



Look out for one of these!
See page 13. Photo, David Cotter

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A Happy New Year to everyone, and we look forward to the new season. We have a full and interesting programme of events for you all to enjoy in the coming year.

November and December were very strange; Primroses flowered in Pickworth Woods, together with Musk Thistles, White Campion and Centaury; Hazel catkins released pollen. The animals must be very confused too! However, there is a lot of winter still to come, and a cold spell will come as an unpleasant shock to us all.

A huge 'Welcome' to Wild Futures members, receiving this their first edition of *Fieldfare*, and we hope that together we shall be able to achieve more than we could do separately!

NOTE Record cards – reproduced on page 18 for photocopying (if you are not sending records electronically).

Retiring recorders

Lepidoptera – Butterflies

After 5 years of recording **Butterflies** in Rutland very successfully, and leading several field trips, **Alistair Lawrence** has decided to step down. He has been asked to carry out other interesting recording tasks, and feels he is ready for a different challenge. We are very grateful for all his hard work, and his regular reports on species seen. Recent years have seen interesting developments, the rise of the Marbled White for example has been charted, and records show how numbers and distribution have developed.

Membership subscription

Thank you to everyone who has already sent in their subscription (which includes those who pay by standing order). However, a number of people have not yet paid their subscription. November's Fieldfare came with a Membership Subscription form on a separate sheet of paper. Please use this if you still have it, or just send your details with your subscription to me as soon as possible.

Margaret Conner,
Treasurer/Membership
(details see page 20)

We wish Alistair success in his new ventures, and look forward to seeing him at our future events.

Lepidoptera – Moths

Jean and Ron Harvey together began entomological recording in 1989, working with the previous recorder Monty Tyler for one year before they took over in 1990. Until that time all entomological reports were recorded by Monty under one heading, including moths, butterflies, dragonflies, bees, wasps, etc. Jean and Ron continued as entomological recorders for many years, and gradually the different groups were split off. Jean took over butterflies and moths, then handed over Butterfly recording to Alistair in 2011, and has continued as Moth recorder since then.

Ron and Jean have done a fantastic job, recording reliably, carrying out trapping and identification and ensuring that our records are forwarded to vice-county and national bodies for wider use. It is a hugely complicated job, when there are as many species of moth and micromoth as there are (2239 as far as I can find out from the internet!). 25 years is a very long time to produce reports and file records. The Society owes a huge debt of gratitude to them both, and we thank them sincerely for all they have done. We wish them well for the future, and hope to see them at our meetings during the coming years.

Jean also wanted to express thanks to **Ron Followes**, who has been trapping and identifying moths for years, and sending on his findings to the Society; we are truly grateful to him.

Welcome to our new Recorders

New Butterfly Recorder

The Society is fortunate that **Richard Brown** has kindly volunteered to take on recording the **Butterflies**, and we thank him for this and hope he will enjoy the experience.

New Moth Recorder

We are also lucky that **Paul Bennett** has volunteered to take over the **Moths**. He has been moth trapping with Ron Followes, and therefore has some knowledge of the identification of species, and is willing to continue the work of recording moths. We hope that Ron will also continue to send in his records and assist Paul in identification, and that Paul too will find the work rewarding and fascinating.

We would also like to thank **Alistair** and **Jean**, **Dave Needham** and **Adrian Russell** for offering their assistance and knowledge to Richard and Paul as they begin the task.

Linda Biddle, *Chairman*

Photographers at the AGM

Hello to everyone who photographs wildlife and nature, sunsets and scenes, we as a Society would like your help to give our meeting on the 1st March a really local flavour. We are not looking for anyone to give a talk, we would just like a few photos to share at the meeting.

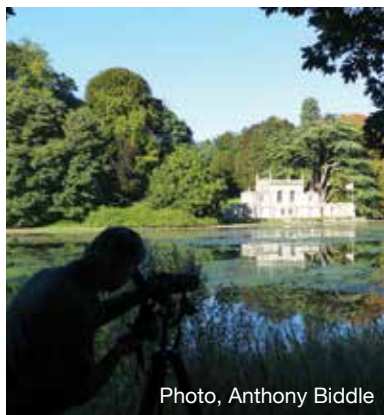
The photos can be of any topic **relevant to the Natural History Society** and preferably locally based.

If you could send these to me by email I will put together a presentation for the evening. It would be of great benefit to have some background information on the photos. Please limit photographs to six per person, which should give us a good selection. We are not looking for absolute perfection and there are no prizes on offer, in fact as we saw with Steve Houghton in December last year, some of the best results come with no interference from Photoshop.

So please do support the evening with your contribution and please come along on the night to view the results. The AGM is always a quick process and your attendance will further support the Society.

If you are unsure about participating and would like to talk this through, please do get in touch. My phone number and email address can be found on page 20.

Peter Scott, *Website Editor*



Photo, Anthony Biddle

DIARY DATES

RNHS FIELD TRIPS

Full details of all these events can be found on our website at www.rnhs.org.uk. If the weather is bad, please call the 'Queries' phone number in case of cancellation, or check the website.

Sunday February 21, 10.00 am

Winter water birds at Rutland Water

Led by Lloyd Park of LRWT. Meet at Egleton Birdwatching Centre (OS SK 877 073). It can be very cold by Rutland Water, remember warm clothes and waterproof boots. Normal charges apply.
Queries: Ann Tomlinson, 01780 721622

Saturday March 26, 7.30 pm

Astronomy evening

At Egleton Birdwatching Centre car park, with David Conner and Melton Astronomical Society (OS SK 877 073).
Contact and queries: David Conner 01664 454532

Saturday 16 April, 10.00 am

Tortoiseshell Wood

On the South Witham to Castle Bytham road (OS SK 963 197). To be led by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the visit to Tortoiseshell Wood involves crossing traditionally managed meadows to get to this SSSI wood with rich, varied ground flora (possibly Herb Paris, see left). Queries: Hendrina Ellis 01780 482048



RNHS EVENING MEETINGS

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

Tuesday February 2, 7.30 pm

Meadowland

By Michael Jeeves, Head of Conservation with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, an illustrated talk on this important aspect of the countryside.

Tuesday March 1, 7.30 pm

AGM and photography evening

The AGM (always short!) will be followed by an evening for RNHS members to show their photography skills. We are asking members to submit a few slides to make up a slide show (not giving a formal talk), and we hope as many members as possible will get involved. You can pick your own topic so long as it is Rutland related. (See page 2 for more information.) Contact Peter Scott, details page 20.

