find while RNHS recorders were out listing species in Panter’s orchard June 27th, was a nice specimen of a **Shaggy bracket** (*Inonotus hispidus*) high up on an Apple tree branch. Quite a few of our bracket fungi favour only certain trees and this can be very helpful in directing the identification. Before the month was out, one of our edible grassland fungi were making an appearance – a few **Field mushrooms** (*Agaricus campestris*) were

Collared
parachute.
Photo C. Baxter



seen dotted around near the Langham roundabout. Throughout July, saw a change to unsettled wet and humid weather, ideal fungal conditions, which sent fruiting bodies up all over the place, creating a dilemma as to where to go first. Of the grassland fungi, the commonest find was the **Fairy-ring champignon** (*Marasmius oreades*) which was found in good numbers in a sheep field above the Eyebrook reservoir and again along the Stamford road in Oakham on 9th July and 19th respectively. **Dung roundhead** (*Protostropharia semiglobata*) and a **mottlegill** species were found together in an occupied sheep field beside Gypsy lane in Uppingham. The Dung roundhead was found typically on top of sheeps dung, and the mottlegills were dotted around in the grass. A window of dry weather on 23rd July demanded a trip out to Wardley woods and there was no surprise to find a **Giant puffball** (*Calvatia gigantea*) in the grass outside the entrance to the woods. Walking up to the top of the

wood from the Sweethedges entrance, there are mixed deciduous and conifer trees with both Oak and Beech and here I found two kinds of bolete, two lovely **Red cracking boletes**, (*Xerocomellus chrysenteron*) and a little troupe of probably **Suede boletes** (*Xerocomus subtomentosus*) (Yet to go to Naturespot for ID). Tim Sexton also found a **Chestnut bolete** (*Gyroporus castaneus*) at Gibbets gorse on the Lyndon reserve on 19th July. Other finds at Wardley were **Glistening inkcap** (*Coprinellus micaceus*), **Small stagshorn** (*Calocera cornea*), a **Fibre-cap** species and various other as yet unidentified fungi found in the woods. A trio of **White dapperling** (*Leucoagaricus leucothites*) were found outside the Council offices on 24th July – a common mushroom but fairly conspicuous. And lastly, while walking in Stoke woods with the grandchildren on 25th July, we spotted some **Earthballs** (*Scleroderma citrinum*) on the gravel path looking like little white and brown balls about 2cm diameter. They have no stem, unlike puffballs

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GLOWWORMS

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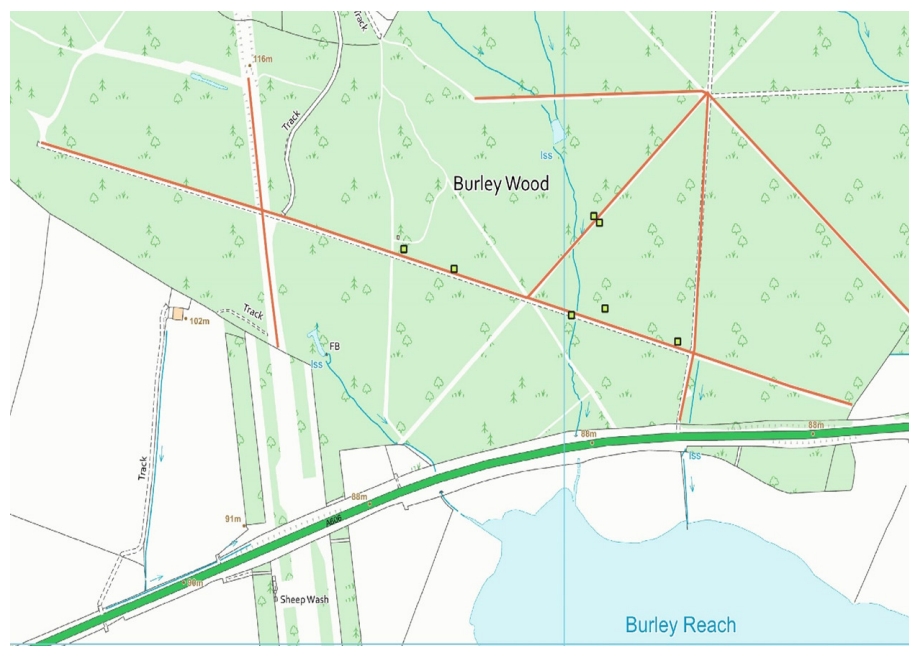
Glow during June/July 2023

Glow-worms start to become active from late May and their glows are most noticeable in June and July when the females light up to attract the males. RNHS members Jenny Harris, Linda Biddle, Linda Clark and Carolyn Baxter planned to go out on three successive weeks at the end of June and beginning of July to count glowworms in Ketton, Barrowden and Essendine, our traditional glow-worming haunts. And then the rain came down! Early June began fairly settled and dry but by the middle of the month we were dodging outbreaks of heavy thundery showers and the next month, July, was even worse. Subsequently, we only managed one trip out on a balmy, dry, 12th July evening, to the Essendine verge running parallel to the main East Coast railway line, and

found 10 glows, obviously well used to the trains thundering alongside their grassland homes!

