



I hope you have all enjoyed the summer and will now enjoy catching up here with each other's news. With the extremes of weather over recent months, environmental issues have been constantly in the headlines. Environmental issues have also been highlighted in the following pages as they very much affect our insect-life. Do remember to share your own news and views in our next publication. Glynis Harris (editor)

FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER

Weather-wise it has been an interesting year to say the least. Evidence of climate change seems to be mounting with, as I write, wildfires around the Mediterranean and floods elsewhere. I mentioned in the last edition of the newsletter that the Purple Emperor had been seen in Nottinghamshire. Well it seems to have succeeded in turning up even closer to Nottingham City. More interestingly, sites in the south of England e.g. Alice Holt in Hampshire, The Knepp in West Sussex etc seem to have had relatively poor years (climate or weather?). I am not aware of any sightings in Derbyshire yet but perhaps next year. It was thought that the Nottinghamshire sightings may have arisen from releases, but the number and spread of them suggests that there is almost certainly some natural colonisation which may possibly be due to changes in climate.

Off the field, as it were, our last journal highlighted the challenge we face as a result of changes in taxonomic names. It is a perennial problem that observers from different generations use different names for the same species. One example is the Large Skipper – now *Ochlodes sylvanus*, formerly (briefly) *Ochlodes faunus*, and before that *Ochlodes venata*, if memory serves. The message here is to try to check for up-to-date taxonomy or, if you don't recognise a species, resort to the internet (or maybe use the colloquial name!). This may not be easy, however, as Chris du Feu notes in his article on old species records later in this newsletter.

There has, lately, been a lot of highly justified interest in bees, and it is something which we are very pleased to see. Three species of bumblebee have become extinct in recent decades, one in ten species of wild bee face extinction and others have faced large declines. The main causes of the decline are habitat loss and the changes in agricultural practices. We can all do our bit to help, so do grow something for the bees!

Phil Gilbert

Articles in this newsletter contain opinions of the individual authors, and information which may not have been officially verified.

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| D | ▪ Meet people who share your interest in entomology | D |
| a | ▪ Take part in meetings, fieldwork, exhibitions, trips and social events | a |
| N | ▪ Report your insect sightings for our database, to help with research and conservation | N |
| E | ▪ Learn more about insects, and share your knowledge with others | E |
| S | ▪ Join in with your news and conversation on our Facebook and Twitter | S |
| | ▪ Enjoy (and contribute to) this newsletter and other DaNES publications | |
| | ▪ Make use of our society's entomology books, photos, microscopes and collecting equipment | |

DaNES NEWS



Latest news updates from your DaNES committee

By Russell Nevin

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

With pandemic restrictions finally being relaxed, the staff at Shipley Country Park are able to allow us to use their meeting room once again (our thanks to them). July saw the first physical meeting of members of the committee since February 2020. Unfortunately we are still no better looking in the flesh than on the computer screen! It was good to see members that haven't been able to attend online meetings, and have their input. We are, of course, following the government's safety advice regarding Covid.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As previously stated, our intention was to hold the postponed AGM as soon as practicable. Due to the number of holidays planned for August, it has been decided to hold the meeting on Tuesday 21st September (a change from the formerly advertised date). It will be held at 19:30 in the Green Room at Shipley Country Park Visitor Centre. All members are welcome, and may vote on such matters as the officers' reports, and the appointment of society officers for the next period. Please note: if you haven't been to a meeting before, the entrance to the Green Room is at the rear of the Visitor Centre (the main entrance to which will be closed at this time of day). Latest government advice on Covid safety will be followed, so please bring a face-mask.

ANNUAL INSECT SHOW

Attempts are being renewed to find a suitable venue for our annual show in November. As well as the difficulty in finding a location, many of the exhibitors we normally have are reluctant to commit their availability in the current climate of uncertainty. What is apparent is that, if we are successful in hosting a show, it is likely to be on a smaller scale this time than those of recent years.

SHIPLEY SUMMER SHOW

Despite having to organise this much later than usual, our summer show took place at Shipley Country Park, in the Visitor Centre, on Sunday 15th August. It was a small event, but all went well, with a good selection of exhibits enjoyed by a good number of visitors.

DaNES EQUIPMENT

In the last newsletter, we asked if anyone was able to offer to store some of our exhibition and field-event equipment (approximately a small shed's worth). Unfortunately we have had no takers. It doesn't, however, all have to be in one place. So if you can offer any space, maybe just for one or two items, please let Phil Gilbert know.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Since the last newsletter, we have lost 2 members, one having resigned, and one membership having been cancelled due to non-payment of the subscription. If your subscription is still outstanding, do please send it to the treasurer, Dave Budworth.

EDITOR'S NOTE

To change from email to printed newsletters, or vice versa, contact Dave Budworth dbud01@aol.com or 01283 215188

DIARY DATES



21st Sept: DaNES AGM - 7.30pm
Shipley Country Park Visitor Centre
(Please bring a face-mask)

Cancelled: AES Annual Exhibition & Trade Fair
Kempton Park, Sunbury-on-Thames

Many events and gatherings are still being postponed or cancelled due to the pandemic.

Please check our website for DaNES updates
<http://www.danes-insects.org.uk/>

FINALLY – FIELD MEETINGS!

By Russell Nevin



Insect surveying at Newstead and Annesley Country Park.
From left: Felicity Jackson (with bat detector), Paul Chapman, Phil Gilbert

After the long hiatus through the last year and a half, DaNES finally resumed collaborative fieldwork this July, the first such activity since 2019. The venue was Newstead and Annesley Country Park. As previously mentioned in our DaNES News (see winter newsletter 2020/21), a local group - “The Friends of Newstead and Annesley Country Park” - are interested in knowing which insects are present on the site, as well as any ideas DaNES may have for enhancing the habitat, to either boost numbers and/or increase diversity. This is necessary as many insects are valuable components of the food chain for the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians that call the Country Park home.

