

Autumn 2017

Volume 2 Issue 20

HAPPY 40TH ANNIVERSARY LENS



Retiring LENS Chairman Alan Heath, Founder LENS member June Crosby and LENS Life Member Norman Lewis MBE cut a cake to celebrate 40 years of LENS. A photographic exhibition sponsored by Derbyshire County Council Community Leadership Fund was displayed at Long Eaton Library, Long Eaton Town Hall and Attenborough Nature Centre. A book 'All About LENS' celebrates 40 Years of Long Eaton Natural History Society Wildlife Group.

Inside this issue:

Butterfly Conservation	2
LES Eco-day	2
DaNES Summer Ex-	2
Seller's Wood	3
Clattinger Farm	4
Attenborough The Delta	5
Forbes Hole Moths	6
Mercia Marina	9
Gang Mine	10
Clover Close Moths	12
Trent Lock & Trent Lane	13
Skylarks	15
Newstead & Linby	16
West Hallam Screen	17
Darley and Nutwood	19
Grasshoppers	
Goldcrest	21
Partridge	21
Birds about Town	21
Future events	22
Contact details	22

LENS at Rotary Club Fun Day



Glorious sunshine greeted us on the Rotary Club Fun Day. A FREE Fun Day Out for children of all ages to make the most of the Summer Holidays. All the children wanted to own a colourful dragonfly and Stuart helped them to make their own. A simple dragonfly identification quiz was also enjoyed. No-one could believe that such a lovely dragonfly spent the first five years of its life as a cryptically coloured predatory nymph at the bottom of a pond. Strange but true! A free foot massage at the end of the day was well deserved. What fun!

Wildlife
emergency call
police
08456 058058

E-mail

force.control@derbyshire.pnn.police.uk

LENS with Butterfly Conservation

[Butterfly Conservation](#) was founded in 1968 by Sir Peter Scott with the aim of saving butterflies and their habitats. LENS led a walk for the East Midlands Branch around Toton Sidings. Toton railway yards, built in 1856, were once described as the "biggest in Western Europe". As freight business declined, the sidings began to return to nature. There was much dismay among local residents when the woodland that had grown up was illegally felled in 2009. But what followed was a blooming of the sidings. With such a variety of wildflowers many different butterflies were attracted and a marbled white colony established.

Currently unmanaged, this is the proposed site for a station hub serving Nottingham and Derby as part of the new HS2 high-speed rail network. site that changes from year to year. 19 group members set out in light rain. Walking off piste to the best wildflower areas where the marbled whites fly late into the July evenings, and there they were, marble indeed, posing, frozen on the mauve knapweed flowers. This year only 7 have been counted and we saw 3 with plenty of photo-opportunity for Rod Smith our professional photographer. He got the best photographs ever! www.flickr.com/rosmith/



Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*

The larvae feed on a wide variety of grasses

Photo credit Marion Bryce

LENS at Long Eaton School Eco-Day

Just lately it has been unusual to see Stuart without a camera in his hand but yesterday was the longest I've seen him not take a photograph. We were set up at Long Eaton School with a Dragonfly Display. A collage to make, pipe cleaner dragonflies to construct, dragonfly nymphs in the micro pond dipping and a dragonfly quiz. The doors opened and I looked across to Stuart. He had disappeared amid a throng of hundreds of excited school children.

There was unprecedented interest and participation. By lunchtime we were ready to lie down but had to get ready for the afternoon's fray. We had run out of pipe cleaners!

Quickly we got out Helen's Insect Quiz and off we went again..... Perhaps I should have warned Stuart what he was in for— just back from holiday and blissfully unprepared!



Stuart Gilder with Dragonfly Mosaic at Long Eaton School Eco-Day 28 June 2017

Photo credit Marion Bryce

LENS at DANES Summer Exhibition

The first visitor to DANES summer exhibition, was a horsefly, it came by car. Soon there was a steady stream of families bugging DANES Dave Budworth, eager to find out what moths had been caught in the night-time moth watch.

One family brought in a puss moth larva which they had found in their garden. A display of live butterflies, displayed Darren Clarke's technological genius. A vivarium uniquely designed to keep the flowering plants watered but the

insects were warm and dry.

Dave Gell from Long Eaton Natural History Society Wildlife Group was kept busy on LENS 'How to make a dragon' stall.

An unusual example of a winged Roesel's bush cricket won the £5 prize on the extremely popular romp around the meadow with Darren armed with nets — The Annual Insect Hunting Expedition.



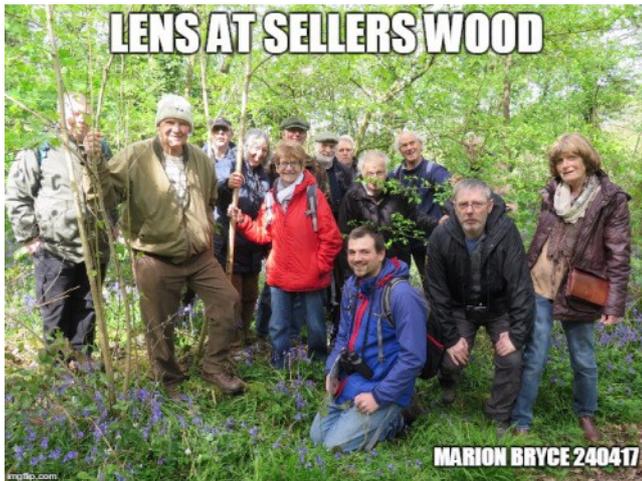
Dave Gell at Danes Summer Exhibition 23 July 2017

Photo credit Marion Bryce

www.lensweb.wordpress.com

Sellers Wood Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Reserve.

Meet At entrance -junction of Sellers Wood Drive West and Wood Link. Follow the Western Outer Loop Road A6002 to the west of Bulwell NG6 7FW Grid Ref SK524454. Leader Marion Bryce



A team of ecologists were asked to survey a wood, they visited the wood in Spring, Summer and Autumn and collated a long list of plant species and were proud to present a 30 page report on what they found. But the report was rejected. Why? They had been so busy looking down that they forgot to list the trees! Determined not to follow this example 15 LENS members set out to survey Sellers Wood which is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is a fine example of broad-leaved semi-natural woodland. We asked ourselves the question, is Sellers Wood an example of ancient woodland? The LENS team made a slow start, excited to find wood arum in flower and numerous plant species to identify and mark down on our list. The diverse vegetation contained a number of plant species characteristic of lowland ancient woodland.

Certain woodlands are known to be ancient through the study of old historical records, and observations of landscape features such as banks, ditches giving clues to previous land use. By surveying a number of proven ancient woodlands, species which are usually confined to this type of habitat can be identified. Their presence can then be used to indicate ancient woodland status in other woodlands. The indicator species chosen are usually plants because they are conspicuous and easy to identify.

Plant species associated with ancient woodland; tend to be either shade-evaders (species which complete their season's growth cycle early and die back soon after the canopy expands), or shade-tolerant species. They may be short, perennial species, with a high seed weight. Poor dispersal ability may be partly responsible for confining these species to ancient woodlands as they may have a low ability to colonise secondary woodland sites and due to specialised growth requirements may be more vulnerable and lost by habitat disturbance.

Ancient Woodland Indicator Species (AWVP). scores are the number of AWVP species present at a particular site which are accepted indicators of ancient woodland in a particular natural landscape area. The greater the number of Ancient Woodland Indicator species occurring together in a wood, the greater the probability that a woodland can be accorded this status. A high AWVP score is a reliable indication of natural diversity – it may also indicate the probability of ancient woodland. AWVP lists of species provide extremely useful tools for ecologists and conservationists in evaluating woodland habitats, the lists of indicator species vary according to natural region because local geology, soils, climate and history of land use, influence the plant species present.



Sellers Wood scored twenty five out of a total of 103 flowering plants listed. Significant AWVP indicators were bugle, wood anemone, wood sedge, remote sedge, early purple orchid and yellow archangel, honeysuckle, yellow pimpernel, wood melick, wood millet, dog's mercury, wood forget me not, three veined sandwort, hart's tongue fern, primrose, pignut, bluebell, field rose, sanicle, black bryony, wood speedwell, early dog violet as well as wild cherry and wych elm. The yew, holly and aquilegia were thought to possibly be recent introductions so making the score 22. Whether this would qualify the wood for lowland ancient wood status is not certain but it shows that there is a diverse flora as would be expected on magnesian limestone (also known as Bulwell stone). With historical research the status of lowland ancient woodland might be proven.

Before we left the woodland to the birds we noted ash and wych-elm, with an understorey of hazel and rowan; also birch and pedunculate oak with hazel and hawthorn and some intrusion by sycamore and the usual nuisance bramble. The bluebells were magnificent with wood anemone and greater stitchwort adding a Gertrude Jekyll dimension. There were also a number of well-vegetated ponds formed from the old clay pits which used to provide the clay for the nearby Richard Sankey Works which was once the best known manufacturer of earthenware flower pots in the world.