This year, the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust were also running a campaign in June, to ask people to go out and find glowworms throughout the county and enter their sightings on their website. Tim Sexton, Species and Recording Officer for LRWT took up the challenge, and it is thanks to him for sharing his findings with us, that we have a report to show you.

Lastly, a resident from Barrowden, who found 18 glows on two occasions on Back road, Barrowden (once just after summer solstice and once on 24th July) sent in her findings to Tim, indicating that it was a record count from Barrowden in recent history!



Map of Glowworm areas covered and recorded by Tim Sexton on 29th July 2023 in Burley wood. (See table opposite)

Squares on map, refer to Grid references in the table for glows.

There is a **late addition** to the records in the table opposite. Tim Sexton made another visit to Burley woods over the weekend of 5/6th August and found another 4 glowworms - 2 adult females and 2 glowing 12mm larvae, making a **total of 9 adult glowworms for Burley woods** this year. A great result considering the weather!

Record of Glowworm count for 2023

Location	Date	Number	Grid ref	Notes	Recorder
Barrowden	10/06/23	0			Tim Sexton
	13/06/23	4	SK890 096	7 glows along Back rd. between SK945 003 – 944 002	Tim Sexton
	13/06/23	3	SK994 002		Tim Sexton
Barrowden	06/23 & 24/07/23	18		Back road	Resident
Burley	10/06/23	0	Not noted		Tim Sexton
	30/06/23	0	Not noted		Tim Sexton
	29/07/23	7	SK890 096 (1) SK890 096 (1) SK887 095 (1) SK888 095 (1) SK890 095 (1) SK890 095 (1) SK892 094 (1)	Refer to map back page.	Tim Sexton
Ketton	21/06/23	9. (6 glowing females, 3 males)	SK978 053 (3) SK976 053 (1F. +3 M.) SK976 053 (1) SK974 057 (1)	2 glows in 1 st meadow from car park. 1 (+ 3 males) on RHS path next to geology area, 2 in valley, 1 on top path near solar farm	Tim Sexton
Essendine	12/07/23	10	TF045 125 – TF040 132. Pickworth road.	From junction of A6121 to where Pickworth road takes bend to left	L.B, L.C, J.H, C.B.
Lax hill. RW	01/07/23	0	Not Noted		Tim Sexton

MAMMALS

RECORDER Linda Biddle

21 Waverley Gardens, Stamford PE9 1BH.

Tel: 01780 762108 Email: ajbiddle21@talktalk.net

June/July 2023

Apologies from Linda to all who have sent in their sightings this summer. They **will** be recorded. The new camera trapping project mentioned in last (June) Fieldfare has triggered hundreds of photographs that need to be checked out and recorded. We await an exciting Summer Mammal report in the October issue.

MOTHS

RECORDER Paul Bennett

90 Kesteven Rd, Stamford PE9 1SR. Telephone: 01780 754569

E-mail: p.bennett569@btinternet.com

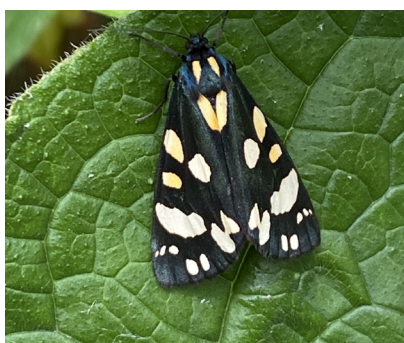
June/July 2023

Although this report covers a four month period, unfortunately, little can be said about the early spring season which was a time of cool and wet weather and unsuited to moth activity. **Burnet Companion** and **Mother**

Shipton were seen flying on the occasional sunny day but in smaller numbers than usual, while **Chimney Sweepers** started to appear at Rutland Water at the end of May. No trapping was done at Lyndon reserve until **27th May** when

58 moths of 20 species were caught including 2 **Sallow Kitten**. The main area of interest around this time was the extensive network of spidery webs that were immersing Spindle trees situated close to the paths either side of Eggleton reserve near the birdwatching centre and which no-one visiting the reserve could have failed to notice. These webs were spun by hundreds of caterpillars of the **Spindle Ermine micro moth** and created a somewhat bizarre and ghostly sight.

