



Autumn 2012

Volume 2 Issue 10

The Jewel in the Crown of the City Derby Arboretum

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LENS at Derby Arboretum

From left to right

Mike McNaught (Derby City Council Ranger and walk leader), John Haynes, Gill Martin, Mike Barrett, Tony Maggs, Dot Banks (front row), Helen Knewstubb, Kathryn Harrison, David Pinney, Alan Heath, Richard Pyle, Dave Gell, Graham Pearce (back row), John and Fay Blackburn, Malina Benn, Joan and Keith Breakwell and Colin Benn.

On a warm evening LENS strolled through the canvas which Impressionists have coloured and New York's Central Park has flattered by mimicry.

Derby Arboretum is a strange landscape of bark textures, gnarled tree roots, earth mounds and winding pathways, punctuated by scarlet flower displays in black Flaxton Victorian vases. The tree tops are out of sight.

Mike gave an enthusiastic introduction to the beauty and complexity of Loudon's 1840 creation and some champion trees, including the tallest American Lime in the UK and, of course, we met the Florentine boar.

Records Wanted

Report wildlife sightings to LENS recorder

Wildlife emergency number call 08456 058058

Join in conservation activities phone Groundwork Derby and Derbys 01773 535232

Dragonfly and Butterfly Event at Forbes Hole

The Friends of Forbes Hole and Groundwork held a public event on Sunday 12th August, led by Marion Farrell at Forbes Hole Local Nature Reserve, off Fields Farm Road, Long Eaton. There were 16 visitors. The weather was fine and sunny for a wildlife walk around the reserve (though there was a brief shower earlier). Pond sampling for the visitors revealed *Diaptomus*, *Cyclops*, *Ceriodaphnia*, *Daphnia pulex*, *Gerris*, *Cloeon* nymph, *Cypris*, *Chaoborus larva* and *Simocephalus*. The afternoon proved good for focusing on butterflies and dragonflies.

Butterflies included common blue and holly blue, Essex skipper (after careful examination of the antennae underneath for dark markings), green veined white, large white, and speckled wood (on the Northern Track). There were some large dragonflies including common darter, southern hawkler, brown hawkler and a wonderful emperor dragonfly.

On the meadow a good display of tansy, tufted vetch, rosebay willow-herb and great hairy willowherb, soapwort and common ragwort attracted other insects. including a cinnabar moth. **Alan Heath**

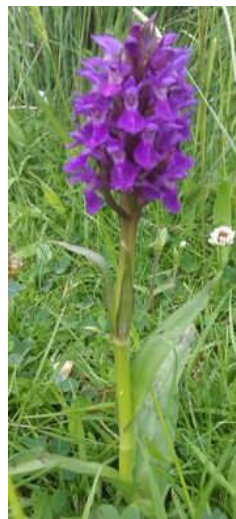


Cinnabar Moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*)

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Toton Washlands

A new wildlife site on the Erewash Valley trail is the land between the Erewash Canal and the River Erewash at Long Eaton which is currently being surveyed for its biodiversity value and a management plan written by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. The old meanders of the river are overgrown but many wild flowers and some orchids have colonised the area. Chiff-chaff, grasshopper and willow warbler are summer visitors and kingfishers, herons and little egrets are a regular sight on the river. Many butterflies and grasshoppers live in the long grass of the meadow and the golden orb weaver spider is also found. A swarm of bats was reported last year.



Marsh Orchid at Toton Washlands
Photo credit Tony Maggs

Northern or Southern?

Northern marsh orchids are

- flat topped not spiked
- deep purple not pink, paler towards the spur
- The lower lip has lines and squiggles, not spots
- The lower lip is entire (toothed in southern)
- the bracts are shorter than the flower (southern longer)

Northern *Dactylorhiza purplella* and Southern *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* orchids rarely hybridise with each other but both may hybridise with common spotted orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.

This could possibly be the most southerly colony of Northern marsh orchids in the UK but unfortunately the ID was not confirmed by the BSBI referee.

Long Eaton at Woodside



Gill Martin with visitors to the Bioblitz
Photo credit Marion Bryce

Pond Dipping, bug hunting and reserve walks took place at a Bioblitz as Derbyshire Wildlife Trust launched Woodside Nature Reserve. A moth watch and bat walk took place in the evening. The reserve is on the site of the old American Adventure and before that was Woodside Colliery. The soil is poor and this benefits wildflowers and insects. The reserve is managed as low intensity grazing by Jacob and Hebridean sheep and highland cattle with Konic ponies on marshy areas.

Many experts were invited to record as many wildlife species as possible over a weekend in June. Nearly 1000 records were received, 522 different species, many were new for the site. The Woodside BioBlitz was one of the "Meet the Species" events which is part of 'Discovering Places', the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Campaign to inspire the UK to discover their local environment.