Tuesday April 5, 7.30 pm

Mammals in Rutland

An illustrated talk by Dr Helen O'Brien, the VC55 (Leicestershire and Rutland) Recorder for Mammals.

LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST, RUTLAND GROUP

For events in Leicestershire and Rutland see www.lrw.org.uk or phone 0116 262 9968. The venue for Rutland Group indoor events is now the Volunteer Training Centre, Hambledon Road, LE15 8AD. Entry £1.

Monday February 15, 7.30 pm

The Brazilian Pantanal

Our very own Dave Needham is giving an illustrated talk on the world's largest wetland, the Brazilian Pantanal, located in the heart of Brazil and Bolivia.

Monday March 21, 7.30 pm

Nene Washes Nature Reserve

RSPB Nene Washes Site Manager Charlie Kitchin will talk about this wetland nature reserve noted for wildfowl, wading birds, owls, harriers and red kite.

See over for Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust events

LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST, BOURNE GROUP

For details of LWT events, see www.lincstrust.org.uk, or phone 01507 526677 in office hours. Bourne Group events are held at the Methodist Church Hall, Bourne.

Friday February 19, 7.30 pm **In search of nature – at home and abroad**

Terry Barnatt talks about his encounters with Camera and Sound Recorder in a variety of habitats and environments in Britain and Europe.

Friday March 18, 7.30 pm **Dragonflies: Ancient aerial predators**

Mick and Sue Parfitt of the British Dragonfly Society provide an insight into this ancient group of insects, their complex life cycles, habitats and conservation.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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November 2015

Atmospheric pressure and wind Pressures were high at the beginning of the month, the month's highest was on the 1st and after that pressures were generally both low and variable, i.e. a cyclonic month. Winds this month were much easier to summarise; after a quiet start on the 1st–4th, winds were S–W for the rest of the month apart from the 21st and 22nd, when they were NW–N, and this coincided with low temperatures, see below.

Temperature This was a warm November, the overall mean at 9.42 °C was the highest in the decade 2006–2015, well above 2011 at 9.11 °C. Both the mean minimum and the mean maximum were also first in the decade, in both cases above 2011. The highest daytime maximum was 17.0 °C on the 1st, 4th and 9th, and the lowest night-time minimum was –3.1 °C on the 20th–21st and then –1.1 °C on the following night.

Rainfall The total here was 58.4 mm (2.3 inches) which equates to 101% of my long-term mean of 25 years. There were 10 days with no recorded rainfall and quantities when it did rain were small, averaging out at 2.9 mm or about 1/10th of an inch per day.

December 2015

Atmospheric pressure and wind Pressure varied between 1005 and 1024 mb during the month, i.e. there were neither remarkable lows nor highs and most pressures were nearer the middle of that band. However the month was notable for a series of south-westerly gales which gave some high wind speeds. The highest I recorded, though by no means the highest of the month, was 26 knots at 09.00 hours on the 30th. All wind directions were consistently between south and west.

Temperature This was a very warm December and, while I have no national figures to hand, almost certainly the warmest December since records began in 1659.

Here the mean minimum was 6.37 °C, the highest in the decade 2006–2015 and well above the next highest, 2006 (3.4 °C) – and an interesting contrast with the December mean in 2010 which was –2.93 °C. This month there was only one air frost, –0.9 °C on the 30th/31st.

The mean maximum was 12.55 °C, with December 2013 second at 9.39 °C. The highest daytime maximum I recorded was 15.6 °C on the 19th, the highest I have ever recorded in December and slightly higher than the 15.4 °C recorded on an unspecified day in December 1974 at RAF Wittering.

Rainfall Here I recorded 60.2 mm (2.37 inches), which is 120% of my long-term mean. The south-westerly gales referred to above brought considerable flooding to NW England and Scotland, and at one site in the Lakes about 13.5 inches fell in 24 hours, very roughly half our annual rainfall!

Rainfall 2015

A total of 525.8 mm (20.7 inches), which is 86.5% of my LTM of 25 years.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore

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E-mail: chasgall@hotmail.com*

November/December 2015

Not many amphibian records are expected in these two months, but the mild winter has meant that **Common Toads** have been about in both months and road casualties were reported on November 30th in Wing and December 4th in Ridlington. In my cellar in Wing both species of newt were present in both months. At least three different individual **Great Crested Newts** were present on four occasions and at least two **Smooth Newts** on three occasions. On December 15th four newts were preparing for Christmas.

My thanks to T Caldicott for his record.

BIRDS

RECORDER Terry Mitcham

*30 Sutherland Way, Stamford PE9 2TB. Telephone: 01780 751268
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November/December 2015

A late **Ring Ouzel** was perhaps the surprise of these months as the reservoirs attracted and held a variety of the usual winter visitors including all five **Grebes** and **Great Northern Divers**. There were good numbers of dabbling ducks and **Tufted Ducks** with **Goldeneye** increasing well by December. **Great White Egrets** increased to three at Rutland Water, where a **Short-eared Owl** and a pair of **Stonechats** provided some interest. Mild weather did not encourage a great influx of birds into gardens, with **Blackcaps** and **Bramblings** the only notable species.

Please continue to submit paper records on standard slips – available from me at indoor meetings, or from our website, or photocopy your own using page 18.

My thanks to the following for their records: V Arnold, P Bennett, A & L Biddle, T Caldicott, A & J Comber, Dr C H Gallimore, M & G Griffin, P Langston, LROS, R Lemmon, I Misselbrook, T Mitcham, B Moore, D Needham, J S & J Rodgers, P Rudkin, RWNR, M & A Thorp, L Worrall.