June was a slight improvement, but numbers were still slow to pick up, although this cannot be put down solely to overnight conditions, as the effects of last summer's prolonged heatwave meant that many larvae would have been unable to feed on plants that had prematurely dried up; micro moths are likely to have been particularly affected by this. The records so far from this year's trapping sessions are that numbers of Carpets, Hawk-moths, Footmen and Pugs are below recent levels although for those people familiar with the problems of identifying Pug moths, their scarcity is not a source of massive disappointment. Prominent numbers appear to have held up and the early signs are that **Yellow Underwings** are faring slightly better this year although August and September are usually their most abundant months. There have been several records of **Scarlet Tiger**, with individuals reported in Edith Weston, Exton, Greetham, Rutland Water Lyndon, (surprisingly a first site record from a trap), Manton and Wing as well as my own garden in Stamford. These have appeared either in traps or by



Scarlet tiger.
Photo Jayne Walker.

day, when males can be observed flying wildly on late afternoons and early evenings around the end of June! **Hummingbird Hawk-moths** have been reported but in fewer numbers so far than last year. **Silver Y's** have been more numerous, but no rare immigrant moth records have been received. **Latticed Heath** was reported from Bloody Oaks, Exton, Pickworth and RW Lyndon, all second generation moths which this year would probably have been the more frequently seen. An **Eyed Hawk-moth** was also seen perched on a garden shed door at Wing allotments. Lyndon was trapped on 4 occasions during June and July. **130 moths of 45 species** recorded on **14th June** on a fairly cool night included a rare appearance there of a **Lime Hawk-moth**. Humid conditions on the night of **24th June** produced **308 moths of 88 species** which shows that with the right overnight temperatures and atmospheric conditions moths will emerge. Several species were recorded in double figures including **Small Magpie** (11) with a count of 10 **Common Emeralds** being unusual given that this species had only previously been recorded as single moths. **Four-dotted Footman** was a new site record. The trap left out on **28th July** produced **621 moths of 90 species**, a record on site for both moth

and species numbers which would have been greater had the warm morning weather not caused a number of moths to have the audacity to fly out of the trap unidentified! The numbers were considerably assisted by a count of more than 250 **Ermine micro moths** situated in or around the trap and perched on neighbouring trees and bushes; the vast majority of these were probably Willow Ermine but with adults it is impossible to verify unless they have been reared in captivity or seen on their foodplant tree, therefore they are only recorded as an Ermine species. Other moths of more than usual interest were **Black Arches** (4), **White Satin Moth** (2), a first record for many years of **Bordered Beauty** and a **Wax Moth** which is a large micro moth normally seen around beehives where the larvae feed mainly on older honeycombs. It was only possible to visit Bloody Oaks on 2 occasions with neither of them being ideal nights, but **16th June** produced **34 species** including 2 **Tawny-barred Angle** which is an annual sighting there,

Lime hawk moth.
Photo Roy Edwards.



Alder Moth and Four-dotted Footman. A mention should also be made of *Ethmia dodeceae*, commonly named **Dotted Ermel**, which is a micro that looks similar to Ermine micros but with larger black dots and feeds solely on Common Gromwell which grows on the bank there. Hopes were high on **29th July** of a good count but a combination of a stiff overnight breeze, clear sky and a near full moon restricted numbers to **37 species** which included **Scorched Carpet** and Latticed Heath as single records. On the technical side it should be mentioned that we now have a new trap operating at Lyndon which is permanently sited, raised from the ground and constructed with treated plywood and using thick Perspex sheets to keep the moths inside when attracted to the light, these have replaced the old DIY store-type plastic trap and funnel although the bulb and other electrical elements have been transferred over from it. Use is now made of a simple light sensor which reduces the amount of electricity used. The raised trap helps to make it more visible to moths and other creatures and I would like to express thanks to Tim Sexton who did the bulk of the construction work and installation. Finally, and weather permitting, Tim is hoping to run another Rutland Water moth bio-blitz on the night of 11th August, and which has been a success in the past couple of years. A report on this will be included in the next edition of Fieldfare.

Thank you to the following for submitting their sightings:
- D & J Ball, P Bennett, A Biddle, T Caldicott, M Grimes, J Morrell, P Rudkin, P Scott, T Sexton, J Walker.

ORTHOPTERA

RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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

E-mail: phil.rudkin@talktalk.net

June/July 2023

At the time of writing, everyone will be aware of the awful weather we have put up with during the period covered. This has affected the insect populations in Rutland, but there were a few sunny days fortunately, for the orthoptera to slowly develop.

Bush Crickets.

Oak Bush Cricket, (*Meconema thalassinum*).

The only one of this species to be reported this period! One adult found in member's back yard, St. Mary's Road, Manton. 26 June 2023. Regular site.

Roesel's Bush Cricket, (*Roeselina roeselii*).

Large colony of stridulating males in rich meadow grasses. On the farm track, adjacent to Tufted Duck Hide at the Lyndon reserve, Rutland Water. Early surprise! Regular sites, 26th June 2023. Large colonies, of stridulating males, in all parts of Ketton Quarries, on 24 July 2023. Regular sites.

Long-winged Conehead, (*Conocephalus fuscus*).