Cromford Canal & Lea Wood – Bluebell Walk

April 28 A 2 mile spring walk. Some uneven ground and some uphill, may be slippery if wet. Park at High Peak Junction car park off Mill Road/Lea Road from Cromford (parking charge).

Grid ref SK 314 560

Leader and report: Marion Bryce

The weather had been so miserable in the preceding week that we jumped for joy when the sun came out and the sky brightened as we watched a buzzard circle over the car park at High Peak junction.

After crossing the fast flowing River Derwent and the railway line to the Cromford Canal we leaned on the black and white lock gates and saw broad leaved pond weed floating on the water surface but the water voles had been flushed out of their usual haunt and were not seen all afternoon.

The construction of the Cromford Canal was completed in 1794. It is 14.5 miles long and joined Cromford with the Erewash Canal at Langley Mill. The site has a wealth of industrial heritage and lies in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage site. The Cromford Canal was last used as a working waterway in 1944 and is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its entire length from Cromford to Ambergate. The designation was for key species such as water vole, grass snake and little grebe but also for the wealth of water associated plants which grow in, and close to the canal such as grass wrack, small and various leaved pondweed.

As we walked towards the Butterley Tunnel we could see the bright green spears of reed sweetgrass emerging and also the pink (male) and white elongated (female) flower spikes of butterbur whose huge leaves were once used to wrap butter pats. Pale lilac cuckoo flower and the fluffy seeds of coltsfoot vied with large stands of pendulous sedge and some lesser pond sedge. The spear leaves of yellow flag also promised a good display. Over 190 species have been recorded by the canal side.

Tufted ducks, moorhens and nesting coots were seen but the whinnying call of little grebes, in summer plumage with bright chestnut throat and cheeks, teased the photographers as the fluffy rear end disappeared into the water only to surface some distance away. There was a convenient bench. A pair of treecreepers showed off on the standing dead wood across in Lea wood. Many Himalayan balsam seedlings were just sprouting and large patches of green algae floated in the opaque water. There has been a lot of disturbance of sediment while major works have taken place to replace the viaduct. Isolated submerged plants of rigid hornwort and other water plants were seen just before we quit the canal bank to climb over the tunnel.



LENS in Lea Wood

Photo credit David Pinney



Wood Sorrell *Oxalis acetosella*
Photo credit David Pinney

Heading towards Lea Wood we used a Woodland Trust list of ancient woodland indicator species and the first plant we ticked was wood melick – it's graceful stems ornamenting the gritstone. The birch woods were ringing with birdsong and the flowers were outstanding, greater stitchwort, Ramsons, yellow archangel and thousands of native bluebells.

As bracken replaced the woodland flora the luminescent moss refracting pale green light from fallen wood and old stone walls inspired more photographs. The red and black northern hairy wood ants (*Formica lugubris*) in the wood are attractive, but they sting, so we were glad there were not too many around. An isolated patch of oxlip grew under hawthorn, just off the track.

A narrow slippery path led back to the Lea Branch of the canal which was covered with lesser duckweed. An excited gulp of martins arrived just as we reached the car park.

May 14 Breedon Hill (SSSI) & Historic Breedon Church

Roadside parking at the green in Breedon (Melbourne Lane), next to the Priory garden centre. (Or, if you don't fancy uneven ground and the climb, meet us in the church car park at top of hill.)

Grid ref SK 403 229 Leaders Christine Carrier (walk), Ida Wright (church)

Report by Joan Breakwell

Breedon Hill is of both natural and historical interest. The areas of limestone grassland support a wealth of plants and, being of national importance, have been designated an SSSI. First fortified in the third century BC, the remaining earthworks are thought to date from the 3rd or 4th century AD and are known as the Bulwarks. In AD 675 a charter was granted to build a monastery. The church appears to be balanced precariously due to the magnesium limestone quarry, which has removed half of the hill, including the Saxon graveyard, to provide agricultural limestone and stone for road building.

We arrived in Breedon after a day of fine weather to see a dark cloud approaching and then hovering over the hill. Showers accompanied us as we followed the narrow footpath. Part of the hill is now fenced to house the sheep, which once roamed free. The woolly grey leaves of great mullein, which had been clearly visible a fortnight earlier were now swamped by many stems of willowherb. There was some beautiful white and red campion, patches of wild strawberry and a very small saxifrage plant on a rock. Was it meadow or rue-leafed? We weren't sure. The rain and our appointment with Ida prevented us from lingering.