Marion Bryce 24 April 2017

May 8 Monday Snake's head fritillary –rare flowers All day 6 mile walk

Car share to Clattinger Farm, Somerford Keynes, Wiltshire

Do you remember in the old days when children used to make it their duty to visit their parents? In these more modern times the parents make it their business to visit their children to forge a relationship with their grandchildren. This being so what better place to take said grandchildren than Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Lower Moor Farm. The visitor centre is a resource for education groups and volunteers and a replica Iron Age hut is a focus for educational activities. This is how Stuart discovered this gem of a wildlife haven and he was happy to drive over 100 miles to show LENS around the site.

Lower Moor Farm opened in 2007 and is the gateway to Clattinger Farm, Oaksey Moor Farm Meadow and Sandpool nature reserves. From LMF you can explore the other reserves, a mosaic of three lakes, two brooks, ponds and wetland scrapes linked together by boardwalks, ancient hedges, woodland and meadows. The lakes were created by gravel extraction in the 1970s. First at LMF we inspected the herd of Gallo-way cattle, they had been rolling in mud, but they weren't camera shy. Then we came face to face with a woven wicker weasel. Or was it an otter? Armed with a map from the visitor centre we walked along a leafy ride frothy with ladies lace, the sun was shining, the rich moist sheltered environment was an insect fest. Bees (early, common carder and white tailed), beetles (cardinal and leaf beetles), hoverflies (drone flies, delta wing, sawflies and butterflies, mostly flying green veined, orange tips and sunning, speckled woods.



We couldn't resist the temptation to dip into Clattinger Farm at the first opportunity. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its fabulous wildflowers and is part of a Special Area of Conservation. It lies on the Thames floodplain and its hay meadows drain into the Swill Brook. It is rich in wildlife because the previous owners farmed the land traditionally without artificial fertilisers. Huge fields of short turf covered in cowslips and green winged orchids. We had to get down low to photograph the green winged petals which shone translucent with sunshine beaming through to show off the green stripes. Each green winged orchid flower is distinctive, most are shades of magenta, sometimes with a white lip, but there are also pink and white varieties. There were thousands spilling across the green turf. The yellow of the cowslips though complementary was not complimentary, nature has not yet engaged an interior decorator's advice. Tiny blue flowers of milkwort hid amongst fragrant downy plantain. A splash of palest pink flowers were our chance to see the rare marsh valerian which here flourishes in the troughs of the lynchetts.

plementary was not complimentary, nature has not yet engaged an interior decorator's advice. Tiny blue flowers of milkwort hid amongst fragrant downy plantain. A splash of palest pink flowers were our chance to see the rare marsh valerian which here flourishes in the troughs of the lynchetts.



We walked past ditch meadow and bridge meadow and also Miss Cory's. Dappled shade in a land of ground ivy, bugle, black bryony, a strange purple arum lily and autumn crocus in fruit. Traversing a sunken lane between 2 overgrown ancient hazel hedges, we came upon a convenient hide overlooking a small lake which was surrounded by the willows of wet woodland. On the lake a solitary moorhen confirmed the empty pages in the visitors book. It was warm and peaceful as we listened to willow warbler, green woodpecker, chiffchaff and blackbird. A cuckoo called summer is nearly here! Making our way back by the lake butterflies swirled past, brimstones, peacock, small tortoiseshell and holly blue. Azure damselflies ripened on lush green leaves, large red damselflies in full glory and a swirl of yellow as a broad bodied chaser perched impossibly on the very end of a thin branch. But where were the snakeshead fritillary's you ask? Gradually as we searched the meadows we realised we were too late, the show was over and a solitary snakeshead fritillary was all we could find. We will have to return next year and try and get there in time for the flower show!



Marion Bryce 8 May 2017

May 22 Monday- Attenborough The Delta Meet car park Attenborough Nature Centre Barton Lane. Well sign-posted off the A6005 between Beeston and Long Eaton NG9 6DY Leader Peter Stanyon

Sitting outside the Nature Centre in the sunshine watching ducks a dabbling, mallards, a ruddy shelduck and Egyptian geese with three fluffy chicks, we were met by Peter Stanyon, the Attenborough Ranger, very knowledgeable about the management of the Delta area of the Reserve and our guide for the evening. We filed across the car park taking the footpath towards Attenborough. The orderly procession paused to gaze across the main pond towards the tower hide where the kestrel box is used by Egyptian geese to incubate their eggs. Further along, L- meadow is a hay meadow which is grazed by the flying flock of sheep. A lagoon with newly planted reed bed has been financed by the Environment Agency as compensation or mitigation for the loss of land underneath the new flood bund.



The old car park which used to host so many fishermen's coaches is now gorgeous grassland with cowslips, bird's foot trefoil and speedwell. It is often used for bug hunts and flying spiders, the old limestone chippings have raised the pH of the soil in favour of the wildflowers so it is now the best meadow in the reserve. In the brook by Ireton Field yellow iris was flowering. Norman Lewis knew it as a relict of the original River Erewash. The meadow across from the stream was bumpy and was the site of the old Upton monastery stew ponds where fish were stored. A song thrush and chaffinches singing among a regular chorus of birds.

A cricket match was just starting as we cut through the cricket club grounds. We walked past glebe field, then paused for a look at the last gravel pit worked by Cemex before the gravel operations were closed down last year. Peter explained the succession which would follow from the open water as the reed invaded and the water was choked, followed by unlocking the steel gate and filing through the portal into the wet woodland of the delta

we felt very privileged, the lock is to prevent disturbance of sensitive species. Pink cuckoo flower, meadow buttercup and common speedwell were flowering among meadow sweet and angelica leaves. The grass is grazed by red Lincoln cows in rotation. Huge white willows stood guard over common alder. This was just the lush, damp, well vegetated place which amber snails appreciate. Clouded border and silver ground carpet moths flew up and settled on nettles. A bright red headed cardinal beetle was basking on a leaf suddenly, a bullet shaped black and brown click beetle catapulted into the air emitting an audible click (or was it Nigel's camera?).

Walking through the shaded woodland the floral diversity diminished. Himalayan balsam plants, higher than us, not yet in flower, crowded the pathway. Norman Lewis suggested the area should be flooded to control the balsam, sluice gates were installed as part of the original reserve management plan. Peter thought this was no longer an option but instead he holds regular working parties who slash the balsam before it flowers to try to stop it spreading. Tony Maggs thought balsam nectar is so good for bees that it should have a place in nature. We slithered and slid on the cut stems just like the large black slugs which were feasting at our feet. Entering a clearing, we sat down on log stools while Peter demonstrated how his team makes charcoal from alder coppice by a quick burn process which makes a lot of black smoke. They have to wear masks and gloves to dig out the charcoal when it has cooled and their faces look like the old miners.

We stopped again in a special part of the wood which was unmanaged with standing deadwood and branches left where they fell, the air was still, very warm and humid. We stopped to admire some steps which volunteers had made. A very large ground beetle, *Carabus granulatus* foraged for earthworms and snails by our newly cut path, this beetle has a specialised lifestyle being attracted by darkness and moisture. It can swim and overcomes flooding by retiring into soil crevices and dead wood. At the end of the delta willow and alder are coppiced to give a graded level down from tall trees to the reed-bed. Swifts flew overhead and a cuckoo called surround sound. We had travelled from the bare pools and piles of sand and gravel at the active works through a succession series to the triumph of mature woodland in the delta.

Leather on willow still echoed as the sun set over the calm Attenborough evening. What wonderful weather for a walk through Attenborough Nature Reserve.

Marion Bryce 2 June 2017

28 May Moth Watch. Light traps will be run to attract moths. Moth identification and release 10 am May 29 followed by a walk around Forbes Hole. Meet car park off Fields Farm Road Long Eaton NG10 1FX

Leader Marion Bryce and Derek Brumbill



Second time lucky! This was our second moth trapping this year and with such warm weather, 18C minimum, we knew we were on to a winner!

Skinner design moth traps were used, which consist of a wooden box with a central wooden crossbar housing a bulb holder and rain guard. Two large, angled pieces of clear Perspex have dual purposes, deflecting moths downwards, and allowing easy visual inspection to find moths which settle into the empty egg boxes which are placed in the box. Two different light sources were used, a 125W mercury vapour (MV) lamp which is very bright and will usually attract more moths and the much duller Actinic which is preferable if you want your nocturnal activities to remain low-key. The two different light sources can attract different moth species, geometers tending to favour the actinic, noctuids the MV lamp, although on this occasion the 15W attracted more than it's fair share.

Forbes Hole Local Nature Reserve is owned by Erewash Borough Council and was declared in 1991. It is managed by Erewash Borough Council and The Friends of Forbes Hole. The 9 acre site is characterised by a large pond or borrow pit, a mature ride of poplar, oak and lime trees, willow carr progressing to deciduous woodland and a small wildflower meadow surrounded by scrub habitats. The traps were placed near to the pond not too far from the car park and we sat down to wait.