Many early instar nymphs, in the Wing Village Allotments, 2 July 2023. Regular site.

Speckled Bush Cricket, (*Leptophyes punctatissima*)

One nymph, located in lane near Pilton, 11 June 2023. New site: SK914028. Four plus nymphs, in the Wing village allotments, 14 June 2023. Regular site. SK889028. Six early instar nymphs, in neglected, old Orchard, Panter's Orchard, next to Ketton Quarries. 27 June 2023. Regular Site. SK966053.



Male Roesels bush cricket nymph. Photo K. Allsop

Field grasshopper. Photo K Allsop



Grasshoppers.

Common Green Grasshopper, (*Omocestus viridulus*)

Three stridulating males in Leighfield, high northern track, Lush fields, 7 July 2023. Regular site. Declining species! SK825051

Field Grasshopper, (*Chorthippus brunneus*). Four adults, in grass verges, outside of Panter's Wood, Ketton, 17 June 2023. Regular site. SK966053. One adult, in the Wing Village allotments, 27 June 2023.

Meadow Grasshopper, (*Chorthippus parallelus*). Many Nymphs noted in Wing Village Allotments, 15 June, and 2 July 2023. Three adults, in the grass verges, outside of Panter's Orchard, Ketton, 17 June 2023. Regular site. One, late instar nymph, in meadow field, Eyebrook Reservoir, 9 July 2023. New site. SP853978. Photograph received. One adult male, in Ketton Quarries, 22 July 2023. Regular site. Photograph received. Regular site.

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, (*Chorthippus albomarginatus*). One late instar nymph, in meadow field, Eyebrook Reservoir, and one adult, 12 July 2023. New site, SP859937. Photographs received. One adult and three nymphs observed, in the Wing Village Allotments. Regular Site, 11 July 2023.

Many thanks to my reporters, for their sightings, and photographs. Carolyn Baxter, Tim Caldicott, Tessa Mitchell, Phil Rudkin.

INSECTS & INVERTEBRATES

RECORDER Jayne Walker

11 Vicars Close, off Empingham Road, Exton LE15 8 AW. Telephone 01572 868624. E-mail Jayne8586@hotmail.com

June/July 2023

There have been 127 records over the last two months, with some being reported on the RNHS WhatsApp group. There have been a number of notable records over the last two months in many of the species' groups which are reported below.

The **bug** *Stictopleurus abutilon* has been noted at a site in Wing the status of which in VC55 is unknown. This was

recorded as extinct in 1992 and is thought to have been re-introduced in the south of the UK and spread northwards. Other bugs, *Leptopterna ferrugata* and *Phytocoris varipes* are also shown as having 'status not known' in VC55 by Naturespot, with the former being widespread and common in the UK and the latter being 'widespread and fairly frequent in the southern half of the UK'.

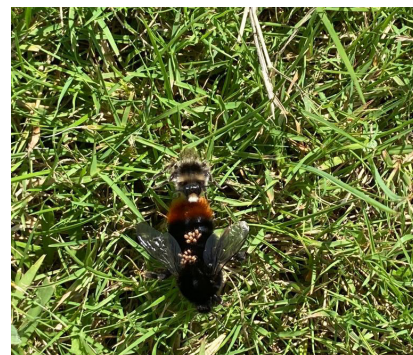
The **beetle** *Ophonus ardosiacus* has been recorded in Wing which is rare find as Naturespot states 'there were only two records for this species up to March 2015 in VC55'. A survey at Ketton Quarry carried out by LRWT also recorded the species of beetle *Mogulones geographicus* which according to Naturespot there have only been 'four records in VC55 up to 2015'. In addition to the *M. geographicus*; six species of **Pot Beetle** were recorded during this survey, which are as follows; *Cryptocephalus bipunctatus*, *C. aureolus*, *C. fulvus*, *C. labiatus*, *C. moraei* and *C. pusillus*. These are 'an interesting group of leaf beetles, many of which are scarce in the VC. Multiple records of each of these beetles were recorded with the exception of *C. pusillus*'. (pers.com Tim Sexton via RNHS WhatsApp group, 9/8/23). More information can be found about this fascinating group of beetles on the Buglife Website at the following link <https://www.buglife.org.uk/bugs/bug-directory/pot-beetles/>



Mogulones geographicus.
Stock image

When the sun has been shining (a rare event in July) the insects have been out in force and this has been reflected in some of the counts recorded in local plots. In Leighfield 145 and 211 **Common Red Soldier Beetle** *Rhagonycha fulva* and 464 and 215 **Marmalade Hoverfly** *Episyrphus balteatus* were noted on two days in July. It was observed by the recorder that the Common Red Soldier Beetle favoured the Hogweed flowerheads *Heracleum sphondylium*. Other large counts included **7-Spot Ladybird** *Coccinella 7-punctata* at Gibbet Gorse Meadows, Rutland Water where over 100 were noted, again on a rare sunny day in July.