Alexanders

Smyrnium olusatrum

Photo credit David Pinney

Suddenly we heard a bird's loud alarm cry. A large brown bird stood out on the hillside and was swiftly identified as a male red-legged partridge, which obligingly posed for photographs as it protected its nest. With splendid views all around, we reached the church.

Inside we joined more of our group, who, declining the hill climb, had already arrived. Ida, church warden emeritus, took us into the bell tower, where we watched fascinated as the ringers perform Keg Meg and Priory changes. We were also treated to a viewing of the 'angel in the tower', a Saxon stone carving set in the wall.

As the rain poured down and the bells rang out, Ida made the history of the church of St Mary and St Hardulph come to life with her stories. The little-known St Hardulph is thought to have lived as a hermit on the banks of the River Trent maybe as early as the 7th century. The church was bought by the Ferrers family at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. We were engrossed by the tale of the Earl who shot his steward. After looking at the wonderful collection of Saxon carvings and freizes, we descended the hill, admiring the view in the gathering dusk.

Sightings on Breedon Hill, 14 May 2012-05-15

Ground ivy; Common vetch; Bluebells (Spanish); White dead nettle; Cow parsley; Buttercup (bulbous); Cleavers; Dandelion; Garlic mustard; Pineapple mayweed Shining cranesbill); White campion; Groundsel; Shepherd's purse; Ragwort Herb Robert; Wild strawberry; Germander speedwell; Smooth sow thistle; Great mullein; Chickweed; Common daisy; Field forget-me-not; Red campion; rue-leaved Saxifrage; Lords and ladies; Dog's mercury; Red dead nettle; Hogweed; Alexanders; Red valerian; Hazel; Hawthorn; Ivy; Pedunculate oak

Chiffchaff (heard); Red-legged partridge



Red legged partridge

Alectoris rufa

Photo credit David Pinney

May 21 Mercia Marina – Wildlife Walk

At the Toyota roundabout (A50/A38) take road left to Willington. At traffic lights at edge of village just before canal bridge turn left. Note brown sign to Mercia Marina. Proceed for about a mile, drive over railway crossing, marina on left. Park inside entrance on left.

Grid ref SK 303 296 Postcode DE65 6DW

Leader David Boddy

Close to the old Willington Power Station, Mercia Marina has been created from an former gravel pit and is on the peaceful and tranquil Trent and Mersey Canal, halfway between Fradley Junction and Trent Lock/Sawley in the heart of England's canal country. Twelve islands/promontories were added to the existing Willington Lake creating a series of mini-marinas in the 24 acre waterspace surrounded by soft banks planted with wildflowers and reeds.

On a warm still evening David introduced the site and led a walk around the marina, through the gated enclosure. He showed the great variety of native trees that had been planted, these included oak, alder, aspen, balsam poplar and several willow species. Jubilee Wood close by had also been planted in honour of her majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The soil was poor and this has resulted in many wildflowers, including bee orchid if you are lucky. There are also varied waterside plants such as great bittercress, water dock and water hemlock. The plants are a mixture of plantings and natural occurrences. Near the road are more formal plantings but great care has been taken throughout to plant species varieties where possible.

Some strange scale insects were found on a hornbeam. Leaf beetles, weevils and soldier beetles were abundant.

We paused for a long time at one of the islands which was hosting a pair of yellow wagtails and other birds. What a wonderful sight. As the binoculars dragged themselves away, a small hedgehog came into view.

The Chandlery had a bright red sedum roof which provides a green niche for wildlife which is low maintenance and provides insulation. There were few flowers on the butterfly bank and no butterflies were seen but purple hairstreaks have been recorded flying in the oak trees and so another visit in the month of July would be a good plan.

Marion Bryce



Nut scale *Eulecanium tiliae*

Photo credit Marion Bryce



Wildlife Pond at Mercia Marina

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Wildlife sightings at Mercia Marina

<i>Altica lythri</i>	Flea beetle
<i>Cantharis rustica</i>	Soldier beetle
<i>Cantharis cryptica</i>	Soldier beetle
<i>Oulema melanopus</i> <i>or rufocyanea</i>	Leaf beetle
<i>Gastrophysa viridula</i>	Dock beetle
<i>Adalia 2-punctata</i>	2 spot ladybird
<i>Eulecanium tiliae</i>	Nut scale
<i>Coprinus comatus</i>	Shaggy inkcap
<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	Common blue damselfly
	Little ringed plover
	Oyster catcher
	Common tern
	Yellow wagtail
	Pied wagtail
	Mute swan
	Canada goose
	Hedgehog

<http://www.merciamarina.co.uk/wildlife>

June 4 Orchid Wood – country walk with flowers

Meet at St Chad's Water car park on Wilne Lane for an approx 3 mile walk on good footpaths.