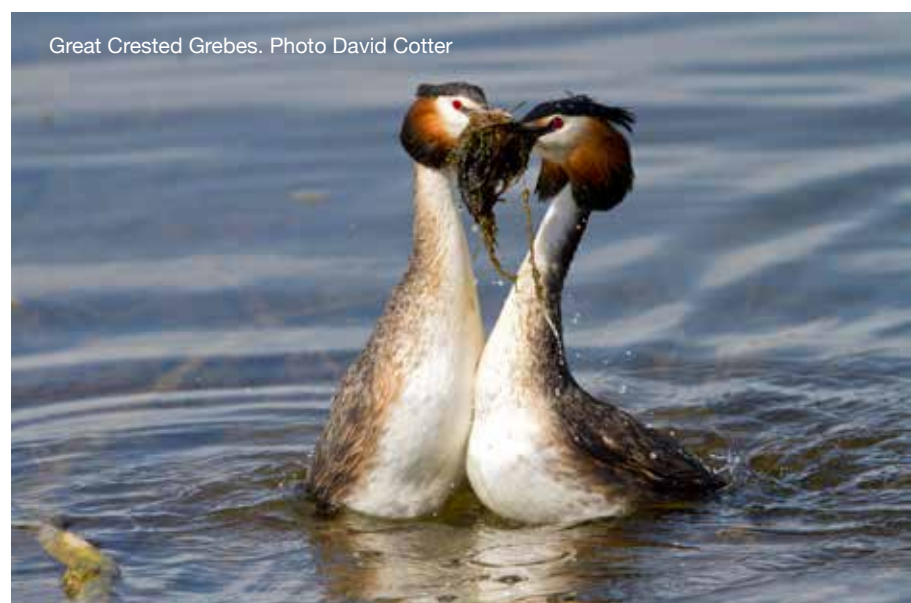
Abbreviations and map references are given in the *Annual Report 2014*, on page 72 and the inside back cover.

See also Wildfowl counts on page 8.

Whooper Swan	Four were at EBR on 24.11.
Pink-footed Goose	Nine flew NE at Greet on 27.11 and a juv was at EBR on 18-20.12.
Egyptian Goose	Two were at LFP on 08.11 and 28.12, and in Ext Park there were five on 20.12.
Red-crested Pochard	A female was at FHP on 06.11, when there were 16 at RW. Single males were at EBR on 20.11 and RW on 24.11.
Scaup	Up to three were at RW between 22.11 and 07.12.
Smew	A redhead at RW on 24.11 was the earliest record, with a pair irregularly from 01.12 to the end of the month. A male was at EBR on 26-27.11 with nos increasing to five redheads and two males by 29.12.
Red-breasted Merganser	A female was at EBR on 31.12.
Goosander	Singles were at RW on 14.11 and EBR on 20.11, with four on Rygate Lake in Ext Park on 04.12. A female flew over LFP on 07.12, with five over on 09.12 and one on 20.12.
Grey Partridge	There was a covey of 11 on a fallow field north of GtCast on 09.12.
Great Northern Diver	A single was at RW from 15.11 to 05.12, with three from 08.12 and four from 13.12 to the end of the month. Most sightings were in the Whit/Dam area.
Little Egret	Away from the reservoirs there were singles at Belm on 17.12 and LFP on 26.12.
Great White Egret	Present at RWEg throughout both months with three noted on 12.12.
Little Grebe	Numbers at FHP peaked at 20 on 06.12.

Red-necked Grebe	One remained at RWNA from 06.11 into 2016.
Slavonian Grebe	Present at RWNA from 06–13.12 with a max of three on 13.12. One was at EBR from 20.11 to the end of Dec.
Black-necked Grebe	A pair remained in RWNA throughout both months.
Sparrowhawk	There were urban records from Oakham and Stamford.
Kestrel	Records of hunting birds were received from an encouraging eight well-distributed sites.
Peregrine	One flew over Leigh on 08.12. A juvenile was at RWEg on 14.11 and 11.12, with a second bird there on the latter date. A perched bird was seen near Wilds Lodge on 23.11.
Water Rail	One was calling at LFP on five dates between 25.11 and 28.12.
Moorhen	One was on a lawn in Wg on 09.12.
Golden Plover	On 15.11, there were 720 at RW and 236 at EBR. c.200 were on arable land in Ext Park on 18.11, with 70 there on 22.11. Just one was at RW on the 13.12 count.
Lapwing	There were 1324 at RW and 650 at EBR on 15.11, and 1311 at RW and 600 at EBR on 13.12.
Curlew	Eight were at RW on 15.11 and 13.12.
Black-tailed Godwit	One was at RWEg/Man Bay between 12.11 and 13.12.
Knot	Singles were at EBR on 03.11, and RW on 04.11 and 24.11.
Dunlin	Noted at both reservoirs from 15.11 to the end of Dec, with max counts of c.40 at RW on 24.11 and 30 at EBR on 27.11.
Green Sandpiper	One was at FHP on 13.11 and at RW on 15.12, with two at RWEg on 19.12.
Redshank	There were ten at RW on 15.11 and six on 13.12. One was at EBR on 13.12.
Jack Snipe	One was at RW on 13.12.
Woodcock	Three near Pilt on 18.11 were our first autumn birds. One or two were in TunnW, Westland Wood, at Leigh and near RWMan Bay between 06 and 29.12.
Snipe	20 were at RW on 15.11 and 13.12, with three at EBR on the latter date.
Mediterranean Gull	An adult was at EBR on 06.12.
Woodpigeon	A strong southerly passage was noted at Leigh in Nov, with 2500 on 12, c.1000 on 18 and c.800 on 22.
Barn Owl	November singles were at FHP on 01 and RWNorm on 02. There were December records from LFP on three dates, Rid on 26 and Bden on 31.
Little Owl	Two called near Pilt on 29.12.
Tawny Owl	One flew over the A606 near Oak on 03.11. Two or three were calling in the Pilt and Leigh areas in both months with four heard near Leigh on 22.11. Two were calling at Bden on 31.12.
Short-eared Owl	Singles were at RWEg on 10–12.11 and 13–14.12, and at EBR on 20.12.
Kingfisher	Two were at RWNorm on 02.11, with one there on 22.11.
Great Spotted Woodpecker	A regular visitor to gardens in Oak and Norm. Two were drumming near Man on 27.12.
Jackdaw	From 18.11 a large roost, probably in Glas Wood, was reported with c.5000 birds noted on the first date and 6000 through Dec. Large numbers, presumably using the same roost, were noted over Wg on 23 and 29.12.
Raven	Regular in the Leigh area in both months with 17 noted on 03.11. One or two roving birds flew over Stam, Ext Park, FHP and Pilt in Dec.
Willow Tit	One or two were noted at RWLynd/Ggorse/Man Bay, LFP and Leigh over the two months.
Marsh Tit	This species remains widespread with records from RWEg Centre, TunnW (3), DP (2) and PGW.
Long-tailed Tit	Five were in an Oak garden on 04.12, with three there on 11.12. There were flocks of 18 at RWLynd on 13.12, and 15 at RWEg on 29.12.