Red-tailed bumblebee queen with mites.



The **Privet Sawfly** *Macrophya punctumalbum* has been recorded at Gibbet Gorse Meadows, Rutland Water which has bright red thighs, although this species appears to be widespread in the UK, its status in VC55 is 'not known' (Naturespot). In addition, the very striking **Banded General soldier fly** *Stratiomys potamida* has been recorded in the Wing area; along with the **Four-barred Major soldier fly**, *Oxycera rara*, which is noted as an 'occasional record for VC55' (Naturespot) and *Parhelophilus frutetorum* which is 'infrequent in VC55' (Naturespot).

There have been a variety of **Hymenoptera** species recorded over the last two months despite the bad weather, with the rare **Ruderal Bumblebee** *Bombus ruderatus* being recorded on two different days in June in VC55 in Pilton on Meadow Crane's-bill, *Geranium pratense*. The **Wood-carving Leafcutter Bee** *Megachile ligniseca*, has been recorded in Wing and this is noted as an 'infrequent visitor to VC55' by Naturespot.

On a final note, a member sent in a photograph of a queen **Red-tailed Bumblebee** *Bombus lapidaries*, which was covered in mites. Having never seen this before (it may be common?) the photograph is included for you all to see. I would like to thank the following for sending in records via the internet and through WhatsApp in no particular order (apologies if I have missed anyone off by accident); Tony Clarke, Tim Sexton, Tim Caldicott, Jacky Morrell, Carolyn Baxter, Linda and Anthony Biddle, David Needham, Bill Smith and Diana Masters.

PLANT GALLS

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

87 Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SU.

Telephone 01780 762051 E-mail: roy.lemmon@yahoo.co.uk

June 2023

The 'pocket plums' mentioned in the May report have been reported again this month, from Barrowden Road, Ketton on the 6th and Walk Farm on the 9th and are in such numbers that it could mean that there will be a reduced crop of good sloes later in the year.

BOQ on the 17th was the source of a tiny gall on Buckthorn which our previous record for, dated from 2014! Its size may have something to do with it. Stretton Wood on the 19th yielded 22 galls including a Crown gall on Bramble which is caused by a bacterium - somewhat unusual. Exton Park on the 26th gave 23 galls and this is a result of a good variety of host plants, including Hornbeam and

Lombardy Poplar. The RNHS visit to Panters Orchard Ketton ended the month with 8 galls.

Thanks to Carolyn Baxter, Linda Biddle, Martin Grimes and Roy Lemmon for their reports, several by email this month.

July 2023

The plant gall season is now in full swing, and numbers found per site vary from one on a follow-up visit to Bloody Oaks Quarry on the 19th, to 32 at Lyndon on the 10th. Galls caused by Aphids are relatively few but this year they seem more abundant and have been found on Elm, Fat

Hen, and some Oraches. Another gall which was found on the 20th at Great Casterton was made by a midge laying its eggs on Wild Carrot flowers and is only the third record we have; the previous ones were 2014 and 2018. The same venue produced 2 galls on Walnut leaves, both caused by mites.

Tinwell on the 26th produced 14 galls, one of which, a Rust on Dwarf Mallow, was new to our records. The rust is actually very common, but this was the first time it was found on this plant. There were also nail galls on Common Lime which are very thin and may protrude from the leaves by up to 15 mm, and also a midge gall on Oak. This year so far, galls on Oak have been on a par with Hen's Teeth,

Gall on Field maple.
C. Baxter



so we shall see what the rest of the season brings! Thanks to Martin Grimes and Roy Lemmon for their records.

FIELD TRIPS

Visit to Collyweston Deeps. Thursday 8th June 2023



Dyers greenweed.
Photo L. Biddle



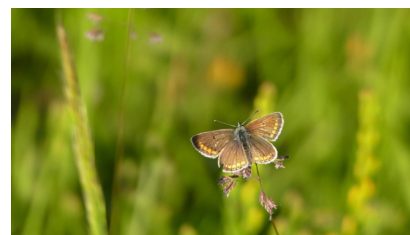
Dodder on Bird's-foot trefoil.
Photo L. Biddle

It was a bright but breezy and cool afternoon when 17 people met in the layby on the A43 ready to visit the Beds Cambs and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust's nature reserve at the old Collyweston deeps quarry. Immediately inside the gate we met with one of the feature species of the site – **Dyer's greenweed**, *Genista tinctoria*, a bright yellow parasitic plant growing strongly in tussocks. It is a member of the pea family and widespread throughout the reserve. Very close by was a newly emerged specimen of **Knapweed broomrape**, *Orobanche elatior*, again a plant parasite, standing proudly in the sunshine. The second species for which this site is noted was **Dodder**, *Cuscuta epithymum*, another parasitic plant, but this has no specific host, living on gorse, and many other types of plant, such as thyme, and in this instance bird's foot trefoil. It looks like thin, reddish hairy strands, spreading over the surface of its host plant, and really, hardly resembles a plant at all, since it has no leaves, and no chlorophyll. (a bit like the hyphae of a fungus). We were too early to see the flowers which would sit singly on the strands of the plant. We found an amazingly rich variety of flowering plants, 49 in total, which are listed in the chart below. A couple of the highlights were **Hound's tongue** and **Meadow saxifrage**. Butterflies were observed too – a small group of tiny