Grid ref SK 448 318

Leader and report Joan Breakwell

We started from St Chad's Water car park, our main object the orchids of orchid wood. We were not optimistic as only three or four plants had been visible four days earlier! However there were plenty of flowers to see on the way. After a damp day the clouds cleared to reveal a very pleasant evening.

We walked across a field of corn, then along the lane. Hop plants climbed in the hedges alongside elderberry. We saw hemlock with its red stems growing by the River Derwent. The elm hedge clearly showed its furrowed branches. Green alkanet, whose roots are used for red dye, grew on the verge. Then, as we turned onto the bridleway there was a lovely patch of yellow meadow vetchling.

Some of us were so busy with the flowers that we missed the lapwings and the skylark, which sang from a fence post. Yellowhammers can usually be spotted here and a few of us caught sight of a female atop a gorse bush. The hedges were alive with birdsong.

We saw Oxford ragwort, much more attractive than ordinary ragwort we thought, and spent some time trying to tell the difference between cow parsley and rough chervil. We wondered if they could hybridise.

Then we reached Orchid Wood, where we were met by Alan and John. Now the orchid hunt was really on. When Drakelow power station was built the southern marsh orchids growing there were moved to Draycott and have continued to grow there ever since. The site, which is a mixture of meadow and wooded areas, is owned by Erewash Borough Council.

With 14 pairs of eyes to search there were frequent cries of 'there's one here'. We found rather more southern marsh than common spotted and most were quite weak plants. However we guessed that in a week to ten days there would be no need to search as the spikes would grow above the surrounding foliage.

As we made our way back to our cars, there was one more treat in store. We had timed our return perfectly to witness a striking sunset. The sun went down in a red sky reflected perfectly in the smooth still water of the lake.



Sunset over St Chad's Water

Photo credit Joan Breakwell

Species list, Orchid Wood Walk, 4 June 2012

Rough hawksbeard	Sticky mouse ear
Lesser trefoil	Yarrow
Cut-leaved crane'sbill	Poppy
Red dead-nettle	Charlock
Flax	Hops
Hemlock	Midland hawthorn
Dock beetle	Prickly lettuce
Mugwort	White bryony
Dewberry	Green alkanet
Elm	Mountain cranesbill
Hogweed	Winter cress
Hop trefoil	Lucerne
Common reed	Yellow rocket
Oxford ragwort	Creeping cinquefoil
Herb Robert	Common mallow
Hedge mustard	Pineapple mayweed
Scented mayweed	Woody nightshade
Rough chervil	Albino form of red campion
Red campion	Osier
Great lettuce	Ground ivy
White poplar	Aspen
Alder	Silver birch
Bush vetch	Hairy tare
Pignut	Black bryony
Weld	
Yellowhammer	Blackbird
Lapwing	Chaffinch
Wood pigeon	Skylark



White form of red campion *Silene dioica*

Photo credit Joan Breakwell

Jul 2 Bonsall – Mining Botany

Meet 7pm at Bonsall. Take Via Gellia (A5012) from Cromford. Turn right up hill towards Bonsall. Meeting place is several hundred yards after road flattens out and at a right-hand bend with a wide junction. Note the 'monument', bus shelter and playing field nearby.

Grid ref SK279 580

Leader Marion Bryce

After a day of continuous rain, we decided that Ecotherapy was needed, so six of us decided to go ahead with the mining Botany walk. After admiring the magnificent village cross and public water fountain, we donned wet gear and set out on the walk.

The main bedrock at Bonsall is Carboniferous limestone,,the layers interspersed with igneous rocks, including dolerite and basalt - called 'toadstones' by lead miners. Where these layers meet a perched water table results in an active spring line. This is why there was a stream running where there is usually a path. As we puffed up-hill onto Bonsall Moor into the long wet grass of the hay meadows, we were in the clouds, taking in water droplets with every breath.

Ruined buildings and bell pits lined the path which wound through a surreal landscape of spoil heaps and lead rakes. Lead was found outcropping on the surface in Roman times and earlier. Derbyshire's lead mining region called the 'King's or Queen's Field' is under the jurisdiction of the Barmote Courts, a judiciary system separate from the rest of the country's legal system written in rhyme to aid memory.

This difficult-to-cultivate landscape has remained 'unimproved' and the limestone grassland surrounding and covering the spoil heaps is rich in wild flowers. Up to 8 different species of wild orchid grow, with evocative names like bee orchid, fly orchid and frog orchid. Characteristic plants of the Derbyshire dales grasslands are also found here, common rock-rose, early purple orchids, pink, white and blue milkwort, fairy flax, eyebright, small scabious and cowslips as well as plants associated with old meadows like violets, yellow rattle, birds foot trefoil and ladies bedstraw. Clumps of wild thyme, downy plantain, kidney vetch and harebells also thrive in these dry limestone grasslands.