Chiffchaff	One was at Leigh on 17.11, one was at RW/Gorse between 8–16.12 and one at LFP from 09 to 26.12.
Blackcap	One was heard near Leigh on 03.11 and a female took biscuit crumbs on a Stam birdtable on 17.12.
Nuthatch	Noted on feeders at Norm and TunnW, where two were regular in Dec.
Ring Ouzel	A late first-winter female was at Leigh on 01.11.
Fieldfare	The largest flocks were c.400 at LFP on 01 and 03.11. 40 were at QF on 08.11. There were 140 at RWLynd on 15.11 and 100 near HM on 18.12.
Song Thrush	Our only record of autumn song came from QF on 28.12 – rather late!
Stonechat	One was at RWLynd on 09–10.11, with a female at LFP on 11 and 14.11. A pair was at RWEg from at least 15.11 to 20.12, with a male at EBR on 03.11 and a pair there from 18.12 to 20.12 and a male on 21 and 27.12.
Duncock	12 were noted going to roost in scrub at KQ on 11.11.
Grey Wagtail	Regular at FHP throughout both months with other records from RWNorm and Dam and the R.Gwash at Belm.
Pied Wagtail	60 were counted on a ploughed field near Pit on 26.12.
Water Pipit	One flew west at RWLynd on 06.11.
Chaffinch	The large roost at Leigh was observed from 01.11 with 200 birds noted regularly and c.265 present on 09.12. c.40 were noted going to roost at KQ on 11.11.
Brambling	Noted at the Leigh roost from 01.11 with a Nov max of 16 on 22.11 and a Dec max of 26 on 07.12. A female took seed in a Stam garden on 04.11, and there were two or three at EBR between 30.11 and 07.12.
Greenfinch	c.100 were at the Leigh roost on 21.12.
Goldfinch	c.50 were feeding on Knapweed at MM on 17.11. A total of c.100 were at QF on 28.12. No records of garden birds were received – presumably all are feeding on abundant wild thistle and teasel.
Siskin	Four were at PGW on 01.12, c.30 were in Alders at RWEg on 11.12, and eight were in Alders near Man Bay on 29.12.
Linnet	c.150 fed in game crops at Banthorpe GP on 04.12.
Lesser Redpoll	Between 11.11 and 28.12 many frequented game crops at LFP with a max of 120 on 20.11 and still 80 throughout Dec. Four were noted at RWEg on 20.11, five were at RWWhit on 09.12 and there were c.20 near HM on 18.12.
Common (Mealy) Redpoll	One was identified at EBR inflow on 30.11.
Common Crossbill	One called over Leigh on 09.12.
Bullfinch	A flock of nine was seen at RWLynd on 13.12. Also noted at KQ and FHP.
Reed Bunting	A female fed in a Stam garden on 04 and 06.12.



November/December 2015 Wildfowl Counts

	Rutland Water		Eyebrook		Fort Henry Ponds/Exton		Holywell Hall Lake		Banthorpe Gravel Pit	
	15.11	13.12	15.11	13.12	13.11	14.12	No count	13.12	11.11	14.12
Mute Swan	248	195	98	100	5	8		2	5	5
Pink-footed Goose	2									
Greylag Goose	1191	650	163	280				156		
Canada Goose	900	769	99	11				65		
Barnacle Goose	17	2								
Egyptian Goose	59	25						3		
Shelduck	4	11	1	1				1		
Wigeon	2406	2163	355	268	27	105		7		
Gadwall	685	516	86	81	66	82		36		
Teal	1316	739	358	591	8	34		8	36	20
Mallard	1068	822	232	217	257	207		218	2	2
Pintail	178	131		2						
Shoveler	212	49	1		15	6				
Red-crested Pochard	8	1								
Pochard	76	46	200	182	5	3				
Tufted Duck	2133	2179	1300	1449	59	55		26		
Scaup	1									
Goldeneye	89	294	36	28						
Smew		2								
Goosander	1	22						4		
Great Northern Diver	1	4								
Cormorant	213	136	42	33	1	4				
Great White Egret	2	3								
Little Egret	30	17	3	11				2	1	
Grey Heron	19	17	3	3	1	1			1	1
Little Grebe	116	76	3	2	10	19		12		
Great Crested Grebe	343	349	44	111						
Red-necked Grebe	1	1								
Slavonian Grebe	1	3		1						
Black-necked Grebe	2	2								
Water Rail	10									
Moorhen	154	102	6	5	25	19		11		
Coot	1561	1548	363	390	106	112		3		
Kingfisher		1		1						

BOTANY



RECORDER John Rodgers

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A Happy New Year to all our readers. I hope that among your New Year resolutions is one to send in records of flowering plants in 2016.

The winter continues as the autumn, mild weather and rain. A number of plants continue to flower, dandelion, daisy, sow thistle, and others have started up again, as most of us will have noticed in our gardens. There was a primrose flowering in Pickworth Great Wood just after Christmas, and Lesser Celandine, Red Campion, White Deadnettle flowers have been seen around Rutland Water, and we found Dog's Mercury on the point of flowering on the RNHS walk at Hambleton on January 10th. Dove's Foot Cranesbill and Creeping Buttercup are in flower along the Oakham bypass. The bittercress in my garden hasn't yet flowered (see November *Fieldfare*) but it will surely do so very soon. There are plenty of Hazel catkins but nobody has reported seeing the female flowers as yet.

Last year saw a total of 402 species recorded. This includes grasses, sedges and rushes as well as flowering plants. Considering the small number of people contributing, this seems a very successful total. I do hope that some more of you will think about sending in records; all contributions are welcome. It doesn't matter if they seem very ordinary and mundane; we do need to collect as much as possible about the distribution of plant life in the county. Do please look out on your walks for flowers and then send records in.

We need you!

Records received from A & L Biddle, R Edwards, M Grimes, R Lemmon, J S & J Rodgers

BUTTERFLIES

November/December 2015



RECORDER Alistair Lawrence

11 Edmonton Way, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6JE. Telephone: 01572 770492

As you may know by now, this is my last report as Butterfly Recorder and I should like to say a sincere thank you to all members and friends who have supplied me with valuable records over the past five years, and a Happy New Year to all.

Although the weather has been mild leading up to Christmas, it has also been windy and very wet which has resulted in only a handful of butterfly sightings.

A **Small Tortoiseshell** was seen in Oakham on 1 November and the last record of the year was a sighting of this species at RW Egleton on 29 December.