The traps were run from 9pm to 1am. By the end of the evening, 39 moth species were trapped. The most numerous species were the common swifts which arrived early on. The other species were in low numbers but in a delightful variety of colours and shapes, favourites being the pale tussock, the pebble prominent and the figure of eighty.

Two nationally 'local' species were caught, the alder moth and the 4 seraphim. We had to wait until after midnight for the poplar hawkmoth. One specimen of each moth was retained for the show and tell the next morning, where we knew the popular poplar hawkmoth would be the star of the show.

FORBES HOLE MOTH SHOW



STUART GILDER 290517

The next morning at 10am we were there to show the moths. We got the idea from Norfolk Wildlife Trust moth trappers. Most people don't want to stay up too late, and children need their sleep. A lot of people detest the inevitable gnats and mosquitoes which may be attracted to the trap with the moths. The civilised way to show the 'other universe' of lepidopterans is the next morning. Actually in Norfolk, even the moth trappers don't stay up but as we are next to the town centre we thought it best to keep an eye on our generator and it is interesting to see the different flight times the moths adopt in their various strategies to avoid being eaten by bats.

It was gratifying to see the interest generated by the moths, questions were asked, how long do they live? A large part of the life cycle is spent in the feeding or larval stage and an adult moth may only live about 5 weeks.

How do you tell a moth from a butterfly? It may be obvious that butterflies fly in the daytime, moths at night but there are many exceptions, the filamentous antennae of butterflies are knobbed, and the wings of the moth have a special attachment but these features may not be easy to see. It is often the case that butterflies land with their wings in the vertical whereas moths tend to lay their wings flat.

How do you tell the difference between a moth and other insects? Moths have two pairs of broad wings covered in tiny scales (you have to look at them under a lens to appreciate this). Caddis flies sometimes look a bit like moths but they have hairy membranous wings.

It was time to let the moths fly away while we went on a walk around Forbes Hole to try out the new paths which have been cleared and admire the wildflowers. Although it was warm, we didn't see any butterflies we were still in the world of moths.

Marion Bryce 30 May 2017



LIGHT EMERALD

MBRYCE 160617

Family	Species	Common name	Food plant
Noctuidae	<i>Acronicta alni</i>	Alder Moth	Birch, alder, willow
Pyrilidae	<i>Aphomia sociella</i>	Bee Moth	Bee and wasp nest comb
Geometridae	<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	Brimstone Moth	Blackthorn, hawthorn
Geometridae	<i>Eupithecia abbreviata</i>	Brindled Pug	Oak and hawthorn
Geometridae	<i>Petrophora chlorosata</i>	Brown Silver-line	Bracken
Geometridae	<i>Lomographa temerata</i>	Clouded Silver	Hawthorn etc
Geometridae	<i>Epirrhoe alternata</i>	Common Carpet	Bedstraws incl cleavers
Geometridae	<i>Dysstroma truncata</i>	Common Marbled Carpet	Sallow, birch, hawthorn
Noctuidae	<i>Mesapamea secalis</i> agg.	Common Rustic agg.	Grass, cock's foot
Hepialidae	<i>Korscheltellus lupulina</i>	Common Swift	Grass roots
Noctuidae	<i>Apamea remissa</i>	Dusky Brocade	Reed canary grass
Noctuidae	<i>Tethea ocularis</i>	Figure of Eighty	Poplar
Geometridae	<i>Xanthorhoe designata</i>	Flame Carpet	Garlic mustard
Noctuidae	<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>	Flame Shoulder	Groundsel, plantain, bedstraw
Geometridae	<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>	Garden Carpet	Garlic mustard
Geometridae	<i>Colostygia pectinataria</i>	Green Carpet	Bedstraws incl cleavers
Noctuidae	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	Heart & Dart	Ribwort plantain, fat hen
Notodontidae	<i>Pheosia gnoma</i>	Lesser swallow prominent	Birch
Totricidae	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	Light Brown Apple Moth	
Geometridae	<i>Campaea margaritaria</i>	Light Emerald	Broad leaved, oak, hawthorn
Noctuidae	<i>Oligia strigilis</i>	Marbled Minor	Cock'sfoot, reed canary grass
Notodontidae	<i>Pterostoma palpina</i>	Pale Prominent	Poplar, willow
Erebidae	<i>Calliteara pudibunda</i>	Pale Tussock	Broad leaved, hawthorn etc
Notodontidae	<i>Notodonta ziczac</i>	Pebble Prominent	Willow
Geometridae	<i>Eulithis prunata</i>	Phoenix	Currant
Noctuidae	<i>Subacronicta megacephala</i>	Poplar Grey	Poplar
Sphingidae	<i>Laothoe populi</i>	Poplar Hawk-moth	Poplar
Totricidae	<i>Archips rosana</i>	Rose tortrix	Raspberry, rose
Geometridae	<i>Perizoma flavofasciata</i>	Sandy Carpet	Red campion
Geometridae	<i>Odontopera bidentata</i>	Scalloped Hazel	Hazel, birch, hawthorn
Geometridae	<i>Lobophora halterata</i>	Seraphim	Poplar
Noctuidae	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character	Nettle, willowherb
Noctuidae	<i>Agrotis puta</i>	Shuttle-shaped Dart	Dock, dandelion
Erebidae	<i>Herminia grisealis</i>	Small Fan-foot	Withered tree leaves, incl oak and hawthorn
Crambidae	<i>Pyrausta aurata</i>	Small Purple & Gold	Mint
Noctuidae	<i>Abrostola tripartita</i>	Spectacle	Nettle
Erebidae	<i>Rivula sericealis</i>	Straw Dot	False brome
Erebidae	<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>	White Ermine	Nettle and dock

June 19 Monday Wildlife at Mercia Marina

Mercia Marina 1 mile from A50 & A38 Findern Lane, DE65 6DW, follow brown signs in Willington.

Leader David Boddy



Mercia Marina opened in September 2008 in the 24-acre Willington Lake, surrounded by another 50 acres of countryside for dog-walking fields, a wildlife lake and holiday home development. In building the marina, twelve islands or promontories were added to the natural contours of the lake thus creating a green oasis for people and wildlife alike. This was enhanced by a £85,000 planting scheme, featuring wildflower banks, reed beds, semi mature trees and native plants. LENS last visited in 2012 and we were keen to see what was happening at the site. The car park was colourful with bands of flowers screening the vehicles. We could hardly recognise the site. Everything and it had grown so much, there were hundreds of boats moored up. Underneath each quay were hundreds of young fish including perch and roach, Waterside flowers reed sweetgrass, yellow iris, monkey flower, purple loosestrife, birdsfoot trefoil and marsh woundwort, grew on bank extensions. The poisonous hemlock water dropwort was frequently seen.

A lot of the site is open to the public with a café, shop and restaurant, but the wildlife sites are restricted entry. David took us under a road tunnel to see where the water exits the marina into the Trent and Mersey Canal, a black and white bridge made of old railway sleepers carries a public footpath past the site. We were there to see the island which is totally left to nature. Southern hawkers patrolled and blue damselflies busied amongst the reeds. The air hummed as we wilted and watched a family of adolescent coots catching fish.

We walked back through the lodges, each with a tree, the eponymous name sake, Cedar lodge, Spindle lodge, Hazel lodge hidden among the flowers bursting in sprays from the front gardens. We saw a rainbow garden of roses. A tribute to Clarice Cliff, a zig zag of stones on a steep bank is filled with daffodils in spring, David is a horticulturalist, the original site plantings were all native but now the site has been enhanced with unusual and choice plants such as arcs of Rubus Betty Ashburner, Rosa pteracantha (winged thorn rose), Viburnum White Beauty and Summer Breeze (we wish), Spanish gorse, oak leaf hydrangea and autumn flowering camellias. Three full-time gardeners look after the site.

We stopped to look at some speckling on the leaves of the young lime trees it looked like a rust fungus. A lot of the trees had been moved and each tree had been plugged into the ground and the line where the soil plug meets the undisturbed earth is favoured by many field voles.

The Met Office has a network of around 200 automatic stations across the UK. Alongside these automatic stations there are manual stations, the marina hosts an official Met Office Weather Station. Every day, at 0900hrs UTC one of a team of a dozen volunteers visit the station to note data from the previous 24 hours – the amount of sunshine, rain, minimum air temperature and grass temperature. This then gets put onto the Met Office site.



It was the hottest day of the year 33C and we were glad to shelter in a small woodland with bee houses and bird boxes and a living bench. We were joined by ringlet, meadow brown and large skipper butterflies. Active wildlife groups on site cover birds, bees, butterflies and moths.