The chosen date for the meeting was Saturday 3rd July. After a week of generally hot, sunny weather, the day dawned damp with intermittent showers. It was, nevertheless, warm and humid and, whilst walking our dog locally at 08:00 that morning, I had seen both Ringlet and Meadow Brown flying. Some DaNES members, who had farther to travel, decided to give it a miss, but three of us, Phil Gilbert, Paul Chapman and myself, met in the pouring rain in the car park at 11:00, and set off. The rain was punctuated by sunny spells, and it was soon evident that, though the number of insects (particularly flies) was reduced, there were still plenty about. Marbled White butterflies, being less active and only recently emerged, made good subjects for photographs, and sweeping the soggy vegetation revealed, amongst other things, a Six-belted Clearwing moth. Paul Chapman’s invertebrate interests include molluscs (slugs and snails) and the conditions proved ideal for these. After a couple of hours, we decided to call it a day. The weather then had the last laugh as, an hour after we departed, the sun shone brilliantly for the next hour and a half (although it was followed by a heavy, noisy thunderstorm!).

We were sufficiently impressed with the potential of the site, that we agreed to try again soon after in better weather. The appointed day, Thursday 15th July, arrived with warm and sunny conditions. This time we were joined by DaNES member Felicity Jackson. Numbers and range of insects were much improved on this visit, and Felicity demonstrated how a bat detector could be useful in finding Orthoptera (grasshoppers and crickets). Probably the best observations of the day were a Mottled Grasshopper and a Silver-washed Fritillary butterfly. In total, over the two visits, covering five hours, 53 species were recorded as follows:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) | 17 species |
| Coleoptera (beetles) | 14 species |
| Orthoptera (grasshoppers and crickets) | 7 species |
| Hemiptera (true bugs) | 5 species |
| Diptera (flies) | 4 species |
| Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) | 3 species |
| Hymenoptera (bees and wasps) | 3 species |



Marbled White on common spotted orchid

The full list has been supplied to our hosts, and will appear in a future DaNES journal. Obviously much more remains to be found, and the Friends of Newstead and Annesley Country Park are keen for DaNES to conduct a night-time moth-trapping event on site.

An aspect of field meetings which can be especially instructive is seeing how other recorders work, as well as gaining tips and hints on finding insects. I was wholly unaware, for instance, that there is a simple, free, mobile phone app which gives you an accurate OS Grid reference of your location, much simplifying recording each find. Likewise, that the use of a bat detector would allow us to locate cryptically camouflaged specimens which may well otherwise have escaped detection.



Cryptocephalus moraei



French Bee Chafer



French Bee Chafer

On Monday 14th June I paid a visit to Wilford Brick Pit to look for flowers and insects. I spent a couple of hours there, but didn't find anything out of the ordinary. It was just a nice day to be out, there was a good show of orchids, including bee, southern marsh and common spotted, and I had the place to myself. As the heat increased, I decided to head for home. I was just passing the Tennis Centre on University Boulevard when I suddenly remembered about Beeston Sidings Nature Reserve. I was just in time, and managed to slow down enough to make the left turn.

The reserve is a small, thin, wooded strip at the back of the playing fields, with some cleared areas and a well-vegetated edge along a narrow path that runs parallel to the sidings. You'd never guess there's a nature reserve there and it is easily overlooked. I hadn't been there for years, even though it's only 3 miles from my house, and the last time I visited I found a male golden pheasant strutting around under the trees, a most unexpected find. It wasn't tame and soon disappeared as I tried to get a picture. The reserve was used for the relocation of slow-worms from a site near Victoria Centre, but I don't think any have been seen for a number of years.

I started to make my way along the path by the fence and found a nice leaf beetle *Cryptocephalus moraei* that is only known from three other sites in Nottinghamshire. I had only seen this once before, so the visit had been well worth it. I took a few photos and moved on to check out the flowering hogweed. On the first clump of flowers I noticed a striking, hairy, pale yellow and black spotted beetle, and one I had never seen before. About 10mm long, it was obviously a chafer of some kind, but I had no idea which one. I took a lot of photos as a breeze had sprung up, as it always does when you point your macro lens at anything. Realising that this was something quite rare, I left it in peace and headed home to try and identify it.

Looking in Brock's "Insects of Britain and Ireland" and his latest "Britain's Insects" there were two candidates - the Bee Chafer *Trichius fasciatus* that occurs in southern and central Wales and central North Scotland, and the French Bee Chafer, also known as the French Flower Chafer *Trichius gallicus*, that is present in most of Europe and is expanding its range northwards. They are separated by looking at the black spots on the base of the elytra. *Fasciatus* has two spots that form a band, whereas *gallicus* has two isolated spots. Looking at my pictures, it was obvious that this was the French Bee Chafer *Trichius gallicus*. The distribution map in "Insects of Britain and Ireland" shows a small area around the Thames and a larger area in Norfolk. I searched online for any records and there were hardly any.

I sent the record and photos to Trevor Pendleton who couldn't quite believe it, and he forwarded them on to the Notts Coleoptera recorder, and he felt the same. I posted the record on the Pan Species Listing Facebook page and got a bit more information. Since 2000 there have been six records, from Warwickshire, Sussex, South Essex, West Kent, Surrey and Norfolk. I also contacted a friend in Norfolk who passed the pictures on to a couple of Coleopterists. They replied that there was no known population in East Anglia, just a record from the grounds of a stately home, which was searched for but never seen again.

The following day I went back to the reserve and re-found the chafer straight away. I ran back down the path to a woman who was doing a slow-worm survey and she got to see it. I managed to get some better photos, then it flew a short distance and tucked itself under a flower head. It remained motionless for a good ten minutes, before flying off down the path. I was surprised how strong a flier it was. Despite searching for well over an hour, I could not relocate it. The following day I met a friend on site and we searched the hogweed in vain. We wandered off to look at some plants, then decided to give it one more go and I found it on an oxeye daisy, before it flew and disappeared yet again. All three observations were made late morning when it was very hot.

Finding such a rarity close to home was a great experience and shows that anything can turn up anywhere. Thanks to all the people I contacted for their information and prompt replies.