delicate **Brown argus butterflies** *Arisia agestis*, balancing on the wildly waving grass stems, and flitting between them, much to the enjoyment of all concerned. **Common blues**, *Polyommatus icarus*, also flew across the meadow. Also recorded were several bird species, including, **Buzzard**, *Buteo buteo*, **Red kite** *Milvus milvus*, and **Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*, and at the end of the visit we were treated to the sight of a family of **long-tailed tits**, as they flitted among the bushes. A **Red tailed bumblebee**, *Bombus lapidarius*, several **ant hills**, and **Orthopteran nymphs** represented the invertebrates, and the only mammal sighting was a couple of **Rabbits** *Oryctolagus cuniculus* sitting in the evening sunshine at the end of our visit. A fascinating reserve – one we should return to soon, I hope.

Linda Biddle

Brown argus.
Photo
C. Baxter



Species list for Collyweston Deeps.

Plants	Plantain	Lesser stitchwort
Dyers greenweed	Wild marjoram	Black medick
Knapweed broomrape	Dodder	Prickly sowthistle
Bladder campion	Eyebright	Butterflies
Bird's-foot trefoil	Wild parsnip	Common blue
Lady's bedstraw	Burdock	Brown argus
Common knapweed	Mignonette	Birds
Common sorrel	Cleavers	Buzzard
Germander speedwell	Smooth sow-thistle	Jackdaw
Common nettle	St John's-wort	Wren
Salad burnet	Mouse-ear hawkweed	Chaffinch
Wild strawberry	Greater knapweed	Woodpigeon
Blackberry	Quaking grass	Blackcap
Willowherb	Hoary plantain	Carrion crow
White campion	Bulbous buttercup	Red kite
Hedge bedstraw	Common vetch	Sparrowhawk
Clover	Horseshoe vetch	Swift
Rock-rose	Pyramidal orchid	Bluetit
Wild thyme	Clustered bellflower	Great tit
Hop trefoil	Small-flowered crane's-bill	Long-tailed tit
Hound's-tongue	Milkwort	Others
Meadow saxifrage	Cowslip (Seed heads)	Rabbit
White bryony	Dropwort	Red-tailed bumble bee

A walk in Merry's meadows. Saturday 17th June 2023



Saturday 17 June was a lovely day, pleasantly cooler and a little overcast at first compared to previous days, when 15 of us, including some new members, visited Merry's Meadows. This Site of Special Scientific Interest and Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust nature reserve comprises three species-rich hay meadows on chalky boulder clay. As soon as we stepped from the surrounding arable fields into the first meadow, Cow Pasture Close, we were in a different world, where the traditional management of cutting for hay, followed by sheep grazing has encouraged the typical hay meadow flowers to bloom in profusion.

Seed-heads of Cowslips and Green-winged Orchids were surrounded by **Meadow Buttercup**, **Lady's Bedstraw**, **Fairy Flax** and soon-to-be-flowering **Common Knapweed**. The last remnants of **Cuckooflower** and **Pignut** were found, the latter the food plant of the day-flying **Chimney Sweeper moth**, of which we saw several specimens. As we walked through this ridge and furrow

meadow, we could hear the calls of **Curlews** alarmed by our presence, as they had nested in a corner of the adjoining Long Field and were anxious for their chicks. We had a marvellous view as one flew nearly overhead. There were masses of **Bird's-foot-trefoil** everywhere and in areas of the second field, Donkey Paddocks, **Yellow-rattle** was both in flower and seed, among **Pepper Saxifrage** and a bewildering array of grass species, including the dainty **Quaking-grass**. The eastern end of Donkey Paddocks has slightly acidic soil, so a new range of plants was observed, including **Saw-wort**, the milky flowers of **Dropwort** (a relative of Meadowsweet) and **Tormentil**. This area is also special because of the **Heath Spotted-orchid**, the closely related **Common Spotted-orchid**, two spikes of **Common Twayblade** and a single flower spike of **Fragrant Orchid**. There is only one other recently recorded site in Leicestershire and Rutland for the Fragrant Orchid: at Herbert's Meadow on the Ulverscroft nature reserve in north-west Leicestershire. We did not walk through Long

Field, leaving the Curlews in peace.