Fortified by Roe's kale juice we headed towards a large slope. There are various banks on site used to cut out sound from the nearby A50 or to separate commercial from living areas from wildlife areas. These banks are colourful displays of poppy, scarlet pimpernel, cut leaved dead nettle, the arable weeds that favour disturbed ground and depauperate soil. This was just a taster for the

amazing prairie flower display on the wildlife meadow. What a wonderful site. We could see corn chamomile, cornflower, and corn marigold we had a good look for the squinancy wort but I'm not certain that we found it. Difficult to ID all the flowers which were such a varied mix of native and non native flowers. We then went to look at an old kneed, hawthorn hedge, with oak trees and crab apple and tried to guess the age, deciding 150 years old and possibly a nineteenth century enclosure hedge. Passing through a willow arch, we hurried past the butterfly garden with its orange balls of globose buddlia and pink sedums and past more choice plantings of clary, we were overtime, thirsty, and glad to sit sipping cool drinks under the shady umbrellas looking out over the magnificent marina.

Marion Bryce 20 June 2017

26 June 2017 Flowers of Lead Spoil Heaps

Gang Mine Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve and National Stone Centre, Middleton by Wirksworth

Meet National Stone Centre car park off the B5035 Cromford-Carsington road DE4 4LS-SK285553

Leader Marion Bryce and Christine Carrier

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:

Spoken by Oberon, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 2, Scene 1

On a gorgeous summer day we walked up from the car park of the National Stone Centre, to Gang Mine to find a small car park which we could have used. Never mind, the walk was good for us and we were able to see some broad leaved helleborine which was about to flower in the grass verge. Gang Mine is incognito but if you can find it, take the opportunity to have a look round. It is fabulous for wildflowers!

Our walk started in an area of unimproved neutral grassland with abundant buttercups, clover, meadow grasses, and herbs such as burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Hieracium pilosella*, bush vetch *Vicia sepium*, pignut *Conopodium majus* and yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*. We were particularly impressed by the hoary plantain *Plantago media*. Ringlets and meadow browns danced in the grass and a pair of chimney sweeper moths stayed low.

Continuing towards the northern and eastern parts of the site which have been colonised by scrub species including hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* we saw our first common spotted orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, crosswort *Cruciata laevipes* and field scabious *Knautia arvensis*. Six spot burnets decorated the purple knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, tiny moths *Micropterix calthella* loved the buttercups and black tipped soldiers, orchid beetles and a hairy click beetle showed some of the vibrant insect life. Dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and ivy *Hedera helix* grew under the hawthorn hedge, then we turned down a gooseberry lined track towards Steeple Grange Quarry, to search a small meadow which is a translocation site, saving pyramidal orchids *Anacamptis pyramidalis* from the working quarry level ahead of the works. Here we found our only betony *Stachys officinalis*. We now passed through a gate and chased red admirals and commas round a mysterious old building on a mound and found ourselves on another planet. Low growing plants, flowering to burst, all the colours of the rainbow and butterflies, small copper, small heath and common blue flying from flower to flower.

In 1652 Gang Mine was recorded as being an ancient lead mine. The associated 'gangue' minerals of calcite, fluorite and baryte were deposited as waste dumps around the shafts and it is these spoil heaps with their high levels of lead and cadmium that support a unique assemblage of plants. The large area of mine workings and spoil heaps on limestone vary in slope, aspect and soil toxicity so every mound has different wildflowers. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust manages the 9Ha site which is, not only as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, but also under European Law as a Special Area of Conservation. The calcareous turf on thin soil, is species rich and supports plants such as milkwort *Polygala vulgaris*, common eyebright *Euphrasia officinalis*, kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, common rockrose *Helianthemum nummularium*, small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, fairy flax *Linum catharticum*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca* and rare limestone bedstraw *Galium sternerii* (mixed with a lot of heath bedstraw *Galium saxatile*). Only a small number of plants are able to tolerate these spoil conditions, they flourish because of reduced competition. The open spoil areas support large populations of alpine penny-cress *Thlaspi caerulescens*. and spring sandwort *Minuartia verna* which is the most characteristic and frequently found metallophyte species. Two further plants associated with the spoil are, mountain pansy *Viola lutea* and a small fern, moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* which we were unable to find despite searching, so we will have to visit earlier next year. Altogether these spoil heaps are an outstanding and unique site and so beautiful that Helen was moved to poetry.

As we completed the circular walk we climbed over the gate to look at the restored Dew Pond, the original purpose of this small saucer shaped pond would have been to water livestock from the rainwater it collects.

In the afternoon we explored the National Stone Centre and that is a story for another day.

Marion Bryce 3
July 2017



Moth Trapping at Clover Close

Sunday, 25 June 2017, Clover Close, Elvaston

Moth Trapping

Meet 9.30pm-1.00am Grid ref SK407323

Marion Bryce and Derek Brumbill

A spell of warm weather lured us into moth trapping at Clover Close. Two Skinner traps were used, a 125w MV lamp and a 15w actinic lamp. These were placed out of line of sight near the pine copse in the centre edge of the field. When we finally got set up it was 10.00pm. A beautiful white barn owl floated over the top of the grass soaring and searching, finally going down for a feast of field vole, but where were the moths? The cloud cover was 100% but thin, and the temperature zoomed down to 10 degrees Centigrade, Brrr! As we had made the effort we decided to wait it out. Excitingly our first moth was a huge brown furry Drinker, a very good looking moth. Apart from Common Footman, Smoky Wainscot and Rustic ten of, the moths were few and far between but we managed to catch some which landed just short of the light. At 1am a Poplar Hawk Moth signalled the end of our session.

When we opened the traps to pack up we found very few moths, the most interesting catch was a summer chaf-er *Amphimallon solstitialis*. Altogether that night there were 37 species of moth identified of which 32 were macro-moths. The highest number of moths were species which feed on coarse grass or bramble and also the nearby trees and shrubs. The most interesting moth was a micromoth, the Rough-winged conch, it's white face and front legs shining in the light of the trap, tufted and unkempt, looking like a caddis larva that has gathered stones to decorate it's case. This woodland species is distributed mainly in southern England, becoming scarcer further north into the Midlands. It is on the wing during May and June, and flies around dusk. During the day it relies on camouflage, taking on the appearance of a bird-dropping. The larvae feed on white bryony (*Bryonia dioica*). Listed as LOCAL in Waring and Townsend it is COMMON in the Butterfly Conservation Microlepidoptera Report 2011. Maybe it depends if you live in the North or the South of the UK?

List of moth species at Clover Close 25 June 2017 with the larval food plant

Species	Common name	
<i>Agriphila straminella</i>	Straw Grass-veener	Fine Grass
<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	Heart & Dart	Herbaceous plants incl dock, plantain
<i>Alcis repandata</i>	Mottled Beauty	Hawthorn, bramble
<i>Bupalus piniaria</i>	Bordered White	Scot's Pine
<i>Cabera pusaria</i>	Common White Wave	Birch, Chestnut, Sallow
<i>Campaea margaritaria</i>	Light Emerald	Many trees and shrubs
<i>Camptogramma bilineata</i>	Yellow Shell	Herbaceous plants incl cleavers, bedstraws
<i>Diarsia mendica</i>	Ingrailed Clay	Herbaceous and woody plants incl bramble
<i>Ditula angustiorana</i>	Red-barred Tortrix	Most trees and shrubs
<i>Dysstroma truncata</i>	Common Marbled Carpet	Many incl willow, bramble
<i>Eilema lurideola</i>	Common Footman	Hawthorn, lichens
<i>Eulithis mellinata</i>	Spinach	Blackcurrant
<i>Euplexia lucipara</i>	Small Angle Shades	Wide range incl bracken, ivy, foxglove
<i>Euthrix potatoria</i>	Drinker	Coarse grass
<i>Habrosyne pyritoides</i>	Buff Arches	Bramble
<i>Hemitehea aestivaria</i>	Common Emerald	Hawthorn, hazel etc
<i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>	Rustic	Herbaceous plants incl chickweed, dock, plantain
<i>Hypena proboscidalis</i>	Snout	Pellitory
<i>Idaea aversata</i>	Riband Wave	Herbaceous plants incl dandelion, primrose
<i>Idaea biselata</i>	Small Fan-footed Wave	Low plants
<i>Idaea dimidiata</i>	Single-dotted Wave	Cow Parsley
<i>Laothoe populi</i>	Poplar Hawk-moth	Poplar and Willow
<i>Lomaspilis marginata</i>	Clouded Border	Willow
<i>Lozotaeniodes formosana</i>	Orange Pine	Scot's Pine
<i>Mythimna ferrago</i>	Clay	Grass incl cocksfoot and meadow grass
<i>Mythimna impura</i>	Smoky Wainscot	Coarse grass
<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	Large Yellow Underwing	Herbaceous plants incl dock
<i>Nola cucullatella</i>	Short-cloaked Moth	Hawthorn etc
<i>Oligia fasciuncula</i>	Middle barred Minor	Grass
<i>Oligia strigilis</i>	Marbled Minor	Grass
<i>Opisthograptis luteolata</i>	Brimstone Moth	Many incl blackthorn, hawthorn
<i>Photedes minima</i>	Small Dotted Buff	Tufted Hairgrass
<i>Phtheochroa rugosana</i>	Rough-winged Conch	White Bryony
<i>Thyatira batis</i>	Peach Blossom	Bramble
<i>Timandra comae</i>	Bloodvein	Coarse grass
<i>Tortrix viridana</i>	Green Oak Tortrix	Oak and other trees
<i>Xestia triangulum</i>	Double-square Spot	Many plants, buttercups, cow parsley

If data from the two previous moth trapping sessions is included, 26 August and 1 September 2016, we now have 56 moths on the Elvaston list. To these we could add several moths which have been seen in the day time, Ghost, Chimney Sweeper, Shaded Broad-bar, Cinnabar, Narrow-bordered 5-spot burnet and 6 -spot Burnet. As the hay meadow flora improves it is expected that the number of species of moth will increase.