SUMMER SHOW AT SHIPLEY – AUGUST 15th 2021

By Phil Gilbert

As we emerged from tight restrictions it was thought that DaNES could put together a simplified version of our usual summer show at Shipley Country Park. The DaNES team (myself, Dave Budworth, Pete Patrick and Keith Moore) produced a display of preserved moths and beetles. We also collected, from the park, live specimens of several groups including Orthoptera (notably Rossel's Bush Cricket), Coleoptera, Hemiptera and spiders. These exhibits proved of great interest to the numerous visitors, which were largely families with small children. The visitors were also captivated by the spider display by Glynn Woodhead and Marlies Chell which always draws a lot of attention. For those interested in the aquatic world, Beverley Rhodes took samples from the park's dipping pond so the diversity of life in such a small pond could be seen. Terrance Hope and Robin Gregson-Brown, with their PC connected to a microscope, were able to show the smaller life forms and the incredible detail of larger organisms. We were very pleased with the number of visitors and their level of interest. Some brought their children for curiosity and ended up being more interested themselves. Thank you to those who made this small event as successful as it was.

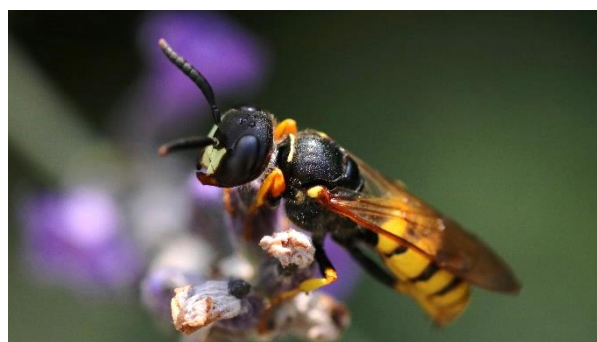


THE BEE WOLF IN DERBYSHIRE

By Kieron Huston

On the 4th August my attention was caught by an unusual wasp-like insect darting between the lavender flowers in the garden. It was very alert and quite mobile, but clearly searching for something as it moved between the lavender stems. I managed to photograph it and was surprised to find it was a female Bee Wolf *Philanthus triangulum*. This is a solitary bee that preys on Honeybees.

They used to be extremely rare, with just a few scattered populations on southern heaths and coasts, but in the last few decades they have expanded their range dramatically. According to Steven Falk (who confirmed the ID) the species is eruptive with irregular expansion and contraction of populations that may or may not persist locally. There are very few records on the NBN for this region, but it has been seen a few times in Leicestershire and Staffordshire, there is at least one record in Nottinghamshire, and there are records from Manchester and York. Definitely a species to look out for in the future.



Philanthus triangulum, Bee Wolf - 4th August 2021

This is a 3-part article, based on almost 70 years of personal observations in the wild, primarily in and around my home county of Nottinghamshire, although these results sadly also apply to much of the UK. Part 1 of the article was published in the previous newsletter, and the final part will be in the next issue.

There were many wild-flower species in these meadows and one, bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) literally covered much of the ground with its bright yellow and orange flowers. As children, we used to call it the egg and bacon plant. However, this was the foodplant of the Common Blue butterfly (*Polyommatus icarus*). This bright cobalt blue butterfly, in the male at least, was a stunning addition to the meadows. They occurred in large numbers, flitting all over the fields like mobile sapphires and if the sun went in, they clung upside down on long grass stems. Small Copper butterflies (*Lycaena phlaeas*), with bright orange, black-spotted forewings were just as common as the Common Blues. A rather lovely aberration, with a row of blue spots near the basal orange border of the hindwings, is known as ab. *coerulea* and was almost as common as the type form. Both butterflies are very scarce today.

The Wall Brown butterfly (*Lasiommata megera*), occurred in their hundreds, settling on the ground at my feet and then rising up again to alight a short distance further on. I have seen but one Wall Brown during the last 50



Wall Brown butterfly

years and it was in the neighbouring county of Derbyshire. This species, like many others, is in national decline, as is the Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*). These lovely little beige coloured butterflies occurred in profusion all over the fields, but it is many years since I have seen this species in Nottinghamshire. Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*), Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) and Peacock butterflies (*Aglais io*) have all declined alarmingly due to many of the stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*), their foodplant, having been destroyed through development. I remember on one occasion, whilst walking through a small orchard where many fallen pears were littering the ground, I came upon a host of Red Admirals, feeding on the rotting fruit. There must have been at least seventy Red Admirals there. Like the white butterflies, this is a sight that I doubt that I will ever see again. I now see only three or four together at the most.

One of my favourite butterflies, the Orange Tip (*Anthocaris cardamines*), was common here, the larvae feeding on the seed pods of hedge garlic or garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolate*). They can be quite difficult to detect with their two-tone green colouration. Only the adult male has the orange wing tips but both sexes have the greenish chequerboard marking on the underside of the hindwings. This is good camouflage when perched amongst the garlic flower heads. Whenever I see the first Orange Tips of the year, I know spring has arrived at last so, for me at least, it is a real harbinger of the end of winter. One of the first butterflies of the year and also one of the last, is the beautiful bright yellow (in the male) Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*). There were a few alder buckthorn bushes (*Frangula alnus*) present, which ensured that the foodplant for the larvae was always available.

And it is not just the butterflies that have disappeared. The beautiful Garden Tiger moth (*Arctia caja*) has also almost entirely, if not completely, vanished from this area. This species was not just common back then, it was ubiquitous and occurred in many variations of wing colour pattern. Its larva, the well-known and very hairy "woolly-bear" was found feeding on a variety of wild plants that were growing in profusion. A close relative, the Buff Ermine moth (*Spilarctia luteum*) was, if anything, even more common than the Garden Tiger. I even found the melanic form known as var. *zatima*, where the usual buff colouration was replaced by dark brown with only the wing veins picked out in buff. Mind you, this form was never very common. Both Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet moths (*Zygaena lonicerae*) and Six-spot Burnet moths (*Zygaena filipendulae*), resplendent in iridescent green and red spots, were to be found in profusion on the pinkish-purple flower heads of the knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).