Yellowhammer, Lesser Whitethroat and Chiffchaff were heard constantly, and a **Red Kite** drifted over. The meadows were full of **Small Heath** and **Meadow Brown** butterflies, but we also saw a **Common Blue**, **Large Skipper**, **Ringlet**, **Speckled Wood** and the surprise sighting of a **Marbled White Butterfly**. **Six-spot Burnet**, a **Yellow Shell** and **Silver Y** moths were also seen.

My thanks to Duncan Ball for his bird list, Linda Biddle and others for plant records; the list of lepidoptera is courtesy of David Needham.

Jenny Harris



Hound's-tongue.
Photo Linda Biddle

**Chimney
sweeper moth.**
Photo C Baxter



**Lesser
whitethroat.**
Photo Peter Scott.



A trip out to Stonesby Quarry. Sunday 2nd July 2023

Large metal gates at the Bescaby Lane entrance to Stonesby Quarry Nature Reserve hint at the past industrial history of the reserve, for this is a very different habitat from most of the grassland sites the RNHS visit. This small reserve, now comprising three separate grassland 'closes', was once part of a large ironstone quarry, then landfill site, until Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust acquired it. Since quarrying and, more recently, tipping, ceased, natural regeneration has created diverse wildlife habitats on the mostly shallow calcareous soils.

In Bescaby Close hundreds of **pyramidal orchids** were a breath-taking sight, having only recently colonised from Orchid Close next door. In fact, each of the three closes has its own distinctive character, Bescaby Close having been the last compartment to come under sympathetic management when land-fill ceased and the Wildlife Trust took over a landscape that was 50% bare ground, 50% invasive scrub and coarse plants. Now the list of colonising plants includes **cowslip**, **common knapweed**, **rest harrow**., **common bird's-foot-trefoil** and occasional **bee orchids**. Among the masses of pyramidal orchids, a single rare white one was found.

Orchid Close is a more mature section of the nature reserve, with long-established pyramidal orchids and a long-grass area where **field scabious** was growing in profusion. Nearby an area of hawthorn scrub became dense during the years of Covid-19 when management by volunteer work parties could not be carried out, but this still had plenty of botanical interest. In a hidden part of Orchid Close is a small experimental area where, in the 1980s,

the ground was scraped free of spoil and scrub to see what would regenerate. Autumn gentian and centaury colonised, but the June draught had prevented them growing this year.

The third section, Jenny's Close, is a mixture of habitats and flora. Decades before the Wildlife Trust was involved, topsoil had been imported to allow allotment gardening, the presence of orange day-lilies and white garden campanula evidence of this land-use. In the early 1990s the Wildlife Trust bulldozed out mounds of spoil and derelict sheds, sometimes down to bare rock. Now, masses of intense blue **meadow cranesbill**, **common and greater knapweed**, **field scabious** and **yellow toadflax** have recolonised and were flourishing in a 'meadow' area of the former garden. In a discrete section of shallow soil, we found the uncommon **small scabious** flowering, giving an opportunity to compare the identification features of the two species of scabious.

The butterfly list included **meadow brown**, **ringlet**, **large and small skipper**, **common blue**; but the surprise of the visit was a single **marbled white** butterfly. Ten people attended the visit. We thank the site manager, Sarah Bedford, for kindly opening the big gates so that we could park inside the reserve, and for joining us during the walk to add her knowledge of recent management. Stonesby Quarry is a dynamic, ever-changing mix of micro-habitats, where coarse invasive plants and scrub are controlled to retain and enhance the developing calcareous grassland plants.

Jenny Harris

OTHER REPORTS



A re-visit to survey Panters Orchard, Tuesday 27th June 2023 with Leicestershire Entomological Society.

Last year the RNHS were invited to do a survey of an old orchard near to Ketton cement works called Panter's wood. There are over 100 old gnarled apple, pear and plum trees still here in various stages of decay and when we visited this year it was completely overgrown with nettles and grasses; a complete contrast to the year

before, when the extreme heat dried practically everything on the floor of the wood. There have been surveys here in the past, but it is always worth re-visiting these old orchards as they often have a high biodiversity value. With the help of the Leicestershire Entomology Society, below is a list of some of the species found.

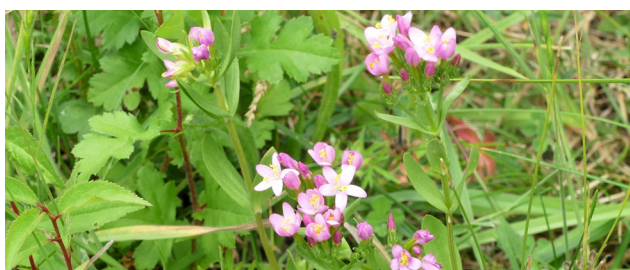
Birds	
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Chiff-chaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>
Green wood-pecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Willow warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Great spotted woodpecker (Young)	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>
Moths	
White plume	<i>Pterophorus pentadactyla</i>
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>
Brown (Common) plume	<i>Emmelina monodactyla</i>
Setaceous Hebrew character	<i>Xestia-c-nigrum</i>
Butterflies	
Marbled white (Many)	<i>Melanargia galathea</i>

Common blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
Meadow brown (Many)	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>
Small skipper x 20	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>

Plants. In Orchard	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>
Stinging nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>
Field bind-weed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
Hedge bedstraw	<i>Gallium album</i>
Wood dock. (?)	<i>Rumex sp.</i>
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Cleavers.	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>

Plants in grass on path near entrance	
Agrimony	<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>
Bird's-foot trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Black medick	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>
Bristly ox-tongue	<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>
Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Cut-leaved-crane's-bill	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>
Common centaury	<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>
Teasel	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>

For Bug and spiders found in Panter's Orchard see Alan Canns species list on outside back page.



Above. Common centaury. Panter's orchard

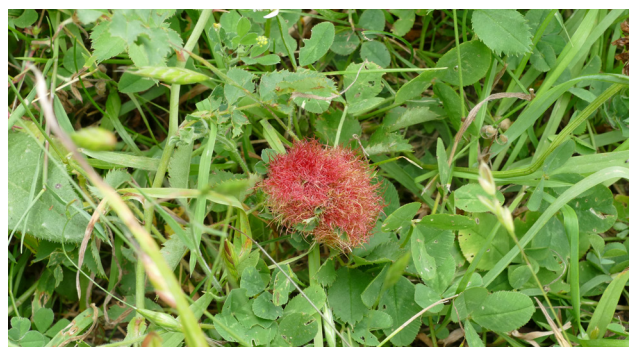


Above. Common blue damselfly. C. Baxter



Above. White plume moth. P. Orchard.

Lesser trefoil	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>
Common Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Orthoptera	
Speckled bush cricket nymphs x 2. (In woods)	<i>Leptophyes punctatissima</i>
Field grasshopper (on grassy path)	<i>Chorthippus brunneus</i>
Meadow grasshopper. (On grassy path)	<i>Chorthippus parallelus</i>
Fungi	
Shaggy bracket	On apple tree
??	(waiting ID)
Choke. (On grass)	<i>Epichloe typhina</i>
Damselflies	
Common Blue	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>
Snails	
White-lipped	<i>Cepaea hortensis</i>
Ribbed grass snail	<i>Vallonia costata</i> . Sent to Naturespot for ID
Mammals	
Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>



Robin's pincushion. Panter's orchard



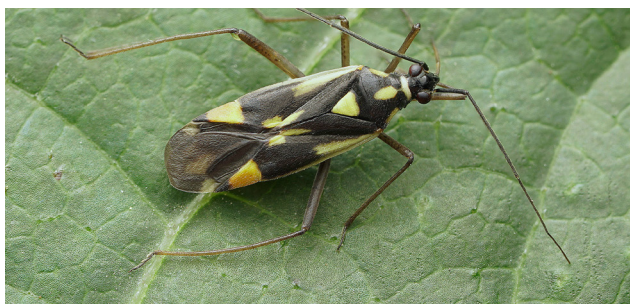
Shaggy bracket on old Apple tree. Photo Phil Rudkin

**Species list and photo's of Bugs and spiders recorded by Alan Cann in Panters orchard.
You can find out more about these bugs on Naturespot.**

Amblytylus nasutus
Atractotomus mali
Campyloneura virgula
Deraeocoris ruber
Grypocoris stysi
Heterotoma planicornis
Himacerus apterus
Leptophyes punctatissima
Leptopterna dolabrata
Megaloceroea recticornis

Nabis limbatus
Neophilaenus lineatus
Orthops kalmii
Philaenus spumarius
Phytocoris ulmi
Plagiognathus arbustorum
Pterophorus pentadactyla
Scolopostethus thomsoni
Stenotus binotatus
Tachycixius pilosus

Below Grypocoris stysi



Below Plagiognathus arbustorum



Below. Scolopostethus thomsoni



Below. Tachycixius pilosus



RNHS CONTACTS

Chairman

21 Waverley Gardens, Stamford PE9 1BH
01780 762108

Linda Biddle

abiddle21@talktalk.net

Fieldfare Editor

37 Stockerston Crescent, Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9UA
01572 823397

Carolyn Baxter

rnhsfieldfare2@gmail.com

Secretary.

Vacant

Treasurer

Vacant

Membership Secretary

42 Church Street, Braunston, Oakham. LE15 8QT
01572 756870

Tricia Marston

rnhsmembers@gmail.com

Programme Secretary

The Jetty, Wing, Rutland. LE15 8RX
Mob: 07946 733931

Jeffery Wilcox-smith

wilcoxsmith@btinternet.com

Website Editor/Calendar

12 Tees Close, Oakham, LE15 6SP
07535 508932

Peter Scott

peter.scott27@btopenworld.com

Wildlife Recorders

Contact details can be found at head of reports inside Fieldfare and on the RNHS website.

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