Marion Bryce

29 June 2017

July 2 Sunday Wildlife Wander Trent Lock and Trent Lane

Meet outside Canal and River Trust Education Centre at Trent Lock near the Steamboat Inn. Approx 4 mile walk, we will stop for refreshments at Trent Lock NG10 2FY Leader Marion Bryce

LEISURE by WH Davies is a poem that warns that "The hectic pace of modern life has a detrimental effect on the human spirit." Modern man has no free time to spend in the lap of nature.

*What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.*



This was the best summer day as we wandered down the Erewash Canal looking at the colourful waterside flowers. Thanks to the bankside enhancement carried out by the Canal and River Trust we still have Great Pond Sedge, Marsh Woundwort, Purple Loosestrife, Hemp Agrimony, Water Figwort and glittering orange Jewelweed. Unwelcome intruders are Water Hemlock and Himalayan Balsam.

Stepping over the rickety old stile into meadow at Cranfleet Farm we can relax, away from the madding crowd. Looking for meadow plants, sweet vernal grass, crested dogstail and fine leaved bent. Chimney sweepers, meadow browns and ringlets abound. Gatekeepers bright on the bramble by the hedge. Ladies Bedstraw, Birds-foot Trefoil and for a surprise, some nodding mauve heads of Musk Thistle with its strange perfume. Stand and stare at Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station, on Red Hill, the other side of the River. What is its future?

We walk towards the smooth blue water of Fletcher's Pond. Tranquillity. This is where the martin's collect mud for their nests and the sparrowhawk stalks the kingfisher. Dragonfly nymphs crawl up the reeds and burst in the sun to reveal their blue metallic glory. Yellow Water Lily smells like brandy and the fruits are the kegs. Pink Water Speedwell, Pond Water-crowfoot, Rushes Hard and Soft and the not so Common Spike Rush necklace the margins. Fletchers Pond has been described as 'Derbyshire's Premier Big Carp Fishery' and is managed by Long Eaton Victoria Angling Society. Tench, bream, roach and pike also swim here. On a hot summer's day the big fish break out of the water.

I was first introduced to these truly idyllic rural surroundings by Bert Hall, Long Eaton's revered botanist and teacher. He knew every blade of grass. In the cool dark under the blue brick arch Greater Celandine, and Wood False Brome still grow. In the mortar between the bricks small ferns, Wall Rue and Maidenhair Spleenwort form stars apart from the Small Toadflax and Spotted Hawkweed. The trains thunder overhead, as we emerge at Cranfleet Farm. The Wildlife Wander has numerous permutations and on this occasion we wander down Trent Lane which runs from Meadow Lane to the Cranfleet Canal. A spaghetti junction of train lines and site of the old Trent Station. Trent Station, a Victorian masterpiece of Midland Gothic architecture stood at the interchange of the five main railway routes serving Nottingham, London, Birmingham, Derby and Chesterfield. Trent was a station without a town or community; no buses passed by, there was no taxi rank – and passengers had to walk more than half a mile from Long Eaton to get there. Opened in 1862, it had everything you would expect a busy station to have: a long, single-island platform, booking hall, waiting rooms, refreshments, book stall, crew accommodation and a ticket barrier. Yet, looking out of the station entrance, all that could be seen was an isolated farm, a cottage linked to a rifle range, the stationmaster's house and a few railway cottages. It was nearly seven miles from Nottingham, more than nine miles from Derby, and precisely 119¾ miles from London St Pancras. All manner of royalty visited Trent, in the form of the Royal train that stabled overnight between Trent Station North Junction and Sawley Junction.



Nearly 100 passenger and parcel trains stopped at Trent every day, from services like the high-speed Thames-Clyde Express to local routes hauled by light steam engines and later diesel units. Trent Station was knocked down when it closed in 1967 but Long Eaton was and is a train spotter's paradise, as Rodney Fowkes describes 'an exciting and romantic place for a train-mad lad to grow up' in his book 'From Clerk To Controller'.

Classic railway plants, mignonette, weld, toadflax common and purple and lucerne colour the roadside but the bank is a tangle of bramble with Ground Elder and Ragwort and trails of Wild Hop and pink Bindweed. Small Tortoiseshell and Large White and a lot more browns bask in the sunshine. It gets wilder, and pink fluffy heads of

Bridewort battle with Snowberry to take over the railway embankment. Another hedge dodge and we happen upon Nottingham Yacht Club (founded 1964) in the old lock cottage, with moorings for nineteen boats on a canalised section of the River Trent between Trent Lock and Attenborough nature reserve on the Erewash Valley Trail, close to the River Soar and the Erewash Canal and within easy reach of the Trent and Mersey Canal. We got stuck at the Grade II listed lock. Here we sat and we sat and dangled our legs over the edge as the sand martin's entranced us, catching airborne insects whilst on the wing. Assiduously feeding the three pushy wailing chicks who butted their heads out from between the ancient stone blocks, me first, me first. Sand martins are summer visitors to the UK, one of the first spring migrants to appear, arriving mid-March to mid-April, travelling around 3,000 miles from sub-Saharan Africa. Easily confused with barn swallows and house martins, sand martins have dark brown upper parts and dark under wings contrasting with pale under parts divided by a distinctive dark chest bar. Cute chicks!

Now we dodge through the hedge to follow a footpath between the new ponds at Pasture Lane. Long grass and skipper country, small and large, no Essex. We are mesmerised by the green eyes of a horsefly. A busy day at the Rifle Range no tranquillity here but a crowd of Scentsless Mayweed with its hoverflies and bees engages our camera interest. Another hedge dodge and we happen upon Nottingham Yacht Club (founded 1964) in the old lock cottage, with moorings for nineteen boats on a canalised section of the River Trent between Trent Lock and Attenborough nature reserve on the Erewash Valley Trail, close to the River Soar and the Erewash Canal and within easy reach of the Trent and Mersey Canal. We got stuck at the Grade II listed lock. Here we sat and we sat and dangled our legs over the edge as the sand martin's entranced us, catching airborne insects whilst on the wing. Assiduously feeding the three pushy wailing chicks who butted their heads out from between the ancient stone blocks, me first, me first. Sand martins are summer visitors to the UK, one of the first spring migrants to appear, arriving mid-March to mid-April, travelling around 3,000 miles from sub-Saharan Africa. Easily confused with barn swallows and house martins, sand martins have dark brown upper parts and dark under wings contrasting with pale under parts divided by a distinctive dark chest bar. Cute chicks!



Finally, we followed Cranfleet Cut, which was dug in 1796 to allow the Trent barges to by-pass difficult and shallow parts of the River Trent and avoid the Thrumpton Weir. It is protected by flood gates when the river level rises. Smiling and happy boaters wave as we see Skullcap, Ivy-leaved Toadflax, Pellitory-of-the-wall, Angelica and many more flowers growing out of the lime mortar. The regular mowing of the grassy towpath has made a linear wildflower meadow with Burnet Saxifrage, Bird's foot Trefoil, Dove's foot Cranesbill, Self-heal and Black Medick. The Canal and River Trust moor their dredgers here and in the shade of the hawthorn hedge, Ground Ivy, Cow Parsley and Rough Chervil, straggle. A shadow of HS2 crossing the cut.

Weary at Trent Lock the major waterway junction where rivers and canals meet. Known as 'Waters Meet' by boaters. Trent Lock is the first lock on the Erewash Canal. Our circle completed we will leave you at the Lock House Tearooms, full of historic canal memorabilia and Measham teapots to admire while sipping our tea.

Marion Bryce 11 July 2017

July 9 Sun Skylarks Notts Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve

Directions From the A52, follow signs for the Watersports Centre turning onto Regatta Way. Bear right at the end of Regatta Way onto Adbolton Lane 500 metres past the Watersports Centre - small car park or layby. NG12 2LU Leader Tom Shields

Skylarks Nature Reserve is a wetland nature reserve owned by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. It is specifically designed for disabled access. In 2014 a further 36ha of land and water to the south of Adbolton Lane, known as Blott's Pit was purchased creating the largest nature reserve in Rushcliffe.

We were impressed by the car park which had giant mullein, nodding thistle, red and white campion, musk mallow and many other colourful flowers, all buzzing with bumble bees.