Puss Moth

There was a stand of pollarded poplar trees in one of the shallow valleys, which were the haunts of a number of moths - the Puss Moth (*Cerura vinula*) with its amazing space-age larva, and the Poplar Hawk-moth (*Laothoe populi*), a large grey moth with chestnut patches on its hindwings, its bright green larva possessing a yellow horn at the tip of its abdomen. A number of other moth species were also associated with these poplar trees, including the White Satin Moth (*Leucoma salicis*), the Peppered Moth (*Biston betularia*), famous for its role in industrial melanism, and the Red Underwing (*Catocala nupta*). On the large clumps of rosebay willowherb ... (Continued)

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Magpie Moth

(*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), which were dotted here and there across the meadows, could be found the amazing dark brown larvae of the large Elephant Hawk-moth (*Deilephila elpenor*). The adult moth is a beautiful mixture of olive green and bright pink. Another ubiquitous species was the large geometrid moth, the Magpie (*Abraxas grossulariata*). This moth was so common that one became blasé about seeing it. Perhaps it was the decline in gardeners growing gooseberry and blackcurrant bushes, which the Magpie larvae fed upon, or perhaps simply habitat destruction. Either way, I have not seen a Magpie moth in this vicinity for more than fifty years. Although it was so common, it was, nevertheless, a very beautiful moth with large white wings covered in black spots and with two yellow bars on the forewings. It had the habit of feigning death if picked up.

... **Article to be concluded in the next newsletter**

LEGS GALORE

By Roderick Dunn

On 8th June my wife and self set off at 8am along North Burbage Edge in the hope of seeing a ring ouzel. We hadn't seen one for a few years. We took the path atop the edge and soon heard a curlew in the valley, followed soon after by a cuckoo. After about a kilometre we found a suitable place to stop and wait. A stonechat alighted atop a small sapling below the edge, and after about half an hour we spotted a ring ouzel, after hearing its piping call and its alarm cackle. We had good views, and then set off back. After a few metres my wife Brenda spotted something crawling over the worn rocks on the path. It was a Striped Millipede (*Ommatoiulus sabulosus*). We focused in and eventually spotted over a hundred on the path rocks. There were also a few black individuals which may have been the Black Snake Millipede (*Tachypodoiulus niger*). When we got back to the car park the herds had arrived. Soon there would be many more legs over the path rocks - but not arthropodous!



Striped Millipede at Burbage Edge

STELLA DAVIES' SLUG – NEW TO NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

By Chris du Feu

There are 5 species of 'large black slugs' (*Arion ater* agg.) known in Britain. All of them are variable in colour ranging from black through orange, yellow, brown and grey to white. The foot fringe may be the same or different colour from the body. Many individuals are difficult or impossible to identify even under a hand lens and need dissection or DNA analysis to determine the species.

In 2014 I collected a few specimens from a very variably-coloured population in Wicken, Cambridgeshire. They were taken by Ben Rowson (author of FSC field guide and Conchological Society terrestrial recorder). He found their DNA did not match any of the existing 4 known British species. Not only that, the DNA did not match any known *Arion* species. It was new to science and has not yet been fully described. Ben then examined some preserved specimens from the late Stella Davies' collection and found that she too had collected some but not been able to identify them. These predated my Wicken specimens – hence the Stella Davies' Slug. There are now about 10 records of the species in Britain.

In mid-August I saw 2 slugs in the garden (Beckingham SK7790) which did not exactly fit the usual 4 species. I sent these to Ben. On dissection he confirmed these too as Stella Davies' Slugs - A first for Nottinghamshire.

At present we do not know whether the species is genuinely rare, or widespread but overlooked. We do not know if it is native nor if it occurs anywhere else in the world. We do not yet know if we will eventually be able to identify it without dissection. The species is included in the FSC guide 'Slugs of Britain and Ireland' ISBN 978 1 908819 13 0 and this is the only complete, up-to-date and correct guide to identifying British slugs.

If you find the 'large black slugs' in your garden are very variable in appearance, you could well have this species. If so it would be good to be able to confirm it. Let me know - chris.r.dufeu@gmail.com

SALES, SWAPS & FREEBIES

If you have any entomological equipment or natural history books to sell, swap, or offer as a freebie email details to the editor to advertise in the next newsletter ... editor's email is on back page.

LET THE GRASS GROW!

By Bill Grange

I am firmly of the opinion that relatively small changes at a local level can play a part in helping to stem the world-wide catastrophic loss of biodiversity. The obsession with 'tidiness' by both local authorities and a large section of the public, including the preoccupation with manicured grass which we see everywhere, along roadsides and in parks and, indeed, in the gardens of private citizens, is the enemy of wildlife.

When I was a lad, much longer ago than I care to contemplate, public parks had large areas of mown sward to which were affixed metal signs with the wording 'Keep off the Grass', the only function of them to be tidy foils to the regimented flowerbeds of French marigolds or whatever. Now, I would like to turn this admonition on its head and throw it back to the local authorities to tell them, instead of the constant mowing, to let the grass grow! In Derby, this regular mowing of verges and parks continued unabated through the period of 'austerity' (and through the Covid 19 pandemic crisis), while other council services have been drastically reduced. Apart from some comparatively small areas set aside for conservation, huge areas of public parks are regularly mown, far in excess of the need for people to picnic or to play football, etc. Areas of grassland could, instead, be wildflower meadows, contributing greatly to the biodiversity of their localities and, at the same time, saving money.

At Kedleston Park (National Trust), much of the whole of the western half now consists of flower-rich grassland with 'rougher' areas of bramble, etc., all maintained by a small herd of miniature cattle. Visitors can enjoy exploring this part of the park by means of pathways cut through the meadowland and leading into the adjacent biodiverse woodlands.

Unfortunately, a large section of the public seems to have been conditioned to expect parks to consist of open expanses of shorn grass. When, in early 2020, Derby City Council decided to close Allestree golf course, and
(Continued on next page)



- 1 Allestree Park - showing a huge area regularly mown
- 2 Allestree Park - an area not regularly mown, showing the resulting diverse flora.
- 3 A verge in Rotherham, planted with colourful 'wildflower' annuals. Although many members of the public have been seduced by this type of planting, it is not recommended by conservationists, as the verges have to be re-seeded every spring, following the application of herbicide and contain species which are not native to Britain.
- 4 A verge in a suburb of Manchester, with wild native perennials. Much better for pollinators and is sustainable.