Peacocks have been seen more widely, with 9 at Clipsham Park Wood on 1 November and one in a Manton garden on 22 November. On 28 December one was identified in flight at Ketton Quarry.

The only report of a **Comma** received was of a singleton at RW Egleton on 25 November.

A single **Red Admiral** was seen at Wing on 9 December.

My thanks to the following contributors: T Appleton, T Caldicott, C Gallimore, A Lawrence, J Myers, D Needham, B & D Parker and S Proud.

We welcome **Richard Brown** as new Butterfly Recorder. See page 2 of this issue. Please send your records to him from January 1, 2016.

Dr Richard Brown

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MOTHS

RECORDER Jean Harvey

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November/December 2015

Despite the very mild weather for the time of year only a few records have been received for this period. On November 2nd a **Herald** was found in a house porch in Wing and was subsequently moved to a more suitable building for its hibernation.

The garden trap at Barrowden was operated a few times, but all it attracted were two moths in early November. The trap in the reed beds at Rutland Water was run four times in November and yielded 16 species with reasonable numbers of **Feathered Thorn** and **Mottled Umber**. This trap was only operated twice in December, with an **Early Moth** on the 7th, which was of note as this species usually flies in January and February. Possibly this is another sign of the weather accounting for early emergence. Other species seen in the reed beds in this final month of the year included **Mottled Umber** and **Winter Moth**.

As these are my last moth notes for *Fieldfare* after over 25 years, my husband Ron and I would like to thank all members who have sent in their sightings and given their support over this long period. As many will know, we covered all the insect groups as Entomological Recorders initially, following in the footsteps of Monty Tyler when he went to Cyprus. Since that time, other members have gradually taken over the running of other groups, leaving me latterly in charge of moths only. The time has come however, for me to wish all recorders and indeed the whole Society every success for the future and may it hold many varied and interesting sightings.

We welcome **Paul Bennett** as new Moth Recorder. See page 2 of this issue. Please send your records to him from January 1, 2016.

Paul Bennett

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ORTHOPTERA

RECORDER Phil Rudkin

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November/December 2015

The weather on the 1st November, during the late morning at 10.45 am on to the afternoon, was warm, clear, calm and dry. The national press reported: *'the hottest start to November since records began.'* This resulted in plenty of activity from three of our orthopteran species. I visited Quarry Farm, Little Casterton Road, on the 1st November, and switched on the trusty bat-detector – much to my delight, I was regaled with the stridulating of three of our Crickets. Late stridulating is always newsworthy. However, I am delighted to report that my sightings were not the last, as I received an on-line report from Martin Grimes for a very late stridulating cricket, heard on a south-facing railway bank near Aldgate, Ketton, on 12th November. Well done Martin!

Regarding the spread of the Rutland Grasshoppers and Crickets: Richard Brown has completed a remarkable job in adding the 2015 sightings onto his computer, and updating the distribution maps. Richard also informed me that our small team's hard work in covering new areas of the county in 2015 has resulted in a grand total of 26 new tetrads for the season. Thanks Richard!

The National Orthoptera Recording Scheme organisers have sent out the news that the National Orthoptera Atlas will not be published for another 2 years. 'Although considerable efforts have been made to prepare the Atlas for publication in 2015, there are some very good reasons for delaying its publication. These relate primarily to some of the excellent studies that are currently being conducted with regard to evaluating the status of some of our rarest orthopterans.' (Quote from *British Wildlife*, October 2015.)

This news could possibly be of benefit to our Society's records. Members may remember that I have been hoping for a new species to appear in Rutland. The Short-winged Conehead was the last new orthopteran, in 2007. In August this year, the BBC produced an excellent 5-minute film, on the ONE SHOW, showing the Tree Crickets, *Oecanthus pellucens*, found at Dungeness. Presented by George McGavin, with Bjorn Beckmann (from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology) bringing his expertise to the cameras. The surprise was that this was a flourishing colony: 'It is the first record for Britain of an apparently viable population of this species. The colony consisted of adult males and females as well as nymphs, indicating that the first individual(s) must have arrived at least in 2014, and laid eggs at the site.' (Quote from National Orthoptera newsletter, number 32, autumn 2015.) This news was exciting enough, but it was followed by more; during the investigation into the Tree Cricket colony, also found at the same site was a small colony of the Sickle-bearing Bush cricket, *Phaneroptera falcata*. Although not a first in Britain, it was still notable.

More exciting news has been forwarded to me, from the Orthoptera Recorder for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, Roy Frost. Roy has a contact in Northamptonshire (Dr Michael Foley), who has been searching (and more importantly) finding, Southern Oak Bush Crickets, *Meconema meridionale*. Michael has used the method of beating the branches of Maple tree species, and targeting Industrial estates in Northamptonshire, which has been successful.

Finally, the species that I have been expecting for about three years to show itself in Rutland, the Great Bush Cricket, *Tettigonia viridissima*, is also on our borders in Cambridgeshire.

All this information gives us hope that in the next two years, surely, we might have two or even three species new to our county records.

Crickets

Roesel's Bush Cricket, *Metrioptera roeselii*

14+ stridulating males found in thick grasses of the wildflower meadow. 50 yards further along the footpath, another 4 stridulating males. 1.20 pm, warm, dry. Second field, Quarry Farm, Stamford, 1st November (TF015084).

Long-winged Conehead, *Conocephalus discolor*

Two colonies: (6 and 10) stridulating males found in thick grasses, wildflower meadow. 1.25 pm, warm, dry. Second field, TF015084. At 1.50 pm, further along, near the hill pond: 4 large colonies of stridulating males, TF014084. 1st November, Quarry Farm.

Speckled Bush Cricket, *Leptophyes punctatissima*

Five stridulating males, in Hawthorn hedgerow, along the pasture field. 10.45 am, warm, dry, calm. Walk Farm, Great Casterton, 1st November, TF015113. Arriving back at the entrance, at 1.0 pm. 4 stridulating males in Hawthorn hedge, TF016108.

Six stridulating males in Ash tree, first field, Quarry Farm, 1.30 pm. Warm, dry, calm, TF018084. At 1.50 pm, 6 stridulating males in Hawthorn hedgerow, second field, Quarry Farm, TF015084.

The final report of stridulating comes from a south-facing railway bank, near Aldgate, Ketton. On the 12th November, sunny day, one stridulating male, picked up on the bat-detector, at 35 kHz, SK990045. The last stridulating for 2015!