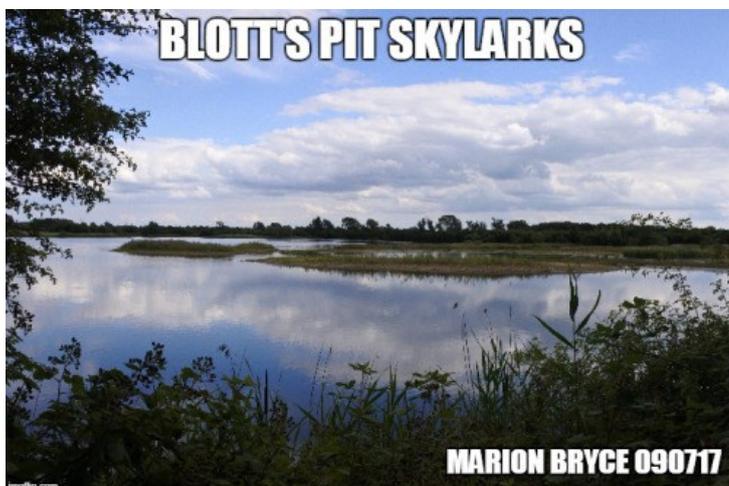
Our leader for the day was Tom Shields, a volunteer Reserve Warden at Skylarks who has led many working parties since the reserve opened in 1982 and runs a group which conducts on-site bird ringing.



Tom led us across the road to the old reserve and to our surprise we found that the Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeology Team have built Grubenhauer at the Nature Reserve. These are small sunken floored, timber framed buildings, which were typical buildings of the Anglo-Saxon and Viking ages. These buildings were constructed using traditional techniques and are part of a 3 year project which is exploring the human and natural heritage of the area. What makes this project more exciting is that a REAL Grubenhauer was discovered on the nature reserve when the site was a commercial sand and gravel quarry.

The sandy ground nearby had an interesting plant community which included common cudweed and blue flea-bane, these are not plants we see every day.

We decided to go dragonfly spotting and saw common blue, blue tailed and red-eyed damselflies from a viewing platform, over Old Skylarks Lake. We watched swans with their cygnets dabbling among the reedmace. Common spotted and a single pyramidal orchid were flowering, the bee orchids having finished. The tangerine tang of sweet flag is unmistakable and there was a lot of this among the more usual branched bur-reed. Looking like an iris or flag, this is distinguished from similar plants, by the unusual crimped edges of the sword shaped leaves. It rarely flowers but we were lucky to see solid, cylindrical, spadix densely crowded with tiny greenish-yellow flowers arranged in diamond-shaped pattern. Brown darter and black tailed skimmed across the water's surface, and soared through the surrounding reeds.



We made our way back to the new part of the reserve. Centaury and St John's Wort, Skylarks is definitely the Ragwort capital of the world. So many six spot burnet moths and butterflies nectaring, and orange and black cinnabar moth caterpillars munching on the 'so called' noxious weed. A flat meadow, prosaically called 'the Dog Walkers Field' was covered with the seed heads of silver hair grass, leading to Single Swan Pond, which speaks for itself. The inestimable value of local knowledge!

Now it was 'Watch the Birdie' at Blott's Pitt which is part-owned by the Trust. A long central ridge shows the line of a former road through the site which has been extensively engineered to suit the birds and the viewing of the birds. Godwit, oyster catcher, peewit,

little ring plover, pochard and sometimes smew. Tom had thoughtfully brought his telescope, even though we did not walk around the Lake it seemed we were close to the birds.

Time had run out so we chased the meadow browns, the ringlets and gatekeeper butterflies all the way back to the car park.

17 July 2017 All Day Walk Newstead Abbey and Linby Trail

Park at the end of the Papplewick Village Hall car park (near the play park), Linby Lane NG15 8FB

Leader Marion Bryce and Christine Carrier 0115 9730506



We made a prompt start from Papplewick, nearly leaving 2 of our members behind. The houses and gardens on Main Street were packed with specimen plants and flowers and history. We passed Papplewick Hall, rebuilt in 1787 for the Hon Frederick Montagu, Lord of the Treasury. A lime tree marked the spot for a mood change as we turn left and follow Hall Lane. The tarmac track passed fields of sugar beet, rape and miscanthus. A yellowhammer called 'a little bit of bread and no cheese' as we named the flowers on a headland of agricultural weeds, scented mayweed, field pansy, fat hen, and poppy. Somehow the track became a magnificent driveway of Turkey Oaks. A sprouted acorn was carefully preserved to grow on. We dallied as a family of kestrels were trying their wings, then they settled on a branch showing side and front profile, it seems they were waiting to be fed. The track trundled on until a

seeming dead-end, a pair of wrought iron gates were the entrance to a lodge. The footpath passes left of the gates and follows alongside ancient beech and oak woods. Hogweed, ground elder and sanicle survive the shady and dry conditions under the trees.



Ignoring a meadow filled with ragwort we kept under the shade until suddenly the frontage of Newstead Abbey was revealed. The abbey, the epitome of a romantic ruin, doesn't look real, is it too good? It seems like a film set facade. Although originally an Augustinian Priory built in 1170 it is best known as the ancestral home of Lord Byron who lived in the house in the early 19th century. He was a leading figure of the Romantic Period, first and foremost a poet. It is sad that his enormous body of works are now little read and he is a celebrity better known by revelations of his bohemian lifestyle. The monument Lord Byron erected to his favourite dog, Boatswain, is larger than his own.

Beauty without Vanity,
Strength without Insolence,
Courage without Ferocity,
and all the virtues of Man without his Vices

We parted in front of the garden lake, a huge expanse of water-lily calm. Like Alice in Wonderland we explored the romantic nineteenth century gardens around the house which were made by Mrs WF Webb and her daughters between 1865 and 1900 and are now maintained by volunteers guided by the Head Gardener. They include a fern garden, a subtropical garden, a Spanish garden, a Japanese garden and a rockery. The Rose Garden was added in 1965, and occupies the old kitchen garden. The enormously long and colourful large raised bed is inspirational.

There are mediaeval stew ponds and a large rectangular 17th century pond, a regular residence of 2 pairs of little grebes. There was also a family of mallards towing a line of fluffy brown ducklings. Birds are a feature of a visit to the gardens, large white orange beaked geese guard the house and peacocks think they own the place which is actually owned by Nottingham City Council and is open to the public.

After suitable refreshment at the excellent café we regrouped and passed the overflow cascade to walk out of the grounds along the east drive. The fields were full of ripe wheat and once again we were glad of the shade of the trees. A second lodge was reached, a most desirable residence. We then continued walking for a considerable distance passing distressed horse chestnuts suffering leaf fall, wych elm with sandpaper leaves, plaited trunks of sweet chestnut and

lime dimpled with small globes of fruit. A small pond provided an oasis of purple loosestrife and common fleabane. The hogweed was getting a little 'samey' the white flat umbels being much of a muchness, until it started to turn into the ribbed stems and shiny green leaves of greater burnet saxifrage.

A left turn took us onto the path signed Linby Trail and National Cycle Network Route No 6. This is a cutting which was the route of the Great Northern Railway. Here Magnesian Limestone beds outcrop, a yellow-ochre sandy limestone in ready-made layers of bricks. It is this rock which has been used as a building stone in the villages of Linby and Papplewick. It weathers to produce a lime-rich clay soil.

This was a complete change of scene and the curtains went up on a fine performance. Firstly were yellows of tall melilot, St John's Wort and agrimony, then pink pea flowers of restharrow and mauve tufted vetch. A purple phase followed with common knapweed, then greater knapweed. A rare plant, saw-wort, looks similar to thistle but without spines, and gets its name from the sharply toothed leaves. It has been used to produce a yellow dye. Super-sized harebells nodded pale blue on the sides of the low but steep sided cutting. A deep rooted survivor of hay meadows, growing tall, tiny flowers in dense oval heads a rich shade of mahogany, great burnet thrust amongst the pale powder blue flat bobbing heads like circus performers spinning multiple plates on sticks held vertically in stands, field scabious.

Where were our butterflies? Bumble bees early and tree, red tailed and buff tailed, busily buzzed, but we had been looking forward to seeing clouds of butterflies. Although a delight to see the bright blue wings of the not so common blue butterflies, we only saw two. A few worn ringlets and meadow browns. a paltry few skippers and a small tortoiseshell. There really weren't many insects, a capsid bug, a cardinal beetle a dance fly, we should be concerned.