(Continued)

incorporate it into the Local Nature Reserve if no organisation would take it on, the reaction by many people was hostile. This is typified by statements such as 'without the golf, the parkland will turn into long grass and scrub, and will no longer be able to be enjoyed by walkers and residents.' To naturalists, like ourselves, sentiments like this do come as something of a shock. The sad truth is that many do not share our love of wild places - and local politicians have been more inclined to listen to those who like things 'neat and tidy', rather than those of us who want a wilder, more biodiverse, environment.

Nevertheless, as the deepening ecological crisis receives more coverage in the media, there are signs that more people are coming over to our side. I wrote to some councillors and the Grounds Maintenance section of Derby City Council, about their management of grass verges (accompanied by photographs). Firstly I expressed my concern over their application of potentially health-damaging herbicide around the base of trees and street furniture prior to mowing. Secondly I raised the issue of their frequency and extent of mowing, and I offered some ideas on how the verges ought to be managed for biodiversity.

I did get a more-or-less sympathetic response from a supervisor of the Grounds Maintenance section and, since then, there does seem to be a change of policy! It seems that the Allestree Park golf course will, indeed, be incorporated into the Local Nature Reserve with, initially, much less mowing, pending the formulation of a comprehensive management plan. The verges around the City have, on the whole been less cut-over in 2021, though not without some adverse comments from the 'tidy-up brigade'! The organisation Plantlife has had some influence through its 'No Mow May' campaign.

References:

Article 'Keep off the Grass' by Bill Grange, Natural History Society 'Observations', 2021:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/wc65589qb3halbo/Keep%20off%20the%20Grass.pdf?dl=0>

Website, on managing grass verges, Plantlife
https://www.plantlife.org.uk/application/files/3315/7063/5411/Managing_grassland_road_verges_Singles.pdf

BOOK REVIEW

By Roy Frost

THE ORTHOPTERA OF RUTLAND by Phil Rudkin,
Published privately, 2021 - 32pp, 20 colour illustrations, colour distribution maps. Softback.

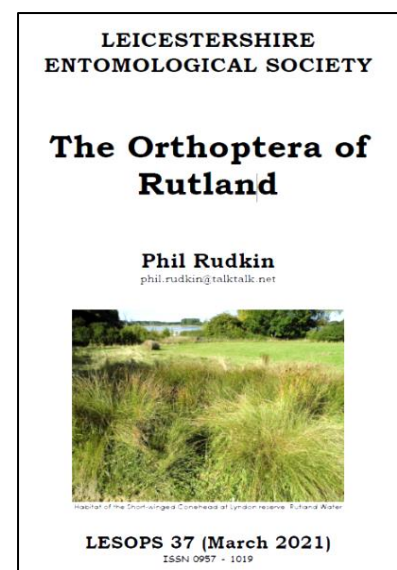
This work was first published in March 2021 by the Leicestershire Entomological Society as one of their Occasional Publications Series and the author has now made further copies available.

The cover features a photograph of Short-winged Conehead habitat at Rutland Water. The text begins with a list of native British Orthoptera, followed by accounts of historical and modern recording in Rutland. Earlier casual recording was metamorphosed when the author became Orthoptera Recorder for the Rutland Water Nature Reserves in 2001 and County Recorder six years later. This gave impetus to more systematic recording, greatly aided by the use of bat detectors to locate and identify both grasshoppers and crickets. There is a section on this, with useful hints on how to stop everything else being drowned out by stridulating Roesel's Bush Crickets!

Mapping was carried out at the tetrad level and shows the recent years when the various species were found in each tetrad. The richest tetrads were the two at the western end of the fabulous Rutland Water with 11 species each. The bulk of the book is given to systematic accounts of the 14 species found in the county in recent times, with details of their UK status, local habitats, and Rutland records, accompanied by one or two colour photographs.

Three appendices feature the county's geology, a site gazetteer and accounts of the discoveries of four adventitious species, which capture the excitement associated with new finds; they also serve to bring back pleasant memories of balmy summer days. It is interesting to note that the quartet of species involved [Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, Roesel's Bush Cricket and Long-winged and Short-winged Coneheads] were all found in Derbyshire or Nottinghamshire between two and five years after their detection in Rutland, continuing their climate-induced spread to the north and north west.

I greatly enjoyed reading this book, and it is available from the author at £12, plus £3. Contact phil.rudkin@talktalk.net



FIELDWORK AT OLD QUARRY, BEELEY MOOR - JULY 23rd 2021

By Darren Clarke



Nearly midnight, and activity increases around the edge of the sheet.
Left to right - Pete Patrick, Dave Budworth, and Keith Cox

A small group of us were recently invited to capture and record the moths flying at a private site high up on the edge of Beeley Moor. The old stone quarry has, over time, been reclaimed by (and probably planted with) a relatively dense covering of native trees inc oak, hazel, birch, poplar, wych elm and scots pine. The fieldwork was arranged for 23rd July and it turned out to be a fine, dry night. We were welcomed onto the site by the owner at 19:30 and a little later by his chosen ecologist, Bev Rhodes.

After what seemed an eternity, a tripod and sheet, three Skinner traps and an actinic trap were put together and spaced out around the site and finally switched on at 21:30. It had been nearly two years since we had taken any recording equipment out into the field and it took a while to assemble the traps. It actually took a minute or two to figure out the process of starting the generator (!!)

At lighting up time the temperature was 18C, the sky was overcast and there was a very gentle breeze. The MV tripod and white sheet, sited in a rough clearing, was chosen as our base area. Nothing much happened at any of the lights until 22:30 when a few bits, a Green Carpet and a Small Fan-footed Wave, arrived. The number of individual moths greatly increased towards midnight, by which time the traps contained large numbers of moths of many different species. Moths attracted to the MV tripod and sheet were recorded and potted as and when they arrived. Those inside the traps were left alone until they were emptied later on.