Thank you for the reports for this period: M Grimes, D Needham, P Rudkin. And R Brown (for work on the distribution maps).

Thanks to the team for their records during season 2015. Happy New Year to all our members of RNHS!

Photo, Phil Rudkin



Part of the team in action.

OTHER INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES

RECORDER Gill Chilverton

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Quite a few people mentioned that they had seen bumble bees visiting still-flowering plants in their gardens during November and December. It was very interesting to receive records of various hymenoptera still flying so near to Christmas.

November 2015

No records.

December 2015

Hymenoptera

On the 5th a single bumble bee was seen briefly nectaring on Winter honeysuckle in Barrowden. Later in the day three bumble bees were noted on the same flowers.

Hornet *Vespa crabro*

On the 22nd a single hornet was noted flying near Fieldfare Hide at Egleton Reserve.

Red-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lapidarius*

One noted at Gibbets Gorse Wood on the 17th.

White-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus lucorum*

One noted with pollen sacs on viburnum flowers at Barrowden on the 18th.

Buff-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus terrestris*

One noted feeding on perennial wallflowers at Manton on the 18th.

Honey Bee *Apis mellifera*

Two noted on mahonia flowers in Lyndon churchyard on the 6th. One flying around a garden in Manton on the 18th.

Thank you to T Caldicott and L Worrall for these records. Also I would like to say a big thank you to anyone who has contributed to our insect records during 2015, and to wish all a Happy New Year and interesting recording in 2016.

GLOW-WORMS

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PLANT GALLS

RECORDER Roy Lemmon

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November/ December 2015

A very quiet time for plant galls as the season has now ended, although there is always the odd straggler to be found.

In October during the Society's foray at Yew Tree Avenue, Clipsham, an unusual gall was found on Meadowsweet. As it wasn't in the usual reference book a photograph was taken and circulated to British Plant Gall Society members. One or two of them had also found it, or something like it, and it was provisionally identified as a midge gall caused by *Dasineura harrisoni*. No one has yet been able to rear the insect in Britain so that a positive identification could be made and ours had an exit hole through which the adult had gone. It is known from Eastern Europe and it looks as if it might be colonizing Britain.

A visit to Merry's Meadow on the 11th November produced just 5 galls, including one by a gall fly which causes hardening of the seed heads of knapweed and is found in several other sites in the county.

Thanks to M Grimes, R Lemmon and members of the BPGS for their contributions.

November/December 2015

Thank you to all members who sent in records for 2015. Without them there would be little to report, and we rely on your observations to make *Fieldfare* a relevant publication. We also need to keep receiving your photographs (and videos where available) to adorn our notes, and add to the website!



By far the most exciting record of November and December was the confirmation of Polecats being in the area. Terry Mitcham was investigating a barn for the presence of barn owls, when he found a dead animal, photographed it, and the species was confirmed by the Vincent Wildlife Trust. Back in June we suspected that an animal dead on the A1 was a polecat, and similarly an animal seen in Pickworth Wood, so it is pleasing that at long last we can add the polecat to our list of species. Keep your eyes open for them!

An Otter was seen by a cyclist at Pilton, crossing the road in daylight in mid-November, and at Wakerley, upstream of the bridge, an adult and two cubs were seen cavorting in midstream. As usual there were many Otter footprints on the mink rafts in November, so they are still active at RW. The only Water Vole reports are of foot-

prints found on the mink rafts at Burley Fishponds, and near Badger Hide.

In early November a **Badger** was seen crossing Seaton Road Barrowden. At Langham a badger continues to visit Marian Markham's Bridge Street garden very regularly, ten visits in November, eight in December, all recorded on the trail cam. The **Fox** is even more frequently recorded, up to 3 times per night and almost every night during December. **Grey squirrels** visit in ones and twos exclusively in daylight hours. The other regular visitors are **Muntjac**, who come in ones and twos, male and female, during the hours of darkness.

Two badger road casualties were recorded from Shacklewell and one further toward Stamford on the A606. A fox was reported crossing Oakham bypass at night, and foxes were also seen near to the old Oakham canal. Grey Squirrels have been seen at Burley Road and Ashwell Road Langham, and at Pickworth and Walk Farm Plantation.

A **Stoat** was recorded at RW near Lagoon 1, and another on the track S of Leighfield Fishponds, where a **Weasel** was seen for the first time in this area.

One dead **Hedgehog** was recorded near the allotments on Wing Hill. Fresh **molehills** were recorded at Merry's Meadows, by the Gwash at Ryhall, and Clipsham Park Avenue. Three **Brown Hare** records were received; at Merry's Meadows in mid November one was seen, at Walk Farm another wandered unconcerned over pastureland, and a road casualty was found between Tickencote and Empingham Cross Roads Farm. The only **Rabbit** report received this month was from the banks of the Gwash at Ryhall, where there is much evidence of their presence, and one lone rabbit scooted hurriedly away from us as we walked.

Apart from those recorded at Langham, a Muntjac was seen behind Shallow Water Hide at RW and another was disturbed from Tunnely Wood at the end of December. **Fallow Deer** slots were found at Clipsham Park Wood, and alongside Pickworth Wood, though unusually none were seen. A **Roe Deer** was flushed from cover in Tunnely Wood at the end of December, and sadly a road casualty was at the junction of the A606 with the Hambleton Road in December.

Thank you for records from: A J Biddle, M Branston, T Caldicott, C Gallimore, M Grimes, R Lemmon, S Lister, M Markham, D Needham, P J Rudkin, L Worrall

BATS

RECORDER Jenny Harris

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September to December 2015

There were very few bat records for the last four months of the year, in spite of the mild weather for most of this period. I occasionally saw bats foraging over my own and neighbouring gardens, mostly **Common Pipistrelles**, but the last formal flight records were from Alan and Julie Comber's garden in Oakham. They recorded common pipistrelles regularly throughout September on a bat detector, with up to four bats, the last record being on 29.9. **Soprano Pipistrelles** are always infrequent in that part of Oakham, with only two records; two bats on 1.9 and a single bat on 20.9.