Leadwort and limestone bedstraw thrive on the spoilheaps where grass finds it difficult to grow.



Lapidary snail *Helicigona lapicida*

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Despite our hurry in passage we saw thousands of common spotted orchids, pink triangles of pyramidal orchid and a pristine patch of fragrant orchid. Chimney sweeper, silver ground carpet and yellow shell moths were flying low through the sodden herbage. Dave Gell found a lapidary snail hiding in the crevice of a wall.

Keeping on the move, we saw DH Lawrence's Mountain Cottage across the moor and imagined cosy snugglings by the fireside. As thick cloud enveloped us we squeezed through a series of narrow stone stiles with quaint wooden gates and walked through wonderful wet buttercup meadows, down the slippery slope to Bonsall village. As the church bells rang, we felt good. Ecotherapy really works.



Fragrant orchid *Gymnadenia conopsea*

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Jul 9 Nottingham University – Rock around the Campus, a geological walk round University Park

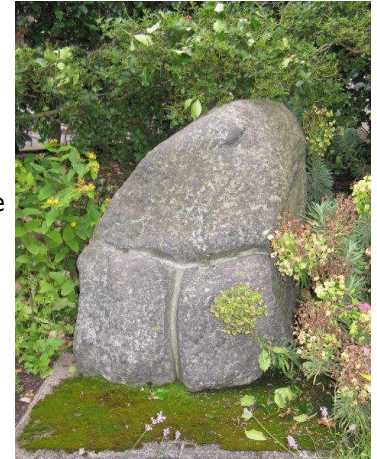
Meet at the visitors' car park on Science Road. Enter from University Boulevard, South Entrance, turn right before gate house and car park is immediately on the left (free after 4.30pm).
Grid ref SK 546 383 Leader:Gerry Shaw Report:Marion Bryce

Nottingham University has a proud history of geology, and the rock around the campus walk not only encompasses the unique fault geology with exposures at key sites but also the stones used to build, face and pave the monumental edifices of learning.

Gerry's famous model which illustrates the role of faults in the creation of the park landscape keened our interest. We could see how over time, the Sherwood (Bunter) sandstone which had started on top of the Lenton (lower mottled) sandstone, ended up next to it – with a band of Mercian mudstone (Keuper marl) in the middle, forming the lake.

We admired the 'fossils' on the old Geology Building which are actually made of cannonball limestone from South Shields. Splashing through a typical mudstone feature (standing water) we looked towards Keighton Hill where archaeological excavation has revealed tiles made for Lenton Abbey. Portland Copse is the site of the old clay quarry. We were distracted for a few minutes watching a bank vole feasting on hogweed seeds but soon our eyes were feasting on an exposure of the Radcliffe formation with its pseudomorphs of salt crystals, hidden, right by the lake.

The Portland and Trent Buildings loomed like huge white whales in an ocean of green. An elaborate parapet made of carboniferous limestone from Standcliffe made an effective buttress to prevent these fine stone constructions sliding into the lake. At the steps we stood on the Clifton fault next to the best exposure of Lenton sandstone with ancient riverside caves The yellow sandstone held together with clay is cross bedded left to right and bands of yellow precipitated iron move through the rock. Up the steps, the mysterious Bassingfield stone is a carved glacial erratic of hornblend schist from SW Scotland.



The Bassingfield Stone

Photo credit Marion Bryce



Admiring Fossils on the Old Geology Building

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Hand lenses were needed to see the fine pearl structure of the oolitic limestone in the Portland stone of the Trent Building. Strolling across echoing slabs of Derbyshire limestone we could see ancient corals and jagged cracks, stylolites, which were clay bands of weakness in the rocks.

We were unable to see the towering black Belgian limestone columns with fossils in the great hall but in the botanic gardens we saw a living fossil, the Maidenhair tree, *Ginkgo biloba*. In the UK we normally only find the male of the 'silver apricot' as many people cannot stand the smell of the edible fruit. For many years it was thought to be extinct in the wild but it has been preserved by monks in Eastern China. On the skyline, through a gap in the trees we could see Nottingham Castle on its cliff of Lenton sandstone which in 1996 was subject to catastrophic collapse, since restored.

Cut Through Lane follows the Clifton faultline between the fine, soft, red Lenton sandstone and the harder yellow Sherwood sandstone. Keighton Auditorium has been finely engineered to house a lens of Lenton Sandstone. Crossing the faultline we admired a red cliff before scaling the amazing Lenton Firs rock garden up to the summerhouse. The rocks were a mixture; Bulwell stone (with rhombs), Lancashire sandstone slabs and, to our surprise, some Pultiham artificial stone.