Large Emerald moth

There was no falling off in activity when, at 02:00, we began to empty the traps and record the moths attracted to each light. The temperature was now 15C. By 03:45 the contents of all five traps had been noted and the lights turned off. Well over 100 different species of larger moths were identified altogether, and (in addition to those already mentioned) included Beautiful Snout, Welsh Wave, Slender Brindle, Double Lobed, Muslin Footman, Brown Scallop and Northern Spinach. There was also a good selection of micro-moths attracted to the lights and recorded. The most common species were True Lovers Knot, Large Emerald, July Highflyer, Northern Spinach, Riband Wave, and Common, Buff and Scarce Footman Moths.

So ... notwithstanding the brambles, nettles, spluttering generators, loose cables, hidden cables, potholes, deep holes, and low branches, the session was most enjoyable, and it felt great to be back in the swing again.

Thankyou to the owner of the site for access, and Bev Rhodes for asking us to become part of the survey team.

BEE-ING MORE OBSERVANT

By Glynis Harris

Spending more time at home last year, I started to notice what a variety of bees there were in my garden. I was keen to discover what they were, but was finding it difficult. Kieron Huston then wrote an article in our summer newsletter 2020, which seemed to help simplify the task. Encouraged by this, I have been on a mission, this year, to try (with help) to identify them ...

In spring and early summer the garden was alive with bees – I found Early Bumblebees, Garden Bumblebees, Buff or White-tailed Bumblebees (hard to differentiate), Common Carders, and Tree Bumblebees. Many flowers were in bloom at that time, but the greatest activity was on my cotoneaster. By the end of June, however, the cotoneaster flowers had finished and the Early Bumblebees vanished, as did the Tree Bumblebees soon after. The main action then shifted to a bank of campanula which had started flowering. At first this seemed to be covered entirely in Honeybees. Some seemed odd, however, tipping their tails up while foraging. I then discovered that these individuals were leafcutters and this is characteristic behaviour. By the start of August, the campanula was spent, the leafcutters disappeared, and Honeybees homed in on my buddleia which had just come into bloom. I also still saw the occasional Garden, Buff/White-tailed, and Common Carder Bees. Another visitor, for a while during the summer, was a tiny solitary bee, its legs always fat with pollen. This, I learned, was an Orange-legged Furrow Bee. I also spotted a Red-tailed Bumblebee, but only one, on an antirrhinum. What I thought was a bee, on my sage, turned out to be a bee mimic, the Narcissus Bulb Fly. By late August I had Honeybees still on the buddleia, and a few Common Carders. I did, however, see a definite Buff-tailed Bumblebee at last; it was a queen, so its tail was actually buff. I shall now look out for Ivy Bees as autumn progresses.

Observing my bees this year has enticed me to find out more about them, including whose hives the Honeybees might be coming from; it would be good to try honey produced by the bees I have been watching. It has also led me to discover more about some of my plants. I noticed that, while the cotoneaster was always humming with bees, 3 plants with very abundant and more visible flowers were almost devoid of insects - I have now read that elder flowers are self-pollinated, and feverfew and garden loosestrife are actually repellent to many insects. I need to make sure, from now on, that my plants are bee-friendly.



Leafcutter bee



Buff-tailed Bumblebee - queen



Buff (or White) Tailed Bumblebee



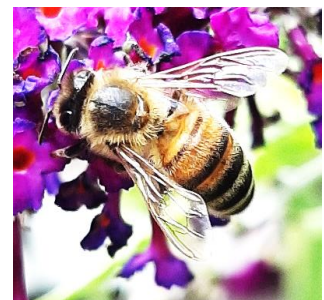
Early Bumblebee



Garden Bumblebee



Common Carder Bee



Honeybee



Red-tailed Bumblebee



Orange-legged Furrow Bee



Tree Bumblebee



Bee mimic - Narcissus Bulb Fly

WHAT IS RECORDED IS HISTORY; THE REST IS MYSTERY

By Chris du Feu

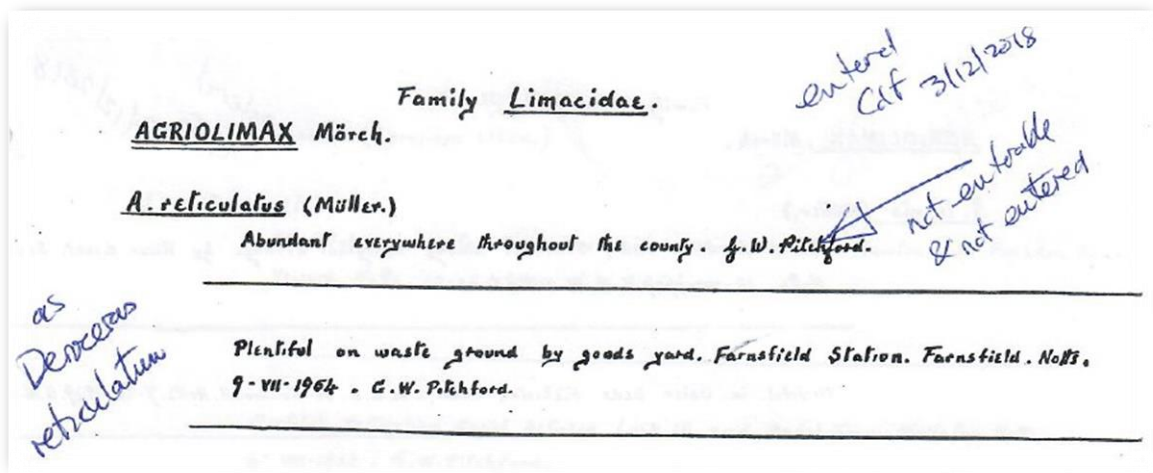
Adrian Norris, the former Conchological Society terrestrial mollusc recorder, mentioned to me that a certain G W Pitchford had been an active mollusc recorder in the past and it would be good to be able to secure his records. Thanks to some work by Dave Budworth, the records were found and came my way to deal with. As a result there are now nearly 600 additional records of molluscs in the DaNES collection.