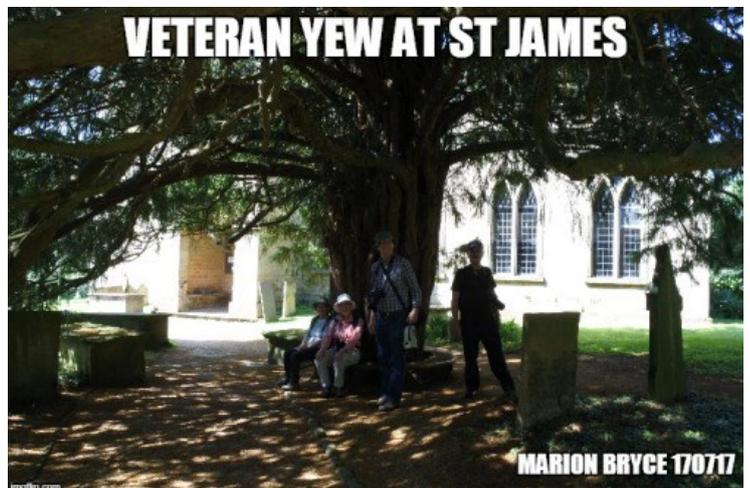
Behind a screen of willow a train raced us along the Robin Hood line which runs into Nottingham. Towards the end of the trail meadowsweet's irregularly branched cymes packed with small creamy flowers featured more and more and a small stream ran alongside growing brooklime, fool's watercress and edible watercress amongst spikes of bur-reed.

We had now reached Linby which starts and ends with a stone cross. Heat exhaustion was such that ice-creams had to be purchased, the barrels of flowers at the Horse and Groom looked inviting! Across the road was an interesting Parish Map of Linby explaining the history of the village. It is a picturesque Conservation Area, streams, known as the Linby Docks, flow down each side of the main street. We spied three spotted trout before they skirled and hid under the little bridges to each cottage. Pale buttercup flowers peering at the water surface was a water-crowfoot we had not seen before *Ranunculus circinatus*.

The road was quite busy so we were glad to turn off and follow a path beside a hawthorn hedge straggled through with black bryony and hedge bedstraw. Golden brown fields of wheat. This is where we saw our butterflies, red admiral, comma, ringlet, meadow brown, gate-keeper and even a speckled wood, which seem to be in short supply this year.

It is not often that you have to apologise for the warm weather but some folks were glad of the shade of a veteran yew tree in St James churchyard. We didn't tally too long, saving the delights of the church for another day, we followed the drive back to Main Street where the friendly faces of huge sunflowers welcomed us back to the car park of Papplewick Town Hall.

Marion Bryce 17 July 2017



Monday 31 July 2017 West Hallam Screen- Bioblitz

Parking by kind permission of the Newdigate Arms DE7 6HW. Leader Stuart Gilder

Until the early 20th century West Hallam was a small rural village and the property of the Newdigate family, which parted with their interest as Lords of the Manor in 1914.

Most jobs were in agriculture, later there was mining work locally in the Erewash Valley coalfield. There was also a West Hallam railway station, now Station House, connected to the Great Northern Railway and Derby Friargate Station. The later 20th Century saw rapid change with both the collieries and the railway disappearing during the 1960s. Stanley Colliery (known locally as 'Nibby Pit' on Station Road) was the last to close in 1959 and some buildings remain. The colliery spoil tips were removed and landscaped and after much opencast coal extraction the area regained its traditional rural appeal from the 1970s onward.



Stuart led us on a short circular walk around the area known as West Hallam Screen which used to be used to screen coal from the colliery. Screening, washes soil and rock from the coal, then crushes it into chunks that are sorted into different sizes or grades. The plant then stockpiles grades for transport. Although the pit was closed, there were various attempts to reopen the colliery as open cast and to recover buried coal, but because of the proximity of a large and vocal local population, Mr RJ Budge was unable to get planning permission. Head House Farm were keen to buy some of the site as grazing but at the insistence of the owner, they were forced to buy the whole site. How fortunate! Now the mosaic grassland site complete with infrastructure, roads, old buildings, industrial relics, an

old rail trackway and part of the Nutbrook Canal is under management by the Owner and a consortium of Natural England, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation. New hedges have been planted and grazing is by the owner's herd of Park Cattle.

A gleaming metal Arla milk tanker met us on the lane as we started out. Sheltering behind concrete blocks we were keen to list all of the wildlife on our mini-bioblitz and the panoply of plants engaged us a while at the beginning, and among them was a short-winged conehead. We walked along the lane and came across an old traffic island, bursting with wildflowers. A heap of sand grew super-sized fat-hen.

Skipping from flower to flower along the verge bright orange gatekeeper butterflies contrasted with the sombre colour of the fading meadow brown butterflies. The gatekeeper is also known as the hedge brown and spends much of its time basking with wings open, when the sexes are easy to tell apart – only the male has the distinctive sex brands on the forewings. On the ground was egg without bacon, bird'sfoot trefoil, the sulphur yellow flowers of black medic seemed too yellow. Prickly leaves turned purple on the common hemp nettle, musk mallow oh so rose pompadour, and there were raised islands of pretty pink flower spikes of rosebay willowherb. Bramble tendrils strayed across the track.

A gleaming metal Arla milk tanker met us on the lane as we started out. Sheltering behind concrete blocks we were keen to list all of the wildlife on our mini-bioblitz and the panoply of plants engaged us a while at the beginning, and among them was a short-winged conehead. We walked along the lane and came across an old traffic island, bursting with wildflowers. A heap of sand grew super-sized fat-hen.

Skipping from flower to flower along the verge bright orange gatekeeper butterflies contrasted with the sombre colour of the fading meadow brown butterflies. The gatekeeper is also known as the hedge brown and spends much of its time basking with wings open, when the sexes are easy to tell apart – only the male has the distinctive sex brands on the forewings. On the ground was egg without bacon, bird'sfoot trefoil, the sulphur yellow flowers of black medic seemed too yellow. Prickly leaves turned purple on the common hemp nettle, musk mallow oh so rose pompadour, and there were raised islands of pretty pink flower spikes of rosebay willowherb. Bramble tendrils strayed across the track.

John Langford got the prize though, a large burying beetle, *Nicrophorus vespilloides*, with black and orange patterning on the elytra. More normally found under dead birds and mammals, these beetles perform an important service in getting rid of carrion (dead animals and birds) by digging beneath the bodies to provide a food supply for their larvae. So what was it doing on top of a grass stem? She didn't stay long, John was quite surprised that a beetle could move so fast from a standing start.

We strayed into a grey moonscape then the sun burst out as we followed a return route along the old Nutbrook Canal. A large splash could have been a water vole? Hemp agrimony, Himalayan balsam and wild angelica, its developing umbels partially enclosed in inflated purple sheaths looked quite exotic. Hoverflies and sawflies fed on the flowers and licked honeydew from the leaves. Chocolate-brown with creamy-yellow eye spots speckled wood butterflies basked in the dappled shade under the oak, willow and birch. In a burst of sunshine, green veined white butterflies chased each other, with some success.

This delightful interlude was followed by lights out, the sun disappeared completely and a heavy shower of rain sent us back to the warmth of the Newdigate Inn.

I-record Species Tally Birds 5:Fern 2:Flowering plant 111:Fungus 6:Insect 29:Mammal 1

Marion Bryce, 31 July 2017.

Aug 14 Monday **Bush Cricket Hunt Bring your bat detector!**

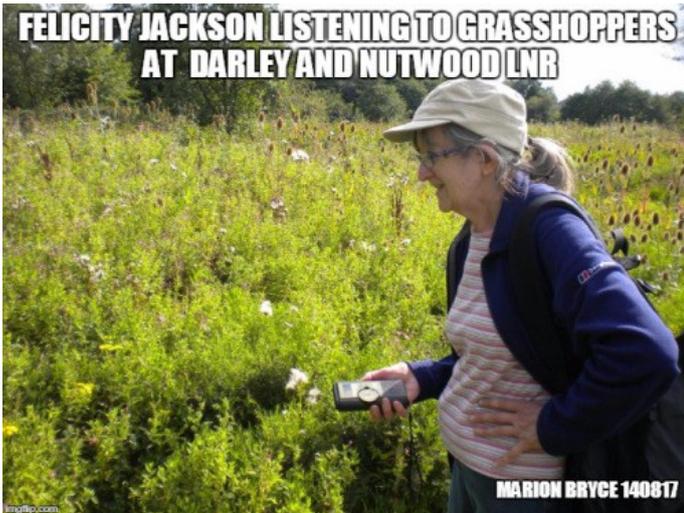
Darley and Nutwood Local Nature Reserve

Meet 2:30 at South Avenue entrance

Sat nav DE22 1DZ.

Leader Felicity Jackson

The chirping of grasshoppers and crickets is one of the quintessential sounds of summer. Their song is very unusual in the insect world. At Darley and Nutwood Local Nature Reserve a small group met up with Felicity Jackson who has made a special study of these insects.



The Darley and Nutwood Local Nature Reserve is based on an old landfill site which was closed and sealed in 1985 and was originally the site of a swan pond of a grand hall. The ruin of a garden temple survives. It is close to the River Derwent and also incorporates a fragment of ancient woodland. Chairman of the management team Dr Keith Dodd explained that the site is fenced so that it can be grazed by sheep and cattle in the winter months. Leading us to an area of long grass, Felicity explained that the Orthoptera are an order of insects that have enlarged hind legs for jumping. There are two sub-orders, consisting of 27 native species, the grasshoppers and the crickets.