On the way back to the carpark we peeped into the Physics building to see the polished slabs of dark Derbyshire crinoidal limestone which has weathered so badly on the outside of the buildings, Gerry left us with the words of the great geologist Adam Sedgewick

' I cannot promise to teach you all geology, I can only fire your Imaginations'.

Jul 30 Toton Sidings Walk

Park at Town Hall car park (free in evening), Midland Street, Long Eaton. An approx 4 mile walk some uneven ground and a short section of roadside walking, returning along the Erewash Canal.
Grid ref:SK 490 339 Leader and report: Marion Bryce

Local people were shocked in December 2009, when thousands of trees were felled overnight on the Toton Sidings site. After complaints to the Forestry Commission by the Toton Environmental Protection Society the new owners were found guilty of illegal tree felling and this was upheld on appeal. In the meantime the site has blossomed with thousands of flowers and insects thrive, including a colony of marbled white butterflies.



**A few of the LENS members at Toton Sidings
(The other members were distracted by the flowers)**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Following a newly designated footpath through the middle of the sidings we could see how birch and willow had rapidly colonised the site and also a solitary oak sapling, the scene was moving fast. Pink - broad leaved everlasting pea and centaury, purple- buddleia, tufted vetch and lucerne, yellow- broom, evening primrose, tansy, perforate Saint John's wort and common ragwort, white -melilot, toadflax and ox eye daisy colour the site. Statuesque plants of mullein were of three species, the common giant mullein with grey hairy leaves, moth mullein with its clutch of orange stamens and white mullein. A large bird cherry marked the end of the footpath and we walked down Bessell Lane through an industrial area. Grass leaved ragwort growing under the A52 bridge was a first local sighting of this newly invasive species. Crossing the railway line and the River Erewash which borders from Nottinghamshire to Derbyshire we peeped at a shy clump of mistletoe high on a poplar tree.

Accessing the Erewash Canal towpath at Sandiacre Bridge we quickly spotted the brown globular capsules of the round- fruited rush. Distinguishing the spear leaves of yellow flag, sweet flag and the burnt tips of branched bur reed, small black powder puffs scattered across the water while mother moorhen scolded, their nest was hidden in the reeds. Reed sweetgrass and lesser pond sedge lined the canal which was decorated by yellow and white water lily flowers. Sharp edged arrows pierced the water surface while the strap like submerged leaves of arrowhead undulated with the flow. The narrow leaves of unbranched bur reed floated midstream its fruit betraying identity. Marsh woundwort, orange balsam, purple loosestrife and creeping yellowcress were some of the many decorative flowers of the canalside. Who can believe that hemp agrimony is a weed? The dead leg of the old Derby Canal was clogged with water fern despite introduction of biological control weevils by the Environment Agency.



Round fruited rush *Juncus compressus*
Photo credit Marion Bryce



Field Garlic *Allium oleracea*
Photo credit Marion Bryce

At the bottom of the hedge between Dockholm Lock and Derby Road Bridge the field garlic was flowering. This red data book species was noted at this site in Rev Linton's 1903 Flora of Derbyshire. From the vantage of the raised flood bund we looked across the flooded fields of Toton Washlands a new wildlife site on the Erewash Valley Trail. As the light faded we reflected on the fine weather and a local walk of great contrasts, admiring the Sustrans flower sculpture on the way back to the Town Hall car park.

Molluscablitz

This year's mild winter and wet spring are said to have provided ideal breeding conditions for molluscs. The native slug and snail population is said to have trebled in some parts of the countryside, but it has also resulted in an increase in the 'Spanish stealth slug'. Slug expert Les Noble, from Aberdeen University, has been quoted as saying that Britain was not taking the threat of the *Arion flagellus* seriously enough.

Heavy rain and warm spells have provided the perfect conditions for the alien pest, which grows to more than 10cm long and produces hundreds more eggs than the typical British slug. In a hot dry climate not many of the eggs would hatch but in the moist climate of the UK there is little control of the number of hatchlings.

The brown-green alien is mating with our native slugs to create fertile hybrids that may out-compete native species. The invasive species may also carry diseases and parasites that could wipe out our native slugs which self-fertilise and are so highly inbred they can't keep pace with new diseases and parasites, and could become extinct.

The most common way foreign slugs and other pests arrive in the UK is in imported produce, like fruit and vegetables. Fresh produce from countries such as Spain is packed and arrives in the UK within 36 hours. Pests which pose all sorts of threat can come in this way.

There are about 30 different native slug species plus some greenhouse exotics. While they are hated by gardeners most native species are not pests and are important for recycling waste. The rapid increase in the snail and slug populations has led experts to predict a better breeding season for birds such as thrushes and blackbirds with more chicks surviving to adulthood. In a normal spring when the sun comes out and the ground dries, they have trouble finding enough food to feed their young.