Of more interest than the number of records are the story behind the collection of the records, the problems of computerisation of old records, and the insights into recent historical recording.

Pitchford was active from the late 1940s until the early 1970s. He seemed to specialise in freshwater and sub-fossil molluscs. He lived in Southwell and many records are from the town and immediate surrounds, although he did rove more widely and there are scattered records from all over the county. The records are very patchy, reflecting his particular interests and opportunities. Many of the sub-fossil records, for instance, were made during excavations for the building of the Edward Cludd School. Although he was clearly very enthusiastic, and known as the Nottinghamshire mollusc expert, he seemed to have little interaction with other people. His notebook with the county mollusc records are almost entirely his own. The very few where other records are mentioned are all joint records with him. There are only occasional references to national authorities where a difficult or unusual specimen was sent for identification.

I found references to a collection of mollusc shells, made by Pitchford, and eventually discovered it was donated to the Nottingham Museum Collection by Pitchford in 1985. It comprises mostly marine species and, of the others, not a single specimen comes from Nottinghamshire.

Without wishing to denigrate Pitchford's efforts, I think there is a message here. Some experts are very happy to be regarded as the local authority on their chosen taxon. They may either actively or passively, discourage others from pursuing the same field in case they lose their position. Whether Pitchford was such a person, I cannot tell. However, the county does not have a good history of mollusc recording. We do not know how much effort Pitchford put into encouraging others but subsequent mollusc-recording in the county has been more notable for its absence than its activity.



Extract from Pitchford's neat notebook, with my own scrawled notes added.

Pitchford's notebook was sensibly ordered with records of the same species together on one page (or sequence of pages), in a loose-leaf binder, additional pages being inserted when needed. However these pages were neat copies of his records from field notebooks. (I wish my writing was as neat as his.) We cannot know what records he made in field notebooks but did not transfer to this neat copy: there were certainly some. Like many recorders (even today) he gave value to species in inverse proportion to their abundance. For the slug *Deroceras reticulatum* the page reads 'common everywhere', followed by just 8 records of the species in a total of only 5 locations in the north and centre of the county. This compares badly with the 6 records of another slug, *Tandonia budapestensis*, which included the first ever record in the county together with, we presume, all other records of this, then very rare, species. That gives the next message – unless we record the common species we will not have evidence that it is common. To quote the late John McMeeking 'Record what is there, not just what is rare.'

The national BRC was created well after Pitchford's recording began. The Atlas of British Flora, with the innovative 10km dot distribution maps, was published in 1962 and from the beginning the BRC encouraged recording using the OS grid at 10km resolution or better. Despite the last decade of Pitchford's recording being in that era, none of his records made use of either the OS grid or longitude and latitude, but were in the style typical of

(Continued)

(Continued)

the Victorian era with reference to places, ie '100 yards south of the signal box'. With OS maps made in pre-Beeching times we can now locate the signal box but some places were more difficult. Southwell golf course, for example, is now in a completely different place from where it was then. Local knowledge from a Southwell inhabitant was vital to resolve this one. Some places were very precisely described and easy to locate to within under 100 metres. Others were equally precisely described but difficult to locate – lock numbers on Nottingham Canal are no use unless you have a map showing the locations of these locks before the canal was infilled.

Some descriptions would lead to a co-ordinate accuracy of 1km – generally a village name would be enough. However a record just in Clumber Park could only be recorded to the 10km grid accuracy. There really is no substitute for a grid reference coupled with a place name to allow for checking of common errors such as transposing northings and eastings or giving the wrong 100km letters for a place near the 100km boundary, thereby shifting the record by 100km.

The final obstacle was nomenclature. Taxonomists seem to be working very hard to make life as difficult as possible for as many observers of as many taxa as possible. Many species have had changes in either, or both of, specific and generic name. Some have changed more than once. Some are easy to trace, others take a surprising amount of teasing out.

The title of my article is more wisdom from John McMeeking. Old records – even from the fairly recent past – give a window into the time before the current rapid changes we are seeing in species distribution. Turning old notes into acceptable species records can be challenging, time consuming and frustrating, but overall very satisfying. Pitchford's records will not be the only ones gathering dust and probably destined eventually for the recycling bin. It would be a waste if any records which can be salvaged are lost. Do not let it happen.

A “NEW” BEETLE

By Tony Pioli

During a visit to Hoe Grange Butterfly Reserve on 26th July, firstly (as always) I checked the pond beside the car park. There were several dragon and damselflies including a drowning male Emperor. Whilst rescuing the Emperor I noticed some frantic movement on the pondweeds. On close examination I realised there were beetles scurrying around, mostly attempting to mate. Since I had not seen this species before I spent some time photographing and videoing their behaviour.

Although somewhat difficult to initially identify from my field guides, I eventually identified them as “Reed Beetles” belonging to the Donaciinae, a small sub-family of the Chrysomelidae (leaf beetles).

The Donaciinae includes about 200 species in 7 genera worldwide and all species occur in waterside habitats with some being gregarious and active in hot weather, as I witnessed in no uncertain fashion on this occasion!!

The largest genus of the group is *Donacia* with about 100 species; in the UK 15 species occur and several are associated with aquatic vegetation (eggs are laid on leaves or stems near or under the water; the larvae emerge after a week or two and feed on submerged roots and rhizomes; pupation occurs in air-filled cocoons attached to the roots/stems where they overwinter and emerge in the spring). Many species prefer certain hosts. Since the pond contained a significant number of broad-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*) plants, this suggested that the beetle was possibly *Donacia versicolorea*. On further examination of images this proved to be the case. The status of this beetle is reputed to be “widespread but uncommon”.

Although I have seen and photographed many local/common beetles on several occasions over many years, it was very interesting, albeit somewhat challenging, to learn about this family of beetles and discover the identity of an insect I had witnessed for the first time!



Donacia versicolorea



Donacia versicolorea paired

SEARCHING GOOGLE WITH AN INSECT IMAGE

By Paul Chapman

Does anyone use Google to search for an image (using the image as opposed to some text)? Technically known as "reverse image search", this is very useful for those occasions when you have a photo but no idea where to start with identifying something. I mainly use this technique on walks, for the plants - if your botanical knowledge is like mine you will definitely need this type of help for the plants that some little animal is sitting on or eating.