Crickets have long antennae, grasshoppers have short antennae.

Crickets stridulate by rubbing their wings together, grasshoppers have a series of pegs on the hind legs that produce sound when rubbed against wing veins. On hot days they can be heard over considerable distances, but in duller weather can be less conspicuous and may be more reliably heard with a bat detector to amplify the sound.

Males can produce up to five songs during courtship: normal song, courtship song, assault song, copulation song and the rivals' duet

The male sperm is transferred in a package called the spermatophore.

Adult females lay eggs through ovipositors adapted for laying eggs, singly or in pods, into the ground or base of grasses. Eggs are the overwintering stage.

The immature stages (called nymphs) closely resemble the adults. They hatch in spring when the temperature is suitable for development and succulent vegetation is abundant. Some bush-crickets are predatory and consume grasshoppers or younger stages of their own species.

The number of nymphal instars varies between species but most Grasshoppers have four nymphal instars and most Bush crickets have five or six.

Development takes about two months and the adults usually emerge in July.

Grasshoppers and crickets rely on external sources of heat to raise their body temperature so are reliant on environmental conditions. As they are highly mobile, they may be valuable indicators of climate change.

We set our bat detectors to 22KHz and soon picked up the loud churring of Roesel's Bush Cricket. We had to look very carefully among the long grass and meadow vetchling before we spotted the actual cricket. We heard about 4 of these before we sighted a wingless bright green cricket with a black stripe down its back, this was the nymph of a long winged conehead. After some time we heard an adult male conehead. Through a bat detector, the stridulation is a chugging train engine sound which distinguishes it from the raspberry buzz of Roesel's Bush-cricket, and from the softer sewing machine stridulation of the grasshoppers.

Long-winged Coneheads (*Conocephalus discolor*) have been expanding into new territories, with rising temperatures under climate change a likely factor. Roesel's Bush Cricket (*Metrioptera roeselii*) is also expanding its range. Of course, 21st century records may sometimes reflect the increased use of bat detectors by recorders, rather than range expansion.

Many colour forms exist of Lesser Marsh Grasshopper *Chorthippus albomarginatus*. It may be a uniform straw brown or dark green with a white line running along the forewing. Fully winged, the side keels of the pronotum are straight which together with a median keel form three parallel lines across the pronotum. We found several females before we heard the soft purring trill of an unseen male which was then tracked to halfway up a plant stem.

The Lesser Marsh Grasshopper can be confused with the meadow grasshopper *Chorthippus parallelus* or the common green grasshopper but the songs are quite distinct. Meadow Grasshopper has a short rattling song of 1 – 2 seconds duration sometimes described as a dry chuckle of 10 – 15 pulses. The Common Green Grasshopper *Omocestus viridulus* has a loud continuous song lasting up to 15 seconds. It is soft in tone but far carrying, rather like the sound of hands being briskly rubbed together. Only the Lesser Marsh Grasshopper has been found at Darley and Nutwood so far.

Two groundhoppers which are like diminutive grasshoppers have been found on site the Slender Groundhopper *Tetrix subulata* in which the pronotum extends beyond the tip of the abdomen, giving a characteristic kite shape when viewed from above and the Common Groundhopper *Tetrix undulata* in which the pronotum is shorter. Their antennae are short and they have no stridulation, courtship being a series of bows.

Felicity was keen to survey the site for speckled bush crickets which have an abrupt, high pitched click, as they are present at nearby Allestree Park, but she was unlucky on this occasion. We were tempted to settle for the night and listen out for the crickets as we watched the Perseids display but – enough!

Pleased to have unravelled the mysteries of grasshoppers singing we were now able to look at other insects. Honey bees and red tailed bees busy on knapweed. Drone flies, sun flies and even a large *Volucella inanis* on angelica. Ladybirds, harlequin, seven spot, clown faced (14 spot) and 22 spot.

A shining domed black dor beetle with purple under garments was set to work rolling rabbit currants before we left the site.

Marion Bryce 14 August 2017



Regulus regulus—The Goldcrest by John Langford

The song of the goldcrest is very high-pitched, to the extent that many devout bird people have to admit they can't always pick it up. My late wife Judy, who had a good ear for birdsong, used to render it as: 'I can see you, but you can't see me... tee hee hee.'

This species is sedentary and present in Long Eaton all year. As we may have said before, Long Eaton Railway Station is a regular *Regulus* site—behind both up and down platforms.

Other places I've heard the goldcrest song in April and May this year are:-

1. At the Green behind the Nottingham bus stops—conifers in the

grounds of Mayfield House

2. Grounds of the Town Hall

3. Conifers near the junction of Derby Road and Park Street.

4. Conifers at the junction of Parkside and Haslemere Road.

I can't recall hearing the goldcrest in West Park recently.

Other members may wish to add to the above, possibly commenting on the types of conifers this bird tends to feature.



Regulus regulus—The Goldcrest

Photo credit Marion Bryce

A French Red-legged Partridge by Roe Gardiner

At approximately 7.30 one morning in early April I noticed this plump beautiful bird in my garden. She (I could not see any spurs) potted around pecking at seed under the bird table and grazing in the undergrowth. I watched her from the kitchen window for about fifteen minutes. When I finally ventured outside she seemed quite unperturbed by my presence and carried on calmly wandering around within a few feet of me. After about an hour she perched on the fence and I was able to let my dog into the garden. It was her turn to observe me now!

Later the same day I received a telephone call from a neighbour who had spotted an unusual bird in his garden. I called round and recognised her immediately. She took up residence in the garden for several days before disappearing.

Hopefully she has returned to a more appropriate habitat and she has happy memories of her Breedon Street adventure.



Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

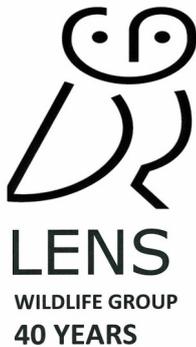
Photo credit Marion Bryce

Birds about Town

Wheatear	1	03/05/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Cuckoo	1	06/05/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Sanderling	1	06/05/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Greenshank	1	06/05/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Dunlin	1	06/05/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Yellow Wagtail	1	06/05/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Black Tern	1	06/05/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Nightingale	1	06/05/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Grasshopper Warbler	1	18/06/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Bee eater	7	26/06/2017	East Leake Quarry	Clive Prescott
Lesser Whitethroat	1	07/08/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Little egret	5	18/08/2017	R Erewash, Manor Farm	Adrian Orrell
Spotted Flycatcher	2	20/08/2017	Long Eaton Gravel Pits	Clive Prescott
Shag	2	28/08/2017	Rifle Range Pit	Clive Prescott
Little egret	1	05/09/2017	Kwikfit, Nottingham Road	James Johnstone-Burgess



Little Egret at Kwikfit 9 August 2017
Photo credit James Johnstone-Burgess



LENS
Long Eaton Natural History Society
Wildlife Group

LENS INDOOR MEETINGS 7.15pm Conference Room,
 Long Eaton School
 Thoresby Rd, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 3NP
 Cost £1.50 for members, £2.50 for visitors. **All welcome.**

- 9 October AGM Norman Lewis The History of Attenborough Nature Reserve
- 13 November Kieran Lee Sustrans talk on Wildlife at Bennerley
- 11 December Quiz and Social Fay Blackburn
- 8 Jan 2018 Rhodri Green 'Pollinating the Peak – Derbyshire's Beautiful Bumblebees'.
- 12 Feb 2018 Lorna Griffiths Introducing Dormice
- 12 March 2018 Adrian Orrell Bats in Romania

CONTACTS

Stuart Gilder 07904169987
Lensnaturalhistory@gmail.com



Photograph taken in her Long Eaton garden when Fay Blackburn was clearing dead leaves shows a pair of mating large yellow underwing moths, luckily Fay hadn't damaged them. This shows the importance of leaving cover for insects and other animals

Thanks to all contributors and Fay Blackburn, Andrew Christian, Stuart Gilder, Robert Waldron, Dr Nigel Downes, James Johnstone-Burgess, John Langford and Marion Bryce, for photographs used in this bulletin. Send articles and photographs to Lensnaturalhistory@gmail.com
 Deadline for next LENS bulletin March 2018



Knopper Gall

Andy took this photo and wondered what had caused the growth on the acorn. It is a knopper gall caused by a tiny gall wasp, *Andricus quercuscalicis* and it is specific to pedunculate oak.

Membership Renewal Form

I would like to be a member of LENS Wildlife Group

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel no _____

Email _____

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £10.00

The annual subscription entitles members to attend meetings at £1.50 per session.

I agree/do not agree that LENS can keep my name on a database.

Please return completed form to the Hon Treasurer

LENS WILDLIFE GROUP
40 YEARS OF WATCHING OVER
LOCAL WILDLIFE

We're on the Web:

<https://lensweb.wordpress.com/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/lensnaturalhistory/>