The Spanish Slug *Arion flagellus*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18672728>

If you are interested in molluscs you may like this event **Saturday, November 3, 2012: Nottinghamshire - Molluscablitz**

Contact Chris du Feu (01427 848 400 - home; chris@chrisdufeu.force9.co.uk).

Nottinghamshire molluscs are not well recorded. The aim of the field visits are to add to the county records by searching some Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust reserves. The mollusc fauna of these nature reserves is virtually unrecorded - the day cannot fail to provide worthwhile records for the NWT and who knows what surprises are waiting to be unearthed?

Elms for Hairstreaks

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation (East Midlands) have joined forces with local community groups, Derby City Council, Wild Derby and Amber Valley Borough Council to help one of our most enigmatic butterflies, the white-letter hairstreak. This butterfly breeds on elm trees, the caterpillars emerging in the spring to eat the flowers before pupating and becoming adults in June and July. Due to the impact of Dutch Elm disease many elms disappeared from our cities and countryside and this project aims to establish a disease-resistant variety called Autumn Gold close to existing colonies of the butterfly to provide an alternative food source

Ken Orpe, the Derbyshire Recorder for Butterfly Conservation (East Midlands) said: "We are at the northernmost edge of a national problem which is causing the serious decline of this rare butterfly. By planting disease-resistant elms now we hope to reverse the situation here in Derbyshire. This is a very important project for the county's biodiversity." Kieron Huston, Senior Local Wildlife Sites Officer at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, added: "With this project we aim to create a network of breeding sites for white letter hairstreaks in the future. The project is long-term and forms part of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Living Landscape strategy

in which we aim to ensure animals and plants can survive and disperse throughout the county in the coming decades."



White Hairstreak Butterfly
Photo credit Internet

Death of Leylandii?

The death of many leylandii hedges came to the attention of DWT recently when someone sent some photos of their brown hedges, asking for an explanation. The cause in many cases is the Cypress aphid, *Cinara cypressi*, and there's little that can be done to stop it. Damage caused by cypress aphid develops in late spring and summer. It is found most often at the base of the hedge, but can develop at any height. Large greyish green-

fly are sometimes found, but the browning often develops long after the aphids have left the foliage. Clues are left behind, including cast aphid skins and a black fungal growth (sooty mould) that grows on the sugary honeydew excreted by the pest. Leylandii provide such good cover for nesting birds they will be sadly missed by many species. One tree nearby has collared dove, woodpigeon, blackbird and greenfinch nesting in it .



Cypress aphid Photo credit Nigel Cattlin Science photo library

BOOK REVIEW by John Ellis

Field Guide to the Micro Moths of Great Britain and Ireland

Many expert mothers dismiss micro moths as to date there has not been an easy guide for identification and one has had to buy several books to cover all the families some of which are very expensive and far too large to use in the field.

With this book we now have the means to identify all those small critters we have previously dismissed.

The authors, Phil Sterling and Mark Parsons are well known and respected experts in the field and the art-

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work done by Richard Lewington is as usual, exceptional. The book covers more than 1,000 species and there are maps for most of them, although these need to be viewed as possible areas where the moths may occur as lack of comprehensive records means less than 100% accuracy of coverage. The text is comprehensive and there are many photographs as well as Lewington's drawings. The descriptions include comparisons with similar or confusion species.

With the recently released "British Plume Moths" by Colin Hart moth

identification has never been more accessible. I would recommend this book to anyone with a passing interest in moths. Hopefully more people will get involved in micro identification and send their records to Dave Budworth the recorder for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire' dbud01@aol.com

The book is available as a hardback at £45.00 or softback at £29.95. I have seen several offers of discounted prices but I got my copy online from "The Book Depository" at £16.40 post free, which is a tremendous discount. [See back page for further book reviews.](#)



LENS Long Eaton Natural History Society

CONTACTS

Future Meetings

- 10 Sept The Quest for the 58 (Butterflies) Max and Christine Maughan
- 8 October Voyage to Antarctica Brian Hobby
- 12 November AGM/Members Night
- 10 December Quiz Social Evening
- 14 Jan Birds of Derbyshire Trent Valley - past, present and future Dr David Parkin
- 11 Feb British Mammals (Characteristic identification in the field) Joe Kirkwood
- 11 March Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership Nick Moyes

Indoor meetings start at 7.15pm in the Social Activities Annex, Long Eaton Public Library, Broad Street, Long Eaton. Cost £1 for members, £2 for visitors. All welcome.

CONTACT: Alan Heath 0115 9733766

See website www.lensweb.wordpress.com for further details of activities.