I tried searching for the following examples on both an Android mobile (using the Google Photos app) and on a laptop with browser (<https://www.google.co.uk/imghp?hl=en&ogbl>), click the camera icon then upload image to use). I have read that the Google Photos app is also available on Apple phones but I cannot check this as no one in my house has one. My laptop results were hopeless - none of the examples were identified and I don't know why. The results from my Android mobile, however, are shown below.

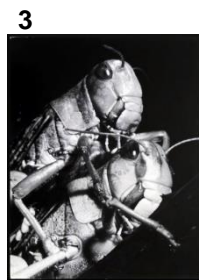
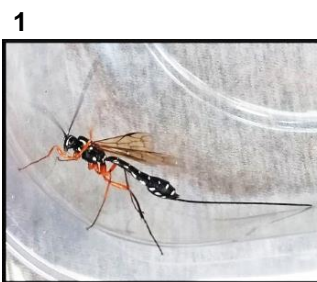
For a much more detailed explanation of reverse image searching, and some alternatives to Google, try this article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reverse_image_search

PHOTOS APP ON ANDROID MOBILE

Select 'Lens' to start the Google image search



PHOTOS CHECKED USING ANDROID MOBILE



- 1 Google result is *Rhyssa persuasoria* which is correct (female Sabre Wasp).
- 2 Google result is *Arge ochropus* which I think is correct (Rose Sawfly).
- 3 Google result is just grasshopper. Obviously correct but missing that they are mating *Locusta migratoria*.
- 4 Google result is Japanese laurel. Correct and I sometimes find shield bugs in this bush in my garden.
- 5 Google result is common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. This is correct.
- 6 Google result is a selection of seed pods, mostly poppy. This is far too limited. It is actually an immature euphorbia (*Euphorbia globosa*). I don't know what insects like this plant.

DaNES SOCIAL MEDIA

LOG ON AND JOIN IN

<https://www.facebook.com/DaNESinsects> ... https://twitter.com/danes_insects

INSECTS IN THE NEWS

SPLIT OPINION OVER REWILDING VERGES

There have been widespread calls for reduced mowing of roadside verges to allow vegetation to grow, to benefit our environment and its insect-life. There are now complaints in many places, including Chesterfield in Derbyshire, about uncut verges looking unkempt and causing a hazard.

<https://www.derbyshiretimes.co.uk/news/people/overgrown-grass-verges-on-major-chesterfield-road-are-accident-waiting-to-happen-says-concerned-motorist-3297963>

BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT 2021

This year's Big Butterfly Count took place from 16th July - 8th August. With still a little time left to submit records, it's already known that there have been over 107k folk taking part, over 152k counts submitted, and 1,392,359 butterflies recorded.

<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/map>

GREEN BUS SHELTERS INTRODUCED

Environmentally friendly bus shelters are being introduced in a number of towns and cities. In Leicester, 30 living-roof bus shelters are being currently created, using sedums and other wild flowers for our pollinators. Solar panels are also being incorporated, and smart lighting which operates only when people are present.

<https://news.leicester.gov.uk/news-articles/2021/may/new-network-of-living-roof-bee-friendly-bus-stops-springing-up-in-leicester/>

GRASSHOPPER RETURNS TO EAST ANGLIA

The Large Marsh Grasshopper, Britain's largest grasshopper, has been surviving only in isolated fragments of wetland in the New Forest, Dorset and Somerset. With habitat loss and climate change it has been thought it could become extinct in the next 25 years. 'Natural England' has, however, licensed a volunteer project to capture, breed and release these grasshoppers. Several thousand have now been returned to East Anglia, where former habitats have been restored. They had been absent here for 50 years. Early releases are already breeding.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/26/grasshopper-bred-in-captivity-returns-to-east-anglia-marshes>

GOVERNMENT USING NEW ALGORITHM TO ASSESS BIODIVERSITY

Government is introducing an algorithm to assess sites prior to development to ensure biodiversity is retained or compensated for. It aims to assess the quality of sites but it doesn't distinguish between degraded habitat and areas which are renewing or rewilding. Neither does it take account of how habitats are linked. And some plants, such as Rumex, are being classified as undesirable despite being highly valuable to insects. Concerns are also being raised over government being prepared to allow wildlife losses today if there are plans to compensate, as replacement of those losses may not be possible. Academics and conservationists are calling for the algorithm to be reviewed.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jul/21/biodiversity-metric-algorithm-natural-england-developers-blight-valuable-habitats-aoe>

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

EXTRACT FROM OUR SOCIETY'S JOURNAL AUTUMN 1992

Dear Editor,

I thought the following excerpt from an article on the Butterflies of Kenya by Torben B. Larsen in "SWARA", the magazine of The East African Wildlife Society might amuse our members in the next edition of the Journal.

I suggest you might title it "DISTILLING YOUR OWN"

"The dung of carnivores is very attractive to the male Charaxes and others of the largest and fastest Kenyan Butterflies. They manage to find every little bit of fresh dung on the forest floor, where they appear as if by magic from the canopy. Urine may also attract many butterflies when poured out over damp sand, and I always carry a few litres of my own, for convenience stored in old Whisky Bottles"!!!

Yours sincerely,
K. Cooper

READERS LETTER

**SHARE YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS
IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER**

Just a few lines or a photo, or a longer article if you like.

Email to glynisharris@hotmail.co.uk

Please send text as a Word document
and photos as email attachments (no zip files)
(Articles preferably 1 page max)

RECORD & REPORT YOUR INSECT SIGHTINGS

Please record any insects you see
and report what / where / when / who to Dave Budworth, our Records Co-ordinator.
He will add the info to our main database then pass it to our individual recorders.

EVERY RECORD IS OF VALUE FOR RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

Report your records to Dave by phone on 01283 215188
or by email to dbud01@aol.com or records@dan-es-insects.org.uk

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DaNES has been generously supported:

