

Cattle egret. Rutland. Photo Peter Scott.



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Welcome

You are either a very lucky person, or a very patient one to have the above photograph to your credit! I gather this Cattle egret was spotted at Rutland Water very recently and Naturespot tells us this bird is still a rarity in this county. There is something to be said for remembering the common names of our fauna and flora, I think. Another first find for RW in early April, was that of a Great Silver Water beetle found in lagoon 6 by Beth Fox. This impressive specimen was 5.5 centimetres long! It is listed as "near threatened" in the GB red list of species, although one was found nearby at Great Fen in Cambridgeshire last year by Henry Stanier, after being absent for 86 years. These exciting finds, got me thinking about how climate change may have contributed to some of the species found by our own recorders this spring.

Most of the records sent in April and May are reminders of the excitement we all feel when we first share the familiar sightings of a plant or animal revisited, or rediscovering that elusive favorite we thought had disappeared years ago. We have been looking to the skies for our returning summer birds - the martins, swifts and swallows that make their long awaited reappearance in the spring. We have hastened back to the meadows to marvel at the exquisite sight of so many hundreds of orchids in a grassland field. It is all so reassuringly familiar. But thankfully, we humans are a contradictory species and are constantly on the look out for something new and different. The Cattle egret and the Great Silver water beetle are welcome species recently found in our landscape, but in the future there may be some that will be not so welcome as the climate heats up. This issue of Fieldfare may seem very similar to the one from last year, but fifty years ago there would have been subtle differences. "...all three English woodpeckers within 10 minutes of Burley fishponds." "...a noticable absence of Turtle doves in Oakham this year" Our recorders often report the unusual amongst the common in our newsletters and that is when sixty years of species recording becomes invaluable. So, whatever method you choose, website, Naturespot or even an email, keep sending your sightings. Happy holidays to all!

DIARY DATES



RNHS Outdoor meetings.

The following events are correct at time of publication but may be changed at short notice. Please book your place with the person who will be leading the walk; phone numbers are beside the listing. Make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing for the time of year and if the weather is bad on the day, please check first by ringing the walk leader. Full details of all these events appear in the Annual programme on the website at www.rnhs.org.uk.

Saturday 9th August. 10.30 - 4pm. Annual RNHS Open Day. NOTE: This event, printed in your Annual programme as the Ketton Quarry Bug hunt, is now open to all members and the public to join us for a day of discovery and fun with workshops and displays. **Park and meet:** in the Scout hut car park, Pitt lane, Ketton. PE9 3SZ. (Carolyn 07729298125)

Saturday 13th September, 10.30am. RSPB reserve Frampton Marsh. This is a wonderful place to visit at this time of the year. Enjoy "the wildlife and waterfowl of the Wash" with Craig Howat, who will be leading the walk. **Meet:** Roads Farmhouse, Frampton Roads, Boston, Lincs. PE20 1AY. Grid ref: TF357 390. Entrance is free. Car park fee £5.

Dont forget to bring your walk cards with you!!

RNHS Indoor evening meetings.

7.30pm – 9.30pm on First Tuesday of every month from October through to March at Volunteer Training Centre (VTC). LE15 8AD. Ref: SK883 083.

Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.00.

Tuesday 7th October, 7.30pm. "The wildlife and birds of Poland". Richard Bashford from Naturetrek will give a talk about Poland's world famous Biebrza National Park marshes - home to the Great Snipe and the iconic Cranes and Corncrakes.

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. World Wetlands Day.

50 years of Wetland Birds Survey. A talk by Tim Sexton, Senior species and recording officer for LRWT.
Sunday 14th September 2025 10.00am - 11.30am.

Go to the events page on www.lrw.org.uk/events

NOTICES

Rutland Natural History Society 60th Anniversary Lunch.

Preparations by the sub-committee have been moving forward apace, and we can now confirm the ticket price for our Anniversary lunch. You will have received all the information in the insert along with this June Fieldfare. If you didn't receive your's, (it gives information on how to purchase your tickets) please get in touch with Tricia - Membership Secretary who will send one out to you. Tricia's details are on the back Contacts page.

Tribute to founder member of the Society: Miss Pleasance Burroughes.

Pleasance was a founder member of the Rutland Natural History Society (formed in the spring of 1965), in Oakham. I joined the Society a year later, in March 1966. We were friends immediately, because we were both sharing the same passion for nature's flora and fauna.

Pleasance was an owner of several properties in Ketton where she lived, and at one time, she invited the society the use of her large garden to hold a 'bring and buy' fund raising party. And we all enjoyed the day.

During the second World War, Burley House was taken over by the military, and became a hospital for wounded soldiers, and Pleasance was one of the nurses at the house. On a bright day, the nurses and some of the wounded would stop for a break and have a snack down at the Eight Riding Tree. This of course was well covered in the local Rutland news papers! Pleasance became famous for this!

In the early days I had the pleasure of delivering the RNHS newsletter to her home in Ketton, and I remember her inviting me in for a cup of tea. She regularly entertained some of her friends this way. When I gave lectures on bird songs in Ketton, she always attended with her friends.

There was a period when she was the manager in the antiquarian book shop, down Cheyne Lane, Stamford. In March 1986, I called in the shop for a chat and to my delight, she presented to me a book that I was desperate to own - a mint condition: Birds of Rutland, Haines, 1907. She refused to charge me. There is a message in the front of the book to me from Pleasance.

The above are my memories. I am sure that other early members of the Rutland Natural History Society, will have more stories about Pleasance Burroughes.

Phillip Rudkin.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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April 2025

Atmospheric pressure and wind. I have no figures for wind but this must have been a sunny April. The first 8 days were 0/8's cloud, both day and night due to a high pressure system over the North Sea, and the last week was similar but not always 0/8's. From the 12th-23rd inclusive, pressures were lower including the month's minimum of 1000mb. on the 15th. and this period had winds variable in direction and often gusty. The highest I recorded was 20mph. at 19.00 on the 16th.

Temperature. This was a very warm April, the mean of 12.3C. was the highest, i.e. the warmest in the decade 2016-2025, well above the next warmest April, 2020 at 11.5C. There were 2 air frosts, the lower being -0.4C on the night of the 6-7th. The highest daytime maximum was 27.0C on the last day of the month.

Precipitation. A dry April with a total of 17.2mm. (0.68 inches) and this represents 42% of my long term mean of 35 years. There were 4 drier Aprils in the decade referred to above, the lowest being 2021 with 3.5mm. (0.14 inches).

May 2025.

Atmospheric pressure and wind. On the first 23 days of the month winds were NW-E due to a persistent high pressure over Scandinavia and at times these winds were gusty. The highest pressure of the month was 1030mb. on the 16th. On the 24th-28th, pressures were low with the lowest of the month 1007.5mb. on the 25th. and on the last three days, were again higher and during the whole period were generally Westerly. This period had high gusty winds which caused some damage to trees locally.

Records of hours of sunshine date back to 1911 and since the year 2000 we have experienced 7 of the sunniest Springs of that whole period. A provisional estimate for Spring 2025 is that it is likely to be the sunniest so far in the UK.

Temperature. This May has been the warmest of the decade 2016-2025 with a mean of 17.11C and also the warmest May I have ever recorded i.e. since 1994. May 2024 was second, with a mean of 15.89C. Currently there were no air frosts, the lowest overnight minimum was 1.9C on 21st-22nd.

Precipitation. A total recorded of 39.9mm.(1.57 inches) equates to 82.5% of my long term mean. It all fell as rain between the 23rd and the 28th and the highest daily amount was 26.5mm.(1.04 inches) on the 27th. There had been no rain in the 30 days previous to this.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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April and May 2025.

The very dry weather may partly explain the paucity of records for this period.

There was a single record of a **Common Frog** on 2 April in Langham and **Common Toads** were reported from Ridlington on 11 April and a "breeding ball" was seen by Tim Sexton by lagoon 3 at Rutland Water.

The only newt observations, have been in the recorder's newish pond in Braunston, where both sexes of both species have been seen on many occasions. Although a single Great Crested Newt was seen in 2022 and two Smooth Newt efts were seen in 2023, none of either species were seen last year (possibly due to inadequate observer effort). However, it is not totally unexpected that they should find their way into my pond as Great Crested Newts were found in half a dozen ponds within a mile radius when I carried out a pond survey in 1989, albeit 36 years ago.

The only reptile sighting was of a terrapin, a **Red-eared Slider**, observed through telescopes, sunning itself on a

half-submerged branch about 200 yards from Fishponds Cottage on 20 May. It is a pity that this North American species keeps cropping up, having presumably been released by an irresponsible owner. This alien species can survive for many years and has been recorded breeding in other parts of Europe.

My thanks to M Markham, J Morrell, J Rodgers and T Sexton who sent records.



**Common
newt. J.
Morrell**

April 2025.

Highlights. Rutland Water had a Red-breasted Merganser two Cattle Egrets (25th) and two Cranes over (2nd). There were two Kittiwakes there (15th), a Sandwich Tern (23rd) and a Little Tern (12th). A Redstart was at Egleton (3rd) and a Wheatear (12th) plus a Nightingale from (15th) with one at Quarry Farm from (18th). Eyebrook Reservoir had a Little Tern (23rd), a Ring Ouzel (18th) and a Black Redstart (29th).

Rutland Water. (See also Wildfowl Count). Other wildfowl were a Garganey (27th, 28th) and a Scaup (1st – 28th). Marsh Harriers were regular at Egleton. Wader counts included 17 Oystercatchers (13th), six Avocets (13th), 42 Lapwings (13th) and two Grey Plovers (15th). There were three Little Ringed Plovers (25th), four Whimbrel (13th) and six Curlew (13th). 59 Bar-tailed Godwits flew through (19th). There was a Jack Snipe (3rd) and the first Common Sandpiper (11th) with two Green Sandpipers (13th), a Wood Sandpiper (30th) and five Greenshank (19th). Little Gulls were noted all month with 16 (4th). Arctic Terns (13th – 24th) were noted with 40 (21st). Two Black Terns were seen (29th). There was an early Cuckoo (8th) with Hobbies noted from (17th). A Grasshopper Warbler was at Lyndon (12th) with two late Fieldfares at Hambleton (13th) and a Spotted Flycatcher (30th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See also Wildfowl Count). Ospreys were regular. There were two Oystercatchers (13th, 27th), two Avocets (25th), five Little Ringed Plovers (26th), a single Whimbrel (12th, 20th), two Bar-tailed Godwits (19th), two Sanderling (23rd) and three Common Sandpipers (27th). A Wood Sandpiper was present (25th – 28th) with Spotted Redshanks (10th, 27th) and two Greenshanks (27th). Little Gulls were noted between (2nd – 29th) with 16 (14th). Caspian Gulls were seen from (3rd – 29th) with Common Terns from (10th) and Arctic Terns from (13th) with 40 (21st) and 50 (23rd). There were five Black Terns (29th). There was a pair of Stonechats all month and a Whinchat (30th).

Other Sites. Banthorpe GP had a pair of Barnacle Geese (28th), four Little Egrets (3rd) and two Snipe (14th). Cuckoos were at Quarry Farm, Geeston, Pickworth and Exton Woods from (22nd). Barn Owls were at Fort Henry and Langham. A Kingfisher was at Tinwell (30th) with Cetti's Warblers there and at Geeston. Garden Warblers were noted from (18th) in Tunneley Wood and Whitethroat in Exton Park from (12th).



Whitethroat. C. Howat

May 2025.

Highlights. Rutland Water had a Fulmar and a Bittern (both 15th). A Crane was near Fort Henry (6th). A Kittiwake was at Rutland Water (10th). Eyebrook Reservoir had a Little Stint (1st) and two Little Terns (1st) with one (31st).

Rutland Water. Wildfowl included a Garganey (25th), two Wigeon (23rd) and a Pintail (10th). There were two Cattle Egrets (10th) and a Marsh Harrier (20th) plus a Water Rail (10th). Some wader counts included 16 Avocets (10th), nine Little Ringed Plovers (19th), three Whimbrel (19th), two Bar-tailed Godwits (2nd), a Black-tailed Godwit (16th) and a Turnstone (19th). Sanderling were noted between (13th – 26th) with nine (24th). There were single Common Sandpiper and Redshank and three Greenshanks (10th). 78 Arctic Terns passed through (5th) with eight Black Terns (2nd) and five (20th). A Barn Owl was regular and up to nine (20th) Hobbies were noted with a pair of Peregrines (10th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See Also Wildfowl Count). There was a Great White Egret (10th) and a Marsh Harrier (18th). Some wader counts were a Grey Plover (12th), up to 44 Ringed Plovers (26th), a Whimbrel (6th), a Bar-tailed Godwit (5th) and two Turnstones (24th). Sanderling were seen (18th – 29th) with five (29th). There were ten Dunlin (26th), seven Common Sandpipers (10th), a Wood Sandpiper (5th, 6th) and a Spotted Redshank (16th – 22nd). 34 Arctic Terns passed through (5th) and Black Terns were seen between (10th – 19th) with four on the first date. A Whinchat was present (1st) and Stonechats all month.

Other Sites. Shelduck bred at Fort Henry Ponds (23rd). A pair of Mandarin Ducks were at Tinwell (10th). An Osprey was at Fort Henry (17th). Avocets and Oystercatchers were at Ketton Quarry. A Greenshank was at Quarry Farm (7th), where a Nightingale sang to (13th). Barn Owls were at Exton and a Little Owl at Braunston.

My thanks to the following for their April and May records:-

T. P. Appleton, A. & J. Biddle, J. Butcher, D. Coles, Dr. CH. Gallimore, A. Lawrence, LROS, T. Mitcham, B. Moore, C. I. Park, J. & J. Rodgers, RWN, T. Sexton, C. Vaughan, C. Warman



Cetti's warbler. Note ring on bird. P. Scott

Wildfowl Counts – April and May 2025

	Rutland Water 13.04.	Rutland Water 27.05	Eyebrook Reservoir 13.04.	Eyebrook Reservoir 25.05.
Canada Goose	116	370	11	28
Greylag Goose	142	591	15	23
Mute Swan	132	263		88
Egyptian Goose	21	20	1	9
Shelduck	12	6	2	
Mandarin Duck	9	1		
Shoveler	31	10		
Gadwall	209	367	34	39
Wigeon	14	2	7	
Mallard	294	521	56	127
Pintail	3	1		
Teal	156	5	150	1
Red-crested Pochard			1	
Pochard	24	20	1	
Tufted Duck	828	154	73	4
Goldeneye	2		5	
Goosander			1	
Little Grebe	1	7		
Great Crested Grebe	104	165	48	54
Grey Heron	4	7	1	3
Great White Egret	5	1		3
Little Egret	8	17	3	12
Cormorant	185	154	18	90
Water Rail	2	1		
Moorhen	31	18	4	
Coot	185	227	4	11
Total	2518	2928	435	1636

	Fort Henry Ponds and Rygate Lake 12.04.	Fort Henry Ponds and Rygate Lake 17.05.	Banthorpe GP 14.04.	Banthorpe GP 15.05.
Canada Goose			2	2
Barnacle Goose		1		1
Greylag Goose	8	25	8	2
Mute Swan	10	6	2	1
Egyptian Goose		1		
Shelduck		1		
Shoveler	8	5		
Gadwall	26	34		
Mallard	32	40	12	10
Teal	1	1	1	
Tufted Duck	32	19	6	2
Little Grebe	1			
Cormorant	1		1	
Moorhen	10	8	2	2
Coot	30	51	9	8
TOTAL	159	192	43	28



April to May 2025

The weather was very changeable, sunny and dry throughout most of this period. It is difficult to know how this will have affected bat behaviour, but warm, sunny conditions could have caused bats to rouse during the day, only to find few insects available during the cold nights. The unusually dry conditions may have caused dehydration in those animals that tried to forage at night. Certainly, a number of grounded found during the period came in with low body weight and quite dehydrated, as can be seen from the examples below.

As usual at this time of year, very little bat activity was recorded by members although I received casual records of bats foraging in Manton and Ketton in May, and a Common Pipistrelle was occasionally seen over my front garden in Woodland View, Oakham, SK866091. Donnie and Steve Smalley observed at least one small bat foraging in their garden on Barmstedt Drive, Oakham, SK862095, on 26 May. During night-time predator assessment surveys at Lagoon 4, Rutland Water, with thermal imaging equipment, Tim Sexton reported seeing around a hundred bats foraging low over the water surface in May. They were thought to be Daubenton's bats from their light-coloured underparts.

Grounded bats

Clipsham Road, Castle Bytham, a **Common Pipistrelle** was found on 7 April, covered in a very sticky, web-like substance, which had prevented it from flying. It was taken to Oakham vet, where the night duty vet nurses cleaned off as much as they could. It looked as though the bat's attempts to rid itself of the web had caused damage to the skin of both forearms and both its wrists were broken, which may have occurred if the bat crashed to the ground. Although in good condition and feeding well, the bat had to be euthanased.

On 27 April a female **Brown Long-eared bat** was found crawling on the ground at livery stables on Station Road, Whissendine. The bat's forearm was 39mm, but at 6.6g its weight was very low, it was thin, and its stomach was empty. The fur on its back was clumped, possibly by cat strike, and there were injuries to its lower abdomen. It was very distressed so was taken to Oakham vet for euthanasia. I have heard that these clumped areas of fur can be swabbed and tested for DNA in the saliva of the responsible animal, which may tell if a cat (or other animal) caused the bite.

A male **Soprano Pipistrelle**, rescued near a property off Barnsdale Avenue as an apparently non-flying juvenile in July 2024, had been in care ever since that time for a variety of reasons. These included his very low weight on admission (around 3.6g), the difficulty of ensuring he could fly well enough to feed himself, and the frequent recurrence of unsuitably wet, cold conditions in summer and autumn of 2024. While I was not doing any bat care from November to April, this male was given flight training in a Staffordshire bat flight cage and developed enough strength and stamina to be considered ready for release. I released him at Barnsdale Avenue on 1 June, and was thrilled to see him fly

off at speed towards the property where he was found, as though he knew exactly where he was going. At the same time other Soprano Pipistrelles appeared and were foraging among the Avenue trees.

A male **Soprano Pipistrelle** came out of an unlit wood-burning stove, on 6 May, in Main Street, Empingham. At 3.4g it was very thin and had soot in its fur. After a short time in care, it developed difficulty breathing, which also impacted its ease of eating mealworms. A vet at the Oakham Practice prescribed Synulox antibiotic for the possible lung infection and after a week of treatment it began to eat mealworms normally. It was released on 3 June close to trees in Empingham churchyard (SK950084), where it took off well and quickly disappeared.

An adult female **Common Pipistrelle** was found trapped inside Edith Weston Academy primary School (SK923052) on 19 May. She weighed 5.1g and as it was likely she was pregnant she was kept and fed, little and often with mealworms. She weighed 5.3g on 21 May, so was released on Weston Road, and flew off well, passing a Tawny Owl perched on a dead tree. Luckily it didn't notice her.

A second adult female **Common Pipistrelle** was found at Edith Weston Academy on 20 May, in the library, where she could have been trapped for some time. Although she was a good size with a forearm length of 33mm, she only weighed 4.1g and was very thin over the shoulders and hips. She had been taken to the Stamford vet at Great Casterton, but had died by the time I got her home.

Bat box check – Barnsdale Wood

There are around 45 bat boxes in Barnsdale Wood, which were checked by Tom Bennet and his National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project team, which I attended on 19 April. A total of 42 Soprano Pipistrelles and two male Nathusius' Pipistrelles were found. The Sopranos were not handled, and no other species were found. In Box 26 a male Nathusius' with ring number J22648 was recorded. In Box 47 the male Nathusius's ring number was J16345. This is the fifth time this bat has been found in this box, and in spring 2024 he was with a female, although mating is usually assumed to take place in autumn.

Bat box check – Berrybutts Spinney

There are 19 boxes in Berrybutts, five of which had evidence of use by bats. One box had five Sopranos in it. These boxes were only put up 13 months ago so the uptake of use by bats is good.

Bat box check – Cherry Wood

All the boxes in Cherry Wood were checked, although they have not been up long. All were empty.

Our thanks to Tom Bennet for all his work to check and maintain the boxes and to maintain the interest in the National Nathusius' Pipistrelle Project in Leicestershire and Rutland.

BOTANY

RECORDER John Rodgers

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April to May 2025.

It's not quite the start of June that the song promises, but there are lots of flowers around; verges full of **Cow Parsley** and hedges full of **Elder flowers**, following on from a good showing of **Sloe** and then **Hawthorn**. What is surprising is that if one simply relied on records received, then the Bluebells in Barnsdale, Hambleton and Burley Woods must have disappeared along with the Stitchworts and Campions that accompany them. It is important to record the common as well as the rarer plants, otherwise we will not be able to track their survival. We need to know in order to protect.

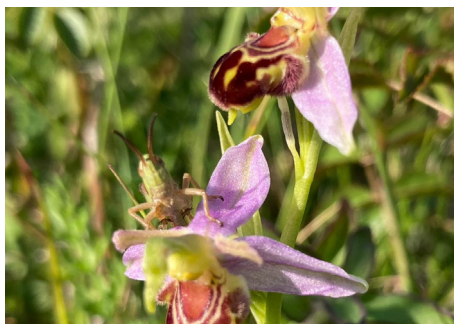
The outstanding record this month is the finding of **Alexanders** on the verge at the Ridlington end of Preston by Tim Caldecott. This plant, probably known to many from visiting North Norfolk where it is common, is a yellow flowered member of the Apiaceae (Umbelliferae) family. It is a salt-liking plant which is why it is most usually found on the coast and this attribute probably explains the fact that it is becoming common inland according to BSBI, the effect of using salt on roads in winter. Other species such as **Danish Scurvygrass** with the same attributes have spread widely in the last decades. This record is the first for Rutland. It has appeared in North-western Leicestershire but not, according to Naturespot, further east.