Please send pictures and wildlife news to the Editor, Marion Bryce

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Mint moth *Pyrusta aurata*

Photo credit Joan Breakwell

Membership Renewal Form

I would like to be a member of Long Eaton Natural History Society

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel no _____

Email _____

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £8.00
The annual subscription entitles members to attend meetings at £1.00 per session.

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

Please return completed form to the Hon Treasurer, Helen Knewstubb,
9 Kingsley Crescent, Sawley Long Eaton NG10 3DA



Alan Heath, Fay Blackburn, Joan Breakwell and Christine Carrier at Long Eaton School's 2012 World Eco Day event.

Photo credit Alan Heath

THE WILDLIFE OF ATTENBOROUGH NATURE RESERVE

This was originally intended as the next in the series of reports on the wildlife of the reserve and was to cover the years 2005-2008. Problems of funding and production delayed it and it has emerged as a much larger document.

The Bird and Mammal reports do confine themselves to 2005-8 as does the ringing report, but the invertebrate, plant and fungi sections are very comprehensive. Butterflies, moths, dragons & damsels, grasshoppers & crickets and hoverflies are covered in depth as are the plants and fungi. There are one or two short articles including a tribute to Keith Corbett, one by Sean Browne on the penduline tit, yours truly on small red-eyed damselfly and a very comprehensive one on bitterns at Attenborough by Sandy Aitken. A very large and well illustrated article on plant galls will make the book worthwhile for anyone interested in this interesting aspect of wildlife as the colour illustrations and text will be useful anywhere in the country.

An A5 sized book of 162 pages printed on good quality glossy recycled paper with more superb colour photographs than you can shake a stick at, the book should be on the shelf of anyone with an interest in wildlife in Notts. It is available from the Nature Centre and the NWT office at the Old Ragged School at £7.50 or can be bought through the Attenborough Website for a tenner including postage.

OK, I am biased, having been involved with Attenborough for over fifty years, having sat on the management committee for a long time, worked for NWT as a paid officer and written some of the content. However, I do think it is a worthwhile purchase. so get one while they are available as it is a one-off print run.

John Ellis

Book Review

The recent snow prompted this review. I awoke the morning after the snow to see a set of footprints crossing the front lawn. I suspected a fox but got a book from my library to check it out. Sure enough it became clear that I had a fox trotting across the lawn on its way to the back garden. The book I checked with is in my opinion the best one to get and I would heartily recommend it to anyone with an interest in Wildlife. It is "Animal Tracks and Signs" by Bang and Dahlstrom and it is published by Oxford University Press at £14.99 but obtainable for much less on Amazon.

It covers Europe but is relevant to the UK even if we don't have wolverine, beaver and wolf. There is a large section on footprints which covers them in greater depth than any other guide I have seen. Not only are they illustrated with drawings of the individual prints but there are photographs and also drawings and photographs of trails of prints. There is a considerable amount of text on the subject as well. A section on droppings is excellent and there is also a bit of info on bird poo and bird of prey pellet identification. There is quite a large section on feeding signs which covers the different ways nuts and pine cones are nibbled by different creatures and bark gnawing and fruit eating are also covered. Various other indications are covered including the various types of hole made by foxes and badgers. Apart from many drawings the book is copiously illustrated with colour photographs and has plenty of good clear text. No natural history bookshelf should be without a copy.

JohnEllis.

British Plume Moths

Colin Hart has finally produced his tome on this interesting group of moths and a splendid job he has done. Unfortunately this is not available from the Book Depository at a bargain price and I got mine from Atropos Books (google it) It is a hardback book with 278 pages and 46 colour plates printed on good quality paper but a little too big for the pocket.

The Plume Moths are a relatively neglected group of moths, with the last identification guide to British species by Bryan Beirne, "British Pyralid and Plume Moths", dating back to 1952 and currently out of print and difficult to obtain secondhand. Since 1952 additional species have been discovered in Britain and much new information about their life histories has been discovered by lepidopterists, including the author of this new book. This long-awaited book provides a definitive account of the current state of knowledge and it includes colour photographs of set specimens of all the British species on 26 plates. These are reproduced at life size and considerably larger to aid identification.

For anyone into microscopy there are detailed genitalia drawings for both sexes of all species as identification of some difficult species can only be confirmed by examining these organs. Colour photographs of a range of live adults, larvae and pupae, as well as feeding signs for some species, are on a further 20 colour plates. There is a key to the adults using wing features, a glossary of terms used and morphology diagrams for the adult and male genitalia structures, a checklist with current nomenclature, while the references cited facilitate access to the published literature.]#

For £24 I would recommend this to any naturalist with an interest in invertebrates.

John Ellis