There were however four grounded bats in the county, three of them **Brown Long-eared**. On 7.9 a juvenile male was found trapped inside Boots the Chemist in Uppingham. Although only weighing 6.6 g, it steadfastly refused to eat, so was released among yew trees in the churchyard on Southern Terrace, Uppingham on 8.9. There is obviously a good population of brown long-eared bats in Uppingham, as another juvenile was found trapped inside Uppingham Theatre on 29.9. It only weighed 5.2 g and was noticeably thin and dehydrated. Once its weight had reached 9.3 g it was released near the theatre. Both bats flew off strongly. A male long-eared bat was found in a 'poorly condition' in South Luffenham, but was dead by the time I picked it up after work. Its weight was rather low at 6.9 g, but the cause of death was a severe wound on the right-hand side of its abdomen, possibly from cat-strike. The last grounded bat, and the last bat of the year, was an injured common pipistrelle, a male found injured in a Tixover garden. There were injuries to both wings, with finger bones exposed and slight tears in the membranes. The tears in the membranes would probably heal, but at the time of writing it does not look as though the bones are going to repair, so it may have to be put down, although it is still eating well.

Bats hibernate in cold weather, but may still be active in mild weather, especially where there are likely to be insects on the wing for them to catch. Long-eared and Natterer's bats are particularly known to be active, even at quite low temperatures, and can take advantage of small moths. If you are visiting any churches in the area look out for moth wings (where the whole body has been removed) and moist-looking droppings. I look forward to hearing your findings.

RIVERS

RECORDER David Roome

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Late news

Sadly we have to report that Sir Clifford Boulton, GCB, DL, died at Christmas.

He was President of our Society from 2001 until 2011 and will be much missed.
A more detailed tribute will be included in the next edition of *Fieldfare*.

MINUTES OF RNHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015

The Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday 3rd March 2015, at Voluntary Action Rutland, Lands End Way, Oakham, with 59 members present and the President Mr J Hanbury in the Chair.

1 Apologies

Jean Harvey and John Rodgers

2 Minutes of the previous AGM 2014

As circulated in *Fieldfare* January 2015. No comments were received. The Minutes were approved and signed.
Proposed Clive Jones, seconded Anthony Biddle.

3 Honorary Treasurer's Report and approval of accounts

Martin Grimes circulated the Society's accounts for year ending 31/12/2014, checked by George Kirk. Martin commented 'The 2014 accounts show a fall in subscriptions but the committee hopes the events and revamping of the society's website and newsletter will help retain and increase membership. There was still a surplus of £452 for the year compared with £1002 for the previous year and £720 the year before that. However, the funds remain high with a balance of £10831 which means there is no need to consider increasing subscriptions. We expect the reserves will be depleted during the current year due to activities outlined by Linda.'
Proposed by Linda Biddle, seconded by Ann Tomlinson, the Report was adopted and Mr Grimes thanked.

4 Re-appointment of Independent Examiner

Proposed by Phil Rudkin, seconded by Jenny Harris. Mr George Kirk was re-appointed.

5 Chairman's Report

I continue to be delighted by the support and enthusiasm of Committee members, all of whom have put in a great deal of time and effort in carrying out activities for the benefit of the membership. Every single member who has served on your Committee has done a tremendous job, and I thank them on your behalf.

We have had an active year, continuing to provide a full programme of activities, indoor and out, to entertain and educate our members. We began in early January walking along the peninsula at Hambleton on a cold blustery morning; followed by a fascinating evening meeting on recording dragonflies in Leicestershire and Rutland by Ian Merrill. Ian later led an outdoor meeting along the Oakham Canal where we discovered at least 8 species of dragonfly, an example of wildlife diversity within very easy reach of many of us. During February our own Tim Newton took a searching look at Beetles, and some members visited the Raptor Foundation in Cambridgeshire. Our March visit to Collyweston Great Wood was followed by a talk on the alien species bringing threats to the health of our forests. Unfortunately the late spring meant that there was little in the way of birdsong at Prior's Coppice in April, but we enjoyed the bluebells, and signs of spring. Our winter talk on the secrets of the River Nene was followed by a wonderful summer trip to Caistor, where we were treated to a look at the invertebrates found in the margins of the river, with the help of Sarah Lambert and Peter Kirby.

Our autumn evening programme began with Terry Barnatt describing and playing recordings of the songs of our native birds, together with superb photographs of each species. The September outdoor meeting was a fungal foray, led by Vin Fleming of the Bourne group Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, where we were joined by some keen non-members from Barrowden.

These are just a few of our programme of activities, ably arranged by Dawn Whitefield, who continues to work hard sorting out times, dates and details, and we are indebted to her for this.

There has been some concern among the Committee that membership has slowly fallen over the last few years, though it appears to have stabilised at around 280. When the Society was formed the membership consisted of people of all ages. I joined some years later in my twenties and at that time there were many people in their 20s, 30s and 40s. The world has changed, technology, mobile phone, internet and social media, are now the major ways of communicating. We need to create the atmosphere that encourages all age groups to join our society.

Our experienced and knowledgeable team of Recorders need to be enriched by some new and enthusiastic supporters, so that we are able to continue as a Society for another 50 years, passing on our knowledge to the next generation of naturalists.

In view of this, your Committee has been working on ways to recruit more members. They have produced new leaflets publicising the Society and encouraging new membership. *Fieldfare* has gone colourful and we hope will attract more readers. The publicity boards purchased some years ago have been updated and were used at the BIG BIOLOGY DAY at Stamford High School, where several of your committee spent the day talking to people about our activities, and making contact with other groups with similar interests in the area. The positive feedback gained at this event encourages us to plan further similar events in 2015. We are trying to raise the profile of the Society in our local community, as many people in the area are at present unaware of our activities.

Your Committee is in the process of producing a new-look website, and hope to have this up and running soon. If you have never logged on, then please do so – there will be notice of the new website in the weeks to come. Peter Scott our Website Editor has been joined by a small subcommittee overseeing progress. We are also investigating entry to other forms of media, such as Facebook and Twitter. I can almost hear some members muttering at this, but we hope that by doing so we shall be able to make contact with a wider audience without neglecting the interests and importance of our present membership.

There have been two meetings between Recorders and Committee, partly to recognise the importance of recording to the Society and conservation in general, but also to help with the introduction of a digital recording system which came into effect during 2014. There has been a mixed reception to this, some members embracing the system, others finding it difficult and preferring to continue recording on paper. We realise that the new system will take time to get used to, and expect to make some changes to it. It is heartening that our recording sheets compare closely with those of other groups sending in reports to national and international recording bodies, and so there will probably be little change to the basic idea. Please do continue to send in all your records, by whatever method – it is the RECORDS which are of value, not the method of sending them. We thank our Recorders for their continued hard work, willingness to try something different and reliable production of reports.

2014 sadly saw the loss of Sir David Davenport-Handley, our president for many years from 1981 to 2000, who was a great supporter of the society, allowing us access to Clipsham Quarry, to monitor and record the flora and fauna, and allowing us to carry out some shrub clearance where necessary. Sir David and his wife hosted RNHS social events at Clipsham Hall, very much enjoyed by members. He is greatly missed by many. The Society is grateful to his daughter Mrs Sue Thomas for continuing to allow access to this lovely quarry area. A small group of dedicated members have been working on recording flora and fauna at Clipsham for many years, and we look forward to hearing about their findings.

50th Anniversary

Now to the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Society, which is a major milestone in our history.

The Society has seen and recorded many changes since 1965. We have followed the development of Rutland Water, a major change to the local environment. Many members had campaigned against it and considered it a loss when work on the reservoir started in 1971. A momentous study of the area was published as *Before Rutland Water* in 1971, involving many hours of observation and records. However, Rutland Water filled up and the nature reserve developed. Over the years many members have volunteered on the reserve, and recorded the wonderful changes in habitat and resulting mass of species colonising the area. These species not only include many wetland birds, but as the reserve has developed, flowers, insects, mammals and a whole range of wildlife. The importance of Rutland Water as a stronghold for species to colonise the rest of the countryside is immense, in spite of initial loss of a large area of typical Rutland countryside.

There have been many occasions when, as a result of our careful monitoring and recording, we have been able to influence events, for example protection of glow-worms in the 80s and 90s. Several colonies were discovered and hence rescued from oblivion, though they are still under serious threat and need constant surveillance. We also are proud that we have been involved in monitoring the conservation verges set up by the LRWT and which we started to record in 1996 and continue to do so. These verges are under constant threat from inappropriate mowing regimes, careless implementation of council strategies, or damage by outside agencies. These blunders are seldom deliberate attempts to damage wildlife, and usually when it is pointed out that damage is being done to flora or fauna, the operatives are regretful and profess ignorance. This is of no consolation when a valuable verge, carrying an important flora and associated fauna, which cannot be replaced, is ploughed up or used as a depository for waste material, and our members need to remain vigilant. We really do need everyone to maintain a watchful eye over the environment in our area, not just the recorders and a few stalwarts of the society. During 2014 this matter was raised yet again with the Local Strategic Plan Environmental Forum, and it is hoped that the resulting changes to RCC procedures will improve the situation.

In the last 50 years, the Society recorded the decline of many birds of prey due to harmful insecticides in the 60s and 70s, but has enjoyed the recovery of some of them since the millennium, some naturally, Sparrowhawk, Peregrine Falcon, for example, and others by reintroduction – as with Red Kite and Osprey. Small birds sadly appear to be in serious decline in our area as elsewhere, and the reasons for this are complex and not yet sufficiently understood to enable their protection. Mammals too have seen cycles of rise and fall in populations.

Badgers, for example, are present now in fairly high numbers following their protection in 1971 when they were uncommon, and **Otters** are making a resurgence after almost disappearing in the 70s and 80s.

So we consider our Society to have been useful to conservation and wildlife. We have been able to record wildlife presence, its increases and declines; and ensured that these records may be used by others to further the protection of our local wildlife. We have also provided education and interest/enjoyment to members over the last 50 years, as many will be happy to tell you. We want to relaunch the Society in 2015, so that we go on doing so for many years to come. There may be changes in the way our Society operates. We have to be prepared to adapt to a changing world, which is unfortunately not always possible for the wildlife we value so highly.

As a Society we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the early members who have worked in so many ways, recording, presenting and organising activities, inspiring others to take up interest in natural history, and all those members who have unfailingly given support. The only way to honour their efforts and to ensure their lasting legacy is to continue their work, cherishing and promoting their aims and ideals, and appreciating the wonderful world of nature around us.

Jenny Harris proposed and Ann Tomlinson seconded that the Chairman's Report be adopted.

6a Election of officers

The following officers, proposed by Jenny Harris and seconded by Julie Comber, were elected en bloc:

President: Mr J Hanbury

Chairman: Mrs Linda Biddle

Honorary Treasurer: Mr Martin Grimes

Programme Secretary: Mrs Dawn Whitefield

Honorary Secretary: Mr Roy Edwards

Membership Secretary: Mrs Margaret Conner

Fieldfare Editor: Mrs Hendrina Ellis

6b Election of committee

The following committee members, proposed by Phil Rudkin and seconded by Ann Tomlinson, were elected *en bloc*: Mrs Gill Chiverton, Mrs Jenny Harris, Mr Peter Scott, Ms Jenny Rivett, Mr David Cotter.

7 Any other business

Linda Biddle outlined the events organised to celebrate the Society's 50th anniversary, including a history of the Society presented by Phil Rudkin and Dave Needham, and a Celebrity Lecture by Mike Dilger, resident naturalist at BBC's The One Show. 'All our Celebration and re-launch work costs money so next year's treasurer's report will show a loss'.

Linda announced that David Roome has been appointed Rivers Recorder.

Linda thanked Mr Hanbury for acting as Chairman and allowing the Society the privilege of access to Burley Wood.

8 Date of next AGM

Tuesday 1st March 2016

Chair Linda Biddle at the 2015 AGM with George Kirk, ex treasurer and auditor for many years.



Photo Phil Rudkin



The first walk of the year – at Hambleton Peninsula, January 10 – started grey and wet but improved to brilliant sunshine.

We saw a variety of birds including Kestrel, Goldeneye, Wigeon, Great Crested and Little Grebe, Redshank and Red Kite. Mayweed and Red Campion were in full flower, and early Dog's Mercury was coming up.



Photographs: Phil Rudkin, Roy Edwards, Linda Biddle





Eyebrook Reservoir. Photo, Peter Scott

Your 2016 membership card comes with this *Fieldfare*, or will be posted to you. The website has full details about what this entitles you to. Please note that the owners have recently withdrawn winter access to the Eyebrook Reservoir.



Burley Wood. Photo, Phil Rudkin

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Wildlife Recorders

Contact details appear at the head of their respective reports; and are also listed on our website and in the Annual Report.

Fieldfare is published six times a year and is free to members: available either as a paper copy or online.

Printed by Lonsdale Direct 01933 228855
RNHS Registered Charity Number 514693