Orchids are beginning to flower. Dave Needham found **Common Spotted Orchids** in both in Ketton Quarry and Bloody Oaks Quarry. **Common Twayblade** was also growing at Ketton and Linda and Anthony Biddle found **Early Purple Orchid** at Pickworth. Marian Markham found **Bee Orchid** on the Oakham bypass last year and was reassured by the County Council that the plant would be protected. She found the plant growing again this year and then disaster; it was destroyed during verge cutting. There seems to be a gulf between what councillors and council officers intend and what contractors actually do. This gulf must be closed. **Verges must be protected.**

Amongst other records **Moschatel** was found by Marian Markham in the hedgerow to the west of Horn Mill in the same place as Martin Grimes found it several years ago. Linda and Anthony Biddle had a Sedge Day in early June when they found **Wood Sedge**, **Remote Sedge** and **False Fox Sedge** on a walk in Pickworth Great Wood.

Do please send in records. As I've already said, we need to know in order to protect, and we need to protect so that life on this planet can continue.

Records were received from C Baxter, L and A Biddle, T Caldicott, M Grimes, R Lemon, M Markham, T Mitcham and D Needham. Thank you to all.



Left. Bee orchid. K. Fortune Jones
Note the passenger!



Right. Common spotted orchid. C. Baxter



Left. Common twayblade. C. Baxter



Right. Early purple orchid. K. Fortune Jones

BUTTERFLIES

RECORDER Martin Quinlan

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Apologies from Martin. A full butterfly report will be in the August newsletter.

FUNGI

RECORDER K Fortune Jones
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Apologies from Kate. The "little spring" flush of fungi that often takes place at this time of the year, failed to materialise. The combination of hot dry weather just at the wrong time, prevented many from producing their fruiting bodies.

INSECTS & INVERTEBRATES

RECORDER : VACANT

April to May 2025.

April

Highlight for April (14th) were the **Hairy-footed flower bees** seen by Jenny Harris flying in and out of the old mud wall on South Street in Oakham (opposite house with thatched roof). Apparently, Oakham residents know about them, and they have been living there going about their business for years. Although nesting in hundreds (aggregations), as they do on the Oakham wall, they are solitary early spring nesting bees with one hole per female bee – hence the heavily pock- marked wall. What was maybe not surprising were the sightings in Manton and Langham of the **Common mourning bee**. This fairly uncommon bee is the cuckoo species that lays it's eggs in the nests of Hairy-footed flower bees. It will be interesting to see if anyone spots a cuckoo amongst the HFFB wall next spring!

Bees Wasps, Ants

Apart from the two mentioned above, the **Tawny mining bee** was spotted in Langham (9th) and also near Empingham (13th), an **Ashy mining bee** also 9th in Langham, a **Common wasp** Langham (23rd) and an **Ichneumon wasp** on an Uppingham house wall on 13th.

Beetles.

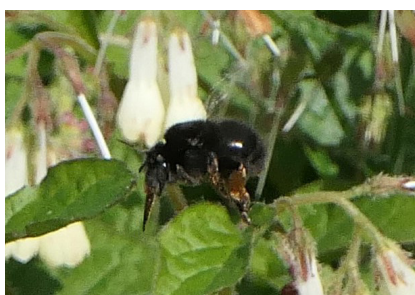
Marion Markham found an **Umbellifa longhorn beetle** (13th) in Horn Lane near Empingham, a nice record as it is uncommon in this area. Jayne Walker sent in a photograph of a **Green tiger beetle** seen at Ketton Quarry at the end of the month (30th). These large, rather striking looking beetles have been found in Ketton quarry on a few occasions.

Flies.

The **Common Drone fly**, really a stout hoverfly that looks like a honeybee and is often out and about early, was spotted outside Stoke woods and Uppingham (27th), and other more recognizable hoverflies, **The footballer** hoverfly seen in Uppingham (27th) and the **White-footed hoverfly** in Langham (30th). Bee flies are another early season starter. You can often hear them before you see their furry brown bodies with their long tongues stretched out in front of them. The most common is the **Dark edged bee fly**, seen at the end of the month (30th) in Langham.

Bugs.

A **hawthorn shield bug** was spotted in a members garden in Oakham (10th).



Above. Female Hairy-footed flower bee. C. Baxter

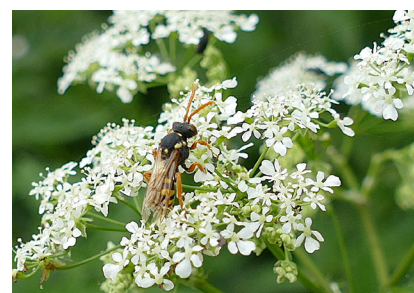
Bottom. Female Yellow-legged mining bee. C. Baxter



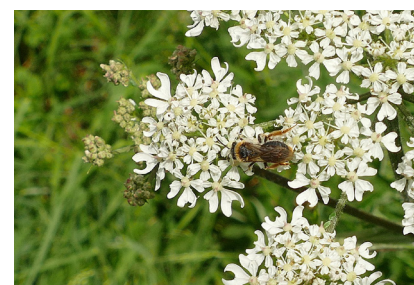
Left. Ashy mining bee. C. Baxter



Right. Early mining bee. C. Baxter



Above. Gooden's nomad bee. C. Baxter



May.

Highlights were the two Longhorn beetles found in scrubby land around the outside of Stoke woods. They are called longhorns because of their distinctive long antennae, some of them being longer than their bodies. Their larvae mostly feed on living or decayed wood and the adults feed on plants like Cow parsley, Hogweed and other umbellifers. Two species of insect found in members gardens, were the gorgeous red Lily beetle, and the Narcissus bulb fly, a type of hoverfly and a bee mimic. Their names suggest why gardeners would rather not see them in their gardens.

Bees, Wasps, Ants.

Buff-tailed bumble bee queens along with **Honeybees** were more noticeable in early May around the county (16th) with more vigilant observers noticing the **Early bumblebee** and the **Common carder bee** a bit later (24th). A **Gooden's nomad bee** was seen (25th) along the woodland edge at Stoke, feeding on cow parsley along with An **Early mining bee** and a **Yellow-legged mining bee**.

Beetles.

The red-headed **Cardinal beetle**, spotted in Langham (1st), followed by the **ladybirds**, a **14-spot** at Stoke and a **Cream spot** at Langham (7th). A **click beetle** showed up (9th) at Stoke and the **Lily beetle** (11th) in an Oakham garden. Many different species of **Soldier beetle** were turning up on the umbellifer flowers. A **Wasp beetle** was observed in Langham by Marian Markham and at the end of the month (29th and 30th) two Longhorn beetles, **Anagyptus mysticus** and **Stenocorus meridianus** were supping nectar off the flowers outside Stoke woods.

Flies.

The little black **stem borer flies** were seen from the start of May when the buttercups were blooming on the verges (3rd) and from around the 7th to the end of the month, there were **Dance flies**, **Yellow dung flies**, **Common snout**, and hoverflies including a **Tapered drone fly** seen in and around Uppingham. The beautiful but common hoverfly **Leucozona lucorum** was spotted resting on vegetation at Stoke (9th). Craneflies were evident around the edges of Stoke woods on a sunny day (9th). Not all are the usual brown-coloured craneflies that emerge from our garden lawns as "Daddy longlegs" in late summer and some can be quite colourful. The large **Ctenophora pectinicornis** was quite alarming as it crashed about in the hedgerow with its gangly legs dangling below its body. There were also several **Tiger craneflies** – not quite so large, identified by their yellow and black thorax.

Dragonflies and Damselflies.

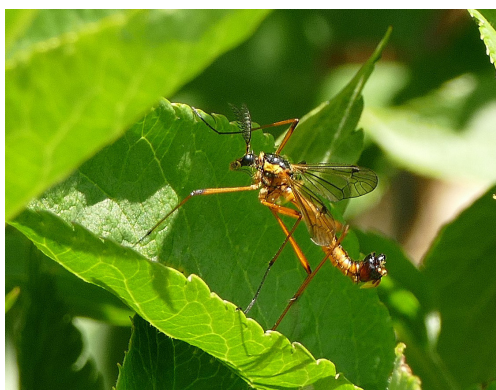
Marian Markham sent to Naturespot all the species of Damselfly recorded for this month. At Rutland water nature reserve on 26th May she recorded Azure, Red-eyed and the Blue-tailed damselflies and at Oakham canal, the Common blue damselfly.

Thankyou to all who sent records to Naturespot on the RNHS menu and to those who contributed to the RNHS Social media platform for these records.

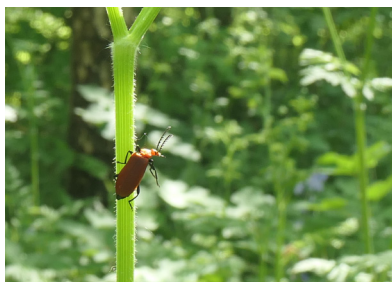


Above. One of the many species of soldier beetle. C. Baxter

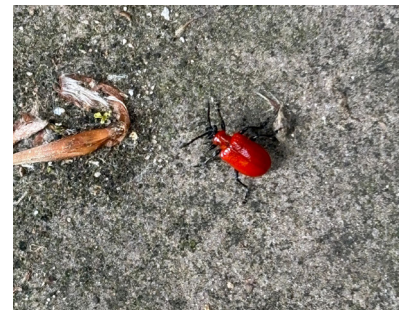
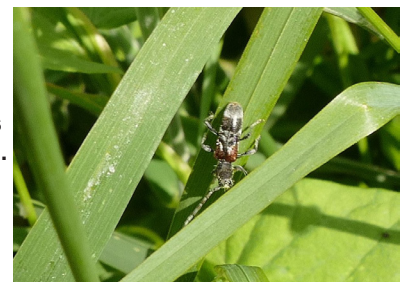
Below. Cranefly. *Ctenophora pectinicornis*. C. Baxter



Left. Red-headed cardinal beetle. C. Baxter



Right. Longhorn. *Anagyptus mysticus*. C. Baxter



Above. Lily beetle. J Rodgers.

April to May 2025

The months fly by, and there's always something to see and do! Several of you have been busy mammal spotting and sending in your sightings. The camera trap at Langham has had its usual crop of visitors, and the camera trapping project at Rutland water is continuing.

We did put out our own camera trap at Pickworth in May and managed to find a spot where we recorded not only a number of live badgers, but also Roe, Fallow and Muntjac deer. Sadly, there have been lots of badgers seen as road casualties, two in Great Casterton, two in Empingham, others at Belmesthorpe and Shacklewell. At this time of year, the adults and some young too are out and about foraging for food, and it has been so incredibly dry that the animals have been under pressure, struggling to find worms in the dry soil.

Badgers were seen regularly on the trail cam at Langham, in May but not during April.

Brown hares are reported from Quarry farm Great Casterton, Pickworth, Essendine south of the river Glen, where five were seen, Walk Farm Pickworth, and on the green lane at Ridlington.

Terry Mitcham saw a group of 18 **Fallow deer** S of the River Glen in Essendine in April, and we recorded some at Walk Farm and Pickworth Great Wood.

There have been three reports of **Roe deer** this month. At Braunston on Brooke Road a roe was at the roadside at 8.30am one April morning, another was seen near Little Casterton and one strolled into range of our camera at Pickworth wood in May.

On our Dawn Chorus visit to Prior's Coppice, we were unnerved in the pitch blackness when a **Muntjac deer** barked loudly quite close to us. Unfortunately, the noise continued for at least 15 minutes, making distinguishing the birdsong quite difficult. Muntjac were also reported from Munday's Close Langham, Wing Grange and Stockerston road in Uppingham, and were as usual, frequent stars on the Langham garden trail camera, visiting on 19 nights during April and May.

Another star of the garden trail camera at Langham is the **Red fox**, two animals appearing on 22nd April, and a single individual on 16 occasions. One also was seen on Brooke Road, Ridlington in April as it crossed the road.

Few **Squirrels** have been reported this month, probably because they are so common that members have decided that we don't need the records. Squirrels were seen on two occasions on the trail camera at Langham during May, only once in April.

It is great that after a gap of some years we now have **Hedgehog** records coming from Barrowden, which we used to regard as hedgehog city because there were so many reports. Some years ago, the hedgehogs contracted a disease and recording became less successful, but we now have reports that there are hedgehog sightings around the village, and that gardens are linked by holes in fences. At Langham, the most regular visitor to the trail camera was a single hedgehog, seen on 8 nights in April and 12 nights in May. Though we don't live in Rutland we were excited to find droppings in our garden and recorded a hedgehog on our camera in April on two occasions. When

we tried again in May all we saw was a large brown dog, and a man mowing the lawn! (we do also have an unmowed area)

Rabbits are doing well locally. At Quarry Farm Great Casterton there are many rabbits, in several warrens. They have also been seen by several members on the verges of the Oakham bypass, at Shacklewell hollow, and on the playing field in Ridlington village.

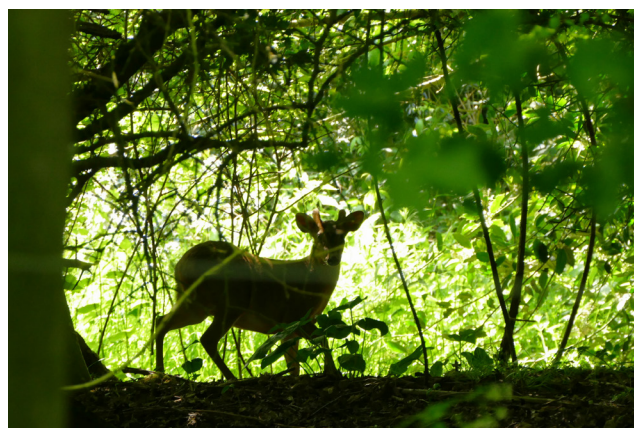
It is good that we have had two reports of **Stoats** during April and May, as there have been few this year. One animal was spotted crossing the Ridlington Road, Brooke, and another near to the junction of Uppingham road and the Oakham bypass.

Last and least (in size anyway) of members reports, a **Wood mouse** appeared on four occasions at Langham on the camera, and one was also recorded from Munday's Close Langham.

At Rutland water and Oakham Canal, the **Water voles** are still being regularly monitored, but unfortunately evidence has only been seen at two sites, Snipe hide channel and by the pollarded willows, where droppings and food piles are prominent on the vole rafts.

The camera trapping project is also continuing, still concentrating on harvest mice, using the boxes with a grid across the open front. Following the early months of the year when the boxes were placed on a stake about a metre from the ground in reedbed areas, and harvest mice were frequently found, we have been siting the boxes in lower vegetation and not getting harvest mice visiting the boxes. We then tried putting the boxes onto the ground, but this enabled **Pygmy shrews** to access the boxes, squeezing in through the holes, which of course would put off the harvest mice, so we only recorded pygmy shrews!! We are now trying to see what happens when the boxes are lower on the posts, about 40cm from the ground, in the hope that harvest mice will be able to climb up to the box, and pygmy shrews will not! Watch this space!!

Many thanks to all recorders. Dr C Gallimore, PA Harwood, Roy Lemmon, Marian Markham, T Mitcham, Jacky and John Morrell, D+S Smalley and Alison Tebbit



Muntjac. Stoke woods. C. Baxter

April to May 2025

Long spells of dry and settled weather presented several opportunities for trapping and the trap in the Lyndon meadow was operated in this period on 4 occasions. The clear skies resulted in relatively cool nights which are not the ideal conditions to induce nocturnal moth activity, but they still offered the best chance for several years of recording large numbers of spring species throughout the season. Another advantage of doing regular recording is that many species appear freshly emerged making even plain looking moths a bit easier to identify.

On the first session, on the night of 11th April there were just 20 moths of 9 species, 2 of these, **Blossom Underwing** and **Frosted Green**, were site firsts. Both of these moths have a strong southern bias in their distribution with the former classed as both locally common and an early immigrant with periodic yearly coastal influxes. Also of note was a very early **Sallow Kitten**.

Numbers had improved by 28th April with 58 moths of 23 species, including 3 records each of **Red Chestnut** and **Chocolate-tip** which together with a **Waved Umber** have been under recorded at Lyndon in recent years.

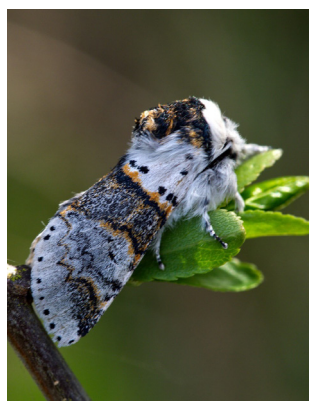
The night of 19th May had 29 species of mainly common moths although **Pale-shouldered Brocade** (4), and single records of **Scorched Carpet**, **Sandy Carpet** and **Eyed Hawk-moth** can all pass a year unrecorded.

210 moths of 49 species on the 31st May indicated that summer emergence was just around the corner. **Flame Shoulder** with 22 was the highest count with good numbers of **Latticed Heath**, **Elephant Hawk-moth** and **Poplar Hawk-moth**. The 3 species of spring emerging Minors totalled 26. **Small Clouded Brindle**, **Light Brocade**, **Orange Footman** and **Brown Silver-line** are less regular with the latter feeding exclusively on Bracken which is present but not abundant in the immediate vicinity. No battery traps were run anywhere in this period although it is hoped to run these when the nights are at their shortest.

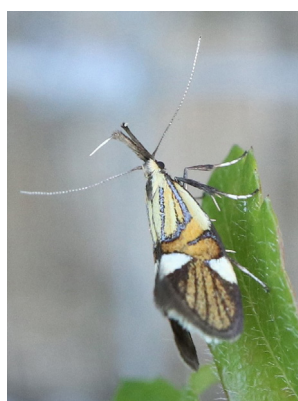
All other records received were day records. A **Nettle-tap** micro moth was seen near Martinthorpe on 27th April and another micro, **Hedge Beauty**, in the same area on 21st May. A **Mother Shipton**, **Burnet Companion** and an **Orange-spot Piercer** (micro) were all active at Merri's Meadows on 28th May together with many **Chimney Sweeper** which could also be seen flying regularly among the flowers in Lyndon meadows.

Caterpillar records of 3 species are all worth mentioning. **Scarlet Tiger** were out in numbers at 3 sites, 13 at St. Mary's Road, Manton on 4th April feeding on Green Alkanet, 6 on Cold Overton Road, Oakham on 7th April feeding on Common Comfrey and some at Wing Allotment at the end of April on Green Alkanet. There were also 3 reports of tents of **Small Eggar** larvae. These tents can sometimes be of considerable size and impossible to miss when out walking. The most impressive of these was on the old airfield site at St. George's Barracks (North Luffenham). They feed on a variety of plants, but Blackthorn is favoured. Their larval season is approximately from April to July after which they go to ground to pupate with this period usually lasting for 2-3 years and occasionally up to 7 years before emerging probably much reduced in number as a flying adult from January until March. As mentioned in my last report, because of the flight period, this attractive moth is elusive and much easier to see in its larval stage. **Spindle Ermine** webs were present again in good numbers along the main path on the south side of Eggleton reserve. Although I think less spectacular than in recent years the caterpillars were in large enough numbers to completely defoliate small trees although this does not seem to cause the trees any long-term damage.

Many thanks to the following people for submitting their records: - C Baxter, P Bennett, C Butler, T Caldicott, T Collins, R Edwards, K Fortune-Jones, C Howat, T Marston, J Morrell, T Sexton



Sallow kitten.
R. Edwards



Hedge beauty.
R. Edwards



Small eggar
caterpillars. T Collins



Blossom underwing.
R. Edwards



Right. Frosted green.
R. Edwards

April to May 2025

Having had no sightings from members in 2024, I am pleased to receive records from the dependable Tim Caldecott, and from our RNHS Madam Chairman, (including her title of Fieldfare editor). Thank you to both!

As expected, at this time of the season, only NYMPHS are found and recorded.

Bush Crickets

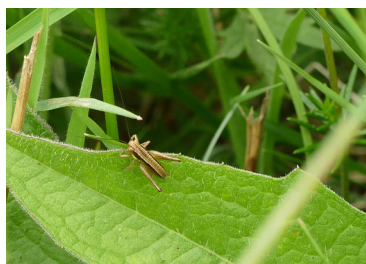
Dark Bush Cricket, (*Pholidoptera griseoaptera*)

Four nymphs, observed in Cribbs Meadow, on 17 May 2025. SK899188. New site,

Five nymphs, observed in the grassy verge, at Luffenham Road, Barrowden, 30 May 2025. SK947006. New site.

Roesel's Bush Cricket, (*Roeseliana roeselii*)

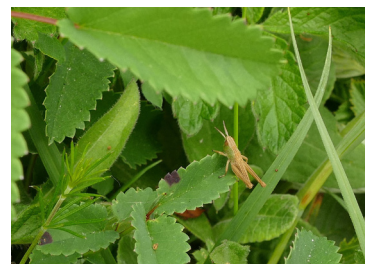
One nymph, observed in the Gwash Valley. Martinsthorpe, SK874046, 1 May 2025. Regular site.



**Roesels bush cricket nymph.
C. Baxter**



**Dark bush cricket nymph. C
Baxter**



**Meadow grasshopper nymph.
C. Baxter**

Speckled Bush Cricket, (*Leptophyes punctatissima*)

One nymph, observed in the famous Wing village Allotment. SK889028, May 18 2025, Regular site.

Grasshoppers

Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, (*Chorthippus albomarginatus*)

One nymph observed, Chater valley. Martinsthorpe. SK868041, 16 May 2025. Regular site.

Meadow Grasshopper, (*Chorthippus parallelus*)

Four nymphs, observed on the famous Wing village Allotment, SK889028, 22 May 2025. Regular site.

Tim Caldicott and Carolyn Baxter: Many thanks for your reports.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday 26th April. A visit to Barnack National Nature Reserve to see the Pasque flowers.

Barnack Hills and Holes is a 50-acre site of hummocky limestone grassland which was once the site of a medieval limestone quarry. Because of its national importance as a wildlife site, in 1976 it became a National Nature Reserve and then in 2002 it was designated a Special Area for Conservation (SAC). The site is now managed jointly by volunteers, Natural England and the Langdyke Trust.

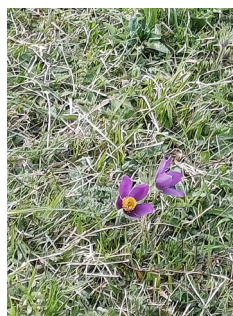
The day promised to be warm, but there was cloud overhead as ten members met in the car park to start our sortie into the reserve. Late April to early May is usually the peak time to find the beautiful, some would say "blowsy", purple/blue Pasque flowers we had come to see, and we were not disappointed. Many of the flowers clustered together in groups, were situated on the warmer, sunnier sides of the hummocks which were fenced off to stop people from trampling over the site. Sadly, Pasque flowers

are now very rare to see in the wild, so to see them still hanging on in good numbers, so very close to Rutland is exceptional and well worth the visit at this time of year. Keeping to the paths, we found yellow Cowslips either side, flowering profusely in patches, along with the odd pink spike of an Early purple orchid dotted amongst the other spring flowering plants. (A chart of all the species we found and heard is below). Throughout the two-hour walk we could hear the spring chorus of birdsong flowing all around us with the garbled song of the Garden warbler taking centre stage. In fact, we noted down more species of birdsong than flowering plants on our walk thanks to the finely tuned ears of Duncan Ball.

Dave Needham had been to have a look around the reserve the previous week and saw the Green hairstreak butterfly flying near a crab apple tree on the reserve. As this uncommon butterfly has been recorded here in the

past, we were all very keen to spot it for ourselves, but the weather as so often, got the better of us with persistent cloud cover for most of the morning, so we didn't see very much insect life in flight at all. One little metallic blue insect crawling amongst the low growing vegetation, did catch our attention though – a very lively little Blue shieldbug.

After some minutes crawling from one hand to another to get a proper identification, we eventually let it go, to bury itself to safety in the undergrowth. Just as we finished our walk, a Green-veined butterfly and an Orange tip fluttered past in the car park just as the clouds parted and the sun came out.



Left
Pasque
flowers.



Right.
Cowslips.



Left. Blue
shieldbug.



Right. Early
purple
orchid.

Birds	Plants	Mammals
Chiff-chaff	Hairy violet	1 Rabbit (many burrows)
Song thrush	Cowslips	Molehills
Garden warbler	Dandelion	Muntjac
Carriion crow	Germander speedwell	
Blackbird	Pasqueflower	Insects
Robin	Salad burnet	Bee fly
Mistle thrush	Early purple orchid	Blue shieldbug
Greenfinch	Violet sp.	Meadow ants
Whitethroat	Last year's Autumn gentian	
Great tit	Garlic mustard	Others
Skylark	Bulbous buttercup	Turkeytail fungi
Woodpigeon	Ground ivy	Silver birch
Jackdaw	Cleavers	
Red kite	Common valerian (not in flower)	
Magpie	Early forget-me-not	
Yellow hammer		
Chaffinch		
Wren		

Saturday May 25th Dawn chorus in Priors Coppice

It was dark at 3.15am when the alarm went off!! However, we had arranged to meet with the others at 4.15, so we had to get up and have a drink before setting off for Prior's Coppice at 3.45. Dressed in warm clothing and armed with coffee, binoculars, camera, head torches, folding chairs and pen and paper we climbed into the car, trying to be quiet so not to wake the neighbours. There was a surprising amount of traffic as we drove to Oakham, where the first snag of the day occurred – we approached the level crossing, to find a large notice saying that it was closed! The earlier diversion sign had been knocked over, so wasn't visible. Luckily for us we were able to cross on the Brooke road crossing. Other prospective dawn chorusers (Donnie and Steve) were less fortunate as, when they tried to take the same diversion a few minutes later, they found that it too was closed, meaning that if they had taken the longer diversion they would have been too late to join us before the first songs had been recorded, so they had got up very early for no benefit!!

As we drove we could see that the sky in the east was looking pink, indicating that the dawn would break soon. The sky was very clear, and temperature 7 degrees, warmer than we had feared. At Prior's Coppice we found two intrepid members waiting for us, and shortly afterwards were joined by our Chairman. As we entered through the

little gate at 4.15am we heard our first bird, all ready in good song – a song thrush, which continued to sing as we walked down the ride towards the edge of the woodland. We settled ourselves down with chairs, and sat watching the sky and trees around, listening for the next bird. We didn't wait long before a robin began to sing, a carrion crow cawed, then a tawny owl hooted and a muntjac began to bark loudly quite close to us. The barking continued for at least 20 minutes, making identifying other songsters extremely difficult. Bluetits and great tits soon joined the chorus of thrushes, and we noted each down as they began to sing, and by 5.00am the chorus was peaking. Just after 5.00am we decided that the song might be louder further into the wood, so set off to walk. We soon heard warblers, after the first chiff chiff then blackcaps, garden warblers and finally willow warblers joined the cacophony of birdsong. As we continued we heard the chip chip of a great spotted woodpecker, a chaffinch and as we continued to walk around the wood a raven cronked and flew over us. At one point as we passed close to the east edge of the wood, the newly risen sun shone redly through the trees, lighting up the branches and making them glow with an orange light. As we walked we spotted flowering yellow archangel, ladysmock, bugle, bluebells, greater stitchwort, woodruff, pink campion, primroses, dog's mercury, sedges

and speedwell (unidentified) and at one point a bunch of King Alfred's cakes on a tree trunk.
We were all(well most of us) pleased that we had made the effort to get up and experience the beautiful dawn

chorus, our first time at Prior's Coppice. So sorry that we were down by two members, who had unfortunately made the effort in vain – but there's always next year!
Linda and Anthony Biddle.

Species	Time song commenced
Song thrush	4.12am
Robin	4.15
Carrion crow	4.17
Pheasant	4.20
Muntjac barking	4.21
Blackbird	4.25
Woodpigeon	4.28
Tawny Owl	4.30
Chiff chaff	4.35
Wren	4.36
Bluetit	4.55
Great tit	4.55 Peak of song
Black cap	4.58
Garden warbler	5.03
Willow warbler	5.14
Chaffinch	5.20
Great spotted woodpecker	5.20
Raven	5.55

Saturday 17th May 2025. Cribbs meadow National Nature Reserve.

The day began overcast with a chilly easterly wind when ten members gathered at Cribb's Meadow National Nature Reserve. Owned by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, the site is bisected by a disused railway into the larger North Meadow and smaller South Meadow. The species-rich grassland habitat is typical of lowland hay meadows of the area that developed on fine clay soils left behind after the last Ice Age.

We entered the reserve on the south side of the embankment, and using the newly repaired steps began our walk in North Meadow. Our first records were of **Gorse** along the embankment, **Wood Avens**, **Oxeye Daisy**, **Herb-Robert** and **Wild Strawberry**.

Cribb's Meadow is one of the last few sites in the two counties where **Green-winged Orchids** can be seen in May. This year we found that the very unusual weather, unexpectedly dry with sunny days and chilly nights, had brought the orchids out early and we struggled to find a few still-recognisable flower spikes, though on some we could

just make out the green stripes that give the species its name. Indeed, even the **Common Spotted-orchids** were already coming into flower unusually early. However, there were still masses of **Cowslips**, that love this moist clay soil, in flower but most other typical hay-meadow plants teased us to identify them by their leaves and unopened flowers alone. These included **Meadowsweet**, **Meadow Buttercup**, **Glaucous Sedge**, **Common Bird's-foot-trefoil**, **Lady's Bedstraw**, **Meadow Vetchling**, **Quaking-grass**, **Pignut** (the food plant of the dainty Chimney Sweeper moth), **Yellow-rattle** and **Great Burnet**. The strange little fern of undisturbed old meadows, **Adder's-tongue**, was noted to be particularly small this year, but several already had their distinctive, spore-bearing 'tongue'. Later, **Water Avens** was found in damp spots in South Meadow, where a few plants had thrived in the wetter conditions of 2024. In South Meadow we also added **Red Clover** and six spikes of **Twayblade** beginning to come into flower.



Dryad's saddle. C. Baxter



Green-winged orchid. A. Biddle



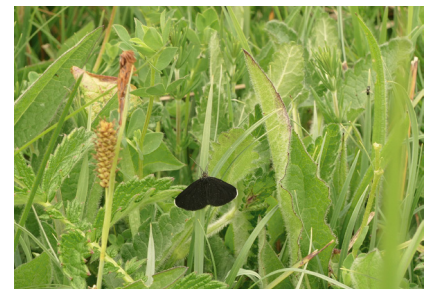
Adder's-tongue fern. C. Baxter



Six-spot burnet caterpillar.



Six-spot burnet pupa.



Chimney sweeper moth

Throughout our walk, the reserve embankment and boundary hedges were full of spring birdsong, with **Chiffchaff** a constant background, but also **Whitethroat, Wren, Chaffinch, Willow Warbler, Robin, Blackbird, Blackcap and Song Thrush**. **Kestrel and Buzzard** were seen.

Insects included one **Chimney Sweeper moth**, **Cochylimorpha straminea** (a micro moth), **Common Carpet moth**, **Six-spot Burnet caterpillars**, while **Large** and **Small White butterflies** appeared when the sun came out later. Tiny **Roesel's Bush Cricket nymphs** were found by some sharp-eyed members, and cuckoo-spit, although

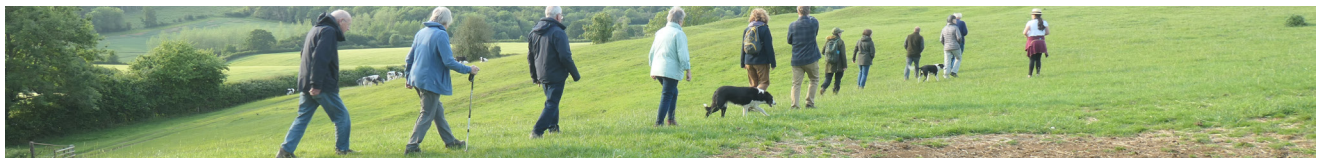
the species of the exact **frog-hopper** responsible was not identified.

Last, but no less interesting, a large **Dryad's Saddle fungus** was found at the bottom of the bank on the south side of the old railway line.

It was an enjoyable, though initially chilly, visit to an important nature reserve. So absorbed were we in identifying the multitude of insect life and familiar, though currently not flowering plants that we didn't get very far in two hours, but it warmed up towards the end, and was a strong reminder to go back in June and July to enjoy the full glory of this wonderful site.

Jenny Harris

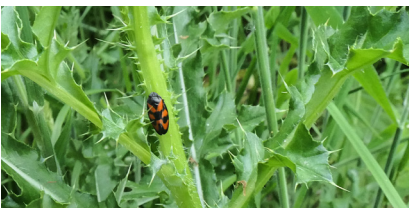
Wednesday 4th June 2025. Evening walk round Beaumont Chase Farm with Joe Nourish.



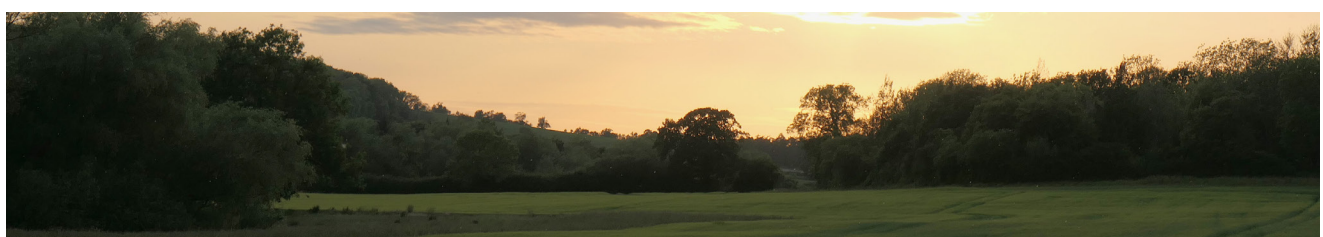
It was seven o'clock in the evening and the weather was cloudy and cool. There were thirteen of us, not including Joe's sheepdog who gladly accompanied us, on our walk from Joe's farmhouse down the valley towards Wardley woods.



We skirted round the edge of the wood towards one of Joe's fields, where we found an interesting little "nature reserve" full of emerging flowers, with Yellow rattle, Pignut and Tormentil already in flower.



Some of the trees on Joe's farm are many hundreds of years old. A huge gnarled Sweet chestnut tree took our attention for some time. After what seemed like a long haul back up the valley to the house, our host rounded off a superb evening walk with tea and biscuits overlooking the valley as sunset swept in, and a tawny owl began to hoot in the distance. Our thanks to Joe for hosting a delightful evening of companionship around his farm at Beaumont Chase.

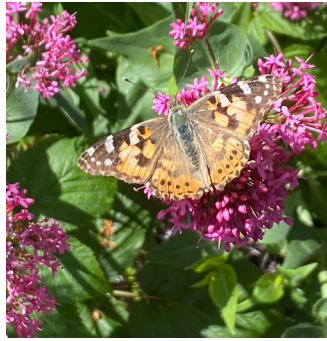


Caught on Camera!

Below are some photos of the last two months shared by members on our social media app.



Orange tip butterfly. Oakham canal.
13th May. P. Scott



Painted lady butterfly. 25th
May. Exton J Walker



Small heath butterfly. 23rd May.
Ketton quarry. P. Scott



24th April. Pickworth
woods. L. Biddle



Kestrel. Rutland. 26th April. P. Scott



Large red damselfly. 13th
May Oakham canal. P. Scott.

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Fieldfare is published five times a year. It is free to
members and available online or printed.

Printed at Lonsdale Direct. Telephone 01933 228855

RNHS is a Registered Charity: Number 514693
